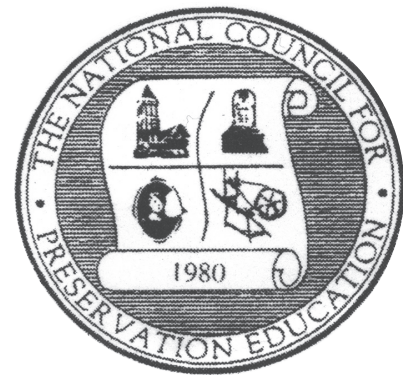


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PRESERVING PUBLIC HOUSING: FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE SOCIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FORMS ASSOCIATED WITH HOUSING FOR THE POOR

DAWN E. JOURDAN AND STEPHANIE ZEIER PILAT

ABSTRACT—Since the 1930s, public housing policy has dictated the design of housing for the poor. Given the age of this housing stock, many public housing communities across the nation are now eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. How might public housing be preserved and on what grounds? This article seeks to understand the social and architectural significance of public housing archetypes built in the United States between 1930 and the present and to explore the legal tools that offer protection from demolition to these potential historic landmarks. This essay examines an array of efforts by local governments and private developers to list historic public housing communities, including the Carl Mackley Houses in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the Santa Rita Courts in Austin, Texas, on the National Register of Historic Places as either historic landmarks or a part of historic districts. The study also reviews the interplay between the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program, as it relates to the anticipated loss of historic public housing communities. The history of the Techwood Homes in Atlanta, Georgia, and the St. Thomas Homes in the Garden District of New Orleans, Louisiana, serves as the centerpiece of this inquiry. Finally, the article explores efforts by local housing authorities, including the Chicago Housing Authority, to review and preserve local public housing stock in some nontraditional ways.

When Atlanta, Georgia, won its bid for the 1996 Olympics in 1990, debate over the fate of the Techwood Homes neighborhood, located in the midst of planned Olympic development, erupted. Built in 1935, the neighborhood was celebrated as the nation's first public housing commu-

nity (see Figures 1, 2, 4, and 5). Dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Techwood Homes earned a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 due to its status as a model for subsequent housing projects as well as its connection to FDR. Yet as Atlanta's economic stature rose in the 1980s the Techwood Homes and ad-



*Fig. 1.
Techwood Homes,
Atlanta, Georgia.
(Library of
Congress.)*



*Fig. 2. Techwood
Homes apartment
interior, Atlanta,
Georgia. (Library
of Congress.)*

jacent Clark Howell public housing complexes suffered despite their prime location next to Coca-Cola's World Headquarters and Georgia Tech University. By 1991, as the city began planning for the Olympic Games, many of Atlanta's leaders and residents advocated for demolition and redevelopment. Atlanta resident Harry Murphy, for example, responded to the ongoing debate over the fate of Techwood Homes and Clark Howell neighborhood in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*:

The Constitution's recent timid editorial, "Devising a future for Techwood," reflects a posture held hostage by the dubious popular wisdom that public housing developments are somewhat sacrosanct. They are not.

What is sacrosanct is the greater good of Atlanta. Techwood Homes/Clark Howell has long since served its purpose, which was to help families get through the Depression of the 1930s.

Sheer inertia, fueled by an absence of political courage, keeps these two complexes in place, though they provide nothing positive to either tenants or the city.

Public housing of the Techwood/Howell genre has proved a failure. (Murphy 1991, A16)

Murphy went on to argue that to preserve a low-income housing complex on such a valuable site did not make economic sense and impeded new development in the surrounding area. Describing the complex as "a file cabinet for the poor," he argued that rehabilitation of such outdated structures was impossible. He ended the letter simply: "Time has passed by Techwood/Howell. Erase it" (Murphy 1991, A16). Arguments in favor of the destruction of public housing projects often cite reasons similar to Murphy's logic: the economics of development, a perceived inability to rehabilitate older structures, management and finance problems, as well as high concentrations of poverty and crime. In the United States, these arguments are winning the day: at least 159,000 units of public housing have been demolished, most less than a half century after being constructed (Goetz 2011). Before our public housing legacy is erased, it is worth pausing to consider when and why public housing projects might warrant preservation in part or in whole.

Advocates for "erasing" sites such as Techwood Homes rarely consider the ways in which such erasures further marginalize the histories of America's poor and working classes. How, we might ask, does the demolition of such projects enable selective forgetting and make it harder to document the histories of those who called public housing home or to examine the complicated web of reasons

that some housing projects, despite the best of intentions, spiraled downward? The erasure of the physical legacy of public housing allows us to ignore the histories of those for whom the American dream remained largely out of reach as well as the histories of success that emerged out of these communities. Moreover, when the residents of projects like Techwood are pushed out of city centers and scattered across the metropolis they are rendered less visible to the public eye. While on the surface and in the moment choices about whether to demolish or rehabilitate public housing may seem to be about economics, poverty, and crime, the choices we make about what to preserve and what to erase indicate whose history matters to a local or national community. As Brian Ladd explains, "The impulse to preserve or destroy—whether motivated by nostalgia, desire for prestige or for legitimacy, or even economics—reflects deep seated beliefs about historical identity" (Ladd 1997, 3).

For half a century social historians have embraced the idea that we must do more than write the histories of the famous and powerful; our understanding of history is richer and more complex when we document and analyze histories of the poor, working class, and marginalized. As the social historian E. P. Thompson argued in his 1963 history of the English working class, "Our only criterion of judgment should not be whether or not a man's actions are justified in the light of subsequent evolution" (Thompson 1963, 13). Women's Studies and Subaltern Studies scholars have further demonstrated the value of considering culture and history from diverse viewpoints. This consciousness, however, has yet to fully permeate preservationist debates. Americans have a long history of preserving sites associated with celebrated individuals ranging from the boxer Joe Frazier's gym to the homes of Thomas Jefferson and Johnny Cash. The potential knowledge gained through a more diverse history suggests a need to consider preserving public housing in order to be able to document the collective histories embodied in such projects.

Preservationists, planners, and political leaders have begun to question what is lost when so much of the nation's public housing legacy meets the wrecking ball. Yet they have struggled to translate desires to preserve the physical legacies of the marginalized into concerted action in part because of a weak, contradictory, and vague legislative framework (Jourdan 2012). A brief review of public housing and preservation legislative acts and funding mechanisms provides a foundation for understanding the

ways in which these two bodies of policy have overlapped and have often contradicted one another. Furthermore, such an understanding helps to identify the opportunities and limitations for preserving public housing. Select case studies reveal the challenges preservationists, planners, and activists confront in seeking to preserve public housing as well as suggest options for negotiating among the many pressures involved. Significantly, these case studies also demonstrate that connections to famous historical figures from FDR and Lyndon Johnson to Elvis Presley have often been cited as primary reasons for preserving the homes of America's working class and poor.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

"Public housing" is a blunt term that describes more than 1.3 million units, which represent a vast array of housing types from high-rise towers, to low-, row-, and single-family houses (Goetz 2011). Since the enactment of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, new architectural forms have informed public housing policy. The first public housing units were built as part of the New Deal Public Works program. These designs, while diverse in style, were built with functionality in mind and minimal decoration (Robinson et al. 1999). As government policy specific to the housing of the poor changed, so too did the architecture embraced by such policies. Movements in planning and architecture, such as the Garden City, International style, and New Urbanism, have greatly influenced ideas about the appropriate form and layout of public housing. With some exceptions, each subsequent public housing program has modified or rejected previous ideologies about the form most appropriate for housing the poor.

After World War II, public housing authorities began building modernist-style, high-rise buildings on superblocks for the urban poor (Goetz 2011). Drawing on the utopian visions of early twentieth-century architects and planners, the skyscraper in the park model was believed to offer residents ample sunlight and fresh air, which were sorely lacking in the urban slums of the era. Misguided social policies, inadequate budgets for maintenance, and the decline of urban industrial economies in cities like St. Louis and Detroit proved impossible to overcome for many postwar housing projects (Freidrichs 2012; Fishman 2004). These new public housing projects quickly became the "epicenter of high concentrations of poverty, violent crime, joblessness, and social breakdown" (Goetz 2011, 269). The 1973 demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe

public housing complex in St. Louis, Missouri, which had been constructed just two decades earlier, marks the point when policymakers began to publicly recognize the failure of postwar housing policy and design ("Why the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project Failed" 2011; Goetz 2011). The general public appeared to agree; hundreds of people, including past residents, cheered as the dilapidated buildings of Pruitt-Igoe were razed ("Why the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project Failed" 2011; Goetz 2011). Little consideration was given to what was lost by the destruction of those towers, if anything.

In terms of historic preservation, Pruitt-Igoe was architecturally significant. The complex was designed by the celebrated architect Minoru Yamasaki, who would later design another notable building—the World Trade Center (Mogilevich 2003). *Architectural Forum* identified the complex as the best high-rise (Mogilevich 2003). Beyond its structural significance, a claim that Pruitt-Igoe was historically significant based on its social history could also be made. Ultimately, Pruitt-Igoe was a product of the Urban Renewal agenda embraced by the city of St. Louis in the late 1940s, a manifestation of housing policy of the time. City politicians sought to clear the Desoto-Carr neighborhood, a poor African American neighborhood occupying the site. Initial plans to build a low-rise housing community were abandoned by local pressures to maximize the efficiency of the site and funds available for urban renewal. At its inception, the community was originally intended to provide segregated housing for middle-class whites and blacks. The first tenants moved into the community in 1955, a year prior to a state court decision requiring the desegregation of public housing. The buildings never reached full occupancy. Within ten years, the complexes had significantly decayed as a result of poor construction and social and economic strife. By 1971, fewer than six hundred people inhabited Pruitt-Igoe's seventeen buildings (Goetz 2011).

The failure of the Pruitt-Igoe housing community still provides an important case study for the general failure of federal, state, and local efforts to concentrate the urban poor in previously depressed areas. Policymakers began to search for ways to deconcentrate public housing because of the outcome of Pruitt-Igoe and an intense desire to lessen the impacts of concentrated poverty on public housing residents and the larger neighborhoods of which these communities were a part (Goetz 2013). The most prominent example of these efforts was the HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) utilized the HOPE VI program to engage in large-scale revitalization of distressed public housing communities and the neighborhoods surrounding them (Zhang and Weismann 2006, 42). These funds were made available to housing authorities that sought to accomplish the revitalization of dilapidated public housing communities (Popkin et al. 2004). More than 200,000 public housing units were demolished with HOPE VI revitalization funds, including Cabrini Green, Robert Taylor Homes, and the St. Thomas Homes, as described more fully below (Jourdan 2013, 482). More than 3,600 of the lost units were demolished in Cabrini Green (Popkin et al. 2004). The residents of these communities were dispersed to other public housing communities and to the private market. Few were able to return to the New Urbanist-style, mixed-use, mixed-income developments that replaced them (Popkin et al. 2004). This article does not seek to provide a critical analysis of these programs. Rather, it presents these as examples of the policies that are promoting the demolition of potentially important historic public housing structures.

This notion is now representative of a prevailing attitude about the location of housing for the poor. As such, public housing, built between the 1930s and 1970s, is being torn down and replaced with scattered-site units (Hanlon 2012). The HOPE VI program represents the latest trend in public housing. The program has served as a catalyst to demolish a significant amount of the nation's public housing stock in the name of deconcentrating poverty. While the new mixed-use, mixed-income communities that replace the demolished public housing may better serve the needs of the poor, much social and architectural history is lost in the process. Many scholars have questioned the necessity of efforts to deconcentrate the poor on the basis of social concerns associated with displacements. However, few have advocated for preservation of these structures on grounds of architectural or social history. The existing legislative framework has been used in the past and could be used in the future to support the preservation of public housing. This framework on its own, however, does not serve as adequate protection for public housing as case studies illustrate.

PRESERVATION POLICY

In the same period in which housing policymakers began to advocate for the wholesale demolition of public housing projects in the name of deconcentrating pov-

erty, other government policies began to provide frameworks and incentives for preserving these same sites. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 laid the foundations for much of contemporary preservation policy. Congress enacted NHPA due, at least in part, to concerns that "historic properties significant to the Nation's heritage are being lost or substantially altered, often inadvertently, with increasing frequency" (16 U.S.C. 470(b)(3)). The act created the National Register of Historic Places, authorizing the secretary of interior to list "districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture" (16 U.S.C. 470a(a)(1)(A)). As the statutory language clearly denotes, the meaning of the term "significance" is vital to the discussion of what should be preserved as historic. Mason (2004, 64) contends:

A "statement of significance" gathers together all the reasons why a building or a place should be preserved, why it is meaningful or useful, and what aspects require most urgent protection. Once defined, significance is used as a basis for policy, planning and design decisions.

In spite of the importance of the term "significance," the statute is devoid of clear guidance regarding its meaning. The Department of Interior, through the rulemaking authority of the National Parks Service, crafted guidelines that attempt to insert objectivity into the process of determining whether a particular landmark is historically significant. The evaluation criteria suggest that a property may be deemed historic if

the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory. (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation n.d.)

Applicants bear the burden of establishing that the potential landmark meets some of the established criteria.

These criteria, having been criticized for being a blunt instrument, do not fully account for the subjectivity of historic preservation values (Mason 2004). Instead, Mason suggests that these criteria, and the very nature of historic preservation, promote the preservation of “unduly objective and scientized” memories and histories (Mason 2004, 64). In an effort to provide clarity about what is historically significant, policymakers have attempted to create a uniform set of standards on which such judgments can be made. With limited exception, these objective criteria primarily focus on building materials and architectural characteristics, as well as other features that can be easily objectified. What is lacking from this conversation is a true understanding of the contingent nature of these landmarks, an identity that can only really be identified through a reflexive, participatory process. It is only through this dialogic process that the true subjective significance of some historic structures and places can be remembered and described as a part of a local collective memory. The significance of historic public housing structures is more layered and subjective than its architectural vernacular, its designer, or what famous person lived there. In some instances, the significance of public housing is a derivative of the richness of the social and cultural history experienced by the generations of residents who have resided in buildings crafted as a product of legislative efforts to house the urban poor. The case for the preservation of historically significant public housing rests on the basis of this premise.

Those who support the demolition of dysfunctional public housing, including Pruitt-Igoe, might question the very foundation of arguments made to preserve public housing communities that have exacerbated the despair suffered by its inhabitants. For more than thirty years, HUD has aggressively promoted the “downsizing of the nation’s public housing stock” (Goetz 2011, 267). Programs like HOPE VI have prioritized the demolition, rather than revitalization, of dilapidated public housing stock (Jourdan 2013). In other instances, similar buildings have been sold to private developers for conversion. The majority, however, have been demolished as a result of national initiatives to deconcentrate poverty. The cities of Atlanta, Chicago, and New Orleans have been the most aggressive in their efforts to demolish public housing (Goetz 2011).

The plans to demolish public housing are often welcomed by a wide variety of stakeholders. Policymakers,

particularly with the enactment of the HOPE VI law, have long viewed demolition as the only way to deconcentrate poverty and the social ills typically associated with public housing. Demolition is sold to displaced residents as an opportunity for them to seek out “greener pastures.” Ironically, housing advocates, often critical of efforts that do not intend to create new housing for low-income people, are often quick to support plans to demolish high-rise public housing. As Alexander Polikoff writes:

High-rises are terrible places for the people who live in them, not to mention for the larger community that lives near them. In my opinion we should, above all, seize the moment and tear them down. (Polikoff 2003, 4)

Often motivated, at least in part, by structural decline, public housing agencies (PHAs) have sought the opportunity to use federal funds to tear down public housing communities in the hopes of alleviating the socioeconomic issues that have plagued them. Few stakeholders are left to advocate for the preservation of these potentially historic landmarks.

Due to concerns about the demolition of public housing projects, the National Park Service (NPS) released guidelines for listing public housing communities on the National Register of Historic Places. Established in 1999, these guidelines recognize public housing as important to the nation’s social and architectural history.

For most of the eligible public housing project properties, the primary historical significance will likely rest in their association with the development of the important federal public housing programs of the 1930s and 1940s. Secondary significance, if present, will likely be found through association with the ideals of modern architecture and urban planning.

The NPS guidelines specify that, to be listed, a public housing project must be nationally significant, not merely an artifact of national policy.

LISTING PUBLIC HOUSING ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Of the more than 159,000 public units lost, less than a dozen public housing communities have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Goetz 2011; Robinson et al. 1999). Groups who value the architecture, people, or histories associated with specific sites have successfully placed some of these communities on the National Register of Places. Listed on the National Register in 1998, the Carl Mackley Houses in



*Fig. 3.
St. Thomas
Homes,
New Orleans,
Louisiana.
(Franklin Delano
Roosevelt Library.)*

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is an example. Built in 1933 and named after a union worker killed by non-union workers, this modernist public housing community was built with funding from the Public Works Administration (Radford 1996). This complex was originally designed by Oscar Stonorov and Alfred Kastner to house hosiery workers in a complete community that would enable union workers to experience the benefits of cooperation (Radford 1996). As Gail Radford explains the designers' motives, "They wanted to create environments that would allow first-hand experience of what they viewed as the advantages of collective provision of goods" (Radford 1996, 124). Three- and four-story buildings covered in orange tile and containing roughly three hundred apartments stretched across a five-acre super block in an industrial section of Philadelphia. The buildings created a series of sheltered outdoor areas between them, which included a wading pool and a swimming pool. The neighborhood also included a nursery school, a community hall, and a store, amenities that fostered a sense of community among those who used them (Radford 1996, 133-44). At the time of construction, the Carl Mackley Houses were lauded for their "peaceful separateness," given the community's occupation of a full city block (Radford 1996). After the Carl Mackley Houses received landmark designation, the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust raised

funds to renovate the community in order to preserve part of the physical legacy of unions in the United States. The buildings were gutted and modernized in 1999. The small size of the typical 1930s apartments led developers to reorganize the interior spaces and join units together to create larger dwelling units. Today, half of the 184 units are currently reserved for occupation by very low-income residents holding Section 8 vouchers. Thus the story of the Carl Mackley Houses serves to illustrate one way in which landmark designation and private fundraising efforts by the AFL-CIO resulted in not only the preservation of a public housing project but also its continued occupancy by low-income residents.

Similarly, in 2006, the housing authority of the city of Austin, Texas, initiated an application to list the Santa Rita Courts. In its application, the housing authority identified Santa Rita Courts as the first public housing development constructed under the 1937 Housing Act, which is nationally significant because of "its association with President Lyndon Johnson and Johnson's role as one of the greatest civil rights and social justice presidents in American History" (Texas Historical Commission 1990, 7). The application also outlined the symbolic role Santa Rita Courts played in the desegregation of public housing in the city of Austin (Texas Historical Commission, 1990). Redeveloped by the initiative of the local public housing

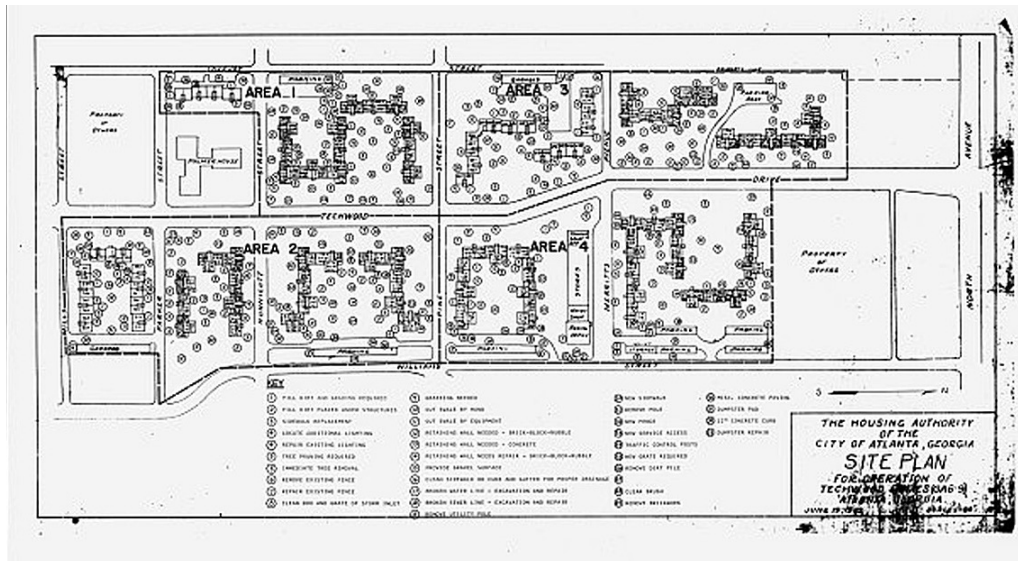


Fig. 4.
Techwood Homes
site plan, Atlanta,
Georgia. (Library
of Congress.)



Fig. 5.
Techwood
Homes, Atlanta,
Georgia.
(Library of
Congress.)

authority, Santa Rita Courts currently provides ninety-seven units of rental housing for low-income families. It serves as yet another successful example of preservation, in this case by a publicly funded agency.

Both Carl Mackley Houses and Santa Rita Courts were included on the National Register of Historic Places due primarily to the important change in federal housing policy they represent. In the case of the Santa Rita Courts,

the association with a famous figure—LBJ—also proved important. The Carl Mackley Homes, in contrast, is a rare example of preservation motivated in part by a concern for the history of the working class and labor unions. The architectural quality of the structures and the architects who designed them figured less significantly in both Carl Mackley Houses and Santa Rita Courts cases. The listing of each of the properties on the National Register of Historic



*Fig. 6.
Centennial Place,
Atlanta, Georgia.
(Rosi Mosca-
Herrera 2014.)*

Places was advantageous to both housing authorities as it made them eligible for additional funds to support the renovation of these historic communities. Whatever the motivations, these cases mark victories for both housing and historic preservation advocates because their designations resulted in the preservation of much needed public housing units and the social history they represent.

A National Register listing may not, however, be enough to protect designated public housing communities from demolition. Should demolition be considered, listing merely requires that a heightened review process be initiated. While the listing does not guarantee total protection from demolition for listed structures, it does provide a mechanism for additional scrutiny when listed landmarks or the properties surrounding them are slated for change. One such protection is laid out in section 106 of the act (16 U.S.C. 470(f)). Federal agencies that undertake projects scheduled to affect either listed properties or those eligible for listing must take into account the effect of the proposed project on the historic property. This accounting typically occurs as a part of either the environmental assessment (EA) or the environmental impact statement (EIS), which is prepared as a part of the federal agency's review as required by NEPA (16 U.S.C. 470f, 36 CFR Part 800)). NHPA and NEPA are both procedural in nature. Collectively, the acts do not mandate that a reviewing agency take a particular course of action with respect to the preservation of a listed or eligible structure.

Instead, the laws require agencies to "seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects on historic properties" through consultation and the evaluation of alternatives (36 C.F.R. 800.1(a) and 800.6(a)).

The story of St. Thomas Homes in New Orleans, Louisiana, provides insight into the limitations of historic designation (see Figure 3). This fifty-acre public housing community was built in the 1930s on the edge of the notorious Garden District to house white working-class families (Reichl 1999). The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) was responsible for listing St. Thomas on the National Register of Historic Places. The listing was strategic, noting that Register status was a necessary precondition of a successful application for a historic preservation tax credit (Manville 2011). Strategic or not, the National Register listing required that special attention be paid to the property when HANO submitted a HOPE VI application for the redevelopment of the site. Pursuant to NEPA, HANO prepared an EA and issued a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The Coliseum Square Association, among other plaintiffs, challenged the FONSI issued by HUD on a number of grounds, including the failure to fulfill its obligations under section 106 of NHPA, which requires mitigation of adverse impacts to historic resources. The group found little sympathy in the courts. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ultimately ruled that HUD and HANO had met their obligations under both NEPA and NHPA (Jourdan and Gifford 2009). Ultimately, the St.

Thomas Homes neighborhood was demolished in 1995 to make way for a HOPE VI community to be anchored by a Wal-Mart Super Center. Thus, historic designation may slow down the demolition process by ensuring additional consideration for a redevelopment application but it is not enough alone to prevent demolition.

Another instructive example is the Techwood Homes neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia, which Harry Murphy so forcefully desired to erase. Designed by Burge and Stevens, Techwood Homes included 576 units housed in 2- and 3-story red brick buildings, which were spread out across a 22-acre landscape punctuated by tall Georgia pine trees (see Figures 1, 2, 4, and 5). The community included a number of stores, playgrounds, and a health clinic. The neighborhood initially served only white residents; it was finally integrated in 1968. The complex was renovated in the late 1970s, but the neighborhood was plagued by problems with drugs and violence in the 1980s. In addition to its association with FDR, the founder of Chik-fil-A restaurant, S. Truett Cathy, and the founder of Days Inn of America, Cecil B. Day Sr., both spent time living in the neighborhood. Techwood Homes was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 because it was the first public housing community in the United States (National Parks Service 2008). Neither the historic designation nor the association with famous figures was enough to outweigh pressure arising from Olympic development plans in the early 1990s. Atlanta politicians, planners, and residents feared that when the attention of the world's media turned to Atlanta, such a visible reminder of urban poverty in the heart of the Olympic development would cast a negative light on the city. Techwood Homes was demolished in 1996 in the name of urban redevelopment. Eight hundred new apartments for mixed-income residents were constructed as part of the Centennial Place development that took Techwood's place (see Figure 6). Although residents were promised opportunities to live in the new development 92 percent had yet to return four years later (Towns 1998). The demolition of Techwood was controversial for a number of reasons, but specifically set the stage for the aggressive demolition practices that would be spearheaded by the Atlanta Housing Authority over the subsequent decade.

Both Techwood and St. Thomas Homes were severely distressed at the time of their demolition. Both communities were located in areas prime for redevelopment. Additionally, they were each redeveloped using HOPE VI funds, which necessitated the creation of new mixed-use,

mixed-income communities on each of the sites. In both cases, the residents of the original communities were displaced; few were able to return to the redeveloped communities. In this way, the demolition of both Techwood and St. Thomas Homes resulted in the loss of historic structures, the destruction of low-income communities, and eradication of the physical manifestation of the memories associated with each.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC HOUSING PRESERVATION

From a purely historic preservation perspective, one might argue for the necessity of leaving standing public housing structures that are historically significant to national- or state-level listing criteria. However, this would require a change in current public policy, which often seeks to demolish these structures in an effort to move public housing residents away from poverty. Under this mindset, policymakers could divert these limited monies to the rehabilitation of outdated public housing communities, rather than committing funds to the demolition of these structures. The rehabilitation approach has been previously tried under the auspices of modernization. In the late 1960s, HUD provided funds to public housing authorizes for repairs (Stegman 1990). This approach was further formalized by Congress with the Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program (CIAP) and the Comprehensive Grant Program in 1980 and 1992, respectively (Polikoff 2002). These efforts were not widely successful for a number of reasons, including the costs associated with making meaningful repairs to structures that had not been well maintained over time. In spite of this fact, the Public Housing Capital Fund, established in 2013, exists to facilitate the preservation of public housing pursuant to 24 CFR Parts 903, 905, 941, et al. While relatively new, there is some evidence that larger U.S. cities, such as Minneapolis, are competing for these funds to preserve public housing units for low-income tenants. However, efforts to preserve public housing structures for continued domicile by the intended inhabitants would require a shift in housing policy, which since the decision in the Gautreaux case, attempted to deconcentrate poverty.

Alternatively, these units could be rehabilitated for new users in an effort to help further gentrify areas primed for redevelopment. This option could most likely be accomplished through the sale of these structures to private developers, which public housing authorities could do as a result of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility

Act of 1998. The act does not condition the future use of the property. While private developers purchase some public housing stock that would otherwise be demolished for new construction, other properties may similarly be converted to other uses. An example of other uses is the Lauderdale Courts Public Housing Project in Memphis, Tennessee, which was built in 1938. To stave off demolition, the city and two private developers filed an application to list the property on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The property was deemed significant because Elvis Presley and his family had occupied one of the units from 1949 to 1953. The property, now known as Uptown Memphis, has undergone a transformation into a mixed-income community. The Presleys' unit has been restored and serves as an onsite museum. This project, costing more than \$36 million, was financed by both public and private funds, including a \$17 million first Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage (Shotwell 2006, 46). An additional \$5 million of Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (HRTC) was utilized for this project. HRTC funds are "the most significant single incentive for historic preservation and the production of housing . . . and the one for which the most comprehensive data are available" (Listokin and Listokin 2001, 3). The Low Income Tax Credit, while appropriate for this type of preservation, was not utilized for financing the restoration of Lauderdale Gardens (Shotwell 2006, 46).

Regardless of the specific success, this model of redevelopment will not work for all types of public housing units. For example, some places, including the towers at Cabrini Green, may be too distressed to be renovated for public housing or private occupancy. While there may be good cause to tear down these towers, it is important that they are not forgotten. Public housing communities are evidence of historic policies about the housing of the urban poor, as well as all of the families who passed through them and made their lives in these places. In this vein, a number of HOPE VI projects have attempted to preserve the history of these places by saving a building or two. These buildings are typically used as administrative offices or community centers. Other projects have sought to document the history of demolished communities through the productions of documentaries and exhibits to be displayed at the community centers of the mixed-use communities that replace them.

Chicago has embraced the opportunity to remember its public housing history through the creation of a museum. The National Public Housing Museum is slated to be

housed in the historic Jane Addams Homes on the Near West Side of Chicago. The building is historic in its own right as it was one of three Public Works Administration demonstration projects completed in Chicago during the 1930s. While not yet fully funded, the project's designers describe the function of the museum as follows:

The Museum will function as an interpretive center by recreating period living spaces of public housing apartments during eight consecutive decades (1938-2002). It will use oral histories, artifacts, and original documents to tell the stories of families who lived in the Taylor Street building. It will incorporate art and music of the periods, the politics and economics, all through the lives of the residents. Docent-led tours will guide visitors through the Museum, helping them make important linkages between the histories of individual residents and the social, political, and economic forces that shaped and continue to have an effect on urban communities. (National Public Housing Museum, n.d.)

The benefactors of the museum aspire to create a living history museum that represents the stories of those living in public housing across the United States. Like the Tenement Museum in New York City, this museum's primary directive is to chronicle the social history experienced by those living in public housing. The museum is an important contribution to the dialogue regarding the social and architectural significance of public housing, ensuring that the experiences of those living in public housing are not lost as more units are invariably demolished. One can only hope that the renewed dialogue will inspire future housing policies that are more sensitive to the social history of these too easily forgotten places and people.

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