

HOUSING DIGEST

National Housing Administration Library

HOUSING NEWS & VIEWS

An abstract & index
of current thought
on housing problems
foreign & domestic
issued occasionally
for ready reference
of staff members &
others interested

There are two theories of the origin of any government. The first is that the government is the result of a social contract between the people and their rulers. The second is that the government is the result of a social contract between the people and their rulers.

During the past few years the housing industry has been the subject of much discussion. The housing industry has been the subject of much discussion. The housing industry has been the subject of much discussion.

Volume 1, No. 1
New York, January 1936

The copy of this Digest is distributed through the National Housing Administration, Room 4000, 1215 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. The price is \$5.00 per copy.

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PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION
HOUSING DIVISION
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION BRANCH

H O U S I N G D I G E S T

January, 1936

Washington, D. C.

Vol. 1, No. 2

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Published by Research and Information Branch

Housing Division - - - - Public Works Administration

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Administrator

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Director of Housing

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FOREWORD

In presenting the second number of the Housing Digest, acknowledgment is made to those friends of better housing who have responded with suggestions and criticisms inspired by the October issue.

Although intended primarily as a reading guide for members of the Housing Division's staff, there have been many requests from others interested in Housing for such an informative bulletin.

It is impossible to cover the entire field of housing literature, and the scope of the reviews in the Housing Digest is limited to those which apply to low-rent Housing.

I. PLANNING AND SURVEYS

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URBAN DEVELOPMENT - Pattern and Background:

Sir Raymond Unwin says: "Planning to provide a setting for any form of human activity involves the laying out of a pattern of some kind on the land as a background; in effect, the making of a design."

Former tendency of planners to be occupied chiefly with elements of plan, such as: roads, sites, parks, playgrounds, etc. When content merely to put these parts together, their plan represents merely a perpetuation of that which exists instead of creating what should be.

"Design" more expressive than "plan" because it includes ability to visualize new physical relations and bring them into being. Essential to create new values arising directly from the relations in which existing things are placed. Values may be of use, convenience, comfort, pleasure, beauty, etc. A good designer will embrace them all in his complete design.

Relation of pattern to background is as vital in smaller as in more extensive conceptions. When planning is considered in terms of "design" it will cease amending the worst phases which have grown out of haphazard undertakings and will create a complete, well-rounded development.

Housing density a subject of widely varying opinion. Advocates of wider or closer housing density must balance many factors and relations. Density applicable to rural areas is not applicable to urban building. Right relation between pattern and background is here determined by extent.

Comprehensive planning requires highest ability possible to find, and the most effective training for which our present-day specialized courses are insufficient. Special courses must be evolved which will utilize selective penetration, imagination and technical ability to secure balance.

Letchworth is cited in detail to exemplify relation of pattern and background.

J. (Planners' Journal, September - October, 1935.)

Planning and Surveys (Continued)

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HOUSING ACT OF 1935: Central Housing Advisory Committee appointed by Minister of Health in conformity with new Housing Act of 1935 includes

(England)
 Sir Kingsley Wood, Minister of Health, chairman; The Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry, vice chairman; Lord Balfour; Sir Harold Bellman; G. M. Burt; Rt. Hon., the Earl of Crawford; Rt. Hon., the Earl of Dudley; George Hicks; L. H. Keay; Sir Raymond Unwin; and R. Rev., The Bishop of Winchester. Communications to be addressed to H. H. George, Secretary, Ministry of Health, Whitehall, London, S. W. 1.

2 (Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, London, November 23, 1935.)

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION: Before the Act of 1935 abolished the reduction factor, compensation to an owner was assessed on the basis of the site value, where a local authority acquired land in a slum clearance area. Then, if the compulsory purchase order stated the land was to be used for rehousing persons of the working class, the site value was subject to a reduction. The reduction factor was known to vary from $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, the lowest, to 50 per cent, the highest.

H. A. Hill, barrister, declares the reduction factor wrong in principle, establishing a dangerous precedent.

3 (Municipal Journal and Public Works Engineer, London, January 3, 1936, p. 38.)

PLANNING AND SURVEYS (Continued)

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REBUILDING BRITAIN Criticism of England's building program for
IN 80 YEARS: giving too much attention to new housing,
and not enough to demolition of existing
bad housing.

W. Craven Ellis, M. P., points out political dangers of local authorities' tendency to become super-landlords. Offers an economic solution under a plan by which Public Utility societies would take building and management away from local authorities.

4 (Published by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London.) *date pages*

TERRITORIAL PLANNING:

The illusion of the Restriction of the Ribbon Development Act of 1935 bringing an earthly paradise in a few years should be dispelled and planners as well as planning must be considered seriously.

William A. Robson says: "There is need for territorial planning, weaving into a well-designed pattern of social life the changes which have taken place in the last twenty years in the distribution of population, number and size of families, housing, transportation, roads, electricity supply, and in the character of industry and commerce. The basis of all this planning lies in controlling the location of industry. There is also need for zoning industrial building in hypothetical green belts, and restriction of further industry to satellite towns. To accomplish this, a national body with executive powers is required - a body which would use the municipal service as instruments of persuasion and dissuasion."

{ (New Statesman & Nation, London, January 4, 1936.)

Planning and Surveys (Continued)

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BUILDING LINES; Almost every city is faced with problems
FUTURE STREETS: of adapting its eighteenth or nineteenth
 century street systems to twentieth
 century conditions.

Russell Van Black and Mary Helen Black - in a study limited
 to experience of cities in the United States, portray various
 methods used to protect community interests through possible
 economical street widening.

Legislative and administrative aspect of building line and
 street reservation; local procedure and experience; the right
 of eminent domain vs. police power of cities; analysis of
 court decisions; and economic aspects are among the topics
 included in the study.

CONCLUSIONS:

- (a) Adequate enabling Legislation.
- (b) Well conceived master plan.
- (c) Platting rules and regulations.

6 (Harvard City Planning Studies No. VIII; Harvard University
 Press.)

THE NEXT STEP: Policy of planning beforehand for peace and
 comfort of tenants is very recent.

Alice Constance Austin gives suggestions for planning the
 future garden city when decentralization has come into practice
 on a large scale. Recommends building communities in units,
 perhaps a mile square, with a mile between units, with agri-
 cultural units planned in the open spaces, sufficient to permit
 the community to raise its own foodstuffs.

The Central Kitchen, house plan, civic center and parks are
 features of the booklet.

1 (Published by Institute Press, Los Angeles, California.)

Planning and Surveys (Continued)

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RECENT GOVERNMENT
EXPENDITURE:

Experience of New York State Board of Housing is most instructive in understanding problems confronting Federal government in its efforts to stimulate a low-rental housing program.

Asher Achinstein analyzes the Limited Dividend projects submitted to the New York Housing Board and explains the policies of the Public Works Administration on Housing.

First efforts were directed toward decentralizing cities by building of planned communities where land acquisition was easier and land costs lower.

Regarding Limited Dividend projects he says:

"Underlying the poor quality of applications for housing developments is the great ignorance -- all along the line -- regarding the provision of civilized shelter for families with relatively small incomes. The architect's past tutelage to the promoter has not afforded him an opportunity for experimental planning in the field of low-cost housing. Nor was a system in which financial institutions sought to diversify their investments in a great number of small loans conducive to large-scale development of communities."

Slum Clearance was the next step in the P.W.A. housing program. "To rebuild large sections of our cities and know where we are going is a surer road to social good than to decentralize them and not know the direction for which we are heading. At a time when we are in the dark as to where industry is drifting, it is a much more difficult task to determine the regions to which the population should be moved than to replan our deteriorated neighborhoods, which are generally in the midst of, or adjacent to, the downtown business sections of our cities."

Variables in a Low-Rental Housing Program, with statistical information on rentals for various cities in the United States are presented.

"If the Federal government chooses to narrow the gap between income and the prices at which new housing accommodations can be provided, it must grant more favorable financial terms to the local governmental agencies. A reduction of one percent in the rate of interest will decrease rentals

Planning and Surveys (Continued)

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by at least \$0.75 per room per month. It is only by recognizing the limitations which confront a housing program, and by squarely facing the issue of further subsidies, that progress can be made in this field."

The National Housing Act is explained with emphasis on the powers and limitations which it contains.

8 ✓ (Economic Essays in Honor of Wesley Clair Mitchell - Columbia University Press, 1935.)

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STATE PLANNING National Resources Committee reports formation of 32 permanent planning boards under legislative enactment and 14 temporary ones under appointment by governors;- a total of 46 in two years.

9 ✓ (Our Municipal Notebook, The American City, November, 1935.)

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NEW ENGLAND HOUSING: Housing sites must be chosen with a view to their adaptable use. Necessary adjuncts, such as schools, recreational and transportation facilities, etc., must be considered.

Edward H. Bonelli, Executive Director of New England Regional Planning Commission, declares it is folly to replace congested areas with high buildings when the present tendency is to get away from such districts. Discusses type and cost of new housing, based on findings of survey in cities of six New England states.

10 ✓ (Published by New England Plan Commission, 1935.)

II. PROGRAMS

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AMERICA NEEDS HOUSES: Building normally employs more men than any other occupation except farming. Its decline in 1926 foreshadowed the crash of 1929, and its upturn now heralds recovery.

Mark A. Rose cites figures on annual income of American families showing custom of building new homes for top one-sixth of population, while majority of families occupy tenth-hand homes.

Real Property Inventory of 1934 disclosed shortage of homes, lack of minimum facilities for decent living, extreme over-crowding, and vast occupancy of unfit dwellings. Such a combination of conditions causes rent profiteering, rent riots and social discontent. Rising rents complicate the situation.

Cheaper money and present possibility of building with profit indicate increased building activity. Since 40% of American families earned less than \$1000 in 1935, building industry must pioneer in new types of modern cheap housing.

|| (Today, January 4, 1936.)

Series

P.W.A. HOUSING PROJECT: Chart of P. W.A. housing projects, with location, type, size, cost and other pertinent data lists 45 Federal projects and 7 Limited Dividend projects, supervised by P. W. A.

|| (Architectural Forum - November, 1935, p. 522)

Programs (Continued)

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CAN WE BUILD OUR WAY BACK? Meaningless slogans like "soak the rich" may become dangerous doctrines. Denunciation of the profit system is useless unless a cure for the abuses of the system is found.

Arthur C. Holden points out the fallacy of certain precepts. He asks government regulation and maintenance of a stable credit system to encourage useful private enterprise. Government should provide the stimulus, private industry the channels for solving housing problems.

15 (The People's Money, December 1935.)

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HOME BUILDING PROGRAM: A home building program placed before President Roosevelt by the Committee on Economic Recovery involves the construction of eight million low and moderate cost homes within the next ten years. It estimates that private building will comprise eighty-five per cent of the total and would absorb about 4,000,000 of the unemployed.

Drastic revision of the present home financing methods would enable Federal Savings and Loan Associations to do the financing. Cash down payments could be reduced to ten per cent of the price of a house and in emergency cases a down payment of as little as five per cent might be made.

16 (Information Service, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, New York, December 7, 1935.)

Programs (Continued)

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THE PRESIDENT AND BETTER HOUSING: Telegram sent to the President by the Housing Pipe Dealing Industry Associations and the NATIONAL RETAIL LUMBER DEALER'S ASSOCIATION expressed opposition to the Federal Housing program. It asked the Government to "get out and stay out" of the housing business.

President Roosevelt, disavowed Federal competition with private building industries when dedicating the Pine Mountain, Georgia, Community Housing Project to the task of "setting an example for the country which will help the nation not only to get but to stay on its feet". He said: "In the United States there are not just 300 families that need help toward better living conditions. I would say there are possibly a million such families." He emphasized the fact that there is not sufficient money in the Treasury to help a million, and stated that Government can set the example that will help tens of thousands of people throughout the country.

17 (Editorial, Building Material Merchandising Digest, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, December, 1935.)

Programs (Continued)

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A TEN-YEAR PROGRAM: An analysis of the essentials of a long term program to provide decent Housing for the United States of America, and reasons why private enterprise can not accomplish it.

Alfred K. Stern points out the factors which created the housing shortage and the requirements for the next ten years. Claiming that government subsidy in some form is necessary, he says it must be measured by the Government's capacity to pay rather than the tenant's capacity to pay.

Pending Legislation, the Wagner and Ellenbogen bills are discussed with these recommendations:

- (1) Declaration by Congress of governmental policy of public responsibility and duty in housing matters;
- (2) Definition of the policy particularly with regard to the income group to be aided;
- (3) The division of responsibility and the character of cooperation between federal, state and local agencies;
- (4) The assurance of permanent public agencies to carry out a program;
- (5) Agencies to have legally established powers and permanent sources of funds sufficient to develop the proposed program.

18 (Survey Graphic, January, 1936.)

Programs (Continued)

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ENGLISH CITIES

Bath: The City Council is divided on a replanning scheme prepared for the centre of the city which includes some of the historical eighteenth century houses.

Birmingham: Housing officials favor cottages rather than flats for low-cost housing wherever possible.

Bradford: A scheme for building tenements is now being replaced by one for small houses.

Buckingham: The Planning Advisory Committee has advised the County Council to "take bold and definite steps to preserve the county's share of London's 'Green Belt'".

Hackney: Controversy on the London County Council's proposal to acquire thirty acres of Hackney Marshes for building purposes is not yet settled. The Ministry of Health's inquiry into this matter will take place sometime in December.

Hampstead: The Westcroft Housing Estate which consists of $18\frac{1}{2}$ acres and 290 houses and flats has been opened by the Duke of Kent. Rents range from 9 to 15 shillings a week.

"The Dogs": The first block of flats built by the Isle of Dogs Housing Society in Poplar has been opened by the Duchess of York.

(The Housing Centre's Bulletin, England, December, 1935.)

BIRMINGHAM: Birmingham plans to erect 168 houses under the Housing Act of 1930 on the Springfield Farm Estate and Umberslade Road, and 2,000 houses under the Act of 1925 on seven different estates. For rehousing persons dispossessed of their dwellings under the Housing Act of 1930, the program provides for the erection of over 10,000 houses by the end of 1938.

(Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, December 27, 1935, p. 2378.)

Programs (Continued)

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THE FRENCH ATTACK ON
THE HOUSING PROBLEM:

City of Paris and Department of Seine have separate housing offices with markedly different policies and achievements.

Wells Bennett analyzes Housing Authority of Metropolitan region of Paris as contained within the Department of the Seine, presenting:

1. Background of French Housing.
2. Accomplishments of Housing Authority of Department of Seine as a demonstration of the current national program, including -
 - (a) Policies and methods of management;
 - (b) Physical characteristics summarizing results to date.

Law Loucher - an emergency act for a five-year period of housing construction, partly for middle-class, partly for low-cost housing. Permits government loans at 2 per cent interest amortized over 40 years, which may be made as high as 90 per cent of total cost of land and construction with certain taxes remitted.

Community laundries and other commercial features are not popular. "Unlike the Vienna or German social group, the French family is a self-contained unit and instinctively dislikes any regimentation of its activities."

Department of Seine places the accent on the formal community plan. But the wide variations on the pattern of housing practice indicate the individualism of the French planner.

Programs (Continued)

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Management of French public housing projects is aided through adaptation of the traditional "concierge" to the service of project manager. Trained women, social workers "humanize the public housing system by personal acquaintance with the problems of the individual families under their charge, endeavoring through these contacts to promote family and neighborhood harmony and betterment. Unlike the English system, however, these women do not have the management in charge."

Economic Evaluation, determined in part by the inventory of physical facilities provided, shows adequate dwelling units, a high order of technical skill, and expression of public interest in social betterment.

Detailed discussion of costs and rents gives a view of the various economic factors involved in public housing.

(Journal of Land & Public Utility Economics - August, 1935 (Part I) - November, 1935 (Part II).)

Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

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NEW CITIES
FOR RUSSIA:

Construction of these new cities in Russia will be started in the Spring under direction of the City Planning Trust of the Soviet Union..

- (1) In Kagakstan near Lake Balkash on the Mongolian border, at present occupied in scattered settlements of primitive wooden huts. Metalled roads will replace sandy tracks; stone and concrete houses and multiple dwellings are being designed for maximum shelter from the winter cold.
- (2) In Eastern Siberia, a project for a Greater Krasnoyarsk will provide for 400,000 inhabitants. On one side of the Yenisei River, the industrial district with the residential area on the other.
- (3) In the vicinity of Orsk, on the banks of the Yeneshanka Riva, a project for 150,000 will be developed.

22 ✓ (Editorial - Architects' Journal, London, December 26, 1935, p. 942.)

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DEMAND IN ENGLAND: Reporting on the provision of houses and the abolition of slums at a conference held in Scarborough, J. G. Martin stated: "The nation can be proud of its post-war housing output under the state assisted schemes of 1919, 1923, 1924 and 1930. Private enterprise, without state assistance, has built 1,400,000 dwellings. Loans from local authority for owner-occupation of these houses are 3½% for thirty years in the North and Midlands, and 4% for London and the South. The current call is for houses costing from 375 to 450 pounds rather than those from 700 to 800 pounds, and many rent rather than buy their homes."

23 ✓ (Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer - London - December 20, 1935.)

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Programs (Continued)

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STOCKHOLM: Acute congestion in city limits after World War caused large-scale construction on city-owned suburban tracts. Present housing scheme in operation since 1926, has provided modern, comfortable homes for more than 50,000 people.

Stockholm System features excellent organization, careful planning, and competent management. Small down payment, partial contribution of own labor by home purchaser, make home-owning easier.

Axel H. Oxholm offers study of Small House Bureau, Land Acquisition Program, Tenant Selection, House Types, Material, Construction, Finance, Costs, Social Aspects.- Illustrated.

24 (Small-Housing Scheme of the City of Stockholm, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.)

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REDEVELOPMENT IN
SCOTLAND:

Memorandum issued by the Department of Health for Scotland, to local authorities emphasizes that proper housing of working classes requires redevelopment of areas as a whole.

✓
25 (Municipal Journal and Public Works Engineer, London, January 3, 1936, p. 38.)

III. SLUM CLEARANCE

Housing Digest

January, 1936

REHABILITATION:

PLANNER AND LAWYER: "War-time experience and two years of Federal housing have not impressed on the country at large these elementary principles of housing policy:

- "(a) Slums or blighted areas are not necessarily areas to be rebuilt with new housing.
- "(b) Suitable housing cannot be built without community planning and the selection of sites in relation to that plan.
- "(c) Careful legal work is a necessary safeguard against false conclusions."

-- Walter H. Blucher

SOCIOLOGIST: "Specialized sociological training essential for those engaged in studies preliminary to planning. In repair and enforcement of sanitary codes, partial rehousing, complete demolition and rehousing of blighted areas, sociologist can show methods of handling population for effective reforms in neighborhood life. Generally, insistence on material betterments greater than social reconstruction."

-- Edwin S. Burdell

REALTOR: "Zoning ordinances came too late to save inner residential districts. To impose a plan is insufficient. There must be created Neighborhood District Improvement Associations with power to develop plans. These plans to be put into effect by City Council."

-- Herbert U. Nelson

CITY ADMINISTRATOR: "Public must be educated to appreciate necessity of civic control of building areas in order that local governments may block efforts to break down zoning plans."

-- Ernest J. Bohn

26 (American Planning and Civic Annual, American Planning and Civic Association, 1935, Washington, D. C.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

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SLUMS AND SLUMMERS: A history of the slum from its inception at the time of the industrial revolution to the present-day intolerable conditions in the larger cities of England and Wales, and in the industrial areas, shows that a century and a half ago, three quarters of England was entirely rural; small agricultural communities and unenclosed land. Today's slums represent a century of administrative neglect which will require generations of effort to return to normal conditions.

C. R. A. Martin reviews briefly the housing conditions of the working class and describes in detail the circumstances which have caused these conditions. He declares the most reprehensible houses are those known as back-to-back, erected with little regard for light, air and sanitation, and often packed to a density of eighty per acre. These houses are often structurally sound, and therefore despite their bad features, may remain outside the scope of slum clearance legislation for years to come.

Vice, poverty and ignorance are discussed with arguments pro and con the housing reformer's hopeful attitude towards an improved environment for slum dwellers. Possible legislative action in the clearance of slums by governmental procedure, and management of housing estates by local authorities, and slums in the making are also treated.

Will existing housing, lacking the proper supervision, deteriorate into the present execrable condition of areas now recognized as metropolitan slums? "The only possible remedy that a local authority has against the despoiling of its districts is in a town planning scheme which when adopted by the council under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1934, and approved by the Ministry of Health, will definitely put a stop to these hideous developments."

27
(John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., London, England.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

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MANAGEMENT PROBLEM: Slum clearance basically a management problem for rehabilitating a sick business (depreciated real estate). Slum clearance involves demolition of existing blighted areas and their replacement by adequate decent housing at rentals commensurate with incomes of the low-paid worker.

Furia's plan, an application of principles of scientific management, as alternative to housing dole (unfair government competition).
Advocates:

- (a) reducing costs by use of new materials and mass production methods of construction.
- (b) private enterprise to provide land and management
- (c) budgeting of expenditures and income to meet economic needs of slum area tenants at present wage levels.
- (d) accumulation of reserves out of annual surpluses to provide for contingencies, to maintain safety of investments and deter future slum formation.
- (e) replacement of buildings after obsolescence assured by use of sinking funds created from ample surpluses accruing at end of amortization.

Plan provides dividend-paying marketable security for owners, preserves present equities without additional investment, is self-perpetuating through revolving fund for further slum clearance available out of amortization.

✓ (Slum Clearance as a Management Problem. John J. Furia, - paper presented to International Congress for Scientific Management, London 1935.)
28

BUILDING HOUSES AND BUILDING CITIES: Recovery requires urban rebuilding including reconstruction on decent basis of the uneconomic and unlivable portions. Federal Housing policy board needed to formulate coordinated policy of national guidance for all housing, publicly and privately developed.

-- Jacob L. Crane, Jr.

29 (American Planning and Civic Annual, American Planning and Civic Association, Washington, D. C.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

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MANCHESTER REPORT Recent survey of former slum families now
on SLUM FAMILIES: living in new housing estates shows 75%
of the families satisfied with their new
quarters; 5% wanted to return to their old houses; 6% divided
in opinion; 10% afraid they would have to return to the slums;
and no information available on 4%.

✓ (The Housing Centre's Bulletin, London, December, 1935.)

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REDEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL AREAS:

L. H. Keay: in address before Royal Institute of British Architects in London, November 18, stressed need for redevelopment of overcrowded districts and slum areas in large cities in England. Cited danger of overemphasizing rehousing of slum tenants in suburban districts, leaving blighted areas behind and endangering beauty of countryside.

Intention of Parliament clearly expressed in memorandum to local Authorities in connection with Act of 1935 states: "It is recognized that a solution cannot be found in new building however intensive, on sites more or less removed from the areas affected, and that the only way in which overcrowding in such areas can be materially alleviated is by the provision within the areas of suitable accommodation for as many persons as the sites which are or can be made available with modern standards."

Statement in Act: "Certain conditions obtain, and where it is expedient to make provision for housing accommodation for the working class, it is essential that any area should be redeveloped as a whole."

Advocates use of multiple dwelling units rather than cottages. Redevelopment aids both tenants and community, therefore preferable to removal to suburban district.

✓ (Journal of Royal Institute of British Architects, London,
31 November 23, 1935.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

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LONDON COUNTRY COUNCIL To determine extent of overcrowding,
SURVEY on OVERCROWDING: in compliance with 1935 Housing Act:-

Inspection of approximately 700,000 houses required by April 1, 1936; submission of report by June 1, and proposals for remedying existing conditions complete by August 1.

32 ↘ (Housing Centre's Bulletin, London, December, 1935.)

LOCAL AUTHORITIES: Scotland's Department of Health has issued a memorandum to the local authorities on the problem of rehousing the working-classes in central areas, in accordance with the Scotland Housing Act, 1935. It states that congestion may be eased only by demolition and replanning of areas as a whole. Shops, new streets, and open spaces must be included in the replanning schemes. The new houses must be of the tenement type with balconies, and only in extraordinary cases will they be more than four stories high.

33 ↘ (Editorial - The Surveyor, London, January 3, 1936.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

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RECLAIMING BLIGHTED AREAS: Tentative form of state statute drafted by National Association of Real Estate Boards, mailed to member boards for study and comment. Object: to secure collective action of property owners for protection of existing residential districts by use of zoning laws, neighborhood betterments, creation of new amenities and rehabilitation of blighted areas.

Foreword by Herbert U. Nelson, recognizes sound economy of attempting to replan and rebuild cities within present limits rather than to decentralize. Assumes that neighborhoods are logical units to begin own planning and property owners, the logical people, but recognizes necessity for comprehensive planning to coordinate neighborhood activities and functions.

NAREB PLAN: under proposed statute:

- (a) Three-fourths of property owners in designated neighborhood may, with court consent, organize Neighborhood Protective and Improvement District, which becomes public corporation.
- (b) District develops neighborhood plan.
- (c) District submits plan to municipal assembly which may be advised by City Planning Commission. On approval by municipal Assembly, plan becomes law, all zoning and other laws in conflict to be amended accordingly.
- (d) District trustees authorized to execute plan, including condemnation of land and improvements. Cost to be borne by district for which limited district tax may be levied.

34 (National Real Estate Journal, October, 1935)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

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MANIFESTO BY CLERGY: Signed by 50 clergymen and social workers, an inter-church manifesto declares war upon slum conditions of New York City, citing figures relating to present-day health, safety and sanitation in congested areas.

"There are 17 square miles of slums. There are 66,000 old-law tenements housing nearly a third of the city's population, more than 500,000 families, including upward of a million children.

"Between 1918 and 1929 there were 15,660 fires in old-law tenements and 448 human beings were burned to death. In the most congested area the infant mortality rate is approximately 100 per cent higher than the city average; the general mortality is more than 200 per cent higher, and the incidence of tuberculosis is nearly 300 per cent higher."

Pledging themselves "in the name of church and synagogue to strive without ceasing to abolish the slum", the signers "call upon our people to rise in moral indignation against the continuance of these conditions" and "call upon all citizens to demand their abolition."

The document was prepared in consultation by Father Edward Roberts Moore, director of the Division of Social Action of the Roman Catholic Arch Diocese of New York; Rabbis Samuel J. Levinson and William F. Rosenblum of the New York Board of Jewish Ministers, and Drs. Eugene C. Carder and Robert W. Searle, president and general secretary, respectively, of the Greater New York Federation of Churches.

35 (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, January 3, 1936.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

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CLERGY ANSWERED:

A. R. Clas, Director of Housing, Public Works Administration, replies to clergy's manifesto:

"In the task of slum clearance as undertaken by the Federal Government we, in the Housing Division, are in daily contact with the terrible conditions this country has, by negligence, allowed to grow up in practically every city. Your declaration has shown that your group is familiar with the appalling situation in New York City which, unfortunately, epitomizes a common condition. We, as you, have evaluated in human terms, the facts we find, and the result constitutes a shameful reproach to our people.

"The present Administration, unlike its predecessors, has not turned its back upon this grave social peril. It has made a beginning in attacking the slum problem. If its present program is small, at least it is a start toward the desired end. Daily, we are learning better methods and improving technique so that future programs, greatly expanded in scope and taken up by cities themselves, can build upon a firm foundation."

36 (P. W. A. Press Release #1787.)

PUBLIC HOUSING: Current revival of home-building industry will provide new construction which will draw families into suburban areas.

Raymond Moley warns lest such a trend away from central blighted areas create serious predicament for cities. Slum clearance and rehousing under government supervision should be continuing program.

37 (Today - Editorial - December 14, 1935.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

ACHIEVEMENTS OF P. W. A. Orientated to accomplish employment and raising of American housing standards, Public Works Administration program of low-rent housing has introduced new concepts of minimum standards, including cross ventilation, hot and cold water, private toilets, easy accessibility of rooms.

Condemnation procedure, for expediting acquisition of land at fair prices, blocked by adverse decision of U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, July 12, 1935, is possible in states whose laws confer the power upon duly authorized bodies created for slum clearance and low-rent housing construction.

-- A. R. Clas.

- 38 (American Planning and Civic Annual, American Planning and Civic Association, 1935, Washington, D. C.)

HISTORY OF P. W. A. Evolution of P. W. A. housing program
HOUSING DIVISION explained with details of funds allocation, legal obstructions and changes in policy necessitated by the difficulties encountered.

- 39 (Bulletin #75, National Association of Housing Officials, Chicago, Ill.)

Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

SHALL WE DESTROY OR MODERNIZE OUR SLUMS? Seventeen square miles of New York City is covered with tenements scarcely fit to live in,— about 66,000 in all. Vast numbers are absolutely unfit for human habitation, yet about 500,000 families, totalling 1,800,000 persons occupy them.

First Houses furnishes the text for editorial criticism which contends that modernization should be used to improve old buildings and thereby resurrect whole sections of the city.

"It may be said that excess cost was unimportant; that it all went to labor instead of a dole. However, if the same amount of money, spent in another manner, would have modernized two projects instead of almost entirely destroying and then rebuilding one, it is important. The city might have had 'Second Houses' as well as 'First Houses', and two hundred instead of one hundred and twenty families might have been accommodated. It is too late for that now."

40 (Building Modernization, January, 1936.)

PENDING CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION:BILLS WHICH WOULD EXTEND THE GOVERNMENT'S SLUM CLEARANCE AND LOW COST HOUSING PROGRAM:

A. "Wagner Bill" - S. 2392 - provides for the establishment in the Department of Interior of a Division of Housing, under the supervision of a Director who would be authorized:

1. To make grants and loans to local public housing bodies in connection with any program or project of slum clearance and low-rent public housing: Provided, That no grant be in excess of 30 per cent of the cost of the labor and materials employed upon such program or project.
2. To initiate and execute within such areas as have no responsible local housing body a plan for the clearance of slums and the construction, operation, and maintenance of low-rent public housing projects.

The Housing Division of the Public Works Administration would be consolidated with the Division set up by this act. To carry out the provisions of the act, a sum of \$800,000,000 would be appropriated. Senator Wagner's secretary states that a new bill will be introduced shortly making changes in the details but not in the substance of this bill. Hearings on this bill will probably be held during February.

B. "Ellenbogen Bill" - H. R. 8666 - provides for the creation of a permanent corporate instrumentality of the Federal Government to be designated the United States Housing Authority. Management of the Authority to be invested in a Board of Directors of three members, not more than two of whom to be of the same political party. (Sec. 3(b)) The Authority to have capital stock of \$1,000,000,000, subscribed by the United States, and authorized to issue bonds fully and unconditionally guaranteed both as to interest and principal by the United States in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$1,000,000,000, to be sold to obtain funds for carrying out the purposes of the act. The Authority would be authorized:

Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

1. To carry out a comprehensive, long-range program to meet the housing needs of all the American people and rehabilitate slum and blighted areas.
2. To engage in the construction, management and sale of projects.
3. To create and charter regional or local Federal housing authorities or corporations.
4. To make loans and grants for the construction of projects on vacant land or in slums, or blighted areas.
5. To plan in advance emergency public works programs, and have projects ready for rapid execution during periods of unemployment.

The Housing Division of the Public Works Administration, with its obligations, projects, assets, etc., would be taken over by this Authority.

This bill has been referred to the House Committee on Banking and Currency.

- C. "Federal Public Housing Bill" - H. R. 10386 - introduced by Congressman Beiter, also provides for the establishment of a division of housing in the Department of the Interior under the supervision of a Director to be appointed by the President. The Director would be empowered to prepare and execute a long-range slum clearance and low-rent public housing program for the United States. This bill also provides for the termination of the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration on June 15, 1936, and transfer of all its equipment, records, files, etc., to the division which would be created by the bill.
- D. "Wood Bill" - H. R. 6998 - almost identical in form with the Wagner bill, provides for the establishment in the Department of Interior of a Division of Housing under the supervision of a Director authorized:

Legislation (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

1. To make grants and loans to local public housing bodies in connection with any program or project of slum clearance and low-rent public housing;
2. To initiate and execute within such areas as have no responsible local housing bodies a plan for clearance of slums and the construction, operation and maintenance of low-rent public housing projects.

The Housing Division of the Public Works Administration would be consolidated with the Division set up by this Act.

41 (Memorandum of Subcommittee on Law and Legislation of the Central Housing Committee, Washington, D. C.)

Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

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Opinions

NATIONAL HOUSING ACT - MORTGAGE INSURANCE -
LOW-COST HOUSING PROJECTS - INSURANCE
PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF PROJECT: The Federal Housing
 Administrator may
 validly insure a mort-
 gage upon a low-cost
 housing project under the provisions of section 207 of the National
 Housing Act, as amended, prior to the completion of such project.

42 (Opinion of the Attorney General, Oct. 14, 1935, 3,20 U. S. Law
 Week 403.)

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NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RECOVERY ACT, TITLE II -
LOW-COST HOUSING AND SLUM CLEARANCE PROJECTS -
DEDICATION OF LAND FOR STREETS, PARKS, AND
PLAYGROUNDS - LEGALITY:

In connection with the carrying out of low-cost housing and slum-clearance projects under Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Federal Government may, where deemed necessary or advantageous to the project, dedicate land to the city or other public body for use as a park, playground or street, provided the function of any lands so dedicated for park or playground use must be incidental to the low-cost housing or slum-clearance project, and reasonably necessary in order to provide therefor proper light, air approaches, etc., as distinguished from monumental, landscaping, scenic, or similar functions. Such dedication does not represent a gratuity, but more nearly approximates the transfer of a liability properly assumable by the local authorities.

43 (Opinion of the Attorney General, Sept. 16, 1935, 3,20 U. S.
 Law Week 403.)

Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

Opinions

LOW-COST HOUSING PROJECTS-
Sale - Rents to be Charged
Tenants by Government -
No Authority for Below-Cost
Sales or Rentals:

The Federal Emergency Administrator
of Public Works may not sell or fix
the rentals on low-cost housing proj-
ects below the cost of such projects.
 "The primary purpose of the National
 Industrial Recovery Act was to create

employment and revive industry, and as one means to such an end there was authorized a comprehensive program of public works including projects of slum clearance and low-cost housing." Nothing is found "in the enactment or any law subsequently enacted indicating an intent that the administration of completed projects -- sale or rent-- should be on a basis contemplating ultimate loss,-- for instance, that sales should be planned at prices below actual cost to the Government. The value of the lands employed" in such low-cost housing projects may be omitted "from any amortization plan adopted, if, however, provision is made therein for including in such rental rates a fair annual interest return on the value of such land-- the actual cost thereof where acquired for construction of the particular project."

44 (Comptroller General's Decision No. A-65368, Jan. 17, 1936.)

Legislation (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

LAW OF HOUSING: Modern housing laws in England began with the Housing of Working Classes Act of 1885. The Act of 1919 started the system of Treasury contributions in aid of housing.

Dr. Ivor Jennings has compiled a comprehensive analytical text-book on the entire English housing law, divided into:

- (a) General Survey of Acts
- (b) Enactments relating to Housing
- (c) Orders and circulars.

Topics analyzed with reference annotations include local authorities, slum clearance, improvement and redevelopment schemes, rural housing and housing administration.

✓ 45 (Published by Charles Knight & Co. Ltd., London.)

Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

Foreign Legislation

RESTRICTION OF RIBBON DEVELOPMENT, Act of 1935. "Ribbon development has occurred especially at sides of new main traffic roads, in form of long rows of small houses, not always set to a building line."

Objections include:-

- (1) Visibility is diminished for fast traffic.
- (2) Parking against the footway narrows the use of the road.
- (3) Danger to pedestrians increases.
- (4) Frequent access to garages adds to the danger.
- (5) Where factories form part of the ribbon, congestion of traffic increases.
- (6) The traffic value of the road is diminished in consequence of the foregoing objections.
- (7) The amenity-value of the road is reduced or even destroyed.
- (8) The owners of the land on the frontage reap considerable financial advantage arising from great public expenditure.
- (9) Development of the backlands is discouraged.

Garden Cities and Town Planning Association Memorandum offers critique of bill, which claims its limitations postpone consideration of housing, roads and industry as an indivisible unity of good planning.

(Town of Country Planning, September, 1935.)

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Legislation (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

DECISIONS: Two important decisions rendered by the English Courts on the Housing Acts:

- (1) Regarding the right of an objector to inspect the report of his property made to the Minister by the inspector holding a local inquiry, court ruled the report was privileged and confidential, and not open to inspection.

- (2) Regarding the extent of the Housing Authority's power to acquire compulsorily certain land adjoining a clearance area, the court held that procedure may be brought by a Housing Authority to compulsorily purchase land not necessarily termed slum, provided the land surrounded or adjoined a clearance area. The acquisition must be necessary for the purpose of securing a cleared area of convenient shape and dimensions; and the acquisition must be reasonably necessary for the satisfactory development or use of the cleared area.

47 ✓ (The Surveyor, London, January 3, 1936.)

Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

ENGLISH HOUSING ACT
of 1935

Fear expressed that it will facilitate over-building of blocks of flats in large towns, thereby destroying process of decentralization.

48 (Town and Country Planning - September 1935.)

IS GOVERNMENT HOUSING
LEGAL?

Serious doubt expressed whether United States Constitution restricts power of government, State, Municipal or Federal, to engage in housing.

Editorial Survey reviews decision in Louisville case declaring housing not "a public use" and therefore government has no right to condemn slum areas.

Dissenting Opinion of Judge Florence Allen stresses general welfare as justification for exercise of the specific right of condemnation.

49 (Housing, National Housing Association, October 1935.)

Legislation (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

SKYSCRAPER CONTROL: Merchants' Association of New York proposes revision of city's Zoning laws to limit height and bulk of skyscrapers.

"If the Merchants' Association can now reverse past trends, a significant change has occurred. Both the merits and disadvantages of the proposal, whose fundamental purpose is to reduce population concentrations with their requirement for larger transit facilities, are many and varied."

Limiting building heights in relation to ground area will not necessarily solve the transportation problem. A more likely solution would be to build residential areas adjacent to business districts. This would permit persons to live near their employment, reduce the load on transit facilities, and remove many unprofitable and unhealthy slum areas. If lower transit cost is the end sought, then the second zoning proposal would seem better than an attempt to control the size of skyscrapers.

50 (Editorial, Engineering News-Record, December 12, 1935.)

FINANCE

Housing Digest

January, 1936

MONEY FOR NEW HOMES: Improvement of the mortgage system is a significant factor in inducing ownership of small homes.

National Housing Act permits Federal Housing Administration to guarantee loans up to 80% of value set by government appraisers. Loans are made by banks or other lenders in usual method, on terms attractive to borrowers and fair to lenders. The lender's money is insured, and the borrower is protected from exploitation.

Result: Increasing popularity of long-term amortized mortgages; standards have been raised.

Committee on Economic Recovery, after one year's study of problems involved in stimulating building industry, has submitted recommendations to President Roosevelt including suggestion that government help to lower the cost of amortized first mortgages to a possible $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

51 (Today, January 25, 1934.)

IN LIEU OF TAXES: Declaring "the Federal Government and its activities cannot be taxed", Comptroller General McCarl rules that the Housing Division of Public Works Administration cannot pay cities for services by a percentage of rentals in lieu of taxes.

Secretary Ickes hopes Congress will authorize this payment to cities furnishing services for low-rent projects.

52 (Nation's Business (Editorial) - December, 1935.)

Finance (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

PROPERTY INVENTORY OF Survey undertaken by the East Side
LOWER EAST SIDE: Chamber of Commerce covering area
 from James to Fourteenth Streets,
 and from Third Avenue and the Bowery to the East River,
 shows that 1935 established a record for demolition of old
 structures.

Seventy-two taxable buildings were torn down, wiping out assessed valuations of \$4,225,000. Two hundred thirty-two buildings, representing $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of all privately owned property in this area, are now closed or boarded up above the ground floor. Although these buildings are widely scattered throughout the area, they present a "growing problem that deserves more than passing notice".

Mr. Joseph Platzker, Secretary, East Side Chamber of Commerce, presents a financial picture of East Side property values. Comparison with surveys of four years ago reveals an increase in the unmortgaged holdings from about 2,000,000 square feet to close to 4,000,000.

"Whether this growth of unmortgaged holdings will help or hamper any definite proposals for neighboring housing developments of considerable size cannot be reported at this time. Several unmortgaged parcels, however, are more than one year in tax arrears.

"More than anything else right now, Lower East Side needs a modern functioning District plan that would pave the way for block consolidation and the encouragement of large-scale neighboring housing developments and also bring up-to-date the district's zoning status. At present less than 2% of Lower East Side is zoned for residence; that should be increased to approximately 60%. The wiping out of the majority of the 2,773 vacant stores should prove an additional comfort to business as well as to investors."

53 (East Side Chamber News, New York City, December, 1935.)

Finance (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

EAST SIDE HOUSING: The Lower East Side in New York, called the mother of urban slums in the United States, is a large, highly populated area crying aloud to be reclaimed from its degredation. This area could become a fine residential district within walking distance of the downtown business section. The land is largely unused; there are enough workmen to build, yet nothing has been accomplished.

Louis Thorup says: "Action in the near future is imperative. The trend of conditions is toward delapidation, decay and default in taxes. If the area is not improved very soon 'the city may be saddled with all this property, and in that event, housing will be out of the hands of private citizens altogether.'"

54 (Monthly Echo, Five Points Mission, New York, November, 1935.)

Finance (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

GOVERNMENT AID: "Government assistance to housing, whether in the form of credit, contingent liability or insured loans, or direct grants, should be given only in return for reliable assurance that discredited building and financial practices will be abandoned."

--Coleman Woodbury.

55 (American City - January, 1936.)

STANDARDS & MATERIALS

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN DWELLING CONSTRUCTION: Prefabricated houses may be possible solution to mass production of low-cost housing.

Building better and more cheaply involves:

- (a) purchasing materials and equipment in larger quantities from fewer sources;
- (b) factory fabrication of larger units, and units combining more than one purpose;
- (c) use of materials supposedly better suited to their function and to factory fabrication;
- (d) employment of labor by the week instead of by the hour with a lower hourly wage in return for steady employment.

Report of F. H. A. Technical Division's study presents

1. The approach to problem of better construction at lowest costs, an evaluation of work done and tentative conclusions as to effect on dwelling market.
2. Brief description of methods and materials tested and lists of persons and firms engaged in experimental work.

(Technical report #1 (Revised)- Technical Division, Federal
56 Housing Administration, 1935.)

Standards (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

HOUSING STANDARDS Quality of work and materials in new homes
CRITICIZED: discussed by National Housing and Town
 Planning Council, and disappointment in
methods of speculative builders voiced by members of council.

Sir Kingsley Wood, Minister of Health, declared results indicated completion of slum clearance in almost all cities by 1938.

(Municipal Journal and Public Works Engineer, London,
December 6, 1935.)

57

STUDY OF BETTER Advent of the automobile marked the first
LIVING: time that a single instrument for man's use
 radically and rapidly affected an entire
 civilization.

Frank Watson claims housing is one of many items of use in present day living which has not kept pace with the automobile.

Purdue University is conducting practical research in housing to test:

- (a) New and improved building materials in combination with each other in finished houses under various weather conditions artificially created and controlled.
- (b) Various types of houses, subjected to actual living conditions of the family.

The study is restricted to housing designed within the price range of the masses.

(American Planning and Civic Annual, American Planning and Civic Association, 1935, Washington, D. C.)

58

Standards (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD STANDARDS:

T. Alwyn Lloyd, past chairman of the National Housing and Town Planning Council, in a recent memorandum entitled "The Importance of Maintaining Good Standards in Housing", states that since its inception in 1900, the Council has always stood for the maintenance of good standards in the layout, planning, and design of small houses erected by local authorities and other agencies. Now that building costs are favorable and rates of interest for long term borrowing are low, an active policy in this respect should be pursued. Those who advocate inferior standards by reason of far-sighted economy, represent interests opposed to housing.

59 (Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, December 27, 1935, p. 2398.)

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HEATING THE PROJECT:

H. G. Schaefer and Lewis Smith explain the Heating System of Hillside Homes. Instead of a central heating plant, a low-pressure boiler was installed in each of the units at Hillside. The furnaces are lined with No. 1 fire-brick laid up with considerable batter to insure stability, and to reflect the heat upwards. Steam is generated from two to five pounds, between which, the automatic control is set. The buildings are so constructed that a single steam main through the center could be used, with branches both ways to the risers.

60 (Heating, Piping and Air-Conditioning, December, 1935.)

Standards (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

BUILDING SCIENCE: Sociological study in relation to building is absolutely necessary, but presents only the objective. Vast improvement in methods are called for and this requires much testing and experiment using full-scale building.

61 ✓ (Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects,
October 12, 1935.)

Materials (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

TESTS OF CONCRETE AND
CONCRETE AGGREGATES:

A statement of the significance of various tests applied to concrete and concrete aggregates and discussion of standard and newer tests which have not yet been standardized. Limitations and applicability of various methods are evaluated as to their importance and whether they present a true picture of results to be expected.

Sections devoted to concrete tests deal with compressive strength, tensile and flexural strengths, shearing and torsional strengths, elastic properties, durability, abrasion, workability, volume changes, cement content and uniformity. Sections dealing with aggregates evaluate gradation, specific gravity, unit weight and voids, soundness, abrasion, free moisture and absorption, deleterious substances, and mortar strength tests. The number of specimens or tests of concrete and concrete aggregates required for reasonable accuracy of the average is also considered.

Each section was prepared by a recognized authority and was then reviewed by the entire A. S. T. M. Committee C-9 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates.

(American Society for Testing Materials, Philadelphia, Pa.)

12

VII. MANAGEMENT

Housing Digest

January, 1936

HOUSING MANAGEMENT After better planning and construction comes
in ENGLAND: a new form of landlordism, under government
ownership and control.

Ernest France advocates "Octavia Hill" methods. Services of practical women in directing lives of former slum dwellers into new channels have distinct value. Experience gained from "Octavia Hill" system must be utilized by municipalities engaged in housing.

63 ✓ (Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, November 15, 1935.)

AFTER THE HOUSES ARE BUILT:

Albert Mayer considers construction of 25,000 family units under Federal housing program only partially solves rehousing problem. Standards are important, but the responsibility of final success rests with management.

Three factors essential: -

- (a) Trained personnel
- (b) Satisfactory accounting system
- (c) Divorcement from political control

Tenant selection offers various problems. Management can "create a community with a rich, varied, corporate life."

64 (Survey Graphic, December 1935.)

Management (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

MAY HOUSING MANAGEMENT Selecting 122 tenants from 4000 applicants
BE YOUR FORTE? tests the discriminating power of a
 Housing Project Manager.

Mrs. May Lumsden, manager of First Houses, first completed project of the New York City Housing Authority, says: "The Management of low-rental housing projects is essentially a woman's job", and proves her argument.

American Society of Women Housing Managers adopts Octavia Hill system of management and proposes:

- (1) To further the interests of women desirous of entering the field of housing management;
- (2) to investigate the possibilities of obtaining the cooperation of private landlords in turning over buildings in habitable condition and tenanted by families of low income for efficient business management by women, along social lines, as a slum prevention measure;
- (3) to support efforts to place public housing management on a permanent, non-partisan basis;
- (4) to give advice and guidance to women with a social point of view desirous of securing training in housing management;
- (5) to serve as a clearing house of information to managers (men and women) of private, philanthropic or public low-rental housing projects on management problems.

65 (Independent Woman, December 1935.)

WOMEN MANAGERS: Report of Mr. S. Chart, Town Clerk of Mitcham Borough, favors choosing trained women managers for low-rent housing projects. "Many of the large authorities are in position to bring ample evidence to show that under sympathetic and trained management enormous improvements in the general standard of living can be obtained."

66
 (Editorial, -Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer - London - November 1, 1935.)

Management (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

HOUSING ESTATE MANAGEMENT: Replying to Ernest France on the subject of Housing Management, stress is placed on desirability of women as Housing Managers.

Margaret Miller, Secretary of Society of Women Housing Estate Managers, says: "The profession of Housing management is and will remain one for which women by reason of character and temperament are especially well adapted, and if given the requisite training, are able to do particularly valuable work.

Miss I. E. Hort, housing manager of Cheltenham, does not claim that women alone are capable of efficiently managing modern municipal housing estates, but contends that on the side of their human relationship with tenants, women have natural advantages over men. "The great tasks and opportunities presented by the housing problem should be the primary consideration and the best that all men and women of good will can give should be devoted to the crusade."

✓
67 (Municipal Journal and Public Works Engineer - London - November 1, 1935.)

HOUSING ADMINISTRATION IN ENGLAND:

Stewart Swift, Chief Sanitary Inspector for Oxford City Council, discusses the practical phase of housing administration, including legal matters, inspections, clearance, re-housing, pests, records, etc.

✓
68 (Published by Butterworth & Co., London.)

VIII. OPINION

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

THE SKY LINE: No mass production can solve the problem of providing decent quarters that rent for \$10.00 per room for people who can afford only four dollars.

Lewis Mumford claims the new housing does not solve the problems. Analyzing New York's low-rent housing projects he says:

- "(a) Hillside Homes: Architect missed the opportunity to take advantage of the natural view by corner windows, but on the whole, building elements have been well handled.
- "(b) Boulevard Gardens is poorly laid out on the land, the architecture lacks positive conviction and gives no positive pleasure.

(Both these projects owe their success to their being built in the grouped manner of English "Housing Estates".

- "(c) First Homes 'replaced old-law slums with a new slum. From the standpoint of the standards of health, decency, and comfort accepted by every civilized country today, these new apartments bear the same relation to good housing that the dreadful model-tenement designs of 1879 did in their time'."

(The New Yorker, December 7, 1935.)

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Opinion (Continued)

Housing Digest

January , 1936

PEOPLE LIKE OURSELVES:

Paul Kellogg - "There are those who only look back, resisting, forgetting that change itself has been of the essence of the American epic. There are those who we say are living in a fool's paradise, busy with stop-gap remedies and sops to a decaying capitalism. And there are those whose faith in the survival and growth of American democracy hangs on our elasticity in grappling with economic forces that have broached as never before the wealth of a new continent but have yet to yield security and opportunity for all.

"Hopes ran high two years ago when the need for low cost housing and a pull to meet it were recognized by federal statute. The need was old -- imbedded in expert findings and government surveys that show that one third of the families in the United States live in dwellings below modern standards of sanitation and convenience -- a threat to health and an exorbitant drain on the earnings of tenants. The pull was new -- the chance that building construction held out as an all round stimulus to employment. Incredible as it seems, in those two years the administration has to show only seven limited dividend projects through government loans and but six public housing projects under way. Conflicting policies, administrative inertias, outworn laws and stubborn circumstance have all been on the cards in this pack of the New Deal. Should the government build directly and to what extent? Should it lend money at low rates to private builders or local public agencies? Should it merely make mortgage money liquid so as to encourage insurance companies and saving banks to lend funds for the purpose? Turning from finance to construction, we come upon questions of relative costs and availability, upon the competing claims put forward for slum clearance and cheap land development, upon the issue of federal condemnation before the Supreme Court, and upon delays due to cramping local laws and to rigorous attempts at headquarters to eliminate graft. Out of it all two things stand clear; the call for state and city housing authorities and purposeful citizen groups, forcing and watching developments; and the call for a permanent low cost housing policy at Washington, on its own, and not merely incident to the employment program."

70 (Survey Graphic, November, 1935.)

Opinion (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

BUILDING'S STUMBLING BLOCKS: Conservation and over-enthusiasm are the two major obstacles in the path of low priced housing -

Marc A. Rose admits country's acceptance of low-rent housing need. Blames faulty marketing system of material and labor for adding cost to consumer. Building operators, financially unable to fabricate materials, are unable to cope with present inadequate distribution system.

Labor problem, and labor's attitude toward saving methods and materials will force new construction which will permit use of unskilled labor.

71 (Today - New York, January 18, 1936.)

U. S. SHOULD QUIT HOUSING: A resolution adopted by the executive committee of the National Retail Lumber Dealer's Association declares that the government's intrusion in the home building field is disadvantageous to private business, and consequently to recovery, and should be stopped.

"With a ten year program averaging 400,000 units per year, any government program, however large, is small in comparison. Yet the threat of government competition and interference in the home building field will imperil the entire private home building structure."

72 (Editorial - American Builder, December, 1935.)

Opinion (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

KNICKERBOCKER VILLAGE
CRITICIZED:

Knickerbocker Village has appealed to professional people and the white collar class. Their presence in the neighborhood has had an appreciable influence for cleanliness. Local shopkeepers striving for the trade of the newcomers have remodeled and improved their stores and disposed of much of their shopworn goods and ordered new supplies. This benefits the entire community.

On the other hand, tenants driven out of the "lung block" for the Knickerbocker development have moved into other old-law tenements, some of which have been modernized and others slightly improved with consequent increase in rentals.

George W. Grinton, Superintendent of Five Points Mission in New York, says: "Ventures in better housing in this vicinity have been few and far between. Fire and crime hazards are increasing because landlords have permitted their properties to deteriorate, thinking the city would take them off their hands. If and when the drive for improvement is extended to the Battery, it may make some change for the better in the territory contiguous to it."

73 (Monthly Echo, Five Points Mission, New York, December, 1935.)

Opinion (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

MUST THEY BE GANGSTERS? The neighborhood bad boy has gone sour and turned vicious toward society. The problem child becomes the juvenile delinquent and then the criminal. Cost of paying the crime bill has focused attention upon the delinquent as a social liability.

Eva vB. Hansl says we must "take our gaze off the electric chair and focus it on the high chair". The home is the beginning of all things, and slum homes are the breeding place of crime.

The cure must begin in the home and society can provide the environment in which the child may grow.

74 (New York Times, January 26, 1936.)

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P. W. A. ACTIVITY: "Those who last month credited the recent fusillade of self-inflating publicity from PWA's Housing Division to the FHA's moves were mistaken. Last month's announcements, releasing names of projects long kept hidden by the speculator beset PWA, told a commendable tale. But they also told a tale of breakneck effort to crowd as many jobs as possible into the Division's remaining lease on life.

"Minute examination of the program's status revealed the fact that as many foundation contracts as possible were being rushed through in order to qualify projects for continuation past the deadline."

75 (Architectural Forum, p. 521, November, 1935.)

Opinion (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

NEW HOMES FOR EVERYBODY: Mass production of houses offers greatest industrial opportunity since development of the automobile. Synthetic lumber, synthetic stone, asbestos compounds, rubber and other substitutes for building material are being tested in the effort to produce less expensive houses.

Marc Rose: "The problem is to create a house that will sell for \$2,500 including lot." Believes an entirely new type of house will replace all known housing, demanding prefabricated materials tested for durability, heat resistance, fireproof and other values.

76 (Today - January 11, 1935.)

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VITAL TO RECOVERY: If taxpayers knew how much they were paying every year, directly and indirectly, for bad housing, many more slum districts would soon be torn down. It costs every city money, thousands of dollars every year, to run the extra health and police services that are needed to keep disease and crime from spreading from a slum district.

Unit Projects in Social Studies, Bulletin No. 7, quotes figures obtained by various surveys in the United States, showing housing conditions and the need for low-cost housing.

77 (OUR TIMES - American Education Press, New York, January, 1936.)

Opinion (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

HOUSING IN RUSSIA:

Dr. E. C. Kaufman, late director of housing, Frankfurt-on-Main, stated in a lecture on "Housing and Territorial Planning in Russia", given at the Housing Center (London), that "all inhabitants of Russian towns, except a few privileged individuals, live in slum conditions. In 1927, only 21 out of 521 cities had drainage systems. With no definite plan, they swing from radical community dwellings to petty bourgeois housing, from over-Corbusiering Corbusier to worship of the Greek and Roman styles."

(Editorial - Architect's Journal, London, December 26, 1935.)

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IX. RURAL REHABILITATION

Housing Digest

January, 1936

PROBLEMS AND GOAL - Resettlement Administration:

Rexford G. Tugwell: Goal of Rural Rehabilitation is permanent independence for families being helped by Government. The most pressing as well as largest of Resettlement problems.

Three-fold program proposes:

- (a) Reduction of farm relief rolls by extending small loans to enable the farmer to conduct his own operations.
- (b) Moving some to better land where they could have better chance for success.
- (c) Provision of employment - small jobs connected with rehabilitation and resettlement in rural areas similar to PWA projects in cities.

County Rehabilitation Agent - consultant usually with Extension Service training - advises rural families on technique of new methods to help them provide for own needs.

Study of Land Use - directed toward permanent reconstruction - requires scientific knowledge of quality of all our land.

Berwyn, Md. : First of four large suburban housing projects, totalling \$31,000,000, will contain multiple-unit homes for several hundred families who commute to their work in the city. Large area of land coverage possible because built outside city. Protective "green belts" of park land to surround each project to prevent encroachment of unwelcome industrial or commercial development and provide opportunity for gardening.

(New York Times Magazine - December 15, 1935 - pp. 3-22)

79

Rural (Continued)

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

RESETTLEMENT: Twenty suburban communities planned; ten of 2000 families each will be built on outskirts of 10 larger cities; ten of 1000 families each near medium-sized cities. Rapid transit makes planned suburban community possible pattern of future. Community interests, schools, entertainment, shopping, and other facilities in tentative program.

Jonathan Mitchell deplures lack of public interest in low-rent housing and criticizes government for lacking a "socially determined criterion of quality". Declares that maximum available community resources should be the criterion to determine quality of homes to be built, and not how cheaply can government build so that the low-rent tenant will repay the cost.

80 (The New Republic, September 18, 1935.)

Rural (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

HOUSING BY THE
TENNESSEE VALLEY
AUTHORITY

To prevent discomfort, dissatisfaction and disease TVA decided to construct permanent modern housing communities rather than shack-towns for workers employed in three localities. Forty different types of house plans were developed, with uniformly high hygienic standards but varying in size and cost. They are excellent examples of planned villages, and offer opportunity for research in low-cost housing.

-- Earle S. Draper

81 (American Planning and Civic Annual, American Planning and Civic Association, 1935, Washington, D. C.)

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HOUSING SURVEY: Made by the United States Department of Agriculture as a Civil Works project during 1934 to obtain information to be used in planning rural housing as part of recovery program.

a 10% sample survey indicated:-

50% of rural homes in good structural condition
 15% need foundation replacements
 15% - 20% need roof "
 10% - 15% need floor "
 10% need extensive repairs or replacement of
 exterior walls
 Average cost \$575 per house.

-- Louise Stanley

82 (American Planning and Civic Annual, American Planning and Civic Association, 1935, Washington, D. C.)

Rural (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

FOREIGN

GERMANY: Governmental home construction is the chief activity of German present day building.

Present housing program originated in 1932 when housing shortage was still very acute. To relieve the pressure upon cities and for economy, the program was developed on lines of subsistence homesteads.

Stuttgart a typical example. On land adjoining and belonging to city, groups of small houses of 3 or 4 rooms and simple conveniences, each have garden plot for vegetables and enough room for small live-stock.

Tenants supply part of labor of building, and repay the government on a long term amortized loan bearing low interest.

-- R. Fernbach.

43 (Architectural Forum, November, 1935.)

MISCELLANEOUS

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

HOUSING THE OLD: Recognition of increasing responsibility to provide proper housing for the aged is spreading throughout England. Since the war over two million houses have been erected for wage earners, and only 5,000 of them for aged persons, although people of 65 and over will soon constitute one-tenth of the population. The need for small houses for elder people may best be demonstrated by the fact that in a northern mining town ten cottages were built for old couples, and a thousand applications were received for them. Similar experiments have resulted in like demands.

Miss Olive Matthews suggests: every well planned housing estate include a proportion of 15 to 20 per cent of small dwellings for older tenants. The rents are very low, as many of these tenants are pensioned or maintaining themselves on very low wages. One-story cottages are best, as they eliminate undesirable stair-climbing. Another feasible type is the cottage flat, consisting of four separate flats, two upstairs and two down, each with a separate entrance. Gardens for the older tenants should be small, so that their upkeep will not prove too strenuous.

Equipment for the small house should include the open fireplace and cooking implements as simple as possible to avoid complicated management and cleaning. Lighting arrangements, baths and cupboards must be carefully planned.

Unless provision is made for its older tenants, the Council will be faced by an unpleasant choice. "Either it must turn them out, to return to the sordid streets and comfortless homes from which it was proud to rescue them years before; or else it must permit them to sublet rooms, thereby introducing all the evils which follow this process; for there is nothing which so soon reduces a good house to squalor, as every housing authority knows, as the presence of two or more families in a dwelling planned for one. When every housing estate contains some small dwellings for the older people, this dilemma will not arise. The Council will be able to offer smaller accommodations in the same place, and the ties of association with a certain neighborhood need not be roughly broken."

84 ✓ (Housing the Old, Olive Matthews, London - Illustrated.)

Miscellaneous (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING CONFERENCE: Held in Washington, D. C.,
January 24-28, 1936.

Hon. Robert F. Wagner, United States Senator: "I am vitally interested in a housing program because it fuses our major and minor objectives. While providing better living conditions at once, it also offers the most fertile field for the large-scale cultivation of reemployment. More than that. It will reemploy millions, not as a matter of relief or made work, but in an industry catering to a tremendous shortage of homes throughout the nation. Every nail driven in a housing program will serve a useful and permanent purpose."

Col. Horatio B. Hackett, Assistant Administrator, Public Works Administration: - "We have still a tremendous amount to learn about public housing technique - financing, site selection and city planning, project design and construction, and management. No agency except the Federal Government can draw on the unrelated and often widely dispersed sources of knowledge which must be tied together for the successful prosecution of a large housing program. To cut off such Federal aid would be to postpone for many years the development of the public housing movement."

Irving Brant, Editor: - "To the extent that low-priced individual homes, located in the suburbs of large cities, would take slum dwellers out of the slums, they would lighten the slum problem, but it is extremely doubtful whether you can transplant any important percentage of city industrial workers out of the city without transplanting the industries also."

* * * *

"Build all the small, family-owned houses that the market will absorb, and use government credit and government machinery to aid the program, but don't do so under the delusion that it will rehouse the millions of Americans who are now living in degradation in our slums. The only way to take these people away from the slums is to take the slums away from them."

Miscellaneous (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

Mrs. Mary K. Simkhovitch: - "A good beginning has been made. Under the leadership of President Roosevelt and Secretary Ickes, the emergency program of slum clearance and low-rent housing has already demonstrated the value of attempting its solution and aroused local communities to an interest in the housing problem. The appeals of 37 cities for Federal aid in housing have been met by the P. W. A. Requests from 200 other cities poured in on Secretary Ickes, reflecting the eagerness with which our localities are tackling the problem and their desire to cooperate with the Federal administration in carrying out a genuine housing program. The applications of these 200 cities had to be denied as there were no funds available for them.

* * * *

"The Wagner bill embodies these principles of federal grants and loans, low interest, and federal standards together with local initiative and administration.

"We ask for an aroused community conscience which will support this measure which has such desperately important significance for millions of our fellow citizens plunged in poverty but who desire to bring up their children in decency and health."

85 (Papers read at National Public Housing Conference,
Washington, D. C., January, 1936.)

Miscellaneous

Housing Digest

January, 1936

CENTRAL HOUSING COMMITTEE: A coordinating agency designed to work more effectively through pooling housing information and experience to develop a consistent, national, long-range housing program. Represents the following agencies:

Farm Credit Administration	Public Works Adm'n - Housing Division
Federal Home Loan Bank Board	RFC Mortgage Company
Federal Housing Administration	Resettlement Administration
National Emergency Council	Treasury Department

Subcommittees deal with separate phases of housing and housing finance including:- research and statistics; planning and initiation; law and legislation; procedure and administration; appraisal and purchase; design and construction; and operation and management.

86 (Federal Agencies Establish Central Housing Committee. The American City, November, 1935.)

Miscellaneous (Continued)

Housing Digest

January, 1936

ENGLISH HOUSING BOOM: Discussions and recent figures from the Ministry of Health indicate a possible collapse of the English housing boom. In the six months ending September 30, 1935, 125,600 houses were built by private enterprise as compared to 149,000 in the previous half-year period - a period normally less active in building. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health described the current output of 327,000 houses as excessive and suggested a reduction to 250,000 or 300,000 houses.

87 (Editorial - Economist, London, December 7, 1935.)

87 items
29 foreign sources represented

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Appendix A

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- 97 Labor Housing Conference. Standards as to labor relations and working conditions in Federal-aided Community housing projects recommendations by the Labor Housing Conference, 1714 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C. 2p. mimeo.
- ✓ 98 Tufts, Joseph P. Standards for housing. Presented to Housing Section of the National Conference, American Association of Social Workers, Washington, D. C. February 17, 1935. Pittsburgh Housing Assn, 519 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, Pa. 4p. mimeo.
- ✓ 99 Women's City Club of New York. Housing for the family; a study of housing essentials compiled from interviews with New York housewives. February 1935. Women's City Club of New York, 22 Park Avenue, N. Y. 43p. mimeo. 12 plates.

99 items on 11 p
26 foreign items sources

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Housing Digest

January, 1936

EXHIBITS: Annual Exhibit of Architectural League of
New York, at Fine Arts Galleries, 215 West
57th Street, New York City, February 18-29,
1936. Open to Public.

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Harvard Architectural School, Auspices of
Cambridge League of Women Voters. Feb. 26,
at Harvard Business School, Cambridge, Mass.

- - - - -

Housing Conference, at Chicago Woman's Club.
March 19.

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Housing Exhibit at Museum of Modern Art,
11 W. 55th Street, New York City, N. Y.
Opens June 14 for balance of summer.

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Texas Centennial - June 1 - Nov. 30.
Housing Division will use an animated
diorama in its exhibit.

ERRATUM

Housing DigestJanuary, 1936

OCTOBER DIGEST - Management:

Hertha Kraus review should read,-

"It is possible that housing for lower income groups may open new opportunities for social workers. The duties include selection and allocation of tenants as well as care for prompt collection of rentals and for property maintenance and repairs. What should be done to prepare pre-selected tenants for transfer to new housing? Social service agencies should organize new non-profit corporations charged with the exclusive function of skilled management of government housing projects. (Social Workers and Problems of Housing Management, Pennsylvania Social Work, April, 1935.)"

(The word "possible" was incorrectly printed "impossible".)