PUBLIC HOUSING IN EAST POINT, FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA: A SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

HILLCREST HOMES AND WASHINGTON CARVER HOMES

Submitted to:
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF EAST POINT
3056 Norman Berry Drive
East Point, GA 30344

Submitted by:
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Project #166600

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between March and April, 2009, TRC conducted historical research and recordation of the Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes in the City of East Point, Georgia. The goal of the project was to provide a comprehensive history of public housing in the City of East Point and to provide a permanent archival record of the two developments prior to the sale of the properties. The permanent archival record is comprised of medium format photography and copies of original site plans and floor plans. Pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800 regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, this project was carried out under the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, through the Housing Authority of East Point and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division.

The United States government took an active role in housing well before the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1965. After World War II temporarily put a halt to housing appropriations, the Housing Act of 1949 was passed to provide for greater local control over site location and management. In response, numerous towns in Georgia established housing authorities and sought funding for local projects. By the summer of 1951, two projects were completed in East Point, Georgia: a 100-unit project for whites (Hillcrest Homes) and a 100-unit project for non-whites (Washington Carver Homes). Abreu & Robeson Inc., Architects and Engineers of Atlanta designed both the Hillcrest Homes and the Washington Carver Homes. Matt L. Jorgensen, Frank H. Griggs, W. M. Anderson and T. M. Deas, Associates are specifically identified on the November 9, 1950 blueprints for the two complexes. The Abreu & Robeson firm is best remembered for grand residential designs, but was also known for commercial and civic structures, such as hospitals, public housing, hotels, and schools.

The Hillcrest and Washington Carver Homes have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for the role they played locally in meeting a national housing crisis as part of the federal housing programs. They are also eligible under Criterion C for architecture as well-intact examples of public housing constructed during the early period of public housing (ca. 1930–1950), which emphasized strong, planned communities.

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INTRODUCTION

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METHODOLOGY

Prior to beginning fieldwork, TRC historian Jeffrey Holland and architectural historian Ellen Jenkins conducted research at local libraries and historical repositories including the East Point Historical Society, the University of Georgia Map Library, Georgia State University, the American Institute of Architects vertical files, and the Atlanta History Center. TRC copied the original blueprints and site plans for the two housing developments (located at the Housing Authority of the City of East Point); recorded the relevant historical information such as architects' blueprints, maps, newspaper articles, historic photographs and aerial photographs; and conducted interviews with former and current residents.

Fieldwork for the survey was conducted by a team consisting of TRC architectural historian Ellen Jenkins and photographer Vince Macek between April 14 and 20, 2009. The architectural historian inspected the exterior and interior of each building and recorded the architectural information in the form of field notes, noting the character-defining features of each building, and made sketch site plans of the developments. The photographer took the required photographs using medium format photography. Using a manual 6 × 6-cm (2¼-×-2¼-inch) camera, three exposures from each angle or view were taken of the interiors as well as the isometric shots of the exteriors. The location of each photograph was marked on field maps and recorded in a photographic log. As the Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes contain four types of housing units that share similarities of scale, construction materials, and designs, a representative example of each of the four building types was chosen for intensive investigation, including detailed architectural description and photography.

The permanent archival records for the structures (negatives, contact sheets, scans of the negatives, and supporting documentation) will be stored loose in an archivally stable folder, which will contain sides and a flap over the top to keep the documentation secure. Each resource recorded will be presented in its own separate folder with all supporting documentation. Three final copies of the documentation will be prepared: one for the City of East Point, one to be stored at the Historical Society of East Point, and a third to be deposited at the HPD. Copies of the permanent archival record are found at the rear of this report in Appendices A and B.

II. SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

EARLY HISTORY OF U.S. HOUSING POLICY

The origins of the federal public housing program can be traced to a series of significant government initiatives begun in the 1930s to combat the converging problems of unemployment, expanding slums, and insufficient housing during the Great Depression. Prior to this time, the role of the federal government in providing for the social welfare of its citizens was limited; this task fell to local governments and private charities. State, local, and private housing measures since the mid-nineteenth century had neither improved the living conditions in the slums nor provided a substantial increase of adequate new housing to the poor (Robinson et al 1997:1). In recognition of the problem, the first public housing projects in the United States were constructed by government-controlled corporations in connection with World War I emergency housing. These properties were liquidated after the war, however. Limited funds for public housing were made available during the Hoover administration (1929–1933), and a local Atlanta real estate developer submitted a request for money to raze a 14-block area north of downtown Atlanta known as Techwood Flats, where some of Atlanta's poorest African-American residents lived in deplorable conditions, and erect low-income housing (Holliman 2008). The project, Techwood Homes, was approved by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933 under his Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (PWA), which was authorized for the "regulation or control of low-cost housing and slum clearance" (PWA 1936:14–16). Techwood Homes became the nation's first permanent public housing project when it was completed in 1936 (Fisher 1975:8; Holliman 2008).

In his first inaugural address in March 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had expressed his firm intention to lead the nation into a recovery through unprecedented, but unspecified government intervention. Although he acknowledged the "tragedy" of foreclosure on small homes and farms, he advocated no particular housing program or plan of attack against the slums (Rosenman 1941:11–15). Congress responded quickly to the request for action towards recovery, passing the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in June 1933. Title II of this act allocated $3.3 billion for the formation of the PWA. A Housing Division was established within the PWA whose primary purpose was to "reduce unemployment and to restore purchasing power" by employing workers in the construction trade. Beyond this immediate goal, however, the Housing Division also hoped to "awaken…a feeling of local responsibility" for the long-term housing needs of the urban poor" (PWA 1936:14–16).

The large number of people living in sub-standard housing as a result of the Great Depression was seen as a danger to public welfare, as these deteriorated dwellings and the neighborhoods in which they were located were breeding grounds for disease, crime, and juvenile delinquency. Efforts to clean up these slums through enforcement of local and state codes were ineffective because they simply displaced residents who then had no other affordable option for housing. Private industry had little interest in providing low-income housing, leaving the federal government to step in to fill the gap. The United States Housing Act of 1937, also known as the Wagner-Steagall Act, was introduced to provide a permanent structure for funding public housing projects (Fisher 1975:8–10).

The goal of the 1937 Housing Act was to provide federal funds for the construction of replacement housing for those displaced by local efforts to eliminate blighted areas. The housing projects were to be planned and carried out by local housing authorities working in cooperation with the Federal Housing Administration. Large cities such as New York, Chicago, and Atlanta were the first to take advantage of the 1937 Housing Act, while smaller municipalities responded more slowly. The projects often met with considerable resistance, as developers felt that the new housing would be unfair competition in the market, and residents feared that they would attract undesirables to their neighborhoods (Freeman 1969:6–9).

GEORGIA AND EAST POINT HOUSING CONDITIONS AND POLICY

Such objections likely inhibited the construction of local housing projects in smaller cities, particularly in the South. After World War II, the Housing Act of 1937 was amended to promote the formation of local housing authorities that would help secure funding for federal projects in smaller cities. The Housing Act of 1949 also provided for greater local control over site location and management. In response, numerous towns in Georgia established housing authorities and sought funding for local projects. By the summer of 1951, $63 million was earmarked for public housing, and projects were under contract, under construction, or completed in 21 Georgia towns from Americus to Hartwell. Another 23 projects were either planned or had bids accepted (Davis 1951; Fisher 1975:111).

Among the projects completed during this period were two in East Point, Georgia. The Housing Authority of East Point (HAEP) was organized in 1949, but it was not until the following year that sites were selected for a 100-unit project for white residents and a 100-unit project for non-whites (Figure 1). Like public education, housing was racially segregated in Fulton County until 1965. In East Point, whites lived primarily on the north and west sides of the town, while non-whites made their homes to the south and east. The boundary between the two areas was the Central of Georgia railroad tracks. Public housing sites were selected with this pattern in mind. The white housing was located across from Hillcrest Cemetery on Stanton Road in the northern part of the city and was known as Hillcrest Homes. The non-white project was located south of East Washington Avenue and Veterans Street on the east side of the Central of Georgia railroad tracks. This complex was known as Washington Carver Homes.

Along with segregation concerns and urban renewal objectives, the housing authority also considered the condition of the surrounding neighborhoods. Public housing was located on the fringes of declining neighborhoods in an effort to encourage their improvement. Authorities tended to locate housing in areas already served by social services like churches and schools. In the case of Washington Carver Homes, the project was sited on the west side of Veteran's Street just east of the East Point Elementary and High School, which had been constructed in 1948 on the site of two previous schools: Bayard Street School and East Point Colored School. In 1953, the name of East Point Elementary and High School was changed to South Fulton High School; the building is currently known as the KIPP South Fulton Academy (Mason 2001:57). Many of the residents of Washington Carver Homes were active members of the Union Baptist Church, located directly north of the complex.

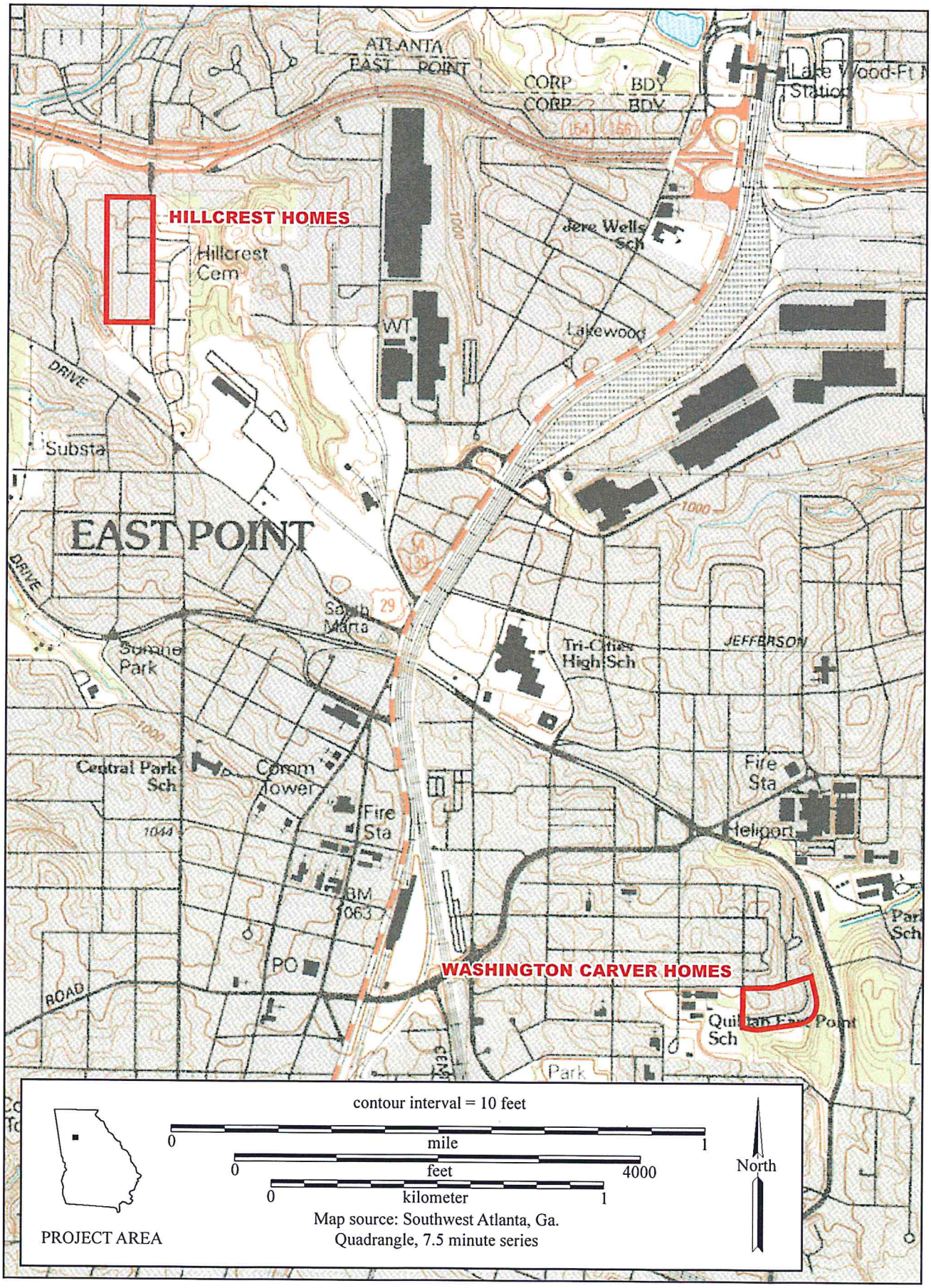

Figure 1. Locations of Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes.

George Stauffacher, the Director of the HAEP, announced in November 1950 that bids would be extended for construction of the two projects, with construction to begin as soon as possible after the contract was awarded. HAEP selected Abreu & Robeson Inc., Architects and Engineers of Atlanta to build both Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes. The projects were completed by March 1952 (*Atlanta Constitution* 1952).

The two 100-unit complexes apparently were not adequate to address the public housing needs of the city, and a disagreement between the City of East Point and the HAEP regarding how to alleviate the problem illustrates the issues that often plagued these projects. An article in the August 1950 edition of the *Atlanta Suburban Reporter* stated that the building inspector for the City of East Point had observed deplorable conditions in the area of Furman, Holcomb, and Barnett Streets, where African Americans rented former mill houses that lacked plumbing, had leaky roofs, and were infested with vermin. Evasive landlords and a lack of resources to enforce city codes had hampered the inspector's efforts to have the houses condemned. The City apparently saw the housing projects, which were approved at about the same time, as a way to eliminate the offending slums. Two years later, after the completion of Washington Carver Homes, the slums were still a nuisance, and in March 1952, the City Council complained that the HAEP had not cooperated adequately with the city in slum clearance. However, the attorney for the Authority, who also represented the City, said that although former residents of the slums had moved into the projects as intended, other low-income families had taken their place in the slum housing, and the Authority had no money to purchase the properties for slum clearance (*Atlanta Suburban Reporter* 1950a, *Atlanta Constitution* 1952; East Point City Council Minutes 1952:1 [Public Housing]).

The Council's focus on slum clearance seems to have frustrated Mr. Stauffacher, who was concentrating on getting federal approval to build more public housing to meet the demand. He told the City Council in April 1952 that Federal Housing Administration officials would be visiting the city for the purpose of evaluating the need for additional public housing units, and he asked that the City Council be cooperative and go on record supporting additional units, provided that they are in the "present slum district." (*Atlanta Suburban Reporter* 1950b; East Point City Council Minutes 1952:1 [Public Housing]).

The failure of the first round of public housing projects to eliminate the local slums likely slowed the HAEP's efforts to build additional public housing projects in East Point. It was not until 1959 that the City Council approved a loan to the HAEP of $40,000 for surveys and planning for new low-rent housing not to exceed approximately 200 units. The number of units for white and non-white residents was determined by a housing survey that assessed the community need (East Point City Council Minutes 1958, 1959).

By this time, "urban renewal," as slum clearance came to be called, was taking hold nationwide following the 1954 Housing Act that increased incentives for large-scale redevelopment projects. Along with federal funding for land acquisition provided in the 1949 Housing Act, the 1954 Act made FHA loans available to developers of such projects. The City of East Point took advantage of the provisions of these acts by launching the Washington Avenue Redevelopment Project. A Chamber of Commerce brochure from ca. 1965 touted the project as part of urban renewal in the city that was "rapidly eliminating some 175 acres of slum and blighted area in the southeastern portion of the city" (East Point Chamber of Commerce ca. 1965). Concurrent with the project,

the 146-unit Martel Homes public housing project was completed in 1963, while Hurd Homes, the final East Point housing project, opened in 1971 (Tara Mobley, East Point Housing Authority, personal communication to Jeffrey Holland, 5 May, 2009). By 1980 there were 485 public housing units in East Point, all of them occupied, with 250 applicants on the waiting list (Atlanta Regional Commission 1980).

The connection between public housing and urban renewal was a hallmark of the housing movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The first wave of public housing had been intended as transitional housing that would support the working class poor until they could afford better accommodations. With the urban renewal movement and increased local control over the location of public housing, projects were increasingly occupied by the lowest class of urban residents—the permanently unemployed, single parents, and those with chronic mental, physical, and dependency problems (Fisher 1975:64–66). Restrictions on the location of public housing, especially for non-whites, contributed to this trend. Rather than helping residents rise above the debilitating living conditions, the projects simply became part of the deteriorated neighborhoods in which they were built. The inadequacy of public housing programs to eliminate substandard housing and provide suitable housing for low-income residents can be traced to a number of factors, including racial inequalities and prejudices, lack of economic opportunity for low-income households, the loss of housing before adequate replacement was available, a lack of flexibility in housing programs, lack of coordination among local, state, and federal agencies, and difficulties in siting projects because of a poor image of public housing, both with the public at large and the people for whom the housing was being built (City of Atlanta 1967; Macey 1972).

As public housing projects deteriorated with age and came to be synonymous with the slums they were intended to replace, the FHA launched programs intended to transform public housing. In 1993, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the HOPE VI program, based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Housing. The program emphasizes changing the physical shape of public housing, establishing incentives for self-sufficiency, dispersing low-income housing into the existing housing stock, and working closely with other relief agencies, nonprofit organizations and local business to integrate services (HUD n.d.). In East Point, the program has provided funding for remodeling public housing units, demolition of highly distressed units, and vouchers for residents to move into non-government owned housing.

RECOLLECTIONS OF EAST POINT PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS

Two current residents of Hillcrest Homes who grew up in East Point housing projects were interviewed for a first-hand perspective on the experience of living in public housing. The grandparents of Sandra Thomas and the parents of Ida Clemons were among the first families to move into Washington Carver Homes, and the two have known each other most of their lives (Clemons 2009; Thomas 2009). Ms. Clemons' family moved from a corner house across from East Point Elementary School on Georgia Avenue to Carver Homes on Washington Circle in 1952. Ms. Thomas' father worked at College Park Furniture Company on Main Street for 52 years, starting when he got out of the armed service. Ms. Clemons and Ms. Thomas both have fond memories of growing up at Washington Carver. "We had a good time. The grass was so

pretty green; everybody was so happy there. We walked to school and walked back home. Nobody knew nothing about dope back then; or if they did we didn't know nothing about it," said Ms. Thomas. "Everybody got along real good over there."

Ms. Thomas moved to Fayette County when she was 15 and married. She returned to East Point in 1970 with six children and moved into Hillcrest Homes. Public housing was officially integrated in the 1960s, and when she moved into the formerly all white Hillcrest Homes, hers was one of only a few black families. She recalled some prejudices, but did not mention any specific incidents. "We had a neighbor across the street when we moved in, I don't think she really cared for black folks," she said. "She didn't stay too long after the blacks started moving in." By the time that the homes were renovated in 1977, most of the whites had left (Thomas 2009).

As families grew or children left, residents were moved to different sized apartments. When Ms. Thomas' children moved out, she was relocated from a larger apartment to a smaller one. Starting with the 4-bedroom apartment she had when she first moved in, to the two-bedroom that she now shares with one of her sons, she has moved 3 times. "I'm not a mover," she said. "When I moved up here [from her larger apartment], it took a lot; it didn't take a lot for me to move, it took a lot to get used to up here. And it took a lot for me to leave 3 different apartments—sentimental reasons. It was like home."

Crime was a significant problem by the 1980s and the police reportedly traveled in convoys when responding to calls at the housing projects. "It was bad when there was the dope because someone else brought it in here. They called them the Florida Boys. Now it's more peaceful. I don't really know what goes on, but we sit on our porch. I haven't ever been afraid to live here."

The HAEP carried out two major renovations at Hillcrest Homes, one in 1977 and one in the mid-to-late 1990s. In 1997 the kitchens were renovated to separate the cooking, dining, and washing areas that had previously been all in the same room. They also put in new cabinets and added washers and dryers. New cabinets were also part of the 1990s renovation, according to Ms. Thomas.

In recent years, new programs such as HOPE VI have been instituted to transform deteriorated projects into mixed-use developments or to move residents into the community at large. A large number of projects across the county, including the Hillcrest and Washington Carver Homes in East Point, have been partially or completely closed (Pittcoff 1999; Mr. Byron Matthews, former board member, HAEP, personal communication to Jeffrey Holland, 23 March, 2009). Within the City of East Point, HAEP has closed units within each of its four public housing complexes, but all of the complexes remain open. Currently HAEP plans to sell the Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes. Some units in Hurd Homes are scheduled to be renovated (Tara Mobley, personal communication to Jeffrey Holland, 5 May, 2009).

Living in "the Bricks," as Ms. Thomas says the projects are called now, has entailed some hardships. She has not had central heat or air, and originally did not have a washer and dryer. It was difficult keeping her children out of trouble, and one son was killed at a nearby liquor store. Nevertheless, both Ms. Clemons and Ms. Thomas expressed a strong sense of community. Ms. Thomas never considered moving out of the projects. "It's nothing wrong with public housing,"

she said. "Home is what you make of it, how you want to fix it, how you want to keep it." She has found the location convenient, especially as she doesn't have transportation. "We had everything right at us. We had the means where we don't have transportation we could call a cab to go to the doctor's office, so it's pretty together for our needs." Both Ms. Thomas and Ms. Clemons expressed a sense of loss at having to move out of Hillcrest Homes. Ms. Clemons thinks tearing down the buildings is unnecessary. "I feel like they really could just redo these apartments, and let us be alright over here." Ms. Thomas concurred. "It's really going to uproot us a lot," she said.

III. ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS

Abreu & Robeson Inc., Architects and Engineers of Atlanta designed both the Hillcrest Homes and the Washington Carver Homes public housing projects. Associates of the firm who were identified on the November 9, 1950 blueprints were Matt L. Jorgensen, Frank H. Griggs, W.M. Anderson and T.M. Deas (Abreu & Robeson 1950a:1, 1950b:1). Abreu & Robeson was established in 1929 and designed buildings into the early 1970s when it closed. The firm was known early on for its design of Mediterranean Revival-style buildings in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and coastal Georgia. The firm later favored the International Style in the late 1930s. Between 1930s and 1950s the firm designed public housing from both their Atlanta and Brunswick offices in Georgia. The firm also designed the Archdiocese of Atlanta's St. Joseph Infirmary when it was relocated in 1977. Other projects included schools, private housing, a USO recreation building, and the Whitfield County, Georgia, Courthouse in 1961 in the International Style. Abreu & Robeson designed several other housing projects in the Atlanta area as well as other communities in Georgia (American Institute of Architects archival files 2009).

Francis L. Abreu earned a bachelor's degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1923. Starting in private practice in 1924, he designed winter homes for Fort Lauderdale's elite. He used barrel-tile roofs, twisted columns, arched walkways, antique lanterns, iron gates, and heavy, dark wooden doors in his designs. In 1928, his firm designed parts of the famous Cloister Hotel on Sea Island, Georgia. Among the homes he designed on Sea Island was that of playwright Eugene O'Neill. Abreu and James Robeson formed Abreu & Robeson in 1929. Abreu is best remembered for his grand residential designs but he was also known for commercial and civil structures—hospitals, apartments, schools, banks, and government buildings (American Institute of Architects archival files 2009).

James L. Robeson received a Bachelor of Science degree in architecture from Georgia School of Technology in 1926. His principal works (all in Atlanta unless otherwise specified) included a housing project in Brunswick in 1941; the Beach Club on Sea Island and the Hughes Spalding Infirmary in 1950; Chatham Memorial Hospital in Savannah in 1955; State Farmers Market in 1957; Fulton Federal Bank Building in 1958; Hamilton Memorial Hospital in Dalton in 1959; Science Center at University of Georgia, Athens, in 1960; Stephens County Hospital in Toccoa in 1967; an addition to Morton Plant Hospital in Clearwater, Florida, in 1968; Mid-State Baptist Hospital, Nashville, Tennessee in 1969; and Brunswick (Georgia) Junior College in 1969. His work comprised nine categories: commercial, recreational, health, public buildings, residential, educational, military, communications, and scientific structures (American Institute of Architects archival files 2009).

Matthew L. Jorgensen received a bachelor's degree from the University of California in 1927, a master's degree in architecture from Harvard University in 1929, and a degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1935. From 1929 to 1942 he was an associate professor of design in the architecture department at Georgia School of Technology. He also operated his own practice from 1932 to 1940. From 1942 to 1944 he was a designer and chief draftsman for Abreu & Robeson, and became an associate with the firm in 1945. His principal works included the infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1961; the Morton Plant Hospital addition in Clearwater, Florida in 1968; Baptist Medical Center in Nashville in 1968; Trust Company of

Georgia Office Building in Atlanta in 1969; and St. Joseph's Hospital in Savannah in 1970 (American Institute of Architects archival files 2009; Gane 1970:465).

W. Montgomery Anderson's principal works included the recreation center and school in Marietta in 1939; several houses in the Brookhaven neighborhood of Atlanta, residences on Sea Island, and private homes in his native area of Marietta (American Institute of Architects archival files 2009; Gane 1970:508).

Frank H. Griggs received a Bachelor of Science degree in architecture from the Georgia School of Technology in 1926. He operated his own architecture practice in Clearwater, Florida, from 1932 to 1935. Between 1935 and 1945 he worked for three architecture firms, and joined Abreu & Robeson in 1945 as the office manager and as an associate architect (American Institute of Architects archival files 2009).

William G. Pauley was the landscape architect for both the Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes. Pauley was the first professionally trained landscape architect to establish a permanent practice in Atlanta. He worked to achieve the registration of landscape architects in Georgia and, following the adoption of professional registration, was granted the first state license to practice landscape architecture. Pauley's career included designing the campuses and grounds for more than 100 schools and colleges in the Southeast, 35 hospitals, and 18 cemeteries. He was also involved to varying degrees in the planning for 50 parks in Georgia. Pauley also designed the landscape for the Clark Howell expansion of the Techwood Homes (American Institute of Architects archival files 2006).

Gilbert Beers, Eng. was the general contractor for both the Hillcrest and Washington Carver Homes. This company is also credited with constructing public housing in the surrounding area such as the Capitol Homes Housing Project in Atlanta. The engineers included: I.E. Morris (structural engineer); L.N. Trammell (site engineer); D.E. Lindstrom (mechanical engineer); and I. Ralph Bush (electrical engineer) (Abreu & Robeson 1950a:1, 1950b:1).

IV. HILLCREST AND WASHINGTON CARVER HOMES

SETTING

Hillcrest Homes

Hillcrest Homes was developed on occupied land just west of the Hillcrest Cemetery and south of Langford Parkway. A 1940 aerial photograph (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1940) shows the Hillcrest Cemetery on the east side of Stanton Road and two residences with outbuildings in the area that is now occupied by Hillcrest Homes (Figure 2). The southern house and outbuildings were demolished in order to construct the complex; however, a 1960 aerial photograph (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1960) shows the northern house and outbuilding as still present, as well as the newly constructed road that was to become Langford Parkway (Figure 3). The house and outbuilding were demolished with the construction of the development to the west of Hillcrest Homes prior to 1972. The complex is bounded on the east by Stanton Road and is fenced with wrought iron and brick posts on the north, south, and west. Stanton Circle forms a horseshoe through the site and an unnamed one-way street connects Stanton Road to Stanton Circle in the middle of the site (Figure 4). Individual building blocks are placed at regular intervals along these streets; the buildings along Stanton Road face east (Figure 5), while the other buildings face north or south (Figure 6). At the center of the complex is a play area which includes two playgrounds. Also in the center is a community building that faces to the northeast (Figure 7). The southwest corner of the complex features a wooded lot, part of which has been cleared for a basketball court (Figure 8).

Washington Carver Homes

Washington Carver Homes was developed on vacant land just west of the East Point Elementary and High School and east of Norman Berry Drive. The 1950 aerial photograph (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1950) shows a wooded parcel and a stream along the southern edge (Figure 9). The 1955 aerial photograph (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1955) shows the new buildings surrounded by trees on most sides with the school and baseball fields to the west (Figure 10). The complex is bounded on the north by Washington Avenue, baseball fields and a parking lot for the school on the west, and woods to the south and east. Veterans Street and Washington Circle form a horseshoe through the middle of the site around which individual building blocks are placed at regular intervals (Figure 11). Those buildings along the exterior of the horseshoe are angled with the curvature of the street (Figure 12). The buildings in the interior of the horseshoe face either east or west (Figure 13). To the south of the complex is a cleared area, which was originally designed as the children's play area (Figure 14). This area has been abandoned and two playgrounds were instead located at the western and eastern areas of the complex in 1994.

Figure 2. 1940 aerial photograph of the Hillcrest Homes lot.

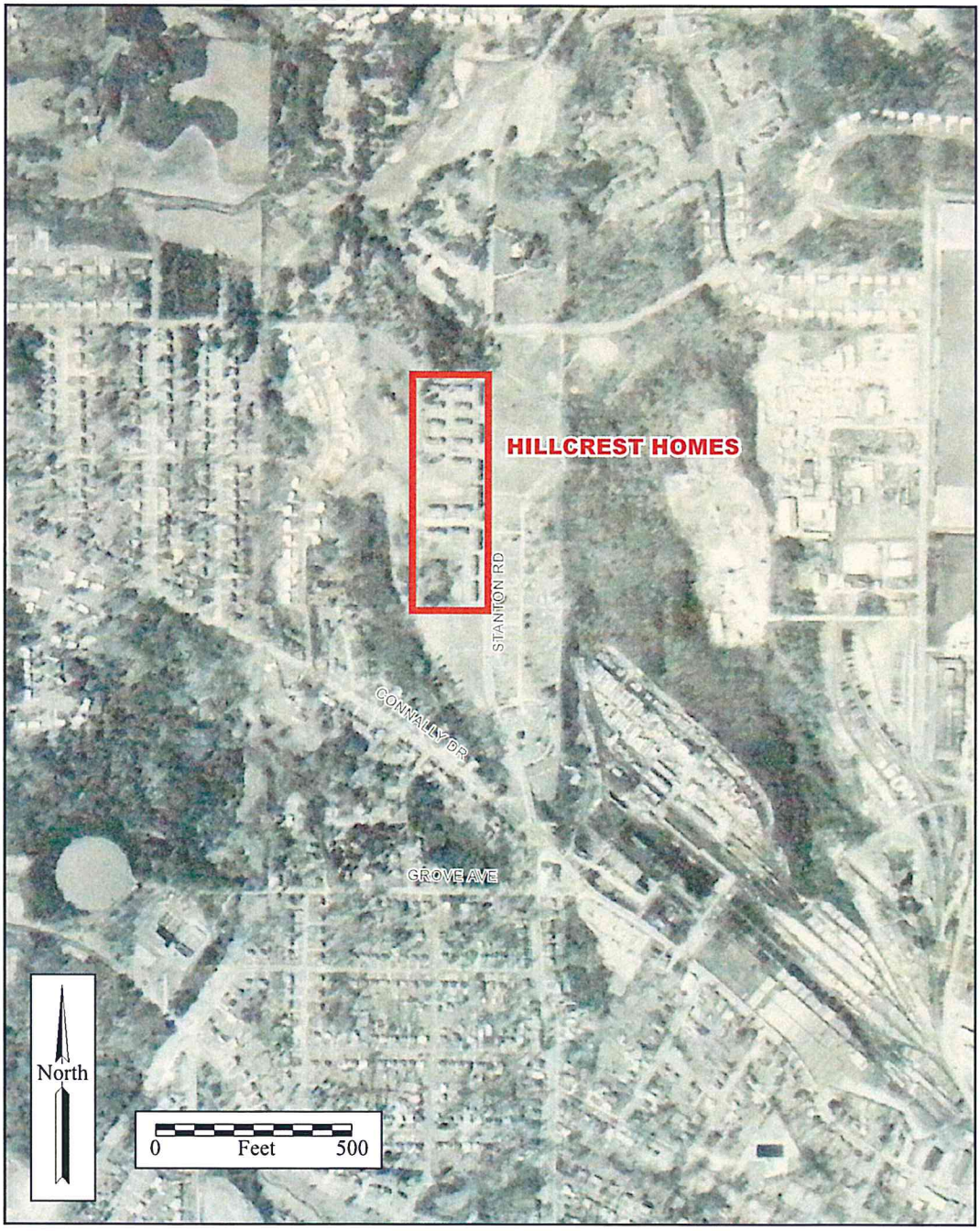

Figure 3. 1960 aerial photograph of the Hillcrest Homes.

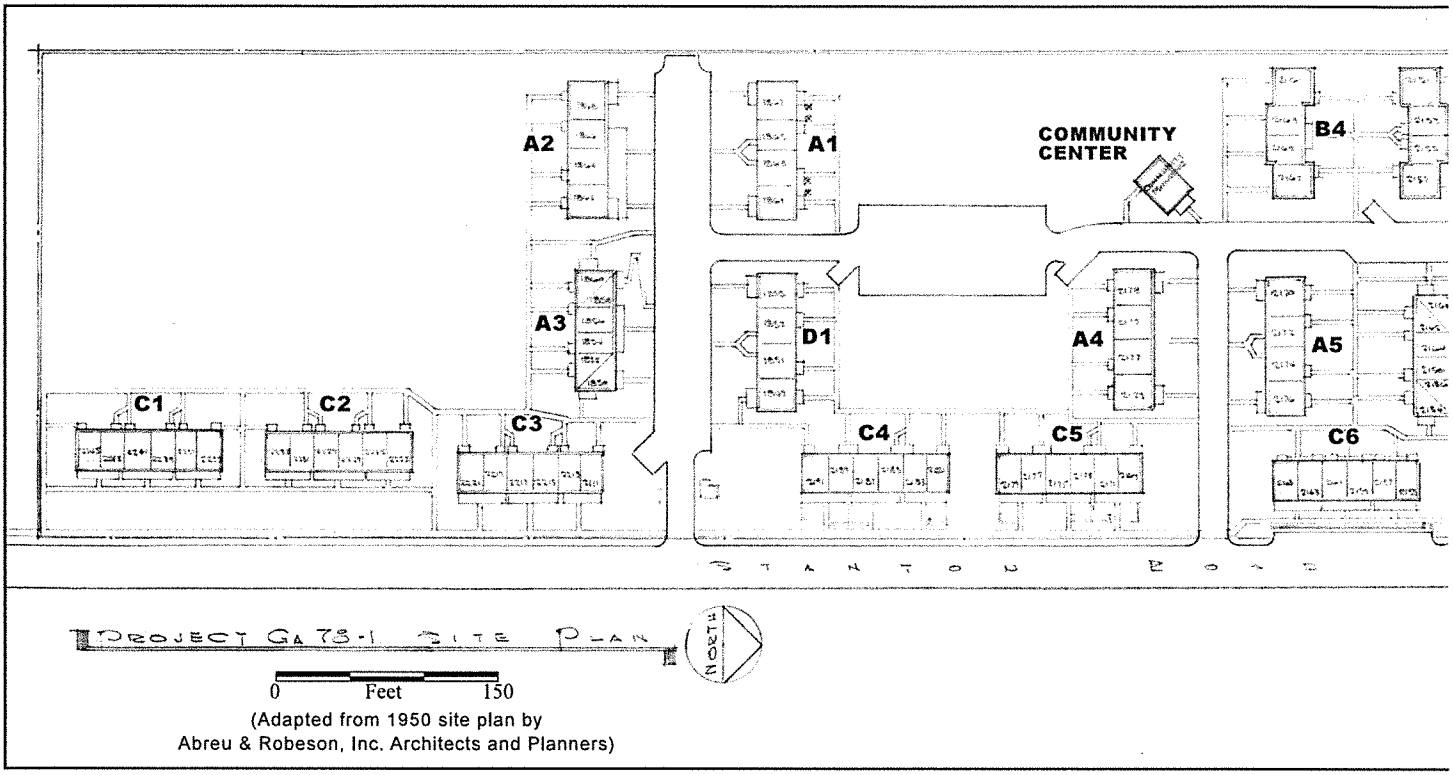

Figure 4. Site Plan of Hillcrest Homes.

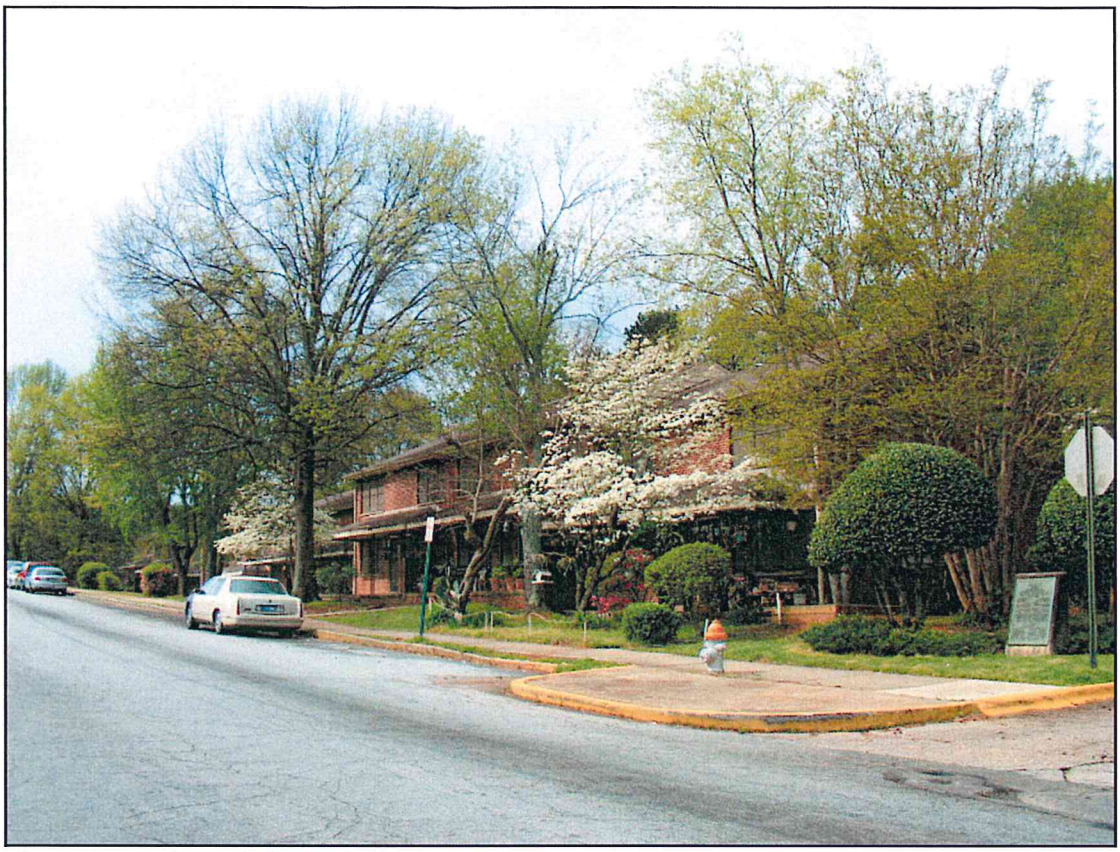

Figure 5. (Left to Right) Buildings C1 through C3 along Stanton Road in Hillcrest Homes, looking northwest.

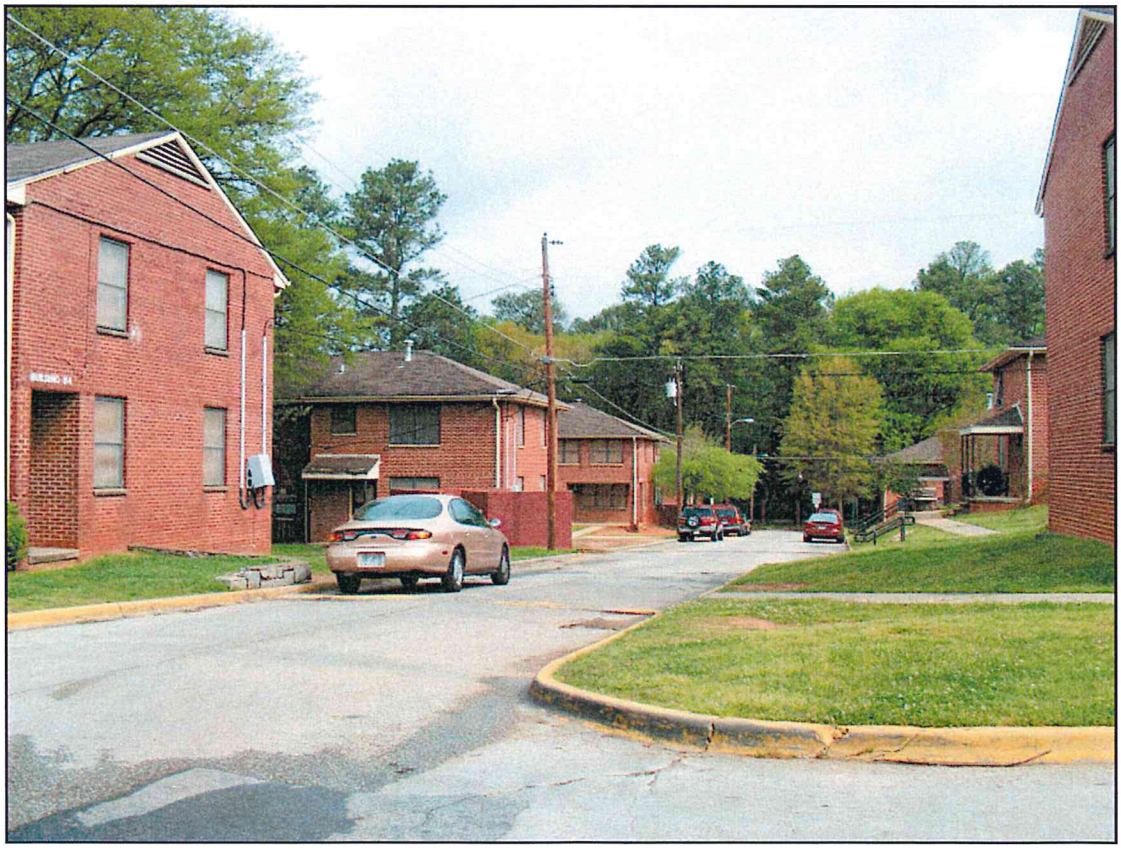

Figure 6. (Left to Right) Buildings B4 through B1, A6, D2, D3, and A4 along Stanton Circle in Hillcrest Homes, looking north.

Figure 7. Community center and playground in Hillcrest Homes, looking northwest.

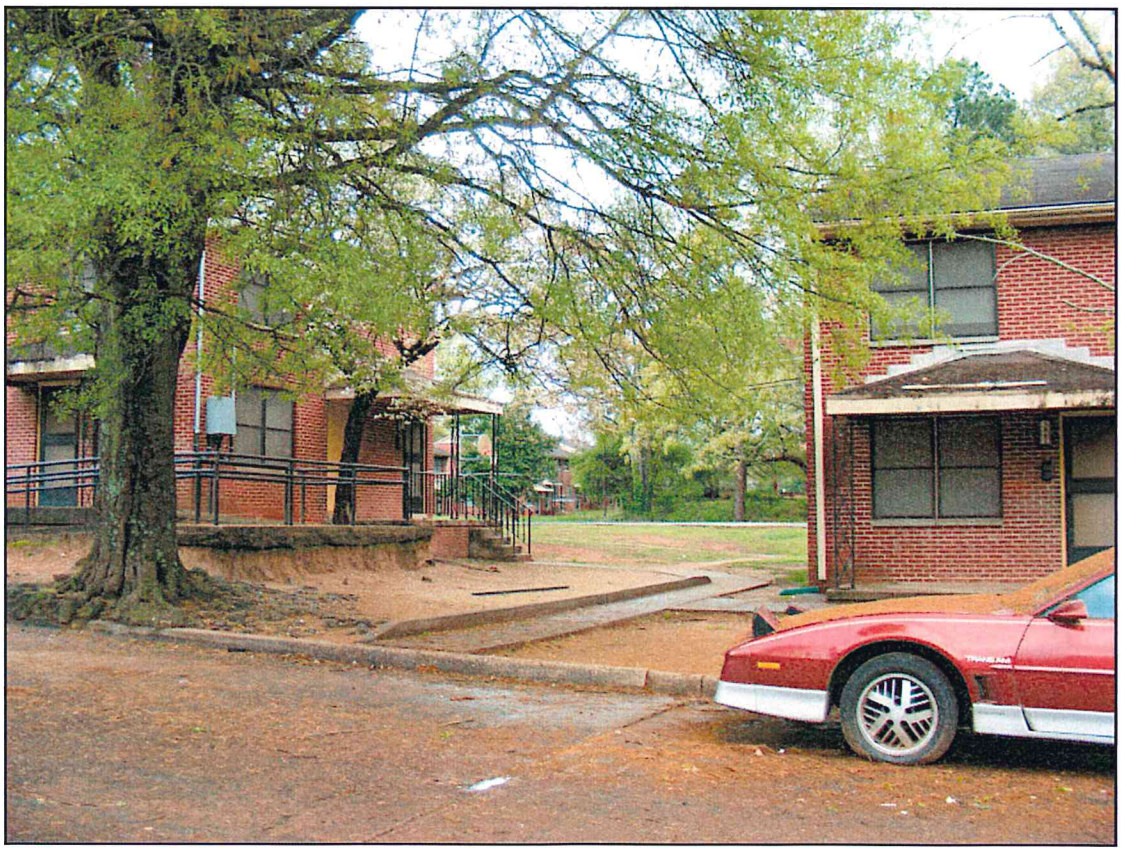
Figure 8. Wooded lot and basketball court in Hillcrest Homes, looking southwest.

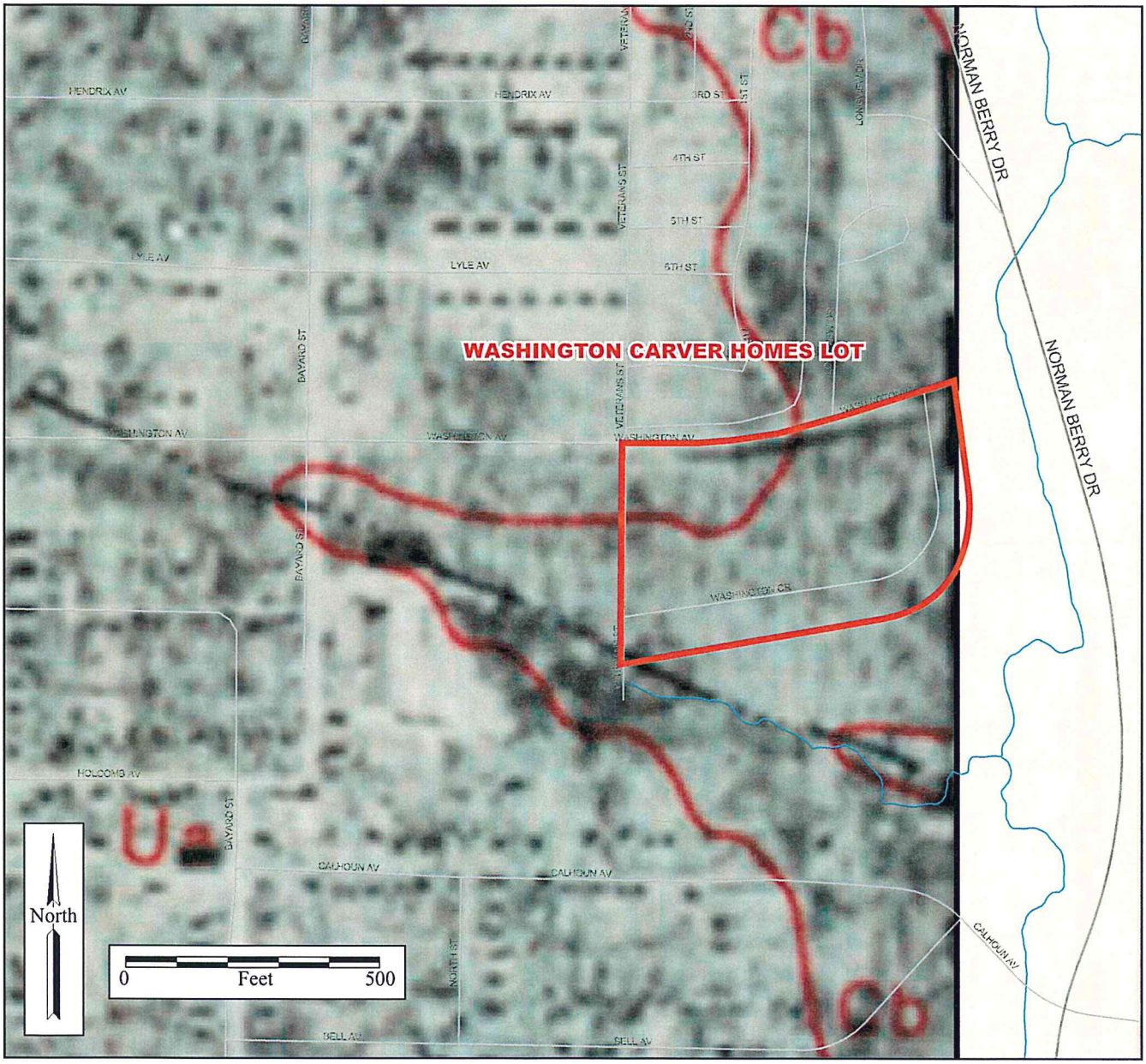

Figure 9. 1950 aerial photograph of Washington Carver Homes lot.

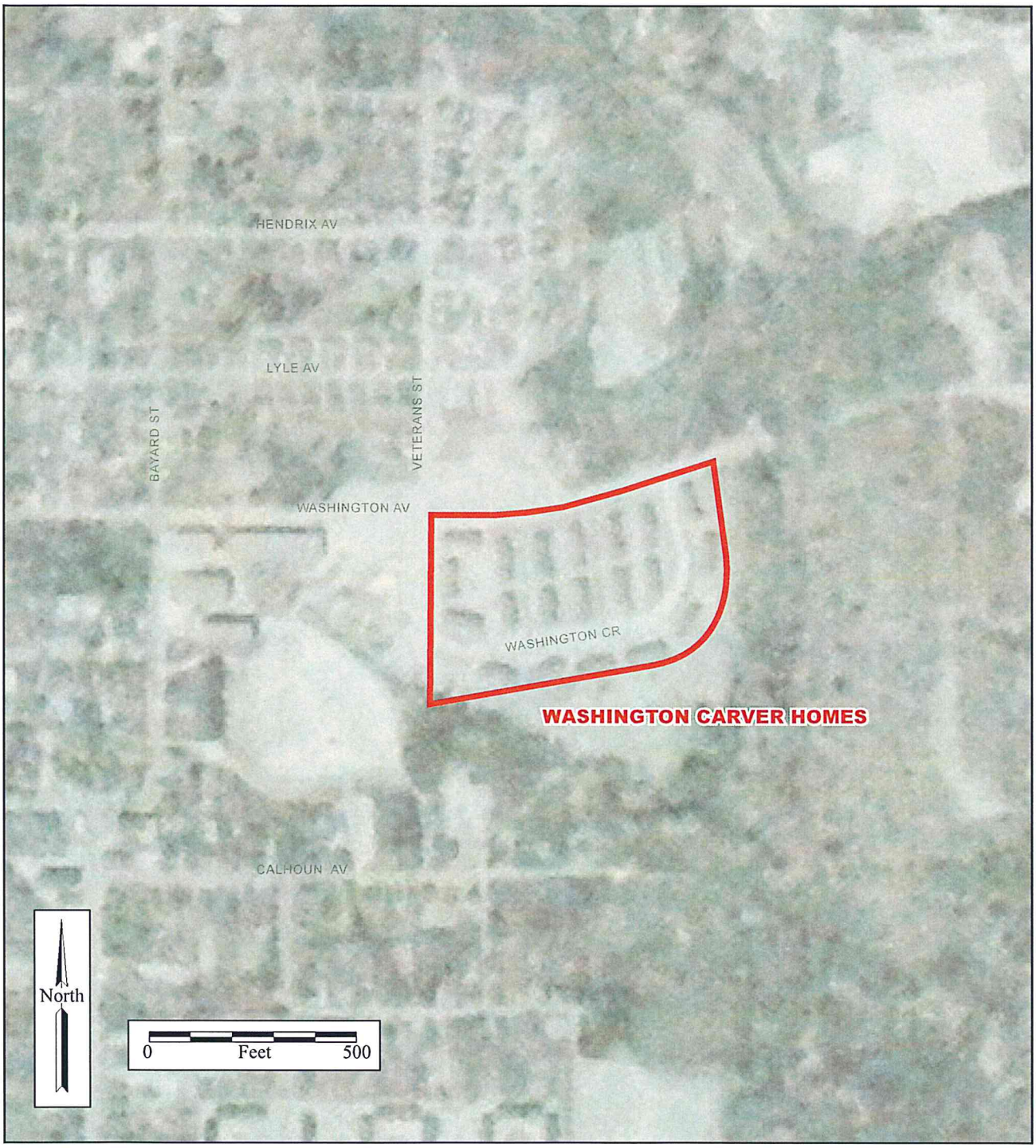

Figure 10. 1955 aerial photograph of Washington Carver Homes.

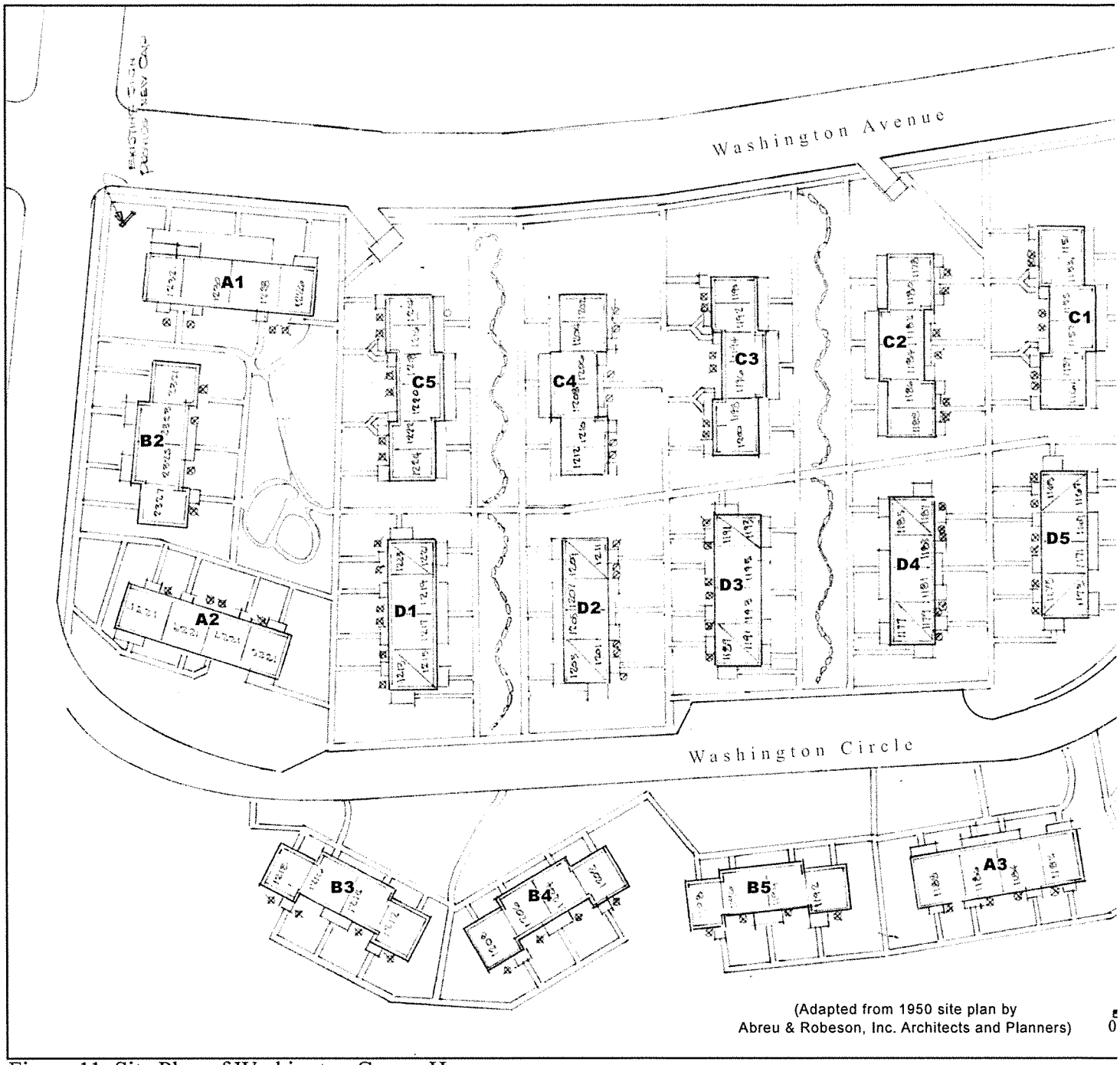

Figure 11. Site Plan of Washington Carver Homes.

Figure 12. (Left to Right) Buildings D5, A4, B6, and A3 along Washington Circle in Washington Carver Homes, looking east.

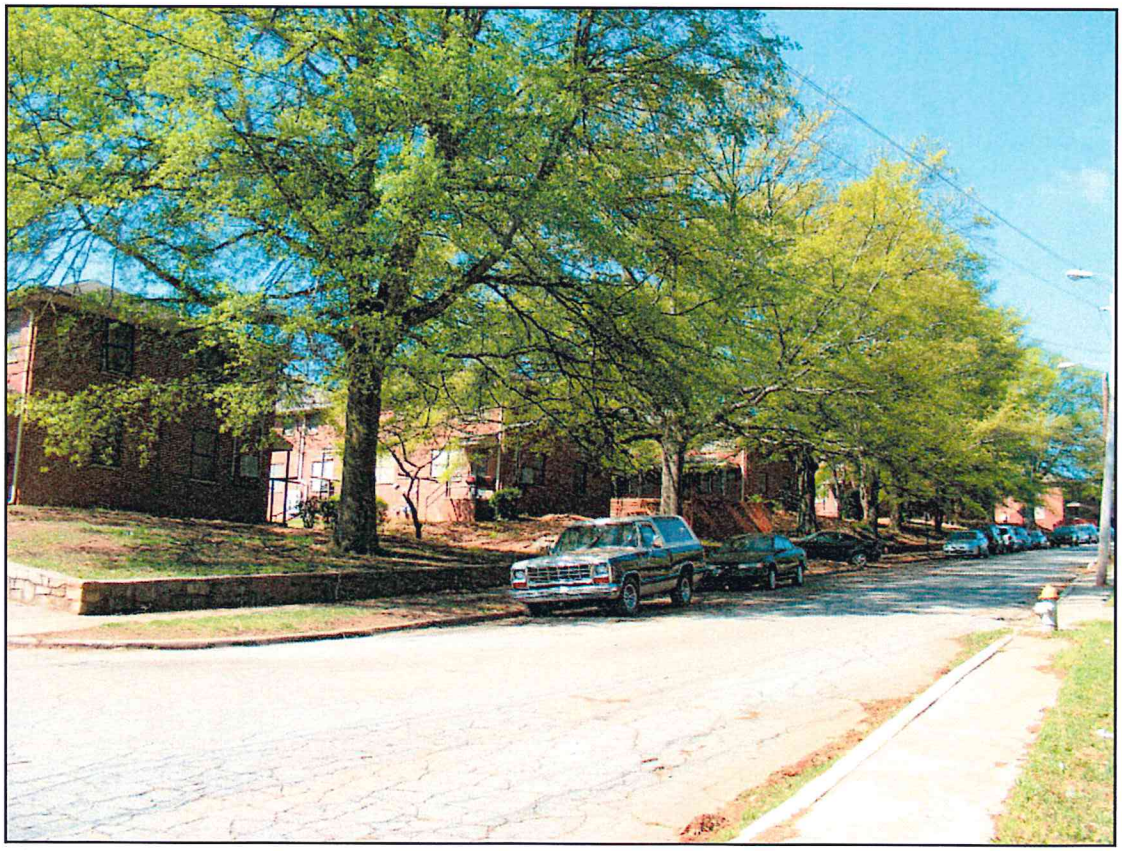

Figure 13. (Left to Right) Buildings C1-C5 along Washington Avenue in Washington Carver Homes, looking west.

Figure 14. Cleared play area in Washington Carver Homes, looking southeast.

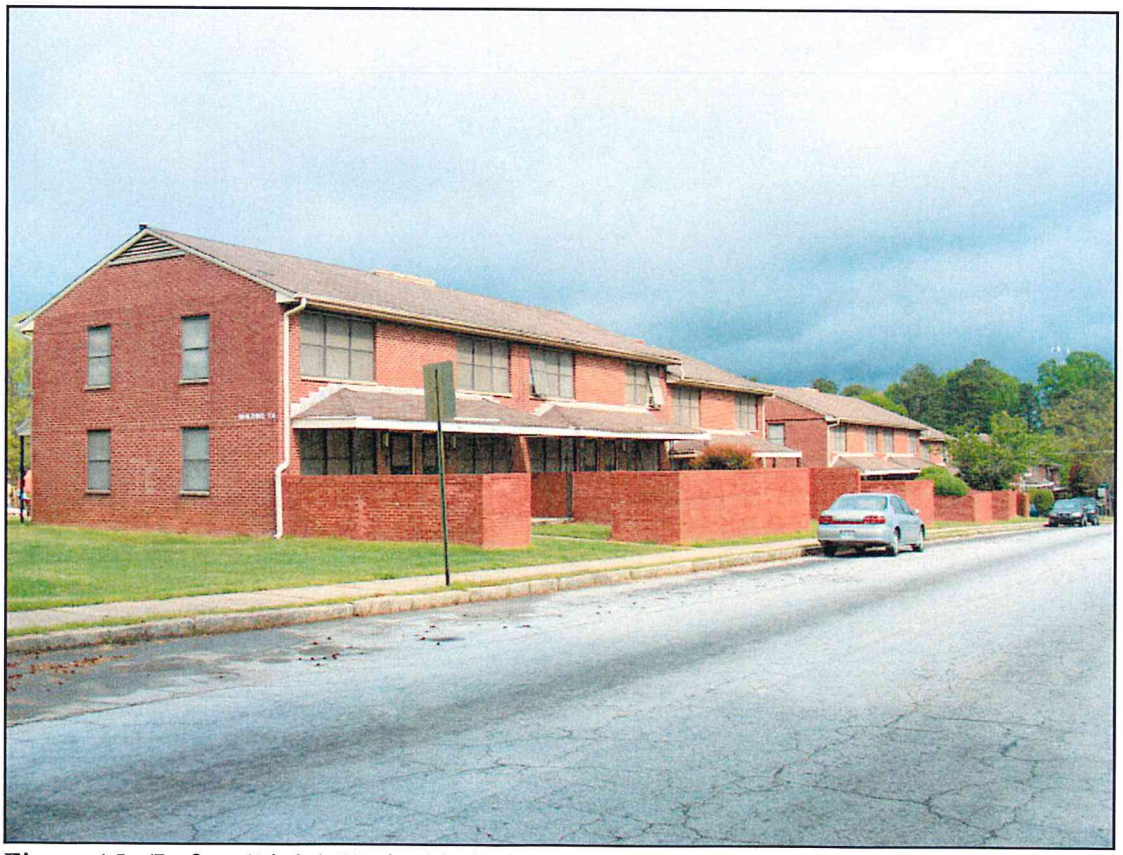

Figure 15. (Left to Right) Typical building setbacks at buildings C4, C5, and C6 along Stanton Road in Hillcrest Homes, looking northwest.

Landscaping

The central orientation of the Hillcrest and Washington Carver Homes is a feature characteristic of early housing projects. Both attempted to foster a strong sense of community in a layout that appeared residential and resembled single-family dwellings. Individual building blocks, containing individual housing units, are detached and oriented in identical setbacks to the street. The importance of community in early public housing site design is also evident in the landscaping of the two complexes. There is an openness within Hillcrest Homes that was encouraged by the side and front setbacks (Figure 15) and a naturalistic feel within the Washington Carver Homes simulated by the stone serpentine walls (Figure 16). Expansive open spaces allowed for recreation and casual social interaction. Trees (oaks, dogwoods, mimosas, hackberry, sycamores, pines, and junipers) as well as shrubs and ivy were planted and/or retained providing shade and an aesthetic associated with the traditional yard (Figures 17 and 18). The plantings were sparser at the Hillcrest Homes in order to provide space for planters as individual garden spaces. These features reflect the "courtyard period" in public housing intended to encourage a healthy and productive environment. In general, the accommodation of automobiles was not a prominent feature of the original landscape plan; the only off-street parking is at the center of the complexes near the recreation areas.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes each consist of 20 residential housing blocks. A community center is included within the center of the complex at Hillcrest Homes. The housing units are categorized along four different building types, distinguishable by the number of bedrooms ranging from between one to four. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the building blocks.

Table 1. Hillcrest Homes Building and Unit Distribution.

Buildings			Distribution					Totals
Type	Composition of Bedrooms	Number of Stories	Number of Buildings	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	Units
A	4-3-3-4	2	6			12	12	24
B	3-3-3-3	2	4			16		16
C	2-2-2-2-2-2	2	7		42			42
D	1-2-2-1	2	3	12	6			18
E	Community Center							
		Totals	**21**	**12**	**48**	**28**	**12**	**100**

Table 2. Washington Carver Homes Building and Unit Distribution.

Buildings			Distribution					Totals
Type	Composition of Bedrooms	Number of Stories	Number of Buildings	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	Units
A	4-3-3-4	2	4			8	8	16
B	3-3-3-3	2	6			24		24
C	2-2-2-2-2-2	2	5		30			30
D	1-2-2-1	2	5	20	10			30
		Totals	**20**	**20**	**40**	**32**	**8**	**100**

Figure 16. (Left to Right) Typical serpentine wall at buildings C4, D1, and C5 in Washington Carver Homes, looking south.

Figure 17. (Left to Right) Typical trees and shrubs at buildings D5, B1, and A4 in Washington Carver Homes, looking northeast.

Figure 18. (Left to Right) Typical trees and shrubs at buildings C7, A6, and B1 in Hillcrest Homes, looking west.

Figure 19. Typical bathroom interior on building B3 in Hillcrest Homes, looking south.

Figure 20. (Left to Right) Typical gab buildings B4 through B2 in Hillcrest I

Figure 21. (Left to Right) Typical roof and building variations on building A1, B2, and A2 in Washington Carver Homes, looking southwest.


Figure 22. Typical attic wood louver in gable end of building A3 in Washington Carver Homes, looking southwest.

Figure 23. Typical porch detail on building D4 in Washington Carver Homes, looking north.

Figure 24. Typical integrated porches on west half of building B3 in Hillcrest Homes, looking southeast.

Figure 25. Typical rear porch stoops on building A6 in Hillcrest Homes, looking northwest.

Figure 26. Typical paired window with rowlock lintel course on building A4 in Hillcrest Homes, looking west.

Figure 27. Typical tripled window with concrete lintel on building B5 in Washington Carver Homes, looking southeast.

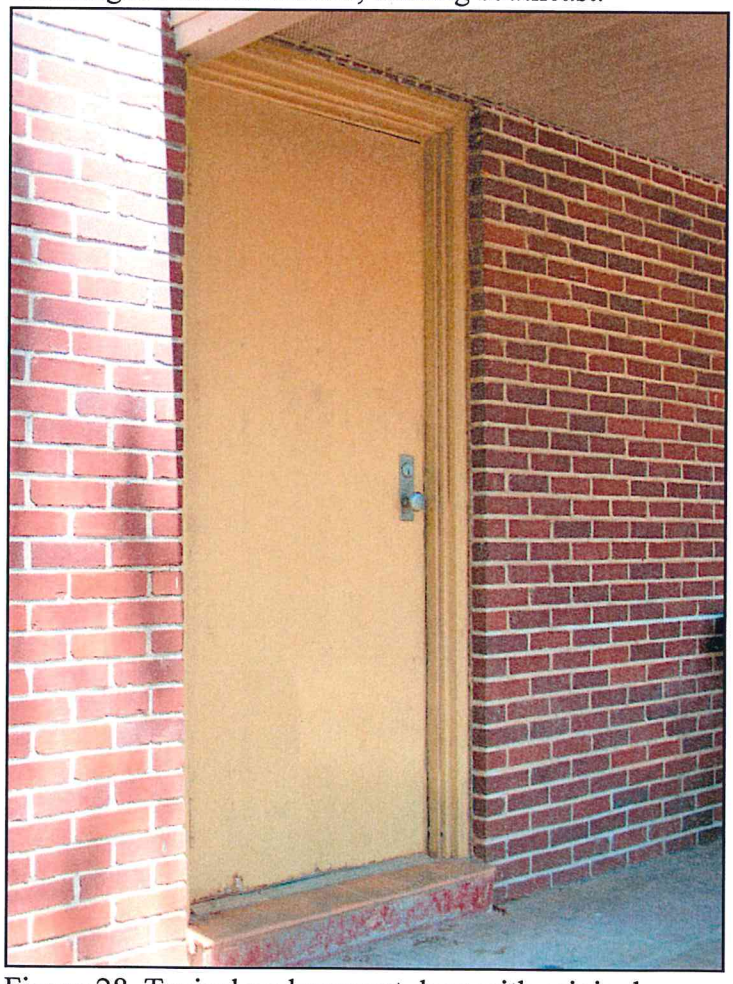

Figure 28. Typical replacement door with original surround on building D4 in Washington Carver Homes, looking north.

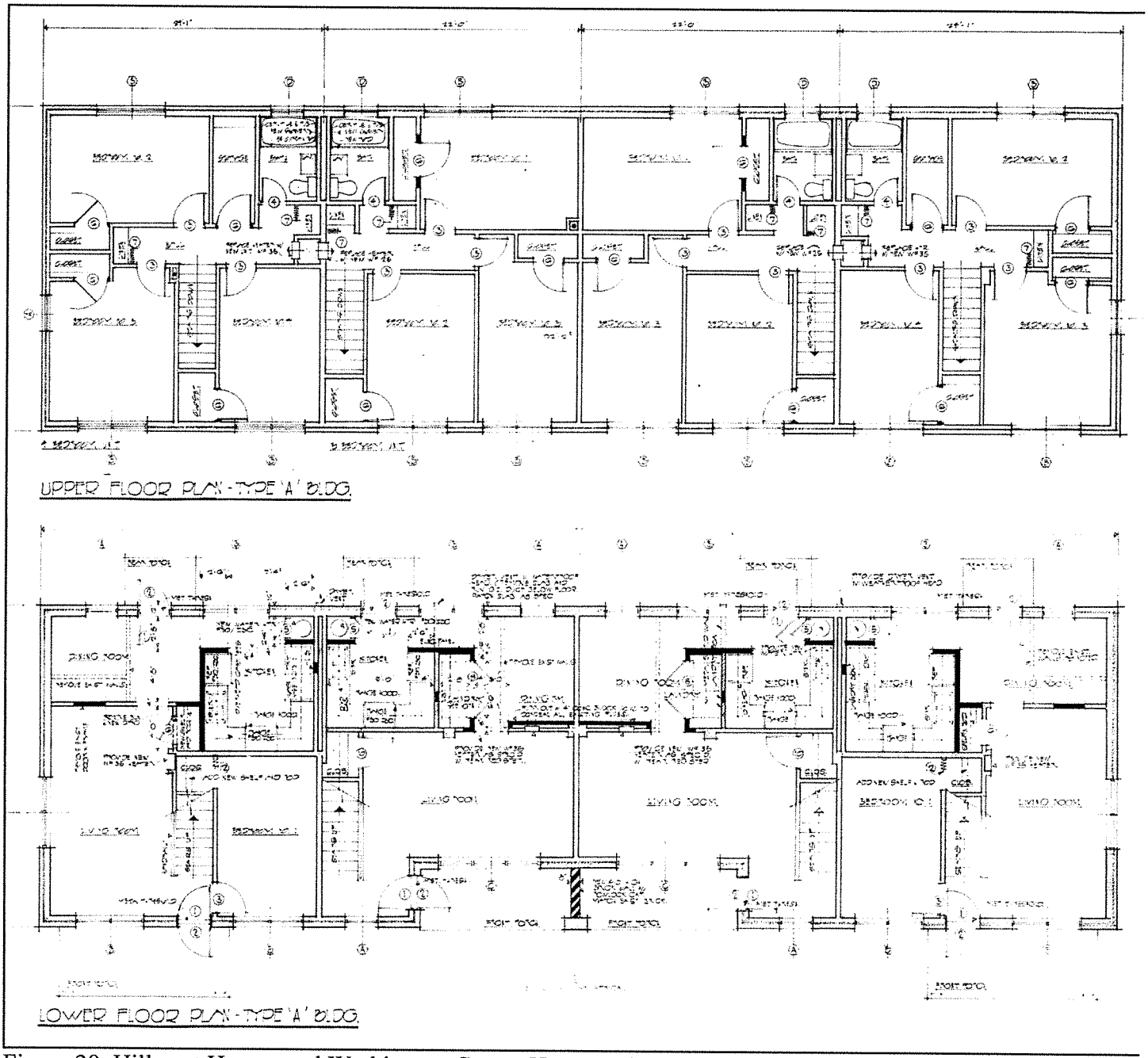

Figure 29. Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes: Floor plan building type "A".

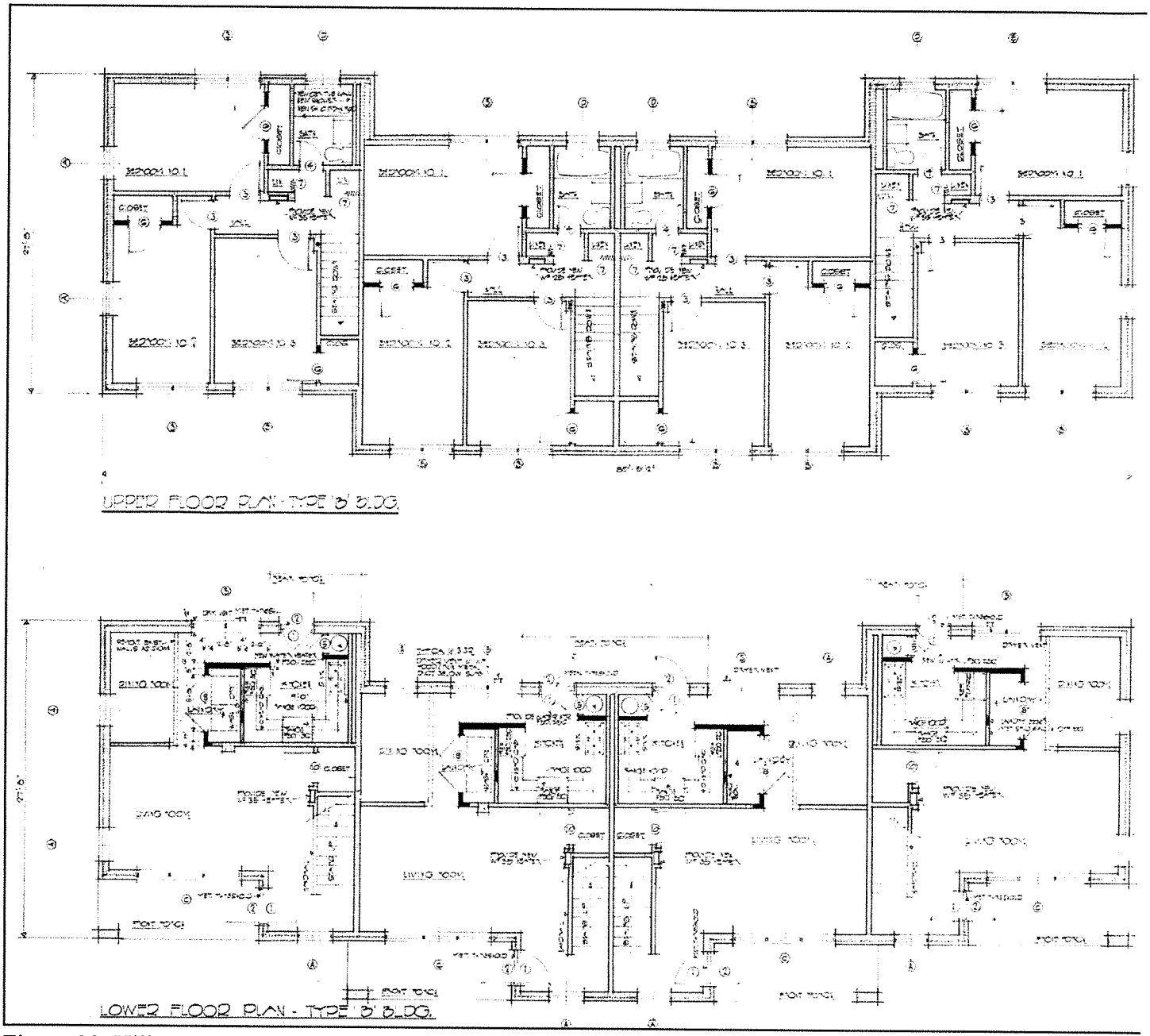

Figure 30. Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes: Floor plan building type "B".

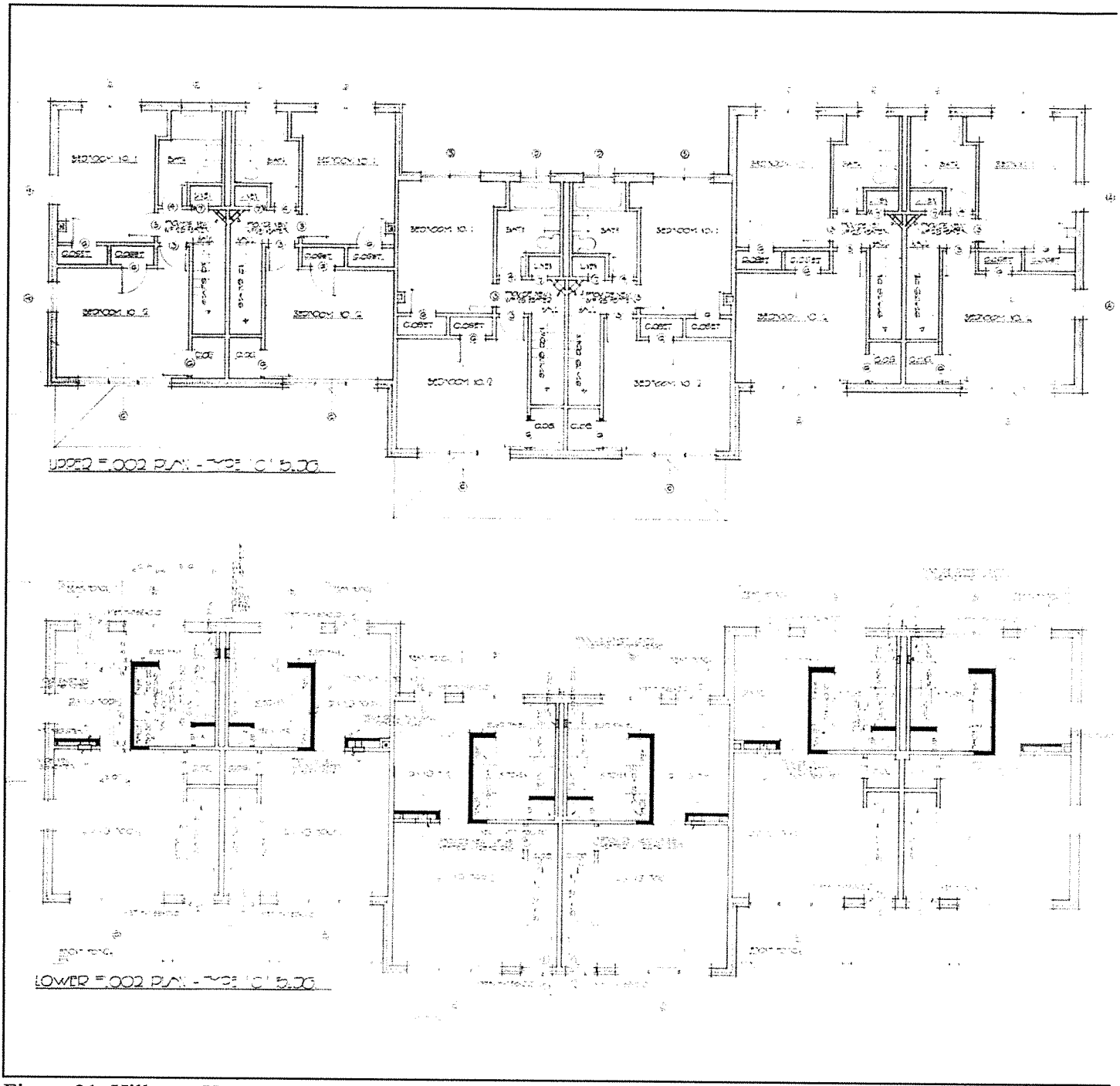

Figure 31. Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes: Floor plan building type "C".

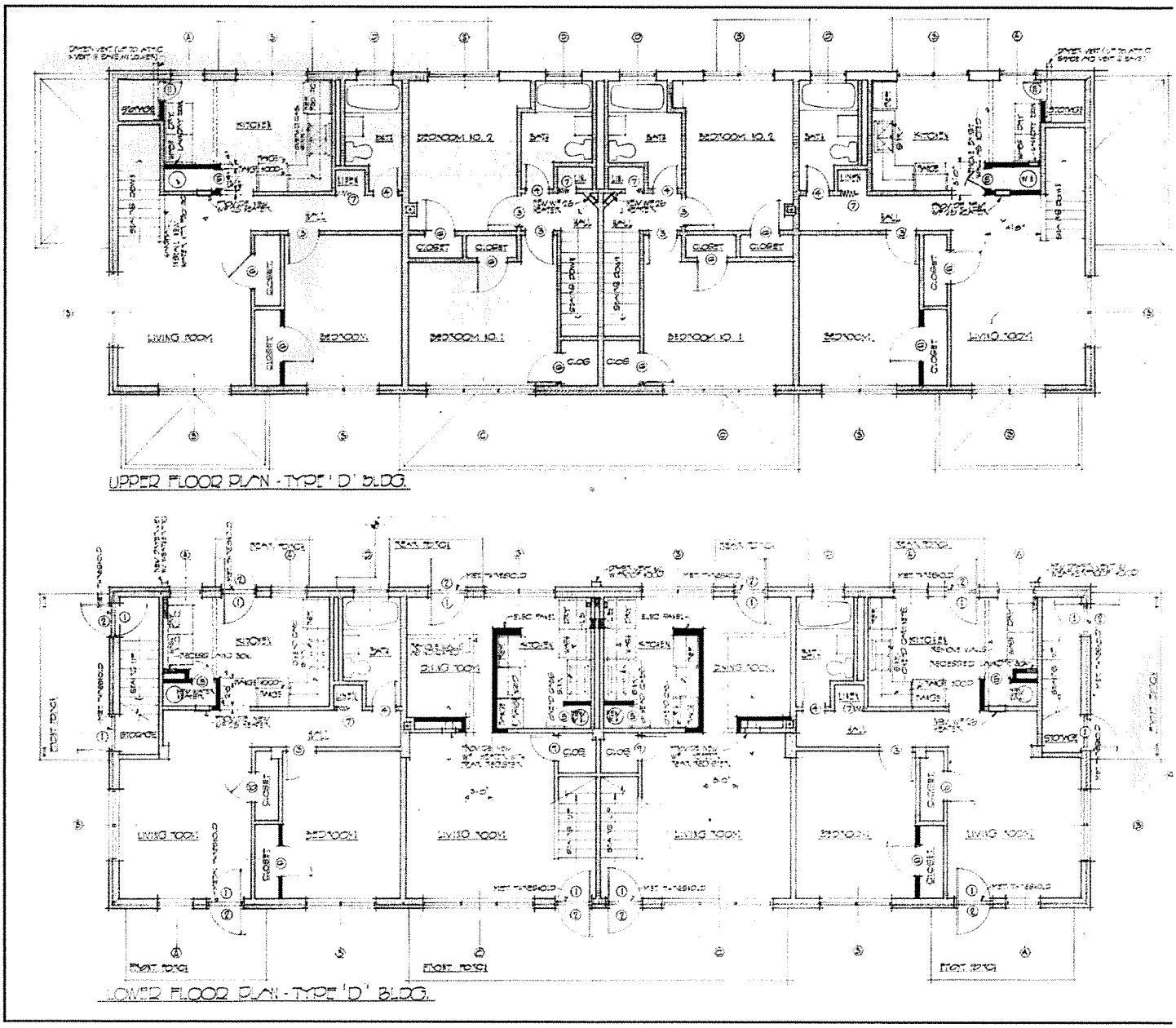

Figure 32. Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes: Floor plan building type "D".

Rectangular in shape, the units are constructed of concrete block with a common bond brick veneer on the exterior. The building dimensions are as follows (height × width × depth): Type A (21' 7" × 100' 00" × 27' 8"); Type B (21' 7" × 88' 8" × 27' 8"); Type C (21' 7" × 105' 5" × 27' 8"); and Type D (21' 7" × 83' 10" × 27' 8") (Figures 29–32). The foundation is a 4" concrete slab on "puddled and tamped fill" (Abreu & Robeson 1950a:4, 1950b:4). Programmatic oversight required that publicly-funded housing remain sustainable and cost-effective compared to private development. Durable exterior and interior materials were used to help control maintenance costs. Brick veneer exteriors were functional and efficient and, inside, concrete block walls were unfinished except for painting. Bathrooms included partially tiled walls and floors (see Figure 19).

The building blocks are covered by hipped or side-gable roofs clad with asphalt shingles that replaced original asbestos shingles and the ridge is topped by a 20-foot metal vent (see Figure 20). Due to design changes as a result of topography, some units that were originally designed to be covered by hipped roofs have gable roofs and the wings are stepped from the main block (Figure 21). The front and rear elevations of the buildings feature relatively wide eaves with ventilated aluminum soffits. Those buildings covered by gable roofs, feature wood louvers in the gable end supported by a pre-cast concrete sill that provide ventilation to the attic space (see Figure 22).

The residential building blocks have spacious front porches which distinguish the building blocks and individual units; those porches on building type "C" have a shared porch, such as a duplex might have. The porches are deep and characterized by projecting, half-hipped roofs supported by metal posts with an inset diamond pattern (see Figure 23). The interior units of building type "A" and all the units on building type "B" have integrated porches supported by a single brick post (see Figure 24). This feature of the large entry porch is unique in the 1950s residential design, where ranch and minimal traditional homes typically had porticos with shallow porches functioning as entry points. These larger porches reflect the desire to allow social interaction more reflective of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century homes. The porch floor is poured concrete scored in 2-inch squares. All of the units also have a small rear stoop, characterized by a concrete-slab floor covered by a shed roof with thin metal columns (see Figure 25).

The units feature one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows on pre-cast concrete sills in three types: single, paired, and tripled. Those windows on the first story are topped by a rowlock lintel course (see Figure 26). The tripled window set within the integrated porch features a concrete lintel (see Figure 27). All of the awning-type screens are original and are still intact. The original flat, two paneled exterior doors have been replaced (see Figure 28) and also include a metal-two paneled screened door. Interior doors are lightweight and replacements as well.

The floor plan is similar to the ranch style characterized by entry into a living room that opens into a kitchen. In 1997 the kitchens were renovated to separate the cooking, dining, and washing areas that had previously been all in the same room. They also put in new cabinets and added space for washers and dryers. In the two- through four-bedroom units, a stairway leads to the upper floor where a hallway along the traverse axis leads to the bedrooms and bathrooms (see Figures 29–32). The separation of social spaces; i.e. living room, dining rooms and kitchen, from private spaces; i.e. bathroom and bedrooms, allowed a high level of comfort within a small

square footage. Interior finishes are institutional in character with painted concrete block; the kitchen and dining areas are finished with plaster. New cabinets in the kitchen were also part of the 1990s renovation. There are two types of flooring: ceramic tile in the living rooms, stairs, hallway, and bathroom, and vinyl tile in the remainder of the spaces.

In general, the Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes interiors and exteriors resemble institutional housing like those found at educational facilities, military bases, and health departments. The building materials were designed for durability and permanence under heavy use. They continue to function as originally designed almost 60 years later.

Originally built as the maintenance and management building, the community center at Hillcrest Homes is a square building of concrete block construction with common bond-brick veneer. The building is 12' 8″ high × 25' 8″ wide × 33' 8″ deep. The foundation is a 4″ concrete slab on "puddled and tamped fill" (Abreu & Robeson 1950a:4). The hipped roof is clad with replacement asphalt shingles and features wide overhanging eaves and a plain fascia board. The single and paired one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows have been replaced with aluminum sash windows. The windows have precast concrete sills and bars have been placed on the exterior (Figure 33). The central entrance is set within a one-bay projecting half-hipped 12' × 6' porch supported by thin metal columns. A secondary entrance is located on the side, southeast elevation. The replacement single-leaf door, which replaced a roll-up door, is set within a recessed brick surround (Figure 34). The interior has been altered through changes in use from the maintenance and management building, to a community center, to a police station, and its current use as a community center again.

Figure 33. Community center in Hillcrest Homes, looking south.

Figure 34. Community center in Hillcrest Homes, looking north.

V. SIGNIFICANCE

The Hillcrest and Washington Carver Homes have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for the role they played locally in meeting a national housing crisis as part of the federal housing programs (National Park Service 1991). They are significant under the theme of *social/humanitarian* for their part in a national housing program that sought to improve housing conditions and remedy post-World War II housing shortages, bettering the lives of many. The complexes themselves are also locally significant under *race relations* as the Hillcrest Homes were constructed exclusively for white and the Washington Carver Homes were constructed exclusively for non-whites during the years of segregation and at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Hillcrest Homes and Washington Carver Homes have also been determined eligible under Criterion C for architecture as well-intact examples of public housing (National Park Service 1991). The two complexes are significant under *architecture* as representative examples of public housing architecture constructed during the 1950s and designed by the noted architectural firm of Abreu & Robeson, Inc. They are similarly significant under the theme of *community planning and development* for their intact pattern of interior streets and the layout of detached buildings and open public spaces developed within a city block during the mid-twentieth century.