
LIVING IN AMERICA

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT,
HARLEM & MODERN HOUSING

September 9-December 17

Wed-Fri, Noon-8pm

Sat & Sun, Noon-6pm

The Wallach Art Gallery
Columbia University
Lenfest Center for the Arts
615 West 129 Street
(West of Broadway)

“Living in America,” a phrase written on wooden panels traveling with the model of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City (1929-58), evokes a question that preoccupied architects and planners throughout the mid-twentieth century: How to live together? Wright’s proposal for an exurban settlement of single-family houses offered one possible answer; plans for large public or subsidized housing located in urban areas presented another. Although these two visions seem a world apart, they share a common history.

Wright (1867-1959) first exhibited his Broadacre City project at Rockefeller Center in Midtown Manhattan in 1935. While the prominent Wisconsin-based architect anticipated a degree of economic diversity, Broadacre’s residents were, for the most part, implicitly white. In 1936 construction began on one of New York City’s first public housing developments, the Harlem River Houses, funded by the Public Works Administration under President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. Built for working-class African Americans, the complex was designed by a consortium including John Louis Wilson Jr., the first African American to graduate from Columbia University’s School of Architecture. Through such parallel examples, this exhibition shows how two different approaches to housing combine societal aspiration with racial segregation and socioeconomic inequality, and asks: How to live in America, together?

The exhibition’s narrative takes the form of two interwoven plotlines, developed through displays of project-specific drawings, photographs, and other material dating from the late 1920s to the late 1950s. One plotline tracks the Broadacre scheme as it plays out in Wright’s subsequent work, scattered around the country; the other tracks the development of public housing in Upper Manhattan’s Harlem neighborhood, ending just outside the gallery, adjacent to Columbia’s new campus. Both stories connect social institutions, such as the nuclear family, with economic structures, such as private property or its alternatives. Wright’s version of the “American Dream” and Harlem’s public housing both draw lines of race, class, and gender, many of which persist today. Their differences remind us that the right to housing once defined, and could still define, what it means to live in America.

The Temple Hoyne Buell Center
for the Study of American Architecture
at Columbia University

Living in America has been curated by The Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP), and is co-presented by The Buell Center, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery and The Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, in correlation with *Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive*, on view at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, from June 12 through October 1, 2017. “Broad Acres and Narrow Lots,” an associated essay by David Smiley, Assistant Director of the Urban Design Program at Columbia GSAPP, is included in the MoMA exhibition catalogue. We are grateful to all of our project partners, without whom this challenging project would not have been possible.

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WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR APARTMENTS

YEAR 1926-28
ARCHITECT Andrew Jackson Thomas
LOCATION West 149th to 150th
Streets btwn Macombs
Place and Adam Clayton
Powell Jr. and Frederick
Douglass Boulevards, New
York, NY

CLIENT John D. Rockefeller Jr.
TYPE 6 multifamily buildings
of 6 stories each, with
some commercial space
UNITS 511

1 Courtyard, ca. 1930,
reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center

The spacious interior courtyard design was a significant departure from Harlem's Old Law tenements and more typical of experiments in the outer boroughs. In contrast to the austere street façade, the crenelated walls of the garden maximized the use of windows and underscored the development's inward focus.

Urged by the New York Urban League, John D. Rockefeller Jr. built the Paul Laurence Dunbar Apartments in an attempt to prove that privately developed housing could be affordable for residents as well as profitable for investors. Residents initially came to this limited-dividend cooperative from Harlem's higher income brackets, and included such prominent figures as the sociologist and political activist W.E.B. DuBois. The co-op's location channeled Black Harlem northward, away from Rockefeller's Morningside Heights and Lenox Hill properties, and formed a self-contained neighborhood, complete with a bank, nursery, recreation areas, and commercial spaces. Its strong

perimeter and highly articulated courtyard became influential models, and its architect—the self-taught Andrew Jackson Thomas—gained recognition as a pioneer of this “garden apartment” design.

The Great Depression brought significant changes. Management reduced the size of payments required to live in the co-op and allowed extended family to move in with relatives. In 1935 it subdivided the largest units, converting 6- and 7-bedrooms into 2- and 3-room apartments. In 1936 Rockefeller converted the co-op to rental units; a year later, he sold the complex, considering it a “noble” but failed experiment.

2 Playground in the courtyard,
ca. 1930, reproduction of
photoprint
Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center

Two nurseries provided childcare for resident children ages five and younger at the cost of 25 cents per day.

- 3 From top to bottom: Letter from Andrew Thomas to W.E.B. DuBois, November 17, 1927; Letter from W.E.B. Dubois to Andrew Thomas, December 2, 1927

Courtesy Department of Special Collections and University Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Named in honor of influential poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, this complex housed many notable figures, including actor Paul Robeson and explorer Matthew Henson. It was also home to Civil Rights Movement leaders such as Asa Philip Randolph and W.E.B. DuBois.

- 4 Floor plans, ca. 1928, reproductions of ink on paper

Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center

Due to the lack of elevators, apartments on the ground floor were more expensive than those on floors above.

- 5 "Rockefeller Opens National Bank in Harlem," *The New York Age*, September 22, 1928

Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center

- 6 Matthew Henson Residence, Dyncourt Lester Mahon (photographer), 1979, reproductions of photoprints

Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS NY-5697-A

On April 6, 1909, African American explorer Matthew Henson became the first person to reach the North Pole. He lived in the complex from 1929 to 1955.

- 7 Clockwise from top left: Roscoe C. Bruce, "The Paul Laurence Dunbar Apartments of New York: An Adventure in Community Building," ca. 1935; Roscoe C. Bruce and Clara Burrill Bruce, "Paul Laurence Dunbar Apartments: At Dunbar You Enrich Yourself—Not the Landlord," ca. 1935; "The Paul L. Dunbar Apartments and The Dunbar National Bank," December 30, 1929

Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center

The development's amenities and services, including a nursery, kindergarten, playground, and the Dunbar National Bank, were intended to foster a sense of community and to accommodate resident needs left unmet by the surrounding neighborhood.

- 8 Application for Tenancy, ca. 1926-41

Rockefeller Archive Center

Open only to African American families, the Dunbar Apartments were highly sought after. However, the cost (and the initial rules against taking in lodgers), made the apartments too expensive for many families.

- 9 Street façade, June 1, 1954, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy Prints & Photographs Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

A clean outward appearance was valuable to management: drying clothes, wringing out mops, and storing milk bottles on window sills were all prohibited.

- 10 Site plan, ca. 1928, reproduction of ink on paper

Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center

With access to all units only through a central courtyard, entry points to that space provided strategic locations for surveillance.

BROADACRE CITY

YEAR	1929-58		industrial buildings,	1	Frank Lloyd Wright and
ARCHITECT	Frank Lloyd Wright		single-family houses,		Taliesin Fellows, model, 1935,
LOCATION	N/A (unbuilt)		and landscape		oil paint, paper, wood
CLIENT	N/A	UNITS	Houses for 1,400		<small>The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)</small>
TYPE	Community plan with civic, cultural, and		families per 4 square miles		

Wright developed the idea behind Broadacre City following the economic collapse of 1929, partially in response to Roosevelt's New Deal. Building on earlier proposals, his plan aimed to decentralize settlement patterns in America, reduce the scale of its institutions, and provide every "head of household" with an acre of land. All this was rendered achievable, Wright argued, by the new transportation, communication, and production technologies then transforming American life and its landscape.

While Wright rooted his plan for Broadacre City in private land-, home-, and car-ownership, he also envisioned public ownership of utilities, resources, and infrastructure. Such an approach was analogous to the private, cooperative arrangements established at

the Dunbar Apartments, as well as to the nascent programs for public housing at places like the Harlem River Houses. Averse to state intervention, Wright sought a balance between the individual, the family, and the community. This search would define much of his work for nearly three decades.

Over time, the architect's vision for low-density, small-scale, high-tech development has provoked a varied response. Some praise his plan, with its emphasis on individualism, local governance, and community life, as reviving earlier agrarian thought in modern form. Others see it as prefiguring post-World War II suburban sprawl and urban crisis. Still others locate in it something more distressing: the symbol of a predominantly white, nostalgic, and chauvinistic nation.

This typical four-square-mile section of the city was first exhibited in 1935 as a centerpiece of the Industrial Arts Exposition at Rockefeller Center, opened by President Roosevelt.

- 2 Frank Lloyd Wright, sketch, 1934, ink on paper

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Here Wright outlines many of the features that would later become part of the model, noting that there would be a "Minimum of one acre per family."

- 3 Frank Lloyd Wright, "Broadacre City: A New Community Plan," *Architectural Record*, April 1935, pgs. 248-49

Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

- 4 Frank Lloyd Wright, "Broadacre City, A New Freedom for Living in America: Radio Script," 1935

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Here Wright contrasts his vision of American democracy with a darker view of modern society.

- 5 Letter from Frank Lloyd Wright to Raymond Moley, May 11, 1933

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Looking to Roosevelt as a potential sponsor, in this letter Wright asks that a copy of *The Disappearing City* be given to the President.

- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship, Two "Broadacre City Exhibition Panels," 1935, oil paint, plywood

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The model was accompanied by a series of panels that outlined the project's key concepts.

(left) Wright lists major religious, political, and philosophical figures he wished to commemorate with the design. (right) Wright assigns exhibition-goers "required reading."

- 7 Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Disappearing City* (New York: W.F. Payson, 1932)

Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

Suffused with American exceptionalist attitudes, Wright's 1932 volume outlines a plan to restore individual freedoms, which he viewed as under attack.

- 8 Members of the Taliesin Fellowship at work on the model, La Hacienda, Chandler, Arizona, 1935, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The Taliesin Fellowship, where students lived, studied, and worked under the architect's tutelage, was established by Wright and his wife Olgivanna in Arizona in 1932. Wright was soon inspired to build a second

home and school nearby, known as Taliesin West.

- 9 View of exhibition at Hillside, Spring Green, Wisconsin, 1935, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

After leaving New York, the model traveled to Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, PA, and Madison, WI, before returning to Spring Green.

- 10 View of model, Spring Green, Wisconsin, 1935, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright insisted that Broadacre was adaptable to different contexts, though his primary point of reference was the rural Midwestern landscape where he grew up, with its prairie, farms, and small market towns.

HARLEM RIVER HOUSES

YEAR	1936-37		Place and Harlem	1	Archibald M. Brown et al., preliminary site plan, July 1, 1935, ink on paper
ARCHITECT	Archibald Manning Brown, Horace Ginsbern, Frank J. Forster, Charles F. Fuller, Will Rice Amon, Richard W. Buckley, and John Louis Wilson Jr.	CLIENT	Public Works Administration, Housing Division		Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
		TYPE	7 multifamily buildings of 4 to 5 stories		The architects dealt with a complicated site by closing off 152nd Street, creating a Beaux-Arts pedestrian axis and a modern superblock.
LOCATION	West 151st to 153rd Streets btwn Macombs	UNITS	574		

Once the Public Works Administration (PWA) was formed as a part of the New Deal, African American leaders and activists pressed officials to create public housing in Harlem. After negotiations with John D. Rockefeller Jr. to purchase vacant parcels near the Dunbar Apartments fell through, the city took the land by condemnation. The Harlem River Houses were built using PWA funds, creating New York's first federal public housing for African Americans. The almost all-white Williamsburg Houses would open one year later in Brooklyn.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) managed a team of local architects and contractors, which produced the acclaimed design combin-

ing axial symmetry with streamlined detailing. It was higher in budget and lower in density than subsequent projects and included a nursery, library, clinics, street-facing commercial spaces, and community rooms. Instrumental in designing the complex's social spaces was John Louis Wilson Jr., the first African American architect to graduate from Columbia University and become licensed in New York. Unlike society architects Brown and Forster, Ginsbern (another Columbia alumnus) had designed apartments for unions, making him the only one on the team with housing experience. The mixture of backgrounds on the design team underscored the project's novelty.

- 2 Aerial view of site, September 16, 1935, reproduction of photograph
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
This view features the Dunbar Apartments to the south and Yankee Stadium to the north.
- 3 Perspective drawing of the courtyard, ca. 1936, pencil on paper
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
- 4 From top to bottom: Tenant Application; Weekly Tenancy Agreement Form; NYCHA Procedure for Selection of Tenants, February 1, 1937
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

- In evaluating tenants, NYCHA used information provided by applicants about their "present accommodations," choosing tenants whose income, "character," and "cleanliness" conformed to precise specifications. Initially, rent was collected weekly at the door to keep a watchful eye.
- 5 Schell Lewis, perspective drawing, 1935, pencil on paper
Horace Ginsbern Papers, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York
Illustrations of this sort were typically reserved for projects with larger budgets.
- 6 John Louis Wilson Jr., "Name for Harlem Macombs Place Project," October 7, 1935, ink on paper
Courtesy Judge Judith W. Rogers. Photographs & Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations
Architect John Louis Wilson Jr. initially proposed naming Harlem River Houses after Frederick Douglass. "Federal authorities" instead requested a name that reflected the project's location.
- 7 Ralph E. Waiters Jr., in Rucker Park, ca. 1976, photograph
Ralph E. Waiters Jr.
Albert "Sunny" Robinson, pic-
tured at Harlem River Houses where he lived for more than fifty years, photograph
Albert Robinson
- 8 "New York City Housing Authority Management Division: Harlem River Houses, Study of Incomes of 4,832 Classified Applications," March 11, 1937
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
- 9 Works Progress Administration, unit plans, ca. 1937
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
Harlem River Houses differs from its NYCHA successors. Two-, three-, four-, and five-room apartments were configured in more than eighty different ways. Subsequent housing plans would standardized unit types according to the number of bedrooms.
- 10 View of a resident in her kitchen, ca. 1937, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy NYC Municipal Archives
Every apartment was equipped with electric lighting, hot water, and steam heating—a first for many initial residents.
- 11 Works Progress Administration, May Day Celebration, May 26, 1938, pamphlet
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
The Education and Recreation Department of the WPA hosted a free May Day celebration in 1938.
- 12 Nursery School, ca. 1938-39; Dental Clinic, February 15, 1944, reproductions of photoprints
Courtesy NYC Municipal Archives
The Nursery School (above) accommodated up to sixty children. (below) Open to residents and neighbors, a health clinic provided services such as dental care and tuberculosis screening.
- 13 Rotogravure Picture Section, *The New York Times*, March 24, 1940
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
This page featuring aerial photographs of six newly completed NYCHA developments emphasizes the city's efforts to solve some of the period's housing problems.
- 14 Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, *Harlem River Houses*, 1937
Courtesy Seymour B. Durst Collection, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

HERBERT AND KATHERINE JACOBS HOUSE

YEAR 1937
ARCHITECT Frank Lloyd Wright
LOCATION Madison, WI
CLIENT Herbert and Katherine Jacobs

TYPE Single-family house
UNITS 1

1 Elizabeth, Katherine, and Susan Jacobs, outside on the living room terrace of the Jacobs House, 1941, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The Jacobs House represents Wright's first effort to design a "Usonian" home—the name, an acronym for "United States of North America," he applied to works aimed at creating a distinctly American architecture. The 1,500-square-foot prototype for a modest, affordable, and efficient dwelling was built on a budget of \$5,500. The clients financed the house with \$4,500 from a local building and loan company, after the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) refused to guarantee a mortgage through conventional lenders. Wright kept costs down by building the house on a concrete slab (as opposed to digging a foundation), by using prefabricated elements, and by constructing built-in furnishings. Lacking a formal entryway as well as formal living and dining rooms, the open plan of the house reflected Wright's idea of an informal, middle-class lifestyle. Rather

than face the street, the house opened onto a private patio, garden, and landscape.

The internal layout, efficient kitchen, integrated carport, and extensive use of prefabrication found at the Jacobs house, among other features, came to define the detached, single-family suburban home in subsequent decades. Yet the FHA's refusal to finance this house and others like it due to their unique building system and fears concerning their resale value would limit Wright's direct involvement in the postwar building boom.

Wright designed the house to help the family weather Wisconsin's winters and to enjoy the long days and moderate temperatures of its spring and summer.

2 Susan and Elizabeth Jacobs in the living room of the Jacobs House, 1941, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

3 View of the fields and woods behind the Jacobs house, n.d., reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The Jacobs house was built on the outskirts of Madison, WI, which

at the time was being bought, subdivided, and transformed into a suburban landscape. A reporter for the *Capital Times*, Herbert Jacobs had a short, fifteen-mile commute into the city.

August 18, and September 28, 1936

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In this letter (left), Herbert Jacobs expresses his openness to utilizing what were then unusual building systems for middle-class American homes, including radiant floor heating. However, family needs at times conflicted with Wright's vision of how they should live.

Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Related to earlier "Prairie-Style" experiments in upper-middle-class residences, the Jacobs House was more modest in scale and informal in character.

- 4 Katherine and Herbert Jacobs in the living room, 1938, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The scale and mass of the masonry hearth, contrasting sharply with the lightness of the living room furniture, underscore the importance of this feature for Wright.

- 7 Frank Lloyd Wright, two views, 1937, ink, pencil, and watercolor on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The Broadacre City exhibition included models of single-family homes to serve as the basic housing types for residents. The Jacobs House commission offered Wright his first opportunity to develop a moderately priced home based on these earlier schemes.

- 9 Frank Lloyd Wright, "Unconnected Notes on the Lecture on the Jacobs House by Frank Lloyd Wright," 1938, unpublished

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Here Wright places the Jacobs house within the context of the rapidly changing technological, social, and cultural landscape of the middle-class home.

- 5 Frank Lloyd Wright, section, 1937, pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In his attempt to shear the single-family house to its essentials, Wright eliminated a number of features common to homes of the era.

- 10 Frank Lloyd Wright, publication plan, 1937, ink on paper

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The first in a series of "Usonian" homes, the Jacobs House included many of the features that would be developed in subsequent projects across the nation.

- 6 Letters from Herbert A. Jacobs to Frank Lloyd Wright, August 10,

- 8 Frank Lloyd Wright, view of interior, 1937, ink, pencil, and watercolor on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The

EAST RIVER HOUSES

YEAR	1939-41	Avenue and FDR Drive, New York, NY	1	Site plan and floor plans, 1941, reproduction of ink on paper Courtesy The New York City Housing Authority
ARCHITECT	Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, with Alfred Easton Poor and C.W. Schlusing	CLIENT	The New York City Housing Authority	
LANDSCAPE	Alfred Geiffert	TYPE	29 multifamily towers of 6 to 11 stories	Though dissimilar in many ways, East River Houses does share affinities with Harlem River Houses, especially in its unit plans, which wind in Z-shaped sections around symmetrical courts, set apart from the street.
LOCATION	East 102nd to 105th Streets btwn First	UNITS	1,232	

Following its creation in 1934, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) gradually began demolishing and rebuilding urban areas designated as “slums.” East River Houses occupies the site of the agency’s first “slum clearance” in Harlem. Mayor Fiorello La Guardia steered the superblock project—the first high-rise, low-income housing developed in the city—to his old neighborhood. Originally, tenants were primarily Italian and Puerto Rican. Lease agreements required that at least one tenant per unit was a U.S. citizen. Residents were sorted into three income tiers with means-tested rents. Although federal policy at the time discouraged adding stores and other program elements to public housing, social rooms were included for residents’ use. Local agencies

and nonprofit organizations also staffed a nursery school and health center.

Built for about half the cost per unit of Harlem River Houses, East River Houses reflects the austerity imposed by the 1937 Housing Act in its unprecedented density and spartan design. Principal architect Ralph Walker (who Frank Lloyd Wright called “the only other honest architect in America”) chafed at NYCHA’s budget and lamented the limits it placed on the design: elevators skipped floors, for example, and ornamental details were minimized. The team managed to work within these constraints, however, to create a complex of large but unimposing scale, filled with sunlit rooms.

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- 2 Site, February 1, 1940, reproduction of photograph
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

East River Houses marked the local beginning of what became known as “slum clearance,” a process by which the government designated tracts of land as blighted in order to demolish the existing buildings, displacing residents, for new construction.
- 3 NYCHA’s 10th Annual Report, ca. 1944
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

- 4 From top to bottom:
Aerial photograph of East River Houses, n.d., reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy NYC Municipal Archives
- Pencil Points*, September 1940, pg. 559; Sun Studies for East River Houses, *Pencil Points*, September 1940, pg. 557
Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York
- Based on solar studies carried out with a "sun machine" owned by the Columbia University School of Architecture, higher towers were placed to the north of smaller ones. This optimized the sunlight, air, and views reaching each unit, while also breaking up the overall density of the complex.
- 5 The New York City Housing Authority, *East River Houses: Public Housing in East Harlem*, July 1941, pgs. 14-17
Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York
- 6 Moving in day at the still-unfinished East River Houses, April 1, 1941, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives,
- La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
- When it opened, NYCHA received over fourteen thousand applications from potential residents.
- 7 From top to bottom: East River Houses tenant poses with her children in their new kitchen, June 6, 1941, reproduction of photoprint; Group of tenants putting food in preserve jars, June 11, 1945, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
- 8 Aerial view, Chester B. Price (renderer), *Pencil Points*, September 1940, pg. 559
Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York
- This rendering provides a bird's eye view, highlighting the central axis of the complex and revealing its sun-lit, south-facing façades.
- 9 From top to bottom: The Solar family in their new apartment, c. 1941, reproduction of photoprint; A family poses in their
- living room, ca. 1941, reproduction of photoprint; Children enjoying the playground, c. 1941, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
- East River Houses was a racially integrated complex, accommodating Italian, Puerto Rican, and African American residents.
- 10 Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith façade and construction details, Chester B. Price (renderer), *Pencil Points*, September 1940, pgs. 562-565
Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York
- The architects of East River Houses were known for their designs of Art Deco skyscrapers. Here, economic constraints forced them to look for new ways to manage a tall, dense building without resorting to elaborate ornamentation. Ultimately they chose a mix of brick colors and a series of patriotic bas-reliefs to animate the buildings' façades.

SUNTOP HOMES

YEAR	1939	TYPE	4 multifamily buildings	1	Frank Lloyd Wright, exterior view, 1939, pencil on paper
ARCHITECT	Frank Lloyd Wright		of 4 units each		
LOCATION	Ardmore, PA	UNITS	16 (only 4 units were built)		The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
CLIENT	Otto Mallery and the Tod Company				

Like concurrent urban experiments, Wright's Suntop Homes presented a prototype for low-cost, multifamily housing—only of lower density. The architect's original plan contained four buildings, each of which connected four single-family dwellings in a pinwheel formation for a total of sixteen units.

Each three-story, 2,300-square-foot dwelling was designed to create a rich domestic environment for a young, upwardly mobile family, imagined here as one in which the husband commutes to the city for work while the mother remains at home with the children. In addition to the master bedroom, two children's rooms were included, along with one shared bathroom. A living room with built-in seating and an eat-in kitchen that projected into the living room below provided social spaces, and a sun terrace off

the children's rooms created places for relaxation, exercise, and play.

The aim was to combine the privacy of a single-family home with the efficiencies of a multifamily building. Wright planned the development so that, even though units shared party walls and a single drainage system, no dwelling directly faced another, and each opened onto its own green space.

Wright secured a patent for his design with the intention of having Otto Mallery sell development rights nationwide. The two encountered many of the same challenges with their small-scale, privately funded experiment that NYCHA faced on a larger scale in Harlem. Building viable models of modern, efficient, and affordable housing pitted social ideals and architectural innovations against limited budgets.

With Suntop, Wright sought to scale his vision for the Usonian house to the multifamily building. From the street, each three-story, four-unit block appears as a single, detached building. "Your quartet house," Mallery declared to Wright, "is to the suburban villa what the Diesel engine is to the steam locomotive."

2 Frank Lloyd Wright, drawing of stack, fireplace, and kitchen (detail), 1939, pencil on paper

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Here Wright's preference for nesting the large central hearth and kitchen within a single service core is adapted to the new quadruple plan.

3 Exterior view, 1939, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Each Suntop dwelling featured a private sun terrace and balcony, as well as a garden that was screened off from the street by a lapped board fence.

4 Telegram from Frank Lloyd Wright to Otto T. Mallery, June 15, 1938

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright's fiery telegram followed a letter from Mallery explaining that the project's underwriters wanted them to raise the listed rent.

5 Exterior view, 1939, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

By extending the party walls that divided the units, Wright's scheme equipped each residence with privacy from its neighbors

and unique views into the surrounding landscape.

6 Interior view, 1939, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright's use of built-in furniture in Suntop Homes—such as the shelves, sofa, and table in this photograph—helped to maximize the use of space throughout the units.

7 Frank Lloyd Wright, revised plot plan, 1939, pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Although four blocks were planned, only one was ever built due to opposition from neighbors. Two university professors and two assistant museum directors became the building's first tenants, renting their apartments for \$55 a month each.

8 Frank Lloyd Wright, plan and section, 1939, pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine

Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The configuration of each unit was designed to help residents keep a watchful eye on family members. From the mezzanine on the second floor, people preparing meals could supervise children playing in the living room or outside in the garden.

9 Letter from Otto T. Mallery to Frank Lloyd Wright, April 20, 1938

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Mallery's excitement here highlights the ability for innovation in building technology to make light, air, and space integral to higher-density housing.

10 Letter from Otto T. Mallery to Frank Lloyd Wright, January 18, 1939

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

This letter came on the heels of a disagreement about how much and when Wright was to be paid by the Mallery Company.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER HOUSES

YEAR	1947-58		Streets btwn Park and	1	Site, January 25, 1954, reproduc-
ARCHITECT	Kahn & Jacobs		Madison Avenues, New		tion of photoprint
LANDSCAPE	Clarke, Rapuano &		York, NY		Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives,
	Holleran	CLIENT	The New York City		La Guardia Community College/The City
RENOVATION	Ralph Pomerance, Simon		Housing Authority		University of New York
	Breines, and M. Paul	TYPE	13 multifamily towers of	2	"Suggestions and Instructions,"
	Friedberg		6 and 15 stories		from the Handbook for Tenants,
LOCATION	East 99th to 106th	UNITS	1,246		issued by the Manager, ca. 1954

This state-funded project grew in concert with nearby Mt. Sinai Hospital during the 1940s and 1950s. Benefitting from eminent domain connected to the housing development, the hospital pushed to extend south of 102nd Street, in order to provide employee housing and parking. In exchange, it provided medical and psychiatric facilities for Carver Houses. The two institutions also shared an architect: Columbia-trained Ely Jacques Kahn.

Residential towers of different heights (some with shared balconies) rose from a naturalistic setting designed by Robert Moses-favorites Clarke, Rapuano & Holleran. Beginning in the late 1950s, the Vincent Astor Foundation supported

an initiative to re-landscape public housing to accommodate baby-boomer children and house new programs in spaces designed on the model of outdoor rooms. The intervention built on Albert Mayer's proposal for the 1959 redesign of Johnson Houses, but incorporated more durable plants and materials. As part of this initiative, Pomerance, Breines and Friedberg redesigned Carver's grounds in 1964 to feature hardscapes and to accommodate the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) first amphitheater, which created a neighborhood commons and an active, versatile space.

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

3 Invitation to the cornerstone laying ceremony, December 22, 1954, ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

4 The New York Housing Authority, site plan, April 1, 1954, ink and red pencil on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

This site plan for George Washington Carver Houses indicates in red pencil the apartments that would receive more sunlight during certain times of day. The plan is unusual

for its depth of formal symmetry, working on major and minor axes at several scales to form two semi-enclosed courts, resolving a site consisting of an asymmetrical group of superblocks.

- 5 Program pamphlet for the Dedication Ceremony of the Carver Amphitheater, June 6, 1964, ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

- 6 The New York Housing Authority, Rental Drawings, ca. 1954, ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

- 7 Kahn and Jacobs (Architects), view of the entrance, 1957, reproduction of photoprint

Unknown photographer for Kahn & Jacobs / Museum of the City of New York

George Washington Carver Houses was the first public housing development in New York with private balconies, heretofore a feature of more expensive market rate housing. Bay View and Marlboro Houses in Brook-

lyn, built around the same time, feature communal balconies.

- 8 Aerial View of East Harlem, including George Washington Carver Houses, ca. 1958, reproduction of photoprint

Photographer unknown / Museum of the City of New York

George Washington Carver Houses was built on seven city blocks between 99th and 106th streets, from Madison to Park Avenues. It is among the largest complexes in the Harlem Area (comparable to Washington and Wagner). Low-rise buildings align with the grid, while the towers are turned 45 degrees.

- 9 Clockwise from top left: David Hirsh (photographer), view of the Plaza, ca. 1964, reproduction of photoprint; David Hirsh (photographer), kids playing on amphitheater steps, ca. 1964, reproduction of photoprint; David Hirsh (photographer), kids playing on the brick wall, ca. 1964, reproduction of photoprint; David Hirsh (photographer), view of the Plaza, ca. 1964, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy Simon Breines papers, ca. 1930-1990, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

The landscape of the George Washington Carver Houses was redesigned beginning in the late 1950s to incorporate new amenities such as a plaza, plantings, and an amphitheater.

- 10 Amphitheater Steps and Sunbreak, Mallow (illustrator), May 19, 1964, photograph of ink on paper

Courtesy Simon Breines papers, ca. 1930-1990, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

The construction of an amphitheater provided outdoor space for civic and cultural activities, as well as play, at George Washington Carver Houses.

GOETSCH-WINCKLER HOUSE

YEAR	1938-40	TYPE	Single-family house	1	Frank Lloyd Wright, millwork details, 1939, pencil on paper
ARCHITECT	Frank Lloyd Wright	UNITS	1		
LOCATION	Okemos, MI				
CLIENT	Alma A. Goetsch and Katherine Winckler				The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright developed the Usonia I community plan for a cooperative of seven Michigan State College teachers looking to live together on a 40-acre parcel outside Lansing, Michigan. The plan included gardens on each individual plot as well as a communal farm, work sheds, and space for a caretaker. To Wright's and his clients' consternation, however, the Federal Housing Authority repeatedly denied approval of the loans needed to begin construction, and thus the project never got off the ground.

After the cooperative disbanded, two of its members—art teachers Alma A. Goetsch and Katherine Winckler—commissioned Wright to build them a

home on a nearby site. The independent, progressive women actively participated in every stage of design, relating their personal habits and social activities in letters to the architect so that he could customize the scheme. Broadly similar to the Jacobs house completed three years earlier, the Goetsch-Winckler house demonstrates how the Usonian ideal could be adapted to suit a variety of living arrangements.

Wright was interested in designing small, efficient, and functional kitchens for his Usonian homes. While prefabrication remained the ideal, this project still required a great deal of hand-crafted cabinetry and millwork.

2 Exterior and interior views, Hedrich Blessing (photographer), 1941, reproductions of photoprints

Courtesy Chicago History Museum, Hedrich-Blessing Collection, HB-06661-A, HB-06661-C, HB-06661-D, HB-06661-E

Throughout his career Wright showed a talent for creating good publicity. These carefully composed commercial photographs of the Goetsch-Winckler house circulated in major architectural publications and helped to shape the demand for his services.

- 3 Frank Lloyd Wright, plan, 1939, pencil on paper
The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Unlike the Jacobs House, which was designed for a traditional nuclear family, the Goetsch-Winckler house was designed for two women who had chosen to live together. "The Misses" Winckler and Goetsch, art instructors at Michigan State, were known to be independent-minded and politically progressive women.

- 4 Letter from Katherine Winckler and Alma A. Goetsch to Frank Lloyd Wright, October 25, 1938
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In this letter, the clients describe their daily routines and interests in detail, as well as features they desired for their home. Most of Wright's houses were tailored to the specific needs and lifestyles of their clients.

- 5 Letter from Katherine Winckler and Alma A. Goetsch to Frank Lloyd Wright, July 23, 1939
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In this letter, Winckler and Goetsch call the architect's attention to some lingering issues with the plan, from details involving cupboard space to the house's orientation on the site.

- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright, plot plan of Usonia I, 1939, ink and pencil on paper
The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Usonia I was Wright's first large-scale effort to demonstrate the principles of Broadacre City in a planned community development. The plan featured seven Usonian homes, a common farm, orchard, and pond. A series of cooperative communities followed this one, including Cooperative Homesteads (1942) in Detroit, Michigan; Parkwyn Village (1947) in Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Usonia Homes (1947) in Westchester, New York.

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON HOUSES

YEAR	1942-48		Park Avenues, New York, NY	1	Rental drawings, 1957, reproduction of ink on paper Courtesy The New York City Housing Authority
ARCHITECT	Julian Whittlesey, Harry M. Prince, and Robert J. Reiley	CLIENT	The New York City Housing Authority		
LOCATION	East 112th to 115th Streets btwn Third and	TYPE	10 multifamily towers of 14 stories each	2	View of the courtyard, April, 1949, reproduction of photoprint Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
		UNITS	1,308		

Upon assuming effective control of the city's housing program in 1941, Robert Moses proposed a group of large "Post War Works" that included James Weldon Johnson Houses. The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) intended this project to serve Harlem's Puerto Rican community, but anti-segregationist organizers pressured for integration. When opened in 1948, Johnson Houses had Puerto Rican (25%), African American (58%), and white (16%) tenants. The effect of only nominally integrating this and other projects was to harden segregation within the city: by 1956, white tenants formed only seven percent of the population at Johnson Houses, and by 1965, zero percent.

The cruciform-plan towers had glass-block walls with operable windows, designed to bring light and air into

stairwells and corridors. Even so, concerns about alienation as well as racial strife in the complex led to the commissioning in 1944 of an alternate community center. William Lescaze based his new scheme, which was never built, on studies of local youth culture.

By the mid-1950s complaints about life in the city's high-rise developments were routine. Johnson Houses was criticized as overcrowded and underserved, with inadequate recreation space and daycare. NYCHA began a series of renovations in 1959. As part of this effort, Columbia University graduate Albert Mayer designed a pedestrian promenade connecting Jefferson Park with the Park Avenue Market via Johnson and Jefferson houses. This landscape, however, went unrealized.

The large interior courtyard of the Johnson Houses was regarded by NYCHA as innovative in its day, due to the inclusion of playgrounds for resident children. As war veterans were given housing preference, playground structures reflected vaguely militaristic themes.

- 3 Julian Whittlesey, Harry M. Prince, Robert J. Reiley, James Weldon Johnson Houses, by L. Marinoff (renderer), ca. 1940, photoprint
Courtesy The New York City Housing Authority. Graphic, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

NYCHA resisted naming earlier, segregated developments such as

Harlem River Houses after prominent African Americans, which would have effectively coded them in racial terms; Johnson Houses would be the first. In addition to authoring literary works, Harlem Renaissance poet and civil-rights leader James Weldon Johnson co-wrote the seminal social and historical study of African Americans in New York, *Black Metropolis* (1930). Recognition of Johnson's accomplishments came at a moment when the integration movement was gaining strength. With Johnson Houses, the city began recasting NYCHA projects as legally integrated at the same time it began coding them in racial terms.

- 4 Key site plan, July 26, 1956, reproduction of ink on paper
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

This site plan of James Weldon Johnson Houses includes data on its 11 pinwheel towers, using 5 basic plans all organized around central circulation. Two of the towers contain the nursery school. Z-plan low-rises attach

to six of the towers and house secondary cores. Apartments consist of between 2 and 6 rooms, for an average of 4.2 rooms per unit (compare this with Dunbar's original 3-7 room range and 4.7 room average).

- 5 Fourth Annual Summer Festival, poster, ca. 1953, ink on paper
Courtesy James Weldon Johnson Community Centers, Inc. records, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

James Weldon Johnson Community Center arranged an annual summer festival, to which it invited residents of the complex together with all residents of East Harlem to enjoy music and other performing arts on the plaza. The event exemplifies the important ways in which public housing engages its larger environment.

- 6 Clockwise from top left: James Weldon Johnson Houses under construction, June 10, 1947, reproduction of photoprint; James Weldon Johnson Houses under construction, September 29, 1947, reproduction of photoprint; View of built tower of James Weldon Johnson Houses,

September 3, 1948, reproduction of photoprint; James Weldon Johnson Houses, June 18, 1949, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

COOPERATIVE HOMESTEADS

YEAR 1941-42
ARCHITECT Frank Lloyd Wright
LOCATION Detroit, MI (unbuilt)
CLIENT Cooperative Homesteads,
Inc.

TYPE Community development
UNITS 20

1 Frank Lloyd Wright,
interior perspective, 1942,
pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The
Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine
Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Inspired by Wright's views on decentralization, his support of cooperativism, and his libertarian political position, a cooperative of autoworkers commissioned the architect in 1941 to design a subsistence homestead community on 160 acres of farmland outside the city of Detroit. The resulting proposal called for a development of twenty single-family residences, each on a one-acre lot. Each dwelling was to include a small vegetable garden, as well as storage for produce, a workshop, and a carport. Building the houses would require grading and terracing the earth in order to create banked walls, which Wright considered an efficient, affordable, and natural method of insulating structures.

Members of the cooperative were expected to share their time, money, and labor to plan, finance, and build the community. Shortly after

construction began on a prototype, in the winter of 1941, the United States entered World War II and the project came to a halt. Many of the cooperative members were conscripted into service or otherwise called upon to work in the defense industry, which was then retooling Detroit auto plants and related factories—a process underway across the entire country at the time.

This drawing for Cooperative Homesteads presents a series of domestic vignettes, in which a father spans his son, a mother cooks a meal, and a daughter reads quietly under a clerestory window.

2 Views of the Cooperative Homesteads prototype under construction, 1942, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery
Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia
University, New York)

In the fall of 1942, members of the cooperative began building a prototypical home. Here, cooperative members build earthen walls and erect the roof.

- 3 Frank Lloyd Wright, rendering, 1942, colored pencil and ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

This exterior rendering of a house in Wright's Cooperative Homesteads features a cooperative member with a wheelbarrow, working in his yard.

- 4 Frank Lloyd Wright, aerial view, 1942, ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

This aerial view of Cooperative Homesteads illustrates the project's unique synthesis of working agricultural land and the emerging practices of suburban development. Domestic agriculture remained fairly common among the working classes in suburban areas at this time.

- 5 Frank Lloyd Wright, drainage plan, 1942, ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In his notes, Wright explains that building into the earth integrates the homesteads with the landscape, provides natural insulation, and facilitates self-building by cooperative members. A low, flat roof resting on banks of earth carries water away from the house.

- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright, "Concerning the Homesteads—Detroit," November 30, 1942

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In this text, Wright outlines the principles of his Cooperative Homestead project. He emphasizes that the houses were designed to be built by the cooperative members themselves, working collaboratively, using the time at their disposal, and spending only what was within their means.

- 7 Letter from Fred Thornthwaite to Frank Lloyd Wright, November 17, 1941

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In his letter to Wright, Fred Thornthwaite, head of the Cooperative Homesteads cooperative, relays that its members deeply sympathize with the architect's economic, political, and social views.

RIVERTON HOUSES

YEAR	1944-48	CLIENT	Metropolitan Life	1	"Our World," <i>The Riverton</i> , May, ca. 1948, 34-39
ARCHITECT	Irwin Clavan		Insurance Company		
LOCATION	East 135th to 138th Streets along Harlem River Drive, New York, NY	TYPE	7 residential towers of 13 stories each		Courtesy Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations
		UNITS	1,232		

In response to legal challenges and accusations of racial exclusion leveled at its Stuyvesant Town development, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company created Riverton Houses. Although technically open to all, only African Americans were expected to live in the complex. Veterans were given priority and made up the initial group of tenants.

Robert Moses sought to replicate Metropolitan Life's Parkchester development as a model of large scale, private-sector, limited-dividend rental housing. During negotiations with the company in 1943, he pushed through the Redevelopment Companies Law, which reduced taxation and oversight of limited-dividend projects while allowing the city to exercise eminent domain for middle-income, private housing. Architect Irwin Clavan, who had worked for Shreve,

Lamb & Harmon on Williamsburg Houses, designed the moderate-rent complex, which benefited from the new law's provisions.

People often mistook Riverton for public housing, based on its external appearance. As would-be tenants could see, however, by comparing model units of Riverton and Johnson Houses on display at the uptown store Spear and Co., Riverton's private apartments were 40 percent larger. Concrete walls were finished with plaster rather than just paint, and floors were made of oak rather than asbestos tile. Additional bonuses at Riverton included concealed plumbing, closet doors, and elevators that stopped at every floor.

2 From top to bottom: Herman Huff (photographer, photo bureau, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company), "East 137 St. & Madison Avenue, Facing West from the [Madison Ave] Bridge," April 11, 1946, reproduction of photoprint; Aerial view during construction, June 15, 1947, reproduction of photoprint; View of Riverton Houses and park, July 1950, reproduction of photoprint; Herman Huff (photographer, NJ Office of Family Affair Records), Security Guards outside Riverton Houses, n.d., reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy Photographs & Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

"Harlem Week to Center on Jim Crow Housing," story from an unknown source, ca. 1940s

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

Metropolitan Life's restriction of tenancy to whites only in Stuyvesant Town caused a backlash led by the City-Wide Citizen's Committee on Harlem. When the construction of Riverton was proposed, the Committee resisted, noting that it wouldn't change the precedent that had been set. In his 1960 essay "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," James Baldwin argued that "Harlem watched Riverton go up...with the most violent bitterness of spirit."

3 Floor plans and site plans, n.d., reproductions of ink and colored pencil on paper

Courtesy Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

The floor plans of Riverton Houses were identical to those used at Stuyvesant Town, an earlier, downtown development built by Metropolitan Life Insur-

ance Company that was restricted to white residents only. The site plan (below) shows voting precincts and polling places under consideration.

4 Mattie Carrie Faulkner and her two children moving in, July 29, 1947, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy Photographs & Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

Mattie Carrie Faulkner moved into Riverton Houses prior to its completion, having recently separated from her husband following a highly publicized lawsuit with boxer Joe Louis. Her sons, Kenneth (left) and Ronald (right), were the first children to live in the development. Faulkner, who later changed her name to Carolle Drake, went on to enjoy a successful career as a model and actor, appearing in the 1957 film *Band of Angels*.

5 Living room, n.d., reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy Photographs & Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

Compared to public housing of the time, Riverton's apartments were 40 percent larger, and interior walls were finished with plaster rather than just paint, concealed plumbing, and closet doors.

6 "Magazine Slanders Riverton Tenants," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 18, 1960

Courtesy *New York Amsterdam News*

Outraged by Baldwin's essay (see 2 and title wall), residents and community members published a coordinated response in the *New York Amsterdam News*.

7 Clockwise from top left: Juliette G. and Michael D. (rear right) celebrate her "Sweet 16" with (left to right) Butch Hudson, Winnie M., Chris "Buddy" J., Yvonne L., Edyth A., and Beverly W., 1958, photograph; Alvin M., ca. 1960, photograph; Residents of Riverton Houses, cooling off in the courtyard, n.d., photograph; "Miss Riverton" Denise L. shown with Juliette G. and Roslyn A., ca. 1955, photograph

Jim Collier

CRYSTAL CITY

YEAR	1940-41	TYPE	24 multifamily towers of	1	Frank Lloyd Wright, floor plan of a tower, 1940, ink on paper
ARCHITECT	Frank Lloyd Wright		12 to 14 stories		
LOCATION	Washington, DC (unbuilt)	UNITS	2,500 apartments and		The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
CLIENT	Roy S. Thurman		hotel rooms		

In Crystal City, Wright interpreted the type of iconic, high-rise, large-scale, mixed-use superblock that would guide redevelopment of the American city throughout the postwar era.

Developer Roy S. Thurman had an option on one of the largest available tracts in Washington, DC—the grounds of a large, historic estate. He hired Wright, who designed a massive residential, commercial, and entertainment complex for the 10-acre site, which was promoted as a “Radio City” for the District.

Wright’s design proposed a series of towers rising from a multilevel plinth containing a high-end shopping center, a large movie theatre, and a five-story parking

deck. This city within the city provided a place where local white-collar workers and visitors could live, shop, eat, and even enjoy a film without ever having to leave. Plans for the complex, which would have been the largest in the nation, were turned down by the Washington, DC planning department, due to numerous zoning violations.

The towers of Crystal City were closely modeled on Wright’s unbuilt proposal for apartments for St. Mark’s-in-the-Bouwerie, a residential project from the late 1920s. These in turn had played an important role in Broadacre City, where Wright scattered them throughout the landscape. In Crystal City the majority of the towers are conjoined, as illustrated in this typical floor plan.

- 2 Fairchild Aerial Surveys, Inc., aerial photograph of the site, Washington, DC, 1940, reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The Crystal City proposal immediately hit a roadblock when it was submitted to the city planning board. The project violated

ordinances limiting the height of buildings to 110 feet and, more seriously, flew in the face of the city's zoning code, which assumed a clear separation between residential and commercial uses.

- 3 Frank Lloyd Wright, plan of entrance level, 1940, ink on paper

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright boasted to the *Washington Post* in 1940 that Crystal City would be “earthquake-proof” and a “poor bomb target” on account of the apartment towers’ tapering tops. In that same year, he also described Broadacre City as “bomb-proof” to *The New York Times*.

- 4 Letter from DC resident Charlotte Clark to Frank Lloyd Wright, 1940

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

While viewed with suspicion by the DC planning board, Wright’s proposal was lauded in the press

as an exciting new landmark. But what did local residents think of Crystal City? In this letter, a DC resident living across the street from the site expresses concern that the massive development will block her views and keep sunlight from reaching her terrace.

- 5 Topographic plate of Temple Heights, Washington DC, 1930, ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In 1940 developer Roy S. Thurman purchased a 10-acre tract of mostly undeveloped land at the intersection of Florida and Connecticut Avenues in the Temple Heights neighborhood of northwest Washington, DC. After Wright accepted the commission to design his large, multi-use complex, Thurman described their relationship as a “marriage of love and compatibility and a common goal.”

- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright, aerial view, 1940, ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Crystal City’s iconic profile, innovative mix of programs, and integrated parking made it a precedent for future superblock developments across the country. In his survey of Wright’s work, *In the Nature of Materials* (1942), architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock hailed the project as “a model of how the urban ideal might be maintained in the mid-twentieth century.”

- 7 Frank Lloyd Wright, elevation, 1940, pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The most prominent features of Crystal City were its towers, which would have created a new skyline for the low, horizontal city. The cluster of twenty-four towers contained 2,500 apartment and hotel rooms, responding to the rapid growth of the federal government at the time.

JEFFERSON HOUSES

YEAR	1950-59		Third Avenues, New York, NY	1	The New York City Housing Authority, rental drawings, ca. 1953, reproduction of ink on paper
ARCHITECT	Brown & Guenther				
LANDSCAPE	Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass	CLIENT	The New York City Housing Authority		Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
LOCATION	East 112th to 115th Streets btwn First and	TYPE	18 multifamily towers of 7 to 14 stories		
		UNITS	1,493		The plan of Jefferson Houses represents a shift from earlier cruciform towers. Its slab form provides its residents with more open views and through ventilation.

Together with Washington Houses, Jefferson Houses belongs to the first group of public projects built under the 1949 Housing Act, whose Title III offered federal subsidies for construction and maintenance. George D. Brown Jr., a Columbia alumnus, met Bernard Guenther while working in the State Division of Housing during World War II. The architects' double-diamond plan represents a transition between earlier cruciform towers and later slab buildings designed around double-loaded corridors.

In 1959 Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass renovated Jefferson Houses' grounds, making it the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) first Harlem location to be re-landscaped. Albert Mayer had long been active in the Housing Study Guild and Union Settlement Association and

was at the time replanning Delhi, India with support from the Ford Foundation. At Jefferson Houses he combined playgrounds, picnic areas, a fountain, bandstand, and children's sprinkler with quiet, detached sitting areas.

Often comparing it to Lincoln Center, Mayer saw the new plaza as part of a democratic "decentralization of excellence" throughout the city. Events hosted on the site (renamed Gala East Harlem Plaza) brought opera, ballet, symphonies, traditional Italian dance, African drumming, and folk music to East Harlem. The re-design marked a turning point in the critique of public housing, away from an aversion to density (as expressed by Catherine Bauer) to a focus on community fabric (as articulated by Jane Jacobs).

- 2 Aerial view of the site, August 29, 1957, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
This view looking southwest from East 112th Street shows part of the 17-acre site cleared to build Jefferson Houses in East Harlem.
- 3 View from East 112th Street and Second Avenue, September 18, 1956, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

Jefferson Houses is located in East Harlem, home to diverse racial and ethnic groups including African American, Italian, and Puerto Rican populations. Yet Jefferson Houses was criticized for creating pockets lacking in street-life that would have reflected this diversity, providing a rationale for the Gala East Harlem Plaza project.

- 4 The New York City Housing Authority, key site plan, ca. 1953, reproduction of ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

- 5 The New York City Housing Authority, *Twenty-Five Years of Public Housing*, ca. 1960, excerpt from a printed book

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

The focal point of this image, featured in NYCHA's book celebrating its first twenty-five years of public housing development, is the re-landscaping of Jefferson Houses' public area, Gala East Harlem Plaza, designed by Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass.

- 6 Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, general play area, April 29, 1953, reproduction of ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

This drawing of the plaza by Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass contrasts the lively play area with the seemingly ghostly housing towers.

- 7 From top to bottom: View of Washington Houses, June 6, 1957, reproduction of photoprint; The New York City Housing Authority, rental drawings for Washington Houses, April 14, 1954, reproduction of ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

(above) The towers of Washington Houses were placed diagonal to the Manhattan grid. This allowed every unit to catch more sunlight. (below) The rental drawings for the contemporaneous Washington Houses demonstrate a shift, also shown with Jefferson, from the earlier cruciform plan of public housing to a linear

slab configuration. The slab forms features one long hallway with "double loaded" corridors. Thinner service areas allow every unit to have through ventilation.

CLOVERLEAF HOUSING PROJECT

YEAR	1941-42	TYPE	Community development	1	Frank Lloyd Wright, rendering of
ARCHITECT	Frank Lloyd Wright		with 25 multifamily		living room in a typical unit,
LOCATION	Pittsfield, MA (unbuilt)		buildings of 4 units		1942, colored pencil and ink on
CLIENT	Federal Works Agency, Defense Housing Division	UNITS	each		paper
			100		<small>The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)</small>

With the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, the United States positioned itself as a leading supplier of war materials for the Allied powers. Passage of the National Defense Housing Act in 1940 enabled the Federal Works Agency to begin building defense worker communities and to support a number of pilot projects in architecture, construction, and home finance that could serve as models for modern home building in the postwar era.

In 1941 defense housing administrators invited Frank Lloyd Wright to submit a proposal for a community near Pittsfield, MA. He repurposed the quadruple block housing first developed in Suntop Homes to a create a community with twenty-five buildings of four dwellings each on more than 100 acres of land. The site was chosen, the drawings were made, and the contract was signed, at

which time the project was abruptly cancelled. Due in part to congressional opposition representing the interests of local architects who had been passed over for the job, this move also reflected a more general antipathy toward the vision behind such modern, permanent, government-built communities. The postwar era would see a ramping up of housing production in both urban and suburban areas, reinvigorating debates about its proper form and methods.

Wright first expressed his interest in domestic environments supporting a more informal style of living in the Jacobs House; that interest carries over in this project. This rendering of domestic life in a Cloverleaf unit features a mother carrying food to a table where her child sits. Rather than separating spaces for cooking, eating, and living, Wright integrates them here.

2 Cost breakdown relating to a unit, 1942

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright's office estimated the cost of a typical Cloverleaf building for the Defense Housing

Division at approximately \$19,000, including architect's fees. The community plan called for twenty-five such buildings.

- 5 Frank Lloyd Wright, aerial view, 1942, colored pencil and ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

- 3 Frank Lloyd Wright, plan and details of kitchen, 1942, colored pencil and ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In a typical Cloverleaf unit, the kitchen, dining room, and pantry combined to form a single space.

The units of the Cloverleaf Housing development were nearly identical to those of Suntop Homes, with a few notable exceptions. In this scheme, individual units were sited further away from the road to accommodate a larger garden as well as a small, enclosed yard next to the carport. On the interior, the living room increased in size, the hearth became more substantial, and a larger wall of windows let in additional sunlight.

- 4 Frank Lloyd Wright, site plan, 1942, colored pencil and ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

While most of the developments built for the Defense Housing Division were subdivisions featuring detached, single-family houses on small individual lots, Wright used the quadruple housing scheme to create a community of greater residential density.

MORNINGSIDE GARDENS

YEAR	1952-58		and Amsterdam Avenue,	1	Morningside Heights Housing Corporation and Harrison & Abramovitz, site plan, ca. 1953, ink on paper
ARCHITECT	Harrison & Abramovitz, with coordination by H.H. Goldstone	CLIENT	New York, NY Morningside Heights Housing Corporation		
LOCATION	123rd to La Salle Streets btwn Broadway	TYPE	6 multifamily towers of 21 stories		Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York
		UNITS	1,493		

Led by Columbia University, Riverside Church, and the Rockefeller family, fourteen local, non-profit institutions formed Morningside Heights, Inc. (MHI) in the mid-1940s. Its aim was to separate Morningside Heights from Harlem by means of social, demographic, and urban planning. Echoing some of Wright's experiments in the early 1940s, the private limited-equity cooperative Morningside Gardens was the heart of MHI's planning efforts. Title I of the 1949 Housing Act allowed the federal government to resell the two-block site, which contained 1,626 families in dozens of tenements, at a reduced price. Initially, the majority of the new development's residents were white (75%); African American (20%), Asian (4%), and Puerto Rican (1%) residents made up a quarter of the tenancy. Approximately one-third of

the units were reserved for allocation by the MHI's sponsoring institutions.

Robert Moses repeated the strategy of bundling low- and middle-income housing together in subsequent development plans, such as Manhattan town and Washington Square. Architects Walter K. Harrison and Max Abramovitz were favorites of Rockefeller. At Morningside Gardens, they worked under Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (charged with coordinating New York City's Title I projects under the federal Housing Act of 1949) to outfit the towers with amenities such as balconies, a 24,000-square-foot shopping center (contrasting with Grant Houses' lack of retail shops), and a parking lot with double the spaces required by code.

- 2 Rendering, Robert Schwartz (renderer), 1958, photoprint
Max Abramovitz Architectural Records and Papers, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York
- This rendering features Morningside Gardens in the foreground and some of its sponsoring institutions in the background. Riverside Church, Union Theological Seminary, and Columbia University frame the project as an integral part of the "Acropolis."
- 3 Groundbreaking, 1954, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York
- Although the clearance plan that included the Morningside-Manhattanville area was

authorized by the Board of Estimate in 1950, the actual development plan received Board approval only in 1953. Following a series of protests that delayed the project, removal and relocation began in 1954.

- 4 The Mayor's Committee on Slum Clearance, "Morningside-Manhattanville Slum Clearance Plan under Title I of the Housing Act 1949," committee report, 1951

Courtesy Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

The committee's report to the Mayor on the "Morningside-Manhattanville Slum Clearance Plan" included a map indicating the future location of Morningside Gardens as well as other "slum clearance" projects. Speaking to the motivation of the plan, the document's authors note, "Through proper integration with the public housing project and with the institutional community, the redevelopment of this site should serve to safeguard an outstanding residential section from further deterioration."

- 5 Morningside Heights Housing Corporation and Harrison & Abramovitz, typical floor plan, ca. 1953, reproduction of ink on paper

Courtesy Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

A notable feature of the floor plan is the inclusion of private balconies. Carver Houses, the only low-income housing in Harlem with private terraces, had been an exception. Morningside Gardens and other higher-income projects like Lenox Terrace and Franklin Plaza included them as a rule.

- 6 Morningside Heights, Inc., "Relocation: Critical Phase of Redevelopment," 1957

Courtesy Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

This booklet summarizing the relocation process on Morningside Gardens' Title I site documents that construction was carried out in three phases. Demolition began as soon as residents in Section I were

completely relocated. Although it would have been less expensive if demolition and construction began at the same time, focusing on a partial section sped up relocation while providing temporary apartments (in sections II and III) for relocated tenants.

- 7 Views, n.d., reproductions of photoprints

Courtesy Wallace K. Harrison Architectural Drawings and Papers, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

- 8 Morningside Heights Housing Corporation, "Morningside Gardens Shopping Center," folded pamphlet, ca. 1956

Courtesy Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

This pamphlet promoting Morningside Gardens Shopping Center to potential commercial tenants conceived of its trading area as primarily for the neighborhood immediately surrounding MHI's institutions, and only secondarily for the larger area.

BENJAMIN ADELMAN HOUSE

YEAR 1951
ARCHITECT Frank Lloyd Wright
LOCATION Phoenix, AZ

CLIENT Benjamin Adelman
TYPE Single-family house
UNITS 1

The Benjamin Adelman House was the first of seven Usonian Automatic homes that Wright designed. Each used a system of concrete masonry construction based on a 12 x 24 x 4 inch block. Like earlier experiments with prefabricated components, including his American System-Built Houses of the 1910s and “textile block” houses of the 1920s, the Usonian system relied on a single modular element to create a variety of different forms and patterns.

Prominent national homebuilders such as Levitt & Sons saw prefabrication, modular construction, and efficient building systems as enabling construction of the single-family house on a truly industrial scale. Wright saw these, by contrast, as providing opportunities to involve homeowners directly in the provision of housing. He encouraged people to design and build for themselves from materials they themselves cast on site.

The idea of self-built housing for the masses projected in Broadacre City clashed with the realities of homebuilding. In the Adelman house and elsewhere in America: most owners had difficulty casting and assembling the concrete blocks, and almost all resorted to the use of a contractor. The challenge of combining the latest building technology with the tradition of the self-built home proved extremely difficult to surmount.

1 Letter from Frank Lloyd Wright to Benjamin Adelman, April 16, 1951

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright first estimated the Adelman House would cost \$15,000. The final cost was \$25,000.

2 Letter from Benjamin Adelman to Frank Lloyd Wright, April 19, 1951

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The Adelmans commissioned several projects from Wright in the 1940s, including a large laundry plant that was never built.

3 Letter from Benjamin Adelman to Frank Lloyd Wright, November 2, 1951

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Though the Adelmans were relatively wealthy, Wright

- promoted the Usonian Automatic for the “free man of our democracy” with moderate means.
- 4 Frank Lloyd Wright, section, 1951, pencil on paper
The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- The Adelman House was the first of seven Usonian Automatics built prior to Wright’s death in 1959.
- 5 “Frank Lloyd Wright and the Natural House,” *House & Home*, January 1955
Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York
- Here Wright explains the novel Usonian Automatic construction system, which he believed could drive down buildings costs.
- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright, sash schedule, 1951, pencil on paper
The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- To let in more light and ventilation, Wright included a large corner window in the living room.
- 7 Two views, 1951, reproductions of photoprints
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- The Adelman House was built using a 1 x 2 x 3 ½ inch block as a basic building module. In total, seven different variations were utilized, including a plain, coffered, and glazed version.
- 8 Interior view of living room, 1951, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- Unlike the decorative “textile” blocks that Wright used in a series of Los Angeles houses in the 1920s, the pre-cast concrete blocks used here were plain, hollow, and relatively light.
- 9 Interior view of kitchen, 1951, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- In *The Natural House* (1954), Wright explained that he viewed
- the kitchen of the Usonian Automatic as a workspace. For Adelman, he designed one that was efficient, well-lit, and with a higher ceiling to prevent heat and cooking odors from travelling to the rest of the house.
- 10 Frank Lloyd Wright, rendering, 1951, pencil on paper
The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- This view highlights the relationship of the house to the garden court at the rear, and beyond to the Southwestern landscape.
- 11 Frank Lloyd Wright, publication plan, 1951, ink on paper
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- The main 700-square-foot house was designed as the living quarters for the Adelman family. The smaller guest house included separate living quarters as well as a small maid’s room.

GENERAL GRANT HOUSES

YEAR	1952-57	CLIENT	The New York City Housing Authority;	1	Morningside Heights, Inc., posters for the Morningside-Manhattanville redevelopment, ca. 1952, marker on paper
ARCHITECT	Eggers & Higgins		Morningside Heights, Inc.		
LOCATION	123rd and La Salle Streets to 125th Street btwn Broadway and Morningside Avenue, New York, NY	TYPE	9 multifamily towers of 13 and 21 stories		Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York
		UNITS	1,940		

In concert with the development of Morningside Gardens, nearly two-thirds of Morningside Heights, Inc.'s (MHI) private institutions advocated for the General Grant housing development. In place of zoning techniques commonly used in the prewar period to achieve similar ends, Morningside Heights, Inc. (MHI) introduced "horizontal restrictions"—conceived as buffer zones formed by establishing nonprofit institutions and racially integrated middle-class housing in the area.

Working with the Mayor's Committee on Slum Clearance, the group addressed resistance to its strategies at local and federal levels by featuring the low-income Grant (as well as Manhattanville) Houses as part of its larger vision.

Public Housing Administration officials held up this project as "visible evidence of the highest and best use of public housing in an overall plan for the reclamation of an entire neighborhood."

Once completed, the twenty-one-story complex became The New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) tallest project to date. Eggers & Higgins—the successor firm of monumental classicist John Russell Pope—went on to design a Columbia gymnasium for Morningside Park, the construction of which would be halted in 1968 due to intense protests by members of the community and students.

Posters were produced by Morningside Heights, Inc. to advance the development of General Grant Houses and Morningside Gardens. Propaganda such as this was crucial for gaining proponents, as the redevelopment plan faced significant resistance from the community.

2 The New York City Housing Authority and Eggers & Higgins Architects, rendering, n.d., graphite on paper

Morningside Area Alliance Records, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

Upon its completion in 1957, General Grant Houses became NYCHA's tallest development. This rendering illustrates the twenty-one-story buildings' tremendous height in contrast to the surrounding neighbor-

hood. It also features Morning-
side Gardens, the public housing
project's private, middle-income
counterpart.

- 3 The New York City Housing Author-
ity and Eggers & Higgins, rental
drawings, 1955, ink on paper

Courtesy Morningside Area Alliance Records,
University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript
Library, Columbia University in the City of
New York

Grant Houses was built in the
slab style with double-loaded
corridors that had become typical
of NYCHA projects by that time.
The plan is not completely
rectangular; the outer line is
jagged, where some of the units
extend out to provide through
ventilation.

- 4 The New York City Housing Author-
ity and Eggers & Higgins, site
plan of General Grant houses,
1955, ink on paper

Courtesy Morningside Area Alliance Records,
University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript
Library, Columbia University in the City of
New York

The development included public
facilities such as a community
center and nursery school
(made available for residents

of the neighborhood as well),
off-street parking, baby
stroller storage space, and a
central laundry. The site borders
a public school.

- 5 The New York City Housing Author-
ity and Earl B. Lovell-S. P.
Belcher, Inc., parcel map, 1953,
reproduction of ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives,
La Guardia Community College/The City
University of New York

This parcel map illustrates
blocks of houses that were ob-
tained and demolished to produce
the General Grant Houses site.

- 6 Photokraft Photographers,
view, ca. 1950s, reproduction of
photoprint

Courtesy Photographs & Prints Division,
Schomburg Center for Research in Black
Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor,
Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

This photograph features two of
the Grant Houses towers as
well as the nursery school (now
Grant Day Care Center) that
provides educational programs
for children ranging from two to
four years old.

- 7 Housing Authority photographer,
view from West 125th Street and
Roosevelt Square, March 18, 1957,
reproduction of photoprint

Courtesy Photographs & Prints Division,
Schomburg Center for Research in Black
Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor,
Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

The photograph was taken in
1957, the year Grant Houses was
completed. Some of the project's
towers opened earlier, in 1956.
The first residents were five
families—two white, two African
American, and one Puerto Rican.
Grant Houses was planned as a
racially integrated development
but eventually became entirely
minority-occupied.

- 8 From left to right: Demolition
at the site of buildings one and
two, November 10, 1954; Demolition
at the site of building
three, January 24, 1955, repro-
ductions of photoprints

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives,
La Guardia Community College/The City
University of New York

USONIA HOMES

YEAR	1945-55	TYPE	Community development of	1	Letter from David M. Henken to
ARCHITECT	Frank Lloyd Wright		single-family houses		Frank Lloyd Wright, July 10, 1947
LOCATION	Pleasantville, NY	UNITS	50		Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
CLIENT	Usonia Homes, a				Archives (The Museum of Modern Art Avery
	Cooperative, Inc.				Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia
					University, New York)

Inspired by Wright's vision for Usonia I (which yielded the Goetsch-Winckler House), in 1945 a group of white, middle-class couples in New York City incorporated Usonia Homes and began pooling funds for the construction of a community outside of the city. In 1947 they purchased 100 acres of land in Westchester and hired Wright to develop a plan. The scheme included circular plots of roughly an acre each for fifty members, with the leftover acreage between plots serving as communal space. They began building five houses in 1948 as a pilot scheme, using cooperative and private funds; several more houses were begun using private funds exclusively. Further development awaited more extensive financing.

Impressed by their efforts, the Knickerbocker Savings and Loan Association agreed in 1950 to finance a group mortgage. Under its terms, Usonia Homes held the title to the land and homes, and it would pay the loan association, whereas members would hold ninety-nine-year, renewable leases and make monthly payments to the cooperative. The bank requested revising Wright's plan to include rectangular plots but ultimately accepted polygonal plots, which eliminated the interstitial communal space.

In 1955 members voted to take full ownership of their homes and lots, leaving the roads, community facilities, and 40 acres of communal land in control of the cooperative.

In this letter, the principal founder of Usonia Homes, David M. Henken, updates the architect on the status of the cooperative and makes several requests for changes to the community's plan. As the cooperative had grown to include fifty members, he asks Wright to create fifteen more plots on the remaining land.

2 Frank Lloyd Wright, site plan, 1948, reproduction of graphite and colored pencil on brownline print

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The cooperative purchased the site at a tax foreclosure auction for \$23,000. Wright intended that, for every acre of land set aside for a home (here indicated by a circle), another acre

would be set aside for parkland. Under the initial terms of the cooperative, each member agreed to pay a \$100 membership fee, a \$5 share, and \$50 a month toward a collective maintenance fund, in addition to covering the cost of their own home.

- 3 Merrill Folsoms, "Rash of Schisms Troubles Colony: Usonia Home Cooperative at Pleasantville Has Circle of Woes on Round Plots," *The New York Times*, May 14, 1955
Courtesy *The New York Times*

The cooperative thrived in the late 1940s and early 1950s. By the mid 1950s, however, it ran into obstacles: tax assessors had trouble evaluating the lots, some members defaulted on their mortgages, and banks refused to finance further construction. This encouraged members to vote to assume full ownership of their homes in 1955.

- 4 Frank Lloyd Wright, plot plan of Irwin Auerbach house, 1949, ink and pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

While Wright agreed to oversee the architectural design of the community, he only designed a few of the homes himself. One of these was Irwin and Ottalie Auerbach's house. On the plot plan he includes the site's topography, the home's footprint, and detailed technical descriptions of the building systems.

- 5 Frank Lloyd Wright, view of Auerbach house, 1949, colored pencil and ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In 1950, Ottilie and Irwin Auerbach informed Wright that they were concerned with the expense of the house he had designed for them and had decided against its construction. Though construction of the Auerbach House didn't proceed, three Wright designs were eventually built: the Sol Friedman House, the Serlin House, and the Reisley House.

- 6 Topographic survey of plot 44 with sketch of Irwin Auerbach house, 1949, ink and pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The most iconic features of the Usonia Homes plan are its 1-acre, circular lots. This topographic survey of plot 44 shows an early conceptual sketch of the Auerbach house, which was never built.

- 7 Letter from David T. Henken to Frank Lloyd Wright, December 23, 1945

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Henken had close ties to Wright. Inspired by the exhibition of Wright's work at the Museum of Modern Art in 1940, he left his job as an engineer to become a fellow under Wright at Taliesin, where he stayed for two years. After securing an agreement from Wright to design a community, he returned to New York to recruit more members for his cooperative. In 1945, they incorporated with thirteen families.

LENOX TERRACE

YEAR	1952-58	CLIENT	Godfrey Nurse Houses, Inc. (Robert Olnick)	1	Charles J. Spiess Jr., rendering of the retail building at Lenox Terrace, ca. 1958, tempera
ARCHITECT	S.J. Kessler & Sons				
LOCATION	134th to 135th Streets btwn 5th and Lenox Avenues, New York, NY	TYPE	6 multifamily towers of 16 stories each		Lenox Terrace Management Office
		UNITS	1,716		

A semi-circular driveway and port cochère welcome tenants to Lenox Terrace, today “Harlem’s finest luxury-styled residential community” according to its website. The former Godfrey Nurse Houses were designed as luxury apartments from the beginning, for a tenancy that was almost entirely African American. Amenities like a “modern” lobby with doormen and a glass entryway, and private terraces in many of the units, made it “Harlem’s most desirable address,” (1968) according to *The New York Times*.

Constructing the Godfrey Nurse Houses was not easy. It was part of the federal Housing Act of 1949 Title I “Slum Clearance Plan” for Harlem, led by Robert Moses. In addition to receiving federal and city aid, the development was privately funded by developer Robert Olnick, who sponsored the project and obtained ownership of the site

in 1952. While Olnick struggled to secure a mortgage, tenants protested flaking paint and plaster, faulty wiring, leaky plumbing, broken light sockets, rat infestations, unsafe gas conditions, and lack of heat in winter. One tenant died in a fire caused by a kerosene heater.

The new development only proceeded after two banks committed to lend Olnick the money required for construction in 1957.

Commercial spaces were a crucial part of Lenox Terrace’s initial design.

2 The Mayor’s Committee on Slum Clearance, “Harlem Slum Clearance Plan Under Title I of the Housing Act 1949,” booklet, 1951
Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

3 From top to bottom: Olnick Organization, apartment floor plans, n.d., ink on paper; Site plan, November 7, 2014
Courtesy Lenox Terrace Management Office

Conceived of as a luxury building, Lenox Terrace projected new social needs and economic circumstances on the part of its future tenants. The plan included a significant proportion of studio apartments and units equipped with walk-in closets.

- 4 Selection of surveys of complaints by residents of the tenements existing on the building site of Godfrey Nurse Houses, 1955, ink on paper

Courtesy Harlem Friendship House Records, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

As Olnick struggled to secure the mortgage for the site clearance and construction of the Godfrey Nurse Houses, the residents of existing tenements on the proposed site complained that he provided them with substandard services. The Harlem Friendship House circulated a survey to collect detailed descriptions from the residents.

- 5 From top to bottom: Ken Sargeant at Godfrey Nurse Houses, May 21, 1960, photograph; Lenox Terrace doorman outside "The Americana," n.d., photograph

Ken Sargeant/Harlem Cultural Archives

- 6 Advertisements, ca. 1958, ink on paper

Lenox Terrace Management Office

In marketing Lenox Terrace as Harlem's "first luxury building," the developers tout amenities including air conditioning, circular driveways, off-street parking, individual terraces, modern equipment, lavish lobbies, and doorman service. Building nicknames such as "The Americana," "The Buckingham," and "The Continental" were inspired by Miami hotels.

- 7 Housing Committee, Central Housing Council for Community Planning, "To Site Tenants of Godfrey Nurse Houses," pamphlet, ca. 1953

Courtesy Harlem Neighborhoods Association Records, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

The tense relationship that existed between the site's developers and current tenants, particularly the deteriorating conditions and the ensuing threats of rent strike, is evidenced in this pamphlet from 1953.

- 8 Aerial view, ca. 1950s, photograph

Lenox Terrace Management Office

This view of Lenox Terrace captures three of the complex's six towers still under construction. Abraham Lincoln Houses appear in the foreground.

JESSE C. FISHER JR. HOUSING PROJECT

YEAR 1957
ARCHITECT Frank Lloyd Wright
LOCATION Whiteville, NC (unbuilt)
CLIENT Jesse C. Fisher Jr

TYPE Community development,
with 31 multifamily
buildings
UNITS 124

1 Frank Lloyd Wright, elevation,
1957, pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The
Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine
Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

After World War II, Americans of all races, ethnicities, and social classes attempted to achieve the “American Dream” of homeownership in increasing numbers. While millions were successful, government policies as well as community hostilities thwarted the aspirations of many, and of African Americans in particular.

The housing shortage facing African Americans in the rural South was particularly dire. To address this, Jesse C. Fisher Jr. commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design a model community for middle-class African Americans in Whiteville, North Carolina, the white real-estate developer’s hometown. The project, referred to in Wright’s office as “Housing for Negro Families,” revisited the quadruple block housing type. Here, the multifamily prototype was inserted amid park areas, a community pool, and a country store-

facilities recalling Wright’s earlier plans, including Broadacre City.

The local African American community greeted the plan with interest. After local banks denied Fisher loans for the project, however, it failed to receive Federal Housing Administration approval, thus repeating a racist pattern established thirty years earlier by the agency, which also thwarted Wright’s attempt to create modern, affordable houses at a replicable scale.

The architect’s own views on the project are difficult to gauge. On the one hand, he featured this as his most advanced community plan in his 1958 book *The Living City*. On the other hand, a racial slur scrawled on one of the plans indicates an environment of prejudice and condescension.

Fisher emphasized the importance of giving the homes a dignified aesthetic character—in apparent contrast, he thought, to the housing available to many African Americans in town at that time.

2 Letter from Jesse C. Fisher Jr.
to Frank Lloyd Wright, April
30, 1956

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery
Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia
University, New York)

In this letter, Fisher proposes building a community for middle-class African American families, noting that they currently lacked “an adequate and beautiful residential section.” In a period when racial segregation often excluded African Americans from using public pools, parks, and gardens, such amenities were likely otherwise scarce.

- 3 Letter from Frank Lloyd Wright to Jesse C. Fisher Jr., May 23, 1956

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Fisher and his wife, Gaye, were refused financing from five local banks. They found a company in Charlotte that would place the loans, on the condition that Wright designed the houses. However, given that African Americans in the area were frequently denied access to credit, the project was still unable to proceed.

- 4 Letter from Jesse C. Fisher Jr. to Frank Lloyd Wright, June 27, 1956

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Here, Fisher petitions Wright for adjustments to the community plan. In particular, he relays his clients' preference for smaller, half-acre lots over full-acre parcels, to reduce the expense of upkeep.

- 5 Frank Lloyd Wright, plan of quadruple housing, 1957, brown ink, pencil, and colored pencil on tracing paper

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

With Fisher Wright returned to the quadruple plan he had developed for his Suntop Homes and Cloverleaf Housing Projects.

- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright, view, 1957, pencil and colored pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

This view of a typical unit highlights the separation of residences, the integration with the site, and the importance of the automobile in Wright's version of an ideal residential community.

- 7 Frank Lloyd Wright, aerial view, 1957, pencil and colored pencil on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In the mid-1950s, Whiteville, NC was a small rural town and the majority of its African American residents were crowded into poor quality housing on marginal land. Fisher intended his development for this population, some of whom had approached him with the idea of developing a project.

- 8 Frank Lloyd Wright, site plan, 1957, pencil with brown paper appliques taped to tracing paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

This sketch outlines many of the features of the final plan, including the location of the roads, layout of the units, and placement of community facilities. The drawing is labeled "Darky Village": although the author of this label cannot be confirmed, in an interview with the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe published in *The New Frontier* (1940), Wright said of Broadacre City, "Of course there will be religion. Protestants, Catholics, Darkies and the Synagogues will be with us."

FRANKLIN PLAZA

YEAR	1954-62		Third Avenues, New York, NY	1	NYCHA and Holden, Egan, Wilson & Corser, rental drawings for Benjamin Franklin Houses, 1958, ink on paper
ARCHITECT	Holden, Egan, Wilson & Corser	CLIENT	The New York City Housing Authority		
RENOVATION	Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass	TYPE	14 multifamily towers of 20 stories each		Courtesy Union Settlement Association Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York
LOCATION	East 106th to 108th Streets btwn First and	UNITS	1,635		

This development, originally called Benjamin Franklin Houses, was initiated as a city-funded, middle-income project, with funds to come from the Mitchell-Lama Program, which in 1955 delivered a local alternative to the Housing Act's Title I, providing state and city channels for eminent domain and financing for limited-profit housing corporations. In 1960—roughly the same time that Usonia Homes in Westchester decided to alter their cooperative to allow for private home and land ownership—the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) sold Franklin Houses to a coalition of community groups and leaders organized by the Union Settlement Association and East Harlem Council for Community Planning. NYCHA, under pressure for reform, was in the process of exiting the middle-income housing field. The new cooperative then

attempted to position the renamed Franklin Plaza as the center of the “New Upper East Side.”

Architect Arthur Cort Holden had long been active in city housing, often proposing community-based redevelopment. His original design provided for thirty-three stores; retail was championed by urban theorist and advisor on the project Jane Jacobs. With Franklin's sale in 1960, Albert Mayer was brought in to reshape the landscaping. He “glamorized” the project by adding a pedestrian “Main Street.” Mayer's firm also revised portions of the buildings, restyling entryways and adding amenities.

- The rental drawings reflect a middle-income vision for public housing, which included some space for retail.
- 2 Franklin Plaza Apartments, Inc., “Twenty Questions and Answers about Franklin Plaza,” folded pamphlet, ca. 1962, ink on paper
Courtesy James Weldon Johnson Community Center Archives, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations
- 3 Rudolph Associates and Holden, Egan, Wilson & Corser, rendering of aerial view, n.d., reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York
- This rendering depicts the complex before it was re-landscaped in 1960-61.

- 4 Samuel Kaplan, "A Guide to East Harlem for Franklin Plaza Residents," ca. 1962

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

This guide, prepared by a resident of Franklin Plaza and sponsored by the local Union Dime Savings Bank, provides a brief history of the complex and highlights community resources.

- 5 NYCHA, key plan, 1958-59, reproduction of ink on paper

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

- 6 Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, drawing of landscape and play areas, ca. 1960, ink on paper

Courtesy James Weldon Johnson Community Center Archives, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

Albert Mayer redesigned the courtyard as an idealized "pedestrian main street" that would stitch together the development and its neighborhood.

- 7 Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, plans, ca. 1960, photoprint

Courtesy Union Settlement Association Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

These two site plans produced by Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass show the superblock after its landscaping had been updated.

- 8 Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, drawing of perspective view, ca. 1960, photoprint

Courtesy Union Settlement Association Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

- 9 NYCHA and Holden, Egan & Associates, drawings of kitchens and bathrooms, August 11, 1958, pencil on trace paper

Arthur Cort Holden Papers, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY

While NYCHA's low-income units had predominantly linear kitchens, often combined with dining alcoves, Franklin featured galley kitchens, separated from large dining-living areas.

- 10 From top to bottom: Views of the site, January 14, 1959, and September 17, 1959, reproductions of photoprints

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

- 11 "Harlem Housing Begins Next Year," *New York Times*, August 5, 1957

Courtesy Arthur Cort Holden Papers, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY

This 1957 article describes Franklin Houses as the largest middle-income housing cluster sponsored to date by NYCHA.

- 12 NYCHA, Holden, Egan & Associates, and Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, drawings of revisions for cooperative ownership, January 13, 1961, pencil on paper

Arthur Cort Holden Papers, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY

This drawing illustrates the effects that change in ownership exerted on the architecture of the complex.

EUGENE VAN TAMELEN HOUSE

YEAR 1956
ARCHITECT Frank Lloyd Wright
LOCATION Madison, WI

CLIENT Eugene van Tamelen
TYPE Single-family house
UNITS 1

The Eugene Van Tamelen House was one of a series of single-family homes Wright designed for the Madison, WI builder Marshall Erdman and Associates in the mid-1950s. The 2,000-square-foot house, commissioned by a professor at the University of Wisconsin, is an example of Wright's first design for Erdman, Prefab No. 1. Like the Jacobs and Adelman houses before it, this project created an opportunity to explore the possibility of transforming homebuilding through prefabrication.

Erdman initially offered buyers of Prefab No. 1 a package that included structural components, floors, windows, doors, and cabinets for a base price of \$16,400; home owners provided the lot, foundation, plumbing fixtures, and electric wiring. With its custom detailing, the Van Tamelen house ballooned in cost to \$55,000. Erdman subsequently raised the base price of the houses to

\$40–50,000, making Wright's designs some of the more expensive options within a rapidly growing market for prefabricated homes.

The positive response to Wright's ongoing effort to build affordable homes in the suburbs contrasted sharply with the increasingly negative associations (fanned by Wright) that were becoming attached to the public housing being developed concurrently. While these public housing efforts were propelled by many of the same desires—to provide affordable, efficient, and modern accommodations on a mass scale—they were viewed through different lenses and judged by different criteria.

1 Frank Lloyd Wright, floor plan, 1956, ink on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

The Van Tamelen House, with its L-shaped plan, efficient layout, and utility core, has roots in the early Usonian houses of the 1930s.

2 Erdman Prefab, William Wollin (photographer), n.d., reproduction of photograph

Courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-91115

The prefabricated houses produced by Marshall Erdman & Associates blended Usonian features with a middle-class suburban vernacular growing in popularity after World War II.

3 Erdman Prefab I, 1956, published in *House & Home*, William Wollin (photographer), December 1956, reproduction of photograph

Courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-66125

Wright and Erdman utilized stock building components such

- as Andersen windows, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of standardized casement windows.
- 4 5817 Anchorage Avenue, 1983, reproduction of photograph
 Courtesy Division of Historic Preservation-Public History, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin
- (left) In the dining area, the core is expressed in exposed concrete block and juxtaposed with plywood paneling.
 (right) The walls of the living area, gallery, and bedrooms were faced with richly colored plywood and battens.
- 5 Frank Lloyd Wright, plan of kitchen/workspace, 1956, ink on paper
 The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- By the 1950s, the kitchen was becoming emblematic of the middle-class home. The "workspace," as Wright termed it, contained all the conveniences of the day, including a refrigerator, an electric oven, and a dishwasher.
- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright, sections, 1956, ink on paper
 The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- To keep construction costs down, Wright and Marshall Erdman & Associates utilized standard concrete blocks, drywall, and masonite boards.
- 7 Frank Lloyd Wright, view, 1956, ink on paper
 Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- Wright's Prefab #1 was part of a broader effort by architects, builders, and developers to create an affordable ranch-style house on a mass scale.
- 8 Letter from Eugene and Mary Van Tamelen to Frank Lloyd Wright, October 5, 1958
 Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- In this letter, Eugene and Mary Van Tamelen inquire about Frank Lloyd Wright's development of a
- line of prefabricated homes.
- 9 "Prefabricated House Bears Unmistakable Stamp of Frank Lloyd Wright," *The New York Times*, July 5, 1959
 Courtesy *The New York Times*
- Wright and Erdman's venture received national attention, as demonstrated by this article, which appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*, above the fold. In addition to the Van Tamelen house, five other Prefab #1 designs were built.
- 10 Frank Lloyd Wright, "Why Not Prefabrication," 1958
 Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)
- Wright's work with Marshall Erdman & Associates was part of a long exploration of the potential of prefabrication. In this address, Wright discusses this interest, putting it in the context of larger debates about the role of technology and the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

MANHATTANVILLE HOUSES

YEAR 1954-61 CLIENT The New York City
ARCHITECT William Lescaze Housing Authority
LOCATION West 129th to 133rd TYPE 6 multifamily towers of
Streets btwn Broadway 20 stories each
and Amsterdam Avenue, UNITS 1,272
New York, NY

The emigré Swiss architect William Lescaze, who in 1938 created Williamsburg Houses, designed Manhattanville Houses to include new features advocated by The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) for its 1950s public housing projects. NYCHA had been moving away from cruciform building plans toward slab-type configurations. But here, each of Manhattanville's six buildings was configured in a Y-shaped plan, which was unusual at the time. Lescaze also introduced a shared "backyard in the sky" on each floor above the first to provide recreation spaces for tenants, and colored panels on the buildings' cores projected an image of public housing beyond the brick monolith.

With the support of Morningside Heights, Inc., NYCHA conceived this federally funded project (along with

Grant Houses) to provide low-income housing near the middle-income Morningside Gardens, thereby improving the economic and racial balance of the area's large-scale redevelopment. Manhattanville Houses also dedicated 5 percent of its units to housing the elderly.

In spite of NYCHA efforts to improve the quality of housing in the city, much of the public remained unaware of or indifferent to the success of these projects, and the stigma surrounding them grew. Wright, for example, was a vocal critic. In a 1955 essay on the future of the American city, he denounced all such public housing initiatives as "oppressive, red prison-towers [that] loom everywhere in the overgrown village."

1 Clockwise from top left: Nevio Maggiora, perspective drawings, 1955, November 14, 1955, December 30, 1955, March 1, 1956, March 5, 1956, and April 4, 1956, reproductions of photoprints

Courtesy William Lescaze Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries

William Lescaze's design for the Manhattanville Houses contains a number of distinctive architectural features, such as the balconies on every floor, which provided families with "backyards in the sky" (a phrase coined by NYCHA with Bay View Houses, in Brooklyn, in mind).

2 From left to right: Demolition at site, August 29, 1958; Demolition at site, December 1, 1958, reproductions of photoprints

Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

3 "Cantilever Base to Support Houses," *The New York Times*, March 14, 1959

Courtesy William Lescaze Papers, Special

In siting the project, Lescaze was confronted with a steeply sloping bedrock. As a result, in place of more traditional foundation pilings, he used a 16-foot-thick, concrete cantilevered beam to support one of the towers.

- 4 Pierre Lutz (renderer), aerial view, 1956, tempera on paper
Manhattanville Houses Management Office, New York City Housing Authority

- 5 Norma Rosario and family at Manhattanville Houses, ca. 1968-1982, photographs
Norma Rosario

- 6 Photographs featuring model of Manhattanville Houses, ca. 1956, photoprint
Courtesy William Lescaze Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries

- 7 Aerial view, ca. 1961, reproduction of photoprint
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

At Manhattanville Houses, colored panels covered the balconies. The panels were used by NYCHA to update the public's perception of the building.

- 8 Rental drawings, ca. 1958, ink on paper
Courtesy The La Guardia and Wagner Archives, La Guardia Community College/The City University of New York

The floor plans of Manhattanville Houses emphasize its basic configuration as three double-loaded corridors, joined at a central point, where a public balcony helps bring in light and circulate air in the service area.

- 9 William Lescaze, composite site plan of three projects, May 2, 1956, ink on paper
William Lescaze Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries

Unprecedented levels of organized resistance delayed the site assembly process at Manhattanville Houses, Grant Houses, and Morningside Gardens for several years, as both sides pieced together dueling coalitions of local nonprofits,

unions, civil-rights groups, and religious leaders. While tenants ultimately did not succeed in halting redevelopment, the conflict did lead to increased scrutiny by federal administrators, made Moses more circumspect in future projects, and secured concessions from the city including a commitment to more low-income housing in the area and more services for evicted residents.

THE LIVING CITY

YEAR	1958		industrial buildings,
ARCHITECT	Frank Lloyd Wright		single-family houses,
LOCATION	N/A (unbuilt)		and landscape
CLIENT	N/A	UNITS	Houses for 1,400
TYPE	Community plan with civic, cultural, and		families, located on 4 square miles

Wright's final statement on Broadacre City was published a year before his death. His plan, presented under the title *The Living City* (1958), had evolved in subtle but significant ways over the course of twenty-five years. While integrating several of his more recent projects, Wright also included new perspective drawings to illustrate his vision of the future city, set within a bucolic landscape of rolling hills, high-speed trains, helicopter taxis, nuclear powered barges, and sleek personal automobiles.

In the text of the book, Wright amplified his long-standing critique of the American city, which had grown increasingly bitter in the postwar period. By this time, his proposal appeared wrongheaded to many, as a new generation of architects, planners, and policymak-

ers had begun reviving the historic urban core of cities, rather than abandoning them. After Wright's death, critics frequently associated his scheme with the phenomenon of suburban sprawl.

Broadacre City-in all its iterations-advances the "American Dream" of the nuclear family with private home-, land-, and car-ownership, while simultaneously acknowledging the need for cooperation and for some public intervention. Like public housing, it represents a bold statement about the possibility of changing how we live in America. Also like public housing, Broadacre City is contradictory, but in different ways. Where one approach celebrates individual rights, the other emphasizes rights that are shared. Both continue to inspire and polarize to this day.

- 1 Frank Lloyd Wright, typical street view at civic center with new type vertical body car and helicopter taxi in flight, 1958, pencil and sepia on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

When Wright first presented Broadacre City in the 1930s, the automobile's impact on American life was just beginning to be felt; by the late 1950s its effects were impossible to ignore. Wright advocated development that accommodated the car. In this drawing, Wright-designed cars traverse fully planted roadways with lighting built into the pavement. Beyond the roadway, however, no suburban houses can be seen-only planted fields and a skyscraper, signs of a new form of regional development.

- 2 Frank Lloyd Wright, typical street view, 1958, pencil on paper

Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

Wright offered Broadacre City as a vision of an “organic” social life that balanced the needs of individuals with those of the community, achieved via controlled mechanization and enlightened governance.

- 3 Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Living City* (New York: Horizon Press, 1958), foldout

Courtesy Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York

In 1932 Wright published *The Disappearing City*, an indictment of modern urban life in America. He continually developed his thesis, republishing it in 1945 as *When Democracy Builds*. In *The Living City*, the third and final version of this thesis, he expanded the scope of his idea, included new projects, and rewrote most of the text. Left unchanged, notably, are the project’s slogans, visible in the bottom left of this foldout as well as in the original project panels flanking the gallery entrance.

- 4 Frank Lloyd Wright, typical view of Broadacre’s countryside, 1958, pencil and sepia on paper
The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In this rendering of the revised Broadacre City scheme, a main road cuts across the evenly settled landscape, connecting farms, the market, the arena, and the county government tower, on the shore of a lake. In the foreground and sky, Wright’s “air-rotor” reveals his continuing fascination with freedom of movement.

- 5 Frank Lloyd Wright, revised plan for Broadacre City, 1958, ink on paper
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In this revised plan for Broadacre City, Wright included a number of new features, such as an airport, and included modified versions of earlier built and unbuilt projects, such as the Price Tower, built in Bartlesville, OK in 1956.

- 6 Frank Lloyd Wright, “The Future of the City,” *Saturday Review*, May 21, 1955
Courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In this short essay written for *Saturday Review*, a popular intellectual journal of political, theatre, and art criticism, Wright penned one of his last statements of Broadacre City. In this piece, he positioned his project as the culmination of a centuries-long development of urban form.

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PROGRAMMING

SYMPOSIUM

The question of how to live in America preoccupied many architects and planners—from Frank Lloyd Wright to the consortium behind Harlem’s first public housing proposals—in the mid-twentieth century. This symposium, which accompanies the exhibition by the same name, gathers scholars of mid-20th Century housing for a conversation that bridges what might otherwise seem like disparate realms of inquiry in order to reassess received histories and to provoke new questions about how we live in America, together, today.

SEPTEMBER 28 THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

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September 28
6pm
Viewing of *Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive* at The Museum of Modern Art
7-8:30pm
Symposium Keynote Presentation, Dianne Harris, University of Utah

SEPTEMBER 29 WALLACH ART GALLERY COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LENFEST CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Symposium speakers are Shiben Banerji, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Jana Cephas, University of Michigan; Brian Goldstein, Swarthmore College; Jennifer Gray, The Museum of Modern Art; Jennifer Hock, Maryland Institute College of Art; Catherine Maumi, The Grenoble School of Architecture; Kevin McGruder, Antioch College; and Joseph Watson, University of British Columbia

September 29,
10am-5:30pm

Please RSVP at wallach.columbia.edu.

FAMILY DAY

An afternoon of art-making activities that invites families to re-imagine together their homes and communities.

October 7, 1-3pm

ROUNDTABLE: PUBLIC HOUSING TODAY

This conversation carries the *Living in America* exhibition premise forward, considering current challenges for New York City public housing.

November 1, 6-7:30pm

SATURDAY GALLERY TALKS

October 21,
November 4 and
December 2 from 1pm

All talks meet at the Wallach Art Gallery entrance.

For more information about these events visit wallach.columbia.edu.

Living in America has been curated by The Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP), and is co-presented by The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery and The Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, in correlation with *Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

