

# Boston Public Housing: Morphology

## European Post-War Modernist Public Housing

Le Havre, France



Auguste Perret- 1945

Priory Green Estates, England



Skinner, Bailey, Lubetkin- 1932 - 1946

Roehampton, England



Rosemary Sternstedt- 1957

Many of these first public housing designs were created in the early International Style or Modernism of that time prior to the outbreak of WWII. After the war, these public housing constructions were even more necessary and thus the plans were finally constructed. This style mainly involved the ideas of "towers in the park" with tall towers of units set within shared open green spaces.

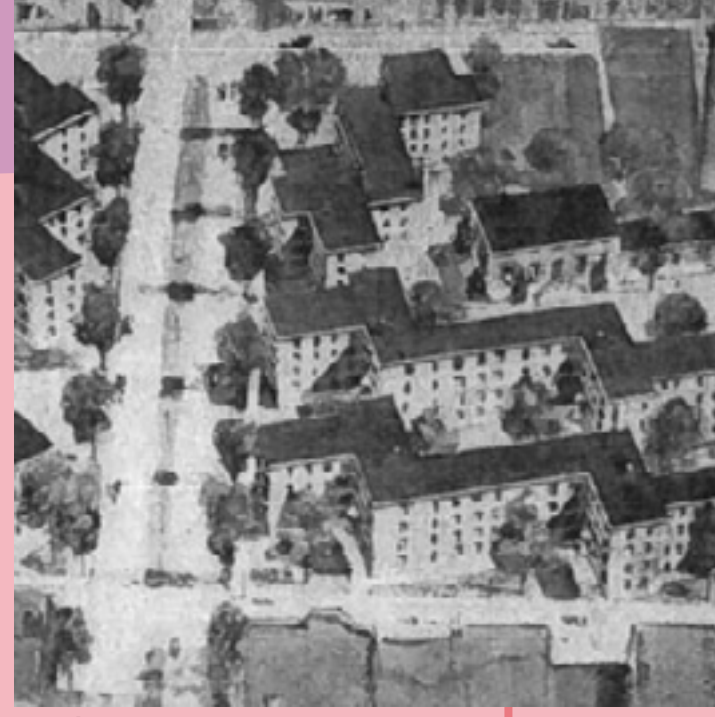
## Federal Funded Boston Public Housing

Bromley Heath Housing



Michael Andrew Dyer  
1941

Orchard Park Housing



John M. Gray  
1942

Columbia Point Housing



Michael Andrew Dyer  
1954

As seen in the European examples, the modernist "Towers in the Park" design was an architectural idea that was very popular among architects at the time. As the United States experienced the end results of WWII the need for low income housing in the cities was very great, and as a result, they took the European ideas of government controlled housing. The city of Boston under the Boston Housing Authority created these government controlled public housing using the popular modernist style. However, as time moved forward, economic and social issues plagued these communities causing many to turn away from the 'public housing', or as seen in these projects as beneficial ideas.

## Puerto Rican Influence

Slow-curved interior roads



In typical plans of Puerto Rican neighborhoods, the slow interior streets were cited as ways to slow traffic and creating mini-communities between neighbors

Emphasis on Pedestrian



Pedestrian access is a mode of transport that is what is most used in Puerto Rico as car ownership is less prevalent

Large extended Family Relation



Traditionally the families in Puerto Rico have a large home with the extended family residing together.

## Tenant Designed Public Housing

Villa Victoria Housing



John Sharrat- 1971

The Villa Victoria was designed as a clear refusal to following the previous public housing examples seen in Boston. Instead of dense 'towers in the park', the housing is instead low rise, multi-family housing units organized around a central space with the sense of community in mind. In addition, the designs for the block was heavily involved with the future tenants and their immigrant history. This involved taking aspects from the Puerto Rican planning and typical way of life and adapting it into a new climate and area in Boston. Since its construction, the Villa Victoria housing units have been very affective and popular among tenants.

Diagoon Housing, Denmark



Herman Hertzberger- 1970

Hertzberger's design's for public housing focused on ways to allow the residents to retain their autonomy even while residing within public housing. This also involved the idea of walk-up housing as a way to provide the tenant a sense of owned space.

## Walk-Up Public Housing

## Recent Re-Developments

Orchard Garden Housing



DHK- 1999

Harbor Point Apartments



Joe Corcoran- 1990

Following the creation and subsequent popularity of the Villa Victoria housing units, the shift of housing in Boston has seen a marked change. The towers of the past public housing buildings have since been torn down and rebuilt following the popularity of walk-up multi-family housing. These sites have since experienced their own rise in popularity as the architecture fosters senses of community as well as allowing for privacy in a dense urban area. In addition, new housing communities all have tenant councils and a boards that make decisions rather than focusing on government organization.