EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH HISTORIC REHABILITATION:
CREATING A MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN
LOS ANGELES

By

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A Thesis Presented to the
FACULTY OF THE USC SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION

May 2016

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Leslie-Anne F. Palaroan
Dedication

To my parents, Jovencio and Mercedes Palaroan, thank you for all of your sacrifices.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following individuals and groups who have aided me in writing this thesis. I would like to thank Katie Horak and Peyton Hall for their support. They looked beyond public housing’s stigmatization and recognized the social and physical vulnerability of these developments. I would also like to thank Trudi Sandmeier – halfway into my graduate program in planning, I asked her if I could pursue a dual degree in heritage conservation. Now I can further challenge the built environment to serve those in need. To my heritage conservation instructors at University of Southern California, thank you for fueling my interest to strive for equitable environments and communities. I have realized that cultivating equitable cities requires acknowledging the past, recognizing community values, and striving to create resilient communities in the face of change. I would like to thank my mentors at East LA Community Corporation. Throughout my graduate school experience, their guidance has allowed me to garner an immense understanding of the complexity of affordable housing financing, subsidies, resources, and asset management. By working alongside them, they have demonstrated the impact of affordable housing and heritage conservation beyond just an increased housing supply and the physical building envelope. Finally, my greatest gratitude is for my family. They have been immensely supportive as I repeatedly traveled away from home to undo inequitable development. Similar to low-income, immigrant families, our immigration story started in one overcrowded house with four nuclear. Similar to public housing developments, that house was supposed to be a starting point for us to save money, so each family could move out and own their own home. By having a home, it gave me a place to study, so I could advocate for those in need. Although I will not understand the experience of living in public housing, writing this thesis underlines the importance of a home - a place of solitude and hope.
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Abstract

In the United States, public housing is a Federal program intended to provide housing to low-income residents with a highly subsidized rental unit to both alleviate rent burden and stabilize a household. This subsidy enables households to spend their money on basic necessities such as food and transportation. However altruistic, eventually Federal investment in public housing decreased, resulting in dilapidated units, concentrated poverty, violence, and overall disinvestment. Public housing came to symbolize the government’s failure to create successful low-income developments.

Specifically, in the city of Los Angeles, the early ground-breaking history of public housing is largely unknown. The city’s public housing agency, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), strove to make housing a human right. HACLA provided housing for the poor, disregarded discriminatory Federal stipulations, and used public housing as a means to integrate races. These ideals were manifested into the Garden Apartments building type – low-density housing built amongst swaths of green communal spaces. These spaces connected residents to the outside, and to their surrounding community.

As Los Angeles’ public housing developments pass the seventy-year-old mark, all demonstrate their age. Federal funds for public housing are still dwindling, and HACLA cannot adequately maintain its properties. As a result of this deferred maintenance and lack of investment, HACLA has resorted to “remuddling” or demolishing their public housing.

The initial ideals of public housing – to make housing a human right, to uplift families out of poverty, to eliminate racial segregation, and to create communities - underlines the significance of these properties and their role in Los Angeles’ history. By recognizing and harnessing the initial intentions for these developments, and their current role in housing the poor, this thesis argues that heritage conservation has the potential of being a valuable tool in simultaneously uplifting the physical structure of these developments and strengthening community development.
Introduction

When riding the Metro Blue Line from Downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach there are numerous portions of the journey that pass by large public housing developments. For those that do not live nearby or in Los Angeles’ numerous public housing developments, this is one of the few instances where these stigmatized communities constantly come into physical view. When public housing was being built in Los Angeles, many of these developments were intentionally hidden from the rest of the city or often in places that were slums. While traveling south towards Long Beach on the Blue Line, the first of these developments is Pueblo Del Rio - a public housing site that includes 660 housing units.\(^1\) As one proceeds to travel along the Blue Line, a few stops away in the neighborhood of Watts are four developments that were forcibly built close to one another to hide poverty from neighborhoods that did not want public housing.\(^2\) For instance, at 103rd – Watts Towers Station, and the Willowbrook – Rosa Parks Station, immediately to the east and west of these stations are enormous concentrations of public housing. These four developments – Jordan Downs, Hacienda Village, Nickerson Gardens, and Imperial Courts – collectively possess 2,454 units of housing for Los Angeles’ extremely low-income (ELI) families.\(^3\) To onlookers, these public housing developments are islands of minorities, poverty, violence, and disinvestment.\(^4\) Although public housing developments in Los Angeles’ are often demeaned, these substantial facilities have become crucial resources for those in need.

Public housing is a rare and valuable resource in the city of Los Angeles. Housing is becoming increasingly expensive and the availability of subsidized housing is becoming more crucial for survival. According to the Southern California Association

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\(^3\) Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *Transforming One Neighborhood at a Time* (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2015), [http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Residents/Housing%20Developments.pdf](http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Residents/Housing%20Developments.pdf).

of Non-Profit Housing (SCANPH), an organization that supports and advocates for the
development of affordable housing, in 2015, the average rent for an apartment in Los Angeles County was approximately $1,796 per month. In order for housing to be considered affordable, a family should not spend more than thirty-percent of their income on rent. Thus, a working family needs to “earn nearly thirty-four dollars per hour – or $71,840 per year - to afford the average rent in Los Angeles. [However], the annual median renter household income is $39,016.” Although public housing is stigmatized, these developments enable ELI families to have a place to live. Public housing helps to prevent families from living on the street, overcrowding homes, and living far away from work.

The developments along the Metro Blue Line are only a portion of the many public housing developments across the city of Los Angeles. With multiple housing developments in Los Angeles, and their heavily subsidized rent, physically maintaining these developments is difficult, and as a result, they have suffered from deferred maintenance. This disinvestment exacerbates the ongoing misperception that public housing developments are substandard. HACLA, the entity charged with maintaining these public housing units and all subsidized housing in the city of Los Angeles, relies on Federal operating subsidies, and leverages other numerous government subsidies to operate these developments. The immense number of aging units has forced HACLA to compromise, alter, redevelop, and demolish these developments. For instance, rather than rehabilitate Jordan Downs, HACLA is replacing the entire development and with

5 Ibid.  
6 The term affordable housing is a general term that encompasses housing that is accessible and below market rate. Public housing is a subset within affordable housing that is owned by public housing agencies, which receive funding from the Federal government. Public housing serves those that earn thirty-percent of the area median income and lower.  
7 Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing, Out of Reach in 2015 – Los Angeles County (Los Angeles: Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing, 2015), http://www.scanph.org/sites/default/files/Out/of/Reach/in/2015/Los/Angeles/County/29_0.pdf.  
8 The thesis will only focus on publicly-owned public housing developments in the city of Los Angeles. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles manages public housing developments in the city of Los Angeles. The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles manages public housing within in Los Angeles County in the following communities: Marina Del Rey, Santa Clarita, unincorporated Los Angeles County, La Puente, Whittier, Long Beach, Lomita, Valencia, and La Crescenta.  
new construction. For some Jordan Down’s residents, this is unsettling, as they are unsure whether they will be guaranteed a home in the new development.

Not only do public housing developments help families survive, these places hold a layered history embedded in numerous themes of selflessness. At the inception of public housing in Los Angeles, HACLA strove to provide housing for poor residents. During World War II, HACLA provided workers’ housing to migrants that came to work for wartime manufacturing. Postwar, these developments shifted to serve families that could not afford housing. HACLA recognized that residents of all backgrounds needed housing, and these developments were among the first in the nation to be racially integrated. Additionally, undocumented residents were given the opportunity to live in public housing. Thus, this altruism makes public housing in Los Angeles historically significant. During McCarthyism, HACLA’s actions and goals led some governmental officials and primarily the public, to believe that HACLA was a communist agency. Additionally, the misuse of Title 608, Federal Housing Act funding, and the subsequent Windfall Scandals ceased public housing development in 1955.¹⁰ Nevertheless, for the past seventy years, not only has HACLA managed public housing, the entity has gradually built a breadth of supportive services that connect residents to social and economic opportunities. However, few of those social programs directly impact the physical building fabric of these public housing developments. For instance, programs for youth have led to additional infrastructure such as portable libraries, or playground equipment. Other programs train residents in the construction trades by having them maintain the aging buildings themselves. Not only does investment improve the physical environment for residents, it generates an opportunity for residents to further pull themselves out of poverty.¹¹ Despite the positive impacts of these physical improvements and job training programs, when acknowledging the historic significance of these housing developments, the potential impact of these programs can be even greater. Past examples of public housing rehabilitation across the country have


revitalized communities in a myriad of ways: by recognizing and appreciating the past, creating jobs, and most importantly allowing residents to have pride in their developments. By reexamining the public housing history, de-stigmatizing these developments, illuminating the inappropriate financial structures that PHAs must cope with, and highlighting rehabilitation examples across the country, much can be learned to aid HACLA in reinvesting in and rehabilitating public housing. This could greatly reduce public housing stigmatization. The current public housing model that HACLA has built is robust and progressive, and by leveraging their current relationships and programs through a heritage conservation perspective, public housing in Los Angeles can be a model in effectively pulling residents out of poverty.

Chapter one asserts the importance of public housing and why some developments should be retained as historic resources. It will go over the public housing history throughout the nation, and explore why these developments have garnered negativity. Chapter one has three case studies that highlight public housing as an architectural and societal movement that focused on housing the poor. At its inception, Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis was perceived to be architecturally progressive because it was intended to serve the poor. However, underlying discriminatory urban planning schemes in St. Louis eventually led to demolition. Images of poverty, violence, and disinvestment at Pruitt-Igoe have influenced many Americans’ negative opinions of public housing. However, for the residents who live in public housing, when faced with having their homes taken away, they highlight that these places are people’s homes. For example, in New Orleans, Lafitte public housing residents protested to keep their homes. Hurricane Katrina had destroyed their homes, and despite failing infrastructure, residents protested demolition. Unfortunately, similar to numerous public housing developments throughout the nation, Lafitte public housing was demolished and replaced with a development in a New Urbanist style. Nevertheless, there are successful cases of public housing rehabilitation in the context heritage conservation. 12 For instance, in Austin, Texas, there are two public housing developments listed on the

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12 Heritage conservation and historic preservation will be used interchangeably in this thesis. Heritage conservation is utilized to encompass both the intangible and tangible significance of historic resources. Historic rehabilitation will be used specifically for maintenance approaches.
National Register of Historic Places that have leveraged preservation incentives to upgrade and maintain these developments.

Chapter two focuses on public housing developments within the city of Los Angeles. The chapter will illuminate the work and history of HACLA – the entity that operates and maintains public housing in the city of Los Angeles. For HACLA, public housing was a means to make quality housing accessible to the poor, and their mission continues to this day. Chapter two highlights the reasons as to why these developments are significant. They housed the poor. They supported wartime workers. Therefore, planners and architects sought to create housing that connected people of various backgrounds together through innovative architecture. Using the garden apartments style, public housing in Los Angeles was architecturally different from the rest of the nation's public housing developments, which were considered as “Towers in the Park” – high rises with large setbacks of green space. Los Angeles' public housing developments are highly differentiated from their surroundings of single-family homes. They dominate the landscape horizontally because they are low-density complexes on large parcels of land. This allowed for community building, and public housing became places where Angelenos were racially integrated for the first time. However, their vast scale and numerous unit counts explains HACLA’s difficulty in providing adequate maintenance. Alongside highlighting the importance of public housing in Los Angeles, Chapter two will examine HACLA’s ability to allocate their efforts and finances to invest in these public housing developments. Chapter two highlights HACLA’s current funding sources and examines how they have benefited or undermined public housing developments.

Chapter three analyzes public housing financing structures and the flaws which ultimately lead to disinvestment. Since PHAs such as HACLA are dependent on Federal funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), these funds are scarce, highly regulated, and monitored. Historically, these funding schemes encourage PHAs to strive for redevelopment and have undermined heritage conservation ideals. By recounting the stories of five public housing developments under HACLA’s control, chapter three highlights HACLA’s compliance with HUD restrictions and the struggle to support the historic integrity of these buildings. These
case studies describe HACLA’s past efforts to upgrade their public housing stock, but this has forced the PHA to undertake negative alterations on their public housing developments. HUD’s financing efforts to upgrade public housing developments occurs through demolition, redevelopment, and alterations. HUD also mistakenly believes that redevelopment is the best solution for aging public housing. HUD’s current available financing is intended to erase the history and social contribution of public housing developments.

Chapter four highlights the different efforts to rehabilitate and preserve public housing throughout the nation, and in Los Angeles. Although Los Angeles’ public housing is consistently marred, the tenets on which public housing was built is rich with selflessness. By recognizing architects, planners, city leaders, and community groups, and their benevolence to provide housing, heritage conservation has been a powerful means to highlight and de-stigmatize resources with difficult significance. In Chicago, there is an effort to acknowledge and disseminate public housing’s significance. While in Los Angeles, advocating for public housing occurs through two avenues – through heritage conservation and dignified housing as a human right. In terms of heritage conservation, the Los Angeles Conservancy has launched initiatives to illuminate the historic significance of these developments. From a housing provision perspective, residents and organizations have advocated for more investment in public housing. The initial altruistic tenets of public housing are unknown to many architectural historians and residents. Finally, chapter four recounts the stories of residents at William Mead Homes, a public housing development listed on the California Register and is eligible for the National Register. Their stories underline their profound connection with their home and neighbors. Yet, their definition of the importance for William Mead Homes, lies primarily in survival and little in historic significance. However, by recalling public housing history, this can de-stigmatize these communities, allow for a greater appreciation for these developments. Chapter Four will underline the need to recognize these developments and to disseminate this information to the public.

Chapter five harnesses the movement to illuminate the significance of public housing and uses a conservation lens to reconfigure HACLA’s current system of physically assessing their developments, and proposes a new maintenance plan
through heritage conservation tools. Chapter five sets parameters for the types of funding sources that HACLA should obtain because these sources would not compromise these developments. Then it will review HACLA’s current methodology to assess properties’ physical state and their maintenance plans. In 2013, HACLA undertook extensive Physical Needs Assessments (PNAs) for all of its public housing developments. These reports revealed the physical state of the developments and proposed improvements for energy efficient solutions to reduce energy costs. Within these reports, historic significance is rarely noted, and not considered as a factor among the proposals for substantial material alterations. Most importantly, these PNAs are used as a resource for HACLA in determining what capital improvements to undertake. Chapter five will look back to HACLA developments, William Mead Homes and Mar Vista Gardens, as they have been threatened with alterations. Chapter five will reexamine the PNAs for these two developments, and illuminate goals that may compromise material significance. By referencing Preservation Briefs and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, chapter five will also use two examples of character defining features for each development and briefly propose a maintenance plan that considers historically significant materials.

Chapter six further utilizes these revised maintenance plans by integrating them with HACLA’s existing social programs, which enable residents to holistically invest in the developments. By integrating the physical work of resident and community-based organizations such as Northeast Trees and HACLA’s Section 3 Program into a conservationist purview, residents can simultaneously garner income and invest the physical integrity and physical condition of these developments. Chapter six will underline the economic benefits of heritage conservation by reiterating the increase in jobs and capital from rehabilitation. Additionally, chapter six will look at examples within heritage conservation that use rehabilitation as a means to connect underprivileged individuals to jobs.

The culmination of this thesis reiterates HACLA’s next steps and takes into account looming issues that public entities such as HUD and HACLA will need to consider as it reinvests in these developments. Ongoing issues such as the lack of affordable housing, density pressures, and climate change posit larger and more difficult
choices for HACLA. However, by understanding the importance of maintaining this rare housing type and significant historic resource, this paradigm shift has the ability to empower public housing residents and to pull them out of poverty.
Chapter 1: Public Housing and Heritage Conservation throughout the Nation

Saving housing has always been a social issue of habitation. When looking at it from a heritage conservation purview, public housing is the nexus of saving social habitation and built environment. Public housing is not only about buildings, but also it is about the cultural landscape, and [that] these residents have suffered more than the buildings.\textsuperscript{13}

Public housing in the United States is one of the few housing types that serve ELI families and families that are financially struggling. In order for families to qualify for subsidized housing, HUD uses the parameter called Area Median Income (AMI). For example, if the median annual income for a fictional county is $100,000, for a one-person household to be considered ELI, they would only make $30,000 a year. In the case of Los Angeles County, the AMI is $60,600. Therefore, to be considered as a household earning thirty-percent AMI in Los Angeles, that one-person household must make $18,180 per year. However, the thirty-percent AMI amount fluctuates depending on the number of people in a household. For instance, for a household of four living in public housing, a combined $24,450 must be earned to qualify as an ELI household.\textsuperscript{14}

There are different AMI brackets such as forty-percent and fifty-percent, but for public housing residents, they qualify for thirty-percent AMI. For many public housing residents, they rely on various income streams and layer their subsidies such as Social Security and Rental Vouchers to pay for housing. Since public housing developments are deeply subsidized, preserving public housing is crucial for struggling households. However, the combination of concentrated poverty and decreasing financial resources from the Federal government for PHAs has encouraged disinvestment. (Figure 1.0) This has been demonstrated to lead to violence and slum housing at notorious public housing developments such as Cabrini Green in Chicago and Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis.

Nevertheless, for the residents living in public housing developments, it is their home, and there have been repeated battles to preserve public housing despite its squalor.

\textsuperscript{13} Andrew Dolkart, “Welcome and Opening Remarks” (lecture, Columbia University GSAPP, New York, NY, March 31, 2012).

Ongoing Stigmatization: Pruitt-Igoe in Saint Louis, Missouri

Pruitt-Igoe in Saint Louis, Missouri is the notorious public housing development often cited by opponents as a reason to demolish public housing. In 1954, Pruitt-Igoe was constructed as a solution to overcrowding in St. Louis. Therefore, thirty-three, eleven-story buildings were built. Violence, crime, and drugs were pervasive. There were images of vandalized hallways, broken infrastructure, and elevators that did not work. According to the documentary, The Pruitt Igoe Myth, in one account, “it was quickly torn apart by residents who could not adapt to high-rise city life.” Demolished after only twenty-years, Pruitt-Igoe has come to symbolize the failure of government-sponsored housing and development.

Originally, planners and architects believed that Pruitt-Igoe would improve the lives of low-income residents. “Pruitt-Igoe’s large scale and grandeur of the buildings

[reflected] optimistic spirit.” However, there were larger externalities beyond the building envelope. Similar to war manufacturing cities, St. Louis was undergoing a postwar urban decline. St. Louis lost half of its population in less than a generation, and Pruitt-Igoe was built to address this decline. The public housing development was also used to racially segregate the city and to demolish poor and working-class neighborhoods. Pruitt-Igoe’s planners and architects “stressed uniformity and ‘hygiene’ in the domestic sphere, political life, and neighborhood composition.” Beyond St. Louis’ urban decline, at a Federal level, housing legislation that created large-scale public housing developments failed to fund operating expenses. Insufficient funding for operating expenses is the greatest problem in public housing, and this problem still plagues PHAs and public housing residents. In St. Louis, this problem began before construction. “Building contractors inflated their bids to the point that public-housing construction costs in St. Louis were sixty-percent above the national average. When the PHA would not raise its unit cost ceilings to accommodate the contractor bids, the city responded by raising densities, reducing room sizes, and removing amenities.” By increasing density for housing that is highly subsidized, it was harder for the PHA to maintain Pruitt-Igoe’s scale. PHAs garner little income from residents’ rents. Therefore, with the lack of funds for operating expenses, and numerous residents, Pruitt-Igoe could not sustain itself. For other PHAs throughout the nation, the size of their developments were not as large as Pruitt-Igoe, but PHAs continued to build housing developments that did not generate income to cover operating expenses, which paid for property management, facility maintenance, and social programs. Rather Federal subsidies are used to cope with maintenance, but the amount of these subsidies is declining. These mistakes not only led to the demise of public housing, it led Americans to become leery of Federal spending on the poor. Pruitt-Igoe’s demise has generated a relentless negative perception of public housing.

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
Reminding Each Other of Home: Four Public Housing Units in New Orleans, Louisiana

The housing agencies’ tabula rasa planning mentality recalls the worst aspects of the postwar Modernist agenda, which substituted a suburban model of homogeneity for an urban one of diversity. The proposal for ‘traditional-style’ pastel houses, set in neat little rows on uniform lots, is a model of conformity that attacks the idea of the city as a place where competing values coexist. Solutions like this might preclude the violent bulldozing of neighborhoods in a city so short of housing. A willingness to make case-by-case historical distinctions would result in a more historically layered urban composition, one that could, eventually, include contemporary architectural ideas as well.¹⁹

In New Orleans, the fight to retain public housing underlines that public housing should not be disregarded, but their demise in this city underlines the repeated attempts by PHAs throughout the nation to undo public housing. After Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans demolished their brick, public housing garden apartments, for “‘traditional-style’ pastel houses set in neat little rows of uniform lots.”²⁰ In New Orleans, public housing was derelict due to PHA corruption. “In the mid-1990s, Federal inspectors found that of a selection of seventy-five apartments that they examined, seventy failed quality standards, describing the conditions as ‘deplorable, unsafe and in many instances unfit for human habitation.’ … Inspectors discovered that twenty-one handymen at one development claimed a total of 1,019 hours of overtime in just two weeks, an average of forty-nine hours per person. In reality, they were doing little work, and areas of the project were flooded with sewage from broken pipes.”²¹ Similar to PHAs throughout the nation, when infrastructure deteriorates, the PHA applies for HUD funding for any assistance. The proposal impacted more than 4,500 existing housing units. Additionally in 2002, when HANO was accused of financial mismanagement, HUD seized the four complexes, also known as the Big Four. After Hurricane Katrina ravaged the city, the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), applied for a proposal that would demolish four dilapidated public housing complexes. Concerned residents, preservationists, the Louisiana Landmarks Society, and a local representative of the

²⁰ Ibid.
National Trust for Historic Preservation had also challenged HANO to examine the value of the city’s public housing stock. These advocates wanted to “[tap] into a higher level of creative intelligence. [To enlist] a similar level of imaginative talent to rethink [how] the city’s public housing could help alleviate trenchant social divisions here.”

Residents believed that these public housing developments, “[embodied] a time when America still seemed capable of a more hopeful vision, one in which architecture, planning and social policy collaborated to create a more decent society.” New Orleans’ public housing residents demonstrated the importance of the developments through the fight for their homes. Tenants shouted at housing officials at public meetings, protested outside former Mayor C. Ray Nagin’s home, and sued HUD. According to longtime resident, Alvin Richardson, he believed his connection to public housing could overcome demolition. “I’m a young man who grew up in the projects. I grew up in the Iberville project, the Desire, the Calliope, the St. Thomas, St. Bernard, and I survived them all. You can’t do nothing to me because I survived the ghetto.”

Alvin Richardson’s connection to his home exemplifies the despair that families experience when their homes are redeveloped. Despite numerous stories from residents, due to the already dilapidated state of these garden apartments, and damage caused by Hurricane Katrina, these public housing developments were demolished and New Urbanist housing was built.

New Orleans replays the problematic and repeated pattern of public housing redevelopment. When public housing is redeveloped, affordable housing is lost and architecturally, some conservationists may argue that the architectural style of public housing becomes vapid. The traditional and newly constructed homes are used to erase the past.

The B.W. Cooper complex, also known as Calliope, was renamed the Yvonne Marrero Commons. The original brick garden apartments were demolished for less sturdy wood framed New Urbanist architecture. In the case of the Yvonne Marrero Commons, the New Urbanist architecture reduced density, and the total housing supply

22 Ibid.
25 New Urbanist style was often used to replace public housing developments.
inevitably decreased. In total, the Big Four developments were home to 3,077 families before Hurricane Katrina. Now, after being razed and redeveloped, there are only 1,829 housing units. Only about forty-percent of the new units are offered at traditional public housing rents, and the remaining units are charged at market rate. HANO thought that they could replace many of the old units with housing vouchers, but Hurricane Katrina left families impoverished, and the requests for housing vouchers had doubled in number. Since so many housing units were flooded and market rents increased, 18,000 families, or one in ten New Orleans households, started to use housing vouchers. Tenants argued “that the plan undermined the return of the city’s poorest residents, virtually all of them African-American.” Public housing redevelopment in New Orleans was erased and left many families with no homes. Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, “Some former residents of public housing now look back with fierce loyalty and a qualified fondness. ‘You were a part of the Calliope,’ said Rodney Lavalais, who has the name tattooed on his right arm alongside an image of his mother.” New Orleans’ public housing battles underlined both the need for housing, and the need to retain community identity.

Successful Public Housing Preservation and Ongoing Battles: Santa Rita and Rosewood Courts in Austin, Texas

There are instances where the significance of public housing has been recognized, and heritage conservation has been the most effective means to highlight public housing. In Austin, Texas, two public housing developments have been found to be nationally significant historic resources. Santa Rita Courts was the first public housing development funded and built under the 1937 Housing Act. The 1937 Housing Act established local PHAs. Santa Rita Courts is the first of three public housing developments built in Austin in 1939. Unlike Pruitt-Igoe where discrimination

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26 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Throughout this thesis, the word development will be used instead of project. Project holds negative connotations.
was overtly practiced by St. Louis’ PHA, the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) built housing for different races. Due to segregation, HACA had to build three separate housing developments. Santa Rita Courts is comprised of forty units that were occupied by Latino families. Additionally, Santa Rita Courts demonstrated President Lyndon B. Johnson’s advocacy for public housing. The funding and construction of Santa Rita Courts is seen to be one of Lyndon B. Johnson’s greatest Congressional achievements. The development is “a cornerstone in his efforts to embody New Deal idealism - civil rights and voting rights.”

Therefore, Santa Rita Courts is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rosewood Courts is the public housing development that housed sixty black families. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Although it is known to be significant for the same reasons as Santa Rita Courts, there have been battles between HACA and advocates for saving this development. The development is in operation, and it has not lost its integrity. “The excellent integrity of the [development] shows in its continuing relationship between built and open spaces, and the enduring workmanship and feeling, with few structural changes.” Additionally, the development is located adjacent to Emancipation Park, a gathering place for Juneteenth celebrations, which marked the day in 1865 when Texans first received word of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Currently, Rosewood Courts is being “closely watched in the Austin development and preservation communities,” due to compromising decisions in the past. In 2012, the seventy-five-year-old property needed work and HACA applied for and received a $300,000 Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) grant from HUD. Similar to HANO, HACA applied to HUD funding. In particular, the CNI grant is alarming because this grant encourages redevelopment. In response, community residents and preservationists have proposed Rosewood Courts to simply be upgraded to meet the PHA’s energy-efficiency standards. According to Fred McGhee, an archaeologist and

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
Preserve Rosewood leader, whom wrote the community’s National Register nomination, "there is nothing structurally wrong with [the property] -- it needs maintenance."\(^{35}\)

Unfortunately, in August 2015, balancing public housing and preservation resulted in the city’s local Historic Landmark Commission’s failure to recommend initiation of historic zoning for Rosewood Courts.\(^{36}\) Unusually, the City of Austin’s Historic Preservation Office and HACA also opposed granting local historic zoning status to the property.

Despite Rosewood Court’s National Register of Historic places eligibility, and the community’s pursuit for local historic zoning, HACA proposed a sixty-million dollar redevelopment plan that will add units, allow for on-site homeownership, and reopen Emancipation Park. The plan would only preserve six of the original buildings. According to HACA’s Eileen Schrandt, the project manager for the Rosewood Courts Initiative, in order to meet the housing standards laid out by the Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs, retaining and upgrading the original housing project, would mean a loss of units – from the current 124 units to about seventy-eight. However, “the new plan, in contrast, would add seventy-six new affordable units, [and] historic zoning would make permitting difficult and could end the redevelopment project.”\(^{37}\) Schrandt’s stance highlights the difficulty of onlookers to see the importance of retaining a public housing development’s significance. Rather, her statement is rooted in the belief of the Federal government’s past mistakes in creating a public housing program that does not generate enough income to physically sustain the development. Despite compromising the development, adding more units at higher AMIs is her goal.

We want to be able to offer a better quality of life, and balance that with historic preservation. But we don’t think that means preserving every single unit in every single building of the 25 buildings that are there right now. It’s basically saying that a better quality of life isn’t deserved by the people who live there, if we keep absolutely every single one of the 124 units that are there today.\(^{38}\)

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
\(^{37}\) Ibid.
\(^{38}\) Ibid.
However, out of the over 600 properties in Austin with landmark status, only eight commemorate black history, and for preservationists and residents, Rosewood Courts would contribute to that. The property met all the criteria for historic zoning. “This is public property, this is not private property, so the issue of a tax advantage is not an issue here...This would be a nomination of a piece of public property that is iconic not just in the history of our city, but in the history of our country,” said McGhee.39 Beyond remembering the past, according to Reverend Freddie Dixon, who is on the board of the Austin African American Cultural Heritage District, recognizing Rosewood Courts is also powerful in abating gentrification pressures in Austin.

East Austin, as you know, is a changing neighborhood. ... Many of the newcomers who are coming to the city of Austin know nothing about the history of East Austin and the changing of East Austin. We need to hold onto that place because many of the ancient landmarks that we know that are Austin are passing away. And this area, housed on Emancipation Park, is a significant area here. I do think we owe that to those persons who have lived there, to those persons who have made legislation possible for them to be there.40

Although Rosewood Courts is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, redevelopment plans are being conjured. Nevertheless, the issues in New Orleans and Austin illustrate how public housing is a resource for history and survival. Heritage conservation can be an effective means of de-stigmatizing the people and stories of these developments.

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
Chapter 2: Public Housing in Los Angeles

Los Angeles has one of largest collection of garden apartments and public housing developments in the nation. Throughout the United States, President Lyndon B. Johnson’s goal for humane housing conditions, and the subsequent increase in Federal initiatives focused on housing, increased housing units. In Los Angeles, public housing developments are highly differentiated from the International Style and modernist towers that other PHA counterparts in the United States built. This is due to numerous reasons: the Garden City principles practiced by local architects, the city’s flat landscape, Southern California’s temperate climate, and the availability of land in Los Angeles. Los Angeles’ climate allowed garden apartments to thrive. “Designers embraced the connection between outdoors and indoors for residences.”41 In Los Angeles, housing stakeholders were community driven and designed with the habitant and community in mind. They built garden apartments to achieve social equality.

Importance of Public Housing in Los Angeles and Current State of Significance

Los Angeles’ public housing history begins from substandard housing conditions, and World War II led to enormous public housing development. Slums were dispersed throughout Los Angeles. According to writer and architectural critic Esther McCoy, “thirty-percent of all dwellings in Los Angeles had no inside toilet, fifty-percent had no bathtub, and twenty-percent were unfit for human habitation.”42 In the 1938, two architectural groups created two projects with the goal of clearing slums. The Beaudry Street Slums were transformed into Ramona Gardens, and the Utah Project became Aliso Village.43 (Figure 2.0) After these first two public housing units were constructed, public housing development increased exponentially.

Impact on Los Angeles’ Economic Development

Los Angeles had a large presence of defense-related industries. The population increased by 165,000 between 1940 and 1942 due to the influx of defense workers. In response to World War II, in 1940, the 1937 Housing Act was modified to exempt defense workers from the strict low-income rules for public housing. The Community Facilities Act, known as the Lanham Act, sought to create 700,000 permanent and temporary units of public housing in Los Angeles for defense workers. This further increased the affordable housing supply in Los Angeles. In 1941, HACLA “established a policy of preference for families of low-income defense workers for all developments except Ramona Gardens.” In addition to giving defense workers preference in existing public housing developments, several complexes, including Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs were constructed specifically to alleviate the wartime housing shortage.

Fig 2.0: Utah Street Renderings, 1934. Source: Herald-Examiner Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.


44 Ibid., 21.
46 Ibid., 34.
After World War II, the Federal Housing Act of 1949 enabled the construction of more public housing developments. Nickerson Gardens, San Fernando Gardens, and Mar Vista Gardens were built, as well as expansions at Jordan Downs, Rancho San Pedro, Pueblo Del Rio, and Estrada Courts. These were higher density than those constructed before and during World War II, and with less open space. Although designers utilized Garden City planning principles, Federal guidelines on unit count and cost restricted the amount of land that could be allocated to community facilities and common green space. As indicated by Michael Ramos, a resident at Imperial Courts in Watts, “The open space and the grass let me have friends growing up. My neighbors ended up being life-long friends because we always played handball against the apartments and the open space allowed us to do that.” Additionally, Imperial Courts exemplified housing built for World War II workers, converted to public housing, and expanded under the auspices of HACLA after the war. 

In 1941 and 1942 alone, the City and County Authorities constructed sixteen complexes. As a result, over 9,000 units of housing were created. Currently, there are thirteen developments owned and managed by HACLA with over 6,000 units. (Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<th>Units</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tr>
<td>Avalon Gardens</td>
<td>701 E. 88th Place Los Angeles, 90002</td>
<td>South LA</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estrada Courts &amp; Extension</td>
<td>3232 Estrada Street Los Angeles, 90032</td>
<td>Boyle Heights</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>1942/1954</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzaque Village</td>
<td>1515 E. 105th Street Los Angeles, 90002</td>
<td>Watts</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Courts</td>
<td>11541 Croesus Street Los Angeles, 90059</td>
<td>Watts</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>1944/1955</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Downs</td>
<td>9800 Grape Street Los Angeles, 90002</td>
<td>Watts</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>1944/1955</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Vista Gardens</td>
<td>11965 Allin Street Los Angeles, 90002</td>
<td>Mar Vista</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. HACLA’s Public Housing Developments

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47 Ibid., 27.
48 Michael Ramos, interview by Leslie Palaroan, Personal Interview, Los Angeles, October 25, 2015. This person’s name has been changed for privacy.
49 Further analysis of these sites is required in order to determine which segments of the complexes (if any) date to the war era.
Community Building Through the Radburn Plan

Not only did public housing help alleviate the housing shortage; it was designed to achieve humane housing conditions through thoughtful planning. With a fundamental belief that all people deserve optimal housing conditions regardless of income or social standing, the planners and designers were conscientious about every aspect of their design, including the site plan. The site plan allowed for the arrangement of automobile circulation and storage, the organization of internal living spaces, more landscape, and recreational facilities. Using Clarence Stein’s Radburn Plan, which is the use of superblock planning, the developments encompassed multiple acres, and their layout, deviated from the rectilinear urban grid. (Figure 2.1) The Radburn ideal sought to achieve “decentralized, self-contained settlements, organized to promote environmental considerations by conserving space, harnessing the automobile, and promoting community life.” Their designs separated pedestrians from automobiles. With superblock site planning, designers were able to relegate automobile traffic and garages

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51 Pico Gardens and Las Casitas have been redeveloped. The development possesses both the new construction of detached single-family homes and townhomes, and older public housing stock.

52 Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, Transforming One Neighborhood at a Time (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2015), http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Residents/Housing%20Developments.pdf.

to the perimeter of the property. Housing units were turned toward gardens or parks rather than the street, and ample space was dedicated to a common green or park. (Figure 2.2) These complexes possessed community buildings, recreational facilities, laundry rooms, and clothes drying yards. Some developments also had educational and child care facilities.\textsuperscript{54} The developments were intended to provide residents with “fresh air and open spaces with provisions for recreation. [This] would create strong community bonds and sociability, which would enhance and enrich [residents’] lives in ways they would not normally be able to [be achieved] in a city apartment or typical suburban situation.”\textsuperscript{55} Planners and architects “believed that superblocks stood as safe islands amidst crime ridden slums.”\textsuperscript{56} Later, in 1942, these recreational and community facilities were necessary as violence increased in the city, and HACLA “insisted that recreational space and community activities must be provided for all sixteen developments.”\textsuperscript{57} Recreational facilities became a vital and integral part of the designs, encouraging residents to get out into the landscape and interact with one another. (Figure 2.3) HACLA believed that “a well-balanced civilization is one which cares for such fundamental needs of its food, clothing, shelter and health. Along with these, man should have a chance to give expression to his cultural desires for play, for education and for the fulfillment of his ideals.”\textsuperscript{58} According to Historian Don Parsons, opportunities for community building were also called community modernism. For instance, architecturally and socially progressive Aliso Village, designed by Ralph Flewelling and Lloyd Wright, offered protected green space away from the street, simple light-filled dwellings, a school and adjacent nursery school, and sheltered play areas for

\textsuperscript{54} “Housing Unit Gets Tenant,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}. January 3, 1941, 11.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 40.
children. Another development, Pueblo del Rio was designed by a team of renowned architects, including Paul R. Williams, Richard Neutra, Gordon B. Kaufmann, and Wurdeman & Becket. (Figure 2.4) It featured modern, sunny apartments with access to both private and communal outdoor spaces, and an average of one-and-a-half fruit trees per household. Unlike huge towers and mega blocks of public housing, socially conscious architects, and planners developed innovative and livable projects in Los Angeles.

Fig. 2.1: Estrada Courts Aerial looking west, n.d. Source: Housing Authority Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.
Fig. 2.2: Gonzaque Village, 2009. Source: Laurie Avocado, “Ozie B. Gonzaque Village,” Flickr.
Fig. 2.3: The Dominguez family children play ball in front of their apartment at Rose Hill Courts, 1951. Source: Housing Authority Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.
**Striving for Equality through Housing**

Most importantly, Los Angeles’ public housing history manifested the nation’s struggle to address social inequality. When over 10,000 African-American and Southern families migrated to the region during World War II, they worked in shipyards, aircraft plants, and other war industries that hired blacks for the first time. The demand for housing increased, and HACLA, adopted a non-discrimination policy for their public housing units. Unlike their PHA counterparts throughout the nation, as HACLA increasingly invested in more public housing, public housing developments were also one of the first areas in the nation that integrated families during segregation. A few decades later, cities across America began demolishing public housing projects.
because these developments had come to symbolize decades of failed racist urban policies.

In Los Angeles, public housing had been an extremely popular New Deal program. It “was viewed as a force for positive social change, and supported by a broad coalition of civic, labor, religious, and community organizations.”\(^{59}\) In addition to addressing substandard housing, providing housing for defense workers, and setting forth innovative design principles, public housing most importantly created conditions where families of different ethnicities lived in integrated communities for the very first time. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) implemented discriminatory housing practices throughout the United States. They utilized the existing social and economic background of the population in a given community to determine the most desirable type of housing needed there. The United States Housing Authority (USHA) guidelines furthered this idea and stated, “that the racial composition of new projects should match that of the neighborhoods in which they would be built.”\(^{60}\) Therefore, public housing was built to further segregate communities of color. In Los Angeles, public housing was a positive New Deal Program that advocated for positive social change, and was supported by a broad coalition. A coalition of diverse groups including HACLA, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, The Urban League, the Spanish American Congress, labor organizations, and Jewish organizations worked together to integrate public housing units. If HACLA had followed USHA guidelines, the existing population around Ramona Gardens' would have been used as a guide to mirror the racial composition of families moving into the new development. However, Ramona Gardens was one of the first interracial public housing projects in the country.\(^{61}\) In 1943, HACLA rescinded its racial quota policy based on the already segregated population of the community. HACLA’s progressive ideals also offered housing to non-U.S. citizens, primarily non-naturalized Mexican citizens, by amending the FHA Act to allow “allied and friendly aliens.”\(^{62}\) These residents were admitted to Ramona Gardens,

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 43.
\(^{60}\) Ibid., 46.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., 47.
\(^{62}\) Ibid., 48.
Aliso Village, Estrada Courts, and Pico Gardens housing projects. To support integration, HACLA also trained its employees “to help ensure that racial harmony and participation would be facilitated within the housing developments and the surrounding community.” Additionally, HACLA adopted a lease clause that guaranteed eviction for “those who contributed to a disturbance based on “racial intolerance.” In 1947, Los Angeles’ public housing was extensively integrated — fifty-five-percent were white, thirty-percent were black, and nineteen-percent were Latino. In 1959, the demographics of public housing units in Los Angeles shifted. Public housing developments became fourteen-percent white, sixty-five-percent black, and nineteen-percent Latino. Unfortunately, racial harmony did not last and white tenants had left the developments for homes in the suburbs. Los Angeles’ public housing came to be perceived as “Negro Housing.” Whites then protested the potential of new developments in their neighborhoods, and developments that were intended for White neighborhoods were relocated to Watts. Three new projects were built in Watts between 1953 and 1955, and this transformed Watts into an impoverished and racially isolated neighborhood. HACLA’s progressive housing policies sought to generate thousands of public housing units for low-income Angelenos, and housing opponents even accused HACLA of communist infiltration.

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 This is due to discriminatory urban planning practices such as redlining, white flight, predatory lending, and blockbusting.
Advocating for More Equity and the End of Public Housing Construction

During the Cold War, Southern California emerged as a stronghold of the Red Scare and McCarthyism. Private sector real estate boards, property owners, and the politicians sought to end public housing. Public housing was perceived to be a "part of a conspiratorial effort by well-placed communists [...] to destroy traditional American values through a carefully calculated policy of racial and class struggle."\(^7\) (Figure 2.6) Chavez Ravine, a neighborhood northwest of downtown, exemplifies HACLA’s struggle to combat public perception as a communist agency. Chavez Ravine was declared a slum, and HACLA had commissioned architects Robert Alexander and Richard Neutra

to design more public housing for the neighborhood. Elysian Park Heights, the proposed development, was thought to stem from communism. [HACLA’s] employees protested, they were subsequently dismissed, blacklisted, and sent to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee.”

According to Frank Wilkinson, former assistant director of HACLA, “[Chavez Ravine] is the tragedy of my life, absolutely. I was responsible for uprooting, I don’t know how many hundreds of people, from their own little valley and having the whole thing destroyed.” He testified to the House Un-American Activities Committee, was fired from him job, and sentenced to one year in jail. To Carol Jacques, a former Chavez Ravine resident, “[We] didn’t want to move. [We did not] want to lose [our] friends. [We] didn’t want to lose their homes.” In July 1950, all residents of Chavez Ravine received letters stating to sell their homes in order to make the land available for the proposed Elysian Park Heights, and they would have the right of first refusal for these new homes. The right of first refusal enables those that have been displaced due to a development project, the opportunity to be a tenant in the new development.

Elysian Park Heights included two-dozen thirteen-story buildings, more than 160 two-story bunkers, playgrounds, and schools. Through eminent domain, which permits the government to purchase property from private individuals in order to construct projects for the public good, the public officials bought the land and leveled many of the existing buildings. The houses were sold, auctioned, and even set on fire and used as practice sites by the local fire department. The majority of residents received insubstantial or no compensation for their homes and property, and land titles were erased. At the end of 1951, land had been cleared in the neighborhood, and construction begun. City Council called an emergency meeting and cancelled the development due to communist perception. The California Supreme Court voided the cancellation, but the Council sponsored a 1952 referendum and voters rejected Chavez

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75 Ibid.
Ravine. The city sold the land to the Dodgers baseball team for its stadium.\textsuperscript{76} The local housing authority was demonized, and “this conflict was so incendiary that public housing became the primary issue during Los Angeles's 1953 mayoral race, and the incumbent candidate who supported it was branded a communist and lost.”\textsuperscript{77} The winner, Norris Poulson, then canceled the city’s public housing contract with the Federal government.

Communist sentiment was not the only factor that led to the end of public housing developments in Los Angeles. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, public


housing developments continued to be built, but true adherence to Garden City principles waned. Instead, developments such as Jordan Downs’ were built with increased unit counts and little recreational space. This was due to Title 608, which encouraged greater density and returns on investment. During the war, in 1942, Congress created Title 608. Initially, Title 608 encouraged private developers and investors to erect low- and moderate-income rental housing. After the war, Veterans needed housing, and the U.S. Congress liberalized Title 608. Therefore, private developers could obtain FHA-backed mortgages of ninety-percent for the development of large-scale multi-family residential housing projects.  

Liberalization caused reduced mortgage amortization, lengthened loan maturity, and reduced capital requirements. This resulted in a high loan-to-value ratio, liberal land valuation, and high estimates of development costs occurred. Developers approximated their costs with no cost certifications, and these regulation lapses made the program attractive for developers. “In 1947, FHA mortgage commitments totaled $360 million. Between 1946 and 1952, eighty-percent of FHA-sponsored developments were insured under Title 608. Four hundred and sixty thousand units were built.”

Title 608 later expired which made multi-family housing difficult. In addition, the “Windfall Scandals” led to the investigations of corrupt private developers. Developers were accused of inflating the cost figures for land and padding construction costs, taking mortgage loans in excess of the reported costs of developments, and pocketing the difference as unearned cash, “aided and guided” by FHA officials.


**HACLA’s Current Significance and Role**

During the ensuing decades, many of these sites have increased in historic significance. For example, at Estrada Courts, residents and community members have painted approximately fifty murals – the highest concentration of murals in Boyle Heights. Between 1973 and 1980, notable Chicano artists created these murals in association with the 1970s Chicano Civil Rights and arts movements. Despite SurveyLA, a citywide survey that identifies and documents significant historic resources, it is unknown whether all public housing developments in Los Angeles are significant. (Table 2) For instance, although Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs are inextricably linked with Los Angeles’ pursuit in providing housing, the developments themselves may not meet eligibility criteria for state or Federal designation. Compounding this issue, are additions and extensions to multiple developments, which do not appear to be significant. Nevertheless, according to SurveyLA, there are a few developments eligible for the National Register – Avalon Gardens, Estrada Courts, Gonzaque Village, Pueblo Del Rio, San Fernando Gardens, and William Mead Homes. Documentation is the first step in capturing public housing history and its impact on Los Angeles’ development.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Significance Statement(s)</th>
<th>Status Code</th>
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</table>
| Avalon Gardens              | • One of the earliest housing projects in Los Angeles designed and built for defense workers.  
• Associated with a distinguished group of architects.  
• Excellent, early example of a Garden Apartment complex in Los Angeles.  
• Exemplary of garden city planning principles.                                                                                                               | 3S<sup>83</sup> 3CS<sup>84</sup> 5S<sup>85</sup> |
| Estrada Courts & Extension | • Excellent example of an intact garden apartment complex in Boyle Heights, developed by HACLA. The original development (1942) was designed by noted architects Robert Alexander, Winchton Risley, David Witmer, and Loyall Watson and noted landscape architect Hammond Sadler; the extension (1954) was designed by architect Paul Robinson Hunter and landscape architect Fred Barlow, Jr.  
• Significant as one of the earliest public housing projects constructed in the City of Los Angeles, associated with slum clearance efforts financed under the Federal Housing Act of 1937.  
• Intact concentration of approximately 50 murals, most of which were painted between 1973 and 1980 by several notable Chicano artists; associated with the Chicano civil rights and arts movements of the 1970s. Less than 50 years of age and not of exceptional importance; therefore not eligible for listing in the National Register. | 3S 3CS 5S3  |
| Gonzaque Village            | • One of the earliest housing projects in Los Angeles designed and built for defense workers.  
• Associated with a distinguished group of architects.                                                                                                                                                                   | 3S 3CS 5S3  |
| Imperial Courts             | • Does not meet eligibility standards. Constructed in phases beginning in 1944, majority was constructed outside the period of significance. Not one of the earliest examples.                                                                                   | 7Q<sup>86</sup> |
| Jordan Downs                | • The theme for post-1945 public housing complexes has not yet been developed. This property will be re-evaluated pending further research and analysis during a later phase of SurveyLA.                                                                                           | QQQ<sup>87</sup> |
| Mar Vista Gardens           | • Excellent example of a post-World War II garden apartment complex.  
• The theme for post-1945 public housing complexes has not yet been developed; this property will be re-evaluated pending further research and analysis during a later phase of SurveyLA.  
• Not one of the first ten public housing projects in Los Angeles; later examples of public housing will be evaluated as a group pending further research and analysis.                                                                 | QQQ         |
| Nickerson Gardens           | • The theme for post-1945 public housing complexes has not yet been developed. This property will be re-evaluated pending further research and analysis during a later phase of SurveyLA.                                                                                           | QQQ         |
| Pueblo Del                  | • One of the earliest housing projects in Los Angeles designed and built for defense workers.                                                                                                                                | 3S          |

<sup>83</sup> Appears eligible for NR as an individual property through survey evaluation.  
<sup>84</sup> Appears eligible for CR as an individual property through survey evaluation.  
<sup>85</sup> Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation though survey evaluation.  
<sup>86</sup> Needs more evaluation.  
<sup>87</sup> Needs more evaluation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Statement of Significance</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rio &amp; Extension</td>
<td>built for defense workers. Associated with a distinguished group of architects.</td>
<td>3CS 5S3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Excellent example of a garden apartment complex, exhibiting garden city planning principles such as superblock site planning, common green space and separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramona Gardens</td>
<td>• No information.</td>
<td>2S2&lt;sup&gt;508&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rancho San Pedro &amp; Extension</td>
<td>• One of the first ten public housing projects in Los Angeles.</td>
<td>3S 3CS 5S3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Hills Courts</td>
<td>• No information.</td>
<td>2S2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Fernando Gardens</td>
<td>• Excellent example of an intact garden apartment complex developed and operated by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and designed by notable architects Arthur B. Gallion and Victor D. Gruen. A rare example of a garden apartment complex in the area.</td>
<td>3S 3CS 5S3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Significant for its association with the development of public housing undertaken by a city agency with Federal funding in the postwar era; one of the last public housing complexes to have been constructed in Los Angeles with Federal housing dollars.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Association with HACLA's non-discrimination and non-segregation policies, having opened as a racially integrated public housing project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Mead Homes</td>
<td>• Pre-War Modern architecture and as one of the first government housing projects in the City of Los Angeles.</td>
<td>3S 3CS 5S3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Statements of Significance for Each Public Housing Development from SurveyLA<sup>88</sup>

Today, HACLA has grown to serve 58,685 households through a myriad of programs. HACLA primarily operates eighteen housing and social programs for public housing residents. (Table 3) Each program financially supports public housing developments in Los Angeles, but each of these programs has its own funding stipulations. One aspect of these stipulations includes growing and integrating supportive social services into public housing developments. For instance, the HUD – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD – VASH) vouchers are similar to Section 8 vouchers because they subsidize rent for residents.<sup>90</sup> However, HUD - VASH vouchers serve Veterans. Compounding subsidizing rent, HUD – VASH vouchers can be used to

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<sup>88</sup> Individual property determined eligible for NR by a consensus through Section 106 process. Listed in the CR.

<sup>89</sup> SurveyLA findings were collected from HistoricPlacesLA (historicplacesla.org) an online platform that inventories the City of Los Angeles' significant historic resources.

<sup>90</sup> Section 8 vouchers set a minimum rent for a household. The voucher is used to pay for the rest of the rent so the landlord (HACLA) receives fair market rent. This generates income and helps fund operating costs.
pay for supportive services for Veterans who are currently homeless. The Veterans that qualify for these vouchers have access to Veteran Affairs’ Hospitals where they can receive services. Additionally, HACLA utilized the Shelter Plus Care (S+C) Program to provide rental assistance and to connect residents to supportive services. S+C assists hard to serve homeless individuals with disabilities and their families. These individuals primarily include those with serious mental illness, chronic problems with alcohol and drugs, and HIV/AIDS or related diseases. For HUD-VASH and S+C, recipients of these programs are provided with both housing and social services. For these eighteen programs, there is little expected turnover, therefore underlining public housing as a vital resource for those in need.

Although HACLA is primarily funded to provide housing, HACLA has developed a long history of seeking grants, partnerships, and leveraging opportunities to support healthy communities by providing recreational, social and other supportive services to improve residents’ quality of life. (Figure 2.7) Currently, there are four partnerships to provide services in four public housing communities in different areas of the city. Under HACLA’s Educational Development Initiative, HACLA has created a non-profit organization called Kids Progress Inc., which builds strategic partnerships to ensure that youth have access to educational programs and opportunities. One program of this initiative is the Community Satellite Library. The program offers residents remote access to the Los Angeles Public Library’s print and electronic collections, including help for students and resources in the public housing communities. These libraries are offered in the Estrada Courts and Ramona Gardens housing developments. Overall, in 2015, HACLA served 147,561 residents in their developments. 56,852 residents had Section 8 assistance, 47,658 residents lived in HUD project-based contract administration units for. Finally, within the public housing units, there is a one-percent vacancy rate.

94 16,316 units are in the City of Los Angeles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Units/Families Served in 2014</th>
<th>Expected Turnover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Public Housing</td>
<td>6,971</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Section 8 Vouchers &amp; Ports</td>
<td>35,110</td>
<td>1,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. HUD - VASH</td>
<td>1,696</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Non – Elderly Disabled</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family Unification</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tenant Protection</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mainstream Year 5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Welfare to Work (Obsolete)</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Project-Based Voucher</td>
<td>2,806</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Limited Preference WL Homeless</td>
<td>3,684</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Limited Preference TBSH</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Section 8 Homeownership</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Public Housing Drug Elimination</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. HOPE VI</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Shelter Plus Care</td>
<td>2,510</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. New Construction</td>
<td>1,704</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. HOPWA</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Households Served: 58,685**

Table 3. Impact of HACLA’s Programs

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95 These are affordable units financed through bonds, tax credits, and other private and public funds. They are not eligible for public housing subsidies. However, some of these units may receive Section 8 PBV subsidies, which makes housing deeply affordable for ELI families.

96 Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *HACLA by the Numbers*, (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2015).


Unfortunately, it is apparent that the amount of public housing is not enough to serve struggling households. Although there are only 6,232 housing units, there were 38,813 families on HACLA’s waiting list in 2014. (Table 4) For the families that live in the units, 92.5-percent of the households are ELI - they are earning thirty-percent of the AMI. When public housing was first built in Los Angeles, it was to address this need, but now, there is no public housing production. Public housing’s demise and stigmatization has prevented HACLA from building public housing. Rather than invest in public housing, at a Federal level, HUD has restructured their financing structures to prevent concentrations of ELI residents. In order to access Federal funding for affordable housing, AMIs must differ and there are stringent regulations on building quality.
### Household Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of Families</th>
<th>% of Total Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waiting List Total</td>
<td>38,813</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Low-Income</td>
<td>35,902</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Income</td>
<td>2,561</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Children</td>
<td>21,766</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Families</td>
<td>4,576</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Disabilities</td>
<td>12,471</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>15,408</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>17,349</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>3,262</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Other</td>
<td>2,794</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bedroom Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedroom Size</th>
<th># of Families</th>
<th>% of Total Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Includes 0 Bedroom)</td>
<td>24,875</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9,140</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,468</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Housing Needs of Families on the Waiting List Public Housing Tenant-based Assistance

### HACLA’s Funding Sources, Budget, and Maintenance

The current public housing supply is not enough to serve struggling households. Due to the Windfall Scandals, the last housing project constructed by HACLA was in 1955. Nevertheless, beyond providing housing, over seventy years later, HACLA has leveraged over 686,237,632 dollars through Federal funding, grants, public loans, private loans, and collaborations with a multitude of non-profit organizations to build and improve housing with social services. Despite this accomplishment, HACLA is struggling to physically manage these developments and to provide more deeply subsidized units. With major Federal and state funding gone, HACLA has become dependent on multiple partnerships, rental subsidies, and voucher programs. (Table 5) Therefore, HACLA’s lack of funding commitments to existing building maintenance has caused many communities to decline physically and socially.

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98 Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Year 2015 Agency Plan*, (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2015), 32, [http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public%20Documents/2015%20Final%20Agency%20Plan%2010-3-2014%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public%20Documents/2015%20Final%20Agency%20Plan%2010-3-2014%20FINAL.pdf). The HACLA’s public housing waiting list is closed.

99 Ibid., 8. Affordable housing includes different housing types – shelters, transitional housing, apartments, and homes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Planned $</th>
<th>Planned Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Grants (Fiscal Year 2014)</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Public Housing Operating Fund</td>
<td>21,840,474</td>
<td>Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Housing Capital Fund</td>
<td>14,104,966</td>
<td>Capital Improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE VI Demolition and Revitalization</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Contributions for Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance</td>
<td>566,462,063</td>
<td>Housing Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Grants</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Community Development Block Grant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Community Service Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPWA, New Construction, Moderate Rehab, Shelter Plus Care, Continuum of Care, Supportive Housing, Family Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>52,914,314</td>
<td>Housing Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency Grants</td>
<td>332,094</td>
<td>Senior Citizen Assistants (RSDM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIA Cluster (Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker)</td>
<td>2,190,885</td>
<td>Workforce Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Housing Dwelling Rental Income</strong></td>
<td>27,738,604</td>
<td>Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Federal Sources</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Healthy Marriage Promotion and Fatherhood Grant</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Resident Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 1913 Housing Based Day Supervision</td>
<td>554,232</td>
<td>Resident Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>686,237,632</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. 2015 HACLA Agency Plan Financial Resources – Planned Sources and Uses<sup>101</sup>

The Aragon Family has been living in William Mead Homes for twenty-four years and counting, but maintenance has been an issue. Joanne Aragon was a resident of William Mead Homes throughout her childhood and teenage years. She now lives in a house in a nearby neighborhood, but she frequently visits her mother, Jasmin, who still lives in William Mead Homes. “Growing up here, William Mead was convenient. My school is in the same development. HACLA lowered our rent when my mom was out of work. There is a WorkSource Center, which helps people get jobs. When I was younger, there were gangs, but not so much anymore. It’s a quiet neighborhood. People keep to themselves.”<sup>102</sup> However, in terms of maintenance, HACLA “need[s] to improve in getting work orders done in timely manner. Their fumigation system is ineffective. When doing some landscaping, they should have the workers clean up as opposed to the residents.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> “Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Year 2015 Agency Plan,” The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, accessed July 20, 2015, 18, http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public%20Documents/2015%20Final%20Agency%20Plan%2010-3-2014%20FINAL.pdf.<br>
<sup>102</sup> Joanne Aragon, interview by Leslie Palaroan, Personal Interview, Los Angeles, January 6, 2016. This person’s name has been changed for privacy.<br>
<sup>103</sup> Ibid.
Most pipes seem to be very old. [The] locations of the lights in the apartments are badly placed.\textsuperscript{104} (Figure 2.8) Unfortunately, it will be difficult solving these issues because HACLA’s overall public housing financing is decreasing. HACLA has been operating at a loss. From 2008 – 2011, HACLA’s operating expenses have been increasing, making it difficult for HACLA to generate income for their housing developments. (Table 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Revenue</td>
<td>$860,175,680</td>
<td>$992,526,445</td>
<td>$1,068,469,934</td>
<td>$1,077,259,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Expenses</td>
<td>$914,935,657</td>
<td>$1,011,832,003</td>
<td>$1,044,906,027</td>
<td>$1,084,043,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Operating Income</td>
<td>$54,759,977</td>
<td>$19,305,558</td>
<td>$23,563,907</td>
<td>$6,783,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-Operating Revenue and Expenses, Net</td>
<td>$2,020,890</td>
<td>$6,219,084</td>
<td>$5,820,225</td>
<td>$1,579,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (Loss) Before Capital Contributions</td>
<td>$56,780,867</td>
<td>$25,524,642</td>
<td>$17,743,682</td>
<td>$8,363,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Contribution from HUD</td>
<td>$9,288,569</td>
<td>$13,542,081</td>
<td>$6,567,711</td>
<td>$17,197,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>$47,492,298</td>
<td>$11,982,561</td>
<td>$24,311,393</td>
<td>$8,833,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets at Beginning of the Year</td>
<td>$446,477,470</td>
<td>$398,985,172</td>
<td>$387,002,611</td>
<td>$468,538,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets at End of the Year</td>
<td>$398,958,172</td>
<td>$387,002,611</td>
<td>$411,314,004</td>
<td>$477,371,931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. HACLA’s Published Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets from 2008 – 2011\textsuperscript{105}

According to HACLA’s latest 2014 financial audit, “Section 8 Voucher program will remain stable; however, funding for Low Rent Public Housing program will continue to be reduced. Public housing authorities will continue to struggle as they face long-term challenges to match operating needs against available revenue.”\textsuperscript{106} This has not changed throughout the years. According to HACLA’s 2012 Annual Report, HACLA’s spends an enormous amount of their budget - ninety-two-percent, on maintaining

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
housing developments. However, residents are living in substandard conditions. Therefore, in 2013, HACLA undertook an assessment of each development. Additionally, there are inspections that aid HACLA in determining what to fix. Despite this methodology, HACLA is grappling with how to not only maintain these developments, but how to maintain them in a manner that does not compromise their historic integrity.

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107 Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 75 Years Providing Affordable Housing 2013 Report, (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2013), 22, http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public%20Documents/2012%20HACLA%20AR.pdf. This percentage is counting Section 8 vouchers as maintenance expenditures. Section 8 subsidizes rental amounts for the tenants, but that voucher generates revenue to maintain the building’s operating costs.
Fig. 2.8: Bad Conditions in Jordan Downs Resident’s Unit, 1988. Source: Herald-Examiner Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.
Chapter 3: Fighting to Preserve and Invest in Public Housing

With public housing developments aging and deteriorating, and with a limited budget, HACLA has demolished sites, and are proposing to alter character-defining features of existing developments. Throughout the decades, HACLA has demolished thousands of units. Citywide, an estimated 7,906 units and beds have been demolished. Currently, there is another plan to demolish a prominent public housing development in Watts - Jordan Downs is in the process of applying for Federal sources to completely redevelop the neighborhood. At a smaller scale, HACLA has altered developments in order to modernize them according the 2013 PNAs recommendations. According to the Los Angeles Conservancy, an organization that advocates for historic places, HACLA has undertaken alterations that do not comply with Section 106 standards. For instance, at William Mead Homes, HACLA is proposing to replace metal casement windows with vinyl windows. To further modernize units and spur community development, HACLA has upgraded developments with the help of residents. At Nickerson Gardens, HACLA has rebuilt sidewalks, painted walls, and replaced plumbing, but without an assessment on the historic significance of these developments, changes may compromise historic integrity. Once again, these issues stem from the financing structures of public housing developments, and how these structures encourage PHAs to disinvest in public housing. In order to understand the disconnect between public housing and heritage conservation, one must reflect on how stigmatization guides Federal investment financing structures, and how any investment used by PHAs enables them to erase public housing through demolition, redevelopment, and modernization.

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Understanding Public Housing Financing

In order to understand why public housing is often in disrepair, one must consider how public housing is financed. At a national level, public housing is one of the nation's three main rental assistance programs, along with Section 8 vouchers and project-based rental assistance (PBVs). Public housing developments provide affordable homes to 2.2 million low-income Americans. While HUD oversees the public housing program, it is administered locally by about 3,000 PHAs. These PHAs own and manage the public housing developments themselves, but some contract with private management companies or transfer ownership to a private subsidiary or another entity that operates the development under public housing rules. In terms of generating income from rents, generally, a family must be “low-income” — meaning that its income may not exceed eighty-percent of the local median income — in order to qualify for public housing. At least forty-percent of the new families that PHA admits each year must be ELI with incomes no greater than thirty-percent of the local median. This is approximately equivalent to the national poverty line. On average, agencies exceed this requirement by a large margin. For HACLA, all tenants are ELI. After certain deductions are taken out, ELI tenants pay thirty-percent of their income for rent and utilities, and even less depending on the family’s circumstances. PHAs can also choose to require families to pay a minimum rent of up to fifty dollars even if this is more than thirty-percent of their income, and families can opt to pay a flat rent based on local market rents regardless of their income. This is the key differentiation between public housing and affordable housing. Although public housing is inherently affordable, developments clearly called affordable housing, do not give families the option to pay a flat rate. Affordable housing developments may layer subsidies, but each unit has to pay a rent set by the developer and HUD. Additionally, it is difficult to develop affordable housing units all at thirty-percent AMI because funding sources prevent a development from being one-hundred-percent ELI. For public housing, with rents charged at such a low rate, it is difficult for PHAs to garner income to operate their developments.

According to HUD, about eighty-five percent of public housing units meet or exceed HUD standards for decent, safe housing, but the developments — nearly all of which were built before 1985 — have accumulated large underlying deferred maintenance and improvement needs. This is due to diminishing Federal funds, and low rents that do generate income that is enough to operate and maintain the development. A 2010 HUD study estimated the total unmet capital needs in public housing developments at more than twenty-six billion dollars. No funds have been provided to build additional public housing since the mid-1990s. Since then, PHAs have demolished or otherwise removed from the program more than 285,000 units due to deterioration resulting from long-term underfunding and other factors. PHAs have built new units to replace only about one-sixth of those that have been removed. The Federal government funds public housing through two main streams – The Public Housing Operating Fund and the Public Housing Capital Fund (Capital Fund). The Public Housing Operating Fund, covers the gap between the rents that public housing tenants pay and the developments’ operating costs. The Capital Fund, funds renovation of developments and replacement of items such as appliances and heating and cooling equipment.\textsuperscript{112}

However, it is difficult for HACLA to maintain their public housing developments.

Contradicting Stipulations between HUD and Heritage Conservation

Public housing has stipulations that are stricter than conventional affordable housing financing. Public housing captures multiple Federal funding sources that are tied to restrictions. For instance, in the case of rental subsidies, PBVs, can only be used at developments that are designated to accept PBVs.\textsuperscript{113} There are other larger funding sources that have stipulations that in effect, destroy public housing. The HOPE VI program has been the most disruptive funding source in demolishing numerous public housing units throughout the United States. HOPE VI was created to redevelop slums, and it was used to justify public housing redevelopment and demolition. In order to save and garner funding, HACLA has decreased the housing stock through HOPE VI. For


instance, when the Pico Aliso Housing project was built in Boyle Heights, it held 685 units of housing. When it was redeveloped, there was a net loss of 308 units, and was renamed Pueblo del Sol. According to Jacqueline Levitt, an urban planning professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, public housing is a “stepchild of the government. [PHAs throughout the United States have never replaced more] than the number of units that were demolished. At Pico Aliso, [there] was a one to four unit replacement.” Many public housing units were demolished and replaced with mixed income developments that house fewer people. There were greater restrictions and requirements for the low-income residents trying to return or apply to the new development. For instance, in the case of Chavez Ravine, although HACLA had promised a first right of refusal, many residents could not financially qualify for the units. Nationally, throughout the HOPE VI programs, there were no one-for-one replacement requirements. Therefore, America has been losing roughly 10,000 units a year since 1995. As of 2014, 140,000 units have been permanently lost through HOPE VI. Back in St. Louis, HOPE VI rapidly replaced public housing. As a result, preservationists filed a lawsuit against St. Louis’ PHA. When Darst-Webby, a public housing development in St. Louis, was set for demolition, there was no replacement plan for affordable units. The units disappeared and preservationists believed that this exemplified private land grabs by HOPE VI. HOPE VI also functioned on the belief that New Urbanist principles would resolve public housing issues, but the program “traded sturdy structures for lighter construction.” Rather, HOPE VI became an inadequate response to the market, maintenance, and architectural issues surrounding public housing. The program destroyed communities.

\[115\] Ibid.
Another funding source that PHAs are starting to leverage is called the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI). It is designed to “address public housing or HUD-Assisted Housing through a comprehensive approach [towards] neighborhood transformation…[CNI] ensures that current public and assisted housing residents will be able to benefit from this transformation, by preserving affordable housing or providing residents with the choice to move to affordable and accessible housing in another existing neighborhood of opportunity.” In terms of housing, the goal was to “replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood…To achieve [this goal] communities must have in place a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy or Transformation Plan.” Currently, HACLA is utilizing the grant to undertake dispositions and extensive renovations.

Last year, Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), another program established as a means to house the nation’s poorest, has the potential of compromising public housing. RAD privatizes public housing by allowing local housing authorities to mortgage land and buildings to private capital. Private capital investors would then use low income tax credits to provide subsidized rent through project-based Section 8 contracts. The program merely shifts units from the public housing program to the Section 8 program so that providers may leverage the private capital markets to make capital improvements. RAD also gives owners of three HUD “legacy” programs – Rent Supplement, Rental Assistance Payment, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation the opportunity to enter into long-term contracts that facilitate the financing of improvements. Repairs would then be able to be made or the properties could be demolished or rebuilt. The units that would be rebuilt would replace the number that was demolished. In simplest terms, a PHA could either sell or lease a public housing building to a private developer; the developer in turn would agree to make certain renovations,

120 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
and to respect tenants’ rights. The traditional public housing funding mechanism, which is direct subsidies to PHAs, would be replaced by tax credits and housing vouchers under Section 8. The total subsidy encourages the developer to undertake the public housing development and maintain low rents for tenants. RAD turns public housing into being general affordable housing. Yet by switching public housing that imitates the affordable housing model, there is an “erosion of tenant legal protections…For example, under current public housing law, if a landlord or housing authority mistreats a tenant, the tenant may pursue redress without resorting to expensive and lengthy lawsuits. But under RAD, the contracts will be between private developers and housing authorities, which could make it much more difficult for tenants to hold landlords accountable.”

Although no tenants will have to be re-screened to establish eligibility to live in RAD properties, and an any demolished units would be must be replaced with the same number of units as was originally there, there are more rising problems from RAD. PHAs can intentionally leave units empty in an effort to lessen their administrative fees or for eventual demolition. In 2014, Congress only authorized 60,000 units to be converted. HUD received applications for more than 180,000 units to be converted. However, according to James Hanlon, the director of the Institute for Urban Research at Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville, the university is conducting research on the first round of housing units approved for RAD. He emphasizes his findings are very preliminary, but, “Economically viable or otherwise better-off housing projects are potentially more likely to be converted, as opposed to more severely distressed [or] poorer projects. [Therefore] better-off projects might be more attractive to potential investors.” With more than 300,000 units of public housing stock removed from 1900 to 2010 because of chronic underfunding, the better-positioned buildings with stable-income tenants are apt to be selected for RAD conversion. Therefore, worst-off places will fall into disrepair. For example, in Baltimore, where 4,000 of the city’s public housing units have been proposed for conversion to private ownership through RAD, tenants

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124 Ibid.
and tenants’ rights groups have been protesting the program’s implementation. Additionally, stakeholders are concerned about using the buildings as collateral, loan repayment viability by PHAs, and exposing housing developments to the financial market. Nevertheless, the RAD program does not increase HUD’s budget.

Regardless of programs such as HOPE VI, CNI, and RAD, HUD simply does not have resources that target public housing rehabilitation and preservation. In 1995, when public housing preservation became a contentious issue from an equity and conservation standpoint, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) issued guidelines to defuse the potential for conflict. The ACHP is an independent Federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of our nation’s historic resources, and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. They encourage Federal agencies to factor historic preservation into Federal project requirements. ACHP’s guidelines were vague. They simply “[relaxed] strict rehabilitation standards as they applied to the interiors of simple buildings.”

126 Their guidance provided flexibility, but left State Historic Preservation Office Staff to decide what would happen with public housing developments. The ACHP merely posts updates on best practices, case studies, and related articles, and heavily depends on Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) to address public housing developments and conservation. The ACHP and their Affordable Housing Task Force revisited their 1995 “Policy Statement on Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation,” in 2005 to create a final advisory council policy statement, but the updated 2006 statement still has flaws – it focuses on affordable housing and is more dependent on Section 106 to prevent negative alterations to buildings. Unlike public housing, affordable housing, can utilize Federal tax incentives such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC) because they are income-generating properties and have different underwriting and financing stipulations compared to public housing financing. Due to LIHTC and HRTC, affordable housing developments are reviewed by the National Park Service (NPS) for adherence to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines

for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings through a more stringent process. This does not happen for public housing developments. Section 106 requires Federal Agencies such as HUD and HACLA to “consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and provide the ACHP a reasonable opportunity to comment on undertakings.”\textsuperscript{127} With public housing units continuing to be demolished, this illuminates the issue that Section 106 is not enough to conserve public housing developments. Conservationists have to reconcile the stricter interpretation of the NPS’s Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, and housing officials are often antagonistic to both historic preservation and the reuse of older structures.\textsuperscript{128} Even for general affordable housing developers, Federal preservation standards and affordable housing credits have been hampered by inconsistencies and conflicts among the Secretary’s Standards, Federal housing credits, and state-mandated local housing codes.\textsuperscript{129} The tools that the ACHP has produced are specifically for those that want to produce affordable housing, not public housing. Therefore, there is conflict between HUD stipulations and conservationists’ convictions. Rather than leverage the existing infrastructure at public housing sites, HACLA is incentivized to demolish public housing developments because there is no guide to historically conserve public housing. HACLA’s ongoing public housing demolitions and alterations are exemplified by changes in Normont Terrace, Jordan Downs, Rose Hill Courts, Mar Vista Gardens, and William Mead Homes.

**Demolishing and Decreasing Housing Supply at Normont Terrace**

Situated in the Harbor City neighborhood in Los Angeles, Normont Terrace was a public housing development, but it was redeveloped as affordable housing. From redevelopment, displaced residents were not guaranteed housing, and units were replaced with higher rents and different architecture. This privatization undermines one of the basic standpoints of public housing in Los Angeles - to provide for the poorest. Normont Terrace first was built in 1942 as temporary military housing but later served as a public housing development. However, the development’s transformation

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 109.
underlines HACLA’s struggle to preserve public housing. To neighbors, Normont Terrace bred gang activity. Therefore, HACLA underwent comprehensive redevelopment of the site, and in 1996, Normont Terrace became Harbor Village Apartments. Harbor Village consists of 624 attached and detached residences. 224 units are for homeownership, and the remaining 400 became subsidized rental units. The rentals are townhomes, garden apartments, and detached homes. (Figure 3.0) The acquisition and redevelopment was funded through LIHTC and Tax Exempt Bond Financing. To attempt to increase affordability, Section 8 vouchers were used. Residents are also provided with comprehensive social service programs. After the expiration of the development’s fifteen-year LIHTC compliance period in 2012, HACLA went into a limited partnership with Related California, a private real estate firm, and Union Bank. HACLA exercised its purchase option to purchase a 400-unit low-income rental unit project to its instrumentality, LA Cienega LOMOD (LOMOD). “Harbor Village is not simply Normont Village with a face lift. Their new community is gated and has 24-hour security.” In 2014, the development underwent more renovation - this included remodeled interiors with new kitchen/bathroom fixtures, cabinets and countertops, kitchen appliances, and dual glazed windows. Additionally, twenty units were fully rehabbed to Federal accessibility standards. This redevelopment highlights HACLA’s pitfalls in preserving public housing developments. Harbor Village erased Normont Terrace’s history and privatized housing. By privatizing housing, this depletes extremely affordable units are removed from the market. Yet, this is only one instance of redevelopment in HACLA’s history. HACLA has demolished fifteen developments possessing 7,906 units. (Table 7) HACLA has plans to demolish more.

Fig. 3.0: Harbor Village, 2015. Source: Public Housing Gallery, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
## Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles' Public Housing Developments - Demolished

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aliso Apartments</td>
<td>First Street and Clarence</td>
<td>Boyle Heights</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliso Village</td>
<td>1401 E. 1st Street</td>
<td>Boyle Heights</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning Homes</td>
<td>N. Gaffey St. and Anaheim St.</td>
<td>San Pedro</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilone Homes</td>
<td>Glenoaks Blvd</td>
<td>Sun Valley</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabrillo Homes</td>
<td>2001 River Avenue</td>
<td>Long Beach</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel Heights</td>
<td>Western Avenue and 25th St.</td>
<td>Harbor Area</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Strand Village</td>
<td>401 Hawaiian Avenue</td>
<td>Harbor Area</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normont Terrace</td>
<td>990 West 256th St.</td>
<td>Harbor Area</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pico Gardens</td>
<td>500 Pecan Street</td>
<td>Boyle Heights</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pico Gardens &amp; Las Casitas(^{133})</td>
<td>1526 E. 3rd Street</td>
<td>Boyle Heights</td>
<td>296</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth Homes</td>
<td>2323 Portsmouth Road</td>
<td>San Pedro</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodger Young Village</td>
<td>Northeast Griffith Park</td>
<td>Griffith Park</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory Park</td>
<td>Cal 4105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Terrace</td>
<td>1655 Seaport Drive</td>
<td>San Pedro</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington Hall</td>
<td>450 Neptune Street</td>
<td>San Pedro</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Number of Units Demolished: 7,906**

Table 7. Demolished Public Housing Units\(^{134}\)

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### Redeveloping and Disrupting the Jordan Downs Community

HACLA has looming revitalization plans for Jordan Downs. Jordan Downs has 700 units of public housing in which some families have lived for generations. HACLA has employed The Michaels Organization and BRIDGE Housing as the joint developers and property managers for Jordan Downs. HACLA will continue to own the land, but all three organizations plan to demolish all of the buildings for a much larger “urban village.” Learning from their past demolitions, HACLA will require one-to-one replacement of the existing 700 public housing units\(^{135}\). In addition to the units, there will be approximately 1,800 subsidized homes and houses to be sold at a fair-market value which will help offset the costs of supporting lower income units. Master planning started in 2008, and it includes neighborhood retail, community centers, and parks. The joint developers “will also develop a comprehensive plan - Human Capital Plan, to

\(^{133}\)It is unclear if Pico Gardens and Las Casitas qualify as public housing in the context of historic significance. This is a redeveloped site with new construction single-family homes and older townhomes.

\(^{134}\)Alan Michelson, “Aliso Apartments, Los Angeles, CA,” University of Washington, 2005, Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD Id: 2963), [http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/2963/](http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/2963/). Some of these developments were intended to be temporary and not permanent housing.

provide family support, job training, and community programs for residents to move
toward self-sufficiency.”

According to HACLA’s CEO and President, Doug Guthrie, “The idea is to upgrade the neighborhood without the displacement of low-income people that comes with gentrification.”

During the 1950s, Jordan Downs sheltered factory workers. The development was said to be “a city within a city of two story structures.” (Figure 3.1) With time, it became notorious for gangs such as the Great Street Crips, and crime. The violence has since subsided and it has become a “breathing neighborhood.”

Despite its violent history, according to Brandon Carter, a resident, Jordan Downs “feels like a family community. My mother grew up here, my grandmother grew up here…kids have potential…but there are no resources.”

In addition, Dorthea Parkins, another resident, does not want Jordan Downs to be redeveloped. “Everybody respects each other. I was born and raised [in Jordan Downs]. The buildings have been here for so long. I am used to this.” However, according to another resident named Sharon, “The structures have problems…the pipes, the roaches, the mice, the mildew, the rust on the floor. [These buildings] have been here for years. [I am] ready for the places to be knocked down.”

In 1992, there was an effort to redevelop Jordan Downs, and residents were concerned about the right of first refusal. (Figure 3.2) Similar to the Chavez Ravine, for renters, this translates to whether or not tenants can return to public housing after redevelopment. In 2015, in order for residents to move back into Jordan Downs, they have to be in “good standing” with HACLA. Families have to comply with the lease, and there is a program called “Shields for Families” that prepares families for redevelopment. The redevelopment plan provides flexibility to build out the urban village in phases. Despite the plans for one to one replacement and redevelopment in phases, Jordan Downs’

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136 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
redevelopment is worrying housing advocates because affordable housing supply is becoming depleted and HACLA has a history of demolition without providing equitable replacement. Compounding this concern, the city of Los Angeles has less than a five-percent vacancy rate, and the residents in Jordan Downs cannot afford market rate housing. Over fifty-percent of Jordan Down’s residents are unemployed.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} The new urban village decreases public housing availability, Jordan Down’s history, and the physical fabric of the neighborhood. In December 2016, the State of California’s Strategic Growth Council’s Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Program awarded BRIDGE Housing with $6,500,000 to start on Phase I.\footnote{California Strategic Growth Council, \textit{Strategic Growth Council Approves $32.4 Million Through Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program}, (Sacramento: California Strategic Growth Council, 2015), \url{https://www.sgc.ca.gov/docs/PressRelease_AHSCFall2015NOFA.pdf}.} Although Jordan Downs is not deemed to be historically, significant, this fight underlines the importance of conserving public housing from a housing and survival perspective.\footnote{Jordan Down’s historic significance may change according to new frameworks for evaluation.}
Fig. 3.1: Jordan Downs, 2015. Source: Public Housing Gallery, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Planning to Demolish Rose Hills Courts

Rose Hill Courts is a one hundred unit public housing development built in the 1940s and HACLA has plans to demolish the buildings.\textsuperscript{145} According to HACLA, “the buildings have outlived their planned life cycle.”\textsuperscript{146} The property has a large termite infestation that extends to subterranean level around the foundation walls, piers, and plumbing. According to the latest physical needs assessment, Rose Hill Courts has over 16,000,000 dollars in capital needs of which 11,000,000 dollars are related to termite

\textsuperscript{145} Similar to Jordan Downs, Rose Hill Courts may need further evaluation for significance, but it is set to be demolished.
\textsuperscript{146} Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, \textit{Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Year 2015 Agency Plan}, (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2015), 25, 113, 131, http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public\%20Documents/2015\%20Final\%20Agency\%20Plan\%2010-3-2014\%20FINAL.pdf.
damage reconstruction. (Figure 3.4) The engineer’s recommendation is to repair, reinforce or demolish the structure and bring property to current seismic codes. HACLA has recently conducted two resident meetings at the site to discuss the termite damage and HACLA’s next steps. Unlike the funds that maintain public housing developments, there are numerous HUD funds for redevelopment. (Table 8) Residents are concerned with where they are going to go. Yet, HACLA’s short-term solution is to monitor and treat the occupied units, but when tenants move out, the vacated units will not be leased out. For the long-term options, residents will have to be relocated. Finding extremely affordable housing for families that will be displaced will be difficult.

Fig. 3.4: Rose Hill Courts, 2015. Source: Public Housing Gallery, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Modernization Upgrades and Alterations at William Mead Homes and Mar Vista

For public housing developments that do not have a forthcoming redevelopment plan, they still undergo modernization upgrades that compromise the material integrity of the buildings. Disregarding developments such as Harbor Village, the integrity of the remaining public housing developments is undeniable. The National Register of Historic Places recognizes a property's significance based on a property's integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. “To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property’s physical features and how they relate to its significance.” At an arm’s length, all public housing development sites convey seven out of the seven aspects of integrity. As exemplified by HOPE VI and CNI funding, HUD funding can still completely uproot historic housing developments. Other smaller funding sources from HUD can also compromise the material integrity of public housing developments. PHAs are subject to two types of maintenance evaluation –

Table 8. HACLA’s Proposed Redevelopment Solutions for Rose Hills Courts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HUD Program</th>
<th>Effects of Rose Hill Courts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Modernization</td>
<td>It is a substantial rehabilitation effort to upgrade the property to market rate condition and extend its life expectancy by an additional 30 – 40 years. Under this scenario, units will continue to be deficient in terms of size, design, and amenities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 18 Demolition</td>
<td>Demolish the property if the property is deemed obsolete as to physical condition, making them unsuitable for housing purposes, and no reasonable program of modifications is cost-effective to return them to useful life. This scenario comes into play if HACLA does not have funds to redevelop the property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 18 Demolition, Disposition, Redevelopment</td>
<td>Under this option, if the property satisfies the Criterion for Obsolescence, in which case Rehabilitation is not cost-effective, the Authority could apply to HUD to demolish the property and dispose of it to a Partnership comprising of HACLA and a Development Partner for redevelopment of low income replacement units using mixed finance sources of funding including tax credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redevelopment through Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)</td>
<td>HUD is advocating that PHAs convert their public housing sites to RAD, a new HUD initiative to preserve units by converting Public Housing subsidies at current levels to long-term Section 8 contract rents. Under this option, HACLA would partner with a development partner to demolish, finance, and rebuild.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

148 Previous alterations made by HACLA may have compromised material integrity, but a survey and a historic structures report must be performed before integrity is examined at each development.
inspections and PNAs. HUD requires PHAs to undergo physical property inspections on public housing and multi-family assisted housing. For HACLA, 20,000 inspections are completed annually with the aim of ensuring safe and sanitary housing for assisted families.\textsuperscript{149} Inspections include rating every item on a list of physical points to inspect, with deductions for issues. Issues are weighted by severity and each inspection is weighted with a one-hundred-point scale. The frequency of inspections increases when scores are lower. Properties that score below eighty points are considered problematic enough to warrant annual inspections to ensure resolution of issues and improvement.\textsuperscript{150} In addition to these standard inspections are PNAs. The purpose of the PNA is to bring each of its sites up to modernization and energy conservation standards. In 2013, this assessment was performed and completed on over 6,800 public housing units owned and operated by HACLA. The study shows a physical need of $533 million. This need is further broken down into four priorities. (Table 9) The huge capital need for the public housing coupled with limited capital funding allows HACLA to set forth a strategic capital spending/improvement plan, subject to commission approval. The PNA and improvement plan are also “predictive road maps that will include resident outreach and transparency [to residents because] addressing capital needs that involve the health and safety of residents as well as accommodations for the disabled residents of public housing.”\textsuperscript{151} In order for HACLA to apply for grants such as HUD Modernization funding and the Capital Fund Program, these assessments are mandatory.\textsuperscript{152} For instance, in 2015, HACLA utilized grants for their water saving initiatives, which included the replacement of no hose bibs, aerators, showerheads, and

\textsuperscript{149} Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, \textit{Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Year 2015 Agency Plan}, (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2015), 11, \url{http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public\%20Documents/2015\%20Final\%20Agency\%20Plan\%2010-3-2014\%20FINAL.pdf}.


tanks. This resulted in seventeen million dollars in savings. HACLA has replaced 4,100 toilets with one-gallon toilets. Their goal is to replace the remaining 2,430 toilets with ones that have 0.8-gallon tank, which saves 18,770 gallons per day.153 These overhauls are also performed on the exteriors of these developments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Non-operational equipment or conditions that will worsen if not repaired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work to replace antiquated systems, such as galvanized water pipe replacement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Predicted replacements, such as water heaters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Long-term projections, such as roof replacement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. HACLA’s Prioritization for Replacement154

Despite their significance, garden apartments and public housing remains a growing concern from demolition to irreversible alterations. The Los Angeles Conservancy estimates that fifteen publicly owned garden apartments have been demolished and others are threatened with incompatible alterations.155 HACLA is proposing to undertake a full-scale window replacement project at two of its historic garden apartments – William Mead Homes and Mar Vista Gardens. Both of these properties have been deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Their horizontal windows are among the primary character-defining features of historic garden apartments because they “have facilitated the spirit of indoor/outdoor living, giving residents access to fresh air and landscaped views.”156 (Figure 3.5) However, these windows are largely in poor condition because of deferred and inadequate maintenance. HACLA’s proposes to remove the original windows and install vinyl windows. (Figures 3.6-3.7) However, since the project involves Federal funding, it is undergoing review for compliance with Section 106 review of the National Historic Preservation Act. This window replacement project will also have to go through the CEQA review process.157 The Los Angeles Conservancy has asserted that the window replacement project would “jeopardize the continued eligibility of the William Mead

153Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 75 Years Providing Affordable Housing 2013 Report, (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2013), http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public%20Documents/2012%20HACLA%20AR.pdf.
154 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
homes and Mar Vista Gardens. Currently, Section 106 is the only tool that is used to determine whether alterations can occur, and this is only triggered when Federal funding is involved. There are no other tools. As for residents that live in public housing, heritage conservation can be seen to be detrimental. According Vanessa Ramos, a resident at William Mead Homes, conservation can be seen as a means to deprive residents from upgrades. “HACLA said they were planning on upgrading our windows, toilets, and water fixtures. We are still waiting for this to happen, but a historic preservation group has stopped this project. We have been waiting a long time for better things.” However, as buildings age, there needs to be a greater understanding of how preservation can holistically improve public housing developments.

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159 Vanessa Ramos, interview by Leslie Palaroan, Personal Interview, Los Angeles, January 6, 2016. This person’s name has been changed for privacy. Similar statements have been transcribed into HACLA’s Annual Agency Plans in 2016, 2015, and 2014.
Fig. 3.5: Children Posing in Ramona Gardens’ Windows, 1945. Source: Housing Authority Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.
Fig. 3.6: William Mead Homes, 2015. Source: Public Housing Gallery, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Fig. 3.7: Mar Vista Gardens, 2015. Source: Public Housing Gallery, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Chapter 4: De-stigmatizing Public Housing through Education

In order to prevent public housing disregard, numerous organizations are trying to undo public housing misperception. Misperception is the greatest motivation for disinvestment and ongoing insufficient Federal funding allocations to public housing. Harnessing public housing’s altruistic history is becoming a tool to preserve public housing. For instance, in Chicago, public housing advocates are building a public housing museum to underline how public housing helped build the city. While in Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Conservancy is illuminating the significance of garden apartments in Los Angeles’ economic development. Through community engagement such as tours, videos, and convening, education is a powerful tool in debunking misperceptions. In addition to recounting heritage, public housing advocates also strive for safer housing conditions and to maintain the current supply of housing. Public housing advocates use a social equity stance to preserve public housing – housing is a right for everybody. A longstanding advocate for public housing is an organization called ReThink. At a National level, ReThink “creates awareness for, and inspires people to learn about public housing.” At a local level, the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN) launched a public housing committee to organize tenants to prevent the privatization of public housing and to improve the health and safety conditions of public housing tenants. In 2010 and 2011, LACAN worked to halt plans to privatize public housing developments. These initiatives underline the hostile political atmosphere in which these developments were built, and their resilience to serve the poor. Public housing developments were tarnished with economic problems, racial segregation, and predatory real estate practices, but these housing developments have also been the basis for positive community growth.

The First Public Housing Museum in Chicago, Illinois

Chicago was home to some of the first urban public housing efforts in the nation. Public housing developments in Chicago have been razed, “and what remains are the

stories." Public housing housed thousands of Chicagoans, and community advocates are seeking to recount this story. In the late 1990s, resident leaders of the local PHA, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), wanted to recount the stories of CHA residents. In 2006, this diverse group came together to preserve and transform the only remaining building of the historic Jane Addams Homes on the Near West Side to a Public Housing Museum. Currently, the CHA, residents, civic leaders, preservationists, historians, and cultural experts are promoting a new architectural landmark to recognize public housing. The three-story brick building opened in 1938 as the first Federal government housing project in Chicago. It housed hundreds of families over six decades, and has been vacant since 2002. The Jane Addams Homes was one of the three demonstration projects in Chicago built under the Public Works Administration Act, which was created to provide jobs and help revive the Depression-era economy. Designed by a team of architects led by John Holabird, the buildings were named after the Nobel Prize-winning founder of Chicago's Hull House. Jane Addams Homes not only provided housing, but also offered childcare, employment counseling, and other pioneering social services. Similar to the Lower Eastside Tenement Museum New York City, the District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa, and Chicago’s Hull House Museum, the National Public Housing Museum will be a place for social reflection, public dialogue, and education. This will result in greater pride and ownership over Chicago’s public housing.

Preserving from a Conservationist View: Garden Apartments of Los Angeles

Similar to Chicago, there is a movement in Los Angeles to conserve public housing. To real estate developers, the vast amount of open space that garden apartments take up is perceived to be a waste of development potential. In Los Angeles, as the demands for higher density accelerates, HACLA is further inclined to

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163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.
demolish and redevelop public housing. The Los Angeles Conservancy has spearheaded the L.A. Garden Apartment Network to provide resources for owners and residents of historic garden apartments. “The Network is intended as a means of building greater understanding and appreciation of garden apartments, where strong, thriving communities have been fostered throughout Greater Los Angeles, in part, because of the design of these built environments. This effort has contributed to a greater awareness concerning the garden apartments. In particular, public housing sites such as Mar Vista Gardens, Estrada Courts, and William Mead Homes have been highlighted alongside private garden apartments.

The Los Angeles Conservancy has held workshops and tours around Garden Apartments. In fall 2012, “I Heart Garden Apartments Day!” included a workshop, self-guided tour, and lunch at Village Green, which is a private garden apartment development listed as a National Historic Landmark. In 2014, the Los Angeles Conservancy hosted tours of private garden apartments Chase Knolls, Lincoln Place, Village Green, and Wyvernwood. At the L.A. Garden Apartment Network event, Wyvernwood residents continued to share stories of their community. Village Green resident Lucy Fried said, “I was very moved by the story told by the Wyvernwood speakers and am thrilled at the Conservancy's idea of a network.” She deepened her understanding of garden apartments and their relation to public housing at the symposium.

[Garden apartments] gave me a whole new sense of the scope and complexity of the socioeconomic and architectural history it embodies. It was the first time I had ever thought of Village Green as part of a family of similar developments. I had never thought of the human connection between our condominium complex and public housing complexes, even though I had noted many times the similarity in style. And all of that made me appreciate Village Green from a preservation standpoint, as I never had before.

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Strengthening these preservation fights for garden apartments is the historic context statement published in 2012 by the Architectural Resources Group in collaboration with landscape historian Steven Keylon. This document provides a framework for evaluation of significance for both private and public garden apartments, and highlights public housing developments' history. (Figure 4.0) The goal was to better understand the history and context under which these developments maybe considered significant. Yet, advocating merely from history and architectural type is not enough. By harnessing the efforts of residents to preserve garden apartments, this collective effort can save these communities and public housing developments. Privately owned garden apartments such as Chase Knolls, Lincoln Place and Wyvernwood were the subjects of hard-fought preservation battles, and this has rarely occurred with public housing units. At the privately owned, Wyvernwood, residents are still trying to prevent Miami based developer, Fifteen Group, from redeveloping the land. Numerous groups such as the Committee of Hope, the Los Angeles Conservancy, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, East LA Community Corporation, and the Los Angeles Collective Media are banding together to preserve Wyvernwood from redevelopment.¹⁶⁹ Wyvernwood has been determined to eligible for listing on the National Register, but Fifteen Group wants to replace the apartments with a mixed-use development that includes several buildings as tall as twenty-four stories. Wyvernwood is not the only garden apartment complex in Los Angeles threatened with redevelopment. In 2000, the Los Angeles Conservancy began advocating for the preservation of Chase Knolls, and the following year began a ten-year battle to save Lincoln Place in Venice. Fortunately, both were saved and underwent rehabilitation, but this was due to private ownership.¹⁷⁰ Private ownership enabled the owners to change the developments. For instance, Chase Knolls will have new towers around the development. These three battles underline the power of heritage conservation to support garden apartments, and these case studies demonstrate that advocacy from a heritage conservation standpoint is powerful in saving garden apartment developments. Despite having the same architectural

typology, public housing residents’ definition of preservation does not stem from history and architectural features. Yet, similar to the Wyvernwood residents, preserving publicly owned public housing is an issue of having a place to call home and the lack of affordable housing options.

Preserving from an Equity Standpoint: Resident Advisory Councils and the Participatory Budgeting Project

*Individual efforts by residents to express their identities occur in the exterior of their home and include gardening and flower planting in the front and back yards, painting windows, decorative fencing, and stringing lights and ornaments at Christmas.*

For public housing residents, the need to preserve and invest in public housing developments primarily stems from an equity stance. Not only do residents want to

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preserve the physical environment because it is their home, residents strive to upgrade their substandard units due to improper maintenance. This is currently being performed through two initiatives - Resident Advisory Councils (RACs), which originate from provisions in the 1986 Housing Act - to promote public housing resident participation, and the Participatory Budgeting Project (PB). These participatory groups empower residents in the decision-making process for greater community development and infrastructure improvements. The 1986 Housing Act provides public housing residents with the right to organize and elect a resident council to represent their interests. In the process of organizing councils, “the leaders began demanding respect for themselves and their opinions. As one example of residents resisting outsiders’ perceptions, leaders said ‘We do not like to be called the projects. We are a housing development, because that’s what we are doing – developing this place into a community.’”

This regulation, 24 CFR Part 964, defines the obligation of HUD and PHAs to support resident participation activities through training and other activities. RACs not only oversee facilitate community building initiatives such as garnering funding for libraries, organizing clean up days, and building playgrounds and community gardens, they surprisingly help prioritize infrastructure upgrades. (Figure 4.1) HACLA conducts eight general leadership-training meetings with RAC board members over the course of a year. Meetings include HACLA’s community budget process where resident leaders participate in agency budget discussions, and receive training on how to prepare and manage individual RAC budgets, conflict resolution, parliamentary procedures and board member roles and responsibilities. RACs also provide input to the annual Agency Plan and draft policy changes affecting residents such as Resident Parking Policies and establishing a Non-Smoking Policy.

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174 HACLA’s Annual Agency Plans includes transcripts from residents at each public housing development. The transcripts include questions about operations, maintenance plans, and social service provision. Annual Agency Plans are public documents and could be accessed at HACLA, public housing developments, and online.
monthly basis and receive briefings on important topics from HACLA senior staff as necessary.\textsuperscript{175}

There is an additional movement that seeks to shift decision-making power regarding budgeting from HACLA to public housing residents. The LA Human Right to Housing Collective (The Collective) has implemented a participatory budgeting process group to ensure the best use of diminishing capital funds. The Collective is a coalition of community-based organizations and legal supporters with the belief that “public housing provides the basis for meeting the human right to housing and also is crucial to

\textsuperscript{175} In the early 1990s, RACs were primarily comprised of women. They advocated for facilities and infrastructure for their children. “Women Under Fire: Public Housing Activism in Los Angeles,” an article by Jacqueline Leavitt recounts the story of Nickerson Gardens’ active female RAC leaders to invest in their community.
individual and community health." This coalition has been successful in preventing privatization plans for public housing in 2011 and 2012, eliminated illegal fees imposed on residents, lowered rents by challenging HACLA’s utility allowance procedures, and have engaged residents in participation processes with HACLA’s annual planning. According to The Collective, “PB is a different way to manage public money and to engage people in government. It is a democratic process, in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It enables taxpayers to work with government to make budget decisions that impact their lives.” PB enables residents to assert their needs in their homes. For instance, in Pueblo Del Rio, residents wanted a plumbing overhaul and security bars for windows. At Mar Vista Gardens, residents’ capital maintenance priorities were for windows, playground maintenance, floors, parking lots, trash, and interior painting. In San Fernando Gardens, residents were concerned that HACLA was forcing residents to reduce their water use by half in 2014, which would cause great hardship to residents. Therefore, residents voted to create a $450,000 capital grant and to set aside $660,000 for drought tolerant landscaping. In addition to reallocating funds to pertinent infrastructure upgrades, San Fernando Gardens’ residents have also created mechanisms that would alter HACLA’s maintenance operations. (Figure 4.2) They created a parking policy, voiced the need for improved customer services for repairs, and underlined the need to coordinate with city agencies for street sweeping and street lighting. The Collective’s long-term goals and approach closely aligns with the need to save public housing in Los Angeles. They want “to end all plans to privatize housing, invest limited capital improvement dollars into the most pressing health and safety issues, and ensure long-term viability of the public housing stock.” They also want the Federal government to “stop all private financing


177 Ibid., 80.


plans for public housing to prevent the loss of permanently affordable public housing stock, fully fund operating subsidies, increase capital funding to address pressing health and safety issues, stop demolitions, stop dispositions, and restore public housing units.  

The Meaning of Heritage Conservation for Residents at William Mead Homes

The “Historic Context Statement,” RAC, and PB are efforts that advocate for public housing preservation from different angles – as historic, as housing, and as a community resource. However, it is unknown to current residents that their public housing developments are rich with history. Residents at William Mead Homes were interviewed, and many were unaware that their development was listed on the California Register and eligible for National Register listing. Rather, their perceptions of the development were grounded in maintaining and keeping their homes. For the three generations of women in the Aragon Family, William Mead Homes’ listing on the

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181 Ibid.
California Register was unfamiliar.\textsuperscript{182} “We know that these buildings were built sometime in the 1940s. They are sturdy. If there was an earthquake, I would be safe in those buildings,” says Joanne.\textsuperscript{183} When they were told that William Mead Homes had historic significance, and the meaning of being listed on the California Register, they recalled the time when there were rumors of demolishing the development. Joanne states,

> So, [the designation] makes it harder to demolish William Mead? That’s good to know. HACLA told us a long time ago that they were going to demolish all of the buildings. People started talking and worrying that they had to move. I think the designation would be helpful to use if HACLA decides to demolish William Mead like Jordan Downs. Where are people going to go?\textsuperscript{184}

It is a missed opportunity if public housing residents continue to be unaware of the public housing developments’ historic significance. Although residents’ stance comes from an affordability standpoint, they can use heritage conservation tools such as designation to preserve their homes. By recognizing the significance of public housing, the vulnerability of these developments, and the numerous efforts to preserve these resources, the remainder of the thesis will integrate these ideals by demonstrating the incorporation of heritage conservation tools into HACLA’s current financing and management plan.

\textsuperscript{182} Joanne Aragon, interview by Leslie Palaroan, Personal Interview, Los Angeles, January 6, 2016. This person’s name has been changed for privacy.  
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
Chapter 5: Harnessing Conservation for Physical Investment

Architectural typology and equitable housing practices by HACLA recognize garden apartments’ historic significance, but preservation tools, such as deeming a property significant is not enough to protect designated public housing communities from demolition. Should demolition be considered, eligibility for listing or listing require that a heightened review process be initiated, and this is due to the previously mentioned 2006 policy made by the ACHP. Section 106 requires projects utilizing Federal funding or otherwise classified as Federal undertakings, and are scheduled to affect either listed properties or those eligible for listing on the National Register, to identify effects on the historic property. However, PHAs garner a numerous Federal funding sources with various stipulations, and Section 106 becomes overlooked. Section 106 requires that adverse effects be avoided if possible, but such effects may still happen following a consultation process. This accountability occurs as part of either the Environmental Assessment or the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). For developments in the city of Los Angeles, when historically eligible resources are subject to demolition, an EIR must be produced to aide developers in mitigating adverse effects. These environmental clearances are prepared as a part of the Federal agency’s review as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA is an environmental law that “promotes the enhancement of the environment.” The laws require agencies to “seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects on historic properties” through consultation and the evaluation of alternatives.” In the state of California, there is another layer of review – the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA “provides decision makers with information about the environmental impacts” of developments before they are approved. CEQA also allows the public to comment on the impacts of developments in their community. “Citizens can help [developments] avoid and minimize impacts by developing project alternatives and

mitigation measures.” Historic resources are a part of the environment and are subject to CEQA review. The current mechanism is piecemeal – when HACLA’s Federal funds are for alterations or demolition, Section 106 or CEQA review is activated. HACLA is continuing to dispossess and demolish their public housing developments because these developments are represented to be not of historic significance and unmaintainable.

HACLA’s plans to demolish and modernize demonstrate that HUD stipulations override Section 106. Despite public housing’s contributions to helping spur economic development in Los Angeles, these blighted developments are deemed insignificant, therefore leading to their demise. The first step in conserving the remaining public housing units is for HACLA to undertake a survey of all of their public housing developments’ eligibility or significance. Without a survey, in order for HACLA to maintain potentially historically significant developments, they must be cognizant of Federal funding sources’ requirements and implications, and their current maintenance plan.

Review of HUD Funding with Respect to Section 106

Rather than disinvest in public housing, as is happening now, more funds should go to maintaining public housing in good condition and upgrading the neighborhoods around it. The existing buildings serve as a base upon which to build. If this housing is preserved, places that “have not been opportunity areas” can “become opportunity areas.” To maintain racial and economic diversity as neighborhoods are redeveloped, the existing affordable housing stock must be preserved.

HACLA undeniably knows how to obtain funding and create partnerships to uplift the residents’ lives in public housing developments. However, funding sources for projects undermine public housing developments’ integrity. In order to maintain these developments, HACLA needs to reevaluate the stipulations for their grants, loans, and operating subsidies. The ACHP has identified financing that considers historic significance. (Table 10) Although these financing sources help PHAs garner funding,

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they are very specific in regards to what type of demographic that funding source should serve, and how the funds should be utilized. Therefore, HACLA should also base their financing decisions on outcomes with regards to heritage conservation. They cannot pursue all the below funding sources. For instance, they listed HOPE VI, which has destroyed public housing developments. Their list simply provides sources, but does not fully highlight the negative outcomes of these funds. After HACLA undergoes a historic survey of their housing developments, the second step is to determine the appropriate funding sources to maintain significant public housing developments.

Table 10. Possible Federal Financial Assistance for Historic Preservation Projects and Affordable Housing – Housing, Community, and Economic Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Program</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOME Investment Partnerships Program</td>
<td>Funds a wide range of activities aimed at expanding the supply for affordable housing for low and very low-income families. Rehabilitation of affordable housing and site acquisition and improvements are eligible activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition/Disposition</td>
<td>The Demo/Dispo program was created in an effort to help eliminate old, run down public housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership</td>
<td>A PHA may sell all, or a portion of, a public housing development to eligible residents or resident organizations, for purposes of homeownership, provided that a Homeownership Plan has been submitted by the PHA and has been approved by HUD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant Program</td>
<td>Targeted to addressing lead-based paint hazards in privately owned, low-income, owner-occupied, and rental housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weatherization Assistance Program</td>
<td>Formula grants fund the weatherization of homes of low-income individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE VI</td>
<td>Rehabilitation of public housing including historic public housing. Since 1993, HOPE VI has been the engine driving the revitalization of the Nation's most distressed public housing developments by providing grants and unprecedented flexibility to address the housing and social service needs of their residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Housing Capital Fund Program</td>
<td>Grants from this program can be used to rehabilitate public housing, including historic public housing and address deferred maintenance needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program</td>
<td>Provides rental assistance for homeless persons in connection with the moderate rehabilitation of single room occupancy dwellings. Owners are compensated for the cost of some of the rehabilitation, as well as the other costs of owning and maintaining the property through the rental assistance payments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program</td>
<td>Grants through this program can be used for acquiring, remodeling, altering, expanding, or constructing buildings for use as service centers, transitional housing or other facilities for homeless veterans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly</td>
<td>Provides capital advances to finance the construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition of structures to serve as supportive housing for very low-income individuals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program | income elderly persons and provides rent subsidies for the projects to help make them affordable.
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**Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities** | Provides capital advances to finance the construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition
**Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program** | Provides housing assistance and related supportive services for low-income persons with HIV/AIDS and their families. Eligible activities include the acquisition and rehabilitation of community residences and single room occupancy units.
**Moderate Rehabilitation** | Provides project-based rental assistance for low-income families. The program was repealed in 1991 and no new projects are authorized for development. Assistance is limited to properties previously rehabilitated pursuant to a housing assistance payments (HAP) contract between an owner and a PHA.
**Mixed-Finance Public Housing** | Mixed-Finance public housing allows HUD to mix public, private, and non-profit funds to develop and operate housing developments. These new developments are built for residents with a wide range of incomes, and are designed to fit into the surrounding community.
**Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Grant** | MTW is a demonstration program that allows housing authorities to design and test ways to give incentives to families to become economically self-sufficient, achieve programmatic efficiencies, reduce costs, and increase housing choice for low-income households.
**Operating Fund** | The Public Housing Operating Fund provides operating subsidies to housing authorities to assist in funding the operating and maintenance expenses of their own dwellings, in accordance with Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, as amended. The subsidies are required to help maintain services and provide minimum operating reserves.

Table 10. Possible Federal Financial Assistance for Historic Preservation Projects and Affordable Housing – Housing, Community, and Economic Development

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A Rehabilitation Maintenance Plan Supported with Preservation Briefs

For significant public housing developments the tangible elements both on the exterior and interior of public housing should be preserved. Therefore, utilizing *Preservation Brief 17 – Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*, will guide in the planning process for carrying out any ongoing or new use or rehabilitation of the building. This is the third step in conserving public housing developments. By using William Mead Homes and Mar Vista Gardens, public housing developments as case studies for *Preservation Brief 17*, this will help guide HACLA in assessing their buildings. Preservationists often take a three-step process to identify a building’s visual character. This approach involves first examining the building from afar to understand its overall

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191 This step is intended to aid in creating a historic structures report.
setting and architectural context. Then moving up very close to appreciate its materials, craftsmanship, and surface finishes evident in these materials; and then going into and through the building to perceive those spaces, rooms, and details that comprise its interior visual character.

Identifying the overall visual character or a building is distinguishing physical aspects without focusing on its details. Step one involves looking at the building from a distance to understand the character of its site and setting, and it involves walking around the building. Step two involves observing the building close range or at “arm’s length.” This is where one can see all the surface qualities of the materials such as color and texture. The surface qualities are important because they display the craftsmanship and age that distinguishes historic buildings. Finally, step three is to identify the visual character of the interior spaces. However, this is more difficult than dealing with the exterior. In simple rooms, the primary visual aspects are features such as lighting fixtures, or wooden floors.\(^{192}\) _Preservation Brief 17_’s “The Architectural Character Checklist/Questionnaire which identifies a building’s architectural character [is] organized on the assumption that historic significance is embodied in those tangible aspects that include the building’s setting, its form, and fabric.”\(^{193}\)

The William Mead Homes public housing development is where the Aragons have lived for decades, and was the eighth development built by the HACLA due to the 1937 Housing Act. Chief architect P. A. Eisen completed it in 1942 in collaboration with Norman F. Marsh, Herbert Powell, Armand Monaco, A.R. Walker, and David D. Smith. Landscape architect Ralph D. Cornell designed the landscaping. The development was named after William Mead, a local politician who was an advocate for improved living conditions. William Mead Homes limited residency to low-income citizens who had lived in Los Angeles for at least a year. The complex quickly filled with defense industry

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\(^{193}\) Ibid.
workers who worked in nearby industries. (Figure 5.0) It is listed in the California Register and is eligible for the National Register.  

In terms of shape, when approaching the brick apartment buildings, William Mead Homes contains a combination of two- and three-story garden apartments on a fifteen-acre property. The buildings are organized into five blocks that largely adhere to the pattern of the surrounding grid. The three-story buildings are arranged in rows parallel to Main Street, with the two story buildings intersecting at right angles. This arrangement creates a series of sheltered, semi-private courtyard spaces throughout the complex. The buildings are set back from the streets by strips of green space, with paved walkways at each unit. An elementary school occupies an entire block centrally located along the Main Street frontage of the housing complex. Typical of garden apartments, William Mead Homes has flat roofs with a low-slope gable. The general finish of the roofs is a built-up membrane, and the finishes vary in age. There is edge

drainage to the ground, built-up base and edge flashing, exposed soffits and fascia, which were all in good to fair condition.\textsuperscript{195} Openings such as windows and doors vary from poor to good. The windows are steel-framed, multi-light casements with center fixed sash. All of the doors are made out of wood. Entrance doors to the units are solid core wood doors with steel security doors. The patio and balcony doors are also made out of solid core wood doors, and the garage doors are overhead wooden doors with manual or automatic openers. These garage doors are located in the community center maintenance area. In terms of projections, there are small cast-in-place concrete front and rear entry stoops and private cast concrete balconies on the second floor with metal railings. Finally, in regards to trim and secondary features, William Mead Homes is made out of brick masonry and cast concrete.\textsuperscript{196}

In the wake of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, Mar Vista Gardens was completed in 1954 as one of a few publicly owned garden apartments built in Los Angeles. Due to new Federal guidelines concerning unit count and cost, these complexes typically featured less common green space and community facilities than their earlier counterparts. It is eligible for the National Register.\textsuperscript{197} Mar Vista Gardens is comprised of two-story buildings that are separated by open yard areas, which hold tenants’ gardens. The approximately, forty-five acre site contains 601 apartment units in sixty-two buildings, a gymnasium, community center, and athletic fields. There are playgrounds, large lawns with picnic tables and canopies. Openings such as windows and doors are made out of metal. The doors to the units are made out of insulated metal front and rear entrance doors with swinging metal storm/screen doors. However, the single-paned, aluminum-framed windows are in poor condition. There are minor projections, which are small cast-in-place concrete stoops at the front and rear of the units. Finally, for trim and secondary features, the building is finished with concrete and

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., 20-29. The PNA categorizes each building component of the building. The thesis highlights “site improvements” and “building architectural and structural systems.”
stucco. There are stucco-clad eaves, and wood-framed and concrete cantilevered canopies at apartment entrances.\(^{198}\)

Every public housing development in Los Angeles undergoes a PNA and this methodology and subsequent document does not assert the character defining features or alterations of the development, but it comprehensively assesses the physical state of the developments. Therefore, step four is to revise the existing PNAs to consider character-defining features. For instance, when the aluminum windows were highlighted for William Mead Homes and Mar Vista, the PNAs considered that these windows were character-defining, but suggested that despite the window’s historic value, they should be replaced.\(^{199}\) For Joanne Aragon, she had heard other residents voice their desire for wanting vinyl windows, but she wanted to keep the metal casement windows.

Those metal windows are sturdy like the rest of the building. These things belong together. I wouldn’t want the vinyl windows. Even if they are vinyl, there are parts of those new windows that are plastic and you can easily rob somebody’s apartment. The metal windows are heavy. You can hear when somebody is trying to break into your apartment. The metal ones have a special way of closing and opening. You can open them out to the yard or into the house. I have never seen that before. They have these latches that you can tell are “old school.” I feel safer with the metal windows. I understand the case for vinyl windows, but I would rather have the metal windows to be safe. I am glad [the preservationists] fought against it. I feel a lot safer in my apartment with those windows opposed to the sliding windows [HACLA] were proposing to install.\(^{200}\)

Furthermore, PNAs are a systematic review of all of the major physical components of property to project future needs and costs to meet those needs. A PNA


\(^{200}\) Joanne Aragon, interview by Leslie Palaroan, Personal Interview, Los Angeles, January 6, 2016. This person’s name has been changed for privacy.
is a strategic planning tool. It is not a budget, but is a reference document for the development of annual budgets, and HACLA had allocated money to replace the historic windows. The PNAs for both developments served as documentation for a long-term grant or loan. PHAs also include Energy Audits (EA) - a systematic review of the energy use and requirements for real estate that seeks to identify opportunities for energy savings. The 2005 Energy Policy Act encouraged the integration of utility management and capital planning to maximize energy conservation in public housing. While EAs and PNAs often involve a review of the same building systems, EAs are completed independently of PNAs. The current Federal EA rule requires that an EA be performed to state standards, but provides no standards of expectation for the result. PHAs are exposed to EAs of poor value and little usefulness particularly in states that lack standards. Then PNAs and EAs are performed to work with the Capital Fund program, which provides funds annually via a formula to approximately 3,200 PHAs across the country. PHAs may use Capital Fund grants for development, financing, modernization, and management improvements. The Office of Capital Improvements also oversees the Capital Fund Financing Program that authorizes PHAs to borrow funds conditioned on a promise to pay the debt service from Capital Fund grants. The Office of Capital Improvements provides technical assistance to PHAs as well as, to HUD Field Offices relating to development, financing, modernization, and management improvements of public housing developments. It prepares quarterly reports to Congress on the status of the obligation and expenditure of Capital Fund grants and implements the statutory sanctions for PHAs that are in noncompliance with the statutory deadlines. By inserting and integrating heritage conservation into PNAs, public housing developments can retain their material integrity and prevent alterations to character defining features, and garner funding.


Revisiting and Forecasting Physical Needs Assessments with Reference to the Secretary of the Interior Standards (36 CFR 68)

Since the existing public housing developments are largely intact, and it is assumed that building materials and character-defining features are essentially intact, the Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitation are the criteria that HACLA should strive for. This is step five – to perform maintenance under the Secretary of the Interior Standards. “Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.”203 The first step of a rehabilitation process for HACLA is to prepare a historic structures report for qualified historic properties, then an ongoing maintenance plan.204 The historic structures report can be written with the results from Preservation Brief 17, and a rehabilitation maintenance plan can build upon PNAs. For more specialized materials, conservation professionals undertake laboratory testing such as paint and mortar analysis, and hire conservators to perform sensitive work. Protection, maintenance, and repair are emphasized while replacement is minimized. Preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. The PNAs seek to upgrade of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional, and the Secretary of the Interior Standards supports this as long upgrades are limited, sensitive, and appropriate within in a preservation project.205 Therefore, PNAs have the potential of successfully supporting the historic significance of these developments. For HACLA’s PNAs, the major independent building components were observed and their physical conditions were evaluated in accordance with ASTM E2018-01 and with the standards outlined in 24 CFR 968.315, the Comprehensive Grant Program Guidebook 7485.3G, the Public Housing Modernization Standards

204 As stated in step one, the information derived from Preservation Brief 17 will help generate a historic structures report.
205 Ibid.
Handbook 7485.2, and 24 CFR Part 5, Uniform Physical Condition Standards. These components include the site and building exteriors, interior areas, and the interior of the buildings. The PNA also documents the physical condition of building systems and related components are typically defined into three conditions: good, fair, poor, or a combination. (Table 11) In addition to the PNAs, HACLA further divides each cost observation into categories that help prioritize maintenance. (Table 12) PNAs also include suggestions for energy efficiency, accessibility, and health and safety. By reexamining the current requirements that HACLA has to comply with, there are opportunities to integrate the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation with public housing regulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory as-is. Requires only routine maintenance over the evaluation period. Repair or replacement may be required due to a system's estimated useful life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Satisfactory as-is. Repair or replacement is required due to current physical condition and/or estimated useful life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Immediate repair, replacement, or significant maintenance is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Conditions of Physical Building Systems in HACLA PNAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Critical Repairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Non-Critical Repairs (1-2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Near Term (3-10 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>Long Term (11-20 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Energy Conservation Measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Prioritizing Cost Maintenance According to PNAs

Energy Efficiency

HACLA’s PNAs include EAs, which utilize a Treat Software Building Energy Model. Key metrics such as the building site energy use intensity, building source energy use intensity, building cost intensity, and greenhouse gas emissions are used to benchmark each public housing development’s energy usage. The EA also highlights the breakdown of utilities by consumption, costs and annual profile, baseline consumption in terms of energy/utility at the facility, and energy use index (Btu/sqft and cost/sqft). The EA also researches the feasibility of incorporating green energy

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207 Ibid., 4.
technology such as wind energy and solar. Finally, the EA recommends energy savings along with specific implementation considerations. Specifically, as the Los Angeles Conservancy has voiced, the PNAs and EAs suggest installing replacement windows, which would compromise William Mead’s character defining features. The PNA argues, “[that] windows play a major role in energy use and comfort of a dwelling unit…all windows at the property [should be replaced] with energy star rated vinyl windows.”

Contradicting this assertion, the William Mead Homes EA acknowledges that, “with mild winters in LA, the energy savings are minimal compared to investment cost.” Similarly, for Mar Vista Gardens, the property’s EA recommends dual paned insulating glass, and window frames made of vinyl, fiberglass, or wood composites, which reduce heat transfer and improve insulation. This suggestion repeatedly occurs for all public housing developments. Therefore, with no current framework to challenge, alterations that will compromise the character defining features of public housing developments, heritage conservationists can use these EAs to foresee changes.

With a greater emphasis on renewable energy in the building industry, heritage conservationists can expect modernization upgrades in public housing. Modernization is tied to larger initiatives set by former President, George W. Bush. On October 16, 2009, HUD released a notice, PIH-2009-43 (HA), which encouraged the renewable energy and green construction practices in public housing. Through the notice, HUD "strongly [encouraged PHAs] to use solar, wind, geothermal/ground coupled heat pumps and other renewable energy sources, and other 'green' construction and rehabilitation techniques whenever they procure for maintenance, construction, or modernization.”

The premise of this initiative is to "support the goals of the President's National Energy Policy by reducing the burden of public housing energy costs while increasing comfort and reducing health risks to public housing residents, and [minimizing] life-cycle costs.” For HACLA, their water saving initiative achieves this. HUD is also advocating

208 Ibid., 50.
209 Ibid.
210 Ibid.
212 Ibid.
for no- and low-VOC paint, adhesives, and finishes, the use of Energy Star and WaterSense qualified products, and the adoption of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy.

In heritage conservation, energy efficiency has implications on rehabilitating character-defining features. Rather, energy conservation is assessed for its potential negative impact on the building’s historic character. (Table 13) When HACLA undertakes modernization upgrades, particular care must be taken not to obscure, alter, or damage character-defining features in the process of preservation work. Buttressing the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, the National Park Service also has “Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability” for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. The guidelines focus on the fact that historic buildings are inherently sustainable, “and this should be used to an advantage any proposal to upgrade them.” Before implementing any energy conservation measures to enhance the sustainability of a historic building, HACLA needs to assess the existing energy-efficient characteristics of the building. Rather than resort to energy modeling and flawed EAs, HACLA must consider how “the design, materials, type of construction, size, shape, site orientation, surrounding landscape and climate all play a role in [building performance].” In the case for public housing developments, and their garden apartments style, they were all designed in regards to local climatic conditions. Their buildings maximized natural sources of heating, lighting, and ventilation. In order for public housing developments to be more resilient, HACLA also needs to identify and understand any lost original and existing energy-efficient aspects and character-defining features of the building. Numerous treatments may be used to upgrade a historic building to help it operate more energy efficiently. Nevertheless, HUD and the City of Los Angeles have strict energy standards and code requirements that dictate at that some of these treatments be

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Rather than overhaul all systems and materials, HACLA should reevaluate how they can use their existing public housing infrastructure to support energy efficiency, heritage conservation, and code requirements.

Table 13. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards – Preservation and Energy Efficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Recommended Solutions</th>
<th>Discouraged Solutions</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals | • Installing thermal insulation in attics and in unheated cellars and crawlspaces to increase the efficiency of the existing mechanical systems.  
• Installing insulating material on the inside of masonry walls to increase energy efficiency where there is no character-defining interior molding around the windows or other interior architectural detailing. | • Applying thermal insulation with high moisture content in wall cavities, which may damage historic fabric.  
• Installing wall insulation without considering its effect on interior molding or other architectural detailing. |
| Windows                     | • Utilizing the inherent energy conserving features of a building by maintaining windows and louvered blinds in good operable condition for natural ventilation.  
• Improving thermal efficiency with weather stripping, storm windows, caulking, interior shades, and if historically appropriate, blinds and awnings.  
• Installing interior storm windows with airtight gaskets, ventilating holes, and/or removable clips to ensure proper maintenance and to avoid condensation damage to historic windows.  
• Installing exterior storm windows, which do not damage or obscure the windows and frames. | • Removing historic shading devices rather than keeping them in an operable condition.  
• Replacing historic multi-paned sash with new thermal sash utilizing false muntins. Installing interior storm windows that allow moisture to accumulate and damage the window.  
• Installing new exterior storm windows, which are inappropriate in size or color.  
• Replacing windows or transoms with fixed thermal glazing or permitting windows and transoms to remain inoperable rather than utilizing them for their energy conserving potential. |
| Entrances and Porches        | • Maintaining porches and double vestibule entrances so that they can retain heat or block the sun and provide natural ventilation. | • Changing the historic appearance of the building by enclosing porches. |
| Interior Features            | • Retaining historic interior shutters and transoms for their inherent energy conserving features. | • Removing historic interior features which play an energy-conserving role. |
| Mechanical Systems           | • Improving energy efficiency of existing mechanical systems by installing insulation in attics and basements. | • Replacing existing mechanical systems that could be repaired for continued use. |
| Building Site                | • Retaining plant materials, trees, and landscape features which perform passive solar energy functions such | • Removing plant materials, trees, and landscape features that perform passive |

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as sun shading and wind breaks. | solar energy functions.
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Setting | • Maintaining those existing landscape features which moderate the effects of the climate on the setting such as deciduous trees, evergreen wind-blocks, and lakes or ponds.
| • Stripping the setting of landscape features and landforms so that the effects of wind, rain, and sun result in accelerated deterioration of the historic building.

| **Table 13. Secretary of the Interior's Standards – Preservation and Energy Efficiency**
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**The American Disability Act and Accessibility**

In terms of accessibility, it is important to identify the historic building’s character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that accessibility code-required work will not result in their damage or loss. HACLA needs to comply with barrier-free access requirements, in such a manner that, character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved. There are special provisions and alternatives to regular code in the California Building Code (Title 24, Division 8, also known as the California Historical Building Code) that may be used for qualified historical properties. There are also alternatives, and the alternative minimum provisions for qualified historical properties in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Within the PNAs, there are the standards for ADDAG for public housing developments. HACLA abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that requires a minimum of five-percent of multi-family properties with fifteen or more units have a minimum of five-percent mobility accessible units, and two-percent of the units for visual and/or audio impaired. Exceptions can be considered due to undue financial burdens or structural restrictions. HACLA has to conform to Reasonable Accommodations, which states “when a family member requires accessible features or policy modification to accommodate a disability, property owners must provide features or policy modification unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of its program or result in a financial and administrative burden.”

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buildings, HACLA has to abide by the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) 24 CFR part forty that was adopted by HUD. Alterations are defined as “work that costs fifty-percent or more of the building’s value when the work performed occurs within a twelve month period. Apartments modified for mobility-impaired residents are to comply with UFAS. Finally, the development has to comply with the ADA guidelines for Community Center and community facilities. To meet Section 504 requirements, developments have to undergo full modifications to units – most of these units would occur at ground level. The PNAs also denote upgrading developments to be compliant in parking, interior common areas, medical clinics, ramps, path of travel, and signage.

With the numerous aforementioned housing Federal requirements, HACLA should also work with local disability groups, access specialists, and heritage conservation specialists to determine the most appropriate solution to access problems. HACLA must work with the City of Los Angeles and HUD to find solutions that meet accessibility requirements that minimize the impact on the historic building and its site, such as compatible ramps, paths, and lifts. HACLA’s current history is to alter, damage, and destroy character-defining features to comply with accessibility requirements. HACLA should not undertake code-required alterations before identifying those spaces, features, or finishes which are character-defining and must be preserved. HACLA should shift to first seek expert advice from access specialists and conservation professionals to determine solutions.²¹⁹

Health and Safety

With many complexes falling into disrepair to the extent that it harms tenants’ health, HACLA believes that demolition and redevelopment are the ultimate solutions to solve substandard housing. Although PNAs do not address health and safety, when applying the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, HACLA needs to comply with health and safety codes, including seismic code requirements. However, health and safety upgrades need to be done in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved. As for abating hazardous materials such

asbestos and lead, testing has to have been conducted and methods reviewed for impacts on historic character. For workers removing the lead and asbestos, HACLA must provide workers with appropriate personal protective equipment for hazards found in the worksite. For instance, the complete removal of asbestos and lead at Rose Hills Courts should have been avoided. (Figure 5.1) There are other means to abate lead and asbestos exposure such as encapsulation.

Fig. 5.1: Lead and Asbestos Abatement at Rose Hill Courts, circa 2012. Source: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.

Similar to managing accessibility requirements, HACLA must work with local code officials to investigate systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior effectiveness and safety to those prescribed by code so that unnecessary alterations can be avoided. By collaborating with agencies, HACLA can install “equivalent health and safety systems, methods, or devices that may be less damaging to historic spaces, features, and finishes,” and find less invasive abatement methods.\textsuperscript{220} For example, in

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.
order to save historic properties from fires, installing sensitively designed fire suppression systems, such as sprinkler systems can retain historic features and finishes. Additionally, applying fire-retardant coatings such as intumescent paints expand during fire to add thermal protection to steel and wood. Merely covering character-defining wood features with fire-resistant sheathing will alter a historic resource’s appearance. Many other fire-retardant coatings can damage and obscure character-defining features. By highlighting the energy efficiency, accessibility, and health and safety, regulations that HACLA must abide by, this allows heritage conservationists to understand the management framework that HACLA must function within. By recognizing these regulations, heritage conservationists can make feasible recommendations to HACLA.
Chapter 6: Pulling Residents Out of Poverty and Stigmatization

With the public housing developments meeting their wear, and with little Federal funding, HACLA has been forward thinking in addressing deferred maintenance. Despite HACLA’s history of resorting to demolition, HACLA has proven to be creative in pooling finances to support their public housing developments and their residents. HACLA has programs that simultaneously contribute to social capital as well as investing in the physical infrastructure of their buildings. Through private partnerships, HACLA has been resourceful in minimizing their financial dependence on HUD for social service delivery. HACLA has gradually increased the number of social service programs for their public housing developments and has created a robust and multifaceted approach to supporting youth at their developments. For instance, HACLA has partnered with a non-profit organization called North East Trees, which educates youth in environmental stewardship at public housing developments. The youth plant trees in public housing developments, which foster interaction amongst youth and encourage neighbors to be outside. Additionally, since public housing receives funding from HUD, HACLA is subject to Section 3 – a legal basis for providing jobs for residents and awarding contracts to businesses in areas receiving HUD assistance. “Under Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968, wherever HUD financial assistance is expended for housing or community development, to the greatest extent feasible, economic opportunities will be given to Section 3 residents and businesses in that area.”221 As a result, HACLA created the Resident Jobs Program, which trains residents in the trades by upgrading and rehabilitating failing infrastructure at public housing developments. A heritage conservation perspective on maintenance can support HACLA’s nexus of job development and infrastructure improvement. Compared to new construction, heritage conservation creates a significantly higher amount of jobs for residents. By harnessing the current social programs that improve public housing infrastructure, public housing combined with heritage conservation, can increase job opportunity and aid in alleviating

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poverty among residents. This is the final step and sixth step in utilizing heritage conservation as a means to reinvest and advocate for public housing.

**North East Trees, Sherwin Williams Painters Training, and the Resident Jobs Program**

With a significant amount of funding for social services, HACLA has developed or adopted three initiatives to simultaneously reinvest in its aging infrastructure and spur job development. North East Trees, a non-profit focused on environmental stewardship, trains at-risk-youth in the green industry, and they have been improving the green spaces in public housing developments. The youth embark on hands-on education in landscape architecture and environmental studies through gardening, tree planting, and painting. Funding is provided by American Relief and Recovery Act, and is administered by California ReLeaf another non-profit organization with a mission “to empower grassroots efforts and build strategic partnerships that preserve, protect, and enhance California’s urban and community forests.”

For example, ten young adults ages eighteen to twenty-four from Ramona Gardens were introduced to the basics of arboriculture and urban ecology, landscape design, habitat restoration, proper tree selection, installation, and maintenance techniques. North East Trees also provides life skills training on resume building and interview skills. The youth are also connected to job opportunities from the U.S. Forest Service and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. In terms of the physical effect North East Trees has on public housing developments, the Ramona Gardens youth have planted approximately a total of 276 shade trees at the public housing facilities where they live. Ten youth from the San Fernando Gardens public housing community planted 200 hundred trees in the housing development. (Figure 6.0) The participating youth were trained in tree identification, installation, and maintenance. The project enabled the youth to learn skills useful in the green jobs and landscaping industries as well as to help their community. Participant Jesus Mejia said, “It’s a workout, keeps me healthy, and it’s going to look

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good here in the community.” The North East Trees Youth Environmental Stewards Program seeks to continually develop a community-based workforce at HACLA’s public housing developments to steward nature in resource challenged communities.

Fig. 6.0: Northeast Trees at San Fernando Gardens, 2011. Source: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.

Smaller programs such as Sherwin Williams Painters Training equip residents with a primary skill in hopes that they will also obtain a job in that specialty. Once again, in partnership with HUD, the Sherwin-Williams Company provides training to residents with painting. The two-week program is sponsored by the HUD is funded primarily by Sherwin-Williams Company. At the end of the training, they receive an Environmental

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Protection Agency Certificate on Renovation, Repair, and Painting. It focuses on teaching residents about asbestos, mold, and lead-based paint. The program gives residents materials and real-world experience through painting units in their own housing projects. "There's more to just putting paint on the brush and then putting it on the wall," said resident Joseph. The program has been in existence since about 2003 and ninety-one people had been trained during sessions at Jordan Downs, Estrada Courts, Mar Vista Gardens, and Nickerson Gardens. (Figure 6.1)

![Image of painting class participants with certificates]

**Fig. 6.1:** Sherwin Williams Painters Training, circa 2010. Source: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.

In addition to North East Trees and the Sherwin Williams Painting program, HACLA also cooperates with the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department, the South Bay Center for Counseling, and the Watts Labor Community Action Committee to provide employment training, job placement, and job retention services to public housing residents. Residents are assigned an Eligibility Worker who

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determines eligibility to work, as well as assists with classroom training for employment certification, job placement, and job retention services. Additionally, HACLA is the only PHA that operates certified WorkSource Centers in multiple public housing developments. WorkSource Centers deliver workforce development services throughout the region. On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). “The Act created a unique national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet the needs of both career seekers and businesses. Because WorkSource California is funded through Federal WIA dollars, most services are available at no cost.”226 Finally, HACLA has also implemented programs beyond construction and trades, such as the Environmental Stewardship Program, solar certifications, advanced security officer trainings, construction apprenticeships, process technician trainings, and Certified Nursing Assistant classes.

The Resident Jobs Program is HACLA’s most profound program in impacting the physical fabric of the buildings while providing job training for residents. Section 3 is a provision of the Housing and Urban Development Act 1968. The purpose of Section 3 is to ensure that employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain “HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, and consistent with existing Federal, State and local laws and regulations, be directed to low- and very low income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing, and to business concerns which provide economic opportunities for low- and very low-income persons”.227 Now called the Resident Jobs Program, it provides public housing residents with an opportunity to gain job experience and increase household income. (Figure 6.2) The program was implemented in November 2011, and a month later, seventy-nine residents were hired to work at various public housing developments.228 Residents worked in various jobs such as painting, roofing, carpentry, and cement masonry. This program has no fiscal impact on HACLA’s budget because of a bidding process. Vendors who win contracts and projects are to hire residents as a part of their

workforce. As of 2013, 431 residents participating in the program have been paid over 4.4 million dollars, and have completed over 345 jobs.\textsuperscript{229} This work has been on public housing developments and affordable housing developments. The estimated total capital improvement investment is over 3.7 million dollars.\textsuperscript{230} Residents worked in “various jobs including liaison, laborer, labor apprentice, painter, painter apprentice, carpenter, carpenter apprentice, and cement mason apprentice.”\textsuperscript{231} However, these results are without a heritage conservation perspective.

![Fig 6.2: Section 3 Resident Jobs Program at Nickerson Gardens, circa 2014. Source: Section 3, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.](image)

**Economic Benefits of Heritage Conservation: HistoriCorps and Veterans Corps**

In heritage conservation, there are programs teach residents how to preserve and maintain buildings, and these programs generate an immense amount of wealth.

\textsuperscript{229} Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 75 Years Providing Affordable Housing 2013 Report, (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 2013), 15, http://www.hacla.org/Portals/0/Attachments/Public%20Documents/2012%20HACLA%20AR.pdf. The total hired is based on an actual number of persons on each project – the same resident may be working on multiple developments.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
Heritage conservation has the ability to create more jobs per dollar of construction than new construction. Since heritage conservation projects are labor intensive, there are organizations such as HistoriCorps, Youthbuild Philadelphia, and the National Trust that train laborers in preservation. HistoriCorps, “a national organization works through partnerships to mobilize volunteers to save and sustain our nation’s special places while providing educational and outdoor experiences.”\(^{232}\) In 2013, they partnered with the Student Conservation and the Forest Service, to help Veterans re-enter civilian life and find career-oriented employment. The Veterans Historic Preservation Team, worked on three National Forest properties listed on the National Register. Over the course of twelve weeks, Veterans develop trade skills.\(^{233}\)

In Philadelphia, YouthBuild allows local high school student dropouts to earn a diploma, acquire valuable job skills, and provide important services to underserved communities. YouthBuild Philadelphia was founded in 1992 with sixteen students, and in 2015, the program has grown to provide over 200 young adults annually with training in healthcare, information technology, business, and the building trades. In Philadelphia, there are numerous vacant and abandoned properties. Youth have rehabilitated over eighty properties across the city, and recently, the school’s building trade curriculum has grown to include training in green building technology and heritage conservation.\(^{234}\)

The Historic Preservation Training Center (HPTC) utilizes heritage conservation projects as “their main vehicle for teaching preservation philosophy, building crafts, building technology, and project management skills.” Their mission is to train preservation craftspeople, to preserve historic resources today, and to promote heritage conservation as key to the future. HPTC has programs such as a three-year training program for the NPS Exhibit and Preservation Specialists; services for the Treatment of NPS, Federal, State, or locally owned historic properties; and extensive outreach training programs aimed at building the skills of personnel responsible for the


maintenance and preservation of historic properties. With a primary mission of developing preservation trade skills for NPS, it also operates as a preservation contractor that works on approximately twelve to thirteen million dollars in projects each year.

Finally, The National Trust has an initiative to train more young people in preservation crafts while helping to protect historic cultural sites on public lands. The youth that are engaged in this program is called the Hands-On Preservation Experience (HOPE) Crew. Crewmembers work on hundreds of sites to learn preservation trades while they rehabilitate historic places. Similar to North East Trees, HOPE Crewmembers are paid for their work and are part of a youth development program. Preservation experts work with the HOPE Crews to provide project leadership and training. Crewmembers receive preservation skills training including masonry, carpentry, painting, and refinishing. The youth also have a preservation advisor, who helps guide each project by answering preservation-related questions as well as helping the crew members understand and appreciate the historic significance of the project. The National Trust is in the beginning stages of this initiative, and is looking to build this program. These programs are similar to the existing programs at HACLA. By underlining the financial impact of these heritage conservation based programs, HACLA should embark on integrating heritage conservation into their maintenance plans.

**Economic Impact of Heritage Conservation**

In the last twenty years, there have been numerous studies using different analyses and methodologies to show the economic impact of heritage conservation. All of these methodologies have been remarkably consistent – heritage conservation is good for the local economy through jobs, property values, heritage tourism, environmental impact, social impact, and downtown revitalization. For instance, in 2010, in Delaware, approximately one million dollars that were being spent on rehabilitation

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237 Ibid.
created 14.6 jobs as opposed to 11.2 jobs in new construction.²³⁸ In Kansas, of the 4,443 total jobs created from historic rehabilitation tax credits, almost half are in the construction industry. The majority of the remaining jobs are distributed among the services, retail, and manufacturing industries. Other sectors related to heritage conservation projects such as agriculture, mining, transportation, and public utilities were impacted as well.²³⁹ Particularly in California, according to Economist Donovan Rypkema, “for every million dollars of production, the average manufacturing firm creates 21.2 jobs. A million spent in new construction generates 26.5 jobs. But that same million dollars in the rehabilitation of an historic building [is] 31.1 jobs.”²⁴⁰ Rypkema estimates that a million dollars of manufacturing in output will add on average about $554,000 to local household incomes and a million dollars of new construction will add $753,000 to local household incomes. The same investment in conservation will yield over $833,000 to local household incomes.²⁴¹ When one looks at the California developments that have used the historic tax credit in from 2001 – 2013, over $2,410,859,677 has been spent on historic rehabilitation for only 145 developments. The total number of jobs created was 33,578, of that number, 12,951 were construction jobs, and 20,627 became permanent jobs. Those workers were paid $1,447,587,300 in household income.²⁴² Additionally, researchers have found that one million dollars invested in historic rehabilitation produces more jobs, income and state and local taxes than one million dollars invested in new construction, highway construction, machinery manufacturing, agriculture or telecommunications.²⁴³ The labor-intensive process of heritage conservation results in sixty and seventy-percent of the total construction costs


²³⁹ Ibid.


²⁴¹ Ibid.


spent towards labor—skilled carpenters, electricians, plumbers, sheet metal workers, painters, and other tradespeople. Heritage conservation outperforms many other traditional stimulus investments. For instance, one million dollars invested in heritage conservation has a greater economic impact in terms of jobs, income, and Federal, state, and local taxes generated than a similar investment in highway construction, machinery manufacturing, agriculture, and telecommunication. The report further states that three-quarters of the economic impacts of historic rehabilitation stays in the same local communities and states where the projects are located. This relatively high retention rate reflects the fact that labor and materials are obtained locally.\textsuperscript{244} When applying this outlook to the current trades training at public housing developments, the income that could be earned by residents could be greater and can pull residents out of poverty.

\textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
Conclusion

Public housing development in Los Angeles exemplified the goals of minimum dwelling and dignified housing for everyone as a social endeavor. The buildings manifested a collective effort to define social problems, solve social conditions, and find solutions. Throughout the nation, residents of public housing seek to save the existing stock of public housing – “for social justice in terms of housing.”

However, less than a dozen developments have been listed on the National Register of Places. Due to concerns about the demolition of public housing projects, the NPS released guidelines for listing public housing communities on the National Register for Historic Places. For most of the eligible public housing project properties, the primary historical significance will likely rest in their association with the development of the important Federal public housing programs of the 1930s and the 1940s. Secondary significance is found through associations with the ideals of modern architecture and urban planning. The NPS guidelines specify that, to be listed, a public housing project must be nationally significant, not merely an artifact of national policy.

Heritage conservation is increasingly looking at intangible significance, experiences, and the relationships that form in these public housing developments. It is a place where residents grow up and cities develop. Underlining this intangible significance can elevate more public housing developments into local, state, and national listings.

Revitalization strategies must capitalize on the existing value of neighborhoods and provide housing with minimal displacement. At every step of the heritage conservation process, local leaders must ensure that decisions on community growth respect the local heritage and enhance overall livability.

Replacing housing is not a solution for housing the poor. Rather, replacement contributes to the loss of neighborhood patterns, embodied energy, inevitable urban maintenance, and loss to the public sphere. Maintaining public housing requires sustained funding and solutions site

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247 Ibid., 30.
specific issues. Public housing challenges conventional heritage conservation to be beyond recollection and sustainability. Rather public housing’s dual role in providing shelter for families and manifesting HACLA’s goal provide housing for everyone, underlines the need for to further conserve these historic resources.

In the case for HACLA, the PHA exemplifies what PHAs throughout the nation suffer with - the negative perception of public housing as a national failure that facilitated violence and poverty. However, when recalling the significance of public housing in Los Angeles, these developments are highly significant because they were built to holistically uplift those in need. Public housing in Los Angeles addressed slum housing, supported World War II workers, utilized the Garden Apartments style to build stronger workers and communities, and was used a means to integrate ethnicities and races together. All of these reasons make Los Angeles’ public housing developments crucial resources. Unfortunately, public housing is plagued with violent narratives that which mask public housing’s selfless act to support the poor. Therefore, residents, conservationists, community groups, and entities invested in public housing preservation must unwind standard narratives about public housing, recover and honor the intentions of public housing, and highlight positive stories from these developments. According to Joanne, when asked about how awareness of William Mead Homes’ historic significance would impact her neighbors, she believes, that “some residents will no longer hesitate to tell others they live in the projects.”

In order to achieve pride, holistic reinvestment, the first step in achieving this is in surveying all public housing developments for significance. Negative perceptions are perpetuated in how HUD structures financing or lack of financing for public housing developments. HUD’s continual disinvestment is displayed in not only diminishing funds, which force PHAs to defer maintenance, but in the funding sources for PHAs. Funding sources such as HOPE VI, CNI, and RAD encourage PHAs to demolish and redevelop their public housing units. Therefore, within HUD, there are no funding sources that support public housing without compromising the developments. As a second step, HACLA must be thoughtful in garnering Federal funding that reinvests in public housing developments.

249 Joanne Aragon, interview by Leslie Palaroan, Personal Interview, Los Angeles, January 6, 2016. This person’s Aragon, name has been changed for privacy.
Third, after surveying the remaining public housing developments, Preservation Briefs can help assess a building’s physical character. *Preservation Brief 17* will help in creating a historic structures report that can be used a guide for maintenance. Fourth, PNAs and EAs must be restructured with a conservation purview by striving to maintain character-defining features such as the green spaces in Avalon Gardens and windows at William Mead Homes. Fifth, maintenance plans created in accordance to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation will help guide maintenance teams and construction laborers in taking care of the developments. This will also decrease unnecessary spending on modernization improvements and halt negative alterations. Finally, the sixth step is to harness HACLA’s infrastructure improvement programs, which connects residents to jobs. Residents who need jobs can holistically improve public housing developments, and have ownership over their community. Through continual investment in public housing, this will strengthen these historic resources, residents, and communities. These developments will not be called projects, and instead called homes.
Fig. 7.0: Children from the Pueblo Del Rio Housing Project plant a tree as part of a school tree planting ceremony, 1949. Source: Housing Authority Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.
Bibliography


http://www.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/PruittIgoe.html.


Appendix A:
Bedroom and Income Limits for HACLA

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Appendix B:
Public Housing, Housing, and Heritage Conservation Acronyms

ACHP: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADAAG: Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines
AMI: Area Median Income
Capital Fund: Public Housing Capital Fund Program
CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act
CHA: Chicago Housing Authority
CNI: Choice Neighborhoods Initiative
The Collective: The LA Human Right to Housing Collective
EA: Energy Audit
EIS: Environmental Impact Statement
FHA: Federal Housing Authority
FPHA: Federal Public Housing Authority
HACA: Housing Authority of the City of Austin
HACLA: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
HANO: Housing Authority of New Orleans
HAP: Housing Assistance Program
HRTC: Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit
IPM: Integrated Pest Management
HOPE: Hands on Preservation Experience
HPTC: Historic Preservation Training Center
HUD: United States Housing and Urban Development Department
LACAN: Los Angeles Community Action Network
LIHTC: Low-Income Housing Tax Credit
LOMOD: LA Cienega LOMOD
NPS: National Park Service
NEPA: National Environmental Protection Act
PB: Participatory Budgeting Project
PVB: Project Based Voucher
PHA: Public Housing Authority
PNA: Physical Needs Assessment
RAC: Resident Advisory Council
RAD: Redevelopment through Rental Assistance Demonstration
Section 106: Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act
SCANPH: Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing
S+C: Shelter Plus Care Program
UFAS: Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
USHA: United States Housing Authority
VASH: Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
WIA: Workforce Investment Act of 1998
Appendix C:

Aerials and Photos of Public Housing Developments

The following sets of photos are of each public housing development in the city of Los Angeles. The aerials display the acres that these developments encompass, the common green areas, and their juxtaposition to the city’s grid. All developments have access to a recreation center, a school, or both resources. If one were to visit these garden apartments, there is an immense amount of resources for residents on-site and off-site. For instance at William Mead Apartments, the development is isolated by Metrolink rail tracks and industrial uses. Despite this, the development has vast amounts of green space, parking, murals, clotheslines, two schools, a baseball field, and a medical clinic. The close proximity of these resources feature architects’, planners’, and city leaders’ intentions to create developments that fosters community building.

The teal line indicates the boundaries of the public housing development. The photos to the right of the maps are street-level photos from HACLA. Each photo displays resident’s access to green open space and highlight a few of close by resources. Each set of photos were adapted by Leslie Palaroan from Google Maps and the Public Housing Gallery from HACLA.
**Avalon Gardens** has a small community center, which is used by the RAC for community programming. Across the street along Avalon Boulevard are the Dymally Senior High School, Watts Learning Center Middle School, and the Green Meadows Recreation Center.
Estrada Courts & Extension has medical provider - AltaMed Health Services and a community center. The development is immediately west of Christopher Dena Elementary School and the Lou Costello Jr. Recreation Center. Two blocks to the east of Estrada Courts is Wyvernwood Garden Apartments.
**Gonzaque Village (Hacienda Village)** is across the street from Thomas Riley High School, Compton Avenue Elementary School, Markham Middle School, the Augustus F. Hawkins Post Office, Alma Reaves Woods Public Library, and Kaiser Permanente’s counseling offices.

![Gonzaque Village, 2015. Source: Adapted by Leslie Palaroan from Google Maps and Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.](image)

**Imperial Courts** has a recreation center.

![Imperial Courts, 2015. Source: Adapted by Leslie Palaroan from Google Maps and Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.](image)
Jordan Downs has a recreation center and is across the street from David Starr Jordan High School.

Mar Vista Gardens has a recreation center and the Mar Vista Community Service Center. The development is across the street from Braddock Drive Elementary School, and Stoner Avenue Elementary School.
Nickerson Gardens has a community center and the Nickerson Gardens Sage Center – a daycare. The development is across the street from Flournoy Elementary, 112th Street Elementary School, and Verbum Dei High School.
**Ramona Gardens** has a recreation center, AltaMed Health Services, and is abutting Henry Alvarez Memorial Park. It is within walking distance of Murchison Street Elementary, Santa Teresita Elementary School, and the Murchison Early Education Center.

Ramona Gardens, 2015. Source: Adapted by Leslie Palaroan from Google Maps and Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Rancho San Pedro & Extension has a community center.

Rose Hills Courts has a recreation center, is Rose Hill Park, and is across the street from Our Lady of Guadalupe.
**San Fernando Gardens** encompasses a Catholic church, has a recreation center, is across the street from Pacoima Charter School, and the David M. Gonzalez Recreation Center.

San Fernando Gardens, 2015. Source: Adapted by Leslie Palaroan from Google Maps and Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
William Mead Homes encompasses Ann Street Elementary School, Endeavor College Prep, a recreation center, and AltaMed Health Services.
Appendix D:
Interview Questions for Residents at William Mead Homes

1. How long have you been living in William Mead Homes?
2. What have you done to make this place a home?
3. What do you like/don’t like about living here?
   a. What is a community asset here?
4. Does HACLA do a good job of maintaining the developments?
   a. If no, what would you improve?
5. Do you know the history of this development?
   a. If no, read Los Angeles Conservancy Overview and History of William Mead Homes.
6. Now knowing the history, does it matter to you? Does it change your perception of your neighborhood?
7. Do you think your neighbors would care about the history? Would telling them about the history create more pride at William Mead?
   a. If yes, what do you think would happen? What would you do?
8. Knowing that William Mead Homes is historically significant, what do you think HACLA should do?
9. A few years ago, HACLA had proposed to replace the windows, but heritage conservationists/historic preservationists fought against this, what are your thoughts on this?
Appendix E:
Photos of HACLA Resident Jobs Program

HACLA Apprenticeship Program, circa 2014. Source: Section 3, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Section 3 Resident Jobs Program at Nickerson Gardens, circa 2014. Source: Section 3, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Accessibility Ramps at Nickerson Gardens, circa 2014. Source: Section 3, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Repainting at Nickerson Gardens, circa 2014. Source: Section 3, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Section 3 Resident Jobs Program Participants at Nickerson Gardens, circa 2014. Source: Section 3, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.