

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Listed 1/21/2021

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: McKinley Park Apartments

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers, 1870-1970

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 510 High Avenue SW

City or town: Canton State: OH County: Stark

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

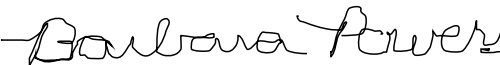
In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

 _____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	DSHPO Inventory & Registration 12/4/2020 _____ Date
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In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria. _____	
Signature of commenting official: _____	Date _____
Title : _____	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/multiple-dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/multiple-dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Miesian

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Brick, Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The McKinley Park Apartments (OH-18-3)¹ is an 11-story concrete and brick L-shaped tower constructed in 1969. Its footprint occupies a total of 9,356 square feet on a roughly one-acre parcel. The building reflects the design elements of high-rise apartments as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form *Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970*. The building is located at 510 High Avenue SW, just southwest of downtown Canton, OH. The building was designed by local Canton architect H.M. Dickinson. The building is composed of the central tower with apartment units flanked by two 1-story wings, which house an office, an entrance lobby, maintenance area, and various community spaces. The building falls under the general Modern Movement architectural style classification with some elements of the Miesian style. The central tower is primarily constructed of two colors of brick, one buff and one dark, which provide the building with a heightened sense of verticality, a character defining feature of the Miesian style. Another Miesian element is the tower's recessed first floor behind outer piers, at the southwest and northwest elevations plus the east corner entrance. The building continues to operate as affordable housing. Interior finishes have been updated throughout the years, yet the original layout of the building remains intact.

¹ This number responds to HUD's project number system. OH referring to the state, 18 referring to the housing authority in the state, and 3 referring to the project number of the housing authority.

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Narrative Description

Setting: The McKinley Park Apartments are located at the southwest corner of downtown Canton, OH, on a block bound by High Avenue SW to the west, 5th Street SW to the north, Wells Avenue SW to the east, and 6th Street SW to the south. The surrounding area is generally residential in character with single-family homes located to the south and west of the subject building. Downtown Canton is made up of mid-rise commercial buildings. McKinley Park is located directly to the east of the subject building across Well Street SW.

The building's entire parcel is rectilinear in shape, totaling roughly one acre and taking up an entire city block. Both the surrounding streets and the building's placement on the property are skewed from a north-south grid. The McKinley Park Apartments contains minimal landscaping, which includes trees, shrubbery, and paved sidewalks. The subject building is located near the center of the parcel, with paved parking, light landscaping, and paved walkways located throughout. A surface parking lot is located at the west perimeter of the property with entrances located at the north and south. Buff brick and metal picket fences are located at the northeast and southeast corners of the property. The fences enclose a small yard at the northeast corner and a paved patio off of the community room, at the southeast corner. A modern chain-link fence is located at the east perimeter of the property. (Photos 4-5, 7, 9)

Building: The McKinley Park Apartments embodies integral elements of the High-Rise Elevator Apartment type as defined by the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970." These defining characteristics include a building that was greater than nine-stories, high efficiency one-bedroom units, and offices located at the first floor. The MPD defines High Rise apartments as buildings that are set back from the street, often on large landscaped lots, with car access to the front entrance. In general, these High Rise Apartment buildings were constructed utilizing steel and concrete walls and frames, steel and aluminum trim and window frames, and dominant use of glass as the primary exterior material. High Rise Apartment buildings constructed after 1950, such as the subject building, often employ Miesian design principles of the Modern Movement in architecture with minimal ornamentation. Parking was often integrated into the building or site design.² The McKinley Park Apartments has all of these character defining features, which are currently present in the nominated property.

The building predominantly falls under the Modern Movement category, but it also has some features representative of the Miesian architectural style, including the flat roof and expressed concrete and steel frame. The loggia located around the perimeter of the recessed first floor of the building is a primary character defining feature of Miesian architecture. The representative materials of the exterior are brick with simple ornamentation, achieved from the two contrasting

² Gordon, Stephen C. *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers 1890-1970*, p.14.

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colors. The use of two distinct brick colors provides the building with a heightened sense of verticality. The configuration of the window openings and spandrels against the vertical brick bands creates a strong grid pattern, also a common Miesian feature.

The 11-story L-shaped McKinley Park Apartments building features a reinforced concrete structural system with a flat roof. The building does not contain a basement. Floors 2-11, which compose the tower, are generally clad in brick with four evenly spaced concrete piers that extend the height of the building. The tower is six bays in width. The central two bays at floors 4-9 protrude roughly one-structural bay from the remainder of the tower. The windows throughout the tower are original mill-finished aluminum-framed paired windows with painted metal spandrels located directly beneath each window. The central tower is primarily faced with buff-colored brick, with contrasting darker brick that frames the vertical piers on the tower. In this location, the darker brick enhances the verticality of the tower. It is also present at the base of the building, as well as at most door and window openings on the tower. There are two one-story extensions with flat roofs clad in buff-colored brick, located at the southeast and northeast elevations. The one-story wings can be seen from all four elevations. A concrete cornice tops the tower and the two one-story wings. The roof is clad in a modern synthetic membrane. A mechanical penthouse is located centrally at the tower. The two one-story extensions each feature a flat roof and are clad in a modern membrane.

Exterior

Southeast and Northeast Elevations: The primary public entrance is located at the eastern corner of the tower's southeast and northeast elevations. (Photos 5-6, 15) The one-story extensions frame a grass lawn and a semi-circular sidewalk that accesses the entrance from the public sidewalk. The entrance features a modern replacement aluminum-framed single leaf door with a modern replacement glazed transom and sidelight. The entrance is recessed underneath the second story of the building. The southeast elevation is composed of the 11-story tower and one of the one-story extensions, which extends to the southeast. The northeast elevation is generally similar to the southeast elevation, composed of the tower and a one-story wing, extending northeast (Photos 8, 9).

Both one-story extensions are comprised of brick and are utilitarian in character. Extending out from the tower, the one-story wings are both five-bays wide. Within both wings, there are original mill-finished, aluminum-framed, single-pane fixed windows, although a few openings have one-over-one windows (Photo 6). The window openings generally have narrow painted metal spandrels, matching the tower, and six courses of contrasting dark brick above the window. Additionally, there several courses of the same dark brick at the base of the wings. The southeastern wing's southeastern elevation features two utilitarian single-leaf metal doors that access an enclosed patio. Original mill-finished aluminum-framed storefront windows are located at this end elevation (Photo 22). Two entrances are located at the northeast end elevation of the northeast extension (Photos 7, 8): one corresponds to an apartment on the interior and the other is a single-leaf utilitarian metal door, accessing a maintenance room. An aluminum-framed picture window for the apartment is between the two doors on this end elevation.

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Southwest Elevation: Expressing a key feature of the Miesian style, the first floor of the southwest elevation is recessed from the remainder of the building plane behind concrete pilotis, which forms a loggia (Photos 1, 2, 12). The ceiling of the loggia is concrete and modern light fixtures are surmounted on the brick walls. There are three entrances located at the first floor, one being a resident's entrance to the building, from the parking lot. The resident entrance is located at the northernmost bay, which is recessed from the remainder of the building plane, and features a modern aluminum-framed single-leaf glazed door with glazed sidelights and transom. The remaining doors are located centrally on the elevation and both are utilitarian in character.

The southwest elevation also includes the rear elevation of the southeast one-story wing, which has four window bays (Photo 3). There is also one entrance located at the fourth bay from the south, which features a modern single-leaf door.

Northwest Elevation: The northwest elevation is generally similar to the southwest elevation in materials and configuration (Photos 1, 10, and 11). There is one utilitarian single-leaf metal door located on the first floor, near the west corner of the building. Also on the first floor, there are three window bays at the northeast end of the elevation. The northwest elevation also includes the rear elevation of the northeast one-story wing, which has five window bays (Photo 10).

Interior: The interior layout generally retains the original floor plan, reflecting the historic function of the building as used for elderly housing. The interior of the building on the first floor features a foyer, a central lobby, a community room, offices, and maintenance rooms. Housing units for residents are located on floors 2-11. Some finishes throughout the first floor have been replaced over time, but are reflective of the simple durable materials utilized for public housing during the mid-20th century period.

Upon entrance at the northernmost bay of the southwest elevation is a vestibule and entrance lobby (Photo 13), which leads to a centrally-located lobby (Photos 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19). Within the vestibule is a metal dedication plaque. The two entrances are original mill-finished aluminum-framed storefront type systems with replacement doors. Two passenger elevators are located at the south wall of the lobby. The elevators are modern and feature painted metal surrounds and doors. Located directly to the north of the elevator lobby is an interlocking stair. The stair is accessible by steps with a simple metal handrail. A planter is located at the landing of the steps. Additional features of the lobby include a wood-frame and glass receptionist's office (photo 15) and painted brick walls.

To the south of the lobby, in the southeast one-story wing, are offices, a community room, exam rooms, and a stag room, all remaining consistent in their original configuration (Photos 21 and 22). The offices are located along the west perimeter. The community room is located to the south of the offices. The community room is open in plan with finishes that include: vinyl tile floors, painted brick or gypsum board walls with vinyl baseboard, and acoustic tile drop ceiling. Ceilings are dropped below the window heads. A utilitarian kitchen is located at the north end of the room. It maintains the original glazed block rear wall.

To the east of the lobby, in the northeast one-story wing, are offices, storage space, a maintenance room, and one apartment unit. The offices are accessible by a wood-frame, glazed

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storefront system within the lobby (Photo 16). A short hall extends from the lobby to access two storage rooms, one apartment unit, and a restroom (Photo 15). The storage areas and offices are accessible by flush single-leaf wood and metal doors, and they contain carpet floors, gypsum board walls and suspended acoustic tile ceilings. The maintenance area is utilitarian in character with concrete floors, walls, and exposed ceiling structure. The apartment finishes are consistent with those at the upper floors.

Located to the west of the lobby stairs and elevator, within the tower footprint, are two utilitarian mechanical rooms. Finishes of the rooms include: concrete floors, painted gypsum board and painted CMU walls, and exposed concrete ceiling.

Floors 2-11 are all similar in design. Floor plans consist of a centrally located elevator bank with a stair located directly to the west and a mechanical/laundry room directly to the south (Photos 23 and 24). Surrounding this central utilitarian core is a single-loaded corridor that provides access to the apartment units located at the perimeter of each floor (Photo 25). Access to the apartments is provided by modern replacement single-leaf painted wood doors with simple painted wood trim. Finishes within the corridors include: carpet floors and painted gypsum board walls, with vinyl baseboard, and ceilings. A modern replacement wood handrail is located along the inner walls of the corridors.

There are two types of apartment units: A and B – four of each per floor. Apartment types A are located at the corners of the floors and are one-bedroom apartments, while apartment types B are located centrally along the north, south, east, and west perimeters and are studio apartments. Layouts of the apartments are typical and finishes throughout are modern and include: carpet floors and painted gypsum board walls and ceilings (Photos 26-31). Some type B apartments have been modified with a wall subdividing the living space to create a bedroom. The outer perimeter walls are painted CMU. The walls feature simple vinyl baseboard. Kitchens and bathrooms feature vinyl tile floors. Kitchen and bathroom fixtures are a mixture of modern and original. Original finishes include: sinks, mirrors, and light fixtures.

Vertical Access: The building contains one elevator bank and one stair located, centrally within the building. The elevators (two in total) contain modern doors, surrounds, and cabs. The stair is utilitarian in character, constructed of concrete with utilitarian metal railings (Photo 32).

Historic Integrity: McKinley Park Apartments is nominated under Criterion C as an example of a High-Rise Elevator Apartment Building with Miesian features, which meets the registration requirements identified in Section F, page 15 of the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD) *Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970*. For buildings listed under Criterion C under the MPD, the registration requirements cite that a significant degree of stylistic integrity (integrity of design) is needed in order to retain historic integrity, particularly if it is a Miesian building, as is the case with the nominated building. As such, High-Rise Elevator Apartment type buildings are required to retain key design features for individual nomination under Criterion C, as a building type. The subject building is also nominated under Criterion A as an example of senior public housing.

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McKinley Park Apartments retains sufficient integrity to meet the registration requirements identified in the Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970 MPD and convey its historic significance, representing senior public housing. The subject building maintains all seven aspects of historic integrity. McKinley Park Apartments is in its original location, and thus retains integrity of location. The building is located just southwest of downtown Canton, thus providing senior residents easy access to local businesses. McKinley Park Apartments retains its association as senior public housing, as it has continuously operated as public housing since construction. To the casual observer, McKinley Park Apartments looks the same as it did when it was constructed as senior public housing, and thus retains integrity of association and feeling. The setting of the building remains consistent with the period of significance, as the property originally featured landscaping and a parking lot, thus the building retains integrity of setting. The design of the building remains consistent with the original design of the building, as is required in the MPD. The building retains its Modern Movement architectural design with Miesian Style elements, including the overall vertical and symmetrical form of the tower, the recessed ground floor, vertical concrete bands, contrasting brick pattern, and simple floor plan at the interior.

Minimal alterations have occurred at both the exterior and interior of the building. Alterations are typical of buildings continuously utilized as affordable housing, including door replacement, window repairs and alterations, updated/replaced interior finishes with modern compatible finishes, and reconfiguration of some units. Some windows within apartment units have been altered with air-conditioning units and repairs, and they generally are in poor condition. Despite these unobtrusive alterations, the materials and workmanship of the building are still intact at the exterior. Most windows and exterior materials, such as the bricks in two colors, are original. On the interior, extant original materials are generally located throughout the first floor interior common spaces and include: vertical wall paneling on the fascia of soffits, opaque glass panels at the office doors, wood-framed opaque glass screens within the waiting area, wood built-ins within the waiting area, and a few wood doors. Although within select Type B units, a wall has been added to the living space to create a separate bedroom, the original floor plan of the building remains intact, including circulation patterns and arrangement of common areas and apartment units. As alterations have been minimal, the building retains integrity of materials, workmanship, and design.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1969-1973

Significant Dates

1969

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Architect: Dickinson, H.M.

Builder: Gellenbeck General Construction Co.

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Statement of Significance Summary (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The McKinley Park Apartments (OH-18-3) is located at the southwest edge of downtown Canton, OH. The building was completed in 1969 by the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority (SMHA) in response to the elderly housing crisis. The property is locally significant under Criterion A for SOCIAL HISTORY as an example of the earliest senior public housing in Canton and reflecting the creation of local public services to address the postwar housing shortages and affordable options for the elderly. The building is also significant under Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE, as an example of a High-Rise Elevator Apartment and senior public housing building type. The McKinley Park Apartments meets the registration requirements for listing in the National Register in the Multiple Property Document cover, *Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970*. The SMHA initiative for public housing utilized federal funding to create an 11-story building, with 81 senior housing units in a distinct Modernist tower with Miesian features. McKinley Park Apartments represents the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority mission of providing affordable and quality senior housing. The building also illustrates the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority's commitment to create not just shelter for the elderly but a holistic program that encouraged independent senior living through thoughtful site selection, design, and amenities that catered to elderly residents. The high-rise design exemplifies goals of both the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority and federal public housing design guidelines for senior housing at the time. The period of significance is 1969 when construction was completed to 1973, when the last Canton elderly housing project was completed, thus reflecting the impact of the initial McKinley Park Apartments project and reflecting the National Register fifty-year cut off due to the continued use of the property as senior public housing.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

McKinley Park Apartments - Developmental History

In April of 1939, the Ohio State Board of Housing Established the Canton Metropolitan Housing Authority, however, federal funds for the housing authority were misused by the Canton City Council and the housing authority laid dormant for eight years. After the eight years of dormancy, the first projects under the supervision of the Canton Metropolitan Housing Authority were the Don Mellett Homes and the Jackson-Sherrick Court Homes.³ Shortly after completing the two developments in 1947, the Canton Metropolitan Housing Authority expanded their

³ "Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority: People Housing People, 50 years," Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority. 1989.

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jurisdiction to include the city of Massillon and changed its name to the Canton-Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority.⁴

In 1960, the population of Canton was 113,631. The 1960 United States Federal Census indicated that 32,250 people (28%) of the total population were 65 or older. A 1961 survey of the city's housing stock strengthened the Housing and Home Finance Agency's position when it showed that Canton had the highest percentage (21%) of substandard housing among Ohio's eight major cities. With only fourteen units of elderly low-income housing, the Canton Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority Board (CMMHA) voted to study the possibility of constructing more elderly housing in December 1962.⁵ Eugene Bray, City Planning Director and John Pulley, CMMHA Director, and the Canton City Housing Commission, met in January 1964 to discuss the need for 300 units for low-income elderly residents in Canton. In 1964, 16,000 elderly Canton residents' annual incomes were under \$1,000⁶. A senior citizens committee also met with Director Pulley to endorse the construction of senior housing. In August 1964, the Board voted to apply for the preliminary reservation of 150 units of elderly housing. The reservation designated federal money for the construction of elderly housing from HUD, which allowed for the greatest chance of new elderly public housing construction.⁷

In 1965, the federal Public Housing Administration (PHA) approved the reservation of 81 units of elderly housing for the Canton Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority. Although three sites were considered, the city block adjacent to McKinley Park was approved as the site for the housing authority's first high-rise and the first elderly housing building in Canton. The site was ideal for residents due to the fact that the building was in close proximity to downtown Canton, thus allowing residents ease of access to downtown amenities, yet also providing residents with a more suburban feel. Clayton Horne of the *Canton Repository* was credited with suggesting the name McKinley Park Homes. The architect chosen for the building was H.M. Dickinson and the contractor was Gellenbeck General Construction Co. The building was ready for occupancy on August 18, 1969, and residents moved in one month later. The building also contained offices for the Canton Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority, which had a small office at the first floor within the northeast wing.⁸ One social practice that the building implemented was a clinic that specialized in providing the residents and other elderly Canton residents with free necessary medical vaccinations and check-ups, a community service that received an award for excellence at the Ohio State Fair in 1973.⁹ The construction of the building was in direct response to the policies that President Lyndon B. Johnson implemented on senior public housing in the late 1960s and the design of the building reflects the design trend of the new senior housing market.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. These rooms still currently function as offices for the housing authority.

⁹ "Free Clinic," *The Akron Beacon Journal* (Akron, OH). September 5, 1975.

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Criterion A: Social History

The McKinley Park Apartments are locally significant under Criterion A for Social History as the earliest example of an elderly housing complex that was constructed for the city of Canton by the Canton-Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority. The subject building was developed directly in response to the shift in federal policy that targeted the elderly through the Housing Acts of 1956 and 1961. The McKinley Park Apartments established the model for elderly housing in Canton and was soon followed by an additional high-rise and several low-scale examples of public housing for seniors.

The History of Public Housing for Seniors

Public housing built specifically for the elderly was largely non-existent until the 1950s. For much of America's history, the societal expectation was for family members to care for the elderly. During the Industrial Era, seniors with limited mobility and financial means were relegated to almshouses along with the mentally ill, orphans, and the physically disabled. As the 19th century progressed, the rise of charitable organizations and religious groups drew the more privileged elderly out of the almshouses and into private institutions, hospitals, and other private care facilities. By the 1920s the almshouses were overrun with the impoverished elderly. The almshouses came to embody the "distresses of abandonment, disgrace, poverty, loneliness, humiliation, and degradation."¹⁰

Starting in the 1930s, the federal government began to recognize the need for elderly housing as a specific policy issue. The United States Social Security Board recognized the plight of the impoverished elderly stating that, "the predominance of the aged in the almshouse is a sign of their increasing dependency."¹¹ Due to this rising concern over the fate of the elderly and increased poverty during the Great Depression, the federal government intervened for the first time in 1935 with the Social Security Act (SSA), as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. In order to eliminate the problems of the almshouses, the SSA stipulated that seniors living within almshouses could receive federal pensions. Once receiving federal aid, some residents were above a certain income threshold and they were not permitted to remain in almshouses. Seniors in this subsequent situation living in the almshouses were forced out and many found themselves in state run sanitariums or homeless. Some of the elderly were able to receive federal aid and remain within their own homes. But, the continued proliferation of these sanitariums made it clear to lawmakers that not all elderly individuals could be supported in their own homes with monthly federal pensions; many older adults required long-term care and additional financial assistance, a vital part of which was housing.

The Great Depression refocused the nation's attention on the inequalities of the housing market and on the rampant slum problems throughout the U.S., as economic collapse devastated home ownership and the residential construction industry. The already deteriorating housing stock available to the poor worsened, as property owners deferred maintenance and construction on

¹⁰ Adapted from: Foundation Aiding the Elderly, "The History of Nursing Homes." <http://www.4fate.org/history.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid

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new housing ceased. Permanent government built housing did not come into existence until the New Deal under President Franklin Roosevelt, through Title II, Section 202 legislation of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933. That act formed the Public Works Administration (PWA) and allotted \$3.3 billion for PWA projects, among them the “construction, reconstruction, alteration, or repair under public regulation or control of low cost housing and slum clearance projects.”¹² However, by 1940, there still were not enough quality homes. Many were still relegated to life in the slums. Surveys indicated that an estimated 10,000,000 households (roughly 30% of the population) were living in substandard homes.¹³ It was clear that additional housing was needed. During this period, the majority of housing was constructed for families, and the elderly were often left out of the equation when projects were evaluated for Public Housing Authority (PHA) funding.

The Wagner-Steagall Act of 1937 provided for subsidies to local public housing authorities (PHAs). It built on the 1934 National Housing Act, which created the Federal Housing Administration. It was clear that additional housing was needed, in addition to what was being created for families. Seniors were left to fend for themselves in the private marketplace, often occupying deteriorated downtown hotels.¹⁴ As described by Kevin Eckert in *The Unseen Elderly*, “the downtown elderly, among the most limited body in income and coping resources, find themselves with fewer housing options and supportive neighborhoods.”¹⁵ The first known public housing project specifically for the elderly was the Fort Greene Houses in Brooklyn, New York, built in 1942 and funded through state bond funds.¹⁶

Simultaneously, demand for senior housing was also rapidly growing, with a steadily increasing senior population. In 1900, older Americans were only 4% of the general population. In 1950, seniors represented 8% of the overall population. By 1970, it was 10% and in 1980, 11.5%. The majority of seniors, 14.6 million or 73%, lived in urban areas with 6.8 million in highly urbanized central cities. As characterized by sociologist Margaret Clark in *The Unseen Elderly*, “inner city elderly are, both physically and psychologically sicker than their age peers in other groups. They have a harder time surviving...like the rats that are often their only company.”¹⁷ *The Oregonian* described similar situations in Portland: “thousands of Portland’s senior citizens, living in unhealthy, drafty buildings, with unsafe stairways; buildings with vermin, rodents, debris and filth, buildings with inadequate plumbing or situations where too many people share a dirty, poorly lighted toilet facility.”¹⁸ In 1960, average social security income nationwide was \$99.33 per month, less than one third of the national average monthly income of \$466, with rent often taking upward to 50% of that income.

¹² Lusignan, 9.

¹³ Reed, W.V. & Elizabeth Ogg. *New Homes for Old*. New York, NY: Foreign Policy Association. 1940, 8.

¹⁴ J. Kevin Eckert, *The Unseen Elderly: A Study of Marginally Subsistent Hotel Dwellers*, San Diego, CA: The Campanile Press, San Diego State University, 1980, p. 15.

¹⁵ *The Unseen Elderly*, p. 18.

¹⁶ “Public Housing For the Elderly,” in *Progressive Architecture*, March 1961, p. 144-152.

¹⁷ *The Unseen Elderly*, p. 17.

¹⁸ *The Oregonian*. January 17, 1960. 37.

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The Eisenhower Administration became increasingly aware of the issue and the need for a federal response. In 1956, Eisenhower established the *Federal-State Council on Aging* to more effectively coordinate policy and to help determine the "resources of the States and of the Federal government that can be mobilized in an attack on the problems of the later years." A group gathered for a 3-day conference in Washington, DC, to explore solutions for seniors that could benefit from coordination of Federal and State Resources. Two years later, the President signed the White House Conference on Aging Act to create a national citizens' forum to focus attention on the problems of older Americans and to make consensus policy recommendations on how to enhance the economic security of this demographic group. This directly led to the 1961 White House Conference on Aging which called on Congress to expand public housing for seniors.¹⁹

Most important though, Eisenhower signed the Housing Act of 1956 into law. This law gave priority to the development of public housing for seniors. It also modified eligibility requirements to allow one and two person households if the occupants were over 65 and increased construction allowances per room for units of one or two rooms intended to cover the higher costs of smaller rooms. Unfortunately, despite these initiatives, by March 1960, only 681 elderly public housing units had been built. One of the first was a high-rise in Somerville, Massachusetts.²⁰

Beginning with the election of John F. Kennedy, public housing programs generally benefited from a shift in the political climate and gradual acceptance by the real estate and building industries. A keystone Kennedy initiative was the Housing Act of 1961 which provided \$4.88 billion in loans and grants to communities around the country for varied forms of public and subsidized housing. Robert Weaver, the administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA), which was responsible for administering these funds, was deeply concerned with the future of America's seniors and prioritized elderly housing policy. The Housing Act of 1961 not only expanded federal funding for low-income senior public housing, but also liberalized financing for seniors to purchase their own homes. The 1961 Act also provided funds for seniors to rehabilitate their own homes and funding for nursing homes. In addition, the federal program of direct loan to non-profit organizations for the construction of housing for elderly, created from the Housing Act of 1959, Section 202, was expanded.²¹ A stimulus from the Public Housing Administration to local housing authorities granted an additional \$10 per month per unit for elderly housing units.²² As a result, senior housing increased exponentially across the U.S. For context, the HHFA financed as many projects in 1961 as the previous five years combined.²³

¹⁹ United States Senate, Special Committee on Aging, "Basic Policy Statements and Recommendations." *The 1961 White House Conference on Aging*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961.

²⁰ "Public Housing For the Elderly," in *Progressive Architecture*, March 1961, p. 144-152.

²¹ *Housing Act of 1959*, Section 202.

²² "Role of Government in Housing for Senior Citizens." Address by Sidney Spector, Assistant Administrator Housing for Senior Citizens, Housing and Home Finance Agency to the Western Gerontological Society. San Francisco, California. April 28, 1962. 7.

²³ *Ibid.* 2-3.

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Following in Kennedy's footsteps, President Lyndon Johnson was more aggressive, making urban issues centerpieces of his administration. He elevated HHFA to a cabinet level position, forming the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and directed Congress to expand government housing programs. Under Johnson's leadership, the Housing Act of 1965 was passed, which authorized 60,000 units of public housing over the next four years, followed by the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 which set an ambitious goal of 26 million new dwellings, including 6 million new units for low and moderate income households over the next 10 years. Accordingly, average public housing starts rose to more than 35,000 in the 1960s and by 1970, the total number of public housing units built, under construction or planned had reached 1,155,300.²⁴ When policy changes under President Johnson in 1968 increased the funding for HUD programs, the review period for applications became longer due to the influx of new applications. The gestation period, already long due to the process of planning, acquiring the site, and bidding for architects and contractors, lengthened with longer review times at HUD. The moratorium on new construction of public housing and the shift to the voucher system under the Nixon Administration in 1973 gave this policy a hard temporal edge.

History of Public Housing and Senior Housing in Ohio

In 1933, Ohio was the first state to pass enabling legislation for the creation of local housing authorities.²⁵ The legislation allowed housing authorities to accept federal aid and to take over some existing housing operations from the federal government. Cities and towns throughout Ohio had experienced the same deterioration and inadequate amount of affordable quality as housing throughout the nation with regards to large swaths of slums and dilapidated housing units. The state of Ohio had one of the highest national population growth rates during the 1920s and 1930s, at 20.8% and 15.4% respectively.²⁶ Coupled with the onset of the Great Depression, the need for affordable housing throughout Ohio spurred the state public housing legislation enacted in 1933. Local housing authorities started to form throughout the state as a result of the legislation, in both large cities and rural towns which sought to remedy the suffering housing stock.

By 1960, the need for adequate and affordable elderly housing in Ohio was high with the fifth largest population of elderly residents between the ages of 64-72, behind only Pennsylvania, New York, California, and Illinois.²⁷ Furthermore, in Ohio, nearly 100,000 of the elderly located between these ages lived by themselves in a single-family home, with an additional 60,000 living by themselves aged 75 years and over. The 1960 census showed that many elderly residents did not have an income or were making less than \$1,000 a year.²⁸ This high population of elderly residents coupled with their lack of financial stability revealed a need for affordable and

²⁴ Von Hoffman, Alexander, "History Lessons for Today's Housing Policy: The political Processes of Making Low-Income Housing Policy." In *Housing Policy Debate*, New York: Taylor & Francis, 2012, p. 314-315.

²⁵ William Dennis Keating, Norman Krumholz, and David C. Perry. "Cleveland: A Metropolitan Reader." 228-229.; "Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority" Case Western Reserve Encyclopedia of Cleveland History. 2020. <https://case.edu/ech/articles/c/cuyahoga-metropolitan-housing-authority>

²⁶ Dr. Eric Ostermeier, "Ohio's Population Rank Over the Last 100 Years." *Smart Politics*. January 14, 2011.

²⁷ 1960 U.S. Census on Housing and Population

²⁸ Ibid

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accessible elderly housing. The construction of elderly housing complexes, more specifically elderly high-rise complexes, by local housing authorities was exemplified in cities such as Cleveland, Akron, Cincinnati, Columbus, and Canton. The construction of McKinley Park Apartments is an example of the larger statewide and national movement, constructing affordable public housing for elderly residents. As more federal funds became available due to the Housing Act of 1961, it afforded smaller housing authorities such as the Canton Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority to construct much needed affordable housing for elderly residents. Youngstown, a city very similar to Canton in population density, constructed its first high-rise elderly public housing complex in 1973, Gutknecht Towers.

The City of Cleveland was the first city in Ohio to enact a public housing agency in 1933, co-founded by Ernest Bohn, the first president of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials.²⁹ He was also a one-term member of the Ohio General Assembly and later chaired the Committee on Housing of the Cleveland City Council. Bohn took advantage of early programs that were precursors to the 1937 Housing Act to develop some of the nation's first public housing. By the late-1960s, 67 percent of all new housing construction in Cleveland was for affordable housing. By the 1990s, the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority had become the most prolific and influential housing authority in the state, with 38 developments containing 11,500 units which housed roughly 18,000 residents.³⁰

The Cleveland Housing Authority constructed several public housing developments for the elderly following passage of the Housing Act of 1956, becoming one of the first cities to construct federally funded elderly housing. In 1956, a 14-story high-rise building was constructed as an extension to the existing Cedar Complex, which was located just north of the new high-rise. In 1962 the Westerly Apartments (NR13000841) in Lakewood, Ohio, located just west of Cleveland, was one of the earliest projects in Ohio to construct elderly housing and a community center through the Housing Act of 1959, Section 202. This funding enabled local non-profit organizations to construct elderly housing. In 1964, a second 15-story high-rise complex was constructed called Riverview Towers and contained 498 one-bedroom apartments. In 1971, the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority completed six more elderly housing located throughout the city. The Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority's focus on elderly housing was evident in the fact that by the end of the 1980s, there were nearly as many elderly high-rises as general affordable-housing high-rises.³¹

In addition to Cleveland, the cities of Akron, Cincinnati, and Columbus were also at the forefront of affordable housing in Ohio in the 1930s. In 1937, Akron received state authorization to create the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, which was formally established in 1938. The first three public housing projects in Akron were Elizabeth Park, and the Edgewood and Norton Homes. Public housing continued as a force for good and gained a positive reception in the community of Akron. The first public housing for the elderly in Akron was constructed in 1958, called Arlington Gardens.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

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Similar to Cleveland, the city of Akron also quickly took advantage of the available federal funds, gifted from the Housing Act of 1956 to construct affordable housing for the elderly. Arlington Gardens was Akron's first public housing for the elderly, constructed in 1958. The complex was designed to resemble a modern motel with features to make living easier for those with physical disabilities. A second complex for the elderly was constructed in 1960, the Cedar Hill Apartments, a two-story white brick building near downtown. Elderly housing proved a success resulting in another project built at Pine and Chestnut Streets. In 1968, the Paul E. Belcher Apartments was the largest project and a dramatic step for the agency. AMHA's first high-rise, the Belcher Apartments signaled a greater awareness of and commitment to senior citizens in Akron.³² Cincinnati's first housing projects were located in its West End neighborhood. Space was provided for the construction of the new buildings through slum clearance overseen by the Public Works Administration. In August 1938 Laurel Homes opened with 1,039 units, with approximately 30% of the apartments available to African Americans. Thus, Laurel Homes became one of the first racially integrated public housing communities in the United States. After the opening of Laurel Homes, the CMHA quickly moved ahead with other housing projects. Winton Terrace, was built in the northern part of Cincinnati on 240 acres of undeveloped property, and the community of English Woods was built west of the Mill Creek valley. The first residents moved into Winton Terrace in 1941 and into English Woods in 1942.³³

The Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority constructed fewer complexes than the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority. The first complex constructed by the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority was Poindexter Village in 1940, and it consisted of 35 buildings.³⁴

History of Public Housing and Senior Housing in Canton, OH

The Canton Massillon Housing Authority was established in 1939 following the passage of the federal Wagner Steagall Act (1937). However, due to conflict between city officials and housing authority officials, the first public housing operations did not commence until 1947, when the Canton Massillon Housing Authority acquired two former wartime housing sites located within the city, the Mellett Homes and the Jackson Sherrick Court Homes. The first proposal for new construction by the housing authority was submitted in 1949, yet public opposition for the construction of a new site delayed construction. Finally, in 1962, the first new construction of public housing complex was completed, the Jackson-Sherrick Homes, which replaced the original wartime complexes.

Recommendations made by the City of Canton and the Senior Citizens Committee prompted board members to apply for new low-income housing for the elderly due to the fact that by 1962, there were only 14 affordable units specifically designated for the elderly in Canton. As a result, the Canton Metropolitan Housing Authority began an intensive building program of senior units in Canton by the end of the 1960s. This was in response to the fact that nearly 20% of the

³² "Housing with Dignity: Seventy-Five Years with the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority 1938-2013," Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, 2013.

³³ "Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority," Guide to African American Resources: Cincinnati History and Library Archives.

³⁴ "CMHA Response to Expert Group Report, July 19, 2013," Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority.

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population of Canton were over the age of 60 and nearly half of those residents were unemployed. Thus, many senior residents could not afford quality housing available on the private market.³⁵ The first elderly housing complex completed in Canton was the nominated McKinley Park Apartments, an 11-story high-rise located just southwest of downtown. This complex was constructed under the direction of the Canton Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority and utilized federal funds granted from the Housing Act of 1961. The second elderly high-rise, Girard Gardens, was proposed in 1968 and completed in 1970. Two elderly low-rise buildings, Roselane Gardens and Kimberle Gardens, were proposed in 1969 and completed in 1970, and a third, Plaza Terrace, was completed in 1973. Due to a longer application waiting list for elderly housing compared to family housing, the number of Department of Housing and Urban Development reserved units of low-income housing was changed from 400 family units and 200 elderly units to 200 family units and 400 elderly units.³⁶

In June 1970, the name of the Canton Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority was changed to “Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority” to reflect the extended countywide jurisdiction of the housing authority. The Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority continued its commitment to construct additional units of affordable housing in Canton following the McKinley Park Apartments’ success. The apartment building’s success was indicated by high demand for the units from the elderly population—a demand that McKinley Park Apartments could not solely fulfill. The resulting high demand resulted in the Housing Authority’s construction of the subsequent developments of Roselane Gardens and Kimberle Gardens. A 100 unit elderly five-story mid-rise was constructed in 1973, named Plaza Terrace.³⁷ The Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority experienced unprecedented growth in the 1970s and 1980s. The growth was characterized by a drastic increase in the number of constructed units, and expanded jurisdiction in Stark County. During this time, the housing authority continued to focus on creating affordable housing for seniors.

The construction and success of McKinley Park Apartments was instrumental in creating and sustaining the success of the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority, and the building continues to function as affordable housing geared towards elderly residents.³⁸

Criterion C: ARCHITECTURE

The McKinley Park Apartments are locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent example of a high-rise elderly housing development that reflects design elements of high-rise apartments, the Tower Plan subset, as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD) *Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970*. These design elements, exemplified in the McKinley Park Apartments, are representative of the elderly housing building trends during the late 1960s, which focused on the tower in the park concept following design guidelines from HUD. The concept focused on one-bedroom units stacked in a single high-rise

³⁵ 1960 U.S. Census on Population.

³⁶ “Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority: People Housing People, 50 years,” Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority. 1989.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

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building surrounded by larger greenspace. The developments were typically located in residential areas at the perimeter of downtowns. Character defining features of the Miesian Style are found in the McKinley Park Apartments. Two contrasting brick colors, which adds functional visual interest without adding ornamentation, is located at all elevations. These vertical brick bands provide the building with a tall vertical presence. Expressed at the window bays, the building has an overall grid pattern appearance, which is a typical Miesian characteristic. The building contains a recessed ground floor loggia, also representative of the Miesian style.

*Harold M. Dickinson (Architect)*³⁹

The architect for the McKinley Park Apartments was Harold M. Dickinson. He was born in Jamestown, NY on March 9, 1924. Dickinson attended the University of Cincinnati where he studied architecture. Dickinson's education in architecture was second to none due to the fact that the school's architecture program was constantly ranked as one of the top programs in the nation. Upon graduation, Dickinson enlisted in the United States Army during World War II. After the war, Dickinson returned to architecture and worked with local firms in Canton, OH from 1952 to 1957. Dickinson opened his private practice in Canton, OH in 1958. His tenure as an architect lasted until 1974 when he retired in Greenwood, OH.⁴⁰ During his architectural career, Dickinson was involved with a variety of different types of building design including municipal, commercial/industrial, and residential buildings. Dickinson's primary focus was in and around Canton, OH, where he designed the Superior Provision Co, various private residences in Market Hills, and the McKinley Park Apartments.⁴¹ The McKinley Park Apartments is the only known example of high-rise elderly public housing that Dickinson designed.

Design of Elderly Public Housing, 1956-1973

Unlike public housing for families and veterans, which the federal government had been subsidizing since World War II, elderly housing presented a new set of issues and design challenges including not only affordability, but also the special needs of elderly populations. Under the aforementioned 1961 Housing Act, elderly housing aimed to avoid the feeling of an institution, while minimizing isolation among senior tenants. To avoid isolation, projects included community centers and social rooms within the housing complexes.⁴² These were typically located at the first floor of the buildings, as seen in McKinley Park Apartments. Additional rooms included offices for employees of the building and exam rooms for residents, also present in McKinley Park Apartments.

³⁹ Information is limited on the architect and most of the information provided here is from his Obituary and a local history source. Research was conducted at the local level at the Stark County Library and other local repositories.

⁴⁰ "Harold M. Dickinson," Canton Repository (Stark County, OH). October 11, 2003.

⁴¹ Heald, Edward Thorton, "Stark County Story," The Stark County Historical Society. The Stoneman Press (Columbus, OH). 1959. Page 769.

⁴² "The 1961 White House Conference on Aging, Basic Policy Statements and Recommendations." May 15, 1961. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington: 1961, 67. 72.

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Organizations such as the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (the AFL-CIO) recommended, “sponsoring such housing that dwellings for the elderly should contain special features and equipment required by the elderly, including adequate community facilities and services, insofar as possible should also be integrated into the community as a whole.”⁴³ In addition, elderly housing was viewed as a “new” problem, which would need a certain degree of flexibility in its implementation. There was also recognition that while there was a high demand for elderly housing in many U.S. cities, elderly housing projects should be more accessible to amenities and neighborhoods.⁴⁴ This ideology stood in opposition to low-income public housing from the same period, which was often massive in scale (containing a higher density and larger number of units) and isolated in location.

The Housing and Home Finance Agency laid out guidelines for the design of new elderly housing in a 1962 internal memo prioritizing housing “designed and located to promote the dignity and maximum independence of the individual older person.” This resulted in the construction of high-efficiency one-bedroom apartments for elderly residents. They were simple, yet were equipped with all of the essential needs for prospective residents. The memo further stipulated that housing for seniors cannot be molded to a single pattern, but should offer a wide range of opportunities for the maximum exercise of free choice of living arrangement. Urban, rural, and suburban housing, therefore, would be designed to fit with the surrounding fabric.⁴⁵ The HHFA also stressed design with an emphasis on physical safety, including such features as the avoidance of steps and thresholds; easy-to-reach kitchen equipment; sit-down sinks; non-skid floors; sit-down tubs and showers; wider doors and corridors; safety and grab bars in bathrooms; higher heat control; waist-level ovens and safety shut-offs on stoves; accessible wall plugs; and dwelling units whose size and design permit easy maintenance. HHFA “encourage[d] imaginative design, adequate size of units, and elements of beauty in architecture and furnishings...this will go toward boosting one’s evaluation of self and induce a sense of pride and belongingness.”⁴⁶ These concepts for independent living are evident in the McKinley Park Apartments, with its simple two apartment type design, A and B. Both provided residents with ease of access between the living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bathrooms.

While HHFA accepted varying building forms, the architectural community was coalescing around the high-rise form in urban areas. As early as 1957, the industry, through the influential publication, *Progressive Architecture*, saw high-rise apartments generally as the solution to urban growth, particularly within the framework of urban renewal. Rather than the chaos of perimeter housing developments, the editors of *Progressive Architecture* noted, the high-rise offered “controlled multiple housing,” emphasizing the livability of high rises providing natural light and air with panoramic views in response to limited land availability.⁴⁷

⁴³ Statement of Boris Shishkin Secretary, Housing Committee, AFL-CIO before the Housing Subcommittee on Banking and Currency. July 11, 1962.

⁴⁴ “The 1961 White House Conference on Aging.” 70.

⁴⁵ Memorandum: Housing for Seniors. From Sidney Spector to Robert C. Weaver, Administrator. Housing and Home Finance Agency. July 25, 1962.

⁴⁶ Memorandum.

⁴⁷ “Apartment houses their new significance,” in *Progressive Architecture*, April 1957, p. 107-125.

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This focus on high-rises extended to senior public housing, which is clearly evident in the McKinley Park Apartments with its 10-stories of apartment units. In 1961, as the HHFA was offering its design guidance, *Progressive Architecture* focused specifically on “Public Housing for the Elderly.” The article begins with a detailed survey of the senior housing problem - 16 million seniors 65 and older with 51% single. Most of the population faced physical, emotional, social and economic problems, and all were anticipating diminishing financial and physical health. The article then details the housing requirements, repeating much of the HHFA guidance and emphasizing improved heat, light and sound insulation. Largely focused on eliminating stairs, the authors conclude only two types of buildings are appropriate: one-story cottage-style or high-rise buildings. The authors also noted the importance of residents remaining within their current neighborhood, though they anticipated this would require zoning modifications.⁴⁸

That same issue of *Progressive Architecture* offered “One Solid Achievement” as the prototype for elderly housing. Conceived in 1956 and completed in 1959, Victoria Plaza in San Antonio, Texas is a 9-story, T-shaped tower with 185 units located on a 2.7 acre site with fountained gardens and parking. Through general interviews with potential residents of elderly housing units, architects determined that potential residents did not favor cottages on the edge of town, but rather wanted to live near the center of the city. The high-rise design also offered “the advantages of superior natural ventilation and separation from street sounds.”⁴⁹ The first floor incorporated spaces for health, recreation, library, and a senior counseling center. Access to the upper floors was via paired elevators to spacious yet flexible units.

The next year, the *Association of Schools of Public Health Journal* offered an article entitled “Housing for Senior Citizens” by E. Everett Ashley.⁵⁰ It too offered high-rise towers as “outstanding example(s)” of what senior housing should look like. In particular, the article noted the presence of the social programming and recreational/social areas that included a community kitchen, library, and counseling office or clinic.

A 1967 interview with Marie McGuire, the Commissioner of the Public Housing Administration from 1961-1966 under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, illuminates many other success stories in smaller cities and towns. In the interview, McGuire states that once manuals were put aside and local architects were given the opportunity to design the best building and living environment for their local community, this resulted in good designs that were a credit to their communities.⁵¹ Given the constraints of land costs that often dictate high density designs, McGuire relates that the result of allowing architects to step away from barrack-style developments was that smaller towns, which had previously shied away from public housing as a warehouse for the poor, began to embrace the idea of a well-designed building to suit their community’s needs. The staff member at HUD who argued for this change was the very architect

⁴⁸ “Public Housing For the Elderly,” in *Progressive Architecture*, March 1961, p. 144-152.

⁴⁹ “Public Housing For the Elderly,” in *Progressive Architecture*, March 1961, p. 144-152.

⁵⁰ E. Everett Ashley, “Housing for Senior Citizens.” In *Public Health Reports (1896-1970)*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (May, 1962), pp.398-400.

⁵¹ Marie C. McGuire, recorded interview by William McHugh, April 3, 1967, (page 5), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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who designed Victoria Plaza and had demonstrated that thoughtful and good design could work for elderly public housing.⁵²

Similar high-rise senior public housing to the San Antonio example began to appear throughout the United States. The first such project in the Pacific Northwest was Northwest Towers. Conceived in 1960, the high rise was completed in 1964. The 150-unit, 13-story project was lauded by HHFA, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and PHA officials as exemplary and warranting replication. Similar examples can be found in cities throughout the country: Atlanta's 1966 17-story Palmer House, Seattle's 1967 17-story Jefferson Terrace, Chicago's 1968 9-story Drexel Square, Canton's 11-story McKinley Park Apartments, Baltimore's 14-story Lakeview Tower, and Philadelphia's 1973 9-story Germantown House, to name but five of hundreds. Of the initial projects constructed under the Housing Act of 1961, high-rise, elevator buildings prevailed.⁵³ High-rise elderly apartment complexes came to be a focal point for small cities, such as Canton, due to the fact that cities of its size did not have very tall buildings within its downtown, and high rises such as the McKinley Park Apartments were one of the earliest expressions of modernism in the central core of Canton.

For its part, the editors of *Progressive Architecture* revisited senior housing in 1967. This time, the 15-story George Crawford Manor in New Haven, Connecticut, was presented as, "making architecture work for the elderly in an urban environment." One resident was quoted as saying, "I went from Hell to Heaven when I moved from the boarding house to Crawford Manor. The overwhelming opinion of the residents is that Crawford Manor is an exciting place in which to live. The garden to the rear will relieve some of the pressure for social space during the summer and the enclosure, with its handsome wall, provides a usable private green space in the middle of the city."⁵⁴ McKinley Park Apartments creates this oasis for its elderly residents due to the fact that it is situated near, but not in, downtown Canton, plus McKinley Park is across the street. An original brick and metal picket fence encloses a private patio off of the community room. Currently, the eastern section of the property is designated for outdoor leisure that is enclosed with a later chain link fence, thus creating additional outdoor privacy for the residents.

The McKinley Park Apartments as an Example of High-Rise Elderly Public Housing

The Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority and the McKinley Park Apartments architect created a high-rise for elderly residents that incorporated ideas presented in trade journals, such as the 1961 *Progressive Architecture* article that outlined first floor space for health (exam rooms), recreation/libraries, and upper floor access with paired elevators. Additionally, a 1962 article "Housing for Senior Citizens" called out a need for community kitchens, counseling offices or clinics. As noted above, in 1967, *Progressive Architecture* reexamined the issue, putting forth recommendations for integrated outdoor areas. All of these elements recommended by

⁵² McGuire interview, p.6.

⁵³ "Housing for Senior Citizens: A Report to Senator John Sparkman, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing, Senate Committee on Banking and Currency." The Housing and Home Finance Agency, Office of Housing for Seniors. February 1962. 17-18.

⁵⁴ "Houses and Housing The Elderly," in *Progressive Architecture*, May 1967, p. 124-134.

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professionals were included in the design and location of the McKinley Park Apartments, as well as additional standards required by the Public Housing Administration.

Starting in the 1950s when federal public housing was expanded to enable inclusion of more elderly housing units, the Public Housing Administration expanded beyond their *Minimum Physical Standards* to include standards specific to elderly units. For elderly housing, the PHA utilized the same guidelines and standards, but included more specific elements which were intended to cater to the elderly. The new design standards for the elderly were aimed at making units safer and more comfortable for older occupants. The housing could take any form. The creation of elderly housing towers was given preference for economical construction and maximization of site size.⁵⁵

When considering elderly housing tower design PHA took safety, accessibility and comfort into consideration. Tower design features like a simple floor plan, fireproof construction, sound attenuation, good lighting, a 24-hour attended entrance lobby, and trash rooms were important to the safety and well-being of residents. Potential for slips or falls was high among the elderly population, so preventative measures like grab bars in corridors and bathrooms, non-slip resilient flooring, and avoidance of stairs/inclusion of elevators on all multistory buildings were required by PHA. Proper and adequate illumination was also deemed important for residents who may have failing eyesight.⁵⁶ Privacy was also considered with requirements for sound attenuation and the inclusion of a separate bedroom and living area, particularly for couples.⁵⁷

Beyond the guidelines for the building(s) were elements of site design. Special consideration was given to the safety and recreational needs of the elderly including a level site with plentiful walkways and benches, and ready access to outdoor areas like gardens and lawns.⁵⁸ The PHA recognized that the aged had special needs regarding their total environment. Since many elderly residents could not drive or walk far distances, the proposed location of developments was also taken into consideration. Preference was given to developments located near food and drug stores, doctors, places of worship, parks, buses, restaurants, and hospitals. The idea to avoid an “institutionalized” feeling was important. This translated to design features like small lounge rooms and private bathrooms and bedrooms, but also to location. Developments located in a neighborhood setting close to other age groups were preferred to lessen the feeling of isolation.⁵⁹

The high-rise design for elderly housing met and often exceeded design standards for public housing developments. McKinley Park Apartments followed standards established in these guidelines, including: the location near downtown, the use of elevators, barrier-free entrances,

⁵⁵ Weiss, 12U.

⁵⁶ Vivrett, Walter K. “Environmental Needs of Older People and Implications for Housing.” *Building for Older People*. New York, New York: National Council on the Aging. 1961. 3-5C.

⁵⁷ Vivrett, 3-5C.

⁵⁸ Weiss, 5U.

⁵⁹ Weiss, Joseph Douglas. “Basic Considerations in Physical Planning of Housing for Older People.” *Building for Older People*. New York, New York: National Council on the Aging. 1961. 1U.

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large flat lawns with walkways, a mail room on the first floor, a simple floorplan with a single corridor with grab-bars, closets and storage space in every unit, and units for events.

In comparison to the subsequent elderly housing complexes that were constructed by the housing authority, Girard Gardens and Plaza Terrace, the McKinley Park Apartments is the only one of the three that embodies the characteristics of a high-rise apartment complex, and the Tower Plan subset, identified in the MPD "Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970." Both Girard Gardens and Plaza Terrace are categorized as mid-rise apartments since they are less than nine-stories in height. The McKinley Park Apartments is also situated closest to the urban center of Canton. Proximity to urban centers is a defining trait of high-rise apartments according to the MPDF. The first elderly public housing complex nominated in Ohio, the Westerly Apartments (NRHP# 13000841, 2013), utilizes similar design elements as McKinley Park in site, setting, and material.

Conclusion

The McKinley Park Apartments was constructed in 1969 as elderly public housing by the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority under the Housing Acts of 1956 and 1961. The property is locally significant under Criterion A for SOCIAL HISTORY and Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE. The initiative for public housing capitalized on the availability of federal funding in the creation of 81 senior housing units in a distinct high-rise tower design. This project represents the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority's need to provide affordable and quality senior housing to the people of Canton, OH. The building also illustrated the agency's commitment to create, not just shelter, for the elderly a holistic program that encouraged independent senior living through thoughtful site selection, design, and amenities that catered to elderly residents. Amenities included exam rooms for residents, a community room, handrails throughout for resident stability and safety, and an enclosed outdoor recreational space. The period of significance is 1969-1973, when construction was completed to when the last Canton elderly housing project was completed. McKinley is the first example of affordable housing for the elderly in Canton, OH. The building retains integrity to convey the historic values of a model elderly public housing development. Alterations have been minor and have not changed the character of the building. The McKinley Park Apartments meets the requirements for individual listing, as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD) *Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Settings, 1870-1970*.

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Name of Property

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County and State

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- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.91

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- 1. Latitude: 40.796314 Longitude: -81.380778
- 2. Latitude: Longitude:
- 3. Latitude: Longitude:
- 4. Latitude: Longitude:

McKinley Park Apartments
Name of Property

Stark, OH
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 467863 | Northing: 4515998 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is composed of Stark County Parcel Numbers: 281679, 281680, 281681, 281682, 281760, 281683, 281684, 281678, and 281677. The parcels are bound by High Avenue SW to the west, 5th Street SW to the north, Wells Avenue SW to the east, and 6th Street SW to the south. Auditor's website accessed October 28, 2020.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the parcels historically related to McKinley Park Apartments.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Cindy Hamilton/ Lee Riccetti
organization: Heritage Consulting Group
street & number: 15 W. Highland Avenue, STE D
city or town: Philadelphia state: PA zip code: 19118-3322
e-mail: chamilton@heritage-consulting.com; lriccetti@heritage-consulting.com
telephone: 215-248-1260
date: February 5, 2020

McKinley Park Apartments
Name of Property

Stark, OH
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: McKinley Park Apartments

City or Vicinity: Canton

County: Stark

State: Ohio

Photographer: Lee Riccetti

Date Photographed: November 1, 2019

- 1 of 32. Exterior, Northwest Elevation, Looking East.
2. Exterior, Southwest Elevation, Looking Northeast.
3. Exterior, Community Room, Southwest Elevation, Looking Northeast.
4. Exterior, Southeast Elevation, Looking North.
5. Exterior, Northeast and Southeast Elevations, Looking west.
6. Exterior, Northeast and Southeast Elevations, Looking west.
7. Exterior, Northeast Elevation, Site View, Looking Northwest.
8. Exterior, Northeast Elevation, Looking Southwest.

McKinley Park Apartments

Name of Property

Stark, OH

County and State

9. Exterior, Northeast Elevation, Looking Southwest.
10. Exterior, Northeast and Northwest Elevations, Looking south.
11. Exterior, Northwest Elevation, Looking Southeast.
12. Exterior, Southwest Elevation, Looking Northwest at Loggia.
13. Interior, First Floor, Entrance Lobby, Looking Southwest.
14. Interior, First Floor, Lobby, Looking Southeast.
15. Interior, First Floor, Lobby, Looking Northeast.
16. Interior, First Floor, General Office, Looking west.
17. Interior, First Floor, Lobby, Looking Southeast.
18. Interior, First Floor, Waiting Area, Looking Southeast.
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27. Interior, Typical Apartment, Living Room, Looking southeast.
28. Interior, Detail of a typical apartment bathroom. Looking Southeast.
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31. Interior, Typical Apartment, looking southwest.
32. Interior, view of the stair, looking north.

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McKinley Park Apartments
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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County: Stark

State: Ohio

Photographer: Lee Riccetti

Date Photographed: November 1, 2019

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**McKinley Park Apartments
Stark County, OH
Boundary Map**



 Boundary



**McKinley Park Apartments
Stark County, OH
Tax Parcel Map**



 Boundary

Accessed
10.28.20





Exterior

Photos 1 – 12

Yellow arrow indicates starting point

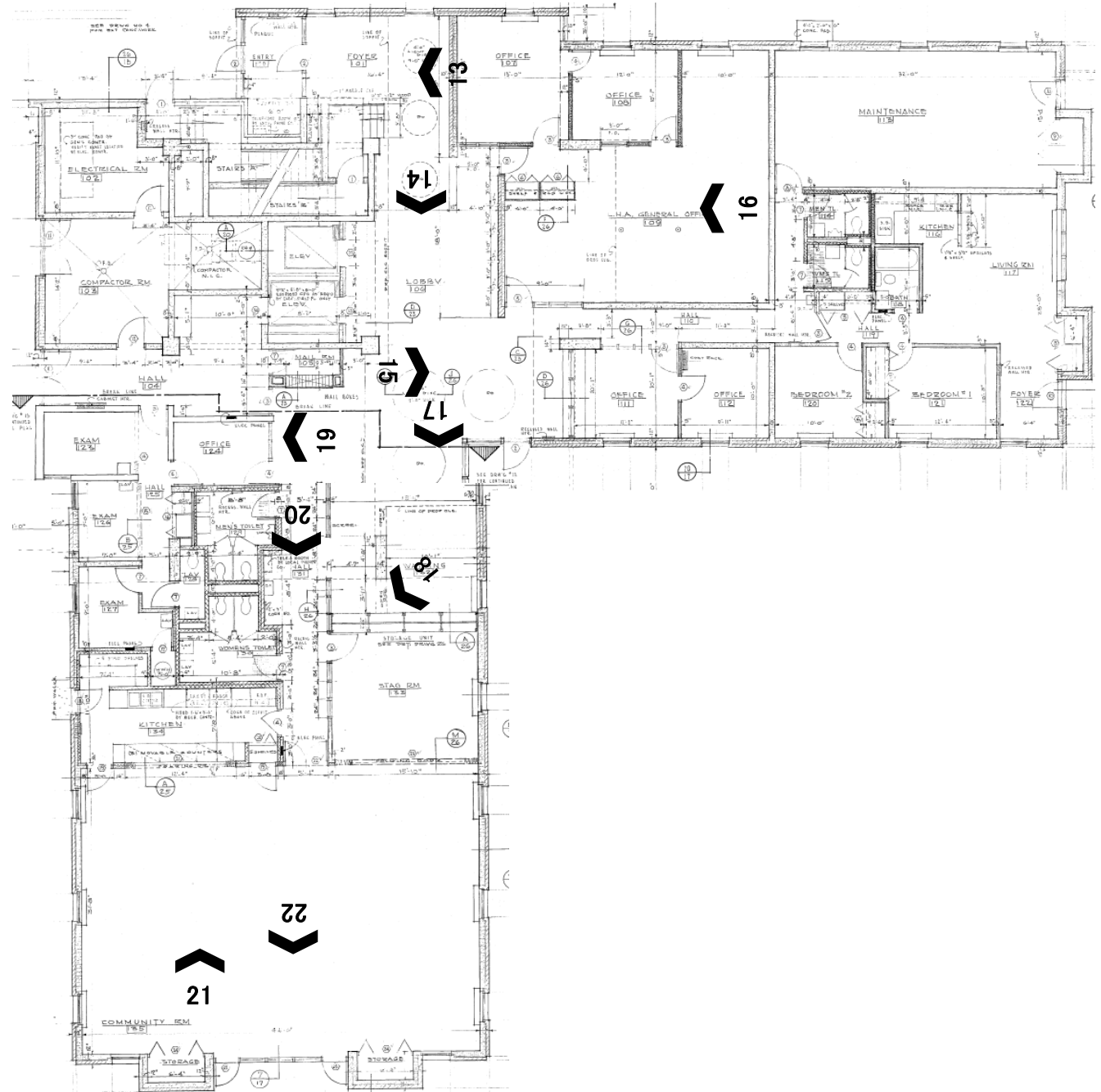




Interior, First Floor

Photos 13-22

Yellow arrow indicates starting point





Interior, Typical Upper Floor

Photos: 23-32

Yellow arrow indicates starting point

