University of Cincinnati

Date: 4/3/2014

I, Caitlyn A Kwiatkowski, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Architecture in Architecture.

It is entitled:
Designing Within Constraints: Design Politics of HOPE VI Public Housing Developments

Student’s name: Caitlyn A Kwiatkowski

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Edson Cabalbin, Ph.D.

Committee member: David Varady, Ph.D.
Designing Within Constraints: Design Politics of HOPE VI Public Housing Developments

A thesis submitted to the
Graduate School
of the University of Cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Architecture

School of Architecture and Interior Design
College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning

April 3, 2014

by

Caitlyn Kwiatkowski

Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design, University of Kentucky 2012

Thesis Committee

Chair: Edson Cabalfin

Member: David P. Varady
Abstract

Architecture has a tangled and tumultuous history with public housing in the United States, to the extent that architecture has been cited as a contributing factor to the program’s failure. Despite the strong criticism toward public housing architecture, little research on the subject currently exists. As the nature of public housing continues to shift from high-rise concentrations of very low-income families toward a low-rise mixed-income model, the role of architecture within the discipline needs to be reexamined. By reviewing planning policy, analyzing theoretical and empirical research in housing and architectural fields, and completing interviews with planners, government officials, and architects, this thesis seeks to draw out relationships and influences that affect the design outcomes of HOPE VI facilities. The research is analyzed through a case study methodology of two HOPE VI developments, Park DuValle in Louisville, Kentucky and City West in Cincinnati, Ohio. The case studies flush out the limitations and constraints faced by the architect, the relationships that evolved throughout the design process, and the role of power within the redevelopment process.

Keywords: HOPE VI, architecture, public housing, design, policy, mixed-income development, low-income housing, housing policy, neighborhood revitalization
Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the dedication and mentorship of my thesis committee Edson Cabalfin of the University of Cincinnati School of Architecture and Interior Design and David P. Varady of the University of Cincinnati School of Planning. I was extremely fortunate to have such supportive, challenging, and committed advisers. They were instrumental to the thesis process, and I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work along side both of my instructors.

I would also like to especially thank all of the people in Cincinnati and Louisville who participated in my interviews who went above and beyond to help me with my research. A special thank you to the following:

**Jeff Raser**, *Principal*, Glaserworks Architecture + Urban Design

**Lawrence “Murphy” Antoine**, *Principal*, Torti Gallas and Partners, Inc.

**Chris Gibbons**, *Co-Program Manager*, Gibbons & Associates

**Reema Ruberg**, *Chief Operating Officer*, Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

**Raymond L. Gindroz**, *Principal*, Urban Design Associates

**Charles C. Cash, Jr.**, *Assistant Director of Planning and Urban Design*, Louisville Development Authority

**Tim Barry**, *Executive Director*, Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority

**Stephanie Sweeney**, Stephanie Sweeney & Associates
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Across the United States cities big and small are attempting to renovate distressed public housing developments through Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) federal grants. HOPE VI came about during a time of intense strain within the urban landscape; population decline, economic restructuring, dramatic increases in crime, and a rise in poverty concentration exacerbated the social ills within the American inner cities (Katz 2009). As support for project based subsidies began to wane and policymakers considered withdrawing from public housing programs altogether to “excise the cancer”, HOPE VI was considered a last ditch effort to renovate the failing program (Katz 2009). The now seven billion-dollar program instituted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has sought to reinvigorate public housing developments and the adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods since 1992. The program has completely altered the course of public housing through drastic changes in tenant selection, mixed-income initiatives, mixed-use commercial interest, poverty deconcentration, public/private partnerships, and architectural alterations. HOPE VI requires a complete rebranding of public housing to reduce stigma and to entice middle class families to move into the facilities; design, therefore, became integral to the program’s successes.

Architecture is weaved within public housing history and discourse. Architecture in this sense can be defined as the built structures that would come to define the image of public housing for decades to come. Design contributes to the success or failure of public housing developments and helps or hinders the sense of community within the
area. Despite the important role architecture and design played in the transformation of public housing, little research has been written on the subject. Most research on HOPE VI has focused on policy and the effects of mixed-income developments, public private partnerships, and displacement. The research that does exist on public housing design is often limited, and few architects and designers have had a voice in the discussion. As this program continues to expand, and more money begins to funnel in the physical rebranding of these developments, research on all aspects of public housing architecture is integral.

1.1 Rationale

The physical characteristics of public housing developments have long been under scrutiny by politicians, designers, architects, planners and policy makers. Architecture has long been cited as a contributing factor of public housing’s downfall. Seminal texts in the architecture and planning disciplines have villainized the high-rise Modernist approach to public housing planning and design. Architect and planner Oscar Newman’s 1996 report *Creating Defensible Space* argued that the high-rise public housing buildings were the antithesis of neighborhood safety and security (Newman 1996). Sociologist Jane Jacobs cried out against urban renewal efforts and separation of uses (residential vs commercial vs industrial) claiming that the isolation created unnatural urban spaces and lead to the destruction of communities (Jacobs 1961). Negative media attention grew. Eyes began to focus on the horrible condition of public housing throughout the country and architecture was viewed as a catalyst for urban affliction plaguing the developments. The rampant crime, stark facilities, desolate
grounds, and physical dereliction have created a poor reputation for the country’s most durable form of subsidized housing (Schwartz 2010).

The stereotypical imagery of large Modernist high-rises and stark, bleak superblocks still resonates in the minds of many Americans. The St. Louis’ public housing high-rise Pruitt Igoe has become a billboard for the program’s failures, and the physical structures have come under fire from planners and academics as a cause it’s destruction.


The project’s eventual demolition was felt keenly throughout architecture and urban planning circles. Architectural historian Charles Jencks cited the fall of Pruitt Igoe as the end of Modernism stating, “Modern architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri on July 15,
1972, at 3:32pm”, and from that day forward public housing’s history was altered (Moore February 25, 2012). The architect of Pruitt Igoe, Minoru Yamasaki, has become infamous due to his connection with the failed housing project. After the destruction of his other famous work, the World Trade Towers, Yamasaki became jokingly known as “architect of disaster”. Criticism for Pruitt Igoe followed the architect throughout his career to his deathbed; his New York Times obituary stated: “His (Yamasaki) career suffered one spectacular setback, the huge $36 million Pruitt-Igoe public housing project in St. Louis. It was hailed as an architectural triumph when it was built in the early 1950's but denounced by public officials 20 years later as 'a complete and colossal failure' and demolished” (Rimer February 09, 1986). The architect later stated that his plans for Pruitt Igoe had been changed without his permission (Rimer February 09, 1986). Regardless of the truth of that statement, Yamasaki has had his reputation tarnished because he is considered the architect of Pruitt Igoe, the author of the structure.

But does architectural authorship truly exist? Are any buildings truly the sole creation of a single individual, institution, or entity? The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Code of Ethics and Bylaws states: “It is the nature of contemporary practice to be a collaborative team effort. The more complex the project and/or the more prolonged the design and construction process, the more individuals may lay valid claim to credit for some part of the work.” (National Ethics Council October 16, 2004). But still throughout the world star architects like Zaha Hadid and multinational firms like Gensler receive all of the praise, notoriety, and criticism for the buildings they are associated with.
Architectural authorship becomes convoluted when one really begins to pull apart the terminology. What does it mean to be the architectural author of a structure? Is it the entity that conceptually designs the building, the individual/group that implements the design, or the architect of record? Legally, the architect of record is the author of the structure, despite their role (or lack there of) throughout the design process. The conceptual designer could lay claim that the design is their intellectual property and as such they are the author.

In addition, other disciplines including city and government officials may have inadvertently impacted the designs through rules, laws, and guidelines. All design projects face constraints, but little is known about how these constraints influence design decisions. Understanding these constraints can help to decipher how much of the design is prescribed through rules and regulations.

As public housing is currently in the middle of a fundamental shift in policy and design through the HOPE VI program, the concept of authorship is especially intriguing. HOPE VI’s revolutionary transformation of public housing policy, goals, and implementation required an equally revolutionary design for these ambitious developments (Calthrope 2009). As a design heavy program, HOPE VI provides a unique opportunity to study the relationship between public housing discourse and architecture.

1.2 Thesis Questions

Through understanding the history and current state of public housing in the United States and assessing the role of architecture within the discourse, this thesis
seeks to better understand the design processes working behind the scenes of HOPE VI public housing developments. The design process is defined, for the purpose of this thesis, as the myriad of steps beginning at conceptual/schematic design and ending with the physical implementation of the design into a built work. This thesis will also investigate the influence of New Urbanism and Defensible Space principles on HOPE VI developments. The theorems of New Urbanism and Defensible Space have garnered strong HUD support, and are commonly a catalyst for architects and designers working on HOPE VI projects. The thesis will delve into two case studies, Park DuValle of Louisville Kentucky and City West of Cincinnati Ohio to understand how these developments were created and who had the most influence on the built environment. Architects and housing authorities were interviewed to understand their role in the project and their perceptions of the overall process. The conclusions emerging from this analysis offer answers to the following overarching questions:

1. What relationships existed throughout the design process and how do these relationships affect architectural authorship and the design characteristics of the development?

2. What design constraints are placed on the designers via policy, city, or housing authority guidelines? How much of the design is prescribed through these guidelines?

3. To what extent did New Urbanism and Defensible space play in the physical characteristics of these developments and why?
Most research on the architecture of public housing focuses solely on the finished product, post-occupancy evaluations, and awards and acclaim (Schwartz 2010; Katz 2009; Epp 1998). But little, if any, research has centered on why the projects were designed in a particular fashion. This study focuses on the efforts of key players in the Park DuValle and City West redevelopment; architects Charles Cash, Raymond Grindroz, Murphy Antoine, and Jeff Raser, and housing authority employees Tim Barry and Reema Ruberg. Their testimonials provide a unique insight into the redevelopments of these HOPE VI projects and the overall insight into issues of power and authorship.

1.3 Methodology

This study is an inquiry into better understanding the role of architecture in public housing discourse, as well as shedding light on the complexity of architectural authorship. As HOPE VI models vary greatly and depend upon the localities’ real estate market, geography, social climate, and economy it was pertinent to use a case study methodology. A comparative case study analysis of two HOPE VI developments was chosen to provide first hand evidence that literature and secondary sources could not provide. As public housing discourse focuses minimal attention on the role of architecture and the little information that does exist provides a shallow overview of design typologies, it was imperative to create first hand research. City West, a Cincinnati, Ohio HOPE VI development, and Park DuValle, a Louisville, Kentucky HOPE VI development, were chosen as the case study locations due to the close geographic proximity of the two developments in the American Midwest. The literature review, a historical overview of public housing, the case study research, and the interviews
conducted with key players in the development process will help to better illustrate the true design journey of HOPE VI developments, and the complex relationships that are necessary to rebuild and redesign public housing.

Figure 1: Proximity of City West and Park DuValle. Source: Author.

1.3.1 Primary Sources

A total of seven interviews were conducted with individuals integral in the development processes of City West and Park DuValle. The design firms and housing authorities were contacted in August 2013 via email to confirm their involvement and assistance. The organizations then selected the individuals that were most fundamental in their respective companies. Often interviewees would provide leads to other individuals that they worked with, which contributed to a more expansive interview process. The interviews were conducted, depending on preference, in person, on the phone, or via email between October 11, 2013 and November 26, 2013. Email interviews were followed with a short phone dialogue for clarification purposes. Interview
times varied depending on the interview type and the interviewees time schedule, falling anywhere between thirty minutes and ninety minutes. Email interviews had a two week deadline and the follow up phone calls lasted under thirty minutes. Interviewees represented a range of disciplines and organizations, including architects, housing authorities, and policy organizations. Each case study had interviews from the city’s housing authority and design team. Limitations did occur, as some key persons were not available to be interviewed. As both HOPE VI projects are more than a decade old, retirement and restructuring within the organizations became big hurdles to overcome. Alternative interviewees were chosen in such instances, which resulted in less productive interviews. In general, however, the interviewees were principals of their respective organizations. The interviewees for Louisville’s Park DuValle redevelopment are as follows: Executive Officer for the Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority Tim Barry, Charles Cash of the Louisville Metropolitan Government, and Principal of Urban Design Associates Raymond Gindroz. The interviewees for the City West Cincinnati redevelopment are hence: Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority Chief Operating Officer Reema Ruberg, Principal of Torti Gallas and Partners Lawrence “Murphy” Antoine, and Principal of Glaserworks Jeff Raser.

Figure 2: Graphic detailing interviewees. Source: Author.
All interviewees agreed to be quoted and listed for the purpose of this thesis. The interviews provided the opportunity to understand the role of design and power from a variety of different perspectives.

The interview questions, first and foremost, attempted to unearth the relationships and power hierarchies throughout the architectural progression of the developments. In addition, the interviews tried to delve into the design process undertaken by the architects, and the issues that arose during redevelopment. Interviewees were asked questions about the general process, and societal, economical, and political questions to better understand the complexity of the system. Two questionnaires were used in the interview process; one focused more on policy and general information and another that focused specifically on the design and architecture. The policy questionnaire was given to the housing authority and policy organizations whereas the design questionnaire was given to the architectural firms. Important questions did overlap between questionnaires. Please see the appendix for the interview questions.

The interviewees were also asked to provide images, sketches, and renderings of City West and Park DuValle. The design firms provided a great deal of conceptual work in the form of sketches, plans, and elevations in addition to photographs of the completed projects.

Torti Gallas and Partners provided presentation materials that were used throughout the design process, including presentations made to the housing authority. The Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority provided the Park DuValle pattern book (1998) that was created by Urban Design Associates. The pattern book provided
integral research pertaining to housing types, urban planning, homeownership, and the future growth of the project. In addition, the Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority sent sections of their Park DuValle 1998 redevelopment and revitalization plans, which discussed policy and design directions of the project.

Additional information was taken from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including policy information, guidelines, and general information about HOPE VI. The HUD website (hud.gov) provided an overview and statistical information of many crucial housing policies in the United States, including the HOPE VI model. The Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority provided statistics and general information about their respective cities. The housing authorities provided an overview of each project, as well as demographic and economic information that was pertinent to the redevelopment. Additional statistics were gathered by reviewing the 2010 United States Census.

1.3.2 Secondary Sources

To understand the current state of HOPE VI it was necessary to have an in depth historical overview of public housing in the United States. It was also necessary to look into the progression of HOPE VI, and the design characteristics that now make it the face of public housing. This includes an extensive overview of defensible space and new urbanist principles as these design initiatives are sponsored by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Having a clear definition of HOPE VI and public housing was integral to this thesis. Alex Schwartz text Housing Policy in the
United States (2010) provided a great overview of housing policy for market rate or subsidized housing. The Schwartz book was used as a key text as it provided a historical overview of public housing policy from origination to current day and highlighted the impact of policy changes on public housing. Lawrence Vale’s most recent book, Purging the Poorest (2013), was used as a key text as well because Vale discussed the history of public housing within a design context. His book highlighted the design changes that occurred within redeveloping public housing communities, and related these changes to politics and housing policies. Bruce Katz (2009), Gayle Epp (1998), and Karen Franck (1998) provided more in depth information on HOPE VI and its evolution and purpose; these texts were used alongside the Schwartz and Vale books as supplemental information.

To better understand the role of design, the thesis focused on two different yet overlapping design ideologies supported and promoted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Defensible Space and New Urbanism theories were thoroughly researched to better understand the new directions being taken by HUD and public housing officials, and implemented by architects and designers. To better understand Defensible Space, Oscar Newman’s texts Defensible Space; Crime Prevention Through Urban Design (1973) and Creating Defensible Space (1996) were analyzed. New Urbanism principles were also studied through the lenses of Peter Calthrope and the Charter for the New Urbanism (CNU). The case studies were analyzed through a Defensible Space and New Urbanist perspective to identify if the
case studies utilized these principles and the extent to which the designers attempted to implement these design ideologies.

Newspaper articles were also used as a resource to better understand public opinion and the societal impact of Park DuValle and City West. Online newspapers, the Louisville Courier-Journal and Cincinnati news website (news.cincinnati.com) were used to gather additional information on the case study locations, and as documentation on the ongoing progress and successes of the developments.

1.4 Limitations

This thesis attempts to understand the design process behind HOPE VI developments through a case study methodology. This in itself is a limitation, as the information cannot be considered generalizable for all HOPE VI developments across the country. The comparative analysis consisted of two HOPE VI developments within the same regional area of the Midwest. HOPE VI developments in other areas may not have the same results. The primary research for this thesis was obtained through interviews conducted with designers and housing authority employees. Interviews are by nature subjective, based on the interviewee’s perceptions and bias. Furthermore, because these projects are not recent and rely on human memory, some details have been lost and some recollections may have changed over time.

As both City West and Park DuValle were completed over a decade ago, some research was hard to obtain and some key players were unavailable to be interviewed. Some design imagery and paperwork had since been lost and documents, including
HUD submittals, were unavailable for analysis. Don Troendle, the director of the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority had since retired by the time this thesis was written. This was most unfortunate as he was vital to the redevelopment of Cotter and Laurel Homes. The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority had lost many employees who played a key role in the redevelopment. Reema Ruberg, the only person available at the CMHA who worked on City West, had limited knowledge on the evolution of project. In addition, some firms and individuals were unavailable or unresponsive to interview requests. In particular, it would have been beneficial to speak with integral persons at The Community Builders, as they developed both sites and were found to be integral to the design process. This thesis could have been richer with the addition of more intervieweees.

Finally, little research currently exists on the architecture and design of public housing. It is even more rare to find an article written by an architect or designer on the subject. Most research on HOPE VI focuses on the policy implementation and social ramifications of the program. When architecture is written about, it is usually a small part of the overall topic being discussed.

1.5 Document Overview

Following this chapter, the second chapter provides context for the current state of public housing and the political climate and societal issues that led to policy and design changes throughout the program’s seventy-seven year history. The chapter attempts to unravel how the program has changed from origination to present day and
how the architecture has also changed. A thorough overview of the HOPE VI program will provide a better political understanding of the housing policy, including its goals and limitations. In addition, this chapter attempts to provide an overview of New Urbanism and Defensible space, HUD adopted and supported theorems widely utilized by architects designing HOPE VI public housing developments.

The third and fourth chapters highlight the HOPE VI transformation of severely distressed public housing units in Louisville and Cincinnati. These chapters provide a brief overview of each city and housing authority, as well as an historical context for the former distressed sites of Cotter/Lang Homes and Lincoln Court/Laurel Homes. The chapters will analyze the design processes utilized in the redevelopments via research and the interviews conducted with the housing authorities and architectural firms.

In the concluding chapter, the case studies are analyzed to help better understand the similarities and differences between Cincinnati and Louisville design processes. The role of architecture in public housing discourse will be discussed as well as a reflective look at the design process employed and the relationships formed within the redevelopment.
Chapter 2: Public Housing History and Policy and Design Initiatives

Public housing in the United States has been at the center of controversies, critiques, and political agendas since its origination. The program has been shrouded by stigma for decades, leaving negative imagery in the minds of Americans across the countries. Architectural historian Lawrence Vale states: “most Americans think of public housing as a single, failed program rather than as a succession of many programs, introduced with different rationales, but sharing the same name” (2013). Public housing is a system with a very complex and tumultuous history. It is not simple or stagnant; it is a varied system that is continuously changing and evolving to balance the needs of the very poor and the desires of policy makers. Public housing is currently transitioning from concentrations of very low-income households to mixed-use, mixed-income communities, through the Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere program (HOPE VI). As the program is in the middle of a new reinvention, it is necessary to understand and learn from the programs past.

2.1 Public Housing History

Public housing in the United States began during President Roosevelt’s New Deal reform as part of the National Industrial Recovery Act (Schwartz 2010). The program was created in 1935 as a method to stimulate job creation and economic growth throughout the country following the economic depression of the 1930s. Public housing was not initially created to combat poor housing conditions (Schwartz 2010). Vale, author of Purging the Poorest Public Housing and the Design Politics of Twice-Cleared
Communities (2013), argues that public housing’s seventy-seven year history can be divided into three social experiments based on varying tenant income brackets.

The first stage lasted for approximately twenty-five years, spanning from 1935-1960. This stage like many New Deal programs, targeted the deserving working poor, the submerged middle class, people with middle class ideologies and a lower class income (Vale 2013). Early public housing advocates embraced the ideas of slum clearance and redevelopment for the upwardly mobile, as slums were considered a plague in cities throughout the United States. The tenements and slums were thought to breed disease, crime, and poor morals. Thus the elimination of slum areas was considered a remedy for urban blight and urban ills (von Hoffman 1998). Few of the displaced slum dwellers were invited to come back to the newly renovated communities, which led to the complete replacement of one community for a different more desirable community (Vale 2013). The Public Works Administration (PWA) was originally put in charge of the construction and repair of low-income housing and slum clearance efforts. The newly constructed developments were often built on cleared slum land and on abandoned industrial sites. Originally the Public Works Administration developments were available to all who sought to live there, as no income ceilings had yet been put into place (Vale 2013). The passing of the George-Healey Act in 1936 limited the residents income to five times the fixed rent, requiring that the housing was made available only to families with insufficient income to find housing on the private market (Vale 2013). Despite these new restrictions, the PWA housing priced out most low-income families and the high rent ceilings enabled households that did not require
financial assistance to live there (Vale 2013). Housing advocates were not satisfied with the temporality of the PWA program, which was considered more of an engine for creating employment than proving suitable housing for the low-income Americans across the United States (Von Hoffman 1998).

In 1937, the Wagner-Stegall Housing Act, colloquially known as the Housing Act of 1937, replaced the PWA Housing Division with the United States Housing Authority (Schwartz 2010). Supporters of the Wagner-Stegall Housing Act often had many different rationales and viewpoints that led to conflicting political and moral agendas. Those who viewed public housing fundamentally as a means of slum clearance garnered public support as well as backing from the real estate industry (Vale 2013).

![Image 2: United States Housing Authority and New York Housing Authority promotion of slum clearance efforts and newly constructed housing](http://www.theatlanticCities.com/design/2011/11/public-housing-posters-new-york-city/407/)

This however left the program in a precarious position. Opposition to public housing and conflicts within supporter groups resulted with the passing of a housing act that was a shadow of its former self. Vale states, “the Housing Act of 1937 as eventually passed,
however, survived only as a battered product of compromise" (2013). The Housing Act of 1937 created the United States Housing Administration, which enabled the federal government to provide subsidies to local public housing agencies (PHAs) that rent to low-income households (US Legal 2014). The federal government provided funding, but the local housing authority was responsible for the ownership and operation costs of the developments (Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston 2014). Local government participation was not required by the federal government, which almost assured that public housing would be concentrated in central cities and absent from prosperous areas (Schwartz 2010). Local governments were also free to choose where public housing would be situated in their jurisdictions, which lead to a high degree of racial segregation. Two-thirds of public housing is located in central cities, with the majority being located in impoverished and minority neighborhoods (Schwartz 2010). Much of the turmoil and issues within public housing policy can be related directly back to the original legislation, including design and construction quality, tenant selection requirements, and location (Schwartz 2010).

Early public housing developments built in the 1930s and early 1940s were primarily comprised of low-density attached two and three story walk-up buildings and garden apartments (Franck 1998). The low-rise buildings provided human-scale and allowed residents to see the surrounding exterior, which helped to secure the site and monitor children (von Hoffman 1998). To create housing that physically differed from the tenements, early public housing adopted European modernist styles as the design style signified functionality and cleanliness (von Hoffman 1998). The modernist aesthetic
eventually became the “poster” of public housing architecture (von Hoffman 1998).

These units, in aesthetics and amenities, greatly surpassed the living conditions of the surrounding slum districts (von Hoffman 1998).

Planners and architects attempted to physically separate public housing from the blight of the surrounding “slum” areas, as public housing at the time was seen as a desirable improvement to tenement conditions. The individual buildings often aligned with the public streets, however, the entrances were generally placed facing the interior, again segregating the public housing units from the surrounding community (Franck 1998).

Barriers did not enclose the grounds but separation from the surrounding neighborhood
was encouraged as it was viewed as breaking free of the adjacent slums, this eventually lead to “superblock” layouts that would dominate in the 1950s and 1960s. These planning principles further cemented in the “project” image that the prevailed for decades (von Hoffman 1998). The program’s focus on apartments units further deviated public housing residents from the majority of Americans who were living in single-family housing (von Hoffman 1998). These early design decisions had lasting impacts on public housing architecture and design and the intense stigma surrounding the program.

![Image 4: Aerial View of Laurel Homes, circa 1938.](http://www.flickr.com/photos/21946699@N02/2364522957/)

Few of the very low-income applicants were provided housing in the early public housing developments, in fact the sheer number of applicants allowed the housing authorities the ability to selectively choose their tenants (Vale 2013). This resulted in discrimination based on race, family size, citizenship, and financial stability (Vale 2013). The rigorous selection guidelines originally indicated the worthiness of the family or individual. No stigma was attached to residents because public housing was, at the time, a privilege and not a last resort (Vale 2013). As World War II commenced, much of
the newly constructed housing was sequestered for the war effort. The housing was now sheltering those with incomes many times over the original tenant targets (Vale 2013). This trend lasted for years with the average income of residents in public housing circa 1950 had incomes more than 60% of the median US income. The end of the Second World War brought with it the introduction of Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage and the simultaneous white flight of the American working class to the suburbs (Schwartz 2010). As the working class moved to the cities periphery, the inner cities began to degrade and housing authorities were left with a population that could not meet their selective criteria (Vale 2013).

The continued popularity of suburbia and the social ramifications of the Civil Rights Movement led to what Lawrence Vale called “The Second Experiment: Public Housing as a Welfare Mission”, a period lasting from the early 1960s until the late 1980s (Vale 2013). The passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act, greatly altered the course of public housing, as most public housing developments were highly segregated. The law prohibited housing discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, and gender. Persons who felt discriminated against were allowed to seek retribution (Vale 2013). The strict selection processes could not withstand the pressure from Civil Rights groups and lawsuits brought forth from rejected applicants. These restrictions were eventually relaxed to let in the very low-income across the United States. Vale states, “As the War on Poverty waxed and waned, public housing came to serve as the battlefield hospitals” (2013). To reduce the issues of poverty concentration, housing authorities began to move away from project-based
subsidies, preferring instead to utilize portable housing certificates that subsidized the household within the private housing market, a result of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (Vale 2013). The program, Section 8 Existing Housing, has gone through many changes since its conception to become what is now known as Housing Choice Vouchers (Vale 2013). Despite the growing popularity of Housing Choice Vouchers, city officials still needed to address the many issues surrounding the deteriorating public housing stock plaguing the inner cities across the United States.

Architecture within this second experiment, varied between row house structures and high-rise elevator buildings (Franck 1998). The buildings were positioned at an angle to the street grids and all interior streets were closed. Open space was highly valued during this time period, and the visualization of open space was highly desired. Guidelines suggested by the US Federal Administration of Public Works states: “… not only must a larger percentage of the land remain unoccupied but in addition to this the buildings have to be placed to emphasize this fact (Franck 1998). To achieve this perceived openness, developments were widely spaced and spatial barriers including through roads were discouraged (Franck 1998). They considered these superblocks superior as they lessened noise disturbances, danger, pollution, and allowed ample safe space for children to play (Franck 1998). Urban planner Karen Franck states:

Just as values guide what we believe and what we build, they also allow us to evaluate what has already been built. As these values change, so do our views of what is good or important. The changes in values can be so profound that the buildings, spaces, and programs that were once deemed appropriate may subsequently be derided as misguided, even after only a short period of time (1998).
Encouraging superblock planning initiatives is a clear example how our values and perceptions alter our views on design characteristics.

Image 5: Aerial view of the infamous high-rise public housing development Pruitt Igoe, showcasing the superblock planning as seen from above. (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pruitt-Igoe_1968March03.jpg)

The developments built during this era sought to separate the development from the adjacent neighborhoods, which were seen as blighted. Large superblocks were dominant, despite lacking facilities, services, or support for the community. Author and planner Karen Franck states: “Differences in the form and the arrangement of buildings and the absence of streets and courts did not just symbolize for residents a break from their past lives. It was also believed that the architectural differences would separate
and protect residents from their surroundings” (1998). This idea was flawed however; the separation led to increasing amounts of crime and vandalism within the developments and the surrounding area (Franck 1998). The idea that differing public housing stock architecturally and spatially from the surrounding neighborhoods to protect the developments from urban ills eventually would contribute to it’s downfall (Franck 1998). The units themselves were not distinct; identity and individuality were downplayed to appear cost effective and efficient (Franck 1998). Public housing developments built within this time period were physically similar to one another in site plan, form, materiality, and landscaping (Franck 1998). The uniformity was due in part to strict design guidelines by the federal government and the demands of the housing authorities (Franck 1998). In addition, visual variety within the developments was deterred by the housing authorities and architects who viewed it as aesthetically displeasing and disorganized, standardization and uniformity were preferred (Franck 1998).

Figure 3: Typical building typology of public housing built within the second experiment. Source: Author.

This similarity perpetrated a branding of the sites as “public housing”, which coupled with other issues, eventually led to a strong stigma surrounding the program (Franck 1998). The structures built within this time period have come to personify public
housing. Pruitt Igoe and Cabrini Green have become fixtures in the minds of Americans. Most architectural criticism has revolved around these high Modernist developments situated within large isolated superblocks. 

Throughout the 1980’s public housing developments further fell into disrepair. They were considered a last resort by policymakers and tenants (Vale 2013). The stigma surrounding public housing further plunged the distressed program into bleaker conditions; those who could leave did, resulting in dangerous poverty concentration. This worsened in 1984 as HUD forbid tenancy to any households earning above 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) in all developments built after 1981 (Vale 2013). In 1987, Congress began favoring the acceptance of severely disadvantaged groups, such as the homeless, mentally ill, the physically disabled, and very low-income households paying more than 50% of their income on housing (Vale 2013). By the end of the 1980’s policymakers, academics, and politicians began to realize that favoring the severely disadvantaged had led to severe poverty concentration in inner cities across the United States (Vale 2013). Due to it’s poor reputation, many judges stopped evicting tenants for “bad” behavior. Tenants and their families had no place else to go and attorneys were eager to take on the cases. Disruptive behavior within the developments increased as management began to worsen, and residents began to loose all control of the developments beyond their own apartments (Vale 2013). The second experiment is almost universally considered a failure.
2.2 The HOPE VI Program

The third and current experiment sought to regain public housing for the deserving poor through the Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere Program, also known as HOPE VI (Vale 2013). The neighborhoods with the highest crime rates and poverty often contained federal public housing developments (Katz 2009). The continuously worsening conditions came to a head in the late 1980s and policy makers and politicians began to discuss possible remedies for the insurmountable issues taking place in the inner cities (Katz 2009). In 1989 Congress created the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (NCSDPH). The NCSDPH was created to study the factors that contribute to distress and to identify strategies that could possibly correct these defects (Schwartz 2010). To identify severely distressed housing, the committee visited developments in twenty-five cities across the United States, held public hearings, and conducted interviews. They analyzed the developments based on the number of tenants living in “distress”, the amount of crime, the role of management, and the physical condition of the units (Katz 2009). The NCSDPH concluded that of the 1.3 million public housing units in the United States, 6% or 86,000 units were considered by their definition “severely distressed” (Katz 2009). The most severely distressed developments were defined as such based on the following conditions: the amount of residents requiring high levels of social and support services, physically deteriorating buildings, and economically and socially poor surrounding communities. Based on the information and recommendations of the NCSDPH, in 1992 Congress approved and enacted the Urban Revitalization
Demonstration (URD) as a part of the HOPE (then the Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere) program (Vale 2013). The goals of HOPE VI are as follows: to demolish and redevelop distressed public housing developments, to replace demolished buildings with small-scale housing that is more economically and socially integrated, to promote self-sufficiency through appropriate support services, to re-house non-returning residents via vouchers, and to work with non-profits and private organizations (Katz 2009).

By allowing private companies to own public housing, HOPE VI developments were able to rely on private funding and Low Income Housing Tax Credits (Vale, 2013). As high-rise, high-density structures have fallen out of favor, Former Secretary of
Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros got Congress to eliminate the one-for-one rule that had required replacement of any demolished units, instead favoring the use of housing vouchers (Vale 2013). The goals of the program eventually broadened to include poverty deconcentration, New Urbanism, and revitalization of entire neighborhoods (Schwartz 2010). 80% of HOPE VI funds are allocated toward physical development improvements and the other 20% go towards community programs, support services, and job training (Epp 1998). The focus of HOPE VI has shifted since its origins:

In a very short time, the primary focus of the HOPE VI program moved from a concern about the isolation of families to a concern about the isolation of housing authorities [from the marketplace]; from a government housing program targeting poor people to a market-driven, mixed-income housing program for the deserving poor and even the well-to-do; and from a modest attempt to cure the ills within the projects to an ambitious plan to revitalize urban communities (Vale 2013, 24).

Many of these changes occurred without new regulations, relying instead on specific grant agreements and funding availabilities. This resulted in a lot of variety between developments across the country. Variation occurs as a result of the housing authority, the local housing market, the role and power of tenant associations, neighborhood activism, city politics, and the city’s relationship and history with public housing (Vale, 2013).

The developments were to utilize quality design practices to increase the resident’s quality of life, to draw in investment, and to create a sustainable income mix (Katz 2009). To complete this goal of quality design, HUD became a “founding signatory” to the Charter for the New Urbanism (CNU) and worked with the leaders of
New Urbanism to create the HOPE VI developments (Katz 2009). The concept of New Urbanism and the influence of the CNU will be explained in greater detail in the following sections. By the late 1990s, HOPE VI had not only revitalized the most desperate public housing projects but also altered the entire public housing program (Katz 2009).

The architecture in the third experiment differed drastically from the previous decades. Architects and planners recognized the failures of the first two experiments and attempted to rectify the situation by completely overhauling the current system. The architecture within this period was and is characterized by low-rise buildings, privacy, and enclosed yards and grounds. The desire for openness and universality that dominated the previous era were rejected and replaced with concepts of definition and particularity (Franck 1998). Individuality was emphasized: units now had private entrances, private yards, and shared facilities had defined uses. The shift in focus was an attempt to reinstitute territoriality and personal ownership over spaces to reduce the rampant crime within public housing developments (Franck 1998). New Urbanism and Defensible Space Principles have shaped the aesthetics of the physical characteristics of HOPE VI developments. Planners reinstituted the street grid and fronted apartment entrances to integrate the development within the existing urban fabric. The physical and symbolic separation from the surrounding neighborhoods is now viewed as flawed and problematic as the layout actually contributed to crime and delinquency within the development and adjacent areas (Franck 1998). Planners and architects now view community connections as vital to the success of HOPE VI facilities. The superblocks,
which before served as protection from blight, were now seen as exacerbating delinquent behaviors and adverse conditions. HOPE VI developments are integrated into the neighborhood, through vernacular architecture and site design that blend into the existing neighborhood context (Franck 1998). Designers must now consider the local vernacular housing stock, the history of the project, the current and future tenants, and the neighborhood culture (Franck 1998). The variation allows designers respond to the individual conditions of the locality while also fighting the stigma associated with the public housing image (Franck 1998). Variety is also seen and valued within the development, as units are now differentiated to portray individuality and a sense of ownership (Franck 1998).


Critics of HOPE VI have often cited displacement as one of the main failures of the program. Like the first experiment, HOPE VI caters to the worthy working poor and
not the very-low income. The rampant displacement of the slum dwellers in the 1930s-1950s mirrors the displacement of the public housing residents in the 1990’s onward (Vale 2013). The percentage of returning residents has fallen as the program has progressed from estimates of 61% in 1999 to 44% in 2003 with numbers as low as 11.4% in some developments (Vale 2013). In addition, housing authorities have been permitted to allow preference to residents receiving their income from employment (Vale 2013). Those who do not work, with the exception of the elderly and disabled, are required to fulfill community service and self-sufficiency requirements (Vale 2013). These requirements can be seen as an attempt to restore the strict tenant criteria of the first experiment.

2.3 New Urbanism

HOPE VI and New Urbanism emerged around the same time. HOPE VI’s economic and social goals required buildings dramatically different than the past models. New Urbanism’s vernacular aesthetic enticed HUD officials, so much so that HUD requested the help of the New Urbanists to transform the image and preconceptions of public housing and other federal housing programs (Calthrope 2009). Peter Calthrope, one of the forefathers of the New Urbanism movement, claims that New Urbanism is “an alternative to the flawed design theories that had shaped architecture and urban design worldwide in the post-World War II era” (2009). Calthrope is speaking of the International Style, a style that brought forth large, stark, high-rise superblock structures (2009). Modern architecture supported standardization, mass production, and segregation, much of which was based off of Le Corbusier’s *La ville*
The Radiant City was a concept developed by Le Corbusier to solve the slum problems and other housing issues by building upwards. Calthrope argues that these large developments destroyed walkability and human scale, limited social and economic opportunities, and stigmatized public housing complexes and their inhabitants (2009).

New Urbanism sought to incorporate what the Modernists took away: walkability, human scale, mixed-use neighborhoods, vernacular housing designs, low-rise structures, and the diversity of a traditional neighborhood (Calthrope 2009). New Urbanism attempts to weave together the building, the neighborhood, and the street fabric to create holistic environments (Calthrope 2009). Calthrope states that New Urbanism principles helped to define the HOPE VI design program, such as diversity (housing types, mixed-income, mixed use), human scale (architectural details, walkability, and defensible space), restoration, and continuity (of street network, public space, etc) (Calthrope 2009). New Urbanism also hope to preserve the culture and history of the community and neighborhood. Calthrope states: “By tapping the architectural history of place, New Urbanism could develop an architecture that related to what was unique about the place – its building materials, climate, and traditions” (2009). Calthrope believes that the relationship between HOPE VI and New Urbanism has been essential to restoring public housing and has been integral to the success of the program (2009).
2.4 Defensible Space

Architect and planner Oscar Newman’s theorem of “defensible space” has also been very influential in public housing design and the design of HOPE VI communities. In fact, Defensible Space is often considered a part of the New Urbanist ideology. HUD commissioned Oscar Newman to analyze public housing developments to understand the physical characteristics contributing to crime and vandalism. The overarching concept of defensible space is the ability to alter the physical layout of the community to facilitate resident control (Newman 1996). This requires societal, psychological, and physical components working together as a whole to inspire change. The theory implies that resident control and territoriality isolates criminals from the neighborhood, which alters the risk/benefit of committing a crime in the area. In the text *Creating Defensible Space* (1996), Newman creates a comparative case study analysis of two St. Louis low-income housing complexes, the high-rise development Pruitt Igoe and a low-rise apartment complex Carr Square (1996). Based on his observations of the two developments, Newman states that the amount of crime correlated to the number of families using the facilities, like entrances, landings, or circulation areas. If fewer people use the space then the users recognize one another and can spot an intruder (1996). Newman claims:

The physical factors that correlate most strongly with crime rates are in order of importance: the height of the buildings, which in turn correlates highly with the number if apartments sharing the entry to a building; the size of the housing project or “the total number of dwelling units in the project”; and the number of other publically assisted housing projects in the area (1996, 24).
He also claims that territoriality and upkeep are related to the number of people occupying a public space. If a small group of people or just a single household are responsible for an area it is more likely to be taken care of, and the residents are more likely to spot intruders (Newman 1996). Newman states that these principles can be applied to public streets as well; he claims that residents can consider the public streets as an extension of their territory and lay claim to it (Newman 1996). Newman’s theory of defensible space has been very influential in public housing design and many of the recommendations made by Newman have been utilized in New Urbanism.

2.5 Summary

Public housing, despite it’s many struggles, is still the most durable low-income housing program in the United States (Schwartz 2010). To summarize, the program’s long history can be divided into three distinct experiments based on different socioeconomic proclivities (Vale 2013). The first experiment, lasting from 1935-1960, focused on slum clearance and targeted the worthy working poor. The architecture of the first experiment is comprised of low-rise two and three story walk-up apartment buildings, with interior entrances (Franck 1998). This experiment was followed by a severe concentration of poverty as public housing sought to serve very low-income households (Vale 2013). Large superblock layouts, stark modernist high-rises and row houses dominated the landscape. The second experiment, spanning from 1960-1990, created a longstanding stigma and is almost unanimously considered a failure. The third and current experiment again shifted public housing occupancy to the “least poor among the poor” through the HOPE VI program (Vale 2013). The architecture of HOPE
VI is primarily driven by New Urbansim in an attempt to reinvigorate public housing and to reduce the stigma associated with the program. As the following chapters will illustrate, public housing in Cincinnati and Louisville followed a similar trajectory to other facilities across the country.
Chapter 3: City West, Cincinnati

Ohio’s third largest city, Cincinnati, has a metropolitan population of 2,214,954 residents making it the 25th largest city in the United States. Cincinnati is a border state, the city is separated from Kentucky by the Ohio River to the South and borders Indiana to the west.

The Midwestern town is 79.54 square miles that is spread over hills and low ridges. The city is famous for it’s Oktoberfest, Skyline Chili, as the home to one of the world’s largest collection of Italianate architecture. Sports fans know Cincinnati as home to the Cincinnati Bengals football team and the Cincinnati Reds baseball league.

Image 8: Map of Cincinnati and City West. Source: Google Maps.
3.1 Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority Overview

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority has sought to provide low-income families quality and affordable housing options since it was created in 1933 as a part of the Ohio Housing Authority Law. The CMHA operates three separate programs: asset management, Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), and diversified affordable housing. The asset management program is comprised of 4,800 units of project-based public housing. The city owns, manages, and maintains these properties. HCV is provides private landlords subsidies to offset the gap between market rent and tenant income; the CMHA currently has 11,200 HCV units under their jurisdiction. The final type is diversified public housing that involves mixed-income communities and public private partnerships, including City West. The Housing Choice Voucher program and the Asset Management units house families, the elderly, and people with disabilities (CMHA 2014).

The CMHA is the only public housing authority in Hamilton County, serving over 40,000 people and controlling over 17,000 units. It is the 17th largest PHA in the United States to date. The housing authority is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; however, operating costs are derived from other federal funds, tenant rent, and other sources of income. The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority has consistently been considered a high performing agency by HUD and continues to grow and improve with each passing year (CMHA 2014).
3.2 History of Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes

The HOPE VI development City West was formerly comprised of two separate public housing developments, Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes, which covered 46 acres of land in Cincinnati’s West End (Sweeney 2003). Both were New Deal urban renewal efforts to eliminate slum conditions and to improve housing for low-income areas in the West End (Works Project Administration 1943). Initially Cincinnati had hoped to build three separate developments, two for white low-income households and one for black low-income residents, however, due to limited the redevelopment was scaled back (Cincinnati Museums 2014). Laurel Homes began construction on 1936 and was opened in 1938. It was the second largest Public Works Administration public housing project as well as the second oldest public housing development in the United States ("National Register Historic Districts" 2014). Laurel Homes contained twenty-five low-rise three and four story brick apartment buildings and four subsidiary buildings, which contained 951 apartment units for low-income households ("National Register Historic Districts" 2014). Lincoln Court was built four years later in 1942 south of the Laurel Homes development. This adjacent development housed fifty-three buildings, contained 886 apartment units (Sweeney 2003).

Both developments offered amenities to residents. Lincoln Court also contained a church and community building that housed an auditorium/gym and an area for social gatherings (Works Project Administration 1943). Laurel Homes provided social services to residents, including children’s craft shops and dances, prenatal classes for expecting mothers, cooking classes, two kindergartens, two nursery schools, and a better-buying
course (Works Project Administration 1943). When it opened, apartments were of five different sizes, and rents were calculated based on the floor level, size, and view of the unit. In 1943, two room apartments ranged from $12.50-$20.50 per month, the cost for each additional room added $2.00 to the rent scale (Works Project Administration 1943). Applicants for both developments were eligible based on the following criteria: applicants must be citizens of the Untied States, they must have lived in Cincinnati for at least one year, they must live in “substandard homes” at the time of application, and must not exceed the income limits (Works Project Administration 1943). Applicant’s incomes could not exceed the following to be accepted into public housing: 2 persons $1,000 per year, 3 persons $1,200 per year, 4 persons $1,350 per year, 5 persons $1,500 per year, 6-7 persons $1,650 per year (Works Project Administration 1943).

Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes were typical of the public housing units built in the 1930s (Sweeney 2003). The buildings were three and four story walk-ups of monotonous brick architecture, with shared stairwells and common entrances (Sweeney 2013). The city cut off the streets from the site and a strong perimeter around the developments creating a superblock layout that cloistered public housing residents from the surrounding areas of the West End (Raser 2013). The developments lacked walkability, and police cars, ambulances, fire trucks, and others could not easily navigate through the site. This led to the creation of indefensible spaces or spaces that lacked all sense of ownership (Raser 2013). Crime and delinquency was rampant throughout the site, architect Jeff Raser stated: “We like to believe that police keep the crime down but they really don’t. An active, well-informed street population walking and
driving up and down streets; that is what keeps crime down and the previous Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes were the antithesis of this concept” (2014).

Image 9 and 10: The left image shows the open space of the former Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court. The right image shows the original street grid of the area. Images courtesy of Torti Gallas and Partners

At the time the West End of Cincinnati had a large African American population. The construction of Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court destroyed over 750 buildings owned mainly by black residents of the West End (Stradling 2003). As Cincinnati was highly segregated at the time so too was public housing, Laurel Homes was a white-only development and Lincoln Court was designated for black residents (Stradling 2003). While Laurel Homes was initially intended as a white only development, the primarily black neighborhood of the West End discouraged white households from residing in the
area. This eventually forced the housing authority to shift the tenancy to a black occupancy housing project (Stradling 2003).

Cincinnati’s 1948 Master Plan continued to concentrate black families within the West End, which lead to even more segregation as the remaining white households fled the neighborhood (Stradling 2003). Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes soon began following the same trajectory as other public housing developments across the country as the effects of concentrated poverty and a poor economy began to take its toll. By the 1970’s the retail industry pulled out of the area and the middle class African American population began its exodus from the West End (Sweeney 2003). By the 1990s, the
West End had become a “high-crime” neighborhood, with a lack of resources, and an engrained stigma in the mind of Cincinnatians.

3.3 The Redevelopment

Redevelopment has been long coming for Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes. As Laurel Homes was one of the first PWA public housing projects in the country, the Laurel Homes Resident Council fought to place the development on the National Register of Historic Places (Sweeney 2003). The effort was successful. Laurel Homes was officially registered as a historic landmark on May 19, 1987 (City of Cincinnati 2014). Despite it’s historic fabric, Laurel Homes was beginning to fall apart. The development was built on a former swampland filled in by bricks, and the structure was beginning to fail causing many maintenance issues (Sweeney 2003). In 1998 the CMHA rehabilitated four buildings within the Laurel Homes development because of its historic significance (Ruberg 2013). This attempt at historic preservation was extremely expensive, and the CMHA later determined that that rehabilitation was not possible for the rest of the site. In order to demolish and rebuild on the site the CMHA had to request the removal of Laurel Homes from the Historic Preservation Register (Sweeney 2003). The historic designation given to the site complicated the HOPE VI redevelopment process, as designers had to work around the rehabilitated A-D buildings (Antoine 2013).

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority applied for separate HOPE VI grants for Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court (Ruberg 2013). The CMHA sent in both HOPE VI proposals to HUD with a schematic design concept completed by Boston
The housing authority sent in a proposal to redevelopment Lincoln Court through HOPE VI in 1997, that application was initially rejected because it did not have a drastic redevelopment plan. In 1998 CMHA reapplied for HOPE VI funding, this time proposing a complete demolition and restructuring of the development to create a mixed income community (Sweeney 2003). This application caused a lot of controversy with the Lincoln Court Residents Council and the City of Cincinnati, but was eventually submitted (Sweeney 2003). The HOPE VI funding was allocated to Lincoln Court in August of 1998. CMHA applied and received HOPE VI funding for Laurel Homes in 1999 (Sweeney 2003). Funding for Laurel Homes was projected to be $93 million, $35 million from HOPE VI funding, $9 million from the City of Cincinnati, and the rest from LIHTC and private partnerships (Sweeney 2003).

3.3.1 The Players

Many different players worked on the physical redevelopment of Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes. The interviews provided an in depth look into the design processes and the relationships that were involved in creating the City West development. Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes originally planned to be designed and redeveloped as separate entities. As such, the CMHA commissioned different developers and designers for Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes. In June 1999, the CMHA choose The Community Builders (TCB) based in Boston as the developers for Lincoln Court. TCB have worked on multiple HOPE VI projects, including Park DuValle, and were hired to develop and manage Lincoln Court. TCB then hired Stull and Lee of Boston to do the Master Plan for
the Lincoln Court site and hired Cincinnati firm Glaserworks to assist Stull and Lee with the master plan, conceptual development, and implementation (Raser 2013). As previously stated, Stull and Lee submitted the conceptual development for the HUD HOPE VI grants for both Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes. Despite Stull and Lee’s early involvement, the schematic designs they created had little bearing on the final design. Raser stated, “Stull and Lee did the early design work for the HUD proposal but it was very, very rudimentary. The design that got built does not look like the stuff that was submitted to HUD to get the HOPE VI dollars” (2013). Stull and Lee unfortunately failed to produce after being hired as the master planner and fell by the wayside. TCB gave the responsibility of the Lincoln Court master plan and architectural character to Glaserworks (Raser 2013). Raser stated:

Stull and Lee were supposed to do the master plan and do preliminary design work for Lincoln Court but they failed at their job. They produced some maps, but not much, and the schematic designs were very simplistic. If I recall correctly they only had completed one streetscape of the buildings and four elevations for the entire development. They were failing to produce and finally The Community Builders said take this ball and run with it because we are behind schedule (2013).

The CMHA hired Columbus based developer Concorde Capital/Midcity to develop Laurel Homes in November of 1999. Concorde Capital/Midcity then hired Torti Gallas and Partners to do the master plan and architectural design for Laurel Homes (Raser 2013). Unfortunately, Concorde Capital/Midcity was fired as the developer by the CMHA because the firm failed to meet deadlines and “live up to its contract” (Raser 2013). A political fight began between Concorde board member and former Mayor Dwight Tillery and former CMHA director Donald Troendle (Malaska January 19, 2011).
The City Council delayed the project until the issue could be resolved. It was restarted in 2000 when TCB won the bid to develop Laurel Homes, making TCB the developer for both Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes (Malaska January 19, 2011). The residents at Laurel Homes insisted that Torti Gallas and Partners were involved when a new developer (TCB) was chosen (Antoine 2013). The strong community support assured that Torti Gallas and Partners would remain the master planner and primary architect for Laurel Homes (Antoine 2013). Glaserwork worked under Torti Gallas to assist the design initiatives for Laurel Homes as well (Raser 2013). Glaserwork became the architect of record for both Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes. Local firm Vivian Llambi and Associates were brought on to design and implement the landscape architecture of City West.

The homeownership component was separate from the redevelopment of Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes. Torti Gallas and Glaserworks had no input in the design or control over the homeownership units. The Community Builders built the first group of homeownership buildings themselves (Raser 2013). All of these homes were the same unit type and the housing lacked architectural style diversity (Raser 2013). In addition, the construction quality was poor and the units needed hefty repair work before they could be sold (Raser 2013). The Drees Company, a large production homebuilder was eventually brought on to develop the homeownership units. The homeownership unit build by The Drees Company had more architectural variety but were still completed independently from the design firms (Raser 2013).
3.3.2 The Interviewees

Three key players in the redevelopment of Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes were interviewed to better understand the design process. The key players interviewed for City West are as follows: architect and principal of Torti Gallas and Partners Lawrence...
“Murphy” Antoine, principal architect of Glaserworks Jeff Raser, and former deputy executive director and chief operating officer of the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority Reema Ruberg.

Reema Ruberg has been Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance for the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority since 2002. Reema Ruberg was also the CMHA’s Acting Executive Director in 2012 before the hiring of Gregory Johnson as Executive Director. Ruberg worked hand in hand with the CMHA during the HOPE VI process, along with Don Troendle (former Executive Director of the CMHA) and Jackie Davis (HOPE VI Coordinator for the CMHA) (Ruberg 2013).

Lawrence Antoine is the Project Manager and current principal of Torti Gallas and Partners, a residential planning and architecture firm committed to New Urbanist principles that acted as master planner and design architect for Laurel Homes, the northern half of City West (Antoine 2013). Torti Gallas has a long history with HOPE VI projects. The firm has acted as the planner/architect on fourteen HOPE VI grant applications and nine public housing developments across the country (Torti Gallas 2014). Antoine is the elected chair of the New Urbanism Division of the American Planning Association and leads the Low Density Neighborhoods Studio for Torti Gallas and Partners. He has spoke on behalf of New Urbanism and the work of Torti Gallas and Partners and numerous conferences, including a panel discussion on ‘The Architecture of HOPE VI’ at the 10th Anniversary for the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) (Torti Gallas 2014).
Jeff Raser is a principal at Glaserworks, a Cincinnati based architecture and urban design firm (Raser 2013). Raser specializes in mixed-use architecture, urban design projects, and walkable neighborhoods. He considers himself “a passionate advocate of compact pedestrian oriented design and the efficient, wise use of land throughout the Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana region” (Glaserworks 2014). Raser is also the chair of the Cincinnati Form Based Code Initiative. Form-Based Codes are attempting to merge zoning and subdivision regulations to better develop mixed use, walkable neighborhoods. Raser is a vocal New Urbanist and a member of the Congress for a New Urbanism (Glaserworks 2014).

When Ruberg, Antoine, and Raser were asked whom they considered the key players for the redevelopment in addition to themselves, all three stated that former Executive Director of the CMHA Don Troendle was integral to the process. All groups also listed the importance of the design teams and the housing authority. Both Antoine and Raser claimed that the Community Builders also played a key role in the redevelopment. Ruberg claimed that the designers working for the CMHA also played a role.

3.3.3 The Process

Throughout the redevelopment of City West, the design teams gathered with the other key players to discuss and present their ideas for the site. During the Torti Gallas design charrette, the architect and master plan were revised the conceptual designs continuously every day or every other day over a two-week period (Antoine 2013).
Housing authority officials, city officials, and designers worked together to create an overarching design for City West.

Image 12, 13, 14: Laurel Homes master plan iterations throughout two week design charrette. Images courtesy of Torti Gallas and Partners.

Then when the architectural designs got underway after the conceptual sketch work they had a schematic review, a design development review, and multiple construction document reviews that occurred monthly. They firms would gather together and present their work to update the other stakeholders and to receive input. Often there would be separate approval tracks and requirements for each different discipline (Antoine 2013). These approvals required a combination of presentations, public meetings, and in-house reviews (Antoine 2013). The city established an early warning team, comprised of one person from all of the major participants, including the city, zoning commission, developers, engineers and architects (Raser 2013). The design teams would present plans conceptual designs and would be required to make alterations based on the feedback from these meetings.
The designers of City West faced numerous hurdles. One of the major policy issues that affected the redevelopment was the historic preservation designation of Laurel Homes and the subsequent rehabilitation of the A-D buildings (Antoine 2013). As previously mentioned the CMHA redeveloped a section of Laurel Homes before removing the project from the Historic Preservation Register. This left a section of the previous development and the architecture and location of those buildings untouchable to Torti Gallas and Glaserworks. The rehabilitated buildings hindered the redevelopment of Laurel Homes and stood out from the renovated site.

Image 15: Conceptual plan of Laurel Homes highlighting the rehabilitated A-D buildings incorporated into the design. Image courtesy of Torti Gallas and Partners, edited by author.

Economic factors were a hindrance for the designers as well. Antoine states “In HOPE VI and mixed-finance work they are generally tied to the constraints and
expenditure caps dictated by the HUD and State-administered Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding sources. These caps are usually referred to as Total Development Costs (TDC’s) and Hard Construction Costs (HCC’s)” (2013). Antoine goes on to state that these factors influence many design considerations, including but not limited to housing types, structural systems, skin and level of finish (2013). In addition, the dreaded effects of value engineering, a term used to describe the method of improving and examining the ratio of function to cost, lessened the quality of materials and finish which negatively affected the aesthetics of the project (Raser 2013).

Zoning and subdivision regulations created a great deal of problems for the architects, specifically for Glaserworks who are the architect of record for all of City West. Raser states:

Cincinnati’s subdivision regulations flew in the face of almost everything we wanted to do. In my entire presentation on City West, about 80% of the design that we wanted implement was considered illegal from a planning perspective and was not allowed by the city. No good urban street that we have in the City of Cincinnati today could be built under these subdivision regulations. For whatever the reason the powers at be did not want this to be a community (2013).

The subdivision regulations were and are very suburban, requiring very wide streets, banning alley ways, and other characteristics required for a walkable urban neighborhood. The firm had to fight with the city, the planning office, the zoning commission, the utilities and sewer companies, to create a New Urbanist community in the Cincinnati West End.
Image 16: Conceptual sketch of interior road dimensions. Image courtesy of Glaserworks.
Glaserworks, with the backing of The Community Builders and the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority, fought for massive zoning changes for the West End neighborhood. They had to create extensive zoning maps and a plethora of meetings with different stakeholders to navigate through and alter the subdivision regulations. To institute alleyways, a necessity in the minds of the designers for public safety, proved to be especially onerous. The word “alley” does not even exist in the City of Cincinnati’s subdivision regulations, and the zoning code explicitly forbids it. The firm had to get approval from the director of planning personally to create alleyways for the City West development. It took Glaserworks over one year to negotiate the subdivision regulations (Raser 2013).

3.3.4 The Design

City West was an early HOPE VI project, as such, the firm could not utilize HOPE VI precedent studies. However, as New Urbanism was very much alive at the time and well supported by HUD, the firms drew a great deal of their work from New Urbanist principals and projects (Raser 2013). Glaserworks completed a great deal of research on form-based codes and New Urbanism principles and neighborhoods (Raser 2013). Raser studied CNU principles, Center for Livable Communities Guidelines and New Urbanism planning case studies, including the New Urbanist Town Seaside, Florida, to create a guide book called *New Urbanism and Livable Communities: data base excerpts from resources*. 

Raser continues to use the research he collected to further the form-based-code initiative (2013). Torti Gallas and Partners referenced and borrowed from previous New Urbanist housing developments they had completed.

“City West needed to emulate the traditional best neighborhoods of the West End”, stated Torti Gallas principal Murphy Antoine (2013). The firms studied the Cincinnati vernacular, specifically the surrounding West Ends neighborhoods, and took cues from the traditional fabric of Cincinnati’s historic Bankers Row on Dayton Street (Antoine 2013). The housing authority was adamant that the architecture, landscaping, and urban design not look institutional and continuously told the designers to create an urban “neighborhood” (Raser 2013). As the designers had to stray far from an institutionalized environment, they choose to work in the opposite direction, residential
(Raser 2013). The master plan divides the former superblock site into a gridded pattern of city blocks to reconnect the housing to the West End and Downtown Cincinnati (Torti Gallas 2014). The existing street grid and urban fabric in the West End provided inspiration to the design teams as it illustrates defensible space techniques like eyes-on-the-street, pedestrian circulation, and controlled movement of motor vehicles (Antoine 2013).

Image 18: Image of renovated Laurel Homes site plan. Photo courtesy of Torti Gallas and partners.

As the housing was placed on a former superblock site, there was no context for the designs to work from (Raser 2013). Raser states: “So we were throwing off 60 years of
stigma, we had to create our own context, and we had to avoid any whiff of institutionalization…” (2013).

Both Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court were based on the local vernacular architecture. The firms followed the principles of New Urbanism, which state that architecture and landscape should grow from the local history, geography, and culture of the area (CNU 2014). The urban design concept is of a row house/duplex community, similar to other parts of the West End and to the adjacent Over the Rhine neighborhood (Antoine 2013). The buildings were designed as low-rise units to provide human scale, walkability, and connectivity with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Image 19: Roof detailing of buildings of the Over the Rhine neighborhood in Cincinnati, OH. Source (http://www.cincy.com/files/images/neighborhoods/over_the_rhine/headers/overtherhine_feature000.jpg)

Image 20: Preliminary conceptual rendering for the Lincoln Court apartments. Images courtesy of Glaserworks.
The architecture is neo-traditional, styles seen throughout the downtown of Cincinnati. These architectural influences were maintained throughout the entire development. Glaserworks decided to implement stronger Germanic roots into the architecture of Lincoln Court whereas Torti Gallas designed structures with more Italianate influences (Raser 2013). The architects also wanted to the facades to speak to the interiors so each façade is a unit and each door is used for one household.

Image 21: Preliminary conceptual drawing for units in Laurel Homes. Images courtesy of Torti Gallas and Partners.

This approach maintains the concept of a neighborhood where families have their own front door, home, and yards, the plan avoids arranging large families in stacked units. They designers hoped that giving everyone their own front door would increase the feelings of ownership, and therefore create defensible spaces.

As the once separate developments were being redeveloped contiguously it was imperative that the developer and both groups of designer worked together to create a
cohesive environment for City West. As the developments were more or less designed by different firms, the architecture does differ between Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court.

Image 22 & 23 : (Top) Finished units for the former Lincoln Court. (Bottom) Finished Units at the former Laurel Homes. Images courtesy of Torti Gallas and Partners. Source: [http://www.citywestohio.com/gallery/](http://www.citywestohio.com/gallery/)
Because the Lincoln Court redevelopment was underway before Laurel Homes, Torti Gallas choose to build off of work completed for Lincoln Court to create a unified development. Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes also had different programmatic requirements. Laurel Homes had fewer units and more acres to develop whereas Lincoln Court had more units and fewer acres.

When asked if they would change anything about the design of the development, both Raser and Antoine said yes. Both disliked the lack of control they had over the homeownership units (2013). Both Raser and Antoine felt that the homeownership units took away from the aesthetics of the surrounding apartment, as they did not follow the same vernacular design style as the rest of the development (2013). They claimed that the unvarying architecture of the homeownership units negatively affected the design of the entire development. Raser in particular felt that The Drees Company, as one of the largest production homebuilders in the country, should not have been hired to design the homeownership units of City West. The designers also felt that some of the design quality was lost through value engineering, as a lot of detail got lost through the process (Raser 2013; Antoine 2013). According to the architects, the designs could have been better had they been able to afford more detailing, and higher quality materials (Raser 2013). Raser also stated that the street widths for the perimeter streets, Court Street in particular, should have been narrowed, as it does not does not encourage residential behaviors, like cautious driving (2013). Court Street also divided City West from a neighborhood park. Narrowing the street, Raser said, could have provided more safety (2013).
Overall, both designers felt that the revitalization of Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes was successful. They measured the success of the project based on its positive impact on the lives of the residents. Both also considered the project “architecturally successful” as they created a neighborhood out of a project. Raser and Antoine felt that the design of the structures was successful because they gave everyone their own front door and a feeling of ownership over something, which was according to the design team, was difficult to accomplish. Antoine stated, “I would consider this a very successful project in its impact on transforming and revitalizing the West End of Cincinnati, and as a model of design excellence for other neighborhood scale, urban revitalizations. I think that the success of the homeownership components and of the project phasing is an opening and ongoing question” (2013).

3.3.5 Power Play

Raser, Antoine, and Ruberg were asked which group or individual had the most power throughout the redevelopment. While all three interviewees claimed that it was a highly collaborative effort, Raser and Ruberg both claimed that Donald Troendle, former executive director of the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority, was the individual with the most power over the development. Ruberg stated, “He had a vision and he and his team made a major impact. He really was the person behind the scenes working with both sides the TCB and the other staff to steer the direction of this HOPE VI development” (2013). The Community Builders also were listed as having a great deal of power over City West, as they worked a great deal with the city, housing authority, and the designers. They often acted as a liaison between the different groups and were
in charge of developing and marketing the project. The City of Cincinnati played a large role in the redevelopment, especially Cincinnati Planning and Public Works. The design firms Torti Gallas and Glaserworks were considered to have moderate power over the redevelopment. The homebuilders, Drees Company were considered to have some power over the development. Stull and Lee and Concorde/Capital Midcity were considered to have little or no power over the redevelopment.

Figure 5: Visual description of the power over the redevelopment of City West. The closer to the center, the stronger the control over the redevelopment. Source: Author.
Raser, Antoine, and Ruberg were then asked which individual or group had the most power over the aesthetics of City West. Unsurprisingly, Torti Gallas and Glaserworks were considered to have the most power over the aesthetics of the Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes redevelopment. The interviewees also considered the developer, TCB, as a powerful player in the physical redevelopment as TCB were the developers and marketers of City West and worked closely with the design teams from conceptual development until completion. TCB was also in charge of hiring Glaserworks and The Drees Company, which indirectly affected the design outcomes. The Drees Company was seen as a powerful entity as well, due to their role as the homebuilder and designer of the homeownership units. Despite the negative feedback on the aesthetics and quality of the homeownership units, The Drees Company played an undeniable role in the physical characteristics of City West. CMHA was considered important as well, due to the influence of Don Troendle. The CMHA also fought alongside the designers against city laws and zoning ordinances that threatened the design integrity of the development. Raser states “The CMHA backed us up. We would not have been able to go to war with the city without their support. From that perspective they influenced the design quite a bit” (2013). The City of Cincinnati, specifically Cincinnati Planning and Public Works, worked alongside, and sometimes against, the designers through subdivision regulations and other zoning issues. As these issues took a great deal of time and effort to resolve, they are considered a powerful player in the aesthetics of City West. Despite Stull and Lee’s early conceptual work for Lincoln Court,
both Stull and Lee and Concorde Capital/Midcity were considered to have little power over the aesthetics of the development.

Figure 6: Visual description of the power over the aesthetics of City West. The closer to the center, the stronger the control over the aesthetics of the development. Source: Author.

As previously stated, one of the goals of HOPE VI is to support resident self-sufficiency as well as to incorporate citizen participation into the redevelopment process. When the interviewees were asked if community participation played a role in the design
process the answers were very mixed. Torti Gallas and Partners did have a design workshop with some residents, including the Laurel Homes tenant association, and claimed that community participation played a large role in the design process for Laurel Homes (Antoine 2013). Jeff Raser however, seemed to disagree. He stated that the charrette was very restrained and did not have a great influence over the design. Raser also stated that his firm, Glaserworks, was not allowed to interact with the residents and had no community participation on behalf of Lincoln Court. He stated: “As designers we had very little contact with the residents, which never sat with us well but I think that is the way the CMHA wanted it. They didn’t want the architect talking to the residents” (2013). He claimed that the lack of community participation for Lincoln Court was due in part to the reluctance of the CMHA and the accelerated schedule for Lincoln Court after Stull and Lee were fired from the project (Raser 2013). Ruberg claimed that the community had a strong role in the redevelopment but did not have much if any influence over the design or aesthetics of the development (2013). As the interviewees had different opinions and recollections, it is difficult to truly grasp the role and influence citizen participation played within the design process for City West.
Chapter 4: Park DuValle, Louisville

Louisville, Kentucky, a city known for bourbon and horse racing, is the largest city in the Kentucky Commonwealth. While the city is known nationally for its baseball bats and internationally as the home to the annual Kentucky Derby horse race, Louisville is a unique and complex city that boasts a rich cultural, economic, and historical heritage. After consolidating power with Jefferson Country in 2003, Louisville is now Kentucky’s only first class city, boasting a population of 741,096 residents and Louisville Metropolitan Area with a population of 1,334,872 (LMHA 2010). Louisville is currently the 16th most populous city in the United States.

4.1 Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority Overview

The Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) formerly known as the Housing Authority of Louisville (HAL) is responsible for the development and management of over 4,000 federally subsidized housing units (2010). This includes scattered site housing as well has four family housing developments and five developments for senior citizens and people with disabilities (LMHA 2010). 7,354 people currently reside in properties run by the LMHA, 43% of the population are children (LMHA 2010). The LMHA is funded through rental payments and a subsidy from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Currently, 86% of LMHA properties are occupied. Despite the many projects under the jurisdiction of the LMHA, the most nationally recognized and successful project is the HOPE VI development Park DuValle. Park DuValle has received acclaim from policy makers and architects alike. The development won a plethora of prestigious awards, including the New Face of America Public Housing award in 2003 and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Urban Design Honor Award in 2000 (LMHA 2010).

4.2 History of Cotter and Lang Homes

The Housing Authority of Louisville opened two adjacent public subsidized housing developments in 1953, Cotter and Lang Homes, which held 620 units and 496 units respectively (Turbov & Piper 2005). The footprint for the two developments contained close to 80 acres. Cotter and Lang Homes were located in Louisville’s West End, which was publically known as “Little Africa” due to the area’s history as a location
with a large portion of the African American population of Louisville (Turbov & Piper, 2005). The slum housing in “Little Africa” was cleared to make way for public housing as part of Louisville’s urban renewal efforts (Turbov & Piper 2005). The design and layout of the barrack style housing caused the quick deterioration of the development.

Image 25: Layout of Cotter and Lang Homes before redevelopment. Image courtesy of Urban Design Associates

The superblock layout, the building orientation, lack of interior streets, and stark architecture created a complete separation from the surrounding area (Turbov & Piper, 2005). Decades of poor maintenance exacerbated the poor housing conditions; the Park DuValle neighborhood was considered to have the worst housing stock in the city by the early 1990s (Turbov & Piper 2005). The adjacent areas were brought down by the blight of the public housing, and the site became known colloquially as “The Bricks” which increased the isolation and stigmatization of the development (Turbov & Piper 2005).
Like many other distressed public housing developments across the country, the majority of households (80%) were living in poverty, 91% were female-headed households, and 34% of residents were unemployed (Engdahl 123). Crime was rampant, and the area got a reputation as “the meanest corner in Louisville”. The Brookings Institution reports that the West End in Louisville had more police reports per square mile than any other area in Kentucky (Turbov & Piper 2005). The area had the highest crime rate and lowest income census tracked in the city of Louisville (Cash, 2013). The interior streets and interior facing building orientation inadvertently created indefensible spaces which lead to high amounts of criminal activity, that even the adjacent police station could not subside. In addition, few commercial or retail
establishments were located in the West End, with the exception of one Kentucky Fried Chicken (Turbov & Piper 2005).

The housing authority recognized the need for a drastic redevelopment, and submitted an application in the mid-1990s for funding to demolish and redevelop the West End projects. The decision to demolish was simple: the city did not want to continue substantial public reinvestment in a segregated, stigmatized development in an area with high poverty concentration ("Redevelopment Plan" March 02, 1998).

Image 27: Back alley of the former Cotter and Lang homes. Image courtesy of Urban Design Associates. Redevelopment would not have solved many of the site’s design flaws, including building orientation, indefensible space, and segregation from the surrounding neighborhoods. By clearing the site, Louisville could increase the perimeter by
expanding into vacant lots and available contiguous land, this provided an opportunity to increase the amount of subsidized and affordable housing while at the same time decreasing poverty concentration ("Redevelopment Plan" March 02, 1998). The city wanted a chance to create a new community that benefitted low-income citizens and fully integrated the site into a revitalized neighborhood ("Redevelopment Plan" March 02, 1998). The city and the housing authority hoped that changing the dynamic of the neighborhood would cause a spillover affect that could benefit the entire West End area, which is not as economically vibrant as other areas within the city (Cash 2013). When asked why they chose to redevelop Cotter and Lang homes, Tim Barry, the executive director of the LMHA, stated: “it was the most distressed one (development) in our portfolio at the time and considering the age of the structure that was 60-70 years old it was time for it to be replaced, and the other issue was an opportunity to redevelop the neighborhood cause you had 1200 units very concentrated, clearly a concentration of poverty, which brings in all kinds of problems” (2013).

4.3 The Redevelopment

The plan to redevelopment Cotter and Lang homes was derived from the failure of Louisville to win federal empowerment zone (EZ) status for the West End (Engdual 123). The city brought government representatives, businessmen, activists, and citizens in the attempt to win $100 million dollars in federal grants to redevelop the area through EZ funding. When Louisville failed to secure the federal funding, Mayor Jerry Abramson and the LMHA redirected their efforts towards redeveloping Cotter and Lang homes as well as the surrounding areas within the West End, through the new HOPE VI Program.
(Engdual, 123). The city and housing authority did acquire the HOPE VI funding which totaled more than $50 million dollars in federal funding. Louisville also secured $12 million dollars through the community development block grant (CDBG), $38 million through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and $66 million from private investment (LMHA, 2010). The city put forth great effort in securing support throughout the city, and lobbied to the school board and the parks department to invest resources in the West End (Cash, 2013). Architect and planner Charles Cash, stated: “they went to the parks department and the school board and said ‘...you guys have got to play. You have to be a part of this. You need to be a participant. You need to figure out what improvements you can make to these parks and to these schools to support this idea’” (Cash 2013). Both the school board and the parks department did support the West End initiatives, which has helped further the HOPE VI development’s successes. A key part of the redevelopment plan, was an emphasis on creating a homeownership market in an area that had previously not supported such investment, Park DuValle was one of the first HOPE VI developments to propose such a strong homeownership component (Engdual 126). In June 1996, demolition began on the former Cotter and Lang developments, and thus began the saga of Park DuValle.

4.3.1 The Players

There were many stakeholders throughout the redevelopment of Cotter and Lang Homes into the neighborhood of Park DuValle. The City of Louisville, specifically former Mayor Jerry Abramson, was at the forefront of the redevelopment process. Executive Director of the Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority Tim Barry claims that the idea
originated with the former mayor and stated: “Jerry Abramson was hell-bent on getting some form of federal assistance to redo Cotter and Lang Homes” (2013). After securing the HUD HOPE VI grant the City of Louisville, the Mayors office, and the LMHA worked tirelessly and collaboratively to redevelop the site. As this development was one of the first HOPE VI projects in the country, city officials worked closely with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The bylaws of HOPE VI were less rigid during the redevelopment of Cotter and Lang Homes then they are in present day. Architect and urban planner for the City of Louisville, Charles Cash stated: “I think they hadn’t gone far enough into it to understand what all the problems were so they were pretty flexible and very supportive of our ideas” (2013). HUD officials came to Louisville multiple times in the early stages of the redevelopment and with HUD came Raymond Gindroz of Urban Design Associates. Gindroz was working with HUD to educate HUD personnel on the theories of New Urbanism and was developing design guidelines for the HOPE VI program (Gindroz, 2013). Gindroz was asked to advise Louisville on the design process for Park DuValle, including community engagement and New Urbanism (Gindroz, 2013). Gindroz’s firm Urban Design Associates (UDA) of Pittsburgh was hired to do the early schematic design work for the HUD HOPE VI grant application.

By the time construction had begun, the LMHA hired The Community Builders (TCB), a non-profit New Urbanist affordable housing developer, to develop and manage the Park DuValle transformation. The Louisville Real Estate Development Company was hired by TCB to develop and build the homeownership-housing component. As a result of Gindroz’s early work on Park DuValle, the housing authority and the developer
commissioned UDA to continue working on the project as both the master planner and lead architect. UDA subcontracted Boston based urban design firm Stull and Lee, architectural firm William Rawn also from Boston, local architectural firm and architect of record Tucker and Booker of Louisville, and landscape architecture firm LaQuatra Bonci of Pittsburgh to implement the design.

Figure 7: Visual description of the hiring process for the Park DuValle redevelopment. Source: Author.
4.3.2 The Interviewees

To better understand the design process, three interviews were conducted with key players within the redevelopment: executive director of the Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority Tim Barry, architect of Park DuValle and principal of Urban Design Associates Raymond Gindroz, and architect and planner for the City of Louisville Charles Cash. Each of the interviewees played a strong role throughout the redevelopment process.

Before Tim Barry was the executive director of the Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority he worked for the City of Louisville under Mayor Jerry Abramson. While he was working for the city, the former mayor asked him to oversee the HOPE VI redevelopment process of Cotter and Lang Homes from his office, which initiated Barry’s relationship with the LMHA. Barry became integral in the Park DuValle redevelopment and his connections with the City of Louisville and Mayor Jerry Abramson greatly helped make the development project a success. He continued to work with the LMHA from the mayor’s office under Mayor David Armstrong until the former director of the LMHA (then HAL) retired. He was then given the job of executive director of the LMHA, due to his connection with the housing authority, his work of Park DuValle, and work with the City of Louisville (Barry 2013).

Raymond Gindroz is the principal of Urban Design Associates (UDA), an urban design and architectural design firm that was commissioned by the housing authority to prepare the HOPE VI application and was later hired to do the master plan and detailed
design documents for Park DuValle (Gindroz 2013). In the early 1990s, UDA was known for their work and innovation for the design and planning of subsidized housing. In addition, Gindroz was also the chair of the Inner City Task Force for the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) in the early 1990s. As such HUD contacted Gindroz to participate in an early brainstorming session about the physical design characteristics for HOPE VI. The CNU and HUD formed a partnership in 1996. The CNU provided design advice to HUD employees through training sessions, in which Gindroz was a part. A manual detailing training seminars was created for HUD to help set the design criteria for HOPE VI applications. Gindroz was invited to Louisville to advise the city how to proceed with the design process and how to “build a neighborhood instead of a project” (Gindroz 2013). Eventually the LMHA commissioned Gindroz and Urban Design Associates to prepare the HUD application and create the design for the development (Gindroz 2013).

Charles Cash is an architect and planner who was responsible for urban design for the City of Louisville. As such he represented the city for the many discussions on the planning and architectural character of Park DuValle. At the time of Park DuValle he worked for a committee called the Global Development Authority, which is the Louisville’s planning and development sector. Cash and Gindroz worked hand and hand on the architecture and master plan of Park DuValle (Cash 2013).

The three interviewees were asked who they personally felt were the integral players in the HOPE VI redevelopment of Park DuValle. All three unanimously claimed that the former mayor of Louisville Jerry Abramson, the developer The Community
Builders, the Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority, and Urban Design Associates were the most integral to the process.

4.3.3 The Process

The design and redevelopment processes were highly collaborative. The stakeholders including the city including Charles Cash, The Community Builders, the LMHA, Urban Design Associates, Stull and Lee, William Rawn, Tucker and Booker, LaQuatra Bonci, the parks department, and the school board met either weekly or every fortnight to discuss the progress of and issues with the Park DuValle redevelopment (Barry 2013). Tim Barry chaired the weekly meetings on behalf of former Mayor Jerry Abramson, all of which generally lasted three hours or more. The meetings involved all aspects of the design, from conception to implementation (Cash 2013). In addition to these meetings, the design teams hosted public presentations and created presentations and submittals for the Housing Authority and the City Planning Commission for approval (Antoine 2013).

As the City of Louisville and the Mayor Jerry Abramson strongly supported the Park DuValle redevelopment, Park DuValle sidestepped a lot of potential obstacles that arose at City West. When the interviewees were asked if any policy requirements hindered the redevelopment or the design of the development, all claimed that the effects were minimal. When discussing Jerry Abramson’s influence over Park DuValle, Tim Barry stated:

We didn’t really have many struggles redeveloping Park DuValle. We did have to go through some rezoning but that wasn’t a problem, never a problem. It helps
when the mayor is behind you. People tend to pay more attention and give more support to a project when it is backed by the Mayor’s office. I am sure his involvement helped knock down some barriers we would have had otherwise. (2013)

4.3.4 The Design

The primary goal that emerged from early meetings was to “build a neighborhood, not a project” (Gindroz 2013). The idea of creating a neighborhood set the image for the master plan and architectural characteristics for the future Park DuValle development (Gindroz 2013). The first step in the design process was the creation of the Park DuValle Pattern Book, a document containing an analysis of the city, public space, streets, and architectural placement, design, and typology (UDA Architects PC June 1997). The Park DuValle Pattern Book provides design guidelines for the community and architectural character of the development in an attempt to create a shared vision for all stakeholders (UDA Architects PC, June 1997). The city and the housing authority asked UDA to follow the HUD/CNU guidelines for HOPE VI developments (Gindroz 2013). These guidelines stressed representing the best attributes of local residential neighborhoods (Gindroz 2013). UDA toured Louisville, attempting to uncover the architectural styles with the most longevity, popularity, and stable value (Engdahl 2009). The architecture of the individual units and the public spaces were based on the most stable of Louisville’s neighborhood, these neighborhoods, include Old Louisville, Olmsted Parkway, and the Cherokee Triangle area (Cash 2013). Urban Design Associates research eventually lead to the adoption of three architectural styles: Old Louisville Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Louisville
Craftsman (Cash 2013). Each architectural style was studied and analyzed for essential design characteristics. For example, steeply pitched roofs, decorative siding, and vertical windows and doors are essential characteristics utilized in the Old Louisville Victorian homes (UDA Architects PC June 1997).

Image 28: Vernacular Influences of Old Louisville Victorian from the Park DuValle Pattern Book. Image courtesy of the Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority.

Each architectural typology is then broken down into 4 different categories: massing, porches, windows and doors, and materiality (UDA Architects PC, June 1997). Each category has multiple examples, measurements, and architectural detailing (UDA Architects PC June 1997). The material type, color, and finish are also provided.
The different building types allow for variety and individuality throughout the development. Architectural typologies are differed by “addresses”, the addresses determine the mix and range of architectural styles. For example Algonquin Parkway is comprised of all three architectural styles, whereas smaller streets, have adopted one style (UDA Architects PC June 1997). The combination of different architectural styles and building types was intended to create diversity within the neighborhood which also enables the mix of subsidized and market rate, retail, and homeownership to become
“invisible” (UDA Architects PC, June 1997). The different “addresses” also give each street its own character and sense of identity.

The Pattern Book goes into detail about the community characteristics as well. Guidelines are given for setbacks, massing, fence locations, and driveway/alleyway access (UDA Architects PC, June 1997). UDA, in an attempt to mimic a traditional neighborhood, has outlined multiple lot types and their position in the development. Lot types include cottage lots, estate lots, commons lots, and patio lots (UDA Architects PC, June 1997). Each lot has a specific massing, setback, size, landscaping requirement, and other regulations. For example, a cottage lot ranges from 35 feet to 40 feet, with a 20 foot setback, and cannot have a lawn exceed 50% of the total lot area and must have at least one ornamental tree in the front yard (UDA Architects PC, June 1997). The Pattern Book also goes into great detail about the landscaping. UDA has divided the plan into specific zones that require different intensities and plant types, ranging from shrubbery, trees, flowers, and hedges (UDA Architects PC, June 1997). The Park DuValle Pattern Book has more or less designed every detail of the development so that it can be used as a guide for future homebuyers, or expansion of the development. By prescribing so much detail, UDA has assumed control over the physical characteristics of the development.

It is important to note that construction of the homeownership units took place before the development of the Pattern Book. Therefore some homeownership housing does not fit into the overall design aesthetics of the Park DuValle development (Engdahl 2009). The homeownership housing luckily did not differ drastically from the rest of the
development (Engdahl 2009). All homeownership units built after UDA was hired have to follow the guidelines outlined by the book (Gindroz 2013). Tim Barry stated, “We had to turn some people away because they just wanted to build a ranch style home with a five car garage facing the street. And that just wasn’t going to work with the Pattern Book” (2013).


The interviewees unanimously considered Park DuValle a successful housing development. The results and feedback they have received in the years after the projects completion have been primarily positive. Tim Barry stated, “Yes, it was hugely successful and I think that success has stood the test of time, Park DuValle is now 20 years old” (2013). When asked if they would change the design of the development if
given the chance, all three responded positively towards the design. Gindroz stated that he wished that UDA had more control over the homeownership units to create more cohesion throughout the different tenure types (2013). Cash had hoped that the development could have absorbed some of the industrial land near Park DuValle to better tie into the neighborhood fabric (2013). Otherwise all three parties were content with the existing design.

4.3.5 Power Play

The interviewees for Park DuValle were asked who they considered to have the most power over the redevelopment process. All three stated that the process was highly collaborative and many players had a large influence on the redevelopment. That being said, the city officials, including Tim Barry and Charles Cash and former Mayor Jerry Abramson were considered the most powerful group by the interviewees. Abramson is considered the individual with the most power of the development (Barry 2013). Abramson charged ahead with the goal of redeveloping the West End after losing the EZ development bid and rallied the city behind the HOPE VI project. The redevelopment of Cotter and Lang Homes was dependant on his early ambition and drive to better the West End of Louisville. Charles Cash, who worked as an urban planner and architect for the City of Louisville is considered a very powerful entity in the redevelopment. Cash played a large role in the physical revitalization of Cotter and Lang Homes, and worked as a liaison between the city and the design firms (Cash 2013). Cash also chaired the design committee meetings throughout the process. As the director of the housing authority retired early in the HOPE VI process, Tim Barry played a dual role as the
leader of the Park DuValle redevelopment working for the Mayor and working alongside the housing authority (Barry 2013). As such he is considered one of the most powerful individuals over the redevelopment. Barry chaired weekly meetings on behalf of the Mayor, which also gave him power over other stakeholders (Barry 2013). The developer, The Community Builders, had a great deal of power as well. Charles Cash stated, “The Community Builders out of Boston were key to the redevelopment of Park DuValle. They had experience with HOPE VI and other affordable housing developments around the country. The brought their experience to the table, which was very useful” (2013). UDA had moderate power over the redevelopment as the primary architect and urban planner on the project. As HOPE VI projects are very design oriented, UDA had a large role over the redevelopment. The Louisville Real Estate Development Company and the subcontractors of UDA (Stull and Lee, William Rawn, Tucker and Booker, and LaQuatra Bonci and Associates) were not considered powerful in the redevelopment process.
Figure 8: Visual description of the power over the redevelopment of Park DuValle. The closer to the center, the stronger the control over the redevelopment. Source: Author.

The interviewees were then asked who they considered to have the most power over the aesthetics of Park DuValle. All three claimed that the design process was highly collaborative however, unanimously, Urban Design Associates was considered to have had the most power over the built environment. Gindroz stated:

Each had a role and that determined what areas they influenced. The developer was concerned about the marketability of the site and the units, the members of the community were anxious that a particular area be redeveloped because it had a high crime rate, the city, especially Charles Cash, was concerned about...
design quality and the creation of appropriate space. Our role as urban designers was to synthesize all of these different points of view and create a plan that accommodated the various points of view. In that sense, we had a major influence. (2013)

One of the primary reasons UDA is considered the main driver behind the aesthetics is the Park DuValle Pattern Book. The book, which is still used today, guided all design practices for Park DuValle, varying from the type of trees planted to the housing to the type of shingle used for roofing. The City of Louisville, primarily Charles Cash but also Tim Barry, and Mayor Jerry Abramson had a great deal of influence over the aesthetics of Park DuValle. Cash worked as the city’s arm into architecture and urban design. In fact, Gindroz and Cash were considered the individuals who had the most influence final design. The developer The Community Builders, who focused on marketability and management, were strong players throughout the design process. They were involved in the hiring processes of the design firms and worked alongside the city and UDA throughout the entire redevelopment. The TCB also brought experience to the tables, having worked on similar projects throughout the country. The Louisville Real Estate Development Company (LREDC) had moderate power as the homebuilder. Before UDA’s pattern book had been instituted, LREDC had created a “first wave” of homeownership units, which affected the overall aesthetic of the development. The Louisville Metropolitan Housing Authority worked alongside the design teams and attended meetings and presentations, but had only moderate power over the design process. Despite the numerous subcontractors working under UDA, Tucker and Booker, William Rawn, and LaQuerta Bonci and Associates were considered to have minimal
power over the aesthetics. The subcontractors were also not considered influential within the design process by the three interviewees.

Figure 9: Visual description of the power over the aesthetics of Park DuValle. The closer the organization is to the center, the stronger the control over the aesthetics of the development. Source: Author.

Citizen participation did not play a strong role in the Park DuValle design process. Cash and Gindroz both stated that while there was some community interaction, it did not strongly influence the design outcome (Gindroz 2013). While UDA did have public design charrettes with the community, they were not very substantive (Cash 2013). The charrette was set up in a way that did not allow for much interaction or input from the
community; Cash states, “The charrette was more of a presentation than a true design charrette, where there is continuous feedback from the stakeholders and designers” (Cash 2013). In the end, the community and residents provided little feedback and had very little influence over the final design of Park DuValle.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Key Findings

5.1.1 Architectural Authorship

Architectural authorship in both case studies has been convoluted by the multidisciplinary nature of HOPE VI. Park DuValle had a more seamless and straightforward design process than City West. Due to the influence of the former Mayor Jerry Abramson, and the strong backing from the City of Louisville, Park DuValle did not face many hurdles implementing their design concepts. The most powerful guide they were required to follow were the HUD/CNU guidelines, developed in part by Gindroz himself. Urban Design Associates, who was listed as the most influential and powerful over the aesthetics of the housing project, had the most authorship over Park DuValle. In fact, Urban Design Associates is often the only designer listed for Park DuValle, in numerous newspaper and book articles. However, as the case study has shown, UDA worked with a plethora of other designers, planners, and even engineers to implement their design and to create the final form that exists today. The subcontractors of Park DuValle, Stull and Lee, William Rawn, Tucker and Booker, and LaQuatra Bonci and Associates were rarely mentioned and sometimes completely disregarded throughout the Park DuValle interviews. Gindroz, Cash, and Barry did not consider the subcontractors a powerful or integral entity throughout the design process. Despite this oversight, all of the subcontractors played a substantial role in implementing the vision of UDA and as such they have claim to authorship. Legally Tucker and Booker are responsible for the Park DuValle redevelopment as the architect of record. As stated in the American Institute of Architects guidelines for the attribution of credit rules states
“the National Ethics Council typically views the Architect-of-Record as the legal entity that has contracted for and completed the work in question”, in which case Tucker and Booker has a strong claim for authorship as Park DuValle as well (National Ethics Council October 16, 2004). As many individuals have a valid claim of authorship, it can be deduced that architectural authorship cannot be credited to any one source.

The City West design process was a lot more tangled than Park DuValle, and the connection to architectural authorship is even more thin. Early research indicated that Torti Gallas and Partners was the sole architect for the City West development, it wasn’t until interviews had began that Glaserworks arose as another key player for the project. This can be partly attributed to the high firm turnover for both Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes, which complicated the design process and in turn gave Glaserworks a larger role in the redevelopment than originally intended. As Glaserworks worked as master planner and for Lincoln Court and architect of record for both Lincoln Court and Laurel Homes, it would seem that they have a very strong claim for authorship both legally and symbolically. In addition, as the developer and the housing authority helped and supported Glaserworks in the numerous subdivision battles, they have played a strong role in the design outcomes as well. As so many different characters made City West possible, it is once again impossible to assign authorship to one specific individual or group.
5.1.2 New Urbanism and Defensible Space

New Urbanism and Defensible Space principles are very much alive in HOPE VI developments across the country. New Urbanism was heavily supported throughout both City West and Park DuValle by the housing authority and U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)/CNU design guidelines. The final designs for both projects reinforce the philosophies of New Urbanism: walkability, human scale, low-rise structures, vernacular housing, and mixed-use neighborhoods. As image 31 and image 32 highlight, some sections of Park DuValle and City West are architecturally similar.

The firms themselves have very strong roots to New Urbanism. As previously stated, Ray Gindroz, as an integral member of the CNU and (then) chair of the Inner City Task Force for the CNU, worked with HUD to develop HOPE VI design guidelines. He created manuals, developed training seminars for HUD employees, and helped to set the design criteria that HUD uses for grant applications. All of the principal designers, Jeff Raser, Lawrence “Murphy” Antoine, and Ray Gindroz, are members of the Charter for the New Urbanism and are big proponents of New Urbanism and Defensible Space Principles. All three primarily focus on New Urbanism within their respective firms, Raser focuses primarily on walkable neighborhoods, Antoine heads the Low Density Neighborhoods Studio for Torti Gallas and Partners, and Gindroz worked on the design and planning of subsidized housing neighborhoods for Urban
Design Associates (UDA). In addition, both Torti Gallas and Partners and UDA are considered New Urbanist architecture and urban planning firms and both have a strong history with HOPE VI. The developer for both City West and Park DuValle, The Community Builders, also has a connection to New Urbanism, stating on their website: “The Community Builders, Inc. is constantly engaged in comprehensive neighborhood revitalization projects. We have become adept at managing master planning aimed at the transformation of distressed neighborhoods. The principles of New Urbanism guide the design of our largest developments to create compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods that incorporate a mixture of residential, commercial and civic uses” (The Community Builders 2014).

In some ways HUD’s support of New Urbanism could be viewed negatively as it stifles other design outcomes that could possibly be more successful. The reliance on New Urbanism and the strong ties the movement has with specific firms and developers could possibly pigeonhole the architecture and planning initiatives moving forward. While most people would agree that the architecture and urban planning in the second experiment was a failure, it is still unknown if the HOPE VI model or the New Urbanist ideals will be successful moving forward. As New Urbanism has already faced strong criticism within architectural circles, adopting New Urbanism as the sole architectural style could be problematic moving forward. As our values continue to change as a society, could New Urbanism inadvertently create a stigma for public housing in a similar fashion to the Modernist designs of the 1950s and 1960s? Karen Franck states “The danger of adopting new values so completely, as a reaction (and possibly an
overreaction) to the previous values, is that other intermediate or meditating values and conditions may be overlooked” (1998). The third experiment has done just that; it has reacted to its predecessor so strongly that it is almost an inverse of the second experiment. Only time will tell if the third experiment and the New Urbanist ideologies that comprise it, are successful.

5.2 Future Research

This thesis has attempted to shed light on the complexity of architectural authorship in public housing discourse. In addition, this thesis has sought to enlighten readers on the architectural design process, specifically the constraints and regulations required for institutional design projects. As previously mentioned the research had many limitations, primarily the age of both projects. Some interviews were difficult or impossible to obtain as key players had retired or passed away since the projects had been completed. Future research should focus on more recent or ongoing projects to eliminate this issue. Ongoing projects would provide rich information as the researcher could witness the design process first hand and develop their own conclusions instead of analyzing the recollections of others. Further research could broaden the study to multiple sites, possibly focusing only on HOPE VI grants given in a particular year to eliminate possible policy variations. Broadening the area of research to HOPE VI locations across the country could make the study more generalizable and could provide more depth on the subject.
Future research could also look at public housing internationally, by studying and comparing the architecture of newly built housing sites in other countries to ones being built in the United States. By comparing the different architectural typologies between sites, researchers can highlight alternative design characteristics of public housing outside of the United States, which could be useful moving forward.

5.3 Implications

This thesis has sought to bring to light the complexity of the design process in the hopes that scholars from both the architecture and planning disciplines can better understand the true role of the architect. As public housing design is and has been a controversial topic, this thesis hopes to spread public awareness that architects are not the sole authors of these developments. While architects do play a large role in the physical outcomes of public housing developments, the design process is highly collaborative. As such critics of both public housing and architecture should not be so severe on the architects moving forward, but should instead judge the process itself and the policies that limit the design.
Works Cited

A. Primary Sources


B. Secondary Sources


Engdahl, Lora. The Villages of Park DuValle. From Despair to Hope: Hope VI and the


Appendix A - Interview Question Guide

Policy

• Name | Position | Institution:

• What architecture firms did the housing authority directly worked with? Who sent in the proposal to HUD and who was responsible for the final design development?

• Why did you choose that particular location for the HOPE VI development? Were there particular physical characteristics that influenced that decision?

• Were there any economic factors that influenced your approach to the design of the development?

• Were there any major issues in the area that you were hoping HOPE VI to address?

• Who were the most integral players that brought about the HOPE VI renovation?

• What is the relationship between the housing authority and the developer?

• What group or individual had the most influence (power) over the project? Is that the same for the aesthetics (style) of the development?

• Did community participation play a role in the design process?

• What type of tenant group were you originally targeting (age, family size, education level)? What were the tenant eligibility requirements?

• How many of the original tenants returned to live in the new HOPE VI development?

• What requirements/guidelines (such as unit size, building size, aesthetics) did
you address with the architects?

- Did you have a particular image in mind for the aesthetics (style/look) of the project? Did you draw any influences for other completed HOPE VI developments?

- How much interaction did your office have with the design team? Would you say you were very involved in the development of the project?

- Were there any policy requirements that caused issues with redeveloping this location?

- What was your measure of success for this project? Would you consider this a successful housing development?

- Would you change anything about the design of the development if you had the option?

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**Design**

- Name | Position | Institution:

- What was your role in the design process?

- Who sent the proposal to HUD for HOPE VI funding?

- Were you given any guidelines by the housing authority/city officials about the design of the development?

- Were there any economic factors that influenced your approach to the design of the development?

- Were there any policy requirements that caused issues redeveloping this site?

- Did you have a particular image in mind for the aesthetics of the project? Did you
draw any influences for other completed HOPE VI developments?

• What group or individual had the most influence (power) over the project? Is that the same for the aesthetics (style) of the development?

• Did community participation play a role in the design process?

• How involved was the housing authority and or/city officials in the design process?

• Did the type and quality of materials differ by unit type (homeownership, market-rate, subsidized)?

• Can you explain the approval process? Who approved your designs?

• How did your design change from the original concept to the final design?

• Would you change anything about the design of the development if you had the option?

• What was your measure of success for this project? Would you consider this a successful housing development?