NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Aberdeen Gardens**

other names/site number **VDHR File # 114-146**

2. Location

street & number **Area centered around Aberdeen Rd.** not for publication ___
including: Langston Blvd., Mary Peake Blvd., Russell, Davis, Lewis, Weaver and Walker Roads.
city or town **Hampton** vicinity ___
state **Virginia** code **VA** county **Hampton (Independent City)** code **650** zip code **23666**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _X_ nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Hugh C. Miller
Signature of certifying official

March 7, 1994
Date

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

X__ private
X__ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

___ building(s)
X__ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
157	**67**	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
157	**67**	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register - **0**

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Domestic	**Single Dwelling**
Education	**School**
Commerce/Trade	**Specialty Store**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Domestic	**Single Dwelling**
Education	**School**
Commerce/Trade	**Specialty Store**

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne (vernacular)
Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **brick**
walls **brick, wood**
roof **wood: shingle; asphalt; tin; steel**
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) **(See continuation sheets)**

8. Statement of Significance

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

X_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

___ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

X__ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

___ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

___ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

___ B removed from its original location.

___ C a birthplace or a grave.

___ D a cemetery.

___ E a reconstructed building, object,or structure.

___ F a commemorative property.

___ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
Architecture, Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage: Black, Politics and Government, Social History

Period of Significance **C. 1934-1946**

Significant Dates **C. 1934, 1938, 1946.**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder **Hilyard R. Robinson (Architect), Lewis B. Walton (Architect)**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) **(See continuation sheets).**

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
_x_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **Approx. 110**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing
1	**18/374500/4099600**	2	**18/374780/4099920**
3	**18/375080/4100000**	4	**18/375280/4099460**

X___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title **John S. Salmon (historian) and Marc C. Wagner (architectural historian)**

organization **Virginia Department of Historic Resources** date **12/22/93**

street & number **221 Governor Street** telephone **(804) 786-3143**

city or town **Richmond** state **VA** zip code **23219**

Additional Documentation

See Continuation Sheets.
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Aberdeen Gardens was a Roosevelt Administration era planned community, designed specifically for the resettlement of African-American workers of the Newport News and Hampton area, who were living in substandard housing. Begun in 1934 and finished by 1937, this unique 110-acre subdivision consists of 158 single-family homes and proposed a school, commercial and community center, and a church, all surrounded by a greenbelt area for subsistence and truck farming.[1] In addition to the Colonial Revival houses, one of the preexisting vernacular farm houses, purchased from the Todd family, became a resettlement residence. The project, sponsored by Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Division of Subsistence Housing (later transferred to the Resettlement Administration), was planned and designed by Howard University's Hilyard R. Robinson (1899-1986), supervising architect, with Louis B. Walton (1889-1973), consulting architect. Jesse R. Otis, also an African American, acted as program supervisor.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Hilyard R. Robinson

The attractive Colonial Revival architecture of Aberdeen Gardens set within an innovative open garden plan highlights Hilyard R. Robinson's abilities as an important American planner and architect. Born in Washington, D.C., Robinson was one of the best known black architect/planner of his day. His involvement with Aberdeen Gardens began with his appointment as senior architect for the RA in 1934. He had attended the Philadelphia Museum and School of Industrial Arts as well as the University of Pennsylvania, and received both Bachelor and Masters of Architecture degrees from Columbia University in 1924 and 1931. One of Robinson's most formative educational experiences came from his postgraduate studies in city planning at the University of Berlin in 1931 and 1932. While in Germany he visited the Bauhaus and was exposed to modernist ideas. Robinson served as head of the Department of Architecture at Howard University form 1926 to 1933. He was responsible for conducting a slum housing survey in the District of Columbia in 1933. Just before his involvement with the RA, he was appointed consulting architect for the National Capital Advisory Committee to select sites for slum clearance (1934). His architectural landmark, Langston Terrace Public Housing Project (1937), which was designed in a Modernist style, and incorporated sculpture, set a national example for inner city public housing. Robinson enjoyed a long career; he designed several Modernist style buildings at Hampton University[2] during the 1950s as well as numerous residences in the Washington, D.C., area.

While Robinson was supervising architect for the project, Louis B. Walton, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture and a partner in the Chicago firm of Benjamin H. Marshall, seems to have played a significant role as consulting architect (in one

project document he is cited as Chief of Special Plans). In several pieces of correspondence Walton was addressed with practical questions about the interior planning of the houses. While it is not entirely clear to what degree he influenced the design of Aberdeen Gardens, Walton seems to have had a supervisory role as a design manager or clerk-of-the-works.

Resettlement Administration Architecture and Planning

The planning ideas that serve as a foundation for the ultimate design of Aberdeen Gardens are evident in name. The "Garden" refers to Ebenezer Howard's "Garden City" theories expounded in his book To-morrow (1898). Howard's intentions, drawn in schematic plans, were realized in the London suburban communities of Letchworth (1903, Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, architects) and Welwyn (1920, Louis de Soissons, architect). Howard's principal idea was to introduce the humanizing element of country space into the urban fringe area to temper the degenerating influence of the city. The planning ideas behind Aberdeen Gardens make a clear reference to the Howard example. Aberdeen Gardens was a subdivision of "house-garden units"[3]; each home had its garden area in a community that was surrounded by a greenbelt of farmland and woods. Like the English Shredded Wheat Ltd. workers who became Welwyn residents, the black Aberdeen Garden homesteaders, most of which were shipyard workers, were generally struggling to afford decent housing in decaying urban areas.

The growth of the Garden and Greenbelt idea was a reaction to the late-nineteenth-and-early-twentieth-century unplanned urban hodgepodge that resulted in what was perceived as an inhumane and immoral life environment. Howard's theories were partly derived from A. W. N. Pugin, the mid-nineteenth-century architectural moralist who asserted that the citizens of England's grey industrial cities were being corrupted by the mass of problems that had accompanied the industry revolution of the early nineteenth century. He proposed a return to the values found in medieval society, a time when man had greater control than the machine. The issue of quality housing for lower and middle classes became of primary concern as industrial countries experienced an exodus of workers from rural to urban areas.

In the United States, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux brought the country into New York City in their triumph of green space, Central Park (1863). This acted as partial relief to the population density of New York City. But worker housing at Lowell mills (Massachusetts, 1840s) or the Pullman factory town (Illinois, 1884) show a direct concern for the well-being of the worker. The development of affordable quality housing for low- and middle-income Americans would be addressed in the twentieth century.

Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, architects and planners, set a precedent for designing quality suburban developments. Radiating roads and building sites with picturesque relationships to open or wooded spaces successfully united the park setting to residential architecture. Their most famous example is the middle-class subdivision at Radburn, New Jersey (1928): here a greater sense of open space was attained by creating a superblock, a

large block where lots behind the houses opened onto a green community space.[4] Stein and Wright's Sunnyside Gardens in Long Island, New York (1924-28) also championed the superblock. Open common spaces with pedestrian paths on the interior of the blocks engendered a greater sense of community and enhanced the quality of urban space.[5] Sunnyside Gardens was designed for white-collar, middle-class families.

The planners and architects of the Resettlement Administration (RA) had superb historical examples to choose from for the design of their communities. There was, however, a significant difference between the Stein and Wright examples and the government-funded projects in that the architectural program for resettlement was less sophisticated. The RA had been organized to help ease the substandard housing conditions of farmers and factory workers. The challenge for RA architects and planners was to design a practical small house with the most up-to-date conveniences that would display some aesthetic value in its appearance, all for an affordable price.

In 1937, Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace outlined some of the RA's planning philosophy.

> The problem of building homes has been approached in terms of their surroundings . . . It should be remembered also that the primary purpose for which the Resettlement Administration received funds was for rural relief. It was possible to supply relief, to assist in the development of sound community life, and to establish housing standards all at the same time . . . The difficulties which stand in the way of low cost housing have been the subject of discussion for many years. Private builders have been remarkably successful on achieving economies on large scale mass production in many suburban developments. The very success, however, which has been achieved has been at the expense of variety, space and ofttimes quality.[6]

The RA philosophy was applied to the local context in Hampton:

> The living conditions of the workers are extremely poor. A majority of the houses are substandard and without space for gardening. Many of the workers walk a half mile in order to cultivate gardens . . . The aim of the project, then is to help these people to leave their present environment, to give them an opportunity to utilize their spare time in the production of food they require, and to lift them to a higher social and health level. The project will give a new economic stability to families who have hitherto been in constant danger of going on relief. It is also hoped that this demonstration of homesteading will attract the attention of private building industries with the possibility of

homestead development for persons belonging to the low-income group.[7]

By 1937 the RA had undertaken fifty-five rural resettlement projects across the nation.[8] The projects, which involved housing for farm laborers, factory workers, and miners and prospective homesteaders, were usually chosen in areas where substandard living conditions were widespread.

Known for its shipbuilding industry and drydocking facilities, Newport News also supported a large work force involved in the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad's coal shipping operations. In the mid-thirties most of the 2,500 black workers of this urban-industrial area lived in dilapidated frame houses that were lighted by coal oil lamps and had no running water, central heating, or bathrooms. While providing the amenities of modern housing represented a great improvement for these workers, the project went further by proposing a transformation of the residents to a "higher social and health level."

By virtue of an all-encompassing plan, the families were to experience the benefits of cleanliness, efficiency, and aesthetics in their well-designed housing; maintain gardens and small livestock on their half-acre[9] lots for self subsistence, especially during the summer slack months of the shipbuilding industry; and profit from educational opportunity through the planned Aberdeen Elementary School and adult programs offered by Hampton Institute. A screening process for prospective residents was also instituted to insure that the community would include shipyard workers, doctors, lawyers and businessmen--a cross-section of Hampton Roads' black society. One of the most radical aspects of this development proposed that the residents would purchase their houses (government financing was set at a three percent interest rate). RA officials appreciated the benefits to a neighborhood where owner occupation translated into community permanence and pride.

At Aberdeen Gardens, the intent of federal officials and the Hampton sponsoring group was to create a model for other, publicly and privately funded, future-planned resettlements of low-income rural and urban black families. While the RA publicly maintained similar goals whether it was building for white or black homesteaders, there was clearly a moral imperative signified in much of the project literature and by the insistence of the Hampton area sponsors that blacks were to be the majority participants in all levels of the project. With great opposition to the seemingly socialistic programs of the New Deal, the RA was treading on dangerous ground by proposing to raise a segment of the black population to a "higher social level."

Hilyard R. Robinson's utilization of visionary planning philosophies from Ebenezer Howard to Stein and Wright made Aberdeen Gardens a unique RA conception. The fact that the community plan, architectural design, site clearing, building construction, road work, and management was performed by blacks, many of whom would stay on to live at the settlement, sets Aberdeen Garden apart from all other RA projects. A government funded

project "by blacks -- for blacks," a motto that the Hampton sponsoring group adopted, was unprecedented in the South as well as the United States.

Aberdeen Gardens Plan

Aberdeen Gardens is named for Aberdeen Road, the principal transportation corridor that linked the worker-residents with Newport News and its shipbuilding facilities. The project area, just south of the junction of Aberdeen and Sawyer's Swamp roads,[10] was originally the site of several farms. The Todd family farmed an area in the northern section of the project site, while the Curtis farm was adjacent to the south.[11] The Todd farmhouse, built in the 1890s, is included in the district because a large homestead family, the Johnsons, took over the farm and sold produce locally (photo 6). Five separate tracts of land were purchased between April 25, 1935, and January 3, 1938, to complete the project at its largest size. Clearing of the site began in 1935 and about half of the houses were finished by the end of 1936. The Todd farm house was preserved for the project and exists on the northern end of Aberdeen Road in the historic district. The Curtis farm was in the area presently known as Granger Court East. When the federal government bought this land, John G. Curtis moved his house about a half mile south where it still exists, substantially remodeled, at the edge of a 1960s subdivision.

The project site at Aberdeen Road was chosen for several reasons. The land was offered at a low price; there was good soil for farming; and the relatively secluded area insured that the project would satisfy critics who were worried about possible racial tensions.

When Robinson designed the subdivision he organized it around the Aberdeen Road corridor. The irregular shape of the subdivision
was longer on the north-south axis than wide on the east/west axis. Five east-west cross streets were laid out perpendicular to the alignment of Aberdeen Road. Two long streets, one block away and paralleling Aberdeen Road were also laid out. The seven streets were given alphabet names at first, from A to G. A Street was the center cross street, B and C streets crossed to the north while E and F crossed to the south. D was the major north/south street on the west, while G matched it on the east.

In 1937, the sponsoring committee decided to rename the streets after prominent black leaders. A Street became Lewis Road, after Matt N. Lewis, pioneer black journalist for the Newport News Star. Weaver Road, formerly B Street, was named for W. B. Weaver who had directed an orphans home in Hampton. C Street became Walker Road, after Richmond's renowned Maggie L. Walker, founder of St. Luke's Penny Savings Bank. The long north-south D street, to the west of Aberdeen Road, became Mary Peake Boulevard, for her accomplishments as a teacher who taught Hampton's contraband children under the Emancipation Tree. E Street was renamed Davis Road after Daniel Webster Davis, Richmond minister, teacher, and poet. The southernmost cross street, formerly F Street, became Russell Road after archdeacon James S. Russell, founder and president of St. Paul's Normal and Industrial School in Lawrenceville. The eastern, north-south, G Street became

Langston Boulevard, celebrating the accomplishments of John Mercer Langston, the first president of Virginia State College and one-time congressman from Virginia.

All roadways in the subdivision (except for the preexisting Aberdeen Road) were designed with wide grassy medians. This design further enhanced the open space qualities provided by planning the houses on large superblocks. In time small trees and shrubs grew up on the medians, also complementing the "green" intentions of the planners. Today, despite the widening of Aberdeen Road, a major thoroughfare, all of the original street planning is intact to its completion date of 1938 (photos 1, 2 and 3).[12]

Within this open-space street plan, surrounded by a band of older wooded areas and farm fields, stood the 158 houses. Each house sat at the front of its lot, which measured about 75 feet across and 220 to 290 feet deep. The resulting blocks were very large by contemporary standards. When the land was developed into gardens, interspersed with many of the older trees and punctuated by small chicken coops, it created a superblock green space that was unique to this subdivision. Unlike the manicured superblock lawns of Stein and Wright's Radburn and Sunnyside Gardens, Aberdeen Gardens superblocks were thriving cultivation areas, an optimistic symbol of prosperity. The idea of private property was maintained at property borders by square-patterned wire fence, but the overall character was of a shared open space. Robinson made sure not to have any houses facing Aberdeen Road, perhaps he knew that it was destined to become the large improved corridor that it is today. While a few of these large lots have been subdivided, mostly along Aberdeen Road where several smaller lots have their houses facing the street, virtually all of the interior areas of the large blocks are intact.

Aberdeen Gardens included garden plots for each resident and a greenbelt area where larger truck farming was planned. In addition to growing produce, residents were encouraged to maintain small livestock. Chicken coops were built for each property. Few have survived, but an almost completely intact example exists behind 3 Russell Road. The federal government provided twelve mules, twelve cows, one-thousand hens, and twenty-five thousand chicks. Pigs were purchased later and kept mostly in the eastern area of the greenbelt. In addition to livestock, apple, pear, and peach trees were provided for an orchard area, as well as strawberry and blackberry plants.

The greenbelt around Aberdeen Gardens remained wooded or farmland until the 1950s. Presently several later subdivisions exist adjacent to the original settlement. In the former greenbelt area on the northwest side is Greenwood Farms, built on reclaimed swampland. On the southwest Granger Court occupies the former farm greenbelt area, and Granger Court East, which lies to the south and east of Aberdeen, was also a farm area. On the northeast edges of the subdivision is a small subdivision called East Aberdeen Gardens. Some houses in these areas may date as early as 1945-1950. Very little was developed beyond the original area until after World War II. The difference in the post-war styles of architecture surrounding Aberdeen Gardens helps to define visually the edges of the district.

Aberdeen Road does not run through the subdivision in a straight tangent. The road curves 20 degrees to the west between the northern cross streets of Weaver and Walker roads. This curve created a ready-made opportunity to site a central community area, the precinct that was to include school, community center, and church. The lot set aside from residential use is roughly in the shape of a keystone. The church and separate community center was never built. But an attractive Colonial Revival school was finished that also functioned as a community meeting place. The school was remodeled several times beginning in the 1950s and was replaced by a larger building in the 1970s. Since there is very little of the original building intact it is considered noncontributing.

Across from the school is the small commercial area that was allotted a medium sized lot. Originally the building accommodated a community grocery store, barber shop, and tavern. Built in the 1940s, this commercial building replaced an even more modest store. The first store operated out of an old farm building that stood on the east side of Aberdeen Road between East Weaver and East Lewis Roads. The present commercial building at Aberdeen Road has undergone substantial remodeling since the 1940s. Because the building lacks architectural integrity, it is considered noncontributing to the district.

Small House Architecture

A whole strain of small-house design in American architecture had been developing since the mid-nineteenth century. An example of this trend is found in A. J. Downing's Cottage Residences (1842), which expounded the romantic idea of a medium-sized house in a country setting. Later in the century, one of many pattern books available, Specimen Book of One Hundred Architectural Designs, by A. J. Bicknell & Co. of New York (1879), adopted Downing's aesthetic by including plans for the "Cheap Country Cottage," a small house of four to five rooms, incorporating some Downing architectural details, to create a dressed-up small house for the mass public. The growing American middle class produced a market for the catalog-ready Sears and Alladin kit houses, some of which were small, designed for a limited budget and the restricted space of urban and suburban lots. The Great Depression brought an intense focus on small house design. With the market for medium and large architect-designed houses diminishing, the architectural community became more involved in perfecting small house plans. The appreciation of the small house market was evident in many architectural publications throughout the 1930s: "Architects needed to Humanize the Small House" (Architecture and Engineering, January 1936, 55); "Low cost home problem: fifteen items essential to the solution of the small house plan" (Hertz, Architecture and Engineering, July 1937, 72); "Small house, responsibility and opportunity" (Saylor, Architecture, April 1936, 209-210); "Small houses for civilized Americans; analysis of space requirements and minimum standards, with eight basic floor plans and exteriors" (Fordyce and Hamby, Architectural Forum, January 1936, 1-40). The cited examples above are just a sampling of articles that grappled with the needs of the affordable house to match the American dream.

Subsistence housing sponsored by the federal government during the Depression selectively inherited progressive design philosophies and experimented with the small house. The small house architecture of the RA was practical and designed to harmonize with regional character and custom. In an effort to fit the different requirements of each project the RA conducted surveys to ascertain the preferences of residents. Attention was given to "rooms and room uses," "climatic factors," and site "orientation." In addition to the practical concerns were the aesthetic qualities of design. The design approach was defined by Secretary Henry A. Wallace in The Architectural Forum:

> Economy does not imply the absence of beauty or taste. No small house is ever completely satisfactory if it is also not attractive; and no housing problem is ever solved that does not install the family amidst homelike surroundings. But little additional is required to obtain aesthetic satisfaction. Care in the proportioning of the plan units, the mass of the house, the size and the arrangement of the openings or the selection of harmonious colors, costs nothing extra. The resulting attractiveness is a decided incentive toward encouraging the occupants to maintain and enhance this attractiveness with furnishings and plantings.[13]

In the same Architectural Forum article various houses are showcased, including photographs, specifications, and interior plans. For the Gardensdale Homesteads, near Birmingham, Alabama, a rammed-earth method of construction was used and the flat- roofed houses looked decidedly modern. A similar flat-top design was used for an agricultural-industrial community near Hightstown, New Jersey. In contrast to these modern-styled houses are the pitched-roof frame houses at Penderlea Homesteads near Wilmington, Delaware and the traditional pitched-roof, exterior chimney, stone houses for the Cumberland Homesteads near Crossville, Tennessee. The latter examples appear to reflect the vernacular building styles of their respective regions. Aberdeen Gardens displays Virginia's most celebrated building element: the brick. The design of Aberdeen Gardens houses is Colonial Revival, uniquely arranged, in many cases, as a "double house" where the side garages of two units share a party wall.

The Aberdeen Garden houses were meant to be embodiments of the "local traditional style" united with the best elements from the "modern functional style."[14] It was thought by federal planners that this combination subjected the homesteader to a "minimum hazard of aesthetic depreciation." A typical house in the subdivision, often referred to as a "house-garden" unit, was of brick construction, one-and-a-half stories, and was rectangular with an attached garage. The first floor was designed as large open space to maximize cross-ventilation. The plan included a sitting or bedroom, a combination living, dining, and kitchen area, an entry hall, a bathroom, and a closet. A stairwell led from the entry hall to the second floor where there were two bedrooms and a storage closet.

Aberdeen Garden's simple Colonial-styled houses were complemented by the traditional design of Aberdeen Elementary School. The school's design was organized around a projecting, pedimented, portico entry which include a three-bay brick arcade with keystones. The building's classrooms were arranged in wings that projected perpendicular to the center section. While simple in execution, the historical reference of the original school building to Virginia's community anchor, the classically-styled courthouse, was clear. To meet the needs of a growing community, the old school was enlarged and then later replaced in the 1970s.

Aberdeen Gardens Houses

In an effort to avoid the mechanical repetition of facades and plans, and to provide dwellings for different-size families, Aberdeen Gardens includes a variety of plans to provide for the one-and-a-half story, three-, four- and five-room houses.[15] All houses included a garage. Some houses were detached while many houses shared a common wall. The houses that were attached were referred to as "double houses." The double house consisted of two rectangular houses with side garages sharing a party wall.

The largest house, the five-room plan (total of twenty three), was built in two versions (see photos 7 and 8). One is recognizable by its three widely-spaced, front-facade, upper sash, and the more common version includes four, front-facade, upper sash. There were eighty three four-room houses built, the greatest number of any plan. One version (total of seventy) had no front porch and are easily identified by its asymmetrical three-bay, front facade (see photos 4 and 10). This was the only plan type with a front, blank, upper half story. Only thirteen four-room plan houses with a three-bay porches were built (this was the only plan that included a porch -- see photo 9) . The smallest house was the three-room plan (see photos 5 and 11), which has the same three, small, front-facade, upper sash as the five-room plan, but the scale of the three room house, discernible by the steeper roof pitch, is a telltale sign of its smaller size.

In planning the house sites the designers used a loose pattern involving the plan types. While the double houses were built throughout the settlement area, all street junctions are punctuated by either a three-room or four-room double house on both sides of the street, perhaps a gesture to give the cross streets a firm definition.[16] The cross streets, Russell, Davis, Lewis, and Weaver, where they are adjacent to Aberdeen Road, include only double houses.[17] On the long streets, Langston and Mary Peake, monotony is avoided by mixing double and detached houses of all plans. One distinctive rule is that the four-room house with porch is not found in the area west of Aberdeen Road and the five-room house with four upper sash is not included on the east side of the development.[18]

The stylistic elements of the Aberdeen Gardens house were simple. All of the houses were based loosely on the popular Colonial Revival style. The stylistic approach is explained in a RA Newsletter:

> The architectural design of these house-garden units is an embodiment of the best from local traditional style together with

> the best from modern functional style, combining the aesthetic and the practical in a way that subjects the homesteader to the minimum of hazard of aesthetic depreciation. The homesteader is investing in a type of house, the architectural style of which, after 250 years of constant employment, is still most in demand for the best type of building.[19]

Most of the houses have an asymmetrical primary facade that could be interpreted as a traditional hall-parlor house, which abounded in Virginia. The most developed stylistic features included a houndstooth cornice band on the front facade; varied brick bond work: five and six course American, English, and some Flemish; jack arches over all wall openings; six-panel doors, some with upper glass lights; a Jacobean-styled, black, sheet metal, front door lamp; six-light, casement, wood sash and six-over-six double-hung, wood sash; originally, all roofs were clad with square-end cedar shakes[20]; garage doors were constructed of vertical boards that opened as a single panel, suspended on heavy duty springs (photo 10 shows details clearly).[21]

The interior plan for the three-, four- and five-room houses was simple and very functional. The three room plan featured a side-passage entry with stairwell in the entrance hall and a bathroom beneath the stairs. The first floor was a multi-purpose living area, including a wall for kitchen appliance space and sink, combined with a living room/dining room area (photo 13 shows a remodeled interior where the kitchen has been moved back into the framed-in porch).[22] The second floor was divided into two bedrooms. The most popular four-room house plan was an extension of three-room house in that it added a bay on the other side of the entry. The second downstairs room was designed to be either a sitting room or an extra bedroom (photo 14). The upstairs consisted of two bedrooms, one on either side of the stair hall (photo 17).[23]

The five-room house, recognizable by its four six-light casement windows, was nearly identical in plan to the four-room house with the exception that one of the two upstairs spaces was partitioned lengthwise to create two small bedrooms (photo 7).

Some of the detached houses differed from the generic three-room principal plan. All of the four- and five-room houses that were detached had a symmetrical, three-bay facade with a two-run, central stair (photos 8 and 9). The room arrangements were virtually identical to the side-stair version, but the interior spaces on either side of the central stair were equally divided. In general, these houses were deeper than the other plan.

Access to the garage in all plans is through a covered porch area. The porches were placed at the rear of the houses, accessed from the kitchen/living room to increase cross ventilation in the primary living space of the house.

The prosperity and well-being of Aberdeen Garden residents is exhibited by improvements that have been made to the houses in the past several decades. Much of the distinctive

character of the alterations comes from the fact that most of the houses became resident-owned. Frame additions designed by Hampton University Architecture School students are on several houses; garages have been converted into living space in some cases; and the addition of dormers follows in the spirit of the Colonial Revival style. Very few of the original dwellings, however, have been altered to the degree that they have lost their integrity.

The success of Aberdeen Gardens is evident in the fact that there is a strong community of homesteader children who chose to live in Aberdeen or nearby. While some Aberdeen Garden houses have undergone typical maintenance alterations, the neighborhood is enhanced by the mature shade trees, large oaks and maples, that stand on the wide grass boulevard medians and surround the houses. Aberdeen Gardens is a historic symbol of African-American pride. It is an example of innovative American planning, a model that would still prove valuable if it were applied to current housing problems.[24]

Marc C. Wagner

ENDNOTES

1. The church and community center were never built. The Aberdeen School provided adequate space for community functions.

2. Aberdeen Gardens community resident Claude Vann, Jr., interviewed John Spencer, Chairman of Hampton University Architecture School, about the Robinson buildings. Robinson is associated with four: Armstrong, Davidson, Harkness, and Twitchell Halls, all designed and built during the mid-1950s. He was also commissioned to design a residence on Pembroke Avenue in Hampton (the house is yet to be identified and date is unknown).

3. Louis B. Walton, *Memorandum*, no date (probably 1935), 2.

4. Stein was a Columbia Architecture School graduate. Much of his renowned work around the New York City area was accomplished while Robinson was in attendance at Columbia. Hilyard R. Robinson, architect and planner of Aberdeen Gardens, was attending architecture school at Columbia University at this period and may have had the opportunity to see Radburn in person.

5. Ironically, the ideas of moderating the city with a preference for the landscape were American ideas embraced by Thomas Jefferson. Aberdeen Gardens was unintentionally conceived as a Jeffersonian utopia where residents maintained their connection with agrarian life, a healthy moralizing effect that defined the difference between the Old World and the New.

6. Wallace and Alexander, *The Architectural Forum*, June 1937, 500.

7. *United States Department of the Interior, Division of Subsistence Homesteads, Memorandum for the Press*, Hampton University Archives, 13 March 1935.

8. Wallace and Alexander, *The Architectural Forum*, June 1937, 500.

9. The actual size is closer to three quarters of an acre per lot.

10. Sawyer Swamp Road was improved during World War II. In 1942, a new primary access road from Newport News to Fort Monroe was built and named Military Highway. This major corridor was later renamed Mercury Boulevard, its present name. Aberdeen Road intersects Mercury Boulevard less than a quarter mile north of the historic district.

11. Claude Vann, Jr., original resident of Aberdeen Garden has surmised that the name Aberdeen may have come from the Todd family, a family of Scottish ancestry.

12. According to local residents the roads were cleared initially by some of the prospective residents as well as available black workers from the area. Later road improvements, swamp drainage culverts and landscaping was done by the P.W.A. (Public Works Administration).

13. Henry A. Wallace in *The Architectural Forum* (June 1937, 475).

14. Close by, further up the peninsula, Williamsburg was undergoing restoration. The choice of a vernacular-appearing Colonial Revival, brick village would obviously be in line with current public taste.

15. The number relates to the total number of rooms in the house minus the bathroom. "Three-room" does not mean three bedrooms.

16. There are two exceptions to this; at the end of East Walker Road where the eastern end of the street is defined by two detached, five-room plan (three upper-sash type) houses; and several detached houses are found on Russell Road. Walker is the last cross street on the north, while Russell is the southern most street.

17. East Walker is an exception.

18. There are two cul de sacs in Aberdeen Gardens. One is at the south end of Mary Peake Boulevard, an area for which an architectural rendering was made (see attachment). The other at the north end of Mary Peake Boulevard does not dead end into houses.

19. Louis B. Walton, *Memorandum for project RA-41F 368*, p. 2.

20. After the houses were purchased by residents and the Farmers Housing Administration relinquished all legal ties to the development, it became too expensive to insure houses with wood- sheathed roofs. Virtually all houses in the subdivision have asphalt shingle roofs, some were laid directly over the wooden shingles.

21. Side garages added variety to the overall character of the neighborhood. The pitched roofs running parallel to the roads were occasionally punctuated with the front gable design of side garages on some of the detached houses.

22. While the major appliances would have seemed modern at the time, some were not electric powered. The stoves were wood burning and the forced hot water radiators were heated by coal-burning Arcola furnaces. The furnace sat to one side of the kitchen area near the center of the house, in many plans, and was visible in the room. One of the more unorthodox house details is the placement of the flue, which exhausted both furnace and stove, in the front plane of the roof, below the ridge.

23. In the three-room plan the bedrooms were partitioned by a wall that ran lengthwise, underneath the roof ridge. The four-room had second floor rooms that spanned the width of the house.

24. Unfortunately, the trend of urban housing after World War II was for cost efficient vertical high-rise architecture. The American planning and architectural communities are now aware that the humane approach to housing, which includes house ownership, would probably have been the better path to follow.

7. DESCRIPTION -- INVENTORY:

ABERDEEN ROAD

1030-1032

1030: Detached house. Ranch. 1970s. Brick veneer; 1-story; 6-bays side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1032: Detached house. Ranch. 1970s. Brick veneer; 1-story; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1100-1106

1100: Detached house. Ranch. 1970s. Brick veneer; 1-story; 5-bays side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1102: Detached house. Modern vernacular. Ca. 1940. Wood frame with some brick veneer; 1-story; 4-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingles); remodeled. Noncontributing.

1104: Detached house. Ranch. 1970s. Brick veneer; 1-story; 5-bays side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1106: Detached house. Ranch. 1970s. Brick veneer; 1-story; 5-bays side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1117: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1970s?. Wood frame; 1-story; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1202-1212

1202: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1970s. Wood frame; 2 story; 3-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1204: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1970s. Wood frame; 2 story; 3-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1205: Detached house. Ranch. 1980s. Wood frame with brick veneer; 1-story; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1206: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1970s. Brick and wood frame; split level; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles) Noncontributing.

1207: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1980s. Wood frame with brick veneer; 2-story; 4-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1208: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1980s. Wood frame with brick veneer; 1-story; 4-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles) Noncontributing.

1209: Detached house. Ranch. 1960s. Brick; 1-story; 5-bays; intersecting gables (composition shingle). Noncontributing.

1210: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1980s. Wood frame; 1-story; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingle). Noncontributing.

1212: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1980s. Wood frame; 1-story; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingle). Noncontributing.

1417-1436

1417: Detached house. Ranch. 1980s. Brick veneer; 1-story; 5-bays; intersecting gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1419: Detached house. Ranch. 1980s. Brick veneer; 1-story; 5- bays; intersecting gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1421 Woodside Preschool. Modern vernacular. 1970s. Stucco (on hollow frame?); 1-story; 5-bays; flat roof. Noncontributing.

1424: Aberdeen Elementary School. Modern vernacular: 1960s-1980s. Brick; 1-story; 10+ bays; built in several stages. Noncontributing.

1427: Commercial building. Vernacular. Ca. 1940. Wood frame; 1 story; 6-bays; flat and angled roof (standing seam metal); 7-bays modern porch; remodeled. Noncontributing.

1436: Detached house. Ranch. 1960s. Brick; 1-story; 5-bays; hip roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1506-1524

1506: Detached house. Ranch. 1960s. Brick; 1-story; 4-bays; hip roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

1524: Johnson Farm house. Detached house. Vernacular Queen Anne. Ca. 1895. Wood frame; 2 stories; intersecting gables (tin plate); 6-bays; 5-bays screened-in front porch (Doric columns); brick-tex sheathing.

EAST DAVIS ROAD

1-12

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 1.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2.

5: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 7.

6: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 8.

7: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 5.

8: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 6.

9: Detached house. Modern Vernacular. 1960s. Wood frame; 1-story; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing. Noncontributing work shop.

10: Detached house. Modern Vernacular. 1960s. Brick veneer and wood frame; 1-story; 4-bays; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

12: Detached house. Modern Vernacular. 1960s. Brick veneer and wood frame; 1-story; side gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing. Noncontributing garage.

LANGSTON BOULEVARD

1-10

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 1.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2.

5: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan.

6: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan.

7: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 9.

8: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 10. Contributing shed.

9: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 7.

10: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 8.

11-19

11: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan.

12: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan.

13: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 15.

14: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

15: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 13.

16: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan. Noncontributing shed.

17: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

18: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 20.

19: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

<u>20-29</u>

20: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 18.

21: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan.

22: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

23: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 25.

24: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 26.

25: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 23.

26: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 24.

27: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version. Noncontributing garage.

28: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

29: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan. Noncontributing garage.

<u>30-39</u>

30: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 32. Contributing chicken coop.

31: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan.

32: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 30.

33: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 35; extensively remodeled. Noncontributing.

34: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

35: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 33.

36: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

37: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

38: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

39: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

40-48

40: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 42; originally included porch.

41: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 43.

42: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 40; originally included porch.

43: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 41.

44: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version. Contributing chicken coop.

45: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 47.

46: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 48.

47: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Cal 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 45

48: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 46.

EAST LEWIS ROAD

1-10

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 1.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 2. Noncontributing garage.

5: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 7.

6: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 8.

7: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 5.

8: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 6.

9: Detached house. Ranch. Modern vernacular. 1960s. Brick; 1-story; 6-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

10: Detached house. Ranch. Modern vernacular. 1960s. Brick; 1-story; 5-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

WEST LEWIS ROAD

10 BLOCK

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 1.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 2.

5: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 7. Noncontributing garage.

6: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 8.

7: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 5. Noncontributing shed.

8: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 6.

10: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1960s. Brick; 1-story; 6-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingle). Noncontributing.

12: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1960s. Brick; 1-story; 6-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingle). Noncontributing.

MARY PEAKE BOULEVARD

25-29

25: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 26; has been remodeled. Noncontributing.

26: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 25.

27: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

28: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

29: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 31.

30-39

30: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 32.

31: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 29.

32: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 30.

33: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 35.

34: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with 36.

35: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 33.

36: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 34.

37: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

38: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan.

39: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 41. Noncontributing outbuilding.

40-49

40: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 42. Noncontributing garage.

41: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 39.

42: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 40.

43: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

44: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

45: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 47.

46: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 48. Noncontributing garage.

47: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 45.

48: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 46.

49: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 51.

<u>50-59</u>

50: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 52.

51: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 49.

52: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 50.

53: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan.

54: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; extensively remodeled. Noncontributing. Noncontributing garage.

55: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 57; has been remodeled. Noncontributing shed.

56: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 58.

57: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 55.

58: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 56.

59: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 61. Noncontributing garage.

<u>60-69</u>

60: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; has been remodeled. Noncontributing garage.

61: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 59. Noncontributing shed.

62: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; has been remodeled. Noncontributing garage.

64: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 66. Noncontributing garage.

66: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 64.

67: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 69. Noncontributing garage.

68: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 70.

69: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 67. Noncontributing shed.

70-74

70: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 68. 2 noncontributing sheds.

71: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 73.

72: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 74.

73: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 71.

74: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 72.

EAST RUSSELL ROAD

1-9

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 1. Contributing chicken coop. Noncontributing garage.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2.

5: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

6: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 8. Noncontributing chicken coop.

7: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; originally built with a front porch.

8: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 6.

9: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1980s. Brick ; 2-story; 4-bays; side gable roof (composition shingle); Noncontributing.

EAST WALKER ROAD

1-6

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 1.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2.

5: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan.

6: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan.

NORTH WALKER ROAD

5: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1950s?, 1970s. Wood frame with brick veneer. Noncontributing.

WEST WALKER ROAD

1-12

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 1.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2.

5: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 7.

6: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 8.

7: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 5.

8: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 6.

10: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1960s. Brick; 1 story; 5-bays; side gable roof (composition shingle). Noncontributing.

12: Detached house. Modern vernacular. 1960s. Brick; 1 story; 4-bays; side gable roof (composition shingle). Noncontributing.

EAST WEAVER ROAD

1-12

1: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 3.

2: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 4.

3: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 1.

4: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2.

5: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan. Porch version.

6: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; substantially rebuilt; common wall with no. 8. Noncontributing.

7: Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan. Noncontributing garage.

8: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 6.

10: Detached house. Modern vernacular. Ca. 1940. Wood frame with brick veneer; 1-story; 3-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingles); moved from Copeland Park, Newport News and remodeled. Noncontributing.

12: Detached house. Modern vernacular. Ca. 1940. Wood frame with brick veneer; 1-story, 3-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingles); moved from Copeland Park, Newport News and remodeled. Noncontributing.

WEST WEAVER ROAD

2400-2411

2400: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2402.

2401: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2401.

2402: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2400.

2403: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 4 room plan; common wall with no. 2401.

2404: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 2406. Extensive remodeling. Noncontributing.

2405: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan; common wall with no. 2407.

2406: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 3 room plan; common wall with no. 2404.

2407: Semi-detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1936-1938. 5 room plan originally, somewhat remodeled; common wall with no. 2405.

2409: Detached house. Modern vernacular. Ca. 1960s. Wood frame with brick veneer; 1-story; 4-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

2411: Detached house. Modern vernacular. Ca. 1960s. Wood frame with brick veneer; 2-story; 4-bays; side-gable roof (composition shingles). Noncontributing.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Aberdeen Gardens, located in Hampton, Virginia, was constructed in the mid-1930s as a resettlement community for African-American industrial workers living in substandard housing. It was the first homestead community in the United States to be constructed for black residents under the New Deal. It was the only such community designed by a black architect and built by black workers under the control of a black construction superintendent. Begun in 1934 under a grant from the Department of the Interior's Division of Subsistence Housing, Aberdeen Gardens soon came under the auspices of the Farm Security Administration, and stood largely completed by 1937. This 440-acre subdivision eventually contained 158 single-family dwellings, a school, and a commercial center. Building lots were large, to allow for truck gardens and small livestock. A surrounding greenbelt separated Aberdeen Gardens from its white neighbors. The brick dwellings were designed to be traditional in appearance and modern in function. The streets were named for "respected and distinguished local Negroes." Although the community was expanded in the 1940s and 1950s, and many of the earlier dwellings have undergone modification, the appearance, circulation patterns, and ambience of the district retain a high degree of integrity. Aberdeen Gardens remains a historical symbol of African-American pride, occupied largely by original homesteaders and their children and grandchildren.

JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

Aberdeen Gardens is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the district is eligible for its association with New Deal programs, because it was the first homestead community in the country built for black residents, and because it was the only such community designed by a black architect and built by black workers under the control of a black construction superintendent It is eligible under Criterion C because it is an early example of a government-sponsored housing development built to combine a local vernacular architectural tradition with functional modernism. Intimate in scale and modest in appearance, the houses of Aberdeen Gardens were nonetheless comfortable, convenient spaces for living, with a more than passing reference to historical models.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Great Depression of the 1930s fostered a revolution in the relationship between the federal government and the private sector. Under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, governmental activism produced dozens of new programs and agencies. Most of the programs were designed to offer relief or create public service jobs. Several of the most important were created with the farmer in mind, since for rural America the depression had begun soon after World War I, not with the stock market crash of 1929. Programs designed for residents of urban areas often contained rural elements--such as garden plots for housing projects--since the tradition of the family farm remained strong in America.

One of the problems addressed for the first time by the federal government during the depression was the housing crisis. Americans long had been aware of the disparate levels of housing in the nation, and by the late nineteenth century they accepted an association between inadequate housing and poverty, disease, and crime. There was a corresponding belief among many social scientists that improvements in housing would lead automatically to the amelioration of the associated problems. The riddle of who would pay for better accommodations was not resolved, however, and little progress was made until Roosevelt's New Deal.

The depression deeply affected black Americans, most of whom already lived in poverty. In attempting to deal with their problems, Roosevelt had to take into account the facts of life in a racially segregated society, particularly in the South. It was understood that if blacks and whites were performing the same work, the blacks would be paid less. Supervisors would be white, not black. Blacks were thought by many whites to be less "deserving" of such amenities as attractive houses and indoor plumbing than whites. Aberdeen Gardens challenged all of these articles of conventional white wisdom.

In July 1933, Section 208 of the National Industrial Recovery Act created the Subsistence Homestead Division, which was placed in the Department of the Interior. The subsistence homesteads undertaking was considered one of the most innovative and utopian resettlement programs of the New Deal era. The division resettled families that had little hope of escaping poverty into new communities that often were established on abandoned or inadequate farmland. Although the heads of the families may have been employed primarily in manufacturing or industry, homesteads typically were located on large lots that included land for part-time gardening. The program was one of the most controversial of the New Deal, and was often labeled communistic by its critics. After June 1935 the programs and projects of the division were transferred to the newly created Resettlement Administration (RA), and in 1937 the Farm Security Administration (FSA), the successor to the RA, assumed its functions.

About a hundred subsistence homesteads were constructed nationwide, with two of them located in Virginia. Shenandoah Homesteads was built to house the mountain families who lost their land to Shenandoah National Park. Aberdeen Gardens, the other resettlement project, was "the first Negro subsistence homestead community in the country."[1] It was also the only such community designed by a black architect and built by black workers under the control of a black construction superintendent. It was conceived and executed primarily by a determined group of Hampton residents.

In January 1934, Hampton Institute formed Hampton Homesteads, Inc., to apply for a federal grant to develop a neighborhood for black shipyard and industrial workers who were living in substandard housing. During the next year, while funding was sought, the group also searched for land on which to build the development. Several sites in Hampton and Newport News were considered and rejected before a hundred acres known as the Aberdeen tract, located in Newport News, was chosen. A local Sponsoring Committee of black residents was formed. A partial list of members included, at various times, T. C. Erwin,

principal of John Marshall High School, chairman; William M. Cooper, Director of Extension Education, Hampton Institute, secretary; L. F. Palmer, principal of Huntington High School; J. W. Dozier, Old Dominion Land Company; Eugene F. Dugger, Newport News Waterworks; John S. Smith, an insurance agent; A. E. Drake, an attorney; N. E. Freeman, secretary of the Longshoremen's Union; the Rev. Mr. C. E. Jones, pastor of Zion Baptist Church; Mrs. C. E. Jones; the Rev. Mr. A. A. Galvin, pastor of the First Baptist Church; and L. E. Wilson, county clerk. The spokesman for the group in dealing with federal agencies was Arthur Howe, the white president of Hampton Institute. In February 1935 the Subsistence Homestead Division awarded the organization $245,000 (later increased to $280,000) to build a hundred houses.[2]

Soon both the size and the scope of the project increased, however, as eventually 158 houses were constructed. Funds also were included for the purchase of twelve cows, twelve mules, a thousand hens, and twenty-five thousand chicks, as well as apple, peach, and pear trees, and strawberry and blackberry plants. The average lot size was half an acre, to allow for large gardens.
According to the Subsistence Homestead Division, the goals of the project were

> to help these people to leave their present environment, to utilize their spare time in the production of the food they require, and to lift them to a higher social and health level. . . . It is also hoped that this demonstration of homesteading will attract the attention of private building industries to the possibility of homestead development for persons belonging to the low-income group.[3]

On 30 October 1936, in an interoffice memorandum to Rexford G. Tugwell, administrator of the Resettlement Administration, Lewis B. Walton, acting director of the Special Plans Division, was more explicit:

> The Newport News Suburban Garden Project is planned for the housing of some 180 deserving negroes and their families having gainful employment in the ship building and other industries within the general area of Newport News and Hampton. It offers to Negro tenants now occupying highly inadequate Negro housing facilities of nearby cities the substitution of modern low-cost, well-planned garden homes in a rural environment located upon highly productive trucking land.
>
> The plot arrangement of this project provides for a concentrated group of living units surrounded by a greenbelt of forest land and trucking areas. This plan achieves at once the elimination of possible inter-racial neighborhood complications, the provision for future expansion, and also (by means of individual garden units and by the commercial cooperative operation of community trucking areas) provision

> for the production of supplemental income to a large proportion of the homesteaders.[4]

It was also expected that many, if not all, of the occupants would eventually purchase their dwellings.

The homestead corporation began accepting applications from local residents in April 1935. By late summer a hundred applications had been received. The suspension of funding in September 1935 caused great consternation among the supporters of the project in Hampton and Newport News. Arthur Howe wrote Rexford G. Tugwell, Under Secretary of Agriculture, on 1 November, asking that the funding be reinstated. "If it has been discontinued," Howe concluded, "I wish to make suitable apologies to the City and State officials, and particularly to the one hundred applicants whom we have, in good faith, continued to promise prospective homesteads."[5] Soon the funding was reinstated and the project progressed.

In July 1936 J. O. Walker, acting director of the management division, Resettlement Administration, appointed a black, William R. Walker, Jr., of Newport News, to be the manager of the project. In announcing the appointment, Walker cautioned,

> I feel the possibility of educational negro communities of this type will hinge in a major degree on our successful development of this undertaking and you will doubtless agree that the need exists to so great an extent that no steps should be neglected by those who are interested, in order to prevent any unfortunate circumstances which would conflict with the carrying on of undertakings of this nature.[6]

As it turned out, this was the only instance of a black appointed to a head supervisory role in such a project.[7]

There was a general understanding that both the project and the blacks involved in it were on trial. On 18 March 1935 Arthur Howe wrote to Charles E. Pynchon, an official in the Subsistence Homesteads Division, expressing his wish that "the building of the Homestead Project [would be] handled by Negro labor. . . . It would be a very fine thing if the whole project can speak for and of the ability of the Negro. . . . I think you can understand the reaction of many Negroes to the whole proposition if their people should have very little or no part in the construction." In announcing the 1 April 1936 deadline for the filing of applications for residency in the development, a local newspaper noted that the project "was being observed nationally in view of the fact that the action on the part of the government in purchasing 200 acres and providing $280,000 for the land and houses was the first of its kind in the history of the United States." The *Daily Press* observed that "the project is planned as the model Negro rural resettlement undertaking in the United States."[8]

In 1935 the corporation began acquiring land, and by January 1938 it had amassed 440 acres of forest and farmland near Aberdeen Road, between Hampton and Newport News, from the Old Dominion Land Company, John G. Curtis, Elijah Todd, L. B. Todd, Henrietta Todd, and Ella Todd. The land was in an area long occupied by whites. Despite Lewis B. Walton's hopeful memorandum of 30 October 1936, in which he stated his belief that the plan of the project would eliminate the complications of an interracial neighborhood, some nearby white residents objected to the project and the Virginia Peninsula Association of Commerce chose to investigate. In a report submitted to the association's board of directors on 9 March 1937, the investigating committee rejected as impracticable a suggestion that the homesteads be "converted into a residential community for white people." On his copy of the report, Arthur Howe wrote marginal notes disputing many of the assertions presented to the committee. Howe did agree, however, with the committee's conclusion that Aberdeen Gardens should not be expanded.[9]

Hilyard R. Robinson (1899-1986), of Howard University, was appointed the architect in charge of the project. Born in Washington, D.C., Robinson was perhaps the best-known black architect of his day. He held degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University, had studied city planning at the University of Berlin, and had served as head of the Department of Architecture at Howard University between 1926 and 1933. In 1934 he was appointed consulting architect for the National Capital Advisory Committee, and then senior architect for the Resettlement Administration. Among the many housing projects he designed, one of the most notable is the Langston Terrace Public Housing Project (1937), in Washington, D.C. Robinson also designed the Women's Dormitory at Hampton Institute and collaborated on the plan for Armstrong Hall there.[10]

The model houses at Aberdeen Gardens opened for inspection on 28 November 1936. The first occupants, Charles Jones and his family, moved into the community on 1 November 1937. Mrs. Jones still occupies the property at 6 Russell Road.

George S. Mitchell, regional director of the Farm Security Administration, wrote to Arthur Howe on 2 November 1937 concerning the names of the streets in Aberdeen Gardens:

> The seven streets at the Aberdeen Community are now named A, B, C, D, E, etc. I think they ought to have names that will serve to stimulate pride in the achievements of Negro leaders. Probably all or most of the names should be of citizens of Virginia men and women. On the Negro part of our Agricultural Project in Halifax County, North Carolina, most of the road names are standard suburban choices, but we picked for three of them names of North Carolina Negroes distinguished in the fields of education, commerce, and farming.[11]

Howe immediately consulted with members of the project Sponsoring Committee and wrote Mitchell on 4 November with a list of names. Mitchell approved them and on 9 December 1937, William R. Walker, Jr., the project manager, announced that the streets of Aberdeen Gardens had been renamed for "late respected and distinguished local Negroes":

> Lewis road (formerly A street) will be named for Matt N. Lewis, pioneer Negro journalist, founder and publisher of the *Newport News Star.*
>
> Weaver road (formerly B street) will be named for W. B. Weaver, founder and director, Weaver Home for Negro Orphan Children, Hampton.
>
> Walker road (formerly C street) will be named for Maggie L[ena] Walker, founder and president of St. Luke's Bank, Richmond.
>
> Mary Peake boulevard (formerly D street) will be named for Mary Peake who taught the first school for contraband children by the Emancipation Oak, on the grounds of Hampton Institute.
>
> Davis road (formerly E street) will be named for Daniel Webster Davis, minister, teacher, lecturer, poet, Richmond.
>
> Russell road (formerly F street) will be named for Archdeacon James S. Russell, founder and president, St. Paul's Normal and Industrial School, Lawrenceville.
>
> Langston boulevard (formerly G street) will be named for John Mercer Langston, first president of Virginia State College and one-time U.S. Congressman from Virginia.[12]

Aberdeen Gardens attracted an important visitor on 21 April 1938, when Eleanor Roosevelt spoke at Hampton Institute's seventieth anniversary ceremonies. After the program concluded, she was driven to Aberdeen Gardens with Arthur Howe and toured the interior of 4 West Lewis Road, William R. Walker's office.[13]

Aberdeen Gardens was officially dedicated on 8 May 1938 with appropriate ceremonies. After the participants sang "America the Beautiful," the Reverend A. A. Galvin, pastor of First Baptist Church in Newport News, gave the invocation. T. D. Lane, a resident of Aberdeen Gardens, welcomed the crowd and was followed by Arthur Howe, president of Hampton Institute, who introduced Sidney B. Hall, the principal speaker. Hall, state superintendent of public instruction, praised the development "as the product of an era when people are engrossed in the working out of social problems and relationships." George S. Mitchell, director of Region IV of the Farm Security Administration, followed Hall. The ceremonies concluded with hymns, additional remarks, and a benediction by the Reverend George S. Russell, the pastor of Queen Street Baptist Church in Hampton.[14]

A year after the opening ceremonies, Aberdeen Gardens became a resident training center for young black women. In June 1935 the National Youth Administration (NYA) was created as

a branch of the Works Progress Administration. At first the program relied on make-work projects to occupy young people, but soon the emphasis shifted to vocational training, largely due to the efforts of Walter Newman, Virginia's NYA director. Newman, later president of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, established resident training programs in trades, first for boys, then for girls. The training centers for young black men and women were located at Virginia State College and Aberdeen Gardens, respectively. At Aberdeen Gardens the program was designed "to train needy and particularly capable young Negro women for household employment in Virginia." Hampton Institute provided teachers, solicited financial contributions from the public, and advertised the program. The first twelve girls reported to Aberdeen Gardens by 19 April 1939, and the residency program continued for almost two years, to March 1941.[15]

Government planners hoped that Aberdeen Gardens would become a model for the residential construction industry and inspire the planning and building of similar communities throughout the country. Quite the opposite happened, however, particularly during the "urban renewal" decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Private builders, fearing the competition and higher standards of government-subsidized housing, remained hostile to it. And the planners of government housing instead chose for their model the high-rise apartment house, with its alleged cost effectiveness and the greater control it provided over its tenants. For the unfortunate inhabitants, however, the lack of human scale and suburban qualities in such massive apartment-block "projects" made them all but unlivable. The carefully planned communities, such as Aberdeen Gardens, that offered the residents attractive surroundings and the possibility of eventual home ownership, were forgotten. It was not until the 1980s that the federal government
rediscovered the principle that home ownership was usually accompanied by pride and a sense of community, and once again made public housing widely available for purchase by its occupants.[16]

During and after World War II, residential and commercial development in Newport News and Hampton began to engulf Aberdeen Gardens. Today the surrounding area is fully developed, largely with residential communities, but within Aberdeen Gardens itself the appearance, circulation patterns, and ambience of the district retain a high degree of integrity. Aberdeen Gardens remains a historical symbol of African-American pride, occupied mostly by original homesteaders and their children and grandchildren.

John S. Salmon

ENDNOTES

1. Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 123.

2. Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.; *Daily Press/The Times-Herald*, 7 Sept. 1985.

3. Quoted in the *Daily Press/The Times-Herald*, 7 Sept. 1985.

4. Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.

5. *Ibid.*

6. J. O. Walker, Washington, D.C., to Arthur Howe, Hampton, Va., 18 July 1936, in ibid.

7. Nicholas Natanson, *The Black Image in the New Deal: The Politics of FSA Photography* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 55.

8. Howe to Pynchon, 18 March 1935, in Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.; newspaper clipping, [March 1936?]; *Daily Press*, 14 August 1936.

9. Report, in Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.

10. Charles E. Brownell, Calder Loth, William M. S. Rasmussen, and Richard Guy Wilson, *The Making of Virginia Architecture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 408.

11. Mitchell, Raleigh, N.C., to Howe, Hampton, Va., 2 November 1937, in Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.

12. *Virginian-Pilot*, 9 December 1937.

13. Series of letters between Arthur Howe, Hampton, and the White House, Washington, D.C., 1937-1938, Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.

14. Program, Formal Opening, Aberdeen Gardens, May 8, 1938, Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.

15. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia*, 95-96; "National Youth Administration of Virginia Work-Experience Project for Negro Girls," Hampton Institute Press, 1939; *Daily Press* [Newport News], 19 April 1939; Arthur Howe, President, Hampton Institute, to "Friends in Virginia," [1940], in Hampton University, Archives Section, Hampton, Va.

16. Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 232-235.

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John H. Spencer, Chairman of the Department of Architecture, Hampton University.

The staff of Hampton University Archives, and Architecture School.

Glen Leiner, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division, Government of the District of Columbia. Phone Interview, October 25, 1993. He has produced a video on Hilyard Robinson's Langston Terrace Housing Project and is perusing further research. Virginia State Library, Photograph Archives. University of Pennsylvania, University Archives, Archivist Gail Pietrzyk.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (continued)

UTM References (continued)

Zone	Easting	Northing
5-18	375260	4098570
6-18	375020	4098460
7-18	374670	4099060

Verbal Boundary Description

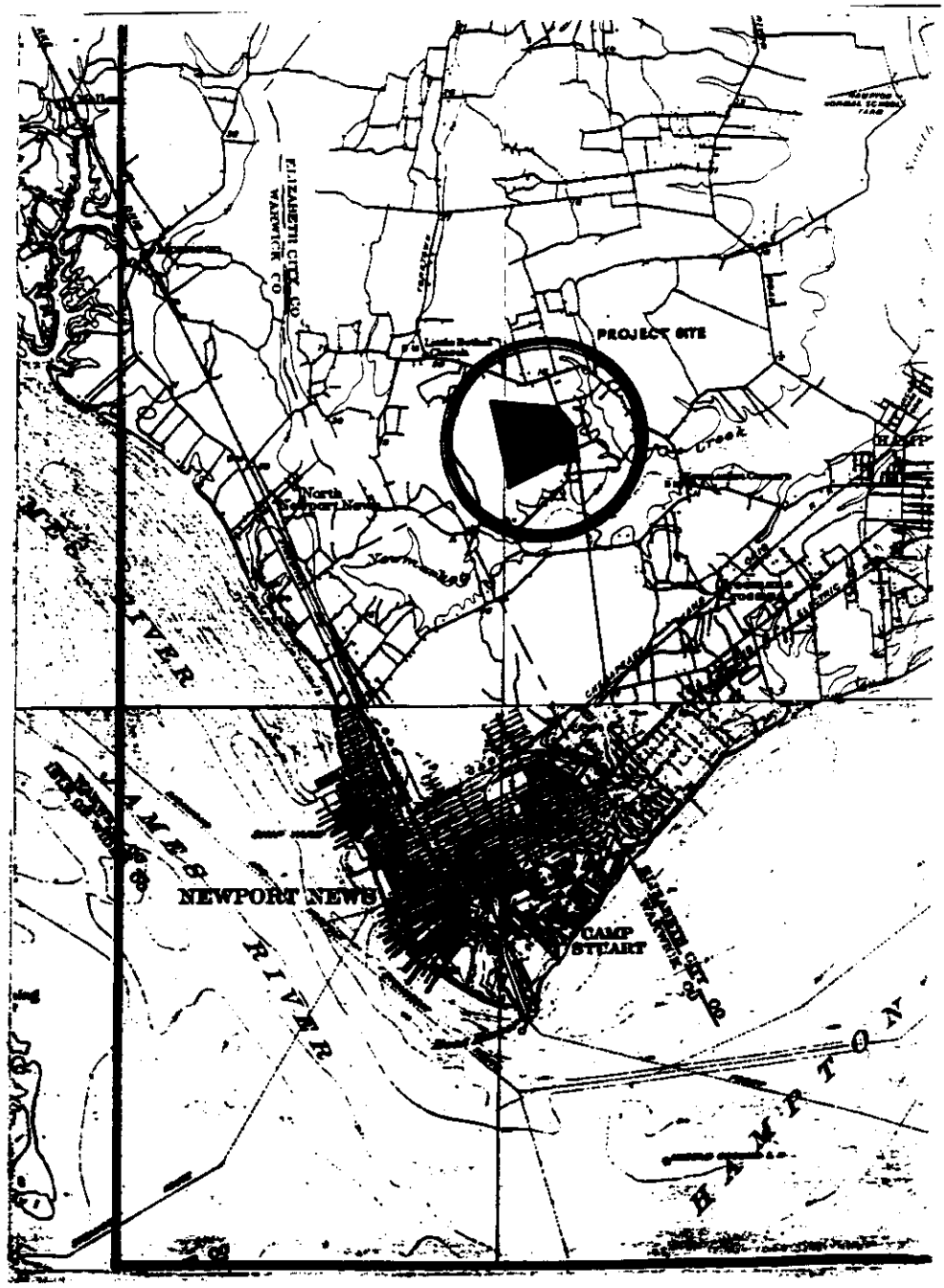
The boundaries of Aberdeen Gardens Historic District are indicated by the solid black line on the accompanying City of Hampton tax parcel map 3P.

Boundary Justification

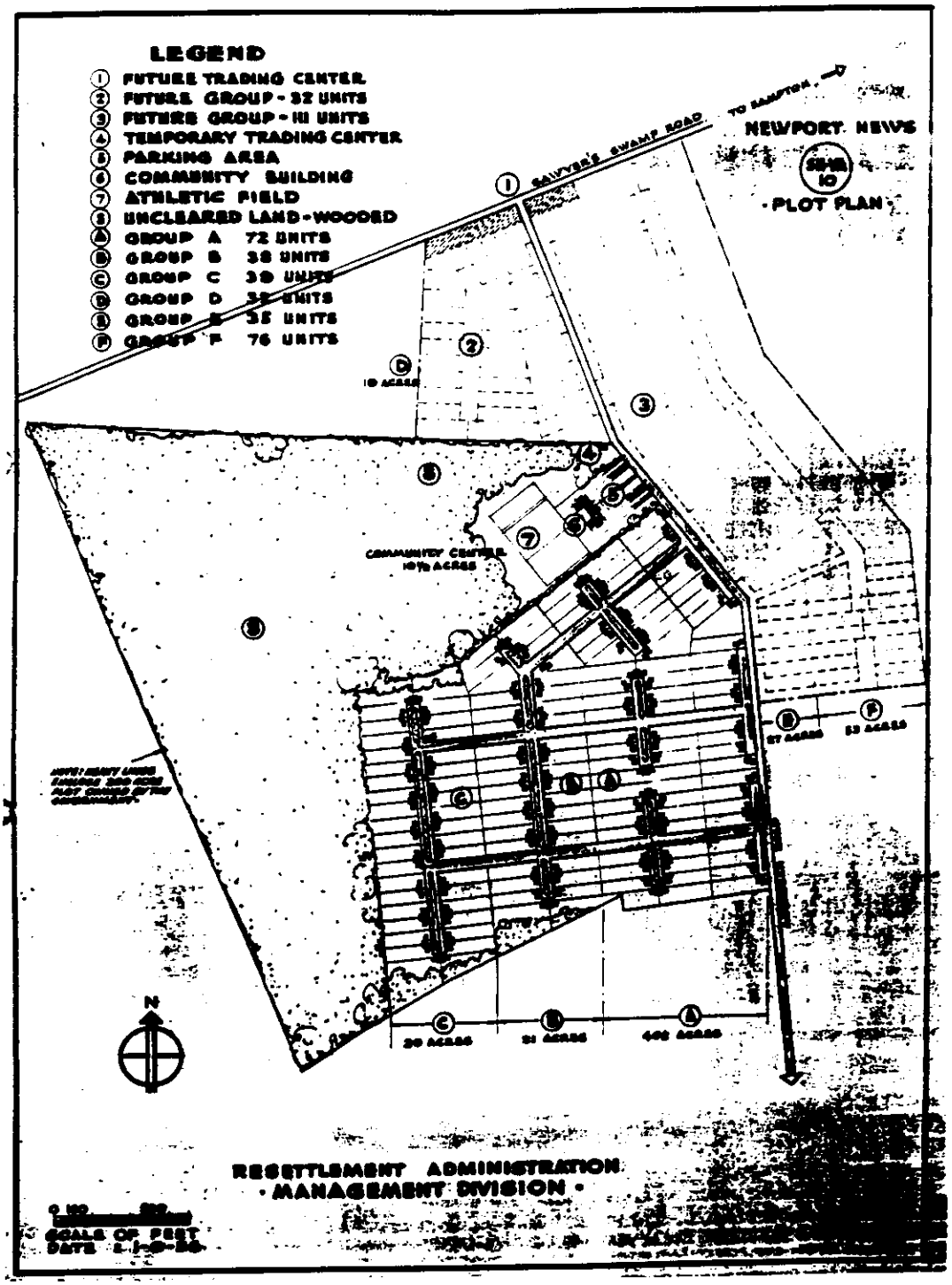
The original scope of the Resettlement Administration project included the use of 440 acres of land. Aberdeen Road which presently runs through the historic district was the original access road to the three farm tracts purchased for the project. The boundaries for the Aberdeen Gardens Historic District include only the 110 acres of land where Aberdeen Gardens buildings were built as well as the last original farm house, referred to as the Johnson Farm. This Queen Anne vernacular building served as a residence for one of the resettled families who maintained a truck farm and provided Aberdeen Gardens with fresh produce. While some noncontributing buildings are included along Aberdeen Road, they are recent buildings constructed on subdivisions of original house tracts. The other subdivided residential areas surrounding the district, East Aberdeen Gardens, North Aberdeen Gardens, Granger Court, Granger Court East, and Greenwood Farms were originally part of a planned Greenbelt, but were developed for residential use after World War II.

ATTACHMENT GROUP 1

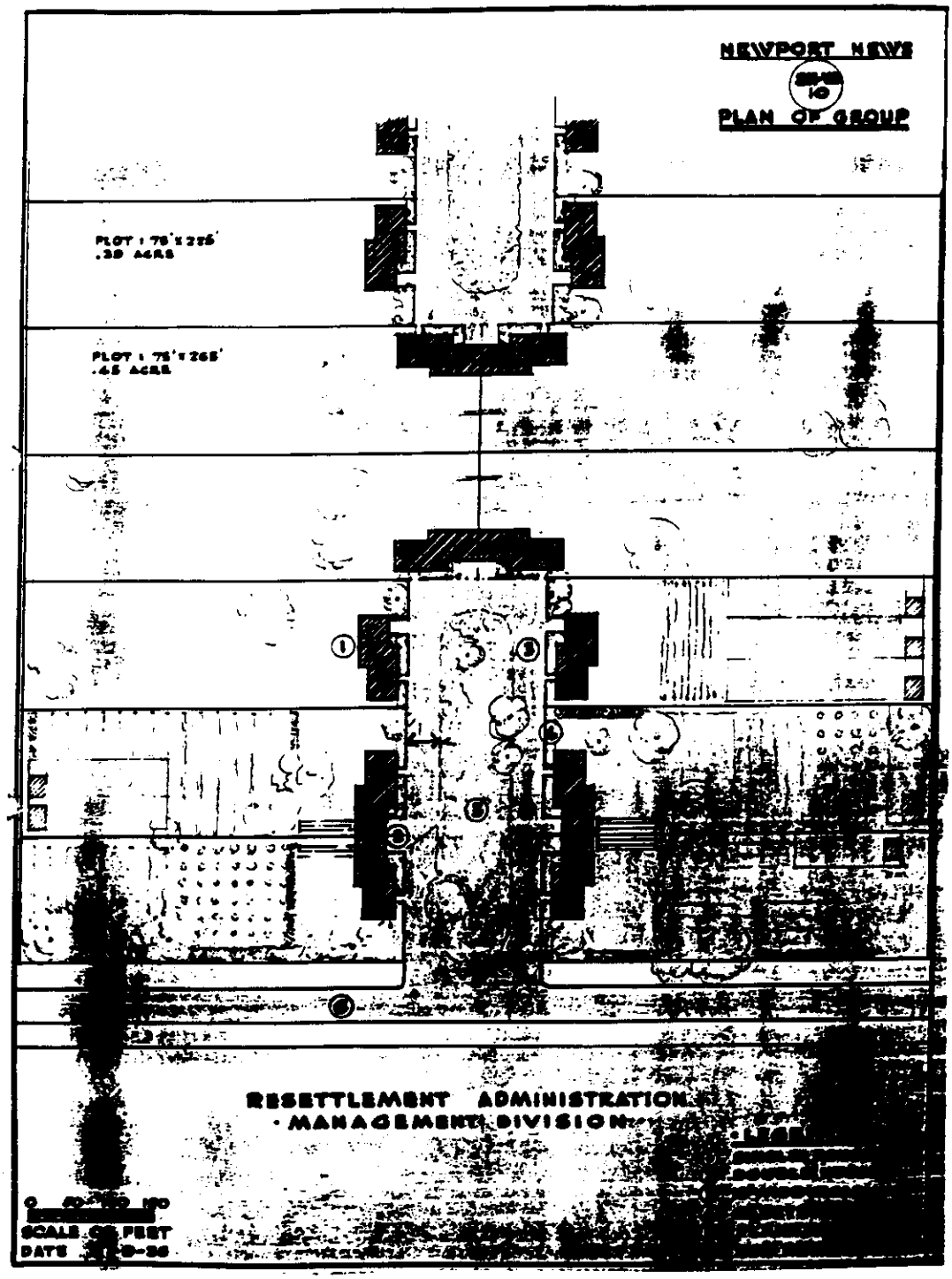
1.A "Project Site," c. 1934. Hampton University Archives.



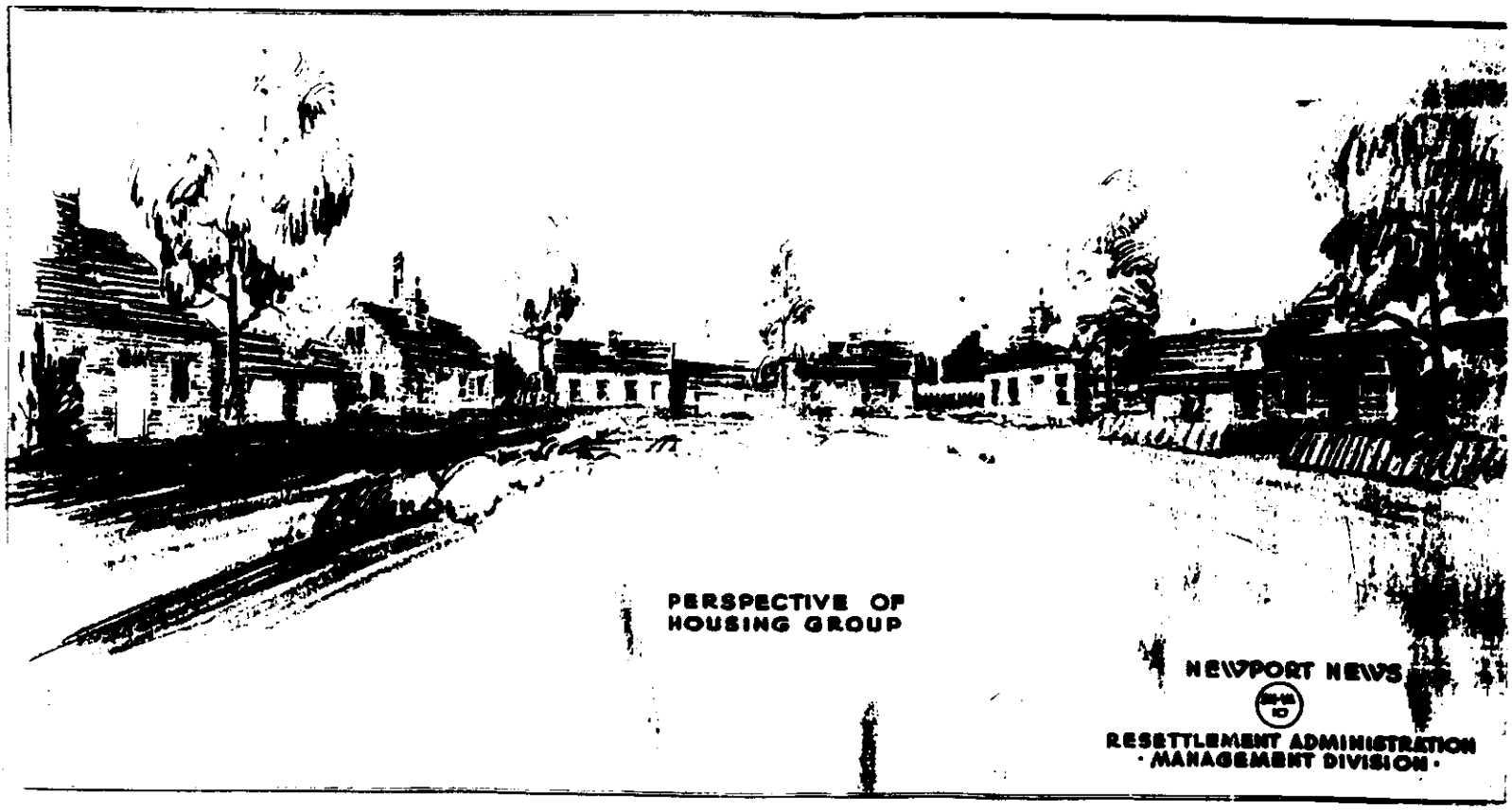
1.B "Plot Plan," c. 1934 (partially realized). Hampton University Archives.



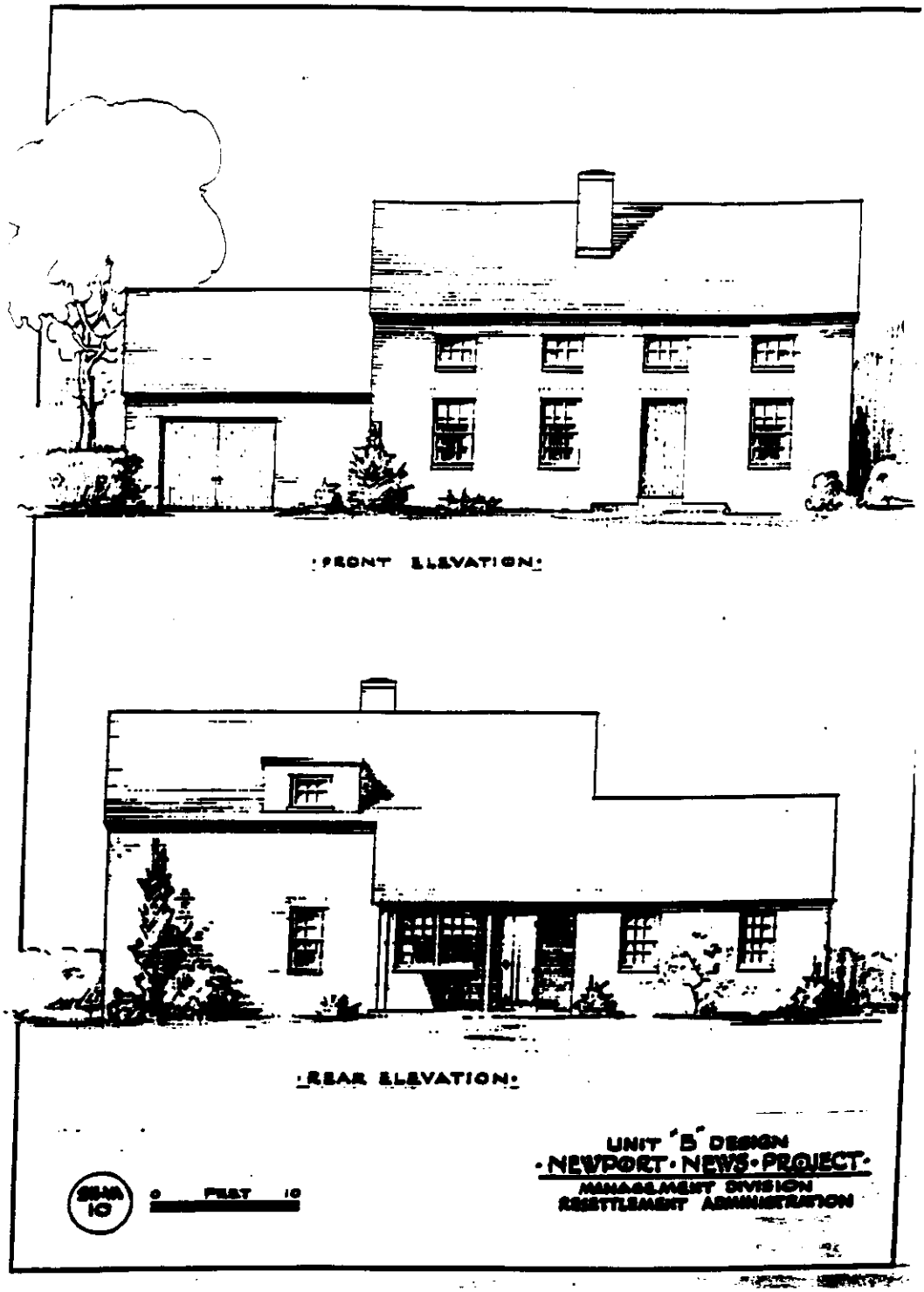
1.C "Plan of Group," c. 1934 (partially realized). Hampton University Archives.



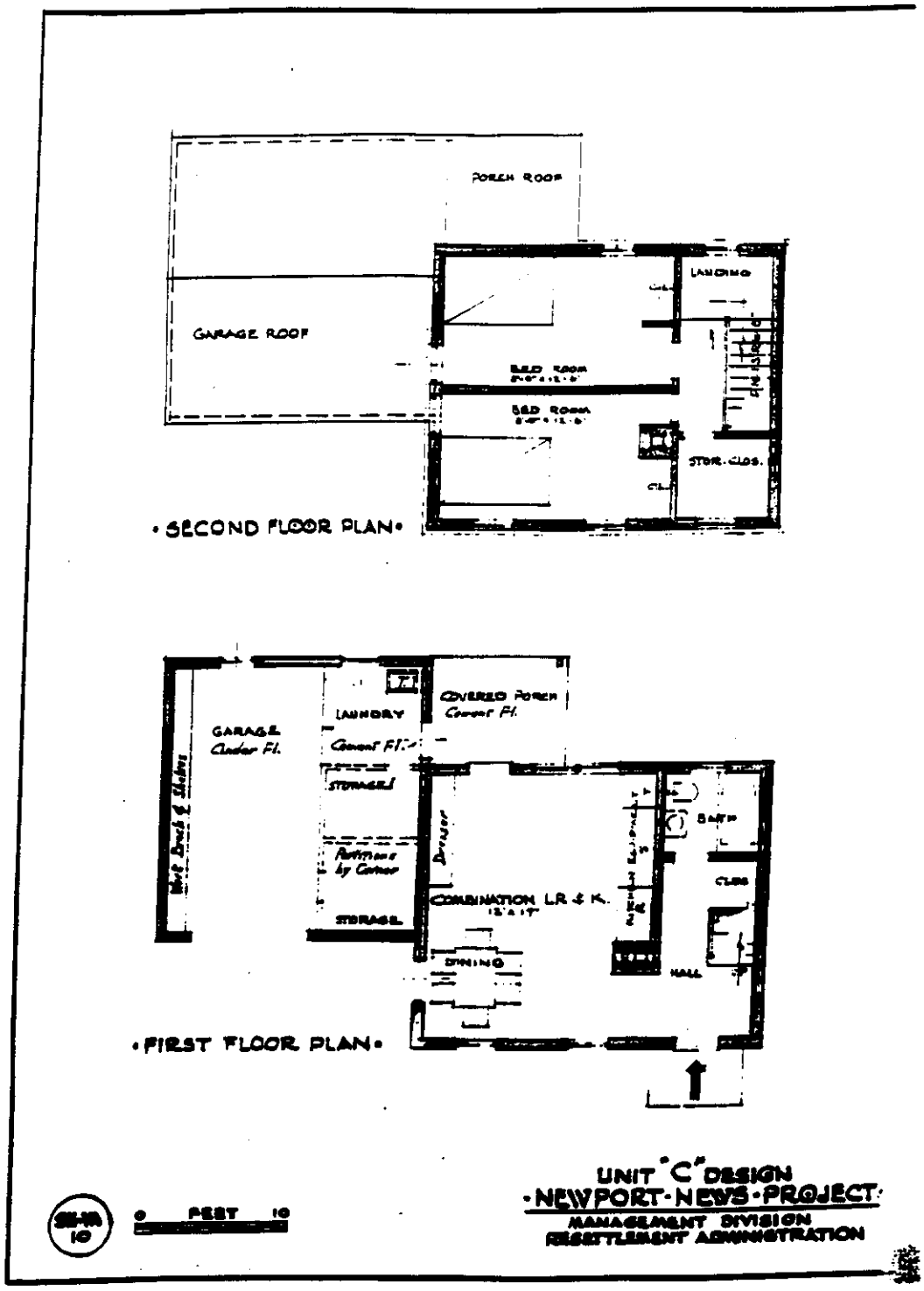
1.D "Perpective of Housing Group," c. 1934 (partially realized). Hampton University Archives.



1.E "Unit B Design," elevations, c. 1934, (partially realized). Hampton University Archives.



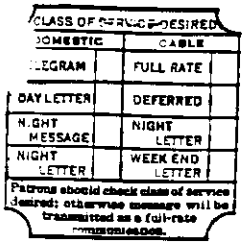
1.F "Unit C Design," floor plan, c. 1934 (partially realized). Hampton University Archives.



ATTACHMENT 4

Copy of Western Union Telegram from Arthur Howe, president of Hampton Institute, to Eleanor Roosevelt. Dated July 1934, approximately four years before she would visit the project.

From Hampton University Archives



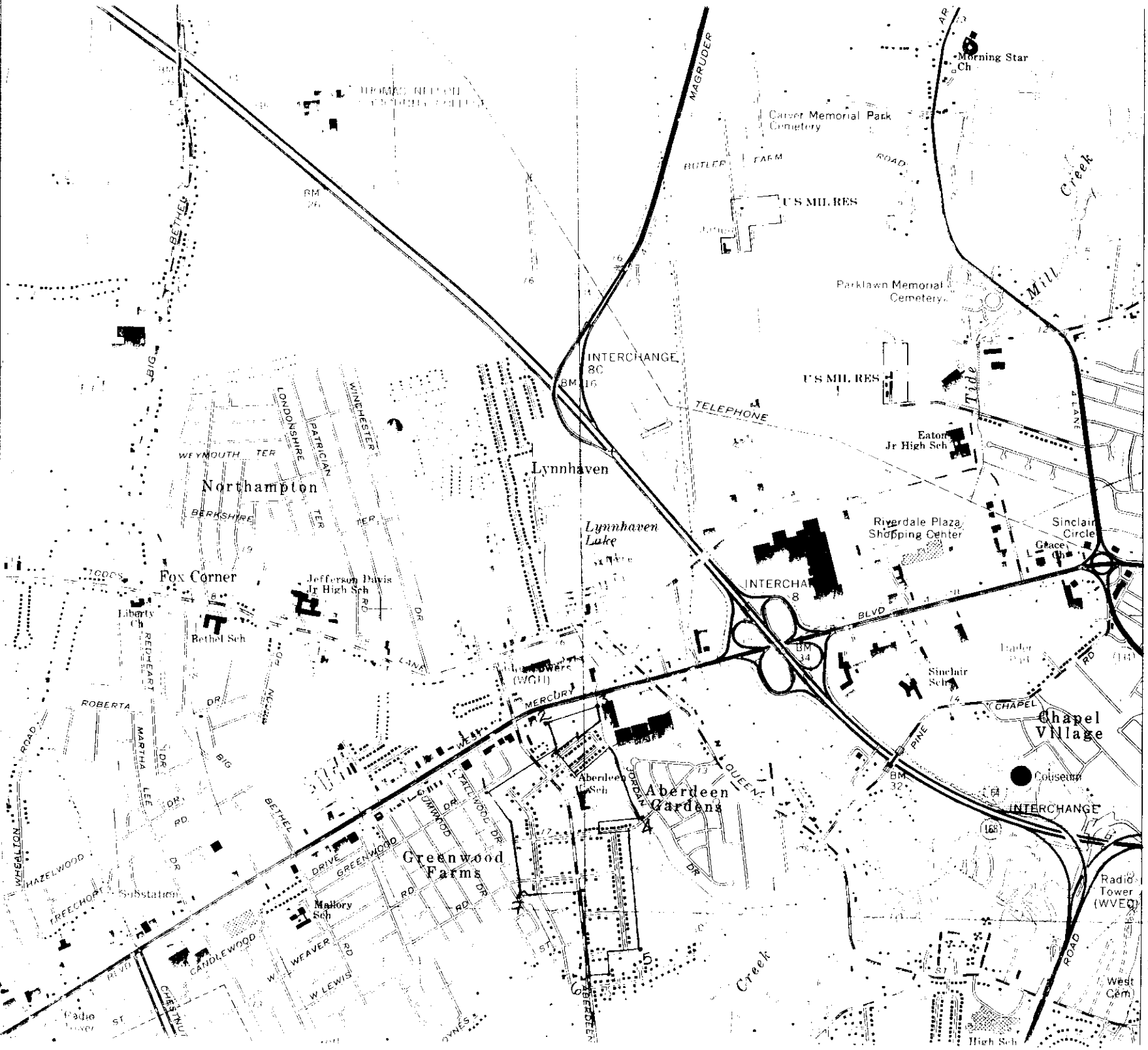
COPY OF WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

July 1934 - Telluride, Colorado

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The Whitehouse
Washington, D.C.

Knowing your interest in subsistence homesteads I wire to urge Negro projects be approved and developed separately stop Believe greatest justice and goodwill can best be secured in this way.

Arthur Howe
President, Hampton Institute



ABERDEEN GARDEN
VDHR FILE #
114-46

	Z/E	/ N
1-	18/374500	/409960
2-	18/374790	/409992
3-	18/375080	/410000
4-	18/375280	/40994
5	18/375260	/40985
6-	18/375020	/40984
7-	18/374670	/40991