

**CULTURAL-HISTORIC SURVEY FOR THE PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF BEECHER  
TERRACE, LOUISVILLE, JEFFERSON COUNTY, KENTUCKY**

KHC Project No. FY17-2707

Prepared for:  
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LEAD AGENCY:  
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Project No. PR17001  
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**December 4, 2017**

## ABSTRACT

Corn Island Archaeology LLC prepared a Cultural-Historic Survey for the proposed demolition of Beecher Terrace public housing development in Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky. The City of Louisville received a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grant as well as public and private dollars for the transformation of the Russell neighborhood and the phase demolition and reconstruction of the Beecher Terrace public housing development. The investigation was requested by Louisville Metro Housing Authority to fulfill compliance requirements relative to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The Area of Potential Effects for this project was determined in consultation with the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office located in the Kentucky Heritage Council. The Area of Potential Effects includes the Beecher Terrace public housing development (bounded by W. Jefferson Street to the north, S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, W. Muhamad Ali Boulevard to the south, and S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street to the west), as well as the surrounding resources with direct visibility of the housing complex. A total of 10 properties with 69 resources were documented within the Area of Potential Effects, including the 60 associated with Beecher Terrace, three National Register of Historic Places-listed resources, one resource is recommended as a contributing resource to a National Register group, three previously-documented buildings with undetermined National Register eligibility, and three newly-documented resources (including Beecher Terrace).

Corn Island recommends that the Beecher Terrace public housing development (JFL-01) is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its association with public housing development from just after World War II in 1946 to Urban Renewal in the 1970s. JFL-485 (Baxter Square) is recommended eligible as a part of the National Register-listed Olmsted Park System of Louisville. Corn Island recommends that the three listed buildings, JFWR-1748 (Fire Department Headquarters), JFWR-1749 (St. Peter's German Evangelical Church), and JFWR-1752 (Church of Our Merciful Savior), remain listed on the National Register. JFWR-3796, the Baxter Community Building, is recommended eligible as a member of a group. JFL-318, JFL-319, JFWR-3830 (warehouse), and JFWR-3831 (Porter Paint factory) are recommended not eligible.

Corn Island recommends that the proposed demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development will have an **Adverse Effect** on this recommended-eligible resource. Consultation with the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office located in the Kentucky Heritage Council is required to mitigate this adverse effect. Corn Island recommends that the proposed demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development will have an **Adverse Effect** on JFWR-1749 (St. Peter's German Evangelical Church), JFWR-1752 (Church of Our Merciful Savior), and JFWR-3796 (Baxter Community Building) as they have served the Beecher Terrace and Russell neighborhoods.

Corn Island recommends that the proposed demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development will have **No Adverse Effect** on JFWR-1748 (Fire Department Headquarters) as it does not impact the building's architectural significance as its association with its Art Deco design or the Works Project Administration; JFL-318; JFL-319; JFL-485 (Baxter Square); JFWR-3830 (warehouse); or JFWR-3831 (Porter Paint factory). No further work is recommended.

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Corn Island Archaeology LLC conducted a cultural historic survey for the proposed demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development. The Beecher Terrace public housing development is located in Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky (**Figure 1**). The survey was conducted in April 2017. The project area encompasses approximately 32 acres and includes the Beecher Terrace public housing development and buildings with direct visibility of the housing development (**Figure 2**).

The survey was requested by Louisville Metro Housing Authority. The City of Louisville received a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grant as well as public and private dollars for the transformation of the Russell neighborhood and the phase demolition and reconstruction of the Beecher Terrace public housing development. The investigation was required to fulfill compliance requirements relative to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966. The purpose of the demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development is to construct mixed-income housing and commercial space as part of the transformation of the Russell neighborhood.

### COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

The cultural-historic survey was requested to meet federal compliance requirements prior to the construction of the project, which is a federal undertaking under Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended. Section 106 requires that federal agencies or federally funded projects take into consideration the direct and indirect effects of the undertaking on historic properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) prior to the issuance of a federal permit or license or the expenditure of any funds for construction. The Housing and Urban Development Administration (HUD) is the lead agency of record.

### AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The project area for the proposed demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development is the boundaries of the development itself. The Beecher Terrace public housing development is bound by W. Jefferson Street to the north, S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard to the south, and S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. In consultation with the Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC)/State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the APE was determined to extend to buildings with direct visibility of the project area (**Figure 2**). It is important to note that the railroad tracks on the west boundary are outside the APE.



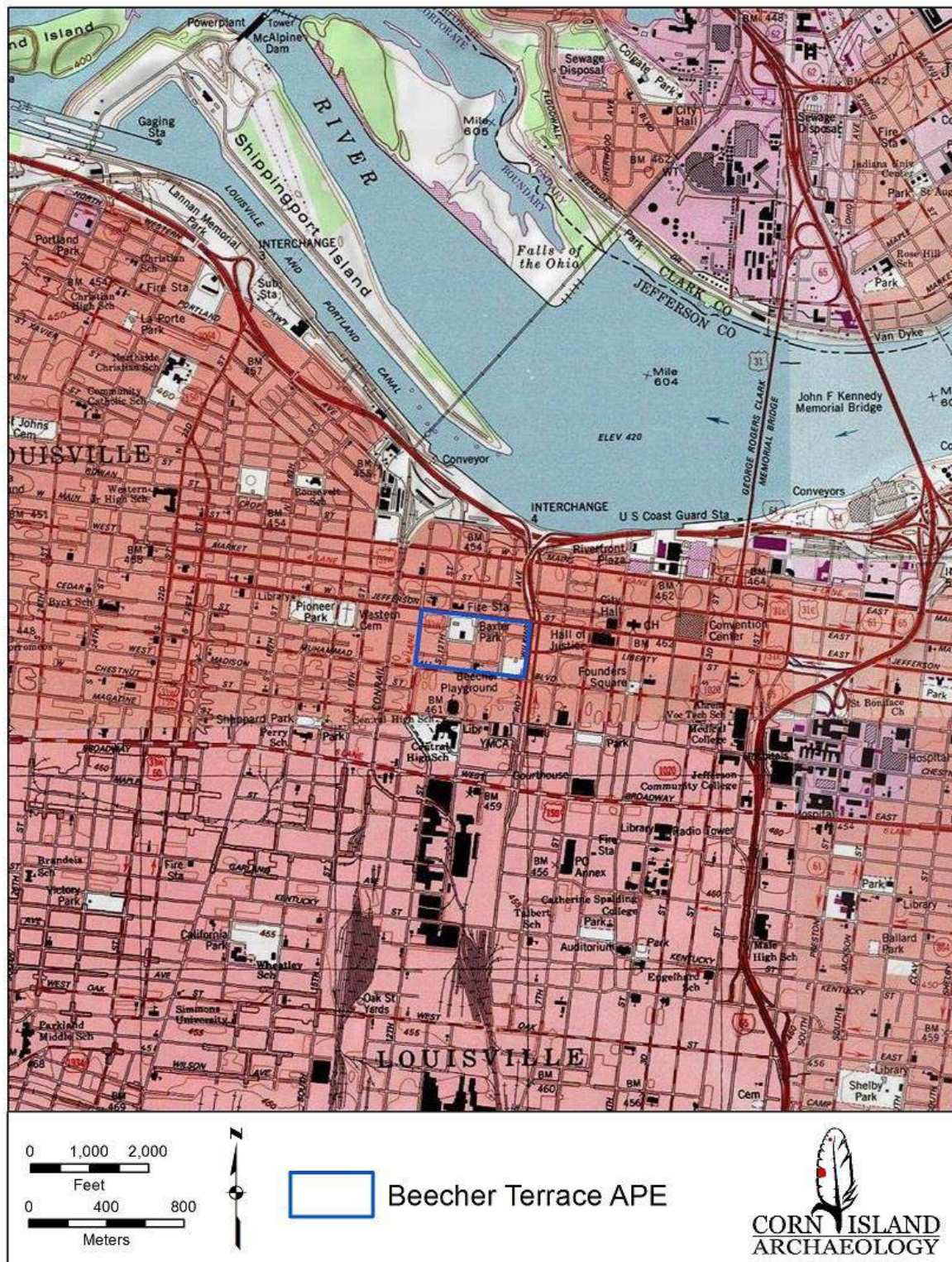
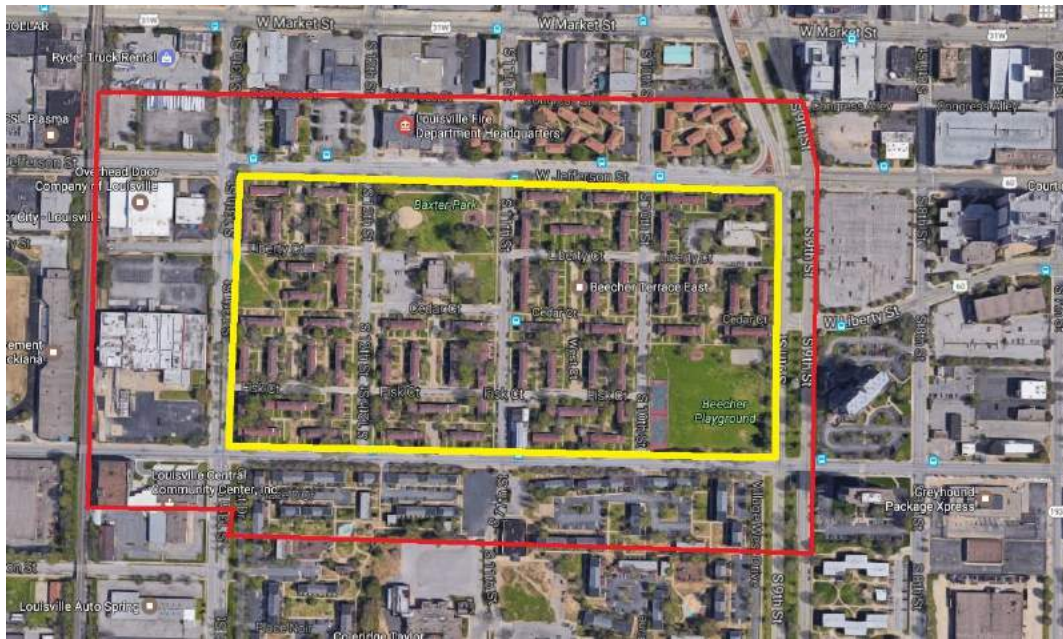


Figure 1. Location of the Beecher Terrace public housing development.





**Figure 2. The direct project area of the Beecher Terrace public housing development is outlined in yellow, while the cultural-historic APE buffer is outlined in red.**

# 2

## METHODOLOGY

The investigation was completed using guidelines set forth in the *Secretary of the Interior Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* and *Specifications for Conducting Fieldwork and Preparing Cultural Resource Assessment Reports*. The Principal Investigator (PI), Mathia N. Scherer, meets the requirements for professional architectural historian and historian as detailed in the Secretary of the Interior standards. The investigation included a records check, review of maps and literature, Property Valuation Administration (PVA) records, and survey.

### PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

Corn Island completed a KHC records search of the APE on 26 April 2017 to identify previously documented above-ground resources. A total of eight resources were identified as previously documented (**Table 1**).

**Table 1. Resources Within the APE Previously Documented**

Survey Number	Resource	NRHP Status
JFWR-1748	Fire Department Headquarters	NRHP-listed
JFWR-1749	St. Peter's German Evangelical Church	NRHP-listed
JFWR-1752	Church of Our Merciful Savior	NRHP-listed
JFWR-3796	Beecher Terrace Community Building	Undetermined
JFWR-3830	Warehouse	Undetermined
JFWR-3831	Porter Paint Factory	Undetermined
JFWR-3833	Warehouse	Undetermined

### SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In April 2017, Corn Island architectural historian, Mathia N. Scherer, surveyed the project area and buffer zone for historic resources over 50 years of age. Each potential historic resource was photographed, and a preliminary assessment of integrity and NRHP-eligibility conducted. General landscape photographs were also taken.

Standing resources are considered eligible for the NRHP if they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and meets Criteria A, B, or C on the local, state, or national level.

**Criterion A:** associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

**Criterion B:** associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

**Criterion C:** embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values,

or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

KHC inventory forms, photographs, and mapping as well as site plans as needed were prepared using guidelines set forth by KHC in *Specifications for Conducting Fieldwork and Preparing Cultural Resource Assessment Reports*, revised in 2006, and in *Instructions for Completing the Individual Buildings Survey Form*.

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Corn Island performed field survey on all built-resources within the APE over 50 years of age. A total of 10 properties with 68 resources were documented (**Table 2**).

Beecher Terrace (JFL-01) is recommended eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion A, for its association with the development of public housing in Louisville. The proposed demolition will have an **Adverse Effect** on this resource. Mitigation is required with KHC.

Corn Island recommends that JFWR-1749, JFWR-1752, and JFWR-3796 retain their eligibility or NRHP status. The proposed demolition will have an **Adverse Effect** on these resources. Mitigation is required with KHC.

Corn Island recommends that the project has **No Adverse Effect** on JFWR-1748 due to the scope of its significance in association with its architecture rather than its role in this neighborhood. No further work is recommended.

Corn Island recommends that the project has **No Adverse Effect** on JFL-318, JFL-319, JFWR-3830, JFWR-3831, and JFWR-3833 due to recommendations of not eligible. No further work is recommended.

**Table 2. Newly Surveyed and Resurveyed Sites in the APE**

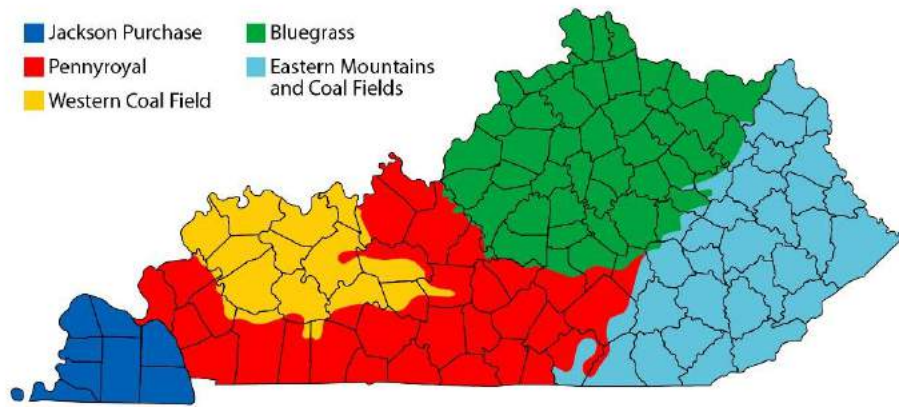
Survey Number	Resource	NRHP Status
JFL-01	Beecher Terrace	Recommended eligible
JFL-318	Louisville Central Community Centers	Not eligible
JFL-319	Mini-Versity Child Development Center and Louisville Central Community Center	Not eligible
JFWR-1748	Fire Department Headquarters	NRHP-listed
JFWR-1749	St. Peter's German Evangelical Church	NRHP-listed
JFWR-1752	Church of Our Merciful Savior	NRHP-listed
JFWR-3796	Baxter Community Building	Recommended eligible as part of a group
JFWR-3830	Warehouse	Undetermined
JFWR-3831	Porter Paint Factory	Undetermined
JFWR-3833	Warehouse	Undetermined

# 3

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC CONTEXT

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

The project area is located within the Outer Bluegrass cultural landscape region, as defined by the KHC/SHPO (**Figure 3**). The area, which is just west of central downtown Louisville, is situated in south of the Ohio River.



**Figure 3. Kentucky's cultural landscape regions map.**

Bounded by the Ohio River to the north and the west within the Outer Bluegrass, West Louisville is relatively flat and low-lying. Prior to development, natural drainage included Upper Paddy's Run, Lower Paddy's Run, Mill Creek, Dry Run, and many other smaller creeks (Bergmann 1858). The first settlement of the area included truck farms, which took advantage of the streams and the natural open landscape without dramatically altering it (Waltrous 1977). Following the Civil War, row housing crept farther out of the historic core of the city. In turn, the city extended infrastructure necessary for residential subdivisions. "Beginning in the early 1870s, the large, brick-lined sewers were built to swiftly convey storm water, along with sanitary waste, directly to the Ohio River. As the new Combined Sewer System (CSS) came online, the natural, pre-settlement streams were filled in and covered over with new development. The natural surface drainage system was literally wiped off the map and replaced with this underground network of pipes" (Third Rock Consultants 2010).

Though the region has always been affected by flooding, the severity of these events increased with each phase of the city's development particularly after the construction of the CSS. As measured at McAlpine Locks and Dam Upper gauge, flood stage is 23 feet, moderate flooding is at 30 feet, and major flooding is at 38 feet. In addition to moderate floods through the years, ten major floods occurred in 1883, 1884, 1907, 1913, 1933, 1937, 1945, 1948, 1964, and 1997. In 1910, the Commissioners of Sewerage Report noted problems resulting from the CSS and stated "the cause of the insufficiency of this sewer and its branches is the large increase in the impervious area of the watershed brought about by the reconstruction of old macadam streets

and alleys with modern materials such as granite, asphalt and vitrified brick, as well as by the construction of many new streets and alleys." (Third Rock 2010:1). In 1948, the city began constructing a concrete and earthen floodwall, which was completed in 1988 (Third Rock 2010).

Shawnee Park is situated at the corner of West Broadway and Southwestern Parkway. These roads provide the main access to the park. The park is within easy access of Interstate 264 and Interstate 64. The setting for the park is residential in nature, with most neighborhoods dating from the early-to-mid twentieth century. The parkways and associated development were carefully regulated by the Louisville Board of Park Commissioners until their disbandment in the early 1940s. The city's department of public works became the primary caretaker after this time.

## **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Extant resources in this APE were assessed based on several themes. These themes included:

- The development of the City of Louisville and Jefferson County;
- Works Project Administration (WPA) effort in Louisville;
- Public Housing and the Development of Beecher Terrace; and,
- Architecture.

Several of these themes are explored below.

### **Euro-American Settlement**

Euro-American historical exploration of the area began during the 1770s. The Falls of the Ohio area, at present-day Louisville, was surveyed in 1773 by Thomas Bullitt. The area was re-examined the following year by John Floyd. As early as 1774, the area along Pond Creek was explored and mapped. This occurred largely due to its location along the Wilderness Road, one of the major thoroughfares of westward expansion. This roadway extended through Jefferson County, paralleling the route of present-day Preston Highway. By the time the American Revolution erupted, pioneer leaders including Bullitt, James Harrod, Daniel Boone, and Michael Stoner were establishing small settlements in the interior of Kentucky (Kramer 2001).

Land grants spurred settlement, as did a number of circumstances occurring on the East Coast. As early as 1774, land east of the Alleghenies had been claimed, land prices had risen, and much land had become exhausted (Crews 1987). After the Revolution, an economic depression and subsequent tax hike contributed to migration (Crews 1987). One of the earliest documented settlements in the area began in July 1776, when Samuel Pearman, of the Virginia-based Shane, Sweeney, and Company, travelled to the mouth of Salt River. The party claimed several thousand acres along the Ohio and Salt Rivers (Kramer 2001). General George Rogers Clark landed at Corn Island at the Falls of the Ohio in 1778 with a regiment of troops and several families.

Shortly afterwards, Clark and his regiment left behind the families on Corn Island as they began their campaign in the Illinois country and eventually captured the British forts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes. A year later, the settlers on Corn Island moved to the Kentucky mainland and established the town of Louisville (Kramer 1980). Much of the land surrounding the new settlement was granted to military personnel in lieu of monetary compensation. Two years after settling Louisville, Virginia granted the town a charter. Louisville was designated the seat of justice for the county (Yater 1992:464). Kentucky remained part of Virginia until 1792, at

which time it was incorporated. Jefferson County was one of three original counties of Kentucky. Named for Thomas Jefferson, it was originally created in 1780 by the Virginia General Assembly. The population of the county concentrated around the Falls of the Ohio River and extended into tributary streams, notably Beargrass Creek.

Rivers and streams provided the easiest and earliest routes of transportation for travelers. Along with buffalo traces and Native American trails, these features served as the primary arteries of travel. At those places where streams and roads intersected, villages became established. This occurred not only because of the intersection of various routes but because it was in these locations that goods and passengers were loaded and unloaded as they changed the mode of conveyance (Kramer 2001:59). The non-navigable streams within Jefferson County were at the center of both agricultural and industrial development. Large plantation type farms with fortified settlements called stations were constructed in the eastern portion of Jefferson County until the threat of Indian attacks diminished in the early nineteenth century. Over time, these larger farms were divided and sold off as the county grew.

According to Kleber (1992), African American populations entered Kentucky during the years of early exploration as slaves. By the time of the first census, 1790, the population of African Americans in Jefferson County included 903 slaves and 5 freemen (Hudson 1976). Almost from the beginning, the African American population was higher in the Louisville area than in the rest of the state, although the average slave-holding family in the Louisville area owned just 4.3 slaves—a much lower number than the averages for North Carolina (6.7), Maryland (7.5), and South Carolina (12.1). In the Louisville area, the main industries using slave labor included hemp plantations such as Farmington and salt works such as Mann's Lick. The largest percentage of African American population prior to the Civil War was in 1820, when 4,824 slaves and 29 freemen comprised 38.1 percent of the Jefferson County population.

During the initial settlement period, Jefferson County saw the most growth in the east along Beargrass Creek and in Louisville. Settlement patterns in the south of the county started slow and originally centered around salt licks and salt springs found near the Salt River. These naturally occurring salt springs would attract wildlife, and the salt could be extracted for use or trade. One of these salt-processing areas was at Mann's Lick in present-day Fairdale near the project area. This miniature industrial site would have been filled with rows of iron kettles to boil the salt out of water drawn from the springs. Often slaves were the primary labor source for this process. Roads began to appear from the more settled areas to the salt licks. Portions of the road to Mann's Lick can still be found in southern Jefferson County, although the name had been contracted to Manslick (Yater 1979:18).

### **Jefferson County**

Jefferson County is located in north-central Kentucky along the Ohio River. The county is situated mainly within the Outer Bluegrass Region of Kentucky, although a portion of the county is situated within the Knobs region. Jefferson County is part of the Ohio Valley Urban Centers Landscape Region, and Louisville subregion as defined by the KHC SHPO (Pollack 2008) (**Figure 4**).





**Figure 4. Kentucky's cultural landscape regions.**

Jefferson County is one of the three original counties in Kentucky, being created from a part of Virginia in May 1780 by the Virginia General Assembly. The 9,000-acre county is named after Thomas Jefferson and was one portion of the vast Virginia holdings, which ran from the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River (Morgan and Jett 2002). Like much of the territory west of the Appalachian Mountains, Native American tribes used the area as a hunting ground and for temporary habitation. European exploration of the area had been minimal until the mid-1700s and Louisville itself remained relatively untouched until the Fincastle Survey in 1774, in which roughly one-third of the county was surveyed (Morgan and Jett 2002:1). While little came of the survey immediately, by 1778 settlement was spurred by land grants.

In May 1778, George Rogers Clark traveled from Pittsburgh with 175 militiamen and numerous settlers. Clark was to launch an offensive to gain control of Canadian lands (Indiana and Illinois) while the settlers desired the surveyed land of Jefferson County (Kleber 1992). General George Rogers Clark landed at Corn Island at the Falls of the Ohio in 1778 with a regiment of troops and several families. Shortly afterwards, Clark and his regiment left behind the families on Corn Island as they began their campaign in the Illinois country and eventually captured the British forts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes. A year later, the settlers on Corn Island moved to the Kentucky mainland and established the town of Louisville. They named their settlement in 1779 after French King Louis XVI, who allied himself and France with the colonial cause after the outbreak of the American Revolution (Kleber 1992:574). Two years after settling Louisville, Virginia granted the town a charter. Louisville was designated the seat of justice for the county (Yater 1992). The population of the county concentrated around the Falls of the Ohio River and extended into tributary streams, notably Beargrass Creek.

### **The New Deal in Kentucky, 1933-1943**

The state of Kentucky participated fully in New Deal programs during the 1930s. Despite political struggles between Washington and the state, as well as friction among leaders within the state, as a whole the New Deal experience was positive.

All of the major New Deal agencies were active in Kentucky. The PWA, for example, conducted 600 non-federal works projects that included waterworks, schools, roads, trash incinerators, and power plants. The WPA was responsible for channeling “more than \$162 million through thousands of state projects and had as many as seventy-two thousand Kentuckians on the payroll in the September 1938 peak” (Blakey 1986:59). The majority of these projects were heavy construction of roads, schools, government buildings, and recreational facilities, though a significant sum was also spent on professional work, such as art projects, writer’s projects, and white-collar work projects. The CCC, for their part, were responsible for the development of numerous state parks including Cumberland Falls, Levi Jackson, and Pine Mountain State Parks, and fire prevention work on federal and private forest lands. A total of 80,000 Kentuckians served in the CCC over the life of the program, of which ten percent were required to be African Americans (Blakey 1986:80).

The bequest of the Kentucky’s New Deal was to put people back to work, and to construct solid buildings and structures as testament to these difficult times. Put simply, the New Deal left a lasting legacy on Kentucky’s landscape that includes: new forests, state parks, recreational facilities, government buildings, schools, roads, streets, bridges, airports, entire communities, water and sewer systems, and nearly any other type public works.

### **The Works Progress (Projects) Administration (WPA)**

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) is one of the best known New Deal programs. During the program’s existence, just about every county and most communities were touched by some type of WPA project.

The WPA was officially created on May 6, 1935 by Presidential Executive Order 7034 (Natural Resources Planning Board 1939:303). Conceived as a work-relief program, the WPA provided jobs to the unemployed on relief rolls. Work accomplished by the agency focused on public projects sponsored by federal, state, and local agencies. WPA projects ranged from constructing public buildings and facilities to “white collar” projects like educational, clerical, and artistic related undertakings. By August 1939, when the program was renamed the Work Projects Administration, more than 8 billion dollars had been allocated for WPA projects and more than 3.2 million people had been employed by the program (Natural Resources Planning Board 1939:303). At the time of its dissolution in 1943, the WPA had become one of the nation’s largest and most expensive relief program (Blakey 1986:58).

Harry Hopkins, the former director of CWA and FERA, was named director of the newly created WPA. Hopkins’ background was in social work. He had also administered then Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA) program in New York State. This program provided state money to local communities for the care of the unemployed (Adams 1939:6). As President, FDR instituted a similar program at the federal level first with the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Federal Works Administration (FERA), and then more permanently with WPA. The federal government recognized that local and state authorities had to contend with both the unemployed and the unemployable. With the WPA, a system was created that provided work to employable people on relief rolls (Blakey 1986:58).

The WPA was organized as a bureaucracy of national, regional, state, district offices, and finally local offices for administration of work projects (Howard 1943:109). Recognizing that communities could best identify needed projects, the federal government enabled branches of local and state government to sponsor projects. The importance of local control became a defining hallmark of the WPA legacy. It was consistently emphasized by officials that project

decisions were not being made at the federal level. The sponsors outlined basic plans and drew up specifications, including a complete project description, cost estimates, and labor requirements. These projects were submitted to the state WPA office for approval. Then, federal matching funds were approved at the national level (Natural Resources Planning Board 1939: 303).

Initially, the agency continued work projects initiated by the CWA and FERA (Adams 1939, 16). As these projects were completed, new WPA projects were proposed by local sponsors. The Division of Engineering and Construction was the largest WPA bureaucracy and oversaw administration of construction projects. Through this division, four main types of major public works projects were administered that comprised nearly 75 percent of WPA work (Kentucky Municipal League and the Kentucky Fireman's Association 1936:10). Road and public building construction were by far the most numerous types of projects undertaken by the WPA. Public health projects, such as water purification and sanitary sewers, and construction of public recreation facilities were also popular types of work-relief undertakings (Kentucky Municipal League and the Kentucky Fireman's Association 1936:10). These projects supported the WPA's mission of creating permanent improvements for communities. Public buildings, streets and roads, public facilities, and infrastructure construction represented physical improvements that most communities could not have accomplished without the assistance of the WPA (Kentucky Municipal League and the Kentucky Fireman's Association 1938:1-2).

It was stipulated in Congressional legislation that WPA projects could not compete with private businesses. Therefore, use of local materials and unemployed workers was stressed. Also, In order to keep project costs minimized, the use of locally available materials was emphasized (Brent 1991:16-17). This regulation explains the regional diversity of materials used in WPA construction, including locally quarried native stone, handmade brick, and wood. Additionally, work undertaken by the WPA was highly labor-intensive with little use of machinery. Construction methods, materials, and architectural design varied widely due to the localized nature of the projects.

By 1939, the WPA was renamed the Works Projects Administration. Instead of being an independent agency, it was moved into an umbrella agency called the Federal Works Administration that also administered the PWA, the U.S. Housing Authority, and the Bureau of Public Roads (Kentucky Municipal League and the Kentucky Fireman's Association 1939:7). With the threat of World War II looming, appropriations for continuing the WPA lasted until June 30, 1941. The anticipated national defense program largely eliminated the need for the WPA, since the labor force was now needed for war-related projects (Kentucky Municipal League and the Kentucky Fireman's Association 1940:12).

### ***The WPA in Kentucky***

The work accomplished by the WPA in Kentucky was extensive. For example, from July 1935 to January 1938, the WPA was responsible for 90 new athletic fields, 320 new bridges, 310 new schools, 173 new libraries, over 59,276 miles of new roadway, and 116 miles of new sidewalk, 20 swimming pools, and 46,528 hours of study each month for city traffic surveys statewide (Kentucky Municipal League and the Kentucky Fireman's Association 1938:7).

While there were WPA sewing projects, art projects, and writing projects, the majority of work in Kentucky concentrated on public construction projects, just as it was across the country. At least 75 percent of the WPA money spent was for the construction of roads, public buildings, parks, and infrastructure. By 1938, over \$56 million had been expended in federal funds with an

additional \$13,807,414 approved, but not yet spent (Kentucky Municipal League and the Kentucky Fireman's Association 1938:7).

Administratively, the WPA state office was headquartered in Louisville (**Figure 5**). George H. Goodman, owner of the Paducah News Democrat newspaper and former director of KERA, was named the state director of the WPA (Blakey 1986:58). Under the administration of Goodman, the WPA headquarters approved projects for Kentucky's 120 counties which were initially divided into six districts, though the number of districts changed frequently.

The WPA is not interchangeable with the Public Works Administration (PWA). The PWA was created in 1933 as the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works in response to the Great Depression and became a part of Roosevelt's New Deal. The PWA focused on employing Americans and reviving the economy by building infrastructure in the U.S. It was less controversial than the WPA, as the program hired skilled laborers though construction companies hired on an open market, rather than through direct hiring. In the APE for this project, the Beecher Terrace public housing development is an example of a PWA project, while JFWR-3796 was a WPA project.



**Figure 5. WPA State Headquarters, Fourth floor, Gibbs-Inman Building, Ninth and Broadway, Louisville.” Photograph date unknown. (Goodman Paxton Collection).**

## **Public Housing and the Development of Beecher Terrace**

Public housing originated with the Great Depression, when middle- and working-class Americans lost their homes due to a lack of work. In 1933, the PWA established an emergency housing project that brought public housing to many cities nationwide. The National Housing Act of 1934 authorized the Federal Housing Administration, which insured loans for single family homes. This act created a template for public housing, and three years later, in 1937, Congress passed the U.S. Housing Act (Edson 2011; National Low Income Housing Coalition 2015). The U.S. Housing Act intended to lessen the shortage of housing for low-income families who could not afford to rent from private landlords while also ensuring safer and more sanitary living conditions (Pappas 2013). Through this act, loans for public housing agencies were authorized for the construction of low-rent public housing. The agency under which this program was managed was the U.S. Housing Authority. The U.S. Housing Authority would be renamed the U.S. Public Housing Authority (USPHA) before finally becoming the Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

In Louisville, small groups of citizens and city officials began to study public housing as a means to deter the prevalence of disease, dependency, and delinquency in the slum areas of the city, approaching the problem from the “basis of cause rather than effect” (City of Louisville Municipal Housing Commission n.d.:1). The leadership in this area at the time was in the City Planning and Zoning Commission and Mayor Honorable Neville Miller. The Commission conducted numerous studies, incorporating white living conditions as well as black, with the perspective that the problem “was not racial but civic”. The objective of the Commission was said to be “in the interest of the society as a whole and not as a special privilege conferred on special groups. Its stated objective was not to reform individuals, or rehabilitate real estate investments, but to broaden the opportunity to share in the American Way of Life” (City of Louisville Municipal Housing Commission n.d.:1). However, aside from public housing, the housing shortage for blacks was often racially motivated as some had no resources to pay for better housing but it was not available to them. Public housing, which was a new source of housing for blacks, actually “reinforced patterns of racial segregation”, with separate projects built for whites and blacks (Adams 2010:45).

Enabling legislation was secured from the Kentucky Legislature in 1933 which authorized the creation of the City of Louisville Municipal Housing Commission. It was organized in 1937 as a political subdivision of the State to include the right to condemn properties in acquisition of sites (City of Louisville Municipal Housing Commission n.d.). The stated policy of the Municipal Housing Commission was to provide “housing both in Clarksdale, for whites, and Beecher Terrace, for Negroes, for as many families with children in the lowest bracket of the low-income group as is possible” (Dosker 1940). By law (Housing Act of 1937), nobody could live in public housing whose “family income exceeds five times the rent or six times if there were three or more children under age. Furthermore, all prospective tenants must come from sub-standard housing.

In 1934, Mayor Neville Miller applied to the PWA for money to build public housing. This request was authorized in 1937, although by this time the PWA was the U.S. Housing Authority. The first two public housing developments in Louisville were the LaSalle Place for whites and College Court for blacks in 1938 (Kleber 2001). Two years later, in 1940, Clarksdale and Beecher Terrace were constructed. All four were developed under the Louisville Municipal Housing Commission. In September 1940, the Municipal Housing Commission approved the issuance of \$4,650,000 in bonds to be issued in case of funding problems. To that point, \$638,000 in bonds had been sold to the public for the Beecher Terrace project (Courier-Journal 1940a). The

housing complexes of Clarksdale and Beecher Terrace were said to be “experimental”. There was no way to know the types of tenants that would be housed, or to gauge the effects of these housing projects on private rental properties. Caution was urged to wait for actual data before beginning any more public housing projects in the city (Courier-Journal 1940d).

The “acute” need for additional public housing in Louisville continued into the late 1930s and 1940s due to the following circumstances:

1. Large scale low-rent housing projects had never been offered to the low-income groups.
2. Decline in the building of all types of dwelling structures.
3. Insanitary and unsafe conditions in existing structures rented to low-income groups.
4. 1937 flood which destroyed, or rendered practically useless some 1,300 residential units.
5. Normal increase in population (Schultz 1940).

In 1949, the philosophy towards public housing enacted by Roosevelt’s New Deal transitioned to President Harry Truman’s Fair Deal. Under the Housing Act of 1949, funding was expanded to provide housing for all Americans in response to the number of veterans returning from World War II. Public housing at this time was the highest quality public housing constructed, specifically because it was intended for returning veterans rather than low-income families (Edson 2011; Pappas 2013). In 1946, Beecher Terrace was to have 25 units specifically for black veterans, with another 53 units for black veterans at 38<sup>th</sup> and Grand. The construction of these units was delayed by materials shortages however. Temporary surplus buildings were being moved into these projects to accommodate the need (Courier-Journal 1946).

Two Housing Acts were passed in the 1950s. The Housing Act of 1954 focused on renovating and rehabilitating slum areas, while the Housing Act of 1956 provided relocation allotments for those being displaced. These two acts were essentially the predecessors to the urban renewal of the 1970s. It was not until 1963, with the passage of the Equal Opportunity in Housing Act under President John F. Kennedy, that the issues of segregation in public housing was addressed. Prior to this time, public housing was separate, with specific developments for whites and for blacks. Restrictive policies for whites and blacks, as well as for social strictures such as unwed mothers, were strictly enforced (Pappas 2013). In 1965, the Housing and Urban Development Act was passed, creating the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD would serve to subsidize the loans and grants under the FHA.

### ***Beecher Terrace***

It was within this context that Beecher Terrace developed. Public housing in Louisville occurred due to the city’s directive to clear slums. Beecher Terrace started as a slum clearance project (Kleber 2001), and it was thought that the Clarksdale and Beecher Terrace projects eliminated some of the worst slums in the city. The area including what would become Beecher Terrace was very depressed (**Figure 6** and **Figure 7**). Across the city, living conditions for poor black families were deplorable. Neighborhoods with predominantly black residents were run-down, consisting of buildings built in the late 1800s (Adams 2010:43). Homes with gas leaks and broken plaster were common. Residences were commonly infested with rats and:

...plumbing so poor that drinking water was located in an outside toilet (see **Figure 8**). When an indoor toilet existed, it was frequently not “fit-for-use”; in some instances, the only available restroom was shared by as many as eight families (Adams 2010:45).



The new housing brought electricity, running water and plumbing, heat and functional toilets, amenities which the poor community had often gone without.



**Figure 6. 1939 view of conditions in slum area planned for Beecher Terrace construction. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.288.**



**Figure 7. 1939 view of depressed area at Beecher Terrace site. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.254.**



**Figure 8. Note segregated outhouse privies. 1939 view. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.250.**

Allied Architects won the contract for the work, and construction was underway in 1940 (**Figure 9**). The complex was comprised of 59 barracks-style buildings arranged in eight blocks (**Figure 10**). Each of these eight blocks had interior courtyards.



**Figure 9. Construction on Beecher Terrace underway in 1940. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.255.**



**Figure 10. Overview of barracks-style housing at Beecher Terrace. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.36.**

Beecher Terrace was named for Reverend Henry Ward Beecher (Tyler 1998:110). He was brother to Harriet Beecher Stowe best known for her abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In the 1830s, the Reverend Beecher was at Cincinnati's Lane Seminary and later served his first pastorate at the Lawrenceburg, Indiana Presbyterian Church. He went from there to a pastorate at Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. Beecher developed an interest in social reform, including the abolitionist movement. Prior to the Civil War, he purchased slaves to free them from captivity, and also bought rifles to equip abolitionists known fighting in the Midwest; these became known as "Beecher's Bibles (Wikipedia 2017). Beecher also introduced free Kentucky blacks to the Ohio underground railroad system (Coon 2015:21).

In May of 1940, E. E. Pruitt was appointed manager of Beecher Terrace by the Louisville Municipal Housing Commission. He was a local citizen who graduated from the Law department of Simmons University and attended Louisville Municipal College. He was also a member of the executive board of the N.A.A.C.P. He had a long history of public service. Des Moines Beard was previously appointed by the Commission as Resident Manager of College Court to succeed Mr. Pruitt (Louisville Defender 1940).

By November 7, 1940, there were 1,657 applications for residence in Beecher Terrace, compared to 959 available units (**Figure 11**). One hundred and twenty-nine units had been filled, and another 136 were ready for occupancy (**Figure 12, Figure 13, and Figure 14**). Clearance to move into these units was to begin November 11, 1940 (Courier-Journal 1940c). Full occupancy of the 808 total units was expected by mid-January of 1941 (Porter 1940).



**Figure 11. Interviewing Beecher Terrace applicants. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, 79.11.13b.**





**Figure 12. Black soldiers raising flag at Beecher Terrace, 1940. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, 84.27.19.**



**Figure 13. Moving-in day at Beecher Terrace. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.84.**



**Figure 14. Celebration at Beecher Terrace. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.24.**

The units were complete modern conveniences and boasted “shining rooms with new gas kitchen stove (**Figure 15**), electric refrigerator, hot and cold water, handy sink and complete bathroom”. This was considered a “far cry” from the previous housing of many tenants who came from one-room residences with shared “conveniences” (Porter 1940). When the administration building was completed, it was to contain a nursery, six clubrooms, and an auditorium for the complex, along with a medical clinic (see more below).



**Figure 15. Modern kitchen and appliances. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.50.**

The lowest rent was \$14.25 per month and the highest -for a five-room unit- was \$16.75 (Porter 1940). There was some concern, however, that the families with the lowest income were not being served by the new public housing projects. In the Spring of 1940, there was expressed the concern that people who needed low-cost housing the most had not been “touched by bright, new Clarksdale and Beecher Terrace”. Incomes of people living in Beecher Terrace were said to range between \$600 and \$1,200 annually while there was an estimated 10,000 who income was below \$600 (Courier-Journal 1940b). This issue continued over the following years, with studies showing that less than 25% of the residents made less than \$1,500 a year. The war and the federal Government housing laws which were designed to help in the war effort, combined with the difficulties of the post-war period were seen to be factors that allowed for ineligible families to be permitted to remain as tenants although their income exceeded legal limits. In 1947, there was a plan to evict within six months the high-income families in the low-rent housing units. Each month, 5 percent of the those in public housing were to receive notices to vacate until the low-income status was restored (Courier-Journal 1947).

In 1940, the Julius Rosenwald Fund awarded \$8,225 to fund a new health clinic on the ground floor of the Community Building at Beecher Terrace. This was a transfer from the outmoded facilities at 920 West Chestnut Street. The “completely modern centralized Negro Health Center” consisted of both preventative and treatment clinics addressing communicable

diseases, school and preschool health, prenatal and post-natal care, venereal disease, and dental care. Mothers were provided free advice on diets and infant care at the well-child clinic. Another objective was to address the threat of tuberculosis (Brown 2012:110) (**Figure 16** and **Figure 17**).



**Figure 16. 1943 photograph of health care clinic at Beecher Terrace. Photograph courtesy of University of Louisville Digital Archives ULPA R 07660.00.**



**Figure 17. 1943 photograph of woman being subjected to x-rays at Beecher Terrace. Photograph courtesy of University of Louisville Digital Archives ULPA R 07660.01**

Outdoor recreation areas for children were provided in open courtyards, with a splash park (**Figure 18**). Additional play areas included the old Baxter Square greenspace which was the site of Louisville's first public burying ground (**Figure 19**). The trees shown in the 1940s photos are still standing at the site.



**Figure 18. Play area with splash park in courtyard. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.28.**



**Figure 19. Play area in Baxter Square, site of an early public city cemetery. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.220.**

In August of 1945, a vacant lot at the corner of Ninth and Walnut (now Muhammad Ali) Streets was dedicated as a park to serve the Beecher Terrace community. The park, which was projected to cost \$11,000, included a baseball diamond and “one of the most modern shelter houses in the city” (Courier-Journal 1945). The construction of the park was seen as “a bigger and better post-war Louisville”. The Beecher Municipal Softball Association played at this location, which was once a slum district in the city.

The late 1950s/early 1960s brought about a change in the nature of the neighborhood surrounding Beecher Terrace. In 1959, the Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency of Louisville was founded with the purpose of addressing housing issues. A HUD-funded program at this time was implemented to “redevelop abandoned, blighted, or vacant” properties (Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission 2013). Rather than improving the area, this urban renewal plan adversely effected the once-thriving African-American business district that encompassed South 6<sup>th</sup> Street to South 13<sup>th</sup> Street along Walnut Street. Residents were displaced. Business owners could not afford to relocate. Racial prejudices at the time resulted in a “white flight” from the west end as more African-Americans moved in. The construction of an interstate freeway along South 9<sup>th</sup> Street created a physical and social divide between white and black, rich and poor.

In 1968, the Civil Rights Act was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Hopes that this legislation would eradicate the unfounded fears regarding integrated neighborhoods failed due to the “hypersegregation” prominent in Louisville (Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission 2013). As the city faced upheaval due to racial polarization, fair housing laws were enacted in an attempt to integrate housing better. These fair housing laws failed, and residents of developments such as Beecher Terrace were unable to move due to cost, cold reception in white neighborhoods, or both. The quality of life in the housing developments continued to

decline, and would continue to do so for decades. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Beecher Terrace and other public housing developments were considered the core area of crime in the city.

An attempt to address this again was attempted in the 1990s when federal funds under the HOPE IV program were used to redevelop existing public housing developments. In the 1990s, the Cotter-Lang Homes were replaced with the new Park DuValle housing community. This program carried into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the Clarksdale public housing development was redeveloped as Liberty Green and Sheppard Square was demolished to construct a mixed-income residential community. The last large-scale renovation of Beecher Terrace occurred in 1992.

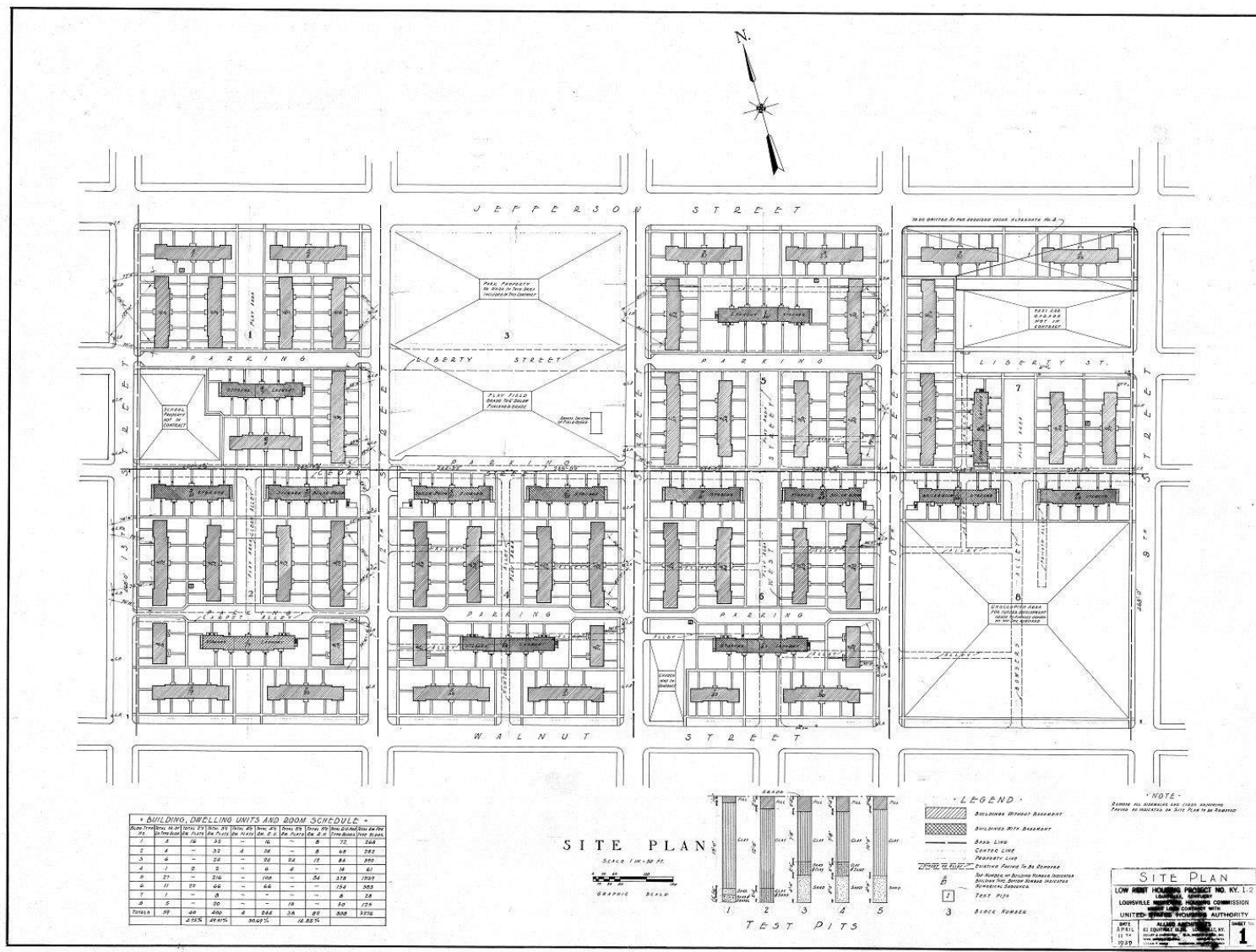
### ***Architectural Discussion***

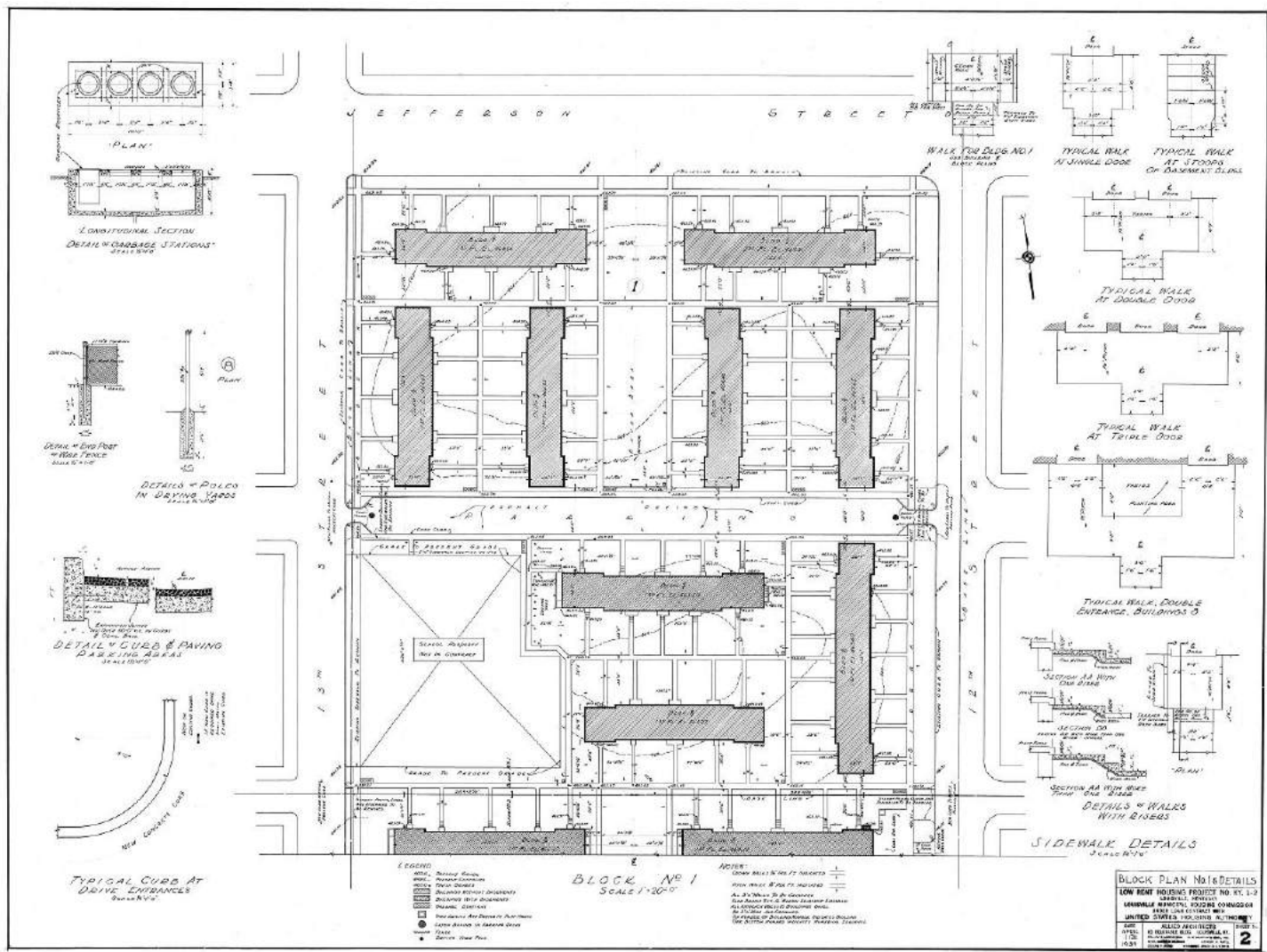
There were eight different styles of buildings, with the differences coming from building size, if there was a basement, and if there were additional functions such as boiler rooms (**Figure 20** and **Figure 21**). Despite the differences in the floorplan styles, the buildings shared a common exterior appearance and general interior design (**Figure 22**). Each had a concrete foundation, brick exterior, and stone band and hanging gutters by the roofline. The roof was built-up. The entrances to the individual units had concrete steps leading to a concrete sill on the first floor, covered with concrete canopies (**Figure 23**). The interior layouts differed based on the type of apartment, but all contained at minimum an entrance hall, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, closet, and shelves (**Figure 24**).

Building No. 1 style was a three-story building with a basement (**Figure 25** and **Figure 26**). It measured 175'10" X 26'9". Building No. 2 style was a three-story building with no basement that measured 173'4" X 26'9" (**Figure 27** and **Figure 28**). Building No. 3 style was a three-story building with no basement. This style measured 161'6" X 26'9" (**Figure 29** and **Figure 30**). Building No. 4 style was a three-story building with a basement that measured 153'0" X 26'9" (**Figure 31** and **Figure 32**). Building No. 5 style was a story-building with no basement that measured 143'11" X 26'9" (**Figure 33** and **Figure 34**). Building No. 6 style was another three-story, slab building with no basement. This style building measured 135'6" X 26'9" (**Figure 35** and **Figure 36**). Building No. 7 style differed in that it was a two-story design with no basement (**Figure 37**). This style building also had a smaller footprint, measuring 91'7" X 26'9". Building No. 8 style was another two-story building with no basement (**Figure 38**). It measures 77'8.5" X 26'9". Four buildings within the Beecher Terrace public housing development had boiler rooms and larger storage area, specifically Buildings 11, 21, 42, and 58.

Beecher Terrace currently has a total of 760 units. Of these 760 units, 357 are one bedroom, 246 are two bedrooms, and 157 are three-bedroom units. A total of 11 of these 760 units are handicap accessible. Beecher Terrace has undergone some renovation, including a \$20 million project that resulted in new vinyl siding, updated water heaters, new roofing, and a new playground. Interiors have also been renovated or reconfigured as handicap accessibility became more prevalent. Other alterations to the exterior included the bricking-in of windows and doors, replacement of the entry stoops, and general maintenance and repair. In December 2016, it was announced the Beecher Terrace, like the Cotter-Land Homes, Clarksdale, and Sheppard Square, would be demolished and rebuilt as a mixed-income residential community. City officials consider this project different from the others, and thus with a better chance of success, because it is integrated with the redevelopment of the Russell neighborhood (Ragsdale 2016). The proposed plan is to demolish the 760 units and replace it with commercial spaces and 640 housing units (Gazaway 2016).







**Figure 21. Example of a block plan from the 1939 as-builts.**



**Figure 22. Detail of building exterior. Photograph courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, D.W. Beard Public Housing Collections, 87.61.26.**

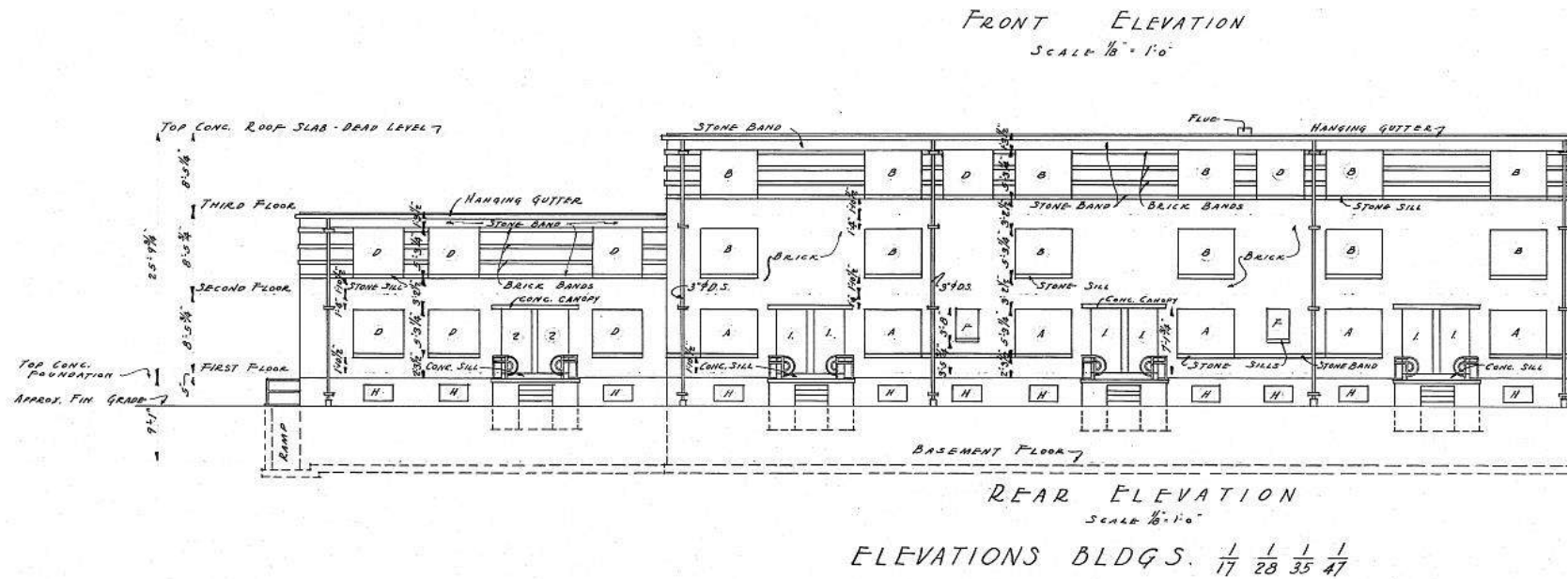


Figure 23. Detail of the exterior design.

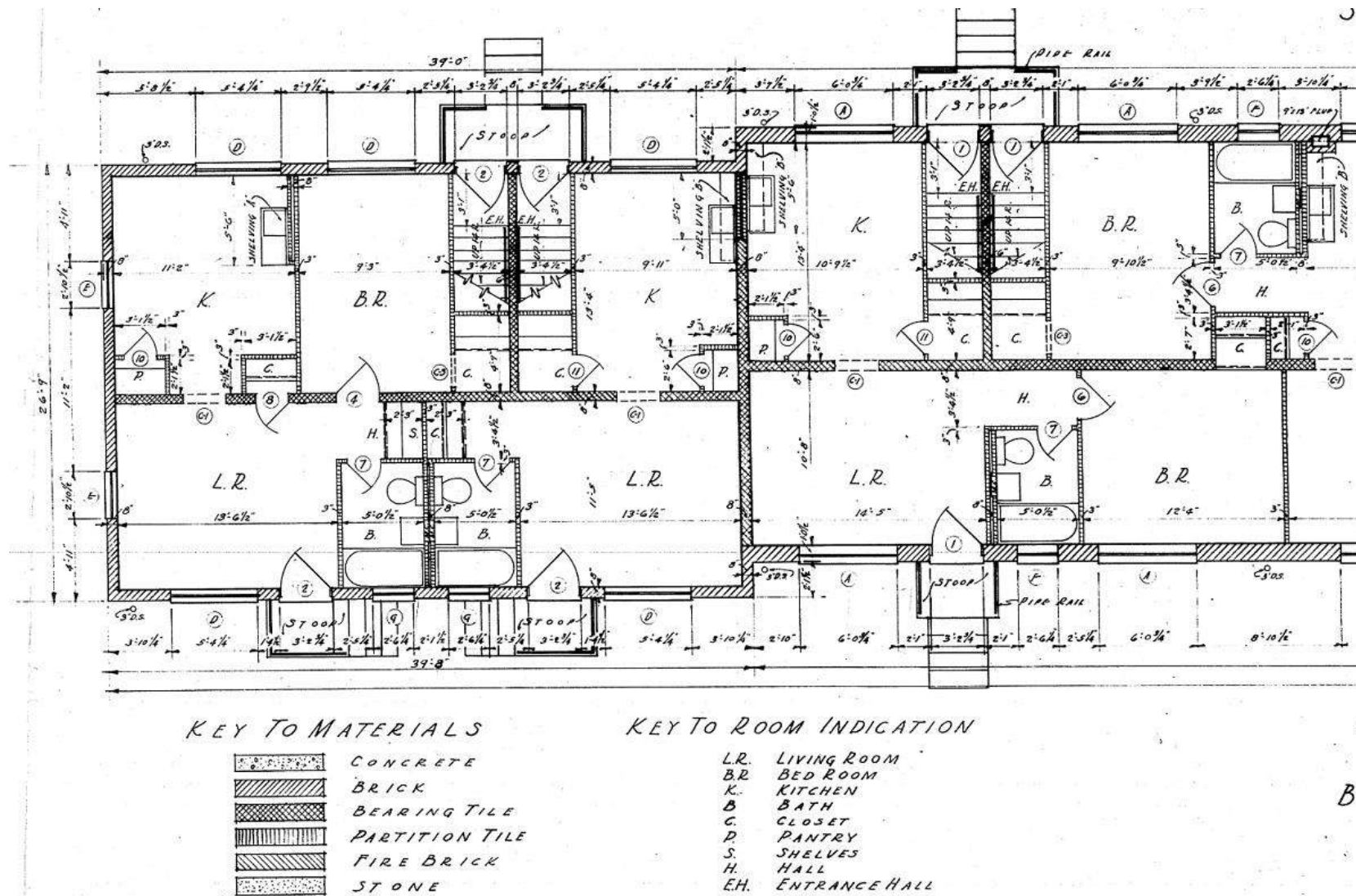


Figure 24. Detail of the layout of an apartment.

33



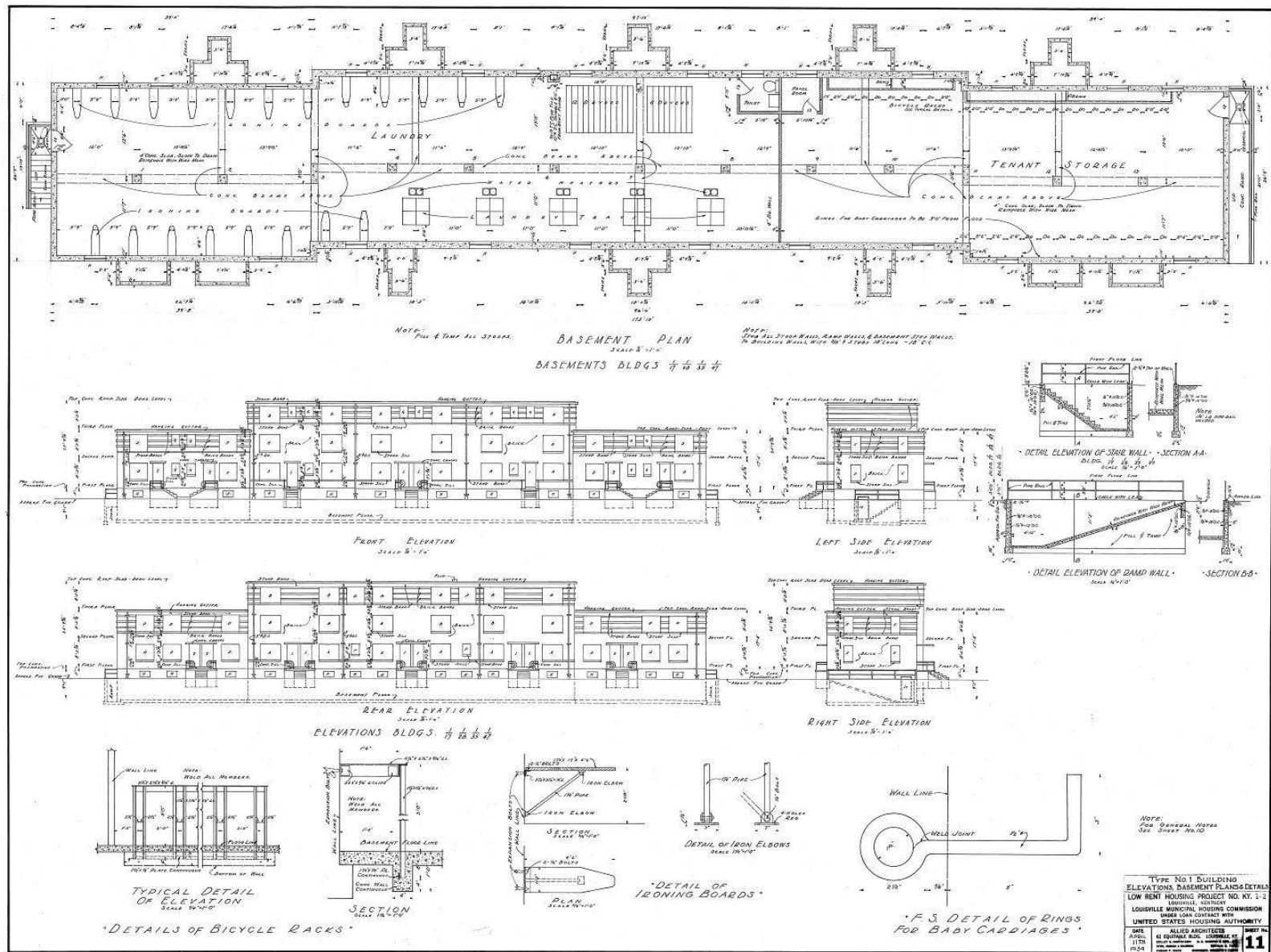


Figure 26. Elevation design for Building Style No. 1 from the 1939 plans.



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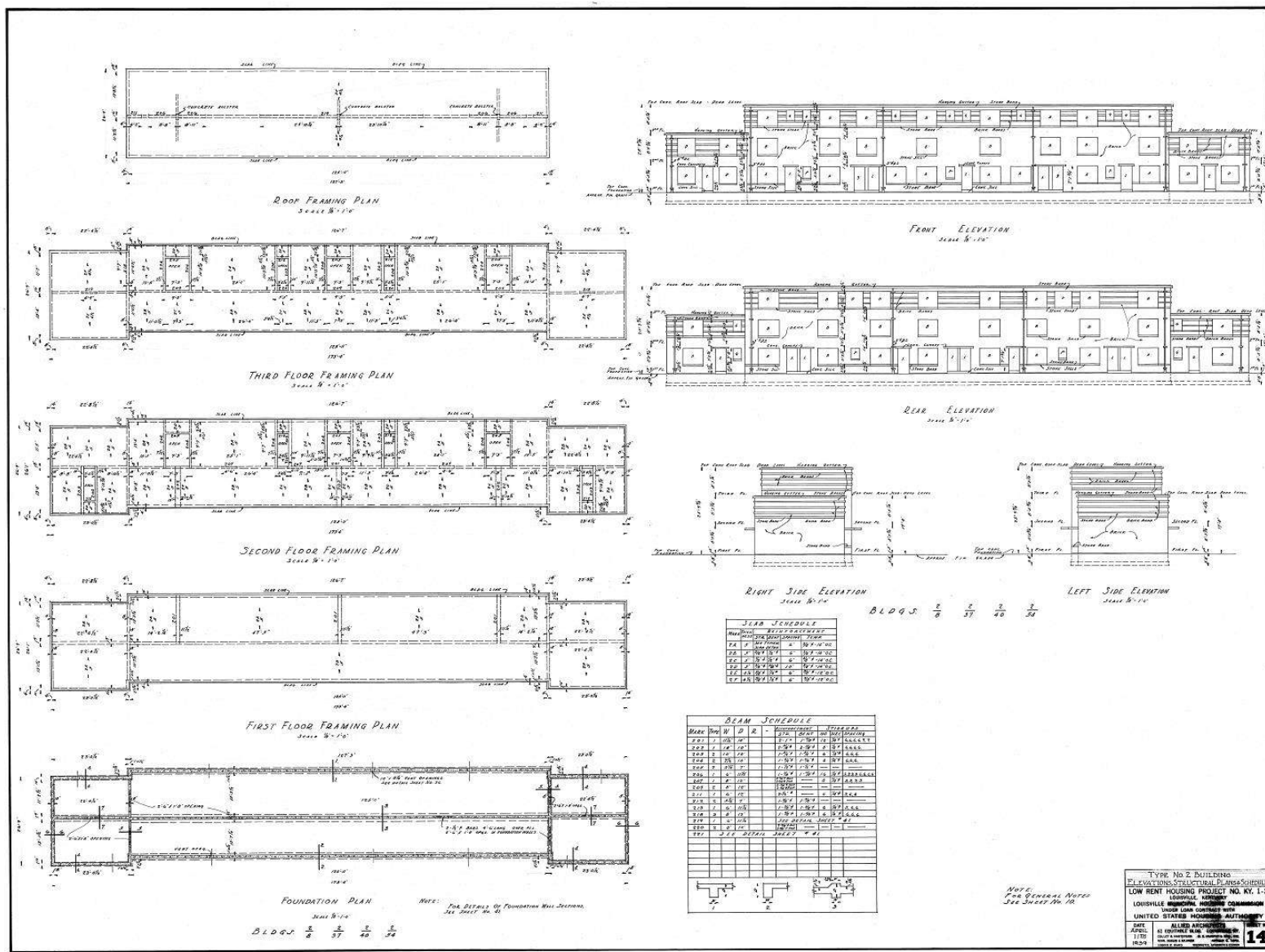


Figure 28. Elevation design for Building Style No. 2 from the 1939 plans.

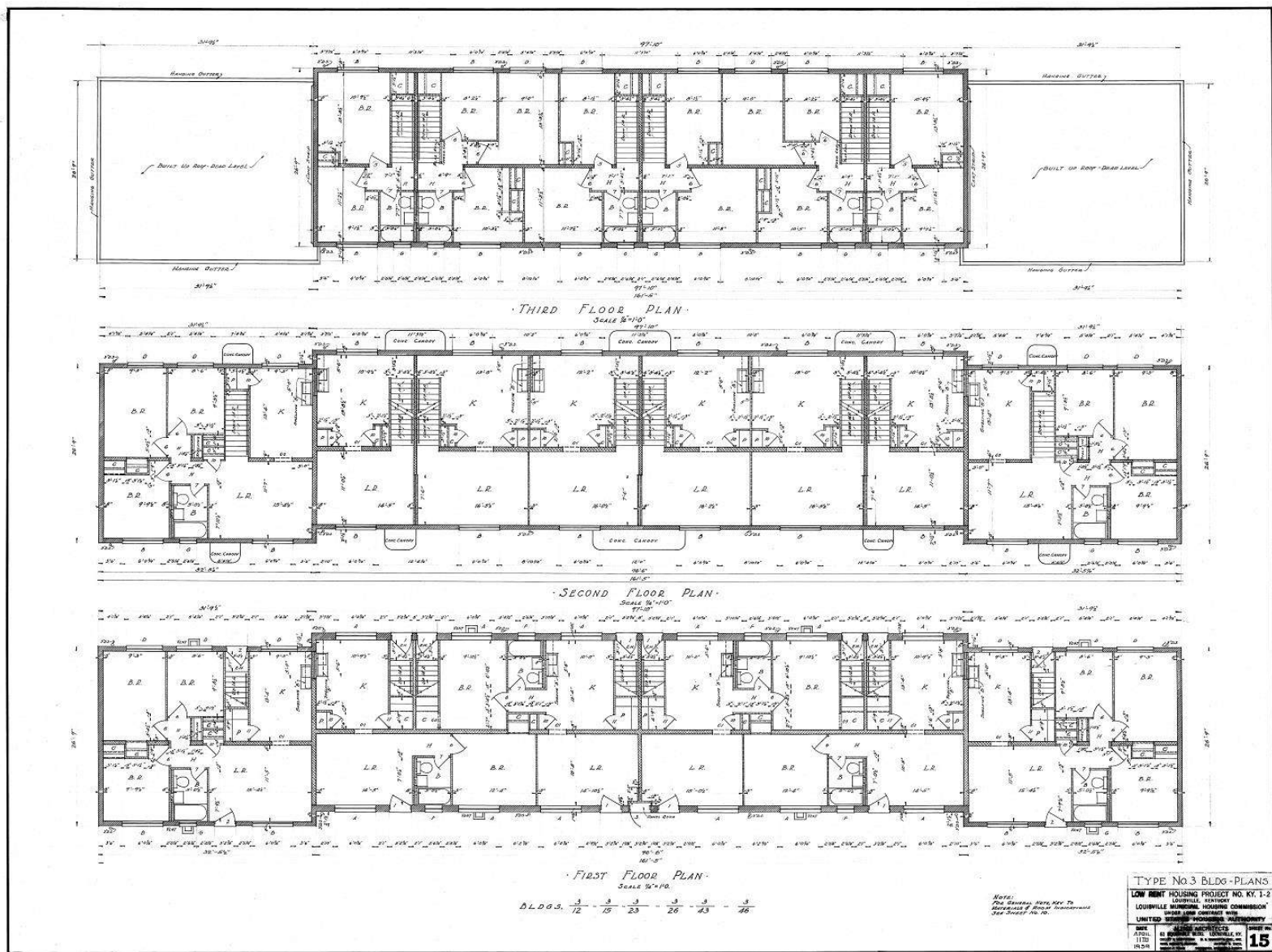


Figure 29. Floor plan for Building Style No. 3 from the as-builts.

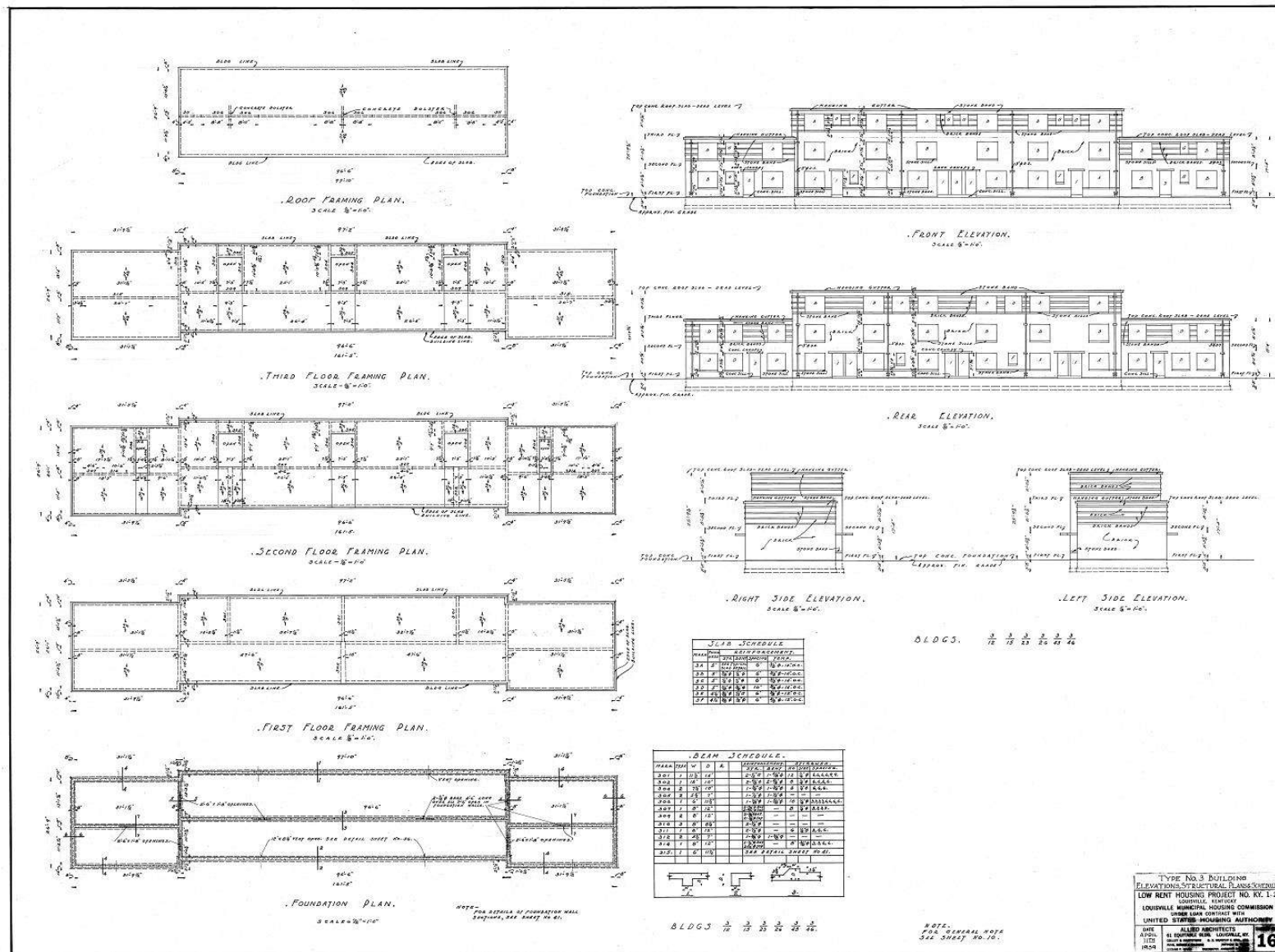


Figure 30. Elevation design for Building Style No. 3 from the 1939 plans.

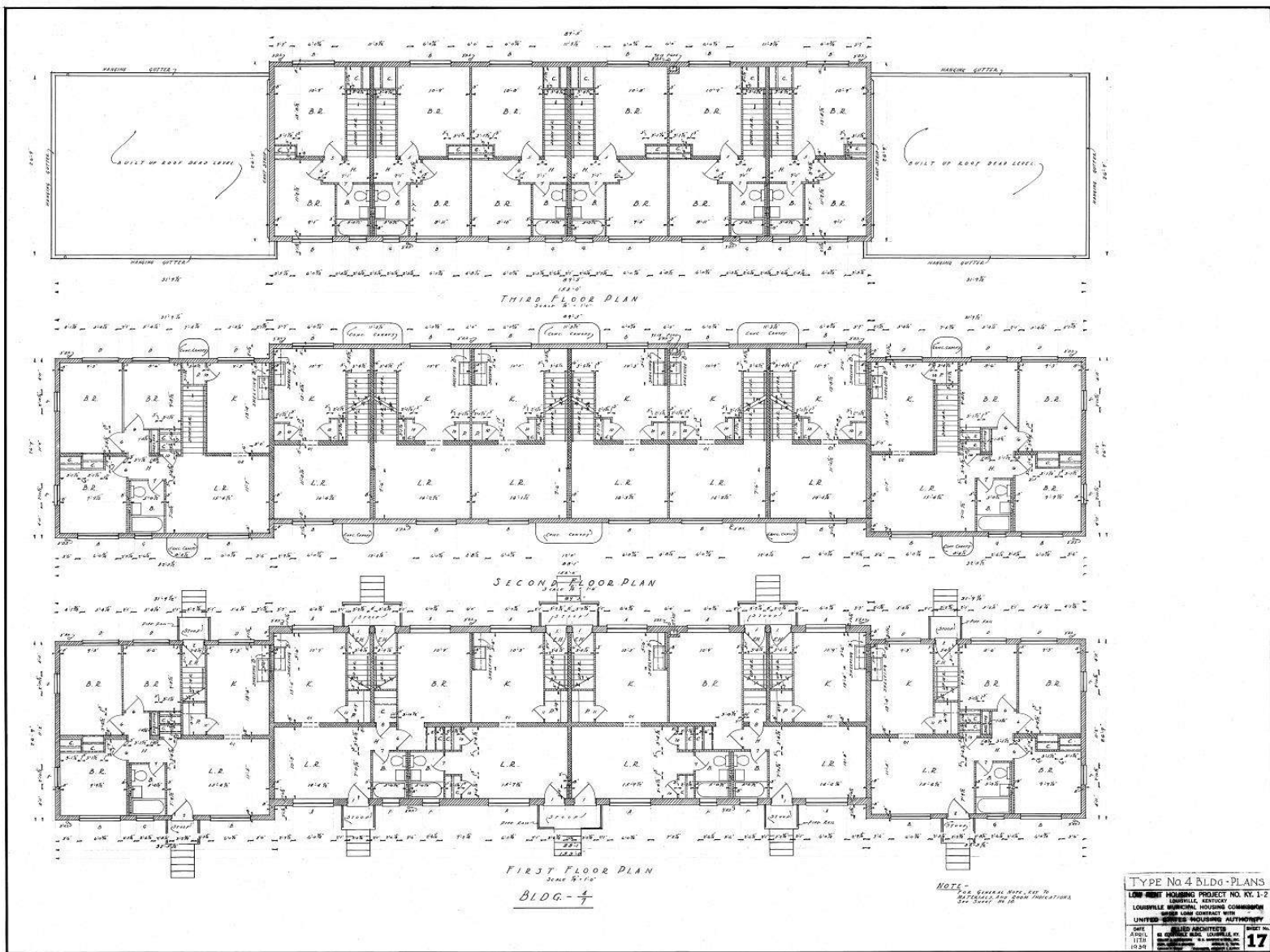
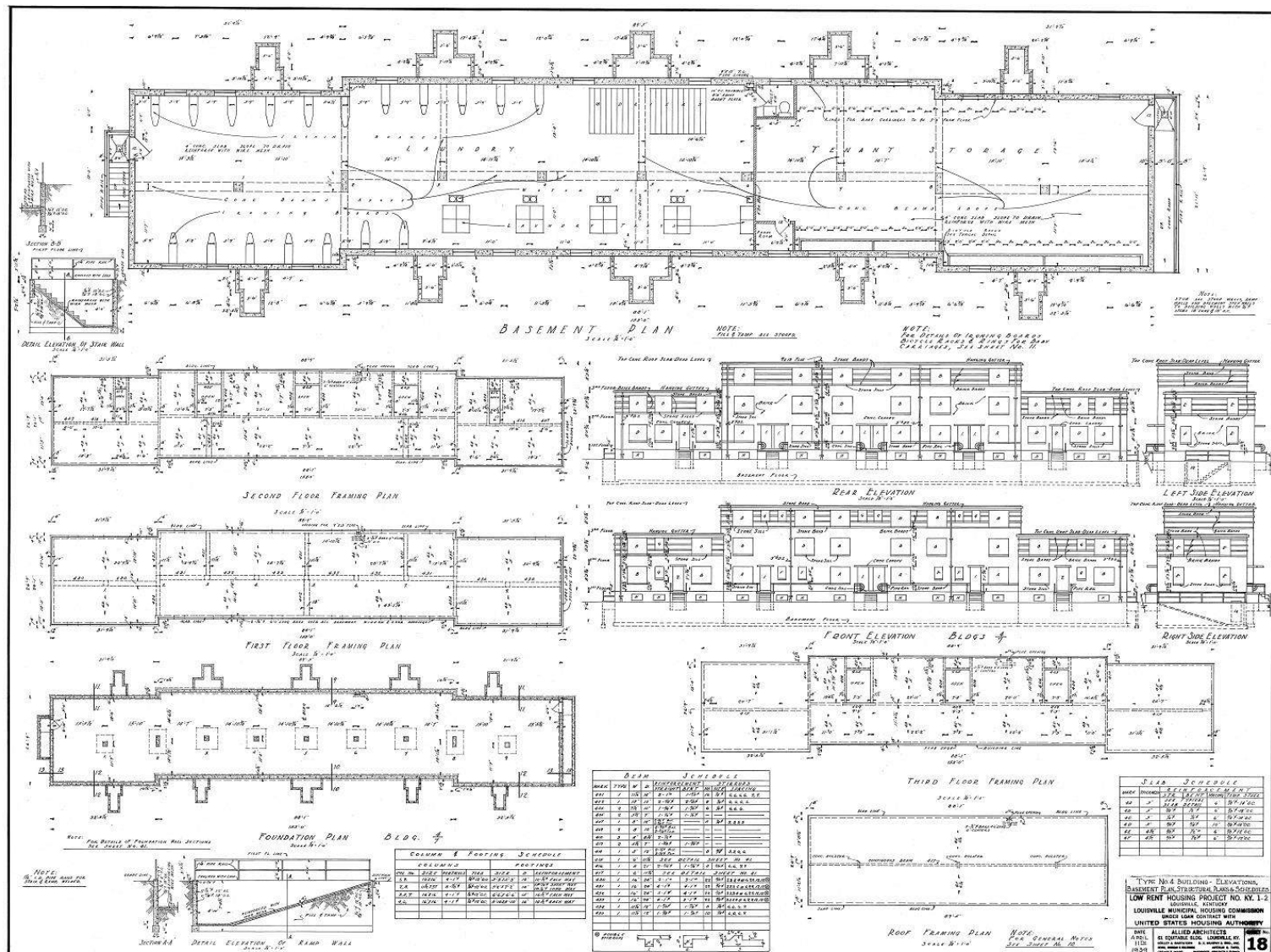


Figure 31. Floor plan for Building Style No. 4 from the as-builts.





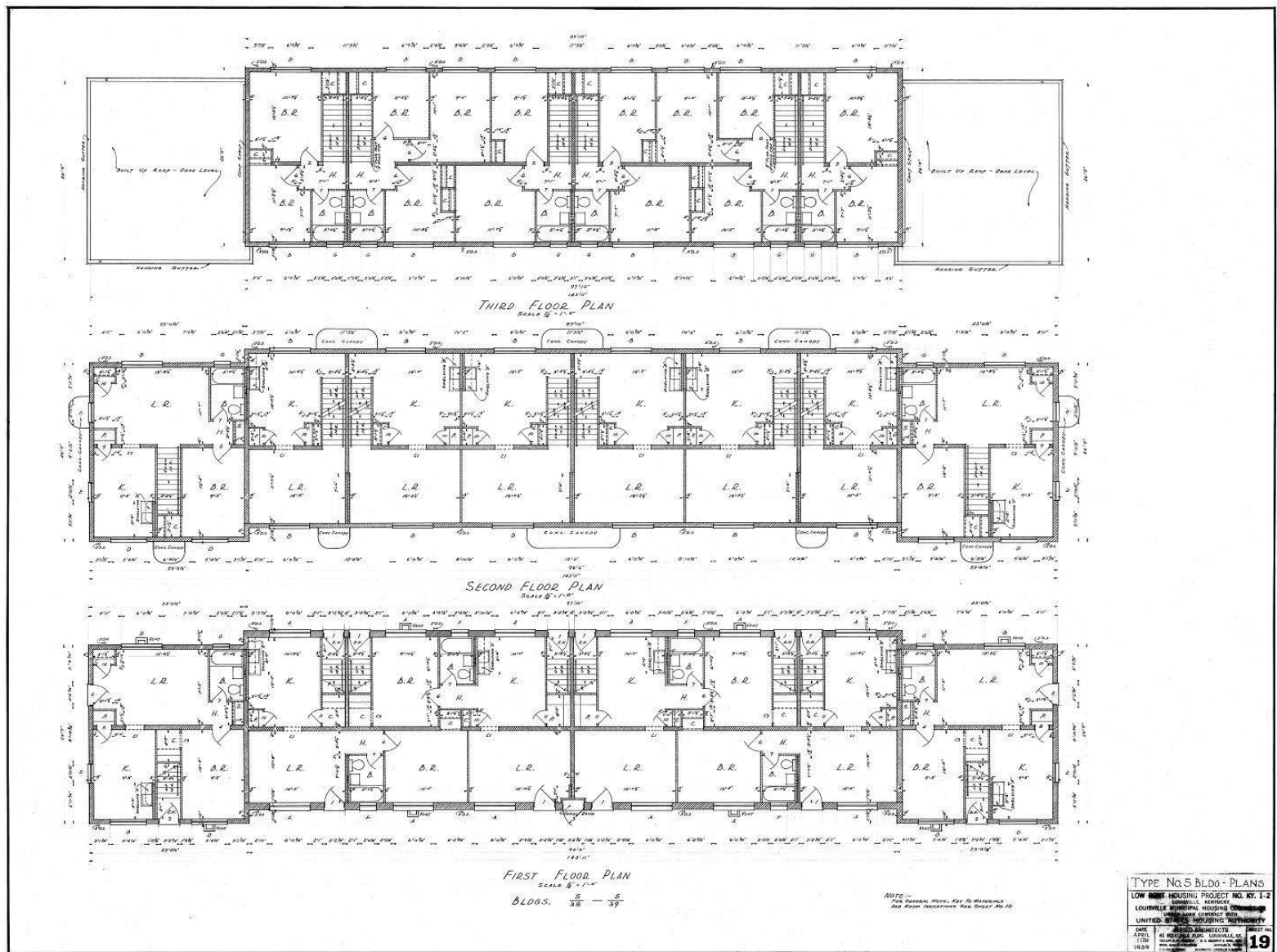


Figure 33. Floor plan for Building Style No. 5 from the as-builts.



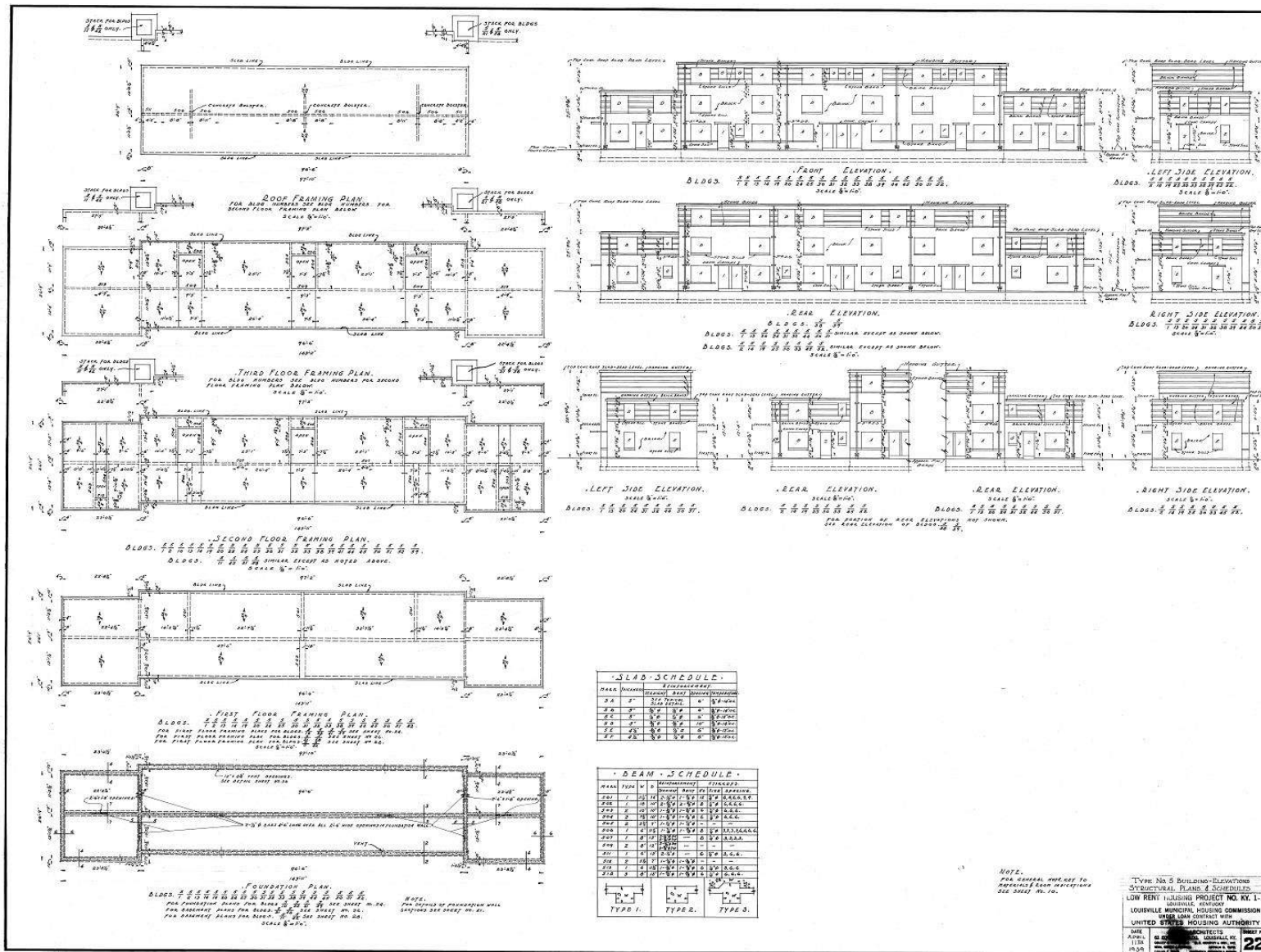


Figure 34. Elevation design for Building Style No. 5 from the 1939 plans.

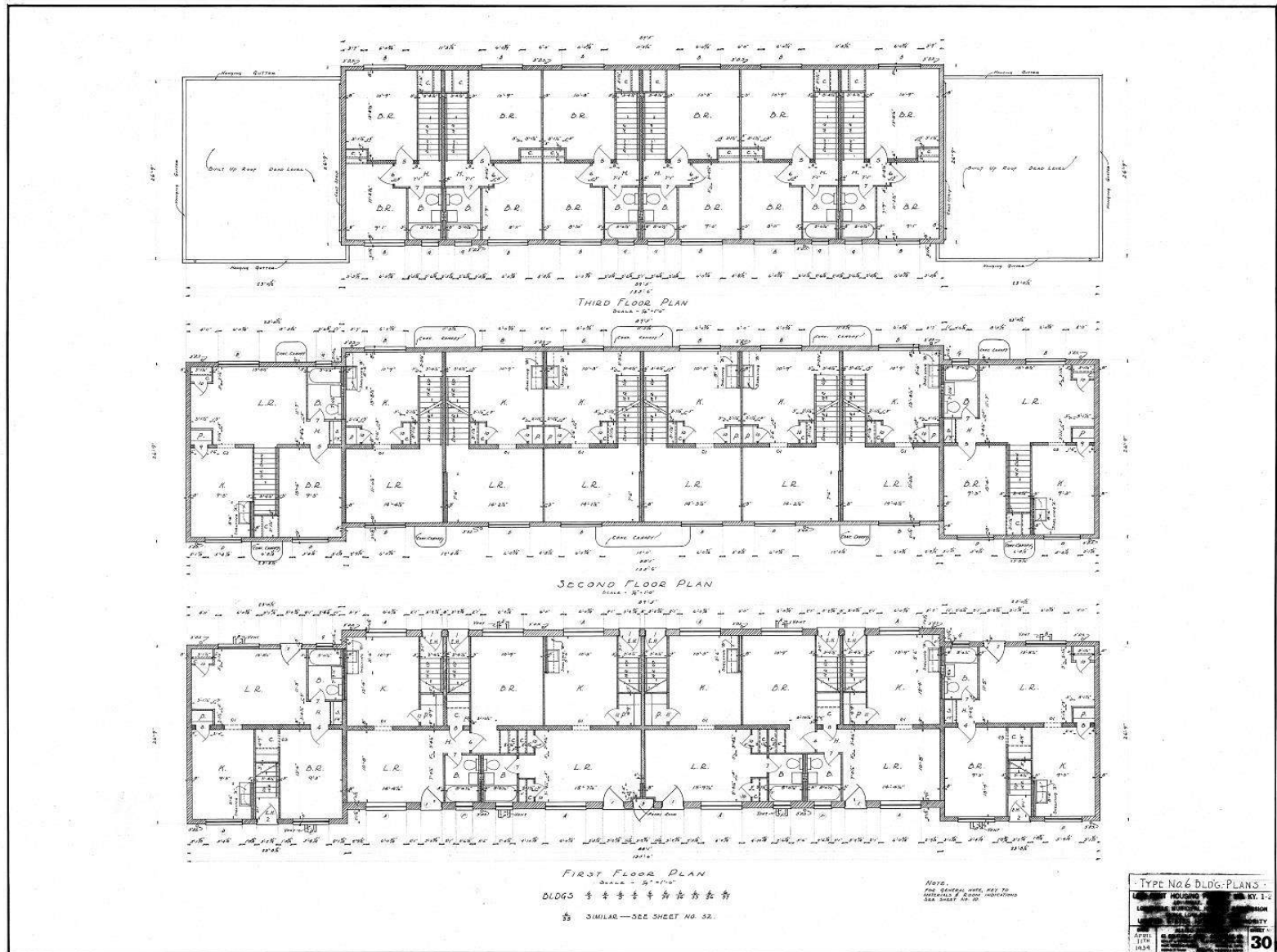


Figure 35. Floor plan for Building Style No. 6 from the as-builts.

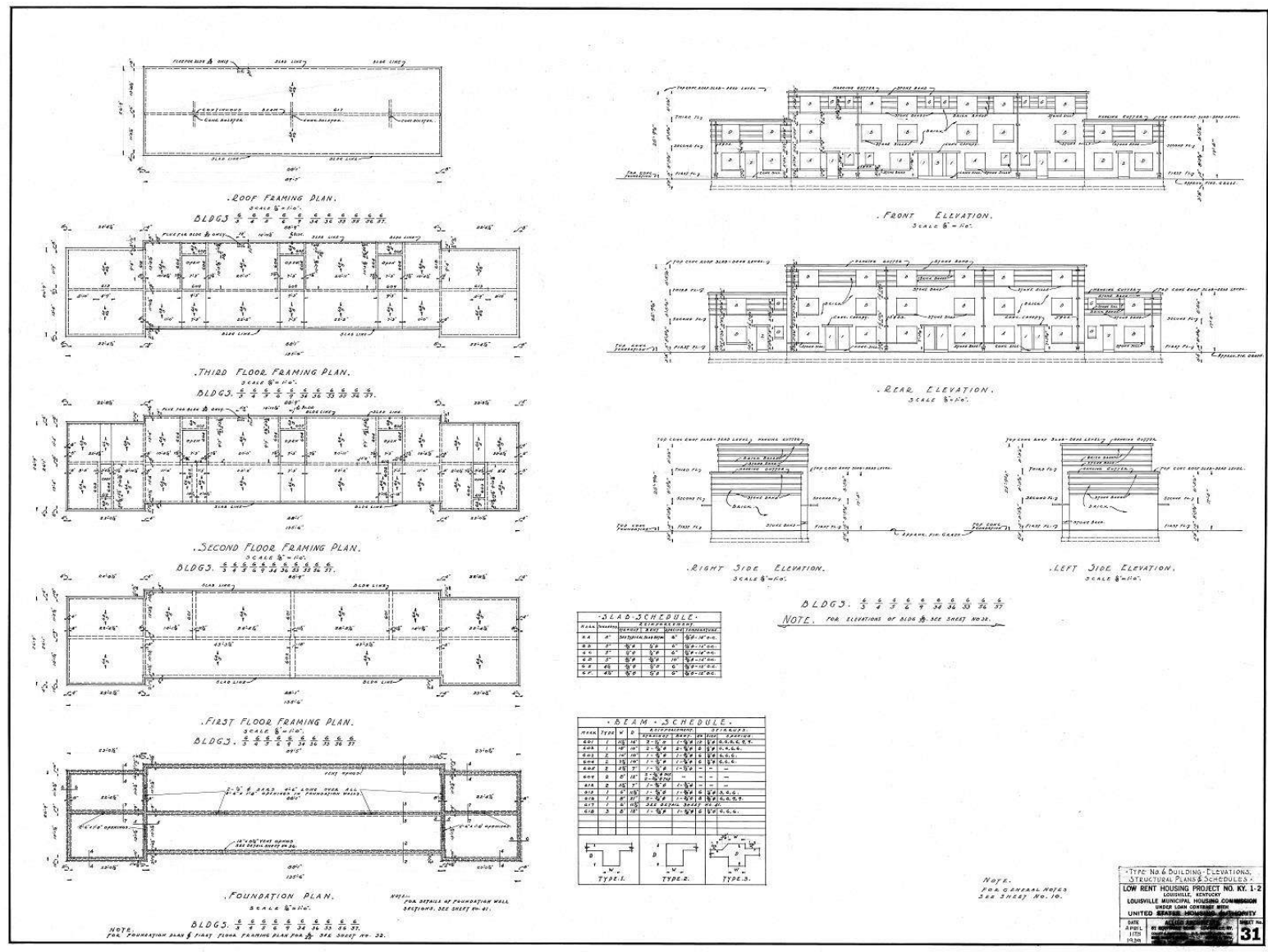


Figure 36. Elevation design for Building Style No. 6 from the 1939 plans.

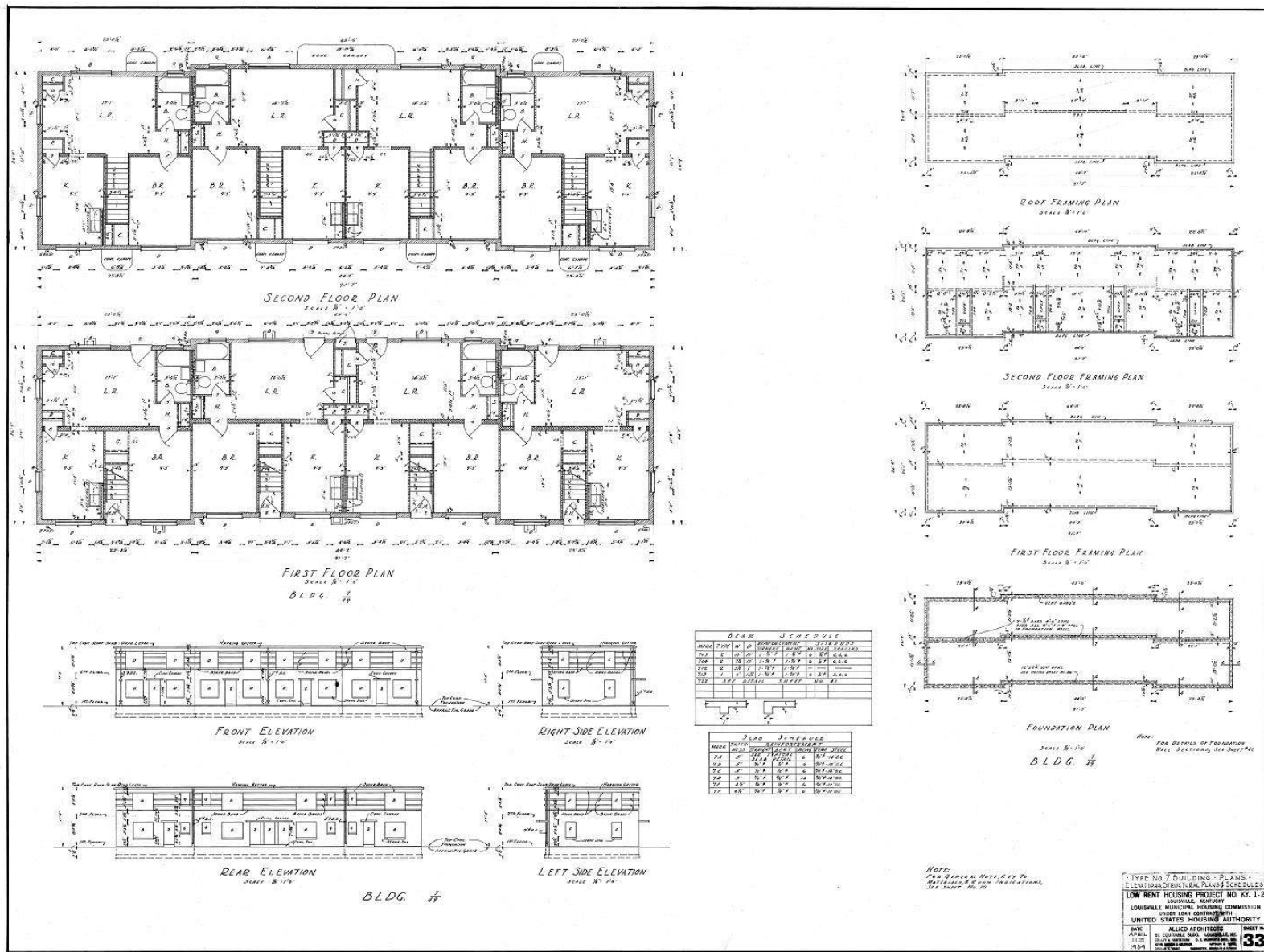
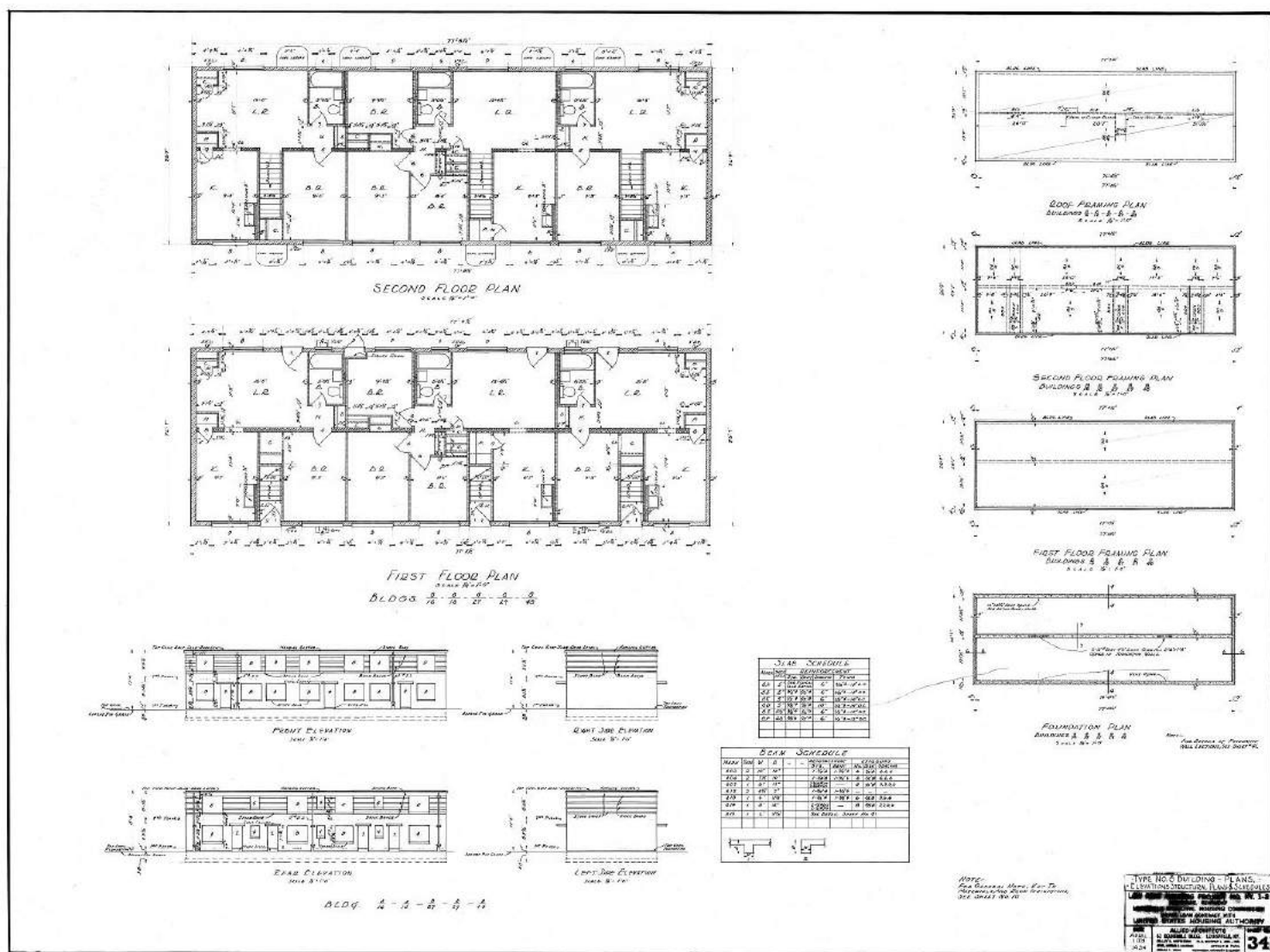


Figure 37. Floor and elevation plans for Building No. 7 style from 1939 plans.



**Figure 38. Floor and elevation plans for Building No. 8 style from 1939 plans.**

## **Baxter Square**

At its founding, George Rogers Clark planned public parks and green strips for the City of Louisville. He was perhaps influenced by the designs of his friend Thomas Jefferson, who had devised a gridiron checkerboard of parks for cities in the south as well as Jeffersonville, Indiana. Unfortunately, these plans never came to fruition. Likewise, Louisville failed to create parks at a time when settlers were more concerned with survival and land disputes. In order to settle a title claim, the city gave the first land set aside for parks to John Campbell. The idea was not revisited until the late antebellum period (Waltrous 1977).

In 1848, the 296-acre Cave Hill Cemetery opened. It was a cutting-edge burial ground, which departed from gridiron municipal yards, churchyards, and family plots on farms. The newly emerging Garden-style or Rural cemetery, made popular on the East Coast, quickly became a recreational venue with its rolling hills, winding paths, ponds, and beautiful monuments. Ultimately, the Rural Cemetery Movement served as the impetus for the American Park Movement.

In 1851, city officials revisited park planning, perhaps because of the popularity of Cave Hill, and set aside land on the present-day campus of the University of Louisville. The need for a house of refuge for the growing number of delinquent and dependent children proved more necessary. In 1859, \$60,000 was appropriated to build the Louisville House of Refuge on the land designated for a public park. Part of the parkland remained restricted, while a portion was given for the completion of the school. Almost immediately, the building served as a Civil War Union hospital and was surrounded by barracks for Union troops, becoming part of a larger military complex that included Brown Hospital and Fort McPherson to the northeast (Carpenter 1996) (Cox and Morison 2000).

Decades later in 1880, Mayor John G. Baxter finally dedicated the first city park located at Eleventh and Jefferson streets and named in his honor as Baxter Square. This park, which is the city's oldest park, totaled 2.2 acres and was located on top of a former cemetery. The cemetery date to 1786 and was situated on four lots. City Trustees maintained the cemetery until 1832 when it closed after the opening of Western Cemetery. A decade after Baxter Square was dedicated in 1880, the Tornado of 1890 destroyed the park and the property was conveyed to the Board of Park Commissioners (**Figure 39**). This Board later hired Frederick Law Olmsted to redesign the park.

By 1887, a more comprehensive public parks system was conceived during a meeting of the Salmagundi Club, a prestigious all-male, 24-member social and literary club devoted to conversation and the exchange of ideas. That same year the Salmagundi Club was joined by the Commercial Club of Louisville and backed by Mayor Charles Jacob to create the legislation that established the Louisville parks system. In 1890, the Kentucky General Assembly created the Board of Park Commissioners, which made the first of many official land acquisitions with a \$600,000 bond (Cowan 1887) (Clay 2002; Kleber 2002).

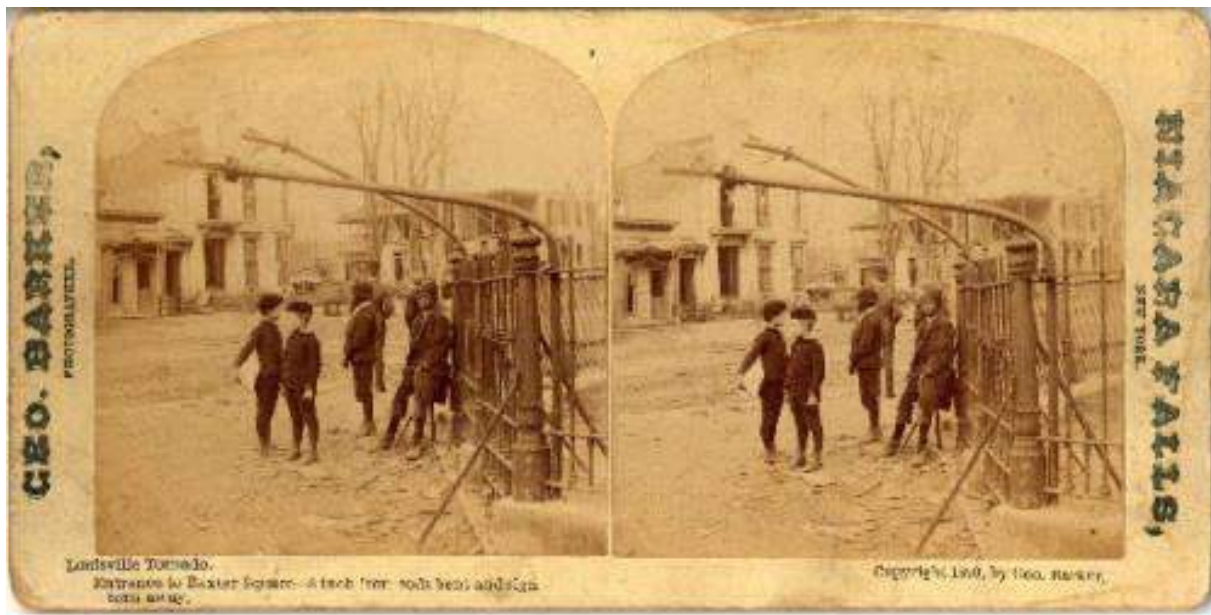
In 1891, the Commissioners enlisted Frederick Law Olmsted, to draft formal plans and continued to work with his firm and its successors through 1961. Olmsted Sr. worked with his son Olmsted Jr. and young associate, Charles Eliot, the master mind behind the forward-thinking Boston Metropolitan System of Parks (Newton 1971). The Olmsted firm followed Hermans's 1887 plan for West (Shawnee), East (Cherokee), and South (Iroquois) Parks closely only moving the East Park from the riverfront farther south into the Beargrass Creek valley, so



that the three parks represented three prominent geographic regions - river floodplains; rugged knobs with old growth forest; and rolling hills and valleys. In addition to the flagship parks, numerous smaller parks were designed or redesigned by the Olmsted firm. Olmsted Sr. upgraded Baxter Square in 1892 and worked on plans of Wayside Park and Chickasaw Park among others. Their smaller urban parks were more formal and sometimes symmetrical.

When the Olmsted firm was hired to update Baxter Square, the park contained its original stone walls, original shelter, and abundant vegetation. Although Olmsted was tasked with redesigning Baxter Square, the actual plans were not presented to the city until 1901, when a planting plan was devised by the Olmsted firm (The Cultural Landscape Foundation 2016). Baxter Square remained a more formal, symmetrical open greenscape that differed from the parks newly-designed that followed a curvilinear, expansive formula. In 1924, segregation impacted Louisville residents, and "Baxter Square Park was designated as a 'blacks-only' park" (The Cultural Landscape Foundation 2016).

In 1940 the Parks Board purchased a 30-foot strip of land to expand Baxter Square and close Liberty Street between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets. No specific redesign occurred to the park until 1942, when Beecher Terrace was constructed around the Park. Today Baxter Square totals 3.99 acres and includes JFWR-3796 (Beecher Terrace Community Building). Amenities include basketball, picnic areas, a playground, a sprayground, and tennis courts.



Photographic Archives, Ekstrom Library, University of Louisville

**Figure 39. Entrance to Baxter Park after the 1890 Tornado.**



# 4

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND RESULTS

A total of 10 properties with a combined 69 resources were documented in the APE (**Table 3** and **Figure 40**). The Beecher Terrace public housing development accounted for 59 of the 69 buildings documented. Per consultation with KHC in April 2017, the Beecher Terrace public housing development was recorded on a group/neighborhood site form. The remaining sites were documented individually.

**Table 3. Resources Documented within the APE**

Survey Number	Resource	Date	NRHP Status	Recommendation
JFL-01	Beecher Terrace	1941	Recommended eligible under Criterion A	Adverse effect – mitigation required in consultation with KHC
JFL-318	Louisville Central Community Centers	1966	Recommended not eligible	No adverse effect – no further work recommended
JFL-319	Mini-Versity Child Development Center and Louisville Central Community Center	1900	Recommended not eligible	No adverse effect – no further work recommended
JFL-485	Baxter Square	1880	Recommended eligible as a contributing element to the Olmsted Park System	No adverse effect – no further work recommended
JFWR-1748	Fire Department Headquarters	1936 – 1937	NRHP-listed	No adverse effect – no further work recommended
JFWR-1749	St. Peter's German Evangelical Church	1895 – 1895	NRHP-listed	Adverse effect – mitigation required in consultation with KHC
JFWR-1752	Church of Our Merciful Savior	C. 1912	NRHP-listed	Adverse effect – mitigation required in consultation with KHC
JFWR-3796	Beecher Terrace Community Building	1940	Recommended eligible as part of a group	Adverse effect – mitigation required in consultation with KHC
JFWR-3830	Warehouse	1945	Undetermined	No adverse effect – no further work recommended
JFWR-3831	Porter Paint Factory	1925	Undetermined	No adverse effect – no further work recommended
JFWR-3833	Warehouse	1922	Undetermined	No adverse effect – no further work recommended

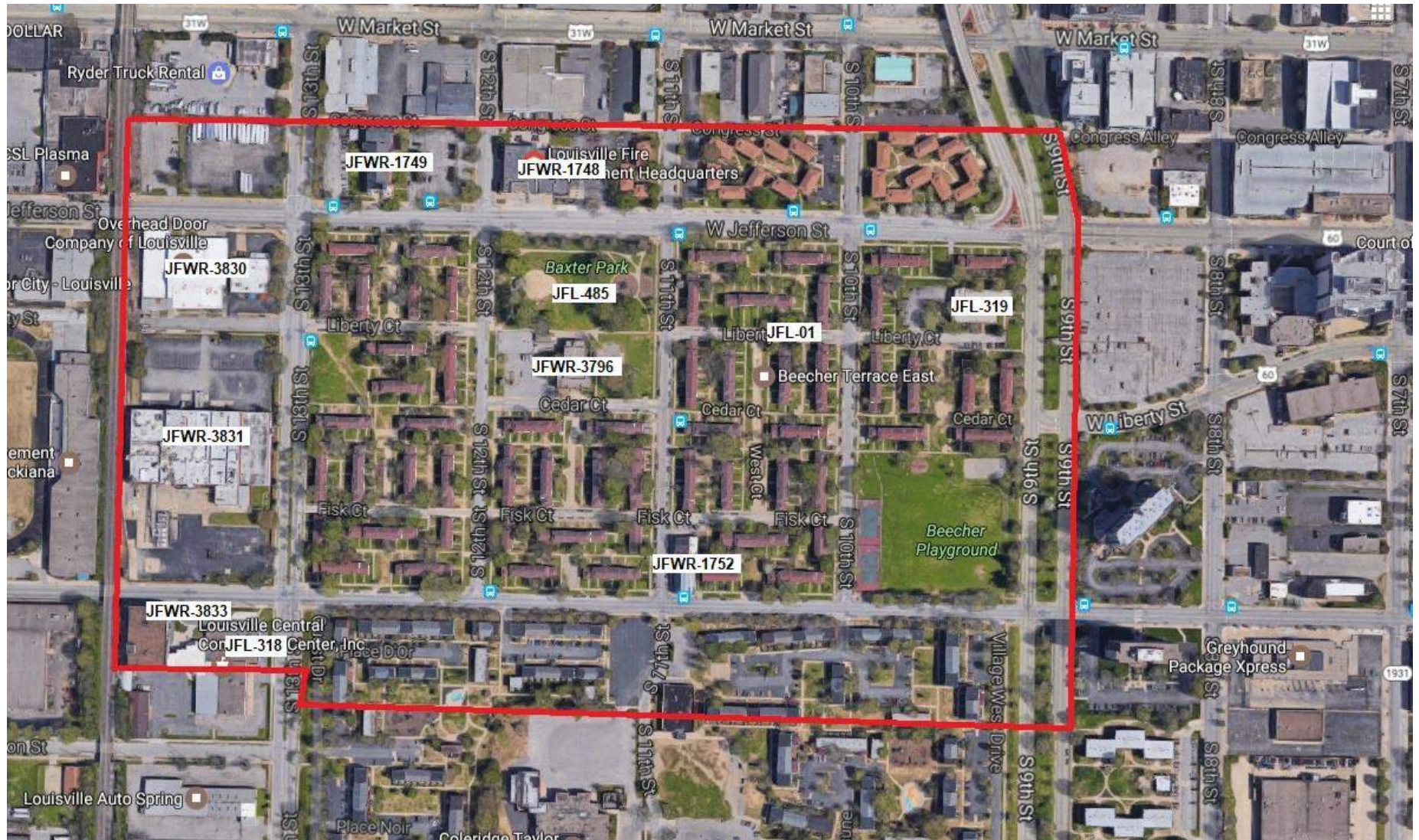


Figure 40. Resources documented within the APE.



**JFL-01**

**Beecher Terrace**

Bounded by W. Jefferson Street, S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard, and S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
1941

UTM 16 38.253752, -85.769688

Recommended NRHP Eligible



**Figure 41. General photograph of Beecher Terrace block showing housing and interior courtyard.**

***Description***

JFL-01, the Beecher Terrace public housing development, originated in 1939 and was completed in 1941 (**Figure 41**). The project began as “Low Rent Housing Project No. KY 1-2” under the authority of the Louisville Municipal Housing Commission (LMHC). The LMHC took loans from the U.S. Housing Authority in order to construct the project. Allied Architects designed the buildings. The purpose of the development was to provide housing to those who lost their jobs and their homes in the Great Depression.

There are eight building styles at Beecher Terrace (**Table 4; Figure 42 to Figure 52**). The primary differentiators are the length and height of the buildings. Each housing unit has a concrete foundation, either slab or a basement, brick and vinyl siding cladding, and a built-up flat roof. The windows and doors have been bricked in or replaced (**Figure 47**). The front stoops have been reconfigured, either with new concrete steps or ramps or wooden ramps. Many of these modifications occurred during a \$20 million-dollar renovation in 1992 that changed the outside appearance of the buildings.

The interior of the buildings has some general similarities. Each building has asbestos tile flooring, replacement windows and doors, and upgraded appliances and bathrooms (**Figure 48 and Figure 49**). As stated previously, each housing unit has at minimum a living room, kitchen, pantry, bathroom, bedroom, and closet (**Figure 50 to Figure 52**).

**Table 4. Buiding Units at Beecher Terrace Broken Down by Building Number Style**

Building Style	Measurement	Stories	Basement	Beecher Terrace Buildings
1	175'10" X 26'9"	3	Yes	17, 28, 35, 47
2	173'4" X 26'9"	3	No	8, 37, 40, 54
3	161'5" X 26'9"	3	No	12, 15, 23, 26, 43, 46
4	153'0" X 26'9"	3	Yes	7, 11, 21, 42, 58
5	143'11" X 26'9"	3	No	1, 2, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 30, 32, 33, 38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 48, 50, 51, 52, 58, 59
6	135'6" X 26'9"	3	No	3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 34, 36, 53, 56, 57
7	91'7" X 26'9"	2	No	49
8	77'8.5" X 26'9"	2	No	16, 18, 27, 29, 48

***NRHP Evaluation: Recommended Eligible***

JFL-01 is recommended eligible as a historic district under Criterion A, for its association with public housing in Louisville. Beecher Terrace exemplifies the various phases public housing endured, including the initial development to assist those affected by the Great Depression to becoming a tool of suppression and poverty. Architecturally the buildings have been impacted enough that their material integrity is suspect. In addition to reworking the exterior façades by enclosing windows or doors, the interiors have been reconfigured to address the number of people needing public housing and handicap accessibility. Beecher Terrace also reflects the racial division and civil rights issues that have plagued Louisville for decades.

The proposed boundaries for the Beecher Terrace Historic District are the boundaries of the housing project itself, specifically W. Jefferson Street to the north, S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard to the south, and S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street to the west (**Figure 53**). JFWR-3796 (Beecher Terrace Community Building) is located within the Beecher Terrace Historic District on Cedar Street between S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street and S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Resource JFL=319, the Mini-Versity parcel is excluded from the district, as is resource JFWR-1752, Church of Our Merciful Savior.

***Effects Assessment: Adverse Effect***

Corn Island recommends that the proposed Beecher Terrace Historic District will be adversely affected by the direct impact of the demolition of the residential buildings that comprise the housing development. The loss of these buildings impacts the historic and architectural significance of this housing development, which was constructed beginning in 1939. The demolition of the residential buildings will impact the Beecher Terrace Historic District's material integrity, as well as its integrity of setting, association, feeling, and design. The loss of the housing complex adversely impacts JFWR-3796 (Beecher Terrace Community Building) because of the loss of its surrounding context as a community building, impacting this resource's integrity of association and feeling.



**Figure 42. Example of Building No. 3 style is Building 43 facing northeast.**



**Figure 43. Example of Building No. 4 style is Building 7 facing north.**





**Figure 44. Example of Building No. 5 style is Building 21 facing south.**



**Figure 45. Example of Building No. 6 style is Building 6 facing northwest.**





**Figure 46. Example of Building No. 8 style is Building 18 facing southeast.**



**Figure 47. Example of reconfigured front stoop with doors bricked in.**



**Figure 48. Example of renovated bathroom.**



**Figure 49. Example of a renovated kitchen.**



**Figure 50. Example of the living room space.**





**Figure 51. Example of a bedroom.**



**Figure 52. A typical hallway in a three-bedroom apartment.**



Figure 53. Proposed Beecher Terrace Historic District.

**JFL-318**

Louisville Central Community Centers  
1300 W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard  
1966  
UTM 16 38.252514, -85.773025  
Recommended Not Eligible



**Figure 54. North and east elevations of JFL-318 facing southwest.**

***Description***

JFL-318 is a one-story, rusticated concrete block building with what may be a modern parapet roof (**Figure 54**). Decorative elements to the façade include a rounded glass block corner and the parapet roof. The building measures 29,334 square feet (SF) (Property Valuation Administration 2017b). The windows and doors are replacements, and a modern, staggered, glass-front addition on the west elevation connects the building to 1316 W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard (JFWR-3833).

***NRHP Evaluation: Not Eligible***

JFL-318 is recommended not eligible due to a lack of historic and architectural significance. This building has lost its integrity of association and feeling through the connection to JFWR-3833, preventing an understanding of the original use of this property.

***Effects Assessment: No Adverse Effect***

This building is recommended not eligible. As such, the proposed action will have no adverse effect. No further work is recommended.



**JFL-319**

Mini-Versity Child Development Center and Louisville Central Community Center  
306 Roy Wilkins Avenue  
1900  
UTM 16 38.254236, -85.765916  
Recommended Not Eligible



**Figure 55. East facade of JFL-319 facing west.**



**Figure 56. West facade of JFL-319 facing east.**

***Description***

JFL-319 is a two-story building that has been constructed in phases. PVA records indicate the building was constructed in 1900, but a visual inspection identifies the building as dating much younger than that date (PVA 2017c). Records for the building were not identified, and Corn Island staff could not verify the date of construction or if the original building had been altered or encapsulated. The current building divides into two bays. The first bay has a concrete foundation, brick cladding, and flat roof with a brick cornice (**Figure 55**). The glass door entry is recessed, and a row of fixed ribbon windows sit to the left of the entrance. Overall, Bay 1 resembles an elementary school. The second bay is a modern addition that could be considered unsympathetic to the more traditional architecture of Bay 1 (**Figure 56**). Bay 2 has a concrete foundation, rusticated concrete cladding, and a flat roof with a sort of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Modern castellation. Yellow tile serves as pilasters and as an asymmetrical arch over the doorway. The fixed windows have brick lintels.

***NRHP Evaluation: Not Eligible***

JFL-319 is recommended as not eligible due to a lack of historic and architectural integrity. Although PVA records state that this building dates to 1900, the architectural style refutes that date. If the current building incorporated the original building, then it has lost too much integrity to warrant eligibility.

***Effects Assessment: No Adverse Effect***

This building is recommended not eligible. As such, the proposed action will have no adverse effect. No further work is recommended.

**JFL-485**

**Baxter Square**

Bounded by W. Jefferson Street to the north, S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, Cedar Court to the south, and S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the west

1880

UTM 16

Recommended NRHP eligible as a contributing resource to the Olmsted Park System of Louisville



**Figure 57. Baxter Square facing south.**

***Description***

JFL-485, Baxter Square, was dedicated in 1880 by Mayor Baxter as a public park. The location previously served as a cemetery (**Figure 57**). The park was redesigned by the Olmsted firm beginning in 1890. By 1901, a planting plan was submitted and Baxter Square was updated. The park was segregated from 1924 to 1960. Expansions occurred and the park grew from 2.2 acres to the current size of 3.99 acres. Baxter Square currently includes open green space, a playground, a sprayground, and tennis courts to the east.

***NRHP Evaluation: Recommended Eligible***

JFL-485 is recommended eligible as a contributing resource to the NRHP-listed Olmsted Park System of Louisville. Although originally constructed in 1880 prior to Olmsted's hiring, after its destruction by a tornado in 1890, Olmsted was tasked with updating the park. The park itself differs from the design of Olmsted's park system because it is overall symmetrical and formal, versus the more fluid parks and parkways. This design difference shows Olmsted's plan to integrate other parks into the system, and redesigning them based on his concepts as seen with

Baxter Square's planting plan submitted in 1901. Alterations to the park have not impacted its association or feeling as a recreational area.

***Effects Assessment: No Adverse Effect***

Corn Island recommends that the proposed Beecher Terrace Historic District demolition will have *No Adverse Impact* on this resource if it remains as a recreational park area. The park itself pre-dates the construction of the housing complex, and its interpretation, feeling, and association is dependent more on its role as part of the Olmsted Park System rather than Beecher Terrace. No further work is recommended.

Should the demolition and reconstruction result in alterations to Baxter Square, it could be an *Adverse Effect* depending on the proposed action.



**JFWR-1748**

Fire Department Headquarters  
601 W. Jefferson Street  
1936-1937  
UTM 16 38.255526, -85.769773  
NRHP Listed



**Figure 58. JFWR-1748, the NRHP-listed Fire Department Headquarters, facing northeast.**

***Description***

JFWR-1748, the Fire Department Headquarters, is a two-story building with a limestone foundation and façade with a flat roof (**Figure 58**). It was built in 1936-1937 on a design by architect Brinton B. Davis. This Art Deco building divides into six bays, with four central bays flanked by two end bays. Stylized trim and geometric patterns are found in the trim, lintels, and doors. The central pilaster has a bas-relief seal of the City of Louisville. One defining feature of the building is the building's cornice, which is described as consisting "of a narrow band of brass in vertical and horizontal designs inset with shields. The brass is accented by a deep blue background" (Hedgepeth 1980a).

***NRHP Evaluation: NRHP Listed***

JFWR-1748 was listed on the NRHP in 1980 under Criterion C. The building's significance comes from its Art Deco architecture and as part of the Works Project Administration (WPA). JFWR-1748 is one of the few Art Deco buildings in Louisville, and is unique for its use of color in the cornice.

***Effects Assessment: No Adverse Effect***

The proposed project not adversely impact the historic or architectural significance of this resource. The proposed demolition does not impact the building's Art Deco architecture or status as a WPA building.

**JFWR-1749**

St. Peter's German Evangelical Church (now St. Peter's United Church of Christ)  
1231 W. Jefferson Street  
1894-1895  
UTM 16 38.255718, -85.771241  
NRHP Listed



**Figure 59. South elevation of JFWR-1749 facing north.**



**Figure 60. West elevation of JFWR-1749 facing east.**



### **Description**

JFWR-1749, St. Peter's German Evangelical Church (now St. Peter's United Church of Christ), is a late Gothic Revival church constructed in 1894-1895 (**Figure 59** and **Figure 60**). Built of limestone, it is considered one of the most detailed buildings designed by the Louisville architectural firm of Clarke and Loomis. As stated in the NRHP form:

St. Peter's is a highly decorative and three-dimensional handling of the Gothic Revival style. The limestone structure consists of a central, gabled nave flanked by two large towers.

The left tower is hexagonal with narrow arched slits filled with quatrefoil grills. Waterspouts extend beneath the steep roof. A circular corner tower which repeats the arch motif in its openings, visually connects the larger tower and the facade. The right tower rising above the height of the nave, is capped by a spire. This tower has an arched opening on the ground floor which is supported by two Romanesque columns. The facing of the arch contains a richly carved medallion with a Celtic-like motif. The opening now contains a window, in place of a door but the original steps remain. The tower is buttressed, adding to the three-dimensional quality. Narrow arched slits, again with quatrefoil grills are a prominent motif. Tourelles rise from the buttresses and flank the roof. A corner tower also connects the tower with the facade.

The central section of the facade is marked by a large ogee-arched opening, terminating in a finial. The arch rests on paired Romanesque columns. Recessed in the arch is a small rose window. The archway contains paired doors with stained-glass panels. The second story contains three arched windows set in stone voussiors with tracery and stained-glass. The top of the central ogee arch of the first floor extends in front of the second-floor window. This nave section terminates in a simple gable with a stone coping and a finial with a bouquet (Hedgepeth 1980b).

The St. Peter's German Evangelical Church congregation originated in 1847 in order to serve the large German population in west Louisville.

### **NRHP Evaluation: NRHP Listed**

JFWR-1749 was listed on the NRHP in 1980 under Criterion A and Criterion C. Under Criterion A, this building is significant for its association with the German community that developed in this section of Louisville. It could also be argued that JFWR-1749 has another period of significance in the late-20<sup>th</sup>/early-21<sup>st</sup> centuries as it served the Beecher Terrace, and also the Russell neighborhood. After World War II, as the neighborhood shifted from its original German community, the church began to serve the Russell neighborhood and Beecher Terrace. It continues this mission today, providing services for those in need. This building is significant for its Late Gothic Revival architecture and its association with the local architectural firm of Clarke and Loomis. Clarke and Loomis is considered one of the most important architectural firms in the history of the city's architectural development JFWR-1749 is also one of the few remaining historic buildings, particularly dating pre-World War II, that was not demolished in the 1970s as a part of Urban Renewal.

***Effects Assessment: Adverse Effect***

Adverse effect is determined, according to 36CFR800, as “. . . found when an undertaking may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of a historic property that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.” Corn Island recommends that the proposed new construction after the demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development will have an indirect adverse effect on JFWR-1749 due to viewshed impacts and temporary construction activities. The proposed action will impact the history of the building as a part of the Beecher Terrace public housing development, the Russell neighborhood, and its association with the architectural works of Clarke and Loomis. Although the church pre-dates the Beecher Terrace housing development, its transition after the construction of the development into a location of community gathering and aid after World War II with its multi-cultural, multi-generation membership” (Ferguson 2014) JFWR-1749 became associated with the defining characteristics of the neighborhood, and demolition of the Beecher Terrace housing development does Consultation with KHC is required to mitigate the adverse effect.

## JFWR-1752

Church of Our Merciful Savior  
473 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
C.1912  
UTM 16 38.252610, -85.768831  
NRHP Listed



**Figure 61. South and east elevations of JFWR-1752 facing northwest.**

### *Description*

JFWR-1752 is the Church of Our Merciful Savior (**Figure 61**). This church was constructed ca. 1912 in a Gothic Revival style and has brick cladding with limestone trimmings. The building has a “symmetrical, modified basilica-type plan with a tall, two-story nave and single-story side aisles” (Hedgepeth 1980). Previous ministers attributed the design of the church to architect Bertram Goodhue, but not documentation has been identified to support this claim. In addition to its significant architecture, the Church of Our Merciful Savior played an important role in Louisville’s African-American community. The congregation originated with St. Mark’s African Church, a mission church dating to 1865. In 1873, the congregation adopted the name the Church of Our Merciful Savior and worshipped in a separate church that was demolished by fire in 1890. The congregation of the Church of Our Merciful Savior was instrumental in sponsoring the first African-American Boy Scout troop in Louisville in 1916, and as one of Louisville’s oldest African-American congregations, was active in the surrounding community.

### ***NRHP Evaluation: NRHP Listed***

JFWR-1752 was listed in the NRHP in 1980 under Criterion A and Criterion C. This building is significant because of its association with the African-American community in Louisville, and due to its architecture.

### ***Effects Assessment: Adverse Effect***

Corn Island recommends that the proposed new construction will have an indirect adverse effect on JFWR-1752 due to viewshed impacts and temporary construction activities. The proposed action will impact the history of the building as a part of the surrounding neighborhood of the Beecher Terrace housing complex. Consultation with KHC is required to mitigate the adverse effect.

**JFWR-3796**

Baxter Community Center  
1125 Cedar Court  
1940  
UTM 16 38.254109, -85.769648  
Recommended Eligible as a Member of a Group



**Figure 62. South elevation of JFWR-3796 facing north.**

***Description***

JFWR-3796 is a two-story building with a raised concrete foundation, a brick and vinyl siding envelope, and a flat roof (**Figure 62**). Constructed between 1925 and 1949, this building mimics almost an armory design with administrative offices and classrooms in the front, and a gymnasium in the rear of the building. The windows are paired, and have metal sashes. Alterations to the building were not obvious other than general upkeep and maintenance, although the previous survey notes that some modification occurred between 1975 and 2000.

***NRHP Evaluation: Eligible as a Member of a Group***

JFWR-3796 was previously surveyed in 2009 and recommended eligible as a member of a group. Corn Island concurs with this recommendation. No information or alterations to the building were identified that would warrant a change in this recommendation.

***Effects Assessment: Adverse Effect***

Corn Island recommends that the proposed demolition of the Beecher Terrace public housing development will have an adverse effect on JFWR-3796. The proposed action will impact the history of the building as a part of the Beecher Terrace public housing development and the surrounding neighborhood. Consultation with KHC is required to mitigate the adverse effect.

**JFWR-3830**

Warehouse  
1328 W. Jefferson Street  
1945  
UTM 16 38.255274, -85.772816  
Recommended Not Eligible



**Figure 63. North and east elevations of JFWR-3830 facing southwest.**

***Description***

JFWR-3830 is a one-story, brick warehouse with a flat, built-up roof, which comprises the original portion of the warehouse (**Figure 63**). Windows in this portion of the building have been bricked in. A one-story, frame addition with metal cladding and a recessed entrance was added to serve as the new primary entrance to the warehouse.

***NRHP Evaluation: Not Eligible***

JFWR-3830 was previously documented in 2014 and recommended not eligible. Corn Island concurs with this recommendation.

***Effects Assessment: No Adverse Effect***

This building is recommended not eligible. As such, the proposed action will have no adverse effect. No further work is recommended.

**JFWR-3831**

Porter Paint Factory  
1327 W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard  
1925  
UTM 16 38.253918, -85.773003  
Recommended Not Eligible



**Figure 64. East elevation of JFWR-3831 facing west.**

***Description***

JFWR-3831 is the former Porter Paint Factory (**Figure 64**). It is a three-story building with a concrete foundation, steel frame-clad with brick, and a flat, built-up roof. JFWR-3831 was constructed in 1925 and sits on a 5.74-ac parcel. The building divides into 14 bays, and the central portion of the building extends one-story above the rest of the building. It has undergone moderate alteration, specifically a metal-clad addition in 2005 and maintenance and repair. The building measures 183,863 SF (PVA 2017d).

***NRHP Evaluation: Not Eligible***

JFWR-3831 was previously documented in 2014 and recommended not eligible. Corn Island concurs with this recommendation.

***Effects Assessment: No Adverse Effect***

This building is recommended not eligible. As such, the proposed action will have no adverse effect. No further work is recommended.



**JFWR-3833**

Warehouse  
1316 W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard  
1922  
UTM 16 38.252616, -85.773702  
Recommended Not Eligible



**Figure 65. North and east elevations of JFWR-3833 facing southwest.**

***Description***

JFWR-3833 is a four-story building with a concrete foundation, brick cladding, and a flat, built-up roof (**Figure 65**). The building was constructed in 1922 and currently measures 71,484 SF (PVA 2017e). The building has undergone extensive alteration, including the construction of a two-story, shed roof addition and a glass stairwell. The front (north) elevation retains some original architectural features, such as the entrance, but key elements such as the windows have all been replaced.

***NRHP Evaluation: Not Eligible***

JFWR-3833 was previously documented in 2014 and recommended not eligible. Corn Island concurs with this recommendation.

***Effects Assessment: No Adverse Effect***

This building is recommended not eligible. As such, the proposed action will have no adverse effects. No further work is recommended.

# 5

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the historic context developed and field survey results, Corn Island recommends that the proposed project will have *Adverse Effects* on the following historic resource: JFL-01, the Beecher Terrace public housing development; JFWR-1749, St. Peter's German Evangelical Church; JFWR-1752, Church of Our Merciful Savior; and JFWR-3796, the Baxter Community Center. Consultation with KHC will be required to mitigate this adverse effect.

Corn Island recommends that the proposed project will have *No Adverse Effects* on the following historic resources: JFL-318, Louisville Central Community Centers; JFL-319, Mini-Versity Child Development Center and Louisville Central Community Center; JFL-485, Baxter Square; JFWR-1478, Fire Department Headquarters; JFWR-3830, warehouse; JFWR-3831, Porter Paint Factory; and JFWR-3833, warehouse. No further work is recommended.

# 6

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