

Littlepage Terrace Housing Project, Kanawha County, Charleston, West Virginia

The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston, West Virginia (CHA) purchased the bulk of the land for the Littlepage Terrace project from the Charleston National Bank in 1938, and the housing project was constructed ca. 1939. In addition to the land, CHA obtained the historic Littlepage Stone Mansion which was built in 1845 and individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Funds for the project were provided through the United States Housing Authority's program for building low-cost public housing. The architects were H. Rus Warne, Charles Arthur Haviland and Julius Meredith Gardner of Associate Architects, Charleston, WV, and the contractors were Algernon Blair of Charleston, West Virginia and W.A. Christian of Richmond, Virginia. Associate Architects also designed Washington Manor, which was the other public housing project built in Charleston during the New Deal.

Littlepage Terrace was originally for white residents, and its sister housing project of Washington Manor was for white and black residents in separate sections. Occupants of the new project were families who had to meet a minimum income level of about \$900 to \$1,000 per year to qualify for residency. There were maximum income limits also, based on family size. The monthly rents at Littlepage Terrace ranged from \$20 for 3 1/2 rooms to \$21.25 for 6 rooms. Rents included steam heat, hot and cold water, electricity, and gas for cooking and refrigeration; the stove and refrigerator were also supplied. Although Littlepage Terrace did not actually replace a slum area, its residents were drawn from poverty affected areas in and around Charleston from Kanawha, Putnam and Clay Counties. In contrast to most existing low cost housing at the time, the new housing project offered apartments that were modern and clean, included utilities, had hot and cold water, and provided laundry rooms and play areas.

There were 170 units in the ten apartment buildings at Littlepage Terrace covering approximately eight acres, and each building contained a mix of one, two, and three bedroom units with either private entrances or a shared hallway entrance. All buildings were three story, multi-colored blonde brick structures of the International style. Regardless of size, each unit had a living room, one bathroom, and a combined kitchen/dining room or kitchen with separate dining room. Buildings had interior bicycle racks and perambulator storage, and those with basements contained central laundry facilities, playrooms, and incinerators. The boiler and maintenance shops were housed together in the basement of one building. Outside there was a playground with a water basin for summer use. The Littlepage Stone Mansion was renovated ca. 1940 to provide offices for the CHA, centrally located mail boxes for residents, and areas to be used by residents for social activities. It is unclear, however, whether the Mansion was actually used as a community space. A museum is now located in the Mansion, with photos and artifacts on exhibit from both the Washington Manor and Littlepage Terrace projects.

Littlepage Terrace was the second WPA public housing project for low income residents authorized in West Virginia and was designated Project No. WVA 1-2 by the USHA. Although Washington Manor was assigned the first number - WVA 1-1, delays in acquiring the land were probably the reason that Littlepage Terrace was constructed first. Roadways and courts within the project were named after local politicians, prominent citizens, and members of the CHA. Photos and artifacts from both Washington Manor and Littlepage Terrace are exhibited at the museum located in the historic Littlepage Stone Mansion on Washington Street West.