

LINCOLN PARK HOMES, TYPE B RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
West Colfax Ave. & Mariposa St.
Denver
Denver County
Colorado

HABS No. CO-74-B

HABS
COLO
69-DENV,
69B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

Historic American Buildings Survey

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LINCOLN PARK HOMES: Type B Residential Building

For historical information about the Lincoln Park Homes complex, see:

HABS No. CO-74 Lincoln Park Homes

For architectural descriptions of other buildings within the Lincoln Park Homes complex, see:

HABS No. CO-74-A Type A Residential Building

HABS No. CO-74-C Type C Residential Building

Location: West Colfax Avenue and Mariposa Street
Blocks 4,5,8 and 9 of Hunt's Addition
Denver; Denver County; Colorado

Construction Date: 1940-42

Designer: Temple H. Buell, Denver CO

Present Owner: Denver Housing Authority

Present Use: Low-income housing (scheduled for demolition in 1994)

Significance: The Lincoln Park Homes complex is one of Colorado's earliest public housing projects. One of three such projects planned by the Denver Housing Authority soon after the agency's formation in 1938, the Homes represent a period in Denver's history when the defense industry was hitting its peak and government subsidization of public housing was just beginning in the state. The Homes are a product of New Deal efforts to revitalize the economic and moral fiber of the nation. What was once an innovative solution to the public housing needs of Depression-era Denver is now a sobering reminder of the ongoing problems associated with providing for the poor and rehabilitating deteriorating neighborhoods. They are now unoccupied, in preparation for demolition.

The Homes are also significant for their place in the lengthy and prolific career of Denver architect Temple Buell. Certainly not one of his more memorable projects, the Lincoln Park Homes represent a transition in Buell's work, from his Depression-era to World War II-era projects.

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ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION by Clayton B. Fraser

1

GENERAL STATEMENT

Architectural character: The Lincoln Park Homes complex is comprised of 24 two- and three-story, flat-roofed, masonry buildings, containing 422 dwelling units. (Four of the buildings are virtually identical Type B Residential Buildings, grouped here under HABS No. CO-74-B.) All of the buildings in the complex are organized in a formal gridiron pattern, interspersed among parking lots, playgrounds, exterior courtyards and grassed lawns. They display the austere, plain-faced architecture that characterized PWA housing projects of the 1930s and 1940s. Massing is simple, spatial organization of the buildings formal and linear, and ornamentation limited to minor surface treatment of the exterior walls. The resulting architectural character is an uneasy amalgamation of a medium-density residential neighborhood and a military barracks.

Condition of fabric: fair-good

2

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

Overall dimensions: 320'2"x 31'2" two-story block, with 26'11"x 34'8" offset side wing and 129'10"x 27'8" third-story block centered on building.

Foundations: 12-inch-thick, reinforced concrete perimeter walls and interior column pads, with spread footings.

Walls: 12-inch-thick masonry walls, with alternating horizontal bands of structural clay tile (laid in running bond) and brick (laid in common bond), separated by slightly corbeled courses of rowlock bricks. Both tiles and brick are buff-colored, with raked mortar joints.

Structural system: 12-inch-thick masonry perimeter bearing walls and interior columns, with 4½- to 6-inch concrete slab floors and wood frame roof joists.

Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Narrow, tile-faced open balconies project from the rear of second story of the three-story sections. These balconies are accessed from ground level by open-stringer, wrought iron staircases. Small concrete slab stoops are located at exterior entrances of ground floor residential units. Open drive-throughs are located in three-story sections. With the rounded edges of their concrete lintels and supporting beams, these drive-throughs provide the most distinctive architectural features of the buildings lending a vaguely classical character to the otherwise plain-faced buildings.

Chimneys: None

Openings: The ground floor of the building facade contains 18 window bays and 18 door bays in an alternating pattern - generally one per residential unit. The second-floor facade contains 34 window bays; third floor, 11 bays. Rear and sides of the building are similarly patterned. Windows and doorways are plainly framed rectangular openings, with loose-lintel heads and brick surrounds. Windows are industrial steel, fixed and casement units in 2- 4- and 5-sash banks, with corbeled rowlock brick continuous heads and sills. Single-leaf wood doors with small lights and wood screens provide exterior entrance to the residential units.

Roof: Composition roof over wood joists (at a $\frac{1}{2}$:12 pitch), with galvanized iron exterior perimeter gutters at top of exterior walls. No dormers, cupolas, clerestories, towers, etc.

3 DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR

Floor plans: The building is organized symmetrically as a modified series of row-houses, with two-story residential units flanking a pair of single-story, ground-floor apartments. All of the residential units extend the full width of the building, separated by frame or masonry party walls. Light, ventilation and exterior access is provided to the major living and sleeping rooms by doorways and/or window banks along the building's exterior walls. The two single-story apartments, situated on either side of the central drive-through, comprise the entire first floor of the three-story center section of the building. Each encompasses approximately 1,100 square feet and contains a living room, kitchen, bathroom and four bedrooms, aligned along a center hallway.

Above and on either side of these are 22 two-story residential units. Each unit has separate exterior access, either through ground-floor doorways on both front and rear or through the second-floor balcony that cantilevers from the

rear of the building. There are no common hallways or spaces within the Type B Residential Buildings. Each two-story unit within the building is comprised of a living room and kitchen on the 380-square-foot first floor, with a bathroom and two or three bedrooms on the second floor (sizes of the units' upper levels vary slightly, depending on the number of bedrooms they contain). A narrow stairway rises in a straight flight along one wall of the living room to a short stair hall above to provide upstairs access.

Stairways: One straight-flight stairway, with enclosed stringers, in each two-story residential unit. Stairs consist of concrete treads in steel pans, with steel stringers and plain wood handrails.

Flooring: Carpeting or vinyl-asbestos tiles over concrete slab.

Wall and ceiling finishes: Sheetrock with painted, papered or paneled finish; painted, plain-board baseboards with quarter-round shoes.

Openings: Painted, plain-board casings around windows and interior doorways; painted, two-panel interior doors.

Decorative features and trim: None.

Hardware: Mortised steel locksets and hinges on interior doors; steel window latches and hinges.

Mechanical equipment: Full plumbing and electrical service throughout; heating provided by circulating hot-water, baseboard fin-tube heaters, with hot water supplied by central boiler.

4 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

General setting and orientation: The Lincoln Park Homes complex is situated in a mixed-use, West Denver neighborhood. West Colfax Avenue, a major arterial through the city, extends east-west along the complex's northern boundary. Originally built in 1917 and recently replaced, the Colfax Viaduct stands a block away from the complex. Lincoln Park, from which the complex draws its name, is an open landscaped space immediately south of the complex. The campus of Auraria College is located immediately across Colfax Avenue from the complex; commercial buildings and the offices of the Denver Housing Authority (which administers the Lincoln Park Homes) are aligned along Colfax

on either side of the complex. The low-density residential neighborhood that surrounds the complex is comprised primarily of one- and two-story single-family dwellings on small residential lots. Many of them aging and deteriorating, these were the types of buildings demolished in 1940 to clear the site for the Lincoln Park Homes.

Buildings within the Lincoln Park Homes complex itself are generally oriented north-south, with eight elongated Type A Residential Buildings and four Type B Buildings alternating in pedestrian avenues with twelve Type C Residential Buildings. The buildings are linked with each other and with exterior courtyards, playgrounds, and parking lots through a series of concrete sidewalks. Original clotheslines extend from the rears of the Type A and B buildings. Four asphalt-paved parking lots provide parking within the complex; off-street perpendicular parking lines Mariposa and Osage streets, at the complex's east and west perimeters. Residential lawns, trees and low plantings fill the landscaped areas between the buildings.

Historic landscape design: The site appears today much as designed and originally built, with minor changes in plantings and courtyard features.

Outbuildings: None.