

CALLIOPE HOUSING PROJECT, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(B.W. Cooper Housing Project)
3400 Earhart Boulevard
New Orleans
Orleans Parish
Louisiana

HABS LA-1368-E
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

B.W. COOPER HOUSING PROJECT, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
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CONFORM TO HABS OR HAER STANDARDS.

HABS No. LA-1368-~~Z~~ E

Location: 3400 Earhart Boulevard, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana

Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates:
29.95215278417538°, -90.09159609675407°

USGS New Orleans East Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM)
coordinates: 15.780704.3317043

Date of Erection: 1939 1941'

Architects: Sol Rosenthal, Jack J.H. Kessel, and Ernest W. Jones

Owners: Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), the City of New Orleans

Significance: The Great Depression of the 1930s spurred the first peacetime federal government attempts to systematically address the lack of adequate affordable housing for low-income residents. The federal government financed local building efforts through a series of new laws. Among the third wave of these projects planned and built in the late 1930s, the construction of the B.W. Cooper Housing Project addressed two major issues of the era: the housing reform movement (i.e. – urban “slum clearance”) and the reemployment of large sections of the labor force. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the closing and demolition of the housing projects along with the destruction of eighty percent of New Orleans housing stock once again focused national and international attention on housing rights.

History: Please see ^{field notes for} ~~historic report~~ HABS No. LA-1368 for the general history of the B.W. Cooper Housing Project.

Description: The architects of the administration building of the B.W. Cooper Housing Project designed a colonial revival structure. The two-fold mission of the building: provide services to the residents and work and storage space to the people who keep the grounds and buildings.

2005-2008) Even after many storms and two major hurricanes (Hurricane Betsy in 1965 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005), the brick, concrete and terra cotta “tile” walls had no structural failure. The terra cotta tile roof had been replaced by a 30-year asphalt shingle roof.

In an inverted “T” shape, the resident services were located at the front of the building, the worker storage and staging in the rear.

The building stood 63 feet long, 94 feet deep, and approximately 25 feet tall at the ridge line. The walls sat on concrete footings with an approximately five foot high knee-wall forming a vented crawlspace. Terra cotta “tile” masonry supported the twelve-inch thick walls with a brick exterior veneer. The floor
1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. “BW Cooper Housing Development, Environmental Justice Study.” (New Orleans, LA 2007), 9.

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was a six-inch thick concrete slab. The only wood could be found in the roof: trussed rafters spaced 23½ inches on center.

The concrete front porch extended six feet out from the façade, with front steps. A hipped roof covered the porch. Thin metal Doric columns supported it.

The exterior front door had six panels with a leaded glass transom. Large eight over eight pane wood double-hung windows were installed. Eight over eight-pane window are more common to the northern half the United States. The contractor installed terra cotta tiles on the gable-ended roof. Hot air vented out of the attic with a small Mount Vernon style cuppola. Wood molding covered the eaves and traditional half-round gutters with downspouts carried rainwater off the roof. The rear roof had a flat composition roof.

In the past, the interior had been gutted. The designed countertops, desks, and doors were removed and replaced with modern institutional furniture and metal doors.

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