

STEVENS COURTS HOUSING PROJECT,
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(USHA Housing Project Tex. 14-2, Administration Building)
2220 West 15th Street
Texarkana
Bowie County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3550-A

Black and White Photographs
Written Historical and Descriptive Data

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Southwest System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

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The Stevens Courts Administration Building is located at latitude: -94.069003, longitude: 33.431040. The coordinate was taken at the building's main entry on November 12, 2010, using a GPS mapping grade unit accurate to +/- 3 meters after differential correction. The coordinate's datum is NAD 1983. The Administration Building's location has no restriction on its release to the public. The location of the Administration Building is shown in Figure 1.

Present Owner: City of Texarkana
Housing Authority of Texarkana Texas

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Public housing

Significance: Stevens Courts was one of two housing projects built for the Housing Authority of the City of Texarkana, Texas in 1941. These were the first public housing constructed in Texarkana using funding provided by the United States Housing Act of 1937. The Administration Building was part of the original construction of the complex.

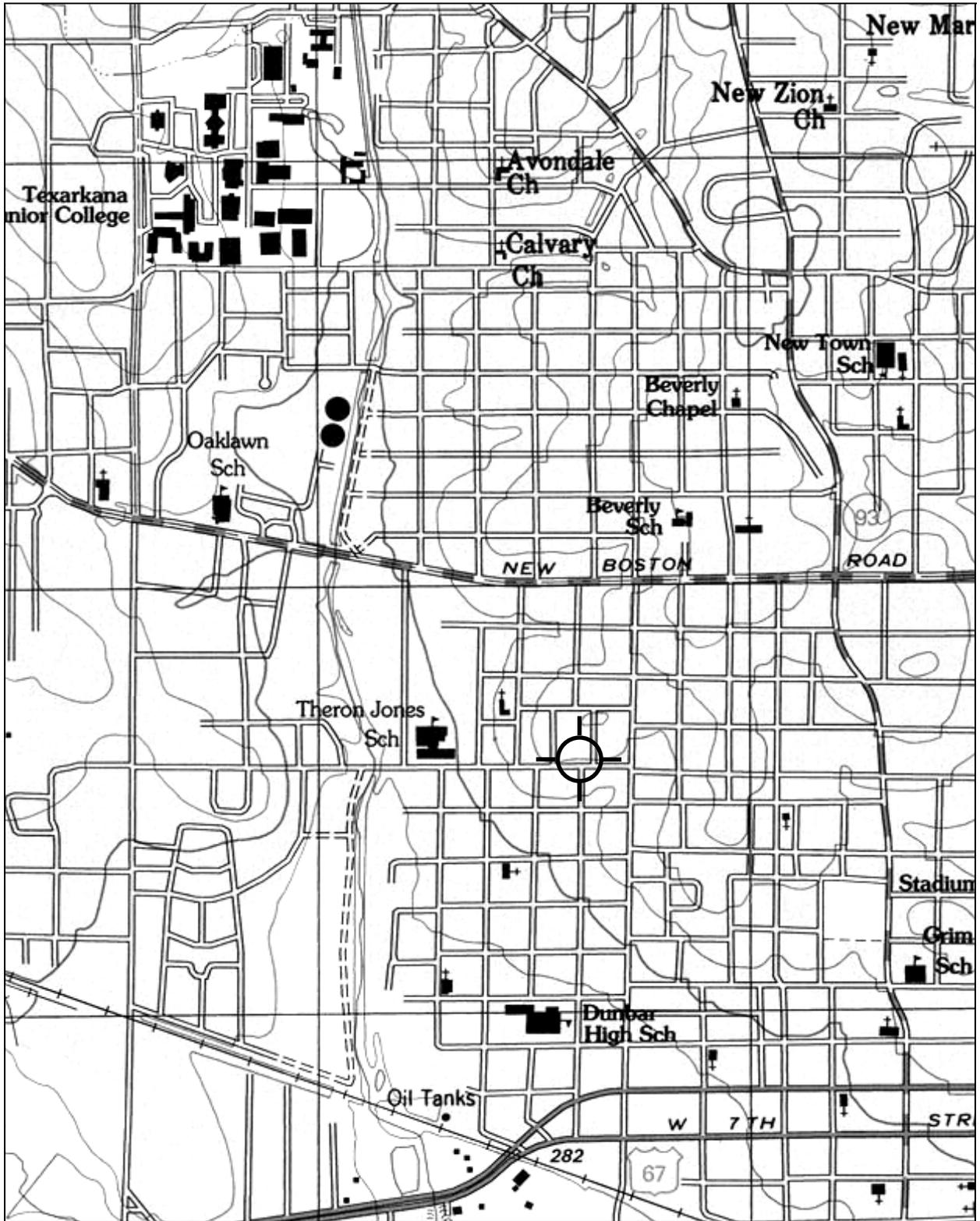


Figure 1. Location Map. Source: USGS Texarkana, TX-AR 7.5' Series Quadrangle Map, 2001.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of erection: 1941
2. Architect(s): J. N. McCammon-Bayard Witt, Associated Architects; Zumwalt and Vinther, Mechanical Engineers; Morrison & Carter, Landscape Architects; Frank Chappell, Structural Engineer.
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:
 - a. USHA Housing Project Tex. 14-2 (later designated Stevens Courts Housing project) was constructed for the Housing Authority of the City of Texarkana, Texas (currently the Housing Authority of Texarkana Texas or "HATT").
 - b. Stevens Courts was used as public housing from 1941-2010.
 - c. HATT will retain the Stevens Courts Administration Building and utilize the building as a cultural center and housing project museum under the terms of a 2010 Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Texarkana, Texas and the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Hardy Brothers Construction Company (General Contractor),
5. Original plans and construction: The Administration Building retains its original footprint and general character.
6. Alterations and additions:
 - a. Roof: At an unknown date, HATT replaced the original clay tile roofing with composition shingles.
 - b. Windows: The original steel casement windows were replaced by mill finish, aluminum single-hung window units in the mid-1980s.
 - c. Entries: The main entry's original paneled doors, transom, and sidelights have been replaced with aluminum-and-glass storefront. The west entry doors have been replaced with flush hollow metal units. The dates of these modifications are unknown.

B. Historical Context

The Administration Building was part of the original construction of Stevens Courts. For a complete historic context, see HABS No. TX-3550.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: More than the other buildings in the Stevens Courts Housing Project, the Administration Building reflects the Colonial Revival style in its proportions, detailing, and symmetry. The building is in the southeastern corner of central part of the complex, facing West 15th Street. It is one story in height and rectangular in plan with a central portico on the south facade. The main roof is hipped, while the portico is gabled. Ornamentation consists of a brick cornice, pedimented portico, octagonal lantern, and decorative ironwork at the main entry porch.
2. Condition of fabric: The Administration Building is in good condition: it is structurally sound and has been well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The Administration Building measures 92'-5" x 24'-1" overall.
2. Foundations: The foundation, floor framing, and roof framing were not observed due to access and asbestos contamination issues. Furthermore, the structural plans for the Stevens Courts Administration Building were not located. The following description is based on the structural plans for the Bowie Courts Administration Building, which has the same construction as its Stevens Courts counterpart.

The foundation consists of a continuous concrete perimeter grade beam, with an intermediate grade beam running east-west at approximately the mid-point between the northern and southern perimeter beams. The grade beams are supported by concrete piers.

3. Walls: Exterior walls are red face brick with structural clay tile backing. Bricks are laid in a running bond.
4. Structural System, framing: Floor framing consists of precast concrete joists typically spaced at 2'-8" on center (o.c.), running north-south, with a 4" reinforced concrete floor. Roof framing consists of truss rafters fabricated from 2x8 and 2x6 lumber spaced at approximately 2'-0" o.c.
5. Porches, stoops: The main entry porch, which measures 18'-11" x 8'-0", is centered on the south facade. It is covered by a pedimented portico supported by steel pipe columns with decorative iron work.

6. Chimneys: N/A
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The building has two exterior doorways. The main entrance, which is centered on the south side, consists of a single aluminum-and-glass door within an aluminum-frame storefront glazing system with fixed glass sidelights. A secondary entry, on the west wall, consists of a pair of flush solid core wood doors in a metal frame.
 - b. Windows: The Administration Building has twenty-seven 2'-10" x 5'-5" two-over-two-light and two 2'-2" x 3'-5" one-over-one-light aluminum sash windows in place of the original steel-frame casement windows. With the exception of single windows flanking the main entry, the windows on the south facade are arranged in pairs. On the other facades, the windows are typically placed individually.
8. Roof:
 - a. Roof shape, covering: The main roof has a 5/12-pitch hipped roof, with composition shingle roofing. The porch at the main entry is covered with a 5/12-pitch gabled roof with composition shingle roofing.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The Administration Building has a simple brick cornice with brick dentils and a wood fascia board. The building does not have eaves.
 - c. Lantern: A louvered, octagonal lantern is located in the center of the main roof. It measures 3'-9" in height and is mounted on a base that projects 8" above the main roof's ridge. The lantern is topped by a 4'-0" metal finial.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The main entry to the Administration Building opens into a lobby. A small reception area is to the west of the lobby. A central hallway extends from the lobby to a workroom that takes up the western one-quarter of building. On either side of hallway are offices, storage rooms, and men's and women's toilets. An assembly area occupies the eastern half of the building.
2. Stairways: The building contains no interior stairways.
3. Elevator: None

4. Flooring: The lobby and assembly room have asphalt tile flooring, and the bathrooms have tile. All other areas have concrete floors.
 5. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior walls are plaster on tile. The assembly room has wood wainscoting. The ceiling is plaster on metal lath. All ceilings are approximately 10' 6" in height. The assembly room has a wood crown molding.
 6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All interior doors are three ply flat panel wood doors with two solid wood panels. Door frames are metal.
 - b. Windows: Interior windows have no decorative molding, surrounds, or sills.
 7. Decorative interior features: None.
 8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. HVAC: The building was constructed with built-in, natural gas space heaters but was later retrofitted with a central air conditioning and heating system.
 - b. Plumbing: The building has running water, a water heater, and sewer system connections.
 - c. Electric: The building has electricity.
- D. Site
1. General setting and orientation: The Administration Building is situated on the south end of the Stevens Courts Housing Project, with the long axis running east-west axis. The building faces south, toward West 15th Street.
 2. Historic landscape design: The Site Improvement Plan, prepared by Morrison & Carter, was not located. A historic photograph shows landscaping included shrubbery planted close to the south facade. South of the building, a grass lawn, a small tree and concrete steps can be seen (see Figure 1).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: Housing Authority of Texarkana Texas, 1611 N. Robison Rd., Texarkana, Texas 75501.
- B. Current Views: All 4"x 5" photos were taken by Ecological Communications

Corporation in November 2010.

- C. Original Architectural Drawings: All original architectural drawings are held by the Housing Authority of Texarkana Texas, 1611 N. Robison Rd., Texarkana, Texas 75501.
- D. Bibliography
Please see HABS No. TX-3550 for a complete bibliography.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

- A. Federal Agency: United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- B. Names and Affiliations of Those Preparing Documentation:
Ecological Communications Corporation, Austin, Texas.
Thomas Eisenhour, Project Manager, Historical Architect, and
Photographer
Kurt Korfmacher, Architectural Historian
Lara Newcomer, Historian
Kathryn St. Clair, Architectural Historian
- C. Date Documentation Prepared: December 2010



Figure 1. Oblique view of south and west facades, date unknown. The original steel casement windows and clay tile roof can be seen clearly.



Figure 2. Mothers and their babies sit for the photographer on the south lawn of the Administration Building while the housing project nurse looks coyly out the window; date unknown. The original main entry is visible.