

3 PHOTOGRAPHY FOR HOUSING REPORTS AND EXHIBITS

The compilation of photographically illustrated annual reports and the construction of housing exhibits formed two interrelated areas of the public relations programs of Los Angeles's housers and planners in the 1940s and early 1950s. This chapter aims to show the relevance of these efforts to this study in their offering of instances where international practices of photography, design, and public relations in housing converged.

Although the making and circulation of displays were widespread practices among housing groups in the 1940s, the subsequent preservation and storage of display panels was not. All the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's exhibits presented in this chapter are now lost. Clues to the form and content of exhibits, however, survive in descriptions and photographs either stored in personal papers and institutional collections or printed in conference reports and trade journals. Photographically illustrated annual reports by local housing authorities not only reproduced photographs of housing exhibits, but also through processes of photographic enlargement and editing were displayed as exhibits, themselves. These records reveal a breadth of concerns that shaped the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's public relations practices, from those of photographic subject matter and composition, to costs, reproducibility, scale, and the use of color.

In facing these concerns, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles hardly stood alone despite the national prominence of its report designs and exhibition activity. Starting in the mid-1940s, the National Association of Housing Officials regularly circulated photographs of housing exhibits from across the country. These photographs reveal that few of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's design or display techniques were particularly unique or innovative, but rather aligned with national strategies for presenting a positive

image of public housing to greater publics. At stake in the Authority's designs for its exhibits was not an image of the modern housing movement as a creative or original endeavor, but a framing of the enterprise as a worthwhile expenditure of federal and local funds.¹ Closely interrelated, the roles of exhibits and reports shifted during the postwar years away from showcasing wartime photography and design and towards providing visual evidence of the creative negotiation of budgetary constraints.

Research on the historical purposes of housing exhibitions has already identified the promotional role of exhibits and reports. This chapter's closer look at postwar commentary, however, reveals design directives understudied in former research. As will be shown, inherent in these acts of aligning material photographic production with seemingly straightforward official goals is the making of meaningful technical and formal choices. It is precisely the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's penchant for drawing on the photographic skills of people outside its ranks and re-purposing materials from one publicity endeavor to another that makes it a compelling case study for this investigation into the larger housing movement's strategies for winning public support. While the extent to which these techniques succeeded in creating policies in favor of public housing remains difficult to gauge, together they nonetheless present a complex portrait of the Housing Authority's public relations work in its busy first decade.² A better understanding of the role of photography in these exhibition practices, in short, reveals not only how exhibitions such as those sponsored or created by the Housing Authority performed this educative, political, and cultural work, but also the ways in which material and iconographic mandates registered in their content and design, ultimately winning them national recognition and bringing them before audiences abroad.³

EXHIBITIONS IN A TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY OF HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING

Recent research by historians of urban planning illuminates the conditions to which housing and urban planning exhibition designs responded. As Carola Hein explains and several other historians acknowledge, housers and planners around the world, especially in the 1940s, created exhibitions to fulfill similar basic functions. Many exhibitions of the first half of the twentieth century aimed at educating their audiences; they allowed housers such as the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles to explain to lay publics such issues as the problem of the slums and promote a "yes" vote on public housing as a solution.

Historically and today, exhibitions might simply “prompt public discussion and awareness,” Hein explains, “even consensus.”⁴ Looking back on their history, at times exhibitions also sought public opinion so that planners could educate themselves about the communities they aimed to serve.⁵ Finally, exhibitions allowed housers and town planners to present their work to each other. As an opportunity for self-promotion among professionals in similar disciplines and a chance to exchange knowledge and experience through contributions from housers and planners in different cities or different countries, exhibitions often took place in conjunction with the gathering of experts at competitions or conferences.⁶ These practices, historians of planning Marco Amati and Robert Freestone observe, were part of “a tradition of planning as ‘civic education’ now largely forgotten.”⁷

While exhibitions performed similar functions, historians of town planning agree that a closer look at individual exhibitions remains instructive in the variety of ways in which these functions were fulfilled.⁸ As Hein shows, planning exhibitions performed their educative work in contexts that varied politically and culturally.⁹ Robert Freestone further notes that the study of individual exhibitions brings into focus a history of the “interface between technical and lay worlds,” or the social and political relationships between planning groups and their publics.¹⁰ But researching these histories also presents challenges. Focusing on Britain in the 1940s, Peter J. Larkham and Keith D. Lilley acknowledge that while much of the history of exhibitions can be gleaned from archival research and historical journals, the ephemerality of the exhibitions makes them evasive research subjects, “often only known from minor news items.”¹¹ Photography likewise occupies a precarious spot in this archive. Historians looking for photographs of exhibition installations are often disappointed, Larkham and Lilley caution. Photographs of the installations alone are rare, but photographs showing *how* the displays were used are rarer.¹² For these reasons, the authors argue that discerning whether exhibitions in 1940s Britain, for example, promoted “*active participation*” of lay publics in making plans or constituted mere “*exercises in placation and persuasion*” remains especially difficult.¹³

A growing body of case studies further places special emphasis on exhibitions as means to understanding housing and planning’s transnational history. This research identifies groups like the Congrès internationaux d’architecture moderne (CIAM) and the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP) as well as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the MARS (Modern Architectural Research) Group as prominent actors in fostering forums for the presentation of housing and

planning achievements.¹⁴ Exhibitions were often the work of travelling designers who brought ideas for the presentation of planning topics with them to planning groups and other institutions abroad.¹⁵ Several exhibitions, especially during what Freestone and Amati identify as the “peak” periods of the 1910s and 1940s, also went on tour, taking designs and ideas to viewers as opposed to requiring that viewers travel to the exhibition space.¹⁶ As Amati and Freestone show in their research on the United States Office of War Information’s *US Housing in War and Peace* (1944–1945) and the British Council’s *Town and Country Planning in Great Britain* (1948–1949), post–Second World War exhibitions functioned both as instruments of knowledge exchange among specialists and “soft power” supported by national governments.¹⁷

These investigations into international exhibitions moreover demonstrate the intersections of housing and planning with efforts to develop new means of visual communication. As early as the 1910 Town Planning Conference in London, international housing and town planning conferences were multilingual; Freestone and Amati argue that exhibitions “provided a forum for a language that everyone could speak.”¹⁸ Indeed, at the CIAM meetings and those of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning, where official congress languages were seldom fewer than three, the extra help of visual media with communicating urban problems and plans was both a practical measure and a call for further experimentation in exhibit design. Many studies of exhibitions since the mid-1920s credit Austrian sociologist Otto Neurath with honing the linguistic inclusiveness of housing and planning exhibitions through his development of the ISOTOPE (International System of Typographic Picture Education).¹⁹ Although designed for use in a variety of areas of the social sciences, one of the immediate applications of this system was Neurath’s own work in housing and planning reform. As founder of the *Österreichischer Verband für Siedlungs- und Kleingartenwesen* (Austrian Settlement and Allotment Garden Association), Neurath also worked on the 1924 Hygiene Exhibition in Vienna and in 1932 met with CIAM in Moscow to work on what historian of architecture Iain Boyd Whyte describes as “a set of visual symbols that would enable ‘comparative city planning.’”²⁰ This final intended application, although never put into effect exactly as Neurath conceived it, sought to make exhibits “speak” the same language not only for the better understanding of audiences, but so that these exhibits may be set in dialogue with one another.²¹

In addition to fostering Neurath’s efforts to develop a modern language, other historians comment on the role of exhibitions in the development of a “planning gaze.”²² Photographs, as Robert Freestone acknowledges, constituted their own “promotional channel” but also figured with plans and models as

important elements of planning exhibitions and other forms of display, such as the magic lantern show.²³ In this connection, Freestone cites photohistorian Maren Stange's research on the Danish-born, New York-based journalist Jacob Riis's photographic lantern slide lectures, noting that these lectures created "the groundwork for tenement housing reform in New York."²⁴ Better known for his subsequent publication, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (1890), Riis began working with lantern slides as part of his reform-minded journalism in 1887 and continued to lecture with slides until his death in 1914.²⁵ As Freestone suggests, a refocusing on housing history's distinct examples of photographic publication and display promises not only a richer understanding of how housing exhibition technologies and techniques worked, but a broader view of the connected histories of housing with those of design, and here one might add journalism, as well.²⁶

In this regard, Peter J. Larkham's introductory essay to *When We Build Again: The Bournville Village Trust* remains a distinguished study for the importance it places on printed material and photographs. In addition to Larkham's essay, the publication includes reprints of two pamphlets from the history of the Cadbury chocolate manufacturer's factory town of Bournville.²⁷ Established in 1879, Bournville attracted Catherine Bauer's attention in the early 1930s for its similarity to later garden cities and its transition from a factory town to an "autonomous Village Trust" in 1900.²⁸ The first of the two reprinted booklets, *When We Build Again* (originally printed in 1941), presents the results of a housing survey conducted by the Trust in 1938.²⁹ In its examination of *When We Build Again*, Larkham's essay considers the report's content as well as the details surrounding the publication, from survey and publication timelines to editing, production costs, and goals for the report as recorded in the Bournville Village Trust papers in the Birmingham City Archives.³⁰ It highlights items from the Bournville Village Trust's meeting minutes such as notes on the making of lantern slides of the 1942 *When We Build Again* plates for lectures and friezes for schools, the circulation history of the pamphlets, and even the reception of a film titled after the 1942 publication.³¹ In placing printed material at the center of the investigation, Larkham's reading comes closest among studies in the history of planning during the 1940s to a photography-focused approach. Larkham traces a constellation of projects related to the 1942 publication, and in so doing offers a far more nuanced reading of *When We Build Again* than would a consideration of its textual content, alone.

The most promising place to begin an investigation into the meaning of photographs in housing and planning exhibitions is in an area where housing's exhibition history and photographic-historical studies of exhibitions overlap:

the travelling housing and planning shows of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Planning-historical studies of these exhibitions such as Freestone and Amati's position the Museum of Modern Art's exhibitions as part of transnational exchanges among planners and architects and the postwar promotion among governments of planning as an essential component of a democratic world.³² Beginning with the 1932 *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*, Carola Hein's study of these shows describes how the Museum circulated modern planning ideas borrowed from Europe within the United States and showed the United States' interpretation of these ideas to European audiences after the war.³³ As Hein explains, especially the 1944 panel exhibition *Look at Your Neighborhood* marked a turning point in the Museum of Modern Art's program (figs. 31, 32). Designed for the Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions by houser and planner Clarence Stein and the architect and brother-in-law of Catherine Bauer, Rudolph Mock, the show featured thirteen panels arguing for neighborhood planning in the United States following the war.³⁴ Speakers at the exhibition's premier celebrated the planned communities as "democratic institutions."³⁵ Following this premier, the Museum created two hundred copies of these panels that schools and other organizations across the country could rent or purchase.³⁶

Comparing these planning-historical studies to those by historians of art and photography shows similar interests in exhibitions' postwar functions for the United States government, as well. Historian of photography Olivier Lugon explains how the Museum of Modern Art and *Life* magazine under the aegis of UNESCO and the United States' Marshall Plan simultaneously developed programs for reproducing and circulating exhibitions as part of the postwar "desire to foster reconciliation, to promote humanistic values and cultural exchange on a wide and democratic basis."³⁷ In looking specifically at travelling exhibitions produced in multiple copies like *Look At Your Neighborhood*, Lugon likewise shows how photography helped "blur the boundaries" between printed publications and exhibitions by "bringing closer layout and display, two- and three-dimensional design"—a practice which his research traces to the photographic exhibitions of the years of the Weimar Republic.³⁸ As Lugon observes, starting in the 1920s, typographers applied book and other print design techniques to designing three-dimensional exhibition spaces.³⁹ In the 1940s, the reproducibility of books defined the form of the Museum of Modern Art's "multiple exhibitions," as well. Printed using the photogravure process, the multiple panels, like books, were lightweight and mobile.⁴⁰

In both Hein's and Lugon's assessments, *Look at Your Neighborhood* was an innovation—one of the first exhibitions that the Museum circulated in a



31] Installation view of the exhibition “Look at Your Neighborhood,” MoMA, NY, March 29, 1944 through June 25, 1944. New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Gelatin-silver print, 5 in. × 9 in. Soichi Sunami (copyright unknown). Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.



32] Installation view of the exhibition “Look at Your Neighborhood,” MoMA, NY, March 29, 1944 through June 25, 1944. New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Gelatin-silver print, 5 in. × 9 in. Soichi Sunami (copyright unknown). Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

multiple format. Bringing Hein’s and Lugon’s studies together underscores the role of housers and planners in the development of the multiple exhibition as well as the instrumentality of photography in housing and planning exhibition design. Specifically, collaborative projects involving museums and housers, as both studies imply, may have brought more to bear on the development of special exhibit and display techniques at midcentury than scholars have previously acknowledged. What one can learn from studying these photographically-laden housing exhibitions as they were wielded in political exercises of transnational cultural influence after the Second World War, then, is how ideas in affordable modern housing shaped the forms and civic roles of photographic exhibitions in a way that privileged their efficiency above all else.

LOS ANGELES AND THE GERMAN BUILDING EXHIBITION OF 1931

Tracing the impetus for Los Angeles's involvement in international housing exhibitions might begin seven years prior to the passage of the Housing Act with the desire of Los Angeles real estate groups to partake in an international exhibition organized by the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning and bring the IFHTP congress to Los Angeles to coincide with the 1932 Olympics. As one of the largest international bodies of housing and planning experts of the interwar years, the IFHTP was not necessarily dedicated to upholding public housing over private building, but nonetheless in the years immediately following the war became an important audience for the United States' public housing movement in general—and, as will be shown, a threat to democracy in the eyes of the Los Angeles real estate lobby.⁴¹ Tracing the attempts of different Los Angeles-based groups to participate in the IFHTP's exhibition program thus situates the public relations efforts of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles as part of a longer history that extends beyond public housing and the city's limits, in turn providing a backdrop for the importance placed on report design and exhibit activity by the National Association of Housing Officials towards the Second World War's end.

The International Federation for Housing and Town Planning, as historian Renzo Riboldazzi shows, was one of main organizations to develop out of the garden city movement.⁴² The congress brought together professionals from architectural and town planning disciplines, civic leaders, and social workers around the idea that cities and regions planned according to modern methods promoted better housing, better opportunities for recreation, and a better life.⁴³ During the 1920s, these members of the soon-to-be-named IFHTP held multiple congresses in cities across Europe and a congress in New York in 1925.⁴⁴ After several more congresses in Europe, the IFHTP again held its 1938 meeting on the American side of the Atlantic in Mexico City.⁴⁵ This practice of holding congresses in different cities was characteristic of what Riboldazzi terms the “international approach” that defined this organization's planning work.⁴⁶

It was not so much the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning congress, but its accompanying exhibition that first attracted the attention of potential delegates from Los Angeles prior to the federal Housing Act of 1937. News articles indicate that a first attempt to organize such participation occurred in 1930, when Cecil B. Barker of C.C.C. Tatum Realtors proposed that Los Angeles submit “an exhibit depicting Los Angeles housing accommodations and the architecture of the Southland” to the IFHTP's international exhibition

planned for the following year in Berlin.⁴⁷ The exhibit, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, would include life-sized models of homes and portions of office buildings—all created with the sponsorship of the United States' National Housing Association and the National Conference of City Planning.⁴⁸

Los Angeles's initial interest in the IFHTP exhibitions offers a case in point for Carola Hein's observation that exhibitions provided cities with the opportunity to promote their civic "brand."⁴⁹ For Los Angeles in 1930, the Berlin exhibition would demand a balancing act: paraphrasing Barker, the *Times* article noted that participation in the congress "would be of the greatest value to Los Angeles realtors, builders, architects, and to the community as a whole," while also paradoxically confirming that the exhibition organizers wanted to avoid "commercialization of the enterprise."⁵⁰ A contribution by Los Angeles to the Berlin exhibition, in other words, promised to promote the city's building activity abroad but should not strictly try to sell it.⁵¹

Certainly aiming to honor the organizers' wishes, Barker's express goal that the IFHTP exhibit not appear "commercial" further hinted at a wish to turn away from the region's "boosterism" of the 1920s that sought to attract the business of vacationers and new residents alike.⁵² This wish also likely indicated a sensitivity to some of the debates at the IFHTP surrounding private versus public management of planning projects. As Renzo Riboldazzi notes, although public housing was a topic of IFHTP congresses in the 1920s and 1930s, mainly delegates from European countries discussed public housing as the responsibility of civic and state governments. Representatives to the congress from the United States, on the other hand, saw in the IFHTP a forum to consider the possible contributions of private builders, organizations, and architectural offices to the design of the modern city.⁵³ Los Angeles's aim to avoid an exhibit that was too "commercialized" might well have stemmed from a desire to present the city's building as less of a for-profit venture and more in-tune with progressive European discussions of housing as a public good. Still, however promising Barker's proposal may have sounded to readers of the *Los Angeles Times*, records of the Berlin exhibition and the IFHTP congress leave unclear the extent of the city's participation.

The IFHTP congress and the parallel exhibition, the *Deutsche Bauausstellung (German Building Exhibition)* presented alluring opportunities to be a part of housing and planning's international networks. The thirteenth congress met in Berlin in the first week of June 1931.⁵⁴ German architect Martin Wagner anticipated in an article on his and Hans Poelzig's designs for the exhibition buildings and grounds that the exhibition would attract visitors from the meeting halls of no fewer than seventy congresses that would take place during that late spring and summer.⁵⁵ Starting a month before the IFHTP congress and finishing

nearly two months later in August, the *German Building Exhibition* was in many ways a bigger event than the IFHTP congress, itself, and a main attraction for congress participants.⁵⁶ After attending the congress' "lantern lectures" and Regierungsbaumeister Werner von Walthausen's showing of the film, *Die Stadt von Morgen* (The City of Tomorrow), IFHTP delegates could board the city cars or underground rail at the Zoological Gardens and disembark at the Kaiserdamm station to visit the show at a reduced price of one Mark.⁵⁷ There, within Poelzig and Wagner's pavilions, they would find a seventeen-room hall featuring exhibits from over twenty countries, including the United States.⁵⁸ One notable delegate from the United States to the IFHTP congress who likely visited the *German Building Exhibition* was Carol Aronovici, then working as a city planner in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles.⁵⁹ Neither Barker nor a representative from C.C.C. Tatum Realtors appears to have attended the IFHTP congress.⁶⁰

As the 1931 conference in Berlin approached, Los Angeles's plans to participate in the *German Building Exhibition* soon turned to hopes to host the Federation for the fourteenth congress in 1932—the same year Los Angeles would host the Olympic Games. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* cited the city's "unprecedented growth and significance in housing and city planning developments" as arguments for the IFHTP to host their next congress in Los Angeles. The preparation and gathering of endorsements for the official invitation to the IFHTP quickly followed, headed by the Chamber of Commerce's civic development and real estate department.⁶¹

Perhaps through the influence of the former president of the American City Planning Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and newly elected president of the Federation, John Nolen, the IFHTP's council ultimately chose to hold the 1932 congress in Boston "with a possibility of an extension to Los Angeles before or after the Congress."⁶² The plans for the 1932 congress in Boston, however, were never realized. First postponed to 1933, in the end, the fourteenth congress was not held until 1935 with London as the location, and a single recorded delegate from Los Angeles in attendance.⁶³

Despite this failed attempt to bring the IFHTP congress to the city as part of the events surrounding the 1932 Olympics, Los Angeles's architects and planners continued to attend the international meetings. The 1938 IFHTP meeting in Mexico City welcomed a larger delegation from the Southland including architects Lloyd Wright and Paul R. Williams (both of whom would soon design housing projects for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles) along with representatives from the Los Angeles County Housing Authority, the City Planning Commission, and the Chamber of Commerce—all keen, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, on gaining a better understanding of how planners in other

countries solved their traffic problems.⁶⁴ The 1939 congress in Stockholm again prompted Los Angeles to invite the IFHTP to come to the Southern California city in 1941. Colonel William H. Evans of the Federal Housing Administration led the delegation.⁶⁵ Checked by the war in Europe, Evans began work on a Pan-American conference scheduled for late 1941 or 1942.⁶⁶ But the next congress of the IFHTP would not be until 1946 in the seaside town of Hastings, England.

However minor these news stories, and however minor the representation of Los Angeles at the IFHTP's events, looking through Robert Freestone's "lens" of the 1931 *German Building Exhibition* begins to outline the largely unexplored transnational dimensions of this pre-World War II and pre-1937 Housing Act part of Los Angeles's planning history. Although unsuccessful, much can be read in Los Angeles's attempts to bring the IFHTP congress to the city. They hint at a desire to dampen the boosterism of the previous decade. They demonstrate an active effort to partake in an international dialogue on the public funding of planning at a time when the United States still did not have strong laws in place for this funding. Finally, they expose the will of Los Angeles's planners, architects, politicians, and realtors to forge professional relationships with their fellow planning advocates abroad so that Los Angeles delegates may gather ideas from these international experts for solving planning problems at home.

These attempts at international engagement on housing and planning issues, spurred on by a landmark building exhibition abroad, likewise provide a compelling comparison to renewed efforts on behalf of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles following the Second World War. By the time of the 1946 congress in Hastings, the Housing Authority had eight years of experience to its name that included managing the city's housing crisis through the war and into the first year of peacetime. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles did not submit an exhibit to the IFHTP exhibition in 1946. Nor do records indicate that it sent a delegate. But when international housing expert Catherine Bauer contacted the Housing Authority's Executive Director Howard Holtzendorff about sending some local pamphlets and films to the congress delegates abroad, Holtzendorff responded that either San Francisco or Los Angeles would be happy to host an upcoming IFHTP congress. In a near echo of Barker's 1931 statement, the director added, "It would be a most valuable and enlightening experience for all housers in this region."⁶⁷

Midcentury housers in California would never realize the chance to host the IFHTP. The changed interests of real estate groups along with opposition from the *Los Angeles Times*, as traced in Don Parson's research, may be at least partly to blame.⁶⁸ The same *Los Angeles Times* that followed the city's engagement with the IFHTP in the 1930s with at least mild interest ran articles in 1951 denouncing

the IFHTP's 1948 report on the United Nations' support of public housing. Although the main concern in these articles was the apparent failure of the United Nations to recognize the success of free building enterprise in cities like Los Angeles and uphold it as an international example to be followed, the role of the IFHTP in disseminating the United Nations' statements in print was cited as a similar threat to free enterprise in real estate—a prime example of “Socialist pleading” and “doctrine.”⁶⁹ Added to the blacklist of the *Los Angeles Times* along with the United Nations and the local public housing program, the IFHTP no longer counted as a club which Los Angeles real estate wanted to join, but as a threat to the free market.

The lens of the 1931 *German Building Exhibition* thus opens up a history of planning aspirations in prewar Los Angeles marked by changing positions among housing's stakeholders and attempts at international engagement now long forgotten. The following review of the housing exhibitions that took place in and around Los Angeles in the 1930s as well as the public relations activities surrounding public housing in the decade that followed aims to bear this transnational history in mind as revelatory of not only the diverse motives and shifting alliances surrounding these events, but also the political pressures with which their sponsors contended.

PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES IN REPORT AND EXHIBIT DESIGN

As shown in the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Howard Holtzendorff's positive response to the possibility of hosting the second postwar IFHTP congress on the West Coast, housers and planners saw in international exhibitions unparalleled opportunities to promote their public images before a broad audience of experts from around the world. But in engaging in such public relations projects, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles also needed to walk a fine line. Exhibitions and exhibits required financial, creative, and material resources. While national housing groups encouraged these activities, this encouragement soon came with a caveat to keep costs low. The question the Authority faced was therefore how to call on exhibition techniques to promote public housing in a way that did not appear to be a waste of funds.

An overview of notable housing exhibitions in the Los Angeles area from the Depression years reveals a history of surprisingly costly displays. While Los Angeles failed to bring the IFHTP congress and its exhibition to the city, in 1932

it succeeded in bringing the Museum of Modern Art's *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* to the fifth floor of Bullock's department store on Wilshire Boulevard.⁷⁰ The exhibition brought together a collection of models and enlarged photographs of the work of modernist architects from both Europe and the United States, including that of Los Angeles's Richard Neutra.⁷¹ Neutra was instrumental in organizing the show's visit, while the President of the University of Southern California reportedly organized fifteen hundred dollars to pay for it.⁷² Whereas other cities opted for the less costly option of renting only the exhibition's photographs, Los Angeles ordered the pricier package that included architectural models, thereby affording visitors to the gallery a more approximate experience of what would become one of the Museum of Modern Art's landmark shows of architecture and housing.⁷³

Arthur Millier, the contemporary art critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, was quick to point out that *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* offered lessons in low-cost and public housing to which visitors should pay special heed. For many audiences, relegating the formal tendencies of these examples of modern architecture to an "International Style" tended to depoliticize especially the exhibition's socially-minded section on affordable mass housing.⁷⁴ Possibly quoting material from the exhibition, itself, Millier aimed to correct this misreading by likening the "style" to an approach or strategy:

"[...] the really important thing the exhibit accomplishes is to demonstrate the international style is not in its intention, just a 'style,'—as in hats or shoes, but an attempt to solve a problem which the nineteenth century neglected—the problem of minimum cost housing for low incomes."⁷⁵

For Millier, the show's housing section organized by Lewis Mumford and featuring photographs supplied by Catherine Bauer contained some of the "most significant things" in the show.⁷⁶

World's fairs provided additional venues for housing exhibitions.⁷⁷ Richard Neutra along with several other Southern California-based architects who would go on to design public housing for the Housing Authority soon became involved in the design of *Modeltown—USA*, an exhibit sponsored by the newly-formed Federal Housing Administration for the Better Housing Pavilion at the 1935 California-Pacific International Exposition in San Diego.⁷⁸ Opening in May of 1935, the exhibit included fifty-six miniature houses of various architectural styles arranged in a garden city layout.⁷⁹ Following the passage of the 1937 Housing Act, Catherine Bauer also advised on a *Modern American Village* exhibit for the 1939 New York World's Fair.⁸⁰ In keeping with the fair's theme,

“Building the World of Tomorrow,” the purpose of this exhibit was, in Bauer’s view, to “really show the public what great progress *could* be made in house design, architecture and neighborhood planning” (emphasis in original).⁸¹

Finally, in 1940 one group of architects on the West Coast took Bauer’s concept to heart. Calling themselves “Telesis,” this group formed in the late 1930s under the leadership of San Francisco housing reformer Dorothy Erskine and through the efforts of several figures connected with the architecture program at the University of California, Berkeley.⁸² As historian of architecture Peter Allen explains, the group’s first major project, an exhibit titled *A Space for Living* held at the San Francisco Museum of Art (now the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) in 1940, played a significant role in bringing centralized, environmentally-conscious planning to the local area through “citizen education.”⁸³ As Allen also points out, the San Francisco Telesis soon inspired the formation of a Southern California Telesis group when landscape architect Geraldine Scott and writer Mel Scott—both founders of one of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles’s greatest proponents, the Citizens’ Housing Council—saw *A Space for Living* under construction in San Francisco and brought the idea of organizing an exhibition back to their fellow housing and planning proponents at home.⁸⁴ Centered in Los Angeles, this group that organized the resultant show, *Now We Plan*, receives precious few mentions in the vast body of scholarship on the region.⁸⁵ Yet, in 1941, *Now We Plan* constituted possibly the largest planning exhibition Southern California had ever seen.⁸⁶

The point of the exhibition was to illustrate a modern approach to planning. Citing Webster’s dictionary, the “Telesis for the Los Angeles Region” group defined Telesis in the exhibition’s catalogues as “progress intelligently planned and directed; the attainment of desired ends by the application of intelligent human effort to the means.”⁸⁷ This “end,” as a review of the exhibition in *California Arts and Architecture* magazine defined it, was the progressive ideal of a “neighborhood atmosphere conducive to the complete development of each member of the community.”⁸⁸ Planning, or the application of “an intelligent approach to the ideal community life, providing a maximum of safety, recreational space, facility of communication,” was the means.⁸⁹

These broadly formulated goals were ostensibly shared by the group’s forty nine members, including architects Gregory Ain, Robert E. Alexander, Raphael S. Soriano, John Lautner, and Richard Neutra, the city planner and designer Simon Eisner, the bookstore owner Jake Zeitlin, Arthur Millier, and Frank Wilkinson, who soon became the Housing Authority’s assistant to the director.⁹⁰ The Housing Authority also appears to have contributed to the 1941 Telesis show by providing data from the 1940 *Housing Survey* about automobile accidents, the per capita

availability of recreation space, and current housing conditions.⁹¹ While the *Now We Plan* show was the first and only concerted effort realized by the Los Angeles group, many of the members and contributors spent the greater part of the decade pursuing the Telesis group's goals through their individual work. In addition to the young Frank Wilkinson, the architect Robert E. Alexander would go on to work for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles when he collaborated with architect Richard Neutra on the Elysian Park Heights development.⁹² Other contributors to the show, such as the photographer Julius Shulman, *California Arts and Architecture* magazine, and the Haynes Foundation would prove valuable contacts to the Housing Authority in respectively growing, circulating, and preserving parts of its photography collection.⁹³

The show that resulted from this concerted effort, *Now We Plan*, opened on October 23, 1941, in the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art in Exhibition Park.⁹⁴ Organized into a series of seven spaces, the exhibition began with “a 12-foot golden sun” and “a large relief map of the region in its primitive state,” to quote Millier’s extensive review of the show for the *Los Angeles Times*.⁹⁵ The visitor then proceeded to view a series of “peep-show miniatures” showing scenes of Los Angeles County in the years 1820, 1880, 1890, 1910, and 1920.⁹⁶ Features of the show that captured visitors’ attention included an “electric eye” that clicked like a time clock as visitors passed and “mural blow-ups of ballots, marked with an ‘X’ in a space labelled ‘better planning.’”⁹⁷ Most spectacular of all, however, was the presence in one of the galleries of a house that, according to the review in *Time*, had been “transported whole from a Los Angeles slum” to be displayed “accusingly before a backdrop of Los Angeles’s skyscraping city hall” in a spatial arrangement not unlike that of the photographs juxtaposed in the montage in the 1940 *Housing Survey* (fig. 7).⁹⁸

California Arts and Architecture published several views of *Now We Plan* in its November 1941 issue.⁹⁹ The photograph on the first page of the article shows a scene to match Millier’s description of the first room: peeking out from between a pillar and a gallery wall, a large, light-colored circle appears to hang from the gallery’s ceiling surrounded by abstract clouds while “rays” of light bear down upon cut-out mountains that rise from the floor below (fig. 33). A second, smaller photograph appears on the same page, cropped to accentuate the curve of a wall of barely discernible photographs arranged side-by-side. Views of the exhibition on the following pages show an arrangement of photographs pinned at varying angles on a fence-like wall next to a sign reading “Circulation must be planned” (fig. 34), while others on the final page of the article show the exhibit’s models and maps—one from a bird’s eye view (fig. 35). Reproduced slightly smaller on the article’s second page is a photograph of the recontextualized

33] "...Now We Plan," *California Arts and Architecture*, November 1941, 21, Environmental Design Library, University of California, Berkeley.

• Not just for our own backyard, nor for our street, nor for our neighborhood, but for all of our communities together—the region of Los Angeles. This is our region. With 1,000 square miles of land, stretching from the sea across the valleys and mountains to the desert, we have ample space for ourselves, and for millions more who may come later, to live, to work, to play, and to move about in comfort. But when we look closely at the land we find the usefulness of much of it has been destroyed because we have been thoughtless in its development. We see mistakes that must be rectified—we recognize opportunities which must not be lost.

In the region of the future, the use of land should be planned with care—the home in relation to the entire neighborhood, the neighborhood in relation to the entire city, and each city in relation to the region. Natural resources should be observed and protected, mountain forests, desert spaces, beaches, water supplies; areas must be set aside for parks, playgrounds, education, and recreation; residential areas spacious and quiet should be protected from business encroachment, from dangerous highways; commercial areas should be located where they are accessible and convenient to customers; industry and manufacturing must have their rightful place, with opportunity for development, a place convenient of access for the workers, with transportation facilities for materials and products; and all these areas must be interconnected by the system of streets and highways and freeways.

Patterns of land use are already in existence which form the starting point for future plans. We should study with understanding the interrelations between human activities and needs and the land of the region, if we are to arrive at a successful solution of the many problems which we recognize in the chaos of today.

•

"The Board of Governors and the Director of the Los Angeles County Museum extend their cordial thanks to the Museum's advisory committee of architects, headed by Falner Sabin, who so enthusiastically devoted their talents and their energies to the presentation of this exhibition.

"A special word of appreciation is extended to Telesis for the Los Angeles Region: a group of extremely talented young men and women who, without regard for time or remuneration, gave their services to the Museum's advisory committee as draftsmen, designers, and craftsmen, making it possible for the Museum to present one of the most attractive and intelligently conceived exhibitions in its history.

Special commendation also is due to the staff of the Museum for the enthusiasm they have demonstrated in lending able assistance to the designers of this significant presentation of . . . 'AND NOW WE PLAN.'"

ROLAND MCKINNEY,
Director of the Museum.

Continued on next page

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...NOW WE PLAN

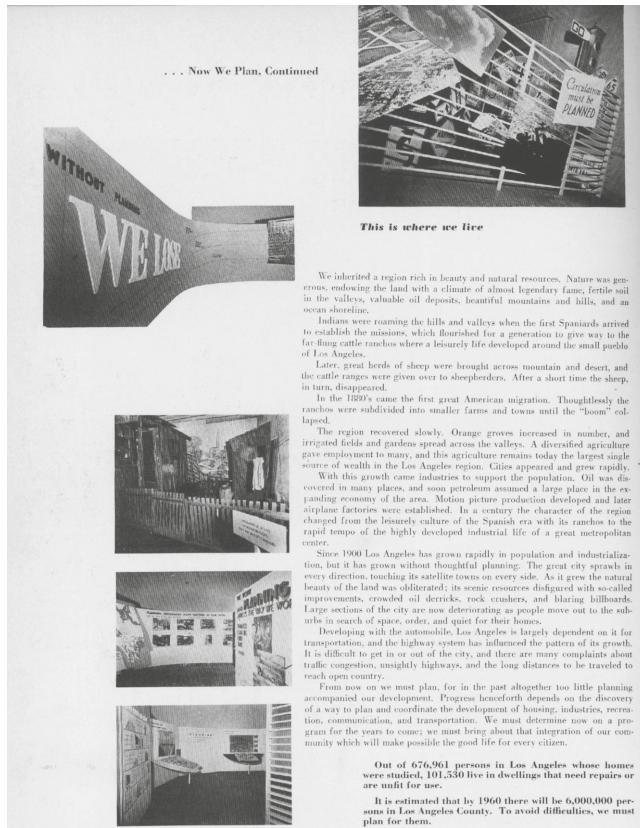
... THIS, IN ALL WAYS, WE WILL REARISE THE CITY NOT ONLY NOT LESS, BUT GREATER, BETER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN IT WAS QUERE TO BE

An exhibition having to do with the problems of Regional Planning showing from October 22, 1941, through January 18, 1942, at the Los Angeles County Museum

house (fig. 34). Separated from the room by a leaning fence and demarcated by a sign whose message remains obscured by the graininess of the photograph's reproduction, the house appears to be actually two structures—a larger building or part thereof on the left, with a smaller building bearing a strong resemblance in size and construction to an outdoor toilet on the right.¹⁰⁰

The two catalogues that were printed to accompany the exhibition interpreted the role of visitors thus: "if we vote for good planning measures, and officials who know the need for planning, we can have a regional community that serves our needs."¹⁰¹ Among the reported visitors to the show were the Civic Development and Construction Industries committees of the Chamber of Commerce, who met at the museum for lunch and a tour of the exhibit just three days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.¹⁰² But the immediate effect of this visit on housing legislation remains unclear. The articles in *Time* and *California Arts and Architecture* set aside, little in the record details the impact of *Now We Plan* on Los Angeles's public housing program.¹⁰³

Far clearer is the opinion of one influential houser about the *Now We Plan* show's design. Catherine Bauer wrote to her sister, the curator Elizabeth Mock



... Now We Plan, Continued

This is where we live

We inherited a region rich in beauty and natural resources. Nature was generous, endowing the land with a climate of almost legendary fame, fertile soil in the valleys, valuable oil deposits, beautiful mountains and hills, and an ocean shoreline.

Indians were roaming the hills and valleys when the first Spaniards arrived to establish the missions, which flourished for a generation to give way to the far-flung cattle ranchos where a leisurely life developed around the small pueblos of Los Angeles.

Later, great herds of sheep were brought across mountain and desert, and the cattle ranges were given over to sheepherders. After a short time the sheep, in turn, disappeared.

In the 1850's came the first great American migration. Thoughtlessly the ranchos were subdivided into smaller farms and towns until the "boom" collapsed.

The region recovered slowly. Orange groves increased in number, and irrigated fields and gardens spread across the valleys. A diversified agriculture gave employment to many, and this agriculture remains today the largest single source of wealth in the Los Angeles region. Cities appeared and grew rapidly.

With this growth came industries to support the population. Oil was discovered in many places, and soon petroleum assumed a large place in the expanding economy of the area. Motion picture production developed and later airplane factories were established. In a century the character of the region changed from the leisurely culture of the Spanish era with its ranchos to the rapid tempo of the highly developed industrial life of a great metropolitan center.

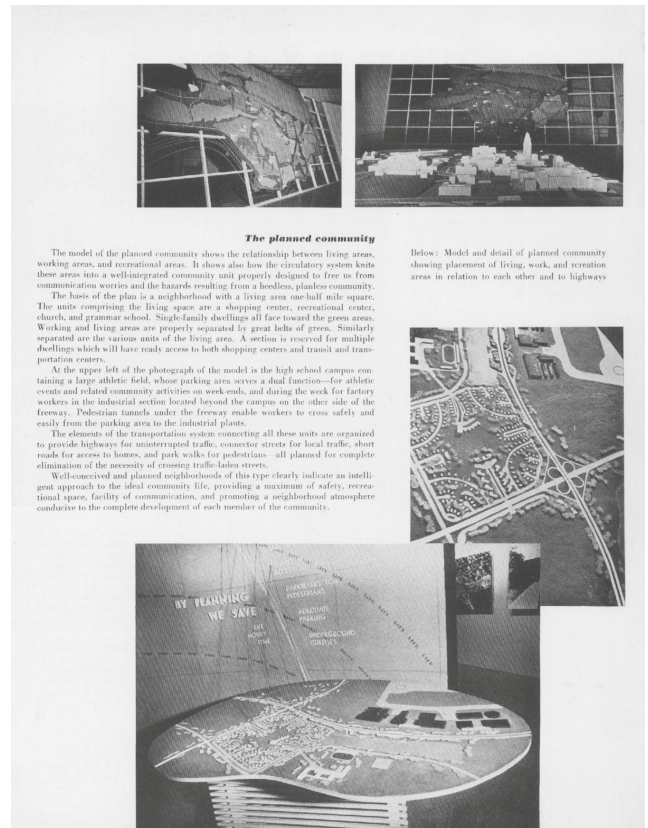
Since 1900 Los Angeles has grown rapidly in population and industrialization, but it has grown without thoughtful planning. The great city sprawls in every direction, touching its satellite towns on every side. As it grew the natural beauty of the land was obliterated; its scenic resources disfigured with so-called improvements, crowded oil derricks, rock crushers, and glaring billboards. Large sections of the city are now deteriorating as people move out to the suburbs in search of space, order, and quiet for their homes.

Developing with the automobile, Los Angeles is largely dependent on it for transportation, and the highway system has influenced the pattern of its growth. It is difficult to get in or out of the city, and there are many complaints about traffic congestion, unsightly highways, and the long distances to be traveled to reach open country.

From now on we must plan, for in the past altogether too little planning accompanied our development. Progress henceforth depends on the discovery of a way to plan and coordinate the development of housing, industries, recreation, communication, and transportation. We must determine now on a program for the years to come; we must bring about that integration of our community which will make possible the good life for every citizen.

Out of 676,961 persons in Los Angeles whose homes were studied, 101,530 live in dwellings that need repairs or are unfit for use.

It is estimated that by 1960 there will be 6,000,000 persons in Los Angeles County. To avoid difficulties, we must plan for them.



The planned community

The model of the planned community shows the relationship between living areas, working areas, and recreational areas. It shows also how the circulatory system knits these areas into a well-integrated community unit properly designed to free us from communication worries and the hazards resulting from a heedless, unplanned community.

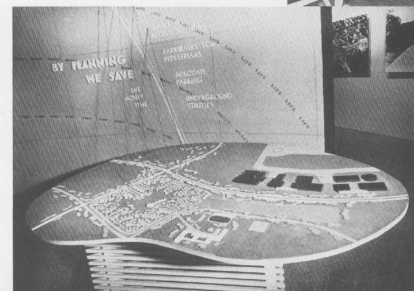
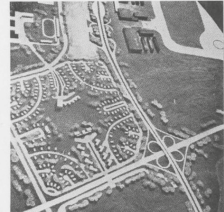
The basis of the plan is a neighborhood with a living area one-half mile square. The units comprising the living space are a shopping center, recreational center, church, and grammar school. Single-family dwellings all face toward the green areas. Working and living areas are properly separated by great belts of green. Similarly separated are the various units of the living area. A section is reserved for multiple dwellings which will have ready access to both shopping centers and transit and transportation centers.

At the upper left of the photograph of the model is the high school campus containing a large athletic field, whose parking area serves a dual function—for athletic events and related community activities on work-days, and during the week for factory workers in the industrial sections located beyond the campus on the other side of the freeway. Pedestrian tunnels under the freeway enable workers to cross safely and easily from the parking area to the industrial plants.

The elements of the transportation system connecting all these units are organized to provide highways for uninterrupted traffic, connector streets for local traffic, short roads for access to homes, and park walks for pedestrians—all planned for complete elimination of the necessity of crossing traffic-laden streets.

Well-conceived and planned neighborhoods of this type clearly indicate an intelligent approach to the ideal community life, providing a maximum of safety, recreational space, facility of communication, and promoting a neighborhood atmosphere conducive to the complete development of each member of the community.

Below: Model and detail of planned community showing placement of living, work, and recreation areas in relation to each other and to highways



34] "...Now We Plan," *California Arts and Architecture*, November 1941, 22, Environmental Design Library, University of California, Berkeley.

35] "...Now We Plan," *California Arts and Architecture*, November 1941, 23, Environmental Design Library, University of California, Berkeley.

at the Museum of Modern Art, regarding one of Mock's recent shows. "The more I think of that exhibit the more I feel it's the best thing of the kind that's been done," Bauer lauded Mock's unspecified exhibition. She then offered up the recent Telesis shows in San Francisco and Los Angeles as foils:

"The Telesis shows were too fancy and involved—particularly in presentation technique—and the others have been generally too statistical and wordy, or just visually dreary. Yours seems to me simple and direct and fresh, and without that smarty Modernite that makes people say How Cute or How Amazing without bothering to notice what it's about."¹⁰⁴

Reminding her sister at the Museum of Modern Art of the stakes in housing and planning exhibition design, Bauer's criticism, quite simply, was that the Telesis exhibitions' complex forms obscured their message. This challenge of defining the forms and aims of housing exhibits was one with which the local Los Angeles Housing Authority and others across the country would continue to grapple well into the postwar years.

CIRCULATING EXHIBIT PHOTOGRAPHS

In the first few years of its operation, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles organized several exhibits in addition to its contribution to the Telesis show. Displayed in contexts ranging from a junior high school to the University of Southern California's Annual Institute of Government summer conference to the Southern California Home Show of 1940, the Authority's exhibits aimed to reach a broad audience in the local community.¹⁰⁵ The exhibit forms and techniques the Authority called on to do this, however, differed markedly from those deployed by Telesis for *Now We Plan*. One photograph printed in *Progress*, the Housing Authority's second annual report, shows a 1940 display consisting of several chairs arranged theater-style before a screen (fig. 36).¹⁰⁶ Along the top of the wall and running the length of the chairs are unidentified printed panels arranged side by side. Below the panels, an architectural drawing presents a barely discernible landscape—perhaps a plan for one of the many public housing projects that the Housing Authority would soon build. Another photograph printed in the third annual report shows the Housing Authority's exhibit at the 1941 county fair in Pomona (fig. 37).¹⁰⁷ Grainy and dark, the photograph offers a rare view of an exhibit in action: a woman in a hat looks back over her left shoulder as she exits a darkened room, her attention arrested by a bright image of an outdoor scene projected in the dark space on a side wall.

The Housing Authority published these photographs in its second and third annual reports as a testament to its yearly activity in “public relations,” as the Authority headed the section of the second annual report in which the empty exhibit photograph was shown.¹⁰⁸ These activities also included speeches, radio broadcasts, articles in local periodicals, as well as the inauguration of the Housing Authority's own *Housing and Slum Clearance News* (later titled simply *Los Angeles Housing News*).¹⁰⁹ But the inclusion of the photographs of exhibits deserves closer scrutiny as an especially efficient form of reporting—a form that presented a public image of the Housing Authority and its work.¹¹⁰ Coming together in these tiny, grainy pictures are multiple forms of “‘all-encompassing’ media” (to deploy an apt phrase devised by Olivier Lugon and Laurent Guido to describe the shared capacity of books, projection media, and exhibitions to “make the circulation of images possible”).¹¹¹ And in this condensed presentation, one begins to see how the housing movement's ideals translated into the very structure and materiality of its publicity program. Next to a caption claiming “‘Housing in Our Time’ Shown 10 Times Daily for 18 Days,” for example, the compilers of the third annual report included a short description of the depicted event:

phases of the public housing program, such as its history, the part that labor plays in the development of this undertaking, the relationship of the Authority to the various departments of the city government, etc.

Periodical news items have been released, and with the employment of a Public Relations Director in January, steps were taken to forward information concerning the activities of the Authority, each week, to more than 250 community newspapers. All press releases have generally been well-received and much used, and the Authority believes that it has, by and large, enjoyed favorable relations with the public press.

On October 19, 1939, the first issue of the "Public Housing and Slum Clearance News" was published by the Authority, and copies sent to clubs, schools, libraries, churches and individuals, numbering nearly 2,500 throughout the city, and in a few cases to libraries, organizations and individuals outside the city who specifically requested they be placed on the mailing list. All told, seven copies of this publication have been issued during the year.

In the fall of 1939, the pamphlet published a year before by the Authority and entitled, "Why Public Housing?" was revised and expanded somewhat, and given a new title, "The Public Slum Clearance and Low Rent Housing Program in Los Angeles," and more than 1,250 copies of this latter publication have been distributed free of charge to those requesting it.

KEEPING LOS ANGELES INFORMED



During the year, four exhibits were displayed by the Authority, the first one at the County Fair in Pomona, September 1939; the second one at a conference of Coordinating Councils held at the McKinley Junior High School in February 1940; the third exhibit in point of time was displayed at the Southern California Home Show at the Pan-Pacific Auditorium from May 25 to June 5, 1940, inclusive. During this exhibit, the motion picture "Housing in Our Time," produced for the U.S.H.A., was displayed before many audiences totaling 1,700 persons; the last exhibit was shown during the week June 10, through June 14, at the 12th Annual Institute of Government at the University of Southern California, when for the second year a full section of 15 sessions was devoted to the subject of housing.



Another undertaking in the field of public relations was a contest fostered by the Housing Authority and conducted by the Los Angeles Daily News and Evening

(17)

36] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *Progress: The Second Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, California, July 1, 1939 through June 30, 1940* ([Los Angeles]: [The Authority], 1940), 16-17, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

OCTOBER

Eight thousand five hundred visitors attended the City Authority's exhibit at the Los Angeles County Fair, Pomona, most of whom saw "Housing in Our Time," USHA motion picture. Models of proposed projects were on display, and much informational material was distributed. There was no charge for space utilized by the Authority in this exhibit.

"Housing in Our Time"
Shown 10 Times Daily
for 18 Days



Arrangements were made with the Los Angeles Railway Corporation for 300 colored poster cards to be affixed to sides of street cars for three days announcing the opening of demonstration units at Ramona Gardens. The expense to the Authority was limited to printing of the cards.

A tour of inspection of Ramona Gardens with City Councilmen as guests was arranged. An interesting sidelight of the tour was the comment made by one councilman who had consistently opposed the Authority's program. This gentleman was an apartment house owner and was then building another apartment. He inspected minutely some phases of construction and declared he would consult his architect about changing his plans to conform with design as he found it at the project.



Mayor Bowron and
Commissioner McMullen
Luncheon Guests of
Contractors and Architects
at Ramona Gardens

With an expanding program the Authority sought some means of organizing the staff so that the increase in burdens and complex problems could be more efficiently handled. In order to accomplish such a reorganization, the Authority retained the Public Administration Service of Chicago to make a study and submit a report of its findings.

NOVEMBER

The most significant event affecting the Los Angeles City Housing Authority

37] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *Third Annual Report, July 1, 1940-June 30, 1941* ([Los Angeles]: [The Authority], 1941), n.p., The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

"Eight thousand five hundred visitors attended the City Authority's exhibit at the Los Angeles County Fair, Pomona, most of whom saw 'Housing in Our Time,' USHA motion picture. Models of proposed projects were on display, and much informational material was distributed. There was no charge for space utilized by the Authority in this exhibit."¹¹²

In telegraphic language, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles relays the details of the exhibit with an efficiency to underscore that of its design and operation. The exhibit, like the housing it promoted, was affordable to make. It drew a crowd the size of a town. The film issued by the United States Housing Authority, as the photograph suggests, stole the show.

A review of these records also shows that the 1941 county fair exhibit recycled numerous materials from among those shown the previous year. The USHA's film made another appearance. The almost unintelligible poster display along the top of the wall in the 1940 exhibit at the Southern California Home Show also appeared in the 1941 display, this time placed high over the entrance to the alcove. Like the photographs and models in the Museum of Modern Art's travelling show, these panels travelled to different exhibition sites, as well. In examining these practices, it is tempting to think that the Authority designed or purchased these panels with their reuse in mind—and for a good reason. The reuse of the exhibit itself was a display of adaptability similar to the Housing Authority's approach to housing construction. In the second annual report, for instance, the Housing Authority included a note that “all projects of this Authority are so designed [that, N.K.O.] they may be built on any site of more or less prescribed size.”¹¹³ Like poster panels and films, housing designs could be easily adapted to new spaces, sparing the Authority the costs of entirely new architectural plans.

One of the key agents in the promotion of exhibits as housing work following the war was the National Association of Housing Officials' monthly publication, the *Journal of Housing*. Inaugurated in October 1944, the *Journal of Housing* replaced *NAHO News* and the *Housing Management Bulletin* as the “official publication of the Association's Management Division” and soon embarked on a mission to provide a forum for housing officials from across the country.¹¹⁴ Auspiciously for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, Director Howard L. Holtzendorff was also the president of NAHO at the time, and penned a few goals for the new journal that were printed inside the cover of the first issue. “The publication of The Journal of HOUSING signalizes the program—its unity, its comprehensiveness, and its appreciation for the problems which are before us,” he wrote, interpreting the publication as a self-portrait of the Association in the scope and nature of its work. But for Holtzendorff, this self-portrait also needed to be a critical one. Housing's administrative work “must be evaluated,” he wrote,

“A strong voice must speak out for ever-improving administration, for ever more effective standards, for ever-increasing efficiency. It is not NAHO's

responsibility to educate the public or to wage the battle of housing in the press, on the platform, or in legislative halls. It is NAHO's responsibility to aid in seeing that housing administration performs the best possible job with the means available. We dedicate The Journal of HOUSING to that task." (emphasis in original)¹¹⁵

In this dedication, Holtzendorff conceived of the journal as an administrative tool—as a resource to which public housing officials at local authorities and managers of housing projects could look for help in improving their own local administrative practices.¹¹⁶ And as subsequent issues of the *Journal of Housing* soon showed, the singular “strong voice” Holtzendorff demanded expressed many different views about how best to operate a national program.

Under the editorship of houser Dorothy Gazzolo, the *Journal of Housing* presented representatives of housing authorities with a variety of opportunities to showcase and view each other's administrative work. Month after month, readers of the journal could find in its pages such pertinent information as news on the status of national housing legislation, reports of the goings-on at the various regional NAHO chapters, biographies and interviews with individual housing professionals (kicked off in the second issue with an article on Catherine Bauer), and practical tips for the maintenance of buildings and grounds in public housing projects.¹¹⁷ Starting in 1946, one could also find photographs of housing exhibits produced by local authorities and other public housing proponents from across the country.

On the level of their content, the exhibit photographs reproduced in the *Journal of Housing* offer a rare view of the array of postwar exhibits and displays on subjects ranging from the broader benefits of neighborhood planning to the more specific needs for public housing. For instance, a photograph in the January 1946 issue depicting the wall of a 1945 planning exhibition in San José, California, takes a large map as its subject (fig. 38). To its left is a photograph and drawing of “Good Housing.” Enclosed in a square, this drawing overlaps with a circle inscribed with words denoting some of good housing's amenities: “privacy,” “convenience,” “safety,” “space,” and “air.” Photographs of uniform size flank the map and this arrangement in orderly columns. “Do the homes in your neighborhood invite Better Living?!” the display asks, encouraging viewers to reflect on whether the homes they know exhibit the qualities of good housing the display invites them to see.

A photograph of an exhibit by the Citizens Planning and Housing Association of Baltimore printed in the May 1946 issue of the *Journal of Housing* invites a similar reflection by placing photographs and numerical data at the forefront



38] Untitled page, *The Journal of Housing* 3, no. 1 (January 1946): 7, Oakland Public Library.

39] "Prize-Winning Exhibit," *The Journal of Housing* 3, no. 5 (May 1946): 97, Oakland Public Library.

of its argument (fig. 39). The exhibit consists of three standing panels that form a niche for the display of leaflets and a title plaque. On the center panel in large letters is the name of the city followed by "Your city is what you make it. You can help shape it. Join the fight for slum clearance, master plan for Baltimore [...]" and the list of initiatives goes on. Additional text offers such unsettling data as "6,000 homes, no electricity" and "49,000 homes without a private flush toilet." Following these data points are arrows pointing to an outline of the Baltimore city limits. Again enjoining the viewer to envision a better city, the left and right panels show two montages beneath the words "This?" on the left panel and "or This?" on the right one.¹¹⁸ The choice, the photographs seem to suggest, is clear. On the left, a photograph of a crowded yard is set above a photograph of a group of children in the doorway of a house that appears much too small to accommodate them all. The house's windows are broken. Its thin roof sags. By contrast, the top photograph on the exhibit's right panel shows children playing in the sparkling water of a fountain in a spacious yard surrounded by apartment buildings. This photograph is set right above another one of houses

tral business district, the lake front, and transportation lines.) Between the structures planned by each of the sponsoring agencies and those of good quality existing in the area, a total of some 7000 units of well-designed and located housing forms the basis of the planning for some 23,000 additional units for the area. To service these 30,000 homes, the plan calls for an increased and relocated supply of shopping, educational, and recreational facilities.

The report devotes a considerable amount of space to sketches and descriptions of the type of housing recommended for the area in order that it achieve a healthful environment with plenty of light and air. The designs are ingenious and appear to be both workable and livable and the buildings are intelligently arranged over the three-mile site in good relationship to transportation and community facilities.

By reason of the high quality of the building and site plans developed in an earlier version of the current report, a description of them was featured in an elaborately illustrated 20 pages of the September 1946 *Architectural Forum*. The present plans have been made the basis of one of the traveling exhibitions of the Museum of Modern Art, shown from June to September 1947 in New York City and for another month at the Chicago's Art Institute.

The negative aspects of this six-way planning job have been stated as follows:

1. The plan has no official status. The Plan Commission played no part in its development, nor did any official city agency other than the Housing Authority. Thus the projected street patterns, schools, parks, etc., are mere "paper plans" and failure to get the full cooperation of all the city agencies involved could seriously distort, if not entirely destroy, the entire proposal.

2. In the absence of any official city-wide plan for reorganizing the city's railway lines—and without official proposals for dealing with other city-wide problems, such as local transportation and traffic, industrial locations, etc.—this planning for a three-mile area had to assume as fixed a number of undesirable conditions and build around them. If the planning could have been done on the broader base of the city as a whole, rather than simply as an effort to "save" a hospital's environment or to enlarge a college campus, it is quite possible that this entire plan would have emerged in a totally different form.

3. The rentals at which the housing proposed (except for that of the Chicago Housing Authority) would be

January, 1948



BALTIMORE REDEVELOPMENT EXHIBIT
The above exhibit was prepared for a better homes show, held in a building located in one of the blighted areas of the city approved for redevelopment. The exhibit captioned on the building's location by taking as its theme "you are standing in the midst of blight—right here."

available are estimated at \$20 and \$25 a room—and up—even though it is demonstrated that more than 70 per cent of present residents of the area could not pay such prices under current conditions.

4. There is nothing in the plan to indicate what controls could be exerted to assure that even the land coverage proposed could be enforced. In short, the whole plan seems to assume that a rather sizable group of persons of "good will" will undertake its execution and that, hence, no machinery to assure its being carried out as recommended is necessary. The booklet descriptive of the plan does, of course, indicate that there are increased city, state, and federal funds and powers needed to get work under way but makes no mention of the need for an integrated system under which the whole job could be achieved, without which, the proposal has something of a dreamlike quality.

5. As an extension of point 4 above, no suggestion is made for protecting this area, once it is developed under the plan. The fact is that, if any area is to be developed along the proposed lines, some "preventive medicine" must be prescribed now, if the whole job is not to be done over again in another generation or two.

**MINNEAPOLIS
Redevelopment of Vacant
Sites Proposed**

Preparing swampy or otherwise undesirable sites for building can

make it possible for the city to exercise its redevelopment powers without tearing down a single house, city planning engineer Herman E. Olson said this month. Mr. Olson suggested this approach in a report to the newly appointed Municipal Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Minneapolis.

Many "soft-land" areas in the city have long been neglected by private builders because they require more expensive foundations. Mr. Olson proposed, therefore, that the Authority should declare such areas "blighted" and then proceed to reclaim them so that special foundations will not be necessary. Thus the sites will be made attractive for building.

A second redevelopment proposal made by Mr. Olson was to rehabilitate blighted areas through a remodeling program, if the structures are sound enough to warrant the investment. The Minneapolis Authority was appointed late last fall with Dr. Carl H. Olson as Chairman. An Executive Director is expected to be named soon.

**PHILADELPHIA
Redevelopment Plan Stresses Spot
Conservation—No Mass Clearance**

Neighborhood rehabilitation—rather than large-scale demolition—is the line of attack on slums proposed by Philadelphia's Redevelopment Authority and City Planning Commission. The program was announced early in January by both agencies at the same time that the Planning Commission certified nine areas of the city for

11

of projects. PL 11 projects ranked the highest with an average PUM of \$2.45, because 80 per cent of the units use electricity for cooking. PL 417 and 671 developments had almost equal charges for the groups as a whole, with an average expense of \$1.78 and \$1.77.

(c) Gas. Charges were reported for gas on all but three projects. The average expense for gas ranged from a low of \$0.75 to a high of \$2.75.

(d) Heating. Heating costs, which accounted for over half of the total expense for Utilities, varied considerably among individual projects. The highest average expense per unit month reported was \$10.13, while the lowest was \$1.00.

R.M.&R. Individual averages for R.M.&R. ranged from a low of \$2.16 to a high of \$10.07.

(a) R.M.&R. Supervision. R.M.&R. expense on nine of the projects included no charge for R.M.&R. Supervision. On the others the charges varied from a high of \$1.63 to a low of \$0.13 per unit-month.

(b) Grounds and Structures. Grounds and structures maintenance varied widely. While the lowest charge reported for Grounds was \$0.12, the average for all developments was \$0.79, and the highest for an individual project was reported as \$1.41. Similarly the average charge for maintenance to structures for all developments was \$0.55, but among the different projects it ranged from a high of \$1.17 to a low of \$0.16 per unit-month.

(c) Painting and Decorating. Painting and Decorating represents from one-third to over three-fourths of the total R.M.&R. expense reported for all but a few projects. Excluding a single project which spent only \$0.41 per unit-month, the minimum charge reported for Painting and Decorating was \$0.76, while the top charge ran as high as \$4.38, and the average for all developments was \$2.31.

However, this large variance may be due to the inadequacy of the reporting period (a calendar year rather than the painting cycle) and some local authorities may have given their project a complete overhauling, while others may have deferred major jobs because of a shortage of labor or materials.

(d) Plumbing and Gas System. The expense for plumbing and gas work ranged from \$0.11 to \$1.78 per unit-month. This indicates that, as with painting, major repairs may be necessary during one year and not another, which would bring the cost for that year far above the median \$33 PUM.

(e) Electrical System. Three-fourths of the projects report a charge of less



At the Texas State Fair in October, the above exhibit told the story of lowest housing through a series of question-and-answer posters and through enlarged "before-and-after" pictures. Models of the Little Mexico Village low-rent development in Dallas and of three San Antonio developments attracted particular attention. The two-week exhibit was sponsored by the Texas Association of Housing Officials and was prepared and shown by Mr. Ben W. Carter, special assistant in the Region V FPHA office. The design for the display was executed by Messrs. Robert S. Arnold and Paul P. Rose of the FPHA Region V Planning Division. Staff members from the Dallas and Fort Worth Authorities and from FPHA shared the job of providing continuous attendance at the booth.

More than a million and a half Texans attended the Fair—and many of them got their first factual view of public housing from the exhibit: "Why that means everybody can live decent," was one of the comments overheard at the booth.

PL 412 developments it was only \$0.26 per unit-month. Three-fourths of all projects reported a charge to Insurance which came within \$0.10 of the average (median) of \$0.28 per unit-month.

(f) Heating and Ventilating System. While the charge for Heating and Ventilating was about the same for all PL 671 and 412 projects combined, namely, \$0.41 and \$0.40 respectively, the average for all developments was \$1.62.

(g) Ranges, Refrigerators, and Other Equipment. Except in one or two instances, the average expense per unit month for repairs and maintenance of ranges, refrigerators, and other equipment, was of little consequence compared to the other R.M.&R. items. For the above three items combined the average for all PWA projects was only \$0.22, while for PL 671 projects the minimum charge reported for Ranges and Refrigerators was \$0.27 and for PL 412 projects, \$0.22 per unit-month.

Miscellaneous Operating Expenses. Nine projects reported no expenditures for Public Services, while three projects charged over \$1.00 per unit-month to this account. The average for all projects, however, was only \$0.20 per unit-month, with a low of \$0.01 for PWA projects and a high of \$0.28 for PL 671 developments. The average expense per unit-month for Supplementary Community Services (Health, Education, and Recreation) ranged among individual projects from a high of \$0.79 to no expenditures at all in five projects.

Insurance. The per unit-month expense for Insurance was among the most constant of all expenditures reported. For both PWA and PL 671 projects, it averaged \$0.37, while for

PL 412 developments it was only \$0.26 per unit-month. Three-fourths of all projects reported a charge to Insurance which came within \$0.10 of the average (median) of \$0.28 per unit-month. Other Expense. The amount of Other Expense reported by all but two projects was negligible, amounting to less than one-tenth of one per cent of Total Operating Expense (excluding Reserves) for all projects combined.

Collection Loss. Six projects reported no Collection Loss, while one actually had a credit to this account. Thirteen other projects charged less than \$0.10 per unit-month to Collection Loss, which was the average. Reserves. The average shown under Reserves represents the amounts reserved during the calendar year, which when added to the amount received during previous years, makes up the total Reserves for a given project to date. The total reserved during 1945 ranged from a credit of \$3.16 to a charge of \$10.37. Sixteen projects reported a credit to Reserves for R.M.&R. The charges made to Reserves for Vacancy and Collection Loss ranged from a low of zero to a high of \$5.22.

Non-Operating Expenses. Ten projects reported no charge to Operating Improvements during 1945. One project actually had a credit of \$0.05 per unit-month. On the other hand, one or two projects had very large expenditures for operating improvements during the year, which resulted in very large PUM's for the period included in this analysis. These factors must be taken into account in comparing the expenses of the various projects.

The Journal of HOUSING

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- 40] "Baltimore Redevelopment Exhibit," *The Journal of Housing* 5, no. 1 (January 1948): 11, Oakland Public Library.
- 41] "This is Public Housing," *The Journal of Housing* 3, no. 12 (December 1946): 296, Oakland Public Library.

surrounded by large lawns and trees. In front of this panel, the exhibit's creators set up a paper-doll-like cutout of a woman and man to gaze upon the pleasant scene.

Probably a mistake in the printing or reproduction of this photograph in the journal, text stamped across the portion of the photograph showing this right panel draws the viewer's attention away from the photographs in the exhibit to the photograph of the exhibit. The photograph of the three panels in the Baltimore exhibit shows the display from the front and closely framed, offering few hints as to the scale of the construction or the spatial context. A separate photograph published in the *Journal of Housing* two years later also shows an exhibit from Baltimore in much the same way. The exhibit, again consisting of three panels forming a small alcove, yet again addresses the viewer directly, but this time with a message that is perhaps more unsettling: "You are standing in the midst of blight—right here." A rod affixed to a point following this final word at the top of the exhibit's back panel draws the viewer's eye down and forward to a point on a map on a fourth panel facing upward (fig. 40). The point, the caption

to the exhibit photograph explains, indicates the location of the building in which this exhibit was displayed.¹¹⁹

Frustrating as some of these small, grainy photographs may be for historians of exhibit design, the *Journal of Housing* invariably presents them as proud evidence of local achievements. The captions underscore notable exhibit features and often credit individual designers, as in the case of the first Baltimore exhibit. If the exhibit received favorable responses from viewers, the editors of the *Journal of Housing* included these details, as well. In the caption to the photograph of a booth in Texas, they noted the remarks of one visitor, ““Why that means everybody can live decent,”” while also highlighting that models of developments in San Antonio and Dallas “attracted particular attention” (fig. 41).¹²⁰ In the case of the 1946 “Baltimore: Your City is What You Make It” exhibit, the editors explained that the exhibit won an award “in ‘recognition of outstanding service...and in furtherance of a greater spirit of public appreciation and cooperation in achieving needed civic improvements.’”¹²¹ In this citation, the *Journal of Housing* seemed to suggest that the exhibit itself won a public service award, thereby ascribing agency to the exhibit while conflating the display with the civic work it showed.

Taken together, these photographs of housing exhibits from the immediate postwar years reveal practices that applied simple materials of boards and paper with succinct pro-housing messages. While direct connections between exhibits and voting remain difficult to trace, as the latter case showed, these materials and techniques were effective in at least winning recognition for housing officials and their work. A win for an exhibit was a win for the people who made it and the social and political endeavor of public housing they furthered. Still, despite its advocacy for a comparative and evaluative approach to all aspects of housing work, the *Journal of Housing* did not sponsor its own exhibit competitions during these early postwar years—at least not directly. Instead, it encouraged competition in a far more fundamental area of local housing authority activity: the design of annual reports. The following section now examines the defining of the annual report in the early to mid-1940s and the effect this effort had on housing exhibition activities after the war.

THE LOS ANGELES ANNUAL REPORT AS EXHIBIT, 1946–1948

Required by the California Housing Authorities Law of 1938, the annual report was a presentation by each local authority to the State Clerk of their activity in the previous year. It was also more than simply a way for the state government to monitor local housing authorities: the State Clerk required California housing authorities to include “recommendations with reference to such additional legislation or other action” to improve the effectiveness of the State Housing Authorities Law.¹²² The question of the form such a report should take was largely left open to local interpretations—an openness which soon gave way to brilliant works in photography, typography, and layout design. By 1945, the status of the report as a designed object could no longer be ignored. That year, the American Institute of Graphic Arts in New York held a competition and a *Town and City Reports Exhibition* to which they invited local housing authorities to submit their best work.¹²³

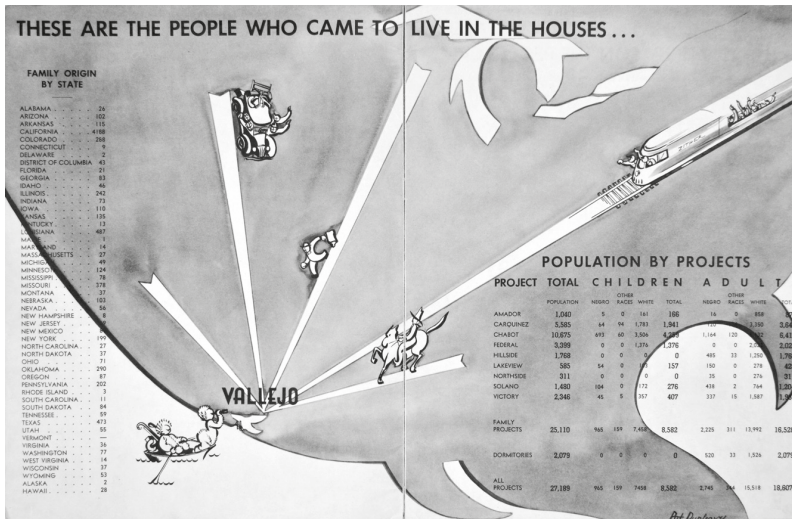
Then entering its thirty-first year as a professional association for designers across the country, the American Institute of Graphic Arts already sponsored an annual “Fifty Books of the Year” design competition.¹²⁴ The 1945 *Town and City Reports Exhibition*, however, was “the first of its kind,” as the *Journal of Housing* reported.¹²⁵ The express goal of the competition’s exhibition was “to promote more effective local government through stimulating the wide-spread publication of well-designed reports—for the better education of the citizen,” the journal quoted in words not unlike NAHO President Howard Holtzendorff’s own mission statement for the *Journal of Housing*, itself.¹²⁶ Seizing upon this opportunity to win national recognition, thirty-two local housing authorities submitted their wartime reports to the American Institute of Graphic Arts for judging by the Institute’s members and a panel of “authorities on municipal affairs.”¹²⁷

The *Town and City Reports Exhibition* ran from September 25 until October 28, 1945, at the New York Public Library.¹²⁸ Of the roughly sixty reports on display, eleven represented the work of local public housing authorities.¹²⁹ Selected based on “(1) size of communities; (2) general appearance and workmanship of reports; (3) number and quality of charts, maps, and illustrations; (4) color and variety of presentation; (5) inclusion of financial statements;” and “(6) success in meeting intended purpose of presenting a clear and accurate report to the public,” the winning reports represented an array of designs from the war years as developed by authorities across the country.¹³⁰ Some of the exhibited reports, such as the reports by the New York City Housing Authority, the Housing Authority of Vancouver, and the Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Schenectady, were simple annual reports covering the year 1944. Others,

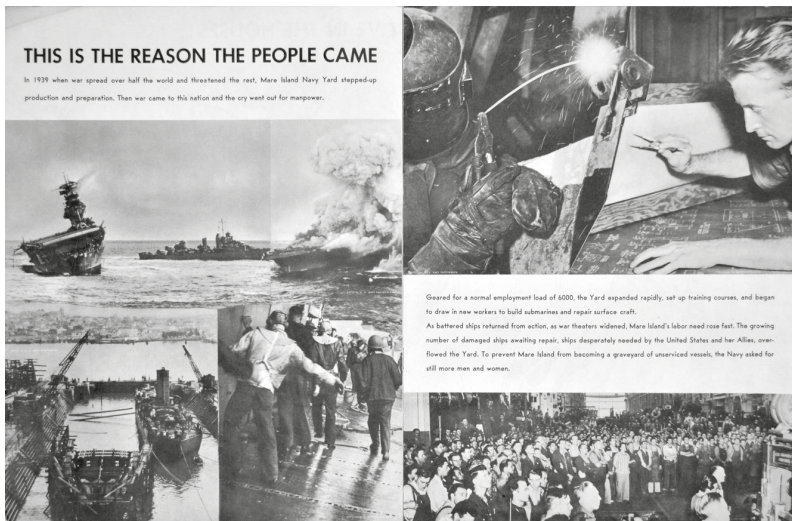
such as the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority's *Ten Years of Progress—1934–1944* or *The First Seven Years* by the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, consolidated several years of reporting into histories of local housing movements.¹³¹

In presenting these reports as works of graphic design, the Institute's exhibition challenged contemporary perceptions of government publications. Writing in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library, Astor Lenox and Tilden Foundations*, the library's director, Franklin F. Hopper, offered the backhanded compliment that the reports "looked interesting enough to read."¹³² A closer look at one particularly innovative report by the Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo shows how the reports in the exhibition might have moved the library director to his statement. Titled *These Are the Houses Sam Built; Vallejo, July 1942–January 1944*, the report turns public housing activity in the Northern California city into the content of a storybook-like presentation.¹³³ The title plays with the title and first line of a British nursery rhyme, "The House that Jack Built," by replacing "Jack" with "Sam," a shortened reference to the United States' uncle who called it to action in the First World War.¹³⁴ Subsequent pages tell the story of these houses with repeating and rhyming titles: "These are the people who came to live in the houses..." (fig. 42), "This is the reason the people came" (fig. 43), "This is the town the people found," the story begins (fig. 44). The "these" and "this" referenced in the titles are quickly explained by text, diagrams, and drawings by the book's layout designer, Pat Dunleavy, as well as photographs of subjects ranging from shipyard workers to housing units taken by a host of now utterly obscure photographers, but also by the star of Los Angeles's architectural press, Julius Shulman.¹³⁵ Adopting these verbal and visual characteristics of a children's book, the annual report clearly and cleverly explained the "who," "what," "where," and "why" of Vallejo's housing for the workers at the nearby Mare Island shipyards while presenting war housing in an accessible and indeed "interesting" format.

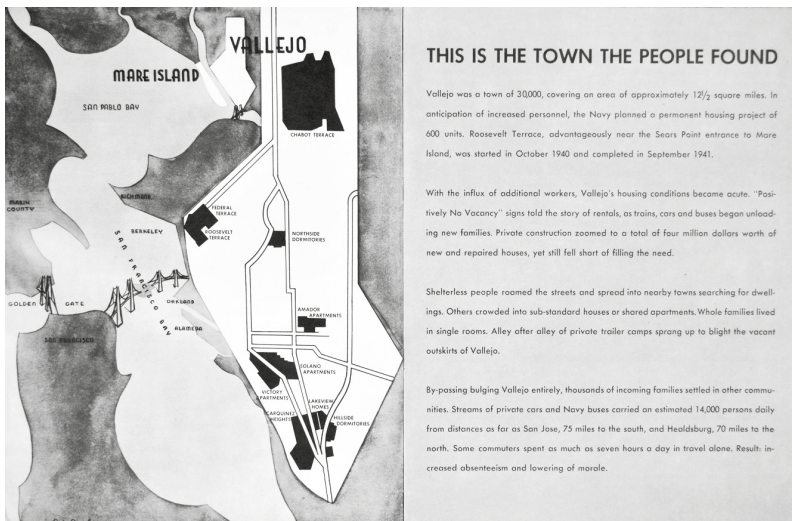
The *Journal of Housing* did not reprint exemplary pages from these winning reports for its readers to study and emulate, but in listing these reports exhibited in New York, it almost certainly encouraged other local authorities to obtain copies and study their award-winning designs. Working at maximum capacity to manage Los Angeles's wartime housing crisis, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles had not created a report since *Homes for Heroes*, nor did it submit this report on its activities from July 1941 through June 1942 to the competition in New York.¹³⁶ Instead, in 1945 the Authority was in the process of completing what Chairman of the NAHO Reports Subcommittee Marion Massen would later call a "glamour number"—a heavily illustrated report covering the local authority's work for the years from 1942 to 1945.¹³⁷ Borrowing words



42] Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo, *These Are the Houses Sam Built; Vallejo, July 1942–January 1944* (Vallejo, CA: Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo, 1944), n.p., Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum.



43] Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo, *These Are the Houses Sam Built; Vallejo, July 1942–January 1944* (Vallejo, CA: Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo, 1944), n.p., Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum.



44] Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo, *These Are the Houses Sam Built; Vallejo, July 1942–January 1944* (Vallejo, CA: Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo, 1944), n.p., Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum.

45] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *A Decent Home, an American Right: 5th, 6th and 7th Consolidated Report*, ed. Frank Wilkinson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1945), cover, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.



from one of President Roosevelt's speeches, the Housing Authority titled this report *A Decent Home, an American Right* (fig. 45).¹³⁸

A Decent Home, an American Right does not have the same nursery-rhyme innocence of the report of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's neighbors to the north in Vallejo. The Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo was established mainly to manage the emergency wartime housing in the largely undeveloped areas surrounding Vallejo.¹³⁹ The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, on the other hand, was established to build public housing to replace the city's substandard housing. Only as the United States began mobilizing for war did the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles re-designate its projects as housing for the workers coming from across the country to take jobs in Los Angeles's defense industries.¹⁴⁰ The Housing Authority's report of 1945, thus, tells a story of a double-war on the slums at home and the Axis powers abroad much like that in *Homes for Heroes*, only this time with forceful photographs of children sitting in the dirt, apparently unattended in the yards of



46] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *A Decent Home, an American Right: 5th, 6th and 7th Consolidated Report*, ed. Frank Wilkinson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1945), 8–9, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

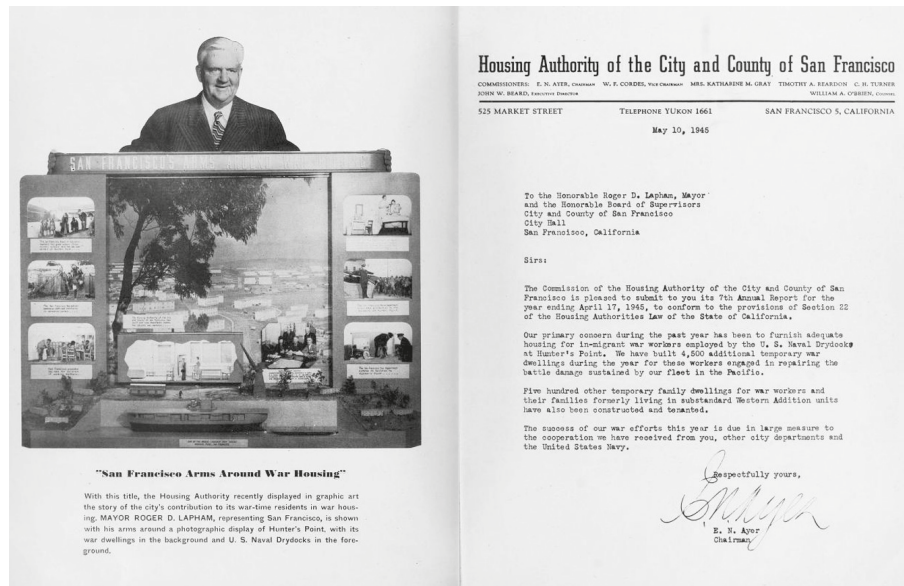
47] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *A Decent Home, an American Right: 5th, 6th and 7th Consolidated Report*, ed. Frank Wilkinson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1945), 4–5, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

48] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *A Decent Home, an American Right: 5th, 6th and 7th Consolidated Report*, ed. Frank Wilkinson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1945), 6–7, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

the city’s substandard housing (fig. 46), planes soaring through the clouds (fig. 47), and workers on their way to a factory (fig. 48).

In terms of design, a closer look at a common feature underscores the formal differences between *A Decent Home, an American Right* and the reports of neighboring housing authorities. By 1945, many annual reports issued by housing authorities contained a “letter of transmittal” written by the chairperson or commissioner of the housing authority to the city’s mayor.¹⁴¹ While some local authorities like the Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo did not always integrate this letter into the pages of their reports, others took the opportunity to incorporate the letter into more complex layouts. For instance, the uncredited designers of the San Francisco Housing Authority’s report reproduced their commissioner’s letter on a full page opposite a photograph of the city’s mayor standing behind a display of ship models and public housing photographs (fig. 49). The mayor holds a sign bearing the words “San Francisco’s Arms Around War Housing” with arms outstretched as though embracing the exhibit. The

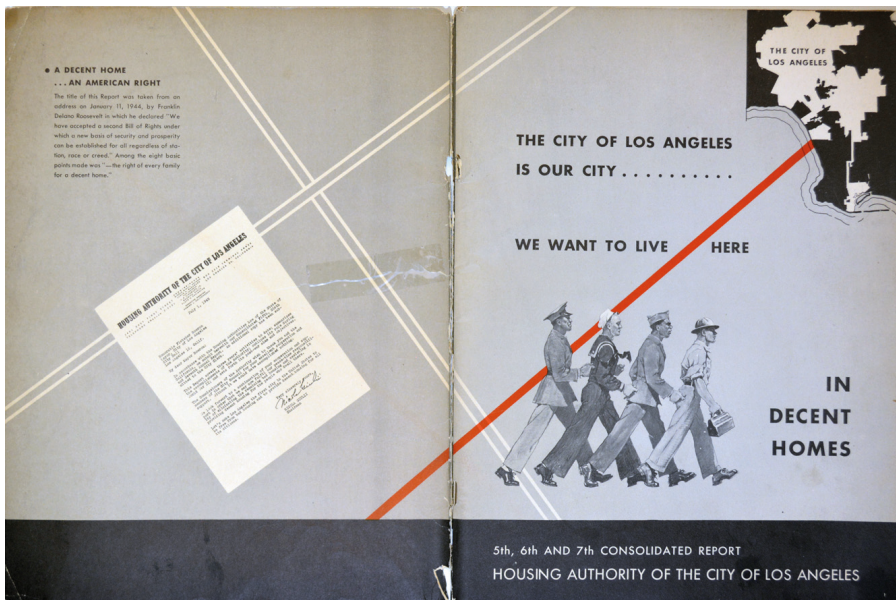
49] Housing Authority of the City and County of San Francisco, *Seventh Annual Report* (San Francisco: Housing Authority of the City and County of San Francisco, 1945), n.p., San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



close cropping of Mayor Lapham’s portrait and the exhibit further adds to the strangeness of the pose by removing all spatial context, leaving him looking like a paper doll pasted on the page.

In contrast, city planner Simon Eisner’s design for the Los Angeles report takes a far more dynamic approach to the reproduction of Commissioner Nicola Giulii’s letter. Rotated at a forty-five-degree angle and reduced in size to the point where the text is almost illegible, the letter in *A Decent Home, an American Right* follows the tilt of a set of parallel lines crossing the two-page spread from the lower left of the layout to the upper right (fig. 50). On the right page, a drawing shows three servicemen and a war worker marching toward the page’s right edge.¹⁴² A small map of the city fills the upper corner. Eisner’s layout thus turns the letter into a shape away from which the war heroes march, following a bright red line to Los Angeles and the words “In Decent Homes.”

The rest of the Los Angeles report exhibits a similar hierarchy of small text, larger titles, and—larger than both—images. Looking at the titles, one sees that like Dunleavy’s design for Vallejo, Eisner’s design for the later Los Angeles report not only made these titles large, but also included ellipses within several of them. As scholar of literature Anne Toner explains, in the twentieth century, writers and publishers turned increasingly to three dots (“...”) over asterisks and dashes as a preferred notation to indicate omission or the obscure as well as “rupture, fragmentation, and formlessness.”¹⁴³ Dunleavy’s design for the Vallejo



50] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *A Decent Home, an American Right: 5th, 6th and 7th Consolidated Report*, ed. Frank Wilkinson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1945), n.p., 1, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

WAR HOUSING	DEVELOPMENT	STATISTICAL	DATA	DEVELOPMENT COSTS												TOTALS NOT COMPARABLE								
				TOTAL	UNIT	PER ROOM	TOTAL	UNIT	TOTAL	UNIT	TOTAL	UNIT	TOTAL	UNIT										
4829 CORINGBOR PARK ANNEX 1	F.S.U.'s	44	1	9.34	200	11	\$	84,649	\$1,215	\$506	\$	1,240	\$	15,917	\$502	\$	1,930	\$	44	\$	8,232	\$210	Vacant	
4830 BARK STRADA ANNEX	F.S.U.'s	260	1	17	11,55	11	379,851	1,445	577	22,575	83	122,874	473	16,326	44	28	14	28	14	28	14	28	14	Vacant
4831 ESTRADA COURT ANNEX 1	F.S.U.'s	100	1	9	10,48	100	152,171	1,322	606	12,378	126	32,655	326	4,347	437	21	24,000	240					Vacant	
4832 ESTRADA COURT ANNEX 2	F.S.U.'s	60	1	6	10,00	60	91,363	1,355	610	16,156	269	19,892	328	3,263	63	22	13,063	218					Vacant	
4837 CORINGBOR PARK	F.S.U.'s	110	1	8	12,28	110	142,332	1,274	591	24,176	220	40,465	348	6,023	55	22	21,050	209					Vacant	
4838 CORINGBOR PARK ANNEX 3	F.S.U.'s	124	1	10	11,39	124	183,285	1,238	611	15,249	132	45,737	348	9,246	68	22	23,970	216					Vacant	
4839 IMPERIAL COURT ANNEX 1	F.S.U.'s	40	1	3	12,42	40	42,231	1,058	631	9,240	226	18,281	445	3,670	92	23	11,791	295					Vacant	
4840 CORINGBOR PARK ANNEX 2	F.S.U.'s	80	1	5	7,00	80	45,231	1,081	568	11,263	258	14,074	327	1,721	79	21	8,200	198					Vacant	
4841 IMPERIAL COURT ANNEX 2	F.S.U.'s	80	1	5	12,48	80	34,452	1,566	626	9,339	119	39,208	479	3,400	425	21	16,200	204					Vacant	
4842 IMPERIAL COURT ANNEX 3	F.S.U.'s	22	1	2	10,36	22	32,842	1,498	371	602	27	46,668	1,171	419	21	200	6,000	209					Vacant	
4877 WESTERN TERRACE	F.T.O.'s	198	1	120	7,95	198	1,286,419	1,391	321	100,373	101	426,041	427	15,548	16	103	189,424	190					Vacant	
4878 PORTSMOUTH HOMES	T.O.U.'s	128	1	22	5,42	128	304,848	2,382	501	13,886	108	91,666	714	74,500	587	21	23,881	187					Vacant	
TOTAL WAR HOUSING		8807		733		36,283	\$13,740,344			\$902,403		\$3,537,724		\$782,108			\$1,882,896						\$13,670,872,283	
AVERAGE WAR HOUSING						13	\$1,560		\$641		\$402		\$125		\$107		\$154							
GRAND - LOW RENT HOUSING		12,275		915		33,469	\$28,013,789			\$2,200,780		\$4,828,232		\$3,420,388			\$714,910							
TOTAL WAR AND LOW RENT HOUSING																								

51] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *A Decent Home, An American Right: 5th, 6th and 7th Consolidated Report*, ed. Frank Wilkinson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1945), 42-43, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

report follows this trend of using three dots, but Eisner's design for the Los Angeles report uses far more.

Tempting as it may be to associate this profusion of dots with the scale of the housing crisis in Los Angeles during and after the Second World War, the dots were more likely an example of what Toner terms "experimental typography."¹⁴⁴ The omission traditionally associated with these dots is seldom clear. In one layout, the title reads "36,283* people.....were housed"—a sentence

which without the mark of omission would still make sense and sound complete (fig. 51).¹⁴⁵ But from a design point of view, the dots serve the practical function of expanding shorter titles to fit to the entire width of the layout. These dots occur most prominently between phrases in the titles along the bottom of the report's pages, connecting them across the gutter. In this application, the dots underscore the spatial and syntactical connection between the text on the facing pages while also slowly drawing the reader's eye from one part of the phrase to the next and from one page to the next, much like the long lines of dots that lead a reader's eyes from chapter titles to page numbers in a table of contents.

Taking the spatial relationship of these titles to the overall visual and textual content of the pages into consideration, one sees how the dots also slow the reading of the text by introducing pauses: "On the battlefields...we fought and died...for" reads one of these titles across pages four and five, leaving the sentence evidently unfinished (fig. 47). Looking up from this text along the bottom of the page reveals a montage of black and white photographs of planes in flight, tanks and men in helmets in a destroyed forest of palm trees, a ship aflame on the water, and a field of white crosses and Stars of David before an American flag flying at half-mast. The "for" at the end of the phrase is the same red as the giant V—a "V for Victory" that cuts across the montage, delineating the different photographic elements with the shape of a letter that dominated US wartime culture.¹⁴⁶ The V completes the sentence. Still, the next pages take the meaning of the sentence further. With the words "the American way of ... living...for all people," the layout on pages six and seven offers a more nuanced ending to the text on the previous two pages (fig. 48). Photographs above captions reading "Religion," "Free speech," "Work," "School," "Recreation," and "Culture" illustrate these various aspects of American living that victory allegedly protects. Finally, in the same red as the "for" and the V of the previous layout, the words "for this" appear along with a circle around a photograph of children playing on the grass in front of a public housing unit. The compilers of the report labelled this photograph "Home." In inserting ellipses into the text that runs along the bottom of these visually dense pages, Eisner may well have intended the reader to look up from the words to the report's complex photographic montages and discover the subtleties they and their captions introduced to the meanings of the phrases below.

To say that Eisner's design aimed at a cinematic effect in crafting this temporal relationship between text and image would not have been a stretch of the imagination. As the photographs of the Southern California Home Show and county fair exhibits in Los Angeles's prewar annual reports show, films such as

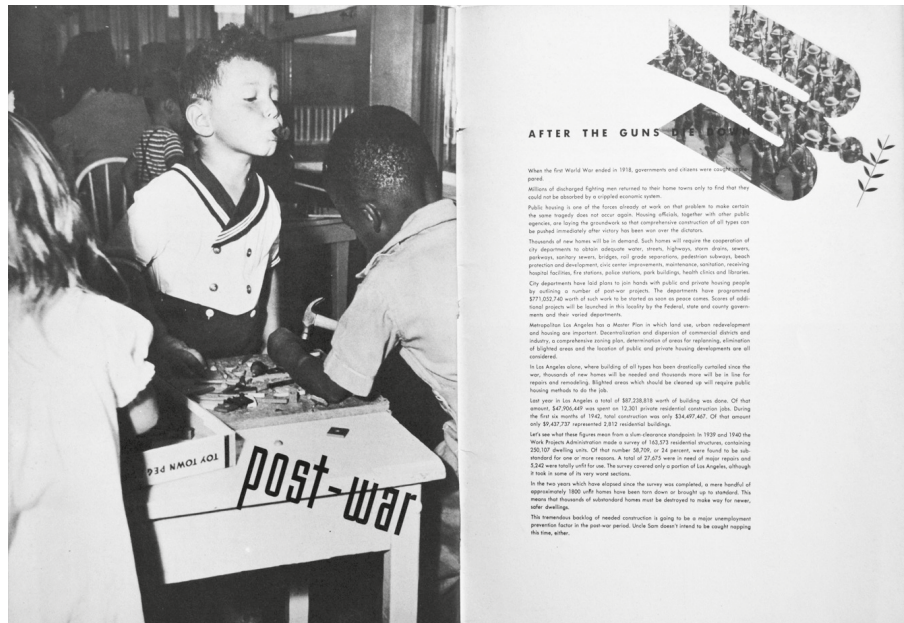
the United States Housing Authority's *Housing in Our Time* were centerpieces in public housing's early public relations efforts.¹⁴⁷ A few years after the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles published *A Decent Home, an American Right*, it also began to enjoy the benefit of films specifically about housing in Los Angeles. In 1948, University of Southern California student Chester Kessler created *What We Can Do for Joe*.¹⁴⁸ In 1951, with Frank Wilkinson of the Housing Authority credited as a "technical advisor," two more University of Southern California film students, Algernon G. Walker and Gene Petersen, produced and directed the twelve-minute 16-millimeter film*And Ten Thousand More* (ellipses in original) as a testament to the need for ten thousand more public housing units with the passage of the Housing Act of 1949.¹⁴⁹ Still, prior to the Housing Authority's involvement in the student work of the nearby film school, prior to Eisner's design for the postwar "glamour number," and prior to the exhibition of local annual reports by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's work in print appears to have realized the promotional potential of film in surprising ways.

Writing in 1943 in the journal of the National Municipal League (a professional organization of city employees), one M.R., likely one of the journal's contributing editors on research, Miriam Roher, deemed the Housing Authority's earlier publication, *Homes for Heroes*, "the best piece of local government reporting" that had crossed her desk.¹⁵⁰ She then proceeded to construct a string of comparisons starting with a reference to the cover, which

"sets the pace for so dramatic a production that the unrelieved black and white of the interior has a chromatic effect and the reader would probably swear, after reading the book, that it was done in reds, greens, and yellows. Movement as well as color is suggested. Not only because there is a generous use of stunning photography throughout, but also because of skillful makeup, the total effect is that of a well done documentary movie. Not for nothing, apparently, does the Los Angeles Housing Authority operate in Hollywood."¹⁵¹

By "skillful makeup," Roher likely meant the report designer Alvin Lustig's dynamic layouts. With cut out and tilted photographs, such as one of soldiers forming the silhouette of a dove carrying an olive branch (fig. 52), as well as text-filled arrows pointing on diagonals to more text and photos (fig. 14), the report adheres to a modern grid filled with visual stimuli. Roher further credited these photographs and their cropping and arrangement with producing a viewing experience not unlike that of viewing a filmic production—a "well

52] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *Homes for Heroes: Fourth Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles*, ed. Roger C. Johnson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1942), n.p., Occidental College Library.



done documentary.” This acrobatic chain of associations—from still photography and book design, to color and motion, to documentary film, to Hollywood, the capital of the United States’ entertainment industry—blurs distinctions “between still and moving images,” monochrome and color, housing reporting and the claims to realism in film.¹⁵²

Miriam Roher’s perceptive evaluation of the *Homes for Heroes* annual report set aside, her access to a copy prompts a far more fundamental investigation into the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles’s strategies for distributing its publications to a diverse and geographically far-reaching readership. Although failing to submit a report to the American Institute of Graphic Arts’ 1945 design competition, the Authority’s scant records show careful consideration of the production and placement of its printed materials. As mentioned in the Authority’s second annual report, copies of the 1940 *Housing Survey* were readily accessible at local public and university libraries, while the Housing Authority’s newsletter was “available for reading at every library and school in Los Angeles.”¹⁵³ In a memo in Frank Wilkinson’s files outlining a “Public Relations Program” for 1946, the Housing Authority stated its aim to increase the mailing list for its smaller publication, the monthly *Los Angeles Housing News*, to at least five thousand in 1946.¹⁵⁴ Further examination of the 1945 publications reveals that however many of *A Decent Home*, *An American Right* the Housing Authority printed, it quickly exhausted this supply. In the same Public Relations Program memo, the first to-do item listed under “Annual Report” was a

note to make enough “Re-Prints of Recent Report” (capitalization in original) to last through the end of June 1947.¹⁵⁵

Perhaps to help with the shortage of reports, but also to offer a different reading experience, the Housing Authority included in the 1946 Public Relations Program special provisions to transform *A Decent Home, an American Right* into a larger, yet still portable and circulating display. The next line-item in the program for the annual report was the “Reproduction of certain pages for exhibits”—and indeed, further records from 1946 indicate that the pages of *A Decent Home, an American Right* formed the basis for several exhibits shown across the country.¹⁵⁶ In April 1946, *Housing News* relayed that the report “has been gathering encomiums everywhere,” but most recently in New York City at the fifteenth annual National Public Housing Conference.¹⁵⁷ With more than seven hundred fifty attendees “from all over the country, representing Housing Authorities and Agencies and Labor and Civic Organizations,” and boasting a program with speeches by Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr. and Wilson Wyatt, President Truman’s recently appointed National Housing Administrator, the conference provided Los Angeles’s *A Decent Home, an American Right* with a vast readership of notable members.¹⁵⁸ “The conception, the editorial content, and the photographic artistry, all came in for their share of the general admiration,” *Housing News* reported, deeming the exhibit a public relations success.¹⁵⁹

The *Los Angeles Housing News* article further hinted at how photography was integral to the report’s promotion of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles’s work. The man behind the project, the article claimed, was the Authority’s own Frank Wilkinson, the editor of *A Decent Home, an American Right* and by 1946 Executive Director Holtzendorff’s “Informational Assistant.”¹⁶⁰ Under Wilkinson’s direction, the Housing Authority “enlarged” approximately forty of the seventy-three pages in the consolidated annual report to the size of “30 × 40 panels.”¹⁶¹ The two photographs printed with the *Housing News* article show the effect of this selection and scaling. The first closely cropped image depicts the housing activities chairman for the American Veterans Committee, Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., standing alongside the retiring president of the conference, Bryn J. Hovde (fig. 53).¹⁶² Roosevelt Jr. peers intently and points at a panel displaying an enlargement of the consolidated annual report’s cover, while Hovde looks on. The panel is propped to the right of a title panel on an easel. A line of panels on similar easels continues to the right, further backed by a slightly warped stretch of light-colored paper. Taken by an unknown photographer from a mezzanine or balcony, the second photograph in the *Housing News* article gives readers an idea of the size and spatial positioning of the Housing Authority’s exhibit at the National Public Housing Conference in New

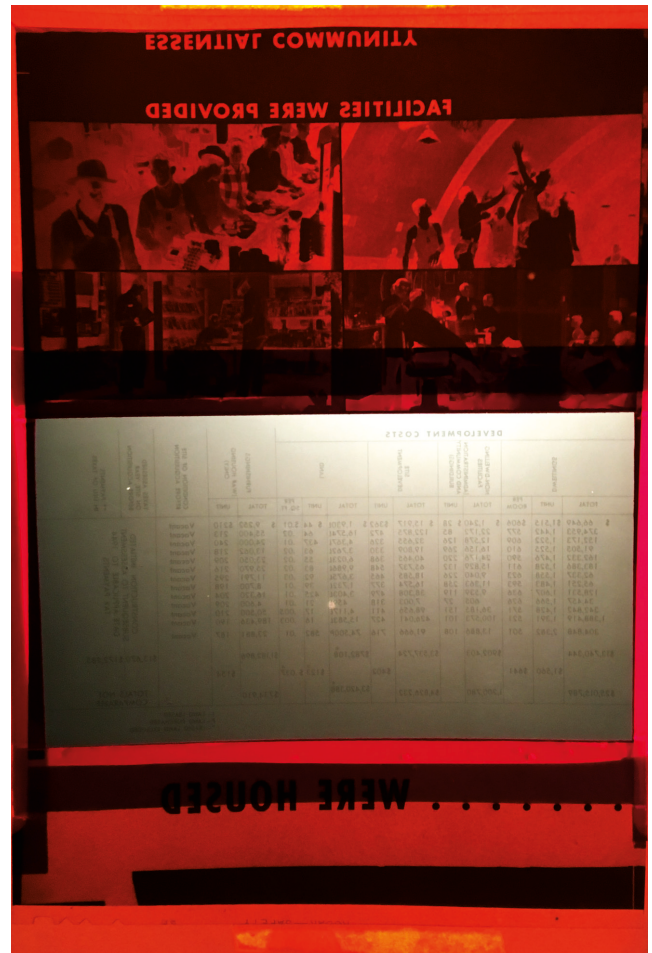
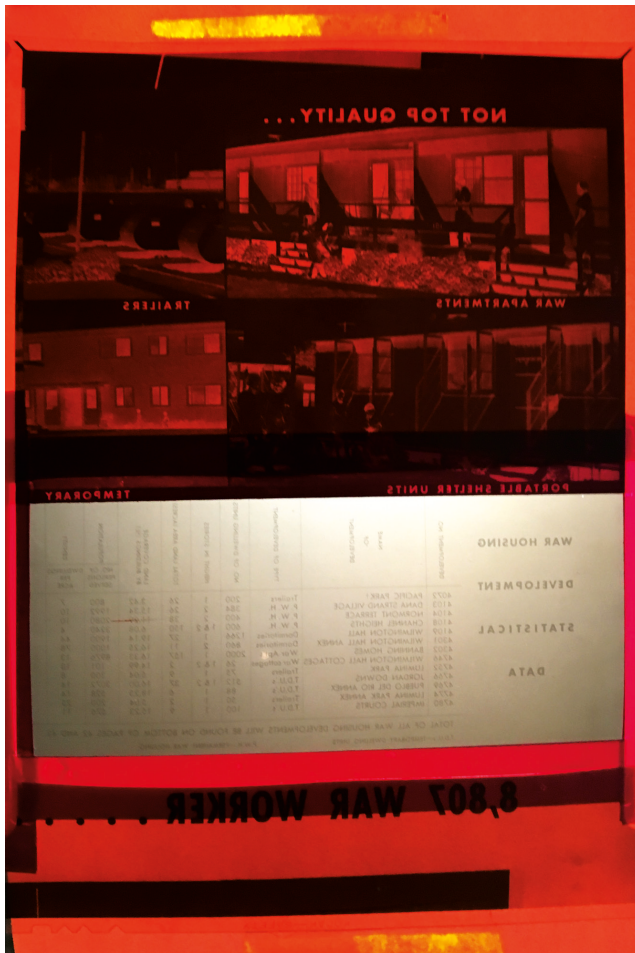


53] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, "L.A. Exhibit Steals Show as NPHC Convenes," *Los Angeles Housing News* 3, no. 4 (April 1946): 3, in box 58, folder 15, Reuben W. Borough papers (Collection 927). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

York. "Circling the walls, the Los Angeles exhibit dominates the room," the photograph's caption begins.¹⁶³ The shot shows a seated audience before a panel of men at a table. One of the men stands as though to deliver a speech. To the left of the man is the American flag, and to the left of the flag is the final panel of the long line that makes up the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's display—a display so long that it turns the corner of the large ballroom.

Photographic negatives of two of the report's pages in the Housing Authority Photograph Collection at the Southern California Library suggest that rather than send the pages to a photo lab for enlargement and editing, the Authority likely performed many steps in these processes, itself (figs. 54, 55). The negatives reveal entire layouts of pages forty and forty-three from *A Decent Home, an American Right* that could have been used for not only reproduction, but enlargement. Editing, moreover, is evident in the masking of all but the tabular parts of the negatives with thick paper.¹⁶⁴ Taken together, these negatives and the newsletter articles about the exhibits leave open the possibility that the Housing Authority created multiple copies of the panels and used photography to extract specific content from them.

A return to Olivier Lugon's research shows that the concept of circulating multiple exhibitions was nothing new in 1946. Not only was the Museum of Modern Art actively circulating such multiple exhibitions as *Look at Your Neigh-*



borhood, but already in the 1920s such institutions as Otto Neurath's Social and Economic Museum turned to reproducible exhibits as ways to reach broader publics.¹⁶⁵ The US public housing movement of the 1930s likewise turned to photography as a means of reproducing and circulating graphic elements which themselves may not have been originally photographic. Consider, for instance, one letter written by Housing Study Guild member Catherine Bauer to fellow member Clarence Stein in 1934: "I don't have any of the photographs of the whole Charts, if that was what you wanted," she stated,

"And most of my originals were loaned to the Museum of Modern Art, from which they have only just now come back. I'll send you the picture of new houses in Welwyn (which headed the chart England I) just as soon as I get back to Philadelphia. Also the whole bunch of photographs that I borrowed from your files some months ago."¹⁶⁶

54] Untitled photographic negative with paper masking and tape, undated, 6.75 in. x 4.75 in. (17.15 cm x 12.07 cm), in box 1, "Los Angeles Housing Authority Photographs, 1940s-early 1950s," folder "General Prints and Negatives," Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Photograph Collection, Ph004, Southern California Library (Los Angeles, California).

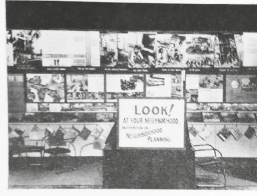
55] Untitled photographic negative with paper masking and tape, undated, 6.75 in x 4.75 in. (17.15 cm x 12.07 cm), in box 1, "Los Angeles Housing Authority Photographs, 1940s-early 1950s," folder "General Prints and Negatives," Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Photograph Collection, Ph004, Southern California Library (Los Angeles, California).

Bauer also wrote to Carol Aronovici while she was working for the Labor Housing Conference to ask for “copies” of “any extra charts laying around your office,” especially in the way of “cost-and-rent analyses like the one which compared private, limited dividend and municipal set-ups” for a “Housing Report” she was writing.¹⁶⁷

The exchange of photographic “copies” of graphic presentations of textual and numerical data was early on part and parcel of the exchange of photographs in the processes of housing research, exhibition-building, and publication. Still, as Lugon notes, these early twentieth-century practices of photographing pages of text might be traced back further in photographic history in their realization of one of the functions William Henry Fox Talbot ascribed to photography as early as the mid-1840s in *The Pencil of Nature*.¹⁶⁸ The result was not innovation but a meaningful efficiency, as again Lugon recognizes in his study of the Museum of Modern Art’s efforts to bring modern art to the world’s masses by circulating multiple exhibitions.¹⁶⁹

Although not technically inventive, the Housing Authority’s photographic editing and enlargement of its annual report’s pages into a multi-panel exhibit was nonetheless strategic. Reading between the two line-items in the 1946 Public Relations Program memo, the enlarged panels first and foremost posed a solution to the problem of the need for reprints of the publication, itself. By creating one or more exhibits and sending them to the meetings and congresses of key public-housing audiences, the Authority placed a customized version of its report before large gatherings of readers. As the photograph of Bryn Hovde and Roosevelt Jr. in *Housing News* showed, the display of *A Decent Home, an American Right* at this national event made reading the report a social experience, presenting opportunities for conversations that ideally went beyond remarks of “How Cute” or “How Amazing” to understand what the exhibit “was about.”¹⁷⁰

True to Lugon’s notion of the exhibition as an event, a modest amount of fanfare accompanied the Housing Authority’s exhibit at its respective showings.¹⁷¹ Following the New York conference, the National Automobile Workers displayed the exhibit version of *A Decent Home, an American Right* at their convention in Atlantic City.¹⁷² Later in 1946, the Los Angeles County Museum in Exposition Park also showed “An Exhibit Depicting the History and Nature of the Problem of Sub-standard Housing in Los Angeles,” as the invitation to the event in Catherine Bauer’s files reads, with the title “A Decent Home...An American Right.”¹⁷³ Although records of this Los Angeles exhibit are scant, its timing, title, and the presence of the report’s designer Simon Eisner at the opening strongly suggest that the exhibit consisted of panels similar to those shown in New York and Atlantic City that depicted pages from the recent annual report.



HOUSING EDUCATION AT NATIONAL ORANGE SHOW

Over 11,000 visitors at the National Orange Show on March 11 to 21 came to look at the above-pictured housing exhibit prepared by the Housing Authorities of the County of San Bernardino and the City of Needles. Space for the exhibit — 12 feet by 60 feet — was donated by the Show. Included were films (note screen at far right of right-hand picture), photographs, and annual reports from 44 cities in 20 states and territories. "Over 7000 pieces of literature were carried away," writes George L. Black, the Authorities' Executive Director. "We ran out of printed material, but this could not be helped."



CALIFORNIA ORANGE SHOW

The top strip of photographs, Mr. Black explains "was made up of 36-inch by 10-inch panels supplied by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles. The next strip consisted of 10-inch by 30-inch panels telling the story of a good neighborhood. Below this were 9-inch by 12-inch photographs of public housing developments throughout the United States. The next panel was placed on an angle, under glass, and consisted of 12-inch by 12-inch photographs supplied by this Authority. Behind the sign 'Look at your neighborhood' is the projection booth. . . . In the center foreground of the right-hand picture is a model of Avalon Gardens, a Los Angeles City Housing Authority development. At the end of the exhibit was a 10-foot table displaying literature."

postwar incomes of \$1500 per annum," he said. "In any event, families of low income, as defined by the statute are those who can not afford to pay enough to cause private enterprise to build a sufficient supply of adequate dwellings." The court rejected an argument that a majority of tenants in existing privately financed dwellings pay less than \$12.50 per room per month, because it was not shown that there were sufficient vacancies in such privately owned dwellings to take care of the housing needs of persons of low income."

PITTSBURGH
Redevelopment Authority Names Full-Time Director, Staff

John P. Robin on April 1 took over as the first Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Redevelopment Authority. An executive assistant to Mayor David L. Lawrence, Mr. Robin had been acting unofficially in this capacity since the Authority was established a little over a year ago with Mayor Lawrence as Chairman. Mr. Robin is a former newspaperman and a close student of redevelopment needs and programs both in Pittsburgh and other cities.

At the same time the Mayor announced appointment of Theodore L. Hazlett as the Authority's counsel. Mr. Hazlett has been counsel for the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.

The Authority's headquarters are the City-County Building.

DES MOINES
City Housing Officer Renews Drive for Housing Law Enforcement

Despite 30-year-old state legislation requiring inspection of all multiple dwellings, Des Moines has never made any serious attempts to enforce minimum housing standards in either multiple-family or "home-owned slums." As a result, the city's housing officer, W. O. Fuller, writes: "The housing situation for the lower-income groups is getting worse all the time and it is doing so rapidly. . . . Unless action is taken at once, it will be completely out of control, if it is not already."

and strengthening of local regulations on nuisances, cabins and tourist camps, issuing licenses; (3) inspection of all multiple dwellings and all blighted single dwellings; (4) banning further construction in flood districts and removing existing dwellings from those districts. Mr. Fuller believes that an important by-product of the inspection program will be to show up the "true size of the housing problem in Des Moines."

Two years ago Mr. Fuller drafted a similar program, which in addition called for the following low-range action: (1) state-enabling legislation to permit public housing for low-income families and (2) county-wide planning and zoning regulations to eliminate substandard housing in unincorporated areas, as well as within the city.

VANCOUVER
Area-Wide Economic Survey — Basis for Future Housing, City Plans

Vancouver is in the dilemma of wanting to get rid of its temporary war housing and, at the same time, to hold on to the families who live there—the thousands of families who came as war workers and who want to remain as part of the permanent

100

The Journal of HOUSING

56] "Housing Education at California Orange Show," *The Journal of Housing* 5, no. 4 (April 1948): 100, Oakland Public Library.

Following the development and deployment of the Housing Authority's travelling exhibit made from its annual report leads to a question raised by Olivier Ligon regarding how the multiple, travelling exhibition put pressure on the definition of an exhibition, itself.¹⁷⁴ In drawing on simple photographic and display techniques, the Housing Authority went beyond "blur[ing, N.K.O.] the boundaries" between the circulating book and the exhibition, as Ligon writes, to combine exhibits into larger and more complex multi-media presentations involving multiple authorities, printed invitations, and museum sponsorship.¹⁷⁵ In April 1948, NAHO's *Journal of Housing* finally printed photographs of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's annual report exhibit that "stole the show" two years earlier in New York.¹⁷⁶ But unlike photographs of exhibits previously published in the journal, these photographs do not show the Housing Authority's exhibit alone, nor do they show it at a civic event dedicated primarily to housing or health. Presented at the 1948 National Orange Show, an annual fair-like event in the Southern California city of San Bernardino, this exhibit titled "Look! At Your Neighborhood" stayed true to the national dimensions of the fair (fig. 56). Organized by the local Housing Authority of the County

of San Bernardino together with the Housing Authority of the city of Needles, as the caption explains, the exhibit featured films, a model of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's Avalon Gardens, as well as photographs and other printed materials from housing authorities across the country. The photographs of the exhibit printed in the *Journal of Housing* show two sections of the sixty-foot long display. Like bricks placed layer upon layer, photographs and materials fill the wall from just above the floor, where various reports hang by their corners from a table of glass-covered photographs, to high overhead, where the enlarged pages of Los Angeles's annual report are mounted side by side in a long line. Between these two registers, according to the caption, were "40-inch by 30-inch panels telling the story of a good neighborhood." Although not credited in the *Journal of Housing*, a quick comparison reveals these panels to be at least part of one of the two hundred copies of the Museum of Modern Art's *Look at Your Neighborhood* multiple exhibition from 1944, designed by Rudolph Mock and the same Clarence Stein who requested charts from Catherine Bauer ten years earlier.

Like the panels that reappeared in the Housing Authority's photographs of its exhibits from 1939 and 1940, the panels of the first consolidated postwar report proved an efficient means of both circulating the report and producing a versatile exhibit for audiences of union leaders, museum-goers, and fairgoers, alike. In this final showing, the placement of the Housing Authority's exhibit and the Museum of Modern Art's together above rows of photographs and reports and behind an architectural model offers both a record of this versatility and a visualization of the allied efforts in making public housing a topic in public education. In these early postwar years, it was just the kind of image of local achievement and inter-agency cooperation that housing leaders aimed to send abroad.

THE LOS ANGELES ANNUAL REPORT ABROAD

When the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles created *A Decent Home, an American Right* in 1945 and enlarged its pages for a series of exhibitions starting in 1946, it was unlikely that the Authority anticipated that this report would be viewed on the other side of the Atlantic. The *Journal of Housing* had established a national audience and encouraged nation-wide competition in report design while actively enabling the circulation of exhibits in the form of photographic documentation and brief textual commentaries. It also, however, reported more broadly on housing issues with the help of housing correspon-

dents abroad. In February 1945, editor Dorothy Gazzolo included notes on a Nazi housing project in a coal-producing region of the Netherlands from Lieutenant Robert Merriam, a former National Housing Agency employee. Less scathing than one might expect of an American article at this time, Merriam offered numerous technical details and went so far as to describe the houses as “reasonably attractive” in his letter.¹⁷⁷ Other correspondence was highly reflective of a US sense of world leadership following the war.¹⁷⁸ Jacob Crane, then Director of the National Housing Agency’s Urban Development Division, spent November and December of 1944 with the British Ministry of Town and Country Planning and the Ministry of Health and toured “war-torn areas of France and Italy” in January of 1945.¹⁷⁹ Upon his return, he appealed to US audiences in a speech, “Why the Nation’s Capital Should Lead the Way in Planning and Housing,” published as a supplement to the March issue of the *Journal of Housing*.¹⁸⁰ “The world will watch the housing program of the United States as it emerges,” Crane prophesied.¹⁸¹ In rallying words, he urged his audience to see housing as the United States’ presentation of itself to the world as a united nation: “[...] we must give full expression to American ideals in building homes and in building communities. Here, above all, we must reconcile differences, and submerge our prejudices and our individual interests. Here, above all, we have the opportunity and the obligation to create a great American city.”¹⁸²

An opportunity to show the United States’ housing program to the world presented itself with the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning’s 1946 congress in England. It was the first postwar meeting of the same congress that Los Angeles failed to bring to the city in the years before the war.¹⁸³ Convening at the White Rock Pavilion in Hastings from October 7 to 12, 1946, the delegates to the eighteenth congress represented twenty-three countries including England, India, the Dutch East Indies, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, as well as three South American countries and fifteen European countries.¹⁸⁴

As articulated in a typescript for an article to be published in *Architectural Forum*, US delegate Catherine Bauer was less than impressed by the federal sponsorship of participants from the United States.¹⁸⁵ None of the representatives’ travel expenses, Bauer was keen to note, were compensated by the United States government despite numerous telegrams from the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations requesting this financial support for the delegation.¹⁸⁶ This lack of support for housers in their professional travels went hand in hand for Bauer with an overall weak public housing program. In an acrid assessment, she wrote, “Does it seem ironic...I hope so... that one of our veterans would be more likely to get a roof over his family’s head,

this year or next, and eventually live in a better, more attractive, and convenient community, if he could transfer his citizenship to poor England or little Sweden, perhaps even devastated Holland, than here in the richest and most powerful nation on earth.”¹⁸⁷

Such critical, comparative readings that centered on the notion of the congress as a showcasing of nations extended to the congress’s accompanying exhibition. One commentator in the *Architect and Building News* lauded the Polish, Dutch, and Swiss work on display, but was less pleased with the London County Council’s presentation of “new house types,” claiming rather cryptically that “[t]he rendering of the perspectives” had “struck a false note.”¹⁸⁸ Catherine Bauer, on the other hand, singled out the contributions from Britain and Denmark, in addition to Holland, Poland, and Switzerland as “very impressive both in content and presentation.”¹⁸⁹ But Bauer was less pleased with the exhibit brought by US delegates. This exhibit, prepared by the Planning Commission of Contra Costa County in Northern California, contained “just about everything they had in their files in the way of zoning maps, street-sections, and traffic-flow diagrams...the usual thing, of no particular distinction,” she wrote in her summary of the conference.¹⁹⁰ She openly stated her concerns to the IFHTP delegates about “the lack of information on our housing and planning experience,” even going so far as to call the exhibit an “inadequate presentation.”¹⁹¹

Catherine Bauer followed up on her sense of the United States’ inadequacy with an aggressive publicity campaign. When the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning initiated a collection of housing materials, Bauer responded by urging the Federal Public Housing Authority to send copies of its book, *Public Housing Design*, to the twelve hundred Congress delegates “to make up in part for the execrable showing we made in exhibition and report material” (emphasis her own).¹⁹² As part of this same initiative, Bauer also afforded the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles what might well have been the international debut for its report, *A Decent Home, an American Right*. Writing to Howard Holtzendorff in the summer of 1947, Bauer asked the Los Angeles director to send “materials” on housing in Los Angeles to forty delegates she had met at the recent congress in Hastings.¹⁹³ Holtzendorff, who had read Bauer’s report from the congress in the *Journal of Housing*, promptly complied with Bauer’s request with the caveat that he was running low on copies of the consolidated annual report and could send only two or three.¹⁹⁴

Bauer’s copies of her subsequent letters to architects and urban planners, especially those in England and Denmark, hint that the Los Angeles materials may have landed on the desks of experts at the London County Council or the offices of Hans Erling Langkilde and Kay Fisker, as illuminated in this study’s

next chapter. In addition to clues as to who Bauer may have targeted in her broadcast, records also give clues to the contents of the packets that these architects and planners received. In a thoughtful move, Holtzendorff provided Bauer with copies of the Los Angeles materials he sent abroad.¹⁹⁵ Objects in Bauer's files such as a promotional brochure for Ramona Gardens or the Housing Authority's informational pamphlet, "The Truth About Public Housing," therefore may well have been among the printed housing materials transmitted in the forty packets sent in the summer of 1947.¹⁹⁶

This broadcast of housing materials that Catherine Bauer orchestrated furthermore sought to "counteract" international perceptions of politics in the United States in general. A letter from Bauer to John Entenza, the Los Angeles-based editor of *Arts and Architecture* who launched the soon famous Case Study House program in 1945, attested to this wish. Explaining to the editor how she combined her 1946 participation in the IFHTP congress with tours of France, England, and Scandinavia, Bauer observed a rift in expert exchange caused by the war: "Due to the war-time blank they have no idea what goes on here and want to renew contacts once more," she wrote. But as Bauer quickly admitted, filling the "blank" left by this attenuation of travel and communication during the war years was only part of her goal:

"I've been so busy this spring that only now am I finally galvanized to do something about this...partly stimulated by the desire to do my bit toward counteracting the picture of America as symbol of pure unadulterated Reaction which is now becoming practically universal. At least they ought to know that there are some of us who would still *like* to be progressive!"¹⁹⁷

As historian Daniel T. Rodgers argues, Bauer was one of the few US progressives following the war to continue to look to Europe for "lessons" in policy.¹⁹⁸ In this letter to Entenza, however, Bauer appears more immediately concerned with keeping up appearances than with receiving any lessons in return. Sending copies of John Entenza's wartime issues of *California Arts and Architecture* to housers in Europe was her strategic maneuver in this regard. Bauer asked Entenza, "... would you by any chance be able to send sample copies of CAA to some Europeans if I send you a list?" She added, "I'd still like to send samples of any of your recent issues—Case Study Houses or whatnot—to about a dozen foreign architects. Perhaps if you included a subscription blank you might get a couple out of it."¹⁹⁹

Returning to the role of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles in this exchange, one sees how Bauer's campaign to both fill a "war-time blank"

and counteract the United States' "inadequate presentation" at Hastings registered with the Authority as an opportunity to likewise present a positive public image of its office before an international audience.²⁰⁰ Rather than emphasize the progressive nature of its work, however, the Housing Authority chose to foreground it, above all, as collaborative. In its initial response to Bauer's call for materials, the Housing Authority offered to assemble the packets of its own pamphlets as well as (according to what one may gather from remaining letters) those from an additional, presumably housing-minded agency.²⁰¹ The response expressly hoped to elicit one in kind. When the Authority forwarded these materials to Bauer's contacts abroad, it included the following statements:

"[...] it is Miss Bauer's hope that we may impart the information through the medium of sharing, and be able to break down the tremendous wall of distance which separates us in our common endeavor.

In addition, we are adding your name to our regular mailing list and will forward you current materials.

May we ask that you send us information of a similar nature regarding the work you are doing."²⁰²

Here addressed to the office of the Minister of Health in London, the invitation to exchange is implied in the unsolicited addition of the recipients to the Housing Authority's mailing list and the polite request to be included in the London office's future broadcasts. Most poignant, however, is the foregrounding of the act of exchange, itself. Probably drafted by Barbara Rosien, the Housing Authority's official secretary, the letter characterizes not the printed materials, but the act of sharing as a "medium" symbolically connecting the office of the Minister of Health and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles as they worked for their similar causes.

Clues as to the reception of these materials and the whereabouts of the precious few copies of *A Decent Home, an American Right* sent abroad remain obscure. The library of the Royal Institute of British Architects, for instance, bears possible traces of Bauer's campaign in its possession of examples of the wartime housing coverage in *California Arts and Architecture* that Bauer mentioned in her letter to Entenza.²⁰³ Several issues of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's *Housing News* from 1949 and 1950 can be found in the collection of the architect Werner Moser at the gta Archive in Zurich bearing his address on Zurich's Limmatquai.²⁰⁴ These tenuous cross-archival connections, moreover, leave open several questions about the campaign's effects. Did Entenza's magazine successfully counteract the image of a politically conservative United

States? Did the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, in its hopes of fostering a relationship based on sharing with such agencies as the British Ministry of Health, receive any materials in return?

Other letters in Bauer's archive reveal wishes to keep the exchange moving in both directions. The main office of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning in London contacted Bauer in 1947 to ask for her thoughts on the possibility of sending the International Exhibition at Hastings on a tour of the United States.²⁰⁵ Arranging for the transport of the exhibit was not as simple as mailing an annual report. Bauer's letter to a contact at the National Housing Administration weighed in the challenges and possible rewards of bringing the Hastings exhibition across the ocean: "Re the IFHTP exhibit...it is awfully vast to tote around, but it is also exceedingly interesting and stimulating, and would do a lot of good here in this moment of doldrum or worse," she wrote, adding,

"Is there *any* chance that the State Department might itself bring it across the Atlantic, at least? It's all from respectable countries, except Poland, and might even fit in with promoting the Marshall Plan. It *should* be possible to at least get it set up in Washington, New York and Chicago if they didn't have to pay to bring it over too."²⁰⁶

In her rapid-fire of ideas, Bauer brainstormed ways to secure funds and arguments for the transport of the exhibit so that it could set the United States' housing movement in motion once again. Nothing in her files suggests that she was successful in this endeavor. But the exchange of housing materials she orchestrated, especially between the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and the forty European delegates to the IFHTP congress, revealed local authorities' work to international audiences, and, more fundamentally, alerted local authorities to the postwar opportunities for exchange beyond national borders.

EVALUATING HOUSING REPORT DESIGN, 1949–1951

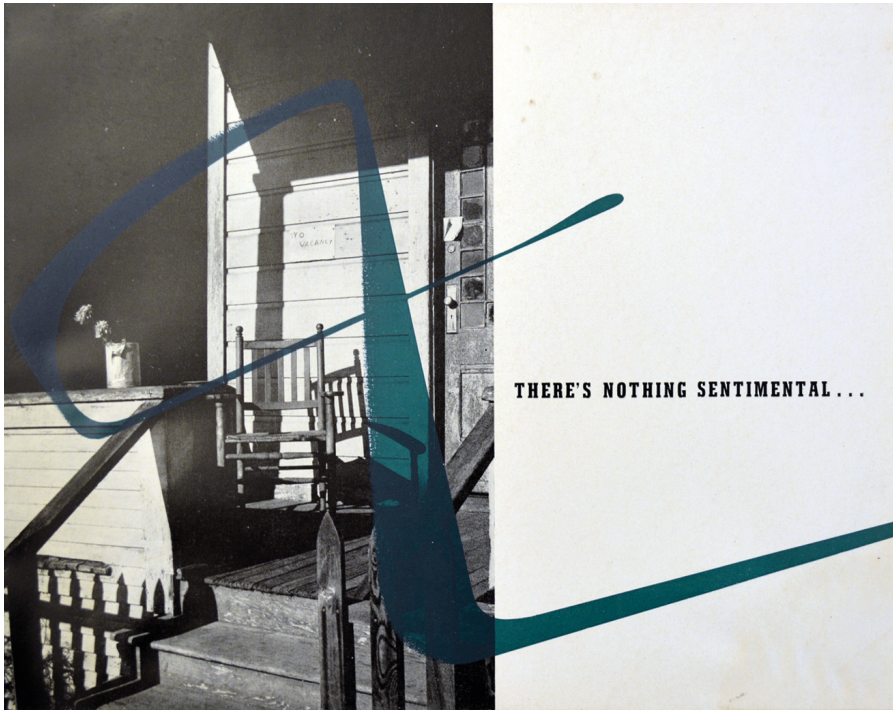
For local housing authorities who missed Catherine Bauer's campaign for exchange prompted by the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning congress in Hastings, in 1949 the National Association of Housing Officials kicked off a campaign of its own with an annual reports competition.²⁰⁷ Rather than seek to expand the horizons of local housing authorities' public relations work beyond national borders, however, NAHO started small with an

object lesson in the political import of good design. Offering a condensed presentation of NAHO's experience gathered in the past decade, this object lesson reflected the increasing pressure of a growing opposition to public housing policy.

Among the winners of NAHO's 1949 annual reports competition was the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, which received an "Award of Special Merit" for its consolidated annual report of 1948, *There's Nothing Sentimental...about Your Cash Register* (fig. 57).²⁰⁸ Anonymized comments from the jury printed in the *Journal of Housing* revealed the complex demands that the report successfully met. The winning reports needed to be "organized" and "tell a story," noted the judges. The "layout and choice of photos" needed to show "a little more imagination," but the "presentation" should not be "wasteful."²⁰⁹ Printed in black and white with a single green "X" across Leonard Nadel's photograph of an old porch on its paper cover, Los Angeles's winning entry was a prime example of the kind of report NAHO encouraged.

The "public housing is good for your cash register" argument, as historian Don Parson argues, was a maneuver on behalf of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles to adapt to the prosperous postwar United States' concerns with public spending and favor of broader redevelopment initiatives.²¹⁰ NAHO was well aware that the production of printed materials and reports was subject to scrutiny, as well.²¹¹ Suspecting "'the real estate lobby'" to be behind a recent initiative of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee to collect "copies of all local authority annual reports and other publications" in order to audit production and printing expenses, the NAHO Public Relations Committee warned readers of the *Journal of Housing* that housing authorities should avoid "extravagance of presentation in any form."²¹² The result of this audit was thus a mandate for local authorities to produce reports that were "very modest, though attractive."²¹³

The Public Relations Committee was keen to show local housing authorities how to comply with this mandate. In evaluating the winners of a 1950 annual reports competition, the Reports Subcommittee chairperson Marion Massen noted that the use of "a second color of ink" and "a photograph or a chart on practically every page to attract the eye" helped one smaller report score high in the presentation category.²¹⁴ But for one of the contest judges, Frederick Gutheim, photography was key. Gutheim's background in housing was not unlike Catherine Bauer's.²¹⁵ He boasted political experience in housing at home and abroad and had worked with the Museum of Modern Art, serving on the advisory committee for Elizabeth Mock's *Built in USA*.²¹⁶ He moreover favored exhibitions and competitions as effective ways of determining the distribution



57] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *There's Nothing Sentimental...about Your Cash Register*, ed. Frank Wilkinson (Los Angeles: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, 1948), cover, in box 13, folder 1, Leonard Nadel photographs and other material relating to housing and urban redevelopment in Los Angeles, 1947–1998, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Accession no. 2002.M.42, <http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa2002m42>.

of public funds in creative endeavors.²¹⁷ Bauer's approach to photographs in public housing work resonated with Gutheim's own. Gutheim warned readers of the perils of "poorly chosen photos" that were "poorly used, many of little interest being blown up for arbitrary effect, producing an impression chiefly of emptiness." He suggested including more photographs of "interesting people," as well as giving credit to the photographers who took them: "We need more photos that inform, that tell stories, that remain etched in the memory and start the imagination working," he advised. "The thing we need least of is politicians' faces."²¹⁸

Gutheim's desideratum underscored the importance of photography and photographers to public housing's postwar ranks despite pressures on housing authorities to mind their publications' costs. As Marion Massen also reminded readers, local housing authorities were capable of producing good reports without calling on "outside professional assistance."²¹⁹ In the end, hers was a call for a "do-it-yourself" photographic practice that at least one internationally-active houser had engaged in all along.