

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Gaylord White Houses
 other names/site number Union Settlement
 name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 2029 2nd Avenue not for publication
 city or town Manhattan vicinity
 state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10029

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
 I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
 In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 ___ national ___ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Gaylord White Houses
 Name of Property

New York, NY
 County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

SOCIAL/Civic

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

SOCIAL/Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Functional Modernism

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: BRICK

roof: SYNTHETIC

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Gaylord White Houses, located at 2029 2nd Avenue, was completed in 1964 as a stand-alone affordable housing development for senior citizens 65 years or older.¹ It is located in the Metro North section of East Harlem, Manhattan. It was built by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and designed by Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass. The Gaylord White Houses consists of a twenty-story tower and an eight-story plus basement extension at the northwest corner of East 104th Street and 2nd Avenue. A one-story children's center and a three-story community center are located along East 104th Street and are connected to the housing wing at the basement level. The surrounding blocks are generally characterized by four-to-six-story early twentieth century tenements, some with commercial use on the first floor and some early-to-mid-twentieth century one-story commercial buildings. The surrounding blocks are interspersed with a few mid-twentieth century mid-rise and high-rise residential buildings, some of which are also owned by NYCHA, though those additional NYCHA complexes fit the campus model of public housing design. Gaylord White Houses comprises roughly half of a city block and is bordered to the north by existing buildings fronting East 105th Street including a Head Start, a High School, and a church, to the east by 2nd Avenue, to the south by East 104th Street, and to the west by existing mixed-use residential buildings fronting 3rd Avenue. NYCHA's Washington Houses is located across East 104th Street from Gaylord White Houses and East River Houses, also NYCHA owned, is located approximately two blocks east. The neighborhood is densely developed with little to no off-street parking. Each block is surrounded by concrete pedestrian sidewalks with mature trees planted throughout.

The building is designed in a functional design aesthetic, clad in brown brick with little ornamentation, typical of mid-century public housing design. The building has an irregular footprint and consists of four interconnected blocks. The primary entrance of the building features a replacement metal door set into the original steel frame with glazed transom and sidelights. The entrance is sheltered by a covered walkway with a metal roof and metal supports. Fenestration on the twenty-story tower largely consists of non-historic one-over-one replacement windows. Some original windows remain extant on the third floor of the three-story community center's north elevation. These original windows consist of seven-light steel projected windows located in the third-floor gymnasium. The original windows at the primary building section were likely a combination of aluminum double-hung, fixed-sash hopper, or picture windows, as well as steel casement and fixed windows. All portions of the complex feature flat roofs with existing penthouses and mechanical equipment.

Narrative Description

Setting: Gaylord White Houses is located in the Metro North section of East Harlem, Manhattan, also known as El Barrio. The neighborhood took its name from the large number of Puerto Rican residents who began moving to the area in the 1950s. Today, El Barrio consists largely of low- and mid-rise commercial and residential buildings interspersed with high-rise residential buildings. The high-rise residential buildings are largely NYCHA developments. The Gaylord White Houses are centrally located within the neighborhood, which is marked by the Harlem River to the east and Central Park to the west. The surrounding streets are arranged in a typical grid-like pattern and consist of primarily mixed-use residential and commercial buildings. The

¹ The terms "aged" and "elderly" were commonly used in themed twentieth century when this development was being planned and constructed; they are no longer preferred and are used in this nomination only in direct quotations. For more information on modern interpretations of the terms, see Dale Avers, et al., "Use of the Term 'Elderly,'" *Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy* 34, no.4 (October/December 2011), accessed May 4, 2023: https://journals.lww.com/jgpt/Fulltext/2011/10000/Use_of_the_Term_Elderly_.1.aspx.

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neighborhood is densely developed with little to no off-street parking. Each block is surrounded by concrete pedestrian sidewalks with mature trees planted throughout. NYCHA's Washington Houses (constructed 1957) is located just south of Gaylord White Houses across East 104th Street, and East River Houses (constructed 1941), is located approximately two blocks east. These NYCHA complexes fit the campus model of public housing design. Washington Houses consists of fourteen L- and T-shaped fourteen-story buildings, and East River Houses consists of ten irregularly shaped buildings measuring six and ten stories tall.

Site: Gaylord White Houses is located on a rectangular-shaped lot, approximately 0.81 acres (35,322 sq. ft.) in size. The twenty-story tower faces 2nd Avenue, while the remaining portions of the complex run parallel to East 104th Street with a roughly sixteen-foot setback and occupies approximately 78 percent of the parcel. The site is urban in nature, displaying simple features, typical of urban public housing. A short metal fence encloses an entrance terrace on either side of the main entrance and a courtyard along the south elevation. Landscaping and hardscaping include trees, metal benches, and concrete courtyards located at the main entrance, in front of the one-story children's center along the south elevation, within the courtyard.

Landscaping: Based on available historical documentation, the original plan called for an entrance terrace with trees and concrete benches along the east side of the complex leading to the main entrance. These plans also proposed a recreation garden with pergolas, a shuffleboard court, concrete tables and benches, and trees located in the courtyard created by the twenty-story tower, eight-story plus basement extension, and one-story children's center. The original site plan also called for a child play area and courtyard located south of the one-story children's center between the building and the sidewalk. This area featured a large, paved area with trees, concrete benches, and a fence dividing the child play area from the courtyard. Today all three areas remain intact, but many finishes have been updated including the replacement of concrete benches with metal benches and the removal of some trees from the entrance terrace. Overall, the site features that represent the intent of the design and its use for senior housing are extant.

Exterior: The Gaylord White Houses consists of a twenty-story tower and eight-story plus basement housing wing at the northwest corner of East 104th Street and 2nd Avenue (Photo 1). A one-story children's center and a three-story community center are located along East 104th Street and are fully connected at the first-floor interior. According to architectural plans, the housing wing and children's center are connected at the basement level; however, this was not verified by a site visit. All portions of the building feature flat roofs with existing penthouses and mechanical equipment. The building has an irregular footprint and measures approximately 236 feet east-west and 101 feet north-south.

The building is designed in a functional design aesthetic with elements of Modernism and is clad in brown brick with little ornamentation. The primary entrance of the building is located on the east elevation on 2nd Avenue and features a replacement metal door set into the original steel frame with glazed transom and sidelights. The entrance is sheltered by a covered walkway with a metal roof and metal support columns. Fenestration on the twenty-story tower largely consists of non-historic one-over-one replacement windows. Some original windows appear to remain extant on the eight-story plus basement extension and three-story community center. The original windows were likely a combination of aluminum double-hung, fixed-sash hopper, or picture windows, as well as steel casement and fixed windows. All portions of the complex feature flat roofs with existing penthouses and mechanical equipment. As the building features three different building sections (Housing Wing, Community Center, Children's Center) the variations between each elevation are discussed in more detail below.

Housing Wing

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The housing wing consists of the twenty-story tower and eight-story extension, which are both original to the building. The exterior of both portions is covered in brown brick laid in the running bond. Both roofs are flat and feature a wide metal cornice painted white with a metal balustrade. Fenestration consists of replacement aluminum windows framed individually or in pairs. These replacement windows were installed sometime in the late twentieth century and replaced the original configurations, which consisted of a combination of aluminum double-hung, hopper, and fixed sash (picture) windows with some steel casement and fixed windows. All first-story windows are covered with metal safety gates. Many of the windows on the upper floors are fitted with child safety guards.

East Elevation: The façade, or east elevation faces 2nd Avenue (Photo 2). It is eight bays wide with an entrance located north of center on the first story. This elevation is characterized by the eight-story plus basement extension that projects from the southern portion of the twenty-story tower. The eight-story plus basement extension is three bays wide and four bays deep and features a datestone that reads "1962." The twenty-story tower's northernmost bay is slightly set back from the rest of the façade. The first story of the one-bay setback contains a secondary cellar entrance sheltered by a shed roof and located behind a tall, metal security gate. All portions of the elevation are built with consistent materials.

Fenestration consists of one-over-one single-hung windows, all of which are framed in pairs except for the easternmost bay of the eight-story plus basement projection, which consists of a single individually framed window.

The main entrance consists of a replacement aluminum door with two, small, square lights encased in an aluminum-frame with large rectangular sidelights and transom (Photo 3). The door was installed during the late twentieth century and replaced the original door, which consisted of a four-light aluminum door. To the south of the main door is a metal dedication plaque dated to the building's opening in 1964. The entrance is sheltered by a covered walkway that extends to 2nd Avenue. A secondary cellar entrance with a metal door is located down a set of concrete steps that lead to the cellar.

South Elevation: The south elevation runs along East 104th Street and largely consists of the eight-story plus basement extension, which measures sixteen bays wide. The top eleven stories of the twenty-story tower projects from the roof of the eight-story plus basement extension and measures six bays wide.

Windows on the eight-story wing largely consist of one-over-one single-hung aluminum windows framed in pairs. The four easternmost bays of the south elevation feature single, individually framed windows. The bay located second from the east end of the building is smaller in size than the other windows. The seven westernmost bays on the first story consist of one-over-one double-hung metal windows with a single-light hopper window directly below all within the same frame.

Fenestration on the twenty-story tower consists of one-over-one single-hung aluminum windows. The two center bays feature pairs of windows while the four outermost bays (east and west) are framed individually.

West Elevation: The west elevation of the eight-story extension measures four bays wide. The first story features a secondary entrance flanked on either side by a one-over-one double-hung window with a single-light hopper window directly below it. The second through eighth stories feature one-over-one single-hung aluminum windows. The northernmost bay is framed in pairs and the other three bays are framed individually.

North Elevation: The north elevation is largely concealed from the public right-of-way and was not accessible during the site visit.

Children's Center

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The one-story children's center is an L-shaped block that connects to the north elevation of the housing wing's eight-story plus basement extension and the east elevation of the three-story community center (Photo 4). The housing wing and the children's center are connected at the basement level, and the children's center is connected to the three-story community center at the first floor (Photo 5). The exterior is covered in the same brown brick seen on the housing wing. This portion of the complex features a flat roof with a wide eave overhang that creates a covered breezeway. Fenestration on the one-story children's center consists of replacement one-over-one double-hung windows topped with a single-light fixed window. These windows were installed in the late twentieth century and replaced the original windows, which consisted of two-over-two horizontal light double-hung windows with a single-light hopper window below.

South Elevation: The south elevation of the one-story children's center is set back from East 104th Street and measures seven bays wide. Windows on the south elevation are framed in sets of five. A single-leaf aluminum door topped with a single-light transom is located next to each set of windows. The replacement doors were installed in the late twentieth century and replaced the original doors which consisted of four-light aluminum doors. The easternmost bay features a pair of single-leaf aluminum doors topped with a single light transom. Some windows and transoms are covered with metal safety gates. Columns of white stretcher bricks run vertically on the elevation separating every window and door set and mimicking the visual effect of a pilaster.

West Elevation: The west elevation connects to the eight-story plus basement residential extension and features a set of five windows consistent with those seen on the south elevation.

North Elevation: The north elevation is concealed from the public right-of-way and was not accessible during the site visit.

East Elevation: The east elevation of the children's center is not visible from the public right-of-way. The elevation is three bays wide and features three sets of five windows. A courtyard is located between the east elevation of the children's center and the west elevation of the twenty-story tower.

Community Center

The three-story community center is a square block located west of the housing wing and one-story children's center (Photo 6, 7). The community center is connected to the children's center at the first-floor interior. The exterior is covered in the same brown brick seen on the rest of the Gaylord White Houses. It features a flat roof with wide overhanging eaves. All windows on the community center are replacement windows installed in the late twentieth century. These windows replaced the original windows, which consisted of a combination of two-over-two aluminum double-hung windows with a hopper window underneath and a single fixed light above, two-over-two aluminum double-hung windows with a hopper window underneath, two-light aluminum projected windows, and seven-light steel projected windows. Unless otherwise noted, current windows consist of one-over-one double-hung metal windows topped by a single-light fixed window. All first-story windows are covered with metal safety gates. Many of the windows on the upper floors are fitted with child safety guards.

East Elevation: The east elevation is five bays wide. The two northernmost bays on the elevation feature windows. The windows on the first story are framed individually while the windows on the second and third stories are framed in pairs. The front entrance is located in the third bay from the south, adjacent to the elevator. The front entrance consists of a pair of replacement single leaf aluminum doors topped with single light transoms. The doors were installed in the late twentieth century and replaced the original doors, which consisted of four-light aluminum doors with a single light transom. The center bay projects from the east elevation and contains the elevator, which was a late twentieth-century addition for ADA Accessibility. The two northernmost

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bays feature a pair of windows on the first story, two sets of three-light metal awning windows on the second story, and two sets of three windows on the third story.

South Elevation: The south elevation is five bays wide, the easternmost of which is blind. Fenestration on the elevation consists of individually framed windows on the first story and pairs of windows on the second and third stories. Columns of white stretcher bricks run vertically on the elevation separating every fourth window mimicking a pilaster. A metal sign reading "UNION SETTLEMENT" is located in the easternmost blind bay and is flanked on either side by a white brick faux pilaster.

West Elevation: The west elevation is five bays wide, the northernmost and southernmost of which are blind. Fenestration on the elevation consists of individually framed windows on the first story while the windows on the second and third stories are framed in pairs. A side entrance is located in the center bay. A one-story, one-bay extension is located off the northernmost bay and features a flat roof with an additional entrance. These entrances both feature replacement doors. The original doors were hollow metal doors with a single-light glazing pattern.

North Elevation: The north elevation is four-bays wide and is largely concealed from the public right-of-way; it was not accessible during the site visit. Original drawings show that the first story featured a small rectangular steel projected window and a hollow metal door with three-light glazing pattern in the easternmost bay, and an additional steel projected window in the bay second from the east. Originally, each of the center bays featured four individually framed seven-light steel projected windows on the third floor. These windows remain intact.

Interior: At the interior, the primary public spaces in the buildings are the first-floor lobbies and the corridors on each floor as well as the community rooms located in the three-story Community Center. Throughout the building, HVAC/MEP equipment is largely concealed within walls and above ceilings, except in secondary, mechanical spaces. This includes fire and life safety sprinklers and HVAC equipment, which are concealed above the ceilings. The housing wing's twenty-story tower and eight-story plus basement extension are fully connected. The northwest wall of the eight-story plus basement extension is shared with the southeast wall of the children's center; however, the two are only internally connected at the basement level. The children's center and the community center are connected at the southwest corner of the children's center first floor.

Housing Wing

The general floorplan of the housing wing consists of a long narrow corridor wrapped by rooms with vertical access at the center of the corridor. The corridor on the second through eighth floors is T-shaped and includes the twenty-story tower and eight-story plus basement extension. The corridor on the tenth through twentieth floors is L-shaped and includes only the twenty-story tower. The stairway and elevators are located at the center of the twenty-story tower. The first floor includes the main lobby, two community rooms that house a senior center, an office, and a mail room. The basement/cellar level is utilitarian in nature and features a boiler room and storage spaces. The upper floors are occupied primarily by a mix of studio and one-bedroom apartments. Vertical access throughout the building is primarily provided by a set of utilitarian scissor stairs and the primary elevator bank located at the center of the building. Generally speaking, the stairs are utilitarian in design, featuring concrete treads and simple metal railings. The elevators, located in the center of the building, consist of two replacement elevator cabs. The cabs feature simple painted metal doors and surrounds.

An aluminum door with two, small square lights encased in an aluminum-frame with large rectangular sidelights and transom is located on the east elevation and allows access to the lobby vestibule. An identical door serves as the main point of entry from the vestibule to the main lobby (Photo 8). The lobby remains in its historic configuration and features two central elevators and a scissor staircase leading to each floor. A small set

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of original terrazzo steps are located on the north and south sides of the lobby which allow access to first-floor housing units. The mail room is located on the left (southeast) side of the lobby and features metal mailboxes. A hallway is located to the left (south) (Photo 9) of the elevators and provides access to additional community space located in the eight-story plus basement extension (Photo 10). The original configuration and volume of the lobby remain intact. Finishes within the lobby include ceramic tile walls, original terrazzo flooring, and painted concrete ceilings. Historic finishes in the first-floor public hall include terrazzo floors and ceramic tile walls. The first-floor community spaces are accessed via the public hall. These spaces are finished with asphalt tile flooring, painted concrete walls, and painted concrete and dropped gypsum board ceilings.

The upper floors are occupied by housing units. The ninth floor features a rooftop sundeck (Photo 12), tenant's association office, and storage area. According to original drawings, the tenant's association office was originally a solarium, and the storage area was originally the laundry room. The corridors at each floor remain in their historic configuration and volume (Photo 11), some of the finishes within the corridor appear to be replacements. Finishes in the corridors include asphalt tile flooring and painted plaster walls. Doors to apartment units are single-leaf metal doors. The apartment unit layouts appear to be in their historic configuration. Finishes in units include asphalt tile flooring, painted plaster walls, and painted cement ceilings. The apartment bathrooms have ceramic tile flooring, painted plaster walls, metal medicine cabinets, ceramic sinks, and vinyl bathtub inserts. Apartment kitchens have linoleum countertops and backsplashes and wood cabinets. Interior apartment doors are wood.

Children's Center

Access was not granted to the interior of the children's center at the time of the site visit. However, original drawings show a lobby and waiting area located just inside the entrance at the southeast corner, offices and a staff lounge, five playrooms, a kitchen, and three restrooms. These spaces are connected by a corridor located along the building's north wall.

Community Center

The Community Center lobby includes original terrazzo flooring and painted CMU walls; interior doors leading to rooms are aluminum with a single-light glazing pattern. Gypsum board wall and storefront glazing separate out a conference room (Photo 14, 15). Bathroom finishes have been updated and include ceramic tile flooring and walls. The auditorium on the first floor largely features non-historic finishes, although the space itself remains intact. Updated finishes include vinyl flooring and gypsum board walls. The second floor features the basketball court (Photo 16) which features painted concrete block walls, wood basketball court floor (likely original), ceiling is unfinished, and MEP is exposed. The third-floor features offices, storage, and a computer lab (Photo 17). These spaces are finished with vinyl or LVP flooring painted cement block walls. Hallways throughout the second and third floors feature vinyl flooring and painted concrete block walls. The community center wing features two stairways which are utilitarian in nature and feature vinyl flooring and painted cement block walls.

Alterations: The building has not undergone any character-defining changes since it was constructed in 1964. Permits and drawings identifying the dates of alterations have not been found, therefore exact dates of alterations are unknown. Based on available historic documentation the windows were originally aluminum and steel in multiple configurations, including double-hung, fixed, and hopper. These windows have been replaced throughout with aluminum windows that match the material and scale of the original fenestration. In this window upgrade, new window guards were installed. Most exterior doors, including the entrance doors to the housing wing lobby, have been replaced with new doors that feature slightly different glazing patterns. Replacement doors are still metal and fit into the original door openings. The brick façade has received routine

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maintenance including selective repair and brick replacement. As tenants moved in and out, apartment units have received minor finish alterations including changes to flooring, bathroom fixtures, and appliances. These alterations were consistent with the original design in that they are utilitarian and often used the same materials. The building site has received various ADA accessibility upgrades, including the addition of an elevator within the community center wing. Concrete benches on the exterior were replaced with metal benches.

Integrity: Gaylord White Houses retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic use as a stand-alone, government-funded senior housing high-rise in New York City. The building is in its original location and retains its setting along a heavily developed thoroughfare with a mix of mid- and high-rise commercial and residential buildings. The building has remained in continual use as public housing designed specifically for seniors since its construction in 1964. Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass Architects' design for the Gaylord White Houses followed industry standards for senior public housing developments. As public housing, the building was designed with minimal exterior ornamentation, consisting of a simple brick veneer atop a CMU block structure. Although the building has undergone renovations required by its continuous use as housing and community space, such as window replacement, and updated appliances and finishes in units, it remains largely as it did upon opening. At the exterior, the Gaylord White Houses has retained its original massing, form, and exterior materials. Although some doors and windows have been replaced, some original windows remain intact, and all fenestration remains its original size and location. Original landscaping plans called for trees, concrete benches and tables, and other amenities throughout the entrance terrace, interior courtyard, and children's play area and courtyard. The original uses of the spaces have been retained, although finishes have been updated, including the replacement of most concrete benches with metal benches. At the interior, the building retains its original floor plan and separations of public and private spaces. At the first-floor level, the primary entrance lobby retains historic terrazzo floors and ceramic tile walls. The configuration and volume of the lobby also remain intact with the two central elevators and a scissor staircase in their original locations. The corridors at each floor remain in their historic configuration and volume, some of the finishes within the corridor appear to be replacements. The auditorium on the first floor of the three-story community center largely features replacement finishes, although the space itself remains intact. Although some original finishes have been replaced, these changes have largely occurred in apartment units. In addition, Union Settlement continues to operate within the building as part of the overall site history. Overall, the building retains a sufficient degree of integrity to the period of significance.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1962-1974

Significant Dates

1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, Architects

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the building extends from 1962, when construction on the complex began, to 1974 reflecting the continued significant use associated with this property. The period of significance conveys the building's construction and use as senior-specific public housing, as well as its association with Union Settlement and their community-based efforts that continue within the building to this day.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Gaylord White Houses is a public housing development for seniors located in the Metro North section of East Harlem, Manhattan. Planning began in 1957 and the complex was completed in 1964. It was designed by the firm of Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass.

The property is **locally significant** under **Criterion A** in the category of *Social History*, for its association with Union Settlement as its headquarters building and its relationship with the overall development. Union Settlement was a significant and active community organization in New York City that provided support for the surrounding community in the way of education, health resources, and social services and was involved with NYCHA on several projects in planning community services. In 1942, Union Settlement started one of the first old age programs in New York City in response to the isolation of the growing senior population. In 1943, the organization opened school-age day care for the children of working mothers. In 1955, Union Settlement once again partnered with NYCHA to open a community center and day care program at East Harlem's nearby Washington Houses. Between 1957 and 1959 Union Settlement opened the Union Settlement Federal Credit Union and created the Youth Employment Service, which provided literacy, job readiness, and support to those who dropped out of high school. In 1960, Union Settlement sponsored the conversion of the Benjamin Franklin Houses to Franklin Plaza, a middle-income cooperative. These projects were under way during the development of the Gaylord White Houses, which began in 1957, showing a new multi-pronged approach of the settlement house to contribute meaningfully to the social services available for aged people in New York City. It also speaks to the impact of its collaborative efforts in support of public housing development. Since the turn of the twentieth century, the future site of the Gaylord White Houses was home to the Union Settlement's headquarters. When the Gaylord White Houses was constructed, the building included a wing that became the new headquarters for the Union Settlement as well as a children's center and community center.

The Gaylord White Houses is also **locally significant** under **Criterion A** in the category of *Politics/Government* as a representative example of NYCHA's early vest-pocket program and as the authority's first-planned development exclusively for senior residents. The early vest-pocket program was a direct response to the federal Housing Act of 1954, which shifted focus from "slum clearance" to "urban renewal," emphasized conservation and rehabilitation of existing building stock, and promoted targeted demolition and new construction on smaller sites scattered throughout a neighborhood. New York City, under Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr., initiated a pilot study for these federally funded "vest-pocket" developments, which were small sites of one to four buildings, typically a city block or less in size. This approach aimed to address criticism of larger high-rise projects by minimizing demolition and displacement while promoting targeted rehabilitation. The need for specialized housing for older Americans became a national priority in the 1950s due to the rapidly increasing population of people over sixty-five and the advent of the nuclear family. In response, New York State mandated that public housing projects set aside a minimum percentage of units for seniors, with special accommodations like accessible bathrooms and kitchens. The federal government also acted, with President Eisenhower signing the Housing Act of 1956, which allowed housing authorities to allocate additional funds for senior-specific conveniences such as ramps and handrails. In 1957, the state announced, "the first rental public housing to be built here exclusively for the aged"; that development was ultimately completed in 1964 as the Gaylord White Houses.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

East Harlem (El Barrio) Neighborhood

The Gaylord White Houses is located in the southern section of East Harlem in Manhattan, sometimes known locally as the Metro North Community.² The neighborhood covers roughly thirty blocks from 96th Street to 106th Street and from 3rd Avenue to the East River. Over the years, the neighborhood has been home to a number of diverse communities including Irish, Germans, Russian Jews, Italians, Blacks, and Puerto Ricans.³ Today, this portion of East Harlem is most associated with the Puerto Rican community and is commonly known as El Barrio.

This area was largely rural and undeveloped until the mid-to-late nineteenth century when the completion of elevated transit and subway lines allowed for permanent residential development in the area. Prior to the construction of apartments and brownstones, many Irish immigrants lived in simple frame buildings in East Harlem, drawn in to work on the city building projects of the mid-nineteenth century.⁴ By the 1870s, land in this area had become desirable attracting more prominent immigrants (largely Irish and German) who had managed to acquire enough wealth to move out of the crowded neighborhoods of lower Manhattan. This led to a surge in housing development—specifically in the form of brownstone row houses and flats.⁵ By 1879, the area surrounding the future site of the Gaylord White Houses had been platted, but many lots remained unimproved.⁶ In the 1890s, developers transitioned from brownstones to focus on constructing four- and five-story brick tenement houses to address the need for affordable housing for New York’s rapidly growing immigrant population.⁷

By the early 1900s, the southern area of East Harlem including the area surrounding the future site of the Gaylord White Houses became a densely developed neighborhood largely characterized by brick tenement houses meant for poor immigrant populations.⁸ In the following decades, the neighborhood suffered from issues surrounding sanitation and quality of living created by poor building design, deficient infrastructure, and inadequate public services.⁹ In the early twentieth century, multiple ethnic enclaves were located in the neighborhood including: Jewish Harlem located west of Lexington Avenue, Black Harlem located on the northwest side of the neighborhood, and Italian Harlem, located east of Third Avenue. According to one local source, “This was Fiorello LaGuardia’s congressional district, and the largest Italian neighborhood in the United States—far larger than the historic Italian settlement on the Lower East Side known as Little Italy.”¹⁰

After the end of World War I, large portions of the Jewish population left East Harlem for more affluent areas, including portions of the Bronx. After the departure of the Jewish population, Italian Harlem expanded west

² The Metro North section takes its name from Metropolitan Hospital, which constructed a new location in 1955 at 1901 First Avenue.

³ Marissa Marvelli, “East Harlem South / El Barrio: Reconnaissance-Level Historic Resource Survey,” prepared for Ascendent Neighborhood Development Corporation and Landmark East Harlem, July 2021-February 2022, 5.

⁴ Marvelli, “East Harlem,” 31.

⁵ Marvelli, “East Harlem,” 31-32.

⁶ G.W. Bromley & Co., “Atlas of the entire city of New York: complete in one volume; from actual surveys and official records” (New York: G. W. Bromley & E. Robinson, 1879), plate 23, Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library, <https://digitalcollections.nysl.org/items/96d64220-0b66-0132-db4f-58d385a7bbd0>.

⁷ Marvelli, “East Harlem,” 33.

⁸ George W. and Walter S. Bromley, “Atlas of the city of New York, Manhattan Island. From actual surveys and official plans” (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1897), plate 32, Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library, <https://digitalcollections.nysl.org/items/510d47e2-0ad8-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>; Marvelli, 34.

⁹ Marvelli, “East Harlem,” 5.

¹⁰ Nathan Glazer, “Letter from East Harlem,” *City Journal*, Autumn 1991, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/letter-from-east-harlem>.

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into what had been known as Jewish Harlem. Around the same time, large populations of Blacks and Puerto Ricans migrated to the neighborhood: Blacks migrating from the southern United States in what became known as the Great Migration, and Puerto Ricans migrating from Puerto Rico after being forced off their land by large U.S sugar and coffee monopolies.¹¹ As one researcher describes it, “The overcrowding of Harlem as a result of the Great Migration and housing segregation had by the 1930s become a serious and distinct social issue...population had exploded by 83,000 in 1920 to 204,000 in 1934.”¹²

By the 1930s, conditions in East Harlem had worsened due to the Depression. Situations of overcrowding and lack of building maintenance became even more widespread.¹³ Even after the rest of the country emerged from the Depression, living conditions in the area did not improve. Landlords left buildings to deteriorate and crumble and wealthier white families left East Harlem for more affluent areas, increasing the inherent segregation and racism that was visible in Harlem. By the post-war era, living conditions became so poor that East Harlem was one of the main targets for large urban renewal developments. The combination of overcrowding, poor living conditions and generally high rents locked populations into situations they could not improve. Local civic leaders, including state representatives, called on the city government to do something about the conditions in East Harlem, which coincided with plans set in motion by NYCHA.¹⁴

In 1934, New York City became the first city in the United States to establish a local public housing authority. The early years of NYCHA’s history focused on the development of low-rise housing developments, such as Harlem River Houses, some designed with federal programs and funding, such as the PWA. In the early 1940s, under Chairman Swope, NYCHA announced a program that would focus on “high density slum neighborhoods,” which coincided with the desire of Robert Moses and other city planners for slum clearance for much of Manhattan’s existing tenements. By 1943, NYCHA decided to focus on several of these tenement districts, including the Lower East Side, Brownsville, and East Harlem. According to one researcher, NYCHA’s goal was for ‘New York’s high-density slums (to) be replaced by high-rise superblocks.’¹⁵ For NYCHA, the superblock represented the emblem of modernity: the agency believed it could create an “aesthetic and social version of modern housing, affordable, sanitary, communal and friendly.” High-rise housing also fit into the long tradition of high-rise living in New York City.¹⁶ The superblock also required less land, a consideration because redlining had actually increased the price of land, and high rises housed more people, more efficiently.

The neighborhood surrounding the future site of the Gaylord White Houses reflected this trend. Redevelopment in the area began with the eleven-story East River Houses (completed in 1941), located just two blocks to the east.¹⁷ According to historian Richard Plunz, “The high-rise, government-subsidized precedent set by East River Houses remained the exclusive model for housing development in East Harlem.”¹⁸ In 1946, the *New York Times* predicted that the “large-scale public and private housing developments...[would] eradicate the slum areas and transform Harlem into one of the most attractive neighborhoods of the city.”¹⁹ Again, this philosophy was derived from that of European predecessors, who believed that “housing projects represented vehicles of modernity and progress.” As such, NYCHA saw East Harlem as a lab to test these theories.²⁰ However,

¹¹ Marvelli, 40.

¹² Nicholas Dagen Bloom, *Public Housing that Worked* (Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 32.

¹³ Marvelli, 41.

¹⁴ Bloom, *Public Housing that Worked*, 143.

¹⁵ Bloom, *Public Housing that Worked*, 129.

¹⁶ Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 257.

¹⁷ Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, Rev. edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 245.

¹⁸ Plunz, 246.

¹⁹ Bloom, *Public Housing that Worked*, 128.

²⁰ Zipp, *Manhattan Projects*, 255.

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NYCHA's was the only opinion holding sway here. There was also that of planners like Robert Moses, whose goal was to clear the "slums" by any means, or the business community, which saw the opportunity to get rid of "blight" and free the land for commercial development.²¹

By 1957, NYCHA alone had cleared over 137 acres of "slums" in East Harlem alone, destroying much of the inherent fabric of the neighborhood, shifting populations, and precipitating the loss of over 2,000 stores for residents.²² What followed was the repeated use of the NYCHA version of the "Tower in the Park" model, which focused on the use of tall red-brick towers with minimal ornamentation set within some sort of greenspace, although on the urban island of Manhattan, the high price of land often led to minimal greenspace and more hardscaping. These towers would house the greatest number of people, as it was required under the "slum clearance" system to provide housing for all those displaced under the program. Thus East Harlem turned from a neighborhood of early twentieth century tenements to a "linked series of superblocks create[ing] one of the largest concentrations of public housing in the country."²³ By the time the Gaylord White Houses were constructed in 1964, the area was home to approximately 150,000 people and served as the heart of New York's Puerto Rican community.²⁴

A Brief History of Union Settlement and the Settlement Movement in New York City

The history of the Gaylord White Houses can trace its roots to the settlement house movement in New York City generally, and Union Settlement's activity on this block specifically. At the end of the nineteenth century, New York City saw the opening of its first settlement house, University Settlement, on the lower East Side. Settlement houses grew out of what was known as the settlement movement, a social movement established in England that sought to bridge the gap between social classes. In New York City, Stanton Coit and members of what was originally known as the New York Neighborhood Guild were among the first to move into lower class neighborhoods, then immigrant tenements, and work with the community to expand their knowledge of health care, educational programs, and other social services.²⁵ More settlements quickly followed in other working-class neighborhoods.²⁶ By 1908, there were nineteen settlement houses in New York City. These houses would evolve to offer a range of services within the same building, not unlike the model often seen at present-day public and senior housing developments.²⁷ Settlement houses offered services to a range of individuals, providing aid to whomever needed it. Residents of the settlements often acted as advocates, contributing to the overall work of the organization. Settlement houses did not, however, provide permanent housing.²⁸

Among the nineteen settlement houses founded in New York City by 1908 was Union Settlement, established in East Harlem in 1895 by alumni, faculty, and students of Union Theological Seminary. The organization was founded to provide support for the surrounding community in the way of education, health resources, and social services. Originally, the organization focused on the large poor and immigrant population of East Harlem, many of whom lived in desperate conditions. The first headquarters of Union Settlement was located at 202 East 96th Street. However, five months later it moved to 237 East 104th Street, the future site of the Gaylord White Houses, where it is still located. By 1900, the organization served more than 3,000 people each week and ran

²¹ Zipp, *Manhattan Projects*, 13.

²² Bloom, *Public Housing that Worked*, 146.

²³ Bloom, *Public Housing that Worked*, 143.

²⁴ Gaylord White Welcome Booklet, ca. 1960s, NYCHA Archives, Accessed May 2023.

²⁵ "Settlement Houses, Houses of Welcome 1886-1925," Museum of the City of New York, Accessed December 9, 2023, <https://www.mcny.org/exhibition/settlement-houses>.

²⁶ "Settlement Houses in New York: From Past to Present," The Gotham Center for New York City History, last modified July 17, 2013, <https://www.gothamcenter.org/blog/settlement-houses-in-new-york-from-past-to-present>.

²⁷ The Gotham Center, "Settlement Houses."

²⁸ The Gotham Center, "Settlement Houses."

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children's programs such as reading and drama clubs and classes teaching sewing and cooking. The group also had special meetings for mothers.²⁹

In 1906 Cleveland H. Dodge, Edward Coffin, and Edward S. Harkness donated two houses to Union Settlement. Located on East 105th Street, these houses adjoined a third building already owned and used by Union Settlement to house headworker Gaylord S. White (also known as Reverend Gaylord S. White). All three buildings backed onto the Union Settlement headquarters located at 237-245 East 104th Street. The gift came at a time when the developers were constructing many tenement houses in this area of Manhattan. Union Settlement planned to remodel and subdivide the two buildings into multiple small apartments to house Union Settlement workers. They planned to retain the parlors in each building for social gatherings.³⁰

In 1917, Union Settlement established campgrounds in Palisades Interstate Park which allowed youth living in New York City to experience the wilderness. Over the following decades, Union Settlement helped provide employment, food, and other relief during times of economic crisis, including in 1930 when approximately 75 percent of East Harlem was on relief. In 1932, the organization opened one of the first birth control clinics in the city.³¹

In 1937, Union Settlement partnered with the Consumer Cooperative Society and the Farmer-Consumer Milk Cooperative to open a cooperative grocery store. Then in 1940, Union Settlement got involved with NYCHA by providing onsite recreational and educational services to tenants of the newly opened East River Houses. This was the first instance of Union Settlement's involvement in the efforts of publicly subsidized housing, but it was not the last.³²

In 1942, Union Settlement started one of the first old age programs in New York City in response to the isolation of the growing senior population. It was during this period that social reformers began to inspect the quality of life for senior citizens in New York City. Union Settlement's first old age program was foundational to many that came after and was a precursor to today's Older Adult Services, which includes a Meals on Wheels program for homebound seniors and operation of multiple older adult centers including one at the Gaylord White Houses. In 1943, the organization opened school-age day care for the children of working mothers. In 1955, Union Settlement once again partnered with NYCHA to open a community center and day care program at East Harlem's Washington Houses. Between 1957 and 1959 Union Settlement opened the Union Settlement Federal Credit Union and created the Youth Employment Service, which provided literacy, job readiness, and support to those who dropped out of high school. In 1960, Union Settlement sponsored the conversion of the Benjamin Franklin Houses to Franklin Plaza, a middle-income cooperative. These projects were under way during the development of the Gaylord White Houses, which began in 1957, showing a new multi-pronged approach of the settlement house to contribute meaningfully to the social services available for aged people in New York City. It also speaks to the impact of their collaborative efforts in support of affordable housing development.³³

The Gaylord White Houses was named for the Reverend Gaylord S. White, the former head of Union Settlement and Dean of Students at Union Seminary. Born in 1864, White was known as a prominent sociologist. He began as a student at New York University before getting his degree from Princeton in 1886. He then spent four years at Union Seminary, graduating in 1890. He was ordained into the Presbyterian ministry in 1892 and became a pastor of a church in a poor neighborhood in Brooklyn before becoming head worker of

²⁹ The Gotham Center, "Settlement Houses."

³⁰ "Its Two New Houses: Union Settlement Announces Gifts at Annual Meeting," *New York Tribune*, April 17, 1906.

³¹ "History," Union Settlement, Accessed February 28, 2023, <https://www.unionsettlement.org/history>.

³² Union Settlement, "History."

³³ Union Settlement, "History."

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Union Settlement in 1901. In 1906, he lived at the site of what would eventually become the Gaylord White Houses. White was the associate secretary of the General Commission of Army and Navy Chaplains from 1918 to 1919 and a member of the Hospital and Playground Commissions. He became president of United Neighborhood Houses in 1926. White's experience working with the poor and ailing earned him a philanthropic place in the history of housing and aid.³⁴ Reverend White died in 1931.

*NYCHA and the Early Vest Pocket Program, 1954-1966*³⁵

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) was the first public housing authority in the United States, established in 1934 during the height of the Great Depression, and its first affordable housing development were built in collaboration with the New Deal-era Federal Public Works Administration (PWA). NYCHA expanded its scope considerably when it was allowed to receive funding directly from the federal government (following the passage of the Housing Act of 1937) and from New York State (following a state referendum in 1938); the state law also enabled New York City to borrow money for its own developments, thus creating a three-tiered public housing program under which NYCHA could tap federal, state, and city fundings sources.³⁶ Construction of public housing was severely curtailed during World War II, although NYCHA continued to acquire sites and plan for future developments.

When the war ended, the authority aggressively resumed its building campaign in response to an acute housing shortage in New York City, exacerbated by the influx of returning servicemen and a halt to construction during the war years.³⁷ One source in 1945 found that "of 2,255,850 dwellings in New York City, only 2,000 vacancies could be found," while another noted that veterans were so desperate for lodging that they were even willing to sleep in Central Park if the city would only allow it.³⁸

NYCHA's post-war building boom was characterized by large developments of high-rise buildings surrounded by open landscaped areas in superblocks that interrupted large swaths of the street grid, a model known as "towers in the park." As a later NYCHA chair would note, these "'superblock projects' were planned...to meet the post-war demand for housing by getting up buildings as quickly as possible."³⁹ While the 1949 federal housing law emphasized slum clearance projects, much of New York's post-war public housing was in fact sited on vacant land at the periphery of the city. This was particularly true of the middle-income, city-funded developments. As one historian noted, "By 1955, NYCHA had built public housing projects evenly on 500 acres of slum land and 500 acres of vacant land."⁴⁰ All, however, were of the superblock, towers-in-the-part model.

By the mid-1950s, public housing in general—and the superblock model in particular—were being questioned by a range of public housing advocates and critics. What was once seen as a patriotic endeavor—providing government-built housing for returning World War II veterans amid staggering demand—had increasingly acquired a taint of socialism and was losing its broad public support. The federal government, for example, had pledged to fund annually 135,000 new public housing units in its 1949 housing law, but that number had dropped to just 35,000 a year in 1954. Even staunch advocates increasingly lamented the lack of innovation in

³⁴ "Reverend White Found Dead," *New York Times*, November 26, 1931.

³⁵ This section prepared by Christopher D. Brazee, NYSHPO.

³⁶ Nicholas Dagen Bloom, *Public Housing that Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 40.

³⁷ These developments initially employed state and city funds and eventually federal money once Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949.

³⁸ Bloom, 112; Peter Kihss, "City's Housing Shortage Worse; Building Programs Deadlocked," *New York Times*, October 14, 1945; "Housing Shortage Erases Moving Day," *New York Times*, October 2, 1945.

³⁹ "Public Housing to Get New Look," *New York Times*, May 5, 1957, 76.

⁴⁰ Bloom, 131.

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public housing. Catherine Bauer, who had written much of the original 1937 housing act, noted, “Everybody tends to sit tight, clinging desperately to the beleaguered formula, instead of trying to improve it in the light of experience and public attitudes.”⁴¹

The federal government took its first, halting steps at improving public housing policy and learning from recent experience when it adopted the Housing Act of 1954. The law explicitly shifted focus from “slum clearance”—the wholesale demolition of areas determined to be irredeemably blighted—to “urban renewal,” which would involve a range of public and private interventions aimed at preserving deteriorating but salvageable neighborhoods. As one contemporary commentator noted, “The Housing Act of 1954 gave explicit recognition to the need to continuously ‘renew’ our cities...Where the 1949 Act was limited essentially to slum clearance and redevelopment (the bulldozer approach), the 1954 Act provided that an urban renewal project might involve rehabilitation and conservation as well.”⁴²

The 1954 law contained several key provisions. It emphasized rehabilitation and conservation, primarily through private development aided by federal mortgage insurance for renovation projects (Section 220). It required every municipality receiving federal housing funds to develop a workable plan including provisions for building codes, developing a comprehensive community master plan, and conducting analysis of deteriorated and declining neighborhoods.⁴³ The act also authorized funding for 35,000 units of public housing; President Eisenhower had asked for this to extend for four years but Southern Democrats, upset about recent anti-segregation rulings at the Supreme Court, limited it to one year. Finally, the act also authorized the federal government to dole out demonstration grants to municipalities seeking to explore new models for urban renewal.

New York City and its housing authority were, as usual, at the vanguard of interpreting and implementing federal housing policy. The Housing Act of 1954 was passed just months into the first term of Mayor Robert F. Wagner Jr., who served from 1954-65 and was instrumental in steering NYCHA, however slowly, in a new direction. Wagner came into office with public housing credentials; his father, a US Senator from 1927-1949, helped sponsor both the Housing Act of 1937 (the Wagner-Steagall Bill) and the Housing Act of 1949 (the Taft-Wagner-Ellender Bill).

In October 1955, speaking in front of a Congressional subcommittee, Wagner announced a pilot program to study urban renewal techniques under the new law.⁴⁴ He noted that this study “involves a cooperative effort on the part of private enterprise and the city, State, and Federal Governments to rehabilitate one entire section of our city, to concentrate on it rather than a few square blocks here and there. If it works in this one area, we will repeat it elsewhere.”⁴⁵ The following year, New York City received a federal demonstration grant—as provided under section 314 of the Housing Act of 1954—to fund the study of what came to be known as the West Side Urban Renewal Area, encompassing twenty blocks between West 87th and 97th Streets and Central Park West to Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan.

⁴¹ Quoted in Barbara Penner, “The (Still) Dreary Deadlock of Public Housing,” *Places Journal*, October 2018, Accessed 14 Mar 2022, <https://doi.org/10.22269/181030>.

⁴² New York City Planning Commission, “Urban Renewal: A Report on the West Side Urban Renewal Study” (New York, 1958), 83.

⁴³ “The workable programs submitted by most large cities consist of a brief textual statement summarizing local compliance”; “The New York workable program comprises a 7-page printed letter of the Mayor to the HHFA Administrator, supported by 45 exhibits.” Quintin Johnstone, “The Federal Urban Renewal Program,” *The University of Chicago Law Review* 25, no. 2 (Winter 1958), 340 and footnote 231.

⁴⁴ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Banking and Currency: Investigation of Housing, 1955, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, 3-7; “City Gives Plan to Rehabilitate Upper West Side,” *New York Times*, October 6, 1955, 1 and 22.

⁴⁵ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee, Investigation of Housing, 1955, 5.

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Crucially, Wagner also noted in his Congressional testimony that the city had received clarification that “Federal low-rent housing funds previously used only for the superblock type of construction can be used both for single buildings and rehabilitation of old buildings.”⁴⁶ With this confirmation in hand, NYCHA announced in February 1956 that its federally funded developments would be “departing from the superblock pattern of projects covering six to eight blocks...[and] will diffuse the low-rent apartments widely in small development covering a single block, a half-block, quarter-block and in some cases a single building.”⁴⁷ It also noted that, “The city’s decision to go from superblock construction to smaller projects and scattered single buildings in its federally aided public housing will, if continued, retain neighborhood characteristics of many older residential sections while slowing or halting the encroachments of slum blight,” therefore achieving one of the primary goals of the Housing Act of 1954.⁴⁸

It took a couple of years for NYCHA to implement this plan, but in 1958 it announced fourteen new developments, of which nine were to be what the authority now termed “vest pocket” housing.⁴⁹ As one article announcing the new program claimed, “This will be the first widespread use of small islands of public housing to rehabilitate neighborhoods affected by spotty deterioration alongside other buildings still in good condition.”⁵⁰ The article also provided a simple definition of what constitutes a vest pocket development: sites a city block or less in size and comprising one to four buildings.

It took another few years for the city’s first vest pocket developments to go from the drawing board, through construction, to finally openings for tenants. Hylan Houses, opened 1960 in Brooklyn, became NYCHA’s first stand-alone tower, although the authority took pains not to call it a vest pocket development since it was sited adjacent to the Bushwick Houses superblock.⁵¹ Ditto the Mill Brook Extension in the Bronx, opened in January 1962 immediately adjacent the original Mill Brook superblock. The authority’s first true vest pocket development was Audubon Houses (NR 2022), opened in April 1962 on Amsterdam Avenue at West 155th Street in Manhattan.

NYCHA’s early vest pocket program was well received. In 1962, the same year the Audubon Houses opened, the city announcing another \$60 million toward vest-pocket developments in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.⁵² A newspaper article from the time noted that, “Thirty-two per cent of all housing projects now being planned or built by the New York City Housing Authority are vest-pocket developments. Such developments occupy less than a city block, and in many instances consist of a single building. The small developments, the Mayor said, are intended ‘to preserve neighborhoods throughout the city which may be destroyed because of more extensive public housing activities.’”⁵³ Another newspaper article from 1964 claimed that “Vest-pocket development, as conceived by Mayor Wagner, ‘is proving to be one of the most practical and popular techniques in our low-rent housing program.’”⁵⁴

Despite its popularity, however, Wagner always viewed the vest pocket program as an adjunct to traditional slum clearance and superblock developments. As he noted in the same Congressional testimony that launched

⁴⁶ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee, Investigation of Housing, 1955, 6.

⁴⁷ Charles Grutzner, “City Will Scatter U.S. Housing Units,” *New York Times*, February 25, 1956, 1.

⁴⁸ Grutzner, “City Will Scatter U.S. Housing Units,” 1.

⁴⁹ NYCHA had in fact used the term “vest pocket” in March 1955 to refer to an unbuilt development in Chinatown. “‘Vest-Pocket’ Housing for City,” *New York Herald Tribune*, March 24, 1955.

⁵⁰ “City Housing Unit Plans 14 Projects,” *New York Times*, February 2, 1958, 49.

⁵¹ “Vest-Pocket Plan in Housing is Set,” *New York Times*, November 5, 1959.

⁵² Susanne Schindler, “The Housing that Model Cities Built: Context, Community, and Capital in New York City, 1966-76,” Doc. thesis, (Universität der Künste, Berlin, 2018), 48.

⁵³ “City Plans Housing in Small Projects,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1962, quoted in Schindler, “Housing,” 48.

⁵⁴ “4 Housing Projects to be Started Here,” *New York Times*, January 20, 1964, 84.

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the program in 1955, “In describing the project as ‘new and workable supplementary approach’ to the city’s housing problem the mayor made it clear that the individual block rehabilitations... would not be a substitute for larger public and quasi-public housing projects.”⁵⁵ NYCHA continued to build superblock developments throughout Wagner’s term as mayor and well into the late 1960s.

Senior Housing in New York City

The need to provide specialized housing for older Americans became a national imperative during the 1950s, particularly for those with limited financial means. As lifespans increased due to “improved nutrition, medical care and knowledge,” the population of Americans over sixty-five years of age jumped from 4.1 percent in 1900 to 7.6 percent in 1950.⁵⁶ At the same time, the rise of the nuclear family meant that “the custom of aging parents living with one or another of the married children was tending to disappear,” and “the difficulty always confronting aging persons of finding suitable reasonably priced housing had been increased manyfold for older persons in the lower income groups.”⁵⁷

In 1950, President Harry Truman convened the first National Conference on Aging, which was facilitated by the Federal Security Administration. Although the event did not produce any definitive findings on concerns or issues with the senior citizens in the United States, the 815 delegates concluded that “the situation of the aging was so critical that it required the immediate attention of all appropriate groups and interests.”⁵⁸ That same year, the *New York Times* stressed the need for senior housing, stating, “In the field of housing for the aging, the widow or the widower whose children have grown up, the story is of retrogression rather than progress.” The article continued, “Social workers and housing experts appear to agree that special housing should be created for the aging.”⁵⁹

Although federal law did not yet address the housing needs of seniors, NYCHA from nearly the beginning had its own policy of reserving some of its units for older residents. The Red Hook Houses (opened 1938), for example, had an entire wing of apartments designated for seniors, the Fort Green Houses—NYCHA’s first state-funded housing complex opened in 1944—had fifty three of its 3,501 apartments set aside for older tenants.⁶⁰ One newspaper article in 1950 noted that New York was the only state in the union that “has set aside apartments in public housing projects especially for oldsters.”⁶¹

New York State implemented its own policies supporting elder housing in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It created the Joint Legislative Committee on the Problems of the Aging—headed by State Senator Thomas C. Desmond of Newburgh, NY—which had among its chief concerns to lobby for the inclusion of seniors in public housing.⁶² These efforts bore fruit in 1951, when the New York State Division of Housing announced that going forward, all state-funded housing developments would be required to set aside a minimum of five percent of apartments for seniors, a policy the *New York Times* reported, “reflects the growing interest of the state in the problems of the aged and recognizes the changing family relationships.”⁶³

⁵⁵ “City Gives Plan to Rehabilitate Upper West Side,” *New York Times*, October 6, 1955, 1 and 22.

⁵⁶ “State-Aid Housing Must Take in Aged,” November 26, 1951, “Our Aging Population,” *New York Times*, June 9, 1950.

⁵⁷ “State-Aid Housing Must Take in Aged.”

⁵⁸ Dale Vinyard, “White House Conferences and the Aged,” *Social Service Review* 53, no. 4 (Dec. 1979): 661.

⁵⁹ Warren Moscow, “Community Study of Aged Stressed,” *New York Times*, April 20, 1950.

⁶⁰ “State is Put First in Helping of Aged,” *New York Times*, August 13, 1950.

⁶¹ “State Is Put First in Helping of Aged.”

⁶² “State-Aid Housing Must Take in Aged.”

⁶³ “State-Aid Housing Must Take in Aged.”

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Not only would state-funded developments be required to include senior housing, but the new policy also stipulated that these units must contain special accommodations for senior residents including:

“...bathrooms with nonslip floors, square bathtubs with seats and hand grips in the walls to facilitate getting in and out, showers with seats and hand grips for persons who would feel insecure in getting into or out of a tub, the elimination of thresholds to lessen the danger of tripping, and electric instead of gas stoves to prevent asphyxiation from escaping gas.

Housekeeping will be simplified by placing the shelves and cabinets at low levels. Life will be made easier by mechanically operated casement windows. Apartments will face the sunny side and more heat will be provided than in other apartment.”⁶⁴

NYCHA more than met its requirements under the new state law. Between 1951 and 1956, the authority constructed eight state-funded public housing complexes. NYCHA statistics, unfortunately, do not indicate the exact number of units reserved for seniors but do provide enough information to ascertain an approximation. The eight developments consisted of a total of 9,286 apartment units; if five percent of the units were reserved for seniors, it can be surmised that NYCHA added approximately 464 units specifically designed for seniors during that time.⁶⁵ In fact, the *New York Times* reported in 1957 that 1,700 public housing units across the state were occupied by seniors.⁶⁶

The federal government implemented its own laws supporting senior housing in 1956, when President Eisenhower signed the Housing Act of 1956 into law. The act expanded upon the previous legislation and increased funding to local housing authorities for both the development of housing and the relocation of those displaced through urban renewal initiatives. The true significance of the law, however, lies in its expansion of the public housing program to include senior citizens, specifically, single seniors. The act stipulated that housing authorities could spend additional funds to provide for the special conveniences required for older residents, such as ramps, handrails, and grab bars.⁶⁷ As such, the federal government opened the door to local housing authorities across the country to increase their unit counts and construct housing developments for seniors.

In 1957, State Housing Commissioner Joseph P. McMurray announced that New York “is raising the reservations for elderly persons in its low-rent housing project from about 5 per cent of the total units to 10 per cent.”⁶⁸ He also noted that for the first time, “some new projects will be entirely for the aged,” rather than being incorporated into larger developments. In July of that year, McMurray unveiled plans “for a public housing project to be tenanted entirely by elderly couples and individuals,” comprising “360 specially designed apartments at the northwest corner of Second Avenue and 104th Streets.”⁶⁹ As the *New York Times* noted, “The project, if carried through in its present form, would be the first rental public housing to be built here exclusively for the aged.”⁷⁰ It took several years, but the development was ultimately completed in 1964 and given the name Gaylord White Houses.⁷¹

⁶⁴ “State-Aid Housing Must Take in Aged.”

⁶⁵ “Project Statistics,” New York City Housing Authority, June 30, 1955.

⁶⁶ “Housing for Aged Gains,” *New York Times*, October 17, 1957.

⁶⁷ “Public Housing in War on Poverty,” *CQ Press*, July 22, 1964.

⁶⁸ “Housing for Aged Gains.”

⁶⁹ Charles Grutzner, “Housing Planned for Elderly Only,” *New York Times*, July 3, 1957, 48.

⁷⁰ Grutzner, “Housing Planned for Elderly Only.”

⁷¹ Though planned first, the Gaylord White Houses were completed several months after Van Dyke II became NYCHA’s first purpose-built, exclusively senior housing development to officially open.

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Development of the Gaylord White Houses

The Gaylord White Houses was the first public housing development exclusively for seniors to be planned by NYCHA. It was financed wholly by New York State, whereas most subsequent senior housing was funded by the federal government. In a letter from State Housing Commissioner McMurry to NYCHA chairman Philip Cruise, dated July 2, 1957, McMurray stated his focus on providing housing and social services to the aging population. He suggested the idea of constructing small buildings within existing neighborhoods. His hope was that buildings such as these would help the senior population integrate into the neighborhood environment while providing them with their own dedicated housing with access to specialized social services and recreational facilities. McMurray also suggested that these specialized amenities might be operated by a social agency or non-profit organization. The end of his letter specified that this type of development would work well at the site located on East 104th Street and Second Avenue currently owned by Union Settlement (the future site of the Gaylord White Houses) and stated his intention to approve said development. In April 1957, the New York Division of Housing had discussed a potential partnership with Union Settlement for this development. Union Settlement agreed to serve as a sponsor in return for an extension and enlargement of their facilities. Because the site was currently owned by Union Settlement, land acquisition was not difficult and required almost no relocation of current residents.⁷²

By 1959, official plans for what came to be called the Gaylord White Houses were underway with a design by the architectural firm of Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass. Planning meetings included involvement from those at the state level, NYCHA, and Union Settlement. One of the Union Settlement representatives included Jane Jacobs the well-known grassroots organizer and activist.⁷³ During the planning process, Union Settlement requested approximately 25,000 square feet of space for their programs. Whittlesey advocated for additions to the original building design that would increase square footage from 24,560 to 35,000. This increase would include added space for a club room, community space, a music room, a restaurant, and circulation. The New York State Housing Division committed to no more than 20,000 square feet for Union Settlement activities, not including space for senior activities.⁷⁴ Discussions also focused on plans for all amenity spaces. Questions arose regarding the plan for the daycare, the size of the gymnasium, auditorium, and club rooms, the layout of office space, the use of the basement, the number of kitchens, storage solutions, and outdoor space.⁷⁵ Originally, some parties were interested in providing a Union Settlement-run restaurant that would serve both senior residents and members of the public, but the idea was eventually abandoned.⁷⁶ Other amenities that were originally proposed but ultimately not included were an infirmary and a music school.⁷⁷

Throughout the planning process, the national discussion surrounding senior housing served to further support the need for the Gaylord White Houses. When a 1960 national study indicated half of the aging population in America lived in inadequate housing, affordable housing efforts in New York City and the rest of the country shifted focus to address this issue. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, NYCHA created plans to construct four public housing buildings specifically to house seniors: the Barnard Haber Houses and Van Dyke House II in Brooklyn, and La Guardia Addition and Gaylord White Houses in Manhattan.⁷⁸

⁷² Letter, New York State Division of Housing Commissioner Joseph McMurry to NYCHA chairman Philip Cruise, July 2, 1957, NYCHA Archives, Accessed May 2023.

⁷³ Memorandum regarding Plans for Gaylord White, March 3, 1959, NYCHA Archives, Accessed May 2023.

⁷⁴ Memorandum regarding Plans for Gaylord White, February 17, 1959, NYCHA Archives, Accessed May 2023.

⁷⁵ Memorandum, March 3, 1959.

⁷⁶ Memorandum regarding Plans for Gaylord White, March 9, 1959, NYCHA Archives, Accessed May 2023.

⁷⁷ Memorandum, March 9, 1959.

⁷⁸ "B'klyn to Get Apt. Building for Old Folk," *New York Daily News*, September 5, 1961.

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In May 1960, NYCHA planned to sell approximately \$4,950,000 of temporary loan notes. The proceeds from the sale would be used to continue the temporary financing of state-funded housing, including the Gaylord White Houses.⁷⁹ In January 1962, construction began on the Gaylord White Houses, which was projected to cost \$4,085,000. Prior to development, most of the proposed 35,000-square-foot site was owned by Union Settlement whose headquarters was still located in the row of old brownstone houses located on the block. The construction of the Gaylord White Houses required the demolition of five extant brownstone tenement buildings ranging from three to five stories in height.⁸⁰ Negotiations for the purchase of the site had begun in 1957. In return for space in the new development, Union Settlement was willing to make a substantial contribution toward the cost of the construction by donating land for the building.⁸¹

The Gaylord White Houses were designed by New York City architectural firm Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, which was founded in 1935 by Julian Whittlesey and Albert Mayer. Albert Mayer was an architect, planner, and civil engineer who consistently worked for ethical housing options in urban settings. Mayer attended Columbia University briefly but ultimately received a degree in civil engineering from MIT. After working as an engineer, he became more concerned with the social aspects of development and design than the technical and became a registered architect. Mayer was part of a group of socially oriented architects, planners, and urban theorists including Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, and Henry Wright. In keeping with this group's ethos, he was an outspoken advocate of large-scale, planned housing complexes in the 1930s. He co-founded the Housing Study Guild and pushed government policy to evolve and eventually created the United States Housing Authority in 1937. He fought for ethical urban living conditions, especially considering the explosive growth of cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Eventually, his pioneering designs for public housing would become important standards.⁸² Among his other achievements, Mayer became the director of the National Housing Conference and was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Institute Of Planners, and the Regional Development Council of America.⁸³ When his firm designed the Gaylord White Houses in the mid-twentieth century, Mayer was already considered a notable figure in planning and community development.⁸⁴

The Gaylord White Houses opened in 1964 with 248 units and community amenity space. Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass's ultimate design incorporated a twenty-story tower and eight-story plus basement extension at the northwest corner of East 104th Street and 2nd Avenue that featured a senior center on the first floor of the eight-story extension and housing throughout the rest of space. A one-story children's center known as the Leggett Memorial Children's Center and a three-story community center were constructed along East 104th Street. The residential wing, children's center, and community center were all interconnected and comprised the Gaylord White Houses complex. The children's center and community center programs were run by Union Settlement, and the building also housed the organization's new headquarters. Union Settlement continued its legacy of support for the surrounding community by providing recreational and educational services and a credit union for community members, as well as a day camp and nursery for children.⁸⁵ Today, Union Settlement still runs the community center, children's center, and Gaylord White Senior Center out of the Gaylord White Houses.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ "House Agency Plans Note Issue: NYC Authority to sell 4,950,000 of its Obligations on May 24," *New York Times*, May 17, 1960.

⁸⁰ NYCHA Archives, Accessed May 2023.

⁸¹ Grutzner, "Housing Planned for Elderly Only."

⁸² Paul Goldenberger, "Albert Mayer, 83, Architect and Housing Planner, Dies," *New York Times*, October 16, 1981.

⁸³ "House Agency Plans Note Issue."

⁸⁴ "Planner to Speak at Vassar Tomorrow," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, April 18, 1960.

⁸⁵ "Union Settlement to Gain Thursday," *New York Times*, September 27, 1966.

⁸⁶ Union Settlement, "History."

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The Gaylord White Houses also conformed to state and federal guidelines set forth for senior housing. All apartments in the building were equipped with special safety features and social considerations for seniors.⁸⁷ The building was designed with minimal decoration, in economical and durable materials. The high-rise tower features elevators that serve as the primary means of movement from floor to floor, requiring minimal stairs for the residents. The elevators are easily accessible, located along a single, centrally located corridor. At the first-floor level, the building also has various recreation rooms and multi-purpose rooms, as well as the children's center and community center wings run by Union Settlement. These additional amenities can be used by residents and community members alike, which allows residents to stay involved in the surrounding community.

When it opened, the complex incorporated community life and recreational facilities associated with the Union Settlement organization. These community amenities were likely part of the 1951 New York State Division of Housing policy, which, according to an article in the *New York Times*, stipulated that "low-rent housing constructed henceforth with state aid would be required to have a minimum of 5 percent of its apartments set aside for elderly persons..." and include "not only special features in the apartments for the safety and general convenience of older persons, but a new type of community life for the occupants, including separate recreational facilities."⁸⁸

When moving into the Gaylord White Houses, new residents received a welcome packet and brochure welcoming them to the building and informing them of nearby amenities. Some of these amenities included the East Harlem Day Care Center for Older People, located at 312 East 109th Street, which provided social, educational, and cultural experiences, and the Yorkville Neighborhood Club, which was open to men and women over the age of sixty. The brochure also informed residents of other agencies that provided senior programs in the neighborhood, as well as a list of the services provided by the East Harlem Health Center located at 115th Street and Lexington Avenue. An additional welcome letter from Union Settlement was also included in the packet.⁸⁹

The Gaylord White Houses' ninth floor originally featured a tenant laundry and a solarium with an open-roof sundeck and an enclosed section. The idea for a solarium was suggested by New York State Division of Housing Commissioner Joseph McMurry in a July 1957 letter to NYCHA chairman Philip Cruise.⁹⁰ This amenity was intended to provide a sunny, quiet area for tenants to enjoy, especially while using the nearby laundry room. During the first year the building was open, the head recreation worker held a coffee hour to get to know the tenants. However, tenants found the area was too hot during the summer months and soon the sun deck was only used during the evenings. When the coffee hour resumed in the fall, attendance had dropped. By this time the solarium was mainly used for those playing cards or dominos. Tenants tended to favor sitting outside at the ground floor level so they could watch pedestrians and see the comings and goings of fellow tenants. By December 1965, there were no organized activities held in the solarium, and use of the space had significantly decreased.⁹¹ Today the enclosed section of the former solarium is used for community events and as office space for the tenant's association.

⁸⁷ "Unique Housing," *New York Daily News*, February 11, 1962.

⁸⁸ "State-Aid Housing Must Take in Aged."

⁸⁹ Gaylord White Welcome Booklet, NYCHA Archives.

⁹⁰ Letter from New York State Division of Housing, 1957.

⁹¹ "Experience of Use of Solarium," Letter from Gaylord White Housing Manager, Bernice Kramer, to Assistant Director of Management, Mary Lavery, December 31, 1965, NYCHA Archives, Accessed May 2023.

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After the Period of Significance

Crime was an issue in the early days of the Gaylord White Houses, when reports of muggings and robberies were common. However, in 1972, a group of senior residents banded together to form a tenant's patrol. Volunteers worked with NYCHA patrolman to keep an eye on the building. Within a year, sixty-four of the 400 tenants had volunteered for patrol duty and there had been no further reports of muggings or robberies.⁹²

Since opening in 1964, the complex has focused heavily on improving the lives of its residents by providing educational and recreational opportunities. In 1974, the Gaylord White Houses established a private cable-TV station to serve the residents of the apartment building. The project was created and supervised by the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. The station served to educate the residents and had a unifying effect by encouraging participation in community activities. In addition to residents starring in programming themselves, the station featured health education presented by a registered nurse.⁹³ This experimental health program was combined with visits from doctors who were brought to the building to see residents in need of medical care.⁹⁴ During the 1980s residents were also involved with putting on shows and programs at the Museum of the City of New York, including bilingual programming and plays.⁹⁵ These types of activities and programs encouraged residents to get involved in the larger community.

Following the completion of the Gaylord White Houses, NYCHA continued to follow the trend of constructing stand-alone senior housing throughout the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, Union Settlement would also continue to work towards bettering the lives of the aged population. In 1979, Union Settlement Home Care was funded by a city government contract to provide home attendants for homebound seniors. In addition, the organization expanded its services further by founding counseling, medical, and mental health services. In 1982, Union Settlement assumed the responsibility of the James Weldon Johnson Counseling Center and the East Harlem Council for Senior Centers.⁹⁶

In the following decades, Union Settlement continued to develop and provide services, some of which are still offered today. Presently, the organization's services include programming for the adult, senior, and youth populations of the community.⁹⁷ Union Settlement's work in assisting in the development of Gaylord White Houses is a testament to its powerful influence in the community by the collaborative means of both social services and design and development. Both Union Settlement and NYCHA have made massive contributions to the history of senior housing and support in New York City.

Comparative Analysis: NYCHA and Senior Housing

Today, NYCHA has ten public housing complexes in Manhattan built specifically for seniors (see Table 1). All were developed by NYCHA except Morris Park Senior Citizens Home, which was a private senior housing development acquired by NYCHA almost a decade after construction. Nine of the senior housing complexes were constructed in the vest-pocket housing concept, and all ten are single buildings of at least nine stories tall. Six of the ten buildings are located on lots less than one acre in size, and only one building, Mary McLeod Bethune Houses is located on a parcel larger than two acres (2.03). Seven of the ten buildings include additional amenities including senior, children, or community centers. Five of the buildings are located in the East Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan; two are located in Washington Heights, one in the East Village, one in Lenox

⁹² "Giving Muggers the Old 1-2," *New York Daily News*, January 14, 1973.

⁹³ "Channel R Zooms In On Elderly Tenants in Harlem," *New York Times*, August 14, 1975.

⁹⁴ "Heart to Heart Specialist," *New York Daily News*, May 14, 1972.

⁹⁵ "A Summer Guide," *New York Daily News*, July 4, 1988.

⁹⁶ Union Settlement, "History."

⁹⁷ Union Settlement, "History."

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Hill, and one on the Upper West Side. Although five of the ten buildings are at least 50 years old, only one, the Mary McLeod Bethune Houses, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Landscaping and hardscaping at the complexes typically include a garden, courtyard, or landscaped area with trees and benches. A few of the complexes, like Morris Park and Corsi Houses, had little space for landscaping. However, Morris Park's proximity to Marcus Garvey Park allows tenants easy access to green space, and Corsi Houses originally used the rooftop as a terrace landscaped for outdoor amenities. Many of the buildings have undergone some alterations that are typical of public housing, specifically the replacement of exterior doors and windows, the addition of child guards on windows, and updates to finishes within units, including the replacement of appliances and flooring.

- Morris Park Senior Citizens Home (ca. 1963) – Located in East Harlem, Manhattan Morris Park Senior Citizens Home is a nine-story T-shaped building dedicated to senior living. Situated on a 0.23-acre site, the building was designed by Samuel S. Arlen and John Louis Wilson Associated Architects. Like Gaylord White, the building is located in the middle of a densely developed block. Morris Park was not created with adjoining community amenities or landscaped areas like Gaylord White. However, the building is located across the street from Marcus Garvey Park, so residents can utilize the amenities located in the park.
- Mary McLeod Bethune Houses (1967) – The building consists of a single, twenty-two-story rectangular building constructed in Washington Heights, Manhattan. Designed by Pomerance & Breines Architects, the building is located on a 2.03-acre L-shaped lot and features a landscaped area with curved paved walkways, trees, and parking. The Mary McLeod Bethune Houses was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2022 as a representative example of senior housing. Similar to Gaylord White, the building is an example of a development located within a densely developed block surrounded by other buildings. The Mary McLeod Bethune Houses features a community center but lacks the additional community amenities and connection with a non-profit like Union Settlement.
- Metzler Tower (1971) – Designed by architects, Morris Ketchum Jr. and Associates, and landscape architect, M. Paul Friedberg, Metzler Tower is a single twenty-story rectangular building reserved for senior living. Located in the East Village of Manhattan, the building is located on a 1.19-acre lot with parking to the east and greenspace with trees to the west. Similar to Gaylord White, the building is an example of a development located within a densely developed block surrounded by other buildings. Metzler Towers features a senior center and some commercial space as well as a courtyard area with trees, tables, and paved paths, but lacks association with a non-profit like Union Settlement.
- Corsi Houses (1973) – Corsi Houses consists of a sixteen-story rectangularly shaped building with two, two-story wings housing a community/senior center. The building was designed by Samuel Paul and is located on a 0.75-acre site in East Harlem. The land for the building was previously owned and occupied by LaGuardia Houses an East Harlem settlement house. LaGuardia donated the land for Corsi Houses in exchange for space in the building. The site had little space for landscaping, so the roof terrace above the community center was originally used for outdoor activities; however, the space no longer serves this purpose. The building served as senior only housing and the two-story wings featured a community center operated by LaGuardia Houses. The community involvement related to Corsi Houses is similar to Gaylord White. Both sites had land donated by a community organization in return for use of a portion of the new building. Similar to Gaylord White, the building is located within a densely developed block surrounded by other buildings and is an example of scattered site development.

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- UPACA Site 5 (1986) – Designed by architects Sanchez & Figueroa and landscape architects Bale & Bainson, UPACA Site 5 is an eleven-story L-shaped building used exclusively for senior housing. Located on a 1.5-acre site along Lexington Avenue in East Harlem, Manhattan, the building features some parking. Landscaping includes a large grassy area, tenant garden with perimeter trees, bushes, paved walkway, benches, fenced grassy areas with trees and plantings, and a paved entrance courtyard with benches.
- UPACA Site 6 (1987) – UPACA Site 6 is a twelve-story rectangular building located on a one-acre site along Lexington Avenue in East Harlem, Manhattan. The building was designed as senior housing by architects Samuel and David J. Paul and landscape architect P. DeBellis. The site features a fenced grassy area, rear tenant garden with benches, tables, trees, fenced grassy areas with trees and bushes flanking entrances, and some parking.

Both UPACA Site 5 and 6 were named for their association with the Upper Park Avenue Community Association (UPACA). UPACA was founded by Harlem residents, Mary Iemma and Margaret Jenkins, in 1963. Their mission was to redevelop Lexington Avenue between 117th and 124th Streets. This collaboration between NYCHA and a community organization and the subsequent naming of the building after said organization is similar to the history of the Gaylord White Houses. UPACA completed multiple earlier projects that are not part of the NYCHA portfolio. However, they were constructed as affordable housing for residents of East Harlem. For example, in 1974 a thirty-two-story building known as UPACA Towers was constructed. UPACA Towers was design by Roger Glasgow, and according to one source was the first of its size to be designed by a black architect.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ “32-Story Building with Over 300 Units Dedicated in Harlem,” *New York Times*, December 5, 1974.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.82
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(Enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 40.789819

Longitude: -73.943952

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel on which the building is situated and all property historically associated with the nominated property during the period of significance. No extant or historically associated resources have been excluded.

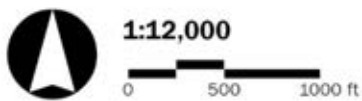
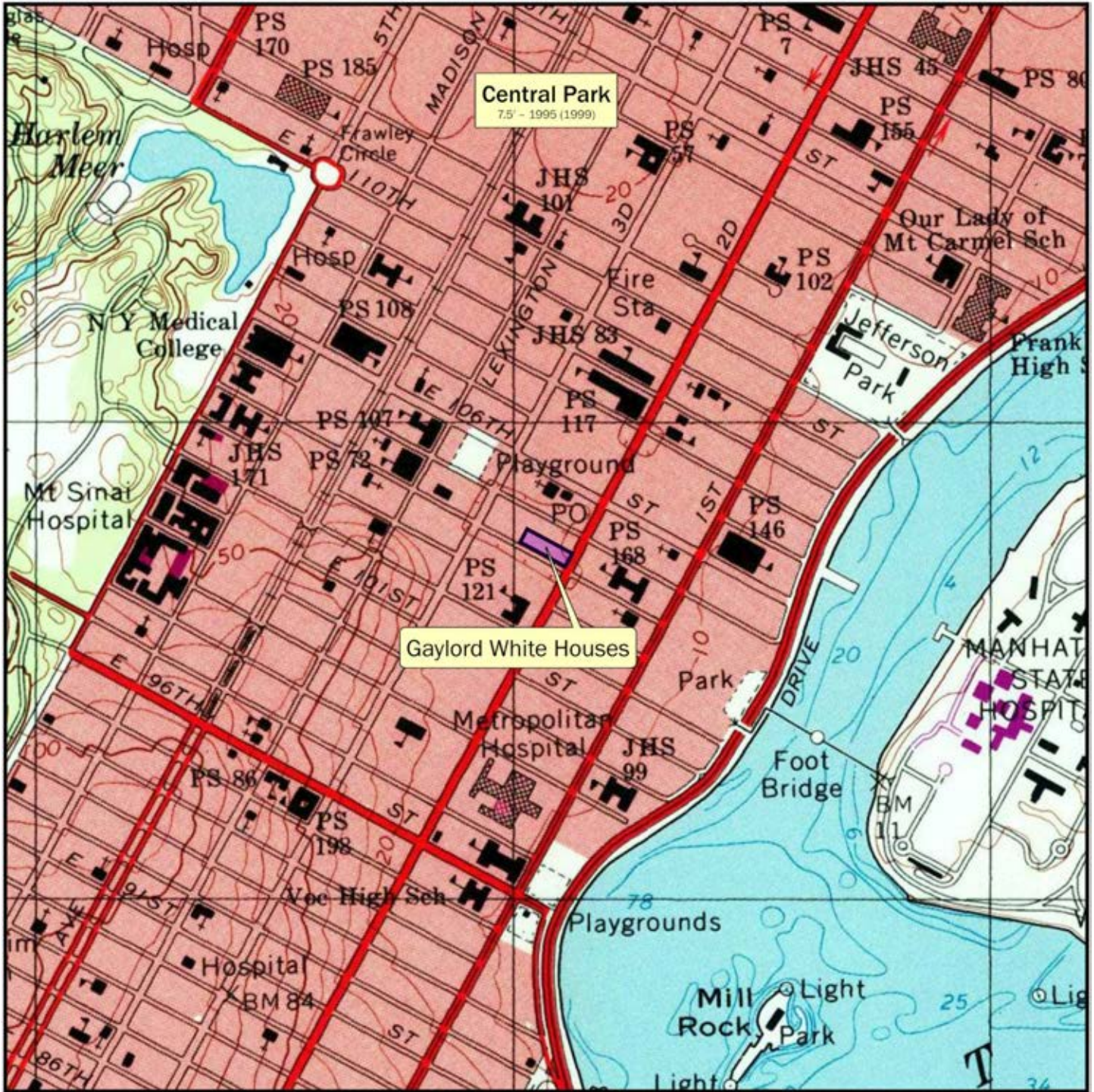
DRAFT


Gaylord White Houses

New York, NY

Name of Property

County and State



 Gaylord White Houses



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

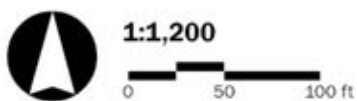
Mapped 08/20/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Gaylord White Houses

Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

 Nomination Boundary (0.82 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2022



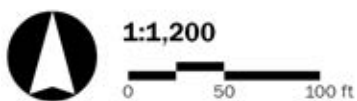
Mapped 08/20/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Gaylord White Houses



Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

 Nomination Boundary (0.82 ac)  Tax Parcels

New York County Parcel Year: 2023



Mapped 08/20/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Gaylord White Houses

Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cindy Hamilton, Caitlin Herrstadt, Linda Santoro, and Nika Faulkner

Revised and edited by Christopher D. Brazee, NYSHPO; contact: Kathleen LaFrank, NYSHPO

organization Heritage Consulting Group

date 12/09/2023

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city or town Philadelphia

state PA

zip code 19118

e-mail chamilton@heritage-consulting.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5- or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Gaylord White Houses

Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State

Figures

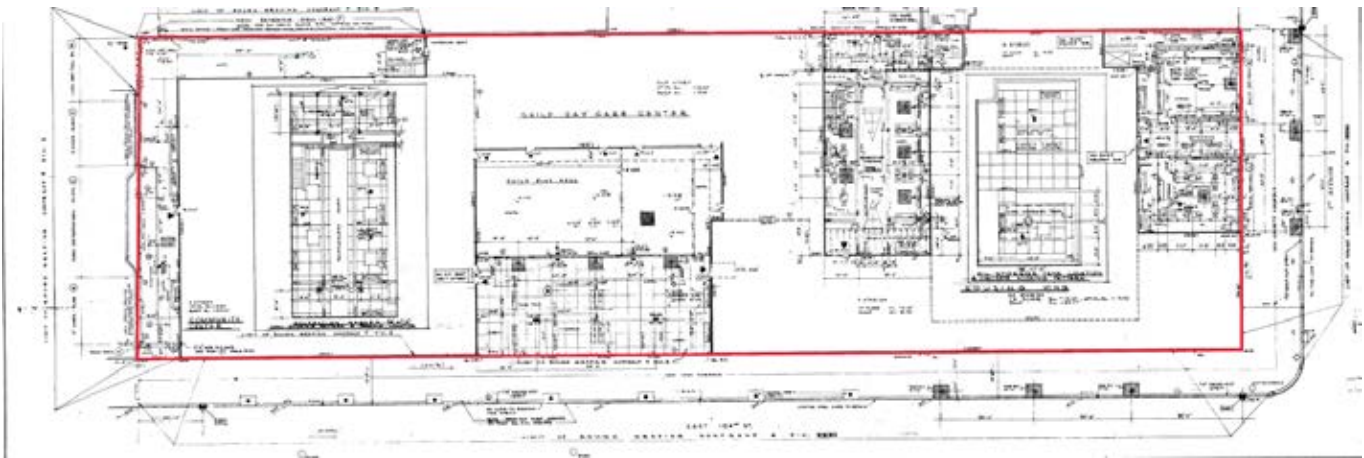


Fig. 1: Gaylord White Houses, Historic Site Map.

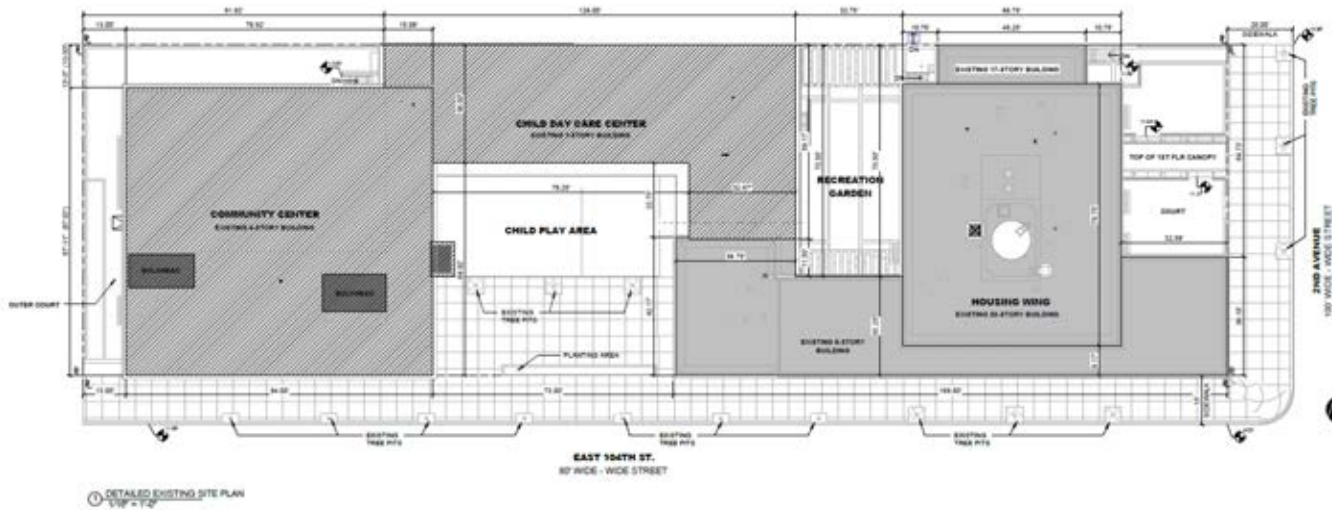


Fig. 2: Gaylord White Houses, Current Site Plan.

Gaylord White Houses

Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State



Fig. 3: 1879 G.W. Bromley & Co. Map.
(Red outline indicates the future site of the Gaylord White Houses.)



Fig. 4: 1897 G.W. Bromley & Co. Map.
(Red outline indicates the future site of Gaylord White Houses.)

Gaylord White Houses

Name of Property

New York, NY

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Fig 5: 1951 historic aerial.
(Red outline indicates the future site of Gaylord White Houses.)

Gaylord White Houses

Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Gaylord White Houses
City or Vicinity: New York
County: New York County State: NY
Photographer: Linda Santoro
Date: 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 Housing Wing, Exterior, East and South Elevations, view looking northwest.
- 0002 Housing Wing, Exterior, East Elevation, view looking west.
- 0003 Housing Wing, Exterior, East Elevation, view looking west.
- 0004 Children's Center and Community Center, Exterior, view looking northwest.
- 0005 Children's Center and Courtyard, Exterior, South Elevation, view looking north.
- 0006 Children's Center and Community Center, Exterior, view looking northwest.
- 0007 Community Center, Exterior, South Elevation, view looking northwest.
- 0008 Housing Wing, Upper Roof, view looking north.
- 0009 Community Center, Roof, view looking southwest.
- 0010 Housing Wing, First Floor, Lobby, view looking east.
- 0011 Housing Wing, First Floor, Corridor, view looking east.
- 0012 Housing Wing, First Floor, Senior Center, view looking southeast.
- 0013 Housing Wing, Ninth Floor, Corridor, view looking west.
- 0014 Housing Wing, Ninth Floor, Lower Roof, view looking east.
- 0015 Community Center, First Floor, Lobby, view looking south.
- 0016 Community Center, First Floor, Lobby, view looking north.
- 0017 Community Center, Second Floor, Gymnasium view looking west.
- 0018 Community Center, Third Floor, Corridor, view looking east.



NY_NewYorkCounty_GaylordWhiteHouses_0001



NY_NewYorkCounty_GaylordWhiteHouses_0002



NY_NewYorkCounty_GaylordWhiteHouses_0003



NY_NewYorkCounty_GaylordWhiteHouses_0004



NY_NewYorkCounty_GaylordWhiteHouses_0005



NY_NewYorkCounty_GaylordWhiteHouses_0006



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NY_NewYorkCounty_GaylordWhiteHouses_0009



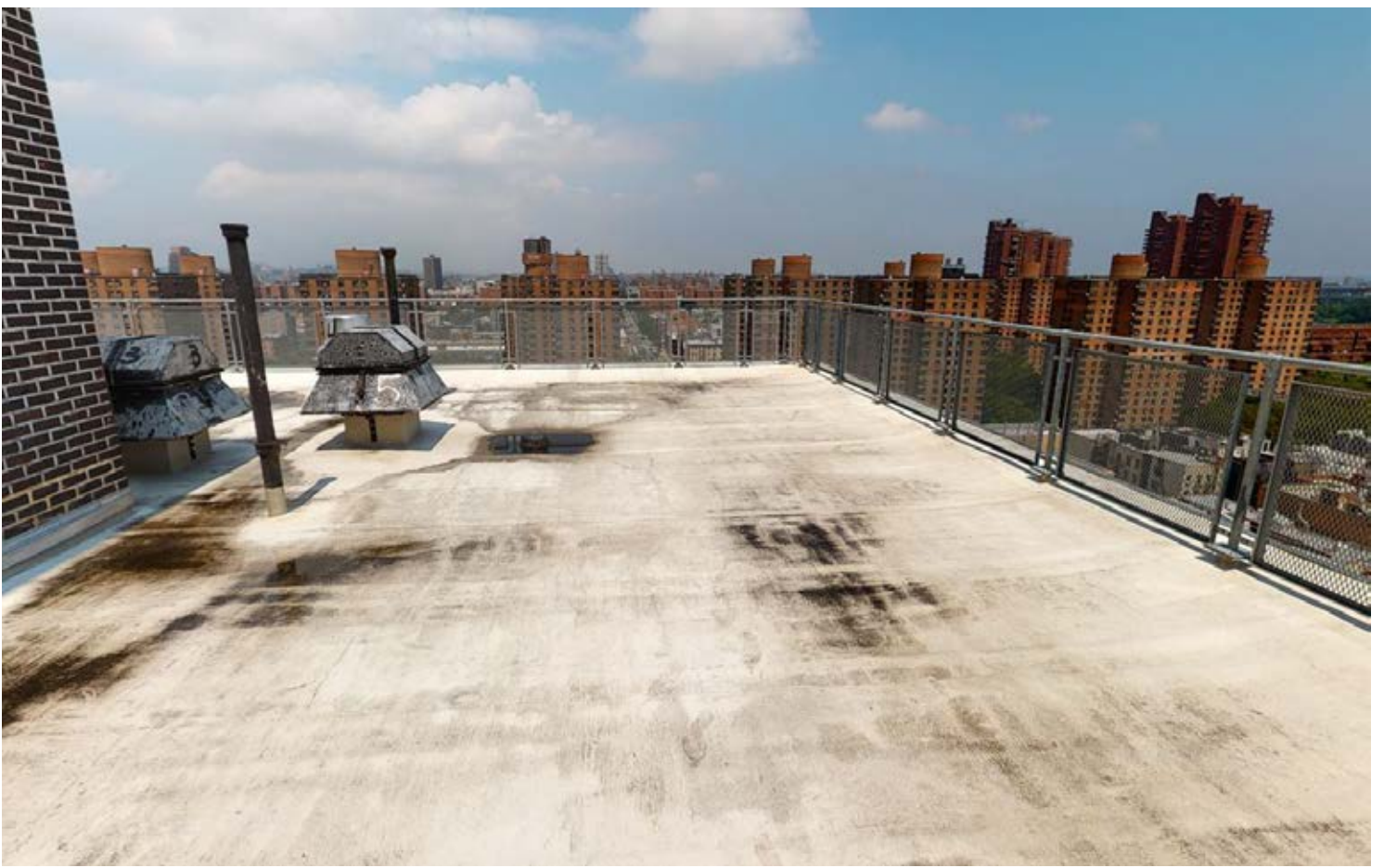
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