

# State and National Registers Program Applicant Form

**TYPE OF NOMINATION:** Historic District

**APPLICANT:** LANDMARK WEST!

**OWNER:** NYCHA  
Address  
Contact #

**PRESERVATION CONSULTANT:** LANDMARK WEST!  
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## ***NOMINATION PRIORITIES GOALS:***

- Public and not-for-profit grant projects
- Projects that will use historic preservation as a marketing tool
- Projects sponsored by community organizations
- Projects benefiting from widespread citizen participation
- Projects that foster pride in community history
- Projects that foster awareness of historic properties
- Projects that can be incorporated into local school curricula

## **Historic Resource Inventory Form**

Amsterdam Houses

Amsterdam Avenue to West End Avenue, between West 61<sup>st</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Streets  
New York, NY 10023

Amsterdam Houses was constructed by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to provide housing for low income families and returning World War II veterans. Residents were selected through a system based on income limitations, housing condition, family size and race. Completed in 1948 and designed by Grosvenor Atterbury, Harvey Wiley Corbett and Arthur Holden, all prominent architects who influenced the growth and development of New York City from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The landscape plan was designed by the noted landscape architects Gilmore D. Clarke and Michael Rapuano.

## **Statement of Significance**

The architecture, the plan, and the racial and ethnic composition of its original residents reflect the progressive thinking of key planners, architects, housing reformers and laws of

post-War New York. As the last NYCHA large-scale public housing complex that maintained New York City's street grid for pedestrians, Amsterdam Houses is significant for its open, classically-inspired axial site plan and brick work detail which co-exist easily with modernist, International style features. Unlike many of the "tower in the park" complexes, Amsterdam Houses has a neighborhood ambiance created by varied building heights, the warmth and subtle articulation of the brick color and the central landscaped axis oriented to the Hudson River.<sup>1</sup> According to a 1940 NYCHA document, the design of Amsterdam Houses was meant to isolate it from the surrounding area to "resist possible influences of blight from its surrounding neighborhood,"<sup>2</sup> a concept that was recently echoed by a long-time resident who recalled that the design prevented children from wandering away without the knowledge of their parent.<sup>3</sup>

The plan incorporates numerous benches which are placed around the complex so that adults can watch children play or to relax in the open air. Three playgrounds are designed for children of various ages, a landscaping plan which further enhances the community environment. More than 5,000 square feet of ground floor space within the complex are reserved for a nursery, a clinic and management offices.

The cultural significance of Amsterdam Houses is rooted in the fact that it is one of NYCHA's first "experiment[s] in integration"<sup>4</sup> which targeted the site of Amsterdam Houses for slum clearance areas and responded to the Public Housing Law of 1939 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed or religion in public housing. NYCHA designated apartments for returning veterans and low income African Americans, whites and other persons of color. Though Amsterdam Houses was destined to displace more people than were eventually housed on the site, the reduced density and improved living conditions provided a foundation of economic revitalization to the area.

A bond still clearly exists among former and current residents of Amsterdam Houses, as evidenced by the annual reunions of long-time residents that continue to be held on the site. A long-time resident of the Amsterdam Houses recently stated, "we were really together then [the 1950s], blacks, Jews, Italians and Latinos;" it was a "great community to be raised in."<sup>5</sup>

## **Narrative Description of Property:**

### **Setting**

Amsterdam Houses is located between West 61<sup>st</sup> Street and West 64<sup>th</sup> Street, from Amsterdam and West End Avenues in Manhattan, and is situated on almost 9.5 acres east of the Hudson River (block 1154, see attached map). The housing complex is home to more than 2,300 people and comprises 10 six-story buildings having "T" and "H" shaped footprints and 3 thirteen-story cruciform towers. The Phipps Housing project (1902) is

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<sup>1</sup> Stern, Mellins and Fishman, *New York, 1960*, p. 675

<sup>2</sup> NYCHA document, 8/14/40.

<sup>3</sup> Comment of long-time resident, September 26, 2006 at Francis Morrone lecture on Amsterdam Houses, sponsored by Landmark West!

<sup>4</sup> NYTimes article

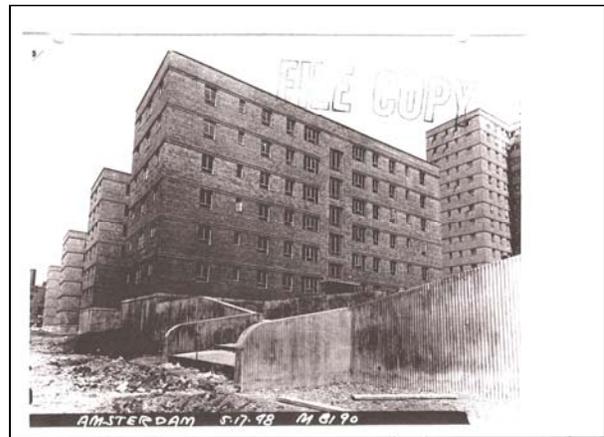
<sup>5</sup> Comment by long-time resident at the Francis Morrone lecture sponsored by Landmark West!, 9/26/06

located at the northwest section of the site and two large playgrounds are situated at the south side of the site, adjacent to a still existing factory building.

The Amsterdam Houses are load-bearing masonry structures with flat asphalt roofs; the exterior brick is articulated with horizontal bands above the windows at each floor. The original windows were steel multi-light of different sizes which were replaced with black aluminum with varying fenestration patterns. International-style influences are evident in the entryways which feature streamlined steel framing, and some of the landscape elements constructed with corrugated and reinforced concrete.



Modernist Door Entry



Corrugated Concrete Walled Stairway

## Landscaping

Landscape architects Gilmore David Clarke and Michael Rapuano were engaged to develop and execute the landscaping plan of the Amsterdam Houses project. The trees were probably brought to the site and planted in 1947 from Riker's Island prison which had inmate-run nursery. Much of the original landscaping remains, but in the 1970s an environmental design effort to prevent crime resulted in additional fences and widened paths in order to allow for better emergency vehicle access. The trees and shrubs have flourished, creating lush, shaded areas.



Amsterdam Houses and recently planted trees, April 20, 1949 (photo courtesy of NYCHA Archives)



Landscaping, September, 2006

The residential coverage of the footprints of the Amsterdam Houses complex was designed to be just over 29%, with a population density per net acre of 410 persons,<sup>6</sup> as compared to 463 persons per acre at the James Weldon Johnson site on East 112<sup>th</sup> and East 115<sup>th</sup> Streets and between Third and Park Avenues, also completed in 1949<sup>7</sup>.

## History

When NYCHA was established in 1934, it inherited the Real Property Inventory compiled through the emergency work programs of the early 1930's, which yielded detailed surveys of each block in the City. In an era of rational planning, this was a valued "first scientific measure of neighborhood decline"<sup>8</sup> which the fledgling NYCHA could then utilize as it analyzed neighborhoods to identify areas ripe for redevelopment.

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from William Vladeck, Chief Project Planning Division, 6/10/41

<sup>7</sup> Stern, p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Schwartz, p.62

One of the thirteen areas chosen was the current site of Amsterdam Houses, then called San Juan Hill. When NYCHA acquired the site in 1941 there were 95 buildings which contained 1204 apartments and housed 1121 people, many of whom were on public assistance.<sup>9</sup> The site was chosen because of the poor condition of the existing housing, constructed under the Tenement House Act of 1879, which was in “an advanced state of disrepair” lacking central heat, toilets and hot water.<sup>10</sup> Other reasons the site was chosen include the accessibility to transit, shopping and employment opportunities and because the site was the least expensive in the area that NYCHA could assemble. City officials were also concerned that “neighboring streets were the scene of frequent race riots<sup>11</sup> and they wanted to disperse the residents in order to encourage economic revitalization.

The residents of San Juan Hill were poor and about 77% were African American or Hispanic. Most of the more affluent black residents of the area had moved to Harlem around the time of the First World War, and the more well-to-do whites moved to other sections of the City and the tenements were then converted to rooming houses for the poor.<sup>12</sup>

San Juan Hill was not uniformly run-down. Tenements on West 62<sup>nd</sup> and West 63<sup>rd</sup> streets, between Amsterdam and West End Avenues (and acquired by NYCHA in 1941 for Amsterdam Houses) had been owned and developed by City and Suburban Homes Company in 1902 to be the “first model tenement building designed solely for negro occupancy erected in the City of New York<sup>13</sup> This project was funded by the sisters Carolyn Phelps Stokes and Olivia Egleston Phelps Stokes who were housing reformers and philanthropists particularly interested in the “erection and improvement of tenement house dwellings in New York City and for education purposes of negroes.<sup>14</sup> At the time, City and Suburban sold the property to NYCHA in 1941, City and Suburban wrote that the housing was well-maintained and profitable, and that 172 of the 174 apartments were occupied when NYCHA bought them. Demolition occurred in 1946 to make way for the Amsterdam Houses.

Just to the north of the Amsterdam Houses site is the Phipps Houses which “went beyond the minimum requirements established by law and were welcomed by the colored race as the first constructive step in the City of New York for provision of living accommodations equal to those provided for the white race.”<sup>15</sup>

In the 1940s, *public* housing in New York City was the only housing in the State that was subject to antidiscrimination laws, as opposed to *private* housing that permitted and even encouraged discrimination.<sup>16</sup> “Redevelopment,” or slum clearance, was generally supported by community activists as the new public housing was to provide more modern facilities than was previously available to the poor<sup>17</sup>. It was not until later that public

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<sup>9</sup> NYCHA summary document, 10/6/41.

<sup>10</sup> NYCHA document 54D5f2, 8/14/40.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Stern, 1960, p. 675

<sup>13</sup> News item released August 14, 1941 by John A. Cahill, President City and Suburban Homes Company.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Bodi, “To Stand and Fight,” p. 115.

<sup>17</sup> Schwartz, Joel, *The New York Approach*, p. 64.

housing was perceived as a form of social engineering through site selections which created or reinforced patterns of housing segregation.

### **Original Funding and Eligibility**

Amsterdam Houses project was financed by a \$7.7 million loan contract with the State Division of Housing through a subsidy agreement with New York City.<sup>18</sup> This loan was enabled by a 1939 State Public Housing Law, the country's first state-subsidized public housing program and which barred discrimination in selecting public housing tenants based on race, color, creed or religion.. Preference was to be given to former site tenants and to returning veterans.<sup>19</sup>

Family size was limited to six; apartment sizes accommodated from two to six persons, with the majority of apartments having four rooms, in accordance with the Public Housing Law.<sup>20</sup> In 1949, the monthly rent ranged from \$32.00 for a three-room apartment, to \$67.00 for a six-room apartment, depending on family income. Rents were determined according to income, and non-veterans had to pay a higher proportion of their income than did veterans. As of December 31, 1948, 1090 persons had moved in; 69% were white, 23% were black and 8% were classified as "other."

According to a 1941 New York Times article decrying the high cost of Amsterdam Houses, NYCHA's cost per family was \$6,995. This figure included land and construction costs and was felt to be excessive since it was purportedly 61% higher than the Queensbridge Project, also built around that time.<sup>21</sup>

### **Architects**

Amsterdam Houses was designed by Grosvenor Atterbury (1869-1956), Arthur Cort Holden (1890-1993) and Harvey Wiley Corbett (1873-1954), all well-known and highly respected architects of the day who explored housing plans prototypes and city planning models throughout their careers. All three architects lived over the age of 80 (Holden was 103 when he died) and their impact on the urban built environment was considerable from the late 19<sup>th</sup> through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Grosvenor Atterbury**

Atterbury, mostly known for his homes for affluent, also designed model tenements, residential and institutional buildings, including First Phipps Model Tenement (1909), the Rogers Model Dwellings on West 44<sup>th</sup> Street (1915), Forest Hills Gardens (1909-22) with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. for the Russell Sage Foundation, The Russell Sage Foundation Building (1912-13, designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 20, 2000), and Sage House Apartments (1930-31). Well-known projects institutional projects were the Blue Room in City Hall (1915,) American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (completed in 1936).

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<sup>18</sup> Contract between State of New York, City of New York and New York Housing Authority, relating to Amsterdam Houses, 3/26/41.

<sup>19</sup> Memo from W.P. Seaver, Chairman, Priorities Appeal Committee of Federal Public Housing Authority to John A. Kervick, Director, Region II, dated 4/18/47.

<sup>20</sup> Section 156, Subdivisions 3 and 4 of the Public Housing Law.

<sup>21</sup> *Housing Comes High*, NYTimes, 4/14/41.

Out of town projects included the Indian Hill Community in Worcester, Massachusetts (1916) and a community at Erwin, Tennessee, begun in 1921. Atterbury was also the Chairman of the NYC Chapter of the American Institute of Architects Committee of Design and Development and prolific author.<sup>22</sup>

Lewis Mumford considered Atterbury to be “fully alive to the social responsibilities- and the economic conditioning- of architecture,”<sup>23</sup> while Christopher Gray credited Atterbury with being “a society figure with a social conscience.”<sup>24</sup> Involved in planning and architecture in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Atterbury was intimately involved in analyzing the plans of tenement buildings to make the best use of space and to open apartments for the poor to light and air.

Throughout his long career, Atterbury was a pioneer who gave much thought to the funding, the design and the construction techniques of low cost housing. In 1906, he designed the philanthropically-funded Phipps Houses, in which he proffered a variation of the then-accepted Flagg prototype for model tenement housing. Flagg’s prototype combined several lots to create a tenement organized around a courtyard, but Atterbury’s variation reduced the number of stairs and removed from the internal courtyards to maximize light and air. Despite the fact that philanthropists underwrote other Atterbury-designed projects, he believed that both state subsidy and private philanthropy “will prove but a well-intentioned gesture and only delay the economic solution of the problem.”<sup>25</sup> In other words, Atterbury advocated utilizing technological and design advances to significantly reduce the cost of housing production for the poor.

Though classically trained, Atterbury was eager to incorporate new designs and construction techniques to reduce costs and to develop more functional and pleasing designs. In 1931, he submitted a plan to the State Housing Commission to found the Research Institute of Economic Housing that would “stimulate, coordinate, concentrate and direct the national will and effort toward a scientific solution” to standardize the wholesale production of housing and construction materials to cut building costs.<sup>26</sup> Atterbury also endorsed revising funding formulas so that subsidies would be given on a sliding scale according to the construction cost per room. At approximately the same time that he was designing and overseeing the construction of Amsterdam Houses he was hired by the War Production Board to develop new lower cost housing production methods.

Atterbury brought to the Amsterdam Houses architectural team a perspective steeped in history and tradition, and he was a progressive thinker always seeking to challenge accepted norms in the interest of developing new, pragmatic models of low-cost public housing.

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<sup>22</sup> Stern, 1960, p. 68

<sup>23</sup> Mumford, Lewis, *Roots of Contemporary Architecture*, as quoted in Plunz, p. 219

<sup>24</sup> Christopher Gray, NYT 4/23/06

<sup>25</sup> Atterbury, Grosvenor, “Model Towns in America,” *Scribner's Magazine* 52 (July 1912):20-35.

<sup>26</sup> “Mass Production of Housing Urged” in *New York Times*, Feb 13, 1931, p. 19.

## **Arthur Holden**

An architect and planner with a degree in economics, Arthur Cort Holden worked at the office of McKim, Mead and White from 1915-1920 and worked in various partnerships until 1977.<sup>27</sup> Holden worked on the Williamsburg Houses under Richmond Shreve (completed 1938 and landmarked by the NYC Landmark Preservation Commission in 2003) and was also associated with Frank Lloyd Wright during the construction of the Guggenheim Museum in New York (1959). He modestly stated that Wright chose him to work with because “Wright needed an architect registered in NY.”<sup>28</sup> Other projects include: Madison Square Boys Club (1924), Sussex Garden Apartments (Rye, New York, 1942), and Queensborough Community College (1968).

A planner and architect who was actively engaged in the pursuit of transforming the urban built environment of New York City, Holden devoted his career to “architecture in the service of the ordinary man.”<sup>29</sup> His planning ideas were progressive if not somewhat radical – he believed that blighted neighborhoods like the Lower East Side could be saved if “property owners could shape a future all their own” without eminent domain and he urged property owners to “pool property” to form “equity trusts” that would exchange ownership in property for proportional stock in the trust’s title to all.<sup>30</sup> As Chair of the NYC chapter of the AIA Committee on Housing, Holden was a vocal critic of NYCHA and he accused it of “eliminating such ‘seeming luxuries’ as closet doors, toilet seat covers, adequate electrical outlets and soundproofing in order to make tenants ‘slightly uncomfortable’ so that they [the low-income residents] would be spurred on to improve their lot and seek market-rate housing.”<sup>31</sup>

## **Harvey Wiley Corbett**

The work of Harvey Wiley Corbett is still prominent in New York City today. Corbett’s firm Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray was part of a team that designed Rockefeller Center under the name of Rockefeller Center Associated Architects with Hood & Foulhoux, Reinhard & Hofmeister. His other work includes the Bush Terminal Sales Building (1916-18), the Metropolitan Life North Building (1933), the NYC Criminal Courts Building (known as “The Tombs,” 1939), the Master Apartments at Riverside Drive and West 103 Street (1929), the National Title Guaranty Building (1929), Pennsylvania Power & Light (1928) and One Fifth Avenue (1929).

Like both Holden and Atterbury, Corbett was interested in rethinking the urban landscape. He was an early and ardent advocate of building skyscrapers, and he was

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<sup>27</sup> Holden held a variety of positions, including membership on New York City Mayor’s Committee on City Planning (1934-1938) and the Coordinating Committee of the Welfare Council, chairman of the Executive Committee of the New York Urban League, chairman of the Committee on Housing of the NY Chapter of the AIA and Director of the Building Congress’s Land Utilization Committee.

<sup>28</sup> Smithsonian Archives on American Art, Interview with Arthur Holden  
Conducted by Paul Cummings, January 20, 1971.

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/holden71.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Stein, Jannon, *Arthur Cort Holden Papers* Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 2000.

<sup>30</sup> Schwartz, p. 62

<sup>31</sup> Schwartz, p. 68

prescient in his concern that vehicular traffic would overwhelm the pedestrian. He was a visionary who wanted to separate automobile and pedestrian circulation and advocated creating a “terraced city” resembling “a modernized Venice, a city of arcades, piazzas and bridges, with canals for streets, only the canals will not be filled with water but with freely flowing motor traffic.”<sup>32</sup> Whether due to Corbett’s influence or to the vision of others on the Amsterdam Houses architectural team, this “terraced city” effect is evident at Amsterdam Houses- intended to be an isolated oasis safe from the incursion of the rest of the rough-and-tumble San Juan Hill neighborhood.

Christopher Gray notes that at One Fifth Avenue Corbett used shaded brick of vertical bands of brick that cast shadows against the building façade. At Amsterdam Houses, this architectural device is turned on its side- with horizontal banding providing interest while still being inexpensive to execute.<sup>33</sup>

### **Gilmore David Clarke, Landscape Architect**

Landscaping at Amsterdam Houses was designed by the firm of Clarke and Rapuano. Clarke is best known for his design of the Unisphere and surrounding pool and fountains constructed in 1963-64 at the World’s Fair and his work at the 1939-40 World’s Fair (designated by the NYC Landmark Preservation Commission in 1995). Among his other well known work is the Saw Mill and the Bronx River Parkways and Rye Playland; late in his career, he also consulted for the Natural History Museum.

In 1934, Clarke was hired by Robert Moses as the Consulting Landscape Architect to the New York City Park Department; Moses undoubtedly recruited Clarke to work on the Amsterdam Houses project since Moses was particularly concerned that Amsterdam Houses include ample playgrounds and open space.<sup>34</sup>

Clarke’s work reflects is a Beaux-Arts influence, and he is adept at incorporating the classical with modernist forms. The plan at Amsterdam Houses feature paths terminating at playgrounds, ample trees and shrubbery and benches, which combine to create an inviting environment.

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<sup>32</sup> Rasberger, James, ”Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda” in *New York Times*, August 1, 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Gray, Christopher, “One Fifth Avenue; A Good Joke Not Well Retold” in *New York Times*, October 4, 1992.

<sup>34</sup> “Housing Plans are Held Up by Estimate Board” in *New York Times*,  
And correspondence between Mayor LaGuardia and Gerard Swope, Chair, New York City Housing Authority, June 10, and June 23, 1941.

## Summary

The Amsterdam Houses provides us with a perspective of how mid-20<sup>th</sup> century architects, housing reformers, politicians and planners grappled with such issues as housing design and construction costs, civil rights, integration, immigration and economic revitalization. Aesthetically, the complex represents a merging of the classic architectural planning and the modernist public housing “Tower in the Park” prototype. The interior plan which maintained the street grid for pedestrians, the benches, landscaping and playgrounds worked together to create a comfortable, neighborhood feel, while the building orientation and plan accessed from Amsterdam and West End Avenues was meant to envelope residents to protect them from outside influences instead of isolating them to keep them away from the surrounding neighborhood. Despite significant development which surrounds it, Amsterdam Houses retains its sense of community and neighborhood. State designation would serve to mark this building typology and foster a sense of neighborhood pride.

### Supplement to Amsterdam Houses Application to New York State

Planned before World War II, but completed afterwards, Amsterdam Houses exemplifies a pivotal moment in the collision of two competing visions of urban planning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rooted in the New Deal acceptance of government responsibility for housing the poor, but profoundly influenced by the post-War need to house returning veterans, the target population that Amsterdam Houses was intended to serve shifted *from* the poor blacks and immigrants who had lived on San Juan Hill *to* the returning more middle-class veterans. Thus, Amsterdam Houses personifies the last gasp of the New Deal vision of social responsibility before the era of Urban Renewal was ushered in by the 1949 US Housing Act. This Act focused on upgrading the urban built environment and encouraged the provision of middle class housing to stem the tide of suburban migration and the revitalize the economic base of New York City.

#### Resident Ethnic and Racial Diversity

Amsterdam Houses was unique from the start for its ethnic diversity. It provided modern and affordable shelter to over 1,000, of whom all but 22 were veterans.

#### Design

Today, it stands as one of the last publicly funded housing developments in New York City to align with the city grid, making the complex feel more of a piece with the neighborhood, in stark contrast to later public housing urban renewal large-scale schemes that relied on larger-scale super blocks and “tower in the park” structures.

Amsterdam Houses was one of NYCHA's last projects built with the primary intention of improving the quality of affordable housing that would serve as a model for other public housing, as opposed to providing middle class housing in areas determine to be underutilized economically and relocating the poor to selected areas away from the middle and upper classes. Quite literally, Amsterdam Houses reflects a transition in the public housing typology of New York City, *from* the low-rise model housing of First Houses in which a strategy of rehabilitating every third house of existing houses was employed *to* a strategy of demolition of low-quality housing to build modern housing. Unlike later public housing projects, the design of Amsterdam Houses followed the City grid and reflected a mix of six-story and thirteen-story buildings.

As a result of the Urban Renewal Housing Act passed by Congress in 1949, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) shifted its focus from creating "model" housing, to creating housing for residents displaced from other neighborhoods by urban renewal.

According to Anthony Jackson, as the economy strengthened in booming post-war New York, many low income workers were elevated to the middle class moved to the suburbs as they availed themselves of federally-sponsored loans. Minorities and the entrenched poor remained in New York City and constituted a significant portion of the residents of public housing. This trend was reinforced by the Housing Act of 1949 which set the maximum rent in public housing to be at least 20 percent below its marketplace equivalent, forcing higher-income tenants to leave when this higher-rental capacity was reached.<sup>35</sup>

#### Legal Context of Amsterdam Houses

The Amsterdam Houses were originally funded under a series of NY State laws. In September 1938, NYS became the first state in the country to incorporate an article on housing in its constitution. Article XVIII specifies how State and Local communities might set up publicly financed low-rent housing, with the State legislature empowered to provide funding. With the amendment passed, the relevant state law – chapter 44-A -- was enacted by the New York State legislature in June 1939.

New York City received two-thirds of the allotment of State loans in the first four years of the passing of the State housing law, some of which went to purchase the Amsterdam Housing site. During the war years, shortages kept the Amsterdam Houses and other projects from moving forward, but New York State prepared architectural plans to avoid future delays.

Post-war inflation in housing constructions costs necessitated additional funding from New York State, and a succession of laws (Laws of 1947, Chapter 618; laws of 1949, Chapter 27) were enacted by the NYS legislature and approved by referendum to increase housing loans from the original \$300 million to 735 million in 1949.

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<sup>35</sup> Jackson, Anthony, A Place Called Home: A History of Low-Cost Housing in Manhattan, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA. 1976.

To expedite the construction of permanent housing, the authority undertook to rehabilitate boarded up slum buildings to house site residents displaced by the construction. NYCHA persuaded the State Division of Housing to approve funds for the rehabilitation of such buildings and on August 14, 1946, New York State provided \$35,000,000 for rehabilitation projects. Of that sum, \$669,497 went to rehabilitate housing for 340 residents from the Amsterdam Houses site in seven old law tenements and 112 “modern dwellings” at a cost per unit of \$5978.

Although the Amsterdam Houses received no funds from Federal or State monies that were earmarked specifically for veterans, Federal and State Governments did pass legislation providing for veterans preference in public housing that applied to the Amsterdam Houses.

Public Law 171, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, First Session, Sec 302 (a), amended the Public Housing Act of 1937 and gave veterans preference over all others except eligible site occupants. The Consolidated Laws of New York, Chapter 44-A, Article VIII, Section 156 limited non-veterans to a 6 to 1 rent-income ratio but permitted veterans a more generous 8 to 1 ratio – making more veterans eligible for PH. Together, these laws had a significant impact on the Amsterdam Houses.

NYCHA Housing Built from 1937 to 1949

	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Number Units</b>
Williamsburg	4/10/38	1630
Harlem River	10/1/37	577
Red Hook	11/20/39	2545
Queensbridge	3/15/40	3149
Vladeck	11/25/40	1531
Kingsborough	10/31/41	1166
South Jamaica	8/1/40	448
East River	5/20/41	1170
Clason Point	12/20/41	400
Edwin Markham	6/30/43	360
Jacob Riis	1/17/49	1190
	<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>14166</b>

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18. Smithsonian Archives on American Art, Interview with Arthur Holden Conducted by Paul Cummings, January 20, 1971.  
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