

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Parkway Village

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number bounded by Union Turnpike on the north, 150th Street on the east, Goethals Avenue on the north, Parsons Boulevard on the east, Grand Central Parkway on the south, and Main Street on the west
☐ not for publication

city or town Queens ☐ vicinity

state New York code NY county Queens code 081 zip code 11435

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth A. Perant
Signature of certifying official/Title

DSHPO

12/29/11
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ see continuation sheet
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ see continuation sheet
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

Parkway Village

Queens County, New York

Name of Property

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	
109	1	buildings
1		sites
5		structures
0		objects
115	1	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Multiple Dwellings

EDUCATION/ School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Multiple Dwellings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Clay Tile

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Parkway Village
Name of Property
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Narrative Description of Property

Introduction

Parkway Village is a residential development in the Borough of Queens, New York City. It occupies an irregularly-shaped area of 35 acres bounded by Union Turnpike on the north, 150th Street on the east, Goethals Avenue on the north, Parsons Boulevard on the east, Grand Central Parkway on the south, and Main Street on the west. It takes its name from Grand Central Parkway.

The complex is adjacent to a number of Queens neighborhoods, including Briarwood and Jamaica, Jamaica Hills, and Kew Gardens Hills. The complex originally was said to be in Jamaica, but today is generally said to fall within the neighborhood of Kew Gardens Hills.

Parkway Village was built 1946-47 to provide housing for the international staff of the newly formed United Nations. It was designed by Leonard Schultze & Associates, who had great experience designing such planned residential communities; other similar complexes he designed include ParkFairfax in Fairfax, Virginia (listed on the National Register). The landscape design was designed by landscape architect Clarence C. Combs.

The contributing elements in the complex are the plan itself, the buildings, and the set of five pairs of entrance gateposts.

The Plan

Within the complex are two internal roads: Charter Road, which runs from Main Street to 150th Street, and Village Road, which runs from Main Street to Parsons Boulevard. They are connected by a short thoroughfare, Little Village Road.

There are three main entrances to the complex. At Main Street, Charter Road and Village Road come together on either side of the Green, then flow into a semi-circular drive with two legs leading out to Main Street. At Parsons Boulevard, Village Road splits into two short branches around a triangular area. The entrance at the less prominent intersection of Charter Road and 150th Street has just one entryway.

Two large green areas also distinguish the plan: a long, narrow triangular area called The Village Green (which now includes a Roy Wilkins Memorial Garden, in honor of a famous resident), just inside the entrance from Main Street, and The Circle, a small way in from the entrance from Parsons Boulevard. The rest of the complex's open land is organized as a series of small green courts and generous landscaping. The resulting land is divided into a variety of groupings of multiple residence buildings. Of the total land area, only 16% is occupied by buildings.

The buildings (see below under Building Types) fall into distinct groupings or types, arranged in alternating patterns throughout the complex. Many of the buildings are grouped around three- or four-sided courtyards. Along Grand Central Parkway, from Main Street to Parsons Boulevard, buildings are arranged as follows: F-C-F-A-G-A-F-C-F-C-F-C, before bumping up against the grouping around The Circle. Here there are six H types, three on the north side of the circle and Village Road, and three on the south side. Behind each of the two

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groups of H types, two pairs of K types stretch away from the Circle. Flanking the triangular area at the entrance from Parsons Boulevard are two G types.

Symmetry of layout is not absolute. The property itself is irregularly shaped, and the asymmetrical groupings - even with symmetrical groupings tucked within larger asymmetrical areas, creates a sense of free-flowing design.

The Buildings: Overview

There are 109 buildings, which together contains 685 predominantly residential units, plus one building which includes a heating plant, community office and meeting rooms. All the buildings are multiple-dwelling units. Approximately half the buildings are two-stories tall, while the other half appear to be two-stories tall on the front, but also have a one-story "basement" apartment which, thanks to the slope of the land from the front to the rear, is also at ground level.

The buildings are framed in concrete blocks and faced in red brick with white neo-Georgian trim, generally in wood, sometimes in metal. Some of the neo-Georgian trim has been altered or covered in various types of siding, but the overall visual effect remains largely unchanged. Windows are simple rectangular openings with non-historic double-hung sash, some of which maintain a portion of their original configuration. Roofs are finished in clay tiles.

The neo-Georgian ornament generally suggests 18th-century colonial prototypes - projecting porches with triangular or segmental-arched pediments, double-height porticos, aedicular entranceways. The large porticos bear a striking resemblance to 18th-century buildings in, for instance, Charlottesville, Virginia. The buildings exist in 18 types, which are actually 9 types - each of the 9 types a building of a certain shape, but all but one having alternate versions that differ primarily in the ornamental details around the entranceways of the main facade.

In general, the side and rear facades of the buildings - all of which are visible from various parts of the development - are much simpler, with one or two small entrances with neo-Georgian ornament on the sides, and little or no ornament on the rear.

The interiors are relatively simple, whether in the smaller one-story basement apartments or the larger two-story apartments in the upper floors. Unusual features include concrete ceilings in a honey-combed or coffered pattern in the basement and first stories, but not in the upper stories in buildings with pitched roofs. Floors are of precast concrete slabs, over which have been laid solid oak parquet floors. Ornamental detailing is minimal. Staircases have simple balustraded staircases.

Some buildings have entrances through which one enters directly into an apartment on the same level; others require short staircases to reach the main floor. All apartments have private entrances.

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All the buildings in the complex are identified in a variety of ways. Each building has an actual street address. Each building also has a number. And each building is identified as a particular building type.

The Building Types

The original plan for the complex identified 18 different building types, which break down into 9 building shapes with variants in their architectural detailing, especially in the arrangement of porticos.

Type A exists in two versions: A-1 and A-2. Both are two-story buildings with long center sections and a projecting two-story pavilion at either end. The central entrance of A-2 consists of a two-story temple front, comprised of two double-height columns supporting a triangular pediment, enclosing two separate aedicular entryways. A-1, by contrast, while similar in shape, has a projecting double-height portico supported on four columns projecting out as a porch, with two aedicular entry ways on the wall behind it.

Type B exists in two versions: B-3 and B-4. Each is a long rectangular two-story building, with a pitched roof, and each has four entryways on the front facade, a pair in the center and one at either end. On B-4, the entryways at either end of the facade are aedicular, a pair of columns supporting a simple entablature, while the two in the center are topped with segmental-arches pediments. On B-3, by contrast, the entryways at either end are topped by the segmental-arched pediments, while the pair of entrances in the center is marked by a projecting porch supported on four columns.

Type C exists as C-5 and C-6: These are somewhat similar to Type A, two-story buildings with a two-story projecting pavilion at either end. C-5, however, has a long projecting one-story-tall porch with a sloping roof, supported on paired columns, extending the entire length of the central portion between the pavilions, while C-6 instead has a central projecting two-story-tall porch supported on four two-story tall columns.

Type D exists only as D-7 (and only one such building currently exists). It is a relatively short plain rectangular building with a pitched roof. It has two entranceways on the front facade framed by a projecting one-story porch on four Ionic columns.

Type E exists only as E-8. In the case of buildings #32 and 33, they face each other across a central green. Each is a long rectangular building with three entrances: a central one-story aedicular entrance topped by a segmental-arched pediment, set within double-height piers supporting a triangular pediment rising above the roofline; and at either end a simple entrance set beneath a projecting porch supported on pairs of columns matched by single piers at the wall.

Type F exists as F-11 and F-12: These close the vistas of long green areas flanked by other building type. Each one has a pair of entryways at the center fronted by a double-height portico. The entryways in F-11 are aedicular topped by segmental-arched pediments, while those in F-12 have no arched pediments; the portico on F-11 rises to a flat top, while the portico on F-12 supports a large triangular pediment.

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Type G exists as G-13, G-14 and G-15: Each is a long building with projecting pavilions and a pitched roof. The entryways on the pavilions are similar on G-13, G-14 and G-15 - a simple, one-story projecting porch. The central entryways on the main portion, however, differ: on G-13, a projecting one-story portico with four columns; G-14, a one-story portico on slender columns supporting a sloping roof suggestive of a mansard; on G-15, a one-story porch on two Ionic columns, with a segmental-arched pediment.

Type H exists as H-16, H-17 and H-18. H-16, H-17 and H-18 all have a two-story central section flanked by one-story projecting pavilions. Their central entryways are treated differently: H-16 has a recessed entrance with two doorways, fronted by a tall one-story porch supported on columns fronted by very thin, ornamental wood piers in a filigreed or jig-saw pattern, supporting a curving roof. H-17 also has a recessed entrance with two doorways, but that entrance is set in an aedicular frame supporting a triangular pediment, and fronted by a two-story curving portico supported by double-height columns. H-18 has similar recessed double doors, but these are set within an aedicular frame supporting an elaborate broken pediment, almost Baroque in flavor.

Type K exists as K-9 and K-10. Each is a long rectangular building with a pitched roof. K-10 has recessed entrances each apparently with four doorways (one is a dummy), set within an aedicular frame supporting a triangular pediment. The similar recessed entrances on K-9 by contrast are fronted by slightly projecting porches supporting a segmental-arched pediment.

Power Station: There is one building that is not a residential unit and is unlike any of the other building types: the former power station. This is a two-and-a-half-story-tall structure, approached by a short flight of concrete stairs. Also neo-Georgian in style, the station is faced in red brick with minimal trim, and includes a large triangular pediment with a central oculus at the top.

The different building types appear with different frequencies. Many have four or five examples, but B-3 has ten while B-4 has only two. There were originally only two examples of D-7, and one has been demolished. There are only two examples of E-8, and they are placed facing each other across a court. By far the most numerous are the "K" types: 18 K-9 and 17 K-10.

The Entrance Gateposts

There are five pairs of entrance gateposts marking the three major entrances to the complex. There are two pairs of gateposts at Charter Road and Main Street, another two pairs at Parsons Boulevard and 182nd, and a single pair at Charter Road and 150th Street.

The double pairs at Main Street and Parsons Boulevard mark entrances to the complex from those two major thoroughfares - at Main Street, where Charter Road and Village Road come together into a semi-circular drive leading to either pair of gateposts, and at Parsons Boulevard, where Village Road splits into two short branches leading to either pair of gateposts. The entrance at the less prominent intersection of Charter Road and 150th Street has just the single pair of gateposts flanking Charter Road.

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Each of the ten gateposts is a simple brick post, square in plan, rising approximately six feet, and each is topped with a simple concrete sphere balancing on a simple concrete base. Plaques inscribed with the name "Parkway Village" have been added to three of the gateposts, one at each entrance.

Other Features within the Plan

Original wooden signage identifying different sections of the complex still stand on the grounds, along with a number of lampposts.

Losses to the Plan

Two parcels of land at the edge of Parkway Village were sold off by the co-op's sponsor at the time of the complex's co-op conversion. A set of garages along Union Turnpike were demolished and replaced with attached two-story apartment buildings serving as residences for St. John's University. Another parcel at Parsons Boulevard and Goethals Avenue, formerly occupied by tennis courts and one residential building, was also sold; courts and building were demolished and replaced with new development.

Around 1960, a portion of ground separating the complex's buildings from a narrow road along the west-bound lanes of Grand Central Parkway, running from Parsons Boulevard to Main Street, was taken by the city to widen the narrow road into a service road to the Parkway, in anticipation of increased traffic to the World's Fair of 1964.

Building list

BUILDING LIST BY TYPE

A-1

- Building 1 - Main Street, 80-15
- Building 34 - Charter Road, 147-36
- Building 74 - Grand Central Parkway, 144-39
- Building 79 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-09
- Building 108 - Grand Central Parkway, 150-47

A-2

- Building 30 - Charter Road, 147-14
- Building 40 - Charter Road, 147-60
- Building 63 - Village Road, 144-12
- Building 103 - Grand Central Parkway, 150-25

B-3

- Building 4 - Charter Road, 144-23
- Building 6 - Charter Road, 144-25
- Building 17 - Charter Road, 147-23
- Building 22 - Charter Road, 147-47
- Building 36 - Charter Road, 147-48

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Building 38 - Charter Road, 147-43
Building 54 - Village Road, 150-45 and 150-57
Building 60 - Village Road, 150-81
Building 64 - Main Street, 81-21 (first building inspected by UN Secretary General Trigrvie Lie in 1947)

B-4

Building 25 - 150 Street, 80-14 (home of United States International School 1950-1983)
Building 27 - Charter Road, 144-62

C-5

Building 7 - Union Turnpike, 144-38
Building 19 - Union Turnpike, 149-08
Building 45 - Goethals Avenue, 150-14
Building 56 - Goethals Avenue, 150-66
Building 89 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-53

C-6

Building 24 - Union Turnpike, 149-32
Building 50 - Goethals Avenue, 150-40
Building 69 - Grand Central Parkway, 144-23
Building 84 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-29
Building 94 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-75

D-7

[Building 61 - Parsons Boulevard, 82-34 - demolished 1985]
Building 110 - Parsons Blvd, 82-86 (site of International Nursery School)

E-8

Building 32 - Charter Road, 147-24
Building 33 - Charter Road, 147-28

F-11

Building 21 - Union Turnpike, 149-12 and 149-20 aka Charter Road, 147-49
Building 52 - Goethals Avenue, 150-58 aka Village Road, 150-45
Building 67 - Grand Central Parkway, 144-11
Building 87 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-35 and 147-45

F-12

Building 9 - Union Turnpike, 144-44 and 144-48
Building 16 - Union Turnpike, 147-48 and 147-54 aka Charter Road, 147-25
Building 72 - Grand Central Parkway, 144-29 and 144-33

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Building 82 - Grand Central Parkway, 149-15 and 149-25
Building 92 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-61 and 147-65
Building 106 - Grand Central Parkway, 150-29 and 150-39

G-13

Building 8 - Charter Road, 144-35
Building 20 - Charter Road, 147-37
Building 29 - Village Road, 147-01
Building 35 - Village Road, 147-35
Building 46 - Village Road, 150-15
Building 107 - Village Road, 150-90

G-14

Building 13 - Charter Road, 144-67
Building 42 - Village Road, 147-57
Building 62 - Village Road, 150-95
Building 68 - Village Road, 144-34 (Ralph Bunche residence)
Building 76 - Village Road, 144-70
Building 83 - Village Road, 147-34
Building 93 - Village Road, 150-14

G-15

Building 3 - Charter Road, 144-15
Building 14 - Union Turnpike, 144-07
Building 26 - Charter Road, 147-57
Building 31 - Village Road, 147-15 (Roy Wilkins residence)
Building 57 - Village Road, 150-67
Building 88 - Village Road, 147-54
Building 102 - Village Road, 150-62
Building 109 - Parsons Boulevard, 82-74

H-16

Building 49 - Village Road, 150-31
Building 55 - Village Road, 150-51
Building 75 - Village Road, 144-66

H-17

Building 51 - Village Road, 150-41
Building 98 - Village Road, 150-38

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H-18

Building 2 - Union Turnpike, 144-14
Building 77 - Village Road, 144-76
Building 95 - Village Road, 150-30
Building 99 - Village Road, 150-46

K-9

Building 10 - Charter Road, 144-45
Building 11 - Charter Road, 144-49
Building 15 - Charter Road, 147-17
Building 23 - Charter Road, 147-51
Building 39 - Village Road, 147-47
Building 47 - Goethals Avenue, 150-35
Building 48 - Goethals Avenue, 150-37
Building 53 - Village Road, 150-43
Building 59 - Village Road, 150-79
Building 65 - Village Road, 144-20 (used as public school annex 1950s- 1970s)
Building 66 - Village Road, 144-24
Building 73 - Village Road, 144-58
Building 80 - Village Road, 147-20
Building 81 - Village Road, 149-24
Building 90 - Village Road, 147-64
Building 91 - Village Road, 147-68
Building 100 - Grand Central Parkway, 150-11
Building 101 - Grand Central Parkway, 150-17

K-10

Building 5 - Charter Road, 144-21
Building 12 - Charter Road, 144-57
Building 18 - Charter Road, 144-27
Building 28 - Village Road, 144-61
Building 37 - Charter Road, 144-52
Building 43 - Goethals Avenue, 150-02
Building 44 - Goethals Avenue, 150-06
Building 58 - Village Road, 150-77
Building 70 - Village Road, 144-42
Building 71 - Village Road, 144-46
Building 78 - Village Road, 144-14
Building 85 - Village Road, 147-42
Building 86 - Village Road, 147-46

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Building 96 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-85
Building 97 - Grand Central Parkway, 147-87
Building 104 - Village Road, 150-70
Building 105 - Village Road, 150-74

POWERSTATION

Building 41 - 150 Street, 81-26 (steam heating plant, offices and community meeting rooms - UN Women's Guild still holds bimonthly meetings here)

BUILDING LIST BY ADDRESS

150 Street

150 Street, 80-14 - Building 25- B-4 (home of United States International School 1950-1983)
150 Street, 81-26 - Building 41 - power station (steam heating plant, offices and community meeting rooms - UN Women's Guild still holds bimonthly meetings here)

Charter Road

Charter Road, 144-15 - Building 3 - G-15
Charter Road, 144-21 - Building 5 - K-10
Charter Road, 144-23 - Building 4 - B-3
Charter Road, 144-25 - Building 6 - B-3
Charter Road, 144-27 - Building 18 - K-10
Charter Road, 144-35 - Building 8 - G-13
Charter Road, 144-45 - Building 10 - K-9
Charter Road, 144-49 - Building 11 - K-9
Charter Road, 144-52 - Building 37 - K-10
Charter Road, 144-57 - Building 12 - K-10
Charter Road, 144-62 - Building 27 - B-4
Charter Road, 144-67 - Building 13 - G-14
Charter Road, 147-14 - Building 30 - A-2
Charter Road, 147-17 - Building 15 - K-9
Charter Road, 147-23 - Building 17 - B-3
Charter Road, 147-24 - Building 32 - E-8
Charter Road, 147-25 - Building 16 - see Union Turnpike, 147-48 and 147-54
Charter Road, 147-28 - Building 33 - E-8
Charter Road, 147-36 - Building 34 - A-1
Charter Road, 147-37 - Building 20 - G-13
Charter Road, 147-43 - Building 38 - B-3
Charter Road, 147-47 - Building 22 - B-3
Charter Road, 147-48 - Building 36 - B-3
Charter Road, 147-49 - Building 21 see Union Turnpike, 149-12 and 149-20 - F-11
Charter Road, 147-51 - Building 23 - K-9

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Charter Road, 147-57 - Building 26 - G-15
Charter Road, 147-60 - Building 40 - A-2

Goethals Avenue

Goethals Avenue, 150-02 - Building 43 - K-10
Goethals Avenue, 150-06 - Building 44 - K-10-
Goethals Avenue, 150-14 - Building 45 - C-5
Goethals Avenue, 150-35 - Building 47 - K-9
Goethals Avenue, 150-37 - Building 48 - K-9
Goethals Avenue, 150-58 aka 150-45 Village Road - Building 52 - F-11
Goethals Avenue, 150-66 - Building 56 - C-5
Goethals Avenue, 150-40 - Building 50 - C-6

Grand Central Parkwya

Grand Central Parkway, 144-11 - Building 67- F-11-
Grand Central Parkway, 144-23 - Building 69 - C-6
Grand Central Parkway, 144-29 and 144-33 - Building 72 - F-12
Grand Central Parkway, 144-39 - Building 74 - A-1
Grand Central Parkway, 147-09 - Building 79 - A-1
Grand Central Parkway, 147-29 - Building 84 - C-6
Grand Central Parkway, 147-35 and 147-45 - Building 87 - F-11
Grand Central Parkway, 147-53 - Building 89 - C-5
Grand Central Parkway, 147-61 and 147-65 - Building 92 - F-12
Grand Central Parkway, 147-75 - Building 94 - C-6
Grand Central Parkway, 147-85 - Building 96 - K-10
Grand Central Parkway, 147-87 - Building 97 - K-10
Grand Central Parkway, 149-15 and 149-25 - building 82 - F-12
Grand Central Parkway, 150-11 - Building 100 - K-9
Grand Central Parkway, 150-17 - Building 101 - K-9
Grand Central Parkway, 150-25 - Building 103 - A-2
Grand Central Parkway, 150-29 and 150-39 - Building 106 - F-12
Grand Central Parkway, 150-47 - Building 108 - A-1

Main Street

Main Street, 80-15 - Building 1 - A-1.
Main Street, 81-21 - Building 64 - B-3 (first building UN Secretary General Trigvie Lie inspected in 1947)

Parsons Boulevard

Parsons Blvd, 82-86 - Building 110 - D-7 (twin of demolished Building 61 at 82-34 Parsons Blvd - International Nursery School)
[Parsons Boulevard, 82-34 - Building 61 - D-7 demolished 1985]

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Parsons Boulevard, 82-74 - Building 109 - G-15

Union Turnpike

Union Turnpike, 144-07 - Building 14 - G-15

Union Turnpike, 144-14 - Building 2 - H-18

Union Turnpike, 144-38 - Building 7 - C-5

Union Turnpike, 144-44 and 144-48 - Building 9 - F-12

Union Turnpike, 147-48 and 147-54 aka 147-25 Charter Road - Building 16 - F-12

Union Turnpike, 149-08 - Building 19 - C-5

Union Turnpike, 149-12 and 149-20 aka 147-49 Charter Road - Building 21 - F-11

Union Turnpike, 149-32 - Building 24 - C-6

Village Road

Village Road, 144-12 - Building 63 - A-2

Village Road, 144-14 - Building 78 - K-10

Village Road, 144-20 - Building 65 - K-9 (used as a public school annex 1950s-1970s)

Village Road, 144-24 - Building 66 - K-9

Village Road, 144-34 - Building 68 - G-14 (Ralph Bunche residence)

Village Road, 144-42 - Building 70 - K-10

Village Road, 144-46 - Building 71 - K-10

Village Road, 144-58 - Building 73 - K-9

Village Road, 144-61 - Building 28 - K-10

Village Road, 144-66 - Building 75 - H-16

Village Road, 144-70 - Building 76 - G-14

Village Road, 144-76 - Building 77 - H-18

Village Road, 147-01 - Building 29 - G-13

Village Road, 147-15 - Building 31 - G-15 (Roy Wilkins residence)

Village Road, 147-20 - Building 80 - K-9

Village Road, 147-34 - Building 83 - G-14

Village Road, 147-35 - Building 35 - G-13

Village Road, 147-42 - Building 85 - K-10

Village Road, 147-46 - Building 86 - K-10

Village Road, 147-47 - Building 39 - K-9

Village Road, 147-54 - Building 88 - G-15

Village Road, 147-57 - Building 42 - G-14

Village Road, 147-64 - Building 90 - K-9

Village Road, 147-68 - Building 91 - K-9

Village Road, 149-24 - Building 81 - K-9

Village Road, 150-14 - Building 93 - G-14

Village Road, 150-15 - Building 46 - G-13

Village Road, 150-30 - Building 95 - H-18

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Village Road, 150-31 - Building 49 - H-16
Village Road, 150-38 - Building 98 - H-17
Village Road, 150-41 - Building 51 - H-17
Village Road, 150-43 - Building 53 - K-9
Village Road, 150-45 and 150-57 - Building 54 - B-3
Village Road, 150-46 - Building 99 - H-18
Village Road, 150-51 - Building 55 - H-16
Village Road, 150-62 - Building 102 - G-15
Village Road, 150-67 - Building 57 - G-15
Village Road, 150-70 - Building 104 - K-10
Village Road, 150-74 - Building 105 - K-10
Village Road, 150-77 - Building 58 - K-10
Village Road, 150-79 - Building 59 - K-9
Village Road, 150-81 - Building 60 - B-3
Village Road, 150-90 - Building 107 - G-13
Village Road, 150-95 - Building 62 - G-1

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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 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 that 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 boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance:

1947

Significant Dates:

1947

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Leonard Schultze

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 Building Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other repository: _____

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8. Statement of Significance

Parkway Village, a planned suburban community in central Queens conceived by Robert Moses for New York City as a residence for United Nations (U.N.) personnel, designed by architect Leonard Schultze & Associates and landscape architect Clarence C. Combs, and built in 1946-1947, is historically significant under Criterion A in the areas of community planning and development, social history, politics and government, and Criterion C in the area of architecture and landscape architecture.

Criterion A:

Parkway Village was built to provide housing for employees of the newly created United Nations, then located in temporary quarters on the site of the 1939 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows Park, Queens, as well as in Lake Success in adjoining Nassau County. Because of the enormous housing shortage of the immediate post-World War II years, finding housing for U.N. employees was a major issue in the competition among American cities to host the organization. Robert Moses, acting on behalf of Mayor-elect William O'Dwyer, who had lobbied to have the organization locate in New York and promised to provide housing accommodations, organized the initial housing for the U.N. and chose a location close to both Lake Success and Flushing Meadows – in which location, in fact, Moses hoped the U.N. would build its permanent headquarters. Although the U.N. eventually moved to the east side of Midtown Manhattan, Parkway Village served as housing for many of its employees.

The U.N. proposed to rent housing space in three locations, but racial discrimination in housing in 1940s New York was endemic, and two locations were owned by private companies which couldn't or wouldn't guarantee that the multi-racial staff of the U.N. would be accepted as tenants. The U.N. pulled out of its arrangements with those two projects and arranged to be the lessee of the third new project, financed by a consortium of savings banks assembled for the purpose; as the lessee, the U.N. could guarantee housing for its multi-national staff. Once Parkway Village opened, it became known as a rare integrated community in New York, as well as in the country at large. Besides U.N. personnel – including the African-American U.N. diplomat Ralph Bunche – it attracted other tenants looking for an integrated community, among them Roy Wilkins, the executive director of the NAACP, and labor and later feminist activist Betty Friedan. Though the U.N. eventually gave up control of Parkway Village, the community retained – and still retains – its multi-ethnic character. Today, that character is not unusual; in the 1940s and 1950s, it was considered a unique "experiment."

Criterion C:

The housing shortage of the pre- and immediate post-war years led to various large planned communities around the country. Three of the largest and most successful were designed by Leonard Schultze & Associates – Parklabrea in Los Angeles and Parkmerced in San Francisco, both begun before the war but completed after its end, and (National Register-listed) Parkfairfax, just outside Washington D.C. in suburban Virginia, built after the war. Building on planning concepts going back to the "garden city" movement in England spearheaded by Ebenezer Howard, and carried forward in New York City at (National Register listed) Sunnyside Gardens – also located in Queens – Schultze & Associates designed self-contained communities based around careful planning and landscaping and focusing on two- to three-story (though sometimes taller) buildings set within a large, green

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area and organized around green courts and cul-de-sacs. The 109 buildings of Parkway Village, inserted into the larger street plan of its section of Queens, are organized around two long private interior streets plus a "green" and a "circle." The buildings are divided into nine "types" – based on their shapes – which, with variants based on their architectural ornament, become 18 distinct designs. These in turn are placed in various patterns – some symmetric, some mirror-image, and some as complicated as f-c-f-a-g-a-f-c-f-c-f-c – to create a carefully planned environment. The architects called the style of the buildings "modernized Colonial" – combining the International Style simplicity of plain brick facades enclosing concrete structures, with applied Colonial ornament, notably large two-story wooden porticos modeled on 18th century monuments. The landscaping was designed by Clarence C. Combs, a long-time associate of Robert Moses, credited with the landscaping plan for Jones Beach as well as half a dozen other major parks on Long Island. The resulting complex at Parkway Village is a remarkable physical environment that still maintains its plan, layout, and architectural details.

Post-World War II housing shortage and the resulting boom¹

In the years following the end of World War II, Queens saw a flurry of new large housing developments, as did the city at large. According to a *New York Times* article in August of 1947:

Large-scale housing operations are overshadowing all other types of building work in New York as the fall season heralds the beginning of the third year of peace. In an effort to catch up with the post-war demand for modern living quarters more than \$300,000,000 in public and private funds is being poured into new apartment projects within the city, a survey of current construction activity revealed yesterday... nearly 35,000 families will be accommodated in the buildings on which work now is in progress.²

Half the activity was in Manhattan, the other half in the city's other boroughs.

Four private builders operating under the amended mortgage-insurance provisions of the National Housing Act have started work on garden-type structures in Brooklyn and on Long Island which will mean an outlay of nearly \$70,000,000 and eventually will care for more than 8,100 families. The New York Life Insurance Company is preparing to open two thirteen-story units in its Fresh Meadow project in Flushing, Queens, which in time will be the home of 3,000 families.... There will be 8,503 suites in the six vast residential neighborhoods which the City Housing Authority lists in various stages of development... Vans are constantly appearing at Stuyvesant Town (8,755 families), where three fourteen-story units have been opened at Fourteenth Street. The fifteen-story building at 601 East Twentieth Street, the first of Peter Cooper Village's twenty-one structures, now is tenanted by 112 families.³

¹ Preparation of this nomination was made possible in large part by the efforts of the Parkway Village Historical Society, which over a period of several years gathered enormous amounts of information from libraries and archives.

² Lee E. Cooper, "Large Scale Housing Leads Building Activity in City," *New York Times*, August 31, 1947, p. R1.

³ *Ibid.*

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The article continued with Fred C. Trump's Shore Haven project in Brooklyn, the Roth-Schenker Corporation's Marine Terrace Apartments in Astoria, and Gross-Morton's 3,800-unit Glen Oaks Village in Queens. And it mentioned that 650 families "of United Nations personnel are moving into Parkway Village, on Grand Central Parkway in Queens, sponsored by the Savings Banks Trust Company."⁴ The U.N. would also consider renting space at the new complexes of Fresh Meadow and Peter Cooper Village.

The Borough of Queens – home to planned residential communities

The borough of Queens – incorporated into the City of Greater New York in 1898 – is geographically the largest of the city's five boroughs and second in population only to the borough of Brooklyn. Unlike Brooklyn – a large Victorian city at the time of its incorporation into New York – Queens developed a sizable population only in the 20th century. Because of the availability of undeveloped land, Queens became home to a number of planned residential communities, many of them now recognized as landmarks or historic districts either by the local Landmarks Preservation Commission or the National Register of Historic Places, or both.

The first such communities developed in the first few decades of the 20th century, including Sunnyside Gardens, Jackson Heights and Forest Hills Gardens, as well as the less-well-known Boulevard Gardens. In the post-World War II years, as residential building exploded throughout the borough – including single-family houses as well as apartment complexes – several new planned communities came to fruition, among the first being Fresh Meadows and Parkway Village. Unlike all other planned communities or residential developments in Queens or the rest of the city, however, Parkway Village stands out on two counts: it was built specifically to house the international staff of the newly created U.N., and, because of the multi-racial character of that staff, it deliberately created an environment impervious to the color bar that still operated throughout New York.

United Nations housing

In the years immediately following the close of World War II, the former League of Nations was replaced by a new organization, the United Nations, devoted to keeping peace in the world. The choice of a home for the new organization was a prize sought by a number of countries and cities.

Historian Robert Caro, in his biography of Robert Moses, recounts the campaign waged by Moses on behalf of the newly elected mayor William O'Dwyer, who later recalled, "I felt that this was the one great thing that would make New York the center of the world."⁵ Even before O'Dwyer's inauguration, he made Moses the head of a committee to secure the U.N.'s location in the city. The committee included two members of the Rockefeller family, Winthrop W. Aldrich and Nelson Rockefeller. Moses and his committee convinced the U.N. to set its temporary headquarters, opening in October 1946, in the New York City Building, a survivor from the 1939 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows Park, which became the first General Assembly Building.

Moses and O'Dwyer hoped the U.N. would choose the park for its permanent headquarters, and the first Secretary General, Trygve Lie, also supported the idea, but the U.N.'s various delegates wanted a Manhattan

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Robert Caro, *The Power Broker, : Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), pp. 771 ff.

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location. San Francisco, Philadelphia and Boston were also competing for the prize. New York prevailed when Moses, with Nelson Rockefeller, convinced Nelson's father John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to buy an enormous tract on the East River from the Zeckendorf organization and donate it to the U.N. as the site for a new home. All the figures involved in the transaction, apparently, considered Moses the chief player in this triumph. Caro especially cites letters from both Lie and Rockefeller offering their "deepest thanks" and "profound thanks," respectively.

The U.N. is a huge organization with a vast staff, and Caro explains that

...a key factor in the acceptance had been O'Dwyer's promise of housing, and, thanks to Moses, O'Dwyer was able to keep that promise, through Metropolitan life Insurance at Peter Cooper Village, through New York Life at Fresh Meadows Golf Course, [and] through a Moses-conceived "Savings Bank Trust Company" formed to build Parkway Village in Jamaica - all housing projects arranged by Moses in which Moses was now able to reserve whole buildings for UNO personnel.⁶

Although the U.N. ended up in Manhattan, rather than Queens, plans for housing the U.N. staff had already been drawn up, and two of the three sites were, naturally enough, located near Flushing Meadow Park. Plans for Parkway Village first became public on April 23, 1946, when Mayor O'Dwyer announced that a

...new housing development to provide living quarters for 4,000 United Nations employees and their families is "almost ready to get going" in the vicinity of Queens General Hospital in Jamaica and should be ready for occupancy by Jan. 1.... The mayor indicated that the new dwellings would be constructed on or near Grand Central Parkway roughly halfway between the two interim headquarters of the United Nations at Lake Success, Nassau County, and the World's Fair site in Flushing. Preliminary plans, he said, were agreed upon at a conference earlier in the day. This conference was attended by Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations; Park Commissioner Robert A. Moses, who also is Construction Coordinator for the City of New York; an official of the Savings Banks Trust Company of 14 Wall Street, which represents the group of banks that is expected to finance the housing project, and the Mayor himself.

The U.N., Moses and the banks apparently considered the mayor's announcement "premature," but many of the details of the plan were already in place.

According to the Mayor, the housing site will be about six miles from Lake Success. His added disclosure that it would be established "in the vicinity" of the Queens hospital, which is on Grand Central Parkway at 164th Street, means that the living quarters of the United Nations employees apparently will be centrally situated along the ten-and-a-half-mile stretch of highway between the two interim headquarters. No definite plans have been completed for the type of buildings to be erected....⁷

⁶ Caro, 774.

⁷ "U.N. Housing Site Set for Jamaica," *New York Times*, April 23, 1946, p. 3.

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The following day, Moses sent a telegram to the Navy Department in Washington, saying:

City and county authorities in cooperation with United Nations are seeking every possible means of providing temporary living quarters here this summer and fall.⁸

And the following month, President Harry Truman sent a telegram to Hon. John W. Snyder, Director, Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion confirming that the president had authorized confirmation

...to Lie and to other delegations that the Federal Government will give all appropriate assistance to the United Nations in connection with arrangements for temporary headquarters.

The president specified that

...these arrangements will include the granting of priorities for materials, the making available of physical facilities controlled by the Federal Government, and such other steps as may be necessary not only to provide the United Nations with adequate office space, conference rooms, assembly hall and other facilities to be used by it, but also to assure adequate housing and transportation for members of the Secretariat and the delegations of the Member Nations.⁹

And in June, a large *New York Times* article extolled the virtues of the former World's Fair site for the new World organization and again mentioned the proposed housing project, now named "Parkway Village."

Housing for the United Nations personnel is to be provided in "Parkway Village," a new residential development on Grand Central Parkway overlooking the valley. The project is being financed by a group of savings banks and will be leased to the United Nations.

The same article imagined other parts of Queens providing additional housing, suggesting that the planned communities of Queens would be most attractive to the delegates:

Some of the officials and others connected with the organization may find living accommodations nearby. Forest Hills Gardens is one of the most noted of planned communities, but Britishers may be attracted by Kew Gardens. Flushing has a special charm; Jackson Heights, Jamaica Estates and many other sections of Queens Borough represent urban living at its best.¹⁰

⁸ Telegram from Robert Moses to Hon. James V. Forrestal, Navy Department, Washington D.C., April 24, 1946. New York City Municipal Archives.

⁹ Telegram from President Harry Truman to The Honorable John W. Snyder, Director, Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, The White House, May 18, 1946, referencing an earlier telegram from the President sent on May 14th. New York City Municipal Archives.

¹⁰ "From World's Fair to World Forum: The story of the magical Flushing Meadow, linked to freedom and the unity of nations," *New York Times* June 23, 1946, pp. SM7 ff.

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As planning proceeded for the U.N.'s Queens location, a *Times* article in October 1946 described the Flushing Meadow Park site and quoted the planning committee:

Housing, the committee said, can be supplied for United Nations without disturbing families dwelling in the proposed site area.... The garden-type apartment houses in Parkway Village, close to the southern end of Flushing Meadow Park, alone will house 675 United Nations families, the brochure says, and the Peter Cooper Village on Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, bordering the East River, will house another 600 families. The New York Life Insurance Company's Fresh Meadow golf course housing project on Horace Harding Boulevard (which runs through Flushing Meadow Park) will include one large apartment building for United Nations personnel and families.¹¹

The project was already well on its way by the time the U.N.'s location moved from Flushing to Midtown Manhattan. Housing for staff remained as originally planned: blocks of apartments at Fresh Meadows, blocks of apartments at Peter Cooper Village, and the entire new development of Parkway Village, of the three, the only one specifically planned for the U.N.. By December of 1946, construction was already underway, and the *Times* could report that

The Savings Bank Trust Company plans 1947 completion of its 685-unit Parkway Village in Queens, which is to be leased to the United Nations.¹²

And indeed, in April of 1947, Trygve Lie could inspect the first completed unit of the complex, a model apartment "furnished by Abraham & Strauss":

The first of 685 apartments being built in Queens for United Nations personnel was inspected yesterday by Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations, Deputy Mayor John J. Bennett and more than 150 bankers and city, state and foreign officials. Called Parkway Village, the development occupies a forty-acre site in Jamaica bounded by Grand Central Parkway, Parsons Boulevard, Union Turnpike and Main Street. Construction of the garden-type apartments, which will be in 110 two and three story buildings, is sturdy, fireproof and expensive. The project will be leased by the United Nations for three years at an average rental of \$25 a room a month. The United Nations will absorb part of the rent and will allocate the apartments.

Savings banks and the post-War housing shortage

In the years immediately following the end of World War II, the dearth of development during the years of the Depression combined with huge numbers of returning veterans led to a tremendous housing shortage. Eventually a massive building boom would transform much of the city, but as late as December 1946 the *Times* could report that no apartments had been completed in 1946 and only 1,603 one-family houses and 822 two-family homes:

¹¹ "City Sets Up Model-Scale World Capital for U.N.; Mayor's Group Details Plans at Flushing Meadow," *New York Times*, October 19, 1946, p. 3.

¹² "No Apartments Finished in 1946," *New York Times*, December 14, 1946, p. 17.

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Solutions to the housing problems of 765,000 veterans who have returned to the city have been found – for awhile – in trailers, tourist camps, furnished rooms and in the homes of relatives and friends... The magnitude of the demand for new homes is indicated by the 85,000 applications on file with the New York City Housing Authority for permanent or temporary apartments of any kind. These applications include only veterans of World War II.¹³

Construction underway in 1946 would, however, lead to new complexes opening in 1947:

For next year the outlook for all sorts of dwelling construction is better.... The largest developments due to open next year [1947] are those of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, among privately-operated apartments, and of the New York City Housing Authority, in the public low-rent field.

Chief among the major projects mentioned were Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, both developments undertaken by Metropolitan Life, and Fresh Meadows, undertaken by the New York Life Insurance Company. Life insurance companies had long been able to invest their capital in housing, but given the shortage of housing, the New York State legislature now extended that right to the state's savings banks.

With amortization and satisfaction of mortgages in recent years proceeding at a rapid pace, savings banks in this State have turned more toward housing developments in the last few years as a source of investment for the employment of their mounting deposits, the annual report of the Savings Banks Trust Company indicated. The company is wholly owned by 131 mutual savings banks of New York State.

Eighteen months after legislation was passed enabling them to participate in such ventures, the savings banks in New York are engaged in a housing program which contemplates the accommodation of more than 4,500 families in seven projects, which will cost approximately \$50,000,000. Several other projects are also under consideration, the fourteenth annual report submitted to the bank owners by August Ihlefeld, president of the trust company, disclosed.... [The trust company] is now agent for fifty-seven banks that are financing eight projects.

The same article noted that "the most prominent of these projects is Parkway Village."

Other housing projects originated in 1946 by the agency were: Beacon Apartments, Beacon, N.Y.; Niskayuna Gardens, Niskayuna, N.Y., which is near Schenectady, and Waverly Homes in Eastchester, Westchester County, N.Y. Besides these, Colonial Village in Harlem, Concord Village in Brooklyn and Sedgwick Village in the Bronx, all carry-overs from 1945, are in various stages of planning or construction.¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ "Investing Funds in New Housing," *New York Times*, January 26, 1947, p. R1.

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In his 1970 book, *Public Works: A Dangerous Trade*, Moses recalled his involvement with Parkway Village and the securing of financing from savings banks:

It was necessary to provide conveniently located housing for the numerous UN delegation personnel. Early in 1946, with the help of organized labor leaders, we prevailed upon a group of twenty mutual savings banks to build and operate a new housing development on a vacant 40-acre tract in Queens near Flushing Meadow Park. This development, called Parkway Village, consisted of 687 modern garden apartments. We then negotiated an agreement between the United Nations and the Savings Banks Trust Company by which the UN underwrote the rental of the apartments for three years.¹⁵

Moses announced the arrangement to the public in a press release of April 28, 1946:

At the request of the United Nations, represented by Mr. Trygvie Lie, and of Mayor O'Dwyer, the Savings Bank Trust Company representing a number of savings banks has purchased the vacant plot of 40 acres in Queens near Flushing Meadow Park bounded by Main Street, Grand Central Parkway, Parsons Boulevard and Union Turnpike. This plot will be improved with two-story garden apartments on a twenty per cent coverage of land. It is contemplated that the United Nations will underwrite the rentals for three years, in which event the apartments will be occupied by members of the staff of the United Nations and their families. There will be approximately 550 apartments, aggregating 2,500 rooms to house about 2,000 people....

Mayor O'Dwyer has asked me to express his sincere thanks and that of the City administration to the officers and directors of these banking institutions for their prompt and generous cooperation in furnishing dwellings to meet the more urgent needs of the United Nations during what we hope will be a permanent stay here.¹⁶

The arrangement worked out between the Trust and the U.N. called for a three-year lease by the U.N. plus an option to renew for two additional years. Since the U.N. held the lease, it could set rental policies. That turned out to be extremely important for the U.N.'s staff, because of the continuing existence in the 1940s of racial discrimination on the part of the owners of residential real estate.

Racial discrimination in New York City housing and the United Nations

In choosing Fresh Meadows and Peter Cooper Village as potential housing for its staff, the United Nations had neglected to take into consideration the wide-spread practice of racial discrimination in housing that still existed in New York City. Although neither Metropolitan Life nor New York Life acknowledged a racially discriminatory policy, the U.N., in an action that made the front page of the *New York Times*, cancelled its housing agreements with the two organizations.

¹⁵ Robert Moses, *Public Works: A Dangerous Trade* (McGraw Hill, 1970), p. 485.

¹⁶ Press release, "City of New York, Office of City Construction co-ordinator, Randall's Island, New York 35, N.Y.," "Savings Banks to Speed Housing for United Nations." New York City Municipal Archives.

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The principal reason for the cancellations, it was learned, was insistence by the insurance companies on the right to refuse accommodations in Metropolitan's Peter Cooper Village in Manhattan and in New York Life's Fresh Meadows project in Flushing, Queens, to any United Nations' employee they decided was unsuitable as a tenant. Officials said privately that clauses that could be interpreted as discriminatory made it impossible for the United Nations to continue a formal contract. It was emphasized that the Charter specifically established racial, religious and color equality between all members of the organization. An official announcement puts the case in guarded diplomatic language, stating simply that the two insurance companies had "found it inadvisable to lease whole blocks of apartments to one organization, and the United Nations is, therefore, not entering into a lease with them."... It was recalled that three years ago the general rental policy established by the Metropolitan for its Stuyvesant Town project was the basis of a State Supreme Court action. At that time it was ruled that while officials of the insurance company had made statements indicating that Negroes, for example, would not get accommodations in the housing development, no action could be taken in expectation of possible future controversies that might never take place.¹⁷

One of the U.N.'s most prominent diplomats was African-American Ralph Bunche. According to Bunche's biographer, Brian Urquhart:

Racial pressures in New York were far less open than in Washington but by no means nonexistent. One of Bunche's first acts when he joined the Secretariat was to protest about the space for the designation of race on the UN's personnel forms, which had been copied from United States models. He noted how conscious of color and race New Yorkers were as they watched the UN's limousines, and how, in contrast, the non-Americans on his UN staff seemed to be oblivious of racial differences. When he decided to send the girls away to school, the vice-principal of the George School, a Quaker school in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, informed him that "as a matter of procedure we have never enrolled a child of Negro background."

Trygve Lie consulted Bunche about the difficulty of finding housing, especially for nonwhite members of the staff. One reason the Bunches were in Parkway Village was that New York Life and Metropolitan Life Insurance, which owned Fresh Meadows and Peter Cooper Village in New York City, the other two UN housing projects, could deny occupancy to nonwhites. ... [Bunche] urged that the UN, as far as possible, not do business with companies or firms which violated the fundamental Charter principles of equality of race, sex, language, or religion on which the United Nations was founded.¹⁸

Racial discrimination faced many U.N. employees in many situations. A lengthy write-up of the life of foreign U.N. staff in New York included the following account:

¹⁷ "U.N. Ends Rent Pact as Discriminatory," *New York Times*, June 5, 1947, p. 1.

¹⁸ Brian Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche: an American Life*, p. 137.

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By and large the people of the United Nations are...glad to be here as long as they can't be home. But there is one American custom that comes in for particularly caustic criticism from all U.N. workers. A Haitian secretary in the language division tells how she has sometimes sat "unnoticed" in a New York restaurant because of her color, and how the U.N. friends with her always want to make something of it. "I never let them," she says. "It gets you nowhere, and anyhow that kind of thing is too unimportant in the whole picture of racial discrimination." She smiles faintly. "Maybe some day the United States will be as democratic as Europe." Maybe some day the U.N. people, who live and work without regard for race, color or creed, can prove to us all that real democracy works.¹⁹

Ralph Bunche became one of the first residents of Parkway Village.

The site

The property identified for the development of Parkway Village had been in use as a farm as late as 1939, belonging to the Klein family who had farmed the 93 acre parcel since 1888. The farm adjoined Cunningham Park and the Fresh Meadow Golf Club. According to an unidentified news clipping of January 20, 1939:

Builders Buy Queens Farm; 93 Acres on Grand Central Parkway Acquired

The Pawnee Land Corporation, headed by Harold J. Weinstock, has just purchased the Klein farm of ninety-three acres which fronts on Grand Central Parkway and Black Stump Road, northeast of Jamaica. It adjoins Cunningham Park and the Fresh Meadow Golf Club. Union Turnpike runs through the center of the tract. The farm has been in the hands of the Klein family since 1888, and was cultivated until last fall, according to Abraham Levingson, who represented the purchaser.

The tract was sold by the Estate of Theresa Klein. The purchasing syndicate recently bought the sixty-three-acres Boos farm at Horace Harding Boulevard and Hollis Court Boulevard Bellaire, and the 107-acre tract on Fresh Meadow Road between Horace Harding Boulevard and Black Stump Road, now being developed with one-family homes.

Leonard Schultze & Associates (*This section is taken almost in its entirety from the National Register nomination of the Parkfairfax Historic District in Alexandria, VA, prepared by architectural historian Laura L. Bobeczko in 1998.*)

The buildings of Parkway Village were designed by Leonard Schultze (1877-1951). A Chicago native, Schultze attended the College of the City of New York, and received his professional training from the Architectural School of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Schultze joined the firm of Warren and Wetmore in 1903 as the Chief of Design for Grand Central Terminal and its attendant structures. In 1911, he was promoted to Executive in Charge of the design and construction of all buildings relating to the terminal. In this capacity, he also supervised the construction of the Biltmore and Commodore Hotels, both in New York City.

¹⁹ George Barrett, "Life in the U.S. as Seen by the U.N. Staff," *New York Times*, May 2, 1948, pp. 142 ff.

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He left Warren and Wetmore in 1921 to start his own firm with S. Fullerton Weaver in New York City. Weaver had previously been both president and owner of the Fullerton Weaver Construction Company, which designed and constructed numerous apartment buildings in New York City. Their new firm was known as Schultze and Weaver until Weaver's death in 1940, when it was reorganized as Leonard Schultze and Associates. Schultze joined the American Institute of Architects in 1929, and was made a Fellow of the AIA in 1948.²⁰

Much of Schultze and Weaver's work from 1921 through the early 1930s consisted of hotels and country clubs, including the new Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Florida (1926); the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City (1931); the Boca Raton Club in Florida; and the General Oglethorpe Hotel in Savannah, Georgia. During this period the firm also designed a number of hotels for the Biltmore chain, including the Los Angeles Biltmore (1923); the Miami-Biltmore Hotel (1926); the Atlanta Biltmore; the Westchester-Biltmore Country Club in Rye, New York; and the Seville Biltmore Hotel and Yacht Club in Havana, Cuba. Most of Schultze and Weaver's work in their first decade of operation was built in New York City; Coral Gables, Miami Beach, and Palm Beach, Florida; and Los Angeles and San Francisco, California. During the building depression of the 1930s, the firm designed a variety of building types, including office buildings, banks, and hotels.²¹

In the 1940s, however, Leonard Schultze and Associates became best known for its design of large rental housing developments. The firm was retained by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to design three such complexes, Parkfairfax (listed on the National Register), Parklabrea, and Parkmerced. Parklabrea, in Los Angeles, and Parkmerced, in San Francisco, California, were developed simultaneously; both were begun prior to World War II and completed after the war ended. In both instances the pre-war construction was of two-story buildings, and the post-war construction was of a few two-story buildings and numerous high-rise apartments. Of the three, only Parkfairfax was designed entirely on a low scale.²² In New York City, Schultze's development for Parkway Village was designed entirely after World War II, but kept entirely on a low scale, with buildings of two and three stories.

Schultze & Associates' work for Metropolitan Life made them a logical choice for the Parkway Village plan, not just because it was physically a similar development, but also because it served a similar purpose to one in particular, Parkfairfax, which was built to accommodate employees of the federal government – just as Parkway Village would accommodate employees of the U.N..

Schultze & Associates and housing developments of the 1940s
According to his obituary, Schultze believed in plans and planning:

²⁰ "Leonard Schultze." Baldwin Memorial Archive of American Architects. American Institute of Architects Library and Archives. Washington, D.C.

²¹ "Leonard Schultze." Baldwin Memorial Archive of American Architects.

²² "The Housing Developments of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company," Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, New York, pp. 2-3.

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Schultze once observed "every architect ought to go at least once a year to Paris. There is the greatest example of beauty in the world, because it's a city with a plan." Of Gotham, he snorted: "an attractive city before we started to develop it. Now the blame place is spectacular, even sensational."

His work on the three Metropolitan Life complexes fit neatly into a developing pattern of post-World War II decentralized housing. As explained by historian Laura L. Bobeszko:

...these complexes are the physical manifestation of a trend towards decentralized living, as proposed by architects and planners like Clarence Stein and Henry Wright.... Other members of this movement included Lewis Mumford, Catherine Bauer, and John Bright.²³

Bobeszko traces the development of the idea for such complexes from Clarence Stein's studies of Ebenezer Howard's plans for new "garden cities" in England, notably Welwyn Garden City, to Stein's work at Sunnyside Gardens in Queens. She quotes Stein as he "reminisced in the 1950 foreword to *Toward New Towns for America*" that

I had in mind that both in America and in Europe the time is ripe for complete change in the form of urban environment. I believe that the best and easiest way to start that change is to build New Towns on new sites, as Sir Ebenezer Howard suggested.... This could be the beginning of a new era of nation-wide decentralization.

Bobeszko's own descriptions of Stein's work sounds remarkably similar to Parkway Village:

...based on the qualities of safety, spaciousness, nature, beauty, economy, and order. Low-scale buildings, usually two to four stories, were arranged on cul-de-sacs and placed around open greens. This arrangement was then set into a lush landscape. On one level, the common green was meant to be aesthetically pleasing; on another, it was to be utilized for recreational purposes...

And she points out that Stein

...believed that decentralized living was as appropriate for the redevelopment of declining neighborhoods within existing cities as it was for the creation of entirely new developments. He strongly felt that these redevelopment projects would not be successful within the framework of the city unless they were "conceived, planned, and carried out as large-scale units of new cities - new cities even though they are on old sites."

Though Parkway Village was not in a declining city neighborhood, it was certainly conceived as a new city on an old site.

²³ Laura L. Bobeczko, "A Study in Decentralized living: Parkfairfax, Alexandria, Virginia," *Historic Alexandria Quarterly*, Spring 1997, Vol. III, No. 6, pp. 1 ff.

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Such early 20th century privately-funded developments as Sunnyside came to an end with the Great Depression. Bobeszko follows development into the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) of the New Deal. While first focusing on single-family housing,

...the FHA discovered rental garden apartments as a building type more appropriate for their involvement.

From FHA, she traces the concept to Washington, D.C. area developer Gustave Ring and other local private developers, and then to the involvement of such large institutions as the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Metropolitan Life's decision to become involved in the housing market was based on a desire for permanent investment projects which would possess public value. The company espoused a "policy of making investment not only sound and enduring but valuable from the standpoint of public service." The construction of garden apartment complexes provided work for hundreds of men who worked in the building trades and in manufacturing, and gave thousands of families the opportunity to live in a suburban environment close to city centers. These complexes functioned well during World War II by providing housing for defense workers and members of the armed forces. Metropolitan Life saw all of these characteristics as evidence of success in their housing ventures.

Metropolitan Life hired Schultze & Associates to design Parkfairfax. Bobeszko explains that

...the basic premise behind Parkfairfax's design was the creation of a park community. This was to be accomplished by dividing the property into a series of different sized parks, and by having the various buildings open directly into these individual areas.

This, then, was the experience with planned housing that Schultze & Associates brought to Parkway Village. The extent to which the firm had absorbed the tradition going back through the FHA and Clarence Stein to Welwyn Garden City is evident from a 1944 article that appeared in *The Architectural Forum*. Schultze (or someone in his office – the article isn't signed) wrote about a proposed project, entitled "Suburban Rental Housing, New York City." The architectural firm of Leonard Schultze & Associates is identified as including four partners: Leonard Schultze, Lloyd Morgan, Eugene V. Meroni, and William Sunderland. Curiously, Schultze says of the firm's accomplishments only that it "has executed some of the largest hotel and office buildings in the country," saying nothing about housing complexes.

The article – which predates Parkway Village by several years – identifies "the problem" as designing suburban rental projects.

Though the idea of home ownership has gained tremendously in popularity during the war, there will always remain a sizable group who prefer the convenience of rented homes to the responsibility of individual ownership. They have recently become planning-conscious. They have been taught to expect

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and will be able to afford better than prewar living conditions. The majority will prefer suburban living to the noise and congestion of a large city.²⁴

The article then explains that during the firm's experience in Virginia and California,

Leonard Schultze & Associates arrived at certain planning principles which they have successfully applied to this project on a greatly reduced scale. The same basic pattern (consisting of radial streets forming wedge-shaped blocks) was used for Metropolitan's 11,200 room housing development in Los Angeles and for this suburban project of little more than one-tenth its size.²⁵

The "solution" for the small New York project

...calls for the use of two story row-house units grouped in such a way as to maintain a coverage of only 13 per cent. Had the design utilized detached or semi-detached houses with individual garages the percentage of coverage would have been almost double.²⁶

The article identifies the basic planning principle as

...the intra-block relationship of a number of housing units, providing a central lawn area and better-than-average living and service facilities for the apartment. Each block offers individual terraces, drying yards, play space for smaller children and adequate parking for tenants and visitors - tenants in parking compounds between the apartment buildings, visitors in off-street parking bays. Main recreation areas and community buildings are introduced outside the block pattern and at less frequent intervals.²⁷

The plan itself bears a great similarity to Parkway Village:

Only three typical building shapes are employed: two variations of the U-shape and the standard bar. In most cases the U-shaped buildings are used alone with the parallel wings forming entrance courts. In two instances U-shaped units are placed opposite each other creating a generous central lawn. Generally speaking, the bar-shaped buildings are used parallel to the roadways shielding the interior of the block, more rarely they are placed at right angles to the street, facing each other, sometimes at a slight angle. ... Units are two stories with laundries, storage and heating in the basement. The site was graded for easy access to these facilities. The combination of apartment building layout and connecting parking compounds allows privacy and quiet for the principle green areas. The fact that there is but one circulating street with three short access streets indicates a minimum of utility construction.²⁸

²⁴ Leonard Schultze and Associates, "Suburban Rental Housing, New York City," *Architectural Forum*, Vol. 80, April 1944, p.81.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.* p.82.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

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The apartment size and layout also resemble Parkway Village:

The project consists of 336 apartments. Individual apartments provide three, five and six rooms. The three and a half room unit has a living room, dining alcove, bedroom, kitchen and bath. The larger apartments have standard dining rooms, one additional bath and one or two more bedrooms. Wherever two baths are provided, one is connected with the larger bedroom....²⁹

Schultze considered his planning experience to be a major credential for his firm. In a company profile Schultze & Associates sent to the United States War Department, in applying for a possible project, he noted – besides the firm's many other accomplishments –

We have had a varied experience in site planning as you can readily see from the photographs of the plans of the three Metropolitan Housing projects which are incorporated in the brochure.³⁰

The company's list of projects includes, under "1946," "Housing Development 'Parkway Village' for United Nations Personnel, Queens, L.I. It lists the cost as \$8,500,000. By comparison, the "Housing Development for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Los Angeles" cost \$15,000,000, as did the Housing Development for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, San Francisco," while the "Housing Development for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Alexandria, Virginia" cost \$12,000,000.³¹

Clarence C. Combs, landscape architect

Though Schultze & Associates seem most likely responsible for the landscape planning of Parkway Village, the actual "planting plan" was designed by Clarence C. Combs.³² Combs (1892-1958) studied at the University of Missouri, took his Masters degree in Landscape Architecture at Harvard, and in 1925 joined the Cambridge, Mass. office of Warren H. Manning, a very influential landscape architect.

[Manning] and those in his office developed landscape design and planning techniques that are still in use today. Manning's office provided an apprenticeship setting for a group of practitioners, among whom were men and women who charted significant directions for twentieth century land...[including] Clarence Combs (1926), the landscape architect of the innovative automobile-oriented scheme for Jones Beach at Long Island, New York.³³

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Schultze & Associates, "Company Profile," submitted to the United States War Department; held at the Wolfsonian Library, Florida International University.

³¹ Typescript, from the Wolfsonian Library.

³² His name appears on the Parkway Village blueprints: "Clarence C. Combs, Landscape Architect, 681 Fifth Avenue, New York."

³³ Lance M. Neckar, "Developing Landscape Architecture for the Twentieth Century: The Career of Warren H. Manning," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33: 159-177, 1989, pp. 79-80.

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After working in several other offices, Combs taught at Massachusetts State College for two years, before taking the position of Chief Landscape Architect at the Long Island State Park Commission. According to his obituary in the journal *Landscape Architecture*:

From 1929 to 1936 [Combs] played an important role in the planning of major portions of the park and parkway system on Long Island under the aegis of Robert Moses. The principal projects designed during this period included Jones Beach, Bethpage, Sunken Meadow, Belmont Lake, and Valley Stream state parks, and he collaborated on the design of the alignment and profile of the Northern, Southern, Wantagh, Meadowbrook, and Ocean parkways. He had sole responsibility for the grading and planting design of the "shoe-string parks" which enframe these major traffic arteries, and for the architectural design of all the stonefaced parkway bridges built during this period – and there were dozens.³⁴

One of those bridges, a footbridge across the Belt Parkway at Shore Parkway and Bay 46th Street in Brooklyn, was featured as one of just four New York City examples in the first "Built in USA" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.³⁵ But landscape and plantings were Combs's main subject.

In the composition of native plant materials [Combs] had no peer. Undoubtedly this talent was an outgrowth of an early interest in growing things and of a generous bump of curiosity about nature generally. The parkways of Long Island circa 1929-1936 are choice examples of good parkway planting.

Though he left the park commission in 1936 to open a private practice, his association with that agency continued:

After he left the Long Island State Park Commission for private practice in 1936, [Combs's] chief professional interest remained in large-scale public work. For twenty-one years, from 1936 to 1957, he was consultant on many park and parkway projects for the Long Island State Park Commission, the Department of Parks of New York City, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, and the New York State Department of Public Works.

Outstanding among his recent works are the Palisades Interstate Parkway, the Anthony Wayne Recreation Area and Swimming Pool, and Sebago Beach – all in the great Palisades Interstate Park. Each development shows a command over the molding of ground forms and the happy blending of areas devoted to intensive human usage with heavily wooded, rugged topography. These are lasting monuments to his feeling for topography, alignment, and form, and to his fine sense of the natural associations of indigenous plant materials.³⁶

³⁴ "Clarence Cornelius Combs, A Biographical Minute," *Landscape Architecture* 1958-1959 Winter, vol. 49, pp. 118-120.

³⁵ *Built in USA: 1932-1944*, Museum of Modern Art, 1944. Cited by Robert A.M. Stern, *New York 1960* (Monacelli Press, 1995), p. 1205.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, "Biographical Minute," p. 120.

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Given his decades- long association with Robert Moses, it's likely that Moses recommended him to Schultze & Associates for the job. Moses, consequently, wanted Parkway Village to have not just landscaping features, but the kinds of landscape planning found in major public parks of the period. The detailed planting plan Combs provided suggests the level of care that went into the planning of the landscape at Parkway Village.

Parkway Village: planning, design and construction

The Housing Agency of the Savings Bank Trust Company prepared a prospectus for Parkway Village in late 1946. Its cover read:

Parkway Village
A Residential Community
For United Nations Personnel

Planned in Cooperation with

The City of New York

To be Built, owned and operated

By a Group of Mutual Savings Banks in the State of New York

Owner: Parkway Village, Inc.

Agent: Savings Banks Trust Company, 14 Wall Street, New York 5 NY

It described the complex as follows:

Parkway Village, now under construction in Queens County, is owned by a group of mutual savings banks of New York State. The entire residential facilities of this housing project, consisting of 687 modern garden type apartments with 2,921 rooms, have been leased to the United Nations for the use of their personnel. The first units are expected to be ready for occupancy next February and the entire project is scheduled for completion in the summer of 1947.

After rehearsing the history of the site, its location near the (then presumed) Queens location of the United Nations complex, the choice of Leonard Schultze & Associates, Architects, together with the George A. Fuller Company as contractors, it describes the project. Besides discussing shopping facilities, laundries, management and heating arrangements, it describes the development's planning and construction:

Residential buildings

Parkway Village, according to current plans, will consist of 110 residential buildings of eight different types. Architecture is to be "modernized colonial"....

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Arrangement of buildings

The 110 residential buildings which will occupy less than 20% of the site area are arranged in groups opening onto large, landscaped areas. About half of the buildings are to be two-story structures containing duplex apartments while the other half will have the general appearance of two-story buildings from the front, but will have a lower floor opening onto a rear garden. This latter type of building which will contain both duplex and single story apartments was made possible by the rugged character of the site in which elevations vary as much as 45 feet.

Size of Rooms

Room sizes are to be spacious. In the larger apartments, living rooms range from 235 to 308 square feet while in the 3 1/2's the smaller living room size of 205 square feet is augmented by an adjoining dining alcove thus making for spaciousness. Dining alcoves vary from 62 square feet in the smaller apartments to 131 square feet in the larger. The kitchens which adjoin the dining alcove are ample and will be efficiently arranged. Master bedrooms are large, the smallest being 178 square feet and the largest 196 square feet; the second bedrooms are mostly from 118 to 130 square feet while in the six room apartments the third or junior bedroom is 91 square feet....

Construction

Walls will be cinder-concrete blocks faced with bricks. Floors will be of precast concrete slabs, made in a central casting plant at the site, using the vacuum system for curing and handling, a unique feature of construction for this type of structure. This new technique will provide residential structures that will be highly fire retardant - in fact, almost fireproof. Ceilings and floors between apartments are being sound-proofed.³⁷

Parkway Village was planned as a separate community set within the surrounding street pattern. While it is bounded by city streets, the community looks inward to a landscaped enclave based on two private streets - Village Road and Charter Road - with a large green area at either end: the Green and the Circle. The complex was then further subdivided into informal courts, green areas surrounded on either three or four sides with two-story buildings.

The buildings, which range from two to three stories in height, fall into nine "types" which, because of ornamental variations, form 18 different types, repeated throughout the development (see Description for details). A prospectus drawing by the firm, for instance, is labeled "Type 'F' Unit - Parkway Village," while another shows "Apt Group Type 'G' & 'H' unit" grouped around a central green court.

³⁷ "PARKWAY VILLAGE," prepared by Housing Agency, Savings Banks Trust Company, November 23, 1946.

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The prospectus called the style of the buildings "modernized colonial." That phrase has been used to describe the Colonial Revival of the late 19th and early 20th century, but in the Parkway Village prospectus it has a different meaning. Using the phrase in the mid-1940s might reflect an extension of the mid-1930s name "Modern Classic." Modern Classic referred to buildings – especially government buildings – with designs based on classical precedents, especially temple fronts, but with the details stripped down and streamlined. "Modernized colonial," at least at Parkway Village, refers to a cross between the simplicity of the International Style, and details reminiscent of 18th-century Georgian common in the mid-Atlantic and New England states. Several of the building types at Parkway Village have double-height porticos with four Ionic columns supporting a pediment – a detail similar to, for instance, the Albemarle County Court House in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The contrast between the "Colonial" ornament and the simple brick facades is striking – as is the contrast in materials: the brick-faced buildings are constructed of concrete, while the colonial ornament is largely wooden.

Life in Parkway Village

The unusual character of Parkway Village attracted notice in the press early on. In January 1949, the *Long Island Sunday Press* ran an article called "UN Town: Harmony's the Rule at Parkway Village... Though It May Not Be at Lake Success."

What did the delegate from Afghanistan say to the delegate from China? At a UN session in Flushing Meadow Park it might be a tart comment about borders. In Parkway Village it would likely be an invitation to come over for coffee. International living on a large scale is being practiced in the Jamaica housing development for UN delegates and employees [sic], and the keynote is harmony. There are 700 families in Parkway Village now, 400 UN employees, 75 UN delegates, and 225 veterans. Despite different languages, different customs, and different viewpoints, they like each other and get along together fine.

The reporter interviewed Mrs. Victor Da Silva, "the wife of a Brazilian employe of the Secretariat."

The Da Silvas, with their 9-year-old daughter, Maria, have been here two and a half years. Cooperation extends from baby-sitting to letting the kids in the neighborhood use the Da Silva piano for practicing their scales.... In the small playground which lies in back of the Da Silva apartment gather children of many nations. The dialogue may range from Chinese to Tagalog... but the idea's the same in any language - fun.

Another resident, Mrs. Ruth Oliver, "the wife of an American employe in the Secretariat,"

... feels lucky to be rubbing elbows with so many different cultures, [and] says her young son Richard has his own international set. He numbers among his best friends a little Chinese girl, a New Zealander, a Scandinavian and several French children.

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Thirty years later, an article in *Newsday* painted a similar picture, though U.N. employees by then represented a smaller number of residents:

A Place Where the Nations Unite - A View from Parkway Village

Their work may center around global politics but, when United Nations workers come home to Parkway Village, they leave ideological differences behind.

Nearly 225 of the 685 families who live in the tree-lined garden apartment community, in central Queens, are connected with the United Nations. In addition, members of another 150 families living in the Village are foreign nationals employed in international commerce. The result is a fascinating mix.....³⁸

Beginning in 1949, the residents organized an "international block party," covered in the *Times*:

All-Nation Block Party - International Flavor Given to ... Carnival

Upward of 3,000 persons, including international figures, attended a carnival last night at Parkway Village...a housing development for 700 families, 75 per cent of whom comprise officials or employees of the United Nations while the other 25 per cent are World War II veterans with their families. The carnival, announced as "an international block party," was held for the benefit of Boy and Girl Scouts and other youth organizations. Ralph Bunche, United Nations mediator for Palestine, showed up with his young son, Ralph Jr., but Mr. Bunche asked to be excused from making a speech because he preferred to remain in the background so that he could enjoy dart shooting and other games with his son.... Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations, was among the invited guests.³⁹

The press also covered life in Parkway Village during major international crises. During the Suez crisis of 1956, the *Long Island Daily Press* wrote:

Life has been turned topsy turvy for the United Nations families living in the Parkway Village section of Jamaica. Last week's dramatic crises turned night into day and day into night for the UN personnel living in the village. Most of them were up all night Thursday for the extraordinary General Assembly session on the Middle East crisis. But when they came home, many found the lights in their apartments still burning. For instance, Arifin Bey, who broadcasts for the UN to his native Indonesia, came home at 6 a.m. His wife, Farida, was up to meet him.....⁴⁰

Many early stories about Parkway Village and, in particular, the United Nations International School (see below, next section), featured "Little Jimmy Li." One newspaper caption read:

³⁸ Maureen Griees, "A Place Where the Nations Unite - A View from Parkway Village," *New York Newsday*, August 16, 1978.

³⁹ "All-Nation Block Party," *New York Times*, June 25, 1949, p. 14.

⁴⁰ "Life Was Topsy-Turvy for UN Families Last Week," *Long Island Daily Press*, November 5, 1956.

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For all the world to see: Little Jimmy Li, a Chinese student at the United Nations Children's School in Jamaica, takes his turn reading a story for his classmates. Jimmy and his friends will be featured on Channel 7's "Close-up" tomorrow night as an example of pint-sized international friendship and understanding. The small fry here with Jimmy are, from left, Akashi [illegible] of Japan, Thelma Catalan of the Philippines and Hari Kannan of India.

As an adult, Dr. James T. C. Li, a physician at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, recalled his experience growing up in the community:

Growing up in the international environment at Parkway Village has lifelong impact. In my current work in academic medicine in the United States, almost every day I draw on my Parkway Village experiences. As a boy growing up in Parkway Village, my friends and their families originated from countries all over the world; Norway, Mexico, Russia, Yugoslavia, Japan, France, India, Ceylon, Cuba and others. The truly unique feature about Parkway was that I thought this environment was perfectly "normal"! My mother taught classical piano out of our home. Every day students from different nationalities and cultures came through our living room. This was not "diversity"; this was everyday life at Parkway. There was no concept of "tolerance"; each person was an individual in his or her own right. These lessons have stayed with me.

What CEO's try to do, what heads of states dream about; that we already accomplished as children at Parkway. We lived together daily with full acceptance and respect for each other; race, religion and nationality were acknowledged and celebrated. Having seen this near Utopia, I can now do my little part to transport the Parkway experience into daily adult life.⁴¹

The unusually integrated character of Parkway Village early on attracted civil rights leader Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, as a resident. As recalled by Mrs. Wilkins:

We moved into Parkway in December, 1952. Parkway was just five years old and was such a friendly place. Everyone said "good morning" when you walked down the street. There was a mixed population which made it interesting. My neighbors were French, Chinese, and across the street was a family from Belgium and one from Africa. We were one of the first non-U.N. residents but we didn't have to get permission to rent as some other families did. The rent at that time was \$175.00 per month. Also, there used to be welcome parties for new arrivals in the Village. When one of my Chinese neighbors moved out, Dr. and Mrs. Silverman came, and their friendship has continued to the present. He was a scientist and mathematician.

Prior to moving here, we lived in Manhattan; because my husband had to travel extensively, we were looking for a safe neighborhood. We looked in Staten Island and in White Plains. One day, while driving

⁴¹ Letter from Dr. James T. C. Li, M.D., PhD., Allergic Diseases and Internal Medicine, Mayo Clinic, Rochester MINN, to Martin Guttman, Board President of Parkway Village Equities Corp., summer, 1998.

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by, my husband remarked, "Oh, that's the U.N. enclave." We drove through and liked it. We contacted someone at the sales office, and in about two weeks they called back to say that there was an apartment available in a choice part of the Village. We have been here ever since.⁴²

Another early resident was political activist Betty Friedan. According to historian Sylvie Murray:

At a time when the New York metropolitan area was sharply segregated along racial lines, Parkway Village was unique in offering its residents the chance to live in a culturally and racially mixed community. Ironically, the creation of this distinctively integrated community was a direct result of the discriminatory practices that characterized postwar metropolitan development.... As the United Nations delegates and staff sought accommodation in the metropolis, they faced the harsh reality of residential segregation.... UN employees vehemently protested against the humiliation to which they were subjected and the flagrant violation of the principles of the UN Charter that such policy entailed. By the time other accommodations were found, including Parkway Village, some UN employees had been forced to move several times and had lived in temporary shelters for more than a year. Forced to intervene directly to ensure that its employees would be able to find convenient accommodation, the UN negotiated an agreement with Parkway Village.....⁴³

Friedan herself recounts her discovery of Parkway Village's diverse community:

One day I read a story in the *Times* about a wonderful co-operative nursery school, in a community built for the United Nations out in Queens called Parkway Village. Although that village of garden apartments was built for UN personnel, the article said vacancies were also open to ex-GIs and to newspaper correspondents. I took the subway out there my next lunch hour, and brought Carl out that night.... We were ecstatic about our garden apartment, with real wood floors and French doors, opening off a central green lawn. We could sit in deck chairs, and barbecue hamburgers, and Danny could play with neighbors' kids.... we also made close friends with Mexican and Iranian families, and French and Swiss we met. All of us were so happy in that community.⁴⁴

The United Nations School

Even as Parkway Village was being planned, concerns were being raised about school accommodations for the children of families who would be living there. An internal memo noted:

This project is planned to accommodate 750 families. The tenants will consist mainly of secretaries and clerical help. Barkin, of the Board of Education, figures that the child population will be about one-half child per family, or a total of 375 children. He said that at the present time there are four existing schools in this area...

⁴² Mrs. Roy Wilkins, "I Remember When," *The Village Vine*, Parkway Village community newsletter, November-December 1992.

⁴³ Sylvie Murray, *The Progressive Housewife: Community Activism in Suburban Queens, 1945-1965*, pp. 71-72.

⁴⁴ Betty Friedan, *Life So Far: A Memoir*, pp. 76-77.

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Barkin told me that the existing schools...are now crowded and simply cannot take care of any more children. However, with the construction of the new school and the addition to P.S. 131, there will be ample accommodations. He also said that at the present time any children of high school age can be accommodated in the Jamaica High School where there is ample room.⁴⁵

Within a few years, a new special school opened on the grounds of Parkway Village: "United Nations International School / Ecole Internationale Des Nations Unies," (often referred to as UNIS).

The school began as an extension of a U.N. nursery school at Parkway Village which opened in 1948. As described that year in the *Times*:

U.N. Mothers Open a Nursery School – 14 Nationalities Represented in the Cooperative Venture....

A community experiment in international understanding for children of fourteen different nationalities began at 9 A.M. yesterday with the opening of the International Nursery School of Parkway Village... Classes were held in Apartment GB in the development, which is inhabited principally by United Nations personnel. Forty children, 2 ½ to 5 years old, from China, Iran, Haiti, the Philippines, Canada, England, India, West Africa, New Zealand, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, the Netherlands and the United States attended two sessions.... Many of their mothers wore colorful native dress for the occasion, for the school's opening represented the culmination of a parents' cooperative venture begun six months ago.⁴⁶

A caption to a photo of the school taken in 1951 for the U.N. (from the school's photo library) traces the school's history over the next few years:

In an apartment house in Parkway Village (which is the U.N. housing area, in Jamaica, N.Y.) a school has taken root. Occupying 4 and ½ room apartments which were reconditioned to make one school building, an experiment in international living is emerging as a sound institution. The U.N.I.S. was organized in 1949 as an extension and merger of the International Nursery School founded by U.N. Secretariat members in 1947 [sic]. One class is added each year and at present children from three years of age to the age group comprising the third grade are enrolled. Seventy pupils are proving the worth of the curriculum.

The school quickly grew in size, expanding into several campuses, including one in Manhattan. U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld later wrote:

⁴⁵ Memo to A.S. Hodgkiss from P.J. Cruise, May 21, 1946, "U.N. Houses - School Facilities: Housing project - Parsons Boulevard and Grand Central Parkway"; Municipal Archives.

⁴⁶ "U.N. Mothers Open a Nursery School," *New York Times*, September 16, 1948, p. 31.

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This school has meant much, not only to those United Nations staff members whose children have had the privilege of attendance, but also to many other who have followed its sound and progressive development with keen interest.⁴⁷

The school attracted much attention, including visits from such dignitaries as "Former First Lady and U.N. Ambassador Eleanor Roosevelt," pictured in a photo with school children, and Margaret Truman (the daughter of President Harry Truman). A 1955 brochure expressed gratitude for "the continued cooperation and interest" of supporters, including Miss Margaret Truman, Mrs. Ed Sullivan, Miss Eartha Kitt, and many others. The United Nations International School continued in Parkway Village until 1983.

Later history

As early as March of 1949, many Parkway Village residents assumed that they would have to leave what they saw as temporary housing once the U.N. opened its Manhattan headquarters.

Preliminary result of a special United Nations survey show that more than 200 Secretariat families are eager to start building their own international community in Westchester County or some other suburban spot within commuting distance of the permanent world capital site on Manhattan's East River. Staff members have initiated the housing survey on their own responsibility to learn how many of their number would like to settle in a self-contained area of homes costing from \$10,000 to \$15,000 or more, to be built cooperatively at reasonable costs and under relatively easy financing terms.... The questionnaire points out that the residential properties now under lease to the United Nations, places like Parkway Village, in Queens...will possibly revert to private operation by the time the first unit of the skyscraper capital in Manhattan is ready for occupation, late in 1950. It is suggested that only a place of their own in Westchester or nearby could preserve the same kind of "international charm" and democratic customs, with no bars on racial, religious or national grounds, that has made communal living in the...projects so successful.

Apparently, however, U.N. personnel remained in Queens. The U.N.'s five-year lease (three-year lease plus two-year extension) expired in 1952, whereupon the consortium of banks which owned the complex announced major rental increases. As reported in the *Times* in July of that year:

Parkway Villagers Appeal on Rent Rise

The United Nations international community in Queens, which has been threatened with rent increases up to 32 per cent, has appealed to President Truman and the Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates to prevent what it believes would be the disintegration of the model community.

Spokesmen for the group were the 200 American citizens residing in the development. The others, numbering 485, are United Nations secretariat employees, members of delegations and correspondents

⁴⁷ Brochure for the United Nations International School.

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from fifty-eight countries. The owners, representing fifteen New York savings banks, have contended that the property must be operated as a business investment and that the rent rise is the only practicable solution.

The issue of racial segregation was raised:

The telegrams, also sent to Governor Dewey, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Mayor Impellitteri, charged that the rent increases would destroy the community and compel families from some Asian and African countries to be subjected to discriminatory housing practices. The appeal urged that the honor of the United States and the hospitality offered to the United Nations be upheld.⁴⁸

Among the leaders of the Parkway Village community fighting the rent increases was resident Betty Friedan, at the time a writer for labor movement publications.

For two years, beginning in February of 1952, Friedan edited *the Parkway Villager*, transforming it from a chatty source of community news into an activist publication. Beginning in the spring of 1952, she led an extended protest and rent strike, actions she couched in terms of protecting an authentic community from greedy bankers.⁴⁹

The issue of discriminatory housing practices was discussed in African-American newspapers. The *Afro-American* reported in July 1952:

UN Workers Face Separate Housing.

Parkway Village, in Jamaica, Queens, a mixed community made up of United Nations workers of all races, may lose its non-segregated status if the property owners are successful in attempts to raise rent by as much as 32 per cent.... Now, the 685 tenants are trying to save their interracial development through legal action on their own hook. Parkway was set up on a mixed basis by the UN to ensure non-segregated living quarters for workers in its staff offices.... It is one of the few mixed communities in New York.⁵⁰

The *Amsterdam News* reported:

Fear Jimcrow of Non-White UNrs in Proposed Rent Hike

Among the UN personnel living in the project, are scores of non-whites, who fear that they will have to remain and pay the rent increase or move into Jim Crow areas. At present more than 2,400 garden

⁴⁸ "Parkway Villagers Appeal on Rent Rise," *New York Times*, July 28, 1952, p.18.

⁴⁹ Daniel Horowitz, "Rethinking Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique*: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Mar., 1996), pp. 1-42; p. 18.

⁵⁰ "Hi Rent May End Village," *Afro-American*, July 12, 1952, p. 5.

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apartments are vacant in Queens alone, according to the Parkway Village Community Association, which foreign families are reluctant to move into because of racial practices.⁵¹

And the *New York Age* described Parkway Village this way:

In order to guarantee proper housing for United Nations delegates and employees in an atmosphere free of discrimination and segregation, the world organization leased Parkway Village in Jamaica, L.I., in 1947 and for the past five years this garden development has been a community of which every American can be proud. There, living side by side, are men, women and children of all nations, all colors.

Of the 685 apartments in Parkway, 480 are occupied by UN families. The other residents are New Yorkers who wanted to live in a community free of discrimination and were allowed to lease apartments from the UN when vacancies occurred. The success of this experiment of "democracy in action" has been publicized in many magazines and periodicals, and this unique village has become a world symbol.... It is feared that the effect of the increases which the landlords seek as a premium return on unsegregated housing will be to drive out most of the white tenants....⁵²

In August, the *Times* ran an editorial on the topic:

Unique Parkway Village

New York City has an interesting international problem within its own borders which has been waiting for solution upon the return of Secretary General Trygve Lie of the United Nations. In Jamaica, Queens... is a community in which citizens of perhaps fifty countries live... All but about 200 of these dwelling unite house United Nations personnel, of varied language, race, color, creed and political persuasion. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world, so far as we know.

Parkway Village was built for this very purpose at the urging of city officials and others interested in having New York play the helpful host to the United Nations. The United Nations itself is really the landlord, with a master lease from the fifteen savings banks which built the village... [which] expires Oct. 1.

The banks... have given notice that they must have \$23 per room to assure an income of 3 per cent on their investment. Not only did the cost of the original buildings far exceed contemplated figures, but city real estate taxes and maintenance costs, especially the latter, have risen greatly... The banks do not see how they can modify their position, much as they would like to see continuation of this unique community, which one banker speaks of as a "grand experiment."

⁵¹ "Fear Jimcrow of Non-White UNrs in Proposed Rent Hike," *Amsterdam News*, July 26, 1952, p. 16.

⁵² "Interracial Village Hits Proposed Rental Boost," *The New York Age*, July 5, 1952, p. 4.

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... We hope...that Mr. Lie and his aides, together with the tenants, the bankers and interested public-spirited citizens, may find some way to keep in being this living example that the peoples of the world can live harmoniously together – if they can pay the rent.⁵³

Nevertheless, the following September:

U.N. Tells Tenants: Pay More or Move – 650 Families in Queens Project Get Choice of 16% Rent Rise or Eviction by Tuesday. – Public Protest Planned.

The United Nations, in its role as acting landlord of the Parkway Village housing development in Queens, notified the aroused residents yesterday that they must agree to pay an average of 16 per cent higher rent or move out next Tuesday.

...[Assistant Secretary General Mr. Byron Price] observed: "We all have taken great pride and satisfaction in the development of this ideal of an international community. But we must all understand that it is only on a practical basis that sound ideals can be realized."

...The United Nations' primary interest was to make available reasonable housing facilities for African, Chinese, Indian and other non-white families against whom there might be discrimination in the market at large. It therefore deposited \$400,000 as a guarantee and became landlords. This contract expires Jan. 15, 1953.⁵⁴

Since that time, the percentage of United Nations employees living in Parkway Village has declined, but many still live there, and the community remains proud of its international history and character.

In 1973, at a New York City Planning Commission public hearing, Queens Councilman Morton Poyman said in his testimony:

To this date, the international character of this community remains one of its unique attributes. It is the only stable community of its kind in the United States and perhaps in the world, being a blend of United Nations, Japanese and American families of all races.⁵⁵

Parkway Village became a cooperative in 1983.⁵⁶ At that time, according to a study of Queens neighborhoods, it housed

⁵³ "Unique Parkway Village," *New York Times*, editorial, August 25, 1952, p. 16.

⁵⁴ "U.N. Tells Tenants: Pay More or Move," *New York Times*, September 27, 1952, p. 19.

⁵⁵ "Preservation Urged By Parkway Village," *New York Times*, December 9, 1973, p. 169; the hearing involved a proposal to designate Parkway Village as a "Special Planned Community Preservation District"; the proposal, however, failed to pass.

⁵⁶ Alan Oser, "About Real Estate: Parkway Village in Queens Going Co-op," *New York Times*, October 29, 1982, p. 9.

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...residents of various ethnicities and nationalities, among them African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics.⁵⁷

According to *Newsday*, in 1990:

UN residents largely dispersed when the complex turned co-op several years ago. [But Principal Adina Vanderpuye of the United Nations School], a Ghanaian, still lives in Parkway Village.⁵⁸

And in 1991, the same newspaper reported:

Queens Scape: Parkway Village.

International Settlement Became Part of Borough. Built as homes for UN families, these apartments still house a cosmopolitan group.

...Although many UN families have since moved, the apartments remain in a borough that has become one of the most internationally diverse communities in the world.⁵⁹

Today, no longer so unusual for the diversity of its population, Parkway Village now mirrors the larger borough around it, while serving as a reminder of an earlier time, as well as the history of the United Nations in New York City, and offers an excellent and largely intact example of early Post-World War II planned garden-apartment communities.

⁵⁷ Claudia Gryvats Copquin, *The Neighborhoods of Queens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p 19.

⁵⁸ "Queens Portrait: Going Global UN school is home to students, teachers from around the world," *Newsday*, March 11, 1990.

⁵⁹ "Queens Scape Parkway Village," *Newsday*, May 26, 1991, p. 11.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 36.47 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

2 1 8 | | | | | | | | | | *

4 1 8 | | | | | | | | | | *

*SEE SECTION 10 Page 1 for UTM REFERENCES

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anthony Robbins (edited Daniel McEneny, NYSHPO)

organization NYS Historic Preservation Office date August 1st, 2011

street & number PO Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643x-3257

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Parkway Village Cooperative Board

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork 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. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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Verbal Boundary Description

Parkway Village is on a largely rectangular parcel located in Queens County, NY in New York City's Borough of Queens. It is bounded on the south by a service road that abuts Grand Central Parkway, to the north by Union Turnpike, and west by Main Street. An L cuts into the rectangular parcel at the north-west creating a large cutout that is bounded by 150th Street at the west and Goethals Avenue at the north. The western most boundary at the south-west of the parcel is formed by Parsons Boulevard.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of Parkway Village for the purposes of this listing follow the historical boundaries of the development, excluding three areas which have been altered beyond recognition.

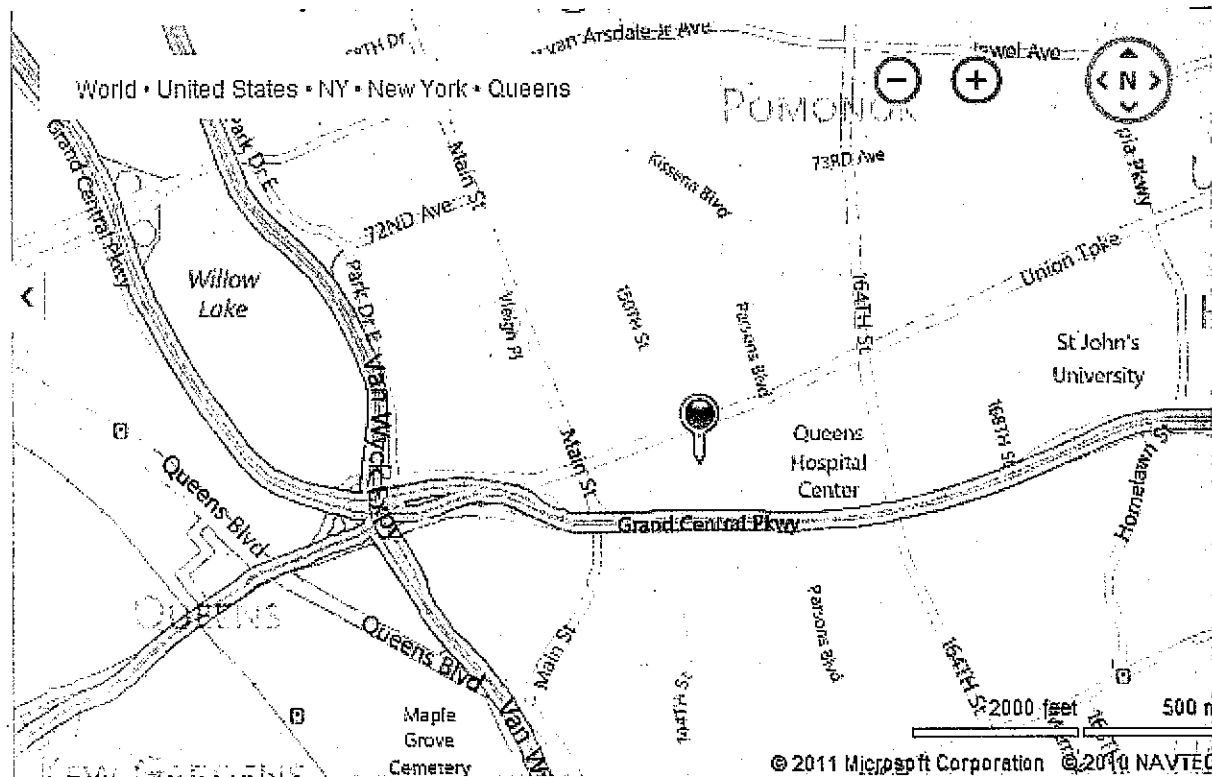
The original boundaries include the following thoroughfares: 150th Street, Main Street, Goethals Avenue, Grand Central Parkway, Parsons Boulevard and Union Turnpike. Excluded from the nomination are the following three areas:

- 1) A section of Union Turnpike, formerly occupied by garages, that has been replaced by new housing – 147-04 to 147-30 Union Turnpike.
- 2) The corner of Goethals Avenue and Parsons Boulevard, formerly the site of one small building (Building 61, at 82-34 Parsons Boulevard) as well as a tennis court and other outdoor facilities, all of which have been replaced by a series of buildings, "Hillcrest Mews," at 82-16 to 82-30 Parsons Boulevard and 150-70 to 150-82 Goethals Avenue.
- 3) The stretch of service road along Grand Central Parkway which until c. 1961 was occupied by a narrower road next to the Parkway and a landscaped border of Parkway Village.

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- 1.) E. 600319 N. 4508233
- 2.) E. 600355 N. 4508077
- 3.) E. 600564 N. 4508145
- 4.) E. 600641 N. 4508067
- 5.) E. 600677 N. 4507928
- 6.) E. 600005 N. 4507916
- 7.) E. 599921 N. 4508087

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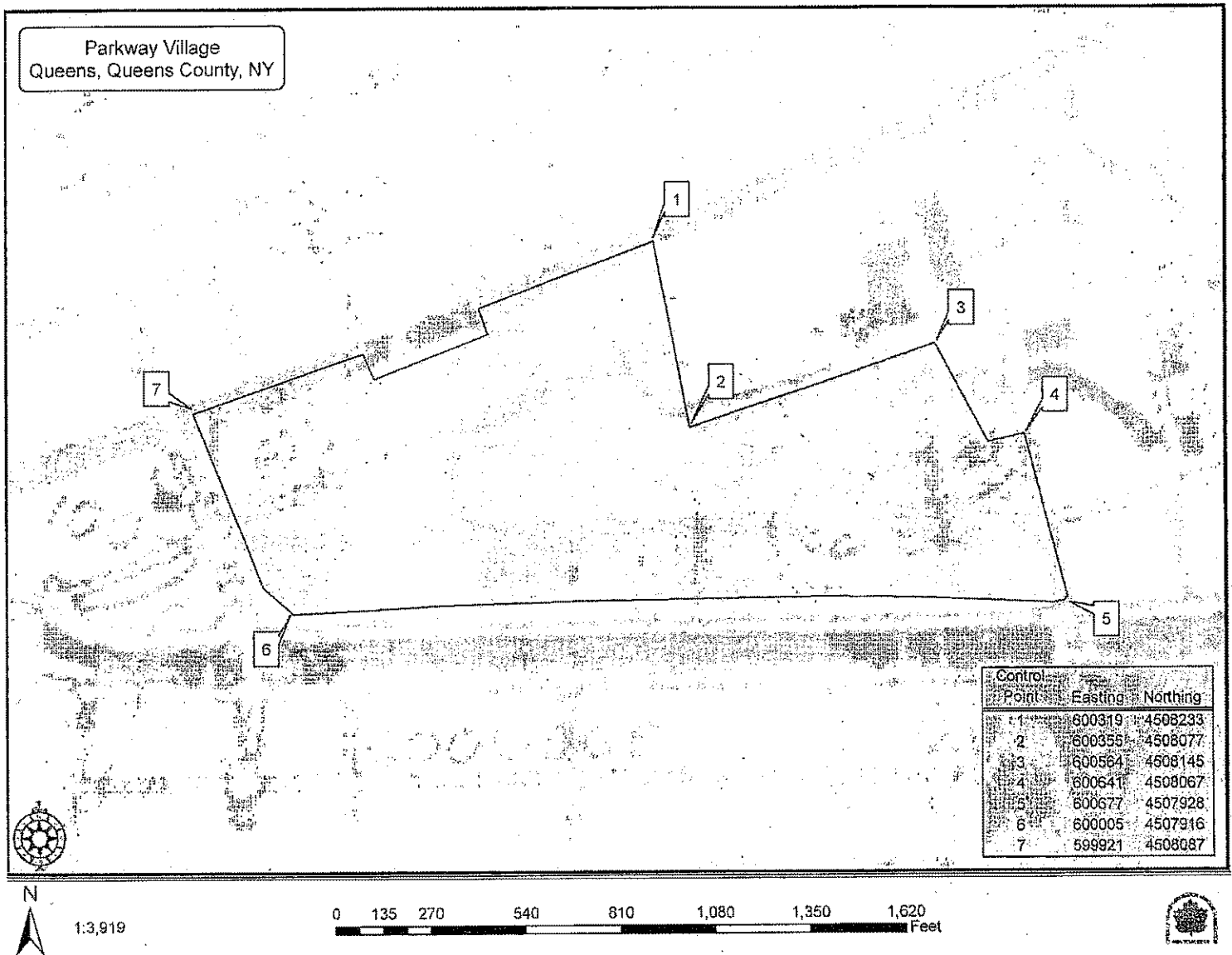
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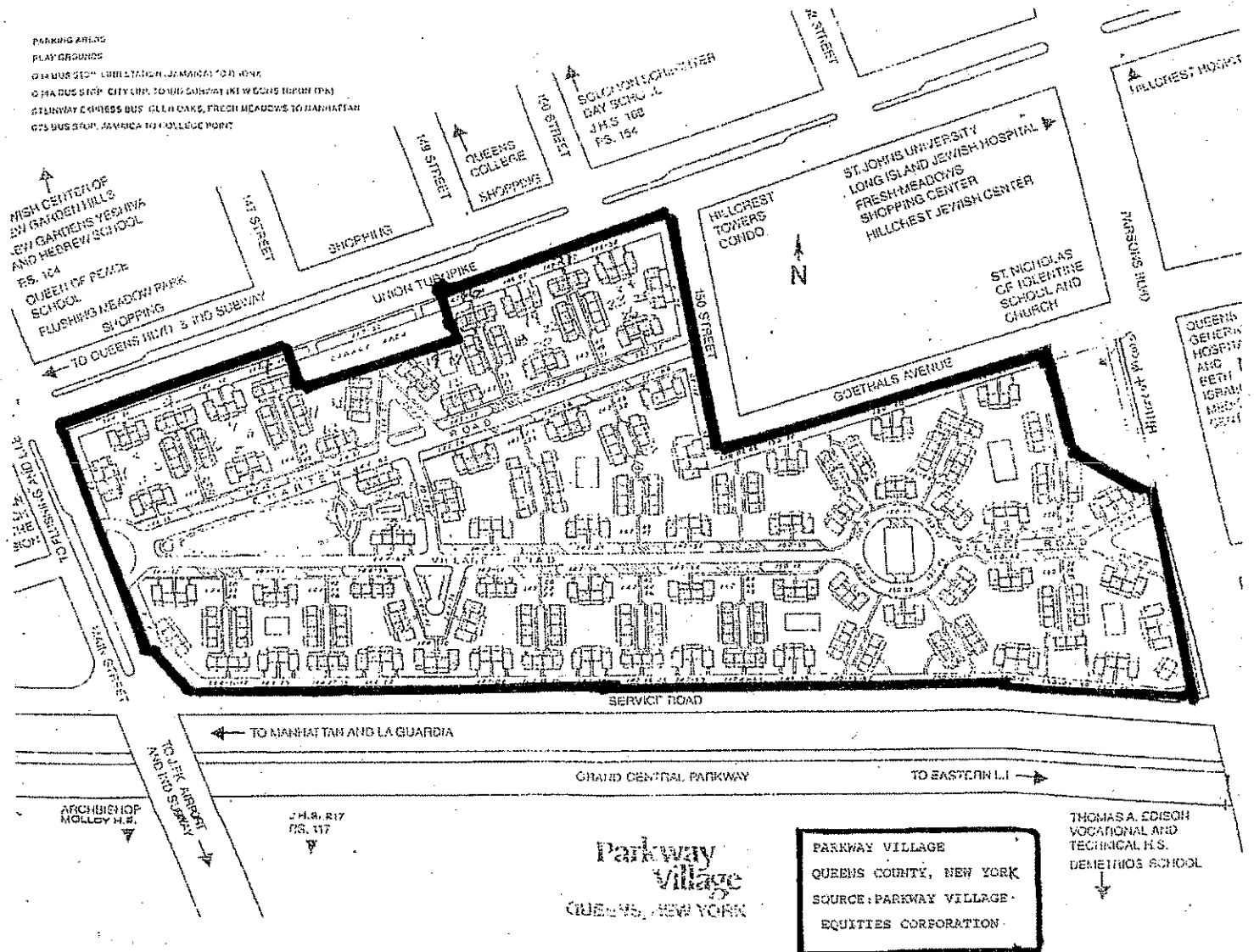


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Additional Information

Photos, Anthony Robbins, 2011

On File Peebles Island Resource Center, Waterford, NY

- 1.) 150th St and Charter Charter Road – gate
- 2.) The green
- 3.) The circle
- 4.) E-8 (#32 and 33) – courtyard
- 5.) F-12 (#16) – from courtyard
- 6.) B-3 (#64) – front
- 7.) C-6 (#24) – front portico
- 8.) Power Station – 1

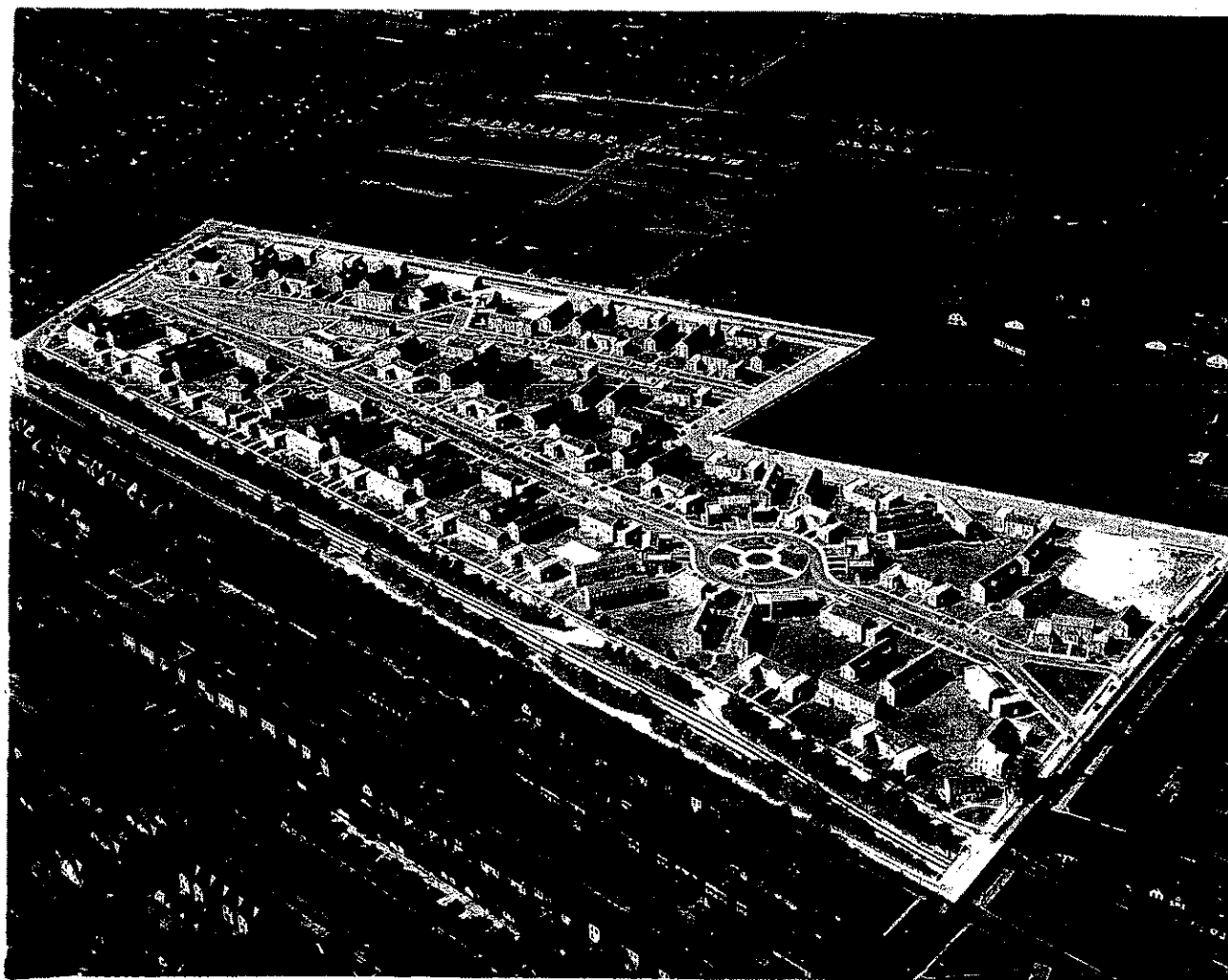
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Historic Views from the Parkway Village archives.
Source Unknown



THOMAS AIRVIEWS

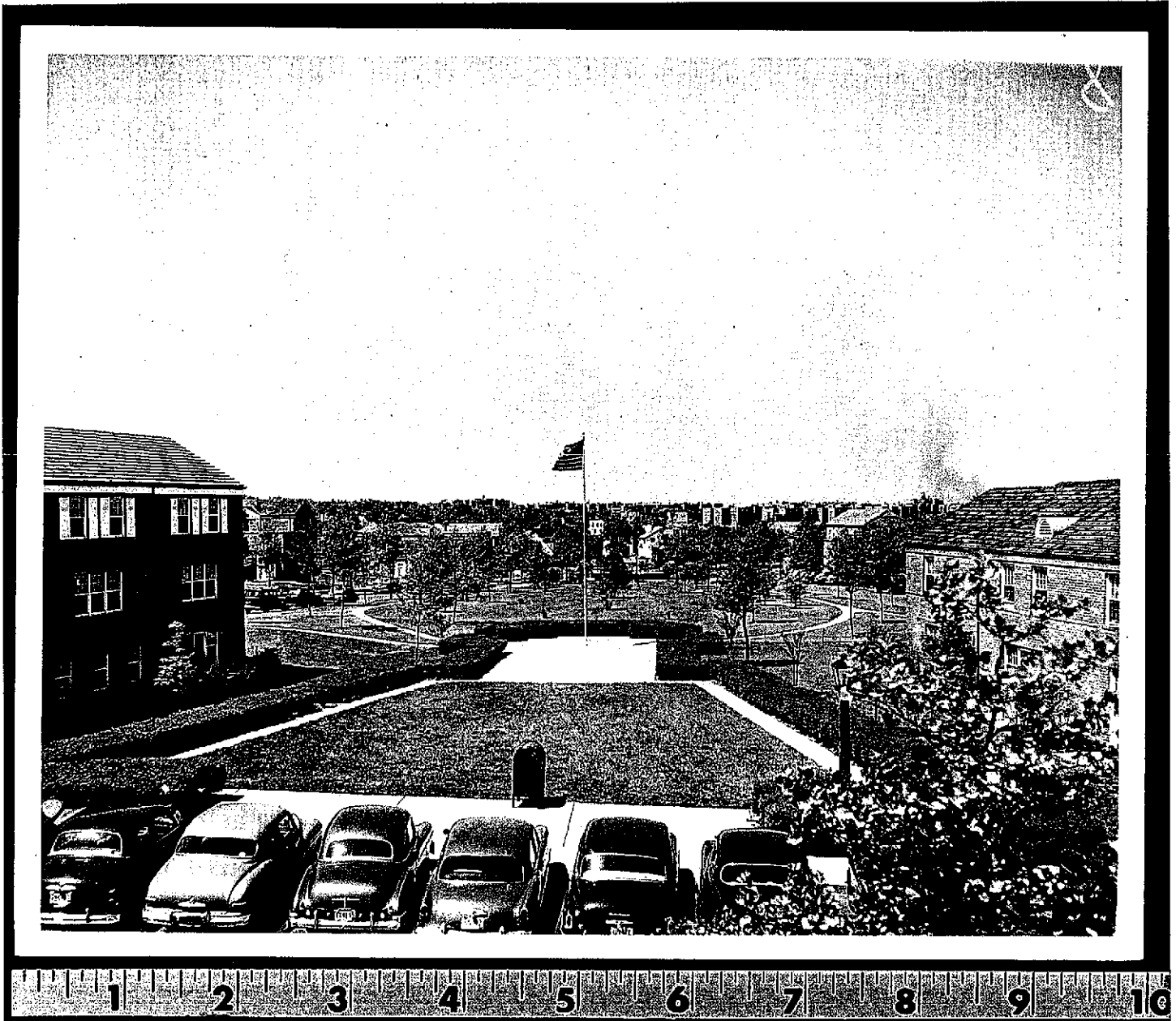


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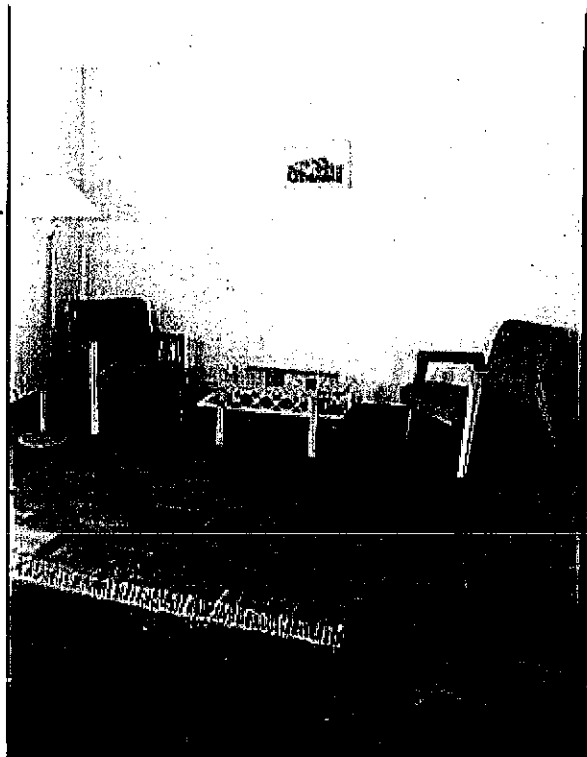


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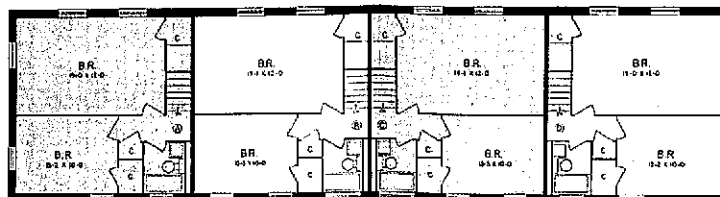


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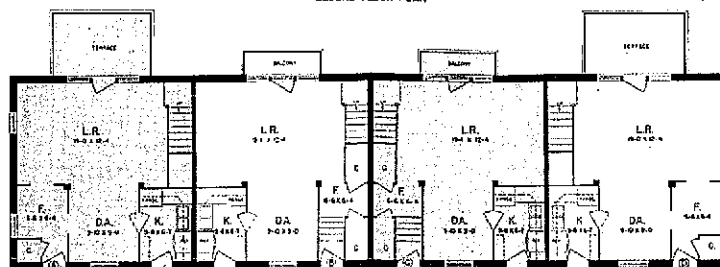
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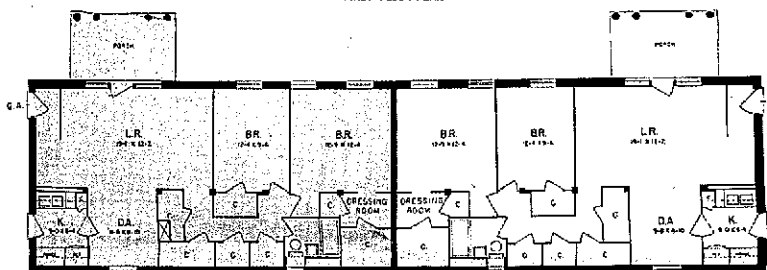
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SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GARDEN FLOOR PLAN

TYPE "F" BUILDINGS
9, 16, 21, 52, 67, 72, 82, 87, 92, 106
2-1/2 ROOM GARDEN APARTMENTS
4-1/2 ROOM DUPLEX APARTMENTS

Parkway Village
QUEENS, NEW YORK
A Residential Community
BUILT-OWNED-OPERATED
BY A GROUP OF MUTUAL SAVINGS BANKS
IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Owner
Parkway Village, Inc.
Agent
Savings Banks Trust Company
14 Wall Street, New York 5, N.Y.

All Dimensions Are Approximate





Landmarks Preservation
Commission

Robert B. Tierney
Chair

August 25, 2011

Kate Daly
Executive Director
kdaly@lpc.nyc.gov

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7926 tel
212 669 7797 fax

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Director
New York State Office of Parks Recreation
and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

Re: Parkway Village, between Grand Central Parkway, Main Street, Union
Turnpike, 150th Street, Goethals Avenue, and Parsons Boulevard, Queens

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

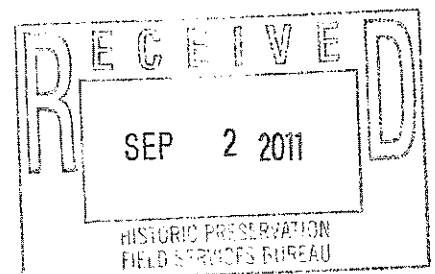
I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of Parkway Village, located between Grand Central Parkway, Main Street, Union Turnpike, 150th Street, Goethals Avenue, and Parsons Boulevard in Queens, to the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Commission has reviewed the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau and has determined that this building appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore based on this review, the Commission supports the nomination of Parkway Village.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Daly

cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Mary Beth Betts





RORY I. LANCMAN
Twenty-Fifth Assembly District
Queens County, New York City

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
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December 6, 2011

Ruth Pierpont
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

Dear Ms. Pierpont,

I write in support of Parkway Village's nomination on the National and State Registry for Historic Places.

Parkway Village is a historic model of diversity, multiculturalism and progressive thinking. Parkway Village was established as United Nations housing as directed by President Harry Truman in 1946. This complex was the first racially and ethnically diverse planned community. In 1947, residents represented 117 different countries, while 25% of the units were reserved for World War II veterans. Parkway Village's unique diversity attracted notable Americans among its earliest residents such as: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Dr. Ralph Bunche; author, Betty Friedan; and NAACP Executive Director Roy Wilkins.

Parkway Village was designed by renowned architect Leonard Schultze, also responsible for assisting and designing such landmarks as the Grand Central Terminal, the Waldorf Astoria and the Breakers in Palm Beach. The contours of the land were preserved, with buildings covering only 16% of the original acreage. Today, Parkway Village is enriched by newly planted trees, spacious lawns and flowering private gardens.

Parkway Village is an important fixture in the community and I strongly support its nomination on the National and State Registry for Historic Places.

Very truly yours,


Rory J. Lancman

cc: Parkway Village Historical Society

Parkway Village
Queens, NY 11355
Queens County

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