

THE GARDEN HOMES PROJECT

A Dissertation on Cooperative Home Building Written
in Collaboration with Lawrence Francis Daly A.B.

by

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a housing problem, more or less acute, in Milwaukee for many years. In 1911, as my collaborator has indicated, Mayor Emil Seidel (1910-1912) appointed the first housing commission to consider ways and means of ridding the City of this problem. The Seidel administration, however, was superseded by that of Mayor Gerhard Bading (1912-1916) in 1912, and the housing committee ceased to function until the administration of Mayor Daniel W. Hoan (1916-) when it was reappointed in 1918.

In the meantime the United States had entered into the World War. During the war period, the industries of the nation were turned toward the production of military necessities. Carpenters, masons, builders of all kinds were either with the colors or engaged in the construction of great war plants. Finance was directed toward one objective: the production of a huge, well oiled fighting machine. Men did not think of housing. There were greater things in the air than mere bodily comfort.

But the war ended on November 11, 1918 and with it ended the excitement and rhetoric of four years. With the common enemy vanquished, America turned toward the domestic problems within her borders that had been a disregarded source of irritation in busier days.

The housing shortage in Milwaukee meanwhile continued to increase. It seemed as if day by day the demand for homes grew greater and the supply, smaller. My collaborator, however,

has discussed this at some length and hence it will not be treated here.

There were two answers to the demand for homes, the one proposed by the Milwaukee Association of Commerce, the other by the new housing commission appointed by Mayor Hoan, June 18, 1918. For a few months it seemed that these two would both endeavor to solve the housing problem, each in its own way. The City housing commission issued a report containing certain suggestions. In keeping with these suggestions, Senator David Jennings introduced a bill into the State Legislature at Madison providing for the organization of cooperative housing corporations. The bill passed on June 21, 1919. An effort, however, was being made meanwhile to merge the two plans. The attempt failed and the City housing commission with plans formulated for a constructive remedy, sat back to watch their competitors in action.

It seems that the Association of Commerce had attempted to do a little too much. They had hoped for much enthusiastic encouragement from the great industries of Milwaukee but they met for the most part only with tolerant indifference. In consequence of this, while they did not actually fail, neither did they succeed, but retired from the field, leaving to the City housing commission an almost virgin problem and much good will.

Immediately the latter body set to work to organize a corporation of the type outlined in the Jennings Law. On February 10, 1921, the articles of incorporation were filed

Shortly after, officers were elected, a stock issue was floated and the Company was ready to begin its operation. This experiment was the first of its kind seeking to solve the housing problem in this country.

It is at this point that this paper takes up the Garden Homes Company, as the project of this corporation is called. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss at length the housing shortage in Milwaukee, just mentioned; neither will it give an account of the various housing commissions, the provisions of the Jennings's Act together with its history, nor the organization or management, financial or otherwise of the Garden Homes Company. This thesis will endeavor to set forth the physical assemblage and construction of the Garden Homes project, from the time of the purchase of the site, the actual building, planning and renting conditions, up to the present date. Section One includes a chronological exposition of the physical makeup of the Garden Homes. Section Two is a description of the homes themselves, their number, kind and architectural design, together with the quality and source of the material out of which they were constructed. Section Three will discuss the various economies effected through this plan and the reasons given for them will be considered. Section Four is a brief summary of the advantages of cooperative house building.

The majority of the data for this thesis was derived from personal interviews with officers of the Garden Homes Company, who were very generous in supplying information.

In many instances, however, owing to the fact that exact dates were absolutely unobtainable, on the advice of the men interviewed, newspaper files were consulted. All sources are indicated in the footnotes.

SECTION ONE

THE PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE GARDEN HOMES

The Milwaukee Sentinel of February 3rd, 1921, contains an item of interest to those who trace the actual construction of the Garden Homes project.

"Articles of incorporation of the Garden Homes Company were approved and adopted. These will be signed and filed with the Secretary of State and the Register of Deeds of Milwaukee County. They provide for a company with \$500,000 capital, equally divided between preferred and common stock and authorize the company to begin business when 25% of the capital is subscribed and 10% is paid in."

This means that as soon as \$125,000 worth of stock had been subscribed and \$50,000 worth of stock paid for, the Garden Homes Company could purchase property and begin the erection of houses.

There was little fear on the part of those directing the destinies of the newly formed corporation that the necessary one-quarter could not be raised. In the 1920 budget of both the City and County of Milwaukee, a sum of \$50,000 had been set aside for this very purpose. Not being utilized however, it was reincluded in the 1921 budget and was available at any time. The sum of \$100,000 of the necessary \$125,000 was therefore ready for service. The other \$25,000² the officers felt, could be secured at any time from civic minded citizens and industries. The promoters, however, felt so secure that they immediately began to look about for a site for the houses which they planned to erect.

This investigation quickly took the form of a seriously organized search. "Sites suitable for fifty to seventy five homes are being inspected by the special committee of the Garden Homes Company, the municipal housing corporation," says

the Milwaukee Journal, March 4th, 1921,- "anyone who has unemployed acreage in Milwaukee County may make an offer to C.B. Whitnall, Commonwealth Mutual Savings Bank, 407 Broadway."

This notice seemed to have attracted much attention for

"some 32 or 33 pieces of property, located in and out of the city were offered. These sites were viewed by the entire commission and a member of the city health department. Of the sites considered, four pieces of property seemed to have advantages worthy of special consideration.

The first of these, the A. Groelling Estate property, was located near the south east corner of North Milwaukee. It is bounded on the north east by the Cedarburg Plank Road and on the west by 27th street, Atkinson avenue entering the tract near the south east corner and leaving it a little south of the middle of the 27th street boundary. The tract comprises approximately 30 acres and was held at \$29,000. This tract possessed the following advantages:

School: A lower grade school is situated at Franklin and 21st street, about one mile away. The North Milwaukee Schools are three quarters of a mile distant.

Sewerage: There is a possibility of connecting the sewer of this tract with the North Milwaukee sewer if the Common Council of North Milwaukee agrees.

Water: There is an 8" line on Atkinson avenue, and a 12" line on the Cedarburg road with a pressure of 50 lbs.

Street Car Service: The 12th street car line of the T.M.E.R. & L. Company is now run on 27th Street into North Milwaukee, at half hour intervals: (27th street is the west boundary of this tract.) The Milwaukee Northern interurban railway runs on 20th street about one quarter of a mile distant.

Industries: The industries of North Milwaukee are easily reached from this tract. Areas which soon will be zoned as industrial areas are within easy access. Within a radius of about a mile are situated such industries as the A.O. Smith Company, one of the very largest of Milwaukee's large industrial plants; the Evinrude Company; the National Metal Products Company; the Bernert Manufacturing Company; the Razell Machine Works; the E.R. Wagner Manufacturing Company; the Paramount Woodwork and Manufacturing Company; the W.O. Goodrich Company and others.

The second of these tracts to receive serious attention from the commission was the Schroeder property, consisting of about 22 acres, for which the price of \$1,000 an acre was demanded. This piece of land was located at

the north east corner of the intersection of the Port Washington road and Hampton street. It was situated to the east of Lincoln Park and to the north of Eastbrook Park. It offered the following advantages and limitations:

Schools: The Whitefish Bay School, one mile distant is the school nearest this property. The Milwaukee public school at Green Bay avenue and Mills street is a mile and a quarter away.

Sewerage: No service is possible until the Metropolitan Intercepting Service System is installed.

Water: The nearest city water line is in Shorewood. To extend this line to the property would cost about \$20,000.

Street Car Service: The Third street line of the T. M.E.R. & L. Company is one and one half mile distant. The interurban line of the Milwaukee Northern Railway is one mile distant. The Fox Point line of the T.M.E.R. & L. Company is one and one half mile distant.

Industries: The Pure Food Company is located directly south of this tract. Other industries must be reached by street car.

The Wagner Property, the third to be considered, lies on the Green Bay road near 14th street. It is of such size that almost any acreage desired could be sold, the price ranging from \$800 to \$1,400 per acre. The ground is very high and commands a splendid view. The Wagner Property offered the following:

Schools: The Green Bay avenue school is three quarters of a mile away.

Sewerage: No immediate sewerage service is possible.

Water: There is no city water at hand just at present. It could be had, however, by extending the 16th street line to the property at a cost of \$20,000.

Street Car Service: The interurban line of the Milwaukee Northern passes at a distance of three blocks. The Third street line of the T.M.E.R. & L. Company is one and one half miles away.

Industries: The Pure Food Company is located in the immediate vicinity and other factories are nearby.

The only property on the South Side which appealed to the committee was the Howard Property, on the intersection of Howell and Howard Avenues. It consists of a tract of about thirty acres, purchasable at \$1,000 an acre. The Howard Property had the following to recommend it for consideration:

Schools: The nearest grade school is at the corner of Chicago road and Howard avenue, one half mile away.

Sewerage: No service is likely for years to come.

Water: No city water is available at the present time but it could be brought to the property by an extension of the Oklahoma line, one mile away, at a cost of about \$25,000.

Street Car Service: Both the Howell avenue line of the T.M.E.R. & L. Company and the city line of the Chicago North Shore Electric Railway are situated about a mile to the west.

Industries: All South Side industries are within reach of this property.

The committee empowered to make the choice of the site analyzed the value of the properties offered and placed them in their relative positions under various headings such as schools, sewerage, water etc.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Price
Groelling	2	1	1	1	4	2	3	----- \$975
Schroeder	3	-	-	3	1	3	1	1,000
Wagner	4	-	-	4	2	4	4	975
Howard	1	-	-	2	3	1	2	1,100

(Legend: A- schools
B- Sewerage
C- water
D- service
E- parks
F- industries
G- environment)" (1)

Thus it will be seen that the Groelling Property, under all classifications received 14 votes, while under five classifications, the Howard Property received 9 votes, the Wagner Property 18 and the Schroeder Property 11. While, therefore, it will be seen that the Groelling Property did not receive the minimum of votes, it must be born in mind that in two important details, the other three properties were totally wanting. In sewerage and water, the Groelling Property was unique, as sewerage and water are more essential to a community than parks and environment. While the Groelling Property could not quite compare with the Howard Property as far as proximity to industries was concerned, it still ranked a close second, being located, as has been indicated, near the North Milwaukee and the northern Milwaukee industrial districts.

(1) Report of the Special Site Committee of the Garden Homes Company in the Minutes of the Garden Homes Company.

"The committee, therefore, after this analysis, suggested that the Groelling Property was the most desirable of all the sites offered, with the Howard Property as second choice, the Schroeder as third and the Wagner as fourth." (1)

But while the committee had been looking over the site the company had not relaxed its efforts marketing the stock. By May 20th, 1921, "it developed that with the \$50,000 subscribed by the City to the preferred stock of the corporation and a similar amount subscribed by the County and \$38,000 subscribed by private parties, there remained only \$112,000 of the preferred issue of \$250,000, desired for the first block of homes to be built by the Corporation." (2) As has already been noted, only \$125,000 was necessary, according to the law, in order to begin operations. The company at this time was therefore in a position to purchase land and erect homes.

The purchase was delayed, however, because of the fact that the Common Council of North Milwaukee, knowing that the Garden Homes Subdivision would apply for annexation to the City of Milwaukee, refused to allow the directors of the Garden Homes Company, in the event of the purchase of the Groelling site, to connect the sewerage system of the future homes with the North Milwaukee Sewers. For the moment the project seemed to have struck a difficult problem, but due to the foresight of its directors, who contemplated a connection with the Metropolitan connecting sewer in four years time, a move was begun to purchase the property and install temporary septic tanks.

(1) Report of the Special Site Committee of the Garden Homes Company in the Minutes of the Garden Homes Company.

(2) Milwaukee Sentinel, May 21st, 1921.

The Groelling Site was finally purchased on July 25th, 1921. The Milwaukee Leader records:

"Coincident with the announcement of the selection of the site for the first unit of Milwaukee's Municipal housing project, just beyond the north city limits, north of the fork of the Atkinson and Cedarburg roads east of 27 street, the directors of the Company declared the preliminary work for the erection of 200 homes will be started today.

"In the meanwhile the work of installing the temporary septic tanks to meet the sewerage problem, which had held up the consummation of the deal for several days, will be inaugurated. The directors of the Company said it was impossible to connect with the North Milwaukee sewerage system and that septic tanks will be used until the Metropolitan Sewerage commission cares for the locality in its plans for the County sewerage system. The property acquired is a tract of about 29 acres and the price paid was about \$28,000. (a little less than \$1,000 an acre) (1)

Not all of this amount was paid in cash, however, for in an interview with David W. Harper on April 12th, 1923, in which he submitted for inspection the stock book of the Garden Homes Company, he asserted that Charles A. Groelling held twenty shares of preferred stock in the company; Edward H. Groelling, his brother, another twenty and third brother, William A. Groelling, ten. These three brothers, according to Mr. Harper, had been the owners of the property and had accepted these shares, valued at \$100 each, aggregating \$5,000, as part payment for the land. (2)

With the land purchased, the next step was the plotting of the property into lots, the preparation of the site, and the designing of the houses to be erected. Owing to the magnitude of the undertaking, this had to be done with great care, for what would ordinarily be a minor detail in the con-

(1) Milwaukee Leader, July 25th, 1921.

(2) Section 5, of the Jennings Law provides that : "No such corporation shall issue any stock except in consideration of money or of labor or property estimated at its true money value etc."

struction of a single house, when multiplied in over a hundred houses would become a factor of importance. The committees, together with Mr. Schuchardt, who was bearing the heaviest part of the architectural labor, had much to do, but the work had progressed so far, that, speaking of a meeting of the directors of the Garden Homes Company on Aug. 28th, 1921, the Milwaukee Leader said:

"It is expected that all blue prints and designs of building will be ready at this time, and that work can be started at once. Miller (chairman of the board) stated that the plans had been held up for several weeks because the committee considered new materials after were once made and that he expected after the Tuesday meeting, nothing would hold up the work and that they would be able to start on the first unit of houses at once.

"If possible we will try to build 200 houses instead of the first plan unit of 75, so that we may help the present unemployment situation," he said." (1)

By September 18, 1921, however, only the plans for the platte and the houses had been prepared. On this date there appeared in the Milwaukee Journal a map of the platte, together with the following comment:

"The usual rectangular plan of laying out lots was largely abandoned in platting the Garden Homes Company, which will start the erection of its first unit of 11 houses this week.

"Engineers will stake out the lots Monday, it is planned and ground will probably be broken this week. The first 11 houses to be built will be built along the Cedarburg Road. It is expected to follow with about fifty more and if plans for raising additional funds materialize, the entire tract will be covered with houses. About 700 applications from persons desiring homes have been filed."

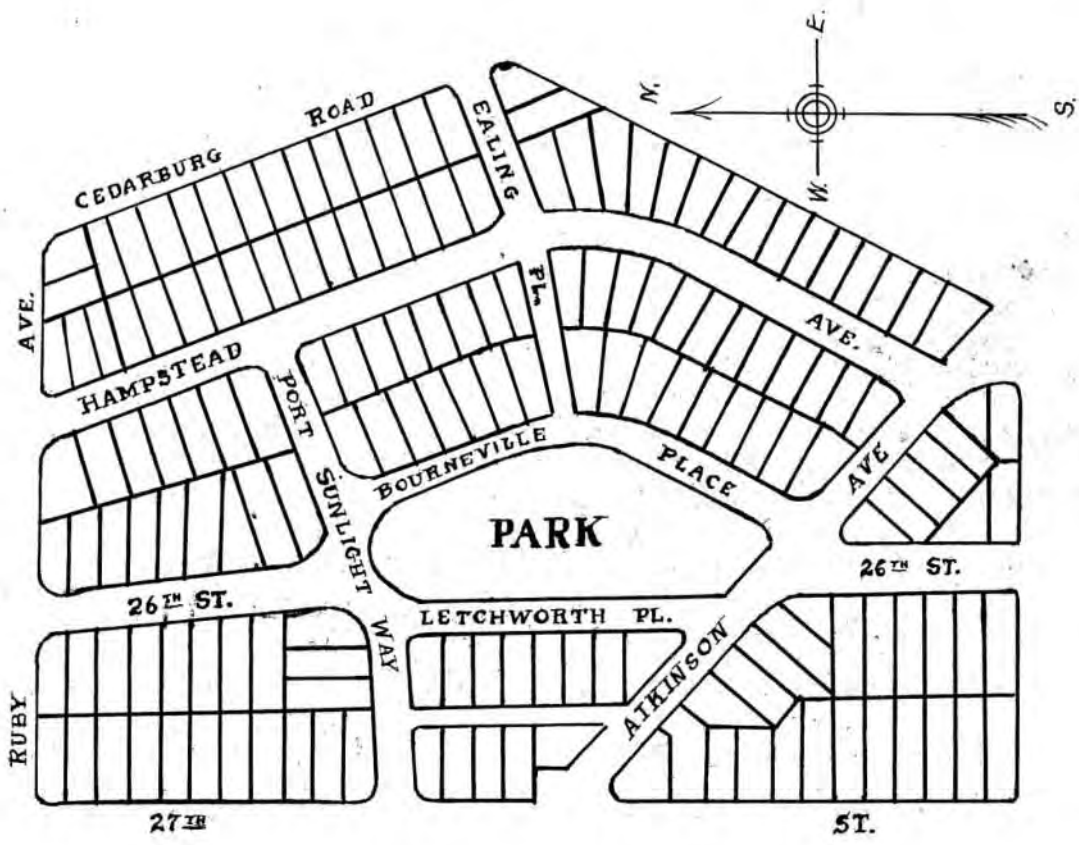
In looking over the map, shown on the following page, one cannot help but admire the euphonious street names: Port

(1) Milwaukee Leader, August 27th, 1921.

The Garden Homes Subdivision is built up around a park. The standard, that is the most general, size of the lots is 30 by 120 feet, but many are of irregular shape owing to the curving streets and many angles. There are 167 lots in the tract, about four acres of which are not included in the platte shown. There are no alleys in the entire tract, with the exception of a short alley running north and south in the block between Letchworth place and 27th avenue.

The unplatted ground, consisting of approximately of 2 acres or 22 lots, is reserved as a neighborhood park, on which, if at some future time a need arises for a school within the Subdivision, a school may be erected. "The park will not be platted out until the streets and sidewalks are in. The park has been deeded to the City and accepted by the Common Council. It will be taken care of by the Park Board of Milwaukee."- David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

THE GARDEN HOMES
SUBDIVISION



Sunlight way, Letchworth place, Bourneville place, Ealing place, Hampstead avenue and others. These, however, were selected for a greater reason than euphony. They are the names of great European cooperative enterprises. The choice of them in this case was most appropriate.

Five days later, on September 23, 1921, the Garden Homes again found place in the newspapers. Under the caption 'Garden Homes Dedicated' the Milwaukee Leader carried the following report:

"The Garden Homes tract, almost a miniature prairie on the northwestern outskirts of the City, was formally dedicated late yesterday, when Mayor Daniel W. Hoan and W.C. Carlson, President of the Commerce Association, turned the first two spades of dirt.

"There were nearly 500 persons gathered to witness the dedication and they remained long after the exercises, looking over the ground and talking in groups."

But while the work of the building committee was progressing rather slowly, the work of the tenants committee, composed of Galbraith Miller Jr., Chairman; Edward Kiefer, business manager of the Painters union; H.H. Jacobs, University Settlement; W.E. McCarthy. Board of Supervisors and J.V. Maple, was advancing by leaps and bounds. Questionnaires were being drawn up and prospective tenants being divided into lists for inspection. The Milwaukee Leader, incidently a Socialist organ, which seemed to take a very great interest in the project, carried the following item on September 30th, 1921:

"With more than 700 applicants waiting to occupy the 11 houses now under construction, the first unit of 75 houses to be erected at Cedarburg and Atkinson roads this fall, questionnaires were sent out today by the

Garden Homes Company, carrying out Milwaukee's municipal housing project, to determine those most in need of homes.

"The purpose of the questionnaires, according to H.H. Jacobs, head of the University Settlement and member of the tenants committee, is to let the houses to men most in need of them.

"We need some way of checking up on prospective tenants. With 700 in the waiting line and 75 houses at most to be divided among them, it is necessary that we go through a process of elimination, therefore the questionnaire. As soon as these are returned to us, we will limit the number to about twice the number of homes. Our next step will be a personal investigation of the tenants."

"Questions included in the questionnaire of the Garden Homes Company take in the name of the applicant, telephone number, address etc. Next are the questions pertaining to nationality, color, age, married or single, number of dependents and ages of each. If of foreign birth, the length of citizenship and residence in Milwaukee is asked.

"Occupation, the place employed, and the yearly income are also required. Along with the questions pertaining to financial standing are those of insurance, how much, what kind, (life, casualty, sick benefit) with whom and what premium per year.

"Rentals now paid and objections to the present place of residence also come in for consideration.

"Concerning the homes of the company itself the questions are what kind of a house desired, four, five or six rooms, the amount to be paid in first payments and monthly payments thereafter.

"Applicants must give the names and addresses of three last employers and length of service with them and also names and addresses of three other references.

"The final question is: 'Do you own any property in Milwaukee and where is it located.'"

It will be seen from this that the tenants committee was very cautious and thorough in the selection of future tenants of the Homes. One of the reasons for this care was that the homes were being built to shelter those who were living in unsuitable dwellings and who were at the same time of such a nature and disposition that they could become members of a corporation, which was to last for many years, and which would bring them into very close contact with their fellow

stockholders.

The insistence with which the questionnaire demands the name and address of the employer was for a greater reason than merely to secure a reference with regard to the character of the prospective tenant. The Company, it must be remembered, was still engaged in floating the preferred stock, a task which was necessary in order to secure the funds requisite for building operations. The majority of this stock, as an examination of the stock lists of the Company in the possession of the Executive secretary will show, was, with the exception of the 1,000 shares held equally by the City and the County, purchased by large Milwaukee manufacturing concerns. The connection between this fact and the questionnaire was indicated in an interview Mayor Hoan on September 9, 1921, quoted in the Milwaukee Leader, September 10, 1921:

"I understand that the board of directors are listing all applicants according to the firm who employs them. It is their intention to suggest that the corporation having a large number of applicants for these homes, loan sufficient money to the Garden Homes Corporation to enable them to erect another quota."

But still the work failed to begin. The site had been dedicated on the 23rd of September, 1921, but nearly a month's delay in excavation followed. Again the Milwaukee Leader supplies the explanation:

"No work has been done on laying the foundations for the 75 houses, the first unit of homes to be built by the Garden Homes Company and to be ready for occupancy, since Mayor D.W. Hoan dug the first shovelfull of ground several weeks ago, it was intimated today by officials of the Company with offices in the Fox building, when it was stated that the contracts were still open and it had not been determined whether or not the union scale would be used in carrying out Milwaukee's municipal housing project.

"While it was officially announced two weeks ago that the Company had agreed to pay union wages to workers, and because of this, had asked contractors to resubmit bids taking into consideration the union scale, it is still a matter of argument among the company officials as to what scale of wages should be adopted.

"It is expected that nothing further will be done until the end of the week, said H.H. Pease, in charge of the offices. Galbraith Miller Jr., absent from the city for several weeks, is expected home late today and it is possible that he may resume the work of the corporation by Thursday, according to Pease.

"Meanwhile hundreds of replies in questionnaires sent out three weeks ago to applicants for homes are being received in the Garden Homes office.

"While answers to questionnaires are being held in strict confidence, Pease stated that the average person applying for one of the homes is earning between \$1,500 and \$2,500. The reasons given for wanting a new home are those of exorbitant rents, undesirable locations, leaky houses and overcrowded homes." (1)

From this extract it will be seen that there was some hesitation among the directors of the Company with regard to the wage scale; nevertheless the union scale was finally settled upon. However, in an interview on March 26th, 1923, Mayor Hoan made this comment on the wage scale: "The union scale is paid throughout. The friendly cooperation of the labor element is essential to the housing project." Speaking on the same subject, William D. Harper, Building Inspector of the City of Milwaukee and one of the prime movers of the Housing Commission and the Garden Homes project, said: "Everything was paid for at the standard rate of wages, because we didn't want anyone to say that we are taking our gains out of the poor man. We raised the wage of the laborer from 60¢ to 65¢ out of our own free will last year." (2)

Another item of interest in the above extract is the vast

(1) Milwaukee Leader, October 19th, 1921.

(2) Interview with William D. Harper, March 27th, 1923.

number of applications for homes, an indication of the interest that was being shown in the Company and its labor. There was little of that suspicion, which attended cooperative enterprises of all kinds, an example of which was cited by Mayor Hoan:

"Some manufacturers started a project in Kenosha (a housing project to relieve acute housing shortage). Real estate men spread stories around, saying that the manufacturers were getting rich etc., and undermined the project. I do not know whether this practice is general but I believe it is. At any rate, this has been eliminated by having a representative of labor on the committee (controlling the destinies of the Garden Homes Company)."
(1)

To return to the narrative, the labor difficulty was finally adjusted and by the first day of November, 1921, the building was begun. Two sawing machines, used to make windows, door frames, porch posts and miscellaneous millwork were installed on the grounds. Men were hired to do the masonry, carpentry and other work.

"All hiring and discharging of laborers was done by the superintendent. The original superintendent is no longer with the Company. The present superintendent is Mr. Peter Breen." (2)

With regard to the number of men employed on the Garden Homes tract, David W. Harper, the Executive Secretary of the Company said:

"At present we have 25 men working out there. We have had as high as 62, excluding, of course, contractors. The plumbing, furnace and electric wiring and fixture installation has been done by contract." (3)

Throughout the winter of 1921, the work continued. On January 16th, 1922, the Milwaukee Sentinel was able to make the following report:

- (1) Interview with Mayor Daniel W. Hoan, March 26th, 1923.
- (2) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.
- (3) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

"A picturesque city in miniature, with winding streets, pleasant parks and drives bordered by cream colored houses is being created between Milwaukee and North Milwaukee by the Garden Homes Corporation, in which the City and the County are financially interested.

"Twelve houses are now under way, seven being under roof, two in frame and the excavation completed for three more. A cellar is being excavated every two days and a half now, and when the spring building season opens, it is proposed to rush work with a crew of 200 men, one lot of artisans following up the other with no waste of time. (This was never done. The greatest number of men employed by the company at any time was 62.) The twenty houses built this winter will not be finished inside now. The inside work will be done in stormy weather in the spring or while the sewer connections are being put in.

"It is planned to build a main sewer north to the Hampdon road and later to connect with the Metropolitan sewerage commission's sewers."

As was observed in the earlier part of this paper, sewerage played an important part in the selection of a site, as sewerage facilities are absolutely essential to a healthy, sanitary community. One of the best features of the Groelling Property had been the fact that it was so situated as to offer easy connection with the North Milwaukee sewerage system and ultimate connection with the Milwaukee Metropolitan sewerage system, which, according to present plans, will approach the fact in about 1924. It had developed at the time of the original negotiations, however, that the new subdivision, if it were created, would apply for annexation to the City of Milwaukee. Thereupon the Common Council of North Milwaukee refused sewer connections, despite the fact that the directors of the Garden Homes Company proceeded to purchase the Groelling Property and to plan for the installation of temporary tanks. (These details have been already set forth) But the tank system did not seem to exactly fit the need. A petition was therefore sent to the State Board of Health :

requesting that the Common Council of North Milwaukee be ordered to permit the Garden Homes Subdivision to use a North Milwaukee sewer connection. By the middle of April, 1922, this petition was granted and the Milwaukee Sentinel of April 21, 1922, contains the information that "the Town of Milwaukee had adopted a resolution permitting the Garden Homes sewer to cross its territory to connect with the North Milwaukee sewer."

Commenting on the sewerage question, David W. Harper said, "Our sewerage system is connected with the North Milwaukee sewerage system and will be until 1924, when the Metropolitan sewerage goes through. We secured the North Milwaukee connection only after the State Board of Health, in answer to a petition of ours, ordered the Common Council of North Milwaukee to give us service. North Milwaukee objected to our using their sewers as we planned annexation with Milwaukee." (1)

Even while the sewerage question was being settled, building operations were advancing. In the issue of the Milwaukee Sentinel already referred to the additional statement is found:

"At the Garden Homes addition --- twenty houses are now under roof, basements are ready and framing has commenced for three more, while six other basements have been excavated and the footings are in four of them.

"The plumbing, electric wiring and heating pipes are in twenty, while the insulite used in place of lathing, is in place in fifteen, which are ready for plastering, as soon as sewer connections are provided.

"Plans for the sewer system are now in the Builders and Traders Exchange for examination by contractors and bids will be opened on Wednesday. The Bucyrus Company has loaned a steam shovel to the corporation for use in digging cellars, sewer trenches and street work, and has applied to the Commissioner of Public Works for permission to traverse the city to get to its scene of operation.

(1) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

"The annexation proceedings which will bring the Garden Homes site into the City of Milwaukee, are well under and annexation will become an accomplished fact about June 15th." (1)

Of the developments during the summer of 1922, little need be said, save that the building proceeded slowly but surely, with the result that a number of homes were ready for occupation by November 1st, 1922. On that day, the Milwaukee Journal made the following statement:

"David Harper, son of William D. Harper, Building Inspector, is the first occupant of a home in the new Garden Homes tract, recently annexed to the City, a cooperative, semi-municipal home building corporation's venture. He moved in Wednesday to the first completed home at 2046 Bourneville place.

"Edward Kiefer, business agent of the painters union and labor representative on the board of directors of the Garden Homes Corporation, was the second to move in. George W. Altpeter, an engineer of the land commission, and John Jenss, a mail carrier, will occupy new homes within a few weeks.

"The Corporation is constructing 85 homes, 15 of which are ready. Seventy are under roof, 30 have been plastered. Applications of persons wanting homes in the tract are being investigated by the corporation."

The winter of 1922- 1923 was a peculiar one, being extremely severe toward the latter half. This, according to David W. Harper, impeded the work very seriously. (2) At the present date April 24th, 1923, however, the project is forging ahead rapidly. Telephone service has been carried to the tract the line being connected with the Kilbourn sub-station.

"As yet, owing to a shortage of pipe the gas is not in the homes." (3) "We expect it in two months," said David W.

Harper on April 12th, 1923. "The city will lay all sidewalks and curbing." (4) "Storm sewer, sidewalks, streets and street lights will be finished this year." (2)

(1) The Milwaukee Sentinel, January 16th, 1922.

(2) Interview with D.W. Harper, March 28th, 1923

(3) Interview with Mayor Dabiel W. Hoan, December 16th, 1922.

(4) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923

"By September 1st, 105 homes will be erected. Seventy eight are now under construction, 15 foundations are completed and 12 more are to be started as soon as the frost is out of the ground." (1) On March 27th, "more than 10 homes were occupied with the probability of at least seven more families by the first week of April." (2)

Concerning the type of people at the Garden Homes, much could be said. According to David W. Harper, who, it will be remembered, was the first man to occupy a Garden Home,

"there is a mixed class of people in the Garden Homes project today and feeling among them seems to be entirely different from anywhere else. There is more of a feeling of companionship in the Garden Homes. That distant city-feeling isn't present. The only barrier drawn is that of color. Outside of a color line, there is no racial barrier.

"The people occupying the homes at present are of different races and different creeds and different occupations. One is a painting contractor, another an employee of the land commission, a third a mail carrier, a fourth a wood worker; there is a dentist, a photo-engraver, a newspaper telegraph editor, a superintendent of a tool manufacturing company, an assistant newspaper editor and an insurance agent. I myself am the executive secretary of the Garden Homes Company." (3)

When asked what would occur if an undesirable would slip past the watchful eye of the Company's officials and become a tenant in the project, Mr. Harper answered:

"If the tenants violate any article in the lease we can order him out and terminate the contract. If he goes away for the summer, he must make arrangements to take care of his lawn, or the Company will do so; if he neglects to shovel his snow, the Company will do that also, and in both cases charge it to the tenant. The tenant cannot plant trees or bushes or make material alterations to the yard. He cannot keep chickens." (4)

Thus, although the Garden Homes Company was founded not

- (1) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.
- (2) Interview with William D. Harper, March 27th, 1923.
- (3) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.
- (4) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

not for the wealthy or the elite but for the man of moderate means who was in need of a home, the district cannot, as long as the majority of members desire otherwise, become a slum, simply because it is open to men and women of all walks and conditions of life.

The writer made a careful inspection of the whole tract on Saturday, April the 14th, 1923. The streets as already indicated were not laid, although the western section of Port Sunlight way, which crosses a small hollow, was filled with red clay, excavated from the cellars. The park was a miniature lake. Sidewalks of cinders were laid from house to house in the completed sections of the project, with boards serving as a means of crossing the drainage ditches on the corners.

Groups of people were standing or walking about inspecting the houses and one man informed the writer that " the cellar on the triangular lot in the block east of 26th street and north of Port Sunlight way was to be "my House." "Fine thing"- he said- " this Garden Homes business, when you get the park in here, and the trees and bushes planted and the streets laid."

A little later the writer met with two boys carrying newspapers. "What are you soing and where do you live?"- he asked. "Peddling papers to the people. We live in that house over there"- pointing in the general direction of ten or fifteen houses. A baby carriage stood on the porch of one house; the yard of another was filled with the weeks wash. The place seemed very homelike.



*LOOKING NORTH ACROSS THE PARK
INTO BOURNEVILLE PLACE*

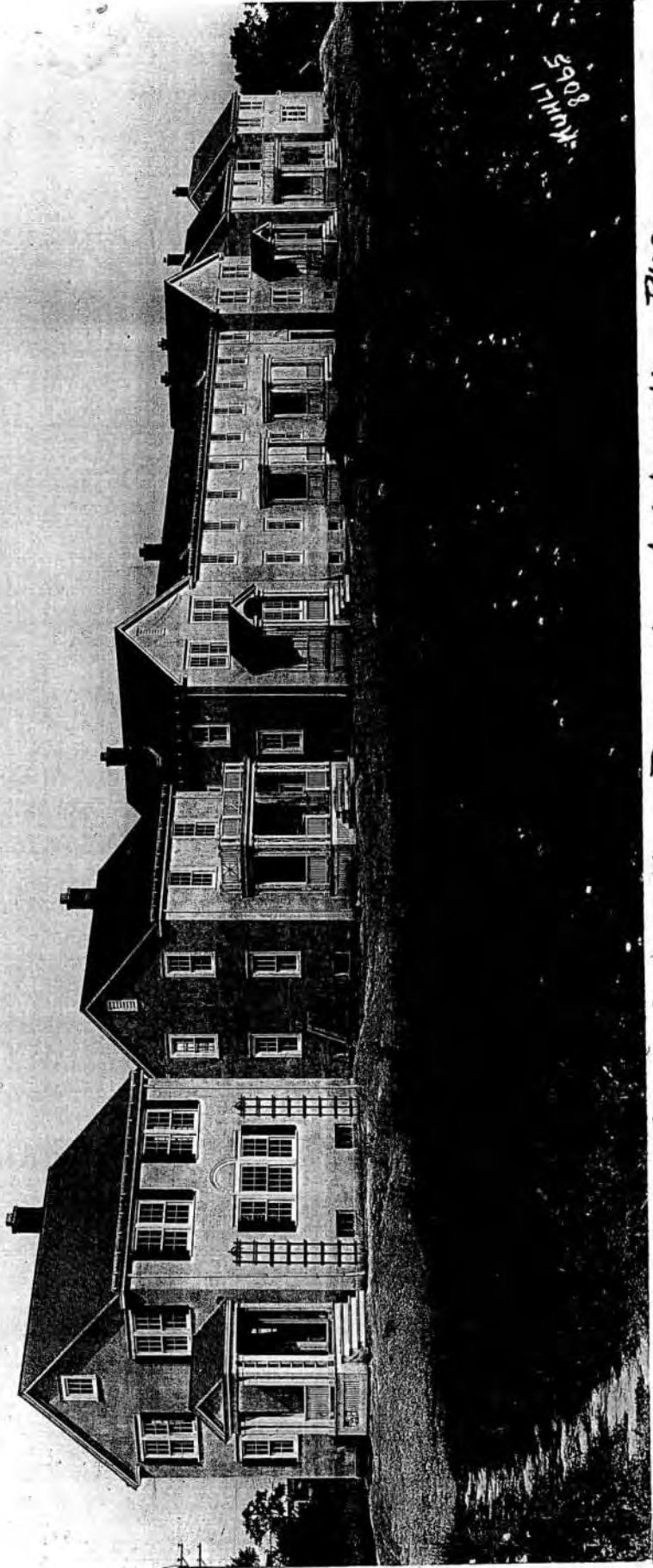


VIEWS
TAKEN
APRIL 14
1923

*SOUTH ACROSS THE PARK
INTO BOURNEVILLE PLACE*



NORTH EAST OF LETCHWORTH PLACE



174-1808

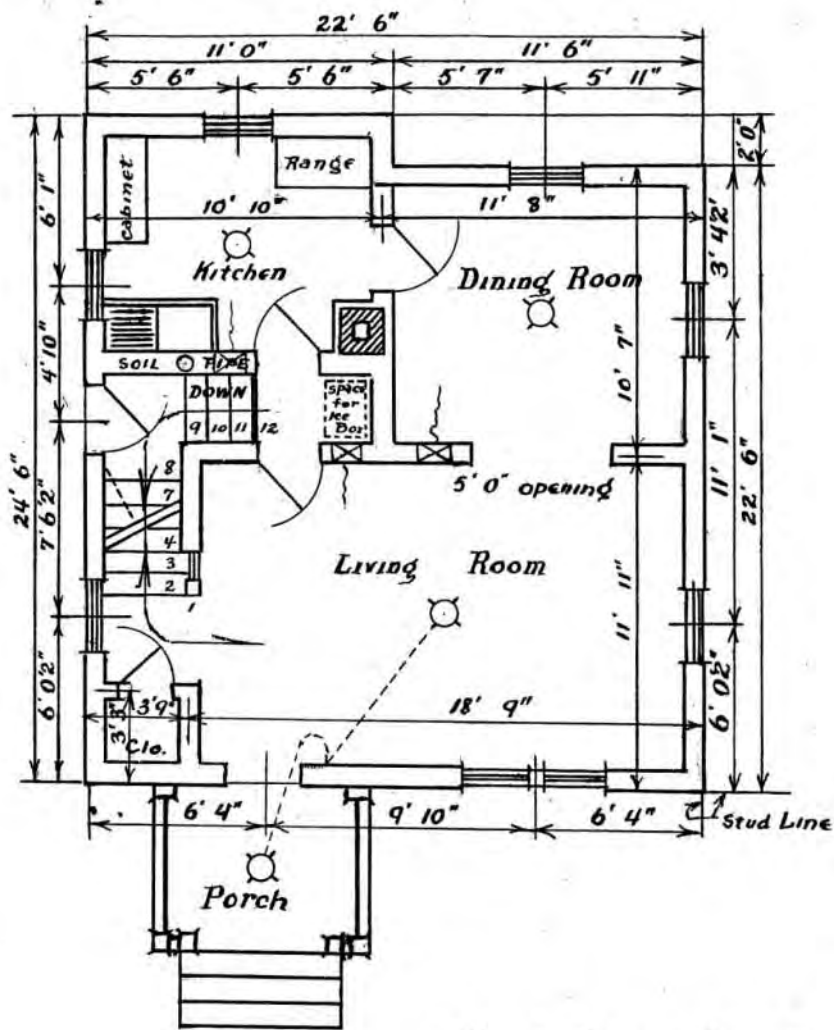
Looking West from the Park into Letchworth Place

SECTION TWO

THE FINISHED HOME

William H. Schuchardt, who designed the Garden Homes, has done a creditable piece of work in making an agreeable neighborhood out of a vacant tract of land. This was his problem: over one hundred and fifty houses were to be built in one place, over a short period of time, by one company. The construction of these homes had to be such that they were firmly built, for the company was not merely to unload them upon the public and then sit by while perhaps the porches sagged and the plaster fell, but was to remain organized until the tenants had taken over all the preferred stock, a period of at least seventeen years. If the houses were defective in construction, this same company would have to pay for the repairs upon them and get the money from the tenants' pockets in some way or other. On the other hand, while the construction must therefore necessarily be substantial, the price of the dwellings, owing to the fact that the Corporation was organized to aid the man of moderate means, was fixed by law as not to exceed five thousand dollars.(1) The management, however, desired to keep much below even this very low cost in the erection of the house. This demand for low cost, as was to be expected, forced the architect to utilize as much as possible the saving that comes from a reduplication of parts, such as is effected by the ordinary contractor when he builds, for example, a dozen bungalows all alike. Mr. Schuchardt's problem was therefore to combine a maximum of

(1) The Jennings' Bill, Section 2 b.



Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1\frac{3}{4}'$

• First Floor Plan •
- of a Six Room Garden Home -

variety with a minimum of cost.

All homes are twenty feet back from the street, allowing for attractive lawns and shrubbery patches. There are three distinct types of houses in the Garden Homes tract: four-family, two-family and one-family. Only one four-family house was erected. It stands in the middle of the block facing the park on Letchworth Place. Speaking of this dwelling, David W. Harper said: "I am afraid that the Americans aren't educated up to the four-party house. It worked in Europe. We are trying to secure a change in the law in regard to it." (1) This change will permit one man to rent the entire house and sub-lease it. The two-family house on the other hand, seems to be acceptable to the American mind for eleven of them have been erected. All the rest of the houses are one-family. (2)

A second classification of the houses could be made according to the number of rooms which they contain. The prospectus of the Company says: "Plans have been prepared for four-room, five-room and six-room houses." In the questionnaires that were sent out however, a question asking what type of a home the prospective tenant desired, was included. "We did not erect any four-room houses because nobody wanted them"- is the statement of D. W. Harper, describing the fate of the first type of house. (2) When asked for the number of houses of the five and six-room variety, William D. Harper said on April 19th, 1923: "There are seven five-room houses. There was practically no demand for them. All the rest are six-room houses."

(1) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

Thus far four types of houses have been considered, a four-family, a two-family and a one-family, the latter being divided into the classifications of five and six rooms. But here the ingenuity of the architect did not stop.

Anyone who has ever examined a cleverly constructed row of syndicate houses cannot fail to have noticed that while the houses had small points of difference, the roofs all faced the same way, concealment being attempted by flattening the front gable of one roof and allowing the gable of another to come to its normal point, or by inserting various different types of decorative triangles beneath the gable end, or by changing minor details in numerous other ways. The Garden Home, however, being 24 ft. by 26 ft., is almost square and may therefore be turned around. Some of the houses can thus present the flat surface of their roofs to the streets and others the roof ends. Another alternative is possible. Instead of turning the house around to present a different arrangement of windows, doors, etc., the roof may and has been turned around on top of the house. This provides two more variations. In the next place two different styles of roofing are used in the homes, the one a deep red and the other a deep green. By the employment of these, and a four gabled roof such as is shown in house #8 in the illustration on the next page, many more variations are reached. Then the porches are placed differently, some being in the front and rear of the house, some on the front and left side, some on the front and right side, some on the rear and right side and some on the rear and left side. And not even in the construction of the



1.



2.



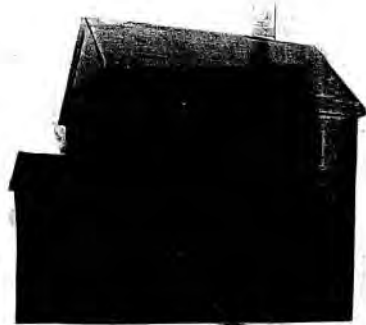
4.



3.



6.



5.



8.



9.

10.

Houses on the West Side of Hampstead Avenue

No. 1 is on the Corner of Atkinson Ave
No 10 on the Corner of Ealing Place

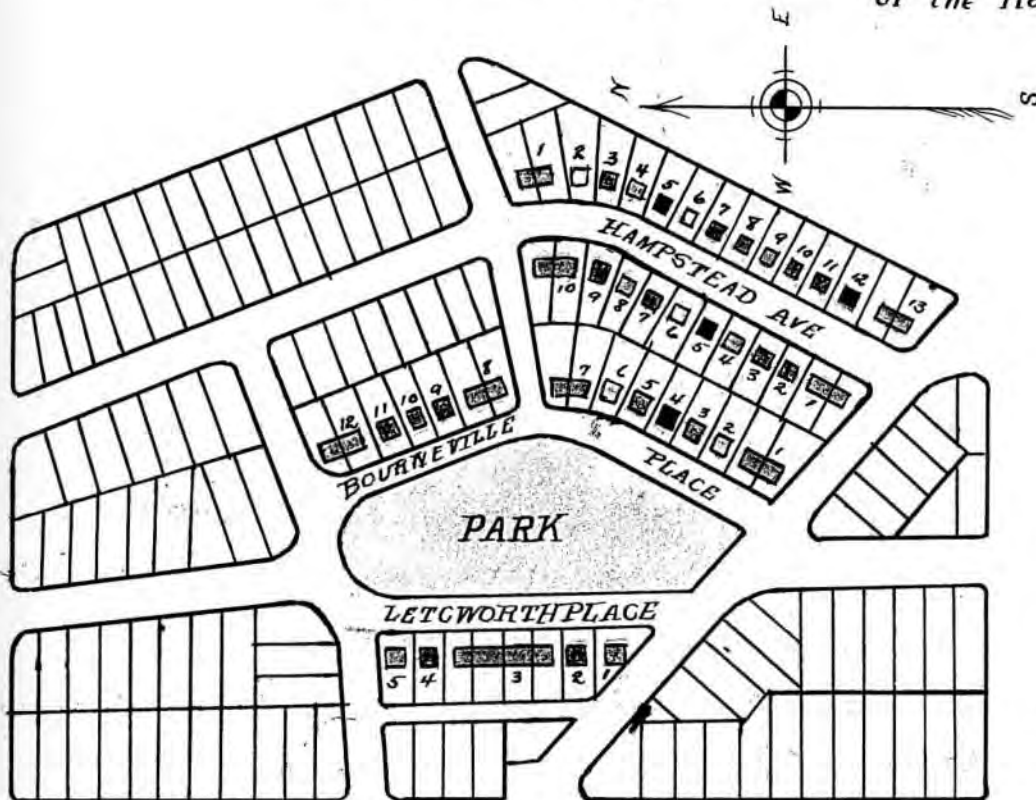
1 matches 10
2 " 9
3 " 7
4 " 8
5 is odd
6 is odd

(note the difference between 4 and 6)

porches is identity to be found. Some of them have sloping roofs; others have flat roofs; some have a succession of spokes in the balustrade that is unbroken; others have a star arrangement in the center of the spoke rack; some are narrow, extending a little over the door with a hanging canopy that stretches across a greater portion of the width of the house; others are wider with a supported canopy of the same width as the bottom. This is not all. To endeavor to figure out the variations possible is a task for the mathematician. Of course only a few have been used, but even with these few, the task has been so skillfully done that it is a difficult matter to match up one house with another, built according to the same general plan. The scheme used in arrangement is not a regular one, if it may be called a scheme at all. It does not proceed mathematically, that is if house # 1 is like house # 12, then house # 2 is not like house # 11, nor house # 3 like house # 10. House # 1 will be like house # 12 if there are twelve houses in the block, because each block thus far constructed has a two family house on each end, both of which houses are of the same type. That, however, is as far as the system goes. It took the writer twenty minutes of very close study to determine how the houses on the east side of Hampstead avenue, south of Ealing place were arranged. (See map on next page)

Plans of the houses are not available, even for inspection. "Not even the officers have any" - according to David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923, "I would only be too glad to give you the blue prints but we had a big demand for them and gave them all out. I couldn't even show you one." The plan inserted on the

PARTIAL MAP OF COMPLETED SECTION
of the **GARDEN HOMES SUBDIVISION**
indicating variations in the
Architecture, Types and Roofs
of the Houses



Bourneville Place

The Roofs of houses
1-2-3-4-5-6-7 are Red
The Roofs of
8-9-10-11-12 are GREEN

Letchworth Place

The roofs of
1-3-5 are Green, 2-4 Red

LETCWORTH PLACE	BOURNEVILLE PLACE	NAMPSTEAD AVENUE EAST	RAMPSTEAD AVENUE WEST
1 matches 5	2-6	1-13	1-10
2 - 4	9-11	2-6	2-9
3 is odd	5-3-10	3-10-8	3-7
	1-7-8-12	4-9	4-8
	4 is odd	5-12	5 is odd
		7-11	6 is odd
3 is a family house	1-7-8-12 are 2 family houses	1-13 are 2 family houses	1-10 are 2 family houses

All others are 1 family

second page of this section was discovered in a newspaper account in the Milwaukee Journal and is a copy of a newspaper copy of one of the Garden Homes blue prints.

The quality of the materials that have entered into the interior of the dwellings will be discussed later in this section. Not a great deal can be said of the interior of the dwellings beyond that which could be said of any house retailing at about \$6,500. The six-room house has a kitchen, dining room and living room on the first floor and three bed-rooms and a bathroom on the second. The five-room house lacks the additional bedroom.

One of the features of the interior of the houses is the number of closets. It seems as if a closet has been placed in every available nook and corner, up stairs and down. Of course, each bedroom has its closet.

Another admirable feature of the homes is their exposure to sunlight. Each room in the house receives light from two directions. To quote Mrs. Altpeter, one of the first to move into the new subdivision- "To see the sunshine stream in all around is wonderful. On a bright and sunshiny day, the light just pours in through all the windows. When we first came out here it seemed wonderful after living in a rather dark city house." (1)

This peculiar brightness can of course be ascribed to other reasons than merely to the number and position of the windows. In many cases, although the houses are built at equal

(1) Interview with Mrs. G. W. Altpeter, April 14th, 1923.

distances from the street, owing to the curving of the street they are not, on the whole set in an entirely straight line but are placed at a moderate distance from one another. The extreme shortness of the houses likewise tends to allow the light from the front and rear to stream in through the side windows, a feature not found to nearly so great an extent in the usual long flat building in cities. A third factor of the Garden Homes is the absence of a high attic which would serve to cut off part of the sunshine from the house to its north. And yet, much of the brightness is due to the judicious arrangement of the windows.

The interior of the houses are not painted at present.

Speaking of this D. W. Harper says:

"It is up to the tenant whether or not the houses will be painted inside, the only restriction being that the material used will not be harmful to the walls. The big objection to having the company paint the inside of the houses is that you might want this- and they, that. If you yourself paint the inside of the house, you can have what you want and spend as much as you want. The outside painting of the house is included in the price paid." (1)

One thing that seemed to be lacking both within and without the house was a place in which to keep an automobile. When questioned on this point Mr. Harper made the statement- "The company will erect garages if the tenant so desires, charging him the actual cost of labor plus a small overhead."

On April the 14th, 1923, when the writer was obtaining the opinions of the tenants regarding the houses, he was invited into several of the homes. He had made a number of visits to the project at an earlier date and had inspected the houses in various states of completion from top to bottom. Before the interior had been plastered it seemed rather small, but after

it had been finished the opposite appeared to be true. What impressed the writer most was the living room at the front of the house. Furnished with large lounging chairs, a fernery, and supplied with a phonograph and piano, it gave no suggestion of being overcrowded. On the contrary it seemed very cozy and inviting.

"The ceilings of all the houses are nine feet high"- said Mr. D. W. Harper on April 21st, 1923. This is a height sufficient to give a feeling of lightness to the rooms but not to create an additional unnecessary air space demanding heat and fulfilling little purpose. It is the standard height employed in the majority of modern bungalows.

Speaking of the houses, the tenants seem well satisfied with their homes. "The arrangements are fine, there are five in our family, and enough room for all"- is the comment of John Jenss, a mail carrier living at 2044 Bourneville Place. (1) "Beyond a doubt, this is a good house"- is the statement of G. W. Altpeter. (2) Other tenants expressed similar sentiments,- but these will be quoted at greater length in Section four.

(1) Interview with Mr. John Jenss, April 14th, 1923.

(2) Interview with G. W. Altpeter, April 14th, 1923

So far as could be ascertained, the quality of materials and construction that entered the homes of the Garden Homes Company, was of the highest type that is used in moderately priced houses, that is houses varying in cost from five to ten thousand dollars and even more. "We had no reason for putting in cheaper materials because we were not building for profit. Whatever the added cost might be to secure good materials, the tenants paid in stock" - according to David W. Harper, the Executive Secretary of the Company.(1)

"The basements of the first 10 or 12 houses were constructed with the aid of a concrete pouring machine. (2) The next 12 or 15 were built with concrete blocks. Today metal forms are used for pouring the wall. All basements walls are twelve inches thick, while the walls in an ordinary house are only ten inches thick. The concrete basement floor is a four inch slab.

"The basement windows have metal frames. The drain tile extends through the footing of the house every five feet and is connected with the catch basin.

"The joists used in the first floor are two by ten inches; on the second floor, two by eight inches. Rafters are two by six inches and the studding is two by four inches. All joints and rafters and studding are braced by cross bracing not to exceed seven feet between braces. A nine by eight inch timber crosses through the center of the basement, taking away the long span and thus saving in construction.

(1) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

(2) Unless otherwise indicated all facts relating to the quality, quantity and source of materials entering into the Garden Homes, have been organized from an interview with William D. Harper, March 27th, 1923.

"All wood finish for the houses is of first quality yellow pine, stained light walnut and finished in shellac and varnish. All floors and steps are of selected maple wood and finished in shellac and floor varnish.

"The roof is covered with dressed lumber and five ply asphaltum shingles. The eavetroughs, plashings and downspouts are made of the heaviest tin used for such purposes. The chimney is made of ordinary common hard brick, and above the roof, is made of pressed brick.

"The electric equipment is of the latest type and mode of installation. The fixtures are in keeping with the medium grade of house and are equipped with wall switches.

"All plumbing fixtures are of the latest Kohler grade and all piping in the ground is lead. All other piping is iron.

"The furnaces are the latest Mueller hot air type." (1)

Much of the comfort of a house depends on the wall construction. The Garden Homes Company, realizing this, were very careful about the materials for the walls of the buildings, and yet, at the same time, the Company insisted on the most advanced method of wall construction. The cross section of the wall shown on the following page is unique in that it contains no inner layer of lathing. The plaster is applied directly to a sheet of sulphide paper, a new departure in home construction.

The surest test of the quality of any wall is the degree of the warmth which can be maintained in the house in extreme weather. If the house is warm without an excessive consumption of coal, it is reasonable to presume the fact that the con-

(1) Interview with William D. Harper, March 27th, 1923.

struction of the wall is not defective.

To ascertain whether or not the wall construction of the Garden Homes was satisfactory an investigation was made among the people who have lived in the new subdivision throughout the winter. It must be born in mind that the past winter of 1922-1923, especially some of the days of January, February and March, was especially severe, the thermometer on February the 3rd hovering around 15 degrees below zero. The following is the result of the investigation:

"The general complaint against the house is that it is built with neither siding nor sheathing and people imagine that the places aren't rigid enough. The flax linum is better than the sheathing, however, because it is not only vermin, but is warmer and is nailed on tight as well, which the sheathing isn't. I know a little about building from my trade, which is carpentering and pattern making. There is little trouble about heating the house."
- Max Leopold, 2076 Bourneville place, April 14th, 1923.

"The house is very easy to heat." - G.W. Altpeter, corner Letchworth place and Atkinson avenue, April 14th, 1923.

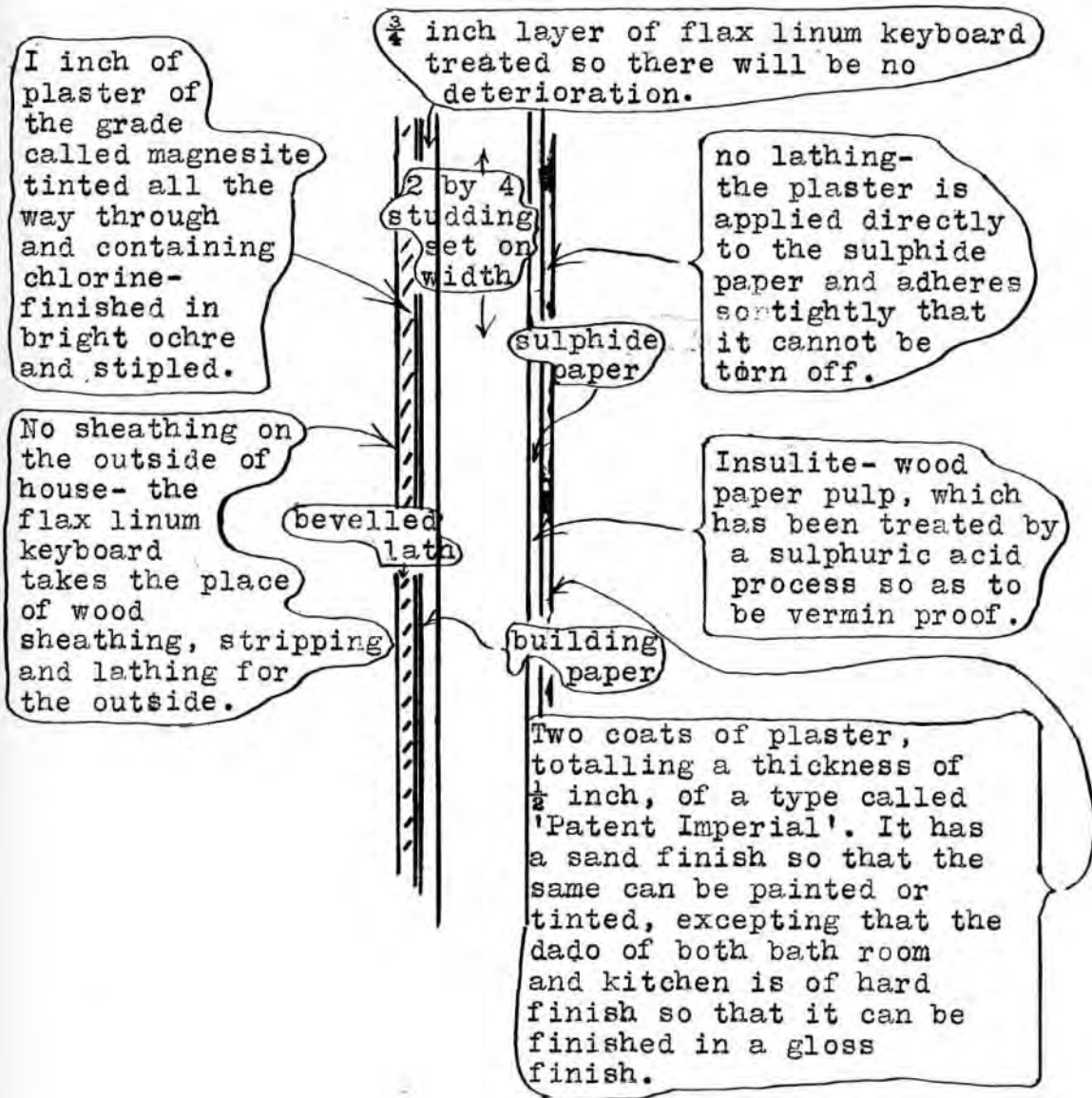
"I've been in since the last of November and I am in my fifth ton of coal, while I have burnt as high as nine in a five room flat." - D.W. Harper, 2046 Bourneville place, March 28th, 1923.

"The places are alright to heat except in cold days when the wind blows from the west. We were warm as toast on the coldest day last winter but the wind was from the north. When the storm windows come, however, the place will not be any trouble to heat." - John Jenss, 2044 Bourneville place, April 14th, 1923.

The storm windows are coming in the not distant future, said D.W. Harper on March 28, 1923. The reason that the storm sash have not as yet arrived is because the houses have not settled sufficiently to justify fitting the windows at the present time.

The following list shows the more important materials used in the construction of the homes, together with the

WALL CONSTRUCTION OF THE GARDEN HOME



Data furnished by William D. Harper,
in an interview, March 27th, 1923.

individuals or firms who furnished them.

- Sulphide Board W.H. Pipkorn Company, agents,
712 Park Street. (1)
- Miscellaneous millwork, woodwork for porches, frieze, ridge
boards, cornices, door frames and window frames of the
exterior except those of the basement....
..... made at a factory situated on
grounds and owned by the
Garden Homes Company.
- Eve, troughs, plashings and down spouts ..
..... made on the grounds by employees
of the Garden Homes Company.
- Sash Rockwell Manufacturing Co.,
572 Park street.
- Magnesite Plaster Magnesite Plaster Company,
Waukegan Illinois.
- Pressed Brick Ricketson and Schwarz,
432 Broadway.
- Lumber Wilbur Lumber Company,
68 Wisconsin street.
Hilty Lumber Company,
Foot of 12th street.
George Johnson and Bros.,
(439 Grand avenue?)
- Furnaces L.J. Mueller Furnace Company,
197 Reed street.
- Plumbing Fixtures Kohler Manufacturing Company,
Kohler, Wisconsin.
(through Frank R. Dengel,
336-48th street.)
- Hardware, Flax Keyboard Asphaltum Shingle
..... Philip Gross Hardware Company,
218-20 3rd street.
(Shingle made by the Reynolds
Company of Grand Rapids
Michigan) (2)

The following are the names of the firms or individuals who contracted for labor and fixture installation which was not done by men in the hire of the Garden Homes Company:

- Furnaces and Tin Work Economy Sheet Metal Company,
305 Grove street.
- Plumbing Otto H. Dittmar,
1403 Fon du Lac avenue.
- Plastering Otto Polzin,
2320 Kilbourn avenue.
- Electric Work Right Electric Company
1508 Island avenue.

(1) Milwaukee, Wisconsin, unless otherwise indicated.
(2) Data from interview with Wm. D. Harper, March 27th, 1923.

SECTION THREE

ECONOMIES EFFECTED

In examining the economies effected through the semi-municipal housing corporation, the first to be considered is that arising from the purchase of the site. When the Lever brothers, who were among the first to lay out homes in immense wholesale lots, purchased a great tract of land on the extreme outskirts of Liverpool, they found that the land economy was immense. The Garden Homes followed their plan. The Corporation purchased near enough to the city to justify the hope of early annexation and city privileges. On the other hand the site chosen was sufficiently distant from the city limits to escape the burdens of unearned increment, usually taken by real estate dealers. The wisdom of the Corporation is evident today. "Below the Garden Homes property is being held for \$2,000 an acre. The property for the Garden Homes cost \$900 an acre. The highest priced residence lot is valued at \$950 with all improvements, including streets, curbing, sidewalks etc." (1) Of course some of this saving is to be ascribed to the fact that the tract of 29 acres was purchased in its entirety.

"The laying out of the property was done for nothing."

(2) William Schuchardt, head of the City Real Estate Board supervised the plotting of the site.

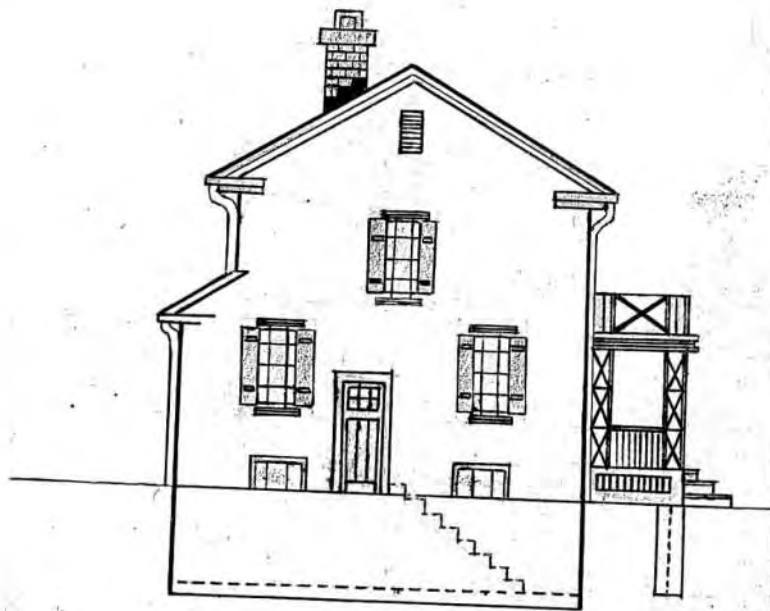
"The grading was let to a man by the yard and was done about 20¢ a yard cheaper, some even as low as 35¢ a yard."

(3) "Naturally since there was so much yardage, the grading

(1) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

(3) Interview with William D. Harper, March 27th, 1923.



SIDE ELEVATION
of a
TYPICAL GARDEN HOME

could be done cheaper." (1) This is in accord with a prediction made by William D. Harper, in a letter to the Housing Commission of the City of Milwaukee, dated May 22nd, 1922:

"-- I shall add, moreover, that in my judgment, the plan proposed by the Housing Commission of securing acreage property, scientifically the same into lots, installing all improvements at one time, will result in a saving of at least \$300 in the cost of each lot." (2)

The Milwaukee Sentinel of April 21st, 1922, mentions at least one factor that must have resulted in a saving in excavating at the Garden Homes tract:

"The Bucyrus Company has loaned a steam shovel to the Corporation for use in digging cellars, sewers, trenches, and streetwork, and has applied to the Commissioner of Public Works for permission to traverse the city to get to its scene of operation."

The word loaned is to be noted especially.

The water for the Garden Homes community was installed by the City and charged to the Company in the form of taxes. No figures are available which will serve to show the exact amount saved through laying mains for 150 houses instead of a few. However "it is probable that better bids were secured for the job of installing the water system because it was a large one than if it had been a small one." (1)

Passing to a consideration of the economies through cooperative management, the following observation of Mayor Daniel W. Hoan is of interest:

"it seems, from European experience, to be a feature of cooperative housebuilding that better results can be attained from the same being done by a private organization, as for example, a stock company. It has been found that

(1) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

(2) From the Files of the Housing Commission in the Office of the Building Inspector in the Milwaukee City Hall.

in the case of municipal housing, the overhead expense was greater than under the cooperative plan, because under the cooperative plan so many men will donate their services free of charge." (1)

This statement seems to be verified by the Milwaukee

experiment. The officials actually did donate their services.

The overhead is very low on account of the officers giving their services gratis," said David W. Harper" the executive secretary, that is myself, is the only paid official."(2)

All our architectural work didn't cost us a penny." (1)

This is not the only saving mentioned by the officials.

The material for the house was secured for less in many cases than the price paid by the ordinary contractor. "All material purchased was bought on quotations submitted by various dealers.

The contracts were let on the same basis. Competitive bidding was the method employed in all purchasing." (2) Concerning

the economy, William D. Harper said:

"The first shipment of lumber we purchased was 240,000 feet. We were very fortunate in securing it for less than the lumber yards could buy it for. After this we purchased our lumber at 5% above cost." (3)

This eliminated the dealers' profit.

"The hardware was obtained through the Gross Hardware Company as agents at less than they themselves could purchase it. Gross pays 9 2/10 ¢ per square foot for flax keyboard, or \$9.20 per one hundred feet. The contractors pay \$11.70 a hundred feet. We get it for \$7.20 per hundred square feet.

We bought thirteen carloads of Sulphide Board through the W. H. Pipkorn Company, to be shipped and delivered at once at less than the Pipkorn Company can buy it for. We paid approximately \$40.00 a ton for Magnesite plaster. The plasterer pays \$54. And so on." (3)

Numerous reasons were given for this economy in the purchase

of material. Said D. W. Harper, speaking on this subject:

- 1) Interview with Mayer D. W. Hoan, March 26th, 1923.
- 2).Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.
- 3).Interview with William D. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

"I ascribe this economy to the fact that we are in a position to shop around. Companies, moreover, figure that it is good advertizing to have us use their material. The Insulite people have increased their sales 400% (in Milwaukee?) due to the advertizing which they figure this project gave them." (1)

It is not to be supposed, however, that all materials were bought at such great reductions. At time, the necessity for quick delivery coupled with unfavorable market conditions necessitated purchases at rather higher prices. "Sometimes higher prices were paid for things but this was offset by higher efficiency." (2)

Speaking of higher labor efficiency, David M. Haper gives a good analysis of the situation:

"Practically all our employees have been with us from the start." (2) "We do all our work ourselves except the plumbing, furnace, electric installation, grading and plastering. We furnish the materials for the plastering and contract for the labor. That means that we have our own painters, laborers, masons and carpenters. There is very little labor turnover, which adds to the efficiency of the men; as we try to find the type of work in which a man is most efficient and then place him on that type of work. Among the carpenters, for example, we have a crew on roughing, a crew on sash work, a crew on interior finish etc. These men go from house to house and perform their particular task to which they are best suited and in which they naturally grow even more skilled as they finish house after house. As soon as the basement is finished, the roughing is done; then the lathing, then the plastering." (1)

Mayor Hoan throws further light on the method of securing added efficiency of labor:

"Frank Harder hires all the labor. (better supervises the hiring, since the actual hiring is done by the superintendent, Mr. Breen.) Master builders who came in said they would do a certain piece of work at a cost of \$1,000; Frank Harder said he would do the same piece of work for \$500. He paid the union scale, divided his laborers into, gangs, placed them in competition with one

(1) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

another. He made good. " (1)

Another element that resulted in savings in the cost of materials was the temporary factory built upon the grounds, which turned out miscellaneous millwork, door frames, frieze, ridge boards, cornice etc. The actual saving through this means could not be determined, but when David W. Harper was asked: "Did the factory on the grounds result in savings?" he replied: "Yes, the factory on the grounds has resulted in savings." (2)

(1) Interview with Mayor Daniel W. Hoan, March 26th, 1923.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.

SECTION FOUR

THE PAYMENT PLAN

The payment plan of the Garden Homes Company can best be explained by giving an answer to the following questions:

1. In what manner is the payment made by the tenant?
2. What amount must he pay?
3. For what purpose are these moneys used?
4. What does the tenant receive in return for his payment?

Each of these questions will be answered in turn.

The report of the Committee on Cooperative Housing of the Cooperative League of America to the league states that:

"Tenants buy shares in the Garden Homes Company. The preferred stock amounts to \$250,000; the common stock, \$250,000. The common stock is owned only by the home occupant. It draws interest if the Corporation so determines. The occupants are required to subscribe to common stock equal to the cost of homes on the partial payment plan. As the occupant pays for his stock the corporation uses that fund to purchase and retire the preferred stock. The owners of the preferred stand much in the same relation as the holder of a mortgage on a home. The stock is gradually retired, much like a mortgage. Besides paying for his stock, the home owner pays a rental sufficiently high to cover interest, taxes, insurance, depreciation and repairs." (1)

This summarizes the method by which the tenant makes the payment upon his house. The second question to be answered is: "What amount does the tenant pay?"

Not all the homes are worth the same price; "The homes around the park are worth more," (2) because, as is but natural, the lots around the park are in greater demand. "The value of the ordinary plot in the Garden Homes tract is com-

(1) This report was supplied as a reliable source of information by Mayor Daniel W. Hoan, who is a member of the Committee referred to, in an interview, December 16, 1922.

(2) Interview with Frank Harder, March 26th, 1923.

puted to be about \$800." (1) Once a value has been set on the lots by the Company, the evaluation remains permanent and cannot be changed in computing rents, taxes, etc., according to the Jennings's Law. Be that as it may, "the value of a low priced and a five-room house is \$4,450. The maximum value of any six-room house and lot in the tract is \$4,800." (2) This is the first expense which the tenant must pay.

As my collaborator has shown, however, the Garden Homes Company, incorporated under the Jennings Law, is not an enterprise organized for the sale of real estate but rather for the distribution of the economies of mass production and cooperation among many. Moreover, one of the first purposes of the organization is to enable the man of moderate means to purchase a house.

In consequence of this and of the fact that the original purchase and development of the site, together with the erection of the first homes, demanded quite a large sum of capital, the Company is so organized that the original capital will remain within it and only be gradually retired over a long period of years, thus enabling the man of small means to make a deposit upon the house and to pay thereafter in the manner in which the lessee pays rent. It would be too much, furthermore to expect that capital, which can command a premium in the money market, should be invested for the benefit of somebody else without any reward, and hence it is that the owners of the capital, or the preferred stock

(1) Report of the Committee on Cooperative Housing.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

receive a maximum 5% rate of interest on their money. (1)

This is the second expense which the tenant must pay.

In the third place, the tenant, together with all other property owners, must pay certain fees. The deed to a home does not mean free occupancy in all senses of the term. The tenant, as a citizen, sharing in the benefits of a government, must pay taxes; and as a home owner and occupier he must pay for repairs and depreciation. These are the burdens which must be born even when the tenant has full ownership of the home.

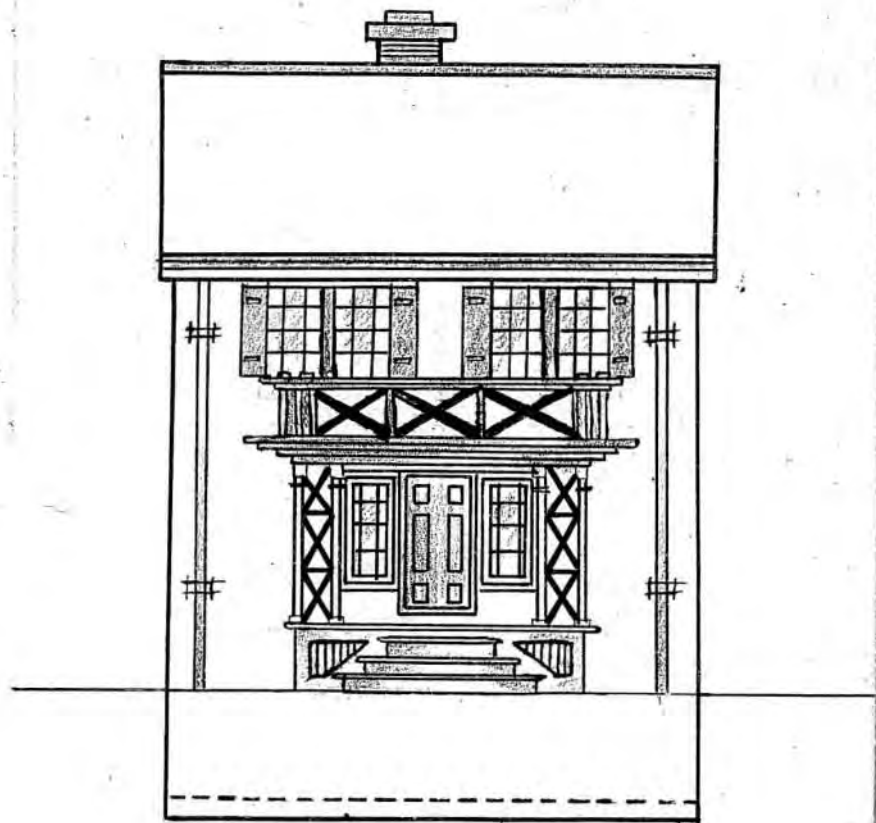
Furthermore, in order to protect its members, the Company has planned a contingency fund. "The contingency fund is a safety fund, set aside for expenses. If not used for this purpose it will be used to retire preferred stock and credited to the tenants on their stock." (2) In the event of anything occurring to the homes or the Company which has not been included in the budget of the Company, this fund may be drawn upon. Each tenant is required to pay an equal share into this fund.

Then, moreover, there are the items of fire and disability insurance. The purpose of the fire insurance is evident; the disability insurance, on the other hand, represents an advance in cooperative home owning. "It provides that in case a man is disabled or sick so that he cannot make his payments, they are made by the insurance company directly to the corporation up to a period of one year." (3) "This will be paid

(1) According to the provisions of Section 6, of the Jennings Law.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

(3) Interview with Frank Harder, March 26th, 1923.



of a *FRONT ELEVATION*
TYPICAL GARDEN HOME

directly to the Company and will be paid at the rate of \$12 per week for a period of fifty-two weeks." (1) "The insurance, both life and accident, was obtained through Leedom, Miller and Noyes Company, 85 Michigan, local agents." (2)

These expenses have been lumped and divided over the year into twelve periods so that they can be paid in the form of the usual rent. There is a little difference in the size of the payments, depending on the value of the house and lot occupied. "On the basis of \$4,450 value, the payment will be \$45.25 per month; on the basis of \$4,500, \$46 per month; on the basis of \$4,800, \$49 per month." (1)

"Assuming that the tenant pays \$500 down on a \$4,800 property, with a payment of \$49 per month, amounts would be credited to the various accounts at the end of the year as follows:

Taxes, repairs and depreciation	\$163
Interest, administration and contingencies .	312
Disability and fire insurance	22
To apply on stock	91
Dividend on stock or 5% of initial payment..	25" (1)

The tenant, as has already been noted, has made an initial payment of \$500 and, owing to the fact that "the common stockholders receive a 5% dividend the same as the preferred," he will at the end of the year draw a \$25 dividend on his payment. (3) This will be retained by the Company and employed in retiring some of the preferred stock on the tenant's home. Over and above this sum, \$91 of the \$588 which the tenant has paid in the form of rent will be used for no other purpose than to retire preferred stock. At the end of the

- (1) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.
- (2) Interview with David W. Harper, April 12th, 1923.
- (3) Interview with Frank Harder, March 26th, 1923.

first year, therefore, the value of the common stock owned by the tenant will be \$500 plus \$25 plus \$91, or a total of \$616.

No matter how much stock the tenant owns, his payment will not change. "The payments remain the same during the entire term." (1) "The tenant making the initial payment of \$2,000 would continue making the same monthly payment of \$49 per month, which would result in retiring stock in considerably less time than the tenant making an initial payment of \$500." (2)

Of course, no matter how large the original payment might be, the tenant would not receive his house until all the preferred stock in the Company had been retired; he would, however, draw 5% on the common stock which he owned, which after his entire payment had been made, would give him very cheap rent.

Speaking of the dissolution of the Company, Frank J.

Harder says:

"I figure that we will clean up the whole thing in 16 or 17 years although the term is for 25 years. In completing figures, I was careful to make each amount large enough. At the end of 25 years we can dissolve the Company. The contingency fund is also worked up so as to have it as a sort of binder. A big contingency fund, furthermore, is an inducement to the tenants to stay there. If this fund should not be touched it will give the people their homes at the end of the term and \$1,200 in cash plus interest. It is my plan to credit the common stockholders from the contingency fund every five years." (1)

David W. Harper is even more hopeful:

"In 25 years everything will be paid and \$2,000 will be credited to the tenants. If this money is applied to the payments, everything will be paid in 16 or 17 years." (2)

Frank J. Harder mentions another factor that should

(1) Interview with Frank J. Harder, March 26th, 1923.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923.

result in an earlier retirement of stock:

"In completing figures I was careful to make each amount large enough. If at the end of the year the accounts run over and we find that we have figured too much, then we can credit the holders of the common stock with a certain amount of the fund. For example, the taxes have been figured on the basis of \$30 per \$1,000 on full value, and the highest the tax commission assesses any property is 85% of the value. There should therefore be a surplus in this fund at the end of the year." (1)

The tenant himself may aid in quickening the termination of the financial end of the project by taking advantage of the opportunity offered of retiring additional stock as he may obtain extra money. Says David W. Harper in this regard: "

"The tenants also have the option of making additional payments on their stock during the year, which gives the tenants of a saving disposition a chance to clean out their stock earlier. Frank Harder, who has had many years of experience in the real estate business, says that it is very seldom that the tenant does not take advantage of the opportunity of reducing payments." (2)

There is another little item in the plan that must not be forgotten. "Another little feature is that we are going to give a little credit on stock at the end of the year to each one of those who have been found to have kept their houses in shape." (1) The Company feels that any man who has aided in reducing the withdrawal from the depreciation fund, deserves to benefit by that reduction. This will also aid in retiring the stock in a shorter time.

Of course, there are certain expenses, which according to the terms of the lease, the leasee is to pay. All water bills and the expense of keeping the premises in good condition are defrayed by the leasee. If, however "the said

(1) Interview with Frank J. Harder, March 26th, 1923.

(2) Interview with David W. Harper, March 28th, 1923

premises shall be partially damaged by fire or wind or the elements, they shall be repaired as speedily as possible by and at the expense of the said Company. In case the damage from such causes is so extensive as to render the premises untenable, the rent shall cease until the same are repaired. If the premises be so damaged that the Company decides to rebuild, the term shall cease, the premises shall be surrendered, and the accrued rents shall be paid up to the time of surrender." (1)

The ownership and tenure of the dwellings in the Garden Homes Company next demands consideration. "The houses cannot be sold or transferred, but the tenants can turn their stocks back into the Company at any time and they will receive all they have paid less wear and tear. They may not however participate in the contingency fund. If a tenant does turn in his stock and gets his money, then the next man comes in and gets the house at the same price." (2)

"If on account of sickness or because of circumstances a member is compelled to give up his residence and move elsewhere, the by-laws of his society provide that the Garden Homes Company must purchase his paid up common stock at its par value, less any damage that may have been inflicted upon the residence." (3)

To quote from the Report of Housing Committee of the Cooperative League of America, which was supplied to the writer by Mayor Daniel W. Hoan in an interview on Dec. 16th,

- (1) Contract in the Pass Book of the Garden Homes Company.
- (2) Interview with Frank J. Harder, March 26th, 1923.
- (3) Report of the Committee on Cooperative Housing.

PROSPECTUS
— of —
Garden Homes
Company



The Co-operative Printery,

1923:

"The home owners do not receive title to their specific house. The tenant does not purchase a house. He owns common stock in the Company. This is in accordance with the experience of cooperatives the world over. ----- It is not the purpose of cooperative societies to enable tenants to obtain homes at bottom prices by building collectively and then to allow the individuals to own and sell them individually for profit to others."

As a matter of fact, however, this holds true for the Garden Homes only for so long a time after all the preferred stock has been retired as the holders of the common stock may wish. When all the stock is in the hands of the tenants, they may close up the affairs of the Company if they so desire. Frank J. Harder intimates this in saying: "At the end of twenty five years we can dissolve the Company." (1)

The last question to be asked is: "What does the tenant receive in return for his payment?"

Frank J. Harder, in an interview on March 26th, 1923, stated a few of the benefits which the tenant gains from the Garden Homes Corporation:

1. The residents are given homes at a very low price.
2. They obtain a home at a low figure on a small payment plan.
3. The Garden Homes Company shows the tenants what can be done cooperatively.
4. The plan gives each and every tenant light and fresh air which are so essential and necessary.
5. It therefore makes better citizens." (1)

To these the Prospectus of the Garden Homes Company adds a few more:

1. He (the resident) gets a home at a rental not higher and probably less than elsewhere and is encouraged to take care of it by having his twelfth month's rent remitted, less the cost of repairs.

(1) Interview with Frank J. Harden, March 26th, 1923.

2. He gets a house with a garden and plenty of fresh air, a house well built and sanitary, with some individuality, in which he can take pride. He lives in a neighborhood where all are equally desirous of keeping up the property.
3. Economies will be effected through wholesale buying of land and materials, building houses in numbers, saving in legal expenses, and the elimination of speculative profit.
4. He can invest his savings in the Company at 5%.
5. The unearned increment goes to the benefit of all the resident members, for with the increase of values they will either get a dividend on rent or pay rent below market value.
6. He secures practically all the surplus profit after fixed charges are made, in the form of a dividend on his rent or in the reduction of the amount he must pay in common stock.
7. He lives in a social atmosphere, with new and vital interests, and collective friendships in the community. He has a mutual interest in common recreation facilities, playgrounds, halls etc.
8. Ownership is common, not individual, thus providing a security from the risk of loss if a resident has to leave, as he has no liability beyond his shares.
9. If on account of sickness or because he is compelled by circumstance to give up his residence and move elsewhere, his contract provides that the Company must purchase his paid up stock at its par value less any damages he may have inflicted upon the residence." (1)

While the majority of these advantages have appeared in the course of this paper, one advantage, the first mentioned by Mr. Harder, deserves fuller consideration, viz., "the tenants are given homes at a very low price."

In Section Three it was shown that both in the purchase and development of the site as well as in the erection of the homes, certain economies had been effected under this plan. In a letter dated May 22nd, 1920, to the Housing Commission of Milwaukee and at present in their files. William D. Harper, Building inspector of the City of Milwaukee, makes the following statement:

(1) Prospectus of the Garden Homes Company, Page 3.

"With reference to the plan of a six room house presented to the Housing Commission by Frank J. Harder ----- I desire to say that the lowest price at which this same type of house, exclusive of the lot, is now sold in the City of Milwaukee, is at least \$1,500 or \$1,200 more than the estimated cost." The estimated cost of the homes, including the value of the lot, which as has been noted is about \$800, is "between \$4,500 and \$4,600," (1) which would set the price of a similar home in Milwaukee at about \$6,000.

"Homes of this style if bought anywhere else would cost at least \$6,000 or better," according to Frank J. Harder. (1)

David W. Harper bears out this statement when he said:

"The house is worth \$6,000 or \$7,000. Mrs. Stiglebauer wouldn't sell her house for \$6,500, where she is only paying \$4,800 for it." (2) Speaking on the same subject, April 12th, 1923, he said: "Dr. Mudroch priced a six-room cottage. The price was \$6,400 and the lot cost \$800. The present place, in his opinion is just as good and costs only \$4,700."

It may be objected, however, that both Mr. Harper and Mr. Harder are officials of the Company, a fact which would serve to lessen the value of their testimony. With this in mind the writer made a personal visit on April 14, 1923, to some of the tenants in their homes in the Garden Homes Subdivision. Parts of the interviews which have not already been quoted are given below.

"We're satisfied. We saw plenty of real estate and we liked this the best of all we saw." - Mrs. Dr. Mudroch, wife of dentist, residing at 2048 Bourneville place. (3)

"We are perfectly satisfied. In proportion to what it costs the place is fine." - John Jenss, mailman, 2044 Bourneville place.

"As far as the construction is concerned the place couldn't

- (1) Interview with Frank J. Harder, March 26th, 1923.
- (2) Interview with David W. Harper, April 28th, 1923.
- (3) Unless otherwise indicated, April 14th, 1923.

be beat for the price. I figure that it would cost about \$1,500 more to duplicate the house under usual conditions. I think that it is a good investment and a house no contractor could erect for the same sum." - Max Leopold, carpenter and pattern maker, 2076 Bourneville place.

"In purchasing one of these house a person gets value received. When we bought it, it was the best to be had for the money, compared with other homes that were on sale. I like the terms of payment." - G.W. Altpeter, employee of the City Lighting Commission, residing at the corner of Letchworth place and Atkinson avenue.

It would therefore appear that the tenants are actually "given homes at a very low price."

CONCLUSION

The value of any plan is judged by the manner in which it accomplishes the purposes which it sets out to fulfill.

The purposes of the Garden Homes Company, taken from its Prospectus, are the following:

- "1. To promote the economic erection, cooperative ownership and administration of healthful homes.
2. To place the said homes in areas platted in accordance with the best ideas of city planning so as to provide the greatest utility as well as healthful conditions and attractive surroundings.
3. To encourage the occupation of modest homes at cost and within the means of those who cannot acquire and retain their own homes.
4. To avoid the dangers that too frequently accompany ownership of houses and speculative building devoid of public spirit.
5. To harmonize and join the interests of resident and investor by an equitable use of the profit arising from the increase of values and the careful use of property.
6. To provide ample space for playgrounds and recreation for both old and young.
7. To provide an opportunity for intensive gardening under instruction, thus maintaining the home by this means."

As regards the last of these purposes, while nothing has actually been done in the way of gardening, the lots are of sufficient size to provide for this development.

This apparently is only a matter of time and of personal initiative on the part of the tenants. It would appear, therefore, that the Garden Homes Company has fulfilled, or is at least in a position to fulfill, all of the above purposes.

Sources

Because of the fact that this project is the first of its kind in America and is as yet in the course of construction, no bibliography relating to it is at present available. The material in the foregoing thesis was secured from interviews, newspaper files and actual observation of the physical part of the project.

Interviews

with:

Daniel W. Hoan, Mayor of Milwaukee, member of the Municipal Housing Commission, on December 16, 1922 and March 26, 1923.

David V. Jennings, Chief Examiner, Milwaukee Civil Service Commission, Father of the Jennings' Law, December 16, 1922 and March 28, 1923.

Frank J. Harder, Real Estate Dealer, Director of the Garden Homes Company, March 26, 1923.

William D. Harper, Building Inspector of Milwaukee, member of the Municipal Housing Commission, Director and Secretary of the Garden Homes Company, March 27, 1923 and April 19, 1923.

David W. Harper, Executive Secretary of the Garden Homes Company, March 28, 1923, April 12, 1923 and April 21, 1923.

William H. Schuchardt, Chairman of the City Real Estate Board, Vice-president and Director of the Garden Homes Company, Member of the Municipal Housing Commission, March 28, 1923.

Mrs. Dr. Mudroch, Tenant of the Garden Homes Company, April 14, 1923.

John Jenss, Mail Carrier, Tenant of the Garden Homes Company, April 14, 1923.

Max Leopold, Pattern Maker, Tenant of the Garden Homes Company, April 14, 1923.

G.W. Altpeter, City Employee, Tenant of the Garden Homes Company, April 14, 1923.

Material has also been obtained from:

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The files of the Garden Homes Company.

The Pass Book of the Garden Homes Company.

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Various issues of-

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MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
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The Report of the Municipal Housing Commission.

The Report on Cooperative Housing to the Cooperative League of America, made by the Committee on Cooperative Housing of the Cooperative League of America.

The Housing Files of the Municipal Library, 8th Floor, Milwaukee City Hall.