

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

New Designation _____ for: Historic Landmark Historic District _____
Amendment of a previous designation _____
Please summarize any amendment(s) _____

Property name Barry Farm Dwellings
If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.

Address 1100-1371 Steven Rd SE; 2679-2687 Wade Rd SE ; 2652 Fifth Sterling Ave SE

Square and lot number(s) Sq 5865, lots 964, 965, 977, 968-973, 243, 254, 249; Sq 5866, lots 130, 133-136, 141-144, 147-150, 152, 831-834

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 8C ; SMD 8C06

Date of construction 1942-43 Date of major alteration(s) 1987

Architect(s) National Capital Housing Authority Architectural style(s) Colonial

Original use Domestic; multiple dwelling Present use Domestic; multiple dwelling

Property owner District of Columbia Housing Authority

Legal address of property owner 1133 North Capitol Street NE, Washington DC 20002-7561

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) Barry Farm Tenants and Allies Association

If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) c/o Empower DC 1419 V St, NW Washington, DC 20006
(202) 234-9119 x100

Name and title of authorized representative Detrice Belt President BFTAA

Signature of representative [Signature] Date 4/8/19

Name and telephone of author of application Sarah Shoenfeld (202) 643-5166

#19-07 Date received 4/19/19
H.P.O. staff [Signature]

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Barry Farm Dwellings

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1100-1371 Stevens Road SE; 2677-2687 Wade Road SE; 2652 Firth Sterling Avenue SE

not for publication

city or town Washington DC

vicinity

state DC code DC county N/A code 001 zip code 20011

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 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

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

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
32		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
32		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic / multiple dwelling

Domestic / multiple dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Colonial

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Concrete, stucco

roof: Asphalt

other: _____

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The intact collection of Barry Farm Dwellings that survives in the historically larger complex extends on either side of Stevens road from Wade Road on the east to Firth Stirling Avenue on the west. This collection of dwellings consists of 18 rows of attached duplexes on the south side of the road and 12 on the north side. The rows, which range from three to five attached duplexes, are further organized into clusters with alternating rows facing the street and extending end-wise to it with open space courts and lawns with mature trees between them, many of which have been cut down. The collection is arranged in an organized, but varied layout, giving each grouping its own character and small-scale feeling despite the almost identical architectural treatment of each attached duplex and the once large-scale complex.

The rows are organized in two principal layouts with variants amongst them: *Pattern 1*) Rows of housing facing Stevens Road with two rows, facing away from each other, placed behind and perpendicular to the street row; and *Pattern 2*) rows (either two long ones, or two smaller groups of four) placed perpendicular to the street and facing away from each other paved alleys between the rear elevations and sidewalks leading to the front elevations from Stevens Road.

Narrative Description

The intact collection of Barry Farm Dwellings that survives in the historically larger complex extends on either side of Stevens road from Wade Road on the east to Firth Stirling Avenue on the west. This collection of dwellings consists of 18 rows of attached duplexes on the south side of the road and 12 on the north side. The rows, which range from three to five attached duplexes, are further organized into clusters with alternating rows facing the street and extending end-wise to it with open space courts and lawns with mature trees between them, many of which have been cut down. The collection is arranged in an organized, but varied layout, giving each grouping its own character and small-scale feeling despite the almost identical architectural treatment of each attached duplex and the once large-scale complex.

From Wade Road looking westerly along Stevens Road, the topography descends towards the Anacostia River with the views to the city extending along the road and duplex housing arranged to either side of it. From this intersection, the addresses of the duplexes descend from the 1300 block to the 1200 block.

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Stevens Road from Wade Road

Although arranged in varying patterns, the rows of attached duplexes are similar. They are two-stories in height, have flat stucco-clad walls under a single, continuous gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles, and punched single and paired window openings. The doors, recessed slightly into the stucco walls, and arranged in pairs across the façades, are adorned with stucco-clad surrounds. These surrounds have blind arches set above the door openings and in certain cases, a single, arched cap centered above the paired doors. The rows house three- and four duplex units, or three duplex units with two single end units. Historically the rows had exposed concrete block walls and a combination of flat and gable roofs and sheds over the entrance doors. Each of the units has a single door and either paired or single windows on the first story, and two or three windows on the second story. At the rear of the units, small, one-story, shed-roof wings extend off the center wall of each duplex. All of the windows appear to be 1/1 vinyl replacements.

The rows are organized in two principal layouts with variants amongst them: *Pattern 1*) Rows of housing facing Stevens Road with two rows, facing away from each other, placed behind and perpendicular to the street row; and *Pattern 2*) rows (either two long ones, or two smaller groups of four) placed perpendicular to the street and facing away from each other with paved alleys between the rear elevations and sidewalks leading to the front elevations from Stevens Road.

In the case of the *Pattern 1*, the street facing rows include five attached buildings with three duplexes at the center and two single units or double units at the ends. The central three duplexes are covered with a continuous gable roof. The two end units are recessed from the façade plane of the center duplexes and are covered with lower gable roofs (these appear to have been flat roofs historically). The paired of doors for the duplexes and the single doors for the single, end units are all centered on their respective façades.

The perpendicular rows behind the street-facing rows in *Pattern 1* are either arranged in pairs or groups of threes with a paved court between and at the rear of the rows, accessible to alleys that run parallel to Stevens Road. While the rear of these rows are joined by the court, the front elevations of these rows are opposite-facing and reached by sidewalks from Stevens Road. The front of these rows face broad lawns with mature trees with adjacent rows of dwellings across the lawn.

In *Pattern 2*, there are two variants: one with two parallel rows of five attached dwellings; the other with four buildings arranged in two parallel rows of three attached dwellings in two rows. In both cases, all the rows run perpendicular to Stevens Road. In the first variant, the rows have paved drives from Stevens Road running between them, with their rear elevations facing the drive and their front elevations reached by sidewalks. The rows of five attached dwellings feature three duplexes in the center and two single end units. The center duplexes are covered with a continuous gable roof, while the end units, recessed from the façade, have lower and independent gable roofs.

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Pattern 1 variant: groups of three duplexes arranged perpendicular to and behind street-facing rows



Pattern 2 variant: parallel rows of five attached dwellings running perpendicular to street

In the second variant, the four rows are all duplexes covered with continuous gable roofs. The two rows of two face opposite directions with a paved court between them and at their rear elevations. The front elevations, reached by sidewalks from Stevens Road, face open lawn and, generally, the facades of opposing rows across those lawns.

The patterns alternate such that Stevens Road is lined with rows of front facing dwellings, and end walls of the perpendicular units. These arrangements allow for a series of shared lawns and courts that provide a sense of unity within

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the larger development plan, just as the variations in type provide individual character to the various units and distinguish one from the next.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage - Black

Landscape Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1942-1969

Significant Dates

1942

1954

1966

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

National Capital Housing Authority

Period of Significance (justification)

Construction began in 1942. A Barry Farm tenant chaired the National Welfare Rights Organization until 1969.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Barry Farm Dwellings is a 442-unit public housing complex constructed by the National Capital Housing Authority (NCHA)¹ as permanent low-income rental housing for African Americans. Located in Southeast DC just east of the Anacostia Freeway, it is bounded by the St. Elizabeths campus, Firth Sterling Avenue, Suitland Parkway, and Wade Road. Its principal streets are Stevens Road, Eaton Road and Sumner Road, with alleys behind Stevens and Sumner roads serving as the boundaries for residential development. The NCHA, in a report covering the agency's first ten years, described the original development site as extending northeast to Howard Road and comprising approximately 34 acres. However Suitland Parkway, which opened in December 1944, serves as the site's actual northeast boundary.

Barry Farm Dwellings was built on a section of a 375-acre site purchased in 1867 by the Freedmen's Bureau, a federal government agency, for the settlement of African Americans after the Civil War. Within two years of its establishment, 266 families had moved to the site (renamed Hillsdale in 1874). A thriving, self-contained settlement, Hillsdale was home to Emily Edmonson—who famously attempted to escape slavery in 1848 by sailing down the Potomac toward Philadelphia; community leaders Solomon Brown and Charles Douglass, along with his siblings Lewis and Frederick, Jr. (their father, Frederick Douglass, lived in nearby Uniontown); DC Public Schools assistant superintendent Garnet Wilkinson, who oversaw the city's African American schools; and Georgiana Simpson, the second black woman to receive a Ph.D.² As described below, the layout and names of the streets in Barry Farm Dwellings mark the last physical imprint of the original Barry Farm/Hillsdale community on today's landscape.

The 32 buildings that are the subject of this nomination comprise the 1100, 1200, and 1300 blocks of Stevens Road and the 2600 block of Wade Road. These buildings are identical to and represent approximately half the units that made up Barry Farm Dwellings prior to the commencement of demolition there in 2018. As documented by the DC State Historic Preservation Office, Barry Farm's housing was altered in 1987, when windows and doors were replaced, exposed white concrete block walls were covered in beige stucco, and significant interior modifications were made. Early photos of Barry Farm Dwellings also show awnings over some doorways, which no longer exist. In addition, the DCSHPO's Determination of Eligibility states that flat roofs were converted to gabled roofs, but as described above, it appears that only some of the end units had flat roofs. Despite the alterations, the overall layout and massing of these buildings, as well as their relationship to the larger site, remain intact.³

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Built in 1942-43, Barry Farm was representative of much of U.S. public housing during this period, all of which was based on specific principals of site organization and design. These principals, drawn from 1932-34 prototypes, are based on the theory that the physical layout of public housing should promote physical and mental health by maximizing natural light, ventilation, privacy, and communal space for social contact and recreation. Like other such projects of this period, Barry Farm's layout reflected the European social housing concept of *Zeilenbau*, with buildings arranged to provide maximum light and cross-breezes, and occupying a relatively small percentage of the whole site.⁴ Like almost every government housing project built in the 1930s-40s, Barry Farm Dwellings included a recreation/community center.⁵

¹ NCHA was known as the Alley Dwelling Authority until June 1, 1943.

² "Frederick Douglass in Washington, D.C.: The Lion of Anacostia" (<https://thelionofanacostia.wordpress.com/tag/barry-farm/>); John Muller, *Frederick Douglass in Washington, D.C.: The Lion of Anacostia* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), 95-97; Louise Daniel Hutchinson, *The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 81-90 (<https://archive.org/details/anacostiastor1600hutc>).

³ LeMoyne Gardens Public Housing Project in Memphis, Tennessee, was listed in the National Register in 1996 with significant alterations having been made prior to the designation, according to the following passage from the nomination: "Between 1975 and 1977, the Memphis Housing Authority spent approximately \$1.3 million rehabilitating LeMoyne Gardens as part of Housing and Urban Developments \$35 million demonstration project.... Several new retaining walls were constructed as well as cast concrete fences around select units. All the buildings within the complex were re-roofed, all 842 front doors were replaced and some interior redecoration was conducted."

⁴ Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949, National Register, 2004

<https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/guidance/Public%20Housing%20in%20the%20United%20States%20MPS.pdf>

⁵ The original Barry Farm Recreation Center is pictured in the DC Office of Planning's Ward 8 Heritage Guide, page 29. A new recreation center has since been constructed on this site.

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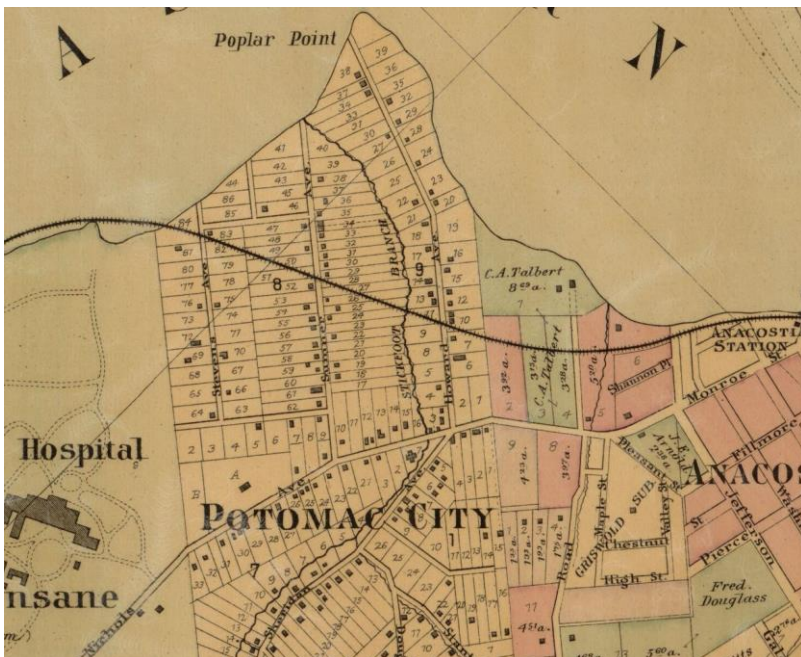
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The principles governing the design of Barry Farm Dwellings and other public housing throughout the U.S. in the 1930s and 40s emerged, in part, from the European social housing movement of the 1920s, which posited new public housing as the answer to slums. Slums were perceived as causing "blight," which was thought to spread and endanger surrounding areas if not contained or eliminated; public housing was conceived as providing a clean, orderly environment in which blight could not take root. Formal site plans dictating the symmetrical placement of buildings, conformity of design and scale, and an overall appearance of uniformity characterize government housing of the time.⁶

Barry Farm Dwellings' layout of "superblocks," each of which contained one or more common open spaces bounded in whole or in part by through traffic streets, but not intersected by such streets, was a typical design for low-rent housing projects. The use of superblocks was based on two corollary public housing design principles. The first was that streets and walkways would enable the passage of through traffic, local traffic, and pedestrians, but having just three major parallel streets through the development, with no perpendicular streets connecting them, kept paving and utility costs down, maintained privacy for residents, and lowered the risk of traffic hazards. The site plan and repetition of buildings also created a sense of communal identity that clearly distinguished Barry Farm Dwellings as a separate entity, distinct from its surrounding neighborhood. The second design principle behind superblocks was the creation of large open spaces within the superblocks to allow for the most economical arrangement of buildings and for maximizing the use of open areas. The caption of an early NCHA photo of Barry Farm Dwellings boasts of its "unrationed" light and air as well as the retention of old trees on the site.⁷ Barry Farm Dwellings' design also retained the same street layout and open space of the freedmen's community originally established on the site in 1867. The streets were widely spaced with long back yards abutting one another, allowing for vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and for families to socialize outdoors.



1887 Hopkins Map showing the street layout and names of the 1867 Barry Farms (Potomac City on map) retained in the 1941 public housing development of Barry Farm Dwellings.

The streets were named for anti-slavery legislators Thaddeus Stevens (PA), Charles Sumner (MA) and Benjamin Wade (OH), among others. The street grid within the boundaries of today's Barry Farm Dwelling looks essentially as it did when the site was first laid out, and all of the street names remain.⁸

⁶ Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949, *ibid*.

⁷ Report of the National capital housing authority for the ten-year period 1934-1944, National capital housing authority (1944), 203 (<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015005704211>).

⁸ Hutchinson, *The Anacostia Story*, 83. John Muller, "Barry Farm street names reflect post-Civil War history," Jan. 31, 2013 (<https://ggwash.org/view/30068/barry-farm-street-names-reflect-post-civil-war-history>); DC Office of Planning, Ward 8 Heritage Guide.

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Constructed of concrete block and adhering to strict low-cost guidelines, Barry Farm's design was largely in keeping with other government housing of the period, reflecting the utilitarian ideals of European architectural precedents in public housing. However, in keeping with much of DC's typical single-family housing, the gable-roof buildings were minimally embellished with Colonial-style decorative elements.⁹

The interior spaces of public housing were relatively spartan and utilitarian, with small rooms. They generally contained between one and four bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and a full bathroom. Finishes consisted of painted concrete block or plaster partition walls, and floors generally consisted of asphalt tile or linoleum over concrete. However interiors at Barry Farm were of higher-than-average quality, with parquet floors and wood throughout. Like the buildings themselves, interior rooms were situated to maximize natural light and ventilation and to provide privacy to family members.

The buildings at 1100-1371 Stevens Road, and at 2679-2685 Wade Road, are the last intact original structures within Barry Farm Dwellings. These are the only remaining structures that represent the history of this housing complex, which is significant under National Register Criterion A for the following reasons: 1) It was established by the federal government for the purpose of selling affordable building lots to African Americans in the wake of the Civil War, 2) It originated as permanent low-rent housing for African Americans with preference given to those displaced by World War II-related projects or engaged in military service or defense industry jobs; 3) Several units on Stevens Road were home to the most active families and plaintiffs in the battle for school desegregation culminating in the Supreme Court's 1954 rulings in *Bolling v. Sharpe* and *Brown v. Board of Education*; 4) In the mid to late 1960s, with an infusion of federal resources provided by President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, Barry Farm Dwellings became the site of a nationally-recognized tenant organizing effort led by Stevens Road residents. Activism around welfare and tenants' rights led to the establishment of DC's Citywide Welfare Alliance and the National Welfare Rights Organization.

Built in 1942-43 by DC's Alley Dwelling Authority (ADA) and subsequently operated by the National Capital Housing Authority (NCHA) and the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), Barry Farm, at 442 units, was the largest subsidized housing complex to provide low-rent housing to African American families during this period. The remaining houses at Barry Farm represent the only development of its kind in Southeast DC, and one of just three African American war housing developments that remained in the District as of 2018.¹⁰ Barry Farm Dwellings initially prioritized tenants displaced by war projects or in war-related employment, and transitioned into low-income rental housing after World War II. Although significantly altered in 1987, the development's original design and its existing layout are in keeping with the standards of the period for public housing, which emphasized the arrangement of buildings to maximize the communal use of open space for recreation and to maximize natural light and ventilation within each unit.

While much of the development was demolished in 2018, the extant buildings along Stevens and Wade roads are not only representative of the community as a whole, but were home to almost all of the most prominent persons who lived at Barry Farm. These buildings stand at the southwesternmost corner of the site, abutting the 336-acre Saint Elizabeths Hospital Historic District; a narrow alleyway behind the units serves as the only boundary between them and the existing historic district. The repetitiousness of design and orientation of these buildings represent the "superblock" design aesthetic of the entire development. Only the units built along Stevens and Wade Road are street facing the street. The other buildings stand behind and perpendicular to the Stevens Road units, with front doors facing the open green space between the buildings. Except at either end of Stevens, there are no cross streets, and walking paths between the buildings combined with unfenced yards along much of the block, allow residents to pass freely between residences and throughout shared outdoor space.

Barry Farm Dwellings' design as well as its isolated location and its unique history as the former site of an African American community built on land provided by the federal government in 1867, helped foster the tight-knit and largely self-reliant community that is central to its history as a site of activism and organizing to resist segregated schools, discriminatory welfare policies, and substandard housing conditions.

Barry Farm Dwellings' period of significance begins in 1942, when the ADA initiated condemnation proceedings to clear the site for construction, and ends in 1969, the last year that Barry Farm's most prominent tenant activist, Etta Mae Horn, was a leader of the National Welfare Rights Organization, which she helped found.

⁹ See photos here of Barry Farm in April 1944: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=barry%20farm>

¹⁰ The only other two extant African American war housing developments are the 239-unit James Creek in Southwest and the 174-unit Syphax Gardens in Southwest.

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Early history of Barry Farm/Hillsdale community

Barry Farm takes its name from an estate once owned by Washington City merchant and councilman James Barry, who had purchased this section of the "St. Elizabeths" tract in hopes of profiting as the city expanded eastward. In early 1868, the federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands purchased 375 acres from Barry's heirs for the purposes of establishing a model community for African Americans on the site. By the end of the Civil War (1861-1865), some 40,000 refugees from slavery had arrived in Washington. The city was not equipped to meet their housing needs, hence the purchase of this large rural tract, along with the provision of basic utilities and enough building materials for each family to build a two-room, 14x24-foot house. The Bureau sold lots of approximately one acre each, to be paid off in two years.

By October 1868, most of the 359 lots had been sold and lumber had been sold and distributed for the construction of 185 houses. By 1869, more than 500 families are said to have purchased lots and a little more than half that number already lived at Barry Farm. Many families made their way to Anacostia after work, to work by candlelight on building their new homes. The growing community banded together to clear the land and to cultivate vegetable gardens and livestock. By 1871, they had already built a school and a Baptist church, and had purchased a lot for the construction of a Methodist Church.¹¹

Most Barry Farm men worked blue-collar jobs, often at St. Elizabeths Hospital or across the river at the Navy Yard. Some also worked as government clerks, teachers, or professionals. These included Frederick Douglass's sons Charles, Lewis, and Frederick Jr., and attorney and justice of the peace John Moss, the first African American judicial officer in DC. Other residents included the assistant superintendent for DC's African American schools, Garnet Wilkinson, and scholar Georgiana Simpson, who became the second black woman to receive a Ph.D upon her matriculation at the University of Chicago in 1921. Emily Edmonson, who joined her siblings in a famous attempt to escape slavery in 1848 by boarding a schooner, the *Pearl*, and sailing down the Potomac River, also lived at Barry Farm. Solomon Brown, for many years the Smithsonian Institution's sole black professional employee, was also a resident. After being elected in 1871 to represent Anacostia in the DC House of Delegates, he introduced a measure changing Barry Farm's name to Hillsdale.¹²

From 1895 to 1918, at least two and a half acres of would later become the site of Barry Farm Dwellings' playground was occupied by Eureka Park, DC's first black-owned amusement park. The park offered picnic areas, a merry-go-round, dancing, and live music. Both Eureka and its next-door rival Green Willow Park hosted conventions featuring nationally prominent speakers.¹³ Thirty-four acres within Section 8 of the original 1867 plan for Barry Farm was taken by the Alley Dwelling Authority in 1941 for the construction of Barry Farm Dwellings. The area contained 32 houses (23 of which were occupied), and mostly sat toward the front of their original one-acre lots. While a 1931 real estate map shows that some of the other lots were empty, other lots had been subdivided and contained more than one building. None of the original freedmen houses remain today.¹⁴

Barry Farm Dwellings Development, Design, and Historical Context

The origins of public housing—housing built and administered by local governments via funding from federal programs to house low- and moderate-income families and individuals—can be traced to a series of government initiatives begun in the 1930s to combat unemployment, poverty, and insufficient housing during the Great Depression. Until the passage of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act in 1937, public housing was reserved for the "deserving poor" with steady, moderate incomes. Additional government programs in the early 1940s provided housing for defense industry workers and their families in overcrowded employment centers during World War II. Until the 1950s, all public housing was racially segregated, and most war housing was for whites only. As a result, federal public housing programs entrenched segregation by either reinforcing existing settlement patterns or by building separate developments for whites and African Americans in areas that were racially mixed.

During the one and a half year lead-up to the United States' entry into World War II, in December 1941, approximately 3 million families and a total of 8-10 million Americans migrated to areas that offered employment related to the war. Black

¹¹ Hutchinson, *ibid.*; "Frederick Douglass in D.C.," <https://thelionofanacostia.wordpress.com/tag/barry-farm>.

¹² Hutchinson, *ibid.*; "Frederick Douglass in D.C.," <https://thelionofanacostia.wordpress.com/tag/barry-farm>; Alcione M. Amos, Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, *History of Place*, forthcoming.

¹³ Amos, *ibid.*

¹⁴ Amos, *ibid.*

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migration to DC accelerated after President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 in June 1941, barring racial discrimination in defense industries. Between 1941 and 1944, the number of African Americans in DC increased by 10,000, to 41,566.¹⁵ As a result, the housing shortage already faced by black DC residents prior to 1940 became increasingly severe. According to a report by the Emergency Committee on Housing, of 30,000 publicly financed units built since 1940 in the metro area, not more than 4,000 were built for African Americans.¹⁶ When the Frederick Douglass Dwellings became the first public housing complex in Anacostia to open for black residents in 1941, the National Capital Housing Authority reported that at first there were not enough applicants, because "they dread moving far away from familiar neighborhoods to the outlying sections of the city." But by the end of June, 5,600 black families had applied for just 627 available units at Douglass and at Carrollsburg Dwellings, just west of the Anacostia River near the Navy Yard.¹⁷

In June 1940, the National Defense Act included a provision for the expansion of public housing, to be administered by the U.S. Housing Authority and to be made available at a low cost to military personnel or defense-related civilian workers and their families, regardless of income. The Act made no new appropriations for public housing, but allowed the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA) to use up to \$150 million in unexpended funds from its final \$800 million pre-war appropriation, and to assist more than 500 local housing authorities in cooperating with the Navy and War departments to make housing available. Local housing authorities in strategic defense areas quickly converted their unfinished projects from low-rent to defense housing, resulting in more than 65,000 such units being converted for occupancy by war workers by the beginning of 1942. By February 1941, the USHA also approved new loans to 20 local housing authorities for 6,344 units of defense housing. In addition, the National Defense Act provided the USHA with federal powers of condemnation, allowing it to acquire large parcels of land that it could resell cheaply to local authorities without the threat of costly court battles. At Barry Farm, this would result in the use of eminent domain to condemn 32 houses, at least 23 of which were occupied.¹⁸ On the other hand, the Defense Act exempted local authorities from a previous requirement that an equal number of "slum" units be razed as the number of public housing units were built.¹⁹

The USHA recommended that housing authorities consider their postwar needs when planning new defense housing, so that permanent structures would be built as needed, and become available to low-income families after the war. However in October 1940, several months after President Roosevelt appointed a well-known real estate developer to coordinate defense housing, the passage of the Lanham Act severely restricted federal efforts to build permanent housing, and from this point on, most of the units constructed expressly for war workers were temporary. Demountable plywood dormitories and trailers would pose no competition to private developers.²⁰

While the national scale of the wartime public housing program dictated central control in directing certain aspects of the program, such as the preparation of standard plans, the mass purchase of scarce supplies, and the development of overall guidelines, construction and management were decentralized to regional offices and local housing authorities. DC's public housing was overseen by the Alley Dwelling Authority (ADA) from 1934 until June 1, 1943, when it became the National Capital Housing Authority. Wherever possible, local communities and public housing authorities actively participated in determining what type of development would occur in a particular area, and in the selection of architects. DC's National Capital Parks and Planning Commission had long advocated for the elimination of "slum" housing downtown and its director in 1942-1949, Ulysses S. Grant III, explicitly called for African Americans to be resettled in the furthest northeast and southeast corners of the city.²¹

Signed in 1939, the contract for Barry Farm Dwellings became the ADA's third contract to be executed under auspices of the United States Housing Authority (USHA). However a white citizens association in the area opposed the project, as did

¹⁵ Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove, *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2017), 274.

¹⁶ "Residential Segregation: Discriminatory Housing in the Nation's Capital," National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital (unpublished background report for *Segregation in Washington*, 1948), Papers of E. Franklin Frazier, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard Univ.

¹⁷ Report of the National capital housing authority for the ten-year period 1934-1944, *ibid.*, 43-46.

¹⁸ 11 of the 23 households were re-housed by the ADA by the end of Jan. 1942. Others found their own housing or were deemed to have incomes too high to be eligible (Report of the National capital housing authority, 57).

¹⁹ Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949, *ibid.*

²⁰ The Lanham Act also required, beginning in April 1941, that the average cost of all permanent dwelling units could not exceed \$3,750 per family unit, with no single unit costing more than \$4,500. A contract for Barry Farm had already been already been executed at \$5,507 per unit (Appendix B, Report of the National capital housing authority for the ten-year period 1934-1944, 124.)

²¹ William D. Nixon, "Ghettoized Housing," *Washington Post*, Jan. 8, 1949. The commission's early members also included segregationist city planners Harold Bartholomew and J.C. Nichols.

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a real estate developer with plans to build whites-only housing nearby. When the developer agreed to build housing for African Americans instead, and when development costs turned out to be higher than anticipated, the ADA delayed its request to the U.S. Department of Justice to commence the process of acquiring the land via condemnation until October 1941. Plans for the development were completed in January 1942.²²

Over the next four months, the ADA solicited and tentatively selected multiple bids for contractors to build the project, each of which was rejected by the USHA, primarily due to cost. After a third round of bids were submitted, a contractor was finalized in late April 1942. (A detailed report by the National Capital Housing Authority does not provide further details on who was selected to design and build Barry Farm Dwellings.) Wartime supply shortages required items such as gas ranges and hot water heaters to be omitted from the construction contract, and "to be secured through the USHA's mass purchase plan," according to the NCHA. Labor and supply shortages also delayed the installation of sewers, and heavy rains during the construction period nearly caused the collapse of a wall dividing the site from St. Elizabeths Hospital next door; a bank had been cut just below the wall to allow for building more houses. Nevertheless, Barry Farm Dwellings' first units were ready for occupancy in November 1942 and, despite delays in installing utilities and defects in war-standard household equipment, all of the units were ready to be occupied by October 1943.²³

The scarcity of construction materials during World War II, combined with short timelines, meant that design work, which had already become increasingly standardized under USHA, was especially restrained during this period. Congressional regulations prevented government support of projects with "elaborate or expensive design or materials." The variation in sizing, placement, and decorative elements that often characterized pre-war public housing (though not necessarily that which was built for African Americans) gave way to rows of increasingly severe and regularized buildings lacking all but minor architectural elaboration. In this regard, Barry Farm was representative of other wartime public housing in its layout. Barry Farm Dwellings was built with relatively inexpensive concrete block, but in a Colonial Revival style typical of other housing in the area. As in this case, architects sometimes looked to regional traditions, so that public housing in a neighborhood would be relatively unobtrusive. Site planning generally emphasized ample outdoor play areas and walkways, and on this site, the original Barry Farm/Hillsdale street grid set a precedent for open space.²⁴

With initial priority given to people displaced by war-related projects, the ADA's tenant selection office began housing families at Barry Farm in November 1942. Thirteen families who had been living in a government trailer park after being forced to vacate their homes for the Navy Yard's expansion were among the first to move in. In September 1943, Barry Farm was one of three public housing sites to which a total of 112 families were moved after being displaced for the construction of Suitland Parkway.²⁵ Secondary preference, as required by federal authorities, was given to housing people working in war-related jobs or employed by the military. In its ten-year report for 1934-44, the NCHA boasted that it had been a pioneer in establishing a graded rent system that enabled even very low-income "relief" families to have access to decent housing, and that the system had been adopted in other cities. "Because of its social objective," notes the report, the agency had also "made the unusual provision for families with children by providing dwellings containing three or four bedrooms and by providing generous open space about the dwellings."²⁶

Barry Farm Dwellings' 442 units were among 2,034 total units of low-income permanent public housing built for African Americans in DC during World War II, during a period when DC's black population increased by more than 30 percent and when most of the city's market-rate housing, even for lower income residents, barred black occupancy.²⁷ Meanwhile, private developers, with the benefit of an expanded federal mortgage guarantee program beginning in March 1941, built nearly 900,000 new housing units during the war, almost all for whites-only. Primarily small, affordable single family homes built apart from the inner city near wartime industrial centers, these new developments would form the nucleus of postwar suburbanization. In the DC area, the Federal Housing Administration's financing of hundreds of whites-only private developments on the city's outskirts served to exacerbate white flight and disinvestment in the area around Barry Farm Dwellings.²⁸

²² Report of the National capital housing authority for the ten-year period 1934-1944, *ibid.*, 55-56.

²⁴ Public Housing Projects in Memphis, Tennessee, 1936-1943, National Register (1996), 8. (<https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/62f4a9a3-5224-4a06-8a3b-ca2698cc370a>).

²⁵ Report of the National capital housing authority for the ten-year period 1934-1944, *ibid.*, 116.

²⁶ Report of the National capital housing authority for the ten-year period 1934-1944, *ibid.*, vii, x.

²⁷ DC's black population increased during this period by 10,000, to 41,566 (Asch and Musgrove, 274).

²⁸ Asch and Musgrove, 290-91; Kenneth T. Jackson, "Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream: The First Quarter-Century of Government Intervention in the Housing Market," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 50, 1980, 421-451.

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Beginning in the late 1950s, the wholesale demolition of low-income, mostly black neighborhoods—via federally-funded "slum clearance" and urban renewal programs—changed the face of public housing. In DC, some 80 percent of the area east of the Anacostia River was upzoned in conjunction with the mass displacement of Southwest DC residents for the nation's first federal urban renewal project.²⁹

By the early 1960s, public housing had become the last refuge for low-income African Americans displaced by urban renewal and redevelopment. In DC, 94 percent of 5,000 families waitlisted for public housing in 1962 were black.

The area around Barry Farm rapidly transformed into a low-to-moderate income, almost entirely black-occupied section of the city. The concentration of low-income apartment housing in an area that remained isolated from the rest of the city and from basic amenities such as grocery stores, combined with municipal disinvestment east of the Anacostia River and the legal desegregation of suburban housing, exacerbated the abandonment of this area by people who could afford to move elsewhere.

As of 2004, twelve years after the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched a national program (HOPE VI) to replace public housing with private mixed-income developments,³⁰ nearly 700 large-scale public housing projects (125,000 dwelling units) built either as low-rent housing during the Great Depression or as defense housing during World War II continued to operate within the federal public housing program. In DC, the New Communities Initiative was launched that year with the stated goal of rehousing public housing residents in new mixed-income developments, but instead the program has drastically reduced the amount of housing stock for low-income Washingtonians, especially for families. In 2013, the waiting list for the city's remaining public housing closed after reaching more than 70,000 names. As of 2019, the 205 remaining units at Barry Farm, 239 units at James Creek, 174 units at Syphax Gardens, and 160 units at Kelly Miller represent all of the city's extant World War II-era public housing, for a total of 778 units in four developments.³¹

Decades of maintenance neglect and the city's lack of commitment to sufficiently funding low-income housing puts much of DC's remaining public housing at risk.³² The extant buildings at Barry Farm, combined with the development's street layout and street names, serve as the sole material evidence of the profoundly important history of a site that has provided government-funded housing for African American families since 1867.

Bolling v. Sharpe

Among those who lived at Barry Farm Dwellings by 1950 were several families whose children became plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the DC public schools, which required black children to attend segregated schools that were frequently housed in aging, overcrowded facilities. (Old school buildings originally built for whites were often designated for African American use once they began to deteriorate or become outdated.) After the suit, *Bolling v. Sharpe*, was dismissed by the District Courts, the U.S. Supreme Court asked to hear it as a companion to *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Because the District of Columbia is not a state and, therefore, not necessarily subject to the 14th Amendment or other laws pertaining to states, it was crucial that a DC case be among those considered by the Supreme Court. Indeed, when the court ruled on May 17, 1954, that the racial segregation of public schools violated the 14th Amendment, which requires states to treat citizens equally, in *Bolling v. Sharpe*, the court ruled that segregating the District's schools violated the the 5th Amendment's guarantee that the federal government treat all citizens with "due process of the law." The Barry Farm community was central to achieving this civil rights victory.

Navy Yard employee James C. Jennings and his wife Luberta moved with their children to Barry Farm in 1943, just at the time that their youngest two children, Adrienne and Barbara, were old enough to start James G. Birney Elementary School nearby.³³ Seven years later, in 1950, the girls were ready for junior high, but there was not a single junior high or high

²⁹ Office of the Assistant to the Mayor for Housing Programs, "Washington's Far Southeast 70," 1970 (Anacostia Community Museum Archives).

³⁰ <http://www.dchousing.org/topic.aspx?topicid=5>

³¹ <http://www.dchousing.org/topic.aspx?topicid=3>

³² Morgan Baskin, "Nearly One-Third of the City's Public Housing Stock Is at Risk of Becoming Uninhabitable," *Washington City Paper*, Dec. 20, 2018 (<https://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/news/housing-complex/article/21038117/nearly-onethird-of-the-citys-public-housing-stock-is-at-risk-of-becoming-uninhabitable>); "DC Housing Authority Board Opens Door to Privatizing Some Public Housing," *Washington City Paper*, Jan. 17, 2019 (<https://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/news/housing-complex/article/21043796/dc-housing-authority-board-opens-door-to-privatizing-some-public-housing>).

³³ Adrienne and Barbara Jennings were 2 and 3 years old in 1940 (U.S. Census for 1940).

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school for African Americans east of the Anacostia River. Their older siblings had traveled all the way to schools in Southwest and Northwest DC, missing out on extracurriculars due to long commutes and walking great distances when buses packed with white students from Congress Heights neglected to stop at Barry Farm. So when it was announced that a brand new whites-only school, John Philip Sousa Junior High, would open nearby on Ely Place in September 1950, the Jennings joined other Barry Farm residents in organizing to fight for access. Community leaders met throughout that summer, and nearly 400 signed a petition to the school board demanding that Sousa be integrated; the majority of signers were from Barry Farm.³⁴

When Sousa Junior High opened on September 11, 1950, the Jennings girls, along with Valerie Cogdell, of 1269 Stevens Road; Sarah Louise Briscoe, of Eaton Road; Spottswood and Wanamaker Bolling, who had moved to Barry Farm as the sons of a war worker and now lived nearby at 1732 Stanton Terrace; and at least four other children went to the school and demanded admittance. They were escorted by Gardner Bishop, who had cofounded the Consolidated Parents Group three years earlier to demand black access to another white junior high in Northeast, and by Reverend Samuel Everett Guiles of Campbell AME Church, which had long served Barry Farm. After the students were turned away, attorneys filed *Bolling v. Sharpe*; the plaintiffs were listed alphabetically with the Bollings first, followed by Cogdell and the Jennings. A companion case filed on the same day listed Valerie Cogdell as the lead plaintiff and included another Barry Farm resident named Wallace Morris, but this case did not move forward.³⁵

Rather than make a case for equalizing segregated schools, as lead civil rights attorney Charles Hamilton Houston had been doing since the 1930s, *Bolling* attorneys James Nabrit and George E.C. Hayes attacked segregation head-on as inherently discriminatory. Barry Farm residents agreed with this approach, and threw their support behind the case by hosting fundraising dinners and raffles at Campbell AME, and by soliciting contributions to pay for legal expenses (other than the attorneys themselves, who worked for free). Their efforts began to pay off in 1952, just after a new school year had kicked off with 26 overcrowded black elementary schools operating on double shifts. That fall, the Supreme Court asked to hear the case, and in September 1954, Sousa Junior High opened its doors to residents of Barry Farm.³⁶

Tenant Organizing in the 1960s

Although Barry Farm Dwellings was just over twenty years old by the mid-1960s, it had begun showing signs of serious neglect by the National Capital Housing Authority. Rats and cockroaches were rampant, faucets leaked, and at least one resident's ceiling had crashed onto her stove. Whereas social and recreational activities had originally been embedded into Barry Farm Dwelling's design, with its recreation center, substantial green space, and limits on through traffic, the complex and its grounds had since deteriorated. The city had stopped providing even basic maintenance, such as the replacement of burnt-out street lights, not only within Barry Farm Dwellings, but throughout this entire section of the city.³⁷

Many of Barry Farm's tenants could also barely afford to feed or clothe their families, but would lose welfare benefits if they became employed. For those who had children to care for, it wasn't worth the risk of taking part-time, low-wage, or unstable jobs that might pay even less than the minimal income provided by the government, especially when they could not afford day care and valued their role as parents.³⁸ But in exchange for receiving government assistance to work as unpaid homemakers, parents, babysitters for their neighbors, and in some cases, community organizers, women were frequently forced to open their doors to welfare investigators, who arrived unannounced at all hours. Entering homes without permission, investigators searched for evidence of paid employment and for the presence of male partners, i.e. boyfriends or husbands; having a "man in the house," as this rule was known, could disqualify women from receiving public funds.³⁹ It was clear to residents that the city directed more resources toward surveillance than it did to basics such as maintaining furnaces and plumbing, or planting grass.

³⁴ Alcione M. Amos, Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, *History of Place* (chapt. 11), forthcoming.

³⁵ Amos, *ibid.*

³⁶ Amos, *ibid.*

³⁷ Office of the Assistant to the Mayor for Housing Programs, "Washington's Far Southeast 70," 1970 (Anacostia Community Museum Archives); *Mary v. Burner et al. v. Walter E. Washington et al.* (ca. 1971; An Anacostia Community Museum Archives).

³⁸ As of 1970, 66 percent of black, female-headed households in the U.S. lived below the poverty line. In DC, the average annual income of welfare recipients was 53.7% below the federal poverty level, with DC officials acknowledging that welfare checks were calibrated to cover just 85% of 1967 living costs. (Anne Valk, *Radical Sisters: Second-Wave Feminism and Black Liberation in Washington, D.C.*, 2008, 40-41.)

³⁹ "Hope Ebbs and Tempers Rise," *Washington Post*, Dec. 25, 1966; "Welfare Mothers Fight for Dignity," *Washington Post*, Feb. 7, 1967.

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In 1965, thanks to President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty—and Johnson's call for "maximum feasible participation" by the poor in making this ambitious program a success—an infusion of federal dollars suddenly provided resources for tenant activism in Anacostia and Congress Heights. Funds were directed to Anacostia's Southeast Neighborhood House for organizing low-income tenants of public and private housing; outreach to Barry Farm Dwellings began in February 1966. With the help of trained organizers, a revived tenants council soon emerged, calling itself the Band of Angels. Led by Stevens Road residents Lillian Wright and Etta Mae Horn, who would soon help found the National Welfare Rights Organization and grow it to 25,000 members, the Angels' first victory was a \$1.5 million renovation.⁴⁰ Outside walls at Barry Farm were "sandblasted and painted with waterproof paint," and "extensive repairs" were made inside the apartments, according to an article published later that year. The Band of Angels also began picketing DC's welfare department and the Alexandria home of its director. (Shirley Jones, of 1302 Stevens Road, reported that in retaliation for protesting the city's welfare policies, the department demanded \$99 from her for a six-year-old infraction.)⁴¹

Barry Farm's Band of Angels formed the nucleus of the Citywide Welfare Alliance (CWA), which consisted of a least 12 groups from across the city representing some 1,300 members by 1970. As a representative of her neighbors at Barry Farm Dwellings and of welfare recipients across the city and the nation, Etta Horn frequently testified before Congress in support of funding welfare, food stamps and childcare. She denounced punitive policies requiring employment or job training as a criteria for welfare, and especially decried the efforts of Congress to regulate women's personal lives by tying government assistance to home inspections and threats to remove children from their families. "You control our lives, she told a session of Congress in 1969. . . . you sit up here on the Hill and talk about building subways and bridges and parking lots for the tourists and people from suburbia . . . It's time to talk about the people who live here. It's time to treat us like human beings," (It was not until 1973 that DC residents regained the right to elect their own city government, after being stripped of home rule for a century.) The previous year, Horn helped lead a national Mother's Day march that culminated in some 6,000 welfare rights supporters—among them Coretta Scott King, Ethel Kennedy, and Julie Belafonte—rallying at Cardozo High School.^{42 43}

While Etta Horn and her neighbors may have been overpoliced by welfare investigators, they also protested the lack of protection they received from Metropolitan District Police (MPD). In fact, policing was another issue addressed with War on Poverty funds, via the support of a community-police relations group of which Etta Horn was an outspoken member. "As long as Congress Heights was white you saw police," she remarked at January 1967 meeting. "Now that the community has been integrated, she went on, "you don't get the police. You get off the bus about 9:30 at night and you pray that you can get home."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Horn was vice-chair of the National Welfare Rights Organization National Coordinating Committee, which held its first convention in August 1967 at Trinity College. DC's City Welfare Alliance was among thirty chapters in attendance (<https://www.dc1968project.com/blog/2018/9/3/2-september-1968-remembering-1st-national-welfare-rights-convention?rq=etta%20horn>).

⁴¹ "Welfare Accused of Using Old Charge to Heckle Picket," Evening Star, May 28, 1966.

⁴² <https://www.dc1968project.com/blog/2018/5/12/12-may-1968-national-welfare-rights-org-organizes-mothers-day-march-launches-poor-peoples-campaign?rq=etta%20horn>. A month earlier, on April 17, 1968, the CWA announced a sit-in to protest work requirement and reductions in welfare, passed in 1967. (Carol Honsa, "Welfare Mothers Plan District Sit-In," *Washington Post* 18 April 1968; <https://www.dc1968project.com/blog/2018/4/17/17-april-1968-dc-welfare-alliance-plans-sit-in?rq=etta%20horn>). During the overnight vigil on Capitol Hill, 39 NWRO protesters were arrested (<https://www.dc1968project.com/blog/2018/4/15/15-april-1968-womens-detention-center?rq=22%20april%201968>).

⁴³ Under Horn's leadership, the CWA was also victorious in securing the appointment of a committee to review procedures for determining women's eligibility for abortions at DC General Hospital, and the establishment of a taskforce on health care for low-income DC residents. This was the outcome of a lawsuit the group filed in 1969. The impact of the city's overly strict requirements was evidenced by the number of women who sought treatment at DC General for complications from self-induced or illegal abortions versus the number who received abortions. In 1967, there were 500 in the former category and just eight in the latter. (Anne Valk, "Mother Power:" The movement for welfare rights in Washington, D.C., 1966-1972, *Journal of Women's History* 11, no. 4, winter 2000). In 1969, Horn's final year as vice-chair, the National Welfare Rights Organization coordinated a national campaign to force department stores to extend credit to welfare recipients. Members arrived at stores en masse to demand accounts and when rejected, waged sit-ins. Numerous department stores changed their policies as a result. (Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (2005), 109-111.

⁴⁴ During the previous year, as tensions had increased over abusive policing practices in Congress Heights, Horn had also drawn attention to the lack of protection for black residents after a 35-year old mother of six was murdered. "If the police had showed up last night, six children wouldn't be motherless," she remarked. "The people down here might as well prepare to meet Jesus if anything

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At the same time, residents feared the police, who were notoriously abusive and were rarely held accountable. While officially, the War on Poverty and its funding arm, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), was not meant to support activism around policing, another Barry Farm group funded through Southeast Neighborhood House made this a central issue of their work. Rebels with a Cause, comprised of up to 300 young adults and teenagers, was cofounded by 21-year-old William Scott, of 1269 Stevens Road, in part to help address the needs of some 1,800 youth who lived in Barry Farm Dwellings and comprised around 70 percent of residents.⁴⁵ In July 1966, fifteen of the Rebels along with seven other Barry Farm-area residents convened a meeting with police where they asked for an opportunity meet the officers who patrolled their neighborhood, but they were rebuffed. Five weeks later, police interrupted a community meeting to make an arrest; when residents then demonstrated in front of the precinct headquarters in protest, they were physically attacked with batons and dogs.⁴⁶ The Rebels would continue to demand better policing and supported youth across the city in making similar demands.⁴⁷

Among the Rebels more attainable goals were infrastructure improvements around Barry Farm. After 20 Rebels showed up at a District Commissioner's office following the death of a 12-year old hit by a car at the intersection of Sumner Road and Nichols (now Martin Luther King, Jr.) Avenue, the city finally pledged to install a street light that residents had been demanding for years.⁴⁸ Funds for promised improvements to the buildings and grounds were increased and re-allocated to essential needs, such as repairing broken lights and exterminating apartments, and recreational facilities in the surrounding neighborhood were improved. Because the Rebels also established successful youth programs ranging from day care to cultural activities to employment services, they were ultimately recognized as a model for youth programming across the city. They became nationally recognized too, thanks to the attention they received from performer Eartha Kitt. After Kitt toured the Barry Farm area during a visit to DC, she joined the Rebels in testifying before a House of Representatives Education subcommittee in May 1967. Kitt pointed to the success of the Rebels—noting that 90 percent of them had police records and all were "products of a ghetto"—in urging Congressional support for the increased participation of youth in designing programs to prevent delinquency.⁴⁹

The activities carried out by the tenants of Barry Farm Dwellings tell a little-known story about President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, specifically that the federal government funded organizing and activism that challenged its own policies.

1980s and the Birth of Go-Go

In the early 1980s, Barry Farm Dwellings became a hub for DC's emerging go-go scene when a group of 9 to 15 year-old male residents formed The Junkyard Band. The group's name came from its instruments, which consisted of "soda bottles, tin cans, picnic benches and whatever else they could find," said Barry Farm Recreation Center director Freddie Bethel in an interview for the *Washington Post* in 1981. Under the leadership of a former Barry Farm resident who quickly signed on to manage the group, the boys performed at recreation centers all over the city, for half-time shows, and at the Washington Coliseum and the National Geographic Society, among other venues.⁵⁰ Their song "Sardines" became a popular hit in DC, symbolizing the city's homegrown music culture. (Nearby at 13th and V streets SE, the Panorama Room of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was also central to the emergence of go-go, hosting frequent shows by the "Godfather of Go-Go" Chuck Brown and others.)

Conclusion

Barry Farm was a community deliberately designed to maximize the benefits of open space for recreation and community-building, and to provide a quiet, safe environment via the layout of its streets. While the community nevertheless suffered from the impacts of racial segregation, municipal neglect, invasive welfare policies, and policing that was simultaneously

happens, because the police aren't going to help them." ("Protesters Lay Killing in SE to Police Neglect," *Washington Post*, Aug. 28, 1966.)

⁴⁵ "Barry Farm's 'Rebels With a Cause' Organize to Get Help for Project," *Washington Post*, Feb. 23, 1966; "D.C. Tenants Lose Their Fears and Learn to Mobilize for Action," *Washington Post*, May 29, 1966.

⁴⁶ Anne Valk, "Separatism and Sisterhood: Race, Sex, and Women's Activism in Washington, D.C., 1963-1980, Ph.D dissertation, Duke Univ., 1996, 132; "Probe Panel Named in Anacostia Unrest," *Evening Star*, Aug. 17, 1966 1.

⁴⁷ "Police and UPO Aide Cooperate, Quiet Crowd," *Evening Star*, May 14, 1967.

⁴⁸ "'Rebels' Press District for New Traffic Light," *Evening Star*, Jul. 23, 1966.

⁴⁹ "Eartha Kitt Joins SE Rebels In Appealing for a Cause," *Washington Post*, May 23, 1967.

⁵⁰ Edward D. Sargent, "Transforming Junk into Funk: A Movin' and Groovin' Anacostia Band that Salvages – and Swings," *Washington Post*, Mar. 5, 1981.

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underprotective and abusive, it was also profoundly rich. Since the original establishment of a freedmen's village on this site in 1867, Barry Farm's community has been defined by resilience. Its remaining houses include the actual homes of at least four *Bolling v. Sharpe* plaintiffs whose parents moved to Barry Farm Dwellings in the 1940s, when it was new. The founders of two groups central to tenant organizing in the 1960s also lived on Stevens Road. The physical evidence of what happened here resides in these buildings and streets.

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of Repository: National Archives and Records Administration

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

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

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

Bounded by alley between St. Elizabeths Hospital Historic District and grounds of Barry Farm Dwellings, Firth Sterling Ave SE, alley between Stevens and Eaton roads SE, and Wade Road SE. Square 5865, Lots 423, 249, 254, 963-965, 968-973 and 977; and Square 5866, Lots 130, 133-136, 141-144, 147-150, 152 and 831-835

Barry Farm Dwellings
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries surround all extant dwellings for which a raze permit has not been issued.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah Jane Shoenfeld
organization Prologue DC, LLC date _____
street & number 603 Rock Creek Church Road NW telephone 202-643-5166
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20010
e-mail sarah@prologueDC.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Barry Farm Dwellings
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Barry Farm Dwellings Boundary Map

Barry Farm Dwellings
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Barry Farm Dwellings (NCHA, 1941)



Barry Farm Dwellings (NCHA, 1944)

Barry Farm Dwellings
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Photographs:

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

Name of Property: Barry Farm Dwellings

City or Vicinity: Washington DC

County: N/A

State: DC

Photographer: Kim Prothro Williams

Date Photographed: March 12, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

View of 1101-1111 Stevens Road looking southwesterly
1 of 12

View of 1300-1314 Stevens Road looking northeasterly
2 of 12

View of 1201-1213 Stevens Road looking southwesterly
3 of 12

View of 1201-1213 Stevens Road looking southwesterly
4 of 12

Detail of 1201-1203 Stevens Road looking northwest at southeast façade
5 of 12

View looking northwest from Wade Road down Stevens Road SE
6 of 12

View looking looking southwesterly along alley running between 1177 and 1201 Stevens Road SE
7 of 12

View looking southwesterly at 1225 Stevens Road SE
8 of 12

View looking northwesterly showing 1345 in foreground, 1317 in mid-ground, and 1301 Stevens Road SE in background
9 of 12

View looking northwesterly at 1345 Stevens Road SE
10 of 12

View looking northeasterly at 2677-2687 Wade Road SE
11 of 12

Detail of 2677-2687 Wade Road SE
12 of 12

Barry Farm Dwellings
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Photo 1 of 12



Photo 2 of 12

Barry Farm Dwellings

Name of Property

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Photo 3 of 12



Photo 4 of 12

Barry Farm Dwellings
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Photo 5 of 12

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Photo 6 of 12



Photo 7 of 12

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Photo 8 of 12



Photo 9 of 12

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Photo 10 of 12



Photo 11 of 12

Barry Farm Dwellings
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Photo 12 of 12

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

name District of Columbia Housing Authority
street & number 1133 North Capitol Street NE telephone 202-535-1000
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20002 ;

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.460 et seq.).

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