

BLAIR HEIGHTS, COMMUNITY BUILDING
Maple Avenue
Clairton
Allegheny County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6642-A

HABS
PA
2-CLAIR,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: Maple Avenue, Clairton, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

USGS Glassport Quadrangle
UTM Coordinates: 17.59552.446114

Significance: Constructed in 1941-42, Blair Heights is one of Allegheny County's World War II defense housing projects. The Community Building served as the social and recreational center.

Description: The Community Building is a one-story, brick structure with a flat roof. The east half of the building is taller than the west half. It is roughly rectangular in plan with insets on the north and south elevations. The building is painted red.

The main entrance is on the south elevation. The entrance has double doors. Immediately to the left of the entrance is the only decorative element on the building-- eight small crosses of open brick work. There are paired double hung sash windows to the right of the entrance and two larger windows in the east half of the building. Drawings indicate that the words "COMMUNITY BUILDING" in wood letters originally were installed above the windows on the east side of the south elevation. The letters have been removed but their shadow remains. Above the entrance is a narrow, painted sign with the building's current name "Roberto Clemente Center." A shallow handicap ramp with black metal railings has been added at the entrance.

The east elevation has a central porch with double entrance doors placed slightly to the left of center. The porch floor is a concrete slab. The roof is supported by narrow iron pipes. There are double hung sash windows on either side of the porch. A shallow concrete handicap ramp with iron railings has been added to the left of the porch and iron railings have been added around the porch.

The north elevation has a pair of double hung sash windows on the east half and a row of three windows on the west half of the building.

The west elevation has an entrance door toward the left and three double hung sash windows toward the right. Drawings show a batten door for dumping coal to the left of the entrance door. This has been removed and the opening bricked in.

Drawings indicate that the windows were originally multi-paned sash (twelve-over-twelve, six-over-six, four-over-four). These have been replaced with one-over-one

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bronze aluminum sash. The original wood entrance doors had six glass panes above a single wood panel. The doors have been replaced with flush metal doors.

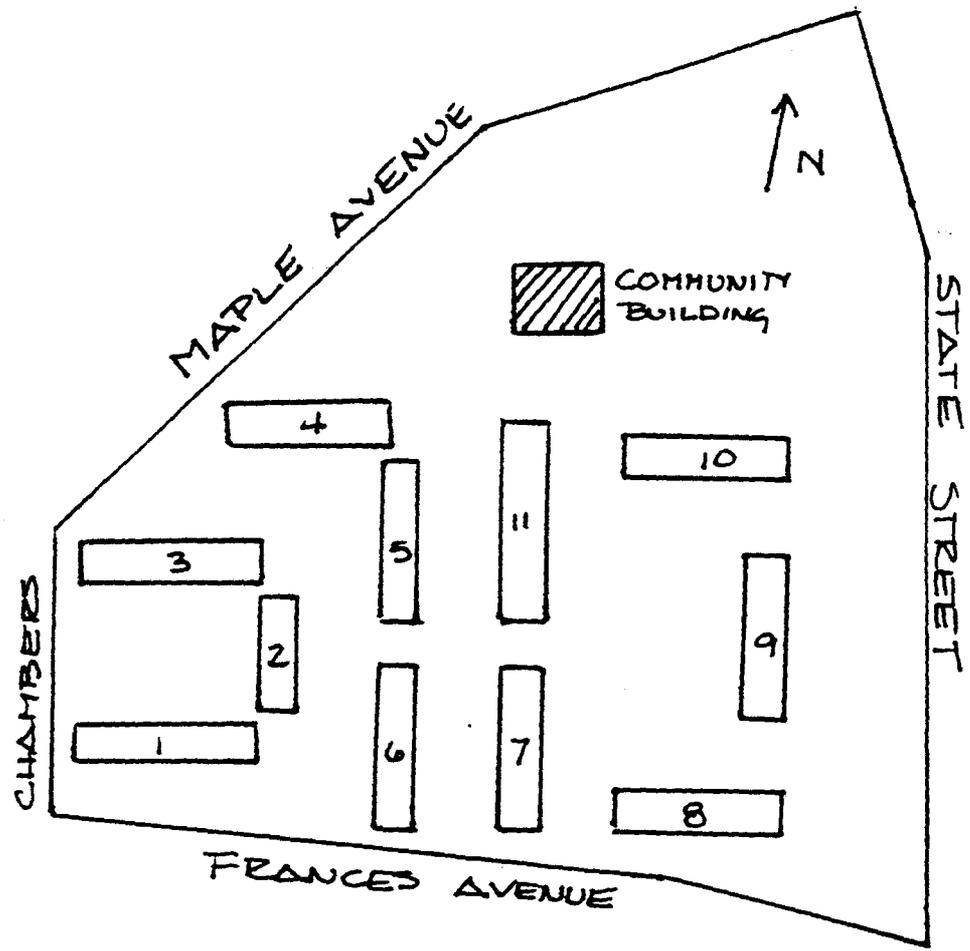
The interior retains most of its original floor plan and finishes. The entrance on the south leads to a hallway with rest rooms on the left. Straight ahead is a small office. To its north is a game room. The east half of the building is a large, open, assembly room. A kitchen opens off the assembly room. The interior walls are buff colored, glazed ceramic block. The floors are covered with mottled beige vinyl squares. The woodwork, ducts, and ceilings are painted cream. The kitchen cabinets are wood with curved metal door pulls. The entrance to the kitchen from the assembly room is through a Dutch door.

The only change in plan from the original drawings is that the central room labeled "storage" was enlarged and serves as a small office.

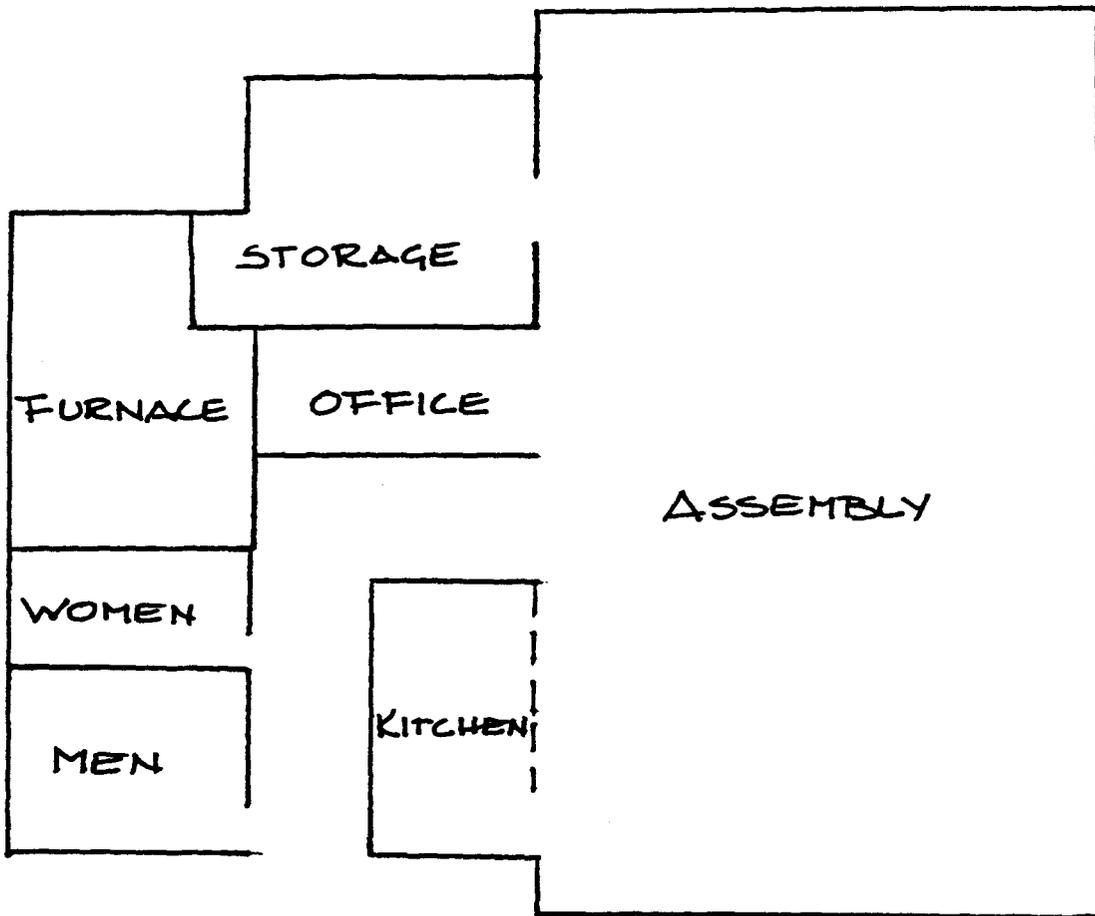
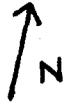
History: Blair Heights was designed by the architectural firm Charles M. and Edward Stotz, Jr. in 1941 as Defense Housing. The Community Building served as the social and recreational center for the complex. Currently it is used for day care, after school programs, and recreational activities for the children of Blair Heights.

Sources: Copies of original drawings at the Allegheny County Housing Authority offices.

Historian: Lauren Uhl, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, June 1999



Site Plan Noting Location of Community Building, 1999



Floor Plan of Community Building, 1999