

STEVENS COURTS HOUSING PROJECT, BUILDING 14
(Stevens Courts Housing Project, Plan Type 1A)
(USHA Housing Project Tex. 14-2, Building 14)
2220 West 15th Street
Texarkana
Bowie County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3550-B

Black and White Photographs
Written Historical and Descriptive Data

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Southwest System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

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Location: 2220 West 15th Street
Texarkana
Bowie County
Texas

Building 14 was located at latitude: -94.070606, longitude: 33.431851. The coordinate was taken at the entry in the center of the west facade on November 12, 2010, using a GPS mapping grade unit accurate to +/- 3 meters after differential correction. The coordinate's datum is NAD 1983. Building 14's location has no restriction on its release to the public. The location of Building 14 is shown in Figure 1.

Present Owner: City of Texarkana, Texas
Housing Authority of Texarkana Texas

Present Occupant: N/A

Present Use: Demolished December 2010

Significance: Stevens Courts was one of two housing projects built for the Housing Authority of the City of Texarkana, Texas in 1941. These were the first public housing constructed in Texarkana using funding provided by the United States Housing Act of 1937. Building 14 was one of four Plan Type 1A buildings at the complex.

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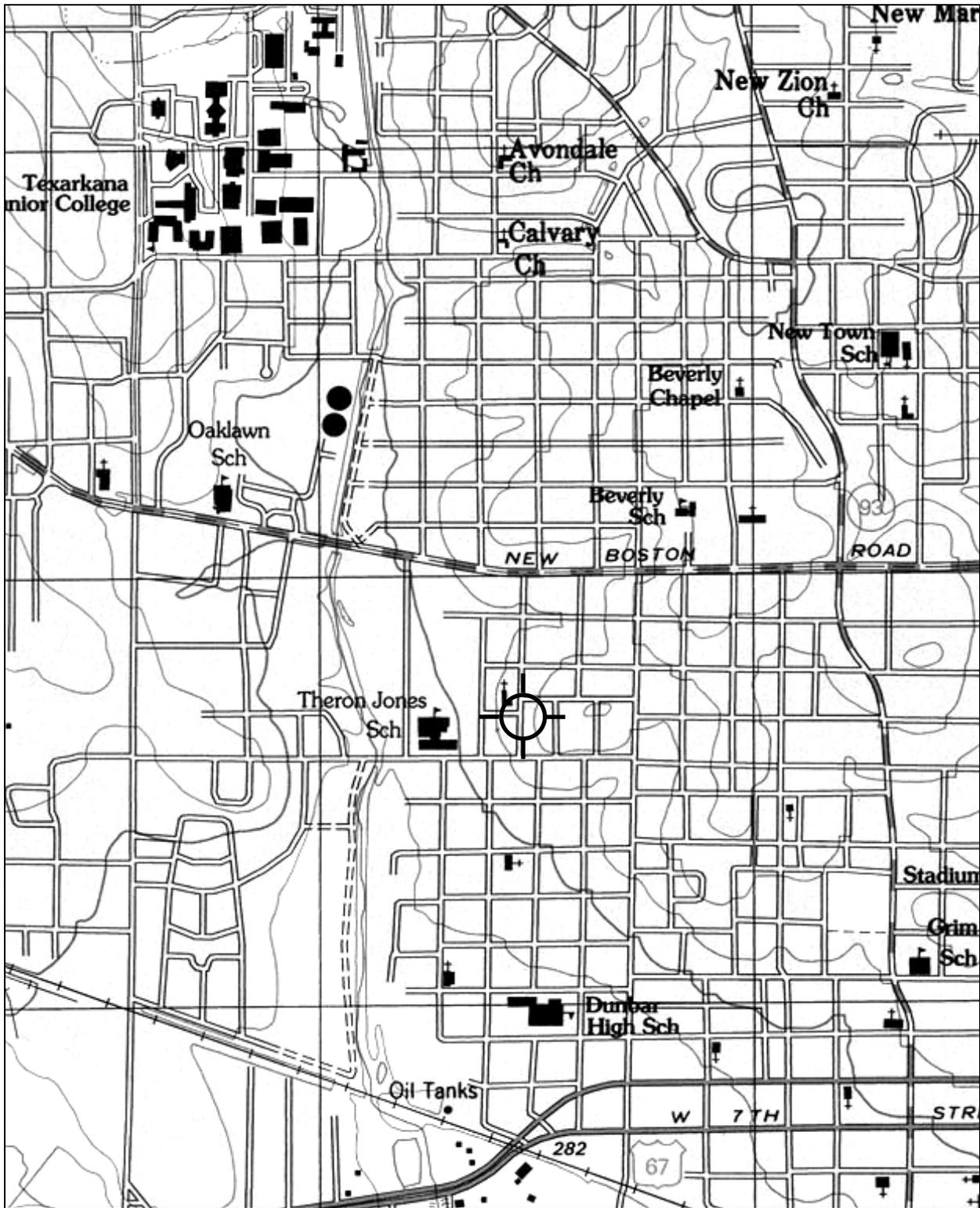


Figure 1. Location Map. Source: USGS Texarkana, TX-AR 7.5' Series Quadrangle Map, 2001.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of erection: 1941
2. Architect(s): J. N. McCammon-Bayard Witt, Associated Architects; Zumwalt and Vinther, Mechanical Engineers; Morrison & Carter, Landscape Architects; Frank Chappell, Structural Engineer
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:
 - a. USHA Housing Project Tex. 14-2 (later designated Stevens Courts Housing project) was constructed for the Housing Authority of the City of Texarkana, Texas (now the Housing Authority of Texarkana Texas or "HATT").
 - b. Stevens Courts was used as public housing from 1941-2010.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Hardy Brothers Construction Company (General Contractor)
5. Original plans and construction: Building 14 was one of four Plan Type 1A housing units constructed at Stevens Courts in 1941. Buildings 1, 2, and 13 were other Plan Type 1A housing units at the project. The 6,563-square-foot, two-story building contained twelve apartments numbered 253 through 264. Unlike Plan Types 4 and 9, which had a mixture of two-story, two- and three-bedroom apartments, Plan Type 1A buildings only had one-bedroom apartments which were either on the first or second story. The second story apartments (253, 256, 257, 260, 261, and 264) were reached by interior stairs at the main entrance and by exterior stairs at the rear. Each apartment had a kitchen/dining area, living room, bedroom, and a single bathroom. The main entrance to the ground floor apartments opened into the living room. Each apartment had a secondary entrance into the kitchen on the east side of the building.
6. Alterations and additions: The interior layout of Building 14 was modified in the late 1990s to make the first-floor apartments accessible to the handicapped. Other alterations included:
 - a. Roof: At an unknown date, HATT replaced the original clay tile roofing with composition shingles.
 - b. Windows: The original steel casement windows were replaced by mill finish, aluminum single-hung window units in the mid-1980s.
 - c. Entries: The original paneled wood doors were replaced several

times over the life of the building. In 2010, exterior doors were solid core wood flush units set in hollow metal frames.

B. Historical Context

Building 14 was a component of USHA Housing Project Tex. 14-2 in 1941. See HABS No. TX-3550 for a historical context of the housing project.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Plan Type 1A of the Stevens Courts Housing Project was a two-story, multiple dwelling. It had a three-part, symmetrical plan consisting of a projecting central block with recessed wings. The building expressed its Colonial Revival influence in its brick facade with dentilled cornice, shallow-pitched hipped roof, and pedimented porticos at the main entry for each unit. Two monolithic roof ventilators mimicking chimneys were symmetrically set on the main roof ridge line.
2. Condition of fabric: The building fabric was well maintained and was in good condition prior to demolition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: Building 14 was irregular in plan and measured 122'-10" north-south x 30'-8" east-west.
2. Foundations: The foundation, floor framing, and roof framing were not observed due to access and asbestos contamination issues. The following description is based on the structural plan sheets.

The foundation consisted of a continuous concrete perimeter grade beam, with an intermediate grade beam running north-south at approximately the mid-point between the eastern and western perimeter beams.

3. Walls: Exterior walls were masonry and consisted of a single wythe of red face brick laid in a running bond, backed by structural clay tile.
4. Structural System, framing: The first floor structure consisted of concrete joists running east-west, typically spaced at 2'-8" on center (o.c) resting on a concrete grade beam foundation. The second floor structural system was of open web steel bar joists, typically spaced at 2'-8" o.c., running east-west, resting on the load-bearing exterior masonry walls. Roof

framing was 2x6 wood truss rafters at approximately 2'-0" o.c., running east-west.

5. Porches, stoops: Building 14 had nine raised concrete porches at main entries on the north, east, and south sides. Three of the porches served two apartments, while the remaining six porches had single entrances. All projected from the building except the central porch on the west side, which was recessed. The double-entry porches on the east side and the single entry porches on the north and south sides were covered by gable-roofed porticos with wood pediments, and supported by steel pipe columns, while the single entry porches on the east side had shed roofs. There were six concrete stoops on the east side at the rear entries of the ground floor apartments. Rear entries for the second floor apartments opened onto a small balcony with a steel-framed, T-plan exterior stair that led to grade. The stair structure extended to the roofline to support flat roofs that sheltered both first and second floor rear entries.
6. Chimneys: The building did not have chimneys, but had two roof ventilators designed to mimic chimneys in appearance. The light colored stucco body contrasted with a dark-colored decorative stucco band and cap. Each ventilator was 7'-0" in depth, 3'-0" in width, and extended 5'-6" above the ridge line.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Each of the twelve apartments had a front and rear exterior door. Main (north) entry doors were single 3'-0" x 6'-10½" x 1¾" solid-core wood units, set into metal frames. Rear (south) entry doors were 2'-8" wide but were otherwise identical to the main entry doors. Each entry had a two-panel aluminum door with insect screen. The later doors replaced the original wood stile-and-rail doors with half-lights.
 - b. Windows: Typical windows were two-over-two-light, mill-finished aluminum, single-hung units, which were arranged individually and in pairs. Other windows were one-over-one-light aluminum, single hung units which were used in bathrooms. These windows were reportedly installed in 1980s, replacing the original steel casement units. Original architectural plans called for six-over-six-light double-hung, hollow metal windows, which were more in keeping with the Colonial Revival design, but historic photographs show that steel casement windows were actually used.

8. Roof:
 - a. Roof shape, covering: Building 14 had a 5/12 pitch hipped roof, covered with composition shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Building 14 had a simple brick cornice with brick dentils and a wood fascia board. The building did not have eaves.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Building 14 contained twelve one-bedroom living units. Each apartment had a kitchen/dining area, living room, bedroom, and bathroom on one floor. The main entrance to each apartment opened into the living room and a secondary entry opened into the kitchen on the east side of the building.
2. Stairways: Each second-floor apartment had a single flight of closed-riser interior stairs at the main entrance and a shared steel-framed exterior stair at the rear entrance.
3. Elevator: None
4. Flooring: Flooring throughout the units was 12" x 12" vinyl composition tile over concrete.
5. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior walls in all areas except the bathrooms were plaster. Bathrooms had glazed ceramic tile on the walls. Ceilings were plaster on metal lath. The typical ceiling height was 8'-2".
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Interior doors were typically two panel, wood stile-and-rail with metal frames. Some closet doors had been replaced with flush, hollow core wood units.
 - b. Windows: Interior windows had no decorative molding, surrounds, or sills.
7. Decorative interior features: None.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. HVAC: The building was constructed with built-in, natural gas space heaters. Each apartment was later retrofitted with a central air conditioning and heating system.

- b. Plumbing: The building was connected to the City of Texarkana water and waste water system. Each apartment had a two-basin, stainless steel kitchen sink; water heater; wall-hung lavatory; built-in, cast iron recessed bathtub with shower; and tank-type, floor-mounted water closet.
- c. Electric: The building had electricity. The main panel for each apartment was located in the kitchen.

D. Site

- 1. General setting and orientation: Building 14 was located at the northwestern corner of Stevens Courts. The main facade faced east toward Peach Street. Buildings 9 and 10 were to the west, forming a three-sided courtyard with Building 14. The terrain sloped down gradually from north to south. The building's main entries led to concrete sidewalks that ran along the west side of Peach Street and the south side of West 16th Street. Concrete walkways led from Building 14's rear entryways to a formal pattern of interior walkways that connected to other units in the complex.
- 2. Historic landscape design: Little information, aside from a few photographs, was discovered that provides information about the historic landscape of Stevens Courts. The Site Improvement Plan, prepared by Morrison & Carter, was not located. The landscape plan for Stevens Courts' sister project, Bowie Courts, called for retaining existing trees where possible, but for no new tree plantings. It is assumed that Stevens Courts would have had the same arrangement. The landscape in 2010 consisted of a grass lawn on all sides of the building and trimmed evergreen shrubs along the east, north, and south sides of Building 14.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: No early views of Building 14 or any other Plan Type 1A building were located.
- B. Current Views: All 4" x 5" photos were taken by Ecological Communications Corporation in November 2010.
- C. Original Architectural Drawings: All original architectural drawings are held by the Housing Authority of Texarkana Texas, 1611 N. Robison Rd., Texarkana, Texas 75501.
- D. Bibliography
Please see HABS No. TX-3550 for a complete bibliography.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

- A. Federal Agency: United States Department of Housing and Urban
Development
- B. Names and Affiliations of Those Preparing Documentation:
Ecological Communications Corporation, Austin, Texas.
Thomas Eisenhour, Project Manager, Historical Architect, Photographer
Kurt Korfmacher, Architectural Historian
Lara Newcomer, Historian
Kathryn St. Clair, Architectural Historian
- C. Date Documentation Prepared: December 2010