hm

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT
TECHNICAL MEMORANDA**

TECHNICAL

DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING
AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDA

In 1972, HUD initiated the Public Housing Management Improvement Program (PHMIP) - a research and demonstration effort aimed at developing , testing, evaluating, and transferring management systems and approaches to improve the quality of life in public housing and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which public housing projects are managed. Significant findings resulting from the PHMIP and other important developments in the housing management field are to be published in a series of Technical Memoranda. This report, which is the first in the series, is produced by HUD's Office of Housing Programs (Mr. Troy L. Chapman, Director).
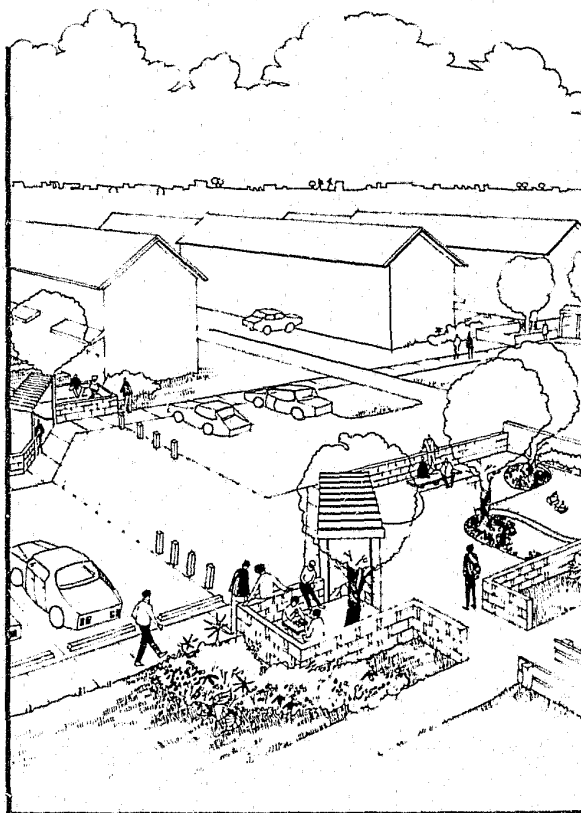
H. R. Crawford
Assistant Secretary for Housing Management

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Crime is one of the most serious problems confronting residents of public housing. Although the impact of crime is nationwide, it places a special burden on public housing residents, a population already burdened by low incomes and difficult living conditions. There is an urgent need, therefore, to understand the characteristics of crime in public housing and to design strategies that can be expected to reduce crime, the fear it induces and the changes it forces people to make in their everyday lives.

This report describes one of the major attempts undertaken in recent years to systematically assess the problem of safety and security in a public housing environment and to develop and test a feasible and integrated approach to the security problem. The work described in this Technical Memoranda was conducted by William Brill/Associates (WBA) of Washington, D.C., a research and planning firm, and resulted from the Public Housing Management Improvement Program.

The housing project selected as the site for this research and demonstration project was an 849-unit public housing project. It was selected because it had a rather long history of being one of the most difficult projects to manage and in which to live. At the same time, it shared similarities with projects throughout the country in that it had a relatively stable population, its families were largely female-headed, and there was a preponderance of younger children. Both

the authority and the local police believed that a significant crime problem existed.

The approach followed by WBA was first to assess the vulnerability of the project environment from both the human and physical aspects. This involved surveying residents about their victimization experiences, their fear of crime, and the degree to which they were altering their behavior because of either fear or actual victimization. This preliminary analysis also involved assessing the penetrability of the individual dwelling units to forcible entry and an analysis of the site to determine its vulnerable features.

These first steps resulted in a safety and security profile for the project. This profile had three utilities:

1. It presented a clear and quantified assessment of the crime problem.

2. It provided baseline data against which to measure the effect of any changes in the environment.
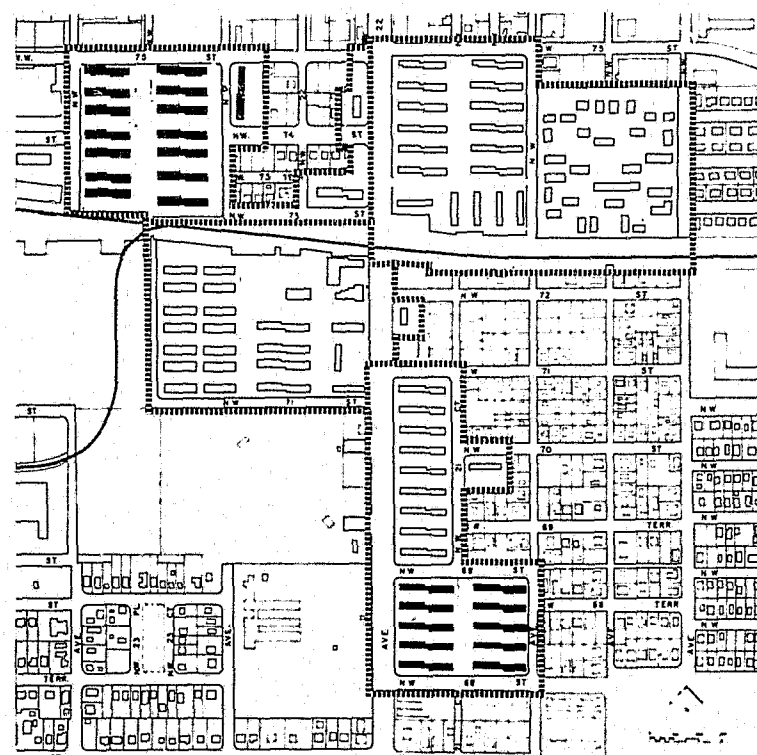
3. It provided a planning tool because it related such critical factors as resident victimization, resident fear of crime and altered behavior on the part of residents to the characteristics of the site, the condition and location of individual units.

This profile provided an important basis for the comprehensive plan for the project that was developed by WBA. As will be discussed in the following pages, this plan was comprehensive in that it involved site improvement recommendations, recommendations concerning security improvements to individual units and new approaches designed to improve police services and police-community relations. WBA's plan also included the establishment of a Crisis Intervention Center for the project.

Although the plan and the supporting research findings relate specifically to the project, the logic behind them and the overall approach should have broad applicability to other housing environments.

THE LOCALE

The housing project under study (within dotted lines) is shown in relation to the rest of the community. The housing clusters shown in solid color were those most vulnerable to victimization because of accessibility from the general community (see page 7, Patterns of Vulnerability).

SAFETY AND SECURITY PROFILE

It is often difficult for anyone involved in security planning for housing to get a clear understanding of the nature and scope of the crime problem. While people familiar with any given project may be convinced that "crime is high" or that "people are afraid," or "don't get out the way they used to anymore," it is hard to plan intelligently without a specific knowledge of the crime problem and features of the housing project environment.

The need to define precisely the "security problem" and to make recommendations based upon such an understanding, led WBA to construct a safety and security profile of the project. This profile was based upon a survey of 298 residents, which represented almost a third of all households. The profile possessed four important characteristics:

● *It was based on a survey of resident victimization experience, resident fear of crime, and the degree to which residents were altering their behavior because they were either afraid of crime or had actually been a victim.* These factors provided an important measure of the vulnerability of a particular environment to crime, and constituted an operational definition of the "crime problem." The data also revealed the actual amount of crime committed as opposed to a rate based solely on crimes reported to police.

● *The findings were environmentally specific.* Because the survey included data on the location of crimes, and the location of burglarized units, it made it possible to identify the units most likely to be burglarized in the future and the places on the site most likely to be the scene of criminal acts. The survey also revealed the social situations and places on the site that the residents held in high fear.

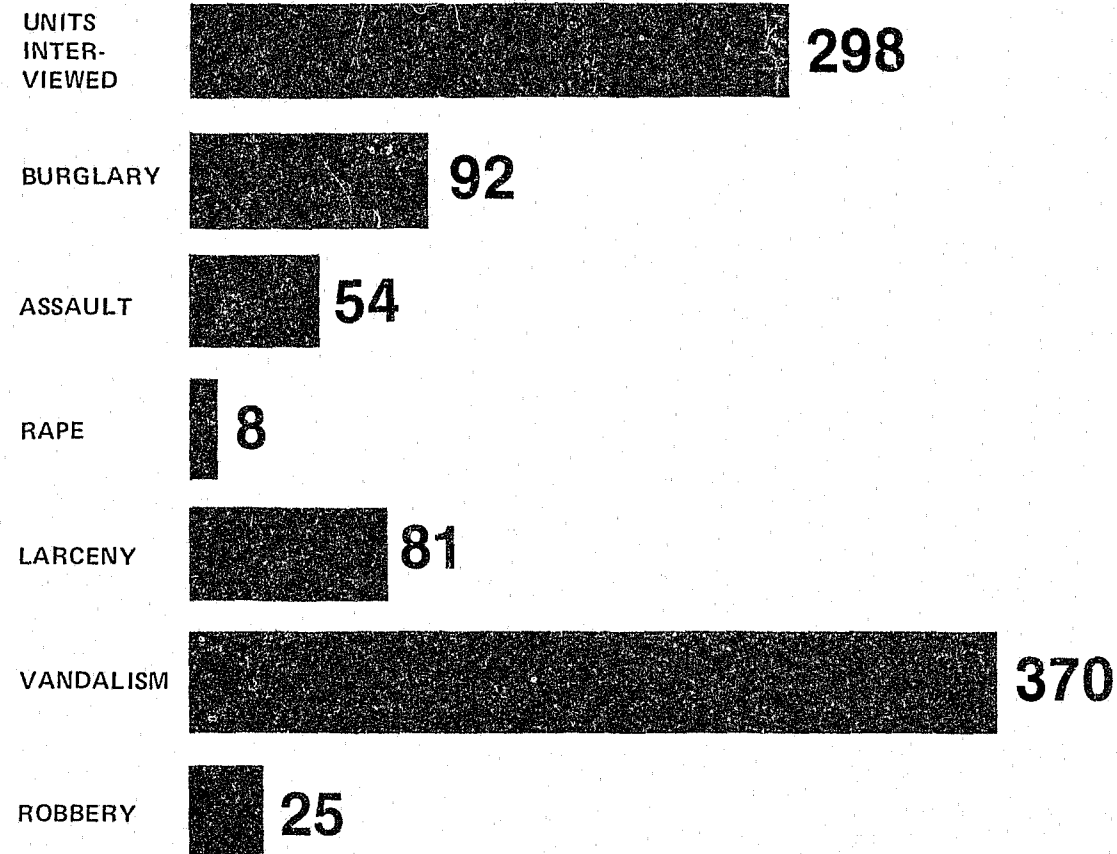● *The survey findings provided an important planning tool for WBA's recommendations* concerning needed site improvements and improvements that could be made to individual units to reduce their penetrability. This was made possible because the survey identified the most vulnerable units and the most dangerous and fearful locations on the site.

● *The survey provided clear baseline data against which to measure the success or failure of the comprehensive program.* On the basis of a re-survey, it will be possible to determine whether crime decreased, whether the residents did become less afraid, and whether they were using their environment more freely as a result of the implementation of the WBA comprehensive plan. It is WBA's operating assumption that downward shifts in these factors should constitute success.

General Findings: High Crime, High Fear, Constrained Behavior

The victimization rate in the project was found to be high. Fifty-five percent of all households that were interviewed were victimized in 1973 for a total of 767 incidents. There were 92 burglaries, which was almost twice the police-reported rate for the district in which the project is located. Robbery rates were also remarkably high, even though the data do not include those who may have been robbed while delivering services to the project or otherwise conducting business. The robbery rates cover residents only, yet it is almost four times the police-reported rate for the district in which the project is located.

PROJECT RESIDENT VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCE

UNITS INTER-VIEWED ████████████████████ **298**

BURGLARY ██████ **92**

ASSAULT ████ **54**

RAPE █ **8**

LARCENY ██████ **81**

VANDALISM ██████████████████████████ **370**

ROBBERY ██ **25**

Equally significant was the high number of multiple victimizations. For example, almost 50 percent of the burglarized units were broken into more than once; 65 percent of the individuals victimized suffered multiple victimizations — 27.3 percent were victimized four, five or six times.

The fear of crime was also determined to be extraordinarily high. When respondents were asked what they thought the chance was of being a victim of a major crime (burglary, robbery, larceny, rape, assault, and vandalism) over 50 percent reported that they felt that they had a 50/50 chance or better of being a victim of each crime listed in the year ahead.

Eighty-three percent believed there was a 50/50 chance or more that their house would be burglarized within the next year; 68 percent of the females interviewed believed there was a 50/50 chance or more of being raped in the coming year; and 73 percent of the people interviewed believed there was a 50/50 chance or more of being robbed in the project in 1974.

In the area of altered behavior — the extent to which people are changing their lifestyles because of crime — the survey also showed high levels. This is particularly significant to the social planner because altered behavior represents what people actually do as opposed to what they feel or what their actual experience
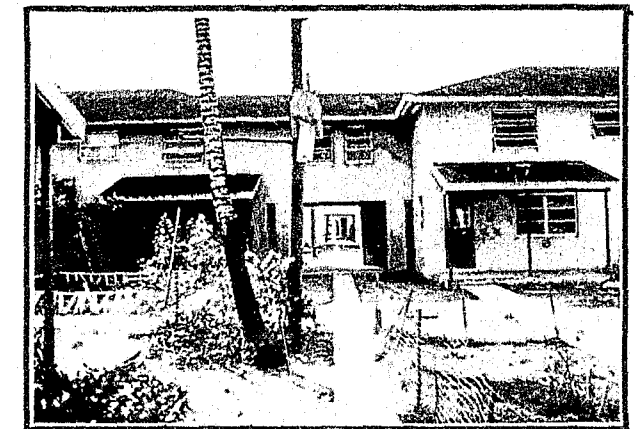
has been. In the case of the project, the survey revealed such indicators of altered behavior as forty-nine percent of the people reporting that they did not visit friends in the city, 53 percent reporting that they always went out at night with someone else, and 39 percent reporting that they did not visit friends in the project — all because of fear of crime.

Since the project provides no designated semi-private gathering areas, neighbors must stand in the sun to meet. This environment does not encourage formation of close supporting relationships. (WBA photo.)
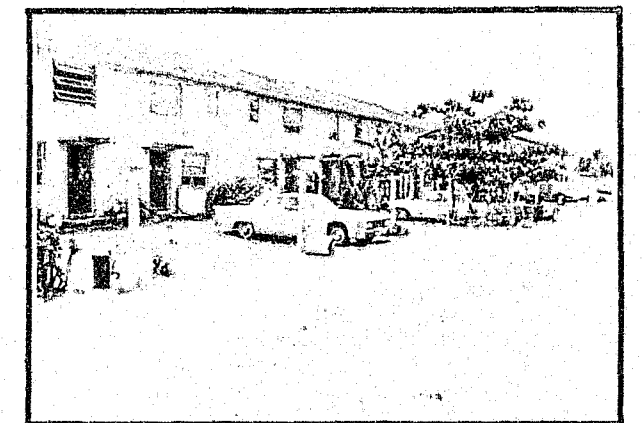
FINDINGS ON FEAR

● *Fear for children.* Parents worried about their children becoming victims of crimes (robbery, extortion, and assault). Asked where they thought the real danger lay — the project, the school, the way to school — the majority felt the danger was within the project and that it was more likely that their child would be assaulted there than anywhere.

● *Chances of future personal victimization.* More than half of the respondents felt that they ran a 50/50 chance or better of being the victim in the next year of a burglary, robbery or an assault.

Breezeways which cut through each of the buildings contribute to the penetrability of the project and were viewed with great fear by the residents. WBA recommended they be closed. (WBA photo.)

● *Car-related fears.* Many residents with cars expressed fear of robbery or assault at night while walking alone from their car to their home or when parking the car alone at night.

● *Fear of movement in the project.* Respondents were asked about different situations and how dangerous they thought such situations might be. The highest anxiety and fear level was expressed for situations where the respondent was *alone,* in the process of *moving through the project,* and at *night.*

One measure taken by residents to protect their automobiles from vandalism is to park them as close to their dwelling units as possible. (WBA photo).

● *Problems in the project.* Residents were asked what they thought were the chief problems in their project which might physically endanger them. The responses indicated that drugs and burglary were considered serious problems; vandalism and juvenile gangs were also rated as serious.

THE VULNERABILITY INDEX

The WBA analysis of the vulnerabilities of the project involved several assessments:

● PHYSICAL LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Focus. Identification of exterior space use and how traffic flows through the project. Particular interest in the amount and location of unassigned or undifferentiated space which no one protects or identifies with and which is easily claimed by intruders or outsiders. Also, an exploration of patterns by which various spaces within the project are penetrated.

Findings. Large amounts of unassigned and undifferentiated space. Almost any part of the project, including front yards, are easily penetrated by almost anyone. As a result, residents have little encouragement to protect their environment. Absence of semi-public areas, entranceways, and zones of transition inhibit development of constructive social relations that might otherwise increase residents' capacity to work together and protect their environment.

● UNIT VULNERABILITY TO FORCIBLE ENTRY

Focus. Assessment of doors, locks, and windows of each unit to determine physical deficiencies.

Findings. Extent of the exact improvements which require installation.

● SURVEY OF RESIDENTS

Focus. Sample survey of residents on three dimensions: (1) victimization experience; (2) fear of crime; and (3) extent to which victimization or fear of victimization alters behavior.

Findings. More accurate victimization data than police statistics, which typically under-report crime. Identification of specific families that had been victimized, their places of residence, type and location of criminal attack, and frequency of each offense. Identification of those places in the project which residents associate with high fear.

● SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Focus. Extent to which residents are organized to identify with their environment, help one another, and take measures to protect it.

Findings. Residents do not actively work together, a situation common to most public housing projects, nor do they support one another to any appreciable degree. While there is a Tenant Council, its capacity to mobilize residents around common issues is extremely limited. The social environment is not cohesive and supportive and residents lead relatively isolated lives.
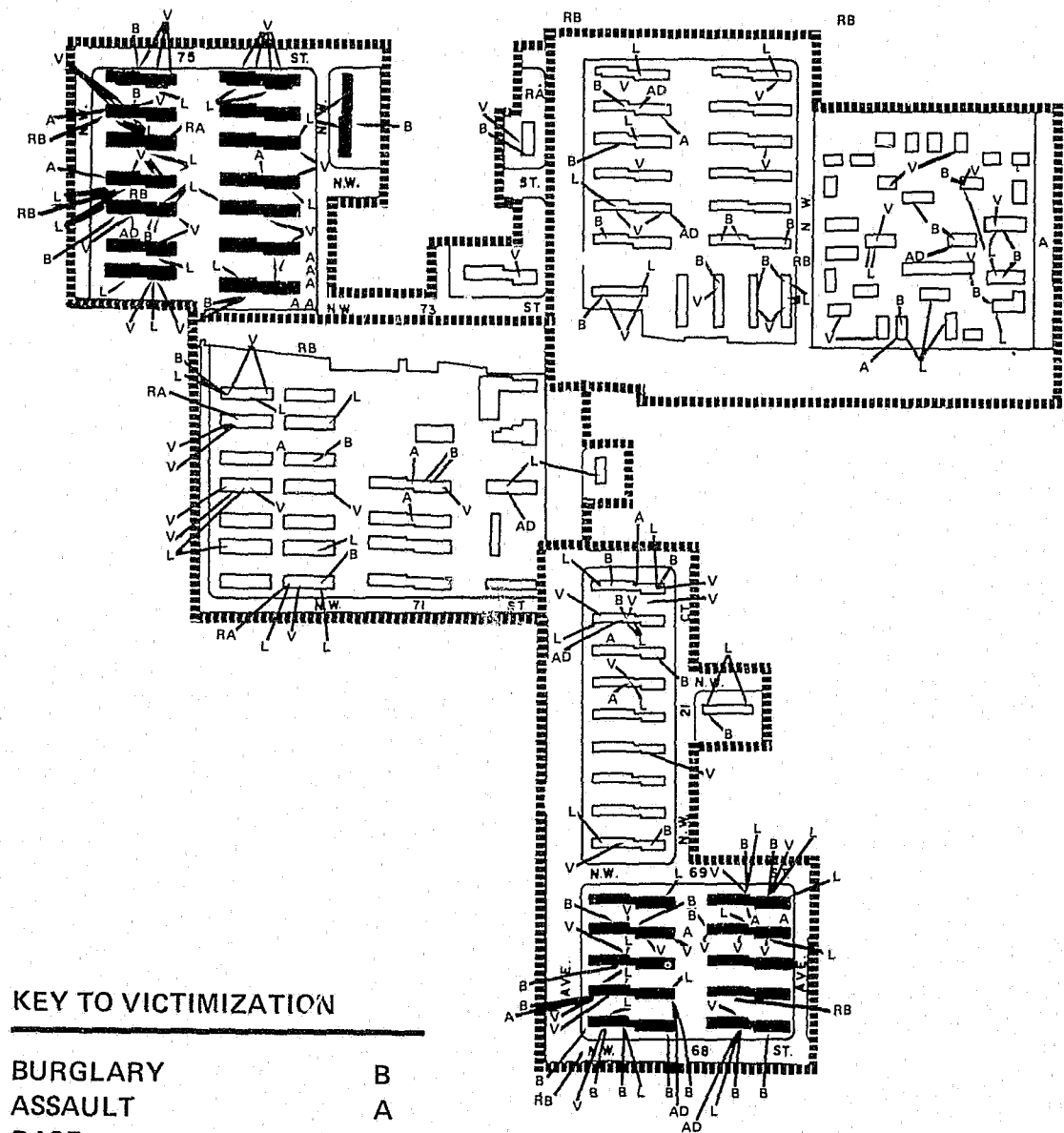
● POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Focus. Attitudes that police and residents have toward one another, and degree to which attitudes impact on delivery of police services.

Findings. Problem extends beyond police-community relations to the policies of the local housing authority. Residents and police have stereotyped and fearful images of each other, and the housing authority has not taken a leadership role to form a more positive and constructive attitude.

Another form of altered behavior examined was the extent to which people had recently obtained some instrument to serve as a means of protection. The findings on this count revealed the project to be something close to an armed camp. Twenty-two percent of the people interviewed reported that they had "recently

PATTERNS OF VICTIMIZATION

KEY TO VICTIMIZATION

BURGLARY	B
ASSAULT	A
RAPE	RA
LARCENY	L
AUTOMOBILE DAMAGE	AD
VANDALISM	V
ROBBERY	RB

obtained something for protection," and 69 percent of these reported obtaining hand guns, axes, or knives. In reviewing these figures it should be noted that this figure represents recent acquisitions only, not the total number of weapons in the project. Equally significant in terms of how people viewed their environment and what they felt was required to operate within it, was the finding that 84 percent of the people interviewed believed people should "get something for protection" and 58 percent of those interviewed felt people should get hand guns; 3 percent felt shotguns were required.

Conclusion

The survey indicated a remarkably high crime rate, an astounding level of resident fear, and the unmistakable conclusion that residents had restricted their lives and use of the environment because of concern about crime.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

The comprehensive plan for the Local Housing Authority recommended a mix of reinforcing improvements that included:

◉ Improvements to individual units

◉ New approaches to organizing residents

◉ Policy and organizational initiatives that could be taken to improve police-community relations and the delivery of police services.
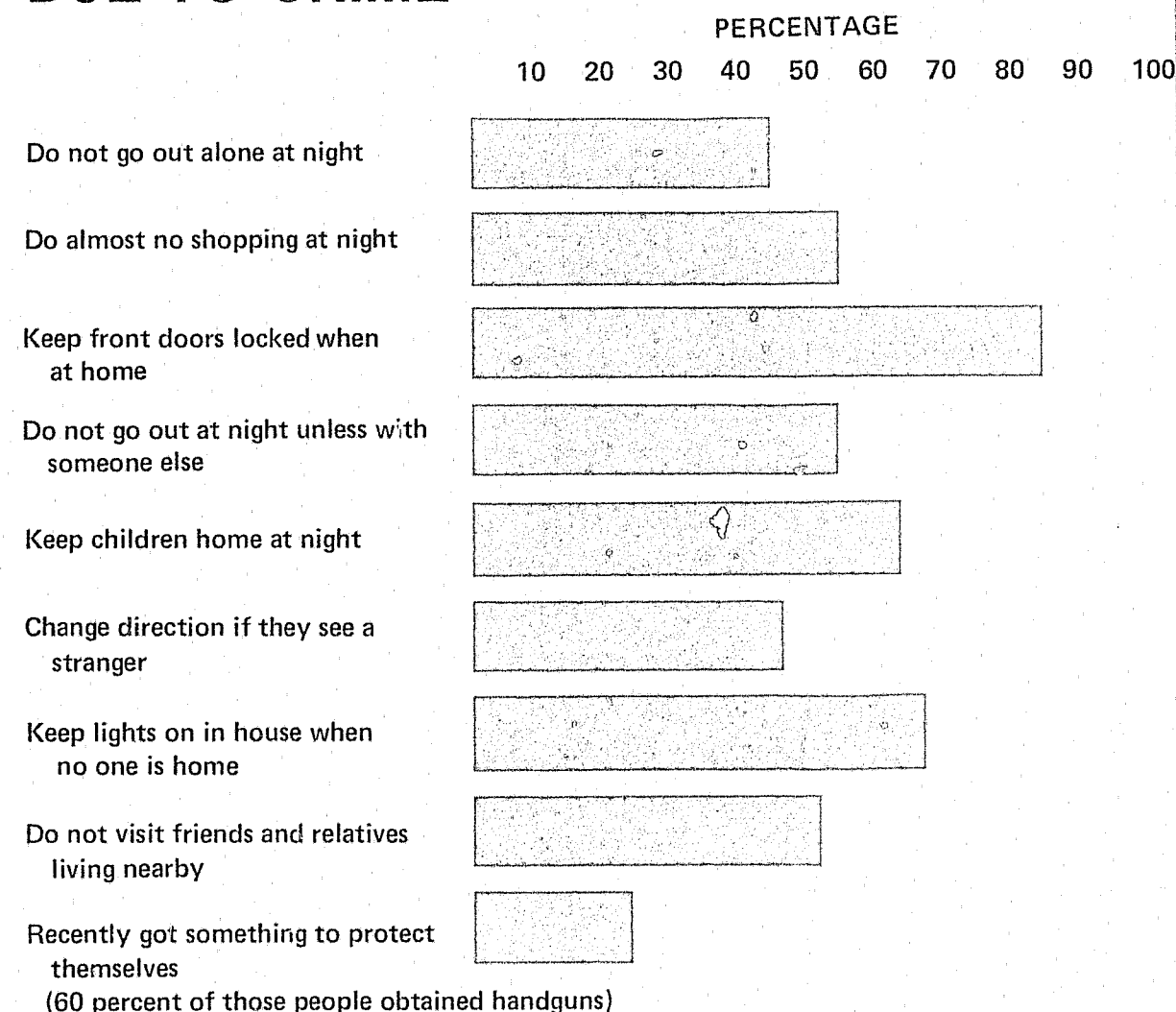
THE GENERAL APPROACH

Guiding the formulation of recommendations in the WBA study was assurance that the recommendations eventually could be evaluated. *If successful, they could be replicated with a minimum of difficulty by other Local Housing Authorities.*

The vulnerability analysis (The Vulnerability Index) provides *baseline data* against which change can be measured. These data are unique in housing security programs. Usually, judgments of effectiveness in the field are based on "feel," intuition, or hearsay. The data generated by the *survey of vulnerability* provide a benchmark which can be proved or disproved upon re-survey after all improvements are fully installed.

A reason for failure of so many efforts to improve housing security is that they are one-dimensional approaches to multi-dimensional problems. Too often, efforts at improvement are done in isolation, or are not structured in a way as to be mutually reinforcing. *The WBA study contends that a number of reinforcing improvements must be initiated to counteract the social, physical, and institutional environment.* Accordingly, the plan recommends site improvements, unit hardening improvements, and initiatives to improve police community-authority relations and police services.

Improvements recommended in the WBA study are integrated in the sense that they are designed to reinforce one another. Reinforcement is centered around increasing the social cohesion of the residents and their ability and willingness to work together to protect their environment. This calls for dividing the project into smaller social groupings or clusters so that residents have
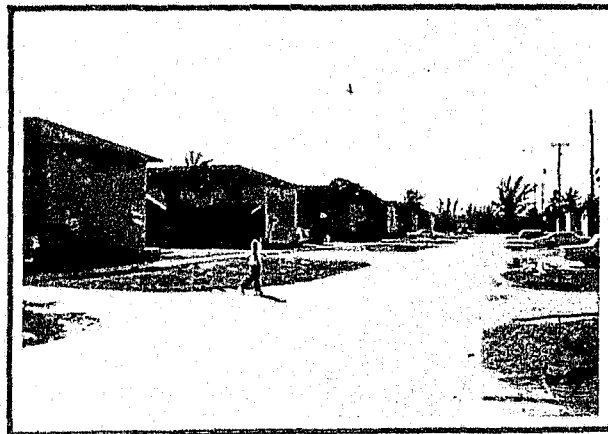
BEHAVIOR ALTERATIONS DUE TO CRIME

PERCENTAGE

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Do not go out alone at night

Do almost no shopping at night

Keep front doors locked when at home

Do not go out at night unless with someone else

Keep children home at night

Change direction if they see a stranger

Keep lights on in house when no one is home

Do not visit friends and relatives living nearby

Recently got something to protect themselves
(60 percent of those people obtained handguns)

a manageable group and an environment of manageable proportions with which to identify. Clusters of 80 to 120 families are recommended.

The plan also included recommendations for site improvements for the project. Because of a budgetary limit of $165,000, improvements could not be made throughout the project.

Accordingly, WBA selected two "treatment areas" which were small enough so that the budgeted amount could have some impact. The areas selected were in the "corners" of the project and consequently relatively self-contained. These areas were also selected because the safety and security survey revealed they had the highest incidents of crime of any similar areas.

The lack of space differentiation has created a vacant, no-man's land atmosphere. WBA recommended that the center area be enriched with active entranceways to groups of buildings. (WBA photo).

Analyzing a Site's Vulnerability

In determining what site improvements should be installed in the two areas, WBA analyzed the site according to four criteria:

● Degree of Assigned and Differentiated Space. An examination was made of how space was defined and the extent to which space within the project "cued" or suggested behavior by the presence (or absence) of trees, sitting areas, etc. Each site was analyzed according to the extent to which it included different levels of space, i.e., private space, semi-public space, etc., and to the extent the site defined or encouraged the development of supportive social groupings.

The project site was found to possess a large amount of undifferentiated and unassigned space. There were few environmental cues as to how space should be used or to whom it belonged. As the WBA report stated:

"The dominant fact of the project is that it consists of low-rise buildings laid out in barracks-like fashion. There are essentially two kinds of space in the project — space behind closed doors, and project space, space that seems to belong to everyone (and thus no one), and which can be used, without challenge, for almost every conceivable purpose.

There are no semi-public areas in the project, or places where people from the same neighborhood might conveniently gather. Beyond the raw presence of rows of buildings, and a few trees, there is little distinction throughout the project. There are no curbs lining the streets, and few sidewalks. The ragged edge of black-top roads disintegrates into the surrounding sandy soil. There are few trees and virtually no street lighting to speak of. It is an environmental wasteland.

The implication of these findings are of considerable significance. First, it means that the physical environment provides no help to residents in terms of encouraging them to form supportive, helping relationships, relationships which would have considerable impact on their ability to restrain or prevent criminal activity. The site's absence of any semi-public areas is an ironic physical statement of what is probably a sociological reality: that residents have not formed those critical intermediate relationships between identifying oneself with a family and identifying oneself as a resident of a public housing project. The design does not encourage them to form relationships, as indeed they have not, on the small, neighborhood level. The design thus reinforces the anomie that clearly exists—that deadly feeling of being alone, isolated, weak, and irrelevant.
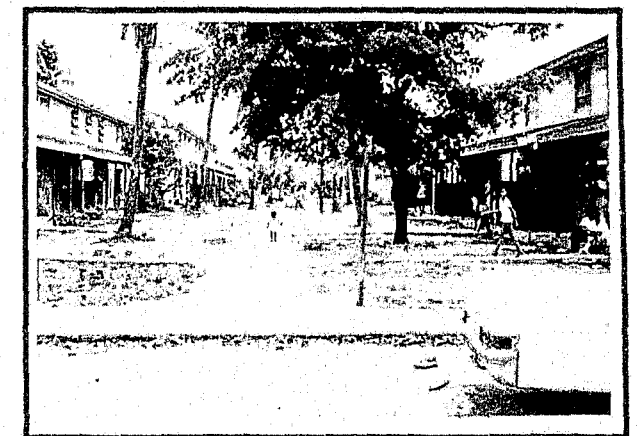
Secondly, the absence of differentiated space inhibits any expression of territoriality. Because the space is open and undefined, it encourages no one, either group or individual, to take possession of it, to care for it, to look after it, or to care who occupies it or what it is used for. Accordingly, few spaces outside of closed doors are protected or claimed."

● Penetrability. An examination was also made as to how people moved on and off the site to determine whether the project could be easily penetrated or whether defined entranceways existed that could encourage the identification of intruders.

The project was found to be penetrable from 360 degrees on the compass. There were no formal entrance areas or control points which established zones of transition from one level of the environment to another. The only zone of transition was the front porch. This meant the residents were denied control of critical areas in their environment that in many design systems serve as informal surveillance points — places where residents could comfortably and casually observe who comes and who goes and which would make clear to the outsider that he is entering someone's environment. WBA concluded the the absence of these features constituted a major site vulnerability of the project.

● Strong Points. Each site, no matter how limited or how barren, has some strengths. These may be in the form of resident organizations or individuals who have laid claim to space and developed it on their own. Part of the site analysis involved identifying such strengths to the extent they existed, so that the design system ultimately recommended would be sure to develop and reinforce these strengths.

Despite the difficult environment of the project, the project, like most public housing projects, was found to have some important strengths. These were comprised of the families who, in spite of the penetrability and barrenness of the environment, had attempted to give it some definition. Revealing once again man's seeming instincts for territory, these families had defined their front yards through the use of shrubs, rock fences, trees and sitting areas which they installed at their own expense. These efforts, interestingly enough, did seem to be rewarded. A preliminary analysis by WBA indicated that

WBA recommended that entranceways be placed in foreground to define a small neighborhood. (WBA photo.)

families who attempted to define their own private space experienced fewer victimizations than those families who made no such effort.

● Vulnerable Locations. Each site, no matter what its design, often has spaces that are clearly dangerous or are regarded with great fear on the part of residents. In high-rises, these might be elevator lobbies, stairwells or dark pathways between buildings. In low-rise configurations they might be routes from bus stops, backyards, parking areas, etc. The site vulnerability analysis included the identification of such areas in the project.

A number of areas and social situations were found to be regarded with great anxiety on the part of residents. For example, the 20' by 20' breezeway that cuts through the middle of each of the long buildings, was viewed as a particularly fearful area. The design recommendation included measures to eliminate such problems.

management notes:

MEMO FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Dear Reader:

A major objective of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and its Office of Housing Management is to assist those responsible for managing the nation's housing in their efforts to deliver improved housing services.

Memoranda make important contributions toward achieving that objective.

On June 22, 1972, the HUD Assistant Secretaries for Housing Management and Policy Development and Research initiated the Public Housing Management Improvement Program (PHMIP). This major three-year research and demonstration program charged participating local housing authorities with developing new means to improve performance in the management of public housing. It called for the design, testing, and documentation of modern techniques in all of the functional management areas essential to local authority needs. The results have been significant.

We are now in the final phase of the program. Successful products are being documented in detail to encourage use by other local housing authorities. In addition, a series of technical memoranda on outstanding contributions to other phases of housing management will be published on a nonperiodic basis to disseminate summary knowledge of the concepts and benefits inherent in the products. Information about related current programs, activities, and policies will be included to keep PHMIP product knowledge in current perspective.

The Housing Management Technical Memoranda will represent achievement of a major milestone for my office. It is my intent to make them as useful and informative to you as possible. Please make your comments, reactions, and suggestions for improving their effectiveness known to me.

Sincerely,

H.R. Crawford
Assistant Secretary for
Housing Management

(William H. Brill, Ph.D., is one of the nation's experts on comprehensive security planning and analysis. Dr. Brill, whose assistance in preparing this Technical Memorandum proved invaluable, held major posts in the fields of housing and drug abuse before forming William Brill Associates (WBA). He was also a Professor of Government at Georgetown University.)

Dr. Brill feels his work has generated some important lessons on ways to approach security planning. The following comments by Dr. Brill summarize these points.

There are several important things we've learned thus far about security planning in housing environments:

● *Make your plan as comprehensive as possible.* There is no sense in a one-dimensional approach to a multi-dimensional problem. Good security planning should involve the integration of site improvements, improvements to individual units, work with residents and with the local police to improve police-community relations, and the delivery of police services. The mix of these improvements is all important. The country is full of sad failures where everything was invested in a single approach.

● *Try to break up projects into smaller social units,* and then reinforce these groupings architecturally and in terms of tenant organizations and management. The most important line of defense against crime and the fear it generates is the small neighborhood and the close helping relationships it encourages. To draw on the ancient strengths of the neighborhood, we have to de-projectize and humanize large institution-like projects.

● *Analyze the actual penetrability of units,* if you have the funds to install security improvements in individual units (unit hardening). Don't just replace doors or locks. Look first at the complete door or window system. Maybe all that's needed is to replace a portion of the door frame or a window handle or latch. And remember, when deciding on what door or lock to use, consider what's in front and what's behind the door. The hardware is inserted in a social context, and sometimes it doesn't need to be as heavy in some situations as in others.

● *In site planning, try to assign or designate as much space as you can* either to individual residents or groups of residents. Encourage homesteading or territoriality through the strategic placement of activity areas, paving, walkways, and accent fencing. These improvements can be orchestrated so as to create psychological borders that encourage residents to protect their environment, while at the same time informing the intruder that there is an environment there.

● *Before you begin security planning, try to understand the extent and character of the crime problem in the project* you are concerned about. Try to identify the vulnerable features of the site and try to identify the areas that residents hold in the greatest fear. Look at available data, including maintenance data, and try to identify the units that seem to be the ones attacked most frequently. If possible, survey the population along the lines we were able to do in the research project but if that's not possible, be sure anyway to review police statistics and spend a lot of time with people who work on the site regularly.

● *Get involved in police-community relations.* Local housing authorities have a significant role to play in shaping the quality of the police services and in shaping the character of police-community relations in the public housing projects. All too often housing authorities stand back from this kind of participation and miss an important opportunity to increase communication between the police and the residents and to break down stereotypes. Make sure that project management staff know and meet regularly with the police who are patrolling the project.

Where you can, set up security planning boards on the project level which are composed of residents, local management's staff and the police. These boards can provide a forum for interchange and planning. Try to get the police to report regularly to these boards on the crime problem and what they are attempting to do about it.
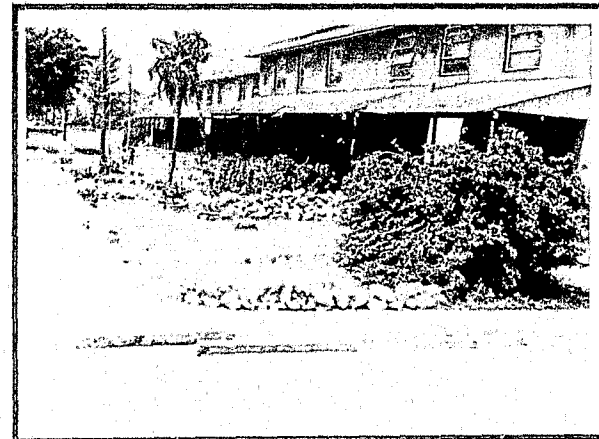

Design Guidelines

Several design guidelines emerged from the findings of the safety and security survey and the site vulnerability analysis. These guidelines constituted the operational objectives of the recommended improvements. They are consistent in many respects with the concepts developed by Oscar Newman in his book, *Defensible Space.*

● **Define Social Groupings.** One of the principal concepts that guided the recommendations was that the most important line of defense in the area of safety and security is the neighborhood and the support and protection afforded by neighbors who look after and protect one another. In much of public housing, the design, some of the management practices, and the structure of tenant organizations do not encourage the formation of these supporting relationships. As a result, residents often feel alone and isolated and, even with long periods of residency, frequently know very few people.

Closer to the dwelling units the well-worn grass indicates indiscriminate traffic. There is nothing to suggest to the intruder that this is someone else's turf. Note also the absence of designated gathering places. (WBA photo).

The psychology of territory is neatly expressed by the low stone walls bordering the residents' "property". The stone border literally says "keep off the grass", while additional piles of stones topped off with shrubs point up private areas where intruders are not welcome. These families constituted one of the strengths of the project.

To encourage residents to organize, WBA recommended that the Housing Authority provide groups of 80 to 110 families with an environmental fund. WBA recommended that the fund be spent by the residents on their immediate environment so long as there was a consensus among the group as to how the money should be spent.

The purpose of the environmental fund, according to WBA, would be to provide the sensitivity that such participation offers in the area of site improvements, and also to offer a constructive and meaningful way for residents to come together. Once together, WBA anticipated that they would become increasingly interested and confident in dealing with issues of security and in controlling their own environment.

As a companion to the environmental fund, WBA recommended that entranceways and activity areas be used to define a series of social modules within the cluster. In contrast to the cluster, which would consist of 80 to 110 families (a treatment area consists of two

A close up of a typical breezeway entrance gives a "hall of mirrors" impression which dramatizes the potential for danger. The graffiti-strewn walls reinforce the scene as boundaryless and open to all comers. (WBA photo).

clusters), the module defined groupings of approximately 24 families. The overall objective was to provide the resident with several levels of environment, as is the case in most middle-class housing. The module, like the traditional cul-de-sac, was intended to group close neighbors together, while the cluster and the project was to provide larger groups with which the resident might identify.
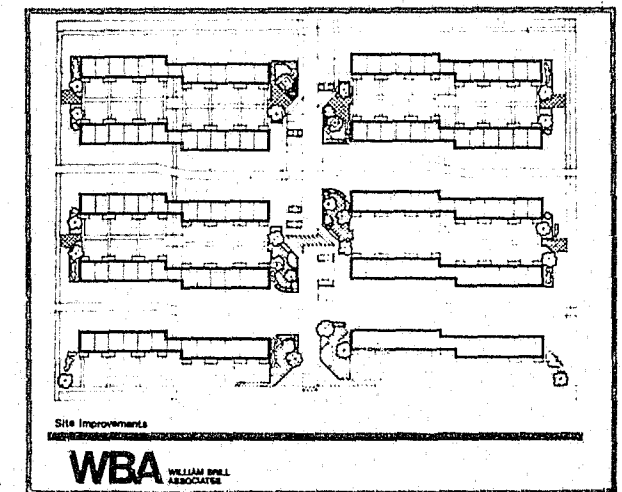
● **Control Access.** Access to many public housing projects is a critical factor. In many cases, anyone can enter and move about exterior space without challenge or without crossing any barriers that might suggest to the intruder that he is entering someone's environment.

In the proposed design for the project, the problem of access control was addressed by recommending a number of barriers. With the exception of closing the breezeways, none of these were to be strong enough to physically restrain entry; rather, most were designed to create psychological barriers. They were to

consist of strategically located fencing, shrubbery, scored paving, and activity areas — all intended to encourage residents to use semi-public space and to inform the intruder that such space was claimed.

● **Activity Areas at Strategic Locations.** Activity areas can serve several important purposes. Not only can they provide for gathering and play, but they can also serve as zones of transition from one environmental setting to another. They can act, for example, as a gateway between public space and semi-private space. From a security standpoint they can present the intruder with a psychological barrier that might deter him. To cross it he must not only clearly move from one environment to another, but he must cross over a gateway through which he will be observed and possibly challenged by residents.

WBA proposed that activity areas be placed at the entrances to the social modules — the mini-neighborhoods formed by groups of two
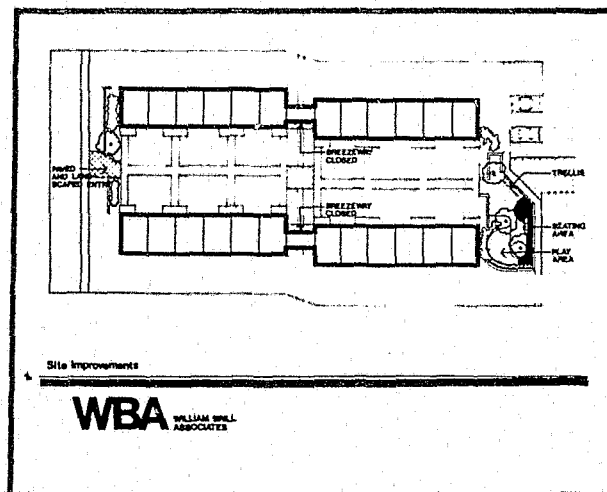

WBA's design proposals called for breaking the project into smaller social units which would be defined by a revised pedestrian circulation system and the designation of private and semi-private areas.

buildings consisting of roughly 24 families. The activity areas were not only to provide a needed place for residents to gather and for children to play, but were also to form a gateway to the entrance to the module. These activity areas would announce that the enclosed area belonged to the residents within the module. WBA's rationale was that these activity areas would encourage the supporting and helping relationships among residents in the module that are so necessary for a secure environment and that these improvements would also encourage the residents to protect and care for the space defined by the activity areas.

● **Encourage Territoriality.** The need for territory seems to be instinctive in man, and can be a constructive and positive force in housing situations. It can lead people to protect their environment and to care for it, but usually some encouragement or "cues" are necessary for people to lay claim to space.

The WBA design recommendations incorporated measures to encourage territoriality. The mini-neighborhoods formed by activity areas,

WBA recommended the formation of smaller social units or "modules" defined by activity areas, paving, and the closing of breezeways. These modules will encourage a sense of community among residents.

fencing, and the closing of breezeways are one example. Their purpose was to define areas that residents would then lay claim to and then protect.

The underlying objective of this recommendation (as well as others) was to correct the large amount of unassigned, undifferentiated space within the project, and to suggest that it be claimed and used by nearby residents.
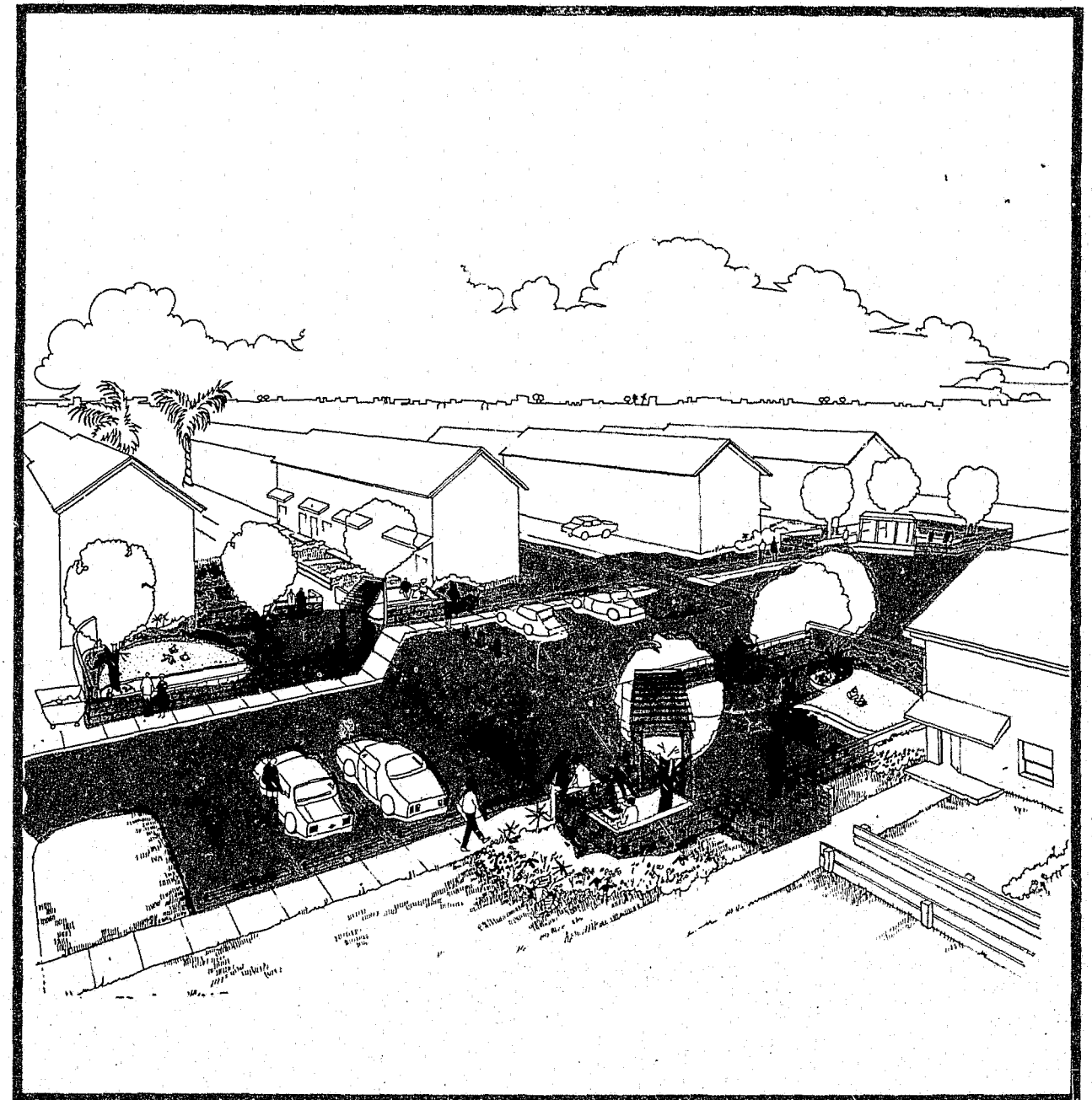
SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS TO INDIVIDUAL DWELLING UNITS

Designing and allocating improvements to individual units to reduce their vulnerability to forcible entry has always involved difficult choices. First, there is the decision as to what improvements will have any effect. Second, there is the decision about which units should be improved. Housing officials rarely have enough money to do everything; it is usually a question of allocating scarce resources. Third, there is the issue of doing the job as economically as possible — to avoid improvements that won't hold up and to avoid replacement when repair or adjustment will suffice. Finally, there is the need to accomplish as many objectives as possible in making improvements: not simply to reduce vulnerability, for example, but also, where feasible, to make the improvements contribute to a reduction of fear and anxiety among the residents.

The WBA Approach

Consistent with the research goals, WBA dealt systematically with these issues in making recommendations concerning improvements to individual units.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

A prominent entranceway was recommended as a means to enrich the center strip of the project and to define smaller neighborhoods or modules within the project.

The WBA approach consisted of:

● Step I: A survey of each unit to determine its susceptibility to forcible entry.

A survey instrument suitable for computer use was designed by WBA. It enabled Housing Authority staff to analyze each unit's penetrability. The instrument provided for the examination of such detailed items as window latches, screen door hooks, and broken portions of door frames. The applications of the instrument allowed the determination of *exactly* which items needed either repair, adjustment, or replacement. Unlike many instruments used by housing authorities that provide only a "OK/Not OK" rating, this instrument indicated exactly what the deficiency was and what was needed to correct it. It provided all the information necessary to order the parts and assign staff for repair work.

● STEP II: The establishment of priorities.

In establishing priorities for units to receive security improvements, WBA integrated the findings on victimization, fear, and altered behavior with the findings on specific deficiencies relating to security in all of the units.

Units were recommended to have specific physical deficiencies corrected in the following priority ranking:

● Units that had been burglarized in 1973.

● Units with high probability of future burglarizations determined by extrapolating data from the Safety and Security Survey.

● Households in neither of the above categories but which nevertheless indicated high fear of victimization — a determination based on a fear score for each household constructed from the Safety and Security Survey.

● Units not meeting any of the above criteria but whose members suffered a significant amount of victimization other than burglary.

This priority was based on the assumption that fear is one of the most acute forms of suffering caused by crime and that it is appropriate to attempt to alleviate it even though victimization has not occurred.

● Attic latch locks for all units. Like many public housing projects, the project has a unique vulnerability that is a product of its particular design. In this case, it is an attic that runs the length of the long buildings that make up the project. An individual can enter the attic from one unit, then crawl along it and drop down in another unit. The Safety and Security Survey uncovered considerable anxiety about this design feature, and WBA recommended that all units receive locks on their attic hatches to prevent intruders from entering through the attic.

The WBA recommendations were guided by the research orientation of the Management Improvement Program and by the expectation of resurveying the population after all improvements called for by the comprehensive plan had been installed to determine their effect on such critical dimensions of the crime problem as victimization and fear.

IMPROVING POLICE SERVICES AND POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A third component of the comprehensive plan involved an examination of the initiatives the Local Housing Authority might take to improve police-community relations and the delivery of police services to the residents of the project.

Analysis of the perceptions of the police, the residents, and the LHA revealed that considerable misunderstanding and stereotyping was

affecting police-community relations and police effectiveness. Significantly, the LHA had no ongoing contact with the police; indeed, there was no individual within the agency who had any designated responsibility for security. Contact with the police was invariably crisis-centered and allowed for no informal or relaxed interaction. Therefore, the LHA was unable to influence or shape the delivery of this important service or to influence how the police and the community in the project related to one another.

The Problem of Stereotyping and Misunderstanding

A number of opportunities were found for the LHA to contribute to the effectiveness of the police without violating its role as a housing agency. These opportunities were made apparent by the misunderstanding and stereotyping that existed between the police and the residents. WBA found both to be uninformed about each other in major ways, and both groups had complicated and ambivalent feelings toward one another. The residents called on the police for a wide variety of services, many beyond the conventional view of law enforcement and they also wanted an increased police presence. At the same time, however, they reported that the police were frequently abusive and discourteous and didn't come when they were called. The factual basis for these perceptions could not be verified, although it is important to note that most of them were based on second- or third-hand anecdotes.

The police, for their part, viewed the project somewhat fearfully, believing the residents to be basically uncooperative and management to be uninterested. According to WBA, they saw themselves as doing a difficult and complicated job alone. Although they sympathized with the life stresses of the residents, the police frequently had the view that the residents were really much better off than they admitted, and that a large segment of the population of the project did not belong in public housing. Actually, they had only a limited understanding of who lived in the public housing project.

Contributing to this misconception was the fact that the police had no routine contact with resident groups or, perhaps more importantly, with the project management staff. Neither the Captain of the district in which the project was located nor the officers who regularly patrolled the area had any relations with their LHA counterpart. Since the LHA had no security service of its own and no one with an interest in security on its staff, the LHA was unable to correct misconceptions on the part of police, to participate in planning programs with the police, and to influence police procedures or take any initiative in forging healthy police-community relations.

WBA Recommendations

Based on its assessment, WBA recommended:

● *The designation of a senior LHA staff member as a security coordinator.*

A security coordinator, according to the recommendation, would give the LHA an internal capability to participate in security affairs relating to housing and would assure that opportunities to use the LHA resources to improve security would not be overlooked. The coordinator's primary responsibilities would be to chair a task force on security that would include project management personnel and to collect data on security, make recommendations to the rest of the agency concerning security improvements, and perform liaison functions with the police. WBA recommended that this individual also be responsible for identifying sources of funds for security improvements and preparing applications for such funds. This individual would thus bring a security perspective to LHA functions and assure that implications of LHA programs and policies on security were not overlooked.

● *The formation of a police/project security planning board.*

As noted earlier, WBA found that there was virtually no regular, structured contact

between the police and the LHA. As a result, a number of serious misunderstandings, misconceptions, and missed opportunities existed. The staff of the LHA had very little understanding of police procedures or of the police perspective, and the police in turn had only a limited understanding of public housing, its management and some of the pressures the residents were under. The planning board, according to WBA, would provide a mechanism whereby the senior staff of the police and the LHA could meet to discuss common problems and share perspectives. The board, according to WBA, should not be tied to a particular event or particular issue but should meet regularly, thus establishing the familiarity and ease of interchange necessary for cooperation and growth. Members of the board should include the Executive Director of the LHA, the security coordinator, and someone from the project management staff. Membership from the police department should include a senior staff member from the Director's office, a District Commander, and at least one officer responsible for patrolling the areas.

● *The formation of a project security planning board.*

This recommendation involved the establishment of a local planning board to provide a forum for residents to interact routinely with the police. It was recommended as a means to provide an opportunity for residents and the police who work in the area of the project to exchange ideas and impressions and to review the project's security problem.

It was recommended that the board meet monthly, and that at each meeting the safety and security situation for the previous month be reviewed. The police could present data on arrests, calls, and any special problems they encountered within the previous month, and the residents and the LHA staff could discuss their understanding and perception of the situation. This kind of interchange, according to WBA, would help prevent or eliminate misunderstandings and permit hearsay and

rumors to be verified or dismissed. These meetings would also assure the police that they were going to be held accountable, but that their views and perceptions would be heard.

● *The establishment of a neighborhood police center for the project.*

One innovation that WBA recommended to be discussed at an early point by the planning board was the feasibility of establishing a neighborhood police center for the project. WBA suggested that consideration be given to locating such a center in space made available by the LHA and that administrative support be provided by residents and local LHA staff. The police staff for the center, which probably would consist of shifts of two-man teams, could be jointly funded under this alternative by the LHA and the local Department of Public Safety.

The center, according to WBA, might serve as a model to be followed in improving the security in other public housing projects. By decentralizing the delivery of police services, as well as providing a forum for interaction among the residents, management staff, and the police, the center could provide increased sensitivity to the delivery of police services. Its presence might also reduce some of the anxiety and suffering associated with the residents' fear of crime.

DESIGNING CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Low-income families frequently live on the edge of crises. Their lives have a fragile, precarious quality in that it doesn't take much to upset them. A late social security check, a loan unrepaid, an unexpected bill, a child with a bad cold or in trouble in school, a minor accident, a quarrel with the neighbors — all are events that can put tremendous strain on the emotional and financial resources of a family living in public housing. Many times what would be an annoyance or inconvenience for a middle-class family is a crisis for a low-income family, given the stress of their lives, their limited resources and the difficult physical and social environment in which they live.

The Need
As a companion element to the Comprehensive Safety and Security Plan, WBA also designed a Crisis Intervention Program for the project. The scope of the program was based on an assessment by WBA which determined that:

● *Residents have a limited capacity to help one another.*

The stress of the environment, the fearfulness with which it is viewed by residents, the absence, until recently, of viable social organizations within the project, and the feeling by many residents that their views and values are not shared by others have all limited the ability of residents to assist one another through difficult times.

● *Residents have a limited awareness of available social services.*

A social services survey administered to residents of the project determined that

while many residents are confronted with a range of difficult problems, only a small number are finding their way to social service agencies. For example, 55 percent of the residents interviewed reported that they needed assistance with mental depression during the previous 12 months, yet only 5.9 percent had used a family counseling service, and only 15 percent of the respondents had any knowledge of a family counseling service. A second example: drugs were found to be a significant problem by the Safety and Security Survey, yet only 16 percent of the population surveyed had any knowledge of drug programs.

● *Residents could develop an increased self-help capacity to deal with crisis.*

With proper training and a greater sense of community and confidence in one another, residents could play, according to WBA, a larger role in assisting one another and in handling family crises. Resident leaders, for example, could be trained in counseling drug users and in dealing with problem drinkers, as well as with troublesome young adults. At the present time, without any training in crisis management and in the absence of a strong spirit of community, residents and resident leaders are frequently ill-equipped to help themselves to the extent that they might.

● *Local social service agencies need a mechanism to reach into the project, both to deliver services and also to assure that their programs are sensitive to the needs of the residents.*

Social service agencies were found not to penetrate deeply into the project. Many agencies and community service groups were found to be in a reactive, relatively passive role instead of the active, outreach position which they would prefer. A mechanism, according to WBA, was needed to increase resident awareness of services and to assure that these services were tailored to resident needs.

A CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Based on these findings, WBA recommended that the LHA initiate a program that included the following components:

● *Preparation of a Community Services Handbook, or "Survival Kit."*

The Community Services Handbook would be distributed to residents, informing them of the community services they could call on for help in a crisis. Facilities and services available in the project area would be listed, not as a simple directory but organized according to problem headings and including all relevant data about the services offered, the applicant requirements, cost, hours, etc. The handbook would be attractively illustrated and written in a common sense, easy-to-understand manner. Also included would be a "how to get services" section which would discuss how to handle agencies (and oneself) when seeking assistance, explaining to residents what is and what is not realistic to expect when dealing with agencies or community groups. This section would be designed to provide the resident with the necessary confidence and operational guidance to utilize the social service delivery system effectively.

● *Crisis Management information and education.*

Intended to reinforce the handbook, the crisis management information and education component would consist of arranging for representatives from community agencies to attend cluster meetings to explain the services they provide and discuss the self-help measures that the residents could undertake in facing particular crises. These agencies would also be asked to train housing management staff and tenant leaders in crisis

management. For example, the local drug treatment program could provide resident leaders with guidance on how to recognize and handle an overdose of drugs; the local alcohol treatment unit could provide instructions on dealing with a heavily intoxicated individual, etc.

● *Installation of a Crisis Hotline.*

The hotline would act as a "fail-safe" mechanism to support the other activities of the program by providing the caller with personal reassurance and information. WBA recommended, however, that this should be the last feature of the crisis intervention program to be initiated. It is the most expensive and potentially the most difficult to manage. It should be explored fully with the tenants and with other hotline services organizations in the LHA area before being installed.

The program recommended by WBA stressed processes and relationships rather than a specific tactical approach to a clearly defined problem or crisis area. One of the major benefits of this emphasis is that the residents are encouraged to develop the capability — through their interaction with social service agencies and other groups — to design programs and approaches suited especially to their needs. The program, like the other recommendations, also placed the cluster and the cluster leaders in a central role. In the area of crisis intervention, WBA recommended that the cluster leadership help provide crisis intervention assistance to the community, and that the cluster be encouraged to provide the forum for discussion as to how people might work together more effectively and how they might relate more positively to local agencies.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON SECURITY PUBLICATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

HUD Handbook HM 7460.4, *Security Planning for HUD–Assisted Multifamily Housing.*

Career Ladder and Curriculum Guide: Security

Residential Security 1, and *Residential Security 2,* Special Report Issues of Challenge Magazine.

A Design Guide for Improving Residential Security, Office of Policy Development and Research, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Note: These publications are available from the Office of Housing Management, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C. 20410, Attention: Dr. Morton Leeds.

References

This Technical Memorandum is based on "Comprehensive Security Planning," William Brill/ Associates, Washington, D.C. The complete report can be obtained by writing the Office of Housing Management, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20410.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
Office of Housing Management
Washington, D.C. 20410

September 1975

The Housing Management Technical Memoranda are a series of nonperiodic publications pertaining to various aspects of Housing Management. This is the first of this series. Major topics are derived from results of the Public Housing Management Improvement Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). While these Technical Memoranda are published in the interest of familiarizing housing management professionals with the state-of-the-art, HUD does not necessarily endorse the observations and conclusions contained therein.

CONTENTS

END