

Walnut Terrace – Then & Now & More

Version 2.1 – November 2, 2016

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Introduction

This document contains informal research about the Walnut Terrace housing projects in Raleigh, North Carolina. It includes a historical perspective of the prior neighborhood, the fire department’s response to the burning of the demolished homes, the story of the subsequent housing project, and histories of nearby structures.

The author is Mike Legeros, who was greatly aided with photographs and materials from the Raleigh Housing Authority.

Vacant Homes Set Ablaze, 1958

On Monday, March 10, 1958, nine vacant homes off South Fayetteville Street were set ablaze. The structures were located south of Memorial Auditorium, east of Washington High School, and west of the later-named South Wilmington Street. They were located in what would soon be called Walnut Terrace.

The structures were among several dozen that were being demolished to make way for a "federal housing project." Construction was scheduled for the spring, and J. M. Thompson Construction Company of Raleigh had been awarded the bid.

Contractors had requested permission from the city to burn the structures, but officials declined their request. City Manager W. H. Carper, the City Attorney, and Fire Chief Jack Keeter ruled that the "destruction of the wooden and unpainted homes by fire would create a neighborhood hazard," reported in the March 11 edition of the *News & Observer*.

"We'll let them burn trash, but not the houses" said Keeter. The structures were supposed to have been instead demolished or "carted away." Said City Manager Carper, "No one can burn anything without clearance from the Fire Chief."

The structures subsequently caught fire. On Monday, March 9, "flames soared through the abandoned district" as hundreds of spectators watched the subsequent firefighting efforts.



News & Observer and Raleigh Times headlines

The fire department was called to the scene twice that afternoon. On the first call, five houses were found burning. Later that afternoon, they found four more houses ablaze.¹

Did crews attempt to control the blazes? The article infers that firefighters “[oversaw] the destruction” and perhaps let the fires burn themselves out.

They also protected one set of exposures: telephone wires that ran parallel to the homes that burned in the late afternoon.

The wires were the “main trunk line to East Carolina.” Said Southern Bell Telephone District Cable Supervisor A. P. Stewart, “[if the wind changed and] the flames reached the wires, it would nearly isolate Eastern Carolina.”

The construction company was not suspected as the cause of the fires. The City Manager told the newspaper that the builder’s crews were working at the “lower end of the project” and “not in the area of the fires.”

The firemen stayed on scene through the night, maintaining a “night-long vigil” over the “ghost town”, reported the next day’s *Raleigh Times*.

At the time of the fires, only four of the 182 vacant buildings had been demolished by workers. They had started two days prior, and expected to take about eighteen days to clear the land.

Noted the *Times*, some of the structures were towed to the nearby fire department drill tower, where they would be “used by local firemen in drills.”

Chief Keeter determined that the fires were “deliberately set,” he told the *Raleigh Times* on March 13. “But by whom is a good question.” Some pointed fingers at students from nearby Washington School. The president of the demolition inferred as much, saying he saw school kids “getting out for the day about the time the first fire was discovered.”

The Washington Principal disputed this account, reported the *Times*. He had told the entire school on Monday that no students were to walk through the construction area. Nor had any students left school at the time the fire started.

By Wednesday, March 13, the *Times* reported that about thirty houses had been demolished, some “with a crane and headache ball.”

Photos of the Burning Debris

Four days after the first homes burned, these photos from the Raleigh Housing Authority captured piles of burning debris. The pictures were taken from a classroom at Washington High School on April 14, 1958.

¹ Historical perspective: By 1960, the city covered 33.7 square miles with a population of 93,931 residents. In 1958, the Raleigh Fire Department answered 1,260 fire calls, which included responses by the Raleigh Emergency Rescue Squad. The city had six fire stations, seven engine companies, one aerial ladder company, one service ladder company, and one rescue unit. There were 123 members of the department, including 114 firefighters in Operations, four inspectors in Fire Prevention, and five positions in Fire Administration.



*Looking southeast.
Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.*



*Looking northeast.
Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.*

New Public Housing Project

The Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) was planning a build 300-unit public housing project on the site. The new apartments would replace a collection of aged and substandard residential structures. (Of the 180 dwellings, 95-percent had been classified as substandard.)

Federal funding was approved in 1955. In June of that year, RHA was notified that funds were available and that they could proceed with their project. In February 1956, they approved the site: twenty-seven acres, located between Fayetteville Road and South Wilmington Street (then called Highway 70/401).

The site was chosen because it was the “most uniformly substandard area of its size” in Raleigh. It was also selected due to its “convenient location in relation to schools, shopping and employment opportunities.”

The first option to purchase property was signed on August 4, 1956. The last of the 183 parcels was purchased in July 1957.

The total value of the properties was appraised at \$610,463, which included 174 dwellings, four stores, two churches, and four vacant lots. The total cost to RHA was \$617,413, which included relocating the occupants.

The tax value? The city received \$1,956 in property taxes in 1957. Once the new apartments were built, the RHA estimated \$1,500 of annual revenue to the city.

By January 1958, all of the residents had vacated the structures: 175 families, including 65 who owned their homes. They left behind “empty streets [and] ghost-like shacks through which the January winds moaned and cried in the night.”

Those who qualified were given the choice of housing at Chavis Heights, the Housing Authority’s “other project for Negroes.”² Others found temporary or permanent homes in other residential areas. FHA loans were also arranged for some of the residents to purchase homes of their own.

Pictures of the Past, 1958

Extensive photographs were made of the neighborhood in January 1958, shortly before demolition started on the buildings.

Among the views are photographs from the top of the fire department training tower, which was located just south of the neighborhood.

The buildings and their contents were also described by the *Raleigh Times* on October 10, 1959:

“Where ancient, weather-beaten shacks [stood] in irregular rows along deep-rutted paths, thirty large apartment buildings of modern architecture [will be reaching] skyward along well-planned and paved streets. The outhouse with the sagging door, the community well in the back yards littered with debris [will be] replaced with gleaming kitchens, well-ventilated living rooms and neat lawns. The coal or wood stove [will be] replaced by electric ranges. The ice-box [will be] gone in favor of new refrigerators. Hot water faucets [will] await the touch of hands that [currently] lugged wood for heating water on the old stoves.”

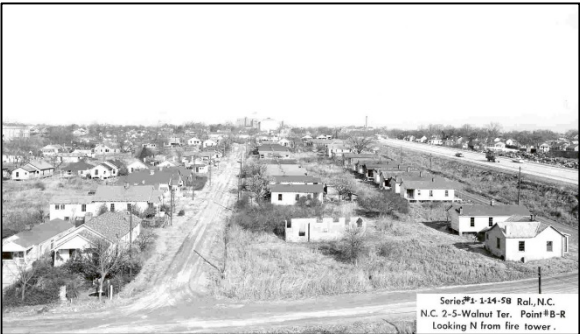
² Does this mean that applicants were given a choice of Chavis Heights or Walnut Terrace, when completed? Or the choice of Chavis Heights or another option? Let’s presume the former.



Note the fire department training tower in the background.
 Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.



Series# 1-1-14-58 Ral., N.C.
 N.C. 2-5-Walnut Ter. Point#C-L
 Looking NE from high school class room



Series# 1-14-58 Ral., N.C.
 N.C. 2-5-Walnut Ter. Point#B-R
 Looking N from fire tower.



Series# 1-1-14-58 Ral., N.C.
 N.C. 2-5-Walnut Ter. Point#C-R
 Looking SE from high school class room



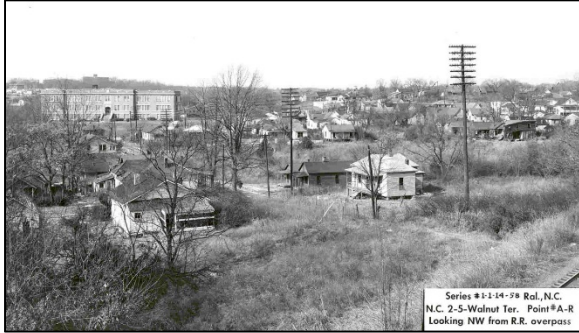
Series# 1-14-58 Ral., N.C.
 N.C. 2-5-Walnut Ter. Point#B-L
 Looking NW from fire tower.



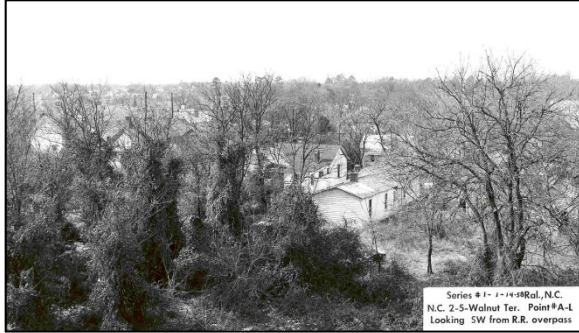
Series #1-14-38 Gill St.



Series #1-14-38 Rd., N.C.
N.C. 2-5-Walnut Ter. Point #C-C
Looking E from high school class room



Series #1-14-38 Rd., N.C.
N.C. 2-5-Walnut Ter. Point #A-R
Looking NW from R.R. overpass



Series #1-14-38 Rd., N.C.
N.C. 2-5-Walnut Ter. Point #A-L
Looking SW from R.R. overpass



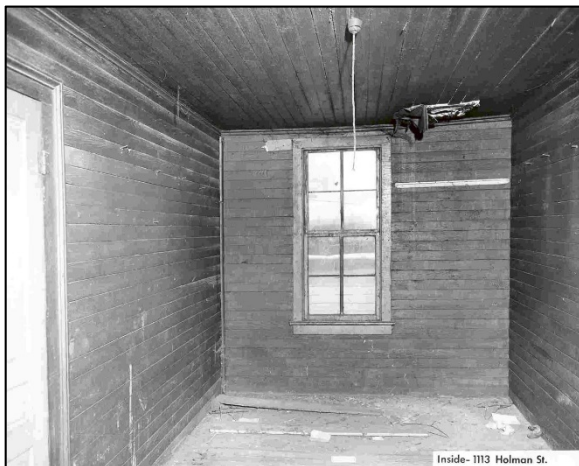
Front- 1113 Holman St.



Rear- 1113 Holman St.



Inside- 1113 Holman St.



Inside- 1113 Holman St.

Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.

Original Property Map, 1956

As this map shows, there were 174 privately owned parcels of land in the twenty-seven acres that comprised Bragg, Branch, Cross, Gill, Holman, and Lee streets, along with three alleys. The neighborhood was bordered on the south by Hoke Street, which was the southern city limit as late as 1953.³



*Property map of Walnut Terrace, December, 1956.
Guy E. Crampton and William Henley Deitrick Papers and Drawings, 1928-1977 (MC00227),
Special Collections Research Center at NCSU Libraries.*

Original Property Owners

Of the 183 parcels, sixty-five were owned by the people living in the homes. The names of the property owners are revealed in closer views of the map:

³ By 1959, the southern city limits had moved further south to Wilmington Street just north of Pecan Road.

PARCEL No	OWNER	AREA SQ. FT.
1	Ray Taylor	8577.5
2	Arlene Montague Hunter	3325.0
3	Southern Bond & Mtge Co. Inc.	8001.7
4	Maggie Bruce (Heirs)	7676.4
5	Maude Harris	4150.7
6	V.N. Smith Heirs	4700.8
7	James H. Pou Estate	5584
8	Lucy Myers Jennings	9000
9	C.V. Palmer	14905
10	H.R. Gurley	3418.25
11	N.M. Gurley	7604.4
12	Leroy Rainey	3000
13	Celia Jeffries	4750.8
14	J.E. Strickland	2300.4
15	Georgia Fuller	1775.5
16	Catherine Logan	1775.5
17	Bessie M.C. Jones	4600
18	Joseph Smith	4600
19	Emma J. M.C. Coy	4450.8
20	Robert L. Monroe	17988.5
21	Ardella Smith	7204.3
22	Lillian Collock	4600
23	Emma M.C. Coy	4600
Subtotal		136326.65

24	Mozelle Morgan	6184.58
26	M.K. Gurley	12086.86
27	Earl R. Franklin	4607.08
28	Leslie T. Brown	8687.5
29	N.M. Gurley	11293.66
30	W.O. Kelley	5615
31	Frank Spikes Heirs	12500
32	James E. Josey	4750
33	Nancy Banks	5000
34	N.M. Gurley	600
Subtotal		71384.68
35	Ether Henry Heirs	3157.5
36	Sadie Horton Heirs	3311.67
37	Maude S. Harris	3480
37A	George Strickland Heirs	3457
38	Maude Harris	4681
39	James H. Pou Estate	2114.67
39A	Emmett Webb	1614
40A	Azum Jones, Jr	7466.75
40	George T. Whitaker	3125
41	Buford E. Dennis	3125
41A	H.P. Gurley	2500
42	Earl Davis	3750
43	Ralph Smith	5000
44	William Straman	7500
45	Marshall L. Robinson	6250
46	Mabel Hartford Davis	6250
57	Emmett Webb	4741.75
57-A	James H. Pou Estate	1001.50
58	R. Milton Haywood, Jr	36296.68
59	Allie Powell	6326.8
60	Agnes Tyson	1501.6
61	Thelma Ailan Shaw Maloney	2053.9
62	J.E. Strickland	5503.1
63	Nassie Connady	5503.1
64	C.W. Hoover (Heirs)	9507.18
65	M.W. Akins, Jr.	13735
66	Hurley E. Davis (Bombard)	8525.75
67	Clyde A. Douglass	14511.28
68	Al Gibson	6250
69	James Parrish Heirs	6250
70	Albert Upperman	6250
71	Moses Mitchell	12500
72	Emily J. Harris	6250
73	Maggie Bruce (Heirs)	10000
74	Charlie Strickland	10000
75	Essex Henry, Jr.	10000
76	Charlie Strickland	20120
Subtotal		180570.61
77	H.P. Gurley	2344
78	Callie Bell Laws	1848
79	Golda G. Young	1648
80	Clarence L. Adams, Jr.	3696
81	Fred D. Zion	2436

82	Maggie Jones	2436
83	William J. Crain	2902
84	Pearl Davis Howell	2402.4
85	Velma S. Williams	2410.8
86	J. Rufus Hunter Estate	4821.6
87	W.O. Crawley	4813.2
88	Perry Lindo Crutchfield	5200
89	M.K. Gurley	4456
90	Dock Johnson	6104
91	H.P. & M.K. Gurley	4584
92	Walter Lassiter	2236
93	William Pendergrass	2344
94	Maude Pope	2352
Subtotal		56744

95	J. D. Douglas	6250	112	Emma Turner	6250
96	Margaret Ruth Judkins	12500	113	Talcott W. Brewer	3125
97	James A. Stroud	6250	113-A	M. K. Gurley	3125
98	Mrs. Lucy Eaton	6250	114	Annie C. & Sarah L. Delany	6250
99	Christine Harris Clarkson	6250		Subtotal	87500
100	Bessie Upperman	12500	115	O. R. Hay	2320
101	Pearl Davis Howell	3125	116	Dampsey Raines	2436
102	S. L. Stallings	3125	117	Kenneth C. Wilkins	2436
103	Siannanos Boucom	6250	118	Willie Dennis	2436
104	Carden Mc Gray	6250	119	Clyde H. Warren	7308
105	Pearl Davis Howell	12500	120	Clarence Battle	2436
106	Carter M. Gray	6250	121	Raymond B. Miles	4872
	Subtotal	87500	122	R. I. Blackwell	4872
107	J. C. Livingston	15000	123	Marcus Billy & Ruth Everett	2436
108	W. J. Pettigren (Hairs)	7500	124	R. I. Blackwell	3049.46
109	Leonidas Frazier	15000	125	M. K. Gurley	52.88
110	Norman Mitchell	25000	125-A	W. P. Gurley & M. K. Gurley	3048.8
111	Calvin Umphrey	6250	125-B	M. K. Gurley	2238.8
			126	L. D. Allen, Jr.	2263.25

Building Walnut Terrace

Land clearing and demolition for Raleigh Housing Authority Project No. NC 2-5 started in February 1958. During the subsequent weeks, “the houses were ripped apart, the foundations pushed away, and the area that was once the site of [homes, stores, and churches] became a smooth, undulating expanse of dirt.”

About a month after the “residential area was levelled and had disappeared completely,” ground was broken on the first of the new buildings.

The buildings were designed by William Henley Deitrick & Associates and F. Carter Williams, Architects.⁴ Planned were thirty-eight dwelling buildings, each housing four or six apartments. The distribution of the apartments included:

- 106 three-bedroom units
- 94 two-bedroom units
- 45 four-bedroom units
- 6 five-bedroom units

Also planned was a “central community building” to house “administrative office, maintenance shop, indoor recreation, a day nursery, and a branch library.” The site also included space for a future nursery school. Was it ever built? To be determined.

The total project cost was \$3,825,000.

⁴Deitrick was a distinguished and prolific architect in Raleigh for half a century. His firm grew into one of the largest in the state, and their best-known projects including Broughton High School and Dorton Arena.



PROJECT NC 2-5
WALNUT TERRACE
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH, N.C.
W. HENLEY DETRICK & ASSOCIATES - F. CARTER WILLIAMS, ARCHITECTS
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS
FORD M. HABEL, CIVIL ENGINEER - GOODIN & BELL, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA
26 JUNE 1957

Site drawing, 1957 – Courtesy of Raleigh Housing Authority

Each apartment was equipped with a furnished kitchen including an electric stove and refrigerator. Heat, water, and electrical was also supplied. There was no air conditioning, however.

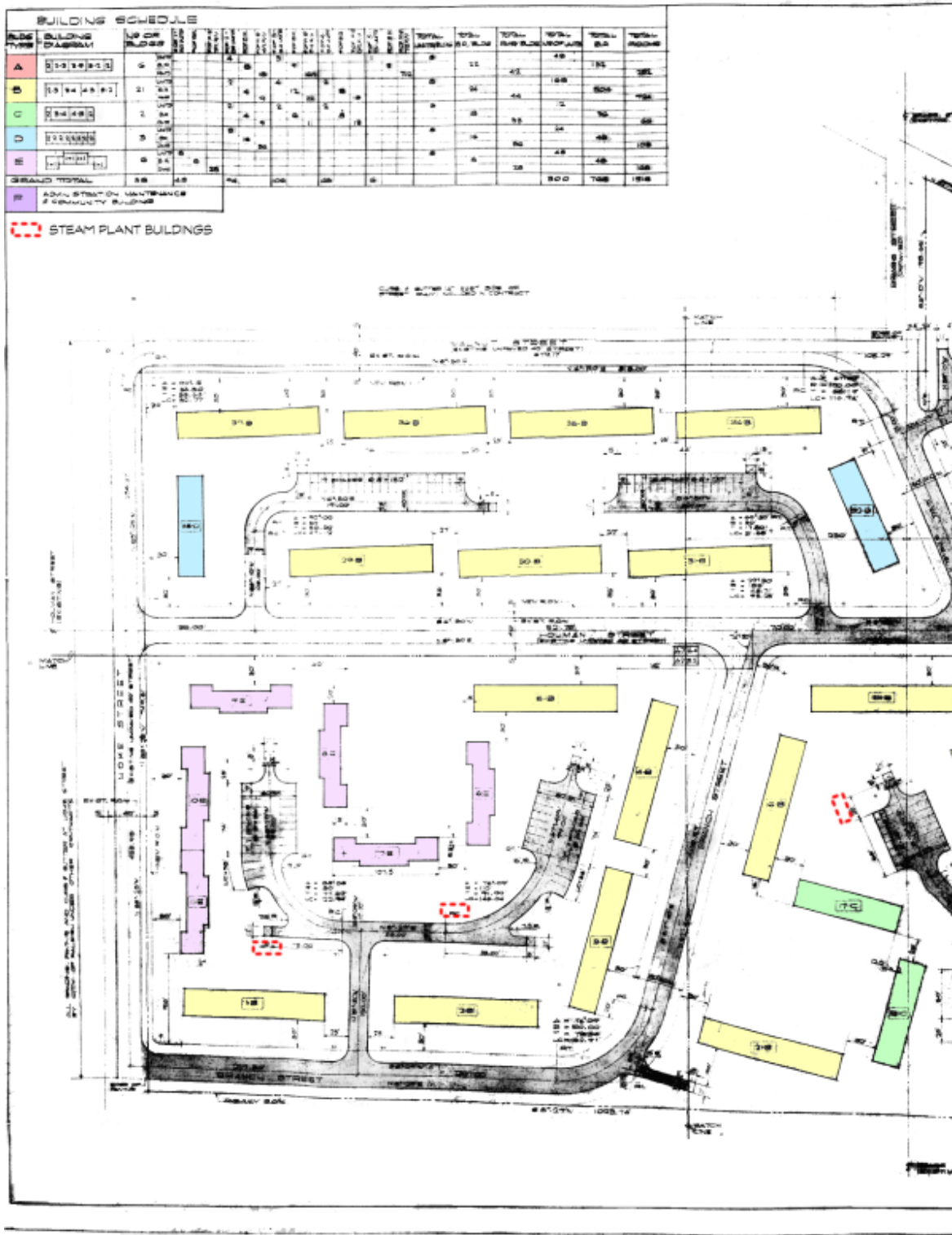
The apartments were equipped with washing machines (at some point), though no dryers. Laundry was dried on clothes lines.

Rent ranged from \$20 to \$45 per month per unit, based on family size and family income.

The completion of the apartments raised the total RHA units to 912 dwellings for low-income families in Raleigh:

- 317 for whites at Halifax Court
- 295 for blacks at Chavis Heights
- 300 for blacks at Walnut Terrace.

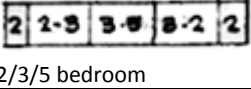
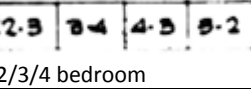
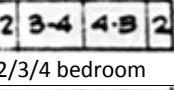
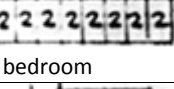
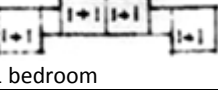
Walnut Terrace Site Plan, 1957



Walnut terrace site plan, 1957.
 Guy E. Crampton and William Henley Deitrick Papers and Drawings, 1928-1977 (MC00227),
 Special Collections Research Center at NCSU Libraries.

The site plan contains a building schedule in the upper left corner.

Here's a transcription of the schedule:

Bldg	Building Diagram/Type	Number of Buildings	Units / Bldg	Bedr. / Bldg	Rooms / Bldg	Total Units	Total Bedr.	Total Rooms	
A	 2/3/5 bedroom	6	Units	8		48			
			Bedrooms		22			132	
			Rooms			42			252
B	 2/3/4 bedroom	21	Units	8		168			
			Bedrooms		24			504	
			Rooms			44			924
C	 2/3/4 bedroom	2	Units	6		12			
			Bedrooms		18			36	
			Rooms			33			66
D	 2 bedroom	3	Units	8		24			
			Bedrooms		16			48	
			Rooms			36			108
E	 1 bedroom	6	Units	8		48			
			Bedrooms		8			48	
			Rooms			28			168
F	Admin., Maintenance, and Community Building								
Total		38				300	768	1518	

Moving into Walnut Terrace

By late-July of 1959, applications for the new apartments were being accepted. A temporary office was opened at Chavis Heights to process the applications. By August 14, over 500 applications had been received.

On, Thursday, September 24, RHA took control of the completed structures. The following Monday, the first of 75 families was expected to begin moving into their new quarters.

Reported the *Raleigh Times* on October 10, the new residents included “a widow with an invalid brother [who] selected a two-bedroom apartment only ten feet away from the site of the former home she had occupied for 40 years.”

Also a “woman with eleven children—four of which she had taken under her room when her sister died—led her brood of which the eldest was fourteen, into one of the five-bedroom units.”

A decade later, renovations were planned for Walnut Terrace. The federal housing authority (HUD) in 1969 approved a \$1.6 million modernization grant, for upgrades to Walnut Terrace, Chavis Heights, and Halifax Court.

This planned enhancements included renovations for individual living units, such as new electrical wiring, kitchen cabinets, and flooring. The community building/day care centers would be expanded and improved, and, at Walnut Terrace, a classroom and ceramics room were planned as additions to the community building.

Each of these three public housing projects were originally segregated by race. What year were Walnut Terrace and the others desegregated? To be determined.

Aerial Photo - 1959



*Aerial photo of construction, 1959.
USDA Historical Aerial Photo.*



*Aerial photo of construction, 1959.
USDA Historical Aerial Photo.*

New Start, New Projects

By the mid-nineties, the Raleigh Housing Authority was administering more than forty city, county, state, and federal programs. They ranged in size and scope—with several programs having fewer than twenty housing units—and each with different regulations, obligations, and reporting requirements. And they collectively drew resources away from the authority's core programs.

They had also faced scrutiny in recent years, notably after the death of a mother and her infant son in October 1992, caused by carbon monoxide leaking into their apartment from the hot water heating system.

With their credibility at a low point, the agency developed a plan for reinvention. They divested themselves of programs that were not cost-effective to operate. They shifted those to other agencies and, going forward, would only apply to grants that met their new criteria: consistent with core mission and cost-effective to run. As a 75th anniversary history recounts, “quality became more important than quantity.”

They embarked upon improvements, such as increasing their Section 8 program lease-up rates to 100 percent, improving inspection processes for landlord accountability, and improved accountability for program participants through increased fraud detection efforts.

Quality of housing was also improved, through a primary focus on solid maintenance and property management. Process improvements generated funds that could be directed back at the properties. Soon, RHA became the first large housing authority in the state to add air conditioning to all public housing properties.

The agency also began looking at improving its properties through replacement. A new federal program called HOPE VI made this possible. In 1998, they received a grant to demolish Dandridge Downs, built in 1972 by Shaw University as married student apartments. (HUD took over the complex in 1977. It had been vacated by 1994.) The site was replaced by 33 single-family homes sold on the private market.

In 1999, a redevelopment grant was obtained for the agency’s oldest property, Halifax Court. The existing buildings were replaced with townhomes, villas, and single-family homes. They also added a 90-unit senior building. In 2002, the Raleigh Housing Authority moved into a new central office building at the new Capitol Park.

In 2003, a second HOPE VI grant was secured for Chavis Heights. In the space of three years and three months—a new national record—the community went from full occupancy of the old buildings, to full pre-occupancy of the new buildings.

The third and last of the city’s “barracks-style” developments remained, Walnut Terrace. The agency again pursued federal funding. But by 2009, funds for HOPE VI programs were few and far between. Worse, the end of the program was in sight.

In December 2009, the RHA Board voted to redevelop Walnut Terrace with or without HOPE VI funding. It would also be the largest development ever undertaken by the Raleigh Housing Authority, and it was accomplished without HUD grants or tax credits.

The new Walnut Terrace project cost about \$50 million, and consisted of 290 apartments, townhomes, and single-family dwellings. Plus, a community building and two maintenance buildings.

In 2010, residents of the old apartments were relocated. Demolition was completed the following year, as firefighters at the training center would watch from across the street. (They also used the empty buildings for training, before they were knocked down.) In 2012, construction started on the new complex, and was completed in early 2015.



Mike Legeros photos – November 2010

Facts and Figures

	Original Homes	Original Development	New Development
Cost		\$4 million	\$50 million
Completed		1958	2015
Number of parcels	174		
Total acreage	27.316 acres		
Number of structures	184 structures, w/175 residential dwellings	38 residential structures with four and six units, and 300 total units: 6 Type A – 48 units 21 Type B – 168 2 Type C – 12 3 Type D – 24 6 Type E – 48 1 Admin., maintenance, and community building 7 steam plant buildings	43 residential structures and 290 units: 10 Villas w/216 units 14 Townhomes w/55 units 19 Single-family homes 1 Community building 2 Maintenance buildings
Number of homes/units	180	300	290

Site Plan, 2013

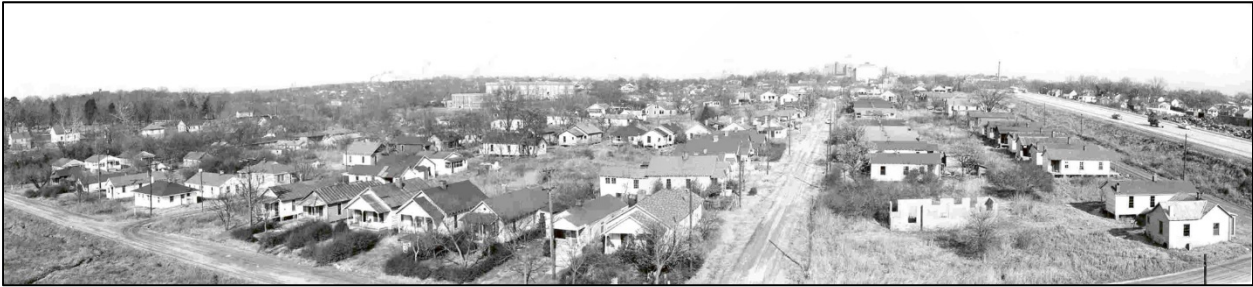


Current site plan – Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.



Current site plan – Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.

Panoramic Perspectives



Looking north from the fire training tower, 1958 – Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.



Looking north from the fire training tower, 1959 – Courtesy Raleigh Housing Authority.

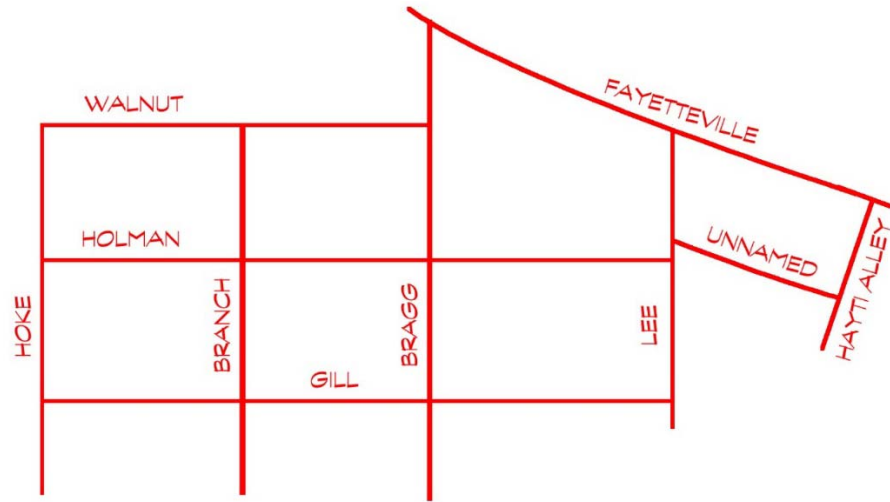


Looking north from the fire training tower, 2015 – Mike Legeros photo.

Comparing Streets

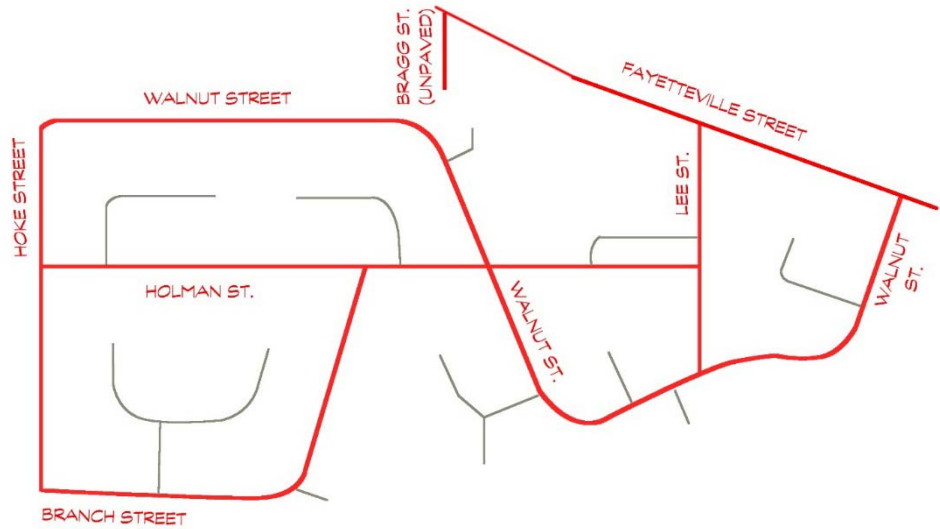
Before 1958

- Bragg
- Branch
- Gill
- Hayti
- Hoke
- Holman
- Lee



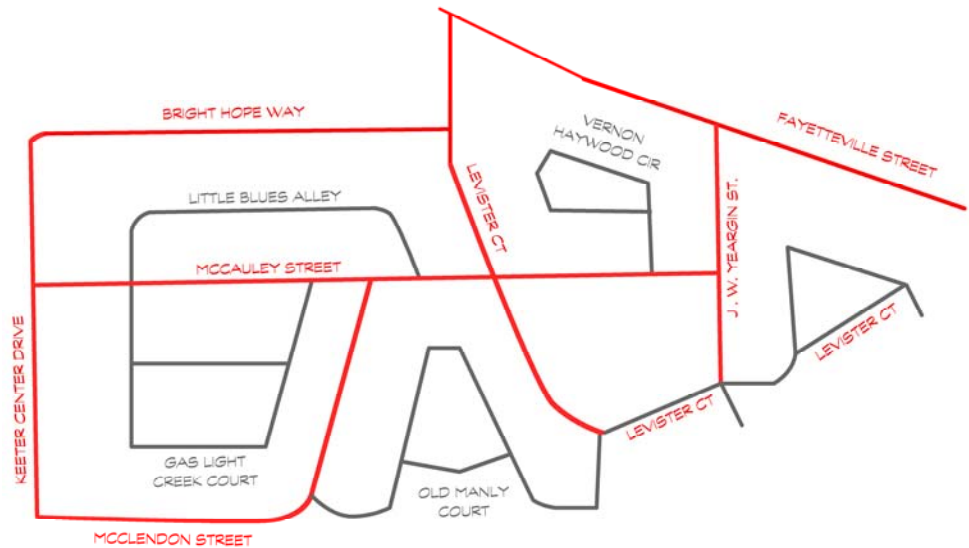
After 1958

- Bragg
- Branch
- Hoke
- Holman
- Walnut



After 2012

- Bright Hope
- Gas Light Creek
- Keeter Center
- J. W. Yeargen
- Levister
- Little Blues
- McCauley
- McClendon
- Old Manly
- Vernon Haywood



Sources

News Stories

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- March 11, 1958 – *Raleigh Times* – Firemen Watch Over ‘Ghost Town’
- March 13, 1958 – *News & Observer* – School Kids Not to Blame For Fires, Principal Says
- July 22, 1958 – *News & Observer* – Housing Requests Being Received Here
- May 25, 1959 – *News & Observer* – Walnut Terrace Housing Project Near Completion Here
- August 14, 1959 – *News & Observer* – 500 Apply for Housing
- September 25, 1959 – *News & Observer* – Authority Takes Over Housing Project
- October 10, 1959 – *Raleigh Times* – Walnut Terrace – A Ghost Town Transformed
- February 5, 19__ - *Raleigh Times* – Bids Called For Facelift

Publications

- *75 Years of Building Communities – 1938 to 2013* – Raleigh Housing Authority.

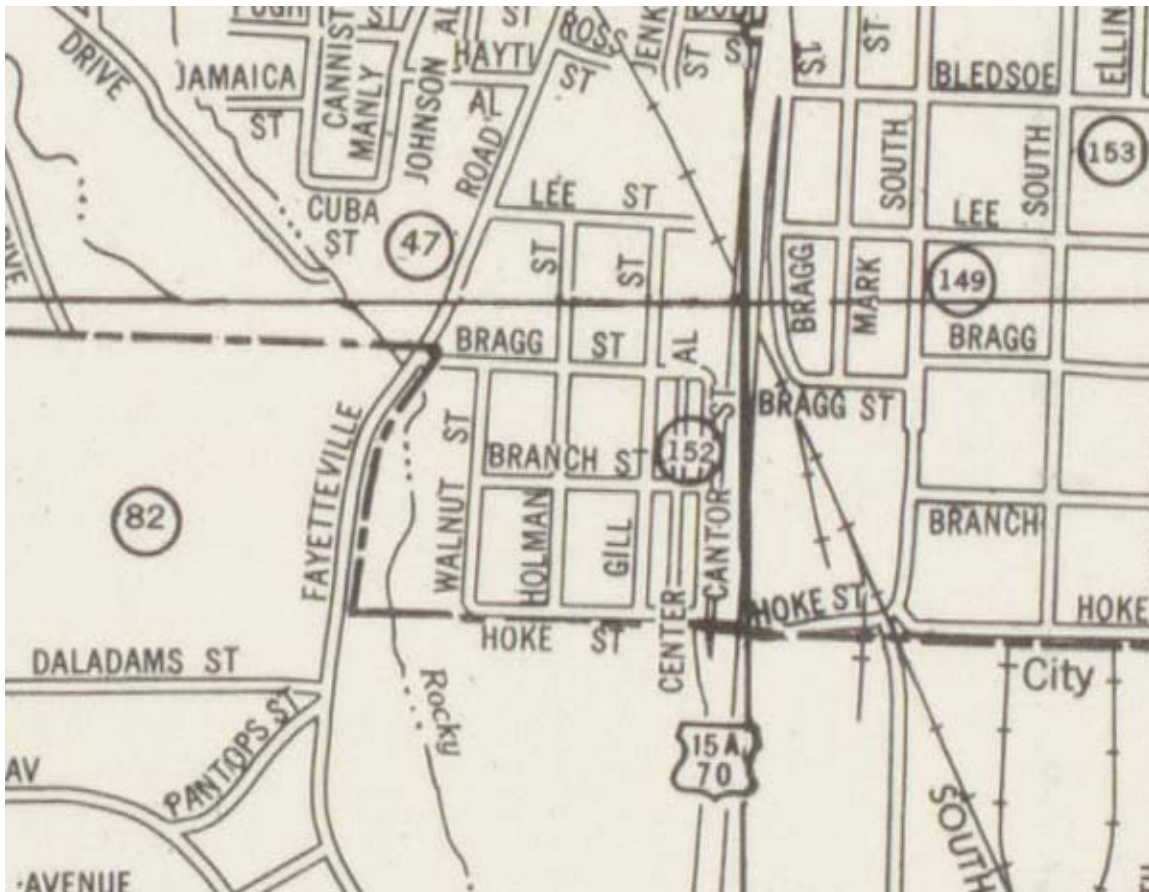
Research Resources

- Housing Developments/Developers I, Box 250, Elizabeth Reid Murray Collection, Olivia Raney Local History Library.
- News & Observer Index, 1926-1992 - Search “Housing” and “Housing Raleigh”, for starters, <http://statelibrarync.org/noi>
- North Carolina State Library – Special Collections Research Center - Guy E. Crampton and William Henley Deitrick Papers and Drawings, 1928-1977 (MC00227), <https://d.lib.ncsu.edu/collections>
- North Carolina Maps – For historic Raleigh street maps, <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/ncmaps>

- USDA Historical Aerial Photos, Wake County, NC, via UNC University Libraries, <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/reference/gis/USDA/wake.html>
- Wake County iMaps – For historic aerial views, <http://www.wakegov.com/gis/imaps>
- Walnut Terrace Pre-Demolition – Photo album by Mike Legeros, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/legeros/sets/72157635365745225/>
- Washington Graded and High School National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/WA3360.pdf>
- William Henley Deitrick, North Carolina Architects & Builders – A Biographical Dictionary, <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000282>.

Appendix A – 1953 Street Map

This City of Raleigh street map dated June 1953 shows the southern city limits at Hoke Street. By January 1959, the south city limited had moved further south to Wilmington Street just north of Pecan Road.



City of Raleigh, North Carolina – Produced by Air Survey Corporation, Arlington, VA, June 1953.

Appendix B - Fire Training Tower



North Carolina State Archives photo.

In 1954, a five-story fire department “drill tower” was constructed along Highway 15-A south (now South Wilmington Street), just south of downtown Raleigh. The brick structure cost \$20,000, including pavement, and was completed that summer.

This was the fire department’s first dedicated training facility. The city’s firemen had been using the rear of Memorial Auditorium for training exercises. Opened in 1932, the performing arts center included a fire station in the rear basement. The back of the building was also designed to function as a multi-story training tower.



North Carolina State Archives photo (left), City of Raleigh Public Affairs photo (right).

The drill tower included a standpipe system, a safety net, and an exterior fire escape. Early drills include "ladder and net work" with "occasional jumps from the windows," though only from the lower floors. Later additions to

the training grounds included fire pits and a smokehouse. The latter was added in 1964, and constructed using bricks from the original Fire Station 5 on Park Drive, which were removed during its demolition in 1961.

Firefighters from both Raleigh and Wake County used the tower for decades, along with other area fire and rescue agencies. The adjacent Keeter Training Center classroom building opened in May 1982 at 105 West Hoke Street, now Keeter Center Drive. The 7,000-square-foot facility was dedicated to retired Fire Chief and Mayor Pro Tem Jack B. Keeter.



News & Observer photo.

The Keeter Training Center housed the offices of the training division, along with classrooms used for fire department classes, and lockers and restrooms for the recruit academies. Additional training props were added on the grounds in the 1980s and 1990s, including a railroad tank car for hazardous materials exercises.

The training tower served until the mid-2000s. With the exterior escape condemned in its last years, the tower was demolished in April 2005. One year later, a prefabricated training tower and fire simulation structure was erected on the site. The Keeter Training Center has been further expanded in recent years to include classroom trailers, vehicle shelters, and an urban search and rescue (USAR) training area.



Mike Legeros photo (left); Raleigh Fire Department photo (right).

Appendix C - Eliza Pool School

Look closely at this picture:



Courtesy of Raleigh Housing Authority.

In the background of the picture, toward the upper-right corner, is a school building:



That structure is the Eliza Pool School at 1600 Fayetteville Street. Built in 1924, the school served the Caraleigh Mills community. The brick building originally contained twelve rooms. In 1941-42, the school had an enrollment of 262 students with seven teachers for seven grades. With the reopening of the manufacturing plant in 1941, a larger school building was needed and the structure was presumably expanded.

The community's first school opened in 1903, using a three-room building provided rent-free by the Caraleigh Mills Company. The Caraleigh (Carolina-Raleigh) School taught first through fifth grades. The following year, a new school building was built on land donated by the company, and with matching monies to those provided by the School Board of Raleigh Township. The company also provided a piano. The city provided horse-and-buggy transportation to the teachers.

A new building on a new site was completed in 1924. The next year, the name was changed to recognize the service of Miss Eliza A. Pool (1849-1935). She had been a teacher and principal in the Raleigh school system for forty-four years. In 1926, was chosen the state's most outstanding teacher and represented North Carolina at a sesquicentennial celebration in Philadelphia.

In 1943, the Eliza Pool School was one of twelve public schools in Raleigh for white students. There were another four public schools for black students:

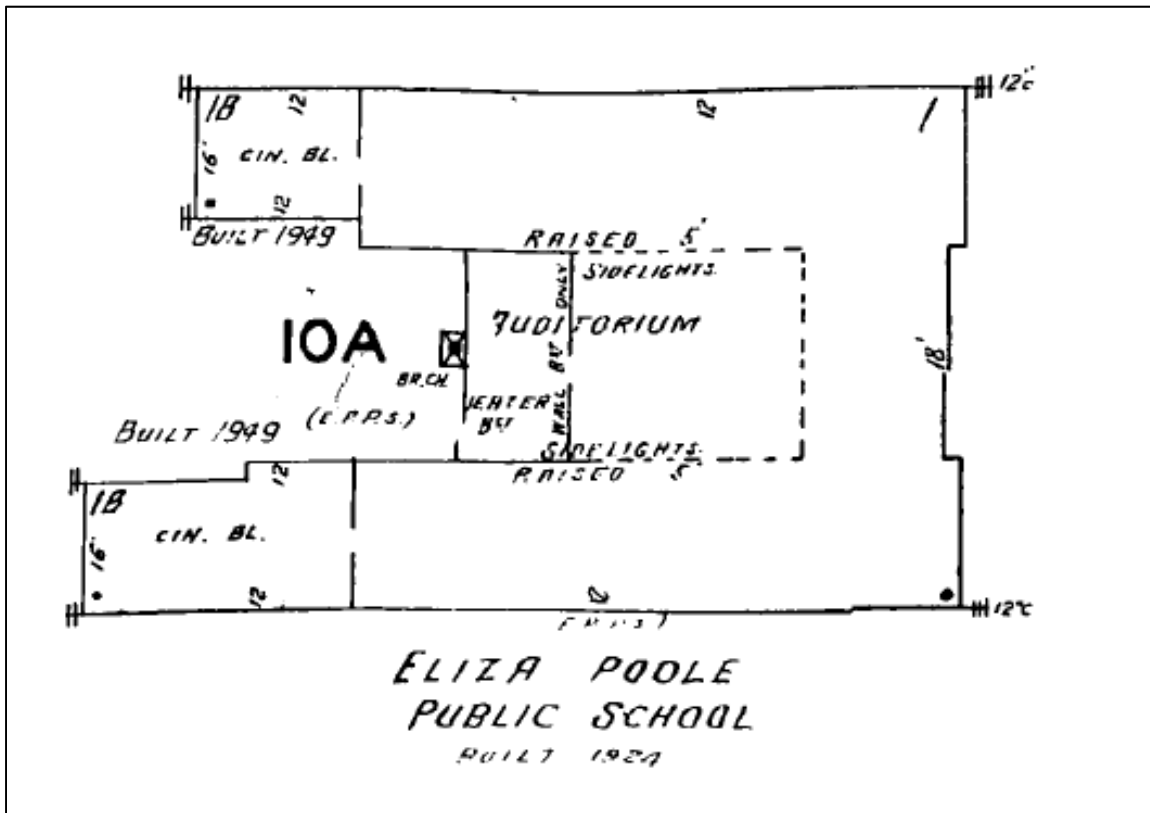
White

- Hugh Morson High School – 301 E. Hargett Street
- Needham B. Broughton High School – 723 St. Mary’s Street
- Barbee School – Pilot Mills, N. Blount Street
- Boylan Heights School – S. Boylan Avenue
- Eliza Pool School – Caraleigh Mills, Fayetteville Road
- Fred Olds School – Dixie Trail
- Hayes-Barton School – Glenwood Avenue
- Lewis School – Glenwood Avenue
- Methodist Orphanage School – Glenwood Avenue
- Murphey School – Polk & Person streets
- Thompson School – 567 E. Hargett Street
- Wiley School – St. Mary’s Street

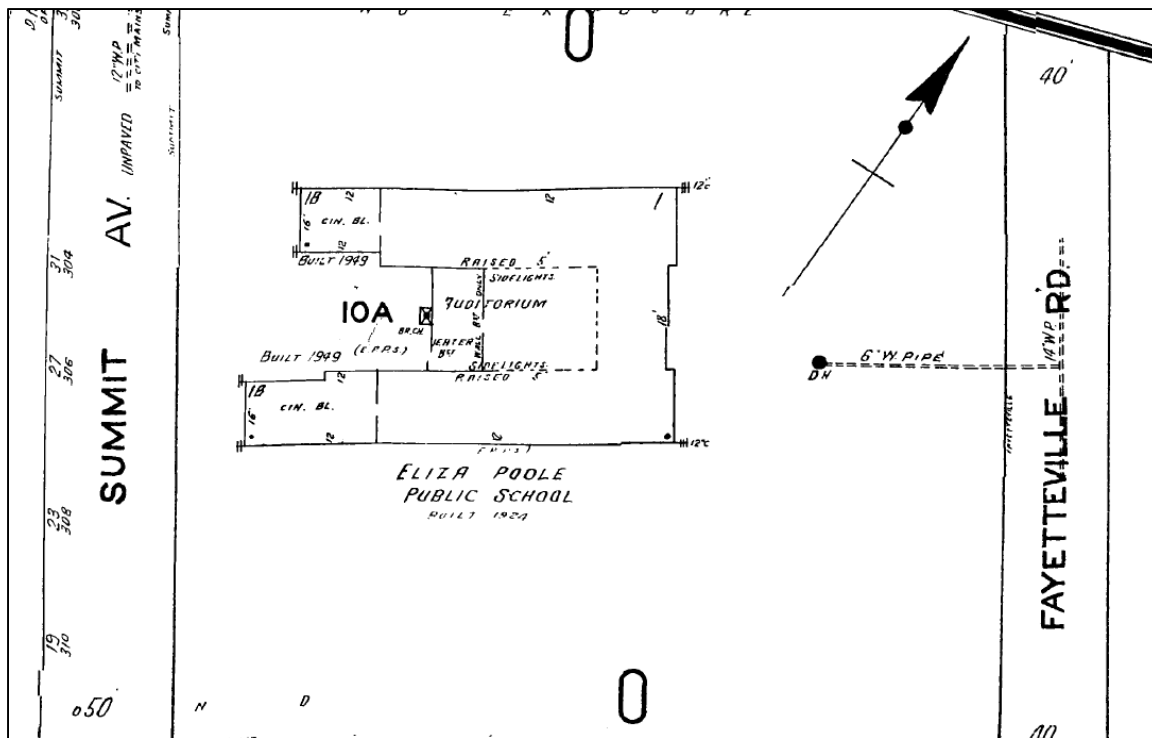
Black

- Washington High School and Elementary School, 1000 Fayetteville Street
- Crosby-Garfield School, 569 E. Lenoir Street
- Lucille Hunter School, 1021 E. Lenoir Street
- Oberlin School, 1004 Oberlin Road

Here’s a 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map drawing of the structure:



And a wider view, showing the distance from the nearby streets:



In 1971, the school was closed as part of a desegregation plan for the city. Five years later, the Raleigh city school system merged with the Wake County school system. The school building was subsequently used as office space and storage.

On July 8, 1980, a fire was reported at the building just before midnight. "It was going out the roof" when firefighters arrived, Asst. Chief C. T. May told the *Raleigh Times*. The fire escalated to two- or three-alarms, bringing seven engines and three truck companies to the scene.

Two firemen were injured in the blaze. Lonnie E. Bridgers was manning his hose line just a few feet inside a door, when a 10 by 10 foot section of roof fell on him. He was "yanked out of the rubble" by May and others, reported the newspaper.

In another section of the building, George Jones was burned on the neck and the arm. He drove himself and Bridgers to Wake Medical Center, where they were treated.

The fire was controlled by about 3:00 a.m. The last fire department unit cleared the scene at 11:52 a.m. the following day.

The building was gutted by the blaze, which was believed to have been started by lightning earlier in the evening. The one-story, 15,000 square-foot structure was valued at \$200,000. The center section, including a gym that ran "almost the length of the building," was destroyed. The fire started on the auditorium roof.

Also burned was some \$45,000 of equipment stored on site. That included a number of musical instruments, mostly string instruments, which had been collected from elementary schools across the county for summer storage.

The building housed administrative offices for the school system's art and music programs, as well as the gifted and talented programs, vocational services, and psychological services. Forty employees had offices there.

In 1996, a park was constructed on the 6.2 acre site. Named the Eliza Pool Park, it contains a multipurpose field, jungle gym, volleyball court, picnic area, handball courts, and a paved trail.

Sources:

- Heather Sullivan, Eliza Pool Park Master Site plan, <https://heatherasullivan.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/eliza-pool-park-master-site-plan.pdf>
- NCpedia, Eliza Anne Poole, <http://ncpedia.org/biography/pool-eliza>
- Mrs. J. M. Barbee, Historical Sketches Raleigh Public Schools 1876-1941-1942, <https://archive.org/details/historisketch00barb>
- *News & Observer*, July 10, 1980
- *Raleigh Times*, July 9, 1980.