The African American Architects & Builders of Eastland Gardens 1928-1955

A Project of the Eastland Gardens Flower Club
Presented to WHSC 2011
Components of Project

• Research
  – History background of the development
  – Location of Eastland Gardens
  – Building permits from 1928 - 1955
  – Architects/builders of record

• Photography
  – Buildings designed by African Americans

Lessons learned
History Committee
Background

In 1927, Eastland Gardens, Inc. purchased property near the old Benning Race Track to be subdivided and developed into homes.

Originally the land was zoned to build “row houses”. However, lots were combined and detached homes were built instead.

The developers used African American architects and builders.

The first to buy and move into the community named Eastland Gardens were African Americans.

By 1955, at least 16 black architects 6 black builders had designed and constructed some 105 of the 166 structures.

A section of the community that included over 20 buildings designed and or built by African American was destroyed with the construction of I-295. Although this action disconnected a small portion of the neighborhood both in geography and in identity, the larger community has strengthened its civic pride and activism as a result.
Eastland Gardens

The original Eastland Gardens development in Northeast Washington boundaries: at Ord Street, between Kenilworth Avenue, Lee Street, 40th Street and Anacostia Avenue, near the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and Mayfair Mansions.

The community was designed and built primarily by African-American architects and builders.
Architects and Builders of Eastland Gardens

• The most prolific Eastland Gardens architects were Lewis W. Giles, Sr., with 45, and J. Alonzo Plater with 20.
• Other architects included: Romulus C. Archer (8), Augustus N. Bull (8), John B. Holloway, Jr. (5), Roscoe I Vaughn (6), S. Leslie Branson (3), Howard H. Mackey, Sr. (3), Robert P. Madison (3), Lewis K. Downing (2), Clyde M. Drayton (2) Cyril G. Bow (1), George Alonzo Ferguson (1), Alexander Barnes (2) and James L Turner (1).
• The styles include Georgian, Colonial and Tudor Revival, Bungalow, Four-Square, and Ranch.
• African American builders included Randolph Dodd, Homer M. Griffin, R.A. Froe, Harry Intzminger, and Oliver B. Cassell.
Eastland Gardens Inc.

1204 42\textsuperscript{nd} Place, 1929
Builder: Randolph Dodd

4244 Meade Street, 1928
Builder: Eastland Gardens Co
Lewis Wentworth Giles Sr.  
(1894-1974)  

4245 Meade Street, 1932  
Builder: Randolph Dodd  

4232 Lane Place, 1930  
Builder: Randolph Dodd
James Alonzo Plater
(1908 -1965)

4115 Lee Street, 1940
Builder: Randolph Dodd

4110 Lee Street, 1941
Builder: Randolph Dodd
Romulus Cornelius Archer, Jr.  
(1890 – 1968)

1125 42nd Street, 1932  
Builder: Randolph Dodd

1120 42nd Street, 1936  
Builder: Randolph Dodd
Gustavus N. Bull
(DOB-DOD Unknown)

4229 Meade Street, 1940
Builder: Simon Vincent

4106 Lee Street, 1939
Builder: Randolph Dodd
Roscoe Ingersoll Vaughn
(1884-1971)

4256 Meade, 1949
Builder: Lawrence E. McKenzie

4228 Lane, 1938
Builder: Morrison Bros.
Howard H. Mackey, Sr. (1901-1987)
Cyril G. Bow (1899-1963)

4101 Meade Street 1954
Builder: Harry Entzminger

4138 Meade Street 1939
Builder: Oliver Cassell
John B. Holloway, Sr.
(1913-1993)

4004 Meade Street 1948
Built: Froe Co.

1205 40th street 1948
Built: Froe Co.
Lewis K. Downing
(1896-1967)

4239 Nash Street 1958
Builder: ?

4237 Meade Street 1956
Builder: ?
Clyde M. Drayton
(1915-1983)

4319 Anacostia Ave. 1949
Builder: Lester N Porter

4018 Lane Place 1950
Builder: H.M. Griffin Co.
James L. Turner (1901-?)
Alexander Barnes (DOB-DOD unknown)

4000 Nash Street 1948  
Builder: Laurence Herndon (owner)

1104 42nd Street 1935  
Builder: Frank Barnes (owner)
George A. Ferguson (1895-1979)
S. Leslie Bransom (DOB-DOD unknown)

1235 Kenilworth Ave, NE 1947
Build: S. W. Dodge

4133 Lee Street 1947
Build: James Arnold (owner)
Randolph Dodd
(1889-1945)
4219 Meade St. 1931
Madison, Madison & Madison

Robert P. Madison

1234 Kenilworth Ave  1963
Harry R. Entzminger
(1902-1981)

1036 42nd Street  1955

4207 Anacostia Ave.  1957
Homer Mitchell Griffin
(1900 -1965)

4317 Anacostia Ave., 1962

4105 Anacostia Ave., 1963
Lessons Learned

• Every community has a story to tell

• People are helpful when you give attention to the things they are willing to share

• Never discard any information even if it does not seem to be historical or accurate
Eastland Gardens Club
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