

Housing changes for poor

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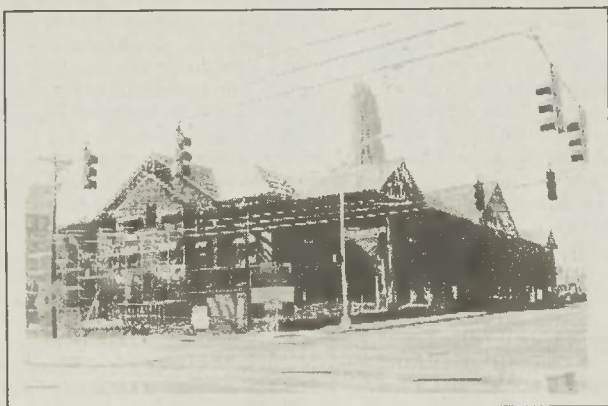
increase as more families are moved off welfare rolls under, Weir said. "It is prolonging the wait," she said. "They are diverting funds from housing new families to housing people already in public housing."

Nationally, according to the National Law Center's Weir, the amount of federal housing available to far less than what's needed.

"HUD published a study this year that said that while 7.6 million American households earn less than \$10,000 annually and there are only 4.4 million households they could afford," Weir said. "And, fewer than 30 percent of those eligible for federal housing assistance actually receive it."

Dalton Village will lose 218 of its 300 units, which will be replaced by 35 single family homes, 112 duplexes for mixed income elderly households and by moving 85 low income families into mixed income neighborhoods in other parts of the city. The remaining 78 units will be reconfigured into 59 apartments and four units will be converted into a Family Investment Center.

Jeroline Woods, president of the Dalton Village residents association, said some displaced residents were moved to other complexes, such as Southside Homes, Belvedere Homes and Boulevard Homes.



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Earle Village will move from a 400-unit community to 200 as First Ward becomes a mixed-income neighborhood.

In Earle Village, a complex of more 430 units is being reduced to about 100 - 70 for elderly households and 35 for families. Replacement housing built in First Ward will be to create a mixed-income neighborhood. The overall aim is to attract young middle income families to the area.

"The general theory," said Ike Heard Jr., chairman of the county planning commission and head of the Northwest Corridor Community Development Corp., "is we need to avoid large concentrations of poor households."

Obviously fewer housing units leaves some families without adequate housing, but that's not necessarily all bad, according to

Heard.

"You've got a lot of households that may not need to exist free standing," Heard said. "Lots of single parent households...young girls with a couple of kids...can't take care of themselves very well. Giving them an opportunity to have a household is not best thing to do."

Heard said it too early to tell if combined public private efforts, including the city's own rehabilitation program, will provide enough housing units for the city's low income families.

"There's no answer to question of whether all efforts combined... will be enough to solve the problem," Heard said.

No hidden agenda in renovation

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Earle Village, a sprawling low-income community, will have a new face in 1998. So will the rest of First Ward if an elaborate proposal is approved by Charlotte City Council.

The plan is ambitious, proposing to turn the mostly unused area into a mixed income area with business. The plan, sponsored by the Charlotte Housing Authority, Charlotte Uptown Development Commission, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and NationsBank Community Development Corp., hinges on revising Earle Village. A \$42 million Hope VI grant from HUD has that revitalization underway.

But should that be cause for alarm for black residents in the area? Second, Third and Fourth wards were once vibrant African American communities filled with black-owned and operated businesses. Once those communities faltered, in came urban renewal - policies that essentially eradicated inner-city black communities across the country. Ironically, Earle Village housed some of the residents displaced because of urban renewal. City council members and Charlotte Housing authority officials don't see the new interest in First Ward as a new round of urban renewal. Far from it.

"There's no comparison to what we are doing now," said John Kinsey, director of the housing authority's Urban Revitalization Demonstration program. "I think the thoughts of something like that happening again are long in the past. I think the community has come to grips with what we are trying to do. We're going to put public housing residents back into Earle Village into units that they've never even dreamed they would be able to live in."

With revitalization, Earle Village will be reduced from 400 to 200 units. In essence, half the residents will be moved to other public housing units or possibly given vouchers to live elsewhere. Kinsey said the move will be beneficial to residents.

"Earle Village had become very large and didn't function any more. Since the '60s, we have not been afforded the opportunity to do a major

rehab," Kinsey said. "We basically had public housing that was obsolete. If we didn't rehab Earle Village or Dalton Village, they would simply drain all our money."

"The general theory," said community planner Ike Heard Jr., chairman of the county planning commission and head of the Northwest Corridor Community Development Corp., "is we need to avoid large concentrations of poor households. Once they are large enough mass to become a community unto themselves, they become

immanageable.

"The concept is to reduce the number and size of these kinds of projects, go in and introduce home ownership and work with the market edge to get more middle income families into the community."

City council member Nasif Majeed agrees with Kinsey. He's seen the plan for First Ward and he doesn't think there is a hidden agenda.

"(The '70s) was a different time and a different set of circumstances," Majeed said.

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