

UNITED HOUSING CORPORATION

The first definite step in a program of building construction to solve the housing problem in Pittsburgh, no less than in many other large Metropolitan districts, and more particularly in the over congested hill district of Pittsburgh, has been taken by the United States Hebrew Relief Association through its housing commission, and actual work has been started on a series of 12 brick two-story quadruplex houses, the plans, survey, etc., having been completed, materials, etc., being in course of purchase, to go right ahead with plans as accepted. Each of these double duplex houses will have four rooms and a bath, the entire plan capable of housing 48 families, who will pay merely nominal rentals.

When this group is completed, which will be in the near future, additional units to the system will be erected. until the housing problem now facing that particular district in the community of Pittsburgh will have been solved.

Although the problem of housing has been growing yearly in this as in all other cities, and many conferences have been held and plans made by experts, this is the first concrete step and actual start made toward its solution and is the result of the appointment of a housing commission by President Aaron Cohen, of the United States Hebrew Relief Association, a commission consisting of Robert Lewin, Chairman, A. J. DeRoy, Stanley J. Kann, Leo B. Foster, Attorney S. Leo Ruslander, Maurice Falk and Irving F. Lehman.

The housing commission although limited in its original scope, soon enlarged its own sphere, funds were immediately underwritten by the individual members of the board of trustees of the United States Hebrew Relief Association and the ground necessary for a proper start of the project. A quadrangular space bounded by Alequippa Robinson, Wadsworth and Outlet Streets, ideal because of its height and healthful atmosphere, a plan of constructions which not only provides homes with every comfort and convenience, but which will give a community lawn, flower gardens, play space and ample sunlight to every tenant.

Its plans perfected, and adopted by the Board of the Relief society, the commission formed itself into the United Housing Corporation with a Pennsylvania charter with Robert Lewin, president, and Stanley J. Kann, secretary and treasurer, and its funds are being obtained not from the funds of the charitable organization, which has a different purpose, but in the form of stock subscriptions from those who have been and are supporting the Jewish charities and active in Jewish philanthropic enterprises in Pittsburgh.

That no time was lost in bringing to a speedy realization an ideal that has been uppermost in the minds of the board of trustees since housing became a problem during the war—immediately upon obtaining title to the ground and on the very first day of the year, 1921, (New Year's night) the housing committee was called into session to approve the plans and contract was awarded to N. Miller & Sons Construction Co.

While primarily an activity of the United Hebrew Relief Association, the homes will have no charitable characterization. On the contrary, Chairman Robert Lewin, who for a long time has been devoting himself to studying housing problems, and his associates declare that the new homes will be self-supporting and will bring a very modest return on the investment.

The building group, according to the plans provide for homes of four rooms and bath each, which can,

however depending upon requirements be converted into 3, 4, or 5-room dwellings. Each home will have a commodious porch, a living room of 14x12 feet, one bedroom, 11x10 feet, a second bedroom, 14x12 feet, a kitchen 11x10 feet, and a modern bath room. Cellar and storage space will be provided in a lockered basement, in which will be included washing facilities. Each unit of the group will have a commodious yard with space both front and back, in addition to the community lawn. Additional light and air is provided in the construction of each house, and the plan has been considered chiefly from a standpoint of ample light and air.

As quickly as each unit is rea-

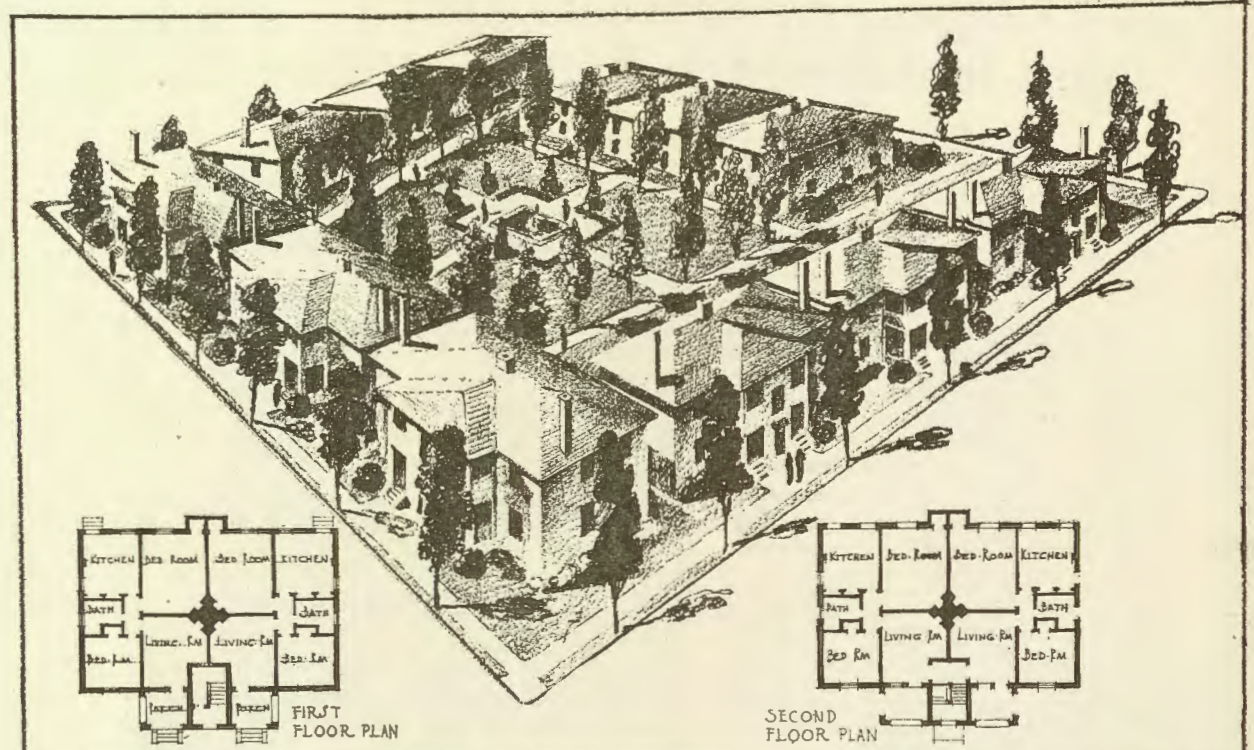
for occupancy, it will be rented to tenants as recommended by the proper officials of the Housing Corporation and will provide homes for many families whose rentals are now excessive in the extreme.

It is hoped by the members of the committee that this initial step will prove so successful that similar activities, some of which have been under consideration for some time by the various civic bodies of Pittsburgh even the United States Government itself, will also be pushed to successful fulfillment, thus relieving the present congestion in the more thickly populated districts of the city.

While housing is always a problem of urban life, and its difficulties are confined to no particular group

of citizenry, it is the more complicated for its Jewish citizens owing to certain necessary requirements of its beneficiaries. Among the problems met and solved by the Housing Commission was the obtaining of proper ground in sufficiently close proximity to the houses of worship attended by the prospective tenants to allow walking to devotional exercises. There was also the necessity for providing ready access to the various Jewish markets and the social activities of this group. Ability to walk to places of employment was also taken into consideration as the cost of carfare is a large item.

But the principal difficulty overcome was to find a method by which these people could be helped to bet-



“TWELVE QUADRUPLEX HOMES”
 FOR THE
 UNITED HOUSING CORPORATION.
 H. MILLER & SONS' CO. BUILDING CONSTRUCTION
 MAY BUILDING, PITTSBURGH PA.
 DECEMBER 11TH 1920

