

THE MOBILE HOME PARK IN THE UNITED STATES:

A DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

by

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ABSTRACT

The mobile home park has developed as the result of interactions between planning, sociology and regulations concerning the mobile home unit over the past forty-five years.

The mobile home park life style has undergone considerable evolution, yet still is not of a high, or in many cases, acceptable, quality.

Prospects for future improvement of this life style include the mobile home subdivision, and the placement of mobile homes on individually-owned lots, neither of which is widespread today.

PROBLEM

In spite of the tremendous growth of the mobile home and park industries over the past forty years, the general life style created has been of dubious quality. Improved mobile home park planning cannot be realized without a sufficient knowledge of its conception and development.

OBJECTIVES

To follow the development of mobile home park planning, determining the main planning, sociological and regulatory forces involved in the emergence and change of the park;

To determine if the mobile home park presents a viable life style.

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis is divided into six main chapters, each covering one specific time period during which important changes or additions were made to mobile homes (or trailers) and parks.

Chapter I discusses the origins of the trailer and trailer camp.

Trailers became mass-produced and developed as primary housing, while the trailer park evolved as a planned housing development. This occurred during the period 1930 to 1941, covered in Chapter II.

Chapter III deals with World War II and immediate post-war trailer facilities, government and private.

Beginning in 1947, the Trailer Coach Manufacturers Association, and later, the Mobile Home Manufacturers Association, renewed park planning efforts that were generally dulled during the war. The mobile home (with its advantages over the trailer) was introduced in 1950. This is covered in Chapter IV.

The 10-foot wide mobile home was first brought into mass-production in 1955, this a predecessor to larger homes, and an influence on increasing mobile home lot size.

As mobile homes began resembling fixed single family housing in floor area and facilities provided (and some mobile home owners bought the ground on which their homes stood), parks tried to become as similar to single family housing developments as possible. The wider homes were

introduced beginning in 1962, when mobile home production began a large upswing. Chapter VI covers the years 1962 to the present.

Conclusions and topics for further **research** appear immediately following Chapter VI.

It was beyond the scope of this paper to deal in detail with legal aspects and court cases involving mobile home parks. (Bartley and Bair, Mobile Home Parks and Comprehensive Community Planning, provides a sufficient initial reference on this topic). Taxation and economic factors dealing with park operation were also not discussed. (See Nulsen, Construction, Management and Investment Potential of Mobile Home and Recreational Vehicle Parks, for information on this topic).

CHAPTER I:

Pre 1930

The Trailer Emerges

Beginning in the early twenties, the trailer emerged-- a crude, home-made convenience to assist travelers by providing sleeping and cooking facilities along with limited storage space. They were used by motorists desiring low-cost, temporary accommodations in popular recreation areas, and trailed along behind their vehicles-- hence the term 'trailers'.<sup>1</sup>

As originally intended, trailers were used for vacations of varying lengths, from overnight to several months. They could not be used as full-time residences because of their small size, lack of the needed conveniences (such as sanitary facilities), and lack of strength to withstand harsh weather for long periods.

As more and more of the trailers were seen by people (especially retired) in the northern sections of the country, the desire for vacations using them increased. They saw them as an economical way to go to a warmer climate and escape the rugged winter. The migrations increased every year. Some built their own trailers, others had them built, and the trailer manufacturing industry was begun by the mid 1920's.

By the time of the Depression, trailers became more common, with some workers using them to move to new job locations throughout the country, and then using them for residences.

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<sup>1</sup> Notes will be found at the end of each Chapter.

As trailering increased, farmers (in particular) along the roads to the various destinations added to their income by allowing the trailers to use their grounds for parking. Most provided water and some semblance of toilet facilities, charging a fee of about fifty cents per night. This led to the trailer camp, which was viewed by the public as a nuisance and menace. Whether they were gathered at a beach, park, forest, or just on the side of the road, trailers were frequently considered a blight, because of their often "shoddy appearance" (of the two out of three trailers that were apparently home-made<sup>2</sup>), and the typical trailerites' habits of awakening early, being usually noisy, and of the men's attire of pants with or without a shirt.

Since sanitary facilities were often lacking, these camps tended to resemble dumps in appearance and aroma. Thus, regulations began to be imposed limiting the trailers to specified areas, with others controlling the sanitary conditions of the trailer parking lots. At the outset, there were no sanitary regulations, and it was left to the trailerites to keep their own areas clean-- if this was overlooked, the perceived nuisance of above became real.

Original regulations throughout the country did not deal with trailers per se and did not become specific for many years. Trailerites were treated solely as transients, in the same class as cabin renters. The first controls, other than for sanitation, dealt with limits on stays in municipalities. Since there were usually no camps at that time, these ordinances kept the trailers out of the respective cities altogether.

As the trailers were forced to move to other locations, they were usually welcomed (local communities not adjacent to large cities increased business and trade) and camps developed on the outskirts of many large cities.

NOTES

1. Hayes, R., How to Live Like a Retired Millionaire on less than \$250 a Month, p. 55.
2. Meloen, T., Mobile Homes, p. 9.



CHAPTER II

1930-1941

The Trailer Community Develops

SUMMARY

The trailer park developed to provide adequate housing facilities for the trailer traveler, income for the park operator, and control over indiscriminate parking for the community.

The National and State Parks were instrumental in propagation of parking facilities for trailers, and there were several attempts at providing a national network of private commercial parks.

Trailers were used more for primary housing, and since parks became inadequate, restrictive regulations were imposed, forcing the trailers outside of the cities, and into the surrounding communities.

### THE TRAILER

Use of mass-production techniques for trailer manufacture began in the first two years of the 1930's. By 1935 the average size for a trailer was six to seven feet wide, and fifteen to twenty-two feet long, although lengths ranged from twelve to twenty-seven feet. Attempts were made to streamline them as far as possible-- see Figure 2.1. By 1940 there were about 350,000 trailers in the country<sup>1</sup> most of which were factory built.

As development continued, the stress was on larger units, with more living space and more permanency. By 1937, vacation usage decreased to 50% of total production (it was 100% in 1929)<sup>2</sup> and approximately 50% were already used as primary housing.

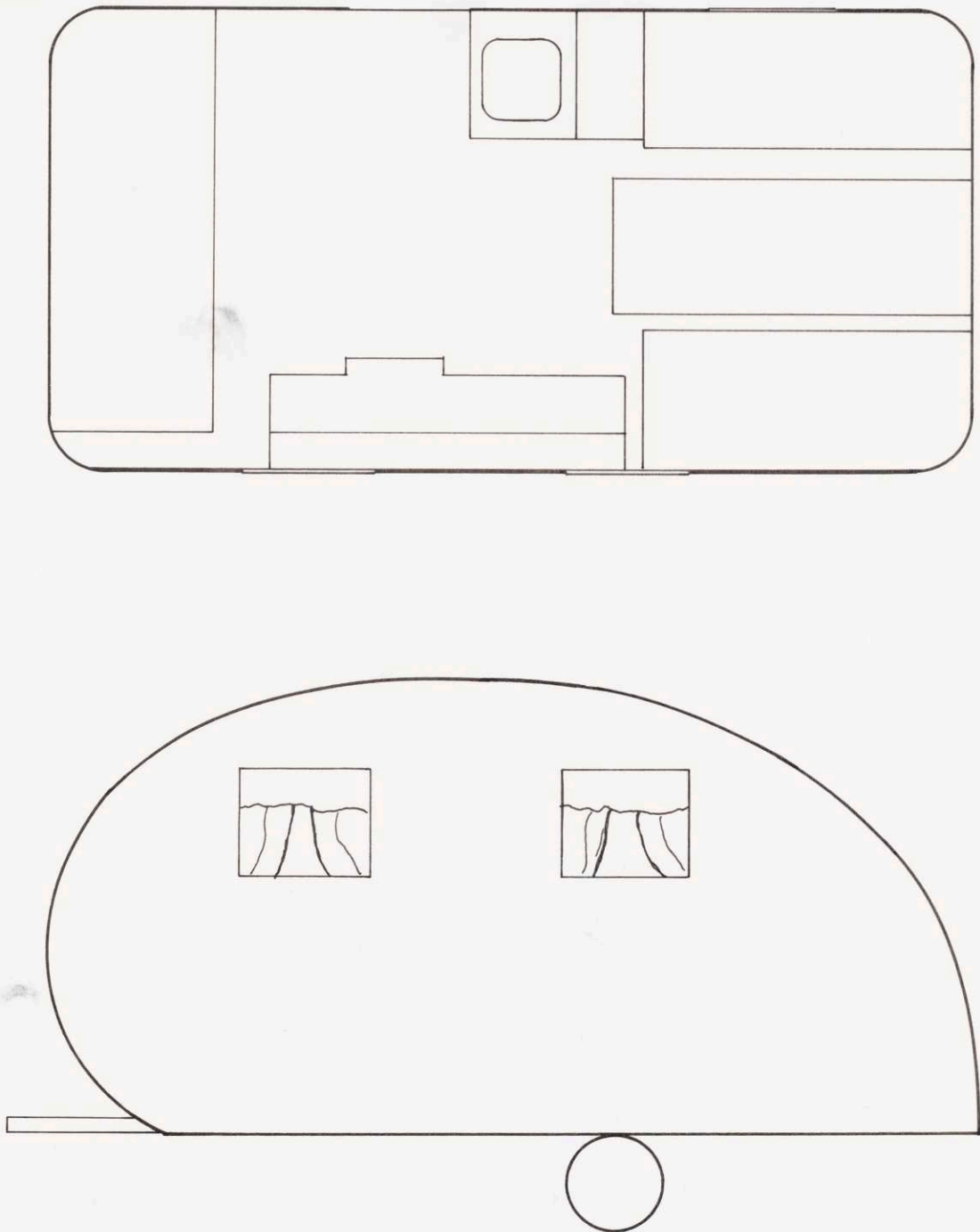


Figure 2.1: Two views of a 1937 trailer.

(From Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, June 1937, p. 16)

## THE TRAILER PARK

### Initial Development of Trailer Parks.

The initial development and establishment of trailer parks proceeded along several lines. The increasing number of trailer vacationers spent longer periods of time at destinations further and further from their points of departure and required rest stops along the way and mobile 'hotels' at the destinations. Prompted by fear of indiscriminate parking by, as well as a means of increasing income for town residents and officiators, many trailer camps were begun in the mid-1930's.

Cabin camps had existed long before the first trailer was made, but even though space was often available, they did not cater to trailers, as cabins brought higher profits and most renters did not want the trailers nearby. When trailers were allowed, facilities were poor.

The trailer camps helped to alleviate sanitary and fire-hazard problems and provided the trailerite with necessary services for modest fees. Park owners found that the trailerite would pay more for parks with better facilities, and began to capitalize on this.

The acute housing shortage in most sections of the country prompted interest in trailer parks as a viable solution for the growing numbers of people who used the trailer as primary housing, especially during the Depression.<sup>3</sup>

Many newcomers to trailering had difficulties in finding stopping

places with electrical, sanitary and other facilities that would provide for a comfortable stay.<sup>4</sup>

As the urge to travel the roads on trips of extended duration increased, thousands of motorists spent time and money in the town nearest the trailer park they patronized. It was predicted in 1937<sup>5</sup> that it would only be a short time until every progressive community would have either a public or private trailer park to profitably handle the increasing mobile population.

Many trailer camps were located near central business districts, on old fair grounds or marshes. When the local residents protested, the trailers often moved to the outskirts of the cities, which would benefit trailer manufacturers if these outlets for their products located nearby.

Tourist trailers became a problem in some of the National Parks throughout the country. These parks provided natural attraction to increasing numbers of travelers, who wanted to stay for long periods of time to view the sights of just to spend some time before moving to the next place on their itinerary.

The following quote<sup>6</sup> presents typical reasoning behind trailer camp establishment throughout the country in 1937: "The establishment of tourist camp sites in many communities in the state [Wyoming] has been a great factor in bringing business to these communities, and has to a large extent done away with promiscuous camping along the highways. This interstate and intrastate travel is highly desirable and very

important in the development of the state and the nation. It brings with it, however, added responsibilities to the communities involved and to the state. As a guest of the community, the tourist should have his health protected by being furnished a suitable, healthful camp site, pure water and the essential sanitary facilities. The tourist camp may be an asset or a liability to the community. Aside from the question of health, civic pride and a sense of common decency should stimulate a community or a camp operator to establish and maintain the kind of a camp that the tourist will look forward to stopping at and pass a word of commendation to fellow tourists. This is in line with sound business practice."

Maine and Michigan became summer meccas, with Florida, Texas and California their winter counterparts. The short summer season and often mountainous roads reduced the North's desirability, while the good weather and straight roads made the South an increasingly popular place to visit. Each year from 1933 to 1938, more new and more attractive trailer parks have been opened in Florida, which resulted in increased desire for trailer stopping-places along the way, and the creation of even more permanent spaces in Florida itself.<sup>7</sup> Other areas of the country that were of primary interest to trailerites: National Parks, the Grand Canyon, the dams of the West, the Ozarks, the White Mountains, the New England coast and the Pacific shore line.

Sales-park arrangements were created, providing salesmen with added income during lulls in trailer purchases, and the manufacturers and trailerites with places to park their homes.

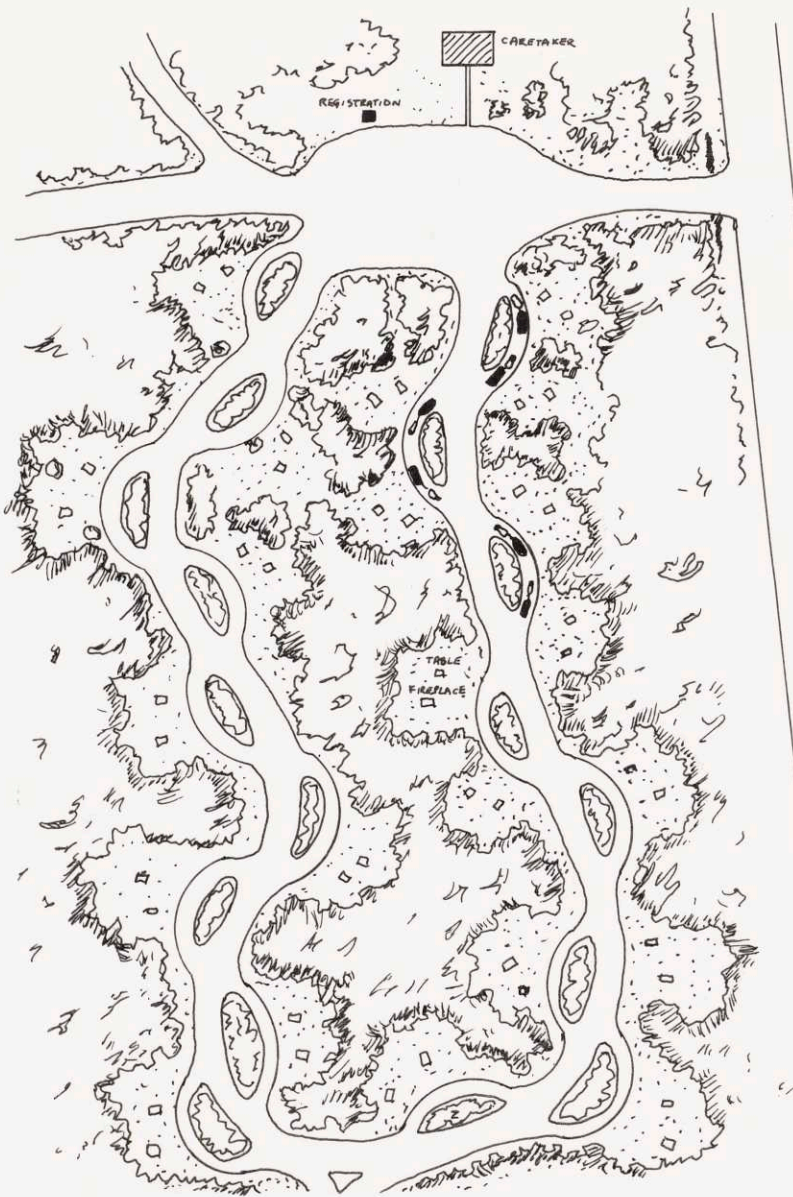
## Trailer Facilities at State and National Parks.

National Parks figured prominently in the design for trailer parks, as they drew large numbers of trailerites to their facilities. There were 134 National Parks and Monuments and 147 National Forests in the United States by 1937, and many of them began making preparations for increasing numbers of visitors bringing trailers. (Most states were visited by fewer trailer-towing visitors than the one-fifth who did so in New York, but still sizeable numbers<sup>8</sup>.) Most of them offered nothing except a plot of land and perhaps a table or so.

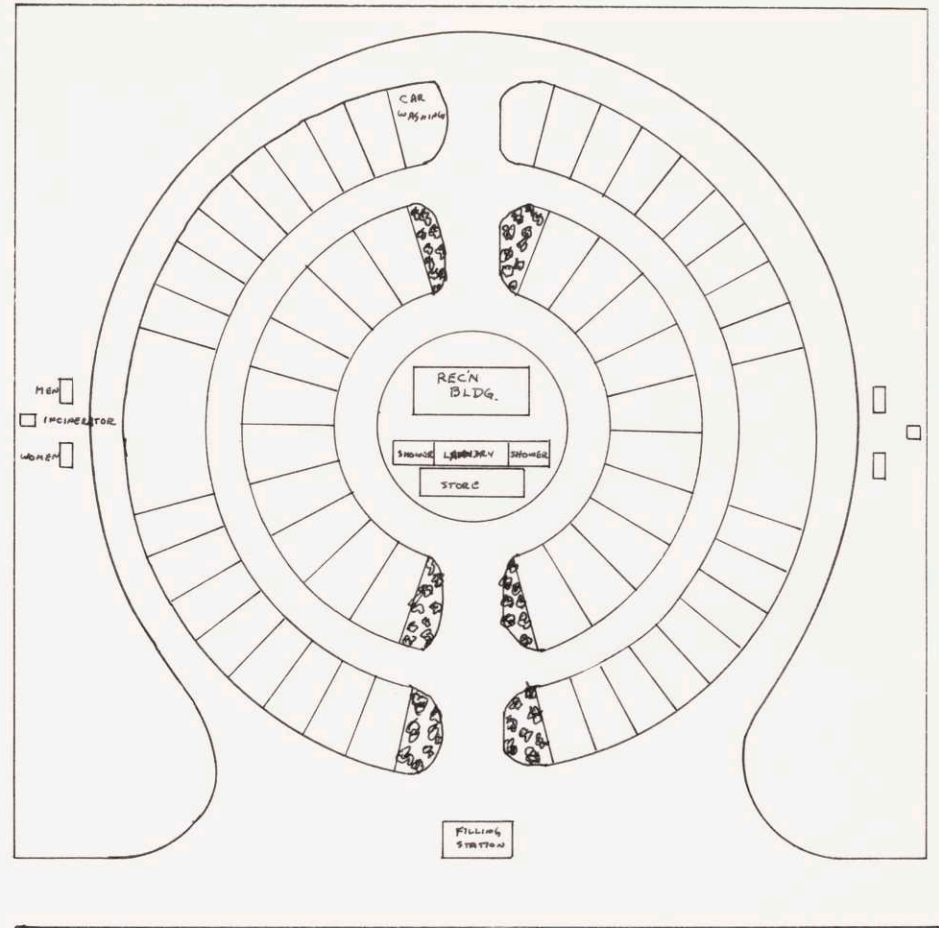
Cooperative planning was begun on the state level, especially in New York and Colorado. The former developed a spur system, the latter a circular plan (which Wyoming then followed.)

In New York, public campsites were laid out to maintain the forest setting while avoiding a monotonous, symmetrical arrangement. The lack of trailer sites became a problem in 1935, and acute by the summer of the following year. Normally narrow camp roads caused problems in maneuvering trailers and backing off campsite locations. The ease with which this maneuvering was done at one of New York's campsites (Fish Creek Pond) led to the adoption early in 1937 of a model plan for trailer camps, first applied to the Cumberland Bay campsite (See Figure 2.2). Trailer units were located on scallop-shaped driveways leading from and to the main drive surrounding the campsite, thus avoiding any backing. Each individual location was screened from the main drive by trees and shrubbery. Water, toilet and other facilities were located within close





(a)



(b)

Figure 2.2:(a) New York Plan for Trailer Park, from The Trailer Park, 1941, p.8.

(b) Colorado Plan for Trailer Park, from Automobile and Trailer Travel, June 1937, p. 15.

walking distance. No electrical connections were installed when the parks were built, because of the long distances to transmission lines.<sup>9</sup>

In Colorado, the State Board of Health designed a model trailer camp for the cities there to adopt, and submitted it to eighteen cities which were strategic travel points, three of them (Alamosa, Durango and Mont Vista) constructing these model camps in 1937. Other cities planned to construct these facilities while one or two, like Greeley, temporarily provided municipal sites with electrical outlets and water until new private camps were readied.<sup>10</sup> The cities owned the camps, supplying land and materials, while the state provided everything else. The parks had space for about 60 trailers (which was typical size in the rest of the country) on five acres, with lots 45' x 18' at the narrow end. Roads were gravel or paved; the circular arrangement avoided the necessity of backing. (See Figure 2.2) In the center, provision was made for a recreation area with theatre, dance floor or swimming pool, general store, laundry and separate men's and women's showers. Two sets of separate toilets were located outside the outer ring; filling stations, garbage incinerators, tables, benches and fire places were also included. Rents were to be from 50¢ to \$1 per night.

Other parks that utilized the Colorado plan were Shenandoah National Park in Virginia; several parks in Washington, DC, and Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. Their operators were of the opinion that since backing was to be avoided, trailer camps were to be constructed on level ground, with preferably circular driveways. This was in contrast with the

Meinecke plan, which used the one-way system, combining two objectives: the "fullest utilization of the limited space compatible with increased convenience and comfort of the visitors, and the permanent protection of the woodland character of the grounds."<sup>11</sup> It also stressed the "setting of the grounds, comfort and privacy, and provisions for obtaining scenic views as well as protection from storms, winds, and dust."<sup>12</sup> The New York Parks' plans were very similar to this, although providing two spaces instead of the Meinecke one per loop.

For other parks' trailer site development, see Appendices 2 and 3.

## Development of National Network of Trailer Parks.

The progress of trailering was slowed somewhat by the lack of parks located throughout the country at convenient driving distances from previous days' stays. Hardy trailer pioneers did not need every convenience; most trailerites were not 'hardy'.

Trailer park development on a national level was begun in 1937. One plan which directed a network of parks to adopt a set of minimum standards was created to allow trailerites to know what service to expect at any of these parks across the nation. 'Kar-A-Van Kamps'<sup>13</sup> were to be as consistent as a chain of stores or gas stations. The plan was based on the principle that trailer travelers were willing to pay a modest sum for complete modern accommodations and preferred to do so rather than accept any nondescript camp that might be available.

As an integral part of the plan, a nationally recognized sign was to be placed at the entrances, and the developers of the plan expected that the country-side would become dotted with such parks with many farmers utilizing some wooded lot as a source of added income.<sup>14</sup> It was easy to see how camps such as this developed into haphazard, unkempt arrangements of trailers and cars.

The American Trailer Travel Association, a merging of all facets of industries related to trailering, also proposed a system with parks at convenient distances across the country. They were to be built at 97 places (see Figure 2.3) each with established minimum standards. Control

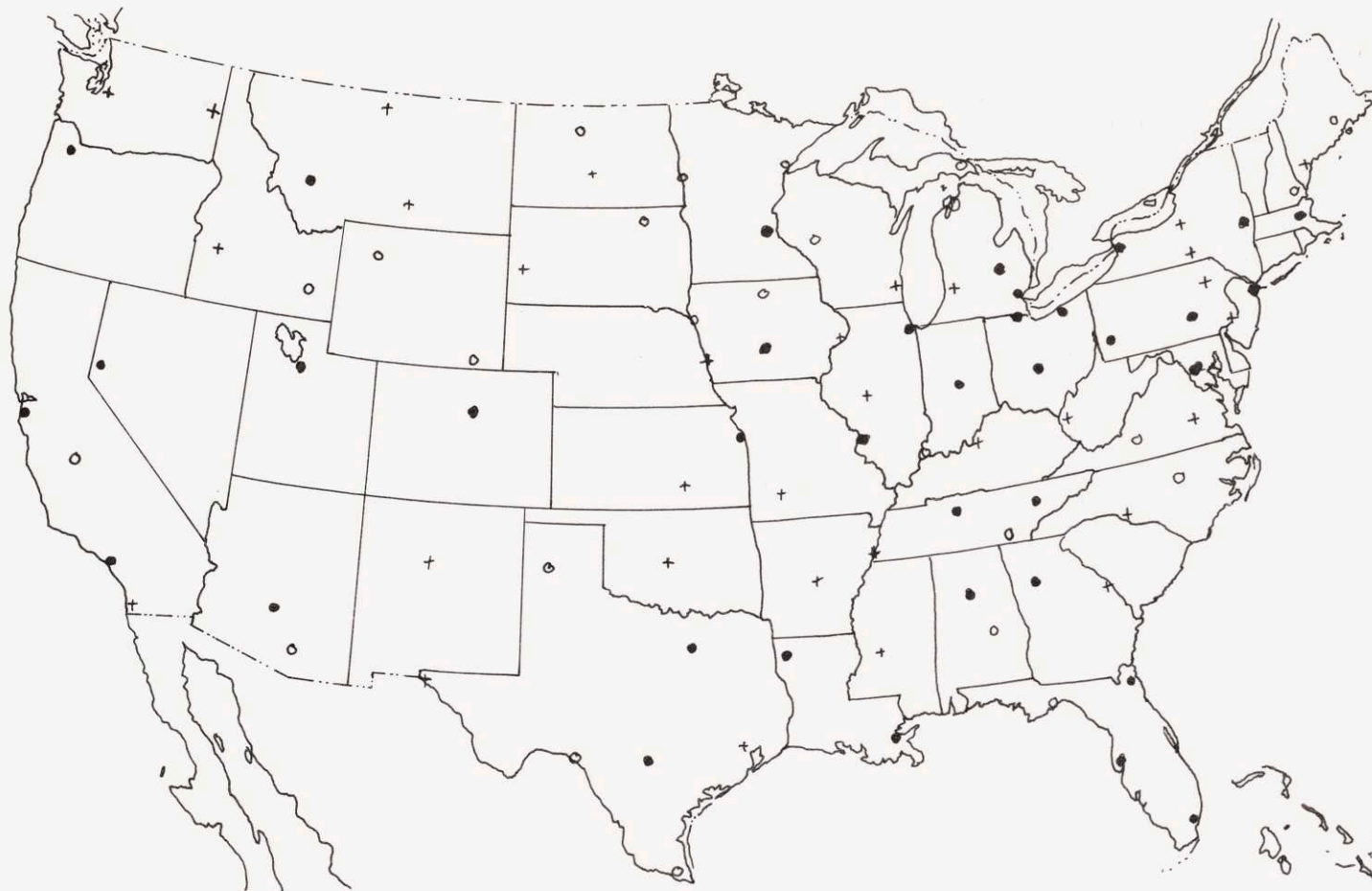


Figure 2.3: Suggested plan for national network of parks.  
 (From Automobile and Trailer Travel, November 1938, p. 23)

- cities opened first
- + cities opened second
- cities opened last

could be through a central organization, but this was not necessary; however, a national publicity and advertising campaign was to be organized to acquaint people with the new chain. This was never realized on a national level, although the spread of parks tended to permit convenient stopping places for traveling families.

In January, 1937, there were 1650 trailer parks listed in Trailer Travel Magazine-- by 1938, there were approximately 3500 stopping places for trailers.<sup>15</sup>

Physical Planning and Facilities.

Probably the first well-planned layout for a commercial park was shown in Trailer Travel Magazine in January, 1937-- see Figure 2.4. The plan, designed by a landscape architect, showed all the conveniences necessary for a comfortable stay, well blended into the landscaped park. Here, trees divided lots, parking was at an angle to the road to allow full view from trailer windows, as well as facilitate parking, and community facilities abounded. All utilities were underground, and the laundry was arranged to eliminate the unsightly clotheslines.<sup>16</sup> The abundance of open space removed the congestion which trailerites tried to avoid.

At about the same time, a park near Delray, Florida<sup>17</sup> was built to an equally high standard, although arranged on a rectilinear pattern. It had 350 spaces, 30 x 50' occupied by trailers 16 - 24' long, paying \$2 to \$5 per week. The plan utilized concrete walks (relatively uncommon at that time, which tended to give parks a trodden-down image), shower baths, toilet, laundry and community buildings, providing better accommodations than most parks at that time.

The size of the lots was often determined by length of stay. For example, someone staying all summer was given enough space for reasonable comfortable living and an area for a small garden. An overnight guest, on the other hand, who only wished clean and adequate facilities, was often not successful in obtaining even that minimum. This planned inequality of spaces led to the poor appearance of many parks.

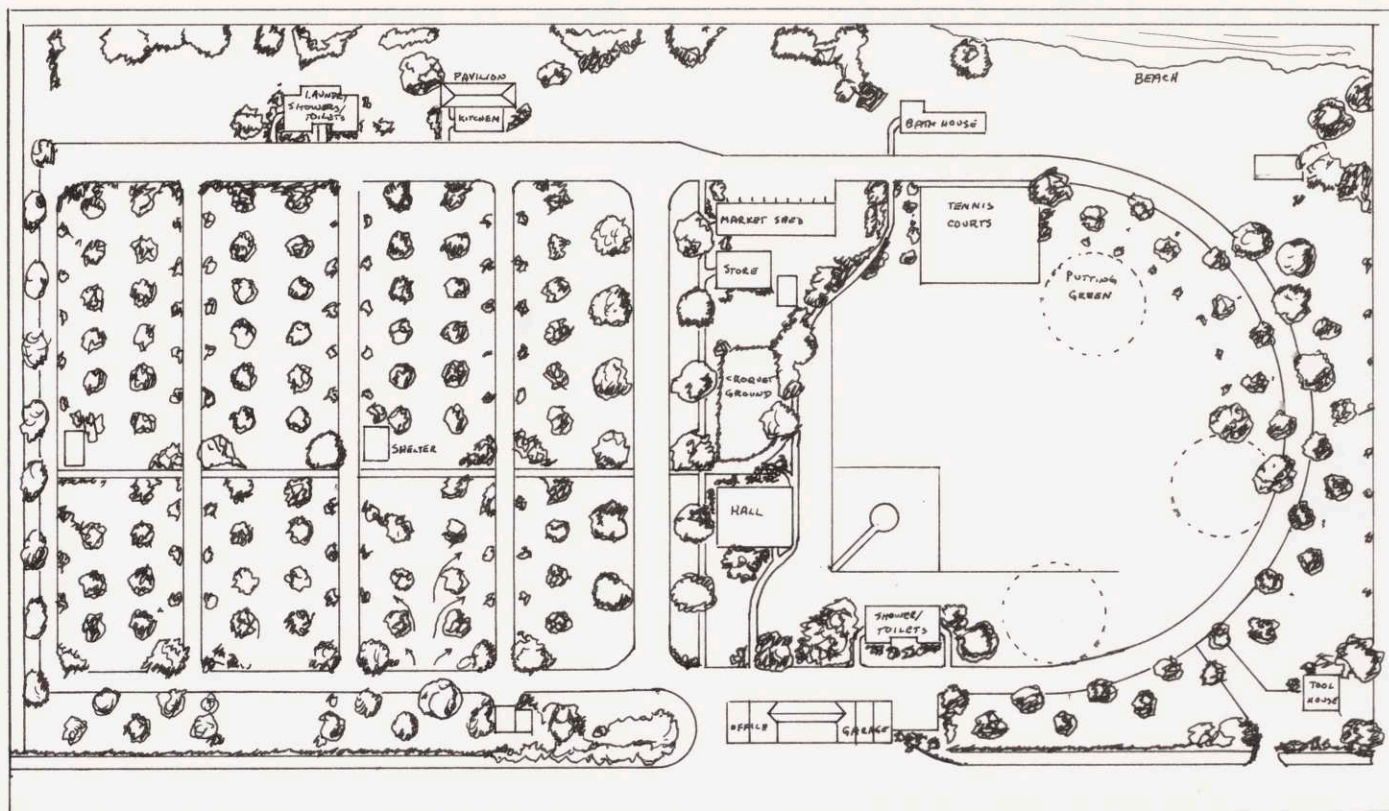


Figure 2.4: Plan for model commercial trailer park.  
(From Automobile and Trailer Travel, June 1937, p. 17)



One of the setbacks to trailer production throughout this period was the lack of trailer parks which were not considered dumps. In 1938, only 3% of trailer stopping places were classified as real trailer parks; 65% were tourist courts or filling stations, and; 32% were camp and/or picnic grounds.<sup>18</sup> The courts were not of high enough quality to attract the types of people that they wanted, and that would improve their image.<sup>19</sup>

Human nature tended to make a park out of a camp, even if the owner did not. The larger parks developed a friendly feeling like one would expect in a small town, while having residents of all types.<sup>20</sup> The total size of the park was governed by the economics of keeping it filled and maintaining it properly, ranging from a few units in a backyard ('Mom and Pop' park) to large commercial courts with several hundred spaces.

Many municipalities (especially in Florida) operated commercial parks, which provided added income to their coffers. These parks did not differ significantly in management or size from private parks.

In locating the court, the school situation was often not considered very important, even though many people brought children. Trailerites would often located in parks near decent schools, even at the expense of living in a poor park as opposed to a park satisfying other needs.

High class management became a prerequisite for every decent park, as trailer people would leave a bad court as quickly as others would leave a bad hotel. This was also not often provided, especially with the large

number of backyard 'parks'. Rents of \$30 per month would not be unreasonable (although high) if good facilities were provided.

By 1940, many parks still did not have adequate washroom and tub facilities so trailerites tended to go to those parks with the facilities desired. Some parks had community kitchen facilities, which were used quite extensively during the warmer months, which avoided heating up the trailer. Average rates for a camp were 50¢ per night, \$2.50 per week or \$8 monthly. (Much of the cost for the trailerite's vacation was for gas and oil for his car. The higher rents would only be paid if first-class accommodations were provided.) Rest rooms, baths and community kitchens were common only at the large parks, and only two-thirds of the parks had ac electricity. (Some had dc, which was of no use at all.) Laundries were infrequently available, but these were not as important to the traveler as having clean toilets, water, electricity and baths. The few community halls tended to develop later as interest in trailering grew.

Showers, toilets and lavatories were placed in utility buildings located an average of 200' from trailers served. Showers were provided in the ratio of one to eight families, one toilet was provided for every eight females and twelve males (also one urinal per sixteen males) and one lavatory provided for every two toilets. Although recommended that shower and toilet facilities be separated, this was usually not the case, and sanitary facilities were often poor.<sup>21</sup>

Pine Shores, with 5300 spaces 25 x 40' was a good example of the

large trailer parks which were first planned in the last few years of the 1930's, especially in Florida. Some plans were never realized; some grew rapidly into small cities.

Trailer parks copied some ideas from hotels; Bay Palms Trailer Park, in St. Petersburg, Florida provided individual bathroom facilities for many trailers.

An entirely new type of trailer park had been proposed in late 1939. It was planned as a trailer hotel; its central idea was taken from hotel design. The problem of shade was solved by a continuous roof, under which trailers and cars were set in regular stalls, like moored boats. Service units containing bath and toilet facilities were placed on or between lots. Stairways at intervals led to the roof, whose wings were divided into gardens. A central heating unit, along with connections for water and electricity to the individual trailer, was to be featured. Its designer maintained that the shade provided by this method was easy to provide, yet was one of the most important considerations of the average trailerite in parking.<sup>22</sup> It was dubious that shade was more important to the trailerite than lot space and services, but in any case, naturally-created shade was better than concrete gloom. Several of the 'hotels' were planned, none were ever finished. Zoning controversies concerning their locations prevailed.

TRAILER PARK REGULATIONS

By the end of the 1930's, the tremendous number of trailers using any available space to park prompted many communities to invoke various ordinances regulating allowable location, time of stay, lot size, and sanitary facilities.

The small average lot size (600 square feet) and short spacing allowed between trailer units permitted very high park densities, which tended to create low-quality environments.<sup>23</sup> Lack of or inadequate sanitary facilities caused the camps to resemble dumps, and cities therefore were forced to establish minimum standards for such facilities as toilets, showers and lavatories, garbage disposal, as well as lot specifications.

The poor image of many of the trailer camps (slums) caused chambers of commerce and mayors to be very reluctant to admit trailers and trailer camps to their communities. There was also pressure from their constituents to not allow these units. They attempted to dissuade the trailers by invoking restrictive types of ordinances, the most typical ones being limits of stay, limits on location, and building codes.

The limit of stay was usually of two types. The length of time a trailer was permitted in a community was usually one to three days, with the proviso that the trailer must be removed or located in an appropriate trailer park or be subject to legal consequences. The

second limited the trailerites' stay in trailer camps to usually 90 days out of any one year period, which forced the trailerite to remain a transient, or if he desired to use the trailer as primary housing, to locate elsewhere. This also hurt the park operators, who claimed that they could not operate profitable businesses by catering only to transients.

Limits on location of trailers usually stated that the trailer was permitted only at (approved) trailer parks, but not within the city boundaries. Limits on parks were much more severe in many cities, as an obvious attempt to eliminate them, or at least force them to locate away from or at undesirable places within the municipality. What was often required for a park operator to have his park approved was to first get permission from most of the property owners located usually within 500 to 600 feet of his proposed park.<sup>24</sup> This usually presented problems because there were often several property owners adjacent who did not want the park and they could usually convince the other owners to vote with them, overruling the park operator. (And if this were not enough, there usually was a clause allowing the mayor, or his equivalent, to rule any way that he wished on the matter!) If trailer parks were permitted, they were relegated to commercial or industrial districts (as they were considered commercial enterprises) or at best as buffers between commercial and residential districts. This sometimes forced the use of unsuitable land for the construction of a trailer park, worsening the image it already had.

The building code regulations, when imposed upon trailers, usually stated that either trailers were to be considered as normal fixed housing,

in which case they had to meet construction standards which they were unable to do, or that the trailer would be considered as permanent housing if the wheels were removed or it was placed on a permanent foundation. Since many more trailerites began using the trailers as primary housing, this tended to restrict them to certain locales. Some building codes specified cubic and square footage minima, which the trailers were also unable to meet within their size and use limitations. (eg, most trailers were of adequate size for one person, but 'illegal' for two or more.)

In 1941, the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply developed a set of recommendations based on several ordinances throughout the country.<sup>25</sup> Lot sizes were set at 800 square foot minimum, with clearly marked boundaries, and minimum lot depth of 35'. Other cities throughout the country had lots from 360 square feet (eg, San Diego) to 1000 square feet (Milwaukee). Roads were set at 10 and 18 feet minimum width, for one- and two-way, respectively, based on the range of 16 to 25 feet (Milwaukee and San Diego, respectively). Trailers also were not be placed within 10 feet of buildings and building lines and 3 feet of property lines. These typical restrictions, even though perhaps discriminatory, tended to force the substandard parks to upgrade or be eliminated. Another factor in the process of improvement was the competition among neighboring parks, which influenced the creation of increasingly more livable spaces. This continual process helped to improve living conditions within the life style of the trailer and park.

Additional information concerning regulations can be found in Appendix 3.

TRAILER PARK SOCIOLOGY

In 1936, perhaps due to the rapid increases in trailer production, Roger Babson came out with the prediction that "within 20 years, more than one-half of the population of the United States will be living in automobile trailers."<sup>26</sup> Although never realized, the use of trailers as primary housing had been increasing since the Depression (when any housing was scarce) and became established by 1935.

The trailerite family, coming up against the one-sided regulations and ordinances as mentioned in the previous section, was often forced to move to locations far from any large city. As Corwin Willson prophesied in 1939, the owning class was forcing the mass consumer to leave the city because of its restrictive legislation, and move to places where land was cheap and abundant, in order to "form a new culture-level."<sup>27</sup> The trailer family did manage to put up with the lack of space and conveniences, much to the surprise of many trailer manufacturers, who thought that "the lack of privacy and room in trailers would soon have the average family at one another's throats."<sup>28</sup> The alternative as Willson put it was for society to encourage construction of trailer-type units, for housing, schools, offices, etc., which would be of low cost and perfectly suitable for those uses (the forerunner of modular construction).<sup>29</sup>

Primary reasons for trailer purchase were: adventure, to get away from the city, for health, and to save money. The trailer also had other

advantages-- ease of cleanliness, use as retirement housing, and use as housing for migratory and other traveling workers. The primary housing population through the 1930's consisted mainly of sales people and retirees, but there was no monopoly of trailer buying, as there were also mobile mothers.<sup>30</sup>

Another substantial reason why trailers became popular, among migratory workers in particular, was as an escape from taxes.<sup>31</sup>



NOTES

1. LeBourveau, Mabel, "Let's Talk Trailer Parks--It's Time", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Jan. 1940, p. 11.
2. Meloan, T., Mobile Homes, p. 19.
3. Sweeney, Al, "Trailer Park Growth Now on a Huge Scale", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, June, 1937, p. 15.
4. Ibid.
5. Davis, William, "Planning the Trailer Park", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Jan. 1937, p. 11.
6. Sweeney, op cit, pp. 16-17.
7. Dixon, Karl, "Trailerites Welcome New Association", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Nov., 1938, p. 22.
8. Sweeney, op cit, p. 80.
9. Ibid., p. 17.
10. Ibid., p. 16.
11. Winters, S., "National Parks Bid for Trailerite Patronage", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, July, 1940, p. 15.
12. Ibid., p. 28.
13. O'Reilly, W., "Kabin-ettes for Trailer Travelers", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Aug., 1937, pp. 13-14.  
 The Kar-A-Van Kamp idea was brought forth by J. Matheson Bell of Kar-A-Van Industries, Inc. In the first class section, buildings (in the shape of trailers), with all facilities and extended overhanging roofs sheltered trailers from sun and rain. The 'Kabin-ette' was enclosed, had electricity, hot and cold running water, toilet, lavatory, shower and heating stove. There were also facilities for the traveler without a trailer, which included complete kitchen units, and sleeping accommodations. In the second class section of the park, guests had a general service building, which was identical to the Kabin-ette, but fully enclosed underneath (no overhanging roof). It was equipped with showers and toilets for men and women in separate sections with separate entrances, and with all necessary laundry equipment. Kabin-ettes were 20 x 7' with overhangs of 7' for the trailers (first class) or enclosed 20 x 14' in second class. The

complete plan contemplated a centralized system of connections to the trailers with drainage and sewer system (with septic tank if city facilities were not available). The outstanding feature of the camp was that standard trailer construction was followed throughout, and all parts were furnished complete.

Two other plans for national networks of camps (from the Sweeney article, June, 1937, Automobile and Trailer Travel):

"In Chicago, for instance, a company, which will be known as Standard Trailer Havens, is now evaluating locations with the same systematic care that the oil companies use in selecting spots for their stations. Its objective is to establish three parks this season on the north, south and west sides of the city respectively... Incidentally the company is proceeding on the sound theory that trailerites will be glad to pay a little more than the rates now prevailing throughout the country for better accommodations, environment and service." This chain ideas as applied to parks was being discussed for New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and one or two intermediate points.

Another plan was for Glidervilles (from the company that made the Glider trailer) every 200 miles along the traveled roads. The first park was created in Bettendorf, Iowa on 26 acres, with very large lots (60 x 160), in more-or-less of a subdivision arrangement. Utilities were grouped for every eight trailers, and each lot had trees. There were minimum standards for trailer appearance, a trend that helped to eliminate trailer slums.

14. O'Reilly, op cit., p. 14.
15. TCMA, The Trailer Park, 1941, p. 1.
16. Dixon, op cit., p. 14.
17. LeBourveau, op cit., p. 14.
18. TCMA, loc cit.
19. Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Oct., 1938, p. 8.
20. LeBourveau, loc cit.
21. Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, Suggested Ordinance for the Regulation of Trailer Coach Parking and Trailer Parks, July, 1941.
22. Sweeney, Al, "Modern Trailer Hotel Newest Idea Proposed for Chicago", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Oct., 1939, p. 9.
23. "A Weekend for a Guest of Three Months in a Park", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, April, 1939, p. 15.

24. Ibid. Also, articles in the same magazine, "Another Model' Trailer Law-- New York City's", June, 1940, p. 14, and "One Court's Reaction to Trailer Park Laws", Dec., 1938, p. 16.
25. Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, op cit.
26. Babson, Roger, "We'll Soon be Living on Wheels", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Jan., 1936, p. 10.
27. Willson, C., "Shelter and Mobility", Delphian Quarterly, April, 1939, p. 17.
28. Meloan, op cit., p. 14.
29. Willson, C., "Toward Mass Shelter", Delphian Quarterly, April, 1940, p. 3.
30. Meloan, op cit., p. 19.
31. "Trailer Camps for Migratory Workers", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, March, 1937.

CHAPTER III

1942-1947

The War And The Government Trailer Park

SUMMARY

During the war years, trailer quality suffered because of restrictions on critical materials. Government trailer parks for servicemen and construction workers utilized some of the most monotonous symmetry imaginable and incorporated far too high a density of housing.

Development of private parks during these years progressed slowly--some became very good; many utilized the great demand for space as an excuse for trailer slums.

After the war, the housing crisis continued, and many returning veterans found that they could own homes and live with people of similar backgrounds in trailer parks. State-initiated veteran housing projects were created, while at the same time, more luxurious parks in Florida and California continued to grow and develop.

Lot sizes grew slightly, although lagging behind trailer size increases. Municipal regulations were better than those of ten years earlier, but only slightly.

### THE TRAILER

War trailers suffered because of the defense requirements for certain materials. Construction was intrinsically better and sturdier, yet outside appearance was as bad as at any time in trailer history. The metal chrome moldings, rub-rails and bumpers and the rubber splash aprons on the front were eliminated, predominant exterior colors becoming Army olive green and khaki and Navy battleship grey and blue, to blend with the armed forces' equipment.<sup>1</sup>

Trailers found use as hospitals, clinics and convalescence wards as well as primary housing for construction workers and servicemen during the war. The government found that it needed trailers, and the industry was happy to provide them-- during the war, 38,000 25' trailers were bought, for use throughout the country.<sup>2</sup> Also, since officers were required to provide their own housing, trailers were purchased because of their low cost and availability as compared with other types of housing.

After the war, demand remained high, as returning veterans found themselves homeless, perhaps with a wife and child.

Use of expandable trailers (which had pull-out sections for increased floor area) grew for housing and particularly for utility buildings, their production following this trend.

### THE TRAILER PARK

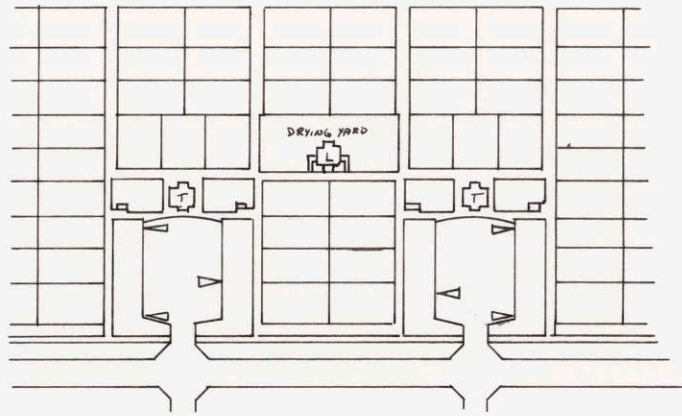
Government Wartime.

Some of the war-caused housing demand was satisfied by government trailer parks. The desire for housing was so great that at a powder manufacturing plant in Charlestown, Indiana, more than 1000 workers slept in cars until trailers arrived to house them. Of their co-workers, 600 were already living in trailers at the site.

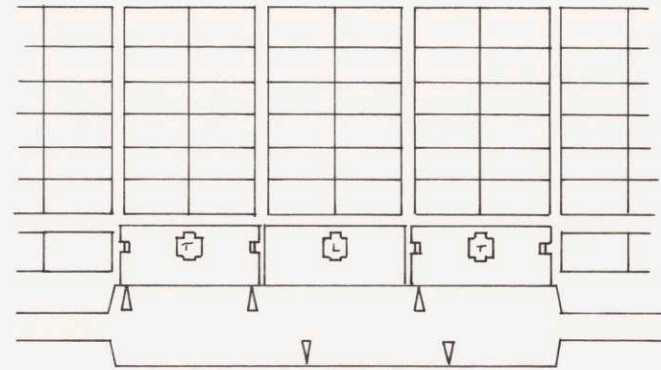
Gridiron (rectilinear) park design was utilized, to get the maximum number of trailers onto the sites. While economical, this proved quite unattractive, especially because of restrictions on plantings and the use of the trailer as temporary housing. Densities were usually about 18 per acre for most of the defense projects, while 30 per acre was not uncommon for wartime construction projects.

The government plans were based on a rectangular modular concept, repeated to provide as many spaces as needed. (See Figures 3.1 and 3.2 and Appendix 2 for plans.) One problem the parks had was that the shower and toilet facilities were often at great distances from some of the trailers. This modular concept influenced later park planning, although modified from the gridiron concept, with far fewer units per acre.

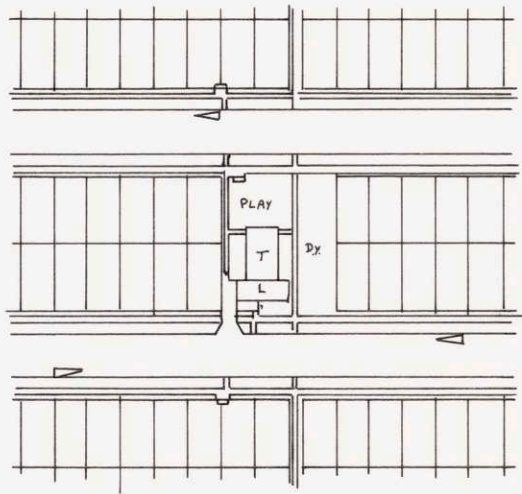
Trailer lots were either 1000 or 1250 square feet (25 x 40' or 25 x 50') for standard trailers, or 1500 square feet (30 x 50') for expandables. Because of facility of installation, trailers were also used



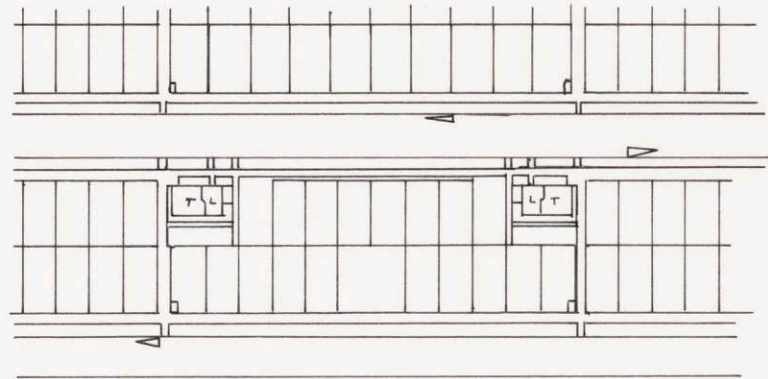
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figures 3.1: Various site plan patterns for war trailer projects: a,b federal; c,d private-owned trailers.  
 (From FPHA, Standards for War Trailer Projects)



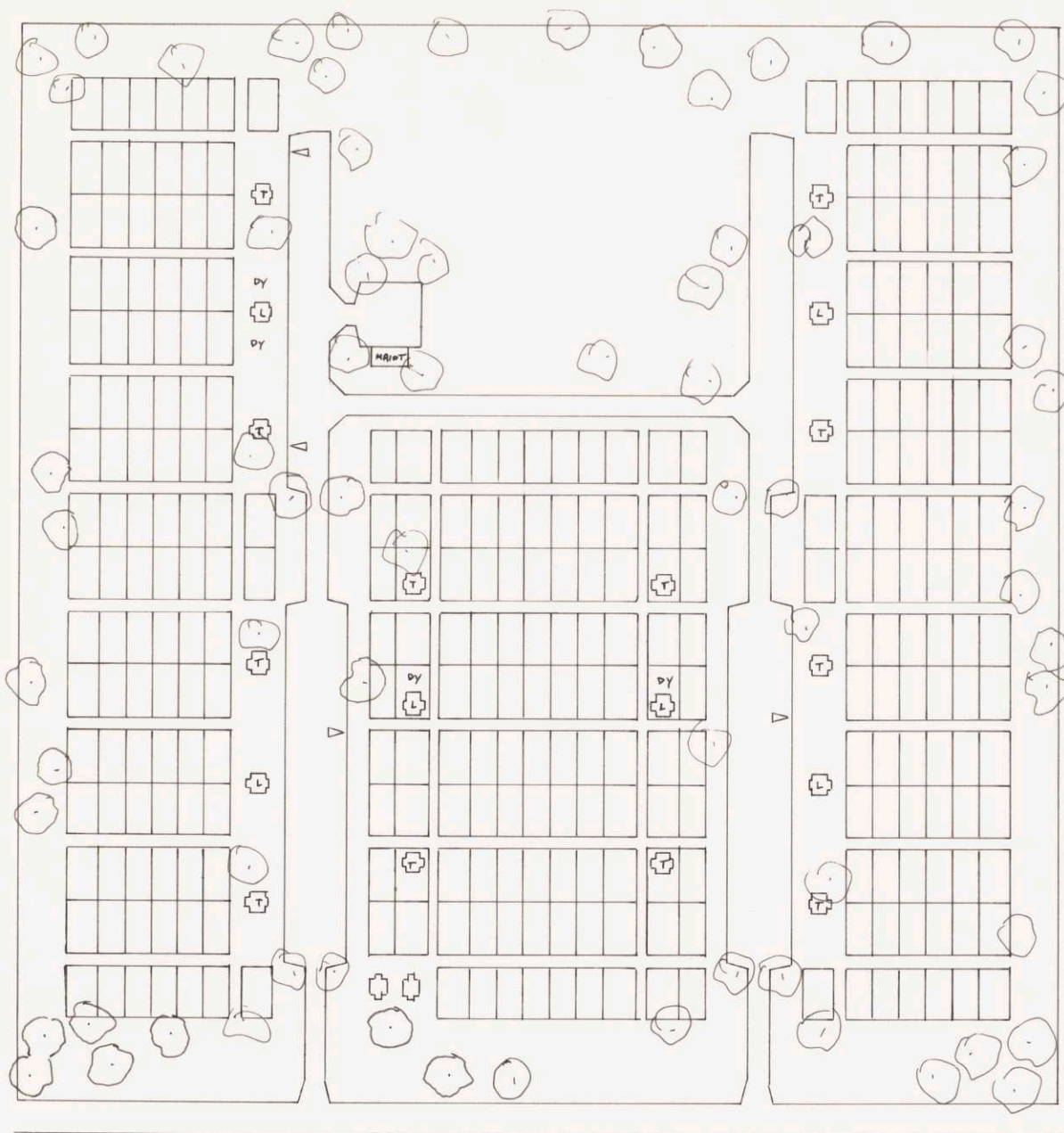


Figure 3.2: Plan for 300 trailer (federally-owned) war project.  
(From FPHA, Standards for War Trailer Projects)

for community buildings, shower, toilet and lavatory units, offices and stores, completing the image of many of these parks as sort of trailer (grave)yards, all laid out in neat little rows. Other contributions to the unsightliness were the duckboard walks between the trailers and the roads, and the drying yards adjacent to the laundry, with 10 feet of clothesline per trailer. One interesting requirement for war trailer parks was for two exit roads, in case of air raids!

Other temporary housing projects, under the auspices of organizations such as the FSA (Farm Security Administration) utilized trailers as well as duplex shelters and dormitories.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that some of the government trailer parks were for trailers that were federally owned, while the later ones were for privately owned trailers.

Private Development.

Through the war years, the nation as a whole continued development of trailer parks to satisfy the continued need for low-cost housing. As the parks attracted more and more people (vacationers as well as residents) the quality of facilities tended to improve. Municipal parks were commonplace, providing those cities with considerable profits, as well as business.<sup>4</sup> It was not uncommon for parks to be operated by the Kiwanis or Rotary in those cities.<sup>5</sup>

As park development throughout the nation continued, the points that park owners tried to satisfy (although not always seriously) were those of increasing lot size, providing separate toilet and shower facilities, and providing better facilities for children's play. Many did not attempt to even provide those minimum requirements.

One park, Miami Trailer City, with population of approximately 2500, started to allow residents to purchase their lots by 1947. This development continued through the next decades, although not on a very large scale.

Immediately following the war, individual states (and the nation as a whole) faced the problem of how to house the thousands of returning veterans. One typical example occurred in Milwaukee County (Wisconsin), where 907 trailers were bought, placed on six State Park sites, and rented to returning servicemen (at 1% of cost plus \$10 per month for

utilities).

The Wisconsin Parks were used because of their inherent amounts of space and also because they had swimming pools, the bath houses of which were converted to sanitary and washing facilities. This temporary measure enabled the state to build three new trailer parks, one of which was 35 acres, providing space for 600 units, at a density of about 17 per acre.

Another use of trailers was for university housing, no doubt partly due to use of the GI Bill educational extension program. At Indiana University at Bloomington, 700 adults and 100 children lived in the Woodlawn Trailer Court, which was run like a dormitory. Most of the trailers were 8 x 22', but some expandables were also used, at rents of \$25 and \$32.50 per month, respectively.

Part of the post-war housing shortage was aided by the government's selling of its tens of thousands of trailers at very low prices. However, what this caused was a rash of continued bad parks, because many of the purchasers were relatively poor, and did not have money for upkeep, or an extravagance such as landscaping. This tended to propagate the image of the government park, although sometimes at a lower level. Part of the problem with bad publicity hurting the industry in later years was based on these substandard parks.

General trailer park development was on a rushed, haphazard basis, with parks built for temporary housing, then remaining many years after

their supposed expiration date. The living conditions in some of the parks were worse than tenement slums, and it required a massive effort to begin to eliminate some of the worse parks, whose residents could not afford anything better.

TRAILER PARK REGULATIONS

Although density requirements were established throughout the country, the housing shortage often overruled sensible numbers of trailers per space. The war and post-war trailer projects created standard park layouts, requiring 1000 square feet minimum lots, with 25 x 50' and 30 x 50' recommended for standard and expandable trailers, respectively. This would allow for up to 25 trailers per acre, which does not leave any space for anything else, other than roads. Two exits were required for the war trailer parks, as protection against air strikes, and all trailers were set back fifty to one-hundred feet from adjacent property.

Because of the undesirable nature of the overcrowding in these parks, many ordinances throughout the country were passed during the war, to either substantially upgrade the trailer, or outlaw it, the latter often preferred. One such regulation stated that it would be unlawful for any room in any type of structure to be used for sleeping if the room contained less than 640 cubic, with each additional person requiring another 500 cubic feet.<sup>6</sup> To convert this to trailer size, a trailer for two people could be as small as 22 x 8 x 6 1/2', but for three would have to be about 30 x 8 x 7'. This completely eliminated the home-made, and forced purchase of larger units, or forced the trailer owner to move to another community without the regulation. The government-purchased trailers were only 25' long, with no such regulations imposed on federal parks, leading to the crowded, sometimes unsanitary conditions.

Regulations also governed the location of bathroom facilities, placing them within certain maximum distances, typically 150 - 200 feet of the trailers served. This still presented problems for some trailerites, but at least the facilities were provided, placed in a somewhat ordered arrangement.

### TRAILER PARK SOCIOLOGY

During the war years, many defense workers as well as servicemen bought trailers, principally because there was nothing else. Some of these came to like trailer living enough to buy new trailers later, but many just waited until permanent housing became available. Crowding was inevitable, but also planned; the benefit to the trailerite was that of having any place to live at all.

It also seemed that a trailerite 'personality' was developed, which enabled these crowded residents to live somewhat more peacefully than many trailer manufacturers thought possible. A common enemy allows one to face his current problems without as much worry.

Because many materials were not available, the trailers were often substandard and unsightly. This contributed to the increasingly poor image of trailers to the outside world, especially with row upon row of khaki or grey trailers with no vegetation softening their appearance.

The post-war government trailers bought by the very poor were not kept up, and looked worse every year.

Private park owners became aware of certain rules of thumb that would upgrade their parks and benefit their residents (as well as improve outside views of trailer parks): insist on compliance with park rules, even though a tenant may have been in the park a long time; provide larger lots, which the trailerite would tend to take care of; provide recreational



space and space for children, and; bring people of like interests together in the park. The typical park had about 50 units and 125 residents: a park restricting children or not providing adequate facilities for them would be discouraging 39% of its possible business.<sup>7</sup> This showed an increased desire to satisfy trailerite children and trailerites in general (with larger lots). However, much of the publicly acclaimed park progress and revision was not undertaken by many park owners, who continued to run their slum-like areas for people who would not, or could not improve their existence.

NOTES

1. Dixon, Karl, "Past and Present in Trailer History. Part II: Now", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Jan., 1943, p. 15.
2. Architectural Forum, July, 1959, pp. 127-131.
3. Farm Security Administration, Site Selection Instructions on FSA Temporary Housing Project. Parts I and II, 1947.  
From Part II, p. 3: (relative densities of housing units on FSA sites)

| <u>Density</u> | <u>Gross building density/acre (maximum)</u> |
|----------------|--|
| Duplex shelter | 8  |
| Trailers       | 18   |
| Dormitory      | 1  |

Utility buildings (shower and toilet facilities) served 60 - 75 trailers, but if expandable trailers were used to provide those facilities, they serviced 35 trailers, within 200' of the furthest one. Streets were of minimum width 20', with 30' right of way.

4. "Trailer Parks in Florida", Automobile and Trailer Travel Magazine, Jan., 1945, p. 23.  
At the typical trailer park, lots were 28 x 30' with utilities underground. Trailers were parked on the East-West streets, with the North-South streets landscaped with flowers and tropical shrubs. Each block would have toilet, shower and laundry buildings, and there would also be a community building with auditorium and card rooms for men and women.

From American City, Nov, 1945, p. 133:

In mid 1945, a survey was taken in one of Florida's parks, Sarasota. It was found that the average trailer contained three people and spent 3.2 months (vacation) in lots 25 x 30'. For the \$7.50 per month rent, the trailerites were furnished with electricity, an individual mail box, a subscription of Trailer News and recreation facilities. Although operating at a slight loss during non-vacation periods, the park still netted \$20,000 per year.

5. Cooper, L., "Trailer Parks in Florida", op cit.
6. California Division of Immigration and Housing, An Ordinance Regulating Construction, Sanitation and Conduct of House Courts and Camp Spaces and Prohibiting Squatter Camps in the Unincorporated area of ..... County, California, Feb. 4, 1943, p. 2.
7. TCMA, Planning a Profitable Trailer Park, 1941.

CHAPTER IV

1947-1954

The Mobile Home is Introduced

SUMMARY

During this period, which followed the immediate post-war housing boom, production remained at almost a constant level. Units containing the previously lacking bathroom facilities were introduced in 1950, making the term 'trailer' one of the past-- mobile homes were now being produced. These mobile homes were larger and better equipped than the war trailers, and these improvements needed to be matched by improved park facilities.

The Mobile Home Manufacturers Association was borne out of the Trailer Coach Manufacturers Association. There was also the Trailer Coach Association, the west coast equivalent of the MHMA.

Also at this time, mobile home and recreational vehicle (trailer, vacation and camping uses) production separated into two different industries, due to the differentiation between the two units.

From this point on, the thesis deals only with mobile home parks, not being concerned with the recreational vehicle (trailer).

THE MOBILE HOME

Mobile home production during this period started at a high of 85,500 in 1948 (up from 60,000 in 1947) but then dropped in 1949, due to the end of postwar housing shortages.<sup>1</sup> \*

The average price for a new mobile home was between \$2500 and \$2700 in 1950, including the addition of bathroom facilities.<sup>2</sup> The mobile homes forced the gradual elimination of utility buildings in mobile home parks, while compelling park developers to install connections for sewage and water (as well as gas and oil).

The increased sizes of the newer mobile homes (in which to fit all the features) forced park operators to allow larger lots for their use. The MHMA helped the park developers by providing a set of guidelines for park spaces allowing ample room for these larger homes. Figure 4.1 shows a sketch of a typical mobile home of this period.

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\* Production statistics for mobile home shipments may be found in Appendix 6.



Figure 4.1: A typical mobile home.

(From Bartley and Bair, Mobile Home Parks and Comprehensive Community Planning, 1960, p.23)

THE MOBILE HOME PARK

Development.

After the war, use of mobile homes near atomic energy plant sites became prevalent, to solve the problem of a short-lived, high-intensity housing demand. The Atomic Energy Commission did not want any more government towns created (such as Los Alamos, California, and Oak Ridge, Tennessee) so mobile home parks were built at such places as Augusta, Georgia and Portsmouth, Ohio. Parks such as this were stopgap measures, and after a short time, they became too dilapidated for continued occupancy without extensive and costly repairs, yet too valuable to eliminate entirely. Some developed into trailer slums, while others were rehabilitated. Typical rents at defense plants such as these were about \$25 per month.

Mobile home parks that were initially established to house returning veterans sometimes developed into full-fledged mobile home parks. Milwaukee County continued its park development program, two examples of which were the Harbor View park with 135 25 x 50' spaces, and the Lincoln park, with 222 spaces of similar size.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the pre-war parks were dilapidated by 1950, offering nothing more than a piece of ground. The mobile park owners considered most home owners as transients, and did not provide many services for them. This began to change during the first few years of the 1950's, as home-

owners became more permanently located, in larger units.<sup>4</sup>

As the size of mobile homes increased, the general lot sizes increased, and by 1954, the average lot size was up to 1500 square feet. It was not uncommon to find spaces 35 x 60 in 1952, although this was rather large. Older parks were forced to limit their clientele to those with smaller units, enlarge their lots, or use two lots for the large mobile homes. Parks began spending more money on landscaping, paved roads and improved community and laundry facilities than ever before.

There were 120,000 parks by the end of 1954, and the greatest number and most modern were in resort areas-- 2000 in California, and 1100 in Florida.<sup>5</sup>

Many parks had patios for several, if not all, lots, and by 1954, all sidewalks were concrete, recreational facilities were provided for some of the parks, and rents were up to \$30 per month. Some parks also began active social and recreational programs for the residents and their children. More and more residents became permanent, and the utility buildings of previous years were eliminated.

Figure 4.2 shows one example of a park during this period. Charts indicating specific details about several parks in operation at this time may be found in Appendix 7.



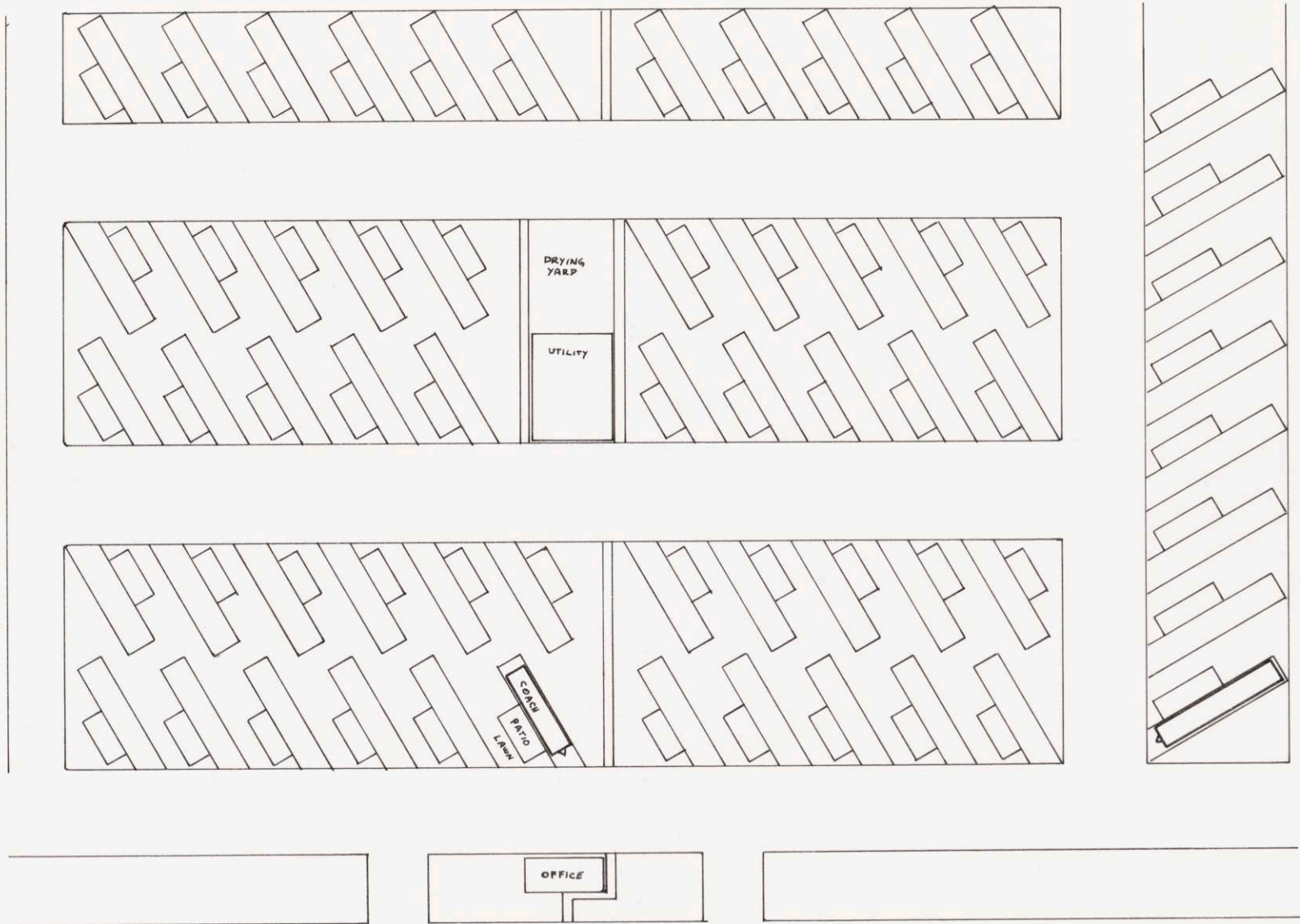


Figure 4.2: Suggested Trailer Park Layout

(From Oregon State Board of Health, Instructions for Preparation of Plans for Trailer Parks, 1954)

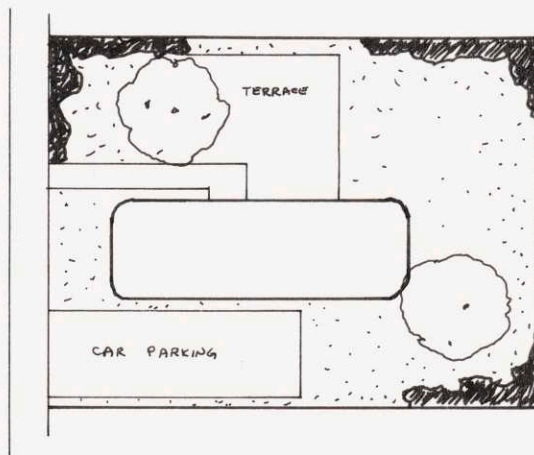
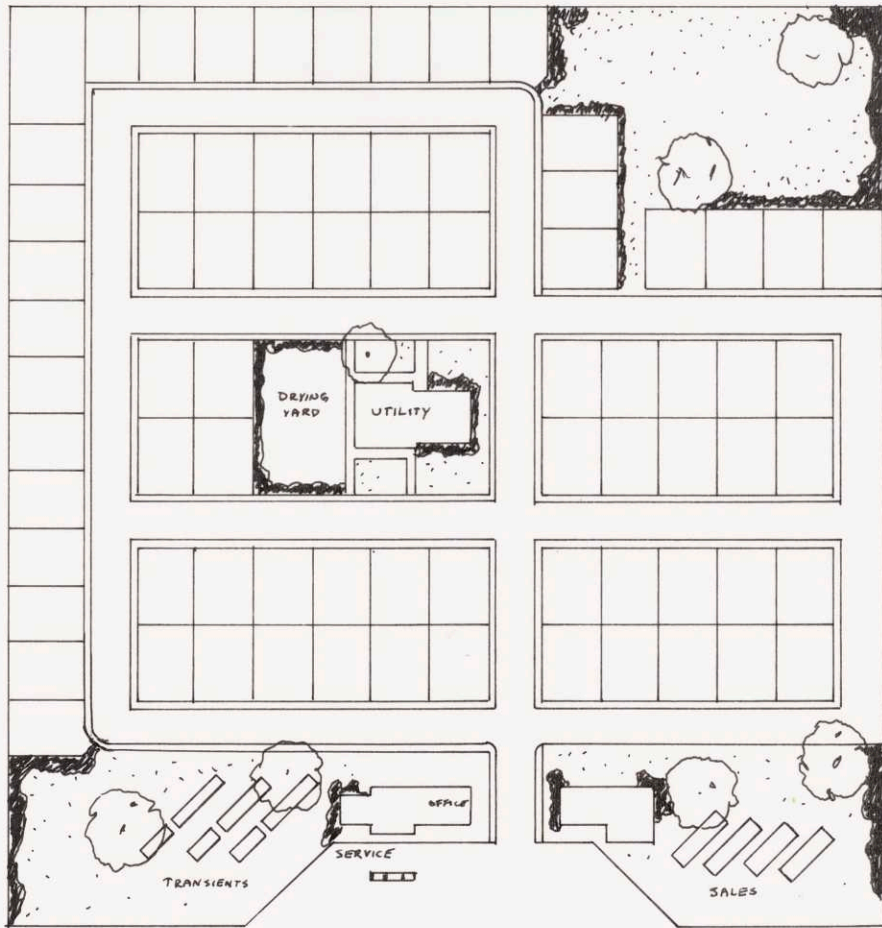
TCMA and MHMA Park Improvement Campaigns.

In 1947, the Trailer Coach Manufacturers Association developed recommendations for improving park facilities following World War II. Although the TCMA standards did not in effect differ from those of the war defense parks concerning densities (25 per acre was set as a maximum), much stress was placed on landscaping and providing all the amenities that one would find in any large community. (See Figure 4.3) It was recommended that small towns as well as large communities provide for the large numbers of mobile home owners, and that to provide for all three types (permanent, semi-permanent and trailer coach travelers) the park should be located near industrial or vacation centers, convenient to public transportation, retail shopping, and police and fire protection.

To stimulate industry growth, a major campaign concerning mobile home park development was begun by the MHMA in the late 1940's to overcome the rightfully bad publicity of the substandard war parks, by an approval and rating program.

Part of the push for park owners to improve was MHMA approval of their parks, resulting in insignias for their entrance signs, as well as a listing in the Mobile Home Park Directory. Home owners then could decide in which parks they would prefer to stay; the parks with the better ratings attracted more business.

As a further incentive for park operators to maintain good facilities, the MHMA undertook to rate all parks in the United States. This rating



Figures 4.3: TCMA 75 unit plot plan and plan of individual lot.  
(From Planning a Profitable Trailer Park, 1947)

also took into account individual unit appearance, which tended to stimulate manufacturers to improve their designs and facilities offered. First done in 1952, this was repeated two years later, by which time it had become more difficult to maintain the same rating. Gold Star Ratings were given to particularly good parks.

Of the 11,000 parks surveyed in 1954, 5,195 received approval, and 954 were awarded Gold Star Ratings. In 1952, 3900 parks had been approved, showing a relative improvement in park quality.<sup>6</sup> (The point system for ratings, as well as MHMA recommendations for lot size may be found in Appendix 4).

Results of the MHMA campaign seemed to be in two directions. First, it was a positive force behind the increase in mobile home lot size in the last half of the 1950's. However, by recommending changes in park design that tended to create more 'luxury' parks, some of the benefits were eliminated. Although many parks could probably have had facilities such as comprehensive community halls, shuffleboard and tennis courts, etc., these catered mostly to the retired and semi-retired, becoming standard in the luxury or country-club parks of a decade later. The high rents of such parks made them undesirable to many mobile home families, who also wanted rich environments for themselves as well as their children. One particular area where little or not results were recorded was in that of family parks, satisfying the needs of the mobile family probably with one child of school-age.

As a stimulus to national interest, four-color ads were placed in many national magazines (eg The Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, National Geographic) showing the public what an outstanding park looked like.

A 25-minute film on mobile homes was also made, and Trailer Park Progress, a monthly magazine was created. Plans and recommendations for park developers were also made available on an increasing scale.

MOBILE HOME PARK REGULATIONS

Due to the post-war upswing in trailer demand and production, their use became more widespread, prompting many cities to impose restrictive ordinances. Prior to the war, only the larger cities may have been visited by large numbers of trailers, but by the end of the 1940's and the beginning of the 1950's, other small communities were faced with a problem of increasing proportion.

Although similar in intent to regulations of the previous time period, ordinances during this era became more discriminatory, in an attempt to eliminate this 'menace' from those communities. The MHMA (and to some extent the TCMA) tried to induce manufacturers as well as park developers to improve on units and facilities to present a better public image, as well as internal image. The MHMA placed stress on not simply using the minimal standards as specified by many codes, but to improve upon those ordinances, especially with regards to increasing the lot sizes.

MOBILE HOME PARK SOCIOLOGY

Even by 1950, the temporary transient use of mobile homes was still predominant.<sup>7</sup> This transiency often led to parks that were not kept up, inhabited by people simply waiting until some permanent housing became available. The few very good parks were not suited to most people and remained relatively crowded, although they did provide enough space for a small yard and garden. Park residents kept their lots neat and tidy, and the "majority of residents feel the same pride of homemaking as householders."<sup>8</sup> With a small lot, most families did nothing, but with larger spaces, they would plant shrubs and flowers, and improve the image of their yards.

Facilities for children were often lacking (or planned) and this tended to force many families with children to live at other parks. The trailer family of a decade ago, eking out an existence in a trailer camp became the mobile home family of the 1950's, trying to make its life as similar as possible to that of the fixed single family dwelling existence.

NOTES

1. MHMA, Flash Facts About Mobile Homes, 1968.
2. American Society of Planning Officials, Planning Advisory Service, Report #12, March, 1950.
3. TCMA, "Two Vets Solve Housing Problems", Mobile Life, 1948.  
At another place in that county, two veterans who lived in a trailer park after the war developed their own 200 unit park, with lots 25 1/2 x 48 1/2. It had 129 occupants by the end of 1948, and was equipped with all the modern conveniences, especially in the laundry building. There were community as well as individual bathing and toilet facilities. All streets were blacktopped, and sidewalks were cement; extensive landscaping was planned, as well as street lighting. The park was serviced by paper boys, postmen, and a volunteer fire brigade. The main problem was that of crowding-- the site was 5 acres, implying a density of between 26 (at the end of 1948) and 40 (if filled).  
  
From Trailer Park Program, also by TCMA, Jan., 1948:  
An almost identical park was built in Hammond, Indiana, in 1948, with 127 lots, expansion capability to 200, and lots 25 x 48 1/2.
4. Some Florida parks still maintained individual baths for every mobile home, even though not generally needed, as most of the newer homes had bathrooms.
5. Meloan, T., Mobile Homes, p. 30.
6. Bratton, Earl, "How to Win MHMA Approval for your Park", Trailer Park Management Magazine, Nov., 1954, p. 6.
7. Meloan, op cit., p. 9.
8. "More Space for Living", Trailer Park Management, Aug., 1954, p. 20.



CHAPTER V

1955-1961

The 10-wide And The Mobile Home Subdivision.

SUMMARY

The 10-wide mobile home was introduced, its implications leading to even larger units, as well as further increases in lot sizes and facilities offered by mobile home parks.

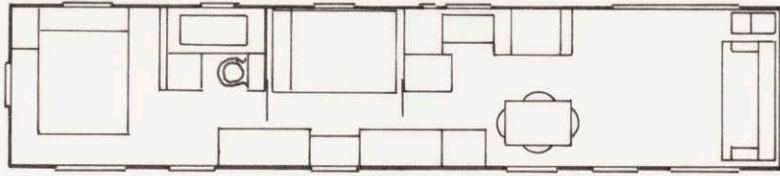
The mobile home subdivision and the incorporated mobile home community were developed, although neither type became very much used during this period.

Despite continued guidelines and ordinances for development of better parks, inadequate facilities were still commonplace, and even some adequate parks did not serve many mobile home families.

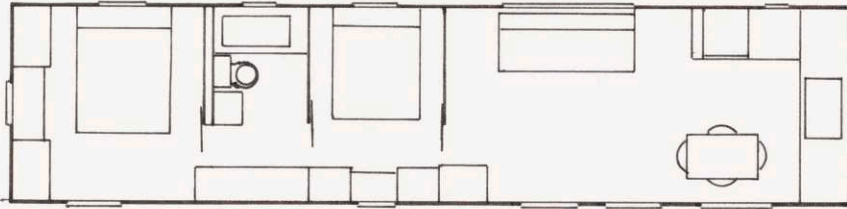
THE MOBILE HOME

To satisfy the increased demand by mobile home owners (or prospective owners) for two and three bedrooms, bath-and-a-half, kitchen, living room, washer/dryer and dishwasher, the manufacturers had to create even larger units. The 10-wide (mobile home ten feet wide) was introduced late in 1954, and was usually 50 feet long. However, many designs (see Figure 5.1) still had walk-through rooms. More juggling of interior space sometimes eliminated this, but introduction of the 12-wide and expandables seven years later, gave the designers an easy out.

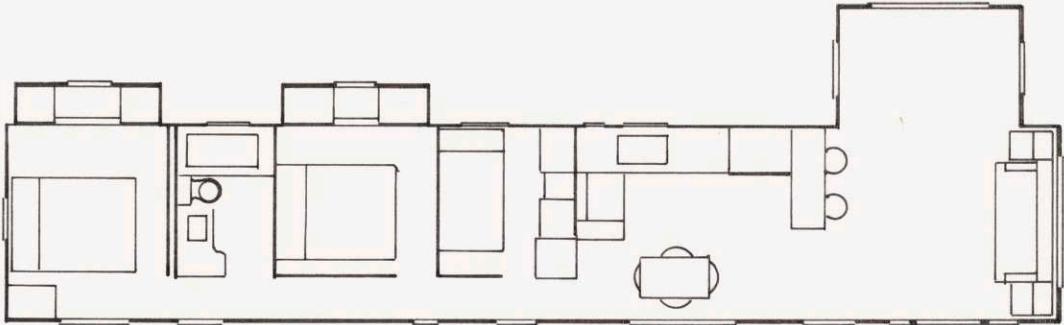
Mobile home production and development continued on an upward swing through this period. The units began looking more like single family dwellings, and less like trailers of a few years earlier. "In the outward design, although the major problems have been solved, there are constant innovations and improvements. At present, after a period of excessive "tear drop" and streamline experiments (of doubtful utility in view of the relative rarity of movement) the design is pragmatically vertical, making it possible to maintain acceptable headroom throughout the unit. Although the industry continues, for the most part, to manufacture the single, self-contained unit, there are developments of varying promise in the form of telescoping second stories, pull-out living rooms, split levels, and 50-foot (or longer) homes which can be divided into two 25-foot sections for ease in moving."<sup>1</sup>



(a) 8-wide, 41' long



(b) 10-wide, 45' long



(c) Expandable, 16' wide, 55' long, extended

Figures 5.1: Mobile Home Floor Plans, from Detroit Mobile Homes  
(From ASPO, PAS, Report #145, p. 10)

The expandable models became very popular, as have the wider single unit models. Split levels, telescoping second stories, and the two section unit mentioned above never found widespread acceptance, although a variation of the two unit home, the double-wide (two units, each 50 - 65' long, that fit together to form a home 20 - 24' wide) became increasingly popular in the later 1960's.

A ductwork heating system became standard in all mobile homes during this period, with air conditioning optional.

In 1960, the MHMA stated<sup>2</sup> that there were 1,400,000 mobile homes in existence, and that the expectation was for production of over 150,000 per year throughout the 1960's.

THE MOBILE HOME PARK

Rental Park Development.

By 1956, parks of 14 units or more per acre were not uncommon, although densities were dropping to about 10 per acre, and it was found that total groupings of less than 50 or 60 were uneconomical. Common business practice also dictated buying larger quantities of land for future expansion.

Lot sizes also increased with the larger units, to an average of about 2000 square feet. It was felt that lot sizes should be 40 x 80' or 50 x 80' for an even better park.<sup>3</sup>

It became important for park owners to provide the mobile home owner with a space better than his previous one. This involved more spacious, well-landscaped lots, good location, but most important, service. Attempts were also made to minimize the number of roads in a park, as they were expensive and did not add to the general aesthetics.

In 1957, Trailer Park Management Magazine conducted a survey among mobile home park operators, and found that the average number of spaces in a park was 56 (the largest park had 1185, the smallest, 7). The average number of mobile home lots that were added during the past year was 8.2, which implied, for the 14,000 parks throughout the country, addition of 114,800 spaces. Spaces to be added the following year were 6.7, which projected a total number of 95,800 for the nation. One park in four also

sold mobile homes, whose sales amounted to 56% of the total dollar volume. Of those who at the time did not sell homes, 28% said they intended to do so in the future.<sup>4</sup> (For further statistics, see Appendix 5).

Even though many of the parks at this time were adequate, substandard parks did exist, for the following reasons: lack of suitable location; overcrowding; poor design with inadequate facilities; improper maintenance; zoning regulations in areas unsuitable for residential occupancy and; inadequate financing arrangements.<sup>5</sup>

The three size differences in parks were:  
small (10-49), where the owner resided in the park, obtaining a supplement to his income;  
average (50-100), which usually was a husband-and-wife operation;  
larger (100-1000 and over) which was a full-fledged business operation, with one or more managers, and large-scale financing.

The MHMA recommended that density be limited to eight per acre, including streets, sidewalks, utility buildings (mainly for laundries) and recreational areas, with lot sizes a minimum of 3000 square feet. This on the average, was never attained. It also stated that separate areas of the park for mobile homes with children should be provided, even though it might require extra effort in dealing with control and leasing for the operators.<sup>6</sup>

Lot sizes preferred by mobile home owners in 1959 are shown in the chart below<sup>7</sup>:

| <u>Size</u>        | <u>% who prefer</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 35 x 60' and under | 25.7                |
| 40 x 50'           | 9.1                 |
| 40 x 60' and over  | 59.6                |
| no response        | 5.1                 |

Of the home owners who preferred the sizes above, it should be noted that very few, if any actually had that much space.

There were (and still are) two basic types of mobile home parks<sup>8</sup>; those for permanent, and those for semi-permanent dwellers. (A third type of park, for transients with recreational vehicles, is not in the scope of this paper.) Among the permanent parks, the categories are: 'service-oriented' where most of the residents are retired; 'housing-oriented' for younger married couples with or without children, and; resort parks, usually service-oriented (since they attract affluent retired people) located in resort or tourist areas.

In the first category, the service-oriented park is characterized by the high percentage of retired and semi-retired residents, and the facilities and organized social life presented. Much of the residents' time is spent in the park playing shuffleboard, going to square dances, and similar activities, and the popularity of this life style is indicated by the fact that many parks have waiting lists. It is not uncommon to find many professional people living in these parks, who, along with the retired, are affluent enough to afford the facilities provided, and usually remain several years. Children are rarely found



in these parks, and many cater to adults only.

Housing-oriented parks, on the other hand, provide accommodations for working people, and are located near places of employment, shopping, and school areas. The forced social contact is removed, and these residents, where often both the husband and wife work, find little need for the recreation and social facilities. They are often at relatively higher densities than the service-oriented parks, as they are frequently located in commercial and industrial areas of urbanized communities, where land costs are relatively higher. Although they accept families with children, the recent HUD survey<sup>9</sup> showed that only 27% of the families surveyed had school-aged children.

The final type of park for permanent residents is the resort park, also service-oriented. Typically found in such areas as California, Florida, and Arizona, they offer extensive facilities for the residents' use. They usually have higher land costs, larger spaces, lower overall densities, and higher rents than other parks, and present a luxurious, country-club atmosphere.

The second category of parks, for semi-permanent housing, is also divided into three categories, university, military and industry-oriented facilities.

The college mobile home park, though not frequently used, provides a low-cost alternative to relatively expensive housing, especially for the increasing number of married students, and a general increase in housing demand, with preference for off-campus living. Rents are usually

low, profits to park operators high, and very few facilities are offered.

Both of the latter 'crash' types of parks should be located, built and managed so as not to become future liabilities to the community. The military park operator should assess the government's long-range plans, and base his park operation on those plans. Both the military and industrial parks, to be properly planned, should be made to be phased over to other uses after the immediate housing demand has ceased.

Many articles were written during these years about how the consumer should buy a mobile home, and especially how he should choose a park in which to live. Factors that were stressed were location, size of lot and total park, type of park, and restrictions that the park might impose. The need for the family-type parks was partly satisfied with subdivision planning and placement of the mobile homes on individual lots.<sup>10</sup> Both of these were exceptions to the rule, the latter being more common in rural areas, where mobile homes had often been placed on individual lots since their inception.

### Subdivision Park Development.

By 1960 there were about 50 mobile home subdivisions in the United States, and most were not very good. The lots were supposed to combine privacy and open areas, relating them to the functional areas of the home itself. Many failed to provide the homeowner with either of those.

Although the mobile home subdivision was the exception, its development will be covered here in some detail, for two reasons. First, many of the plans for the subdivision were used by rental parks, and second, an increase in the number of these parks is expected in the future.

The function of streets, drives and parking areas were subordinated to other uses of lot and common space. A prime objective was to make the park a 'person-oriented' (not vehicle-oriented) place to live. "Cars with hostile tendencies ["...jump at people, bowl children over, dig up the flower beds, make riotous noise, or commit other nuisances..."] should be encouraged to break their springs or wrap themselves around trees."<sup>11</sup>

Landscaping became one of the factors of prime concern in subdivision development, as densities were reduced to five to eight per acre, and sidewalks were removed from alongside the curbs, to be placed usually towards the rear of the units. Lots were sold, and the tenant became the land owner, subject to property taxes.

The following figures illustrate application of subdivision housing procedures for single family dwellings to the mobile home. There were

(and currently are) three basic types of arrangements: angular or herring-bone, rectangular, and radial or pie-shaped.

Figure 5.2 shows plots with conventional residences in a rectangular block arrangement. Figure 5.3 indicates how the mobile home must fit into that configuration, in the rectangular arrangement, but with the unit perpendicular to the street. The other rectangular arrangement possible (but more expensive, due to additional costs of longer roads and utility lines) is with the unit parallel to the street.

Figure 5.4 presents a more useful arrangement than having the units perpendicular to the street, placing the units at an angle to the street, giving full views to the principle windows, and allowing the easiest movement of the mobile home onto and off of the lot.

The final basic unit structure involves radial or pie-shaped lots, which result from curved or looped roads, or from cul de sacs. These lots function effectively as the lots perpendicular to the street, although the angular relationship tends to give the homeowners feelings of greater lot size. These are shown in Figure 5.6, and a portion of an entire subdivision is shown in Figure 5.8, with various lot sizes and arrangements.

Various clusters or modules were developed from these arrangements. Typical plans are shown in Figure 5.7 and in Appendix 2.

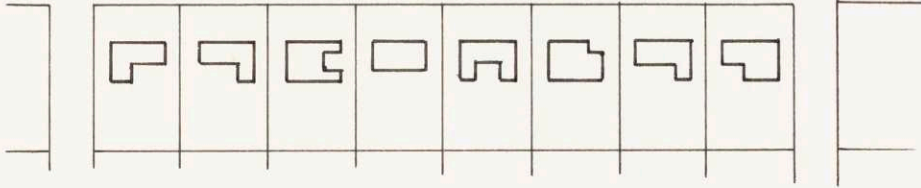


Figure 5.2: Conventional residences arranged in a rectangular block.

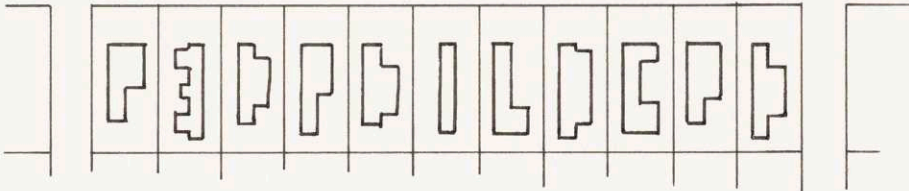


Figure 5.3: Mobile homes arranged in the same subdivision arrangement. Most of the windows would face the adjacent unit (see Figures 5.1) and it is quite possible to have the master bedrooms, which are at the rear of the homes, facing each other. This is generally not desirable.

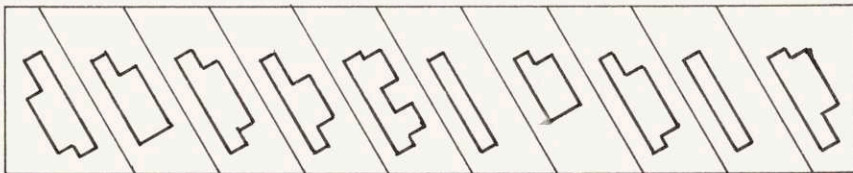


Figure 5.4: Lots arranged on an angle to the street (30° in this case). Principle windows now face the street, and movement of the home is also made easier.

(All Figures on this page from ASPO, PAS #145, p. 11)

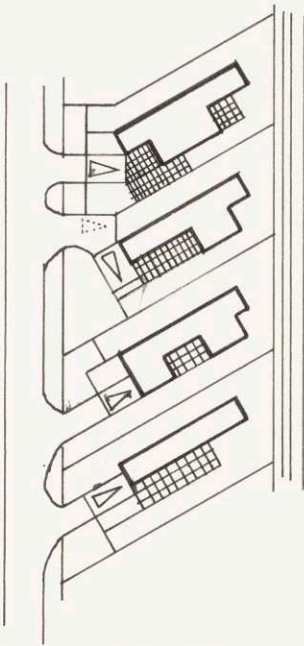


Figure 5.5: Unit variations, angular.

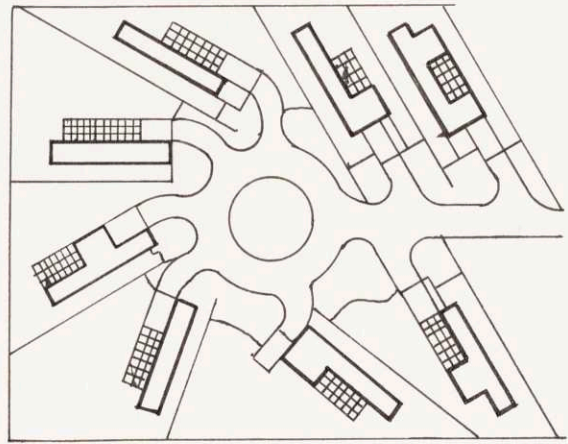


Figure 5.6: Cul de sac

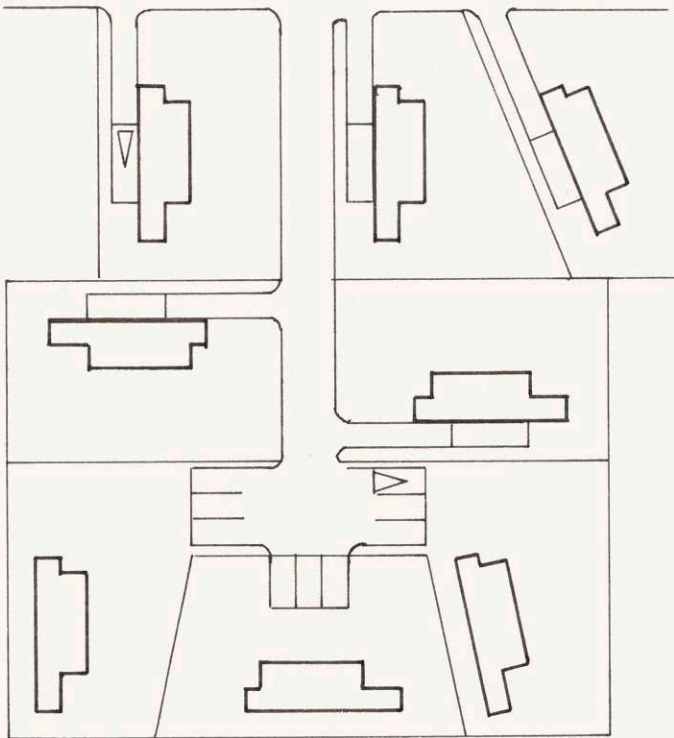


Figure 5.7: Module

(All Figures from ASPO, PAS #145, pages 25, 25, and 27, respectively)

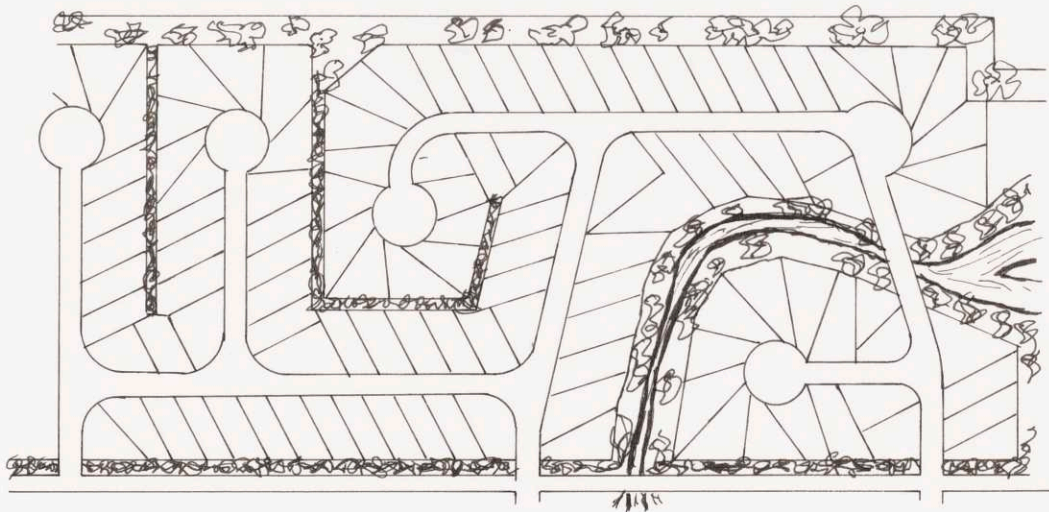


Figure 5.8: Portion of a subdivision  
Note variation in lot size, arrangement, and orientation.

(From ASPO, PAS #145, p. 26)

The parks during the late 1950's were much larger than their predecessors, averaging about 150 spaces, while at the same time, becoming more specialized in the residents that they would accept. Several mobile home communities incorporated by 1960, indicating the greater need for self-government of the mobile home owners-- these have not become widespread by any means.



MOBILE HOME PARK REGULATIONS

Still discriminatory, yet a new trend emerged in regulatory action towards development of the mobile home park or subdivision as a viable life-style. Examples of proposals for new ordinances to create desirable parks were in Groton, Connecticut<sup>12</sup> and Fresno County, California,<sup>13</sup> each setting standards for density, recreation space and total park size, to make the parks more like conventional housing developments. These were perhaps not typical, but more far-sighted than most regulations in the country at this time.

Although many of these far-sighted ordinances were proposed, not all of them were approved, but of those passed, some had loopholes to allow higher densities with less open space, while others were simply ignored, by the granting of variances. The lot sizes were to be 4000 to 7500 square feet, yet most parks surveyed at this time had spaces far below these minima.

A new Federal Housing Authority program provided up to \$1500 per space for site development<sup>14</sup> to developers with parks of fifty units or more.

The businessmen who began to realize large profits from mobile home parks were able to acquire FHA subsidies without always providing the highest-quality spaces (and particularly the type of management that was

needed to take care of these parks); and once the parks were built, they usually remained, even if (slightly) substandard.

MOBILE HOME PARK SOCIOLOGY

Throughout this period, the mobile home owner became more verbal and expressed his desires and complaints. In one study<sup>15</sup>, two-thirds of those sampled felt that the major drawback to mobile home living was the lack of good parks. In this as well as another survey<sup>16</sup> other factors considered important yet often not provided were larger lots, playgrounds and open space, and better landscaping. Some felt that there was social discrimination in many parks, others that park rules were generally not strictly enough enforced to control nuisances.

The mobile home owners wanted excellent facilities for their families, just as would any fixed-home owner. Yet, even obtaining adequate facilities was often difficult especially for families with school-age children. As an example of the senselessness of the discrimination against these people, Coral Roc Mobile Park in Florida has 120 children who not only enjoy their way of living, but whose company was enjoyed by most of the older, retired residents.<sup>17</sup> As an easy way out of providing facilities for their use, and ostensibly because of noise reasons, many parks did not permit children at all. It should also be noted that the highest ratings in the Mobile Home Park Directory are usually given to parks that cater to adults only.<sup>18</sup>

A new concept in parks evolved in 1959, with the inception of the incorporated mobile home community. Partly to escape the usually

high state-imposed taxes, but mainly to govern themselves and deal with their own problems, this idea developed, although not commonly used. It was a step towards the greater independence that the mobile home owners desired-- their own city councils governing their minicosms of mobile home life. Two such communities are mentioned in Appendix 7.

NOTES

1. Bartley, E. and Bair, F., Mobile Home Parks and Comprehensive Community Planning, 1960, p. 24.
2. MHMA, 9th Annual Mobile Homes Industry Report, 1960.
3. "How Large the Future Park Space?", Trailer Park Management Magazine, July, 1957, p. 34.
4. "TPM Survey Shows Park Statistics", Trailer Park Management, Oct., 1957, p. 24.
5. MHMA, op cit.
6. MHMA, Mobile Homes Park Planning Kit, 1960.
7. "Survey of the Mobile Home Consumer", Trailer Travel Magazine, 1959, p. 4.
8. Urban Systems Laboratory, MIT, Project Mobile Home Industry, from a draft on "The Mobile Home Park Industry", Oct., 1970.
9. US. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Surveys, Parts I and II, Nov., 1968.
10. Such as Mobile Life, 1957, pp. 46-48, "Mobile Home Park Construction", and "How to Choose a Park", Mobile Home Journal, April, 1961.
11. American Society of Planning Officials, Planning Advisory Service, Report #145, April 1961, p. 5.
12. Groton Planning Commission, Groton Zoning Commission, Report on Mobile Home Parks, Groton, Connecticut, March, 1965, p. 32.
13. Fresno County Planning Commission, Trailer Parks and Fresno County, Feb., 1960.
14. Appraisal Journal, April, 1961, pp. 246-250.
15. "Survey of the Mobile Home Consumer", loc cit.
16. "Park Owner Makes Survey of Residents' Wants", Trailer Park Management, March, 1956, p. 24.

17. Dale, Glenn, "Children are an Asset", Mobile Home Journal, March, 1961, pp. 30,31,54,55.
18. Nulsen, Robert, Construction, Management and Investment Potential Of Mobile Home and Recreational Vehicle Parks, 1970, p. 111.

CHAPTER VI

1962-Present

Larger Homes and Larger Lots

SUMMARY

Larger mobile homes evolved in the 12-, 14- and double-wides, making the differences between fixed dwellings and mobile units smaller towards the end of the 1960's.

Rental parks and subdivisions more closely resembled standard housing developments, while the MHMA influence on park development increased many-fold.

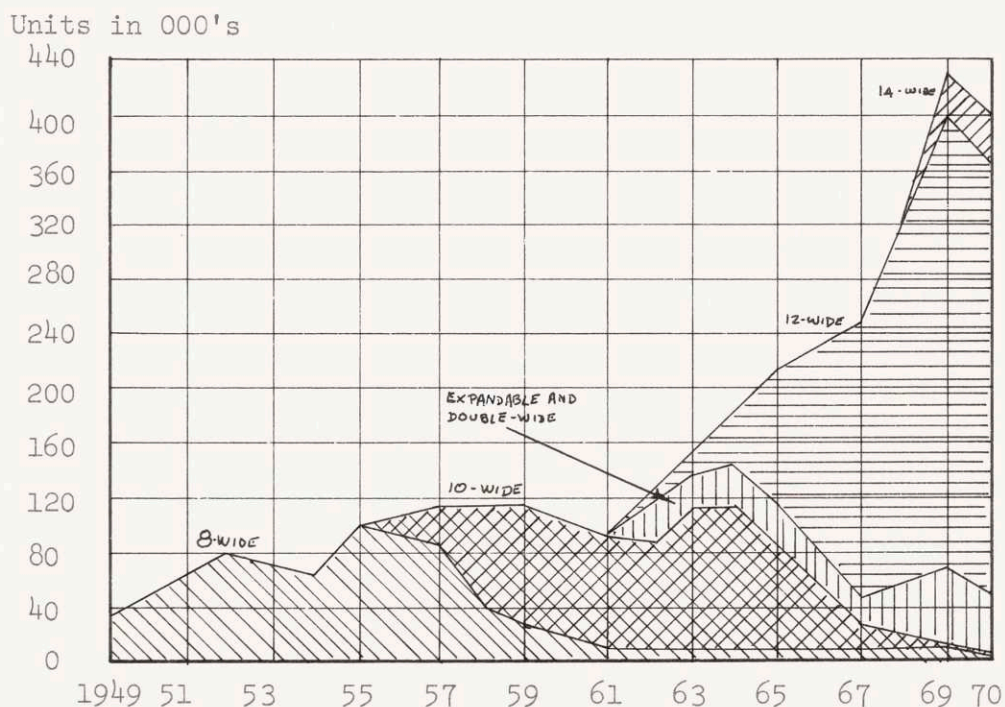
The mobile park as a viable life-style started to become visible, prompting further park development.



### THE MOBILE HOME

Mobile home production began a tremendous upswing in 1962 and, based on a realistic growth rate of 10% per year, it was estimated that 1976 production could reach 711,000 mobile homes.<sup>1</sup> Since World War II, 3,596,050 mobile homes have been produced, four-fifths of which were used as primary housing.<sup>2</sup>

To satisfy the mobile home owner's increased need for space, manufacturers developed larger and larger mobile homes. In 1962, 12-, double-, and later even triple-wides were introduced, 14-wides in 1969, and most recently, experimental 16-wides. The chart below indicates change in desire



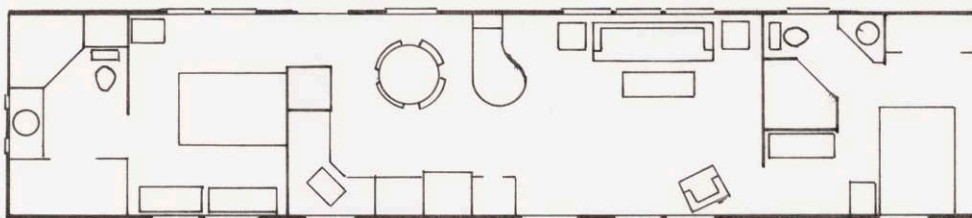
(From Michelon and Behrend, How to Build and Operate a Mobile Home Park, p.13)

of homeowners for the various sizes of homes. As more and more states allow the wider homes, these will come into larger production.\* Currently, twenty-seven states permit passage of 14-wide homes over their highways.<sup>3</sup>

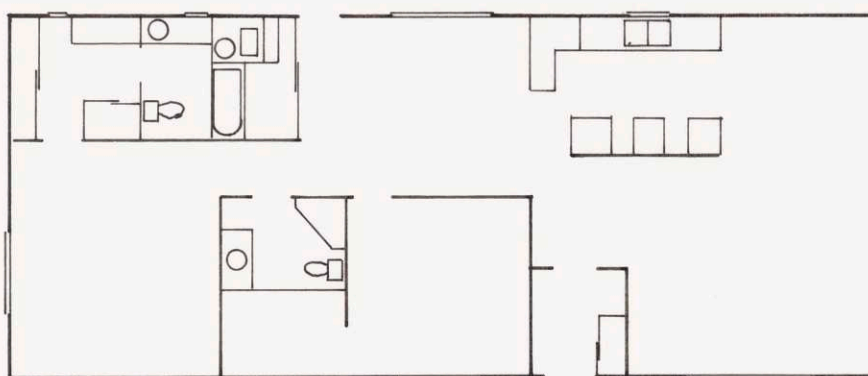
The mobile home buyer has become an instant interior decorator, able to choose interior plan, type of furniture (homes are usually purchased fully-furnished), and color scheme for his home, all at the dealer's lot or showroom. Figure 6.1 shows typical plans for several types of mobile homes.

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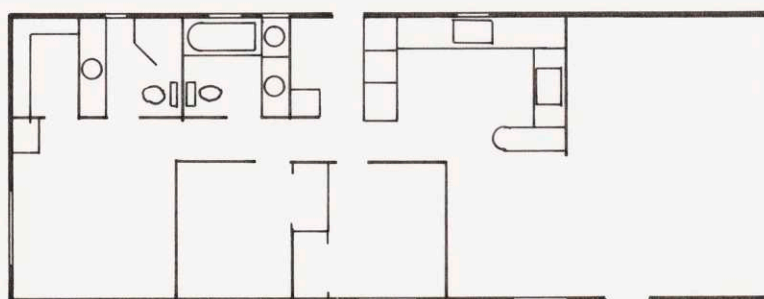
\* Further production statistics may be found in Appendix 6.



(a) 12-wide, 60' long (Delta Homes)



(b) 24 x 60 double wide (Cambridge Mobile Homes)



(c) 20 x 55 double wide (Budger Manufacturing Co.)

Figures 6.1: Mobile Home Floor Plans.

(From Nulsen, Construction, Management and Investment Potential of Mobile Home and Recreational Vehicle Parks, 1970, pp. 18,34,21, respectively.)

THE MOBILE HOME PARK

The larger units, for a comparable quality of living, require larger lots. A double-wide home was not different in total floor area than many single family dwellings, and should be placed on a similar-sized lot. The 12- and 14-wides, usually 60 - 65' long, also require reasonably large lots. Parks owners should have provided spaces of 3500 square feet (minimum; at least 4000 square feet for a decent lot<sup>4</sup>) but this figure is even far below that of proposed ordinances of the previous time period. Average lot size in 1966 was only 2500 square feet.<sup>5</sup>

Many older parks had to be remodeled or replaced to keep pace with increased sizes of the mobile homes, acceptable community environmental standards, and wants of the residents. The mobile home owner who has spent about \$8000 to \$10,000 on his basic unit wants to place it in an environment that he considers desirable, and an under-sized lot in a crowded park does not fit into that category. Yet, the results of a survey taken late in 1963<sup>6</sup> showed that the average park had lots 40 x 60', rented for about \$30 per month, had paved streets, a coin-operated laundry, and that was about all. Only one park in four had a recreation building or pool, and only three in ten had playgrounds. This reflected the obvious dichotomy between reality, the supposedly best available facilities, and what park owners and operators said that they were building or already had.

There was also an increased desire for privately owned lots, which became possible when a California court ruled that individually owned lots would be allowed outside of State-approved and -inspected parks.<sup>7</sup> After this decision, many private developers began construction of subdivision and other mobile home communities, utilizing tenant-owned lots, which were of two types: sold outright, with the deed to the owner, or leased for 99 years, with an option for renewal.

These lots sold for \$1000 to \$2500, depending on location and size.<sup>8</sup> This type of lot created even greater homeowner independence when used, while creating, in effect, a normal subdivision, if appropriately grouped.

Many of the better mobile home subdivision-type parks tended to become oriented towards a single class, especially the rich and retired. Luxurious parks, such as Bayside Park, in Newport Beach, California, had lots of only 2200 to 3000 square feet, but each had cabana, carport, and single roof covering all. There was also a pool, private beach, clubhouse, private slips for yachts, guarded fence surrounding the community, and gardeners to take care of the landscaping. This particular park required the homeowners to buy from its own sales lot, thereby controlling unit appearance. Total unit cost ranged from \$15,950 to \$24,000 with ground rental extra.<sup>9</sup> Other parks of similar description also sold lots. These were not common throughout the country, but centered mainly in resort cities, and on the pages of the various trade magazines.<sup>10</sup>

The trend, as of the present, is for increased subdivision development, more closely relating the mobile home life style to that of the fixed house.

The MHMA Park Planning Division greatly helped park developers who needed assistance in planning, local ordinances, and facilities to be provided. One plan from this service follows, Figure 6.2. The MHMA claims that it is the largest development planning operation, in the world, since most of the parks developed use solely its services, from site planning to obtaining zoning variances to final design (and perhaps help in finding financing arrangements), this for hundreds of parks each year.

A perhaps inevitable development during this period was the high-rise mobile home park, similar to a parking garage, although with several spaces per floor for mobile homes. Increasing land costs combined with tax incentives and greater need for housing near or in commercial centers led to proposals for the Web in England and Mobile Vista in the United States.

The Web was designed to accommodate caravans [British trailers] in a more economical use of scarce land in the urban environment.<sup>11</sup> In Mobile Vista, each home was flush with the floor, facing a balcony. Its basic usefulness would have been to provide housing and income in high tax districts, "on choice locations along the beaches of the Pacific, close to Disneyland in Los Angeles, on the 'Strip' in Las Vegas-- in other words, where land is costly or scarce."<sup>12</sup>

To this writer's knowledge, no high rise parks have thus far been built.

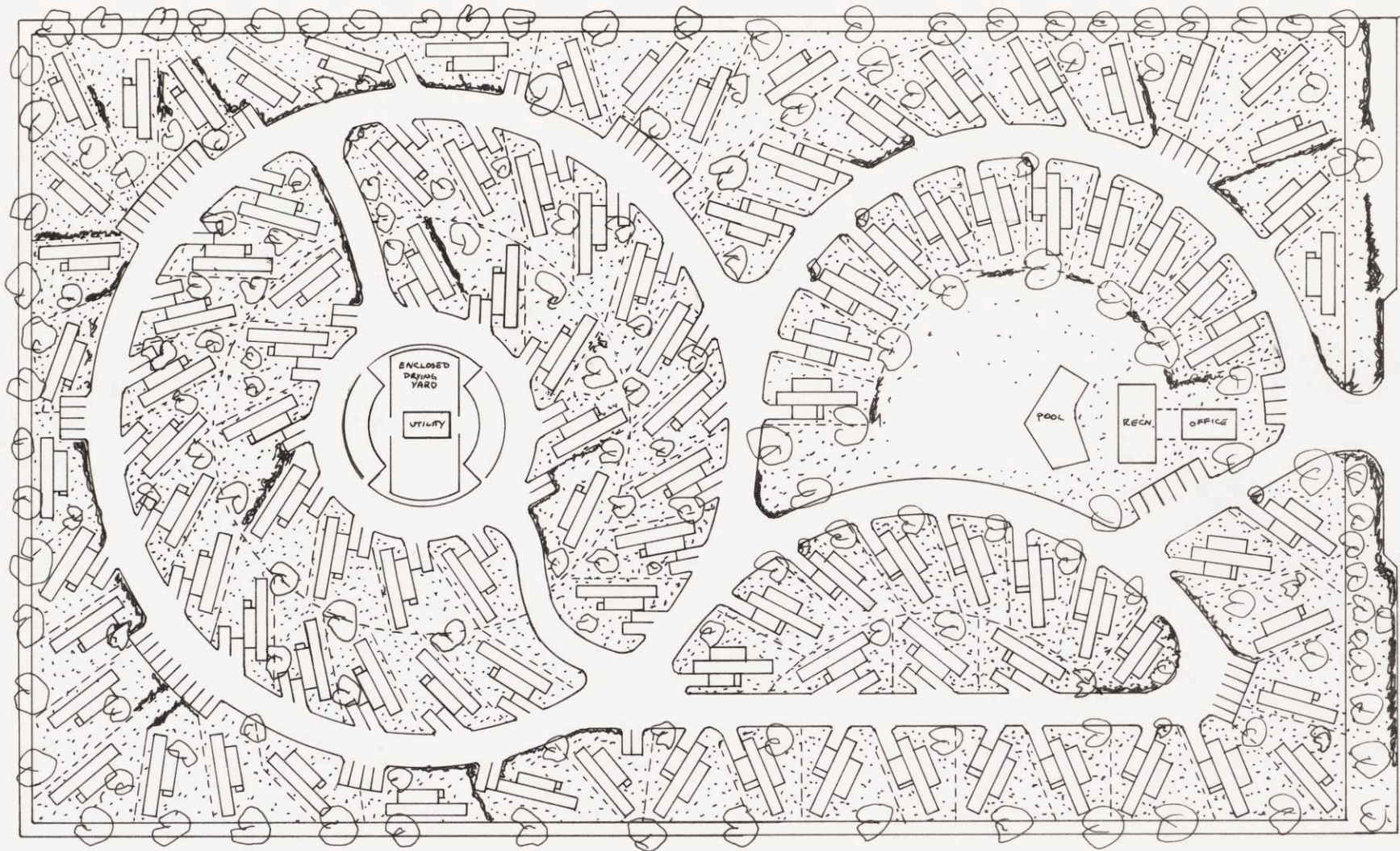


Figure 6.2: Plan from MHMA Park Planning Division's Mobile Home Park Planning Kit, 1960.

MOBILE HOME PARK REGULATIONS

Ordinances proposed during this recent period required lots of from 5000 to 8000 square feet and densities of about six and less per acre. The mobile home subdivision was treated similarly to fixed dwelling subdivisions, but often conditions did not quite match, the former being the inferior. Permission to place mobile homes on individually-owned lots outside of mobile home districts or parks was granted in several ordinances, but with restrictions on proximity to public conveniences and services.

Other than providing minima for lot size and location and such facets as street lighting, the ordinances do not really eliminate construction of inadequate facilities. The MHMA Park Planning Division has provided strong promotional assistance for park developers, with even political pressure applied if necessary to develop new parks in certain area, especially if ordinances are unduly restrictive.

Several ordinances from the New England area are reprinted in part in Appendix 3, showing the trend towards better-equipped and more home-centered housing development.



MOBILE HOME PARK SOCIOLOGY

In 1971, it was found that the average length of stay for a mobile home household was somewhat over three years,<sup>13</sup> placing it partway between residency for apartments and fixed houses. The permanency of mobile home owners has increased for several reasons. More retired people are living out their lives in parks built especially for them. Somewhat more prevalent mobile home subdivisions with tenant-owned lots, tend to keep the homeowners more tied down to their investment of money, time, and social contacts. Also, additions of such types as ramadas, which are enclosed living rooms, carports, and continuous roofs (especially common in luxury parks) usually occurs only when the homeowner felt that he would remain long enough to enjoy it and get his money's worth out of the investment.

Permanency would probably increase if a larger percentage of the mobile home families had children of school-age, who would probably remain in one school for several years. Currently, the majority of all mobile home households have no children under 18, and half of those, have only pre-school children (under 6).

In New England, it was found that 87% of mobile home parks had no school-age children, and the average was computed to be one school-age child per 17 mobile homes.<sup>14</sup>

The following chart<sup>15</sup> shows some of the features that mobile home

owners have and want:

| <u>Feature</u>   | <u>% who own</u> | <u>% who want</u> |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| expandable units   | 5                | 73                |
| length more than 50'   | 32               | 65                |
| air conditioner  | 36               | 48                |
| garbage disposer   | 9                | 20                |
| skirt [covering for the space<br>between the mobile home<br>chassis and the ground--<br>usually metal or wood<br>siding] | 48               | 70                |

Many of the above are considered as standard and the relatively few who have such features as length over 50' and skirts indicate that the appearance of many units throughout the country sadly lacks the aesthetic appeal that the manufacturers and trade magazines say is inherent in mobile homes. It is entirely probable that more beautiful units and housing developments will be developed into the 1970's, without increasing the cost beyond the budgets of many of the families that purchase mobile homes.

NOTES

1. MHMA, Flash Facts, 1971, p. 10.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 3.
4. Okrongly, Herbert, "The Ideal Park", Mobile Home Journal, August, 1962, p. 56.
5. City of Edmonton [Canada] Planning Department, Mobile Home Parks in the Urban Environment, Aug., 1968.
6. "MHJ Looks at You!", Mobile Home Journal, Dec., 1963, pp. 30-1,47-9.
7. "Buy Your Own Site", Mobile Home, Dec., 1962, p. 77:  
"Be it so, the law in California, until recently, did not permit the permanent location of a mobile home in any spot outside of a State-approved and State-inspected park. For obvious reasons, trailer park owners, tightly organized, fought any attempt to change that law. It took a woman to upset the apple cart." She had land in San Luis Obispo County, and laid it out in subdivision form, complying with all local regulations and having it approved by the planning commission. Then she sold only to mobile home owners, and the park operators initiated court action.
8. Ibid.
9. Michelon, L, and Behrend, H., How to Build and Operate a Mobile Home Park, 1970, p. 26.
10. "Buy Your Own Site", loc cit.
11. "The Seven Story Mobile Home Park", Mobile Home Journal, Aug., 1961. There were 4,000,000 people living in 1,400,000 mobile homes in 1961, and there were 15,000 mobile home parks with 750,000 spaces. Production was expected to be over 125,000 per year, and parks were being added at the rate of 1000 per year. By 1970, it was estimated that there would be 21,000,000 people living in mobile homes, and there needed to be places to put them, especially important for the increasing number of homeowners of younger age, who would be working.
12. "It's in the Air", Mobile Home, Aug., 1962, p. 36.

13. MHMA, op cit., p. 6.
14. New England Mobile Home Association, "Mobilehome developments are adjusting to New England's needs", leaflet, 1970.
15. "Mobile Home Journal looks at You", op cit.

### CONCLUSIONS

The mobile home park of today has developed through the continual interaction of restrictive regulations, home owners' verbal complaints and wants, manufacturers' products, and park developers' planning and business guidelines. In spite of some excellent examples, the average park is substandard, basically due to lack of sufficient lot size, but also because of the lack of modern facilities.

However, two trends show promise in creating a more viable life style-- the mobile home subdivision and the placement of mobile homes on individually-owned lots. While not widespread currently, these concepts are gaining popularity (and approval by zoning boards), to some extent approaching the quality of life style of the better conventional fixed housing.

The individual unit has also developed to resemble the fixed single-family house in size and shape, but for the most part, is still discernable as a mobile home, a drawback to a large percentage of the public.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A survey to determine if the mobile home can actually provide a viable life style for many families in the country should be undertaken. Increased mobile home production will place more of these units than ever before throughout the country and the sociological acceptance of this type of dwelling needs to be determined if a large-scale blight is to be avoided.

The court and the zoning board (and such others as building inspectors and health officers) have influenced mobile home park development and location throughout the country. A study of court cases involving mobile home residents (and developers) would undoubtedly show some correlation between park development and the legal decisions handed down.

A third research project would be to compile a pictorial history of park and unit development beginning in the 1920's. This complete 'picture book' would hopefully show in a clear fashion the evolution of each, while at the same time presenting examples of the inadequate and substandard parks that were only described in this paper.

APPENDIX 1

Additional Mobile Home Plans

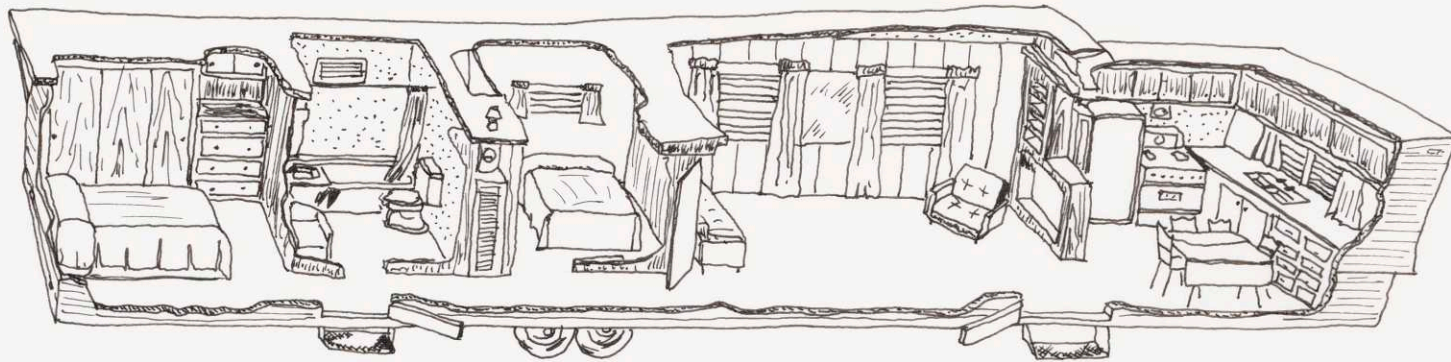


Figure 1: A typical 50' mobile home (12-wide).

(From Bartley and Bair, Mobile Home Parks and Comprehensive Community Planning, p. 20)



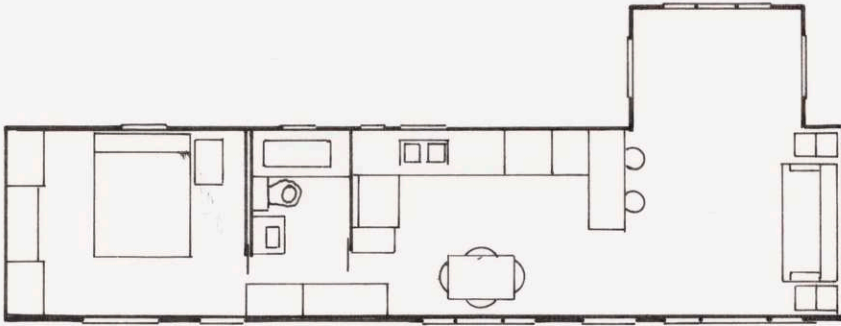


Figure 2: Expandable, 16' x 46'. Detroit Mobile Homes.

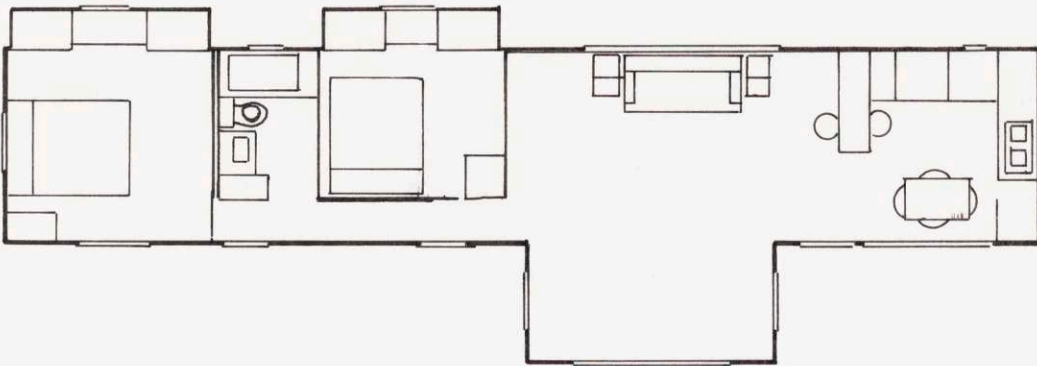


Figure 3: Expandable, 18' x 55'. Detroit Mobile Homes.

(Both of these figures are from ASPO, PAS, #145, p. 10)

APPENDIX 2

Additional Mobile Home and Trailer Park Plans

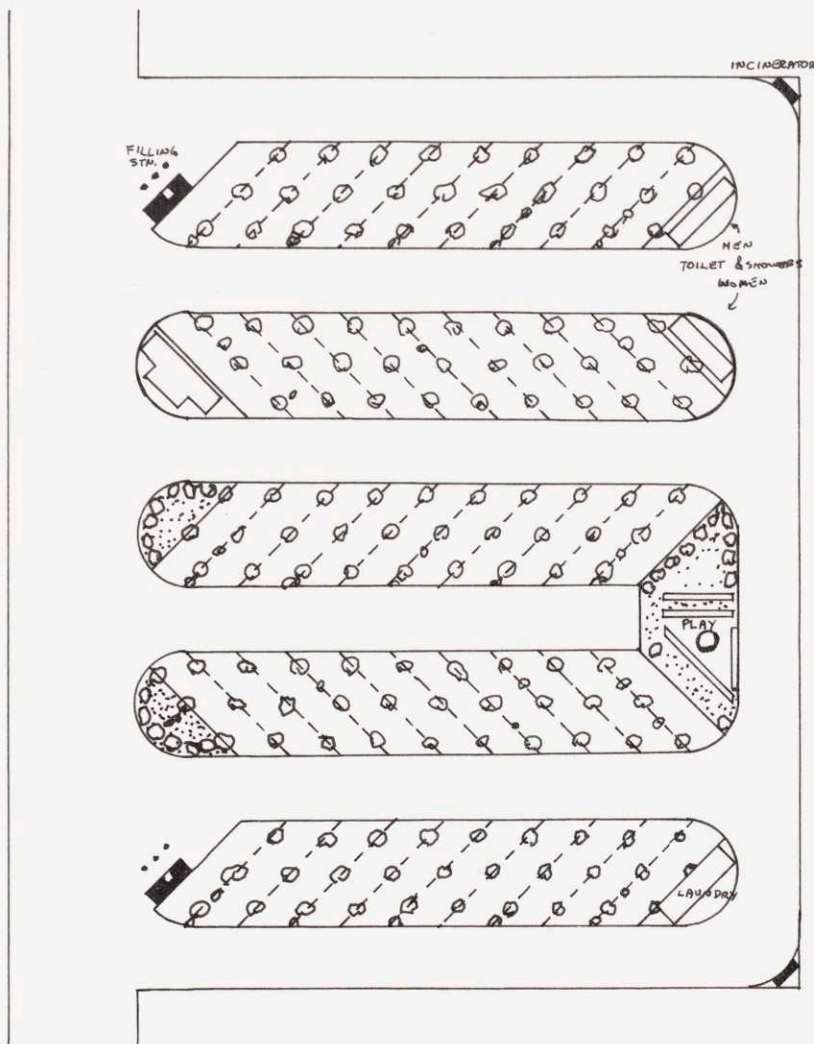


Figure 1: Trailer Park Arrangement; from The Trailer Park, 1941.

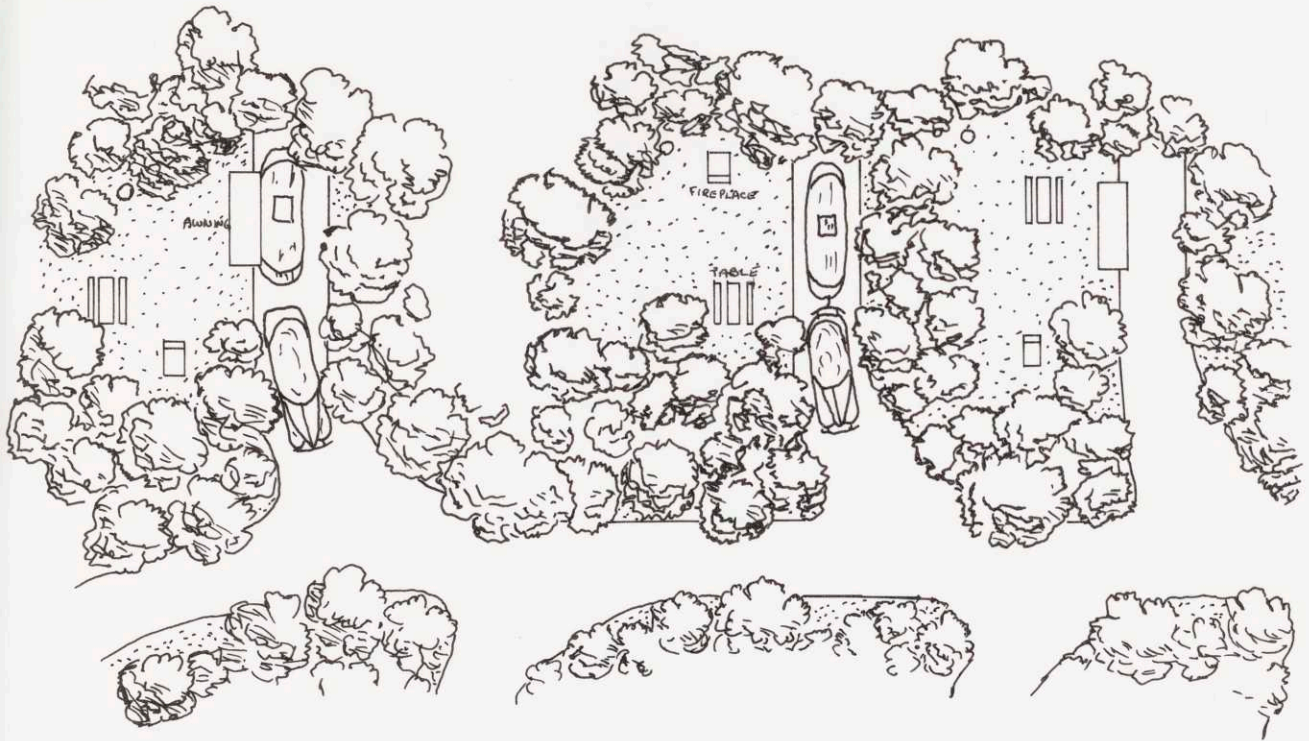


Figure 2: Informal Spur Road Design (from Special Report of Trailers and Trailer Camps, 1939, p.34)

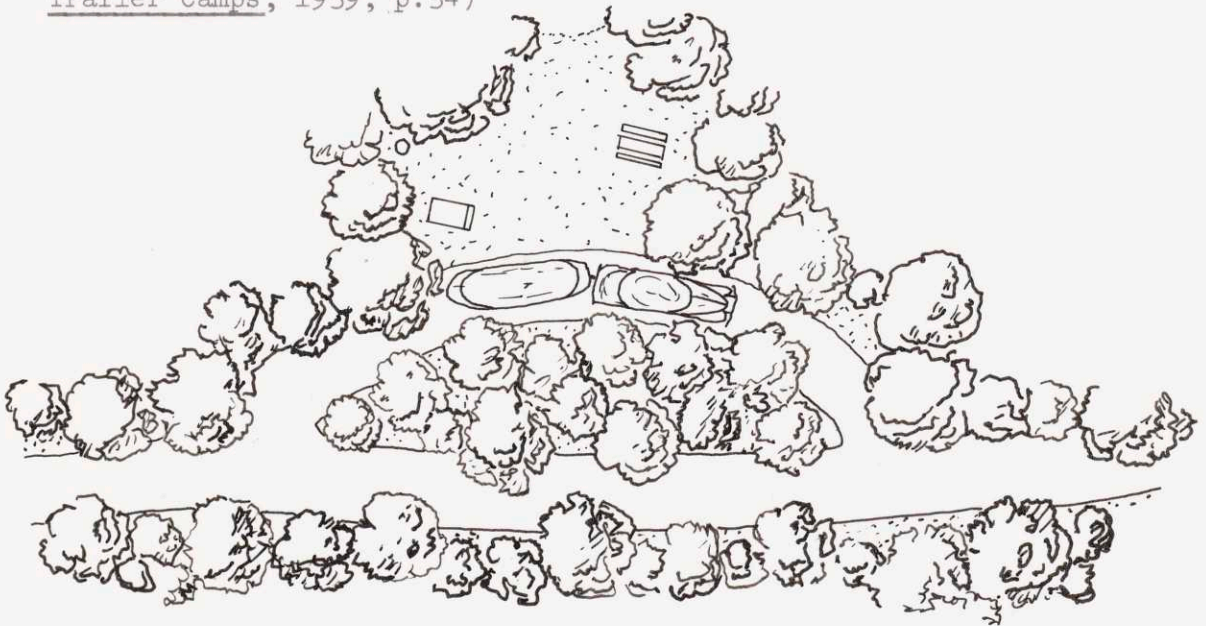


Figure 3: Loop from left side of road. (Same source as Figure 2)

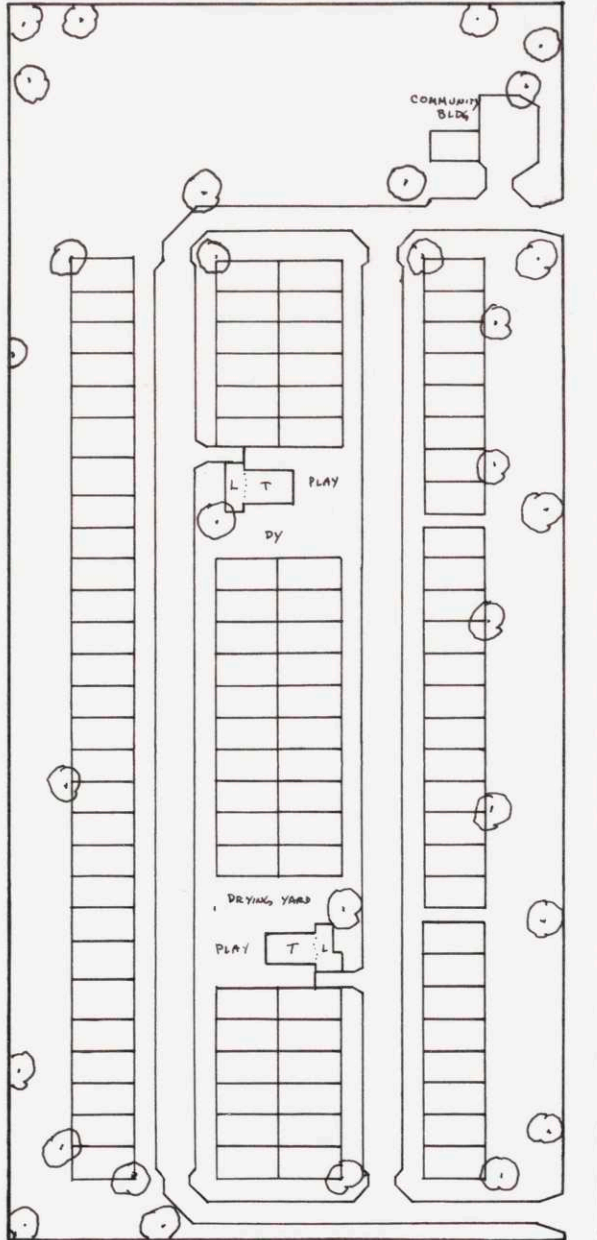


Figure 4: Plan for 100 trailer, privately-owned-trailer war project.

(Note: Figures 4-7 from Standards for War Trailer Projects)

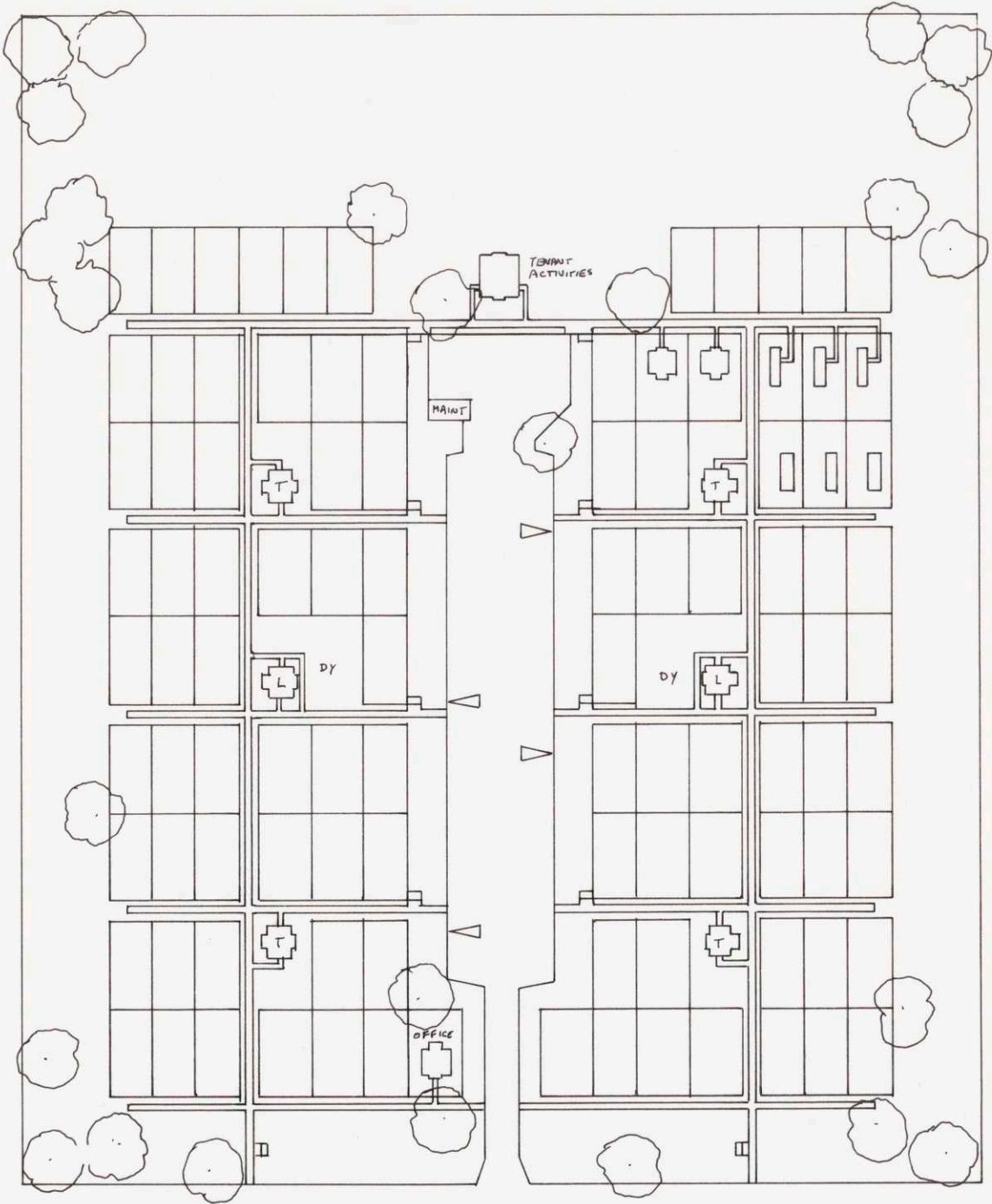


Figure 5: Plan for 100 trailer, federally-owned-trailer war project.

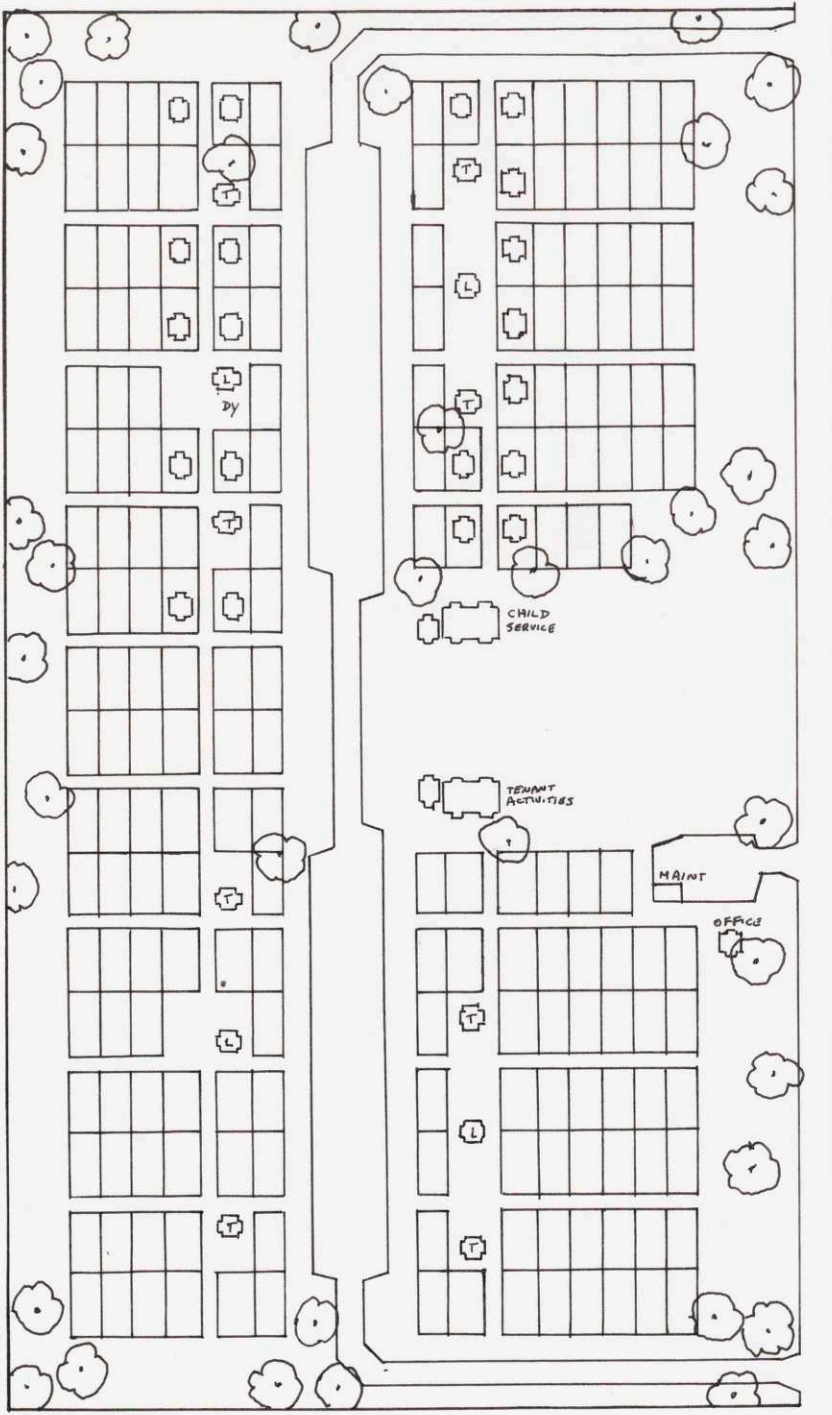


Figure 6: Plan for 200 trailer, federally-owned-trailer war project.

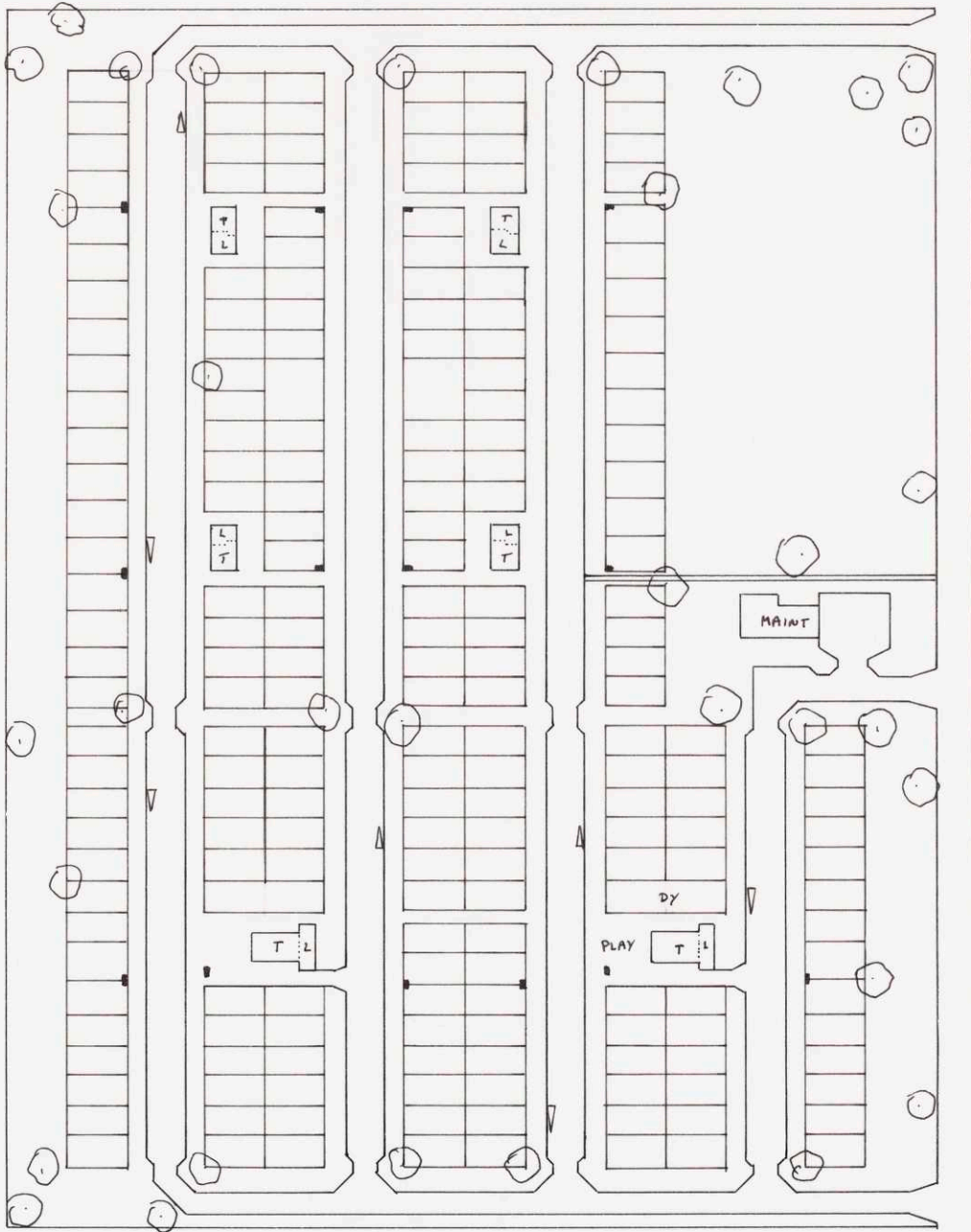


Figure 7: Plan for 200 trailer, privately-owned-trailer war project.



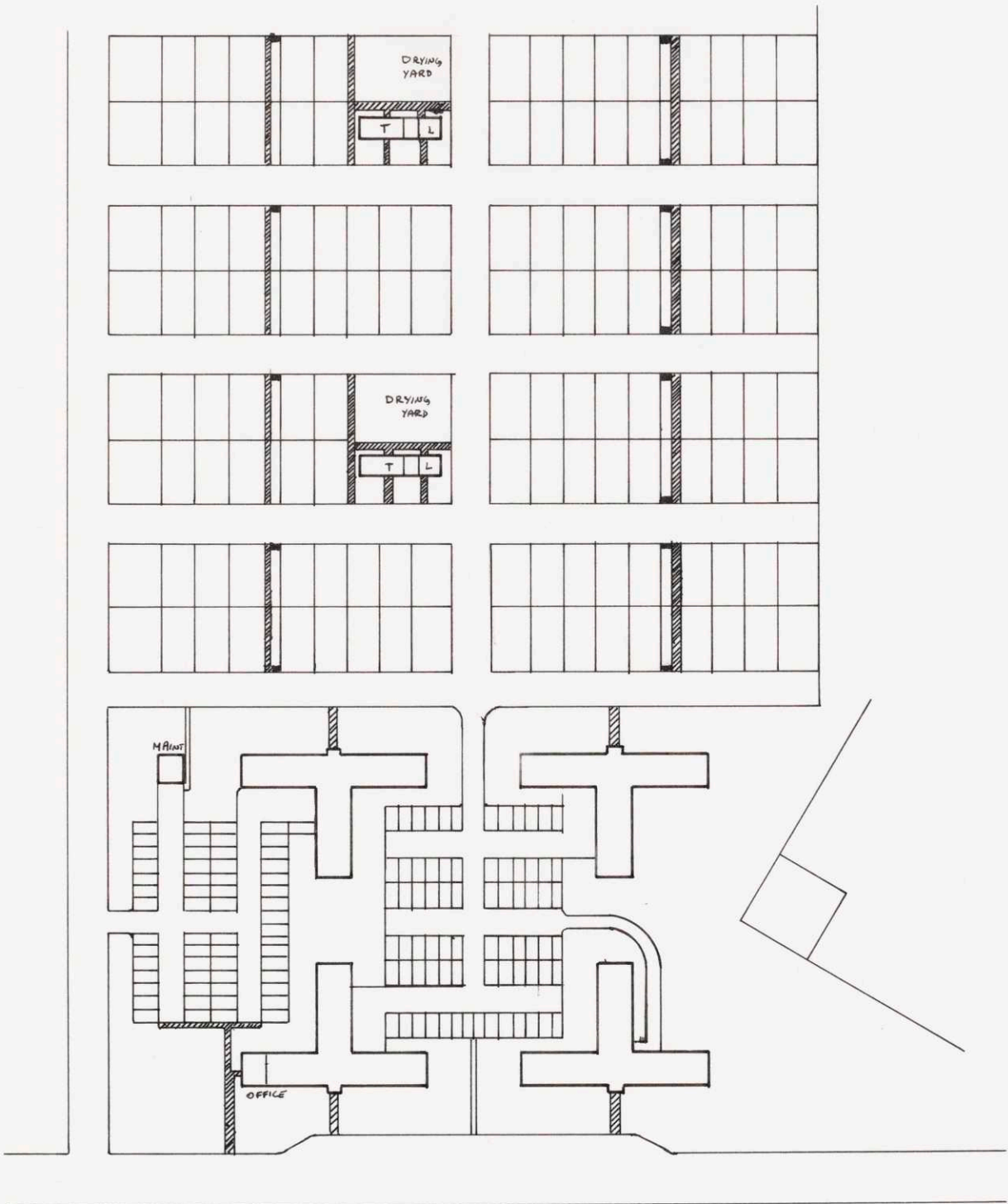


Figure 8: FSA Temporary Housing Project with Dormitories and Trailers.

(Figures 8-10 from Site Selection Instructions on FSA Temporary Housing Project, 1947)

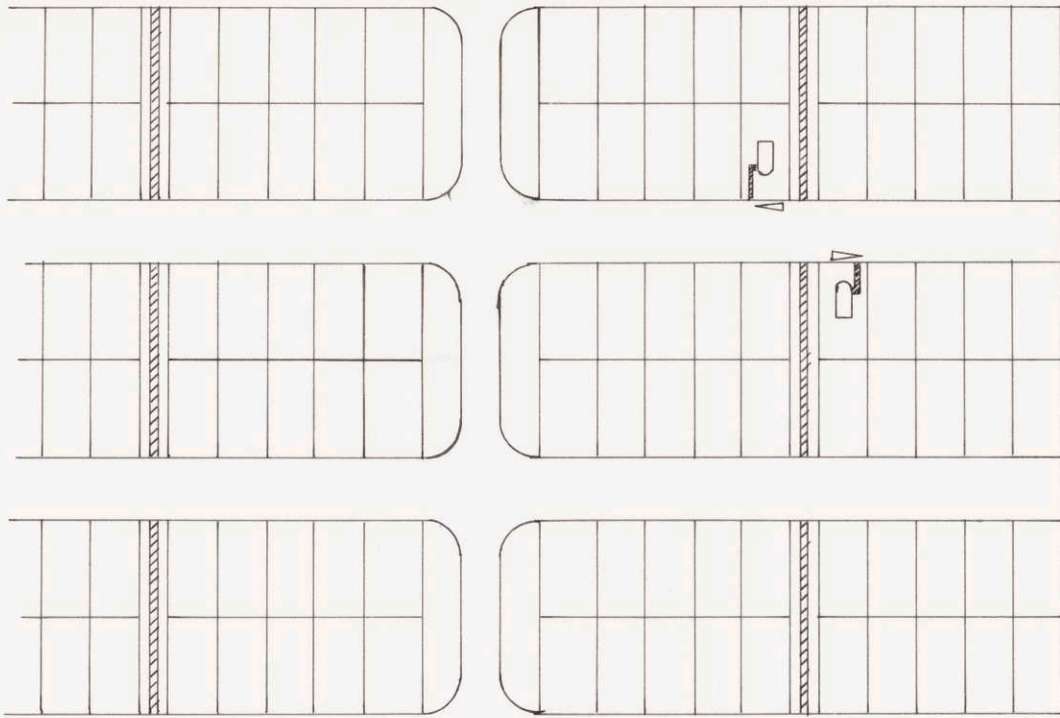


Figure 9: Trailer arrangement with parallel parking and walkways.

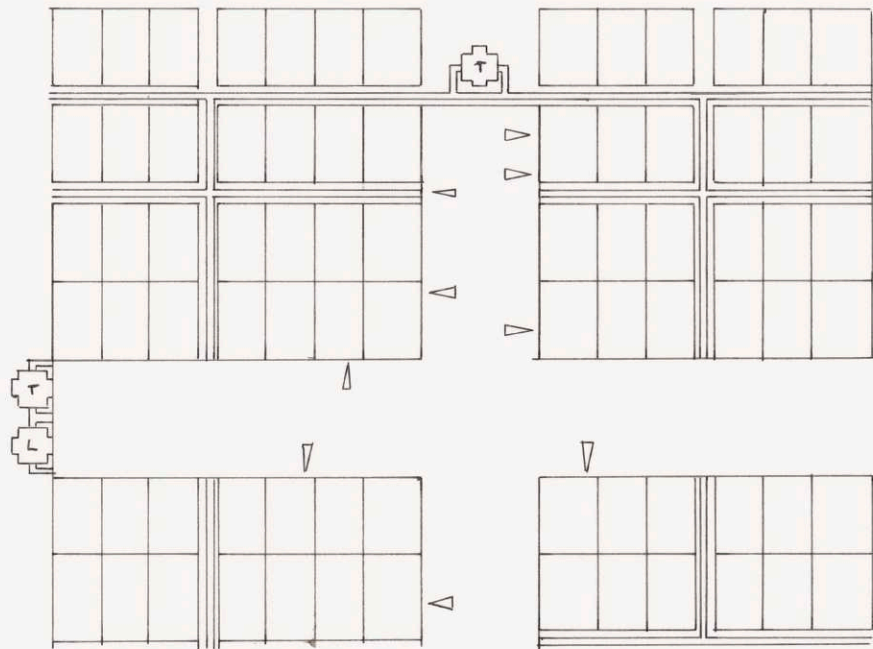


Figure 10: Standard trailer arrangement with parking compound.

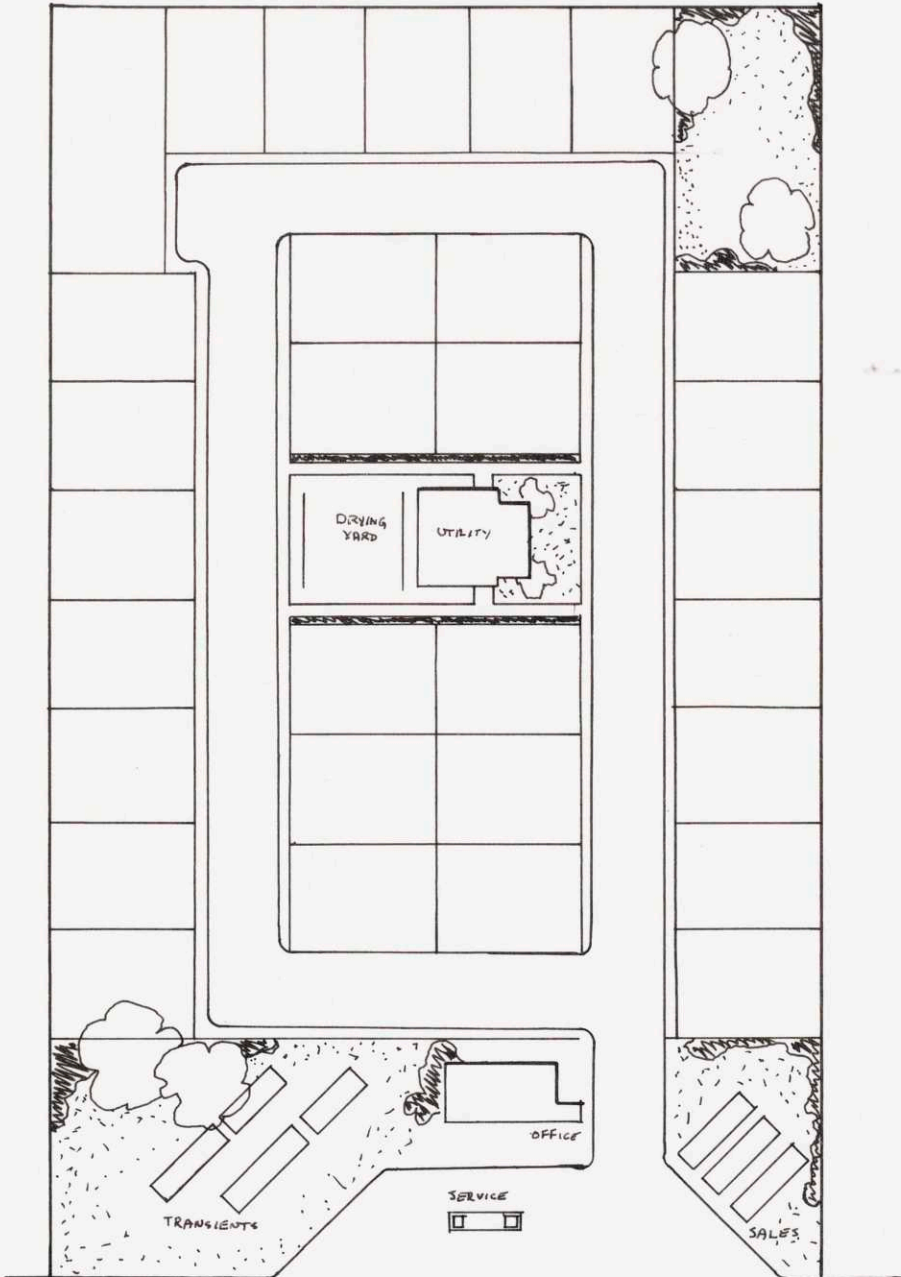


Figure 11: TCMA recommendation for 30 unit park, 1947.  
(From Planning a Profitable Trailer Park.)

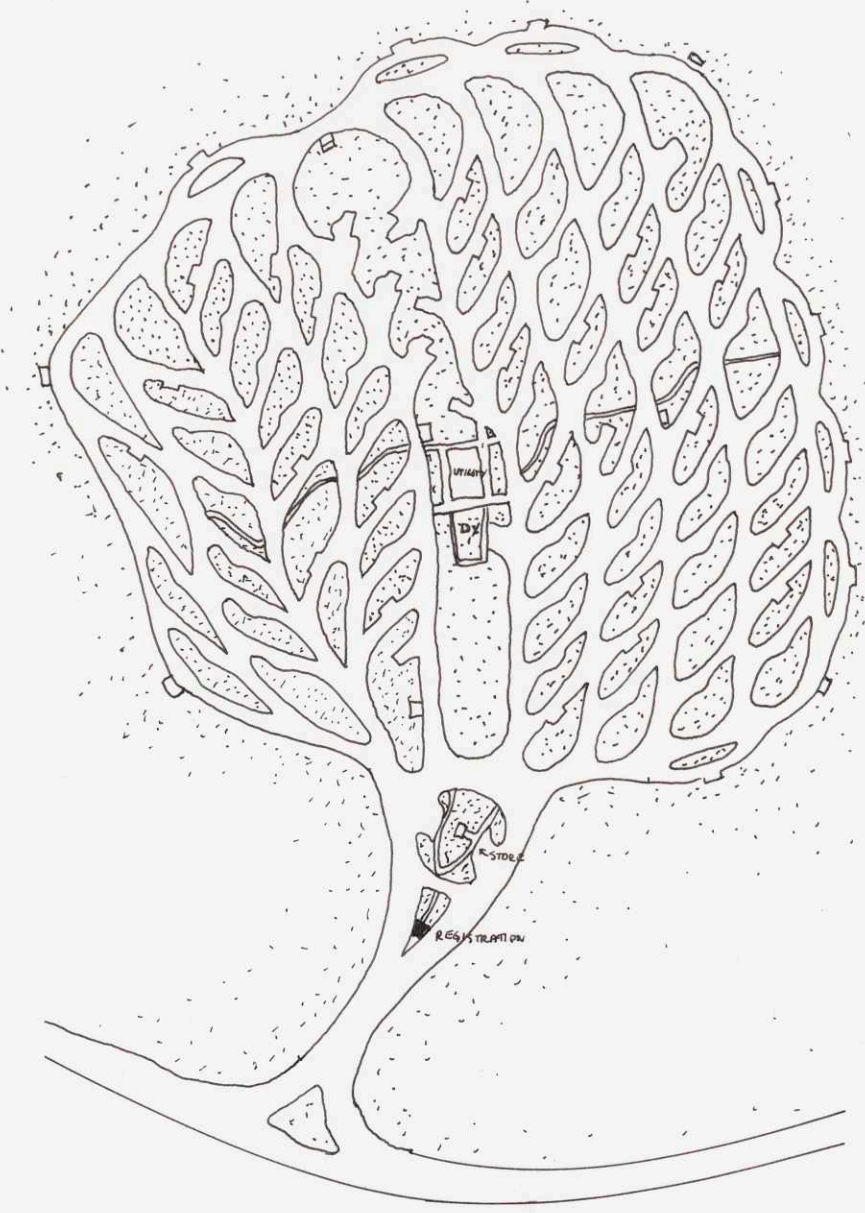
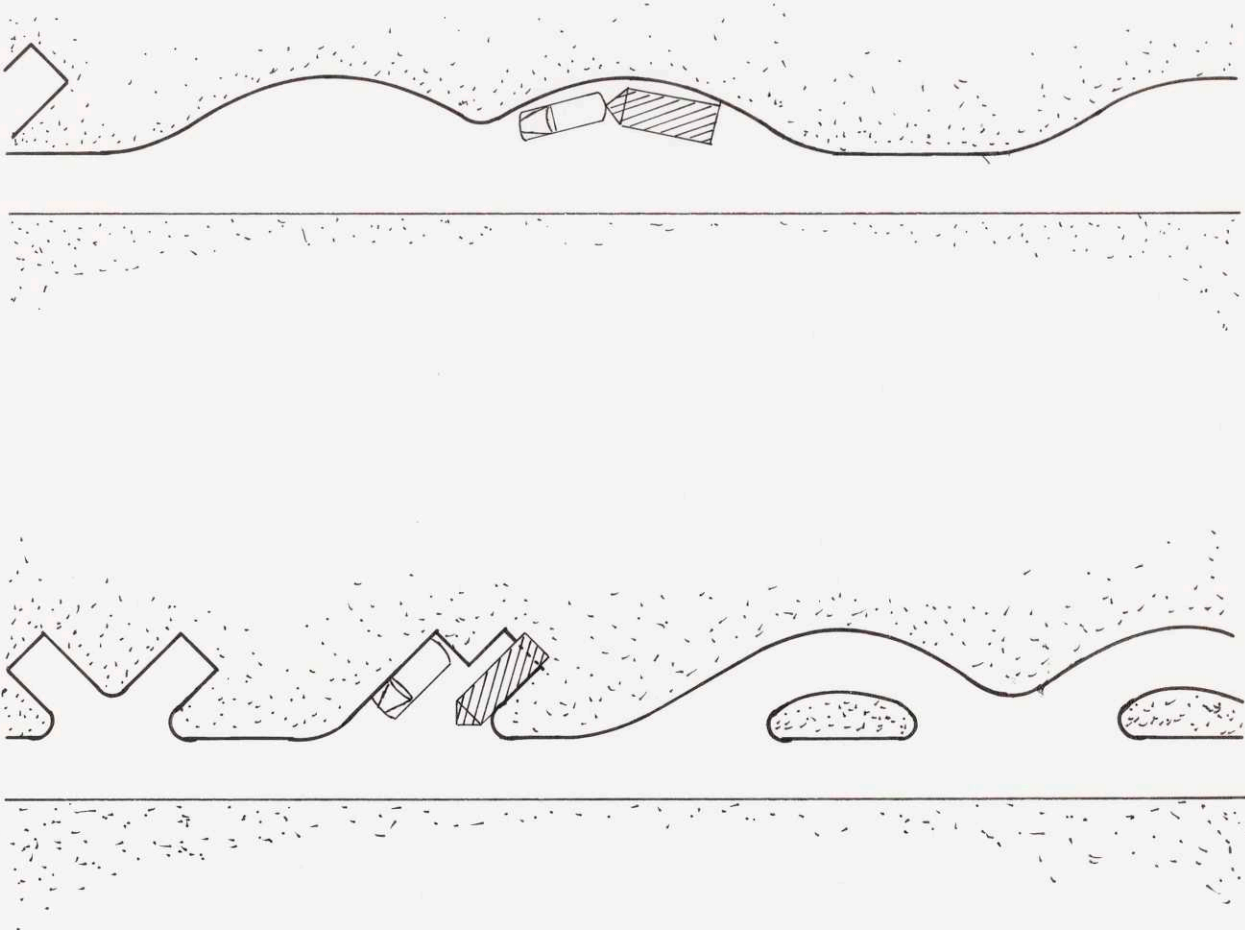
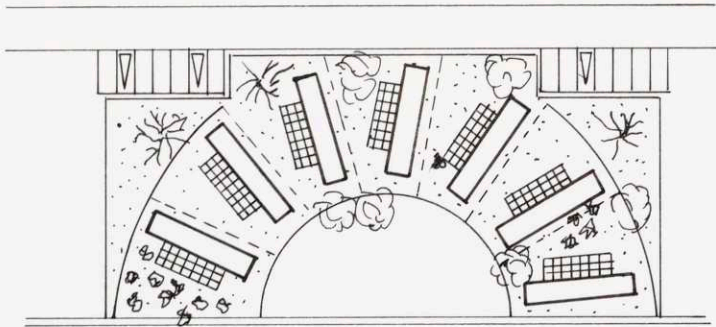


Figure 12: Example of hypothetical trailer court layout, 1954.  
(From Department of the Interior, Trailer Coach Facilities)

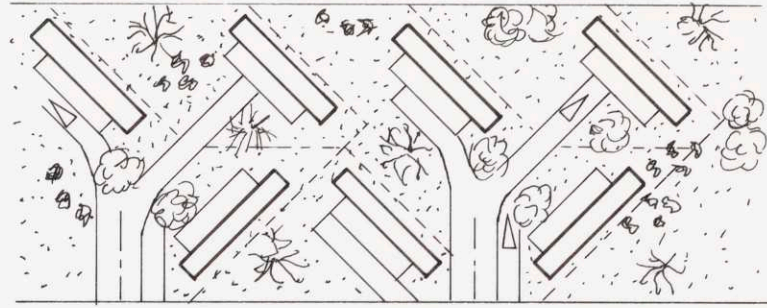


Figures 13: Details of trailer parking for campgrounds (1954).

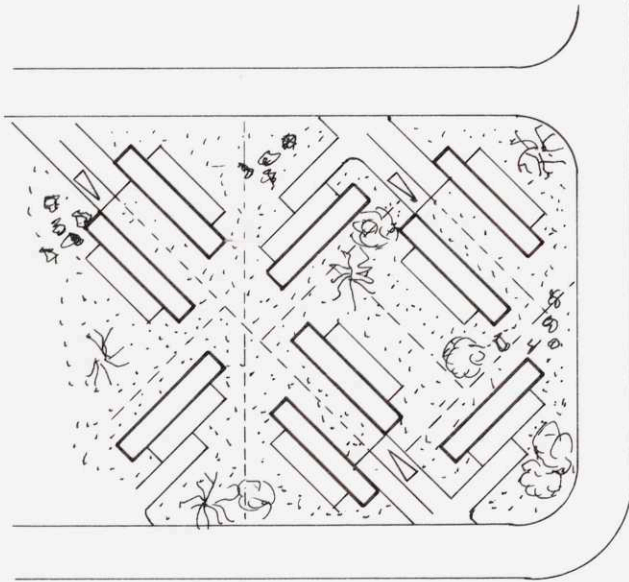
(From Trailer Coach Facilities)



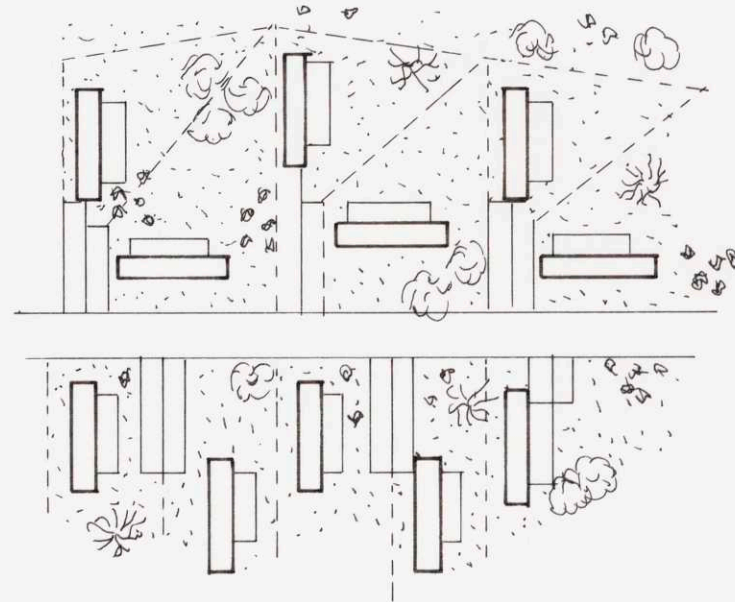
(a) Semicircle



(b) Short Cul de sac, or double-back



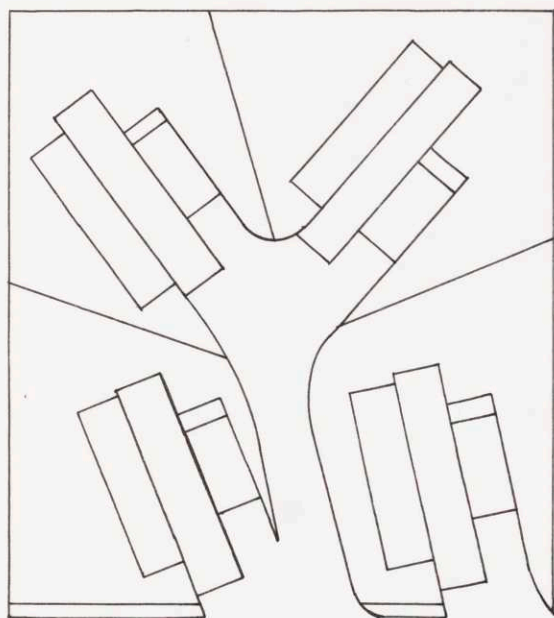
(c) Six Unit Grouping



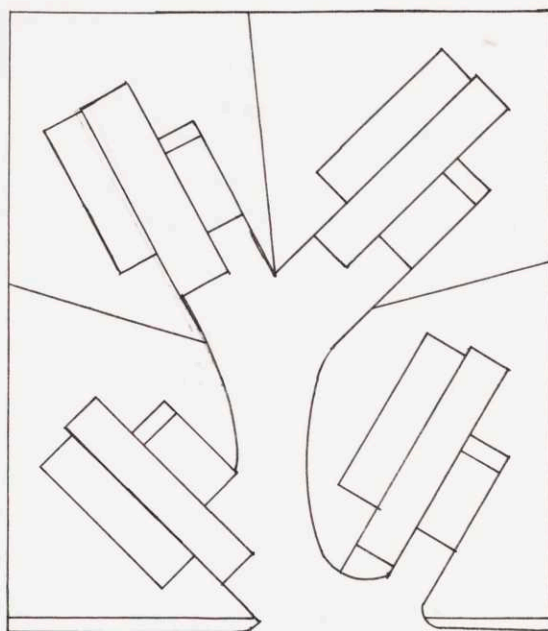
(d) Variety in Setback of units

Figures 14: Basic Layouts for mobile homes, 1968!

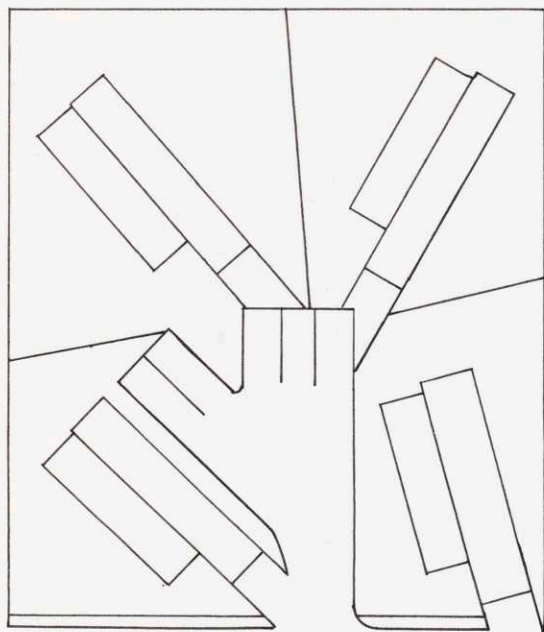
(from City of Edmonton Planning Department, p. 32)



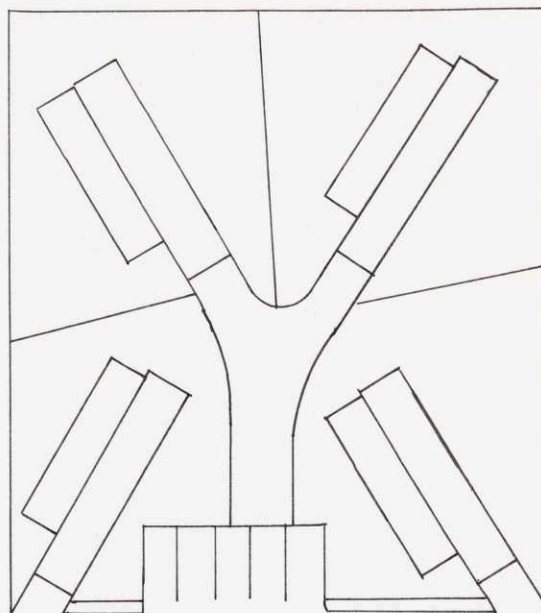
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figures 15: Parking arrangements (carport: a,b; offstreet compound: c,d)  
(From Sparer, How to Build Mobile Home Parks, pp. 48-51)

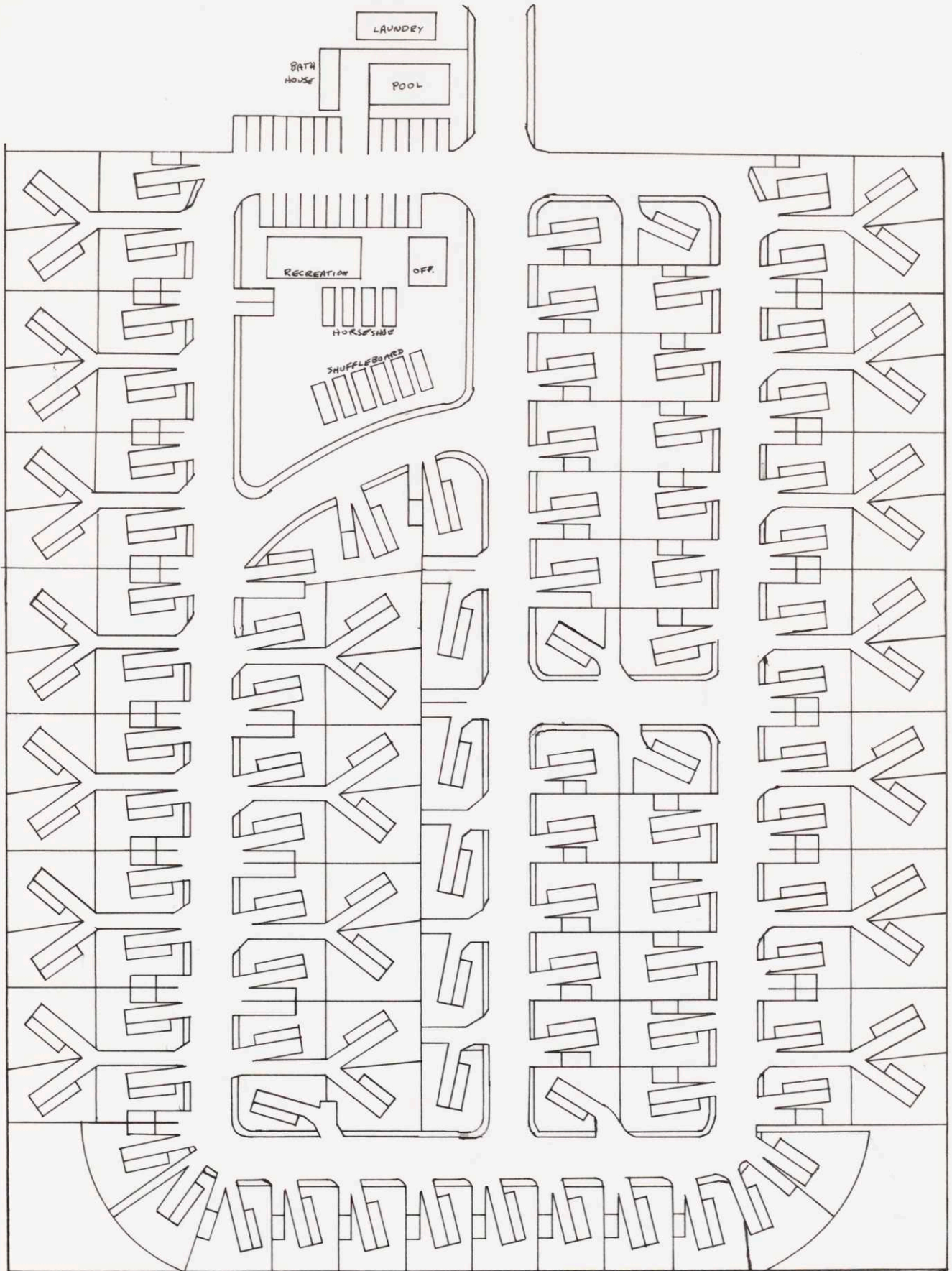


Figure 16: Mobile Home Park, with 20°, 70° and double-back arrangement.  
(From How to Build Mobile Home Parks, pp. 80-81)



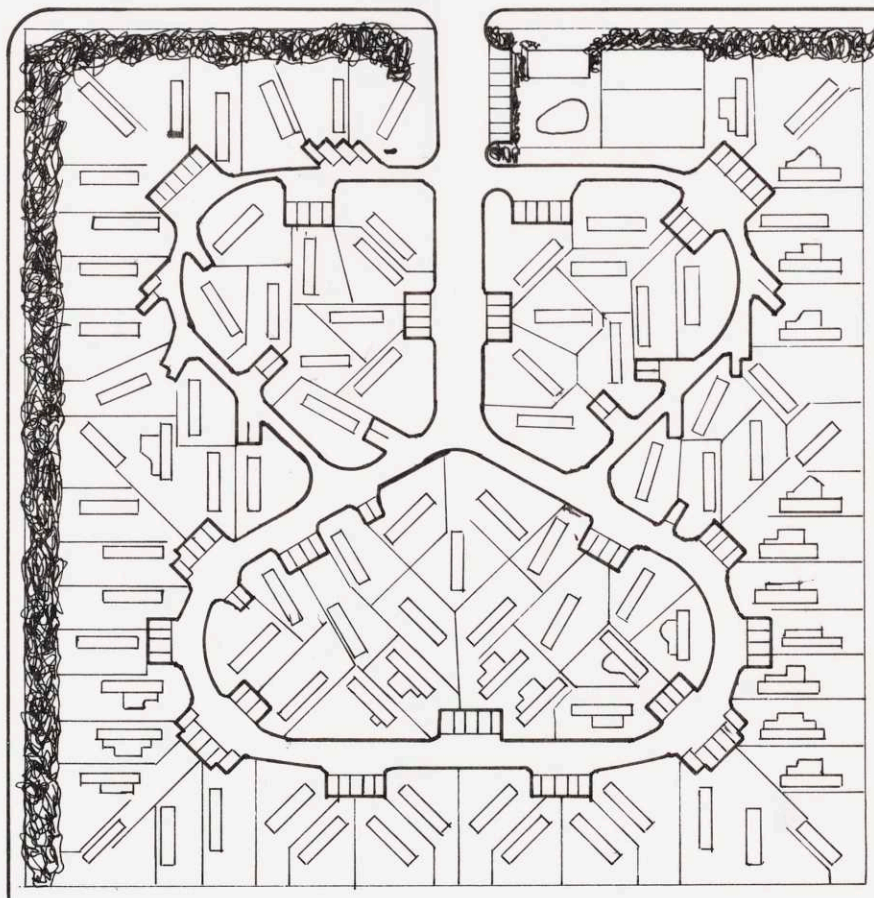


Figure 17: FHA Designed court.

(Notes: patios shown only on some lots.  
buffer zone shown consists of screen and plantings.  
tenant storage lockers are grouped at lot boundaries)

(From How to Build Mobile Home Parks, p. 91)

APPENDIX 3

Regulations and Ordinances:

Trailer Camp Definitions (1937)  
Trailer Camp Requirements (1937)  
State Park Trailer Facilities (1937)  
Ordinances (excerpts) from New England  
States (1970)

DEFINITIONS OF TRAILER CAMPS (1937)

Large Eastern City (proposed): A 'Camp and/or House Trailer Camp' shall mean any site, lot, field or tract of land upon which two or more camp and/or house trailers are harbored whether or not a charge is made for such harboring, and shall include any building, structure, tent, vehicle or enclosure used or intended for use as a part of the equipment of such camp and/or house trailer camp.

Miami, Florida: An 'automobile tourist park or camp' is defined to be any plot of ground where accommodation is provided for three or more automobile trailers or house cars used by transients as living or sleeping quarters.

San Diego, California: 'Public camp' is approved area, lot or parcel of land regularly used or intended regularly to be used for temporary camping in tents or other portable shelters; provided, however, that an occasional and temporary use of an area, lot or parcel of land for camping by a single camping party shall not be construed as a public camp within the meaning of this ordinance.

St. Petersburg, Florida: 'Tourist Camp' shall mean any lot, piece or parcel of ground where three or more camp cottages, tent houses, or house cars, used as living or sleeping quarters are or may be located, such camp being operated for or without compensation.

Banning, California: 'Camp ground' is defined to be any place, area or tract of land upon which is located any camp car and/or trailer.

Phoenix, Arizona: 'Auto trailer house car or house car parks' are hereby defined to be any place which has approved sewer connections, water taps, bath facilities, toilet facilities, garbage disposal service, electric current connection and has a valid and subsisting permit issued by the

City Health Officer and has a valid and subsisting license to operate the same for the convenience of such trailer house cars or house cars during such time as they are used for residential and/or sleeping or living quarters.

Long Beach, California: A 'qualified camp ground' for the purpose of this ordinance, shall mean and include a place operated by a person, firm or corporation, who or which has obtained from the Health Department a permit to operate a place where may be maintained, placed, parked, or located house cars.

These definitions are taken from Report #114, February, 1937, of the American Municipal Association, The House Trailer. Its Effect on State and Local Government.

TRAILER CAMP REQUIREMENTS (1937):

Large Eastern City (proposed): lots 875 square feet, 25 x 35, grouped in blocks. Distance from trailer to street, 10', from trailer to property lines, 20'. Camp surrounded by fence 5-6' high.

Miami: 875 square feet, 25 x 35, with markers at corners of the lots. Roads minimum 18' wide, and distances from trailers to street, minimum 20', to property, minimum 5', and to structures minimum 10'.

San Diego: 360 square feet, 18 x 20, arranged in rows facing street not less than 25' wide.

St. Petersburg: 800 square feet lots abutting streets not less than 18' wide. Minimum distance to street, 20', to property, 5'.

Banning, California: 560 square feet, 16 x 35, arranged in rows, facing streets not less than 30' wide.

Phoenix: No stipulations for camp plans.

Long Beach: 600 square feet, minimum distance to other property 3', and to other structures, 12'. Streets 16' wide. One toilet per 7 units, not more than 100' away.

Michigan (in 1941): 700 square feet, on streets 20' wide. Minimum distances to streets, 10', to property lines, 3' and to structures, 10'. Toilets, showers and lavatories within 300' of the trailers served. Water outlet within 100'.

Los Angeles: 18 x 20 lots, abutting streets 15' wide. One toilet per 15 trailers, within 300 feet.

Pasadena: 800 square foot lots, of minimum width 25'. Minimum distance to other property 5'. Roads were minimum 20', and a fence was to surround the court, at a height of minimum 6'.

Detroit: 500 square feet, abutting streets 20' wide. Minimum distances to streets 10', to property, 20', and to structures, 8'. Fence of height 5-6' must surround court.

Portland, Oregon (proposed): 900 square feet, with boundaries clearly marked. Distances to streets, property and structures minimum 10'. Fence surrounding park minimum height 6'.

Cleveland (proposed): 25 x 35 lots, with markers at corners of lots. Distance of 10' to other property lines. One toilet per 10 units, not more than 150' away.

Lansing (proposed): 800 square feet lots, rectangular in shape, grouped in blocks, abutting streets 18' in width. Minimum distance to streets, 20', to property and structures, 5'. One toilet provided per 8 units. Hedge or fence surrounding park, 6' high.

Akron (proposed): 800 square foot minimum, 20' minimum width, arranged in blocks.

New Hampshire: 700 square feet, 20 x 35 lots, with markers at the corners. Minimum distances to streets, 20', to property, 5', and to structures, 10'.

TRAILER FACILITY PLANNING IN STATE PARKS (1937)

Virginia: no overnight facilities currently, but complete facilities should be developed by 1938.

Kentucky: electrical connections for trailers to be installed in all state parks by 1938. None has ever had them before.

Mississippi: National Park Service will furnish all nine state parks with trailer facilities in the near future.

Texas: Nothing done up until 1937, although a tentative plan has been readied for one of the parks, at Kerrville.

Nebraska: Under supervision of National Park Service, largest state park has been provided with all conveniences that the trailerite needed. There were 40 spaces on a loop system, and room was left for expansion. Charge for water and electricity connections.

New Hampshire: Plans were developed for trailer accommodations at two parks, with water and power connections, conserving the rustic surroundings.

North Carolina: Special accommodations for trailers, including water, toilets and showers are being provided in many parks.

South Carolina: Plans formulated for two state parks' trailer facilities, with plans for similar additions to the other state parks in the future.

Midwestern states, in general: Facilities are being readied in parks for the trailerites, and the states are experimenting with various patterns, such as herringbone, circular, and square lots, as well as the driveout loops. There are often problems with providing power and water connections,

due to rugged terrain and distances from the sources.

These are excerpts from an article in the June, 1937 edition of Trailer Travel Magazine, "Trailer Park Growth Now on a Huge Scale" by Al Sweeney, pages 15-17 and 80.



SUGGESTED MOBILEHOME ORDINANCE FOR THE TOWN OF WINCHENDON, MASS.

(Prepared by the New England Mobilehome Association, Granby, Conn. 6/71)

Section A-- Definitions:

1. Mobilehome: A transportable, single family dwelling unit suitable for year round occupancy and containing the same water supply, waste disposal, and electrical conveniences as immobile housing.
2. Mobilehome Lot: A parcel of land for the placement of a single mobilehome and the exclusive use of its occupants.
3. Mobilehome Park: A parcel of land under single ownership which has been planned and improved for the placement of mobilehomes for non-transient use and is designed to accommodate two or more mobilehomes.
4. Trailer: The following shall be considered a trailer:

Travel Trailer: A vehicular, portable structure built on a chassis, designed as a temporary dwelling for travel, recreation and vacation, having body width not exceeding 8 feet and its body length does not exceed 32 feet...

Section E-- Requirements:

2. Density Requirement: A minimum lot size of 7000 square feet shall be provided for each mobilehome or mobilehome clusters with a density not to exceed six mobilehomes per acre.
3. All roadways shall provide widths of fifty feet with a minimum paved surface of thirty feet.
4. All mobilehomes shall be placed at least 50 feet from all set back and side line boundaries.
- :
9. Street lights: Street lights be installed at intervals of not more than 300 feet apart.

Section F-- Single Mobilehomes:

1. The Planning Board of Winchendon may issue Special Exception permits for the parking of mobilehomes on single lots subject to the following conditions:
  - (a) No individual mobilehome shall be permitted within 100 yards of

a church, school, public library, fire station, theater or other place of public assembly.

- (b) No mobilehome shall be parked within 50 feet of the traveled portion of any public highway.
- (c) No such mobilehome shall be maintained, established, stationed or parked on a lot or area having a frontage of less than 100 feet on any accepted town road or highway or any state highway.
- (d) No such mobilehome shall be maintained, established, stationed or parked within 50 feet of the interior boundary on any lot or area upon which such mobilehome is stationed or parked.
- (e) The granting of such Special Exception shall be in the judgement of the Planning Board compatible with the aesthetic and environmental characteristics of the area.

MOBILE HOME ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FALMOUTH (as of June, 1970)

An Ordinance Providing for the Regulation of Mobile Homes and Mobile Home Parks; Establishing Provisions for the Issuance of Permits; and Setting Forth Minimum Standards for Mobile Home Parks.

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following words and phrases have the meaning ascribed to them in this section.

A. Mobile Home. Mobile home shall mean a transportable, single family, one level dwelling structure, built on a chassis of which wheels are an intrinsic part and are designed to remain so, and said structure being designed to be used without a permanent foundation and with a floor area of at least 450 square feet and constructed in such a manner as will permit occupancy thereof as a permanent dwelling of sleeping place for one or more persons, and provided with a toilet and a bathtub or shower.

B. Travel Trailer. Travel trailer shall mean a vehicular, portable structure designed as a temporary dwelling for travel, recreation and vacation, having a width not exceeding 8 feet, and a length not exceeding 32 feet.

F. Mobile Home Park. Mobile home park shall mean a contiguous parcel of land in single ownership which is plotted and divided such that mobile homes may be located and occupied for dwelling or sleeping purposes.

G. Mobile Home Lot. Mobile home lot shall mean a parcel of land within a mobile home park which provides facilities for long term occupancy by and of a mobile home and designed for the exclusive use of its occupants.

H. Mobile Home Stand. A mobile home stand shall be considered as that part of a mobile home lot which is reserved for the mobile homes.

SECTION 2. GENERAL PROHIBITIONS.

No person shall maintain and occupy a mobile home in the Town of Falmouth except in a duly licensed mobile park.

SECTION 5. DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS.

Mobile home parks shall conform to the following minimum requirements:

A. Mobile home parks shall be located on a well drained site properly graded to insure rapid drainage and freedom from stagnant pools of water. The site shall not be exposed to objectionable smoke, noise, odors or any other adverse influences, and no portion subject to unpredictable sudden flooding, subsidence or erosion shall be used for any purpose which would expose persons or property to hazards.

B. The area of a mobile home park shall be a contiguous parcel of land having a minimum area of 25 acres.

C. All mobile homes shall be located at least 300 feet from any park property boundary line abutting a public street or highway and at least 100 feet from all other park property boundary lines.

D. A minimum of 25 mobile home lots shall be completed and provided with all streets, walks, and utilities called for in this ordinance before occupancy of the mobile home park shall be permitted.

E. A mobile home park shall not exceed a net residential density of six (6) mobile homes per acre.

F. Lot Size and Setback Requirements:

1. Each individual mobile home lot shall be not less than 7,000 square feet in area, and shall be not less than 70 feet wide and 100 feet deep.
2. No mobile home shall be located less than 20 feet from the side rear lines of an individual mobile home lot, and there shall be a minimum side and end clearance of 40 feet between adjacent mobile homes.
3. No mobile home shall be located closer than 20 feet to a street or service building within the park.

G. Streets, Walks and Parking:

1. All mobile home parks shall be provided with safe and convenient vehicular access from abutting public streets or roads to each mobile home lot. Such access shall have a 50' right-of-way and a 36' payment. All park streets shall be well drained, paved, maintained in good condition, and at night adequately lighted.
2. Street pavement widths shall be not less than 36 feet where parking is permitted on both sides of a street. Where parking is permitted on one side of a street the minimum pavement width shall be 28 feet. Where on street parking is prohibited the minimum pavement width shall be 20 feet.
3. Dead end streets shall be limited in length to 1000 feet and at the closed end shall be provided with a turn-around having a minimum radius of 50 feet.

4. Paved sidewalks not less than three feet in width shall be provided on at least one side of every street within the mobile home park.
5. Paved walkways not less than two feet in width shall connect each mobile home stand to a paved sidewalk, to a paved street or to a paved driveway connecting to a paved street.
6. Off-street parking in all mobile home parks shall be furnished at the rate of at least 1.5 car spaces for each mobile home. Parking spaces shall be paved and shall be located at a distance not to exceed 200 feet from the mobile home that it is intended to serve.
7. Mobile home stands shall provide an adequate foundation for the placement of a mobile home. Stand foundations shall be of such construction as to prevent heaving, shifting, or settling due to frost action.
8. All individual mobile homes shall be equipped with skirting or other type of enclosure.

SUGGESTED MOBILEHOME ORDINANCE

(Prepared by the New England Mobilehome Association, 1970)

Section A-- Definitions:

1. Mobilehome: A transportable, single family dwelling unit suitable for year round occupancy and containing the same water supply, waste disposal, and electrical conveniences as immobile housing.
2. Mobilehome Lot: A parcel of land for the placement of a single mobilehome and the exclusive use of its occupants.
3. Mobilehome Park: A parcel of land under single ownership which has been planned and improved for the placement of mobilehome for non-transient use and is designed to accommodate two or more mobilehomes.

Section F-- Single Mobilehomes:

3. Restrictions:

- (a) No individual mobilehome shall be permitted within 100 yards of a Church, School, Public Library, Fire Station, Theater or other place of public assembly.
- (b) No mobilehome shall be parked within 50 feet of the traveled portion of any public highway.
- (c) No such mobilehome shall be maintained, established, stationed or parked on a lot or area which shall contain less than one-half acre of land.
- (d) No such mobilehome shall be maintained, established, stationed or parked on any lot or area having a frontage of less than 100 feet on any acceptable town road or highway or any State Highway.
- (e) No such mobilehome shall be maintained, established, stationed or parked within 25 feet of the interior boundary of any lot or area upon which such mobilehome is stationed or parked.

Section E-- Requirements:

2. Minimum lot size: A minimum of 6,000 square feet shall be provided for each mobilehome lot or space or a density of 6 mobilehomes per acre.

3. Minimum clearance: There shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet of clearance between each mobilehome.
4. All mobilehome lots shall abut on a roadway of not less than 30 feet width where off-road parking is provided, or 40 feet where no-off-road parking is provided.
5. All roads within the park shall be well drained, provided with gravel or hard surface, and be maintained in good condition.
6. No mobilehome shall be located closer than 50 feet from the traveled portion of any public highway.

MOBILE HOME PARK REGULATION IN VERMONT (1970)

Section 5. Mobile Home Parks-- basic regulations

- (a)(1)(c) Subject to the provisions of section 6 of this act, at least 8000 square feet of lot area shall be provided for each mobile home in each park, including at least 5000 square feet for each mobile home site, plus at least 3000 square feet for each mobile home in common open space, exclusive of roads. Such common open space shall be accessible to all residents of the mobile home park, and shall have a minimum dimension of 30 feet. The land provided pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection above shall not be counted for the purpose of satisfying this requirement. [subsection (1) refers to buffer zone, of at least 100 feet in depth, with trees or other plant materials]
- (4) At least two trees shall be planted on each mobile home site. All trees required under this act shall be suitably maintained by the owner or lessee.
- (5) At least one off-street parking space shall be provided for each mobile home, and at least one off-street parking space shall be provided for each two mobile homes for visitor parking. The space need not be paved. The space may be included in the minimum lot area requirement as specified in subdivision 3 of this section.
- (6) All buildings which are not physically connected must be at least 15 feet apart, except as otherwise permitted under site plan review pursuant to sections 8 and 9 of this act. [section 8 is site plan review for mobile home parks, and section 9 is granting or refusal of permit and revocations].

Section 6. Bonuses for improved facilities and layout

In any case where better facilities or an improved site plan is provided, in accordance with this section, the required site area may be reduced as follows:

- (1) The required lot area for mobile home parks shall be reduced by five percent of the total area otherwise required under section 5 (a) (3) of this act for each of the following facilities which are provided in such park:



- (A) Central recreational building
- (B) Central laundry and drying facilities
- (C) Central television antenna system
- (D) Central maintenance shed
- (E) Underground utilities, including fuel storage.

SOUTHEAST CONNECTICUT MODEL MOBILE HOME PARK ORDINANCE (1970)

Section 1: Definitions

- 1.1 Mobile Home: The term mobile home as used in this ordinance shall refer only to transportable single-family dwelling units, without a permanent foundation but suitable for year-round habitation and equipped with the means to connect to water, sanitary and electric facilities. It shall not include similarly prefabricated modular or unitized dwellings placed on permanent foundations, nor shall it refer to travel trailers, campers or similar units designed for recreation or other short term uses.
- 1.2 Mobile Home Park: A parcel of land of at least 25 acres upon which 2 or more mobile homes are, or are intended to be, placed and occupied as dwellings.

Section 5: Site Requirements

- 5.1 The density of a mobile home park shall be such as to prevent overcrowding and to provide light, ventilation and open areas for each mobile home.
- 5.2 The park site shall be graded to ensure drainage of surface and subsurface water and sewage, and freedom from stagnant pools, erosion or flooding.
- 5.3 Each mobile home lot shall contain a minimum of 7,500 square feet. Each lot shall be defined by permanent corner stakes and identified with a permanent marker showing the lot number corresponding to the approved plot plan. No lot shall have less than 50' frontage on a roadway.
- 5.4 Mobile homes shall be located at least 10 feet from all public walkways and roadways within the park. There shall be a minimum clearance of 20 feet between mobile homes. A setback of at least 100 feet shall be maintained from any public roadway and 100 feet from any adjoining property line.
- 5.5 Screening shall be provided and maintained between the park and adjacent properties and roadways in the form of shrubbery or fencing as the Zoning Commission requires.
- 5.6 Paved off-street parking areas or on-street parking lanes shall be provided in the amount of 1 1/2 spaces per mobile home.

- 5.7 Interior roadways within the park shall be paved 24' wide, curbed and maintained in good condition. Sidewalks shall be provided on at least one side of all streets.
- 5.8 Access to and from the park from public streets shall be the same as required for new roads in subdivisions.
- 5.9 Mobile home parks shall be furnished with lighting units so spaced and at such heights to provide illumination for safety of pedestrian and vehicular movement at night.

APPENDIX 4

MHMA Park Improvement Campaign:

Recommendation to Park Builders  
Park Inspection Point System

"How to Win MHMA Approval for Your Park", by Earl Bratton, indicated the point system that was used to rate the parks. This article appeared in the November issue of Trailer Park Management, page 6.

The inspections were performed by Marketing Information Associates, an independent firm:

- 5 points for individual lots averaging 1400 square feet or more. (no points if lots less than 1000 square feet).
- 3 if every mobile home lot has individual water connection. If only 2/3 of the lots have these connections, 1 point is lost.
- 3 if the water connection riser is at least 4" above ground.
- 13 if all mobile home lots have trapped sewer connections on either a city or septic tank disposal system (No points for cesspool)
- 10 if each lot is provided with an individual electric connection providing at least 25 amps requiring a service cord of not over 30' length.
- 16 if each mobile home lot is attractive, with trimmed lawn, trees, shrubs, flowers, patios, sidewalks and level, hard surface for mobile home pad.
- 1 for any type of recreational facilities.
- 10 if the utility building is clean and the paint is in good condition. There must be at least one washing machine for every 25 mobile homes, and a dryer or special clothes drying area.
- 5 if roads have suitable surface free of ruts.
- 2 if there is sufficient automobile parking space or if the roads are wide enough to provide street parking.
- 8 if park property is properly landscaped with trees, flowers and front lawn area.
- 2 if the park is attractive from the road.

- 1 if there is an identification road sign.
- 3 if the park has an inviting entrance.
- 2 if all the park spaces are back at least 25' from the main street.
- 2 if the park does not appear to be overcrowded.
- 4 if the park appears to be generally clean and there is a manager or attendant on the premises.

This comes to a total of only 90; it remains slightly unclear where the other 10 points are derived.

In "More Space for Living" (pages 20-21) in Trailer Park Management, August, 1954, some of the recommendations for mobile home parks as presented by the MHMA were shown in a dialogue between a representative of the Canadian Trailer Coach Association and representatives of the MHMA.

CTCA representative: What things should a person setting out to build a park keep in mind?

MHMA representatives:

Probably the most important one, judging by mistakes that have been made in American parks, is to make each mobile home space big enough... a thousand feet seemed to be satisfactory seven or eight years ago when our manufacturers were building 'trailers.' But now that the public wants mobile homes, you have to provide more space to park them...That's [30 x 40] still on the light side. We think the frontage should be at least 35 feet, and the depth at least 50 feet...on paper, 35 feet might look like a big frontage, even extravagant. But when you see spaces of that size in a park, you can appreciate what a difference it makes in the overall appearance...The big difference between the early trailer and the present mobile home is that trailers were used mainly for travel and later for emergency housing, and mobile homes are being used for permanent living. It takes more than four walls to make a home. With a mobile home, you have to make better use of the out-of-doors, so that the wider your parking spaces, the more outdoor living area each family has...the more privacy the family enjoys...which makes for happier park residents... Most of the good parks provide patios, 8 x 16 feet or larger, beside the mobile home. Many residents like to attach one of the new aluminum cabanas to the side of their home, or put up an awning over the patio. This brings them eight or nine feet closer to their neighbors when they are using the cabana or sitting under the awning. if you have 20 or 25 foot spaces, like most of the old parks, everyone is living on top of their neighbors...Everyone agrees that mobile homes are very attractive in appearance, but you need a large space to display them. You can't appreciate their lines until you spread them out...the trend in both

Canada and the United States is towards longer mobile homes. A few years ago the average length was under 30 feet, but now it's 34 and going up each year...you could probably get away with some of your spaces only 40 feet deep for a while, but any park with a future will want to take care of the longer homes...And suppose your park is filled, and a 34 footer moves out of a 40 foot space. Then along comes a 45 footer. Where are you going to put it?...If you crowd mobile homes into small spaces-- 1000 square feet or less-- you do get more return per acre. But your investment per acre is higher, too . You'd be better off to buy cheaper land and keep down the cost of land per mobile home that way. Or put it this way. You might be all right today building a park with cramped quarters. Then a year from now, someone builds a modern park with spaces 35 x 50 or larger across the street, or even a few miles away, and charges the same rent. If you were a mobile home owner, where would you want to park?..one more point. There comes a time when a park operator will want to sell out. The market price of his park will depend on the competition of neighboring parks, as well as on the money invested in his property. The best park buy, all other things being equal, will be the one with the larger spaces...We recommend 35 x 50 as a minimum. But there are many park builders who want to go 40 x 60 or more. The important thing is to make 35 x 50 your minimum, and make the spaces larger if you can...and that's the opinion of hundreds of park operators in the United States.



APPENDIX 5

1957 Trailer Park Management Park Operator Survey

Additional results from the Trailer Park Management Magazine survey of 1957, of 3000 park operators. There were 504 responses.

The average money spent on improvements was \$5610 in 1957, which amounted to a total for the entire country, with 14,000 parks of \$78,540,000. Park operators planned on spending \$5155 in 1958, for a total of \$72,170,000.

Money spent on maintenance was \$935, for a total of \$13,090,000.

Thirty-five percent of the tenants came to their park operators for advice on buying new homes, accessories, and other similar questions.

Other operations that park operators were involved in:

stores: 10%  
restaurants: 5%  
repair shops: 11%  
gas stations: 8%  
motels: 10%

Percentages of operators who planned on purchasing the following:

cleaning supplies: 72%  
plumbing supplies: 67%  
insurance: 63%  
electrical equipment: 57%  
laundry equipment: 52%  
lights: 48%  
landscaping tools: 46%  
meters (gas and electric): 41%

APPENDIX 6

Mobile Home Production and Family Statistics

MOBILE HOME SHIPMENTS (From Flash Facts, 1971)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Manufacturer's shipments to dealers in US</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 1970        | 401,190  |
| 1969        | 412,690  |
| 68          | 317,950  |
| 67          | 240,360  |
| 66          | 217,300  |
| 65          | 216,470  |
| 64          | 191,320  |
| 63          | 150,840  |
| 62          | 118,000  |
| 61          | 90,200   |
| 60          | 103,700  |
| 59          | 120,500  |
| 58          | 102,000  |
| 57          | 119,300  |
| 56          | 124,330  |
| 55          | 111,900  |
| 54          | 76,000   |
| 53          | 76,900   |
| 52          | 83,000   |
| 51          | 67,300   |
| 50          | 63,100   |
| 49          | 46,200   |
| 48          | 85,500   |
| 47          | 60,000   |

Prior to 1947, production varied from 1300 in 1930 upward to 60,000 in 1947.

Change in Size of Mobile Home Annual Shipments (in percent), from  
Appraisal Guide for Mobile Home Parks, 1966, p.1.

|                                    | 1955 | 56 | 57 | 58   | 59   | 60   | 61   | 62   | 63   | 64 |
|------------------------------------|------|----|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|----|
| 8-wides                            |      |    |    |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| less than 29'                      | 14   | 14 | 11 | 10   | 13.9 | 7.1  |      |      |      |    |
| 30-34'                             | 7    | 5  | 4  | 1    | .4   | .5   | .5   | .75  | .5   | .2 |
| 35-49                              | 25   | 20 | 19 | 10   | 3.9  | 1.1  | .5   | .75  | .78  | .6 |
| 40-44                              | 34   | 23 | 16 | 5    | 1.7  | .6   | .7   | .5   | .22  | .1 |
| more than 45                       | 20   | 29 | 25 | 5    | 1    | .2   | .2   | *    | *    | *  |
| Total                              | 100  | 91 | 75 | 31   | 20.9 | 9.5  | 1.9  | 2.   | 1.5  | .9 |
| 10-wides                           |      |    |    |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| less than 34'                      |      |    |    |      | .3   | .2   | .7   | .4   | .1   | .2 |
| 35-39                              | 11   | 3  | 4  | 2.5  | 1.8  | 1.2  | .4   | .3   | .3   |    |
| 40-44                              | 1    | 4  | 9  | 4.9  | 4.1  | 2.4  | .9   | 1    | .9   |    |
| 45-49                              | 6    | 15 | 30 | 20.4 | 13.3 | 8.1  | 6.1  | 5.1  | 6.   |    |
| 50-54                              | 1    | 3  | 26 | 51   | 43.9 | 41   | 34   | 35.7 | 30.8 |    |
| 55-59                              |      |    |    |      | 26.5 | 41.4 | 28.3 | 28   | 19   |    |
| more than 60                       |      |    |    |      | 17   | 3.3  | 2.6  | 3.1  | 3.1  |    |
| Total                              | 9    | 25 | 69 | 79.1 | 90.5 | 98.1 | 72.7 | 73.3 | 59.8 |    |
| 12-wides                           |      |    |    |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| less than 54'                      |      |    |    |      |      |      | .5   | .8   | 5.2  |    |
| 55-59                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | 1.8  | 1.9  | 7.1  |    |
| 60-64                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | 2.3  | 3.4  | 8.5  |    |
| more than 65'                      |      |    |    |      |      |      | .4   | .3   | .3   |    |
| Total                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | 5    | 6.4  | 21.1 |    |
| Expandables<br>and Double<br>Wides |      |    |    |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| less than 39'                      |      |    |    |      |      |      | .3   | .2   | .3   |    |
| 40-44                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | .7   | .5   | 1.3  |    |
| 45-49                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | 1.9  | 1.9  | .6   |    |
| 50-54                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | 8.8  | 6    | 5.4  |    |
| 55-59                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | 7.6  | 8.1  | 7.4  |    |
| more than 60'                      |      |    |    |      |      |      | 1    | 2.1  | 3.2  |    |
| Total                              |      |    |    |      |      |      | 20.3 | 18.8 | 18.2 |    |

\* less than 0.1%

The 1971 edition of Flash Facts shows the following about mobile homes in 1970:

States permitting movement of 14-wides on their highways:

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

Price range: \$4000 to \$18,000; current average retail price is \$6110 (12 x 64' overall size; 732 square feet living area), or about \$8.35 per square foot, depending upon the furnishings and appliances. By comparison, the average unfurnished site-built home costs about \$16 per square foot, exclusive of land.

The larger mobile homes, ranging from 1000 to 1440 square feet retail from \$8000 to \$18,000. According to the Department of Commerce, the median intended sales price of a 1970 site-built, single family home was \$26,200 including land, and excluding furniture and appliances.

1970 Sales Comparison Between Mobile Homes and Site-Built Homes

|                   | <u>under \$15000</u> | <u>under \$20000</u> | <u>under \$25000</u> | <u>all prices</u> |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| site-built        | 20,000               | 158,000              | 259,000              | 487,000           |
| mobile homes      | 401,190              | 401,190              | 401,190              | 401,190           |
| <u>Total</u>      | 421,190              | 559,190              | 660,190              | 888,190           |
| Mobile Home share | 95%                  | 72%                  | 61%                  | 45%               |

MOBILE HOME FAMILY STATISTICS(From Flash Facts, MHMA, 1971)

| <u>Persons in Household</u>      | <u>Mobile Home Survey (%)</u>            | <u>1967 Current Population Survey (%)</u> |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 1                                | 10.7                                     | 15.5                                      |
| 2                                | 39.7                                     | 28.3                                      |
| 3                                | 23.9                                     | 17.6                                      |
| 4                                | 14.5                                     | 16.1                                      |
| 5                                | 7.0                                      | 10.6                                      |
| 6                                | 2.8                                      | 5.9                                       |
| 7                                | 1.4                                      | 6.0                                       |
| Median Persons                   | 2.49                                     | 2.85                                      |
| <br><u>Household Composition</u> |  |   |
| 2 or more persons                | 89.6                                     | 84.5                                      |
| husband-wife                     | 84.6                                     | 72.2                                      |
| other male head                  | 1.3                                      | 2.7                                       |
| female head                      | 3.6                                      | 9.6                                       |
| 1 person                         | 10.7                                     | 15.5                                      |
| <br><u>Age Groups</u>            |  |   |
| less than 35 years               | 49.4                                     | 23.6                                      |
| 35-54                            | 29.4                                     | 40.4                                      |
| 55-64                            | 11.8                                     | 16.7                                      |
| 65 and over                      | 9.3                                      | 19.4                                      |
| <br><u>Children's Age</u>        |  |   |
|                                  | <u>Two or more person household head</u> | <u>1967 CPS. All Families</u>             |
| None under 18                    | 46.9                                     | 44.0                                      |
| 1 child under 18                 | 26.0                                     | 17.8                                      |
| 2 or more under 18               | 27.1                                     | 38.2                                      |
| none under 6                     | 62.8                                     | 71.6                                      |
| 1 or more under 6                | 37.2                                     | 28.4                                      |

| <u>Income</u>    | <u>Two or more person<br/>Household head (%)</u> | <u>1967 CPS. All Families (%)</u> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| \$4999 and under | 27.6   | 28.2                              |
| 5000-6999        | 27.2   | 17.8                              |
| 7000-9999        | 29.4   | 24.4                              |
| 10,000-14,999    | 13.2   | 20.4                              |
| 15,000 or more   | 2.5  | 9.2                               |
| Median Dollars   | \$6620   | \$7440                            |

Education

|                        |      |      |
|------------------------|------|------|
| Less than 8th grade    | 7.5  | 13.2 |
| 8-12 grade             | 74.5 | 64.4 |
| 1 year or more college | 18.0 | 22.4 |
| Median School years    | 11.6 | 12.1 |

Occupations

|  |      |      |
|--|------|------|
| Professional technical   | 7.1  | 10.9 |
| Managers, officers, pro-<br>prietors                             | 8.1  | 15.0 |
| Craftsmen (skilled)  | 21.5 | 16.5 |
| Operatives (semiskilled)   | 21.4 | 15.7 |
| Clerical (sales)   | 7.2  | 10.5 |
| Service  | 4.8  | 6.2  |
| Laborers (non-farm)  | 7.5  | 3.7  |
| Farm Laborers  | 1.4  | 1.0  |
| Not employed or active<br>military duty or not<br>in labor force | 20.9 | 20.5 |



APPENDIX 7

Mobile Home Park Descriptions, 1948-1961

| DATE  | PARK                       | LOCATION       | SIZE (spaces:acres) | LOT SIZE    | FACILITIES, RENT, LANDSCAPING, ETC.   |
|-------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------|---|
| 50    | Bradenton                  | Florida        | 1118:               | 26x35       | \$12/month.   |
| 50    | Sarasota                   | Florida        | 947:                | 1100 sq.ft. | \$14-\$20/month.  |
| 51    | Jacob's Trailer Court      | Milwaukee      | 70:                 | 1500 sf.    | 16x24 patios (concrete); underground utilities. trees on all lawns, as are shrubs, fences. paved streets.   |
| 48-52 | Bay Pines                  | Florida        | 150:                | 50x65       | cabanas added by residents. mail boxes, recreation hall, shuffleboard courts. wash house and laundry.   |
| 48-52 | Bay Palms                  | Florida        | 114:                | 35x45       | many lots with private baths. 1/3 of lots have bay frontage. 80% of residents permanent. little vacancy due to vacationers and transients.  |
| 53    |                            | Hamilton, Ohio | 80:                 | 30x40       | utilities underground. motel and office on same lot. street lighting. recreation building eliminated, as not enough use to warrant maintenance. 30 lots with patios 8x26. homes longer than 40' required 2 lots. laundry to be installed. |
| 54    | Blue Skies Trailer Village | Palm Springs   | : 21                | 1400-2500sf | 30' wide streets. 850' highway frontage. underground utilities. minimum home spacing 18'. luxury park, with pool, recreation building, shopping.  |

| DATE | PARK                          | LOCATION            | SIZE (spaces:acres) | LOT SIZE        | FACILITIES, RENT, LANDSCAPING, ETC.   |
|------|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---|
| 54   | Midway Trailer City           | St. Paul            | 66: 4 1/2<br>18:    | 27x35<br>27x50  | 50 lots with 7x15 patios. Park in 6 sections, 5 with permanent spaces, 1 for storage, vehicles, transients. 80-90% occupancy. trees on each lot.                                  |
| 54   | Green Hills Trailer Park      | K.C., Mo.           | 44:18               | 50x50,<br>50x80 | 8x20 patios. tenants must have grass on their lots. 3 acre playground. laundry and 5 storage rooms in utility building. 35' wide streets. underground utilities. \$30/month rent. |
| 54   | Longview Park                 | Denver              | 57:                 | 25x40<br>25x50  | fenced lawns. sidewalks. extensive recreation program. sponsored activities on holidays.  |
| 54   | Modern Trailer Park and Sales | Montgomery, Alabama | 84:6                | 35x50           | \$20/month. 30' wide streets. trees on each lot. section for sales.   |
| 54   | Potomac Park Trailer Court    | D.C.                | 56:2                |                 | 2 week limit. 3 rows of parking, all at angle; 2 for back-in, 1 for drive-through.  |
| 55   | Al's Trailer Court            | Akron               | 24:16               | 20x40           | expand to 54 lots. City sewerage and water. shopping center nearby. mobile home pad 12 x 40.  |
| 56   | Desert Shores Park            | Tucson              |                     | 30x30,<br>30x45 | also with dealership. 8x18 or 8x24 patios. landscaped, underground utilities. pool and club house.  |

| DATE | PARK        | LOCATION               | SIZE (spaces:acres) | LOT SIZE        | FACILITIES, RENT, LANDSCAPING, ETC.  |
|------|-------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| 58   | Sarasota    | Florida                | 900:                | 35x60           | renovating, doubling lot size. is largest city-owned park in the country, population over 3000. the five community buildings (for toilets and showers) being removed. individual metering of electricity. profit over \$50,000 per year to owners.   |
| 60   | Monet Acres | Palm Beach             | 87:10               | 40x90           | minimum lot size 40x80. lots owned, cost \$1760, plus \$10/month maintenance. homes must be less than 2 years old to get in. paved streets, lit. recreation building. restrictions on children.  |
| 60   | Bradenton   | Florida                | 1188:40             | 26x35-<br>37x42 | 2300 people. 25 shuffleboard courts, 10 horseshoe pitches. Children's playground. auditorium. 3 laundries. rent \$15-\$25/month.   |
| 60   | Sahara Park | Palm Springs           | 212:30              | 45x60           | will expand to 300 units. rents \$55-\$75/month. average age of resident, 67. many cabanas built. style, color and foundation plantings of lots controlled by management.  |
| 61   | The Spruces | Williamstown,<br>Mass. | 234:30              | 40x65           | smallest lot 2300 sf, average 2500 sf. total acreage 231 acres. most lots with patios, 9x35. average resident age 61. streets 35' wide. recreation area 300 yds x 100 yds., with pool, clubhouse, pavilion. restrictions on children--none under 16. rents \$20-\$22/month. all homes must be bought from sales lot. |

| DATE | PARK                    | LOCATION              | SIZE (spaces:acres) | LOT SIZE | FACILITIES, RENT, LANDSCAPINT, ETC.   |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------|---|
| 61   | Coral Roc               | Homestead,<br>Florida | 120:                |          | 120 children in 80 homes. area for children's play. older residents seem to like having children around.  |
| 60   | Town of<br>Ocean Breeze | Florida               | 600:35              |          | incorporated town. 1800 population. 490 spaces, with 1600 people on 24 acres in main section. 300 people on 105 spaces on 11 acres in new section. less than 12 children. |
| 59   | Village of<br>Landfall  | Minnesota             | 400:60              |          | 10 acres are commercial, 10 are part of Tanners Lake. lots angle to street.   |

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