

REPORT OF ATLANTA HOUSING AUTHORITY CONCERNING DEATH OF MRS. JESSIE MAE COLLIER AND CHILDREN AT THE PERRY HOMES HOUSING PROJECT

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The first information the Housing Authority received as to the above occurrence came from a telephone conversation between a maintenance mechanic at Perry Homes and the Manager on Sunday morning, February 26. The Manager, Mr. Arthur F. Smith, had been called out of church to be given the information that the tenants residing in Apartment 726, 2186 Clarrisa Drive, N. W., had been found dead in the apartment. The police had broken into the premises late Saturday night, but had not notified any Housing Authority personnel at the time the occurrence was discovered. The Manager in turn telephoned the Executive Director and it was arranged for the Assistant Technical Director, Mr. Ernest Bathke, to proceed to Perry Homes for an on-the-spot inspection. Mr. Bathke reached the site at about two o'clock Sunday afternoon in company with the Manager, the assistant to the Maintenance Superintendent and a maintenance mechanic, who entered the apartment.

The gas heater located in the living room is vented through a plaster partition and connected to a transite vent located underneath the stairway on a diagonal and connected at the upper end to a vent from the gas water heater, thence to a vertical vent through the roof. The transite vent had become disconnected from the pipe leading through the wall from the heater. The heater may have been exhausting fumes into the apartment at this point. The space heater appeared to be clean and in good condition and this was later confirmed by a detailed examination. The plaster immediately surrounding the opening in the partition had a broken edge rather than a smooth appearance. All other features of the gas system were in good condition. The only evidence of carbon deposit in the room was on a paper bag located on a shelf nearby the vent pipe. There was no evidence of carbon on the windows or walls within the apartment.

The records of the project Maintenance Department were examined and it was determined that in line with instructions from the Central Office to all projects requiring an annual inspection of all heating equipment prior to the heating season, this apartment was inspected on October 20, 1966, and the gas space heater readied for operation. This inspection was conducted by a maintenance group of three persons. Everything was in order except that one glass in the front of the space heater was missing and was replaced. This heating inspection routine also includes cleaning and adjusting the space heater and vacuuming the vent system where necessary. The maintenance log also shows no requests made for service in this apartment subsequent to the October 20 inspection. Since this occurrence, space heaters in all the other apartments in the project have been inspected again and are in good condition.

March 8, 1967