

CHESTER TIMES – August 8, 1912

BIDS ARE ASKED FOR MARCUS HOOK HOUSES – Sixty to Be Built at Once by American Viscose Company – Plans Are Unique

Bids have been asked for the model houses which will be erected for the employees of the American Viscose Company at Marcus Hook by the Architects, Ballinger and Perot of Philadelphia. The bids will be opened August 15, and work will begin as soon as the contracts are awarded.

The first contract will be for the erection of 66 houses, but it is the plan of the company to increase this number each year, until a good sized town of 226 houses has been erected near the works. The officials of the company believe that they have hit upon a plan whereby they may secure the greatest comfort and convenience for their employees and make their mills in great demand among working men.

Totally unlike the plans of any other village or town in America are those prepared for this settlement. Instead of building the houses in rectangular blocks or squares, they will be built upon streets which converge at a semi-circular plaza. The houses will be in rows, those on and nearest to the central plaza being larger and finer than those further away. There will be several grades to suit the varying sizes of the purses of the different employees. The company will own all the houses, and will rent them at the cost of operation.

Last fall Mr. Perot went to Europe for the express purpose of getting ideas for the construction of these houses and the laying out of the plans of the village. He saw all kinds of model villages there, and took the best ideas from each, incorporating them in his plans. Since the village is not to be run for profit, the architects have been able to submerge the purely utilitarian motives of building and devote themselves to the artistic side to a greater degree than could have been possible in a city or in a new town which would be intended to be a commercial venture.

HOUSES ALL HARMONIZE – As a result, their plans show that a certain artistic theme runs through all the houses. They are made to conform and harmonize with each other and blend into a beautiful whole. This does not mean that all the houses will be alike. In fact, there will be a dozen styles on each street but all the styles will be in harmony with all other styles.

The interiors are designed first for comfort and then for beauty. No houses will have less than three sleeping rooms on the second floor, and all will be provided with modern kitchens and bathrooms. There will be no outside wooden sheds, such are found on almost all workingmen's houses in Philadelphia. In fact, the entire structure will be of brick and stone and practically fireproof.

One of the features of the houses is the fact that there will be no side alleys or yards. All houses will be lighted from front and back only, the houses being made particularly wide for this purpose, so as to allow two front rooms facing on the street and two back rooms facing on the back yards. As much attention will be paid to the rear gardens as to the front. There will be no wooden fences, lots being divided by iron railings three feet high.

The fronts of all houses will be terraced and set back from the streets, on which there will be rows of trees. Hedges will mark the division between the front lawns and the sidewalks. Each house will have a cellar and a hot air heater.

The company will provide macadam streets, the water supply, a gas supply and a sewage system equal to that in any city. It will also build sidewalks, with green plots on the curbside. It will make a large flower garden, surrounded by a hedge in the central plaza.

Following are the six contractors who have been asked to bid upon the work: William Provost, Jr., Chester; H. Irving Taylor, Chester; Nolan Brothers, Chester; Harry Brocklehurst, Philadelphia; Frederick C. Michaelson, Philadelphia, and B. Ketetiem's Sons, Philadelphia.

KEITH LOCKHART COLLECTION