EASTER HILL VILLAGE, BUILDING NO. 8
North side of Hinkley Avenue, west of South Twenty-sixth Street
Richmond
Contra Costa
California

HABS CA-2783-A
CA-2783-A

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PACIFIC GREAT BASIN SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1111 Jackson Street
Oakland, CA 94607

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Easter Hill Village, Building No. 8 **HABS No. CA-2783-A**
North side of Hinkley ~~Boulevard~~ Avenue, west of South 26th Street
Richmond
Contra Costa County
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Location: North side of Hinkley ~~Boulevard~~ Avenue, west of South 26th Street

U.S.G.S. Richmond Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercater Coordinates: northwest corner 10.4197417.557557; northernmost point 10.4197464.557687; northeast corner 10.4197354.557875; southeast corner 10.4197235.557872; southwest corner 10.4197233.557673.

Present owner: Richmond Housing Authority

Present use: Demolished in 2004

Most recent use: Public housing project (until late 2003)

Significance: Easter Hill Village has been determined eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. Easter Hill is eligible under Criterion A because of its local significance as part of the effort to address the critical Post-World War II housing shortage in City of Richmond. Easter Hill Village was the most significant public effort to provide affordable permanent housing for many families displaced by the demolition of temporary war housing. Easter Hill Village is eligible under Criterion C because it had significant influence on the design of multi-unit housing. Easter Hill Village was the first multi-unit residential development to combine the twin themes of the planned unit development with the individuation of units. The design was also unique for its time in the care given to integrating a multi-unit residential development to its site. Easter Hill Village also is an important design by master architects Donald Hardison and Vernon DeMars, and landscape architect Laurence Halprin. The design of Easter Hill Village had at least statewide, if not national significance and influence. The period of significance under Criteria A and C is 1953 to 1954. The boundary of the eligible resource is the boundaries of the original Easter Hill Village project except Buildings 2, 3, 4 and 6 that have lost their historic integrity.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.

B. Historical Context

Please refer to the " Narrative " report, HABS No. CA-2783.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

Building 8 is one of forty-one surviving buildings in the Easter Hill Village complex. As originally built in 1953-1954, the complex consisted of forty-eight buildings that were similar in construction, finishing materials, and general architectural character. All buildings were one or two stories in height and consisted of one or more modules that were linked end-to-end. The buildings varied principally in the finish of their second stories and in the number of modules that they contained. (The basic modules are identified on original plans with a letter from A to E; variations indicated by a number suffix, and by the letter "R" for reverse plans.)

Building 8 consists of three modules linked end-to-end. The modules are setback relative to each other, creating a staggered or stepped footprint. On the original plans, these modules are labeled as (from north to south) modules C-2, C-1, and DR.

Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783, for a description of the elevation, plan, and architectural character of these modules, and of the Easter Hill complex as a whole.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions

Building 8 is two stories in height and 111'-10" in length, from north to south. The building faces east, toward a courtyard that it shares with Building 10.

In its plan, Building 8 is divided into three modules: C-2 to the north, C-1 in the middle, and DR to the south. Each of these modules is 26'-0" in depth and contains two living units. The three modules are staggered, with the middle module set back 6'-6" from the northernmost one, and the southernmost module set back the same distance from the middle one.

Each module is 33'-0" in length, except for the southernmost, D-R, which has an extension at its southwest corner, and is 45'-9" in length.

2. Foundations

Building 8 has a reinforced concrete perimeter foundation.

3. Walls and structural system

Like all buildings in Easter Hill Village, Building 8 is stud-framed in construction. The first story of the building is clad in stucco on all four sides, and the second story is clad in wooden board-and-batten siding on all four sides. These surface treatments wrap around the corners of the setbacks to create a continuous treatment across each elevation. The second story overhangs the first story by sixteen inches for the entire length of the east and west elevations.

The main façade is along one of the long sides, that facing east. Entrances to five of the six units can be found in this façade. The rear of the building is in the other long façade, that facing west. Each of the six units has a back door on this side of the building.

A one-story extension can be found at the south end of the building. This extension serves as the entrance for the southernmost unit and contains a bedroom for that unit.

The stucco surfaces are painted salmon-beige, and the board-and-batten siding is painted brown. This coloring is not original.

4. Porches

Each unit in this building possesses its own entrance porch. Five of the porches are located along the main (east) façade. These consist of concrete decks raised several inches off the ground, and plain wooden railings supported by plain wooden posts. Metal awnings cover each of these porch decks, which measure about five feet by eight feet. These porches, including railings and awnings, are non-original.

The sixth entrance porch is located in the extension and serves the southernmost unit. It has a concrete deck and wooden railing, and is protected by an extension of the gabled roof of the ell. Square wooden posts support this porch roof. The porch measures about four feet by twelve feet.

5. Openings

All exterior doors are wooden hollow core doors, opening inward. Over each door is a security grille with dense metal screen that opens outward. Both the doors and the security grilles have deadbolt locks. These doors and grilles are non-original.

As is the case elsewhere in Easter Hill Village, all windows in this building are of three types: single windows measuring about three feet in width by four feet in height, paired windows measuring about seven feet in width by four feet in height, and bathroom windows measuring about three and one-half feet in width by two feet in height.

In the main (east) façade, fenestration across the entire second story is symmetrical, with single windows at each end and paired windows in-between. In the first story, the arrangement of singles windows, paired windows and doors is essentially random. Some doors are adjacent to single windows, and some are adjacent to paired windows. In the south façade (facing Hinkley Boulevard), single windows can be found in the first and second stories and in the one-story extension, and a vent is in the tip of the second story gable. In the symmetrical north façade, there are two single windows in each story and a vent in the gable. In the rear (west) façade, fenestration in the second story consists of five pairs of windows, three pairs of bathroom windows, and a single window at the north end. The first story contains five single windows and one paired window, each of which is adjacent to one of the six doors in this façade.

6. Roof

The roof is gabled, with extended eaves. There are breaks in the roofline where the modules are set back from each other, creating the impression of a separate roof over each module. The roof of the one-story extension is also gabled, and extends west beyond the wall plane to cover the porch. Metal gutters run the length of each of the long sides of the roof. The eaves in this building do not have exposed rafters.

C. Description of Interiors

1. Floor plans

a. Basement

Building 8 contains no basement.

b. Apartment floor plans

Modules C-1 and C-2 each contain two townhouses. The entrance door in each of these townhouses opens directly into the living room. In each townhouse the stair to the second floor divides the first floor plan into two primary spaces - a living room in front, and a kitchen area in back. A rear door in the kitchen opens out to the back yard. A storage room opens off of one side of the kitchen. In the second floor, the bedrooms and bathroom open to the landing at the top of the stair. The bedrooms in both units vary in size from about nine feet by eleven feet to eleven feet by twelve feet. In both the C-1 and C-2 modules, the right (north) unit has 3 bedrooms and the left (south) unit has two bedrooms.

Module DR includes two townhouses - a two-bedroom unit on the right (north) and a four-bedroom end unit on the left (south). The entrance to the two-bedroom unit opens directly into the living room. As in C-1 and C-2, above, the stair to the second floor divides the first floor plan into two primary spaces - a living room in front, and a kitchen area in back. A rear door in the kitchen opens out to the back yard. A storage room opens off of one side of the kitchen. In the second floor, the two bedrooms and bathroom open to the landing at the top of the stair. These bedrooms measure about nine feet by twelve feet and ten feet by twelve feet.

The entrance to the four-bedroom unit is set into the single-story gabled extension that is set back from the front façade. Turning left from the small entrance hall, one enters one of the unit's four bedrooms (also located in the extension). Turning right, one enters the two-story portion of the townhouse. Straight ahead is the stairway to the second floor, to the left is the kitchen with storage room, and to the right is the living room. In the second story, the landing at the top of the stairway opens into the three bedrooms on this floor and the bathroom. The bedrooms in this unit vary in size from about nine feet by eleven feet to eleven feet by twelve feet.

Each bedroom in the building has its own closet. A storage room is adjacent to each kitchen, with an opening between the two spaces near the back door. In the C-1 and C-2 modules, a coat closet can be found on the first floor of each unit, beneath the staircase. A linen closet is on the second floor of each unit, near the stairway landing and adjacent to the bathroom. In the DR module, the linen closet is in the kitchen, near the hallway.

2. Flooring

Floors are covered with non-original twelve-inch vinyl tiles.

3. Wall and ceiling finish

Interior walls and ceilings are finished with gypsum board. The walls have been repainted so that they are textured. Exposed ceiling beams can be found in the living rooms and kitchens. These have been painted to match the ceilings.

4. Openings and trim

Plain wood trim two inches in width surround each window and door opening. Baseboards are plastic, and three inches in height.

5. Doors to bedroom and linen closets, storage rooms

All bedrooms originally had open closets, while linen closets had wood paneled doors. Storage rooms were open. All of these spaces are now closed with hollow-core doors.

6. Kitchen fixtures

The kitchens in all units have been remodeled in the last twenty years. Each kitchen originally had pine cabinets with open shelving. The original cabinets were replaced with wooden cabinets with hinged doors, Formica counters, and aluminum sinks. These cabinets are left with a natural finish. The stoves are also not original, and the refrigerators have been removed.

7. Bathroom fixtures

All bathroom fixtures in Easter Hill Village – toilets, sinks, showers, and cabinets -- are recent replacement fixtures. The units were originally built with bathtubs but no showers.

8. Lighting and heating fixtures

The heating in each unit originally consisted of wall heaters that have been removed. New, larger gas wall heaters have been installed in the living rooms. Fluorescent lighting is in each kitchen, and incandescent lights are in the living room and bedrooms.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation

Building 8 is located on the north side of Hinkley Boulevard. It faces east, toward its mirror-image, Building 10, and with which it shares a common courtyard. In the courtyard between these buildings are three very large boulders, seven small to medium-sized boulders, and two trees. Sidewalks in front of the buildings lead north, where they converge upon a series of steps leading up a steep hill toward buildings 19, 30, 31, and 32. One boulder can also be found in the south yard of Building 8.

Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783 for more on the general setting at Easter Hill Village.

2. Historic landscape

See "Narrative" report, CA-2783.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings

The original 1953 Easter Hill Village plans and specifications are on file at the architectural firm of Hardison, Komatsu, Ivelich & Tucker, 538 Ninth Street, Suite 240, Oakland, CA 94607.

B. Interviews

Hardison, Donald. Personal communication with Marjorie Dobkin. January 2003.
_____. Personal communication with Ward Hill and William Kostura. October 2003.
Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783, for more interviews.

C. Bibliography

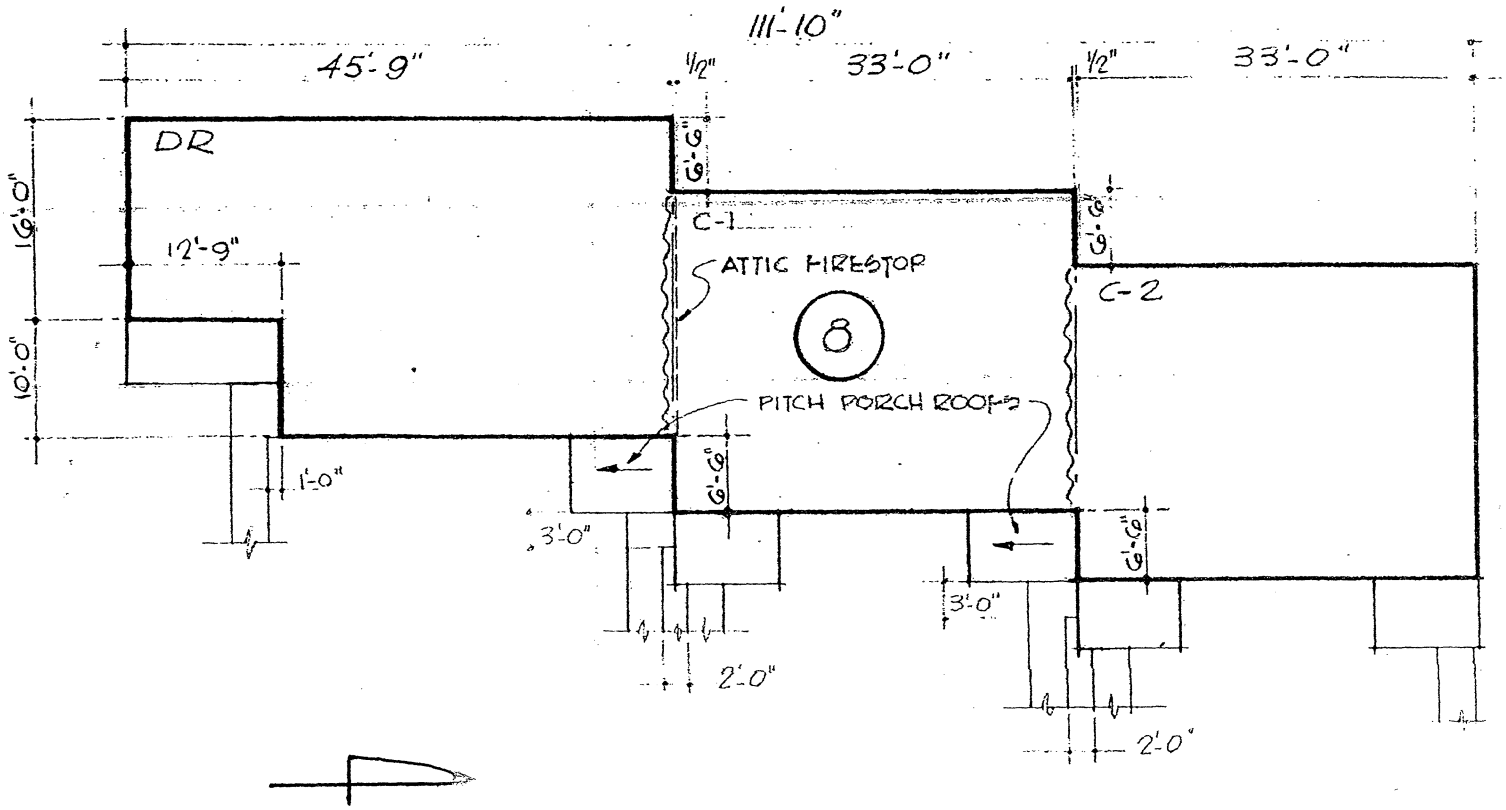
Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Historic American Building Survey documentation was undertaken as a mitigation measure as per the Memorandum of Agreement between the Richmond Housing Authority and the California State Office of Historic Preservation. The City of Richmond Housing Authority as part of the Hope VI Revelopment Project demolished forty-one (237 units) buildings of the existing forty-five buildings in the Easter Hill Village complex (including removing existing landscape features) in May 2004 for the

construction of 219 new multi-family rental-housing units, thirty for-sale detached houses, and fourteen for-sale town-homes would be developed. On a vacant site just east of Easter Hill Village, an additional forty for-sale detached houses would be developed. A total of 303 new housing units will be constructed as part of this project.

The documentation was prepared during the period of October 2003 to July 2004. The narrative report is a collaboration of three individuals: Historian Marjorie Dobkin prepared the sections on social history regarding Richmond during and after World War II and on Easter Hill Village and the section on the history of the Easter Hill Village design; Landscape historian Denise Bradley prepared the description and historic background sections on the Easter Hill Village landscape design and the biographical material on landscape architect Lawrence Halprin; Architectural historian Ward Hill prepared the sections on the Modern Movement in architecture, the Bay Region Tradition and the general historical background of the City of Richmond. Architectural historian William Kostura prepared the Outline Format reports on the forty-one individual Easter Hill Village buildings (original building numbers 8 to 48) demolished for the project.



Sketch plan for Building No. 8, showing the arrangement of modules. For module plans, please see the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.