

EASTER HILL VILLAGE, BUILDING NO. 29  
West side of Corto Square  
Richmond  
Contra Costa  
California

HABS CA-2783-V  
CA-2783-V

WAB  
1/11/83

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. 29**  
**West side of Corto Square**  
**Richmond**  
**Contra Costa County**  
**California**

**HABS No. CA-2783-V**

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**Location:** West side of Corto Square

U.S.G.S. Richmond Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator 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 29 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 were indicated by a number suffix, and by the letter "R" for reverse plans.)

Building 29 consists of two reverse-image modules, C-3 and C-3R, linked end-to-end. The C-3 module is setback relative to the C-3R module, creating a stepped footprint. The building is removed a substantial distance from Corto Square, and is connected with that square and with other buildings by walkways.

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 29 is two stories in height and 66'-0" in length. The building faces northeast, toward Corto Square.

In its plan, Building 29 is divided into two modules: C-3 to the northwest, and C-3R to the southeast. Each of these modules is 33'-0" in length and 26'-0" in depth and contains two living units. The C-3 module is set back from the other module by 6'-6".

## **2. Foundations**

Building 29 has a reinforced concrete perimeter foundation.

## **3. Walls and structural system**

Like all buildings in Easter Hill Village, Building 29 is stud-framed in construction. Both stories are clad in stucco on all four sides. The second story overhangs the first story by sixteen inches along both of the long elevations.

The main façade is along one of the long sides, that facing northeast. Entrances to two of the four units can be found in this façade. The rear of the building is in the other long façade, that facing southwest. Each of the four units has a back door on this side of the building. The short facades are on the northwest and southeast sides of the building. Each of these facades contains an entrance porch.

The stucco surfaces are painted salmon-beige. This coloring is not original.

## **4. Porches**

Each unit in this building possesses its own entrance porch. Two of the porches are located along the main (northeast) façade, another is in the northwest façade, and the last is in the southeast facade. These consist of concrete decks raised several inches off the ground, and plain wooden railings supported by plain wooden posts. The porches measure about five feet by eight feet. Metal awnings cover each of the porch decks. All of these materials are non-original.

## **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 (northeast) façade, fenestration across the second story is symmetrical, with single windows at each end and four pairs of windows

in-between. The first story is also symmetrical, with centered doors that are adjacent to paired windows, and two single windows at each end. The rear (southwest) façade is also symmetrical. In the second story, paired windows are in the center of the façade, single windows are at the ends, and pairs of bathroom windows are between them. In the first story, four back doors and four single windows are symmetrically arranged, with doors centered in each module and flanked by single windows. The southeast and northwest facades are identical, and nearly symmetrical, with two single windows in each story and a door centered in the first story.

## **6. Roof**

The roof is gabled, with extended eaves. Rafters are exposed; their ends are hidden by metal gutters that run along the long sides of the roof. There is a break in the roofline where one module is set back from the other, creating the impression of two separate roofs on this building.

## **C. Description of Interiors**

### **1. Floor plans**

#### **a. Basement**

Building 29 contains no basement.

#### **b. Apartment floor plans**

Each of the modules contains 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 vary in size from about nine feet by eleven feet to eleven feet by twelve feet. In the C-3 module, the right (northwest) unit has 3 bedrooms and the left (southeast) unit has two bedrooms. In the C-3R module, this arrangement is reversed.

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. 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.

**2. Flooring**

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

**3. Wall and ceiling finish**

Please refer to the "Outline" report for Building 8, HABS No. CA-2783-A.

**4. Openings and trim**

Please refer to the "Outline" report for Building 8, HABS No. CA-2783-A.

**5. Doors to bedroom and linen closets, storage rooms**

Please refer to the "Outline" report for Building 8, HABS No. CA-2783-A.

**6. Kitchen fixtures**

Please refer to the "Outline" report for Building 8, HABS No. CA-2783-A.

**7. Bathroom fixtures**

Please refer to the "Outline" report for Building 8, HABS No. CA-2783-A.

**8. Lighting and heating fixtures**

Please refer to the "Outline" report for Building 8, HABS No. CA-2783-A.

**D. Site**

**1. General setting and orientation**

Building 29 is located a substantial distance west of Corto Square. It is connected with that square, and with buildings to the north and south (buildings 28 and 30) by curvilinear walkways. Connecting walkways lead west, down a hillside toward Hinkley Court. Many boulders can be found in a grassy area to the east of this building, near Corto Square. Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783 for more on the general setting of buildings at Easter Hill Village.

## 2. Historic landscape

Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. 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

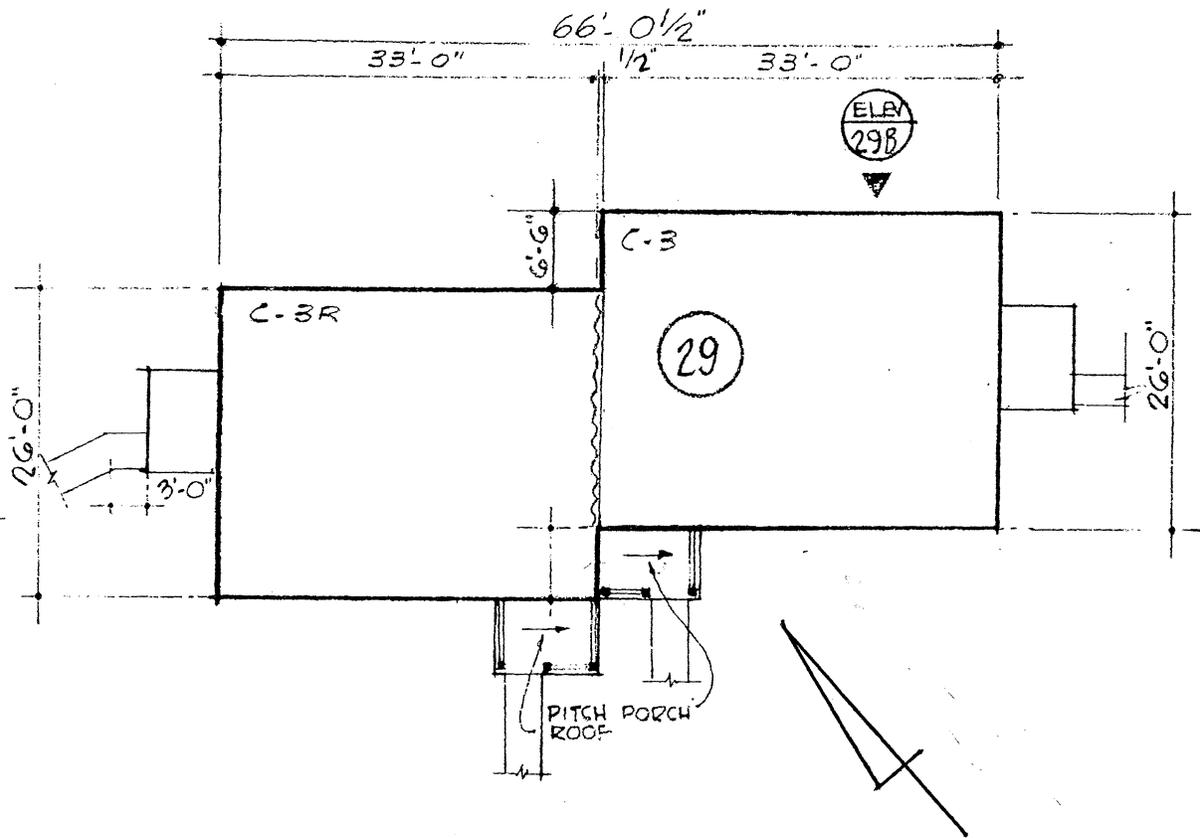
Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.

### 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. 29, showing the arrangement of modules. For module plans, please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.