

EASTER HILL VILLAGE, BUILDING NO. 30
Southwest corner of Corto Square
Richmond
Contra Costa
California

HABS CA-2783-W
CA-2783-W

118
CA

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

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(page 1)

Location: Southwest corner 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 30 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 30 consists of one rectangular module, which is labeled on original plans as module A. It contains four living units, two in the first story and two in the second story. The second story units were reached by exterior staircases that were originally made of wood but which were replaced by the present concrete staircases. This is contrast with most other buildings in Easter Hill Village, which were built as townhouses or duplexes.

There is no obvious main façade in Building 30. Entrances are in the short (east and west) facades, and there are no back doors. The building is clad solely in stucco, without any wooden siding on the second story. In these respects, Building 30 is similar to the other "module A" buildings, numbers 31, 32, and 42, and is different from the other two-story buildings in Easter Hill Village. Another difference between the "module A" buildings and other two story buildings in the complex is that the second story in these buildings does not overhand the first story; the walls are flush from the ground to the roofline.

The "module A" buildings are also distinctive in the way the gabled roofs extend several feet beyond the end walls to cover the exterior staircases.

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

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions

Building 30 is two stories in height and 44'-6" in length, from east to west. The long sides face north, toward Building 29 and Corto Square, and south, toward a steep bluff.

In its plan, Building 30 consists of one rectangular module, module A. It is 44'-6" in length and 26'-0" in depth and contains four living units.

2. Foundations

Building 30 has a reinforced concrete perimeter foundation.

3. Walls and structural system

Like all buildings in Easter Hill Village, Building 30 is stud-framed in construction. Both stories are clad in stucco on all four sides.

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

4. Porches

All four living units in this building are entered via the east and west façades. Centered in the first story of each façade is a concrete porch deck that serves the first story units. On the west side of the building the porch is reached by a series of five concrete steps with a metal railing; on the east side it is reached by steps and by a concrete wheelchair ramp.

The second story units are reached by exterior concrete staircases with metal railings. The landings for these staircases are located directly above the first story porches.

All of these porches, staircases, and wheelchair ramp are non-original, having replaced wooden staircases and porches.

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.

Windows in this building are of four types: larger paired windows, smaller paired windows, single windows, and bathroom windows. The two types of paired windows are very similar in appearance, with only a slight difference in size.

In the south façade, the windows are symmetrically arranged in each story, with larger paired windows at the ends and smaller paired windows between these. In the north façade, the windows are also symmetrical in each story, with larger paired windows at the ends and bathroom windows between them. In the short (east and west) façades, a single window can be found next to a door in each story.

6. Roof

The roof is side gabled, with extended eaves on all sides. On the east and west sides, the eaves extend about five feet beyond the walls in order to cover and protect the porches and second story landings. The soffits of these extended eaves are made of wood. Both the purlins and rafters are exposed in this roof. Metal gutters run the length of the long sides of the roof.

C. Description of Interiors

1. Floor plans

a. Basement

Building 30 contains no basement. The foundation, however, rises to a height of about three feet above the ground on the south side of the building to account for the downward slope of the ground on that side.

b. Apartment floor plans

Building 30 contains four apartments, two on each story. The two first-story apartments are mirror images of each other, and the two second-story apartments are identical to those directly below them. In each apartment, the front door opens directly into the living room, which measures about eleven feet by seventeen feet. The living room, in turn, opens through a doorway into the kitchen. A hallway leads from the living room to a bedroom and a bathroom. The bedroom measures about eleven feet by thirteen feet in area.

Each bedroom in the building has its own closet. A storage room is adjacent to each kitchen. A coat closet can be found in each

unit near the entry. A linen closet can be found at the end of the hallway, near 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 30 is one of a cluster of three originally-identical buildings located around the south end of Corto Square. (The others are buildings 31 and 32.) South of Building 30 is a steep bluff that overlooks Building 4 (which has been remodeled) and the former site of Building 7 (demolished). In the commons area directly north of Building 30 and southwest of Corto Square are many boulders.

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

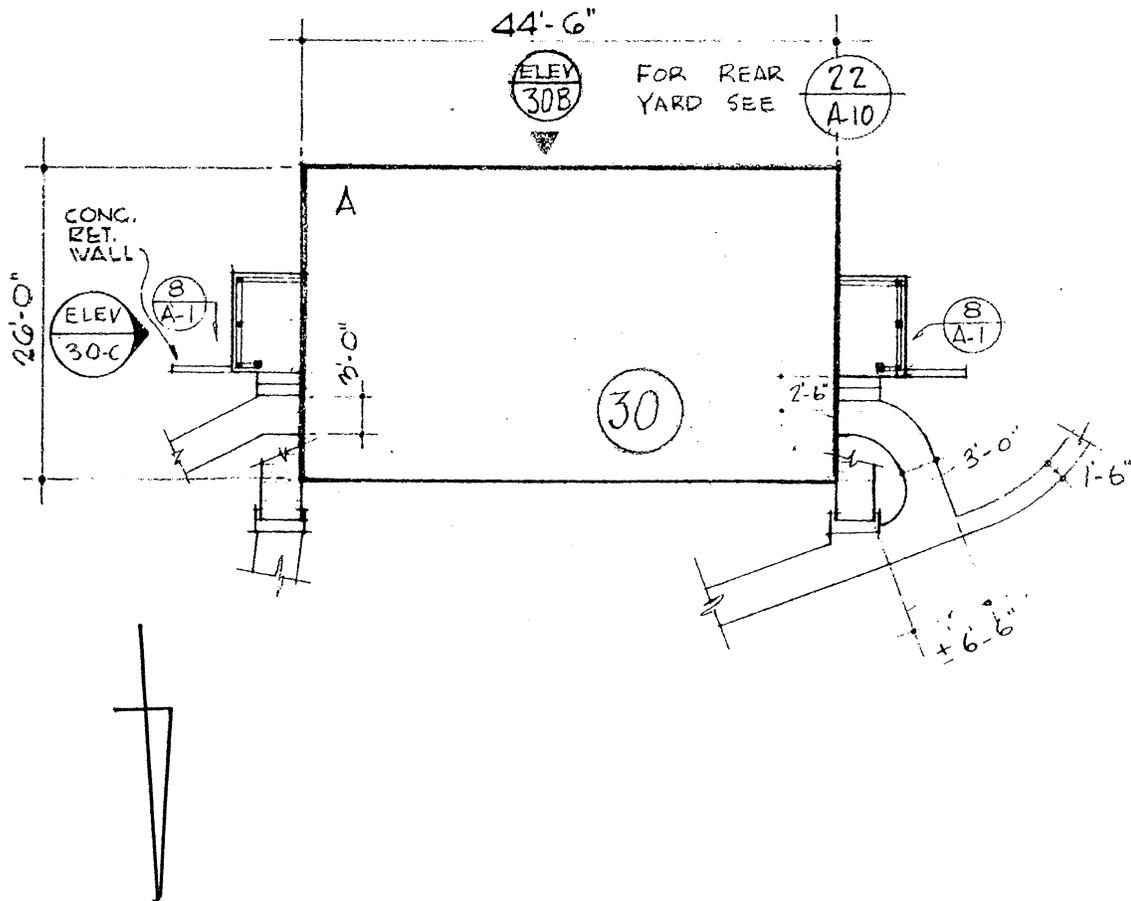
Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.

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. 30. For a module plan, please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.