

EASTER HILL VILLAGE, BUILDING NO. 36  
Northeast corner of Foothill Avenue & South Twenty-sixth Street  
Richmond  
Contra Costa  
California

HABS CA-2783-AC  
CA-2783-AC

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. 36**  
**Northeast corner of Foothill Avenue & South 26<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Richmond**  
**Contra Costa County**  
**California**

**HABS No. CA-2783-AC**

HABS  
CA-2783-AC  
(page 4)

- Location:** Northeast corner of Foothill Avenue and South 26<sup>th</sup> Street
- 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 36 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 36 consists of four modules linked end-to-end. The end modules are set back relative to the two middle modules other, creating a staggered or stepped footprint. On the original plans, these modules are labeled as (from north to south) modules A-1, BR, BR, and C-3. There are two townhouses in each of the BR and C-3 modules, plus two apartments, one per story, in the A-1 module, for a total of eight units in this building.

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 36 is two stories in height and 118'-5" in length, from north to south. The building faces west, toward South 26<sup>th</sup> Street.

In its plan, Building 36 is divided into four modules: A-1 to the north, followed by two BR modules, and C-3 module to the south. Each of these modules is 26'-0" in depth and contains two living units. The modules are staggered, with the BR modules set forward 6'-6" from their neighbors.

The A-1 module is 22'-3" in length, the BR modules are 31'-6" in length, and the C-3 module is 33'-0" in length.

## **2. Foundations**

Building 36 has a reinforced concrete perimeter foundation.

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

Like all buildings in Easter Hill Village, Building 36 is stud-framed in construction. The entire building is clad in stucco on all sides, except for the second story of the C-3 module, at the southern end of the building, which is clad in horizontal wood siding. In the C-3 module the second story overhangs the first story by sixteen inches along the east and west elevations. In the three northernmost (BR and A-1) modules, the walls are flush from the ground to the roof.

The main façade is along one of the long sides, that facing west. Entrances to five of the eight units can be found in this façade. The rear of the building is in the other long façade, that facing east. Six of the units have back doors on this side of the building. The north façade contains entrances to two units, and the south façade also contains an entrance.

The stucco surfaces are painted salmon-beige, and the horizontal wood 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 (west) façade. These consist of concrete decks raised several inches off the ground, and plain wooden railings supported by plain wooden posts. These posts rise above the level of the railings to support trellises that cover each porch. The porches measure about five feet by eight feet.

On the north side of the building porches can be found in each story, one directly above the other. The upper story porch deck is concrete laid in a steel frame, and is reached via a concrete and steel staircase. Both porches and the staircase are provided with metal railings.

All porches, including the trellises and railings, and the staircase 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 (west) façade, fenestration across the second story consists of six paired windows and five single windows in an essentially random arrangement. In the first story, the arrangement of six single windows, five paired windows, and five doors is likewise essentially random. Some doors are adjacent to single windows, and some are adjacent to paired windows.

In the rear (north façade), fenestration and placement of door openings is likewise essentially random. In the second story, there are six paired windows, one single window (at the south end), and seven bathroom windows. The latter are paired, save in the A-1 module at the north end. In the first story there are six single windows, a paired window (at the north end), six doors, and a bathroom window. All of the back doors are adjacent to single windows.

In the north façade, there is a single window next to a door centered in each story. In the south façade, there are two windows in each story, plus a door centered in the first story adjacent to one of the windows.

## 6. Roof

The roof is gabled, with extended eaves. There are breaks in the roofline where the BR modules are set forward from the adjacent modules, and there is also a slight break in the roof where the BR modules meet, due to elevation change. These breaks create the impression of separate roofs on this building. On the north side of the building, the roof extends several feet beyond the wall plane to cover the porches and staircase on that side. On this side the purlins are exposed to view. The eaves on the long (east and west) sides have exposed rafters. The rafter ends are hidden by metal gutters that run the length of the building. Two rectangular, wooden, stucco-clad chimneys can be found over the BR modules in this building.

## **C. Description of Interiors**

### **1. Floor plans**

#### **a. Basement**

Building 36 contains no basement.

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

The northernmost module, A-1, contains two identical apartments, one on each story. 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.

Module BR contains two townhouses, each with two bedrooms. The front door in each unit opens directly into the living room. Toward the rear of each living room is a doorway to the kitchen, which in turn connects with a storage room. A door to the back porch can be found in the back wall of the kitchen.

From the living room in each unit of Module BR a staircase leads to the second floor. A small hallway at the top of the staircase leads to each of the two bedrooms and a bathroom. The bedrooms measure about ten feet by eleven feet and eleven feet by twelve feet.

Module C-3 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 in both modules vary in size, from about nine feet by eleven feet to eleven feet by twelve feet. The right (south) unit has 3 bedrooms and the left (north) unit has two bedrooms.

Each bedroom in the building has its own closet. In the A-1 module a coat closet is off of the living room and the linen closet is at the end of the hallway, near the hallway. In the BR module, the coat closet is off the living room and the linen closet is off a

small hallway at the top of the staircase. In the C-3 module a coat closet can be found on the first floor of each unit, beneath the staircase. A linen closet is on the second floor, 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 36 is located on the northeast corner of South 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Foothill Avenue. This is the northernmost building in the Easter Hill Village complex. Private development, mainly single family housing, can be found in the blocks to the north and west of this building (across Cutting Boulevard and South 26<sup>th</sup> Street, respectively), and on the land to the east. Building 37 is directly east of Building 36, and Building 35 can be found across Foothill Avenue, to the south. One boulder is placed in the yard at the southwest corner of Building 36. A large tree and a few boulders can be found at the north end of the building.

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**

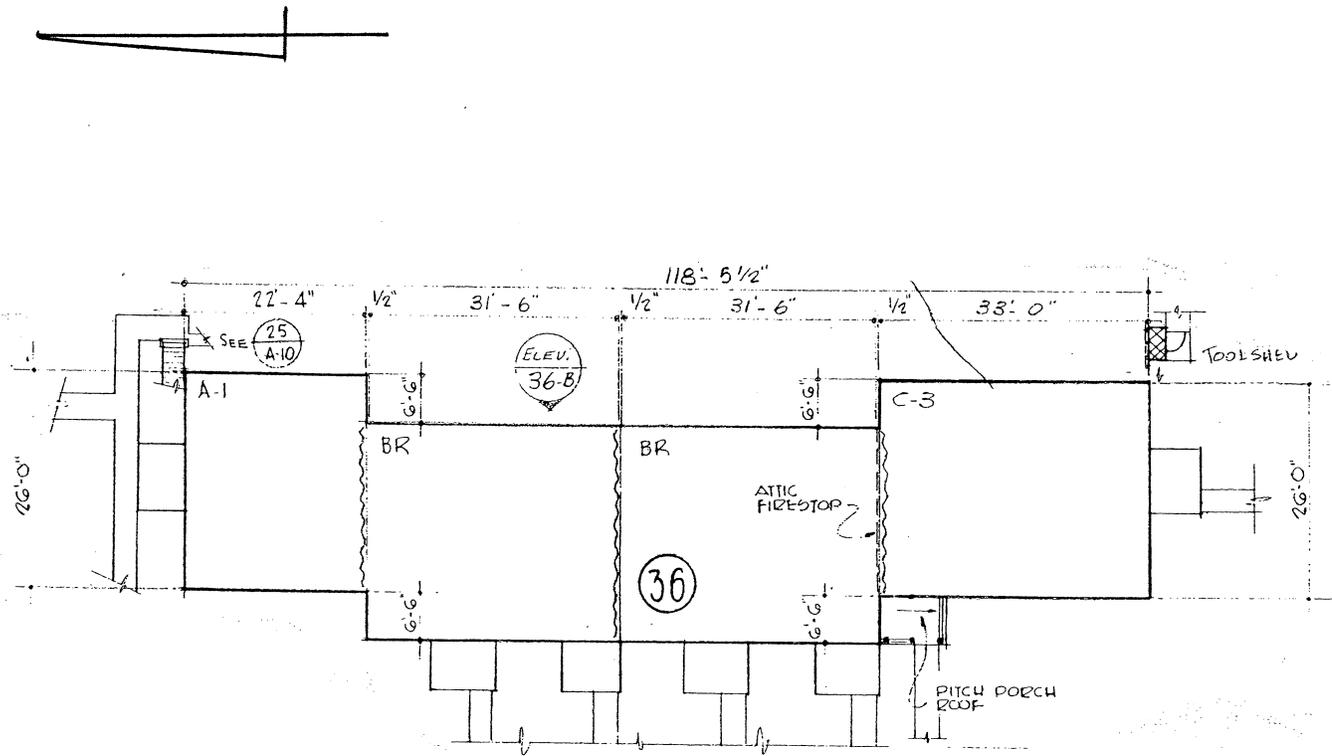
Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.

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