

PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO, MAIN POST, LAUNDRY BIN
STRUCTURE
(Building No. 46)
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
46 Hardie Avenue
San Francisco
San Francisco County
California

HABS CA-2861
HABS CA-2861

HABS
CA-2861

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Presidio of San Francisco, Main Post, Laundry Bin Structure (Building 46)

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Location: 46 Hardie Avenue
West of Building 47 (garage), east of Building 48 (garage) and south of Building 49, at the south side of the paved driveway to the service entrance of Building 50 (Visitor Center & Officer's Club) and south of Moraga Street
Presidio of San Francisco, Golden Gate National Recreation Area
San Francisco
San Francisco County
California 94129

U.S.G.S. San Francisco North Quadrangle; Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 10/547654/4183438

Present Owner
And Occupant: Presidio Trust (owner and occupant)

Significance: Building 46 is a contributor to the Presidio of San Francisco National Historic Landmark District (NHLD). The NHLD registration form lists the structure as a "very small ancillary shed." The building's significance is most closely tied to the (NHLD) Significant Dates: 1941, Entrance of the United States into World War II.¹

Part 1. Historical Information

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of erection:** Ca. 1941
2. **Architect:** Unknown
3. **Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:**
 - a. **Owners:** United States Army, 1897 to 1994; National Park Service, 1994 to 1996; Presidio Trust, 1996 to present.
 - b. **Occupants and Uses:**

¹ Presidio NHLD Update, 1993, 7.

(Known occupants and uses with date estimates based on limited available evidence).
Ca. 1940 – ca. 1992: Post Exchange, “storage for dirty laundry”² and “Storage, Officers Club”³
Ca. 1992 to Present: Not in use during this period.

4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** U.S. Army Post Exchange (Main Post), possibly Works Progress Administration funded.
5. **Original plans and construction:** Not Available
6. **Alterations and additions:** Much or all of this ancillary shed that measures approximately 5’ x 10’ in plan appears to have been replaced within the last thirty years. The Physical History Report based on a 1992 site visit states that the shed was “totally rebuilt according to one of the employees of the Presidio Officer’s Club in 1972.” Although neither the source of this statement nor its accuracy could be verified there are both physical and documentary evidence that suggest that much if not all of the structure is rebuilt. Physical alterations from the late 20th century include 2” x 4” studs with dimensions and labeling of that period, laminate plywood and light-gauge corrugated tin on interior surfaces, replacement foundation posts and skirt boards, and an entirely new roof structure that includes later 2” x 4” rafters and plywood sheathing, and replaced corrugated tin with asphalt shingle roofing. These elements show that most or all of the structure was altered by the replacement of original materials with newer materials. The exterior walls could be either original or replacement materials. Walls consist of horizontal tongue and groove boards with narrow cornice and corner boards. Raised surrounds and paired doors for access to the laundry bin interior are also potentially from the 1940’s or the late 20th century.

Documents from 1975 to 1977 record extensive efforts to repair all aspects of deferred maintenance at laundry facilities at the Presidio. Most centered on the primary laundry facility, Building 1047. The work done on Building 46 may have been funded under these allocations.⁴ A 1981 photo that is part of a report of that year inventorying buildings and uses for hazardous waste purposes shows a recently painted structure with a new roof structure, including simple cornice boards, and asphalt shingle roofing.⁵

B. Historical Context:

² National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Building Reference 46, Collection ADPWEMS-2, Box 4, undated.

³ National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, GOGA 35300, 41-50, Box 1, Folder 11/24.

⁴ National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Army Real Estate Records, Laundry and Steam Plant, Index 294-75 (Military Construction Project No. T080), Collection ADPWEMR-003 058/095.

⁵ National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Collection ADPWE-001 038B/037, Remove Oil Drums and Piping, 46, Building 2 FOMA (Photos).

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) may have funded the erection of the ancillary wood-frame shed in 1940 or 1941, when the WPA funded the concrete garages, buildings 47 and 48 that stand on either side of the shed, and garage Building 44 and possibly a fourth garage (demolished) that stood behind Building 42.⁶ Builders may have worked in the Army carpentry or cabinetry departments. Records of any kind for Building 46 itself are scarce due to its probable low construction cost and lack of operational importance. Historic use of the shed structure is, however, clearly recorded in two undated Army records as “Storage for Dirty Laundry”⁷ and as “Storage, Officers Club.”⁸ Evidence of its construction and use are best understood in the context of World War II build-up in the southern corner of the Main Post (i.e. site of the former El Presidio) and laundry services for the Main Post.

The NHLHD registration form lists the structure as a “very small ancillary shed” with a construction date of 1941, whereas Thompson’s *Historic Resource Study* gives a 1940 date.⁹ This discrepancy cannot be reconciled by available evidence. In aerial photographs the location of the shed is obscured by tree canopies and the only two photos found date from 1981. At 10’ x 5’ in plan, the small shed may have been moved to its present location, and it may have inherited its number from an earlier, no longer extant building. A neighboring field officers quarters, Building 46 (formerly Building 17), was demolished after July 1941.¹⁰ Its number “46” was reassigned to the laundry shed. Assignment of this number to the laundry shed implies a contemporaneous construction date with neighboring buildings 47 and 48 (built in 1941). The fact that Building 46 does not appear on the Main Post map dated 1943 is probably due to its lack of operational importance and small footprint. Also, it may have been in a different location in 1943. The Army likely constructed the laundry bin sometime after 1940 as part of the World War II temporary build up of the upper Main Post area with the particular use of laundry pick-up efficiency for many new bachelor officers quarters in the area, as well as an existing one (i.e. Building 42, built in 1904). It was built as a temporary structure and was also referenced as Building T46. A “T” prefix identified temporary buildings in some Army records. An Army photo from 1981 shows the building with an address label of “T46” on the front cornice board. The building appears to have served originally as storage for dirty laundry based on an undated Space Utilization Data Collection Sheet. In that record the Army refers to the building as “storage for dirty laundry” and identifies its “type const” (sic) as “T” for temporary. Building 46 is most closely associated with the temporary barracks buildings 40 and 41, also constructed early in the World War II build up. Nearby Building 42, a substantial Colonial Revival style brick bachelor officers quarters, stands in sharp contrast to the temporary structures erected for World War II. Collectively these barracks housed 120 officers. Along with serving the Officers Club

⁶ National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Presidio Building Book, Building 47 and Building 48.

⁷ National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Building Reference 46, Collection ADPWEMS-2, Box 4, undated.

⁸ National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, GOGA 35300, 41-50, Box 1, Folder 11/24.

⁹ Thompson, *Defender of the Gate*, Vol. 1, 706; Alley et al, Presidio NHLD Update, 1993, 7-163.

¹⁰ National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Presidio Building Book, Building 46.

(Building 50), Building 46 likely served the need for a central bin for dirty laundry storage for pick-up and delivery to the central laundry facility, Building 1047.

Building 46 has a new roof and roof structure, new floor for the inside bin, and scrap carpentry components to serve as a wood foundation, horizontal board skirting, and interior wall structure. There is a possibility that the majority of the structure was altered by replacement materials, that it may have been entirely reconstructed in the 1970's, and that it was moved to its current location either after or during its NHLD period of significance. Buildings in this area of the Main Post provided two primary functions: the provision of bachelor officers' quarters (buildings 40, 41 and 42) and as a center of social life for officers and their families at the Officer's Club (Building 50) and Chapel (Building 45). The Officers' Club, a portion of which dates from the Spanish and Mexican era, was extensively remodeled in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1934. In ca. 1942 a Spanish Colonial Revival-inspired, stucco covering replaced the clapboard on the former 1882 schoolhouse, Building 49.¹¹ Building 46, the laundry shed, is built of a much lighter construction type than the concrete neighboring garage whose construction had been approved by the Secretary of War in 1938¹² or other buildings predating World War II build up. Building 46 is more akin to the temporary buildings 40 and 41:

Constructed in 1941, for \$30,300 each, as temporary buildings to serve rapidly expanded activities associated with World War II, this pair of adjacent and identical two-story buildings each housed 32 officers. Their long rectangular plans are axial in orientation and measure 30' x 147'. Axial gable roofs have skirt-roof extensions continuing across the gable ends; a second skirt roof projects from the wall between the first and second stories. These buildings are of wood-frame construction with horizontal wood siding and concrete-pier foundations; the foundation level is differentiated with vertical wood siding. The roof is covered with red asphalt shingles and has exposed rafter ends. The fronts of these buildings (the gable end) have central single-door entrances at both the first and second levels; a small cantilevered platform with an open wood rail serves as both a porch overhang for the first-level door and a balcony for the second-level door. An attached front ladder provides access to this platform element, and even to the roof above. The buildings' numerous windows have eight-over-eight double-hung wood sash. Small one-story shed additions are located at the rear. Architecturally, the buildings exhibit one of the highly standardized designs developed for rapid and economical construction nationwide as the United States became involved in World War II.¹³

However, unlike these bachelor officers quarters for which there are standardized plans, this simple laundry shed has no plans remaining with Army records at the National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) Archives. A late 20th century Army data sheet does show a sketch of the shed, as a supplemental sheet to an inventory sheet. The sketch is

¹¹ Building 49 was converted from a schoolhouse to a field officers quarters prior to the remodeling.

¹² National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Presidio Building Book, Building 47 and Building 48.

¹³ Paul Alley, Leo R. Barker, Gordon Chappel, Cary Feierabend, John P. Langellier, David Quitevis, and Sally A. Dean, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Presidio of San Francisco National Historic Landmark District, October 1993, 7-147.

simply a rectangle with two plan measurements, 5" x 10". Construction of the temporary structure would not have presented a challenge to carpenters or cabinet makers, both professions aided in maintenance at the installation. A note in the Presidio Building Book indicates that the Post Engineer's cabinet shop was housed in building 204 in 1946.¹⁴ The shed is small enough to have been constructed elsewhere and moved.

Building 46 was a place to collect dirty laundry from some or all of the neighboring residential and social facilities and store it where it could be picked up by truck and delivered to the central laundry facility (Building 1047) in the northwestern portion of the Letterman Hospital Complex area between Edie and Thornburgh roads. Two truck docks are located on the Edie Rd. façade of the central laundry facility. Building 1047 was only converted to a central laundry for the base after its remodeling of 1937, within 3 or 4 years of Building 46's construction:

Built in 1914, for \$18,900, as a disinfecting and sterilizing plant, a concrete loading dock with horizontal wood siding was added to the north elevation in 1917. The original equipment was removed, and the building was converted to a laundry c. 1937; the laundry was rehabilitated in 1960... The existing decorative features relating to the "Spanish Colonial Revival" may date to the 1937 remodel rather than the 1914 construction date.¹⁵

The small role of Building 46 as a satellite of the larger problem of maintaining clean uniforms, bedding, clubhouse linens, and other textiles with an efficient centralized laundry is born out not only in the press for improvements to Building 1047 but also in attempts to establish a second central laundry on the installation. In 1950 plans were produced to convert a portion of Building 204 to a Naval Laundry equipped with 20 Streamliner Laundromats and two automatic gas-powered Hamilton Dryers. It is not certain that these plans were implemented.¹⁶ This Presidio central laundry would serve U.S. Air Force needs and further represents the challenge of providing laundry as an essential support service in the military locally.¹⁷

There are no records indicating subsequent alternative uses to which the Army put Building 46 except for the entry, "Storage, Officers Club." The building may have been used for general storage during a later period or it may refer to laundry storage for the Officers Club. Its use as a secure laundry bin positioned to be out of sight yet central to several housing quarters seems clear.

¹⁴ Building 204 Record (including 1940 plan), Presidio Building Books, GGNRA Archives, GOGA 32421, Box 2.

¹⁵ Paul Alley, Leo R. Barker, Gordon Chappel, Cary Feierabend, John P. Langellier, David Quitevis, and Sally A. Dean, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Presidio of San Francisco National Historic Landmark District, October 1993, 7-43.

¹⁶ Proposed Launderette, Building 204, GGNRA Archives, Drawer 24, Folder 3. Yates, Tim

¹⁷ Alterations to Building 204, Office Space for Civil Air Patrol, U.S.A.F., September 15, 1953, GGNRA Archives, Drawer 24, Folder 3; Proposed Additions to Buildings 200 & 204, with New Parking Areas, 1955, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Drawer 24, Folder 1; Custodial Service, P.S.F.C, Plan of Building 204, U.S. Air Force Signal Projectionist School, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Drawer 24, Folder 1.

Part 2. Architectural Information

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural character:** Building 46 is a small, wood-frame structure built with a simple utilitarian purpose and without evidence of conscious decisions for the purposes of architectural design. The substantial replacement of original materials further degrades the ability of the resource to convey vernacular design elements. The structure is characteristic of the temporary architecture constructed in the years immediately preceding and during the World War II build up. The vernacular wood structure was constructed with the minimization of cost, both in terms of time and materials expended, as a priority. The structure's light construction reflects these values, as do many larger structures of the same period. The partial or total lack of original materials brings into question any vernacular architectural characteristics that it might convey.
2. **Condition of fabric:** Poor (Racked from the failure of its foundations and severe wood rot; the roof appears to be ready to collapse; scheduled to be demolished in 2011.)

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall dimensions:** Building 46 measures 9'11" x 5'½" in plan. The shed roof from the top of the façade cornice to the top of the foundation measures 76 ½" and from the rear of the roof to the top of the foundation measures 4' 11" in height. Although this report does not include a Drawing Set, detailed dimensional drawings are submitted in the field notes.
2. **Foundations:** Wood posts on concrete footings.
3. **Walls:** The walls are horizontal tongue and groove wood boards of 3 ¼" exposure. This siding is framed by 1' x 2" surrounds at the top, bottom and corners. Perimeter walls are framed with 2" x 4" boards. There are no interior walls. The exterior walls are surfaced with tongue and groove over plywood sheathing.
4. **Structural system, framing:** Building 46's structural system is a platform frame of late 20th century dimension 2" x 4" studs and the rigidity of plywood sheathing.
5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** None
6. **Chimneys:** None.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** A centered pair of single panel doors in an opening that measures 5' 5" wide by 4' 1 ½" high is set at a height for easy reach for placing in

and taking out laundry. The threshold of the service doors is 2' 6 ½" above the ground.

b. Windows and shutters: None.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Building 46 has a shed roof that slopes to the rear. The roofing material is asphalt shingles. The shed roof has a low slope.

b. Cornice, eaves: The building has board fascia without moldings on the façade and rear. The front cornice projects approximately 6 ¾" and the rear eave slightly less. The side cornices project less than an inch, the width of a contemporary 1" x 4" board. Side and rear roof edges have contemporary metal drip courses under asphalt shingles.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: The interior is designed for the storage of soiled laundry and is rectangular in plan. At the front where the shed roof is higher, the interior height is 5' 7" and in the rear 4' 7 ¾".

b. Second floor: None.

2. Stairways: None.

3. Flooring: Flooring for the laundry shed is designed to allow for ventilation. ¾" plywood cut into 1 ½" wide strips is laid on two layers, one layer at right angles to the layer below. Between the two layers is a heavy gauge galvanized metal screen.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Some interior wall surfaces have raised seam metal roofing material laid horizontally. The roofing is labeled "USS Storm Seal." Other interior wall surfaces are plywood. The ceiling is plywood laid over six 2" x 4" boards that run from the front of the shed roof to the rear. At each end the boards rest above the front and rear walls with spacer blocks to form vents. These vents are covered with heavy gauge galvanized metal screen.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: No interior doors.

b. Windows: None.

6. **Decorative features and trim:** 1" x 2" boards form simple corner boards and weatherboards.
7. **Hardware:** Building 46 has a contemporary galvanized metal strap for a hasp lock. Four hinges supporting the two doors are also contemporary galvanized metal.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The laundry shed has vent openings secured by heavy gauge galvanized metal screen at the front cornice and rear eave and through the lattice floor.
 - b. **Lighting:** None.
 - c. **Plumbing:** None.
 - d. **Elevator Hoist:** None.

D. Site:

1. **Historic landscape design:** The location of Building 46 on Hardie Avenue is notably behind primary structures facing Moraga Avenue. It is located adjacent to other support structures, a series of four garages of which three remain.

Part 3. Sources of Information

- A. **Architectural Drawings:** The only drawn plans yielded by research for this HABS report date to 1981. See the plan included in the National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Army Real Estate Records, Collection ADPWEMR-003, 001/076, Building Reference Files for Building 46. This sheet simply shows a sketch, not to scale of a rectangular plan with two dimensions, 5' x 10'.
- B. **Early Views:** The earliest photograph yielded by the research for this HABS report dates to 1981: See the photograph included in the National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Collection ADPWE-001 038B/037, Remove Oil Drums and Piping, 46, Building 2 FOMA (Photos).
- C. **Bibliography:**
 1. **Primary and unpublished sources:**

Alterations to Building 204, Office Space for Civil Air Patrol, U.S.A.F. September 15, 1953. National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Drawer 24, Folder 3.

Army Real Estate Records, Laundry and Steam Plant, Index 294-75 (Military Construction Project No. T080), National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Collection ADPWEMR-003 058/095.

Building 46 Physical History Report Building Inventory. 1992. Presidio Trust Library. San Francisco, California.

Building 46 Record (not the HABS subject property but a previously numbered Building 46), Presidio Building Books, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, GOGA 32421, Box 2.

Building Reference 46, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Collection ADPWEMS-2, Box 4, undated.

Building 204 Record (including 1940 plan), Presidio Building Books, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, GOGA 32421, Box 2.

GOGA 35300, 41-50, Box 1, Folder 11/24, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives (Reference to "Storage, Officers Club").

Presidio Building Book, Building 47 and Building 48, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives.

Proposed Launderette, Building 204, October 4, 1950, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Drawer 24, Folder 3; Alterations to Building 204, Office Space for Civil Air Patrol, U.S.A.F., September 15, 1953, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Drawer 24, Folder 1.

Remove Oil Drums and Piping, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, Collection ADPWE-001 038B/037, 46, Building 2 FOMA (Photos). Includes the 1981 photos of the building and site.

U.S. Army, Presidio Building Books, National Park Service, GGNRA Archives, GOGA 32421, Box 2.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Alley, Paul, and Leo R. Barker, Gordon Chappel, Cary Feierabend, John P. Langellier, David Quitevis, and Sally A. Dean. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Presidio of San Francisco National Historic Landmark District. October 1993.

Thompson, Erwin N. *Defender of the Gate, the Presidio of San Francisco: A History from 1846 to 1995, Vol. I.* 1997, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, California. National Park Service.

Part 4. Project Information

This Historic American Building Survey records a building that is slated for demolition as stipulated in accordance with the *Programmatic Agreement Among the Presidio Trust, the*

California State Historic Preservation Officer, the National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the Main Post Update to the Presidio Trust Management Plan, Presidio of San Francisco National Historic Landmark, San Francisco, California. The undertaking is part of a rehabilitation of the adjacent garages to serve as a new Archaeology Lab and Curation Facility for the Presidio Trust. On November 10, 2010 a letter stipulating the requirements of the Historic American Building Survey for Building 46 was sent from the National Park Service, Pacific West Region to the Presidio Trust that stated the parameters of the HABS report's required components and level of documentation.

The HABS was reviewed by Rob Thomson, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, Presidio Trust, Brian Ramos, Ph. D., Project Director, ICF International, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Ph. D. and Christine Avery, Pacific West Region, National Park Service.

The contract work for the project was performed by ICF International, 620 Folsom, Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94107.

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Date: December 2, 2010