

EASTER HILL VILLAGE, BUILDING NO. 21
East side of South Twenty-sixth Street, north of Hinkley Avenue
Richmond
Contra Costa
California

HABS CA-2783-N
CA-2783-N

HABS
CA-2783-N

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. 21
East side of South 26th Street, north of Hinkley Boulevard
Richmond
Contra Costa County
California

HABS No. CA-2783-N

Avenue

HABS

CA-2783-N

(page 1)

Location: East side of South 26th Street, north of Hinkley Boulevard Avenue

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 21 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 21 consists of four 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-3R, C-1, C-1, and C-3.

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 21 is two stories in height and 132'-1" in length, from north to south. The building faces west, toward South 26th Street.

In its plan, Building 21 is divided into four modules: C-3R to the north, two C-1 modules in the middle, and C-3 to the south. Each of these modules is 33'-0" in length and 26'-0" in depth and contains two living units. The modules are staggered, with the first and third modules even with each other, the second module set back from them by 6'-6", and the fourth module set forward from the third 6'-6".

2. Foundations

Building 21 has a reinforced concrete perimeter foundation.

3. Walls and structural system

Like all buildings in Easter Hill Village, Building 21 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 on all sides. 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 west. Entrances to six of the units can be found in this façade. The rear of the building is in the other long façade, that facing east. Each of the six units has a back door on this side of the building. The short facades are on the north and south sides of the building. Each of these facades contains an entrance porch.

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. Six of the porches are located along the main (west) façade, a seventh is in the northernmost façade, and the eighth is in the southernmost facade. 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 the porch decks, which measure about five feet by eight feet. The porches, including railings and awnings, 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 entire second story is symmetrical, with single windows at each end and ten pairs of windows in-between. In the first story, the arrangement of single windows, paired windows and doors is essentially random. Some doors are adjacent to single windows, and some are adjacent to paired windows. In the identical, asymmetrical north and south façades, two single windows and a gable vent can be found in the second story, while two single windows and a door can be found in the first story. This door is placed adjacent to one of the single windows. In the rear (east) façade, fenestration in the second story is symmetrical, with six pairs of windows, four pairs of bathroom windows, and single windows at the ends. The first story of the rear façade contains eight single windows, each of which is adjacent to a back door.

6. Roof

The roof is gabled, with extended eaves. There are breaks in the roofline where modules are set forward or back from each other, creating the impression of four separate roofs on this building. The eaves do not have exposed rafters. Metal gutters run the length of the long sides of the roof.

C. Description of Interiors

1. Floor plans

a. Basement

Building 21 contains no basement.

b. Apartment floor plans

Each of the four 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-1 and C-3 modules, the right (south) unit has 3 bedrooms and the left (north) 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 21 is located on the northeast side of South 26th Street, where the street bends from a generally east-west to a north-south direction. Parking areas can be found to the northwest and the south of this building, separating it from buildings 17 and 23. At either end of the building, between it and the parking areas, are several boulders plus one large, fixed native outcropping. 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

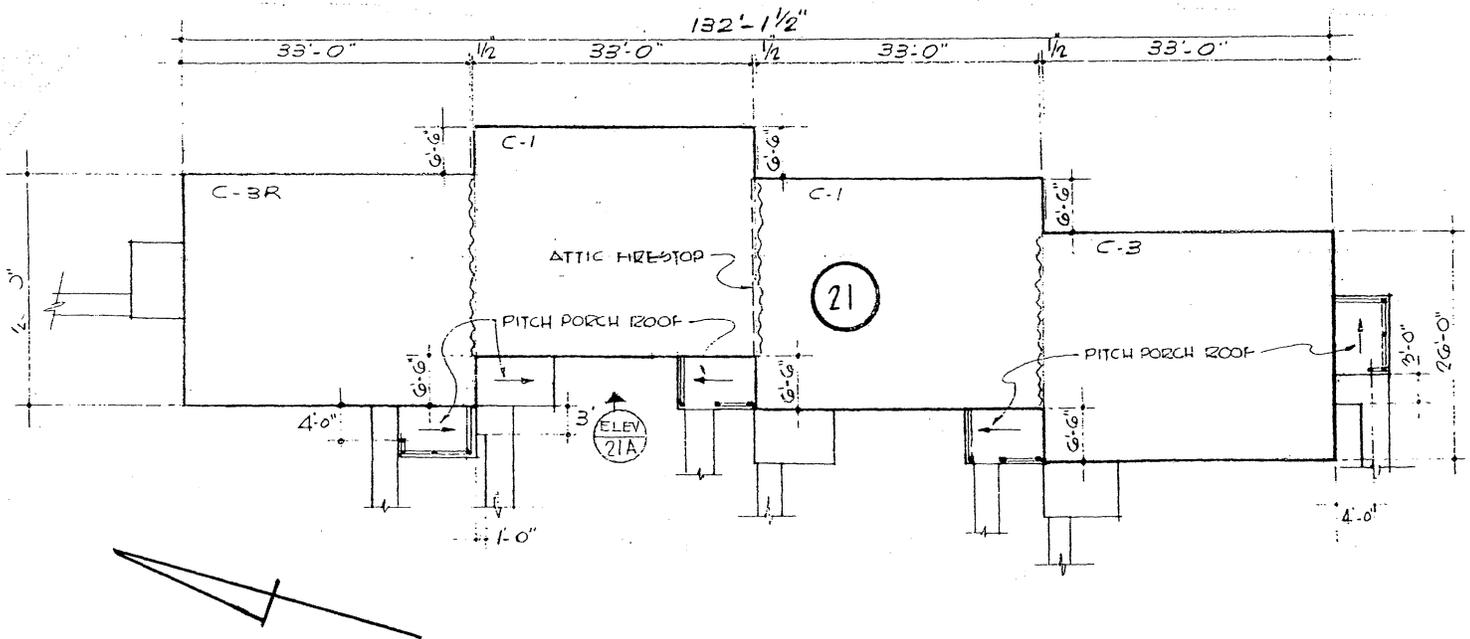
Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783.

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