EASTER HILL VILLAGE, BUILDING NO. 39
South side of Foothill Avneue, east of South Twenty-sixth Street
Richmond
Contra Costa County
California

HABS CA-2783-AF
CA-2783-AF

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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. 39 **HABS No. CA-2783-AF**
South side of Foothill Avenue east of South 26th Street
Richmond
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Location: South side of Foothill Avenue east of South 26th Street

U.S.G.S. Richmond Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercater 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

At an unknown date a portion of this building was adapted for recreational uses. Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783 for more information on the historical context of Easter Hill Village.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

Building 39 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 indicated by a number suffix, and by the letter "R" for reverse plans.)

Building 39 consists of four modules linked end-to-end. The modules are setback relative to each other, creating a staggered or stepped footprint. These setbacks are defined to a certain extent by Foothill Avenue as it curves to the south. On the original plans, the modules are labeled as (from east to west) modules C-3R, C-1, C-1, and A-1. There are two townhouses in each of the first three modules plus two apartments, one per story, in the A-1 module, for a total of eight units in this building. A sign on the exterior of the building reads "Easter Hill Recreation House." This is the only indication on the exterior that a portion of the building was adapted for this use.

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 39 is two stories in height and 121'-5" in length, from east to west. In its plan, Building 39 is divided into four modules. They are,

from east to west, C-3R, C-1, C-1, and A-1. Each of these modules is 26'-0" in depth and contains two living units. The easternmost module, C-3R, is set back (south) 6'-6" from its neighboring C-1 module; that module is, in turn, set back the same distance from the C-1 module to the west; and that module is set back the same distance from the A-1 module at the west end of the building. The result is a staggered composition. The C-1 and C-3R modules are 33'-0" in length, and the A-1 module is 22'-4" in length.

2. Foundations

Building 39 has a reinforced concrete perimeter foundation.

3. Walls and structural system

Like all buildings in Easter Hill Village, Building 39 is stud-framed in construction. The second story is clad in a variety of materials, namely (in modules from east to west), board-and-batten siding, horizontal wood siding, board-and-batten siding, and stucco. The first story is clad entirely in stucco. The second story overhangs the first story by sixteen inches in both the north and south elevations, except in the westernmost (A-1) module, which has walls that are flush from the ground to the roofline.

The main façade is along one of the long sides, that facing north. Entrances to five of the eight units can be found in this façade. A sixth entrance is in the east façade, and the other two entrances are centered, one over the other, in the west façade. The rear of the building is in the other long façade, that facing south. Six of the units have a back door on this side of the building.

The stucco surfaces are painted salmon-beige and the board-and-batten siding is painted brown. This coloring is not original.

4. Porches

Six of the eight units in this building possess entrance porches consisting of a concrete deck raised several inches off the ground, and plain wooden railings supported by plain wooden posts. These posts rise to support a non-original wooden trellis over each entry. Each porch measures about six feet by eight feet. On the west 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. All porches 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 (north) façade, fenestration in the second story consists of nine paired windows, a single window (at the far east end), and a single bathroom window (at the far west end). The first story contains four paired windows, six single windows, a bathroom window, and doors to five units. In the rear (south) façade, the second story fenestration consists of seven paired windows, a single window (at the east end), and three pairs of bathroom windows. In the first story are two paired windows, six single windows, and six doors. The east façade is nearly symmetrical, with two single windows in each story, plus a central doorway in the first story. In each story of the west façade there is one door adjacent to a single window in each story.

6. Roof

The roof is gabled, with extended eaves. There are breaks in the roofline where modules are set back from each other, creating the impression of four separate roofs on this building. On the west side the roof extends about five feet beyond the wall plane to cover the second story porch. On this side there are exposed rafters and purlins. The soffit of the extended roof is wooden. The eaves have exposed rafters. Metal gutters run the length of the roof on each of the long facades.

C. Description of Interiors

1. Floor plans

a. Basement

Building 39 contains no basement.

b. Apartment floor plans

From east to west the module floor plans in Building 39 are as follows:

Module C-3R contains two townhouses, a three-bedroom unit on the left (east), and a two-bedroom unit on the right (west). The entrance door in each of these townhouses opens directly into the living room. In each townhouse the staircase 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 staircase. The bedrooms vary in size from about nine feet by eleven feet to eleven feet by twelve feet.

Module C-1 contains two townhouses. The entrance door opens directly into the living room. 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 units vary in size from about nine feet by eleven feet to eleven feet by twelve feet. The right (west) unit has 3 bedrooms and the left (east) unit has two bedrooms.

The next module to the west is another C-1 module, with the same plan as above.

The westernmost 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.

Each bedroom in the building has its own closet. In the C-1 and C-3R modules 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. In the A-1 module the coat closet is off of the living room and the linen closet is at the end of the hallway, near the hallway.

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 39 is on the south side of Foothill Avenue a short distance east of South 26th Street. Parking lots can be found directly to the east and west of Building 39. The surrounding buildings on the south and north sides of Foothill, all two stories in height, include buildings 35, 41, 38 and 40. Directly to the south, facing South 26th Street, is Building 23, also two stories. Five boulders can be found distributed around the eastern end of Building 39. Please refer to the "Narrative" report, HABS No. CA-2783 for more on the general setting at Easter Hill Village.

2. **Historic landscape**

See the "Narrative" report, 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.

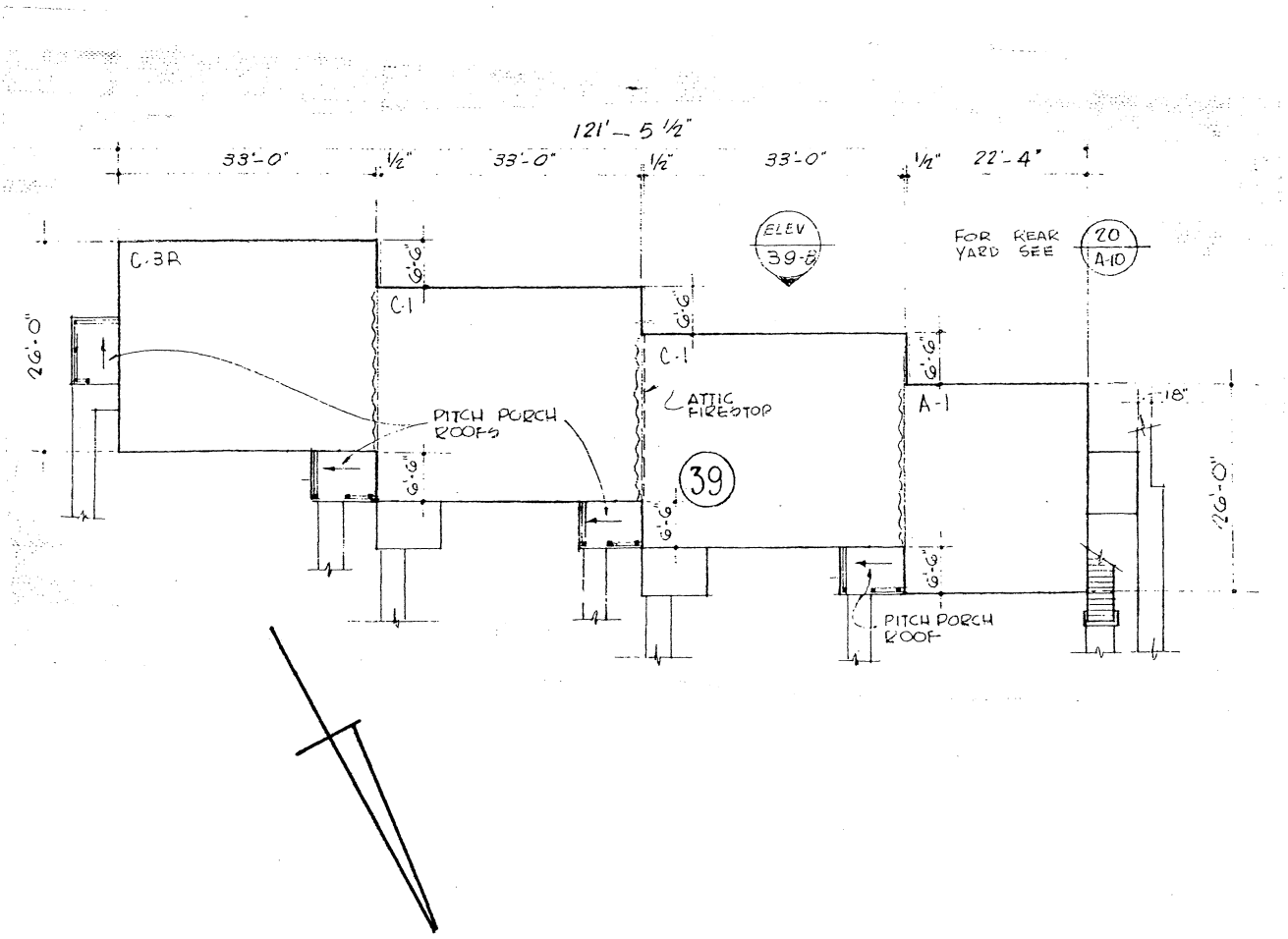
C. Bibliography

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