



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMO

Historic Resource Evaluation Response

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Project Address: **1095 Connecticut Street (Potrero Terrace/Annex)**
Block/Lot: 4167/004, 004A, 4220A, 4222A, 4285B, 4223/001
Case No.: **2010.0515E**

Date of Review: July 15, 2011 (Part I)

PART I: HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

BUILDING(S) AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Potrero Terrace/Potrero Annex ("Potrero housing complex") is a mid-20th century public housing complex that includes a total of 61 separate buildings and 606 units on a sloping, hillside site that covers 24.84 total acres. The Potrero housing complex is identified by several street addresses, including 1095 Connecticut Street, which is the Administration Building. The Potrero housing complex was constructed in two phases: Potrero Terrace was built in 1941; and Potrero Annex was built in 1953-1954. The Potrero housing complex includes long rectangular buildings arranged in curvilinear rows on terraced building pads, and a similar curvilinear street pattern, which conform to the sloping topography of the site. Most buildings include two full levels at uphill elevations and three full levels at downhill elevations. Buildings are simple in design and display minimal architectural articulation or detail. Other site features include mature trees, concrete retaining walls, walkways and steps, and yards around and between buildings.

The Potrero housing complex is located on the south and southeast slopes of Potrero Hill, in southeast San Francisco. The housing complex site is bounded approximately by: 23rd Street to the north (with the northern boundary of Potrero Annex located at 22nd Street); Texas Street to the east; Wisconsin Street to the west (with the western boundary of Potrero Annex located at the eastern boundary of the Potrero Hill Recreation Center); and 25th and 26th Streets to the south. The housing complex site includes 6 separate, irregularly shaped City-owned parcels that range in area from 57,890 square feet to 245,695 square feet. Potrero Terrace includes parcels 4220A, 4222A, 4285B, and 4233/001. Potrero Annex includes parcels 4167/004 and 4167/004A.

The Potrero housing complex site is located within a RM-2 (Residential, Mixed, Moderate Density) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

Potrero Terrace

The Potrero Terrace phase, constructed in 1941, consists of 38 separate buildings on 17.6 acres. It contains 469 units and the Administration Building (1095 Connecticut Street). Potrero Terrace forms the original and primary portion of the Potrero housing complex. The boundary of Potrero Terrace is mostly rectangular and regular in shape. The natural terrain of the site is bowl-shaped, which results from its location within a low valley on the south-facing slope of Potrero Hill. The Potrero Terrace complex is designed to conform to the natural contours of the sloping site, which minimized grading activities and results in the complex's distinctive feature of "terraces". The terraces are formed by buildings arranged end-to-end in rows that run across the bowl-shaped site. The terraces are located in a pattern of concentric, broken rings that wheel around the complex's focal point, the Administration Building at 25th and Connecticut Streets. The internal street circulation system fans out in a radial pattern from the centrally located Administration Building, through the terrace rings, to all corners of the Potrero Terrace complex. According to information provided by the Project Sponsor:

The most prominent feature in the project is the site topography. The buildings are set along contour lines while roads run up the slope. One contemporary SFHA [San Francisco Housing Authority] document focused much attention on the end result of this careful planning, saying the project had "[t]he aspect of a Mediterranean Hillside because of the view of the bay, the following of the contour lines, the simple form of the buildings, the [red] color of the tile roofs."¹

Potrero Terrace buildings are reinforced poured-in-place concrete construction, and feature hipped roofs with mission barrel tiles. Exterior concrete walls display expressed form board lines in horizontal patterns. Potrero Terrace buildings are accessed at both uphill and downhill primary elevations, which include regular rows of entrances with solid wood and/or hollow metal doors, and rectangular windows filled with wood, vinyl, and/or aluminum sash. The three-story (downhill) elevations also include balconies with metal railings at the second floors. The narrow side elevations include single entry doors, metal railings, and flat concrete awnings. Potrero Terrace contains three types of residential buildings in varying quantities, including: 5 type E buildings (each containing 8 units); 15 type F buildings (two sub-types each containing 10 or 11 units); and 18 type G buildings (three sub-types with varying window and door placements, each containing 15 units).

Potrero Annex

The Potrero Annex phase, constructed in 1953-1954, consists of 23 separate buildings on 7.24 acres. It contains 137 units, a Family Resource Center, and a childcare center. The Potrero Annex phase was constructed adjacent to and north of the original Potrero Terrace site, on an irregularly shaped site with very steep, somewhat uneven terrain on the east-facing slope of Potrero Hill. According to information provided by the Project Sponsor: "The SFHA described Potrero Annex's site as 'marginal land which perhaps otherwise would have laid undeveloped for many years' that was chosen because 'available sites were becoming increasingly difficult to find'."² Development of the marginal site was accomplished by

¹ *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.*

² *Potrero Annex, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.*

substantially altering the Annex site with cut-and-fill activities to create deeply stepped terraces, and by extending previously existing rows of buildings, pathways, and streets of Potrero Terrace onto the Annex site. Due to the constrained, very steep nature of the Annex site, it exhibits crowding and some irregular placement of buildings. Also, due to the Annex site's location on the opposite side of a valley crest that defines the original bowl-shaped site of Potrero Terrace, Potrero Annex is largely disconnected visually and spatially from Potrero Terrace.

Potrero Annex buildings are wood-frame construction with stucco-clad exteriors, slightly canted flat roofs and projecting eaves. The two-story (uphill, west-facing) elevations include single and paired entrances with solid wood and/or hollow metal doors and flat canopies, and a belt course between levels. The three-story (downhill, east-facing) elevations include rectangular windows filled with wood, vinyl, and/or aluminum sash, and wood balconies that are canted outward at second and third floors with exposed joists and closed rails. The narrow side elevations include balconies and steps that wrap around from the east-facing elevations. All 23 buildings in Potrero Annex are of the same type.

PRE-EXISTING HISTORIC RATING / SURVEY

In 2001, Carey & Co. Inc. produced 2 separate Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) reports (see attached) for Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex, at the request of the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA), in order to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). In the HRE reports, Carey & Co. concluded that Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex, as separate properties, are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.³

In 2009, CIRCA: Historic Property Development ("CIRCA") produced a single HRE report (see attached) for 15 separate SFHA properties, including Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex, at the request of SFHA, in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and to update previously completed evaluations of SFHA properties. In the HRE report, CIRCA concluded that Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex as separate properties are not eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.⁴

In 2011, Carey & Co. produced a Landscape Integrity Analysis report (see attached) for the Potrero housing complex at the request of the San Francisco Planning Department, in order to augment previously completed evaluations of Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex. In the Landscape Integrity Analysis report, Carey & Co. concluded that the separate landscape components of Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex do not retain integrity.⁵ Also in 2011, Carey & Co. provided a letter (see attached) that addressed new information for the Potrero housing complex that became available after previous

³ *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.; and *Potrero Annex, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.

⁴ *Historic Resources Evaluation Report, Evaluation Review and Update, Selected SFHA Properties*, March 31, 2009, CIRCA: Historic Property Development.

⁵ *Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex Housing Project, Thomas Church and Douglas Baylis Landscape Design, San Francisco, California, Integrity Analysis*, May 31, 2011, Carey & Co. Inc.

evaluations were completed in 2001, and that clarified applicable criteria for evaluating potential significance.⁶

This Historic Resource Evaluation Response (HRER) evaluates the Potrero housing complex as a single property comprised of two phases, Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex. This HRER incorporates information from previously completed separate HRE reports for Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex, as well as the previously completed Landscape Integrity Report for the Potrero housing complex (which includes separate assessments for Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex).

According to the Planning Department's *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 16: City and County of San Francisco Planning Department CEQA Review Procedures for Historic Resources*, the Potrero housing complex (consisting of Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex) is considered to be a "Category B" property (Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review) for the purposes of the Planning Department's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review procedures due to age (constructed in 1941 and 1953-1954, and more than 50 years of age).

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

The Potrero housing complex is located on the south side of Potrero Hill, which is the "back-slope" of Potrero Hill in relation to downtown San Francisco, which is located several miles to the north. Immediately to the north and west of the Potrero housing complex, residential neighborhoods contain primarily individual wood-frame houses and flats located on south Potrero Hill. Immediately to the south and east of the Potrero housing complex, large-scale commercial and industrial properties, as well as some residential properties, occupy relatively flat lands at the base of south Potrero Hill. Also, nearby public uses consist of: the Potrero Hill Recreation Center (gymnasium/field house and public park), located directly north and west of the Potrero housing complex, at the top of Potrero Hill; Starr King Elementary School, located west of the Potrero housing complex, overlooking the residential neighborhoods and southwest slopes of Potrero Hill; and the Caleb G. Clarke Potrero Hill Health Center, located directly north of Starr King Elementary School. In some places, the prevailing rectilinear street grid of the area, overlaid upon steep natural topography, results in cut-and-fill sites, street switchbacks, and impassable, unimproved street segments.

The immediate area around the Potrero housing complex is eclectic in design and visual appearance. Properties located within the area do not exhibit a predominant architectural style or a cohesive historic character, and the majority of properties display varying levels of physical alterations to historic features and materials. Residential properties that are present in the area were constructed during various periods of time from the late 19th century and early 20th century to the contemporary era. They exhibit elements associated with a wide range of architectural styles such as: Queen Anne; Shingle; Craftsman; Edwardian; Period Revival; Modern; as well as vernacular property types that lack distinguishable styles. Typical residential properties include long narrow lots with buildings located at or near the front property lines,

⁶ Letter dated June 3, 2011, Carey & Co. Inc.

and with little or no side yards. Some older residential buildings are located at the backs of lots, and newer residential buildings may be constructed in front of them.

Large-scale commercial, industrial, and public uses that are present in the immediate area around the Potrero housing complex site were constructed during periods of time from the first half of the 20th century to the contemporary era. They generally occupy level sites on medium-size to large lots. Commercial, industrial, and public use properties are generally massive buildings constructed of brick, concrete, and/or steel, and they display mostly utilitarian forms and minimal architectural detail. Commercial/industrial properties, which are primarily warehouses, typically incorporate outdoor loading/storage/staging areas, parking areas, and/or access ways on site. Public properties, including a recreation center/park and a school, incorporate landscaped open spaces.

Brief History of the Area

The development history of south Potrero Hill, which contains the Potrero housing complex site, may be organized into the following general historical periods:

- *Ohlone period, pre-1776.* A Native American people, the Ohlone, occupied the San Francisco Peninsula during the pre-European contact era. For hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, the Ohlone lived in seasonal villages that ringed the bay, including near the creeks and shoreline that existed at the base of Potrero Hill (now filled). The Ohlone culture was dramatically changed and ultimately displaced by Europeans and Americans during the post-contact era, which largely obscures physical records of Ohlone history. No intact structures of pre-contact Ohlone origin are known to exist above current ground level in San Francisco.
- *Hispanic period, 1776-1846.* Starting with the establishment of a Spanish mission and colony in the current Mission District of San Francisco, and continuing through the period of Mexican California and the ranchos, Potrero Hill served as the *Potrero Nuevo*, or “new pasture”. During the Spanish mission period, Ohlone “neophytes” at Mission Dolores constructed a low wall to demarcate the Potrero Nuevo, where mission cattle grazed. After the independent nation of Mexico dissolved the former Spanish mission’s land holdings in 1834, Mexican ranchers continued the grazing tradition on the Potrero Nuevo, and they engaged in the lucrative international hide-and-tallow market. In 1844, Mexico granted exclusive use of the Potrero Nuevo to the de Haro family, whose patriarch was Francisco de Haro, an *alcalde* (mayor) of Yerba Buena Pueblo, which preceded the city of San Francisco. Except for construction of isolated adobe buildings and denuding of grasses by cattle, Potrero Hill continued in its natural state. No intact structures of Hispanic origin are known to exist above current ground level on Potrero Hill.
- *Early American period, 1846-1906.* Between U.S. expansion into California in 1846 and the Gold Rush that followed soon after, and the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, the north slopes of Potrero Hill developed considerably, while the south slopes remained difficult to access and develop. By 1850, American settler George Treat had fenced off Potrero Hill from the west (along the low wall that Ohlone neophytes had constructed to demarcate the Potrero Nuevo), and squatters gradually encroached onto the hill. For decades, the de Haro family pursued their legal claim to ownership of Potrero Nuevo, and final rejection of the de Haro claim by the U.S. cleared the way for full-

scale development. Filling of creeks and shoreline, installation of streetcar lines, and expansion of urban infrastructure occurred earlier near the north slopes of Potrero Hill, which were closest to the developing city of San Francisco. By the end of the 19th century, north Potrero Hill was occupied by growing residential neighborhoods, while the more remote south slopes remained sparsely developed and rural in character. Various occupants of Potrero Hill, which at that time was still located adjacent to waterfront, engaged in maritime occupations such as boat building, outfitting, and fishing. Typical properties of the period, which are extant on the south slopes of Potrero Hill, include modest wood-framed houses designed in National vernacular, Italianate, and Stick architectural styles.

- *Post-Earthquake & Fire period, 1906-1920.* Following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire that destroyed four-fifths of San Francisco (but did not affect Potrero Hill), a building boom occurred in all neighborhoods of San Francisco. The building boom resulted from the intense demand for housing created by hundreds of thousands of post-disaster refugees, many of whom did become permanently resettled until years after the disaster. The refugee/post-disaster population that gravitated to Potrero Hill was working-class in character. On the south slopes of Potrero Hill, the post-fire building boom is characterized primarily by extant wood-framed “workingman’s” cottages, bungalows, and row-houses, built between 1906 and 1908 (the peak of the post-fire building boom) and designed in Queen Anne, Shingle, Craftsman, and Edwardian architectural styles, as well as vernacular forms that lack discernible styles. Some vernacular dwellings may have originated in U.S. Army relief camps, as mass-produced “refugee cottages” that were later acquired by private citizens, moved to new sites, and reoccupied as permanent housing. Also during this time, the nearby Bayshore Cut-off was completed in 1907, which provided greater access to the south base of Potrero Hill, and facilitated installation of railroads and commercial/industrial development in the area (as well as increased filling of creeks and shoreline).
- *Early Modern period, 1920-1941.* As the early 20th century unfolded, increasing widespread availability of personal automobiles and public infrastructure provided for much greater access to all areas of San Francisco, including the south slopes of Potrero Hill. Also, the rise of modern realtor-based housing practices resulted in widespread replication of standardized, economical dwelling types by realtors and contractors. Typical two-story houses designed for San Francisco’s long narrow lots included full-height garages/basements at ground floors, and living rooms at raised “first” floors. Residential designs incorporated newer building practices such as plaster (stucco) facing, and newer styles such as Period Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Modern (Deco/Streamline). On Potrero Hill, houses of the period tended to be individually built, rather than constructed as parts of large housing tracts, as occurred in other areas of San Francisco. The overall development pattern on south Potrero Hill remained semi-rural, and several streets remained unimproved in the area, even as new houses gradually filled in the blocks. During the Depression era, new private residential construction virtually ceased, and planning began for public housing projects.
- *Late Modern period, 1941-1962.* During the mid-20th century period, the south slopes of Potrero Hill were characterized primarily by consolidation and development of large sites for government and public uses. These included: the San Francisco Housing Authority’s Potrero

Terrace public housing complex; “temporary” defense workers housing constructed by the government during World War II (structures no longer extant, but sites preserved as private open space); the Housing Authority’s postwar extension of Potrero Terrace, the Potrero Annex; the Potrero Hill Recreation Center (gymnasium, field house, and park/open space); and Starr King Elementary School. Construction of these large projects involved preparation of sites by removal of earlier development, including relocation and/or demolition of private residences. Around the large project sites, private residential construction continued to fill in open lots within the neighborhoods, with flats and apartments predominating. Also during the period, large warehouses and facilities designed for truck traffic were constructed at the south base of Potrero Hill, near the major automobile thoroughfares of Bayshore Boulevard and Army (Cesar Chavez) Street, and railroad traffic and related uses diminished.

CEQA HISTORICAL RESOURCE(S) EVALUATION

Department staff finds that the subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is not a resource for the purposes of CEQA because it does not appear to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) as an individual historic resource or as a contributor to a historic district. To be considered a resource for the purposes of CEQA (and to be eligible for listing in the California Register), a property must be significant under the California Register criteria, and it must demonstrate integrity. While the Potrero housing complex appears to be individually significant under California Register Criterion 1 (Events), Criterion 2 (Persons), and Criterion 3 (Architecture), the Potrero housing complex does not appear to retain integrity due to cumulative physical changes to the property that have occurred, and that have adversely affected design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property does not appear to contribute to a historic district.

To assist in the evaluation of the subject property, the Project Sponsor has submitted the following reports:

- *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.*
- *Potrero Annex, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.*
- *Historic Resources Evaluation Report, Evaluation Review and Update, Selected SFHA Properties, March 31, 2009, CIRCA: Historic Property Development.*
- *Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex Housing Project, Thomas Church and Douglas Baylis Landscape Design, San Francisco, California, Integrity Analysis, May 31, 2011, Carey & Co. Inc.*

Staff has reviewed the reports. In addition, staff has conducted additional research and analysis, including site visits, in order to complete the evaluation of the property and the project.

Included is an evaluation of the subject property (Potrero housing complex), which is not eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources.

Step A: Significance

Under CEQA section 21084.1, a property qualifies as a historic resource if it is "listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources." Properties that are included in a local register are also presumed to be historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources or not included in a local register of historical resources, shall not preclude a lead agency from determining whether the resource may qualify as a historical resource under CEQA. (Please note: The Department's determination is made based on the Department's historical files on the property and neighborhood and additional research provided by the Project Sponsor.)

Based on evaluation of the subject property (the Potrero housing complex) according to the California Register criteria, Department staff finds that the Potrero housing complex (specifically, the Potrero Terrace phase) is individually significant under Criterion 1 (Events) and Criterion 3 (Architecture), and the Potrero housing complex has potential to be individually significant under Criterion 2 (Persons).

Included is an evaluation of the subject property (the Potrero housing complex), based on the following California Register criteria:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Criterion 1 - Event: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to determine |
| Criterion 2 - Persons: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to determine |
| Criterion 3 - Architecture: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to determine |
| Criterion 4 - Information Potential: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to determine |
| Potential Historic District: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to determine |
| Period of Significance: | 1941 (Potrero Terrace) | | |

Criterion 1: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Based on a review of information provided by the Project Sponsor and located in the Planning Department's background files, the subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is determined to be eligible under California Register Criterion 1.

Potrero Terrace

The construction and occupation of Potrero Terrace as one of the first "super-block" public housing complexes in San Francisco, as well as the occupation of Potrero Terrace by World War II defense workers, were significant events in relation to the history of public housing development in San Francisco and nationwide. Potrero Terrace was one of only five public housing projects in San Francisco to be undertaken before World War II, and one of only three to be completed or partially occupied before December 1941 and to be reclassified as World War II defense worker housing. Of these latter three, Holly Courts (May 1940) is a "court plan" type that was the first completed public housing project located west of the Rocky Mountains; and Potrero Terrace (1941) and Sunnydale (1941) are the earliest

examples of larger “super-block” public housing projects in San Francisco. Of the two “super-block” projects (Potrero Terrace and Sunnydale), Sunnydale is larger and was constructed more rapidly.⁷ However, Potrero Terrace is more important in the history of public housing because it best exemplifies the federal government’s very specific model for a “super-block” public housing project located on a hillside in a western U.S. city during the pre-World War II period, during which time only a few such housing projects were actually constructed. According to the 2001 Carey & Co. HRE report:

While design and construction of housing projects was the responsibility of local housing authorities, the federal government provided advice and guidance through “education” books or pamphlets. One such book, entitled *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site* (1939), described how designers could work with different types of topographic situations. In one example, the preferred scheme for 320 families “on a very steep site in a large western city” lays the buildings along the site contours but cuts the roads across them. The sketch in the book is practically identical to the site plan for Potrero Terrace [which was designed the same year that the book was published].⁸

Potrero Terrace is therefore determined to be eligible under California Register Criterion 1.

Potrero Annex

Unlike Potrero Terrace, Potrero Annex was not included in the original 11 public housing projects that were planned in San Francisco before World War II, nor was its construction more than a decade after Potrero Terrace was constructed as notable as that of other postwar public housing projects in San Francisco such as Ping Yuen. Potrero Annex was constructed on a marginal site that was developed by SFHA primarily because other sites for new development were scarce. Potrero Annex is a later, peripheral extension of the original Potrero Terrace complex, and Potrero Annex does not meet the specific design standards that are exemplified by Potrero Terrace.

Potrero Annex is therefore determined not to be eligible under California Register Criterion 1.

Summary

The subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is therefore determined to be eligible under California Register Criterion 1. This is because the Potrero Terrace phase, which forms the original and primary portion of the Potrero housing complex, is eligible under California Register Criterion 1, as one of the first public housing projects to be designed, constructed, and occupied in San Francisco, which contributed to a nationwide pattern of “super-block” public housing development. Also, Potrero Terrace was one of three prewar public housing complexes in San Francisco to be occupied by defense workers during World War II. The Potrero Annex phase, which is a later and smaller expansion of the original Potrero Terrace complex, and which was not occupied by wartime defense workers, is not individually

⁷ *Historic Resources Evaluation Report, Evaluation Review and Update, Selected SFHA Properties*, March 31, 2009, CIRCA: Historic Property Development.

⁸ *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.

eligible under California Register Criterion 1, and may be considered to be a non-character-defining feature of Potrero Terrace in relation to Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: It is associated with the lives of persons important in our local, regional or national past.

Based on a review of information provided by the Project Sponsor and located in the Planning Department's background files, the subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is determined to be potentially eligible under California Register Criterion 2.

The Potrero housing complex is documented to include a housing unit (5 Turner Terrace in the Potrero Annex phase) where poet Allen Ginsberg lived and worked in the mid-1950s. According to *San Francisco's Potrero Hill*, published in 2005, a photograph of Ginsberg is accompanied by the following caption:

Poet Allen Ginsberg is seen here in 1955 typing (possibly the *Howl* manuscript) at Peter Orlovsky's apartment at 5 Turner Terrace, Potrero Terrace [Annex] Project. *Howl* changed the world's expectations of poetry and overcame censorship trials to become one of the most widely read poems of the century. (Photo by Peter Orlovsky; courtesy Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.)⁹

However, specific association of the housing unit at 5 Turner Terrace with the *Howl* manuscript is not confirmed. Also, according to National Register Bulletin #16, if significance is related to the productive life of a person, then the property must be one that best represents the person's historic contributions. In the case of poet Allen Ginsberg, *Howl* associations may be much stronger with other properties such as San Francisco's City Lights bookstore (extant), which published the poem, as well as other locations where the poem is documented to have been written, named, and/or read. Nonetheless, the possibility of significant association with poet Allen Ginsberg remains.

Also, the Potrero housing complex is documented to include a housing unit (144 Dakota Street in the Potrero Terrace phase) that was the childhood home of Kevin Starr, author and former State Librarian, from 1950 to 1955.¹⁰ However, according to National Register Bulletin #16, significance under National Register Criterion B (which is approximately equivalent to California Register Criterion 2) is usually required to be related to the productive life of a person, or to be one of last remaining examples if no examples related to the productive life remain. In the case of Kevin Starr, Potrero Terrace is related to the formative life of the person and not to the productive life, and examples that are related to the productive life of the person likely exist elsewhere, such as the State Capitol where State Librarian functions occur, and at other places that may be associated in specific ways with Starr's career as an author.

In addition, the Potrero housing complex may be associated with the lives of other important persons whose productive lives may have occurred in residence at the complex, which could not be determined by available information. This may be determined by further research that includes using primary sources of information such as SFHA records and/or Census records to identify historic residents of the Potrero

⁹ *San Francisco's Potrero Hill*, 2005, Peter Linenthal, Abigail Johnston, and the Potrero Hill Archives Project (*Images of America* series by Arcadia Publishing).

¹⁰*Ibid.*

housing complex, and cross-referencing potentially thousands of listings with media archives, Internet searches, etc. to identify and evaluate potential significance. This research is beyond the scope of this HRER; therefore, potential significance is assumed under Criterion 2.

Summary

The subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is therefore determined to be potentially eligible under California Register Criterion 2. This is because a housing unit in the Potrero Annex phase may be associated with the productive life of an important person, poet Allen Ginsberg. Also, the Potrero housing complex may possibly be associated with the lives of other important persons whose productive lives may have occurred in residence at the complex.

Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

Based on a review of information provided by the Project Sponsor and located in the Planning Department's background files, the subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is determined to be eligible under California Register Criterion 3.

Potrero Terrace

As noted under Criterion 1 (Events), Potrero Terrace embodies the federal government's very specific model for a "super-block" public housing project located on a hillside in a western U.S. city during the pre-World War II period, during which time only a few such housing projects were actually constructed. Potrero Terrace was designed in 1939 identically to an example plan released by the federal government the same year, which was "the preferred scheme for 320 families 'on a very steep site in a large western city' [that] lays the buildings along the site contours but cuts the roads across them."¹¹ While Potrero Terrace actually exceeded the housing supply that was called for in the federal government's example by half, it did so while carefully following the design principles of "super-block" site planning that were characteristic of the period. According to the 2001 Carey & Co. HRE report:

For the most up-to-date ideas on public housing site planning, American designers looked to the "European planning and design philosophies"...[T]he English "super-block" was a large contiguous block of land, defined by multi-use roads along its edges but featuring small vehicle- or pedestrian-only pathways "indented into the periphery of the block"...Orientation toward sun and air flow was part of the German version of the super-block, *Zeilenbau*, in which parallel rows of buildings led to "[n]o closed courtyards, no traffic, no wasted pavement, and an open vista in two directions for every window and balcony." Despite topographical differences, Potrero Terrace [exemplified] super-block-type site planning...¹²

¹¹ *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.

¹² *Ibid.*

Also, Potrero Terrace represents the work of masters in architecture. The complex was designed by three master architects: (1) Frederick C. Meyer, a Bay Area-based California architect who achieved greatest acclaim for his work on the San Francisco Civic Center with John Galen Howard and John Reid, Jr.; (2) Warren C. Perry, an Ecole des Beaux Arts-trained architect and Director of the School of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley; and (3) John Bakewell, Jr., a Bernard Maybeck student, Ecole des Beaux Arts-trained architect, and longtime partner of Arthur Brown, Jr. In addition, the landscape of Potrero Terrace was designed by Bay Area-based, modern landscape pioneer architect Thomas D. Church. According to the 2011 Carey & Co. Landscape Integrity Report:

Church's simple, low-maintenance design for Potrero Terrace intended to soften and humanize the relentlessly rectilinear rows of the large public housing development...Church's design for the Potrero Terrace Housing Project was consistent with his broader body of work and used combinations of trees, hedges and ground cover to create pleasant spaces that worked with the architecture...Church combined formal hedges to define parking and living spaces, with informal clusters of trees...located in the open spaces...At various locations the hedges were supposed to be arranged in curlicues. All of the trees and plants were of the hearty, low-maintenance type that bloomed in red, white, yellow, and blue during the spring. The plants were not deciduous, so they always offered a textured landscape in various shades of green.¹³

In addition, Potrero Terrace is significant because it displays high artistic values as a successful example of a mid-20th century, "Mediterranean Hillside" public housing complex. The physically integrated complex of terraced buildings, streets, pathways, and plantings was constructed in a radial plan on the large, bowl-shaped site, in a way that embraces the natural topography, controls erosion, and minimized cut-and-fill activities. This results in an orderly, visually connected complex that fans outward from a central location (the Administration Building), and that incorporates rows of regularly spaced, low-slung buildings located on terraced pads across the hillsides, accessed by streets and pathways that follow contours or that cut gradually across them. The overall contour-oriented site plan, in combination with the original architectural treatment of buildings (uniformly consistent elevations with simplified Spanish influences) and the original landscape plan (copiously distributed trees, hedges, and ground cover), represented a highly successful design for the period of the prewar mid-20th century.

Potrero Terrace is therefore determined to be eligible under California Register Criterion 3.

Potrero Annex

Potrero Annex was not part of the original plan for Potrero Terrace because it is located on land that was considered to be marginal due to its extreme slope, and because it is not directly contiguous with the bowl-shaped "super-block" site. Potrero Annex occupies a steep slope that winds around the east face of Potrero Hill, which is visually disconnected and further away from the center of the original complex (the Administration Building) than any other part of the complex. Due to the constrained nature of the annex site, the plan of Potrero Annex is characterized primarily by deeply stepped terraces accomplished by

¹³ *Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex Housing Project, Thomas Church and Douglas Baylis Landscape Design, San Francisco, California, Integrity Analysis, May 31, 2011, Carey & Co. Inc.*

cut-and-fill, and it exhibits crowding and irregular placement of buildings, which are not apparent in Potrero Terrace's careful arrangement of terraces and regular building rows. Also, Potrero Annex's utilitarian, wood-frame construction and lack of stylistic references in building design depart from Potrero Terrace's "Mediterranean Hillside" appearance.

Furthermore, Potrero Annex is the work of architects who are lesser known than the architects of Potrero Terrace. Potrero Annex was designed by the architectural firm of Ward & Bolles, which was headed by J. Francis Ward and John S. Bolles, who designed various residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and military projects during the mid-20th century. Most notably, Ward is associated with San Francisco's Sea Cliff neighborhood, several consulate buildings, and Salvation Army buildings; and Bolles is associated with the Ping Yuen public housing complex and the International Business Machines headquarters in San Jose, and also served as president of the San Francisco Art Association. Although Ward and Bolles produced some notable works, they do not appear to have been widely influential in the field of architecture (separately or together), nor does Potrero Annex appear to be particularly representative of their best work.

Also, the landscape of Potrero Annex was designed by modern landscape pioneer architect Douglas Baylis, a co-founder of the "California School" of landscape architecture with Thomas D. Church, for whom Baylis worked before starting his own firm. However, Baylis' landscape design for the constrained site of Potrero Terrace was not representative of his best work, but instead responded primarily to utilitarian needs for shade and erosion control on the steep site, as well as an aesthetic need to "soften" the visual appearance of the complex. According to the 2011 Carey & Co. Landscape Integrity Analysis report:

Little is known about the original landscape design for Potrero Annex...The existing evidence, however, indicates that Baylis designed an informal landscape fairly densely filled with trees. Hedges do not appear to have been part of his design. Particularly when compared to Church's adjacent design for Potrero Terrace, Baylis did not include significant fields of open space; the steep, narrow site of Potrero Annex likely made such a spatial design impossible.¹⁴

Potrero Annex is therefore determined not to be eligible under California Register Criterion 3.

Summary

The subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is therefore determined to be eligible under California Register Criterion 3. This is because the Potrero Terrace phase, which forms the original and primary portion of the Potrero housing complex, is eligible under California Register Criterion 3, as an excellent example of "super-block" public housing that was designed and constructed on steep terrain, and as the representative work of master architects. The Potrero Annex phase, which is inferior in design and construction to the original Potrero Terrace complex, is not eligible under California Register Criterion 3, and may be considered to be a non-character-defining feature of Potrero Terrace in relation to Criterion 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Criterion 4: It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Based upon a review of information provided by the Project Sponsor and located in the Planning Department's background files, the subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is not significant under Criterion 4, in relation to the built environment. The Potrero housing complex does not include rare construction types and it is not known to have any potential to yield information that is important to understanding the physical construction of the built environment. In relation to Criteria 4 and potential archaeological resources that may be associated with the Potrero housing complex, the archaeological analysis of the site is conducted separately and is included in separate report(s) available from the Planning Department.

Potential to Contribute to a Historic District

Based upon a review of information provided by the Project Sponsor and located in the Planning Department's background files, the subject property (the Potrero housing complex) does not contribute to any potential historic district at the federal, State, or local level.

According to the National Park Service, a historic district "possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development". The Potrero housing complex was specifically designed not to be united with nearby properties and neighborhoods, by virtue of its programmatic architecture and its self-contained "super-block" plan that is differentiated from the surrounding street grid. All previously existing structures on the Potrero housing complex site, which may have been linked historically and/or aesthetically by plan and/or physical development to surrounding properties, were removed in order to construct the complex. Also, there are no extant nearby examples of temporary housing constructed for defense workers during World War II, which may have been linked historically by plan to the Potrero Terrace as wartime worker housing. Furthermore, large public uses that were constructed in the area during the mid-20th century, such as the Potrero Hill Recreation Center and Starr King Elementary School, are not directly linked by plan or physical development to the Potrero housing project.

The subject property (the Potrero housing complex) is therefore determined not to be a contributor to any potential historic district at the federal, State, or local level. This is because the Potrero housing complex is not united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development to any significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects.

Step B: Integrity

To be a resource for the purposes of CEQA, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the California Register of Historical Resources criteria, but it also must have integrity. Integrity is defined as "the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's period of significance." Historic integrity enables a property to illustrate significant aspects of its past. All seven qualities do not need to be present as long the overall sense of past time and place is evident.

Location: Retains Lacks
Association: Retains Lacks
Design: Retains Lacks
Workmanship: Retains Lacks

Setting: Retains Lacks
Feeling: Retains Lacks
Materials: Retains Lacks

The subject property (the Potrero housing complex) retains integrity in only two qualities: location and setting. It lacks integrity in every other quality, including: design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A detailed analysis of the subject property (the Potrero housing complex), based on the seven aspects of integrity, follows:

Location

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The current location of the Potrero housing complex (including buildings and extant site features) is the place where it was constructed.

Therefore, integrity of location is retained.

Setting

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property, and it refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. At the time of its construction and historic occupation, the setting of the Potrero housing complex was a developing area on the south slope of San Francisco's Potrero Hill, with residential, commercial, and industrial uses located nearby, as well as undeveloped sites. After construction and during historic occupation of the Potrero housing complex (including Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex), new construction that occurred in the area was generally in character with the historic setting. This included expansion of residential neighborhoods to the west of the complex, expansion of commercial and industrial uses to the south and east, development of additional large-scale public uses (recreation center/park and school), and retention of some undeveloped sites and open spaces in the area (including through permanent dedications).

Therefore, integrity of setting is retained.

Design

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. In the case of the Potrero housing complex, cumulative physical changes have resulted in diminishment of historic design. An important character-defining feature of the complex, as originally designed, is building architecture that exhibits uniform appearance, functionality, and efficiency. According to the 2011 Carey & Co. Landscape Integrity Report: "The buildings [of Potrero Terrace] were all identical – three-story, hipped roof structures with stucco cladding, wood sash, one-over-one double hung windows.

Porches with wrought iron balustrades span the length of the primary façade of each building. Lines from the form boards and colorful paint provide the only other decoration.”¹⁵

However, cumulative physical alterations that have occurred to exteriors of buildings compromise the originally consistent building designs. Most original windows were removed and replaced in piecemeal fashion with different kinds of windows; all main entry doors and terrace doors were removed and replaced with doors that do not match the historic doors; and many wall openings are boarded up and nonfunctional. As a consequence of these alterations to the primary building elevations, which are otherwise mostly lacking detail, the appearance of architectural uniformity, functionality, and efficiency is lost, and design is adversely affected. In the Potrero Annex phase, additional physical alterations to buildings include removal of original lattice metal supports and open wood trellis features from around the front entries, which further degrades overall design.

Also, the design of the Potrero housing complex is adversely affected by severe deterioration of the landscape designs, which are important elements of the integrated complex design. According to the 2011 Carey & Co. Landscape Integrity Analysis report:

The existing landscape designed by master architect Thomas Church for Potrero Terrace does not retain historical integrity, as there is too little remaining historic fabric to convey the original design’s significance. The character defining features of the original plan, as evidenced by the drawings, include the use of a combination of trees, hedges, and ground cover to arrange space, to distinguish between public and private spaces, and to subdivide public areas into spaces for people to use. A number of trees still stand, though probably only about half of those originally planned for, and virtually none of the hedges and ground cover remains. No one area captures the complete balance between the informal trees in public areas and formal hedges lining pathways from parking areas to buildings...Similarly, the landscape [that] Douglas Baylis designed for Potrero Annex retains poor integrity. Although only a vague planting scheme remains of Baylis’s original plans, it clearly shows a landscape filled with trees, softening the stark architecture and likely creating shade. Few of these trees remain.¹⁶

In addition, the overall design of the Potrero housing complex, which originally consisted of Potrero Terrace (built 1941), is adversely affected by the later development of Potrero Annex (built 1953-1954). The original, self-contained “super-block” design of Potrero Terrace is characterized by a regularized project boundary, a visually connected, bowl-shaped site with generally consistent slope, and a unifying radial plan that fans out from the Administration Building and includes regularly spaced, carefully arranged terraced building pads, rows of buildings, streets, and landscape elements. The construction of Potrero Annex involved incorporating a marginal site located on very steep slope at the periphery of the original complex. This was accomplished by substantially altering the Annex site with grading and filling, and by extending previously existing rows of buildings, pathways, and streets of Potrero Terrace onto the irregularly shaped Potrero Annex site. This resulted in: a change in overall shape of the complex

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

from regular (which characterizes “super-block” design) to irregular; a loss of internal connectivity within the complex, due to the visual and spatial remoteness of Potrero Annex, which is located on a separate slope in relation to Potrero Terrace; and overall obscuring of the original successful “super-block” design.

Therefore, integrity of design is not retained.

Materials

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. According to the 2001 Carey & Co. HRE report: “[C]ertain alterations and improvements have removed original material and changed certain character-defining features of the buildings.”¹⁷ Material changes to buildings, which apparently occurred mostly in the 1970s, included: removal of most original wood sash windows throughout the complex, and replacement with non-matching aluminum or vinyl sash (or boarding up of window openings); removal of original paneled and/or glazed wood entry doors, and replacement with non-matching solid wood or hollow metal doors (or boarding up of entry openings); removal of original glazed wood terrace doors, and replacement with glazed aluminum doors; removal of metal lattice and wood trellis entry features in Potrero Annex; and replacement of interior finishes and appliances throughout the complex.

Also, most of the original landscape plant materials throughout the complex were removed, destroyed, and/or lost to attrition, including approximately half (or more) of the trees, such as Monterey pines, olive trees, a variety of acacia trees, and Silver Wattle trees, and virtually all of the shrubs and ground cover, such as Tarata, Blue Veronica, Australian Tea trees, Yunnan Fire Thorn plants, Lemon Woodwood, Mirror Plant, and Red Ironbark. According to the 2011 Carey & Co. Landscape Integrity Analysis report:

[In Potrero Terrace] Thomas Church used perennial trees and shrubs with white, yellow, red, and blue flowers to create hedge-lined buildings and pathways combined with groups of shade trees. Today, some of the groups of trees stand, but the hedges are nearly all gone and the landscape is generally barren. While little historical evidence exists to determine exactly how Baylis designed Potrero Annex, the available documentation indicates that less than half of the original planting scheme still stands. Again, the landscape appears largely barren. These alterations have substantially and adversely impacted the landscapes’ integrity...to the extent that they no longer express their historical significance.¹⁸

Therefore, integrity of materials is not retained.

¹⁷ *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.

¹⁸ *Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex Housing Project, Thomas Church and Douglas Baylis Landscape Design, San Francisco, California, Integrity Analysis*, May 31, 2011, Carey & Co. Inc.

Workmanship

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. The Potrero housing complex was constructed using efficient mass production techniques and standardized materials and features that were distinctive of the mid-20th century period. However, maintenance and repair activities (or lack thereof) have not maintained the original standardized, functional nature of workmanship in building architecture. Many window and door openings of vacant units are boarded up and nonfunctional, while other original windows and doors have been replaced with contemporary windows and doors that differ from historic elements in materials, operation, and manufacturing techniques.

Also, the severe deterioration of the landscapes, including removal, destruction, and/or loss of much original plant material (such as the entire shrub and ground cover palettes), indicates a degradation of workmanship. According to the 2001 Carey & Co. HRE report: “[T]he original landscape design for the complex does not remain, except for some trees. This is most probably the result of lack of maintenance and the natural attrition of plant material.”¹⁹ Also, according to the 2001 Carey & Co. HRE report: “[A]side from the remaining lawn areas, the majority of the trees and plants from the original landscape from the complex are not extant. This is most probably the result of lack of maintenance and the natural attrition of plant material.”²⁰ In both cases, deterioration of landscapes that were originally designed to require low levels of maintenance indicates a loss of historic workmanship.

Therefore, integrity of workmanship is not retained.

Feeling

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time, which results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. To a large degree, the aesthetic and historic sense of the Potrero housing complex is no longer expressed, and the property does not convey historic character, due to cumulative changes to physical features that have occurred over time. These changes include: severe deterioration of “softening” landscapes, including removal and/or loss of most original plant materials and entire landscape elements; loss of architectural character and consistency among buildings due to widespread, inconsistent alterations to windows and doors (including boarding up of openings); and postwar expansion of the original, integrated “super-block” complex onto a marginal annex site, which adversely changed the overall spatial relationships and character of the complex.

Therefore, integrity of feeling is not retained.

Association

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The presence of physical features provides the link to important historic events, persons, and architecture,

¹⁹ *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.

²⁰ *Potrero Annex, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.

while the absence of physical features weakens the link to important historic events, persons, and architecture. In the Potrero housing complex, the absence and/or diminishment of various character-defining features (such as original landscape materials and landscape elements, standardized windows, doors, and building elevations, and the original pre-annex plan) weakens direct links to historic events of the early public housing movement, as well as weakens direct links to the successful "super-block" design of master architects. In addition, the complete renovations to interiors of housing units (which occurred in the early and mid-1970s) results in weakening of associations to important persons whose productive lives may have occurred in residence at the complex.

Therefore, integrity of association is not retained.

Step C: Character-defining Features

If the subject property has been determined to have significance and retains integrity, please list the character-defining features of the building(s) and/or property. A property must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity in order to avoid significant adverse impacts to the resource. These essential features are those that define both why a property is significant and when it was significant, and without which a property can no longer be identified as being associated with its significance.

The Potrero housing complex is individually significant under Criterion 1 (Events), Criterion 2 (Persons), and Criterion 3 (Architecture), but the Potrero housing complex does not retain integrity because aspects of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association are adversely affected by cumulative physical alterations. The property no longer retains certain essential features that defined its significance, and the property can not longer be identified as being associated with its significance. The property is not a resource as defined by CEQA.

A listing of character-defining features is not required because the property does not retain integrity and it is not a resource as defined by CEQA. However, an analysis of extant and non-extant character-defining features was included in the assessment of integrity. For informational purposes only, a list of extant and not extant character-defining features follows:

Character-defining Features (Extant)

Extant character-defining features of the Potrero housing complex include:

- Rows of long buildings arranged along contour lines and curvilinear streets
- Concrete and/or stucco exterior walls
- Regular patterns of window and door openings
- Hipped roofs with mission tiles, or canted flat roofs with eaves
- Yards, concrete site walls, and steps

Character-defining Features (Not Extant)

Non-extant character-defining features of the Potrero housing complex include:

- Consistent, uniform appearance of building elevations, including matching windows and entrances (compromised by non-matching window/door replacement and boarding-up of vacant units)
- Integrated landscape plan and landscape elements (mostly removed, destroyed, and/or lost, including virtually all original shrubs/ground cover and most trees)
- Regularized project boundary/shape, generally consistent slope, and internal visual/geographic cohesion (original Potrero Terrace plan compromised by construction of Potrero Annex on peripheral, marginal site)
- Original unit interiors (renovated with new finishes/paint and new appliances)*

*Original unit interiors may be considered to be character-defining features in relation to potential significance under California Register Criterion 2, which can apply to physical features and spaces associated with the productive lives of persons who were important in history.

CEQA HISTORIC RESOURCE DETERMINATION

No Historic Resource Present

If there is no historic resource present, please have the Senior Preservation Planner review, sign, and process for the Environmental Planning Division.

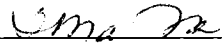
No Historic Resource Present, but is located within a California Register-eligible historic district

If there is a California Register-eligible historic district present, please fill out the *Notice of Additional Environmental Evaluation Review* and have the project sponsor file the **Part II: Project Evaluation** application fee directly to the Environmental Planning Division.

Historic Resource Present

If a historic resource is present, please fill out the *Notice of Additional Environmental Evaluation Review* and have the project sponsor file the **Part II: Project Evaluation** application fee directly to the Environmental Planning Division.

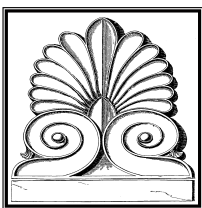
PART I: SENIOR PRESERVATION PLANNER REVIEW

Signature: 
Tina Tam, Senior Preservation Planner

Date: 7-15-2011

Attachments: *Potrero Terrace, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.*
Potrero Annex, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation, July 26, 2001, Carey & Co. Inc.
Historic Resources Evaluation Report, Evaluation Review and Update, Selected SFHA Properties, March 31, 2009,
CIRCA: Historic Property Development
Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex Housing Project, Thomas Church and Douglas Baylis Landscape Design, San
Francisco, California, Integrity Analysis, May 31, 2011, Carey & Co. Inc.
Letter dated June 3, 2011, Carey & Co. Inc.

cc: Linda Avery, *Recording Secretary*, Historic Preservation Commission
Vimaliza Byrd / Historic Resource Impact Review File
Beth Skrondal / Historic Resource Survey Team
I:\DECISION DOCUMENTS\HRER



CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

POTRERO TERRACE
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

July 26, 2001

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA), Carey & Co. has undertaken a historic resource evaluation of Potrero Terrace housing complex located in San Francisco. This evaluation report is intended to serve as a determination of the complex's historic significance as a compliance measure of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The SFHA has various rehabilitation projects planned for this housing complex, and these federally-funded projects (by the Department of Housing and Urban Development) have triggered this Section 106 review process.

METHODOLOGY

Carey & Co. prepared this evaluation by visiting the site to inspect the property, taking photographs, and conducting archival historic research. During the site visit Carey & Co. evaluated the existing conditions, historic features, and architectural significance of the residence. The site visit was carried out on May 15, 2001. Because all the residential units are occupied, the interiors were not surveyed. Carey & Co. also conducted archival research on Potrero Terrace and the history of housing projects in general at the San Francisco Public Library History Room, the University of California, Berkeley's Bancroft Library and College of Environmental Design Library, and the SFHA's drawing archives at the Egbert Avenue offices. Although original architectural drawings and specifications were found at the SFHA offices on Egbert Avenue, administrative records pertaining to the individual housing projects were not available.

SUMMARY

Our evaluation was based on the eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which requires that the resource be at least fifty years old (except under special circumstances), that it retain its historic integrity, and that it be significant under at least one of four criteria. These four criteria include: association with historic events, association with important persons, distinctive design or physical characteristics, and the potential to provide

important information about history or prehistory. In determining National Register eligibility, we weighed known historical associations, architectural merit, and the current level of integrity.

We have assigned the property a NRHP Status Code of 6Z, which indicates, in our opinion, that the property is ineligible for listing in the National Register through a complete evaluation process. After conducting extensive historic research and a site assessment of the property, Carey & Co. believes that Potrero Terrace, though over fifty years old, is neither architecturally remarkable nor associated with significant people or events, and therefore would not be eligible for a listing in the National Register.

DESCRIPTION

This housing complex consists of 469 units in 38 separate buildings located on a steep site at the south slope of Potrero Hill, bound by Wisconsin Street, 23rd Street, Texas Street, and 26th Street—the site is 17.6 acres total and slopes steeply down north to south, from 23rd Street to 26th Street. The footprint of each building is aligned with the natural topography so that they are each oriented according to the slope. This gives the appearance that the buildings are situated randomly on the site, but they actually follow the natural contours of the land to reduce the required amount of soil cut and fill and to help prevent erosion. There are three types of buildings—E, F, and G—of which there are five, fifteen, and eighteen, respectively. This complex has 27 one bedroom units, 387 two bedroom units, and 55 three bedroom units. There is also an Administration Building located at the corner of 25th and Connecticut.

Each of the buildings is rectangular in plan, constructed of reinforced poured-in-place concrete, and features a hipped, mission barrel tile roof. Because of the steep slope of the site, one elevation of each building is a full three levels, while the other elevation reveals only two levels. Units are accessed from both elevations. These rather simple buildings have minimal architectural articulation and detail. The three story elevations feature a second floor balcony with metal wire mesh railing. The windows vary from the original two-over-two double-hung wood sash windows to vinyl double-hung and aluminum sliding sash replacements. The entry doors are solid wood, while the second floor balcony doors are glazed aluminum with a sidelight and transom. The doors leading out to the balconies have a slightly depressed eight-inch border which articulates the opening. The exterior concrete walls have expressed form board lines creating a horizontal pattern at every elevation. The side elevations of the buildings feature a single entry door with wire mesh railing and a flat concrete awning projection above.

The “E” type building, which is the smallest of the three types, contains eight units. The “F” type building, of which there are two subtypes, contain either ten or eleven units. The “G” type buildings, of which there are three subtypes that vary according to window and door placement, each contain fifteen units.

The circulation between the buildings consists of concrete walkways, steps and retaining walls—T-shaped pipes with clotheslines strung between are for hanging wash. The landscaping is minimal—between the concrete walkways is a combination of grass and dirt, with some mature trees extant.

CONDITION AND ALTERATIONS

The exterior of these buildings appear to be in good condition. However, the original landscape design for the complex does not remain, except for some trees. This is most probably a result of lack of maintenance and the natural attrition of plant material.

The architectural design of these buildings remains fairly intact, however certain alterations and improvements have removed original material and changed certain character-defining features of the buildings. In 1975 the interiors were completely modernized with modern finishes, new paint, and new appliances in the kitchen. The original entry doors, which were paneled and glazed wood, were replaced with the current solid wood doors in 1978. At this time many of the original two-over-two double-hung windows were also replaced with aluminum sliding sash or vinyl double-hung windows. Also, the original second level glazed entries leading onto the balconies were also replaced with the current glazed aluminum doors. New metal gutters and downspouts were installed in 1993, and an exterior security lighting system was put in during 1994. Construction work that is currently under way includes the replacement of the original mission barrel clay roof tiles with matching tiles, and the repair of concrete on the balconies and the installation of a floor membrane.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

History and Background of Public Housing in the United States

Confronting the problems of Depression-era unemployment and growing slums in America's cities, the federal government began a focused initiative to alleviate unsafe urban living conditions. In the early 1930s, through the Public Works Authority (PWA), the federal government built homes for low-income families illustrating the benefits of modern housing. Spurred on by critics of the nascent housing program, a 1935 court ruling established that the federal government could not appropriate private land for public housing. Because these new programs began in the East, no PWA projects were carried out on the West Coast.

Congress passed the United States Housing Act in 1937, establishing the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA) within the Department of the Interior. This act bypassed earlier court rulings on the legality of federal land confiscation by allowing funding for local housing authorities. Income limits guaranteed that the neediest people benefitted from the program while the mandated elimination of slums insured an increase in the quality, not quantity, of urban housing.

The first USHA secretary, Nathan Straus, believed that clearing slums was important, but that new construction had the potential to benefit the poor more quickly. He appointed Catherine Bauer, an influential supporter of modern public housing, to be in charge of slum clearance deferments. Priorities were set from the beginning, therefore, with the USHA's main emphasis on the construction of new buildings. This policy had an immediate influence on which sites were chosen; some of the first projects tended to be located on empty lots at the edges of cities.

One of the strongest criticisms of the PWA projects was that designers included unnecessary luxuries in an effort to highlight the potential of "modern housing" to help eradicate slum

conditions. In reaction to this, the USHA mandated cost limits of \$1000 per room or \$4000 per family unit, thereby impacting the decision-making processes of many local housing authorities. There was an increased reliance on “standardized unit plans,” which, in conjunction with “restrictive budgets,” “conspired to significantly inhibit creativity in housing design.”¹ Since the cost of land was included in the per room and per family unit calculations, the high cost of land in San Francisco made meeting the limitations particularly difficult. Indeed, in many cases the City and County of San Francisco had to contribute additional funds to cover expenditures that exceeded the federally-allocated budget.

Site planning was often seen as a way to make housing projects attractive and liveable without increasing costs. In 1939, Straus wrote,

In low-rent housing, it is in the plan of the project as a whole—in the relation of the buildings to each other and to the land—that we may provide both insurance against deterioration of the neighborhood and the opportunities for the growth of a better community life.²

For the most up-to-date ideas on public housing site planning, American designers looked to the “European planning and design philosophies” advanced by Catherine Bauer in her seminal book of 1934, *Modern Housing*.³ According to Bauer, the English “super-block” was a large contiguous block of land, defined by multi-use roads along its edges but featuring small vehicle- or pedestrian-only pathways “indented into the periphery of the block.”⁴ This concept allowed “very large economies in paving. . .and at the same time whole neighborhoods were rendered immune from traffic noise and dirt and dangers.”⁵ Orientation toward sun and air flow was part of the German version of the super-block, *Zeilenbau*, in which parallel rows of buildings led to “[n]o closed courtyards, no traffic, no wasted pavement, and an open vista in two directions for every window and balcony.”⁶ Despite topographical influences, Potrero Terrace and Sunnydale are the two examples of super-block-type site planning among San Francisco’s five permanent pre-WWII housing projects.

Another way to arrange buildings on a site was referred to as a “court plan.”⁷ Designers using this technique placed inward-facing buildings at the perimeter of the site, creating “spaciousness of effect and esthetically satisfying enclosed areas” between the buildings.⁸ Protected inner courtyards were considered safer for children and easier to maintain than lawns or gardens along the street, and the court plan tended to be chosen when sun, wind, and views were not programmatic considerations, such as on small sites in dense urban neighborhoods. In San Francisco, court plan-type site planning among the first five permanent projects can be seen at Holly Courts, Westside Courts, and Valencia Gardens.

Landscape design was an important component of early housing project design however cost limitations and maintenance requirements prohibited the use of many types of plantings. Only the varieties that were “thoroughly hardy and free from horticultural handicaps” were considered appropriate for the purposes of low-rent housing. Trees were not generally recommended due to the desire for maximum sun and wind and shrubs, flowers, and grass were

discouraged because caring for these items was very expensive. Vines, on the other hand, added “the charm of green foliage” and helped reduce the harshness of unarticulated concrete facades.⁹ The federal government also looked favorably on landscape designs that included tenant-maintained areas, believing that this would reduce costs and promote civic pride.

While design and construction of housing projects was the responsibility of local housing authorities, the federal government provided advice and guidance through “education” books or pamphlets. One such book, entitled *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site* (1939), described how designers could work with different types of topographic situations. In one example, the preferred scheme for 320 families “on a very steep site in a large western city” lays the buildings along the site contours but cuts the roads across them. The sketch in the book is practically identical to the site plan for Potrero Terrace.¹⁰

As the economy improved in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the USHA experienced several budget cuts. Simultaneously, the country’s increased involvement with World War II was leading to a housing shortage in cities as workers moved from outlying areas to take defense-related jobs. Eventually, in 1942, the program was folded into the Federal Public Housing Administration (FPHA). This new agency’s role was much narrower; it was meant only to administer existing public housing projects and build temporary defense worker housing.

Debates erupted over the temporary nature of the new war-time construction. Private industry supported it because of the potential for a huge post-war housing market, however, public housing advocates believed that quality should not be compromised. In the end, income levels were raised to allow defense workers to occupy public housing legally, projects that were incomplete or only partially occupied by December 1941 were “reclassified” as defense worker housing, landscapes recently installed went unmaintained, and the slum clearance policy was eliminated. It was not until the 1950s that the conversion from temporary defense workers’ housing back to permanent low-income public housing was completed.

Public Housing in San Francisco

Like many other local housing authorities, the history of the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) begins with the United States Housing Act of 1937. Empowered by this act, the California Legislature passed the Housing Authorities Law in 1938, which allowed local communities to create their own housing authorities and begin asking for federal funding. The SFHA was formed in 1938 and was among the first California cities to request USHA funding.

In addition to requesting funds, the SFHA’s initial efforts were directed toward determining how great the need for public housing was at the time. With the first survey indicating that 46,000 homes in San Francisco were “substandard,” the agency planned 11 public housing projects with a total of 2,855 units.¹¹ Five of these were undertaken before WWII (Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnydale, Valencia Gardens, Westside Courts) and three were completed or partially occupied before December 1941 (Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnydale). Of these, two projects deserve particular attention: Holly Courts, because it was the first completed public housing project located west of the Rocky Mountains (May 1940) and was designed by Arthur

Brown Jr., and, Westside Courts, because it was the only public housing project in San Francisco programmed specifically for African-American families.

Also like many other housing authorities, the SFHA undertook a public information campaign. This included brochures and pamphlets emphasizing modern conveniences, improved sanitary conditions, and careful planning. One of these, entitled *Holly Courts*, describes the highlighted project with typical language:

The things to notice in the architecture of Holly are the service and simplicity, service to fulfill the basic needs of the tenants in little as well as big factors, in a floor that can be swept easily as well as in walls that won't fall down: simplicity primarily to keep construction costs low. The two together are important to good architecture. . . In spite of their rectangular simplicity and concrete construction, the buildings avoid austerity by the informality, their close relation to the play spaces, and their warm friendly color and texture.¹²

The war-related changes in public housing policies made the SFHA the largest landlord in the City, managing the five permanent projects as well as 10,000 new temporary housing units. It was not until the early 1950s that the SFHA returned to building permanent public housing projects.

The Development of Potrero Terrace

This housing project, designed by Frederick H. Meyer, Warren C. Perry, and John Bakewell, Jr. in 1939, was constructed in 1941, and the landscape was designed by Thomas D. Church. While Potrero Terrace was designed almost simultaneously with Holly Courts, it was a vastly different project in both size and scope. There were almost four times as many units at Potrero Terrace and it could not be designed with an enclosed plan because of the steeply sloping site. Additionally, there were no nearby parks or public transportation services, making both recreational and parking spaces a necessary part of the housing project program. Site coverage for Potrero Terrace was only 13.10%, while the density was also low at 27.4.¹³

The most prominent feature in the project is the site topography. The buildings are set along contour lines while roads run up the slope. One contemporary SFHA document focused much attention on the end result of this careful planning, saying the project had “[t]he aspect of a Mediterranean Hillside because of the view of the bay, the following of the contour lines, the simple form of the buildings, the [red] color of the tile roofs.”

Potrero Terrace was designed by three architects: Frederick H. Meyer, Warren C. Perry, and John Bakewell Jr. At his death, Frederick H. Meyer was called “a pioneer of San Francisco architecture in this century.”¹⁴ He began his career as a draftsman at the end of the nineteenth century. After the 1906 earthquake he designed the Humboldt Bank Building, the “first important structure on Market Street,” as well as the Monadnock Building.¹⁵ He also designed projects in other California cities, such as the white terra cotta Bank of America building in Red

Bluff, CA. Meyer is best known for his work with John Galen Howard and John Reid Jr. on the 1913 San Francisco Civic Auditorium.

Warren C. Perry was born in 1884 and attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts from 1908 until 1911. He spent three years working in the office of John Galen Howard, however, he spent most of his career as a faculty member and, later, as the Director of the School of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. He began his private practice in 1913, including buildings on the UC campus and a variety of residential projects. In an interview contemporaneous with the design and construction of Potrero Terrace, Perry said that he thought “good architecture has always been modern.”¹⁶

John Bakewell Jr. was born in Topeka, Kansas in 1873. He came to the San Francisco Bay Area with his family in the 1880s and studied at the University of California, Berkeley under Bernard Maybeck. Phoebe Apperson Hearst loaned him money to go to the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris where he met Arthur Brown, Jr. He and Brown returned to San Francisco as partners in 1906, continuing together until 1928. From that time until his retirement in 1942, he worked in partnership with Ernest Weihe. Bakewell was acknowledged by Daniel Burnham for his help in the 1905 plan for San Francisco, and he served on the architectural commission of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Throughout his long career, Bakewell served primarily as a sophisticated and capable executive and supervising architect.

Thomas D. Church was the landscape architect for Potrero Terrace. While very little remains of Church’s design due to lack of maintenance immediately after installation, plans for the project indicate that his design was somewhat formal, reflecting the urbane and elegant approach expected in a city development. He is considered a pioneer in modern landscape architecture who changed a diverse range of past styles into the Modernist designs of today. Church designed as many as 2,000 gardens in addition to housing developments and corporate and college campuses, including such well-known projects as the Memorial Court garden at the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center and the *Sunset* magazine headquarters in Menlo Park. His work was influenced in part by his training in landscape architecture at the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard University.

Church’s design style changed during the Depression, when he needed to develop landscapes that involved minimal maintenance. His gardens simplified traditional styles, using informal masses of plants and ground cover and also highlighted indoor-outdoor living, popular in California at that time.¹⁷ According to Michael Laurie, the chair of the department of landscape architecture at the University of California at Berkeley and an authority on Church’s work, “Church was on the cutting edge of change to smaller, more functional, yet still artistic gardens. . . .Church developed a devoted following in part because he built gardens to last and because his designs took into account practical matters as well as the common man’s desire for beauty.”¹⁸

EVALUATION

We have assigned the property a NRHP Status Code of 6Z, which indicates, in our opinion, that the property is ineligible for listing in the National Register through a complete evaluation process. After conducting extensive historic research and a site assessment of the property, Carey & Co. believes that Potrero Terrace, though over fifty years old, is neither architecturally remarkable nor associated with significant people or events, and therefore would not be eligible for a listing in the National Register.

As the USHA was developing and codifying their housing policies during the late 1930s, they released publications in order to promote a consistency of approach and design for the individual public housing projects around the country. For example, in their document *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site*, the USHA addressed all aspects of site selection, planning and design, and presented various hypothetical case studies which reflected these standardized policies. For most important areas of public housing development, including cost controls, management and tenant selection, the federal agency published materials to help guide the local housing authorities.

Because of these established standards, there is a broad consistency in the site planning and architectural design of extant historic public housing projects around the nation. While Potrero Terrace reflects the “super-block” approach to site planning on a steep slope, it is not necessarily a distinctive example of this planning type. Architecturally, the buildings are not significant and there are no historic people or events associated with the complex. Therefore, Potrero Terrace is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register under any of the NRHP criteria.

NOTES

1. Robinson & Associates, Inc., and Jeffrey Shrimpton, *Draft Historic Context: Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949* (August 14, 1997) 68.

2. Nathan Straus, Foreword to U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority, *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site* (Bulletin no. 11 on Policy and Procedure, 1939) 3.

3. Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, *State of California Historic Resources Inventory Form for Peralta Villa* (August 1990) 8.

4. Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934) 178.

5. Bauer 178.

6. Bauer 180-1.

7. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 22.
8. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 22.
9. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 71.
10. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 46-7.
11. "History of the Authority," *San Francisco Housing Authority 1942-1943 Annual Report*, no. 5 (April 15, 1943).
12. *Holly Courts* (San Francisco: San Francisco Housing Association, 1940) 1.
13. *San Francisco public housing: a citizens' survey of five permanent projects: Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnydale, Valencia Gardens and Westside Court* (San Francisco: San Francisco Planning and Housing Association, 1946) 6.
14. "Frederick Meyer dies," *Western Architect and Engineer* 221, no. 4 (April 1961) 7.
15. "Frederick Meyer dies," 7.
16. *Architect and Engineer* 145, no. 3 (June 1941) 19.
17. "Church's Gardens," *Historic Preservation*, (January/February 1995) 74-79.
18. "Church's Gardens," 74-79.

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May 25, 2001

Potrero Terrace Housing Development

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PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 6Z

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 2

*Resource Name or #: Potrero Terrace

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted a. County San Francisco

b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ T _____ R _____ 1/4 of _____ 1/4 of Sec _____ B. M.

c. Address 1095 Connecticut Ave. City San Francisco, CA Zip _____

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear feature) Zone _____ rnE/ _____ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g. parcel #, legal description, directions to resource, elevation, additional LITMs, etc. as appropriate)

Located on several blocks on the south slope of Potrero Hill, bound by Wisconsin Street, 23rd Street, Texas Street, and 26th Street.

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

This housing complex consists of 469 units in 38 separate buildings located on a steep site at the south slope of Potrero Hill, bound by Wisconsin Street, 23rd Street, Texas Street, and 26th Street—the site is 17.6 acres total and slopes steeply down north to south, from 23rd Street to 26th Street. The footprint of each building is aligned with the natural topography so that they are each oriented according to the slope. This gives the appearance that the buildings are situated randomly on the site, but, rather, they follow the natural contours of the land to reduce the required amount of soil cut and fill and to help prevent erosion. There are three types of buildings—E, F, and G—of which there are five, fifteen, and eighteen, respectively. This complex has 27 one bedroom units, 387 two bedroom units, and 55 three bedroom units. There is also an Administration Building located at the corner of 25th and Connecticut.

See Continuation Sheet.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP3. Multiple Family

* P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, etc.)
View from 25th Street, View North (May, 2001)

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Prehistoric Historic Both

1941, original drawings

*P7. Owner and Address:

San Francisco Housing Authority

440 Turk St.

San Francisco, CA 94102

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, address)

Winslow Hastie

Carey & Co. Inc.

460 Bush Street

San Francisco, CA 94108

*P9. Date Recorded: 5/24/01

* P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

Intensive

* P 1 1. Report Citation: (Cite survey report/other sources or " none ") Potrero Terrace Historic Resource Evaluation

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record
 Photograph Record Other: (List) _____

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 2 of 2 *Recorded by Winslow Hastie *Date 5-24-01 Continuation Update
*Resource Name or #: Potrero Terrace

Description, Continued.

Each of the buildings is rectangular in plan, constructed of reinforced poured-in-place concrete, and features a hipped, mission barrel tile roof. Because of the steep slope of the site, one elevation of each building is a full three levels, while the other elevation reveals only two levels. Units are accessed from both elevations. These rather simple buildings have minimal architectural articulation and detail. The three story elevations feature a second floor balcony with metal wire mesh railing. The windows vary from the original two-over-two double-hung wood sash windows to vinyl double-hung and aluminum sliding sash replacements. The entry doors are solid wood, while the second floor balcony doors are glazed aluminum with a sidelight and transom. The doors leading out to the balconies have a slightly depressed eight-inch border which articulates the opening. The exterior concrete walls have expressed form board lines creating a horizontal pattern at every elevation. The side elevations of the buildings feature a single entry door with wire mesh railing and a flat concrete awning projection above.

The "E" type building, which is the smallest of the three types, contains eight units. The "F" type building, of which there are two subtypes, contain either ten and eleven units. The "G" type buildings, of which there are three subtypes that vary according to window and door placement, each contain fifteen units.

The circulation between the buildings consists of concrete walkways, steps and retaining walls—T-shaped pipes with clotheslines strung between are for hanging wash. The landscaping is minimal—between the concrete walkways is a combination of grass and dirt, with some mature trees extant.



Photo 1: Rear Elevation of Building, View South



Photo 2: Front Elevation of Two Buildings, View North



Photo 3: Side Elevation with Original Windows



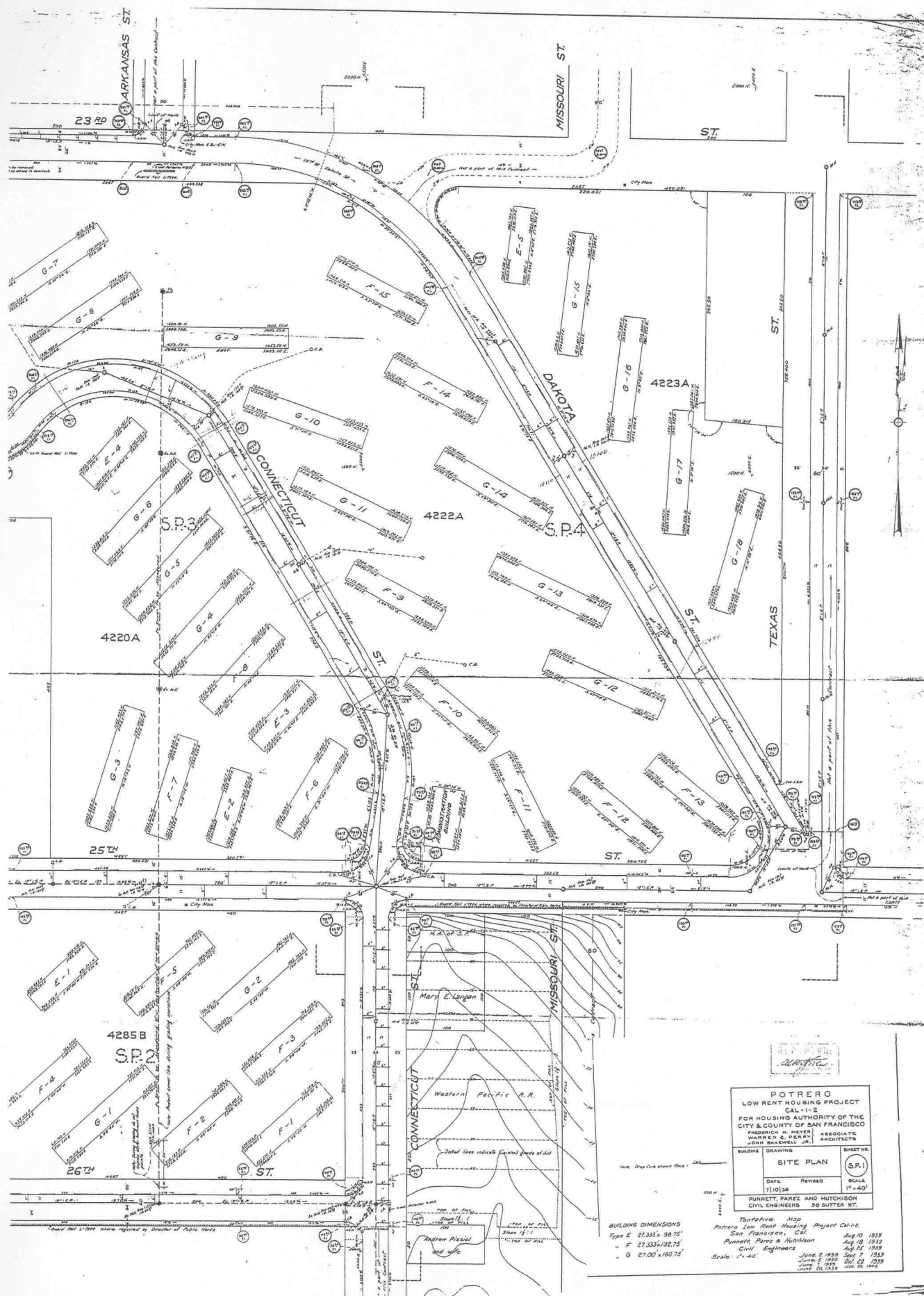
Photo 4: Building Layout according to Site Topography, View North



Photo 5: Detail of Front Elevation with Balcony



Photo 6: Laundry Area at Rear of Building



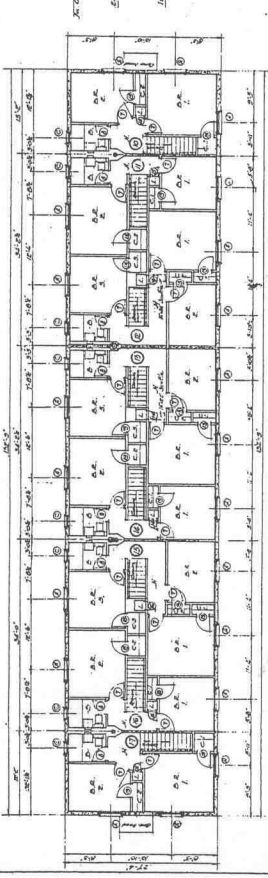
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 LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT
 CAL. 11-2
 FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
 CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 FREDERICK H. MOORE & ASSOCIATES
 WARREN C. PERRY & JOHN BAKWELL, JR., ARCHITECTS

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1/10/35	
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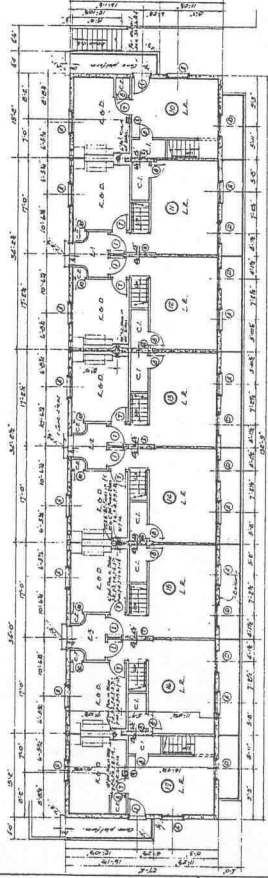
PUNNETT, PAREZ AND HUTCHISON
 CIVIL ENGINEERS 56 BUTTER ST.

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 Punnett, Perez & Hutchison Aug. 18, 1935
 Civil Engineers Aug. 25, 1935
 June 2, 1935 Sept. 7, 1935
 June 3, 1935 Oct. 29, 1935
 June 1, 1935 Jan. 12, 1936

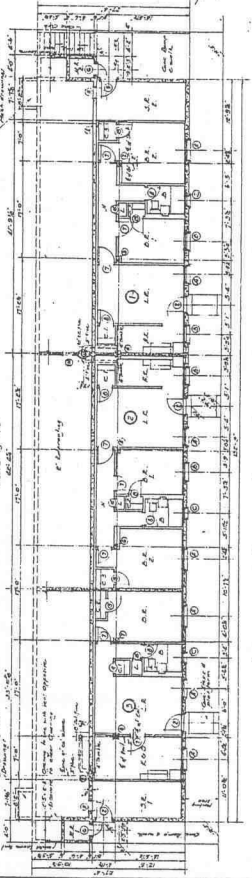
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 " F 27,333' x 32.75'
 " G 27,000' x 140.75'



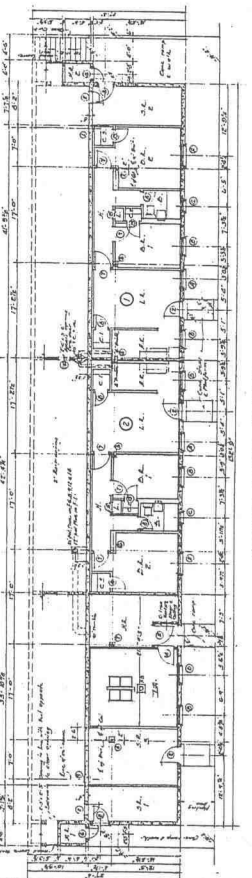
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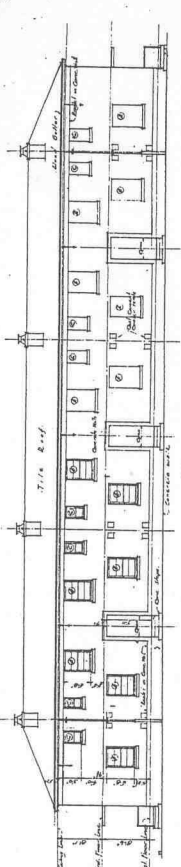
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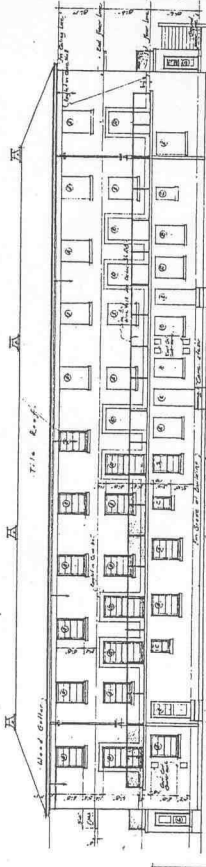
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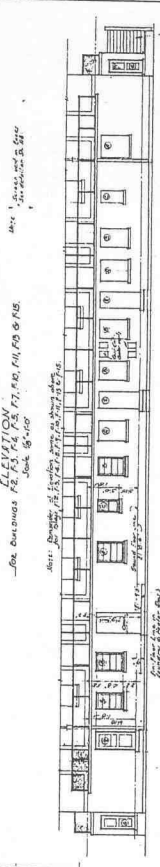
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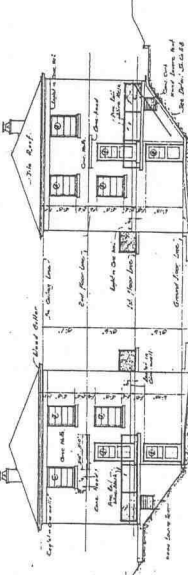
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ELEVATION
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ELEVATION
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"



ROOF PLAN
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

APPROVED FOR RECORD
 CITY ENGINEER
 OCT 27 1939
APPROVED:

DESIGNED FOR INTERIOR PAINTING
POTERO
 LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT
 CAL. 1-2
 CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 ARCHITECTS
 100 CALIFORNIA STREET
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

PLANS & ELEVATIONS: A-2
 DRAWING DATE: 10/27/39
 SHEET NO. 1 OF 1

May 25, 2001

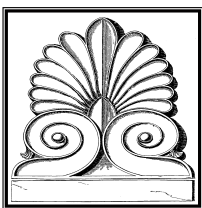
Potrero Terrace Housing Development

CREDITS

The following individuals participated in this historic resource evaluation report:

Carey & Co. Inc.

Alice Carey, Principal
Hisashi B. Sugaya, Project Manager
Winslow Hastie, Preservation Planner
Sarah M. Dreller, Architectural Historian



CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

**POTRERO ANNEX
San Francisco, California**

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

July 26, 2001

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA), Carey & Co. has undertaken a historic resource evaluation of the Potrero Annex housing complex located in the Potrero Hill neighborhood of San Francisco. This evaluation report is intended to serve as a determination of the complex's historic significance as a compliance measure of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The SFHA has various rehabilitation projects planned for this housing complex, and these federally-funded projects (by the Department of Housing and Urban Development) have triggered this Section 106 review process.

METHODOLOGY

Carey & Co. prepared this evaluation by visiting the site to inspect the property, taking photographs, and conducting archival historic research. During the site visit Carey & Co. evaluated the existing conditions, historic features, and architectural significance of the residence. The site visit was carried out on June 13, 2001. Because all the residential units are occupied, the interiors were not surveyed. Carey & Co. also conducted archival research on Potrero Annex and the history of housing projects in general at the San Francisco Housing Authority Offices, the San Francisco Public Library and History Room, and several libraries at the University of California, Berkeley, including Doe Library, Bancroft University Archives, the Environmental Design Library, and the College of Environmental Design Archives.

SUMMARY

Our evaluation was based on the eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which requires that the resource be at least fifty years old (except under special circumstances), that it retain its historic integrity, and that it be significant under at least one of four criteria. These four criteria include: association with historic events, association with important persons, distinctive design or physical characteristics, and the potential to provide

important information about history or prehistory. In determining National Register eligibility, we weighed known historical associations, architectural merit, and the current level of integrity.

We have assigned the property a NRHP Status Code of 6Z, which indicates, in our opinion, that the property is not eligible for a separate listing in the National Register.

DESCRIPTION

This housing project consists of 23 buildings containing 13 one-bedroom units, 46 two-bedroom units, 55 three-bedroom units, 18 four-bedroom units, five five-bedroom units, and a child care center. The very steep, 7.24-acre site, on the east slope of Potrero Hill, is located between Potrero Playground and Interstate-280. Missouri Street curves through the development, with two curvilinear cul-de-sacs at the east side of the street. Due to the sloping site, most of the buildings are two levels at the west elevation and three levels at the east elevation. Between the buildings is a circulation network of concrete walkways and stairs, with chain link fencing and some mature trees.

These wood-frame, rectangular buildings have flat roofs canted at a slight angle and projecting eaves with soffit vent panels. The two- and three-story buildings feature a combination of original two-over-two double-hung wood windows, replacement aluminum sliding sash windows, and replacement double-hung vinyl windows. The east-facing elevations, with broad views of the San Francisco Bay, feature second and third floor wood balconies with exposed joists and a closed, clapboard rail that is canted outward. The west elevations feature single or paired entries with a flat canopy and a beltcourse separating the two levels.

CONDITION AND ALTERATIONS

The exterior of these buildings appear to be in good condition. However, aside from the remaining lawn areas, the majority of the trees and plants from the original landscape for the complex are not extant. This is most probably a result of lack of maintenance and the natural attrition of plant material.

The architectural design of these buildings remains fairly intact, however certain alterations and improvements have removed original features. In 1973 the interiors were completely modernized with modern finishes, new paint, and new appliances in the kitchen. At an unknown date the latticed metal supports flanking the front entries were removed. The original glazed or paneled wood doors have been replaced with the current hollow metal doors at an unknown date. Many of the original double-hung wood sash windows have also been replaced with aluminum sliding sash or vinyl double-hung windows. An open wood trellis originally ran between the flat entry canopies at the location of the present-day west elevation beltcourse, however this trellis was also

removed. While the specific date of these modifications is unknown, according to SFHA documents most of these alterations probably occurred around 1980.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

History and Background of Public Housing in the United States

Confronting the problems of Depression-era unemployment and the growing slums in America's cities, the federal government began a focused initiative to alleviate unsafe urban living conditions. In the early 1930s, through the Public Works Authority (PWA), the federal government built homes for low-income families illustrating the benefits of modern housing. Spurred on by critics of the nascent housing program, a 1935 court ruling established that the federal government could not appropriate private land for public housing. Because these new programs began in the East, no PWA projects were carried out on the West Coast.

Congress passed the United States Housing Act in 1937, establishing the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA) within the Department of the Interior. This act bypassed earlier court rulings on the legality of federal land confiscation by allowing funding for local housing authorities. Income limits guaranteed that the neediest people benefitted from the program while the mandated elimination of slums insured an increase in the quality, not quantity, of urban housing.

The first USHA secretary, Nathan Straus, believed that clearing slums was important, but that new construction had the potential to benefit the poor more quickly. He appointed Catherine Bauer, an influential supporter of modern public housing, to be in charge of slum clearance deferments. Priorities were set from the beginning, therefore, with the USHA's main emphasis on the construction of new buildings. This policy had an immediate influence on which sites were chosen; some of the first projects tended to be located on empty lots at the edges of cities.

One of the strongest criticisms of the PWA projects was that designers included unnecessary luxuries in an effort to highlight the potential of "modern housing" to help eradicate slum conditions. In reaction to this, the USHA mandated cost limits of \$1000 per room or \$4000 per family unit, thereby impacting the decision-making processes of many local housing authorities. There was an increased reliance on "standardized unit plans," which, in conjunction with "restrictive budgets," "conspired to significantly inhibit creativity in housing design."¹ Since the cost of land was included in the per room and per family unit calculations, the high cost of land in San Francisco made meeting the limitations particularly difficult. Indeed, in many cases the City and County of San Francisco had to contribute additional funds to cover expenditures that exceeded the federally-allocated budget.

Site planning was often seen as a way to make housing projects attractive and liveable without increasing costs. In 1939, Straus wrote,

In low-rent housing, it is in the plan of the project as a whole—in the relation of the buildings to each other and to the land—that we may provide both insurance against deterioration of the neighborhood and the opportunities for the growth of a better community life.²

For the most up-to-date ideas on public housing site planning, American designers looked to the “European planning and design philosophies” advanced by Catherine Bauer in her seminal book of 1934, *Modern Housing*.³ According to Bauer, the English “super-block” was a large contiguous block of land, defined by multi-use roads along its edges but featuring small vehicle- or pedestrian-only pathways “indented into the periphery of the block.”⁴ This concept allowed “very large economies in paving...and at the same time whole neighborhoods were rendered immune from traffic noise and dirt and dangers.”⁵ Orientation toward sun and air flow was part of the German version of the super-block, *Zeilenbau*, in which parallel rows of buildings led to “[n]o closed courtyards, no traffic, no wasted pavement, and an open vista in two directions for every window and balcony.”⁶ Despite topographical influences, Potrero Terrace and Sunnydale are the two examples of super-block-type site planning among San Francisco’s five permanent pre-WWII housing projects.

Another way to arrange buildings on a site was referred to as a “court plan.”⁷ Designers using this technique placed inward-facing buildings at the perimeter of the site, creating “spaciousness of effect and esthetically satisfying enclosed areas” between the buildings.⁸ Protected inner courtyards were considered safer for children and easier to maintain than lawns or gardens along the street, and the court plan tended to be chosen when sun, wind, and views were not programmatic considerations, such as on small sites in dense urban neighborhoods. In San Francisco, court plan-type site planning among the first five permanent projects can be seen at Holly Courts, Westside Courts, and Valencia Gardens.

Landscape design was an important component of early housing project design, however, cost limitations and maintenance requirements prohibited the use of many types of plantings. Only the varieties that were “thoroughly hardy and free from horticultural handicaps” were considered appropriate for the purposes of low-rent housing. Trees were not generally recommended due to the desire for maximum sun and wind, and shrubs, flowers, and grass were discouraged because caring for these items was very expensive. Vines, on the other hand, added “the charm of green foliage” and helped reduce the harshness of unarticulated concrete facades.⁹ The federal government also looked favorably on landscape designs that included tenant-maintained areas, believing that this would reduce costs and promote civic pride.

While design and construction of housing projects was the responsibility of local housing authorities, the federal government provided advice and guidance through “education” books or pamphlets. One such book, entitled *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site* (1939), described how designers could work with different types of topographic situations. In one example, the preferred scheme for 320 families “on a very steep site in a large western city” lays the buildings along the site contours but cuts the roads across them. The sketch in the book is practically identical to the site plan for Potrero Terrace.¹⁰

As the economy improved in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the USHA experienced several budget cuts. Simultaneously, the country’s increased involvement with World War II was leading to a housing shortage in cities as workers moved from outlying areas to take defense-related jobs. Eventually, in 1942, the program was folded into the Federal Public Housing Administration (FPHA). This new agency’s role was much narrower; it was meant only to administer existing public housing projects and build temporary defense worker housing.

Debates erupted over the temporary nature of the new war-time construction. Private industry supported it because of the potential for a huge post-war housing market, however, public housing advocates believed that quality should not be compromised. In the end, income levels were raised to allow defense workers to occupy public housing legally, projects that were incomplete or only partially occupied by December 1941 were “reclassified” as defense worker housing, landscapes recently installed went unmaintained, and the slum clearance policy was eliminated.

By late 1944 Americans began to worry once again about the shortage of permanent affordable housing. Private industry constructed almost 900,000 units of housing during the war, but government estimates indicated that 12,600,000 units of urban housing would have to be built in the decade after the war to meet the needs of a growing population and shift in rural-urban demographics.¹¹ With an overwhelming amount of construction work on the horizon, the government expected private industry to focus on projects providing the highest profit margins, leaving low-income rentals units in precariously short supply. Moreover, returning veterans would require housing while their permanent units were being built.

In reaction to the upcoming housing crisis, a presidential executive order issued in 1945 suspended plans to demolish temporary defense housing units and allowed veterans to occupy them after the end of war-time hostilities. This done, the slow movement of veterans and their families from public housing to private homes opened the way for converting defense housing back to its original low-income purpose and demolishing the many temporary structures which had been constructed quickly and cheaply during the war. It was only in the mid-1950s that local housing authorities completely disposed of temporary defense housing units and public housing occupants were all at the lowest income brackets.

A “powerful real estate lobby” prevented Congress from acting on public housing for several years, although important federal legislation was eventually passed toward the end of the decade.¹² The Housing Act of 1949 made several major modifications to the Housing Act of 1937, allowing the resumption of public housing construction. One major difference was a dramatic increase in federal funding for both loans and subsidies, which combined provided for the creation of 810,000 new public housing units. The other substantive change was in the way construction cost limits were calculated; the new housing law removed the per-dwelling limit and increased the per-room limit, effectively permitting “construction of larger units for big families” without penalty.¹³ These and other “refinements drawn from the 12 years’ experience that has gone before” encouraged local housing authorities to undertake new construction.

Some of the projects built as a result of the Housing Act of 1949 consisted of generously spaced row houses similar to those designed before the war. However, taller buildings with higher densities, such as those found at many later housing projects, were becoming popular at this time because of their ability to alleviate immediate urban housing issues with very small acreage requirements. In a 1952 essay, Catherine Bauer described the complexity of the emerging debate:

A big issue today in connection with slum clearance, public housing, and redevelopment policy in large cities is the decision between elevator apartments and low flats or one-family houses, particularly with respect to the needs of low- or moderate-income families with children. Although in the USA Federal aid makes low density theoretically possible, the trend is toward high buildings due to the combined pressure of central property and political interests, the housing shortage, and the frequent difficulty of finding suitable vacant sites within the city. Also, a great many designers like the concept of architectural urbanity and technological refinement expressed in tall buildings when properly spaced, and among the sophisticated there are those who feel that collective apartment living is more convenient, more efficient, and culturally more desirable than our old small house pattern.¹⁴

Despite increased funding, more liberal cost limits, and the potential savings due to higher densities, the federal government continued to strongly encourage standardized design as a cost-cutting measure. Like before, the government issued a series of bulletins focusing on all aspects of housing construction. Titles such as “Zoning and Rezoning,” “Control of Condensation in Crawl Spaces,” and “Saws—Their Care, Use, and Condition,” suggest an attempt to illuminate a broad range of technical issues through detailed discussions of individual topics. At this point in the second major phase of public housing in the U.S., design appears to have been a low priority, with only one bulletin (entitled “Architectural Planning and Design”) devoted specifically to the topic.

The second wave of support for public housing lasted only a few years longer than the first. The reason for its rapid demise was not war, as was the case in the 1940s, but rather the perception that public housing was failing to achieve the expectations of the programs' creators. By the mid-1950s, "the general public's growing unhappiness...with the high incidence of crime, the generally sterile appearance, [and] the rising costs of construction and maintenance"¹⁵ was evidenced in a considerable change in contemporary writing on the subject of public housing. Fewer articles were written about new public housing projects, with the notable exception being those projects that differed in some way from the standardized norm. Public housing's most ardent early supporters criticized some aspects of how the flawed implementation of the program had affected the result. Focusing on design, Catherine Bauer wrote:

[T]here is a strong prejudice against the row house in most sections of America. What we need to know is whether its unpopularity is due to inherent factors (such as closeness to neighbours, relatively small yards, lack of "individuality") or to the fact that few people have seen or occupied a really well-designed up-to-date version as yet.¹⁶

Respected trade journals printed editorials written by private industry which at times featured emotionally-charged rhetoric such as this, published in the January 1950 issue of *Architect and Engineer*:

If the government would stay off the market, 1950 would almost automatically be another all-time high year for home building. All conditions except that of the socialized housing threat are good.¹⁷

Problems with segregation policies caused even more discussion. Throughout the war local housing authorities had relatively little control over tenant selection; priority was given to defense workers and their families. However, as defense workers and veterans were phased out of public housing and new units were constructed, local housing authorities were again confronted with who to allow into the program and where those individuals would live. While the Housing Act of 1949 provided detailed guidance on how to identify low-income families, it did not address the problem's demographic aspect. In 1952, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed suit on behalf of three African-American families because they had been denied application to a San Francisco housing project reserved specifically for Caucasians. The San Francisco Housing Authority segregation policy was eventually found unconstitutional, setting the precedent for the rest of the nation.

In reaction to these critiques, officials began looking for other solutions to the country's affordable housing problems. One infamous strategy was "urban renewal," in which the existing federal public housing and slum clearance programs were combined with new efforts to develop commercial and transportation features of a given neighborhood. The process began with the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, which created federal subsidies

for private industry projects on land that had been cleared of slums. Another, somewhat lesser-known, later program was referred to as the “scatter plan,” in which local housing authorities purchased and renovated existing homes in various neighborhood throughout their city in hopes of lessening the isolation and stigma attached to low-income public housing. Finally, throughout the post-war period the federal government passed legislation making private homes more accessible through new mortgage financing and subsidies.

Public Housing in San Francisco

Like many other local housing authorities, the history of the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) begins with the United States Housing Act of 1937. Empowered by this act, the California Legislature passed the Housing Authorities Law in 1938, which allowed local communities to create their own housing authorities and begin asking for federal funding. The SFHA was formed in 1938 and was among the first California cities to request USHA funding.

In addition to requesting funds, the SFHA’s initial efforts were directed toward determining how great the need for public housing was at the time. With the first survey indicating that 46,000 homes in San Francisco were “substandard,” the agency planned 11 public housing projects with a total of 2,855 units.¹⁸ Five of these were undertaken before WWII (Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnyside, Valencia Gardens, Westside Courts) and three were completed or partially occupied before December 1941 (Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnyside). Of these, two projects deserve particular attention: Holly Courts, because it was the first completed public housing project located west of the Rocky Mountains (May 1940) and was designed by Arthur Brown Jr., and, Westside Courts, because it was the only public housing project in San Francisco programmed specifically for African-American families.

Also like many other housing authorities, the SFHA undertook a public information campaign. This included brochures and pamphlets emphasizing modern conveniences, improved sanitary conditions, and careful planning. One of these, entitled *Holly Courts*, describes the highlighted project with typical language:

The things to notice in the architecture of Holly are the service and simplicity, service to fulfill the basic needs of the tenants in little as well as big factors, in a floor that can be swept easily as well as in walls that won’t fall down: simplicity primarily to keep construction costs low. The two together are important to good architecture. . . In spite of their rectangular simplicity and concrete construction, the buildings avoid austerity by the informality, their close relation to the play spaces, and their warm friendly color and texture.¹⁹

War-related changes in public housing policies made the SFHA the largest landlord in the City, managing the five permanent projects as well as 10,000 new temporary housing

units. Many of these units were concentrated in Hunter's Point, where land was easily secured and close to defense jobs, as well as in areas that private industry considered less desirable, such as steep terrain on Potrero Hill and along Alemany Boulevard. These locations eventually became the sites for permanent housing projects after the war.

Despite this new housing the City experienced a serious housing shortage during and after the war. Three million people moved to California between 1940 and 1947, with most of these choosing to settle in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles areas.²⁰ San Francisco's lack of older buildings meant that "there could be less 'filtering' down of homes from one class to another."²¹ Moreover, while federal mortgage programs made it possible for many more people to afford new homes, private industry was unable to build housing fast enough to satisfy demand. The 1945 executive order allowed the SFHA to defer the disposition of temporary war housing, however, the situation continued until the Housing Act of 1949 provided local housing authority officials with new funding and a refined mandate.

Soon after the Housing Act of 1949, the California legislature passed State Article XXXIV. Considered "the major success of the anti-public housing lobby in California," it required that any proposed public housing projects be approved in local referenda.²² When San Francisco voters passed several projects, though, the housing authority was able to proceed relatively unimpeded.

The first projects on the SFHA's list after World War II were the remaining six of the original 11 planned before the war. Designs for Ping Yuen in Chinatown and North Beach Place in North Beach were finished when the program was suspended so these two provided the most logical and most easily achievable starting point for the revived effort. Construction was completed for both projects in 1952, providing the first new permanent public housing in San Francisco in over a decade. Other projects that followed in the early 1950s tended to relate to the ongoing process of phasing out and disposing of temporary defense housing units. This usually meant providing new permanent housing near occupied temporary units or reusing land that had been recently cleared. Building new units adjacent to older ones was also an option, as in the case of Potrero Annex.

While the SFHA was starting to construct new, voter-approved permanent public housing, the agency was fending off negative national attention on its segregation policy. The "neighborhood pattern" policy officially began in 1942 when officials decided to base the racial mix of a project on that of the surrounding neighborhood. Out of the original 11 projects, for example, Westside Courts was set aside for African-Americans because there was a high concentration of African-Americans living in that area, Ping Yuen in Chinatown was reserved solely for the Chinese, and the remainder were meant for Caucasians. SFHA officials used the federal requirement of neighborhood "harmony" as justification, but within a decade the policy came under attack. In 1950, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors forced the agency into a partial compromise; the SFHA agreed to stop using the policy for tenants in newly designed and constructed projects

but was able to continue enforcing it in “all war-deferred projects and existing low-rental housing.”²³ The issue was finally settled by the United States Supreme Court in 1954, one week after its landmark ruling against the “separate but equal” policy in public schools. In the public housing case, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from a federal district judge’s ruling that San Francisco’s “neighborhood pattern” policy was unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment.

During the first half of the 1950s, the SFHA’s efforts focused on the disposition of temporary defense housing units, reviving the projects which had been postponed by the war, building new permanent housing, and defending their “neighborhood pattern” policy. The decisions made during this busy period in the agency’s history continue as part of the legacy of San Francisco’s public housing program.

The Development of Potrero Annex

The Potrero Annex housing project, immediately adjacent to Potrero Terrace, was designed in 1952 with the firm of Ward & Bolles as the architect and Douglas Baylis as the landscape architect. Construction began in 1953 and was completed in late 1954 with housing for approximately 170 families.

The SFHA described Potrero Annex’s site as “marginal land which perhaps otherwise would have laid undeveloped for many years”²⁴ that was chosen because “available sites were becoming increasingly difficult to find.”²⁵ Indeed, the steeply sloped site proved challenging for designers; the solution was similar to low-density pre-war projects in which roads and buildings followed topographical lines while footpaths cut across open areas to provide interior circulation.

A detailed early history of the project based on contemporary sources is difficult to compile; there is little substantive mention of Potrero Annex, possibly due to the large amount of attention being paid at the time to Ping Yuen’s opening and the SFHA’s Supreme Court appeal of its controversial segregation policy.

J. Francis Ward came to the United States in 1920 from his native New Zealand. Before World War II his career focused specialized in residential architecture. These projects included homes in San Francisco’s Sea Cliff neighborhood, four along the “winding block” of Lombard, and several on Washington and Jackson streets which eventually became foreign consulates. During the war Ward was an architect for the Twelfth Naval District and afterward his commissions came primarily from industrial and commercial clients. He was particularly involved with designing buildings for the Salvation Army, including the Officer’s Training School and several “men’s social centers.”²⁶

Ward’s business partner, John S. Bolles, was from San Francisco. During the 1950s he designed Ping Yuen and Potrero Annex housing projects as well as his more well-known International Business Machines headquarters building in San Jose. In 1958 he became

president of the San Francisco Art Association. In the late 1960s he returned to designing public housing, with his Public Housing for the Elderly on Russian Hill.

Douglas Baylis is best known as one of the co-founders of the “California school” of landscape architecture in which strict Beaux-Arts rules were cast aside and the regulating elements of landscape design were the Californian climate and lifestyle. He became involved with the creation of this movement in the latter years of the Depression and in 1941 began working for famous landscape architect Thomas Church, another co-founder of the “California school.” It was during his tenure in Church’s office that several government-funded housing projects were designed. He opened his own firm after the war where his most well-remembered employee was his wife, Maggie Baylis, a very skilled renderer. His projects during the next two decades include San Francisco Civic Center Plaza, International Business Machines Headquarters near San Jose, Washington Square in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco, and several BART stations. He served as campus landscape architect at the University of California, Berkeley and lectured and wrote on a variety of topics.

EVALUATION

We have assigned the property a NRHP Status Code of 6Z, which indicates, in our opinion, that the property is not eligible for a separate listing in the National Register.

To be listed in the NRHP, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the established criteria, it must also possess historic “integrity.” Integrity is defined as “the ability of a property to convey its significance.” The National Register criteria for historic significance recognize seven aspects or qualities that define integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. While Potrero Annex retains its location and association, substantial alterations and lack of original landscaping have compromised the project’s design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling.

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1. Robinson & Associates, Inc., and Jeffrey Shrimpton, *Draft Historic Context: Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949* (August 14, 1997) 68.
2. Nathan Straus, Foreword to U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority, *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site* (Bulletin no. 11 on Policy and Procedure, 1939) 3.

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3. Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, *State of California Historic Resources Inventory Form for Peralta Villa* (August 1990) 8.
 4. Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934) 178.
 5. Bauer 178.
 6. Bauer 180-1.
 7. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 22.
 8. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 22.
 9. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 71.
 10. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority 46-7.
 11. Robinson & Associates 84-5.
 12. Gwendolyn Wright, "The Evolution of Public Housing Policy and Design in the San Francisco Bay Area," Ph.D. diss. exam (University of California, Berkeley, 1976) 31.
 13. U.S. Department of the Interior, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Public Housing Administration, *A Handbook of Information on Provisions of the Housing Act of 1949* (1949) 14.
 14. Catherine Bauer, *Social Questions in Housing and Town Planning* (London: University of London Press, 1952) 20-1.
 15. Wright 42-3.
 16. Bauer, *Social Questions* 21.
 17. Rodney M. Lockwood, "Increased Home Construction Costs May Result from Federal Housing Program," *Architect and Engineer* 153, no. 1 (January 1950) 11.
 18. "History of the Authority," *San Francisco Housing Authority 1942-1943 Annual Report*, no. 5 (April 15, 1943).
 19. *Holly Courts* (San Francisco: San Francisco Housing Association, 1940) 1.
 20. Wright 28.
 21. Wright 28.

22. Wright 33.

23. "Cooperation Agreement Bans Racial Segregation," *The Journal of Housing* 7, no. 3 (March 1950) 82.

24. San Francisco Housing Authority, *Annual Report* (1952) 4.

25. San Francisco Housing Authority, *Road to the Golden Age: A Report on the First Twenty Years of Operations* (1960) 15.

26. "Architect Joseph F. Ward Dies," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 June 1970, 38.

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PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 6Z

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 2

*Resource Name or #: Potrero Annex

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted a. County San Francisco

b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ T _____ R _____ 1/4 of _____ 1/4 of Sec _____ B. M. _____

c. Address Missouri @ 23rd Street City San Francisco, CA Zip _____

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear feature) Zone _____ rnE/ _____ mN _____

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g. parcel #, legal description, directions to resource, elevation, additional LITMs, etc. as appropriate)

Located on the eastern slope of Potrero Hill.

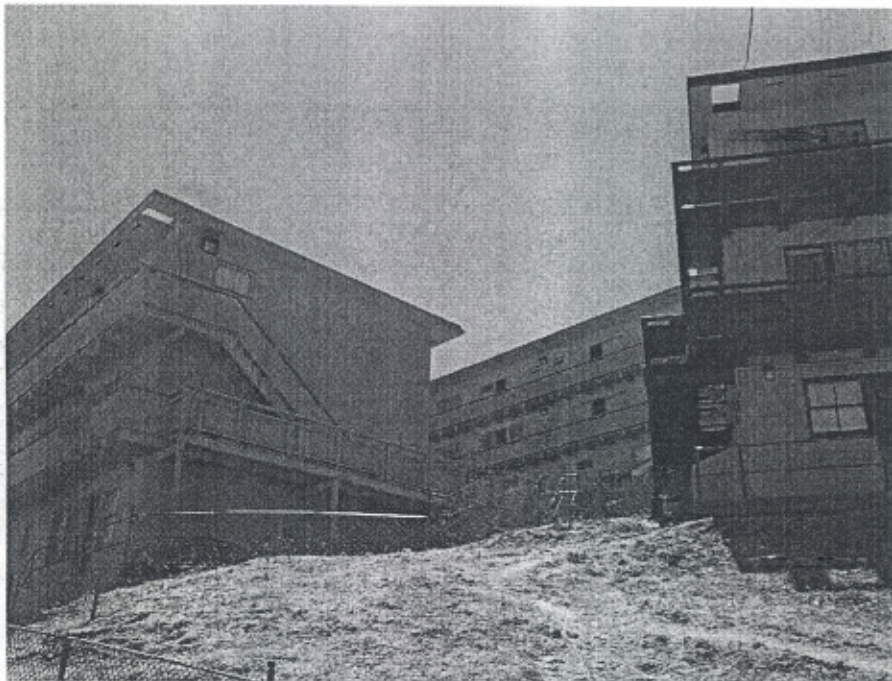
*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

This housing project consists of 23 buildings containing 13 one-bedroom units, 46 two-bedroom units, 55 three-bedroom units, 18 four-bedroom units, five five-bedroom units, and a child care center. The very steep, 7.24-acre site, on the east slope of Potrero Hill, is located between Potrero Playground and Interstate-280. Missouri Street curves through the development, with two curvilinear cul-de-sacs at the east side of the street. Due to the sloping site, most of the buildings are two levels at the west elevation and three levels at the east elevation. Between the buildings is a circulation network of concrete walkways and stairs, with chain link fencing and some mature trees.

See Continuation Sheet.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP3. Multiple Family

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)
P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, etc.)



View to SW. 6/13/01

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Prehistoric Historic Both

1954, original drawings

*P7. Owner and Address:

San Francisco Housing Authority

440 Turk St.

San Francisco, CA 94102

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, address)
Winslow Hastie/Sarah M. Dreller

Carey & Co. Inc.

460 Bush Street

San Francisco, CA 94108

*P9. Date Recorded: 6/13/01

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report/other sources or "none") Potrero Annex Historic Resource Evaluation

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record
 Photograph Record Other: (List) _____

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 2 of 2 *Recorded by Winslow Hastie/Sarah M. Dreller *Date 6-13-01 Continuation Update
*Resource Name or #: Potrero Annex

Description, Continued

These wood-frame, rectangular buildings have flat roofs canted at a slight angle and projecting eaves with soffit vent panels. The two- and three-story buildings feature a combination of original two-over-two double-hung wood windows, replacement aluminum sliding sash windows, and replacement double-hung vinyl windows. The east-facing elevations, with broad views of the San Francisco Bay, feature second and third floor wood balconies with exposed joists and a closed, clapboard rail that is canted outward. The west elevations feature single or paired entries with a flat canopy and a beltcourse separating the two levels.

Condition and Alterations

The exterior of these buildings appear to be in good condition. However, aside from the remaining lawn areas, the majority of the trees and plants from the original landscape for the complex are not extant. This is most probably a result of lack of maintenance and the natural attrition of plant material.

The architectural design of these buildings remains fairly intact, however certain alterations and improvements have removed original features. In 1973 the interiors were completely modernized with modern finishes, new paint, and new appliances in the kitchen. At an unknown date the latticed metal supports flanking the front entries were removed. The original glazed or paneled wood doors have been replaced with the current hollow metal doors at an unknown date. Many of the original double-hung wood sash windows have also been replaced with aluminum sliding sash or vinyl double-hung windows. An open wood trellis originally ran between the flat entry canopies at the location of the present-day west elevation beltcourse, however this trellis was also removed. While the specific date of these modifications is unknown, according to SFHA documents most of these alterations probably occurred around 1980.

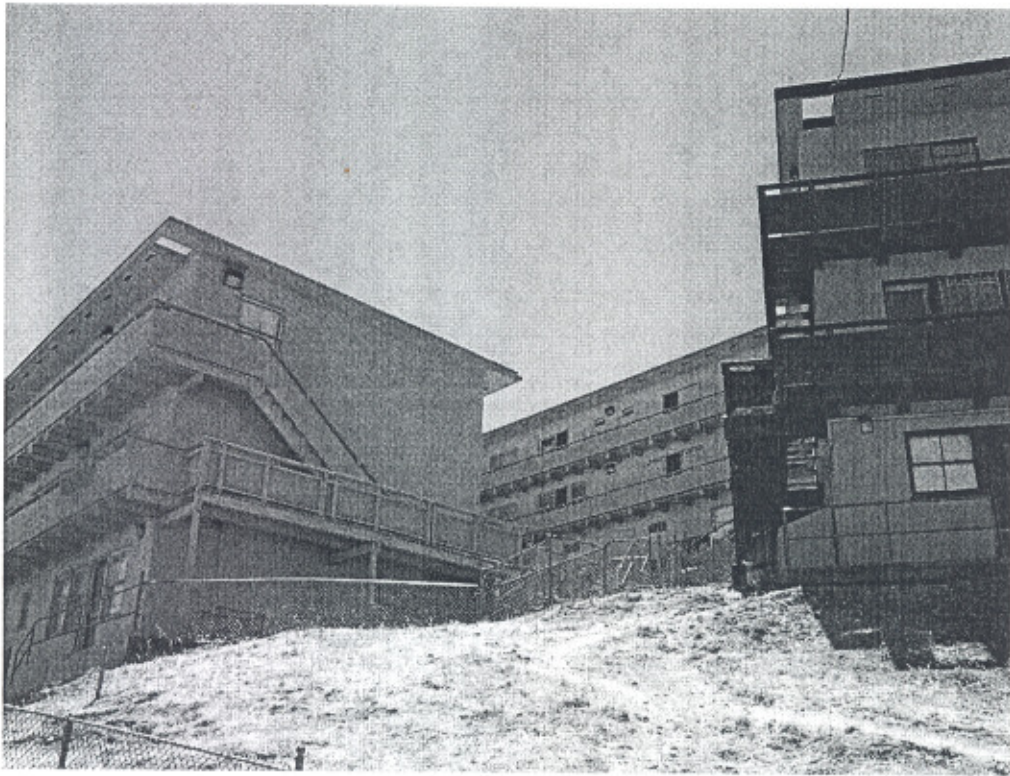


Photo 1: Rear Elevations and Balconies of Three Buildings



Photo 2: Community Center

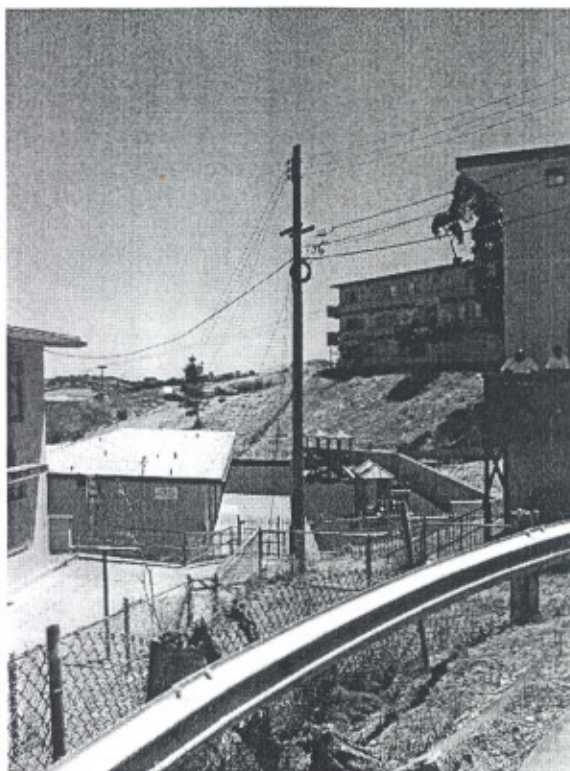


Photo 3: Community Center with Playground



Photo 4: Cul-de-sac on Watchman Way

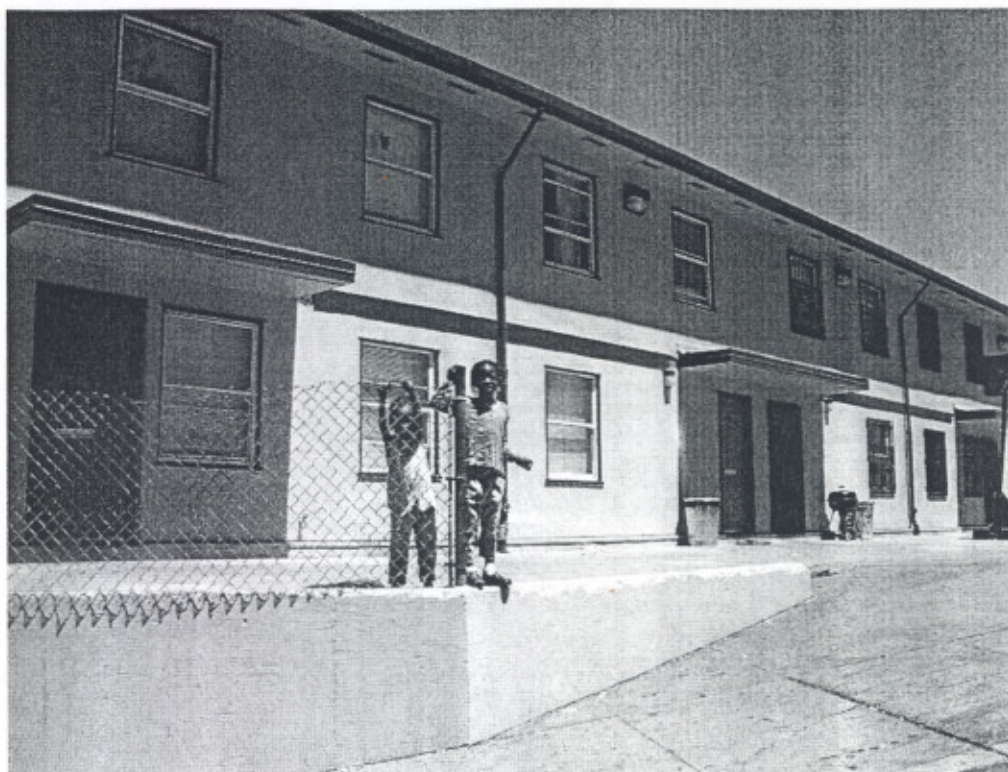
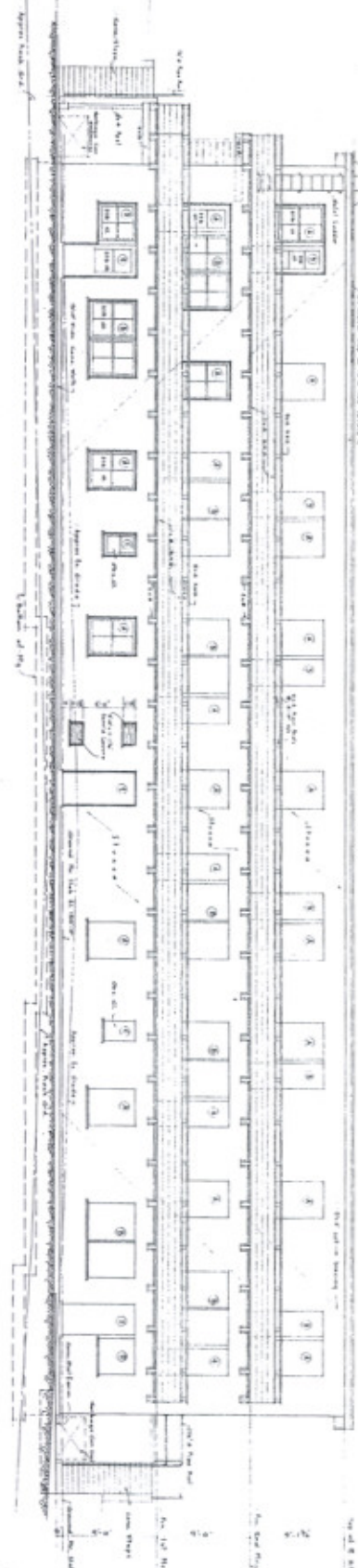
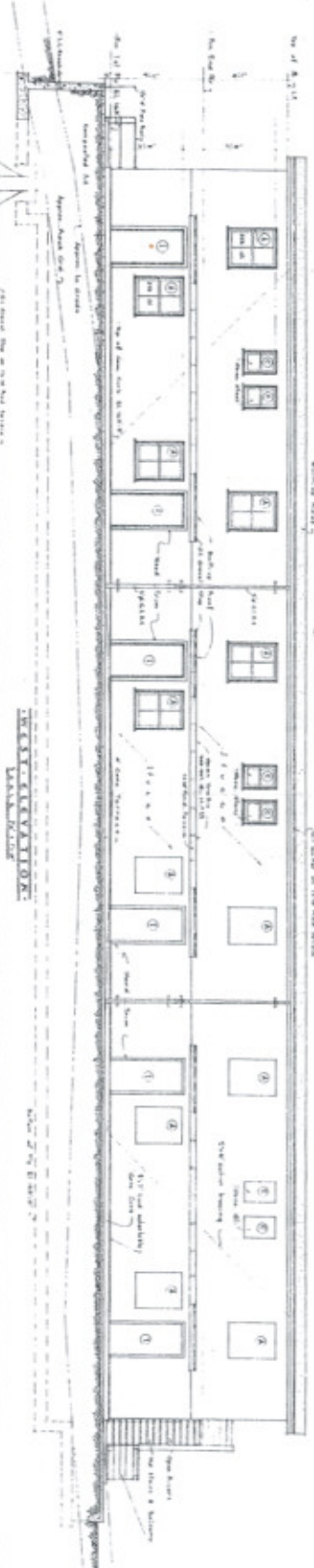
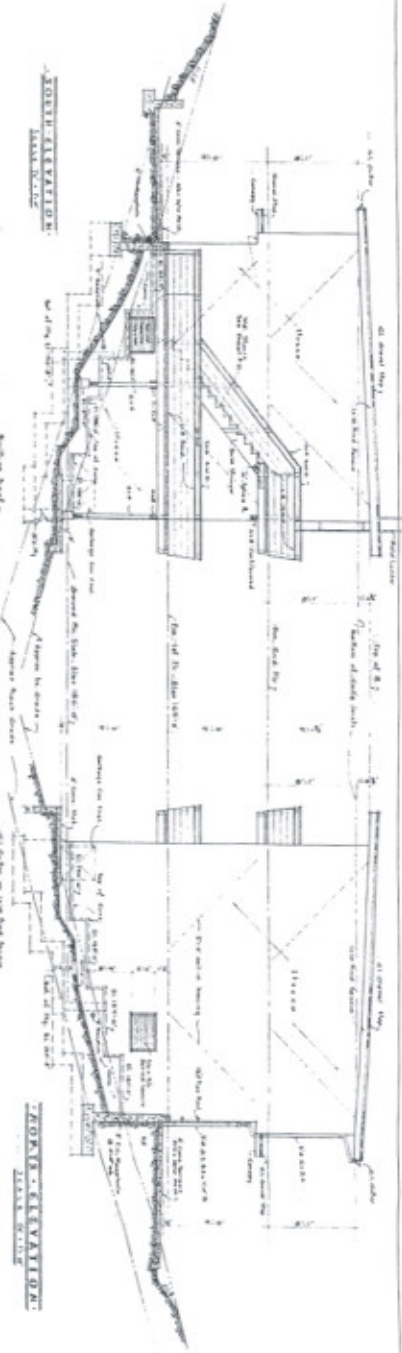


Photo 5: Front Elevation



Photo 6: Side and Rear Elevation



BUILDING D-18
BUILDINGS D-19 TO D-23 (INCLUDING SIMILAR)

BUILDING D-18 (AS SHOWN)	NO. 21
CLASS. D-18-18-18-18-18	NO. 21
- ELEVATIONS -	
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO	WARD & SOLLES ARCHITECTS INC. SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

June 22, 2001

Potrero Annex Housing Development

CREDITS

The following individuals participated in this historic resource evaluation report:

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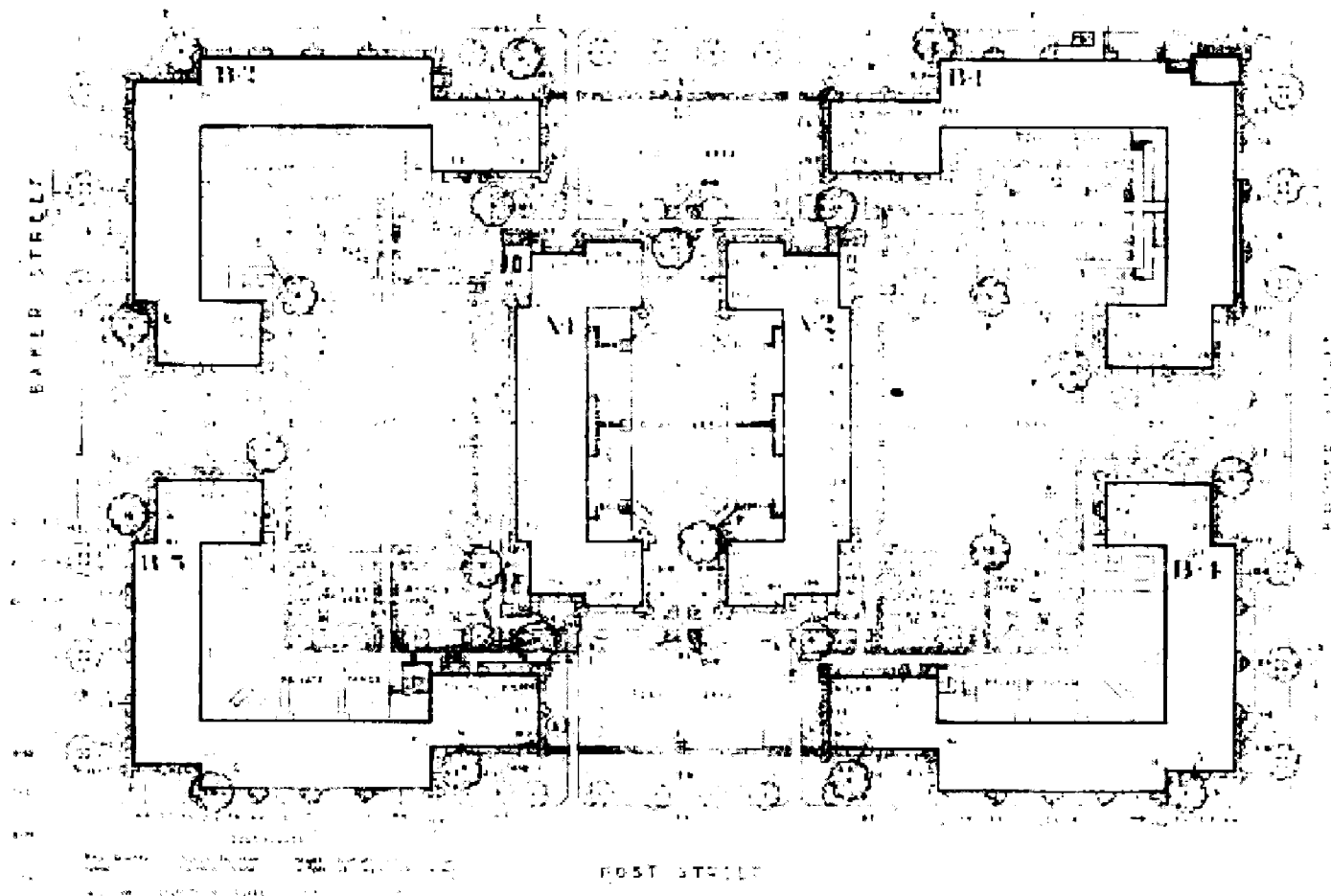
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Historical Resources Evaluation Report

Evaluation Review and Update, Selected SFHA Properties
San Francisco, California

Final Report

Prepared for the
Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, Inc.



Westside Courts

Prepared by
CIRCA: Historic Property Development
One Sutter Street, Suite #910
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31 March 2009

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Project Description

Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, Inc. (Client) contracted Circa: Historic Property Development (Circa) in August 2008 to survey and evaluate 15 selected San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) properties throughout the City of San Francisco. Twelve of these properties had been previously evaluated for historical significance and three had not been previously assessed. This review was requested for CEQA purposes, as the previous evaluations, completed in 2001-2002, are approaching 10 years old and therefore nearly outdated by state standards. Those properties that had not been previously evaluated are nearing 50 years of age and evaluations for historical significance were requested by SFHA. At the writing of this report there were no anticipated projects for any of the properties; this Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) has been completed for update and evaluative purposes only.

Methodology

Since a number of the selected properties had been evaluated in the past, the Client provided existing evaluation reports, original drawings and related documentation to Circa for review. These documents were reviewed prior to fieldwork to inform historic significance, condition and integrity levels. To complete this Historic Resources Evaluation, Circa conducted a site visit to each property in September 2008 (with exception of Holly Courts and Alice Griffith, which were visited in February and June 2008 respectively). While on-site, Circa staff took digital photographs, identified character-defining features, assessed existing exterior building conditions and surveyed the architectural integrity of each property, taking into consideration the noted conditions and features from previous evaluations where possible. Additional primary and secondary source research was conducted at the San Francisco History Room, San Francisco Public Library, the San Francisco Planning Department and other repositories to further develop the historic context and determine levels of significance and integrity for each property.

Most of the previous evaluations completed by Carey & Co. Inc. used only the National Register Criteria for evaluation as they were evaluated for the purposes of Section 106/NEPA. Circa has updated or confirmed these National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-level evaluations and has also provided evaluations for each property at the California level (CRHR).

Summary

Out of 15 SFHA properties evaluated for the purposes of this study, 12 have been found ineligible for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR. These include the following housing developments: Ping Yuen North, Potrero Terrace, Potrero Annex, Sunnydale, Westbrook, Alemany, Hunters Point East and Hunters Point West, Hunters View, Alice Griffith, Rosa Parks and Velasco. The previous evaluations for three SFHA properties (Holly Courts, Westside Courts and Ping Yuen) were confirmed; these properties remain eligible for listing on the NRHP and CRHR as historic districts.

2.0 EVALUATIVE FRAMEWORK

In general, to be eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places, a structure must be more than 50 years old, must have historic significance, and must retain its physical integrity. In California, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) recommends that properties over 45 years of age and older be evaluated for significance. According to *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources*, an OHP bulletin, “the 45-year criteria recognizes that there is commonly a five year lag between resource identification and the date that planning decisions are made. It explicitly encourages the collection of data about resources that may become eligible for the NRHP or CRHR within that planning period.”¹

The National Register of Historic (NRHP) Places Criteria for Evaluation

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of properties, structures, districts, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties have significance to the prehistory and history of their community, State, or Nation.

The National Register Criteria for Evaluation is...“the basis for judging a property's significance for their association with important events or persons, for their importance in design or construction, or for their information potential...” National Register Bulletin 15. The National Register Criteria recognizes the following categories:

- **Associative Value - Event; Criteria A:** properties significant for their association or linkages to events
- **Associative Value - Person; Criteria B:** properties significant for their association to persons important to the past
- **Design or Construction Value; Criteria C:** properties significant as representatives of the manmade expression of culture or technology
- **Information Value; Criteria D:** properties significant for their ability to yield important information about prehistory or history²

Determining a property's eligibility for the National Register is a two-part process. In order for a property to meet the requirements for listing, it must meet one of the National Register Criteria listed above *and* it must retain historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance.

Integrity is the measure by which properties are evaluated. To retain integrity a property must have most of the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

¹ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources* (Sacramento, CA: March 1995), 2.

² U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

The seven aspects of integrity are quoted as follows:

- **Location** - Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- **Design** - Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- **Setting** - Setting is the physical environment of the historic property.
- **Materials** - Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration form a historic property.
- **Workmanship** - Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- **Feeling** - Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- **Association** - Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.³

The California Register of Historical Resources Criteria for Evaluation

The California Register of Historic Places is the official list of properties, structures, districts, and objects significant at the local, state or national level. California Register properties must have significance under one of the four following criteria and must retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and convey the reasons for their significance (i.e. retain integrity). The California Register utilizes the same seven aspects of integrity as the National Register. Properties that are eligible for the National Register are automatically eligible for the California Register. Properties that do not meet the integrity threshold for the National Register may meet that of the California Register.

1. **Event:** Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of local or regional history, or cultural heritage of California or the United States;
2. **Person:** Associated with the lives of persons important to the local, California or national history
3. **Architecture/Design:** Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a design-type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value; or
4. **Information Potential:** Yields important information about prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.⁴

³ Ibid. (NRB 15: section VIII)

⁴ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Series #7: How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources* (Sacramento, CA: 09/04/01), 11.

Eligibility for the California Register does not assign any property to the register. To be listed on the California Register a formal application must be completed and sent to the State Historic Resources Commission (SHRC) for consideration. Consent of the property owner is not required, but a resource cannot be listed if the owner objects. The SHRC can, however, formally determine a property eligible for the California Register if the resource owner objects.

3.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Public Housing in the United States

The Great Depression put an extraordinary strain on the country's urban housing stock. With little money to invest in repairing or building new housing to accommodate the influx of people moving from rural areas to urban centers for work, the existing residential conditions went from marginal to deplorable in many cases. To combat rising unemployment and improve the economy through the construction of public highways and buildings, the Federal government passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in June 1933. Under this act, several key New Deal agencies were established to simultaneously provide jobs and improve the country's infrastructure. Title II of the act appropriated \$3.3 billion for the creation of the Public Works Administration (PWA).⁵ Under this agency, a special housing division was created to construct residential buildings that showcased the benefits of modern housing. This agency's prime directive was to provide jobs while building housing for low-income families. It was not as concerned about economies of scale or economic design and construction.

In its brief history, the PWA completed seven low-income housing projects, all on the east coast. They were heavily influenced by European, specifically German, cooperative design concepts and were fairly modern in their use of materials and arrangement. The designers were given wide latitude to develop creative solutions for layout, program and choice of materials. The results were well-designed, high-quality homes that sadly were out of the price range of most low-income families. In fact, only one of these original seven projects met the low-income tenant objective.⁶

1937 Housing Act

In 1937, Congress passed the first United States Housing Act. This act established the United States Housing Authority (USHA) as a part of the Department of the Interior. It is this act that created the decentralized public housing governance structure that is still in existence today. It put the Federal government in the funding role while giving governance of the resulting housing to local housing authorities. "Under this decentralized program, local public housing authorities were given primary responsibility for initiating, designing, building, and operating their own housing projects, while the newly created United States Housing Authority provided program direction, financial

⁵ Paul R Lusginan, "Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949," *Cultural Resources Management Bulletin*, No. 1, 2002, p. 36.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 37.

support, and technical and design assistance.”⁷ This was done by issuing low-interest, 60-year loans for up to 90% of the development costs for public housing and slum clearance.⁸ San Francisco was one of the first cities to apply for the Federal program, establishing the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) in 1938.⁹ This initial Federal program was highly influential on the modern public housing governance system even though it was short-lived. It resulted in over 370 projects throughout the country over the course of its three-year term, including Holly Courts in San Francisco.

The emphasis on design and modern living in the PWA projects created a strong backlash from social critics who saw the program as wasteful and the extras as luxuries that should not be included in public housing. Powerful lobbyists for the real estate industry also posed strong opposition to the act because they saw it as a threat to real estate and rental values near housing projects. Their fear was the low costs and low rents of the projects would force the entire local market down.¹⁰ As a result of the 1935 District Court ruling in *United States v. Certain Lands in the City of Louisville*, influential lobby groups and other cost-conscious interest groups were able to affect strict expenditure limits on all USHA-funded construction to make sure it could not compete with the open rental market.¹¹ The ruling limited the power of the Government to exercise eminent domain to acquire land, which in turn, limited the funds available for the design and construction of the projects. As a result, strict limitations were placed on costs. Projects were funded under the terms of \$1000 per room or \$4000 per dwelling unit, including all construction and land acquisition costs. These strict guidelines virtually mandated that systematic, “cookie cutter” design be used and that cost minimizing measures become paramount to maximizing the number of dwelling units that could be built. Individual designs for single-family dwellings gave way to more rectilinear, apartment-style residences all constructed in a similar form with simplistic details. In spite of this, many early public housing projects displayed a surprising quality of material, craftsmanship and design.

Even in 1938, land values in San Francisco were discouragingly high. Meeting the required \$1000/\$4000 rubric established by the USHA proved to be impossible even within the depressed real estate market. Therefore, from the beginning, SFHA had to rely on a combination of Federal and City money to acquire and develop public housing.¹² As a result, the first housing projects took longer to reach completion than in many early adopting cities on the east coast. However, in spite of the delay, in 1940 Holly Courts opened, becoming the first public housing project completed west of the Rocky Mountains under this system.¹³

Generally, site planning was considered an economical way to make the developments attractive and distinctive. At the time, two major types of planning predominated public

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Fred L. McGhee, National Register Nomination: Santa Rita Courts, Austin, Travis County, Texas. 1990, p. 7.

⁹ Carey & Co., Inc., Historic Resource Evaluation for Hunters View Housing Development, San Francisco, California, Prepared July 26, 2001 and updated September 10, 2007, p. 9.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 8.

¹¹ Alexander Garvin, *The American City*, 2002, p. 207.

¹² Ibid. p. 4.

¹³ “Beginning of the Housing Projects,” *Hunters Point Beacon*, October 22, 1943.

housing design: the super-block and the court plan. The super-block was a common planning concept promoted in the European Modernist writings of the time. According to a previous study:

This concept allowed ‘very large economies in paving...and at the same time whole neighborhoods were rendered immune from traffic noise and dirt and dangers.’ Orientation toward sun and air flow was part of the German version of the super-block, *Zeilenbau*, in which parallel rows of buildings led to ‘[n]o closed courtyards, no traffic, no wasted pavement, and an open vista in two directions for every window and balcony.’ Despite topographical influences, Potrero Terrace and Sunnydale are the two examples of super-block-type site planning among San Francisco’s five permanent pre-WWII housing projects.¹⁴

The court plan traded the openness of the super-block for more intimate arrangements. In this plan, designers “placed inward-facing buildings at the perimeter of the site, creating ‘spaciousness of effect and esthetically satisfying enclosed areas’ between the buildings.”¹⁵ Enclosed inner courtyards were deemed safer for children and more manageable to maintain than street side lawns or gardens. In general, the court plan was “chosen when sun, wind, and views were not programmatic considerations, such as on small sites in dense urban neighborhoods. In San Francisco, court plan-type site planning...can be seen at Holly Courts, Westside Courts, and Valencia Gardens.”¹⁶

Landscape design was also an important part of early housing project design though budget constraints and maintenance requirements limited the types of plantings that were acceptable. According to the previous study:

Only the varieties that were ‘thoroughly hardy and free from horticultural handicaps’ were considered appropriate for the purposes of low-rent housing. Trees were not generally recommended due to the desire for maximum sun and wind, and shrubs, flowers, and grass were discouraged because caring for these items was very expensive. Vines, on the other hand, added ‘the charm of green foliage’ and helped reduce the harshness of unarticulated concrete facades. The federal government also looked favorably on landscape designs that included tenant-maintained areas, believing that this would reduce costs and promote civic pride.¹⁷

To guide the local housing authorities on site planning, design, management and maintenance issues, the USHA published numerous brochures and pamphlets on a variety

¹⁴ Carey & Co., Inc., *Hunters View Housing Development: Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001 and updated September 10, 2007, p. 4-5. Quotes from Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), 178, 180-81.

¹⁵ Carey & Co., Inc., *Hunters View Housing Development: Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001 and updated September 10, 2007, p. 5. Quote from Nathan Straus, Foreword to U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority, *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site* (Bulletin no. 11 on Policy and Procedure, 1939), 22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5. Quotes: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority, 71.

of subjects from design to tool maintenance. Some public housing projects from this early era incorporated the suggested styles and layouts exactly and others had a more liberal interpretation. One book, entitled *Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects: Planning the Site* (1939):

...described how designers could work with different types of topographic situations. In one example, the preferred scheme for 320 families 'on a very steep site in a large western city' lays the buildings along the site contours but cuts the roads across them. The sketch in the book is practically identical to the site plan for Potrero Terrace.¹⁸

The whole USHA program was viewed as a positive, socially responsible, progressive step to address poor living conditions throughout the country. Many prominent social critics, architects, planners and designers of the time either worked on or wrote about the public housing being built. In general, the expectation was for the units to serve as transitional housing for whole family units to move from poverty to the middle-class. The selection criteria were created to promote this ideal, and included interviews of the prospective tenants in their current living quarters as well as minimum income guidelines. People had to be gainfully employed and meet a certain level of self-sufficiency to qualify.¹⁹

The USHA was initially authorized for a period of three years. In 1939, when the process to extend the bill was starting to gain steam, Congress felt that the economy was improving sufficiently enough that it no longer needed the extra building stimulus provided by the USHA programs. It was not renewed. Instead, the government began to shift its focus from providing public housing to building defense-related housing in preparation for entering World War II.

World War II and Wartime Housing

As part of the country's shift to a wartime reality, all housing construction was stopped to conserve construction materials for the war effort. This included all public housing projects currently underway. Special provisions were made to those housing projects in strategic locations near defense bases and industrial zones. There, the housing projects were allowed to finish with the provision that all unoccupied units be made available for war housing. In this way, many public housing projects throughout the United States became part of the war effort. Potrero Terrace and Sunnydale initially were used for wartime purposes when they opened in 1941, with Westside Courts and Valencia Gardens following in 1943.²⁰

The mandates for extreme speed and economy in war housing construction were handed down by provisions in the 1940 Lanham Act. This act appropriated \$150 million to the Federal Works Agency to provide defense-related housing in the most congested and

¹⁸ Ibid, 5. Quotes: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority, 46-47.

¹⁹ Amy Howard, *Northern Shelter: Community, Identity and Spatial Politics in San Francisco Public Housing, 1938-2000*, Dissertation, College of William and Mary, 2005, p. 12.

²⁰ "Beginning of the Housing Projects," *Hunters Point Beacon*, October 22, 1943.

stressed cities. The provisions also placed very strict restrictions on construction costs, limited average costs per dwelling unit to less than \$3,750 per family unit, with no single unit exceeding \$4,500.²¹ To emphasize the temporary nature of the housing authorized under the Lanham Act, it was amended in July 1943 to require that all housing built with its funding be demolished within two years after the war was over. This amendment specifically forbade the units to be used as subsidized housing for low-income families after the end of World War II.²² Between 1940 and 1944, the Lanham act was responsible for the construction of over 625,000 housing units.²³ Of these, over 580,000 units were considered temporary construction. The idea was that these units would be of such low construction quality that they would have to be removed from the housing market after the war, thus posing no long term competition threats to the existing housing markets in the effected cities.²⁴

The first of the war housing construction projects to open was the Middle Point War Housing complex along the bay between Evans Avenue and Innes Avenue in early 1943. In the next six months, five more war housing complexes opened on the north and south slopes of Hunters Point Hill, at the eastern end of the point near the shipyard and in the flat land near the bay further south, including the Double Rock War Dwellings, the precursor to today's Alice Griffith Housing.

The war housing construction projects were all constructed according to very similar plans. Generally they consisted of groups of two-story rectangular buildings with eight apartments to a building. There was a range from one to three bedrooms and they came either furnished or unfurnished. The families rented the apartments by the month for between \$27.50 for a two-room, unfurnished unit to \$42 for a furnished five-room unit.²⁵ Most of the complexes had at least one elementary school, childcare facilities and a community center that doubled as a health center for routine checkups and minor illnesses.

Post-WWII – A New Era in Public Housing

While the Lanham Act provided for many more units of housing than would have been possible under previous legislation, cost restrictions placed on these housing units prevented them from doing more than addressing short-term housing needs. After the war, there were still a large number of people who lived in sub-standard housing but had no alternatives because the money slated for public housing construction had been diverted to temporary defense worker accommodations. Critics of the Lanham Act were quick to point out that temporary housing units had an uncanny ability to become de facto permanent housing for those who desperately needed shelter of any kind. They predicted

²¹ Robinson & Associates and Jeffery Shrimpton, Draft: Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949: A Historic Context, August 14, 1997, p. 80.

²² Ibid, p. 82.

²³ Paul R Lusginan, "Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949," *Cultural Resources Management Bulletin*, No. 1, 2002, p. 37.

²⁴ Robinson & Associates and Jeffery Shrimpton, Draft: Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949: A Historic Context, August 14, 1997, p. 79.

²⁵ *Hunters Point Beacon*, June 1, 1944. All prices are in 1944 dollars.

that the temporary wartime housing would create the exact housing conditions that they were fighting – substandard, dangerous, urban slums. Unfortunately, their words came to fruition within just a few years, spawning a new era of public debate surrounding the public housing issue.

In 1949, Congress passed the Housing Act. This Act renewed federal subsidies to local housing authorities and closely linked public housing construction to urban development and slum clearance. In many cases, it was used to relocate families displaced by highway and urban renewal projects. Because many of the anticipated social benefits of public housing (moving families from poverty to the middle class, “improving” character for the children, etc.) failed to materialize, critics began to attack the public housing programs.

At the same time the USHA changed its federal policies regarding public housing, the “SFHA began to shift away from its aim of creating public housing communities... By the 1960s, the SFHA, like the Federal government, has abandoned all facets of its initial plan for public housing to serve as a stepping-stone to middle-class ‘respectability’.”²⁶ The architecture began to reflect these changing views and utilized construction materials and methods that most economical. The result was projects with higher densities even in areas where land values did not necessarily require such developments. In many urban areas, this gave rise to a new construction type – the high-rise concrete developments of 1950s and 1960s.²⁷

*(Note: the remainder of this section is quoted from a previous study, see citation below).*²⁸
“Despite increased funding, more liberal cost limits, and the potential savings due to higher densities, the federal government continued to strongly encourage standardized design as a cost-cutting measure. At this point in the second major phase of public housing in the U.S., design appears to have been a low priority. The second wave of support for public housing lasted only a few years longer than the first. The reason for its rapid demise was not war, as was the case in the 1940s, but rather the perception that public housing was failing to achieve the expectations of the programs’ creators. By the mid-1950s, ‘the general public’s growing unhappiness...with the high incidence of crime, the generally sterile appearance, [and] the rising costs of construction and maintenance’ was evidenced in a considerable change in contemporary writing on the subject of public housing. Fewer articles were written about new public housing projects, with the notable exception being those projects that differed in some way from the standardized norm.”²⁹

“Problems with segregation policies caused even more discussion. Throughout the war local housing authorities had relatively little control over tenant selection; priority was given to defense workers and their families. However, as defense workers and veterans

²⁶ Amy Howard, *Northern Shelter: Community, Identity and Spatial Politics in San Francisco Public Housing, 1938-2000*, Dissertation, College of William and Mary, 2005, p. 12.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. xiii.

²⁸ Carey & Co., Inc., *Hunters View Housing Development: Historic Resource Evaluation*, July 26, 2001 and updated September 10, 2007, p. 7-11.

²⁹ *Ibid*, quote from: Gwendolyn Wright, “The Evolution of Public Housing Policy and Design in the San Francisco Bay Area,” Ph.D. diss. exam (University of California, Berkeley, 1976), 42-3.

were phased out of public housing and new units were constructed, local housing authorities were again confronted with who to allow into the program and where those individuals would live. While the Housing Act of 1949 provided detailed guidance on how to identify low-income families, it did not address the problem's demographic aspect. In 1952, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed suit on behalf of three African-American families because they had been denied application to a San Francisco housing project reserved specifically for Caucasians. The San Francisco Housing Authority's segregation policy was eventually found unconstitutional, setting the precedent for the rest of the nation.

Public Housing in San Francisco

"Like many other local housing authorities, the history of the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) begins with the United States Housing Act of 1937. Empowered by this act, the California Legislature passed the Housing Authorities Law in 1938, which allowed local communities to create their own housing authorities and begin asking for federal funding. The SFHA was formed in 1938 and was among the first California cities to request U.S. Housing Administration (USHA) funding.

"In addition to requesting funds, the SFHA's initial efforts were directed toward determining how great the need for public housing was at the time. With the first survey indicating that 46,000 homes in San Francisco were 'substandard,' the agency planned 11 public housing projects with a total of 2,855 units.³⁰ Five of these were undertaken before WWII (Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnydale, Valencia Gardens, and Westside Courts) and three were completed or partially occupied before December 1941 (Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnydale). Of these, two projects deserve particular attention: Holly Courts, because it was the first completed public housing project located west of the Rocky Mountains (May 1940) and was designed by Arthur Brown Jr., and, Westside Courts, because it was the only public housing project in San Francisco programmed specifically for African-American families.

"Also like many other housing authorities, the SFHA undertook a public information campaign. This included brochures and pamphlets emphasizing modern conveniences, improved sanitary conditions, and careful planning. One of these brochures, entitled Holly Courts, describes the highlighted project with typical language:

The things to notice in the architecture of Holly are the service and simplicity, service to fulfill the basic needs of the tenants in little as well as big factors, in a floor that can be swept easily as well as in walls that won't fall down: simplicity primarily to keep construction costs low. The two together are important to good architecture...In spite of their rectangular simplicity and concrete construction, the buildings avoid austerity by the informality, their close relation to the play spaces, and their warm friendly color and texture.³¹

³⁰ Ibid, and "History of the Authority," *San Francisco Housing Authority 1942-1943 Annual Report*, no. 5 (April 15, 1943).

³¹ Ibid, and *Holly Courts* (San Francisco: San Francisco Housing Association, 1940), 1.

“War-related changes in public housing policies made the SFHA the largest landlord in the City, managing the five permanent projects as well as 10,000 new temporary housing units. Many of these units were concentrated in Hunters Point, where land was easily secured and close to defense jobs, as well as in areas that private industry considered less desirable, such as steep terrain on Potrero Hill and along Alemany Boulevard. These locations eventually became the sites for permanent housing projects after the war.

“Despite this new housing, the City experienced a serious housing shortage during and after the war. Three million people moved to California between 1940 and 1947, with most of these choosing to settle in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles areas. San Francisco’s lack of older buildings meant that ‘there could be less filtering down of homes from one class to another.’³² Moreover, while federal mortgage programs made it possible for many more people to afford new homes, private industry was unable to build housing fast enough to satisfy demand. The 1945 executive order allowed the SFHA to defer the disposition of temporary war housing; however, the situation continued until the Housing Act of 1949 provided local housing authority officials with new funding and a refined mandate.

“Soon after the Housing Act of 1949, the California legislature passed State Article XXXIV. Considered ‘the major success of the anti-public housing lobby in California,’ it required that any proposed public housing projects be approved in local referenda.³³ When San Francisco voters passed several projects, though, the housing authority was able to proceed relatively unimpeded.

“The first projects on the SFHA’s list after World War II were the remaining six of the original 11 planned before the war. Designs for Ping Yuen in Chinatown and North Beach Place in North Beach were finished when the program was suspended so these two provided the most logical and most easily achievable starting point for the revived effort. Construction was completed for both projects in 1952, providing the first new permanent public housing in San Francisco in over a decade. Other projects that followed in the early 1950s tended to relate to the ongoing process of phasing out and disposing of temporary defense housing units. This usually meant providing new permanent housing near occupied temporary units or reusing land that had been recently cleared. Building new units adjacent to older ones was also an option, as in the case of Potrero Annex.

“While the SFHA was starting to construct new, voter-approved permanent public housing, the agency was fending off negative national attention on its segregation policy. The ‘neighborhood patterns’ policy officially began in 1942 when officials decided to base the racial mix of a project on that of the surrounding neighborhood. Out of the original 11 projects, for example, Westside Courts was set aside for African-Americans because there was a high concentration of African-Americans living in that area, Ping Yuen in Chinatown was reserved solely for the Chinese, and the remaining housing developments were meant for Caucasians. SFHA officials used the federal requirement of

³² Ibid, and Gwendolyn Wright, 28.

³³ Ibid, and Gwendolyn Wright, 33.

neighborhood 'harmony' as justification, but within a decade the policy came under attack. In 1950, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors forced the agency into a partial compromise; the SFHA agreed to stop using the policy for tenants in newly designed and constructed projects but was able to continue enforcing it in 'all war-deferred projects and existing low-rental housing.' The issue was finally settled by the United States Supreme Court in 1954, one week after its landmark ruling against the 'separate but equal' policy in public schools. In the public housing case, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from a federal district judge's ruling that San Francisco's 'neighborhood pattern' policy was unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment.³⁴

"During the first half of the 1950s, the SFHA's efforts focused on the disposition of temporary defense housing units, reviving the projects which had been postponed by the war, building new permanent housing, and defending their 'neighborhood pattern' policy. The decisions made during this busy period in the agency's history continue as part of the legacy of San Francisco's public housing program."³⁵

Public Housing Today

The changes in policy during the 1960s that led to a decrease in the incomes of public housing recipients also contributed to an increased isolation of these communities. Most of the social writings from the times seem to dismiss the project communities, failing to give credit to the strong social networks that often developed.³⁶ Bad press, political corruption, increasing crime rates and other negative factors changed the public perception of public housing, attaching to its residents a debilitating social stigma.

More recent years have seen efforts to reverse these decades-old trends. In the 1992, the Federal government began its HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program with the goal of encouraging local housing authorities to partner with community groups to improve the most troubled public housing locations. The idea was to redevelop these projects into mixed-use communities that provided for a greater mix of economic and social strata within the larger community. Facilities for residents and non-residents would bring in a broader mix of people and reduce the negative connotations associated with public housing. In San Francisco, five HOPE IV grants were received from 1994 to 1999. They were used to construct projects in North Beach, the Mission, the Western Addition, Hayes Valley, and Bernal Heights.³⁷ This included the demolition and reconstruction of one of San Francisco's first public housing projects, Valencia Gardens. While the success of these projects has yet to be fully determined, the philosophies are now the predominant ones used in the planning of public housing. They are seen as a way to respond to the isolation that developed in the 1960s through the 1980s as well as a means to address the economic disparities and lack of community amenities that often found in traditional public housing complexes.

³⁴ Ibid. and "Cooperation Agreement Bans Racial Segregation," *The Journal of Housing* 7, no. 3 (March 1950), 82.

³⁵ This ends the quoted material.

³⁶ Amy Howard, *Northern Shelter: Community, Identity and Spatial Politics in San Francisco Public Housing, 1938-2000*, Dissertation, College of William and Mary, 2005, p. 13.

³⁷ Rachel Peterson, *Hope IV in San Francisco*, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association Newsletter, March 2005.

4.0 PROPERTY EVALUATIONS

Holly Courts (1940) - 100 Appleton Avenue

118 Apartments

Historical Summary

Holly Courts, designed by architect Arthur Brown Jr. and landscape architect L. Glenn Hall, was completed in 1940 making it the first public housing project built west of the Rocky Mountains. The housing development represents Brown's "only foray into the design of public housing" and the symmetrical arrangement of the buildings on the site and the strong axial emphasis of the circulation represents Brown's lifelong interpretation of architectural classicism".³⁸

Description

Holly Courts housing complex is located in a wedge-shaped city block bound by Appleton Avenue (north), Holly Park Circle (east), Highland Avenue (south) and Patton Street (west), just south of the Mission District. The 2.68-acre lot slopes steeply downward from east to west. The development consists of ten separate buildings arranged symmetrically along a central, axial concrete pathway that stretches from Holly Park Circle to Patton Street. Four cross axes run north to south between Appleton and Highland avenues.

The development is comprised of two-story, flat-roofed buildings, constructed of board-formed concrete. All buildings have a below grade basement level except Building A along Patton which features a raised basement (due to slope). In plan, each building has an adjacent mirrored opposite creating interior courtyards between buildings. Landscape features within these courtyards include common interior spaces and playgrounds, private yards, paved "dry yards" and trash sheds.³⁹

Condition and Alterations

According to the May 2001 Carey & Co., Inc. report, the buildings were constructed in 1940 with interior improvements conducted in 1973. Aside from remaining lawn areas, most original trees and plantings were found to be no longer extant. In general, the buildings remain fairly intact however some original features have been lost to alterations over time. Exterior alterations include removal of the original latticed metal entry supports flanking the front entries and replacement of the original glazed, paneled wood entry doors with the existing solid wood doors. The original steel casement windows were also replaced with aluminum sliding sash windows. The dates of these alterations

³⁸ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Holly Courts Development, San Francisco, California* (25 May 2001), 6-8.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 2.

are unknown. In 1985 solar panels were installed on the roof of each building and, and in 1992 metal security gates were installed at each courtyard entrance.⁴⁰

Circa conducted a site visit in February 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit confirmed that the buildings still retain a good degree of material integrity and appears to be in good condition. At the time of survey Circa did not note any major alterations other than those listed in the Carey & Co. findings listed above.

Evaluation

Holly Courts was surveyed and evaluated in the *Historic Resource Evaluation, Holly Courts Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. in May 2001. Carey & Co. found that the Holly Courts Housing Development, although somewhat altered, retains an adequate level of integrity to be eligible as a National Register historic district under Criteria A and C as the first public housing project built in the western United States (Criterion A), and because it is a work of a master, nationally recognized architect Arthur Brown Jr. (Criterion C).⁴¹

Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the Office of Historic Preservation that Holly Courts housing development is eligible as a National Register Historic District under Criteria A and C. Field survey indicated that there have been no major alterations to the property since that determination was made that would negatively effect the property's integrity and, as a result, its eligibility for listing as an historical resource. Properties listed in, or officially determined eligible for listing in the National Register, are automatically qualified for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Westside Courts (1943) - 2501 Sutter Street

136 Apartments

Historical Summary

Westside Courts was designed by architects Lester Hurd and James H. Mitchell, and landscape architect Emery LaVallee in 1941, and completed two years later. This project was the only one of the original eleven planned by the San Francisco Housing Authority that was set aside for African-Americans, based on the city's policy that dictated that the racial mix of housing project was determined by the surrounding neighborhood. Based on a 1952 lawsuit filed by the NAACP, the segregation was determined unconstitutional and discontinued.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid, 3.

⁴¹ Ibid, 8.

⁴² Dr. Knox Mellon, SHPO, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director, Mayor's Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001. Also see Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Westside Courts Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (25 May 2001) for more extensive historical documentation.

Description

The 136-unit housing development occupies a full city block bounded by Sutter Street (north), Broderick Street (east), Post Street (south) and Baker Street (east) in San Francisco's Western Addition. Four buildings, roughly L-shaped in plan, are set at each of the lot's four corners creating interior courtyards that are paved and used for parking and common space. Two slightly U-shaped buildings are set facing each other in the center of the block, framing a grassy central courtyard featuring a Benny Bufano sculpture of a horse and rider set on a brick plinth. The development encompasses 84 one-bedroom units, 24 two-bedroom units, 20 three-bedroom units and 8 four-bedroom units.

The board-formed, reinforced concrete buildings range from two to four stories in height and the flat roofs have shallow eave projections. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding sash windows set in wood window frames. Some windows have been covered with plywood boards. Exterior stairwells and corridors provide access to individual units. A basketball court and fenced play area and "drying areas" for hanging laundry are also located on site. Concrete sidewalks provide pedestrian access throughout the site and vehicular access is provided at both the east and west sides of the development. The SFHA administration offices are located at the corner of Sutter and Broderick Streets.

Condition and Alterations

The 2001 Carey & Co., Inc. report found the buildings to be in good condition though the "majority of the trees and plantings from the original landscape [were] not extant...most probably [as] a result of lack of maintenance and the natural attrition of plant material." Carey & Co. also found the architectural designs of the buildings to be fairly intact with exception of a few alterations. The interiors of the apartments were modernized in 1973 and the original apartment doors were replaced with the existing solid wood doors in 1978. The existing aluminum sliders replaced original double-hung wood windows (no date).⁴³

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit confirmed that the buildings still retain a high degree of material integrity and appear to be in good condition. Though a few window openings had been covered with plywood boards, no other major alterations were noted.

Evaluation

Westside Courts was surveyed and evaluated in the *Historic Resource Evaluation, Westside Courts Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. in May 2001. Carey & Co. found the Westside Courts Housing Complex to be eligible as a district for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its

⁴³ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Westside Courts Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (25 May 2001), 3.

“association with events and broad patterns of history, because it was the only public housing project in San Francisco reserved exclusively for African-Americans”.⁴⁴

This determination was supported by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP/SHPO) in an October 2001 letter to the City and County of San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Housing. OHP/SHPO concurred with the findings that the property is significant as a “physical reminder of racial segregation policies in public housing and serves as a reminder of that part of American history”.⁴⁵

Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the Office of Historic Preservation that Westside Courts housing development is eligible as a National Register Historic District under Criterion A. Field survey indicated that there have been no major alterations to the property since that determination was made that would negatively effect the property’s integrity and, as a result, its eligibility for listing as an historical resource. Properties listed in, or officially determined eligible for listing in the National Register, are automatically qualified for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Ping Yuen (1952) - 655-895 Pacific Avenue

3 Buildings, 234 Apartments

Historical Summary⁴⁶

Ping Yuen, or “Tranquil Gardens” in Chinese, was one of the original eleven public housing projects planned by the SFHA. Designed by architects Mark Daniels and Henry Temple Howard developed the original plans in 1940 but construction was deferred due to the onset of World War II. When the project was reactivated in 1949, the original architects were no longer in business and J. Francis Ward and John S. Bolles were hired. The new architects made minor revisions to the original plans and landscape architect Douglass Bayliss provided the planting scheme. Construction began in October 1950 and was completed the following year.

Description

This housing complex consists of three buildings containing 46 one-bedroom units, 92 two-bedroom units, 75 three-bedroom units and 21 four-bedroom units. The 2.6-acre site is located on three separate city blocks in the Chinatown neighborhood, bound by Columbus Avenue, Powell Street, Pacific Avenue and Jackson Street - the site slopes gently down from west to east. The east and west buildings have the same compound, asymmetrical plan, while the larger central building has a compound symmetrical plan - in plan, this central building is actually formed by two mirror images of the smaller end buildings. The east building is referred to as Building C, the central building is Building

⁴⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁵ Dr. Knox Mellon, SHPO, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director, Mayor’s Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001.

⁴⁶ For full developmental history see: Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Ping Yuen Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (22 June 2001).

A, and the west building is Building E. The buildings have long elevations facing the street with wings projecting to the south at the rear. Each building fronts onto Pacific Avenue, is separated from the street by a tall, metal fence and gates, and features courtyards and gardens at the rear, south side. The courtyards contain flower and vegetable gardens, playgrounds, basketball courts, sitting areas, and raised, hexagonal concrete planters. Along the southern boundary of each courtyard is a series of concrete ramps that accommodate the sloping of each site.

The front, north elevation of these concrete, six story buildings feature projecting end blocks with a long middle section - this section has a side-gabled terra cotta tile roof and exterior hallways accented with inset panels and colored, diamond-shaped ceramic tiles. Supporting these hallways are rows of columns with notched spandrels between; however, the vertical supports at the bottom floor are chamfered, rectangular posts with incised Chinese characters indicating "Ping Yuen." the windows are original one-over-one double-hung wood sash at the hallways, with paired wood casement windows at the end blocks and at the rear elevations, the second and third floors of each building (except at the exterior hallways) are separated by a concrete beltcourse with a stylized geometric relief pattern. The end blocks feature concrete panels with incised Chinese characters indicating whether the building is a Ping Yuen East, Central or West.

The rear of the buildings feature cross wings extending to the south which create separate courtyards-the east and west buildings have two wings each, while the central building has four wings. These unadorned, rear elevations are composed of rows of wood casement windows. The only break from these window rows is at the westernmost wing, where its east elevation has exterior hallways (similar to the front elevations) along the inner portion.

The larger, central building (Building A) is symmetrical with the two rectangular projecting end blocks, a large central block, and two long sections between with the exterior hallways as described above. At the south end of the westernmost cross wing is the small, one-story administrative building formerly also containing the project's health center. Directly in front of the large, central block is an ornate, Chinese-inspired gate constructed of concrete with colorful steel decorative elements.⁴⁷

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the June 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Ping Yuen Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the property retained all seven aspects of integrity and that the buildings and landscape design appeared to be in excellent condition. Few alterations were noted.

⁴⁷ Physical description quoted entirely from the CA Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record form (DPR A form) completed by Carey & Co., Inc. for the property and dated 6/14/01.

Circa conducted a site visit in February 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit confirmed that the exteriors of all three buildings still retain a high degree of material integrity and appear to be in excellent condition.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Ping Yuen, Carey & Co., Inc. found the development eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. The report states that “under Criterion A, it appears eligible because it was the first federally funded housing project designed and built in a Chinese community and with that group’s culture in mind.”

Dr. Knox Mellon, the State Historic Preservation Officer, confirmed this assessment in a letter dated 25 September 2001 to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing.⁴⁸

Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the State Historic Preservation Officer that the Ping Yuen Housing Development is eligible as a National Register Historic District under Criterion A. Field survey indicated that there have been no major alterations to the property since that determination was made that would negatively effect the property’s integrity and, as a result, its eligibility for listing as an historical resource. Properties listed in, or officially determined eligible for listing in the National Register, are automatically qualified for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Ping Yuen North (1961) - 838 Pacific Avenue

194 Apartments

Historical Summary

Ping Yuen North was designed by Bay Area architect John Bolles and landscape architect Douglas Bayliss; construction was completed in 1961. Like at the nearby Ping Yuen housing development discussed above, the designers drew cultural inspiration from the surrounding neighborhood and incorporated design features such as sculptural panels with symbols of Chinese legend and mythology. The fish, symbolizing luck and honor, is a common animal in these relief panels found on the rear elevations of the building. The 194-unit housing development, opened in the same year as another hi-rise concrete apartment building in San Francisco, now known as Rosa Parks Senior Housing. Both buildings are representative of the type of hi-density urban housing developments that dominated public housing construction in the post World War II decades.

John S. Bolles

“In 1958, prominent Bay Area Architect John S. Bolles designed the stadium. Born in Berkley on June 25, 1905, Bolles obtained his bachelor’s degree in Engineering from the

⁴⁸ Dr. Knox Mellon, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Mayor’s Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001 (Letter regarding SFHA properties and historic status).

University of Oklahoma in 1926, and graduated from Harvard with a Master's degree in Architecture in 1932. During the 1930s, he worked as a structural engineer in Oklahoma and as an archaeologist for the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on the excavations at Persepolis, the ancient capital of Persia, and for Washington's Carnegie Institute on a comprehensive study of one of the most important Mayan sites in the Yucatan.

"In the late 1930s, Bolles moved back to the Bay Area and joined his father's architectural firm. Father and son designed the Temple of Religion and the Christian "Science Monitor building on Treasure Island for the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition. In 1941, he passed the State of California Architectural license examination and between 1943 and 1945 Bolles served as project engineer for the Federal Public Housing Authority in San Francisco. During this time he also began collaborating with architect Joseph Francis Ward, a New Zealander, who has been associated with architect Albert Farr since 1922. Together, Bolles and Ward designed several residences in San Francisco during the 1940s and early 1950s. In 1954, Bolles began working independently on commercial, industrial, and residential buildings. A Modernist, Bolles' work often displayed a bold incorporation of modern art and sculpture. Eventually he started his own firm in San Francisco called John S. Bolles and Associates.

"Noteworthy designs by Bolles in San Francisco include Candlestick Park, Embarcadero Park, and the Anna Wadden Library (Bayview Branch of the San Francisco Public Library) built in 1969. He also designed a number of buildings in Northern California including the McGraw-Hill complex in Navato, the General Motors assembly plant in Fremont, Gallo Winery in Modesto, Downtown Plaza in Sacramento and several Macy's department stores. Additionally, Bolles designed the IBM campus in San Jose of which IBM Building 25 was found eligible for the [National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historic Resources,] and is a San Jose Landmark candidate. While his work throughout Northern California is extensive, he is best known for designing Candlestick Park. Bolles died in 1983."⁴⁹

Douglas Bayliss is best known for his work in the "California School" of landscape architecture in which the more structured Beaux-Arts conventions were replaced with an approach that centered on the California climate and lifestyle. Bayliss graduated with a Landscape Architecture degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1941 and began working with Thomas Church. It was during his tenure in Church's firm that several government-funded housing projects were designed. Bayliss opened his own firm with wife Maggie Bayliss after the war and his projects over the next two decades included Washington Square in North Beach, San Francisco Civic Center Plaza, IBM Headquarters near San Jose and several BART stations. He is often credited along with Church, Garrett Eckbo and Robert Royston as one of the founders of the "California School" of modernism in Landscape Architecture.

⁴⁹ Biographical summary quoted from :Jones & Stokes, *Bayview Transportation Improvements Project-Evaluation Exemption for Monster Park*, May 15, 2007, pp. 6-7.

Description

Ping Yuen North occupies the city block bound by Broadway Street (north), Cordelia Street (East), Pacific Avenue (south) and Powell Street (west). Located in Chinatown, a high-density mixed residential/commercial neighborhood, the complex consists of a “C”-shaped landscaped courtyard to the west and a paved service area to the east. Street trees line the west, south and partial north lot lines and the site slopes upward from east to west. Metal security gates and fencing enclose the property along the north, south and east lot lines. The western courtyard contains a playground and basketball court in addition to large paved open spaces. Site plantings are limited to small concrete planters and a continuous planting strip along the western edge of the site.

Constructed of steel and concrete, this compound plan high-rise residential building is eleven stories in height, not including a base entry floor at the ground level. The base is battered and finished with exposed large aggregate cladding that is pierced at regular intervals by rectangular vents. The primary elevation along Pacific Avenue is organized vertically into five bays by stepped piers, and horizontally by grouped bands of seven metal sash fixed/awning windows alternating with unornamented concrete spandrel panels at each floor level. The east elevation is detailed the same as the front elevation though with more bays. Other secondary elevations, including the north elevation and all courtyard-facing elevations on the west side of the complex, feature exterior corridors at each floor. With exception of the east elevation, fenestration on the secondary elevations consists of metal sliding sash windows. Circulation towers attach to both the north and west elevations of the complex (5 total).

Condition and Alterations

Ping Yuen North appears to have undergone few exterior modifications and to be in good condition. Information provided by the SFHA indicates that many of the building’s exterior balcony drains are blocked with dirt and rusted, causing the surrounding concrete surfaces to spall. Interior issues include an aging plumbing system, corroded window frames and an outdated sprinkler system. According to SFHA records, some of the upgrade and modification work completed from 1992 to 2007 at Ping Yuen North includes site improvements (sidewalk/electrical/exterior painting), roof repair, security and ADA improvements, an elevator upgrade and addition of six new units.

Evaluation

In their 2002 Historic Resource Evaluation for SFHA Properties, Carey & Co., Inc. found the development ineligible for listing in the NRHP and the CRHR. The report states that,

“...evaluation of this property was based mainly on the third context type, in which distinctive design or physical characteristics are needed to establish historic significance. Additionally, since the property [was not 50-years old], it must have been determined ‘exceptionally significant’ under this context in order to be found eligible for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR.

While representative of its period, this property’s overall architectural design displays no exceptionally notable features. [They] therefore assigned the property

a historic status code of 6Z, indicating that it [was] ineligible for listing on the National Register through a complete evaluation process. Since the CRHR criteria for historic significance are the same as those used for the NRHP, it [was] also [their] opinion that the property is not eligible for listing on the California Register.”⁵⁰

Ping Yuen North was constructed 47 years ago and therefore still does not meet the 50-year age requirement for consideration as a historic resource on the NRHP. It also does not display a level of “exceptional” significance that would qualify it for this listing. For the purposes of CEQA however, properties 45 years old or older should be evaluated for significance. Research conducted for the purposes of this evaluation did not provide any indication that Ping Yuen North was associated with events or persons notably significant in National, California or local history. Therefore, since the property is neither architecturally significant nor associated with significant people or events, Circa also finds that the property is not eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. Since the property is not found to have historical significance, a discussion of integrity is unnecessary.

Potrero Terrace (1941) - 1095 Connecticut Street

469 Apartments

Historical Summary

Potrero Terrace was constructed in 1941 and designed in 1939 by Frederick H. Meyer, Warren C. Perry and John Bakewell, Jr. Thomas Church designed the landscaping for the housing development. While Potrero Terrace and Holly Courts were designed at almost the same time, the projects were very different in size and scope. Potrero Terrace had almost four times as many units and the steeply sloping plan prevented the use of an enclosed plan.⁵¹

Description

Potrero Terrace consists of 469 units in 38 buildings and is set on the south side of Potrero Hill. The housing development is bound by Wisconsin Street (west), 23rd Street (north), Texas Street (east) and 26th Street (south) and the 17.6-acre site slopes steeply down from north to south. Each building is situated to follow the natural contours of the site. The development is comprised of 27 one-bedroom units, 387 two-bedroom units and 55 three-bedroom units, all housed in one of three building types (Type E, F or G).

Each building is rectangular in plan, constructed of reinforced, board-form concrete and topped by a hipped, mission tile roof. Due to the steep slope of the site, one elevation of each building is a full three stories, while the other is two stories. The three story

⁵⁰ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, SFHA Properties, San Francisco, California* (16 December 2002).

⁵¹ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Potrero Terrace Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (25 May 2001) 5-6. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation.

elevations have a second story balcony enclosed by a metal wire mesh railing. The primary entry doors are solid wood and the second floor balcony doors are glazed aluminum with sidelight and transom. Individual units are accessed from both elevations. Fenestration varies from the original two-over-two double-hung wood sash windows to vinyl double-hung and aluminum sliding sash replacements. The end elevations feature a single entry door with wire mesh railing sheltered by a flat concrete awning projection above.

Circulation paths throughout the development consist of concrete walkways, steps and retaining walls. Other site features include T-shaped clothesline poles and a few mature trees.⁵²

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the May 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Potrero Terrace Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the building exteriors appeared to be in good condition; however, the original landscape design was not extant. Carey & Co. found that the architectural design of the buildings remained largely intact, however modifications and improvements over time had removed or altered original materials and features. Alterations include interior upgrades (1975), replacement of original wood paneled entry doors with existing solid wood doors and replacement of some original two-over-two wood sash windows with existing aluminum or vinyl sash windows (1978). New metal gutters and downspouts were added in 1993 and exterior security lighting was installed in 1994. Roof repair, floor membrane installation and concrete balcony repairs were undertaken in 2001.⁵³

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit confirmed that the building exteriors still appear to be in good condition. Many window openings had been covered with plywood boards and the wire mesh railing at the second story balconies had been replaced with new metal railings.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Potrero Terrace, Carey & Co., Inc. found the development ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The report states that, "...though over fifty years old, [Potrero Terrace] is neither architecturally remarkable nor associated with significant people or events, and therefore would not be eligible for listing in the National Register." Dr. Knox Mellon, the State Historic Preservation Officer, supported this assessment in a letter dated 25 September 2001 to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing. Dr. Mellon states, "I concur with the determination made by the City that [Potrero Terrace does] not maintain sufficient significance to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register".⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid, 2-3.

⁵³ Ibid, 3.

⁵⁴ Dr. Knox Mellon, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Mayor's Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001 (Letter regarding SFHA properties and historic status).

Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the State Historic Preservation Officer that the Potrero Terrace Housing Development does not maintain sufficient historical significance and is ineligible for listing in the National Register. Though the California Register does have a lower threshold for evaluation of historical integrity than the National Register, the legislation does not state that the California Register has a lower threshold of significance. Therefore, since the property is neither architecturally significant nor associated with notable people or events important in National, California or local history, Circa also finds that the property is not eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

Potrero Annex (1955) - Missouri Street at 23rd Street

137 Apartments

Historical Summary

The Potrero Annex Housing development was designed in 1952 by the architecture firm of Ward & Bolles and landscape architect Douglas Bayliss. Construction began in 1953 and the development was completed in late 1954. According to the Carey & Co., Inc. report, the site was described by the SFHA as “marginal land which perhaps otherwise would have laid undeveloped for many years” and was chosen because “available sites were becoming increasingly difficult to find.” the report continues, “indeed the steeply sloped site proved challenging for designers; the solution was similar to low-density pre-war projects in which roads and buildings followed topographical lines while footpaths cut across open areas to provide interior circulation.”⁵⁵

J. Francis Ward designed a number of high-end residential properties in San Francisco between 1920 and World War II. During the war he designed for the Twelfth Naval District and after took a number of commissions from industrial and commercial clients. John S. Bolles was from San Francisco and designed the Ping Yuen housing project as well as the better-known International Business Machines headquarters building in San Jose. Douglas Bayliss is best known as one of the founders of the “California School” of landscape architecture. His projects include the San Francisco civic Center Plaza, Washington Square in North Beach and several BART stations.⁵⁶

Description

Potrero Annex consists of 23 buildings containing 13 one-bedroom units, 46 two-bedroom units, 55 three-bedroom units, 18 four-bedroom units, five five-bedroom units and a child care center. Set on a steep 7.24-acre site on the east slope of Potrero Hill, the development is located between Potrero Hill recreation Center and Interstate-280. Two cul-de-sacs, Watchman Way and Turner Terrace, extend east into the development from Missouri Street. Landscape features include concrete sidewalks between buildings, concrete stairs, chain link fencing and some mature trees.

⁵⁵ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Potrero Annex Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (22 June 2001), 9. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

The rectangular plan, wood frame buildings have flat roofs canted at a slight angle and projecting eaves with soffit vent panels. The two- to three-story buildings are glazed with a combination of original two-over-two double-hung wood windows and replacement aluminum sliding sash or double-hung vinyl windows. The east-facing elevations have wood balconies with exposed joists and a closed clapboard rail at the second and third stories. West elevations feature single or paired entries sheltered by a projecting flat awning and the first and second stories are divided by a beltcourse.⁵⁷

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the June 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Potrero Annex Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the building exteriors appeared to be in good condition; however, the original landscape design was not extant. Carey & Co., Inc. found that the architectural design of the buildings remained largely intact, however modifications and improvements over time had removed or altered original materials and features. Alterations include interior upgrades (1973), removal of the latticed metal supports flanking the front entries (n.d.) and the replacement of the original glazed or paneled wood doors with the existing hollow metal doors (n.d.). Many of the original double-hung wood sash windows have been replaced with aluminum sliding or double-hung vinyl sash windows and wood trellises that originally attached to the west elevations at the beltcourse level have been removed. Though the specific dates of these modifications are unknown, most likely occurred around 1980.⁵⁸

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property and found the building exteriors to be in good to fair condition. Plywood boards have been installed over a number of window and door openings. In addition, many other alterations have been made that resulted in a loss of integrity of design materials, setting workmanship and feeling.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Potrero Annex, Carey & Co., Inc. found the development ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under any of the criteria. The report also states that, “to be listed in the NRHP, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the established criteria, it must also possess historic ‘integrity’ [or]...the ability of a property to convey its significance.” The report continues, “[w]hile Potrero Annex retains [integrity of] location and association, substantial alterations and lack of original landscaping have compromised the project’s design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Potrero Annex Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (22 June 2001), 2. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 10.

Dr. Knox Mellon, the State Historic Preservation Officer, supported this assessment in a letter dated 25 September 2001 to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing. Dr. Mellon states, "I concur with the determination made by the City that [Potrero Annex does] not maintain sufficient significance to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register".⁶⁰

Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the State Historic Preservation Officer that the Potrero Annex Housing Development does not maintain marked historical significance and is therefore ineligible for listing in the National Register. The Carey & Co. evaluation did not find the property to be historically significant and also noted that the property lacked integrity. As with the National Register, evaluation for eligibility to the California Register requires an establishment of historic significance before integrity is considered. However, the California Register's integrity threshold is slightly lower than the federal level. As a result, some resources that are historically significant but do not meet NRHP integrity standards may be eligible for listing on the California Register. Since the property is neither architecturally significant nor associated with notable people or events important in National, California or local history, a discussion of integrity is unnecessary. As such, Circa finds that the property is also ineligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

Sunnydale (1941) - 1654 Sunnydale Avenue

767 Apartments

Historical Summary

Designed by architects Albert F. Roller and Roland I. Stringham in 1939, this housing development was constructed in 1941. Thomas D. Church designed the original landscape plan. Sunnydale was the largest of the five pre-WWII permanent housing projects. Standardization was one of the key features at this project as it allowed for rapid construction. Contemporary documents refer to the "house a day for 90 days" and were complimentary of the efficiency achievable through the standardized policies of the USHA.⁶¹

Site planning was another element of Sunnydale that gained a great deal of attention. The super block, a planning concept gaining favor at this time, provided the organizing principle; roads defined large sections of the project while footpaths provided the interior circulation. Giving less land over to roads meant that more could be allocated to play areas, drying yards, and other common areas. A 1941 magazine declared that, "super blocks take the place of the well known chaotic criss-cross of modern speculative subdivision; twenty such blocks would ordinarily cover a comparable area." In comparison, very little attention was given to building design. A SFHA document, in

⁶⁰ Dr. Knox Mellon, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Mayor's Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001 (Letter regarding SFHA properties and historic status).

⁶¹ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Sunnydale Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (25 May 2001), 6-7. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation.

fact, stated that, “from the architectural point of view, it is the development of the super block and the arrangement of plan that is interesting rather than the buildings themselves.”⁶²

Description

Sunnydale housing development consists of 767 units in 90 separate buildings located in Visitacion Valley on a 48.83 acres site bound by John McLaren Park to the north and west, Hahn Street to the east, and Velasco Street to the south. Curvilinear streets wind through the complex. Each building was intentionally oriented according to the slope and aligned with the natural topography in order to reduce the required amount of soil cut and fill and to help prevent erosion. While all buildings are similar in style and materials, there are six different types of buildings within the development, building types A-F. There are six type A buildings, three type B, five type C, seven type D, forty-five type E, and twenty-four type F buildings. Sunnydale has 71 one-bedroom units, 531 two-bedroom units, 150 three-bedroom units and 15 four-bedroom units. The Administration Building at the intersection of Santos Street and Sunnydale Avenue serves as the on-site SFHA property management office and also provides community recreation and health facilities.

The rectangular plan buildings are constructed of reinforced, board-formed concrete, and are topped by side gabled roofs clad in flat tiles. The buildings range from one- to two-stories, with two building types having a single story at the rear and two stories in front because of the sloped site. The original windows have been replaced with aluminum sliding sash and the entry doors are solid wood. Corrugated concrete panels flank the primary entryways, some upper story windows and elaborate the second story corners of the buildings. Flat concrete awning projections shelter both primary and secondary entry doors. These simple buildings have minimal architectural articulation and detail.

The type A buildings each have eight units, with a one-story upper section and a two-story lower section. The type B buildings, with eleven units each, are a bit longer and also have a one story upper section and a two story lower section. The one-story type C buildings only have three units each. With two full stories at each side, the type D buildings contain four units; the most prevalent type E buildings are just two attached type D buildings, so they have eight units each. The type F buildings, which are the longest, have twelve units each.

The reinforced concrete, two-story Administration Building is a U-shaped building composed of three adjoining gabled buildings. In front of the primary entrance is a black granite Benny Bufano sculpture depicting a woman’s head with a bear behind it. Glazing on the front elevation consists of aluminum sash windows; narrow corrugated concrete panels flank the window openings. The building retains some original steel sash casement windows flanked by corrugated concrete panels. A border of the same corrugated concrete panels frames the primary entry.

⁶² Ibid, 7.

The circulation between the buildings consists of concrete walkways, steps and retaining walls. T-shaped pipes with clotheslines strung between, located at the rear elevation of the buildings, are for hanging wash. The landscaping is minimal-between the concrete walkways are a combination of grass lawn and dirt, with some mature trees extant along the curvilinear streets. Paved parking areas are located between some of the buildings.⁶³

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the May 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Sunnydale Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the building exteriors appeared to be in good condition; however, the original landscape design was not extant with exception of some trees lining major streets. Carey & Co., Inc. found that the architectural design of the buildings remained fairly intact, however certain modifications had removed original material and changed certain character-defining features. At an unknown date, the original steel sash casement windows were removed and replaced with the existing aluminum sash windows. In addition, the original 3-panel wood entry doors have been replaced with the current solid wood doors. The original flat clay tile roofs are currently being replaced with similar flat concrete tiles.

The Administration Building has been heavily altered with new stone cladding surrounding the main west entry, the addition of new entry doors, new gabled canopy over the primary entrance, and the installation of new aluminum windows.

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit confirmed that the building exteriors still appear to be in good condition. Though a few window and door openings had been covered with plywood boards, no other major alterations beyond those listed in the Carey & Co. report above were noted.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Sunnydale, Carey & Co., Inc. found the development ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The report states that, “while Sunnydale reflects the ‘super-block’ approach to site planning on a steep slope, it is not necessarily a distinctive example of this planning type. Architecturally, the buildings are not significant, and there are no historic people or events associated with the complex. Therefore, Sunnydale is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register under any of the NRHP criteria.”⁶⁴ Dr. Knox Mellon, the State Historic Preservation Officer, supported this assessment in a letter dated 25 September 2001 to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing. Dr. Mellon states, “I concur with the determination made by the City that [Sunnydale does] not maintain sufficient significance to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register”.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid, 2-3.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 8.

⁶⁵ Dr. Knox Mellon, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Mayor’s Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001 (Letter regarding SFHA properties and historic status).

Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the State Historic Preservation Officer that the Sunnydale Housing Development does not maintain sufficient historical significance and is ineligible for listing in the National Register. Though the California Register does have a lower threshold for evaluation of historical integrity than the National Register, the legislation does not state that the California Register has a lower threshold of significance. Therefore, since the property is neither architecturally significant nor associated with notable people or events important in National, California or local history, Circa also finds that the property is not eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

Westbrook Apartments (1956) - 90 Kiska Road

225 Apartments

Historical Summary

Westbrook, originally called Harbor Slope, was designed in 1953-4 by the architectural firm of Ryan & Lee and landscape architects Katy & Paul Steinmetz. Construction was completed in 1956. At the time of construction, the neighborhood consisted of thousands of temporary defense housing units that were slowly giving way to more permanent, family-oriented housing developments. Westbrook was the third of four 1950s-era permanent housing projects to be built in the area, eventually becoming a part of the city's largest and most isolated concentrations of public housing.

The SFHA decided to build Westbrook in late 1952, when officials abandoned plans for one of the original 11 projects, De Haro, because its Potrero Hill site had become too industrialized. The site chosen by the SFHA for Westbrook, adjacent to the new Hunters Point "A" development, contained war-era temporary housing units and was owned by the federal government but SFHA soon received authorization to continue.

In their 1952 *Annual Report* the SFHA described a similar project, Hunters Point "A," as a "departure from the original reinforced concrete type of building previously constructed in the Public Housing program." Indeed the housing projects planned before the war, including Ping Yuen and North Beach Place, were all of concrete construction. For this project, however, the agency cited the "postwar increase in the cost of construction" and federal per-room limits as reasons for having to "resort to frame and stucco type of building" for all four Hunters Point projects.

Site planning for the Westbrook housing development was based on the "garden-type" plan. Similar to the superblock type popular before the war, roads defined large sections of the development and concrete footpaths provided circulation between the buildings. Allotting less land to vehicular access allowed more space for play areas, drying yards and other common areas. These developments differed from projects in dense urban

areas, such as Ping Yuen and North Beach Place, where buildings were tightly packed into regular city blocks and the perimeter of the development was more defined.⁶⁶

Description

Westbrook housing development consists of 37 buildings containing four one-bedroom units, 60 two-bedroom units, 116 three-bedroom units and 12 five-bedroom units. The steep 19.1-acre site is bound by Innes Avenue (north), Dormitory Road (east), Kiska Road (south) and Ingalls Street. The rectangular plan buildings are set both perpendicular and parallel to the curved streets that wind through the development. The perpendicularly placed buildings are set into the steep terrain and have stepped foundations to accommodate the grade change. Residents of these buildings are afforded sweeping views of the San Francisco Bay to the north and east. Site features include concrete retaining walls, pathways and stairways with metal pipe handrails.

The one- and two-story wood frame buildings are clad in stucco and topped by gravel clad hipped roofs with moderate eave overhangs. Asphalt shingle-clad pent roofs shelter the apartment entryways and the original windows have been replaced with aluminum double-hung sash. There are nine different plan types within the housing development and, in many of the buildings, the second story is cantilevered out over the first, breaking up the wall plane. The stepped perpendicular buildings feature small front porches with low concrete walls, and the rear elevations have concrete balconies with wire mesh railing. A one-story administration building is located at the southwest corner of the development.⁶⁷

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the June 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Westbrook Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the building exteriors appeared to be in good condition. However, aside from the remaining lawn areas, most of the trees and plantings from the original landscape design were not extant. Carey & Co., Inc. found that the architectural design of the buildings remained fairly intact, however certain modifications over time had removed or altered original features. The original awning and fixed wood sash windows have been replaced with aluminum double hung windows. In addition, the original flat projecting porch roofs over the front entries had been replaced with the existing shingle-clad pent roofs.⁶⁸

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to evaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit found the building exteriors to be in good to fair condition. Some buildings appear to have been recently painted and others are undergoing minor repairs to the stucco cladding. A number of windows have been covered with plywood

⁶⁶ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Westbrook Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (22 June 2001), 9-10. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

boards and the units appear to be vacant. No major alterations other than those described in the Carey & Co. evaluation above were noted.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Westbrook, Carey & Co., Inc. found the development ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under any of the criteria. The report also states that, “to be listed in the NRHP, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the established criteria, it must also possess historic ‘integrity’ [or]...the ability of a property to convey its significance.” The report continues, “[w]hile Westbrook retains its location and association, substantial alterations and lack of original landscaping have compromised the project’s design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling”.⁶⁹

Dr. Knox Mellon, the State Historic Preservation Officer, supported this assessment in a letter dated 25 September 2001 to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing. Dr. Mellon states, “I concur with the determination made by the City that the [Westbrook Apartments do] not maintain sufficient significance to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register”.⁷⁰ Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the State Historic Preservation Officer that Westbrook does not maintain marked historical significance and is therefore ineligible for listing in the National Register.

The Carey & Co. evaluation did not find the property to be historically significant and also noted that the property lacked integrity. As with the National Register, evaluation for eligibility to the California Register requires an establishment of historic significance before integrity is considered. However, the California Register’s integrity threshold is slightly lower than the federal level. As a result, some resources that are historically significant but do not meet NRHP integrity standards may be eligible for listing on the California Register. Since the property is neither architecturally significant nor associated with notable people or events important in National, California or local history, a discussion of integrity is unnecessary. Circa finds that the property is also ineligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

Alemany (1955) - 956 Ellsworth Street

157 Apartments

Historical Summary

Alemany was one of the original 11 public housing developments planned by the SFHA but not constructed until after World War II. The project was reactivated in 1952 and opened to new residents in 1955. Milton T. Pflueger was the architect for the project and Douglas Bayliss designed the landscape. Alemany was Pflueger’s only public housing

⁶⁹ Ibid, 10.

⁷⁰ Dr. Knox Mellon, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Mayor’s Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001 (Letter regarding SFHA properties and historic status).

project and Bayliss designed a number of landscape plans for SFHA in the post-war years. At the time of construction, Alemany was located directly across from the temporary defense housing development, Guam Village. Interstate-280 was built in 1958 through the land made available by the clearing of Guam Village and today defines the southern edge of the Alemany housing development.⁷¹

Description

Alemany is comprised of one administration building and 157 residential units in 24 separate buildings; there are 13 one-bedroom units, 96 two-bedroom units and 48 three-bedroom units. Set on a narrow 7.79-acre site between I-280 (south) and a steep rise to Holly Park (north), the housing project abuts St Mary's Park to the west and is bisected by Ellsworth Street, which curves through the development from Alemany Blvd at the south. Most buildings are located on the south side of Ellsworth Street and six of the buildings in this area are set at alternating 45-degree angles to the street, creating triangular courtyards between the buildings for common yard space and playgrounds.

The buildings are wood frame, two- and three-story buildings that are clad in a combination of stucco and wood clapboard siding and topped by a hipped roof. Two main building types make up the complex: two-story buildings with front entries accessed by a concrete sidewalk and three-story buildings with entries accessed by exterior corridors and front entry steps. The primary entries of each building consist of a solid wood door with an aluminum slider sidelight. Fenestration consists primarily of aluminum sliding sash windows. The corners of both building types have a slightly projecting upper level supported on the side elevations by projecting beam ends.

Landscape features include courtyards between buildings with raised concrete planters, playground equipment, a basketball court, laundry drying areas, garbage collection areas and patches of lawn. Within the triangular courtyards are paired rear entries with metal gates separating small rear yards.⁷²

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the June 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Alemany Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the building exteriors appeared to be in good condition; however, the original landscape design was not extant. Carey & Co., Inc. found that original architectural design of the buildings to be severely impacted because certain modifications and improvements had removed a significant amount of original features. Alterations include replacement of the original glazed or wood paneled entry doors with the existing hollow metal doors, replacement of wood awning windows with aluminum sliding sash windows, and the addition of postmodern-style gabled projections and full-length exterior corridors were added to the front elevations of all three story buildings. Additionally, asphalt shingle-clad canopies were attached over the primary

⁷¹ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Alemany Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (22 June 2001), 9-10. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 2.

entrances of every two-story building. One building, a two-story building at the west end of the development, has been demolished.⁷³

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit found the building exteriors to be in excellent condition. No major alterations other than those described in the Carey & Co. evaluation above were noted.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Alemany, Carey & Co., Inc. found the development ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under any of the Criteria for listing. The report also states that, “to be listed in the NRHP, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the established criteria, it must also possess historic ‘integrity’ [or]...the ability of a property to convey its significance.” The report continues, “While Alemany retains its location and association, substantial alterations and lack of original landscaping have compromised the design, materials, workmanship and feeling [of the property]. The project’s setting has been negatively impacted by the construction of Interstate-280 nearby.”⁷⁴

Dr. Knox Mellon, the State Historic Preservation Officer, supported this assessment in a letter dated 25 September 2001 to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing. Dr. Mellon states, “I concur with the determination made by the City that [Alemany does] not maintain sufficient significance to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register”.⁷⁵ Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the State Historic Preservation Officer that the Alemany Housing Development does not maintain marked historical significance and is therefore ineligible for listing in the National Register.

As noted above, the Carey & Co. evaluation stated that the property had undergone significant alterations and lacked integrity. As with the National Register, evaluation for eligibility to the California Register requires an establishment of historic significance before integrity is considered. However, the California Register’s integrity threshold is slightly lower than the federal level. As a result, some resources that are historically significant but do not meet NRHP integrity standards may be eligible for listing on the California Register. Since the property is neither architecturally significant nor associated with notable people or events important in National, California or local history, a discussion of integrity for the purposes of the California Register is unnecessary. As such, Circa finds that the property is also ineligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

⁷³ Ibid, 2-3.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 10-11.

⁷⁵ Dr. Knox Mellon, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Mayor’s Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001 (Letter regarding SFHA properties and historic status).

Hunters Point East (A-E) (1953) - Kirkwood Ave. at Dormitory Road
Hunters Point West (A-UW/LW) (1953) - 1065 Oakdale Avenue
213 Apartments Total

Historical Summary

The Hunter's Point "A" housing development was designed in 1951-2 by architect Angus McSweeney and construction was completed in 1953. McSweeney designed two housing projects for the SFHA, the other being Hunters Point "B" of 1959. He is best known for his collaboration with Paul Ryan and John Michael Lee on the design of St. Mary's cathedral. At the time of construction, the neighborhood consisted of thousands of temporary defense housing units that were slowly giving way to more permanent, family-oriented housing developments. Hunters Point "A" was the first of four 1950s era permanent housing projects to be built in the area, eventually becoming a part of the city's largest and most isolated concentrations of public housing.⁷⁶

In their 1952 *Annual Report* the SFHA described Hunters Point "A" as a "departure from the original reinforced concrete type of building previously constructed in the Public Housing program." Indeed the housing projects planned before the war, including Ping Yuen and North Beach Place, were all of concrete construction. For this project, however, the agency cited the "postwar increase in the cost of construction" and federal per-room limits as reasons for having to "resort to frame and stucco type of building."⁷⁷

Site planning for the Hunters Point "A" housing development was based on the "garden-type" plan. Similar to the superblock type popular before the war, roads defined large sections of the development and concrete footpaths provided circulation between the buildings. Allotting less land to vehicular access allowed more space for play areas, drying yards and other common areas. These developments differed from projects in dense urban areas, such as Ping Yuen and North Beach Place, where buildings were tightly packed into regular city blocks and the perimeter of the development was more defined. Compared to low-density, pre-war projects like Sunnydale and Potrero Terrace, the designers for Hunters View appear to have focused less on topography and more on picturesque placement of the buildings and intent to take advantage of the sweeping views offered of the San Francisco Bay to the east.⁷⁸

Description

This housing development is comprised of three sections that are referred to as Upper West (UW), Lower West (LW) and East (E). The adjoining UW and LW sections are bound by Navy Road (northeast), Griffith Street (southeast), Palou Avenue (southwest) and Ingalls Street (southeast). Section UW has five buildings with 20 two-bedroom units, six three-bedroom units, and four four-bedroom units. Section LW has 12 buildings containing 13 one-bedroom units, 58 two-bedroom units, 16 three-bedroom units, six

⁷⁶ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Hunters Point "A" Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (22 June 2001), 9-10. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 10.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 10.

four-bedroom units, nine five-bedroom units, and one six-bedroom unit. Hunters Point East is bound by Innes Avenue (northeast), Earl Street (southeast), Kirkwood Avenue (southwest) and Dormitory Road (northwest). This section consists of ten buildings containing four one-bedroom units, 44 two-bedroom units, 13 three-bedroom units and 19 four-bedroom units. Between the buildings are common yard areas with concrete sidewalks and stairs, laundry drying areas and playgrounds.

Each section is comprised of long, two- and three-story rectangular buildings, many of which have smaller rectangular wings attached at the corner. These wood frame buildings have slightly hipped roofs and moderate eave overhangs and are clad in a combination of stucco and wood board and batten panels. The five, two story UW buildings have large glazed bay projections that are not original. A basketball court, community center, and large open common areas are located in the LW section. All buildings have replacement aluminum awning and double hung sash windows. Many units have front yards surrounded by wood or vinyl picket fences and a shed roof supported by simple wood posts over the primary entry door. One- to three-story wood staircases attach to the buildings located on more of an incline. Concrete planters and metal pipe railing are located throughout the housing development.

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the June 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Hunters Point "A" Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the building exteriors appeared to be in good condition; however, aside from the remaining lawn areas, the original landscape design was not extant. Carey & Co., Inc. found that original architectural design of the buildings remained fairly intact, however certain modifications had removed original features. Alterations include replacement of the original wood paneled entry doors with the current solid wood doors (n.d.) and replacement of the original awning, hopper and fixed wood sash windows with the existing aluminum sliding sash. The open wood stairways that extend from the front elevations of several buildings were added at an unknown date, as were the glazed bay projections at the rear elevations of several buildings. In addition, the original flat concrete roofs over the front entries have been replaced with asphalt shingle-clad pent roofs supported by wood posts. According to SFHA records, most alterations probably occurred around 1978 and 1983.⁷⁹

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to evaluate the condition and integrity of the property. This site visit found the building exteriors to be in good to fair condition. Many window openings have been covered with plywood boards and the units appear to be vacant. White vinyl picket fencing was installed in the front yards of many Hunters Point West units in August 2008 and are already showing signs of vandalism. No major alterations other than those described in the Carey & Co. evaluation above were noted.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 3.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Hunters Point "A", Carey & Co., Inc. found the development ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under any of the criteria. The report also states that, "to be listed in the NRHP, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the established criteria, it must also possess historic 'integrity' [or]...the ability of a property to convey its significance." The report continues, "[w]hile Hunters Point "A" retains its location and association, substantial alterations and lack of original landscaping have compromised the project's design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling.

As noted, the Carey & Co. evaluation stated that the property had undergone significant alterations and lacked integrity. As with the National Register, evaluation for eligibility to the California Register requires an establishment of historic significance before integrity is considered. However, the California Register's integrity threshold is slightly lower than the federal level. As a result, some resources that are historically significant but do not meet NRHP integrity standards may be eligible for listing on the California Register. The archival research completed for the purposes of this review did not uncover any additional information linking the property to events or people notably significant to California or local history. Since the property is neither associated with notable people or events nor architecturally significant in National, California or local history, a discussion of integrity for the purposes of the California Register is unnecessary. As such, Circa finds that the property is also ineligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

Hunters View (1956) - 112 Middle Point Road

325 Apartments

Historical Summary

Donald Beach Kirby & Associates designed the Hunters View housing project in 1953-4 and the firm of French, Jones, Laflin & Associates designed the landscape. Construction of the approximately 300 units began in 1954 and was completed in 1956. By that time, the Hunters Point neighborhood had already begun its transition from a temporary defense worker population to a more permanent residential neighborhood. Hunters View was the second of four SFHA housing developments built in the area.

In their 1952 *Annual Report* the SFHA described the design of a similar development, Hunters Point "A," as a "departure from the original concrete type of building previously constructed in the Public Housing program." The agency cited the "postwar increase in the cost of construction and federal per-room limits as reasons for having to resort to frame and stucco type of building."⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Hunters View Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (26 July 2001), 11-12. See this report for full developmental history and evaluation. Quotes from San Francisco Housing Authority, *Annual Report* (1952), 3.

Site planning for the Hunters View housing development was based on the “garden-type” plan. Similar to the superbloc type popular before the war, roads defined large sections of the development and concrete footpaths provided circulation between the buildings. Allotting less land to vehicular access allowed more space for play areas, drying yards and other common areas. These developments differed from projects in dense urban areas, such as Ping Yuen and North Beach Place, where buildings were tightly packed into regular city blocks and the perimeter of the development was more defined. Compared to low-density, pre-war projects like Sunnydale and Potrero Terrace, the designers for Hunters View appear to have focused less on topography and more on picturesque placement of the buildings and intent to take advantage of the stunning views offered of the San Francisco Bay to the east.⁸¹

Description

Completed in 1956, the Hunters View housing development consists of 55 buildings containing 10 one-bedroom units, 130 two-bedroom units, 112 three-bedroom units, 64 four-bedroom units and 9 five-bedroom units. Set on a steeply sloping 17.15-acre site, the buildings overlook San Francisco Bay to the east. Middle Point road bisects the property and the buildings are situated around a simple network of roads: three cul-de-sacs to the east of Middle Point Road and the West Point Road loop to the west. Site features include a circulation network of concrete sidewalks and stairs, clothesline areas and common areas with playground equipment.

The rectangular plan buildings are clad in a combination of stucco and vertical board and batten and are topped by flat roofs with projecting eaves. The two and three-story wood frame buildings are glazed with replacement one-over-one double-hung and sliding sash aluminum windows. The long elevations are broken up by upper level projections at either end of the building and the metal fire escapes have corrugated metal at the balconies. Asphalt shingle clad shed roofs shelter the primary entries.

The community center features alternating roof sections - the two end sections are gabled, while the center roof plane slants to the east. A playground surrounded by chain link fencing is set to the north of the community center and a basketball court is located to the south.⁸²

Condition and Alterations

The property was surveyed and evaluated in the July 2001 *Historic Resource Evaluation, Hunters View Housing Development, San Francisco, CA*, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. At that time, the surveyors found that the building exteriors appeared to be in fair to poor condition and the original landscape design was not extant. Carey & Co., Inc. found that original architectural design of the buildings remained fairly intact, however certain modifications had removed or altered original features. Alterations include replacement of the original wood entry doors with the current solid wood doors and the original wood casement windows with aluminum sliding sash windows. Three 3-story buildings were

⁸¹ Ibid, 12.

⁸² Ibid, 2-3.

demolished for construction of the community center, playground and basketball court. Most alterations likely occurred around 1982. The report states that many apartments at the time of the survey appeared to be suffering from neglect. "Numerous apartments had been broken into, resulting in damage to the windows and interior and ultimately the boarding up of all apartment openings. In addition, some apartments show signs of significant fire damage and damage to exterior elements."⁸³

Circa conducted a site visit in September 2008 to reevaluate the condition and integrity of the property and found the building exteriors to be in good to fair condition. A number of window and door openings had been covered with plywood boards and some buildings also appeared to be suffering from neglect. No major alterations other than those described in the Carey & Co. evaluation above were noted.

Evaluation

In their 2001 Historic Resource Evaluation for Hunters View, Carey & Co., Inc. found that neither the Hunters View property as a whole nor any of the individual buildings is eligible for listing in the in the National Register or the California Register for association with a significant event or person, or for its architectural value or information potential. Furthermore, the property was found to have significantly diminished levels of integrity.

Dr. Knox Mellon, the State Historic Preservation Officer, supported this assessment in a letter dated 25 September 2001 to Daryl Higashi, Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing. Dr. Mellon states, "I concur with the determination made by the City that [Hunters View does] not maintain sufficient significance to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register".⁸⁴ Circa concurs with the determination made by Carey & Co. and supported by the State Historic Preservation Officer that the Hunters View Housing Development does not maintain marked historical significance and is therefore ineligible for listing in the National Register.

As noted above, The Carey & Co. evaluation stated that the property had undergone significant alterations and lacked integrity. As with the National Register, evaluation for eligibility to the California Register requires an establishment of historic significance before integrity is considered. However, the California Register's integrity threshold is slightly lower than the federal level. As a result, some resources that are historically significant but do not meet NRHP integrity standards may be eligible for listing on the California Register. Since the property is neither architecturally significant nor associated with notable people or events important in National, California or local history, a discussion of integrity for the purposes of the California Register is unnecessary. As such, Circa finds that the property is also ineligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

⁸³ Ibid, 3.

⁸⁴ Dr. Knox Mellon, Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, to Daryl Higashi, Mayor's Office of Housing in San Francisco, 25 September 2001 (Letter regarding SFHA properties and historic status).

Alice Griffith (1962) - Griffith Street at Gilman Street

254 Apartments

Historical Summary

Hertzka & Knowles and H.C. Baumann Associated Architects designed the Double Rock Low Rent Housing Project in 1953-4 and Douglas Bayliss was retained as the landscape architect for the project. Construction of the approximately 250 units began in 1960 and was completed in October 1962. Initially referred to as Double Rock, after the earlier temporary war housing development on the site, the project was later renamed to honor former SFHA board member Alice Griffith. Griffith actively opposed the SFHA's restrictive placement known as "neighborhood patterns." This policy allowed settlement within the housing projects only if the applicant reflected the predominate ethnicity of the neighborhood, or if they were White. In spite of the fact that the majority of the tenants were African-Americans who had difficulty finding housing because of rampant racial discrimination, only one permanent housing project, located in the Western Addition, was open to Blacks.⁸⁵ The "neighborhood patterns" policy was the City's way to segregate housing in practice while condemning the practice in theory. Alice Griffith resigned her post over the matter and became a voice opposing the policy in public debate.⁸⁶

Wayne Solomon Hertzka and William Howard Knowles formed Hertzka & Knowles, the San Francisco-based architecture firm in 1932. Hertzka, a Washington native born in 1907, earned his masters degree in architecture from MIT in Cambridge and became a registered architect in California in 1956. Knowles, born in 1909, completed his undergrad work at UC Berkeley and also earned his masters degree in architecture from MIT in 1932. Together the architects worked on a number of projects including 1 Bush Plaza, Anza Elementary School, the Mission BART stations and the Hotel Empire in San Francisco.

Herman C. Baumann started his architectural practice in San Francisco in 1924. A prolific architect, Baumann designed hundreds of apartment buildings in the Bay Area over his career. He also designed hotels and commercial buildings in San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento. During WWII, Baumann held a contract with the U.S. Navy Bureau of Yards and Docks, designing a number of buildings at Mare Island and other Naval outposts in the Bay Area. After the war, Baumann designed several multi-family housing projects. He is likely best known for his Art Deco apartment houses such as 1895 Pacific Avenue and 1950 Clay Street in San Francisco and the striking Bellevue-Staton apartment building in Oakland.

Douglas Bayliss is best known for his work in the "California School" of landscape architecture in which the more structured Beaux-Arts conventions were replaced with an approach that centered on the California climate and lifestyle. Bayliss graduated with a

⁸⁵ City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department, *Hunters Point Shipyard Reuse FEIR, Appendix E*, certified February 8, 2000, File No.1994.061E, p. E15 and Albert Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954*, 1993, p. 222.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 177.

Landscape Architecture degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1941 and began working with Thomas Church. It was during his tenure in Church's firm that several government-funded housing projects were designed. Bayliss opened his own firm with wife Maggie Bayliss after the war and his projects over the next two decades included Washington Square in North Beach, San Francisco Civic Center Plaza, IBM Headquarters near San Jose and several BART stations. He is often credited along with Church, Garrett Eckbo and Robert Royston as one of the founders of the "California School" of modernism in Landscape Architecture.

Description

The Alice Griffith Housing Development sits on a single large parcel in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco. Set on a rise overlooking Monster Park to the south, the development is generally bound by Carroll Avenue (north), Arelious Walker Drive (east), Gilman Avenue (south) and Hawes Street (west). A guard kiosk secures the property's Fitzgerald Avenue entrance at Cameron Way. The housing stock consists of 33 apartment buildings, constructed from standardized plans using five slightly different building types. The six Type A apartment and eight Type B buildings contain six apartments each, the four Type C buildings and seven Type E buildings have ten apartments per building, and the eight Type D buildings each contain seven apartments.

The buildings line a simple circulation network of streets including Doublerock Street, a cul-de-sac named after the geologic formation visible at low tide nearby. (This is also the name of the war housing development that occupied this site during WWII.) Rectangular in plan, the concrete buildings are topped by a side facing, gravel covered gable roof and exterior walls are clad primarily in stucco with board and batten panels surrounding the second-story windows. The number of windows per building varies by building type, though the metal sash windows are consistent throughout. These are three-lite vertical windows with central awning sash at the ground level and two-lite windows at the upper level with fixed transom and lower awning sash. Each building has a concrete front walk and entry step and a rear, shared rectangular concrete patio with concrete planters and clotheslines. Simple flat roofs project over both the front and rear entry porches. A community garden and basketball court are located along the east side of the development, and the modern Alice Griffith Opportunity Center building is located at the southeast corner, adjacent to the development's Griffith Street entrance.

Condition and Alterations

In their 2001 evaluation of the housing development, Carey & Co. reported the property to have been in good condition. Circa conducted a site visit in July 2008 to reevaluate the condition of the property and found the development be in good to fair condition. The housing development was completed in 1962 and rehabilitated in 1980. Common alterations include installation of metal screen doors and window bars at the first floor windows. A number of the original board-and-batten panels have been replaced with plain painted plywood boards or T-111 panels. Some window and door openings have been covered with plywood panels and a number of units have been removed from use.

Though the original concrete planters are extant throughout the complex, most of the original planting material has been lost.

Evaluation

Carey & Co.'s 2001 evaluation for Alice Griffith was based primarily on architecture/design (Criterion 3/C). At that time, the property was not yet fifty years old and therefore would have had to exhibit "exceptional significance" in order to be found eligible for listing on the National or California registers. The report states, "While the property is representative of its period, this property's overall architectural design displays no exceptionally notable features". The property was found ineligible for listing on the National or California registers. To supplement this cursory evaluation, Circa has completed the following evaluation of the property using National and California criterion.

Circa Evaluation

At the time of this writing, the Alice Griffith public housing is 46 years old. In general, in order to qualify for listing on the National or California Registers, a property must be 50 years old, meet one of the four criteria for significance and retain integrity. Unless the property demonstrates exceptional significance, a property less than 50 years old is not eligible for listing. However, the California Office of Historic Preservation recommends the recordation of properties 45 years or older, recognizing that there is commonly a five year lag between resource identification and the date that planning decisions are made. As criterion for the NRHP and the CRHR are the same, an evaluation using both is provided below:

Under Criterion A/1, archival research yielded no information indicating that Alice Griffith Housing Development is strongly associated with an event or pattern of events important to local or regional history, or to the cultural heritage of California or the United States. The development was one of a number of housing developments constructed as part of SFHA's post WWII campaign to replace temporary war housing and address the need for public housing in the city. As mere association with historic events or trends is not enough to qualify under this criterion, and the property's specific association must be considered important as well, the development does not appear to be eligible for listing under Criterion A/1.

The subject property also does not appear to be eligible under Criterion B/2 for association with persons significant in local, state or national history. Although later named for former SFHA board member Alice Griffith, the housing equality advocate died in 1959 and never lived at the housing development. The property is not directly associated with Griffith's productive life and is therefore not eligible for listing under Criterion B/2.

The subject property does not notably embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values. While representative of its period, the overall architectural design displays no exceptional design characteristics. Further, though the property was designed

by notable architects and a well-known landscape architect, it is not particularly illustrative of any one of their characteristic design styles. A property is not eligible as the work of a master simply because it was designed by a prominent architect and the subject property does not appear to be eligible under Criterion C/3.

Archival research provided no indication that the property has the potential to yield exceptionally important information important to prehistory or history, therefore the property is not eligible for the CRHR under Criterion D/4.

Rosa Parks Senior Apartments (1961) - 1251 Turk Street

198 Apartments

Historical Summary

Originally known as the Yerba Buena Plaza Annex, this 11-story, cast concrete hi-rise apartment building was originally designed by the architectural firm of Spencer & Ambrose and the original landscape planned by Thomas D. Church. The architects were contracted in February 1956, though the building was not completed until September 1961. The 211-unit housing development, opened in the same year as another hi-rise concrete apartment building in Chinatown, Ping Yuen Annex (North). Both buildings are representative of the type of hi-density urban housing developments that dominated public housing construction through the 1960s and 1970s.

A native of Tulare, California, William Clement Ambrose was born in 1888. After attending the University of California Berkeley's School of Architecture, Ambrose's first practical job experience after graduation in 1910 was assisting architect Willis Polk in the rebuilding campaign that followed the 1906 earthquake and fire. After several years of study and travel abroad, Ambrose entered the infantry in World War I. Upon return to San Francisco after the war, he joined the staff of city architect John Reid Jr. Ambrose opened his own office in 1926 and later formed a partnership with Eldridge T. Spencer, another California native and graduate of the UC Berkeley Architecture program. Spencer graduated from the program in 1917 and flew in the Army Signal corps in World War I. Following his military duty, he attended and graduated from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in 1925.⁸⁷

The architectural partnership of Spencer & Ambrose formed in the mid 1940s and the firm was responsible for a number of prominent Bay Area commissions including the University of California Davis Plant Sciences Building and the North Point Sewage Treatment Plant and the Home Economics Building on the US Berkeley Campus. Spencer was a founder of the Stanford University planning office played a major role in shaping the post-war development of its campus. The firm of Spencer & Ambrose designed a number of buildings for the University including the W.W. Hansen Laboratories (Microwave "Linear Accelerator" Lab and High Energy Physics Lab) and

⁸⁷ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Eldridge T. Spencer (obit.)," 25 September 1978. Also: *San Francisco Chronicle*, "William Ambrose Dies," 7 March 1962.

the Ginzton Laboratory, the Organic Chemistry Building, and campus residential buildings, Crothers, Stern and Wilbur Halls.⁸⁸

Ambrose served as a lecturer for the University of California's Extension division and as a member of the State Board of Architectural Examiners from 1943-1951. He was a member of the Northern California chapter of the American Institute of Architects and was made a fellow of the organization in recognition of his service to the institute. William Ambrose died in March of 1962 at the age of 73. Eldridge Spencer retired from his San Francisco practice in 1972, but remained active until his death in 1978 with the Palo Alto firm that bore his name, Spencer & Associates.⁸⁹

Thomas D. Church, a prominent and prolific Bay Area landscape architect, designed the original landscaping for the housing development. Church is considered a pioneer in modern landscape architecture and designed landscapes for as many as 2,000 private gardens, housing developments, corporate and college campuses and other well-known commissions such as the Memorial Court garden at the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center and the Sunset magazine headquarters in Menlo Park.⁹⁰

Description

Occupying an entire city block, the Rosa Parks Senior Apartments housing development is bound by Turk Street (north), Buchanan Street (east), Golden Gate Avenue (south) and Webster Street (west). The complex is enclosed by a steel perimeter fence and includes both the multi-story apartment building and another one-story building at the southeast corner of the site. The smaller building is leased to the Parks and Recreation Department and used as the Senior Recreation Center. Paved pedestrian pathways and common areas with benches and site features including covered sitting areas with trellises, raised planting beds and playground areas are located to the south, east and west of the main building. Parking areas for residents and staff are set along the north side of the property.

The 11-story apartment building is constructed of board-formed reinforced concrete and is topped by a flat roof with a simple cornice. Its long primary elevation faces Turk Street and two residential wings project to the south. The exterior walls at the first two stories are covered with stucco and painted. A concrete stringcourse runs along the top of the stucco-clad portions and another one encircles the top of the building, just above the tenth story. The concrete on the remaining wall surfaces has been scored, creating square and rectangular panels, painted in shades of white, gray and yellow. Paired, full height window surrounds with stamped spandrel panels are located on all secondary elevations though most windows remain unframed. Glazing on the front elevation consists of a combination of metal hopper, sliding and fixed sash windows; secondary elevations have aluminum sliding, fixed and casement windows.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Carey & Co., Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Hunters View Housing Development, San Francisco, California* (26 July 2001), 11-12.

Condition and Alterations

The subject property was completely remodeled by the San Francisco-based architecture firm of Marquis Associates in 1984. Richard Schadt Associates, Inc. also rehabilitated the landscape at this time. This remodel transformed what was by the 1980s a deteriorated family housing project, into a senior housing community. Originally, the front elevation (along Turk Street) and the rear interior elevations facing the west rear courtyard, featured open circulation corridors, running in long horizontal bands across the facades. Open, full-height stairwells were located at either end of the main building mass as well as at the ends of the rear exposed corridors. The 1984 rehabilitation enclosed these open circulation ways to provide greater security for the residents and added exterior elements such as the upper cornice and stringcourse as well as the two-story applied stucco facade around the base of the building. The one-story, stucco-clad elements such as the gatehouse and arcade at the primary entrance, as well as the sunroom additions and sheltered seating areas in the south courtyard were also added at the time of the 1984 renovation. A number of original windows and doors were also replaced at this time.

Evaluation

Rosa Parks Senior Apartments housing development has not been previously evaluated for listing on the National or California Registers or for local listing.

At the time of this writing, the Rosa Parks senior housing is 47 years old. In general, in order to qualify for listing on the National or California Registers, a property must be 50 years old, meet one of the four criteria for significance and retain integrity. Unless the property demonstrates exceptional significance, a property less than 50 years old is not eligible for listing. However, the California Office of Historic Preservation recommends the recordation of properties 45 years or older, recognizing that there is commonly a five year lag between resource identification and the date that planning decisions are made. As criterion for the NRHP and the CRHR are the same, an evaluation using both is provided below:

Under Criterion A/1, archival research yielded no information indicating that Rosa Parks Senior Housing is strongly associated with an event or pattern of events important to local or regional history, or to the cultural heritage of California or the United States. The development was one of a number of housing developments constructed as part of SFHA's post-WWII campaign to replace temporary war housing and address the need for public housing in the city. As mere association with historic events or trends is not enough in and of itself, to qualify under this criterion, and the property's specific association must be considered important as well, the development does not appear to be eligible for listing under Criterion A/1.

The subject property also does not appear to be eligible under Criterion B/2 for association with persons significant in local, state or national history. Though originally designed by prominent Bay Area architects Spencer & Ambrose and Landscape Architect Thomas Church, better examples of their work exist within the Bay Area. Further, the property has been significantly altered from its original design. The property is therefore not eligible for listing under Criterion B/2.

The subject property does not notably embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values. While representative of its period, the overall architectural design displays no exceptional design characteristics. Despite its original design by Spencer & Ambrose and Thomas Church, a property is not eligible as the work of a master simply because it was designed by a prominent architect and the subject property does not appear to be eligible under Criterion C/3.

Archival research provided no indication that the property has the potential to yield exceptionally important information important to prehistory or history, therefore the property is not eligible for the CRHR under Criterion D/4.

Furthermore, in order for a property to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR it must enough integrity to represent its historical value. The 1984 rehabilitation of the property significantly diminished the property's integrity of design, workmanship, association and material. As the property does not possess marked historical significance and also does not retain integrity, it does not appear to be eligible for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR.

Velasco (1962) - Velasco Avenue at Castillo Street

18 Apartments

Historical Summary

Originally known as the Hayes Valley Apartments, Velasco housing development appears to have been one of three housing developments designed in 1960 and constructed in 1962. The Hayes Valley Apartments are referred to as "Site A" on the original plan drawings, the umbrella project referred to by the SFHA as "Project No. CAL. 1-18(7) A, B & C". Designed by architect William Mooser Jr. of the San Francisco partnership of Mooser & Haines.

William Mooser Jr., a native and longtime resident of San Francisco, "was the third-generation member of a family whose work in architecture spanned more than a century of California design."⁹¹ In 1898, his father took over the firm of architect William Mooser, founded in 1854. William Mooser Jr. inherited the architectural practice, on the corner of Market and Stockton Streets in San Francisco in 1962 and changed the name to William Mooser Jr. His most noted projects include projects such as the Berkeley Aquatic Park and the Santa Barbara courthouse. In the 1930s he was a San Francisco director in the Works Progress Administrations and was a member of the American institute of Architects.

⁹¹ "Services for William Mooser Jr.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 August 1969, page 36.

Description

Velasco, located at the southeast corner of the Sunnydale housing development, is comprised of two, two-story, rectangular-plan, wood-frame buildings attached by an open stairwell. A second stairwell is located at the east end of the building. Exterior walls are clad in stucco and the east-west oriented gable roofs are clad in asphalt shingles. Glazing consists of replacement aluminum one-over one double-hung sash and metal awning-over-fixed sash windows in wood frames. Triangular wood vents are located beneath the gable peaks. Second-story residential units are accessed via a covered exterior corridor enclosed with a metal mesh fence and metal railing. Landscape features along the south elevation consist of exposed aggregate concrete planters and paving juxtaposed with smooth concrete paving and red and blue checkerboard paving tiles. Two clusters of mature trees are located at the northeast and southeast lot lines. The buildings contain a combination of studio, one- and two-bedroom units of senior housing.

Condition and Alterations

Circa conducted a site visit to the property in September 2008 and found the development to be in good condition. Some window openings had been covered with plywood boards and it appears that some of the original window sashes have been replaced. SFHA records indicate that from 1992 to 2005 work completed at Velasco included site improvements and deck repairs, mechanical upgrades and installation of security lighting and improvements to the property office.

Evaluation

Velasco housing development has not been previously evaluated for listing on the National or California Registers or for local listing.

At the time of this writing, the Velasco is 46 years old. In general, in order to qualify for listing on the National or California Registers, a property must be 50 years old, meet one of the four criteria for significance and retain integrity. Unless the property demonstrates exceptional significance, a property less than 50 years old is not eligible for listing. However, the California Office of Historic Preservation recommends the recordation of properties 45 years or older, recognizing that there is commonly a five year lag between resource identification and the date that planning decisions are made. As criterion for the NRHP and the CRHR are the same, an evaluation using both is provided below:

Under Criterion A/1, archival research yielded no information indicating that Velasco housing development is strongly associated with an event or pattern of events important to local or regional history, or to the cultural heritage of California or the United States. The development was one of a number of housing developments constructed as part of SFHA's post-WWII campaign to replace temporary war housing and address the need for public housing in the city. As mere association with historic events or trends is not enough in and of itself, to qualify under this criterion, and the property's specific association must be considered important as well, the development does not appear to be eligible for listing under Criterion A/1.

The subject property also does not appear to be eligible under Criterion B/2 for association with persons significant in local, state or national history. Though designed by Bay Area architect William Mooser Jr., the building is not a notable example of his work. The property is therefore not eligible for listing under Criterion B/2.

The subject property does not notably embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values. While representative of its period, the overall architectural design displays no exceptional design characteristics. Despite its original design by William Mooser Jr., a property is not eligible as the work of a master simply because it was designed by a prominent architect and the subject property does not appear to be eligible under Criterion C/3.

Archival research provided no indication that the property has the potential to yield exceptionally important information important to prehistory or history; therefore the property is not eligible for the CRHR under Criterion D/4.

Conclusion

Out of 15 SFHA properties evaluated for the purposes of this study, 12 have been found ineligible for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR. These include the following housing developments: Ping Yuen North, Potrero Terrace, Potrero Annex, Sunnydale, Westbrook, Alemany, Hunters Point East and Hunters Point West, Hunters View, Alice Griffith, Rosa Parks and Velasco. The previous evaluations for three SFHA properties (Holly Courts, Westside Courts and Ping Yuen) were confirmed; these properties remain eligible for listing on the NRHP and CRHR as historic districts.

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- Historic Resources Evaluation, Potrero Terrace Housing Development, San Francisco, CA (25 May 2001).
- Historic Resources Evaluation, Ping Yuen Housing Development, San Francisco, CA (22 June 2001).
- Historic Resources Evaluation, Holly Courts Housing Development, San Francisco, CA (25 May 2001).
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U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Washington, D.C.: U.S Government Printing Office, 1995.

Useful Websites

Office of Historic Preservation:

<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/>

California State Historical Building Code:

<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/>

Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatments of Historic Properties:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/secstan1.htm>

National Park Service: Technical Preservation Services:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/index.htm>

Preservation Briefs:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>

Preservation Tech Notes:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/technotes/tnhome.htm>

National Register Bulletins:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins.htm>

APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS

Holly Courts (100 Appleton Avenue)



Looking west up Highland Avenue



Fenced backyards



Central Axis

Westside Courts (2501 Sutter Street)



Looking north across Post Street



Looking south on Broderick Street



Looking east into parking area from Baker Street

Ping Yuen (655-895 Pacific Avenue)



655 Pacific Avenue



795 Pacific Avenue



895 Pacific Avenue (rear courtyard/garden area)

Ping Yuen North (838 Pacific Avenue)



Looking west on Pacific Avenue



Primary (south) elevation



Potrero Terrace (1095 Connecticut Street)



Looking southwest from Connecticut Street and 25th Street



Concrete steps and walkways



Looking up Connecticut Street

Potrero Annex (Missouri Street at 23rd Street)



Front elevation



Rear elevation



Concrete walkways and steps

Sunnydale (1654 Sunnydale Avenue)



Two-story building along Sunnydale Avenue, primary elevation



Two-story building along Hahn Street, primary elevation



Concrete walkways and common space

Westbrook Apartments (90 Kiska Road)



Looking downhill (northeast) from Northridge Road



Looking uphill (southwest) from Northridge Road



Typical elevation

Alemaný (956 Ellsworth Street)



Front elevation, typical



Looking northwest toward playground from Alemany Blvd.



Community Garden

Hunters Point West/A-UW/LW (1065 Oakdale Avenue)



Primary elevation, building on Oakdale Avenue



Rear elevation on Oakdale Avenue



Looking into interior courtyards from Oakdale Avenue

Hunters Point East/A-E (Kirkwood Avenue at Dormitory Road)



Front elevation, building at corner of Jerrold Avenue and Earl Streets



Rear elevation, building at corner of Jerrold Avenue and Earl Streets

Hunters View (125 West Point Road)



Looking west on West Point Road



Typical elevation



Interior walkways

Alice Griffith (Griffith Street at Gilman Street)



Typical front elevation



Typical front elevation



Rear elevation

Rosa Parks Apartments (1251 Turk Street)



Primary (north) elevation



Looking northwest from Buchanan Street and Golden Gate Avenue



Secondary entrance along Webster Street

Velasco (Velasco Avenue at Castillo Street)



West wing



North wing



CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex Housing Project
Thomas Church and Douglas Baylis Landscape Design
San Francisco, California

Integrity Analysis

May 31, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Carey & Co. previously prepared an evaluation report for the Potrero Terrace Housing Project in 2004 and Potrero Annex in 2001. In those reports, Carey & Co. determined that the original landscape designs of Thomas Church for the former and Douglas Baylis for the latter no longer retained sufficient integrity to be considered historic. The San Francisco Planning Department has now requested that this assertion be documented with further research and evaluation. Curtis Development & Consulting has requested Carey & Co.'s assistance in completing this task. This report provides background on Thomas Church and Douglas Bayliss, their approach to the landscape design for Potrero Terrace and Annex, and an integrity evaluation of Thomas Church's landscape.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Additional research confirms that Thomas Church and Douglas Bayliss's landscape designs for Potrero Terrace Housing Project and Potrero Annex retain poor integrity. Thomas Church used hearty perennial trees and shrubs with white, yellow, red, and blue flowers to create hedge-lined buildings and pathways combined with open spaces dotted with groups of shade trees. Today, some of the groups of trees stand, but the hedges are nearly all gone and the landscape is generally barren. While little historical evidence exists to determine exactly how Baylis designed Potrero Annex, the available documentation indicates that the less than half of the original planting scheme still stands. Again, the landscape appears largely barren. These alterations have substantially and adversely impacted the landscapes' integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to the extent that they no longer express their historical significance.

METHODOLOGY

Carey & Company conducted a site to Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex housing projects on May 31, 2011. The San Francisco Housing Authority provided Carey & Co. with Thomas Church's original plans for the Potrero Terrace Housing Project and what is left of the original plans by Douglas Baylis for Potrero Annex. Carey & Co. compared the original plans with historic photographs and the site visit to determine the integrity of the landscape designs. Other resources include an oral history project about Thomas Church and essays about his life and work, Carey & Co.'s previous evaluations of the two housing projects, historic maps, and professional publications.

This report includes 2 Appendices:

Appendix A: Thomas Church's 1939 Potrero Terrace drawings

Appendix B: Douglas Baylis's original drawings for Potrero Annex

BACKGROUND: THOMAS CHURCH & DOUGLAS BAYLIS

Thomas Church (1902-1976) lived and worked in the Bay Area from the 1930s on and became one of the most influential mid-century landscape architects. He was operating a successful firm when the release of his 1955 book *Gardens are for People*, spread his name and the California-style garden all over the world. Central to Church's design philosophy was that gardens and landscaped areas should be designed to respond to how people would use and interact with the space. He endorsed a casual style of outdoor living consistent with the California climate, and intended to promote health among the people who used his spaces. Stylistically, Church's designs feature rectangular and circle geometric forms, and amorphous areas that engage with the pure geometry. Curlicue elements are frequently used to enclose and define space. His landscapes work with the existing topography, rather than against it, and feature just enough cultivation to distinguish them from wild spaces.¹

Douglas Baylis (1915-1971) designed the landscape for Potrero Annex. After graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1941, he found work in the offices of Thomas Church, who was already recognized as the father of the California modernist school of landscape architecture and who was working on a number of public housing projects for the City of San Francisco. After about four years with Church, Baylis opened his own firm with his wife, Maggie Baylis. His projects during the next two decades included San Francisco Civic Center Plaza, International Business Machines Headquarters near San Jose, Washington Square in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco, Portsmouth Square and Ping Yuen Housing Project in San Francisco's Chinatown, Candlestick Park, and several BART stations. Baylis served as campus landscape architect at the University of California, Berkeley, and lectured and wrote on a variety of topics.²

¹ Marc Treib, ed., *Thomas Church Landscape Architect* (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2003), ix.

² College of Environmental Design Archives, "Douglas Baylis (1915-1971), Maggie Baylis (1912-1997)," <http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives/profiles/baylis.htm> (accessed May 20, 2011); Carey & Co., "Potrero Annex: Historic Resource Evaluation," July 26, 2001, p. 11.

THOMAS CHURCH'S POTRERO TERRACE HOUSING PROJECT LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Church's simple, low-maintenance design for Potrero Terrace intended to soften and humanize the relentlessly rectilinear rows of the large public housing development. Potrero Terrace consisted of thirty-eight buildings and an office building arranged at angles to the streetscape, which diverged from the urban grid and sloped towards the San Francisco Bay. The buildings were all identical – three-story, hip-roofed structures with stucco cladding, wood sash, one-over-one double hung windows. Porches with wrought-iron balustrades span the length of the primary façade of each building. Lines from the form boards and colorful paint provide the only other decoration.



Fig. 1. Top left: View of Potrero Terrace under construction, taken from 26th Street and facing north, 1941. Top Right: A freshly landscaped unit of Potrero Terrace at the corner of 26th Street and Connecticut, 1941. Courtesy of SFPL. Bottom left: Silver Wattle tree; four such trees stood asymmetrically along the verge. Bottom center: *Rhamphiolepis ovata*; a dense, full-width hedge of this plant was planted along the base of the primary façade. Bottom right: Yunnan Fire Thorn plants, which produced small red berries, were densely planted in the foreground and to the immediate northwest of the parking area seen here.

Church's design for the Potrero Terrace Housing Project was consistent with his broader body of work and used a combination of trees, hedges and ground cover to create pleasant spaces that worked with the architecture. According to the original designs for the housing project, Church combined formal hedges to define parking and living spaces, with informal clusters of trees – mostly Monterey pines, olive trees, and a variety of acacia trees – located in the open spaces. Hedges of Tarata, Blue Veronica, and Australian Tea trees framed the parking areas and lined the pathways that led from the parking spaces to the buildings. Each building featured a tree at either end of the primary façade, creating natural columns, and dense hedge rows across the entire width of the façade. Similar hedge rows were planted on the rear

side of each unit, and expansive yards with a defined central play area were planned beyond the hedges. At various locations the hedges were supposed to be arranged into curlicues. All of the trees and plants were of the hearty, low-maintenance type that bloomed in red, white, yellow, and blue during the spring. The plants were not deciduous, so they always offered a textured landscape in various shades of green.

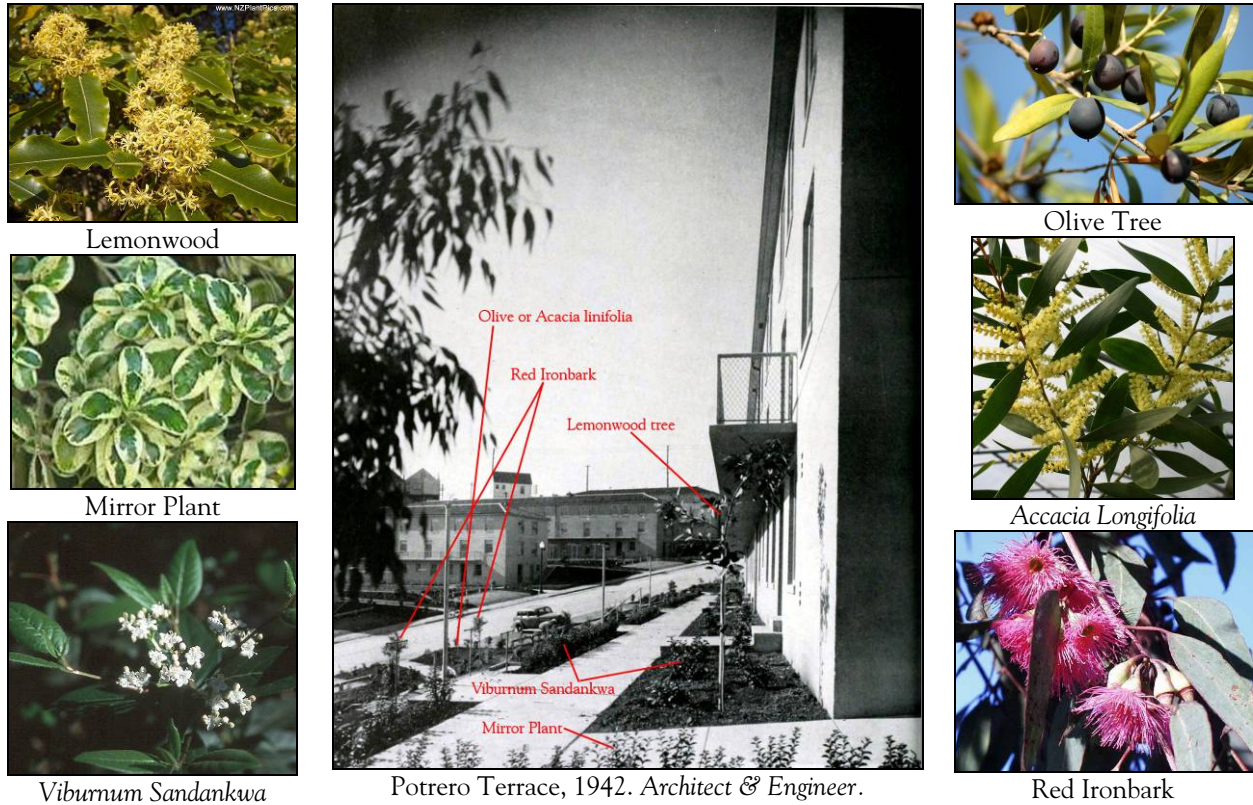
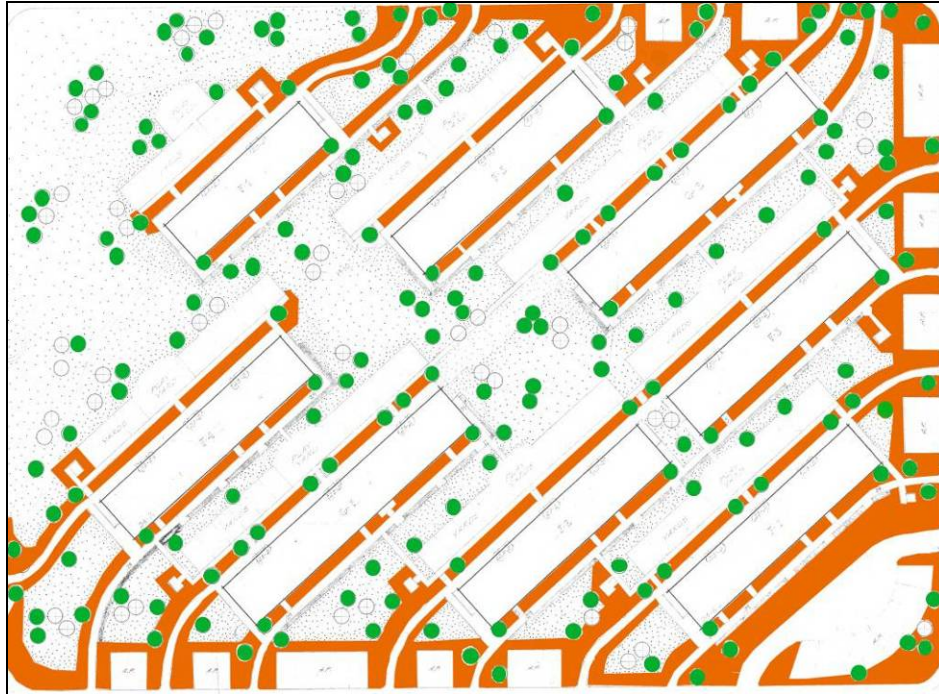


Fig. 2. Example of original Thomas Church planting scheme

DOUGLAS BAYLIS’S POTRERO ANNEX HOUSING PROJECT LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Little is known about the original landscape design for Potrero Annex. A single sheet of the original plans has survived, and it does not include a key to the types of trees, plants, and bushes. No historic photos or maps were found. The existing evidence, however, indicates that Baylis designed an informal landscape fairly densely filled with trees. Hedges do not appear to have been part of his design. Particularly compared to Church’s adjacent design for Potrero Terrace, Baylis did not include significant fields of open space; the steep, narrow site of Potrero Annex likely made such a spatial design impossible. Carey & Co. did not find any historic photos to illustrate the Baylis landscape.

THE EXISTING LANDSCAPES



Figs. 3 & 4. Above: Thomas Church plan for trees and hedges, 1939. Trees are represented by green circles, and hedges are represented in orange. The white circles represent trees that were not contracted; whether or not some or all were planted is unclear. Below: An approximation of what is left of Church's planting scheme. Note: A number of trees have survived, but virtually none of the hedges have survived. This block at 26th and Connecticut Streets retains more integrity than most of the Potrero Terrace site. Plans courtesy of SFHA.



Fig. 5 Corner unit at 26th Street and Connecticut, shown in the historical photos in Fig. 1. A few shrubs remain, but all of the trees are gone, as is most of the ground cover and all of the hedges that were planted along the façade of the building. Photo by Carey & Co., May 31, 2011.



Figs. 5 & 6. The above photos are the Connecticut Street building featured in Fig. 2. The tree is the only element of Church's landscape that appears to have survived. Photos by Carey & Co., May 31, 2011.



Fig. 6. This is the view west up Connecticut Street featured in Fig. 2. Photo by Carey & Co., May 31, 2011.



Fig. 7. This photo shows the typical landscaping behind a building. While these were generally open spaces, hedges often lined them and trees were planted close to the buildings. Note that virtually no formal plantings remain. Photo by Carey & Co., May 31, 2011.



Fig. 8. Church's original designs show hedges lining the parking areas and pathways to buildings. Here stands one of the most landscaped parking areas; only one hedge remains. Photo by Carey & Co., May 31, 2011.

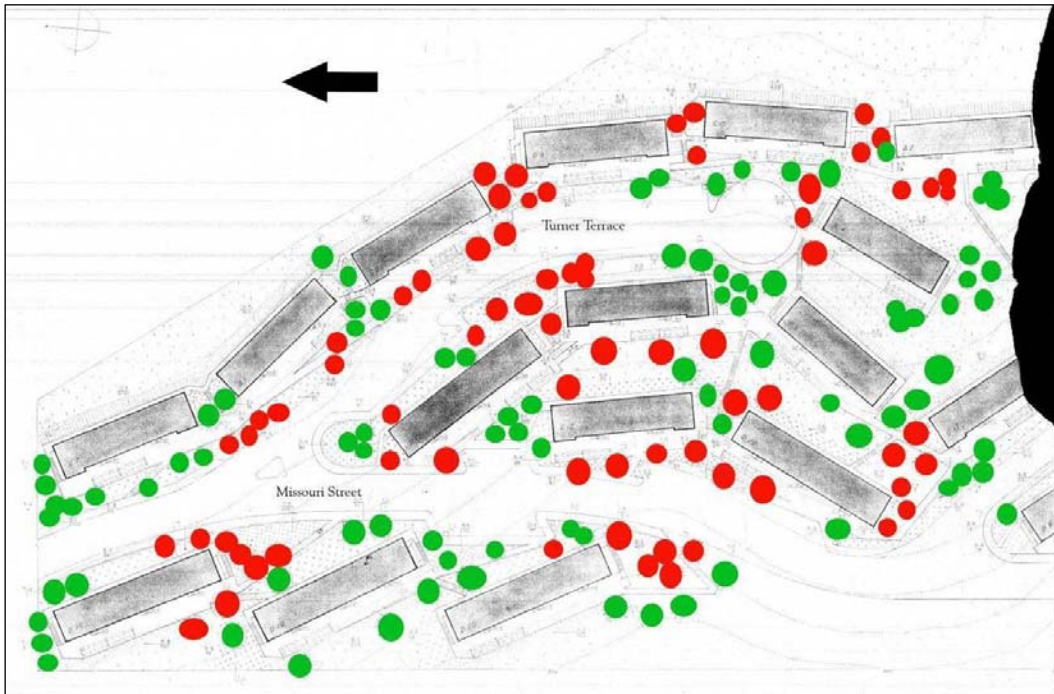


Fig. 9. The above drawing illustrates Douglas Baylis's original landscaping plan for Potrero Annex. The green circles indicate what remains of the tree planting scheme, while the red circles indicate what has disappeared. The green circles may be generous. Drawings courtesy of SFHA.



Fig. 10. While little original documentation of Baylis's design for the Potrero Annex remains, it clearly called for a more densely planted landscape. Some original trees still stand, as seen in the background. Photo by Carey & Co., May 31, 2011.



Fig. 11. Again, a few shrubs that likely date to or are in keeping with Baylis's design remain, but they now grow out of context. May 31, 2011.

CONCLUSION

The existing landscape designed by master architect Thomas Church for Potrero Terrace does not retain historical integrity, as there is too little remaining historic fabric to convey the original design's significance. The character defining features of the original plan, as evidenced by the drawings, include the use of a combination of trees, hedges, and ground cover to arrange space, to distinguish between public and private spaces, and to subdivide public areas into spaces for people to use. A number of trees still stand, though probably only about half of those originally planned for, and virtually none of the hedges and ground cover remains. No area captures the complete balance between the informal trees in public areas and formal hedges lining pathways from parking areas to buildings. Out of the seven qualities of integrity described by the National Park Service, the landscape retains its integrity of location and setting because the topography and architecture are still essentially the same. Otherwise, the landscape does not retain its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.

Similarly, the landscape the Douglas Baylis designed for Potrero Annex retains poor integrity. Although only a vague planting scheme remains of Baylis's original plans, it clearly shows a landscape filled with trees, softening the stark architecture and likely creating shade. Few of these trees remain. Like the Church landscape at Potrero Terrace, the Baylis landscape at Potrero Annex appears to retain integrity of location and setting, as the hillside setting and mid-century architecture remain largely unchanged. Integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, however, are poor.

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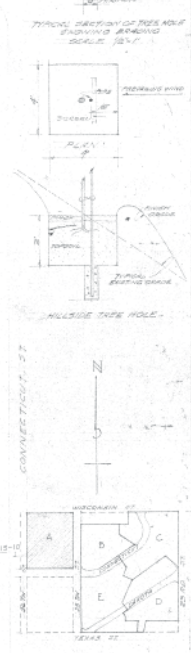
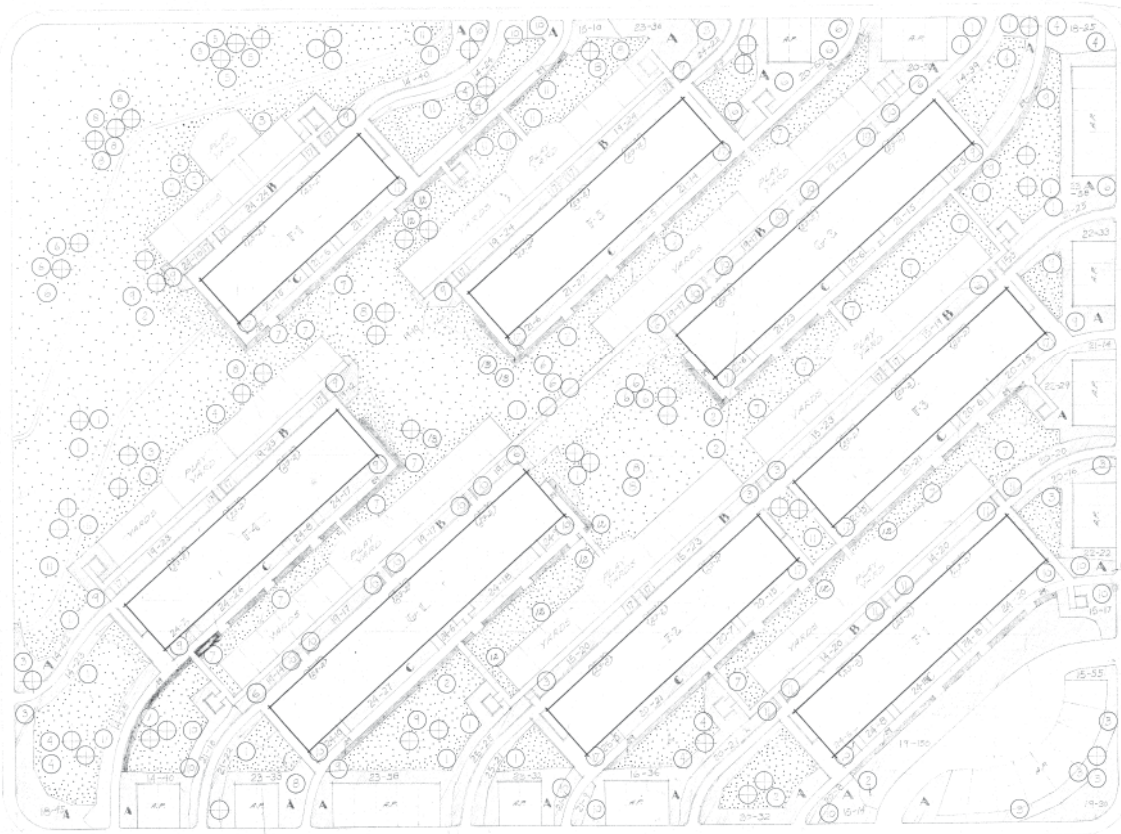
Appendix A
Potrero Terrace
Original Thomas Church Drawings

Potrero Terrace Housing Project & Potrero Annex
Landscape Design Analysis

by
Carey & Co., Inc.

NO.	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	QUANTITY	UNIT	PRICE
1	Grass	Grass	50	SQ. FT.	1.00
2	Flowers	Flowers	100	SQ. FT.	1.00
3	Shrub	Shrub	50	SQ. FT.	1.00
4	Tree	Tree	10	SQ. FT.	1.00
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NO.	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	QUANTITY	UNIT	PRICE
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LEGEND

- PRIMARY AREAS
- FIELD AREAS
- SECONDARY AREAS
- TREES
- AUTO
- PLANTING

APPROVED:

POTRERO
LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT
CAL. 1-5
FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
ARCHITECT: ...

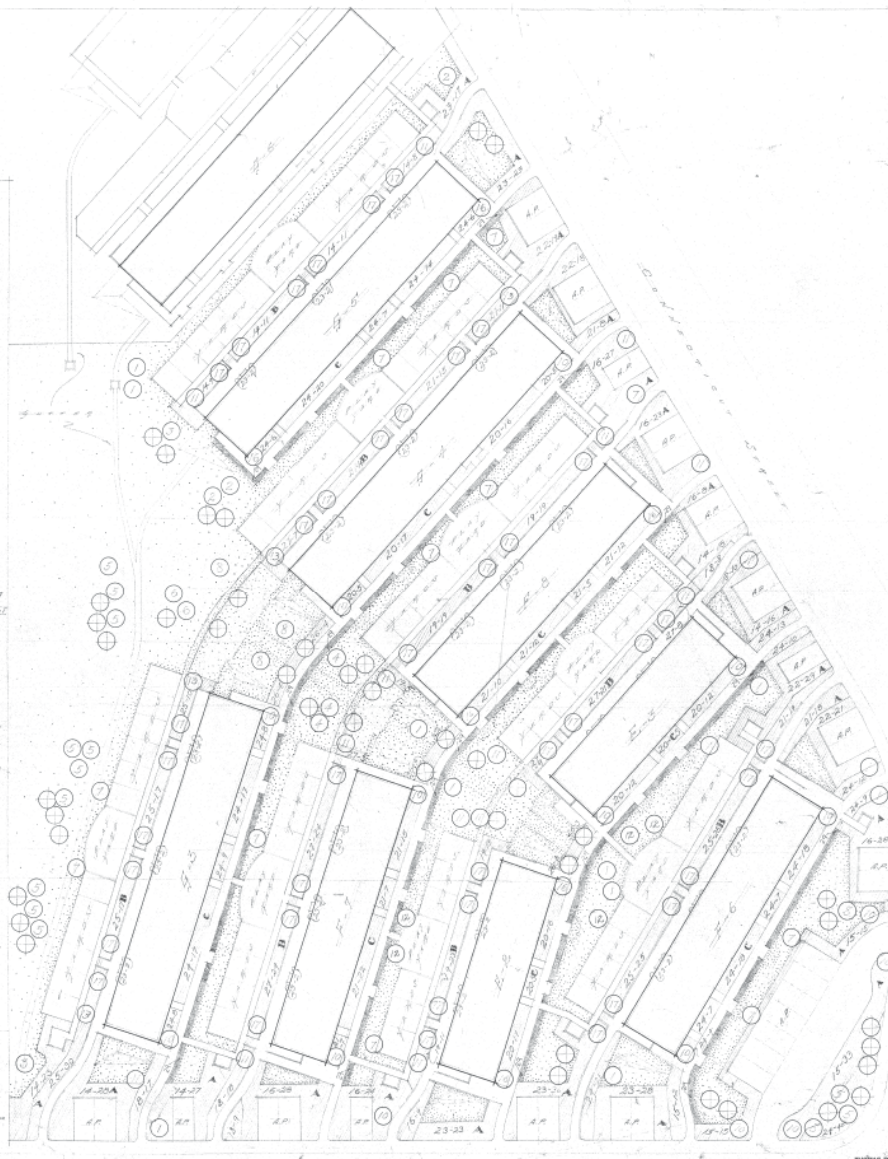
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LEGEND

PRIMARY
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 FIELD
 TREE
 S.P. AUTO
 PARKING AREA
 NOT TO CONSTRUCT

NOTE

FIRST NO. OF PLANTS IS KEY NO.
 SECOND NO. IS QUANTITY
 WHEN ONLY ONE NUMBER APPEARS
 IT IS THE KEY NUMBER FOR
 ONE PLANT.



REVIEWED BY THE
 CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 OCT 21 1959
APPROVED:
 [Signature]

POTERO
 LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT
 CAL. 118
 FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
 CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 WALTER H. HAYES ASSOCIATE
 CIVIL ENGINEER, JR.
 1500 CALIFORNIA STREET
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

DRAWN BY
 [Signature]
 CHECKED BY
 [Signature]

THOMAS D. CHURCH
 ARCHITECT

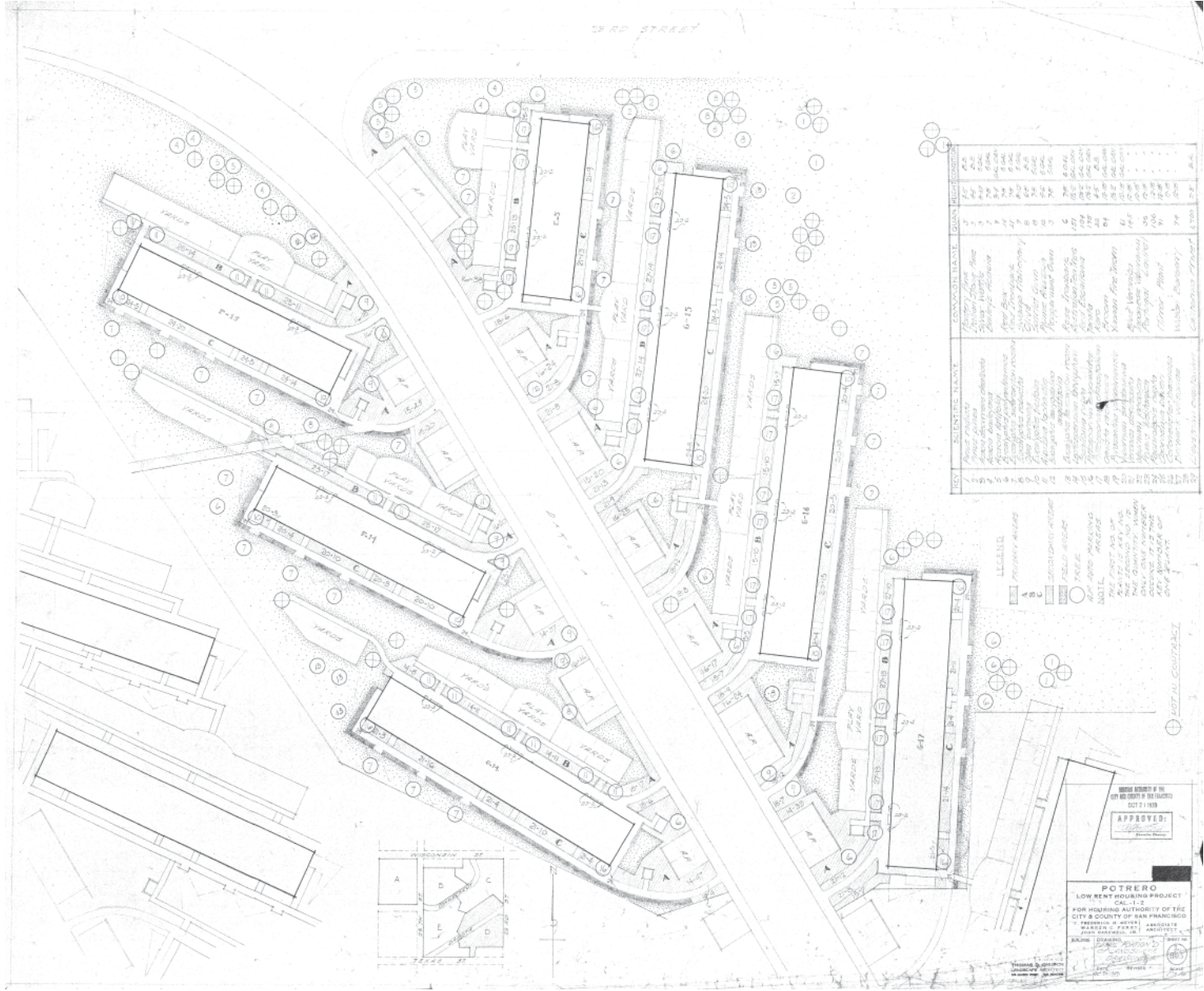


TREE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	COAS. HEIGHT
1	Quercus agrifolia	California Oak	40'
2	Quercus laevis	Live Oak	40'
3	Quercus lobata	Red Oak	40'
4	Quercus parviflora	White Oak	40'
5	Quercus agrifolia	California Oak	40'
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LEGEND:
 OCCUPANCY AREAS
 PUBLIC AREAS
 TREE
 SHRUB
 AP

100% COMPLETE IN THE
 CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 OCT 21 1958
 APPROVED:
 [Signature]

POTRERO
 LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT
 CALL 2-2
 FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
 CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 PROJECT'S ARCHITECT ASSOCIATE
 ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATE
 JOHN BARNETT, INC.
 ARCHITECT



3RD STREET

LOT	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT
1	<i>Abies balsamea</i>	Blue Spruce	1000
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REVIEWED BY THE
 CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 2017.11.16.18
APPROVED:
 [Signature]
POTRERO
 LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT
 CAL-1-2
 FOR REVIEW AUTHORITY OF THE
 CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
 PREPARED BY: [Firm Name]
 ARCHITECTS
 1000 MARKET STREET, SUITE 100
 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102
 PHONE: 415.774.1111
 WWW: WWW.POTREROARCHITECTS.COM



NOTE:
1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN FEET AND INCHES.
2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO FACE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
3. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
4. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
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10. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

LEGEND
SYMBOLS AND MEANS

UNIT NO.	TYPE	AREA (SQ. FT.)	PRICE (DOLLARS)
1	1-BED	450	150
2	1-BED	450	150
3	1-BED	450	150
4	1-BED	450	150
5	1-BED	450	150
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88	1-BED	450	150
89	1-BED	450	150
90	1-BED	450	150
91	1-BED	450	150
92	1-BED	450	150
93	1-BED	450	150
94	1-BED	450	150
95	1-BED	450	150
96	1-BED	450	150
97	1-BED	450	150
98	1-BED	450	150
99	1-BED	450	150
100	1-BED	450	150

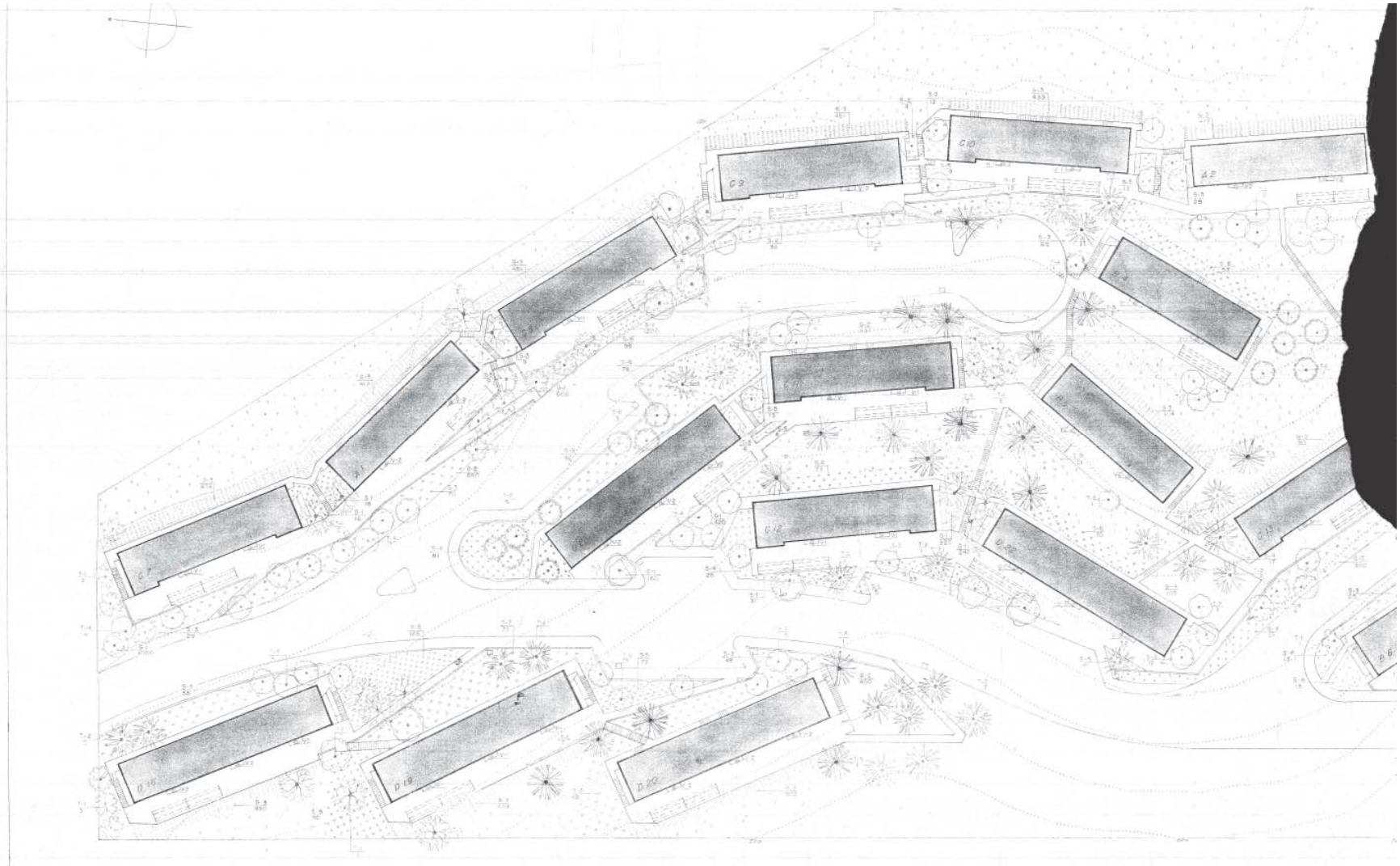
APPROVED

BOTERO
LOW-RENT HOUSING PROJECT
FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY OF
CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ON MAY 11, 1966

Appendix B
Potrero Annex
Original Douglas Baylis Drawings

Potrero Terrace Housing Project & Potrero Annex
Landscape Design Analysis

by
Carey & Co., Inc.





CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

June 3, 2011

Matt Weintraub
Preservation Planner
Planning Department
1650 Mission St, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex

Dear Matt,

The following comments address questions you raised concerning Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex. Carey & Co. prepared HRERs for these properties in 2001, and recently completed a Landscape Integrity Analysis. One of your questions relates to new information brought to light in a book entitled "San Francisco's Potrero Hill," indicating that Kevin Starr, Allen Ginsberg, O.J. Simpson and Danny Glover all lived in the complex. You ask about making a Criterion B context statement. The other question relates to the Criterion C arguments in our 2001 reports.

Unfortunately, the author of the 2001 reports no longer works here, but we do have some thoughts.

In terms of Criterion B, as you know, the property needs to be associated with the "productive life of the individual in the field in which (s)he achieved significance." So, if we can prove that Howl was written here, or if Ginsberg lived here during the Howl trial, there is a good case. If he merely typed the manuscript here, I'm not sure. He may have also produced other important poems during this residency; research would need to be done to clarify this. For the other individuals, one would need to look at when in their careers they lived at Potrero Terrace. Given modifications to the buildings and landscape, even if a Criterion B argument is successful, integrity may be compromised – the individuals might not necessarily recognize the place where they once lived.

For the Criterion C discussions, a strong case can be made for Potrero Terrace, less so for the Annex - it was constructed 10 years later and designed by lesser known architects. Either way, lack of integrity may lead to a finding of non-significance. Windows, balconies, doors and landscape alterations significantly and adversely impact integrity.

I would be happy to discuss this with you if you like.

Sincerely,

Nancy Goldenberg
Principal
Carey & Co., Inc.