

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Atchison Village Defense Housing Project, Cal. 4171-X

other names/site number Atchison Village Mutual Homes Corporation

2. Location

street & number 7 blocks bound by Macdonald Ave to the north, Ohio St to the south, First St to the east and Garrard Blvd to the west not for publication

city or town Richmond vicinity

state California code CA county Contra Costa code 013 Zip code 94801

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Stephen D. Mikesco, D-HPO 4/14/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 5/30/03

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
163	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
164	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

LANDSCAPE: Park

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

LANDSCAPE: Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY VERNACULAR

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: vinyl over original redwood weatherboard

roof ASPHALT: shingles

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark 'x' in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1941-1950

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Warnecke, Carl I., Architect

Hass, Andrew T., Associate Architect (continued)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 30.1696

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	10	555200	4198560
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	10	555600	4198560

3	10	555600	4198080
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	10	555060	4198240

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kimberly Butt/Preservation Specialist

organization Carey & Co. Inc. date March 1, 2002

street & number 460 Bush St. telephone 415.773.0773

City or town San Francisco state CA Zip code 94108

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Atchison Village Mutual Homes Corporation, Rebecca Cerda, President

street & number Collins and Curry Streets telephone (510) 234-9054

City or town Richmond state California Zip code 94801

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Contra Costa County, California

Narrative Description (continued)

Summary

The former Atchison Village Defense Housing Project, presently known as Atchison Village Mutual Homes Corporation, consists of 162 separate buildings comprising 450 dwellings units in addition to the Community Building and the "playing field". The community sits on a flat 30 acre site in central Richmond, California, between an industrial region, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad yard, and low income housing. This mid-twentieth century vernacular housing project reflects the typical construction and design practices of the United States Housing Authority (USHA) pre-World War II. The building assemblies include concrete foundations, light-weight wood stud frames, and vinyl over weatherboard siding.

All of Atchison Village's significant features, including the 162 domestic structures of five different designs, the Community Building and the four-acre park, maintain a high degree of their historic appearance. The deed to the defense housing project transferred in 1957 from the Federal Housing Administration to the non-profit Atchison Village Mutual Homes Corporation. The corporation supports strict development restrictions regarding any changes made to the community. Thereby the integrity of the project has been strenuously guarded.

Original Layout

On October 16, 1941, the Federal Works Agency (FWA) issued an order to proceed for National Defense Project Cal. 4171-X. Just prior to this date, John M. Carmody, then Federal Works Administrator, visited Richmond and confirmed the Richmond Housing Authority's selection of the site for Atchison Village.¹ The chosen property is bound to the north by Macdonald Avenue from First Street to Garrard Boulevard, and to the south by Ohio Street. This land worked well for the new housing development not only for its level grade, but also for its close proximity to the Kaiser shipyards, about two miles to the south, and to the commercial downtown to the east. Similar to other federal housing projects to be built in Richmond, the site was in a lowland industrial area, where no clear neighborhood pattern had been established. The property was purchased from the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, hence the name "Atchison Village" in honor of the railroad's former president.

The original defense housing plans, provided by the Mutual Homes Corporation, reveal that the layout of the village was an irregular four-sided plan with a curved base that fit within the constraints

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Narrative Description (continued)

of the purchased property. Four roads bisected the site into seven sections established by the architects, and allowed for entry from all directions except from the south. Curry and Collins Streets, transversing the site from east to west, arc to the south mid-way through the property, diverging from the typical orthogonal grid of Richmond. Curry Street aligns with the established angle of Garrard Boulevard and the railroad tracks, and Collins Street mirrors this angle, forming the centrally located triangular playing field.

Serving as a visual mark of entry from the north, the one-and-one-half-story Community Building, framed by the fork in the roads, stands on the northern tip of the playing field. The housing structures are dispersed throughout the site on meandering, tree lined roads. The majority of the soft-tone buildings face the 50-foot-wide streets. Several units, however, align to form grassy courtyards that are themselves oriented towards the road.

Structures cover only 15.4 percent of the land. Therefore, the village provides an ample amount of green space for both public and private use. Not only do courtyards grace the public fronts of the project, but also smaller, private back and side yards adjoin each dwelling. At a minimum, each building retains a 15-foot setback from the interior line of the sidewalk and at least a 20-foot distance from neighboring structures.

The open space has allowed for a significant amount of project landscaping. Original landscaping consisted of lawns and trees including Monterey pines, Australian black acacias, and weeping willows. Today in addition to these plantings, now matured, are resident-planted shrubs and flowering plants at porches and building perimeters.

The original plans provided ample parking, for the car was quickly becoming the primary means of transportation. Niches were carved out of the street boundaries for head-in parking, and several small lots dot the area between structures so as not to be visible from the road. At its completion, each unit was allotted one parking stall.

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Narrative Description (continued)

Contributing Site Features***Playing Field***

A four acre park, originally referred to as the "playing field", serves as the central element of the site. Triangular in plan, this contributing site began simply as a large green space lined with trees. On August 21, 1957, the Public Housing Administration turned over the title for the park to the City of Richmond.² The area remains a public park, but has undergone a few alterations. The city formed a baseball diamond in the southeast corner and placed children's playground equipment enclosed by a chain link fence in the northeastern segment just south of the Community Building.

Contributing Buildings***Community Building***

Situated on the most prominent central location of the site, the Community Building served many functions. It housed a social room, crafts room, general, managerial and consultation offices, a repair shop, and storage rooms. Generally "L"-shaped in plan, the building has a 138' by 106' footprint and contains approximately 7,000 square feet. Built at grade, the structure sits on a concrete foundation. The central, pitched shingled roof over the Social Room rises up one-and-one-half stories to a height of 22 feet, while the rest of the structure remains one story with a low-pitched composite roof standing at only 11 feet. Redwood, cove rustic wood siding historically clad the structure, punctuated by wood double-hung sash windows. Typical features include wood sash windows aligned in horizontal rows, wood paneled doors, some with glass insets, wood boxed chimneys, corner boards, and linear roof lines accented with wood cornices and a two-foot overhang.

The north elevation is the primary facade. It serves as the entrance both to the building, as well as to the village. Although the structure is proportionally asymmetrical, the covered, recessed entrance stands in the center of the facade. The central portion of the building sits two feet above grade, requiring three concrete steps for access to the scored concrete entrance porch. Two vertical side lights flank the double, wooden, two-lite entry doors, topped by five single-lite transom windows. All of the double-hung windows on this facade begin at five feet above grade and ascend to a height of ten feet. Not one window stands alone, as wooden trim encompasses sets of at least two. This grouping reads as horizontal window banding consistent with the horizontal wood siding and low linear lines of the eaves.

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Narrative Description (continued)

The protruding volume above the Social Room rises up five feet above the typical ceiling height throughout the building. This height allows for a row of six clerestory windows to provide natural diffused light into the space below. Two more clerestory windows punctuate the raised volume on the western side of the north facade. These windows allow light into the enclosed office restrooms below. Rising up from both the east and west ends of the pitched roof are two chimneys clad in cove rustic siding. A centered roof ventilator caps the building.

The flanking Repair Shop at the west end sits on grade, recessed from the public areas of building, while maintaining the horizontal lines of the facade. The windows sit at the same heights, and the wood cornice serves to unite the entire lower level of the north facade. On the far east corner of the north elevation a partial-height wall historically obscured the kitchen service entrance. This porch is now fully enclosed.

The south facade is similar to the north, but is quite clearly a less important elevation. Unlike on the north side, the lower cornice on the south is broken by the elevated central mass. Six 11-foot window sections with 10 lites each accent this expanse of wall. To the west of these windows a door with two window panes originally provided a service entrance, and five double hung windows in groups of two and three provided natural light to the public restrooms. Further west only two windows penetrate the south wall of the store room. A porch, now enclosed, initially carved out the southeastern corner of the building under the continuous roof overhang. The same type of wood double doors as at the main entry, with glass insets and a three-lite transom above, graced the now hidden south wall of the scored concrete porch.

The original side porch also affected the east elevation of the structure. Six-by-six posts, between which a wooden railing was located, framed the recessed veranda. Three more concrete steps led up to a door configuration exactly like the one at the north entrance, including the flanking windows. To the south of the porch an extant grouping of five wood-sash windows at the standard height pierce the wall of the repair shop and stock room. To the north, three double-hung windows provide light to the former crafts room. At the northeastern corner, the covered service entrance to the kitchen was initially concealed by a partial height gate, but today solid walls form this corner.

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Narrative Description (continued)

At the west elevation, two sets of double doors are centered in a group of six double-hung windows. The only other fenestration on this elevation is a row of seven wood-sash windows at the end. Service parking flanks only this side of the building.

The Social Room, also known as the auditorium, acts as the primary space within the plan. The rectilinear room originally filled the rear of the building, with an area of almost 1,800 square feet that could be divided through the center by an accordion door. An exterior covered porch could be accessed by the double doors on the east wall of the auditorium. The rooms to the front of the building, north of the Social Room and east of the main entrance, were programmed for use, from west to east, as a store room, crafts room, kitchen, service entrance, and restroom. Another storage area fit between the service entry and the east porch. To the west of the small entry lobby are offices projecting north beyond the entrance porch. Both an exterior door from the porch and an interior door from the lobby access the office area, including a supply closet and both men's and women's restrooms. The door at the lobby's southwest corner connects to a 27-foot-long hall accessing the two large public restrooms and a rear exit. Large open spaces, programmed as a repair shop, stock room, paint store, and a small shop restroom, occupy the building's westernmost portion.

The Community Building maintains its primary proportions and most of its significant features. However, a few alterations were made in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including the enclosure of the southeastern porch and the northeastern service entry.³ At this time, the redwood siding was covered with a stucco finish, except for the north, east, and west clerestory walls, which were covered with vinyl siding in the past decade. Also, a small paint closet now covers the south service entrance, and a one-car garage sits on the southwest corner in the service yard. For security reasons, a chain link fence now surrounds the entire building and its adjacent parking lot.

The interior configuration and room functions remain essentially the same. The crafts room, however, has been converted into the credit union office, which has also taken over some of the auditorium space. Finishes also are essentially intact.

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Narrative Description (continued)

Residential Buildings

Atchison Village includes five different residential building types. Much of their design stems directly from the USHA guidelines and Lanham Act conditions including, the low average cost of \$3,300 per dwelling unit, the efficient use of space planning, and a standard means of production by using similar parts and materials throughout the project. They feature shared characteristics that unify the district. Historically, one-by-ten cove rustic redwood siding, with corner boards at the edges, clad each dwelling.⁴ The siding colors on each structure adhered to a simple palette of light blue, yellow, beige, gray and white. The structures maintain a shingled roof with a pitch of 5:12, and present exposed rafters at the eaves. Every unit's front and rear entrances display covered concrete porches raised one foot off grade. Four-by-four posts support the awnings and provide a frame for wood side railings. Each residence is built on a continuous concrete foundation with narrow crawl spaces beneath.⁵

The elevations are simple, with no ornament, revealing only the buildings' necessary functions. The doors are wood, with a one-foot-high inset panel below four feet of window, comprising two stacked lites. The front and back doors correspond in type, yet the back doors fill a frame of only two-and-one-half feet wide, whereas the front doors span three feet. Also, two varieties of double-hung, two-pane-wide, wood-sash windows were employed throughout the project. The first extends to a width of three-and-one-half feet, while the second only reaches three feet. Both maintain a height of five feet. Single-pane-wide, double-hung, four-foot-by-two-foot windows occur in some locations.

All residential structures employ the same interior finishes. One-inch tongue-and-groove stained wood flooring covers the bedrooms, living rooms, separate dining spaces, halls, stairs, and "yard stations" or exterior maintenance closets. The bathrooms, kitchens, and utility closets feature linoleum over 3/8-inch plywood flooring. Gypsum lath and plaster were used to coat the majority of interior walls and ceilings. Two-by-four studs at 16-inches-on-center frame the walls, with sound insulation dressing both sides of the walls between units. All the trim consists of stained wood. A two-and-5/8-inch wood board caps the bathroom wainscot.

Type 1

The first residential building type offers four one-bedroom units. One-story and linear in plan, this design measures 24 feet by 90 feet. This housing group represents 17, or roughly 10 percent, of the

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Narrative Description (continued)

dwelling structures within Atchison Village. The majority of the Type One buildings stretch lengthwise, north to south. Each interlocking "L"-shaped unit provides about 540 square feet of living space.

The front elevation is symmetrical. The two end unit entrances maintain their own porches, while the center units share a single veranda. Wood-sash, double-hung windows, typical of this project, penetrate the walls in an 'a b b a' rhythm. The end units mimic each other with each door flanked by windows. The middle units each have two windows beside the entry doors.

The side facades feature a window near the front and one at the back corner. A series of doors punctuates the rear facade in the same manner as the front. Although not noted on the original drawing, small aluminum awnings cover most rear porches. Smaller, two-foot-by-four-foot, double-hung windows penetrate the bathroom walls.

Remarkably, a window illuminates every room, except for the utility closets. Warnecke accomplished this by devising "L"-shaped, interlocking plans that provide maximum exterior wall space for each unit. All living rooms address the front, while the bedrooms may reside to the front or the rear of the plan, serving as the interconnection between two units. The combined dining and kitchen area always occupies the space behind and adjacent to the living room, and offers the only egress to the rear porch. The bathroom fits next to the kitchen and can be directly accessed from the bedroom or the living room, as stipulated by USHA standards.⁶ Each unit features a bedroom closet, hall closet, linen closet and a large utility closet.

Type 2

The second housing type provides two, two-bedroom units. Linear in plan, this design covers a footprint of 24 feet by 56 feet. Twenty-five, or 15 percent of buildings within the site take on this form. These units all face either the street or the surrounding structures, and lack a uniform angle. Almost square in plan, the units encompass about 672 square feet.

Four double-hung windows penetrate the symmetrical front facade. In the center, two frames sit 12 feet apart between the entry porches. The other two windows adjoin with the side window frames. Only two windows punctuate the two side facades. Each opening occurs at a corner, allowing an

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Narrative Description (continued)

expanse of wall between. The rear facade is also balanced. A corner window hangs to the outside of each back door. Two small bathroom windows and two standard windows fill the area between the porches.

The plan places the living room at the front, outside corner of each unit. From the living area every other space can be accessed directly. The combined kitchen and dining area contains the utility closet, in the back outside corner, and a door to the rear yard. Bedrooms occupy the building's center. In each unit, one bedroom sits to the front and the other to the back. The separation wall between the units jogs slightly to allow each bedroom to have a closet four feet wide. The compact bathroom falls between the kitchen and rear bedroom. The hall leading to the bathroom contains both a coat closet and a linen closet.

Type 3

The third type of residential building accounts for 34 percent of housing structures. This three-bedroom configuration appears 55 times in the community. Linear in plan, the building contains two reflected units that abut at the central bedroom wall. The perimeter measures 69 feet by 25 feet, and each unit offers about 860 square feet. This one-story building features a centered bay window on either the left or right end wall, depending on building orientation. In all cases that the building sits perpendicular to the road, the bay window faces the street.

Type three presents the only asymmetrical front facade of the residential buildings. In the center, two sets of two, three-foot wide windows hang four-and-one-half feet apart, flanked by a three-and-one-half foot wide window. Outside of one entry porch sits a large window that adjoins with the side frame, while the opposite end presents the same window not at the corner, but equidistant from the door and the edge of the building.

The side elevations differ. One facade simply presents a corner window. The opposite side centers the bay window on the wall. The protruding seven-foot high bay begins at one-foot off grade, fills an eight-foot-five inch wide space, and extends out two feet. Siding covers the bay to the height of the window sill. The central five-foot-seven-inch wide panel holds a four-lite fixed-sash wood window. The other two-and-one-half foot sides contain a two-lite double-hung wood window.

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Narrative Description (continued)

The rear elevation features symmetrical fenestration between the two kitchen doors. Two wider, central windows are flanked by two smaller windows. To the outside of the bay-window-unit's porch, one narrow double-hung window abuts the door. On the opposite end a standard window hangs centered between the kitchen door and the wood paneled "yard station" door.

The unit plans each have two bedrooms at the front next to the living room, and one at the rear adjacent to the bathroom. However, the living, kitchen, and dining layout differs slightly. One residence combines the living and dining rooms into one large area before the bay window, and access to the kitchen occurs through a door at the end of this space. The kitchen, as in other units, contains a utility closet and a door to the rear patio. The facing unit features a solitary living room and a combined kitchen and dining area connected to a utility closet. A "yard station", accessed from the exterior only, fills the space of the rear corner of this residence.

Type 4

Type Four provides four two-bedroom units in a two-story, linear arrangement that measures 62-feet-four inches by 24-and-one-half feet. This plan affords a per unit area of 764 square feet. The community includes 46 Type Four structures, which represent 28 percent of the total construction.

The symmetrical front elevation features two sloped awnings projecting five feet to cover the two sets of entry doors. On the first floor two groups of two windows hang two feet apart between the porches, while on the facade edges a standard window punctuates the wall. A corner window occurs directly above on each end of the second floor. Four additional windows create a horizontal band in the center of the second floor to complete the facade. The second floor windows are shorter than those on the first.

The two side elevations are identical. Both display only one window per floor, on the front edge. Many windows punctuate the rear elevation. Double-hung windows flank the two sets of two covered back doors. On the far left of the elevation stands a "yard station" door. Two small bathroom windows are centered above each awning, flanked by a total of four larger windows.

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Narrative Description (continued)

The plans offer a simple allocation of space. The stairs stand directly across from the front door and adjacent to the living area. A closet fits just under the stair. The combined kitchen and dining room sits to the back of the building with access through the living room. The kitchen has a back door and a utility closet. The second floor provides two bedrooms, one to the front and one to the back, and a bathroom located at the top of the stair.

Type 5

Rectilinear in plan, this two-story structure provides two, two-bedroom units, and measures 31-feet-four-inches by 24-feet-six-inches. The Type Five unit plan is the same as Type Four, and also contains 764 square feet of space. The 19 buildings of this variety equal roughly 12 percent of the total housing.

The front elevation presents a covered porch that unites the two front doors under one eleven-foot-wide awning. One large double-hung window rests on the edge of each wall at the first floor. Only two smaller bedroom windows punctuate the upper level of the elevation.

The two side facades are identical, with two shorter windows, eight feet apart, centered on the second floor, and one standard window at the front corner. The rear elevation contains two kitchen doors under one 13-foot awning. A standard window hangs to the outside of each door, with two small bathroom windows above. The "yard station" door on the right side completes the elevation.

The Type Five plan is one-half of building Type Four. The living rooms reside to the front of the unit, with the combined kitchen and dining area to the back. The stair stands directly across from the front door and ascends to the bathroom. The bedrooms sit on the second floor in the outside corners.

Integrity

Through the years the Atchison Village Mutual Homes Corporation established development regulations that serve to guide any changes to the community structures. Therefore, modifications have been minimal and strictly guarded. The most significant alterations to the buildings include the

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Narrative Description (continued)

addition of metal security bars over many of the windows and doors, and the installation of vinyl siding over the extant, historic redwood boards. The vinyl siding replicates the size, profile, and colors of the original cove rustic siding, and does not obscure any architectural features of the structures. Thereby, the integrity of the district was not damaged by the addition of the new siding. The original wood-encased chimneys have since been replaced with prefabricated insulated metal chimney flues. Regulations also allowed for storage sheds to be located on the back patios with a maximum coverage of 50 percent of the area, not to exceed 120 square feet in size, and for new fences or hedges, at a maximum height of six feet, to enclose back and side yards. The corporation permitted one unit to construct an accessible concrete ramp to the front entrance. The majority of original doors and windows remain intact.

A few alterations affect the entire village such as the addition of parking spaces, primarily located behind structures, to provide individual units with more than the original one allocated space. In 1992, the city of Richmond constructed a sound wall along the western edge of the village to dampen the noise from the recently expanded Garrard Avenue as part of the new Richmond Parkway project.⁷ This wall blocks access to the village from the western intersections of Garrard and Bissell Avenue to the north and Chanslor Avenue to the south. In conjunction with this project, Public Services also formed new cul-de-sacs at the road ends. In November of 1998 the city government introduced two street-wide gates, at the eastern Bissell Avenue and Chanslor Avenue entrances, as a crime reducing measure. Now only one entrance to Atchison Village remains available to the public.

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Narrative Description (continued)

Endnotes

1. "First Annual Report of the Richmond Housing Authority." (Richmond: Richmond Housing Authority, 1941), 10.
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Architect/Builder (continued)

Epp, Leo, Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

Atchison Village Defense Housing Project is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A because it represents an important effort by both the federal and local governments to provide low-cost family housing for workers involved in the defense shipbuilding industry during World War II. Just prior to and during the war, the Lanham Act of 1940 provided \$150 million to the Federal Works Administration, which built approximately 625,000 units of housing in conjunction with local authorities nationwide. Brigadier General Philip B. Fleming, then Federal Works Administrator, selected the Richmond Housing Authority to be the first authority in the country to manage a defense project. Atchison Village represents one of twenty public housing projects built in Richmond before and during World War II. Constructed in 1941 as Richmond's first public defense housing project, it is the only project funded by the Lanham Act extant in Richmond and one of the few in the nation that was not destroyed. Atchison Village has already been designated a Richmond "Historic Resource"¹ and has been listed as a "theme-related site" in conjunction with the Rosie the Riveter National Historic Park.²

Atchison Village should be considered at the national level of significance as it is a site within the Rosie the Riveter National Historic Park that was established through an act of the United States Congress and signed into being by President Bill Clinton on October 25, 2000.³ Being that Richmond presents a critical mass of extant structures that were solely built for and dedicated to the World War II home front effort, the National Park Service found the city to be the best location in the nation for a home front national park.⁴ Atchison Village not only plays an integral role in the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park, but also stands as a prime example of one of the only public defense housing projects remaining in the United States.

World War II Defense Housing in Richmond, California

Even before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the city of Richmond began to feel the effects of the war. In January 1941 the United States Federal government, in conjunction with Henry J. Kaiser, began

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construction on the first shipyard in the then semi-rural, small town of Richmond, selected for its deep-water ports and unoccupied land. The shipyards, as well as 55 other war related industries, attracted a massive influx of migrant workers, mostly from the southern and midwestern states. The Kaiser company brought almost 38,000 workers to their shipyards, while over 60,000 made their own way to the Bay.⁵ In April of 1940 only 23,000 people resided within the municipality, but by 1943 the population had increased to over 100,000.⁶ Richmond was completely unprepared to become a burgeoning metropolis. The city lacked both sufficient infrastructure and housing needed to support the immense population increases.

Logically, the city with “perhaps the greatest growth in population of any wartime center in the United States” would become quite prosperous.⁷ However, all the federally controlled defense industries were exempt from local taxation, which led Richmond into a steep decline of property tax revenues. The municipal government sought much-needed financial relief through Federal government programs. Under the Lanham Act the government authorized “payments in lieu of taxes” to cities requesting aid for specific wartime programs.⁸

The Lanham Act provided federal funding for vital temporary defense housing. As many American politicians of the time were concerned with the socialist implications of public housing, the Act stipulated involvement of local authorities in the management of these projects. The federal government also emphasized the impermanence of the housing units, as a means to appease local builders and developers. According to the Lanham Act, temporary war housing was to be removed within two years after the war ended. An exception was made for housing found necessary for the war effort demobilization.⁹

In early 1941 the Richmond Chamber of Commerce began developing plans for the creation of a local housing authority. The importance of forming an authority to safeguard local interests in the imminent urban growth and the maintenance of traditional housing patterns became increasingly evident with the development of the shipyards. With the *Richmond Independent* championing their cause, the City Council, by resolution, formed the Housing Authority of the City of Richmond on January 24, 1941, “to represent the community in carrying out the Federal Public Housing Administration programs for low-income families.”¹⁰

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The Richmond Housing Authority (RHA) completed three federally funded housing projects in their first year. By the end of World War II, Richmond would maintain the largest federal housing program in the nation. Agencies had constructed 21,000 housing units by 1943, which housed over 60 percent of Richmond's total population.¹¹ The funding for these various projects came not only from the Lanham Act, but also from the United States Maritime Commission, the Federal Public Housing Administration, and the Farm Security Administration.

The first project constructed in Richmond, Atchison Village, was financed through the Lanham Act defense funds. The Federal Works Administration complimented the Richmond Housing Authority by designating them the "Agent of the Federal Works Administrator" for the construction of the \$1,717,000 Atchison Village.¹² No other housing authority in the nation had yet been appointed to manage a defense project. The other two projects that year, Triangle Court and Nystrom Village, were constructed with United States Housing Authority funds.

The United States Housing Authority (USHA) hired Carl I. Warnecke to be the project architect and Andrew T. Hass to be the associate architect for the design of Atchison Village, or National Defense Project CAL 4171X. Both architects were well trained and highly respected in their field.¹³ Warnecke, the more renowned of the two, studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, and apprenticed under Bernard Maybeck after returning to California. Shortly after he died in 1971, a retrospective exhibition of his work showed in New York City.¹⁴

With suggestions from the Richmond officials, the Federal Works Administrator selected the 30-acre site to be purchased from the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. Warnecke and Hass finished the design of the village in September 1941. The housing structures were typical of the period and complied with the strict USHA defense housing standards. The Lanham Act itself limited designs by requiring that no more than \$3,500 be spent per unit. As discussed by Architectural Record, the most important aspect of defense housing design included economy: "economy of space planning; economy in the use of materials and units of equipment; [and] economy in time."¹⁵

The strength of this project lies in the development of the site itself and the relationships between the

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structures. The architects of Atchison Village drew from the principles of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement and New Town ideals. Resigning from the established grid pattern of Richmond, Warnecke cut diagonal and curved streets through the site that provided for a relationship to the railroad and the placement of a large park within the village. The program included a central Community Building that served to unify the project. The residential buildings are oriented in relation to each other, forming small courtyards from the spaces between.

On October 30, 1941, building permit #15777 was issued to the RHA for the construction of the 450-unit Atchison Village.¹⁶ Only 650 federally funded units were built for permanence in Richmond, including Atchison Village. The remaining public housing projects were constructed to be temporary and included "dormitories, demountables, and trailers."¹⁷ The typical housing construction and design qualities were very poor. A Fortune magazine journalist described that "huge barrack-like public-housing projects cover the mud flats between the harbor and the town."¹⁸ In general the projects were located on swampy flat-lands and provided unsanitary living conditions. Atchison Village provided a striking alternative to the typical housing situations found in Richmond. It soon came to be "Richmond's most coveted wartime housing project."¹⁹ This community was privileged to be sited on firm, dry land and to have ample green space, trees, and solid construction.

Atchison Village provided much needed housing for shipyard workers and their families. Some tenants sent their children to the nearby day care centers developed for the shipyards, the Maritime Child Development Center and the Ruth C. Powers Child Development Center, while they worked. When the residents were at home their individual yards and the large playing field provided them with places where their children could safely play. The community center in the village offered a location for neighbors to gather and have functions, a feature no other housing project could boast.

Even after the war had ended, the need for housing had not. This need led the government to postpone the destruction of projects to far beyond the original two year post-war deadline. Not until November of 1950, five years after the end of the war, did the government begin the process of "conveyance or disposal" of Atchison Village.²⁰ The City Council decided not to convert the project into low-income public housing in November 1954. Therefore, the city turned to the three means of disposal that were identified under the provisions of the Lanham Act. The first offered each building,

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at a fixed price, to a preference buyer, such as a veteran. The second sale plan presented the entire property to a group of veterans organized as a cooperative. The final sale plan issued bidding to anyone, but only after the first two plans had failed.²¹

While other housing projects were being razed, a group of Atchison Village residents formed a Mutual Homes Corporation. After sale plans one and two had both failed, the community was available to public purchase. In a hurried effort, the Corporation raised \$50,000 for the down payment and bought the Village from the government.

The fate of other Richmond housing projects was in peril, for it was deemed necessary that housing be removed as soon as the war was over.²² By 1953 all of the seventeen projects near the harbor were torn down, in accordance with the Lanham Act. Nystrom Village, built the same year as Atchison but only a quarter of the size, was converted into low-income public housing. Still extant, Nystrom Village illustrates a lower design quality, offering little public open space, and does not maintain the integrity of Atchison Village, demonstrating a greater amount of alterations. Triangle Court also was converted into low-income public housing, but the original structures have since been destroyed and new housing built in its place.

Atchison Village demonstrates a cohesive example of a World War II Home Front defense housing project. It stands as an important intact model of both federal and local government intervention in the defense effort. Nationally, most of these housing sites were built as temporary installations and were either modernized, altered, or leveled and redeveloped for other uses.²³ With the Mutual Homes Corporation remaining as the owner and manager of the community, their strict covenants have protected the site and maintained its integrity. Atchison Village is an integral part of the Richmond Home Front, and in their feasibility study the National Park Service found that "Richmond is significant for its Home Front story in the San Francisco Bay Area, on the Pacific Coast and nationally."²⁴

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Supplemental Information in Reference to the National Significance of the Nomination

In the Spring of 1998 Congressman George Miller directed the National Park Service to evaluate the national significance of the Rosie the Riveter Memorial, a monument to the working women of the Richmond World War II Home Front dedicated on October 14, 2000, as well as the associated extant historic structures and sites from World War II. After finding that Richmond's collection of historic structures and sites were nationally significant, the National Park Service recommended the establishment of a Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park. Congressman Miller and Senators Boxer and Feinstein introduced legislation authorizing the Park in March of 2000. After being established by an act of United States Congress the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park bill was signed into being by President Bill Clinton on October 25, 2000.

Congress created the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park to interpret the story of the World War II American Home Front. The Park consists of a collection of theme-related sites in Richmond, California that were associated with the industrial, governmental and citizen efforts during the war. The National Park Service has designated these theme-related sites, but does not own any of them as of yet. Atchison Village, Richmond Shipyard #3, S.S. Red Oak Victory, Maritime and Ruth C. Powers Child Development Centers, the Kaiser Permanente Field Hospital, the Oil House, Richmond Fire Station No. 67A, and the Ford Assembly Building (which will house the Park's Interpretive Center) are all included as sites of the Park as part of the legislation. The National Park Service, in consultation with the City of Richmond, is now working on the General Management Plan for the Park and will continue this process until August of 2004.

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Supplemental Information in Reference to the Social and Cultural History of Atchison Village Defense Housing Project

Summary

Atchison Village Defense Housing Project provided the first defense worker housing under the management of the Richmond Housing Authority (RHA). The RHA controlled not only the development and construction of this public project, but also the tenancy of the individual units. Atchison Village housed primarily middle-class, white, key defense workers during World War II. The residents came from many of the local industries involved in government defense contracts including the Kaiser shipyards and the Standard Oil refinery, as well as from City of Richmond agencies, such as the fire department. The integration of non-white tenants into Atchison Village began in 1953 with the relocation of residents from temporary public housing projects that were removed in accordance with Lanham Act provisions.

The Lanham Act secured funding for many of the public housing projects constructed in Richmond during the 1940s. Included in the legislation for housing were provisions for "any facility necessary for carrying on community life substantially expanded by the national-defense program," or "necessary to the health, safety, or welfare of persons engaged in national-defense activities."¹ This language allowed for the inclusion of community buildings, child care centers, and schools with most of the public housing projects. Both a community building and a park were included as part of the Atchison Village Defense Housing Project. In addition, federal funds supported the reconstruction of a public elementary school just blocks away from the project with a district that included Atchison's children.

Atchison Village provided a well constructed housing community for many of Richmond's defense workers. The 450-unit complex by no means fulfilled the extreme demand for housing during the war boom in Richmond, however it constitutes the beginning of the largest public housing development in the nation to be controlled by a single housing authority during World War II.² As one of two historic housing projects extant in Richmond today, Atchison Village exemplifies the design standards of the Federal Housing Authority and provides an opportunity to examine the lifestyle of a defense worker housing community.

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Housing Attainment

Richmond was in desperate need of housing by the time Atchison Village opened its doors to residents in 1942. The National Housing Authority had already exhausted its resources for placing workers into private sector housing, and therefore turned to public housing as an alternate solution.³ Administrated by the Richmond Housing Authority, the Tenant Management division began filling Atchison Village's units before construction was even complete.⁴

As the most coveted public housing complex in Richmond, the applicants for Atchison Village were numerous.⁵ "Because of their desirable features of permanent ... construction and of low-density design, the units in Atchison Village were in great demand."⁶ Personal and political connections served as the most expedient manner in which to obtain accommodations. "It was said that when election time came during the public housing era (1941-1956) candidates for City Council were vying to see who could place the most tenants in Atchison Village, and this, supposedly, was a mark of their political power."⁷ All residents interviewed for this nomination obtained housing through friends and contacts in the Richmond Housing Authority, and do not recall ever having filed a formal application. One prospective tenant was cautioned by a Housing Authority board member that "the Authority was really overwhelmed by applicants" and not to expect housing at Atchison Village.⁸ However, the applicant and his wife were placed in a unit on Collins Street by their political connection before the completion of the Village.

Atchison Village generally housed a middle-class, cohesive group of tenants.⁹ Don Hardison, an initial resident and architect at Kaiser Yard Three, retains that the first residents were "management personnel" and held position not only at the Kaiser Shipyards, but also at the City of Richmond and at Standard Oil. His neighbors included a fireman, Standard Oil supervisors, Kaiser foremen, and Kaiser superintendents. Only as more units were completed did Atchison Village begin to house more men and women "in the trades."¹⁰ Although Standard Oil supervisors would not initially seem to be directly related to the war industry, in fact Standard Oil, a major industry of Richmond, held contracts with the United States Government for war related products. John Trouton, a resident of the Village from 1942 to 1944, supervised the manufacturing of lube oil for U. S. submarines as part of his duties at Standard Oil.¹¹ City of Richmond employees were included in the residential pool because the Richmond Housing Authority, as an agency of the City, could aid other municipal divisions in hous-

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ing their new workers. The City was in great need of employees to help maintain social order in the burgeoning city, and no policy specifically excluded the RHA from placing municipal employees.¹²

The population of Atchison Village during the war changed frequently, as was typical of Richmond during this period. Residents, such as James McCloud, a Kaiser superintendent, were often transferred out of California by their respective companies.¹³ Although an average 140 tenants vacated the project per year, Atchison Village still provided fewer available units per year than any other war housing project in Richmond.¹⁴ Many residents moved to Atchison Village from other states such as Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri, due to the extensive Kaiser recruiting across the South and Midwest.¹⁵

Rent

Rent at the Village was similar to typical rents found throughout Richmond's public housing program. A study of Kaiser shipyard employees' information reveals that the average Richmond rent in 1944 was \$8.50 per week, or about \$34.00 per month, which amounts to an estimated 13% of the average worker's salary.¹⁶ In 1942, John and Bobbie Trouton rented a one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment in a four-plex at Atchison Village for \$28.00 a month, including utilities.¹⁷ During the post-war era of deciding the fate of Richmond's permanent projects, one city official cited concern about transferring Atchison Village into a low-rent housing project, because most of the tenants' incomes then exceeded the limits for low-rent housing.¹⁸ By 1957, just before the sale of Atchison Village from Richmond to the Mutual Homes Corporation, rents had increased to \$39.00 per month for a one-bedroom unit, \$43.50 per month for a two-bedroom unit, and \$47.00 per month for a three-bedroom unit.¹⁹

Other Facilities and Child Care

As part of the Lanham Act funding, which financed the construction of Atchison Village, up to three percent of the total cost of a project could fund a community facility. Section 201 of the Act "declared it to be the policy to provide means by which public work might be acquired, maintained, and operated." Many of Richmond's temporary war housing projects incorporated community facilities includ-

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

ing: auditoriums, community buildings, cafeterias, child care centers, commercial buildings, a firehouse, a post office, and schools. Atchison Village was provided with two inclusive facilities, the park and the Community Building.²⁰

The initial plans for the Community Building indicate several uses including: a crafts room, a social room, and a general office, all in the main wing, with a repair shop and stock room in the single-height western wing. The early residents interviewed did not recall using the Community Building much during their tenancy. This may have been due to their rigorous work schedules or to the Richmond Housing Authority's policy concerning community activity, in which the stated intent was to "have tenants take part in all general community activity rather than setting up a community within a community."²¹ After Atchison Village became a privately owned cooperative the Community Building use increased, maintaining its function as a meeting hall, it also incorporated a new Credit Union and at one time a Teen Center.

The triangular park, central to the project layout, was initially designated as a playground for the residents. After the sale of Atchison Village, the City of Richmond maintained ownership and care of the public park. Today the city park retains its primary use as a playing field for children's sports.

School authorities lobbied for the inclusion of new permanent schools in the federally funded public facility construction to ease the massive overcrowding. Lincoln Elementary School, originally built in 1912, served a district that encompassed Atchison Village. In 1943 the number of students so overwhelmed the small school that Lincoln was forced to offer multiple class sessions.²² The City of Richmond eventually secured financing and reconstructed the elementary school in 1949.²³ Located at 29 Sixth Street, the new school stood only six blocks away from the Village. By 1943 the Maritime Child Development Center on Florida Avenue and the Ruth C. Powers Child Development Center on Cutting were also available to mothers working at the Kaiser Shipyards. These centers, located about ten blocks away from Atchison Village, provided modern daycare facilities for children from ages two to six.

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Racial Segregation and Integration

The Richmond Housing Authority (RHA) kept a racially segregated public housing policy throughout the World War II, by separating racial occupancies by building and block. Although this action technically infringed on Federal policy, "the racial stigma toward the Negro was carried out in so subtle a manner that the violation of the Federal and State laws regarding non-discrimination in public housing was hard for the average person to detect."²⁴ The pattern of segregation by the Housing Authority essentially located White residents in areas north of Cutting Boulevard and east of the railroad. This section of Richmond contained already established neighborhoods built on high, solid ground. African American and minority residents lived in areas closer to the harbor near the shipyards, on boggy infilled land, in poorly built temporary projects.

The temporary housing projects which housed African Americans and other minorities were the first to be razed after the ending of the war in accordance with the Lanham Act. Law required the Richmond Housing Authority to relocate the displaced tenants to other public housing projects. Atchison Village remained an all-white community until 1953, when the placement of tenants from the demolished Canal, Terrace, and Harbor Gate projects forced integration into Richmond's remaining public projects.²⁵ Throughout the war years the RHA maintained a fixed ratio of project residents at 79 percent white and 19 percent African American, regardless of fluctuating turnover rates.²⁶

Atchison Village's population integrated slowly after World War II ended and the segregation policies were removed. The Mutual Homes Corporation formed by Atchison Village residents maintained no such discrimination policies for prospective buyers after its formation in 1957. Richmond City Council member Nathaniel Bates, an early African American tenant of Atchison Village who moved to the project from another Richmond Housing Authority project in 1956, recalls that by 1957, minorities made up approximately five percent of the total occupancy and that most of the tenants were blue collar workers.²⁷

Conclusion

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Atchison Village has been an occupied, active community since before the completion of its construction in 1942. As the first housing development overseen by the Richmond Housing Authority, it demonstrated the municipality's capability to successfully produce a well designed, viable, and affordable defense housing project. During its period of significance the community housed white, middle-class families of various sizes working in the Richmond defense industries, typically at management levels. The policies enacted by the Richmond Housing Authority retained Atchison Village as a segregated all-white community throughout the entire war period. The project also offered facilities for social interaction such as the Community Building, the park and the collective courtyards formed by building layouts. Atchison's children were within walking distance of a new public elementary school and some were eligible for government funded early childcare at either the Maritime or Ruth C. Powers Child Development Centers. Although the housing development no longer remains public, it still maintains an identity as a cohesive community. The Mutual Homes Corporation, that now owns the project, sustains rigorous policies to keep the homes affordable and the community's integrity intact, thereby providing a formidable example of Richmond's defense worker housing history.

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The following sequence of metes and bounds is from the property deed written on February 26, 1957:

Beginning at a concrete monument in the point of intersection of the southerly line of Macdonald Avenue (80 feet wide) and southeasterly line of Garrard Boulevard (80 feet wide); thence along the southeasterly line of Garrard Boulevard, South 42 degrees 26 minutes West, 841.79 feet to its intersection with the center line of Chanslor Avenue; thence southeasterly and easterly along the said center line of Chanslor Avenue along a curve to the right with a radius of 436.00 feet, from a tangent that bears South 47E 34' east and through a central angle of 17E 36' 22" a distance of 133.98 feet to a curve to the left with a radius of 1097 feet, from a tangent that bears South 29E 57' 38" East; thence along said curve to the left through a central angle of 46E 26' 49" an arc distance of 889.29 feet; thence radially South 13E 35' 33" West a distance of 113.24 feet to a point; thence South 0E 02' 30" East a distance of 120.00 feet to a point; thence North 89E 57' 30" East a distance of 900.00 feet to a concrete monument; thence (crossing Chanslor and Bissell Avenues) North 00 degrees 28 minutes East 1497.54 feet to a concrete monument in the Southerly line of Macdonald Avenue; thence along said line due West 1087.96 feet to the point or place of beginning, being a portion of Lot 43, Rancho San Pablo.

Boundary Justification

The described boundary encompasses all of the buildings included in the Atchison Village Defense Housing Project and the park.

END

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Additional Documentation

A. Owner's letter of approval

B. USGS Map (Richmond Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series)

C. Site Plan

D. Diagrammatic Floor Plans of Residential Building Types 1-5

E. Existing Conditions Photographs (1-9)

F. Historic Photograph (10)

G. Index to Photographs:

Photographs #1-9 submitted with this nomination were taken by Kimberly Butt, on January 10, 2002, and the negatives reside at the office of Carey & Co, 460 Bush, San Francisco, CA.

1. View of the village entrance facing south.
2. View of the north facade of the Community Building facing south.
3. Photo of the Playing Field from Collins Street looking southwest.
4. Chanslor Avenue streetscape looking east.
5. Courtyard view on Bissell Avenue facing north.
6. Facade of "Building Type 1" on Collins Street looking northeast.
7. View of "Building Types 2 and 3" on Follette Street looking northeast.

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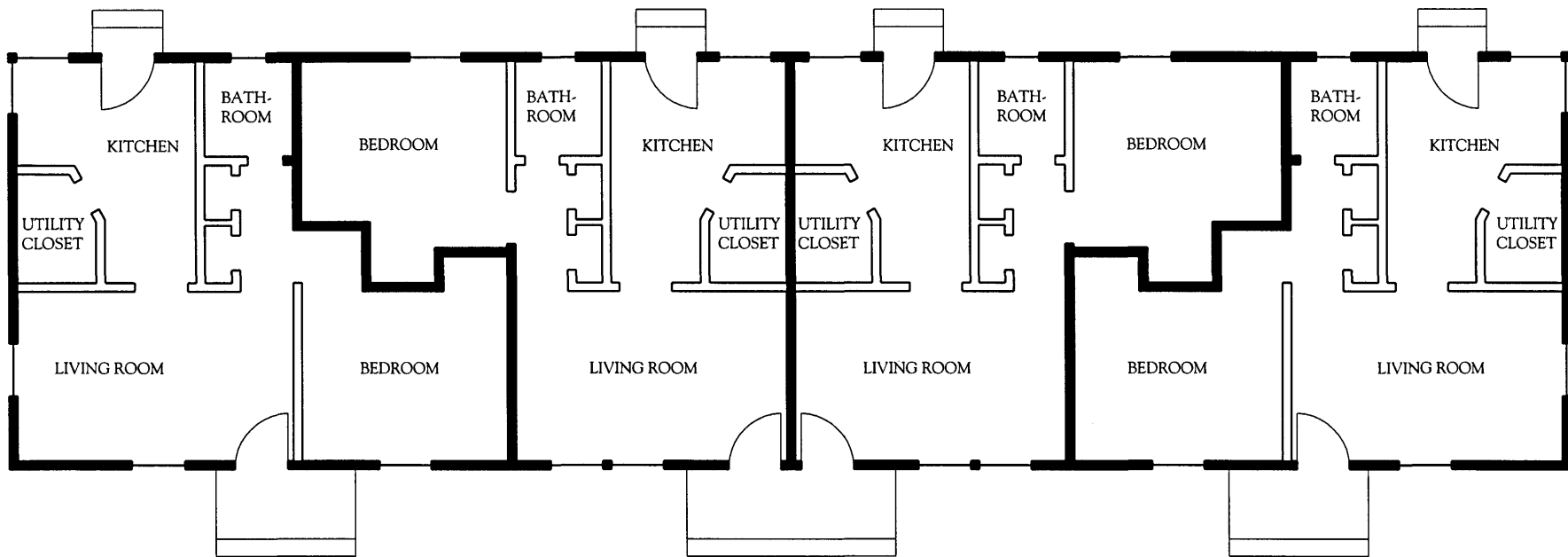
Section number _____ Page 36

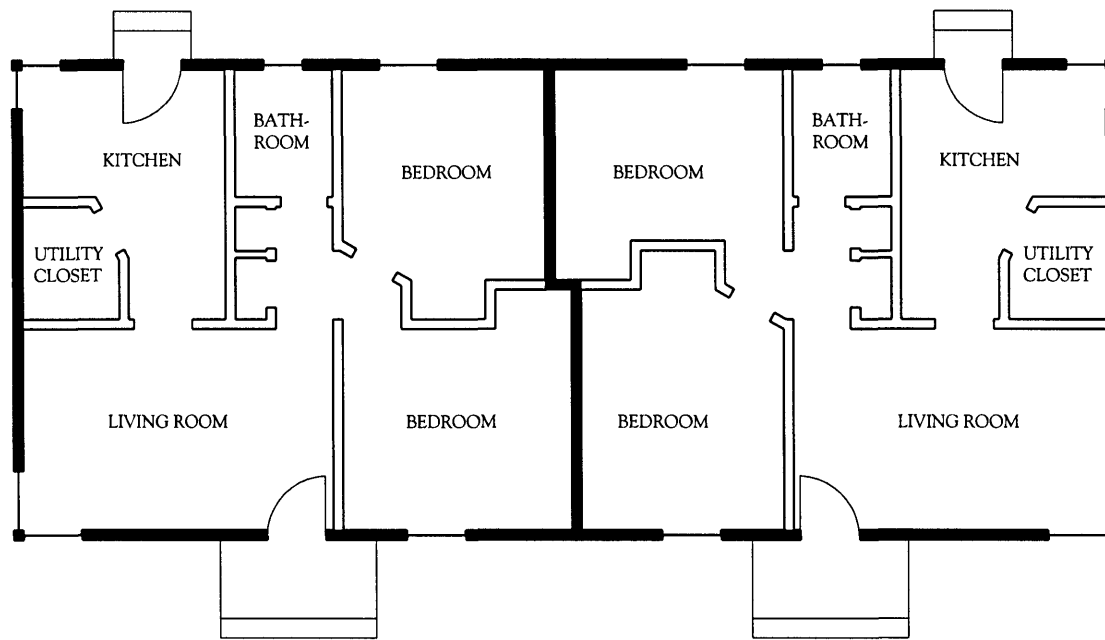
Atchison Village Defense Housing Project
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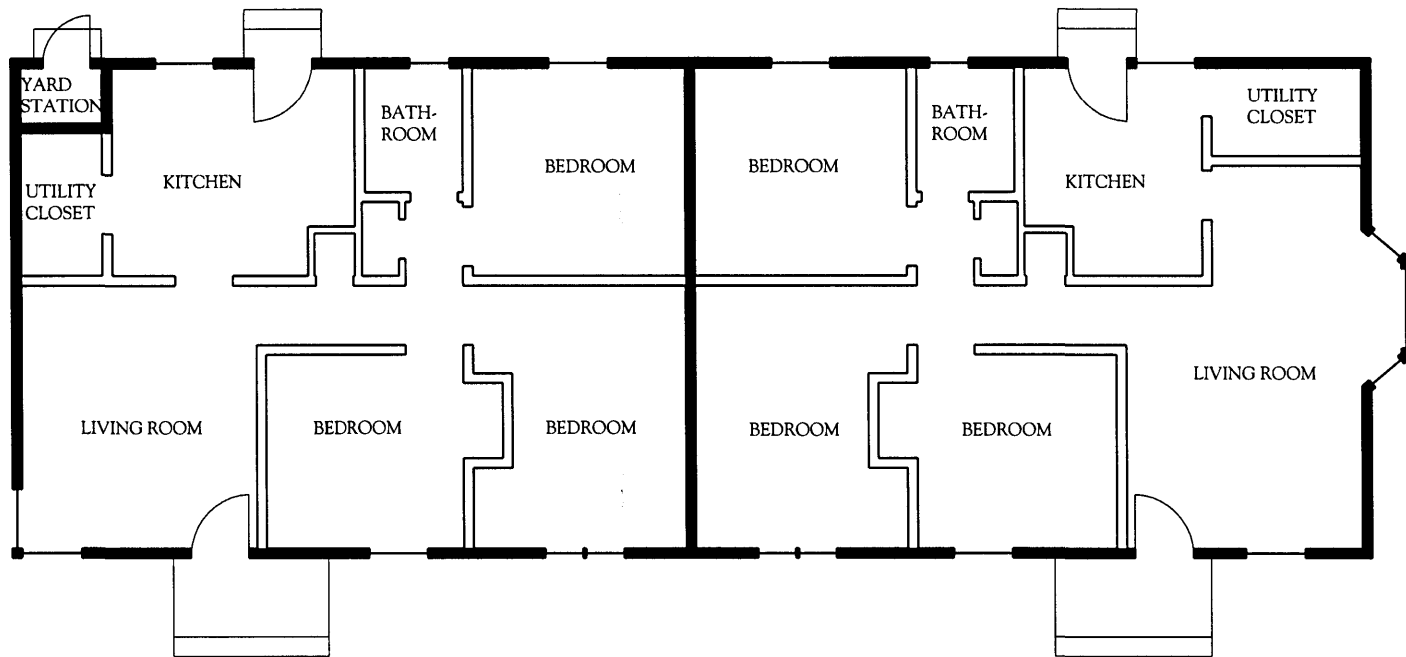
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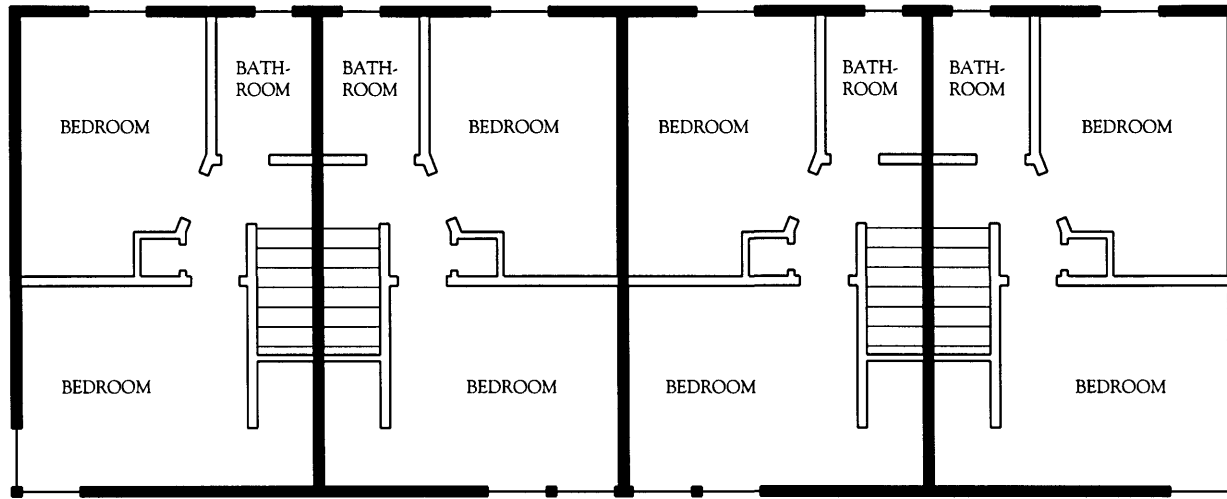
8. Front view of "Building Type 4" on Chanslor Avenue facing northeast.
9. View of "Building Type 5" on Collins Street facing northwest.
10. Historic view of the north facade of the Community Building facing south. The photographer and date are unknown. The original photograph resides in the Richmond Room of the Richmond Public Library.
11. Historic photo of the Garrard Blvd streetscape just after project completion, c. 1941. The photographer is unknown. The original image resides in the First Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Richmond located at the Richmond Museum of History.

END.

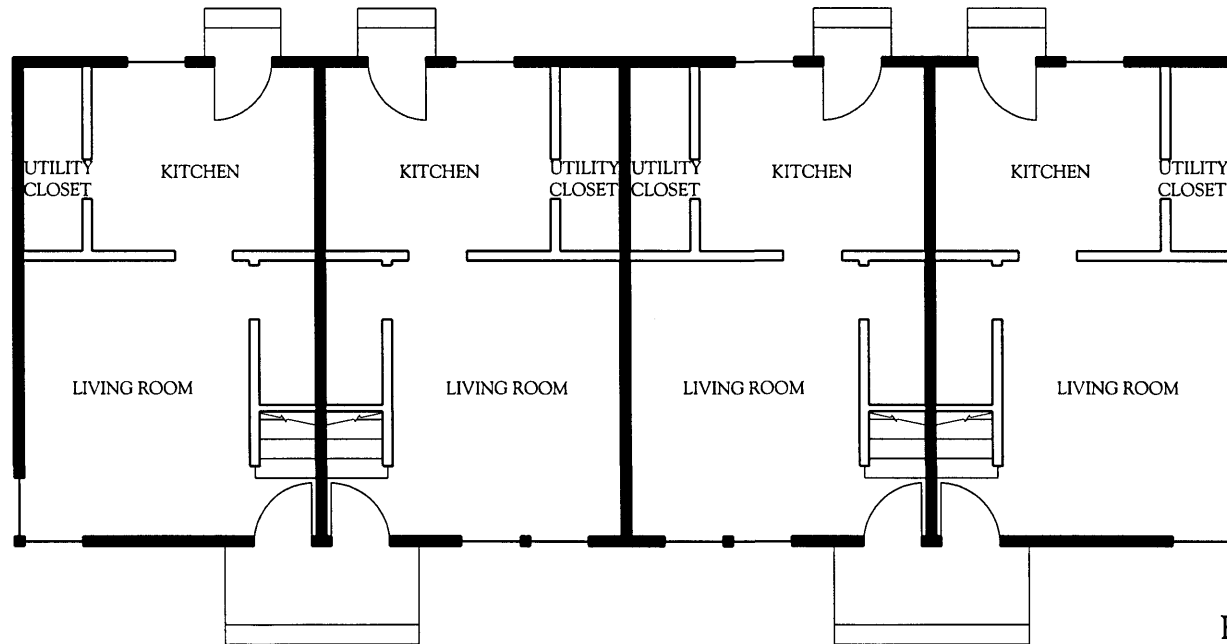




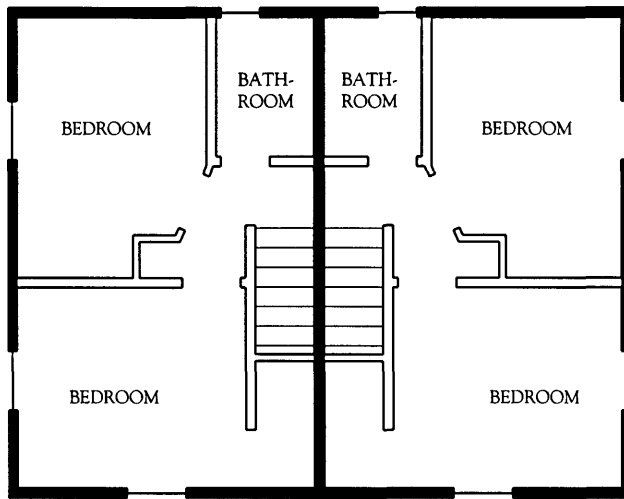




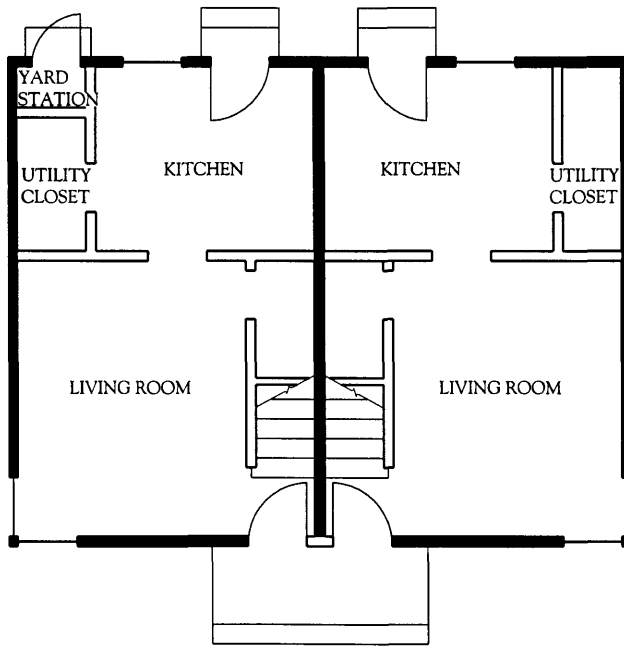
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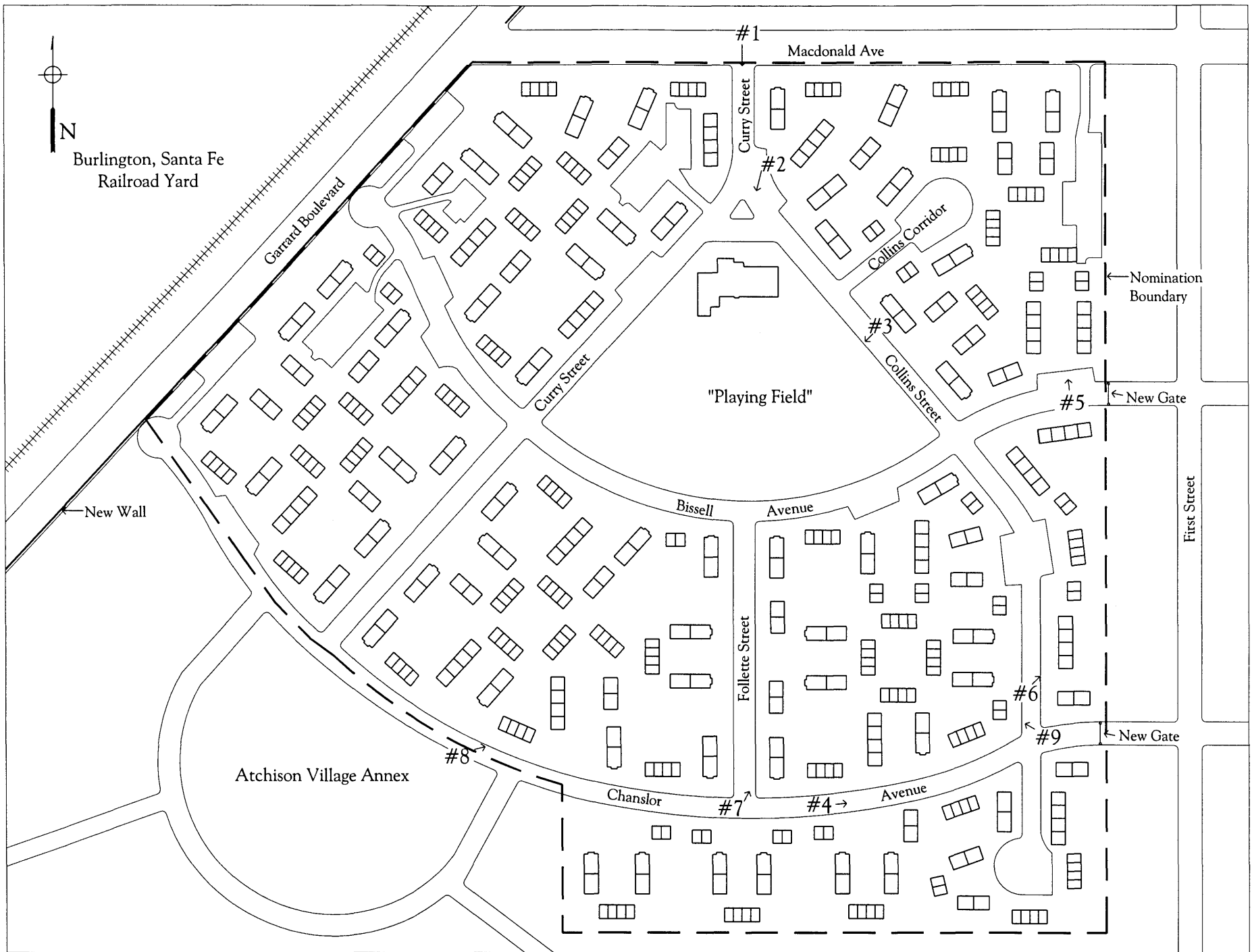
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SITE PLAN

ATCHISON VILLAGE DEFENSE HOUSING PROJECT
 RICHMOND, CA

SCALE: 1" = 300'