

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 17 1980

DATE ENTERED AUG 22 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Hercules Village

AND/OR COMMON same

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER ~~In irregular pattern along Kings Avenue, Railroad Avenue, Santa Fe Avenue~~
Hercules Avenue, Talley Way, Bay and Pinole Streets ^{and}

CITY, TOWN

Hercules

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#7

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Contra Costa

CODE

013

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME multiple ownership

STREET & NUMBER

(See Continuation Sheet)

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Courthouse of Contra Costa County

STREET & NUMBER

843 Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Martinez

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hercules, California plant village being nominated is comprised of thirty-six buildings remaining from the original plant village in the geographical area included in this nomination. This represents the majority of the total buildings in this area that was the company town operated by the explosive manufacturing companies in Hercules in the 1890's-1940's. Originally, the village had a population of several hundred, but now the majority of the residential buildings are vacant, subjected to vandalism and abuse both unauthorized and authorized, and are scheduled for possible demolition. The remaining plant village buildings represent the cohesiveness of the original village fabric, with the company buildings on the hill being all intact and used; the social and utilitarian buildings being intact, vacant, and available for re-use; superintendent's hill having sufficient remnants of the area to note its former presence; and the remaining residential buildings.

Buildings and Sites Contributing to the Character of the District

(Note: The numbering system used here utilizes the original plant village structure numbering system.)

<u>Building No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Description</u>
8100	Kings Avenue	Main Office Building: Three-story, masonry, Classic Revival, symmetrical patterns of functional windows characteristic of turn-of-the-century industrial/office buildings.
8101	Kings Avenue	Laboratory: Two-story, masonry, utilitarian, Classic Revival.
8103	Kings Avenue	Hercules Club House: Massive, two-story, wood frame built in 1897. Included large auditorium, bar, barber shop, shower-bath, billiard room, library, bowling alley.
8111	Kings Avenue	Guard House: Now housing Hercules Post Office, a small, utilitarian, wood frame, shingled hip roof building.
8118	Kings Avenue	Office Annex: Now housing Hercules City Hall, a mildly sprawling, one-story, wood frame, bungalow style.
9302	Low Level Plant Road	Store/shed; large storage sheds, wood frame, sheet metal siding and roof.
9701	Low Level Plant Road	Store/shed, large storage sheds, wood frame, sheet metal siding and roof.
4	Pinole Street	Queen Anne cottage, two-story with basement elevated (same as No. 10).

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed historic district represents one of the last remaining company towns in California. Its existence cannot be separated from the explosive industry in America. The parent of Hercules was the California Powder Works which was incorporated on December 28, 1861, and operated in Santa Cruz, California. It was the first incorporated powder company in the far west and was established to afford explosives for gold miners and for the building of the western end of the transcontinental railroad. The prime mover and first president of the California Powder Works was Captain John H. Baird (1822-1880), a "forty-niner" who was elected to the State Senate for 1852-1854. By 1869, the California Powder Works began manufacturing dynamite in San Francisco. The explosive was called "Black Hercules Powder" which eventually became its major product. The plant was called Hercules Powder Works. Because of explosions and an encroaching population, the California Powder Works, along with other powder companies, was forced to move to a less inhabited area. The site chosen to construct the new Hercules Powder Works was the present day Hercules, California. It was ideally situated on the bay with a railroad running through the property.

On October 27, 1879, a 44.94^{acre} parcel of land was purchased from the heirs of Don Ignacio Martinez, the grantee of Rancho El Pinole, a Mexican land grant of 1824. In 1888, a second parcel of land was purchased. It included a marshland/floodplain. The deed also included a covenant that prohibited the California Powder Works from ever manufacturing any explosives on a section of land that presently comprises the old village of Hercules. This section, shielded from the explosive plant by a hill, is the site of the residences of the workers employed by California Powder Works and later by Hercules Powder Company.

Dynamite was not manufactured at Hercules until 1881, but over the ensuing two decades Hercules became the largest producer of dynamite in the world. Eventually, during World War I, it also became the largest producer of TNT in America. The plant supplied explosives to both sides until America entered the war. The first plant explosion occurred on January 11, 1882, and was felt nearly 35 miles away. At least six other explosions had occurred before the turn of the century, two in 1892 and one each in 1895, 1896, 1898, and 1899. The most disastrous explosion occurred on February 20, 1908. Subsequent explosions had been few and confined to small sections of the plant.

By the end of the 19th century, a strong need for government was felt, so that on December 15, 1900, the City of Hercules was incorporated by a vote of 103-3. It was the third incorporated town in Contra Costa County. With one exception, the councilmen were and always have been, until very recently, employees of the industry. Simultaneously with organization of a city, the homes and structures were built to accommodate the plant employees and their families.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- A. History of the Explosive Industry in America by Von Gelder/Schatter
- B. History of Contra Costa County by Slocum
- C. History of Contra Costa County (1917) by Hulaniski
- D. Contra Costa County--Historical and Biographical Illustrated (1926)
- E. Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Pinole-Hercules News
- F. Library of Pinole Historical Society
- G. Archeological Site Record, Sonoma State College, CA-CCO-370

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

H. Follow-up Archeological Report, June 7, 1978

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 34.4±

UTM NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME Mare Island QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minute series

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
none			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

<u>Dr. Joseph Mariotti</u>	<u>Edwin S. Astone, Consultant</u>	<u>1-16-79</u>
<u>Pinole Historical Society</u>	<u>Astone & Associates</u>	DATE <u>JM (415) 758-1235</u>
<u>100 Tennant Avenue</u>	<u>928 Second Street</u>	TELEPHONE <u>EA (916) 446-1472</u>
<u>Pinole, CA 94564</u>	<u>Sacramento, CA 95814</u>	CITY OR TOWN

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

R. Wilson 6/15/80

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Sally G. O'Neil*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 8/22/80

DATE 8/18/80

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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PAGE

1

Citation Buildings
2777 Alvarado Street
P.O. Box 2359
San Leandro, CA 94557

Valley Nitrogen Products, Inc.
P.O. Box 1752
Fresno, CA 94717

Hercules, Inc.
910 Market Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19899

State of California
State Lands Commission
1807-13th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

East Bay Regional Park District
11500 Skyline Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94619

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
San Francisco District
211 Main Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

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<u>Building No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Description</u>
7	Bay Street	Two-story, "pattern book," wood frame house, hip roofed, now covered with synthetic siding material.
10	Pinole Street	Queen Anne cottage, two-story with basement (elevated), having tall, narrow bay windows, columns supporting entryway, high front steps. Structure is generally intact with no major alterations.
12	Pinole Street	Queen Anne cottage, two-story with basement elevated (same as No. 10).
16	Pinole Street	Two-story, "pattern book," wood frame house, hip shingled roof, presently covered with a synthetic siding material.
17	Pinole Street	Two-story, "pattern book," wood frame house identical to the majority of the buildings in the village.
18	Pinole Street	Two-story, "pattern book," same as No. 17.
19	Santa Fe Avenue	Two-story, "pattern book," wood frame house, hip roof, brick fireplace/chimney, brick foundation presently covered with a synthetic siding material.
20	Santa Fe Avenue	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
21	Santa Fe Avenue	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
23	Santa Fe Avenue	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
24	Santa Fe Avenue	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.

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<u>Building No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Description</u>
27	Santa Fe Avenue	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
30	Santa Fe Avenue	Three-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19 at an elevated level with the addition of a basement level.
34	Park Street	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
37	Park Street	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19 except with porch railing removed.
38	Park Street	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19 except with porch railing removed.
39	Park Street	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
47	Park Street	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
48	Park Street	Two-story, "pattern book" house, identical to No. 19.
54	Kings Avenue	Two-story with basement, wood frame bungalow, excellent condition.
56	Kings Avenue	Two-story with basement, wood frame bungalow, good condition.
62	Santa Fe Avenue	One-story, flat duplex bungalow, built during World War I, generally flat roof, with each unit having a studio unit layout.
69	Railroad Avenue	One-story flat.
102	Railroad Avenue	Masonic Lodge: Originally a bachelor's quarters and supplemental clubhouse, one story with basement, bungalow styling, wood frame.

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<u>Building No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Description</u>
129	Railroad Avenue	One-story duplex, elevated bungalow style, wood frame with a synthetic siding material on the exterior.
132	Railroad Avenue	Two-story with basement, elevated bungalow, brick fireplace/chimney, brick foundation, large porches and roof eaves, excellent condition.
133	Railroad Avenue	One-story with basement, elevated bungalow, brick fireplace/chimney, brick foundation, large porches and roof eaves, excellent condition.
135	Kings Avenue	One-story with basement, wood frame bungalow, good condition.
160	Kings Avenue	One story with basement, wood frame bungalow, excellent condition.
200	Waterfront	Wharf: Constructed in 1902 pursuant to the franchise granted by the City's Board of Trustees. Includes a pump house at its terminus which pumps cooling water to the plant; narrow gauge tracks, previously used to haul raw materials to and finished explosives from the plant. The superstructure, including the bridge over the railroad right of way, is deteriorated with age and neglect but is essentially as it was during the high production time of the plant and plant village.

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Because of the necessity of locating explosive manufacturing plants in remote areas, housing for key employees in close proximity to the plant was usually a necessity. Numerous explosives manufacturing companies erected plant villages such as Hercules. In addition, to satisfy the housing demand, the plant village provided for a strong social atmosphere and other needed community services. One of the important features of the plant was the Hercules Club, founded in 1896 by a few employees. The project received the enthusiastic support of the Company, the Plant Superintendent and the Board of Trustees of the City who appropriated \$5,000 for it. The socializing at the Club, which still stands today, proved to be very popular with the workmen and resulted in stabilizing the work force. From time to time, the Company enlarged and improved the building and equipment, but its management has been entirely carried on by the workmen. The Hercules Hospital was established by the California Powder Works as the first hospital and resident physicians service in the American explosive trade. The building still stands today.

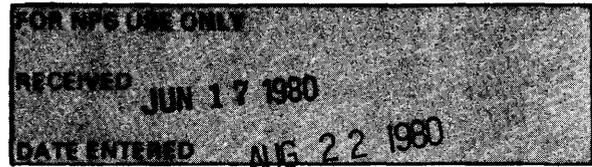
Basically, there were two groups of homes. One group was situated in an area commonly called "The Hill" which accommodated the administrative personnel and families. It was less crowded and demonstrated greater variation of style. The other group, which was built on the side of the sloping hills, was somewhat separated and accommodated the working class and their families. The town also included a clubhouse and a resident physician staffed hospital. The town had abundant recreational facilities including lighted tennis courts and a baseball field which had been in near constant use for greater than three-quarters of a century.

Hercules was the area's most desirable community in which to live, with its untarnished and desirable social atmosphere, and its cleanly polished and well kept homes with the neatly trimmed yards. All of the residents of Hercules were company employees. Although the number of residences and residents increased precipitously during World War I and World War II, the number averaged approximately 100 and 300 respectively. The following were the population totals of the plant village: 1910 - 274; 1920 - 373; 1930 - 389; 1940 - 343.

Consistent with the attitude of the times, however, no residences were afforded the hundreds of Chinese workers. In 1903, the plant and the homes were absorbed by the DuPont company. In 1912, the DuPont holdings were dissolved by decree (Sherman antitrust) and assigned to the new Hercules Powder Company. Eventually, Hercules Powder Company became Hercules, Incorporated, and the plant began manufacturing agricultural chemicals.

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

In spite of the changes within the industry, the town of Hercules has remained essentially unchanged for three-quarters of a century. At the turn of the century, the region in which Hercules is located, was the center of explosive manufacturing in the west. Of the six (or more) other previous explosive manufacturers, only the town of Hercules remains as remnants of this era. Only recently has the community atmosphere dissolved and a portion of the homes destroyed in preparation for total redevelopment.

The village area includes a referenced archeological site (CA-CCO-370) and a "possible site" as indicated on the enclosed map. There is confusion as to the existence of any moderate or substantial archeological material. The exact location of the listed site is not pin-pointed. As referenced in the listed reports, ".....it appears that we will have to wait a bit to find the site if it extends into the project area. George Cales says that it's under the Lions Club or Masons Hall or whatever is just across the street outside of the project area". The possible site is even more nebulous. "The site I located inside the project area has not been recorded as a site because I feel that it was dumped there along with a whole lot of other fill material."

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Beginning at a point of intersection of the continuation of the centerline of Santa Fe Avenue and the easterly right of way line of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks; thence northerly along said right of way line to the intersection of the continuation of the westerly edge of the wharf/bridge; thence over the tracks and continuing out to the end of the wharf, continuing along the easterly edge of the wharf the bridge over the tracks; thence continuing this line to a point approximately 50' east of the Laboratory Building (Bldg. No. 8101); thence along the existing fence line in a southerly direction to a point approximately 50' south of the security gate at King Avenue; thence westerly 100' at a right angle; thence continuing in a generally southerly direction 450'; thence continuing at a 45° angle in a southwesterly direction 250'; thence continuing at a right angle in a southeasterly direction 300'; thence at a right angle in a southeasterly direction 650'; thence at a right angle in a southwesterly direction 200' to a point of intersection with the center line of Santa Fe Avenue; thence along the centerline 250'; thence at a right angle continuing in a southwesterly direction to the centerline Hercules Avenue; thence at an approximate 55° angle continuous 285'; thence at a right angle, continuing 200' in a northerly direction; thence at a right angle continuing 100' in an easterly direction; thence at a right angle continuing 150' in a northerly direction; thence at a 45° angle continuing in a northeasterly direction 125' to the intersection of the centerline of Santa Fe Avenue; thence continuing in a northwesterly direction 1125' to the point of beginning.

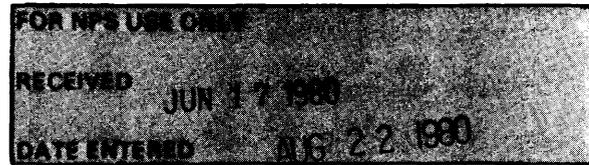
The boundaries proposed for the Hercules Village include all of the remaining viable areas which represent the earlier plant village. There are four activity zones of the earlier village, all with key existing structures.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Activity Zone</u> <u>Activity</u>	<u>Existing Buildings</u>
1	Institutional Headquarters Office	Main office building, laboratory, hospital (police headquarters), office annex (City Hall)
2	Social	Hercules Clubhouse, Lodge
3	Superintendent's Hill	Two large residences, street pattern, park, etc. of the location of the large, prestigious residential building.
4.	Workmen's Houses	Two basic clusters of workmen's houses separated only by topography and the open area, which was the acid flow area, from the plant complex and now a park-like setting.

Omitted from this Hercules Plant Village District nomination were any of the industrial buildings of the plant complex for the following reasons:

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1. Questionable as to the extent of the age, alteration, etc. of any building going back to the pre-1928 era of the plant village.
2. District separation from the four above activity zones by topography and distance.
3. Obvious nonhistoric intrusion by additions of industrial pipes, valves, sheds, etc. adjacent to all industrial buildings.

Also omitted from the nomination was the area south of the triangle residential complex which originally included twenty-seven (27) residential buildings (24 singles, 3 duplexes) on the streets of Durham, Skelly, Bacchus, and Hercules. This area was omitted for the following reasons:

1. Of the original 27 residences, only five (5) remain today, which represents only 18% of the original, far below the accepted benchmark of 50% remaining structures.
2. There is a separation of approximately 1050' between Building No. 34 and the closest of the five remaining residential buildings, a separation which is unable to be justified either by landscaping, archeological, topography, etc. Only the street pattern remains.

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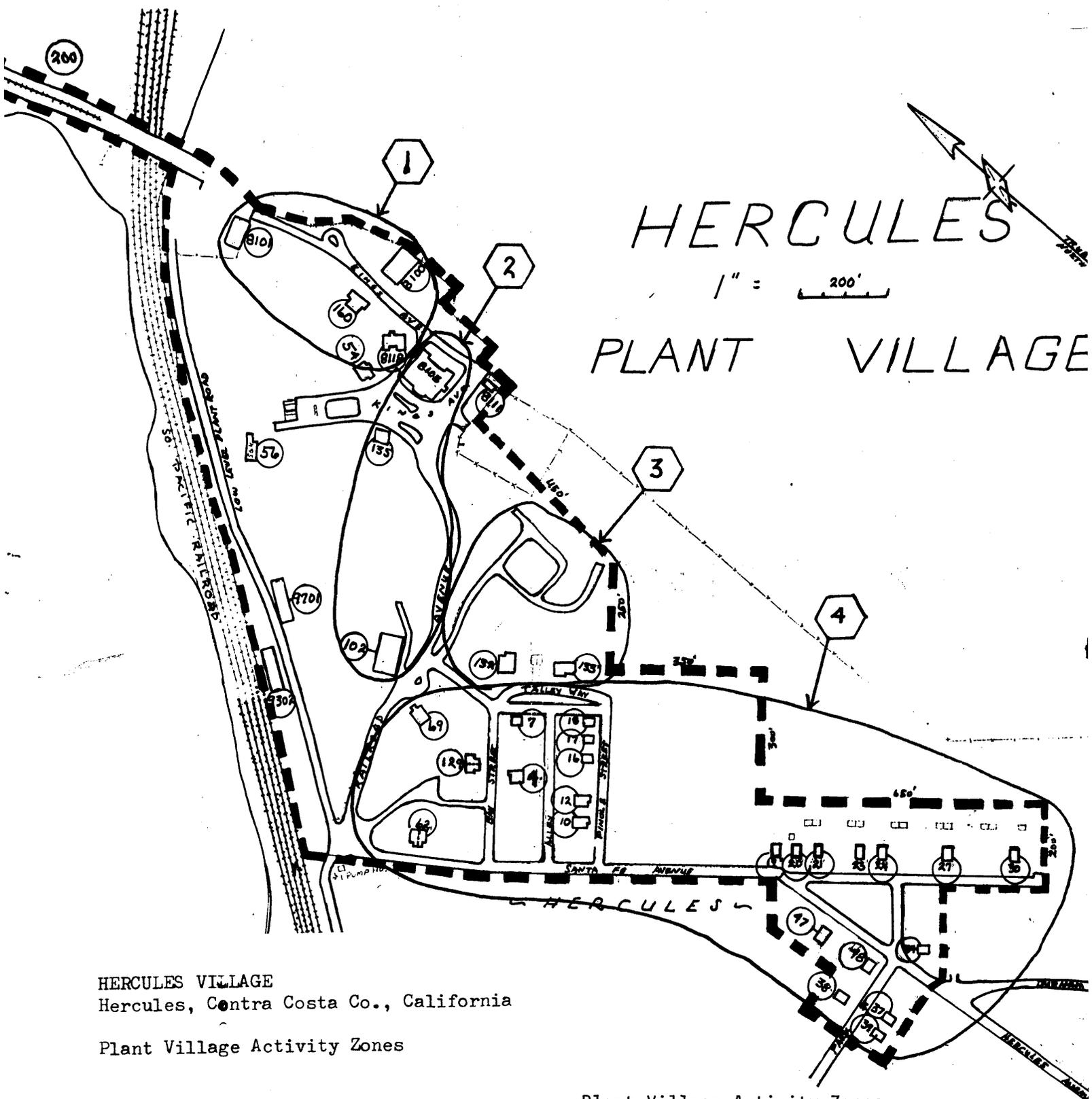
ITEM NUMBER 10

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Hercules Village Historic District
Hercules, Contra Costa County, California

UTM Reference

- A. 10/562400/4207150
- B. 10/562390/4207380
- C. 10/562230/4207560
- D. 10/562490/4208000
- E. 10/562360/4208210
- F. 10/562100/4208350
- G. 10/562140/4208470
- H. 10/562450/4208300
- I. 10/562590/4208050
- J. 10/562620/4207720
- K. 10/562540/4207530
- L. 10/562620/4207430
- M. 10/562540/4207370
- N. 10/562630/4207260



HERCULES

1" = 200'

PLANT VILLAGE

HERCULES VILLAGE
 Hercules, Contra Costa Co., California
 Plant Village Activity Zones

- Plant Village Activity Zones
- ① Institutional Headquarters/Office
 - ② Social
 - ③ Superintendent's Hill
 - ④ Workmen's Houses

JUN 17 1980



30. House #20

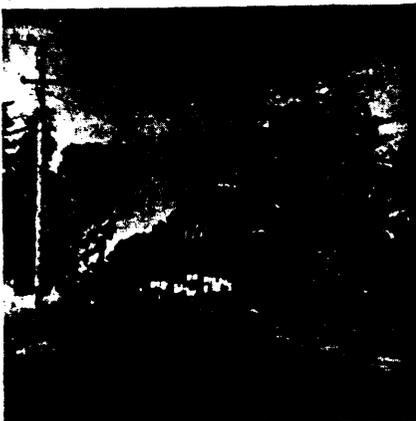
SITE AREA C: HOUSES C WITH VIEWS OF THE APPROACH TO THE PARK ON HERCULES AVENUE AND ACROSS THE PARK TOWARD SANTA FE AVENUE. (Photos 31-34)



31. House C, Hercules Avenue, others of this type are discussed on page 19.



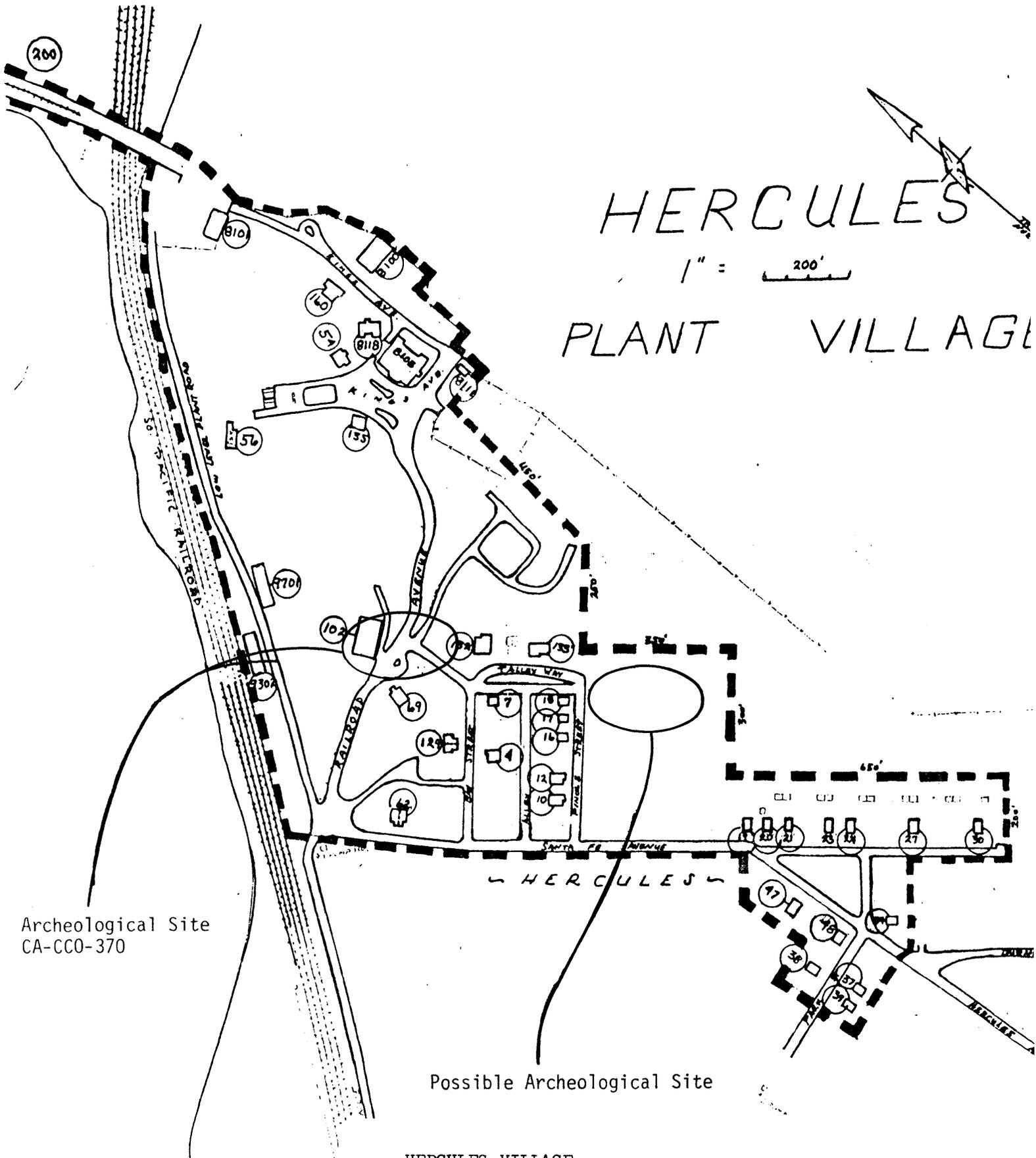
32. View across the triangular park to Santa Fe Avenue.



33. View northwest on Hercules Avenue showing mature landscaping and approach to the park.



34. View from Hercules Avenue to the intersection with Santa Fe Avenue showing Houses #8-#10.



HERCULES

1" = 200'

PLANT VILLAGE

Archeological Site
CA-CCO-370

Possible Archeological Site

HERCULES VILLAGE
Hercules, Contra Costa Co., California

Location of archaeological sites

JUN 17 1960