

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Marin City Public Housing

Other names/site number: Golden Gate Village

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 101-429 Drake Avenue, 1-99 Cole Drive

City or town: Marin City State: California County: Marin

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

Jenan Saunders/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer: Date

California State Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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 ☐

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>29</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Wrightian

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, wood, red clay Spanish tile, asphaltic composition shingle

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Marin City Public Housing, or Golden Gate Village as it has been known since the 1990s, is located on a 29.8-acre site in southern Marin County, directly northwest of the City of Sausalito. The topography ranges from tree-covered hillsides at the southwest that gently slope down northerly to level ground. The property encompasses 29 contributing buildings—28 apartment housing units ranging in size from one to five stories and a single one-story office and maintenance facility for the Marin County Housing Authority—and one contributing site, the designed landscape. All the buildings were planned and arranged to provide privacy and views within an open landscaped green campus. The building style was strongly influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, reflective of Design Architect Aaron Green's architectural philosophy and practice, an individual who was trained by Wright as well as then serving as Wright's West Coast Representative. The campus was constructed by the County of Marin, using federal funding, as the first phase of the redevelopment of Marin City from a temporary wartime labor town of quickly constructed wood frame buildings to a permanent solution providing housing for low- to mid-income residents who settled in the area. All buildings are structurally sound and materially intact with few alterations, and retain all aspects of historic integrity. As originally purposed, they continue to serve the housing needs of a low-income segment of the population of highly affluent Marin County.

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Narrative Description

Setting

The southwest property line abuts the Golden Gate National Recreation Area open space. Golden Gate Village can be partially seen by those driving along Highway 101, which forms the eastern border for the property. To the northeast is Richardson Bay, an estuary that joins San Francisco Bay to the south. The layout takes its cues primarily as a response to the sloping aspect of the site rather than organized upon a rigid grid as often a hallmark of typical public housing projects. This less formal arrangement sought to incorporate generous amounts of open space for active social use of the residents and the play activity of children as well as for attractive clusters of permanent landscaping. As well, it preserves the natural features of the site rather than removes or fully builds upon them. As a result, the overall character of the property is very much like a pleasant suburban campus, rather than a grim, dreary housing complex that most tend to associate with public housing. Parking lots, walkways, stairs, and community courtyards remain essentially intact and unchanged. The landscaping of the park-like campus is mostly lush and mature, but has departed from original standards where replacement has occurred and could benefit greatly from being refreshed according to the planting specifications of the Landscape Architect's master plan.

Buildings

There are four building types that comprise the housing portion of Golden Gate Village as designated by the associated architects on site and building plans. Type A buildings contain two bedrooms, Type B buildings contain three bedrooms, Type C buildings contain four bedrooms, and Type E buildings contain one bedroom each. Curiously, there is no Type D building and the architects' reason for skipping the letter is unknown. The largest building type, the rectangular Type A, is repeated eight times, and oriented in a vertical manner fanning out from Marin County Assessor's parcel 22 towards the site's hills. Thirteen Type B buildings are staggered in the northern portion of the site, tapering in towards the center of the site. Five Type E buildings anchor brick paved courts that are formed at the rear of several Type B building pairs. Two Type C units are spread out within the site, one towards the center of the easternmost extent and the other situated within parcel 22 (**Figure 3**).

Concrete walkways wrap around buildings, landscaped areas, and the site's contours, connecting the site with pedestrian access. Concrete steps with metal handrails emerge from the hills, leading to concrete and brick courts. Each of the building types features a concrete porch of some configuration. Cole Drive and Drake Avenue both offer continuous vehicular access through the district, and are lined by raised concrete sidewalks. There are two parking lots towards the northern portion of the property, offering access to Type B and Type E dwellings. Parking for the elongated Type A buildings is organized between building pairs, each façade leading onto a paved, graded driveway, offering parking terraces to each of the building's five levels. A connected roadway surrounding the Type A buildings in the southwestern portion of the property offers additional access to the dwellings. The rear elevations of Type A building

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

pairs similarly face one another, while sharing green space in between. The units on grade have rear concrete patios, some featuring gardens. A community garden sits just south of parcel 22.¹

Housing Type A

Eight rectangular five-story Type A towers stagger into the property's surrounding hillside. Radiating from the centralized parcel 22 delineated by Cole Drive, these buildings are characterized by their monolithic presence that terminates gradually into the surrounding topography. The reinforced concrete buildings are one unit deep, with twenty-three units total, twenty-one dedicated to residential use with two used for combined laundry and storage functions. The hipped roof is clad in Spanish red clay tile. On the rear elevation, the portions of the roof above the semi-enclosed patios feature segments of exposed open rafters. Each floor is accessible at-grade or by a north-end anchoring staircase servicing the building's façade. The stairs feature a pierced concrete patterned opening stairwell. Openings on some buildings have been infilled with glass concrete blocks.

The two-room units are accessed by means of elongated open-air hallways that extend the length of the façade at each floor. Stylized precast concrete screens sit regularly between metal handrails at each floor of the façade. The façade's at-grade units lead onto paved parking terraces, while the rear of the at-grade units offer access to individual dry yard/terraced patios. The rear of each above-grade unit terminates with canted walls to form semi-enclosed patios/recessed balconies with views leading on to central green space. The precast concrete motif continues on this rear elevation as the balcony rail. Windows at the rear of each unit are aluminum framed, with sliding glass balcony doors, and operable transoms.² The unique relationship to site topography provides the five-story building with parking and pedestrian access to each floor without need for an elevator.

Low-Rise Building Overview

The low-rise buildings, Types B, C, and E, share several stylistic traits, allowing Golden Gate Village to appear uniform and consistent throughout. The chosen materials include painted concrete masonry units, formed concrete, and wooden siding in various proportions and orientations. The general massing of the low-rise building types is rectangular, monolithic, and elongated. Single doors punctuate the façades, and window types are uniform. The window-to-wall ratios are consistent throughout these building types, as are the rooflines, and minimal ornamentation by means of exaggerated roofing elements/eaves, siding materials, and patterned cement block dry yard enclosures.³

Housing Type B

This housing type sits on level grade, below the Type A towers, starting in the northern portion of the site and tapering west, towards the center. There are thirteen Type B buildings, each comprised of eight three-room units. The two-story buildings are constructed with a concrete

¹ Alison Garcia Kellar, *Golden Gate Village Marin City, CA: Historic Resource Evaluation* (San Francisco: Garavaglia Architecture, June 2015), 9.

² Ibid, 14.

³ Ibid, 18.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

foundation, and a combination of reinforced concrete masonry units, and wood framing. The concrete walls of the lower floor are painted, as are the upper floor wooden horizontal siding and plaster, a common configuration in the low-rise buildings at Golden Gate Village. Their gabled roofs with exaggerated eaves and rafters are clad with composition shingles. The second story is slightly larger in floor plan than the first, creating a slight overhang. In plan, a unit is repeated four times, and mirrored at an axis. The stairs, kitchen, and second story bathroom sit central in each plan. From this, two groups of pop-up ventilation dormers emerge from the roofline above the stacked kitchen and bathroom. The long sides of each Type B building each provide access to four units. Two pairs of concrete dry yards and patios sit in front of each elevation, some with enclosing wooden fences. Sliding aluminum windows are grouped at each of the three bedrooms, spanning much of the second story elevation. The interior is finished with wooden doors, ceiling beams, stairs, and railing.⁴ The pop-up dormer, or clerestory, contains operable windows that allow natural daylight down into the bathroom space directly below. Residents open the windows by means of turning the operating lever with a long reaching rod.

Housing Type C

Housing Type C buildings also sit on-grade. There are two of these buildings, one at the eastern extent of the site, and another within parcel 22, surrounded by Cole Drive. This elongated concrete building is similar in material and roofing to Type B. Low to the ground, the one-story buildings have four units each, organized linearly, with all entrances on a single façade. Each unit extends through the width of the building, with an open kitchen and living room space upon entry, and four bedrooms off of a central hallway. Four concrete dry yards sit paired to the rear of the building, accessible from a door in the kitchen.⁵

Housing Type E

Housing Type E is the smallest housing type in Golden Gate Village, and it resembles Type C in its siding material, roofing, and massing. This housing type anchors pairs of Type B buildings, forming a courtyard, paved with brick. The five one-story buildings are comprised of four residential units each, oriented on an axis with primary access from the gabled ends. Raised concrete pads lead off of these entryways. The bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and living room run along the side elevation, with windows organized respectively. A pair of concrete dry yards sits on either long elevation, accessible by a glass sliding door off of each living room.⁶

Administration Office and Maintenance Building

A modest, one-story building was created as a new office and property maintenance facility for the Marin Housing Authority, which also had been occupying one of the temporary wartime buildings in Marin City. The design utilizes the same palette of materials as the low-rise building—integral color concrete block and redwood board-and-batten siding. The floor plan is a simple L-shape arrangement with the administrative component contained primarily in the short segment and the maintenance area in the longer wing. There is a waiting area upon entry with view into the Cashier's room on one side and the Secretary's room on the other. Each contains a

⁴ Ibid, 18-19.

⁵ Ibid, 23.

⁶ Ibid, 25.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

counter for meeting with individual tenants. The offices of the Assistant Manager and Executive Director are at the far end of the short plan segment. Each space has paired doors that open out onto a large landscaped patio area screened with wood fencing. An internal hallway within the building connects with the Maintenance portion of the building, essentially a large open warehouse-type space with several storage spaces on each end. Four garage doors access the warehouse space. Unlike the other low-rise buildings, the Administration portion of the building has a hipped, Dutch gable-type roof, with each end of the small gable serving as a vent for a small attic space under the main ridge. At the interior, like the one-story low-rise buildings, the sloping underside of the roof is exposed with structural decking and beams in view. Further up the slope and at the center of the building form, a flat, dropped ceiling is created between two upper beams with a clever alternating pattern of lighting units and air return registers in a wood-trimmed band along its edge.

Campus Landscape (contributing site)

The campus is highly site-sensitive, meticulously studied and planned with generously planted open spaces interspersed between buildings in order to blend and harmonize the property with the natural scenic quality of the surrounding Marin landscape. An extensive system of sinuous walkways meander throughout the campus, creating practical connections between buildings, as well as leading to common spaces, courtyards, and parking areas. The open quality of the campus, the variety and size of open spaces, as well as lush plantings creates a very pleasant and decidedly non-institutional character. One is afforded privacy as well as views to the landscape or even to the Bay beyond in the case of the upslope high-rise buildings. This helps to foster a more relaxed atmosphere where individuals have the opportunity and space to move freely in an attractively landscaped environment, as opposed to, and a reaction against, typical high-density public housing projects with rigidly controlled concrete landscapes.

Condition/Alterations

The campus and all twenty-nine buildings stand solid and strong as evidence of the quality of their materials and construction, though weathered by the test of time. The property still provides housing and community for a low-income segment of the population that they were originally intended to serve. The apartments have been occupied continuously and exhibit a lack of vandalism often suffered within most other public housing projects. The residents appreciate their homes and campus, and have been very active in the upkeep via an active Resident Tenants Council. The residents established and maintain a community garden. In the 1990s, the residents convened a contest to name the public housing, which until that point really had no familiar identity as other areas around Marin City such as Ridgeway, Ponderosa Estates, Oak Knolls, or the Headlands. A public housing resident, Gracie Stover, won the contest with the name “Golden Gate Village.”⁷ It is notable that the word “village” was chosen and included within the identity, perhaps resonating with the residents; the term appropriately expresses the pleasant character and feel of the property.

⁷ Royce McLemore—Executive Director, Women Helping All People—in support of the Golden Gate Village Resident Council, in an email to the author, February 25, 2017.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Building and property maintenance is another matter and is the subject of debate between residents and the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority, once the vocal advocate of Marin City's low-income residents and seniors, has evolved into the residents' seemingly greatest adversary. Most of the residents' arguments decry deferred maintenance and a lack of an informed and architecturally sensitive approach to improvements and upgrades within the buildings and throughout the campus landscape. There have been upgrades of benefit to the comfort and safety of the residents, such as removal of asbestos tile flooring, lighting and plumbing fixture replacement, and accessibility improvements.

The one- and two-story apartment buildings have all been painted a shade of gray where once the redwood board-and-batten siding was left natural and stained clear, the paint hiding the grain and texture of the wood. Integral color concrete block walls for the base story of low-rise buildings, once an earthy terra cotta color, have been painted the same gray color as well. The monochromatic painting scheme essentially negates the warmth and variety of the original earthtone palette for the buildings—and makes the buildings look more institutional than residential as a result, exactly the opposite of what the architects intended. The buildings do not harmonize with the landscape through color as well as they once did. The only paint at the exterior, originally, was reserved for the emphatically blocked beam terminations extending from below the roof edges, which this author recalls as being a dark red color, a color similarly found at the square batten blocks for wood fences that enclosed portions of yards for the apartment units. Only the laundry yard walls (between the high-rises) show the original color. Roofs originally cedar shingled are covered with composition shingles of a dark brown color. Roof fascia trim has been painted a midnight blue where originally was natural redwood. Soffits were painted gray where was originally natural exposed structural decking, clear stained.

Some original wood fencing defining rear yards for the low-rise units has been replaced with more conventionally designed and constructed wood fences, likely by the residents themselves. Replacement fences are higher than the original in some cases and of a vertical composition of boards rather than the horizontal patterning and orientation preferred by the architects. Individual gas meters for all units have been added to the ends of all buildings, in a conspicuous location, with associated surface runs of piping. Large security floodlights have been added at ends of buildings, also with runs of exposed conduit.

The five-story apartment buildings were originally painted a darker, richer color compatible with the block walls of the laundry yard, and have been painted two tones of light tan and cream. Projecting concrete floor slabs, originally left as natural concrete, have been painted a bright red. Exposed roof rafters and roof fascias, once left natural, have also been painted the same bright red.

The Administration and Maintenance Building still serves in much the same capacity as originally intended, yet no longer houses the office of the Executive Director of the Marin Housing Authority. The main offices of the MHA moved to San Rafael in the 1990s. The building now serves as the offices for the Property Manager as well as original clerical functions associated with the rental housing. A vestibule was added at the entry in a departure from the

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

floor plan of the construction documents; it is unknown if that was a change during the course of construction. The materials and detailing are very much the same as elsewhere found in the building. The maintenance component is virtually unchanged with the main exception that metal doors have replaced the original wooden garage doors. There has also been an addition at the tail end of the building, extending roof and walls in essentially a simple extrusion of the architecture. Again, it is unknown when this addition occurred. Similar to elsewhere throughout the campus, this building has been painted the same monochromatic putty color that obscures the warm earthtones and textures of the original colored concrete block and wood siding.

The play areas at the courts shared by the low-rise apartments have been altered with open areas filled with modular paving, as well as removal of original benches for the addition of grouped seating areas with tables and child play structures of timber construction. The original large playground area on the northernmost end of the campus has been redeveloped in order to incorporate a basketball court and tennis court.

The campus landscape plantings, particularly shrubs and ground cover, as originally designed and selected by renowned Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin, have been allowed to deteriorate and erode without like-kind replacement. Many of Halprin's selected trees remain and represent some of the most mature specimens on campus. Other new varieties have been introduced without respect to compatibility with the landscape master plan or appropriateness (invasive surface roots). Halprin provided a highly specific and detailed master plan for the landscaping, with an extensive, regionally appropriate, and carefully determined Plant List of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers selected for every nook and corner of the campus—to guide and serve any facility manager of the property for decades without any question.

In the early 2000s, the Housing Authority embarked upon a series of insensitive alterations to the five-story high-rise buildings as an ill-informed strategy to improve security—adding clumsy open metal stair towers to the side of existing cast-in-place concrete stair towers, as well as replacing many of the patterned precast concrete guardrails with open metal pipe railing. This all was intended to improve surveillance at the high-rise buildings during a period of heightened criminal activity and problems. It was an ill-conceived and costly strategy. The Housing Authority fell short of funds to complete these alterations for all of the high-rise buildings. Four of the eight high-rise buildings were altered in this way. As insensitive, unsightly, and poorly adapted to the buildings as these changes are, they are all reversible and have not irreparably harmed the buildings. Future restoration efforts would seek to remove the offensive metal stair appendages, restore the concrete, and replace precast guardrails where taken out.

Integrity

The buildings and landscaped campus retain a high degree of historical integrity despite the low standard of upkeep, unsympathetic alterations, and deferred maintenance. Altogether, very little has actually changed over time and the property remains intact. Marin City Public Housing retains all seven aspects of integrity.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Location: Marin City Public Housing remains in its original location, a lovely sloping site backed by the open space of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area with views towards Richardson Bay on the north and Mount Tamalpais to the west. There has been no building added to or removed from the property.

Design: Marin City Public Housing retains all elements of its original architectural design and organization. The high-rise Type A buildings have been the most impacted by poorly guided and insensitive alterations by the owners, all reversible. There have been very few alterations at the low-rise buildings, most primarily as concerns the material colors and low yard boundary fencing. The warm colors of natural earthtone building materials have been muted by insensitive application of unnecessary painting. There have been no significant alterations to the façades. Otherwise, all buildings are clearly unchanged and fully retain their distinctive design characteristics, materials, and detailing. All 29 buildings appear structurally sound and solid with no visible signs of system failures or settlement—a credit to the original design and engineering by a capable team of professionals.

Setting: Marin City Public Housing was the first phase of post-war development and redevelopment of Marin City. Over time, the entirety of Marin City to the north and west would be demolished and re-built, from rows of deteriorating temporary wood-framed wartime buildings to the pleasant suburban enclave it became. The setting has become the diverse community that was envisioned by County Supervisor Vera Schultz and Planning Director Mary Summers. Marin City Public Housing continues to serve the role as originally intended—affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families in one of the most affluent and naturally beautiful counties in Northern California—and a landmark for diversity. The setting has remained completely unchanged despite the development of surrounding Marin City. The hillsides that border Marin City and the Public Housing to the south evolved from private land, which was nearly developed, to protected open space with the creation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. These hills form a natural backdrop to the district. Views of Mount Tamalpais and Richardson Bay are still clearly enjoyed from so many vantage points within the campus. The landscape planting, particularly trees placed from Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin's plan, have all grown to full maturity and provide a green shaded canopy and texture. Along with the generous green open spaces, there is the sense and scale of a pleasant, established suburban community.

Materials: Materials were selected to provide structural strength and permanence as well as to reduce the need for maintenance. There is no evidence of settlement or cracking to either cast-in-place concrete or concrete block masonry. The buildings are as solid as when originally constructed. The combination of redwood siding and integral color concrete block for the one- and two-story buildings is all intact and unaltered despite painting by the owner, perhaps as early as circa 1997. Nearly all key exterior materials throughout the campus have been retained with the exception of landscape planting, which to some degree, could be expected. Plantings originally selected by the Landscape Architect were not replaced in-kind. Lawrence Halprin's documents provide all of the information needed to restore the landscape.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Workmanship: Marin City Public Housing exhibits workmanship according to design details that were appropriate to the nature of materials and modern Wrightian design philosophy of organic architecture: pressing patterns into concrete, assembling cut wood blocks into creative fence assemblies that played with light and shadow as decoration, expressing support structure visibly as well as materials honestly and directly. As simple as the buildings appear, skilled workmanship is required to execute the details precisely and neatly. Buildings constructed along these lines leave little margin for error or sloppiness—nothing is covered up or veneered over. The craftsmanship is clearly on display. Concrete block laying has to be precise and carefully laid clean of mortar splashes upon the colored masonry face to avoid staining. Wood beams, boards, and trims required skilled carpentry, mitring joints and hiding fasteners due to being directly exposed to view. The high level of workmanship that went into the construction is highly admirable and all very much in evidence throughout the campus.

Feeling: The architectural design expresses a feeling of singularity and uniqueness. It is architecture that definitely one does not associate with public housing, particularly that from the particular period of time when it was created. Along with the generous amounts of open space and mature landscaping, the campus still looks fresh and contemporary. Marin City Public Housing retains all of its historic character—the original design, materials, and setting.

Association: Marin City Public Housing maintains its association with historic WWII wartime activity in the Sausalito area, as well as the permanent creation of Marin City. The local community is generally aware that the property is linked to that time and was created as an outcome relative to the end of the war and the closing of the shipyard. That period of history is highlighted in 2017 by events to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Marinship shipbuilding as well as the creation of Marin City. Others more new to the region may pass by, either along the Marin City roadways or Highway 101 that swings directly past the property, and its distinctive architecture gives them an impression of a visual connection to Frank Lloyd Wright. There is a perception among individuals that Wright had something to do with the property, was involved in it, or in some cases, actually designed Marin City Public Housing. This is largely due to awareness of the Wright-designed Marin County Civic Center, which asserts a strong visual presence just a few miles further north from along the same Highway 101.

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

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.)

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1955-1960

Significant Dates

1955

1957

1960

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Green, Aaron G.

Warnecke, John Carl

Halprin, Lawrence

Livingston, Jr., Lawrence

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Marin City Public Housing is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Community Planning and Development as a product of post-WWII urban development in Northern California, and under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, for its association with three prominent mid-century designers: Architects John Carl Warnecke and Aaron G. Green, and Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin. The period of significance is 1955 to 1960, representing a span of events beginning with County Supervisor Vera Schultz' lead role in acquiring the land for redevelopment as a permanent community—particularly for low-income workers who lost their jobs at the close of the Marinship shipyard—through Master Planning for the new community by County Planning Director Mary Summers and her department, the selection of Architects John Carl Warnecke and Aaron G. Green as associated architects for the design of the 300 unit low-rent housing project, the design and approval process for the project, and construction.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Social History

The Marin City Public Housing apartment development was the result of dedicated efforts by a concerned group of citizenry and elected officials as well as socially and environmentally concerned design professionals. They realized that there existed a clean slate opportunity to create a new community in the County of Marin, not just physically, but a racially integrated community where none existed elsewhere in the County—all within a spectacular 365-acre bowl-shaped site surrounded by wooded hills. The modern design and park-like setting for the 300-unit low-rent apartment development was the first step in that direction—a demonstration of sensitive, human-needs building design and site planning that provides much needed personal open space with conservation concerns toward preserving the beauty of Marin County's natural resources. As noted in the *Historic Resource Evaluation*,

The buildings at Golden Gate Village were constructed by the Housing Authority of Marin County in an effort to rebuild the Marin City community that remained after the end of World War II and the closing of the Marinship shipyard. Fueled largely by the Federal Housing Authority and funded by Federal sources, the buildings represent post-World War II urban development of Northern California, and more specifically in Marin County. Additionally, within a larger context, the buildings fall into the significant pattern of events involving public housing in the United States.⁸

⁸ Garcia Kellar, *Historic Resource Evaluation*, 49.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

The sensitively scaled design of the buildings and campus were striking in contrast to the uniform, austere, institutionalized look of postwar housing that dominated the period. As well, the buildings of the Marin City housing development were more informally grouped in a carefully landscaped and open, park-like setting—again in marked contrast to heretofore standard housing consisting of dense block-like developments with minimal open space.

According to architect Daniel Liebermann, who worked in Aaron Green's office during the latter stages of the Marin City project: "Aaron Green had a vision for that project...to create a democratically oriented housing development for the workers at Marinship. We wanted to be sure those buildings connected to the natural landscape, to the hillsides—Aaron was actually, deep down, equalitarian: very American. He wanted to really dedicate a serious Wright/Green-type project—to do his best for the workers who would be living there."⁹

Architect Aaron Green, in *An Architecture for Democracy: The Marin County Civic Center*, states Marin City Public Housing,

was designated by housing officials as the breakthrough project to new federal housing standards. This project was an early recognition of the Civil Rights Movement and another social milestone in Marin County for a higher standard of architecture: "architecture for democracy" via Frank Lloyd Wright. Without my training by Frank Lloyd Wright for organic relationships of buildings to sites, I could not have developed these accomplishments. *Therefore, the Marin City Federal Housing Project may be considered another contribution to Marin County by Frank Lloyd Wright.* (Green's emphasis)¹⁰

The Marin City Public Housing project represents a significant component of an effort by the County of Marin to establish a new community within the Marin City area following World War II. The housing development was a social justice endeavor encouraging racial integration at a time leading up to the Civil Rights movement. According to County Supervisor Vera Schultz, who was instrumental in the redevelopment of Marin City: "We are pioneering something here, and we are on our way to doing a good job for democracy."¹¹

Community Planning and Development

As noted in the *Historic Resource Evaluation*,

The development and implementation of Golden Gate Village is associated with highly notable individuals involved with Marin County government. This project, as in the case of the Marin County Civic Center, was an effort largely spearheaded by two Marin women, Vera

⁹ Mark Anthony Wilson, "Marin City: The rich history and current challenges of a historic African-American enclave," *Marin Magazine*, Volume 11, Issue 12 (December 2015), 52-57. In a letter to the editor from Jan Novie, Owner and President of Aaron Green Associates, published on the magazine's website in February 2016, Mr. Novie corrected two erroneous statements about Aaron Green and the project.

¹⁰ Aaron G. Green and Donald P. de Nevi, *An Architecture for Democracy: The Marin County Civic Center*, (San Francisco: Grendon Publishing, 1990), 84.

¹¹ "Demo-Sponsored Panel Discusses Marin City," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 13, 1955, 26.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Schultz, the first female Supervisor on the Marin County Board of Supervisors, and Mary Summers, the first female Marin County Planning Director. Schultz advocated fiercely for the acquisition of the land to be able to redevelop the former Marinship housing at Marin City.¹²

Vera Schultz (1902-1995) was a progressive, reform-minded thinker and leader—an advocate for efficient government. She began her career as a teacher in Berkeley. After moving to Marin County in the 1920s, she developed a deep interest in government, manifested in her organizing the local chapter of the League of Women Voters. She was elected to her first political office in 1946, the first female City Council member for the City of Mill Valley. In 1952, she was elected the first female Supervisor for the County of Marin, where she served two four-year terms. In addition to her efforts with the redevelopment of Marin City, she successfully fought for a more modern, efficient governmental system, evolving beyond the provincial cronyism that served as County government at the time she first took office, including a County Administrator and centralized purchasing system. She also worked to establish a Parks and Recreation Department, the Public Health Department, and a Public Works Department—the many services that residents of Marin County enjoy.

Marin City Public Housing is considered one of her signature projects. The other is her hard-fought—and won—battle to acquire property for a new county government center in order to consolidate County offices once scattered about San Rafael in thirteen different locations, many of which were rented at great expense to the County. Vera Schultz took the matter a major leap forward. Rather than hire a local architect, as most the Board of Supervisors preferred, she took the initiative to invite Frank Lloyd Wright to consider designing the Marin County Civic Center.¹³ The building she helped create has been a National Historic Landmark and State Historical Landmark since 1991. According to Mark Anthony Wilson, in his September 2016 article for *Marin Magazine*, Vera Schultz

was a true pioneer for women's rights in Marin County, but she was also a trailblazer in the fields of urban planning, environmentally sensitive design and social justice. Marin County would not have some of its most valuable assets if not for her legacy. It was for this reason that she earned the respectful reference as "First Lady of Marin" by her peers regarding her six-decade career in public service.¹⁴

Mary Summers (1917-1988) was the first female Director of Marin County's Planning Department, a position she held for over twenty years. She was a conservation-minded environmentalist and quickly recognized an ally in Vera Schultz when she took office. They teamed together on numerous efforts to control suburban over-development and density while preserving natural resources throughout Marin County. Both were instrumental in orchestrating the redevelopment of Marin City as well as the creation of the Marin County Civic Center, Frank

¹² Garcia Kellar, *Historic Resource Evaluation*, 50.

¹³ Evelyn M. Radford, *Vera, First Lady of Marin: A biography of Vera Lucille Smith Schultz*, (Sonoma, CA: Hilltop Publishing Co., 1998), 169-171.

¹⁴ Mark Anthony Wilson, "Paving New Roads: Marin County's First Female Supervisor, Vera Schultz, Was A Woman Ahead Of Her Time," *Marin Magazine*, Volume 12, Issue 9 (September 2016), 76-81.

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Lloyd Wright's last major work. After her tenure as Planning Director, Mary Summers continued to serve the citizens of the County of Marin as the president of the Marin Conservation League, an environmental organization founded in 1934 whose mission is "to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural assets of Marin County for the public."¹⁵

Architecture and Landscape Architecture

As noted in the *Historic Resource Evaluation*,

The NPS *Public Housing in the United States* Draft Multiple Property Documentation Form briefly summarizes the architectural program of public housing after 1949, suggesting that: "Public housing constructed in the United States after 1949 reflects changes in architecture, architectural theory, and public policy. The overall character of the architecture of later public housing is a striking contrast to the public housing that had preceded it. The humanizing scale of earlier complexes, created by placing low-rise buildings within carefully landscaped settings, was replaced with high-rise towers set in large, open courtyards. This high-rise tower, viewed as a symbol of economic efficiency, social order, and modern design, replaced the low-rise building as the preferred building type for public housing constructed after 1949...The monotonous standardization of 'stripped modern' exterior architectural detailing gave the later public housing a severe, institutional appearance, in contrast to the innovative designs and more residential quality of earlier complexes."

The highly designed and landscaped complex at Golden Gate Village was not characteristic of post-1949 public housing. In fact, the subject complex would seem to be a public housing building anomaly given overall characterization of low-cost housing types constructed in this era. In this, it is clear that the buildings present at Golden Gate Village were an innovative example of a public housing complex in the second half of the 20th [sic] century. The Golden Gate Village complex is significant under Criterion C for its association with renowned architect Aaron G. Green and John Carl Warnecke, and landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. Their collaborative, innovative efforts at Golden Gate Village were recognized for the unique building types, master site plan, and landscaping moments created for the site, which remain largely intact today. Additionally, the subject buildings are significant as an innovative example of a public housing complex of second half of the 20th [sic] century.¹⁶

Marin City Public Housing, designed in 1957 and construction completed by the end of 1960, is of a modern, Frank Lloyd Wright-influenced design by Aaron G. Green (1917-2001), a former apprentice and then later associate of the Master Architect. In 1951, Aaron Green opened a jointly held office in San Francisco at the request of Frank Lloyd Wright and served as Wright's West Coast Representative. In addition to his own professional work, Aaron Green assisted Frank Lloyd Wright on over forty projects during the span of their twenty-year association.

The Marin City Public Housing project and the Marin County Civic Center were virtually concurrent in design and construction—with Aaron Green serving both projects. Within a month

¹⁵ "Mary Summers, former planning director, dies at 70," *Marin Independent Journal*, August 31, 1988, A4.

¹⁶ Garcia Kellar, *Historic Resource Evaluation*, 51.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

of Aaron Green being selected as the Design Architect for the Marin City project, the County of Marin was considering Frank Lloyd Wright as architect for the Civic Center.¹⁷ The first meeting between Wright and representatives of the County, including Supervisor Vera Schultz and Planning Director Mary Summers, was held in April 1957 at Aaron Green's San Francisco office.¹⁸ By the end of July 1957, the County of Marin had signed a contract with Frank Lloyd Wright.¹⁹ From August 1957 onward, Aaron Green was regularly reporting to the County Board of Supervisors for both Marin City Public Housing and the Civic Center. Wright designated Aaron Green as his Associate Architect for the Civic Center project, a rare distinction for him to share credit on any building in the course of his long career. When Frank Lloyd Wright passed away in April 1959, the County Board of Supervisors elected to finish the drawings for the Phase One of the Civic Center and proceed into construction with both Taliesin Associated Architects (the firm succeeding Wright) and Aaron Green.²⁰

In 2015, the Marin County Civic Center was among ten buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright that were nominated for inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List as sites of significant cultural value.²¹ "Aaron G. Green and California Organic Architecture" at the Palos Verdes Art Center in Rancho Palos Verdes, California was curated by noted architect and author Alan Hess, a lecturer and advocate for twentieth century architectural preservation.²² Publication of a monograph presenting the life and sixty-year career of Architect Aaron G. Green is anticipated in late 2017.

The Marin City Housing development was a collaborative endeavor involving a team of local professionals who held strong beliefs in the ability of sensitive planning and design as a means towards providing an environment supporting a better standard of living.

John Carl Warnecke (1919-2010) was named associated architect for the project. His office produced the Construction Documents for the project. A modernist designer, his work was noted for its commitment to contextualism—aspiring to design buildings that harmonize with the environment in which they are sited including respect for local cultural and historical conditions.

At the time of the Marin City Public Housing project, Warnecke's work consisted primarily of school and university buildings. Warnecke was already well known to the County of Marin for design of the 125-acre campus for the Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, under construction just one mile away from the Marin City site. In time, Warnecke's office would become one of the largest architectural firms in the country, working upon hundreds of notable buildings including the Hawaii State Capitol, the United States Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD), Logan International

¹⁷ "Wright Recommended To Plan Civic Center," *Daily Independent Journal*, February 28, 1957, 1.

¹⁸ "8 County Officials Confer With Wright, Are Impressed," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 27, 1957, 1.

¹⁹ "Board Signs With Wright," *Daily Independent Journal*, July 31, 1957, 10.

²⁰ "Board To Stick By Wright Contract," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 15, 1959, 1.

²¹ "Civic Center Nominated as World Heritage Site," *County of Marin News Release*, January 30, 2015, www.marincounty.org/main/county-press-releases/2015/flw-world-heritage-013015; "Wright World Heritage Update," *Website: Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy*, July 18, 2016.

²² "Aaron G. Green and California Organic Architecture," *Website: Palos Verde Art Center*, accessed February 2017 www.aaronggreen.org.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Airport (Boston, MA), and multiple buildings on the Stanford University campus. He is best known for his work in Washington D.C. at Lafayette Square, working alongside First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in 1962 to save historic row houses along the square threatened with demolition and integrate them into two new large modern office buildings of his design set back behind. The assassination of the President led to his most visible project, the design for the Kennedy gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery, a simple, design composition in stone paving, landscape, and an eternal flame.²³

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) was the project's Landscape Architect, a resident of Marin County and involved in numerous Bay Area projects, mostly in conjunction with a local circle of modernist architects—one of whom was John Carl Warnecke. Just prior to the Marin City Public Housing project, both collaborated on the design and landscape for the home of Planner Lawrence Livingston Jr., the final individual who became part of the Marin City team.²⁴ Halprin designed scores of private and public spaces across the country. Smithsonian magazine called him “one of the preeminent place-makers of the 20th century,” and Charles Birnbaum of Washington's Cultural Landscape Foundation called him a trailblazer and one of the most important landscape architects of the modern era.²⁵ Halprin defined his practice as “a whole appreciation of environmental design as a holistic approach to the matter of making spaces for people to live...”²⁶

In 1960, while attending a meeting of the International Federation of Landscape Architects, Halprin outlined the landscape architect's special contributions to a planning team: the vision of the landscape as the “matrix of life”; the design of meaningful open space; a focus on movement in space, or choreography of human participation in the landscape; a concern for regionalism and ecology; and design synthesis, encompassing both conservation and the “dynamics of change.”²⁷ Halprin was later retained as Landscape Architect for the residential and commercial development of Marin City that followed the Public Housing project. Some of his more notable works include the adaptive reuse of historic buildings at Ghiradelli Square in San Francisco, the master landscape plan for Sea Ranch, United Nations Plaza and Levi Plaza in San Francisco, a re-designed approach to Yosemite Falls in Yosemite National Park, and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. As well, Lawrence Halprin was engaged by Warnecke to design the setting and approaches to the Kennedy gravesite. A major retrospective exhibition of Lawrence Halprin's life and work opened at the National Building Museum in November 2016, and moved to the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco in May 2017.²⁸

²³ William Grimes, “John Carl Warnecke, Architect to Kennedy, Dies at 91,” *The New York Times*, April 22, 2010;

²⁴ “Comfortable Sausalito Living Illustrated By House Tour,” *Sausalito News*, May 4, 1956.

²⁵ Patricia Sullivan, “Urban Projects Won Wide Acclaim for American Landscape Architect,” *Washington Post*, October 28, 2009 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/27/AR2009102703857.html?sub=AR>, accessed May 8, 2017.

²⁶ Peter Walker, and Melanie Simo, *Invisible Gardens: the Search for Modernism in the American Landscape*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

²⁸ The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF), Exhibition: *The Landscape Architecture of Lawrence Halprin*, <https://tclf.org/landscape-architecture-lawrence-halprin-san-francisco> tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/halprinlegacy/exhibition.html, accessed January 25, 2017.

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Lawrence Livingston Jr. (1918-2007), Planner, was in private practice in Sausalito at the time of the Marin City Public Housing project. Mr. Livingston was a colleague of Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin and they worked together on many projects, including a Master Plan for the California State Capitol in 1962.²⁹ Although primarily recognized as a City Planner and for his involvement in large profile urban redevelopment projects, Livingston was at his core a tireless advocate for conservation of land resources around the Bay Area, largely via the group People for Open Space that evolved into the nonprofit land conservation and urban planning organization Greenbelt Alliance. He fought to control low-density urban sprawl across the Bay Area, guiding a study for the City of Palo Alto that recommended turning nearby hillsides into parkland rather than allowing them be developed into new neighborhoods. His leadership in numerous environmental and conservationist matters earned him the nickname “Mr. Open Space” by his peers within the American Planning Association.³⁰ His son, Jonathan Livingston of Mill Valley, said he is reminded of his father’s efforts and collaborations with environmental champions including Dorothy Erskine and Jack Kent whenever he strolls trails above Sausalito or drives through Tiburon and San Rafael. “I see the results of their successful grass-roots efforts to stop inappropriate development,” he said. “All of us in Marin benefit from Larry’s passion that every resident be adequately housed, and that the best open space and parkland remain for all to enjoy.”³¹

Aaron Green, John Carl Warnecke, and Lawrence Halprin all have created, or are associated with, projects designated National Historic Landmarks. These are all individuals who have made significant and lasting cultural contributions to the American landscape.

Significance Summary

Marin City Public Housing is the result of a collaborative design by a prominent association of socially and conservation-minded architects and planners. Instead of following conventional public housing models of developing dense sites comprised of blockish, austere, and soulless concrete buildings, these individuals embarked upon an opportunity to create human-scale dwellings with greater human dignity in a pleasantly open landscaped setting. It was an intentional reaction against conventional housing design of the time as well as an effort to site and develop the campus in a sensitive manner that best preserved the scenic natural resources of the region. Marin City Public Housing represents the pioneering efforts of local government individuals to redevelop deteriorating temporary wartime housing into a new community—a racially and economically integrated community where none existed elsewhere in the County of Marin. Where other housing projects and developments of the time, all around the country, have fallen to a new wave of redevelopment, Marin City Public Housing stands intact as a pleasant

²⁹ “In Memoriam: Lawrence Livingston, Jr. AICP, 1918-2007,” *APA Northern News*, December 2007/January 2008, 4.

³⁰ John King, “Lawrence Livingston Jr., ‘Mr. Open Space,’ dead at 89,” *The San Francisco Chronicle* (online edition), December 14, 2007 www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Lawrence-Livingston-Jr-Mr-Open-Space-dead-3232782.php, accessed December 26, 2016.

³¹ Jim Staats, “Lawrence Livingston, ‘Mr. Open Space,’ dies at 89,” *Marin Independent Journal* (online edition), December 19, 2007 www.marinij.com/article/zz/20071219/NEWS/712199968, accessed December 26, 2016.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

community that continues to serve the needs for affordable housing, particularly in one of the most affluent counties of the State of California.

Notes architectural historian Alison Garcia Kellar of Garavaglia Architecture, who authored the *Historic Resource Evaluation* for Marin City Public Housing, “While it is clear these buildings as a public housing project are unique to Marin County, the project is further distinctive, from a design perspective, as part of a nationwide, post-World War II public housing program. This is largely because of its relationship to the existing hillside site and the way in which the buildings interact with each other. A mini ecosystem was created for this specific community, most of which is essentially intact.”³²

Marin City Public Housing History

Marin City is a misnomer. Marin City is not incorporated as a city; it is a Community Services District of unincorporated Marin County. The area was an idyllic dairy farm in 1942 until the United States was suddenly thrust into World War II. Immediate production of warships was needed for the Pacific arena. In an emergency act, the U.S. Maritime Commission contracted with the Bechtel Corporation to create a shipyard, called “Marinship,” on the Sausalito waterfront. The workforce demands to construct the ships far exceeded local availability insofar as laborers and housing. As a result, recruitment for workers reached out across the country to the Midwest and deep South in order to attract those willing to relocate temporarily to Marin County in order to fulfill the labor needs. The Federal Government acquired the land of the dairy farm and surrounding hills, some 365 acres, in order to build housing—nearly 3,000 wooden buildings were planned and constructed within three months’ time. As quickly as the units were completed, they were filled by some 6,000 migrating individuals—virtually overnight Marin City came into being.

When the war ended in 1945, so too ended the need for the thousands of workers who had flooded into the area to build the ships. Many returned east and home to their families; some decided to remain in California and Marin County; others decided to remain in Marin City, voluntarily or not. At that time, Marin City was a true melting pot of race, evenly mixed of black and white families primarily. At the conclusion of the war, black families who wished to relocate elsewhere in Marin County were met by restrictive racial covenants that prevented them from relocating into housing elsewhere or even purchasing homes. In addition, some black families could not relocate due to financial hardship—now jobless with the close of the shipyards—and so essentially became trapped in the temporary wartime housing. This circumstance remained for the next seven years while the Federal Government debated how and when to dispose of the property.³³

The election of Vera Schultz to the Marin County Board of Supervisors in 1952 began the process of change to a new community for Marin City. She survived a very closely contested and controversial campaign to take a seat in January of 1953 as the first female Supervisor of Marin County. A progressive leader, she immediately took charge of a committee formed to determine

³² Mark Anthony Wilson, “Marin City.”

³³ Evelyn M. Radford, *The Bridge and the Building*, 2nd ed. (Danville, CA: Pradbin Publishers, 1998), 49-52.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

the future of Marin City, advocating for the County to acquire the land and develop low-cost housing in order to replace the deteriorating wartime buildings. Schultz then connected with Mary Summers, the County of Marin's first female Planning Director, who was already and would become more so, an instrumental contributor to the process. Vera Schultz personally traveled to Washington D.C. to request that the Marin City property be relinquished to the County—an act which eventually proved successful. In order for this transfer of land to happen, the Federal Government required that Marin County establish a Redevelopment Agency as well as write and adopt a Housing Code. Both Supervisor Vera Schultz and Mary Summers were critical participants in the process of completing this requirement.³⁴

It was determined to split the redevelopment within the 365 acre site into two distinct projects—the creation of low-rent housing in the southern section and a low-cost residential development on the north.³⁵ Both projects moved forward concurrently, with immediate priority given to the development of the low-rent housing. Housing priority for both developments would be given to displaced Marin City residents.

Throughout 1955, physical planning for the Marin City redevelopment was led by Marin County Planning Director Mary Summers with staff under her direction. Their scope of work encompassed overall Master Planning (including roadway layouts, land use, and zoning district development) and lot subdivision.³⁶

The Federal Government required public approval of a referendum measure before it would agree to grant monies to the County Redevelopment Agency for the purposes of building up to 300 units of low-rent housing.³⁷ Proposition C passed in November 1956 by a 2 to 1 margin enabling the County to move ahead with the project.³⁸ Directly following upon this public approval, the Housing Authority approved the sloping site that had been recommended by both county and federal planners, and initiated the process of demolition and removal of the existing wartime housing.³⁹ Within the month of December, the Housing Authority interviewed nearly 30 architects applying for the opportunity to design the housing project, eventually narrowing the list to eight candidates.⁴⁰

On January 7, 1957, the Housing Authority announced an association between John Carl Warnecke and Aaron G. Green, head of the San Francisco office of Frank Lloyd Wright, as collaborating architects chosen for the housing project, along with a team that included

³⁴ Evelyn M. Radford, *The Bridge and the Building*, 2nd ed. (Danville, CA: Pradbin Publishers, 1998), 53-56.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Preliminary Plans for Redevelopment of Marin City Are Nearing Completion," *Daily Independent Journal*, November 16, 1955, 23.

³⁷ "U.S. Grants Funds To Carry On Marin City Renewal: New Boundaries Must Be Set Up; Referendum Vote Still Essential," *Daily Independent Journal*, September 6, 1956, 1.

³⁸ "County Passes Marin City Redevelopment," *Daily Independent Journal*, November 7, 1956, 1.

³⁹ "Site for Housing Project Selected," *Daily Independent Journal*, December 11, 1956, 6.

⁴⁰ "Architect List Pared to Eight," *Daily Independent Journal*, December 19, 1956, 17.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin and City Planner Lawrence Livingston Jr.⁴¹ Execution of the contract for professional services was reported at the beginning of April.⁴² Aaron Green produced preliminary design drawings presented to the County Housing Authority, and approved, on June 3, 1957. Green “envisioned seven large ‘multi-units’ built at right angles to the hillside contours, so designed as to ‘become a part of the hillside.’”⁴³ Financing for the 300-unit housing project was approved by the federal government’s Public Housing Authority (PHA) on June 27, 1957, with the construction estimated to cost \$4.3 million.⁴⁴

The Master Plan for Marin City, as prepared by County Planning Director Mary Summers, was officially approved by the Marin County Planning Commission on October 14, 1957. Developed drawings for the housing project were presented including an aerial view rendering (**Figure 15**), published in Marin County’s *Daily Independent Journal* the next day.⁴⁵ A rendering followed on November 27, 1957, titled “Preliminary Perspective Typical Court” (**Figure 16**). Both were produced by Barry von Hungen of Aaron Green’s office.⁴⁶

Demolition of wartime housing in the site area for the public housing began in November.⁴⁷ The Housing Authority approved developed plans by Aaron Green, who indicated that once construction costs were available, the project plans would proceed to the PHA, then, if approved, would proceed to the Marin County Board of Supervisors for review and approval.⁴⁸ Thus, the approval process for the rental housing development proceeded through an elaborate gauntlet of various government agencies for the remainder of 1957 and well into 1958, creating public frustration in the community with the perceived slow pace of the project.⁴⁹ Bert Klahn, executive director of the Marin County Housing Authority, announced that that PHA had approved preliminary plans for the low rent housing project and was authorizing John Carl Warnecke and Aaron Green to proceed with preparing construction documents.⁵⁰

A model of the five-story apartment building was published in the *Daily Independent Journal* on April 18, 1958.⁵¹ Plans and specifications for the project were sent to the U.S. Public Housing Administration at the end of September 1958 for final approval.⁵² Aaron Green received a preliminary review of the drawings, and was reported to be quickly making minor revisions requested by the PHA. As a result, the Marin County Housing Authority issued a cautious statement that the project might be ready for bid by November 1, 1958.⁵³

⁴¹ “S.F. Architect Named To Redesign Marin City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, January 8, 1957, 1; “Architects Named for Marin City,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 12, 1957, 3.

⁴² “Clarification of In-Lieu Plan Asked,” *Daily Independent Journal*, April 2, 1957, 4.

⁴³ “Site, Building Plans Shown For Marin City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, June 4, 1957, 14.

⁴⁴ “Government Approves Marin City Financing,” *Daily Independent Journal*, June 27, 1957, 1.

⁴⁵ “Marin City’s Master Plan Gets Approval,” *Daily Independent Journal*, October 15, 1957, 1.

⁴⁶ Archives of Aaron Green, Aaron Green Associates.

⁴⁷ “Beginning Of The End For Marin City Housing,” *Daily Independent Journal*, November 5, 1957, 1.

⁴⁸ “Report Given On Aid To Sausalito Schools,” *Daily Independent Journal*, November 5, 1957, 16.

⁴⁹ “Session Called On Marin City Redevelopment,” *Daily Independent Journal*, February 28, 1958, 1.

⁵⁰ “U.S. Approves Plans For Marin City Houses,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 4, 1958, 2.

⁵¹ “New Look For Marin City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, April 18, 1958, 25.

⁵² “Marin City Plans Go To U.S. Agency,” *Daily Independent Journal*, September 27, 1958, 9.

⁵³ “Bids May Be Called Nov. 1 On Marin City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, October 7, 1958, 12.

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Final plans were dated November 3, 1958 and sent out for bid on November 13.⁵⁴ Twelve general contracting firms expressed interest in bidding on the project.⁵⁵ Five bids were read on December 17 and the low bid of \$3.8 million was awarded to the general contracting firm of Williams and Burrows. This contractor was already working nearby at the major development for the Baptist Theological Seminary campus designed by architect John Carl Warnecke. Aaron Green expressed particular pleasure with the bids, "The figures are under our estimates and we are especially happy with caliber of the firms who bid."⁵⁶ The next day, Supervisor Vera Schultz spoke on a local radio station's program and when asked of her view regarding Marin County accomplishments for 1958, she declared, "Positive advancement for Marin City redevelopment at last," and declared this "an answer to those who claimed Marin City redevelopment was a dream impossible of realization."⁵⁷

The bid was formally accepted by both the Marin Housing Authority and San Francisco Office of the Public Housing Authority on January 15, 1959 with Aaron Green establishing a timetable of 650 days to construct the 300 units of housing and an additional 150 days to install landscaping. The contract also stipulated that 100 of the apartment units would be completed in 400 days.⁵⁸ Construction officially commenced with the General Contractor's move onto the site on February 2, 1959.⁵⁹ Actual building construction was underway by the week of April 6, with report that the contractor was pouring the concrete caissons (below grade pier support structure) and that all 300 units were expected to be completed by summer of 1961.⁶⁰ Housing Authority Director Klahn reported on August 3 that the project is "considerably ahead of schedule" with the first 100 units expected to be completed by March 1960.⁶¹ Still, work slowdowns arose resulting from regional labor disputes. A Teamsters Union strike in San Francisco slowed the delivery of reinforcing steel to the project. A field representative for Aaron Green's office expressed concern that the project could fall behind schedule if the strike were to persist. Still, he indicated the project was still well ahead of schedule and 30 percent complete. The full completion date was projected for November 19, 1960.⁶² By November 2, 1959, Klahn was reporting that the project was 55 percent complete, yet a local carpenter's strike resulting in a six-day walkout slowed construction once again and nearly shut the project down.⁶³ By December 8, it was announced by Director Klahn that two apartment units would be rushed to

⁵⁴ "Bids Called Thursday On Marin City," *Daily Independent Journal*, November 11, 1958, 1.

⁵⁵ "Dozen Developers Interested In Marin City Low Rent Job," *Daily Independent Journal*, December 2, 1958, 3.

⁵⁶ "\$3.8 Million Marin City Bid Lowest," *Daily Independent Journal*, December 18, 1958, 1.

⁵⁷ "Supervisors Sum Up 1958 Accomplishments," *Daily Independent Journal*, December 18, 1958, 6.

⁵⁸ "Initial Work Set To Start Feb. 2 On Marin City Low-Cost Project," *Daily Independent Journal*, January 16, 1959, 11.

⁵⁹ "Redevelopment Starts In Marin City," *Daily Independent Journal*, February 2, 1959, 1.

⁶⁰ "1st Apartments Start Going Up In Marin City," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 8, 1959, 4.

⁶¹ "Housing Work Well Ahead At Marin City," *Daily Independent Journal*, August 4, 1959, 3.

⁶² "Truck Strike Slows Project In Marin City," *Daily Independent Journal*, August 21, 1959, 1.

⁶³ "Improvements Set At Hilarita Project," *Daily Independent Journal*, November 3, 1959, 9; "Strike Over, But Marin City Work Slows," *Daily Independent Journal*, November 11, 1959, 1.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

completion by February in order that prospective residents could preview the interiors. One unit would be furnished for this purpose.⁶⁴

On January 11, 1960, the Marin County Housing Authority began accepting applications for rentals of the apartments, with priority given to residents displaced by the removal of wartime housing in order to make way for the construction of the new housing underway.⁶⁵ Also on January 11, the Marin County Grand Jury, after a procedural investigation of the project, presented the Marin County Board of Supervisors with a resolution commending the Redevelopment Agency and the Housing Authority for “adding to the beauty of Marin County and for the handling of a project of this magnitude in an orderly, economical and expeditious manner.” They praised the transformation of wartime Marin City, from “one of the county’s most blighted areas into a new planned community,” also noting, “No Marin City family has been forced to leave the area due to redevelopment. No direct cash outlay by the County of Marin and no direct financial obligation will fall upon the taxpayers of Marin County.”⁶⁶

During the months of February and March, a series of town meetings were held to discuss with Marin City residents questions regarding progress of the project, eligibility matters, and tenant leases and responsibilities, as well as the actual physical transition between the wartime housing and the new apartment buildings.⁶⁷ At the beginning of March, Housing Authority Director Bert Klahn announced that families were expected to start moving into the first apartment units between March 15 and April 1. He indicated that the contractor expected to have the units ready by that time. Within 35 to 40 days, Klahn estimated that 135 families would be occupying the new buildings. A public dedication was scheduled for March 19.⁶⁸ On March 7, Klahn reported that there were 382 applications from Marin City wartime housing tenants for spaces in the new low-rent housing and that the project was 80 percent complete.⁶⁹

“The front door of Marin County has been preserved in beauty...by a respect for nature and working with her to preserve beauty...” These were the words of tribute spoken by County Supervisor Vera Schultz at the formal dedication ceremony held at the Marin City project on March 19, 1960. A *Daily Independent Journal* reporter noted that, “Mrs. Schultz cited the seven-year struggle to get the redevelopment project underway and noted that the ‘stormy struggle’ had been rewarded with the producing of the ‘most beautiful low rent residential installations in the United States.’” U.S. Public Housing Authority regional director J.G. Melville, who originally negotiated the purchase of the land in 1942 for the federal government, also spoke at the ceremony, held on the lawn in front of the new administration building.⁷⁰ Both architects Aaron Green and John Carl Warnecke attended and spoke at the ceremony, with Warnecke noting that, “this is the first link in transforming a rundown relic to one of the finest communities in the

⁶⁴ “2 Marin City Apartments To Be Rushed,” *Daily Independent Journal*, December 8, 1959, 8.

⁶⁵ “First Requests For Marin City Housing Filed,” *Daily Independent Journal*, January 11, 1960, 1.

⁶⁶ “Jury Praises Marin City’s Redevelopment,” *Daily Independent Journal*, January 20, 1960, 19.

⁶⁷ “Marin City Meeting On Housing Slated,” *Daily Independent Journal*, February 12, 1960, 2; “Meeting Set On Housing,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 21, 1960, 14.

⁶⁸ “Marin City Move Will Start Soon,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 2, 1960, 22.

⁶⁹ “Applications Total 382 At Marin City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 9, 1960, 7.

⁷⁰ “First 6 Buildings Dedicated In Marin City Development,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 19, 1960, 1.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

world.” Following the ceremony, the public was invited to inspect the first six completed buildings.⁷¹ More than 300 attended the ceremonies, some of them prospective tenants. The public was informed that rents would range from \$35 to \$84 a month and prospective tenants would have to meet certain economic requirements. For example, a family with three or more children was eligible if annual income was not in excess of \$5,000.⁷²

On March 21, Rev. S.L. Banks of the Village Chapel of Marin City spoke to an audience during a meeting of the Marin City Tenant Council emphasizing the importance of Marin City citizens taking pride in their new homes. “The new low-rent housing facilities are good; we should show the same fight in keeping them good as we did to get them.” “Marin City is the greatest experiment in democracy” he went on. “This is a community where Southern whites and Southern Negroes have learned to live together in harmony...and this is our opportunity.”⁷³

Moving day was postponed until April 15 after an inspection of the contractor’s work was found unacceptable to the architect and the Housing Authority. The additional time would allow correction of the deficiencies.⁷⁴ Final inspection was scheduled for Friday, April 15 at 8:00 am. Housing Authority Executive Director Bert Klahn indicated that he thought that the inspection and signing of the acceptance would be completed by 9:00 am by which time the tenants could immediately begin to move in.⁷⁵

True to Klahn’s schedule, the inspection and signed acceptance were concluded that Friday and the first 40 families began to move into completed low-rise apartment units, noting features they had never experienced in the years living in the wartime housing: sidewalks, street lights, their own yard with lawn and private terrace, bathtubs (only showers before), sliding glass windows, wood ceilings that pitched with the roof supported by exposed beams, drapery, double sinks in the kitchen, and forced-air heaters. Apartments faced onto a landscaped court that had redwood and concrete benches with sandboxes for children. Klahn noted that, “there is no segregation or discrimination in the project. Families are placed side-by-side according to their needs and size of families.”⁷⁶ Marin City’s oldest resident, Catherine “Mother” Washington, 99, was the first resident to move into the new apartments. When Director of the Marin County Housing Authority Bert Klahn greeted Mrs. Washington, he asked, “Well, how do you like it?” She gave him a smile that moved a cascade of wrinkles in her face. “Son,” she replied, “I never expected to live in anything like this.” She strolled into her one-bedroom apartment, glanced at the pastel walls and beamed ceilings, and remarked, “This is the best ever.”⁷⁷

The tenants met with Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin on the evening of June 27, 1960 to discuss landscaping underway around the housing campus. A representative of the Housing

⁷¹ “Housing Dedicated, Marin City Buildings Await First Tenants,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 21, 1960, 1.

⁷² “Marin City’s New Housing Dedicated,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 20, 1960, 19.

⁷³ “Upkeep of Marin City Emphasized,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 22, 1960, 4.

⁷⁴ “Marin City Move Delayed A Week,” *Daily Independent Journal*, April 6, 1960, 1.

⁷⁵ “Friday May Be Moving Day In Marin City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, April 12, 1960, 11.

⁷⁶ “Big Move Gets Underway In Marin City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, April 15, 1960, 1.

⁷⁷ “Big Move Gets by Marin City Families,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 16, 1960, 2.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Authority indicated that tenants would be responsible for their landscaping and gardening after the present work was accepted.⁷⁸

At the end of November, the Housing Authority announced another open house for the public, this time at one of the newly completed five-story apartment buildings to review three unit types of one-, two-, and three-bedrooms.⁷⁹

In March 1961, the County of Marin received a national award as an “All-America City” in which the 300-unit housing project was featured along with the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Civic Center, then under construction, as well as parkland being developed, including the prospect of a 53,000-acre Point Reyes National Seashore. The annual contest was sponsored by the National Municipal League and *Look* magazine, in which both cities and counties “must show noteworthy accomplishments through alert, continuing citizen participation.” The award announcement declared that “Marin citizens met in their own area a problem facing the whole nation—the rescuing of our natural scenic resources. Proud of the rare natural beauty of their county, citizen conservation groups in Marin have fought subdividers and saved thousands of acres of shore and woodland for the creation of county, state and federal parks.”

Marin County Administrator Donald Jensen, who prepared and submitted the application on behalf of the County, noted, “Because of citizen action, coming generations will reside in a planned community with beauty and recreation available and preserved.” The reporting in the *Daily Independent Journal*, in a caption for an artist’s rendering of the public housing project, indicated that, “preservation of natural beauty in this area, too, contributed to Marin County’s winning an All-America Cities award.”⁸⁰ Jensen noted, “Although there may appear to be little similarity between a redevelopment project, a Civic Center, and development of recreational areas, they are all part of the same goals of the citizens of the community. These goals are primarily to preserve for Marin County the beauty that has made it unique and to provide for orderly development in a manner that will make it a beautiful place in which to live.”⁸¹

By the beginning of April 1961, the Marin County Housing Authority reported that all 300 units of the low-rent housing project were filled. The organization was accepting applications for residents outside Marin County and already had received 100 unsolicited requests by this time.⁸²

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) took exception to the low-rent housing project, reporting to Congress in April 1962 that design, planning, and construction costs were “unnecessarily wasteful” due to “uneconomical design features and use of expensive materials.” The auditors admitted that the overall cost was below the legal maximum allowed for the project.

⁷⁸ “Marin City Tenants Hear Architect Talk,” *Daily Independent Journal*, June 28, 1960, 10.

⁷⁹ “Open House Slated At New Marin City Apartments,” *Daily Independent Journal*, December 1, 1960, 16.

⁸⁰ “Marin Wins National Award As ‘All-America City,’” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 15, 1961, 1;

“Administrator Puts County Over As All-America City,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 15, 1961, 17;

“Redevelopment Of A Slum Helped Marin Win City Contest,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 15, 1961, 17;

“Marin Beauty Preserved Through Work,” *Daily Independent Journal*, March 15, 1961, 18.

⁸¹ “Tense Moments Due In Contest: Is Marin Best City?,” *Daily Independent Journal*, October 28, 1960, 21.

⁸² “Low-Rent Housing Applications Still Are Being Taken,” *Daily Independent Journal*, April 4, 1961, 11.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Still, they sharply objected to many features of the five-story buildings that they believed could have been made even less expensive, such as composition roofing instead of clay tile and laundry yard fencing from some less expensive material than concrete block, as well as objecting to outside corridor access, a private balcony for each unit, and view windows.

The Governor's Advisory Commission and the Public Housing Commissioner all defended the project as well as Marin County Housing Authority Director Bert Klahn who stated that the project was not extravagant in any way, adding "We are proud of it. We feel it is a step in the right direction for future housing projects."⁸³ Klahn declared, "This is the proper time for housing authorities to take a firm stand in the promotion of imaginative and resourceful design."⁸⁴ Architect Aaron Green blasted the report, stating, "This report is the kind of mediocrity in Government which is responsible for the unfortunate image public housing projects have presented nationally for a long period of time."⁸⁵ We considered the needs of the people who will occupy the homes and the relationship of the buildings to the community. The people of Marin are extremely aware of the beauties that surround them." Green continued, "We don't feel we have a thing to apologize for. The architects dedicated themselves to do a better job than the usual horrible examples of public housing throughout the country."⁸⁶

Later in the month of August, Representative Clem Miller spoke before Congress to address the criticism of the cost and design by the GAO. Miller praised the design and stated that the GAO was "over-reaching itself," adding, "When it [GAO] fulfills its function of saving taxpayers money, detecting fraud, deceit, waste, it is superb. When it is passing judgment, it is out of its field." Miller also noted that, "to some degree we have become a nation of accountants. The figure sheets have become sacred talisman. Among other things this leads to the destruction of beauty." He said that one only need look at the buildings going up in Washington, D.C. to see "some of the most graceless architecture conceived by man."⁸⁷

In December 1963, noted urban design expert, Dr. William Wheaton, a member of the United Nations Committee on Housing and Planning, blasted builders of private and public housing in the United States and called upon housing authorities to insist on good design for public projects. Both public and private housing projects, Wheaton said, are works of "unparalleled dullness done on an inhuman scale" and "fearful places for the human spirit..." He singled out the Marin City redevelopment project as an example of how elegance can be reached despite a low budget. "Happily, it had good architects (Aaron Green and John Carl Warnecke)," he said. Wheaton concluded that this proved how "solid design" can triumph over "ill-founded" criticism.⁸⁸

⁸³ "Marin City Project Is Hotly Defended," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 7, 1962, 1, 7.

⁸⁴ "Cost Of Marin Public Housing Attacked," *Daily Independent Journal*, August 2, 1962, 8.

⁸⁵ "U.S. Auditors: Marin City - 'Legal' But 'Wasteful'," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 7, 1962, 3.

⁸⁶ "Marin City Project Is Hotly Defended," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 7, 1962, 1, 7.

⁸⁷ "Rep. Miller Defends Marin City Housing," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 22, 1962, 16.

⁸⁸ "Expert's Blast at 'Awful' Private Home Projects," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 12, 1963, 12.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

The federal Public Housing Authority agreed with the experts and the architect. In November 1964, during a ceremony held in Washington, D.C., the apartment development was awarded "First Honors" for design excellence from among 700 entries nationwide and regarded as "outstanding" by a jury of architects and specialists. Their statement: "This highly original design meets the challenge of the site's topography and dramatic situation. Each floor of the hillside apartment building is accessible from grade without ramps or stairs. The buildings on the lower part of the site are intimate in scale, carefully detailed, and show a sensitive selection and use of materials." Federal housing authorities declared that this project represented a "break-through" to better federal housing design.⁸⁹

Architects Aaron Green and John Carl Warnecke both flew to Washington D.C. to be honored during the ceremony. The citation included Planning Consultant Lawrence Livingston Jr. and Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin. Green, before departure, called the award a vindication of his contention that matters of design, practicality, and aesthetics could be evaluated only by competent experts, stating, "The domination of public architecture by bookkeepers and accountants can only result in mediocrity. Imagination and practical creativity in the design of the Marin City project brought higher standards and better living to many citizens without increasing costs."⁹⁰

For Aaron Green, the success of Marin City led directly to his being selected, in November 1966, from among sixteen applicants as the prime consultant to master plan the Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco. The Hunters Point Joint Housing Committee, a volunteer group representing an amalgam of individuals, clubs, church groups, and poverty program organizations, told the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, after a contentious three-month period of meetings with the Agency, that they wanted Aaron Green to plan the redevelopment of their neighborhood. This marked a first in American urban renewal, an Agency spokesman claimed: consultation with citizens from a target area to select the consultant for urban renewal.⁹¹

⁸⁹ "Marin City Honored for Design," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 23, 1964, 4.

⁹⁰ "Marin City Project Design Wins Award," *Daily Independent Journal*, October 21, 1964, 16.

⁹¹ "A Meeting Of Minds on Hunters Pt.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 2, 1966, 2.

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Books

Green, Aaron G. and de Nevi, Donald P. *An Architecture for Democracy: The Marin County Civic Center*. San Francisco: Grendon Publishing, 1990.

Radford, Evelyn M. *The Bridge and the Building*. 2nd ed. Danville, CA: Pradbin Publishers, 1998.

_____. *Vera, First Lady of Marin: A biography of Vera Lucille Smith Schultz*. Sonoma, CA: Hilltop Publishing Co., 1998.

Walker, Peter and Melanie Simo. *Invisible Gardens: the Search for Modernism in the American Landscape*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.

Documents

Garcia Kellar, Alison. *Golden Gate Village Marin City, CA: Historic Resource Evaluation*. San Francisco: Garavaglia Architecture, June 2015.

Newspapers

Daily Independent Journal, San Rafael, CA, 1952-1964.

San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco, CA, 1957-1964.

Periodicals

Wilson, Mark Anthony. "Marin City: The rich history and current challenges of a historic African-American enclave." *Marin Magazine*, Volume 11, Issue 12 (December 2015).

_____. "Paving New Roads: Marin County's first female Supervisor, Vera Schultz, was a woman ahead of her time." *Marin Magazine*, Volume 12, Issue 9 (September 2016).

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Aaron Green Archive

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 29.8 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.871380 | Longitude: -122.509191 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.871485 | Longitude: -122.507462 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.866836 | Longitude: -122.507350 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.866710 | Longitude: -122.510800 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.868663 | Longitude: -122.513027 |
| 6. Latitude: 37.869353 | Longitude: -122.512096 |

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Bounded on the north by Drake Avenue and Donahue Street, on the east by Highway 101, and on the west and south by the wooded hills and open space of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is that which is designated by the Assessor's Map for the property and historically defined as the complete site for the development.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Daniel Ruark, Architect
organization: _____
street & number: 61 Buckelew Street
city or town: Marin City state: California zip code: 94965
e-mail: daniel@danielruarkarchitect.com
telephone: (415) 302-7932
date: March 2017; Revised May 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Photo Log

Name of Property: Marin City Public Housing

City or Vicinity: Marin City

County: Marin

State: California

Photographer: Daniel Ruark

Date Photographed: Photos 1-28 October 20, 2016; Photos 29-33 April 27, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, looking northwest
- 2 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, looking west
- 3 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, entry elevation with each level at grade, looking west
- 4 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, private balcony elevation, looking east
- 5 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, rear elevation, looking north
- 6 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, entry access gallery, looking north
- 7 of 33 Type A five-story apartment buildings, looking east along Drake Avenue (from upper floor of building)
- 8 of 33 Type A five-story apartment buildings, looking west along Drake Avenue
- 9 of 33 Type A five-story apartment buildings, looking west
- 10 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, looking northeast, integral color block enclosure of laundry yard, entry to laundry room at right, on grade
- 11 of 33 Type A five-story apartment building, looking northeast, integral color block enclosure of laundry yard
- 12 of 33 Steel stair tower addition representative of owner's security alterations (not required by Building Code) to four of the eight Type A buildings
- 13 of 33 Access stair and walkway from Cole Drive down to area of low-rise buildings, looking northeast with Type B two-story apartment building in background; concrete stair likely original, railings have been updated to be Code compliant; Silk Oak trees conform to the Halprin landscape plan

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

- 14 of 33 Walkways behind and between Type B two-story apartment building, looking northeast; concrete walks original with paved "island" altered from open lawn; Silk Oak trees conform to the Halprin landscape plan
- 15 of 33 Walkways in front and between Type B two-story apartment building, looking west; concrete walks original
- 16 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking southeast
- 17 of 33 Typical gable end of Type B two-story apartment building, looking southeast
- 18 of 33 Walkway and stairs down to common court between typical cluster of Type B and E apartment buildings, looking northeast with Type B two-story apartment building in background; concrete stair likely original, railings updated to be Code compliant
- 19 of 33 Common court between typical cluster of Type B and E apartment buildings, looking northeast with Type E one-story on left, Type B two-story on right
- 20 of 33 Common court between typical cluster of Type B and E apartment buildings, looking northeast with Type E one-story at center
- 21 of 33 Type E two-story apartment building, looking southeast, showing original wood patio fence screen at center; original concrete walkways, mature trees conform to landscape plan
- 22 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking northeast
- 23 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking northwest
- 24 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking northeast, showing original horizontal board and square batten screen fencing of patios
- 25 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking northwest, with original concrete walkway
- 26 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking northwest, view into patio/yard
- 27 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking north
- 28 of 33 Type B two-story apartment building, looking northwest, with original concrete block service yard wall for drying laundry, original concrete walkways
- 29 of 33 Type E one-story apartment building, looking south

Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

- 30 of 33 Type C one-story apartment building, looking east
- 31 of 33 Administration and Maintenance building, looking west
- 32 of 33 Type C one-story apartment building, looking northeast from 5th floor of adjacent Type A building
- 33 of 33 Type A five-story apartment buildings upper part of photo, low-rise apartment buildings at right of center, looking west along Drake Avenue (from upper floor of Type A building); corresponds to Figure 30

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.460 et seq.).

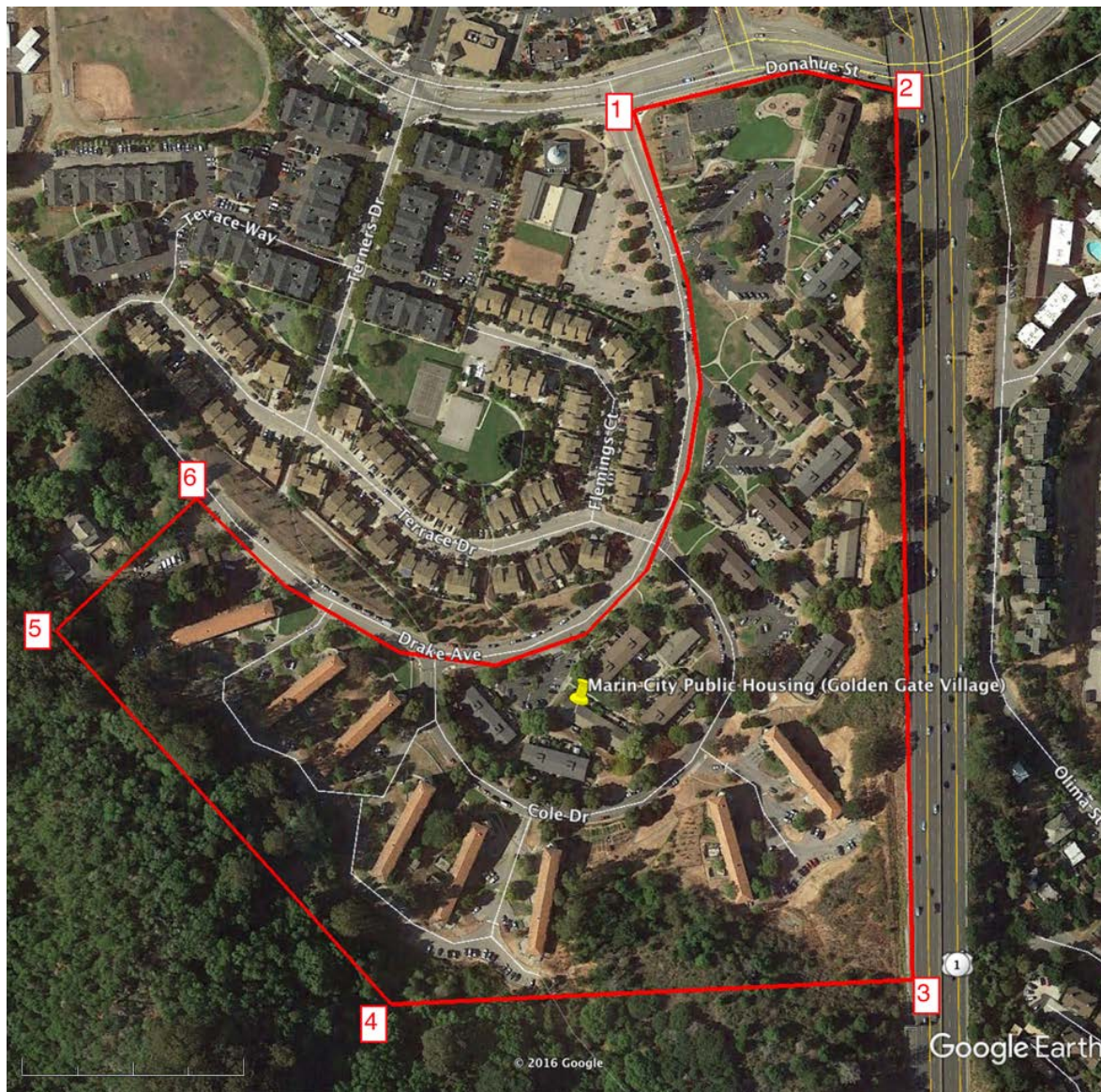
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 1. Location Map

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.871380 | Longitude: -122.509191 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.871485 | Longitude: -122.507462 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.866836 | Longitude: -122.507350 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.866710 | Longitude: -122.510800 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.868663 | Longitude: -122.513027 |
| 6. Latitude: 37.869353 | Longitude: -122.512096 |



Google Earth

feet 1000
meters 300



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 2. Sketch Map/Photo Key



Base drawing from Presentation Site Plan prepared by Aaron Green Associates, circa 1957
Source: Aaron Green Archives

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 4. Marin City circa 1942; Temporary wartime housing for ship builders, future site of Marin City Public Housing in upper third of photograph
Source: Sausalito Historical Society



Figure 5. Marin City circa 1943; Looking west from future site of Highway 101, future site of Marin City Public Housing in foreground; Source: Sausalito Historical Society



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 6. Marin City circa 1944; Looking east, future site of Marin City Public Housing in upper third of photograph; Source: Sausalito Historical Society



Figure 7. Marinship, Sausalito, circa 1944; Marin City at upper right
Source: Sausalito Historical Society



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 8. Marin County Supervisor Vera Schultz, 1960; Source: *Marin Independent Journal*



Figure 9. Marin County Planning Director Mary Summers, circa 1960
Source: The Marin Conservation League



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 10. Architect Aaron Green in his San Francisco Office, circa 1963
Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 11. Architect John Carl Warnecke, 1954; Source: San Francisco History Center



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 12. Landscape Architect Lawrence Halprin, circa 1960; Source: AP Photo



Figure 13. City Planner Lawrence Livingston, Jr., 1956; Source: San Francisco History Center



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 14. August 1, 1957 Frank Lloyd Wright visits site and studies a topographical map for future Marin County Civic Center; Marin County Planning Director Mary Summers at center, Frank Lloyd Wright, right of center, Aaron Green, Marin City Public Housing Architect, far right (three gentlemen at left unidentified)
Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 15. Aerial view rendering created by the Aaron Green office, published in the *Daily Independent Journal* October 15, 1957; Source: Aaron Green Archive

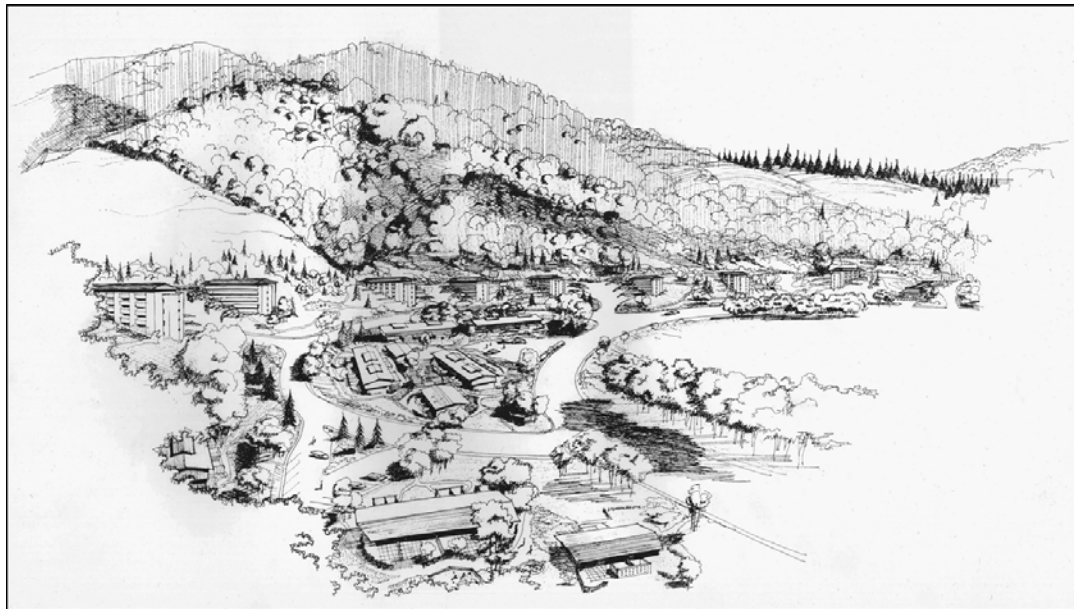
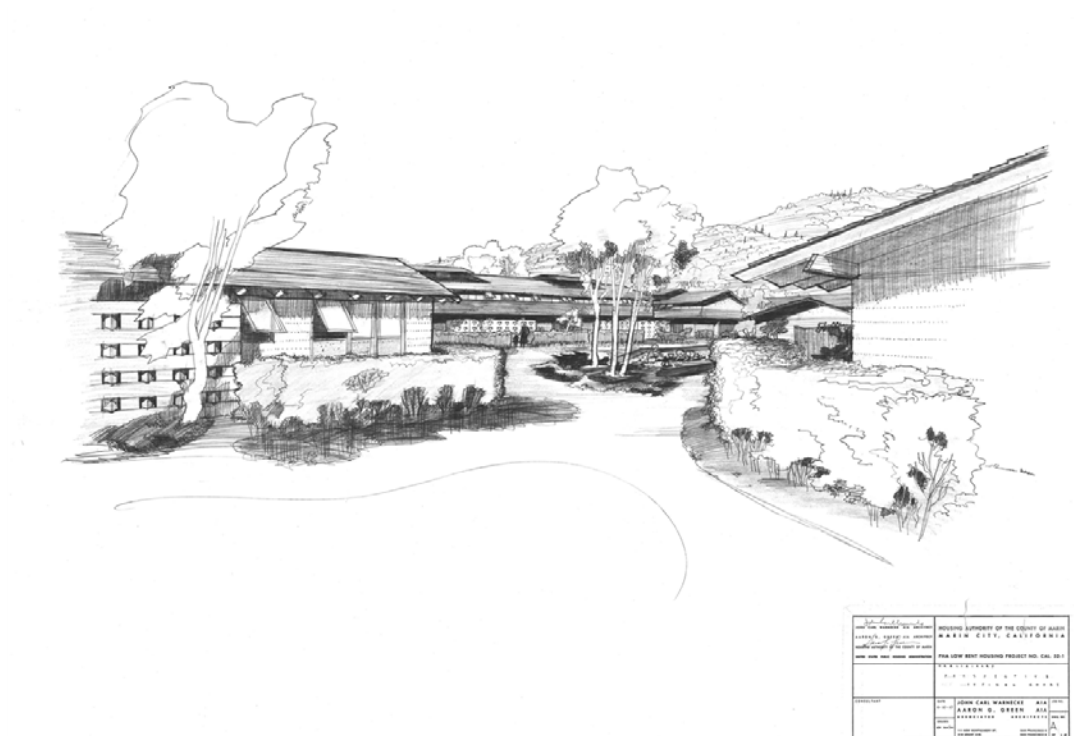


Figure 16. View of low-rise apartments, looking towards common courtyard, created by the Aaron Green office, dated November 27, 1957; Source: Aaron Green Archive



MARIN CITY PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA PREPARED BY: AARON GREEN ARCHITECTS 1957	
DRAWN BY: AARON GREEN CHECKED BY: AARON GREEN DATE: 11/27/57	SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0" SHEET: 1 OF 1

Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 17. Presentation Documents, Type A Apartments, Cross Sections, circa 1957
Source: Aaron Green Archive

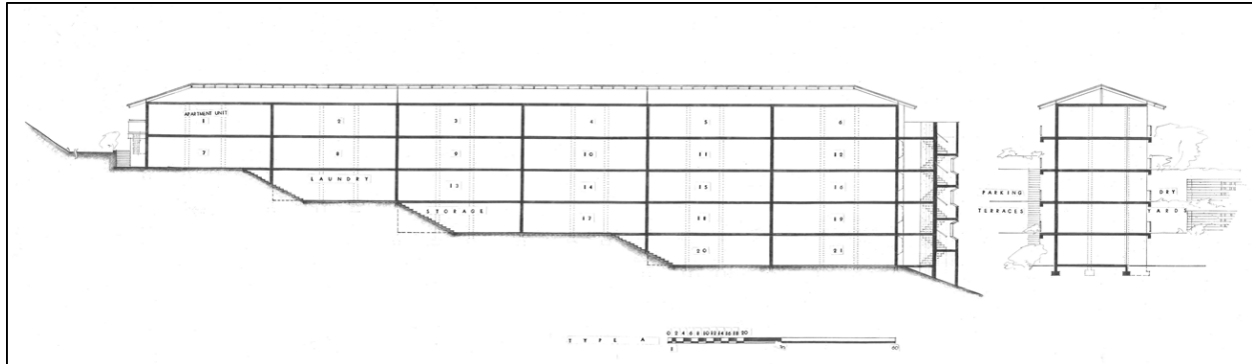
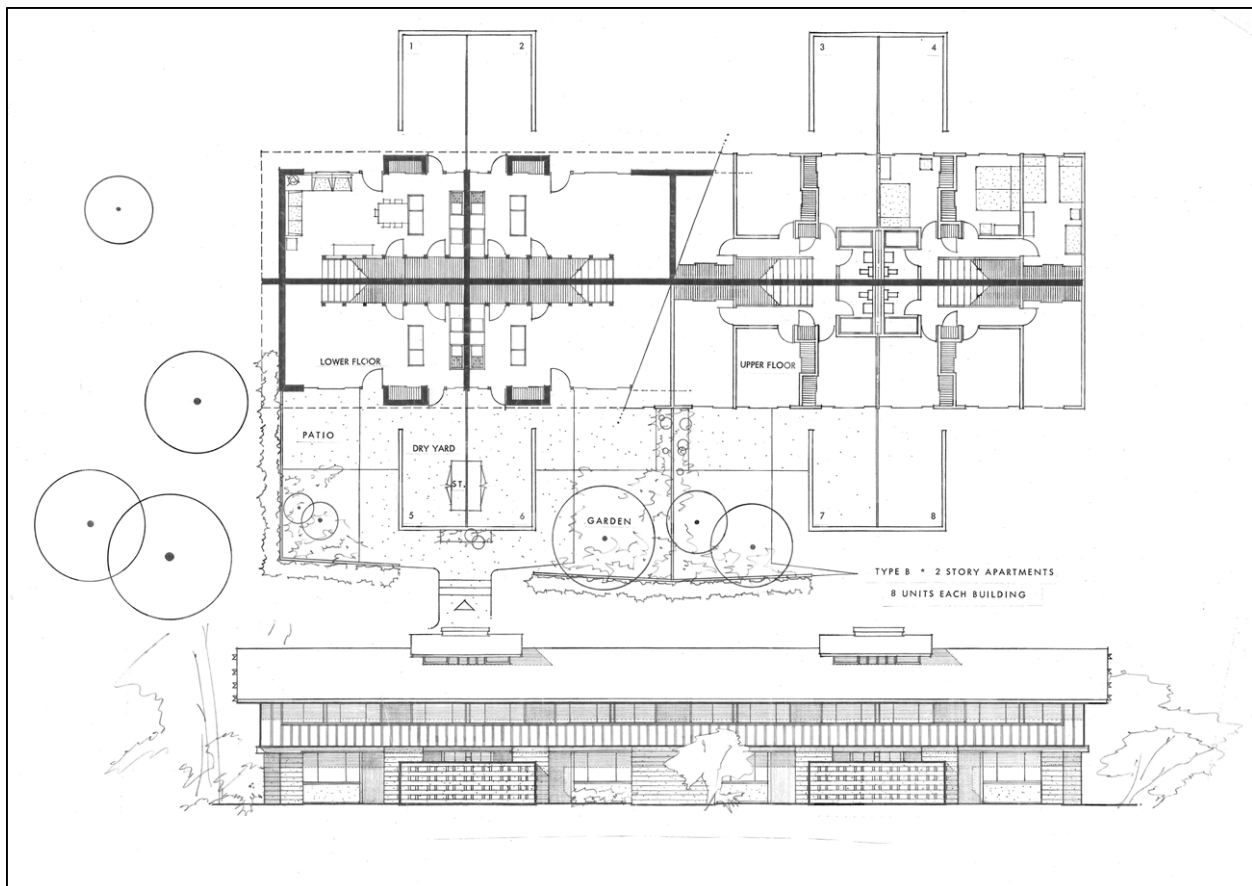


Figure 18. Presentation Documents, Type B Apartments, Floor Plans and Elevation, circa 1957
Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 19. Presentation Documents, Type C Apartments, Floor Plan, circa 1957
Source: Aaron Green Archive

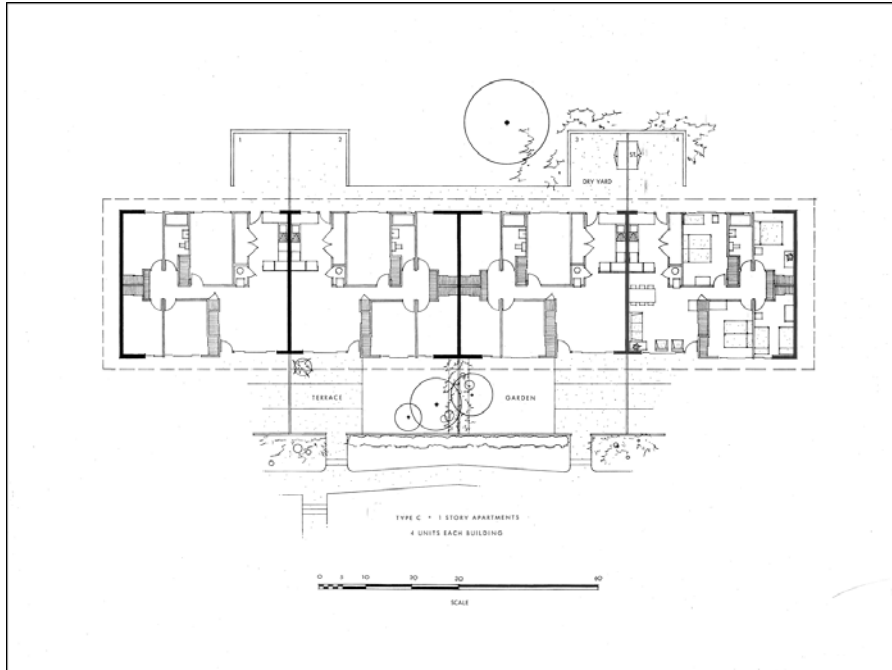
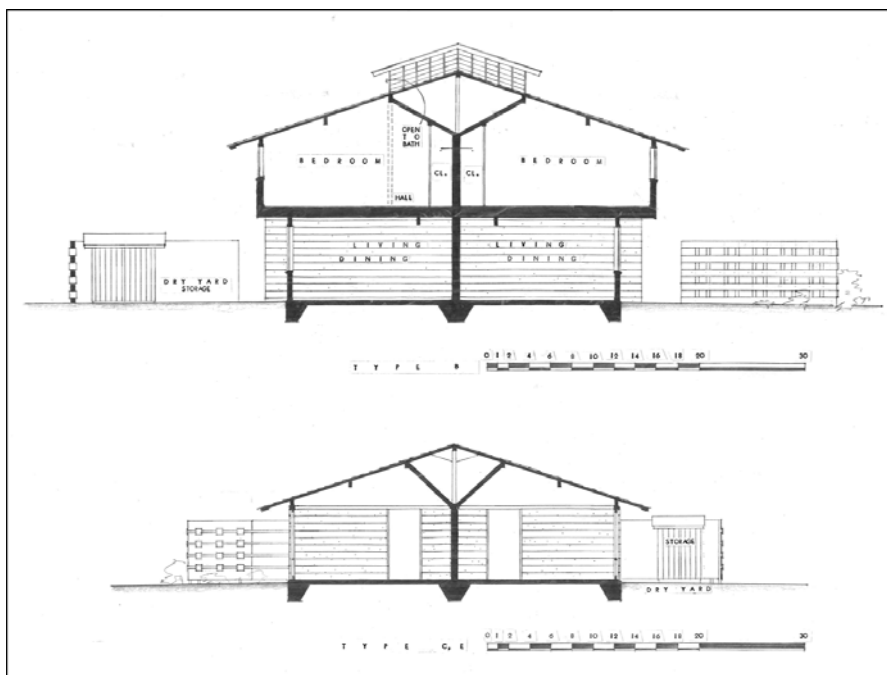


Figure 20. Presentation Documents, Type B, C, and E Building Sections, circa 1957
Source: Aaron Green Archive



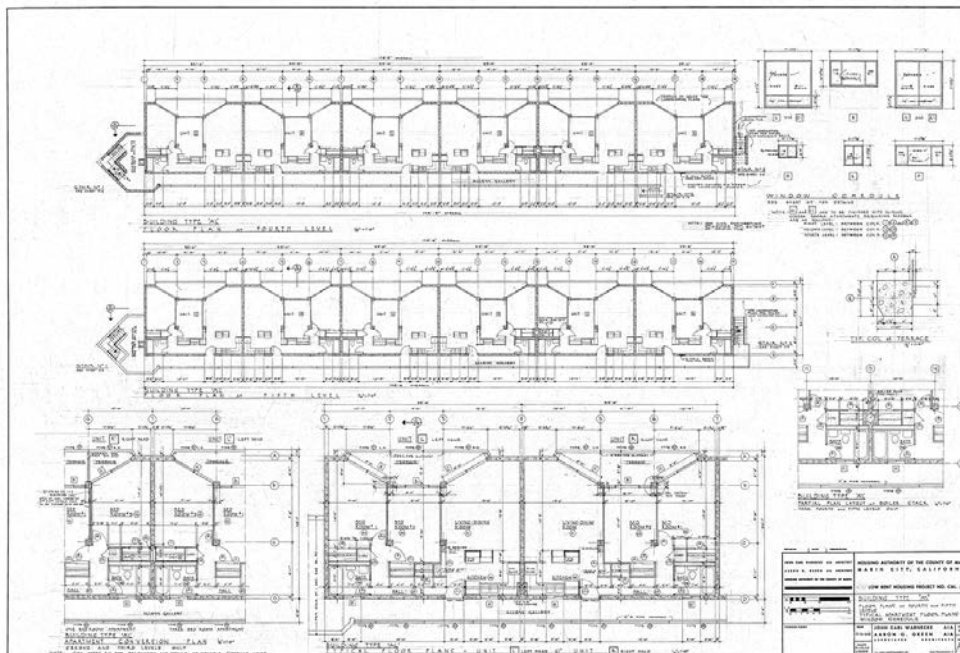
Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 21. Scale model for the Type A apartment buildings, photos of model published by the *Daily Independent Journal*, April 18, 1958; Source: University of California Environmental Design Archives



Figure 22. Construction Documents, Type A Apartments, Floor Plans, November 3, 1958
Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 23. Construction Documents, Type A Apartments, Exterior Elevations, November 3, 1958; Source: Aaron Green Archive

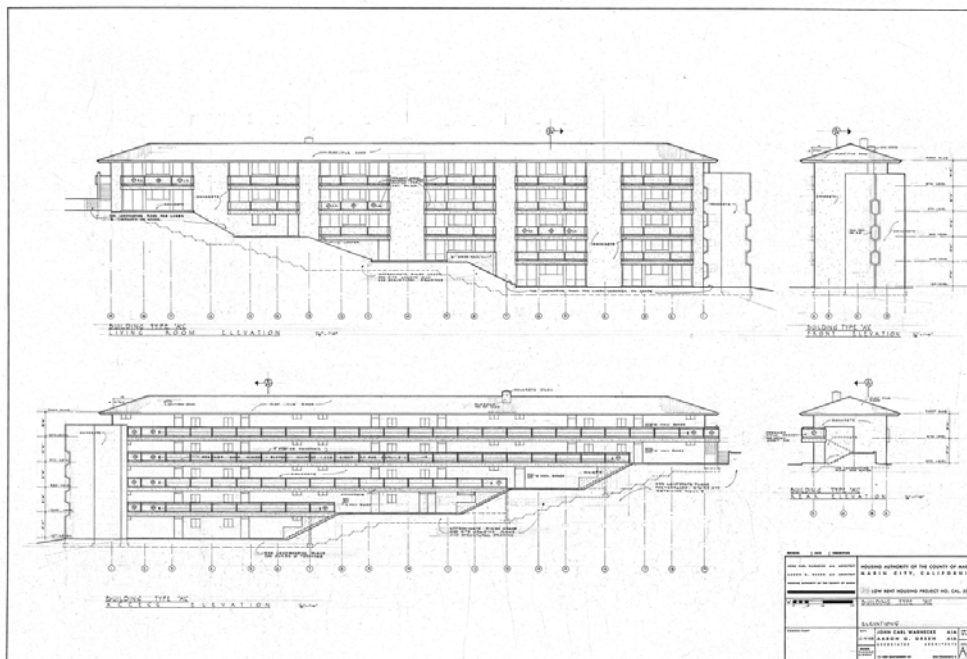
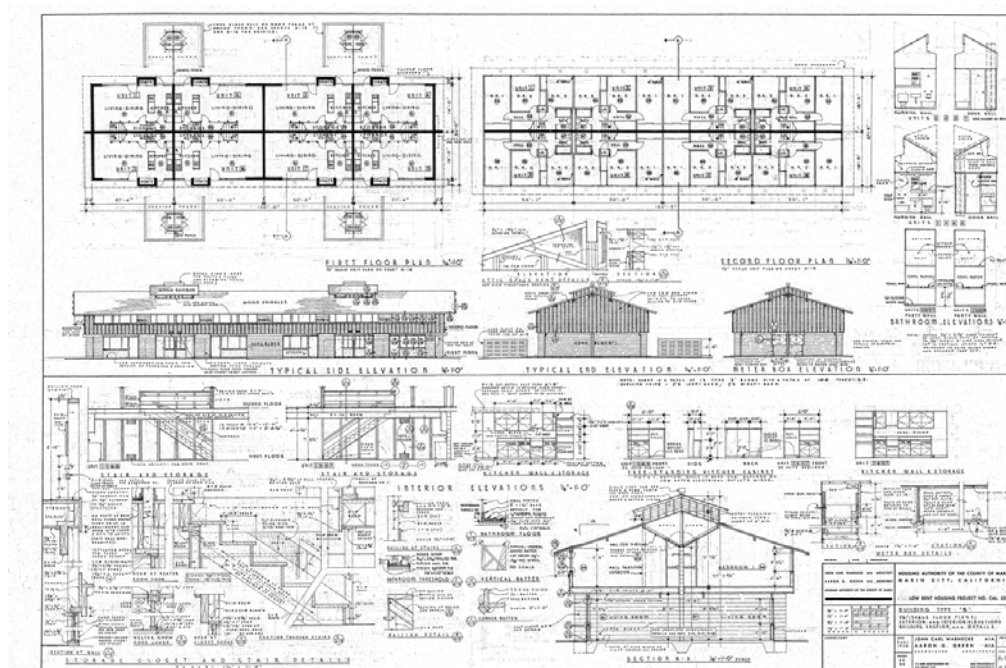


Figure 24. Construction Documents, Type B Apartments, November 3, 1958
Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 26. Under construction, January 1960, five-story Type A apartment buildings, looking west; Photographer Ken Molino; Source: Sausalito Historical Society



Figure 27. Under construction, March 1960, five-story Type A apartment buildings separated from typical 1942 wartime housing by new Drake Avenue, looking southwest
San Francisco News-Call Bulletin Photograph; Source: San Francisco History Center



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 28. Under construction, October 1960, Drake Avenue separates old and new, aerial view looking southeast; Photographer: Aero Portraits; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 29. View from fifth floor of Type A apartment building looking east, circa early 1961
Photographer: Gerold Ratto; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 30. View from fifth floor of Type A apartment building looking west, circa early 1961
Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 31. View of typical on-grade entries for Type A apartment buildings, circa early 1961
Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



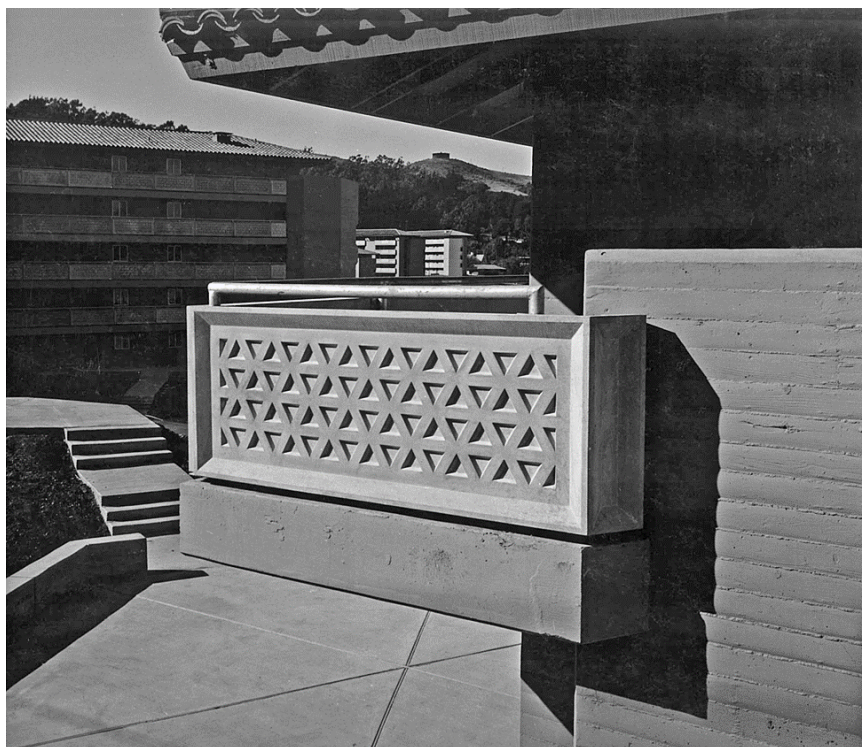
Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 32. View from terrace of Type A apartment building looking north to Richardson Bay, circa early 1961; Photographer unknown; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 33. Detail of fifth floor corner of entry galley, at rear of Type A apartment buildings, circa early 1961; Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 34. View of Type A, B, C, and E apartment buildings looking southwest, circa early 1961
Photographer: Gerold Ratto; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 35. View of Type A, B, and E apartment buildings looking southwest, circa early 1961;
Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 36. View of Type A, B, C, and E apartment buildings looking southwest, circa early 1961
Photographer: Gerold Ratto; Source: Aaron Green Archive

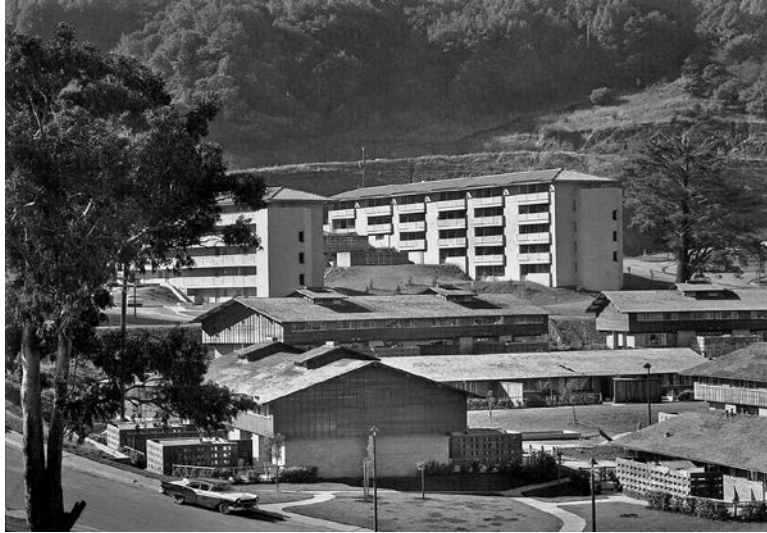
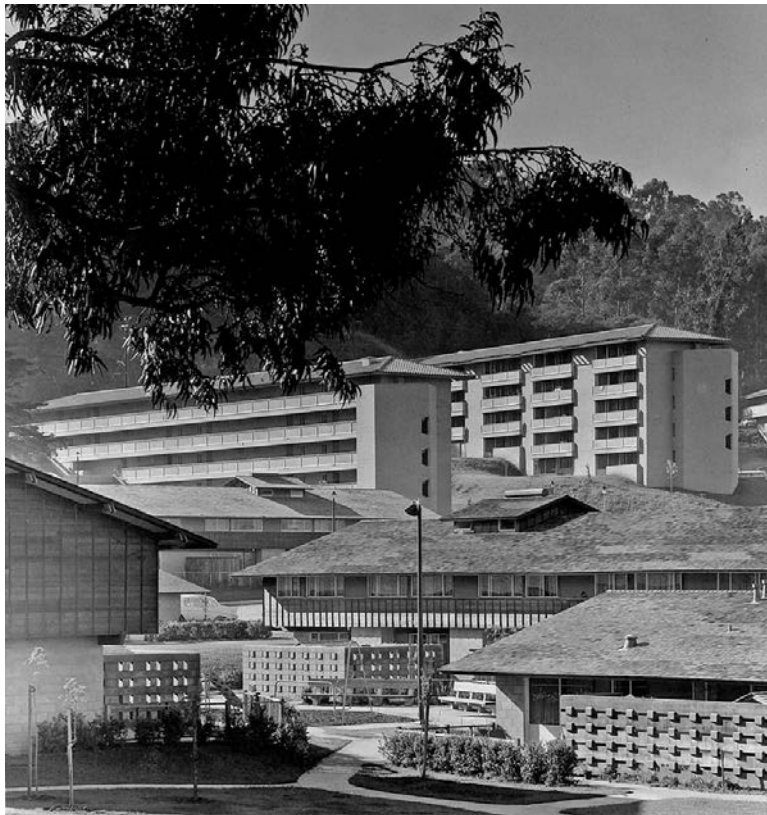


Figure 37. Detail view of apartments looking southwest, circa early 1961
Photographer: Gerold Ratto; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 38. View of two-story Type B apartment building looking west, circa early 1961;
Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 39. View of two-story Type B apartment building looking northeast, circa early 1961
Photographer: Gerold Ratto; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 40. View of two-story Type B apartment building and community courtyard, looking east, circa early 1961; Photographer: Gerold Ratto; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 41. View of Type A apartment building looking southwest from playground, circa early 1961; Photographer unknown; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 42. Type B apartment, second floor hallway and stair, circa early 1961
Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 43. Type E one-bedroom apartment, view to kitchen from dining area, circa early 1961
Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing
Name of Property

Marin, California
County and State

Figure 44. Type E one-bedroom apartment, kitchen, circa early 1961
Photographer: Ken Molino; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Figure 45. Public Housing Administration First Honor Award for Design Excellence
Marin City Public Housing, 1964; Source: Aaron Green Archive



Marin City Public Housing

Name of Property

Marin, California

County and State

Figure 46. Letter to Aaron Green from Alan Bruce, Marin County Administrator, 1971
Source: Aaron Green Archive

<p>ALAN BRUCE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR</p>	<p>OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR COUNTY OF MARIN CIVIC CENTER SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA TELEPHONE 479-1100</p>	<p>JOHN F. BARROWS THOMAS F. CAMPANELLA ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS</p>
--	--	---

June 28, 1971

Mr. Aaron Green
319 Grant Avenue
San Francisco, Ca., 94108

Dear Aaron:

I would like to take the occasion of my departure from County government to extend a special commendation for your architectural services to Marin County.

You and I have worked together for nearly 14 years. Looking back, several aspects of your working approach stand out:

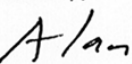
You always have been patient and temperate in dealing with a cantankerous governmental client, characterized by divided authority and frequent changes in course.

You have taken unusual pains to learn, understand, and design to functional needs and inter-relationships.

You have kept within budget, yet kept an eye on future costs.

You have managed with apparent ease, from beginning to post completion caretaking, projects of great magnitude and complexity.

You have on occasion and with courage talked back to the client as a true architect must.

Sincerely,

Alan Bruce
County Administrator

AB:dm