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Some Social Implications of
House and Site Plan Design
at Easter Hill Village: A Case Study

By Clare C. Cooper

University of California, Berkeley: Institute of Urban and Regional
Development
Center for Planning and Development
Research

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I

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Clearly the architect and the planner are social planners as well - although perhaps unwillingly and unwittingly so. The execution of their house and site plans may influence the social life, behavior, and satisfaction of people to an extent not fully appreciated up to now.¹

Introduction

In its initial conception, the purpose of this study was to test the efficacy of a designed object by first, establishing the objectives of the designer, and second, questioning the object's users to discover how fully these objectives had been realized. In designing something as mundane as, say, a coffee pot, the designer could have one of a number of objectives: he could design it to be as heat-retentive as possible, as light as possible, as cheap as possible, or a combination of these. We could run a series of experiments in the laboratory and thus test the success of these objectives. The designer may also have other, less tangible objectives - to make the coffee pot visually attractive, to make it "look" expensive, etc. These objectives cannot be tested in the laboratory; we must ask the users of the coffee pot, and draw our conclusions from the consensus of their opinions.

At the outset, then, we must establish the point that as regards testing, there are two kinds of design-objectives; those that can be

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1. Festinger, L., S. Schachter, and K. Back, Social Pressures in Informal Groups, New York: Harper Bros., 1950, p. 179.

tested in the laboratory, or by a computer, and those that must primarily or exclusively be tested through questioning the users. In this study we are concerned with the latter.

We made the points above with reference to a relatively simple designed object - a coffee pot, but when we come to a matter of housing, we soon find that our task in testing the objectives of the designer is a much more complex one. Whereas a coffee pot represents a relatively minor purchase, is not seen except by family and friends, plays a minor role in determining day-to-day happiness, and is expendable, a house is something different. It represents a major purchase decision in the life of the family, is clearly visible to neighbors and passers by, and is not - except in exceptional circumstances - expendable or movable. Its nature, appearance, status, and location have for most people such a profound influence on their life-style, self-image, and feelings of security, that we must both question its users, and interpret their answers, with extreme caution. For...

...People frequently see the home as an outer shell of the self. Where a person lives and how he lives determine the view which he has of his place in the community, his role, his status, and his style of life. Consequently, a major change in housing conditions implies a major adjustment of a person's self-concept.¹

We are concerned then in this study with determining how fully the objectives of the designers of a particular group of houses were realized, by means of questioning the residents. My personal reason

1. Back, Kurt W., Slums, Projects and People, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1962, p. 3.

for wanting to gather such information is a recognition that a profound weakness of the design professions concerned with man's environment - architecture, landscape architecture, and city planning - is the almost total lack of concern for the question of "feedback." Professionals have gone blithely ahead, designing and programming subdivisions, shopping centers, industrial estates, and new towns, with little thought of learning from their mistakes, without any serious concern for how their solutions work out in the real world. As a recent report on attitude surveys noted:

...the planner has long been operating with a stock of "planning principles" inherited from the historic concerns of city planning; and these "principles" predispose him to make certain assumptions about what people "want" and "ought to want." It is time, therefore, that the planner conducted his own surveys into how people use their environment, what they like and dislike about it, and what kind of environment they would prefer...It is a time to experiment.¹

The manufacturer of a new detergent has an obvious interest in how people react to his product: if it doesn't sell, he's out of business. Architects and planners, unfortunately for the public, are not in quite the same position; they may plan and build a new town, but if its inhabitants find it an unhappy place in which to live, that's not the designers' problem. The glossy pictures with clichéd captions are in the magazines, and they are off on a world tour of academic institutions, showing colored slides to their admiring colleagues. Meanwhile, back at the town, the inhabitants grumble on, unheard,

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1. Von der Muhll, Celia, The Use of Living Patterns and Attitude Surveys in City Planning, Washington, D.C.; A. M. Voorhees and Assoc. Inc., Research Document No. 11 (no date).

because the designers have neither the time, the interest, or perhaps, the knowledge of necessary research procedure, to discover whether these grumblings could have been diminished or silenced by a better design. And social scientists, with the necessary methodological know-how have not, until recently, been remotely interested in how people react to design. For instance...

...social psychology, having only recently and belatedly trained its sights upon the field of housing, has yet to accumulate a comfortable backlog of pertinent findings which can be taken into account by makers of policy.¹

In the case of the private housing market, the glib explanation that - "We must be giving people what they want because they're buying it" - may be partially true; but in the case of public housing, where people have little opportunity to choose whether to live there, little opportunity to choose which project they will live in, and no opportunity to choose where in a given project they will live, no such explanation can be offered. It is particularly important that we study consumer preferences in public housing, first, because of the very fact that its users are more or less forced to live there, and second, because it may be that the people who are living in public housing have quite different needs and values than do the architects who are doing the designing. As Hartman has written:

...a greater concern and understanding must be shown for the preferred life styles of working-class families and the ways in which they differ from the middle-class

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1. Merton, Robert K., "The Social Psychology of Housing," in Current Trends in Social Psychology, ed. Wayne Dennis, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1951.

norms and goals which have by and large characterized housing and planning efforts in this country. Physical spaces, administrative regulations, community facilities, and the role of the tenant, must all be re-examined and revised to meet the needs of the population that the projects are intended to serve.¹

For these reasons, then, it was a public housing project that was selected as the locale for this investigation.

While the operational goal of this study is to ascertain to what extent the objectives of the designer were satisfactorily realized, there is a secondary, and for wider purposes of application, a much more important goal. This is to determine how valid these objectives were in terms of the wants and behavior patterns of the inhabitants. For the principal end-result of this investigation is not a criticism of the design of a particular housing project, but a series of guidelines for future architects of low-cost housing (whether public or private), so that they may have a better understanding of client wants, perceptions and aspirations, and thus may, hopefully, produce more pleasing and acceptable end products.

We do not pretend that this study will fill the need referred to by Burnham Kelly when he wrote that the designer "does not have a scientific basis for the planning decisions which he must make in the process of designing a house or a group of houses. Occasionally, he makes these decisions without even knowing that the basis is lacking."²

1. Hartman, Chester, "The Limitations of Public Housing-Relocation Choices in a Working Class Community," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 29, No. 4, Nov. 1963, pp. 283-296.

2. Kelly, Burnham, in Festinger, L., op. cit.

Rather, we hope that it will make some people aware that this scientific basis is lacking, and that it will begin to suggest ways and means of filling that lack.

In brief, then, it is hoped that a detailed look at one low-cost housing project may produce helpful guides for the future, both in terms of aids to designers and in terms of suggested further investigations of the social implications of physical design.

Designers' Objectives at Easter Hill

Easter Hill Village, in Richmond, California, was chosen as a suitable locale for this investigation for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a project that has received design awards, and is considered by some critics to be one of the most successful housing projects in the United States.¹ Here, then, we are looking at not any-old-design, but one with a national reputation; here, if anywhere, people should be happy with their lot. A second reason for choosing this project was that the designers - Vernon Demars, Donald Hardison, and Lawrence Halprin - were available in the Bay Area, and were willing to discuss with me the social objectives of their design. And a third and most practical reason was its proximity to Berkeley for the purposes of field work.

At this point, it is important for us to consider what were the objectives - social and economic - of the designers of Easter Hill, and to explain briefly how the 'testing' of these objectives was operationalized in this study.

For the purposes of this study, social objectives are defined
1. 1957--Cited as one of the "10 Buildings in America's Future," AIA Centennial, Washington, D.C. 1964--Honor Award for Design Excellence, Public Housing Administration, HHFA.

as those pertaining directly to the inhabitants (i.e., the users); while economic objectives are those pertaining to the Public Housing Administration, who approved and partially financed the project, and Richmond Housing Authority, responsible for day-to-day maintenance and administration (i.e., the promoters and administrators).

Table I indicates in note form the major social objectives of the design; in the second column will be found a summary of the design means by which the objective was attained. In the third column are examples of the types of questions utilized in the questionnaire to determine whether this specific objective was realized, and also questions to determine whether it was a "good" objective, in terms of the wants of the inhabitants. Those questions indicated in parentheses were not specifically asked of the inhabitants, but the writer had them in mind when observing day-to-day behavior at Easter Hill, and when analyzing the interview responses.

We have to appraise the economic objectives of the design in a rather different way, for in this case, we will learn nothing about the effectiveness of these objectives by talking to the inhabitants. Whether the objective "To keep building costs to a minimum" was realized is not answerable by the inhabitants, nor is the answer, however obtained, of any direct interest to us in a study of this type.

We are interested, however, in the social implications of the particular design methods used at Easter Hill to attain these economic objectives. For example, although we do not care whether, in fact, building costs were kept to a minimum, we do care whether the limitation on interior space (i.e., the means of attaining this objective)

DESIGNER'S SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

1. To create a housing project so different from, and better than, existing ones, that its inhabitants would not feel they were living 'in a project'.

2. To fulfill a basic need of American families - to have a home of their own.

3. To fulfill a second basic need - to have control over a piece of outdoor living space (however small) for individual and family activities.

4. To provide means for the inhabitants to express their individuality/creativity.

TABLE I

DESIGN MEANS OF ATTAINING THESE OBJECTIVES

1. Get away from 'public image' of housing projects (high rise, institutional, regulated), contrasted with surrounding private homes, by providing a collection of basically similar row houses, which are given individuality and variety by arrangement in different groupings, and provision of differing exterior details.

2. (a) Each unit differs from its neighbors in one of a number of design details (e.g., color, window arrangement, porch detailing, etc.).
(b) Each unit has its own front and back path leading to it from communal paths, its own front and back doors.

3. (a) Each unit has its own fenced back yard (except 12 duplexes which have use of a piece of ground, but unfenced).
(b) Each unit has its own front porch.

4. (a) Back yard space provided 'raw' (i.e., not landscaped) with basic wire fence, so that tenants might develop, alter, enclose as they wish.
(b) Tenants can paint outside of house and select color (this objective vetoed by Housing Authority who now do painting and select colors).
(c) Tenants can paint insides of houses (are allowed to do this, but from very limited range of colors provided by Housing Authority).

TYPES OF QUESTIONS ASKED

Which is more important to you, your house, or the outside? exterior of the houses at 1. Put you feel about living in Put does Easter Hill compare with

Some people prefer it when the neighborhood all look alike, and they are different from each other. Do you feel about this? Do you think look different from each other they different? (What is the to low-income people?)

How do you like having a fence? do you use it for? Would you smaller than it is now? Would solid fencing around it? Would your front yard was fenced the covered front porch on the you use it for? (What are the of private open space?)

Some people like it when the hood all look the same, and looking different - how do you Do you think you would like you could fix up the outside from the way it does now? How the inside of your house?

TABLE I (continued)

DESIGNER'S SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

DESIGN MEANS OF ATTAINING THESE OBJECTIVES

TYPES OF QUESTIONS ASKED

5. To fulfill children's needs for individual/adventurous play, and for group/field sports.

5. (a) Rocks on site bulldozed into groups between dwellings for climbing, hiding, adventuresome play; small 'vacant lot' areas also left between houses for digging, etc. (not to be maintained or planted).
(b) Baseball field at one end of project, on only piece of flat land available.

Where do your children play most of the time? Sometimes go to the baseball field side of the project? Do they ever go to Nicholls Park? Do they ever go to the things for teenagers to do around there? Do any place mothers can take their children, and sit and watch them play?

6. To create self-identity of sub-groups of dwellings within the project.

6. Small sub-groups of dwellings have been arranged around courts and cul-de-sacs, and provided with a sense of unity by the use of similar building material, roof color, etc., throughout that sub-group.

How do you like the way your house is arranged onto the street (court) - would you have it facing a court (street)? How many people do you know in your neighborhood well enough to visit in their homes? Do they live?

7. To foster neighborliness and casual social meetings among adults.

7. (a) Same as above.
(b) Pathways running through project, linking individual dwellings, sub-groups, etc.

How many people do you know in your neighborhood to say 'Hello' to? Whereabouts mostly? Do you use the walkways that go around the houses? What for?

has had important effects on family relations. In Table II, then, will be found a list of the major economic objectives, the means of attaining these objectives, and the types of questions put to the residents of Easter Hill to determine how these design-solutions affected family and social relationships.

The body of the report contains analyses and comments, not only of the responses to questions on designer-objectives, but also of responses to a number of other questions that it was felt important to ask in order to understand the behavior patterns of Easter Hill residents. A large section of the report, entitled Housing Aspirations, is concerned not with the operational-goal, that of testing the efficacy of designers' objectives, but with the principal end-goal, that of devising guidelines for future architects of low-cost housing.

In the concluding chapter will be found a summary of the major findings. In terms of the social objectives, the discussion is concerned with how well the objectives were realized, and the wisdom of having such objectives. In terms of the economic objectives, the discussion centers around the social implications of using the particular design-solutions that were chosen at Easter Hill.

Methodology

The method adopted in this study was briefly as follows. A list of the 300 units in the project was obtained from Richmond Housing Authority, and 60 addresses from the list were selected, using a table of random numbers. During the months of July and August 1964, interviews were conducted by the writer, and two part-time helpers,¹ with

1. Phyllis Hackett and Nancy Odinov.

52 out of the 60 selected households. A questionnaire,¹ comprising 120 largely open-ended questions, was used to structure the interviews.

The final questionnaire was put together after several months of study and perusal of other questionnaires², and sessions with members of the staff of the Survey Research Center on the Berkeley campus,³ who kindly appraised and criticized the earlier drafts. A number of copies of the early draft were also circulated among members of the Department of City Planning faculty and graduate students, who gave many useful comments and suggestions.

The almost-final draft of the questionnaire was then pre-tested at Easter Hill, by means of 4 pre-test interviews; it was found to be too long, and the questions were badly ordered in parts. The questionnaire was revised, and the final interviewing began. During the course of the interviews, responses were noted down as fully as possible by the interviewer. After each interview, which lasted from 45 minutes to 2½ hours, according to the volubility of the respondent, interviewers made further notes on the family structure, type of furnishings, state of the front yard, and any other incidental observations about the home or household which would aid in interpreting

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1. See page x. in the Appendix to this report for a copy of the questionnaire.
 2. Herbert Gans' Levittown study questionnaire (unpublished, mimeo); Robert Wilson's questionnaire used in his "Livability of the City" study (unpublished, mimeo); Daniel Wilner's questionnaire in The Housing Environment and Family Life, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962.
 3. Charles Glock and Earl Babbie.

TABLE II

DESIGNER'S ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES	MEANS OF ATTAINING	QUESTIONS ASKED OF RESIDENTS
1. To keep building costs to a minimum.	Relatively small, standardized dwelling units. No provision of 'luxury' space (basement, den, etc.). Use of modestly priced materials. No community buildings provided. (Architects wanted them. PHA vetoed idea - too costly.)	How do you like the inside of your house? Are there any things you dislike about the size of rooms--number of rooms--space? Have you ever thought of room-what for? (How does lack of space affect you?)
2. To house as many people as possible, but to maximize usable open space.	Grouping of dwelling units into collections of 2-story row houses.	How do you like living in a 2-story row house? Do you think you would like this house if there were some space between it and the other houses? Can you hear no one on either side? Can you hear no one from the next door? (How important is privacy?)
3. To keep landscaping costs to a minimum.	(a) Rocks on site used as integral part of design (i.e., materials that didn't have to be brought in). (b) Modest amount of tree planting (holes had to be blasted for roots, soil brought in). (c) Same, relatively cheap form of paving used throughout project. (d) Drainage channels 'double' as paths in some places. (e) No sitting area, few benches, and no pre-school play equipment provided because of cost.	How do you like all those rocks? Do you think your children play on them? Do you think that bothers you? Do you think that the neighborhood looks better with trees and grass? For you to see trees and grass in the neighborhood where you live? Do you use the walkways that run between the houses? If there were an area where adults could sit, and maybe play cards or chess, would you use it? Do you think Hill would? If there were a playground with small children could go to, talk while the children played, would you use it? (Does lack of formal adult places inhibit socializing?)

TABLE II (Continued)

DESIGNER'S ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

4. To keep maintenance costs down to a minimum.

MEANS OF ATTAINING

- (a) Front and side yards limited in extent, so that they can, without too much trouble, be maintained by tenants themselves.
- (b) The one large area of public open space is a playfield, relatively cheap to maintain.
- (c) Considerable amount of space in private yards - no maintenance costs to Authority.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF RESI

Do you like looking after the self, or would you rather that Authority did it for you? (Do maintenance have good social e ing, neighboring - or bad - te neighbors, feeling of being 'p Do you think the Housing Autho: sweeping up leaves, etc.? Do the big playfield (limited to to it?) Do you like having you here, or would you rather not

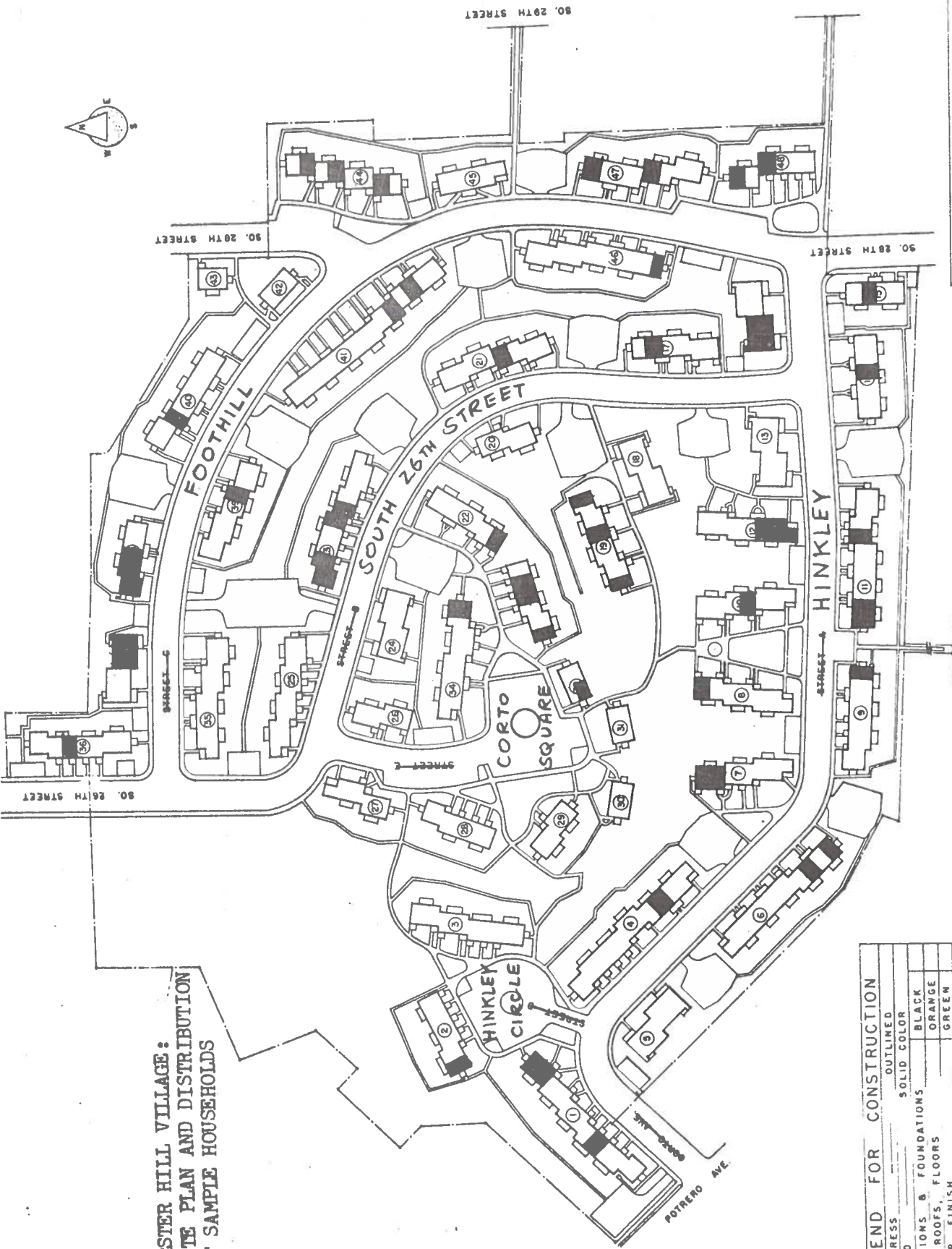
the respondents' remarks.

The response of the inhabitants of Easter Hill was generally very good. Most accepted the fact that we were students (and not members of the Housing Authority out snooping) and answered the questions quite freely; many were only too happy to have someone "drop by for a chat"--the ennui of the housewife is not a phenomenon confined to the suburbs. A number were evasive at first, and made excuses for not being able to see the interviewer right then--hoping she would go away for good; when the interviewer made arrangements to come back at a certain time the next day, and actually did come back, they were generally then quite cooperative. The rate of outright refusals, or persistent evasions, which amounted to the same thing, was around 10%.

One fact that became obvious was that in this type of environment, only a woman (or a woman and a man together) could conduct this kind of survey. Many of the respondents told me that they only permitted me to come into their homes because I was a woman; Easter Hill, like most residential areas, has its fair share of unscrupulous and sometimes unsavory "salesmen."

All the interviewing was done during the daytime, and consequently, almost all the respondents were women. It was originally intended to carry on some of the interviewing during the evenings, so that a number of men could also be questioned, but since the writer had to approach the project by means of a bus ride, and then a walk, and was told on a number of occasions about the unsafe nature of Easter

EASTER HILL VILLAGE:
SITE PLAN AND DISTRIBUTION
OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS



143

LEGEND FOR CONSTRUCTION	
IN PROGRESS	OUTLINED
FINISHED	SOLID COLOR
EXCAVATIONS & FOUNDATIONS	
BLACK	BLACK
ORANGE	ORANGE
GREEN	GREEN
BLUE	BLUE
BROWN	BROWN
RED	RED
PUNCH LIST ITEMS	
LEGEND FOR LANDSCAPE WORK	
IN PROGRESS	OUTLINED
FINISHED	HATCHED
PLANTING TREES & SHRUBS	YELLOW
LAWN WORK	PURPLE

PUBLIC HOUSING ADMINISTRATION
HOUSING AND HOME FINANCE AGENCY
ACCOMPANYING PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHS NUMBERS

SITE PLAN DIAGRAM
EASTER HILL VILLAGE
PROJECT CAL 10-3
RICHMOND CALIFORNIA
HOUSING AUTHORITY CITY OF RICHMOND
DATE 195

Hill and the surrounding streets at night, discretion was deemed to be the better part of valor, and no interviewing was done in the evenings.

No elaborate formula was set up to decide who in the household to interview. Generally, whoever came to the door was interviewed, except in the case of children, when whomever they called to the door (supposing there was an adult present) was the one interviewed. If, after three call-backs, no one could be located at the address, or there had been three evasions, that house was dropped from the list, and another one substituted from the 60 randomly selected addresses.

The Interviewed Sample

Tables illustrating the basic biographical data of the sample interviewed will be found in the appendix. The main points in these tables are briefly summarized below.

Family status: Two-thirds of the families interviewed comprised husband and wife, with or without children; almost a third comprised a mother, divorced or separated from her husband, and her children.

Children per family: The average family size is 2.7 children, but this figure masks the fact that approximately one-third of the families have four or more children. (I interviewed one family with 7 children, and two with 8, despite the fact that officials of Richmond Housing Authority assured me that there was no unit in the project large enough to accommodate a family of more than 6 children.) At a rough estimate, the project, covering an area of about 4 city blocks, contains 800 children.

Race: Two-fifths of the inhabitants are members of minority groups;

25% are Negro (approximately the proportion which Negroes are of the total population of Richmond), and the remaining 17% Mexicans, Orientals, and American Indians.

Employment status and occupations: About two-thirds of the families include one or more working adults. The remaining one-third are living on Welfare, unemployment insurance, or pensions--a proportion much higher than in the population at large, and an explanation of why some of the inhabitants find themselves living in low-rent housing.

Of the men that are employed, most are working in fairly low-paid, skilled or semi-skilled occupations (e.g., machinist, barber, railroad car loader, truck driver, service station attendant), and a considerable number are servicemen in the Navy or Coast Guard, stationed at Alameda and Treasure Island. As a columnist recently pointed out in a local newspaper,¹ a large proportion of non-commissioned servicemen in this area are living below the poverty line (family income of \$3000 p.a.). Small wonder that when low-rent Navy housing in Alameda was torn down in 1963, local housing authorities were flooded with applications from servicemen's families.

Fewer than one-fifth of the women at Easter Hill are working, a proportion about 10 percentage points lower than the U.S. average; most are employed in fairly low-paid service jobs, such as nurse's aide, child care, playground supervisor, cashier, and beautician.

Education: Some 45% of the respondents had graduated from high

1. Oakland Tribune, April 7, 1965, p. 22.

school, as compared with 52% of persons 25 years old and over in California as a whole (1960 Census). But only 18% had not been educated beyond the 8th grade, whereas this group comprises 28% of the total state population. There is such a discrepancy between the Easter Hill and State figures that one wonders if the respondents were not over-estimating their educational attainments; however, this question was asked toward the end of a long interview when most respondents were answering quite freely and without hesitation. Those with one or more years of college, 14%, represented a smaller proportion than in the state as a whole (26%).

Although no questions were asked about income (a question which is bound to arouse suspicion in the minds of public housing tenants), we can presume that none of the households were earning more than a low, or very moderate income, or they would not have been in public housing. (The income limit, in the summer of 1964, for a family of 3 or 4 was \$4,100.) The information we have on the education level of the sample suggests either that we were not getting truthful answers, or that the Richmond Housing Authority are selecting those applicants from their waiting lists who have the highest education levels, and therefore the greatest chances of success, either in terms of bettering themselves and getting out of public housing, or in terms of being "good" tenants.

Length of residence: About one-third of the sample had lived at Easter Hill for more than 5 years, and another third between 1 and 5 years. Among the remaining third, those that had lived there less

than a year, there appeared to be considerable turnover; some were servicemen's families stationed temporarily in the locality, and others were young couples using public housing as means to get started in their married life, an opportunity to pay a low rent and save money for the down payment on a house, to which they shortly hoped to move.

Place of origin: Just over a third of the sample was born and raised in the south-eastern states, almost a third had been brought up in California--most of them in Richmond itself, while the remainder had come there primarily from the Pacific northwest, the midwest, and the east.

Mobility: The people in one-third of the households in Easter Hill do not own a car; and in those families that do, a considerable proportion of the wives do not drive.

To generalize, we can say that the tenants at Easter Hill fall into two broad categories. There are those people who semi-permanently will be dependent on the subsidized rents due to their impoverished circumstances (no breadwinner - living on welfare; families living on unemployment insurance or small pensions; those with very low-paying jobs and no hope of advancement). And the second category comprises persons who temporarily have a low earning capacity (students, servicemen, etc.), but who expect eventually to be able to compete for housing on the open market.¹

1. These same two categories were noted by Back in his study of attitudes toward public housing in Puerto Rico (Back, Kurt W., op. cit.).

Outline of thesis

The second chapter of this study will concern itself with the question of space and privacy within the home, and the third chapter, with aural and visual privacy between houses. Chapter IV consists of a consideration of the use and functions of private open space, while the following two chapters are concerned with perceptions of the house and of the neighborhood. In chapter VII we will consider how people feel about living in Public Housing, and chapter VIII will comprise a discussion of the residential aspirations of Easter Hill tenants. Finally, in chapter IX will be found a summary of the major findings and a suggested list of further studies in this field.

II

SPACE AND PRIVACY WITHIN THE HOME

Introduction

In order to fulfill two important economic objectives of their design--to keep building costs to a minimum, and to house as many people as possible while maximizing usable open space--the designers of Easter Hill resorted to the following design solutions. They provided 2-story row houses in order to conserve open space for private and public use; dwelling units were relatively standardized and small, with no provision of "luxury" space (basement, den, etc.), in order to minimize building costs. In this chapter we shall discuss how the residents responded to these design solutions. First we shall consider what they appeared to like most about the house, then we shall discuss their reactions to living in a 2-story house, to the size of the rooms, and to the numbers of rooms. Finally, we shall attempt to draw some conclusions about the use of space within the house by public housing tenants, the relative importance of space and appearance, and the need for privacy within the house.

What people liked about their houses

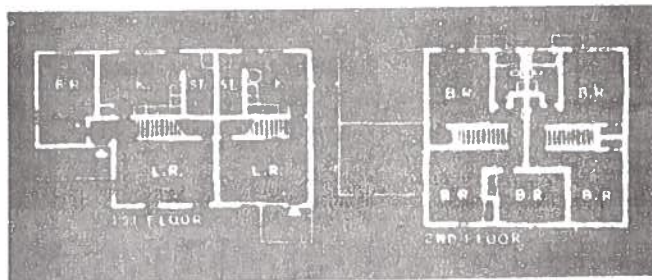
The amount of living space per family at Easter Hill is quite limited when compared with modern middle-class suburban standards; for instance, the two-bedroom units are 16 feet wide and have only 820 square feet of living space. The largest units in the project--the semidetached 1-story, four-bedroom units have 1,200 square feet of living space.

(See page 22 for house-plans of the five different types of units at Easter Hill.)

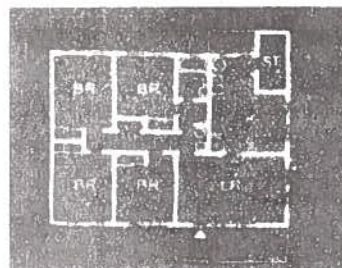
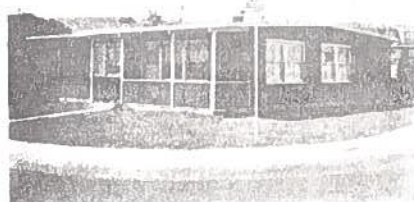
In view of the limited amount of space provided within the house, it is perhaps surprising that when asked: "What do you like most about your house?" the most frequently mentioned features were those concerned with the spatial qualities of the house. The general "roominess," the size of specific rooms, the pleasure at the amount of storage space were all mentioned frequently.

There are probably a number of explanations for this seeming anomaly. First, it is generally recognized that the space demands of low-income people are more modest than those of middle- or high-income groups; therefore what might seem cramped to a middle-income family may seem reasonable to a low-income family.¹ They have less money to spend on housing, they are generally less willing to spend as great a proportion of their income on housing as is a middle-income family,² and they have less demanding requirements for internal space in terms of

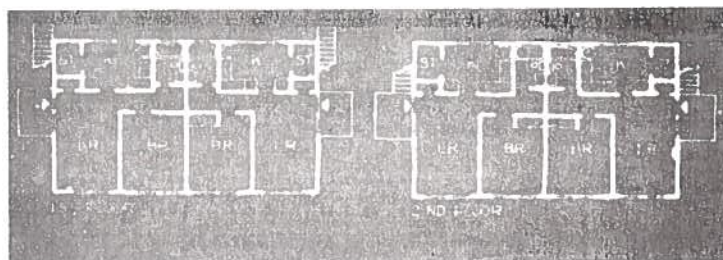
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1. Rainwater contends that the lower classes see the house primarily as a place of "retreat" from the potential threats of the outside world; their main concern is that it provide them with security. The middle classes, on the other hand, see the house as a place for self-realization, self-expression, for a wide range of social interactions... "the requisite housing standards of the middle class reflect a more complex and varied set of demands on the physical structure and its equipment." (Lee Rainwater, Fear and the House-as-Haven in the Lower Class [mimeo], paper prepared for a symposium on The Social Psychology of Low-Income Housing: Policy and People. American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, California, Sept. 6, 1964.)
 2. Working class women are willing to spend only 20% of the family income on housing as against middle-class women, who are prepared to spend 26%. (Lee Rainwater, R.P. Coleman, and G. Handel, Workingman's Wife. New York: Oceana Publications, 1959.)



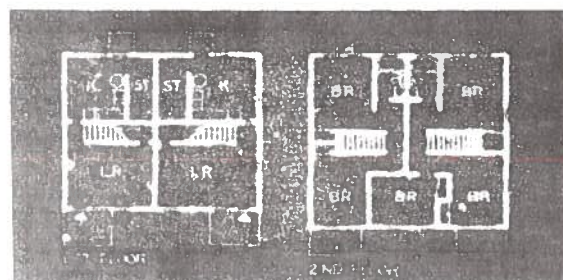
A 4-bedroom unit which appears at the ends of rows; one bedroom is in a one-story lean-to.



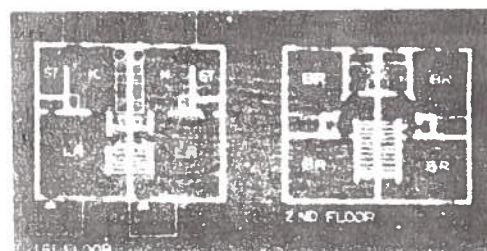
Another 4-bedroom unit is a semi-detached house only one story high



1-bedroom apartments, one above the other sometimes occur at the end of a row



2-bedroom, two-story units and 3-bedroom units which overlap the living room of the adjacent house and add variety to the fenestration



privacy, entertaining, and status. Another factor to be taken into account is that many families moved to Easter Hill from even more cramped and trying living conditions, and thus, in comparison, their homes in the project seemed reasonably spacious.

Although the question quoted above did not specify a response relating to the interior of the house, it is interesting to note that almost three-quarters of the responses did refer to some aspect of the interior rather than, say, to its rent, location, or exterior appearance. Very few made any references to the appearance of the house, either outside or inside, and when they did, it was generally in reference to the ease of maintenance rather than to aesthetic qualities. Of all the responses to this question, only 8% made any reference to a non-practical, aesthetic quality of the house; the remainder were concerned with the ease of cleaning, convenient room sizes, good storage facilities and so on. It would be interesting to discover if the same question directed to women in a higher income/educational bracket would elicit the same ratio of aesthetic versus practical responses.

Of the non-design responses, the most frequently mentioned was the low rent. But one respondent may not have been alone when she stated enthusiastically that what she most liked about her house was: "It's mine! I've always had to share before. This is the first place my husband and I have had that's exclusively ours."

TABLE III

HOW DO YOU LIKE LIVING IN A 2-STOREY HOUSE?

	<u>Nos.</u>	<u>%</u>
Don't like	23	56
Like	17	42
Indifferent	1	2
	<u>41</u>	<u>100%</u>

(7 respondents were not living in 2-storey houses)

Reasons for liking

Like bedroom being upstairs	11
Kids are out of way, in day and at night	6
Can leave upstairs in a mess	3
Like bathroom upstairs	3
Good exercise, going upstairs	2
House stays cleaner	1
It's quieter	1
Gives a 'different feeling'	1
No reason	1

Reasons for not liking

Too tiring	16
Difficult with young children, training	6
It's noisy	2
Makes extra work	2
It's like living in 2 houses	2
Would like bathroom downstairs	1

Although a few replied that there was nothing at all they liked about their house, the general, though grudgingly admitted, feeling was that for the **rent** paid they were receiving a good bargain. A typical response was that of a young white woman who had previously lived under very trying, crowded conditions with her family in El Cerrito.

"For \$38.24 a month, it's very reasonable. And it's roomy, for the price. It's the best I've ever lived in. I like the back yard-- and the place for the washing machine; there's plenty of space here."

Respondents' reactions to living in 2-story, attached houses

The 2-story town house is not a familiar feature in California, and it seems unlikely that more than a few residents of Easter Hill would have lived in such a house before.

Asked how they liked living in a 2-story house, just over half replied that they did not;¹ the most frequently voiced reason for this was that "it is too tiring going up and down stairs." Many of the women who replied in this way were middle-aged or elderly, or had large families, or were pregnant. Typical responses were those of a 30-year-old mother of 5--"It's okay, except I have bad legs and it hurts going up and down stairs. I make as less [sic] trips as I can." Or that of a 50-year old Negro woman--"I don't like going upstairs; I'm getting old."

For some of the respondents, the chief problem of a 2-story house was the inconvenience it caused in child-rearing. There is the problem of keeping an eye on the children when they are on a different level--

1. Another recent study reported the same dislike of 2-story houses among working-class women in several American cities; the reasons most frequently cited were--difficult to keep clean, tiring, harder to heat in winter, fear for children's safety. (ibid.)

"I don't like it because if I'm in one part of the house, I don't know what the kids are doing in the other part. And I'm pregnant." For those with very small children, there is the problem of toilet-training, when the bathroom is on a different level from the living quarters--"For the kids, I don't like it. Especially when you're trying to train them-- they want to go to the bathroom and you have to rush upstairs with them. It's so tiring...if they were older, it wouldn't matter, but right now I'd rather be without a pantry, and have another toilet downstairs."

Another less frequently mentioned criticism was that a 2-story house is noisy, both because of the noise of people going up and down the wooden stairs, and because of sounds coming through the ceiling when people are upstairs. For one Negro couple, shortly to leave the project and buy their own house, the prohibitive cost of carpeting to insulate for noise had decided them against buying a 2-story house elsewhere. "I don't like it at all. If you don't have rugs upstairs, there's no insulation from the noise. We were considering buying a town house up on Cutting, but I objected because I knew we couldn't afford thick rugs for upstairs."

Some objected because they felt the 2 stories made "extra work," and others didn't like the arrangement because they felt it was like "living in two different houses." Evidently to these two latter respondents, the concept of having a home which comprised two different levels was so unfamiliar that they could not conceive of them as together forming one living unit. It cannot be argued that this was merely the reaction of newcomers, for although one had indeed only lived in Easter Hill for two weeks, the other had been there for seven years.

Among the minority who did like living in a 2-story house, the most commonly expressed reason for this feeling was that they liked the

added privacy of having the bedrooms upstairs. "I really do," replied a middle-aged Negro woman. "I like sleeping upstairs." For many people then, even if '2-storey living' was unfamiliar to them before moving to Easter Hill, they found the separation of living and sleeping areas to be a good arrangement.

"I like the bedrooms upstairs, and the kitchen and living room down here; I like the bedrooms away from the living room."

For some, it was particularly useful for separating sleeping children from other, potentially noisy, household activities--"When the kids are asleep in the daytime, the noise downstairs doesn't disturb them." Or for keeping them out of the living room when the parents were entertaining. "It's good for the kids when we have company; we can send them upstairs to bed--but we usually let them stay up anyway." Another useful attribute of an 'upstairs' is that it can be left in a mess, and the unexpected visitor doesn't see it. "It doesn't matter if the beds aren't made, when they're upstairs."

In a situation, as at Easter Hill, where it is frequent that the man of the household (if there is one) is doing shift work, or is on leave from the service, or is out of work and therefore likes to sleep late, the separation of the sleeping from the living quarters is of more significance than in the normal, 9-5 middle-class household. As one young serviceman's wife commented:

"I like it, because when my husband is home, he can sleep during the day if he wants to, and I can do the work downstairs and not disturb him."

Size of rooms

Asked to comment specifically on the size and number of rooms in their house, just over one-half of the respondents replied that they were not satisfied with the size of the rooms. Most complained about the size of the kitchen; although the kitchens do vary slightly in size among the various units, the variation is not commensurate with the great differences in family size which these units have to accommodate. And to make matters worse, the gas stoves provided by the Housing Authority are all the same size, regardless of whether the family to be cooked for is composed of two or ten persons. Since there are no separate dining areas, most families eat in the kitchen, and for a large family the seating of 8 to 10 persons in such a confined area can pose something of a problem. As one harried mother remarked, "The kitchen is too small; by the time we have the table up, there's no room to walk around it." Since the kitchen opens directly into the back yard where the children often play, it becomes a place of constant to and fro, the hub of family life. A typical comment was: "I would like the kitchen bigger--we practically live there!" Probably the only time that most of the family is together in an active, space-consuming capacity is at meal time, hence the number of complaints about the size of the kitchen.

The second most frequent comment was on the size of the bedrooms. "They're so small, there's only one way you can arrange the furniture." This becomes a very important factor in young, expanding families, when the arrival of a new baby requires doubling up, or even tripling up in the already small bedrooms.

Relatively few complained about the size of the living room, possibly because the chief function of that room seemed to be as a place to watch TV, a passive form of recreation which is not inhibited by cramped conditions. In more than 90% of the sample households, the TV was on at the time of the interviewer's visit, even if, as in some cases, no one was actually in the room watching it. Television is both an audible companion to the many lonely women in Easter Hill, and a remarkably effective child-pacifier. Rainwater has referred to it as "the working class housewife's tranquilizer," and remarked that in his surveys of working-class households, one-third of the women named it as their favorite household object: "It keeps the husband home in the evenings, keeps the children docile in the daytime, and brings vicarious thrills to the housewife."¹

Another reason for the lack of complaints about the size of the living room may well have been because a larger room would have meant more space to furnish, and therefore more expense. One young Mexican-American woman, whose living room was cluttered, almost to excess, with furniture, family photographs, ornaments, and books, remarked, "I like the living room being big--there's room for the furniture." But this was the exception rather than the rule. Although most families had an adequate amount of furniture, there were a number where it was noticeably sparse, and two houses where the living room was almost completely bare. In one of these, the living room of a young Negro couple with three small children was furnished with a dilapidated couch at one end

1. Ibid., p. 180.

and a TV set at the other. And the living room of a Mexican-American couple contained just two wooden chairs; the rest of the furniture had been sold off bit by bit during the preceeding three months, while the husband, a gardener, had been out of work. To these families, perhaps the size of the living room was even an embarrassment, since it glaringly showed up their lack of material possessions.

The importance of a feeling of space, with room to get away from other members of the family, and the detrimental effects on family relations from the lack of such space cannot be overemphasized. The case of Mr. A must suffice to illustrate this point. Living in a 4-bedroom house at the end of a row, family A comprises a couple in their late 30s and their 8 children ranging from 3 years old to 14. Previously a shipping and receiving clerk at a local factory, Mr. A had been out of work for 8 months; "It's worse than usual now, because of automation," he remarked. On a number of occasions, at different times of the day, I had noticed him leave the house and wander up and down the road; he did the same while I was interviewing his wife. The living room floor, with the furniture pushed back to the walls, was occupied by a wooden table which he was in the process of building; an electric drill lay on one chair, hammer and nails on another. Four or five different children came in to ask something or fetch something during the interview. There was a tight, enclosed feeling within the house, of human beings being thrust too close together. A neighbor had told me that Mr. A was "a drinker;" this may have been gossip, but under the circumstances, the relaxed atmosphere of a bar would have been a haven indeed, compared with the

constant crowded commotion of his "home." No wonder when I asked him what he liked most about Easter Hill, his reply was a terse, "Nothing." And no wonder when I asked his wife if there were any particular rooms she would like larger or smaller, she replied with a wry laugh, "Oh, I'd like all of them larger!"

Increasingly, low-rent housing is going to have to provide out-size units, for it is just those families with 6, 7 and 8 children which cannot afford to buy a house in suburbia.

Number of rooms

Asked to comment on the number of rooms, more than half of those who replied felt that they needed extra space; the most frequently mentioned need was for an extra bedroom or bedrooms. As might be expected, these complaints were most often voiced by families living in cramped conditions. Such as the Mexican-American family of two adults and 4 children under 8, living in two bedrooms--"We've asked the Authority for a larger house, we're on the waiting list;" or the Negro family of two adults, boys of 9 and 5, and a girl of 8--"With three children, I feel we need 3 bedrooms, but they won't let us have a 3-bedroom apartment. They seem to consider it unnecessary unless one of the three children is much older."

The only other room which more than a few people thought they would like was a den or rumpus room. The mother of 5 living in a 3-bedroom house replied: "I would like another room downstairs--a den maybe, because of our large family. It gives the family a chance to have a little more privacy. The teenage girls take their radio up to their

bedroom, and it always creates a noise problem." In another family, where there were eight children, one of the 4 bedrooms was used permanently as a playroom--"so there's somewhere the kids can leave their things. I would like an extra room for the children to play in." The result of this conversion to a playroom was that the family of ten was packed into the remaining three bedrooms.

Two respondents expressed a desire for a guest room. One, an elderly woman living alone, was pathetically desirous of the extra space so that she might invite relatives from elsewhere in the United States to come and stay with her; the obviously "genteel" nature of her upper-class upbringing as a wealthy attorney's daughter in Wisconsin evidently precluded her from considering the use of the settee as an extra bed, or the use of the living room as an extra bedroom. One deduced from her answers that she would rather remain lonely than stoop to such depths.

No such inhibitions on the use of space within the home were expressed by the young Mexican-American woman, whose house obviously functioned as a kind of way-station for close and distant relatives, on extended visits from Mexico. In addition to a permanent household of five, there were, at the time of the interview, three female relatives visiting from Mexico; three persons were sleeping in one bedroom, three in another, one in the living room, and one in the pantry! And this was only possible because three persons who were normally part of the permanent household were themselves away visiting relatives in San Jose.

Conclusions on the use and importance of interior space

When asked specifically whether they were satisfied with the size of the rooms in the house, and with the number of rooms, the majority of respondents replied that they were not. Now, this may seem to be a contradiction of our earlier discussion in which we pointed out that when asked what they liked about their house, most people replied in terms of its spatial qualities. But this is really not a contradiction; when asked a general question such as "What do you like about your house?" most people will reply in terms of comparisons with what they have known before. Since for most people the move to Easter Hill meant an improvement in the amount of their living-space, it is hardly surprising that they cited this as one of the things about the house that pleased them. But when faced with the hypothetical questions: "How about the size of the rooms--would you prefer any of them larger or smaller?" ~~or~~ "And what about the number of rooms--are you satisfied with that?", there are obviously going to be many who will "vote" for larger rooms or more of them. You can be happy with a house because it is more spacious than where you lived before, but still desire to have, in the "ideal situation," more space.¹

From the discussion above on the different uses made of available

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1. In future studies of this sort it might be very revealing to try and find out how important space, privacy, etc., are, by posing questions that force people to assess the "worth" of each. For instance, by asking: "Supposing that extra space inside your house meant that you had to give up some of your back yard--would you still want that extra space?" Or, "Supposing the Housing Authority was going to make improvements to these houses and you could choose either to have sound-proofed walls between your house and next door, or an extra room--but you couldn't have both--which would you choose?"

space in two households which said they would like a guest room (the Mexican-American extended family, and the elderly woman living alone), it is obvious that we cannot make any sweeping generalizations about the uses of space within the home in a public housing project, or come up with any succinct square-foot-per-person formula that will suit everyone.¹ Perhaps one of our greatest oversights with regard to public housing tenants is in thinking that they form a homogeneous group. Although the group of people we are considering in Easter Hill may now find themselves living together in the same circumstances, they have only one common denominator, and that is that they have low incomes, relative to the rest of society. Apart from this, there is little that they have in common; certainly one cannot be so naive as to think that in all cases low income equals lower or working class "attitudes", whatever they are. For here we have not only the stereotyped working-class family, father working in a blue collar occupation, and both parents having been brought up in working-class homes, but also the aspiring middle-class family, biding their time in low-rent housing until they have saved enough for a down payment in suburbia, and the lapsed middle-class family --who had formerly known better times and had owned their own home, but

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1. As Kennedy has pointed out in a comparison of rooms-per-unit and rooms-per-person ratios in two housing projects--Westgate and Regent Hill--the tenants in the latter had more room (an average of 6.2 rooms per unit and 1.8 rooms per person) than those in the former (4 rooms per unit and 1.6 rooms per person), but were less satisfied with their homes. Therefore, he concluded, although room-ratios undoubtedly affect privacy, sense of space, etc., they cannot be taken as absolute indications of satisfactory or unsatisfactory conditions. (Kennedy, Robert Woods, "Sociopsychological problems of housing design," in Festinger, L. et al., op. cit.)

who now find themselves forced to live in public housing. One might also argue a case for the classless household, the mothers and children without a man in the family, who are in effect in limbo, and whose future status depends very much on whether they remarry, and what prospects their husband will have.

Given families from such varied socio-economic backgrounds, and in addition from varied racial and national backgrounds, one may conclude that any architect of public housing is going to have trouble suiting all of the people all of the time. But in terms of space and the size of rooms, we can perhaps make a few generalizations on the basis of the above responses.

First, it seems clear that most people in public housing are far more concerned about the inside of their house, and the amount of space they have for various family activities than they are with the appearance of the house, either on the inside or the outside. Indeed, a question which asked whether people thought the inside or the outside of the house was more important to them resulted in the overwhelming majority voting for the inside, and a number implying, or actually stating, that "the outside really doesn't matter because I never look at it."¹

Second, it would seem that most women are far more concerned about ample space to move and work in their kitchen than in their living room, both because they spend much more of the day there--preparing meals,

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1. Rainwater has stated, "Working-class women apparently can put up with 'plain' exteriors if the interior of their house is well-applianced and nicely furnished. Middle-class women care more for appearances" He also contends that working-class women are prepared to spend 35% more of the family income on furniture and appliances than are middle-class women. (ibid., p. 171)

baking, chatting to neighbors over a cup of coffee, and because the kitchen is in many families the only room of the house where the whole family assembles at one time. Even if the family does all sit together in the evening, watching TV, it is far less frustrating to watch a movie in quasi-cramped conditions than it is to cook, serve and eat a meal under such conditions.

Third, very few remarks were made about the need for more privacy within the house; a few expressed the desire for a den or rumpus room so that the husband and/or children could get away from the rest of the family, but such requests were not common.¹ Although quite a number said they would like more bedrooms, this was usually because the arrangement of furniture, and the handling and disciplining of the children at bedtime, would be more convenient if they had separate rooms, rather than because the parents were concerned for the children's needs for more privacy. In very few cases was any child, older than a young baby, sleeping in the same bedroom as its parents; if anyone was directly inconvenienced by the lack of bedroom space it was not the adults, but the children, who, at least before adolescence, are not nearly so seriously concerned about privacy as are adults. Most tenants admitted that the Housing Authority was fairly prompt about finding them a larger unit in Easter Hill when the point was reached of two adolescent children of different sexes sharing a bedroom.

1. Supporting Rainwater's contention that "...the middle class ideal of 'a house with plenty of different rooms where each person in the family has a place to call his own and can have privacy when he wants it' does not appeal very strongly to the working-class woman." (Ibid., p. 175.)

In view of the fact that discussions of privacy between adjacent units elicited many complaints about the thin walls and the high degree of noise transference, we can presume that this must also be a problem, in terms of sexual privacy, between adjacent rooms in the same unit, though no one referred to it directly. (This is hardly surprising, since it is not the type of problem one usually discusses with young lady interviewers who drop in unannounced.) Considering the number of references made throughout the interviews to the fact that people hoped they could get out of Easter Hill before their children were old enough to comprehend the "things going on there," one can hazard a guess that respondents were not only concerned about what could be heard between adjacent units, but also what could be heard through the thin walls enclosing rooms within their own house.

No one made any references, good or bad, about the layout of the rooms, vis à vis each other. But responses to the question on how people liked living in a 2-story house indicate that respondents generally had very marked ideas about this particular feature of the house, because for most it was a new experience, and because some who had expected to dislike it had discovered that it offered certain conveniences. Again, the question of convenience far outweighed the question of privacy; a far larger number disliked the separation of the unit into two levels, because of the problems it raised in child-rearing and housecleaning, than liked it because of the added privacy between sleeping and living quarters it afforded. This would seem to support the general consensus of our conclusions above, notably that public housing tenants seem much more concerned about the size and arrangement of rooms in terms of

convenience, ease of maintenance, and ability to contain normal family activities, than they do in terms of privacy-needs within the family.

III

PRIVACY BETWEEN DWELLING UNITS

A. Aural privacy

Two of the primary economic objectives of the designers of Easter Hill were, to keep building costs to a minimum, and to house as many people as possible on the site, while still leaving considerable amounts of usable open space. This they achieved by means of row housing, for to build units which are attached in rows is both more economical in terms of building costs, and more economical in terms of maximizing usable open space, than building detached or semi-attached units.

The designers may have achieved their economic objectives, but only at considerable social 'cost', for the fact that the house units at Easter Hill are joined together in rows, is a feature of the design which came in for considerable adverse comment from the inhabitants.

Asked if they would like their house better if there were some space between it and the houses on either side, almost two-thirds said that they would prefer the house to be detached; half of these stated as their chief reason - 'the noise'.

"If they sneeze next door, you can hear them. I can hear everything going on - the walls are just like paper."

"You can hear them yellin' when my kids are asleep - it's annoying."

"I have good neighbors now, but there have been some sour grapes. I thought then, if there were only some space, I wouldn't hear so much through the walls."

TABLE IV

Do you think you would like the house better if there were some space between it and the houses on either side?

		<u>%</u>
YES	34	65
NO	5	9
INDIFFERENT	10	19
DON'T KNOW	1	3
NO ANSWER	2	4
	<u>52</u>	<u>100</u>

Reasons for preferring the house to be separate

Too noisy this way	17
We'd have more privacy	9
Too close together here	6
Would be more like a private home	4
Would have more yard space	4
" " " light	3
No reason	1

Reasons for preferring house to be attached

Safety	4
Being attached is OK	2
Not classifiable	1

Nor was everyone only concerned with the annoyance their neighbors caused them; many were apprehensive lest their noise annoy other people.

"We wouldn't have to worry about disturbing the neighbors - or hearing their quarrels!"

"Yes, I'd like that; the neighbors complain about our noise."

"If the houses were separate, they wouldn't hear what you are doing - and you wouldn't hear them."

"We wouldn't have to listen to all the noise; it would be more like living in a home. Here you have to put up with other peoples' noise, because you may be noisy yourself."

In a neighborhood where there are many large families, many small children, and many households living in tryingly cramped conditions, it is not surprising that the subject of noise, and the annoyance it produces, should be frequently alluded to. In addition to the many who referred specifically to noise as their reason for preferring a detached house, some also said they would like it that way because it would give them "more privacy." Some of the latter group may also have had the problem of noise at the back of their minds when they mentioned "privacy," but others evidently objected to the mere physical proximity of other people, particularly as they left and entered their house. "You're forced to say hello to the neighbors - there's not enough privacy here." One woman couldn't imagine how people would live in row housing out of choice--

"Sure I'd like my house separate - then you'd really get more privacy! Those houses on Cutting are all joined together (Plaza II development) and they're private homes! I might rent them, but I wouldn't buy. If I could afford to buy a house, it would have to be one that's separate."

Another conceded that if just one side were free (i.e., a semi-detached house) she would feel happier.

"I wouldn't mind so much if one side was free; I don't like to be closed in on both sides. With so many kids around here - there's no privacy. I tried to have flowers in the back yard, but it's impossible'.

A number of respondents just did not like the feeling of being all 'jammed together'. One young woman, who was hoping soon to leave the project, lived in the middle of a row of nine houses, and replied most vehemently -

"We're all jammed together here - just like sardines. One kid gets mumps, they all get mumps; one kid gets a cold, they all get colds. One apartment has mice, we all get them; they come galloping along under the roof. They have rats next door, and the apartment next to that - they get through the heating system. It won't be long before they're in here. . . . And when you're jammed together, everyone else's problem is your problem. Like, there are 4 mentally retarded children in this building; no one here has much money, so they can't pay for them to go to proper schools - so they just hang around here all day. There's one little boy of 8 - he can't talk as well as my 2-year old, and my boy can't understand it - he comes and asks me why this boy won't talk to him. What am I to tell him."

A few respondents said they would prefer a detached house because it would feel more like 'a Home'.

"It would be more like a private house, a regular house - not Housing. But it would take up a lot of space, so I guess they have to put the houses together."

A few said they would prefer it so that there would be windows along the side of the house - and not just at the front and back; it would let in more light and air, and . . . 'you could have a variety of room arrangements with the sunlight.' Others favored a detached house for the extra yard space it would give them. This concern with yards and privacy between them is one that occurred frequently throughout

the interviews, and seemed to cause almost more concern than the noise between houses, presumably because lack of privacy between open spaces produces both unwanted visual, as well as aural, contact. One respondent conceded that if there were a fence, she wouldn't care if the houses were attached.

"I would love that (i.e., space between houses). We try and keep our part of the lawn up, and the neighbors might not. It might be more like your own home; here the kids can jump from my lawn onto the next lawn - I have to keep them off. I'd be happier if there were a fence between the front yards. If we had a fence, it wouldn't bother me that the houses themselves are actually joined together."

The problem of noise

Over 90% of the respondents stated that they could hear noise from next door through the walls of their house; and of these, a little under one-half said that the noise was enough to bother them at times. The walls are undoubtedly thin, and people reported hearing even the 'normal' sounds of family life from next door, such as the phone being dialed, chairs being drawn back from the table, conversation, the faucet being run, toilet being flushed, the TV on at normal volume; nor were these exaggerations, since the interviewers heard these level of sounds from the next house on several occasions. Although most people, mentioning these sounds, said that they were a problem at times, most responded good humoredly and gave the impression that they caused no really great annoyance. A typical response was -

"They can probably hear everything we're saying right now. I know exactly when everyone takes a bath next door - when they go to the toilet - we're just like one big family in this building!"

In some cases, annoyance was caused by the different room arrangement of adjacent houses - a deliberate effort by the architect to produce variety and individuality in the house interiors. Unfortunately, though, the annoyance caused by someone else's stairs running up beside your kitchen, or someone else's children fighting in the room above your living room, more than offsets any pleasure that might have been caused by the feeling of individuality. And where the problem of noisy children is added to that of unsatisfactory room arrangement, the effects can be even more acute, as in the case of an elderly Negro woman whose bedroom in a downstairs apartment is adjacent to the living room of a Mexican family with 5 small children -

"Our upstairs neighbor is very considerate - gives us no trouble. But the neighbor next door gets upset with her children - and we can hear them real plain. She actually wakes me up - yellin' at her kids - then I can't get to sleep again."

Even without the problems of room arrangements in adjacent houses, the problem of children's noise was a constant source of comment and concern, and people thought themselves lucky if there was only one child next door, or if the children next door were 'not too noisy'. In a situation such as one has in public housing, of many large families, often without the disciplinary influence of a man in the house, it is hardly surprising that the inconveniences caused by unruly children should be frequently alluded to, particularly by older people whose children have long since passed the 'noisy' stage.

But for the people with small children, the problems caused by noisy and unruly adults can be just as acute. Fights, quarrels and noisy outbursts in the neighboring house, particularly at night, were referred to on a number of occasions.

"You can hear them yellin'; when my kids are asleep, it's real annoying," replied a young Mexican woman with two children under two. "You can hear them cussin' each other out at 2 and 3 in the morning; she and her husband are separated, but he comes home sometimes," responded a Negro woman, referring to her Mexican neighbors, and later commented she was worried that her teen-age boys were picking up bad language from what they heard through the walls at night. Some were only too glad that domestic sounds in their own house covered up the noisy quarreling of their neighbors. "No - their noise doesn't bother me; my freezer drowns out all other sounds. I don't like to hear the neighbors quarrels, and know all their business." To this respondent, the unwanted intrusion of her neighbors' private life was presumably more a source of embarrassment than it was of annoyance.

For some respondents, noise from the next house, and noise from their own, was just an accepted part of the give and take of life at Easter Hill, and neighbors developed a pattern of mutual 'reprimends', as in the case of one respondent, who replied -

"Sometimes I can hear the kids next door yellin' and I yell through the wall at Helen, and she tells them to stop. My child says she can even hear people talking through the wall. Sometimes the neighbors ask my children to turn the TV down."

Or another, who replied - "No, the noise doesn't bother us. It might bother some people, but we're usually with them when they're making a noise!"

Others seem to have developed a feeling of tolerant complacency -

"Yes, late at night sometimes it's annoying, if they have the TV on. But it doesn't happen often - doesn't really bother us."

"My neighbors complain about our noise - but I don't complain."

"No - the noise doesn't bother me; I just hope my kids aren't loud enough to bother others."

An interesting, and unexpected, feature of the comments on noise, was that a number of young women who did not have a man in the house, found comfort and security in sounds from the next house, in the feeling that people were close by who they could call on for help if the need arose. A middle-aged white woman, whose husband had recently 'gone off', replied that the noise didn't bother her - "I like to feel there is someone close by because there's no man in the house." A Mexican divorcée, who resented the neighbors gossiping about her boy-friends, nevertheless welcomed the proximity of other people as a source of security, particularly since the house had twice been broken into, and she had once had her purse snatched from her, just a few yards from the front door.

"Sometimes the noise bothers me - but I have no phone, no husband - I like to have the neighbors near in case of trouble. I'd rather put up with the inconvenience of having the neighbors hear my conversations, and comment on my visitors - than have a separate house and feel nervous. That house over the road [semi-attached, 1-storey] has more room, but I wouldn't want it; I'd feel so scared not having anyone near."

The unusually large number of servicemen's families in this project, particularly of Navy personnel based at Alameda and Treasure Island, further enlarged the number of families who were temporarily without men in them. A young naval electrician, on leave at the time of the interview, mentioned that he was glad the houses were attached, and the walls thin; his wife and her two friends on either side had developed a series of knocking signals, which they could use in times of

danger or sickness. This, the husband said, made him feel a little better about leaving her alone when he was on the ship. Nevertheless, he had also had extension phones fitted in every room, so that she could call the police wherever she was in the house. Others could not afford to have even one phone installed, and, as in the case of a middle-aged Negro woman on welfare, a knocked signal through the wall to a neighbor who did have a phone was her only means of summoning help. So to not a few of the inhabitants of Easter Hill, whose husbands are either temporarily or permanently absent, the sound of 'people next door' through the relatively cheaply constructed walls, is a constant source of comfort and security; in fact, as one respondent put it -

"I worry when it gets too quiet! At night, if I do hear familiar noises next door, I feel safe. My husband's in the Army, in Kansas; he only comes on leave every few months, so I'm alone most of the time."

Intra-family v. inter-family privacy

One fact is patently obvious, and that is that people are much more concerned about privacy between their home and the one next door, than they are about privacy within their home. This fact would probably be true also in a middle-class suburb, but the desire for intra-family privacy is heightened in an environment such as Easter Hill, where units are joined together in rows (a feature not commonly seen in California except in public housing projects), and where adjacent units are not soundproofed from the normal sounds of family life. Obviously you feel inhibited in expressing your feelings if every time you have a row with your husband, or yell at your kids, all the neighbors know about it. And, as some of the above responses indicate, it

is not only the fact that your noise will be heard by the neighbors that is disturbing, but also the fact that their noise may cause you annoyance and embarrassment. In fact one woman said that she had given up asking friends over for the evening because their noise had disturbed her next door neighbor; she felt it was more important to 'keep in with' the neighbors, whom she saw every day and might need to call on some time, than to entertain her friends whom she could see elsewhere.

Although the architects of Easter Hill were admittedly working on a very limited budget, and tried to make the best possible choices between alternatives, maybe that in skimping on the soundproofing between adjacent units, but spending money on upgrading the appearance of the interior by putting in one polished wood wall in the living room, they made a mistake. For surely it would have been better to sacrifice a dubious aesthetic gimmick, noticed by few, in place of an obvious practical amenity, appreciated by all.

'Appreciated by all?' - one might question - what about the women-without-men who specifically stated that they liked to hear sounds from next door? This, I think, is a matter of degree; for only the most expensive forms of soundproofing, which will probably never be provided in low-cost housing, will cut out all sounds. It is more a question of the level of sound, rather than one of complete soundproofing. It is doubtful that many at Easter Hill would have complained if what they heard were just vague sounds of people next door, but when every sound-producing domestic incident from washing-up, to the TV news, can be more or less distinctly discerned, there is real cause for complaint.

B. Visual privacy

A number of people were concerned about factors other than noise, intruding on their privacy, for there is also the question of visual privacy. Incursions into visual privacy can be classified into those which intrude into people's private living space through windows, and those which intrude into people's private open space over or through fences. In the former, we are primarily concerned with privacy at the front of the house, in the latter, with privacy at the back of the house. Let us consider first the question of privacy at the front, or street-side of the house.

TABLE V

Do you like the way your house faces, onto the street/court, or would you prefer it to be facing onto a court/street?

House of respondent faces -		<u>Total</u>	<u>Likes way house faces</u>	<u>Would like it another way</u>	<u>Indifferent</u>
STREET	No.	36	29	3	4
	%	100	81	8	11
COURT	No.	15	9	5	1
	%	100	60	33	7

Orientation of house units - street v. court

The nature of the exterior space onto which a house faces can have important effects on a number of aspects of day-to-day living. If the house faces onto a street, the presence of people walking by close to the windows of your house, may be thought of as an intrusion into

into family privacy. The noise and dust caused by passing auto traffic may cause considerable annoyance, while concern for the safety of children at play (where front yards are unenclosed) can produce tensions in the minds of mothers. Where, as at Easter Hill, the front yards are not wide in extent, such annoying aspects of on-the-street living could be intensified.

Facing onto a court or open space may reduce noise and road safety problems, but may have its own 'hazards', such as the encouragement of large numbers of children playing noisy games in the open area, which people may feel to be an intrusion into the privacy of their front yards. There may also be a feeling of insecurity at nighttime when such areas could be beyond the view of patrolling police cars.

The designers of Easter Hill provided both types of house orientation¹ - the majority of units face onto three curving streets, and a lesser number face onto 4 court areas, leading off the streets at right angles. Two of the courts are 'complete courts'. That is, they comprise two rows of houses facing each other across a grassed interior space; while the other two are 'One-sided' - that is, there is just one row of houses, facing - in one case - a small grassed area, parking lot and the end of a row of houses; and in the other case - a grassed area, and beyond it - and down a hill - the back yards of other houses. Access to all these courts is by means of paved footpaths from the

¹ Although there are also two cul-de-sacs, not enough of the sample lived on these to warrant making a 3-way breakdown of orientations - i.e., street, cul-de-sac and court. It was felt that cul-de-sacs had more in common with the street, than with the court, therefore the few examples of respondents living on cul-de-sacs were included in the street category.

street, and cars are parked in small lots at, or near to, the street end of the court.

Since tenants at Easter Hill cannot choose which unit they move into, but are assigned to one somewhere in the project, we do not have the situation, as in private housing, where people living on a court, or a street, have chosen that particular location. Consequently, one might expect to find roughly equal proportions of tenants liking and disliking the orientation of their units, if in fact these two types of orientation are approximately balanced in terms of their advantages and disadvantages. Such, however, is not the case.

It was found that of those facing directly onto a street, 80% liked the orientation of their house, 8% would have preferred facing a court, and 11% were indifferent. But of those facing onto a court or open space, only 60% were satisfied, while 33% would have preferred facing the street, and 7% were indifferent. (Though, admittedly, the actual numbers involved are small.) The most prevalent (verbalized) reason for liking a street orientation was that it is 'more private'. A number of respondents implied that the street formed a type of barrier, a welcome 'moat' preventing too intimate contact between opposite site neighbors.

"I like it (i.e., the house) as it is. I don't want to get mixed up with people."

"It's more private facing onto a street . . . more separate."

Living on a court, people implied, would force one into uncomfortable contact, since the front doors, in some places, face each other across relatively narrow areas of grass. Even where, at the wider ends

of court, a larger open area separates opposite front doors, the lack of pedestrian and auto traffic would seem to reduce the 'barrier' effect of this space.

"On the courts, everyone can see everything . . . knows everyone else's business. We lived on a court once before."

"I wouldn't want to look into the other guy's house all the time."

"I face the side of a house across the road; I wouldn't like to be looking straight across at a neighbor's front door, with no road in between."

The cul-de-sac, with its lack of through traffic, and its more intimate, enclosed feeling, seems to have all the disadvantages of court living (i.e., too much 'contact') and none of the advantages (i.e., complete safety from traffic). On one of the cul-de-sacs in the project, as on one of the more tightly enclosed courts, stories were told the interviewer of women opposite who were 'trouble-makers', or 'gossips', or who were 'always telling us how to live'. No such criticism of opposite neighbors was heard from street dwellers, though derogatory remarks were voiced about next-door neighbors. Some of those facing the street were aware of this lack of privacy occasioned by living on a court or cul-de-sac, by reason of their own, or a relative's experience. A middle-aged Negro woman living on Hinkley Avenue, and pleased with her location, remarked -

"But my brother used to live on Hinkley Circle; he didn't like the Circle . . . people don't seem to get along there, they're always bickering. It seems more private facing the street."

The fact that her brother is (presumably) Negro, and that Hinkley Circle is in a predominantly white section of the project, suggests that where there are potential racial tensions, the enforced 'intimacy'

of close groupings of houses, may compound the problem.

Perhaps more than the one respondent who replied ". . . it seems more like a private home, facing the street," linked courts and cul-de-sacs in their minds with housing projects, since such arrangements of units are unfamiliar both in the older parts of cities, where respondents, for the most part, had come from, and in the newer, low-priced subdivisions, where their friends or relatives reside, and where some of them aspire to live.

Almost as popular a reason for liking a street orientation was the attraction of seeing "people go by", or watching them going "in and out". Even traffic passing was a welcome change to the quietness of cul-de-sacs -

"I like to see action . . . cars moving. Corto Square is too quiet . . . we lived there first," remarked a middle-aged, divorced woman, whose children were at school all day. And an elderly woman, recently widowed and living alone, replied -

"I like the idea of looking out and seeing the traffic . . . people and children. Why would anyone want to be jammed onto a court? Nothing to see . . . no traffic going by."

Even some of the 'natural' disadvantages of street living, did not, it seems, deter from the pleasure of 'seeing people' -

"There's more dust on the street side, but there's more to see! It's not too quiet . . . the people walking from the bus stop go past my house."

Some conceded that a court may be more attractive to look at, but nevertheless preferred a street location for its greater degree of privacy.

"I wouldn't care for a court . . . it looks rather attractive, but I wouldn't care about living there. On a corner like here, it's more private."

An end-of-row location, on the street, seemed to some, to combine the advantages of both street and court orientation -

"Well I face onto the street and onto a 'court'! [End of row, front door faces grass area.] My door is away from everyone else's. I think people living on the end are more satisfied than the others . . . the doors are all by themselves."

One respondent, preferring her street-orientation, referred to the maintenance problem of living in a court, with people constantly making short cuts across your front lawn -

"We have trails here [i.e., at Easter Hill] . . . the people in the courts have a problem with people walking straight through, over their grass . . . they can't keep their lawns up."

Only one person preferred her street location for purely aesthetic reasons . . . "I guess I like it for the view . . . you're not closed in."

Only 3 respondents, out of the 36 interviewed who were facing the street, disliked their location; one could give no reason, one thought it would just be 'more pleasant' facing a court, while the third thought that it would be safer for her children.

The majority of those facing onto courts, also liked their location, though the proportion was considerably smaller than that of street dwellers who liked their location (60% as against 80%). More than half of those who liked living on a court did so because of the safety for their children.

"When the children were smaller, I didn't have to worry about them going onto a busy street. They have plenty of space to play here. Where my girl friend lives (Hinkley Avenue) . . . she's constantly worried about kids running onto the street."

Although the courts do, undoubtedly, provide a safer place to play in, this can also prove to be a source of annoyance, for open space attracts children, and not only those who live beside it. The flat, open court leading off Hinkley Avenue provides a favorite locale for team games, races and ball games - accompanied by the usual cheers and shouts of both participants and spectators; while the narrow, sloping court between Corto Square and South 26th Street, provides a favorite route for cyclists and roller skaters. No wonder then, that an Eskimo family living on the Hinkley Avenue court, remarked that they didn't like facing the court, because . . .

" . . . it's too crowded with kids playing at night - they play rough; they play baseball in the court and break the glass."

One respondent preferred court living because there were 'fewer people walking by', and another because she felt it was 'a little more private like this'. But although the court may seem more private than the street, in terms of less people and traffic 'passing by', it also seemed less private in terms of proximity to opposite neighbors. A number of court dwellers, particularly on the narrower court off 26th Street, remarked at other points in the interview, that they used their back door much more than the front, because it was less exposed to the scrutiny of all the others living on the court. Casual observation would support this feeling that the narrow courts are less private than the street, for it was noticed that a considerable number of the houses on the court off 26th Street had their drapes or blinds permanently drawn. This was seen much less frequently on the streets.

As Kuper noted in his study of the effects of a planned environment on social relations in a suburb of Coventry, siting arrangements can create the opposite of neighborliness; they can create reserve by throwing people too close together so that they "...feel the need to withdraw in order to preserve their privacy." He found greater instability where people were thrust close together; for instance, there were many more changes of tenancy among the houses facing onto the cul-de-sacs and a central court than among those in other locations.¹

The general feeling, then, among residents at Easter Hill, seems to be that it is the street that provides more privacy, more anonymity. Passing autos and pedestrians not only form a kind of 'moving screen' between houses which face each other, but they also provide a pleasant visual diversion for the many house-bound mothers who live in Easter Hill. Indeed, the lack of anything to look at--and by "anything" was inferred people--was the most frequently voiced complaint from those who live in courts, and dislike them.

"I would like it on the street...you can't see anything here."

"Look out here--all you can see is houses! If we faced the street, I could see the traffic and things."

Conclusions on privacy

It is a quirk of human nature that one tends to yearn for what one does not have, and take for granted what one does. In the case of privacy, it is not surprising that we should detect a note of yearning in many of the above responses, for however deftly the designers arranged the housing units, there is still a much greater density of

1. Kuper, Leo, "Blueprint for Living Together," in Living in Towns, London: The Cresset Press, 1953.

persons-on-the-land than in the 'normal' residential neighborhood. And when the problem of high-density living is compounded by that of a group which is paying rent according to income, and where every extra job and additional piece of overtime is noted and gossiped about by the neighbors, and overnight visitors (only permitted by special permission of the Housing Authority) have to be secreted into the house, it is small wonder that people are concerned about privacy. There is a definite feeling at Easter Hill that people regard their houses as havens from the outside world, as places to retreat into from the various difficulties which beset them; it is hardly surprising then that we should find that they were disturbed at various aural and visual incursions into their privacy.

IV

THE USE OF PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

The back yard

The back yards at Easter Hill, measuring approximately 16 x 20 feet were thought of by the architects as very important appendages to the living space of the house, but were included in the final design only after some altercation with Public Housing Administration, who considered them an unnecessary expense. The results of this survey overwhelmingly vindicate the designers in their decision, for the back yards, small and open to view as they are, are considered by the tenants at Easter Hill to be one of their most valued 'possessions', in terms of usable space.

In Public Housing, just as in any other forms of low-rent housing, there is over-crowding. As we noted elsewhere, there were 4 cases in this small sample of families with more than 6 children, despite the fact that the Richmond Housing Authority assured the writer that there were no units big enough for families with 6 children or more. Small wonder then, that the cement back porch and fenced back yard, leading off the minimal-sized kitchen should be used as a kind of overflow receptacle for storing extra furniture and large kitchen appliances (freezers, washing machines, etc.), bicycles and over-sized toys, as well as a receptacle for the more 'normal' outdoor family activities--drying clothes, minding children, growing plants, sitting in the sun, etc.

When asked if they were pleased that they had a private back yard at Easter Hill, almost everyone said that they were; two persons were

indifferent, and none responded that they were not pleased. A few answered that they were pleased, even though responses to other questions revealed that they never used the yards, even for drying clothes; presumably for them, the yard had some sort of status value, or they felt it was just nice to have it there in case, one day, they did feel like using it. Not unexpectedly, the most enthusiastic remarks about the yard space came from those who had previously lived in cramped apartments, with no opportunities for getting outside.

"I'm very glad we have a yard . . . it's the first thing I noticed. The kid is at an age when he can't be cooped up. With a yard, it feels more like a house than an apartment. We lived in an apartment house before we came here--all on top of one another."

"I sure am pleased! At the last place, we had an upstairs apartment--couldn't go outside at all. I was stuck in day and night, it was awful. We lived over a store . . . the only way to get out was to walk through the store. The girl was only 3 months then; it didn't matter so much as now . . . but I sure got tired of being stuck in."

Clothes-drying

It is not surprising that almost all the women interviewed in this survey remarked that they used their yard for drying clothes, for here we are dealing with a low-income segment of the population who can neither afford automatic dryers, nor afford to take large family washes to the local laundromat (even supposing that they have a car to do the trip in). Certainly, one of the most striking impressions which the visitor to Easter Hill takes away with him is of the rows upon rows of clothes lines, with drying garments blowing in the wind which is almost invariably present in this part of Richmond. Design-oriented visitors no doubt, together with the architects of the project, view the kaleidoscopic

TABLE VI
USES OF THE BACK YARD

	<u>No. of Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Clothes-drying	48	92
Children's play	36	69
Sitting out (woman)	28	54
Growing plants, lawn, etc.	27	52
Barbecues, picnics	21	40
Repair jobs	20	38
Keeping dog in	17	32
Storing bicycles, toys, etc.	14	27
Sitting out (man)	11	21
Storing extra furniture	7	13
Parties, gatherings, entertaining friends	2	4

N=52

pattern of drying clothes with pleasure, even 'excitement'. Not so some of the inhabitants, who thought it untidy, even embarrassing, to have all the family clothes drying in the public gaze. Not so one middle-aged Negro woman who, when asked if she thought Easter Hill was an attractive neighborhood, replied . . . "No, I do not . . . all I can see out the window are all those little yards with clothes drying in them . . . I get tired of the same messy view."

But most were only too happy to have a place of their own to hang clothes, and ignored, or put up with, the undesirable visual results. Indeed, for one young Negro woman, who evidently had had unfortunate experiences with shared clothes lines and unfriendly neighbors in another project, the private clothes line in her yard at Easter Hill was one of her most valued 'possessions', and she even stated at the end of the interview that it was the thing she would miss most if she had to leave the project.

Children's play

More than two-thirds of the respondents used their yards for play areas for their small children or babies, or had done so when their children were younger. Although the fences are only low, and made of chicken wire, they are capable of containing small children, and thus the yard becomes a very important escape-valve for the harassed mother living in cramped conditions, a place where she can get the children out from under her feet, but where they will be reasonably safe from traffic, older children, dogs, etc. Although sneeringly referred to by some as 'chicken coops' and 'dog runs', because of their small size, the yards

at Easter Hill are probably far more effective as 'containers' of small children, than are the more rambling and spacious yards of middle-class suburbia, for they more closely resemble playpens.

The use of the yard as a play area is even more enhanced by the arrangement of rooms within the house, in particular, with the positioning of the kitchen at the back of the house, so that it is a relatively simple matter for mothers working in the kitchen, to 'keep an eye on' their offspring in the yard. The fact that the entrance from the back yard into the house is via the kitchen, means that muddy shoes and clothes can be disposed of there, without treading dirt into the rest of the house. This is a rather important matter, in terms of keeping the house clean, for many of the yards have not been 'landscaped'--due to lack of interest or lack of money, or both, and their surfaces are bare earth. Indeed, one mother replied that she never let her kids go out in the yard, and that she used it for nothing but drying clothes, because there was no grass in it. Presumably the problem of seeding the back yard was a greater one than having the children under her feet in the house.

The almost complete lack of play equipment anywhere in Easter Hill has resulted in the already cramped yards in many cases, being practically filled with mail-order swing sets, leaving little room for any other activities. A number of mothers remarked that if only there was a place with swings and slides where their children could go, they wouldn't have to have the swing set cluttering up the yard and could use it for planting a lawn, flowers, etc.

Sitting out

Roughly half of the women interviewed, and about one-fifth of their husbands, used the back yards for sitting out. In the case of the men, it is understandable that few used the yard for this purpose, for many are gone to work all day and at weekends are busy working on their cars or doing jobs in the house. Among the women, too, a good many, in response to this question, replied good humoredly that they just never had time to sit out, since their children and household chores kept them on the go all day. But an equally important reason is that the weather at Easter Hill is not conducive to 'sitting out'; cold winds are frequently blowing off the Bay, and the temperatures, even in July and August, are several degrees below those in the hill areas to the east. The designers seem to have taken very little account of these adverse climatic factors, for there seems to be little use of planting as a wind-screening element.

A number of people remarked that they would have sat out more if the fencing around the yard had been more solid, and they had had more privacy. ". . . Who wants to sunbathe with all the neighbors gawking at you through the fence!" While others responded that they would use the yard if the outlook were more pleasant. ". . . I don't . . . my teenage daughter sits out in the sun sometimes, but it looks right out onto a busy street and service station, not a very pleasant outlook."

A middle-aged Negro woman, when asked if she sat out in the sun, responded good naturedly, "I was born with my color, I don't need to sit out in the sun!" while another, evidently strongly under the influence

of the Homes and Gardens magazines which lay around her living room, replied, "Oh, no, I can't . . . you see we don't have no garden furniture."

Growing plants, etc.

The use of the yards as gardens, with lawns and flowers, is of course directly related to the length of stay of the inhabitants at Easter Hill. Those who are transient, or hope they are transient, have little interest in investing time and money in improving their yard, when they will soon move on and leave it. A number complained bitterly about the unkempt appearance of the yards, but seemed unwilling to admit that their own yard was 'one of the culprits'.

The yards of tenants who had lived at Easter Hill for some years and those who had no children were noticeably better landscaped and maintained than those of the more 'transient' residents and those with large families. The yards of the chief minority groups represented at Easter Hill--notably Negroes, Orientals, and Mexicans--are on the whole much better kept up than those of the Anglo-Whites; the explanation for this may be partly that they expect to stay in Easter Hill longer, or that most of them have come from rural backgrounds and are thus conversant with 'growing things'.

A number of people remarked that they had once tried to grow plants in the back yards, but had given up because so many dogs and kids had 'wandered' into the yards, trampling down plants, picking flowers, etc. The inadequacy of the fencing, and the greater use that would have been made of the yards, given greater privacy, will be discussed at greater length shortly.

Barbecues, picnics, etc.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents said that they never used their yards for barbecues or picnics, mostly because of the lack of privacy. ". . . As soon as you get the barbecue out, all the kids in the neighborhood come and lean over the fence to watch you." A young Mexican woman, whose yard backed onto other yards, responded that she wouldn't barbecue in her yard because the kids come and watch, but that she goes and uses her sister-in-law's yard on the hill . . . "because she's on the end of a row and there are no houses behind . . . it's more private."

For some, though, it was not the lack of privacy which precluded them using the yard for family picnics, but lack of money to buy the necessary 'equipment' (barbecue set, furniture, etc.); for them, it was cheaper to take a trip to a nearby park, where fireplaces and tables are provided. And for others, having a picnic was a good excuse to get away from home, to get away from the neighbors.

"I like to get away from people when I have a picnic, go to the country."

"The children would come and watch. If we want a picnic, we go off in the car somewhere . . . go fishing."

"We don't have any lawn furniture . . . we like to get away from home when we have a picnic."

Repair jobs

Over a third of the respondents said that their husbands or children used the yard for repair jobs--for fixing bicycles, for painting and repairing furniture, etc. But from general observation of Easter Hill, both on weekdays and at the weekend, it is obvious that the back

yard is not nearly so important an 'outdoor space' for the men of the project, as are the parking lots. For here, neighboring men and youths can stand around and discuss cars, work and tinker on them, lend advice, do jobs requiring several pairs of hands, etc. In contrast, the back yard is a rather lonely place, and is within sight of their wives.

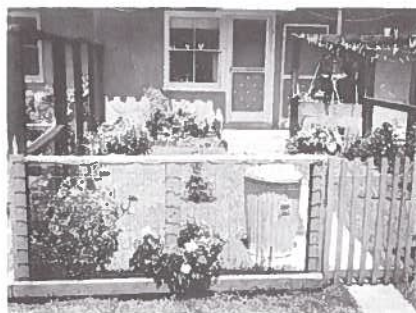
Storage of bicycles, toys, extra furniture, etc.

The importance of the back yard as a kind of overflow container for the paraphernalia of family life is readily noticed by even the casual observer walking through Easter Hill. Extra furniture and pieces needing repairs are stacked on the cement porch, tin baths and hoses and tools are hung on the back wall of the house, bicycles and mowers are propped against the fence, the whole effect lending a somewhat messy appearance to the backs of the houses. In one household, there must be a mechanical enthusiast, for the skeletal remains of at least a dozen bicycles lie scattered around the back yard. In another is an old gas stove and a number of battered easy chairs, which, said the owner, ". . . I hope my husband will get around to repairing some day."

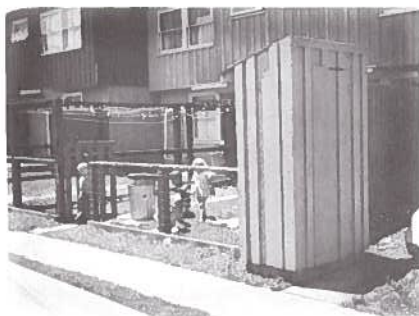
It is easy for the casual visitor to Easter Hill to view all this and go tut-tutting away, complaining about the messiness of the working classes. But, of course, the truth is, in a middle-class suburb, such clutter would be there all right, but not exposed to public view in a chicken-wire-fenced back yard that anyone can peer into; it would be stacked away in the garage, the tool shed, or the basement. But in a situation as at Easter Hill, where there is no garage, or tool shed, or basement, or even enough room in the house for the people, it is small



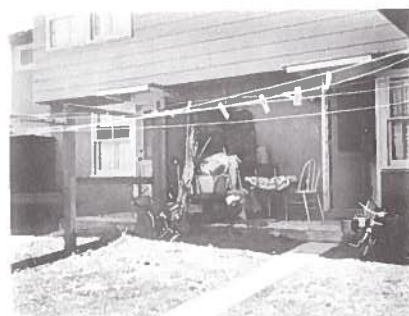
The back yards were considered by many tenants to be one of their most valued possessions in terms of usable open space



...some of the long-term residents had made attractive gardens



Many yards were used as play-spaces for young children...



...and as storage places for family paraphernalia

wonder that the back yard takes on the function of a somewhat untidy storage area.

In fact, more people would have used their yards for storage if it were safe, and/or permitted to do so. Many respondents remarked that they had to pile all their children's garden toys and bicycles into the pantry every night, or they would get stolen; and some reported that bicycles, etc., had been stolen when they had neglected to bring them in. There certainly would have been more furniture stacked outside and more people reporting in this survey that they used the yard for that purpose, but for the fact that the fact that the Housing Authority expressly forbids people to do this. (They evidently have trouble enforcing their 'rules', for many still do it.) So not only do Easter Hill residents have to contend with marauding pilferers from within and around the project, they also have to contend with rules from an Authority which forbids the use of the back yard for storage, but provides no alternative storage space. No wonder that a few people have constructed lockable tool sheds in their back yards, though the Housing Authority views even this with disfavor.

Keeping the dog in

The use of the back yard as a place to keep a dog, or dogs in, is one that is immediately noticeable to anyone taking a brief walk through the project. Although only one-third of the respondents admitted to this as a use of their yard, general observation suggests that half to two-thirds of the inhabitants keep dogs; the reason for this reluctance in admitting the ownership of a dog is that it is, on the books at least,

against Public Housing regulations. Richmond Housing Authority tried to clamp down on the first few people who bought dogs, but soon things got out of hand--more people had them than didn't, and it was found to be impossible to enforce the rule. A few people complained about them during the course of the interview, and remarked that their barking and howling at night was even worse than the noise of children during the day; this was probably an exaggeration, or the observation of a few very light sleepers, for no more than a few mentioned it. There were even a few people who had more than one dog, and in one case, a neighbor complained bitterly that she couldn't even let her small children play in their own back yard, because of the smell from next door, where three dogs were kept penned up in the yard all day.

There are a number of possible explanations for this remarkable emphasis on canine companionship at Easter Hill; and 'remarkable' is no exaggeration, for there appeared, at least to this observer, to be many more dogs than one would normally find in a middle-class suburb. Firstly, people may have bought dogs in defiance of the Housing Authority, as a sort of thumb-nosing gesture at officialdom. Secondly, it may have been a matter of 'fashion', or keeping up with the people next door . . . "but everyone else has a dog." Thirdly, it may genuinely be a question of companionship, especially for older people living alone. And lastly, and most importantly, it may well be largely for protection, especially since one-third of the households are temporarily or permanently without a man in them. Stories of burglaries are not uncommon, and many people complained of the lack of police protection at night, and their slowness

at coming when called. A dog in the house or back yard, if not in reality much of a threat to life and limb, at least by its barking may scare off a potential intruder.

Size of the back yard

Asked what they felt about the size of their back yard, 42% were satisfied with the way it is, they felt that it was adequate for their uses, and were concerned that they wouldn't be able to keep up a yard that was any bigger. But more than half did want their yards bigger, the most important reason being that their kids would have more room to play or they would have more room to grow flowers. Certainly, the lack of specific play-spaces in Easter Hill for children of different ages was an important omission in the design, and accounts in part for this desire on the part of the tenants for bigger yards.

"Yes, I'd like the yard bigger . . . when I hang up the clothes I need more room; there's not enough room for clothes and kids."

"I'd like it bigger to put toys out for the kids; when the kids friends come by--especially when we put the pool up, it would be nice to have a larger area to play in."

"As the boys grow older, they might like to play badminton or something; it's important to have a large yard because we don't have any extra room inside the house. I'd like a garage too--especially with the boys growing up . . . having bikes, playing with the car."

Some felt that they would only want it larger if it were fenced for privacy; others, that only if it were larger, would they use it, for right now they felt so cooped up in it, they just didn't bother. Some just wanted more room for garden furniture, picnic tables, barbecues, etc., so that they could use the yard as a family, or for entertaining friends.

The reasons for wanting the yard larger seemed to be primarily functional; no one mentioned a 'status' reason.

Privacy in the back yard

Asked if they would prefer to have a higher and more solid type of fence around their back yard, the majority said that they would; though when asked earlier if there were anything about the yard that they didn't like, that they'd like to see changed, most said that there was nothing they wanted changed. From this we can perhaps deduce that more privacy in the back yard is considered a 'good thing' when it is suggested, but that it is not a premeditated desire.

Perhaps adding the phrase 'that people couldn't see through' loaded this question to a certain extent, but it certainly seemed to touch a sore point with many of the respondents.

"Yeah . . . I would like to be able to wear shorts and not have people staring at my fat legs."

"The yard should be enclosed, living so close like this . . . you can't have grass or anything . . . kids scale the fence like monkeys. It would seem like it would make the apartment bigger, if the yard was fenced."

"I would like more privacy . . . I like to lie out in the sun. Around here, you can't wear a swim suit, or the neighbors will say you're trying to entice the men in."

Surprisingly, though, probably just as many people wanted a solid fence so that they didn't have to see what was around them, as wanted it to prevent other people from seeing them; this was obviously a reaction to the drab physical surroundings at Easter Hill--the views of unkempt yards, of stretches of open space that the Housing Authority has permitted to revert to bare dirt, of vacant lots and filling stations which back onto

TABLE VII

PREFERENCE FOR A HIGHER AND MORE SOLID TYPE OF FENCING
AROUND THE BACK YARD, THAT PEOPLE COULDN'T SEE THROUGH

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Would like	27	55
Would not like	12	25
Indifferent	6	13
No answer	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
	48	100

the project. At least with a solid fence, you wouldn't have to see these things.

"It's nice to see around if there's something nice to look at-- here, all there is is dirt."

"It would furnish more privacy . . . also, if the yards on both sides were not kept up, then we wouldn't have to look at them."

As we have noted elsewhere in this survey, a number of people made interesting distinctions between what they would really like, were the house their own property, and what they thought was 'suitable' at Easter Hill, considering it was public housing. In the case of fenced back yards, quite a number of respondents remarked that if the yard were larger, or the houses were separate, or they owned the house, then yes, they would like to have a high and solid fence around their yard for privacy. But because this was a Project situation, and you couldn't quite expect to have all the niceties of 'the outside world', then a fenced yard did not seem 'suitable'.

"Not here in a project . . . I don't care about a solid fence, just one high enough to keep the kids out."

"If the houses were larger, yes--then I would like a fence; but not when they're this size."

"Yes, if it were all mine; I've always wanted a yard with a high redwood fence all around it."

"If the houses are separate, it's better to have solid fences, but not as they are here."

One respondent, who may not have been alone in thinking this way, seemed to regard a desire for privacy in the back yard as something 'not quite nice', as if you wanted to do things in the yard that shouldn't be seen by anyone. "A solid fence would give more privacy . . . but anything

that private belongs in the house," she replied, rather primly. Possibly to some then, who have been unused to much privacy in their lives at any time, living in crowded apartments, and housing projects without private open space, the idea of outdoor privacy had never occurred to them, and when it is suggested as something that might be desirable, their reaction is one of slightly shocked surprise.

Certainly privacy, as such, is not the only reason for wanting fencing around the back yard; almost as many people wanted it for more 'utilitarian' reasons, such as screening their yard from the wind, keeping stray baseballs from smashing their windows (a costly hazard of high density living), keeping dogs, cats and children from getting into the yard, preventing burglars from escaping when they left the house by 'the back way'.

The desire for fencing was as much a desire for protection as it was for privacy. Those who had tried to keep up their back yards, complained of children and dogs getting over the low fences, and trampling their preciously tended flowers; in fact, there were probably more strongly worded complaints about the pilfering and damaging of plants and flowers in people's yards (back and front), than about almost any other point. Certainly more than there were about the Housing Authority. A number conceded that they didn't care about the fence being solid, or about people seeing in, as long as it was higher.

"No . . . I don't particularly want a solid fence, but I would like the present fence higher . . . to keep the dogs and cats from jumping in."

"Sure I'd like a higher fence--keep those kids out from picking my flowers."

One-fourth of those who were asked this question were quite positive in not wanting higher or more solid fencing around their back yards, primarily because they liked to look out of the yard when they were in it; they liked to see people go by, to chat to their neighbors, to look at the scenery. Even so, some admitted, their husbands wouldn't care for it that way; there seemed in the responses to this and a number of other questions, a feeling that the men in Easter Hill were desirous of more privacy, were more concerned about the closeness of the houses, than were the women. Possibly because, the very lack of privacy engendered by Project living, was more a 'reflection' on them and their 'inability' to provide, than it was on their wives. This reaction was also undoubtedly linked to the fact that the men were, on the whole, gone all day and had friends at their work places, so that when they returned home, they were ready for quietness and privacy. Wives, on the other hand, stuck in the project all day, welcomed the chance for a chat as they hung out the washing, or did the gardening.

"No, I'm not looking for privacy, but my husband would . . . he tends to like more privacy. I like to visit over the fence . . . like to make friends."

"No, I wouldn't want a solid fence . . . I don't like being closed in; I like to see the scenery."

"I like to visit with the neighbors, and see out . . . see who's walking by."

"No . . . solid fencing isn't necessary in so small a yard. The kids can talk through the fence; the baby in the playpen can see other children, and not feel lonely. In my own place though, I'd want a large yard and solid fence."

Only one person replying either positively or negatively to this question of yard-fencing, made a response that could be construed

as having 'status' in mind . . . and she said, "Yes, I'd like a higher fence, it adds to the house . . . makes it more . . . attractive."

The fact that many distinguished between what they'd want if the house was their own, and what they were content with in a Housing Project, suggests that they 'judge' these two different living environments with rather different criteria. It also suggests that the designer who tries to introduce 'status' extras into a Public Housing design, and attempts to make it 'more middle-class looking', as De Mars admittedly did at Easter Hill, is somewhat 'off-beam'; for no amount of prettying-up a project is going to divert the inhabitants from the realization that they are living in Housing, and not in 'a house'.

The front porch

The architects provided each unit with a covered front porch, comprising a concrete slab (approximately 6'x 4'), fenced in by a wooden slatted railing, and roofed with corrugated asbestos. They considered this to be an important appendage of the interior living space, a place where people could leave bikes or baby carriages, or sit out and watch the world go by, without the connotations of 'sitting out on the stoop'.

More than four-fifths of the respondents commented that they liked having a porch on their house, primarily because it provided protection from the rain and wind, especially when entering the house, searching for keys, fumbling with shopping bags, etc. "You're out of the rain when you're entering the house, and it keeps the door mat dry; that's important when the door opens straight into the room and not into a hallway." Three times as many people mentioned this protection from the

rain, as mentioned protection from the sun--a surprising fact considering that Richmond experiences an essentially dry, sunny climate, with probably no more than 10% of the days of the year being wet. There appeared to be no correlation between the orientation of the house vis-à-vis the sun, and liking the front porch.

A few said they liked it for sitting out--"There's a lot of shade; I can sit out there and not worry about taking things in if it rains."; and a few others felt that it gave the house added privacy--"I like it for the privacy; you're not seen when you step out of the house." And one respondent--a young, illiterate Mexican woman--gave a more sophisticated answer:

"I like the porches; without them it would just look like one long, straight building."

Uses of the front porch

A number of families had erected a gate across the entrance to the porch, to make a small 'playpen', the railings being high enough to keep any but the most adventurous child, from climbing out. Others sometimes moved a temporary playpen out there during the day--"I put the baby's playpen there; meanwhile, I sit and watch the cars go by, it's something different to do." For slightly older children, the porch provides a good locale for playing 'house' or 'shop'. But perhaps the greatest users of the front porches are the teenagers, only one of which was interviewed in this survey. From general observation, one could see that the porch provided a convenient spot for teenagers to gather in for it was attached to the house and yet not 'in it'. In the



The front porch was an important locale for adding touches of individuality to the exterior of the house...



...it also proved popular as a means of separating adjacent front doors and providing a semi-private entrance, sheltered in times of bad weather



Some tenants used the front porch as a storage place for extra furniture

late afternoons and early evenings, it was a fairly common sight to see a half-dozen teenagers grouped in and around the front porch, playing cards on the step, sitting on the railings, leaning against the corner posts, laughing, talking, and calling out after passers-by. For this section of the population, then, the porch performs a most useful function, the same sort of function as the stoop of a New York tenement house, a place from which you can view the passers-by, and a place in which you can be seen.

For adults, too, the porch provided a semi-private spot from which to view the world, and when asked specifically if they used the porch for sitting on, two-thirds replied that they did, though many added that Easter Hill was a windy place, and it was only occasionally that the weather was hot enough for them to want to do so; others inferred that even if they'd wanted to, their children took up so much of their time that they rarely had a chance to sit outside. Even though this survey was carried out during one of the warmest periods of the year, July-August, it was not a common sight to see people sitting on their porches; use of the porch by teenagers was much more frequently observed, presumably because they both had more time to 'hang around', and they were less concerned with whether the weather was 'just right' for sitting out. From observation, a frequent use of the porches by adults seemed to be as a place for casual, brief conversations between neighbors, standing on the front step for five or ten minutes, when even sitting down on the porch might have proved too formal a situation, and when an invitation to come into the house and chat was perhaps not wanted by either party concerned.

There appeared to be an interesting relationship between 'sitting out' and race. Only 54% of white respondents said that they liked to sit out, whereas 75% of those classified as 'other' (Mexican, Oriental, American-Indian) said that they did so, as did 92% of the Negro respondents. Presumably this is because the majority of Negroes in the sample were brought up in the south, or their parents were brought up in the south, and the habit acquired there of 'sitting out on the stoop' had been extended to their life at Easter Hill, even though the climate here rarely warrants it.

Among other uses of the porch which were observed were the storing of extra furniture, defunct TV and radio sets, etc.; and as a kind of setting for staging attempts to introduce variety and individuality to the house fronts. This was achieved in various ways; by planting flowers and vines around the base of the porch, by fixing window boxes to the horizontal slats, by hanging gay drapes in the window of the front door, even painting the woodwork of the porch a different color, though this was admitted to somewhat sheepishly, as painting the exterior of the house is not officially 'permitted' by the Housing Authority.

As was the case with the back yard, the architects of Easter Hill had had to argue and insist for a long time, with the Public Housing Administration, before they were permitted to include in their design, a front porch for every house. Officialdom deemed this a wasteful luxury, really only necessary in rainy sections of the country, and to their minds, superfluous in sunny California. The architects insisted, however, partly because they felt the porch would have a

utilitarian function, but mostly because they felt it would add a little 'prestige' to the house, make it look a little more 'middle class', and a little less like public housing; and because they wanted to provide a place where people could sit out and watch what was going on in the street, without having to 'sit on the front step'.

The responses of the residents indicate that the architects choice was a wise one. Although no one expressed such enthusiasm for the front porch as they did for the back yard, and seemingly few had really 'thought' about the porch before, there was nevertheless a feeling that it was a 'good thing', that the houses would look much more dull and stereotyped without them. Whereas the back yard was a private open space with fairly utilitarian functions--drying clothes, storing furniture, minding children--the front porch was more important as a locale for casual social contacts, whether it be a game of 'house' among neighboring children, a round of pontoon among a group of teenagers, a brief chat between housewives returning from the store, or a nod to a neighbor passing by. Whereas the back yard appeared to be a place into which family activities 'overflowed', the front porch and yard were the half-way house between completely private space and completely public space, a space where family and neighborhood activities intermingled. As such, they perform a most valuable function, especially in a milieu such as this, where among many of the residents there is a feeling of withdrawal, of not wanting to mix, of mistrust. Sitting on the porch, you can 'watch what the neighbors are doing' so much better than peeping through the lace curtains, and yet you are still on your own 'property'.

There is no need to be sociable, unless one wants to be--like kicking one's feet in the swimming pool, while still holding onto the hand rail.

The front yard

The front yards of the units at Easter Hill comprise pieces of unfenced lawn separating the facade of the house from the sidewalk, and varying in width from approximately 8 to 15 feet, according to the setback of the house. Through each front yard runs a narrow concrete path leading from the public sidewalk to the front porch of the house, and around the porch is a small flower bed in which the tenants are permitted to plant what they like--or to plant nothing. The lawns, however, cannot be altered, and it is the responsibility of each tenant to take care of the piece of lawn in front of, or sometimes at the side of, his house. If he fails to do this, he is liable to being 'reprimanded' by the Housing Authority, and if he still fails in his responsibilities, the Housing Authority sends one of its gardeners to do the job--and later bills the tenant for this service. I heard of no cases where this latter course of action took place, for it seems that the spoken hints and 'dirty looks' of neighbors are far more effective means of keeping people in line, than are threats from the Housing Authority. When asked if they thought Easter Hill was an attractive neighborhood, the majority made it obvious in their answers that they felt the 'other tenants' in the project were responsible for whether or not it was attractive, or remained attractive. Few felt that design had anything to do with attractiveness, for attractiveness was deemed by most to be a question of maintenance, primarily tenant-maintenance.

TABLE VIII

Do you prefer to take care of the grass at the front of the house yourself, or would you rather that the Housing Authority took care of it for you?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Prefer to do it myself	28	54
Prefer Housing Authority to do it	16	31
Indifferent	7	13
No answer	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	52	100

Designing the front yards for easy tenant-maintenance was one means of attaining the objective--'to keep maintenance costs to a minimum'. But how do the tenants feel about this--do they feel 'put upon', or do they enjoy the chance to have a lawn to take care of? The responses to a question put to the tenants on this matter, are illustrated in Table VII. (See page 62)

The majority responded, some quite strongly, that they would rather do it themselves. Most felt this way because they enjoyed the work, they enjoyed the feeling of having a piece of lawn 'of their own', they enjoyed an excuse to get out in the sun.

"It feels more like a home . . . to keep up a lawn."

"I'd much prefer to do it myself, because I enjoy being outdoors . . . it gives me something to do."

"It's better for individuals to do it . . . you feel more at home when you have to take care of it yourself."

Others felt it was just more convenient this way--they could fix the yard the way they wanted . . . "They'd just do it the way they wanted, probably cut down all your flowers" . . . and they could do the watering when they wanted, preferably after the kids had gone to bed, so they didn't tread water into the house.

"They'd probably do it the wrong way, have the sidewalk and the kids all soaked; I'd rather do it myself."

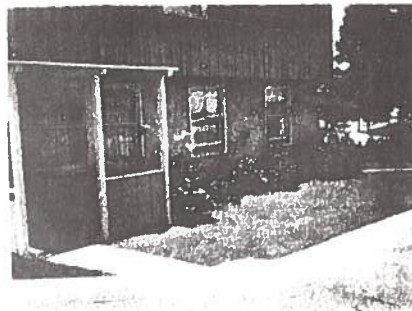
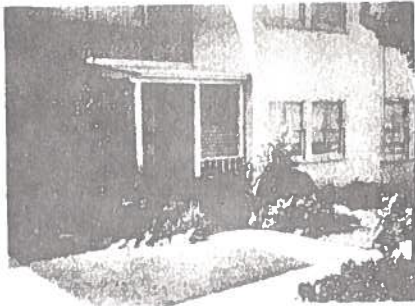
"I can do it any time I want to . . . they don't have to come around and tell me what to do. I don't have to depend on them."

A few saw taking care of the lawn as a valuable means of training their children to do their share of household chores; it was not an uncommon sight in the summer vacation to see children mowing the front law, or trimming the edge of the walk. A mother of 5 responded:

"I think each individual should take care of his lawn . . . children should be trained to help to do those things . . . they need to learn about responsibility. The more you do for people, the less they do for themselves."

Although no one said as much, it is likely that quite a few enjoy taking care of the front yard, because it gives them an excuse to be out front of the house, speaking to passers-by and watching what is going on in the neighborhood. Some may also welcome the chance to take care of one part of their 'domain' which is in the public view, for here is a chance to 'show off', a means of making your house look a little better than your neighbor's. Indeed, this may be a partial explanation of why the front yards of the Negro, Mexican and Oriental tenants at Easter Hill look noticeably better kept up than those of the Anglo-whites; keeping your lawn looking nice is a relatively inexpensive, but visually noticed way, of gaining status.

However, almost a third of the respondents to this question said that they would prefer it if the Housing Authority took care of their front lawn. Many of these were women who had no husbands or whose husbands were away at sea for long periods of time, and found the work too hard. But perhaps more significant than the lack of helping in doing the work, was a lack of money to buy garden equipment; if you're living on a low budget anyway, you will obviously not feel well disposed towards spending valuable cash on a lawn mower or a hose. When the project first opened, one person in each building (row of houses) was put in charge of a mower which was to be loaned out to anyone that wanted to use it. But for some reason, this procedure was stopped, and now, if you want to borrow a mower, you have to go to the Housing Authority office, roughly



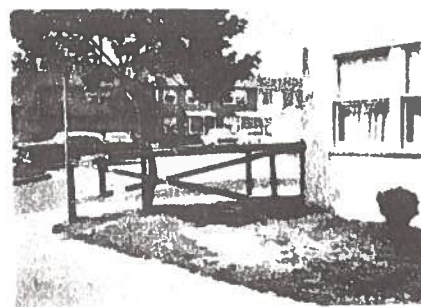
Some residents gave their houses individuality
with an attractive front yard ...



... others painted
flowers on the rocks
in their front yard
in lieu of the real
thing



The front yard was an
important locale for
making friends



Many would have liked their
front yard to be fenced,
especially where short-
cuts were made across their
lawn

four blocks from Easter Hill, to fetch it. Not only is this a difficult task for those without cars, it became obvious during the interviews that not even all the tenants knew of this arrangement. One middle-aged Negro woman replied:

"I wouldn't mind doing it if I had the tools . . . be glad to do it with the boys. (Did you know you can borrow a mower from the Housing Authority office?) No . . . I didn't know that . . . but how could I get the mower from the office without a car? The lady next door lends us a rake for the leaves."

"If my husband did it with me, it would be better, but he doesn't care for yard work. I really try with that yard though, but you have to keep at it with so many kids around. They expect you to take care of it, but they don't supply you with the tools . . . and what with the mower, and the hose, and a little fertilizer, it costs a bit of money. I've tried to grow flowers out there . . . but it's no good . . . the kids pick them or pull them up. When I tell some kids to get off, they say, 'You can't tell us to get off . . . it don't belong to you . . . it belongs to the Housing Authority!' What can I say? I tell them, 'You see how your Mom likes it if I come and stand on her front lawn.' Wish we had some sort of fence around the piece of lawn we take care of . . . just to show which part is ours."

This question of fencing the front yards is one that the architects did have in mind when designing Easter Hill, but they felt it should be optional. Accordingly, they provided a number of houses in the project with low picket fences, such as they had observed in the neighborhoods around in Richmond, with the thought that if other people wanted to copy this idea, they could do so at very low cost. But the Housing Authority evidently had other ideas, and shortly after the opening of the project, took out the picket fences, and introduced a rule forbidding tenants from fencing or delimiting their yards in any way, except that they were allowed to put up a temporary string or wire fence to keep children and dogs off when the lawn was reseeded. However,

tenants told me, if this temporary fence stays up any time after the grass begins to sprout, they are asked to remove it.

The question of lawn maintenance and the desire to put up some form of fence became especially heated in those locations in the project where 'natural paths' or shortcuts have been made across people's front yards; this occurs particularly around exits from the project, and in the court areas where the boundary between front yards and public open space is poorly delimited.

On the original questionnaire, no question about fencing the front yards was included, but as the interviews proceeded, it soon became obvious that this was a touchy point, and therefore a question was added, worded thus, "Would you prefer it if your front yard was fenced too?" Although the numbers questioned were small, it is probably safe to say that about half the residents would have preferred it if their front yards were fenced.

TABLE IX

Would you prefer it if your front yard was fenced too?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	10	53
No	7	37
Yes and no	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>
	19	100

The chief reasons that seemed to appear, for wanting to delimit this open space at the front of the house, were reasons of convenience (knowing where one lawn stopped and another began), and reasons of privacy (keeping dogs and children away from carefully tended plants).

No one seemed to view a fenced yard in terms of 'status', for indeed, few front yards in a better class neighborhood would be fenced.

"I sure would like it fenced . . . the kids tromp through . . . paper blows about . . . they pull roses off the bushes; and the parents don't say nothing."

"Yes, we'd like to, but the Housing won't let us; all the dogs round here come and mess up the front lawn . . . sometimes they even get into the back too."

"It would keep out the kids and dogs; but I'd like to be able to see through it . . . there's no sense in making it solid."

"I certainly would; I've had a brawl with the neighbor over the lawn. I try to keep the lawn nice, but I go out there and have to pick up rocks by the bushel. Not high . . . just a little picket fence with a gate."

"Yes, that would be nice. I used to keep up the front lawn beautifully . . . grew flowers . . . but the kids ruined it, and I got discouraged. Once I planted beautiful new flowers and the painters ruined them. I asked them to stop, and they laughed."

Conclusions on the use of open space

There can be no doubt that the insistence of the designers in providing each house with three pieces of open space--a fenced back yard, an unfenced front yard, and a roofed front porch--was a very wise move, and one that must have immeasurably increased people's satisfaction with this project, as against housing projects without these 'extras'. As the above responses indicate, the great majority of Easter Hill's inhabitants valued highly the opportunity they had to do what they liked with a piece of land, however small that piece was, and however limited was their experience at gardening. In addition, the open space 'attached' to a house assumes an even greater importance when the climate is such (as it is in California) as to permit a number of family activities to

take place outside, and where (as in Easter Hill), the space inside the home is severely limited. And, as we shall see in a later chapter of this study, the open space around the house also functioned importantly as a place of initial contact with other people in the project, and as a locale for continuing and widened contacts, for, as one respondent remarked, "If you don't meet people on the outside . . . you never will."

VISUAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE HOUSE

House exteriors - uniformity v. variety

It has become almost a cliché of architectural and landscape design that one must introduce variety into the visual scene - variety of form, variety of color, variety of texture, variety of visual experience; certainly this was one of the prime objectives of the designers of Easter Hill. Even non-designers, when they think about it, concede that somehow, variety must be 'good'. But to my knowledge, the question of variety v. uniformity has rarely been put to the lay public. Perhaps, in their ignorance, they prefer things lined up and symmetrical, perhaps we are forcing the designers' values onto an uncomplaining public.

In order to discern to what extent people living in Easter Hill cared for variety, as against uniformity, a question was asked as to whether they liked the yards at Easter Hill all looking different, or whether they would prefer it if they all looked the same. Another question, a little later in the interview, asked if they preferred the houses in a neighborhood to all look the same, or whether they preferred it when there were differences. This latter question was then followed by one which asked . . . 'Do you think the houses here have differences between them, or do they all look the same?' If they replied that they thought there were differences, they were asked to elaborate, and note was taken of which differences they had noticed, and in what order they were mentioned.

Firstly, then, let us consider how respondents reacted to the question of variety v. uniformity among the back yards.

Variety v. uniformity: the yard

One method by which the designers hoped to introduce variety among the individual housing units was by providing each with a small enclosed back yard, unlandscaped, in which they could 'express their individuality', and by which the designers hoped a kaleidoscopic effect of toys, drying clothes, flowers, shrubs, grass, and dirt, would be created in the project by the tenants themselves. The front yards, comprising unenclosed lawns with small areas of dirt close to the house for planting flowers, permitted of less variation (or alteration), except in terms of how well the lawn is watered and cared for.

TABLE X

Some people like the yards all looking different, and some think it would be nicer if they all looked the same. What do you feel about this?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Like yards looking different	31	60
Like all yards to look the same	10	19
Indifferent	10	19
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Totals	<u>52</u>	<u>100</u>

When asked how they felt about the yards at Easter Hill, whether they would prefer to see them all looking the same, or all looking

different, the great majority 'voted' for them looking different.

When asked why they liked the yards looking different, almost a third replied that people are 'individual', people have 'different tastes', and therefore, it was implied, their yards will naturally be different. Typical responses were -

"Everybody has different tastes."

"Everybody's individual . . . the yards should be suited to your own individuality."

"Everybody has their own ideas - if it's well kept up, it all looks nice (i.e., all styles). I like flowers, but some people only have time for a lawn. It's hard to keep them all the same . . . it's like parks . . . some have lots of flowers, and some are just grass."

A second group of respondents, almost as large as the first, were somewhat more defiant in tone . . . "People should be allowed to do what they like" . . . almost as if the interviewer was suggesting that tenants should be forced to keep their yards all looking the same.

"People should do as they please . . . but they should all be kept up."

"Everybody's different - I like for them to have what they like."

"The only thing that could be different is people setting out different plants . . . they're all made alike [i.e., the yards]. They should be different . . . people should do what they want."

And in an even more defiant tone -

"Wouldn't want anyone telling me how to keep up my yard!"

Such responses are not perhaps surprising in a Public Housing milieu, where the Authority does forbid the alteration by tenants of house exteriors, or of the unfenced front yards. The back yard, small and cramped though it is, is the one exterior domain, visible to friends and neighbors alike, where people are permitted to express their

individuality . . . 'to do as they please'. It is worth noting however, that none carried this sentiment to its logical conclusion, that is, that people, if they so desire, should be allowed to do nothing with their yards, but leave it as it is provided - bare, flat dirt. A few stated this, explicitly . . . "Each apartment should take care of their own yard in their own way . . . but they should all keep them neat" . . . and many more implied that they felt this way. Individuality, it seems, is fine, up to the point where it becomes anti-social.

Surprisingly, relatively few people replied to this question in a purely subjective manner. Although the question ended with the words . . . 'How do you feel about this?' . . . respondents prefaced their remarks with . . . 'People' . . . 'Everybody' . . . 'They' . . . and rarely with the first person. Among the nine who responded wholly, or partly subjectively, were a group of 6 who replied that they did not like uniformity, or, conversely, that they did like variety.

"It's not so monotonous . . . Each one has individual tastes. I enjoy seeing different houses, different ideas . . . but some people may copy (your ideas)."

"It breaks up the monotony - I like them different."

"People have different ideas, aesthetics aside . . . so long as the yards are neat, they are equally attractive. When the yards are all the same, I think it's dull . . . sort of confusing."

"I'd like some slight differences . . . it's not a serious thing, but I have a slight objection to conformity. My husband would think much more strongly about it . . . he can't stand conformity."

And one replied, more emphatically than most -

"I don't want my house and yard looking like everyone else's . . . like in tracts."

But presumably the uniformity of yards in tracts was not so striking, or it did not arise so much emotion as the uniformity of house types, for when this question was repeated later, referring to houses' exteriors, 10% made reference to the fact that tract houses 'all look the same'.

Of the one-fifth who said that they would prefer all the yards looking the same, almost half considered that in a neighborhood such as Easter Hill, where 'all the houses look the same', it would look neater if all the yards looked the same too; some added, that with detached houses, the yards could be different. A young white man, on leave from his ship, replied - "With row houses, it looks better if all the yards are the same. If the houses were separate, the yards should be individual." And a middle-aged Negro woman responded - "As the buildings are here, it would look neater if the yards were about the same. If they're separate houses and yards . . . it would look nicer if the yards were different."

One respondent just 'liked uniformity'; it is perhaps significant that she was Oriental. Two thought it would look 'neater' if the yards were the same, while another - a middle-aged divorcee, who seemed to be disliked by many of her neighbors, perhaps referred to her own experience when she said . . . "I'd like them all the same, then one person wouldn't be jealous of another - pullin' the lawns up, digging up the plants in the better gardens." One respondent, alone among all those replying to this question, thought that houses should be different, but that yards should be the same -

"I like them the same . . . but houses should be different for a sense of privacy and individuality. Landscaping should all be alike for a neater appearance to the outside world."

But we should not overemphasize the number who wanted the yards to look the same, for just as many were quite indifferent as to whether they looked the same, or were different. Some of these were living in one-bedroom apartments at the end of rows, the only units where yards were not private, but are shared with the apartment downstairs or upstairs. It is not surprising that they should answer . . . 'I've never thought about it', for in fact, they have no opportunity to make their yards the way they want, so presumably have never thought about whether they would like them the same as everyone else's, or different. Again, a number of comments arose on maintenance; people didn't care whether yards were the same, or different, as long as they were all kept up.

Variety v. uniformity: house exteriors

When asked a similar question about houses in a neighborhood, an even higher proportion - 80% - voted for them looking different. Most remarked that they just did not like uniformity, or conversely, that they did like variety. Typical responses were -

"I don't like to see four or five houses looking the same."

"I don't like conformity - if they're all alike, you wouldn't know which one was yours, except for the number on it."

"You look at the houses here - you look at one, you've seen them all. But at least the houses are different colors. I think everybody's house should be different."

"I like variety - it adds something."

A number were more positive in their reasoning, they said in effect, . . . 'I like them to be different because it's prettier',

TABLE XI

Some people prefer it when all the houses in a neighborhood look the same, and others like it better when there are differences between the houses. What do you feel about this?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Like them to be different	42	80
Like them to be all the same	4	8
Indifferent	4	8
Don't know	1	2
Unclassifiable	1	2
	52	100

<u>Reasons for liking houses to look different</u>	<u>No. of respondents¹</u>
Don't like uniformity/like variety	12
It's prettier, more interesting to look at	10
Feels more like your own home	6
Don't like my house looking like my neighbor's	6
Then it wouldn't look like Public Housing	6
Then it wouldn't look like a tract	5
People have different tastes	3
Then I wouldn't walk into the wrong house	3
Like them different - don't know why	2

¹ These do not add up to the total number of respondents because some respondents mentioned more than one reason.

rather than, 'I like them to be different, because I don't like uniformity'. In almost every case, it was color that was mentioned as the most striking means of differentiation; in fact, a number of responses suggest that to some, at least, 'houses looking different' and 'houses being different colors', are synonymous.

"Yes, I'd like them different. I like different colors - it's prettier."

"I'd like them different. It just seems like it would add more color if they were all different."

We shall come back to this question of color, and people's reactions to it, at a later point; suffice to say here that color appears to be the first thing that comes to mind when you ask people about 'differences between houses.' The question of different sizes or shapes of houses was never mentioned, perhaps because, as this following quotation suggests, most people see the sizes and shapes of contemporary houses as 'about the same'.

"If you drive through a town, you don't see all the houses the same colors. They may be about the same size and shape - but at least the colors are different."

A number of people felt that if the exteriors of the houses looked different, it would feel more like their home.

"If you're driving through, it's more interesting to see houses that are different. And if you live there, it feels more like your house."

"It feels like your house is your own, if it looks different."

"It feels more like it's mine if it's different from the house next door."

Although the question was asked in a non-specific way, referring to 'houses in a neighborhood', rather than to 'houses in this neighborhood',

it is significant that more than a few responded in terms of a Public Housing milieu; as if unable to conceive of ever owning their own home, most responded . . . "It would feel more like my own house if it were different" . . . , rather than, "If I had my own house, I would want it to be different."

Considering that the respondents to this survey were living in public housing, and that the majority of them thought the houses in Easter Hill looked all, or about, the same, it is not surprising that many replied quite vehemently that they didn't want their house to look like the one next door.

"I hate to live in a house, and have the next door house just like mine," replied a middle-aged white woman who had lived in Housing for seven years. . . . "Nobody likes their houses all looking the same", was the response of a young Negro girl, who had lived in Public Housing for more than half of her life. But perhaps the response of a young, illiterate Mexican woman was the most 'feminine' . . . "Everybody doesn't want to look the same. Like with a girl and her dress - she doesn't want to meet someone else in the same dress."

A few referred more explicitly to their present milieu, when they replied, some quite bitterly, that if the houses in a neighborhood were different in appearance, then 'it wouldn't look like Housing.'

"Yeah - I like them different. Maybe that's what bugs me about this place.

"I like differences, then it doesn't give a barracks appearance. Even here, one visitor couldn't tell where I lived until she saw the milk bottles out front. Now the paint is more varied - before, it all looked the same."

"It looks better if there are differences. It wouldn't look so much like Housing if the houses were painted different."

"I mean - it's sort of slummy when they all look the same - like someone threw them up for people who couldn't do any better."

Perhaps what is more surprising is that almost as many replied in similar fashion, but substituted 'tract' for 'Public Housing'. A college-educated white woman responded -

"I don't like a neighborhood that's stereotyped. That's why I don't like new tracts. The floor plans are different and the exterior color and trim, but they look like they've all been pressed out of a mold. That's why I like the old neighborhoods better."

And a middle-aged Negro woman who had left school in the 8th grade, replied -

"I like them when they're different - it's prettier. I see track [sic] homes . . . every house you look at looks alike . . . not everyone has the same taste. Like in Parkchester Village, and other places we pass when we're going fishin', they all look alike, all the same color."

While another Negro woman, who had lived in Public Housing for 24 years (and in Easter Hill for 10), remarked, good humoredly, that given the choice between a tract and Public Housing, she'd rather stay in the latter.

"A subdivision with the houses all alike looks like a project - you might as well pay the low rent - and stay here! And some of the rules and regulations are identical - in the project and in the subdivision. But you can have more privacy, more individuality when the houses are different."

Although few would go quite so far as to say they'd prefer to stay in Housing, the feeling that tracts were not the paradise which their advertisers would have us believe, was one expressed by a number of people in Easter Hill. As the young sailor and his wife, vehemently

critical of life in Easter Hill, who were shortly leaving to rent a house in an older neighborhood of Richmond, partly because they could not afford the down-payment on a new house, but partly because they had not liked what they had seen in their price bracket.

"If the houses are separate, they should be different - those new tracts show no imagination."

But one respondent, the wife of a Negro architect, conceded that one day, people may have to relinquish their desire to have houses all looking different, and learn to accept row housing as an acceptable form of living.

"No one wants their house like their neighbors'. But people may have to adjust to having their homes looking the same, living in town houses - because there won't be enough land. My family always had their own house; I've never been used to being jammed together like this."

Of the four respondents who said they liked houses all looking the same, one, evidently referring to her present Public Housing milieu, thought it was better because . . . "then there aren't so many hard feelings." And another, born and brought up in the Philippines, replied. . . "In Housing projects, it's better when they're uniform - there's something beautiful when places are uniform." A young Mexican woman also liked uniformity, but added that it was only the fronts of the houses that mattered - "I like them the same height - all the same in front; the backs don't show, so they don't matter."

Of the four respondents who were indifferent as to whether houses in a neighborhood looked the same, or different, two thought that it was the upkeep that makes houses attractive, not whether they're the same or not. A young woman whose three small children kept her on

the go in the house, most of the day, replied . . . "You don't live outside that much; it doesn't matter too much how the exteriors look." And an elderly white woman, one of very few in the project who had been brought up in the East, seemed somewhat surprised at the question, and replied -

"Oh . . . I don't really care. I grew up in Philadelphia - there you get 50 houses all the same - so I'm used to it. It doesn't bother me either way."

Perception of variety in the house exteriors at Easter Hill

It will be recalled from the introductory chapter to this study, that one of the objectives of the designers of Easter Hill was to create an environment where the inhabitants did not feel that they were living in a 'project', where they could feel that 'their' house was different and individual. As we have noted in the discussion above, on tenants' reactions to the questions of uniformity v. variety, the majority of people do in fact like their houses and yards to be different, they do prefer to look at a neighborhood that has variety, over one that is stereotyped and repetitive. In theory, then, this was a 'good' objective. But it remains to be seen whether the methods used by the designers at Easter Hill to achieve this objective were effective or not.

The site of Easter Hill was an abandoned, depleted rock quarry that had been passed up for many years as too difficult to build on; the architects, therefore, were faced not only with the problem of trying to house as many people as possible on the $21\frac{1}{2}$ acres, but they were presented with a site that was desolate, badly graded, and strewn with boulders. They decided to concentrate the 300 units into groups

of row houses, thereby using only 3 acres for actual buildings, and devoting the remainder, much of it unusable for building, to public open space, yards, parking lots, streets, etc. Because up to this time, row housing had tended to consist of long, stereotyped rows of units, the designers of Easter Hill went to great lengths to introduce variety into the house facades, and to get away from the 'dreary-row-housing' image.

The methods they used to introduce variety were as follows:

1) Varying the number of units in a row from 2 to 14.

2) Staggering the facades of the buildings, so that a long group of adjacent units did not look like one, long straight building.

3) Using different materials and different combinations of materials, the three basic ones being all wood, all stucco, and wood with stucco.

4) Varying the color of many adjacent units, and varying the roof colors between different buildings. The architects prepared exact charts showing variations within each row of houses, and even within each house there were variations - gray houses with blue doors, white houses with red doors, etc. Unfortunately, when the Housing Authority came to repaint the project some years after it was opened, they did not keep to the original colors; and when they repainted the doors and porches in the summer of 1964, they used the same color throughout the project. Therefore, it should be noted, the colors present in Easter Hill when this survey was conducted, were not the ones intended by the architects.

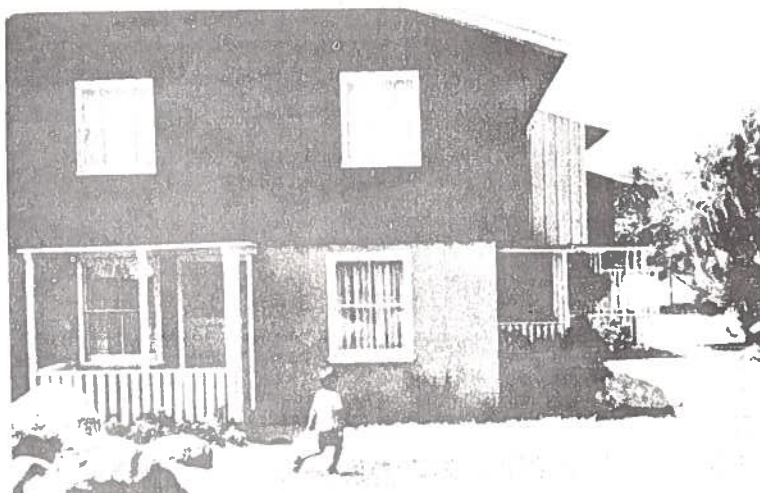
5) Varying the size of units, and the combinations of sizes. The 5 basic types are a four-bedroom, semi-detached house, all on one floor;

100a



The architects introduced variety into the house facades by changes in color and in fenestration...

...by changes in the building materials and porch design



...and by staggered facades and changes in orientation of the front doors

a 2-storey, 4-bedroom unit appearing only at the end of rows; a 3-bedroom, 2-storey unit; a 2-bedroom, 2-storey unit; and one-bedroom apartments, one above the other, at the end of certain rows.

6) Differing the height of buildings; 12 four-bedroom units were built as 1-storey, semi-detached houses, while all the other units are 2-storey row houses.

7) Varying the position of the front doors; some are adjacent, but separated by a porch wall; some are separated by a stagger in the facade; many are not adjacent; in some buildings, the last unit in the row has its front door around the end of the building; in other buildings, it does not.

8) Varying the design of the front porches, by slight alterations in the pitch of their roofs (flat or shed), by changing the shape of the railings (flat vertical, square vertical, square horizontal) , and by varying the relationship between the entrance to the porch and the entrance to the house (directly opposite or diagonally opposite).

9) Varying the window spacing in certain adjacent units.

10) Varying the design of the exterior stairs to the one-bedroom apartments at the end of certain rows.

11) Encasing the vent pipes on some units in stucco "chimney stacks", and leaving them exposed on others.

12) Altering the pitch of house roofs, from flat on the 1-storey units, to pitched on the 2-storey buildings.

13) Varying the distance of the unit from the sidewalk, and varying the orientation of the unit, vis-a-vis the traffic streets.

These were the basic methods of architectural variation which the designers used in different combinations and permutations, to bring variety to the row housing at Easter Hill. An article on Easter Hill in House and Home remarked -

"To some, this meticulous attention to details may sound a little excessive, but the results at Easter Hill are startling - and convincing: not only does each house seem to have a "personality" of its own, but the village seems to have acquired a curious and pleasant quality of homogeneous chaos . . . "2

It remains to be seen whether the residents at Easter Hill saw things in the same way.

After respondents had expressed their opinions on whether they preferred houses in a hypothetical neighborhood to look the same, or different, they were asked whether they thought the houses at Easter Hill had differences between them, or whether they all looked the same.³ More than half the respondents (57%) thought that the houses all looked the same, or about the same. (See Table XII.) Evidently, to this latter group, the differences which they did recall when thinking about it, or looking out of the window, were only superficial, and did little to alter the same basic 'sameness' of the buildings.

2 Variety: the No. 1 row house need, House and Home, July 1955, p. 111.

3 After some days of interviewing, it became obvious that the question should have been worded - "Do you think the apartments here . . . etc.," since most people referred to the individual units in the project as apartments, rather than houses. Although the majority did interpret the question in the way in which it was intended (i.e., differences between units), there were some who undoubtedly answered in terms of differences between buildings (i.e., groups of adjacent units). The architects did introduce differences between buildings, as well as between units, and therefore it was felt that although the question was being interpreted differently by different respondents, the end result was the same, i.e., an ability to perceive differences between physical objects.

TABLE XII

Do you think the houses here have differences between them,
or do they all look the same?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Different	22	40
About the same, but a few differences	13	25
All the same	16	32
Don't know	1	3
	52	100

} 57%

In what ways do the houses look different from one another?

<u>Method of differentiation</u>	<u>No. of respondents who mentioned it</u>	<u>No. who mentioned it first</u>
Color	16	13
Height	12	8
Size	8	5
Yard care	4	1
Changes by inhabitants	3	1
Staggered facade	3	-
Porch detail	3	3
Position of front door	3	-
Materials	2	1
Position of windows	2	-
Orientation of unit	2	-
Pipes inside	1	1
Pitch of roofs	1	-
2 apartments at end of some rows	1	-
4-bedroom units semi-attached, not in rows	1	-

Two-fifths of the respondents did consider that the houses looked different from each other, and proceeded to name the differences that they saw. The most frequently mentioned feature making for variety between adjacent units was color; of those that saw differences between the houses, almost half mentioned it. It seems then that color was the most easily perceived method of contrast, among the many that the architects used, for not only was it the one most frequently mentioned, but it was also nearly always mentioned first in a list of differences.

Two other features were also mentioned frequently, though neither of them as often as color. These were the different heights of some of the buildings - most of them being two-storey, but some larger units being 1 storey; this feature was noticed by just over a third of the respondents who saw differences between the houses. And the other feature was the different sizes of many of the units, visible on the exterior by different numbers of windows, distances between front doors, and the addition of an extra 1-storey 'annexe' at the ends of certain rows. This feature of size was mentioned by about a quarter of those who saw differences.

The other features introduced by the designer to make the houses appear different and individual, were almost all mentioned by someone, but never by more than a few. Only three people, for instance, made any reference to the staggered facade of the buildings; only 3 mentioned the subtle variations in the porch railings; only 3 referred to the different positioning of the front doors; only 2 noticed that different materials were used in the construction of different units, or that

there were variations in fenestration, or that the houses were oriented in different ways. Only one person noticed that some of the houses had their vent stacks enclosed in a stucco chimney, while others had them exposed - a feature mentioned twice by the authors of the article on Easter Hill in House and Home, in which the authors described Easter Hill as a "gay little village of 300 units, in which no one house is quite like its neighbors." Maybe they are not, to the experienced architectural critic, but to the inhabitants, for whom, after all, Easter Hill was built, the basic 'sameness' of the buildings quite 'overwhelmed' any of the subtleties of detailing.

Not only was some of the architects' clever use of detail noticed by only a few of the inhabitants, but some of it - the variation in pitch of the porch roofs, the variation in color of the roofing in different sections of the project, and the different design of stair railings at the ends of some buildings - was noticed by no one at all. Of course, without a much more complex form of perception test, we cannot state categorically that these last three items were not seen by anyone, or that the features mentioned very infrequently were not noticed by more people than the few who actually referred to them. All we can say from the responses to this question, is that color, and the height and size of house units, seem to be the features most readily noticed by the casual observer, while the minor, perhaps more subtle features of differentiation, are noticed by relatively few.

On the basis of this sample, albeit small, it would seem reasonable to recommend that if an objective is to introduce variety among

housing units, then this would be best achieved by a bold use of color, and by 'strong' variation in the height and size of buildings. If these can be achieved, and more subtle methods of differentiation also introduced, so much the better; but if the matter of cost forces a choice between these two methods, and if we are concerned about the inhabitants of the buildings we are designing, then the 'bold' approach should be used - however 'corny' it may seem to other designers, and however much the architectural magazines would prefer the more subtle approach.

It is obvious from the responses to this survey, that people want to be individual, to have a house and yard that look different, to feel that theirs is a home with personality, and not just a mirror image of the one next door. If we have to mass-produce housing for low-income people, then let us attempt to produce houses with some individuality. Paint, after all, is cheap enough.

Perception of the environment, and race, length of residence, education

There appear to be some interesting variations in people's ability to see differences between house units, according to their race, educational attainment, and the length of time they had lived at Easter Hill. (See Tables XIII and XIV.) Although the number of Negroes in the sample is relatively small (13 out of 52 interviewed), and therefore our assumptions may be invalid, it does appear that they more readily notice differences than either the majority whites, or the other minorities. None of the Negroes interviewed, for instance, thought that all the houses at Easter Hill looked the same, whereas

Do you think the houses here have differences between them, or do they all look the same?

TABLE XIII
PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, AND RACE

<u>Houses in Easter Hill are -</u>	Race							
	White		Negro		Others		TOTAL	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Different	15	50	7	54	-	-	22	40
About the same, but a few differences	5	17	5	39	3	33	13	25
All the same	10	33	-	-	6	67	16	32
Don't know	-	-	1	7	-	-	1	3
	30	100	13	100	9	100	52	100

TABLE XIV
PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, AND LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

<u>Houses in Easter Hill are -</u>	Length of Residence at Easter Hill							
	Less than 1 year		1-5 yrs.		More than 5 years		TOTAL	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Different	7	41	4	22	10	63	21	41
About the same, but a few differences	3	18	8	45	2	12	13	26
All the same	6	35	6	33	4	25	16	31
Don't know	1	6	-	-	-	-	1	2
	17	100	18	100	16	100	51	100

PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, AND EDUCATION

Of those with an 11th grade education and above, 79% saw differences between the houses (22 out of 28).

Of those with less than an 11th grade education, only 55% saw differences between the houses (12 out of 22).

one-third of the whites and two-thirds of the other minorities (Orientals and Mexicans) thought that they did. Negro respondents also seemed more desirous of bold color differences in their environment, for not only did they react more enthusiastically to the designers' use of color in the project, and to people's attempts to grow flowers in their yards, than the rest of Easter Hill's inhabitants, they were also more critical of those sections of the area which looked drab and needed painting, and of tracts and neighborhoods elsewhere that 'all looked the same'. Although the smallness of our sample may invalidate these conclusions, it seems an interesting enough 'clue' to investigate further. If we are to produce more low-income housing, either for rent or sale, and if, as seems probable, a considerable proportion of it will be inhabited by Negroes, it would seem a worth while investigation to find out what, if any, are the differences in environmental/aesthetic 'values', as between majority whites and Negroes.

The broad variation of answers in terms of length of residence, were, as might be expected; of those who had lived there a considerable length of time (more than 5 years) the majority saw differences between the houses, and of those that had lived there a shorter time (less than 5 years), the majority thought the houses all looked the same, or pretty much the same. However, if we divide the responses into those who had lived there a year or less, those who had been there 1-5 years, and those more than 5 years, an interesting feature appears. The relatively recent residents seem to be roughly equally divided between thinking the houses looked the same, and thinking they looked different.

But in the group that had lived there from 1-5 years, the majority thought they all looked the same, whereas among the long-term residents (more than 5 years) the majority thought they all looked different. Again, the numbers involved are small, but if these figures have any validity, they seem to suggest that newcomers to an environment are relatively observant of their surroundings. These are the people who we might call 'the hopefully-transient'; they do not expect to stay too long in Public Housing, therefore they are reasonably noticing of their surroundings, reasonably tolerant of the project's 'shortcomings'. But the group in the 1-5 year bracket, may well include many who are 'stuck' in the project, many who hoped to leave after six months or a year, but were frustrated in their desires; the fact that very few in this group noticed any differences between the houses, may be indicative of the fact that they have 'closed their eyes' to their surroundings, that they have withdrawn, and do not want to recognize anything pleasant in a place they are trapped in. Maybe this is far-fetched, but it does seem strange that when we look at the group who had lived at Easter Hill more than 5 years, the great majority did notice differences in their surroundings; perhaps this group, having lived there longer, had had more time to notice the subtle variations in their environment, and, were resigned to the fact that this may be their home for a good many years to come, are willing to see, and be pleased with, whatever is pleasing in their environment.

The link between perception and educational attainment is one that we might expect, and probably has been proved by numerous

psychological experiments; of those with an 11th grade education or more, almost three-fifths commented on the differences they saw between house units at Easter Hill; of those with less than an 11th grade education, less than two-fifths saw these differences. This fact, however, has very little practical significance for the designers of future low-income housing, for, as this sample indicates, low-income is not necessarily synonymous with low-education level.

Having considered whether, in theory, people like their houses to be different, and whether they thought their homes at Easter Hill were different from each other, it is important to consider if in fact they liked their houses there, or not. If, as we have seen, the majority preferred the houses in a neighborhood to be varied, and they also considered the houses at Easter Hill to look pretty much the same, then, if respondents are consistent in their replies, we should also expect to find that the majority did not like the house exteriors. And this in fact, is the case. (See Table XV.)

TABLE XV

TENANTS' FEELINGS ABOUT THE OUTSIDE APPEARANCE OF THEIR HOUSE

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Like the house a lot, or quite a bit	16	31
Like the house only a little, or not at all	21	40
Neither like nor dislike	15	29
	52	100

The majority of the respondents (40%) did not like their houses at all, or only liked them 'a little'. Of those who could find nothing to like in the exterior of their house, typical responses were -

"It looks like an army place."

"It feels like a dormitory - they all look just the same, You can't see anywhere - all you can see is another house, and kids running around outside."

"It's so drab looking."

Of those who liked their house 'only a little', the most frequently voiced criticism was that the colors were too dull, or that it needed painting. Others, although they did not particularly like their house, were well aware that it was pretty good compared with what they might have been living in . . .

"It's all right, I guess, but I'm not crazy about it. Compared with other projects, it's pretty good - others have no style to them at all. We looked at one in Oakland, by the freeway; it looked terrible - at least this has some style."

The husband of this respondent was an architect, who had just graduated from the University of California, and started work. Presumably she had learned from him, to recognize that Easter Hill has 'some style'; but since for them, public housing was just an unpleasant, temporary arrangement until they could afford their own house, despite this 'style', they still did not like their house there.

More than a quarter of the respondents neither liked nor disliked their houses. Some appeared not really to have noticed the exterior of their house, or to have ever consciously looked at it, for they had to think some time - evidently visualizing what the house did look like - before they made a response.

Some thought the house was 'OK', but that lack of maintenance detracted from its attractiveness . . . "It hasn't been taken care of, but it's suitable - I've seen worse; with this many houses, it's difficult to keep them up." For others, their dilemma in choosing between 'like' and 'dislike' was evidently prompted by the fact that this was Public Housing, and therefore could not be judged in normal terms . . .

"For Housing it's all right; but not for private housing. You can see right away that it's Housing - like an army barracks."

However, almost a third of the respondents did reply with considerable enthusiasm about their houses - they either liked them 'a lot' or 'quite a bit'. "They're real nice buildings, especially since they've painted some of them," was a typical response. Respondents were not asked why they felt the way they did, but almost half made some comment without being asked. Of those in this 'enthusiastic' category who did comment on why they felt that way, the majority implied that they liked their house in comparison with other projects they had seen or lived in.⁴ "I've lived in a number of projects, and I like this the best."

Satisfaction with house exterior related to its position in a row

An interesting fact which emerges from the responses to this question is that there appears to be a significant correlation between how people like the exterior of their house, and the position of that house in the row. Of those respondents living at the end of a row, some 43% liked their house, 38% were neutral, and 19% didn't like it. But of

⁴ The tendency for responses to be made in terms of comparisons, was one that was noted throughout the interview.

those living elsewhere in the row - i.e., where they had houses on both sides - 23% liked their house exterior, 23% were indifferent, and 54% did not like it. (See Table XVI) The reasons for this are fairly obvious. The units at the end of rows have considerably more individuality and amenity than those in the middles of rows. The end unit has three exterior walls instead of two; it has more windows than a house which is attached on either side, and consequently, is more light and airy; it has a larger extent of lawn space 'attached' to the house, than do the other houses in the row; and perhaps most significant of all, in almost every case, its front door is not in line with all the others in the row, but around the corner at the end of the building. This feature of the front door being 'around the corner', and not opposite a long row of other front doors, was referred to on a number of occasions by respondents living in these units. People appreciated the fact that their front door was not 'on the street', and that their house gained a certain individuality thereby. "You can't mistake our house", was their reaction. Nor was this an idle remark, for a number of persons living in the middle of rows, referred to the fact that on occasions, and particularly when they first moved to Easter Hill, they had by mistake gone up to the wrong front door because, as they said - 'they all look the same'. At least for the person living at the end of the row, there was less likelihood of making this mistake.

This feeling of individuality which is felt by those living in the end house, is to a lesser extent shared by those who live next door - i.e., in units next to the end. Table XVII indicates that although the proportion of those living next to the end who like their house is



Houses facing onto
the traffic streets
proved to be more
popular than...



...those
facing onto
courts

Houses at
the ends of
rows
proved to
be more
popular
than...



...those in the middles
of rows

Relation of respondents' feelings about the exterior appearance of their house, to the position of that house in row

TABLE XVI

FEELING ABOUT HOUSE EXTERIOR	POSITION OF HOUSE			
	End of row		Elsewhere	
	No.	%	No.	%
Like	9	43	7	23
Neither like nor dislike	8	38	7	23
Don't like	4	19	17	54
TOTAL	21	100	31	100

TABLE XVII

FEELING ABOUT HOUSE EXTERIOR	POSITION OF HOUSE					
	End of row		Next to end		Elsewhere	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Like	9	43	3	33	4	18
Neither like nor dislike	8	38	2	22	5	23
Don't like	4	19	4	45	13	59
TOTAL	21	100	9	100	22	100

not as high as among those actually living at the end, it is not as low as among those further along in the row; nor is the proportion who dislike it so high as among those living in the middle of the row. The reason for this is presumably that the house next to the end has more individuality than those further along in the row, in that it does not have several houses on either side of it and is easily identifiable in the row, either to its inhabitants or to visitors as 'the one next to the end'. Perhaps even more important is the position of the front door; since in most cases, the unit on the very end has its front door 'round the corner', this makes the front door of the next-to-last unit, the end one of the row of front doors facing onto the sidewalk. Hence, to a casual passerby, not noticing the front door around the end of the building, the door of the next-to-last unit may appear to be the 'last in the row', and therefore to have some individuality. Although this point may appear to be labored, it cannot be overemphasized that in an environment such as that at Easter Hill, where many people felt the houses all looked about the same and resembled barracks or dormitories, the existence of some feature that made their house different, was of considerable importance in determining how they felt about it. Just to strengthen this point, the figures for those living in the end unit and the next-to-end unit were combined, and compared with the rest. In Table XVIII, we see that of all those who expressed pleasure with the exterior of their house, almost three-quarters lived in the last or next-to-last unit; of those who did not particularly like or dislike their house, two-thirds lived in the last or next-to-last unit; while of those

TABLE XVIII

FEELING ABOUT HOUSE EXTERIOR	POSITION OF HOUSE		
	End or next to end	Elsewhere	TOTAL
Like	No. 12	4	16
	% 74	26	100
Neither like nor dislike	No. 10	5	15
	% 67	33	100
Don't like	No. 8	13	21
	% 39	61	100

who did not like their house, some three-fifths lived in units other than those at the ends - i.e., in the middles of rows.

An interesting feature of people's responses to this question was that a considerable number, having been asked the question exactly as worded in the questionnaire, replied in terms of the front lawn or front yard, with no reference to the facade of the house itself.⁵ Evidently, when asked what they feel about the 'outside' of their house, then, many people instinctively visualize the horizontal plane - i.e., the ground leading from the sidewalk to their front door, rather than the vertical plane - i.e., the facade of the house itself. At this point, we shall do no more than suggest a possible, practical explanation for this phenomenon. Maintenance of the front yard - watering the lawn, cutting the grass, etc., - is the tenant's responsibility, and indeed, if he does not do a good job, he finds himself being 'scolded' by Housing Authority officials. He can plant flowers around the front door if he wants, put up window boxes around the porch, and to a limited extent, alter and improve this sector of his domain. Not so, however, the house facade; this is maintained by the Housing Authority, is altered by the tenant at his peril, and therefore is, in effect, beyond his domain. He does not think about it, or perhaps even look at it, because it is

⁵ When this occurred, the interviewer repeated the question, and if necessary, explained that what he meant by the outside was the house itself, and not the yard. The interviewee, having then understood what was meant by the question, responded and this answer was recorded. Although no record was kept of how many responded in terms of 'the front yard', it was felt by the interviewers that approximately one-third to one-half replied initially in this way.

not 'his' and is not capable of improvement or alteration as the yard, in a limited sense, is. Therefore, when asked a question about the 'outside appearance of the house', many people reacted in terms of that part of the 'outside' which interested them and with which they were concerned, that is, the front yard.

VI

PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Having considered how people reacted to the house--its interior space, privacy between adjacent and opposite units, use of space attached to the house, and perceptions of the house exterior, we must now consider how they responded to the neighborhood as a whole. We will first discuss simply what the inhabitants liked and disliked about Easter Hill as a residential neighborhood; then we will consider their 'social perceptions', in terms of how they viewed the neighborhood as a place in which to raise children, and as a place in which to make friends. Finally, we shall discuss the inhabitants' 'visual perceptions' of the neighborhood, whether they thought it was attractive, and the relative values that they would attach to 'attractiveness' versus 'friendliness'.

What people like about Easter Hill

In response to a question worded - "What things do you especially like about Easter Hill as a neighborhood?" - just under one-third replied tersely that they liked 'Nothing'. Another third mentioned some aspect of the 'other people' that they liked, and just over a third referred to some physical attribute of the project. (See Table XIX.)

Physical attributes

The majority of those who mentioned a physical feature of the project, referred to its location as the aspect that they most appreciated. The fact that it is close to a bus line, not far from local shops or from downtown, was frequently mentioned. Typical responses were -

TABLE XIX

WHAT RESPONDENTS LIKED ABOUT EASTER HILL

29% - 'Nothing'

31% mentioned a design feature they liked . . .

- 19% were pleased with the location
- 8% thought project nice/pretty to look at
- 4% liked having a 'private home' (i.e., not sharing)
- 4% " inside of apartment

33% mentioned some aspect of 'other people' as feature they liked best . . .

- 15% liked their 'good neighbors'
- 12% liked the fact that 'people don't bother you'
- 4% " " " " there were plenty of children
- 2% liked it being a mixed neighborhood

4% mentioned 'low rent' as the feature they liked best

"I like it because it's close to things . . . town and grocery stores."

"The location isn't bad . . . it's close to the buses, and not far from town or anywhere you'd work . . . but that's about it."

"I like the location . . . it's not too far from grocery stores or bus stops."

Whereas 10 respondents referred to some aspect of Easter Hill's location vis-a-vis 'outside' services, only 4 made any complimentary reference to the physical aspect of the project itself. A young Negro woman, who had complained elsewhere about the neighbor's noisiness, conceded here . . .

"It's a pretty place . . . some parts are real pretty. Some people have painted their rocks . . . some yards are real pretty."

But the others all 'modified' their praise with remarks such as . . .

"It's a nice-looking project, but a few people don't keep their yards up . . . it could be very pretty if people would cooperate and do their share."

"I like the hill . . . the rocks and flowers up there. It's much nicer than this part of the project [Hinkley Avenue]."

A few, when asked what they liked about the neighborhood as a whole, could refer only to the insides of the apartments, in some cases because they were so delighted to have a place of their own and could think of nothing else . . . "I've always lived with my folks . . . this feels like my own home." But more often, because they were tied to the house by virtue of necessity (child-rearing) or of choice (fear of the outside environment), and therefore had little to say about what lay outside their front door.

It is significant that of the respondents who referred to some physical aspect of the project, the majority mentioned either the inside

of their home, or the proximity of the project to necessary urban services - transport, shops, work, etc. Very few made any direct reference to the neighborhood itself. It would seem then that here we have a population which is largely concerned with the privacy of their homes, and/or with the most convenient means of getting away from the neighborhood . . . "I like my apartment . . . but to tell the truth, I stay to myself, I don't mix much. But it's convenient for transportation here." For this is a population which largely would like to forget the nature of the neighborhood in which they live, a population which has only chosen to live here as a last resort.

Presumably, if we were to ask this same question of a sample of middle-class suburban housewives, we might find many more answers referring to the positive physical/visual aspects of the neighborhood, and fewer referring to its convenience as a 'place to get away from'.

Social attributes

Almost as many people referred to some aspect of the other tenants at Easter Hill as referred to some physical attribute of the project. There were slightly more positive remarks about friends and neighbors ("We have nice neighbors"), than there were negative remarks ("People here leave you alone."). Typical responses in the first category included -

"Our friends are all close together - we're one big happy family!"

"I like it . . . it's not too much like a private home, but you have your neighbors; you can depend on them . . . they're friendly."

"I like people dropping in . . . lots of neighbors drop in, and I don't sit down unless people come in, so I'm pleased when they do. Unless they do it too often . . . then I just go on working or leave them sitting downstairs alone while I make the beds."

But others were more 'apprehensive' about their neighbors, glad to be left alone and not 'bothered.' A middle-aged Negro divorcee replied tersely -

"I like it because people don't bother me."

And a Mexican-American woman responded -

"The neighbors here don't get very acquainted . . . only 'How do you do'. I live my life - she lives hers. But we do help each other."

It is surely significant that the 6 people who responded in this 'negative' way, were all minorities of one kind or another; 3 were Negroes, 1 Japanese-American, 1 Mexican-American, 1 Eskimo, and 1 divorced white woman with no children - a relative anomaly in this child-infested neighborhood. Perhaps expecting to be shunned or discriminated against, they were sadly grateful that people left them alone.

One elderly Negro woman who had lived at Easter Hill for some years with her teen-age son responded that what she liked most was that -

"It's private - people are moving out all the time."

For when people are 'moving out', you don't have to get involved with them. And an Eskimo man, whose command of English was somewhat limited, nevertheless managed to express what he and his family liked most about Easter Hill-

"No one asks you - 'Why do you stay here?' . . . they don't bother anyone."

A few people expressed pleasure at the number of children at Easter Hill for their children to play with; but as we shall see in the next section, this was much more often a source of annoyance, than it was of pleasure. And one sole respondent, a young girl who had only

recently come to California from her rural North Dakota home, referred to the racial integration of Easter Hill as the aspect of it she liked the most.

"The only thing I like . . . I can live here and enjoy my neighbors without saying . . . 'He's colored and I won't have anything to do with him.' We have coloreds, Japaneses, people born in the States . . . living altogether and all making a go of it. This is how the whole world ought to be . . . living together in peace. I have friends down the hill who are colored, and I think just as much of them as I do of my own sister."

In this analysis of what people liked about Easter Hill, we must not overlook the fact that almost one-third of them replied that they liked 'Nothing'. Although most replied in a rather hostile tone with just that word, a few did elaborate on what it was that disturbed them. For one it was the children constantly playing around the house -

"I don't see nothing I really like. No place for the kids to go and play . . . always playing ball in front of the house and in the parking lot . . . breaking windows. They need parks close around here where they can go."

For another, who had come here from a small town in Kansas, it was the racial mix of the inhabitants that caused the most concern.

"I don't like coloreds and whites so close together . . . I don't dislike Negroes, but I don't like to look out and see coloreds, Mexicans and whites playing together." (To which her 13-year old daughter retorted, with a sigh . . . "But Mother, they do it all the time.")

For another, it was the fact that this is - "a very bad neighborhood".

A perusal of the population characteristics of this group who liked 'Nothing' about Easter Hill, indicates that it contains a disproportionate number of majority-whites; although the sample as a whole was 58% white, this group was 73% white. It also comprised above-average

numbers of people who refused to answer the question on their own class, and of people who considered their neighbors to be middle-class. This would seem to suggest that those who could find nothing good to say about Easter Hill were largely the majority-whites who were disturbed at the racial mixing in the project, and those who felt themselves to be 'inferior' to most of the other inhabitants.

The group that cited physical attributes of the neighborhood, comprised above average numbers of non-whites, those without husbands, those without cars, and those who considered themselves working class; or in other words, it was largely overweighted by just those segments of the population who would be most concerned about being close to urban amenities, and being to a greater or lesser extent, disadvantaged by immobility, would be most likely to 'notice' whatever there was pleasant (or unpleasant) in their physical surroundings. If you have to walk every day from your front door to the bus stop, you are far more likely to notice the flowers in your neighbor's window box, or the cracks in the sidewalk, than if you drive off in your automobile.

Finally, considering the group that mentioned largely social attributes of Easter Hill, we find that it also contains above-average numbers of non-whites, and of nuclear families (i.e. husband, wife, and children). But perhaps even more striking is the fact that this group contained a much above-average proportion of those who considered themselves working class (70%, as against 42% in the whole sample), and of those who considered their neighbors to be largely working class (82% as against 40%). This would suggest that for the 'normal' working class

family, without any noticeable middle-class aspirations, the chief virtue of Easter Hill lies in the people that live there, not in its physical makeup. "I like it here because we're all in the same boat," was the general consensus of the responses.¹ Of those who responded positively--"I like it because I have good neighbors"--the majority were white; of those who responded negatively--"I like it because the neighbors leave me alone," the majority were non-white.

What people disliked about Easter Hill

Immediately following the question on what people liked about Easter Hill, they were asked: "Are there any things that you especially dislike about the neighborhood?" People were noticeably more voluble about what they disliked; but this is a relatively "normal" situation, as people seem better able to verbalize complaints than praise.

There is a noticeable contrast between the complaints made by people actually living here in a project (See Table XX), and those reported in other studies, expressed by persons living outside housing, when asked if they would like to live in a project. In Hartman's study of 500 households prior to and after relocation in Boston's West End, 74% said they would not like to live in a project, and the most frequently voiced complaints were the density of population and congestion

1. The importance of homogeneity of the population as a basic factor in promoting friendships and general satisfaction with a neighborhood is reported in Festinger, et al., op. cit.; in Gans, Herbert, "Planning and Social Life," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 27, No. 2, May 1961; and in Gans, Herbert, "The Balanced Community: Homogeneity or Heterogeneity in Residential Areas," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 27, No. 2, May 1961.

(51%). the undesirable people (32%), and the rules and regulations (25%)¹.

Although about as many at Easter Hill complained about undesirable neighbors, very much fewer complained about density and congestion, presumably because row-housing is less congested than the predominantly apartment-block projects known to the Boston sample; and hardly anyone complained about the rules and regulations, presumably because these seem a greater threat to individuality among those viewing housing from the "outside" an an actual problem for those on the "inside."

Physical features of the neighborhood

Although just under a third mentioned some physical feature that they liked at Easter Hill, a considerably larger proportion--over one-half--mentioned some physical feature that they disliked. By far the commonest complaint was the lack of play-space for children; of course, this complaint did not, in most cases, reflect an altruistic desire for the children to "have a good time," but rather was a reflection of the annoyance caused by bands of noisy children playing in and around the houses.

"There's quite a few children here . . . they don't have a place to play . . . they need a large playground. They don't know what to do . . . they get into fights . . . or they just idle away the time."

1. Hartman, Chester, "The Limitations of Public Housing--Relocation Choices in a Working-Class Community," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 29, No. 4, Nov. 1963, pp. 283-296.

TABLE XX

WHAT RESPONDENTS DID NOT LIKE ABOUT EASTER HILL

12% - disliked nothing

54% mentioned a design feature they did not like . . .

- 31% complained about lack of places for children to play
- 10% " that location was inconvenient
- 8% " that yard was not private enough
- 6% " that houses were too close together
- 5% " that parking was difficult
- 2% " that streets were dangerous

38% mentioned some aspect of 'other people' that they didn't like . . .

- 15% thought there were too many 'bad people' at Easter Hill
- 13% " there were too many colored people at Easter Hill
- 8% complained that people were too nosey/gossipy
- 2% " that people weren't friendly enough

10% had complaints about the Housing Authority

"There's not enough places for the children to play . . . especially the smaller ones . . . maybe a recreation hall to keep the teenagers out of trouble. It used to be very bad here . . . if you said you lived at Easter Hill, people thought your kids would all become delinquents. They need a place for ping-pong . . . dancing . . . In future housing projects . . . if they had more things for kids, they'd have much less trouble. And there are so many families with no fathers . . . the kids need to let off steam."

Many remarked how lack of places in which to 'let off steam', lead the children into fights and petty vandalism.

"The kids jump up and down on your car - throwing rocks. We used to park on the lot, but that's one of the basic places where children play . . . so we don't keep it there any more. Now we leave it on Corto Square . . . there aren't so many children there. My husband bought a plastic cover for the car, but with so many teenagers around here - you daren't leave it on the car. They came around one night and snapped off all the aerals from the cars . . . there's nothing better to do."

And for those who perhaps can stand the noise and petty lawlessness that occurs outside their domain, intrusion into their own private living space, is more than they can stand.

"There's no privacy whatever . . . due to so many kids . . . If we had private yards, we wouldn't have to put up with everybody else's kids . . . Ours are almost grown . . . but I would like more privacy. I can't say too much about the neighbors . . . I stick at home, I don't like to mix with the neighbors."

"We had a dog . . . the kids always came and took him from the yard . . . that made me mad; I'd call him and he wouldn't come, so I said - 'If he bites you, it's your fault' - so eventually, they left him alone."

"There are so many children, and they congregate right on the front porches."

Others complained about the danger caused by children playing in and close to the streets, and told of accidents that had occurred even when people were driving through the project, slowly and carefully. And in the courts, there were stories of younger children being hurt as the

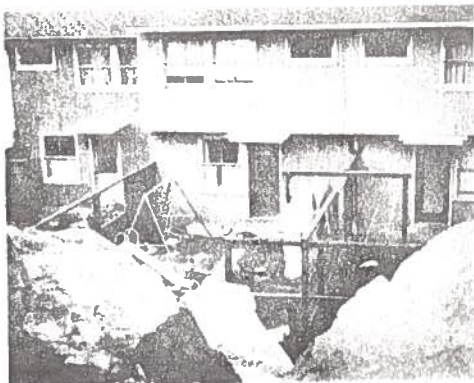
One of the chief complaints was lack of specific play areas...



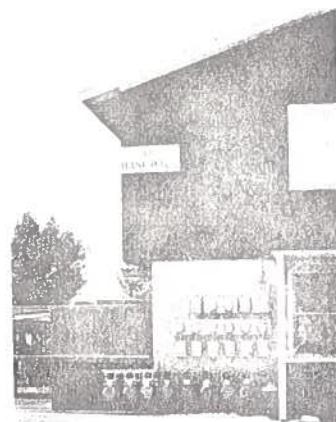
...the baseball field was located in one corner of the project



...one slide was all that remained of two playgrounds provided by the designers



In consequence, many back yards were cluttered with mail-order swing sets and other play equipment...



...and notices discouraged ball games in the parking lots



Small children stayed close to the houses, often played in large groups and caused annoyance with their clamor.

older ones rode furiously through on their bicycles, and of innumerable windows being smashed by baseballs.

The importance of the provision of sufficient attractive outdoor play areas in a neighborhood where indoor living conditions are relatively cramped was evidently underestimated by the designers of Easter Hill; the playfield located eccentrically in one corner of the project, and the two playgrounds which have subsequently been largely destroyed, are not enough to channel the interests and energies of the roughly 800 children living in this 4-block area. And, as Alva Myrdal has written, lack of play areas...

...is not to be accepted with indifference. Play is the indispensable outlet for children's activity. It is their form of expression and experimentation by observation. When play is repressed there is direct thwarting of development. Every housewife's ambition to keep order must conflict with every child's for freedom¹ and space for his experimenting attitude towards life.

Apart from complaints about the lack of places for children to play and make a noise without disturbing the inhabitants, other complaints about the physical plant of the neighborhood were relatively infrequent, and less vehemently expressed.

About 10% complained about the location of Easter Hill--that it was too far from downtown, too far from the shops; most of these were people without cars. Smaller proportions complained about the yards

1. Quotation from Alva Myrdal, *Nation and Family*, New York: Harper Bros., 1941, in Mackintosh, J.M., Housing and Family Life, London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1952, p. 73.

not being private enough, the houses being too "jammed" together, the lack of parking space, the poor street lighting at night, and the dirtiness of the streets. All of these complaints were, at least to this observer, reasonable comments, except the last; the streets at Easter Hill are always well-swept and free of litter.

Surprisingly enough, considering our insistence as planners upon the segregation of land uses, only one person here (or anywhere else in the interviews) made any comment about the proximity of Easter Hill to factories and warehouses along Hoffman Boulevard.

"I don't like the area . . . the closeness to industries . . . the main highway nearby. And it's inconvenient for shopping . . . no decent shopping except away across town. Most of the markets around here . . . the prices are sky-high . . . I keep away from them."

This study, therefore, does not seem to confirm Kennedy's suspicion that the industrial surroundings of a housing project might have a greater adverse effect on low-income persons than it did on the student group Festinger studied in Cambridge. He wrote: "The effect of its industrial surroundings on the inhabitants of Westgate does not seem to have been important. But if Westgate were inhabited by a low-income group on the way up and out of an industrial slum area, would its environs be as unimportant socially?"¹

"People Problems" at Easter Hill

Over a third of the respondents had some complaint to make about other people who lived at Easter Hill. The two most frequent complaints were that there were "bad people" living there, or that there were "too

1. Kennedy, Robert Woods, "Sociopsychological Problems of Housing Design," in Festinger, L., op. cit.

many colored people'. Less frequently mentioned were that people were too nosey and gossipy, that too many kept dogs, and that people were not friendly enough.

Again, it was often the children who figured in the replies, either that there were too many or that they weren't disciplined by their parents, or that they were just 'bad'. Typical responses were -

"There are too many younger kids with bad thoughts . . . there's vandalism. We can't leave nothing out . . . they steal it."

"I don't like living with so many children . . . the noise and fighting . . . your own children constantly bickering. Then I have to see the parents of some of the children . . . you can't talk to some of the parents. Any neighborhood would have it . . . but here, there's so many different types of people."

"There are too many children . . . and not enough correction of children . . . fights over race . . . grown-ups as well as children . . . alcohol and fist fights."

"The only thing that aggravates me is the children that aren't looked after by their parents. Almost every day, the Police are out here . . . some kid has done something. The mothers are at home . . . but they just don't care what the kids are doing."

Although mostly people complained about other children, and other parents' lack of discipline, it was obvious from some incidents observed by the interviewers, especially when two women living next door to each other were interviewed, that some of the loudest complainers were also the worst offenders. This can partially be explained by guilt transference, but partially, it seems, in terms of Negro child-raising habits.

From the interviews conducted in Negro households in this survey, it appears that Negro mothers (sometimes doubling as fathers when there is no man in the household), are often very strict with their children inside the house, demanding (and obtaining) considerable help with the

household chores, even from quite small children, and generally expecting complete obedience, that sometimes borders on subservience, from their children. The mother in these Negro households, appears to be highly revered, even feared, by her children. Perhaps as a result of this over-strict atmosphere within the home, Negro children at Easter Hill, away from their mothers' surveillance, appear to run wild - fighting, chipping off pieces of rock to throw at each other, taunting dogs through the chicken wire which surrounds the back yards, etc. Women in the project, observing this type of behavior, seemed unaware, or unwilling to admit, that their own children were probably causing just as much 'trouble' out of sight on the next block, and put it down to 'lack of discipline'. It would seem that at least in some cases, the children's unruliness is not caused so much by lack of discipline, as by too much.

Other complaints about the inhabitants of Easter Hill focussed on the 'anti-social behavior' which respondents had noticed in their neighbors - the lack of a desire to better themselves, drinking, fighting, cussing, and promiscuity. A number alluded to the fact that many women in the project who were divorced or separated, or whose husbands were away for long periods of time at sea, had frequent 'male callers'. Although they conceded that 'they probably do it for fun, not for the money', there were some who referred explicitly to the presence of prostitutes in the project. A few mentioned the fact that Easter Hill is known locally as Whore Hill. But generally they referred to this good humoredly, and talked about those who made a good living as prostitutes

with almost a tinge of envy; not so much, envy of what they were doing, but envy of what they could buy with the money they earned. One young woman, describing a prostitute who lived a few doors away -

"Oh - she has such lovely clothes - I'm really envious sometimes at the things she wears. But you should see her on the day she goes to pay the rent - she puts on a little black dress, and off she goes, like the widow-living-on-Welfare she's supposed to be. That's the only day in the month when she wears that black dress."

Although some could respond good humoredly, there were others who were obviously disturbed by the promiscuous behavior they observed or suspected in their neighbors, and made veiled references such as -

"There are things going on I'd rather the children didn't know about", and "Everyone says it's better to leave here when your children get old enough to notice things." Some of the most shocked and upset by the 'dubious' behavior of their neighbors were a number of divorced women in the project who seemed genuinely to lead quiet and 'respectable' lives, and were most disturbed that they might, in the eyes of neighbors or outsiders, be lumped together with the more promiscuous women-without-men who lived at Easter Hill. One such divorcee, after some probing from the interviewer, conceded that this was her chief complaint about Easter Hill, and the cause of her keeping to herself and not socializing with the neighbors.

"I guess one reason I'm so defensive about living on the Hill is that I'm alone, and people put a bad interpretation on that. Once, the Richmond Independent called Easter Hill - Divorcée Hill, and I resented it . . . it carries a stigma."

Not only the writers on the Richmond Independent but other people in the project (and particularly those who did have husbands) implied that divorce and promiscuity were to all intents and purposes, synonymous.

Other types of anti-social behavior referred to explicitly included drinking, theft, and molesting of women in the streets. A number of respondents made reference to the fact that there were men living nearby who were 'drinkers', and one responded that she was afraid to go out at night because -

"There are lots of taverns and liguid [sic] stores around here . . . lots of old people walking around drunk . . . colored people . . . we have two wine men [sic] near here."

And there was one, a harassed though cheerful mother of 5, who responded -

"A lot of people here could better themselves . . . drinkers, etc., . . . my husband is one . . . that's our problem."

Many respondents, here and elsewhere throughout the interviews, made repeated references to the petty thefts that took place in the project; toys taken from the front porches, bicycles and garden furniture taken from the back yard, money and valuables taken from inside the houses. It is little wonder that people talked of wanting more privacy in the back yard - a higher fence and a gate that could be locked; many said they did not dare leave the children's toys or bicycles in the back yard overnight for fear they would be stolen. In consequence, the kitchen, already only marginally big enough for some of the larger families, would be crowded at night with impedimenta which, in a 'better' neighborhood, could be safely left out in the back yard.

A number of women referred to assaults and attempted rapes by individual, or groups of, youths in the project, pestering and assaulting of teenage girls by gangs of boys, and, in a few cases, sexual molestation of very young children. Most of the assaults were described

as happening at night, and were ascribed to the poor street lighting, lack of passing traffic, and lack of any other diversions for gangs of teenage youths. Most of the described assaults took place on the streets, but at least two were said to have taken place within the houses, by men just walking in during the day. Neither of the two women who described the above assaults could explain why before, or since, they had not kept their front doors locked to prevent this happening again, and it seems possible that the 'assaults' may well have been either deliberately invited or figments of a hopeful imagination. Indeed, sexual 'imaginings', jealousies, and tensions seemed pretty much in evidence, which is hardly surprising in a neighborhood where almost half the women are permanently or temporarily without husbands, and where those who had boy-friends or 'callers' were regarded with hypocritical shock/envy by their less fortunate/more 'respectable' neighbors. At least one case was noted of a possible lesbian relationship between neighboring middle-aged Negro women, both of whom had been deserted by their husbands some years before.

Another complaint about Easter Hill, voiced almost as frequently as remarks about it being a 'bad' neighborhood, was that there were just 'too many colored people here'. Such remarks were made most frequently by white southerners, by other minority groups (particularly Mexican, but also Orientals), and by white persons brought up in areas of the United States noticeably devoid of Negroes (eg., the Midwest and New England).

To the latter group, it may be that Negroes are to be feared as

something unknown; to all other minorities, presumably to dislike Negroes is to place yourself a cut above them. And for a white-southerner, who, even if poor, was used to living in a different part of town from the 'colored folks', the shock of finding themselves living cheek by jowl with them in Easter Hill is a sharp reminder of their degraded place in the social scale. Two respondents - a white woman who'd been brought up in North Carolina and a Mexican-American woman born in Texas - responded thus -

"There are too many coloreds here--at home, in North Carolina, the coloreds kept to themselves; you never had to live with them."

"I don't like the coloreds and them all mixed up . . . we have nice neighbors here . . . but some areas . . . phew! They let little children run out on the street all ragged and dirty. I don't like intermarriage, and when they throw them together in the same schools and same neighborhoods . . . I'm from the South . . . we always lived separate . . . had our own areas . . . didn't live all mixed up like this. There are some colored nurses where I work, and they're just the finest people, but . . . "

Mapping the location of the dwellings within the project, of those who replied in the above vein, an interesting pattern emerges. They are found either on the 'boundary' between predominantly white, and predominantly Negro sections of the project, or on the edge of the project, backing onto surrounding neighborhoods which are almost exclusively Negro. Hence, we find most white 'agitation' about integration at the points where white and Negro domains meet, and presumably where there is the greatest feeling of fear, and of not being sure that you really are 'the majority race.'

A white sailor, originally from New Hampshire, who lived on the very edge of the project, just across Cutting Boulevard from an

almost 100% Negro neighborhood of small single-family homes and apartments, responded more vehemently than most -

"What don't I like about Easter Hill? All them niggers! 'I'm not prejudiced - I just hate niggers!' This is a tough part of town . . . we've had three incidents with the coloreds, that's why I say that. There was a man killed here a little while ago . . . on a vacant lot back of the houses . . . they questioned a friend of mine whose back yard was near the house where the murder took place . . . otherwise they kept it very hush-hush. And one day my wife and the neighbor were sitting in the front room when we were both at sea . . . a Negro broke a window and climbed in . . . the neighbor scared him off. But I'm not scared for her now (motioning toward his wife) . . . she's got a 12-gauge shotgun in the bedroom now."

And a young Mexican-American woman, living on the mixed 'boundary' between the all-Negro southeastern section of the project, and the all-white northwestern section, responded that her chief complaint was -

"The colored kids . . . getting on people's nerves . . . that's everyone's complaint here . . . you can't tell them to behave, they just answer you back."

Although this woman, and indeed almost every Mexican-American interviewed (or sitting in on interviews) displayed considerable prejudice toward Negroes in the project, there were some white women living in this same 'borderline' area who seemed quite genuinely to want to be friendly with their Negro neighbors, and to bring up their own children without prejudice. But, as one said -

"Since all this Civil Rights business, the Negro children have become impossible. I told one the other day to give back my boy's bicycle . . . I would have said it to anyone who took his bicycle . . . and he turned around and said . . . 'You're prejudiced - that's why you said that'. Well . . . what can you do?"

Others complained that the local elementary school, adjacent to the project, is now largely Negro, and because the teachers are terrified of being labeled 'prejudiced', it is the white children who are now

'discriminated against'. Consequently, it was contended, the white children were beginning to get resentful of the special privileges granted to the Negro children, and of the teachers' constant 'over-looking' of Negro misdemeanors.

About 10% of the respondents mentioned as their chief complaint that people were too noseey and gossipy. It is significant that of those who responded in this way, all were separated or divorced and one was a member of a minority group; thus, all were, in the eyes of the majority-white nuclear families, not quite 'normal'. We have mentioned elsewhere the stigma that seems to be attached to divorce in this social milieu, no doubt because a considerable proportion of the white, nuclear families in Easter Hill are Catholics. And where a woman is not only divorced but also has no children, she has little in common with her neighbors and therefore seems to become (at least in her eyes) an object of derision and gossip. One such responded to this question somewhat bitterly -

"I don't like noseey people - just like people to leave me alone. I've made some enemies around here."

On a number of occasions, this particular respondent was seen shooing neighbor children off her front lawn and telling them to play some place else; at another point in the interview she told bitterly how some local children (presumably in retaliation for the treatment described above) threw dirt all over her car just after she had cleaned it.

Another divorced woman with two teenage sons responded to the question in somewhat cowed tones -

"I live here alone - I stay to myself and don't mix. In the past, some of my neighbors have been rough . . . I used to draw my drapes so I couldn't see what was going on."

Here is a woman who seems to have withdrawn from what she considers as a hostile environment; her house was one of many in the project where the drapes and blinds were drawn all day, and where bamboo fencing had been erected around the back yard for privacy. But seemingly, Easter Hill had not always had this effect on her, for as the interviewer wrote at the end of this interview -

"This woman made some interesting observations about the apparent deterioration of Easter Hill over the last few years. She's been there a long time, claims that when she first came it was a real community, had an active PTA and a Dad's Club, both of which had frequent meetings and frequent outings for the children - to parks, skating rinks, and so on. Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts were also active. She obviously felt that low-income people needed to make up for a lack of material privileges by working together and organizing wholesome activities, and she was herself a leader in this kind of effort. But community participation only lasted a few years, then began to go downhill - by 2 or 3 years ago, it was completely defunct. This is a woman who is now terrified by her surroundings, without in any way seeming to be paranoid or to exaggerate. In other words, she was able to accept a low income and do her best with it, but she is not able to accept the social disorganization and lack of respect for social rules which has accompanied her sojourn into the working class."

Another cause of concern, as far as 'gossip' is concerned, was the type of neighbor who would go 'blabbing' to the Housing Authority when someone bought a new car ('How can they afford it?') or where someone's husband started working overtime to bring in a little extra money.

"Everybody tells your business on the phone . . . the Housing hears and comes and raises your rent . . and you're just trying to make a little overtime for a little extra money. The neighbors talk like newspapers, . . . the Housing comes and sees your new furniture, and raises the rent."

Complaints about the Housing Authority were relatively few and far between, but generally focused either on their lack of care for the maintenance of the project (not painting the houses often enough, not

coming to exterminate the rats in one building . . . 'They only deal with cockroaches and termites' . . .), or on their vigilant watch on people's incomes. One middle-aged divorced woman, supporting a niece crippled with muscular dystrophy, was particularly unhappy at Easter Hill and lead a quiet, withdrawn life behind drape-covered windows. (It required some persuasion on the part of the interviewer to be admitted to the house.) In her eyes the chief blame for her unhappy life lay with the Housing Authority -

"They have the right to come in your house when they like . . . you have to tell them everything, just like the Welfare. My husband and I are separated . . . he came back one time, and they found out and raised my rent. I said, 'Why? He doesn't contribute . . . he drinks it all up.' If you buy a new car, you have to report it . . . you aren't to pay more on the car than on the rent. A girl near here went out to work . . . they raised the rent . . . so all her extra money went on extra rent . . . it's not worth it."

Complaints about Easter Hill - Design v. People

Having discussed at some length the chief categories of complaint about Easter Hill, we must now consider whether the two main groups of complainers - i.e., those who mentioned a design feature and those who mentioned a social feature - differed from each other as population groups.

The group that mentioned design features comprised slightly above-average proportions of non-whites and of those who considered themselves middle-class; although whites complained more about the people in the project, non-whites had more complaints about the design - especially the lack of play areas for children. This group was also characterized by a much above average proportion of people under 40;

since the lack of play space was one of the most common complaints, it is understandable that it was largely younger women with small children who were most vocal on this subject.

The group that complained largely about the other people in the project comprised above average proportions of whites (complaining about the racial mixture), people over 40 (complaining about unruly children and dogs), and those who considered themselves working class (complaining about the noseyneess and gossiping of neighbors). Surprisingly perhaps, an above-average proportion in this group considered the other people at Easter Hill as middle-class; in this sample at least, people seemed more concerned about the class of their neighbors when they considered them a class above themselves, than when they considered them inferior.

Population segments - likes and dislikes

To summarize then, the findings of these two questions on what people like and dislike about Easter Hill indicate that -

a) Non-whites - are more concerned about design than about people, both as regards what they like and what they dislike about a neighborhood. For whites, the opposite is true.

b) Over-40s - are equally concerned about people and design, when talking about what they like. But when registering complaints, they are far more vocal about people, while younger respondents are far more vocal about design.

c) Women without husbands - when discussing what they like are far more concerned with the design than with their neighbors, but when

it comes to discussing what they don't like, they appear to be roughly equally divided between design and people.

d) Educated to 12th grade or above - comprised above-average proportions in both the group that found nothing they liked about Easter Hill, and the group that found nothing to dislike. This would tend to suggest that the better-educated respondents were sharply divided between those who gladly accepted Easter Hill as a place to live, and those who vehemently rejected it.

e) Without cars - those without cars were more apt to mention design features that they liked (particularly location) than social attributes, and were less likely to mention people as a source of irritation.

f) Working class - those who considered themselves working class were less likely to say they liked nothing about Easter Hill, and far more likely to mention the other people in the project as the feature they liked most about it. Also as regards complaints, they were far more likely to mention people than design.

g) Middle-class - those who thought of themselves as middle-class, on the other hand, were far more likely to mention design than people--though the contrast was not as great as among the working class respondents.

h) Those who considered their neighbors to be working class - were far more likely to mention people as the feature they liked most about Easter Hill, rather than design; among the things they disliked, they were less likely to mention people.

i) Those who considered their neighbors to be middle-class - represented an above-average proportion of those who liked 'Nothing'

about Easter Hill, presumably because without husbands with regular jobs, they considered themselves inferior to the nuclear, working families around them, and less likely than they to ever break out of their present public housing milieu.

Child-rearing

It became obvious when discussing with people their likes and dislikes about Easter Hill, that many had a seemingly very middle-class concern for the drawbacks of the neighborhood as a place in which to bring up their children. I say 'seemingly very middle-class' for sociologists have tended to emphasize this as a middle-class trait, as if members of the 'lower' classes do not also exhibit concern for the where-withal of their children. The following discussion will indicate that at least in this sample of the 'lower classes', this is not true.

TABLE XXI

Do you think this is a good neighborhood to bring
up children in?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
No	25	53
Yes	14	30
Both good and bad	6	13
Don't know	2	4
	47	100

When asked if they liked Easter Hill as a neighborhood in which to bring up their children, more than half the sample responded, some quite heatedly, that they did not.

"I absolutely do not! We're too jammed together . . . the kids learn to fight . . . my three-year old is using foul language . . . you have no life of your own."

"A lot of mothers don't care how their children act . . . let them use any language . . . talk back to anyone, with or without reason. All kinds of people moving in and out . . . little ones learn whatever they hear. With more privacy, children would learn only from their parents - or from the professor on TV . . . you could teach them what you wanted them to know."

"No, I don't. Some older kids beat up my three-year old twice. It's quite a neighborhood this . . . They told me to keep the back porch light on, and get a dog . . . the neighbor warned me."

"So many people don't care what their kids do; it's hard for those who do care. We've learned to keep our kids close to home, but lots of people turn their kids out of the house, and whatever they do . . . that's it. Not everybody's like that, but some are."

Mostly the blame was laid on other parents - their lack of concern for their children, their lack of discipline and standards, though the blame was so often laid on other people, that one could not help but wonder how much was genuine complaint, and how much was guilt transference. However, the question of discipline in so many households that had no man in them was a very real source of friction; in these families, the mother has to act as both father and mother to her children, with the result that sometimes neither role is played satisfactorily. The results seem to range all the way from, at one end of the spectrum, extremely strict, sometimes even harsh discipline, together with an almost neurotic concern at keeping children actually inside the house (or at least, very close to it) and, at the other end of the spectrum,

almost an abandonment of the children to fend for themselves. In either case, there would tend to be friction with neighboring nuclear families, who practiced less extreme methods of child-rearing, and who had a man at home to help with the discipline. For instance, a young Negro woman, with a husband and two sons, and with neighboring families on both sides without men in them, remarked revealingly -

"We try to chastise our kids, and the neighbor kids are allowed to do what they like . . . I've had a lot of trouble with my eldest son. He might have been that way anyway . . . but he seems to have been worse here. There are so many kids only with mothers . . . they give in to them all the time, rather than argue. Then our kids come home and say . . . 'But Johnny can do it, why can't I?', and you have to argue with them and they get resentful that you're so strict - or that you make them go to bed before the other kids."

Other sources of concern were the rough behavior and fighting that tended to arise spasmodically (particularly between white and Negro children), and the 'bad things' that your children learned, mixing with kids from unruly households. The 'bad things' could mean the vandalism which tended to occur, but more probably meant the use of bad language, and a too-early familiarity with matters sexual, as the following quotations suggest -

"You see too many things. It's all right with small children . . . but, like people say around here . . . it's better to leave when the children get older . . . they'll see too many things they shouldn't see."

"I wouldn't choose it. I hate to say it, but some of the children learn too much bad language."

"No. . . . I don't think it's a good neighborhood . . . your children pick up bad things."

"There are too many children . . . they pick up things they shouldn't learn till their mother or father teaches them."

"It's too rough . . . there are too many juvenile delinquents around."

There were some who pointed out that though things were bad, they were worse in other parts of the project, as the Negro wife of an architecture student living on Corto Square remarked -

"It's not a bad neighborhood here . . . but what if I lived on Hinkley? My children would learn far more filth and junk. Even here, they learn some . . . when I hear them say some things, I say . . . 'Now just you stop . . . you don't hear your father and I saying that word'."

This was not the only comment about Hinkley Avenue being a 'rougher' part of the project; a number of people, living elsewhere, mentioned that they had been offered larger houses in that section, but had refused because of its 'bad reputation'. How much of this bad reputation was rumor, and how much was fact, is impossible to say, but from general observation there were certainly many more children on Hinkley; in addition, the eastern end of Hinkley is a 'boundary' area between predominantly white and predominantly Negro areas of the project, and it was reported that there are sometimes such brawls between white and Negro children, that the Police have to be called. The Police, incidentally, were loath to 'break up' such fights, or to be called at all on racial matters for, as one told a housewife on Hinkley, "We don't like getting mixed up in things like this . . . people will say we're trying to discriminate. People should just settle these things on their own . . . not call the Police in." Undoubtedly, some of the heated reactions to this question stemmed from the fact that this is a mixed neighborhood; to some people, though by no means the majority, Easter Hill would still be a 'bad neighborhood for raising children' even if behavior were perfect, as long as it was a mixed neighborhood. One respondent remarked how her kids wouldn't sign up at school for the City

recreation program in the summer months--one way to keep amused--because the other kids were all Negroes, and her children felt 'out of it.'

Those who did think the neighborhood was all right for raising children were none of them too enthusiastic, and a few may well have answered this way out of 'defensiveness', as the ones who said -

"Well, it's OK . . . Public Housing is never the best place."

"It's not one of the worst places . . . or one of the best."

"It is, if you can't afford to live someplace else. There's a lot of good kids here . . . only some of them are devils."

A few, obviously took the question as a 'slight' on Easter Hill, a suggestion that it wasn't as good as an area of private houses, and responded in quasi defiant tones -

"I don't know what you would consider a nice neighborhood . . . even in private homes, where both parents are working . . . the kids go wrong. There's good and bad everywhere . . . it's up to the parents. My kids have friends that don't live at Easter Hill . . . they meet them at St. Cornelius [local Roman Catholic church] . . . The girls often go away on weekends with their friends in the summer . . . to Santa Cruz and the Russian River and places like that."

"It's safer than for kids from an average home . . . especially for small children. The neighbors help each other . . . the project brings people close together . . . same incomes . . . same life problems. They help each other . . . in a private home, you may not even know your neighbor."

Certainly, part of the 'problem' with regard to child-rearing is just the sheer numbers of children in the project, and the high density of families on the land; without the aggravating factors of fatherless families, and families with fathers who are sick or out of work, we might still find people that would regard this as a 'bad neighborhood'. But part of the 'blame' must be laid on the designers and on the Housing Authority; the former, for providing far too few specific play

areas in the project, and the latter for permitting the two equipment areas that were provided to be demolished by marauding teenagers some years ago and never replaced.

Nor is the problem of recreation only confined to say, the 5-10 year age bracket, i.e., those most likely to use the type of play equipment referred to above. In addition, and to compound the problem, there is a complete lack of play spaces for very young children (pre-school), and an equally serious lack of anything for teenagers to do.

It is difficult to estimate just how serious a problem the lack of toddler play space is, since people do have their own back yards in which to let their pre-school children run and play. Few mentioned this as a drawback of the project in general conversation, but when a specific question was put to them, suggesting that there was no such place, and asking if they would use it if there were, the great majority of those with small children said that they would. Certainly, such a place, in which mothers could sit and watch their children at play, and in which such things as a sandbox and water area could be provided, would serve an important double purpose, as both an area where children could learn to play together, and a locale where women in the project, who might otherwise feel isolated, could meet and talk with other mothers. If your neighbors are friendly, or if there are children next door through whom you meet the parents, this is fine; but, as some people reported, if you live in an unfriendly section, or are a young mother 'isolated' among units inhabited by older people or childless couples, your chances of meeting compatible companions are rather slim.

A place to walk to where your children can play with things which you cannot afford to provide in your own back yard, and where you can talk casually to other adults, may not be the full answer, but it is a start.

The question of teenager recreation is certainly a more serious problem, in terms of the annoyance it causes to inhabitants of the project.

TABLE XXII

How about the teenagers around here - is there enough for them to do?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
No	33	72
Yes	2	4
Don't know	8	17
No answer	3	100
	46	100

Almost three-quarters of those questioned remarked that there was not enough for teenagers to do, in or around Easter Hill; people needed little encouragement, when this question was asked, to expound on why they thought this was so.

"No . . . there's nothing but getting into mischief. My kids have nice friends . . . but some kids are awful . . . they ought to be in the service. There's nothing at all for them to do."

"Nothing . . . absolutely nothing. I was talking to the Public Health Nurse . . . trying to get a neighborhood council going here; I think they should work with the teenagers . . . get them off the streets and out of all the trouble they get into. We're lucky . . . it's not so bad here . . . down on Hinkley it's very bad."

"No . . . it's unfortunate, but many mothers have to work . . . so the kids are left on their own, with no supervision . . . even smaller kids are left on their own. And many families have only a mother . . . she has to deal with all their problems, as well as taking care of the house and maybe working."

"Most of them roam the streets . . . it's a real problem. My son hadn't been the same since we moved here; he was 10 when we came here . . . he's 14 now . . . maybe it isn't Easter Hill, but he sure has been hard to handle since we came here. In fact, all the trouble here has made me quite nervous . . . I have go go to the doctor quite often."

The problem at Easter Hill is not merely one of lack of facilities in the project, but also one that must be encountered in any low-rent housing area; recreation generally costs money, especially the type of recreation which teenagers favor - going to a soda fountain and playing the juke box, going to the movies, going swimming, going bowling, driving to 'the city' - all of these cost money, and neither the jobless youth nor his unemployed father has the kind of money to spare that will enable him to 'keep busy' at these types of recreation. It is all very well for the middle-class planner to say . . . 'But we've provided boy's clubs, and libraries and neighborhood parks, and they don't cost anything'; they don't cost anything, but nor do they particularly appeal to today's swingin' teenagers. The middle-class parent, when his kids are too much around the house, slips them a dollar and says, 'Run off to the movies', but in Public Housing, most families have difficulty enough meeting the weekly food bill without handing out cash so their kids can 'have a good time'.

"We're a poorer class of people and can't afford things for our kids . . . music lessons, bowling . . . All the children here are in the same fix; they don't have enough to do . . . to get into things more. I can't afford to pay for my children's activities . . . it's even too expensive to buy Scout uniforms."

"Everybody goes wild around here . . . there's nothing to do. They're not taught to do anything at home or in the yard . . . they can only go to the library or the auditorium, and they're on the other side of town."

"They're always in the streets . . . no place to go . . . Kids don't have money . . . they need something to do that don't cost money. Even the swimming pool costs money."

Even if there is the money to spare for commercial recreation, Easter Hill is unfortunately situated vis-a-vis the city's recreation opportunities; it has warehouses and a truck route on one side, vacant lots and run-down housing on the others, and is a bus-ride from downtown, where, even if you don't have money, you can pass the time window-shopping or girl-watching. But if you don't have a car, even the trip to downtown is an expense. Perhaps the answer is to site Public Housing closer to downtown areas, where there are both the cut-price markets which low-income people need to patronize, and the cheaper forms of recreation such as cut-price triple feature movies, as on Broadway in Oakland or San Francisco's Market Street. The other answer is to provide attractive recreation halls in the project itself; not a dreary community building that smacks of social workers and ante-natal clinics, but an exciting place where people want to go - where they can dance and play pool, and drink cokes and play cards, or do nothing. This may not be the complete answer, for growing boys are always going to want to roam the streets and look for 'kicks', but at least it could be an outlet for some of their energy, a locale for some social contacts; at Easter Hill, there is not even this. In fairness to the designers, we should add that they wanted to provide a community building in the project, but the idea was rejected by the Public Housing Administration,

as being too costly. Costly it may have been, but what has been the cost in vandalism, and petty theft, in frayed nerves and anxious parents?¹

A number of people, when discussing this question, remarked that they thought a recreation or community hall would alleviate at least part of the problem, and bemoaned the fact that Easter Hill did not have such a facility.

"They need a recreation center . . . pool tables and things like that. They play ball on the street, and at night, break into stores because there's nothing to do."

"There's not enough for the teenagers to do, anywhere in the City of Richmond, or in San Pablo. The old recreation hall system Richmond used to have . . . they don't have it any more. The social center in Richmond is now dominated by the Y, and by High School fraternities and sororities, . . . most kids can't get into those . . . including ours. I think it's a good idea to set up a drag strip with supervision . . . a good place for the kids to go . . . with strict rules; it makes the kids good drivers."

"They need a recreation hall to keep the kids out of trouble. It used to be very bad here . . . if you said you lived at Easter Hill, people thought your kids would all become delinquents. They need a place for ping-pong . . . dancing. In future housing projects, if they had things for the kids, they'd have much less trouble. And so many families with no fathers . . . kids need to let off steam."

"We want a community center where we could have dances and things." [Boy, 18]

The lack of things for teenagers to do not only causes tensions and frustrations in their own families, but renders them an annoyance to the whole neighborhood, for they would often pick on younger children

¹ In fairness to the Public Housing Administration, we should state that they have now done an 'about turn', and are insisting on adequate community facilities in newly designed projects. (Conversation with Frances Toler, Community Facilities Section, San Francisco Regional Office of the Public Housing Administration, Dec. 1964.)

to tease and 'beat up', and there were stories from several quarters of gangs of youths roaming the streets at night making it unsafe, or at least unpleasant, for women to walk around alone. Sometimes, it seems they would single out an 'odd man out' in the project, to pester and annoy; as in the following account given by a childless middle-aged divorcée, living alone with her aged mother, and recently laid off work by a local cannery.

"The kids cut down two trees in my front garden. Teenage girls put mud all over my car; I'd just cleaned it . . . they came round at night, after it was dark and put mud all over it. Don't know why they did it . . . I hadn't done nothing to them. They were big girls . . . 3 of them . . . 15 and 16; they came round later and apologized. And the kids are always throwing rocks in the road. I had a guest staying once . . . and all the gas was taken from his car . . . and the top of the gas tank stolen."

Nor were such happenings the exception, for when asked if there was trouble of this sort in the neighborhood, more than two-thirds replied that there was.

TABLE XXIII

Most neighborhoods have some trouble with the kids damaging things, digging holes, breaking windows, etc. Do you know if there is any problem like that here?

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	35	67
No	14	27
Don't know	3	6
	52	100

The three kinds of vandalism which cause the most annoyance at Easter Hill are tampering with parked autos (stealing hub caps, snapping off aerials, climbing on roofs and scratching paint, etc.), messing up the front yards ("I used to keep flowers in the front . . . it was so pretty . . . but the kids played hide and seek in the daisies after I'd tied them up. I came home and found them flattened . . . so I gave up."), and breaking windows with baseballs, rocks and other missiles. This latter form of mischief is not only annoying, it is costly, since tenants are expected to replace broken windows at their own expense; even a few dollars to replace a window can be an irksome extra expense when you're living on a limited budget, especially irksome when it isn't even your own kids that did the breaking.

"I had one of my windows broke . . . paid almost \$5 to have it put back in . . . I do think they could have used the \$30 deposit we give them for things like that; but they added \$5 to my next rent check . . . that's a lot when you don't have much coming in."

"They haven't done much since I came here . . . but there were BB shots through the windows before I came. But I do watch them . . . because if they break anything, we have to pay. I can't afford that."

And the houses which are close to the Hill, where loose rocks provide ample 'ammunition', are only too tempting for kids with nothing to do; one such household reported having had 14 windows broken in 6 years, and paying for each one at \$6 a piece.

The problem of petty vandalism, though it may not sound very serious to the reader, is just one of many such nuisances encountered in a high density, low rent area such as this, and which, taken together, may weigh up to an intolerable annoyance. A broken window alone may not

be very important, but a broken window in a household where there are a dozen other problems, can well be 'the last straw'.

Friendship patterns

Despite the reservations that many people had about Easter Hill as an area in which to raise children, when asked if they thought the project was a friendly place in which to live, three-fifths replied that it was. Although the children got into fights, and got bored and fractious with nothing to do and occasionally caused arguments between neighboring mothers over discipline, the adults in the project seemed to get on fairly well. There was a definite feeling in the responses that people in Easter Hill didn't want to be too friendly with their neighbors; and the more 'degraded' they felt by Public Housing, and the more 'trapped' they felt, the less the likelihood that they wanted to be over friendly with other people in the project. It was noticeable, that those who considered themselves middle-class and had husbands with reasonably paid, steady jobs were far more likely to know lots of people in the project and visit quite a number in their homes; whereas, those who thought of themselves as working or lower class, many of whom did not have husbands living with them, were less likely to know many people, or visit around.

The most common means by which people appeared to get to know each other when they first moved into the project was by talking with their next door neighbor while hanging out clothes or emptying garbage in the back yard, or while cutting the lawn in the front yard, or through their children. (See Table XXIV.) Interestingly, almost one-fifth mentioned that they knew people in Easter Hill before they moved

TABLE XXIV

HOW DID YOU GET TO KNOW PEOPLE WHEN YOU FIRST MOVED HERE?

	<u>No. of responses</u>	<u>% of total respondents</u> ¹
Started talking while in the back yard	14	29
Through the children	12	25
Started talking while in the front yard	11	23
Knew people here already	8	17
Neighbor introduced herself	4	8
Through my husband	3	6
Introduced myself to neighbor	2	4
Called on neighbor in emergency	2	4
Met while collecting mail	1	2
Met at church	1	2
Met at PTA meeting	1	2
Don't know anyone yet	4	8

¹ Percentages do not add up to 100% as some respondents mentioned several means of meeting people. (N = 48)

in, and thus got to know other people in the project through them. In many cases it was a close relative - mother, sister, brother - who was living in the project already; two women were interviewed who had been brought up in Easter Hill, had married and were still living there, but in a different house from their parents. A few people had a friend from work already in the project when they moved in, and had learned of Easter Hill through them; and a few women mentioned the fact that their husbands had heard about the neighborhood through shipmates who already lived there. The decision to move there, in these cases, was generally made so that the wives could live near to each other and keep each other company while the men were away at sea.

No doubt in a less densely populated suburban community, though there may be many chance meetings 'though the children', there would probably be far fewer acquaintances struck up, as at Easter Hill, while working in the yard. For the houses at Easter Hill have such a narrow frontage (16 feet in most cases), and the yards are so close together, that you would be hard put not to meet your neighbors while hanging out clothes on washing lines only a few yards apart, and while tending front lawns that are within easy chatting distance of each other. On the other hand, in a middle-class suburb, there would no doubt be a considerable proportion of friendships made at the local church, or nursery school, or at neighborhood meetings; the proportion of respondents at Easter Hill who reported meeting people this way was only 4%.

A consideration of the relationship between the dwelling-type of the respondent, and the number of people she knows in Easter Hill to

say Hello to, reveals some interesting differences. It seems that if you live in one of the court areas at Easter Hill, you have more likelihood of knowing a considerable number of people in the project, than if you live on one of the traffic streets. Those living on a court or courtlike arrangement of houses knew, on the average, 30 people in the project well enough to say Hello to; those living in units facing one of the traffic streets knew about 12. (See Table XXV.) This suggests that living on a court, through which many people take shortcuts on their way across the project and in which the yards often back onto other back yards, one is more likely to strike up chance acquaintances than on a street.

Dividing the street units, however, into those at the ends of rows and those elsewhere in the row, a further interesting difference comes to light; notably, that in the end units, where the front door is around the corner of the building and not in line with the others, residents are likely to have almost twice as many nodding acquaintances in the project, as those living elsewhere in the rows. This may at first seem an unexpected result; one might have assumed that the end house, more separate from the others, would provide fewer opportunities for chance meetings. The explanation for this seeming anomaly may lie in the fact that the end units generally face onto a small, communal parking lot where there is constant coming and going, where children often play in the daytime, and men work on their cars at the weekends; thus, as you enter or leave the house, or as you work on the lawn (and there generally is more work in the end units since there is both a front and

TABLE XXV

NUMBER OF PEOPLE KNOWN JUST TO SAY HELLO TO

<u>Type of dwelling unit of respondent</u>	<u>Total number of acquaintances</u>	<u>Average per respondent</u>
Court (12 respondents)	365	30.4
End (12 respondents)	199	16.5
Row (21 respondents)	191	9.1

a side yard) you are probably more likely to see neighbors from up and down the street as they are parking their cars, unloading their shopping, and so on. In addition, many of the end units have a walkway running past their front door, leading from the sidewalk on the street to the backs of the houses, or to another part of the project, or out of the project altogether; this is another reason why the end house might have more contact with people walking in or through the project.¹ It might be argued that units in the middles of rows also have this opportunity, for they have sidewalks passing their front yards; but there is somehow an intangible, more intimate feeling about the walkways than about the sidewalks. For one thing they are narrower--you have less chance of avoiding someone you meet on one; and another thing, the walkway is more likely to be used by people living in the immediate vicinity, people who you see around every day.²

The end units of rows, and the units facing onto courts, are the two locations in the project in which these more 'intimate' walkways pass by the front door; they are also the two locations in which residents tend to know more people on a nodding, Hello-type basis.

This explanation of the greater opportunities for casual meetings in the courts, and at the ends of buildings, tends to be confirmed by

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1. This tends to confirm Whyte's speculation that friendship patterns often revolve around "common areas," such as common parking lots or footpaths. (Whyte, William H. Jr., The Organization Man. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956.)
 2. Robert Woods Kennedy speculated that intimate footpaths would seem to be more conducive to friendships than sidewalks along public streets; in the case of Easter Hill, his speculation has some foundation. (Kennedy, R.W., op. cit.)

Table XXVI, which indicates that 50% of those living on courts, and the same proportion of those living in end units, see their friends while they, or the friends, are walking through the neighborhood, only 29% of the row-residents reported seeing their friends this way.

Another interesting fact which emerges from this analysis of casual meeting patterns is that the back yard figures more importantly than the front as a place of initial contact, where the first words of introduction or passing-the-time-of-day take place; but that the front yard seems more important than the back as a place of continuing contact, where greetings and casual chats are repeated. This seems logical enough. When you first move in, it may be a while before you get around to taking care of the front yard, but from the very first day you are hanging out clothes, emptying the garbage, and putting the children out to play, and it seems likely that you might make the first contact with your neighbors when doing these things. Later, when you feel settled enough to start tackling the front yard, or when you feel "sure" enough of your neighbors and the neighborhood to start sitting out on the porch, or to stop and admire the baby of a passing stranger, your widened circle of acquaintances or repeated greetings to those already known may tend to become focused at the front of the house. Added to which, there are, of course, many more people passing by the front than by the back, so it is not surprising that after initial contacts, the further widening of friendships tends to take place while residents are "out front."

The local store, which in "traditional" working class neighborhoods tends to be a meeting place, a place for the exchange of news and

TABLE XXVI

AREAS IN PROJECT WHERE FRIENDS MOST OFTEN SEEN

Type of dwelling unit of respondent	TOTAL		Front yard		Back yard		Walking through neighborhood, 'all over'				Store		Church	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Court	12	100	-	-	1	8	6	50	3	25	2	17		
End	12	100	3	25	2	17	6	50	1	8	-	-		
Row	21	100	9	43	5	24	6	29	1	5	-	-		
TOTAL	45	100	12	27	8	18	18	40	5	11	2	4		

gossip, does not seem to play the same role here; only about 10% of the respondents said that they saw their friends mostly at the store. This may be partly because there are a number of small stores serving the project, and not just one; but a more likely explanation is that many people do not shop locally at all--some go to cut-price markets in downtown Richmond, some of the more mobile ones go to the "nicer shops" at El Cerrito Plaza, and servicemen's wives don't shop at all in the ordinary sense, for they obtain all their foodstuffs from the Commissary in Oakland or in Alameda.

Visiting patterns

So far we have been considering only casual acquaintanceships; now we shall turn to the matter of more intimate friendships, and of visiting people in their homes. The first fact that emerges is that a considerable proportion of Easter Hill's residents are fairly isolated with regard to knowing someone locally whom they can visit in their home; almost a third either know no one at all, or only one other family. On the other hand, there are some families that are obviously very social, and have made many contacts in the project; over two-fifths of the residents know more than four families well enough to visit, and 16% know more than ten families.

Considering again the location of the dwelling units of respondents, we find that those in a court location know on the average 5.3 families whom they visit, while those in an end location know only 3.8 families, and those elsewhere in the row, 3.9. (See Table XXVII.) As in the table on numbers of acquaintances, the court area seems to

TABLE XXVII

NUMBER OF PEOPLE KNOWN WELL ENOUGH TO VISIT OFTEN IN THEIR HOMES

<u>Dwelling unit of respondent</u>	<u>Total number of friends</u>	<u>Average per respondent</u>
Court (12 respondents)	64	5.3
End (15 respondents)	57	3.8
Row (24 respondents)	94	3.9

be the most conducive to sociability, while the street areas are less so. It will be noticed that the end units differ markedly from the rest of the row units in terms of acquaintances, but in terms of numbers of families visited, they are both roughly the same. This presumably indicates that the end location, conducive as it is to more chance meetings and nodding acquaintanceships than the middle of rows, is not necessarily also conducive to more permanent friendships; the casual greeting on the parking lot is not any more likely to lead to visits in the home than is the casual greeting on the sidewalk, or at the store. But the casual greeting in the court does, for some reason, seem to lead to knowing a greater number of families in their homes. As Table XXVIII indicates, the majority of the friends of court-residents lived opposite; but the majority of the friends of street-residents lived neither opposite, nor next door, nor further along the row, but elsewhere in the project. There seemed to be considerably more "local" visiting among court residents than among those facing the streets. There were also higher proportions of people living on the streets of those who knew no one in Easter Hill well enough to visit.

A consideration of the locations of dwelling units of respondents, vis-a-vis those of the families they visit, seems to indicate that in general, people visit where it is easiest to do so; that is, more than two-thirds of all the visiting reported was done in the immediate vicinity of the home--next door, or further along the row, or opposite. As Festinger et al. reported in their study of friendship and neighboring patterns in two married student housing projects in Cambridge,

TABLE XXVIII

LOCATION OF DWELLING UNIT OF FRIENDS VISITED MOST OFTEN

Dwelling unit of
respondent

Location of friends' dwelling unit

	Total		Next door		2 doors away		Further along row		Across back- yard		Across street or court		Further away		Visit no one	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Court (12 respondents)	29	100	2	7	5	17	6	21	2	7	7	24	6	21	1	3
End (15 respondents)	31	100	3	10	1	3	5	16	-	-	9	29	10	32	3	10
Row (24 respondents)	57	100	15	26	10	18	2	4	-	-	8	14	19	33	3	5
	117	100	20	17	16	14	13	11	2	6	24	21	35	30	7	6

Massachusetts:

"The most striking item was the dependence of friendship formation on the mere physical arrangement of the houses. People who lived close to one another became friendly with each other, while people who lived far apart did not."¹

At Easter Hill this was also true, and it is not really surprising, considering the fact that most of the respondents were women, and most of the visiting is done by them, during the day, for coffee and a chat. With small children to take care of, there is not much time for visits across the other side of the project. And as Whyte pointed out in his study of visiting patterns in a suburban area of Chicago, sight and sound contacts are important for women visiting in the daytime; they like to visit where they are within sight of their children playing and within hearing-distance of the phone.² Those that did visit further away than the immediate vicinity of the home were often women who had moved within the project as their families increased, and they were visiting friends who had once been their next door neighbors; or there were also cases of Navy wives visiting other wives elsewhere in the project when their husbands, often on the same ship, were away at sea. As we have mentioned before, there were also cases of people who were brought up in the project, and then moved into another unit when they married, and cases of people moving to Easter Hill because they had relatives already there. In these situations, there would tend to be more non-local visiting.

The more conducive the location of the unit was to very local

1. Festinger, L. et al., op. cit., p. 11.

2. Whyte, op. cit., Ch. 25.

neighboring, the more such neighboring there appeared to be; friendship patterns, as several other studies have indicated, seem to be very closely linked with layout.¹ For, as Festinger has written:

"The architect who builds a house, or who designs a site plan, who decides where the roads will and will not go, and who decides which direction the houses will face and how close together they will be, also is, to a large extent, deciding the pattern of social life among the people who will live in those houses."²

In the court areas at Easter Hill, roughly a quarter of the visiting was done with next-door, or two-doors-away neighbors; and roughly a quarter with opposite neighbors. In the end units, where opportunities for next-door neighboring are obviously halved, only 13% of the visiting was to next-door or two-doors-away neighbors, whereas 29% was with people on the other side of the street. Presumably, where neighboring next door is lessened, people tend to visit more across the street. Finally, in the row units, not at the end, 44% of all visiting is with next-door or two-doors-away neighbors, but only 14% is across the street. The neighboring across the street is presumably less than that of the end units because there is just more opportunity to visit with families next door, and it is less than in the court areas because contacts across a traffic street are just more difficult to make than contacts across a grass court.

To sum up, it seems that court locations in Easter Hill are more

1. Festinger, L., et al., op. cit.; Kuper, Leo, "Blueprint for Living Together," in Living in Towns. London: The Cresset Press, 1953; Weesner, Charles, Social Contact within a Housing Group. Berkeley, Calif.: unpublished thesis in Architecture, 1964; Whyte, Wm. H. Jr., The Organization Man, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956.

2. Festinger, L., et al., op. cit., p. 160

conducive to casual social contacts and to visiting in peoples' homes than are street locations. But how does this tie in with the fact, discussed elsewhere, that the courts seem to be less popular as places to live than the streets? It may be that people don't particularly want the excessive amount of casual social contact that occurs in the court areas; indeed, as we mentioned previously, people facing the streets in Easter Hill liked their orientation because it was more private than the courts, because they weren't looking "right into the other guy's front window." In the streets, you may not have aural privacy but you have at least some visual privacy from opposite neighbors, because of distance and because of moving traffic and people forming a kind of screen. In the courts, however, you have neither aural privacy between next-door houses, nor visual privacy from opposite neighbors; hence, the number of houses with permanently drawn blinds on the narrowest court (on 26th Street).¹ The loss of privacy is evidently a large price to pay in order to have a frontage free from traffic.

Though the courts do indeed seem to "induce" a great deal more casual social contacts than do the streets, these contacts do not necessarily lead to visiting in the home. On the streets there is approximately three times as much casual meeting as visiting in the homes; on the courts, however, there is roughly six times as much casual meeting as there is visiting. All of which seems to suggest that though the courts may offer more opportunities to see people go

1. "It has been pointed out that if people are close together, enmities may be increased as well as friendships." (Schorr, Alvin, op. cit., p. 27.)

by and to make casual contacts, this does not necessarily lead to more visiting, or to making them more popular than the streets. For as we have discussed elsewhere, many people in low-income groups tend to see their house as a haven from the outside world, and they resent invasions on privacy or too great an emphasis on "popping in and out of each other's houses." The following respondent may not have been alone when she said:

"Sometimes it's too friendly, people always dropping in; sometimes the same one, two or three times a day. If you spend too much time on coffee klatches, you have to neglect your children; that's what I always say."

A further factor of considerable importance that must not be overlooked is that all the court areas at Easter Hill are mixed racially, whereas all the streets are not. This may indeed be the crucial factor in explaining why the courts have a much higher "score" on casual contacts than the streets, but why the visiting score is not so different from that on the streets, and why the courts are generally less popular as places to live.

The two sub-areas of Easter Hill

An interesting fact which we began to sense during the course of the interview, and which is confirmed by analysis of some of the responses, is that there are two more or less distinct sub-areas within the project. These comprise a western "happy" area, in which there is a definite feeling of an extroverted neighborhood with much visiting and neighboring and mutual assistance with child rearing; and an eastern "unhappy" area, in which there is much less neighboring, in which people appear to

TABLE XXIX

THE TWO SUB-AREAS OF EASTER HILL

	<u>Western 'happy' area</u>		<u>Eastern 'unhappy' area</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Total households in area	16	100	28	100
Families in area who liked 'Nothing' about Easter Hill	-	-	15	54
Respondents who talked about 'other people' in the project, as one of things they disliked	6	38	16	57
Respondents who complained there were 'too many coloreds'	-	-	7	25
Respondents who thought Easter Hill was not friendly, or 'didn't know' if it was friendly	2	12	9	32
Respondents who knew fewer than 5 people to say 'Hello' to in Easter Hill	2	12	12	43
Respondents who visited no one in their homes, or only 1 other family	4	25	11	39
Respondents who knew more than 10 other families in Easter Hill, well enough to visit in their homes	7	44	1	4

to keep more to themselves, in which there is a feeling of an "introverted," sometimes even a hostile neighborhood. The approximate boundaries of these two sub-areas are illustrated in Fig 1.

Table XXIX indicates that there were a considerable number in the eastern section of the project who replied that they liked nothing about Easter Hill. No one in the western section replied this way. More than a third of those in the eastern section reported that they didn't think Easter Hill was a friendly neighborhood, and more than two-fifths said they knew fewer than 5 people to say Hello to in the project. In the western section, the proportions in each case were scarcely more than 10%. Almost two-fifths in the eastern area reported that they knew no one well enough to visit in their home, or only 1 other family; only 4% said that they knew more than 10 families. In the western section of the project, 44% reported knowing more than 10 families well enough to visit in their homes. These facts tend to support Fried and Gleicher's conclusions that the greater one's interpersonal commitments are in an area, the greater the likelihood of highly positive feelings about the area as a whole.¹

The explanation for this marked difference in socializing and satisfaction probably lies in the fact that the western section of Easter Hill was almost completely white; for instance, west of the court on Hinkley Avenue, there was, to my knowledge, only one Negro family in the summer of 1964. To the east and northeast of this court,

1. Fried, M., and P. Gleicher, "Some Sources of Residential Satisfaction in an Urban Slum," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 27, No. 4, November 1961, pp 305-315.

there were buildings which were almost totally Negro, and many that were mixed. As Table XXIX indicates, 25% of those in the eastern section complained that there were "too many coloreds around" (and probably more would have said it if they had dared); in the western section, not a single person made this complaint.

It seems that Richmond Housing Authority has probably been pursuing a conscious policy of quasi-segregation within the project, and that racial prejudice and the presence of an unusually large number of families who are new in them have brought about tensions and consequent withdrawals-into-the-house in the eastern, mixed section of the project, while the all-white, western section functions much more as a normal, out-going working class neighborhood.

The following quotations from interviews illustrate some of the differences between these two sub-areas; first, from residents in the western section:

"It seems like every family has their own friends; the neighbors come in for a coffee and sit for a few minutes--no place more than here (western end of Hinkley Avenue)."

"You can go anyplace and talk to anybody, and they'll talk to you."

"People seem to be friendly . . . they speak to you. I speak to them when I go to the store."

"Any housing is real friendly, the same way tract housing is."

"Sometimes it's too friendly, people always dropping in. Sometimes the same one, two or three times a day."

And from the eastern, less happy section of the project:

"There's every kind of people here; it's difficult to mix and make friends."

"It's more or less friendly, I'd say . . . people stick to themselves--not much visiting around."

"People don't bother you . . . you can meet the people you want to meet."

"Most everyone keeps to himself."

"I just stay in my own house and mind my own business."

"No, it's not friendly . . . because it's mixed. They should have colored in one building and white in another."

VII

THE STIGMA OF PUBLIC HOUSING

In view of the fact that we are dealing in this study with a Public Housing project, we have said remarkably little so far about the reaction of the inhabitants to this fact. Certainly enough has been written and said in the past, in academic and municipal studies, to suggest that there is a considerable stigma attached to living in Public Housing, and that the inhabitants are, in effect weighed down with the 'shame' of living on public charity. If we are to consider people's responses to the social objectives of the design, it is important that we also consider their reactions to living in Public Housing, per se, for it may be that the 'shame' of living in Housing is so overwhelming a feeling, that their responses to the physical environment are colored by this fact, and are, to a certain extent, invalid.

Although to a certain extent, we may have gauged people's feeling about living in a project when we asked them what they liked and disliked about the neighborhood, it was felt worthwhile to ask a direct question about their feelings on living in Public Housing. This question was asked more than half way through the interview, so that in most cases, interviewer and interviewee had established some sort of rapport, and it was felt that reasonably honest answers were forthcoming.

TABLE XXX

How do you feel about living in Public Housing?

	No.	%
Strongly positive	4	8
Mildly positive	17	35
Indifferent	13	27
Mildly negative	12	24
Strongly negative	3	6
	49	100

Handwritten annotations: A bracket groups the 'Strongly positive' (8%) and 'Mildly positive' (35%) categories, labeled '43%'. Another bracket groups the 'Mildly negative' (24%) and 'Strongly negative' (6%) categories, labeled '30%'. A third bracket groups the 'Strongly positive' (8%), 'Mildly positive' (35%), and 'Indifferent' (27%) categories, labeled '70%'.

Positive remarks

"Nothing against it."	4
"It's a bargain for the price."	4
"We can save for furniture/own house."	3
"Nice to have own home, but this is not so bad/HA pretty nice."	3
"Pretty good."	2
"Great thing that they have it."	2
"Have family together/better than sharing."	2
"We're all in the same boat."	2
"Makes friends easier than private housing."	1
"It's safe for the kids."	1
"Can't afford to live any other way."	1
"Save on water and gas."	1
"Used to close living in service."	1
"Grateful--but don't feel I've achieved anything."	1
"Just as good as private rental."	1

Indifferent remarks

"It's alright/OK."	7
"Rent is reasonable."	1
"OK if you can't afford anything else."	1
"Practical."	1
"I don't feel bad about it."	1
"It's a place to live."	1

Negative remarks

"Wouldn't live here if I could afford anything better."	7
"Kids roo rough/bad language/too many kids."	4
"Don't like people in Housing."	1
"Don't like neighborhood."	1
"No room in house."	1
"People look down on you, living in Housing."	1
"HA, too nosey."	1
"It's OK, I guess."	1

Perhaps the most surprising result of the responses to this question is that more than two-thirds of the sample replied with positive or relatively indifferent remarks about their feelings on living in public housing; less than a third responded in a negative or unenthusiastic way. The general feeling among those that replied in a positive tone was that the rent was a bargain for what they got, and they had therefore more money to spend on buying food for the family, clothes for the children, or more money to save for the down payment on a house, or for buying furniture. "It's a bargain for the price," was a fairly frequent response. A 19-year-old sailor, who had moved into the project six months previously, on getting married, responded:

"I think it's a good deal; a lot of people can't afford \$125 a month in rent . . . this gives people a chance to get started. We were able to buy furniture, which we couldn't have done if we had to spend all our money on rent. Lots of people need this kind of chance."

Others were pleased at living in Housing, because it had meant moving out of cramped, shared quarters, and here they had a home of their own, even if it was not strictly "their own."

"It's OK . . . though I hardly ever think about that [i.e., being in Public Housing]; it's certainly better than sharing, and the rent is better. We was living in an apartment over a store on San Pablo before we came here . . . the rent was too high there . . . sharing with my sister, that was bad . . . especially with my sister! We just had one bedroom and a long living room; my husband and I had the bedroom, my sister and her husband and two kids slept in the living room. My husband only made \$45 or \$50 a week when we were living there, and we had to pay \$45 a month rent . . . and then there was the food. . . ."

This was the response of a young Mexican-American woman who had lived in the project just over a year, and whose husband worked nearby as a service station attendant; her 'mild enthusiasm' for her home at Easter Hill was no doubt largely conditioned by the trying conditions in which she had lived previously.

Some liked the feeling of "everyone being in the same boat" in a housing project, the feeling that you all knew you couldn't afford anything else, and therefore would make the best of it; there was also the feeling that just because everyone was "in the same boat," it was easier to make friends than, say, in a tract or subdivision. "Well--I appreciate the fact that everyone is in the same condition; there's a lot of people in the service here, so we have a lot it common."

Those who replied in an indifferent tone (27 per cent of the total) might, of course, have replied negatively if pressed further, but the general feeling was that the question of being in Housing or not, did not really concern them . . . it was a reasonable rent, a reasonable physical environment; it probably wasn't going to be their home for more than a year or two, so . . . "It's a place to live," "It's OK for the time being," "It's alright," was the general tone of the responses, not wildly enthusiastic, not particularly critical.

The negative remarks about living in Public Housing were probably the most strongly worded of all the responses to this question: "I certainly wouldn't live here for a moment if I could afford anything better," "It's OK, I guess, but you don't feel you've done anything if you stay in it all your life . . . seems like you've wasted your life." This latter response, of a 45-year-old mother of six, was spoken with resignation, but not with bitterness; her husband's salary had 'gone backwards' [as she put it] when he started drinking. "We won't be able to leave here till the older children can work . . .

and I can get out to work." They had lived at Easter Hill for eight years, and though she was good-humoredly tolerant of her surroundings, and had obviously made some effort to create 'a home,' she was evidently most concerned about being in Housing on account of her two teenage daughters who were 'ashamed' of living there and were loath to bring their friends home from school to see where they lived. (Though, they had one friend who lived in a subdivision in Moraga who visited them often because, as she said, 'It's so dull where I live . . . nothing ever happens.') ..

Even those who replied somewhat negatively towards Public Housing often indicated that there were some redeeming facets to project living, besides the low rent. In this case it was the people who lived around her who were the 'compensation.' . . . "People are very friendly here--almost too friendly, at times! Always dropping in . . . I'm a good listener . . . people come to me with their problems!" When asked what she would miss most if she left, she replied: "The people--outside of Housing, people get lonesome." . If people were specific about what they disliked in Housing, it was almost always the other people they had to live with, the excessive number of children, 'unsavory' types of neighbors, bad language, and undisciplined behavior. Only one person complained about the Housing Authority itself . . . "They're too nosey," and only one gave what one might have suspected would be a more common form of response . . . "I don't like it. When you say you're living in Housing, people look down on you . . . treat you as second-class citizens." This was the response of a white woman, aged about 35, who had lived at Easter Hill for more than five years, and had recently been deserted by her

husband, leaving her to support their four children; her resentment towards Public Housing was no doubt partly a resentment against life in general, and partly a bitter reaction at having to live in the same neighborhood with Negroes. She had been brought up in a small town in Missouri.

Although, as the above quotation indicates, there were some who felt very bitterly towards Public Housing, this type of response was the exception rather than the rule.

The responses to this question in general suggest that either there has been a change in recent years in the attitude of the public to the 'stigma' of living in Public Housing, or that this particular project and Housing Authority elicit different responses than the general run-of-the-mill project. Which of these assumptions is correct we cannot tell without a comparative study with another project. But what we can say about Easter Hill, is that those who are unhappy living there are generally far more concerned about the types of people with whom they have to associate, than they are about being 'charity cases' living in Housing. Perhaps Public Housing has been on the scene long enough by now that it no longer produces the same feeling of stigma and depression that it did in the forties and fifties.

TABLE XXXI

Feelings About Living in Public Housing
By Length of Residence at Easter Hill

	Less than 1 Year	More than 1 Year
Positive	6 (35%)	15 (47%)
Indifferent	6 (35%)	7 (22%)
Negative	5 (30%)	10 (31%)
	<u>17 (100%)</u>	<u>32 (100%)</u>

A tabulation of people's feelings about living in Public Housing, by the length of time they had lived at Easter Hill, indicates that those who had lived there less than a year were roughly equally divided between being positive (those who had just arrived, and those who knew they were not staying long), indifferent (those who had not had time enough to make a judgment), and negative (those who felt that entering Public Housing was a 'come down' from their previous residence). By the time people had lived there more than a year, the proportion who were indifferent had diminished. The proportion who were negative remained about the same (largely women without husbands, who feel trapped in Housing, and without hope); and those couples whose 'transiency' through Public Housing had lasted longer than they expected). The proportion that was positive had increased to almost half the total--many of these were middle-aged women on Welfare who had lived in the project for some years (quite a number of them since the project opened in 1953), and had supposedly come to accept this as their home. The positive group also contained nuclear families whose incomes were limited due to low-paying jobs or the disability of one of the adults in the family and looked upon Housing with mild enthusiasm as a place where they could save on rent. This tends to suggest that people become more content with Housing the longer they stay, as long as their family life is reasonably happy. They tend to become more negative the longer they stay if their home life is unhappy, if life shows less and less hope or chance of 'escape'. There is then a tendency to lay their misfortunes increasingly at the door of Public Housing. Unfortunately, the disgruntled attitude of the 'negative' groups tends to have a far greater influence on the 'social success' (or lack of it) of this project, than

the accepting attitude of the 'positive' group, even though the negative group is (in this sample at least) a smaller proportion of the total. ("One rotten apple in a barrel," etc., etc.) Which seems to suggest that if we are going to continue building housing projects, and we want them to be reasonably 'happy' social groupings, we should concentrate far more money and effort in providing services (psychiatric, employment, counseling, marriage guidance, etc.) to improve the outlook on life of the disgruntled tenants, then we should go on providing fancy physical facilities. This is not to suggest that design and the provision of physical facilities should be placed 'way down the list'; certainly not, for as we have already noted, such simple deficiencies as lack of play areas for children, lack of a meeting place or recreation facilities for teenagers, have serious consequences in terms of people's contentment with their milieu. What should be stressed is that if either the physical facilities or the services is lacking (or worse still, both are lacking), there is going to be trouble. But if one has to make the cost-choice between providing a project with a resident psychiatric social worker and providing it with a children's paddling pool, there is no question but that the service is more important than the facility. With a paddling pool the kids may have a fine time and mothers may be relieved of thinking up diversions for their children for a few brief hours a week, but the basic life problems still remain. If the social worker is provided, and not the paddling pool, the kids may be a little more difficult to amuse,

but there is hope that some people's problems regarding marriage or employment or child care may be alleviated. This is perhaps a naive comparison for rarely, if ever, does such a 'simple' black and white choice have to be made, but the principle remains.

Relations with the Housing Authority

Certainly part of the reason for the generally positive attitude towards living in Public Housing which we find at Easter Hill must be found in the good relations which exist between the tenants and the officials of the Housing Authority. When asked how they were treated at the Housing Authority office when they went to pay the rent or asked for things to be repaired, 81 per cent responded that they were treated well, 12 per cent that they were treated OK . . . so-so, and only 2 per cent that they were not treated well. It might be argued by the cynic that people were not telling the truth because they feared recriminations, but this seems extremely unlikely; the question was asked more than half way through the interview when a general feeling of trust had been established, and since the majority of the interviews were carried out by the author, who has a 'foreign' accent, it seems unlikely she was suspected of being a Housing Authority 'spy.'

TABLE XXXII

How do they treat you at the Housing Authority office when
you pay your rent, ask for things to be repaired, etc.?

	No.	%
Treated well	42	81
Treated OK	6	12
Not treated well	1	2
Don't know	3	5
	52	100

The specific responses of many of those who said they were treated well certainly seem to bear out the feeling that relations were generally very good.

"They're very nice . . . I've no complaints. I've been late many times with the rent, and they've been very good. . . . as long as you tell them why, and when you'll pay. And they fix anything you want."

"Real nice . . . even when I pay late. They give you till the 8th . . . sometimes I take it in on the 10th or 12th and they never say anything."

"They're very good about fixing things . . . that's very important when you're a woman alone . . . no man in the house to fix things. I've called them up several times to mend the heater, and twice because a door knob came off . . . and they came around right away. They're real good about that."

"Very nice . . . very nice . . . they said to make a list of missing items when we moved in; we did, and they brought them up right away."

"I know Mrs. L _____ well, I ought to, I've been here seven years. We have a high rating in the Housing. [What do you mean?] I mean we've always kept our place up, paid the rent on time."

However, the responses of a few suggest that the officials in the Housing Authority are 'flexible' in how they enforce the rules, and while being lenient to some who turn up late with their rent, are evidently harsh with others.

"They just scold you when you take the rent in late . . . even if it's only two or three days late. If you're on time they don't say anything."

"They're too inflexible about when the rent is due . . . they want it on the first, by my husband doesn't get paid till the fifth."

The general feeling, though, was that the officials and the men who worked for the Authority, were both friendly and helpful, and those

who did complain were sometimes expecting more of the Authority than they would have expected of a private landlord, as the one who responded:

"They don't both me too much . . . they came and fixed the water heater when I asked, but they should come round and ask if anything needs fixing from time to time."

When asked if they thought the Authority took good care of Easter Hill, in terms of maintenance and repairs, the majority again expressed complete satisfaction . . . "Excellent, yes. Especially when you consider all the children there are here." "They're always here . . . cleaning up." "They water the lawns every day." "There's been very few times when I've looked out and haven't seen a clean-up truck!"

TABLE XXXIII

Do you feel that the Housing Authority takes good care of Easter Hill--
the outside of the houses, the streets, the trees, etc.?

	No.	%
Yes	33	69
No	8	17
Indifferent	6	12
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	48	100

Of those who thought that the Housing Authority did not do a good job, or only did an indifferent job, most complained about the fact that the houses needed a good coat of paint--a reasonable request in view of the drab exteriors of many of the units which could easily have been 'brightened up' with a painting. Many would no doubt have

agreed with the one housewife who responded: "They should give us the paint and let us decorate the front of the house." But few would probably have agreed with another who said quite bitterly: "The Housing Authority doesn't take care of Easter Hill--the tenants do," for as we have noted elsewhere, most residents were only too happy that they had lawns and yards to take care of, and certainly would have resented the intrusion if the Authority had maintained these as well as the public areas of Easter Hill.

Rules and Regulations in Public Housing

When asked how they felt about the rules and regulations that tenants in Public Housing must inevitably comply with, the great majority responded that they thought these were perfectly fair and acceptable: some, in fact, thought the Authority ought to be stricter in their enforcement of the regulations, especially with regard to yard upkeep and reporting additional income. Presumably most people had accepted this phase of Public Housing living, for at least they knew about the regulations before they moved into the project whereas they may well not have known about the noise, delinquent behavior, racial tensions, and other aspects of living in Easter Hill which caused people annoyance.

TABLE XXXIV

Do you feel that the rule and regulations here, about what you can do with your house and yard, paying the rent, notifying the Authority of your income, etc. --are generally fair or unfair?

	No.	%
Fair	44	85
Unfair	5	10
Don't know	3	6
	52	100

Typical responses were as follows:

"I think it's practical . . . it's not a question of fair or unfair. In this type of project they've got to have control."

"They're City houses . . . they have to protect themselves."

"I've seen one case where I thought they were unfair . . . but I didn't know the whole story. Speaking for myself, I think they've been fair."

"It's their house . . . they can set the rules; you have to have rules."

"It's due to the fact they are low-rent houses and charged on incomes . . . although I don't like it . . . reporting my income . . . I think it's fair."

Of those who complained about the regulations, most were concerned about the fact that rents are set once a year and are assessed on whatever your income is at that point, assuming that your income will be the same for the ensuing year. But this 'inflexibility' seemed to cut both ways, as the following quotations indicate; if your income went up after the rent was set, so much the better for you.

"When my husband was working, they thought he'd make more each year, and they put the rent up. But we're on Welfare now . . . he's going to school . . . State Vocational Rehabilitation in Oakland . . . and the rent is much more difficult."

"As soon as you get a raise . . . they raise your rent . . . you never get ahead. We was paying \$61 a month in rent out of \$38 a week unemployment; not it's not so bad . . . my husband has a job."

The latter response was of a young Mexican-American woman, whose living room was bare of furniture except for two wooden chairs for, she said, they had had to sell everything off, bit by bit, to pay the rent while her husband was looking for work; he had just secured a job as a gardener in North Richmond, and they were hoping soon to re-buy a TV set, the loss of which for the wife, who was illiterate, was obviously the most 'tragic' result of their straightened circumstances.

In the few cases where respondents voluntarily told the interviewers details of their income and the rent they had to pay, there did seem to be some inconsistencies. An elderly woman living alone in a one-bedroom apartment was paying \$25.50 out of the \$88.20 she received as a pension (or 25 per cent of her income). A middle-aged Negro woman living on Welfare with her two sons aged 10 and 11 was paying \$43.00 a month out of a Welfare check of approximately \$175 (or 25 per cent of her income), though presumably, one could argue that she should be paying a much smaller percentage than the woman living alone, since she had two dependents to feed. Further 'out of line' was the couple with two small children who were paying \$40 out of \$360 a month income; the husband had recently left the Navy and was working as a civilian at Hunters Point Shipyard. This family was paying only 11 per cent of their income in rent, though the wife did admit that at the time the rents were next assessed, they would probably be asked to find other accommodation.

Although one can sympathize with the administrative problems of frequent changes in rent as financial circumstances change through the year, one can also understand the bitterness felt by some of the tenants as their husbands lost their jobs, and they were told at the Housing Authority office, "Sorry, but we can't change your rent until next year." One can also appreciate the bewilderment of one housewife who knew that her neighbors, while under-reporting their income, had bought a magnificent TV-tape recorder-stereo for \$1,440 (it was costing them \$67 a month in payments) and had recently come back from a six-week trip to Mexico. They were paying the minimum rent of \$26.50 a month. "But they're my neighbors . . . my friends . . . I couldn't 'tell' on them; anyway it wouldn't help get my rent reduced, . . . would just mean theirs was put up . . . but it does make you mad."

Other 'regulations' which came in for comment were those regarding yards, painting the houses, and having visitors to stay. As we have discussed elsewhere, the question of yard maintenance was one which aroused considerable tension and animosity between neighbors, and therefore it was not surprising to find people saying, in regard to regulations in the project: "They should have stricter rules about the yards . . . to get people to keep them up." Regarding painting, many commented during the course of the interviews that they would have liked to paint the front of the house, or at least the woodwork around the porch and windows, but that the Housing Authority wouldn't let them; while others remarked that they were prevented from painting the inside of the house (which the regulations did not preclude), by the cost of the paint . . . "If the Housing Authority could give us the paint, we'd be glad to do it ourselves . . . " was the response of a number of people.

There are fairly strict rules about having visitors, presumably to prevent 'doubling up' and letting out rooms to 'lodgers,' though these seem to be enforced rather inflexibly, as in the case of one middle-aged woman who responded: "My daughter's husband is away in the service . . . she's all alone . . . but they won't let her come and stay here. It's not fair . . . how can she manage, all alone with her baby?" The interviewers noted a number of other cases in Easter Hill where a relative, usually a mother or mother-in-law, was permitted to move in while a husband was away at sea. Presumably decisions regarding visitors are made on some sort of persons-per-room basis, and can be justified this way; there still remains the irksome fact that in your own house, if you feel like putting up with the discomfort of having visitors and sleeping on the settee, you can do so, whereas in Public Housing you are not allowed to make this choice.

On the whole, though, as we have noted above, the regulations at Easter Hill were not a major source of conflict; most people accepted them, and considered them 'fair,' even if at times the seeming inflexibility with which the Housing Authority 'enforced' them, was somewhat irksome. But presumably people were willing to live with them, for when asked which they would choose--Easter Hill with regulations, or a less desirable neighborhood without--96 per cent responded unequivocally that they would prefer to stay at Easter Hill.

TABLE XXXIV

If you had to choose between staying at Easter Hill with these regulations, or living in a less desirable neighborhood where there were no regulations, which would you choose?

	No.	%
Easter Hill with regulations	46	96
Less desirable neighborhood without regulations	-	-
Don't know	1	2
No answer	1	2
	48	100

From the responses it seemed obvious that many people could not conceive of a neighborhood where there were no regulations. They seemed to envisage, in a situation where regulations were not enforced, a state of social and physical 'chaos.' It should be added, however, that whereas the interviewer had in mind the kind of regulations that had just been discussed, i.e., those such as the Housing Authority has to enforce, it is possible that some respondents interpreted this to mean the normal police regulations regarding traffic, disorderly conduct, etc. Indeed, some of the responses suggest this was so. "Without regulations, people would go

haywire." "Places have to have some rules." "Some regulations are necessary." "I'd rather be here! No matter where you live . . . there have to be rules."

Disregarding for a moment this possible ambiguity in the meaning of the word "regulations," it still appears that the majority of those who were interviewed did not relish the prospect of living in a neighborhood where there were no 'standards' and no Authority to enforce those standards; they envisaged a state of affairs where homes would not be kept up, yards would not be maintained, and "everybody would mess up their place."

"At least then there are some standards . . . people know they have to keep yards and homes to certain standards."

"It wouldn't be a good neighborhood without regulations."

"You've got to learn to live with regulations. With regulations you appreciate things . . . take better care of the place. If you know you'll have to pay for things that get broken . . . you take better care of them."

Some actually seemed to like the idea of 'rules,' for with them they knew where they stood; they knew what they could and could not do. It was almost as if the regulations at Easter Hill were a welcome 'prop,' as much to remind them of their responsibilities, as to keep their neighbors in line. "It's better here; there are rules to follow . . . what to do . . . what not to do." It's nice to have rules to abide by . . . if not, it would be worse than it is already." These were typical responses, the latter seeming to suggest that having observed the state of 'social disorganization' which pertained at Easter Hill with these regulations, the respondent could imagine an even more chaotic state of affairs in any neighborhood without such regulations.

Indeed, one young woman, and she may not have been alone in her feeling that she was more protected living in a project that had rules, replied:

"I feel a little protected here . . . even at night the police patrol through; in a neighborhood with no rules, it wouldn't be protected. I don't have a phone . . . can't afford it. I'm living on Welfare. But my neighbor does; and she told me to knock on the wall any time I was in trouble . . . she'd know, and come right over . . . or phone the police."

Indeed, one response indicates that some people, at least, may reject Public Housing, not because of the rules per se, but because they're afraid of becoming dependent on the 'paternalism' of the Housing Authority, on its enforcement of regulations, and particularly on its flexible rents.

"I'd prefer to stay here, but my daughter would disagree . . . she's afraid of becoming dependent on paying a low rent and never being able to budget herself to spend more on rent when she moved away. She'd rather pay a lot of money for not such a good place as we have . . . than live in Housing."

Housing Projects--Easter Hill v. Other Types of Design

Since this study is in effect testing the 'success' of Easter Hill as a designed object, or at least testing the efficacy of the social objectives of the architects, it would seem that a reasonable testing of this success would be to ask the inhabitants to rank Easter Hill with a number of other projects of different designs. Since it would be impossible to expect respondents to be equally familiar with other Bay Area projects which the interviewer might name, it was decided to use photographs of other types of projects, as well as one of Easter Hill, to enable simple comparisons to be made and commented on.

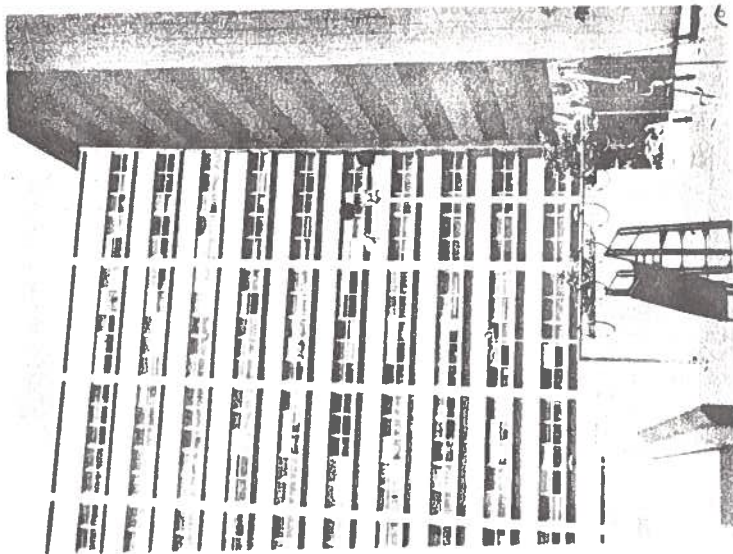
Four photos were used, since it was discovered in the pre-testing stage that it was impossible for most respondents to place more than this number of pictures in their order of preference.¹ Other than one of the backs of a row of houses at Easter Hill (chosen to remind people of the fact that there are private back yards there), the other pictures comprised a high-rise project in Chinatown, San Francisco (Ping Yuen); a walk-up apartment project in San Francisco (Valencia Gardens); and a row of ordinary single-family houses in an older residential district of Berkeley. When shown this latter picture, interviewers explained briefly the main points of the 'scattered sites' program of Public Housing, and suggested that one of the houses in the picture might be rented to Public Housing tenants, but the others might be privately owned. Respondents were asked to rank these four pictures in their order of preference as places to live, and to explain the reasons for their choice. The results are shown in Table XXXV.

TABLE XXXV

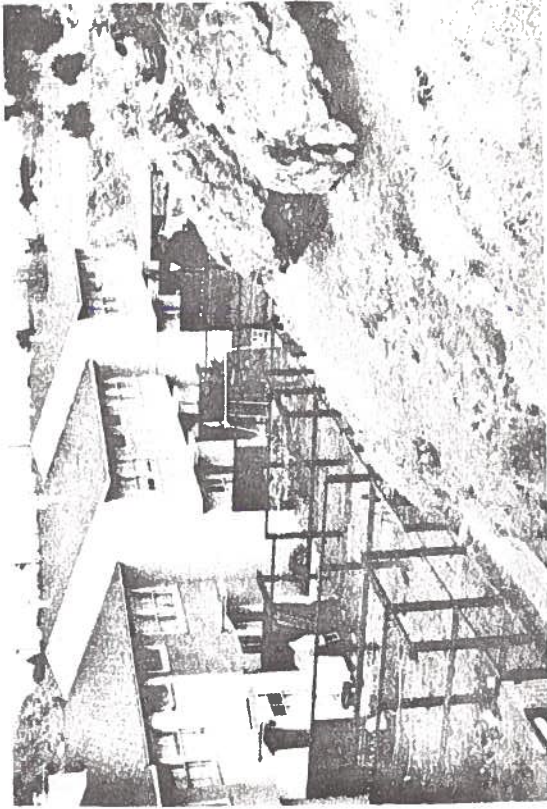
Respondents' Ranking of Four Public Housing Projects
As Places in Which They Would Most Prefer to Live

	1st Choice		2nd Choice		3rd Choice		4th Choice	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Separate houses	41	85	4	8	2	4	1	2
Easter Hill	6	13	37	77	3	6	2	4
Valencia Gardens	1	2	6	13	40	83	1	2
Ping Yuen	-	-	1	2	3	6	44	92
	48	100	48	100	48	100	48	100

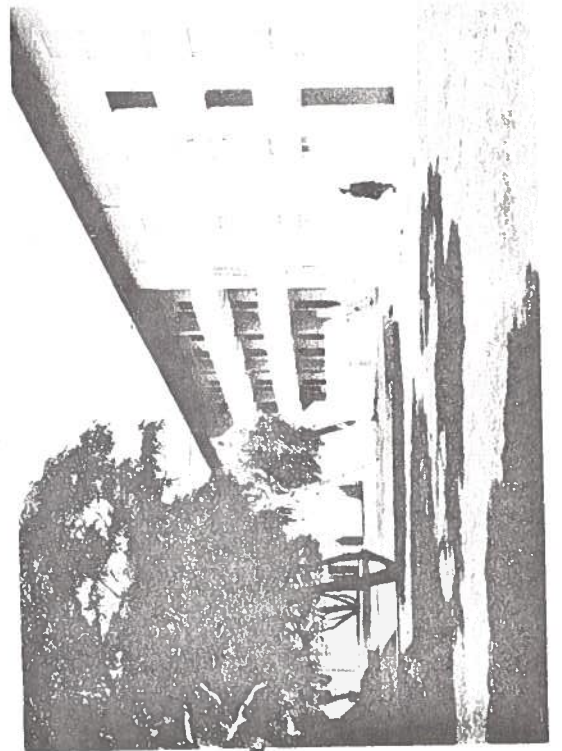
¹ Six pictures were used in the pretest, and it was found that respondents could put the first two and the last two in order, but became 'disinterested' in the two in the middle.



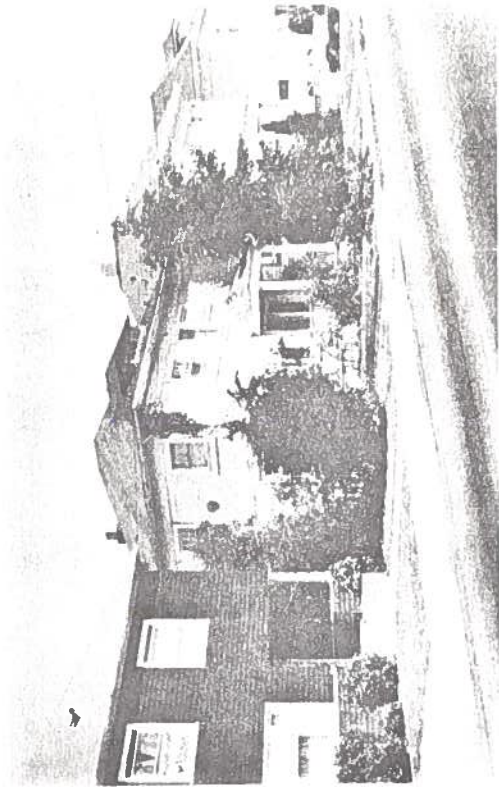
Ping
Yuen



Easter Hill



Valencia
Gardens



Scattered sites housing

These pictures (like those used elsewhere in the interview of different types of neighborhoods in the city) were to a certain extent loaded; that is, one could almost predict in which order people would place them. In this respect, they may have been poorly selected; it might have been more revealing to have used pictures of projects that more nearly resembled Easter Hill, such as Hunters Point, or either of the other two Housing projects in Richmond. In a sense, people were selecting a neighborhood as well as a house design when they placed these pictures in order, for it is pretty obvious that a high-rise project will be downtown, and that single-family houses will be in a largely residential area of the city. Despite these drawbacks, the responses revealed some interesting sidelights on people's motivations for making various choices. (Detailed responses are listed in the Appendix, pp.

The first choice of more than three-fifths of the respondents was the picture illustrating the scattered-sites program. The idea of living in separate houses was greeted enthusiastically, largely because the actual houses in the picture were much more what people aspired to live in ('more like ordinary house' . . . 'more homelike' . . . 'they're separate' . . . 'there'd be more privacy'), especially when compared with row housing at Easter Hill. Very few made any direct reference to the fact that it wasn't a project, or that living there 'people wouldn't know we were in Housing.' (Though, admittedly, they may have been indirectly 'saying' this when they referred to the individual houses, the greater degree of privacy, the more 'homelike' appearance of the houses.) Significantly, many more people selected this picture because it would afford

more privacy than they had at Easter Hill, rather than because it afforded more space (inside or out), supporting the contention we have noted elsewhere, that people in Easter Hill were much more concerned about privacy between their home and others in the project than about space and privacy within the home.

More than three-quarters of the respondents placed Easter Hill as their second choice. Significantly perhaps, there was less unanimity about where to place Easter Hill in the list of four than any of the others, presumably because this was the one picture which people knew a lot more about than just what they saw in the photograph. Most preferred it to either the walk-up or the high-rise projects, for the obvious reasons. At Easter Hill you have your own yard; it's more private than an apartment house; it's 'more like a house'; the houses are 'on the ground'; the neighborhood looks more 'homey,' etc., etc. In this sense, the question was 'loaded' for it is obvious that families with small children, as many of those at Easter Hill are, will much more readily choose to live in houses with private back yards than in apartments with communal play areas.

Valencia Gardens was selected as their third choice by more than three-fifths of the sample, and at the point of their third choice, people began to be much more verbal about what they disliked (in comparison with the first two choices) than about what they liked (in comparison with their last choice). The things they disliked were the lack of privacy ('no yards' . . . 'people all around you'), and the difficulties of child-care in walk-up apartments ('no private yards' . . . 'kids too far away to watch' . . . 'would fall off balconies').

Ping Yuen, the high-rise project in Chinatown, was put in last place by more than 90 per cent of the sample. People were probably more verbal about this picture than about any of the others. Again, the criticisms, like those of Valencia Gardens, were of being 'too jammed together,' though there began to be more emphasis here on lack of space as well as lack of privacy. There were many remarks about the cramped and claustrophobic feelings evoked by the buildings in this picture, though again, as in the remarks about the separate houses, there was more concern about inter-family privacy than intra-family. People felt that being so jammed together, there would be bickering and fights; the kids would get into trouble; the elevators would break down; and there would just be a feeling of "choking to death." There was, of course, too, the concern for child-rearing, and more people remarked about "kids falling out of the windows," than made any other comment on the building. This is suggestive of the 'disaster complex' which Rainwater contends is a characteristic of the working class, and further support to this is given by a number of remarks about fires and epidemics starting and 'never stopping,' and about children 'being kidnapped.'

A number of people rejected this picture because it just didn't look like a place to live . . . it looked like a 'business building,' a 'hospital,' like 'living in a hotel,' like 'an overgrown school,' like 'living in a jail'; others remarked that it looked too much like downtown, or that it would be like living in Los Angeles or New York--certainly not like 'a home.'

Conclusion

It will be recalled from the introductory chapter that one of the primary objectives of the designers was to create a housing project so different from and better than existing projects that its inhabitants would not feel they were living in 'a project.' If the answers to this question are any criteria, it would seem that the designers have largely succeeded. Most people did not seem weighed down by the fact that they lived in Housing, or that Easter Hill was 'a project'; in fact, Easter Hill looks much better than most of the run-down houses and vacant lots around it in contrast to the usual project which stands out because it looks so much worse than everything around it.

How much of the 'success' of Easter Hill can be attributed to the design, and how much to good relations between the Housing Authority and the tenants, is impossible to say; all we can impute is that were Easter Hill a more dreary-project-like environment, it would surely have a more depressing effect on the inhabitants, and no amount of 'good relations' with the Housing Authority would alleviate this. The converse could also be argued, that even the most sparkling project in the world would be marred by tense relations between tenants and Housing Authority; the answer to this is that you have to look at and use the physical environment every day--you have to be in contact with the Housing Authority at most, say, twice a month.

VIII

THE RESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS OF EASTER HILL TENANTS

During the course of the interview, a number of questions were asked which aimed at discovering the respondents' aspirations for the future in terms of where in the city they would like to live, and in what kind of neighborhood. The questions were deliberately scattered throughout the interview and not asked in sequence; each was successively more explicit in attempting to ferret out the real bases for the respondents' particular residential aspirations, in that each question became a little more concrete. For example, the first question in this sequence, asked more than halfway through the interview when both the respondent and interviewer had warmed up, was one where the interviewee was asked to describe the ideal type of neighborhood in which she'd like to live--if there were no worries about money or paying the rent. This question followed a series of questions about what people liked and disliked about their houses at Easter Hill and about the neighborhood, so they had had by that time some opportunity to express their feelings.

The "Ideal" Neighborhood

The single most important finding from the answers to this question is that respondents, when asked to talk about an "ideal" neighborhood, mention the physical attributes of that neighborhood most frequently; the social attributes--that is, the nature or "quality" of the other inhabitants--are less frequently mentioned, and the location of the neighborhood is referred to relatively infrequently. When comparing the

relative frequency of these specific responses with how people liked Easter Hill as a neighborhood, we find that location seems to have equal importance in people's minds whether they're talking about their present residence or an ideal residence. But the physical design attributes of the environment rank far higher when people talk about an ideal neighborhood (mentioned by 57% of respondents), than when talking about their present habitat (mentioned by 16% of respondents). This would seem to indicate that in terms of people's satisfactions with Easter Hill, design is of relatively little importance, but in terms of what they aspire to, it is of considerable importance. When we consider what people do not like about Easter Hill, we find that complaints about the people who live there rank first, the design is of less importance, and the location is least important.

To summarize, then, the physical/visual aspects of a neighborhood seem to increase in importance as people think less about present reality and more about potential change, culminating in a consideration of an ideal future environment. It appears that when people are thinking about what they like in their present environment, the other people there--their neighbors and friends--come to mind first. When considering what they do not like, their neighbors come to mind again, but so also does the physical nature of the place.¹ But when asked to think about the ideal habitat, it seems easier to imagine and talk about the physical aspects

1. In large measure, this supports findings in Festinger's study, where he reports that in response to a question on their overall satisfaction with the project, most cited non-physical aspects ("congeniality of neighbors," etc.), while most of the unfavorable comments were about physical factors (heating, space, etc.). (Festinger, L., op. cit.)

of that neighborhood than about the other inhabitants, or perhaps it is just that one takes for granted that in a "nice" neighborhood the people will also be "nice," and therefore one needn't even refer to them.¹

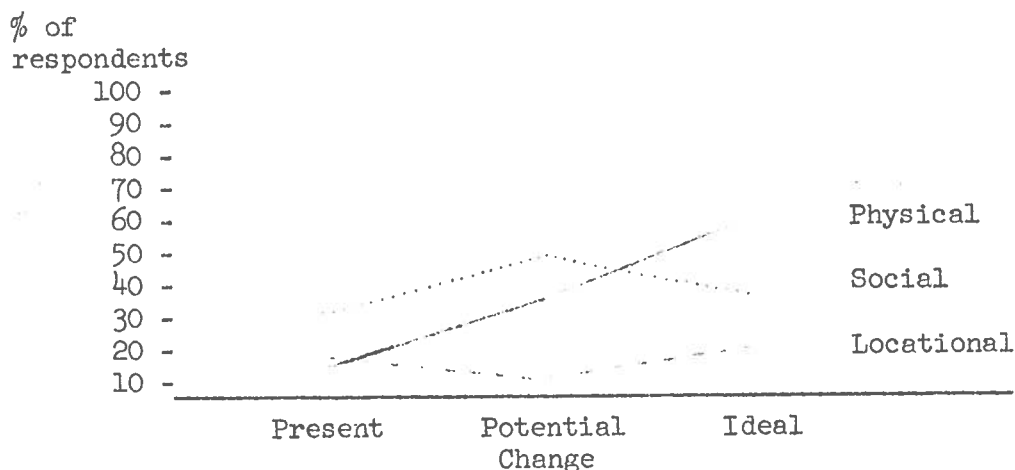


Diagram to illustrate increasing importance of physical qualities of neighborhood with increasing future-orientation.

Physical attributes of the "ideal" neighborhood

More than half of the respondents to this question referred in their replies to some physical/visual aspect of the environment of their ideal neighborhood, and among these aspects, the most frequently mentioned was the desire for privacy between dwellings.

Whereas in some cultures, notably the Japanese, privacy is a mental state and has nothing to do with the physical proximity of people, contemporary American culture has come to equate privacy with separation. Most people's ideal is to live in a detached, single-family house, because this is the American pattern; even if row-housing was guaranteed to be

1. In Bennett Berger's study, Working Class Suburb, 86% of the sample of Ford workers who had moved from Richmond to a suburban tract in San Jose were happy about the move, and the reasons most often cited had to do with the physical desirability of the suburb; responses referring to "nicer neighbors," or "a finer class of people," were relatively rare.

TABLE XXXVI

<u>Attributes</u>	<u>Like about</u> <u>Easter Hill</u>		<u>Dislike about</u> <u>Easter Hill</u>		<u>Ideal neighborhood</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Physical	8	16	20	39	24	57
Location	10	19	5	10	9	21
Social	16	31	25	49	18	43
Other	6	12	4	8	3	7
Nothing, no ideal	15	29	6	12	1	2
Don't know	3	6	1	2	6	14
No. of respondents	51		51		42	

NOTE: Percent columns do not add up to 100% since some respondents named several attributes.

completely soundproof, it is doubtful whether more than a very small proportion of the present sample would choose to live in it.

Privacy means being separated from your neighbors,

both in terms of audible contact, and in terms of sheer physical distance. Proximity is equated with forced and unwanted personal contacts; neighbors are desirable as long as they keep their distance. "I'd like to live away from people--you're too close to people here" was a typical response.

Along with this desire for separation/privacy there runs a parallel, 'back-tracking' concern for not being too far away from other people.

"I'd like to live where there are a few houses together--out of town. Not completely out of town, but not too congested."

"I'd like a house with nobody right up to me, and plenty of yard. I like neighbors, but not nosey ones--just people to be friendly with. But friendliness can go too far; in some places we've had freinds who took up too much time, I couldn't get to the housework. But I'd still like to feel close to somebody."

Of course, it should not be forgotten that people's replies to this question are undoubtedly influenced by their present residential circumstances--if you are living in what you consider to be congested conditions, you are obviously going to 'vote' for more space and privacy, as the woman who replied:

"If we had more privacy in our house and outside property, then this neighborhood would be all right."

People are also concerned with the spaciousness of their surroundings, though not necessarily with space for the sake of privacy, rather for the feeling of room to move, room for children to play away from the traffic, room to cultivate a garden around the house.

"I'd like to be away . . . out from the busy streets, where the kids wouldn't be in the streets, where I could grow things, make a garden, even. This house is too near the avenue--you never know when the kids will run out and get hurt."

"Oh, my ideal neighborhood would be where I had a big yard with lots of shrubbery and flowers."

TABLE XXXVII

ATTRIBUTES OF THE IDEAL NEIGHBORHOOD

<u>Physical</u>	<u>No. of responses</u>
- private	8
- well maintained	5
- spacious	5
- nice and clean	3
- quiet	3
- individual houses	1
- big trees	1
<u>Social</u>	
- not a lot of kids	7
- nice neighbors	6
- lot of people	1
- all white	1
<u>Locational</u>	
- in the country	3
- close to park and school	2
- close to shops and work	1
- close to downtown	1
- close to transport	1

Almost as important as the concern for space and privacy, was the notion that an ideal neighborhood would be one which is well maintained, one which is neat and clean, and which presents a pleasing appearance to the inhabitants and, probably more importantly, to the relatives and friends who visit them there. A number of responses in this category were quite terse; it seemed that for some, the first and only feature that came to mind was that the neighborhood should be 'clean', 'well kept-up', 'nice and neat'. Other elaborated a little further:

"A neat neighborhood, with nice sidewalks, where people like things to be kept up."

"Where the houses are neat on the outside--where people take care of their yards."

Some indicated that in their minds, people who kept their yards in control, also kept their children in control, and that this was an eminently desirable situation.

"Where everybody does their part towards looking after their homes; when they do this, they seem to be more concerned about their children."

"My ideal would be a housing development, where there are all new homes, and nice green grass. A place where everybody keeps their yards up, and the kids are under control. A friendly place, but not too much so--a real polite neighborhood."

Although the responses referring to a 'well-kept neighborhood' have been categorized under physical attributes, it is conceivable that they were also intended as social attributes, since a well-kept neighborhood implies 'nice' people who are concerned about their homes.

Along with these concerns for privacy, space, and a pleasing visual appearance is a parallel, though less frequently verbalized, desire for quietness; freedom from the noise of children playing and shouting

close to the house was the most common concern, though traffic noise was also mentioned.

As in the responses to the question on whether respondents thought Easter Hill was an attractive neighborhood, very few replied in what a designer might call 'aesthetic' terms. And the only two that did, prefaced their 'aesthetic' considerations by very practical ones--as the young woman who wanted to live close to a park and school for her children's sake, and then added, somewhat as an afterthought, "and I'd like lots of big trees, of course." Or the young sailor, answering for himself and his wife when he said, "It would have to be a neighborhood that's all white," and then added, "and with separate houses, none of them alike."

Social attributes of the 'ideal' neighborhood

Whereas 57% of the people who replied to this question responded in terms of the design or layout or visual appearance of the neighborhood, a smaller proportion--43%--referred to some aspect of the other inhabitants. Again, the replies must be considered in terms of the Public Housing milieu of the respondents, for this helps to explain why the most frequently expressed desire was for 'fewer children'. The sheer volume of children, and the noise and confusion they necessarily make, is one of the chief sources of irritation at Easter Hill. No wonder then that replies such as the following should be common:

"In my 'ideal neighborhood', there certainly wouldn't be a bunch of children around! I've been nervous ever since living here--so many kids and trouble."

"One where everyone gets along--where the kids would quit fighting and rock-throwing."

"If I could afford to buy or rent, I'd like a place with less children; some for them to play with, but not a thousand and one--not noise constantly."

Others were more 'positive' in their responses and wanted to live where there were 'nice people', 'good neighbors', 'people you can get along with'. Again, the replies were undoubtedly influenced by what respondents felt was lacking at Easter Hill, as in the case of a young, white woman, married to a full-blooded Hawaiian, who felt isolated and shunned at Easter Hill, partly because of her 'mixed' marriage and partly because of the number of non-nuclear and elderly households who lived around her.

"I'd like to live where there were nice, friendly people. . . my own age group . . . young couples with children. You can do more in the church and the PTA in that type of neighborhood, because it's the young people who do those type of things."

Or, in the case of a middle-aged white divorcee, who had been brought up in the South, and whose chief complaint about Easter Hill was that they 'mixed the coloreds up with everyone else'. For her, the ideal neighborhood would be one with

"Nice, quiet neighbors . . . Christian people, you know. Not a place with drinking or noise at night. A nice clean place with nice neighbors."

It seems obvious, in view of her responses to other questions, that to her 'nice neighbors' are synonymous with 'white neighbors'.

Considering the numbers of people who, at various points through the interviews, referred to the fact that Easter Hill is a 'mixed project', it is perhaps surprising that only one, in response to this question on an ideal neighborhood, expressed any desire to live in a segregated neighborhood. This was a man from rural New Hampshire, living in

a predominantly white section of Easter Hill; however, he did live right on the edge of the project and faced, across a highway, a neighborhood of single-family homes which is almost 100% Negro from which, he contended, youths came at night to 'make trouble' in Easter Hill. "I'm not prejudice--I just hate niggers!" he said, in a quasi-joking, quasi-serious tone.

It is surprising that none of the eight white Southerners in the sample made any specific reference to wanting to live in all-white neighborhoods. Perhaps they take it for granted that an 'ideal' neighborhood would be segregated, and therefore don't even bother to mention it; or perhaps their fears are more class-based than race-based, and in a 'nice, middle-class' neighborhood, they would be ready to accept their 'nice, middle-class' neighbors, whether white or Negro.

Only one person expressed any desire to live where there are 'lots of people'; significantly though, this was a Negro who had lived in Easter Hill only a few days, and replied in cowed and quasi-hostile tones that he wanted to live where there were plenty of people ". . . for safety purposes, and for the children."

Locational attributes of the 'ideal neighborhood'

Only one-fifth of the respondents to this question made any reference to the location of their 'ideal neighborhood'. Three specifically wanted to live in the country ". . . where the kids have room to roam and play and holler and scream . . . I'm from the country and think there's nothing better than wide open spaces."

Two mothers with large families--one with 4 and one with 8 children--wanted to be close to schools and a park, for obvious reasons.

A childless, middle-aged Negro woman, whose husband used the car each day to get to his job, wanted to be ". . . near the shops and near my work." While a Roman Catholic woman with a family of 6, whose husband also used the car all day, wanted to be ". . . close to transportation and to my church--that's most important because I don't drive. And close to the shops and to the dentists for the children."

Two elderly women both described their ideal neighborhood as one which is "close to downtown"; for them, living alone and without private transportation, proximity to the shops and to 'what's going on', are of far greater significance than the privacy, spaciousness or quietness desired by younger respondents.

No one mentioned that they wanted to live 'in the suburbs', or 'in a subdivision', but one did refer to her ideal neighborhood as ". . . a housing development, where all the homes are new . . ." Only one respondent referred to any particular area by name, and it is worthwhile quoting her answer in full since it summarizes in one response, many of the features of the 'ideal neighborhood' that we have discussed above.

"Up towards Pinole, that's my ideal neighborhood--I like it there, there are lots of homes. They're close, but private. Quite big homes and real quiet; you see the kids, but not too much. The streets are larger, and you have more privacy. The homes are bigger there . . . it's more peaceful; and the people are friendly, but they don't bother you. It's away from the traffic, more like a country scene. And you'd enjoy your ride to town, if you lived there; here, it's just the same thing, all the way to town."

This was the response of a young Mexican-American woman, living in a 2-bedroom house at Easter Hill with her husband and 20-month-old baby,

and 5 other adult relatives, permanently or temporarily 'visiting' from Mexico; small wonder that words such as 'quiet', 'private', 'peaceful' figured in her reply.

But not everyone, having lived in an area such as the one described above, comes away with such a rosey view of it. A mother of eight, who had previously lived in a tract, when her husband had been employed and the family was smaller, said little about her ideal neighborhood, but did make some interesting observations on life in a tract, as compared with life in a project.

"I don't like tracts too well. I'd like to be in a quiet area; not fancy homes--couldn't afford that--but where the school wasn't too far away. Lots of people think Easter Hill is a horrible place to move to, but it's a great improvement over the last place I lived. Tract houses . . . all the same . . . and all the people are the same . . . and everyone trying to be different. Within three blocks, all the houses looked the same; one man would paint his wall one color, and everyone would do it. I'd rather live in an older, bigger house. I lived in a tract for 3 years. There were clans and cliques; I only knew 3 people after 3 years. Here I know many more--it's easier to get to know people here with so many children."

Design implications

What sort of 'guidelines' can we glean from all this to aid us in the design of 'better' neighborhoods? Admitting that these responses refer only to people's conscious desires, we can make the following tentative conclusions:

- 1) People's greatest concern is for privacy without isolation. Therefore, great stress should be laid on the adequate separation and set-back of individual units, or, in the case of row housing, on complete sound-proofing between adjacent units. Doors into units should be so spaced and oriented that there is no risk of 'forced' personal contacts between neighbors, and yet units should not be so spaced that any particular units would feel isolated.

- 2) The concern for good maintenance of open space could be aided by unmistakable delimitation between privately maintained and publicly maintained open space, and between adjacent parcels of private space.
- 3) Annoyance caused by playing children could be avoided by providing:
 - adequate fenced back yards
 - frequent, adequate, interesting play areas,
 - adjoining garages, laundries or other non-living areas
 - safe pedestrian access to neighborhood parks
 - providing greater ranges of recreational facilities
- 4) People are far less concerned with the aesthetic attractiveness of a neighborhood than they are with its ability to provide for privacy--both privacy from neighbors and privacy from roaming neighborhood children; therefore, if a cost-choice has to be made between, say, providing separate houses that all look pretty much alike and row houses that have been expensively designed to look different from each other, then in terms of satisfying the greatest number of people, the former combination (separate, but the same) should be chosen over the latter (different, but attached).

Locational preferences

The 'ideal neighborhood' question was followed a little later by one which became more specific with regard to people's aspirations for a certain location within the city. They were asked:

"If there were housing you could afford in all parts of the city, where would you most like to live--closer to downtown than Easter Hill, about as close to downtown as you do now, further out in the suburbs, or in the country?"

This question was aimed at determining people's locational preferences within the city, given the situation that housing they could afford was equally available in all locations. Thus, it was hoped to measure the importance of factors other than the availability of housing in determining people's location preferences.

TABLE XXXVIII
LOCATIONAL PREFERENCE

	No.	%	%
Closer to downtown	6	13.0	} 47.0
About as close to downtown as Easter Hill	16	34.0	
In suburbs	17	36.0	} 44.5
In country	4	8.5	
Not classifiable	4	8.5	8.5
	47	100.0	100.0

The largest group of respondents, just over one-third, wanted to live in the suburbs.¹ The most frequently mentioned reason for this choice was that it is less noisy in the suburbs; a number referred to the noise of Hoffman Boulevard running along one side of the project and commented on the annoyance caused by heavy truck traffic and by passing police and ambulance sirens. Here, and elsewhere throughout the interviews, reference was also made to the noise and trouble caused by so many children playing close to the houses, as they do at Easter Hill. In a recent interview survey of 211 adult residents of Greensboro, North Carolina,² 'lack of noise' was ranked almost last in a list of 13 'livability values', presumably because the majority of the respondents lived in reasonably quiet neighborhoods, and therefore did not think to mention lack of noise as one of the most important livability values. It is significant that in that survey, the greatest difference between whites and Negroes was found to be in the priority accorded 'quiet'. Negroes considered it the second most important quality of an ideal town, while whites ranked it 12th out of 13 values. This would seem to support the contention, illustrated by the answers to this question at Easter Hill, that people seem to value most what they have least of.

¹ A number of respondents did not understand the term 'suburbs'; they either asked what it meant--and it was briefly described to them--or they answered that they'd like to live 'in the country', but from the nature of their comments, it became obvious that they really meant 'in the suburbs'. It is perhaps significant that to a person living this close to downtown, and in relatively cramped conditions, the suburban environment appears to be 'in the country'.

² Richard A. Lamanna, "Value consensus among urban residents," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. XXX, no. 4, p. 318, Nov. 1964.

Other values of the suburbs which were mentioned included more space, a warmer climate,³ cleanliness, privacy, nicer neighborhoods, more parks, and better schools. Only 1 person out of 17 who preferred a suburban location made any reference to the social attributes of the suburbs . . . "There are all different types of people there . . . a mixture."; all the remainder mentioned physical attributes. This tends to support our contention, discussed in the section on the 'ideal neighborhood', that people tend to think of a potential future environment in terms of its physical attributes, rather than its social values. If, as Rainwater⁴ has suggested, the typical working-class wife is chiefly concerned about living in a neighborhood that is 'respectable', with friendly neighbors 'of your own kind', and with an absence of 'crumbs and bums', it would seem that our sample of public housing wives are not typically working-class in their residential aspirations. Rather, they seem to more closely approximate what Rainwater has termed the 'modern working class',⁵ with a greater emphasis on the maintenance and appearance of the neighborhood; or even the middle classes, concerned

³ This was a reference to the supposed warmer climate of the suburban hill areas east of Richmond (Pinole, El Sobrante, El Cerrito) as compared with the windy, and often rather bleak, climate at Easter Hill--located as it is, on the flat-land, close to the bay shore.

⁴ Lee Rainwater, Richard P. Coleman, and Gerald Coleman, Workingman's Wife, New York, 1959.

⁵ Lee Rainwater, Fear and the House-as-haven in the Lower Class, prepared for symposium on The Social Psychology of Low-income Housing: Policy and People. American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, California, Sept. 6, 1964.

with maintenance of property values, good schools, etc. Working and lower-class women tend to describe an ideal neighborhood in negative terms--that is, in terms of what it is not, rather than what it is. Middle-class women, on the other hand, tend to think more positively about the place where they'd like to live; in this respect, our sample would seem to approximate more closely a middle-class way of thinking, rather than a working class.

Almost as many people, in answer to this question, said they would like to live about as close to downtown as Easter Hill, as said they wanted to live in the suburbs. By far the most prevalent reason for making this choice was that transportation is convenient for getting to downtown and to other places in the East Bay, such as El Cerrito Plaza and downtown Oakland. One respondent mentioned the fact that the freeway was not far away, making commuting easier for her husband, while another commented that the location would be even more enhanced in the future:

"This location will be good because of Rapid Transit coming down Cutting. . . I'll be able to visit my sister in Walnut Creek and my daughter in San Francisco . . . it will be real convenient."

Half of the respondents in this group did not own cars or could not drive; therefore it is not surprising that responses such as these, were typical:

"I like it here . . . I can go to Richmond or El Cerrito on the bus. It's convenient for transport here . . . I wouldn't want a car . . . couldn't afford to run it."

"Right here it isn't too bad . . . it does give the feeling of being in the country. But it's hard if you don't have a car . . . have to catch the bus . . . it takes time."

But what of the other half who did own cars--why did they choose to live this close to downtown? Probably because they were just being realistic and saw little chance of ever living anywhere else. Two of the eight were non-whites, while the remainder who were white were all over 40 and half of them having lived at Easter Hill for more than 5 years. Most were married and their husbands working, but presumably they did not expect at this time in their lives to see any great changes of fortune that would enable them to move into a better neighborhood. For it is generally conceded that after the age of 40, whereas white-collar wages continue to increase, blue-collar wages start a downward trend.

Of those who would prefer to live even closer to downtown (13%), all mentioned the convenience of being close to a variety of shops and services. Most people mentioned specifically the convenience of shopping and of having a choice of shops, especially since the few corner groceries within walking distance of Easter Hill carried only a limited choice of goods and were expensive.⁶

"I'd like to be close to the supermarkets. I get my meat there, and have to catch a bus; I don't drive. The meat in the groceries around here is so bad--and expensive."

"I could get to the shops in a hurry . . . I don't drive; so if I need something in a hurry, I have to take the kids over to my sister (on the other side of the project) and then take the bus."

An elderly widow replied enthusiastically that a location closer to downtown would be . . . "Utopia . . . then I'd be closer for church,

⁶ Most complained about the neighborhood stores--that prices were marked up because they had the monopoly on local, day-to-day shopping. A few women on Welfare, who complained about the prices, said they still shopped at these stores because the owners would extend them credit until their next check came through.

shops, movies, and friends; here you have to wait on the bus, and you never know when it will come." And a middle-aged Negro woman, who had previously mentioned fairly frequent visits to her doctor, replied:

"Yes, I'd rather be nearer to downtown, then I could walk where I want to go. If I have medical troubles, I can be closer . . don't have to wait on a cab."

If we consider the respondent's present location at Easter Hill as the 'dividing line', so to speak, we find that almost half wanted to remain in their present location or live closer to downtown, while a slightly smaller proportion wanted to live further out in the suburbs or in the country. What can we say about these two 'divisions' of the Easter Hill sample--how does the downtown-oriented group differ from the suburb-oriented group?

The two groups were looked at with regard to 6 variables--color, age, marital status, education, class status, and car ownership. It was found that two of these variables--education and marital status--showed no variation between the two groups, and therefore presumably are not crucial factors in determining location preferences. Of these two, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that marital status was not a critical factor; approximately a third of the women in each group were without husbands. Presumably, if you imagine yourself at some future date having the wherewithal to live in the suburbs, you also imagine yourself to be in possession of a husband.

The four variables that did seem to be critical were race, age, class, and car ownership. Perhaps the most crucial of these was the latter, with two-thirds of the downtown-oriented group being without cars or unable to drive, but only one-third of the suburban group were

in this position. The group that chose a downtown location also contained above average proportions of non-whites, and of women over 40. Presumably, then, although one can image oneself at some future date having a husband, one cannot so easily 'imagine away' the 'deterrents' of minority status and of age.

Perhaps the most interesting result is that there seems to be a positive correlation between wanting to live in the suburbs and considering oneself lower or working-class; 52% of the suburb-oriented group classified themselves as lower or working-class, whereas only 32% of the downtown-oriented group did so. This perhaps signifies that aspirations to the middle-class ideal of suburban living are stronger among those who feel themselves to be of the lower class, and therefore deprived, than among those who already consider themselves middle-class.

Amenity v. accessibility

In order to try and determine what importance low-income people give to amenity--i.e. the quality of a neighborhood--as opposed to accessibility--i.e. its proximity to essential urban services, a question was asked, worded thus:

"If you had to choose between a good neighborhood, but located so that it was a long way from shops, work, entertainment, etc., or a less desirable neighborhood located so that it was near to shops, work and entertainment, which of these two would you choose and why?"

The results of this question are shown in Table XXXIX, together with the proportions in each group who did not own cars.

More than two-thirds 'voted' for the neighborhood; thus, to the majority of this low-income sample, accessibility to shops, work, etc.,

TABLE XXXIX
AMENITY v. ACCESSIBILITY

	No.	%	% with no car
Good neighborhood, far from shops, etc.	52	68	12
Less desirable neighborhood, near to shops, etc.	9	19	67
Don't know	4	9	75
No answer	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	
	<u>47</u>	<u>100</u>	

TABLE XL
REASONS FOR SELECTING A GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

Inaccessibility is no problem	
- have car/could get ride	6
- husband does shopping	2
- have freezer	1
- don't mind long journey to work	1
- relaxing to drive	<u>1</u>
	11
No trouble, no undesirables in good neighborhood	3
Because of children	4
Good, nice neighborhood is 'important'	3
Wife would choose good neighborhood, but husband would disagree	3

is less important than living in a 'good' neighborhood.⁷ Asked why they made this choice, most made no direct reference to the neighborhood at all--what it would or wouldn't be like--but explained their choice in terms of their indifference to inaccessibility. Most replied that they had a car or would probably have access to one, while two women who did not drive remarked that their husbands did all the shopping for them anyway, so the remoteness from shops, etc., would not bother them. One respondent remarked that she had a freezer--a relative rarity among low-income families--and therefore would not have to shop more than once a month, while another said she would enjoy having to drive some distance from her home to the shops, instead of having them 'on the doorstep'.

"We have a car . . . if we lived far from town, it would be more relaxing to drive somewhere, instead of just stepping in and stepping out."

Of those responses that did make a direct reference to the neighborhood itself, 4 chose it 'because of the children', 3 because of what it would not be--'no trouble', etc., and 3 for what it would be--a 'nice, good place to live'. Typical responses were:

"For the kids . . . I've got good kids; I want them to stay that way. For myself, the other neighborhood might be OK."

"I'd like a good neighborhood to raise my children in . . . people that don't live it up . . . have a wild life."

⁷ No definition was offered of a 'good neighbor', 'less desirable neighborhood'; respondents presumably knew what these terms connoted in their minds. If, as occasionally happened, the respondent asked for a definition, the interviewer replied, "It's whatever you think of as a good neighborhood."

Three respondents, having made the choice of a good neighborhood, quickly added that their husbands would probably not agree, because of the longer journey to work. One woman, whose husband presently drives from Easter Hill to Emeryville, replied:

"I would choose the good neighborhood, but my husband wouldn't like to drive too far . . . I have to consider him."

And another, who, with her husband, had recently been pricing low-cost new homes in the East Bay, responded:

"I'd much prefer the good neighborhood . . . but I don't know if my husband would agree. The best deals in houses we've seen are in Hayward . . . but he says that's too far to commute . . . he works in downtown Oakland."

Among the 19% who replied that they would choose the less desirable neighborhood, close to shops and work, the chief reason was their lack of adequate transportation; two-thirds of the respondents in this group did not own cars. Typical responses were:

"Without a car, I'd take the one that was most convenient."

"Unless I had a car . . . with a car, I'd choose the better neighborhood. Otherwise it's a matter of convenience."

Most people mentioned the shops as the facility they would be most concerned about being near, which is not surprising in view of the fact that most of the respondents were women. But two also mentioned work.

"I'd like the nice neighborhood, as long as there was good transportation or as long as the car was in good running order, but my husband would prefer to be close to his work--he works at San Pablo and Cutting (10 minutes drive)."

And a middle-aged woman, recently separated from her husband and learning a 'trade' in order to support herself and a crippled niece she was raising, responded:

"I go to a beauty college every day in downtown Richmond . . . I'm training to be a beautician; if I lived further out, it would be out of the question."

As among those who chose the 'good neighborhood', few made any specific reference to the neighborhood itself, which in this case is perhaps not surprising. But two respondents did refer to the potential undesirable, unfriendly elements in such a neighborhood, and justified their choice thus:

"Even if it was a bad area, I wouldn't have to associate with them . . . it wouldn't rub off on me."

". . . if you show people how friendly you can be, they will in turn show some kind of friendship."

Who prefers accessibility over amenity?

The two major groups of respondents to this question--i.e. those who chose the good neighborhood and those who chose the less desirable neighborhood--were scrutinized with regard to the 6 population variables noted in the last section--color, age, education, class status, marital status, and car ownership. All except the first of these were found to be significant. Thus, the group choosing the less desirable neighborhood contained above-average proportions of those population elements who would be most penalized by inaccessibility--i.e. those without cars, those without husbands, and those aged over 40. Those women with a better education (12th grade or higher) seemed more concerned about being close to essential urban services, than those with a less good education.

In seeming contradiction to the results of the last question discussed, in which an above-average proportion of lower working-class

respondents chose a suburban location, in response to this question it was the group who chose a less desirable neighborhood which contained an above-average proportion of those self-styled as lower or working-class. It should be emphasized that the actual number in this group choosing a less desirable neighborhood--nine--is a small number on which to place significance; but supposing for the moment that it is a tenable sample, we might offer the following explanation. When offered the choice between 'the suburbs' and 'downtown', without any emphasis on the relative merits of each location, an above-average proportion of the 'deprived'--i.e. those who classify themselves as lower or working-class--choose the suburbs for that is where, all else being equal, they most aspire to live. But when it is emphasized in a latter question that a good neighborhood may have the penalty of being far from the shops, etc., and a less desirable neighborhood may have the advantage of being close to the shops, then a larger proportion 'vote' for the undesirable, but accessible, neighborhood. This is perhaps not surprising, in view of the fact that outside the home one of the chief concerns of the working-class housewife is in 'doing the shopping', and on a low income, this means visiting cut-price markets downtown, comparison shopping, etc. Another factor may well be that seemingly a fairly large proportion of working-class wives do not drive--buying and driving the car is the husband's concern; so even if there is one in the family, it is frequently unavailable to the wife, both because the husband uses it for commuting and because the wife, in many cases, does not drive.

Color does not appear, at least in this sample, to have any significant effect on how people respond to this question; the group choosing the good neighborhood and that choosing the less desirable neighborhood each contained the same proportion of non-whites. Therefore, seemingly, in choosing between amenity and accessibility, color has little significance.

Conclusions

1. To the majority of low-income people, the quality of a neighborhood which they would choose to live in is of prime concern, while the accessibility of the neighborhood to shops, work, entertainment, etc., is of less importance. Most of this group comprised young, fairly 'normal' families--i.e. husband working or seeking work, owning cars or feeling themselves shortly to be in the position of owning one.

2. Of the minority who chose the less desirable neighborhood, most did not own cars and/or would in some other way feel 'isolated' in a normal suburban neighborhood--i.e. they had no husbands or were over 40; their chief concern was in being close to the shops.

3. The replies of a number of respondents (though a minority) indicate that whereas the women of the household would much prefer to live in an inaccessible, good neighborhood, for reasons of both status and child-rearing, the man might veto this idea, because in his estimation, the prime concern in choosing a place to live is that it be close to his place of work.

4. The responses to this question do not corroborate Rainwater's contention,⁸ that among low-income people, the chief concern for a

⁸ Lee Rainwater, Richard P. Coleman, and Gerald Coleman, op. cit.

hypothetical 'good' neighborhood is what it is not (unrespectable, peopled by undesirables, etc.), rather than for what it is. However, the responses do support another of Rainwater's points, notably that working-class mothers are very concerned about the well-being of their children and about the potential bad effects which a less desirable neighborhood will have upon them.

Suburban living and the journey to work

Although in the previous question it was suggested that choice of a suburban location would place one in a less accessible position as regards 'shops, work, entertainment, etc.', the likelihood of a longer journey to work was not emphasized. As we have noted above, a number of respondents did refer to this as a disadvantage to living in a 'good' neighborhood, but many more addressed themselves exclusively to the problems of being a long way from the shops. Therefore, it was felt worthwhile to ask a specific question on people's reactions to a longer journey to work. After a series of question on the respondent's and her husband's occupations and journey to work patterns, respondents were asked:

"If there were housing in the suburbs that you liked and could afford, but you or your husband (wife) had to spend more time and money on traveling to work than you do now, would you want to live there?"

Over half the respondents replied that they would not want to live in the suburbs, given this specific 'deterrent' of a longer journey to work. It was obvious from the comments people made, that it was not the added time or strain of the journey that concerned them most, but the additional cost. A middle-aged Oriental woman who had

TABLE XLI

DESIRE TO LIVE IN SUBURBS IF JOURNEY TO WORK IS LONGER

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
No	19	54
Yes	12	34
Don't know	4	12
	<u>35⁹</u>	<u>100</u>

⁹ Unfortunately, the total number asked this question--35--is a smaller sample than was asked the previous two questions. The reason for this is that the question was asked towards the end of a long interview (question 110 out of 120), and in a number of cases, the interviewers inadvertently omitted the question, and in other cases, it was deliberately omitted, because it seemed inappropriate, either because the respondent was elderly and without a spouse or because the respondent was a young woman, without a husband, living on Welfare. The results of this question are shown in Table XLI.

an hour and a half journey each day to her job in a children's nursery in Alameda, seemed reasonably reconciled to the amount of time she had to spend each day traveling, but said she would not want to live in the suburbs because:

"I'd have to spend more money on bus fares . . . I only spend 35 cents each way here."

Another woman, separated from her husband and working as a nurse in a hospital in San Pablo, replied:

"I couldn't do it . . . the money and transportation . . . couldn't afford anything more expensive."

Nor was it only a problem of the journey to work; for some, it was a question of a journey to find work. Since the State Employment offices are usually located downtown, a suburban location would certainly put those who were looking for work at a great disadvantage, for these are just the families who can least afford a long journey into the city each day. As one middle-aged Negro mother replied:

"No . . . we couldn't live out there . . . my husband . . . he has to go down to the Labor Hall every day to see if there's a job."

Just over one-third of the respondents, however, thought that they would still like to live in the suburbs, despite a long journey to work. "Most people in the suburbs work away anyway," was the response of one; while another, who didn't drive, was anxious not to be too far away from town:

"I'd like the suburbs as long as it wasn't 20 or 30 miles away . . . Danville or Walnut Creek is too far away . . . 15 or 20 minutes away from downtown Oakland would be OK."

Others commented that the only problem would be that they'd have to "start earlier to get to work."

How then, did this group who would tolerate a longer journey to work, differ from that which would not? Two population variables did not seem to be significant--these were age and education. But the other four variables which we have been considering did seem to be significant. Quite expectedly, there was a positive correlation between not having a car, or not being able to drive, and not wanting to make a longer journey to work. It also seems that non-whites are less likely to want to make a long journey to work in order to live in the suburbs than are whites. (Or maybe they are just being realistic in not expecting to live in the suburbs anyway.) Those who consider themselves lower or working-class, overwhelmingly voted for the longer journey to work; 75% of the group who said they would tolerate more commuting was of this status, while they composed only 32% of the group who would not. It would appear then that those who consider themselves in the lower status groups will not tolerate being too far from the shops, but will tolerate longer journeys to work; but we must not forget that most of the respondents in this sample were women, and whereas they are the ones who have to do the shopping, they are not the ones, generally, who have to travel to work each day. If we had interviewed the husbands as well, we would perhaps have had a different result.

Population segments and locational values

It may be useful here to summarize how different segments of the sample population varied in the way they answered these questions. We have, in effect, been asking respondents to express their opinions on

TABLE XLII

RESIDENTIAL LOCATIONAL PREFERENCES OF SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS

	Prefer to live -		Prefer -		Would tolerate longer journey to work	
	As close to downtown as Easter Hill	In suburbs	Good neighborhood, inaccessible	Less desirable neighborhood, accessible	Yes	No
Non-whites	50%	43%	44%	44%	17%	53%
Over 40s	41	29	28	44	33	35
12th grade education or above	41	43	41	55	42	47
Working-class (self-classified)	32	52	41	67	75	35
No husband present	36	38	19	67	17	35
No auto	28	33	12	67	17	12

NOTE: The figures represent the per cent preferring each location who were non-white, over 40, etc., etc. Thus, of those preferring to live as close to downtown as Easter Hill, 41 per cent were over 40, but of those preferring a suburban location, only 29 per cent were over 40.

- three locational 'values':
1. proximity to downtown
 2. amenity v. accessibility
 3. proximity to work

Proximity to downtown

The population segments most concerned about living close to downtown are non-whites and people over 40. Or perhaps to say 'concerned' is not correct; perhaps these two elements of the population are just more than usually aware of realities, for they know that this is where, in all probability, they will have to live--like it or not.

The population segment most concerned about living in the suburbs is that which classifies itself as lower and/or working-class, possibly because for this population group, self-classified in the lower ranks of society by virtue of income, education or background, the reality of ever owning a house in the suburbs is fairly remote. This would tend to support the findings of Richard Lamanna in a similar study of livability values, in which he states, "Within the context of shared, culturally-defined standards, the things one is accustomed to having are taken for granted, while those which are relatively absent from one's life-experience are likely to take on exaggerated importance In short, privation, or feelings of deprivation, if they are not too severe, may inflate the importance of certain desirable qualities."¹⁰

Amenity v. accessibility

Faced with a question which makes them choose between amenity and accessibility, respondents appear to answer in more realistic terms

¹⁰ Lamanna, op. cit.

than they did to the previous question. When it is pointed out that the price one pays for living in a good neighborhood is lack of accessibility to the amenities of urban living, those sections of the population who would undoubtedly be most penalized by the lack of accessibility--notably those over 40, those with lower incomes (self-classified as lower or working-class), those without husbands, and those without cars--'vote' for the less desirable neighborhood that is close to shops, work, etc.

Those who did feel that they would gladly put up with inaccessibility in order to live in a good neighborhood comprised largely the young, upwardly-mobile, nuclear families who did, in reality, have some chance of making it to suburbia.

There are two unexpected features about the way this question was answered that are worth mentioning. Firstly, it appears that in a question of amenity v. accessibility, race is not a significant variable; exactly the same proportion of non-whites chose the inaccessible neighborhood, as chose the accessible one. And secondly, the higher educated section of the sample--those with a 12th grade education or above--seem to place more importance on accessibility than does the lower educated group. This seems to support the findings of the Lamanna study cited above, which states that the less well-educated attach greater importance to the values of 'people attending to their own business' (i.e. a 'good' neighborhood), while those who are better educated give higher priority to 'accessibility to schools and shopping facilities'.

Proximity to work

When asked to consider whether or not they would choose to live in the suburbs if this meant spending more time and money on the journey to work, the group who answered 'no' again contained above-average proportions of the disadvantaged--i.e. those without husbands (and therefore, largely living on meagre incomes), and those who are non-white. It is worth noting, however, that whereas color appears not to be significant when considering accessibility v. amenity, it did seem to be significant when the question of additional time and money to be spent on the journey to work was raised. Non-whites, at least in this sample, with generally lower incomes and poorer employment opportunities than whites, are reluctant to spend more money on commuting than they do at present.

The question of class status again appeared to be significant in that the group who would tolerate longer journeys to work in order to live in the suburbs contained a much above-average proportion of those self-classified as lower or working-class. Evidently the feeling of deprivation is so strong that they would be willing to sacrifice time and money in order to live in suburbia; whereas those who consider themselves lower-middle or middle-class are less worried about the status of suburban living and would rather live in a less desirable section of town and spend less time and money on commuting. However, as we have noted elsewhere, 95% of this sample were women, and a number commented that their husbands would probably not be willing to make the long journey to work. Add to this the fact that, at least from

this sample, it appears that working-class families are more dominated by the husband than are middle-class families, and we can deduce that the proportion 'voting' for suburban living in this survey represents only the desires of the female section of the population, and not the proportion of the total population that would, in reality, move to suburbia, given the opportunity of suitable housing.

Neighborhood preferences--high v. low density

In order to test respondents' reactions to living in different types of neighborhoods in a city and to make sure that they were all visualizing the same neighborhood types, a question was devised using four photographs and introduced by the interviewer in the following manner:

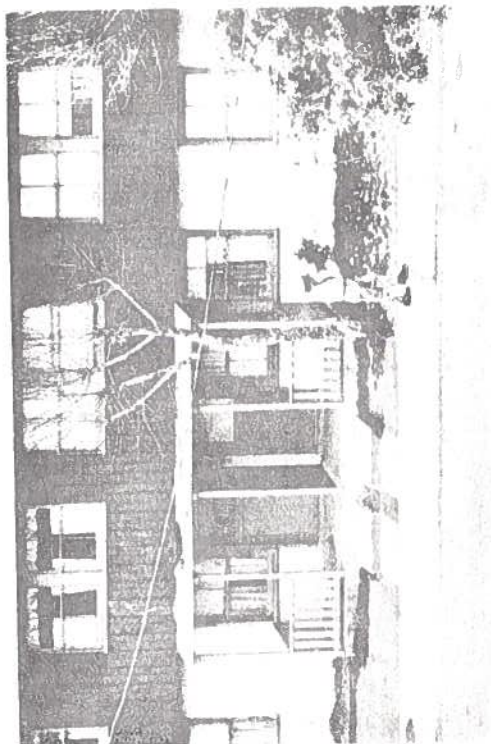
"Now I'd like to show you a set of four photographs. One of them is Easter Hill, and the others are of different types of neighborhoods in a city. If you could live in any one of these neighborhoods--or stay at Easter Hill--for the same rent you are paying now, which neighborhood do you think would be the nicest to live in . . . and the next . . . and the next . . ."

The four photographs comprised one of Easter Hill, one of a typical suburban neighborhood of detached single family homes,¹¹ one of an older residential neighborhood of detached homes now divided into 2 or 3 apartments,¹² and one of a typical downtown street of attached walk-up apartment buildings with a few corner stores visible.¹³

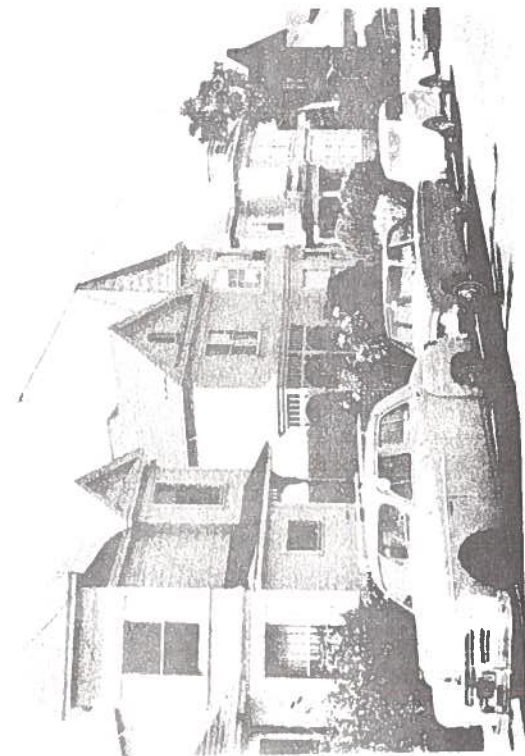
¹¹ Actually, a Negro subdivision in south Vallejo.

¹² Francisco Street in Berkeley, a few blocks from downtown.

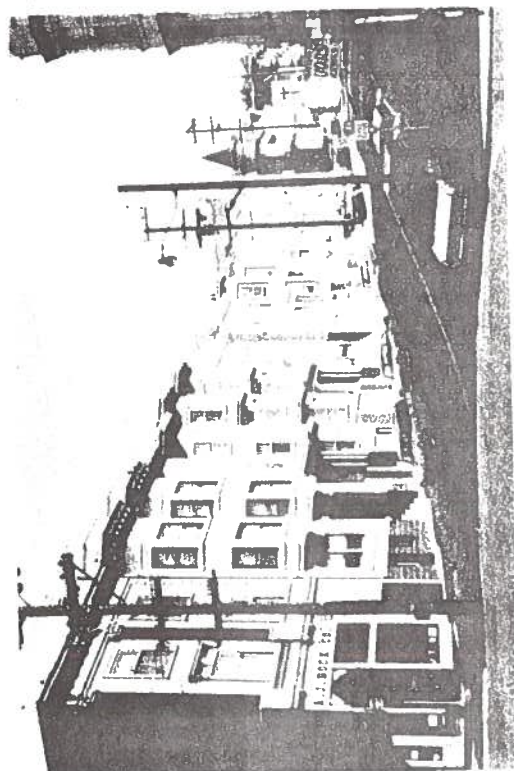
¹³ Stanyan Street at Frederick, near Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.



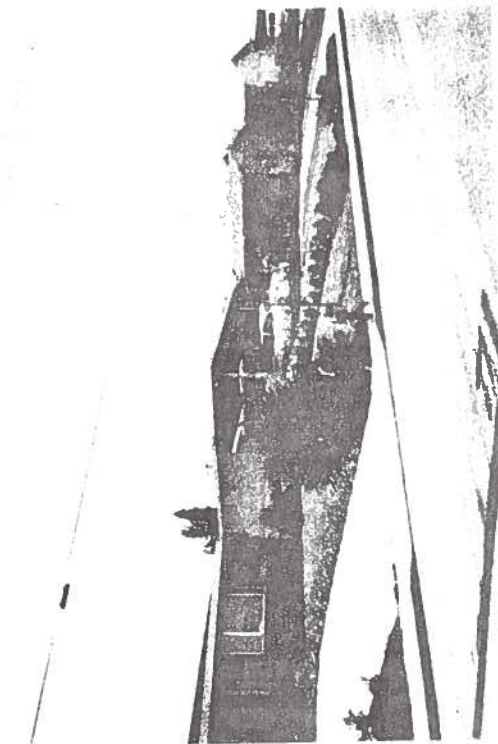
Easter Hill



Older residential neighborhood



Downtown neighborhood



Suburban neighborhood

NEIGHBORHOOD
PICTURES IN
QUESTIONNAIRE

TABLE XLIII
NEIGHBORHOOD CHOICES

	Total		Suburban		Older residential		Easter Hill		Downtown		No Answer
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1st choice	49	100	45	42	3	6	1	2	-	-	
2nd choice	49	100	3	6	28	57	16	33	1	2	1
3rd choice	49	100	-	-	17	35	30	61	-	-	2
4th choice	49	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	98	1

No. of respondents = 49.

After respondents had made their choices and been asked 'why?' in each case, they were asked, with reference to their first choice (assuming it was not Easter Hill):

"What are some of the qualities of this neighborhood which you feel are missing from Easter Hill?"

And with reference to the last choice, they were asked:

"And what are some of the qualities of Easter Hill that you feel are missing from this neighborhood?"

Although the answers to these two questions sometimes were repetitions of what people had said in answer to 'why?', very often they resulted in greater amplification of the respondent's choice, and it was obvious that respondents found it easier to verbalize what they did and did not like about Easter Hill when faced with two photographs to compare than when asked the question 'cold' earlier in the interview.

In view of the unanimity of the answers, it soon became obvious that the pictures were somewhat 'loaded'; in another survey of this kind, more interesting results would probably be found by using photographs of different types of suburban developments (attached, detached, 1-storey, 2-storey, etc.). However, the reasons that people gave for choosing the suburban neighborhood, and for almost universally rejecting the downtown neighborhood, are worth summarizing.

As might be expected, respondents found it relatively easy to choose the picture they liked best and the one they liked least, but more difficult to place the remaining two in order. There was considerable unanimity over the first choice, with 92% of the respondents selecting the suburban neighborhood, and even greater agreement over

the 4th choice, with 98% choosing the downtown picture as the one they liked least. Approximately three-fifths selected the older residential neighborhood as their second choice, and three-fifths chose Easter Hill as their next-to-last choice. About one-third of the respondents put Easter Hill in second place, and the older neighborhood in next-to-last place.

The suburban neighborhood

Respondents were most vocal about their first choice, which for 45 of the 49 was the suburban neighborhood. In all, some 150 remarks were made about the picture; that is, as a respondent said, she liked it because, "The wide street, the big front yard, and separate houses--these were counted as three 'remarks'. Almost one-half of the remarks were about the house and yard, just over one-third were about the neighborhood, and 15% about the type of people who might live there.

Table XLIV illustrates that among the most frequent references to the house and yard were the fact that there is a big yard and that it is nicely kept up, the fact that each house has its own driveway and garage or carport, and that the houses are not attached, and are 'all on one level'. Typical responses included:

"It's just more attractive. There's a carport for the car . . . the house is set back from the street . . . very nice people . . . the yards are kept up. The planting is all right . . . everything is all right . . . it looks privately owned. The street is clean . . . very neat looking . . . there's a wide picture window. I don't know, but flat-top houses are much easier to heat than 2-storey."

"Naturally you'd choose that . . . even if they're all the same, like tract homes . . . you'd still choose it, because they're separate houses, big yards, etc."

TABLE XLIV

REASONS FOR SELECTING THE SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD AS FIRST CHOICE

<u>House</u>		<u>Yard</u>	
Place for car	9	Yards are big	11
Separate	8	Yards nicely kept-up	9
1-storey	7	Like lawns	4
Modern design	5	Like shrubbery, plants	4
Set back from street	5	Can have barbecue in	
Well build/looks nice	4	back yard	1
Individual	2		<u>29</u>
Large	1		
New	1		
Has picture window	<u>1</u>		
	43		

<u>Neighborhood</u>		<u>People</u>	
Looks nice neighborhood	8	People who own own homes	6
Neat	7	Average/working people	5
Privacy	7	People care about neigh-	
Pleasant/attractive	6	borhood	3
Not crowded	4	People with money	3
Quiet	4	Nice/better class of	
Wide streets	4	people	2
Facilities close by	3	All one race	2
Spacious	2	Peaceful people	1
'Homey'	2	Businessmen	1
Clean	2	Younger generation	1
Safe	1		<u>23</u>
Country-like	1		
Colorful	1		
Happy-looking	1		
It's a suburb	1		
No business around	<u>1</u>		
	55		

"Looks more homey . . . average people. You'd be more to yourself . . . bigger lawns, more of an individual environment."

"It looks more like a home . . . blocks more modern. Average, clean-looking people. I'd like it better than Easter Hill because it has more design . . . people would take better care of it, if it do look like their own home."

It is not perhaps surprising that these particular features should be mentioned frequently, since the lack of yard maintenance at Easter Hill, the fact that the houses are attached and are of 2-storeys were frequently mentioned complaints earlier in the interviews.

Remarks about the neighborhood were also frequent, though not as much so as those about the individual houses. Most respondents referred to qualities that could be inferred from the picture--that the neighborhood looked 'nice', attractive, neat, that it appeared to be homey, clean, etc. But more than a few attributed qualities to the neighborhood which could not possibly be 'seen', but which presumably they had noticed at first hand, in neighborhoods that looked like this one; for instance that it would be quiet, safe, colorful, and that there would be facilities close by, such as shops and schools.

"It has big yards . . . pretty and well kept-up . . . you'd have a nice back yard where you could have picnics and barbecues. [Why do you like it better than Easter Hill?] Upkeep is number 1. The way the buildings are built . . . the style. There'd be a lot more facilities close by . . . don't have to cross major highways. The buildings are further away from one another . . . Also, it looks more colorful from the picture."

"Naturally I'd choose this one. A nice neighborhood . . . good schools close by. [Why do you like it better than Easter Hill?] The good appearance of the neighborhood in general . . . the houses don't look identical . . . even though they're probably tract houses . . . there are plants, bushes . . . it shows individuality . . . and you can park off the street."

"Oh, gee . . . that's beautiful . . . what a nice lawn. [Why do you like it better than Easter Hill?] It's more neat . . .

there's a drive-in garage . . . beautiful lawn . . . individual houses . . . the house is set back from the walk."

"It reminds me of Pinole . . . the streets are wider . . . more front yard . . . I like to do that [i.e., look after yard] . . . the house is large . . . more privacy, more modern, low . . . not noisy. It's like a country scene."

Remarks about the people who might live in such a neighborhood were much less frequent than references to its appearance, though all were positive references--i.e., "They would be nice people," rather than "There wouldn't be any undesirables."

"I'd choose this because it's the type of neighborhood I'd like to move into . . . not well-to-do . . . working people with 2 or 3 children. I'd like it better than Easter Hill because there's more room, the yards are bigger . . . the houses have driveways, garages . . . probably all one race . . . good working people."

"It's not so crowded . . . private houses . . . peaceful people . . . not so much business . . . not so crowded. [Why do you like it better than Easter Hill?] Because of the spacious lawns."

"The yards are better kept . . . they're single houses, one-story. There's more privacy . . . a better class of people."

"It makes for a nice neighborhood . . . where there's beauty, people take pride in caring for things."

"It looks neater, nicer . . . everything about it. People with money . . . younger generation."

"Oh, this is by far the best! Big yards . . . kept up well. Average people . . . because you can get a tract house with nothing down." [Husband, interjecting] "And they fall down too!"

It was noticeable that very few respondents indicated that living in a house which they owned would be their prime reason for preferring this neighborhood, and relatively few made remarks that could be construed as the house being a status object. In this respect, the findings at Easter Hill confirm those of Berger in San Jose, and Gans

in the West End of Boston, namely that the house is not looked upon as a status object, as it typically is among the middle classes.

TABLE XLV

REASONS FOR SELECTING OLDER NEIGHBORHOOD AS
FIRST OR SECOND CHOICE

<u>Houses</u>		<u>Neighborhood</u>	
Separate	11	Nice/attractive	4
Homey	4	Private	2
Roomy	2	Spacious	1
Only 2 apts. per building	1	Quiet	1
Like old houses	<u>1</u>	Close and cosy	<u>1</u>
	20		9
<u>People</u>			
	Average people	1	
	Older generation	<u>1</u>	
		2	

The older residential neighborhood

Approximately three-fifths placed the older neighborhood in second place, and one-third in third place, but remarks about it were far less voluble and articulate than those about the suburban picture,

or the downtown neighborhood. Again the individual house merited the most remarks (two-thirds), the neighborhood received far fewer references (just under one-third) and the people who live there, very few (6%).

The one important fact that impressed people about this picture was that the houses are separate; in fact more people mentioned the separation of the units in this picture than referred to it in the suburban picture, presumably because here it was one of the few redeeming features, whereas in the suburban picture it was one of many they could observe or surmise. Typical responses were:

"They're right on the street . . . but at least there the houses are separate."

"There'd be nobody banging on the walls . . . you'd feel more private. They'd be average people . . . depending on the location."

"They're separate houses . . . but close and cosey."

The latter remark reflects a feeling alluded to elsewhere in the interviews, that people wanted to live in separate houses for prestige/privacy reasons, but they didn't want the houses to be too far apart, for reasons of safety and security, particularly at night.

Others remarked that the houses looked 'homey', and roomy, and seemed well-built.

"It gives you a feeling of homeyness, but not real tight and close together."

"It looks roomy . . . you could send the kids upstairs if they were noisy." [Teenage daughter interjected] "Lock them up, you mean!"

"It looks homey . . . makes me homesick. I come from Iowa . . . it looks like that there."

Three respondents actually chose this neighborhood in preference to the suburban one; they included an elderly woman, and two young women from mid-western backgrounds who mentioned that the picture reminded them of the houses 'back home'.

Very few remarks were made about the picture of Easter Hill itself, since people's likes and dislikes about the neighborhood had been discussed at length earlier in the interview. However, using the picture of Easter Hill was useful in that it stimulated respondents to make comparisons between it and the other neighborhoods depicted.

The downtown neighborhood

The remarks about the downtown picture were even more vituperative than those about the suburban picture were complimentary. Perhaps the most interesting finding which emerged from the responses to this question was the very marked, almost embittered hostility that many people felt towards 'the city'. Some recognized the picture as San Francisco and, as if this were reason enough, placed it last on their list. Others just referred to it being ". . . too much like the city," or looking like downtown or Main Street, and then proceeded to name their dislikes about such an area . . . the noise, the dirt, the congestion, the traffic, the 'wrong' type of people. And all this, despite the fact that a picture was deliberately selected of a fairly attractive downtown neighborhood; witness the good upkeep of the houses and stores, and the fact that the street forms part of the 49 Mile Scenic Drive. But people ignored these facts, and having

TABLE XLVI

REASONS FOR SELECTING THE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD
AS LAST CHOICEBuildings

Too jammed together	16
Too high	6
No yards	5
Fire would be hazard	4
Old, unattractive	4
Too close to street	3
Like a hotel	2
Lot of windows	1
No privacy	1
No private entrance	1
Kids might fall out	1
Uneven roof line	1
Not kept up inside	1
Feel penned in	1
Rooming Houses	1
Not enough bedrooms	1
People over you	1
	50

Neighborhood

Too much like city	9
Busy street	8
No place for kids to play	7
Don't like San Francisco	6
Too many hills	3
Stores nearby	3
Bad, poor district	2
Looks like a slum	1
Kids would get into trouble	1
Telephone wires spoil view	1
	41

People

Too many people	9
Too noisy	5
All kinds of people	2
Lower-class people	1
Too much friction	1
People on Welfare	1
Transients	1
People who couldn't do any better	1
Mixed races	1
Winos	1
	23

taken one glance at the picture, proceeded to list off all that they knew, or had ever heard, about the drawbacks of city life.

"I don't like that smashed-together look. I don't like San Francisco."

"It looks like the city . . . too jammed in . . . too much city . . . too much noise."

"Wouldn't care for this at all . . . it must be Frisco. Too close together . . . too many hills . . . too much traffic. If it's Frisco, it must be mixed . . . you'd be out of your mind to live there. I wouldn't live there . . . rent free! [Why is Easter Hill beter?] The houses aren't jam-packed . . . the houses there are all squashed together."

As in the responses to the suburban picture, almost half of the remarks referred to in the buildings themselves, just over one-third to the neighborhood, and one-fifth to the people who might live there.¹

Respondents' strongest reactions were to the high density, and they referred repeatedly both to the fact that the houses are 'all jammed together,' and to the fact that they are 'too high.' These physical deterrents were interpreted as giving rise to potential psychosocial problems..."I'd feel penned in"..."There'd be too much friction"..."You'd have no privacy"; and also to potential disasters, such as fire and accidental falls. This concern about danger, both of a physical nature (disasters, etc.) and of a human nature (tensions, friction, kids "getting into trouble") was very noticeable in these responses, and would tend to confirm Rainwater's findings that among the lower classes the environment is considered more threatening than rewarding, and that anxiety about potential

1. In Robert Wilson's study of how people in two North Carolina towns rated their environment for "livability," he showed them photos of a new tract, a mature residential area, and downtown; two-thirds found the downtown picture least attractive. What bothered them most was lack of privacy, followed closely by concern about spaciousness, not good for children, lack of homeyness and quietness. (Wilson, Robert L., op.cit.)

danger is a very common characteristic.¹⁴ Responses such as the following were typical:

"It's too close . . . wouldn't want to live there . . . all jammed in, 6 or 8 tenements in a building, like in New York. Lots of friction . . . people gripe and fight when they live so close. Here we don't have all the congestion . . . all the mess. Besides, I don't like tenement flats."

"Looks like hotel rooms . . . like you'd be penned in. Everything's missing . . . I'd feel penned in even if I didn't have any kids."

"Looks like a crowded place . . . there'd be people I wouldn't know."

"It's too crowded . . . too confined. Half of those buildings shouldn't be there . . . if one caught fire, they'd all burn."

"There'd be too much trouble for the kids to get into . . . it wouldn't be safe."

"Looks like Frisco . . . on a hill. The buildings are too close together . . . one house catches on fire, they all catch on fire. I don't like the way the houses are built there . . . the kids would fall out of the window and break their necks."

The most frequently mentioned complaints about the neighborhood, apart from the fact that it is 'too much like the city', were that the streets would be busy and noisy, and that there'd be a lack of places for children to play.

"It's too cramped . . . where are your kids going to play? [Why do you like Easter Hill better?] Well, here you're on the ground level . . . and it's only two stories. Easter Hill doesn't have a busy main street outside . . . probably cleaner than a downtown street . . . and that would be noisier too."

¹⁴ Lee Rainwater, Fear and the House-as-haven in the lower class, paper prepared for the Symposium on The Social Psychology of Low-income Housing: Policy and people. American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, Sept. 6, 1964.

"It's not sufficient for anybody who has kids . . . there's business places. Okay for a couple, or 1 or 2 kids, but not 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7. Just don't like places in the city for kids."

A greater proportion of the remarks were about the type of people who might live in such a neighborhood, than was the case in the response to any of the other pictures. Many referred to the fact that there would be just too many people jammed into a tight space, and that there would be noise problems with people living above, below and on either side of you. Others referred to the quality of the inhabitants and in every case it was a derogatory remark.

"Never would want to live like this . . . people all around you . . . families above and below you . . . all using the same entrance. Wouldn't want a community entrance."

"It's downtown, isn't it? Too noisy . . . a busy street; I know, because it's like a hotel . . . always noisy. There'd be people like on skid row. [Why do you like Easter Hill better?] Well at least there are trees . . . more a home atmosphere. This looks like it's for transients."

"Don't like old-fashioned houses. There'd be people who were not working . . . on Welfare . . . people who can't do any better."

"Just looks like the type that is not kept-up on the inside . . . a bad district . . . people who couldn't afford anything better. [Why do you like Easter Hill better?] Because there are no people living above you . . . more privacy . . . a front yard . . . a place for the children to play."

When asked what they had at Easter Hill which they felt was lacking in the downtown neighborhood, people mentioned: no congestion or mess, individual homes and a better appearance, trees and a home-like atmosphere, yards and better homes, no people living above you and more privacy, front yards for the kids to play in, no busy streets right outside, cleanliness and lack of noise, houses are a little more modern and aren't squashed together, lawns and trees, etc.

The two important facts which stood out in these remarks were, firstly, that compared with the downtown neighborhood, people considered themselves fairly well-off at Easter Hill; despite previous remarks, they felt the houses were more individual and private and better looking. And secondly, these responses re-emphasized the great value people put on having their own private yard--as something pleasant to look at, as a place to work in and sit in, as a place for the children to play in, and as a 'barrier' between their living space and 'the outside world'.

IX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Weighing the net meaning of all the evidence that is available, one must conclude that the placement of houses and apartments in relation to one another and to the total city... clearly influences family and social relationships.¹

In this final chapter I shall attempt first, to summarize the extent to which the designers' social objectives at Easter Hill were achieved, and discuss the wisdom of those objectives in terms of the needs and values of low-income people. Second, I shall consider the designers' economic objectives and discuss the social implications of the means used by them to achieve those objectives. Third, I shall list a number of recommendations on the design, lay-out, and location of low-cost housing--whether public or private, based on the findings of this case study. Finally, I shall suggest a number of topics concerned with the social implications of design which I feel are worthy of study, and about which we need to have more knowledge if we are to plan and design in the future for the consumers of our products.

¹Alvin Schorr, Slums and Social Insecurity, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Research Report No. 1, 1963, p. 8.

A. Success of the designers' social objectives, and the wisdom of selecting these objectives

1. To create a housing project so different from, and better than existing ones, that its inhabitants would not feel that they were living 'in a project.'

The general feeling among the interviewed sample was that Easter Hill is quite a reasonable place to live compared with other projects, but that it is still definitely a housing project and does not resemble the privately-owned houses in which most people aspire to live, and which can be seen in the vicinity or in the suburban areas of the East Bay. It became obvious that few could forget that they were living in a housing project, for remarks about the neighborhood or its inhabitants were frequently prefaced by ... "Considering it's Housing....", or "Well for Housing it's OK, but...."

Most people did not seem particularly concerned about the supposed stigma of living in Housing, but it is impossible to say whether this was due to (1) superior design, (2) selection of tenants to screen out those with an excessive number of problems, (3) good relations between tenants and the Housing Authority, or (4) a changed attitude towards Public Housing in general.

Another explanation which we cannot overlook, is that the sample interviewed in this study was almost entirely female. It may be that women react less strongly to living in a project than do men, because few of their home-based activities--cooking, cleaning, child-rearing etc.--are adversely

influenced by the fact that they are living in Housing. With men however, the very fact of living in a project is a reflection on their capacities as breadwinners, prompting a natural resentment towards public housing; in addition, their home-based activities--gardening, house improvements, do-it-yourself projects etc.--unlike those of their wives, are severely limited by the space provisions in housing and by the institutional regulations imposed on tenants.

Undoubtedly the unique and, to some, attractive appearance of Easter Hill did add to people's contentment with it as a place to live, but for most people in the project, the physical environment in which they were living seemed not to be so important in promoting their psychological well-being as did the presence of friends, the absence of family problems, and so on.

In terms of creating an environment that did not seem like a project, the designers were not successful--largely, I would judge, because of their decision to use row-housing. Row-housing is relatively rare in the private housing market in California; therefore, however well it is designed, it is linked in people's minds with institutional, mass-produced housing, either public or military. Only a project of separate, single-family houses, boldly differentiated by color and size, and resembling the middle-class housing seen on television and the movies, would really permit tenants to forget that they were living in public housing.

In terms of creating a housing project "better than

existing ones," the designers were undoubtedly successful, for most tenants liked it better than other projects they had visited or lived in, better than the photographs of other projects they were shown in the interviews; they preferred Easter Hill because they were not living in apartments, and because each family had a highly-valued piece of open space to do what they liked with.

2. To fulfill a basic need of American families--to have a home of their own.

The attempt to introduce variety and individuality into the row houses so that each family would feel that theirs was an individual home, was not entirely successful. Despite the very serious and thoughtful attempts by the designers to fulfill this objective, most of the inhabitants did not feel that their houses looked different and individual; many noticed the differences in color, but this and other more subtle means of differentiation (some noticed, some not) were not enough to disguise the basic sameness of the buildings.¹

¹Further evidence to suggest that perhaps architects and their clients don't "see" things the same way, was afforded by another survey conducted during the spring of 1965. I arranged for a class of second year architects on the Berkeley campus to go and see Easter Hill and afterwards to answer a number of questions. One of these was worded--"Which of the methods used by the designers of Easter Hill to differentiate the house exteriors do you think would be most readily noticed by the residents?" Almost all of the students mentioned color, and a good many mentioned height differences--both of which were referred to quite frequently by the residents; however, more than half the students mentioned the different materials used in construction, noticed by only 4% of the residents, and over a third mentioned the staggered facades of the buildings --a feature referred to by only 6% of the residents. This tends to confirm my suspicions that designers and design students tend to observe the physical environment much more acutely than do the "lay public."

This feeling of living in a basically stereotyped neighborhood and thus not having an individual home, was compounded by (1) the feeling of closeness and being jammed together, with its consequent lack of visual privacy, (2) the lack of aural privacy between adjacent houses and the consequent feeling that you could not do or say just what you wanted in your own house, and (3) the limitations on altering or improving the house, having guests to stay, etc. which further emphasized the feeling that the house is not yours to do what you like with.

This objective was undoubtedly a wise one, for there was a unanimous feeling of wanting to have a home that either was, or felt like, one's own. Certainly if this had been achieved at Easter Hill, we would also have found a good part of objective (1) being fulfilled also--that is, the feeling that people were not living in a project. Two features which would have added immeasurably to people's contentment with their houses as individual homes were (a) the provision of sound-proof party walls, and (b) a bolder differentiation of house exteriors.

However, we should not give the impression that everyone at Easter Hill was dissatisfied. For those who had come there from the trying circumstances of sharing a house or apartment with others, and for those who were using public housing as a means of saving on rent in order to buy furniture or make the down-payment on a house, their houses at Easter Hill were indeed homes. But it seems likely that their

contentment with their homes was as much a function of their previous living conditions or their future aspirations as it was of the design.

3. To fulfill a second basic need--to have control over a piece of outdoor living space (however small) for individual and family activities.

The fulfillment of this objective by the provision of a fenced back yard, an unfenced front yard and a front porch, was not only entirely successful but undoubtedly contributed in large measure to people's satisfaction with Easter Hill, when compared with other projects they had seen or heard about.

Although many would have preferred the back yard to be larger, and to have had higher and more solid fencing around it, the great majority was pleased that they had one, used it in many ways, and regarded it as one of the most valued attributes of Easter Hill. It functioned not only as a container of necessary family activities such as clothes-drying, child-minding, etc., but also as an overflow receptacle for objects which could not be stored in the house and as an adjunct to the house which could be altered and improved while the house itself could not.

The front yard, though not perhaps used quite as much as the back, performed certain important functions, such as

- (1) providing a spatial barrier between the public space of the street and sidewalk and the private space of the home,
- (2) providing a means of maintaining or up-grading status, and
- (3) providing a place in which to make or expand social contacts with neighbors.

The front porch, though it was not thought about so consciously as an asset by the people who were interviewed, nevertheless, appeared to be a useful adjunct to the house, attached to it and yet not in it. Its major functions appeared to be (1) as a semi-private entrance to the house, especially valued in row housing where front doors are close together; (2) as a play space for very small children with a gate added across the entrance; (3) as a sheltered spot in which older children and teenagers could gather to play and talk; (4) as a place in which to sit and view the world outside; and (5) as a place in which neighbors could gather briefly for a chat. Without the porch, the houses at Easter Hill would not only have looked more like long, stereotyped rows, thus emphasizing the feeling of being in a project; but there would also have been no "half-way house" between the completely private domain of the house and the completely public domain of the street, and the people might have withdrawn even more into their houses than was the case.

The findings of this survey then, tend to confirm a speculation made by Chester Hartman in a recent article, in which he wrote ...

For the working class, the intermediate level of space between the individual apartment and the general neighborhood--the "envelope" which surrounds the apartment... may be an extremely important spatial component, the meaning and functional significance of which has received little attention in planning studies.¹

¹Chester Hartman, "The limitations of public housing-relocation choices in a working-class community," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 29, No. 4, November, 1963, p. 285.

4. To provide means for the inhabitants to express their individuality and creativity.

The back and front yards, as we have noted above, provide important locales for the expression of individuality, especially since the houses themselves are generally considered to look very much the same and cannot be altered. The front yard is probably the most important place in which people tend to express themselves, for it is more open to general view and approval than the back; it does more for the overall improvement of the house; and working in the front yard can be combined with watching what is going on in the neighborhood, chatting to neighbors, minding the children, etc. It is small wonder then, that there were probably more hard feelings about unkempt front yards and children and dogs trampling on plants, than about almost any other feature of life at Easter Hill. For it seems that the upgrading of your home through maintenance of the front yard, and improvement of the appearance of a particular section of the project through neighbors all "pulling their weight," are just as important aspects of life in a housing project as they are in suburbs. But whereas the suburbanite is concerned about maintenance because of the effect it has on property values, the public housing tenant is concerned both to give his home a small amount of individuality and to gain status in the eyes of his neighbors.

Although a number of people had painted the insides of their houses (as they are permitted to do) and a number expressed a desire to paint the outside, the majority of public

housing tenants are not as interested in this paint up-fix-up means of expressing their individuality as, say, a home-owning suburbanite would be, since they hope their sojourn in the project is only temporary. If you expect, or hope, not to stay in a place, it is unlikely you will want to spend time and money improving or altering it; and if you are a tenant rather than an owner, improvements are not investments.

An added reason why few are interested in doing very much to the house, even if they were permitted to do so, is that any improvement costs money; even buying a few plants or a can of paint is an added expenditure that few can justify. The designers' idea of permitting the tenants to paint their own houses and select their own colors was in theory a good one; but when a good proportion of the inhabitants can't afford to buy the paint, and when many of the households do not have a man in them to do the work, the idea becomes somewhat impractical.

5. To fulfill children's needs for adventurous play, and field sports.

The use of the rocks at Easter Hill as places for adventurous and imaginative play has indeed been successful, even though their use by very small children causes some mothers to worry. The two areas of play equipment provided in the original design have been less successful, since one of them was completely destroyed by teenagers, and the other partly so, a few years ago. The Housing Authority has failed to replace them, because, as they say, ... "they will just

get destroyed again." In consequence, the play equipment for a project containing at a rough estimate, 800 children, comprises just one slide; small wonder that one of the biggest complaints about the project was that there are not enough places for the children to play.

The playfield, which was placed in one corner of the project because that was the only place where there was a large enough piece of flat land, was/is not used equally by children from all over the project; those living close to it tended to use it more, while those living on the opposite side of the project rarely, if ever used it, for the mothers felt it was too far away and that there was the danger of their children being "roughed up" there by older children.

The decision by the designers to leave lots of small open spaces at the ends of the rows of houses and between rows looks, in plan, like a good idea; the building masses are broken up, and there are small, informal play spaces near to the houses. The only trouble is that there are few competing attractions to draw children away from these spaces close to the houses, with the consequence that one of the biggest complaints was that there were "just too many children around." Certainly some played on the rocky sides of the hill which gave the project its name, and others went to the playfield, but the great majority stayed around the houses, as is evidenced by the several notices which tenants have tacked up on the end walls of the rows reading--"No Ball Playing."

It seems that the designers of Easter Hill probably underestimated the great numbers of children which the project

would have to contain, and it is probable that they had little idea of the large proportion of families without men in them (which therefore have something of a discipline problem), and of the numbers of unemployed youths who spend their time around the project. The means of fulfilling children's play-needs in a housing project, must be quite different from, say, in a neighborhood of middle-class homes, with fairly stable families, large yards, means of access to other parts of the city, etc.

In fairness to the designers, as we have noted above, they did want to provide some sort of community building, but this was vetoed by the Public Housing Administration; and the fact that the equipment areas have been destroyed and not replaced cannot be blamed on them. However, they did fail completely to provide play areas for very small children, and this was a serious omission in view of the large numbers of small children, and the smallness of the fenced back yards.

6. To create self-identity of sub-groups of dwellings within the project.

Small sub-groups of dwellings were arranged around courts and cul-de-sacs in order to create physical and perhaps social groupings with some identity; it was felt that the close physical arrangements of the houses with front doors opposite across an open space would foster neighborliness and thus create small social sub-groups within the larger context of the project.

In terms of neighborliness, the courts did seem to score higher than the streets, and court dwellers did seem to

neighbor much more within the immediate vicinity of their homes; but it is somewhat doubtful whether this high score, so sought after by designers, is thought of as an advantage by the tenants. As we have discussed in the main body of this report, the courts were not as popular as the streets as places to live, due to the very fact that people felt too jammed together on them and preferred (or thought they would prefer) the anonymity from opposite neighbors afforded by a traffic street.

Although in the above terms of social contacts, the courts may have fostered an over-abundance of casual meetings and thus be thought of as less desirable than the streets, in terms of a visually-identifiable sub-area in the project they were important. The general feeling was that any means by which a small group of houses is made different from the rest, is desirable. More of those at the ends of rows liked their houses than those in the middles of rows, because the end units are different; those in the middles of rows complained that they sometimes walked in the wrong front door because the houses looked so much alike. The general consensus was that people disliked repetitive, stereotyped neighborhoods, that they wanted their house to look different and unique. And whereas many considered that the houses at Easter Hill all looked the same, and thus could not be used as points of reference in walking around the project, they did see the layout (with courts, streets, cul-de-sacs) as varied and used this as a means of orientation. We could perhaps say the opposite has occurred in some of the older residential streets

of our cities, where the streets are straight, grid-patterned . . . and stereotyped, but it is the houses which are different from each other and can be used as reference points.

7. To foster neighborliness and casual social meetings among adults.

Those features which the designers thought of as potentially capable of fostering neighboring, did indeed seem to do just that. Here I am thinking of the arrangement of houses around courts, the backyards with low fences, the unfenced front yards and the network of pedestrian walkways around the project. In addition the small communal parking lot served as an important meeting and talking-place for the men of the project.

Another important means of initial contact was through the children. One might argue that the minimal provision of play spaces for children may also have had a harmful effect on adult relations, in that the children had few places in which to congregate without annoying the residents and arguments consequently arose between neighbors over child-discipline.

As to whether this was a good objective in terms of the needs of the inhabitants, most people certainly wanted to be friendly with their neighbors, and considered that friendliness was one of the most important qualities of a neighborhood; there also seemed to be a correlation between thinking Easter Hill was a friendly neighborhood and being satisfied with it as a place to live. But there is a difference between

living in a friendly neighborhood where the opportunities for casual meetings are there if you want to take advantage of them, and living in a neighborhood where you are thrust too close together with your side and opposite neighbors, and where meetings are consequently "forced." Although forced meetings might be resented in any neighborhood, they are particularly resented in a housing project where, because of personal and family problems, many people want to keep to themselves, and where others feel the need to withdraw into the security of their home because they cannot accept the social disorganization which is in evidence around them.

Many referred to the fact that they felt "too jammed together at Easter Hill," and when asked about their ideal neighborhood described homes with large yards around them; there was a definite desire for more space between houses, but some admitted to a fear that that very space might make it difficult for them to make friends. The real need seemed to be for privacy-without-isolation.

The fact that the houses were joined together at Easter Hill, and that front doors were close to one another, was one means by which the designers sought to achieve this objective of "neighborliness." But the very closeness of the houses and consequent tensions over yard maintenance and child-minding, the degree of noise transference between adjacent units and consequent tensions over privacy, brought about the opposite effect. In the courts there was much more visiting with neighbors two doors away or further down the row, than there

was with next-door neighbors. The aggregated figures for all households in the sample indicate that there was more visiting with opposite neighbors, and with people not in the immediate vicinity of the home, than there was with next door neighbors. (See table XXVIII)

There is also evidence that the courts, used here and elsewhere as a device to foster neighborliness, induced too much contact with neighbors and passers-by, and consequently were not as popular as places to live as the more anonymous traffic streets. In the narrower of the two courts (the one off 26th Street) many of the houses had their blinds permanently drawn, and some respondents told of using the back door more frequently than the front, because they felt the front entrance to be too public.

To sum up then, the designers of Easter Hill were right to select this as one of their social objectives, since the majority of public housing residents are desirous of having friends in the neighborhood who they can visit. Unlike most middle-class suburbanites, many do not have cars to go visiting elsewhere, and cannot afford a phone. Many, beset with family problems and without a man permanently in the house, feel the need for someone nearby to go and talk with.

The network of walkways through the project, the adjacent yards without high and solid fences, the communal parking lots, were all successful means of attaining this objective. The adjacent front doors and the closeness of opposite houses on the courts, tended to produce tensions rather than the desired neighborliness.

Two features were missing from the design that would most probably have increased the number of desired casual social meetings among adults; these were a pre-school play space, where mothers could bring their children, and a place for elderly persons to sit and chat. Certainly these two groups of adults--young mothers with pre-school children, and elderly persons, often living alone--appeared to be the most isolated of all Easter Hill residents, presumably because they were the most tied to the home. A means of casually meeting others in their situation, leading perhaps, to exchanges of visits in the home, would have added considerably to these people's satisfaction with Easter Hill as a place to live.

N. The social implications of the means used by the designers to fulfill their economic objectives

1. To keep building costs to a minimum.

The means of attaining this objective were (1) by providing small, relatively standardized dwelling units, and by eliminating luxury space such as basements, dens, garages, etc.; (2) by using modestly priced materials, and not providing expensive, sound-proof party walls between adjacent houses; and (3) by not providing any community buildings.

The social effects of attaining this objective through these particular means were that first, some families complained about the lack of space and in particular about the small size of the kitchen in which most activities involving the whole family took place. Second, the limited space in the house had particularly harmful effects in the case of large

families; in some instances the resultant tensions caused the husband and teen-age children to spend a good part of their time away from the home.

The lack of provision of private garages could be said to have resulted in both good and bad effects. The back yard, already very small, had to act also as an overflow receptacle for objects which would normally be stored in a garage (bicycles, tools, extra furniture etc.); but on the other hand, the communal parking lots which replaced the garages became important gathering and socializing places for the men in the project, and when not used in the day-time, as hard-surface play areas for the children.

Most people were completely indifferent to the building materials used in the project, and therefore the use of relatively cheap materials could be said to have had no social effects, except in the very important case of party walls between adjacent units, where the cheapness of construction had serious consequences in terms of the lack of family privacy.

The lack of community buildings had harmful effects on the social structure of the neighborhood, in that there was both no place for adults to meet in informal social activities, with the result that many knew very few other families in Easter Hill; and there was no place for teen-agers to meet for social events, meetings, classes etc., with the result that vandalism and petty crime were high on the list of complaints about the project.

To conclude, then, we might say that the means used to keep building costs to a minimum, have had some serious social effects among the inhabitants of Easter Hill, and in quite large measure have contributed to the feeling of dissatisfaction with the project felt by many people. Perhaps the most serious omissions were the lack of soundproofing between adjacent units and the lack of community buildings.

2. To house as many people as possible, but to maximize usable open space.

The means of attaining this objective were by grouping the dwelling units into collections of 2-story row houses, and leaving the remainder of the land in private and public open space. An alternative might have been to house everyone in a few tower blocks and thus leave even more open space for the use of the inhabitants while cutting down on interior space. Another alternative might have been to house each family in a one-story single-family house, thus increasing the amount of interior space while decreasing the amount of open space.

The designers decided on the solution of 2-story row housing since this way they could, at one and the same time, fulfill a number of their major objectives--i.e., to keep building costs to a minimum and to give each family a home of its own and control over a piece of outdoor living space. This solution, though it probably was the best available in terms of these objectives, nevertheless had certain unfortunate social effects. First, row housing is relatively

unfamiliar in California, except in housing projects. Consequently, a good many people reacted negatively towards this type of housing since it tended to remind them they were in a project. Secondly, the type of row housing provided at Easter Hill had other problems attached to it, such as sound transference, and stereotyped exteriors. With sound-proofing and boldly differentiated exteriors, many people's objections to row housing might have been alleviated, though whether enough to let them "forget" they were living in a project, is debatable.

Tenants also reacted negatively to the fact that the houses were of two stories; again, this is relatively unfamiliar in California, except in the older residential districts, where many two story houses are now divided into 1-story flats. Although their verbalized objections were mostly concerned with such practical matters as ease of maintenance and child-rearing, it seems likely that an underlying objection was to living in a type of house which was unlike the privately owned dwellings most of their friends lived in, and therefore unlike what they themselves aspired to live in. When you feel yourself to be outside the general run of society, the last thing you want is that your house and neighborhood should symbolize that you are different, that you are an "outsider"; hence the concern at Easter Hill with the appearance of the environment. No wonder that when asked to describe their ideal house, most described a single-family, 1-story detached house, unlike what they had at Easter Hill, but just like what they saw in drives through

suburbia.

3. To keep landscaping costs to a minimum.

The decision to keep the rocks which formed part of the site problem and incorporate them into the design, was a very wise move on the part of the designers, both in functional and in aesthetic terms. In functional terms, they are a constant source of enjoyment to the children in the project, as objects to climb on, to hide behind, to dig around, etc. In aesthetic terms they seem to give the project some "identity," and, in the view of some of the tenants, they make it seem more "homey," more "modern," more "like it's different from other places." In a few sections of the project the rocks are used much as walls would be used in a city slum, with initials daubed on them in white paint, pictures drawn on them, and flowers painted in bright colors in lieu of the real thing. Although a few people complained that the children hurt themselves climbing, or tore their clothes, or that they were fearful of rocks rolling down the hill into their house, or of snakes lurking beneath them, the general consensus was that the rocks added something to Easter Hill and made it both different and more attractive.

Although most of the grass areas at Easter Hill are well maintained and do give a general sense of greenness to the project, there could have been more tree growth. The limitations on planting were largely due to the effort to keep landscaping costs to a minimum; not only do the trees themselves cost money, but on this particularly difficult site,

much of the tree-planting had to be accomplished by blasting holes for the roots and by bringing in soil, which added to the cost.

The limitation on the amount of tree-planting, though by no means a crucial matter, was unfortunate in a number of ways. The skillful use of trees and of hardy shrubbery (to withstand the many children) could well have ameliorated the micro-climate of the neighborhood, by forming wind breaks; being on flat land fairly close to the Bay, Easter Hill is a very windy place. And it could be argued that the micro-climate in a housing project is even more important than, say, in a middle class suburb; in a low-rent project people are both more tied to the neighborhood and more cramped for living space, and consequently they have more need of using the outdoor spaces around their homes.

The relative lack of tree growth is also unfortunate in other functional ways. First, the problem of lack of privacy could well have been ameliorated in a small way by careful use of planting; for instance, central planting in the court areas might have alleviated the feeling of "looking straight into the other guy's window," as well as deterring some of the rowdier children's games from taking place in such areas close to people's houses. Second, the use of quick-growing sturdy trees in specific places away from the houses could have provided another form of play-object for climbing, for swinging from, for playing around; and it is doubtful that they would have been too seriously over-used since the rocks form an important counter-attraction as objects to climb on.

In purely aesthetic terms, more tree-growth would certainly have improved the appearance of the project, for the great majority of the inhabitants said it was important for them to see trees and grass in the neighborhood where they lived. A number specifically complained about the dreary outlook from their house onto rows of similar back yards, onto the rocky side of the Hill with "barracks-like" houses perched on top, onto the littered vacant lots, filling stations and run-down housing which surround the project.

Although few planners have done any definitive research on the psychological effects of one's physical surroundings, there is a cult in the profession which tends to deny the importance of those surroundings despite the scant evidence to support their contentions. From the results of my interviews at Easter Hill, I would tend rather to support the view of a psychologist who wrote....

It seems to me that, in our culture, a conscious ignoring of the psychological importance of the non-human environment exists simultaneously with a (largely unconscious) overdependence upon that environment. I believe that the actual importance of that environment to the individual is so great that he dare not recognize it. Unconsciously it is felt, I believe, to be not only an intensely important conglomeration of things outside the self, but also a large and integral part of the self.¹

Certainly, there appeared to be a correlation between not liking the appearance of Easter Hill, and not liking it

¹Harold F. Searles, The Nonhuman Environment in Normal Development and in Schizophrenia, New York: Internal Universities Press, Inc., 1960, p. 395; quoted in Schorr, op. cit., p. 10.

as a social milieu, as though the two were inextricably intertwined. Those who withdrew into their homes, often behind drawn blinds, because they could not accept the social disorganization they felt and saw around them, were more than likely also to react unfavorably to the nonhuman environment. Those who were beset with personal problems tended to "blame" both the people around them and the physical environment; this latter would be described as "depressing" or "unpleasant," whereas a neighbor with the same outlook but greater psychological contentment, might describe it as "pretty" and "colorful."

In one specific instance, a woman with a number of family problems who had considerable difficulty relating to the interviewer and to her neighbors, responded that she kept her blinds drawn because she got..."sick and tired of looking at that parking lot out front and that dreary dirt area out back," and that she became quite depressed each time she approached Easter Hill in her car because she knew..."it would still look just the same...nothing ever changes." When asked if she thought the houses had some individuality, she replied..."They sure don't--maybe that is what bugs me about this place." This seemed a classic case of the physical environment becoming..."a large and integral part of the self."

It may be that an attractive neighborhood is psychologically even more important to a group of people who feel themselves inferior or out of the mainstream of American

life, than it is to members of a middle-class, relatively stable community, who both have the wherewithal to have larger homes and more material possessions, and the ability to leave their neighborhood to visit the beach, the city, the mountains, and other contrasting environments. If you're tied to the home, a pleasant view out of the windows may mean a good deal more to you than if you leave the neighborhood frequently to work or shop or visit friends or go on trips.

The problems that arose through the lack of provision of enough play-equipment have already been discussed, and in part we must lay the blame for the omission at the door of this objective--"to keep landscaping costs to a minimum." It will serve no purpose to repeat here the arguments we have already expounded on the need for more and varied play equipment in this neighborhood of many children. However, we should briefly mention another, comparable omission--areas for adult relaxation and recreation.

It is sad to report that in this neighborhood of 300 families, many of them transient and lonely, there is not a single bench where two people might chat in the open air and not a single gathering place where adults might casually meet. While this may not be a very serious omission in a middle-class neighborhood where there is plenty of space in the house, where people can phone their friends for a chat or drive round in the car, it is much more of an omission in a neighborhood where many of the houses are overcrowded, and where many people lack the money for phones or automobiles with which to make contact

with friends outside the neighborhood; where many are strangers to the area and yet do not have the social ability to go calling on their neighbors. Granted, the front porches and front yards do act as places of casual social contact, but these are essentially attached to the houses. A number of people expressed the desire for somewhere to go to within the project; they wanted an excuse to take a walk, to go to a place where they could sit down, look at the view and maybe chat with other people who were there. This lack of anywhere different to go, of anything different to look at, was pathetically illustrated by the case of an elderly man whom I saw get up with a sigh, after sitting for some time in his front porch, and go sit in his automobile parked opposite. He didn't go anywhere in it, but just sat; it faced the opposite way from his porch, so at least the outlook was different.

This lack of a specific place to which adults might go was especially felt by elderly people, who often were living alone, and by women with small children who just wanted to go for a walk and get away from the house. For adult men the omission was not serious, for they already have an important informal gathering place in the parking lot. Here they can discuss cars, sit on the curb and have a smoke, meet with their neighbors, wash the car, and so on; certainly, if the parking had been left entirely to spaces on the street, this important meeting and gathering place for youths and men would have been lost.

4. To keep maintenance costs down to a minimum

One of the means used by the designers of Easter Hill to keep maintenance costs to a minimum was by including a considerable proportion of the open space in the project in private yards, maintained by the tenants themselves. As we have already discussed above, the provision of these pieces of private open space greatly increased the inhabitants' satisfactions with the project as a place to live. And not least of these satisfactions was the feeling that each household had a piece of land which was theirs to take care of, which gave them an excuse to be working out in the fresh air, to make contact with neighbors. It gave them the wherewithal to improve the look of their domain, to gain status in the eyes of their neighbors and friends, and in the aggregate, to upgrade the appearance of the neighborhood. Therefore, one might say, that in using this particular means of attaining their objective, the designers were not only successful in minimizing maintenance costs, they were also successful in satisfying a number of other tenant-needs.

There is one important factor to remember, in terms of lowering maintenance costs by maximizing the amount of land which is tenant-maintained, and that is that we are concerned in public housing with a low-income population. Keeping up a yard, however small, costs money, and if lawn mowers and garden tools are not provided (as they are not at Easter Hill), there is always the problem of people not being able to do a good job through lack of money to buy the necessary equipment,

or lack of familiarity with their neighbors to borrow it. Ideally, then, if one wants to ensure the success of this objective, one should also make sure that tools are going to be provided. Garden tools were in fact provided, during the early years' of Easter Hill's existence, with a tool shed attached to each row of houses containing the shared equipment for that particular group of households. For some reason, this was discontinued, and the tools now have to be borrowed from the Housing Authority office, which is more than a quarter of a mile distant from most of the houses in the project; added to the problem of borrowing these tools if one does not have a car is the fact that a number of the tenants approached in this survey, did not even know that it was possible to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DESIGN OF LOW-COST HOUSING

Having discussed the results and social implications of the designers' objectives at Easter Hill, I shall now list a number of points which I feel should be kept in mind by the designers of future low-cost housing. Although most of the points made apply equally to private or public housing, those in sections D and E--public open space, and community buildings, apply largely to public housing.

A. THE HOUSE - INTERIOR

1. The kitchen should be the largest room in the house, or at least of equal size to the living room, with adequate space for food preparation, eating of meals, washing clothes, tending children, casual entertaining etc; in many working-class families, it is the only room in the house where the whole family gathers together at one time.
2. The kitchen should look out over the back yard so that children at play can be easily supervised by the mother while she is preparing meals, etc.
3. The living room need not be any larger than the kitchen, since in many families the members rarely all use it at the same time, and if they do, it is for such activities as entertaining, or watching TV; these are passive activities, and do not need as much space as do the equivalent number of people assembling for, eating, and clearing away a meal. Also, a large living room requires more furniture, which is an added expense for the inhabitants.

4. In areas where the climate is such that children cannot play outside for considerable periods of the year, the living room should be larger than the kitchen, since it will be used as a play area during the day-time.

5. If possible, a basement should be provided which could be used as a playroom, workshop, extra bedroom, storage space etc. At present, low-cost housing, of necessity, skimps on 'luxury' space; an ideal extra would be a space which could be used for many functions, at the same time.

6. If possible, all rooms should be provided on the same level, to make child-care and cleaning less tiring. But if it is necessary to provide 2-story units, then every effort should be made to:

- (a) provide a second toilet downstairs, to aid mothers in the training of very young children;
- (b) provide good sound-proofing between floors; if, because of costs, this cannot be provided satisfactorily, then ...
- (c) care should be taken that adjacent units do not overlap (i.e., bedroom of one unit overlapping living room of another), and
- (d) care should be taken that the stairs of one unit do not run adjacent to the sleeping quarters of an adjacent unit.

8. In the use of interior finishes, thought should be given to the fact that the inhabitants of the house will have low incomes and cannot afford extra expenses in the way of cleaning materials, etc. For instance, flooring should be of a material that can be easily and cheaply maintained (i.e., not a pine floor that needs constant, expensive polishing); walls

in all rooms should be of a material that needs little maintenance and can be easily cleaned (e.g., washable paint, tiles, etc.).

9. Heating can be an extra expense to a low-income family, so care should be taken that the form of heating installed is as economical as possible, and that it is so located within the house that each heat outlet is strategically placed to warm as much of the house as possible. (Not, as in some units at Easter Hill, at the base of the stairs, so that the upstairs gets overheated and the downstairs remains cold.)

10. The aural separation of sleeping and living quarters is important, both because of sexual privacy, and because in many low-income families the father may be working shifts, or be out of work, or be on leave from the service, and therefore may want to sleep at different times from the rest of the family.

11. More units should be provided with 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms, to house the increasing number of low-income families with large numbers of children.

12. The amount of space, both for living and for storage, is much more important to most low-income people, than the appearance of the house, either inside or out.

B. THE HOUSE - EXTERIOR

1. People are less concerned with the aesthetic attractiveness of their house than they are with its ability to provide for privacy from their neighbors; therefore, if a cost-choice has to be made between, say, providing separate houses that all

look pretty much alike, and row houses that have been expensively designed to look different from each other, but which do not afford inter-family privacy, then in terms of satisfying the greatest number of people, the former combination (separate, but the same), should be chosen over the latter (different, but attached).

2. House exteriors should be designed to look owner-occupied as much as possible like the prevailing designs of middle-income owner-occupied housing in the area. The majority of low-income persons (at least, in California) do aspire to look and live like the middle-classes; they do not aspire to live in houses that are "different," or avant-garde. Therefore, in terms of either public housing projects or low-income subdivisions, the closer the houses resemble middle-class suburbia, the more satisfied the inhabitants will be with their environment.

3. If possible provide detached houses, even if there is only a very narrow space between them. People equate privacy with physical separation, but...

4. Most people would probably accept semi-detached houses almost as readily as completely detached houses, as long as there is good sound-proofing between the two units.

5. If limited building costs and land availability demand the use of row housing, make every effort to -

- (a) boldly differentiate house exteriors,
- (b) provide separate, private entrances,

- (c) provide party walls that are sound proofed enough to eliminate the transference of normal family activities and conversation, but not necessarily completely sound-proof, since a low level of sounds from an adjacent house provides a sense of security. Privacy between units is valued much more highly than privacy within units.

6. Next to privacy, people prize individuality of house exteriors very highly, even if the interiors are basically the same. But the methods used to differentiate house exteriors must be bold--contrasting colors and building heights seem to be what people notice most readily. If limiting costs is an important factor in the design, then eliminate the subtle, "cosmetic" variations between exteriors, as they will be noticed by very few people, apart from designers who are looking for them.

C. THE HOUSE - ORIENTATION AND APPROACHES

1. Provide each house unit with a private entrance separated from those adjacent to it by distance, or variations in setback, or a front porch. People do not like shared entrances, or their front door located such that any callers waiting for the door to be opened are visible to the whole street.
2. Provide each unit with a front porch which will both perform the functions noted in 1 above, and serve as a place in which teenagers can loiter, talk, flirt, play cards, watch other teenagers go by, and generally engage in those quasi-public activities that require a locale mid-way between completely public space.¹

¹Elizabeth Wood has criticized design which sets out to minimize or prevent accidental communication between people and the informal gathering of people. She says, ... "It seems

3. Provide each house with a separate front path from the front door to the public sidewalk or walkway/ shared paths provide sources of tension over use and maintenance, and are not typical of the majority of middle-income homes.
4. Where possible, provide also a back entrance and back path, so that children can enter the house via the kitchen, and so that adults can leave the house the back way, if there are neighbors out front who they wish to avoid.
5. A balance should be provided between houses facing onto traffic streets (preferred by persons with older children, by women isolated in the house all day, by older persons) and those facing onto courts and cul-de-sacs (preferred by those with small children).
6. Units facing onto traffic streets should be set far enough back from the street that small children running out of the house will not be in danger. Streets should be designed so as to prevent automobiles from travelling too fast.
7. Units on traffic streets should be so placed, in reference to the street and sidewalk that passers by cannot easily see into the house, but so that persons inside the house can readily see what is going on outside (e.g., children playing, neighbors walking by, passing auto traffic etc.).
8. Units for elderly persons should be so located that there is not excessive noise from traffic or children playing, but

to be an urban fact that boys and girls must loiter: girls with girls, to see if they can see boys; boys with boys, to see if they can see girls; boys with girls for general purposes." (Elizabeth Wood, Housing; A Social Theory, Citizens Housing and Planning Council of New York, 1961, pp. 27 and 29.)

where there is plenty of activity to be observed, such as people walking by on the way to the store, the bus-stop and so on.

9. Where units face each other across an open court-area, care should be taken that -

- (a) opposite front doors are not too close, and not exactly opposite each other. A given distance across a court, comprising open grass or paving, does not provide opposite neighbors with as much privacy as the same distance across a street, with moving traffic on it;
- (b) back entrances are provided to each house unit, so that those who feel the front entrance onto a court is too much in the public view, can use the back entrance;
- (c) where necessary, planting is used to provide a visual barrier between opposite neighbors;
- (d) public and private open space are carefully delimited, so that groups of neighborhood children do not annoy residents by playing right under their windows;
- (e) attractive and safe play areas be provided away from the courts, to prevent excessive use of the court areas as playgrounds;
- (f) those areas away from the surveillance of patrolling police cars on the streets, are well lit at night, so that no one has to approach their home fearfully.

10. People's greatest concern seems to be for privacy without isolation, therefore great stress should be laid on the adequate separation and set-back of individual units, and the placing of entrances so as not to induce "forced" personal contacts; yet units should not be so placed that any particular household would feel isolated.

D. PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

1. Provide each unit with a private enclosed back yard with fences high enough to keep out children and animals, and with a gate that can be locked.
2. Provide each back yard with at least the following -
 - (a) a clothes line,
 - (b) a hard-surfaced, partially enclosed area in which to keep a garbage can, easily accessible for collection,
 - (c) a small shed or lean-to, preferably lockable, in which to store bicycles, toys, garden tools etc., particularly if there is no garage,
 - (d) a hard surface area on which to do small repair and painting jobs,
 - (e) a small lawn.
3. Provide the back yard with fencing that cannot be seen through, and that is high enough that (a) children can't see over it, and (b) when a person is sitting, they cannot be seen by their adjacent neighbors; but it should not be so high that adult neighbors cannot talk over it.¹
4. Provide a back yard that is at least 15' x 15' in size, and can accommodate at least the following four activities-- clothes drying, children's play, sitting out (adults), and gardening. The fewer the public facilities for children's

¹The greater the privacy of the back yard, the more it will be utilized by the adult residents (for sitting out, barbecues, etc.). The greater the density of the project, and the more unpleasant the surroundings, the greater the need for adequate solid fencing.

play in or near the project, the larger must be the amount of private open space provided for each tenant.

5. Provide each unit with a front porch, so constructed that additional fixtures, such as window boxes, plants in pots, etc., may be added to it, to lend a touch of individuality to the house front; so that there is room for one or two persons to sit in it, partly out of view, so that they may see what's going on, and yet not be sitting in a completely public place; and so that a small temporary gate can be erected to turn it into a play-pen.

6. Where possible, provide each unit with a front yard as well as a back yard. Though the quasi-public front yard is not as important in utilitarian terms as is the private back yard, people like to take care of a front yard because it is a means of improving the appearance of their home (and, in aggregate, of the neighborhood); a means of maintaining or up-grading status in the eyes of their neighbors and friends; a means of (legitimately) being out front of their house to see what is going on in the neighborhood; a place in which a chat to a neighbor or friend can take place without the formality of an invitation into the house.

7. Where houses are close together, and particularly where they are attached, adjacent front yards should be carefully delimited from each other, to avoid quarrels over maintenance, "trespassing" etc.

E. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

1. Make sure there are sufficient attractive, interesting, and specific play areas for the number of children expected to live in the neighborhood. The smaller are the house units, and the private space provided for each unit, the larger and more varied must be the public play areas for children. They should include some or all of the following:

- (a) tot-lots; one or a number, within easy walking distance of the majority of homes in the neighborhood, with facilities different from those that can be provided in the back yard, and with sitting areas for adults to watch their children, meet each other, and talk.
- (b) play-equipment areas for young school-age children, unless these are already available close by in parks or school-yards; care should be taken that they are very sturdily built, so as to withstand possible vandalism.
- (c) an area for team sports (baseball, basketball, etc.) if this is not locally provided.
- (d) hard surface areas for roller skating, bike riding, etc.; communal parking lots, half or completely empty during the day, can quite safely double as play areas, as long as they are used only by inhabitants who are aware of this double use, and are cautious when entering the lot.

(e) consideration should seriously be given to the provision of a supervised adventure playground, in which children of all ages could build houses, dig tunnels, or do anything constructive or destructive that they desired. It should be surrounded with solid fencing (since such playgrounds are often very untidy), and should be locked when not in use and supervised. Arrangements could be made with local builders to dump their scrap wood and other materials at the playground, and tools can be loaned out to the children each day by the supervisor. Such a playground would be especially desirable in a low-income area where living space and the ability to engage in constructive play, are limited; where there are sometimes discipline problems (due to the lack of a man in the house), and where children need some way in which to let off steam without annoying local residents, or engaging in vandalism; and where mobility (to other recreational facilities in the city) is limited.

2. Ideally, all the above play areas (except the tot-lots) should be located away from the houses (because of noise), preferably in a neighborhood park, adjacent to, or safely accessible on foot from, the housing area.

3. Play areas provided among the houses, should as far as possible be screened from the houses, both visually and aurally.

4. Casual meeting places for adults should be provided,

particularly where the project aims at housing numbers of elderly persons living alone; even a simple bench, located in a pleasant spot, is a place to walk to for those who are house-bound most of the day, and who do not have the means of leaving the neighborhood.

5. Casual loitering places for teenagers should be unselfconsciously woven into the site plan, and should be located in places that are well-lit at night, but which are not so close to the houses that noise would cause annoyance to the residents. The further the project is from cheap, commercial recreation facilities, the more important such areas are.

F. COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

A community building for the use of project residents should be provided, where such facility is not provided locally, say, in an adjacent neighborhood park. Important points to be noted in its siting are:

- (a) that it should be easily accessible on foot from all parts of the project
- (b) that it be well lit, and safely approachable at night, from all parts of the project.

Important points to be noted as regards facilities within it, are:

- (a) that it should include indoor sports facilities suitable for the use of teen-agers in the evenings (e.g., volley ball, basketball, etc.); this space could double as an assembly place for meetings,
- (b) that a casual recreation area should be provided

- for the use of adults or teenagers, such as a small lounge for talking, playing cards, etc.
- (c) that office space for a project manager be provided, if the project is large enough to warrant this;
 - (d) that office space be provided for the joint use of social case workers, guidance counsellors and any other agency workers who may have occasion to work in the project;
 - (e) that a small clinic area be provided for the use of public health nurses or doctors who hold office hours for the convenience of project residents;
 - (f) that a small kitchen area be provided, so that refreshments can be served at meetings;
 - (g) that space for a small day-care nursery be provided, for the use of mothers in the project who, without such a facility, could not go out to work.
 - (h) that display space be provided outside the building so that there could be publicity about the services offered, programs and meetings being scheduled, etc.
 - (i) that there be display space inside the building, to inform residents about those services provided in the city which they may want to make use of, such as adult education, employment services, limited cost health services, limited cost legal services, recreation programs, etc.

G. LOCATION

Wherever possible, the following location criteria should be observed:

- (a) closeness to a supermarket or cut-price food stores, so that those without cars do not have to make a long journey to shop, and so that those with very low incomes can economize on food-buying;
- (b) closeness to cheap, commercial recreation facilities, such as movies, bowling alleys, cafes etc., especially for teenagers and young adults, who may be out of work;
- (c) closeness to a neighborhood park, with safe pedestrian access to it, especially where play facilities within the project are limited, or where private yards for family picnics or barbecues are not provided;
- (d) closeness to public transportation for those who do not have cars, or for women in the project whose husbands take the car to work;
- (e) easy accessibility to downtown for -
 - visits to public agencies, such as the Department of Employment,
 - County Welfare Department, etc.,
 - cheaper food and clothing stores, sales, etc.;
 - public and private vocational education facilities (e.g., evening classes at High Schools, Manpower Development and Training Act programs, barber colleges, beautician schools, secretarial colleges, etc.);
 - public transportation access to other parts of the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

I would briefly make the following recommendations on the types of studies I feel are desirable, in terms of expanding our understanding of people's responses to housing and neighborhood design:

1. The social implications of the design of various types of low-cost housing - high-rise apartments, walk-up apartments, single family housing, etc.
2. The function and meaning of "the house," and "the neighborhood" to different socio-economic groups, and the implications for planners and architects.
3. The play needs of children in an urban environment, the various means of fulfilling those needs, and the socio-psychological implications for adults and children of the inhibition of those needs.
4. The privacy needs and social needs of adults in an urban environment, the various means of fulfilling those needs and the socio-psychological implications of their inhibition.
5. The psychological need for beauty and serenity in the physical environment, whether that need really exists, and what the implications are for human development/relations, of unpleasant, depressing or threatening environments.¹
6. How different categories of urban residents (i.e., by race, sex, income, etc.) view their "ideal house," and their "ideal neighborhood," and the implications for planners and architects.
7. Which types of site-plan design will best enable racial integration in housing to take place with the minimum of social problems.

¹"Light, air, greenery, variety of color, materials, forms--within the dwelling unit and the neighborhood--may create interest which affects people's moods.... planners have here a more intangible factor, which, despite its subjectivity, may have subtle effects on mood and thereby potentially affect tolerance thresholds and the texture of social integration. Very little research has been done on the psychological impact of different aesthetic environments ... so there is little ground on which to evaluate the importance of design from this standpoint." (Irving Rostow, "Social effects of physical environment," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 27, No. 2, May, 1961, pp. 127-133.

8. The future needs for, and ideal location of, low-cost housing in a metropolitan area, having in mind the mobility needs and abilities of low-income persons (i.e., to work, to shops, to recreation, etc.).
9. The leisure-time needs of low-income persons, considering particularly which needs require fulfillment within the house; within private open space, within local public space, at commercial places of recreation, etc., and the implications for house and site plan design, and for the location of low-cost housing within the metropolitan area.
10. The correlations between the success of various housing projects and the provision of community facilities within the project.
11. The relative desirability of locating units for elderly persons throughout a project, in one section of a project, or in a separate location.
12. The effect on the social structure of a housing project, or low-cost subdivision, of a surrounding area inhabited by different economic or racial groups, or by non-residential land-uses.
13. The differences in the use made of private and public open space by members of different socio-economic groups, and the implications for planners and designers.
14. The degree to which there are conflicts in the use of private interior and exterior space between different members of a family--husband, wife, young children, adolescents--and the implications for designers.

POSTSCRIPT: The field work for this study was carried out in July and August, 1964, and the analysis of the results and writing of the report was carried out between September 1964 and July 1965. In August 1965--during the course of the final draft typing, I learned that under the Poverty Program in Richmond, a tenants organization has been started at Easter Hill, additional play equipment has been purchased and added to the one playground, two tot-lots have been constructed, though more are planned, and there is the possibility

of an adventure playground and a community building being added to the project.¹

¹Conversation with Anatole H. Shaffer and the Rev. William R. Pothier of the Contra Costa Council of Community Services, Richmond Community Development Demonstration Project, August 26, 1965.

GENERAL TABLES OF EASTER HILL SAMPLE

<u>SEX OF RESPONDENTS</u>			<u>RACE OF RESPONDENTS</u>			<u>EST. AGE OF RESPONDENTS</u>		
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>		<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>		<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Female	47	90	White	30	58	Under 20	4	7
Male	5	10	Negro	13	25	20-29	16	31
Total	52	100	Oriental	4	8	30-39	16	31
			Mexican	4	8	40-49	13	25
			Other	1	2	Over 50	3	6
			Total	52	100	Total	52	100

PLACE OF ORIGIN OF RESPONDENTS, BY RACE

Place of Origin	RACE											
	White		Negro		Oriental		Mexican		Other		Total	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
South	28	8	62	8	-	-	50	2	-	-	35	18
California	24	7	38	5	25	1	50	2	-	-	29	15
Mid & N. West	38	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	11
East	10	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3
Outside cont. USA	-	-	-	-	75	3	-	-	100	1	8	4
TOTAL	100	29	100	13	100	4	100	4	100	1	100	51

Details of Place of Origin:

Whites - California(7), Kansas(3), Minnesota(3), N. Carolina(2), Arkansas(2); Texas(2), Missouri(1), Tennessee(1), Nebraska(1), Iowa(1), Michigan(1), Wisconsin(1), Washington(1), Pennsylvania(1), New Hampshire(1), Massachusetts(1).

Negroes - California(5), Louisiana(3), Texas(2), Arkansas(2), Tennessee(1).

Orientals - California(1), Guam(1), Philippines(1), Japan(1).

Mexicans - Texas(2), California(2).

Other - Alaska(1 - Eskimo).

MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

	No.	%
Living with spouse	33	63
Divorced or separated	14	27
Widowed	2	4
Single	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	52	100

MARITAL STATUS BY RACE

<u>Race</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>					
	<u>Living with Spouse</u>		<u>Divorced or Separated</u>		<u>Widowed</u>	<u>Single</u>
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.
White	19	53	8	57	1	2
Negro	6	18	5	36	1	1
Other	<u>3</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL	33	100	14	100	2	3

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD

	<u>Households</u>	
None	6	Median Number of Children = 2
1	6	
2	15	Mode = 2
3	10	
4	7	Average = 2.7
5	4	
6	1	
7	1	
8	<u>2</u>	
TOTAL	52	

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY RACE

<u>Race</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>				
		<u>None</u>	<u>1 - 2</u>	<u>3 - 4</u>	<u>More than 4</u>
White	No.	5	12	8	5
	%	17	40	26	17
Negro	No.	1	5	6	1
	%	8	38	46	8
Other	No.	-	4	3	2
					9

EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS

<u>Last Grade Completed</u>											<u>College or trade school</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>			
No. 1	-	2	1	-	5	4	10	5	16		7	51
% 2	-	4	2	-	10	8	20	10	31		14	100

EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS BY RACE

	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>Col. or tr. sch.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Med. Grade Completed</u>
White	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	6	2	11	4	29	12th
Negro	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	1	2	4	2	13	11th
Other	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	1	8	10th

EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS AND SPOUSES

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Less than 6th grade</u>	<u>7th, 8th 9th grades</u>	<u>10th & 11th grades</u>	<u>12th grade</u>	<u>Col. or tr. sch.</u>
Males - No.	36	3	4	8	15	6
%	100	8	11	22	42	17
Females-No.	50	4	8	16	13	9
%	100	8	16	32	26	18

Median Grade Completed: Males 12th
Females 11th

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE AT EASTER HILL

	No.	%
Less than 6 months	10	20
6 months - 1 year	7	14
More than 1 year, less than 3	9	18
3 - 5 years	9	18
More than 5 years	<u>16</u>	<u>31</u>
TOTAL	51	100

EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALES IN HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Occupation	RACE			TOTAL
	White	Negro	Other	
Domestic/kitchen	2	2	-	4
Child care	1	-	1	2
Factory operative	-	-	1	1
Cashier	1	-	-	1
Nurse	1	-	-	1
Doctor's receptionist	-	1	-	<u>1</u>
				10
Unemployed-- seeking work ¹	5	1	-	<u>5</u>
				15
Housewife	18	9	7	34
Student	1	1	-	2
Retired clerk	1	-	-	<u>1</u>
				<u>52</u>

1. As - secretary, key-punch operator, cashier, nurse's aide, and cannery worker.

EMPLOYMENT OF MALES IN HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>RACE</u>			<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>Other</u>	
Professional	-	1	-	1 ¹
Clerical	-	1	1	2 ²
Skilled or Semi-skilled	5	2	4	11 ³
Unskilled	2	-	2	4 ⁴
Servicemen	8	1	1	10
Unemployed	4	2	-	<u>6</u> 34
No male in household	10	6	1	17
No answer	-	-	1	<u>1</u> 52

NOTE: Totals in the above tables may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

-
1. Architect.
 2. Post office clerk (Negro); clerk to Navy, Civil Service (Other).
 3. Medical aide, forklift truck operator, self-employed truck driver, transformer repairman, roofer (White); medical aide, barber (Negro); welder, machinist, forklift truck operator, gardener (Other).
 4. Docksmen, railroad car loader (White); warehouseman, service station attendant (Other).

PUBLIC HOUSING PICTURES - DETAILED RESPONSES

SEPARATE HOUSES

Reasons for liking:-

More like ordinary house, more homelike	16
More privacy	13
Separate, individual houses	11
More space around house/own yard	8
Like appearance/trees	4
More interesting/different	4
Wouldn't bother people with our kids	3
No noise from next door	3
Greater variety of people	2
People wouldn't know it was Housing	2
Would feel more individual	1
We'd be by ourselves	1
Clean	1
Being Hsg., would keep relatives from descending on us	1
Like older houses	1
Could tell people to get off your front lawn/not public land	1
Far from traffic	1
Own garage	1
Could keep child in yard	1
Like an English-type home	1

Reasons for not liking:-

Too lonely/husband away/people wouldn't talk	2
Not private enough	1

EASTER HILL

Reasons for liking:-

Have our own yard	7
Private	5
More like a house	2
Different/individual	2
Like to be close to neighbors / help you	2
Like way it looks	1
No one above you	1
Like styling of bldgs./modern ones too stark	1
On ground	1
More homey	1

Reasons for not liking:-

Not enough room in yards	2
Don't like 2 storys	1
Don't like apartments	1
Like living in a trap	1
Too jammed together	1

VALENCIA GARDENS

Reasons for liking:-

Places for kids to play	1
Only 3 floors	1
Not so jammed together as Easter Hill	1
Like way it looks	1
Looks clean/nice	1
It's like Navy Housing	1
Nice balconies	1
Like people around, as long as can't own own home	1

Reasons for not liking:-

No private yards	3
People all around you	5
Balconies too high, kids could fall	2
Kids too far to watch	2
Too close/like living in trap	2
Too barren	1
Have to keep kids quiet/would bother people	1
Too noisy	1
Clean and dirty people living together	1
Don't like communal drying yards	1

PING YUEN

Reasons for liking:-

Like a hotel	1

Reasons for not liking:-

Too high/kids would fall out	12
Too cramped/too many families in building	11
Have to come down to get kids/too difficult to watch them	7
Don't like elevators	5
No good for kids/no place to play	4
Hate to live on top	4
No private yards	3
Too hard to carry up groceries/too tiring	4
Would have claustrophobia/choke to death	3
Too many kids together/trouble	3
Don't like downtown/living in city	2
Like a hospital	1
Like a business building	1
Like living in a jail	1
Like an overgrown school	1
Like living in a hotel	1
If epidemic starts, would never stop	1
Too many foreigners	1
Couldn't get to know people	1
Have to pass so many doors on way down	1
Too noisy	1
Don't like all that cement and glass	1

PING YUEN

Reasons for not liking:- (continued)

Wouldn't suit our family	1
No privacy	1
Terrible	1
Not like a home	1
Like living in New York or Los Angeles	1
Sleeping and living on one floor	1
Child could be kidnapped	1
Have to share hallways--be a mess	1

EASTER HILL QUESTIONNAIRE

ADDRESS _____

Location of unit: In row neighbors on both sides ☐

End of row, neighbor on one side only ☐

Duplex - upstairs ☐

- downstairs ☐

Orientation of unit: Faces directly onto street ☐

Faces onto court or open space ☐

House exterior:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>RESULT</u>
1st visit _____ am pm	_____	_____
2nd visit _____ am pm	_____	_____
3rd visit _____ am pm	_____	_____

1. How many rooms do you have in the house?

Kitchen ☐ Bathroom ☐ Living room ☐ Bedrooms ☐

2. What would you say you like most about your house? Why is that?

3. Are there any particular things that you don't like about the house?

4. How about the size of the rooms - would you prefer any of them larger or smaller?

5. And what about the number of rooms - are you satisfied with that?

6. What about storage space (i.e. closets, etc.) - is there enough for your needs?

7. How do you like living in a 2-story house?

Like ☐ Don't like ☐ Indifferent ☐

Why do you say that?

8. Do you think you'd like the house better if there were some space between it and the houses on either side? ('next door' - where appropriate)

Yes ☐ No ☐ Indifferent ☐ Don't know ☐

(IF ANSWERS YES OR NO, ASK-) Why? _____

9. Can you hear any noise through the walls?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Is it sometimes loud enough to bother you?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Indifferent ☐

Comments _____

11. Now about the outside appearance of your house. Would you say that you like it - (READ OUT ALTERNATIVES)

A lot ☐ Only a little ☐ Neither like nor ☐
dislike
Quite a bit ☐ Not at all ☐ Don't know ☐

Comments _____

12. Do you ever wish that you could paint or fix up the outside of the house to be different from the way it is now?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(IF ANSWERS YES, PROBE FOR REASONS) _____

13. How about the inside of your house - have you ever painted that?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(PROBE FOR REASONS) _____

14. Which is more important to you - the appearance of the inside of the house, or the appearance of the outside?

Inside ☐ Outside ☐ Both equally important ☐ Don't know ☐

Why is that? _____

15. What do you and your family generally use the back yard for?
(DO NOT PROMPT: NOTE ORDER IN WHICH USES MENTIONED)

(AFTER RESPONDENT HAS GIVEN ALL USES SHE/HE CAN THINK OF, ASK -)

16. Do you ever use it for - Drying clothes

☐

Keeping children in

☐

Keeping dog in

☐

Storing bicycles, play equipment

☐

Storing extra furniture

☐

Sitting in sun (respondent)

☐

Growing plants

☐

Sitting in sun (spouse)

☐

Doing repair jobs

☐

Barbecues or picnics

☐

17. How about the size of your yard - do you like it the way it is, or would you really like to have a bigger yard, or a smaller one?

As is ☐ Bigger ☐ Smaller ☐

Why is that? _____

18. Apart from its size - can you think of any other things about the back yard that you don't like - that you'd like to see changed?

No, nothing ☐

Yes ☐ _____

(IF HASN'T ALREADY MENTIONED, ASK -)

19. What about a higher and more solid type of fence that people couldn't see through?

Would like ☐ Wouldn't like ☐ Indifferent ☐

Why? _____

20. And what about a larger cement area outside the back door?

Would like ☐ Wouldn't like ☐ Indifferent ☐

Why do you say that? _____

21. Some people like the yards all looking different - and some people think it would be nicer if they all looked the same. What do you feel about this?

Like all different ☐ Like all same ☐ Indifferent ☐

Why do you say that? _____

22. Have you had your own private yard at other places where you've lived?

Yes ☐

No ☐

23. Are you pleased that you have a yard here, or would you rather not be bothered with it - or don't you really care either way?

Pleased ☐ Not pleased ☐ Indifferent ☐

(IF NOT PLEASED, ASK -) Why? _____

24. Would you like it if your front yard was fenced too?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Why? _____

25. How do you like having a covered front porch on your house?

Like ☐

Dislike ☐

Indifferent ☐

Why is that? _____

26. What do you use the porch for? _____

(IF HASN'T MENTIONED ALREADY, ASK -)

27. Do you ever use it for sitting outside? Yes ☐ No ☐

28. Now that I've asked you a lot of questions about the inside and outside of your house - perhaps you could tell me, in general, how do you like it. Would you say you like it - (READ OUT ALTERNATIVES)

A lot ☐ Only a little ☐ Neither like nor dislike ☐

Quite a bit ☐ Not at all ☐ Don't know ☐

Comments _____

29. All things considered, do you feel that the rent here is too high, or about right?

Too high ☐

Don't know ☐

About right ☐

Comments _____

30. Could you describe to me the ideal type of house you'd like to live in - if you didn't have to worry about money or paying the rent? _____

31. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about the neighborhood. What things do you especially like about Easter Hill as a neighborhood?

32. Are there any things which you especially dislike about the neighborhood?

33. Do you think this is an attractive neighborhood to look at?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Indifferent ☐ DK ☐

Why do you say that? _____

(IF DIDN'T MENTION TREES, GREENERY ETC, ASK-)

34. Is it important to you to see trees and grass in the neighborhood where you live?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Indifferent ☐ DK ☐

Why? _____

35. Some people prefer it when all the houses in a neighborhood look the same, and others like it better when there are differences between the houses. What do you feel about this?

Like all the same ☐ Like differences ☐

Indifferent ☐ Don't know ☐

Why is that? _____

36. Do you think the houses here have differences between them, or do they look the same?

All look the same ☐ Differences ☐ Don't know ☐

(IF THINKS THERE ARE DIFFERENCES, ASK-)

37. In what ways do the houses look different from each other?
(DO NOT PROMPT: NOTE ORDER IN WHICH ITEMS MENTIONED)

Color	☐	Materials	☐	Porch detail	☐
Size	☐	Orientation	☐	Windows	☐
Height	☐	Staggered facade	☐	Front doors	☐

Other _____

38. Do you like the way your house faces (onto street/open space),
or would you prefer it to be facing onto open space/street?
(DELETE INAPPROPRIATE WORDS)

Likes the way houses faces ☐ Would like it another way ☐

Why is that? _____

39. How do you like all those rocks in between the houses?

Like ☐ Dislike ☐ Indifferent ☐ DK ☐

Why? _____

40. Do you use the walks which go around the backs of the house?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments _____

41. If there were a pleasant place in Easter Hill with benches and
trees, where people could walk to and sit and talk with their
friends - do you think you would use it?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Possibly ☐ DK ☐

(IF ANSWERS NO, ASK-)

42. Do you think anyone in Easter Hill would use it?

(IF CHILDLESS FAMILY, JUMP TO QUESTION 50)

43. How old are your children? AGE 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
SEX _____

44. Where do they play mostly? _____

(IF DIDN'T MENTION ROCKS, ASK-)

45. Do they play on the rocks?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Does this bother you? _____

(IF DIDN'T MENTION BASEBALL FIELD, ASK-)

46. Do they sometimes use the baseball field? Yes ☐ No ☐
Don't know ☐

47. Are there any play areas here for very young children - say,
where their mothers can take them to?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

(IF ANSWERS NO, AND CHILDREN UNDER 5 IN FAMILY, ASK-)

48. If such a place were provided - say, with a sandbox and swings
- would you use it?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

49. How about the teenagers here - is there enough for them to do?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Comments _____

50. Do you think this is a good neighborhood to bring up children in?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Why? _____

51. Most neighborhoods have some trouble with the kids damaging things, digging holes, breaking windows, etc. Do you know if there is any problem like that here?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Comments _____

52. Do you feel safe here walking home alone at night?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Comments _____

53. Do you feel the Police do a good job here? Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments _____

54. Do you have a car? Yes ☐ No ☐

55. Do you drive? Yes ☐ No ☐

56. Where do you generally park the car? On street ☐ On lot ☐

(IF LEAVES CAR ON LOT WHICH IS NOT ADJACENT TO HOUSE, ASK-)

57. Do you find it inconvenient - leaving your car on the lot and then walking to your house?

Inconvenient ☐ Not inconvenient ☐ Indifferent ☐

58. Do you have a telephone? Yes ☐ No ☐

59. How did you get to know people when you first moved here?

(IF RESPONDENT HAS NOT ALREADY INDICATED WHETHER SPOUSE LIVING IN HOUSE, ASK-)

60. Do you have a husband? Yes ☐ No ☐

61. How did he get to know people when you first moved here?

62. Do you get on well with your neighbors? Yes ☐ No ☐

Indifferent ☐

63. Would you say Easter Hill is a friendly place to live?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Why? _____

64. If you had to choose between living in a pretty and attractive neighborhood where the people were not friendly - or in an un-attractive neighborhood where the people were friendly - which would you choose?

Attractive/not friendly ☐ Unattractive/friendly ☐

Why do you say that? _____

65. About how many people do you know here, just to say Hello to?

66. Where do you see them most often?

When you are in backyard ☐ Walking through neighborhood ☐

When you are in front yard ☐ At shops ☐

Other _____

67. How many families in Easter Hill do you know well enough to visit with quite often in their homes? _____

68. Where do the 3 families live who you visit most often? (i.e. in Easter Hill)

Next door (either side) ☐ Across Backyard ☐

2 doors down (either side) ☐ Across street or court ☐

Further along row ☐ Further away ☐

69. How many families do you visit in their homes outside of Easter Hill? _____

Where? _____

70. Would you prefer to live in a neighborhood where the people have about the same amount of money to spend as you do, or with a mixture of people?

Same as me ☐ Mixture ☐ Don't know ☐

Why do you say that? _____

71. Would you prefer to live in a neighborhood with people of the same race as yourself, or in a neighborhood where there is a mixture of races?

All same race ☐ Mixture ☐ Don't know ☐

Why? _____

2. I see that there are people of different races living at Easter Hill - does this bother you?

Yes ☐

No ☐

(IF ANSWERS YES, ASK-)

3. Why is that? _____

4. Do you feel that the Housing Authority takes good care of Easter Hill - the outsides of the houses, the streets, trees etc.?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Indifferent ☐

5. Do you prefer to take care of the grass at the front of your house yourself, or would you rather the Housing Authority took care of it for you?

Prefer to do it ☐ Let Hsng. Auth. do it ☐ Indifferent ☐

Why? _____

6. How do they treat you at the Housing Authority office when you pay your rent, ask for things to be repaired, etc.? (INTERVIEWER GRADE RESPONSE)

Treated well ☐ Treated OK, so-so ☐ Not treated well ☐

Comments _____

7. Do you feel that the rules and regulations here, about what you can do with your house and yard, paying rent, notifying your income, etc. - are generally fair or unfair?

Fair ☐

Unfair ☐

Don't know ☐

Comments _____

8. If you had to choose between staying at Easter Hill with these regulations, or living in a less desirable neighborhood where there were no regulations, which would you choose?

Easter Hill/regulations ☐ Less desirable/no regulations ☐

Don't know ☐

Why? _____

79. Now that I've asked you a lot of questions about this neighborhood - perhaps you could tell me in general, how you like it as a place to live. Would you say you like it?

A lot ☐ Only a little ☐ Neither like nor ☐
dislike
Quite a bit ☐ Not at all ☐ Don't know ☐

80. Could you describe to me the ideal type of neighborhood you'd like to live in - if you didn't have to worry about money or paying the rent.

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about other places you have lived in, and to show you some pictures of different types of neighborhoods, and have you tell me which you like the look of.

81. How long have you lived here at Easter Hill?

6 months or less ☐
More than 6 mos., less than 1 year ☐
More than 1 year, less than 3 years ☐
More than 3 years, less than 5 years ☐
5 years or more ☐

82. How long do you expect to stay living here? (TRY AND GET SPECIFIC ANSWER)

A year or less ☐ Don't know ☐
Several years ☐ Other _____
Indefinitely ☐

83. Where did you live just before coming to Easter Hill? (GEO-GRAPHICAL LOCATION, APPROXIMATELY)

84. What type of house were you living in there?
- | | <u>PRIVATE</u> | <u>PUBLIC</u> | <u>ARMY/NAVY, etc.</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Single family house | ☐ | | ☐ |
| Row house | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Duplex | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Apartment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Sharing a house | ☐ | | |
| Other _____ | | | |

85. Why did you leave there? _____

86. Which do you like better - Easter Hill, or the last place you lived?

Easter Hill ☐ Previous Residence ☐ Indifferent ☐ DK ☐

Why? _____

(IF DID NOT ANSWER 'PUBLIC HOUSING' IN Q. 79, ASK-)

87. Have you ever lived in public housing before?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(IF YES, ASK-)

88. Which do you like better - Easter Hill, or the other project you lived in?

Easter Hill ☐ Other project ☐ Both same ☐ DK ☐

Why is that? _____

89. How many years, in all, have you lived in public housing? _____

90. How do you feel about living in public housing?

(INTERVIEWER CODE REPLY AS-)

Strongly negative ☐ Mildly negative ☐ Strongly positive ☐
 Mildly positive ☐ Indifferent ☐

91. If there were housing you could afford in all parts of Richmond, where would you most like to live (READ OUT ALTERNATIVES)

Closer to downtown than Easter Hill ☐

About as close to downtown as Easter Hill ☐

Further out in suburbs ☐

In the country ☐

Why? Are there any other reasons? _____

(IF ANSWERS 'NOT IN SUBURBS' ASK-)

92. Are there any particular reasons why you would not like to live out in the suburbs?

(IF ANSWERS 'BECAUSE NO JOBS, PUBLIC TRANSIT ETC', ASK-)

93. If there were jobs (Public transit, etc.), would you like to live there?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Possibly ☐ Don't know ☐

Comments _____

PUBLIC HOUSING PICTURES

94. I'd like to show you 4 photographs of different types of public housing - one of them is Easter Hill, 2 others are different types of projects, and the fourth is a new idea; the Housing Authority would buy up single-family houses in different parts of the city, and rent them at very reasonable rates to families who want to live in public housing. I'd like you to imagine that you could live in any of these for the same rent you are paying here, and that all of them would be equally convenient for getting to work, to the shops, etc. Which of them would be your 1st choice your 2nd etc.

1st choice _____ Why? _____

2nd choice _____ Why? _____

3rd choice _____ Why? _____

4th choice _____ Why? _____

(IF EASTER HILL IS NOT 1st CHOICE, ASK, INDICATING
RESPONDENT'S 1st CHOICE-)

95. Why do you think you would like living here, rather than
at Easter Hill?

(IF EASTER HILL IS NOT LAST CHOICE, ASK, INDICATING
RESPONDENT'S 4th CHOICE-)

96. Why do you think you would like living at Easter Hill,
better than here?

97. If the Housing Authority were to offer you, at the same
rent that you pay here,

- a good house in a less desirable neighborhood ☐

or - a less desirable house in a good neighborhood ☐

which of these two would you choose?

Why? _____

98. If you had to choose between -

a good neighborhood, but located so that it was a long way from shops, work, entertainment, etc. ☐

and a less desirable neighborhood, located so that it was near to the shops, work, entertainment, etc. ☐

- which of these 2 would you choose?

Why do you say that? _____

NEIGHBORHOOD PICTURES

99. Now I'd like to show you another set of 4 photographs. One of them is Easter Hill again, and the others are of different types of neighborhoods in a city. If you could live in any of these neighborhoods - or stay at Easter Hill - for the same rent that you're paying now, which neighborhood do you think would be the nicest to live in ... and the next....

1st choice _____ Why? _____

2nd choice _____ Why? _____

3rd choice _____ Why? _____

4th choice _____ Why? _____

(FOR EACH CHOICE IN TURN ASK, AFTER 'Why?'-) What type of people do you think would be living in this neighborhood?
(OMIT QUESTION FOR EASTER HILL PICTURE)

(IF EASTER HILL IS NOT 1st CHOICE, ASK-)

100. What are some of the qualities of this neighborhood which you feel are missing from Easter Hill?

(IF EASTER HILL IS NOT LAST CHOICE, ASK-)

101. And what are some of the qualities of Easter Hill which you feel are missing from this neighborhood?

102. Do you, or any other members of the family belong to any clubs or churches in this area?

<u>Family member</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Approx. location</u>

103. Is it convenient for you to get to the shops from here?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Comments _____

104. (IF NO CAR, ASK-) How do you get there? _____

105. Where do you generally go shopping for food, and for clothes? (i.e. location, if answers 'downtown,' 'El Cerrito Plaza,' or name of store, if answers 'Montgomery Ward' etc; if any doubt about location, ask).

Food _____

Clothes _____

106. How often do you go to downtown Richmond?

Often (Once a week or more) ☐

Sometimes (1, 2 or 3 times a month) ☐

Rarely (less than once a month) ☐

Never ☐

What for? _____

107. And what about downtown Oakland, how often do you go there?

Often ☐ Rarely ☐

Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

What for? _____

108. And San Francisco - how often do you go there?

Often ☐ Rarely ☐

Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

What for? _____

109. Do you ever go to - Nystrom Park? Yes ☐ No ☐

- Nicholl Park? Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments _____

110. Do you go to work? Yes ☐ No ☐ Unemployed at present ☐

111. Where do you work?(i.e., geographical location) _____

112. How long does it take you to get there? _____

(WHERE APPLICABLE, ASK-)

113. Does your husband/wife go to work? Yes ☐ No ☐

Unemployed ☐

114. Where? (i.e., geographical location) _____

115. How long does it take him/her to get there? _____

116. If there were housing in the suburbs you liked and could afford, but you (or your husband/wife) had to spend more time and money on travelling to work than you do now - would you want to live there?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Comments _____

(IF RESPONDENT PUTS UP OTHER OBJECTIONS TO LIVING IN SUBURBS, SAY, 'BUT NONE OF THESE PROBLEMS EXISTED, AND THE ONLY DIFFICULTY WAS THE JOURNEY TO WORK...)

117. We need to know how different types of people feel about their home and neighborhoods. On this card are a series of words which are often used in the newspapers and on TV to describe different classes of people - which of these do you think best describes your family?

Lower class ☐

Working class ☐

Lower-middle class ☐

Middle class ☐

Upper class ☐

Don't know ☐

118. And how about the other people living at Easter Hill - which word do you think describes them best?

Lower class ☐ Middle class ☐

Working class ☐ Upper class ☐

Lower-middle class ☐ Don't know ☐

119. And what about the other neighborhoods around here - let's say on the other side of Cutting Boulevard?

Lower class ☐ Middle class ☐

Working class ☐ Upper class ☐

Lower-middle class ☐ Don't know ☐

120. Now I'd like to ask you something about your education. What was the last grade that you completed at school? And your husband (wife)? (CIRCLE APPROPRIATE FIGURE OR WORD FOR FEMALE, SQUARE FOR MALE)

Elementary or grade school	1	2	4	5	6	
Junior or Senior high school	7	8	9	10	11	12
Some college						
College graduate						
Trade school						
Other						

121. What part of the country were you brought up in? _____

122. What size of town was that? (READ ALTERNATIVES)

Rural ☐ Small town ☐ Medium-size town ☐ Large ☐
town

123. What part of the country was your husband (wife) brought up in? _____

124. What sort of work does your husband do? _____

(IF RESPONDENT WORKS, ASK-) And what sort of work do you do? _____

Now - after all these questions about your house and neighborhood and family, perhaps I could ask you again -

125. What is it that you like most about Easter Hill - or to put it another way, if you were to leave here tomorrow - what would you miss most?

126. And of those things you have told me you don't like about Easter Hill - which is the most important - that is, if you were to leave here tomorrow, what would you be most pleased about leaving behind? _____

That is all the questions I have. Thank you so much for spending all this time with me.

TO BE FILLED IN AFTER INTERVIEW COMPLETED:

A. Respondent's reactions:

Suspicious throughout ☐

Initially suspicious, later friendly ☐

Friendly throughout ☐

B. How well did respondent understand questions:

Very poorly ☐ Average ☐ Very well ☐

C. Brief notes on -

Taste of furnishings _____

Condition of furnishings _____

Cleanliness of house _____

D. Books in evidence: Yes ☐ No ☐

T.V. on: Yes ☐ No ☐

E. Maintenance of back yard:

Very neat, well maintained ☐

Neat, but obviously used ☐

Somewhat messy and uncared for ☐

Very untidy ☐

F. Cultivation of back yard:

Plants cultivated and lawn ☐

Just a lawn ☐

Just dirt ☐

Modifications to porch and yard fencing:

Gate added to porch ☐ Fencing added to porch ☐

Fencing added to yard (or solid planting) ☐

H. Family structure:

	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Age</u> (est.)
Respondent	_____	_____	_____
Spouse	_____	_____	_____
Children	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
Other(s)	_____	_____	_____

I. Any other notes

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