

Mare Island Naval Shipyard,
Quarters P (Building P)
Walnut Avenue, northwest corner of Walnut Avenue and 5th Street
Vallejo
Solano County
California

HABS No. CA-1543-AN

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, CA 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD
Quarters P (Building P)

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- Location:** Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, California
Walnut Avenue, northwest corner of Walnut Avenue and 5th Street
- Significance:** Building P is a contributing element of the Mare Island Historic District. Building P (Quarters P) is significant as an element of a small row of residences that exists along Walnut Avenue to the north of Captains' Row. These buildings reflect two important trends: vernacular residential design from the late 19th century; and the long-standing Navy tradition of providing on-base housing for its most prized civilian employees.
- Present Owner:** U.S. Navy, EFA West
900 Commodore Drive
San Bruno, CA 94066
- Present Use:** Offices
- Last Use:** Officers' Quarters
- Description:** Quarters P is one of four small, vernacular homes located along Walnut Avenue just north of the row of major officers' quarters, called "Captains' Row." Quarters P is the most southerly of the four; it is immediately across 6th Street from Quarters O, which is one of the components of Captains' Row. Photograph AN-1 shows Quarters P in relation to Quarters O. This row of homes was assembled to house prized civilian employees at the station in the years just before and after the devastating earthquake of 1898, except for Quarters P, which appears to date from the early 1870s. Some of these homes were built on site, while others were moved to this row in the early 20th century from the Dublin Hill area, which was leveled for additional shops and offices in the early part of this century. Quarters P was likely built in the early 1870s, making it by far the oldest of this group of civilian housing units.
- Quarters P is a one and one-half story, wood-frame residence that was originally built in 1873. The building has been modified substantially from its original design, making it difficult to read its

original form. A varied roofline now characterizes the house, with two main wings forming a rough “L” shape. A jerkinhead gable roof tops the main two-story wing at the left, and a gable-roofed, one-story wing at the rear. The facade (east elevation) is shown in Photograph AN-2. Smaller elements that project from the main L-shaped body include a front gabled section protruding from the rear wing, a long, shed-roofed dormer on the side of the main two-story wing, an angled bay with a pyramidal hipped roof on the other side of the two-story wing, and a pyramidal hipped porch cover over the small porch entry. A portion of the rear of the two-story element is recessed under the roof eaves; this unusual modification is illustrated in Photograph AN-3. Windows are predominantly four-over-four and six-over-six double-hung wooden sash. The window in the upper story front gable end has decorative carved wooden shutters. Walls are clad in V-groove siding. The front porch railing is designed with cross-diagonal style bracing. The interior of Quarters P includes elements from many generations of work.

Historical Context: Quarters P is significant as an element of a small row of residences that exists along Walnut Avenue to the north of Captains’ Row. These buildings reflect two important trends: vernacular residential design from the late 19th century; and the long-standing Navy tradition of providing on-base housing for its most prized civilian employees.

Quarters P was built in 1873 and is by far the oldest home in this group. The home would eventually be identified as the “boatswain’s house”; a boatswain was a 19th and early 20th century term for a warrant or petty officer, or simply a ranking non-commissioned officer (NCO). The NCO that lived at this house was in charge of the observatory located on the top of Dublin Hill at the northeast corner of Irwin Park; neither the observatory nor Irwin Park still exists. This home was greatly enlarged and a second story added. It is possible that this home was built by a civilian employee but redesignated for NCO occupancy at the time it was enlarged.

Sources: (See list of sources under HABS Narrative Report for Mare Island Naval Shipyard Historic District.)

Project

Information:

The action causing this documentation to be undertaken is the disposal of historic properties at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in accordance with the Base Realignment and Closure Act, as amended in 1993. Once the transfer occurs, these National Register properties will no longer be afforded the protection of the National Historic Preservation Act. This documentation is a requirement of the MOA among the Navy, SHPO and ACHP reached in accordance with the regulation for the "Protection of Historic Properties," (36 CFR Part 800) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

LOCATION MAP

