

Mare Island Naval Shipyard,  
Quarters M1 (Building M1)  
Preston Street, south side adjacent to Marine Parade Grounds  
Vallejo  
Solano County  
California

HABS No. CA-1543-CC

HABS  
CAL  
48-MARI,  
ICC-

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 M1 (Building M1)

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CAL  
48-MARI  
ICC-

- Location:** Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, California  
Preston Street, south side adjacent to Marine Parade Grounds
- Significance:** Building M1 is a contributing element of the Mare Island Historic District. Quarters M1 is highly significant as the last *in situ* quarters from the original Marine Corps detachment at Mare Island. It is also an intrinsically interesting building, representing an Italianate design from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, in a residential area dominated by turn-of-the-century Colonial Revival homes.
- Present Owner:** U.S. Navy, EFA West  
900 Commodore Drive  
San Bruno, CA 94066
- Present Use:** Vacant
- Last Use:** Family Officers' Quarters
- Description:** Quarters M1 was built in 1870 as the home of commander of the Marine Corps detachment at Mare Island. In the original plan for the Marine detachment, all elements of the detachment were to be housed in buildings on the west side of Cedar Avenue, just south of Alden Park. This area included Quarters M1, quarters for the other high-ranking Marine Corps officers, a large barracks, and a parade ground. In 1917, however, the Marine barracks were rebuilt on a site several blocks west of the original site and the parade grounds were re-established in that area. Little by little, the function and some of the other officers' quarters from the old Marine Corps area were relocated to face the new parade ground. As a result, Quarters M1, the only *in situ* quarters of the original Marine area, is isolated from its intended context. Photograph CC-1 illustrates the isolation of this building. That view also shows that the building is set perpendicular to Cedar Avenue. Navy homes along Cedar Avenue are oriented toward the street. Quarters M1 was built to face the Marine Corps parade ground. Since that parade ground no longer exists, the context for the orientation of this building has been lost.

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Quarters M1 is a two-story masonry home, finished in concrete plaster. It sits on a high base and the wall is capped with a cornice supported by modillions. The cornice is shown in detail in Photograph CC-11. The windows are one-over-one double hung wooden sash. On the east elevation (facing Cedar Avenue), there exists a glazed porch with casement sash. The exterior of this porch is shown in Photograph CC-9, the interior in Photograph CC-15. This porch is capped by a classical cornice and turned baluster railing. The original entrance is the north elevation, now essentially a side entrance owing to destruction of the original parade ground. The first-story entrance is accented by a projection of the central section and a classically detailed one-story portico, which uses Doric columns and a semicircular hood. This entrance is shown in detail in Photograph CC-6.

Quarters M1 retains some of its original interior features, although less so than the homes along Captains' Row. Fireplace details are shown in Photographs CC-16 and CC-13. An interesting arched alcove is shown in Photograph CC-14.

**Historical Context:** Quarters M1 is highly significant as the Marine Corps Commanding Officer's Quarters and as one of the last *in situ* quarters from the original Marine Corps detachment at Mare Island. It is also an intrinsically interesting building, representing an Italianate design from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, in a residential area dominated by turn-of-the-century Colonial Revival homes.

The Marine Corps area was set aside in the original 1854 Sanger Plan, the master plan along which all of Mare Island was built during the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The area was not built, however, until 1870, when Quarters M1 was constructed, along with a Marine Barracks building, a Marine prison, and several other officers' quarters. As planned, all of this construction was to be centered on a large parade ground located on the west side of Cedar Avenue, just south of Alden Park. Little by little, however, the Marine Corps area was relocated to its current position, due west of Quarters M1. The relocation was voluntary, i.e. was not related to the earthquake of 1898, although the barracks were damaged at that time, or any other external factor. In 1917, the Marine barracks were rebuilt on the new site and, in time, all Marine Corps functions other than the commander's residence, Quarters M6 and M7, and the brig (Building 84) were relocated there. The original barracks building stayed in place until the

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1950s, when the building was demolished to make way for new construction.

Quarters M1 is of interest architecturally, simply because it is so unusual among the building stock of Mare Island. The Marine Corps made little effort to conform to the general architectural program at this Navy base. Neither was its architecture internally consistent. Building M1 is the oldest remnant of the original compound and is Italianate in design. More than a decade later, the Marine Corps built several additional officers' quarters in the area; these buildings were Eastlake in design. Three decades later, the Marine compound moved to its current site. The new Marine barracks building, Building M37, was essentially Beaux Arts in design. Quarters M1, the only Marine Corps building left in the old area, is isolated architecturally as well as physically.

**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

