

City of Las Vegas

STAFF REPORT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DATE: 05/28/14

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

ITEM DESCRIPTION: For possible action regarding draft Phase II Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, generally bound by Francis Avenue and Cottonwood Place on the north, Maryland Parkway on the west, Norman Avenue on the south and South Fifteenth Street on the east, multiple APN, multiple zones, Ward 3 (Coffin)

BACKGROUND

- 09/30/05 Historic resource survey and inventory of Huntridge Neighborhood Tract I and a portion of Tract II was completed as part of the 2005 Historic Preservation Fund grant. Due to a lack of architectural integrity in the survey area, the consultant recommended no further studies.
- 10/24/12 Historic Preservation Commission voted to approve (HPC-47140) the historic resource survey and inventory of a portion of tract two and all of tract three of the Huntridge neighborhood, generally bounded by E. Charleston, S. Maryland Parkway, Franklin Avenue and S. 15th Street on the north, west, south and east, respectively, multiple APNs, multiple zones, Ward 3 (Coffin), as part of the 2013 HPF grant scope of work.

ANALYSIS

ICF International has completed the draft Phase II Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory. The draft is hereby submitted for HPC review and comment. If approved, the report will be submitted with any comments to the State Historic Preservation Office for review.

Findings (abbreviated from draft "Phase II Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory" report):

A total of 134 buildings and Huntridge Circle Park were documented within the survey area known as Huntridge Subdivision – Tract 3 in the City of Las Vegas, Nevada. The buildings are modest one-story, single-family dwellings constructed primarily in 1943 and 1944. Several that face South Maryland Parkway have since been converted for commercial use.

While the components of Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 continue to share the historic associations of a district, the current survey has shown, due to alterations, that the great majority of the properties in Tract 3 have lost integrity such that the neighborhood no longer conveys the sense of the historic environment that existed in 1943-1944, the period of the tract's significance. As a result, there would be an insufficient number of contributing properties to suggest the existence of a NRHP eligible district.

CM

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL of draft report

BACKUP DOCUMENTS

Draft “Phase II Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory” report

Phase II Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory



Prepared for the City of Las Vegas
Department of Planning

Prepared by ICF International
May 2014

Executive Summary

ICF International performed an intensive level survey and inventory of Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 as part of the City's ongoing effort to understand the development and history of the neighborhood within the context of Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada. The purpose of the survey was to assess (a) if any of the residential properties in Tract 3 met individual eligibility criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and (b) if Tract 3 as a whole or portions of it met eligibility criteria for listing as a NRHP historic district.

The intensive level architectural survey of Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 resulted in the identification of 134 single-family residences and a neighborhood park located within one of five tracts built in the Huntridge Subdivision primarily between 1942 and 1944. An examination of previous and current research led to the identification of an applicable historic context in which to evaluate the subject properties. Land Usage: Development of FHA-approved tract housing in Las Vegas during World War II. For the purposes of this report we restricted our analysis of significance to the FHA period of construction, which is 1943-1944, the war years when most of the tract's houses were built according to FHA Guidelines.

Each Tract 3 property, and the tract as a whole, was evaluated according to NRHP eligibility criteria. As part of this evaluation, the integrity of the properties was also examined to determine if they retained a sufficient degree of integrity to convey their significance within the identified historic context. Under Criterion A, it was found that almost all of the Tract 3 dwellings have experienced substantial alterations such that they no longer retain the essential physical features associated with FHA approved tract houses built in 1943-1944 as war-related worker housing. Under Criterion B, it does not appear that any of the extant individual dwellings in Tract 3 are associated with historic personages. And under Criterion C, the current survey reveals that since World War II the great majority of houses in Tract 3 have experienced substantial alterations resulting in a significant loss of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. For similar reasons, the Tract 3 neighborhood as a potential district no longer conveys the sense of the historic environment that existed in 1943-1944, the period of the tract's significance. Consequently, there were an insufficient number of contributing properties to form a NRHP eligible district.

However, the current survey identified a trio of Tract 3 properties representing each of the tract's three distinct architectural designs that retain sufficient integrity to meet NRHP Criteria A and C.

- 1320 Jessica Avenue – Model A: Cross Hipped
- 1433 Cottonwood Place – Model B: Cross Gabled
- 1425 Francis Avenue – Model C: Cross Hipped with Raised Center Hip

As a result, all three of these properties qualify for individual listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance.

Project Name

Phase II Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory

Participating Architectural Historians**Peter Moruzzi, Senior Architectural Historian, Project Manager**

Peter Moruzzi has extensive experience as Project Manager and Lead Investigator for historic resources surveys, including a survey of the entire City of Santa Monica. As a Senior Architectural Historian with over 17 years of experience, Mr. Moruzzi conducts field investigations, performs historic research, assesses properties for historic significance, and writes context statements. Mr. Moruzzi was the author of the successful nomination of the El Cortez Hotel and Casino in downtown Las Vegas that was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. For the City of Las Vegas, he served as Project Manager and Architectural Historian for the overall survey project. Peter Moruzzi is a 36 CFR Part 61 U.S. Secretary of the Interior qualified architectural historian.

Daniel Paul, Senior Architectural Historian

Daniel Paul meets the Secretary's Professional Qualification Standards (PQS) as an architectural historian with a wide range of work experience. This multi-year experience includes: Section 106 reviews, state regulatory setting analysis, the drafting of Programmatic Agreements, and all aspects of individual property evaluation at the local, state, and federal levels. Daniel has been the signatory architectural historian on numerous California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) cultural resources technical reports and has multiyear experience in the research, authorship, and compilation of successfully listed NRHP, CRHR, and local level landmark nominations.

Andrew Bursan, Architectural Historian

Andrew Bursan is a federally qualified professional (36 CFR 61) with seven years of experience working on issues related to urban land planning and historic preservation. With ICF he has supported various projects through archival, library, and Internet research. Andrew also is experienced conducting historic resources surveys and in the preparation of SHPO assessments, historic context statements, and property descriptions. While working for the City of Arroyo Grande, California, he assisted in the creation of a historic resources committee, citywide historic register, and a historic preservation overlay zone.

Statement of Project Objectives

The City of Las Vegas Planning & Development Department contracted with ICF International (ICF), a qualified historic preservation consultant, to complete Phase II of the Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, an intensive level historic resource survey of a portion of

the Huntridge Neighborhood. The Phase II survey builds upon a previous Huntridge Neighborhood historic resource survey and inventory completed in August, 2005. The Huntridge Neighborhood is comprised of five tracts. The 2005 survey included Huntridge subdivision tracts 1 and 2, and a portion of the Huntridge Subdivision Amended Tracts 1, 2 and 3. The 2005 survey found that the surveyed portion of the Huntridge Neighborhood was not eligible for listing in the National Register as an historic district.

The Phase II survey area is generally bounded by Francis Avenue and Cottonwood Place on the north, Maryland Parkway on the west, Norman Avenue on the south and South Fifteenth Street on the east. The survey area consists of the Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 and Huntridge Circle Park (designated as a part of Huntridge Tracts 2, 3 and 4). The area contains approximately 134 properties, almost all of which are single-family homes. Survey of this area will help inform a Mid-Century Historic Context Report for WWII and post-WWII development within the City of Las Vegas.

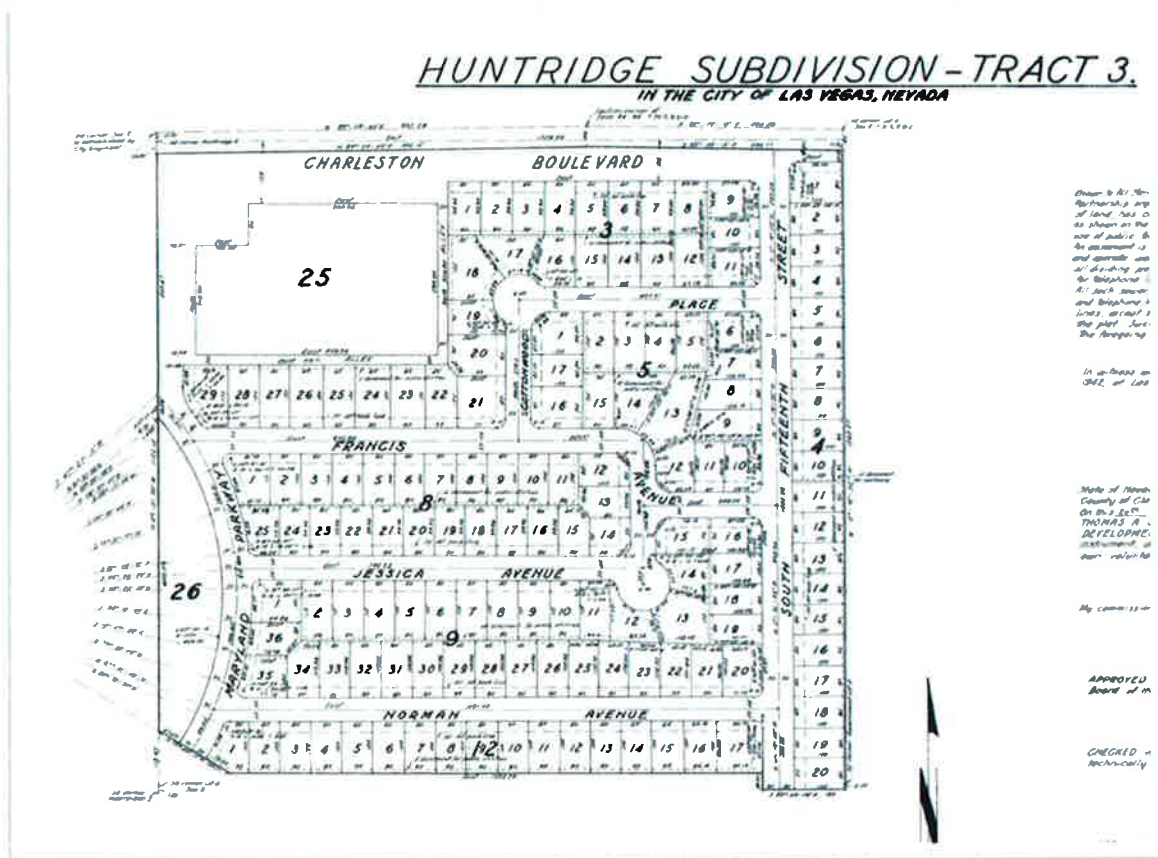


Figure 1. Clark County Assessor's Map of Huntridge Subdivision – Tract 3

Scope of Services

- Conduct research using available resources as necessary to gain and understand the development and history of the neighborhood within the context of Las Vegas, and if applicable, the state of Nevada and the nation.
- Complete the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) Architectural Resource Assessment (ARA) forms in accordance with the instructions therein, for each individual building. This includes determinations of eligibility and justifications for each building.
- Document each building using color digital photographs per the SHPO Guidelines.
- Compile data in Excel format utilizing the required fields as follows: street name, street number, historic/current building name, APN, SHPO Resource No., acreage, date of construction, associated structures, individual eligibility, whether property is a contributor or non-contributor to a historic district.

Research Methodology

ICF architectural historians Peter Moruzzi, Daniel Paul, and Andrew Bursan conducted all research and survey activities pertinent to Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3.

Early in the process, ICF architectural historians contacted the City of Las Vegas regarding original records and other information. No original building permits were located by the City. However, the City uncovered subsequent permits documenting additions and alterations, and a handful of inspection permits.

ICF architectural historians reviewed the 2005 Historic Resources Survey and Inventory for Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2, which proved helpful for understanding the general context of the Huntridge Neighborhood.

To assist in understanding Las Vegas during the early 20th century, ICF architectural historians reviewed the historic context section of Mr. Moruzzi's 2012 National Register of Historic Places nomination for the El Cortez Hotel and Casino.

For research purposes, sites visited included the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) Lied Library including Special Collections, and the Cahlan Research Library of the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas. At each location, all available city directories pertinent to the period of significance (1943-1944) were reviewed to identify names and occupations of residents. Because of a lack of cross-reference directories from the 1940s, Moruzzi reviewed the entirety of the 1943-1944 Las Vegas city directory, notating the name and occupation of any listed resident at an address within the survey area. Oral Histories reviewed at UNLV focused upon those done as part of the John S. Park neighborhood oral history project. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were reviewed; unfortunately, the survey area is not present in any of them. Early USGS 7.5 minute

quad maps were also reviewed. At the Nevada State Museum, the primary items reviewed were microfilm copies of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* where a variety of early advertisements and articles were copied. One 1944 advertisement showed five separate houses within Huntridge and identified residents by name.

ICF architectural historians contacted Las Vegas historian Lynn Zook whose assistance proved useful, particularly in leading ICF to Senator Richard Bryan, whom ICF interviewed about Huntridge, its residents, and the experience of growing up in the neighborhood.

A fair amount of research was conducted online, particularly through various UNLV historical databases. A review of Google Books led to the transcripts of a March 1942 Senate Hearing focused on BMI and Las Vegas.

Various documents from the Las Vegas Public Library and the Los Angeles Public Library main branch were consulted. Previous Las Vegas histories, Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Bulletins, and other relevant books and serials were reviewed.

Survey Methodology

ICF architectural historians conducted the Phase II field survey in Las Vegas from January 28 to January 31, 2014. The architectural historians walked the entirety of Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 to take photographs and field notes. Regardless of integrity or age, each house in the tract was documented from the front, at least one side view, and in the context of its immediate vicinity, street, and neighborhood. All photographs were shot with a digital camera in a large size (+ 5MB) for purposes of viewing details as needed from the desktop. In understanding the broad context of World War II era FHA approved housing tracts, ICF architectural historians also conducted a brief windshield survey of the Mayfair and Biltmore tracts, photo documenting select buildings within each tract.

Historic Development of Las Vegas¹

The natural geography of Las Vegas with its fertile plains and many springs attracted indigenous peoples such as the Paiute more than a millennium before Euro-American settlement of the area. Spanish missionaries established portions of what would become the Old Spanish Trail in the 1770s to provide a route between Santa Fe, New Mexico and California by way of Utah; however, it was not until 1826 that American Jedediah Smith altered the path of the trail to pass through what would eventually become Nevada. In 1829, a party led by Antonio Armijo followed Smith's trail through Nevada and a scout of this party looking for water came upon the Las Vegas Valley.

The first Euro-American attempt to settle the Las Vegas Valley occurred in 1855 when a group of Mormons established a small fort and mission in the area as part of the Church's broader initiative

¹ Excerpted from "Intensive Level Historic Resource Survey and Inventory of the Phase III Beverly Green Neighborhood," by Greta J. Rayle and Helana Ruter for The City of Las Vegas Development Services Center and Historic Preservation Commission. June, 2013.

to settle lands in the desert southwest. This mission, however, was ultimately abandoned due to disagreements between the settlers and limited opportunities to sustain agriculture. In 1865, the remaining infrastructure of the settlement was acquired by Octavius Decatur Gass, who re-established "Los Vegas Rancho" as a commercial hub along the Old Spanish Trail from which to supply goods to mining camps in the area. Defaulting on debts in 1882, the Rancho was acquired by Archibald and Helen Stewart. Although Archibald died soon thereafter, Helen continued to operate the ranch until 1902 when she sold the property to Montana Senator William Clark whose intention was to establish a railroad line connecting Salt Lake City, Utah to Los Angeles, California via the Las Vegas Valley.

William Clark formed the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad in 1900 and initiated construction on the portion of the rail line through Las Vegas in 1904. Workers constructed a tent camp to the west of the railroad tracks which became the nucleus of a small settlement. John T. McWilliams, a surveyor who was hired by Helen Stewart in 1902 to survey the Rancho land prior to the sale to Clark, acquired 80 acres from the government, including the railroad construction camp site. After formally surveying the land, he established the townsite of Las Vegas in 1904 and began speculative sale of the lots. Concurrently, the Las Vegas Land and Water Company, a subsidiary of the railroad, surveyed its own townsite on the east side of the railroad tracks which it recorded as "Clark's Las Vegas Townsite" in 1905. This second townsite was laid out with 80-foot-wide streets running parallel to the northeast-southwest railroad alignment, as opposed to McWilliams's north-south oriented grid. The townsite, bounded by Main and Fifth Streets (roughly east and west) and Stewart and Garces Avenues (roughly north and south) consisted of 1,200 lots. Lots along Fremont Street were specifically oriented perpendicularly to the street to allow for additional lots to encourage commercial use, a centrally located block was reserved for public use; the remaining 25 x 140 foot lots, platted on 300 x 400-foot blocks, were laid out identically.

Investors filed more than 3,000 land applications for the 1,200 available lots in Clark's Las Vegas Townsite, ultimately resulting in a land auction in May 1905. Astute investor Peter Buol platted a subdivision east of Clark's townsite prior to the auction, capitalizing on the remaining investor demand and sold lots in the first "suburb" of Las Vegas. Buck's Addition, as it was called, continued the street orientation established in Clark's Las Vegas townsite which radiated from the railroad tracks. Buol subsequently platted the Grandview, Fairview, and Pioneer Heights tracts in 1905. With the Grandview Addition, he broke with the previous plat orientation, establishing streets with a nearly true north to south alignment that would serve as a precedent for development of the town to the east.

A significant portion of the development in Clark's Las Vegas townsite was related to the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad. New businesses supporting the railroad were located in this area and over time, McWilliams's townsite to the west of the railroad declined. The growth of Clark's Las Vegas townsite, which at the time was located in southern Lincoln County, fostered the Nevada Legislature's 1909 decision to pass a bill to create Clark County, with the growing town of

Las Vegas chosen as its county seat. While Las Vegas attained this new political status, the town, which incorporated in 1911, remained dominated by the activities of the railroad throughout the 1920s.

In 1921, William Clark sold his interest in the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad to the Union Pacific Railroad Company. Following a general strike by union employees of the railroad, the Union Pacific led retaliatory efforts against Las Vegas which included the relocation of important repair shops to the town of Caliente, damaging Las Vegas' economy. At the same time, the railroad company also refused to make upgrades to the infrastructure it had created under its umbrella organization, the Las Vegas Land and Water Company, which further impaired the growth of the city. Recognizing the need for transportation routes, local Las Vegas leaders persuaded state engineers to route the proposed US 91, a connecting highway from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles, through Las Vegas. Improvements were made to Fifth Street which was expanded to the southwest and incorporated as part of the highway. Fifth Street had been platted as part of the 1909 Clark's Townsite and ran parallel to the railroad line. The route, renamed Las Vegas Boulevard, was paved in the 1930s and helped to spur tourism in Las Vegas.

The town's efforts to sever its economic dependency from the railroad would not be fully recognized until the advent of the "Reclamation Era" in the American West. In 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed the Boulder Canyon Project Act to regulate water on the Colorado River and provide a consistent water supply to the Imperial Valley in California. Work started in 1931 on a massive dam structure less than 50 miles southeast of Las Vegas. Initially called the Boulder Dam, the massive feat of engineering was dedicated as Hoover Dam upon its completion in 1935. The dam was a boon to Las Vegas and an estimated \$19 million dollars was infused into the local economy as a result of its construction. Las Vegas became the shipping point for supplies to the construction site and became a destination point for workers and tourists coming to see the development. The town's status as a desirable tourist destination was further bolstered in 1931, with the legalization of gambling and concurrent development of casinos along Fremont Street and the relaxation of divorce laws.

Although the completion of the Hoover Dam and power generators in 1936 led to a recession in Las Vegas, defense developments for WWII soon brought new economic and human capital to the local economy. The influx of population to the Las Vegas area also benefited the burgeoning casino industry, which expanded beyond its original Fremont Street location in central Las Vegas to Las Vegas Boulevard/US 91, just outside of the city limits where city regulations and taxes could be avoided. Hotelman Thomas Hull constructed the El Rancho Vegas hotel and casino at the southwest corner of San Francisco Street (later known as East Sahara Avenue) and Las Vegas Boulevard/US 91 in 1941. The El Rancho, credited as the first Las Vegas Strip hotel, was followed shortly thereafter by the construction of the Last Frontier Hotel and the Flamingo Hotel in 1942 and 1946, respectively. Throughout the 1950s there was dramatic growth of casinos on both Fremont Street and Las Vegas Boulevard/US 91. New development along Las Vegas Boulevard also

had the effect of shifting city development south. Between 1950 and 1960, Las Vegas' population nearly tripled to 64,605 reflecting the continued postwar growth of the city.

Early Residential Development in Las Vegas²

Peter Buol's first subdivision plats, such as the 1905 Buck's Addition to the east of Clark's Las Vegas Townsite, represented broader early 20th century neighborhood planning principles now classified as "horizontal development," in which a developer would subdivide land in a typical grid layout, make minor improvements (i.e., install utilities, construct roads and sidewalks), and then sell individual lots to buyers on which they could construct their own homes. Residential growth was gradual in the decades following Las Vegas' inception and by 1930, the population of Las Vegas stood at just over 5,000 persons. Because lots were sold individually, the slow growth in population resulted in many of the lots in these early subdivisions remaining vacant and unimproved. Unlike other areas of the country, however, Las Vegas continued to grow during the Great Depression due to an influx of revenue from the Boulder Dam project and the legalization of gambling; by 1940, population of the city had reached more than 8,400 persons.

Las Vegas Army Air Field and Gunnery School

Originally called Las Vegas Army Air Field when first established in October 1940, the primary impetus for establishing the Field was for a flexible gunnery school. "Flexible gunnery" refers to the use of bomber-mounted machine guns, primarily upon B-17 bombers and later upon the B-29 Super Fortress for in-air combat.³ The site of the Air Field was originally a dirt runway and associated small amenities for Western Air Express (WAE) a privately operated carrier that used the landing strip to fly tourists into the City. At the time the gunnery school was established, Las Vegas was still a relatively small town with a population of 8,422.⁴

The WAE site seen as ideal by Major David Schlatter of the U.S. Army Air Corps as the gunnery school location.⁵ The Las Vegas Valley weather with its year round clear skies and vast, open sight lines were optimal for gunnery training and a military air base. Additionally, the site was selected in part for its considerable distance from vulnerable-to-attack Western coastal cities, as well as the abundant presence of open public domain land.⁶

In order to establish the gunnery school, Western Air Express, with some pressure from Senator Pat McCarran and the Army itself, sold the airfield to the City. Mayor Jon L. Russell then signed

² Excerpted from "Intensive Level Historic Resource Survey and Inventory of the Phase III Beverly Green Neighborhood," by Greta J. Rayle and Helana Ruter for The City of Las Vegas Development Services Center and Historic Preservation Commission. June 2013.

³ U.S. Air Force, "U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet: Nellis Air Force base" viewed online: http://www.nellis.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=4096&page=1

⁴ "Timeline," *Las Vegas Sun* viewed online: <http://www.lasvegassun.com/history/timeline/>

⁵ U.S. Air Force, "Nellis AFB History," *Nellis Air Force Base: The Official Website of Nellis Air Force Base*, viewed online: <http://www.nellis.af.mil/library/nellisafhistory.asp>

⁶ Ibid. and Perry Kaufman, "City Boosters, Las Vegas Style," *Journal of the West* Vol. XIII, No. 3 (July, 1974). Page 49.

over much of the property to the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps to develop the gunnery school.⁷ WAE was given a 30 year lease with landing privileges as part of the agreement which included permission for WAE to allow their tourist planes to land at the base.⁸

The Las Vegas Army Air Corps Gunnery School was established on the airfield in January 1941, with the mission of "training of aerial gunners to the degree of proficiency that will qualify them for combat duty."⁹ On-site construction of barracks to house 3,000 people began a few months later. The opening of the gunnery school and airfield substantially increased the population of Las Vegas—not just from servicemen, but those associated with other related activities such as contractors and other business people.¹⁰ This influx of workers and their families supporting the quickly growing airfield and gunnery school required new housing, the availability of which was severely lacking in 1941. This urgent situation was one reason behind the government's insistence in 1941 that new FHA-approved tract housing be immediately constructed in Las Vegas and vicinity. The other primary reason, discussed below, was the opening of the massive Basic Magnesium Incorporated (BMI) facility that employed 14,000 workers in 1941 just for its construction alone, with 6,000 regular workers by its 1943.¹¹

By 1942, 4,000 tail gunners every six weeks were graduating from the gunnery school.¹² During the peak period of World War II in 1943 and 1944, over 15,000 men and women were present at the base.¹³ By the end of the war, less than four years after being established, approximately 48,000 gunners had been trained at the Las Vegas Army Air Field.¹⁴

With the ending of World War II, the gunnery school closed and the primary function of the base was exit duties—physicals and last paychecks—for those leaving the military and returning to civilian life.¹⁵ Much to the dismay of Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce officials, the Las Vegas Army Air Field was inactivated on January 31, 1947. The Chamber later reached out to the military, requesting that the airfield become a permanent facility and the government agreed, on the condition that tourist and other commercial traffic be relocated off-site.¹⁶ To facilitate this, the City passed a 1947 bond issue funding the construction of McCarran Field.¹⁷

On March 31, 1948, the base was reactivated as Las Vegas Air Force Base, hosting a pilot training wing and gunnery school. With the onset of the Korean War, the base's mission changed from flight training of advanced single-engine aircraft to the training of jet fighter pilots. In 1950, the air force base was renamed in honor of Las Vegas Valley native First Lieutenant William Harrell Nellis,

⁷ Robert D. McCracken, *Las Vegas: The Great American Playground* (Reno, Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1997) Page 45.

⁸ Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History* (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005) Page 104.

⁹ U.S. Air Force, "Nellis AFB History."

¹⁰ McCracken, *Las Vegas*, Page 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Hal Rothman, *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002) Page 9.

¹³ MilitaryBases.US, "Nellis AFB". *MilitaryBases.US* [A Sun Key Publishing Company] viewed online: <http://www.militarybases.us/air-force/nellis-afb/>

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ U.S. Air Force, "Nellis AFB History."

¹⁶ McCracken, *Las Vegas*, Page 45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

a young P-47 aircraft pilot having flown 69 missions who was killed-in-action over Luxembourg on Dec. 27, 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge.¹⁸

Basic Magnesium Incorporated during World War II

Basic Magnesium Incorporated (Figure 2) is an entity of substantial historic significance for Southern Nevada. Located in what is today Henderson, the sole purpose of constructing the BMI plant was to produce magnesium: referred to as the “miracle metal” for both its light weight and its strength. The Germans were the first to construct warplanes and munitions from magnesium in the 1930s, giving them an early advantage over the Allies.¹⁹

The existence of BMI is largely due to Howard Eells, a Cleveland based industrialist of fire brick and other heat resistant materials.²⁰ His company had previously secured mining rights to a site in Gabbs, Nevada east of Carson City that contained 70 million tons of two of the basic components for producing magnesium: magnesite and brucite.²¹ Additionally, Eells had secured magnesium production patents from a German company after World War I. When the U.S. Government decided it needed its own magnesium production facility in 1941, it collaborated with Eells in establishing a plant. The influence of Nevada Senators Pat McCarran and Key Pittman helped direct the plant’s construction to their state.

The British designed the BMI facility, which was constructed by Los Angeles based McNeil Construction Company.²² The site selected was in a barren, wide open desert area with no immediate availability of water or power. However, the site was nearby a substantial water source, Lake Mead, and a major power source in the Boulder Dam.²³ Additionally the site was near Las Vegas, at that time still a relatively small town but one having a Union Pacific Railroad depot and rail stop.

¹⁸ Royston, Mark W. *The Faces Behind the Bases: Short Biographies for Whom Military Bases are Named* (Bloomington, IN: Universe, 2009) Pages 99-100; Department of the Air Force, “U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet.”

¹⁹ The LandWell Company, *Battle Born: The History of Basic Magnesium, Inc.* moving image (Henderson, NV: The LandWell Company, 2003).

²⁰ A.D. Hopkins, “Howard Eells,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal* Feb 7, 1999 viewed online: <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/howard-eells>

²¹ The LandWell Company, *Battle Born*.

²² Ibid.; “Investigation of the National Defense Program: Hearings Before A Special Committee Investigating The National Defense Program, United States Senate, Seventy-Fifth Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to S. Res 71: A Resolution Authorizing and Directing an Investigation of the National Defense Program. Part 13: March 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 23, and 24, 1942: Light Metals, Defense Problems in California, Basic Magnesium, Inc.” (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942) Page 5594.

²³ Moehrig and Green, *Las Vegas*, Page 101; McCracken, *Las Vegas*, Page 46.

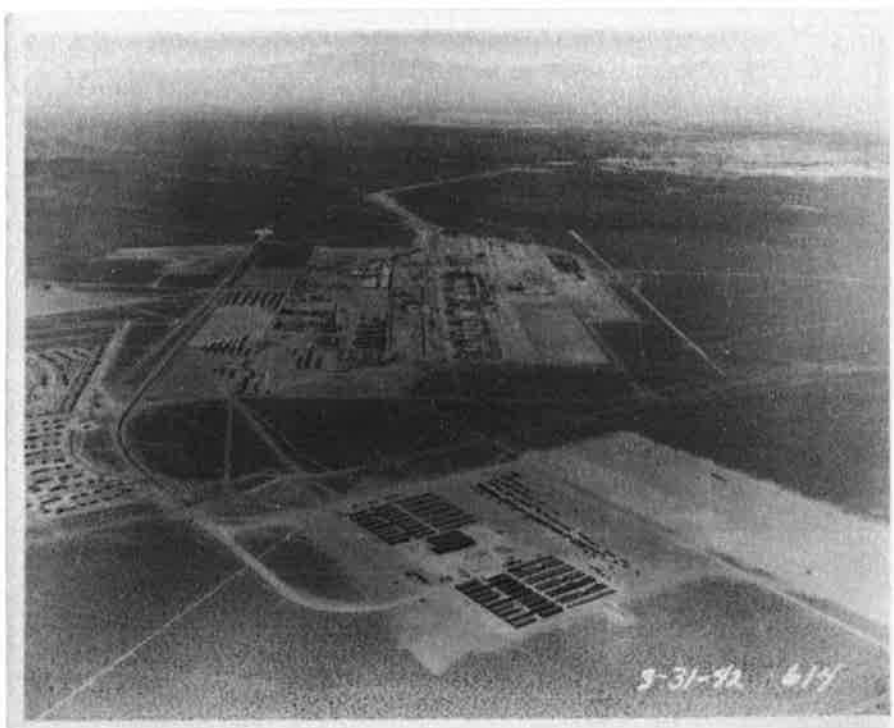


Figure 2. Basic Magnesium Inc. plant, Basic (Henderson), Nevada. March 31, 1942.²⁴

The construction of the BMI plant was a remarkable achievement. Ground broke on September 15, 1941 and its first output of magnesium was poured just 11 months later. 13,000 people constructed the plant on a parcel 1.75 miles long and .75 miles wide.²⁵ Construction cost was 130 million dollars in 1941, nearly two billion dollars in 2014 money adjusted for inflation.²⁶ Completed facilities included a chlorine plant, ore preparation plant, chlorination plant, metals recovery plant, electrolysis plant, and support facilities for each.²⁷

BMI (Eells) managed the plant operation, although the government financed the plant's construction and paid its employees.²⁸ At the end of 1942, Eells sold BMI to Anaconda Copper Company, which ran the operation until the government ordered all production halted in November, 1944.²⁹ At that time the government determined that it possessed enough magnesium for what it saw as the duration of the war. The plant closed at the peak of production when over 13,000 people – 10% of Nevada's population at the time – were employed at the BMI plant.³⁰ When it closed, over 166 million pounds of magnesium had been produced at BMI since its opening just three years earlier.

²⁴ Photo courtesy UNLV University Libraries, Digital Collections. <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/objects/hln/1187>

²⁵ The LandWell Company, "Basic Magnesium and Henderson," *Landwell Restoration Project* viewed online: <http://www.landwellco.com/index.php/past/basic-management-inc-story/magnesium-henderson>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Hopkins, "Howard Eells."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.; McCracken, *Las Vegas*, Page 46.

BMI Housing Concerns

Housing was a major concern beginning immediately upon plant construction. Initially, tents, shacks and other gerrymandered forms of shelter were erected along Boulder Highway outside the construction site.³¹ Anticipating the housing crisis, Eells had originally wanted an employee townsite established in Boulder City, Nevada. That city had just recently been developed by the U.S. Government for the construction of Boulder Dam. The City of Las Vegas, fearing that it would lose out economically if Boulder City was chosen, fought Eells and pressured the federal government to locate the townsite in Las Vegas.³² Instead, federal authorities selected a townsite near the plant with construction beginning on February 17, 1942. It would soon contain approximately 1,000 houses erected on wooden foundations for easy relocation after the war. All of the houses were built by the McNeil Construction Company, the primary contractor responsible for erecting the tract housing in Huntridge.³³

Confirming Eells' housing concerns was Rolla E. Clapp, chairman of the national housing research organization who, in October of 1941, presented a report to the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.³⁴ Clapp predicted that the population in Las Vegas would increase by 13,000 persons in the coming 18 months, effectively doubling the City's current population.³⁵ Clapp "urged the necessity of an immediate large housing campaign in Las Vegas and stressed the need to keep the cost to a minimum in order to provide quarters for families of small incomes."³⁶ As relates to the planned BMI facility, Clapp said that he expected 3,000 or more families would be located in Las Vegas in connection with the BMI plant.³⁷

A senate hearing led by Harry Truman and held in March of 1942 in Las Vegas addressed a variety of issues related to BMI, including the housing crisis. In the transcripts, various senate members and others discuss the possibility of "an expansion of Las Vegas" for housing purposes. In order to ensure accommodations for BMI workers in Las Vegas, the City guaranteed the immediate construction of 2,000 houses as BMI was being completed.³⁸ The subsequent announcement of the Biltmore, Mayfair, and Huntridge tract developments would have been the direct result of the City's housing commitment. The Huntridge and Mayfair developments were both located on the eastern edge of Las Vegas, directly off Boulder highway for direct highway access to the BMI plant (Figure 3). City directory research discussed below indicates that approximately 39% of residents living in Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 (the subject survey area) in 1943-1944 were BMI employees, confirming the need for Huntridge housing as predicted in late 1941.

³¹ McCracken, *Las Vegas*, Page 46.; The LandWell Company, *Battle Born*.

³² Hopkins, "Howard Eells."

³³ "Chronology," *Henderson Home News* (Industrial Days Edition) Apr 22, 1965, Page 13.

³⁴ "Las Vegas Housing Needs Growing, City to Double in 18 Months, Said," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. October 28, 1941.

Page 1.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Investigation of the National Defense Program," Page 5620.



Figure 3. The far eastern edge of Las Vegas, looking west, 1945 (detail).³⁹

The Huntridge development is to the left just south of Charleston Blvd. To the right, just north of Charleston and south of Boulder Highway (Fremont St.), is the 1942 Mayfair development. Downtown Las Vegas is in the background. The intersection at the image's lower right corner is that of Charleston Blvd. and Boulder Highway – the direct route to BMI.

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA)

The Federal Housing Administration was established as an independent agency under the June 27, 1934 passage of the National Housing Act (Public Law 73-479, 48 Stat. 1246). The two primary components of the National Housing Act focused upon:

Housing Renovation and Modernization (Title I) "Authorized the Administrator to insure banks, trust companies, personal finance companies, mortgage companies, building and loan associations, installments lending companies, and other such financial institutions approved by him against losses on loans and purchases of obligations representing loans for financing alterations, repairs, and improvements upon real property. [...]"⁴⁰ and:

Mutual Mortgage Insurance (Title II) "Insurance of Mortgages on One- to Four-Family Homes: Authorized FHA in Section 203 to insure, and to make commitments to insure mortgages on one- to four-family homes with obligations not exceeding \$16,000 or 80 percent of the appraised value of the property covered by the mortgage. Maturity of a mortgage could not exceed 20 years, and

³⁹ Photo Courtesy UNLV University Libraries, Digital Collections. <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/objects/hln/321>

⁴⁰ The Congressional Research Service, "A Chronology of Housing Legislation and Selected Executive Actions, 1892-2003: Committee Print 108-D for the U.S. House of Representatives, one hundred eighth congress, second session." printed brief (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, March, 2004) np.

the interest rate could not exceed five percent- or six percent if the Administrator found that in certain areas or under special circumstances the mortgage demanded it. [...]”⁴¹

One of a variety of government measures aimed at restoring economic health to the nation, the National Housing Act passed during the depths of the Great Depression, a time when the housing industry was suffering mightily, and “flat on its back,” according to HUD.⁴² At that time, two million construction workers were unemployed, mortgage loans were limited to 50 percent of a property’s market value, and terms were difficult to meet for homebuyers seeking mortgages. In fact, only four in 10 households owned their homes.⁴³ The collapse of the banking industry during the Great Depression further discouraged potential homeowners.

The FHA administered the Titles of the National Housing Act, and did so by advocating measures to encourage improved housing standards and act as a stabilizing influence on the mortgage market.⁴⁴ Additionally, and perhaps what the FHA is best known for today, the FHA provided a system of mutual mortgage insurance to mortgage or property improvement loans made by private, approved lending institutions.⁴⁵ The FHA, as an insurer of such loans, did not provide the loans directly, and did not build housing.⁴⁶

Various FHA programs served as mechanisms for providing assistance for home sales, rental units, cooperative housing, elderly housing, and housing for the military and defense. Pertaining to the latter, on March 28, 1941, Congress Passed Public law 77-24, called “Title VI” to the National Housing Act. Title VI was an emergency measure authorizing the FHA to issue a total of 100 million dollars in mortgages and the ability to fund them on more liberal terms for one- to four-family homes in critical defense areas. Title VI was the primary focus of the FHA during World War II. By 1946 the total aggregate amount allocated to FHA Title VI for mortgages to be insured was 2.8 billion dollars, with an option by the president to raise this to 3.8 billion dollars if necessary. Interest on Title VI loans was to be capped at 4 percent.⁴⁷ With the end of the War, Title VI was terminated on August 10, 1948, and the FHA turned its focus to the housing of World War II veterans.

On November 9, 1965 FHA became integrated into the US Department of Housing and Urban development (HUD), where it remains at the present time.

FHA’s Principles of Planning Small Houses

⁴¹ The Congressional Research Service, “A Chronology of Housing Legislation and Selected Executive Actions, 1892-2003: Committee Print 108-D for the U.S. House of Representatives, one hundred eighth congress, second session.” printed brief (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, March, 2004) np.

⁴² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “The Federal Housing Administration (FHA): The History of FHA,” *HUD.gov: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development* viewed online: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/fhahistory

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Poyntz Tyler, ed., *City and Suburban Housing* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1957) Page 39.

⁴⁵ Ibid, Page 40.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ The Congressional Research Service, “A Chronology of Housing,” np.

The site planning, house plans, and architectural designs for the Huntridge Subdivision as announced in December of 1941 were to be prepared "...in compliance with F.H.A. requirements...."⁴⁸ Those requirements were essentially codified in the FHA's Technical Bulletin No. 4 "Principles of Planning Small Houses" initially published in 1936 and revised in 1940. This modest 44-page booklet, illustrated with floor plans and sketches of various designs, had an enormous impact on the execution of tract housing throughout the United States from the late 1930s through the early 1950s. The reason was, in order for private developers to obtain construction loans they had to be certain that the FHA would insure homebuyers' mortgages. As a result, developers' tended to follow FHA guidelines or "principles" religiously because they were unwilling to risk FHA disapproval.

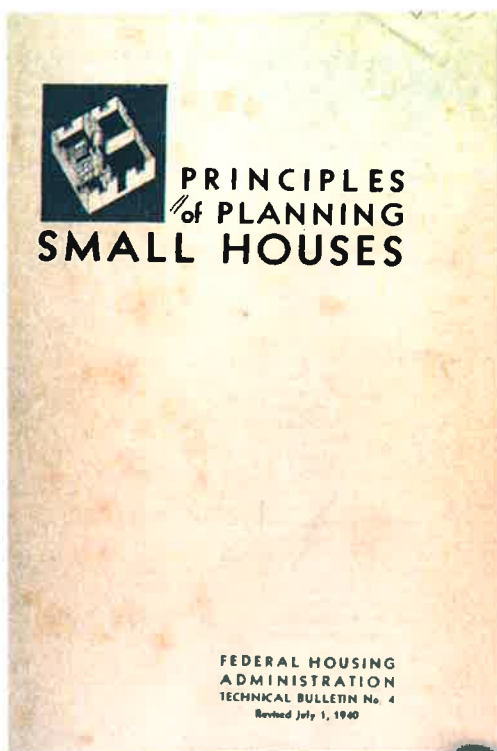


Figure 4. FHA Technical Bulletin No. 4, Revised July 1, 1940

Regarding the small house, the FHA's goal was "a maximum amount of usable space, with as much comfort, convenience, and privacy as possible...obtained for a minimum amount of money."⁴⁹ According to FHA principles as articulated in the technical bulletin, "Economy in planning requires the elimination of waste space, especially hall areas; rooms planned for dual purposes when possible; and rooms whose shape and wall space permit the use and arrangement of essential movable furniture in a minimum floor area."⁵⁰ The document continues,

⁴⁸ "Home Building Program in Vegas Outlined Today," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. December 20, 1941. Page 4.

⁴⁹ *Principles of Planning Small Houses*. Federal Housing Administration, Technical Bulletin No. 4, revised July 1, 1940. Page 3.

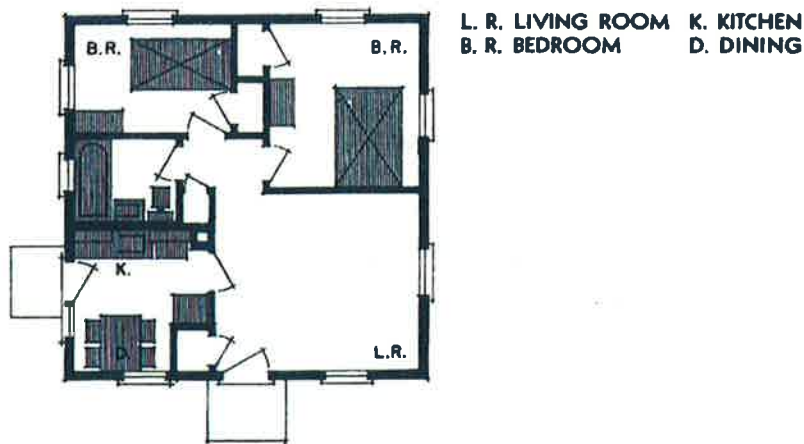
⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Page 4.

*Simplicity in exterior design gives the small house the appearance of maximum size. The fewer different materials used on the exterior the better the appearance usually will be. The use of several different materials, especially those which contrast in color and texture, breaks up the exterior into a series of small units or segments. This has the effect of making the house appear smaller than it is. ... Exterior proportions are improved by setting the house as low on the ground as possible. ... Unnecessary gables and dormers, overelaborate cornices and all nonessential features can profitably be omitted.*⁵¹

As actually constructed by builders, particularly during the war years, the small house was often a boxy two-bedroom, one-bath, one-story house of 1,000 square feet or less. In appearance, the FHA's small house was loosely derived from the modest 17th century Cape Cod house. With its many variations in size, plan, roof form, fenestration, and cladding the FHA's small house has in recent decades been dubbed "Minimal Traditional."⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid. Page 37.

⁵² McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2103. Page 588.



**BASIC PLAN
ONE-STORY
TWO-BEDROOMS**

12

LIVABILITY In this basic small house is assured by separation of sleeping and living areas, privacy obtained with a minimum hall, adequate closet space, and a kitchen which provides space for dining. Room sizes are based upon the use of framing materials of standard length. Economy in construction is assured by the square plan providing maximum floor area with minimum wall area, location of bathroom and kitchen to permit concentration of plumbing pipes, use of an inside chimney for heater and kitchen range, omission of basement to minimize excavation and foundations, and use of simple structural framing and stock millwork. Use of a space heater permits minimum cost and floor area for heating equipment. This plan serves as a starting point from which the variations shown on pages 16 to 19 can be added.

Figure 5. FHA's Basic Plan Small House now known as Minimal Traditional

FHA Tract Design⁵³

Among the concepts promoted by the FHA were curved streets, looping streets and short cul-de-sacs, intended to slow traffic and protect children. Differentiated circulation – that is, the superblock concept with only a few external access points – was intended to reduce the volume of traffic in the subdivision. The subdivisions were to include parks, schools and commercial development. The influences of the standards at the time in Las Vegas can be seen in this 1942 quote about the Huntridge, Biltmore and Mayfair projects: “All of the projects have been carefully laid out on curved streets, to keep traffic slow and protect the lives of children living in the area, and ample provision has been made for landscaping, paved streets, and small parks which will add to the convenience and pleasure of the home owners in the area.”⁵⁴ Shopping areas within walking distance of the homes were promoted “in the interest of national defense and the preservation of automobiles and tires.”⁵⁵

The standards that the FHA established became industry standards. It was unfortunate in a sense that they also became minimum standards. However, they were revolutionary for the fact that they were “objective, uniform, and in writing”, and were enforced through on-site inspection. Standards were set for lot size, setback from the street, separation from adjacent structures, and even for the width of the house itself. They in effect designed American suburbs.

The mass production techniques applied to home construction and tract design that would become famous in the postwar housing boom were already in place prior to World War II in Las Vegas’ Biltmore, Mayfair, and Huntridge housing tracts that broke ground in 1941 and 1942. An article in the December 20, 1941 issue of the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* noted that the current method of prefabricating housing elements “...permits a wide variation in design through changing arrangement of panels, varying floor plans, and architectural planning.”⁵⁶ The article concluded that the “basis for prefabrication [of houses], of course, is the assembly line devised by automobile manufacturers.”⁵⁷

Huntridge Subdivision

Thirteen days after the attack on Pearl Harbor marking America’s entry into World War II, the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* announced the first phase of the new Huntridge subdivision that was meant to address an acute and growing housing shortage in the City:

A gigantic home building enterprise involving \$2,900,000 worth of construction and quarters for 572 Las Vegas families was launched

⁵³ Excerpted from “Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 Historic Resource Survey and Inventory” prepared for the City of Las Vegas Development Services Center & Historic Preservation Commission. Prepared by Diana J. Painter or Painter Preservation & Planning. August, 2005. Page 9.

⁵⁴ “Many New Homes Will Be Ready By Early Spring: Landscaping, Curved Streets Featured in All Developments,” *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 10, 1942. Page 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ “Mass Production Techniques Now Used In Building Homes,” *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. December 20, 1941. Page 4.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

*this week by the Realty Development Corporation at Huntridge subdivision located on the south side of Charleston Blvd. between Ninth Street and Fifteenth Street in Las Vegas. ... Builder of the new houses is the Realty Development Corporation, a Nevada corporation. Dr. Francis D. Griffin is president of the corporation, Norman Winston is vice president, and Thomas A. Oakey is secretary. The officials are experienced in this type of project having directed many major housing programs of the same character throughout the country.*⁵⁸

In the same issue of the newspaper, the head of Realty Development Corporation, Dr. Francis D. Griffin, published an open letter "To the People of Las Vegas" introducing the Huntridge housing project and its contractor, McNeil Housing Company:

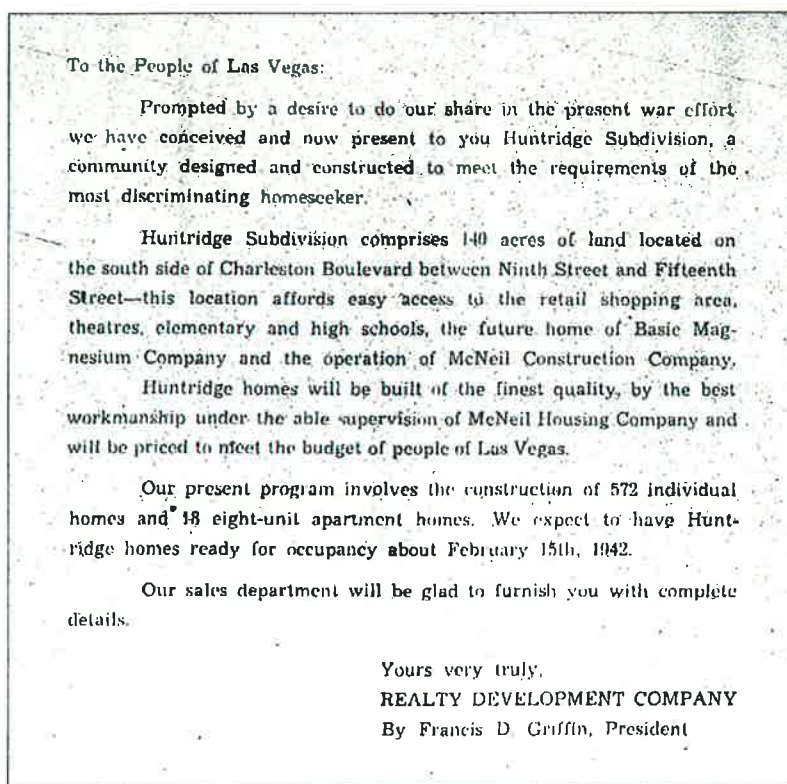


Figure 6. Ad announcing Huntridge Subdivision. *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, December 20, 1941. Page 5

Consistent with the array of house designs possible with the mass production techniques introduced in the United States by the early 1940s, Realty Development Company initially

⁵⁸ "Three Million Dollar Residence Building Program in Vegas Near," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. December 20, 1941. Page 1.

presented 14 basic plans and 27 different architectural variations for the new Huntridge development.⁵⁹ Dr. Griffin stated that the 572 dwellings envisioned for the Huntridge Subdivision would be "...designed for character, originality, and dignity in an effort to escape the 'mining town' aspect so prevalent in former planned developments."⁶⁰ He added, "...no two of the same type being included in the same block."⁶¹ Griffin also stated that setbacks would be varied "...to avoid the 'military pup tent' effect."⁶²

A review of aerial photographs and contemporary street views of Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 indicates that while Griffin may have disliked the "pup tent effect," setbacks along each street appear relatively uniform from parcel to parcel. However, consistent with Griffin's initial program, there was substantial architectural variety within each block with at least five different house models available for buyers to choose from.

In contrast, by 1943 and 1944, when most of the subject Huntridge Tract 3 dwellings were constructed, there were only three house plans/architectural designs available. (See "Huntridge Tract 3 Architectural Designs" below). It can be surmised that because Tracts 1 and 2 were designed in 1941, before America's entry into World War II, the developers could afford to offer more options to potential buyers. By 1943 and 1944, when Tract 3 was designed and mostly completed, the United States was fully engaged in the war. Increased efficiencies in mass construction necessitated by urgent housing requirements most likely led to the focus on only three home designs versus the five or more available before the war.

Circle Park⁶³

The three-and-one-half acre park centering the Huntridge subdivision was dedicated in February 1944, when the Huntridge Development Company deeded the park to the City.⁶⁴ As envisioned, the park was to have a recreational area for small children with a wading pool, sand piles, swings and other playground facilities. "Shaded benches will be built around the sides of the playground for the convenience of attending adults."⁶⁵ Plans were made for a softball diamond and a touch football field. It was to be landscaped with grass and shrubs and outlined with trees. There was disagreement, however, over who should actually construct and landscape the park, and how it was to be funded. Evidently this situation was not resolved quickly, as a photograph published in 1949 shows that the park was still not landscaped.

⁵⁹ "Home Building Program in Vegas Outlined Today," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, December 20, 1941. Page 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Note that although the same article stated that the tract was designed by Kenneth Jones, land planning department of the FHA, no evidence was found to verify this. Quite the opposite, the FHA pointedly refrained from designing specific housing tracts, leaving that to private developers who felt obligated to follow FHA guidelines so that their projects would be eligible for FHA-insured loans.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Excerpted from "Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 Historic Resource Survey and Inventory" prepared for the City of Las Vegas Development Services Center & Historic Preservation Commission. Prepared by Diana J. Painter or Painter Preservation & Planning. August, 2005. Page 10.

⁶⁴ Note that there was a company name change after the completion of Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2. For the remaining tracts, Realty Development Corporation became Huntridge Development Company.

⁶⁵ "Huntridge Park Project Will Get Started Monday," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, September 22, 1944. Page 3.

Marketing Huntridge⁶⁶

A number of different advertising strategies were undertaken to sell the homes in Huntridge. Initially, workers involved in America's defense effort were targeted. Such workers included those employed at BMI and the Army Air Field Gunnery School.

HUNTRIDGE HOMES FOR DEFENSE WORKERS

WAR WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES,
Engaged in Defense Work,
Living in Las Vegas, Nevada
Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Partners of HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, in
a desire to lend their aid to the full extension of WINNING THE WAR, and in
the PRESERVATION OF THE AMERICAN HOME, have launched a pro-
gram providing BETTER living accommodations for the many War Work-
ers and their families engaged in Defense Work in the vicinity of Las Vegas.
In this program, we have the support and the cooperation of the War
Production Board, Federal Housing Administration, Bank of America, the
Bank of Nevada and First National Bank of Nevada.

TO THIS EFFORT THIS PROGRAM IS DEDICATED.
HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.
Thomas A. Oakley, General Partner.



\$ 50⁰⁰

RENT

WITH OPTION TO BUY



HERE ARE YOUR SPECIFICATIONS

Our homes are in beautiful, landscaped and
modern, low 1 1/2 story homes. A complete kitchen,
bath, and living room and a full private bath.
Stainless steel kitchen appliances. Staircase down
into swimming pool. Home for all needs and
all tastes. Home for all tastes and all needs.
The kitchen and bath are equipped with the latest
modern fixtures and appliances. Home for all
needs. Home for all tastes. Home for all needs.
Call us today at 791-1111.

Huntridge Homes are located in a self
contained community, which will in-
clude:

- 1. Parks
- 2. Grammar School
- 3. Playgrounds
- 4. Complete Shopping Center
- 5. Amusement and Recreation

HERE IS HOW YOU SAVE MONEY

1. Rent is \$50.00 month.
2. Price is \$5,000.00.
If you decide to buy the home within
thirty months, your rent payments will
build up an equity towards the purchase
price.

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

OFFICE 1109 SO. 10th ST. PHONE 79

WAS INDEED A HONORABLE AND SERIAL NUMBER 1001 AND SERIAL NUMBER 2002

Figure 7. Ad from *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. January 26, 1943. Page 5. Early ads targeted defense workers

⁶⁶ Excerpted from "Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 Historic Resource Survey and Inventory" prepared for the City of Las Vegas Development Services Center & Historic Preservation Commission. Prepared by Diana J. Painter or Painter Preservation & Planning. August, 2005. Page 11.

An ad in the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* on December 4, 1943 noted that, in addition to the schools, parks and bus service, "protective restrictions" would be in place for 25 years; in other words African Americans could not live in the development. These covenants were endorsed by the FHA and occurred in similar projects throughout the United States until 1948, when a United States Supreme Court ruling determined that they were 'unenforceable as law and contrary to public policy.'

A New Group of 2-Bedroom Homes

NOW AVAILABLE IN

HUNTRIDGE

"A Good Place To Live"

Schools — Parks — Bus Service — Protective Restrictions

Some of the Special Features in These Homes Are

Bruce Block Hardwood Floors
Bath with Tub and Shower
Built-in Hollywood Bath Tub
Forced Air Oil Burning Furnace

Built-in Laundry Room
Double Kitchen Sinks
Large Wardrobe Closets
Complete Cooling Units with Individual Outlets to Each Room

TERMS ARRANGED TO SUIT YOUR CONVENIENCE
Small Down Payment—Monthly Payments Like Rent

COME EARLY AND MAKE YOUR SELECTION
Visit Our Model Furnished Home

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.

Open Daily and Tuesday and Friday Evenings
Office Corner 10th and Charleston

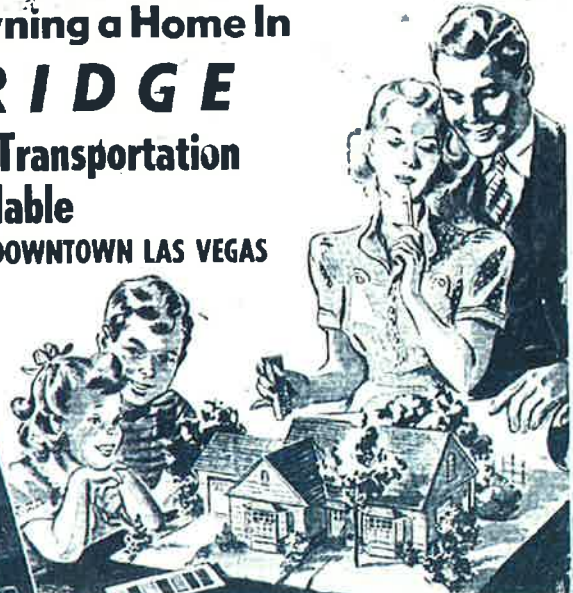
Phone 79

Figure 8. Ad mentioning "Protective Restrictions," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. December 4, 1943. Page 3

An ad on June 16, 1944 promoted the ease and convenience of living in Huntridge, in addition to providing a bus schedule from downtown and suggesting carpooling.

You Will Enjoy Owning a Home In **HUNTRIDGE** Where the Best Transportation Is Available ONLY FIVE MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS

One of the first questions that goes into a family's mind when they think of purchasing a new home is the location. This question is readily answered at Huntridge. Your new home in this beautiful subdivision will place you in a position to quickly reach the social and business centers of Las Vegas, either by bus or car. A convenient Vegas Transit bus runs every hour to downtown Las Vegas. If you prefer to own your own car, you will enjoy driving on paved streets, including Charleston Boulevard, and all of Huntridge. Yes, Huntridge is the ideal spot for your new home.





HUNTRIDGE BUS SCHEDULE

Bus leaves corner of Fifth and Fremont Streets every hour on the half hour from 6:30 A. M. to 11 P. M. on week days and from 9:00 A. M. to 11:00 P. M. on Sundays and holidays.

Leaves the corner of Maryland Parkway and Oak Streets on return trip at a quarter to the hour.



Choose From Nearly 100 Beautiful Homes Recently Completed

**SMALL DOWN PAYMENT
EASY MONTHLY PAYMENTS
TO MEET YOUR BUDGET
OPEN SUNDAY ALL DAY**

- Every home FHA inspected and approved.
- Hardwood floors
- Complete cooling and air-conditioning system
- Oil burning furnace, operated by system of ducts bringing heat into every room.
- Modern plumbing fixtures with chromium plate fittings, including square bath tub in a variety of colors.
- Fully equipped with screens and window shades.

AND HERE'S A GOOD SUGGESTION

**SHARE YOUR CAR
To Work — To Market**

Share with a friend or family member. It's a great idea. You can save money on car payments and insurance. Plus, you can enjoy the convenience of having a car for work and market. Contact us today for more information.

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.

1105 South Tenth Street

THOMAS A. O'KEY, General Manager

Phone 79

Figure 9. Ad, *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. June 16, 1944. Page 7. Later ads such as these focused on proximity to downtown Las Vegas in contrast with early ads targeting defense workers

23

An ad on June 9th, which included testimonials from people who live in the development, accompanied photographs of their home.



I just felt like Huntridge was and is the up and coming place to live in Las Vegas. Everyone here is taking an interest in their home with splendid results. I for one am very interested and intend doing much more to our home this coming year.
—Mr. Stephen Cedzo

Why Pay Rent? Select Your Huntridge Home Now!

- Every home FHA inspected and approved.
- Hardwood floors.
- Complete cooling and air-conditioning system.
- Oil burning furnace, operated by system of ducts bringing heat into every room.
- Modern plumbing fixtures with chromium plate fittings, including square bath tub in a variety of colors.
- Fully equipped with screens and window shades.

- Corner kitchen slabs.
- Spacious kitchen cupboards.
- Every room has double exposure with large windows.
- Hingle roofs.
- Every home equipped with electric hot water heater.
- Pricelies furnished for electric refrigerator and electric stove.
- Highly restricted district for twenty-five years.

OPEN SUNDAYS

**SMALL
DOWN PAYMENT
EASY
MONTHLY PAYMENTS
TO MEET YOUR BUDGET**

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.

1108 South Tenth Street

THOMAS A. OAKLEY, General Manager

Phone 79

Figure 10. Ad from *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. June 9, 1944. Page 6. Despite its 1944 date, the houses depicted were from Huntridge Subdivision Tracts 1 and 2. Five house designs were depicted. Only one of the models appears in Tract 3 (see “Model C” below)

It is interesting to note that, as the war progressed, the emphasis in the advertisements shifted from promoting the basic services available at Huntridge to comfort, convenience, and the availability of technically advanced, modern conveniences that enhanced family life.



Figure 11. Ad from *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. June 9, 1944. Page 6.

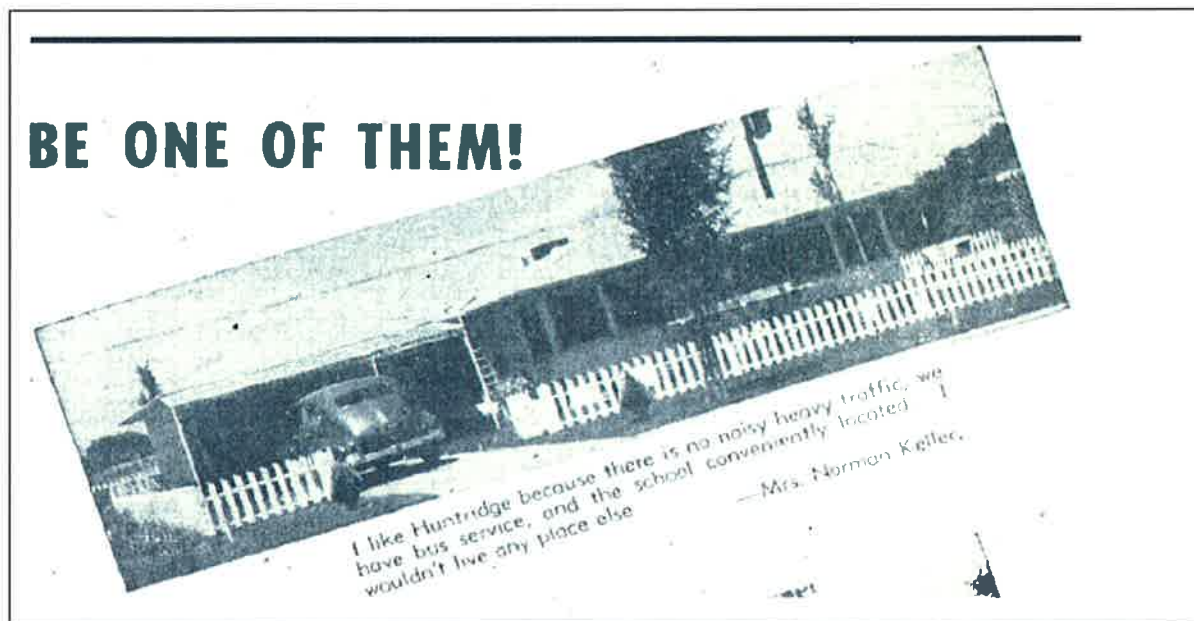


Figure 12. Ad from *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. June 9, 1944. Page 6.

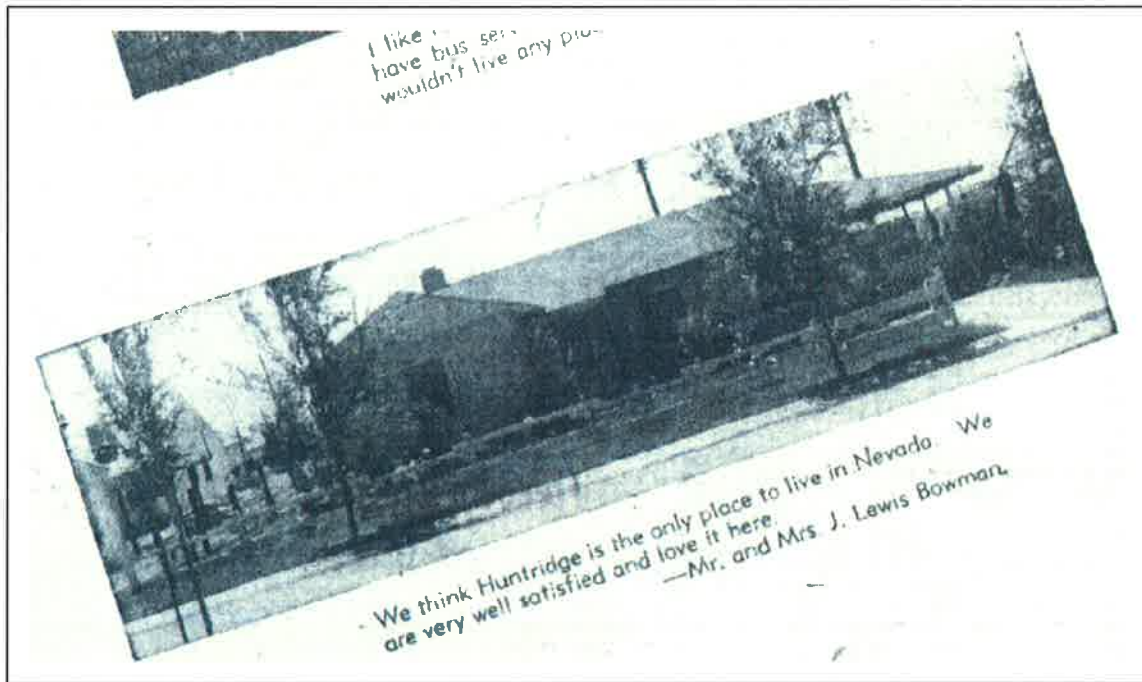


Figure 13. Ad from *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. June 9, 1944. Page 6.

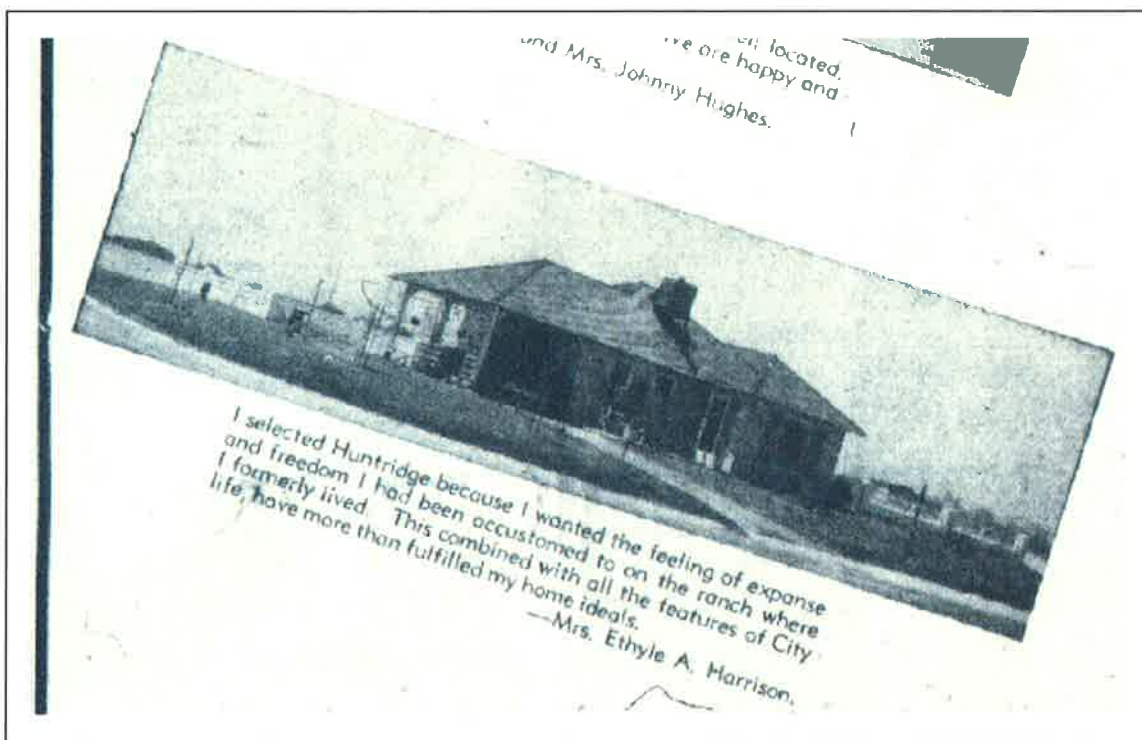


Figure 14. Ad from *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. June 9, 1944. Page 6. "Model C"

Huntridge in the Urban Context⁶⁷

The Huntridge Addition was just one development that was eventually built on land owned by speculator Leigh Hunt. He bought 4,000 acres south of Las Vegas in the 1920s. After he died in 1931 his wife Jesse sold the estate to various parties. At the time that Huntridge was developed, the location of the subdivision was still very remote. In fact, the commercial development envisioned as a part of the entire complex was not constructed until the 1950s and 1960s, with the exception of the Huntridge Theater, which opened in 1944. It was the only business on Charleston Boulevard at the time.

The Huntridge neighborhood is located just five blocks east of Las Vegas Boulevard and a little over a mile from Fourth and Fremont, the heart of downtown Las Vegas. There was no development south of Oakey at the time. Even in 1948 Huntridge was surrounded on all four sides by vacant land. The closest subdivision was Vega Verde to the west, which had also developed in the early 1940s.

Maryland Parkway was also to remain relatively undeveloped until the 1950s. The Paradise Development Group built Sunrise Hospital in 1959 and later, a series of professional buildings. They also built the Las Vegas International Country Club along this corridor, and several commercial centers. The city's first indoor mall, Boulevard Mall, was sited on Maryland Parkway in 1967. Finally, the University of Nevada at Las Vegas campus was established here in 1957, making Maryland Parkway from Huntridge to the McCarran Airport a major commercial and institutional corridor.

Huntridge After 1960⁶⁸

In 1961 Huntridge was announced to be the "first sizable development" outside of the old Las Vegas area to "effectively meet the challenge of creeping blight and deterioration."⁶⁹ This was part of an effort by Franklin J. Bills, who was listed as Planning Director and Coordinator for Urban Renewal for the City, and managed the Citizens' Committee for Renewal and Development, to procure funds to improve streets and add sidewalks and streetlights.⁷⁰

In a block meeting in 1961 Mr. Bills announced that "while the area is definitely not a slum it is showing the traditional warning signs, and unless something is done the area will slide downhill and will require the city to move in at a future date on a full-scale urban renewal plan."⁷¹ This seems unprecedented for a development less than 20 years old. The major proposal was a system of having block captains, who would represent the community and coordinate efforts between the city's urban renewal and planning agencies and the neighborhood.

⁶⁷ Excerpted from "Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 Historic Resource Survey and Inventory" prepared for the City of Las Vegas Development Services Center & Historic Preservation Commission. Prepared by Diana J. Painter or Painter Preservation & Planning. August, 2005. Pages 11 and 12.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ "Huntridge Plan Set in Motion," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 21, 1961. Page 2.

⁷⁰ "Huntridge Residents Form Project Group," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, January 22, 1961. Page 10.

⁷¹ "Huntridge Plan Set in Motion," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 21, 1961. Page 2.

The article covering the meeting stated that the results of this coordination effort were planned public improvements, to be followed by private improvements. The City announced that further questions would have to be posed, and would be answered, by mail. The process was likely undertaken by the City to position themselves for Urban Renewal funds.

Comparing Biltmore, Mayfair and Huntridge subdivisions

It is important to recall that the Huntridge Subdivision was not developed in a vacuum but was one of three large FHA-approved housing projects being built in the early 1940s in response to the urgent demand to provide accommodations for the Las Vegas Air Corp Gunnery School, BMI workers, and others. Yet, while all three projects adhered to the FHA's "Principles of Planning Small Houses," there were differences in architectural design among them, particularly when comparing the houses initially constructed in the Biltmore and Huntridge tracts in 1942. The houses in Biltmore were "attractive colonial designs"⁷² of brick masonry construction and steel-frame windows.⁷³ In contrast, the Huntridge dwellings were Minimal Traditional designs of wood frame construction finished in stucco, with wood-frame windows.

BILTMORE HOMES

Corner Main Street and Clark Avenue

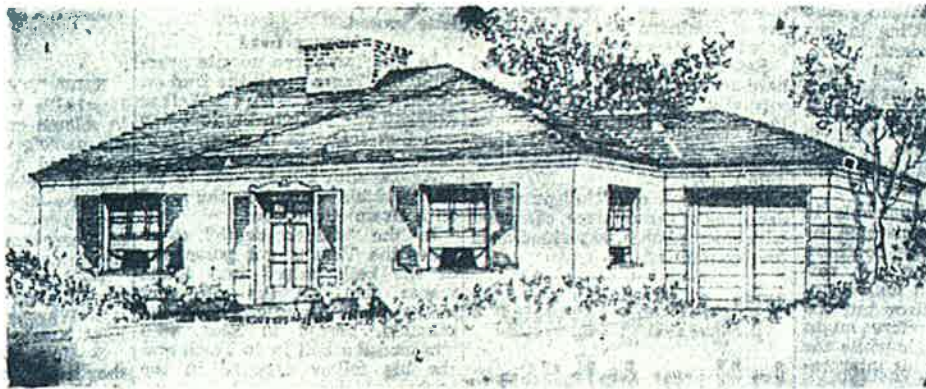


Figure 15. Ad from *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. February 2, 1942. Pg 3

⁷² Advertisement "The Beautiful New Biltmore Homes," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 2, 1942. Page 3.

⁷³ "Homes Arising in Biltmore Tract, First to be Ready in 40 Days," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 10, 1942. Page 4.

The 400 houses of the Biltmore subdivision were to consist of 16 different elevations and, similar to Huntridge, "...be spotted so that no houses of the same exterior construction will be adjacent."⁷⁴ An informal windshield survey did not confirm whether all 16 elevations were available throughout the multi-phase development of the Biltmore subdivision. At Huntridge there were 14 basic plans and 27 different architectural variations planned for the development although, as discussed below, far fewer designs were actually built in Tracts 1 and 2, and only three in the subject Tract 3.



Figure 16. Excellent example of a Biltmore residence. Photographed January 30, 2014.

Similar to Huntridge, the 300 houses of the Mayfair Tract were to be of wood frame and stucco construction. "The entire project has been approved by FHA and the tract has been laid out in accordance with FHA plans for new tracts, eliminating alleys and providing for curved streets to slow traffic in residential areas."⁷⁵ Of the 80 houses to be built in the Mayfair Tract's first phase there would be 10 basic floor plans and an astounding, but currently unverified, 40 different elevations.⁷⁶ And, just as promised at Huntridge, "...no two [Mayfair Tract] dwellings of the same exterior will be in the same block..."⁷⁷ A brief windshield survey of the Mayfair Tract suggests that its Minimal Traditional designs are closer in style to those of Huntridge than the Biltmore designs.

⁷⁴ "Homes Arising in Biltmore Tract, First to be Ready in 40 Days," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 10, 1942. Page 4.

⁷⁵ "Mayfair Tract to Provide 300 Homes and Business District on Fremont," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, March 18, 1942. Page 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*



Figure 17. Typical Mayfair Tract residence. Photographed January 30, 2014.

Each of the three subdivisions was of similar size, planned and constructed around the same time, for similar reasons according to FHA guidelines. As a result, it would be inaccurate to conclude that Huntridge – although somewhat larger in size than Biltmore and Mayfair – was more historically significant than the other two within the context of FHA-approved tract development in Las Vegas during WWII.

Architectural Context

Setting⁷⁸

The topography within Huntridge is flat. Huntridge and Las Vegas as a whole is set within a basin nearly surrounded by mountains. To the west are the Spring Mountains; to the east is Sunrise Mountain; and to the north is the Desert Mountain Wildlife Range. The larger urban context is as follows. Charleston Boulevard and Maryland Parkway are the largest arterial streets. The area to the south of Charleston Boulevard is basically a gridiron in design. North of Charleston Boulevard the grid is skewed in alignment with the Union Pacific Railroad tracks (originally San Pedro, Los Angeles, & Salt Lake Railroad) and Clark's Las Vegas Townsite. The oblique angles of the intersecting grids, width of Charleston Boulevard, the amount of traffic carried by the street, and the extensive commercial development divide the primarily commercial and residential area to the north from the residential neighborhoods of Huntridge and immediately surrounding neighborhoods.

⁷⁸ Excerpted from "Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 Historic Resource Survey and Inventory" prepared for the City of Las Vegas Development Services Center & Historic Preservation Commission. Prepared by Diana J. Painter or Painter Preservation & Planning. August, 2005. Page 14.

The Huntridge neighborhood extends from South 10th Street on the west to Fifteenth Street on the east, and from Charleston Boulevard on the north to Oakey Avenue on the south. ... Maryland Parkway bisects the neighborhood into east and west sectors, and frames an oval-shaped park in the center, historically called Circle Park. Most of the streets are oriented east-west, and the neighborhood as a whole is divided into four super blocks by interior terminating streets. The main arterials that connect the neighborhood to its larger urban context are Charleston, Franklin, and Oakey, running east and west, South 10th (with the exception of John S. Park Elementary School), Maryland and Fifteenth running north and south.

Architectural Character

Arguably the most respected reference book devoted to American residential architectural is *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia and Lee McAlester. Originally published in 1984, a revised and much expanded version by Virginia Savage McAlester (sans Lee) appeared in 2013. A weakness of the original book was its cursory examination of what they termed “Modern Houses” that included Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Split-Level, Contemporary, and Shed. In the new version, each of these is afforded its own chapter.

Virginia Savage McAlester (henceforth, McAlester) dates the Minimal Traditional house circa 1935-1950. Its identifying features are “Low- or intermediate-pitched roof, more often gabled; small house, generally one-story in height; roof eaves usually have little or no overhang; double-hung windows, typically multi-pane of 1/1; minimal amounts of added architectural detail; rarely has dormers.”⁷⁹ McAlester acknowledges the FHA as the guiding force behind the Minimal Traditional house. On the style’s occurrence, she writes:

Minimal Traditional homes can be found throughout the United States. During the early 1940s, concentrations were rapidly built where new sites for World War II production plants created an urgent need for worker housing. After the war, developers built instant communities – such as Levittown, New York, on Long Island, and Brentwood in Denver, Colorado – filled with Minimal Traditional houses, sometimes using only a few designs in a subdivision. ... In postwar subdivisions, the style is found with early Ranch houses (sometimes called Minimal Ranches or Ranchettes).⁸⁰

⁷⁹ McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2103. Page 587.

⁸⁰ Ibid. Page 588.

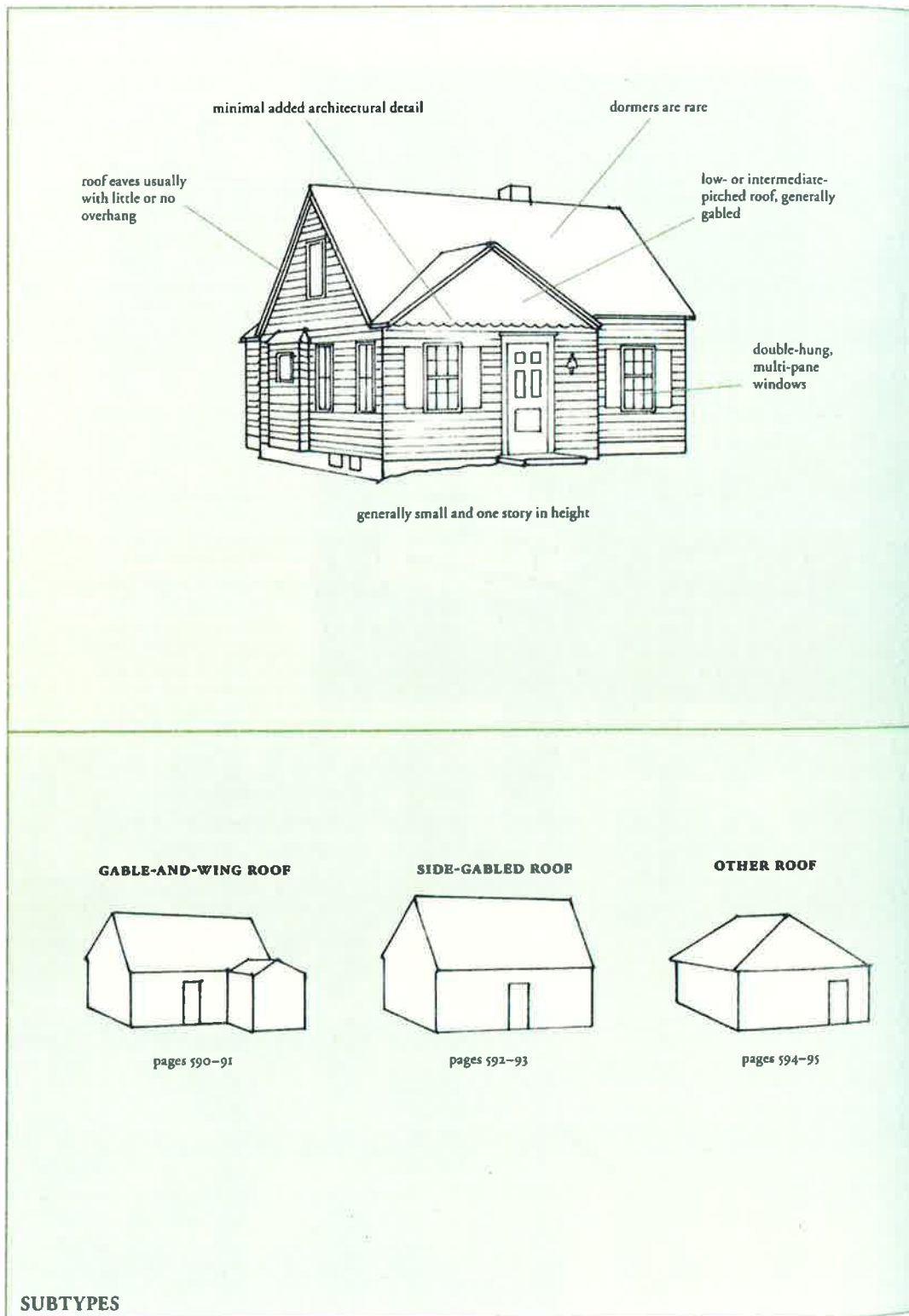


Figure 18. Minimal Traditional style house as defined by Virginia Savage McAlester

As applied to Las Vegas in 1941, the drastic increase in demand for worker housing associated with the defense-related construction of the nearby BMI facility and expanding gunnery range necessitated the government's mandate for large new housing tracts in the city. The result was the Biltmore, Mayfair, and Huntridge subdivisions announced that year. With the FHA firmly behind these projects, the agency's "Principles of Planning for Small Houses" would be realized in the Minimal Traditional designs of the dwellings in the three new tracts.

Huntridge Tract 3 Architectural Designs

Character-Defining Features

The key character-defining features of the Minimal Traditional style as applied to the houses erected in Tract 3 of the Huntridge Subdivision are their small size, one-story height, cross-gabled or cross-hipped roof forms, shallow eaves, lack of dormers, wood-framed double-hung windows, and minimal added architectural detail. In addition, the Tract 3 houses typically included wood shutters. In keeping with FHA principles, exterior surface materials were minimized in color and texture by employing stucco finishes and horizontal boards in gable faces. A consistent FHA-approved variation seen in the original Huntridge Tract 3 houses was the attached single-bay carport (generally termed a 'garage' prior to World War II). The FHA's small house booklet noted, a garage "...makes the small house appear larger due to the increase in building mass."⁸¹ The vast majority of Huntridge carports were enclosed for living space after the war.

A review of the dwellings in Huntridge Tract 3 confirms that there are only three Minimal Traditional models that were actually built. Each is identified below and includes a photograph of the best example retaining the highest level of physical integrity. The use of model names "A," "B," and "C" are only for convenience in identification. They were assigned by ICF and were not identified as such by the developer at the time of construction.

⁸¹ *Principles of Planning Small Houses*. Federal Housing Administration, Technical Bulletin No. 4, revised July 1, 1940. Page 2.

Model A – Cross Hipped

852 square feet, one-story, cross-hipped roof, shallow eaves, stucco finish, four-over-four wood-frame double-hung sash windows, wood shutters, unenclosed entry porch configuration, open single-bay carport. This is the most numerous model constructed in Tract 3.



Figure 19. Model A. 1320 Jessica Avenue. The most numerous of the Tract 3 house designs.

Model B – Cross Gabled

832 square feet, one-story, cross-gabled roof, shallow eaves, stucco finish and horizontal boards in gable faces, six-over-six wood-frame double-hung sash windows, original entry porch configuration, unenclosed single-bay carport. This model is a close second to Model A in number of dwellings built.



Figure 20. Model B. 1433 Cottonwood Place. Second most prevalent Tract 3 house design.

Model C – Cross Hipped with Raised Center Hip

850 square feet, one-story, cross-hipped roof with raised center hip, shallow eaves, original entry porch configuration, six-over-six wood-frame double-hung sash windows, unenclosed single-bay carport. Only about 10% of this model was erected.



Figure 21. Model C. 1425 Francis Avenue. Relatively uncommon Tract 3 house design.

Occupations of Huntridge Tract 3 Residents

A review of the “Directory of Las Vegas and Vicinity for 1943-1944” provides the best window into the occupations of those who lived in Tract 3 of the Huntridge subdivision. When the 1943-1944 edition was printed, 56 (42%) of the 134 residences that would be built in Tract 3 were occupied and listed by address. Of these 56 residents, 22 (39%) were employed by BMI, 10 (18%) were employees of Union Pacific Railroad, 4 (7%) were in the military, and 3 (5%) were public health nurses. The remaining 17 (30%) of the households had a wide variety of occupations as indicated below.

BMI	22	39%
Union Pacific Railroad	10	18%
US Military	4	7%
Public Health Nurse	3	5%
County Health Department	1	2%
Swift and Company	1	2%
Trucker	1	2%
Guard	1	2%
Linotype Operator	1	2%
Metal Worker	1	2%
Standard Oil Representative	1	2%
Manager SNI	1	2%
Electrician	1	2%
Agriculturalist	1	2%
Oil Business	1	2%
Fire Department	1	2%
Carpenter	1	2%
Accountant	1	2%
Service Station Manager	1	2%
Miner	1	2%
No occupation listed	1	2%
Total	56	100%

What is striking about this admittedly small sample is that BMI accounted for only 39% of household occupations, which is less than would have been expected given newspaper accounts of the time that focused so intensely on the need for BMI employee housing. Indeed, the second highest employer of residents in Tract 3 in 1943/1944 was the Union Pacific Railroad at 18%, a company generally not mentioned as in dire need of employee housing by the local press at the time. Nonetheless, Union Pacific was a central player in the early development of Las Vegas and the railroad continued to be an important mode of transportation during the war. The remaining 43% of occupations in Tract 3 ran the gamut from employment in the military, nursing, and trucking, to linotype operator, electrician, agriculturalist, carpenter and accountant.

To summarize, it appears that the initial demand for housing in Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 was by workers for a wider spectrum of employers than originally reported.

Survey Results

Resources Identified

A total of 134 buildings were documented during the Phase II Huntridge Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory. The survey area is known as Huntridge Subdivision – Tract 3 in the City of Las Vegas, Nevada as recorded in Book 2 of Plats Page 54 in Clark County, Nevada and filed on October 21, 1942. The area is generally bounded by Francis Avenue and Cottonwood Place on the north, Maryland Parkway on the west, Norman Avenue on the south, and South Fifteenth Street on the east. It also includes Huntridge Circle Park. The buildings erected in Tract 3 are modest one-story, single-family dwellings constructed primarily in 1943 and 1944, according to tax assessor records, although a handful were built later. Several that face South Maryland Parkway have since been converted for commercial use. As described above, each building exhibits the Minimal Traditional style of architecture that was associated with FHA approved residential developments just prior to and during World War II.

Evaluating Integrity

The immediate wartime need for inexpensive worker housing designed according to the FHA's "Principles of Planning Small Houses" led the Huntridge Development Company to erect exceptionally modest dwellings in Tract 3. Square footage of the two or three bedroom houses averaged between 800 and 1000 square feet. Instead of enclosed garages, most of the houses came with single-bay carports. Available building permits indicate that in the years immediately following World War II, Tract 3 homeowners began altering their residences. The open single-bay carport that was sheltered by an extension of the main roof was typically the first element to be enclosed for additional living space. Today, it is difficult to find any original carports that have not been enclosed.

Rear additions appeared around the same time as carport enclosures and have continued to be built to the present day as documented in building permits. Aluminum, asphalt, and wood shingle cladding over original stucco was a common exterior alteration. Also, the application of rough-textured stucco over smoother original stucco has occurred on numerous houses in the neighborhood. Other commonplace modifications include porch enclosures, covered rear patios, application of brick or rock veneer, and the installation of exterior chimneys. In recent years, the replacement of wood frame windows with metal sliders or double-hung vinyl sash has affected many residences in the tract.

The totality of these alterations has resulted in a distinct loss of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to the individual houses in Tract 3. In addition, the feeling and setting of modest

World War II worker housing associated with the original dwellings has been lost as the houses have become increasingly larger over the years.

Individual Property Findings

The current field survey revealed that only three Tract 3 properties retain sufficient integrity to be considered excellent examples of the original designs. As viewed from the public right-of-way, all three retain the key character-defining features of each model: original plan; cross-hipped, cross-gabled, or cross-hipped with raised center hip roof; shallow eaves; wood-framed double-hung windows; unaltered entry porch; unaltered front entrance, and open single-bay carport.

- 1320 Jessica Avenue – Model A: Cross Hipped
- 1433 Cottonwood Place – Model B: Cross Gabled
- 1425 Francis Avenue – Model C: Cross Hipped with Raised Center Hip

Properties that were found to retain much physical integrity but not enough to qualify as excellent examples of Tract 3 dwellings are typified by modifications such as an enclosed carport, replacement cladding, visible addition(s), and/or non-original window(s).

- 1410 Jessica Avenue – Model A. Replacement cladding, large addition to primary elevation
- 1324 Norman Avenue – Model A. Replacement cladding, metal porch enclosure, non-original carport posts
- 1140 South Fifteenth Street – Model A. Masonry replacement of original cladding, non-original carport posts
- 1310 Jessica Avenue – Model B. Replacement cladding, non-original front door, partially enclosed carport
- 1424 Jessica Avenue – Model B. Replacement cladding, partially enclosed entry porch
- 1201 South Fifteenth Street – Model B. Replacement cladding, vinyl window on primary elevation
- 1412 Cottonwood Place – Model C. Replacement cladding, partially enclosed porch, vinyl window on primary elevation
- 1129 South Maryland Parkway – Model C. Enclosed carport, additions

Determinations of Eligibility

Significance

The significance of individual properties or a district is determined by evaluating its importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope. Based upon the earlier discussion, the context within which Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 is being evaluated is Land Usage: Development of FHA-approved tract housing in Las Vegas during World War II. For the purposes of this report we restricted our analysis of

significance to the FHA period of construction, which is 1943-1944, the war years when most of the tract's houses were built according to FHA Guidelines.

Properties located within Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 were evaluated for NRHP eligibility under three NRHP criteria. According to the National Park Service, a cultural resource may be considered eligible for listing in the NRHP if it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A); is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B); embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction (Criterion C). Criterion D, which is related to yielding information important to an understanding of history or prehistory, does not apply to the subject survey area of mid-twentieth century residences in urban Las Vegas.

Furthermore, in order for a property to be considered individually eligible for the NRHP, it must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity in terms of the seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. To be eligible for the NRHP, a property must possess integrity of those elements as they relate to the criterion or criteria under which it would be determined eligible. For example, those properties recommended eligible under Criterion C, or Criteria A and C, would require stronger integrity in design, materials and workmanship than may a property recommended eligible under Criterion A only.

Individual Properties

Criterion A:

According to the National Park Service, a cultural resource may be considered eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A if it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Specifically, "a property must be associated with one or more events important in the defined historic context."⁸² As noted, the historic context associated with Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 is Land Usage: Development of FHA-approved tract housing in Las Vegas during World War II. The properties in Tract 3 are, indeed, tract houses built in Las Vegas according to FHA principles to meet the urgent need for accommodating workers in World War II. Indeed, the Biltmore and Mayfair tract developments also fall within the same historic context suggesting that the Huntridge Subdivision was not unique in its contributions to the broad patterns of Las Vegas' history.

In addition to establishing a property's association with important events in the defined historic context, it must retain "...the essential physical features that made up its character, or appearance

⁸² National Register Bulletin 16, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Page 12.

during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s).”⁸³ As has been shown, almost all of the Tract 3 dwellings have experienced substantial alterations such that they no longer retain the essential physical features associated with FHA approved tract houses built in 1943-1944 as war-related worker housing. The three exceptions in Tract 3 that continue to fully express the established historic context and retain sufficient integrity for individual NRHP eligibility under Criterion A at the local level of significance are 1320 Jessica Avenue, 1433 Cottonwood Place, and 1425 Francis Avenue (as depicted on pages 34 - 36)

Criterion B:

The key business partners associated with the Huntridge Development Company who were responsible for the development of Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 were Dr. Francis D. Griffin, president; Norman Winston, vice president; and Thomas A. Oakey, secretary.⁸⁴ These were the same individuals responsible for Tracts 1 and 2 of the Huntridge Subdivision completed in 1942 who would then go on to develop Tracts 4 and 5 following the completion of Tract 3. Three of the streets in the Huntridge Subdivision were named after the corporation’s officers: Francis Avenue, Norman Avenue, and Oakey Boulevard. Thomas A. Oakey resided in Tract 2 of the subdivision at 1140 South Maryland Parkway during World War II. He later relocated to Santa Monica. No other information was uncovered on these three individuals to suggest that they would be considered persons significant in the overall history of Las Vegas.

As relates to the occupants of the Tract 3 residences as documented in the 1943-1944 city directory, current research does not suggest that any of them would have been considered significant at that time. However, one of the residents of Tract 3 who would definitively grow into prominence, Richard Bryan, served as a U.S. Senator from Nevada from 1989 to 2001. Although born in Washington D.C., Bryan grew up in Huntridge at 1141 South Maryland Parkway. Unfortunately, the house has since been demolished.

In sum, it does not appear that any of the extant dwellings in Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 meet NRHP Criterion B as relates to persons who would be considered significant in the history of the city, state, or nation.

Criterion C:

In order for an individual property to meet eligibility requirements under Criterion C it must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. Each of the three distinct house models found in Tract 3 is a modest example of the Minimal Traditional architectural style. Designed according to

⁸³ National Register Bulletin 16, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.” U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Page 46.

⁸⁴ The company was initially called Realty Development Corporation when the Huntridge Subdivision was announced in 1941. Tracts 1 and 2 were constructed under the initial name. Tracts 3 – 5 were built under the Huntridge Development Company.

FHA principles, the dwellings were erected to meet the urgent demand for worker housing arising from the rapid growth of both the City of Las Vegas and nearby employers such as BMI. The current field survey reveals that since World War II the great majority of houses in Tract 3 have experienced substantial alterations resulting in a significant loss of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. In addition, these alterations have greatly reduced the feeling of humble worker housing that distinguished the dwellings when completed in 1943 and 1944. Therefore, it was determined that in order for a property to be considered individually eligible under Criterion C it must retain a sufficient degree of integrity among the seven aspects in order to convey its distinctive characteristics. As viewed from the public right-of-way, only three houses representing each of the three distinct models built in Tract 3 meet this integrity threshold (as depicted on pages 34 – 36):

- 1320 Jessica Avenue – Model A: Cross Hipped
- 1433 Cottonwood Place – Model B: Cross Gabled
- 1425 Francis Avenue – Model C: Cross Hipped with Raised Center Hip

In addition to physical integrity, each retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. Specifically, the three houses are located at their original addresses and, due to the retention of their original modest size, each evokes the setting and feeling of modest worker housing associated with FHA-approved tract developments erected for defense-related industries during World War II. Therefore, the three individual dwellings appear to meet NRHP Criterion C for architectural merit at the local level of significance.

District

According to National Register Bulletin 16, “A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects unified historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”⁸⁵ The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment.⁸⁶ Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 possesses a significant concentration of dwellings unified historically by their function as modest worker housing designed according to FHA principles to address a housing shortage arising from the opening of the war-related BMI facility and the Air Force Gunnery School.

However, in addition to possessing a significant concentration of historic resources, a historic district must retain integrity.⁸⁷ “For a district to retain integrity as a whole, the majority of the components that make up the district’s historic character must possess integrity even if they are

⁸⁵ National Register Bulletin 16, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.” U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Page 5.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ National Register Bulletin 16, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.” U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Page 44.

individually undistinguished.”⁸⁸ The Bulletin continues, “A district is not eligible if it contains so many alterations or new intrusions that it no longer conveys the sense of a historic environment” and “a component of a district cannot contribute to the significance if it has been substantially altered since the period of the district’s significance....”⁸⁹ While the components of Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 continue to share the historic associations of a district, the current survey has shown, due to alterations, that the great majority of the properties in Tract 3 have lost integrity such that the neighborhood no longer conveys the sense of the historic environment that existed in 1943-1944, the period of the tract’s significance. As a result, there would be an insufficient number of contributing properties to suggest the existence of a NRHP eligible district.

Huntridge Circle Park

The historic context associated with Huntridge Subdivision Tract 3 is Land Usage: Development of FHA-approved tract housing in Las Vegas during World War II. Circle Park was a planned component of the Huntridge Subdivision from the project’s inception. Although the three-and-one-half acre park was deeded to the City in February 1944, during the period of significance, there was disagreement over who should actually construct and landscape it, and how the park was to be funded. Indeed, by 1949 the park had still not been landscaped. Therefore, because the oval-shaped acreage was only set aside by the Huntridge Development Company but not improved by it during the period of significance, the park area does not meet Criterion A for important historic associations. Under Criterion B, the park area does not appear to be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, so it fails to meet this criterion. Finally, under Criterion C for architectural merit, Circle Park was improved sometime after 1949 and, based upon the current field survey, appears to have been substantially renovated and modified in recent years. As a result, the property does not meet Criterion C because it does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

⁸⁸ National Register Bulletin 16, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.” U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Page 46.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Recommendations

The conclusion of the previous Huntridge Subdivision Phase I survey and the current Phase II survey is that the integrity of the great majority of dwellings in these neighborhoods has been substantially compromised. As a result, only a handful have been found individually eligible for listing in the National Register.

A cursory survey of the Biltmore and Mayfair tracts finds, similar to Huntridge, that the physical integrity of these neighborhoods has been lost due to incompatible alterations. Therefore, it is recommended that as an alternative to expending resources to conduct future intensive level surveys of Huntridge Subdivision Tracts 4 and 5, and the Biltmore and Mayfair tracts, windshield surveys be conducted of these areas instead. Such efforts could verify the supposition that the overall integrity of these areas has been compromised. In addition, as part of the windshield survey, a few excellent examples of houses in these neighborhoods could be identified and evaluated under the applicable historic context: Land Usage: Development of FHA-approved tract housing in Las Vegas during World War II.

With this information, the City could consider honoring a few selective properties in order to encourage the preservation of such important representatives of modest World War II era worker housing in Las Vegas.

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Appendices

Property Table in Excel Format

Nevada State Historic Preservation Office's Architectural Resource Assessment (ARA) Forms