

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Registration Form****Wait 1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Billy Mitchell Village

Other name/site number: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

**2. Location**

Street &amp; number: 201-245 Croyden Ave., 201-435 Cropsey Ave., 101-409 Gilmore Ave., 101-160 Camelot Ct., and 102-132 General Ent Ct.

City or town: San Antonio

State: Texas

County: Bexar

Not for publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this

☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

State Historic Preservation Officer

October 26, 2022

Signature of certifying official / Title

Date

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

### Category of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
32	2	buildings
0	0	sites
9	0	structures
0	0	objects
41	2	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

**Current Functions:** DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

**Principal Exterior Materials:** BRICK, ASBESTOS, ASPHALT, WOOD

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-12)

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria:** A, C

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Military (*local level*), Architecture (*local level*)

**Period of Significance:** 1950-1965

**Significant Dates:** 1950

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Gerber, Erwin (architect)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-13 through 8-25)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheet 9-26 through 9-27)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (*Part 1 approved 7-15-2020, Part 2 approved 4/27/2021*)
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository: NA

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** approximately 33.5 acres

### Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates: see continuation sheet 10-28

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

**Verbal Boundary Description:** see continuation sheet 10-28 and MAP-30

**Boundary Justification:** see continuation sheet 10-28

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Kate Singleton, M.P.A. and Charlotte Adams  
Organization: Post Oak Preservation Solutions  
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Date: October 10, 2021

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets MAP-29 through MAP-32)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets FIGURE-33 through FIGURE-39)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheets PHOTO-40 through PHOTO-48)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

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



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**Photograph Log**

Name of Property: Billy Mitchell Village  
City, County, State: San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas  
Photographer: Ellis Mumford-Russell  
Date Photographed: May 2022

Photo 1  
Site.  
View north.

Photo 2  
Site and Type L Building.  
View southeast.

Photo 3  
Building Type R1, North Elevation  
View east.

Photo 4  
Building Type R2, West Elevation  
View east.

Photo 5  
Typical Rear Elevation  
View west.

Photo 6  
Typical Rear Elevation  
View west.

Photo 7  
Typical Parking Structure.  
View north.

Photo 8  
Building Type R1, Typical Entrance Detail.  
View south.

Photo 9  
Building Type O, Typical Entrance Detail.  
View south.

Photo 10  
Building Type L, Typical Entrance Detail.  
View east.

Photo 11  
Typical Interior Stair.

Photo 12  
Typical Unit Living Room and Kitchen.

Photo 13  
Typical Unit Bedroom.

Photo 14  
Typical Unit Bathroom

Photo 15  
Non-Contributing Clubhouse  
View south.

Photo 16  
Typical Laundry Building

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## Narrative Description

Billy Mitchell Village is a postwar military housing development historically associated with Kelly and Lackland Air Force Base in southwestern San Antonio, Bexar County. Designed by architect Erwin Gerber for the United States Department of Defense, Billy Mitchell Village was constructed on 94 acres in three phases between 1949 and 1951. Originally there were 1,000 apartment units in 45 apartment buildings. The proposed district is a coherent 33.5-acre subsection of 22 apartment buildings and 19 carports/laundry facilities opened in 1950 as the project's first phase of development. Of the 43 resources in the boundary, only two are non-contributing. Billy Mitchell Village is a garden apartment community characterized by its park-like superblocks with standardized L and Z-plan Colonial Revival-style apartment buildings. The two-story apartments are brick veneer with asbestos shingles on the second floor, have hipped roofs, symmetrical facades and feature varying Classical Revival ornamentation in decorative door surrounds and columned porches. The proposed boundary excluded extant buildings and structures from the development's later phases because of drastic alterations that adversely affected the integrity. The current property owners are working with the National Park Service Technical Preservation Services and Texas SHPO to rehabilitate resources in the nominated historic district using federal and state tax credits. The district retains excellent integrity.

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## Setting and Site

Billy Mitchell Village is in southwest San Antonio, Bexar County, where the topography is generally flat. The nominated district is a 33.5-acre subset of the original 94-acre Billy Mitchell Village military housing development. The district is roughly bounded on the south by Billy Mitchell Boulevard, on the north by Calgary Drive, on the west by the former Kelly Air Force Base, and on the east by San Fernando Cemetery. The surrounding area includes parks, residential areas developed in the 1940s and 1950s, and industrial and commercial development.

The district's site plan is indicative of 20<sup>th</sup> century Garden Apartment communities with park-like settings that prioritize pedestrian traffic, "superblocks" of low to medium density building coverage, and standardized building types. Billy Mitchell Village's 22 apartments are generously setback from the roadway with original carports and laundry facilities behind residential buildings. Sidewalks throughout the site prioritize pedestrian traffic. These line the district's few streets, leading up to and connecting each building throughout the complex. Large grassy lawns of St. Augustine or Bermuda; mature trees—crepe myrtles, sycamore, red cypress, and live and American oaks—and variegated pittosporum, red tipped photinia, English holly, and other bushes characterize the landscape. These plantings are likely original to the development. The property is currently undergoing rehabilitation through the historic tax credit program. As part of this rehabilitation, sidewalks will remain or be replaced in kind as needed. Large trees, where healthy, will remain and new landscaping will be in keeping with the original planting palette. The existing circulation patterns will remain after rehabilitation is complete.

There are 43 total resources in the district: 34 buildings and 9 structures. Two buildings (Resources #6-7) were built after the period of significance and are considered non-contributing. A recent fire destroyed one complete and one partial apartment building (#31) within the nominated boundary. The 22 extant apartments cohere to standardized plans (labeled L, Z, O, R-1, or R-2) with vaguely Classical Revival ornament in decorative door surrounds, pedimented entrances, and columned porches. A few buildings have *viga*-like projections, which are not characteristic of the style nor are structurally functional. Although the apartments range in size (2,700 sq.ft. to 20,000 sq. ft.) and plan, all are two-story rectangular structures with repeating window patterns, limited ornamentation, hipped roofs, and brick and asbestos siding veneers. Ten buildings are brick veneer laundry facilities or combination laundry buildings with attached carports. Nine freestanding metal carports are counted as structures. Though the property is currently undergoing rehabilitation, buildings will retain their historic appearance and missing or damaged elements will be replaced in kind.

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**Inventory (See Map 5)**

#	Type	Classification	Status	Address
1	Structure	Carport	C	
2	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
3	Building	O	C	225-257 Calgary
4	Building	R-2	C	201-217 Calgary
5	Building	R-2	C	101-117 Calgary
6	Building	Clubhouse	NC	
7	Building	Poolhouse	NC	
8	Building	L	C	250-258 Calgary and 401-409 Gilmore
9	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
10	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
11	Building	Z	C	202-218 Calgary
12	Structure	Carport	C	
13	Structure	Carport	C	
14	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
15	Building	L	C	402-418 Cropsey, 101-117 Camelot Ct.
16	Building	Z	C	409-435 Cropsey
17	Building	L	C	101-117 Gillmore
18	Building	L	C	
19	Building	Z	C	319-381 Cropsey
20	Building	R-1	C	340 Gilmore
21	Building	L	C	152-160 Camelot Ct., 301-309 Gillmore
22	Building	Laundry	C	
23	Structure	Carport	C	
24	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
25	Building	Z	C	210-250 Gillmore
26	Structure	Carport	C	
27	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
28	Structure	Carport	C	
29	Structure	Carport	C	
30	Building	Laundry	C	
31 <sup>1</sup>	Building	L	C	101 General Ent, 302-318 Cropsey
32	Building	Z	C	308-310 Gillmore, 115-121 General Ent
33	Building	L	C	301-333 Cropsey
34	Building	Z	C	201 Gillmore, 102-132 General Ent
35	Building	R-1	C	202 Gillmore
36	Structure	Carport	C	
37	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
38	Building	Z	C	221-245 Croyden, 202 Cropsey
39	Building	L	C	201 Croyden, 209-217 Cropsey
40	Structure	Carport	C	
41	Building	O	C	226-242 Cropsey
42	Building	O	C	202-218 Cropsey
43	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	

<sup>1</sup> Due to a fire, only the north portion of this building remains. The remaining part retains good integrity.

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## Resource Types

Billy Mitchell Village is a postwar military housing development historically associated with Kelly and Lackland Air Force Base in southwestern San Antonio, Bexar County. Designed by architect Erwin Gerber for the United States Department of Defense, Billy Mitchell Village was constructed in three phases between 1949 and 1951 with 1,000 apartment units in 45 apartment buildings spread out over 94 acres of flat land. The proposed district is a coherent 33.5-acre subsection of 22 apartment buildings and 19 carport and/or laundry facilities completed in 1950 as the project's first phase of development.

### *Apartment Buildings - Exterior*

The buildings are two story wood frame construction with concrete foundations, brick and asbestos or cementitious shingle exteriors, and hipped roofs covered with asphalt shingles in five building configurations that are variations on the basic rectangular building form.



**Building type “R1”** (Resources #20 and #35) are the smallest building type in the district. Each are 3,100 square feet with rectangular plans on concrete base foundations, red brick, and a soldier course to distinguish the first and second floors. The second floor is clad in light colored asbestos shingles. At the entrance on the front elevation, the brick extends to the second floor creating a visual focal point. The entrance is covered with a shallow-hipped roof; it consists of a door with sidelights framed by Tuscan columns and dentilling on the face of the hipped roof. The doors are wood with multi-pane upper panels. Above the entrance, on the second floor is a window that has a small wrought iron balconet railing. *Viga*-like ornamental protrusions are above several primary façade windows.

These are neither common to Classical Revival style nor provide the building any structural support. The window sills on the first floor are red brick and on the second floor are plain wood sills. The windows are in a repeating pattern and are multi-light steel casement. One R-1 building's original windows were replaced with one-over-one aluminum. There are black non-historic shutters at the window openings. The side elevations of the buildings have windows placed similarly to the front elevation. The rear elevations have a similar window pattern as the front, and a rear entrance.

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“R2” (Resource #4-5) are approximately 8,900 square feet buildings with rectangular footprints. Entrances are have pedimented door surrounds with sidelights and enframed fluted pilasters. Red brick extends above these primary entrances to frame the second-floor window above. There is also a balconet with a wrought iron railing, a window, and decorative wood rafter tails above that window. Two-story columned porches cover part of each façade. The windows are either replacement one-over-one aluminum or the original steel multi-light casements. One of the buildings does have two portions that extend out from the rear elevations for the rear entrance from the parking area; this small rectangular projection is two stories.

**Building type “O”** (Resource #3, 41-42) are generally rectangular in plan but each have an offset, smaller wing that steps back from a rear corner of the main wing. The square footage ranges from 9,275 to 14,692 square feet. Resources #41-42 on Croyden Avenue have a much less obvious offset, whereas the building on Calgary Avenue (#3) looks like two structures that are joined only by a small connection at the end of the hipped roof. (This model



with the connection at the overhang of the hipped roof is repeated in the other types, the “L” and the “Z.”)

Resource #3 (shown here) has five entrances: on the large portion of this building there are three entrances; the middle entrance is a two story, six columned porch with a flat roof that extends from the main hipped roof. The door entrance has a pedimented frontispiece with compound pilasters and sidelights. The windows are a repeating pattern with multi-light steel casements. Some of the windows are steel casement with a vertical row of fixed lights between the operable casements. The other two entrances on either side have the same pedimented frontispiece with compound pilasters and sidelights, and above the entrance is a single window with wood decorative *vigas*. For the offset portion of the building,

there are two entrances that are the same as the other building types, with a small, hipped roof, Tuscan columns, and a door with sidelights. The doors are wood with multi-pane upper panels. Above the entrance, there is a window that has a small wrought iron balconet railing on the second floor. Above the window are decorative projecting wood rafter tails. As with the other buildings, there are non-historic shutters for the windows. The side elevations, including the end or side of the larger building, have casement windows. The rear elevation has entrances that correspond to the placement of those on the front elevation. These have a small, flat canopy over the rear doors.



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There are seven **Building Type L's**: Resource #8, 15, 17-18, 21, 33, and 39. As with the type "O" Building on Calgary Avenue, the "L" is joined only at the edge of the hipped roof; *there is no interior intersection of the buildings*. Square footage for these resources ranges from 9,100 to 14,700. Each section of the "L" has two entrances on the front elevation. The entrances are the same as the other buildings with a small, hipped roof, Tuscan columns, and a door with sidelights. The doors are wood with multi-pane upper panels. Above the entrance, on the second floor is a window that has a small wrought iron balconet railing. Above the window are decorative projecting wood *vigas*. As with the other buildings, there are non-historic shutters for the windows. At the intersection of the two end sections of the building, there is one upper and one lower story

window on each end or side elevation. The other side elevations (not joined to the other building) each have two windows on the first and second floors. The rear elevation has four rear entrances that correspond to the front entrances. The rear entrances have flat wood awnings above each door.



The fifth type is **building type "Z,"** of which there are eight: Resource #11, 16, 19, 25, 31, 34, and 38. Resource #31 suffered fire damage that destroyed part of the building.

This configuration has four forms: one consists of two larger buildings with a smaller building in between; another consists of two larger buildings with the smaller building at the end; another configuration consists of a larger building with two smaller buildings; and the last is comprised of three large similarly sized buildings. Sub-type Z resources range in square footage from 15,941 to 19, 108.

Depending on the configuration, each building section has one, two, or three front elevation entrances with architectural details that differentiating them. The doors are

nine light wood with lower panels. One entrance type has a pediment with a variation of surrounding features. The pediment feature, in one variation, is part of a two-story pilaster. The entrance has boxed pilasters as support for the pediment (usually with the building number) and sidelights with 3 vertical lights and wood below the glazing. Another variation has paired boxed pilasters on either side of the entrance. The single boxed pilasters are not original; the double boxed pilaster on either side is the original configuration. Another entrance form is the two-story colonnade with a pedimented entry. The entry has boxed pilasters as support for the pediment and sidelights with 3 vertical lights and wood below the glazing. Another variation is a small-hipped roof over the entrance with decorative brackets. The door and sidelight configuration are the same. In one version, the hipped roof has exposed rafter tails. Another version has the hipped entrance roof and columns as support for the roof as well as scalloped detail for the fascia. The plain fascia is not original to the buildings. Some of the buildings feature a small decorative Juliette balcony that is original. The rear entrances have a small, hipped hood over the entrance with small brackets or a hipped entrance hood with columns. Original fascia is scalloped, similar to the front entrances.

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*Apartment Buildings – Interior*

The apartments contain a variety of floor plans for one-, two- and three-bedroom units. Each building entrance opens to a small foyer with stairs or corridor that lead to the first and second floor units. (See Figure G) The stairways in all the buildings have simple wood banisters. There are one-, two- and three-bedroom units. The interior space is planned with units on either side of a stairway/corridor. The number of units in a building dictates the number of stairways. The units have the following square footage: one bedroom units are 640 square feet; two bedroom units (smaller) are 768 and 852 (larger) square feet, and three bedroom units are 919 square feet. Units consist of bedroom(s), living room, kitchen and dining room/area, bathrooms, and closets. Interior materials in all the units include hardwood floors in the living areas including bedrooms, vinyl floor squares or linoleum floors in the kitchens and some dining areas, and ceramic tiles for the bathrooms. There are simple wood window sills, wood doors and wood trim door surrounds in the units. The kitchens have tile counters and backsplashes with wood cabinets. The bathrooms have non-historic ceramic tile around the tubs that extends around to the sinks and toilets. Simple wood mouldings are used at floor level. The walls are gypsum wall board with a light texture covering. The stairways and entrance vestibule have linoleum floor covering and simple stairways. The banisters and rails are wood, the rails are square and painted, the banisters are unpainted wood and the newel posts are wood with a simple cap.

The one-bedroom unit has the main entrance off the stairway/corridor that opens into the living area. The dining room is open to the living room and the kitchen is adjacent to the dining room and separated by a door. There is another door leading to the stairway/corridor in the kitchen. The bathroom, closets, and bedroom are together at the end of the unit with a door from the dining room into a small hall area or vestibule area where the bedroom and bathroom are located. The two-bedroom units are similar in layout to the one bedroom units. The main entrance into the unit is in the living room; the dining room is adjacent to the living room and the kitchen historically had a doorway into the dining room. As part of the current ongoing rehabilitation of the property, walls between kitchens and dining rooms are being demolished to create a countertop. A second door in the kitchen historically lead out to the stairway/corridor, though this is being fixed in place as part of the ongoing rehabilitation of the property. The two bedrooms and bathroom are accessed through an opening into a small hall or vestibule with small closets, the bathroom and bedroom on one side of the hallway and then the second bedroom. The three-bedroom units again are similar in layout to the one and two bedroom units, the configuration is generally the same except the unit is larger to accommodate the third bedroom. The unit is accessed through the main entrance at the living room with the dining area adjacent to it. The kitchen is adjacent to the dining area and was historically accessed through a door, though this wall is being demolished and replaced by a counter as part of the ongoing rehabilitation. In the kitchen is a second entrance historically lead to the stair/corridor, though this door is being fixed in place as part of the current rehabilitation. The bedrooms are accessed through the dining area with a small hall or vestibule area which has two small closets, the bathroom and the three bedrooms.

*Carports/Laundry Buildings*



Parking is provided at the rear of some of the buildings and is shared; the access to the parking and rear of the buildings is from the streets. The parking area has open sided **carports** with metal poles and wood and corrugated roofs. The beams are wood with metal plates for bolts to secure the poles and beams together. The end-facing gable roof has a low slope with corrugated metal roofing, wood rafters and wood fascia. The wood support beams extend out somewhat from beneath the gable end of the roof. The other parking structures have metal poles, metal beams and corrugated metal roofs; the slope of the shed roof is almost flat. The majority of the parking structures or carports are single bays, accommodating one row of cars. However, the buildings facing onto Cropsey Avenue have double stacked

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parking structures for two rows of cars facing each other. The parking surface is asphalt and/or concrete. These carports vary in size depending on the size of the building that they serve. For those buildings on the periphery of the site, the carports and laundry rooms are located adjacent to the lot line. The interior buildings on the site have the carports and laundry buildings situated behind them, so they can serve multiple buildings. Access for all the carports is from the rear of the buildings.



At one end of some of the carports is an attached storage area with T1-11 siding and adjacent to that **are one story brick laundry/storage buildings** with flat roofs. These laundry buildings have multi-pane casement windows and plain metal doors. Many of the large carports have a roof extension at one end that serves as the roof for the adjoining laundry/storage buildings. These buildings are one story brick buildings with casement windows and a door. There are two smaller stand alone brick laundry/storage buildings with shed roofs; again with windows and a single door. The laundry rooms have sheetrock walls and are an open plan.

### Integrity and Alterations

This complex is undergoing rehabilitation as part of a phased federal and state tax credit project. At the time of this nomination, roughly half of the buildings have undergone rehabilitation and the others are under construction. The rehabilitation will retain the character defining features including site plan, circulation patterns, overall massing, materials, fenestration, and interior configuration of the property while replacing missing or damaged elements in kind.

The buildings have few alterations. The most common is replacement of the original steel casement windows with one-over-one aluminum windows, though these will be replaced with steel windows matching historic as part of the current rehabilitation project. However, the majority of the buildings do retain original windows. Where the original windows have been replaced, the size of the openings has not been altered. The buildings retain a high degree of integrity. One building, formerly located at the center of the nominated parcel, burned to the ground in recent years. (*Note: included aerials are not up-to-date and show this destroyed building as standing.*) A portion of building number 31 also burned recently, leaving only the north portion of the Z-type building extant. For the interiors, wood flooring remains in many units though, as part of the current rehabilitation, some has been replaced in kind. New tile replaced existing in bathrooms and kitchens and the wall between the kitchens and dining rooms will be replaced with a countertop as part of the ongoing rehabilitation project.

Billy Mitchell Village retains a high degree of integrity. There have been minimal alterations of the property over the years. For the exterior, a few of the windows have been changed but the majority of the windows are the original metal casement, and the original materials remain including siding, many of the doors, door surrounds, pilasters, pediments and other ornamental features. Some of the balconettes have been replaced but many are original. The interior of the building retains a high degree of integrity of design and workmanship including the original much of the interior configurations for the apartments. Many of the original finishes are still intact including wood flooring, walls, stairways and stair material and railings. The site retains a high degree of integrity of the setting and location. The site, location and setting still convey the original open space plan, which is fundamental to garden apartment complexes. The open spaces have much of their original configuration, landscaping and sidewalks which are an important part of the Garden Apartment and Garden City planning principles. The secondary structures, laundry buildings and carports, are still intact. The complex has a high degree of feeling and association as the buildings, space and structures convey their use as military housing. The buildings still physically convey the history of military housing in the postwar years as well as Garden City planning principles. The Garden Apartment and Garden City principles of “superblocks” with low rise buildings arranged at the interior of the site plan, and repetition of nearly identical building models throughout the plan are hallmarks of Garden Apartments.



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## Statement of Significance

Billy Mitchell Village is an excellent local example of a postwar housing development constructed by the United States Department of Defense to entice employment and retention of military enlisted and civilian personnel in the years leading up to the Cold War. From its passage through 1962, Section 803 (called the Wherry Act) of the 1949 Housing Act enabled the construction of 62,475 military housing units, including Billy Mitchell Village, nationwide. Like all Wherry Housing, Billy Mitchell Village met FHA *Minimum Property Standards* and provided affordable housing for Air Force personnel that was comparable to private sector housing. Completed in two phases between 1949-1952, the development was once touted as the largest military housing project in the nation's history. The nominated district represents the first phase of the housing project's development. Former FHA employee and architect Erwin Gerber designed the nominated district as garden apartment complex with Colonial Revival-style buildings in a park-like suburban setting. In September 1965, Billy Mitchell Village was sold at public auction for \$257,000 after a multi-year investigation into windfall allegations and subsequent modifications of the FHA multifamily program. The proposed district is a coherent 33.5-acre subsection of 22 apartment buildings and 19 carports completed in 1950 that represents the project's first phase of development. Billy Mitchell Village is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Military History and Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1950-1965, representing the year Phase I was completed through the period when its association with military housing ended.

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## CRITERION A: Military

### *History of Military Housing Through World War II*

Historically, housing for the military usually only extended to officers. Enlisted men in all military branches were discouraged from marrying and housing was not provided for their families if they were. In the nineteenth century, the Navy officers and enlisted men mainly lived on ships and housing for families was not provided. In 1905, the Navy began to assign ships to home ports and added some services to shipyards to support sailors and their families; however, housing for enlisted men was still not provided. The Army did not provide family support services for enlisted men in the early twentieth century. During World War II, the Army changed their policies as married people enlisted or were drafted. However, their families received very little support.<sup>2</sup>

To understand military housing development, it is important to look at the development of the military in the interwar years between 1919 and 1940. At the time of World War I, there were two branches of the military: the Army and the Navy. The Army and the Army Air Service were under the War Department and the Navy, including the Marines, was under the Department of the Navy.<sup>3</sup> The military, during the Inter-War years was impacted by public policy and public opinion. After World War I, the Army and Navy saw shifts in their funding and roles. The post-World War I era meant American isolationism as a public policy which grew during the 1920s and 1930s. The public felt the two oceans would help protect the United States from the impact of European conflict and treaties and neutrality agreements had been signed to, hopefully, mitigate tensions in Europe. Isolationism can be seen as a response to President Wilson's failed attempt at internationalism and the liberal opposition of war as policy. Another factor was the impact of the Great Depression; America was looking inward to solve problems and issues arising from the economic and social impact of

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<sup>2</sup> Kathryn M. Kuranda, et al. "Housing and Air Force and Navy: The Wherry and Capehart Era Solutions to the Postwar Family Housing Shortage," United States Department of the Air Force and United States Department of the Navy, June 2007, pp. 17-18.

<sup>3</sup> R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates. *Army Inter-War Era Housing Historic Context (1919-1940)*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and the Environment, July 13, 2021, p. 9.

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the Depression.<sup>4</sup> The Johnson Act of 1934 and the Neutrality Act of 1935-1936 effectively prevented the United States from giving economic or military aid to European countries involved in disputes.

The post-World War I National Defense Act of 1920 served to define the Army's mission and reorganize it. The mission of the Army became defending the borders of the country and overseas territories as well as training for the National Guard.<sup>5</sup> The Navy, during World War I, had produced some of the most powerful battleships the world had seen. These included the South Dakota class ships and battle cruisers of the Lexington class. The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 disrupted the continued development of the Navy as it decreed that the Navy cease construction of new battleships for a 10-year period. At the end of World War I, the Navy had approximately 500,000 personnel, many of these people were demobilized and left the military after the close of the war. It should be noted that the Navy's housing needs were not as great as the Army's. The Navy housed people on ships, was a smaller force, and, therefore, needed fewer housing accommodations. Because of this, housing developed by the Navy was often designed by civilian architects or staff in the Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks or in the installation's Public Works office.<sup>6</sup>

The Army maintained their forces which included artillery, cavalry, infantry and the ordnance departments and expanded these forces. Fort Bragg was completed by the end of World War I; Forts Knox and Benning became permanent bases with housing. Both Aberdeen Proving Ground and Edgewood Arsenal needed permanent housing developed. Three installations were constructed by the Navy Moffett Air Field in California, Hawthorne Army Depot in Nevada, and McAlester Munitions in Oklahoma. These would also need housing to support personnel.<sup>7</sup> The funding for the Army and military was limited in the post-World War I era again due to the policy of isolationism. Reports from the military between 1920 and 1925 lamented the lack of funding for transportation, personnel, supplies, and renovation and new construction of facilities, including housing.<sup>8</sup> In 1926, the Congress enacted Public Law No. 45, which allowed the Secretary of War to dispose of 43 military installations, and to deposit the money received from sales into a special fund held by the Treasury designated the "Military Post Construction Fund". This fund could then be used for new permanent construction at some of the posts for the construction of permanent housing for both enlisted personnel and officers. The program included permanent barracks, hospitals, and family housing. Advice was sought from the American Institute of Architects and civilian architects to develop a long term building strategy for the bases--both existing and proposed. The Construction Service of the Quartermaster unit of the Army oversaw construction.<sup>9</sup> Under Public Law 45, the air corps, a unit of the Army, was slated to be expanded over a 5-year period. It included funding authorization for housing units at existing airfields and new airfields.<sup>10</sup>

Congress authorized a military housing construction program in the late 1930s and the armed forces had built about 25,000 family housing quarters, enough for less than ten percent of the troops.<sup>11</sup> Between 1929 and 1932, the Army made steady progress towards providing housing for officers and non-commissioned officers as well as troops. The Great Depression impacted the progress made in earlier years. The War Department's budget was severely cut during 1931 and 1932, however, in 1933, the Department received funding for construction as part of the New Deal programs administered by the Public Works Administration.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 9-12.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Mason Architects. "Historic Context Study of Historic Military Family Housing in Hawaii". Prepared for Commander, Pacific Division Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program, Project No. 115, August 2003, 2-8.

<sup>7</sup> R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates. pp. 24, 25, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.45.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.51.

<sup>11</sup> Suzann Chapman. "The Housing Problem". *Air Force Magazine*, June 1996, pp. 36-41.

<sup>12</sup> R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates. p. 53.

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In 1939, two years before the United States entered World War II, there were only 200,000 enlisted soldiers in the United States Army. By 1940, the military began drafting soldiers into the army and navy. All of these hundreds of thousands of military personnel needed to be housed. The War Department requested funding from the Works Progress Administration from 1935 to 1943 for construction of housing and other facilities. The last funding for permanent housing structures was received by the War Department in 1938. Looming tensions in Europe and Asia began to draw the attention of the military away from housing and to the possibility of war.<sup>13</sup>

With the United States entrance into World War II, priorities shifted to developing and constructing temporary barracks and facilities. Six million soldiers were housed in temporary military housing by 1944.<sup>14</sup> These were constructed on existing and new bases. Housing for troops during World War II consisted of structures such as the “Boyle Hut” and the “Nissen Hut” or Quonset huts. The Boyle hut was designed by architect John Allen Boyle of Texas during World War II. These structures were plywood with glasswood between the layers of wood. They were twenty feet by forty-five feet and could be used for housing or other purposes.<sup>15</sup> Easy to assemble, these barracks and Quonset huts housed soldiers at military bases in the United States and abroad.

*Post-WWII Military Housing*

After World War II, worldwide political conditions mandated that the U.S. maintain a large active-duty military. The United States used its superior economic and military power to fill the vacuum created in Europe after the War. The U.S. used the Marshall Plan to bolster democratic nations and developed a policy of “Containment of Communism” which became an important part of U.S. foreign policy to counter the rise of communism within Europe and the Soviet Bloc that included Russia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. In the postwar years, the Cold War with the rise of communism, “brinkmanship” was used as a policy to coerce Russia into backing down from military incursions with the United States and other countries. The escalation of tensions between the United States and Russia as well as other Soviet bloc countries and China, meant maintaining a robust military in the postwar years. In 1949, the U.S., Canada, and ten western European nations formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a way to provide mutual defense if attacked or threatened by the Soviet bloc. The Soviet Union’s counter was to form the Warsaw Pact of Communist countries. For the United States, these new military obligations meant the military needed to be able to mobilize quickly as well as have a formidable presence in allied countries.<sup>16</sup> The National Security Act of 1947 consolidated the military branches, Army, Navy and newly created Air Force, under the Secretary of Defense. In 1949, what had been established in 1947 as the National Military Establishment became the Department of Defense. This new policy and consolidation allowed the military to use its resources across branches and have a cohesive plan for confronting the ongoing nuclear threat from the Soviet Union. Obviously, the need to address and respond to the nuclear and other global threats influenced military funding and policy. The Air Force emerged as the dominant branch of the military because of its ability to deliver airborne nuclear weapons and to defend the country. The Navy and other branches expanded their global presence to provide conventional battle support and also developing technologies to respond to nuclear threats.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> “World War II Temporary Construction”. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/ww2-tempconstruction.htm>, Accessed October 4, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> “Prefab House Firm Resumes War Effort”. Dallas Morning News, June 24, 1951, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Kathryn M. Kuranda, et al. “Housing and Air Force and Navy: The Wherry and Capehart Era Solutions to the Postwar Family Housing Shortage,” United States Department of the Air Force and United States Department of the Navy, June 2007, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, pp.15-18.

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The size of the armed forces was initially reduced in the post-War years, however personnel numbers remained consistent. The Air Force had 411,000 members in 1949, this number nearly doubled to 788,381 in 1951, and totaled almost 1 million by 1955.<sup>18</sup> These numbers reflect the Air Force's central role in the U.S. policy to contain Communism in the Cold War.

Army Air Forces, Navy, and Marine Corps Personnel Strength 1935-1945<sup>19</sup>

*Note: Air Force was part of the Army until 1947*

Fiscal Year	Army/Air Forces*	Navy	Marine Corps
1935	15,945	95,053	17,260
1936	16,863	106,292	17,248
1937	18,572	113,617	18,223
1938	20,196	119,088	18,356
1939	22,387	125,202	19,432
1940	51,185	215,273	28,345
1941	152,125	383,150	54,539
1942	764,415	1,259,167	142,613
1943	2,197,114	2,381,116	308,523
1944	2,372,292	3,201,755	475,604
1945	2,282,259	3,405,525	474,680

Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps Personnel Strength 1950-1962

Fiscal Year	Air Force	Navy	Marine Corps
1950	411,277	380,739	74,279
1951	788,381	736,596	192,620
1952	983,261	824,265	231,967
1953	977,593	794,440	249,219
1954	947,918	725,720	223,868
1955	959,946	660,695	205,170
1956	909,958	669,925	200,780
1957	919,835	676,071	200,861
1958	871,156	639,942	189,495
1959	840,435	625,661	175,571
1960	814,752	616,987	170,621
1961	821,151	626,223	176,909
1962	884,025	664,212	190,962

It is also important to note that during the post-War years, families and wives were seen by the military leadership as important ambassadors of the "American Dream" when stationed in foreign countries. Military wives were also seen as the ones that could persuade their husbands to re-enlist; some feat considering private sector jobs paid more and came with much less risk. The emerging sectors such as commercial airlines, technology, commerce, and manufacturing all competed with the military for experienced workers. Many of the commercial airline pilots of the post-War years learned to fly in the Marines and Army (pre-Air Force). The military realized that they needed trained, skilled professionals to develop and operate a modern military with sophisticated and complex technology. Therefore, military

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-18

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policies began to embrace and invest in the dependents of their soldiers and officers.<sup>20</sup> Despite the change in policy to be more “family friendly”, housing was still one of the largest issues the military had to grapple with and substandard housing was seen as a barrier to enlistment and reenlistment.

In the post-War years, the number of married service members increased. Previous policies discouraging marriage were amended at the start of World War II. By 1955, 85 percent of Air Force officers and 80 percent of Naval officers were married. As for enlisted men, 20 percent of Air Force enlisted men were married in 1955. A number which rose to 40 percent by 1961. For Naval enlisted men, 20 percent were married pre-War, and 32 percent were married by 1961. Also, for the Navy before the War, the average age at which officers married was 26; post-War, it dropped to 22 years old.<sup>21</sup>

During this realignment of forces, military housing conditions and shortages in these postwar years affected morale and force retention, most substantially in the Air Force and Navy, the branches of the military most needed for the changing scope of war.<sup>22</sup> At the time, much of the military’s housing stock consisted of deteriorating temporary housing that was rapidly constructed during the war years under the Lanham Act. This housing, intended for demolition after World War II, consisted of demountable plywood dormitories and trailers, and other temporary structures. However, much of this substandard housing was left intact at the war’s end due to the need to house troops and their families.

Substandard living conditions at bases across the country were brought to the public’s eye in a scathing article in *Life* magazine in 1949. The article described a family’s apartment in a “chicken coop with a ladder to a loft ‘bedroom’” at Ford Ord in California and “tar-paper shacks” at Great Falls, Montana. Twenty-five people were sharing a single outdoor toilet at Fort Dix. The investigation by *Life* magazine revealed that the Army and Air Force were fully aware of the dismal housing situation but had done nothing to remedy it. Additionally, the magazine reported that the Army had condemned 330 of their huts as “unfit for habitation,” but then sold them to enterprising landlords who rented them back to military families at escalated prices.

As the military housing crisis was brought to the public eye, Congress had begun to address the problem. In June 1948 Public Law 626 authorized the construction of housing at Air Force and Army installations for fiscal year 1949 and included three significant housing policy changes related to size and cost limitations intended to spur the construction of more multi-family units rather than single-family houses for higher-ranking officers, as had been the practice previously.<sup>23</sup>

*The Wherry (Section 803 of the National Housing Act of 1949) and Capehart Acts*

The Wherry Act, signed into law in August of 1949, provided the vehicles for the Air Force and Navy to further address their housing shortages. The Act was unique in the history of military housing because it forged public-private partnerships between the government and private industry, wherein the installations worked directly with “sponsors” (developers) and architects to design and construct housing. The sponsor then constructed and managed the units, retaining ownership and prioritizing rent to military families. Using standard (and Federal Housing Authority approved) floor plans, the project was reviewed by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) for an appraisal and eligibility statement to establish a maximum insurable mortgage, thereby creating the high-end value for an individual housing unit. Then, bids were solicited, and the lowest bidder was awarded a certificate of need, which allowed the bidder to apply to the

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<sup>20</sup> Serena Covkin. “A Short History of U.S. Army Wives, 1776-1983”. <https://ushistoryscene.com/article/a-short-history-of-u-s-army-wives-1776-1983/>, Accessed October 6, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Kathryn M. Kuranda, et al., pp. 20-21

<sup>22</sup> Serena Covkin, p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., page 48.

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FHA for mortgage insurance. The sponsor then built the housing, retained the real property title, and rented to service members. Because Wherry housing was constructed in accordance with FHA standards, housing was comparable with that found in the private sector, which, hopefully, would boost morale and retention rates in the military.<sup>24</sup>

The Wherry legislation enabled the construction of 62,475 military housing units, including Billy Mitchell Village.<sup>25</sup> However, problems with the program arose quickly. The structure of ownership and development costs resulted in windfall profits for sponsors. Additionally, sponsors did not properly maintain their constructed units. Further, the rents collected directly from military members were intended to service the mortgage debt, maintain the property, and provide a profit for the sponsor. To cover these obligations, the rent usually exceeded the service member's housing allowance, resulting in out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>26</sup> Because of these issues, Congress terminated the Wherry program in 1954.

Wherry's successor, the Capehart Housing Act of 1955, was constructed similarly to the Wherry program. However, the Department of Defense (DOD) purchased the housing from the sponsor upon completion. Under Capehart, mortgages were insured on behalf of the private developers, who, like Wherry housing, built the homes on government-controlled land. The major difference was that once constructed, the federal government purchased the housing units to own, operate, and maintain. Also, unlike Wherry housing, the Capehart occupants forfeited their entire housing allowance to the government, then the DOD paid single-mortgage installments to the developers of the Capehart projects. More than 115,000 housing units were constructed by the time the program ended in 1962, due to political conflicts surrounding budget priorities. Despite their short-lived tenures, the Capehart and Wherry programs constructed nearly 200,000 units and combined, were the largest housing programs in DOD history.<sup>27</sup> Residents of Wherry and Capehart homes felt that the units were a substantial improvement from previous living situations, which consisted of dirt-floor huts or windowless Quonset huts in some instances. Generally, Wherry and Capehart developments were a welcome addition to military installations.

### *Characteristics of Wherry Housing*

Physically, Wherry neighborhoods were shaped by the FHA, since projects were required to meet FHA standards in order to be approved. Thus, Wherry and Capehart-era neighborhoods shared many similarities in the units' sizes and amenities, as well as the overall site plans. The FHA published revised requirements in 1948, one year before the enactment of the Wherry Act. The *Minimum Property Requirements for Properties of Three or More Living Units* thus guided the construction of Wherry housing. The standards specified room size and type to ensure adequate natural light and air ventilation. In three- and four-unit buildings (such as those at Billy Mitchell Village), the standards also specified that each unit contain at least one bathroom and three habitable rooms including one bedroom and another living space such as a living room and dining room. Other requirements included storage, linen and coat closets, and doors on kitchen cabinets.<sup>28</sup> Open space was also a required element per the standards, often resulting in Garden Style apartments like Billy Mitchell Village. Buildings were prescribed to be set far apart, to allow for maximum sunlight and air flow within the units.

The standards also include specifications driven by economics, such as preferring less expensive building materials and minimal ornamentation. Therefore, interior materials consisted of plaster or drywall, hardwood, wood block, asphalt

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<sup>24</sup> John S. Madeiros, "The U.S. Air Force Transformed Approach to Military Family Housing: An Organizational Routine Case Study in Change and Learning," PhD diss., (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2015), page 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, page 67.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, page 21.

<sup>27</sup> Kuranda, page 150.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, page 139.

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tiles, vinyl sheet, or terrazzo flooring, and ceramic bathroom tile. In general, interior ornamentation was austere and trim was limited to wood baseboards and window and door casings.<sup>29</sup>

A major difference between the Wherry and Capehart programs, however, was the construction of multi-family buildings. Wherry neighborhoods contained single-family, duplex, and multi-family buildings, whereas Capehart neighborhoods were mostly single-family and duplex homes.<sup>30</sup> Both programs built neighborhoods with amenities, such as laundromats, covered parking, and playgrounds.

The design of the buildings in Wherry and Capehart neighborhoods reflected common principles and use of materials. Exteriors included a combined variety of materials to add visual interest (such as brick and siding). Extensive exterior ornamentation was not common, but the overall design of Wherry and Capehart housing referenced more traditional architectural styles. Some neighborhoods in New England were designed in the Cape Cod style, while the International Style was used at Mountain Home Air Force Base (designed by famed architecture firm Neutra and Alexander). The Colonial Revival style as seen at Billy Mitchell Village was also found in Wherry neighborhoods across the country, due to its wide appeal.<sup>31</sup>

The design of Billy Mitchell Village was typical of housing built under the Wherry Act and the requirements from the FHA. The FHA preferred multi-family construction over single-family or duplexes, largely due to economics. Further, the arrangement of the buildings on the site allowed for maximum privacy, daylight, and air ventilation in the units. The FHA regulations also paid close attention to both vehicular and pedestrian circulation on sites. At Billy Mitchell Village, the slightly curvilinear street plan with minimal access from the surrounding streets allowed for reduced traffic within the neighborhood to create a safer suburban environment. The ample sidewalks at the site allowed access not only from streets to living units, but from units to playgrounds, open spaces, parking structures, and laundry facilities (all of which were amenities required by the FHA for this type of development). The units at Billy Mitchell Village, while small, were built to FHA specifications for required square footage and storage space.

*History of Lackland and Kelly Air Force Bases*<sup>32</sup>

The military has played a major role in the economic vitality of San Antonio. This continued to be true in the postwar years. San Antonio, at this time, was home to Fort Sam Houston, Brooke Army Medical Center, Randolph, Kelley and Lackland. These bases and facilities had a huge impact on the local economy. The addition of housing for officers and enlisted personnel strengthened this impact, as well as the employment of local civilians at these bases. In 1950, an article in the newspaper detailed this impact, which was noted by the Chamber of Commerce. The estimates were around \$125 million to \$150 million annually that poured into the local economy from the various bases and facilities (approximately \$1,422,769,700 to \$1,707,323,650 in today's dollars). The payroll for the military and civilians at the bases was approximately \$10 million per month.<sup>33</sup> As for procurement of goods and services, approximately 60 percent of the food procurement for the Air Force was bought locally, amounting to \$7.6 million per year and \$25 million for all the military branches.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Kuranda, page 140.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, page 146.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, page 45.

<sup>32</sup> Largely adapted from Handbook of Texas Online, Art Leatherwood, rev. by J. T. L. English, DAF, "LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE," accessed January 09, 2020, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbl01>. And Largely adapted from Handbook of Texas Online, Art Leatherwood, rev. by Laurie E. Jasinski, "KELLY AIR FORCE BASE," accessed January 09, 2020, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbk01>.

<sup>33</sup> "Military Installations Biggest City Industry". San Antonio Express, January 12, 1950, p.12.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



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At its closing in 2001, Kelly Field was the United States Air Force's (USAF) oldest continuously operating flying base and San Antonio's largest single employer. In 1916, Captain Benjamin Foulois selected a site southwest of San Antonio as a flight base for the newly formed Aviation Section of the U.S. Army Signal Corps.<sup>35</sup> Originally called Aviation Camp, Kelly Field (later Kelly Air Force Base) is named for the late Lt. George "Bill" E. Kelly who died piloting army aircraft at Fort Sam Houston in 1911.

The base's physical plant grew and its importance to national security increased in response to the United States' armed participation in 20<sup>th</sup> century global conflicts—World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. Initially, it was distinguished as the site where more WWI aviators earned their wings than any other U.S. base. In 1942, the U.S. Army expanded Kelly AFB when it established the Aviation Cadet Reception Center dedicated to pre-flight training for pilots, bombardiers, and navigators. Four years later, the training center was named for former Kelly Field General Frank D. Lackland. When the USAF became its own branch of the U.S. Armed Forces in 1947, it became Lackland Air Force Base, the 'Gateway to the Air Force,' as all personnel entering the new branch were processed and trained at Lackland.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, Lackland was considered the largest university with 10,000 faculty members and 300,000 graduates annually.<sup>37</sup> There were 40,000 personnel on the base; 10,000 of that were civilians.<sup>38</sup> Kelly AFB subsequently became the base for San Antonio Air Material Area that distributed military supplies (arms, munitions, fuel, food, water, etc.) and repaired planes. After WWII, global operation logistics for bomber, fighter, and cargo aircraft were centered at Kelly AFB. Lackland's training broadened at mid-century to include fiscal officers, nurses, dentists, medical techs, psychological researchers, Air Police, sentry dogs, and marksmanship school. Kelly Air Force Base closed in April of 2001, and Lackland took control over portions of the former airfield. In the 2010s, Lackland continued to host the largest training wing in the USAF and was one of the most diversified installations, with missions extending around the world. Lackland presently has 46,577 personnel on site; 24,702 are active-duty members. Another 10,131 are Department of Defense civilian employees. The remaining 11,744 are contract employees and family members.<sup>39</sup>

Housing at Kelly and Lackland followed these national trends in military housing. Most buildings and structures at Kelly Field in the early 1930s dated from World War I, and were of temporary construction often wood framed tents or simple wood structures. This was not unique to Kelly: poor living conditions were a well-known fact of life for those in the military.<sup>40</sup> However, in the early 1920s, federal funds were used to obtain land and begin construction of a single family residential area for officers, known today as Bungalow Colony Officers' Housing (NRHP 2003).<sup>41</sup> Further housing improvement came with the aid of PWA and WPA (federal funds) money in the 1930s. During this time, new officers' housing was constructed, along with bachelor officers' quarters, cadet barracks and enlisted men's barracks. The majority of these buildings were constructed in the Moderne style, as was popular at the time.

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<sup>35</sup> The United States Air Force (USAF) is a branch of the United States Armed Forces and created by the National Security Act of 1947. When established in 1907, the USAF was originally a unit of the U.S. Army and called the Army Signal Corps.

<sup>36</sup> Handbook of Texas, "Lackland Air Force Base."

<sup>37</sup> "Population of Bases 40,000". San Antonio Light, October 14, 1951, p.37.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> "Military Installations" <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/in-depth-overview/joint-base-san-antonio-lackland-randolph-sam-houston>, Accessed October 4, 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Kathryn M. Kuranda, et al. "Housing and Air Force and Navy: The Wherry and Capehart Era Solutions to the Postwar Family Housing Shortage," United States Department of the Air Force and United States Department of the Navy, June 2007, pp. 1, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Victoria Clow. "Bungalow Colony Historic District, Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio, Bexar County National Register Registration Form". San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, May, 2003, NRIS 03000627.



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During World War II, new permanent construction stopped in favor of temporary housing structures, due to wartime demand for housing to serve the increased number of soldiers being trained, non-commissioned officers, officers, and support staff and personnel who helped the War effort. Therefore, Billy Mitchell Village was the first permanent military housing constructed after the end of World War II for those enlisted personnel at Kelly and Lackland Air Force Bases in San Antonio and was one of the first projects in the United States constructed under the Wherry Act. Built to encourage Air Force retention as well as to accommodate the flood of new Air Force personnel, Billy Mitchell Village represents the shift in military housing postwar, facilitated largely by unprecedented legislation from the Federal Government through the Wherry and Capehart laws. When the project was initially announced, it was called the largest military housing project in the nation's history and was a tremendous improvement on the existing aging and temporary housing found on the bases at that time.

The project was constructed with Federal Housing Authority approval by Southwest Homes, a subsidiary of N. K. Wilson of New York and was underwritten by New York Life Insurance Company. Since the project was outside the San Antonio city limits when it was constructed, the Air Force agreed to provide water and sewage lines. This project followed the Air Force's new policy of encouraging private funding for development of housing.<sup>42</sup> In early 1949, the first phase of the project was announced and included an eighty-six acre track with 408 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. Local newspaper articles noted that the development would have a laundry for each group of apartments along with play areas and greenspace.<sup>43</sup> It was noted that it was the first development to receive approval under the Wherry Act.<sup>44</sup> In November of 1949, the Air Force approved construction of another 592 units under the Wherry Act, making the 1,000 unit complex, at a cost of \$10 million, the largest military housing project in the country.<sup>45</sup> The opening for the project was in December of 1949 although the units were not complete until June of 1950.<sup>46</sup> The rental rates were reasonable for the time. Enlisted airmen paid \$52.50 a month for a one-bedroom apartment; \$65 for a two-bedroom, and \$72 for a three-bedroom apartment. Officers paid slightly more, \$65 for a one-bedroom apartment; \$80 for a two-bedroom apartment, and \$90 for three bedrooms. Additionally, a shopping center, costing \$300,000, was constructed in 1950 to service Billy Mitchell Village and other housing in the area; it would serve 50,000 residents.<sup>47</sup> It was located at Billy Mitchell Boulevard (formerly Lackland Road), and Croyden and Gillmore Avenues. The center, also designed by Edwin Gerber, had 14 retail spaces including a 12,000 square foot HEB grocery store. Other uses included a post office, barber shop, beauty parlor, dress store, and dry cleaners.<sup>48</sup> Again, the complex was not owned by the Air Force although the FHA did purchase 592 units in 1960 under the provisions of the Wherry Act.<sup>49</sup>

**CRITERION C: Architecture**

Billy Mitchell Village is significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an intact example of a post-World War II Garden Apartment complex with Colonial Revival elements. Designed by architect Erwin Gerber for the United States Department of Defense, Billy Mitchell Village was constructed in three phases between 1949 and 1951 with 1,000 apartment units in 45 apartment buildings spread out over 94 acres of flat land. The proposed district is a coherent 33.5-acre subsection of 22 apartment buildings and 19 carports completed in 1950 as the project's first phase of development. It should be noted that architect Erwin Gerber designed similar garden apartments for private developers

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<sup>42</sup> Ann Krueger Hussey, Dr. Robert Browning III, Elizabeth Manning. "A Heritage of Service: Seventy-Five Years of Military Aviation at Kelly Air Force Base, 1916-1991". San Antonio: Office of History, Kelly Air Force Base, 1992, p. 127.

<sup>43</sup> "Mitchell Village Applications Set". San Antonio Light, June 14, 1949, p.14.

<sup>44</sup> "Billy Mitchell First to be Approved". San Antonio Express, March 31, 1950, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> "Largest Military Project is Open". San Antonio Express, December 17, 1949, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> "Mitchell Center Plans Near Done". San Antonio Express, July 30, 1950, p.27.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ann Krueger Hussey, Dr. Robert Browning III, Elizabeth Manning, p. 127.

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before Billy Mitchell Village. The configurations of those apartments, the Elmwood Village (Figure H) and Warwick Gardens (Figure I), both constructed in 1946, are similar to what Gerber would use in 1949-1950 for Billy Mitchell Village. Colonial Revival-style two-story apartment buildings are brick veneer with asbestos shingles on the second floor, have hipped roofs, symmetrical facades and feature varying Colonial Revival ornamentation in decorative door surrounds such as pedimented entrances, pilasters, sidelights, columns and columned porches. The Billy Mitchell Village displays the characteristics of garden apartment communities: development of the site as a "superblock" or large block; separation of automobile and pedestrian traffic; low to medium density and building coverage; standardized building types, and emphasis on open space and park-like landscaping. The proposed boundary excludes extant buildings and structures from the development's later phases because of drastic alterations that adversely affected the integrity.

*Origins of the Garden Apartment*

The concept of garden apartments originated from 19<sup>th</sup> century urban planning and landscape concepts from Great Britain. Sir Ebenezer Howard's book *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, published in 1898, outlined an ideal living environment as a carefully planned new town in a rural district outside (but near) the city. Howard believed that proximity to nature was crucial to living happily. He established the Garden City Association in 1900 to promote his ideals, which had been embraced in his native England at the turn of the century. Early examples of Garden City developments include Letchworth (1903) and Welwyn (1919-1920). Characteristics of the carefully planned, self-sufficient towns included curving roads, residences affording views of open space with access to educational facilities, shopping centers, and recreation areas; and parks and landscaping spread throughout. For Howard, one's quality of life was in direct relation to one's access to green space, fresh air, and natural light, as opposed to high architectural style.<sup>50</sup>

Also in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Zeilenbau* was being developed in Germany. Like the Garden City concept, the *Zeilenbau's* ideals abandoned the urban grid in favor of a "superblock" designed to ensure dwellings were located off majorly trafficked streets, have an open view from every window, and allow in as much natural light and cross ventilation as possible. *Zeilenbau* ideals were adapted in the U.S. and worked extremely well for low-income housing developments. Successful examples include the Carl Mackley Houses in Philadelphia (1933-34) and the Fort Craig Gardens in Arlington, Virginia (1940).<sup>51</sup>

Much of the development of movements like the Garden City Movement came from the desire to deal with the tenements and the horrible living conditions for low-income families. Philanthropists and businessmen thought that the private sector would be able to solve this problem in the large cities, however, there were not enough investors or money for a sustained "model tenement" program. Before World War I, the Settlement House movement spearheaded by Jane Adams in Chicago, Robert Woods in Boston, and Lillian Wald in New York brought the issues of tenement housing and immigrants to middle-class America.<sup>52</sup> New York and other cities and states passed laws with minimum standards for housing in an effort to clean up the slums, however enforcement was lax and ineffective. At this time, apartments in the United States were either tenements or luxury apartments for the rich. Various studies were conducted with limited funds by the federal government in the late 1890s. After the turn of the century, Theodore Roosevelt, convened the President's Homes Commission to tackle the issue of substandard housing. The advent of World War I made the issue worse; the need for housing in cities and industrial centers exploded due to the influx of workers and

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<sup>50</sup> "Garden Apartments of Los Angeles: Historic Context Statement," Los Angeles Conservancy, 2012, page 12.

<sup>51</sup> National Register of Historic Places, "Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County, Virginia 1934-1954," United States Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002, E7.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Lusignan, et al. "Public Housing in the United States 1933-1949 Multiple Property Submission, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form", 2004.

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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others for war mobilization. Federal intervention was necessary and various agencies and corporations were created to address the shortage of housing.<sup>53</sup>

The Garden City Movement in the United States, spearheaded by urban planners Clarence S. Stein and Henry Wright, envisioned environments with low density of buildings constructed at human scale on acres of shared open space. Stein and Wright formed the Regional Planning Association of America in 1923 (RPAA) to advance ideas about housing in America. The RPAA went on to have a profound influence on urban development and spearheaded innovative ideas that resulted in unique developments on the East Coast. Sunnyside Gardens (1924-1929) in Queens, New York, was the first such development and consisted of 77 acres of city blocks filled with low-rise single-family, duplex, and triplex housing, each of which shared a foundation and party walls to allow for cost and materials savings. The housing ran along the perimeter of the blocks, enclosing a large central shared garden and recreational amenities. Sunnyside was followed by Radburn, a much larger community in New Jersey that began in 1929 but was never fully realized due to the Stock Market Crash. With Radburn, Stein and Wright were able to employ the superblock concept and completely separate automobile traffic from pedestrians. Radburn included the principles that would become the core tenets of Garden City and garden apartment developments in the United States: superblock organization; specialized roads; separation of pedestrian and automobile traffic; dwellings turned towards gardens and parks; and parks as backbone (green spaces dominate rather than streets).<sup>54</sup>

Characteristics of Garden Apartments<sup>55</sup>:

- Superblock site plan, which deviates from the rectilinear urban grid by combining multiple city blocks or parcels into a single property,
- Three acres in size or greater,
- Low-slung buildings, rarely exceeding two stories in height,
- Elimination of common interior corridors,
- Repetition of nearly identical building models throughout the plan,
- Stylistic simplicity; buildings are usually minimal in appearance with a lack of stylistic details and ornament,
- Primary building entrances face common courtyards rather than the street,
- Parking at the perimeter of the site plan, typically in detached, enclosed garage buildings or garage courts,
- One or more large open spaces, or greens, located at the interior of the site plan, around which buildings are arranged,
- Recreational amenities planned to help foster community,
- Variety of landscape, often native or drought tolerant; low shrubs used to delineate outdoor “rooms”; alleys; mature trees and the use of climbing vines to add visual interest to buildings.

The federal government drew inspiration from the privately funded garden apartments geared toward middle- and upper-middle classes during the early years of the Great Depression, and used garden apartments as the design standard for public housing programs (including defense housing) that followed. FHA-insured garden apartments were later defined as being “composed of individual buildings forming a group of at least three buildings designed and constructed specifically to function as a multiple dwelling. These small buildings were designed to contain at least four self-sufficient dwelling units. Each building is at least two and no more than three stories high and has a single main entrance. The group is designed and sited to relate to the surrounding landscape.”<sup>56</sup> In 1940, *Architectural Forum*

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> “Garden Apartments of Los Angeles,” page 14.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pp. 3-4

<sup>56</sup> “Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes,” F31.

**Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas**

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observed that garden apartments “offered renters the nearest thing to ‘home’ that can be found in apartment buildings: private entrances, front yards, few overhead neighbors.”<sup>57</sup>

Billy Mitchell Village clearly reads as a garden apartment complex and fits securely within the context of FHA-approved and projects for multi-family dwellings in the mid-twentieth century, as well as within the context of the Garden City movement’s effect on planning. The large, empty parcel located away from the utilitarian functions of Kelly Field allowed the site to be developed with curvilinear streets and minimal access points from major roads. Buildings are either set far back from the road if road-facing, allowing for generous front yards, or sited perpendicular to the street, facing open green space. Green space is the predominant feature in Billy Mitchell Village, rather than roads or buildings, and the space is traversed by a substantial network of paved sidewalks. When completed, Billy Mitchell Village also included amenities such as playgrounds, laundry facilities, off-street parking, and a nearby shopping center exclusively constructed for the complex.

*Colonial Revival Style*

The Colonial Revival Style was used for military installations often and seemed well-suited to the constraints of these developments. The buildings at Billy Mitchell Village also have Neoclassical elements on some of the larger buildings such as the two story or full height entrance porches. Virginia McAlester notes that the Colonial Revival style was the dominant domestic architectural style used throughout the United States in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>58</sup> This style was used on approximately 40% of the housing built in the years between 1910 and 1930. The style continued to be used in the years after World War II, into the early 1960s.

The Colonial Revival style is usually two stories with a dominant front entrance with a decorative pediment, pilasters or columns, often with fan lights or sidelights or both. The façade usually has a center door with symmetrically balanced windows. The exterior is often brick but wood exteriors are also common.<sup>59</sup> The buildings can have Georgian or Federal style details. Windows are usually multi-light, double-hung. In Billy Mitchell Village, the windows are multi-light steel casements.

**Erwin Gerber, Architect (1903-1982)**

Architect Erwin Gerber studied at Case Western and Columbia Universities, eventually getting a degree in architecture. He was licensed in several states including Texas, New Jersey, Florida and Ohio and joined the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1965.<sup>60</sup> Gerber became a deputy chief architect at the FHA in 1935 and went on to be a prolific architect of housing, particularly multi-family, designing more than \$40 million worth of housing by the late 1940s.<sup>61</sup> He had worked with the FHA 207 program, established in 1934, which provided loans for multi-family housing. It was revised in 1938.<sup>62</sup> Gerber developed the 608 program which was in effect from 1941 to 1950. Under this program, developers could borrow up to 90 percent on the appraised cost of the project and it would be guaranteed by the government. Because this large percentage could be borrowed against the project, the 608 program was extremely popular and eclipsed the smaller 207 program for a time.

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<sup>57</sup> “Garden Apartments,” *The Architectural Forum*, Volume 72, Number 5, May 1940, page 309.

<sup>58</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, “A Field Guide to American Houses,” New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017, page 414.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, page 409-431.

<sup>60</sup> Matthew Gordon Lasner, “Architect as Developer and the Postwar U.S. Apartment, 1945-1960,” *Buildings & Landscapes; Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, Vol 21, No. 1 (Spring 2014), page 43.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>62</sup> “Edwin Gerber: Architect Who Became ‘Mr. 608’,” *Miami Herald Sun*, January 27, 1974, Home Design, p. 1, 97K-98K. “The Next Three Quarters: Tough But Improving,” *Miami Herald Sun*, March 19, 1976, p. 3-B-C.

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Gerber translated his extensive experience in the development and management of FHA's housing programs when he went into practice again in the private sector. He understood that using FHA as part of the financing sources for projects would help ensure funding and could be lucrative for developers. He became the expert on these projects, working across the country. His projects drew on FHA formulas, mostly taking the form of Garden Style apartment complexes in the Colonial Revival style. Elmwood Village Garden Apartments (1946, Elmwood Park, NJ) and Warwick Garden Apartments (1946, Red Bank, NJ), for example, employed FHA protocols such as widely spaced, walk-up buildings spread across green campuses. In both complexes, Gerber employed the Colonial Revival style, which he would later apply to Billy Mitchell Village. The style and layout were both aspects that Gerber thought were important to the projects. He felt people would enjoy the green space and look out over it. Gerber had helped to develop the FHA 608 program and understood the requirements which were meant to keep construction costs low yet provide reasonable housing for middle class families and members of the military respectively. By using this rather formulaic multi-family design, he was able to keep construction costs within the guidelines. Gerber stated that he used the rather plain Colonial Revival style so that more money could be spent on the interiors of the buildings.<sup>63</sup>

He also developed designs for Co-op apartments under the 213 Housing Program. Co-ops were a relatively new idea and became more common in the years after World War II as a way to add affordable housing in New York City and the surrounding suburbs. This program became part of the National Housing Act of 1949 when it was expanded in 1950. It allowed loan guarantees for new construction of housing cooperatives. Gerber helped to develop programs for the FHA which he was able to then apply to the various projects--both civilian and military--that he worked on during the post-war years. Gerber served as an architect on projects but was often the developer to keep the costs down. It was cheaper to self-finance some of the projects than to seek bank loans.<sup>64</sup> Gerber moved to Florida in the 1970s and continued as an architect until 1975 when he retired.

## Conclusion

Billy Mitchell Village is a postwar housing development constructed by the Department of Defense in 1949 under the Wherry Act for military enlisted and civilian personnel at San Antonio's Lackland and Kelly Air Force Base. The Colonial Revival apartment buildings of Phase 1 and 2, designed by architect Erwin Gerber and built following FHA *Minimum Property Standards*, retain a good degree of integrity. Billy Mitchell Village is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Military and Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The district is an excellent local example of the U.S. Department of Defense's post-WWII efforts to improve servicemember retention and increase recruitment by building desirable affordable homes in the popular Colonial Revival style and that which reflected the era's suburban neighborhoods. Its design reflects Gerber's expertise in FHA standards and his personal preference for Garden Apartment-style developments. Billy Mitchell Village offered tenants attractive housing in a low density suburban and park-like setting of Colonial Revival apartment buildings. The district featured characteristics demonstrate Garden Apartment principles in the superblock organization with dwellings turned towards gardens and parks, and auto infrastructure that was subordinate to the natural setting. The period of significance is 1950-1965.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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*Dallas Morning News*

"Prefab House Firm Resumes War Effort". Dallas Morning News, June 24, 1951, p. 14.

*San Antonio Express*

"Billy Mitchell Village Sold for \$257,000," September 8, 1965, page 32

"Billy Mitchell Village Capacity Doubled," December 4, 1949, page 57.

"56,550 Airmen Trained at Lackland in 1949," January 7, 1950, page 18.

"Largest Military Project is Open". December 17, 1949, p. 3.

"Billy Mitchell First to be Approved", March 31, 1950, p. 15.

"Military Installations Biggest City Industry", January 12, 1950, p.12.

"Mitchell Center Plans Near Done", July 30, 1950, p.27.

*San Antonio Light*

"Billy Mitchell Village Applications Set," June 14, 1949, page 14.

"Billy Mitchell Site Is \$50,000," June 19, 1949, page 47.

"Billy Mitchell Village Growing," April 2, 1950, page 65.

"Population of Bases 40,000", October 14, 1951, p.37.

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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## Section 10 – Geographical Data

### Coordinates

1. Latitude: 29.388867°N	Longitude: -98.560043°W
2. Latitude: 29.386239°N	Longitude: -98.560371°W
3. Latitude: 29.385380°N	Longitude: -98.559509°W
4. Latitude: 29.385211°N	Longitude: -98.557567°W
5. Latitude: 29.386114°N	Longitude: -98.556627°W
6. Latitude: 29.388971°N	Longitude: -98.556267°W
7. Latitude: 29.389243°N	Longitude: -98.559242°W

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The district (**see maps 3-4**) is 33.5 acres comprised of four legal parcels Bexar CAD identifies as Property ID #'s: 395119, 395120, 395121, and 395122. UCAD accessed August 30, 2021.

Beginning at the northwest corner of Property ID#395115, which is 275 feet west from the center of the Calgary and Gillmore Avenue intersection. Proceed south approximately 960 feet along the western edge of Property ID#395119 to its southwest corner. Thence, go east approximately 305 feet along the south property line to the west side of Gillmore Avenue. Next, go south approximately 270 feet and proceed east along the south property line of Property ID#395122 to its southeastern corner. Thence, go north 350 feet, and proceed east 250 feet to the southeast corner of Property ID#395121. Then go north along the eastern property line of the same parcel to its northeastern corner, a distance of approximately 1,050 feet. Proceed west 955 along the north property line for Property ID#395121. Next, go south 160 feet. Finally, proceed 240 feet to the point of beginning.

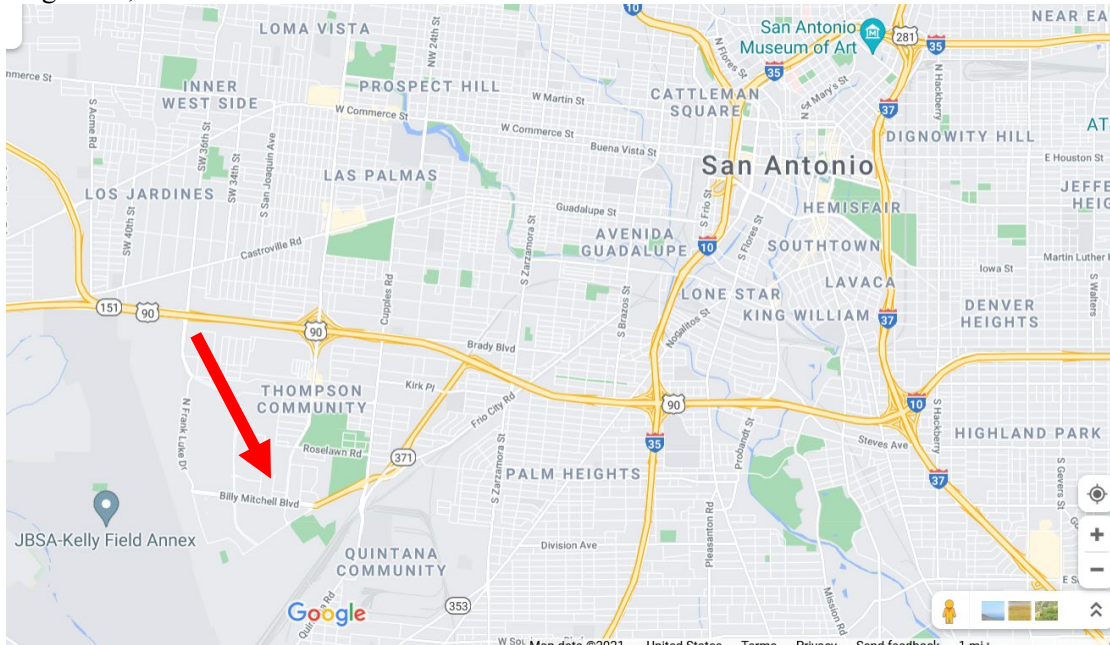
**Boundary Justification:** The boundaries were selected to include all apartment buildings and associated structures built during the first phase of Billy Mitchell Village's development. These resources form a distinct portion of, what eventually became, a 45-building complex. Buildings and structures constructed in subsequent phases do not retain a good level of integrity and are excluded from the proposed boundary.



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

## Maps

Map 1: Billy Mitchell Village (red arrow) is southwest of downtown San Antonio, Texas. Source: Google, accessed August 31, 2021.



Map 2: The proposed district (shaded) is 33.5-acres of the original 94-acre Billy Mitchell Village housing development.



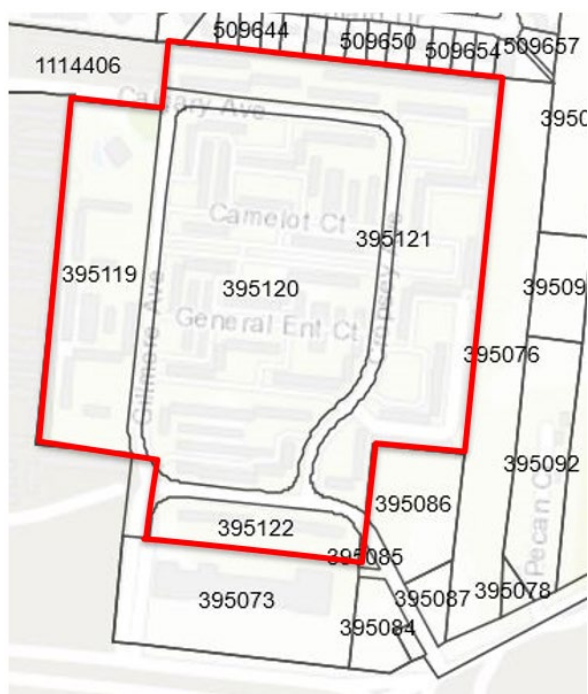


Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

Map 3: Proposed district boundary. Source: Google Earth, accessed August 31, 2021.



Map 4: The nominated boundary (in red) is four legal parcels Bexar County CAD identified as Property ID: 395119, 395120, 395121, and 395122. Source: Bexar CAD, accessed August 30, 2021.



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

Map 5: Proposed district map. (See inventory on next page).



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

### Inventory

Resource	Type	Classification	Status	Address
1	Structure	Carport	C	
2	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
3	Building	O	C	225-257 Calgary
4	Building	R-2	C	201-217 Calgary
5	Building	R-2	C	101-117 Calgary
6	Building	Clubhouse	NC	
7	Building	Poolhouse	NC	
8	Building	L	C	250-258 Calgary and 401-409 Gilmore
9	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
10	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
11	Building	Z	C	202-218 Calgary
12	Structure	Carport	C	
13	Structure	Carport	C	
14	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
15	Building	L	C	402-418 Cropsey, 101-117 Camelot Ct.
16	Building	Z	C	409-435 Cropsey
17	Building	L	C	101-117 Gillmore
18	Building	L	C	
19	Building	Z	C	319-381 Cropsey
20	Building	R-1	C	340 Gilmore
21	Building	L	C	152-160 Camelot Ct., 301-309 Gillmore
22	Building	Laundry	C	
23	Structure	Carport	C	
24	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
25	Building	Z	C	210-250 Gillmore
26	Structure	Carport	C	
27	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
28	Structure	Carport	C	
29	Structure	Carport	C	
30	Building	Laundry	C	
31 <sup>65</sup>	Building	L	C	101 General Ent, 302-318 Cropsey
32	Building	Z	C	308-310 Gillmore, 115-121 General Ent
33	Building	L	C	301-333 Cropsey
34	Building	Z	C	201 Gillmore, 102-132 General Ent
35	Building	R-1	C	202 Gillmore
36	Structure	Carport	C	
37	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	
38	Building	Z	C	221-245 Croyden, 202 Cropsey
39	Building	L	C	201 Croyden, 209-217 Cropsey
40	Structure	Carport	C	
41	Building	O	C	226-242 Cropsey
42	Building	O	C	202-218 Cropsey
43	Building	Carport/Laundry	C	

<sup>65</sup> Due to a fire, only the north portion of this building remains. The remaining part retains good integrity.



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

**Figures**

Figure 1: Billy Mitchell Village was built near Kelly Air Force Base to house personnel. Source: United States Geological Survey. *San Antonio West Quadrangle*. Topographic Map. 7.5 Minute Series. Reston, Va: U.S. Department of the Interior. 1953.

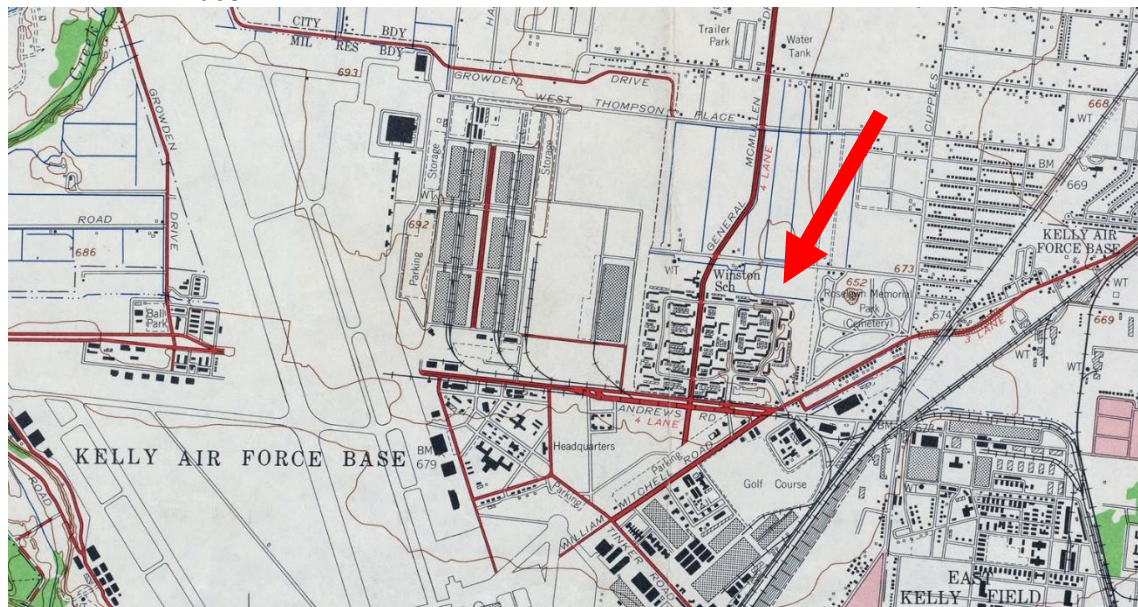
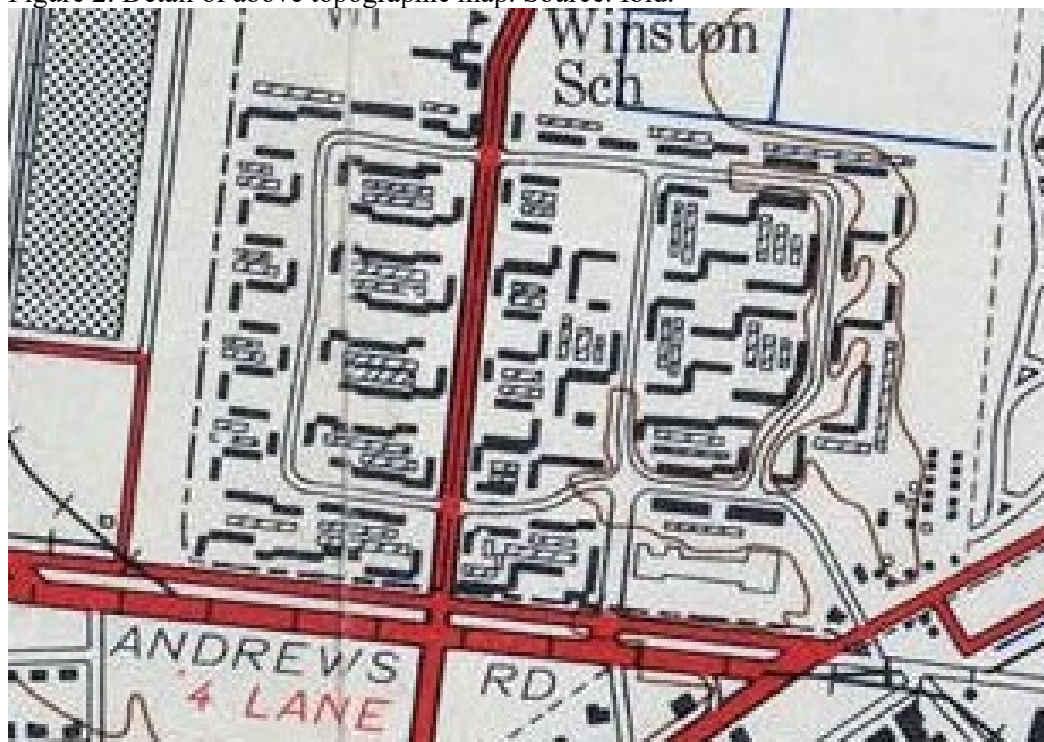
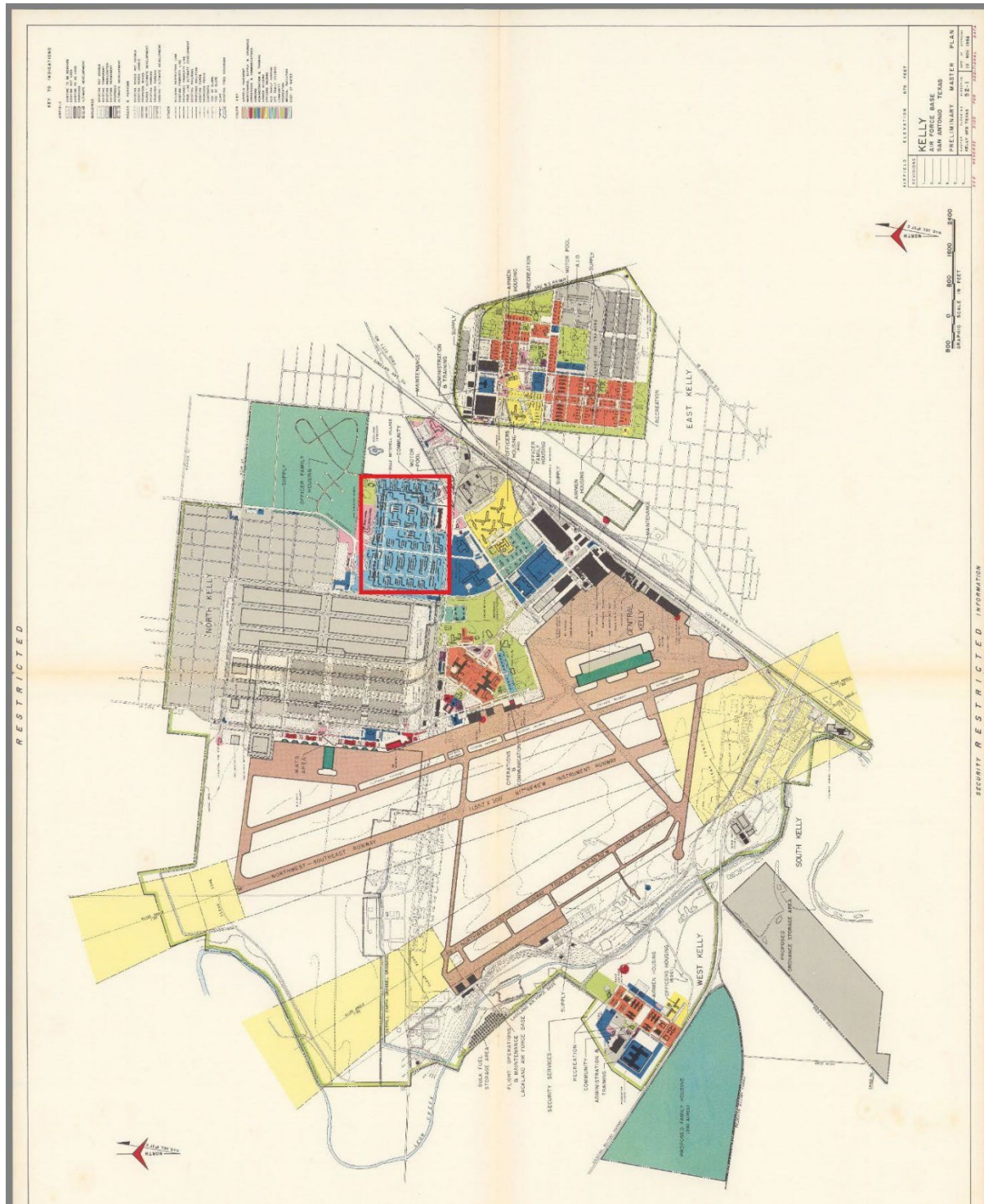


Figure 2: Detail of above topographic map. Source: Ibid.



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 3: Kelly Air Force Map 1952 with Billy Mitchell outlined in red. Source: Image from the U.S. Air Force History Office





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Figure 4: 1949 Aerial of Billy Mitchell Village under construction. Looking southwest. Source: U.S. Air Force History Office.



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Figure 5: 1950 Aerial showing completed first phase of Billy Mitchell Village. Looking east. Source: Ibid.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 6: Billy Mitchell Village, July 1950. Image from *San Antonio Express*.



**IN BILLY MITCHELL VILLAGE**—This is one of the buildings housing apartment units in the 1,000-unit, \$10,000,000 Billy Mitchell Village, Lackland and Frio City roads. More than 400 of the 1,000 apartment units have been completed. They are being rented to military and civilian personnel of Lackland and Kelly Air Force bases.

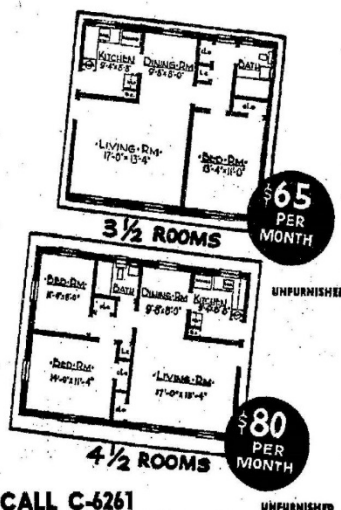
Figure 11: Advertisement for Billy Mitchell Village. *San Antonio Light*, September 3, 1950, p. 26



**AVAILABLE** *Now*  
**FOR THE FIRST TIME**  
**FURNISHED APARTMENTS**  
**IN BEAUTIFUL BILLY MITCHELL VILLAGE**

★ UNFURNISHED APARTMENTS INCLUDE FEATURES BELOW

- Low rents fixed by agreement with U.S.A.F. Headquarters.
- Designed to capture all prevailing breezes.
- Acres of lawn.
- Modern scientific kitchen.
- Plenty of closets.
- Refrigerator.
- Table top gas range.
- Spacious rooms.
- Automatic laundries.
- Plenty of storage.
- Children and adult playgrounds.
- Carpools available.
- On City Bus Lines.
- Community and shopping center now under construction.



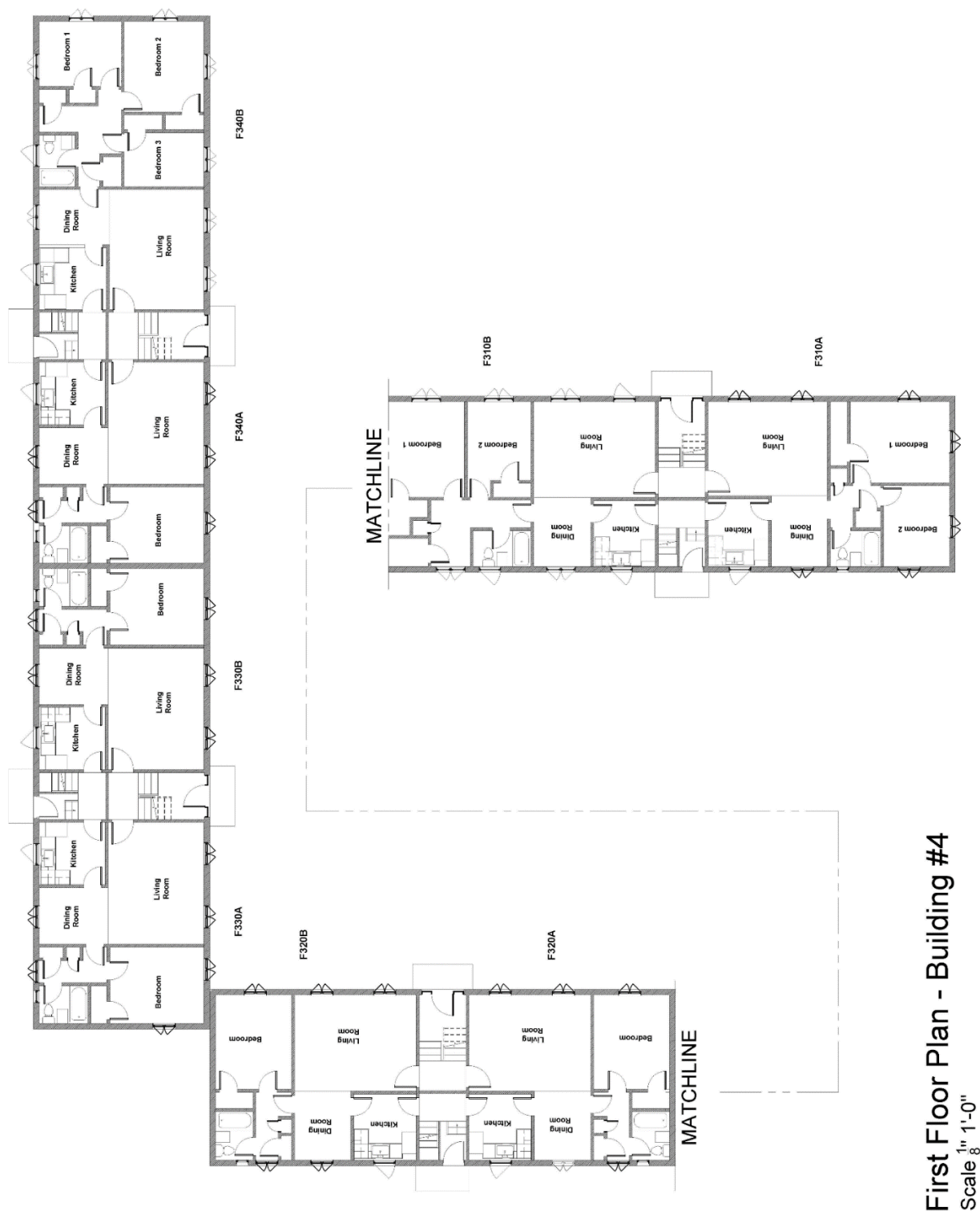
COME OUT AND SEE FOR YOURSELF OR CALL C-6261

**Billy Mitchell Village**

OPPOSITE KELLY FIELD NORTH MAIN GATE ON CITY BUS LINE, KELLY FIELD and FRIO CITY ROAD, SAN ANTONIO

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 12: Representative Plans. Reckon Point, 2020. Typical 1st floor for 1-2-3 bedroom apartments; 2nd floor is the same configuration.



First Floor Plan - Building #4  
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Figure 13: Elmwood Village, Elmwood Park, New Jersey. Erwin Gerber, 1946. Note building style and configuration. Image courtesy of Matthew Gordon Lasner, 2012.



Figure 14: Warwick Garden Apartments, Red Bank, New Jersey. Erwin Gerber, 1946. Note building style and configuration. Image from Apartments.com.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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**Photographs**

Name of Property: Billy Mitchell Village

City, County, State: San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photographer: Ellis Mumford-Russell

Date Photographed: May 2022

Photo 1: Site. View north. The rehabilitation project (underway) includes landscaping work to resod the historically grassy lawns.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 2: Site and Type L Building. View southeast.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 3: Building Type R1, North Elevation. View east.



Photo 4: Building Type R2, West Elevation. View east.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 5: Typical Rear Elevation. View west.



Photo 6: Typical Rear Elevation. View east.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 7: Typical Parking Structure. View north.



Photo 8: Building Type R1, Typical Entrance Detail. View south.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 9: Building Type O, Typical Entrance Detail. View south.



Photo 10: Building Type L, Typical Entrance Detail. View east.



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 11: Typical Interior Stair.



Photo 12: Typical Unit Living Room and Kitchen.



Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 13: Typical Unit Bedroom.



Photo 14: Typical Unit Bathroom.





Billy Mitchell Village, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 15: Non-Contributing Clubhouse. View south.



Photo 16: Typical Laundry Building

