

FORT BAKER, GARAGE  
(Building No. 538)  
Golden Gate National Recreation Area  
Umia Street parking lot  
Sausalito vicinity  
Marin County  
California

HABS CA-2643-E  
CA-2643-E

HABS  
CA-2643-E

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Oakland, CA 94607

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

FORT BAKER GARAGE  
(BUILDING NO. 538)

HABS  
CA-2643-E  
(Page 1)

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Location: Umia Street parking lot, between Kober Street and Seiter Street, Fort Baker, Sausalito, Marin County, California.

USGS Zone 10, Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Coordinates:  
4187965 (north); 545692 (east).

Present Owner: Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service.

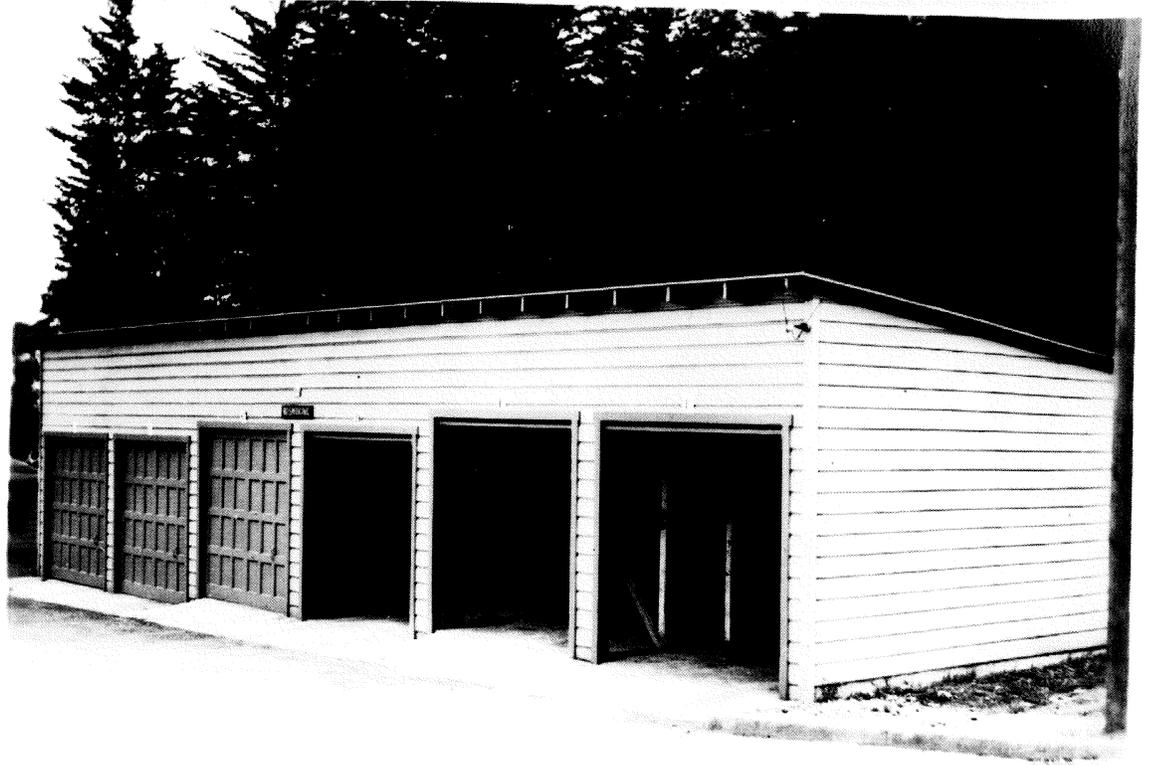
Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: Building 538 is significant for its role in supporting coastal defense activities that occurred at the Fort Baker, Barry and Cronkhite Military Reservations.

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Dates of Erection: Ca. 1935. Building 538 was built as a 6- car garage to accommodate the vehicles associated with the non-commissioned housing located on Kober Street.
2. Architect: The architect for this building was the Office of the Construction Quartermaster, Fort Mason, California, United States Army.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The United States Army owned building 538 from 1935 to July of 2002, when the land property of Fort Baker was officially transferred to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The Quartermaster General Office Form No. 117 was used by the army to track building cost and expenditures information. The building cost for building 538 was \$1,422.00. In 1939, the total building expenditures was \$123.76 and in 1940, the total expenditures were \$83.15. The original builders and contractors for this building are not known.
5. Original plans and construction: Original plans for this building, titled "Multiple Garage Groups for Fort Baker", dated August 20, 1935, are located in Drawer 199, Folder 4 at the Presidio Archives and Record Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, California. The building's original number was 85 and was renumbered 685 around 1945. In the 1970s, it was renumbered again to 538.
6. Alterations and additions: The building currently matches the original plan so it is inferred that no alterations or additions have taken place.



Building 538 (photo date probably between 1938 and 1940); U.S. Army Quartermaster Form 117, negative # P91-005.938; Golden Gate National Recreation Area Park Archives and Records Center, San Francisco, CA.

## B. Historical Context

Fort Baker was one of the new state-of-the-art coastal defense installations constructed during the Endicott era of military expansion. In 1885, in response to the government's growing concern over the country's dilapidated military installations, the Board of Engineers for Fortifications was created to improve the future of the country's seacoast defenses. The Endicott Program, named after the board's chairman, Secretary of War William C. Endicott, made sweeping recommendations for all existing U.S. seaports and proposals to revive all seacoast fortifications. Through the efforts of the Endicott Program, hundreds of new batteries and posts were constructed, resulting in a golden age of coast artillery. The Endicott Program became an expression for America's new awareness of herself as a growing imperial power, the rise in the country's industrial strength, and the new developments in military technology.

Between 1885 and 1910, the War Department constructed new coastal defense batteries through out the Marin Headland's coastline. Fort Baker, built between 1902 and 1910, supported the new seacoast defenses and housed the soldiers assigned to arm and maintain these new technologically-superior guns. The Fort Baker post consisted of several barracks, officers' housing, non-commissioned

housing, a post exchange, a hospital and a gymnasium buildings all clustered in a horse-shoe shape around the main parade ground. Fort Baker is a model Endicott period army post which represents the military's new focus in providing the soldiers with clean, healthy and sanitary living conditions.

During the Great Depression, the government created the Works Progress Administration to provide jobs and incomes to the nation's millions of unemployed workers. The War Department, along with many other federal agencies, provided emergency employment to unemployed skilled laborer for projects that would have ordinarily been carried out by regular appropriations. Civilian men and supplies, financed by transferred WPA funds, constructed both large and small-scale projects at army and navy posts all across the country. Building 538, built with WPA funds and labor, was one of many WPA projects that occurred at Fort Baker.

## Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a long, rectangular, wood-frame, 6-bay garage, that is utilitarian in nature and devoid of any decorative features. The building is separated into 6 bays to accommodate 6 individual vehicles.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in poor condition. During a winter storm a few years ago, a falling tree severely damaged the middle section of the roof at the east elevation.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is a one-story, 57'4" x 19'10" feet rectangular shaped structure that stands 11' 6" tall.
2. Foundations: The building rests on a concrete pad. There is a short, sloping concrete ramp that extends the length of the front elevation.
3. Walls: The walls are wood-frame and are covered with a painted, drop siding.
4. Structural systems, framing: The building is constructed by wood platform framing construction.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: There are no porches on this building.
6. Chimneys: There are no chimneys on this building.
7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The building contains six 12-paneled 8'0 x 7'6" wooden overhead doors with metal pull handles and flat wooden surrounds.

b. Windows and shutters: On the rear elevation, there are six 4-light, 10" x 12" hopper windows, located at the back wall of each of the vehicle bays. Currently, five out of six windows are boarded-up with plywood.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The building has a shed roof that tilts to the rear of the building and is covered with dark roll roofing.

b. Cornice, eaves: The building has exposed, overhanging eaves.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The building contains no dormers or cupolas.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: Building 538 is a long, rectangular building, divided by 6 bays, each bay measuring approximately 9'6" x 19'10.

2. Stairways: There are no stairways in this building.

3. Flooring: There is a 4" concrete floor slab with a 3" concrete baseboard running the perimeter of the building.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are exposed wood-frame 2 x 4 studs with 2 x 4 corner bracing. The partition walls in between each vehicle bay are created with 2 x 4 studs and mesh wiring. The ceiling is unfinished so the roof rafters are visible.

5. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: There are no interior doors and no access in between the individual vehicle bays.

b. Windows: There are no interior windows.

6. Decorative features and trim: The building is a utilitarian structure and there are no decorative features or trim.

7. Hardware: Each of the six overhead doors is mechanized by a pair of large metal springs and metal overhead runners.

8. Mechanical equipment

a. Heating, air condition, ventilation: The building contains no mechanical equipment.

b. Lighting: The building has been wired for electricity. Each vehicle bay has an independent light switch and a bare light bulb.

c. Plumbing: There is no plumbing in this building.

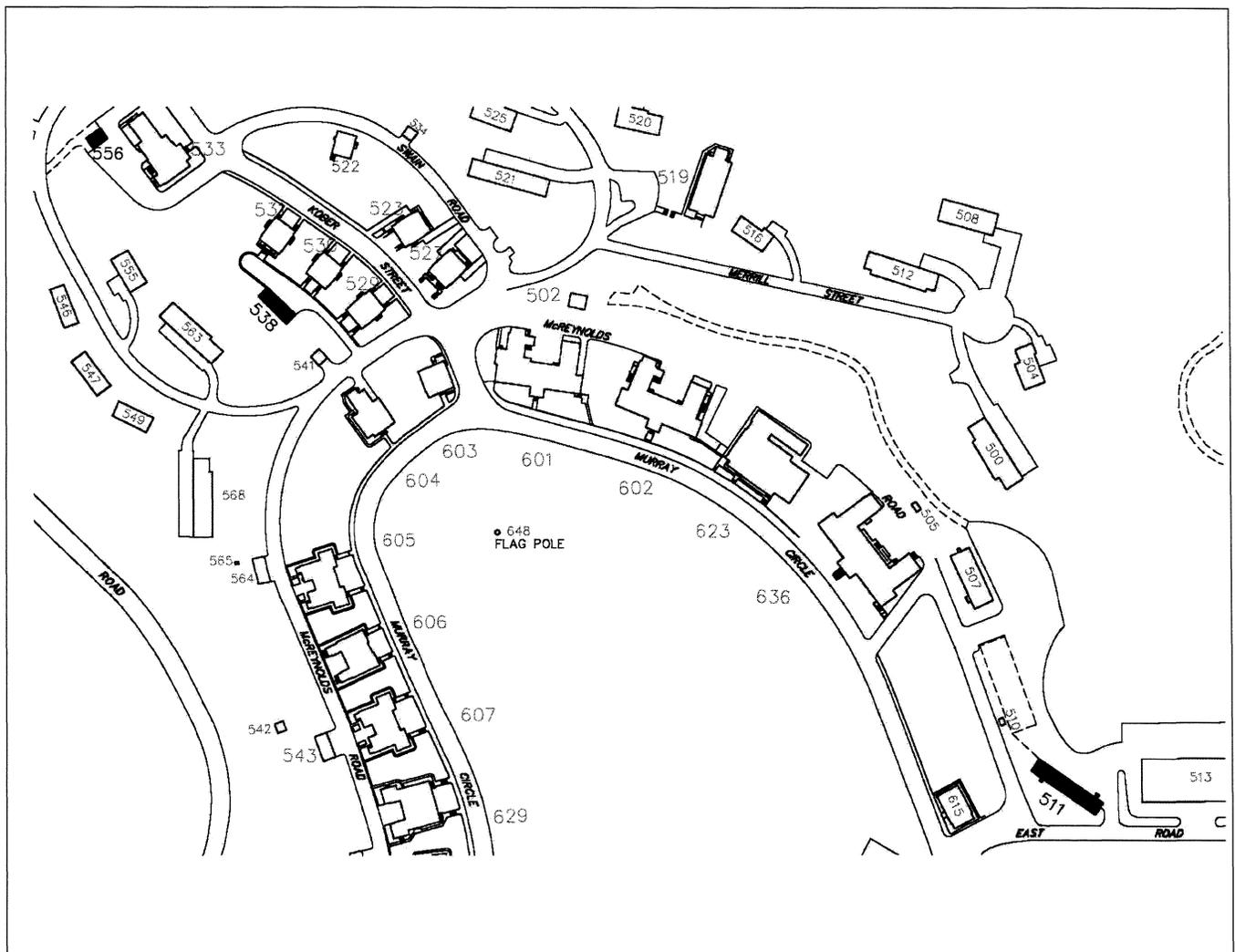
9. Original furnishings: There are no original furnishings remaining in the building.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Building 538 is situated in the rear of a large, paved parking lot, located directly behind the Kober Street non-commissioned officers housing. Behind the garage building is a small meadow that leads up to Seiter Road.

2. Historic landscape design: The character of the building's landscape is utilitarian and industrial. Low-scale, overgrown vegetation surrounds the building.

3. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings associated with this structure.



Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings: Office of the Constructing Quartermaster, Fort Mason, California: Multiple Garages for Fort Baker, California, August 20, 1935. This plan is located in Drawer 199, Folder 4, Presidio Archives and Records Center, Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

B. Historic views: Historic photograph of Building 538 from the Quartermaster General Office Form No. 117; date is probably between 1938 and 1942. The photograph shows an oblique view of northern and eastern elevation of the building. The negative number for the 4" x 5" image is P91-005.938 and is located at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Park Archives and Records Center.

C. Interviews: No interviews were conducted for this document.

D. Bibliography:

Archive collections, including plans, photographs and the Quartermaster General Office Form No. 117, were consulted at the Presidio Archives and Record Collection, Golden

Gate National Recreation Area, Building 667, Presidio of San Francisco, 415-561-4804/4807.

Forts Baker, Barry, Cronkhite National Register Nomination Form, 1973.

*Fort Baker Construction Completion Reports, 1917-1941*. Record Group 77 (Records of the Chief Engineer), Entry 391 & 391 B, National Archives, Washington, DC.

National Park Service's List of Classified Structures.

Martini, John. "Guide to Fort Baker Building Numbers", National Park Service, 2000.

*Quartermaster General Office Form # 117 (1926-1941)*. Golden Gate National Recreation Area Park Archives and Record Center, San Francisco, CA.

Thompson, Erwin N. "Historic Resource Study: Forts Baker, Barry, Cronkhite of Golden Gate National Recreation Area". Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 1979.

E. Likely sources not yet investigated: In the future, oral history information may be available and would be retained at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Park Archives and Record Center.

A. Supplemental material:

1. "Multiple Garages for Fort Baker, California"; Office of the Constructing Quartermaster, Fort Mason, California; August 20, 1935.

2. *Quartermaster General Office Form # 117 (1926-1941)*. Golden Gate National Recreation Area Park Archives and Record Center, San Francisco, CA.

Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The purpose of the HABS recordation is for mitigation recording of historic buildings that are removed as part of implementation of the Fort Baker Plan. Under the Fort Baker Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, removal of Building 538 was accepted as part of a site-wide rehabilitation plan. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the National Park Service and the California Office of Historic Preservation contains the following stipulation:

“1. Prior to the demolition of any or all of the buildings listed in the List of Buildings Proposed for Demolition or other Adverse Effect attached hereto as Appendix B, NPS shall contact the Regional HABS/HAER Coordinator at the Pacific West Regional Office, NPS...to determine what level and kind of recordation is required for the properties.”

The HABS report was prepared by Kristin Baron, architectural historian, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service.

HABS photography was provided by Lewis Watts Photography, 29 Oregon Street, Point Richmond, CA. 1-510-484-8462.

Archival reproduction of the historic view of Building 538 was provided by Caledonia Camera, 301 Caledonia Street, Sausalito, CA 94965, 415-332-6116.

The HABS records were prepared between November 2005 and February 2006. All existing condition HABS photographs were taken in January 2006.