BEDROOM, LIBRARY-GUEST ROOM, TWO BATHS, KITCHEN-DINING ROOM

HOUSE IN HINGHAM, MASS. 
GEORGE R. PAUL, ARCHITECT

The plan for this house was established by a very definite series of requirements, which included a carport to serve as a garage, a porch suitable for dining, and a library suitable as a guest room. The owner also wanted a history of the rambling Cape Cod type. Garage, porch and house form a rather irregular unit, the shape being determined by its view and by a desire to save as many of the tall pines as possible.

HOUSES FOR DEFENSE

Private architects prove that a Government project can be attractive at low cost and without sacrifice of speed. Site planning and design studies with models precede 840 handsome houses.

Big and convincing is the argument for the substitution of private architects in defense housing offered by Westpark, an 840-unit Government project in the Naval shipbuilding town of Bremerton, Wash. It was built quickly—the first units were opened in occupancy just eight months after the architects were retained, the balance during the next three months of rapid-fire construction activity. It was built economically; dwelling facilities cost an average of $2,500 per unit, were raised to only $3,344 by the inclusion of land, utilities, site improvements, landscaping, community and other non-dwelling facilities. And, despite this speed and economy, Westpark is attractive; the natural beauty of the wooded tract was enhanced by reasonable site planning, by simple but effective landscaping and, most important, by good architectural design—all of which were carefully studied in scale models as well as on paper. Seldom does defense housing receive such design attention, and seldom do the finished projects compete with Westpark.

Background. With 10,000 Navy enlisted men and civilian shipyard workers crowding its 15,000 housing population, Bremerton recognized the need for new housing early in the defense program. In September 1940, Tax Director (p. 4) reported that "garages have been converted into bedrooms; beach houses are commanding $90 rents; the municipal jail sleeps seven or eight new-comers every night; others sleep in trailer camps, parked automobiles, tents and on the city park's well worn grass." By that time Bremerton had formed a local housing authority, had petitioned the U. S. Housing Authority for loans and subsidies with which to build and operate 1,400 units of public housing to supplement the 500 new units expected of private enterprise.

Approved by the Federal Defense Housing Coordinator, this public program was soon underway, despite the opposition of local property owners and the Apartment Operators Assn. They recalled that during World War I Government built in Bremerton a hotel, an apartment project and some 250 scattered houses whose boarding-up at

Contour Map
Site Plan Model
Detail Models
Air View
Super Drainage

Site plan of Westpark covers 95 acres, makes room for 460 dwelling units in 275 one-story buildings. Three design units are being used: 16-unit, 20-unit and 24-unit. The houses are one-story, low-slung, with basements, to best advantage, with the small lots available. Natural contours, drainage and topography were all factors in the design. The site is on the north east corner of the city. The elevation varies 125 ft., between the low and high points. To minimize grading expenses and to preserve a maximum amount of existing

In real life, Westpark from the air (top view) closely resembles the site plan model (opposite to which it sprang. Likewise, the three-building court (viewed immediately above) which includes a hipsted roof variation of the standard two-family building. Note use of different exterior finishes and colors.

Progress. First of Bremerton's new public projects is Westpark,—originally conceived as a 600-unit defense development to be financed with USHA funds and later expanded to 800 units with Low Income Funds entrusted to USHA. On August 14, 1940, Architects Floyd A. Naumann, Clyde Grainger and Percy B. Johanson from three different Seattle offices were retained by the Bremerton Housing Authority. In six weeks they had completed the preliminary drawings for the first 400 units; in three more, the working drawings and specifications. bids were opened on November 13, and after ten days' consideration the $8.8 million lump sum contract was awarded to Seattle's Western and West Coast Construction Co. The "proposed order" was issued on December 17 with the requirement that the 600 dwelling units, eight laundry buildings and one community building be completed in 150 days—by March 9.

Meanwhile (January 29), the contractors were awarded another contract of about $100,000 covering the 230 additional units and a second community building designed by the same architects for the same site. These were completed and occupied only ten days after the original order—on July 12. During the construction of these "temporary" houses and shops in Bremerton's three other USHA-assisted defense projects (all 1,900 units are now complete), the government found it necessary to throw up 500 single-worker dormitory units and to rush a squadron of 200 family trailers to stop the local housing gap.

Land Planning. Located about three miles west of the city center and the booming Navy Yard, Westpark covers about 95 acres of moderately rough terrain overlooking one of the many salt water bays which surround Bremerton. Much of the logged-off land was covered with a second growth of fir, pine, cedar and hemlock; some had been developed into small farms; one deep pasture had served as a garbage dump. Bounded on one side by a State highway and its bus line to Bremerton, the property is also conveniently near a number of grocery and miscellaneous small stores.

Such was the site handed the architects who, in collaboration with Landscape Architect Butler Stormvant, were to develop it into an 880-family community. Most important factor in the land planning was the terrain. A north-south ridge divides the site almost in half, and several areas were considered too steep for economical development—the elevation varies 125 ft., between the low and high points. To minimize grading expenses and to preserve a maximum amount of existing
One-family house plan shown above joins with the rendered elevation and, when reversed, with the scale map. Completed house (left) is based on the same plan, but displays some of the several variations in fenestration. According to the architects, "The floor plans are the result of an attempt to combine minimum requirements of the U. S. Housing Authority. The attempt made in the one-family plan is to have jutting sections with a continuous seating line to give an appreciation of greater area" (see interior view, p. 410).

Two-family buildings shown complete on this page and varying from one standard floor plan, for which three exterior variations were rendered. Thus, the complete buildings in the right sideline in every detail the third rendered exterior variation, while the building above it is a combination of the second and third rendered variations. And the model pictured above is like the first rendered variation, except for its shaded roof. Note the use of three different exterior materials—oak, native wood, shingles, clapboards and vertical boards and battens.

Another controlling factor behind the site development was the proposed post-war use of the project. While it will house primarily civilian Navy Yard employees, "for the duration," Westpark will subsequently be occupied for short terms (up to 90 days) by the families of Navy enlisted personnel on shore leave. In view of this ultimate short-term tenancy, it was decided to cut tenant and project maintenance to the minimum by leaving most of the open areas in their natural state and by planning the other areas with slow growing ground covers. For this purpose Landscape Architect Sturtevant specified ivies and suitcase, maintenance expenses for which will be above average for the first few years but next to nothing thereafter.

To the same end, backyards are grassed and the numerous children's play areas are bituminous paved. Only lawn areas are around the two community buildings and their adjacent play fields, one of which was formerly the city garbage dump. The landscape architect's task was somewhat simplified by the presence on the site of such shrubs as rhododendron, evergreens, madrona, malasia, buckthorn and dogwood trees. "To add sparkle to the dull winter months," he specified the planting of large numbers of birch trees, set forsythia bushes against the masses of green background.

As shown in the accompanying photographs, the land planning problem was carefully studied with the aid of scale models—first, the relation of buildings to the land and, then, with larger models, the relation of the buildings to each other. The relation of the buildings to each other. Note the close parallel between the photographs of the models (p. 416) and the finished project (p. 411).

Architecture. Much the same type of scale preceded the final design of the house—eventhough, to the development of the manually accurate scale models shown on these pages. Since it was estimated that most of Brentmont's current and post-war housing demands would come from twoperson families, it was logical that Westpark should be comprised primarily of one-bedroom dwelling units. And since the project is located at the edge of a suburban area, it was decided to preserve...
its character as much as possible by limiting the new buildings to one story in height and four dwelling units in length. This reasoning explains the breakdown of Westpark into its various buildings and dwelling unit sizes:

- 392 1-BR units in 98 4-unit buildings
- 318 2-BR units in 100 2-unit buildings
- 70 3-BR units in 70 1-unit buildings
- 80 units in 357 buildings

In addition to these living quarters, the site plan makes provision for two community buildings and eleven laundry-dry cellers, all well distributed among the residential buildings. The latter are roughly the same size and design as the one-family houses.

In the interests of economy, only one floor plan was developed for each of the three building types, but the standardization was deftly disguised by numerous variations in exterior appearance:

1) Entrance details are varied in design and, except in the case of interior combining units, the entrances are frequently shifted from the front to the side of the living rooms. 2) Coupled with the latter, three variations in living room fenestration are used for each building type to take advantage of orientation and outlook—see renderings, p. 413. 3) While most of the roofs are gabled, some are hipped. 4) These types of exterior finish are employed either individually or in combination with one another—shingles, clapboards, and vertical boards and lattices. 5) Five colors and white are used. The different combinations of these colors and finish variations are almost limitless and were used in good taste at Westpark to give the many houses the tenant-pleasing character of individuality.

Particularly noteworthy is the use of color. In the wooded sections of the site, warm colors predominate—tan, dark brown and red. Where the growth is low, houses are painted gray, green or tan. All are roofed with bleached gray shingles. Finally, to relieve these large expanses of color, those portions of the exterior walls sheltered by the wide overhangs of the roofs are frequently painted white with the doors accented in bright yellow, pink, blue and green.

Construction of Westpark was, for the most part, conventional. There were, however, several money-saving exceptions:

1) Gabled end walls were framed and sheathed horizontally on trusses in a central field shop, were then trucked to the various building sites for erection. 2) All other framing members were precut before delivery, but were conventionally put together. 3) Concrete pier footings cast inside the poured concrete foundation walls were preset in another field shop. 4) "Roughing-in" plumbing was pre-assembled at a central point, installed in the houses as units.

Cost. In view of Westpark's above-average appearance in site layout, building design

(Text continued on page 47.)