

WILLIAM STANLEY ABLETT VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT
City of Camden
Camden County
New Jersey

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

Prepared to the Standards of the
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
For submission to the
New Jersey Historic Preservation Office
5 Station Plaza
501 East State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM STANLEY ABLETT VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Location: River Avenue and East State Street, City of Camden, Camden County, New Jersey

39°56'56.5"N, 75°06'11.3"W

The coordinates represent the approximate center of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District. These coordinates were obtained on January 16, 2026, using Google Maps and the National Geodetic Survey Conversion and Transformation Tool. The coordinates' datum is North American Datum 1983. There is no restriction on their release to the public.

Date(s) of Construction: 1942–1943

Architect: Henry G. Perring

Present Owner: The Housing Authority of the City of Camden

Present Use: Residential

Significance: The William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District (Ablett Village) is significant as an exceptionally well-preserved example of World War II-era defense housing. Ablett Village was initially planned as one of Camden's earliest public housing complexes in the mid- to late 1930s, alongside housing developments such as Westfield Acres and Clement T. Branch Village. When the United States entered World War II, there was an influx of defense workers in Camden, an industrial center, which could not be met by the city's existing housing. Ablett Village was constructed from 1942 to 1943 and was initially used to house defense workers and their families. During this time, public and defense housing in Camden was segregated, and Ablett Village specifically housed white people who were engaged in the war effort. When completed, the residential complex consisted of 23 two-story, austere, brick buildings, a concrete block community center, and various recreational spaces such as a basketball court and victory gardens. After World War II ended, the housing complex was gradually transferred into low-income public housing, and it has remained in use as such throughout the remainder of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

The Ablett Village was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Preservation by the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (NJHPO) as a well-preserved example of World War II-era government defense workers housing, and is significant under Criterion A, likely in the areas of Military and Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C, likely in the area of Architecture (Marcopul 1998). The period of

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significance was not specified in the NJHPO's Opinion of Eligibility; however, it most likely extends from 1942 to 1947, marking the initial development of the housing complex, and the year in which the property was formally transitioned from housing defense workers to low-income residents.

Description:

The Ablett Village is located on a 25.026-acre parcel (Block 807, Lot 1) at the western corner of the intersection of East State Street and River Avenue in the Cramer Hill neighborhood of the City of Camden, Camden County, New Jersey. This housing complex consists of 23, circa-1943 apartment buildings of identical design and one circa-1943 community building which was partially rebuilt circa 1971 (Figures 1 and 2). The buildings are arranged in two parallel rows oriented on a roughly east–west axis, with 15 buildings in the northern row and 9 buildings in the southern row. Each apartment building is oriented onto a front courtyard shared with the adjacent building, which features geometric, multi-chromatic paving with planted trees. The rear of each apartment building has a small grass yard, which abuts the asphalt-paved access roads. Moro Street runs northwest from River Avenue through the center of the housing complex and turns northwards at the northwesternmost building to connect to East State Street. Asphalt-paved access roads run perpendicular to Moro Street and access the various apartment buildings. The driveways on the northern side of the complex connect to East State Street. The southern end of the parcel is wooded. Ablett Village is surrounded by largely early to mid-twentieth-century industrial and commercial lots consisting of auto repair shops, vehicle lots, and general industrial buildings. A twenty-first-century school borders Ablett Village on the north side of East State Street.

Apartment Buildings

Exterior

Each apartment building is two stories tall with brick construction and a rectangular footprint containing housing units which are organized in a rowhouse configuration. Each apartment building is topped by a flat, rubber membrane roof which is pierced by six concrete-encased internal chimneys. The rooflines are lined in metal fascia. The buildings' primary entrances accessing each residential unit are regularly spaced along the primary elevation. Unless otherwise noted, all entrances contain wood-paneled doors and half-glazed, metal storm doors, which are set in metal surrounds, topped by a stone lintel. The primary entrance doors are elevated from grade by a single, concrete step. The two outermost entrances on the primary elevation of each building contain single doors, while the remaining entrances contain paired doors. Additionally, there are rear entrances accessing each residential unit containing the same door type regularly spaced along the buildings' rear elevations, which are flanked by concrete clothesline structures. Unless otherwise noted, windows throughout are predominantly six-over-one and four-over-one, double-hung, vinyl windows with stone lintels and sills, the majority of which

are paired in double units. The windows in the second story are offset from the first-story fenestration, creating asymmetrical fenestration patterns on all elevations. The buildings likely sit atop concrete foundations.

There are three typical building types: Type A features two, one-bedroom units in each outer rowhouse, with the inner rowhouses containing two- or three-bedroom units; Type B features a four-bedroom unit on one end, with the remaining units containing two- or three-bedroom units; and Type C consists exclusively of two-bedroom units.

Type A Buildings

Type A buildings are the most numerous residential building type within the complex and are arranged in both the northern and southern rows of apartment buildings. Each Type A building contains 14 housing units organized within 12 rowhouse-style units. Primary entrances are typically located on the primary and rear elevations, supplemented by additional side entrances on the northeast and southwest elevations, each accessed by short flights of concrete steps with metal railings; these features distinguish Type A buildings from the other types. The side entrances to Type A buildings provide access to the upper floor units on each side.

Type A buildings are commonly paired with another building of the same type, facing one another across a shared, paver-surfaced courtyard enclosed by metal fencing. Rear elevations generally overlook grass lawns that abut shared asphalt-paved driveways, while some primary elevations face River Avenue or internal circulation drives lined with lawns, sidewalks, and trees. Together, these buildings establish the dominant residential rhythm and courtyard pattern of the development.

Type B Buildings

Type B buildings are located exclusively in the southern row of apartment buildings and are visually and programmatically similar to Type A buildings; Type B buildings are slightly smaller in scale than Type A. Each Type B building contains 12 housing units within 12 rowhouse units and lacks the additional side entrances found on Type A buildings. Entrances into each housing unit are limited to the primary and rear elevations, reinforcing a more uniform façade treatment.

Like Type A buildings, Type B buildings are typically arranged in facing pairs that share paver-surfaced courtyards enclosed by metal fencing. Rear elevations overlook grass lawns adjacent to shared asphalt driveways. The reduced unit count and simplified entrance configuration distinguish Type B buildings from the larger Type A examples.

Type C Buildings

Type C buildings are the least common building type and appear at transitional or terminal locations within the site, including at the western edge of the development and near communal open spaces. Each Type C building contains 12 housing units within 12 rowhouse units, similar in unit count to Type B buildings, but is differentiated by its siting and relationship to open space rather than by architectural complexity.

Type C buildings are paired across paver-surfaced courtyards, often adjacent to larger landscaped lawns, picnic areas, or peripheral streets, including Moro Street at the northwest edge of the parcel. Rear elevations typically face grass lawns and driveways, while primary elevations orient toward courtyards or community-focused spaces. Their placement marks key spatial transitions within the overall site plan.

Interior

Each apartment building is divided into 12, two-story rowhouse units, which contain a combination of one-, two-, three-, or four-bedroom units. The one-bedroom units occupy one floor, while the remaining units occupy both floors. One-bedroom units are located in the first and second stories of the outermost rowhouses of the Type A apartment buildings, and the second-story apartment is accessed by an interior staircase from an entrance on the side of the building.

The one-bedroom units are entered into the living room; first-floor units are entered directly from the building's primary entrance, and second-floor units are accessed from the staircase connecting the building's side elevation and entering into the center of the unit's footprint. Each unit contains a living room, a kitchen with a pantry, a bathroom, storage closets, and utility space, which are organized around a central hallway, and a single bedroom typically sharing a wall with the unit's living room. In both one-bedroom floorplans, the living room is located at the front of the footprint and the kitchen is located along the rear, with direct access to the utility room and pantry storage.

Both the two-bedroom and three-bedroom unit types are entered into the living room from the primary entrance. On the first floor, the living room occupies the front of the footprint along with a staircase and a closet, and the kitchen, utility room, and additional storage closet occupy the rear of the footprint and can be entered directly from the rear entrance. Upstairs, the bedrooms and one bathroom are organized around a central hallway situated at the top of the stairs.

The four-bedroom unit type is entered into the living room. The first floor of this housing unit type consists of a living room, a kitchen with a pantry, a bathroom, storage closets, utility space, and a bedroom, with a staircase in the

center of the footprint between the living room and bedroom. The second floor consists of the remaining three bedrooms and a bathroom.

Interior finishes throughout each housing unit type consist of drywall walls and either carpeted or linoleum tile floors. Interior doors are generally wood-paneled or wood-slab doors set in wood trim. Wood trim also outlines the windows. The kitchen contains wood cabinetry, laminate countertops, and appliances dating to the mid-1990s. The bathrooms contain a bathtub/shower with metal faucets, which generally feature some tiling, a wood vanity with a sink with a metal faucet and a mirrored medicine cabinet, and a toilet.

Community Building

The Ablett Village Community Building is a single-story, concrete block building with an irregular footprint composed of two roughly rectangular blocks: a circa-1943, southwest block and a 1971, reconstructed northeast block, which intersect at the northeast corner of the southwest block/the southwest corner of the northeast block. The building is topped by a flat, rubber membrane roof with a parapet encircling the southwest block, which is pierced by an interior, concrete-encased chimney at the intersection between the two blocks. The roofline is lined with aluminum fascia. The southwestern block is clad in stucco, while the northeastern block is clad in brick veneer, both of which are painted in two shades of blue. The primary entrance is located on the north (primary) elevation of the southwest block and consists of a half-glazed, metal door that is accessed by a concrete stoop flanked by metal railings and sheltered by a metal awning. On the west elevation of the southwestern block, there is a metal rolltop garage door and a metal pedestrian door. These entrances are located at grade and are topped by metal awnings. Two additional doors are located along the west elevation of the northeastern block, one in the recessed northern bay, which is accessed by a concrete ramp, and the second in the second, northernmost bay, which is accessed by two concrete steps with metal railings, and both consist of solid metal doors set in metal surrounds.

The Community Building has few windows that are arranged asymmetrically throughout. Two horizontally oriented window openings on the primary elevation of the northeast block are filled with glass blocks. Additionally, there is a six-over-one, double-hung, metal window adjacent to the primary entrance, in the easternmost bay of the southwestern block. A plywood-infilled window opening is located in the northernmost bay of the southeastern block's east elevation. The building likely sits atop a concrete foundation. A brick and concrete sign is located on the grass lawn on the building's north side, adjacent to the primary entrance, which reads "William Stanley Ablett Village, Est. 1943."

According to architectural plans from the Community Building's partial reconstruction in 1971, the rear (south) elevation of the building also features two single pedestrian doors, one on each block, and a double window which is likely the same in material and operation to the six-over-six, double-hung, metal window adjacent to the primary entrance (Walter Weissman, A.I.A. Architect 1971).

History:

Ablett Village was constructed from 1942 to 1943 to house defense workers who were engaged in the war effort in the City of Camden, largely as employees of defense-related industrial ventures such as the New York Ship Company. The housing complex had originally been planned as a low-income housing development, and after the end of World War II, was transitioned into this use and continued as such throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The United States government's involvement in housing through policy began during the Great Depression, a period which exacerbated America's housing inequalities and slowed the rate of housing construction. In response to these conditions, the US Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in 1933, which created the Public Works Administration's Housing Division. The Housing Division aimed to both alleviate unemployment and improve the country's housing situation. In its earliest period, the Public Works Administration (PWA) achieved these goals by providing low-interest loans to limited-dividend housing corporations. Only seven projects were built using this model. In 1934, the PWA began financing and building its own projects directly, instead of simply providing loans. Many of these projects involved "slum clearance," in which the agency demolished an existing neighborhood considered to be of substandard living conditions to facilitate new development. However, the process of slum clearance, which often involved seizing property by eminent domain, resulted in too many legal complications, and by 1935, the PWA exclusively built on vacant land (Lusignan et al. 2004:Section E Page 17–35). In 1937, the United States Housing Act was passed, which solidified the involvement of the Federal government in the housing market and its commitment to creating public housing. This act established the United States Housing Authority (USHA), which could not build or manage public housing, but rather provided loans and guidance to local public housing authorities (PHAs) around the country (Lusignan et al. 2004:Section E Page 43–46).

The New Jersey State Housing Authority was founded in 1934, preceding the 1937 Act and the establishment of the USHA. Surveys done throughout the state revealed that approximately 18 percent of New Jerseyans were living in substandard conditions, which included conditions such as no running water or private toilet, no central heat, overcrowding (more than one person per room), or an urgent need for major repairs (New Jersey State Housing

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Authority 1939:5, 6). In Camden, a 1934 survey revealed that only about one quarter of the city's housing stock was in good condition, and that 17 percent needed major repair and 9 percent was deemed unfit for use (Federal Writers' Project 1942:12). The crux of this housing problem, according to a report of the New Jersey Housing Authority, was a lack of sufficient new construction targeting low-income demographics, creating a shortage of affordable housing. To qualify for funding under the provisions of the NIRA, New Jersey created a statewide housing authority in 1934, which could undertake slum clearance and low-income housing projects (New Jersey State Housing Authority 1939:15, 22).

The City of Camden constructed its first two public housing projects in the mid- to late 1930s. Westfield Acres, located in northeast Camden, was completed in 1938 and occupied a 26-acre tract, the majority of which required reclamation to restore to use from a damaged state. This development consisted of 514 housing units housed throughout 18 brick, three-story buildings. Clement T. Brach Village (Branch Village) was completed in 1941 in South Camden and consisted of 279 dwelling units housed across numerous two-story brick buildings. Public housing in Camden was segregated at the time, and Westfield Acres was inhabited by white residents while Branch Village was inhabited by Black residents. Both housing complexes shared several similarities in their designs, which featured low-rise brick construction with boxy massing, rowhouse organization, and included individual yards and recreation space (Federal Writers' Project 1942:16–27).

In 1940, as the United States became increasingly involved in World War II, the need for housing for those employed in the war effort became paramount, especially in cities with a housing shortage. Families across the country were flocking to defense industry centers for employment, which included the City of Camden. The city had been developing from the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century as a regional center of industry and manufacturing, and over that period, became home to a number of industrial ventures. Among the largest of these was the Campbell's Soup Company, which was incorporated in 1891. In 1900, the New York Ship Company opened a shipyard in Camden and quickly established itself as a leader in the shipbuilding industry, playing a vital role during wartime. During World War II, the New York Ship Company experienced a period of heightened activity directed towards building naval warships, during which time the company employed up to 30,000 people (newyorkship.org n.d.; Gillette, Jr. 2011:18–20). Camden's growth as an industrial center was further supported by the construction of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in 1926, connecting Camden to the City of Philadelphia across the Delaware River (Gillette, Jr. 2011:20).

To mitigate the growing housing crisis borne from these conditions, a Defense Housing Coordinator was appointed in 1940, and by 1941, a Division of

Coordination of National Defense Housing was established within the Office of Emergency Management of the Executive Office of the President. This Division was responsible for coordinating action between various agencies, anticipating defense housing needs through research, recommending defense housing programs and legislation to the President, facilitating such programs, and advising various public and private agencies on the defense housing program (Veenstra 1941:1061–1069). In this period, the power of USHA was increased to provide defense housing, and new legislation was passed authorizing the appropriation of funds to house defense workers and enlisted men and their families. In particular, the Lanham Act of October 1940 appropriated \$150,000 to the Federal Works Administration for this purpose, which was amended in February of 1941 to double the authorized funds. In Camden, New Jersey, a survey was performed by the Works Progress Administration in October of 1940 to determine the amount of vacant housing that could be used to house incoming defense workers to better evaluate the needs of the defense housing program. This survey found that Camden had a gross vacancy of 1.7 percent, which included houses under construction, for-sale houses, and housing that is unfit for habitation. This survey, which was a part of a nationwide series of such surveys, reflected a need for additional defense housing both in Camden and across the country (Veenstra 1941:1061–1069).

Ablett Village, initially referred to as NJ 10-2, was planned as a “slum-clearance and low-rent housing” project in Camden as a part of the city’s early public housing initiative (Federal Writers’ Project 1942:30). However, with the onset of World War II, Camden’s priorities turned to housing the influx of workers who came to the city seeking employment in aiding the war effort, and Ablett Village was transitioned into a defense housing project which provided residence to workers in war industries who migrated to Camden for employment (Federal Writers’ Project 1942:30). The housing development was not created through the Lanham Act, as many other defense housing developments in Camden were, but rather through the joint sponsorship of the Housing Authority of the City of Camden (HACC) and the Federal Public Housing Authority, with an estimated cost of \$1,566,000 (Morning Post, 4 June 1942:4). Ablett Village was named in honor of Camden resident William Stanley Ablett. Ablett was born in Camden in 1895 and was later killed in combat in France during World War I. Members of the HACC agreed that the defense worker project’s title should memorialize a veteran from Camden (Courier Post, 20 February 1942:3). The project was sited on an approximately 25-acre parcel which had belonged to chemical industry magnate Moro Philips in the late nineteenth century and was more recently used as an airport in the 1920s (Baist 1893; drbs.camdenhistory.com n.d.). Ablett Village consisted of 306 residential units, sized from three-and-a-half to six-and-a-half rooms each, and distributed across 23 buildings, with one additional building designated for

community use. The buildings were made of brick and wood, each with a coal heater (Morning Post, 11 June 1942:3; Courier Post, 25 April 1942:1).

The architect of this project was Henry G. Perring, a Baltimore-based engineer and architect who operated the firm Perring and Remington. By the early 1940s, Perring had already gained extensive experience on public projects, both as an architect and as an engineer. Perring acted as the Chief Engineer of Baltimore from 1920 to 1922, and from 1922 to 1928 was a supervising engineer of the Public Improvement Commission (Baltimore Sun, 26 January 1946:5). After 1928, Perring went into private engineering practice and, at some point afterwards, joined J. C. Remington, Jr. in operating an architecture and engineering firm. Some projects that Perring and his firm completed include the design of a women's prison in Maryland, the construction of a sewer system in Tonawanda, New York, and the design of two underpasses in connection to a large-scale road project in Baltimore (Daily Times, 6 October 1938:9; Courier Post, 27 July 1938:3; Evening Sun, 6 August 1929:36). In Camden, Perring also acted as a project engineer for the Branch Village public housing project, the construction of which preceded Ablett Village by about two years (Morning Post, 11 June 1941:1, 4).

The choice of Perring as architect was met with backlash and controversy from various architectural organizations in and around Camden due to Perring's office and residency in Maryland. Camden's community of architects believed that the public project should be designed by a local architect. Although Perring's firm had an office in Camden, he lived and did significant work in Maryland, putting into question whether Perring could be considered a local architect. A related concern was that the major planning and design work of Ablett Village would be done in Baltimore, inconveniencing the HACC and making it more difficult to ensure a high-quality standard. This concern was based on the work Perring had done on the Branch Village project, of which members of the HACC complained about having to travel to Baltimore to view plans and deal with numerous construction problems. Additionally, the West Jersey Society of Architects had lodged a complaint that Perring was not registered to work as an architect in the State of New Jersey at the time of his appointment, which HACC commissioner Wilbert F. Dobbins corroborated. Perring, however, denied this accusation (Morning Post, 11 June 1941:1, 4). Despite the controversy, Perring remained the architect on the project.

The construction of Ablett Village began in June of 1942. Almost immediately, problems arose that threatened to delay the project's completion. The pilings used by Perring in the buildings' construction were smaller in diameter than those in the specifications, although Perring insisted that the smaller pilings actually exceeded the capability of those in the specifications. A judge ordered the pouring of any concrete to be prohibited until the pilings were inspected and deemed to comply with specified requirements. An inspection of the

pilings found that their tonnage capacity (17 tons) far exceeded what was required in the specifications (13 tons), and the pilings were safe and sufficient for use despite their smaller diameter (Morning Post, 17 July 1942:1, 2). Work proceeded without significant delay. However, concerns regarding safety and comfort remained at the forefront as several cracked lintels above doorways had to be replaced before the project was ready for residents. The poor quality of these lintels raised further concern that the pilings were in fact not sufficient for the needs of the project (Morning Post, 2 December 1942:10).

The first occupants of Ablett Village moved into the complex in April of 1943, inhabiting 50 units. Ablett Village opened with 306 dwelling units, ranging from \$25 to \$35 a month including utilities (Morning Post, 18 March 1943:11). Similar to the preceding public housing projects in Camden, the site consisted of 23 two-story, brick apartment buildings with boxy massing and little to no ornamentation. Each building had a shared front courtyard and individual rear yards which backed up to their respective access driveways. Dwellings were heated by coal. Coal bins were located along the individual units' rear elevations and accessed via a basement window (dvrbs.camdenhistory.com n.d.). Additionally, the site contained a community center and shared green space (Figure 3) (Morning Post, 2 January 1943:1; Morning Post, 18 March 1943:11). Ablett Village was advertised by project manager Mary Soistmann to have excellent transit connectivity, easy-to-clean floors, large closets, bathrooms and kitchens with storage space and modern amenities, natural light, plenty of play space for children, and space for victory gardens. The housing complex was completed and ready to house tenants at full capacity by June 1, 1943 (Figure 4) (Morning Post, 18 March 1943:11; Morning Post, 12 April 1943:5).

Initially, tenancy in Ablett Village was reserved for those employed in the war effort. To qualify for housing in the development, potential tenants were required to obtain certification from their supervisors ensuring they were employed in war-related industries. Furthermore, public and defense housing in Camden was segregated during this time, and Ablett Village was restricted to white defense workers. Branch Village, named for a prominent Black physician and the first Black man to serve on Camden's Board of Education, provided approximately 500 housing units for Black defense workers in the city (Morning Post, 4 June 1942:4). Priority was given to tenants whose current residences were either temporary or too far to commute daily into Camden (Morning Post, 2 January 1943:1; Morning Post, 18 March 1943:11). The first two Ablett Village leases were signed by Mr. Joseph Galloway and his wife and Louis Grossbaum, from Florida and Connecticut respectively, who were both employed at the New York Ship Company (Morning Post, 30 March 1943:6). Ablett Village was officially dedicated in an on-site ceremony on June 20, 1943 (Morning Post, 4 June 1943:3). By February of 1944, Ablett Village was at full capacity with a sizable waiting list, along with two of the other government-

subsidized housing projects in Camden (Figure 5). The fourth project, Chelton Terrace, which was designated for Black defense workers, was projected to be filled by the following month (Morning Post, 22 February 1944:3).

Within Ablett Village, a strong community of war workers and their families was developed and sustained through on-site community groups and events. As early as September of 1943, a weekly newsletter written by volunteer residents of Ablett Village called “The Village Crier,” circulated monthly and reported on the events and daily happenings of the housing complex. The newsletter included information such as new tenants, life events (marriages, deaths, births, etc.), updates from the local sports leagues and boy scout troops, and general information on Ablett Village events, such as the annual Halloween festivities (Figure 6) (dvrbs.camdenhistory.com n.d.).

In March of 1946, following the end of World War II, the HACC declared that Ablett Village would transition into a low-income housing development as it was originally intended. Effective immediately, housing applications would be approved based on income. The maximum income to qualify for housing at Ablett Village was \$1,500 for a two-person household, \$1,550 for three-person households, \$1,650 for three- to four-person households, and \$1,800 for five- or more person households. However, given the postwar housing shortage in Camden, the HACC decided that residents would not be evicted at the time and would not be immediately affected by the change (Courier Post, 2 March 1946:3).

This housing security for Ablett Village residents came to an end by 1947. In May of that year, the United States Senate passed the Housing and Rent Act of 1947, which had four main pillars. Firstly, landlords were permitted to raise rents a maximum of 15 percent given that the landlord and tenant agreed to such an increase “voluntarily and in good faith” (Schiro 1948:14–15). Secondly, it empowered local advisory boards in defense areas to decrease controls over their defense-rental areas and institute general rent increases. Thirdly, the act decontrolled certain property types, such as hotels, housing created after February of 1947, or tourist houses. Finally, the act eliminated the six-month waiting period granted to tenants that protected them from being evicted on short notice. This act negotiated the Federal government’s intention to end its rent restrictions in the post-war period with the existing housing emergency that continued to necessitate governmental control (Schiro 1948:14–15). As a result of the Housing and Rent Act of 1947, about 200 renters in three of Camden’s low-income public housing developments (including Ablett Village) had their rents raised an average of \$3/month, while another 200 had their rents decreased by \$5/month (Courier Post, 29 May 1947:1).

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Evictions in Camden's public housing began in 1947. By September of that year, 142 families in Camden's three low-income housing developments received notices of eviction, to be carried out within six months of the notice, for having an income that exceeds the maximum income requirement to qualify for the housing (Courier Post, 2 August 1947:17). Approximately 650 evictions were projected between the three developments. Residents of Ablett Village, Westfield Acres, and Branch Village resisted their imminent evictions. Although their incomes were higher than the qualifying income for low-rent housing, the residents argued that they still could not afford mortgages and that there was a lack of affordable housing in Camden. Several residents argued against their eviction in the Camden District Court (Courier Post, 13 July 1948:3).

Throughout the mid-1960s, Camden gradually integrated its public housing projects amidst a culture of public unrest and social tension. The first Black family moved into Ablett Village around 1964 and was met with racially motivated harassment from the Ablett Village residents, which continued to occur intermittently in the following years (Courier Post, 21 April 1966:31). In June 1966, Ablett Village was inhabited by 260 white families, 6 Black families, and 40 Puerto Rican families. These demographics reflect larger trends throughout Camden around this time. In the post-war period, many Puerto Rican immigrants were drawn to Camden due to industrial employment opportunities, such as the Campbell's Soup factory. Census data from 1960 reveals that throughout North Camden, previously white neighborhoods were beginning to integrate. This data also reveals a positive correlation in some areas of North Camden between the presence of Black and Puerto Rican residents in a neighborhood (Gillette, Jr. 2005:54–56).

At some point in the late 1960s, a fire occurred which destroyed a portion of the Ablett Village's community building. The southwest portion of the footprint was subsequently reconstructed in 1971 (Figure 7) (Courier Post, 17 December 1971:5; Walter Weissman A.I.A. Architects 1971). Aerial imagery reveals that the building's reconstructed footprint remained the same as the original building. The community building included multiple social rooms, a meeting room, a kitchen, and storage space (Walter Weisman, A.I.A. Architects 1971). Also around this time, the heating system throughout the apartment buildings was modernized, and as a result, the coal bins were removed and dwellings' access windows infilled (dvrbs.camdenhistory.com n.d.).

In 1986, Ablett Village underwent a modernization campaign led by the HACC consisting of sitework and interior and exterior renovations of the apartment buildings and community building (Kitchen & Associates 1986). Sitework performed in 1986 included the repair of existing sidewalks and stoops and the creation of new sidewalks along rear yards, the repaving of roadways, the

addition of new signage and speedbumps, and the improvement of communal play spaces through new equipment and ground cover. Exterior work included the repair of damaged masonry surfaces and concrete foundation walls, lintels and sills, as well as the waterproofing of concrete surfaces and repointing of mortar joints where required. Interior work included the installation of new finishes, such as tiling and painting, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing work, and overall bathroom modernization (Kitchen & Associates 1986). Community building alterations included the installation of an HVAC system, repair and cleaning of exterior finishes, replacement of exterior doors, extension of the parapet and modification of the roof drainpipes, and the addition of a new locker and shower room (Kitchen & Associates 1986).

Nearly a decade later, the HACC oversaw another modernization campaign at Ablett Village. Site work in 1995 included the installation of new handrails and the construction of new concrete landings at some of the units' entrances. Inside the housing units, work included general plumbing and electrical work, the installation of some new windows, and the updating of kitchen appliances (Guenther & Hee Associates 1995).

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1942 Piling Okay Saves Ablett Housing Job. July 17:1, 2.

1942 It Can Happen Here—Unless We Stop It. December 2:10.

1943 Ablett Housing Units Will Open Next Month. January 2:1.

1943 April 1 Moving Day at Ablett Village. March 18:11.

1943 First Units in Use at Ablett Village. March 30:6.

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Walter Weissman, A.I.A. Architect
1971 William Stanley Ablett Village Community Building Reconstruction.
Prepared for the Housing Authority of the City of Camden. On file,
William Stanley Ablett Village, Camden, New Jersey.

Historian: Jane Nasta
Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.
259 Prospect Plains Road, Building D
Cranbury, New Jersey 08512
February 2026

Project Information: Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. (RGA) completed Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District in support of the Housing Authority of the City of Camden's proposed redevelopment of Ablett Village. The HABS documentation was completed pursuant to Stipulation I of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the New Jersey Historic Preservation Officer and Housing Authority of the City of Camden executed March 21, 2024, for the redevelopment project. Per Stipulation I in the MOA, RGA completed the documentation to HABS Level III-like standards as prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Architectural and Engineering Documentation* as published in the *Federal Register*, Vol. 49, No. 190 (September 29, 1983).

Allee Davis, RGA Principal Senior Architectural Historian, supervised the project. RGA Architectural Historian Jane Nasta prepared the historical report. The photographic documentation was completed by Ms. Davis, and RGA Graphics Specialist Dave Strohmeier produced the figures.

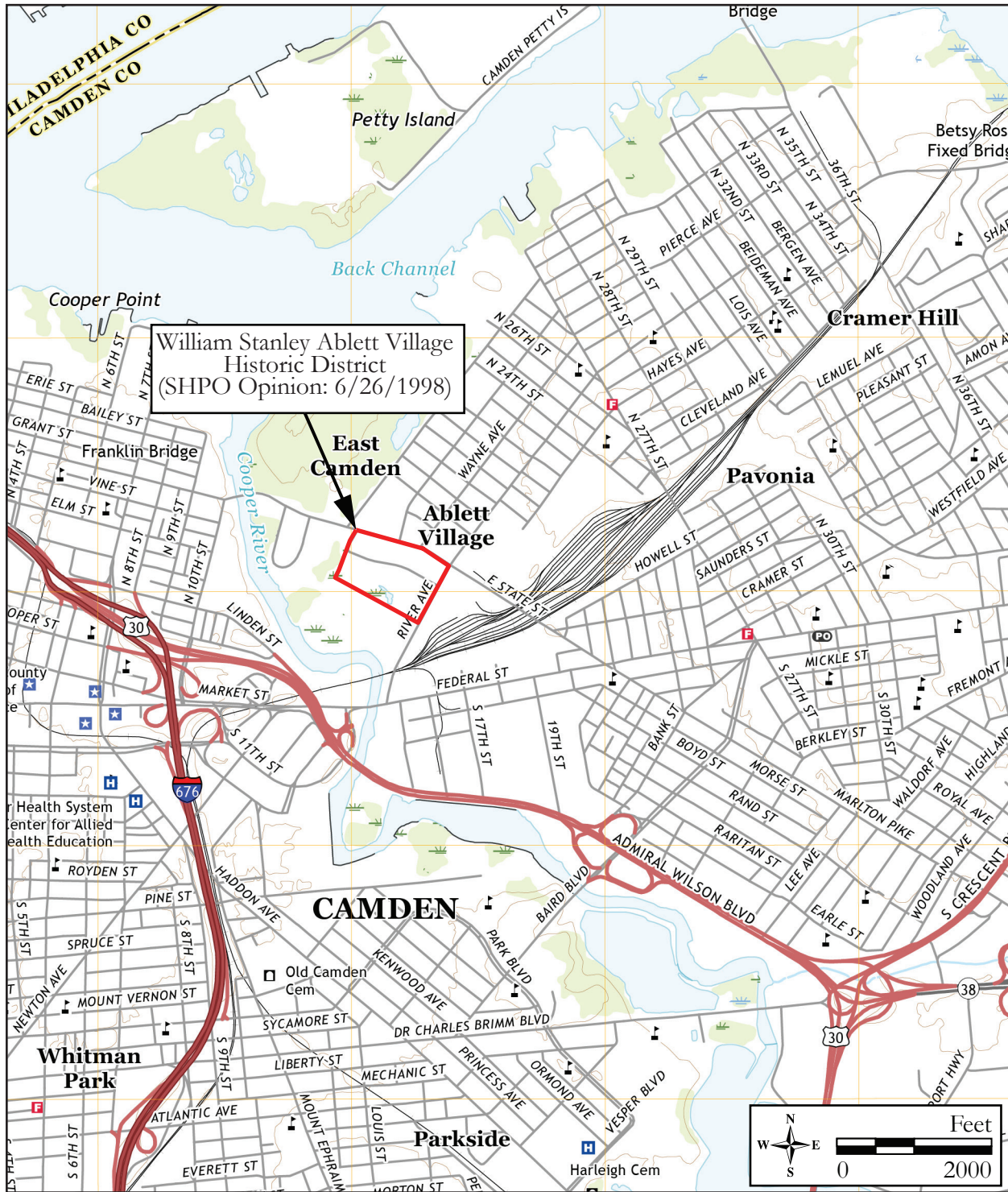


Figure 1: USGS map showing the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District (USGS 2019).



Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District (NJOGIS 2020).



Figure 3: 1951 historic aerial photograph showing William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District (NETR 1951).



Figure 4: 1943 newspaper aerial photograph showing the newly completed Ablett Village
(Morning Post, 12 April 1943:5).



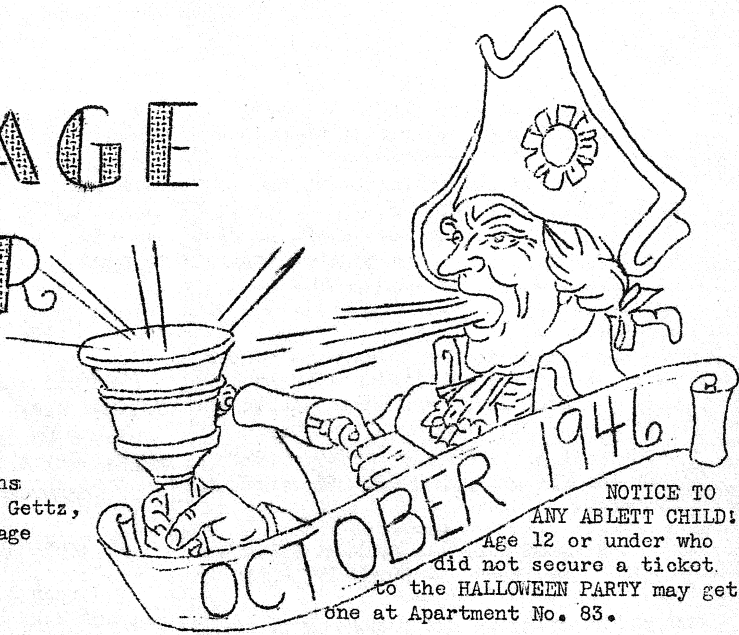
Figure 5: An undated photograph, likely from the mid-twentieth century, showing residents of Ablett Village on the lawn of an unknown apartment building (dvrbs.camdenhistory.com n.d.).

VILLAGE CRIER

PUBLISHED IN THE
 INTEREST OF THE
 RESIDENTS OF
 ABLETT VILLAGE

Address all Communications
 to the Editor-William S. Gettz,
 Apartment 83 Ablett Village
 Camden, N.J. Telephone-
 Emerson 5-1022.

VOL. 3 No. 11



NOTICE TO
 ANY ABLETT CHILD:
 Age 12 or under who
 did not secure a ticket
 to the HALLOWEEN PARTY may get
 one at Apartment No. 83.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ABLETT'S COMMUNITY HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION FOR KIDDIES

THE DATE-

OCTOBER 1946						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



★ SPECIAL PRIZE FOR THE
 YOUNGEST COSTUMED VILLAGE
 BABY STORY ON PAGE 12

WEDNESDAY
 NIGHT
 THE TIME →
 THE PLACE
 ABLETT SOCIAL HALL



FOR
 VILLAGE
 KIDDIES
 UP TO 12 YRS.



Figure 6: A 1946 excerpt from "The Village Crier," Ablett Village's community-run newsletter (dvrbs.camdenhistory.com n.d.).



Figure 7: 1973 historic aerial photograph showing the reconstructed community building at Ablett Village (NETR 1973).

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City of Camden
Camden County
New Jersey

Photographer: Allee Davis, August 16, 2023

- Photograph 1: View of the River Avenue entrance into the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking northwest.
- Photograph 2: View of the buildings on the north side of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District from East State Street at its intersection with River Avenue, looking west.
- Photograph 3: Perspective view of the buildings on the north side of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District from the River Avenue entrance, looking northwest.
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- Photograph 5: View of the rear elevation (northwest) of Building 1 of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking southeast.
- Photograph 6: Elevation view of the northeast elevation of Building 2 of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking southwest.
- Photograph 7: View of the rear elevation (southeast) of Building 3 of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking southwest.
- Photograph 8: View of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District's typical backyards and clotheslines taken from the rear of Building 3, facing southwest.
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- Photograph 10: Perspective view of the primary (northwest) elevation of Building 8 in the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking northeast.
- Photograph 11: Overview of Moro Street near the center of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking northwest.

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- Photograph 14: Perspective view of the rear (northwest) elevation of Building 23 of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking southeast.
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- Photograph 17: Perspective view of Building 15 of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District from the southernmost access road looking northwest, featuring a garden to the south of the building.
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- Photograph 21: Interior view of a bedroom in a typical, second-floor, one-bedroom apartment of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking east.
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- Photograph 24: Interior view of a kitchen in a typical two-bedroom apartment of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking southwest.

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- Photograph 25: Interior view of a living room from a kitchen in a typical two-bedroom apartment of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking northeast.
- Photograph 26: Interior view of a bathroom in a typical two bedroom apartment of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking northwest.
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- Photograph 31: Interior view of a second-floor hallway in a typical three-bedroom apartment of the William Stanley Ablett Village Historic District, looking southeast.

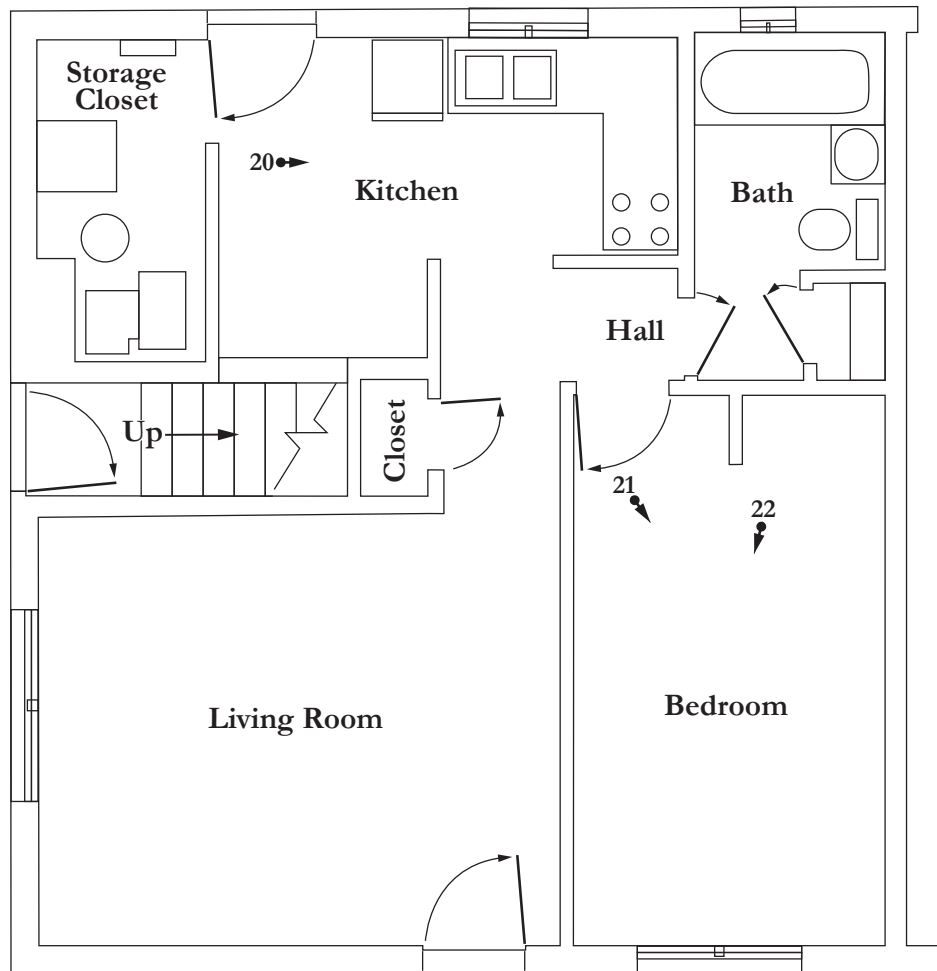
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Site map overview.

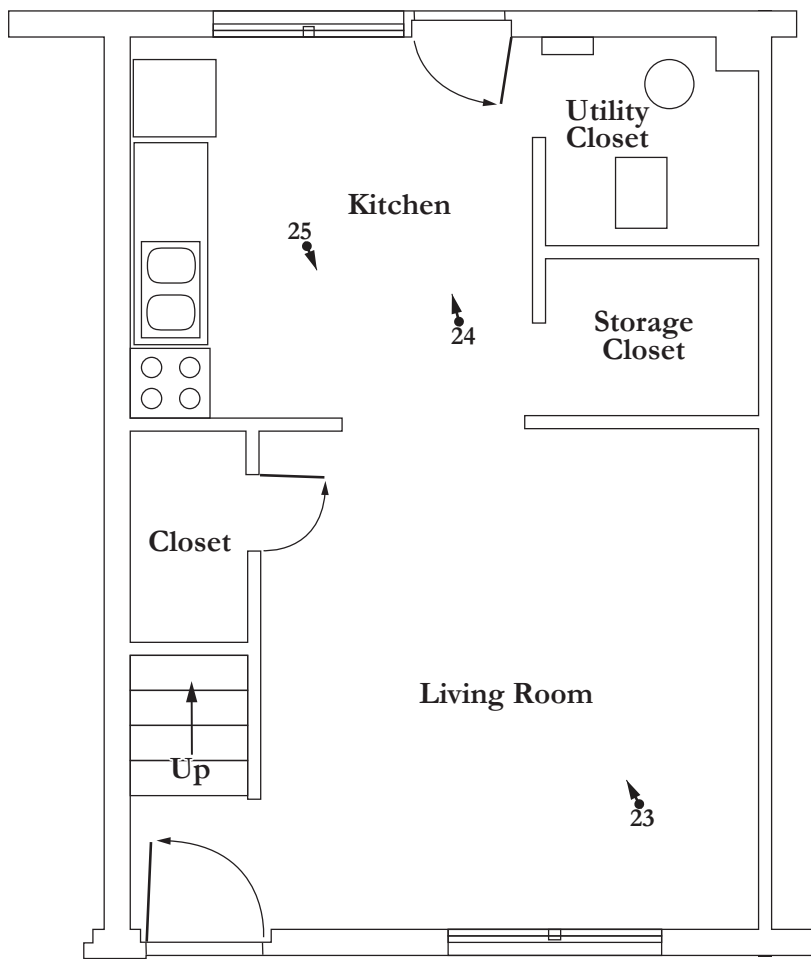
Typical One-Bedroom Apartment



X Photo Location and Direction

Typical one-bedroom apartment.

Typical Two-Bedroom Apartment 1st Floor



X Photo Location and Direction

Typical two-bedroom apartment 1st floor.

Typical Two-Bedroom Apartment 2nd Floor

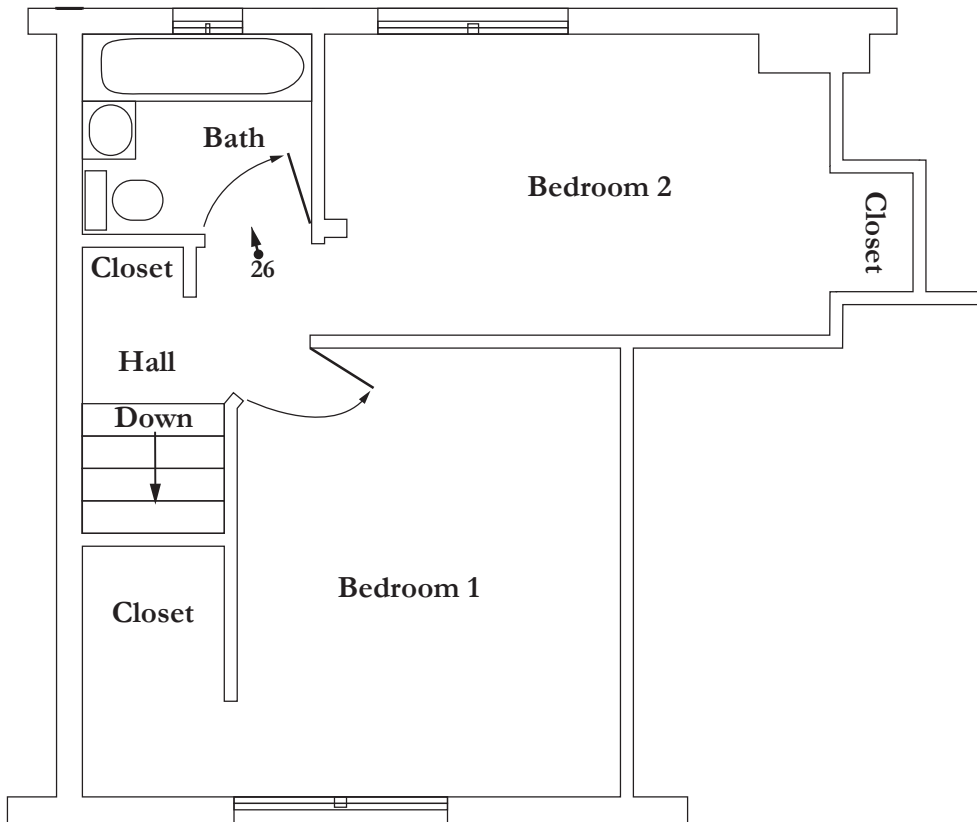
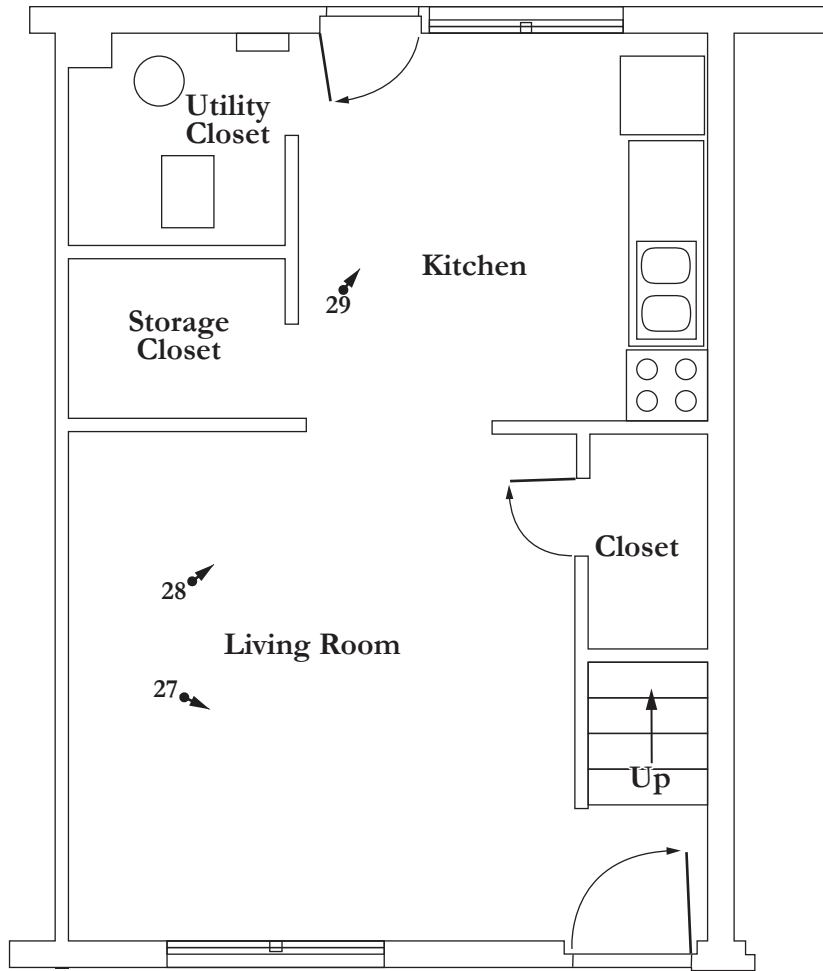


 Photo Location and Direction

Typical two-bedroom apartment 2nd floor.

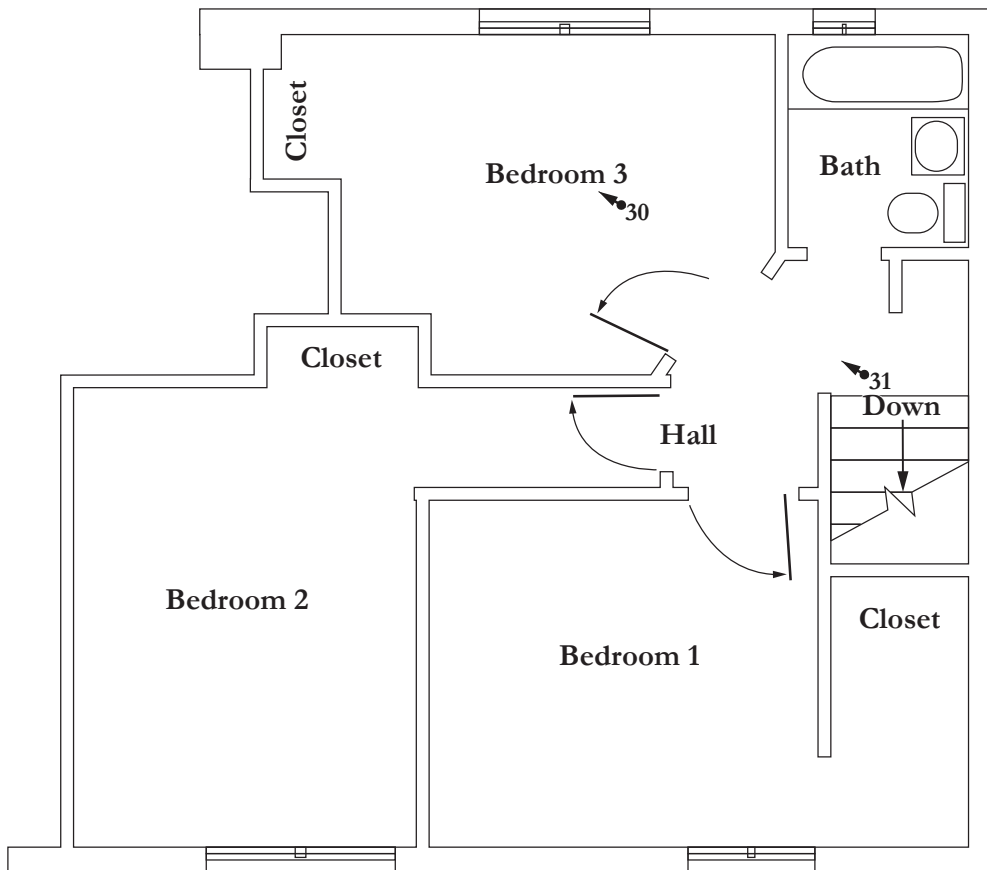
Typical Three-Bedroom Apartment 1st Floor



X Photo Location and Direction

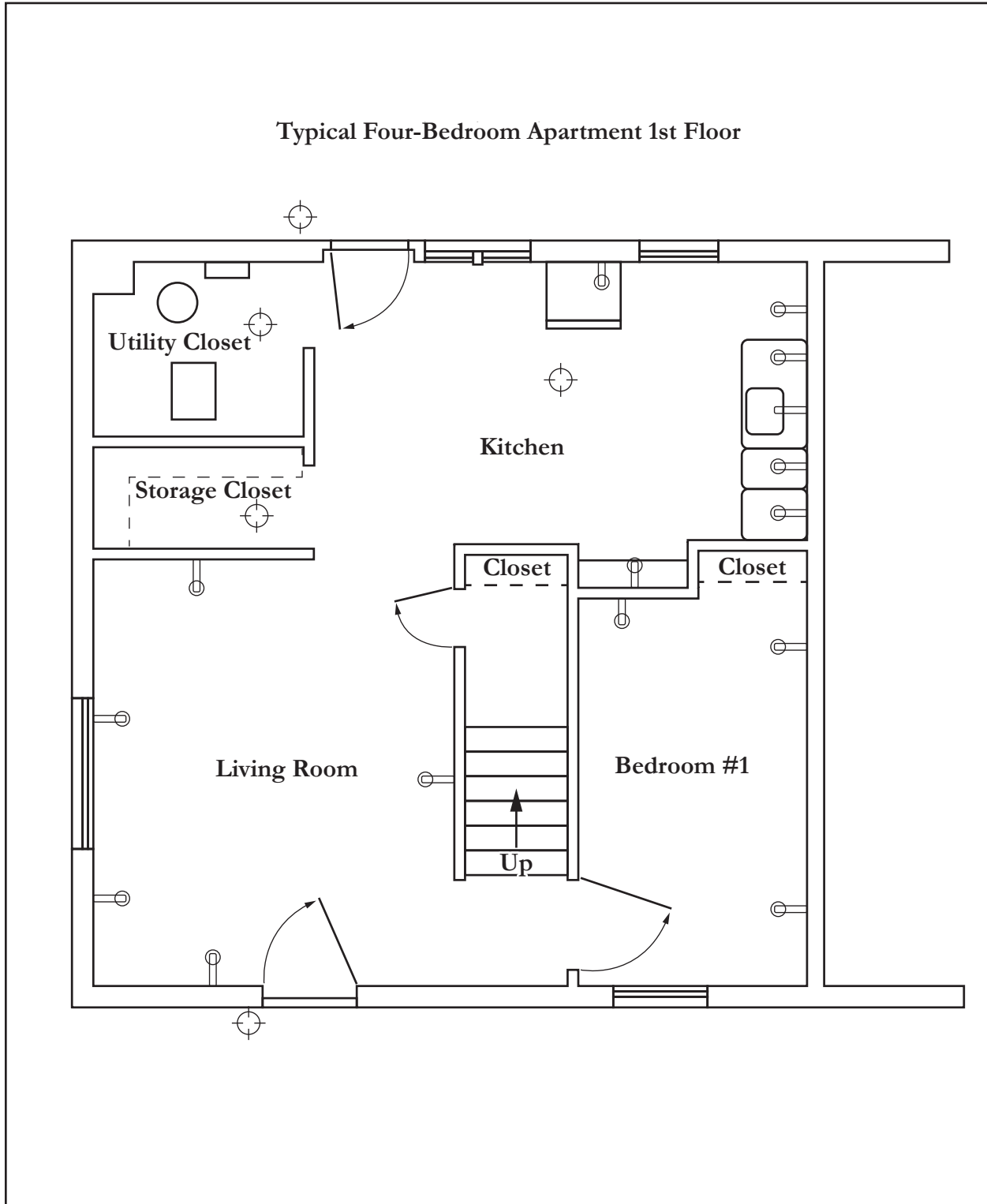
Typical three-bedroom apartment 1st floor.

Typical Three-Bedroom Apartment 2nd Floor

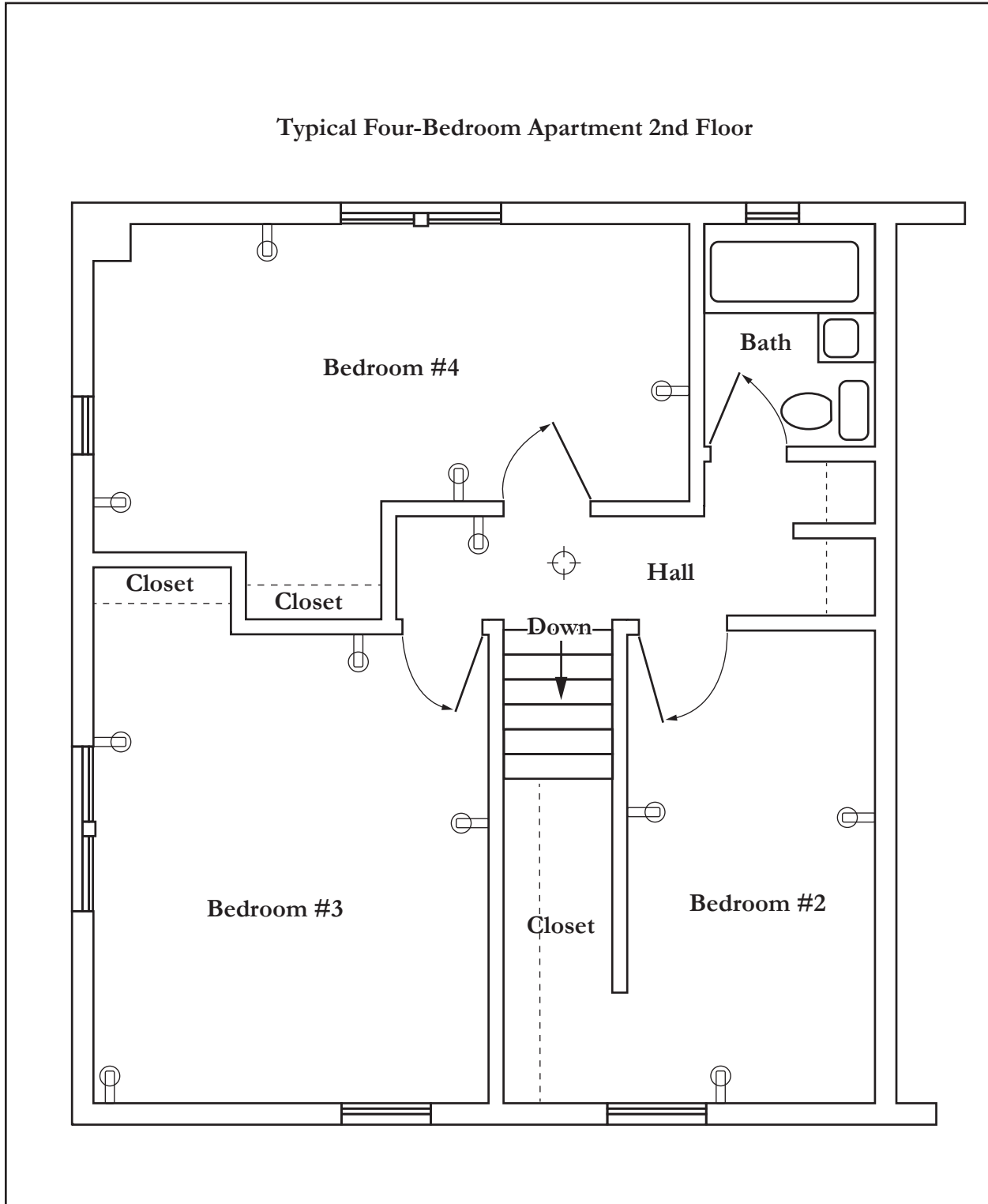


X Photo Location and Direction

Typical three-bedroom apartment 2nd floor.



Typical four-bedroom apartment 1st floor.



Typical four-bedroom apartment 2nd floor.

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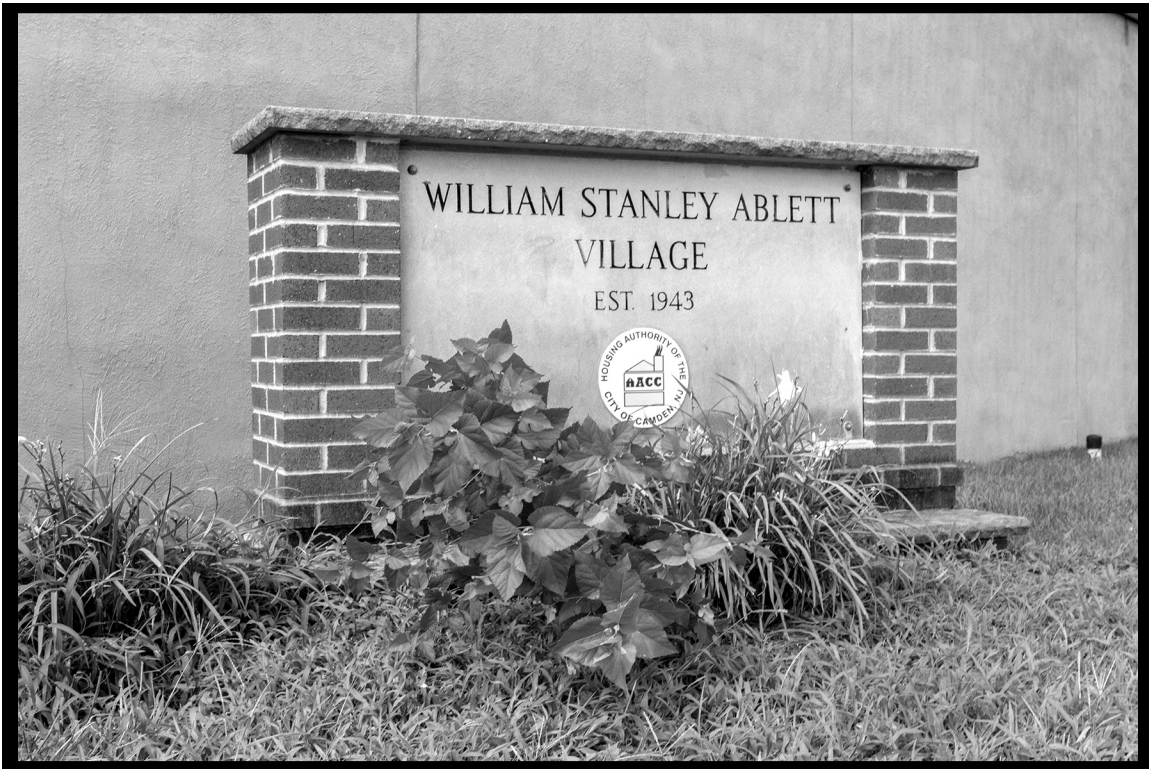
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