

OVERVIEW

La Quintana Manor Quonset Huts are located on the east of SW 24th Avenue south of SW 13th Street. The street is not part of an overall planned neighborhood, but rather reflects an earlier development pattern where blocks were subdivided and sold to individuals or buyers who developed smaller parcels of land. As such, the area is less cohesive than other neighborhoods. However, the 11 Quonset Huts present a unified streetfront of nearly identical buildings. All the contributing buildings in this district are Quonset 20 model Quonset Huts measuring approximately 20' x 48', adapted to residential use. They are rectangular in plan with bowed roof assemblies clad in corrugated steel sheet metal set on longitudinal knee walls, also clad in corrugated steel. The huts are oriented perpendicular to the street and have stepped ziggurat-like stucco-clad masonry false-fronts at each narrow end. All of the Quonset Huts were constructed or moved to the lots on the east side of SW 24th Avenue in 1945. Two recently constructed



Figure 6F-1: map of La Quintana Manor Quonset Huts. Map by Rollin Maycumber, City of Fort Lauderdale.



Figure 6F-2: The Quonset Huts on SW 24th Avenue were all erected in 1945. View facing south along SW 24th Avenue. Photo by Bill Morache.

modular homes interrupt the row of Quonset Huts and are non-contributing buildings.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The La Quintana Manor Quonset Huts appear to meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a district. The district is significant under Criterion A for its association with post-World War II development in Fort Lauderdale. The district is also significant under Criterion C as an intact collection of repurposed Quonset Huts. Together the district represents mass manufacturing

techniques developed during World War II as well as the housing boom that followed as soldiers returned home. The structures retain a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

QUONSET HUT AND LA QUINTANA MANOR HISTORY

Quonset Huts are a type of pre-fabricated building developed during World War II. They are recognizable by their cylindrical form and corrugated sheet metal exterior. The building is named for the Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island where the design was first developed. In 1941 the Navy solicited the George A. Fuller company to design a portable structure that could be easily shipped and erected as part of military mobilization. Additional contracts to manufacture the buildings were awarded to Stran-Steel and other companies; each developing their own version of the building. By the end of World War II, an estimated 150,000 Quonset Huts had been constructed.¹

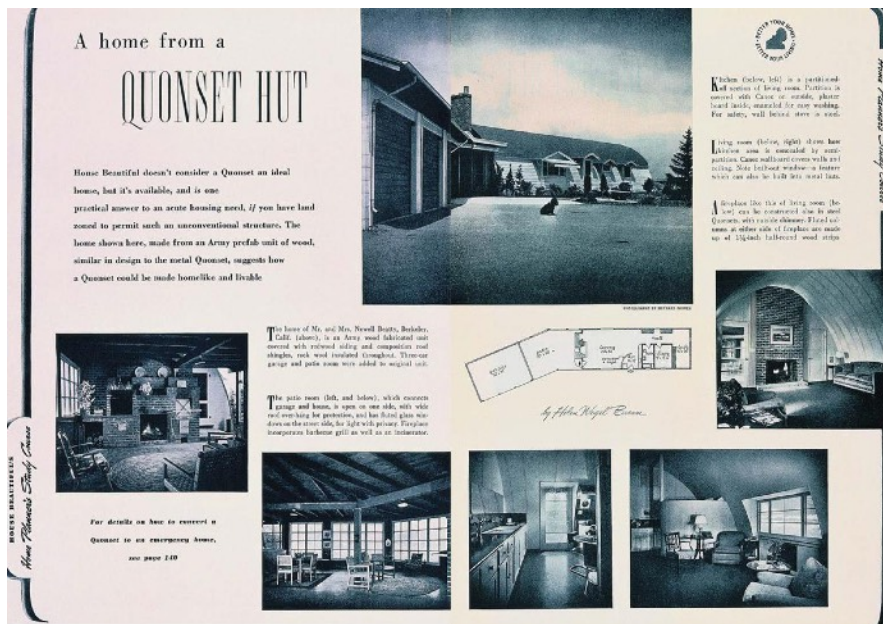


Figure 6F-3: "A Home from a Quonset Hut" magazine spread, 1945. Image courtesy of House Beautiful (September Issue).

The standard Quonset Hut design consisted of curved steel ribs, corrugated metal shell, wood fiber insulation, Masonite inner lining, and tongue-and-groove plywood flooring. The huts came in two sizes, the Quonset 20 and the Quonset 40. The Quonset 20 measured 20' x 48' and the Quonset 40 measured 40' x 100'. A team of ten untrained men could reportedly erect a Quonset 20 in one day.² The buildings in this

district are the dimensions of the Quonset 20 model.

Looking for a quick solution to the housing shortage that followed World War II, the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce saw the Quonset Huts' potential for quick and inexpensive housing and sought to make 100 of the buildings available for local contractors and residents.³

¹ "Quonset Hut: 1941-1960," *Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation*. Olympia, Wa. Accessed on May 15, 2020. <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/quonset-hut>

² Ibid.

³ "Navy Huts Seen as Aid to Housing," *Fort Lauderdale News*. (20 November 1945): Page 1.

William E. Dunn and his building company, Dunn and Schilo, developed La Quintana Manor specifically to house veterans and take advantage of post-war financing incentives. The development consisted of fifteen converted Quonset Hut homes and six conventional houses. Eleven of the Quonset Huts remain on their original lots. Each Quonset Hut home sold for \$5,100 while the conventional homes cost \$8,000.⁴

The development was located in Broward County immediately adjacent to the Fort Lauderdale city limits and were thus subject to fewer building restrictions. Shortly after construction, a County Service Officer reported complaints from the veterans that the roofs leaked, the wiring was defective, and the septic tanks were inadequate. In some cases two houses were served by a single septic tank; a violation of the sanitary code.⁵ It is unclear whether William E. Dunn remediated these concerns, but the County ultimately replaced the septic tanks and the holdings of Mr. Dunn were liquidated at auction in 1949.⁶ Despite the claims of substandard construction, residents of the La Quintana Manor Quonset Huts in 1991 described them as practical and comfortable to the local news media.⁷

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Within La Quintana Quonset Huts Historic District, the buildings are all residential and the existing historic buildings were all constructed in 1945. The contributing buildings, Quonset 20 model Quonset Huts, were all constructed with masonry false fronts on the east and west facades. Main entrances and adjacent front windows are located within the west-facing masonry fronts. Side elevation windows and side doors are housed within flat-roofed dormers on either longitudinal elevation ranging from one to three dormers per side. Typical window openings are shaded by aluminum window awnings. Two non-contributing houses were constructed in the early 2000s.



Figure 6F-4: A typical Quonset Hut within the district located at 1232 SW 24th Avenue. Photo by Vagabond Consulting Group.

⁴ "War Veterans File Protests About Housing," *Fort Lauderdale News*. (24 July 1947): Page 1.

⁵ "County Orders Replacement of 'Improper' Septic Tanks," *Fort Lauderdale News*. (26 July 1947): Page 1.

⁶ "Liquidation Auction," *Miami Herald*. (11 February 1949): Page 41.

⁷ "Old Soldiers' Quarters Never Died," *South Florida Sun Sentinel*. (Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 30 December 1991): Page 9.