

Los Angeles National Cemetery, Gatehouse  
(Los Angeles National Cemetery, Pumphouse)  
950 South Sepulveda Boulevard  
Los Angeles  
Los Angeles County  
California

HABS No. CA-2709-A

HABS  
CAL  
19-LOSAN,  
79A-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
LOS ANGELES NATIONAL CEMETERY  
GATEHOUSE (Pumphouse)

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CAL  
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**Location:** Los Angeles National Cemetery  
  
950 South Sepulveda Boulevard  
(Intersection of Sepulveda Boulevard and Constitution Avenue)  
City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California 90049  
  
U.S.G.S. Beverly Hills Quadrangle (7.5')  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11.371720.3769660

**Present Owner:** Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

**Present Occupant:** Los Angeles National Cemetery

**Present Use:** Site Maintenance Staff Office and Assembly Area, and Utility (Electrical and Telephone) Services Center.

**Significance:** The building is one of several structures built on this cemetery site by the Work Projects Administration (WPA). It is also one of several on-site facilities of unique Spanish architectural motif using many materials not typically associated with such architecture. It is the first structure seen by visitors who enter the cemetery through the main entrance on Constitution Avenue at Sepulveda Boulevard.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: Construction of the building is presumed to have been circa 1939-1940. This is when several other structures on the site that employ similar architectural and construction styles and identical materials were constructed, i.e., columbarium (and associated restrooms), pergola, maintenance facility, etc.. Furthermore, in documentation describing the property that was being transferred to the Veterans Administration in late 1930, there is no description of brick buildings on the property that matches these structures.
2. Architect: The names of any architects, engineers and/or other professional designers involved in the project are currently unknown; however, it is most probable that the designer(s) were professionals participating in the Work Projects Administration (WPA) program.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The cemetery was started in 1889 with the acquisition of 20 acres for use as a cemetery for the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. It is most likely that this initial acquisition did not include the property upon which the gatehouse facility sits. Over the next 50 years, additional property was acquired to increase the cemetery to its current 114.5 acres, including the property where the gatehouse facility is located.

By Act of Congress on July 3, 1930, the property was transferred from "The Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, a corporation created by an Act of the Congress of the United States, and the said National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers" (which was formerly known as the National Asylum for Disabled Veterans, a Corporation), to the Veterans Administration.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The construction of the original building and entrance wall elements is believed to have been accomplished using labor and materials from the WPA program.
5. Original plans and construction: No original plans are known to exist.
6. Alterations and additions: The building is believed to have been altered several times to reflect the changes in usage. The key conversion was from pumphouse to visitor information center, when it is believed that the restrooms were added and the present floor plan was established. At some point in time, the original entrance walls adjacent to the gatehouse were demolished and rebuilt to afford a wider entrance to the cemetery.

B. Historical Context

Little documented information has been identified or located regarding this facility and its uses. Anecdotal information from sources within the Department of Veterans Affairs indicates that the building was initially constructed as a pumphouse for the cemetery irrigation system. This would be consistent with references to reservoirs found on the plat maps and in the property transfer information included with this survey. Later, after other sources of water were provided, the facility is reported to have served at various times as a visitor information center, welcome center, and guard house. Its present use is by the Cemetery's site maintenance staff as a combination office, worker assembly area and utility building.

PART II.      ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The building is of Spanish architectural character that reflects the area's Spanish heritage. The design was executed, in part, using non-traditional materials for such an architectural motif. The mixed use of red brick and wood in a Spanish design is an interesting and unique combination for the area. Several other building structures on the cemetery are constructed using the same architectural motif and materials.
2. Condition of fabric: In general, the condition of the original exterior materials is excellent. There is minimal damage from weathering or vandalism; however, there is definite evidence of earthquake damage, i.e., cracking of unreinforced masonry walls, displacement of porch beams, movement of clay roof tiles, etc. Most of the original interior finish materials have been covered with contemporary materials; however, where the original interior materials can be found, they are badly deteriorated or damaged.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The building is approximately 17'-10" by 19'-4" for a total area of 345 square feet. The building also has a front porch on the north side, centered on the building, that is approximately 16'-8" wide and 7'-0" deep.
2. Foundations: The building's concrete floor is raised approximately 9" above the surrounding grade level. The floor slab is bounded by a course of red brick placed on end, (9" vertical dimension). This bottom course of brick supports the building's walls and rests on a concrete perimeter foundation that extends at least 12" below grade. The building foundation extends approximately 1-1/2" beyond the edge of the walls.
3. Walls: The walls are constructed of double wythe, unreinforced, interlaced kiln-fired red brick masonry units with pronounced slump mortar joints.
4. Structural system, framing: The building is constructed of a double wythe, unreinforced, interlaced red brick walls supported on a perimeter concrete foundation. The floor is slab-on-grade concrete of an undetermined thickness. The roof is supported by rough-sawn wood beams resting on (or embedded in) the building's brick walls and pilasters and on the wooden posts of the front porch. These beams support 2" x 6" rafters to which 1" x 6" wood sheathing underlayment is nailed. The connection (tie) between walls and foundation is a mortar joint. The connection between the wood beams, wood columns and rafters is a nailed joint. The connection between the roof and brick walls is unknown.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The building has a front porch on the north side. The front porch extension of the building is articulated with two brick archways that support a rough-sawn 8" x 14" wood beam with two intermediate 7" x 7" rough-sawn wood posts at roughly 48" spacing. Faux wood capitals and corbels (essentially for decorative purposes) "support" this beam at the wood posts and brick pilasters that are part of the porch archways.
6. Chimneys: None. The only chimney provided is a ventilation pipe for the hot water heater, added well after the building was constructed.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The building has three exterior door openings. The main doorway is on the north side. It is approximately a 3'-9" x 6'-11" opening surmounted by an 8" x 5'-0" wood lintel. The existing door is a contemporary 3'-2" x 6'-5" solid core door. Two additional doors are located on the east and west sides for accessing the restrooms. These doors are 2'-8" x 6'-5" doors in 3'-0" x 6'-9" openings surmounted by rough-sawn wood lintels.
- b. Windows and shutters: There are seven window openings in the building. All are nominally 2'-8" in width but with varying heights. All have soldier brick sills that slope outward. The openings are surmounted by 8" x 4'-0" rough-sawn wood lintels.

Two windows are located symmetrically around the entry portal in the front (north side) of the building. They are 2'-2" x 4'-3" in 2'-8" x 4'-10" wall openings. There is one window in each of the east and west sides of the building that is 2'-2" x 4'-3" in a 2'-8" x 4'-10" wall opening. In the rear (south side) of the building, there are three windows. All are nominally 2'-2" x 3'-3" windows in 2'-8" x 3'-10" wall openings. Two are located symmetrically near the corners of the building with the sill height at approximately 54" and provide lighting to the restrooms. The third is centered in the rear wall with a sill height of approximately 38" and provides light to the storage/utility room.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof has a ridge oriented in an east-west direction draining to the north and south. Red clay Spanish barrel tiles held in place by mortar cover the 1" x 6" wood roof sheathing. The height of the ridge is approximately 16'-6" above the finished floor. The elevation of the roof gable is approximately 13'-0" on the south side of the building and 10'-10" at the outer edge of the north porch. The attic space between the ceiling and roof structure is open. Several red clay Spanish barrel tiles are embedded in the red brick masonry gables just below the ridge line in the east and west brick walls, providing natural ventilation to the attic space.
- b. Cornice Eaves: None.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: See Floor Plan on Page 8.

- a. Basement: None.
- b. First floor: Initially, the building had one main room and two small rooms in the corners, with a cutout in the concrete floor slab in an alcove at the back of the main room to accommodate the irrigation piping to the pumps. It is believed that the main room at the front of the building, approximately 10' x 16' in size, served as the pump room. The remaining two rooms, approximately 5'-10" x 6'-8" in size, located in the southwest and southeast corners of the building and accessed from the outside, served as a small office and a tool room/maintenance area. When the facility was converted to other uses, the small rooms were converted to restrooms, and the area

between the restrooms, where the cutout in the floor is located, was converted to a storage/utility services room.

- c. Second floor: There is no second floor.
2. Stairways: There are no stairways.
3. Flooring: In the main room and the adjacent storage area, the original concrete floor is now covered by 9" x 9" vinyl asbestos red tiles. The restroom floors are painted concrete.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Most of the original interior finishes and materials have been covered with contemporary materials.

The original wall finish appears to have been a white cementitious plaster, applied approximately 1" thick, directly to the red brick walls. This plaster has been covered with mahogany wood-grained vinyl (laminated) wall panels in the main area and storage/utility room. The original plaster wall material is presently exposed in the restrooms but is deteriorating.

The original ceiling in all of the rooms appears to have been painted white wood panels nailed to a 2 x 4 frame with an exposed 1 x 3 wood lathe over the panel joints. In the main room, this ceiling has now been covered with a contemporary 2' x 4', mineral fiber, exposed spline dropped ceiling with recessed 2' x 4' fluorescent light fixtures. This new ceiling is mounted 7" below the original ceiling that is still in place.

5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There were no original interior doors. The current door between the utility room and main area is a 2'-0" x 6'-2" hollow core door.
  - b. Windows: All the windows are wood-framed, double-hung sash windows with counter-weights (for ease of opening and closing) concealed in the sash. The windows are all nominally 2'-2" in width and vary in height. All appear to be the original windows.
6. Decorative features and trim: The two decorative features of note are the pronounced "slump" mortar joints, and the previously mentioned faux wood capitals and corbels which support the beam which supports the porch roof.
7. Hardware: All hardware, except possibly the hinges on the exterior doors and one of the window latches, appears to be contemporary. The one window latch is a metal (steel) twist-down type latch typically found on double-hung windows. It is presumed the other latches are all more contemporary since they are different styles and different materials and mounted offset from the center of the window - where the holes from the original latch can typically be seen.
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating, air conditioning, and ventilation: Except for the natural attic ventilation provided by the red clay tiles embedded in the brick gables, and the ventilation provided by the double-hung windows, there was no mechanical heating or

ventilation in the original structure. There are now contemporary wall and window mounted air conditioning units and a wall mounted gas heater in the main area.

- b. Lighting: It appears that the original lighting was industrial incandescent fixtures. The current lighting in the main area is 2' x 4' recessed fluorescent fixtures. In the restrooms, the surface mounted single bulb incandescent fixtures appear to be original units.
- c. Plumbing: There are lavatories and water closets in both restrooms that, based on their design and type, were added at a later date when the building was modified.
- d. Other/etc.: There is water heater located in the southwest corner restroom. This was undoubtedly installed when the building was modified.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

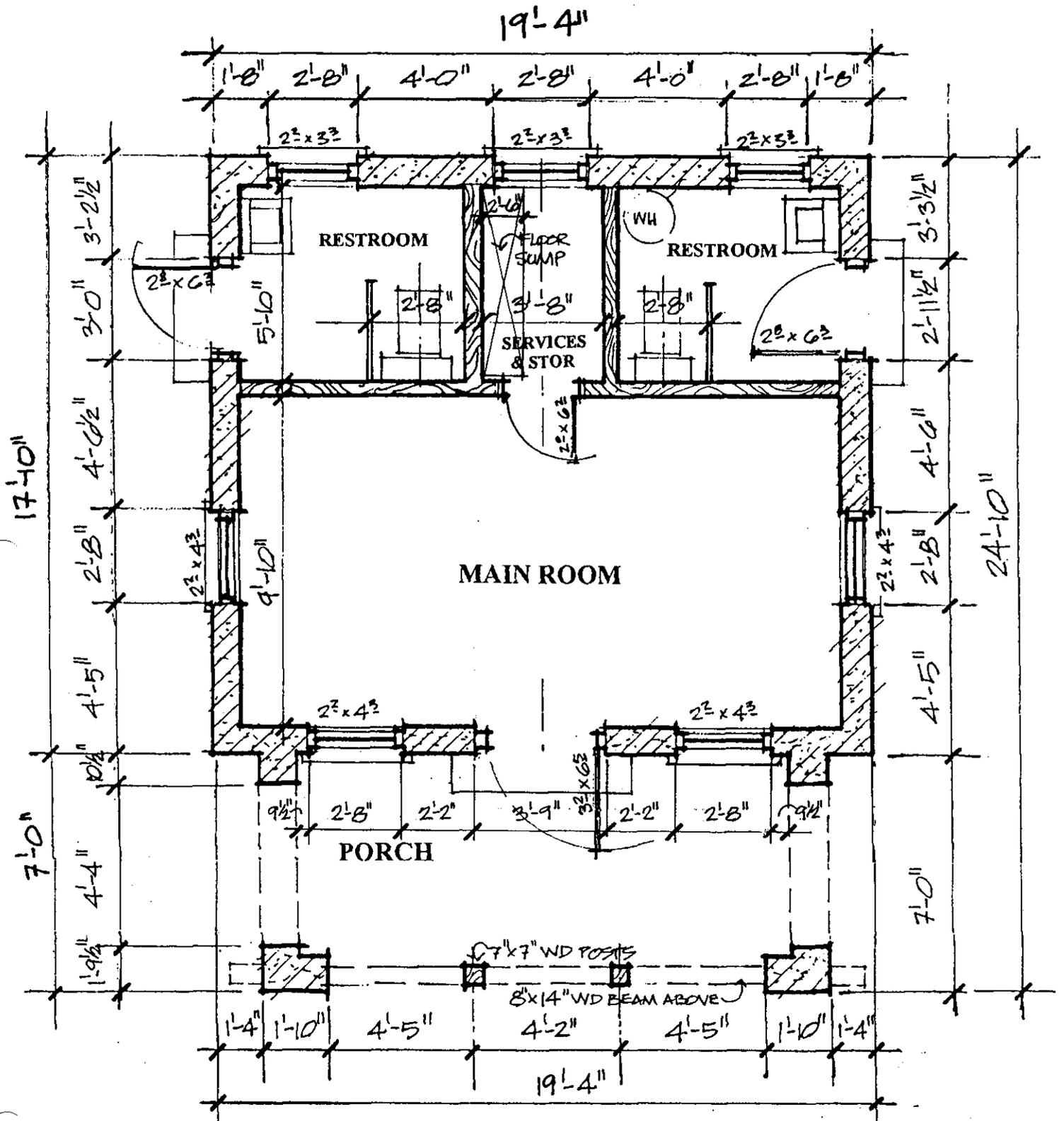
- A. Original Architectural Drawings: None known to exist. Sketch elevations of the building are included in Pages 9 – 11 of this survey report.
- B. Early Views: There is one photograph of the building dated June 8, 1949. It was taken from west of the main gate looking east into the cemetery. It presents the building in its context with surrounding landscaping, pedestrian gate and wall. Based on this photograph, it is obvious that the landscaping has been removed and the entry wall and pedestrian gate replaced. It would also indicate that the use of the facility had changed by this time from housing pump equipment to a visitors center or site security (gatehouse) function. A copy is included with HABS No. CA-2709-B, Photograph No. 2.
- C. Interviews: None.
- D. Bibliography:  
American Military Cemeteries: A Comprehensive Illustrated Guide to the Hallowed Grounds of the United States, Including Cemeteries Overseas  
Dean W. Holt / Hardcover / Published 1992
- E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: WPA records, newspaper archives

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

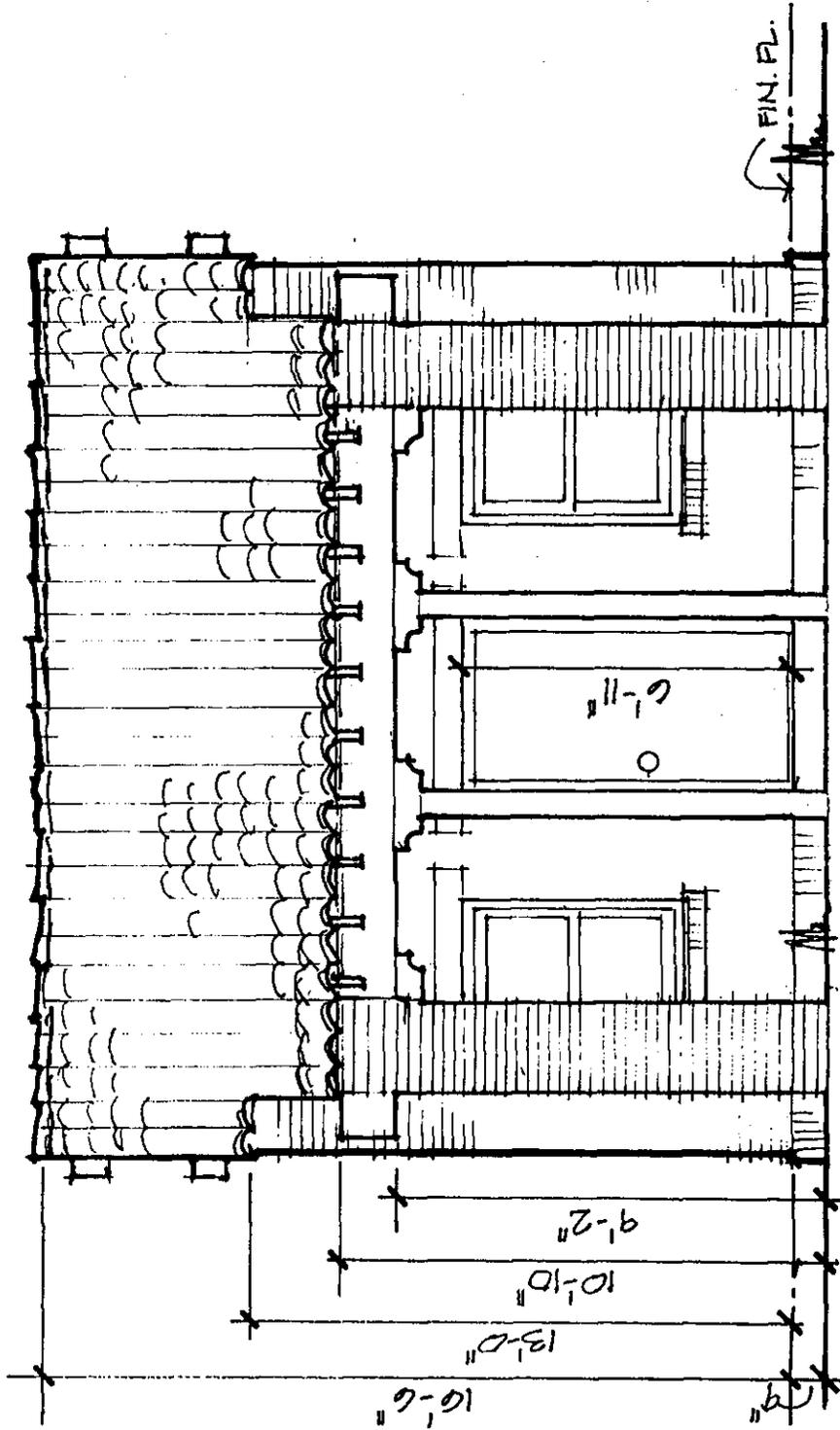
This survey is a donated recording project co-sponsored by the Veterans Park Nonprofit Corporation and the Los Angeles National Cemetery, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs. The documentation was undertaken precedent to the demolition of the gatehouse (pumphouse) structure to make way for the installation of a new main entrance to the cemetery. This new construction is necessary to alleviate a serious life-safety hazard occasioned by the configuration of the present main entrance, which does not meet current traffic or pedestrian safety standards. The intersection at the main entrance experiences an abnormally high vehicle accident rate, and is extremely hazardous to visitors -- both pedestrian and those arriving in vehicles.

This survey was prepared by the Construction Consultancy, 1450 East Seventeenth Street, Suite 226, Santa Ana, California, under the supervision of Mr. Stephen T. Sharr. The photographs were provided by Tom Zimmerman Photography, 10350 Ilona Avenue, Los Angeles, California, under the supervision of Mr. Tom Zimmerman.

The survey was prepared during the period March 1 – April 14, 2000.

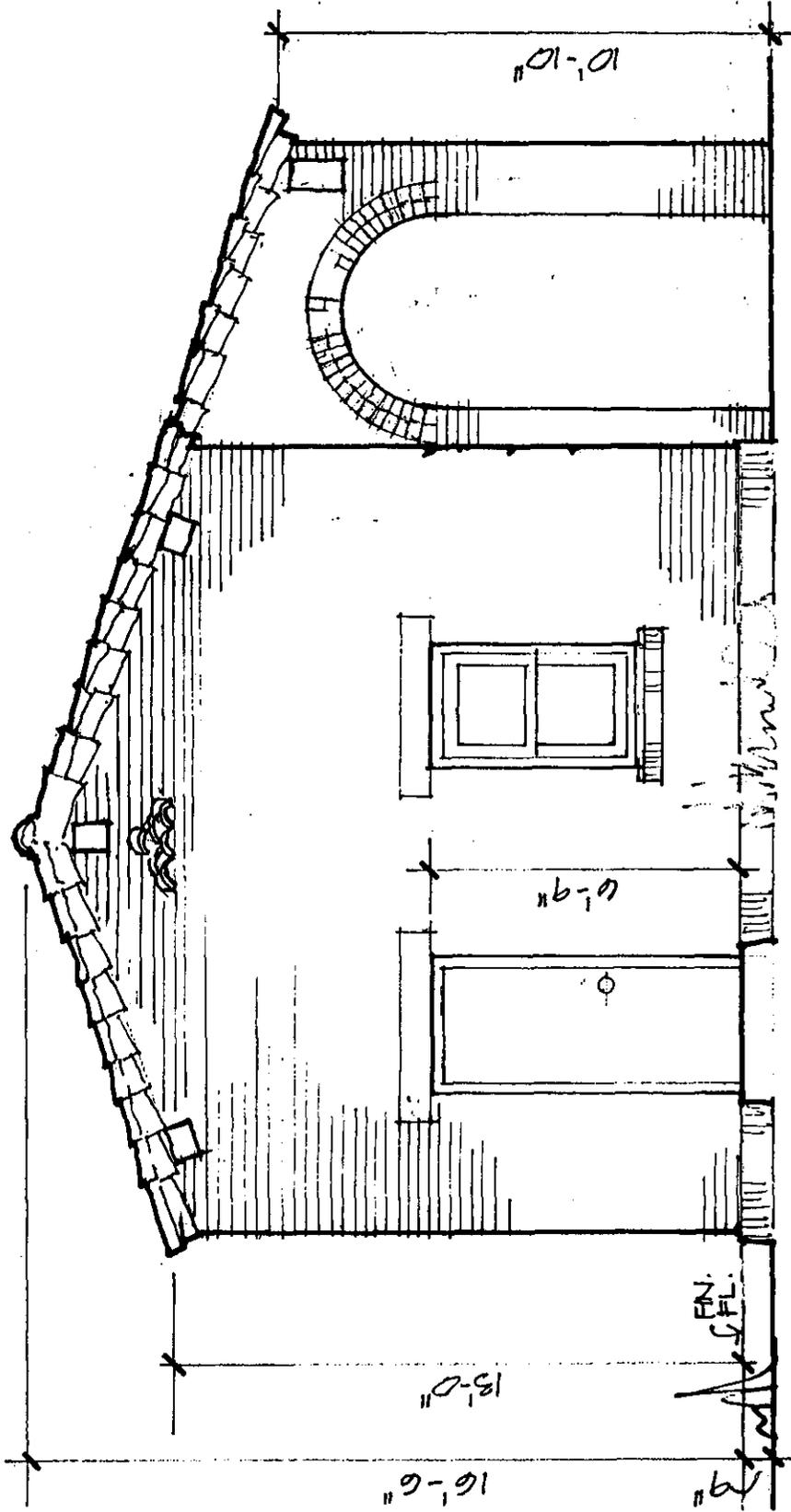


**FLOOR PLAN**  
 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



**FRONT (NORTH) ELEVATION**

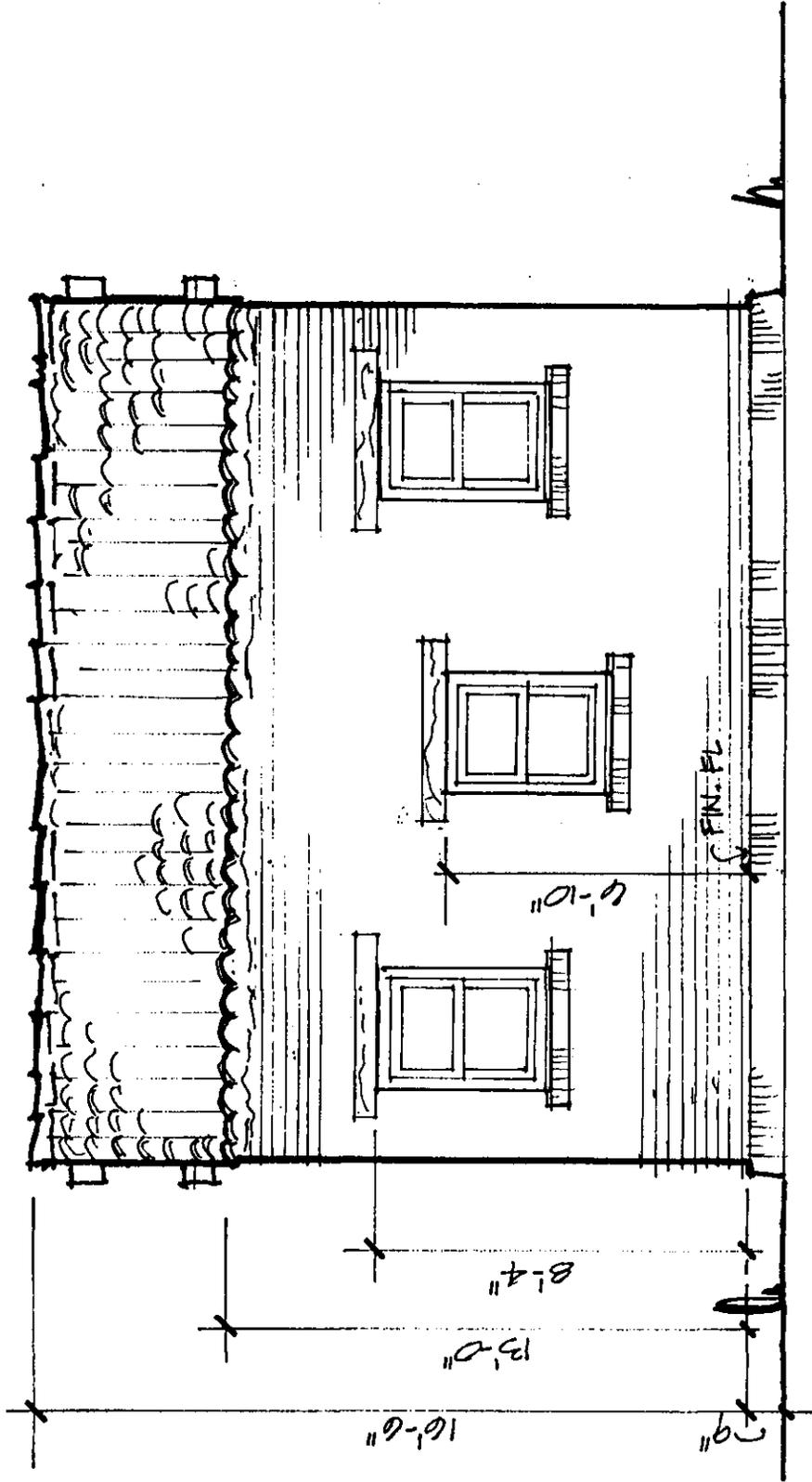
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



SIDE (EAST) ELEVATION\*

Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

\*NOTE: WEST ELEVATION SIMILAR



REAR (SOUTH) ELEVATION

Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"