

U.S. NAVAL BASE, PEARL HARBOR, BOAT HOUSE
(U.S. Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, Naval Station Ford Island, Facility
No. 44)
Hornet Avenue at Independence Street
Pearl Harbor
Honolulu County
Hawaii

HABS HI-397

HI-397

HABS

HI-397

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PACIFIC GREAT BASIN SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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Oakland, CA 94607

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. NAVAL BASE, PEARL HARBOR, BOAT HOUSE (U.S. Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, Naval Station Ford Island) (Facility No. 44)

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- Location:** Hornet Avenue at Independence Street
Ford Island
Pearl Harbor Naval Base
City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii
- U.S.G.S. Pearl Harbor Quadrangle, Hawaii, 1999
7.5 Minute Series (Topographic) (Scale – 1:24,000)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates 4.608200.2362530
- Significance:** Facility No. 44 consists of an office and dormitory building over finger piers, sheltering the small boats responsible for carrying passengers between Ford Island, other base landings, and the ships moored in the harbor. It is associated with the water-based transportation history of Pearl Harbor. It remains an essential transportation hub for the base, although its importance to Ford Island has diminished since the Admiral Clarey bridge to mainland Oahu opened in 1999. This boat house is a contributing element to the Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark.
- Description:** Facility No. 44 is located over the water at the shoreline near the middle of Ford Island's southeast side. It is connected to the roofs of the finger piers on either side (Facilities S375 and S376 abut the west and east ends, respectively). Shop and warehouse buildings (Facilities 3, 217, and 264) are located nearby and a large, tree-lined, grassy quadrangle is located immediately inland of the boat house.
- This rectangular-plan, gable-roof building was constructed over four concrete finger piers. It is one bay wide and three bays long. The building footprint measures about 54' x 76'. The height from the piers to the roof ridge is about 32'. Each finger pier measures approximately 6' x 45' and is connected to a shoreline wharf that is about 12' wide. This wharf also extends along the shoreline of the facilities that abut both ends of the boat house. The boat slips between the piers measure about 19' x 45'. Eight 12" x 10" and eight 5" x 5" H-section steel columns rest on the concrete piers or wharf to support the steel-framed building. The floor line is about 11' above the pier decks, but the clearance between the deck and the bottom of the building's siding is approximately 8', except where this clearance has been increased on the south side, by cutting an opening in the siding above two of the slips, to allow taller boats to be docked there. The siding and roofing material is corrugated asbestos (transite) panels. The eaves overhang the walls by about 3', and the ends of the roof's steel truss framing are visible. Expanded metal mesh fills the spaces between the truss ends, above the transite panels.

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In its original design the north facade of the boat house had a metal stair with pipe railing leading to a door on the west side of the center bay. Originally the center bay had a steel door with four lights and a steel-frame window containing three sashes. The two outer bays on the north side each had a large window containing four sashes. Each sash consisted of nine lights with an operable upper six-light section and the bottom three lights fixed. The drawings call the operable section "pivotted," and historic photos show these were pivotted near the top, appearing like awning windows. The other three sides had the same type of window (36-light total in the four sashes) in each bay. The interior was one large dormitory room with a bathroom in the northwestern corner.

A few changes were made when the building was moved to its current location in 1941 (see following section for history of move). The main change was that the building and finger piers abutted the shoreline, unlike the original site, which was located far from the shoreline. Sheet piling was installed to hold back the abutting bank, and a concrete stair down to the wharf and finger piers was also built. The interior changes made at the time of relocation are not known.

Facility No. 44 was extensively remodeled about 1982. The original door and metal stair, as well as all the steel windows, were removed and replaced with modern ones. The wood floor was replaced by a metal deck filled with concrete. Three new turbine ventilators were installed in place of the original cylindrical ones on the roof ridge. New gutters were installed. A second stair and door were added to the northern facade. A third door was installed in the northern half of the west end, reached by a ladder and wooden catwalk. Sometime after 1984 another stair, replacing the ladder, was added at the northwest corner. In the 1982 remodeling the existing corrugated asbestos siding was repaired or replaced, as necessary, with matching corrugated transite panels. There was no attempt to match the original windows, and they were replaced with jalousies or fixed lights. Some of the openings were made smaller by covering the bottom portion with matching transite siding. Over the original door opening a small transom was installed. New exterior lighting fixtures were placed on the north side and west end of the building.

The original bathroom fixtures and walls, as well as all interior finishes, were removed. The only interior element left was the wood framing for new ceiling panels. All new interior finishes and fixtures were installed, but the original diagonal bracing for the structural framing is visible in some rooms. The wood flooring was removed and replaced with vinyl tile covering the new concrete floor poured over metal decking. The interior space was divided into several rooms, including a women's bunkroom, radio dispatch room, men's bunkroom, office space, and two bathrooms.

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Historical Context: See HABS No. HI-382 for an overall history of Ford Island, and the report on the ferry landings (HAER No. HI-60) for an overview history of ferry transportation in Pearl Harbor. This building is part of a unique water transportation system. Pearl Harbor is the “only harbor in the United States that is totally controlled by the United States Navy. [It] is also the only harbor that runs such an extensive water transportation system” (Huesmann 1981). Locations of boat landings include those at Quarry Loch, Merry Loch, Charlie Landing (between the Shipyard and Hospital Point), and Iroquois Point, as well as several points on Ford Island. Small boats have provided the water-borne transportation between various parts of the large harbor since the earliest days of the Navy base at Pearl Harbor. Shelters for these boats are necessary to lessen the rate of deterioration from the intense tropical sun. Different terms have been used over the decades for the small boats, such as whale boats, launches, and grey boats. In 1981 the small boats were described as 50 feet in length with a carrying capacity of 140 people (Huesmann 1981).

The earliest boat house for the Naval Air Station (NAS) on Ford Island was built in 1923, a few years after the NAS was established. Historic photos show that building consisted of a gable roof covering four boat slips, all of wood construction except for the corrugated metal roof panels (National Archives II). A 1924 Ford Island map shows this was located offshore, south of Facility No. 26 (U.S. Navy Yard 1924).

This boat house (Facility No. 44) was built in 1936 and originally sited a little further north than the first one, also offshore but south of Facility No. 42. An undated historic photo from the late 1930s, viewing Ford Island from the Navy Yard, shows both boat houses (National Archives II). A January 1941 aerial photo shows the first boat house was demolished by that date (National Archives II). The caption on the 1937 photo of the new boat house notes its construction was under contract NOy-2535 and its cost was “approximately \$25,000” (National Archives II). As early as 1939, plans were made to build a new administration building (Facility No. 77) on the island and the shoreline was altered to accommodate the building site. This required relocation of the boat house. The Young Engineering Co. was the contractor, involved in either the original construction or the move of the boat house, based on Navy property record files, which noted the building’s cost at over \$128,000 in 1962 (Naval Station 1962).

According to historic photos and maps ranging from 1936 to 1942, the 1936 boat house was moved to its current location sometime between the summer and fall of 1941. It was placed over four of seven concrete finger piers; a November 1941 historic photo shows these had been constructed before that date (National Archives II). The three (originally unroofed) piers to the west of the building were given a separate facility number (Facility No. S375).

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The small boats, stationed at this boat house and elsewhere, played a vital role during the December 7, 1941 attack. The head of the Medical Department in Facility No. 76 on Ford Island reported that "boat crews and boat service was noteworthy for its high degree of co-operation in the transfer of [severely burned] patients to the Naval Hospital" (Iverson 1941: 2). The officer who ordered all the boats in the boat house "out on rescue," noted that over 1000 men, "some badly wounded, and also some dead, were hauled out of the water, which was by this time covered in many places with blazing fuel oil from the ships." He went on to report:

All boat crews, and all members of them, behaved splendidly under what often was heavy machine gun fire, and much falling shrapnel, seemingly ignoring altogether either the presence of enemy planes, or their fire. Several boats were riddled with bullets, and one, is believed to have sunk as the result of enemy fire. Their bottoms were plugged in many places with available pencils, to keep them afloat (Baldwin 1941: 2).

The Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station included the boat crews under his "Recommendations for bravery and extraordinary acts of devotion to duty" in his report sent to the Commandant of the 14th Naval District (Shoemaker [1941]: 4).

Historic photos show that a temporary boat house, of all wood construction except for a steep gable roof of corrugated metal, had been built by January 1940 (National Archives II). Apparently, it was to shelter the boats during the relocation of the boat house. The 1940 map of Ford Island shows the eight-slip temporary boat house was located about where the current Facility No. S376 is, close to the gasoline wharf – Facility No. S377 (Naval Air Station 1940). A 1943 aerial (National Archives II) shows the finger piers of the temporary boat house still in place, but without the gable roof over them. About 1945 the new concrete finger piers abutting the east end of Facility No. 44 were built as a replacement to the temporary boat house ones. These are now designated Facility No. S376. The adjacent Facilities S375 and S376 are closely associated with Facility No. 44. The three piers of Facility No. S375 were unroofed for several decades, but covered with three Quonset hut-type half-cylinder roofs sometime before 1967. The date when Facility No. S376 was first roofed is not known, but photos show it with a shed roof in 1980 (State Historic Preservation Division). Sometime after June 1987 the roofs over both of these facilities adjacent to the boat house were changed to slightly gabled roofs (O'Conner 1987). The roof of Facility No. S376 abuts the boat house below its east-end windows. The roof of Facility No. S375 is higher and does not abut the building since there is a walkway on the west end of the boat house. Photovoltaic roofing tiles were installed on Facility No. S375 in 1999 (Hawaiian Electric Company 1999).

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Facility No. 44 currently serves as a combination of office space, boat shelter, and barracks. Originally, the upper level just housed men that were crew members for the small boats sheltered underneath. Living spaces are now divided into men's and women's areas.

Sources:

The original drawings for this building are on microfiche cards at the Plan Files of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Pacific under numbers 120965 through 120967 (1935 drawings), V-N15-134 (1941 drawing), and 7038307 through 7038320 (1982 remodeling drawings).

Baldwin, J.W. (Lt. Cmdr., USNR)

1941 Memorandum report to Commanding Officer dated Dec. 16, 1941, from First Lieutenant, U.S. Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor. In set of reports on Air Raid Attack by Japanese, provided by Jeffrey Dodge, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Hawaii.

Hawaiian Electric Company

1999 "Solar roof," *Consumer Lines* [HECO newsletter] XVIII: 10 (Oct. 1999).

Huesmann, Stacey

1981 "Water transprotation [sic] division at Pearl has big responsibilities," *Hawaii Navy News*, January 7, 1981, pp. A-1 and A-5.

Iverson, Louis

1941 Memorandum report to Commanding Officer dated Dec. 15, 1941, from Medical Department, U.S. Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor. In set of reports on Air Raid Attack by Japanese, provided by Jeffrey Dodge, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Hawaii.

National Archives II

var. Historic photos in RG71CA of Ford Island's first boat house dated Dec. 5, 1923 and Feb. 9, 1924; of Facility No. 44 dated Aug. 4, 1936, Sept. 4, 1936, Dec. 14, 1937, and Nov. 5, 1941; of the temporary boat house dated Jan. 4, 1940; an undated (late 1930s) view of part of Ford Island from the Navy Yard; and aerial photos of Ford Island dated Jan. 30, 1941; plus a Jan. 15, 1943 aerial of the north end of Ford Island (80-G-451261). All in Still Photo Section at College Park, Maryland.

Naval Air Station

1940 Ford Island, Showing Conditions as of June 30, 1940. Drawing No. V-N1-120, filed as RG 71, 1405-3-33 in Cartographic section of National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

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1942 Ford Island, Conditions as of June 1, 1942. Map Number 509, provided by Jeffrey Dodge, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Hawaii

Naval Station

1962 Building Card (NAVCOMPT Form 277) for Facility No. 44, Ford Island, in property record files of Pearl Harbor Naval Station.

O'Conner, P. (Captain, U.S. Navy)

1987 Letter dated 26 June 1987 to Margaret Pepin-Donat, Chief, Division of National Register Programs, National Park Service, from files for Facilities S375 and S376 at office of State Historic Preservation Division.

Shoemaker, J.M.

[1941] Memorandum report, undated [1941], from Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor to Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District. In set of reports on Air Raid Attack by Japanese, provided by Jeffrey Dodge, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Hawaii.

State Historic Preservation Division

var. Photos and Inventory forms from Navy in binders.

U.S. Navy Yard

1924 Map of Naval Air Station, Ford Island, showing Improvements to June 30, 1924. Drawing No. V-61, from National Archives, provided by Earth Tech, Inc.

Project Information: Commander Navy Region (COMNAVREG) Hawaii has embarked on a program of documentation of historic properties within its area of responsibility, with the goal of recording historic information about each property and establishing its context of significance. This information will assist COMNAVREG Hawaii in the appropriate management of these properties, be it routine repair and maintenance for continuing use, rehabilitation for continuing use / adaptive reuse, or demolition. At this time, specific action that may affect this facility has not been determined. This report was prepared under a Historic Preservation Services contract (N62742-97-D-3502) awarded to AMEC Earth and Environmental, the prime contractor, by the U.S. Navy, Naval Facilities Engineering Command. The contract was funded through the Cultural Resources Program of COMNAVREG Hawaii. The photographic documentation was undertaken by David Franzen, of Franzen Photography. Location maps were made by Nestor Beltran of NAB Graphics. Between 1999 and 2001, the field work was done and the draft of this report was written by Dot

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Dye, AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc. The report was rewritten in 2005
by Mason Architects, Inc.

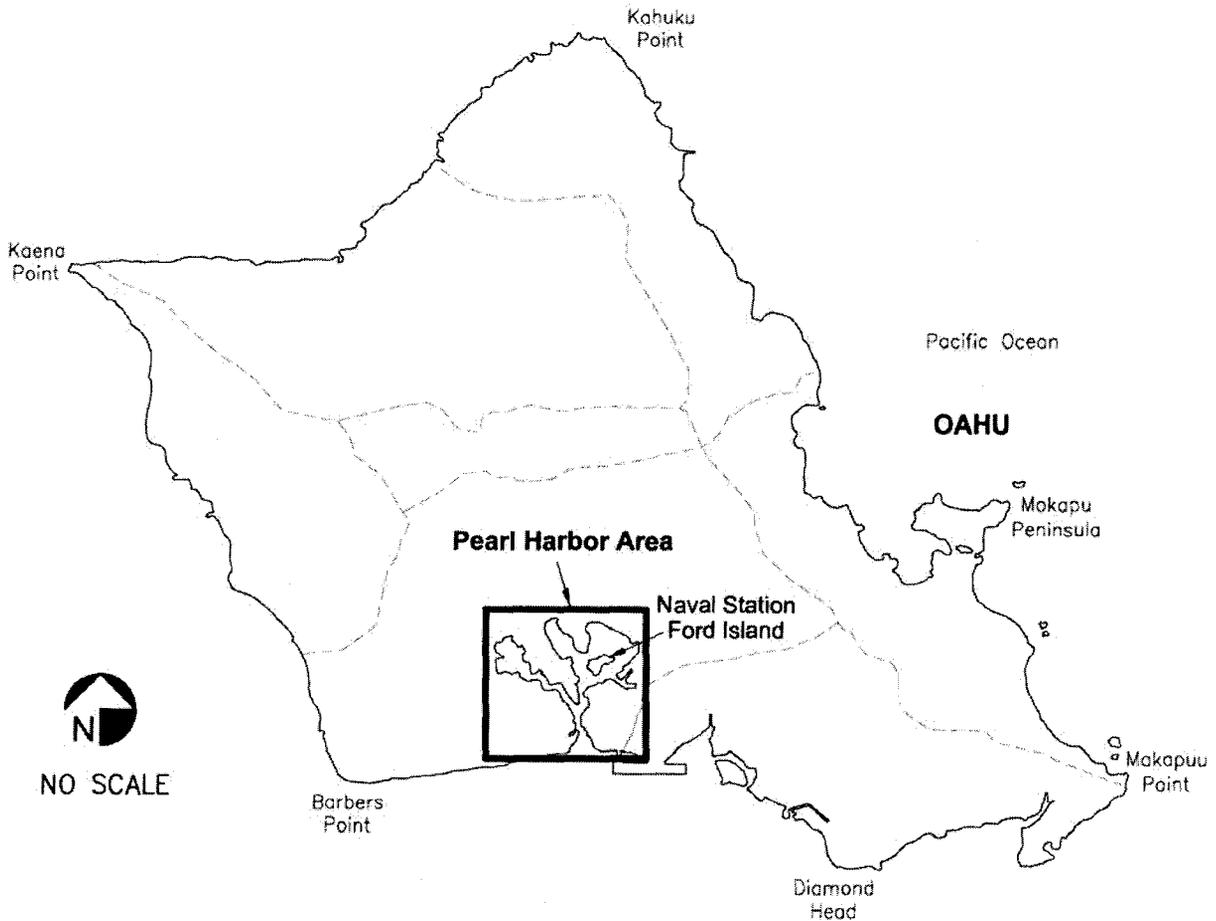
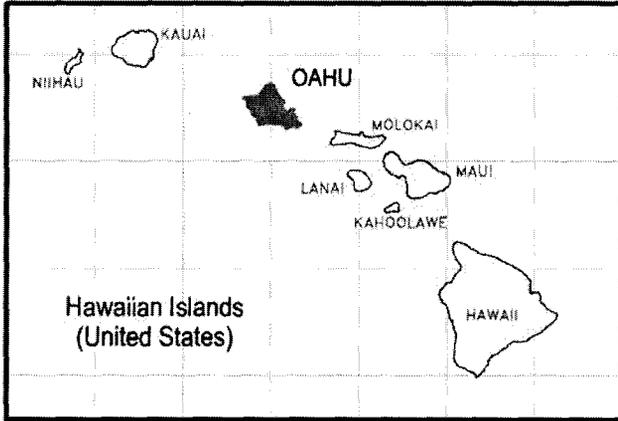
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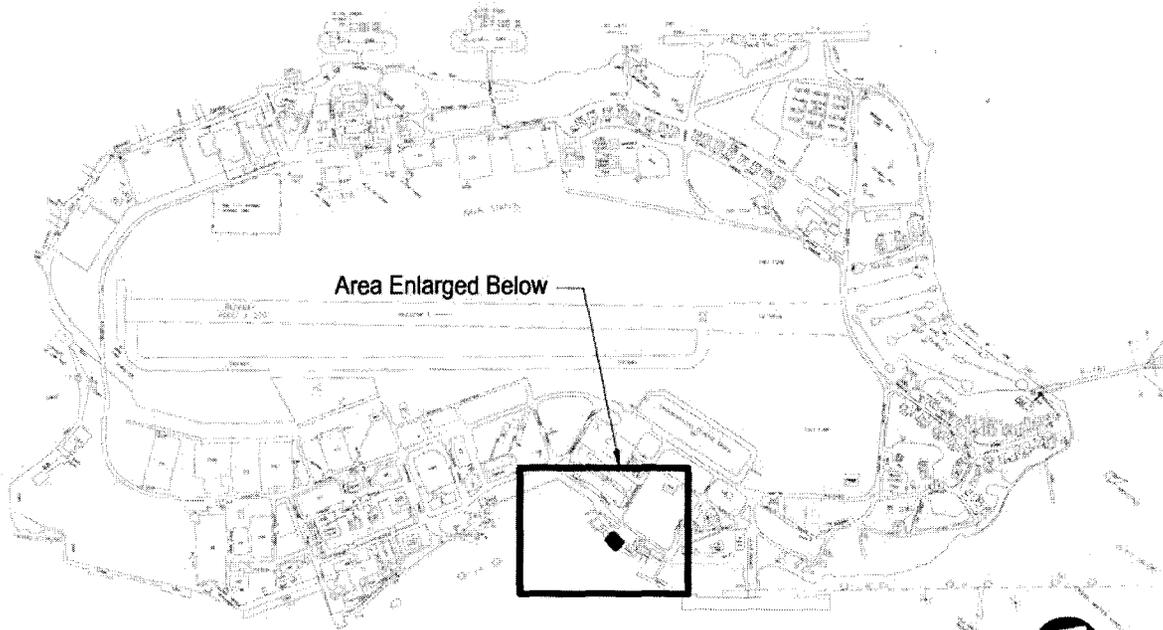
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Date of Final Report: July 2005

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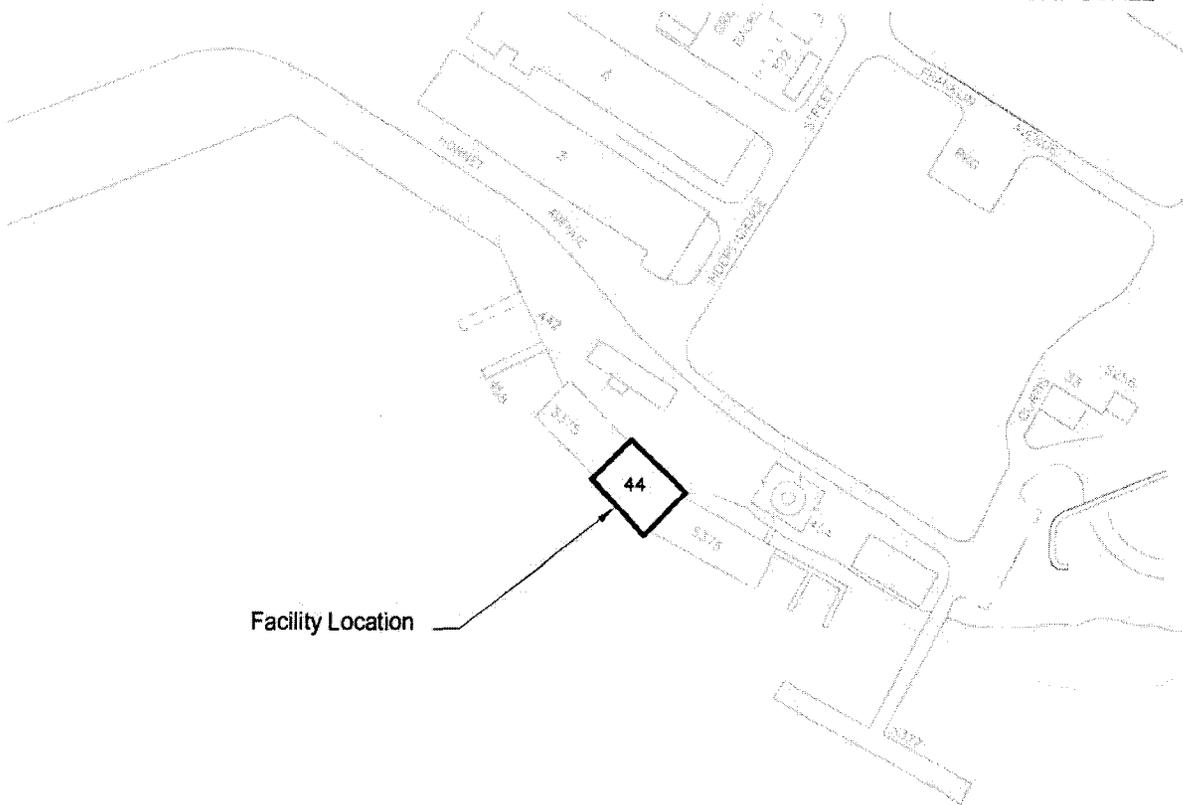
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Vicinity Map



NO SCALE

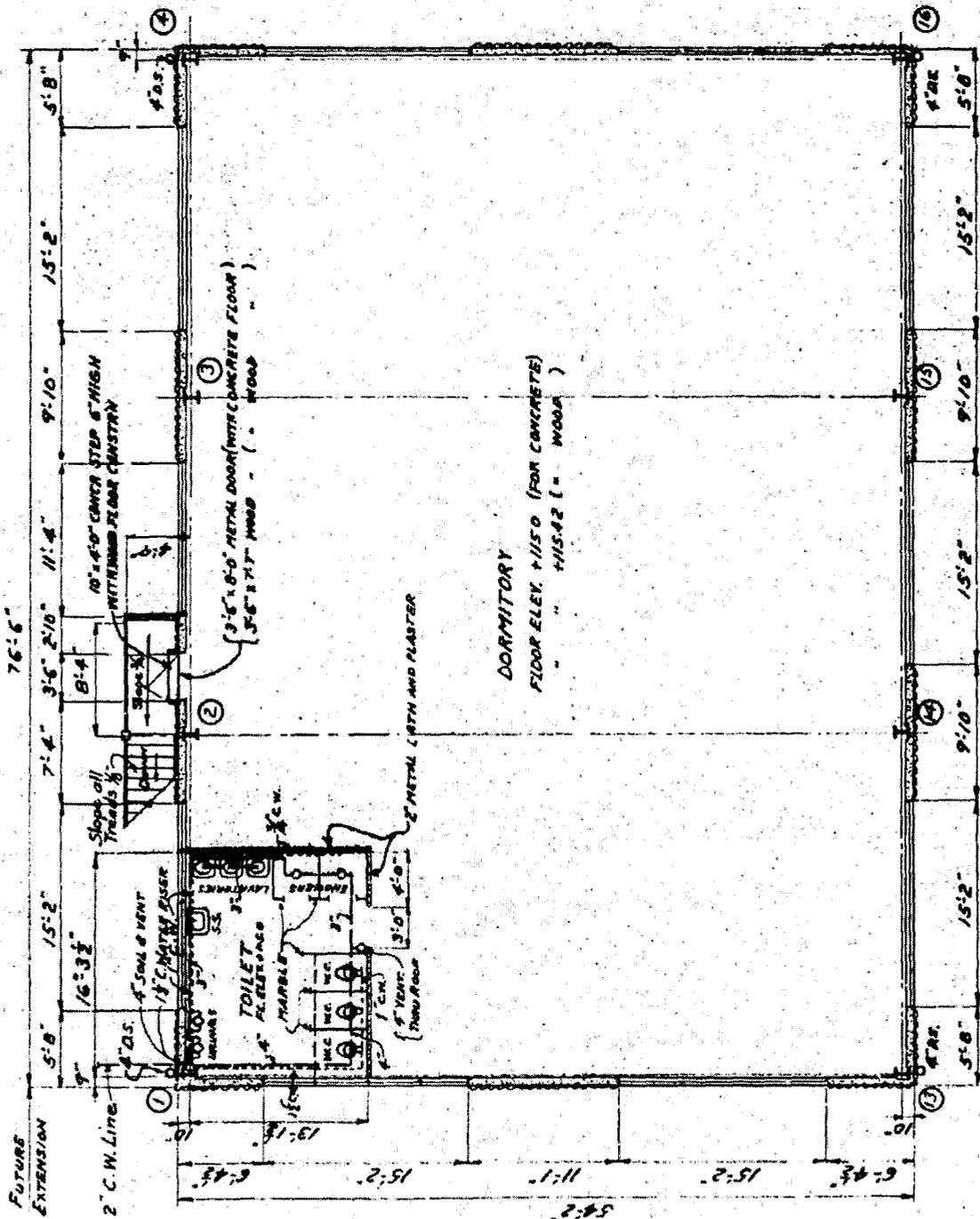


Facility Location

Site Map

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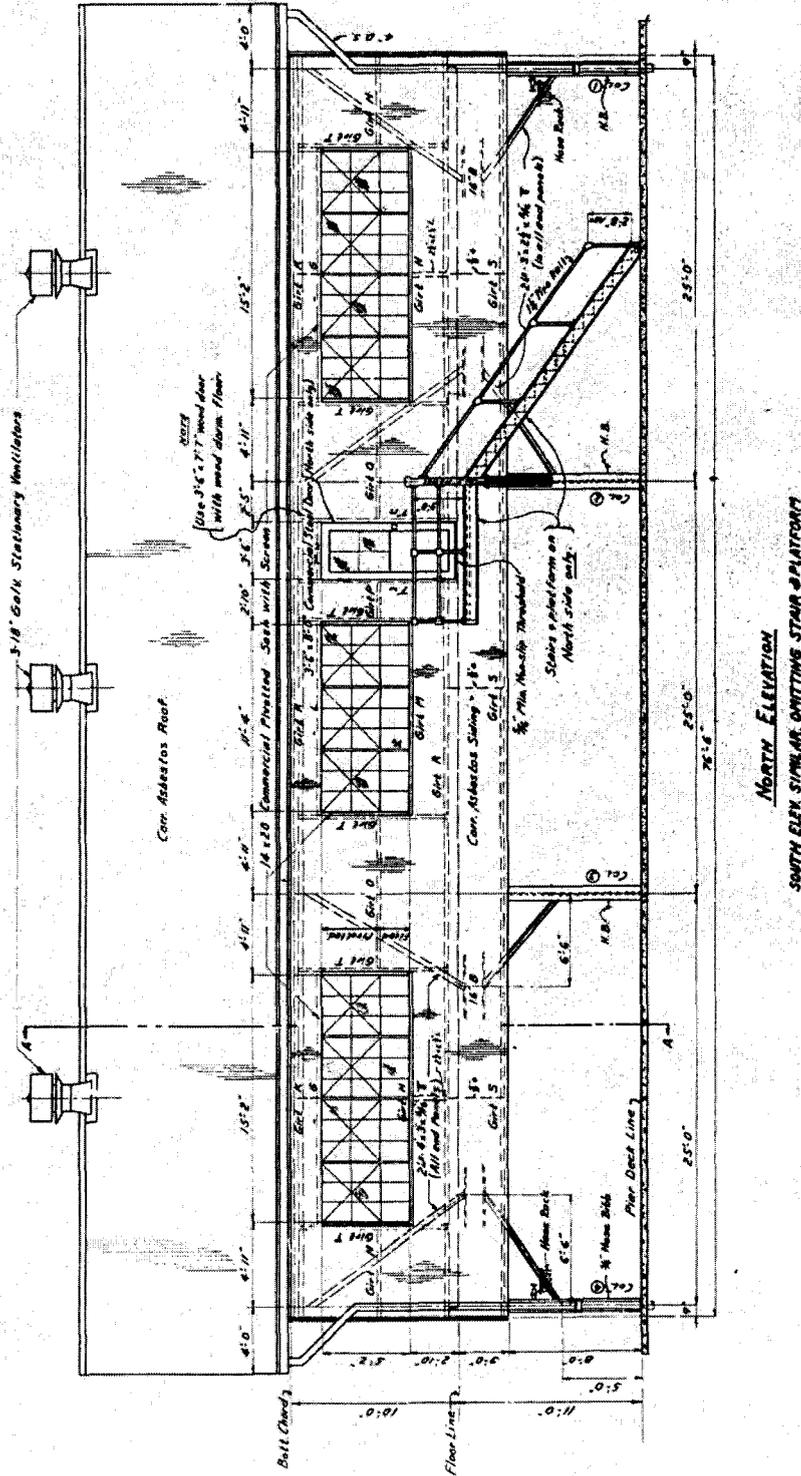
Portion of Drawing No. 120967, dated September 26, 1935 (Floor Plan)



DORMITORY FLOOR PLAN

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Portion of Drawing No. 120966, dated September 26, 1935 (North Elevation)



NORTH ELEVATION
SOUTH ELEVATOR OMITTING STAIR PLATFORM

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Portion of Drawing No. 7,038,311, dated June 11, 1982 (South Elevation)

