Chanute Air Force Base, Company Officer Housing
(Building 9)
Senior Officer Row
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1185-Q

HABS
ILL
10-RAN.V,
1Q-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

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Location: Senior Officer Row
Chanute Air Force Base
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois

Present Owner: United States Air Force
OL B, AFBCA
501 East Sopwith, Suite A
Rantoul, Illinois 61866

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: From its establishment in 1917 as a military aviation school, until its closure on September 30, 1993, Chanute Air Force Base (AFB) has served almost continuously as a technical training center for the United States Air Force. As one of the oldest military installations in the Air Force inventory, Chanute AFB has played an important role in the development of the American air defense system. Since its construction, the area of the Historic District has served as Chanute's administrative core, and the design and construction of the buildings and structures within the District reflect the extraordinary growth of the installation just prior to and during the early years of World War II. It was during that period that the base was rapidly transformed from a collection of neglected wooden World War I-era buildings into the permanent brick and steel features that remain as the Chanute AFB Historic District.

In response to massive World War II mobilization, Building 9 and four identical duplex units of Company Officer Housing were built in 1940 on Chanute AFB. The Georgian Revival-designed housing was built from Office of Quartermaster General (OQMG) standardized plans. This housing is a contributing element of the Chanute AFB Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of erection: 1940

2. Architect: Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG) Construction Division

3. Original and subsequent owners: United States Army, United States Air Force

4. Contractors: William C. F. Kuhne Rantoul, Illinois (foundation contractor); Purchase and Hire (superstructure).

5. Original plans and construction: Plans for the building were drawn by the OQMG Construction Division.

B. Historical Context:

Established in 1917, Chanute AFB is one of the oldest Air Force installations in the United States. During World War I Chanute Field provided pilot training and afterwards temporarily became a storage facility. In 1921, the Air Services Mechanics School was transferred to Chanute from Kelly Field, Texas. When the Wilcox Bill (49 U.S. Stat. 610) was passed by Congress in 1935, the large-scale expansion of Chanute began and, in the next ten years, it changed from a neglected World War I Field into a centralized, subdivision-type collection of brick and steel buildings. More than 200,000 military students would graduate from its various technical schools between 1940 and 1945 and over 1,000,000 students would pass through its doors before its closure in 1993.

In general, the history of Chanute AFB parallels the history of American military aviation and its built environment reflects the economic and military priorities, architectural styles, and concepts of military installation planning common to the OQMG and the Corps of Engineers (COE). The buildings and structures within the Historic District, including this building, reflect Chanute's "Great Renaissance" period (1938-41).

Buildings 5, and 8 through 11 were completed on March 30, 1940, at a cost of $24,076.60 each; OQMG Plan Nos. 625-8400 through 625-8411 were used. William C. F. Kuhne of Rantoul, Illinois was the foundation contractor and the constructing quartermaster supervised the completion of the superstructure under a "purchase and hire" contract. These Company Officer Quarters were completed soon after their Noncommissioned Officer Quarters (NCO) counterparts.

Several changes were made to the original drawings including the deletion of dormer windows and a substitution for the enclosed, heated sun parlor shown on the drawings with an open un-screened living porch. These changes may have occurred because none of the construction bids came within the statutory limitation for Officers' Quarters construction.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Company Officer Housing (Buildings 5, 8-11) was designed in an early twentieth century Georgian Revival style of architecture.

2. Condition of fabric: Building 9 is in good condition. The interior has been modernized with a new kitchen and new bathroom fixtures.

B. Description of Exterior:

Building 9 is a two-story, rectangular-in-plan, brick duplex (71 ft by 26 ft 10 in) which consists of two identical three-bay front and two-bay side residences of classical design. The exterior walls are multi-colored brick, laid in common bond (four stretchers/one header) with crushed stone mortar. Corners and center party wall locations are decorated with 14 equally spaced brick quoins that are defined by three projecting stretcher brick rows. One row of projecting stretcher brick defines the watertable. Recessed windows have plain flat heads and stone lug sills and are eight-over-eight light on the first floor and six-over-six light on the second floor, double-hung, wood-framed sash. The windows have been covered by aluminum-framed storm windows. Basement windows are single light awning types.

Central entrances, which serve as focal points for each residence, have a heavily entablatured arch with a recessed panel and fully entablatured cornice, Tuscan pilasters and stone sill. Each recessed doorway has two small lights over four panels and panels in the side frame; new aluminum-framed storm doors have been added. The stairway to the entrance has concrete steps and a metal railing. The rear entry has a recessed door with a three-light transom, aluminum canopy, aluminum storm door, and concrete steps with pipe railing. Exterior rear stairs lead to the basement.

The side, one-story porches are centered on both side walls; they have flat roofs, brick columns with plain stone bases, and entablatured heads and concrete sills. The brick porch foundation rises three feet above ground. Original wood-framed screens have been removed and the porch is now enclosed with additional brick and paired, eight-over-eight light (on front facade) and six-over-six light, double-hung, wood-framed sash windows filling the voids. Porches have rear entries with prefabricated concrete three-step stairs; the wood doors are nine light with one panel.

The hipped roof is covered by clay tile shingles with a capped ridge, boxed cornice, molded fascia, and molded frieze. Exterior-end chimneys have stone caps and modern metal covers.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plan: See attached floor plans.

2. Summary Description: The original construction report described the quarters as follows:

> "Each Quarters contains vestibule, Living Room with fireplace, Open Living Room, Dining Room, Kitchen, Rear Unroofed Stoop, Maid's Room

off Kitchen, Maid's Bath in basement, three bedrooms and two family Bathrooms. There are laundry facilities in basement as well as a large, pleasant room adaptable for recreation."

The two interior plans mirror each other with a four-room first floor with foyer and a three-room, two-bath second floor; there is a multi-room basement as well. The original kitchen and maid's room have been combined into a large, modern kitchen with contemporary cabinets, counters, and appliances. Original features include molded trim, white oak floors, plaster walls, paneled wood doors with brass knobs and key plates, and boxed radiators. The fireplace in the living room has an entablatured wood mantle and vertical wood valances and the central, curved, closed stairway, with access from the living room, has maple rail and thin-spoke balustrade. The second floor hallway retains original fixtures and the upstairs doorways have a single-light transom with a molded head and six panel doors. Original bathroom fixtures have been replaced. The basements have concrete walls with the upper three feet of brick and contain several multipurpose rooms, a bathroom with original fixtures, and a furnace room with an original boiler.

Each duplex was served by a single service from the main post steam distribution system providing heat; a single steam hot water generator supplied domestic hot water from the same source.

D. Site:

The Company Officer Housing is a group of five duplex units, with two detached garage buildings and a utility vault. This collection of residential buildings makes up Senior Officer Row and forms the southwestern boundary of the Chanute AFB Historic District. The residential setting includes sidewalks, large shade trees along the street, and a large, green space behind the buildings that forms a community backyard.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Original drawings for the buildings on Chanute AFB are currently housed in Building 62, Chanute AFB, Illinois.

B. Historic Views:

A large collection of historic photographs is located in the Museum Building (Hangar 4), Chanute AFB, Illinois.

C. Bibliography:

D. E. McGillem and Associates, Inc., 1990. Historic Inventory Chanute Air Force Base.

King, Thomas F. and Paige M. Peyton, 1991. Chanute AFB, Illinois Historic Evaluation.

U. S. Air Force, 1940. Chanute Field, Office of the Constructing Quartermaster, Chronological Report of Construction Program, December 27, pp. 6-7.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

National Register and HABS documentation for the Chanute AFB Illinois Historic District is the culmination of the Section 106 process initiated during the preparation of the Disposal and Reuse Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Chanute AFB. The EIS was precipitated by the Congressional decision to close Chanute AFB as directed by the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BRAC) of 1988. A Memorandum of Agreement among the U. S. Air Force, the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Eastern Division, has been drafted.

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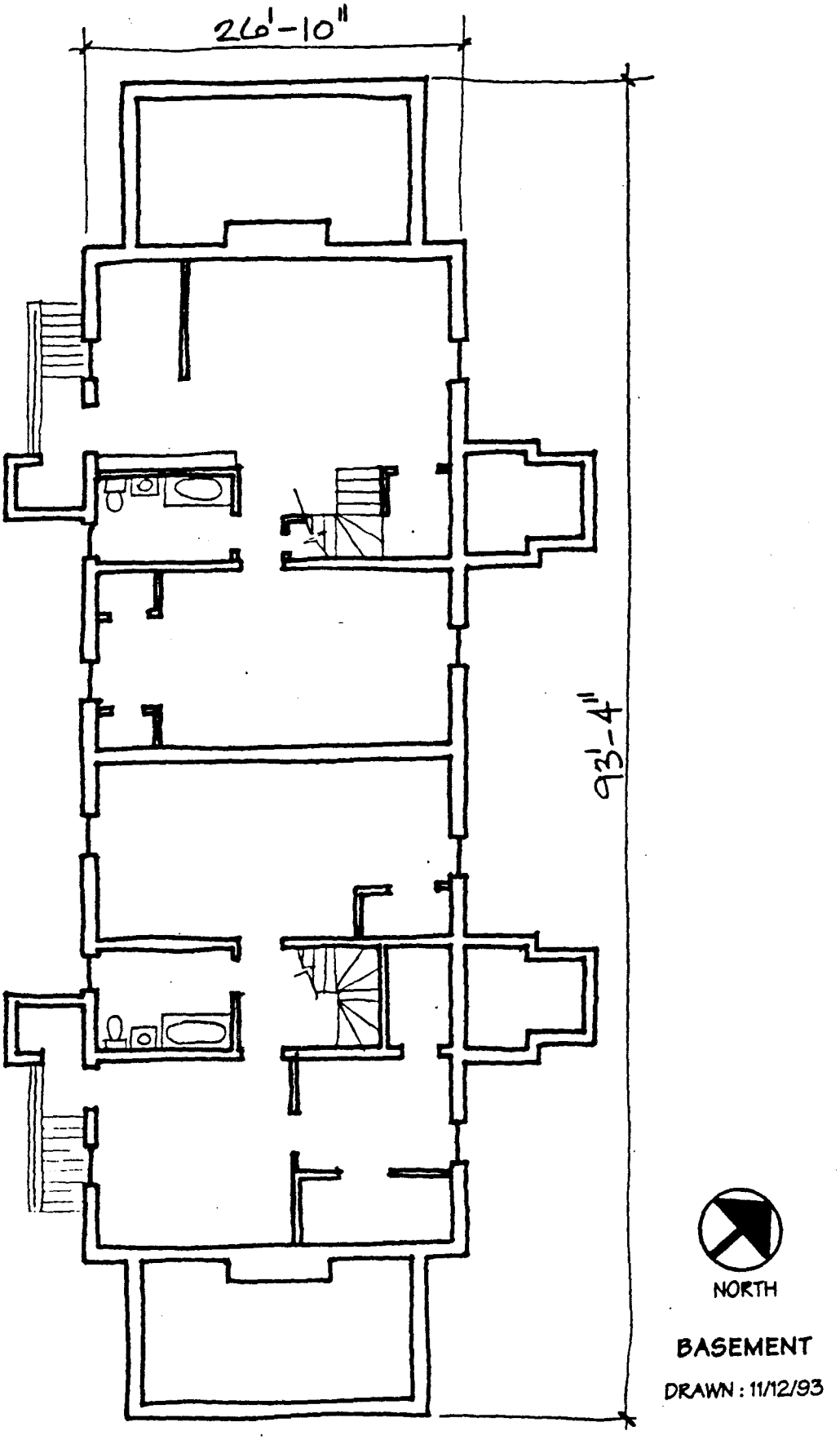
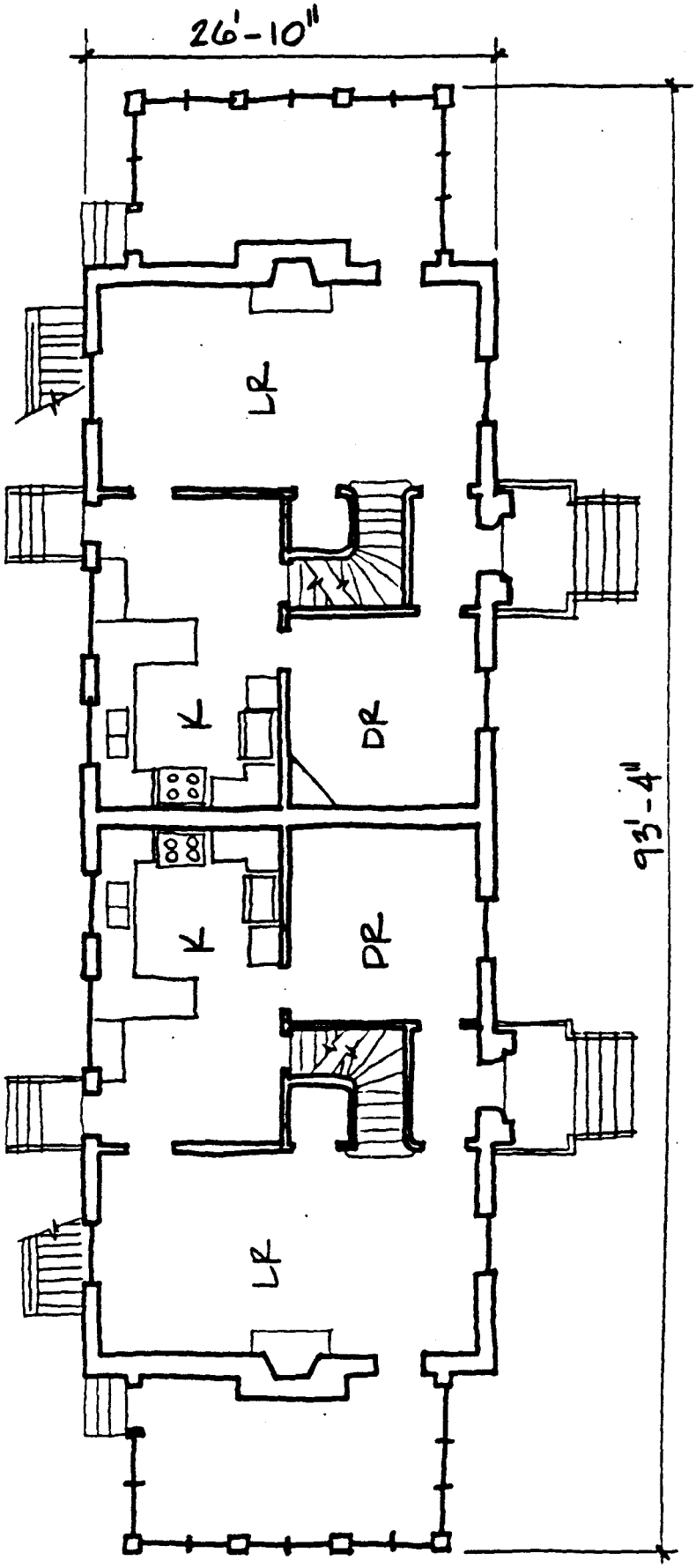


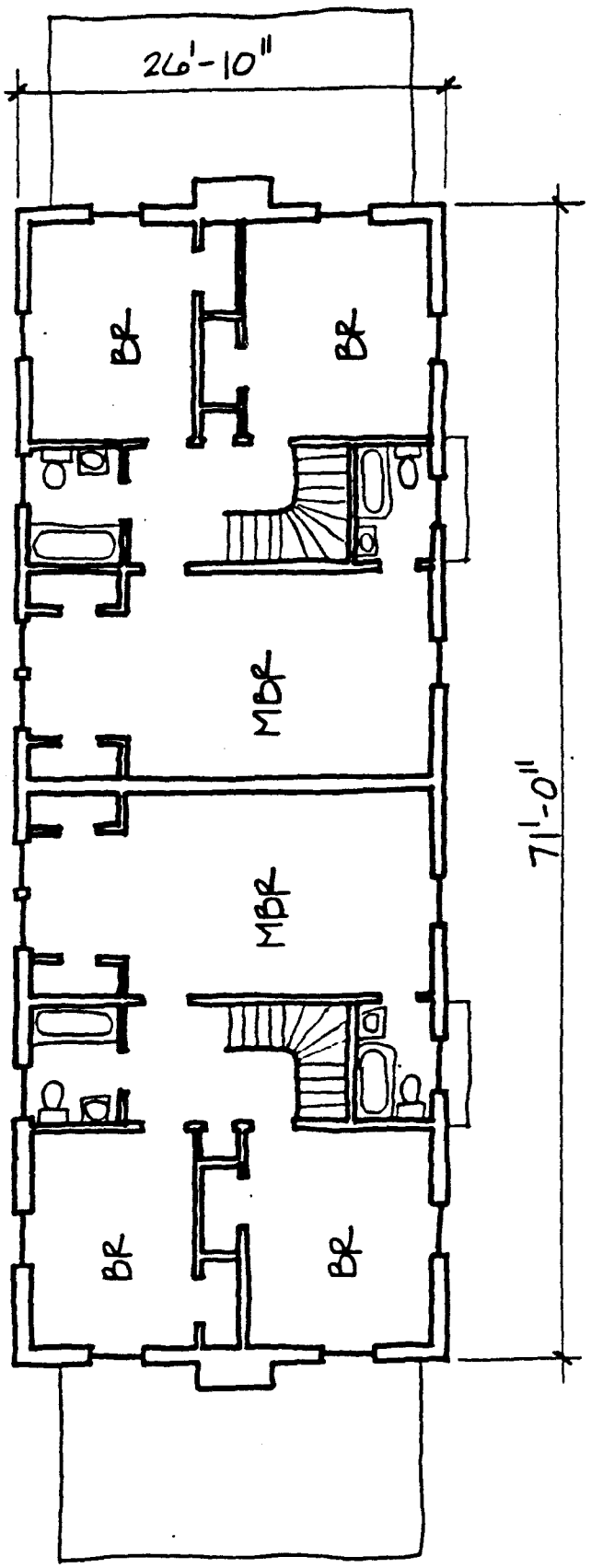
BASEMENT

DRAWN : 11/12/93



FIRST FLOOR

DRAWN : 11/12/93



SECOND FLOOR

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