

FORT RODMAN MILITARY RESERVATION,
FIRE APPARATUS BUILDING
(Fort Rodman Military Reservation, Building P-9)
South Rodney French Boulevard, 550 feet west of
main entrance to complex
New Bedford
Bristol County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-1256-K

HABS
MASS
3-NEBED
27K-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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Location: Approximately 550 feet west of the main entrance to the fort complex,
facing South Rodney French Blvd.
Fort Rodman Military Reservation
New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts

USGS Quadrangle: New Bedford, South
UTM Coordinates: 19.341120.4606430

Present Owner: City of New Bedford
Municipal Building
133 William Street
New Bedford, 02740

Occupant: Vacant/Storage

Significance: The Fire Apparatus Building retains its integrity of location design, materials, and workmanship. It was built in connection with the development of Fort Rodman during the Endicott Period, an important era in the history of coastal fortifications. The Fire Apparatus Building is also a good example of this type of building constructed according to a standardized plan. Its frame construction is unusual, since most similar Endicott Period buildings at other New England forts were of brick.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1903
2. Architect: Quartermaster General's office
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Army - City of New Bedford
4. Builder: United States Army
5. Original Plans: Constructed from Standard Plan No. 98-C, filed in the National Archives. Records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Record Group 77. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. P.I. NM-19, E-411 - Standard Fort Plans, Plan No. 98-C.
6. Alterations and Additions: Rear ell added to rear of building. (1912-41)

B. Historical Context

The Fire Apparatus Building at Fort Rodman was built in 1903 as part of the first phase of development of the base during the Endicott Period. A firehouse was apparently a typical building provided at forts of this period (Eastman 1988:12) and, also typically, this building was constructed according to a standardized plan prepared by the Quartermaster's General's Office, in this case Plan No. 98-C. What is not typical, however, is that this building is frame rather than brick, which was much more common at New England coastal forts. It is not known how many other Plan 98-C Fire Apparatus Buildings were constructed elsewhere nor how many survive, but this example is quite well-preserved. The building housed fire fighting apparatus, usually a fire engine, from the time of its construction until at least 1959; it is now used for storage.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural Character:** This building is a well-preserved example of a utilitarian firehouse constructed during the Endicott period according to a standardized plan.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** Good

B. Description of Exterior/Interior

The building is a simple one-story, one-by-three bay structure with a gable roof covered with slate, the exterior sided with clapboard, and the sills set on brick piers. It has very

few period finishes with the possible exception of the scalloped rafter ends. The original double door has been replaced, one of the side windows has been replaced by a door, and a full-width lean-to with a chimney has been added at the back, but otherwise the building remains intact.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Drawings

National Archives. Records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Record Group 77. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

E.393 - Completion Reports. Box 222 - Fort Rodman, Mass.

P.I. NM-19, E.411 - Standard Fort Plans, Plan No. 98-C.

Specifications

National Archives. Records of the Quartermaster General's Office. Record Group 92. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Blueprint File. Fort Rodman. #11 - Specifications for a Frame Apparatus Building at Fort Rodman, MA

Historical Information

Eastman, Joel W.

1988 The Modern Defense of the Coast of Maine, 1891-1945. Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, ME

Seasholes, Nancy

Office of Public Archeology - Boston University

Architectural Inventory of the Fort Rodman Military Reservation in New Bedford, MA
Office of Public Archeology Report of Investigations No. 72

Site Plans

Post Engineer's Office

1945 Fort Rodman: Water System. Map on file at U.S. Army Base, Fort Rodman, New Bedford, MA

Quartermaster's Corps.

1941 Fort Rodman: Sewer Systems and Drainage. Map on file at U.S. Army Base, Fort Rodman, MA

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

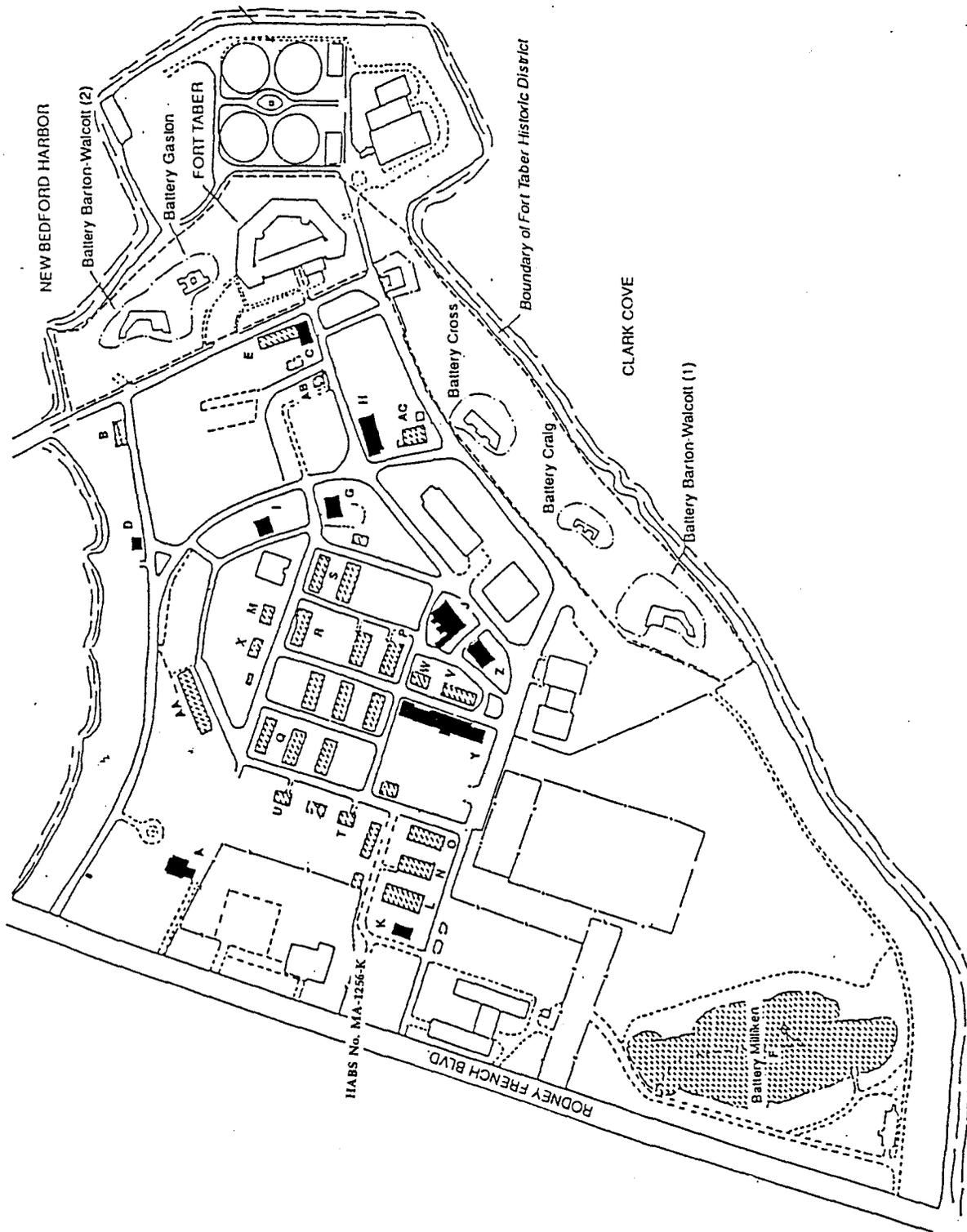
The City of New Bedford entered into a consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and the Conservation Law

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Foundation in 1986 to construct a secondary wastewater treatment facility as a result of the city's violation of the Clean Water Act. The Project includes a new secondary wastewater treatment plant at Fort Rodman, decommissioning and demolition of the existing primary plant, improvements to historic Fort Taber and development of Taber Park, and rehabilitation of the existing 60-inch outfall. The majority of buildings comprising the Fort Rodman Military Reservation will be demolished; several will be retained or relocated and renovated for community purposes. Following completion of the plant, the existing primary plant will be demolished and the Fort Rodman site will be restored, including significant mitigation in the form of Taber Park. Taber Park will be a community recreational park, around the site's existing national register-listed fort and batteries. The park will provide an appropriate setting for the historical resources of Fort Taber and the batteries, as well as recreation opportunities such as picnic areas, multipurpose playfields, and trails and paths. The Memorandum of Agreement for the Project was developed between the City of New Bedford, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the National Park Service, the Department of the Army, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. EPA, as enforcer of the Clean Water Act, is the primary agency for ensuring NHPA compliance. The US Army Corps of Engineers is also involved as a holder of property restrictions on the site. The National Park Service is involved due to property restrictions.

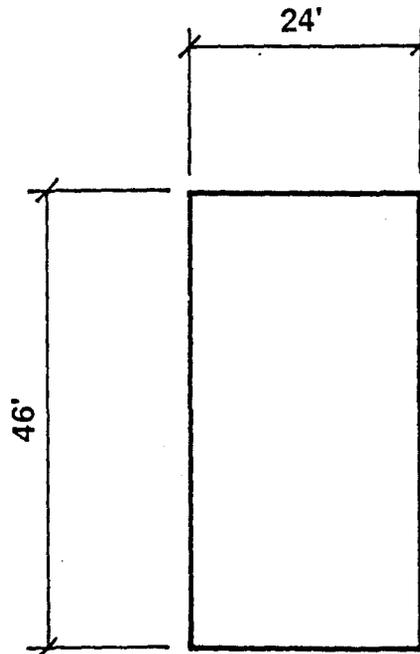
Prepared by: Elizabeth Beardsley, based on studies and documentation performed by Donald G. Jones and Nancy C. Seasholes, Office of Public Archaeology, Boston University (historical and archaeological research and analysis) and Martin Stupich (photography).
Title: Engineer
Affiliation: Camp Dresser & McKee Inc.
Date: 1992

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SCALE: 1"=20'