

WATERTOWN ARSENAL, BUILDING NO. 652
Arsenal Street
Watertown
Middlesex County
Massachusetts

HAER No. MA-20-W

HAER
MASS
9-WATO,
5W-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HAER
MASS
9-WATQ,
5W-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
WATERTOWN ARSENAL, BUILDING NO. 652

HAER No. MA-20-W

Location: Arsenal Street, Watertown, Middlesex County, Massachusetts
USGS Boston South, MA Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinate: 19.286210.4595450

Engineer/Architect: Unknown

Date of Construction: 1918

Present Owner: U.S. Army Materials Technology Laboratory
Arsenal Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02172

Present Use: Vacant Pump Station

Significance: Building 652 is significant as part of a major World War I construction program for a new erecting shop (Building 311, HAER No. MA-20-E) and additions to other buildings and an important support building to the former Watertown Arsenal's industrial operations. It is a contributing element in the Watertown Arsenal Historic District which is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

PART I DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Building 652, the Pump House erected in 1918, is sited on the southwestern boundary of the Army Materials Technology Laboratory, three feet from the fence line along North Beacon Street. The rectangular, 10 ft. by 20 ft., one-by-two-bay building is oriented with its facade facing northwest. It is set into the hill slope at the rear (northeast) with only 2 ft. 8 in. of the southeast elevation visible about grade. Concrete retaining wing walls fan out along the steep slope from the rear corners of the building. The building's red brick walls laid up in Flemish bond with black glazed headers rise from the concrete foundation to a flat, built-up roof with concrete coping, copper flashing, and a small, square ventilation opening. Two corbelled courses edge the top and bottom of recessed bays on three elevations. The entrance, facing northwest, has a wood door with three panels in the lower half and four-light glazing above. The three windows, two on the southwest and one on the southeast, are 12-light, metal frame with wire mesh glazing, concrete lug sills, and concrete lintels. The doors and windows are now boarded up. The interior is a single room with painted concrete and brick walls and a plastered ceiling pierced by three square, steel framed openings that once held ventilation equipment. The roof rafters have been sistered. Electrical switch boxes on the northeast wall are all that remain of equipment on this level. In a pit below the floor, the building contains intake cribbing and once held pumping machinery.

PART II HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Building 652 was erected in 1918 at a cost of \$1,000 as part of a major World War I construction program involving a new Erecting Shop (Building 311, HAER No. MA-20-E) and additions to Building 43, the Smith Shop (HAER No. MA-20-C); Building 36, the Projectile Shop; and Building 60, the Power House (HAER No. MA-20-V). The improvements were intended to meet requirements for manufacturing 16-inch seacoast guns and armor-piercing projectiles (Mather 1942:8). The present building replaced an earlier wood pump house structure on the same site. Construction specifications of 1917 directed the contractor to retain the existing foundation and keep equipment in operation during construction.

Building 652 was one of two buildings used to pump water from the Charles River to cool air compressors and steam generating machinery in Buildings 60 and 64. Compressed air was distributed via underground tunnels to the various testing and fabricating shops within the Arsenal and was an important component of the manufacturing process. Steam heat was provided to Arsenal buildings via tunnels as well. All equipment is said to have been removed when the building was closed in the 1960s, although some pumping equipment may remain below ground.

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Plans and Drawings

Army Materials Technology Laboratory, Facilities Engineering, Watertown, Massachusetts.

B. Historic Views

Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division, Waltham, Massachusetts. Photographs (5 volumes: 1944 to 1970).

Army Materials Technology Laboratory, Library, Watertown, Massachusetts. Foster Notebooks, files, and historic photographs (nineteenth century to 1980s).

Army Materials Technology Laboratory, Photo Lab, Watertown, Massachusetts.

C. Bibliography

Adams, Virginia H.

1992 Historic American Engineering Record Addendum to Watertown Arsenal: HAER Nos. MA-20-C, D, E, F, G, and Documentation for Watertown Arsenal: HAER Nos. MA-20-R, S, T, U (NPS # 601). Prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division, Waltham, MA and the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

Anon.

1917 Specifications for the Construction of an Erecting Shop, Tunnel and Coal Conveying Apparatus, and Alterations and Additions to the Smith Shop, Projectile Shop, Power House and Coal Pocket, including Plumbing and Heating and certain Track and Grade Work, at Watertown Arsenal, Watertown, Mass., May 3, 1917. Watertown: Army Materials Technology Laboratory, Library.

Baylies, Libby

1982 *Watertown Arsenal (Gun Carriage Manufacturing Complex) Draft National Register of Historic Places Nomination*. Unpublished typescript. Watertown: Army Materials Technology Laboratory, Library.

Burns, Libby Baylies and Betsey Bahr

1982 Historic American Buildings Survey of the United States Army Materials and Mechanics Research Center, Watertown, Massachusetts HAER No. MA-20. Washington, D.C.: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Dickson, Tracy C.

1928 *History of Watertown Arsenal, Watertown, Massachusetts*. Unpublished typescript. Watertown: Army Materials Technology Laboratory, Library.

Dobbs, Judy

1977 A History of the Watertown Arsenal 1816-1967. Watertown: Army Materials and Mechanics Research Center.

E.G. & G. Idaho, Inc.

1988 USATHAMA (U.S. Army Toxic and Hazardous Materials Agency) Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection for the Army Materials Technology Laboratory. Idaho Falls: Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

Foster, Laurence S.

1965 *U.S. Army Materials Research Agency Annual Historical Summary, 1 July 1964 -30 June 1965*. Unpublished manuscript. Watertown: Technical Information Center, AMRA, 15 August 1965.

Mather, John

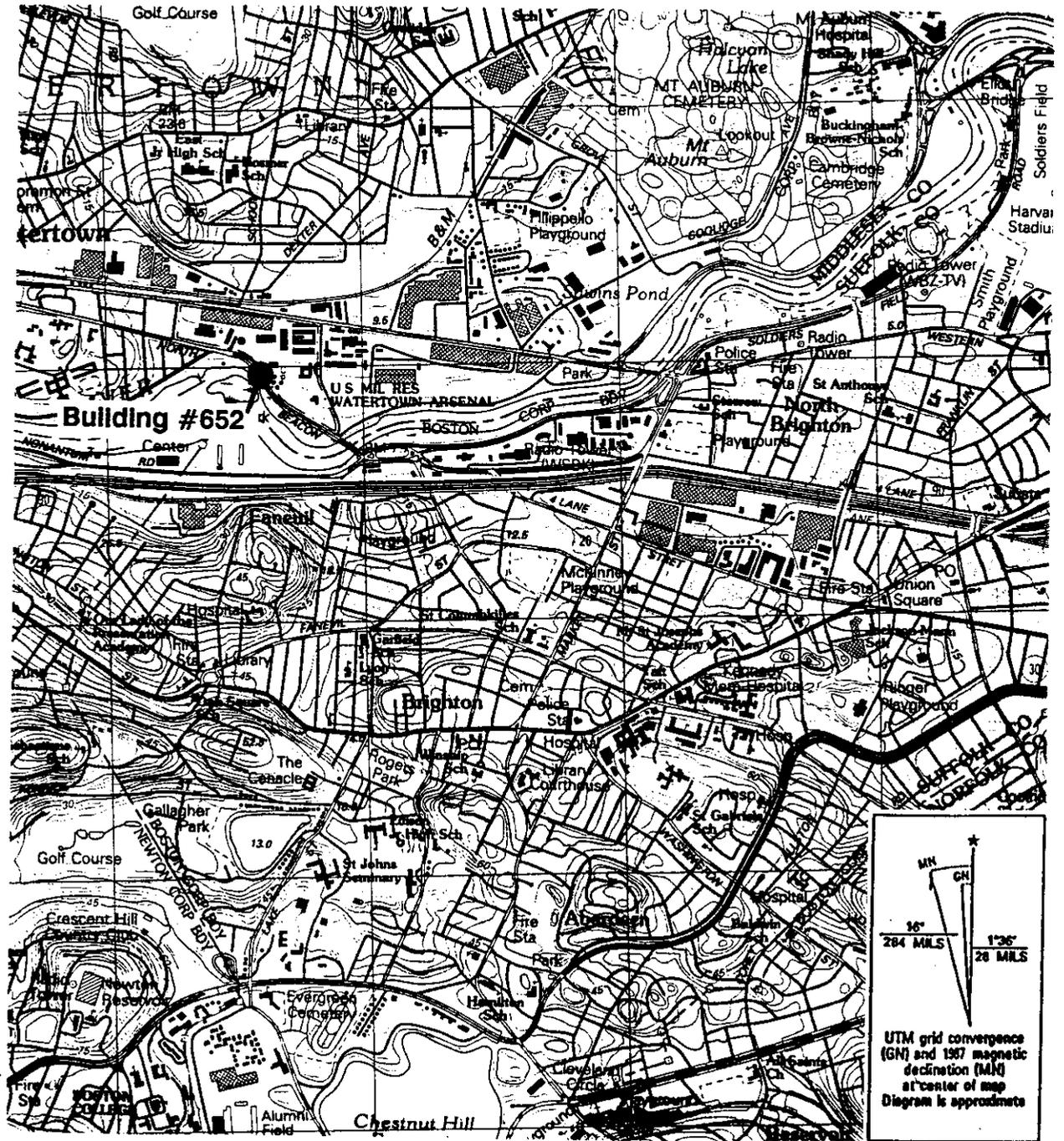
1942 *History of the Watertown Arsenal*. Unpublished manuscript. Foster Notebook. Watertown: Army Materials Technology Laboratory, Library.

For additional sources, consult Burns and Bahr 1982, previously submitted to the Library of Congress as HABS/HAER documentation for Watertown Arsenal, HAER No. MA-20.

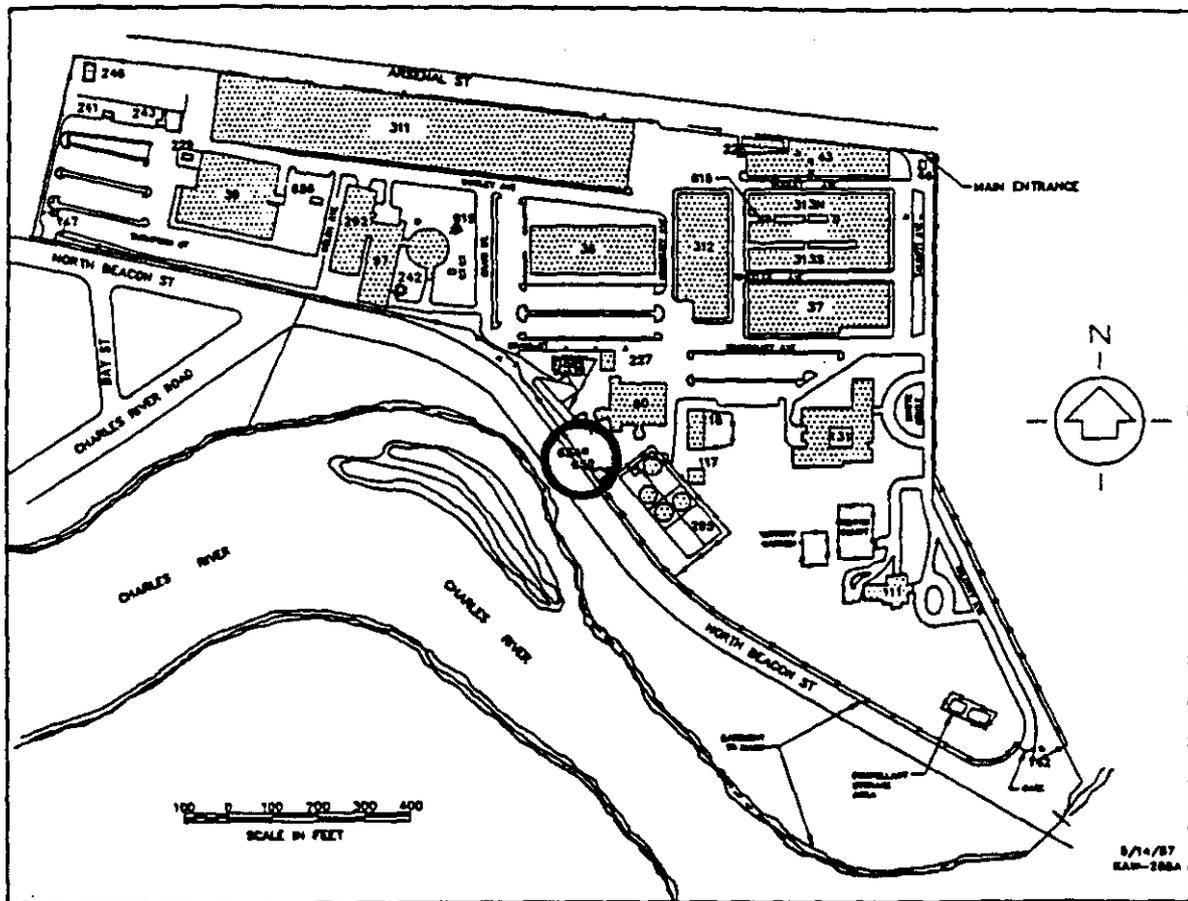
PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL Inc.) was retained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division to prepare HAER and HAER documentation for the Watertown Arsenal. The documentation was conducted in April, May, and June 1995 by the PAL Inc. project team including Virginia H. Adams, Senior Architectural Historian, Catherine Vieth, Assistant Architectural Historian, and Maureen A. Cavanaugh, Preservation Planner. The large format photography was completed in May and June 1995 by Robert Brewster of Warren Jagger Photography, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island.

LOCATION MAP (USGS BOSTON SOUTH, MA)
Scale: 1:25,000



LOCATION MAP WITHIN WATERTOWN ARSENAL
(Source: E.G. & G. USATHAMA report, 1988)



FLOOR PLAN SKETCH

