

WATERTOWN ARSENAL, BUILDING NO. 118
Arsenal Street
Watertown
Middlesex County
Massachusetts

HABS

~~HAER~~ No. MA#1009-C

HABS
MASS
9-WATO,
6C-

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
WATERTOWN ARSENAL, BUILDING NO. 118

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- Location:** Arsenal Street, Watertown, Middlesex County, Massachusetts
USGS Boston South, MA Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinate: 19.286210.4595450
- Present Owner:** U.S. Army Materials Technology Laboratory
Arsenal Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02172
- Present Use:** Officer Family Housing, former Stable, former Fire Engine House
- Significance:** Erected as a stable in 1851, Building 118 is one of the oldest structures within the former Watertown Arsenal. It was moved in 1893 and was converted to officer family housing in 1938. The building is significant for its ancillary role in the history of the Watertown Arsenal, as a fine example of adaptive reuse, and is a contributing element in the Watertown Arsenal Historic District which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

PART I DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Building 118, a Stable erected in 1851, moved to its present site in 1893, and converted to a picturesque five-unit apartment building for officer family housing in 1938, is located immediately north of the Cow Barn (Building 117, HABS No. MA-1009-C) on the western edge of a large open lawn that was formerly an orchard. The facade faces east with its gable ridge line running north-south. The rectangular, two-and-one-half-story building measures 90 ft. (eight-bay front) by 32 ft. (two-bay sides). It rests on a rubble foundation with a smooth granite block sill. Sill sections infilled with cast concrete indicate the location of former stable openings. The red brick bearing walls are laid in 7/1 common bond with a brick dentil cornice and eaves, and a brick stringcourse below. The building is capped by a slate gable roof. Three slate gable dormers (front) and three identical rear dormers rise from the roof slopes. Copper gutters and downspouts drain the roof.

The former three-over-three gable windows and six-over-six, wood, double-hung sash windows have all been replaced with one-over-one, aluminum double-hung sash with snap-in, six-light muntin grids. Windows are paired in the end bays on the first and second stories of the facade and on the east bay of both stories in the end elevations. All windows have red tinted concrete lug sills and brick soldier-course lintels. Each gable end peak has a bricked-up elliptical lunette pierced by a square louver vent. The south sill is brick; the north sill is brownstone. The two identical front entrances, near center on the east facade, have a brick soldier-course lintel, wood sill, and wood molded panel door with diamond-pane glazing. The one-bay, one story, open entrance porches has two square, brick corner posts and two brick pilasters with wood capitals that support a plain frieze and a slate, hip roof. At the rear (west), the center two bays are occupied by a one-story, one-bay-deep extension with a slate hip roof and two wood molded paneled doors that lead to the basement. Flanking bays contain rear entrances with diamond-pane glazed doors under open porches with narrow, square wood posts supporting a slate, hip roof. The floors of all porches are cast concrete and checkered pattern concrete tiles. A brick chimney rises on the exterior wall adjacent to the south corner of the center one-story extension.

The interior of Building 118 is laid out as multi-unit family quarters with two units on the first story and three units on the second story. The basement, excavated under the south half of the building only, contains storage, a boiler room, and laundry spaces. Each main entrance at the facade leads to a small vestibule with a first-floor apartment door on one side and a straight run, enclosed stair to a landing. The south stair has a dogleg turn to the upper south apartment, while the north stair splits in two directions to the north and central apartments. The two rear entrance dogleg staircases also run up to each landing. The two first floor apartments are laid out with living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and bath around a central hall. The three upper apartments are similarly arranged, but have smaller dimensions, fewer closets, and a dinette space rather than a dining room. Window and door trim throughout the units is simple, comprised of flat board flanking molding and plain board tops with molded cornices. Door knobs are clear glass with deeply imbedded clear rosettes. The floors are two-inch hard pine; walls and ceilings are plaster.

The windows, dormers, entrances, chimney, and the entire interior are the result of the 1938 renovations converting the former Stable to officer family housing. The entrance doors and windows were replaced in the mid- to late 1980s.

PART II HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Stable was erected in 1851 at a cost of \$3,000.00. It was originally a two-story, brick building measuring 90 feet by 32 feet, with a capacity for 12 horses. The design is said to have been based on the stables at the Springfield Arsenal. In 1893, as the gun carriage manufacturing complex at the

Watertown Arsenal expanded, the Stable was moved 100 yards southward to its current site (Dobbs 1977:19). It was part of a small agricultural complex in this area of the Arsenal that included the former Cow Barn (Building 117, HABS No. MA-1009-B) and several poultry houses. It was used to house the post fire engine until 1938 when it, along with its neighbor Building 117, was renovated as officer family housing under the Works Relief Program at the Arsenal. It is a fine example of the building reuse practiced consistently throughout the Arsenal's history.

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.

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.

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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

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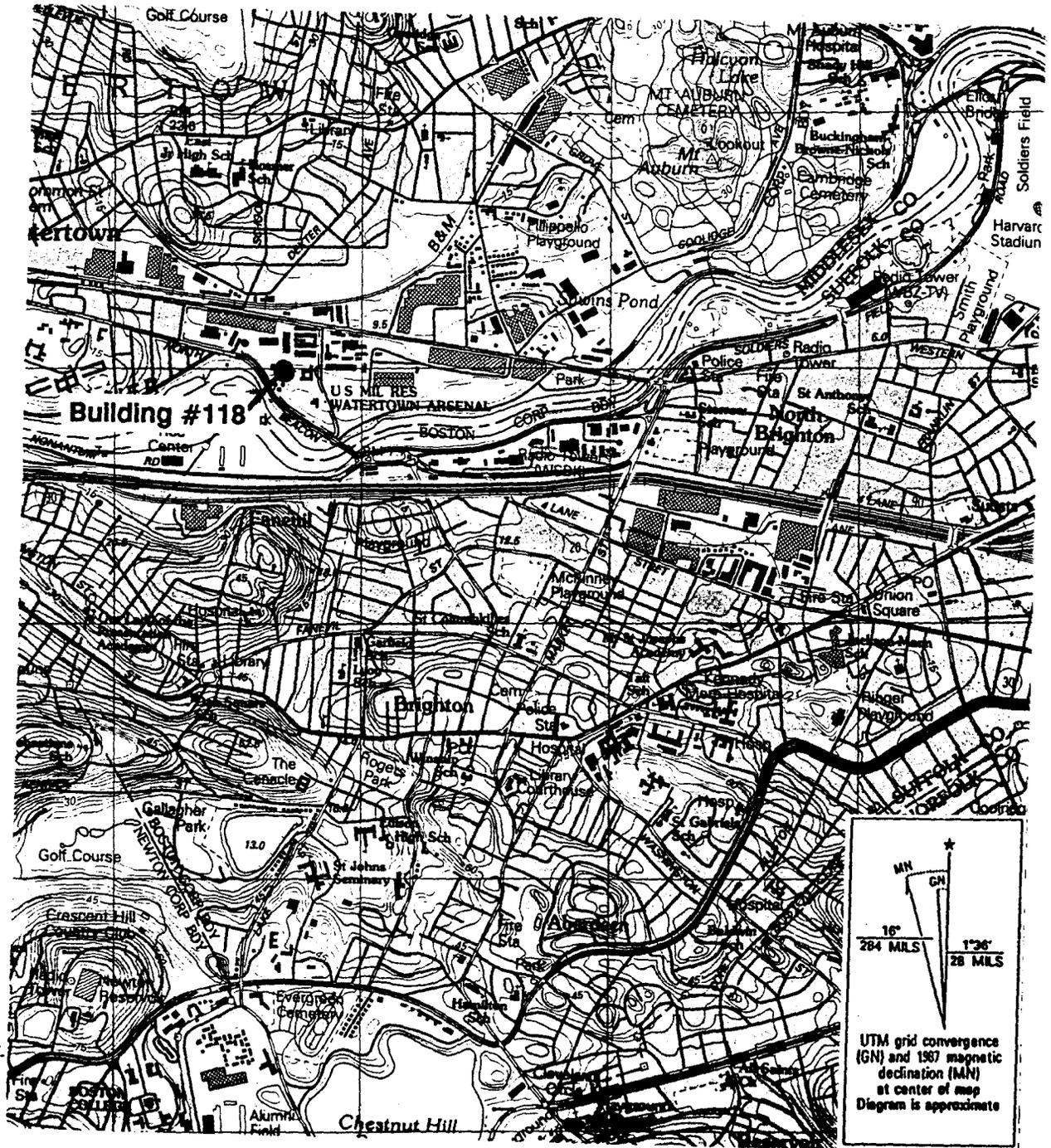
For additional sources, consult Burns and Bahr 1982, previously submitted to the Library of Congress as HABS/HAER documentation for Watertown Arsenal, HAER No. MA-20.

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 HABS 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.

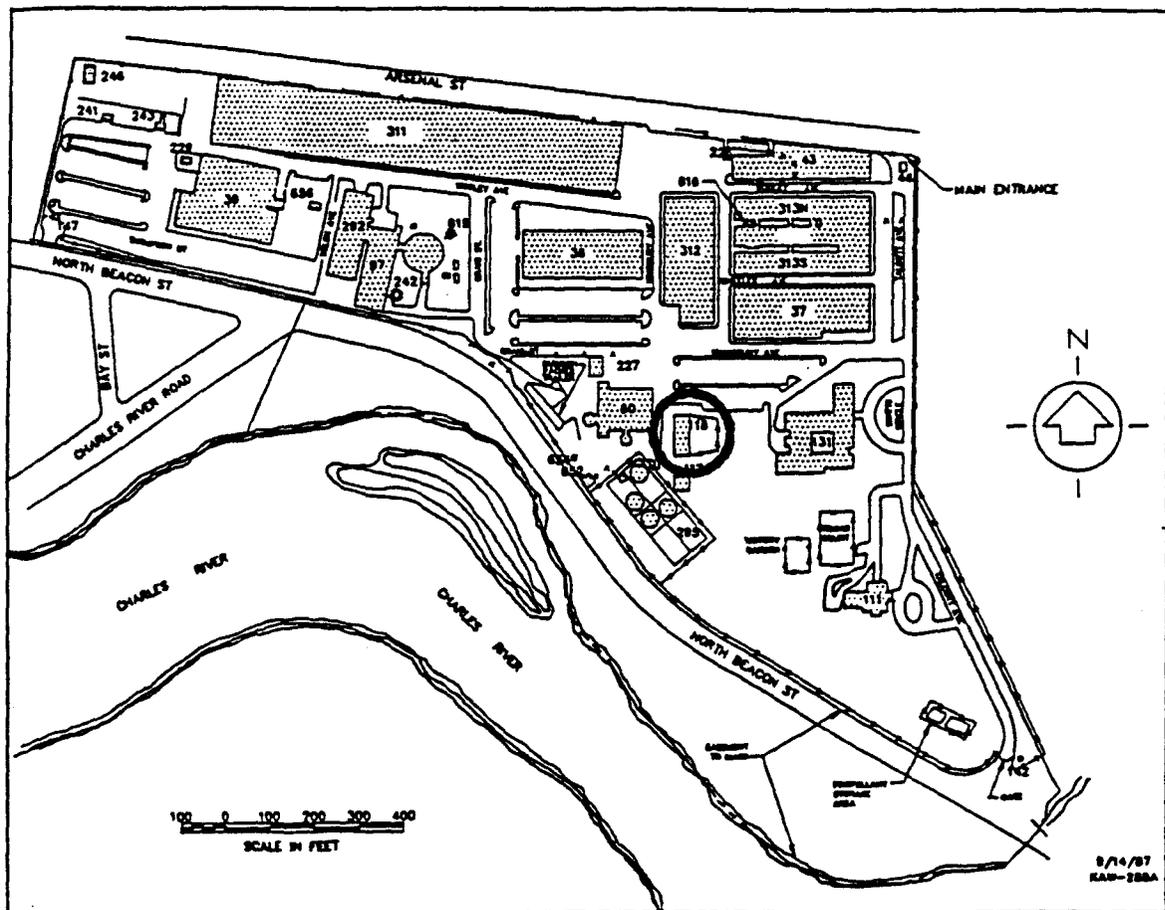
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LOCATION MAP (USGS BOSTON SOUTH, MA)
Scale: 1:25,000

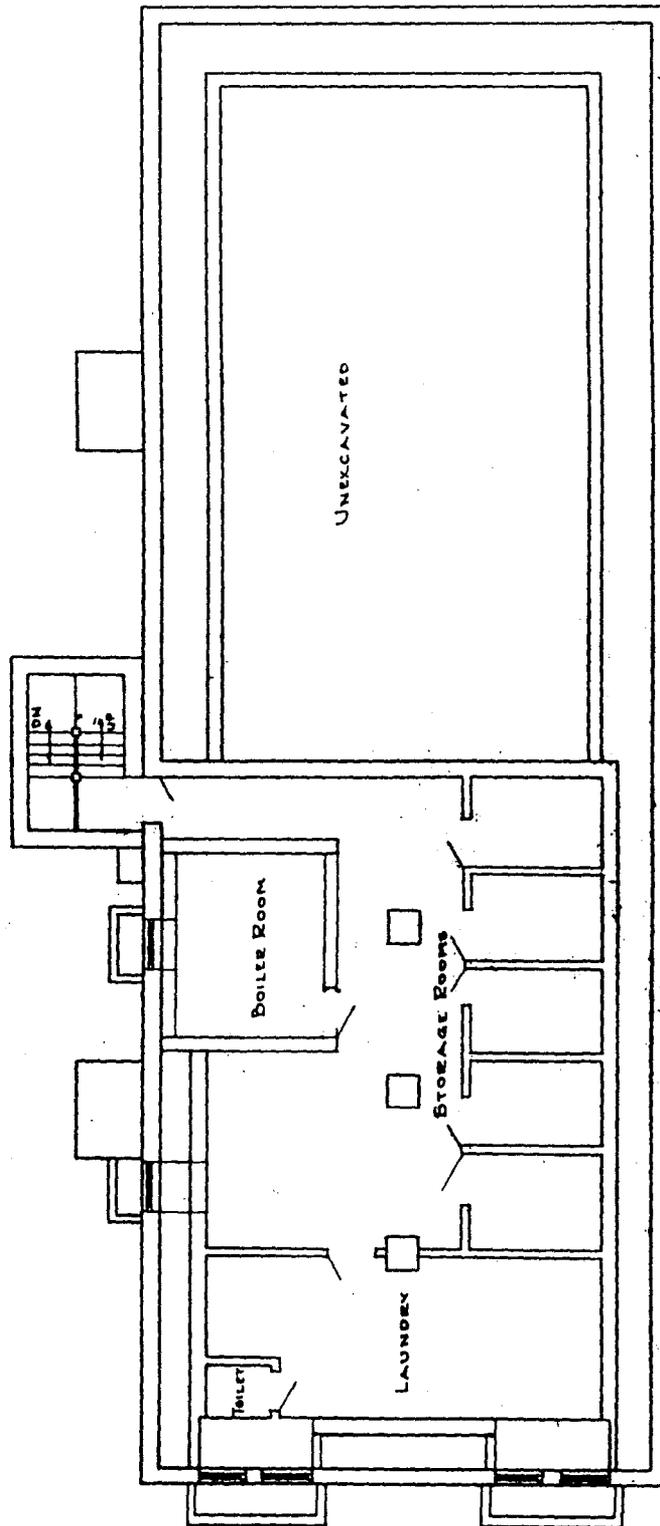


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LOCATION WITHIN WATERTOWN ARSENAL
(Source; E.G. & G. USATHAMA report, 1988)

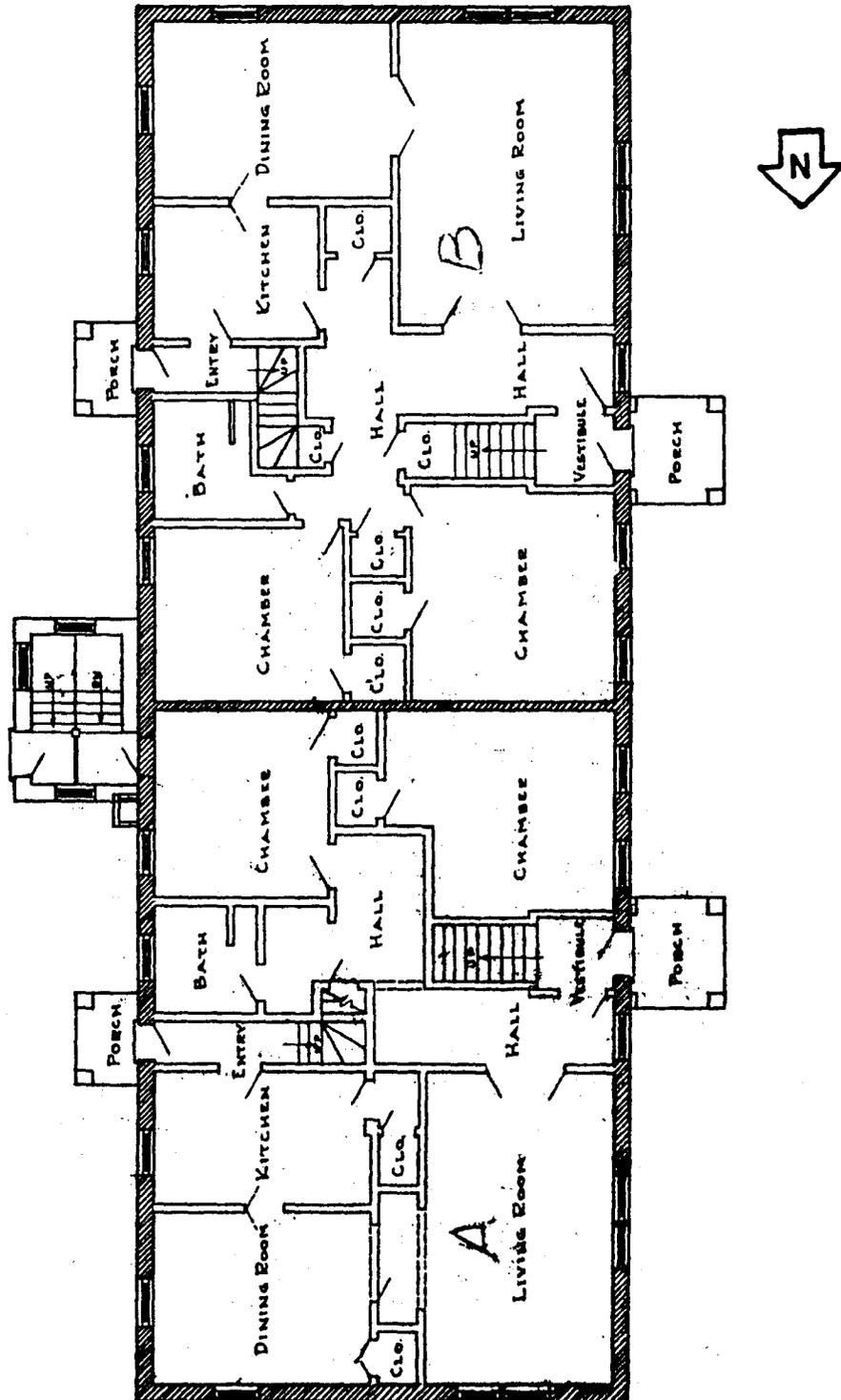


BASEMENT PLAN
(Source: Drawing AA-Q-34178, Sheet [ca. 1938])



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FIRST FLOOR PLAN
(Source: Drawing AA-Q-34178, Sheet [ca. 1938])



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
(Source: Drawing AA-Q-34178, Sheet [ca. 1938])

