

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND,
COMPANY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(Aberdeen Proving Ground, Building No. 4647)
Flare Loop
Aberdeen
Harford County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1071-A

HABS
MD
13-ABER,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
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200 Chestnut Street
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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LOCATION: Flare Loop, Aberdeen, Harford County, Maryland

UTM: 18.401000.4371150
Quad: Perryman, Maryland, 1:24,000

Present Owner: Department of the Army

Original Use: Company Administration Building,
Aberdeen Ordnance School

Present Use: Furniture Refinishing Shop. The
building is scheduled for removal in
1992.

Significance: Building No. 4647 is an example of a
24-clerk company administration
building constructed according to
standardized plan Type A-7, 800-210
series as part of the Army's World
War II mobilization construction
efforts.

Project Information: The documentation of Building No.
4647 was undertaken by R.
Christopher Goodwin and
Associates, Inc. on behalf of the
Baltimore District, Army Corps of
Engineers for Aberdeen Proving
Ground in October 1992. Building
documentation was undertaken in
partial fulfillment of a
Programmatic Memorandum of
Agreement among the United States
Department of Defense, The
Advisory Council on Historic
Preservation, and the National
Conference of State Historic
Preservation Officers (1986,
amended 1990), to mitigate the
removal of temporary World War II
mobilization buildings as

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stipulated by the Senate Armed
Services Committee Report 97-440.

Hugh McAloon
R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates,
Inc.
337 E. 3rd Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Standardized War Department plans for 24-clerk company administration buildings Type A-7, series 800-210, such as Building No. 4647, were developed on May, 24, 1941. Documents recording the exact date of construction for Building No. 4647 at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) have not survived. The buildings located on Block 4600 were constructed between October 1941 and the end of the mobilization program in December 1944.
2. Architect: George E. Bergstrom, Chief of the Architectural Unit in the Engineering Branch of the Construction Division, Quartermaster Corps, supervised revisions to the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps 700 series of standardized architectural designs that resulted in the 800 plan series. Lt. Col. Hugh J. Casey, Chief of Design and Engineering, Engineering Branch, authorized and approved the 800 series designs for company storehouse and administration buildings on May 24, 1941. The local architectural-engineering firm of Albright & Friel, Inc. was contracted to erect 700 and 800 series buildings at APG.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Block 4600 is located on land acquired for the expansion of the APG Ordnance School. The site was condemned and purchased by the War Department in 1941. The owner of the property from 1941 to 1947 was the War Department. Since 1947, the U. S. Department of the Army, the successor to the War Department, has held title.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Completion reports detailing builders, contractors, and suppliers for Building No. 4647 were not filed. Completion reports for earlier 700 series cantonment buildings erected at the installation record that the work of the cantonment architect-engineer and builder was satisfactory. Notations on plans for other 800 series buildings constructed at Aberdeen Proving Ground during the same period as the construction of Building No. 4647 indicate that the architectural firm of Albright and Friel,

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architect-engineers was retained for the 800 series building program.

5. Original plans and construction: Building No. 4647 adopts the structural elements delineated in War Department standardized architectural plan 800-210. A 105mm negative copy of this plan drawing is included in the archives of the Army Corps of Engineers Office of History, Kingman Building, Alexandria, VA.
6. Alterations and additions: The present fabric of Building No. 4647 exhibits evidence of alterations and modifications introduced since its construction. These alterations are documented through historic architectural drawings of the building. The first record of changes to Building No. 4647 is depicted in a ventilation plan of the building filed with the APG Engineering Division on April 15, 1962. At that time, the central clerk's office was subdivided into six partitioned rooms.

The next documented change to the fabric of Building No. 4647 occurred in 1972. Architectural drawings filed in that year include an exterior plan for re-roofing, and exterior painting schedules. These 1972 drawings reveal that the original louvered roof ventilators were removed from the building. Neither of the 1972 drawings depicted the interior plan.

Four years later, interior plans of Building No. 4647 were filed in anticipation of repair work to the buildings located on block 4600. These plans, submitted in September 1976, document that the interior of Building No. 4647 was returned to the open clerk's office plan typical of a standard Type A-7 mobilization building. Repairs scheduled for Building No. 4647 include the replacement of broken and missing floor tiles, the repair of a hole in the east wall, and the replacement of a window screen on the primary elevation.

In February 1980, the structure was again assessed for minor exterior repairs and re-painting. Photographs were taken as part of this assessment; necessary repair locations were noted on the images. These photographs document the removal of a heater room entry door between 1976 and 1980.

The resulting hole was infilled with drop siding. The photographs also reveal that Building No. 4647 had undergone minimal exterior alteration since its construction in 1941.

Comparison between the current structure and the 1980 photograph reveal the following exterior changes: the removal of metal porch handrails, enlargement of the primary elevation entries from 2'-8" to 3'-4" in width, replacement of entry doors, installation of metal mesh security screens over all windows, and replacement of a west elevation window with an electric fan.

Undocumented changes in the structure's interior were also noted in 1992 during the current survey. The plan of the central clerk's office was again altered through the addition of partitions. The building's lavatory also was altered. One commode and the bathroom stall partitions were removed.

B. Historical Context:

The United States has historically maintained a small professional military in times of peace. During times of war, the American military expanded to the size required for combat through the induction, whether voluntary or conscripted, of civilians. United States Army mobilization plans between 1919 and 1940 anticipated the use of European facilities to train American civilians mobilized for military duty. Consequently, mobilization plans in the United States during this period concentrated on maintaining facilities where recruits could be assembled into units, and transported to Europe for appropriate military training. In the spring of 1940 the German Army conquered continental Europe, leaving Great Britain alone in their military opposition against Nazi Germany, and capturing many of the facilities that the United States Army intended to use as training centers for civilian recruits in time of war.

In June 1940, a massive, nation-wide mobilization program was authorized by Congress. This program was implemented in anticipation of possible United States involvement in World War II. The mobilization program expanded the size of the Army and established training installations for new recruits. The 700 series of building plans, and the 800 series that followed, were a comprehensive set of building designs for construction of temporary military

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cantonments. The standardized plans were flexible, easily adaptable to base-specific architectural programs, and quickly constructed.

Through the construction of temporary wood-frame buildings, the United States Army increased its capacity to house personnel. In 1939 the Army had the facilities to house 200,000 persons. By the conclusion of the mobilization program in 1944 the Army possessed the facilities to house over 6,000,000 personnel. The need for rapid structural erection led to innovations in construction technologies. Standardized plans and prefabrication of building units were refined in the design and construction of the mobilization buildings.

The structures of the 700 and 800 series plans were designed to be constructed not as individual buildings, but as integrated operational groups, or cantonments. The smallest planned cantonment was designed to accommodate a full company of men, approximately 125 soldiers. The company was the basic unit from which larger units in the army operational hierarchy were formed. The cantonment was a collection of buildings which housed company activities. A company cantonment consisted of two barracks, one mess hall, one recreation building, and one storeroom.

Several companies formed a battalion. Similarly, battalion cantonments were composed of several company cantonments. The purpose of company administration buildings, like Building No. 4647, was to coordinate the administrative duties of companies within the battalion.

Building No. 4647 was one of approximately 300 buildings constructed at Aberdeen Proving Ground during the World War II mobilization program to accommodate the Ordnance, Officer Candidate, and Bomb Disposal Schools. In July 1940, the education functions of the Raritan Arsenal officially were transferred to APG, and the Aberdeen Proving Ground Ordnance School was activated. The Ordnance School originally operated from three permanent buildings and a handful of temporary buildings. The school grew dramatically between December 1940 and June 1941. In March 1941, the first selective service

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inductees arrived for training.¹ The Officer Candidate School opened in July 1941 as a part of the Ordnance School. By the close of the war, over 10,900 lieutenants graduated from the rigorous technical and military training program.² A separate Bomb Disposal School also was located on the installation. Using techniques developed by the British, this school taught military and civilian personnel techniques for disassembling live munitions.³

After the United States entry into World War II, the mission of Aberdeen Proving Ground was narrowed from general product testing to ordnance research and testing of new equipment. The facility's name was changed to the Ordnance Research Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground in November 1943 to reflect the refined function. Throughout the war, workers at APG conducted research on ammunition, armor, aviation armament, ballistic research, rockets, and automotive engines.⁴ The scope of the testing performed at the installation is evidenced by the fact that 75 percent of the equipment used during World War II was either new or substantially improved from the pre-war years. Of 1,860 major ordnance items used during the war, 350 were designed prior to 1940.⁵ At the beginning of 1945, 27,295 military personnel and 4,867

¹Aberdeen Ordnance Replacement Training Center, Record Group 156, Entry 646, Washington Federal Records Center, Suitland, MD Facility.

²Ordnance Officer Candidate School, Record Group 156, Entry 646, Box A634, Washington Federal Records Center, Suitland, MD Facility.

³Aberdeen Ordnance Bomb Disposal School, Record Group 156, Entry 646, Box A633, Washington Federal Records Center, Suitland, MD Facility.

⁴Ordnance Proving Grounds, Record Group 156, Entry 646A, Box A776, Washington Federal Records Center, Suitland, MD Facility.

⁵History of Ordnance Research and Development in World War II, Record Group 156, Entry 646A, Box A777, Washington Federal Records Center, Suitland, MD Facility.

civilians worked at the Proving Ground portion of the installation.⁶ During the war years, the Ordnance School grew into one of the major activities at the installation.

Following World War II, the Army undertook a substantial demobilization accompanied by budget decreases. The advent of the Cold War facilitated increased activity at APG. In the late 1940s, the installation added a new Range Fire Control complex. In 1949, Building No. 4647 was converted to quarters.⁷ The Korean conflict served to further increase the level of activity at APG from 1950 to 1953. In 1958, Building No. 4647 underwent unspecified modernization and was converted back to administrative use.⁸

Since the late 1950s, APG has undergone numerous changes in command structure, organization, and function. The World War II-era temporary buildings located on 4600 Block presently are vacant with the exception of Buildings 4640, a facility security headquarters, and 4647, which now serves as a furniture refinishing shop.

⁶Ordnance Proving Grounds, Record Group 156, Entry 646A, Box A776, Washington Federal Records Center, Suitland, MD Facility.

⁷Grandine, Henry, and Henry Jr., DARCOM Historic Building Inventory: Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Building T-4647.

⁸Grandine, Henry, and Henry Jr., DARCOM Historic Building Inventory: Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Building T-4647.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Building No. 4647 is an intact example of the Type A-7, 800-210 series, 24-clerk company administration buildings constructed by the War Department during the World War II mobilization program. The design and construction of the building emphasizes functional requirements and spatial utility. The astylistic building illustrates the technological innovations of standardized design and uniform construction common to the temporary building erected during this nationwide military building program.
2. Condition of fabric: The general condition of Building No. 4647 is good. Exterior wood drop siding, entablature, and soffits are in good condition as are the structure's concrete pier and block foundation and asphalt roof. All exterior wooden surfaces including window sills and surrounds, doorways, soffits, fascia and siding exhibit minor weathering. Exterior paint films have failed and are peeling.

B. Description of the exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Building No. 4647 adopts a rectangular ground plan measuring 25'-0" wide and 80'-0" long. The building is one story high.

The east (primary) elevation contains eight bays; two entry and six window bays. The south two bay elevation includes a boiler room entrance and a window. Two windows are found on the north elevation. Seven bays occupy the west elevation and include six windows and a building vent.
2. Foundations: The foundation of the company administration building incorporates concrete piers and a poured concrete pad. The majority of the building is raised from the ground level and supported by rows of 1'-0" square concrete piers. The resulting crawl space is open. Longitudinal exterior walls are supported by parallel rows of concrete piers; a third row of piers supports the center of the structure. The piers are spaced at 10'-0" intervals. The foundation of the furnace

room located on the south end of the structure consists of a poured concrete pad.

3. Walls: The walls of Building No. 4647 are composed of three layers. Interior wall planes are sheathed in wooden sheathing composed of 7-1/8", tongue and groove boards. Black construction paper serves as a vapor barrier between interior and exterior sheathing. Exterior wall planes are clad in wood drop siding.
4. Structural System, framing: Building No. 4647 and the other one story buildings erected from plans in the 800 series are of balloon construction. The structure is composed of a system incorporating sill, corner posts, wall studs, and plates.

The floor joists are borne by the east and west elevation sills, which are supported by the center row of foundation piers. Floor joists are 2" x 10" wood elements, spaced 2'-0" on center. The roof trusses are clear-span.

The common rafter roof system is supported by simple Warren trusses; modified to include supporting knee braces located below the plate level.

Interior walls added since the structure's construction do not exhibit the stud and sill framing found in the original exterior walls. Interior partitions added to the building since its construction are not load bearing.

5. Porches, stoops: The standard 800-210 series plan for Building No. 4647 depicts two wooden open entry porches on the primary elevation. These entry porches survive with modifications. The original east elevation porch foot print was expanded to correspond with modifications made to the building entries. Simple metal balustrades originally were included in the porch design; these elements have been removed.
6. Chimneys: An interior straight stack brick chimney, measuring 30" square, rises from south elevation of the building and punctuates the west roof plane near the ridge. The chimney is constructed of buff common brick laid in running

bond with Portland cement mortar. The chimney flue pipe is fired clay. The intersection of chimney and roof is sealed with metal flashing. The stack served the building's original coal-burning furnace.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The majority of the building's entry doors are modern wood units installed post-1980 when the original entries were widened in an undocumented alteration of the building. One original exterior door survives and provides access to the heater room. The second heater room door was removed and in-filled with siding between 1976 and 1980.

b. Windows: Windows in Building No. 4647 consist of Standard Type A units. These units are wooden eight-light-over-eight-light, double hung sash measuring 3'-4,4/16" x 4'-6". Window surrounds are simple board elements. Wide-mesh steel security screens are bolted to the structure over all of the windows.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The roof of Building No. 4647 is a low pitched gable. The roof covering is composed of grey asphalt shingles. Real property records of the APG Directorate of Public Works document that the building was re-roofed in 1972.

b. Cornice, eaves: The longitudinal eaves of the building are accented by a simple board fascia. The lateral gable-ends of the building are defined by simple raking boards.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

a. Basement: There is no basement under the building. The building is raised on concrete piers creating an open crawl-space.

- b. First Floor: The original floor plan of the building included a central clerk's office flanked by offices and service areas. Two interconnecting private offices were located on the north-end of the structure. The south-end of the building was occupied by a furnace room, bathroom, and storage area. The furnace room was accessible from an exterior entrance; no interior access to this service space was incorporated in the original design.

Modifications to the original plan, extant in 1992, included the subdivision of central clerk office into three spaces. A south-end office was created through the introduction of an east-west partition. The original central room was further subdivided through the addition of west elevation wall partitions.

- c. Attic: The building includes a full half-story attic. This area is unfinished.
2. Stairways: There are no interior stairways.
 3. Flooring: The standard floor treatments prescribed for 800 series buildings survive in Building No. 4647. Floors in the bathroom and heating rooms are poured concrete. The remainder of the building floors consists of wooden subflooring laid diagonally across the structural floor joists. Construction paper is found above the subflooring. Original interior floor surfaces were finished in narrow floorboards. Linoleum tiles have been installed over the original floor boards.
 4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Interior wall finishes are composed of "insulation board," a standard fiber board. The lavatory walls are sheathed in marble patterned plastic panels. The interior walls of the storeroom are unfinished. Interior office partitions added to the original building fabric are composed insulation board. Interior wall surfaces are painted a cream color.

Ceiling panels are composed of insulation boards and are identical to the interior wall sheathing. Knee braces extend from the roof trusses to the wall studs. Insulation board has been used to box each pair of knee braces.

5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Four of the original standardized solid wood, interior doors survive. The design of the units includes five horizontal, recessed panels.
 - b. Windows: The simple, board surrounds found on the exterior of the building are repeated on the interior window faces.
6. Hardware: Minimal original hardware survives. Original building hardware included simple mass-produced elements.
7. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating, ventilation: The building is heated with an oil fired furnace. Fuel is stored in a tank located adjacent to the south elevation. The building employs a forced hot air system utilizing exposed aluminum duct work. The heating ducts run from the heater room along the center line of the interior of the building. The heating system integrates a Lennox "Torrid Zone" furnace. This furnace was originally fueled by coal and converted to oil heat. The conversion most likely occurred during a building modernization in 1958.⁹ A fresh-air intake duct runs from the west wall of the heater room into the furnace; a pipe connects the unit to the chimney.

Ventilation in the building is afforded by means of an electric fan. The fan occupies a former window bay in the west exterior wall. Original louvered roof ventilators have been removed from the building.
 - b. Lighting: The original socket fixtures installed in the company administration building survive. Fluorescent light fixtures have been adapted for use in the original sockets.

⁹Real Property Record No. T-4647, Real Property Office, Aberdeen Proving Ground Directorate of Public Works, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

- c. Plumbing and other fixtures: Records suggest that the building's original plumbing system and fixtures survive. Inspection indicates that one of the building's original commodes has removed.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The primary elevation of Building No. 4647 is oriented to the east toward the company parade grounds. The company parade ground is surrounded by a World War II 800-series temporary cantonment complex. To the north and south of Building No. 4647 are Buildings 4646 and 4648, respectively. Each of these structures is a two story 800-443 series barracks designed to accommodate between 63 and 74 men. The barracks and company clerk's office are separated by an access drive connecting Deer Creek Loop and Flare Loop.
2. Historic landscape design: The site surrounding Building No. 4647 was designed in 1941 for convenient traffic circulation and adequate drainage. A concrete sidewalk runs north-south past the building and an open drainage ditch is located between the walk and the asphalt-paved, Flare Loop road.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: The following Standard War Department drawings were devised for use in constructing the Type A-7 company administration building: 800-210, 800-211, 800-212, 800-212.1, 800-213, 800-213.1, 800-100, 800-101, 800-151, 800-154, 800-182, 800-185, 800-186, 800-194, 800-196, 800-199. The original drawings and plans for Series 800-210, Type A4-A17 are included in the collection of Archives, Office of History, Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Virginia. Photographic copies of selected original plans relevant to Building No. 4647 are included with this documentation.

Large format, photographic negatives and prints of the drawing 800-210 accompanies this report. The images are copies of a negative on file with the Army Corps of Engineers, Office of History, Alexandria, Virginia. Other plans of this series can be accessed in the same collection.

- B. Early Views: No construction photographs of Building No. 4647 were discovered in the records of the Directorate of Public Works, APG. No photographs depicting building No. 4647 were found in Completion Reports stored in the National Archives, Suitland Facility: RG 77, Entry 391, Boxes 1-5.

C. Interviews: None

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

a. Standard War Department Drawings:

- i. War Department, Construction Division. Office of the Quartermaster General. "Mobilization Buildings. Administration Building. Type A-1 - A-17. Plans, Elevations & Sections," Plan No. 800-210, May 24, 1941.
- ii. _____ . _____ . "Mobilization Buildings. Administration Buildings. Types A-4 to A-17 Inclusive, heating Schedules," Plan 800-213, October 11, 1941.

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iii. _____: _____. "Mobilization Buildings. 25'-0" Wide Building Clear Span: One Story, Structural," Plan No. 800-101, May 3, 1941.

b. Drawings Produced at Aberdeen Proving Ground:

i. Miller, Schuerholz and Gipe, of Baltimore, Maryland for the Post Engineer Division, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. "Air Conditioning of Building 2484 and Mechanical Ventilation of Fourteen Buildings: Buildings 3646, 4639, 4640, & 4647, Plans," Drawing No. P.E. 288-62, April 15, 1962.

ii. Facilities Engineering Directorate, Engineering and Planning Division, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. "Re-roofing of Selected Buildings," Drawing No. P.E. 161-72, January, 1972.

iii. _____. _____. "Interior and Exterior Painting: Selected Bldgs, Postwide," Drawing No. P.E. 167-72, February, 1972.

iv. _____. _____. "Repairs to 4600 Block, Aberdeen Area," Drawing No. P.E. 19-7T, September, 1976.

v. Department of the Army, Baltimore District, Corps of Engineers, Baltimore, Maryland. Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. "Exterior Painting and Minor Repairs: Bldg. T-4647," APG Project 814X, Drawing No. 31620, Plate A054, February, 1980.

vi. _____. _____. "Exterior Painting and Minor Repairs: Selected Buildings. Details - Barracks and One Story Bldgs. - 4600 Block," APG Project 814X, Drawing No. 31564, Plate G017, February, 1980.

vii. _____. _____. "Exterior Painting and Minor Repairs: Selected Buildings. Aberdeen Area - Schedule of Buildings."

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APG Project 814X, Drawing No. 31553,
Plate G006, February, 1980.

- c. Record Drawing versions of standard plans:
None
- d. Other original records at Aberdeen Proving
Ground:

"Real Property Record. Buildings and
Structures. Facility No. T-4647," Real
Property Office, Directorate of Public Works,
Building 5252.

2. Secondary and published sources

- a. Books and Manuscripts:

Fine, Lenore and Jesse A. Remington. The
Corps of Engineers: Construction in the United
States. [volume in the series, United States
Army in World War II: The Technical Services].
Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of
Military History, United States Army, 1972.

Grandine, Katherine, Irene Jackson Henry, and
William R. Henry Jr. DARCOM Historic Building
Inventory: Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.
Prepared by the National Park Service Historic
American Buildings Survey. Located in the
Historic American Building Survey, Prints and
Photographs Division, Library of Congress,
Washington, D.C., 1982.

Wasch, Diane Shaw, Perry Bush, Keith Landreth,
and James Glass, Ph.D. World War II and the
U.S. Army Mobilization Program: A History of
700 and 800 Series Cantonment Construction,
including Historic American Building Survey
mitigation documentation for Camp Edwards,
Massachusetts and Fort McCoy, Wisconsin,
MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION.

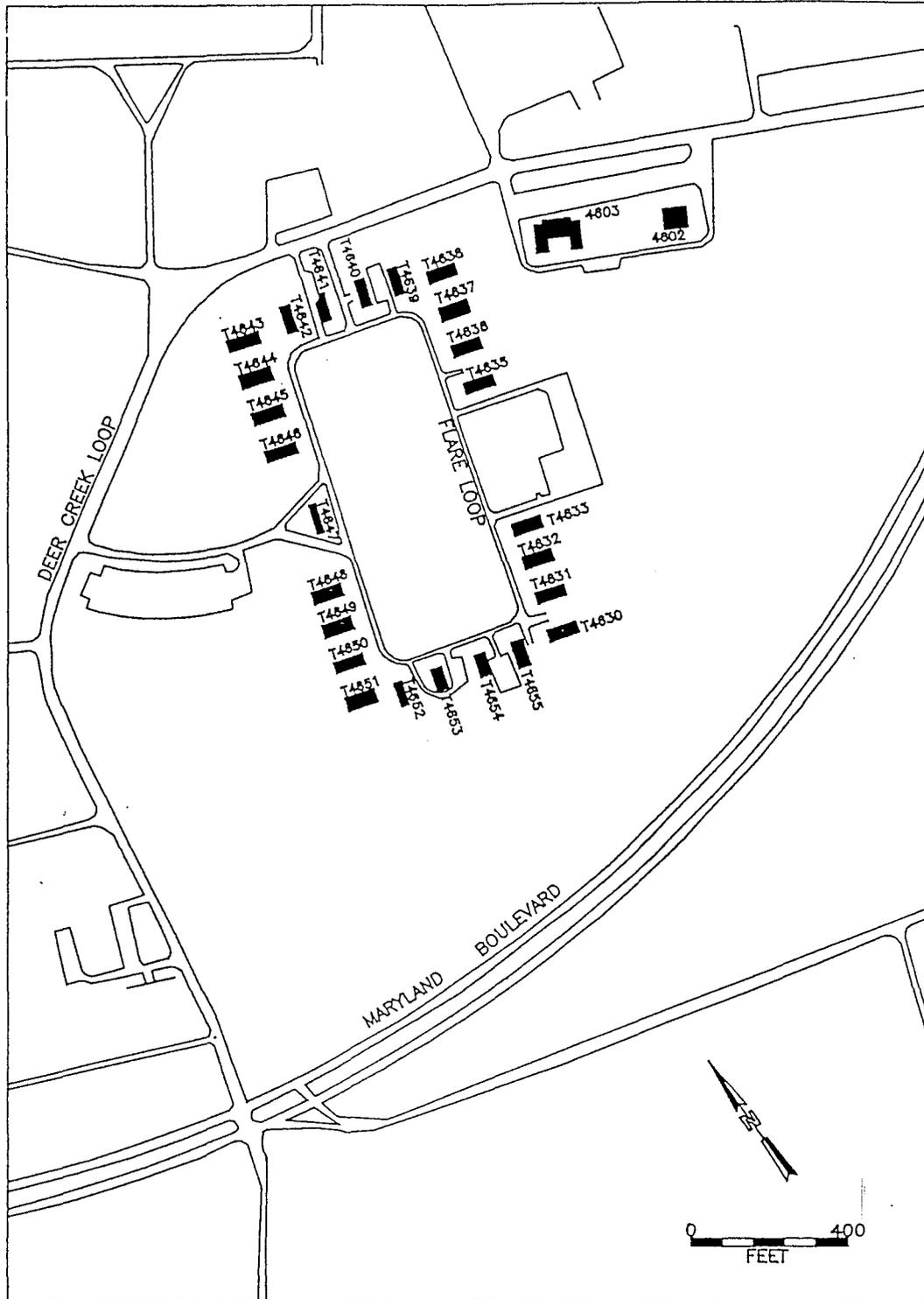
E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

- 1. Documentary: Records of civilian construction
firms that were active in the War Department
mobilization effort were not reviewed as part of
this building documentation.

2. Oral History:

- a. Military officers and enlisted personnel stationed at APG during active use of Building No. 4647 as a company cantonment were not identified and interviewed as part of this building documentation.
- b. Possible employees of civilian construction firms who were active in the War Department mobilization efforts were not identified and interviewed as part of this building documentation.

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SITE PLAN

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