

VANCOUVER BARRACKS, TRUCK STORAGE GARAGE
(Building No. 304)
(Building No. 406)
Vancouver National Historic Reserve District
East Fifth Street southeast of McLoughlin Road
Vancouver
Clark County
Washington

HABS WA-267
WA-267

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
909 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

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(Building No. 304)

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HABS No. WA-267

- Location:** Vancouver National Historic Reserve District
East Fifth Street southeast of McLoughlin Road
Clark County
Washington
- USGS Vancouver Quadrangle Topographic Map,
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 10.526145.5052336
- Present owner:** United States Army Reserve
- Present use:** Vacant/Storage
- Significance:** The Truck Storage Garage, Building No. 304 (currently Building No. 406), is a contributing building to the Vancouver National Historic Reserve District in Vancouver, Washington. The military reserve is significant for its role in the defense of the Pacific Northwest and its place in the administrative history of the United States Army (U.S. Army). The truck storage garage is a good example of a utilitarian building type erected in the 1930s during the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) tenure at Vancouver Barracks.
- The truck storage garage reflects the building development within Vancouver Barracks that occurred during the Great Depression when the post was designated as one of the headquarters for the CCC. In 1935, over a dozen support buildings were constructed to accommodate the influx of enrollees, and the reserve's role as a CCC supply and administrative center.
- Completed in 1935, the truck storage garage was part of a complex of motor pool buildings built on the south side of East Fifth Street (originally the Evergreen Highway), the main east-west road through Vancouver Barracks. These utilitarian buildings were vital to the operations of the CCC camps.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** 5 September 1935
2. **Architect:** U.S. Army
3. **Original owners:** U.S. Army
4. **Contractor:** Contractor name unknown. U.S. Army and CCC work crews.
5. **Original plans and construction:** According to the U.S. Army's 1935 Quartermaster's report, the truck storage garage was completed on September 5th of that year as part of a cluster of motor pool buildings erected after Vancouver Barracks became the headquarters and dispersing agency for CCC camps across Oregon and Washington (Figure 5).

Originally designated as Building No. 304, the truck garage was constructed on the south side of East Fifth Street, east of McLoughlin Road (Figure 4). The 50' wide and 140' long, wood-frame building was built with a concrete foundation, horizontal wood siding, boxed eaves, and a gable roof covered with composition shingles. Seven garage door bays spanned the length of the north facade (Figure 6). The folding garage doors were comprised of wood panels below and multi-light windows above. The windows on the west, east, and south facades were six-light, wood sash windows.

The interior of the garage was designed as a large open space that had a gravel floor. Diagonal braces on the sidewalls supported the large trusses that spanned the width of the interior. The garage, completed in 1935 for a cost of \$2,801.00, had a storage capacity of 28 trucks.

6. **Major alterations:** On 16 February 1960, plans were completed by the Office of Post Engineer at Fort Lewis, Washington, to convert the garage into a hanger for the Civil Air Patrol (Figure 6). The central bays on the north facade (fourth & fifth from the east) were modified into a single bay with a sliding door to accommodate small airplanes. The vertical support beam between the two bays was removed to expand the opening, and a laminated support beam to strengthen the header replaced the original steel I-beam above the two openings. A metal track was installed to support the sliding door rollers. The original folding doors were converted into sliding doors. A concrete slab floor later replaced the gravel interior floor, and a concrete apron was poured beyond the north facade wall.

Prior to 1960, an interior office was built in the eastern end of the building, and between 1963 and 1987, a pedestrian door added to the west facade. A pedestrian door was also added to the one of the original folding doors on the north facade. The building was repainted and the gutters replaced in 1987 (Figure 8).

B. Brief Historic Overview: Fort Vancouver Barracks

Note: The following historic overview is based on a report entitled "Fort Vancouver, Cultural Landscape Report" prepared by Terri A. Taylor, Project Landscape Architect, and Patricia C. Erigero, Project Historian, in 1992.

Development of Fort Vancouver

For thousands of years prior to Euro-American settlement, the region around present-day Vancouver Barracks was an important Native American trading center. The predominant group in the region was closely related to the Chinookan languages. Their village economies were based primarily on fishing, hunting and gathering.

As Euro-Americans began to explore and settle the native lands, the Native American populations declined dramatically due to smallpox, measles, malaria, and other diseases. By the early-1830s, an estimated ninety-eight percent of the Chinook population had died. In the next 25 years, the few Native Americans that survived the diseases were moved to reservations in exchange for residual fishing rights.

In 1824, the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) established Fort Vancouver, a fur-trading post on the north side of the Columbia River near present-day Vancouver, Washington. Fort Vancouver developed into the most important Euro-American settlement west of the Rocky Mountains, and became the economic, political, social, and agricultural center of the Pacific Northwest. Between 1829 and 1846, Fort Vancouver's influence in the Pacific Northwest reached its peak. Under the leadership of Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin, the fort dominated the fur-trade industry. The fort became the administrative hub, and the social and cultural center of the region.

In 1849, the U.S. Army built a military post on the hill above the fort's stockade, and by 1850, the military had established a 640-acre military reservation around Fort Vancouver called Columbia Barracks. Although the HBC and the U.S. Army co-existed for several years, political, economic, and social pressure led to the loss of thousands of HBC-owned land to squatters. In 1860, Fort Vancouver and the remaining HBC land around the stockade were abandoned.

By the mid-1850s, there were over 40 buildings at the U.S. Army reservation, which was divided into three main sections; the garrison, arsenal, and quartermaster depot. Houses, barracks, barns, warehouses, and a hospital were all part of the military reservation.

In 1865, the U.S. Army established the Department of Columbia and designated Columbia Barracks as its headquarters. Two years later, the headquarters was relocated to Portland. The headquarters was returned to Columbia Barracks in 1878, and renamed Vancouver Barracks in 1879. An expansion of the barracks followed as numerous barracks and dwellings were built to house officers and enlistees. Throughout the 1880s and early 1900s, the soldiers of Vancouver Barracks enforced domestic policies in the Pacific Northwest.

World War I and the Twenties

Vancouver Barracks served as a principal military site for the Pacific Northwest during World War II. The Spruce Production Division, part of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, was formed to provide milled spruce for allied demands for production of combat airplanes. The barracks became the site of the Cut-up Plant, the largest spruce mill in the Division, and the training center for recruits leaving for the logging camps. Thousands of soldiers descended on Vancouver Barracks to help in the war effort. The activity at the camp came to a halt after the armistice was signed in November 1918. The number of wartime soldiers at the fort dwindled to peacetime levels.

After World War I, the post became the site of a Citizens' Military Training Camp given statutory authority in the National Defense Act of 1920. The camps, held for two weeks each summer at posts throughout the country, were designed to give civilians training in various branches of the service. Vancouver Barracks also served as a branch of the newly formed U.S. Army Air Service. In 1921, the Air Service joined forces with the U.S. Forest Service, and created an airplane forest patrol. The barracks became a major base for the Portland-Vancouver region.

In the mid-1920s, under post commander Oakley Kelly, the airfield was developed for commercial and military flights, and served as a training center for the air reserves, a stop-over for military aircrafts and trans-polar flights, and an airfield in case of war. The airfield was officially named Pearson Field in 1925 (ceased to be an active Army Air Corps base in 1941).

Civilian Conservation Corps and Vancouver Barracks

One of the most popular and successful work programs established by the Roosevelt administration was the CCC, which combined work relief programs with the preservation of natural resources. Started in 1933, the program put young unemployed men (and some women) between the ages of 18 and 25 to work on reforestation, road construction, flood control, and beautification projects. Other work included building firebreaks, lookouts, bridges, campgrounds, trails, and museums in the National parks. There were over 1,500 camps in the United States that employed over 2.5 million men and 8,000 women.

Each area of the country had designated regional military headquarters. Vancouver Barracks was one of six headquarters for Oregon and Washington (the Ninth Corps area). The barracks also became a district headquarters, administrating and supplying all the camps with materials for their operations.

The CCC enrollees were also trained at the barracks, and then sent to forest camps to work. Initially controlled by the U.S. Army, these camps were laid out in precise manners depending on the U.S. Army's available supplies, and their designation as permanent, semi-permanent, or portable camps. A typical CCC camp had several buildings including barracks, mess and recreation halls, infirmaries, officers' quarters, truck garages, latrines, and shower buildings.

World War II

By the beginning of World War II, about 4,000 CCC enrollees were in camps in Oregon and Washington. In July 1942, the work at Vancouver Barracks and the CCC camps ceased after the United States entered into World War II. As per Congressional action, all funding for the CCC work programs was transferred to the war effort. Many former CCC enrollees entered into the military or found civilian employment in war-related industries.

Vancouver Barracks, once again, was revitalized. The government increased funding for the barracks due to the importance of the site as a military base. The largest building boom on the post since World War I ensued as additional troops, reservists, and Citizen's Military Training students arrived at the barracks. The U.S. Army converted many of the CCC structures for wartime use. Pearson Field became a valuable intermediate airfield and home to a large pool of reserve pilots.

The effect of World War II on Vancouver Barracks was unparalleled. After Pearl Harbor was bombed, a state of civic emergency was declared in Vancouver due to its strategic location. Vancouver Barracks processed thousands of soldiers as well as housing Italian prisoners-of-war. The City of Vancouver also prospered and grew as a result of its proximity to the barracks. New industrial technologies were introduced, infrastructure and transportation systems modernized and expanded, and social services improved.

Post-War Use of Vancouver Barracks

After World War II, the U.S. Army declared Vancouver Barracks surplus property. The reservation was slated for disposal, but in 1947, portions of the post were reactivated to serve as headquarters for reserve training in the Pacific Northwest. Two years later, the War Assets Administration transferred about 53-acres of the military reservation to the Department of the Interior who established Fort Vancouver National Monument on 19 June 1948. In 1961, Congress enlarged the boundaries of Fort Vancouver and redesignated the monument as a national historic site.

In 1958, the Oregon Military District was phased out under a reorganization of the U.S. Army; Vancouver Barracks became a satellite of Fort Lewis, Washington. The Oregon Sector of the Tenth U.S. Army Corps became the post's chief tenant. By 1970, Vancouver Barracks also served as home for two units of the Washington National Guard and as an Air Reserve Center. The buildings south of East Fifth Street (including the subject building) served as vehicle maintenance and storage facilities for the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Reserve Center, and the National Guard.

Currently, Vancouver Barracks occupies fifty-two acres of the original reservation and is under the command of Fort Lewis, Washington. A portion of Vancouver Barracks lies within the boundary of Vancouver National Historic Reserve District that was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2007.

C. Brief Overview of the Building History at Vancouver Barracks

Thirty-eight buildings were constructed between 1881 and 1943 at Vancouver Barracks.¹ Although modest in design, the building styles and types varied depending on the development phase represented.

Buildings at the reserve constructed in the last two decades of the nineteenth century were primarily living quarters (barracks), although auxiliary structures such as a chapel and lecture hall were added to the camp. The U.S. Army announced plans to increase the number of regiments at the barracks in 1903. Over the next 10 years, a hospital, dental clinic, headquarters building, barracks, mess halls, storehouses, and workshops were constructed. By the end of the 1910s, as the United States entered into World War I, other new buildings were erected. These included a large storage building, motor repair shop, and a Red Cross recreational building for convalescing soldiers. After the war ended, few buildings were constructed at the barracks until the CCC work programs of the 1930s brought another period of growth to Vancouver Barracks.

CCC-Era Buildings

Although the CCC camp headquarters was established at Vancouver Barracks in 1933, new buildings were not constructed until 1935 when twelve buildings were erected including a cluster of motor pool buildings north of the rail spur and south of East Fifth Street. These new service buildings included a gas pump, truck storage garages, storehouse, and paint and auto repair shops. By 1936, Vancouver Barracks also had a new central heating plant. Most of these buildings were constructed from standardized army plans modified to suit the conditions of the site and needs of the base.

Additional warehouses were built south of the motor pool and rail spur, near the buildings erected by the Bureau of Public Roads in the 1920s (renovated some of the

¹ Information included in the Vancouver National Historic Reserve District, National Register of Historic Places nomination.

roads' buildings for CCC use). Three large barracks, an office, mess hall, and recreation building were also erected. In 1938, a large portable building was built east of the barracks, which served as the CCC District Headquarters. Vancouver Barracks remained an active base throughout the 1930s, providing essential services for the CCC camps.

The Truck Storage Garage in the Motor Pool Complex

The motor pool buildings, all completed in 1935, were important part of the CCC operations (Figure 4). Vehicles would be stored in the garages, repaired, and readied for distribution to the camps. The truck storage garage (the subject building) was completed in September 1935, and was directly east of another large garage (razed, Building No. 301) that was the first of the motor pool buildings constructed during the 1935 boom (Figure 4). The gas pump house (razed) was northwest of the truck garage, and the paint shop/fire station and automotive building (both extant) were to the east. These buildings were conveniently located between the railroad spur and East Fifth Street, the major east-west arterial.

The truck garage was one of the major vehicular storage buildings at the camp. The garage had a capacity of holding 28 trucks. Each of the seven bays held four trucks; two side-by-side and two deep. The building had no interior post supports; the trusses spanned the entire width of the building. Utilitarian in design, the wood frame building was rectangular in plan with a gable roof, horizontal wood siding, and fixed, multi-light, wood sash windows. There were many similarly designed vehicle storage garages built in the CCC camps and the U.S. Forest Service ranger stations throughout the Northwest.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

- 1. Architectural character:** Completed in 1935, the Vancouver Barracks truck storage garage is a one-story building with a side-facing gable roof, boxed-eaves with returns, horizontal siding finished with corner boards, and multi-light windows with simple wood trim. Seven large garage doors, made of wood panels below and multi-light windows above, line the north facade. The interior has remnants of former offices with a loft above the southeast corner of the building (Figures 3 and 6). The trusses span the vehicle storage area that comprises most of the floor area. Alterations include the addition of a pedestrian door on the west facade, and conversion of the central folding garage doors on the north facade to sliding doors (1960s).

- 2. Condition of fabric:** The asphalt composition roof shingles are in poor condition. The majority of the wood eaves, siding, and trim are intact; although some of the siding is missing and the paint is peeling. The concrete foundation and floor slab are intact, as are the six-light, fixed wood windows on the east, south, and west facades.

B. Description of Exterior

- 1. Overall dimensions:** The building measures 50'x140' with about 14' high walls (Figure 3). The height to the peak of the roof is about 27'.
- 2. Foundations:** The east, south, and west walls are supported by a concrete foundation. The original footings for the posts between the north facade bays are obscured by a wide concrete apron that extends beyond the interior concrete floor (poured ca. 1960).
- 3. Walls:** Walls are covered with horizontal, drop siding about 5" wide finished with 1"x5" corner boards. One-inch quarter-round finishes the edges of the corner boards.
- 4. Structural system:** Wood 2"x4" stud walls are attached to a 5-1/2"x7" sill plate attached to the concrete perimeter footing on the east, south, and west facades. The wall studs are spaced approximately 18" on center, except over and under the window openings where the studs are spaced 25" on center. The top plate is made of two, stacked 2"x4" boards.

The roof trusses, spanning the 50' width of the garage, are supported by 5-1/2"x7" posts located against the sidewalls, approximately 10' on-center. Diagonal braces support the horizontal truss members. Secondary and longer 3"x7-3/4" brackets are bolted to the sides of the posts and the horizontal truss members. Vertical tie rods, spaced every 8'-4" along the horizontal member, support the trusses. The roof system is made of 2"x6" rafters spaced about 2' on-center, covered with 1"x6" sheathing.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors:** A solid wood pedestrian door (35"x80") is near the north end of the east facade, immediately adjacent a window. This door opens into what was originally a truck bay and later an office. The south facade has a double, four-panel sliding freight door covering a 9'-6" wide x 11'-2" high opening. The doors are attached to a metal track by rollers. A wood pedestrian door (32"x80"), about 3' south of the northern-most window, is on the west facade. This door opens into the western-most bay. The door was added to the building between 1963 and 1987.

The north facade is comprised of a series of seven, 18'x12' bay openings. The garage doors are designed with six, 3' wide, vertical panels originally connected by hinges. These doors have three recessed panels below and a six-light, wood window above. The eastern three garage doors have been modified by the creation of overhead doors from the original folding doors. The eastern-most bay was later secured shut to form the north wall of a former office space.

The fourth through seventh garage doors were originally folding doors; however, in 1960, the fourth and fifth bay doors were converted to rigid sliding doors to accommodate its use as an airplane hanger. The center post that separated the two bays was removed and a laminated beam lintel installed. Although converted to sliding doors, the garage doors retain the hinges and hardware from their original folding application. The sixth bay has a five-panel pedestrian door installed in part of this folding door.

- b. Windows:** The east, south, and west facades have a total of 21 windows. The fixed, six-light wood sash windows measure 46" wide by 70" high. The glass measures 21-1/2" wide by 20" high. Six-light windows are in the east and west gable ends. The window trim is made of simple 1"x5" wood boards.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering:** The side-facing gable roof (6-in-12 pitch) is covered with red asphalt composition shingles.
- b. Cornice and eaves:** The boxed eaves extend about 2' beyond the wall surface and have eave returns. The wood soffit is constructed of 1"x3" V-groove siding boards. The 1"x8" frieze board extends around the perimeter of the building.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Main Floor:** The interior is divided into two main spaces; the truck bays and a former office space at the eastern end of the garage (Figure 3).
- b. Loft:** The low ceiling of the interior office rooms in the southeast corner created a 30'x36' loft area above. The open loft has a wood floor but no interior walls. Natural light from the upper portions of the windows, which extend slightly above the level of the loft floor, illuminate the area. The wood stairs to the loft are along the west wall of the offices below.

2. **Stairways:** A wood utility stairway leads up from the south end of the west office wall to a landing at the level of the loft floor.
3. **Flooring:** Originally a gravel floor, the interior floor is comprised of a concrete slab poured ca. 1960.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The building has an open truss and rafter ceiling system, and exposed wood stud walls. The interior office rooms had sheetrock on the ceiling and walls, but these have been destroyed by vandalism.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** The wooden door, on the west wall of the office, leads into the former offices.
 - b. **Windows:** Natural light from the six-light, fixed wood sash windows helps illuminate the interior of the building.
8. **Mechanical equipment:** Electric lighting circuits served the bays and the interior office rooms. Ceiling lights attached to the bottom of the trusses originally served the to illuminate the interior. The building no longer has electricity.

D. Site

1. Vancouver Barracks is located on the north bank of the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington, within the Vancouver National Historic Reserve (Figures 1 and 2). The western portion of the Reserve, divided by East Fifth Street, includes the U.S. Army's Vancouver Barracks. The truck garage is on the south side of East Fifth Street, east of McLoughlin Road. The entrance drive is on the north side of the garage. A chain-link fence encloses the truck garage and associated buildings. A concrete parking area is on the north side, and the railroad spur and warehouse are on the south side.
2. **Associated buildings:** Building No. 406, the truck storage garage, is closely associated with Buildings No. 408 and 410, to the east, and Building No. 422 to the south (Figure 2). The eastern buildings were constructed at the same time as the truck garage and served as part of the motor pool building complex. The building south of the garage along the railroad spur was a warehouse erected later than the garage.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography

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Merritt, Jane. "Administrative History: Fort Vancouver: National Historic Site. National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Cultural Resources Division, 1993."

Taylor, Terri A., and Patricia C. Erigero. "Cultural Landscape Report, Volume 1 and II. Fort Vancouver National Historic Site." Prepared for the NPS, Dept. of the Interior, Cultural Resources Division, Pacific Northwest Region, Seattle, Washington, 1992.

U.S. Geological Survey. Vancouver, WA 7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map.

Vancouver National Historic Reserve, Clark County, WA: A National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 5 January 2007.

B. Architectural/Engineering Drawings & Maps

"Conversion of Bldgs No. 404 & 406 for Hangar Use by Civil Air Patrol." Floor Plan, Bldg. No. 406, Modifying Folding Doors to Sliding Doors, 16 February 1960. Archives, U.S. Army, 70th RRC Environmental Division, Seattle, WA.

"Installation Site Plan." Vancouver Barracks, Environmental Baseline Study, Figure A-1. 8 May 2002.

“Map, Vancouver Barracks Wash., Water & Sewer System. Compiled by Edwin T. Postal, Civil Engineer, April 1936; drawn by Earl W. Bartlett, Draftsman, completed on 10 June 1936.” NPS, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, archive collection, Vancouver, WA.

“Paint & Miscellaneous Repairs. Building 406 – Floor Plan, Elevations & Fin. Sched. USARC, Sheet 2. 27 July 1987.” Archives, U.S. Army, 70th RRC Environmental Division, Seattle, WA.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “Site Plan, Vancouver Barracks, Vancouver, WA.” Map source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, Vancouver Barracks Real Estate Project Map, 26 July 1988.

“War Department Q.M.C. Form No. 117.” O.Q.M.G. Building No. 304-CCC. 5 September 1935.” Quartermaster form, updated in 1963. Vancouver Barracks Collection, Washington State University Vancouver Library Digital Collection, <<http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/library/archive/vbcollection.html>>

C. Historic Photographs:

Washington State University. Vancouver Barracks, QM Report Building 304, ca. 1935. Photograph and written material. Updated 1963. Vancouver Barracks Collection, Washington State University Vancouver Library Digital Collection, <<http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/library/archive/vbcollection.html>>

D. Supplemental Material:

See pages 13-20.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The field work and HABS report was prepared by Sally Donovan, M.S., Donovan and Associates. Donovan also completed the required large format photograph for the project. Bruce Howard, an associate with Donovan and Associates, assisted in the field work, editing, and producing the floor plan for the report. The field work was completed in November 2008 and the report completed in December 2008.

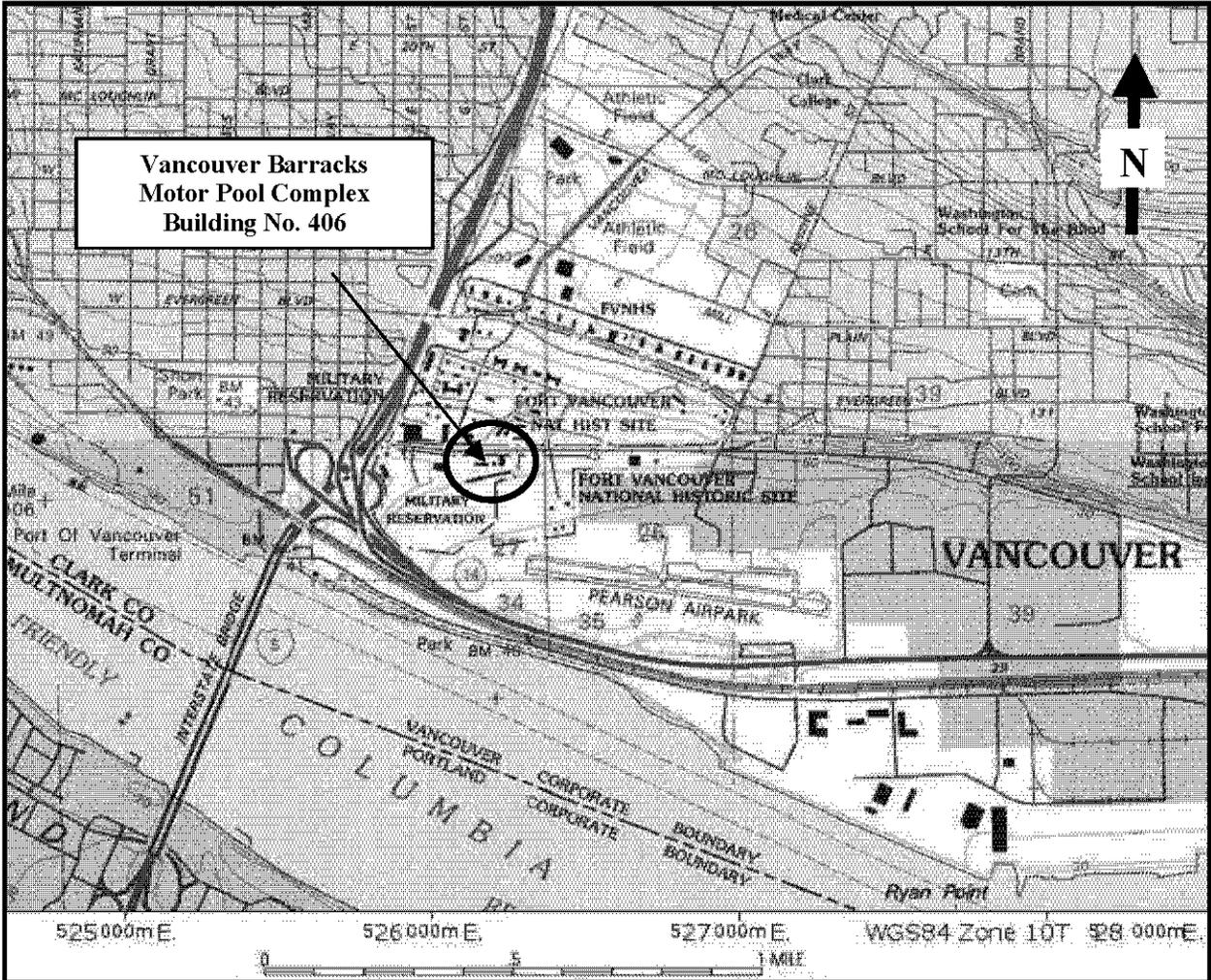


FIGURE 1: Location map showing Vancouver Barracks and Truck Storage Building, USGS Vancouver Quadrangle topographic map source: TOPO, National Geographic Map Collection.

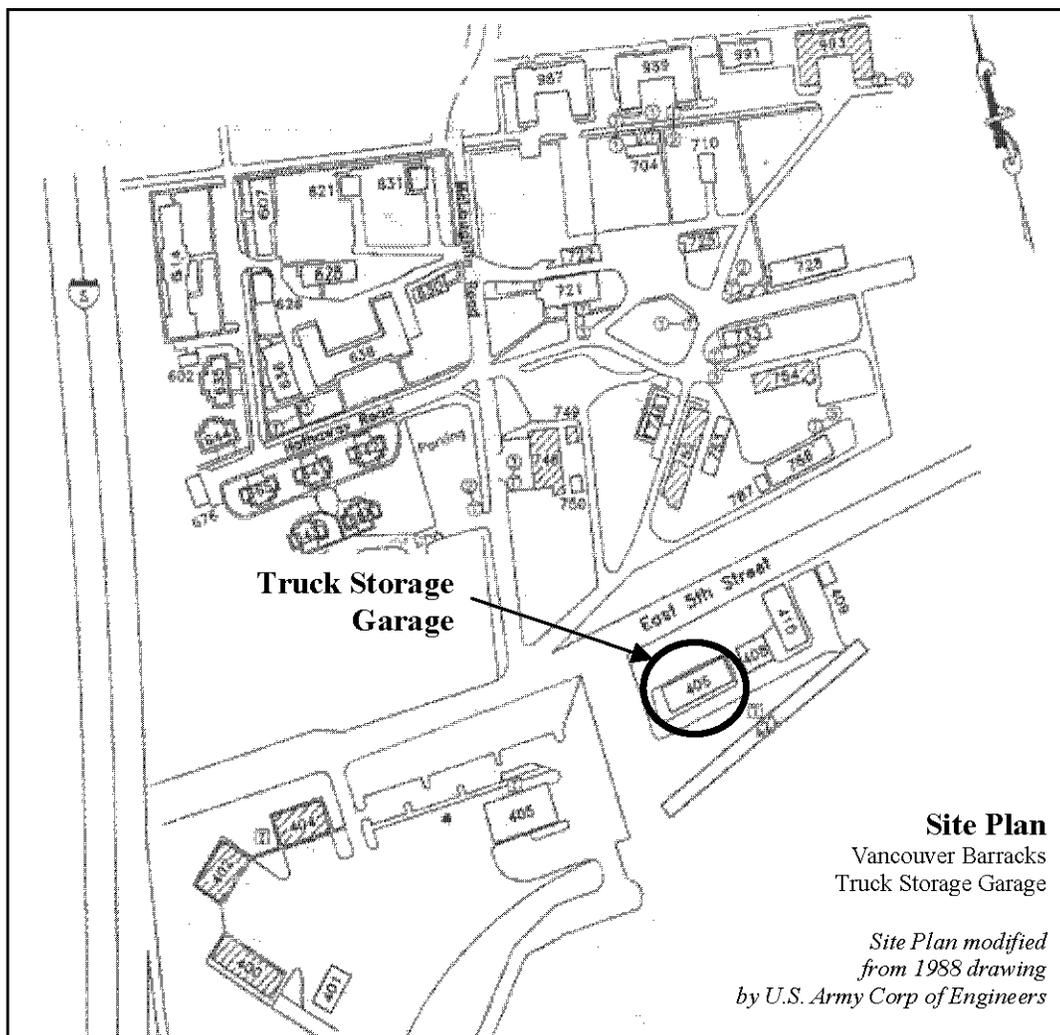


FIGURE 2: Site Plan, Vancouver Barracks, Vancouver, WA. Map source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, Vancouver Barracks Real Estate Project Map, 26 July 1988.

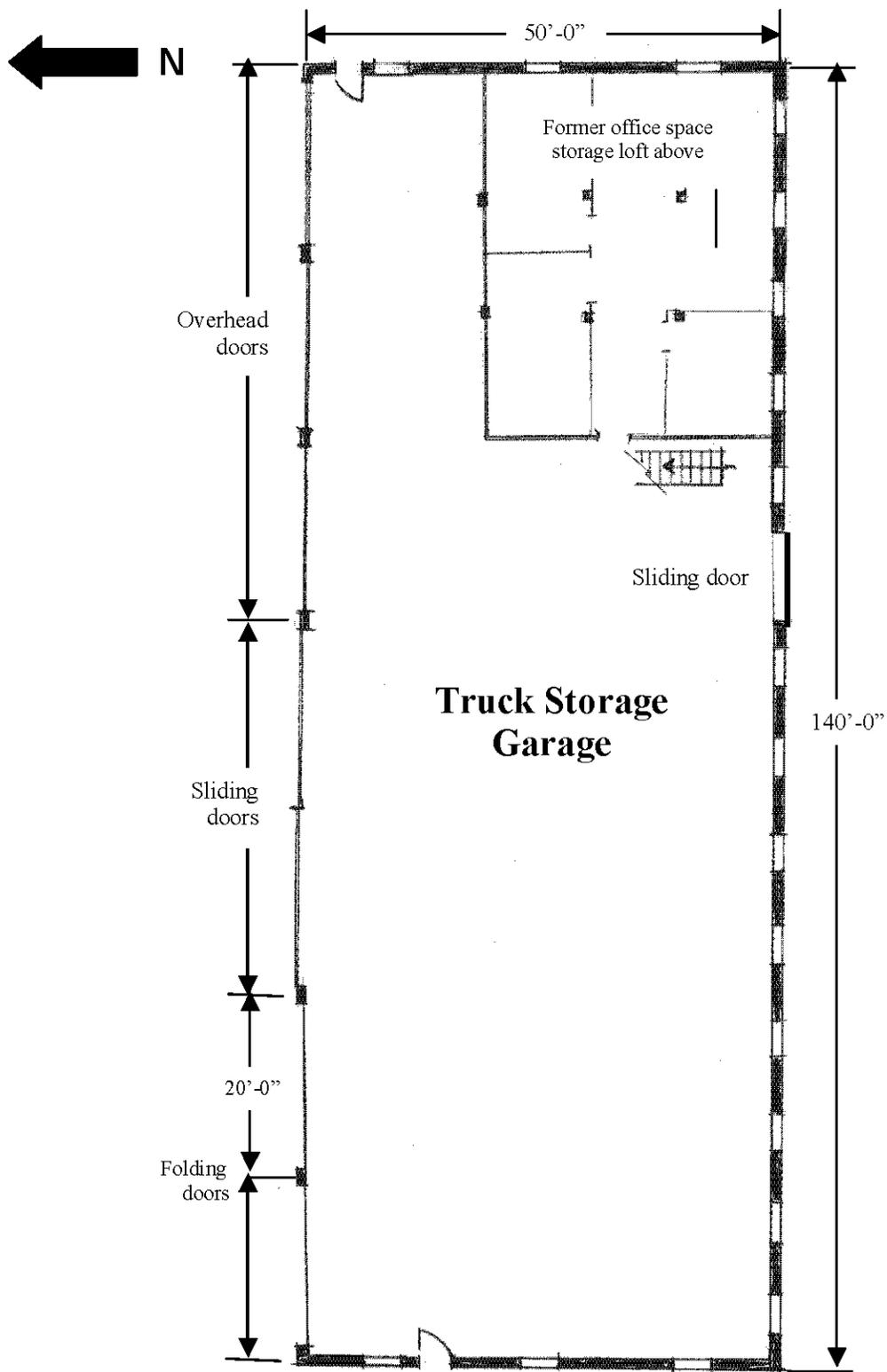


FIGURE 3: Current floor plan sketch, Donovan and Associates, October 2008.

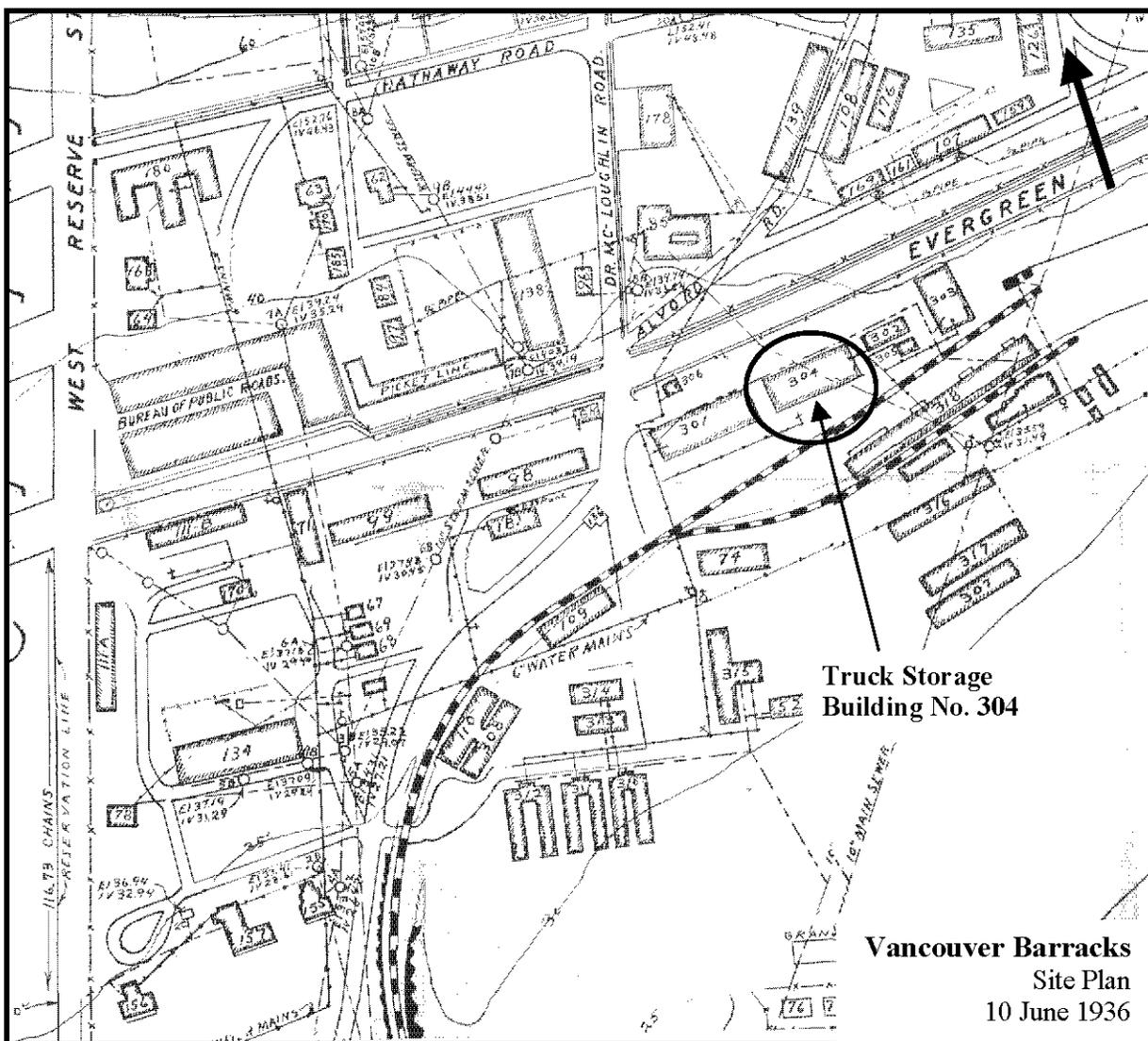


FIGURE 4: Portion of map entitled “Map, Vancouver Barracks Wash., Water & Sewer System.”
Compiled by Edwin T. Postal, Civil Engineer, April 1936; drawn by Earl W. Bartlett, Draftsman, completed on
10 June 1936. NPS, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, archive collection, Vancouver, WA.

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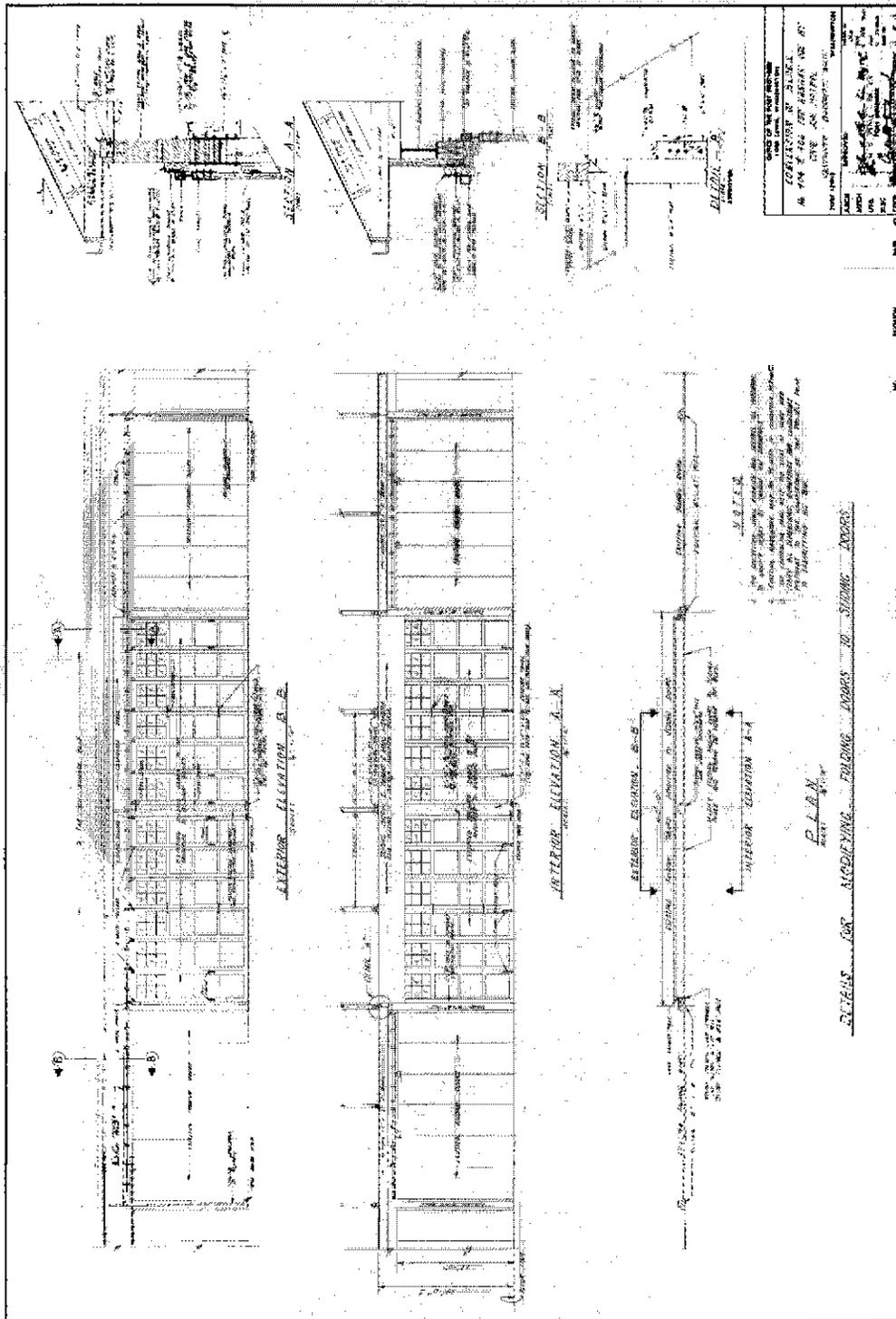


FIGURE 6: "Conversion of Bldgs. No. 404 & 406 for Hanger Use by Civil Air Patrol, Vancouver Barracks, Wash. 16 Feb. 1960. Source: Office of the Post Engineer, Fort Vancouver, WA. File No. 2201, Archives, U.S. Army, 70th RRC Environmental Division, Seattle, WA.

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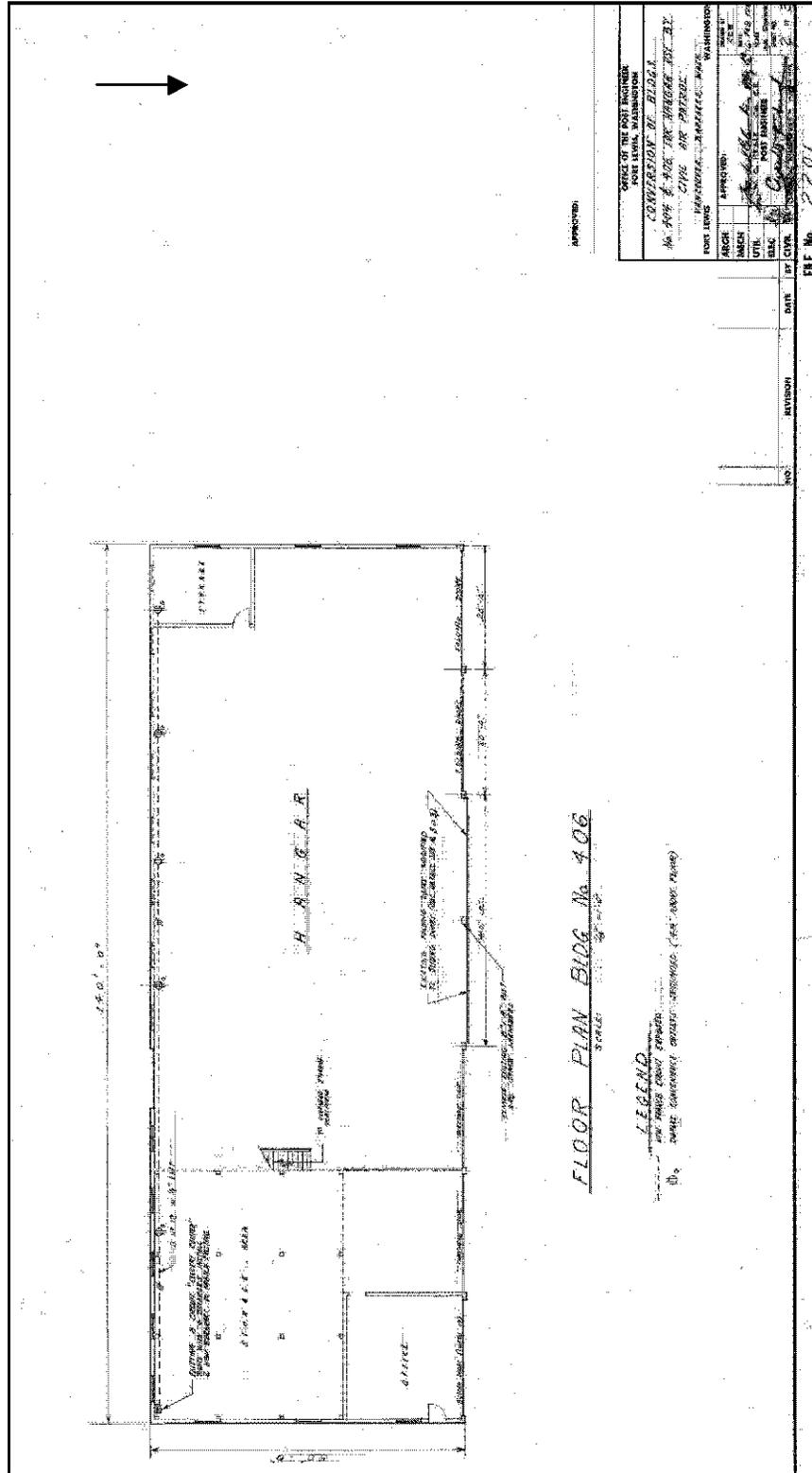


FIGURE 7: "Conversion of Bldgs. No. 404 & 406 for Hanger Use by Civil Air Patrol, Vancouver Barracks, Wash. 16 Feb. 1960." Source: Office of the Post Engineer, Fort Vancouver, WA File No. 2201. Archives. U.S. Army. 70th RRC Environmental Division. Seattle. WA.

