

National Home for Disabled Volunteer
Soldiers Western Branch,
Ward Memorial Building
(Building 29)
Franklin Avenue, southeast of intersection
with Rowland Avenue
Leavenworth
Leavenworth County
Kansas

HABS No. KS-55-A

HABS
KS-55-A

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS
WESTERN BRANCH,

WARD MEMORIAL BUILDING
(BUILDING 29)

HABS No. KS-55-A

Historic Name: National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Western Branch, Ward Memorial Building (Building 29)
Presently named: Department of Veterans Affairs Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center, Building 29

Location: East side of Franklin Avenue, southeast of intersection with Rowland Avenue, Leavenworth County, Leavenworth, Kansas

Quadrangle: USGS Leavenworth, Kans. - MO. Quadrangle
Scale: 1:24,000

UTM: Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinate:
15.336490.4349460

Present Owner: Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC

Present Use: Vacant

Date of Erection: 1887 - 1888; Major Modifications: 1903, 1946, 1962, 1977 -1990

Architect: Unknown
Builder: James A. McGonigle (1834-1925)

Significance: The Ward Memorial Building (Building 29) was constructed as the original cultural, administrative and recreational center of the Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. It provides a significant record of the history of the National Home and the breadth of its commitment to the welfare of veterans. In addition, it is significant for the quality of its design, its distinctive Queen Anne architecture is second only to the Chapel (Building 66) on the campus.

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I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The former Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was founded in 1885. It was the fifth in a series of 11 branch institutions established between 1867 and 1929. The Western Branch Home, now the Department of Veterans Affairs Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center (DDE/VAMC) has continuously provided residential and medical care for veterans since 1886. The facility embodies the comprehensive federal policies and concepts of health and rehabilitative care provided in a planned community as they originated after the Civil War and evolved into the first half of the twentieth century. The Western Branch has excellent examples of building and landscape architecture, most notably its fine groups Georgian Revival, late Gothic Revival, and Queen Anne style buildings, surrounded by a designed park- and campus-like setting.

The 213.97-acre site is characterized by rolling terrain, tree-dotted lawns, a man-made lake, and curving roads overlooking the Missouri River. The historic buildings constructed between 1885 and the early 1940s are mostly well-designed and crafted examples of popular period Victorian revival styles executed in brick and stone, with a few wood-frame examples. The work of a notable local architect and builder are represented, as well as that of a nationally important landscape architect. The original planning concept combined civilian and military influences in a planned rehabilitative community. The evolution of the Home into a major regional Veterans Administration medical center in the 1930s is reflected in the building scale and siting.

The Ward Memorial Building (Building 29) was constructed in 1887-1888 by James A. McGonigle, a Leavenworth contractor who was also building Union Station in Leavenworth during this time. The building, intended to house the administrative headquarters and library, was part of the first phase of construction at the Home. The designer of the building is unknown. The building was named for Horatio Ward, an English philanthropist, who bequeathed funds to the National Home. The Ward Memorial Building, constructed at a cost of \$13,195, was one of three buildings constructed at different Veterans Administration branches with this fund.

Built to serve as the administrative and cultural center of the original Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers complex of 45 buildings, the Ward Memorial Building is sited at the top of the North Rowland Road entry to the campus. This prominent location, combined with its three story turret, ensured that the building was visible from a considerable distance, and was one of the first buildings encountered upon entry to the Center.

Upon its completion in 1888, the initial first floor occupants of the Ward Memorial Building were the administrative offices of the Governor, Treasurer, Quartermaster, and Commissary of Subsistence. The upper floor was occupied by the Hancock Library and reading room, a single, large room measuring fifty by forty-two feet which housed 6,000 - 7,000 volumes in stacks around the perimeter of the room with periodicals and seating for 100 readers in the center. A billiard room and barber shop were located in the basement. Other sources indicate the lower level provided space for meetings of patriotic societies and a sleeping room for the Treasurer (later used by the janitor). These functions continued until at least 1897. During these years, the Keeley League, an alcohol reform movement, also used the basement.

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In 1903, the National Home built a new administrative building (Building 21) and the offices moved to their new larger quarters. The Library's collection had grown to over 8000 volumes and was expanded to the first floor with a reading room on the main level and stacks on the upper level. Exterior painting and brick pointing were also done at this time.

A pamphlet of 1905 entitled "The Better Side of the National Military Home, Kansas", offers a detailed description of the building's functions at this time. The basement contained a billiard room and various offices. The second floor entrance room had a door on the left leading into the main library hall, which was furnished with tables and chairs. There were two officers - a librarian and an assistant. The third floor was occupied by the library proper, or stockroom. Two men stayed there - one was in charge of the books, which were passed up and down by elevator, and the other was the janitor. By 1911, the library had grown to 8,344 volumes, not including newspapers and periodicals. A total of 16,297 books circulated each year.

During World War II, the upper floor was converted into dormitory space and the library stacks were relocated to the first floor. In the late 1940s, the second floor was vacated due to basement settlement, but was reoccupied after a 1959 basement underpinning. The Library continued to occupy the remainder of the building until a new, expanded facility was constructed elsewhere on the campus (Building 152) in 1960. At that time the Ward Memorial Building was scheduled for demolition as a component of the new library/theater building construction project. Instead, the first and second floors were renovated to serve as temporary space for Fiscal Services. The Fiscal Office was projected to occupy the building for only five years, but remained in the building for over twenty years until 1982. In 1968, the second floor was again condemned, though the first floor remained in use by Fiscal Services. The building was again condemned and vacated by Fiscal Services in 1982 due to concern about wind damage in the west gable and other structural deficiencies. Plans to renovate the building in 1984 were not funded. The building remains empty at this time. A study of current conditions, renovation costs and alternative reuses is now being prepared.

II. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Ward Memorial Building is prominently sited on Franklin Avenue at the corner of North Rowland Road facing west toward the main entrance to the Home. The land slopes steeply down towards an area of grass and trees to the east and north. Entry to the main level is off Franklin Avenue through a porch which extends across the western facade of the building. The sloping site also allows entry at grade to the lower level at the southeast corner of the building.

The building is approximately 11,350 square feet (sf) not including the porch which is 720 sf. The first floor area is 3,783 sf, also excluding the porch. The exterior dimensions of the building are approximately forty-four by eighty-three feet in plan, three stories high, with an attic above and a crawl space below.

Exterior: Built in 1887-1888 of brick of local manufacture on a base of local conglomerate and limestone, the eclectic Queen Anne style building occupies a prominent site near the entrance to the DDE/VAMC, an area originally referred to as the Plaza. The appearance of the Ward Memorial is commensurate with its importance. The use of three types of stone compliment

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the red brick and creates a rich visual effect: a rough conglomerate and limestone base is capped with a finer limestone belt course; sandstone window lintels, arches and belt courses appear in the brick upper stories. Early photographs show the building was painted with a rich Victorian polychromatic palette: dark metal roofs and rake moldings, alternating light and dark bands on the corner turret accentuated by darker moldings. Doors, windows and trim also appear to have been richly colored. The existing windows are a mixture of original materials and subsequent renovations. The original wood windows on the first floor have been replaced with aluminum double hung windows. Original wood windows do survive in the upper levels, with the notable exception of the Lincoln window, (see description below) which has been moved to storage for preservation and protection.

The Franklin Street elevation is two stories with a corner conical turret in the cross gable roof, tripartite round arched windows, string courses and a long covered porch. The rear opens up to a full basement allowed by the steep slope siting.

Portions of the masonry have deteriorated due to a history of settlement and water damage. A wood handicap ramp was added to the front of the building in the mid-1950s, and replaced with a concrete ramp in the late 1970s.

Interior: Each of the three principle floors originally consisted of one large room in the north end, approximately forty-two by sixty feet, furnished with brick and tile fireplaces on the east and west walls. A line of cast iron columns (now enclosed) down the center of these rooms carried the floor above with a brightly finished wood beam. These interior spaces have survived largely intact. South of these large rooms, separated from them by a masonry cross wall, were the stair, toilet rooms, and a number of small offices. The second floor was partitioned into a central hall with flanking offices in 1946.

The large first floor room had a painted plaster ceiling stenciled with botanical patterns in green, brown, and ocher. Some of the walls may also have been decoratively painted. Flaking paint in the stair, for example, has exposed the original finish which was banded in colors similar to the main floor ceiling: ocher, brown, soft reds and blue-grays. On all three levels, windows doors, beam casings and other woodwork was finished with shellac.

The most prominent decorative feature of the Ward Memorial was the stained glass Lincoln window, which was removed from the building in 1985, releaded, and put into storage to protect it from damage. The window, which depicts a standing figure of Abraham Lincoln, with the motto "The Union must be preserved" was presented to the Western Branch of the 21st Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1887 by the citizens of St. Louis. Located on the south wall of the building in the stair between the first and second floor, the fifteen by five foot window filled the entry vestibule with colored light through most of the day.

There appear to have been few plan changes to the main and lower floors during the first half of the twentieth century. On the lower level, window openings on the north and west sides were bricked in, along with a single opening into the crawl space and closets under the entry vestibule. The interior wood stair has survived, although the intermediate newels from the basement to the first floor have been reinforced with wood columns.

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On the upper level there were several successive subdivisions throughout the early 1940s, and the addition of a central hallway connecting the stair to a fire escape at the north end of the building. These changes may have been to provide additional living or office space for the library, but during and after World War II were used for dormitories. The library stacks were relocated to the lower level to accommodate these new rooms.

The Ward Memorial Building was renovated to serve as the temporary offices for Fiscal Services in 1962. The top level remained unchanged, but both the main and lower floors were subdivided into smaller offices. On the exterior, a metal-framed glass vestibule was added to the northwest entry. Between 1977 and 1980, the main floor had additional office subdivisions, air conditioning, a concrete vault and a new concrete handicapped access ramp.

The existing mechanical systems in the building (heating, water, fire protection, air conditioning, plumbing, electrical, telephone) are fragmentary and in poor condition. The building was served by high pressure steam and condensate piping which heated cast-iron radiators, many of which have been removed; steam is not currently flowing into the building. A two-inch cold water line also served the building which has been valved off at the main line. Only the first floor of the building was ever cooled, but the fancoil unit and air cooled condensing unit have been removed. The fire protection system for the building was a dry valve sprinkler system which is not in operation. The only element remaining of the original plumbing system is the main soil stack extending from the main sanitary sewer piping in the building up to the roof. Some existing bathroom fixtures remain, but are in poor condition. The existing electrical system is almost nonexistent; all interior wiring, junction boxes, light fixtures and outlets have either been pulled out or are in poor condition. There is a telephone terminal board in the building but no telephone outlets, wiring, or telephone equipment remain.

The building is currently vacant. Original finishes remain, including brightly finished trim, fireplaces, and original plaster with stenciled decoration.

III. BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

JAMES A. MCGONIGLE (1834-1925)

The contractor hired to undertake much of the early construction at the Western Branch, National Home for Disabled Veterans Soldiers including the Ward Memorial Building was James A. McGonigle (1834-1925). Mr. McGonigle was a prolific Leavenworth builder responsible for many buildings erected in the Leavenworth area and throughout the western part of the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among his other projects were St. Mary's College, Leavenworth; Machinery Hall and other buildings at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago; Leavenworth Union Depot (1888) and 15 other railroad depots from Missouri to Wyoming; facilities for the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey restaurants; and state and federal buildings in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Iowa, Texas, and Colorado. He collaborated with Kansas City architect Louis Singleton Curtiss (1865-1924) on the National Home Chapel (Building 66; 1893) and they subsequently worked together on multiple projects.

IV. SOURCES

A. Collections

Department of Veterans Affairs, Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center, Engineering Services drawings and project files, Leavenworth, Kansas.

B. Historic Views

Building 29, Views, University of Kansas Library, Kansas Collection, Topeka, Kansas

Building 29, Views, VAMC Historical Photographs, Voluntary Services, DDE/VAMC, Leavenworth, Kansas

C. Major Bibliographical References

Adams, Virginia H.

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Department of Veterans Affairs

--- Report of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Veteran Soldiers 1893, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1900, 1905, 1906, 1912, 1930. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

1890 The Taps. A Monthly Journal, Western Branch, National Military Home, Leavenworth, Kansas. Vol. 1, No. 8.

1896 Report of Gen. William W. Avery, U.S. Army, Assistant Inspector-General, N.H.D.V.S., to Gen. William B. Franklin, President of the Board of Managers..., November 30, 1895. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

1901 Rules and Regulations of the Western Branch National Home For Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Wadsworth: National Home.

1947 Land and Improvements, Buildings and Plant, Wadsworth, Kansas. Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs. On file at the Department of Veterans Affairs Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center Voluntary Services, Leavenworth, Kansas.

1980 The Nation Builds for Those Who Served: An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of the Veterans Administration. Washington, DC: Veterans Administration and National Building Museum.

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[1985] Commemorative History, 100th Anniversary 1885-1985, Veterans Administration Medical Center, Leavenworth, Kansas. Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs. On file at the Department of Veterans Affairs Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center Voluntary Services, Leavenworth, Kansas.

Olson, Robert, + Associates Architects.

1993 "Building 29 Condition and Use Assessment Study", Draft Report. Submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC.

Porter, Roger O. (former Chief, Engineering Service VAMC Leavenworth)

1986 "Ward Memorial Building Historic American Buildings Survey Documentation, Draft". Dwight D. Eisenhower Veterans Administration Medical Center, Leavenworth, Kansas.

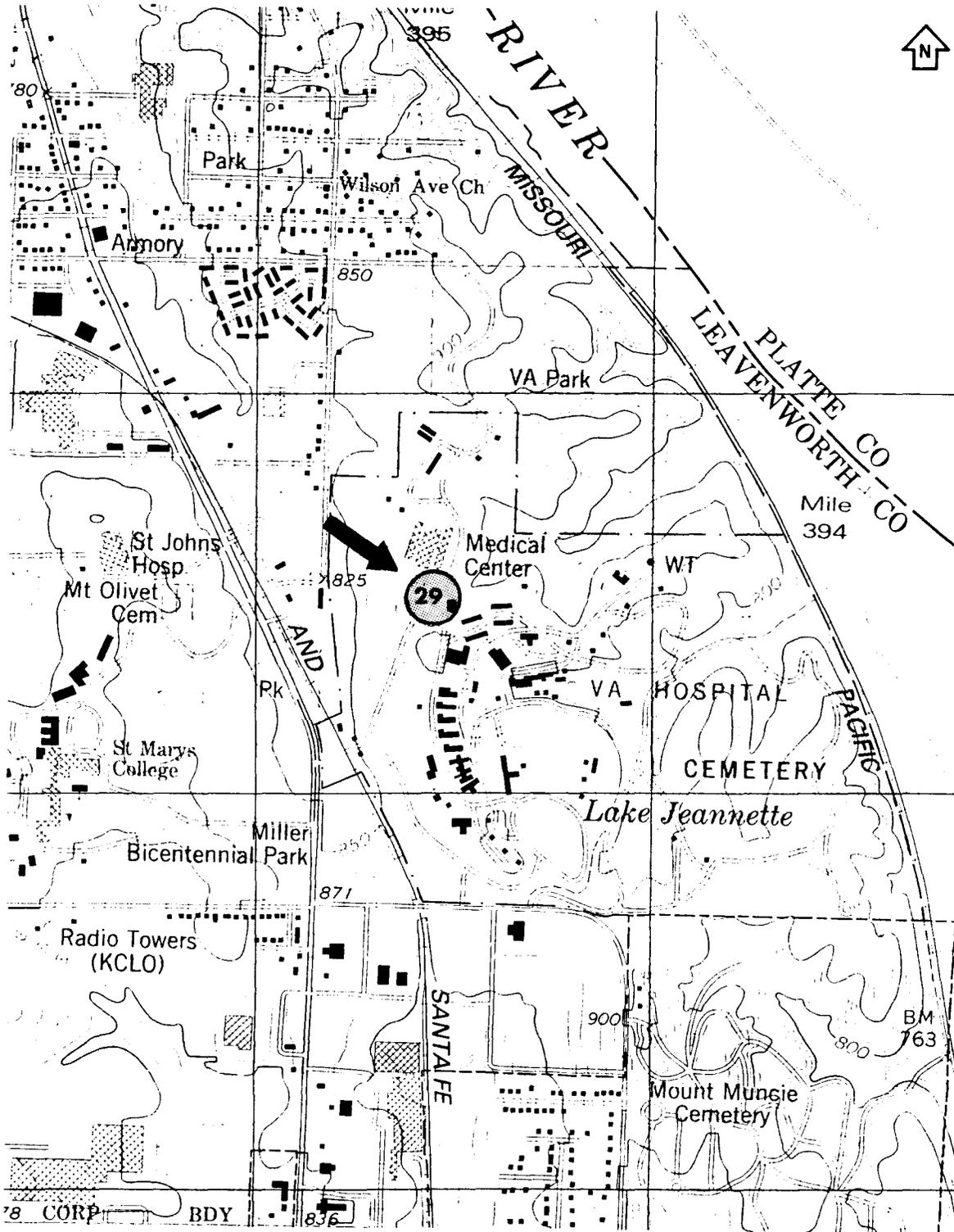
V. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Ward Memorial Building has suffered from structural failure, wind damage and deferred maintenance over the past ten years. Plans were developed to renovate the building in 1984, but were not funded. Subsequently, the Veterans Administration proposed to demolish the building in 1985. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Kansas State Historic Preservation Officer agreed to the demolition provided the stipulations outlined in a draft Programmatic Agreement (PA) were carried out. This PA was never signed. The study of the existing conditions and potential reuse alternatives, and the Historic American Buildings Survey documentation of the building is being undertaken as a component of a comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan for the facility.

This report was completed in June and July 1993 by Virginia H. Adams, Architectural Historian and Maureen A. Cavanaugh, Preservation Planner, of the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The Historic American Buildings Survey large format photography was undertaken in June 1993 by Robert Brewster of Warren Jagger Photography, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island.

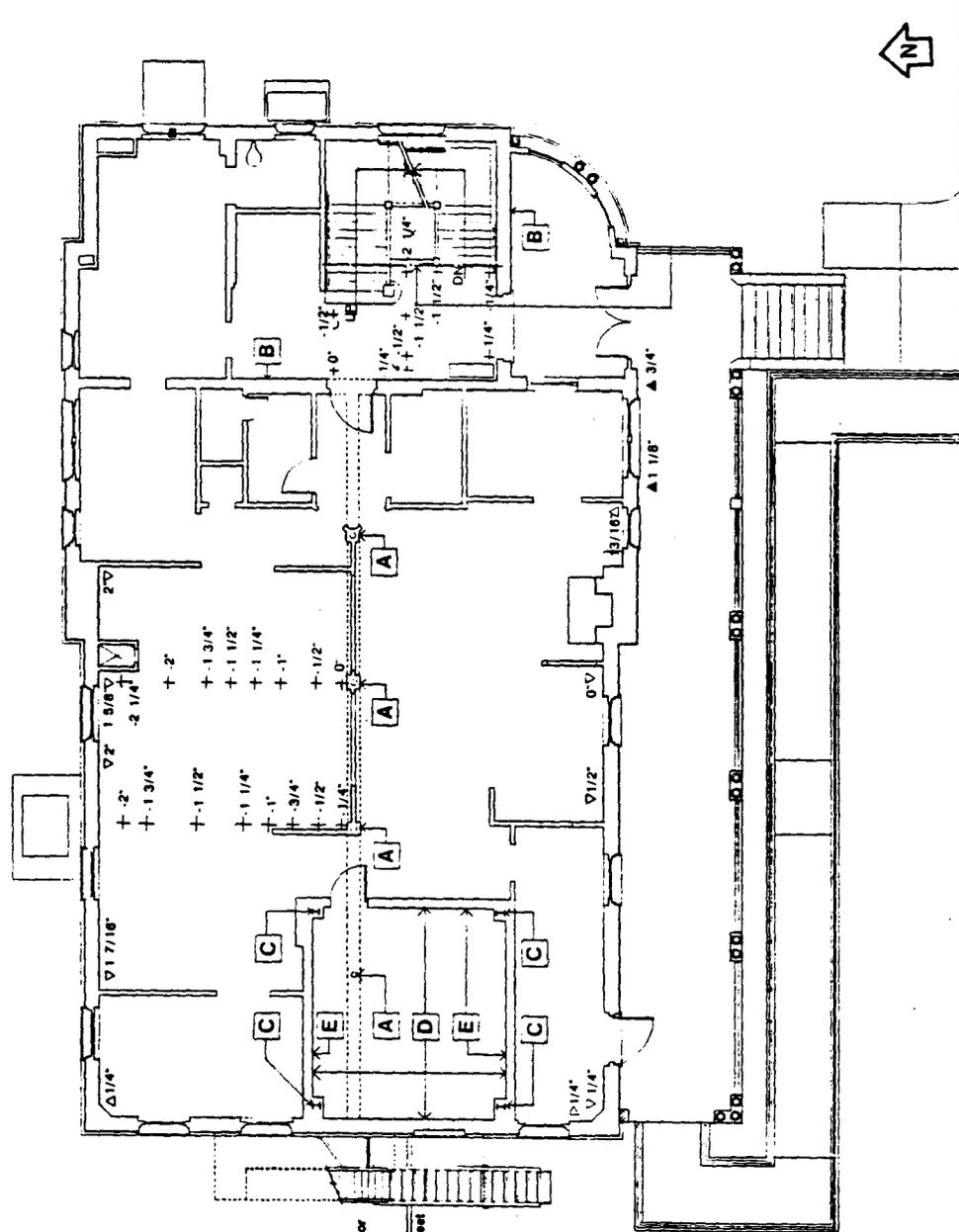
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LOCATION MAP



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FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PLAN NOTES:

- [A] Original cast iron columns with wood beam (wood clad) above.
- [B] Brick masonry wall.
- [C] Steel column supporting steel beam joists, and metal deck above (from enclosure below original ceiling).
- [D] Concrete slab on metal deck on metal bar joist.
- [E] Chalk partition.

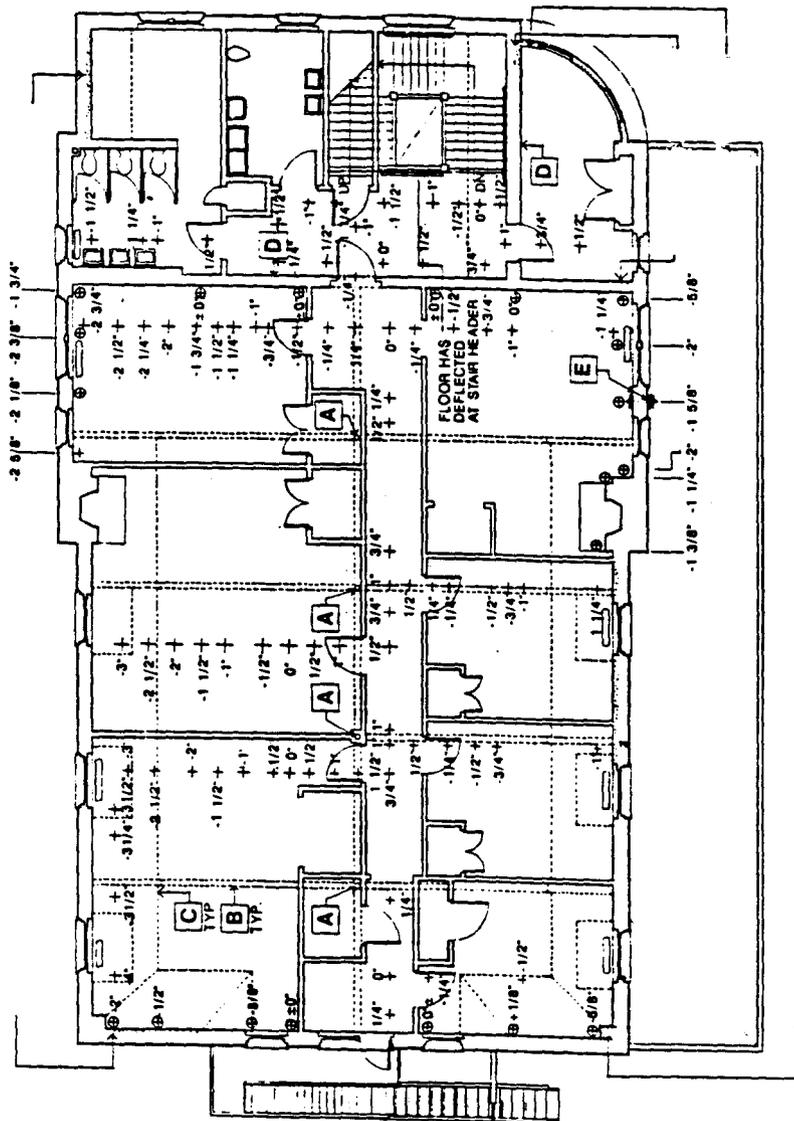
LEGEND

- Observed areas of damage to floor structure.
- Observed areas of damage to interior of exterior walls.
- ∇ x' = Dimension measured over 10 feet 1/2" that wall at ceiling is out of plumb (relative to wall at floor); measured at building interior.
- ∇ indicates direction.
- x' = Dimension that wall at porch ceiling is out of plumb (relative to wall at floor measured at building exterior).
- ∇ indicates direction.
- Note: See building sections for additional measurements of deviations from plumb.
- + x' = elevation relative to +0' measured with inclinometer.



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SECOND FLOOR PLAN



PLAN NOTES:

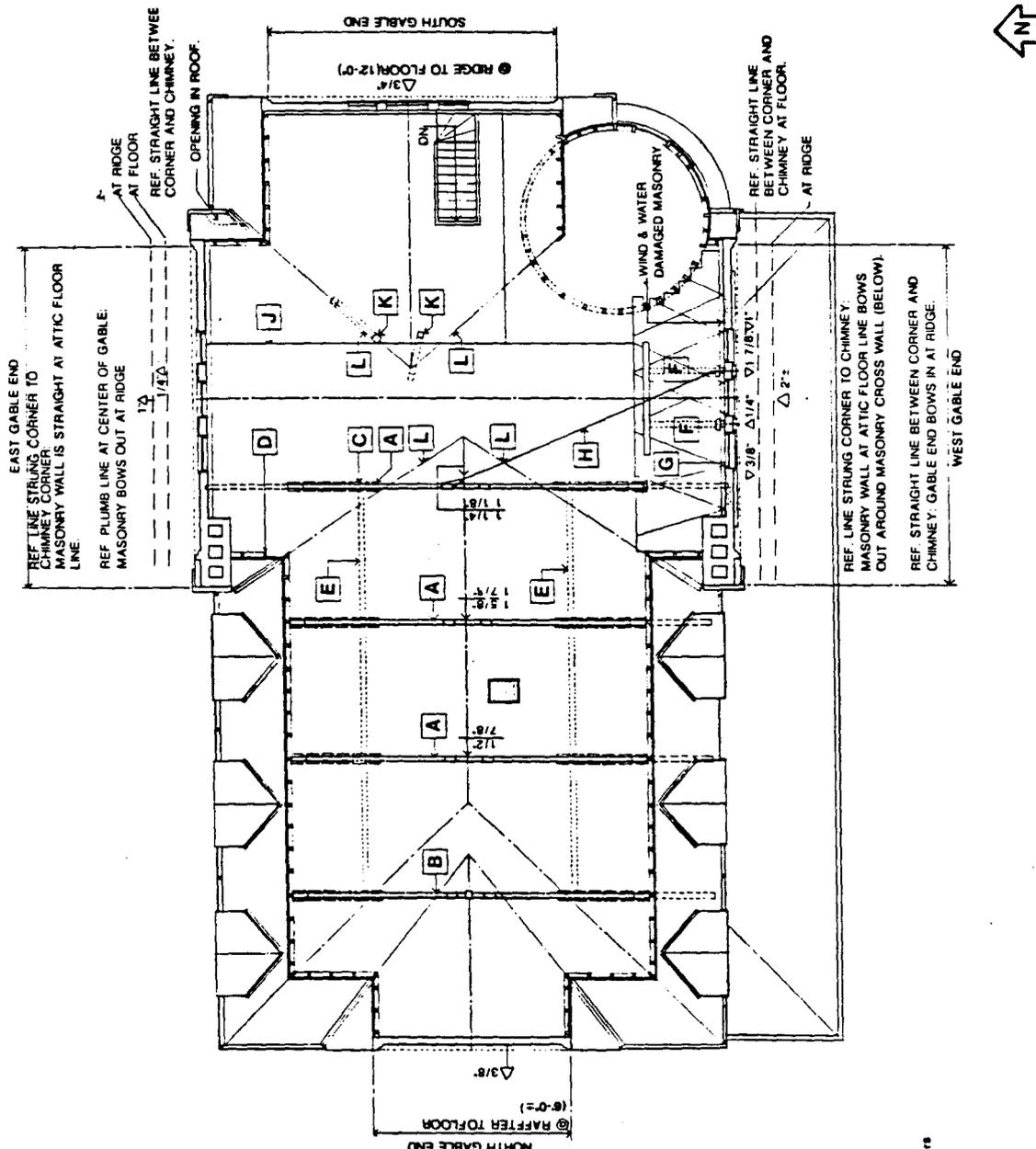
- A** Original cast iron columns with wood beam (wood clad) above.
- B** Original bottom chord (wood clad) of wood roof truss above.
- C** Change in ceiling plane above parallel roof structure.
- D** Brick masonry wall.
- E** Temporary timber bracing thru-bolted to brick masonry.

LEGEND

- Observed area of damage to floor structure.
- Observed area of damage to interior of exterior walls.
- ⊕** Changes in floor elevation measured at face of wall within room with line level relative to floor at corridor wall indicated $\ominus 0'$.
- X'** X' = Change in reference to line level.
- + X'** + X' = Elevation relative to $\pm 0'$ measured with inclinometer.

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THIRD FLOOR PLAN



PLAN NOTES:

- A** Timber roof truss: supports roof purline.
- B** Timber roof truss with center post; truss supports hip rafters and purlins.
- C** 1" x 12" boarding attached at top and horizontal chords of truss.
- D** 1-3/4" x 6" +/- roof rafters 2'-0" - 3'-4" o.c.
- E** 1-1/2" x 4" x 3-1/2" x 4" roof purlin.
- F** Timber bracing thru-bolted at masonry.
- G** Temporary plywood diaphragm with horizontal timber stiffener exterior with strap ties.
- H** Temporary cable tie.
- J** 6" step in floor at masonry cross wall below.
- K** Wood shores from masonry cross wall to valley rafters and ridge.
- L** Joint in valley rafters.

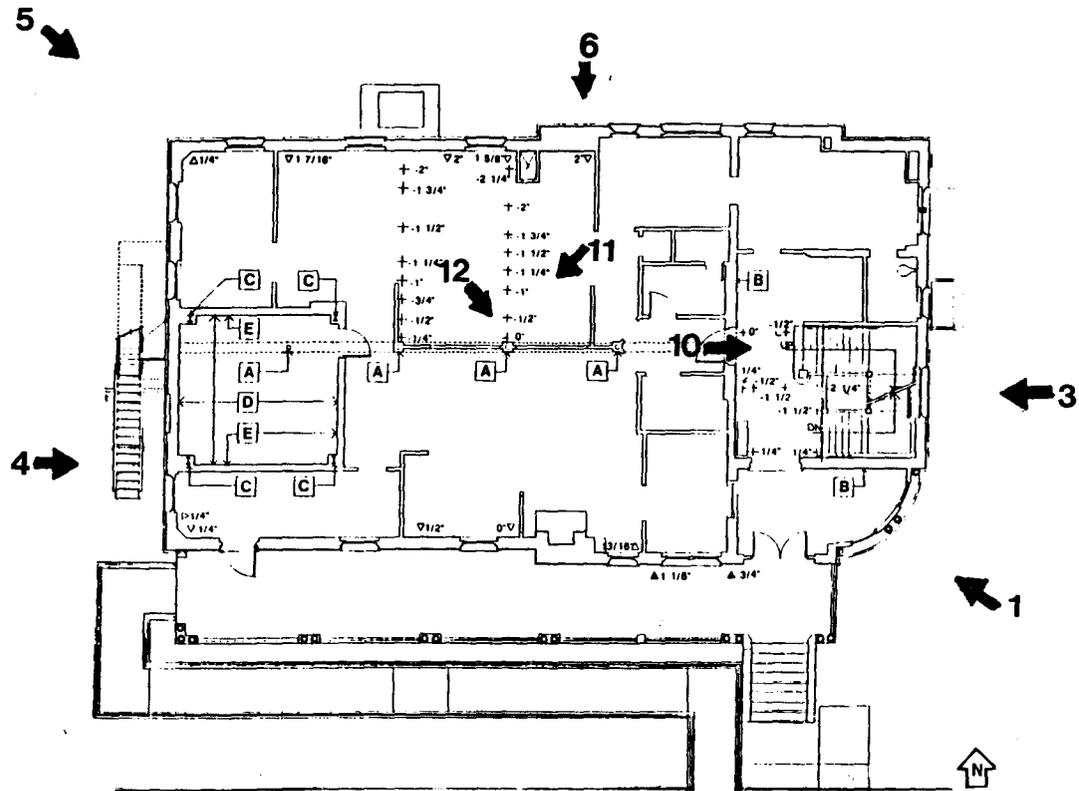
LEGEND

- Observed areas of damage to interior of exterior walls.
- Observed deflection in exterior wall.
- Face of wall.
- Deflection.
- Direction.
- Observed gap between chord members at ridge.
- Gap at top of joint.
- Gap at bottom of joint.

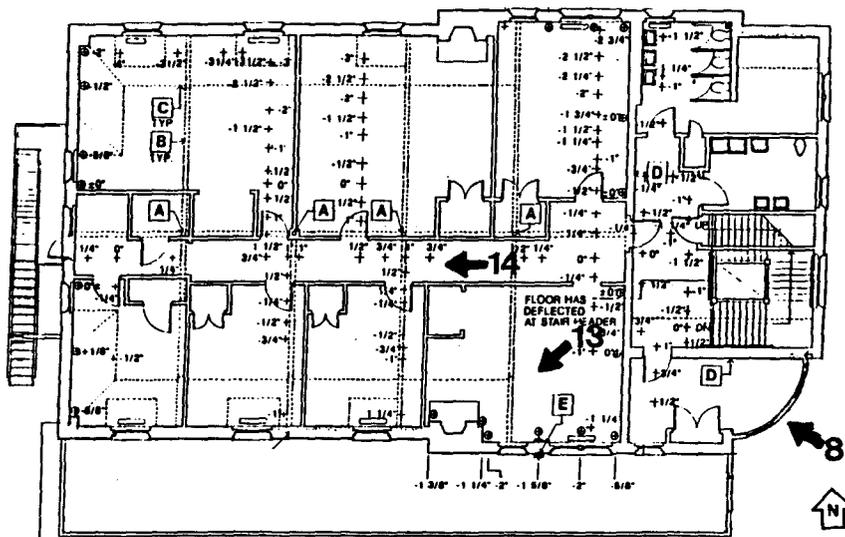


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KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

1849 C Street NW

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