

Saint Aloysius Academy (Mount Aloysius)
Tile Plant Road at Thorn Street
Pike Township
New Lexington Vicinity
Perry County
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2150

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SAINT ALOYSIUS ACADEMY

HABS No. OH-2150

(Mount Aloysius)

Location: Tile Plant Road (at Thorn St.), Pike Township,
(New Lexington vicinity) Perry County, Ohio

USGS New Lexington Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinate: 17.294600, 1396810

Present Owner: Good Shepherd Manor Inc.
Mount Aloysius
297 S. High Street
Suite 600
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Present Occupant: Mount Aloysius

Present Use: Administrative offices, dormitory, chapel and convent
for a school for mentally retarded and developmentally
disabled boys.

Significance: Mt. Aloysius is historically significant because it
served as an educational institution for children in
both New Lexington and the surrounding area for nearly
a hundred years. It is also an example of the strong
Catholic presence in Perry County. Mt. Aloysius is also
an example of institutional architecture. The main
facility is designed in two distinct architectural
styles, French Second Empire and Late Gothic
Revival. The change in style from French Second Empire,
which is more appropriate for residential designs, to
Gothic seems to be an indication of the firm
establishment of St. Aloysius Academy as an
educational institution.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: Original-Main building was built in 1878. Main building addition was constructed in 1882 along with the convent and chapel. The annex building was constructed in 1897 and connected to the main building via "Pigtail Alley" in 1906. The west dormitory wing and auditorium were added in 1907.

2. Architects: Main building and 1882 additions : not known
Annex : Sweeney Architects-Columbus Oh.
Dormitory wing : Ginther-Akron Oh.

3. Original and subsequent owners : References to the Chain of Title to the land upon which the structure stands are in the Office of the Recorder of Perry County, Perry County Court House, New Lexington, Ohio.

1870 Deed recorded November 7, 1870, in book volume #12, page 583.
Owen Donnelly
to
S.H. Rosencrans (Bishop of Columbus)

1886 Deed recorded October 28, 1886, book #35, page 9.
Silvester Rosencrans by John Purcell et al. - trustees
to
John A. Waterson (Bishop of Columbus)

1900 Deed recorded November 9, 1900, book #5, page 323.
John A. ~~Waterson~~ (trustees)
to
Bishop Moeller (Columbus)

1902 Deed recorded October 27, 1902, book #60, page 60.
Bishop Moeller
to
Mother Gonzaga (Wilhelmine Brexel)

1921 Deed recorded August 20, 1921, book #115, page 134.
Mother Gonzaga
to
Mother Cecilia Hidenkamp

1931 Deed recorded August 14, 1931, book #115, page 125.
Mother Gerard Zimmerman and Sister Lima Dreckman
(trustees of the Celia Hidenkamp Estate)
to
the Buffalo Academy of the sacred Heart

1969 Deed recorded October 27, 1969, book #200, page 64.
Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart
to
the Brothers of the Good Shepherd

4. Builder : dormitory wing - Showers and May (1907)

5. Original plans and construction : No original drawing or plan remain to date. Early drawing of the original main building show the academy as a rectangular French Second Empire structure with a five-bay north facade and a very modest porch on the center bay. The east facade is shown with four bays. The original center hallway and staircase remain today as secondary access within the main building.

6. Alterations and additions : The first addition to the main building came as a result of damage from a tornado in June, 1881. Outside walls were cracked and enough structural damage occurred that an addition was planned for both expansion and repair of damaged sections. The addition included the present main entrance and main staircase. The French Second Empire design was replicated in the addition of three bays to the north facade.

The second addition to the academy was the present chapel and convent. By 1890 there was a need for additional dormitory space, a study hall, music room, and a larger chapel. Construction actually began in 1890 on the 3 1/2 story convent and chapel, which is really a small gothic church. The addition was under roof in 1891 and the interior was finished and dedicated in May, 1892. An 1895 photograph shows the convent and chapel to have the same appearance as present with the exception of the sanctuary which was expanded at a later date.

The third addition was actually built as a separate annex in 1897. The annex was to contain a laundry, class rooms, dining room, and storage. Being separate from the main building proved a problem during poor weather.

The fourth addition was a 2 story structure built to connect the annex to the main building and to provide additional bedrooms. In the fall of 1906 thirteen Puerto Rican girls arrived to attend St. Aloysius. Because all the girls wore their hair in a braid fashion and some occupied the small bedrooms of the annex it was christened "Pigtail alley" and the name remained until the present. There is evidence of a porch extending almost the entire length of "Pigtail Alley" which has been removed in favor of a small covering over the entrance door and steps.

The fifth addition was the dormitory wing in 1907. This was a necessity because of the large increase in the number of boarders at the academy.

6. Alterations & additions(cont.)

The sixth addition was the construction of the auditorium east of the dormitory in 1908.

Also in 1908, the large front porch was added onto the main building.

The last addition/alteration was the expansion of the chapel sanctuary in 1924.

B. Historical Context:

In 1870 a farmer by the name of Owen Donnelly, living near New Lexington, Ohio, offered his farm to the Most Reverend Sylvester H. Rosencrans, Bishop of Columbus, on the condition that it be used for a school. The offer was gladly accepted by the Bishop, and Father Francis Moitrier, then pastor of St. Rose Church, New Lexington, was told to begin and to superintend the erection of an academy on the site. Four years later the academy was not yet complete for lack of funds. When it was known to Bishop Rosencrans that many of the educational establishments directed by the Franciscan Sisters of Penance and Christian Charity in Germany were being closed by the Prussian Government, the Bishop asked Mother Aloysia Lenders, Mother General of the Sisters, to allow her religious order to take charge of the academy at New Lexington. In 1873 a group of six Sisters, led by Mother Gonzaga Brexel arrived from Konitz, Germany.

It is interesting to note that old historical maps of the 1870's show that the name of the academy was to be "Saint Euginia", a name which Mother Gonzaga changed to "Saint Aloysius" no doubt because of her friendship with Mother Aloysia Lender, the first Franciscan Sister of her Order to arrive in America.

The trip to New Lexington was a revelation to Mother Gonzaga. Any illusions which she and her Sisters might have perhaps cherished were dashed. Upon arrival they found Father Moitrier engaged in a number of law suits concerning payments to be made for labour and material. It was nearly a year before the building was completed and the Sisters could move into sparsely furnished quarters. On Saint Francis Day, 1876, the building was at last dedicated and ready to accept students. Mother Gonzaga was to labour for 28 years in the house she had founded.

In June, 1881, a tornado swept over Perry County which caused a great deal of damage to the outer walls of the building. This event, which greatly distressed everyone at the time, was really a blessing in disguise, for it made it necessary for the Sisters to build; had the walls not been damaged, expansion might not have occurred.

This first addition to the original building comprised on the first floor, the present entrance hall and stairway, the two reception rooms and one classroom which was also the auditorium; on the second floor the children's dormitory, guest rooms and infirmary; on the third floor, dormitory and wardrobe. It was completed in July 1882. No further additions were made until 1890 when the present chapel foundations were laid. It was completed and dedicated by Bishop Watterson in May, 1892. On November 19, 1900, Bishop Moeller blessed the present bell which had been presented by Mother Gonzaga's nephew, and which was christened "Joseph Elizabeth." In 1907 excavations were begun for the dormitory wing of the building. The present front porch and the new wing gave additional classroom space, dormitories, a social hall, and an auditorium. In 1924 under the direction of Mother Dorothy Ortmeier, the present sanctuary was added to the chapel and windows were ordered from Munich, Germany. A white marble altar, imported from Italy, was presented to the academy by the Alumnae for the golden jubilee year. Needing additional space, the Sisters constructed a new academic building in 1968 consisting of classrooms and a gymnasium.

Saint Aloysius Military School and Academy was established in 1939 as a boarding school for boys and to provide elementary school education from the third through eighth grade. For its first 72 years, Saint Aloysius Academy High School remained a school for girls. In 1948 as a result of a growing need for a parochial high school for boys in the New Lexington area, the high school was opened to boys.

Because of a decline in student enrollment and changing circumstances within the educational field, the Sisters decided to close the Saint Aloysius in 1969. The future of the building seemed doomed. However, it was not long after the Academy closed that the Brothers of the Good Shepherd were contacted to see if the building could be used in their work with the physically and mentally handicapped. After several months of negotiations, the properties were purchased by the Brothers and on November 1, 1969 a new phase in the life of Saint Aloysius Academy was begun. The name "Aloysius" was retained in this new work because of its significance.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure is a combination of the French 2nd Empire style (main building) and Late Gothic Revival (convent, chapel, dormitory & auditorium). Situated on a hilltop

2. Condition of fabric: The exterior brick masonry is fairly sound although there are several areas exhibiting water damage and deteriorating mortar. The roof is in generally poor condition with leaks and water damage evident throughout the building. The interior is in fair to good condition, apart from water damage. Most of the original interior elements remain.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The entire building is 477' in overall length and 231' in depth. The plan is irregular and asymmetrical. Most of the wings are two & one half and three story buildings with full basements. The original main building and 1st addition are basically "L" shaped; "Pigtail alley" is a long rectangular wing shape; the annex is nearly square; the convent is rectangular; the chapel has an irregular "T" shape; the dormitory wing is basically "L" shaped; and the auditorium is rectangular. The main building has an eight bay facade; the convent - three bay; the chapel - eight bay; the dormitory - three bay; and the auditorium - five bay front elevation. The main building, chapel, annex, and auditorium each have two & one half stories; "Pigtail alley" - two stories; and convent and dormitory - three & one half stories.
2. Foundations: Rock-faced stone, thickness not known. The original building has a brick foundation with stone watertable.
3. Walls: All are solid, red brick. The main building, convent and chapel utilize a common or American bond, while the annex, "Pigtail alley", dormitory wing and auditorium utilize a running bond. The chapel walls are buttressed as are the convent walls. The main building has giant order brick pilasters.
4. Structural system: Exterior walls and major partition walls are brick, load bearing.
5. Porches: The main entrance to the building is through the 65' x 12' porch. It has decorative tile flooring and stone Tuscan columns. A dentiled entablature supports a flat roof.
6. Chimneys: All chimneys are brick and of plain design. The main building has twelve chimneys, each extending from the mansard roof and in line with the pilasters below.
The convent has four chimneys, each in line with a buttress and behind parapeted gables.
The chapel has three chimneys, one on each side behind parapeted gables and a large one on the rear

6. Chimneys (cont.):

side.

The annex has one on its rear wall

The dormitory wing has three chimneys, one incorporated into the rear gable parapet and two attached to the gable parapet on the side, center tower.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: There are surprisingly few exterior doorways for the size of the structure. Most duplicate existing window configuration or are converted window openings. The main entrance is round arched (as are the windows on this side) with a transom and double, lighted doors. The rear doorway is round arched, duplicating the windows, with a modern lighted door.

The convent has a ground level, basement doorway in a gothic arched opening, a wide segmental arched doorway (top and side lighted) with a flat topped solid door, and three gothic arched doorways, two with arched doors and one top-lighted with a flat topped door. All of these exit to a rear fire escape. The chapel has one large exterior doorway with a stone hoodmold. All remaining doorways are flat-topped without decorative treatment.

b. Windows: The main building window openings are brick round arches on the first two stories and wood segmental arched dormers in the mansard roof. All windows were originally two-over-two light, double-hung sash. Most windows in the convent and chapel are gothic arched, with brick head treatments. The convent windows are one-over-one sash windows. The front facade of the convent has segmental arched windows on the ground and first floors with ground floor wooden casement windows.

There are two circle-in-triangle dormer windows in the convent roof. Annex windows are segmental arched with brick head treatment, but with flat-topped one-over-one light windows. Most dormitory wing windows are flat-topped, stone linteled windows with a mixture of one-over-one and four-over-four double-hung wood sash. There are several gothic arched windows in the gabled ends of the building, and facing the main building are several circle-in-arch wooden casement windows with gothic arches and brick head treatments. The auditorium's gothic arched, paired windows are actually one-over-one double hung sash windows with flat stone lintels topped with gothic arches.

B. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: All roofs are slate shingled. Main building - mansard with decorative slate shingles.
Convent and chapel - gable ; Annex - truncated hip and gable ; dormitory wing - gambrel ; and auditorium - hip.
- b. Cornice, eaves : The main building has a wood cornice of plain design which incorporates the gutter system.
The convent and chapel have corbeled brick cornices. The dormitory wing and auditorium have an arcading corbel cornice with standard metal gutters.
- c. Dormers, towers: The convent, chapel, and dormitory wing each have parapeted gables which form a cross design in the roof lines. In addition the convent has a pair of triangular dormers.
The bell tower of the chapel is square with a pinnacle (tops now removed) on each corner, and an eight sided roof rising to a cross/spire. There are brick, stone-capped pinnacles on the northern corners of the dormitory wing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: see page 11
2. Stairways: Stair in entrance hall has turned balusters, elaborate newel post and decorated risers.
3. Flooring: Original mosaic tile floor coverings exist in the main building, convent, and chapel.
The chapel sanctuary has a terrazo floor with golden, mosaic tile inlay.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The chapel interior has a rib-vaulted ceiling with a smooth plaster finish. The original metal ceiling is still visible in the main building entranceway.
5. Openings
 - a. Doorways: The standard doorway throughout the building is a segmental arched opening.
 - b. Windows: stained glass windows in the chapel, imported from Munich, Germany. See exterior description.
6. Decorative features: Marble altar and gothic detailing in chapel, tile floors, main staircase.

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D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Mount Aloysius is located on a hilltop just northwest of New Lexington, Ohio. The country side consists of gently rolling hills. Mount Aloysius is approached from Thorn St. which intersects Tile Plant Rd. across from the long driveway which climbs the hill to the institution. Conifers line the front yard area. The building faces northeast.
2. Historic landscape design: No records exist of original landscape design. Walks, shrubbery, and trees currently in place are shown on page 12.

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: No original drawings exist. A 1/16"=1' floor plan is retained by Good Shepherd Manor Inc.
- B. Historic views: A 1976 pamphlet tracing the history of Mount Aloysius with photographs by Gene Woolfe's Studio in New Lexington is retained by the Brothers of the Good Shepherd. An 1883 photograph of St. Aloysius and an amateur drawing of the original building appeared in a series of newspaper articles. The articles dated March 30, 1983 through August 10, 1983 appeared in the Perry County Tribune, New Lexington, Ohio.
- C. Interviews: Historic information was provided by Brother Michael Carlyle, Brothers of the Good Shepherd, March, 1985 at Mount Aloysius.
- D. Bibliography.

1. Secondary and published sources:

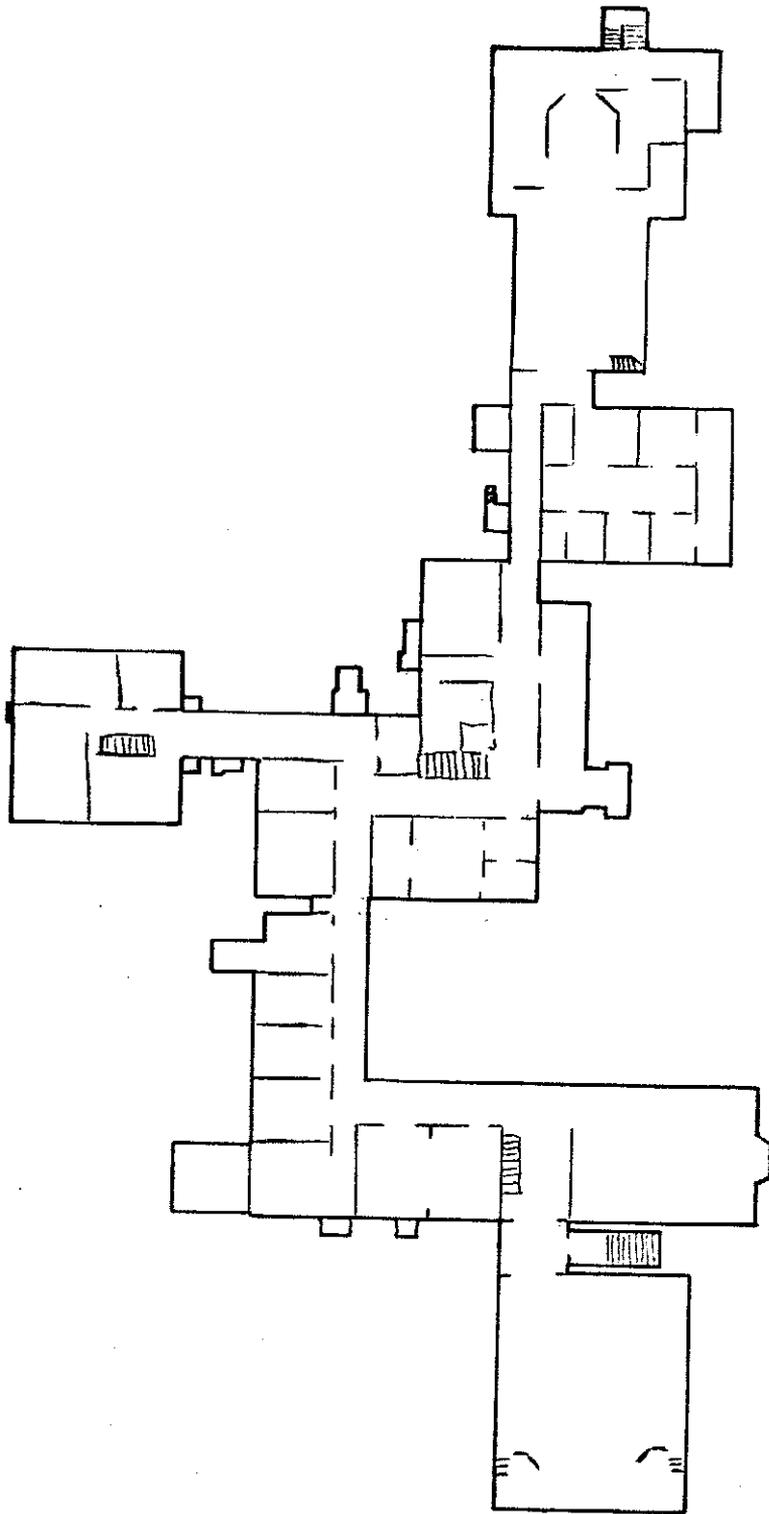
"The House on the Hill", Perry County Tribune: New Lexington, Ohio, March 30 through August 10, 1983.

"Mount Aloysius 1876 - 1976" a centennial celebration pamphlet: New Lexington, Ohio, 1976.

PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

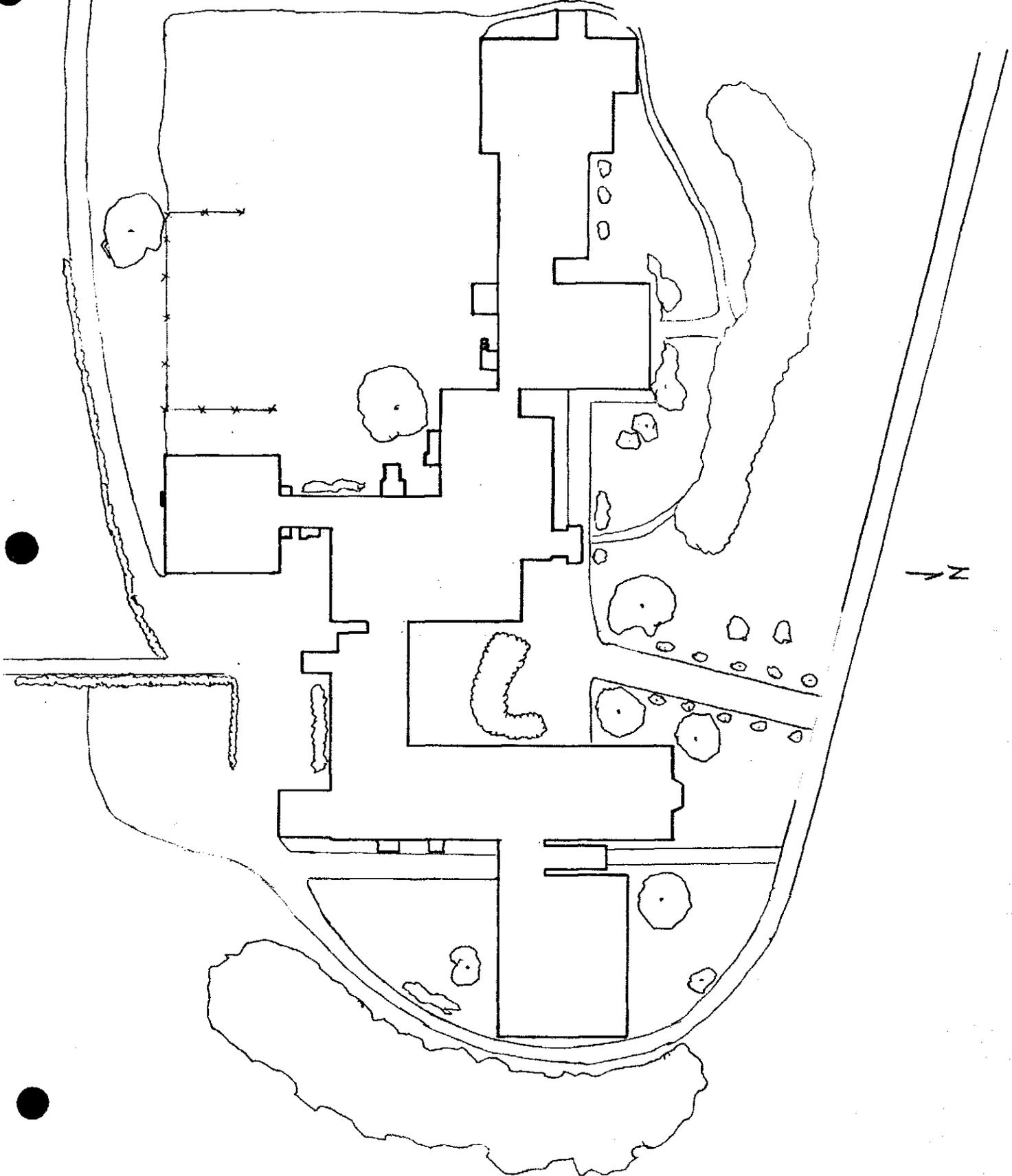
Mount Aloysius is being funded by the Farmers Home Administration for the construction of a new intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded. The new facility is to be built on the site of the current Mount Aloysius facility, thus requiring its demolition. A condition of the Memorandum of Agreement dated September, 1985 authorizes the implementation of the undertaking. A condition of the Memorandum of Agreement was HABS documentation of the structure, since it had been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

prepared by: Bruce D. Williams
affiliation: consultant
Date: June 12, 1985

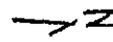
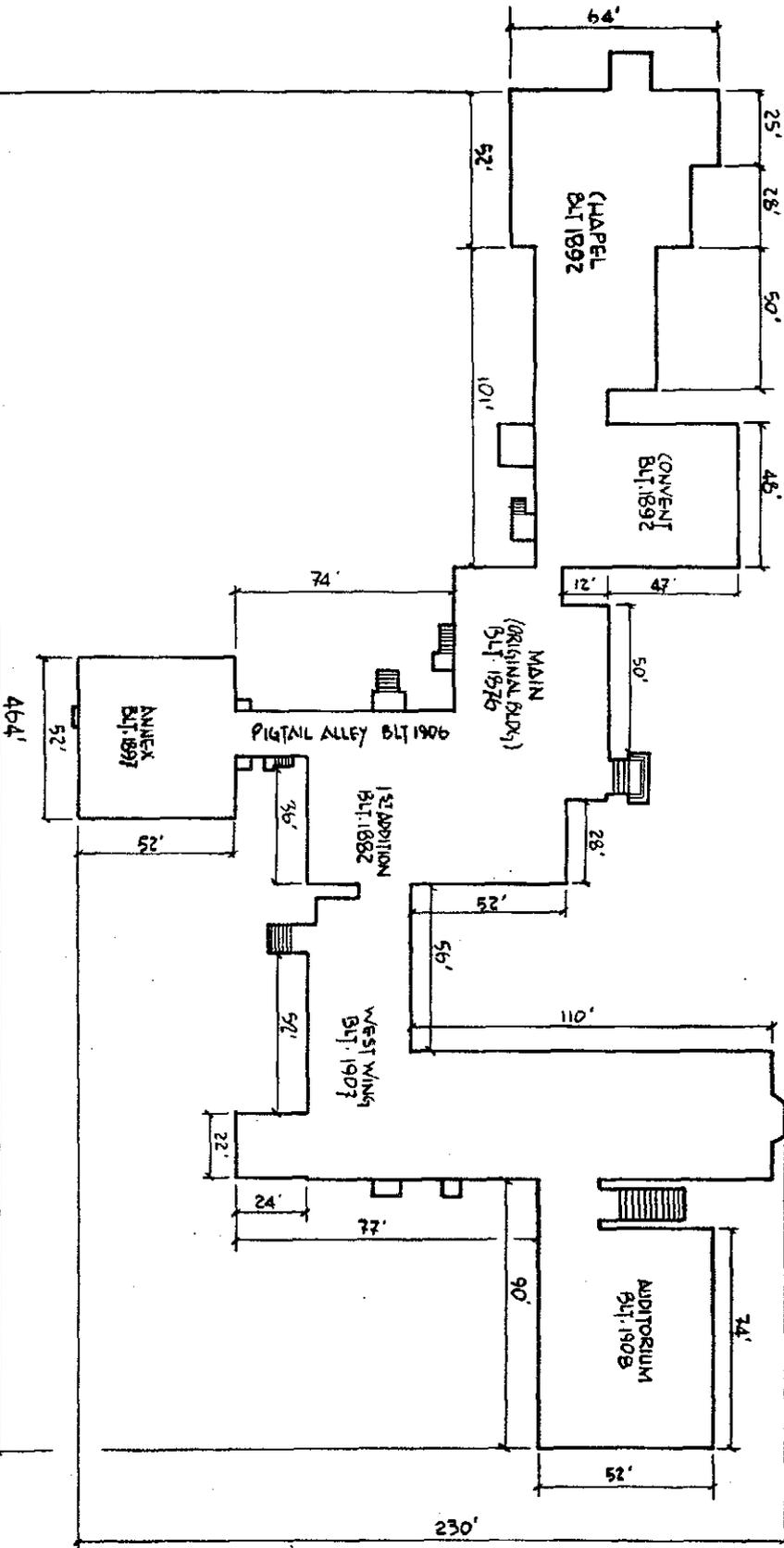


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NOTE: DIMENSIONS TAKEN FROM BLUEPRINT
 SUPPLIED BY SPALL ENGINEERING.



Photograph guide

