

Grosvenor-Dale Company, Tenement
110 Main Street
Thompson
Windham County
Connecticut

HABS No. CT-433

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8-THOMP,
1-

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

GROSVENOR-DALE COMPANY, TENEMENT

HABS No. CT- 433

Location: 110 Main Street
Village of North Grosvenordale,
Town of Thompson
Windham County, Connecticut

UTM: 19.259700.4651980
Quad: Putnam, Conn., 1:24,000

Present Owner: Estate of Thomas Andrea, Jr.
c/o Thomas Andrea, Sr.
Box 67
Quinebaug, Connecticut 06262

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Significance: This building is historically significant as an integral part of the corporate village of North Grosvenordale. Between 1864 and 1912, the Grosvenor-Dale Company, a textile producer, built mills, residences and stores, and subsidized the construction of churches and social halls in this village. Most of the workers lived in multi-unit dwellings accommodating four to twelve families. This house was one of five large tenements in a small cluster south of the mill and west of the French River; only one other house remains from this cluster. Most of the housing is in three larger concentrations known as Three Rows, Swede Village and Greek Village. In its rectangular form, general lack of embellishment, and simple stick-framing, this house typifies the company-built dwellings of North Grosvenordale.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** This tenement was probably erected in the mid-1880s, when the Grosvenor-Dale Company was expanding its textile factory and ancillary facilities in the village of North Grosvenordale.

Direct evidence is limited to two maps. The C. G. Keeney atlas of 1869 (see Bibliography for full citation) shows this location, immediately north of the cemetery, as open land. The Waterman survey of 1897 (see Bibliography) shows this house and a similar one to the north (demolished), both owned by the Grosvenor-Dale Company. The likelihood of mid-1880s construction is supported by the historical context of the company and the village; see below.

2. **Original and Subsequent Owners:** The Grosvenor-Dale Company was indicated as the owner of this property in the first legal document to record the building's existence, the Waterman survey of 1897. Deeds in the following Chain of Title to the property are in the Town Clerk's Office, Thompson Town Hall, Thompson, Connecticut.

1938 Deed, May 26, 1938, recorded in Volume 47, p. 463. Grosvenor-Dale Company, by George V. Meehan, Treasurer, to Onesime P. Faucher.

1954 Deed, December 6, 1954, recorded in Volume 65, p. 239. Onesime P. Faucher to Nova I. Faucher et al. (Grantees were the children of Onesime P. Faucher.)

1954 Various quit-claims among Faucher heirs.
-1966

1966 Deed, April 29, 1966, recorded in Volume 76, p. 452. Nova I. Faucher et al. to Violet G. Hoyt.

1972 Deed, May 30, 1972, recorded in Volume 87, p. 125. Violet G. Hoyt to Michael P. Markowitz.

1985 Deed, November 1, 1985, recorded in Volume 184, p. 239. Michael P. Markowitz to Robert E. Mooney and Lorraine M. Mooney.

1988 Deed, September 29, 1988, recorded in Volume 231, p. 206. Robert E. Mooney and Lorraine M. Mooney to Beverly L. Adams and Thomas Andrea, Jr.

1989 Deed, December 15, 1989, recorded in Volume 249, p. 86. Beverly L. Adams to Thomas Andrea, Jr.

The property is subject to a purchase-and-sale agreement, dated February 1, 1991, between the trustee of Thomas Andrea, Jr.'s estate and SK Properties. This agreement has not been executed or filed.

3. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers: It is not known whether the Grosvenor-Dale Company erected this tenement with its own crews or contracted for its construction.

4. Original Plans and Construction: The long, rectangular building originally held nine apartments, three on the first floor and six that included space on both the second floor and attic (see sketch plans).

5. Alterations and Additions: The overall dimensions of the building have not been changed. Significant alterations, which have all occurred since 1938, include the division of each of the end apartments on the first floor into two smaller units (see sketch plan), and the installation of plumbing. The 1938 subdivision survey (see Bibliography) indicates two large privies to the north of this building, which have been demolished. Exterior alterations include the installation of aluminum siding over the original clapboards; the enlargement of a window (north elevation, third bay in from the west end) to accommodate a door; the cutting of a new opening for the entry that is now the easternmost bay of the north elevation; and the replacement of virtually all of the original sash (except for the dormers). Inside, the majority of the finishes have been removed, obscured or altered.

B. Historical Context.

The settlement and growth of this village was the product of 19th-century textile industrialism. William Fisher first developed the waterpower at this site on the French River in the 1840s, beginning the small village known as Fisherville. The Grosvenor-Dale Company, which owned the water privilege immediately downstream, purchased Fisher's property and water rights in 1864. Over the next eight years the company acquired substantial additional property in and around Fisherville, and renamed the village North Grosvenordale. (The downstream mill village was known as Grosvenordale.) In 1872 the Grosvenor-Dale Company replaced the prior manufacturing facilities with the enormous Mill No. 2, which, at five stories and more than 450' in length, rivaled in scale the largest textile mills in the state. The worker housing erected at that time stood south of the mill on the east side of the river, in the neighborhood that became known as Three Rows. By 1880, Mill No. 2 employed 850 people.

Between 1882 and 1885, major additions almost doubled the manufacturing floor space, and employment increased by more than a third. The company began erecting additional worker housing west of the river, probably including the cluster that included this tenement. Besides this building and the one to its north, the cluster also included three similar tenements immediately across Main Street to the east. The other notable component of 1880s housing growth was the neighborhood of one- and two-family houses erected on the hill west of the mill and known as Swede Village, indicating the heritage of the skilled and supervisory employees who lived there. In the 1890s, further expansion again caused employment to increase by more than one-third, and more twelve-family tenements went up adjacent to Three Rows; occupied primarily by new immigrant workers from southeastern Europe, this cluster became known as Greek Village.

The North Grosvenordale mills originally produced high-quality sheetings, and achieved peak output in the first decade of the 20th century. As increased competition from southern and foreign producers lowered profits, the Grosvenor-Dale Company shifted to lower-quality fabrics

that rewarded the economies of scale afforded by this huge enterprise. After the decline of business in the Great Depression shrank the market and further reduced earnings, the company began laying off workers. Because of the rising vacancy rate in company housing, and needing to raise capital to upgrade its equipment, the company decided to sell its residential holdings in 1938. The residential areas were surveyed for subdivision and the houses auctioned. In 1942 the Grosvenor-Dale Company sold its mills to another textile firm. The North Grosvenordale facility operated at sharply reduced capacity before closing in 1954. Since then, the mills have stood vacant or marginally utilized, while the multiple-family dwellings originally built for millworkers, including this one at 110 Main Street, have continued to be occupied as rental housing.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural character:** The character of this building is consistent with its origin as a means of housing workers and their families as cheaply as possible. Its chief features are a simple rectangular plan and gable roof, general lack of adornment, and use of repetitive modules as the means of interior spatial division.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** The basic structure does not appear to be substantially compromised: the roof does not sag and the walls are plumb. The interior and exterior surfaces, however, have been subject to numerous changes that are not consistent with the building's historic character; these surfaces also display the effects of accumulated deterioration due to lack of maintenance and moisture penetration.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall dimensions:** The building is a long rectangle, 135' x 32'. There are sixteen bays across the north elevation (where an entry has been added) and fifteen across the south (original

configuration). The building is two and one-half stories high, with a full-height basement.

2. **Foundations:** Dry-laid rubble of local granite is approximately 2' thick in the basement, tapering to less than a foot in thickness above grade. Exposed portions are covered with a thin facing of concrete.
3. **Walls:** Aluminum siding (light blue) is installed over clapboards. Except for a simple cornice (see below) and ornamental lintels over the entries (also see below), there are no decorative effects.
4. **Structural systems, framing:** Exterior walls and a long, central interior wall (see sketch plans) are the principal load-bearing elements. All these walls are stick-framed of circular-sawn lumber, ranging in size from full 2 x 4's to full 2 x 12's. Floor joists, visible only in the basement, vary in size from 2 x 9's to 2 x 12's and vary in placement from 15" to 22" center-to-center distance. Rafters are hidden behind plaster ceilings throughout the attic.
5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** A short flight of concrete steps appears at every entry.
6. **Chimneys:** There are six brick chimneys spaced symmetrically along the length of the building and offset slightly from the ridge: half the chimneys come through the roof immediately north of the ridge, and half immediately south of the ridge. The chimneys are square in section, with corbeled tops.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** There were originally six entries, three in each of the long elevations. The south elevation retains the original pattern, with one entry at the extreme east end and the other two spaced apart by a distance equal to a third of the building's length (Photograph 2). The north side originally had two entries in line with the middle ones in the south wall and one at the extreme west bay (Photograph 6). Two more entries have been

added to the north side, one inserted at the east end and the other created by enlarging a window (third bay in from the west end); both new entries were added as the consequence of subdividing first-floor apartments (since 1938). All the original door surrounds have been removed except for simple ornamental lintels, which have a narrow plain-board frieze under a molded cornice (Photograph 7). The original doors have all been removed since the building has been vacated. The added entries are fitted with modern steel doors and metal storm doors.

- b. **Windows:** Fenestration on the long elevations corresponds to the modular division of interior space (see sketch plans), with five windows per module per floor. Each set of five is further divided into one group of three and one group of two. The end walls each have a pair of windows in the second floor and attic, and rectangular staircase windows centered on the first and second floors. Most of the openings have no sash or modern one-over-one light double-hung metal-frame sash. One opening (south side, second floor, fifth bay from the east end) retains two-over-two light double hung wooden sash, which is either original to the building or an early replacement. The staircase windows on the east end are fitted with two-over-two light double-hung wooden sash. (See below for dormer sash.)

8. **Roof:**

- a: **Shape, covering:** The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. **Cornice:** A wide fascia board with ogee bed-molding is surmounted by a plain cornice that is also finished with an ogee molding. This entire treatment displays a partial return at the gable ends.
- c. **Dormers:** On both slopes of the roof are six symmetrically placed, gable-roofed dormers.

Their sides are clad in aluminum siding and the front faces are finished with flush-boarding. Each dormer has two windows, fitted with small, two-over-two light double-hung wooden sash.

C. Description of Interior:

1. **Floor plans:** See sketch plans.
2. **Stairways:** See sketch plans for locations. Stairways feature pipe rails and vertical-board wainscoting above which runs an ogee molding (see Photograph 9).
3. **Flooring:** Original flooring consists of six- to eight-inch-wide pine boards, painted a variety of colors. Carpet or tile obscures the flooring in many rooms.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** Walls and ceilings were originally finished with plaster on sawn lath; in some one-quarter of the rooms all or part of the plaster has been replaced by gypsum-board drywall. The parlors also feature wainscoting of vertical boards (Photographs 10, 11, 12).
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** The typical doorway features a plain-board surround (Photographs 10, 11, 12), although this trim has been removed from approximately one-third of the doorways. Original doors featured four rectangular panels (Photographs 10, 12), although more than half of these have been replaced by wood and steel doors in various configurations. Photograph 10 shows one such replacement door in the right foreground.
 - b. **Windows:** Typical interior window trim includes plain-board surrounds with simply molded sills.
6. **Mechanical equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** No

remnant of the original heating system is evident.

- b. **Lighting:** No remnant of any original lighting system is evident.
- c. **Plumbing:** Original sanitary facilities consisted of privies (not extant) located in the yard to the north of the building. Potable water was probably obtained from the well located about 25 feet to the south of the building; though the well is inoperable, it is protected by a small shed (Photograph 4).

D. **Site:**

- 1. **General Setting and Orientation:** The building is oriented with its long axis on an east-west line and with its gable-end to the street. It was originally one of a pair of similar tenements, but its neighbor to the north has been demolished. This property was the southern limit of the Grosvenor-Dale Company's holdings on the west side of Main Street, because Upham Cemetery, immediately to the south, effectively blocked further land acquisition. Construction of this pair of tenements blocked access to a pasture west of Main Street that probably belonged to the Upham family. The company accordingly cut through the embankment south of the tenement, reinforcing the cut with rubble walls on either side, to create a passage to the pasture (Photograph 3). To the east, across Main Street, stood another set of three similar tenements, of which one remains (Photograph 1).
- 2. **Outbuildings:** A small plywood-walled shed stands atop the inoperative well (Photograph 4).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. **Architectural Drawings:** None were located.
- B. **Historic Views:** No views were discovered that depicted the building's elevations. Its footprint was delineated

on the 1869 county atlas, the 1897 Waterman survey, and the 1927 Sanborn map, all cited in the Bibliography below.

C. Interviews: None.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Barlow's Insurance Survey [Company]. "Grosvenor-Dale Co., Mill No. 2." New York, 1878; insurance map and report located at the Museum of American Textile History, North Andover, Massachusetts, file number 5108.

Gerrish, E. P., W. C. Eaton, D. S. Cosborn, and H. Cosborn. Windham County, Connecticut. New Haven, 1855; wall map.

Keeney, C. G. Atlas of Windham and Tolland Counties. Hartford, 1869.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company. "North Grosvenordale, Connecticut." New York, 1927; insurance maps, 5 sheets, microfilm at Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

Thompson Land Records. Town Clerk's Office, Thompson Town Hall. Volumes as cited above under Original and Subsequent Owners.

Waterman Engineering Company. "Survey of Subdivision of Dwellings and Lands of the Grosvenor-Dale Company, North Grosvenordale, Thompson, Connecticut." Providence, 1938. Located in Thompson Land Records, Map File Number 94.

Waterman, Frank E. "Survey of a Highway at North Grosvenordale, Connecticut." Providence, 1897. Located in Thompson Land Records, Map File Number 19.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Bayles, Richard. History of Windham County, Connecticut. New York, 1889.

McDonough, Mark. Historic Resource Survey of Thompson, Connecticut. 1987. Records deposited at Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, Connecticut.

Porter, Dwight. "The Water Power of the Region Tributary to Long Island Sound," in 10th Census, Reports on the Water Power of the United States, Part 1. Washington, D.C., 1885.

Roth, Matthew. Connecticut: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites. Washington, D.C., 1981.

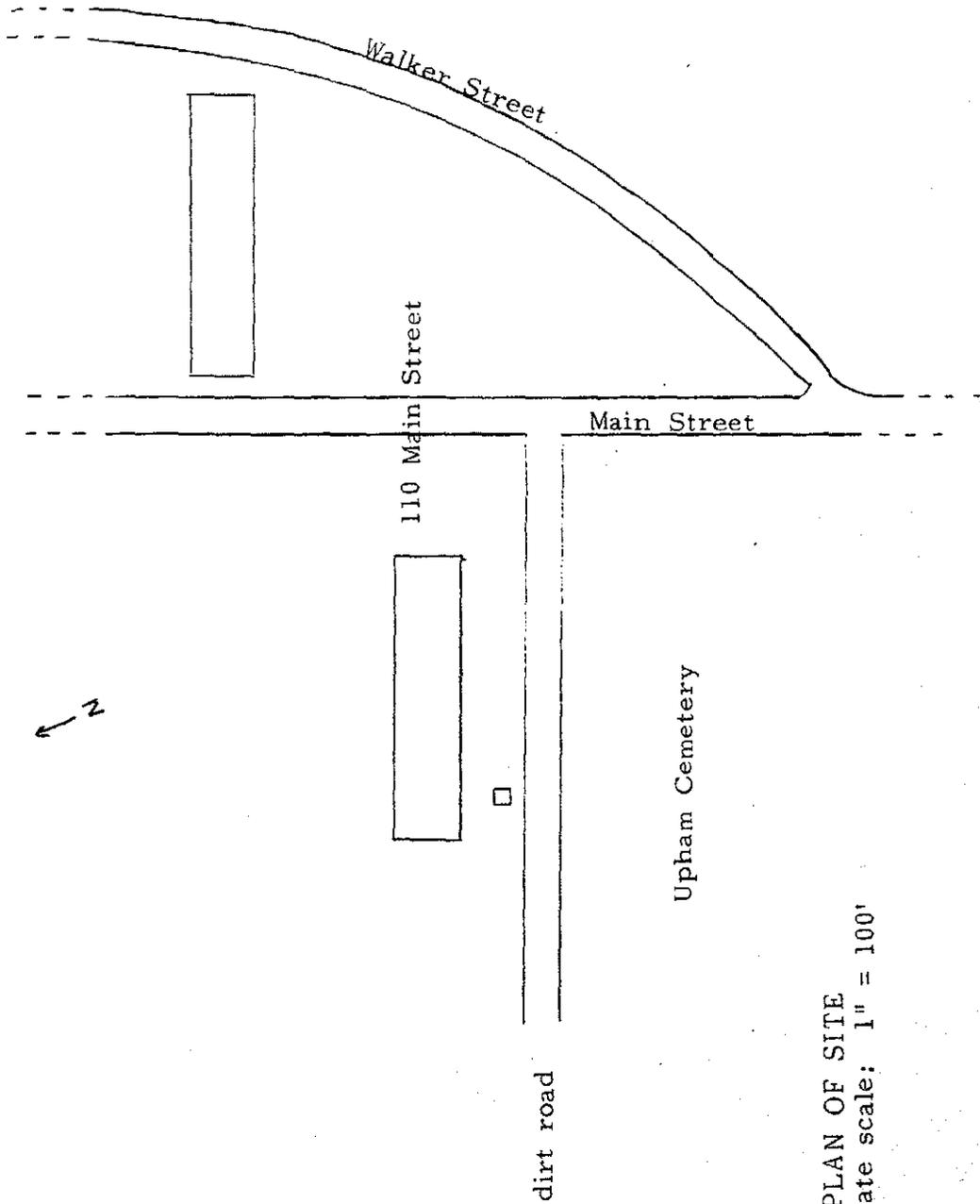
E. Likely sources not yet investigated: None.

F. Supplementary Material: None.

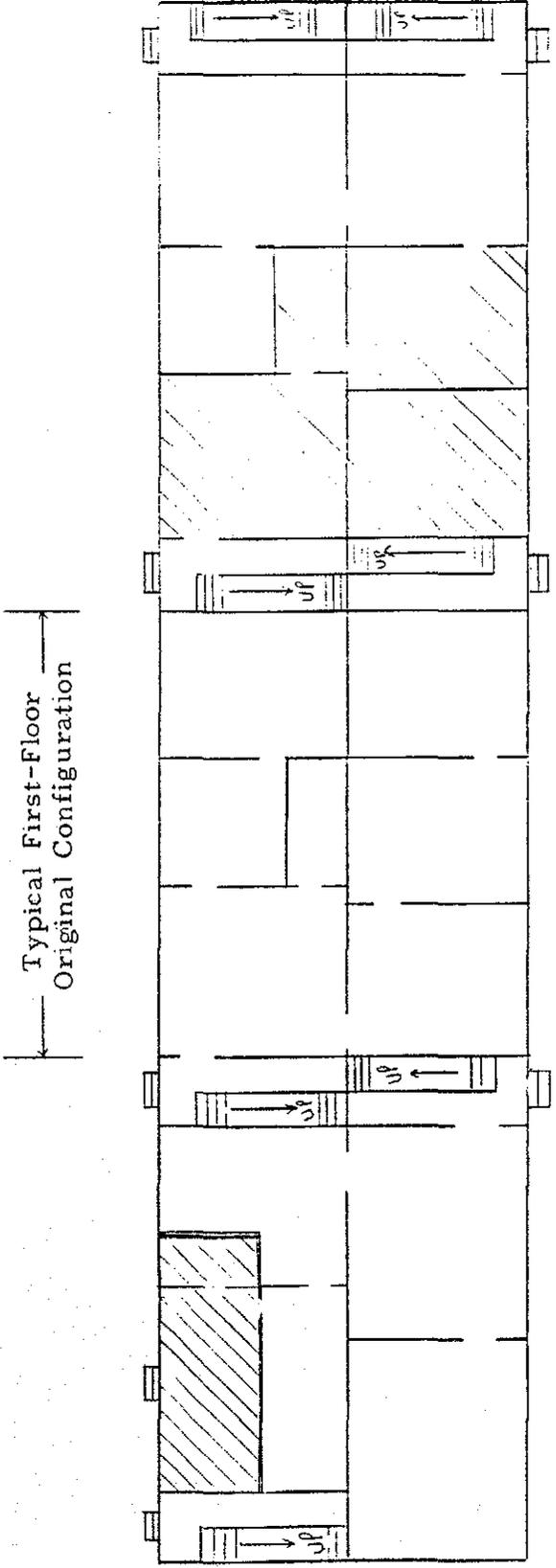
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The present owner of the property intends to sell it to SK Properties of New Ipswich, New Hampshire, which plans to demolish the building and construct on the site twenty-eight units of housing for low and moderate-income elderly tenants. The property acquisition and new construction will be funded by a loan from the Farmers Home Administration, a Federal agency with compliance responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and Executive Order 11593. This documentation was prepared to mitigate the adverse effect of demolition. It was prepared by:

Matthew Roth
Historian/Preservation Planner
Historic Resource Consultants, Inc.
Hartford, Connecticut
January 16, 1992.



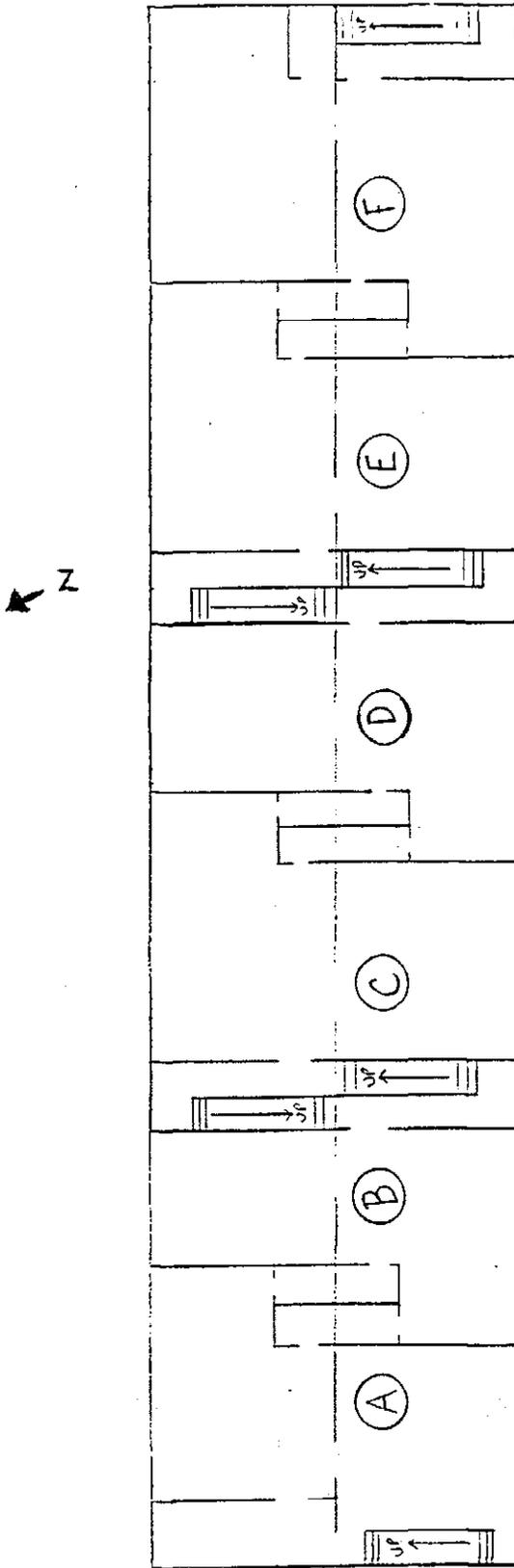
SKETCH PLAN OF SITE
Approximate scale: 1" = 100'



SKETCH PLAN, FIRST FLOOR

Approximate Scale: 1/16" = 1'

Notes: Middle unit retains its original configuration.
Shaded areas indicate smaller units made over from larger original units.



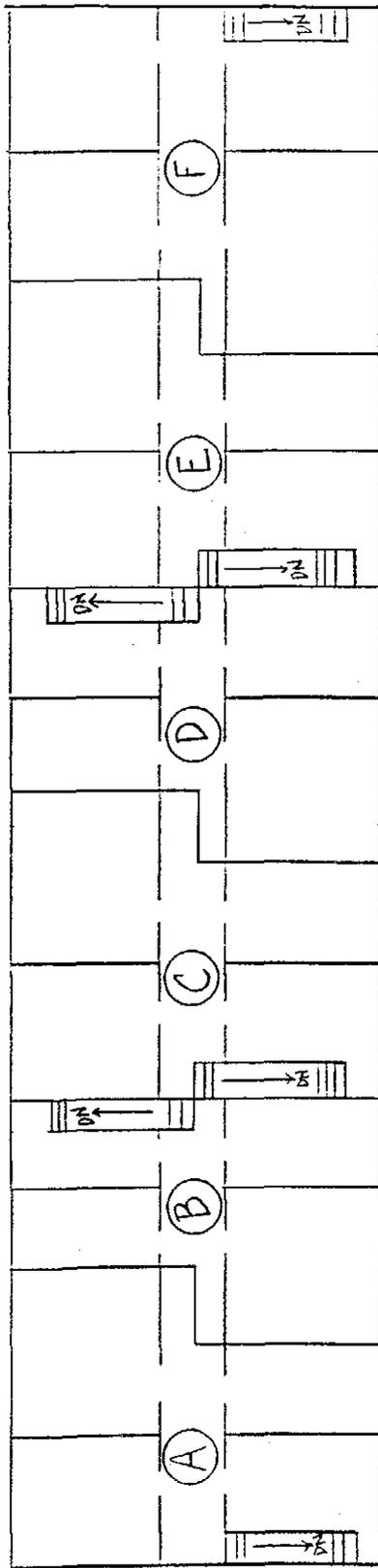
SKETCH PLAN, SECOND FLOOR

Approximate Scale: 1/16" = 1'

Note: Each unit, designated by letters, includes two rooms on the second floor and four rooms in the attic. The ATTIC SKETCH PLAN (page 15), uses the same letters to indicate unit division.

GROSVENOR-DALE
COMPANY, TENEMENT
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← Z



SKETCH PLAN, ATTIC

Approximate Scale: 1/16" = 1'

Note: Letters indicate the four-room groupings that correspond to the similarly designated units on the second floor; see Page 14.