

U. S. Soldiers Home (Old Soldiers Home),  
Grant Building  
Entrance at Rock Creek Church Road  
and Upshur Street, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-353-F

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
534F-

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE District of Columbia	COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY Washington
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) U. S. Soldiers Home, Grant Building		HABS NO. DC-353-F
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Old Soldiers Home, Grant Building		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) Entrance at Rock Creek Church Road and Upshur Street, NW		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1910-1912	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) U.S. Soldiers Home established by Congress in 1851. Grant Building constructed to serve as quarters and principal mess.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Gothic and Classical Revival details		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Marble		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) 3-story; projecting central block and slightly lower wings		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Arcaded entrance; crenelated parapet; arcaded windows; arched niches; high-relief eagle decorations on central block		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED)		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Condition in 1975 appeared good.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Schwartz, Nancy B. <u>Historic American Buildings Survey District of Columbia Catalog, 1974.</u>		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Druscilla J. Null, HABS	DATE 7/5/83	

ADDENDUM TO  
U.S. SOLDIERS HOME, GRANT BUILDING  
Rock Creek Church Road and Upshur Street, N.W.  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-353-F

HABS  
DC  
WASH,  
534F-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
Northeast Field Area  
Chesapeake/Allegheny System Support Office  
National Park Service  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HABS  
DC  
WASH  
534F

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to  
U.S. SOLDIERS' HOME, GRANT BUILDING

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One page of documentation was previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

**Location:** Rock Creek Church Road and Upshur St. N.W., Washington, District of Columbia.

USGS Washington West, D.C. - MD - VA Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 18.325690.4312230

**Present Owner  
and Occupant:** The United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home

**Present Use:** A men's domiciliary and fitness center/recreation area.

**Significance:** The Grant Building is a significant contributing element, both in architectural and cultural terms, to the historical context of the Soldiers' Home. Constructed at a time when monies were willingly spent on grand public architecture and displays of appreciation, the building stands as a monument not only to Ulysses S. Grant, for whom it was named, but also to the many unnamed U.S. war veterans which it has housed.

Architecturally, the Grant Building has threefold significance: 1) as a contributing structure to the overall history and character of the Soldiers' Home, 2) as the work of the noted Baltimore firm of Baldwin and Pennington, and 3) as a fine example of Beaux Arts/Renaissance Revival architecture. The building was designed specifically to be compatible with the historic structures in the Home's historic core -- specifically the Sherman Building -- directly to its south. Its architectural execution is both impressive and elegant, reflecting an age when the City Beautiful Movement was prevalent across the country, and when construction of grand public buildings was at a height.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Dates of erection:** The Grant Building was completed in 1910.
2. **Architect:** Ephraim Francis Baldwin and Josias Pennington of the firm Baldwin and Pennington.

The senior architect in the firm, Ephraim Francis Baldwin, received his architectural and engineering education at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Thereafter he worked for a

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short time as a draftsman for the noted Baltimore architect John Nierensee and, from 1869 through 1873, he served as the associated architect for New York architect Bruce Price on his Baltimore commissions, including the Christ Episcopal Church. In 1883, Baldwin formed a partnership with Josias Pennington, a native of Baltimore who had served his architectural apprenticeship under Baldwin. The partnership, which proved to be lucrative and successful, lasted until Baldwin's death in 1916. Over the years, the firm continuously received a long line of prestigious projects throughout Maryland, specifically ecclesiastical commissions (both churches and institutional buildings), as well as commissioners from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. Over a dozen of Baldwin and Pennington's works have been listed on the National Register of Historic places.

3. **Original and subsequent owners:** The original owner of the property was the United States Soldiers Home. Although the name of the Home was later changed to the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home the Grant Building has not changed owners since it was constructed.
4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** The Soldiers' Home itself acted as the general contractor for the project. The Constructing Officer was Captain John Sewell. Sewell was detailed from the Army Corps of Engineers. Sewell was a career officer in the Corps of Engineers. Among the projects which he supervised in Washington were the Government Printing Office, the Engineer School, War College, new Agricultural Department, and the Grant Building.

Major suppliers and contractors include:

Matthew Myers: Excavation.

Dana Lincoln: Cement and hydrated lime.

Builders' Supply Company of Washington, D.C.: Broken stone, gravel, sand, and slates.

Brennen Construction Company: Laying brick and slate, and plastering outside walls.

National Mortar Company: Portland cement.

Chase Granite Company (Blue Hill, Maine): Granite for the basement story.

O.W. Ketcham: Brick.

William A. Mills: Porcelain enamel bricks.

Charles H. Sanborn (Boston): Heating and ventilating.

Potomac Brick Company: Common bricks.

Vermont Marble Company: Exterior marble (white).

American Bridge Company: Structural steel on basis of reinforced concrete construction for first floor.

National Fireproofing Company: Terra-cotta fireproofing on basis of reinforced concrete construction for first floor.

David Lupton's Sons Company (Philadelphia): Sheet metal work.

J.C. McFarland & Company (Chicago): Slate roofing and skylight work

Evans Marble Company (Baltimore): Interior (Knoxville) marble.

National Mosaic Company: Terrazzo floors, etc.

Butler Marshall Company: Painting, graining, etc.

Hugh Reilly: Glazing.

Harry Alexander (New York): Electrical wiring.

Crump & Company: Rough erection work.

Otis Elevator Company: Electric elevator plant.

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Ocorr & Rugg Company (Rochester, New York): Mill work.  
Bonneville Portland Cement Company: Portland cement.  
Steele & Condict, Inc.: refrigeration plant/cold storage rooms.  
H.W. Miller, Inc. (New York City): Plaster work, metal lathing and furring.  
J.W. Danforth Company: Heating equipment.  
Champion Iron Company: Ornamental iron work (stairways, railings, grilles, marquees), miscellaneous iron work (iron door to vent shaft, smoke stack, hoods, ladders, etc.).

5. **Original plans and construction:**

Initial planning for the construction of the Grant Building began in 1901, when discussions were held on the merits of building a new mess hall for the Soldiers' Home. As the plans for the mess hall developed, it was proposed not only to build a dining hall and kitchen, but also a dormitory to serve the entire membership. It was not until 1903, however, that the decision to build a mess hall was formally authorized by the Board of Commissioners of the Home and the Secretary of War and that they officially considered the idea of having one facility which served both as a mess hall and as a dormitory.

The site for the planned building remained in question for a long period of time also. Two sites were debated: the site of Anderson Cottage (the former Riggs Cottage) and an undeveloped site behind the now-demolished Library. At issue was the demolition (or removal to another site) of the historic Anderson Cottage where President Lincoln had drafted the second draft of the Emancipation Proclamation or the erection of a new important building at the rear (and thought-to-be unsightly) elevations of several buildings. In the end, those in favor of the site at the northern corner of the Home property prevailed over those in favor of the Cottage site.

In 1903, early plans for the building by William Poindexter and John L. Smithmeyer were dropped because they were found to be unsuitable for the adopted site. At that time the Home invited five architectural firms -- Smithmeyer, Poindexter, James G. Hill, Baldwin and Pennington, and Hornblower & Marshall -- to submit new proposals for the mess hall. All the firms were well-respected within the area, both for their private and public commissions. After reviewing the plans, a committee consisting of the Governor of the Home and the Home's Constructing Officer, would not give an unreserved endorsement to any plan. Nonetheless, they recommended that the Board first consider the plans of Baldwin and Pennington.

The selection of Baldwin and Pennington was consistent with the Home's desire during its great construction era (1890-1919) to erect the finest buildings possible. Baldwin and Pennington had an established reputation for, among other building types, elegant public buildings -- banks, churches, campus halls, and a series of Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company waiting stations scattered throughout Maryland. (See "Architect" Section). Baldwin and Pennington were retained to further develop their plans. As part of their efforts, and after discussions of the present and probable future needs of the Home in the way of a mess hall and increased dormitory space, the Commissioners authorized a trip by Pennington, the Deputy Governor of the Home, and the Quartermaster to inspect similar structures at soldiers' homes in Marion, Indiana and Dayton, Ohio. Upon their return, a report of findings and suggestions, and a sketch of the proposed building were submitted, along with a building cost estimate of \$580,000. It is unknown whether this report suggested combining the mess and dormitory functions under one roof.

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On August 17, 1903, at a special meeting of the Board of Commissioners Pennington gave a full explanation of his architectural firm's proposals, after which a vote to proceed was passed. According to the minutes of this meeting, Baldwin and Pennington were instructed to build the structure as outlined in their plans, of white, rock-faced marble to conform in architectural style with the Sherman Building. The architects were to receive five percent of the construction costs, and were to complete specifications for the structure within three weeks.

It was not until nine months later, however, that the final decision about the building site was made. On May 3, 1904, it was decided to erect the building on the site originally adopted (the present location). With all the decisions in place, the Constructing Officer was authorized to advertize for construction bids. In the meantime, due to a variety of unstated irregularities, the Board rejected all construction bids which had been received to date. As a result of these problems the board appointed Captain John Sewell to act as the Constructing Officer. (See "Builder" section) .

Captain Sewell's involvement in the construction of the Grant Building had begun in the spring of 1905, when he was asked to investigate some of the bids which had been made for construction materials. Before his appointment as Constructing Officer of the new building itself, he reported on his investigation of the most advantageous types of marble for the building. As part of this investigation Sewell visited quarries in Georgia, Vermont, Maryland, and Pennsylvania (at a total cost of \$200), and recommended that tooled, rather than rock-faced, marble be used. Sewell's appointment as Constructing Officer for the new building came about partially from his excellent investigative work, and partially out of his conclusions that the Home would be better served if they, themselves, acted as the general contractors -- rather than hiring a company for this role. As part of his work force, Sewell called upon his professional staff who were at work at the Washington Barracks to assist him at the Home as well. (Sewell continued to supervise construction at the Washington Barracks during the construction of the Grant Building.)

Sewell was given a relatively free reign during the construction process. He was authorized to approve specifications, to advertize for bids, and to contract up to a certain sum without consulting the Board. In addition, the contracting regulations of the Corps of Engineers were adopted in order to avoid further charges of unfairness.

In 1907, with the completion of the excavation and construction of the foundation of the new mess hall and dormitory, the contracts for the remaining construction were still under negotiation. It was at this time that General Crosby P. Miller, who served as the Constructing Officer of the Home, took over Sewell's duties.

The building was essentially complete in 1910. The first meal was taken in the new mess hall on July 12, 1910, apparently without much fanfare -- no notice of this event has been located in the local papers. Although the first members occupied the dormitory in July of that year, much work still had to be done. Among the projects were plans for new walkways and drives to the building, grading the land around it, and a new fence demarcating the Home property line. It was only later, in February 21, 1911, that the Board resolved, after some amount of controversy, to name the building in memory of General Grant.

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6. **Alterations and additions:**

According to the Annual Reports and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Commissioners, as early as 1912, allocations were necessary to overhaul, extend and renew toilet fixtures. In 1915, unspecified interior walls and ceilings of the mess hall, kitchen, and dormitory were cleaned, painted and retinted. This program was continued into 1917 at a cost of \$6,418.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes to the building occurred with its siting. Soon after the building was completed in 1912, the old Library which stood between the Grant Building and the Sherman Building was demolished. With the clearing of the land between the two massive buildings, a second dormitory core was created. (See further description of this alteration in the "Historic Landscape" Section.)

For the most part, only minor alterations were made to the Grant Building in the years which followed. In 1920, \$2,500 was spent on the protection of the skylight. Two years later, plans were approved for the enlargement of the cold storage plant and for extensive repairs to the meat shop in the building. The walls and ceiling of the cold storage plant had, apparently, deteriorated very quickly. The new plans called for two separate rooms -- one for meats and a second for butter, eggs, and vegetables. This was accomplished without rearranging the existing room configurations significantly.

Reading rooms were established in the building in 1947 and a 16" television was installed on the third floor in 1949 as a special benefit for the older members. In 1951 several improvements were undertaken: a new freight elevator and a new passenger elevator were installed, and all the exterior wood and metal was painted.

In March of 1954, upon the completion of the new Scott Building to the southeast of the Sherman Building, all the members housed in the Grant Building were relocated to that structure. Because the Scott Building had new dining facilities (which served the Home's entire membership), the kitchen and dining hall in the Grant Building were also closed down. In the year that followed, the Grant Building was renovated. The interior was painted, and electrical fixtures, radiators and new furnishings were installed. It was at this time that the dining room was converted into a gymnasium, and the kitchen area was emptied and used for storage. After completion of the renovation, members reoccupied the building in November of 1955.

Other alterations over the years include the alteration of the passage between the kitchen and the dining room around 1946, and the installation of a bowling alley in 1972 in what had been the east wing of the dining room.

B. **Historical Context**

The U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home was founded in 1851 as an asylum for aged, honorably discharged veterans. The first phase of development was completed in 1857 when the first members moved into the main building, the current Sherman Building. Directly before the end of the Spanish-American War (1895) the Home was reported as increasingly overcrowded, its population having doubled in less than 15 years. With the hostilities to the south and in the Philippines, the Board of Commissioners pushed for more dormitory and hospital space. Between 1890 and the U.S. involvement in the First World War, 21 structures were erected on the Home

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grounds. The Grant Building (1906-1912), which housed dormitory space for 400 men and a mess hall for 2,400, was the largest of these buildings.

For nearly 80 years the Grant Building has been a major facility for housing the Home's members in comfortable, well lighted and ventilated facilities. The building also served for 44 years as the main dining facility for Members. As such, the unusually large dining room permitted all of the members of the Home to eat together, at a single sitting. It was equipped with the most modern improvements, including plumbing and elevators.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural character:** With the exception of a few minor alterations, the Grant Building dates from the period from 1906-12. It was designed in the Beaux Arts style with stylistic cues also from the English Renaissance, which employed crenelation (as seen on its parapet) during the Jacobean period. The crenelation on the Grant Building stylistically links it to the Norman-Gothic Revival Sherman Building (which was part of the architects' assignment) without compromising its own stylistic integrity--the crenelation is an academically correct use of detail.

The building is essentially rectangular in shape with a central light court from the second through fourth floors. It has the classical tripartite design typical of the Beaux Arts style. The emphasis on fine materials, and careful detailing can also be clearly seen in this fine design.

2. **Condition of fabric:** The Grant Building is generally in good condition although certain areas and materials show expected wear and overuse. Nearly all of the original exterior fabric and much of the interior fabric of the building has survived intact. Exterior facades are in good condition, with only minor alterations/additions on the north elevation. On the first floor, the site of the building's major public rooms, most of the original building fabric is in place although use of the space has changed. The upper floors, with the exception of the bathrooms, are generally unaltered.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall dimensions:** The Grant Building is approximately 229 feet by 179 feet. Exact dimensions of the building are given on the accompanying plans. (See pages 20-24). The building presents three stories on its principal (south) facade. A mezzanine level and attic level are visible on the north facade.
2. **Foundations:** The foundations of the building are of brick with concrete footings.
3. **Walls:** The building has masonry bearing walls faced on the exterior with marble.
4. **Structural systems, framing:** Existing original construction drawings and field observations indicate that the building uses an innovative structural system which combines masonry bearing walls, reinforced concrete with structural clay tile, and structural steel framing. The building's massive solid masonry exterior walls are supported on corbeled brick foundations with concrete footings. Structural steel columns are embedded in the brick walls to help support first-floor beams and steel framing in the upper floors and roof. In

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the basement, brick piers support the first-floor beams (which are called girders on the original drawings). These beams, which bear on the exterior masonry walls, are poured-in-place concrete, reinforced with rectangular steel bars and round stirrup bars. Typically spanning 12 feet and spaced approximately 16 feet apart, the beams support the fitness center (the old dining hall) and the kitchen floor system. Structural clay tiles are laid in rows perpendicular to the beams with approximately 3-inch-wide spaces between rows. Reinforcing bars are laid in the space between the rows. Concrete has been poured on top of the clay tile, thus filling the space and creating a concrete floor joist between the tile.

To provide a 48-foot clear span over the dining hall, the architects devised a unique structural system whereby the beams of the second, third and attic floors were hung on steel straps from steel trusses located in the attic. These, presumably steel, floor beams support the steel joists and a concrete structural clay tile floor system. The trusses also support the steel framing and the concrete and structural clay tile roof deck.

The first-floor kitchen structures have an almost independent structural system, with masonry bearing walls and steel roof framing.

5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** N/A
6. **Chimneys:** The single low brick chimney, venting the fireplaces in the second- and third-floor sitting rooms is not prominent. More visible is the tall brick chimney, located in the interior courtyard. The chimney has a corbeled opening and a metal cap. Seven slate-covered octagonal ventilators sit on the ridges of the roof.
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** The main entrance to the building is located on the south facade. The entrance is through three of five arched openings in the building's center bay. Slightly behind these openings, double doors are recessed between the columns. Doors are set in a wood frame and have a single rectangular pane. Other exterior doors located on the east, west and north facades are generally similar to those used at the main entrance. The double doors on the east and west facades are set in a wood frame with glass side lights and a glass transom overhead. The doors themselves have a wood lower panel with glazing above.
  - b. **Windows and shutters:** Windows throughout the facade are deeply recessed with painted wood sash and frame. The large arched windows on the first floor consist of three parts; a bottom portion which is filled with a pair of double-hung windows, a middle section with a hopper transom window and, filling the arch, a fixed, single pane window. Third floor openings are filled with arched, double-hung windows. Second floor openings and mezzanine level openings on the north facade are fitted with one-over-one rectangular double-hung windows. There are also small, two-light-in-swing awning windows in the granite base which provide natural light and air to the basement.
8. **Roof:**
  - a. **Shape, covering:** The main roof structure is hipped. It is covered with smooth grey slate shingles. Sheet-copper covers the ridges of the hip roof as well as the

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flat portions of the north and south roofs and the entrance pavilions. The kitchen has standing seam copper roofs. Original skylights in these roofs have been removed.

- b. **Cornice, eaves:** Crowning the building on all facades (including the two entrance pavilions, and the porch and tower structures on the north facade) is a crenelated parapet. Below this on the main block of the building (i.e., not on the entrance pavilions) is a decorative, dentilated cornice.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** There are no dormers on the building. A prominent feature of the north facade of the building is a five-story tower structure. The tower projects from the plane of the facade and houses a service stair. It is of the same materials and is detailed similarly to the rest of the building.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. **Floor plans:** The building is laid out, basically, as a square with an open interior light court. (See pages 20 to 24). On the first floor this plan is slightly altered as the kitchen area fills what is the light court on the other floors.

On the first floor, entrance is through either the (south) main entrance hall, through one of the entrance vestibules on the east and west sides or through the north tower structure. The entrance vestibules and the main entrance hall lead to the massive U-shaped dining room (the open end of the U being on the north side). This large space has been divided; the east wing of the U has been partitioned off for use as a bowling alley. The rest of the original dining room space is in use as a fitness center. To the inside of the U and in the center section of the North side of the building, the area was divided up for use as a kitchen, bakery, dishwashing area and food storage area. A service stairs was located in the tower section of the North tower section.

The mezzanine levels exist at various places throughout the building. At the north end of the building the mezzanine level houses a stair hall, a number of members rooms and, on the other side of the corridor, a bathroom and storage area. A mezzanine level also exists above portions of the entrance lobby. More recently a mezzanine level has been added above the passage between the dining hall and the kitchen to house locker rooms, showers and toilets.

On the second and third floors, the U-shaped area occupied by the old dining hall on the first floor, is occupied by members' rooms. The area above the kitchen is open, and the entrance hall area is occupied by a lounge/sitting room area. On the north side of the building, a narrow corridor also houses members rooms and the service stairs. Bathrooms for the floors are located on the south side of these corridors, facing onto the light court.

The attic story is entirely open and without partitions. The basement, which is used for storage only, is divided up into a number of discrete storage areas around a central area, located below the kitchen, where mechanical equipment is located.

- 2. **Stairways:** The building's two grand staircases are located in the lobby on the south side of the building. The two elegant, open, marble staircases begin along the back wall of the lobby -- one at either end of the space. Square in design, they follow the east and

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west walls of the room to a landing. The stairs then turn along the east and west walls to continue up to the mezzanine level. A cast-iron baluster supports the oak handrails along the outer edge of the staircase.

A set of service stairs is located on the north side of the building in the tower structure. This staircase is constructed of cast iron with marble treads and landings. A new service elevator with a concrete block shaft has been inserted in the open well of the stairs.

3. **Flooring:** Flooring in the entrance vestibules and entrance lobby is marble. That in the lobby consists of marble slabs placed in a star motif at the center of the room. Flooring in the rest of the first floor is of terrazzo panels framed by mosaic borders. Floors in the second and third floors are of wood and linoleum. Floors in the attic and basement are exposed concrete.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Walls in the main lobby have white Vermont wainscotting up to the level of the window sills. Above this, the walls are of buff-colored brick. The same brick is also used in the interior court/light wells and in such spaces as the old dining hall and entrance vestibules. Walls in the kitchen area are of buff-colored glazed brick. Walls in the upper floors are generally plaster. Bathroom walls are tiled or covered with vitrolite.

Ceilings throughout the building are of plaster. In the main lobby ornamental plasterwork has been used to decorate the beams which are visible at the mezzanine level. The plasterwork includes egg-and-dart molding, rosettes which hold light bulbs, and dentils.

5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** Doors on the first floor are of a variety of types including single rectangular pane wood frame doors and raised five-panel and three-panel doors. On the upper floors raised two-panel, wooden doors are used throughout, with the exception of original metal fire doors which are found separating the dormatory areas from the lounge areas and service stairs.
  - b. **Windows:** The interior window trim is oak. Sash has a simple profile and is grained to match the oak trim.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** The main lobby has extensive decorative trim on the ceiling beams. In addition, this room has marble columns, placed directly in front of marble pilasters which divide the lobby from the entrance vestibules. The one-story columns and pilasters, which are of the Tuscan order, stand paired on a single, simple base. A matching set of columns appear at the back elevation of this room and serve to divide the lobby from the former dining area.
7. **Hardware:** Nearly all entrance doors have their original brass fittings including pulls, kick plates and hinges. Brass panic hardware has been added to most of these doors. Original hinges remain on most of the other doors in the building, while the majority of knobs and locksets have been replaced. Most windows also retain original hardware.

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Original elevator service in the building included three passenger and one service elevators, all supplied by the Otis Elevator Company. Elevators #1 and #2, located in corners of the entrance hall, had four stops from the first floor to the third floor. Originally, the shafts of these elevators were closed in only by decorative wrought-iron bars so the cage-type cab could be seen ascending and descending. The bars have been removed or covered with plaster and the shafts of both of these elevators have been enclosed. Only elevator #2, in the southeast corner of the entrance hall, is in service. The cab in this elevator has been replaced and new call buttons installed. Elevator #1 has its original cab.

A smaller passenger elevator (#3) located in the southeast corner of the north stair tower is also no longer in service. This elevator, whose cab sits in the bottom of the shaft, has six stops, basement through attic and includes a crenelated marble penthouse. Elevator #4, which is also no longer in use, operated as a service elevator between the basement and kitchen. Motors for all of these elevators are located in a machine room in the basement.

8. **Mechanical equipment:**

- a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The Grant Building employs a sophisticated system for providing heat and fresh air by combining forced air heat, radiant heat and ventilation. Steam, piped from the main generating plant, enters the building at the basement level below the main entrance. The steam is then piped to radiators, located below windows, thus providing radiant heat to offset heat loss through exterior walls and windows. Steam also heats an indirect coil located in the basement. Air, blown over this coil is heated and then ducted up through chases in the thick masonry walls, thus providing heated fresh air to the building. Stale air is exhausted by chases located on interior partitions. Air rises up the chases and is ducted in the attic to rooftop mounted ventilators. The kitchen and bathrooms are vented into the interior court vent tower, which also contains the round metal flue from the kitchen ovens.
- b. **Lighting:** Original construction drawings of the Grant Building show a combination of electric and gas fixtures, however early photographs seem to indicate that only electric lights were actually installed. Copies of the original electrical wiring and gas piping drawings show the locations and types of the original fixtures. Few of the original fixtures still exist.

Most of the extant original fixtures are located in the entrance hall, mezzanine and grand stairs; they are all now electrified. Original fixtures include the exposed bulbs set in decorative plaster sockets which light the ceilings of the entrance hall and mezzanine. The fixtures mounted on the underside of the music balcony in the dining hall appear to be original. Only two of the original three-bulb sconces that once lit the dining hall now remain. (These are located on the wall above the balcony.) Other light fixtures have been removed or replaced. Early photographs of the Dining Hall show two 7-light chandeliers hung in each bar, along with a four-light wall sconce mounted between each window.

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A majority of the lights on the first, second and third floors were originally combination gas and electric chandeliers. The dining hall originally had two 12-light combination chandeliers in each bay along with a three-light sconce between each window. The kitchen and smaller spaces on the first floor had 2, 3, 4 and 6-light combination chandeliers. Corridors and residence rooms were lit with 2, 3, or 4-light combination chandeliers. Single electric ceiling lights typically were used to light the basement except for storage areas below the kitchen where 2- and 3-light chandeliers were used.

- c. **Plumbing:** The plumbing system includes the first-floor kitchen facilities, two small toilets on the first floor and the mezzanine, second and third floors bathrooms. Original kitchen fixtures have been removed. In all bathrooms the original toilet and bath fixtures, which included wall hung sinks, urinals, toilets, bath tubs and showers, have been replaced with new fixtures.

- 9. **Original furnishings:** There are no known original furnishings.

D. Site:

- 1. **General setting and orientation:** The Grant Building is situated on an irregularly shaped triangular piece of land in the northernmost section of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home. (See site plan). The building site is closely bounded by Rock Creek Road, N.W. on the northwest and Harwood Road, N.W. on the northeast. The remaining Soldiers' Home property lies to its south. The structure, itself, faces south onto a large open plaza, which is planted with mature trees and shrubs. The building helps define this plaza, along with the Stanley Hall on its eastern edge, the Sherman Building on its southern edge, and a parking lot at its western edge (formerly the site of the old Sheridan Building). All three buildings are clad with white marble and, together, present an impressively elegant assemblage of structures. The building is part of the members' residential core of the Home. Along with the Sheridan, Sherman, and Scott Buildings, it forms the residential cluster created at the northern end of the Home property.

- 2. **Historic landscape design:**  
A significant change in the setting/landscape design occurred soon after the Grant building was completed in 1912 when the old Library which had previously stood between the Grant Building and the Sherman Building was demolished. With this change a new dormitory core was created. This core had a plaza at its center, and was flanked by buildings which were architecturally relatively cohesive. Rather than being relegated to the position of being at the rear of several structures, the creation of this plaza provided the Grant Building with a distinguished location as one of three grand buildings which defined a new elegant open space.

For the first years after the demolition of the old library, the new plaza was an open space. Historic photographs indicate that there were no plantings at all. Over the years, however, aggressive landscaping has created a park-like setting with mature trees, which all but obscure the Grant Building.

- 3. **Outbuildings:** The Grant Building is one of many building located on the grounds of the Home. The North Gate Lodge located to the north of the Grant Building carries over many of the stylistic details of the Grant Building.

**PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- A. **Architectural drawings:** All relevant drawings are available through the Logistics Directorate/Design Division of the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home.
- B. **Historic views:** See Bibliography Section.
- C. **Interviews:** N/A
- D. **Bibliography**

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E. **Likely sources not yet investigated:** All likely sources have been investigated.

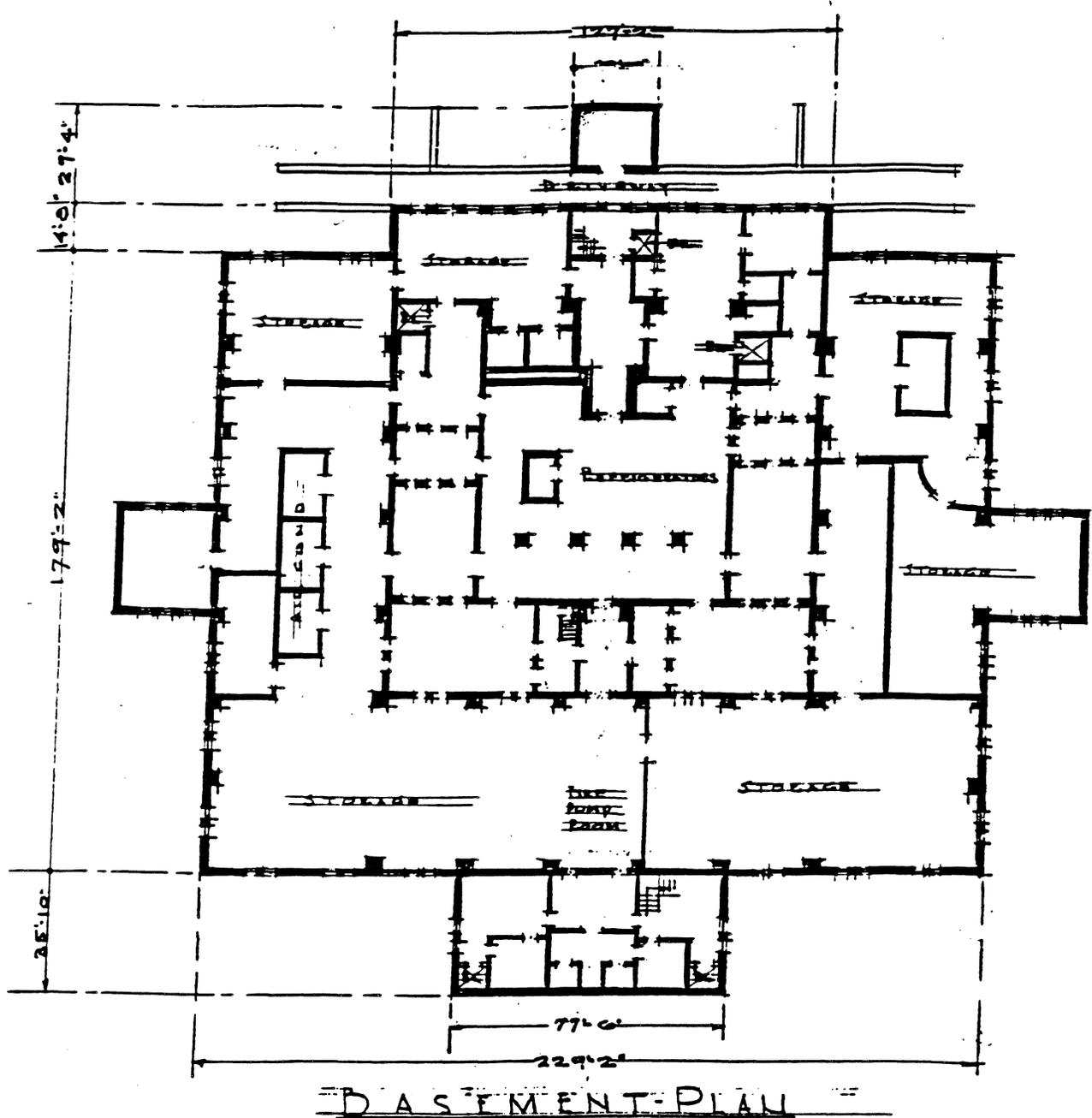
F. **Supplemental material:** N/A

**PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

The preparation of Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation on the Grant Building was requested by the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office in February 1989. The request was made in response to the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home anticipated renovation of the property.

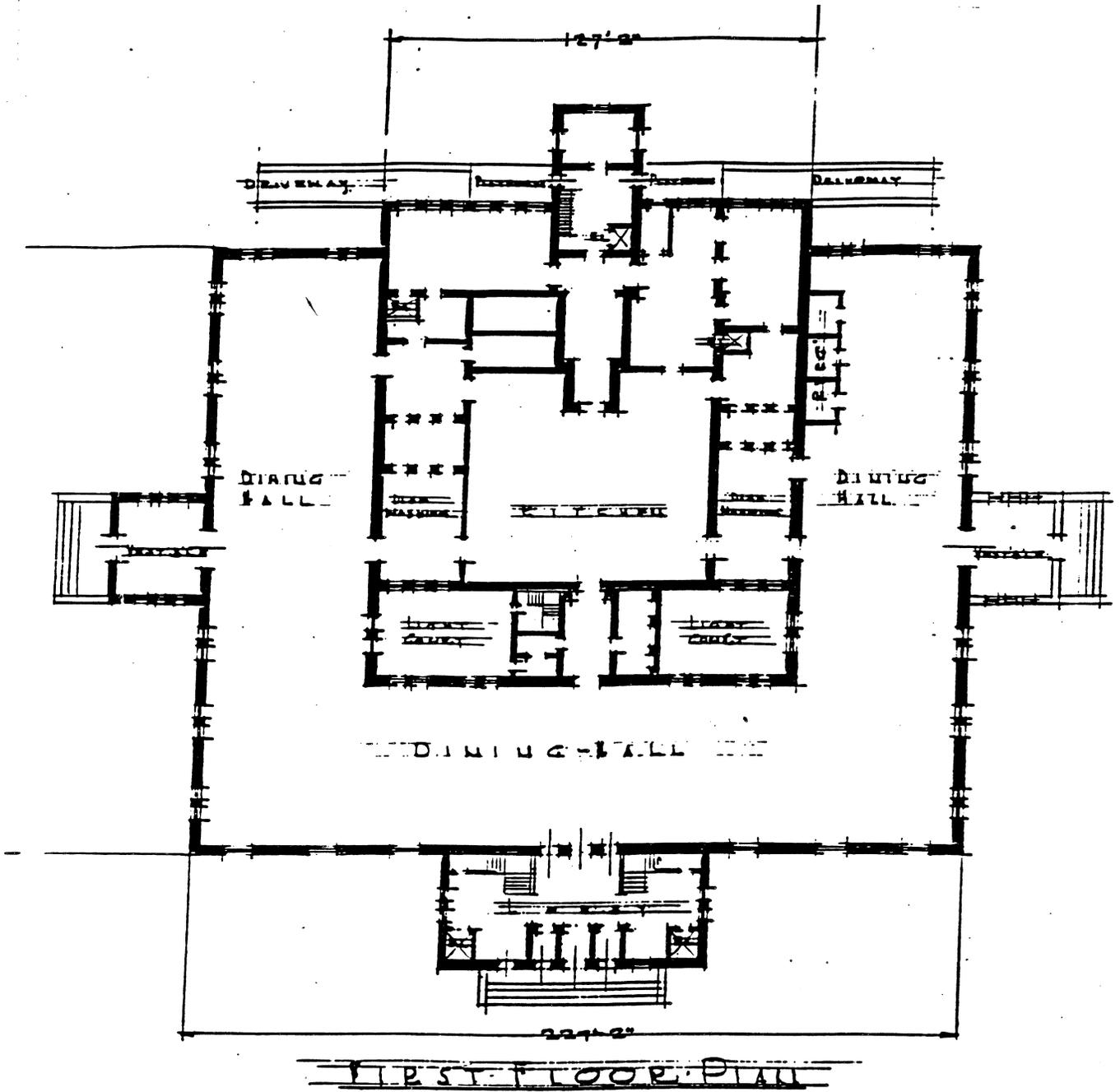
Prepared by: Carol Hooper and Julie Mueller, Research Associates and Judith  
Helm Robinson, Principal  
Affiliation: Robinson & Associates, Washington, D.C.  
Date: March 18, 1991

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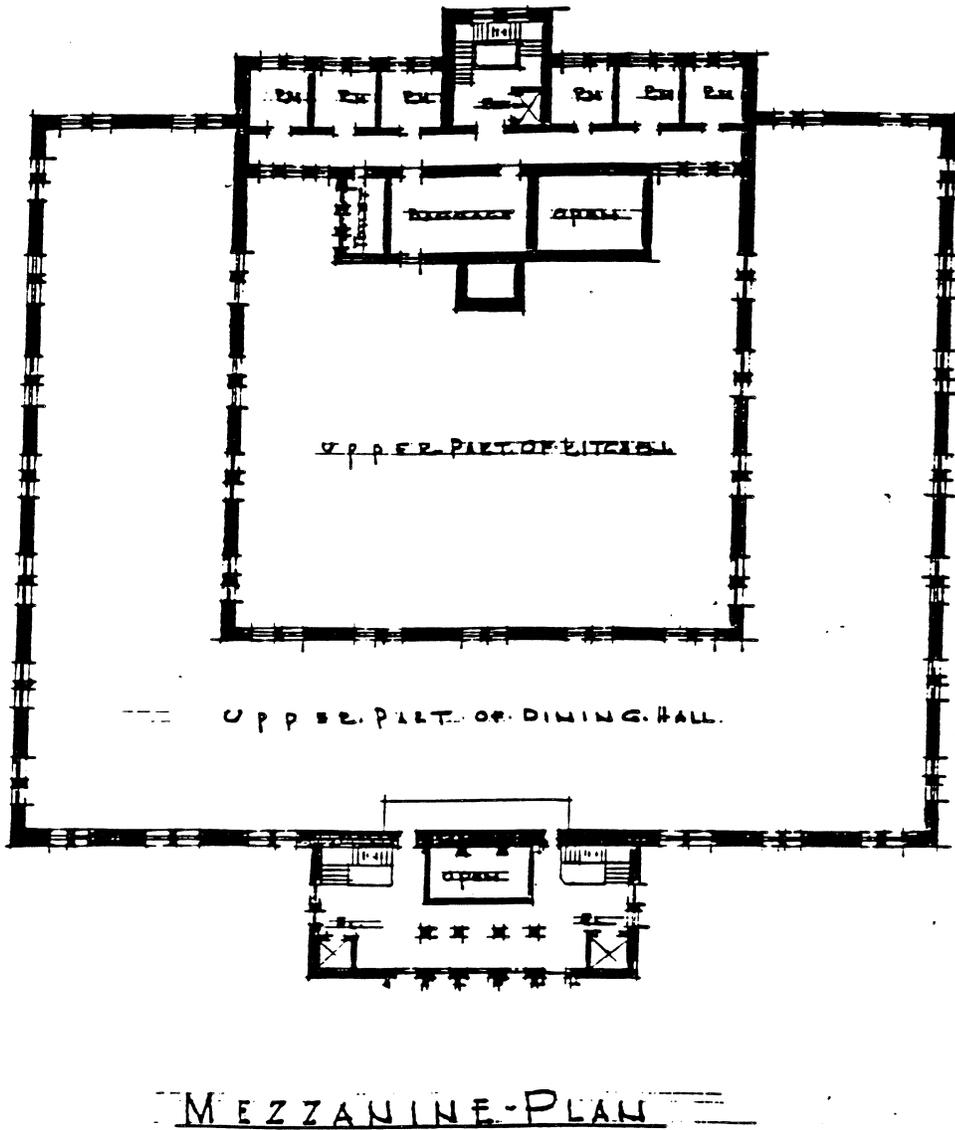
Floor Plan (Basement) Grant Building (Undated Plan available at USSAH)

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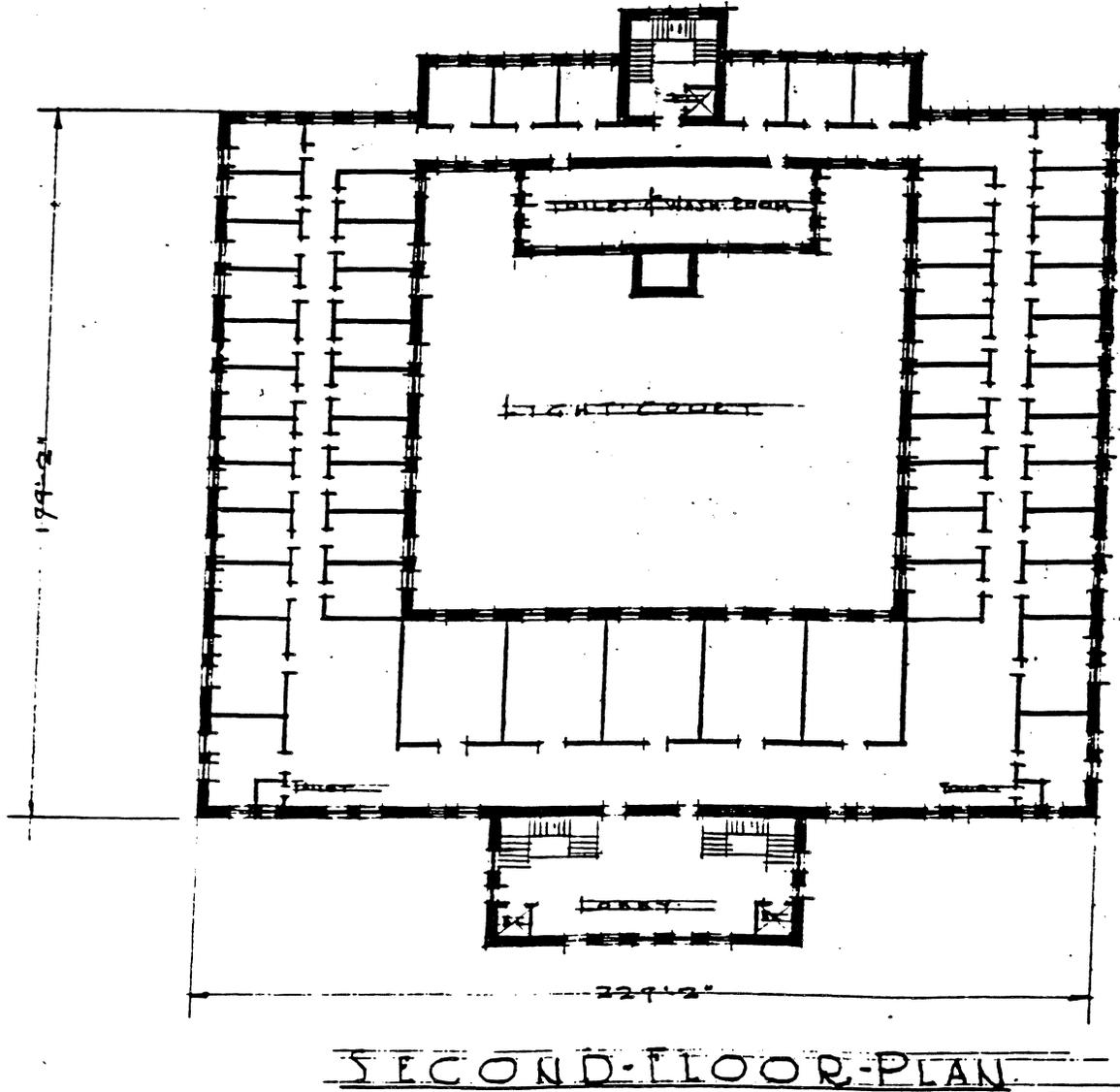


Floor Plan (First Floor) Grant Building (Undated Plan available at USSAH)

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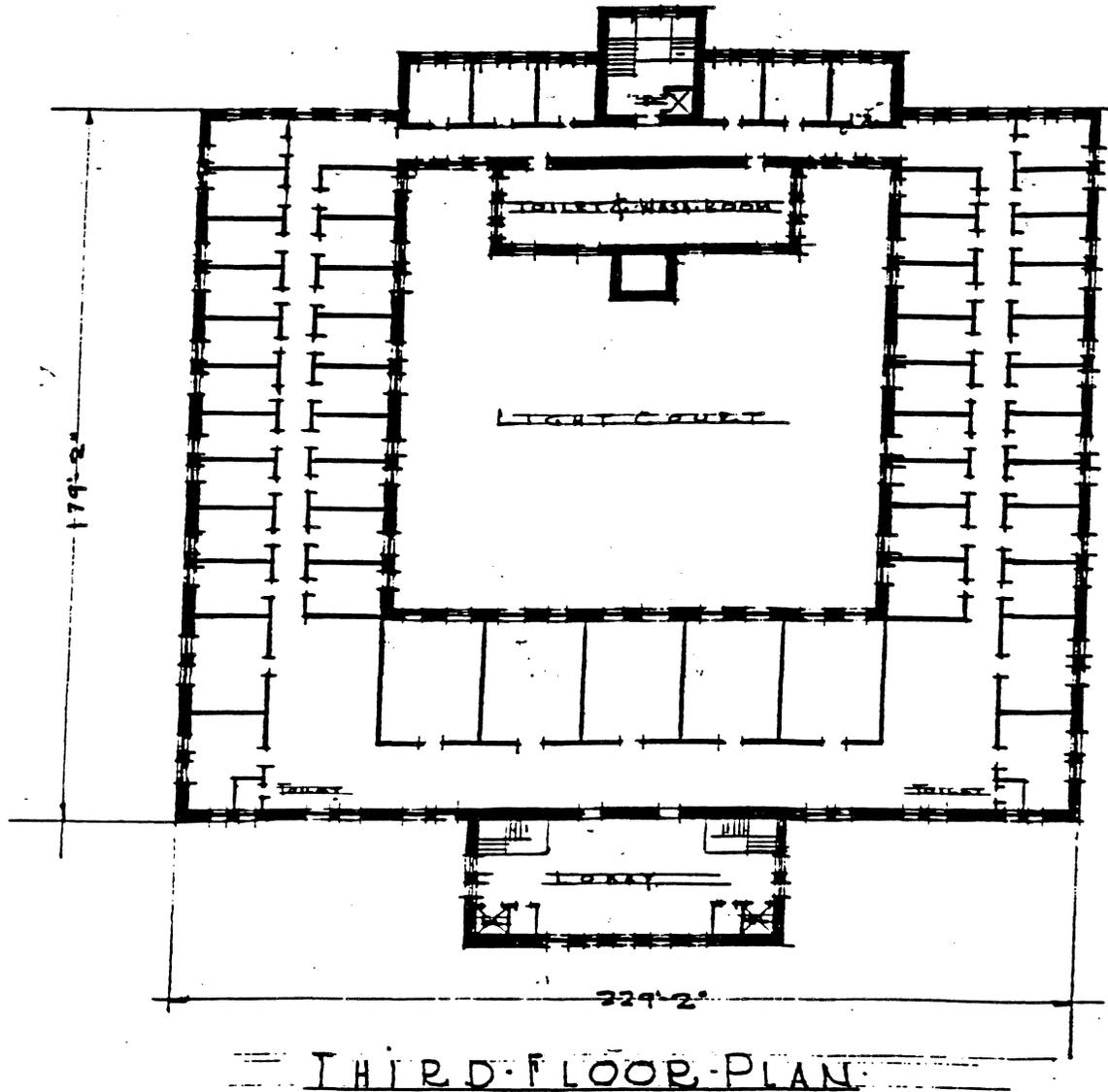


Floor Plan (Mezzanine Level) Grant Building (Undated Plan available at USSAH)



Floor Plan (2nd Floor) Grant Building (Undated Plan available at USSAH)

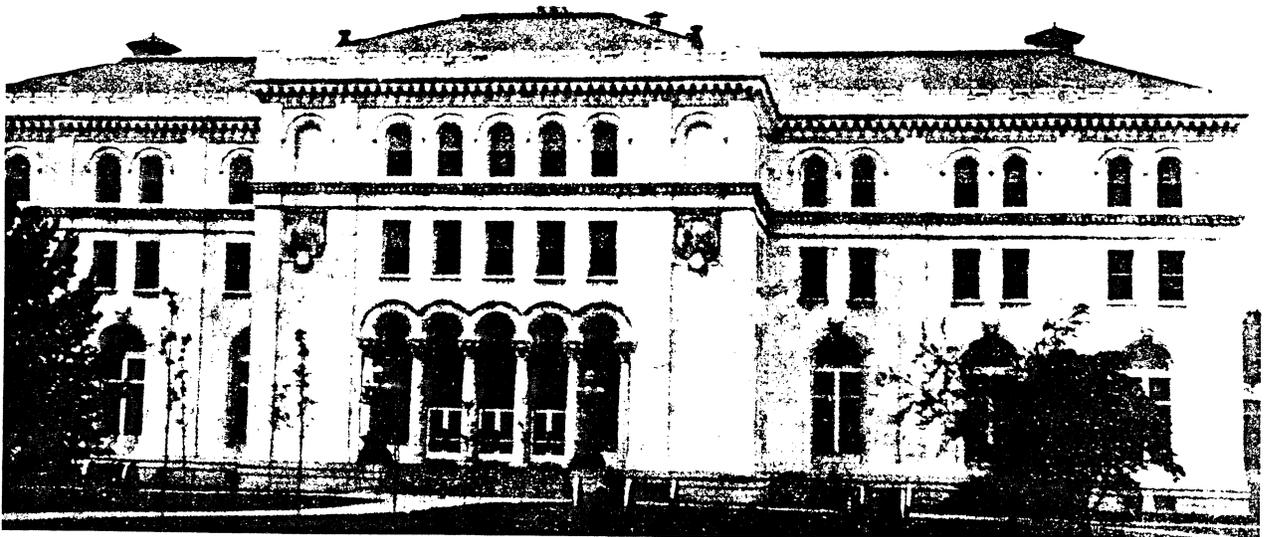
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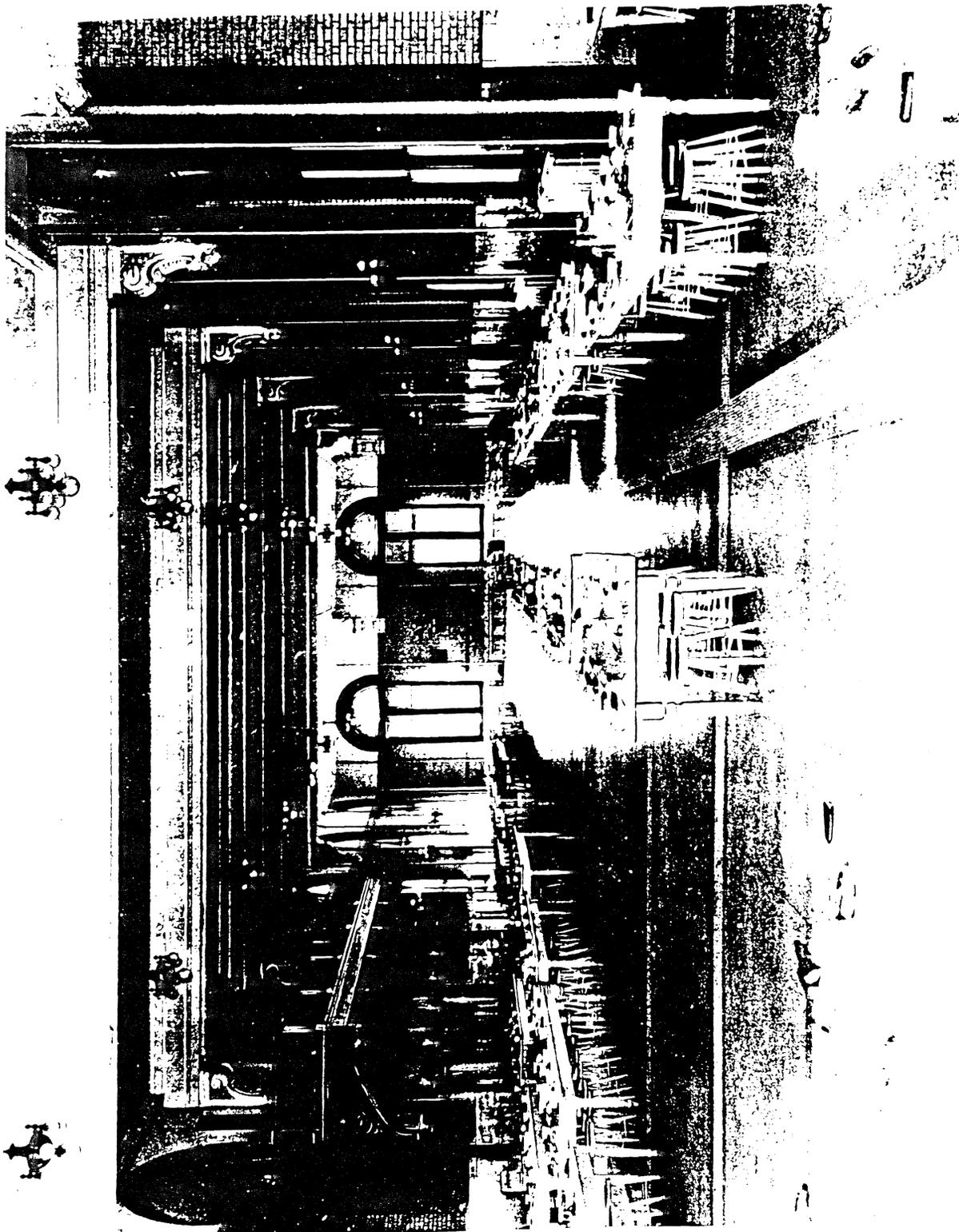
Floor Plan (3rd Floor) Grant Building (Undated Plan available at USSAH)

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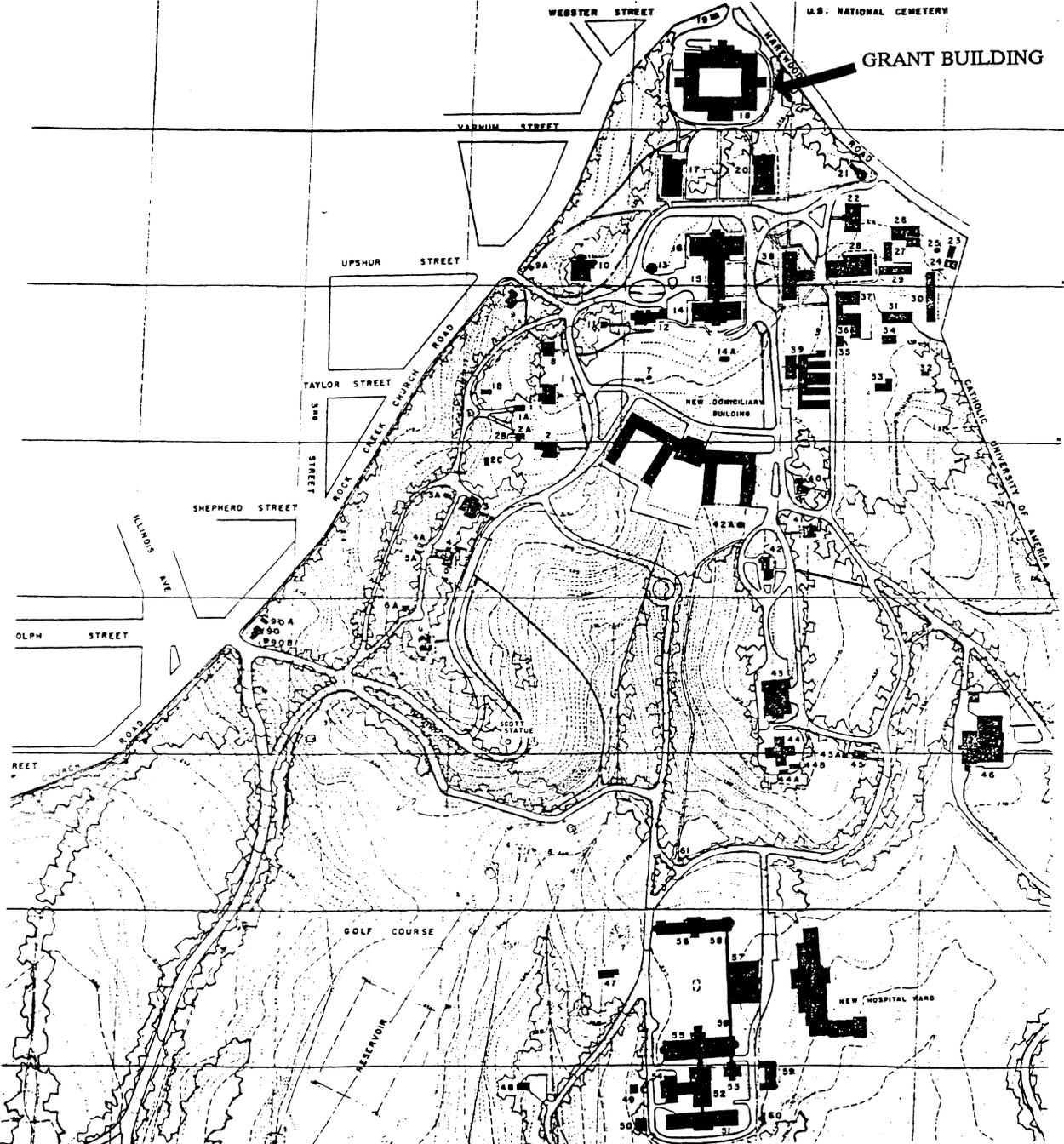
Historic Photograph of Grant Building -- View from South. (Sunday Star 10/7/1917 "At the Soldiers' Home" available at Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C., Washingtoniana Division Neg. #7950).



Undated Historic Photograph Showing Dining Room ("Washington" File, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

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Partial Site Plan Showing Location of Grant Building (USSAH)