

LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 3
70 General Street
Lawrence
Essex County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-988-R

HABS
MASS
5-LAWR,
1R-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Northeast Area Office
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 3 HABS No. MA-988-R

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Location: 70 General Street (bounded by General and Canal Streets), Lawrence,
Essex County, Massachusetts
USGS Lawrence, Massachusetts - New Hampshire Quadrangle,
UTM Coordinates 19.323783.4730371

Present Owner: GenCorp Inc.
175 Ghent Road
Fairlawn, Ohio 44333-3300

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: This building was part of the improvements made to the Lawrence Machine Shop yard by Everett Cotton Mills. Though construction began in 1859, it was not completed until 1888. When the mill was built, Everett Mills was the world's largest cotton mill. Everett Mills figured prominently in Lawrence's 1912 Bread & Roses Labor Strike.

PART I - HISTORY OF THE LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 3

Building 3 is listed in the National and State Historic Registers of Historic Places as Everett Mill Co. Picker House and is part of the North Canal Historic District. Early construction began in 1859 and it was completed as it stands today in 1888.

In the 1890s, the Everett Cotton Mills began a series of improvements on the former Lawrence Machine Shop yard. Building 3 was already a part of that yard and was used as the picker house of the cotton mills complex. The Picker House was used early in the cotton manufacturing process by mechanically picking impurities, e.g., cotton seeds out of the cotton. Other jobs included weaving and carding. Shortly thereafter, the then world's largest cotton mill, the main mill of the yard (6 stories; 650x75 feet; 12 acres of floor space), was constructed to complete the complex. These were the last of the large-scale brick mills to be constructed along the North Canal. As best as can be determined, A. H. Dennett may have been the architect of Building 3, as he also designed the main Everett Mills building.

As part of the Everett Mills, Building 3 was in use during the famous Lawrence Bread & Roses Labor Strike of 1912. Nearby was the site of many confrontations between strikers and the militia, including the death of a woman, which led to the arrest and trial of prominent union leaders. The strike particularly brought attention to the labor practices involving women and children.

Everett Cotton Mills ceased operation in 1929 and various tenants have used the buildings. Building 3 was bought by the Bolta Company in 1931 which manufactured hard rubber and vinyl plastics. Work in this building included milling, pressing, packing, embossing, printing, and inspecting various rubber and vinyl products, e.g., combs, trays, and plastic sheets. General Tire & Rubber Co. bought the building in 1954 and continued plastics and vinyl manufacturing until it ceased operations in December 1980. Since then equipment has been removed and it remains vacant. The company changed its name to GenCorp Inc. in 1984.

PART II - DESCRIPTION OF THE LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 3

Building 3 is five stories tall, has a basement, and is approximately 94,800 square feet. The walls are masonry brick, with wood floors and roof, and cast iron columns. The wood floors are unpainted planks on timber beams. The beams are supported by brick bearing walls at the perimeter of the buildings and by timber, concrete and cast iron columns at interior locations. The exterior perimeter walls extend to the foundation level and the interior columns are supported on brick foundation piers of various sizes. The exterior sills are rectangular granite blocks and are found on all windows including the ground floor windows. Most of the ground floor window sills are partially imbedded into the ground. There are no loading bays in Building 3. The basement floor is a thin layer of concrete overlying a soil subgrade. There are some small areas where there is no concrete. It also has abandoned concrete equipment foundations in the basement. The tops of some of the foundation are near the first floor level. Some areas of the first and second floors are covered with steel tread plate.

This building's features also include a mezzanine between the first and second floors near the south side of the building. The mezzanine is framed with steel beams and columns which support a thick concrete slab. The south side also has a granite retaining wall, a concrete utility tunnel which enters at the first floor level, and old foundation walls from a previously demolished building. The main physical characteristics of the building have remained unchanged, though some windows were replaced by wood after the abutting building was damaged by fire in 1986.

Building 3 is connected to Building 3A, the five story extension of the Everett Mills Co. Picker House, and runs parallel to Canal Street and the historic North Canal.

PART III - SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Interviews

Devaney, Robert J. Jr., Gauvin, Mark R. and Kfoury, Kasper J. *November 1995 - March 1996 GenCorp Inc. - Lawrence.* GenCorp Inc. - Lawrence Location employees and retired employee.

Bibliography

Gwardyak, Chester T. and Keating, John W. *Main Buildings Demolition Structural Report.* Cambridge: Camp Dresser & McKee Inc., 1995.

Grasso, Darren R., Kfoury, Robert T. and Stupich, Martin. *Graphic Sketch Plans.* Lawrence and Boston, 1996.

Poirier, Clarisse A. *Massachusetts Historical Commission - Form No. 809 (Form B - Building).* Lawrence: Planning & Community Development Department, 1981.

Zellie, Carole. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form.* Cambridge: Landscape Research, 1983.

Repositories Searched

1. City of Lawrence Planning & Community Development Dept. and Historical Commission
225 Essex Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
Tel: (508) 794-5891
2. Essex Company
200 Bulfinch Drive
Andover, MA 01810
Tel: (508) 681-1900
3. GenCorp Inc. - Lawrence Location
70 General Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
Tel: (508) 683-7123

4. Immigrant City Archives
6 Essex Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
Tel: (508) 686-9230
5. Museum of American Textile History
800 Massachusetts Avenue
North Andover, MA 01845
Tel: (508) 686-0191
6. Society For Preservation Of New England Antiquities (SPNEA)
141 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA
Tel: (617) 227-3956

The above repositories were thoroughly searched and are all appropriate sources of information for this project. Very few historic photographs (two or three) of this site exist, and those that do are copyrighted. They can be viewed at the Immigrant City Archives and The Society For Preservation Of New England Antiquities which are both open to the public. These photographs do not show any of GenCorp's buildings separately, and the two or three group photos show a large area of buildings partially consisting of GenCorp buildings. The best historic photo, which is owned by GenCorp Inc., has previously been submitted to the National Park Service and is now in the Library of Congress and Massachusetts State Archives (Reference: HABS No. MA-988-18 photograph). The Museum of American Textile History has historic site plans of the general area, but all are copyrighted, though they can be seen at the museum which is open to the public. There were no original drawings of the site available.

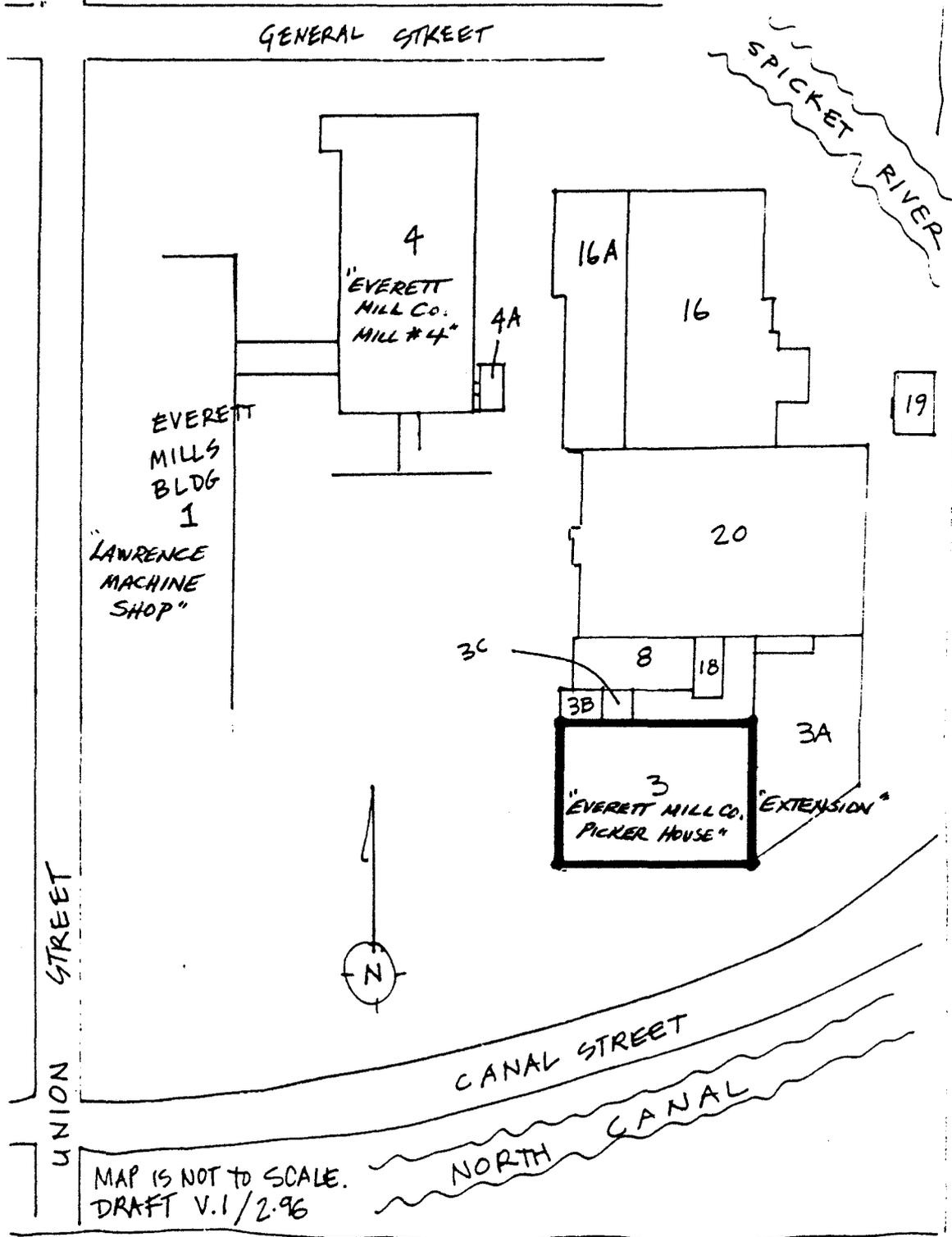
The historical and descriptive information was all found in the records of GenCorp Inc. - Lawrence Location and the City of Lawrence Planning & Community Development Department and Historical Commission (Please see Bibliography). Lawrence Community Development and Historical Commission information included information that could also be found in the state archives with the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

PART IV - PROJECT INFORMATION

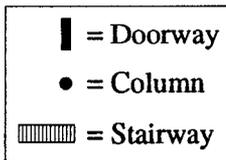
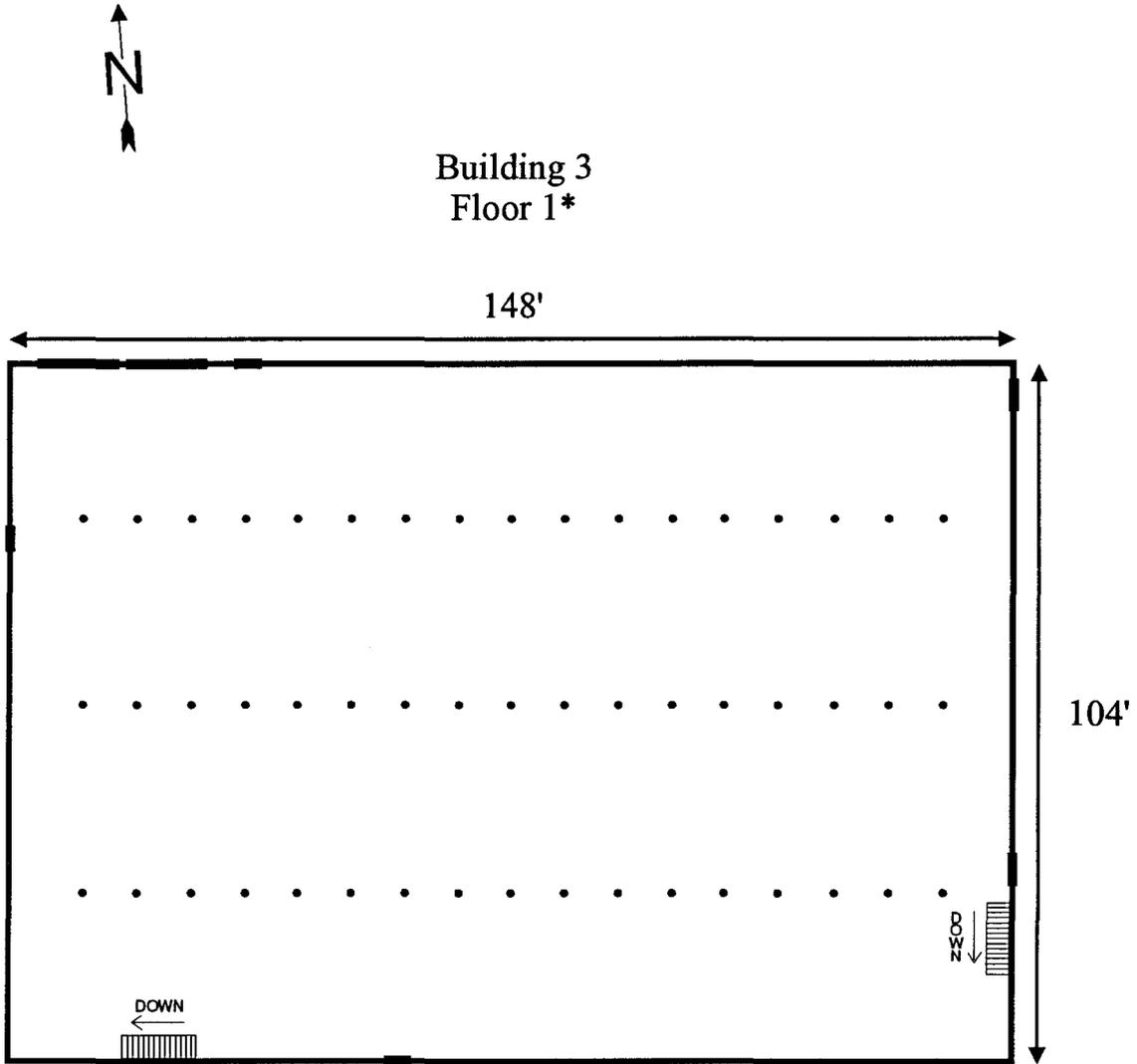
This project is a continuation of an ongoing remediation project with this particular segment known as the GenCorp Inc. Phase II Demolition/Main Buildings Project (Phase II). It is part of a phased comprehensive remediation project addressing environmental, health and safety concerns with the objective to return the property to productive use in the City of Lawrence. Phase II demolition, scheduled to begin in June 1996, is primarily needed to remove contaminated buildings, to provide access to subsurface areas for investigation and potential remediation, and to continue the remediation process in order to achieve compliance with government environmental, health and safety standards. This program is being conducted under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection as the lead agency. Since there are many environmental statutes applicable to this project, the Environmental Protection Agency - Region I, New England (EPA) is the lead federal agency involved. Both agencies concur with GenCorp on the project. Also, EPA, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Massachusetts Historical Commission and GenCorp have all agreed to and signed a Memorandum of Agreement regarding this project. This record was prepared February 23, 1996.

Prepared by: Robert T. Kfoury, Esq.
Title: Consultant
Affiliation: GenCorp Inc.
Date: May 14, 1996

BUILDING 3 SITE PLAN



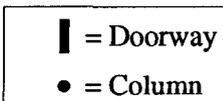
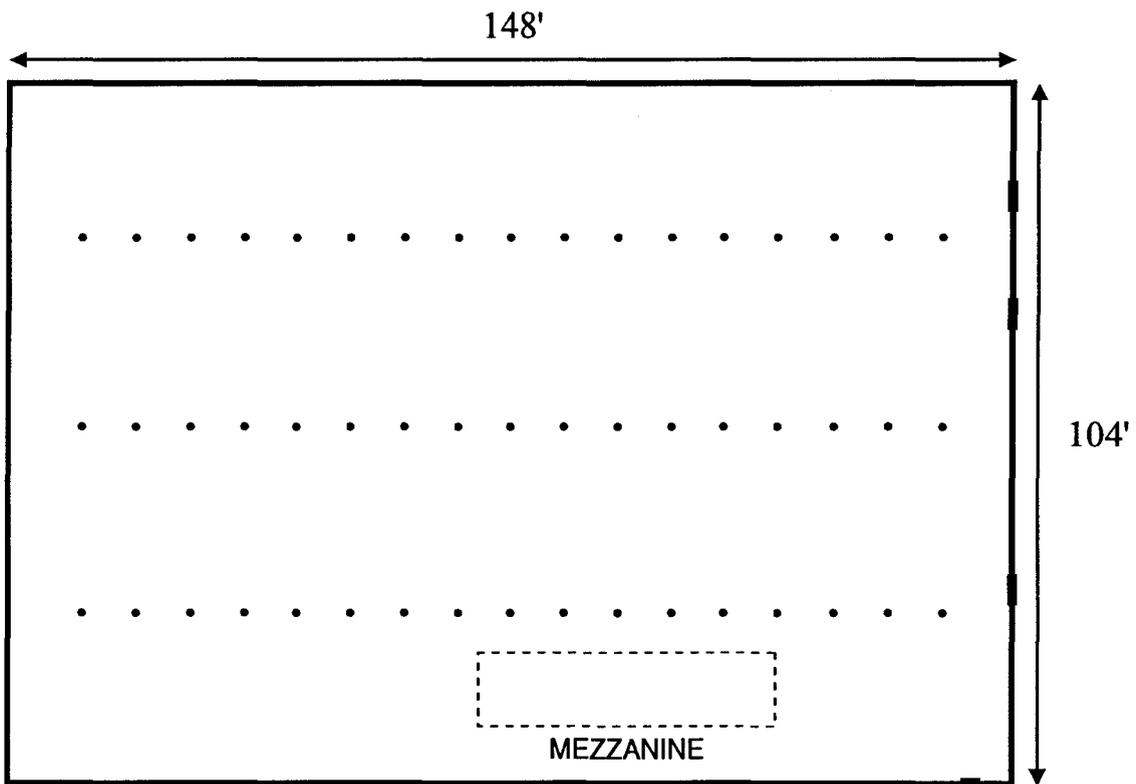
MAP IS NOT TO SCALE.
DRAFT V.1/2.96



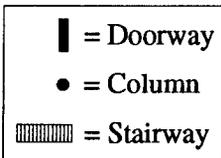
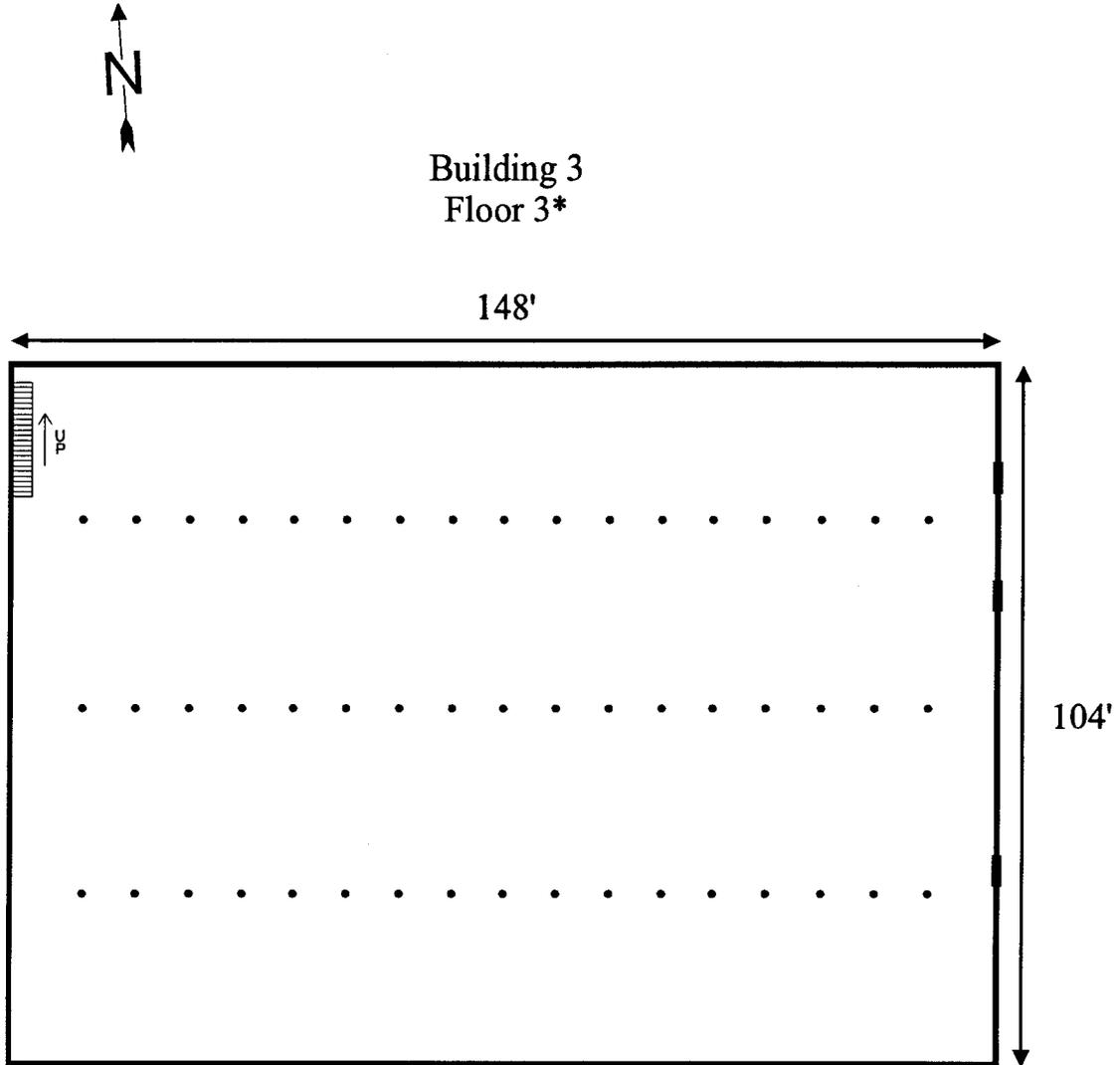
* Access to second floor from Building 3A only.



Building 3
Floor 2*



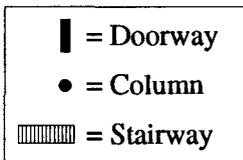
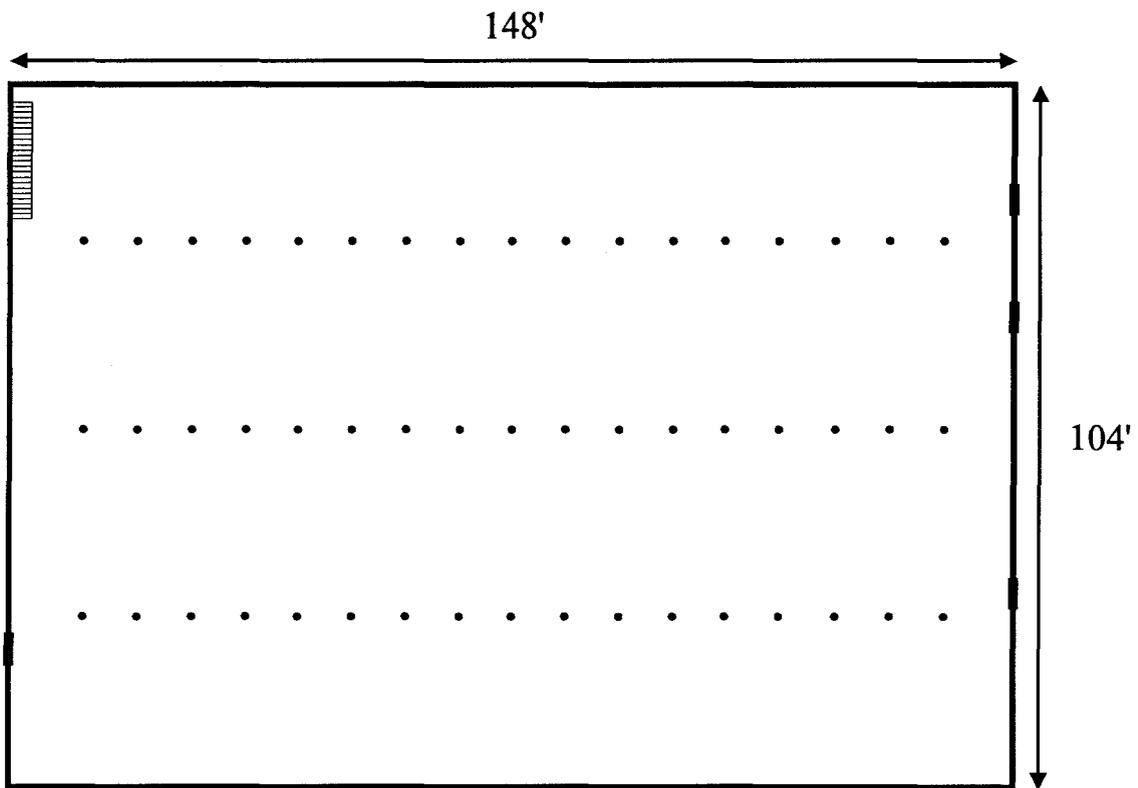
* Access to this floor from Building 3A only.



* Access to this floor from Building 3A only.



Building 3
Floor 4



LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 3
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Building 3
Floor 5

