

OLD POLICE STATION
65 1/2 Park Street
Adams
Berkshire County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-1299

HABS
MASS
2-ADAM,
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
OLD POLICE STATION

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MASS
2-ADM
3-

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Location: 65 ½ Park Street, Adams,
Berkshire County, Massachusetts

USGS: Cheshire, Massachusetts
UTM Coordinates: 6.54.130 and 47.20.375

Significance: The Old Police Station in Adams, MA, is representative of a small, functional police station of the turn of the century, built at a time when police services were just being put on a professional footing in small-town America. While the building has little architectural distinction, it is interesting because of the manner it accommodates its function.

Description: The two-story structure is landlocked on a site behind the former Town Hall, in the center of a large mixed-use block. It was always reached by a narrow alley, affording only a partial view of its front facade. A commercial building and its parking lot bounds the police station to the north, residences to the east and south, and the alley and rear of the former town hall to the west. The residence to the south was demolished to provide a site for the new Adams Police Station.

The building is a small Queen Anne Revival industrial structure, with brick walls, fieldstone foundations and a flat tar and gravel roof. There are a few architectural conceits, but the cornice has pleasant brickwork comprising 3-brick corbels, with a single-brick denticulation three courses below. Brickwork is projected to suggest quoins on all four corners, and the water table and window lintels are of local marble. The front door has an arched fanlight with a marble keystone, and is surmounted by an interesting sign, which is being salvaged for the new station.

Of special interest are the iron grilles at the smaller windows, seven of which are original. These seven small windows not only retain their grilles, but original wood sash with six panes in two horizontal rows, and swinging in away from the grilles. Since this arrangement is not very water tight, there must have been reluctance to open these windows, accounting for their survival. Larger windows were replaced in the last 20 years, but no records were kept. Other small windows were also replaced with raw aluminum, in the last 20 years.

Inside, almost no original detail remains, with the following exceptions: The three male cells, built of plate steel, are interesting for their smallness (7'-0" x 3'-6", or 24.5 sq. ft.), contrasting vividly with present 60 sq. ft. cells required by code. Otherwise, their construction is similar to that of modern prefabricated steel cells. Upstairs, there is a larger, original steel cell for women, and the stair hall retains its original oak doors, each with five horizontal panels.

While none of the plumbing fixtures are original, it is interesting to note that all are located outside of the cells they serve, even when a single cell is involved.

Interior alterations are all of post WWII vintage, and include plumbing fixtures, men's and woman's cells, the padded cell, the second floor darkroom, and a washroom for the Chief. Records of dates were not kept.

History:

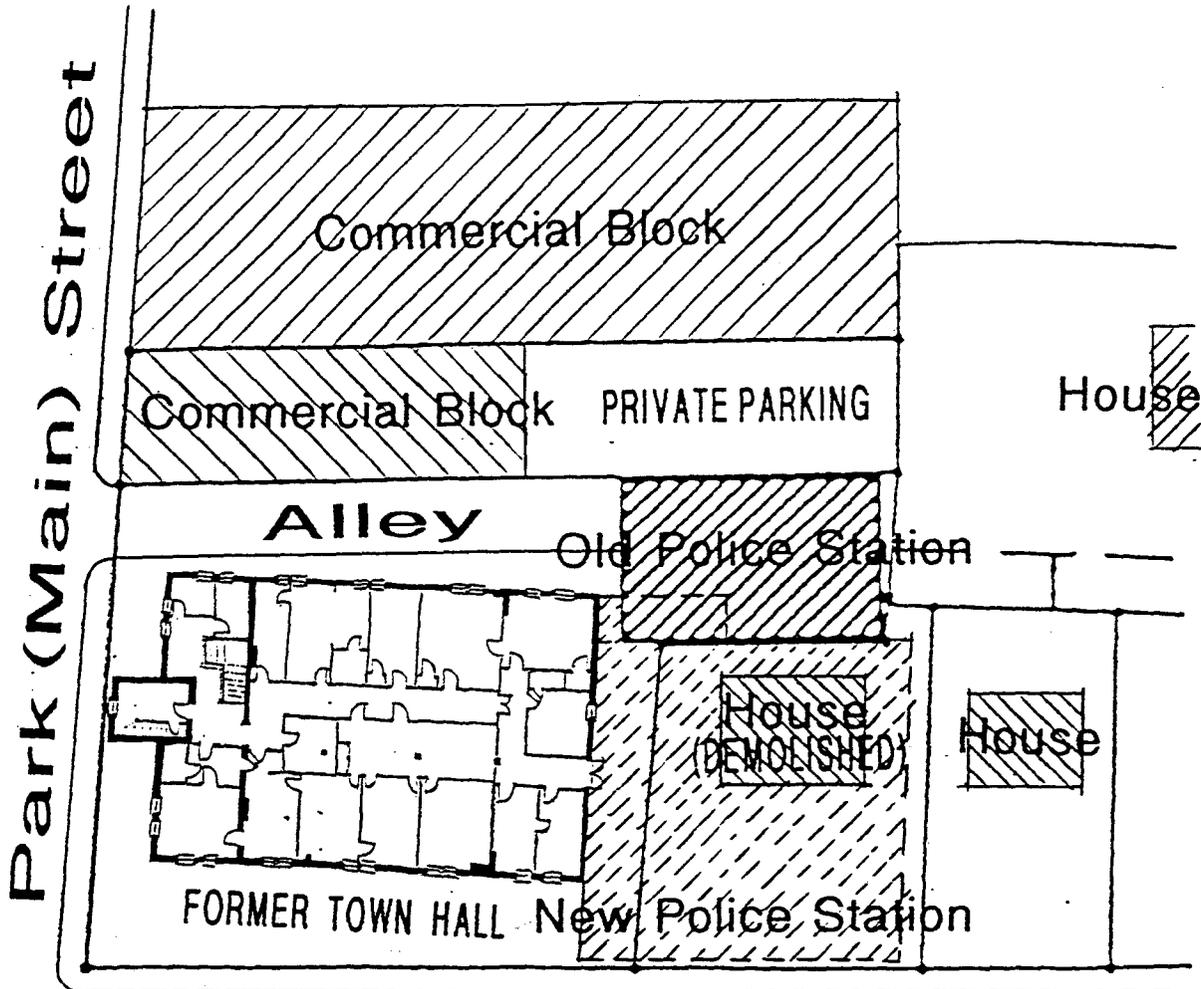
According to the Adams Historical Society's records, the Police Station was built in 1896, and is consistent with that date in its style and remaining detail. It has served the Town in its original function until November 1997, and is now vacant. At the time of its abandonment it met none of the criteria of the Massachusetts Department of Health for incarceration facilities, and is in critical structural condition because of an unintended collapse of its southeast corner during adjacent excavation. The building is scheduled for demolition by the Town of Adams, MA.

Sources:

Town and Historical Society Records; Visual Observation.

Historian:

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134 Quaker Street
Weare, NH 03281
Date Prepared: December 11, 1997



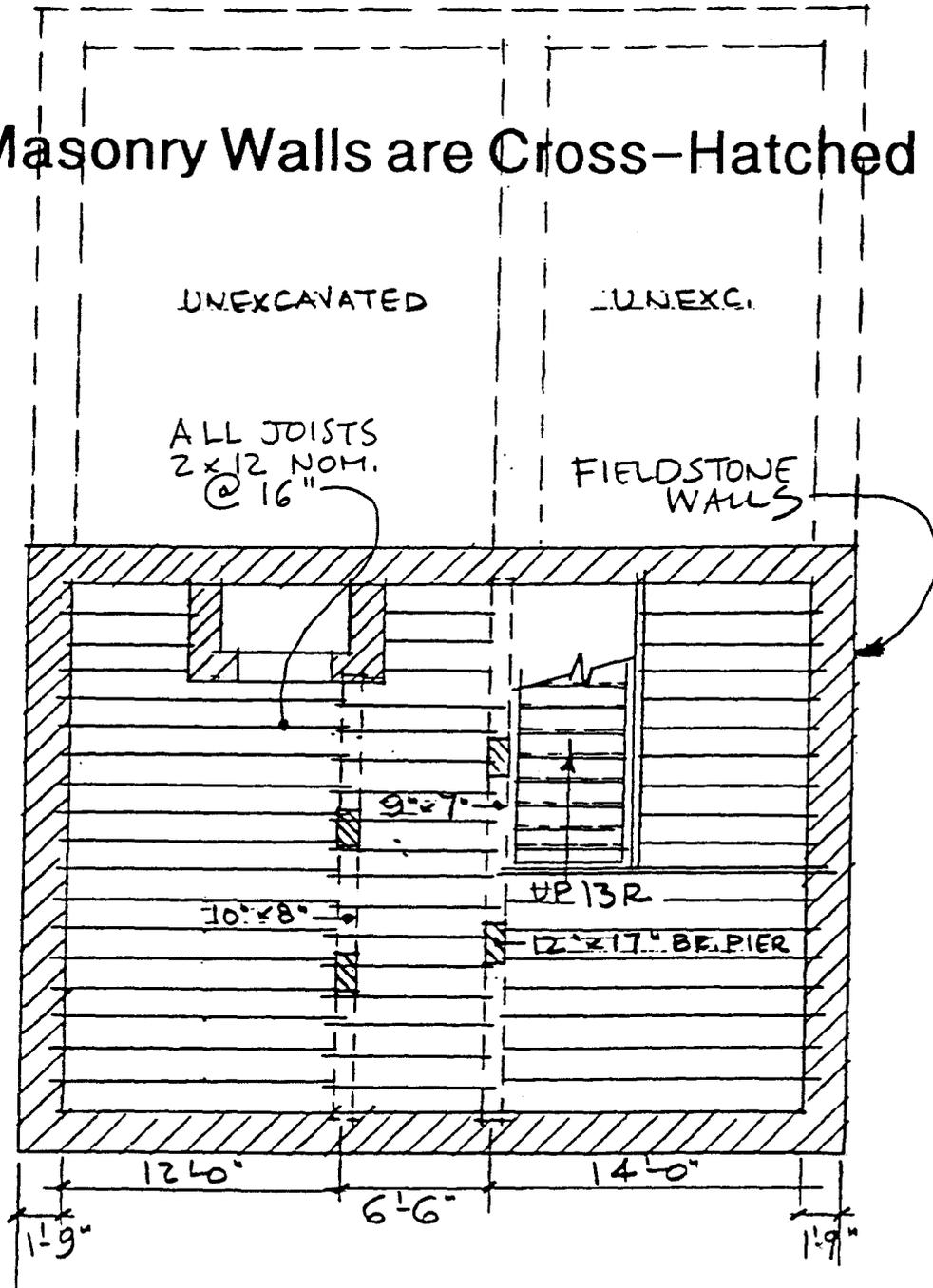
School Street



Old Police Station Site
Adams, Massachusetts

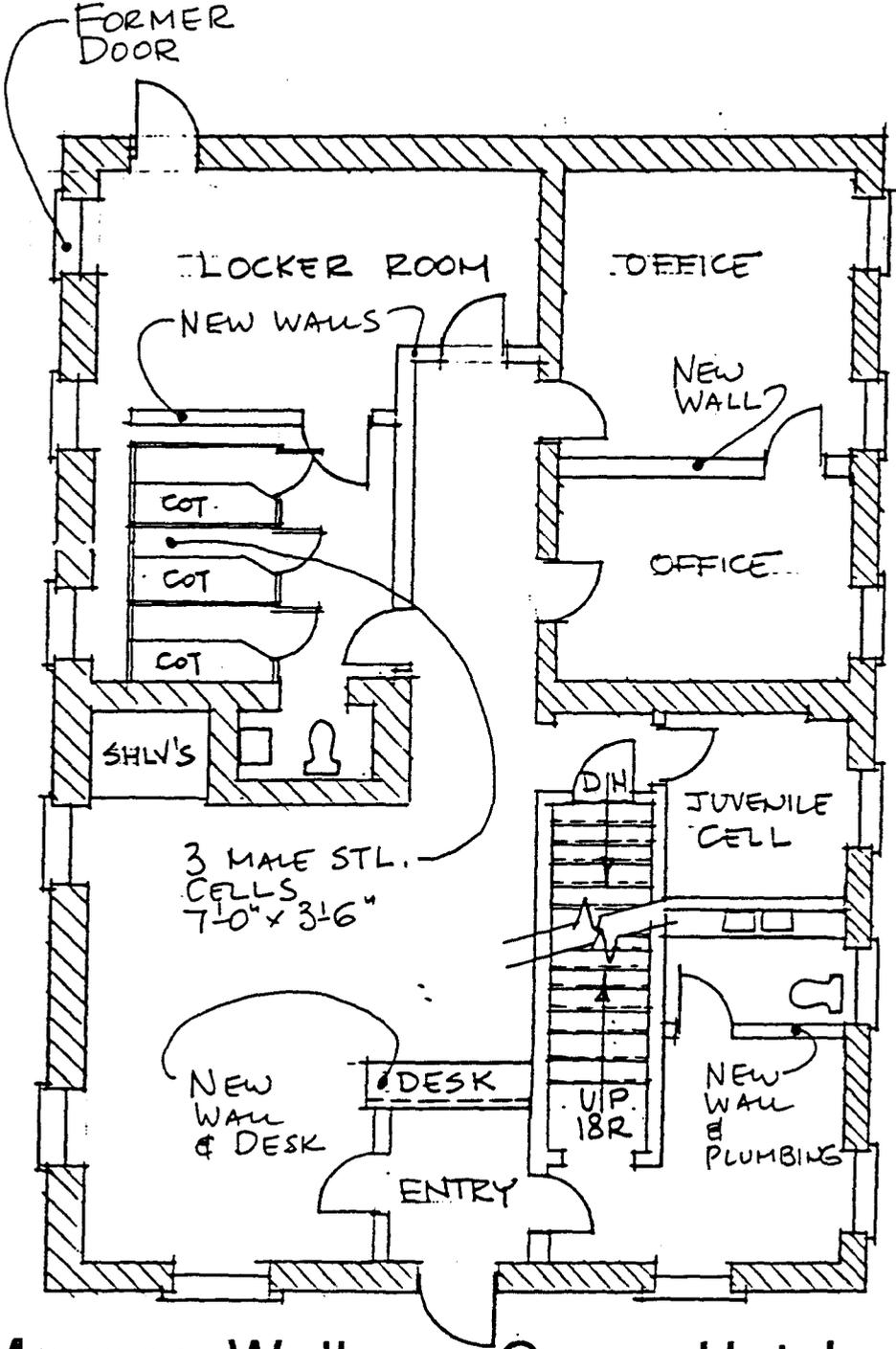
Drawn December 1997

Masonry Walls are Cross-Hatched



1/8" Scale

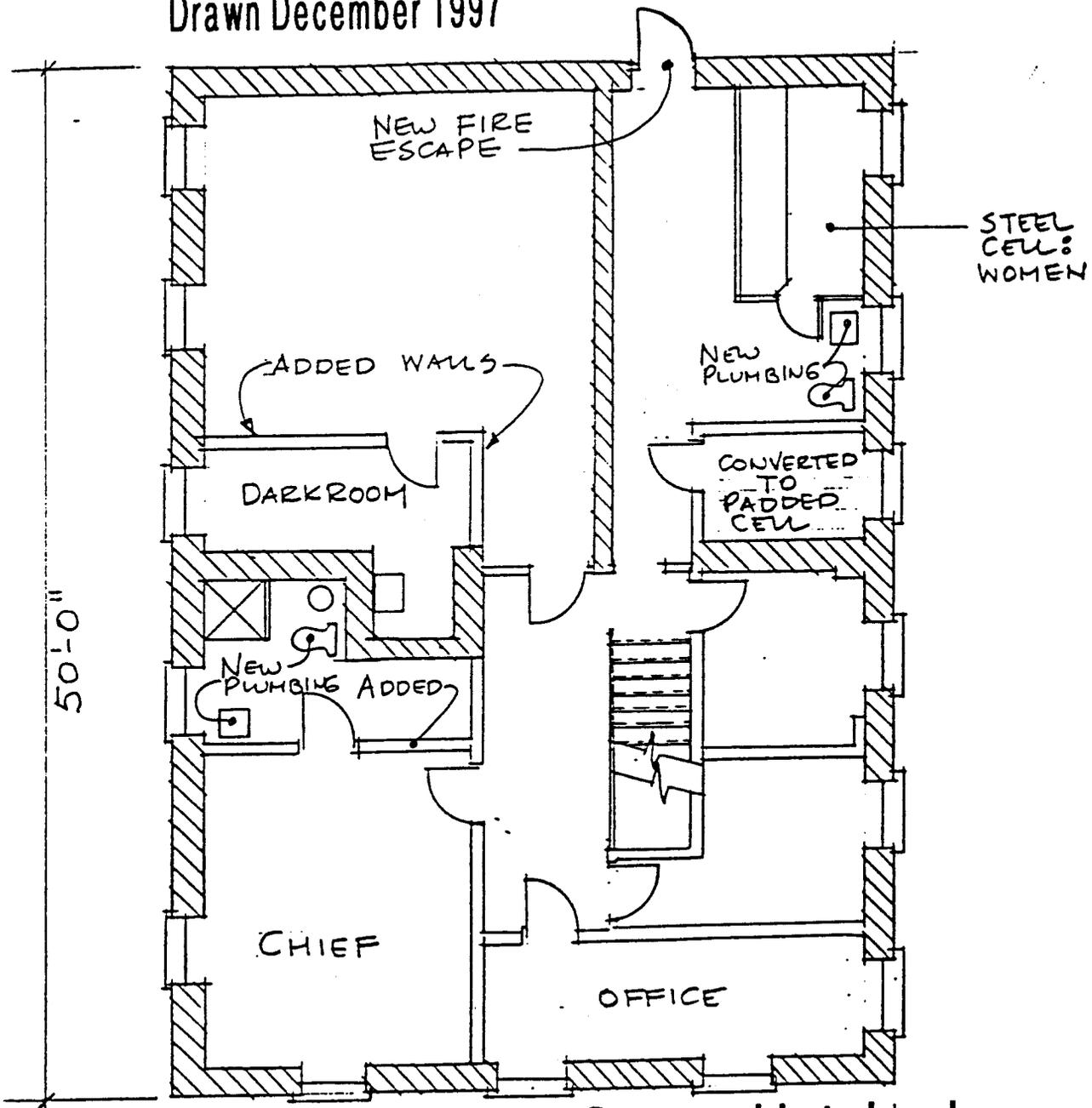
Drawn December 1997



Masonry Walls are Cross-Hatched

1/8" Scale

Drawn December 1997



Masonry Walls are Cross-Hatched

36'-0"
1/8" Scale