

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 8
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Research Building
Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Attendants' Quarters)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-D

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL BUILDING 8 (Attendants' Quarters/Research Building)

HABS No. MI-427-D

- Location:** Southfield Expressway and Outer Drive
Allen Park, Wayne County, Michigan
- Present Owner:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420
- Present Use:** Vacant.
- Significance:** Building 8 was constructed as the Attendants' Quarters for the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital. It was one of the first buildings completed on the complex in 1939. The presence of this building, as well as the Nurses' Quarters and Director's Quarters (Buildings 7 and 6, respectively) indicated the need for round-the-clock, on-site staff at the hospital.
- Building 8 exhibits elements of the Georgian Revival style, which are typical of the Allen Park facility and of VA hospitals nationwide. The interior and exterior symmetry, side gable form, pediment with dentils, pedimented entrance, and sash and dormer windows are all reflections of the Georgian Revival style that was common for VA hospitals.
- The building was converted for use as a research facility at an unknown date. This change reflects a shift in focus at the Allen Park hospital from strictly treating veterans to researching common illnesses and disorders and developing treatments. This trend is also reflected in the construction of additional research facilities in Units B and C of Building 1 (1945-47), Units D and E (1960), Building 31 (1959) and Building 67 (ca. 1970).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Date of Erection:** 1939.
- B. Architect:** Anonymous Veterans Administration Construction Division staff architect.
- C. Original and Subsequent Owners, Occupants, Uses:** The building is part of a Veterans Hospital complex constructed for and owned by the United States Government from 1939 to the present. Building 8 originally served as the attendants' quarters and was later converted into a research building with laboratory spaces.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** No original plans for this building could be found.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** A brick exterior enclosed stairwell was added to the eastern side of the building, obscuring the original façade. The interior room configuration was changed during the conversion of the building from residential to laboratory use.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 8, formerly the Attendants' Quarters, is a 2½-story residential structure. Its Georgian Revival style complements the other original 1939 buildings in the complex, including Building 1, Building 6, and Building 7.
- 2. Condition of Fabric:** The building is in fair condition due to neglect and deterioration.

B. Description of Exterior:

- 1. Overall Dimensions:** The overall dimensions of the building measure 79'-9" x 38'-0". The rectangular plan building is two stories, with a basement. The structure is seven bays long and three bays wide.
- 2. Foundations:** The foundation is poured concrete.
- 3. Walls:** The walls are faced with four-course common bond red brick and feature brick quoins at the corners.

4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a poured concrete structure. The roof is wood framed.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** A projecting portico is centered across three bays in the middle of the main, or south, façade. A flight of steps constructed on a brick base with granite treads provides access to the portico. The portico floor is limestone. Four giant Doric columns across the front and two Doric pilasters at the rear support a full entablature and triangular pediment. The cornice of the entablature and the raking cornice of the pediment are decorated with dentils. A semicircular multi-light window decorates the pediment.
6. **Chimneys:** There are no chimneys present.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The building originally had two exterior doorways; one centered under the front portico and one centered at the rear of the residence, both of which are directly in line with each other. The front entrance has a classically styled surround featuring Doric pilasters supporting an entablature with corner medallions and a triangular pediment. Just below the entablature is a four-pane transom with Romanesque arched frames. The door surround at the rear is similar, but has a recessed semi-circular arch and keystone above the doorway instead of a transom. Three more doorways have been added over the years; one below the sixth bay in the basement level of the main façade, one in the south facade of the east addition, and a large doorway in the center of the second story of the east facade of the east bulkhead addition. All the doors are metal with those in the front and rear entrances featuring a narrow, vertical, rectangular light.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** All the windows in this building, except the decorative windows in the building's two pediments, are six-over-six double-hung, wood sash. There are no shutters. With the exception of the windows under the front portico, those flanking the rear entrance, and present in the roof dormers and pediments, all feature brick jack arches. Those under the front portico have limestone jack arches with a central keystone; those flanking the rear doorway have brick jack arches with a limestone keystone. All windows except those in the dormers and pediments have limestone sills. The windows in the dormers have no trim. The window in the front pediment is a fixed semi-circular wood sash with radiating muntins and a keystone above. The window in the rear pediment is a fixed oval wood sash with a keystone at the top, bottom, and on each side. The center windows in the first and second stories of the building's west façade have been closed with brick in-fill.

8. Roof:

- a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof is a hip roof with intersecting gables over the front and rear entrances. The hip roof and gables are sheathed in treated terra cotta tiles manufactured to imitate slate. The east stairwell addition has a flat roof.
- b. **Cornice, Eaves:** A simple wood cornice surrounds the building on all sides; it features cyma recta and cyma reversa moldings.
- c. **Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:** There are four hip roof dormers present; one centered at each end of the building and one centered to each side of the front gable. The dormer roofs and sides are covered with treated terra cotta tiles manufactured to imitate slate.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. **Basement:** The basement was inaccessible due to posted biohazard warnings.
- b. **First Floor:** The building has a cross-axial plan with rooms entering off the main central corridor along the east-west axis. The main entry is on the south façade through a vestibule. The rear entry to the building is on the north façade through the stair hall. It is currently separated from the rest of the building by a wall and fire door built during interior modifications in the 1970s.

Eleven laboratory spaces and a restroom are located off of the east-west corridor. Large refrigeration units and safety equipment have been installed in the hallway. The main laboratory space is in the southwest corner of the building. This space is twice the width of the other laboratory units in the building. The other rooms are designed to accommodate both laboratory and office functions.

- c. **Second Floor:** The rooms on the second level open off a corridor, which runs from east to west through the building. The stair hall is separated from the corridor by a wall and fire door constructed during interior modifications in the 1970s. The twelve rooms are a combination of laboratory and office space with the rooms designed to accommodate both functions. A restroom is located to the western side of the stair hall. A fire stair was constructed on the east façade in the 1970s to provide emergency egress from the second floor.
- d. **Attic:** The attic was inaccessible due to locked doors.

2. **Stairways:** The open string stair has a straight run to the second floor. A small flight of stairs leads down three steps from the first level to the rear entry and the base of the main stairs up to the second level. The wood balusters are a square shape with two per step. The wood newel posts are square with a pyramidal cap. The entire stair is painted grey, except for the wood hand rail which has been varnished. The stairs are of dark brown terrazzo with a metal edge on the front of each step. The fire stair is of concrete with non-slip tape at the edge of each step. At the top of this set of stairs is a wood newel post and railing which matches the main stair.
3. **Flooring:** The floors throughout the building are covered with tan linoleum. The integral baseboards and thresholds are of terrazzo with dark brown, black, orange, and pink stone chips. The connection between the floor and the baseboard is coved to prevent dust build-up in the corners. The two rooms on either side of the stair hall on the second floor have decorative ½" tile flooring in a blue-green color with grey inset tiles.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The walls throughout the building are of plaster which has been painted white. All rooms have terrazzo baseboards with a curved connection between the floor and the walls. The drop ceiling has rectangular acoustic tiles within a suspended metal frame.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The interior doors in the building are single-panel wood laminate set in metal frames. Original six-panel wood doors set in metal frames can be found on the entrances to two rooms on the second floor. These doors are similar to the doors found in Building 6 and Building 14. The doors at the front and rear entry, interior and exterior entrances to the fire escape, and the stair hall are all steel fire doors in metal frames.
 - b. **Windows:** All of the interior windows have a large wood sill and are surrounded by 6" wood molding. All of the woodwork, such as the window surrounds, is painted white.
6. **Decorative Features and Trim:** There are no decorative features or trim.
7. **Mechanical Equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:** The original heating and ventilation system has been replaced with a centralized forced air system. The ductwork for the

new system is located along the exterior walls and has been boxed in. Vents are located in each room.

- b. **Lighting:** No original light fixtures remain in the building. Fluorescent light fixtures have been installed within the drop ceiling.
 - c. **Plumbing:** The restrooms have standard porcelain toilets and sinks. In the laboratory areas the sinks are stainless steel with gooseneck faucets.
8. **Laboratory Equipment:** The building contains laboratory workspaces complete with stainless steel cabinets and treated stone or stainless steel work surfaces. The cabinets in some rooms have been painted turquoise, orange, yellow, green, or a combination of these colors. The majority of the upper cabinet doors have glass panels, which are either opaque or translucent. The lower cabinet doors and drawers have solid steel panels. Some rooms have open steel shelving. Fume hoods and/or large pieces of equipment such as incubators, centrifuges, and refrigerators are still located in many of the rooms.

D. Site:

- 1. **General Setting and Orientation:** This building is located on the south side of the Allen Park complex. It faces south, and overlooks a drive and Patients' and Visitors' Parking Lot D. It is the westernmost building in a row of three residential structures located along a tree-lined drive.
- 2. **Historic Landscape Design:** Mature ornamental coniferous and deciduous shrubs surround the building.
- 3. **Outbuildings:** None.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This complex was recorded by URS Corporation, Gaithersburg, Maryland, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, from January to March of 2002. Architectural Historians Amy Barnes, Anne Brockett, and Caleb Christopher completed the fieldwork for this project in January 2002. The photographer was Andrew Bagnat and the Historian was E. Madeleine Scheerer. The project was reviewed by Fred Holycross and Mark R. Edwards.

As stipulated in the deed in which Henry and Clara Ford donated the land on which the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital is located, when the property ceases to be used as a

veterans hospital, the land is to revert in ownership to the Ford family heirs. Since inpatient and outpatient veteran medical service is now provided at the John D. Dingell Veterans Administration Hospital in Detroit, which opened in 1996, and the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital ceased all operations in 2002, the land is to be turned over to the Ford Motor Land Development Corporation (FMLDC) in compliance with the original deed. A Congressional appropriation of \$14 million, to be disbursed to the FMLDC over a seven-year period beginning in 2002, was designated for the demolition of the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital complex.

PART IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Collections:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Architectural Drawings Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. John D. Dingell Medical Center Collection. Detroit, Michigan.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Architectural Drawings Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Collection. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Information and Media Section Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. John D. Dingell Medical Center Audio Visual Collection. Detroit, Michigan.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Office of Facilities Management Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Collection. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Photograph Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. John D. Dingell Medical Center Audio Visual Collection. Detroit, Michigan.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Photograph Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Collection. Washington, D.C.

B. References:

Ching, Francis D. K. *Building Construction Illustrated*, 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997.

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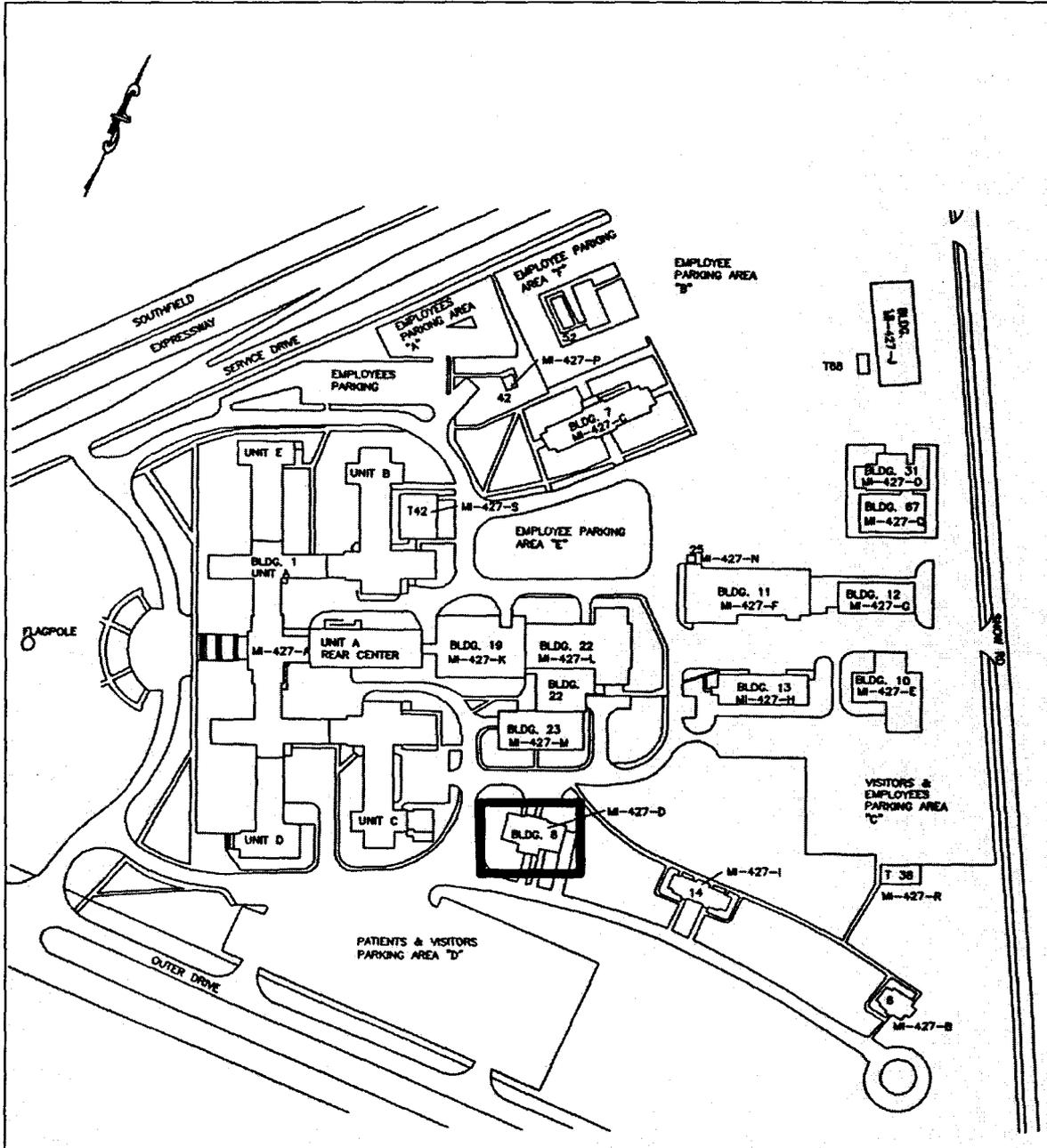
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

Mollenhoff, Gjore J. and Karen R. Tupek. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for Allen Park Veterans Administration Medical Center," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., 1980.

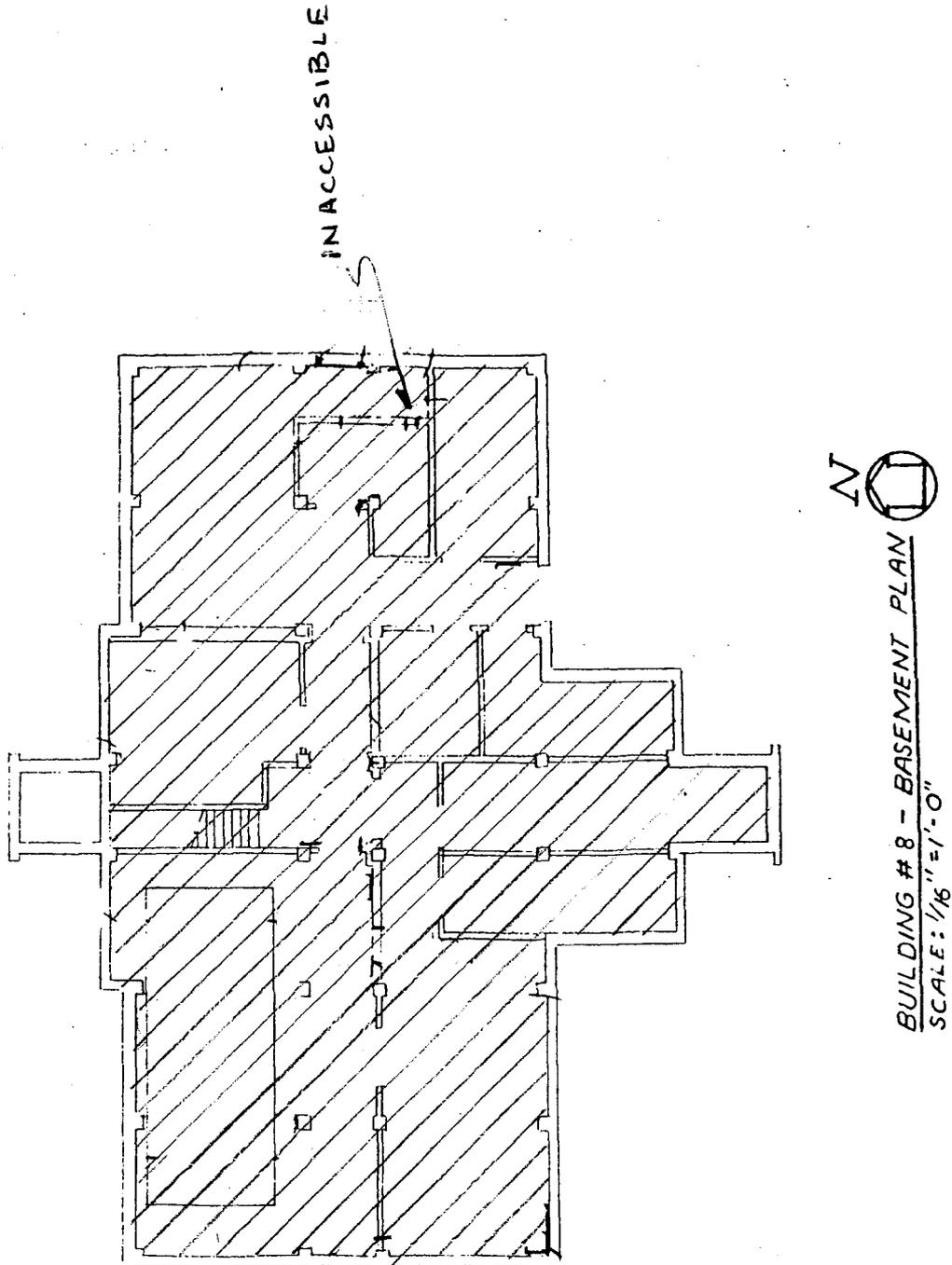
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Site Plan



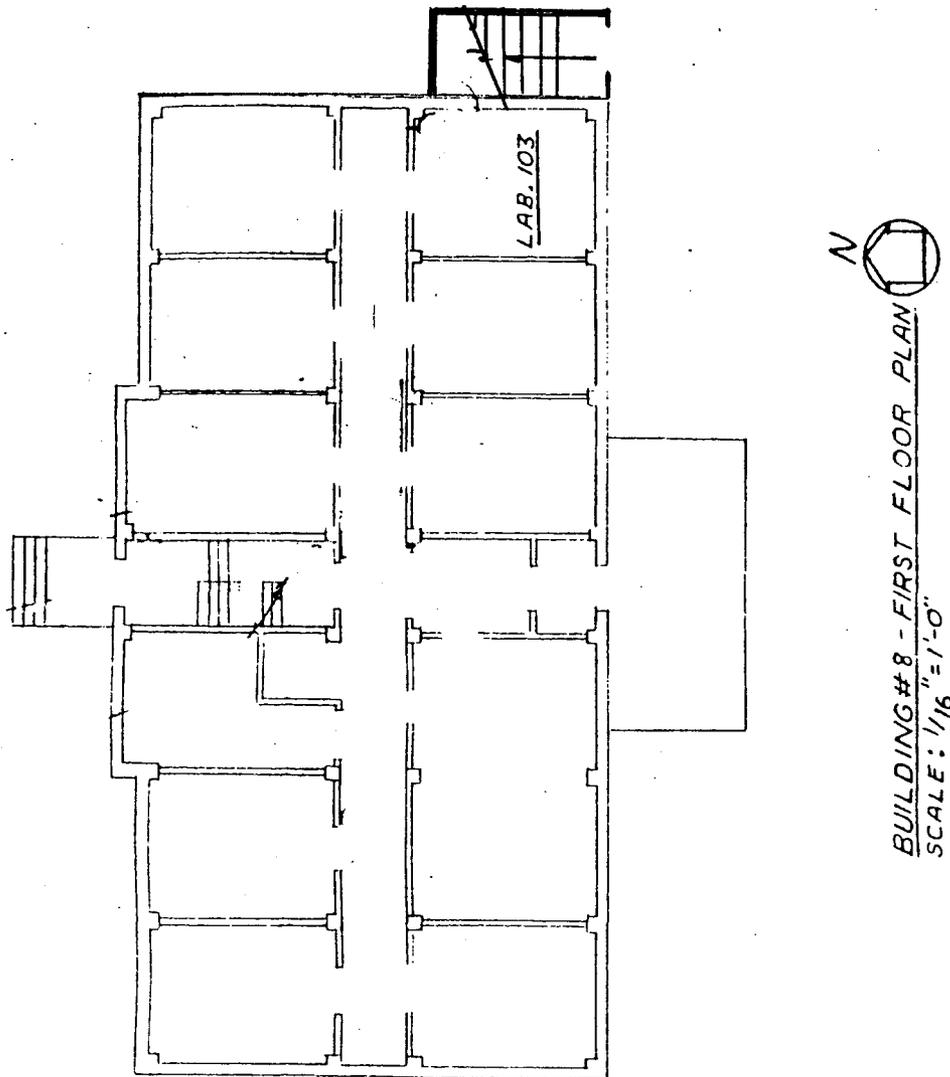
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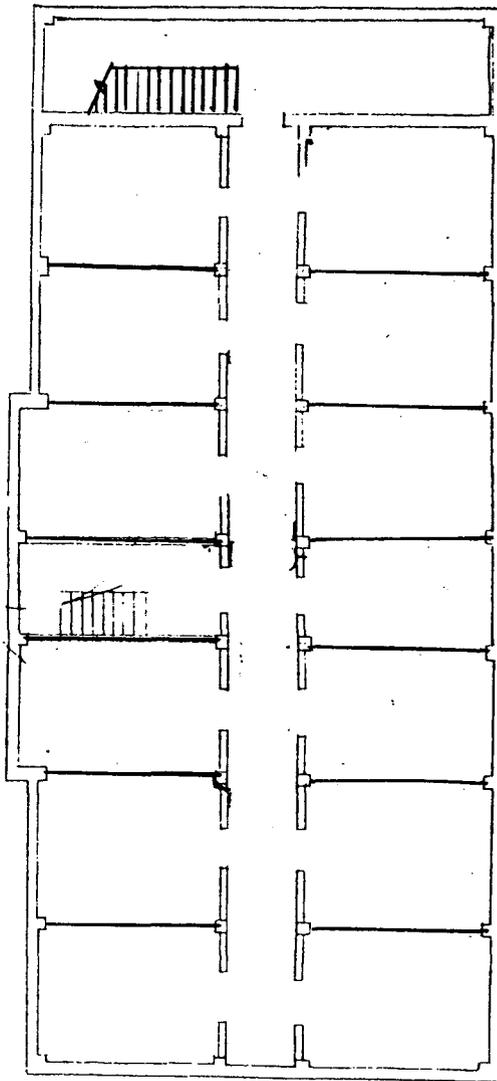
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N
BUILDING #8 - SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

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