

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS,
ATTENDANTS' QUARTERS
(Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Building No. 4)
(Veterans Administration Hospital, Jefferson Barracks)
(Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks
Division)
VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division
1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
Saint Louis
Independent City
Missouri

HABS MO-1943-D
MO-1943-D

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, ATTENDANTS' QUARTERS
(BUILDING 4)

HABS No. MO-1943-D

- Location:** Building 4, VA Medical Center, 1 Jefferson Barracks Drive,
St. Louis, Missouri
USGS Quadrangle Oakville, Missouri
UTM Coordinates 16 7258278 E 9965717 N
- Date of Construction:** 1922-1923
- Designer:** Treasury Department Supervising Architect's Office
- Contractor:** James Stewart and Company
- Present Owner:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Present Use:** Vacant
- Significance:** The Attendants' Quarters was part of the early 1920s effort to build clean, modern hospitals for U.S. military veterans. The building was one of the original facilities of the U.S. Veterans Bureau Hospital built at Jefferson Barracks in 1922-1923. The Attendants' Quarters continued to serve as attendant accommodations at the hospital through the late 1930s. By 1940, the building had been converted into hospital space and appears to have been used as a segregated hospital for African Americans during the 1940s and 1950s.
- Project Information:** This project was sponsored and funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as mitigation for the demolition of buildings at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, a property that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places via consensus determination of eligibility between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Office.

Description:

The Attendants' Quarters (Building 4) is a two-story stucco-clad facility with a hipped roof and a raised basement that is fully exposed on the north side of the building. The building is twenty-five bays wide and three bays deep. The building has replacement double-hung metal windows throughout, and the exterior is plain except for a simple white cornice and gutter that sits at the top of the second floor. In terms of structure, the building has a reinforced-concrete frame composed of concrete posts, beams, and floors. Wall spaces between the concrete posts are filled in with brick and terra-cotta block and covered with stucco on the building's exterior. The interior has been remodeled repeatedly, but the central stairs and stair lobbies contain some original features. The building faces an asphalt parking lot to the north, and the building is connected to the south to the former Dining Hall (Building 23) via a small above-ground connector structure.

Originally, the facade of the Attendants' Quarters was the south wall of the building, but because of the addition of an above-ground connector to the former Dining Hall (Building 23), the porch and other aspects of the center portion of the south wall have been demolished. The north wall of the Attendants' Quarters now serves as the building's facade.

The north wall consists of the fully exposed basement level and the first and second stories, and features a symmetrical arrangement of double-hung metal replacement windows; the original windows were six-over-six wood double-hung units. The central entrance is a flat metal double door leading into the basement level of the building. This door is sheltered by a flat-roof porch with concrete walls and a concrete roof. This entrance originally featured a double door with a small flat-roof porch suspended on two chains. The north wall also has four hipped-roof stair towers that were added to the building within the last forty years. The stair towers have basement, first floor, and second floor levels. The entire north wall is capped with a simple wood entablature, cornice, and box gutter, at the top of the second (top) floor.

The east and west walls are plain with metal double-hung replacement windows, stucco cladding, and a plain wood entablature, cornice, and box gutter. Original drawings show that stairs were once located on the first floor of these walls, but the stairs and doorways have been removed in favor of windows.

The south wall, which was originally the facade, features a symmetrical arrangement of metal replacement one-over-one windows. The connector corridor structure that leads to the former Dining Hall (Building 23), attaches to the center of the south wall. Originally, a hipped-roof wood porch with wood posts and railings occupied the center of the south wall, but this porch was demolished to make way for the connector. However, a small hipped-roof wood porch now sits to the west of the connector structure and appears to have

been built with remnants of the original central porch. This porch is attached to a small three-story tower that sits next to the connector structure and was added to the building ca. 1940. The south wall of the Attendants' Quarters also features two recessed blind arch openings that are part of the building's original design. The arched openings frame single replacement double-hung windows on the second and third floors. The south wall also features four two-story stair towers with hipped roofs. Note also that the Attendants' Quarters is constructed into a hillside, so the basement is mostly below grade on the south side of the building, and the connector with the former Dining Hall connects to the first floor of the Attendants' Quarters.

The interior of the Attendants' Quarters has been altered over the years but still retains some aspects of the original layout and a few older finishes. The central portion of the building on each floor consists of a lobby and stairway space. The staircases are concrete with steel and wood railings and are original features of the building. The lobby spaces on the first and second floors contain some original gypsum board walls, but other areas of wall are clearly later modifications. Two pre-World War II ceramic water fountains remain in these lobby spaces and are mounted inside arched plaster niches. The area next to the staircases would have originally been more open and would have contained community rooms for the residents of the building; these spaces were remodeled by 1940 when the building was converted to hospital use. Doors are mostly flat metal replacements, and the lobby spaces also have acoustical drop ceilings from the ca. 1960-1975 era.

The east and west wing spaces that sit on each side of the lobbies on the first and second floors were originally composed of central corridors lined on each side with small apartments for the hospital attendants. The basement wing spaces contained storage and laundry facilities. By 1940, the building was converted to clinic and hospital space. As part of this remodeling, most of the attendant apartments on the first and second floors were merged into larger spaces that housed three- and four-bed hospital wards, surgical rooms, bathrooms, and offices. Today, the first and second wings retain central corridors flanked on either side by rooms, although interior finishes in the wings date mainly to the 1960s and 1970s.

History:

The U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, was part of an early 1920s plan to reform health care for veterans. Before the early 1920s, health care for veterans had in many cases been dispensed from improvised facilities that were in poor condition and not well suited for the task. After a well-publicized tour of some of these hospitals, the U.S. Veterans Bureau began planning and construction on new, modern hospitals throughout the United States. Planning for the U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, including drafting of construction drawings for the Attendants' Quarters (Building 4), took place in 1922.

Construction on the Attendants' Quarters and other major buildings at the hospital began in 1922 and was completed in 1923.

The Attendants' Quarters was originally built as a large housing facility for hospital attendants, who would have assisted the doctors and nurses in dealing with the patients and keeping the hospital facilities running. As built in 1922-1923, the hospital campus had a fairly large number of buildings devoted to nurse and attendant living spaces. This may have been related to the location of the hospital at Jefferson Barracks, which in the 1920s was fairly remote from the more heavily developed portions of St. Louis County. Due to the remoteness of the site and the difficulty in commuting back and forth, the government appears to have decided that it made sense to provide on-site living accommodations for much of the hospital staff.

The original floor plan of the Attendants' Quarters shows the building as having a series of communal spaces in the center block of the building, while the east and west wings on the two main floors were devoted mainly to apartments for the attendants. Each apartment consisted of a single room measuring about 9'6" x 11'0" and each had one window and two doors; one door opened out to a central corridor, and a second door led into the adjacent apartment. Residents used communal bathing and toilet facilities located on the main corridors.¹

Allocation of bathrooms on the floor plan suggests that the sexes were mostly segregated in the Attendants' Quarters. The west wing of the first floor contains only women's bathing and toilet facilities. On the second floor, the east wing contains toilet and bath facilities for men, and the west wing contains only facilities for women. However, the east wing of the first floor contains both a male and a female toilet facility, and the facilities are of roughly equal size, suggesting that perhaps men and women had apartments on the first floor of this wing.²

Communal facilities in the building's first and second floors included large community rooms for social activities, plus a small reading room on the first floor. The center block of the first floor also included a small office. The basement contained laundry, storage, and toilet facilities, as well as several unfinished spaces. However, the unfinished spaces were fitted with doorways similar to those in the apartments on the first and second floors, indicating the spaces were viewed as potential areas for additional one-room attendant

¹ Department of the Treasury, Supervising Architect's Office, *U.S. Veterans Bureau, Jefferson Barracks, Attendants' Quarters*. Washington, D.C., 1922, on file at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

² *Ibid.*

apartments, should a larger number of hospital attendants needed to be housed on-site in the future.³

At some time after its completion, the Attendants' Quarters was converted from quarters to hospital space. Although the exact date of this conversion is not known, it appears likely that the change happened in association with the construction of new facilities that occurred at the Jefferson Barracks VA facility in the late 1930s. In 1937, the new Nurses' Quarters 2 (Building 18) was constructed, and attendants' quarters were installed in Nurses' Quarters 1 (Building 3). Once the employee living accommodations were moved out of the Attendants' Quarters (Building 4), the VA was free to remodel this building for other uses. A floor plan of the former Attendants' Quarters (Building 4) from 1940 shows the building as having been converted to hospital ward space.⁴

Although the 1940s floor plan labels the building as housing Research and Services, a few pieces of evidence suggest that the building was converted at this time into a segregated hospital for African Americans. The 1940 plan includes a "Colored Visitor Room" in the basement, indicating that black patients were accommodated in the building.⁵ In addition, the 1948⁶ and 1950⁷ development and master plan maps for the Jefferson Barracks Veterans Administration (VA) campus refer to Building 4 as the "Colored Patients Building," indicating that the facility was already in use to segregate African American patients, or its use for that purpose was part of the plans for the new psychiatric hospital that was being envisioned for the Jefferson Barracks VA facility.

The 1940 floor plan for Building 4 shows a seventy-eight-bed hospital facility. The first floor of the building contained a series of wards varying from two to eight beds in size, one single-bed room, offices for doctors and nurses, toilet and bath facilities, a surgical dressing room, a small kitchen, and linen facilities. The second floor contained a nearly identical floor plan. The first floor notably contained a four-bed locked section, presumably to house patients who were to be confined to their ward space. The basement contained storage for patients' clothing, toilets, an attendants' recreation room, the "colored patients" visitors' room, and a restroom and recreational room that were marked as facilities for future development.⁸

³ Ibid.

⁴ U.S. Veterans Administration, *Alterations to Hospital Building No. 4, Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.*, 1940, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers, *544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Site Plan*, 1948, on file at St. Louis VA Hospital, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁷ Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers, *544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Master Plan*, 1950, on file at St. Louis VA Hospital, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁸ U.S. Veterans Administration, *Alterations to Hospital Building No. 4*.

The central porch on the south wall of the building was also demolished ca. 1940 to make way for an above-ground corridor structure that connected the first floor of the Attendants' Quarters to the Dining Hall (Building 23) and the Main Hospital (Building 1). The construction of the connecting corridor was likely triggered by the construction of the Dining Hall in 1937, and a desire to allow patients and staff in the Main Hospital and the Attendants' Quarters to travel to the Dining Hall without going outdoors. A portion of the south porch may have been salvaged in 1940; the wood from the salvage effort appears to have been re-used to build a smaller porch on the west side of the connecting corridor, on the south wall of the Attendants' Quarters.

A 1955 plan for the former Attendants' Quarters (Building 4) suggests that by this time it was no longer in use as a segregated building for African American patients, but instead was being used to house space for volunteer and service organizations, and for education and training. The first floor contained spaces devoted to service organizations and volunteers in the larger rooms, and there were also restrooms and offices for nurses. Many of the smaller rooms on the first floor were not labeled with a function on the floor plan. The second floor contained male attendant lockers, restrooms, an office, and two rooms for nurses' education. Many of the smaller rooms on the second floor also were not labeled on the plan. The basement was shown as containing laboratory and research facilities, including a bacteriology and serology lab, surgical pathology facilities, rooms for research and pathology, an interview room, offices, and restrooms. As with the first and second floors, many of the basement spaces were unlabeled on the floor plan.⁹ By 1990, the building was in use for volunteer services, building management offices, and psychology and sociology operations, functions fairly similar to those shown on the 1955 floor plan.¹⁰

Building 4 is currently largely vacant, although some areas are used for storage. Most of the interior finishes in the east and west wings date to the 1970s and later, although the central lobby spaces on the first and second floors retain original concrete stairs and metal stair railings, and original ceramic water fountains. Plans for the redevelopment of the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks, call for this building to be demolished in the coming years, and the site will be re-used for the construction of new VA Medical Center facilities.

⁹ Maguolo and Quick, Architects and Engineers, *Construction Drawings for Additions and Alterations, Veterans Administration, Jefferson Barracks, Mo., Building, No. 4*, April 1955, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Annual Real Property Survey Report, Building Numbers and Locations, Jefferson Barracks VAMC*, 1990, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

Sources:

Department of the Treasury, Supervising Architect's Office. *U.S. Veterans Bureau, Jefferson Barracks, Attendants' Quarters*. 1922. On file at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers. *544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Master Plan*. 1950. On file at St. Louis VA Hospital, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

———. Architects and Engineers, *544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Site Plan*. 1948. On file at St. Louis VA Hospital, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

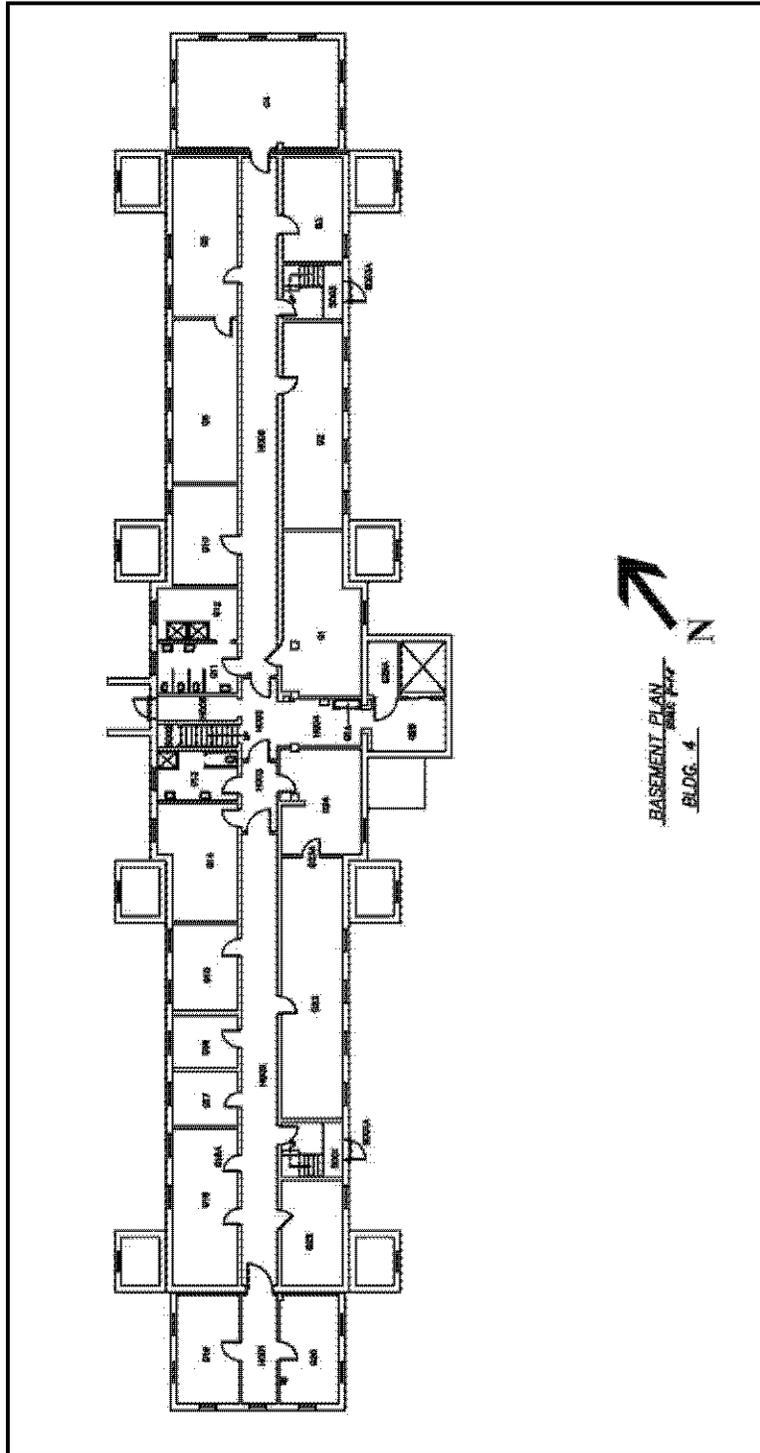
Maguolo and Quick, Architects and Engineers. *Construction Drawings for Additions and Alterations, Veterans Administration, Jefferson Barracks, Mo., Building, No. 4*. April 1955. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

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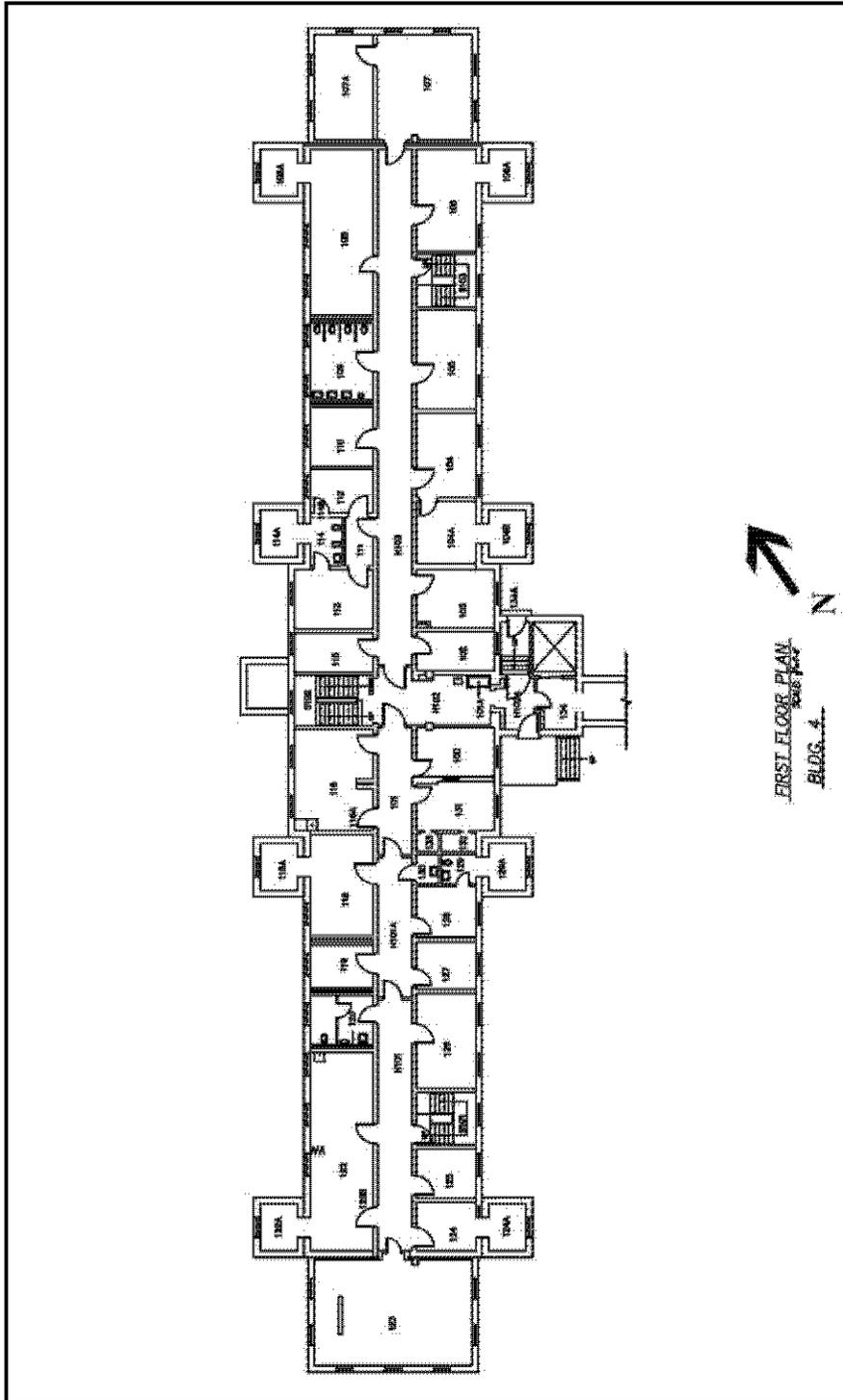
U.S. Veterans Administration. *Alterations to Hospital Building No. 4, Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.* 1940. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

Historians:

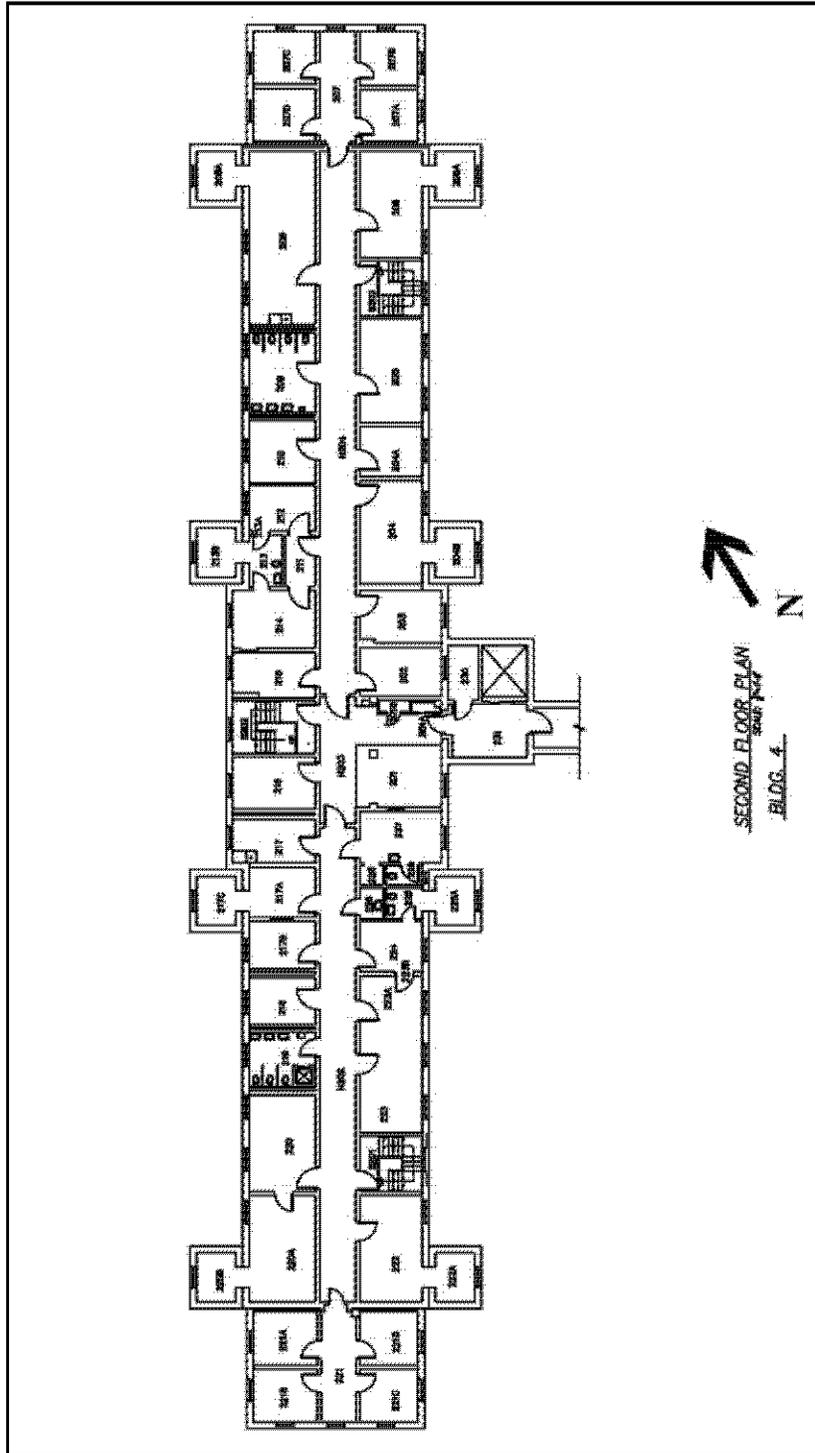
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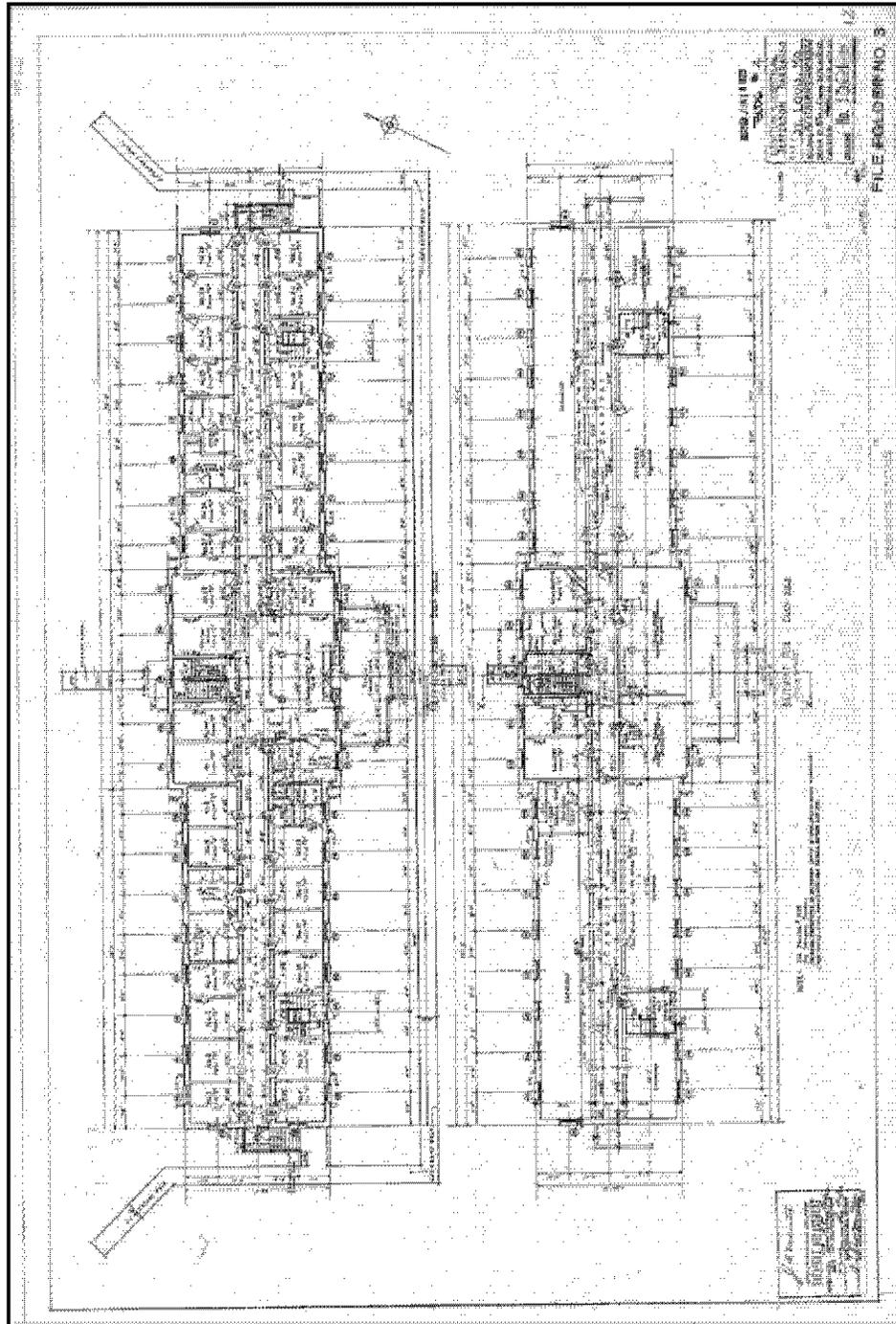
Attendants' Quarters (Building 4), current floor plan of basement



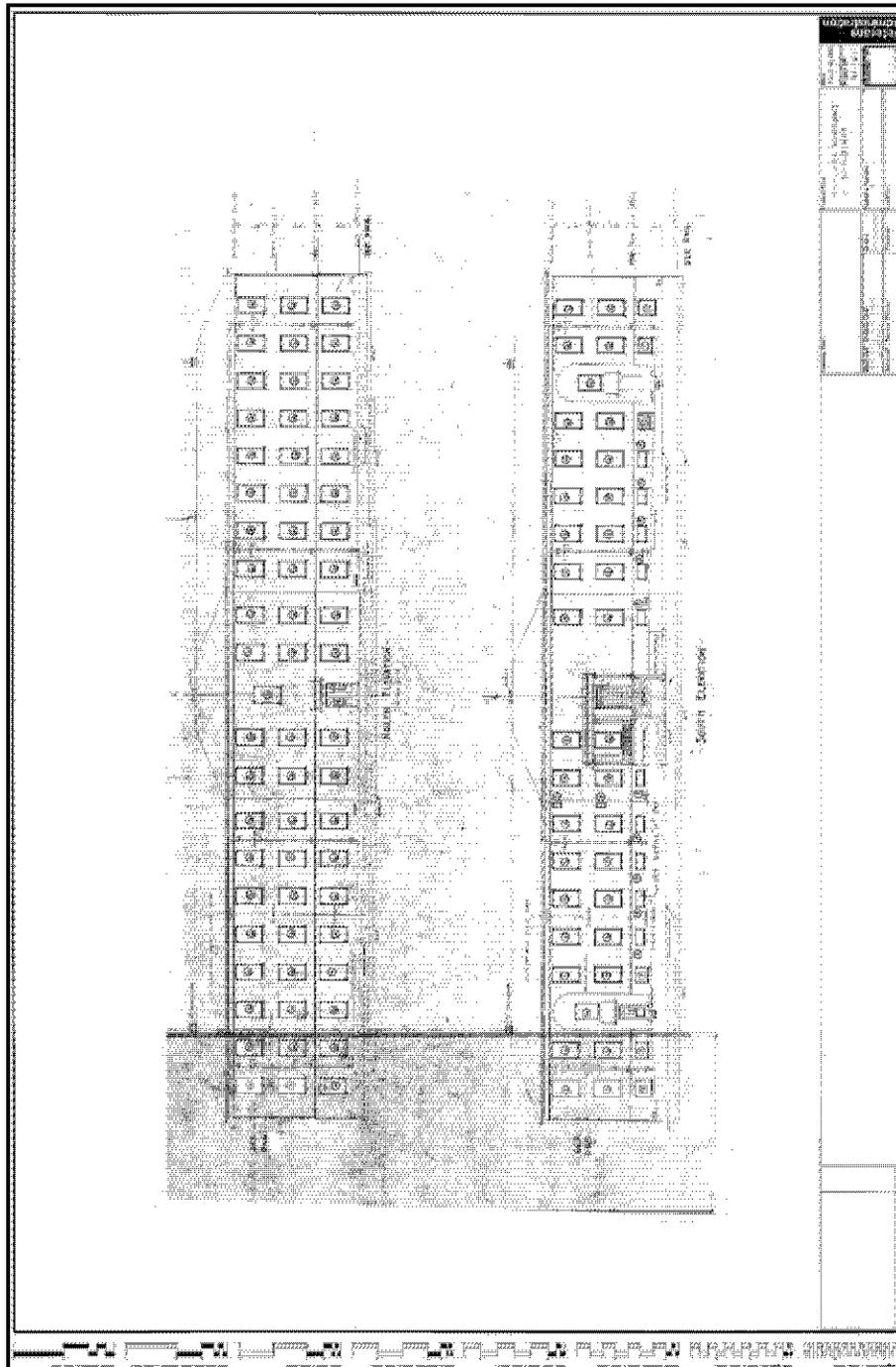
Attendants' Quarters (Building 4), current floor plan of first floor



Attendants' Quarters (Building 4), current floor plan of second floor



Original floor plans for the Attendants' Quarters (Building 4), 1922



Original elevations for the Attendants' Quarters (Building 4), 1922 with 1982 modifications