

JOSEPH D. REINBOTH HOUSE  
412-414 Cooper Street  
Camden  
Camden County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-988

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4-CAM,  
17-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOSEPH D. REINBOTH HOUSE

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LOCATION: 412-414 Cooper Street, Camden, Camden County, New Jersey.  
USGS Camden, New Jersey Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
18.489610.4421650

PRESENT OWNER: United States General Services Administration, Region 3, Ninth and Market Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19107

PRESENT USE: Vacant. To be demolished in 1991.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Reinboth house is a key structure in the Cooper Street National Register Historic District. Constructed about 1861, the house has been attributed to Philadelphia architects Joseph E. Hoxie and Stephen D. Button, and cited as possibly the best example of the Italian Villa style remaining in Camden.

I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: The house is believed to have been completed in 1861, the year after Joseph Reinboth purchased the lot on which it is located (Greenberg 1978).

2. Architect: The design of the house has been attributed to Joseph E. Hoxie and Stephen D. Button, architects of Philadelphia (Graham 1980), although it has not been possible to substantiate this through available documentary sources.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: References are to deeds and other documents in the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Camden County Courthouse, Camden, New Jersey.

- 1860 Deed, 19 July 1860, Book 36, p. 165. William Hart to Joseph D. Reinboth.
- 1868 Deed, 3 December 1868, Book 57, p. 321. Joseph D. Reinboth to Abigail R. McCallister and Mary J. Browning.
- 1883 Deed, 24 February 1883, Book 108, p. 67. James B. Dayton, Special Master (Chancery Court) to Ida Hatch.
- 1908 Deed, 17 February 1908. Book 326, p. 133. Ethel A. Hatch and Jeanne M. Hatch to August H. Sickler.
- 1916 Deed, 6 December 1916, Book 411, p. 509. August H. Sickler and Florence B. Sickler to Ernest G. Hummel and Rae E. Hummel.
- 1943 Deed, 31 December 1943, Book 979, p. 476. Ernest G. Hummel and Rae E. Hummel to Louise Hummel Curry.
- 1957 Deed, 11 September 1957, Book 2129, p. 52. Louise Hummel Curry to P.J. Service Corporation.
- 1972 Deed, 26 December 1972, Book 3266, p. 137. P.J. Service Corporation to Maurcon Associates.
- 1974 Deed, 19 December 1974, Book 3365, p. 108. Maurcon Associates to Volunteers of America, Camden Post.
- 1988 Deed, 18 July 1988, Book 4310, p. 345. Volunteers of America, Camden Post, to Volunteers of America, Delaware Valley, Inc.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: No documentary information on the original appearance of the house has been located.
6. Alterations and Additions: Originally a single-family dwelling, the house had been divided into two dwelling units by 1885 (Sanborn Map Co. 1885). Sometime after 1906 and prior to 1926, the house was further subdivided into apartments (although remaining owner-occupied), and the two rear wings substantially reduced in length (Sanborn Map Company 1906, 1926). By 1950, the entire building had been converted to office use (Sanborn Map Co., 1950). Extensive interior modernizations since that time (for dormitory-style residential occupancy) have removed or obscured nearly all original interior features, as well as evidence of any historic-period alterations.

#### B. Historical Context

The Cooper Street Historic District covers six blocks along a major thoroughfare extending from the Delaware River through center-city Camden. The district contains residences, offices and commercial buildings representing the development of the city between 1810 and 1937, a period when industry, commerce and agriculture combined to make Camden the economic and urban center of southern New Jersey. One of the city's oldest roads, Cooper Street was first laid out in 1765 as Ferry Road. It originally constituted the terminus of a route which provided access from all of southern New Jersey to Philadelphia via ferry. Renamed when Jacob Cooper laid out the town of Camden in 1773, Cooper Street remained a major thoroughfare as Camden grew and prospered through the 19th century. The six blocks between 2nd and 7th Streets, which constitute the historic district, represent a significant architectural legacy. Represented among its 76 contributing buildings, most of which are brick rowhouses and offices, are Greek Revival, Italianate, Chateausque and Queen Anne styles from the 19th century, as well as Mission Revival and Art Deco designs from the first decades of the 20th century. To a significant degree, the high quality of the architecture within the district is attributable to Cooper Street's "long tenure of professional tenants", physicians and attorneys who commissioned substantial residences and offices. Many of these were architect-designed and, as a result, the street offers examples of the work of a number of major Philadelphia architects, including Hazelhurst & Huckel, J. Fletcher Street, Hoxie & Button, Bailey & Truscott, and Frank R. Watson.

This house was built for Joseph D. Reinboth, a real estate broker who had his principal offices in Philadelphia. He lived in the

house only a few years, as his wife, Eliza, died in 1867. Reinboth then sold the house the following year to sisters Abigail McCallister and Mary Browning. The latter was wife of Cooper P. Browning, a member of the family which operated a dye-woods and chemicals manufactory called the Aroma Mills in Camden (Munn 1989).

Mary and Cooper Browning had three daughters, Elizabeth Croskey, Mary Truscott and Caroline Ida Hatch. In 1883, as a result of an action brought against her sisters, Caroline Ida Hatch acquired the house at public sale. Caroline died in 1891, followed by her husband, Joseph, a partner with his brother in the Fairview Brick Works, in 1898 (Camden County Historical Society, Vital Statistics Files). Ownership of the property fell to the couple's two daughters, Ethel and Jeanne Hatch. In 1908, the sisters sold the property to August Sickler, who retained it until 1916. That year, he sold the house to Dr. Ernest Hummel, a prominent Camden pediatrician and chief of staff of the pediatric department at Cooper Hospital in the city (Heston 1924:89-90). In 1943, the Hummels transferred the house to their daughter, Louise Hummel Curry of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. Until this time, the building appears to have been consistently owner-occupied, and Hummel operated a medical practice from it as well (Howe 1917:579; 1931:331; 1940:367) The property passed into corporate ownership in 1957, when it was acquired by the P.J. Service Corporation. Under the Volunteers of America, who purchased the house in 1975, the house became a dormitory-style residence through contracts with government agencies for social services.

## II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Reinboth house is a free-standing dwelling in the Italian Villa style, with symmetrical facade, centered tower, and stucco finish scored to resemble coursed ashlar stonemasonry.

2. Condition of fabric: The house is in good condition and appears to have been well-maintained.

### B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The house is massed as a 2 1/2-story, nearly square, main block of three bays, approximately 40 feet wide and 37 feet deep. There are two, two-story extensions off the rear (south) wall of the main block. The southeast extension measures approximately 27 feet x 21 feet, the southwest extension about 17 feet x 22 feet. On both the extensions, the

second stories are partially supported on steel posts to overhang the ground stories.

2. Foundations: The house rests on rubble stone foundations which incorporate a full basement beneath the main block and a portion of the east rear extension.

3. Walls: The exterior walls are of brick construction, covered with white-painted stucco. On the facade and a portion of the east side, the stucco is scored to resemble coursed ashlar stonemasonry. The rear extensions are also stuccoed, over brick and concrete block.

4. Structural system: The exterior walls are loadbearing. Brick walls and arches in the basement support interior bearing points. Neither floor nor roof framing systems were accessible at the time of recordation.

5. Porches, stoops, etc.: none present.

6. Chimneys: One stuccoed chimney is visible above the roofline, contained within the east wall toward the north end. A second chimney was originally present within the west wall.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is centered on the facade at the top of a flight of five stone-clad concrete steps edged with metal railings. The entry itself contains a modern glass and aluminum door flanked by tall plate-glass "sidelights". It is sheltered by a canvas awning. Secondary entrances, with steel or plain wood doors, are located at the center rear, in the west wall of the southeast rear extension, and on the east side in a recess between the main block and southeast extension.

b. Windows: Window openings in the north (main) elevation are symmetrically arranged and have round-arched heads and stone sills, but lack evidence of exterior trim or surrounds. All these openings have 1/1 wooden double-hung sash. First floor windows are contained in projecting polygonal bays with molded cornices and applied friezes with scalloped edges. On the second story, the sash are paired within each opening. Each window is set in an inner surround of half-round molding, the mullions and jambs thus resembling engaged colonettes with "Tower-of-the-Winds" style capitals. The attic level window, in the central tower, is filled with an air-conditioning unit. The sills of this window and the one directly below it are edged with ornamental ironwork.

On the east wall of the house is a second-story oriel supported on four pendant brackets. The oriel's three round-arched window openings contain 2/2 double-hung sash, with round-arched upper lights. These windows are framed with half-round moldings with small foliate capitals. The oriel is capped with a heavy wooden cornice with pendant brackets and ornamental frieze. Remaining windows in the east elevation are either modern, or represent modern reworking of earlier openings. They are irregularly placed, and of varying shapes and sizes.

In the west and south elevations, metal 8-light casements appear to date from a remodeling prior to 1926. Other windows in these elevations date from the 1950s or later. An oriel formerly present in the west wall of the main block, reportedly similar to that on the east side, has been removed and the arched opening completely filled in.

#### 8. Roof

a. Shape: The house has a flat roof, the covering for which could not be determined during this recordation.

b. Cornice, eaves: The main block and tower are edged with a simple, molded cornice, lacking ornamentation or frieze. Given the cornice treatment of the bay windows and oriel, it is likely that the main cornice is either not original or has been stripped of original detailing. Rear extensions to the house have low parapets edged with metal coping.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A three-story square tower projects from the center of the facade, serving as a frontispiece containing the main entrance. Like the main block, it is capped with a flat roof and edged with a simple molded cornice. Although earlier descriptions of the building (Munn 1989) noted that the tower was once topped with "battlements", no evidence of such a feature remains.

#### C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: See floor plans for existing room arrangement. The plan of the main block is oriented around a center stair hall. At the time of this documentation, only the parlor at the northwest corner of the first floor retained an appreciable semblance of its historical character. What was likely a parlor on the other side of the hall has been subdivided with full-height partitions into offices. The upper floors have been converted to dormitory space, during which some interior walls appear to have been removed and others added to enclose bathrooms, storage areas and emergency stairs. The rear extensions also serve

as dormitories, except for the first floor of the southwest wing, which contains a modern cafeteria.

2. Interior characteristics: Apart from the exceptions noted below, original interior features have been removed or wholly obscured as a result of extensive remodeling within the past 20 years or so. The main stair has been replaced, all floors covered with linoleum, ceilings dropped, fluorescent lighting installed, and many of the door and window openings (where present or not filled in) trimmed with stock "sanitary" moldings.

The northwest parlor on the first floor, however, remains significantly intact to convey some idea of the original interior character of the house. This long room retains a broad, strongly-articulated plaster cornice and ceiling molding, molded baseboards, and fine wood floor inlaid with contrasting strips around the perimeter. The window bay features a paneled ceiling, paneled aprons below the window sills, and a bold, though simple, arched enframingent. In the center of the parlor ceiling is a large cast-plaster medallion thickly encrusted with foliate elements. Roughly centered in the west wall is a fireplace, its round-arched opening typical of Italianate design. The opening, now filled with ornamental glazed tiles, is framed by a paneled mantelpiece flanked by short columns which support the projecting outer ends of the paneled frieze and shelf. Above the shelf is a tall, mirrored overmantel topped with a heavy, elaborately embellished, wooden cornice.

As noted above, the parlor in the northeast corner of the first floor has been subdivided into offices. Remaining in this area, however, are vestiges of what appear to have been a remodeling from perhaps the 1910s or 1920s. Several of the present office spaces contain darkly-stained beaded-board ceilings with exposed beams beaded at the lower corners. One wall of one of the offices is completely filled by a large fireplace of narrow, brown Roman brick, with bracketed wooden mantel shelf and brick chimney breast banded with a single line of egg-and-dart molding cast into the outer surface of the brick course.

#### D. Site

1. General Setting and Orientation: The Reinboth house is situated on the south side of Cooper Street in center-city Camden. Most of Cooper Street in this vicinity is solidly lined with brick-and stone-fronted rowhouses. The Reinboth house and the Gothic Revival-style Tabernacle Methodist Church to the east are among the few freestanding buildings in the immediate neighborhood. To the south, across the alley known as Markley Place, is the United States Post Office and Courthouse, constructed in 1931.

2. Landscape design: None evident. The ground to the east and behind the house is occupied by paved and gravel parking lots. The low stuccoed walls which contain foundation plantings along the front of the house are not original to the building.

3. Outbuildings: None present. Sanborn fire insurance maps indicate that a carriage house was located at the rear of the lot during the 19th century. By 1926 it had been replaced with a five-bay garage, no longer extant.

### III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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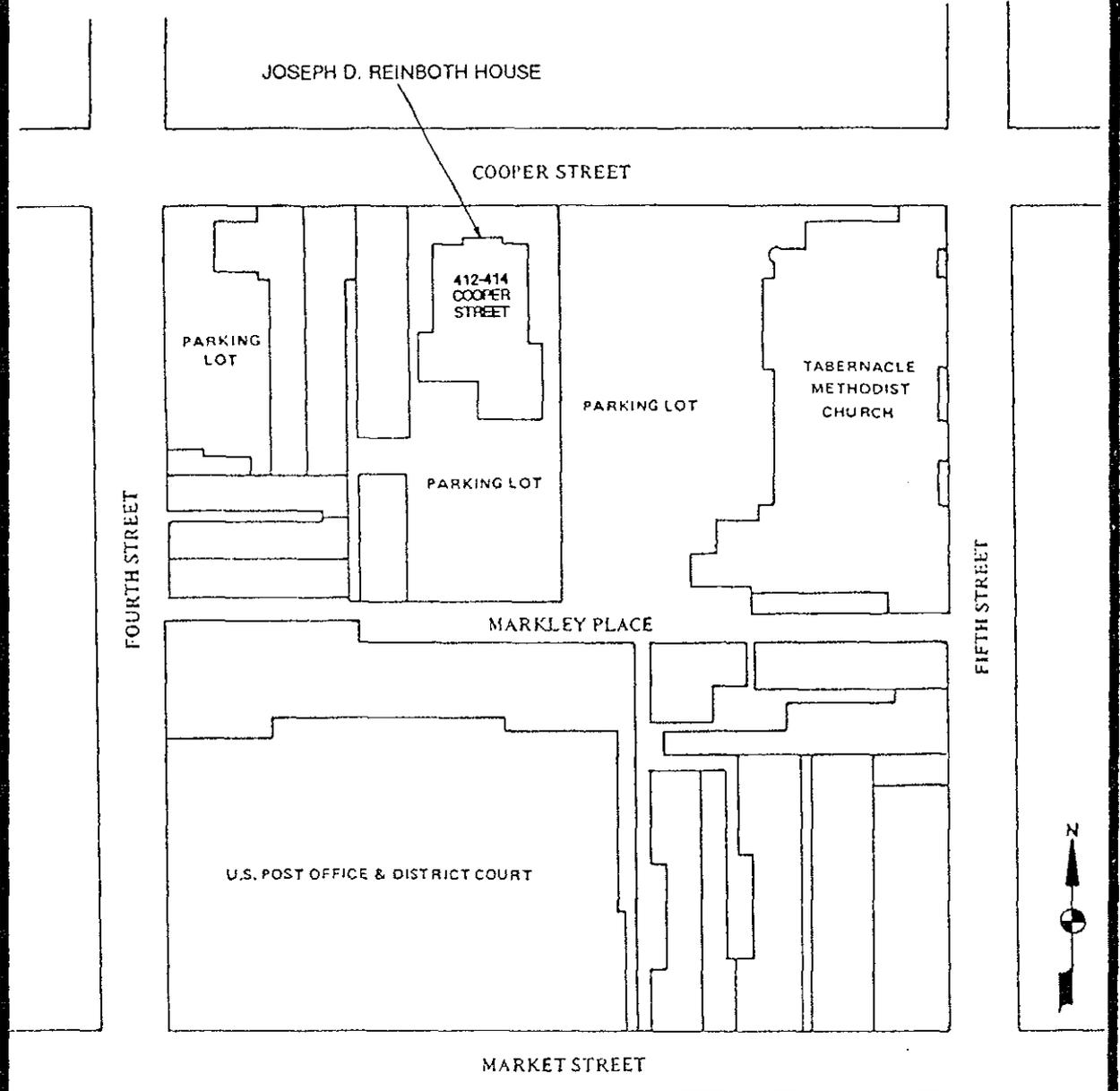
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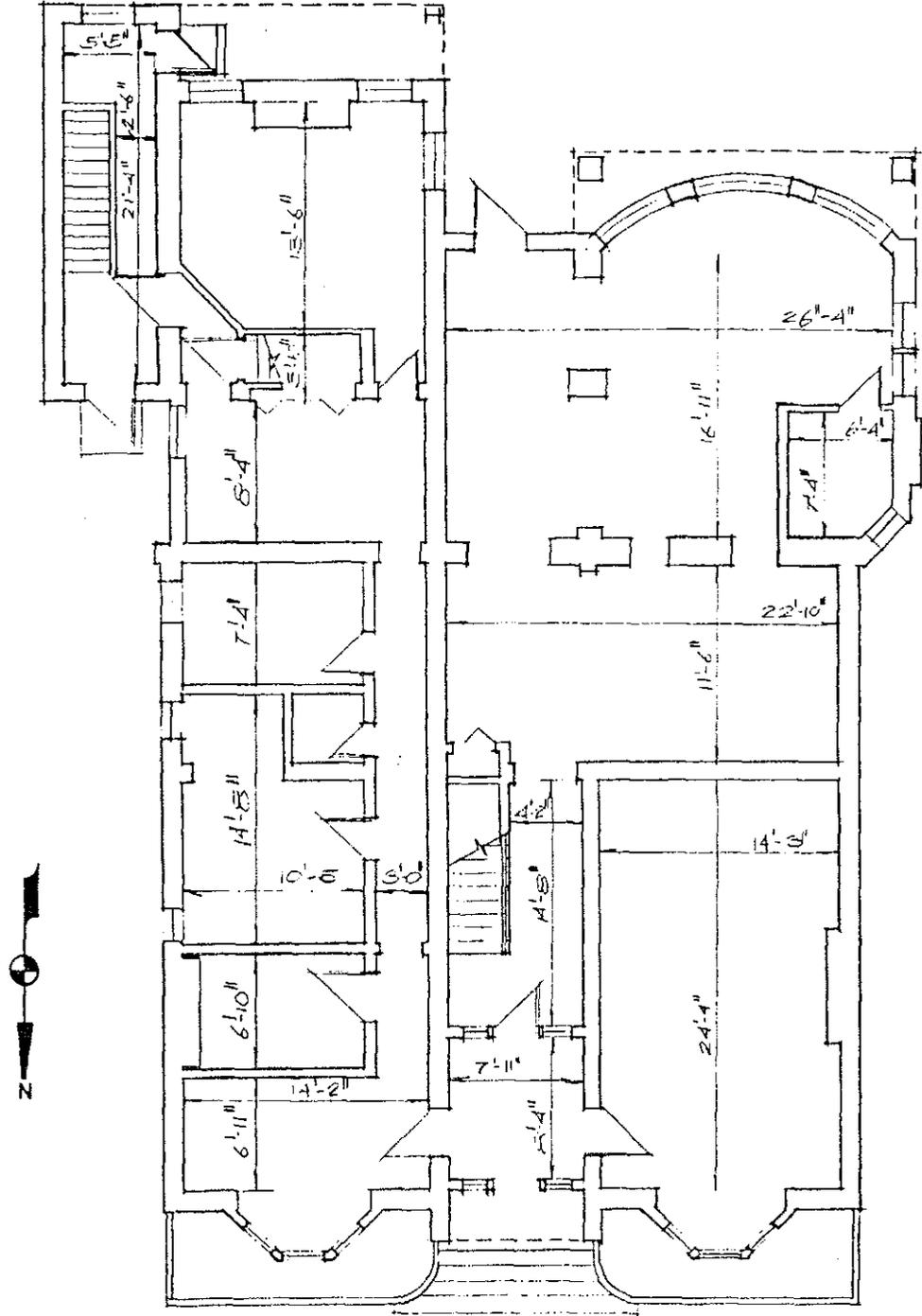
IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Joseph D. Reinboth House was recorded November, 1990, by the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., East Orange, New Jersey, for Oliver & Becica, A.I.A., P.A., Cherry Hill, New Jersey and the United States General Services Administration. The project team included Martha H. Bowers, Architectural Historian; Rob Tucher, Photographer; Alison Helms and Ingrid Wuebber, Historians; and Charles Fiachetti, Field Assistant.

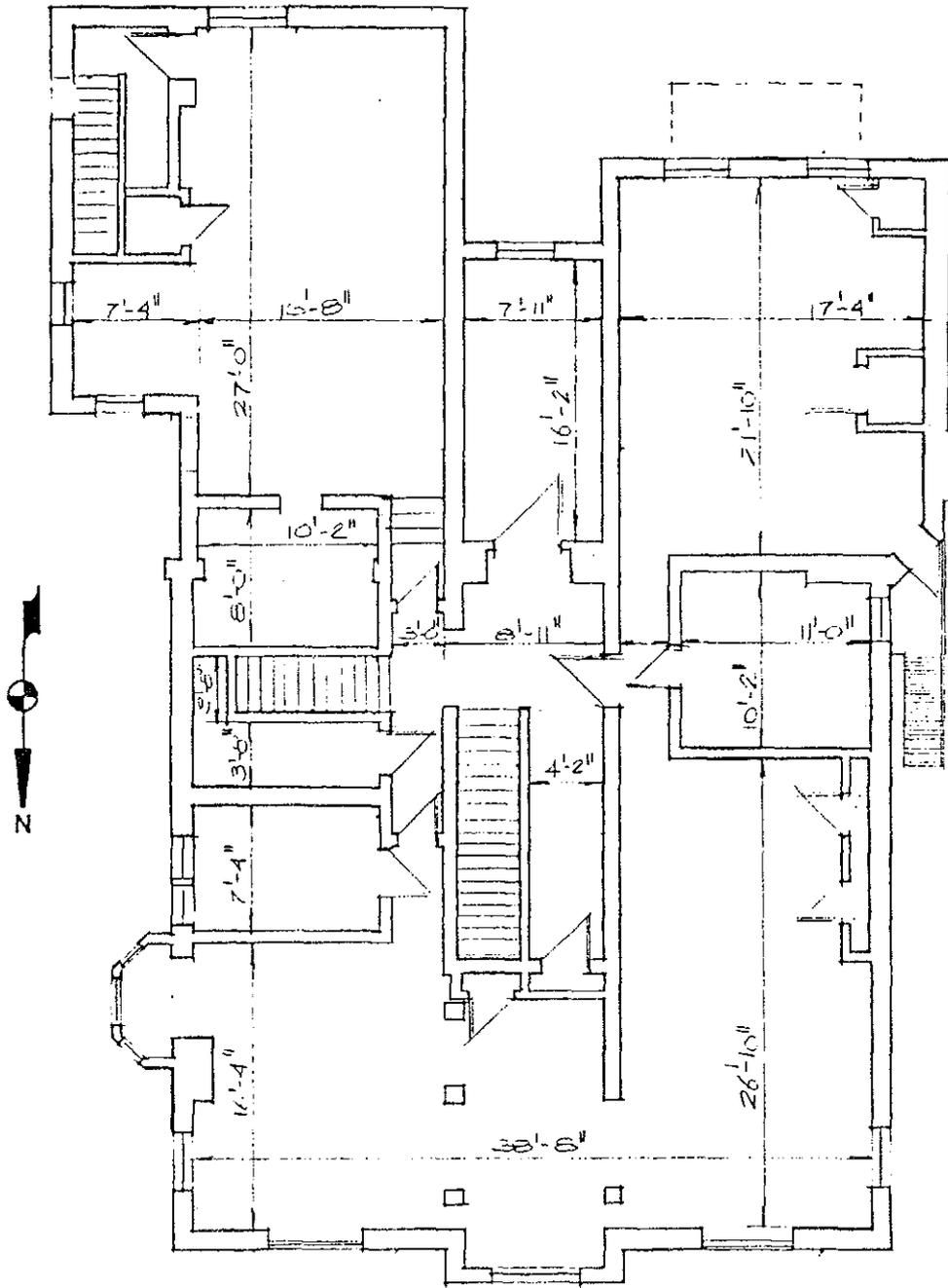


SITE PLAN

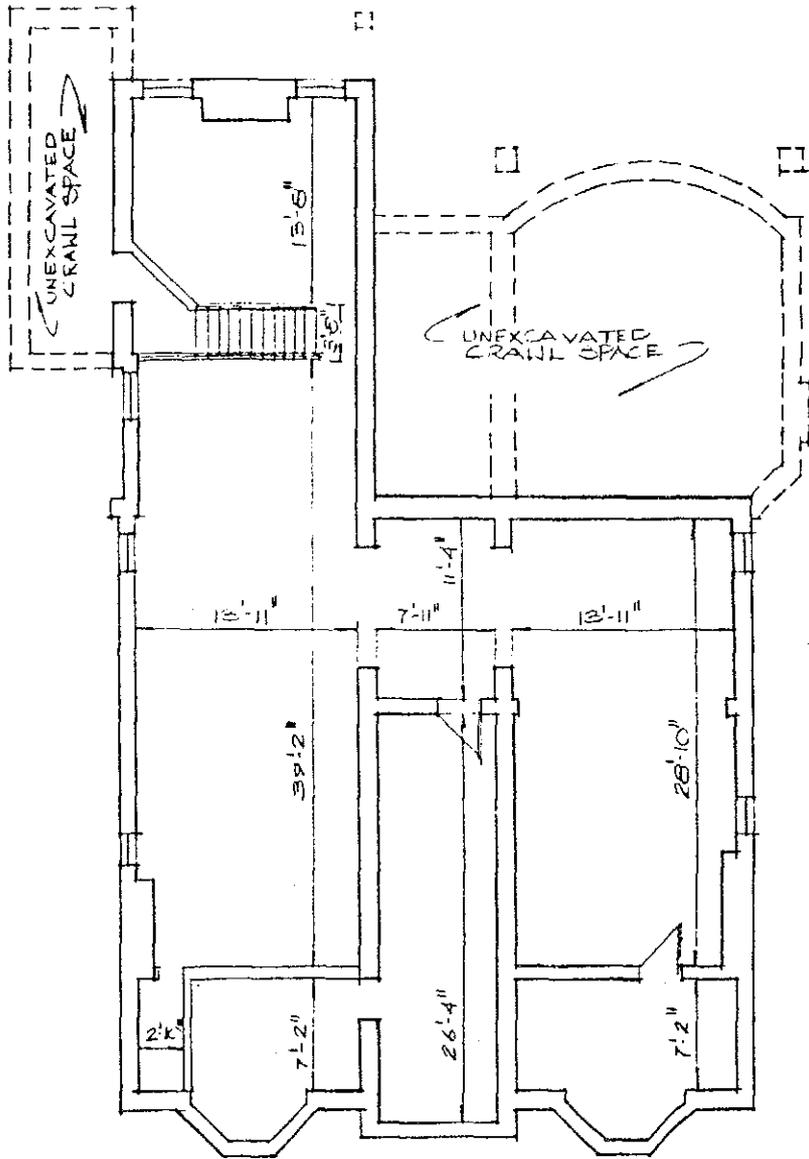
SOURCE: Camden Development Agency



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



BASEMENT