

STATUE OF LIBERTY NATIONAL MONUMENT EMPLOYEE
HOUSING, DUPLEX
(Statue of Liberty National Monument, Building No. 43A-B)
Statue of Liberty National Monument
Liberty Island

HABS NY-6397-B
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New York County
New York

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

STATUE OF LIBERTY NATIONAL MONUMENT EMPLOYEE HOUSING, DUPLEX (Statue of Liberty National Monument, Building No. 43A-B)

HABS No. NY-6397-B

- Location:** Statue of Liberty National Monument, Liberty Island, New York, New York County, NY and Jersey City, Hudson County, NJ
- The Duplex is located at latitude 40.690680, longitude -74.047084. The point was obtained through Google Earth (datum: WGS84) in June 2014. There is no restriction on its release to the public.
- Present Owner:** National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
- Present Occupant:** Unoccupied
- Present Use:** Storage space, office space, and gym for park staff (slated for demolition)
- Significance:** The Duplex on Liberty Island is a simple two-story brick building built in the early 1950s to house the Statue of Liberty National Monument staff and their families. The Duplex houses two three-bedroom units. While the Duplex and the other employee housing units built on Liberty Island stand in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, they also constitute a distinct place in the island's landscape. Tucked away on the northwest end of the island, these dwellings have served to house the National Park Service staff (as over-night residences through the 1990s and thereafter as day quarters) from 1953 to 2012 when Hurricane Sandy storms forced park staff to completely evacuate the buildings on October 29, 2012.
- While the Statue of Liberty was publicly dedicated on October 28, 1886, the Statue only became a National Monument in 1924. It was not until 1937 that the National Park Service achieved sole jurisdiction over the island when the War Department finally withdrew from the remnants of Fort Wood (occupied since its construction in 1811). Under the leadership of the Park Service's Chief Architect Thomas C. Vint, landscape architect Norman T. Newton developed a Master Plan for Liberty Island in 1937. Newton's design included clearing out the old, obsolete military buildings on the premises, developing facilities to better beautify the island and accommodate the rising number of visitors, and constructing employee housing to accommodate more staff.
- During the early 1940s, the Park Service constructed the Administration Building and Concessions Building and expanded the northwest area of the island by dredging/landfill. It was not until the post-World War II era

that the Park Service was able to realize new employee housing units to replace the old Army quarters. In addition to building a seawall around the island and constructing a new western pier/ferry landing at this time, the National Park Service had employee houses designed and constructed between 1949 and 1952. The mid-twentieth century employee housing units are thus a part of the site development by the National Park Service. The Park Service and Congress viewed these improvements as essential in response to public outcry at the untidiness of the island hosting a highly recognizable American icon.

The employee housing units are evidence of a larger mid-twentieth-century trend in National Park practices to provide adequate, up-to-date employee housing. These structures were constructed specifically in an effort to enlarge the staff of the National Park Service and improve interpretive efforts in order to better serve the swelling numbers of park visitors in the postwar era.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: October 23, 1951-August 21, 1952.¹ The construction and landscaping of the central courtyard was completed on December 15, 1953.²
2. Architect: James C. Mackenzie, whose practice was located at 5 East 57th Street, New York City, was the principal architect of the employee housing on Liberty Island. Born in New Jersey, and educated at Columbia University and the École des Beaux Arts, Mackenzie began his profession as a draftsman for the prestigious architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White. Beginning his own practice in 1919, his most noteworthy designs included the neo-Georgian corporate headquarters of the Reader's Digest in Chappaqua, New York (1937) and the Harlem Branch of the YMCA (1932, a designated New York City Landmark). He also designed many large and small houses, winning several prizes for skillful use of brick in residential design. E.W. Aschmann (Acting Architect) & A. L. Stabler (Draftsman) worked with Mackenzie in preparing the drawings for the employee residences on Liberty Island.³
3. Original and subsequent owners and uses: The National Park Service has owned and occupied the premises since its initial construction in 1952. The full-time

¹ Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports, Newell H. Foster, Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument, (October 1951 and August 1952), Box 300, Entry P11 Administration Files, 1949-1971, RG 79 Records of the National Park Service, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD [hereafter Entry P11, RG 79, NARA II].

² Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports, (December 1953), Box 300, Entry P11, RG 79, NARA II.

³ Cynthia Danza, "Architects Appendix: James Cameron Mackenzie, Jr.," *Fieldston Historic District Designation Report (Volume 1)* (New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, January 10, 2006), 52-53.

residential use of the Duplex units was phased out during the late 1990s and early 2000s. These spaces were instead used by staff agencies as non-residential day quarters and storage for various park staff agencies including the United States Park Police (USPP), the Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and the Interpretive Development Program (Interp). These former housing units were used informally as a place to use gym equipment, create temporary office space and storage space, and otherwise shelter employees during their down-time.

4. Contractors: Michael H. Field, Inc. was contracted and completed construction of the employee housing units, and Turecamo Construction Co. won the contract and completed construction and landscaping for the employee housing units' central courtyard.
 5. Original plans and construction: James Mackenzie produced the original architectural drawings for the project in 1949, and the construction specifications were won by Krendel Construction Co.'s bid in 1950. However, the Comptroller eventually ruled the initial contract invalid, which led to a new public bid in September 1951 won by Michael H. Field, Inc. Thus construction was delayed for a year, and the Duplex was completed on August 21, 1952.⁴ The housing largely retains its original form and appearance (Figures 1 and 2).
 6. Alterations and additions: Changes to the Duplex include replacement windows, alterations to some entrance porches, and interior changes to kitchen cabinetry and appliances. The bathrooms are mostly intact except for the replacement of the sinks in both units and the replacement of the toilet, shower head, and its valves as well as the addition of some wall-mounted fixtures in Unit 43B.
- B. Historical Context: See overview report for Statue of Liberty National Monument Employee Housing (HABS No. NY-6397) for detailed historical context. For architectural information about the Superintendent's House and Triplex, see individual HABS reports (HABS No. NY-6397-A and HABS No. NY-6397-C).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Duplex on Liberty Island is a simple two-story brick and hollow concrete block structure with a common bond brick veneer and a shallow pitched standing seam metal hipped roof. It is six bays wide and two deep, with doorways at the center bay of each unit on the front and rear elevations. Each unit is two stories with three bedrooms and a full bathroom on the second floor. (Figures 3, 4 and 5)

⁴ Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports, Newell H. Foster, Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument, (April 1950-August 1952), Entry P11, RG 79, NARA II.

2. Condition of fabric: Poor/fair. The entire first floor has endured destructive flooding during Hurricane Sandy storms on October 29, 2012. There is extensive damage to the floors, walls, and windows on the first floor. The second floor fared much better; with the exception of a single tongue and groove panel being torn up and some paint peeling off the walls, upstairs rooms are in a rather fair condition. Overall, the Duplex appears to be structurally sound and has an intact roof.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The rectangular footprint of the Duplex measures 62 feet, 4 inches by 21 feet, 10 inches. The top of the first story's floor to the bottom of the second story's ceiling measures 16 feet, 6 3/4 inches.
2. Foundations: The Duplex has a shallow external foundation. The water table projects 5/8 inch from the wall surface with six visible stretcher courses below it.
3. Walls: The exterior brick walls are arranged in a common bond of six stretcher courses to every one header course. In addition to the water table, a belt course projects 5/8 inch from the wall surface near the second floor window sills.
4. Structural system, framing: The Duplex has a spread footing foundation with a crawl space—measuring 2 feet, 6 inches—located below the first floor's eight-inch reinforced concrete joists. There appear to be some concrete and brick piers under the first floor in the crawl space. According to the architectural drawings, the foundation walls were intended to be one foot thick with the exceptions occurring at the porches where it is only eight inches thick, and the bottom of all footings were intended to extend at least one foot below firm ground—a minimum of four feet from grade level.⁵

The load-bearing walls are executed in a hollow concrete block and brick wall system (with a course ratio 2:1) with an exterior brick veneer finish. The concrete blocks measure one foot, 5 1/2 inches by 7 1/2 inches and are 3 3/4 inches wide with three hollow cells while the bricks measure from 7 1/2 to 7 3/4 inches by 2 1/4 inches and are 3 3/8 inches wide. Southern pine wood framing (either dip-treated or painted with creosote) and light gauge steel members form the interior walls and framing.⁶

⁵ “Specifications for Employees’ Houses, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Bedloe’s Island, New York, Contract No. I-56np-63,” (September 5, 1951), Box 1115, Entry P11, RG 79, NARA II, 23-25. According to archival records of the employee housing’s specifications, the foundations were to include 40 ft. pressure-treated, Douglas fir piles with a safe bearing value of 15 tons while the pile caps, footings, slabs on grade, and the porch floor were all to be executed in reinforced concrete. Whether or not these piles were executed in the Duplex is unknown.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 30, 33-34.

The roof is supported by wood common rafters. The rafters are nailed to a ridge board and there is wood decking supporting the metal roof.

5. Porches and stoops: The front entry porches on the west elevation (facing the waterfront) were covered with flat roofs, but only the concrete block post bases remain. The outline of the flat roof is still visible against the brick wall above the doors. The brick stoop measuring 5 feet, 7 1/2 inches by 4 feet, 2 1/2 inches has three brick steps. The rear entrances of the Duplex (facing the courtyard) each have a small porch—measuring 5 feet by 4 feet—covered by a nearly flat roof supported by square wood posts resting on 24-inch high brick knee walls—these are later additions. The base of the porch is concrete accessed via one step (Figure 6).
6. Chimneys: None. On the shorter north and south elevations of the Duplex, there are crawl space vents and dryer vents on the exterior walls while the east elevation has square metal kitchen vents that swing open and can be completely closed shut.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The Duplex has four exterior doorways (two for each unit) -- two front entrances on the west elevation (facing the water) and two rear entrances on the east (facing the interior employee housing courtyard). All entrances occur in the center bay of each three bay-wide unit.

The wood entry doors have nine fixed lights in the upper halves, except the rear door of Unit 43A which is solid wood. According to the architectural drawings, the original rear door had glazing in the upper half.

- b. Windows: The Duplex has regularly placed window openings, with a mix of replacement sash (c. 1990s) or plywood covering where the window sash had to be removed after storm damage. The architectural drawings indicate that the original movable window sashes were casements or French windows (Figure 7). The west (front) elevation has picture windows flanked by one over one double hung sash (originally casements) on both the first and second floors. The first floor window openings are now filled with plywood. On the east elevation the first floor living rooms had the same picture window arrangement as the front elevation (one is now filled with plywood). The other first floor window opening on the east elevation was located over the sink in the kitchens. Here the original French windows were replaced by a pair of two light horizontal sliding windows. A smaller window opening, now with one over one double hung window sash but originally casement, is located at the second floor of the rear elevation and the both the first and second floor of the side elevations.

8. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: The Duplex has a standing seam, metal hipped roof with a shallow 3:12 pitch.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The Duplex has a simple eight-inch white fascia board covering the attic vent with a two inch trim cornice molding abutting the white vinyl soffit, which overhangs about four inches. The house has external copper gutters with a green patina and white vinyl downspouts (the one on the west elevation is missing but the clips and outline remain).
- c. Roof projections: There is a single TV antenna on the duplex and two pipe vents with a green patina on either side of the duplex.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The floor plans for the two units are mirror images of each other. The main entrance opens into the first floor foyer facing the stairs with the large, double pile living room on one side and a dining room in front of the kitchen on the other. The second floor contains three bedrooms and a full bathroom.
2. Stairways: There is one straight-run staircase in each unit of the Duplex, each with fifteen steps. The staircase runs through the center of each unit dividing the living room on one side from the dining room and kitchen areas on the other. The closed stairs have wall strings on either side with varnished wood treads and painted white risers as well as a white-painted cavetto curve molding below the nosing. There is a wood handrail up one side as well as a simple wood balustrade and a newel post at the top of the stairs (Figure 8).
3. Flooring: The first floor rooms of both units (except the kitchens) have nine-inch square wood parquet flooring (now heavily damaged). The kitchen of Unit 43A has nine-inch square gray and white marble-patterned asphalt tiles. In Unit 43B the kitchen has two-inch white ceramic hexagonal tile (Figures 9 and 10). The second floor bedrooms and hall of both units have two and a quarter inch wide tongue and groove wood flooring. The bathrooms have ceramic tile floors in a pattern of gray squares with a white square tile at the center. Each bathroom floor includes a five-inch wide border of black one-inch square mosaic tiles. All flooring on the second floor appears to be original and is in good condition.⁷ (Figure 11)
4. Wall and ceiling finish: According to the architectural drawings, the walls and ceilings were intended to be covered with gypsum plaster on lath. However unlike traditional gypsum plaster on lath where the lath is either a wood or metal

⁷ Ibid., 35. The specs call for 9" x 9" x 25/32" plain sawed, select, white oak fabricated blocks made up of 2 1/4" T&G for the first floor and 2 1/4" x 25/32" plain sawed, select, white oak T&G for the second floor.

material, the plaster is applied to wallboard. With storm damage revealing the interior of walls, one finds patent no. 2,442,321 used by Newark Plaster in South Kearny, New Jersey on the wallboard, which has with circular perforated holes covered by a thick plaster layer (Figure 12). There is more typical metal lath behind the ceramic bathroom tiles as well as around corners and window openings. All walls (except for in the tiled bathrooms) have a white baseboard with a toe molding and an ovolo molding above.

The bathrooms have a ceramic tile wainscot of four-inch square white tiles with a border of rectangular black tiles. The black tiles are coved where they meet the floor. The wainscot extends about four feet up from the floor around the toilet and sink and up to a height of seven feet inside the shower tub.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The Duplex has metal door frames with wood doors, both painted white. The small closets in the first floor entrance foyers and dining rooms have plain or vertically scored wood hollow core doors. The second floor bedrooms and bathrooms also have hollow core wood doors on metal frames. These openings have two-inch wide wood trim with mitered corners. The trim is painted white. The bed room closets have examples of hollow core wood doors and also hollow metal sliding doors on metal tracks.⁸
- b. Windows: While the window openings do not have trim on the interior, they do all have simple white painted wood window sills and aprons. The sills are fairly shallow at three inches and the aprons likewise measure about three inches with an ovolo molding between the two. While most of the window lights are fully transparent, the windows in the bathrooms have opaque privacy glass.

6. Decorative features: None.

7. Hardware: The exterior doors have lever handles and deadbolts. They are hung on loose-pin hinges. Despite many variously styled replacements, there remain a few original round, metal doorknobs on the Duplex's interior doors located on a few of the closets; these doorknobs each have a small, circular escutcheon. On the closet interior side of these doors, there are small metal twist knobs. Both the later hinges and the original closet hardware consist of loose-pin hinges.⁹

The bathrooms have four original black ceramic tile wall-mounted accessories integrated into the bathroom wall tiles. These include a toilet paper holder, a soap dish, and toothbrush holder near the sink, and towel rack next to the bathtub. Both

⁸ Ibid., 35. According to the building specs, the doorways and windows were to be made of "C" select or better white pine, or Ponderosa pine.

⁹ Ibid., 36.

bathrooms also have recessed mirrored medicine cabinets that appear to be original. Unit 43B's bathroom also has wall-mounted, industrial-sized paper towel and toilet paper dispensers in plastic casements as well as a wall-mounted liquid soap dispenser made of metal over the sink. Unit 43A's bathroom lacks these later hardware additions, and it retains the original four cross-bar valves for the shower and tub as well as the original bath tub spout (all of which has been replaced in unit 43B). (Figures 13, 14 and 15)

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The Duplex appears to have relied primarily upon natural ventilation as there is no evidence of air conditioning units. Most of the window openings in the Duplex (except for those in the kitchens and bathrooms) had a partially recessed radiator beneath it. These radiant heaters have dense fins—hot water heating coils—that are encased in perforated, metal covers. The hot water for radiant heat was provided by the nearby central boiler plant.
- b. Lighting: The lighting fixtures of the Duplex represent a variety of replacements over time. Unit 43A has more older incandescent lighting—including a square recessed light fixture with a metal frame—whereas unit 43B has nearly all later florescent lighting. Unit 43A has a ceiling-mounted fan and light fixture in its living room.
- c. Plumbing: The Duplex has interior plumbing with a full bathroom in each unit on the second floor. There remain some original bathroom fixtures including the streamlined, built-in vitreous china bath tub in each unit. The sinks in both bathrooms are later additions whereas Unit 43A has its original vitreous china toilet and Unit 43B has a toilet of more recent installation.

9. Original furnishings: None.

D. Site

1. Historic landscape design: Unlike the Superintendent's House, the Duplex and Triplex were designed to face the perimeter walkway around the island's shoreline. The Duplex sits on the northwest corner of the employee housing area with the Superintendent's House and Triplex units as well as the rear of the Administration Building forming a central courtyard. While the original design called for a well-landscaped courtyard of walkways to the rear entrances of the other units and the front entrance of the Superintendent's House, in summer 2014 the landscape was given over to heaps of gravel, dirt, and categorized debris collected from the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: Architectural plans including floor plans, elevations, and construction details prepared by James C. Mackenzie, dated February 3, 1950, are reproduced below and can be found in the electronic Technical Information Center (eTIC) administered by the National Park Service's Denver Service Center.
- B. Early Views: See overview report for Statue of Liberty National Monument Employee Housing (HABS No. NY-6397) for historic photos of the employee housing.
- C. Selected Bibliography:

Bob Hope Memorial Library, Ellis Island National Immigration Museum, Statue of Liberty National Monument (STLI), New York, NY.

Danza, Cynthia. "Architects Appendix: James Cameron Mackenzie, Jr." *Fieldston Historic District Designation Report (Volume 1)*. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, January 10, 2006.

Electronic Technical Information Center (eTIC), Denver Service Center, National Park Service.

RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD.

RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, New York City, NY.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the Statue of Liberty National Monument Employee Housing was undertaken in summer 2014 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP) of the National Park Service (Catherine C. Lavoie, Chief, HABS; Richard O'Connor, Chief, HDP). The project was sponsored by Statue of Liberty National Monument (STLI), John Piltzecker, Superintendent. Project planning was coordinated by Robert Arzola (HABS Architect) and by Diana Pardue (Chief, Museum Services, STLI). Field recording and measured drawings were completed by Daniel De Sousa (HABS Architect). Samuel R. Palfreyman (Ph.D. Candidate, Boston University) assisted with field measuring and served as project historian, with guidance from Lisa P. Davidson (HABS Historian). Contract photographer Joseph Elliott completed large-format photographs during spring 2015.

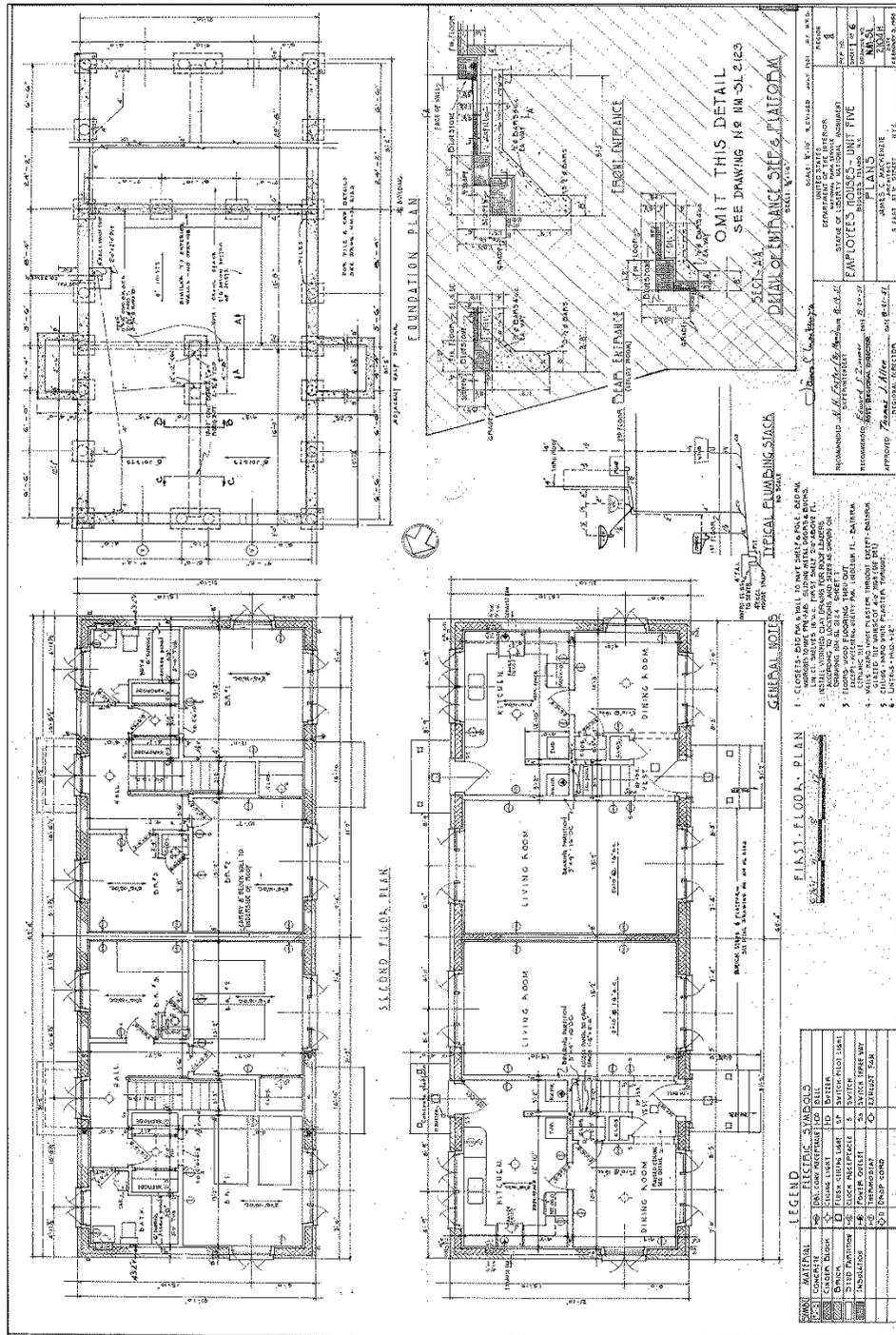


Figure 2: Floor plans for the Duplex, February 3, 1950.
Source: Electronic Technical Information Center (eTIC), Denver Service Center, National Park Service.



Figure 3: Duplex, south and east elevations, July 16, 2014.
Note the symmetrical, six-bay arrangement with a central entries for each unit.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 4: Duplex, west and south elevations, July 16, 2014.
Note the symmetrical, six-bay arrangement with a central entrance for each unit.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 5: Duplex, north elevation, July 16, 2014.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 6: Duplex, Unit 43B's rear entry porch on the east elevation, July 16, 2014.
Note the different color bricks used in the knee walls added later.
Source: Photograph by author.

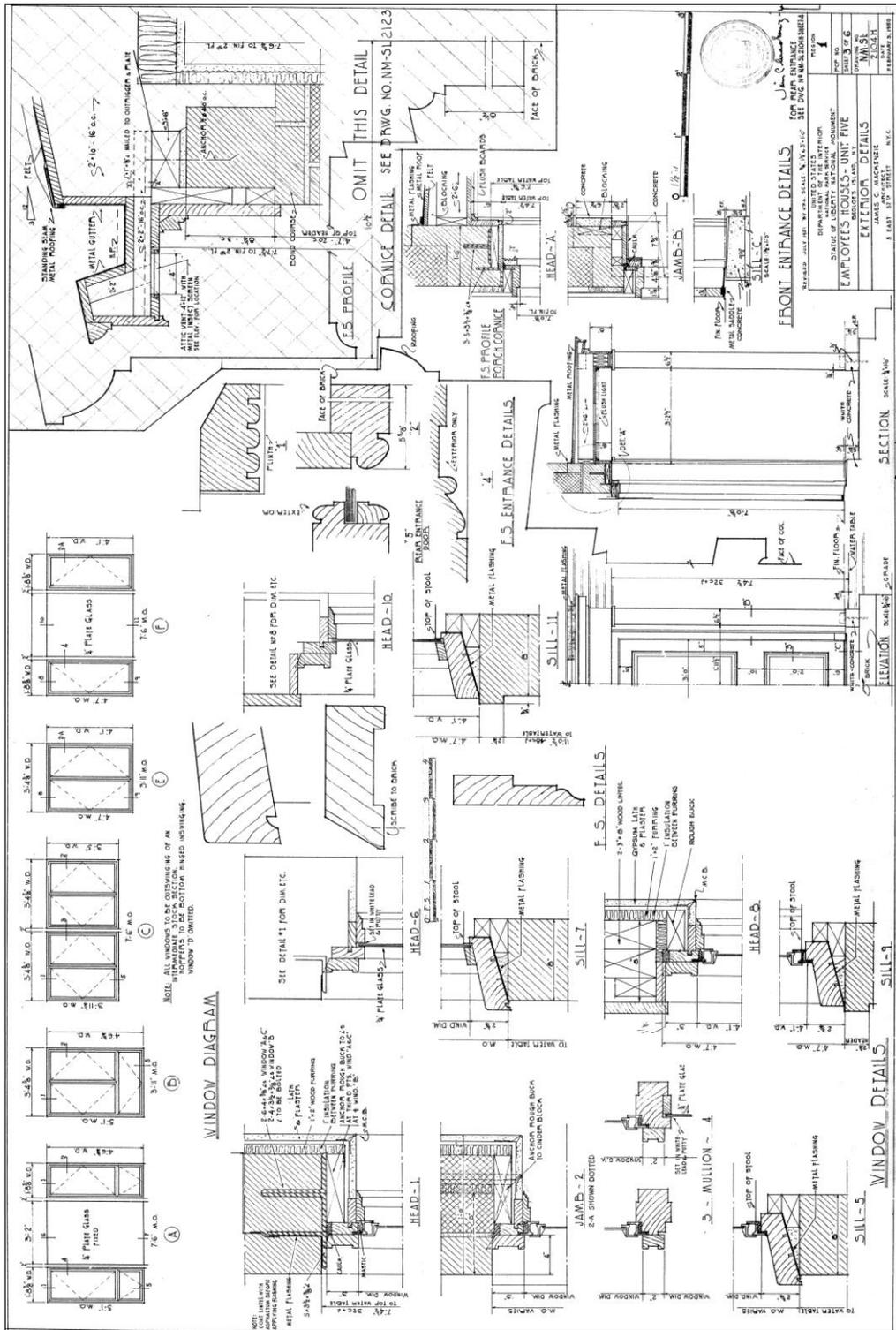


Figure 7: Exterior Details, Duplex, February 3, 1950.
Source: Electronic Technical Information Center (eTIC), Denver Service Center, National Park Service



Figure 8: Duplex, facing down the staircase toward the front door of Unit 43B, July 16, 2014.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 9: Duplex, the kitchen floor of Unit 43A, June 18, 2014.
Note the nine-inch square gray-and-white marble-patterned asphalt tiles and the extensive flooding damage.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 10: Duplex, the kitchen floor of Unit 43B, June 18, 2014.
Note the two-inch hexagonal white ceramic tiles and the extensive flooding damage.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 11: Duplex, the second story flooring of Unit 43B, July 16, 2014.
Note the ceramic tiles in the bathroom and tongue and groove flooring in the hallway.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 12: Duplex, the living room wall/staircase of Unit 43B, June 18, 2014.
Note the small circular holes in the wallboard acting as a lath for plaster.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 13: Duplex, the interior sink of Unit 43B's bathroom, July 16, 2014.
Note the original black and white tile, accessories and mirrored medicine cabinet.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 14: Duplex, the interior sink of Unit 43A's bathroom, July 16, 2014.
Note the original black and white tile, accessories and shower/tub fixtures.
Source: Photograph by author.

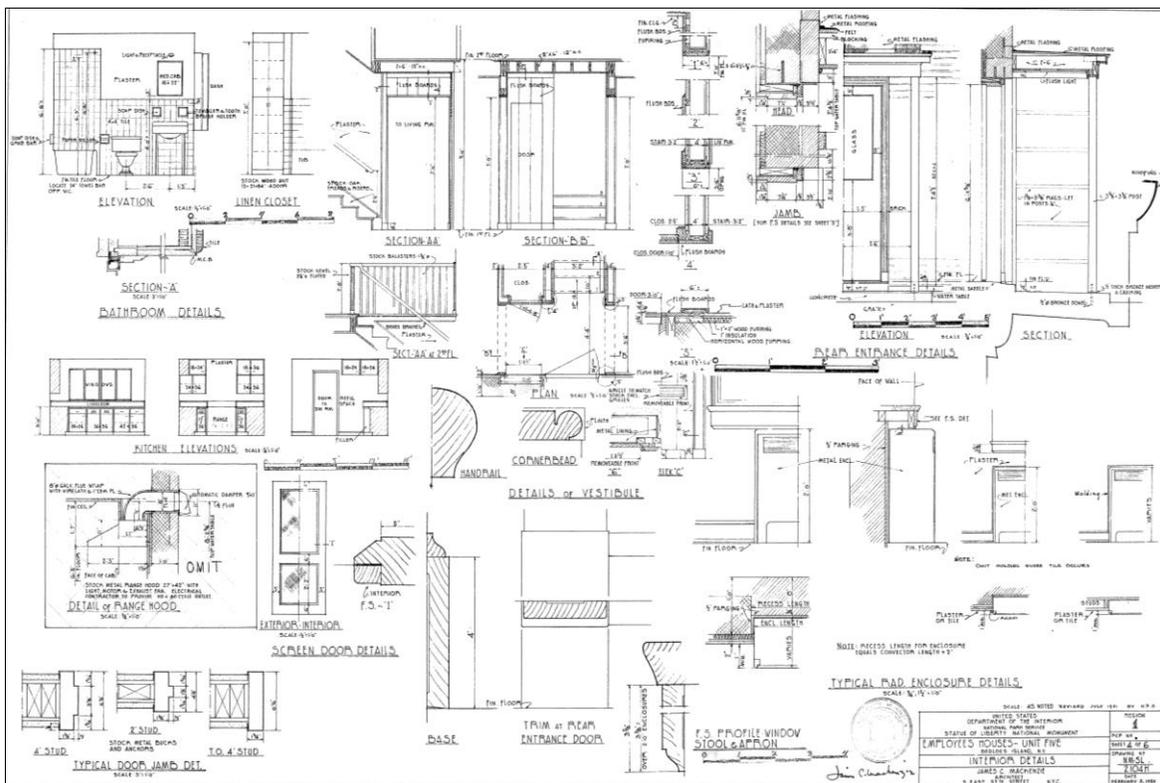


Figure 15: Interior Details, Duplex, February 3, 1950.
Source: Electronic Technical Information Center (eTIC), Denver Service Center, National Park Service