

WASHINGTON COUNTY OLD MEN'S HOME, MAIN BUILDING
2198 North Main Street
Arden Vicinity
Washington County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5585-A

HABS
PA
63-ARD.V,
1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Washington County Old Men's Home, Main Building

HABS No. PA- 5585-A

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63-ARD.V
IA-

Location: 2198 North Main Street, Arden Vicinity, Washington
County, Pennsylvania

U.S.G.S. Washington West Quadrangle, Pennsylvania
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
17.563519.4450957

Present Owner: County of Washington,
Washington, Pennsylvania

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Main Building of the Washington County Old Men's Home is an example of institutional type architecture. It is a large imposing structure with fine details. It is elaborate in its use of architectural features. The original structure has not been significantly altered and the grand scale of the facade has been retained. It was built in the Victorian Age, 1872-1874, to care for those less fortunate, during the era of the awakening of social conscience. The building is an excellent example of the Second Empire style of architecture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: Built from 1872 to 1874 and occupied in 1875. (Based on marble tablet attached to side of main entrance.)
2. Architects: J.W. Kerr and J.T. Steen. Superintendent F.G. Cundall. A local architectural firm from Washington, PA who designed many municipal and public buildings after the Civil War.
3. Original and subsequent Owners: The County of Washington, PA was the original owner and remains the present owner. The County Commissioners in office at that time were J.G. Barr, Alex. McCleary, and Joseph A. Gaston.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Hamilton, VanKirk and Little were the contractors. They were a local firm located in Washington, PA and specialized in constructing large commercial and institutional buildings.
5. Original plans and construction: The original plans are lost. Drawings of the facility as it exists today were drawn by Carl Baker & Associates, Architects in July, 1978, which are attached. When the facility was closed in 1976, the records were moved to the County Courthouse, and in 1980 these files were mistakenly destroyed.
6. Alterations and additions: The original building was built in 1872 and there was a two-story brick rear addition built in 1916, as well as two smaller additions to the rear of the east and west wings of the original building. This addition connected the original barn/storage building to the main building and converted its use to a boiler room. There is a marble plaque on the west side of the 1916 addition that lists the architect as F. McC. Croom. and the construction superintendent was John McNary. The contractor was J.V. Bumgarner.

There was additional remodeling of the main building in 1922, as shown on the marble tablet at the side of the front entrance. The architect was T. McCrook and his construction superintendent was C.R. Riggle. The contractor was not listed. As a part of this remodeling, an addition was added to the front of the east wing and a covered front porch was built. The last significant addition was a bathroom and storage room addition to the east side of the main corridor connecting the public/offices to the side wings, also constructed in 1922.

B. Historical Context

The Washington County Old Men's Home was initiated in 1830, when the PA State Legislature passed an act authorizing Washington County to construct a building and operate an institution for the support of the poor. The County Commissioners purchased 172 acres on August 19, 1830 in Chartiers Township. In 1865 they purchased an adjacent 6 acres and two years later purchased 28 acres. The facility was originally known as the Washington County Home for the Poor from 1831 until 1883, when separate buildings were built at other locations for women and children. Since 1883 only men were housed at this facility, thus the name change.

The main building was built in 1872 - 1874 under the directors of Workman Hughes, James McBride, and James Jones. This was a major undertaking for the time and a credit to the liberal social conscience of these benefactors. Mr. and Mrs. McLoney were the administrators of the institution and were known for their kindness and dedication.

The building was completed in time to aid the veterans from the Civil War who had served their country and were unfortunate in their health and inability to be gainfully employed.

The facility also served as a home for tuberculosis patients after the turn of the century.

The facility is an example of the institutional facilities that were being built in the late 19th century as a result of the increased public awareness and social conscience. Leaders in the field such as Jane Adams advocated for the poor. Major industrialists started to become philanthropic. The Country became aroused to the needs of the poor and infirm, and Washington County met those needs with this facility.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A rather large 3 story masonry building built in the Second Empire Style of Architecture. There were originally three wings radiating from the central corridor. The fourth (rear addition) is consistent with the original layout.

There are many outstanding features of the Second Empire Style such as: the 4 story central tower; high pitched mansard roof; ornate wrought iron grille work at the roof line; quoins on the corners; raised ashlar cut stone foundation; flat arched windows with heavy lintels; groupings of

two and three narrow long windows; symmetrical plan; projecting dormers with rounded tops; heavy/stepped and projecting cornice; etc.

2. Condition of fabric: The main structure has been vacant since 1976. In the 15 years since it was last occupied there has been a complete lack of maintenance and repairs. There has been extensive damage on the interior caused by water infiltration through the roof and numerous broken windows. There has been no heat in the building for 15 years which has caused further damage to pipes. Many of the floors in the main entrance wing are badly rotted and unsafe to walk on. There is litter and debris such as fallen plaster, broken glass and old files/equipment strewn about. Downspouts and gutters are missing or inoperable which has caused damage to the brick and stone facing such as missing mortar, spaulding and cracking. The exterior wood trim lacks paint and caulking which has caused the wood to crack, split and rot.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The building is symmetrical. The structure is 3 stories in height with a 4 story high central square tower. The height of the first floor is approximately 4 ft. above grade. The basement is 8 ft. in height. The first and second floor ceilings are 12 ft. high. The third floor ceiling is 8 ft. high. The fourth floor of the tower has a 10 ft. high ceiling.

The main entrance/administrative office area is approximately 66 feet by 52 feet. The rounded front porch is 45 feet wide and projects out from the faces of the tower 12 feet. There are 3 bays across the front with 3 sets of double windows. The sides are 4 bays deep.

The east and west wings are approximately 25 feet by 72 feet, with projecting squared ends. There are 7 bays along the front facade and 7 bays on the sides.

The central projecting portion from the administrative wing is approximately 60 feet by 44 feet. It is 5 bays deep and 2 bays wide.

The rear, 1916 addition is 2 stories in height with a 3 story central portion. Overall dimensions are approximately 176 feet by 40 feet. It is 17 bays long and 3 bays wide.

Attached are floor plans drawn to scale which show the layout of the building and sizes of areas.

2. Foundations: The main original structure contains a full basement which is partially above grade. The original foundation is stone that is laid in a "rubble" pattern with an ashlar cut stone facing. There is a polished stone band at the top of the foundation. The rear addition has a raised foundation with full basement. The foundation has brick to grade.
3. Walls: The exterior walls of the original building are solid brick. The outside course is a common bond. There are large stone quoins on the corners of the central section and the ends of the east and west wings. The exterior walls of the rear addition are also brick. It is a common bond with bands of soldier and row lock courses.
4. Structural systems, framing: The original main structure has exterior masonry load bearing walls and interior masonry load bearing walls on both sides of the wide halls. The framing is heavy wood timber joists. There are wide plank sub-flooring spanning the joists. The roof framing is also wood timber which has steep pitched rafters forming the mansard roof. The rear addition is a structural poured concrete system with concrete floors and concrete interior columns. The exterior walls are load bearing.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: There is one large semi-circular porch at the front entrance. It has a poured concrete deck over concrete block with a rusticated face. The steps and side rails are poured concrete. The porch railing has an open "checker board" pattern of concrete.

There are 12 fluted round columns with 2 matching pilasters. The bases are classic Doric with square base plate, scotia and torus. The capitals are terra cotta and are Ionic. There is a semi-circular wood cornice with a triangular wood entablature at the steps forming a projecting entrance with double side columns. The porch floor has an inlaid ceramic tile laid in a geometric pattern with colored octagonal tiles. There is a marble plaque on the porch which gives the dates of the original building and the later additions.

There are several side and rear stoops which are plain poured concrete with plain wrought iron flat bar and square picket metal railings.

There are no balconies.

6. Chimneys: There are 9 chimneys in the original portion of the building. The chimneys are brick with a projecting 3 course stepped cap, and two lower projecting courses. There are scattered throughout the building.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entry doors are double wood panel doors with a circular arched stone lintel which continues downward to form side pilasters. There are three sets of decorative iron hinges. The door knob and plate are bronze with a simple scroll type design.

The side and rear doors have flat brick arched openings with stepped in bricks at side jamb. The doors are simple wood panel, double doors, with glass lites. The hinges and knob sets are plain, C. 1950, with panic bars. There are double wood panelled doors on the back of the rear addition with a circular glass fan lite above.

- b. Windows and shutters: The original windows in the central section on the first and second story are wood double hung with 2 over 2 glass lites and flat arched top sash. There are heavy stone projecting lintels that wrap around part of the sides. There are narrow projecting stone sills.

On the third floor, in the mansard roof dormers, the windows are wood double hung, 2 over 2 with circular top sash. In the central tower, on the second floor, the windows are narrow and long, 1 over 1, double hung with flat arched top sash, stone flat arched cornices with keystones and stone sills. They are grouped in sets of two. The third floor tower windows are set in groups of three. They are narrow and long wood double hung with circular top sash. There are circular stone lentils with stone keystones. The top story of the tower has circular arched windows that match the mansard dormer windows.

The first and second story windows in the east and west wings are wood double hung, with 9 over 9 lites. The lintels are flat arched corbelled brick. The sills are narrow flat stone.

The third floor mansard dormer windows match the central section dormer windows.

The basement windows are rectangular, 2 lite, that are awning type casement.

The hardware is plain iron that had a brass plating.

There are no shutters.

The windows of the rear addition are wood double hung with one over one lites. There are bands of soldier and row lock courses that form the lintels and sills.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof of the original building is mansard in shape. The roof is covered with composition asbestos type shingles. The roof of the rear addition is hipped with a composition asbestos shingle.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The cornice of the original building is approximately 12 inches in height and is wood with a flat fascia board and a crown mould top at the bottom of the mansard. There is wood cornice at the top of the mansard roof. Large stone lintels are beneath the lower cornice.

There is no cornice on the hipped roof of the rear addition. However, there is a 24 inch overhang.

- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There are two dormers on the front of the center section of the original building and two dormers on the sides. The east and west wings each contain five dormers on the front facade and four dormers on the sides. The dormers have rounded arched tops and are faced with wood trim and round arched windows.

There is a wooden cupola on the rear addition. It is octagonal and has louvered sides.

There is a four story square tower in the front center of the original building. It is brick construction with stone quoins on the first and second stories. The roof is steeply pitched, square plan.

There is a decorative wrought iron railing at the top of the mansard roof on the center section and the tower. The design is French with fleur-de-lis on top.

C. **Description of Interior:**

1. Floor Plans: Attached are reduced copies of the floor plans of the basement, first floor, second floor, and third floor. The floor plan consists of a central section projecting out from the center with two side wings perpendicular to the center. A later 1916 rear addition is connected via

a covered hall, and it is perpendicular to the central core. There is a central hall from the main entrance and a cross hall in the center of the side wings.

The rear addition also has an east-west hall that runs down the center of the longitudinal axis.

There are a series of administrative offices in the central core on either side of the hall. In the wings there are smaller rooms with wards at the ends. A chapel is located on the first floor at the rear of the central section. There are large ward rooms on the second floor and smaller rooms on the third floor.

2. Stairways: There is a main stairs in the central section. This is an open stairwell with molded large flat rail and turned spindles. The railing wraps around in a circular pattern. Risers and trends are wooden. There are two fire stairs with concrete and steel steps and steel pipe railings adjacent to the central core. There are two sets of enclosed wooden stairs, one at each end of the wing. These stairs have been renovated as fire stairs.

There are also two sets of stairs in the rear addition. These are concrete and steel frame stairs with iron railings with square pickets and molded wood top rail.

3. Flooring: The floors in the original building are oak hardwood. They are badly buckled and the finish is no longer visible. The floors in the rear addition are smooth concrete, painted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are smooth finish plaster through the original structure and additions. The walls and ceilings were painted. There were decorative cornices. Color was white.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: There are a few original doors in the center section of the original building. These doors have 4 panels and are mortise and tennon. There are two lite transoms above. The trim around the doors is 8 inch wide with beads on ends and stepped down. There are iron knobs and plates. The newer doors are two panel veneer. All doors and trim are painted white.
- b. Windows: The window trim is also 8 inch wide with beaded stops. The sash is wood with two over two lites. The top sash is arched. The interior hardware is iron and non-ornamental.

6. Decorative features and trim: The base boards are 10 inch high. The top has a scotia mold followed by a bead, another scotia, another bead, recess and then a flat surface. There is a chair rail in the corridors that is a stepped down casing. There are several original wood fireplace mantels. The opening is arched and surrounded by wood panels and octagonal pilasters. A center medallion supports the top ledge. There are cast iron inserts for gas "Taylor" burners.
7. Hardware: There is no other notable hardware than that which was described above.
8. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The heating system was steam radiators installed in 1922 when the original building was renovated. There are large cast iron radiators in each room.
 - b. Lighting: There are no original lighting fixtures. They have all been removed during renovations and fluorescent tube fixtures were installed.
 - c. Plumbing: There are several small bathrooms located throughout the facility. There are no notable fixtures.
9. Original Furnishings: There are no original pieces of furniture and/or furnishings in the building.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces almost due south. The main facade is the south side, the rear addition is the north side, and the wings face east and west.

The structure is located on a flat site that drops off to the south where the Chartiers Valley Railroad tracks are located.

There is a circular drive around the Main Building from North Main Street. From the main entrance and porch there was a walk lined with trees leading to the railway platform for visitors to travel from Washington and Canonsburg, PA to the facility.

2. Historic landscape design: There is an original walk that leads from the front porch to the platform by the railroad tracks.

There are no other landscape features remaining.

3. **Outbuildings:** There are five outbuildings that are covered in a separate short form report for each. These buildings include the following:
 - Administration Building - PA-5585-B
 - White House #1 - PA-5585-C
 - White House #2 - PA-5585-D
 - Laundry Building - PA-5585-E
 - Bakery Building - PA-5585-F

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

1. **Original Drawings:** There are no known copies or originals of the architectural drawings for the Main Building.
2. **Current Drawings:** Attached are copies of architectural floor plans that were recently prepared for the Main Building.

B. Historic Views: There is only one early historic view of the building that was located. It is an engraving of the front elevation and was found on Page 80 of J.A. Caldwell's Centennial Atlas of Washington County, PA, published in 1876.

C. Interviews:

1. Roy Sarver, Administrator, Washington County Historical Society. He was interviewed at his office in Washington, PA in late May, 1991. Mr. Sarver provided references for books to research.
2. Kerry Fox, Redevelopment Authority of Washington County. Mr. Fox was interviewed at the Washington County Court House Annex building in June, 1991. He had done extensive research on the project and provided the architectural drawings and a tour of the buildings and site.
3. Norman Carson, retired, former Buildings Maintenance Superintendent for Washington County. Interviewed at the Court House Annex in June, 1991. He was familiar with renovation work on the facility.

D. Bibliography:

1. **Primary and unpublished sources:**
 - a. Archives and files of the Washington County Historical Society, Washington, PA

- b. Files and records of the Washington County Redevelopment Authority, Washington, PA
 - c. Deed registry offices of the County of Washington, Courthouse Building, Washington, PA
2. Secondary and published sources:
- a. J.A. Caldwell; Centennial Atlas of Washington County, PA; 1876; p.p. 14 and 80.
 - b. J. McFarland; History of Washington County; 1910; p.p. 210-211
 - c. Earle Forrest; History of Washington County; 1920; p.p. 966
- E. **Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:** There are no other known sources for information. When the building was closed in 1976, the files and historical records were transferred to the Washington County Court House. These records were mistakenly destroyed in 1980.
- F. **Supplemental Material:** Not Applicable

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The County of Washington proposes to demolish the subject building utilizing funds from its Basic Entitlement Grant under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. These funds are provided to the County by the U.S. Department of HUD.

The structure is economically infeasible to rehabilitate and has become a health and safety hazard.

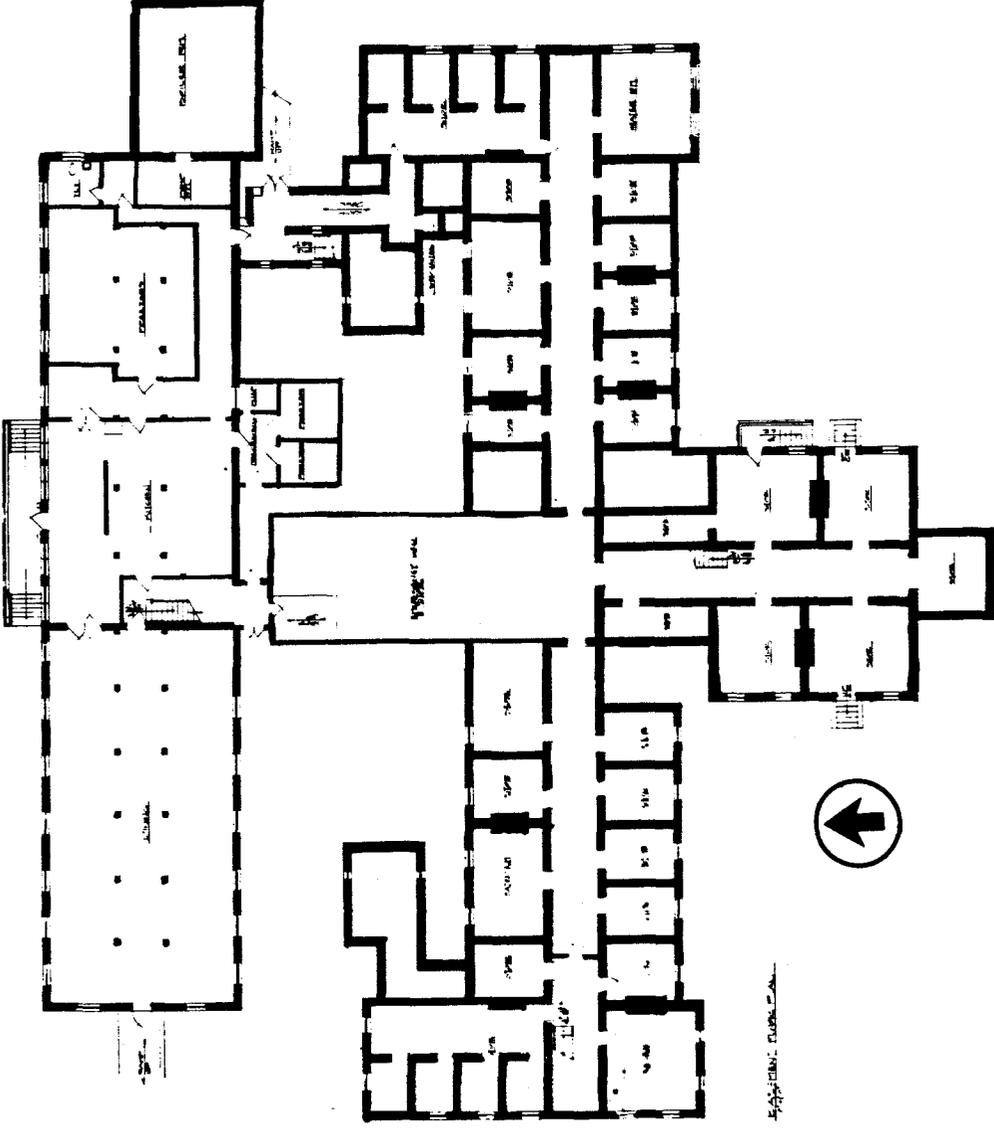
Prepared by: Walter J. Haglund, AIA

Title: Registered Architect, EX-6100
Commonwealth of PA

Affiliation: Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc.
Pittsburgh & Philadelphia, PA

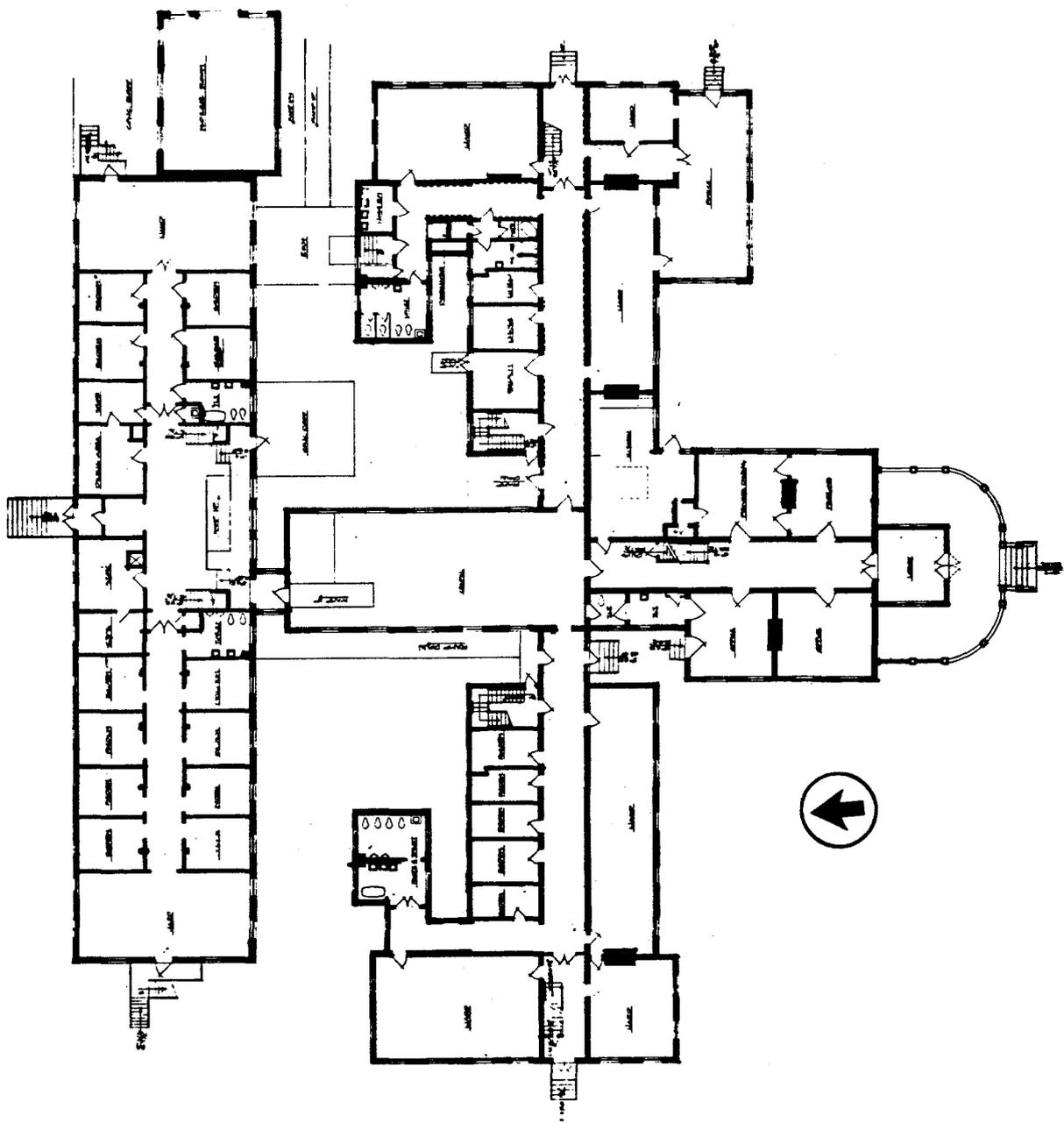
Date: June 17, 1991

WASHINGTON COUNTY OLD MEN'S HOME,
MAIN BUILDING
HABS NO. PA-5585-A (PAGE 12)



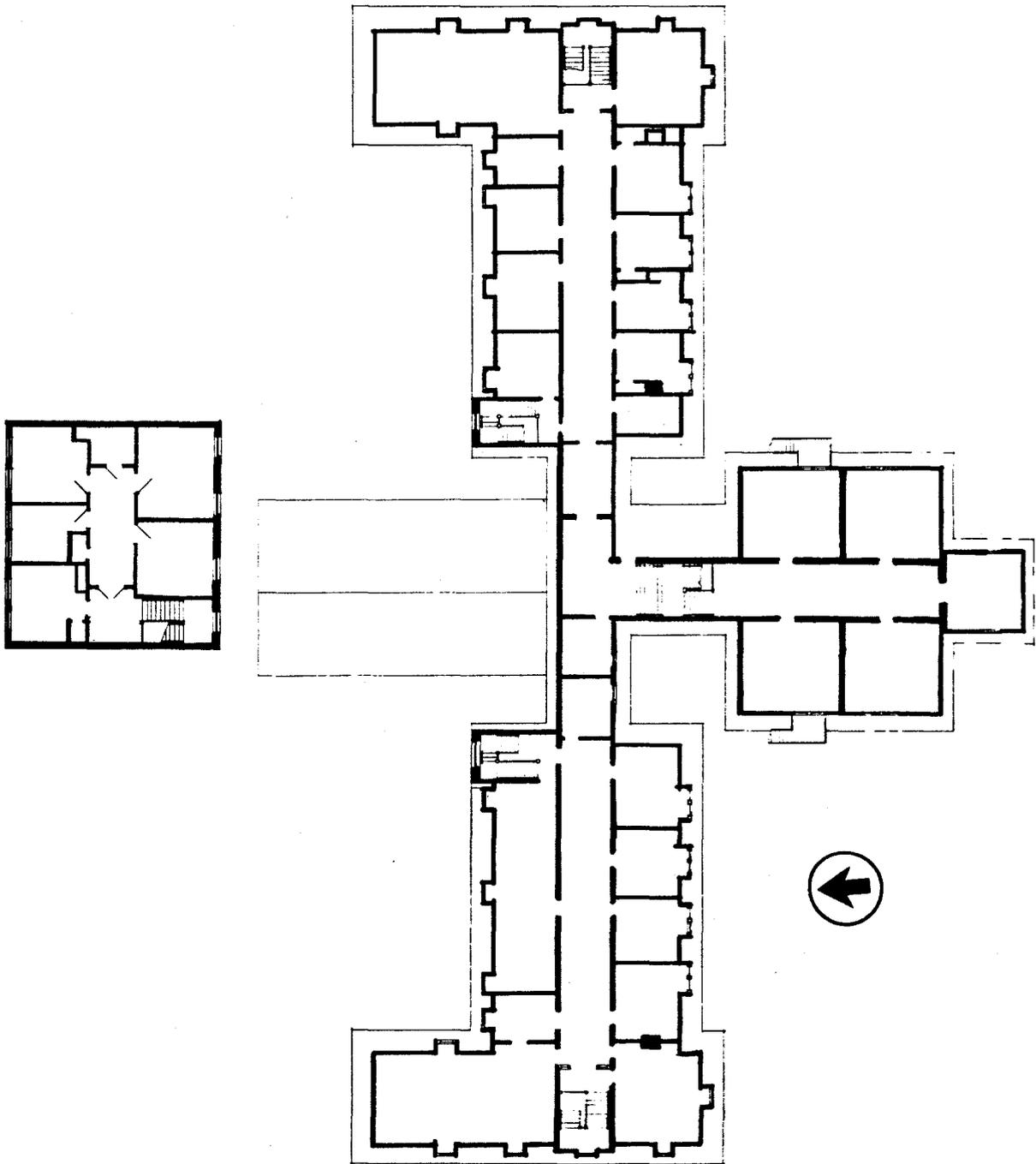
BASEMENT PLAN - DATED: JULY 6, 1978

WASHINGTON COUNTY OLD MEN'S HOME,
MAIN BUILDING
HABS NO. PA-5585-A (PAGE 13)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN - DATED: JULY 6, 1978

WASHINGTON COUNTY OLD MEN'S HOME,
MAIN BUILDING
HABS NO. PA-5585-A (PAGE 15)



THIRD FLOOR PLAN - DATED: JULY 6, 1978