

WARREN STATE HOSPITAL FARM ,  
COLONY BUILDING  
State Route 62  
North Warren vicinity  
Warren County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6014

HABS  
PA  
62-NWAR.V  
1-

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, P.A. 19106

HABS  
PA  
62-NWAR.V  
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WARREN STATE HOSPITAL FARM, COLONY BUILDING

HABS No. PA-6014

Location: State Route 62, North Warren Vicinity, Warren County, Pennsylvania

USGS, Russell Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates:  
17.655000.4638000

Present Owner: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Public Welfare  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: This building is a three story masonry building with a full basement containing approximately 35,958 square feet of space. It was built to house the indigent who were working on the farm. The building was built to be self sustaining, with its own water supply and heat. It is served by the Warren State Hospital sewer system.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The building was constructed during the period 1899-1900, to house the farm workers of Warren State Hospital Farm.
2. Architect: John McArthur, Jr. A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania was appointed as an architect in 1873. He designed Danville State Hospital as well as Warren State Hospital to house the insane. He is one of Pennsylvania's most important architects of the 19th Century. In addition to Danville and Warren State Hospitals, he designed Philadelphia City Hall, his most famous work. He was a leader in founding the Pennsylvania Institute of Architecture in 1861.

Both Danville and Warren State Hospitals are among the State's finest surviving examples of the "Philadelphia" or "Echelon" plan used in the 19th Century institutional architecture.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: The land on which the Colony Building is located was purchased for the purpose of farming.

1897 - Deed Book Vol. 79 page 742 - D. I. Ball conveyed to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Deed Book Vol. 92 page 596 - George R. Starr conveyed to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by tax sale.

1923 - (Public Law 498, No. 274) "The Administrative Code" transferred control to Department of Public Welfare.

1969 - The Department of Public Welfare transferred control to the Department of Public Instruction. (Public Law 374, No. 164).

1980 - Commonwealth of Pennsylvania conveyed to County of Warren, Pennsylvania by Act 66-1980 of PA Legislature.

1988 - Property reverted to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as condition of Act 66-1980.

1989 - Department of Education transferred control to Department of Corrections, (Memorandum of Understanding).

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1989 - Department of Corrections transferred control to Department of Public Welfare,  
(Declaration of Surplus Property - Act 48-1981).

After the Farm Colony was closed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the building was utilized by the Department of Education as an off-campus school for Edinboro University.

The building was transferred to the Department of Corrections of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania after the Department of Education had no more use for the premises. They allowed the operating of a day care center for the County of Warren in the building until the facilities were arranged for the day care on the main campus closer to town. In 1989 the Department of Corrections declared the property as surplus to their needs and a transfer of control was conducted to Department of Public Welfare who were the original Commonwealth of Pennsylvania owners.

4. Builders: The Farm Colony Building was constructed during the period 1899-1901, through an appropriation from the Pennsylvania Legislature. The name of the contractors are not known.
5. Original Plans and Construction: No original plans or drawings can be located. Early photographs show the construction process.  
The first floor contained the main entrance as well as the administrative offices, a dining room, kitchen and an infirmary. The second floor contained the quarters for the residents, as did the third floor.
6. Alterations and Additions: An addition was added to the building in 1938 to expand the operational capacity of the facility.

B. Historical Contexts

In 1896, due to overcrowding in the Warren State Hospital, Doctor Curwen had recommended to the Trustees of Warren State Hospital the erection of an additional building to house male patients. Early in 1897 the Trustees were able to exchange a two acre lot, purchased at a foreclosure sale, for the 173 acre George Starr farm located on the Jamestown Road, one mile north of the Hospital. The Trustees authorized Attorney D. I. Ball to bid an amount not exceeding twenty dollars (\$20.00) an acre at the Sheriff's sale for the George Starr farm. Attorney Ball's bid of two thousand eight hundred dollars (\$2,800.00) was accepted and the hospital received the title for the property. In order to make the payment, the hospital sold the Berry property for two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) and used three hundred dollars (\$300.00) of the oil fund balance.

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The primary object of the purchase was to obtain more pasture land, due to the short supply of milk at the hospital caused by over-population. With the purchase of the George Starr farm the hospital was able to immediately increase the number of cows by twenty-five (25) and speedily bring up the hospital production of milk.

It was decided shortly thereafter to make the place a "Farm Colony". "A good house on the property, with some changes, was able to accommodate about fifteen male patients with their attendants who would give time under careful direction, to the improvement of the farm . . . The removal of that number of patients from the wards will relieve to some extent the overcrowded condition and give the patients themselves, so removed, more liberty and occupation of character useful to them and beneficial to the hospital. Such a place in Pennsylvania is an experiment, but there is no good reason why it should not be made valuable to the hospital and advantageous to the patients themselves."

The purchase of the George Starr farm caused some controversy as the Committee on Lunacy forbade the purchase of additional land for the purpose of increasing accommodation for the insane at State Hospitals. The Trustees argued that they had acquired the property for farm purposes and the building on the property was for the housing of farm laborers. The matter was settled at this juncture as neither side had any desire to prove a point of law. Apparently the Committee on Lunacy merely wanted to flex its muscles.

The "Farm Colony" was occupied on September 1, 1898; nine patients were transferred along with the necessary number of attendants and cooks. By year's end, sixteen patients were in residence, engaging in various forms of agricultural work and enjoying the freedom of the farm.

The Trustees saw in the "Farm Colony" idea the nucleus for requesting a State appropriation of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) for a suitable dormitory or farm colony. In 1899, the Warren State Hospital was granted an appropriation in the amount of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) for the "erection, completion and furnishing of a building for use as a dormitory and infirmary at the Farm Colony . . . "

The Warren State Hospital submitted plans to the Board of Public Charities which approved proposals calling for:

The building at the Farm Colony to be constructed of brick and stone, as nearly fireproof as possible, having a frontage of 84 feet and a depth of 152 feet exclusive of the dining room and kitchen, and will accommodate 100 patients with the necessary help. The dining room and kitchen are separated from the main building by an enclosed passageway to insure safety from fire.

By 1902 sixty men were living at the farm colony and engaged in farm work and landscape grading. Those who were unable to work simply took daily walks around the countryside. Another several hundred patients from the hospital proper were engaged in farm work, clearing land, and light gardening.

In 1903 the Superintendent reported:

"We have increased the number of patients at this detached building from 60 to 80. While the situation of this detached ward is beautiful it is far more difficult to manage than if it were nearer the main building. In the winter especially the patients there are cut off from the amusements provided at the main building and a great deal of time is consumed in carrying provisions, clothing, etc. back and forth. It is visited daily by one of the physicians which also takes considerable time. We have endeavored to overcome the lack of amusement as far as possible and Mr. McMichael has given a stereopticon lecture one evening each week in the cool weather. Reverend A. B. McCormick is unable to go there on Sunday, but has services one evening each week at which he preaches a sermon."

In 1907, the "Eddy Farm", located on the other side of the Conewango Creek, was purchased. The patients at Farm Colony were taken across the Conewango Creek by ferry to work at the farm on the other side.

In 1940 the dormitory building at Farm Colony was completely remodeled but due to lack of funding, it was not reoccupied by patients until 1941.

The Sauder vs. Brennan decision of 1973 prohibited labor by patients for the benefit of the hospital. Even prior to that, patient activities such as farming and helping with maintenance of the grounds, were gradually being phased out. All farm operations were shut down and in 1978 the prize herd of cattle was auctioned off.

In 1969 the last patients were transferred from Farm Colony to Israel Building. The Farm Colony Dormitory Building was used by Edinboro University for several years in the 1970's as an off-campus site. Sometime later, the property was transferred to the Commissioners of Warren County and used for some programs by the Department of Human Services. The grounds behind the building had been used as playing fields for youth baseball. For the last few years, the building has been abandoned and has fallen into disrepair.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. Architectural Characters:

1. State Architectural Style: Two spires rise from the front of the building. It is constructed of concrete and brick. The foundation is concrete and the walls are unstuccoed brick and concrete. Windows throughout the building continue the pattern of groups of two as do the windows of the main campus of Warren State Hospital buildings.
2. Condition of fabric: The building was constructed to withstand any condition. Except for the roof, the building is in generally fair condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is a three (3) story brick and concrete building measuring 85 feet wide and 230 feet in length. The addition was added to the southern side of main building which is a two (2) story brick construction which complements the main building.
2. Foundations: The foundation is constructed of concrete masonry units. Thickness is not known, water table is not known.
3. Walls: Walls are constructed of concrete and brick masonry units, especially the load bearing walls.
4. Structural systems, framing: The front of the building has two spires constructed of brick, all windows are in sets of two (2) throughout the building. All floors are of concrete composition. The roof framing is of wood.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The main entrance is serviced by a square porch, with a concrete floor and wood frame roof.
6. Chimneys: There are two (2) chimneys to the building, the small one is to the kitchen and the large one is to the furnace. The original round chimney was replaced by a smaller square type at sometime. All are constructed of brick.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The doors at the main entrance are of wood construction with glass windows in a set of two (2) with window panels on either side. There are a number of smaller doors giving access to building all are of wood and glass construction.
  - b. Windows: Windows are constructed of wood frame and are placed in a pairs system throughout the entire building. All windows are one over one, large pane glass. Except for front of building, all windows on ground floor have been secured with metal grids for security.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof of the original building is an "A" frame style with slate shingles. The newer section has a flat roof with a tar and chip roofing composition.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The cornices of the building are constructed of wood with probable brass flashings.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The main towers/spires at the front of the building have peaked dormers with two (2) peaks on each. At the front of building, on the third floor, there are three (3) dormers with single peaks.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: See sketch plans attached for basement, first floor, second floor and third floor.
2. Stairways: There are three (3) stairways up from the basement, all are constructed of concrete. There are four (4) stairways located in the building with exits to the outside located at each. They are constructed of concrete with metal handrails.
3. Flooring: The floors of the building are constructed of concrete reinforced with tile placed over them.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior walls are constructed of a plaster and lath material and have been painted. Some walls have had wallpaper applied.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Most of the doors within the building have been replaced over the years to support different occupants.
  - b. Windows: The windows are of the one-over-one style throughout the building. They are mainly of wood frames which have been painted.
6. Decorative features and trim: Nearly all of the decorative lights and other trim features were replaced over many years of different occupants.
7. Hardware: No information is available concerning these.

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The building is heated by five (5) side-by-side, 400,000 BTU per hour, gas-operated boilers which are located in the basement boiler room. No air conditioning was installed in the building. Ventilation was accomplished by opening of windows.
- b. Lighting: Power was supplied by Pennsylvania Electric Company and consisted of 2,400 volt, 3-phase with an emergency generation system for lights only.
- c. Plumbing: Most plumbing fixtures were replaced over the years.
- d. Water Supply: Being a self sustaining unit, it had its own water supply from wells on the property which was pumped into an underground reservoir. The reservoir is constructed of concrete and has a capacity of approximately 200,000 gallons. There never were any elevators installed in the building.

9. Original furnishings: None are available

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This building faces in an easterly direction on to Route 62, which travels north and south across the property.
2. Historic landscape design: (See property plot attached)
3. Outbuildings: (See plot plan attached)
  - a. Main residence - This is a two (2) story frame structure used as the Managers Residence, with apartments.
  - b. A four (4) car garage is located next to the residence, this is constructed of cement blocks and wood with overhead doors.
  - c. A cement block building, two (2) story, is located on property which was originally for chicken farming and later for storage.
  - d. A shed and icehouse is located to the rear of the Colony Building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

- A. Architectural Drawings: None are available
- B. Historic Views: Photographs were found which show the architectural design of the building. These were furnished by Warren State Hospital Personnel from their files.
- C. Interviews: Persons interviewed to complete this report were:
- Mr. Larry E. Buchanan, Acting Director, Facilities Management, Department of Public Welfare, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
- Mr. Domenic Romeo, Business Manager, Warren State Hospital, Warren, Pennsylvania
- Mr. Gerald Phelps, Architectural Division, Department of Public Welfare, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- D. Bibliography:
1. All information was obtained from the files maintained in the Warren State Hospital files at Department of Public Welfare, Department of General Services, and at Warren State Hospital. These include deed, land transfers, and historic files as maintained.
  2. No secondary sources were used.
- E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: No other sources are known.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This information has been furnished to preserve the building for its architectural design and purpose. The building will eventually be demolished by the County of Warren, due to its unsafe condition.

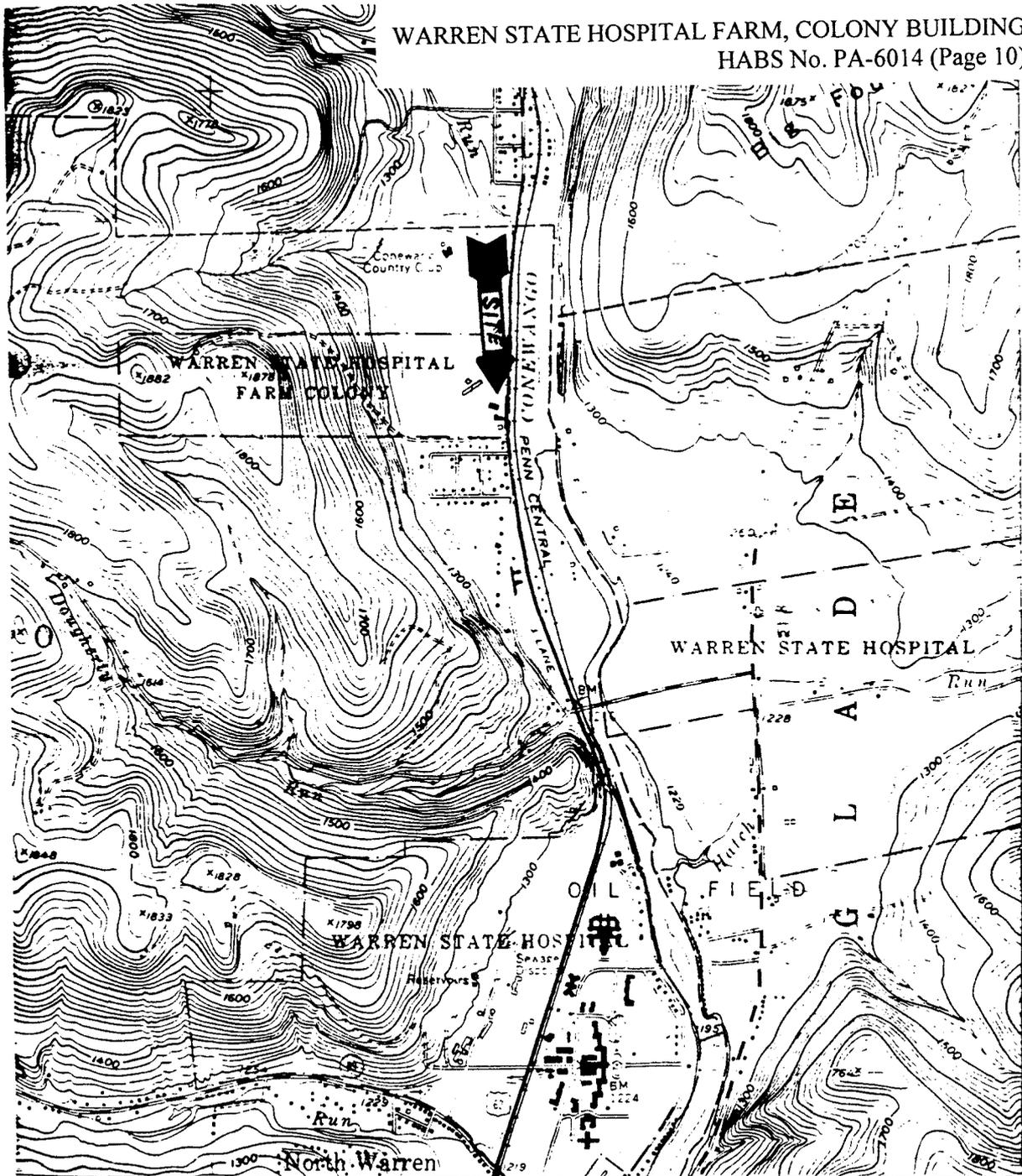
Prepared by: Lloyd D. Colegrove

Title: Real Estate Representative

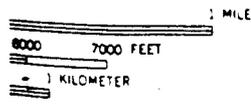
Affiliation: Land Management Division/Bureau of Real Estate, Department of General Services

Date:

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WARREN (QUAD U.S. 6123 MI) INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 1972 30000 FEET (1 IN. = 1.55 KM) 19-07-30

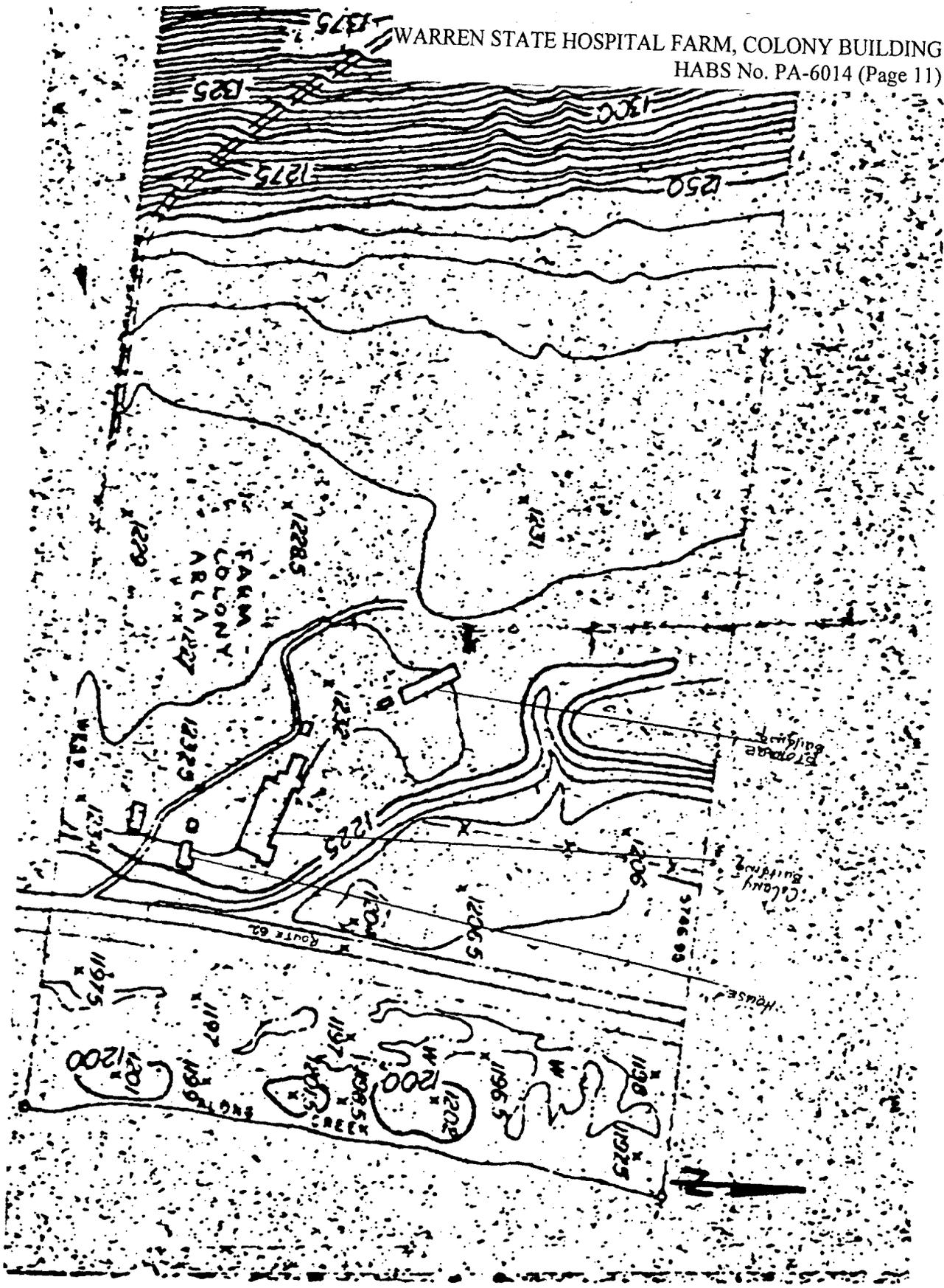


ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty		Light-duty	
Medium-duty		Unimproved dirt	
		U. S. Route	State Route

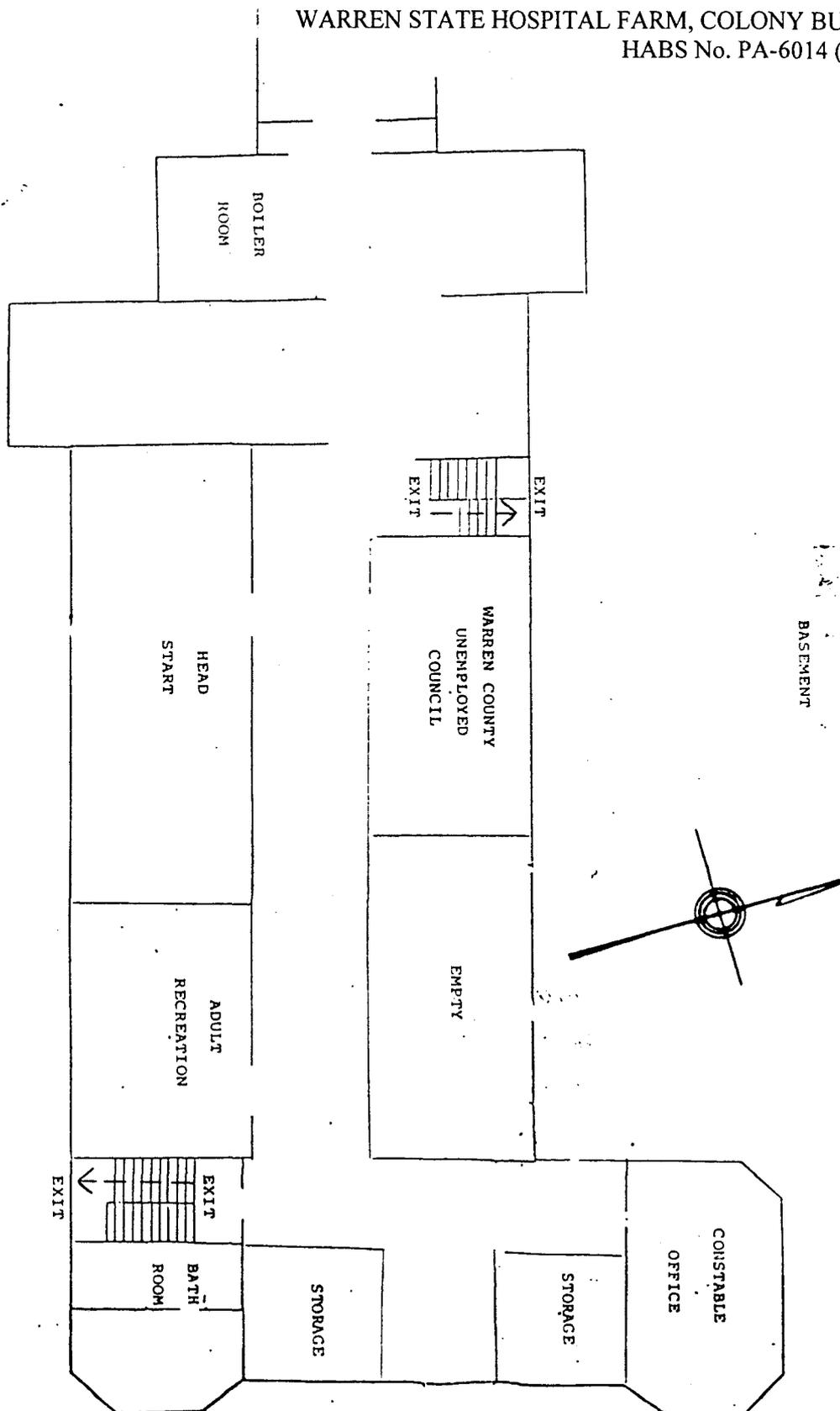
RUSSELL, PA.—N. Y.  
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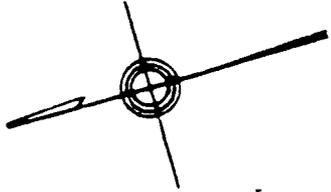




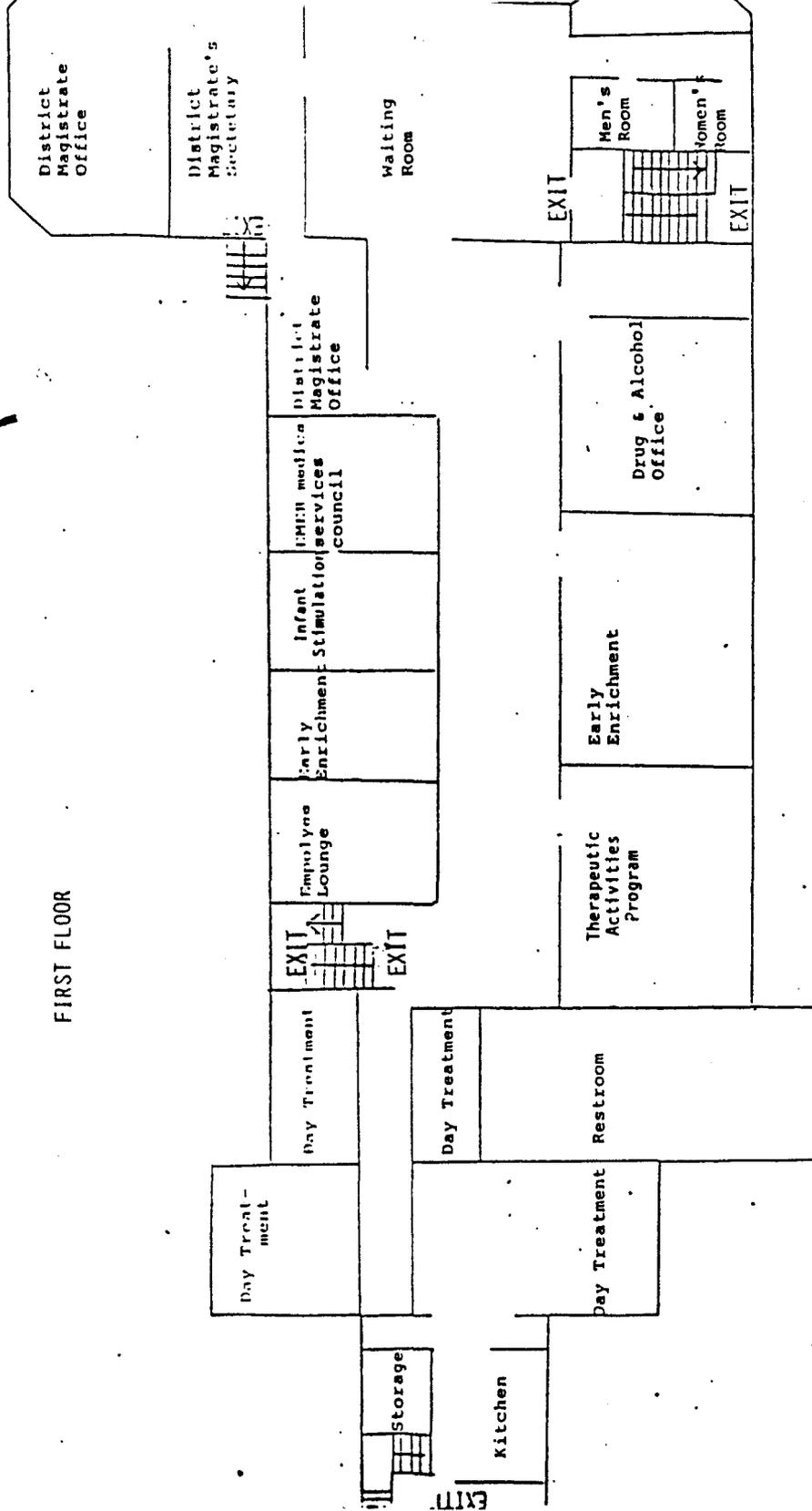
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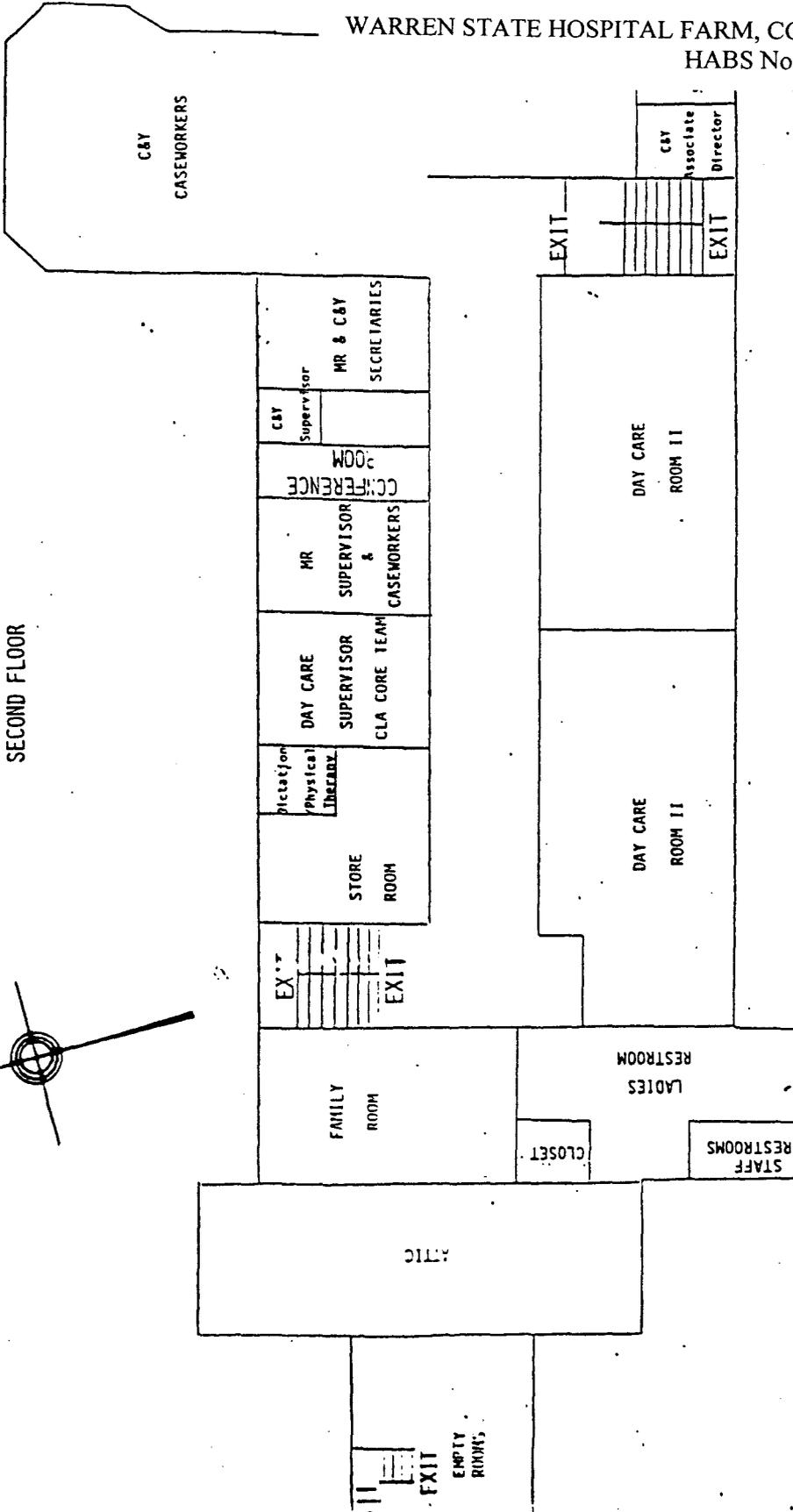
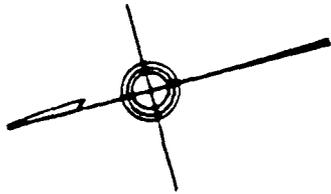


FIRST FLOOR



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SECOND FLOOR



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