

Fort Riley,
Building # 25
25 Sheridan Avenue
Fort Riley
Riley County
Kansas

HABS NO. KS-54-C

HABS
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81-FORIL,
2-C-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. KS-54C

FORT RILEY, BUILDING # 25

Location: 25 Sheridan Avenue, Fort Riley, Riley County, Kansas

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Army

USGS Junction City Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Coordinates: 14.692145.4326020

Present Occupant: # 25-A, temporarily vacant; # 25-B, Ltc. Sinn and family.

Present Use: Family officers quarters

Significance: Building # 25 at Fort Riley is representative of the type of double quarters built for married officers at Fort Riley during the 1880's. It is one of three identical residences built along Sheridan Avenue in 1887. It is also similar to Buildings # 7, # 8, # 11 and # 12 Forsyth, built the same year. They are a variation of the same plan, differing somewhat in the floor plan and the architectural detailing. Buildings # 25, # 20 and # 22 (and # 23, also on Sheridan Avenue built one year before in a similar style) are distinguished by the segmental brick arches. These were the only limestone quarters built with this detailing feature. The construction of Building # 25 and others built that year, marks the beginning of a boom period in construction at Fort Riley, resulting from the establishment of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School the previous year. Extensive improvements were at that time planned for Fort Riley, for it was to become the depot through which all recruits into this branch of the service would pass (Pride, p. 193). Construction had been virtually halted with the coming of the Civil War, not to resume until the 1880's and the establishment of the school. Building # 25 was constructed specifically as "Company Officer's Quarters" (Plan of Fort Riley, 1890). Over the years it has housed mostly Cavalry Division Officers- majors, lieutenants colonels and captains. In 1922-23, Capt. W.F. Pride, author of The History of Fort Riley, lived in Building #25-A. In addition, buildings such as # 25, constructed during the 1880's period, represent a change in the original plan of the fort. At this time the post was enlarged and separate areas developed for the Cavalry and Artillery. The original rectangle of the frontier era then became the Cavalry Parade, some old buildings were removed and others, like Building # 25, were added. The plan of the present post was prepared by Colonel George E. Pond, Assistant Quartermaster General and approved by the Quartermaster General from Washington.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1887. This is the date that appears on the Real Property Cards and in the Engineer's Historical Record Book, Directorate of Engineering and Housing (D.E.H.), Fort Riley. (May be 1886, see Part I, section A.-4).
2. Architect: Unknown. Plans were made through the office of the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C. They were approved by the Department of War and sent to Fort Riley for execution. However, articles appearing in the local Junction City Union mention "Architect, William Goding" at Fort Riley, working with Quartermaster, Pond, during this period. Therefore, he may have possibly designed this building along with others.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Department of War, known since 1947 as the U.S. Department of the Army.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:
 - a. Builder: Building # 25 was constructed under the direction of Capt. George E. Pond, Quartermaster, Fort Riley by the U.S. Department of War.
 - b. Contractor: It was probably built by contractors Beatty and Wright of Junction City. On Saturday, August 15, 1885 a proposal for bids for four double sets of officer's quarters at Fort Riley appeared in the Junction City Union, newspaper. The proposal came from the Headquarters Department of the Missouri, Office of the Quartermaster, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and was signed by James Gilliss, Major and Quartermaster, U.S.A., C.Q.M. The contract was awarded to Beatty and Wright (Union, September 5, 1885, p. 3). By September 19, they had "men already at work at Riley getting out stone (Union, p. 3). By October 10, it was reported "The stone work on the officer's quarters is up to the first floor. This building is on the north side (of the original rectangle of the fort) east of the center building" (Union, p.3). Finally, on March 13, 1886, the Union reported, "John K. Wright during the week finished his contract at Riley. His job has been accepted and pronounced good." Although the date here does not match that given in the sources at the D.E.H., it would appear that the four double sets of officers quarters referred to were Building # 26 (1886, according to D.E.H.) and # 20, # 22, # 25 (1887

according to D.E.H.). Thus, creating infill around the original quarters along Sheridan Avenue. These quarters around the original post were probably the first built as part of the plan for the expansion of the fort.

- c. Suppliers: The stone used in the construction of Building # 25 came from the river bluffs on the fort reservation (Journal of the U.S. Cavalry Assoc., p. 128).
5. Original plans and construction: Any original plans and drawings that exist for these buildings would be located in Record Group 92 at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. However, undated copies of what appear to be original floor plans for Building # 25 are located among the plans and drawings at the Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Riley. Included is the lay out of the basement, first and second stories as well as a transverse sectional drawing and a drawing of the front elevation (see Supplemental Materials # 1 - # 5). The original cost was \$7,379.50.
6. Alterations and additions: On the first floor, a half bath was added in the back hall across from the stairway. The kitchen was completely remodelled. A bathroom was also added to the second story, front, large bedroom and the bath to the rear was modernized. In Building # 25-B, the moldings around the upstairs windows have been removed. To the rear of the house, off each kitchen, have been added small, frame entry enclosures. The original turned post porches have been replaced. A photograph from the Pennell Collection shows Building # 22 which is identical to Building #25, with the original porch, etc. (See Supplemental Material # 8). A garage was added circa. 1938 (according to the Fort Riley Historical and Archeological Society's house tour booklet for 1975, the garages added throughout the post were a W.P.A. project).

B. Historical Context:

Building # 25 is one of three identical sets of double officer's quarters built in 1887 along Sheridan Avenue, facing the Cavalry Parade Field. Its construction coincides with the establishment of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School and the beginning of a boom period in the development of the fort. Building # 25, along with # 20 & # 22, were built specifically as company officer's quarters.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Building # 25 is representative of the officer's quarters built at Fort Riley during the later part of

the nineteenth century. Its limestone construction is indicative of the area as well as Fort Riley itself. Though no longer hammered limestone, as used the early phase of construction, Building # 25 and most of those that followed were built of rock-faced ashlar limestone. The distinctive architectural feature of Building # 25 and the two like it are their decorative segmental brick arches over the doorways and windows. The rock-faced treatment of the limestone recalls the Romanesque Revival style of H.H. Richardson, also of the 1880's. Also, according to an article from this period, "The new buildings (at Fort Riley), all, are artistic in style and fitted with every modern convenience" (Davis and Geary County, Clippings, p. 170). The plan of Building # 25 illustrates the trend toward standardized design in the Quartermaster General's office. The front pavillion with two side wings symmetrically arranged and divided into a duplex is an plan type seen in army posts in Kansas as early as 1855. (eg. plan of Syrause Houses at Fort Leavenworth).

2. Condition of fabric: On the whole, Building # 25 is in good condition. The exterior structure appears to be sound and well maintained. The exterior is original with the exception of replacement porches and possibly the rear frame entry section. Inside, the fireplace mantels are original and many other decorative interior features such as moldings remain intact with the exception of the removal of window molding in the upstairs of # 25-B.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Overall dimensions: Building # 25 is a two story, T-shaped structure with a rear wing. To the rear is a small, frame entry section (See HABS photos # KS-54-C-4 & 5). The main block is approximateley 52' x 36' with a front pavillion approximately 18' 8" x 8'. The rear wing is approximately 33' x 22'. The rear entry sections together measure approximately 13' x 8' 4". Building # 25 is six bays by three bays with a rear wing two bays wide and three bay deep. The front pavillion is one bay deep (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-2). The house has a full basement.
 2. Foundations: The foundation is made of rock-faced ashlar limestone approximately eighteen inches thick.
 3. Walls: The walls are made of rock-faced ashlar limestone, approximatley eighteen inches thick.
 4. Structural systems and framing: The walls of Building # 25 walls are load-bearing limestone. The floors and partition walls rest on wooden joists and beams.

5. Porches: There is an entry porch to either side of the front pavilion. The porch has a concrete floor resting on limestone piers. The low shed roofs are supported by plain square posts with iron railings (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-1 & 3). There are also L-shaped porches along each side of the rear wing. They run from the main block around to the rear entry section. The porches also have concrete floors on limestone piers. The shed roofs are supported by pairs of square wooden posts. Both side porches have been enclosed with screening. Underneath each is an open space with an entry into the basement (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-5).
6. Chimneys: Five plain, brick chimneys have replaced the originals, probably during the last twenty-five years. There is an interior end chimney on the front slope at each side elevation of the house. These two chimneys serve the living room fireplaces of each side of the duplex. There are two chimneys centered on the back slope of the main block, both serving the dining room fireplaces located on the inside wall of each side of the duplex. Finally, the fifth chimney serves the kitchen cooking facilities of both sides and is located to the center of the rear wing.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entries are located to either side of the front pavilion (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-2). There is a wooden panel door with a single light transom topped with a wooden arch over which is a segmental brick arch. The same entryway appears at the rear of the main block on both sides and is located to the center of the rear wing.
 - b. Windows: Building # 25 has two over two sash windows with smooth-faced limestone sills and segmental brick arches, under a wooden arch window frame (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-2). The windows on the second story are slightly shorter than those on the first. There is a paired window under a single arch on the second story of the main block at each side elevation. At the gable end of the main block, on both sides, is a round, fixed window surrounded by segmental brick. In the second story of the rear wing are half story windows, three over three sash. The basement windows, with window wells, are small two over two sash. There are four of these at each side elevation and one at the facade of the "B" side of the duplex.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Building # 25 has low pitched, side gable roofs on the front pavilion and the rear wing. Originally covered with slate, the roofs are now covered with composition shingles with raised seam metal on the porches.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is a simple, molded cornice and overhanging eaves with exposed rafters on the front of the pavilion, the sides of the main block and in the rear of the back wing. The eaves have decorative brackets in the front and rear elevations of the main block and in the sides of the pavilion and the rear wing (See HABS photos # KS-54-C-1 & 2).

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Building # 25, the "A" side, is entered by the front vestibule. From there, there is a side stairhall with the stairway against the inside wall. The first room off the hall is the living room which adjoins the dining room behind it. The dining room can also be entered at an angle from the main hall, to the east of the doorway into the back hall. On the west side is a doorway into the back hall (See HABS photos # KS-54-C-6 & 7). On the east side of the back hall is a modern half bath and on the west across from it is a curved landing, two flight stairway. Through the back hall is the kitchen. To the rear of the kitchen, to the west side, is the back doorway to the rear entry section. Upstairs, the rooms follow the same pattern, with bedrooms over the vestibule, living room, dining room and kitchen. There is a bathroom in the rear section over the one downstairs. Another bathroom has been added at the southeast corner of the center bedroom. The basement is entered through the kitchen and has a curved landing, two flight stairway. It comes down into a hall with a boiler room to the south and a hall to the north. Off the hall, to the east is a maid's room with an adjoining bathroom. At the end of the hall, at the north end of the house is a large recreation room. The "B" side of Building # 25 is the exact reverse of this plan.
2. Stairways: Building # 25 has two stairways to each side of the duplex, a main and back. Both have the same newel post and balustrade, but the main stairway is an open, single flight stairway and the back is a curved landing, two flight, partially open stairway. The balusters are octagonal, turned. The newel post is a tapering, octagonal, turned post on a square base with

a flattened rounded newel cap. There are no brackets at the end of the treads (See HABS photos # KS-54-C-6 & 8). In addition, there is a basement stairway on each side of the duplex. Like the back stairway, this has a curved landing and is partially open, at the bottom. It has a beveled, wooden newel post and plain, squared balusters.

3. Flooring: The flooring throughout is post World War II, narrow board yellow pine with a clear varnish (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-7). There is linoleum tile flooring in the kitchen and the back portion of the back hall and in the basement recreation room.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are plaster, painted white, with no decorative detailing with the exception of a narrow strip of molding along the walls just below the ceiling in the living and dining rooms of # 25-B. Also in # 25-B, there is decorative stenciling throughout the house, appearing mostly around the upper walls, below the ceiling (applied by the current resident, Mrs. Sinn).
5. Doorways and doors: The doorways on the first story of the main block have beaded framing with corner bull's eyes and operable transoms in all the doorways off the halls and to the outside. The front door is a wooden four panel door. There is a large, approximately six foot, doorway adjoining the living and dining rooms with wooden nine panel doors that slide into the walls. The doorways in the main block upstairs are also four panel with five horizontal panel doors on the closets (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-8). The doors in the rear wing are plain doors (replacements of the originals).
6. Decorative features and trim: The baseboards in the first story of the main block of # 25-A have a inverted ovolo molding at the floor, above which is a plain wide band followed by a fluted band with a double curved molding above. Upstairs, the baseboards are plain with a strip of inverted ovolo molding at the floor. # 25-B has these plain baseboards both upstairs and down. The baseboards in the rear wings of both sides are plain wide boards. The mantels, two in each duplex, are the same. They are made of slate with fading marblization. To the sides and below the mantel shelf are simple, linear etchings. The chimney blocks extend out approximately eight inches and they have concrete hearths. In each fireplace is a cast iron insert. In # 25-A, a pussy willow pattern appears. In # 25-B, in the living room, is a heart shaped leaf vine and, in the dining room, is a sunburst design. There are telephone niches

on the interior walls, both upstairs and down, in the main hallways on both sides (See HABS photo # KS-54-C-6). There are built-in cupboards in the second story of the rear wing on the interior wall. Finally, there are chimney closets in the basement recreation room.

7. Hardware: There are original, brass door knobs with foliated designs on the door plates and circular rope patterns on the knobs on the front doors. The doors to the closets under the main stairway, the upstairs bedroom doors off the halls in the main block, and the doors between the main and back halls, have black porcelain delf knobs with decorative brass plates. There is plain, brass hardware on the closet and bathroom doors in the main block, some with box locks. The transoms all have operable hardware.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Built in 1887, this structure was probably heated by wood and/or coal burning fireplaces. Then, in 1889, a steam-heating system, consisting of a battery of seven boilers and a pump room, was added. This system was set up to serve eighty-three buildings on post, operations from November until April, with a fuel consumption of sixteen to twenty-five tons of coal per day (Journal of the U.S. Cavalry Assoc., p. 118). Thus, there are radiators throughout the structure. This central system was later replaced during the early twentieth century by individual heating systems in each building. Quarters # 25-A is now heated by an "American Radiator Company, No. 2 Ideal Sectional Boiler." Quarters # 25-B is heated by a "Kewanee Boiler, Type R."
 - b. Lighting: In the dining room of # 25-A to either side of the doorway into the living room is a single light, brass sconce.
 - c. Plumbing: There is an original, claw foot, cast iron bath tub in the basement bathroom in both # 25-A and # 25-B.
- D. Site: Building # 25 faces south onto Sheridan Avenue. It rests on a flat, tree shaded lot, at the east end of a row of double officer's quarters (See HABS photo # KS-54-9). Quarters were constructed only on the north side of Sheridan Avenue, giving the occupants a clear view of the Cavalry Parade Field (See Habs photo # KS-54-8). The row that is now Sheridan Avenue, in fact, was part of the original plan of the fort which was laid out in a rectangle with the current parade

field in the center, officers's quarters along the north and south sides and barracks along the east and west sides (see Supplemental Material # 6). Due to various changes over the years, however, this original plan is no longer apparent. This old scheme was changed in the 1880's when the post was enlarged and separate areas set up for the Cavalry and Artillery branches. The original rectangle of the frontier era then became the Cavalry Parade Field and residences like Building # 25 were added (see Supplemental Material # 7). The plan of the present main post area was prepared by Capt. George E. Pond, Assistant Quartermaster General, assigned to the project by General Philip H. Sheridan (Journal of the U.S. Cavalry Assoc., p. 118).

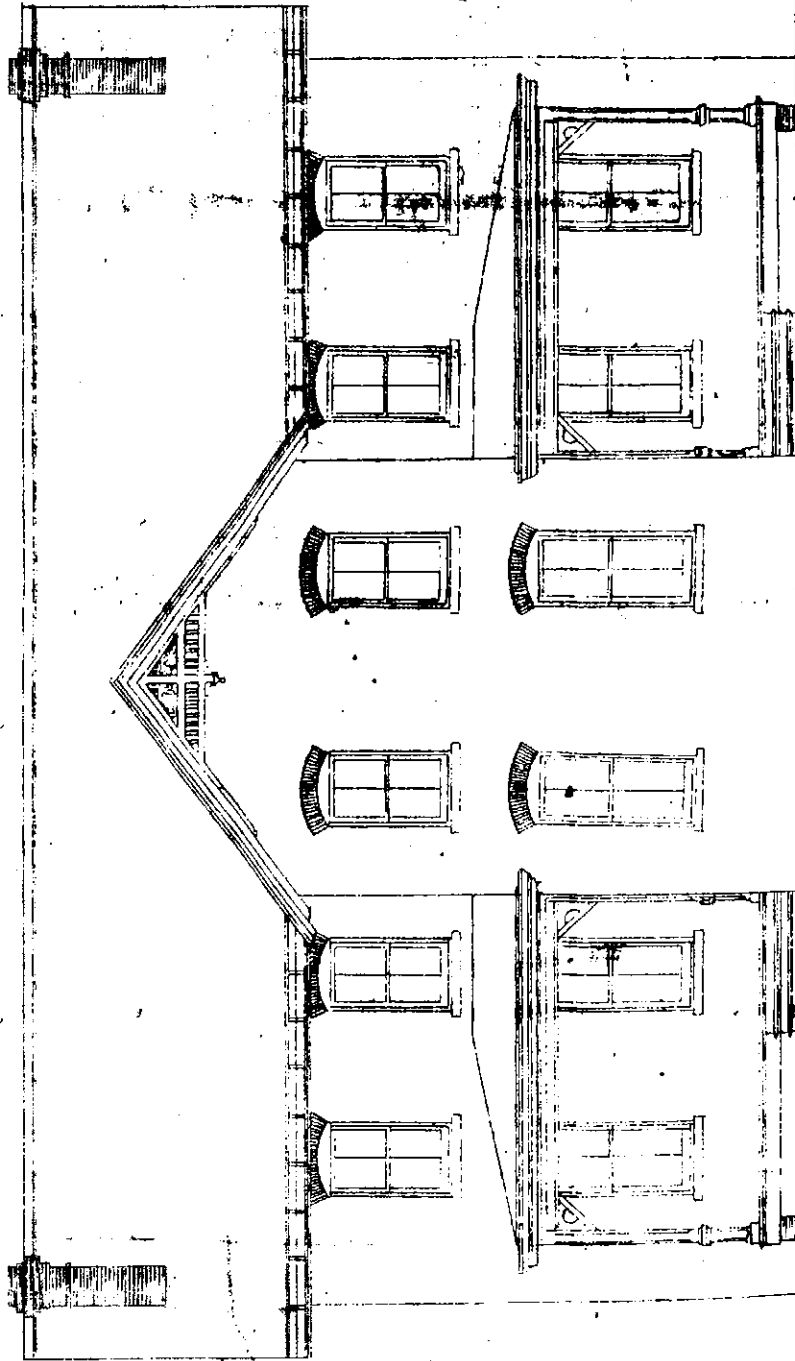
PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: See section I., part 5.
- B. Early Views: There is a circa. 1930 Photograph of Building # 25 in the Engineer's historical Record Book, D.E.H. There is also a photograph of its twin, Building # 22, in the Pennell Collection at the Spencer Library at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.
- C. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and unpublished sources:
 - a. Engineer's Historic Record Book, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Riley, Kansas.
 - b. Plan of the early Fort Riley, 1867. Plans and Drawings Collection, U.S. Cavalry Museum, Fort Riley, Kansas.
 - c. Real Property Cards, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Riley, Kansas.
 - 2. Secondary and published sources:
 - a. Davis and Geary county, Clippings, Vol. 2, 1883-1896, Kansas State Historical Society Library, Topeka.
 - b. Fort Riley, Clippings, Vol. 1, 1855-1941, Kansas State Historical Society Library.
 - c. Pride, W.F. The History of Fort Riley, 1926.
 - d. U.S. Cavalry Association, Journal of, Vol. 13, 1902-1903.

Prepared By:

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Historic American Buildings Survey
Summer 1985

D. Supplemental Material
1. Front Elevation

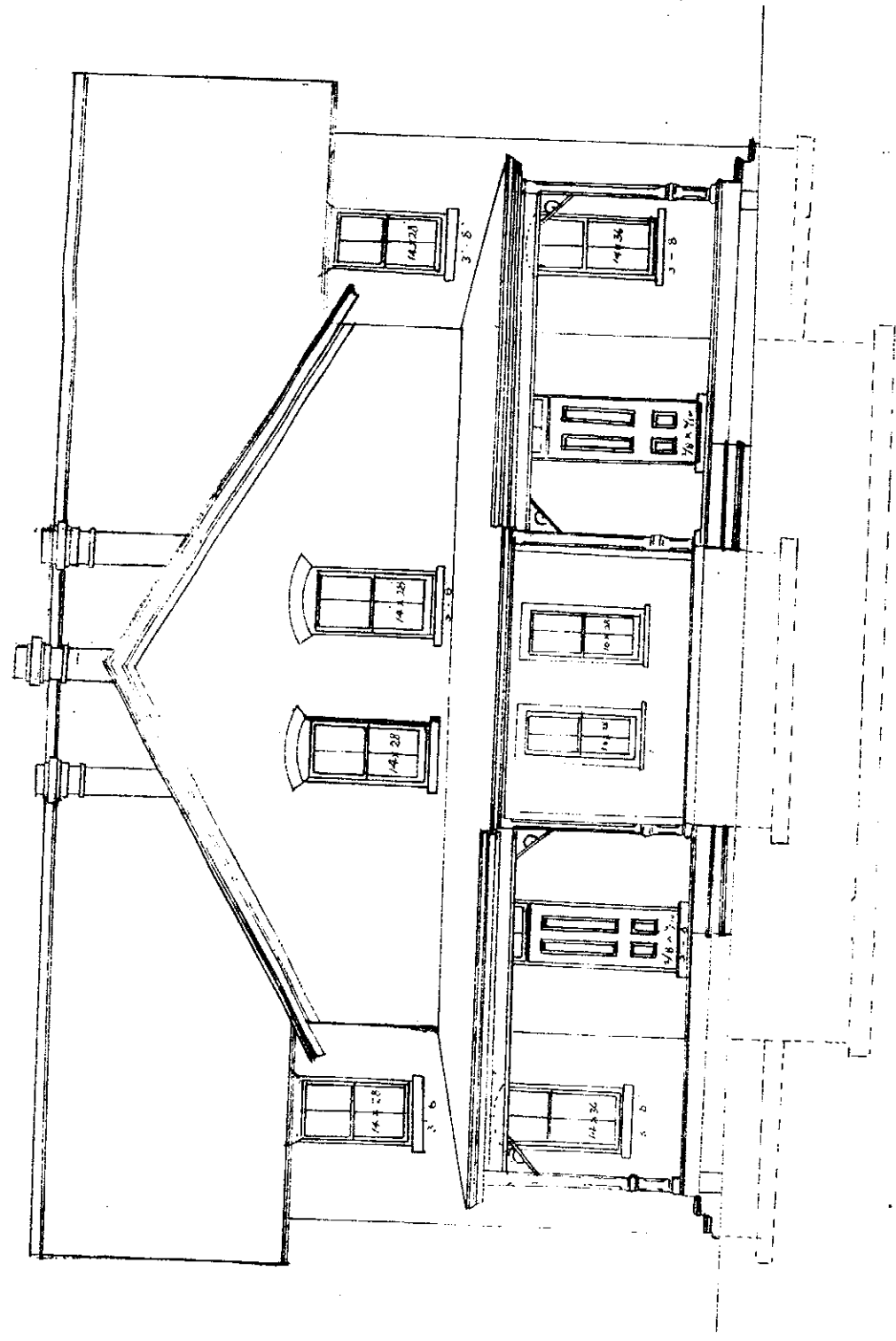


FRONT ELEVATION.

Scale 1/8" = 1'
Sheet 1
U File A4-7

File 1

2. Rear Elevation

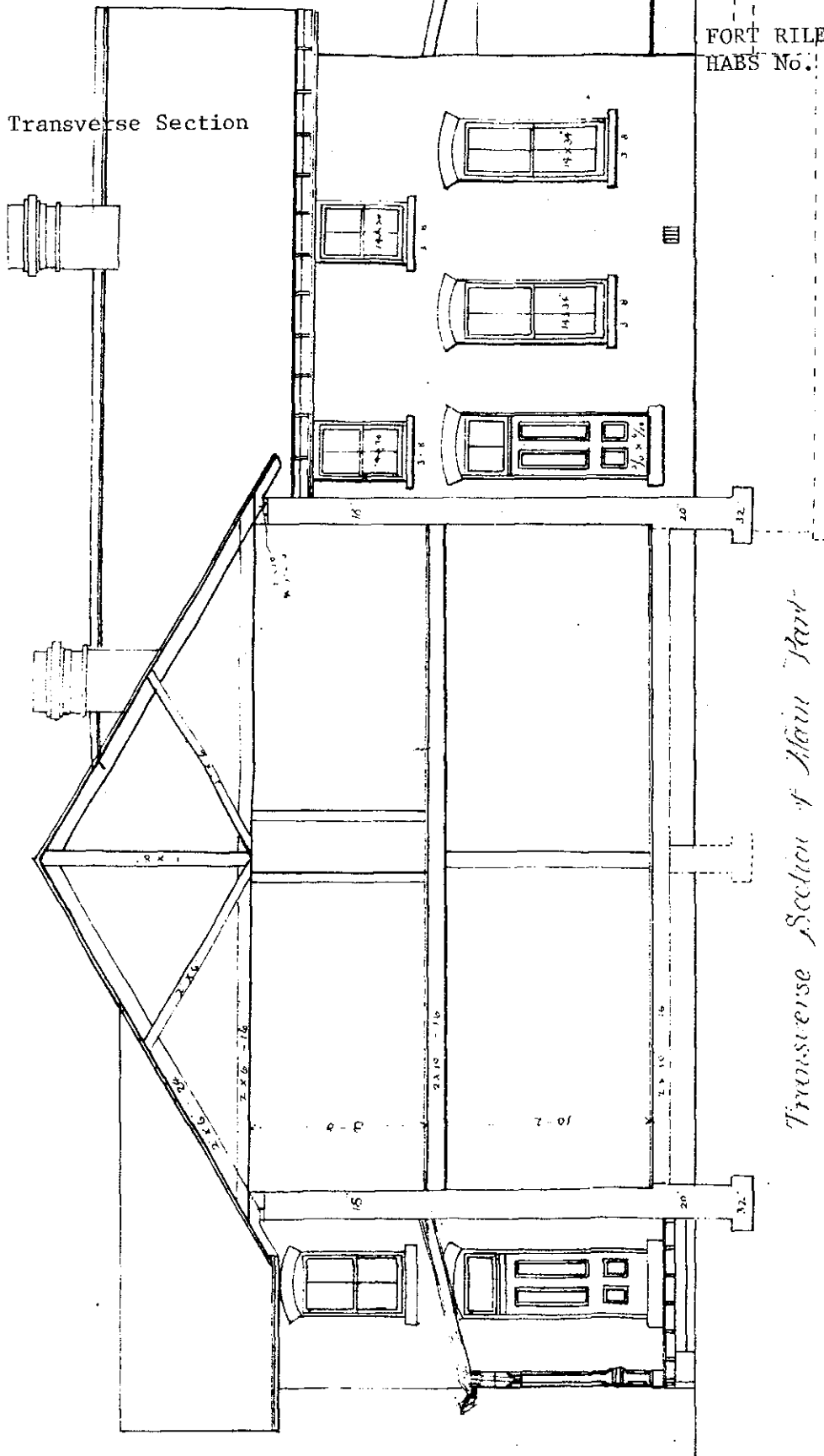


Rear Elevation

Scale 1/8" = 1'

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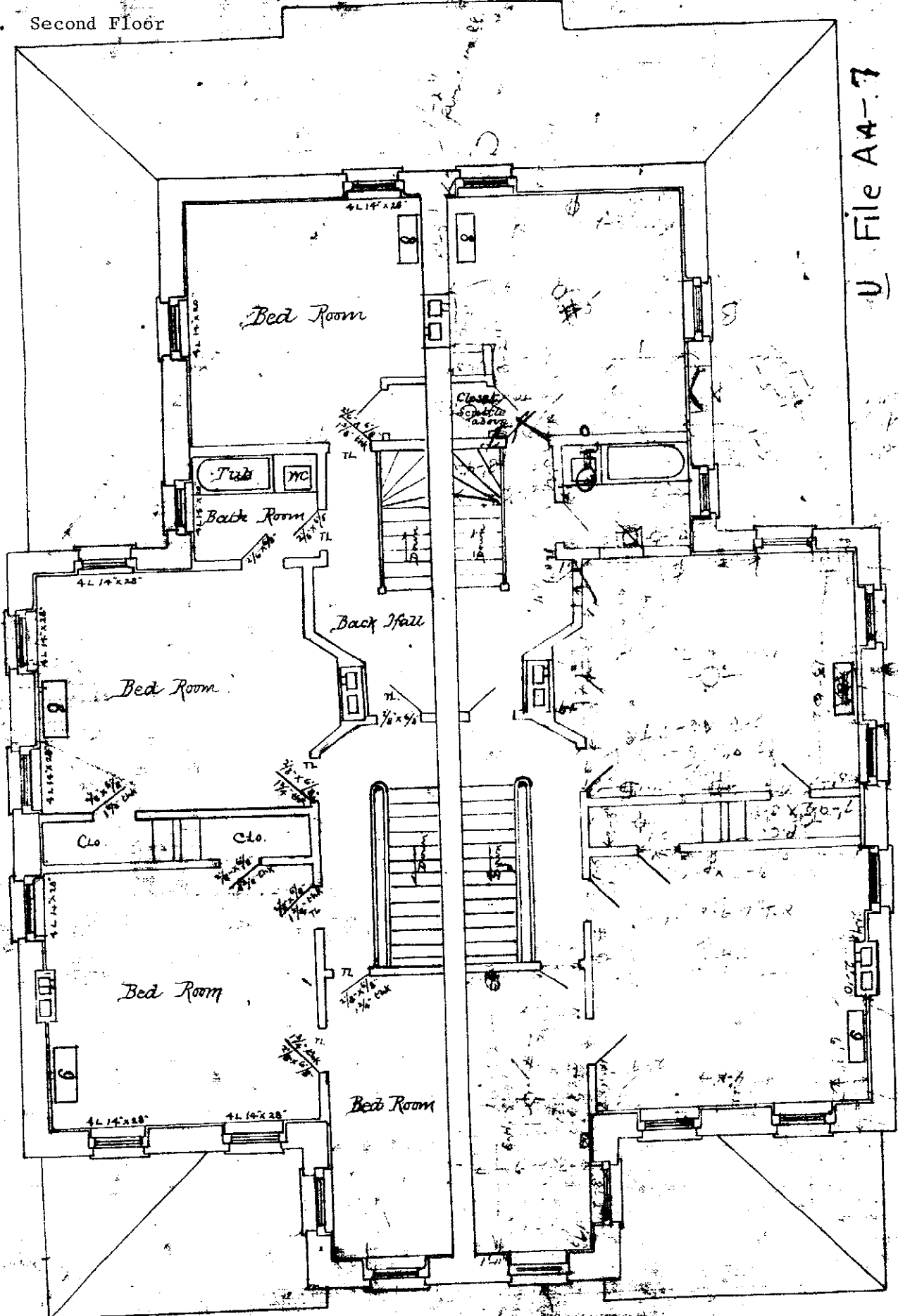
3. Transverse Section



Transverse Section of Main Part

Scale 1/8" = 1'

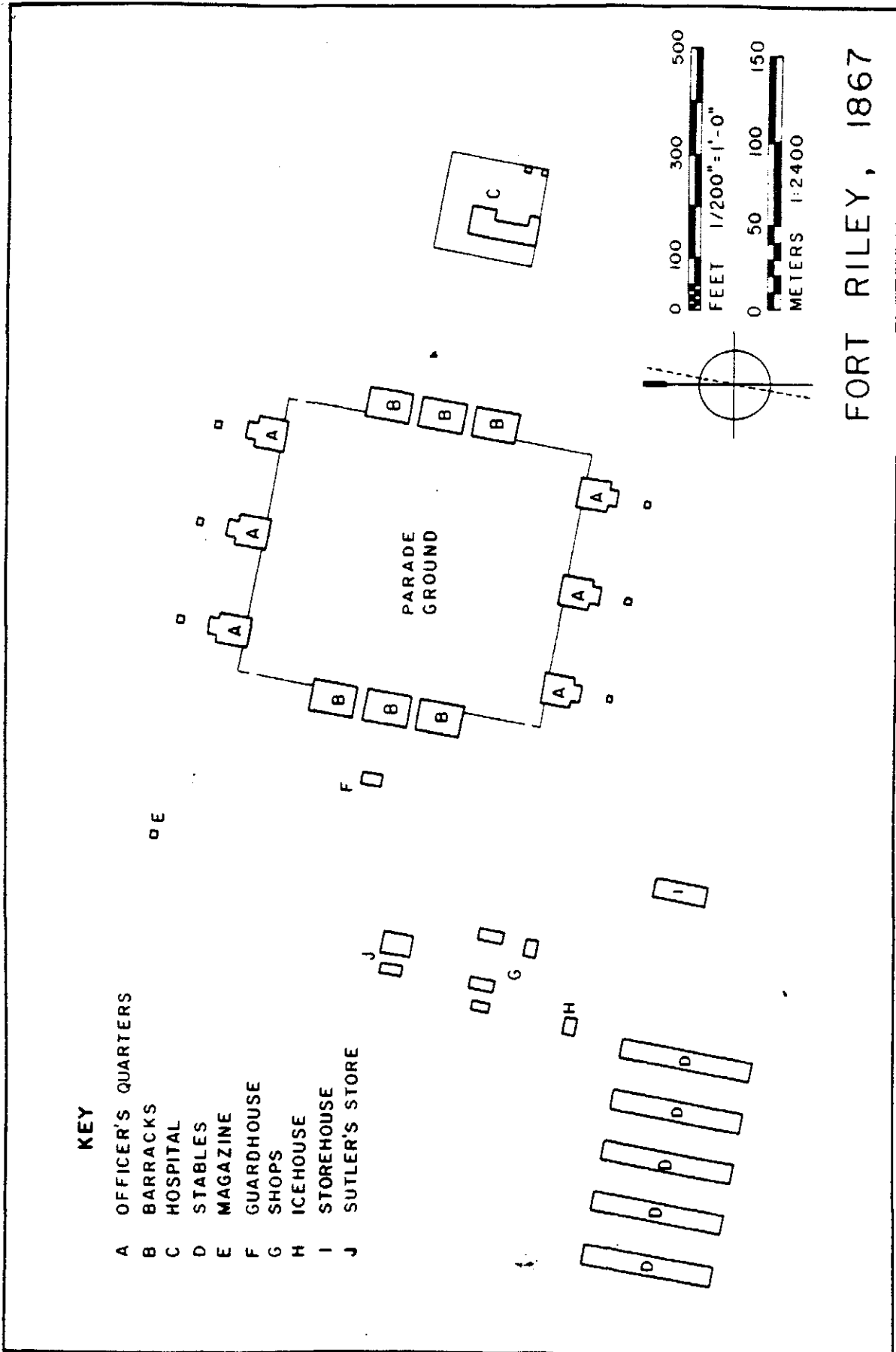
5. Second Floor



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W. L. ...
Office ...

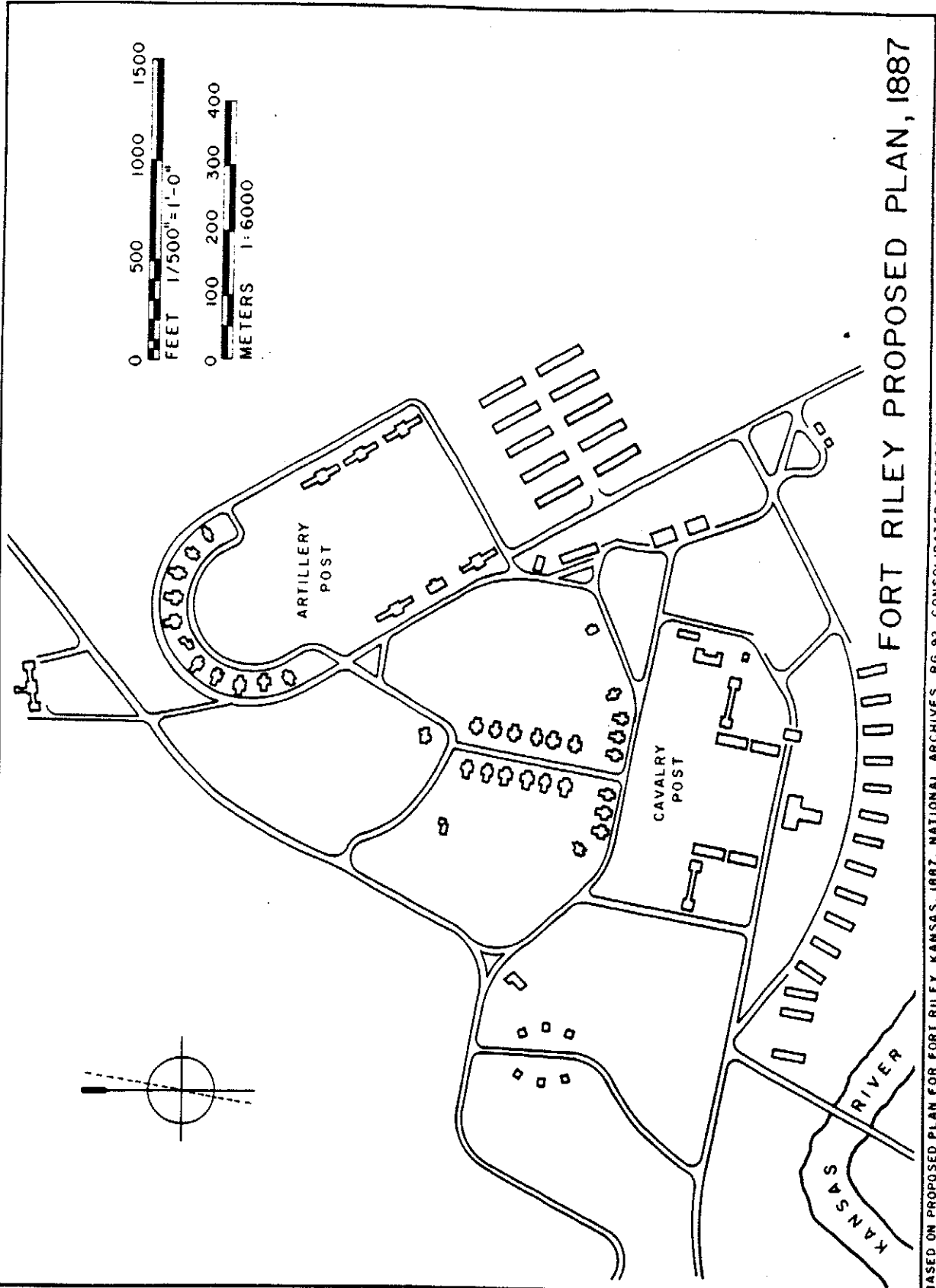
6. Fort Riley, Early Plan, 1867



BASED ON GROUND PLAN OF FORT RILEY, KANSAS, 1867, NATIONAL ARCHIVES, RG 77, DRAWER 29.

7. Fort Riley, Proposed Plan, 1887

PROPOSED PLAN, 1887 AND SITE PLAN, 1985



FORT RILEY PROPOSED PLAN, 1887

BASED ON PROPOSED PLAN FOR FORT RILEY, KANSAS, 1887. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, RG 92, CONSOLIDATED CORRESPONDENCE FILES, BOX 915.

8. Pennell Photograph, Sheridan
and Forsythe Avenues with # 22
Sheridan Avenue in the foreground



PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service in agreement with the post commander of Fort Riley, Kansas, and the headquarters of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. The project was completed under the general supervision of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the HABS/HAER Division. Sally Kress Tompkins served as Program Coordinator and Robie S. Lange as Project Leader. The Field Supervisor was James A. Glass (historian, Cornell University). The project historians were Catherine Crawford (University of Maryland) and Joseph Rodriguez (University of California). Large format photography was conducted by Mike Whye. Documentation was prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by Catherine Crawford.