

U.S. Military Academy - Officer's Quarters No. 34

HABS No. NY-5708-33

(Family Housing)

West side of Thayer Road, north of Buffalo Soldier Field

U.S. Military Academy

West Point

Orange County

New York

HABS  
NY  
36-6280,  
1/33-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - OFFICER'S QUARTERS NO. 34  
(FAMILY HOUSING)

LOCATION: West side of Thayer Road, north of Buffalo Soldier Field, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USGS, West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.586930.4581250.

PRESENT OWNER AND OCCUPANT: U. S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE: Family Housing - Colonel.

SIGNIFICANCE: Quarters #34 is an example of the highly successful officers' quarters designed for the U.S. Military Academy by the office of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson. Its character, neo gothic, reflects the general theme of their work at the Academy, with exceptional American Arts and Crafts interiors.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1905 - 1910
2. Architect: Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, Architects, Boston and New York.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Broderick & Wind Engineering and Construction Company. The construction was completed by the U.S. Fidelity and Guaranty Company, a bonding company, after a default and delay. The bonding company contract is dated September 20, 1906. The Mitchell Vance Company supplied the original light fixtures (Annual Report 1908).
5. Original plan and construction: Quarters No. 34 was part of a group consisting of Quarters Nos. 21, 25, 34, 42, 45 and 48. The total cost of these quarters was \$270,292.70.
6. Alterations and additions: There have been no major alterations or additions.

B. Historical Context: Quarters No. 34 was one of many sets of quarters designed by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson as part of the

early twentieth century expansion of the Academy. These particular quarters were intended for Captains and Lieutenants and were approved in 1904.

For the historical and architectural context of this building within the overall development of West Point, see HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2: "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy".

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Quarters No. 34 is representative of the work of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson at the U.S. Military Academy in the first decade of the twentieth century. The brick exterior walls with limestone detailing and painted wood trim were designed to create a Tudor Gothic appearance that would be distinctive on a campus that, at that time, was composed of a wide variety of styles. Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson were, without doubt, the most prominent architectural firm at West Point in this century. Their major building campaign at the Academy is a clear reflection of the "medievalist" craftsman philosophy of Ralph Adams Cram. This is seen not only in their other buildings at West Point, but also in their work nationally.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimension: Quarters No. 34 is essentially a rectangular building that steps forward in a series of shallow projections from the center to the end of the structure. The overall dimensions are 125'-2" by 40'-4". The three 2 1/2-story cross gable units on the facade (east), and the two-story bay window units help create a sense of verticality appropriate to a "gothic" design. The elevation of the building on the terrace, created by a 15' retaining wall to the east, heightens the impressiveness of the building's exterior. Quarters No. 34 has twelve bays along the front facade and two bays on the north and south facades.
2. Foundations: Concrete was used for the footings, while the foundation walls are stone below grade and brick above.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are red brick laid in a Flemish bond with brick, limestone, and limestone detailing.

Limestone is used for the sills of the windows, while splayed brick lintels composed of both headers and stretchers complete

the exterior window detailing, except over the bay windows. Additionally, limestone is used as a trim material for the "buttress" elements in the verandas, and for the corbels supporting the wood lintel spanning the veranda openings. Bluestone is used for the parapets over the buttresses and for the exterior stairs.

The only exterior wall embellishment is a brick segmental arch over a center two-story paired window grouping.

4. Structural systems, framing: The walls are load-bearing brick faced with brick on the exterior, and non-load-bearing wood stud partition walls covered with plaster and/or wood paneling on the interior. Floors are supported by wood joists, and the roofing system is composed of wood rafters. Steel beams are used where unusual loading conditions exist, primarily to transfer loads to the exterior walls.
5. Porches, verandas, buttresses, chimneys: Two rectangular verandas, 24'-6" x 12'-8", are located at the northeast and southeast corners of Quarters No. 34. Each is 2 x 1 bays, and is incorporated into the roof sweep of the main part of the structure. Brick "buttress" elements with limestone and bluestone trim exist on the verandas and add to the medieval character of the building. The verandas have recently been converted into screen porches through the addition of aluminum screens. The floors are concrete, while the ceilings are 1" x 3" beaded wood tongue-and-groove paneling.

Two rear porches correspond to the two rear entries and have heavy chamfered posts and solid wood brackets supporting slate covered shed roofs. Plain, square handrails and balusters complete the rear porch detailing.

There are four brick chimneys: two in the rear wall at the north and south ends of the building, and two located just behind the main gable ridge in the same position as the two-story bay windows.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: There are six doorways: two main entries, one each in the two major cross gable units; a French door leading from each veranda into the building; and two rear entries flanking the central rear projection.

The main entry doors are oak, 3'-6" x 7'-8" x 2 1/2", with three panels below, leaded quarrel light glazing above and are rounded at the top to follow the doorway arch.

The French doors, 2'0" x 7'-0" x 2 1/2", have three vertically arranged glass panels.

The oak rear doors measure 3'-0" x 7'-3" x 2" and have three panels below and leaded quarrel light glazing above.

- b. Windows: The windows are primarily one-over-one double-hung wood sash. The exceptions include leaded quarrel light casement windows corresponding to the main stairway of the two main cross gables; leaded quarrel light windows (casement on the third floor, one-over-one double-hung wood sash on the second floor) in the central gable of the facade (single pane has replaced the diamond panes in the upper left window); the basement, which has pivoting wood casement windows with three lights in the front, one-over-one double-hung wood sash in the central projection in the rear and nine-light pivoting wood casements elsewhere in the rear. The window arrangements are in vertical bays on all facades.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with multi-colored slate placed in a random pattern.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves are made of wood. A narrow brick cornice is created by two projecting brick courses below the connection of roof and walls.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Quarters No. 34 is a duplex with two identical units arranged symmetrically about an east-west party wall. Quarters No. 34B was surveyed for the purposes of this report. In this unit, Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson created a residence that has four rooms flanking a hall/stairway that extends from the front to the rear of the unit on the first and second floors. A parlor, library, dining room and kitchen are on the first floor; four bedrooms and two baths are on the second floor; and three bedrooms, a bath and a trunk room exist on the third floor along a "Z" shaped hallway serviced by the rear stairs only.

There is a strong flow of open space on the first level. A large main hallway leads to both the parlor and dining room through two 6'-0" x 7'-0" openings. The library and rear hall also have access to this main hall, while the kitchen is reached through the rear hall and through a swinging door to the dining room.

The second and third levels, with smaller doorways that are well separated, are much more private in plan.

2. Stairways: Two stairways service Quarters No. 34B. The main stair connects the first and second levels. It is a "U" return type stair situated in a 10'-1" x 8'-6" space with a carved oak newel post; alternating square oak balusters and larger, rectangular oak cutout balusters; an oak handrail; and oak risers and treads. The rear stairway, connecting the basement to the third

floor, is also a "U" return type stair, in a 9'-5" x 5'-0" space, with plain wood elements: posts, balusters, and handrail and wood risers and treads.

3. Flooring: Flooring is oak on the first floor, heart pine on the second and third floors and, except for a wood floor in the laundry, concrete in the basement.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: There is a great variety of wall finishes on the first floor. The entry vestibule and main hall have a 7' wainscoting with 1" x 6" at 2' on center; and the dining room has a 7' wainscoting with oak paneling below. Plaster walls exist behind the woodwork. The kitchen has been remodeled.

The walls on the second and third floors are plaster, while the basement has plaster, brick and stone walls painted white.

Ceilings are plaster throughout.

5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Quarters No. 34B has four-panel wood doors measuring 2'-10" x 7'-0" x 1 3/4". Plain wood trim is used on the first floor, while beaded wood trim is used on the second, third and basement levels.
6. Mechanical Equipment:
  - a. Heating: Steam radiators provide heat for the building.
  - b. Lighting: Incandescent lighting is used throughout.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Quarters No. 34 is located at the intersection of Thayer Road and Swift Road. The building fronts on Thayer Road, and is oriented east towards the Hudson River. A terrace to the front, created by a 15' granite retaining wall, separates the building from Thayer Road to the east of Thayer Road. The heavily wooded land drops off sharply to the Hudson River to the north, up a slight rise, is Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson's Quarters No. 32 (HABS No. NY-5708-32). To the west, across the rear service road, the land slopes gently upward and is covered with a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees. The site slopes gently downward to the south to Swift Road and Buffalo Soldier Field beyond.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Original ink-on-linen working drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy. Subsequent alteration drawings are also found there.
- B. Early Views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. Some of these are reproduced in the Grashof and Lange's volumes of this project.
- C. Bibliography:
1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:  
  
Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. See bibliographic essay in the Lange volume of this project for a listing of record groups.
  2. Secondary and Published Sources:  
  
Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy Archives.  
  
Grashof, Bethanie C. - "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and Selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York", Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983, HABS No. NY-5708.  
  
Lange, Robie S. - "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy", Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.
- D. Likely Sources not yet Investigated: The Records of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is part of a multi-year project sponsored by the National Park Service and the United States Military Academy, explained in the United States Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 1, "Methodology". This written documentation was prepared by Travis C. McDonald, Jr. and Timothy Lindblad, architectural historians, in 1982-1985 based on fieldwork conducted in 1982 and 1984.