

U.S. Military Academy - Officer's Quarters
South side of Washington Road, east of
intersection with Mills Road
U.S. Military Academy
West Point
Orange County
New York

HABS No. NY-5708-41

HABS
NY
36-6280
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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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HABS No. NY-5708-41
U.S.M.A. No. 109

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - OFFICER'S QUARTERS NO. 109

LOCATION: South side of Washington Road, east of intersection with Mills Road, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USGS, West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.586740.4582820.

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

PRESENT USE: Family Housing - Company Grade and Warrant Officer.

SIGNIFICANCE: Quarters No. 109 is a strong example of late 19th century vernacular architecture. As an example of an American building trend of the period, Quarters No. 109 represents the eclectic nature of the architectural development at West Point in the last part of the 19th century and is an example of a standardized Quartermaster design for the time.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1875 (Williams, "Facilities Report").
2. Architect: Presumably, this was a standard Army Quartermaster design.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Presumably, the post quartermaster's office.
5. Original plans and construction: Originally designed for two families, the quarters were converted to a three family dwelling and later into a four family dwelling. "The ca. 1903 photograph shown in Pl. 109-a shows the quarters with 2-over-2 double-hung sash rather than the present 6-over-6 light sash, typical of earlier architectural styles. Shutters are also present. The present crisp, white trim is generally inappropriate as well. The historic photograph shows the trim painted a much darker color, possibly to resemble the color of brownstone, as was typical in the latter part of the nineteenth century." (Grashof)

Williams's "Facilities Report" of 1889 gives the following room sizes and uses. For "Quarters 43" the first floor contained a front parlor, back parlor, and dining room; the second floor contained four bedrooms and a bathroom; the third floor contained four bedrooms; and the basement contained a kitchen, laundry, storeroom and water closet.

"Quarters 45" contained on the first floor a parlor, a dining room, an office and a kitchen; the second floor contained two bedrooms, a dressing room, a library and a bathroom; the third floor contained three bedrooms and a sewing room.

6. Alterations and additions: "On the exterior, Quarters 109 has changed very little since it was completed in 1875" (Williams, "Facilities Report," pp. 66-68). Small single-story frame additions and a porch have been added on the west side and at the rear of the building. The second floor center windows of the south (rear) elevation have been converted to doors.

"Despite the drastic modifications made to the plan, most of the significant architectural features remain." (Grashof)

- B. Historical Context: "A significant feature of this building is that it may be an early example of Standard Quartermaster housing. It bears a striking resemblance to quarters built in 1890 at Fort Wood, N.Y. and on Governors Island, N.Y. Though the quarters at these last two locations were of frame construction, a comparison of Quarters 109 at West Point with prints of the original Quartermaster design, located at the National Archives, points out more than a coincidental similarity of plan and detail." (Grashof)

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. 109 is representative of late 19th century eclecticism and of a standard Quartermaster design. It borrows elements from the Greek Revival, Gothic and Italianate styles and combines them in a visually impressive whole. Although the stylistic treatment varies, the building is unified by the strong brick overall massing. This structure is somewhat unique now at the Academy, yet it is representative of a national trend.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in fair condition. "Serious maintenance problems have occurred because of the leaky roof and broken steam pipes. Quarters 109C are vacant due to the failure of the plaster ceiling. Broken steam pipes underneath the floor of Quarters 109B have severely damaged much of the wood trim in the living room." (Grashof)

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Quarters No. 109 is cross shaped in plan, with Greek Revival gable ends to the south, east and west and a Gothic Revival gable peak to the north. Its overall length from north to south is approximately 82' while its overall width is around 54'. The central mass of the structure is approximately 40' x 54', while the Gothic peak caps a 23' x 11' projection and the rear Greek Revival gable caps a 40' x 30' wing.

2. Foundation: The foundation walls are a random range fieldstone with a red sandstone watertable.
3. Walls: The exterior walls of Quarters No. 109 are red brick laid in a five course American bond with red sandstone sills, arches and lintels. While most windows are topped by a molded cornice red sandstone lintel, the window in the gable peak has a segmentally arched red sandstone window cap.
4. Structural systems: Load-bearing brick walls with brick facing are used on the exterior, while wood joists are used to support the floors and wood rafters are used for the roofing system.
5. Porches, chimneys: The building features a front porch with Gothic details. Its wood floor is elevated above grade and its flat roof is supported by chamfered wood posts and long brackets with cut outs. The railing is machined, while the balusters are square.

There are four brick chimneys on the building: two each incorporated into the east and west end walls. The tall chimney masses extending above the roof add to the Gothic Revival feeling of the building.

6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Two main exterior entry doors lead from the front porch into the Quarters. They are wood with four panels below and a large light of glass above. Two small rear wood doors lead from the second floor to an elevated deck.
 - b. Windows: Except for paired casement windows with ten lights each in the gable peak, the windows are six-over-six double-hung sash throughout.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with gray slate.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The wood eaves have a heavy wood cornice and large Italianate brackets.
 - c. Dormers: There are six gable roofed, slate sided dormers. Two flank the entry gable, two face east, and two face west on the roof of the rear wing.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: Quarters No. 109 contains four dwelling units, two on the basement and first levels, and two on the second and third levels, separated by a central north-south party wall. Rooms are arranged along the outside walls with a hall/stairway along the party wall. Quarters No. 109C was surveyed for the purposes of this report.

This unit has a living room, den, dining room and kitchen off of the hall on its first level with a bathroom at the front end of the hall. Above these rooms are three bedrooms, a workroom and a bathroom.

2. Stairway: One stairway services Quarters No. 109C, leading from the first to the second levels in the center of the unit. It is a straight run stair with wood risers and treads, turned posts and balusters and a curved handrail.
3. Flooring: Heart pine is used for the flooring. In the main entry hall of the building, the floor wood alternates from dark to light, creating a striped effect.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of Quarters No. 109C are plaster covered with wallpaper throughout.

A dropped ceiling has been added but high plaster ceilings with a broad cornice beneath exist in the main entry hall downstairs.

5. Openings:
 - a. Doors: Four-panel wood doors with plain wood trim are typical to Quarters No. 109C. The doorways between the hall and the living room and between the dining room and the den have recessed paneling.
6. Built-in features: Three carved marble mantelpieces in the living room, den and dining room are the most distinctive features.
7. 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. 109 is situated just west of "Professors Row," on the corner of Washington and Mills Roads. It is oriented to the north, fronting on Washington Road, with a narrow grass covered lawn in front. The land rises sharply to the west to Mills Road, then rises sharply in a moderately tree covered hillside. To the south, the land slopes gently downward, while to the east the land slopes down to Professors Row Quarters No. 107 (HABS No. NY-5708-6). A brick wall runs between the two buildings. Deciduous and coniferous trees are scattered about the site.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: There are no known original drawings. Subsequent alteration drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy.
- B. Early Views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections.

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.

Captain Charles W. Williams, "Post Facilities Report," 1889. U.S. Military Academy Archives.

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.

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.