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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

APR 19 1991 NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Tampa Free Public Library other names/site number Exceptional Children Education Center 8HT 126

2. Location

street & number 102 East Seventh Avenue city, town Tampa state Florida code FL county Hillsborough code 057 zip code 33602

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Suzanne P. Walker (deputy) Date: 4/12/91

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Date: State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: Date of Action: Entered in the National Register: 5/16/91

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Library

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, Concrete

walls Brick

roof Clay Tile

other Masonry Portico

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1915-1925

Significant Dates

1915

1917

1925

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

James, Fred J. (Architect)

Aulick, Bates and Hundall (Builders)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property Less than one

**UTM References**

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Livonia Dobbs Cline Subdivision, Lots 5, 6, 7, and 8; Block 2

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The above boundary description contains all physical resources associated with the Old Tampa Free Public Library.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist  
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date \_\_\_\_\_  
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333  
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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Description

Summary Description

The Old Tampa Free Library at 102 Seventh Avenue is a one-story, T-plan, masonry building located in the Tampa Heights Subdivision just north of downtown Tampa. The Classical Revival style structure is constructed of yellow and brown brick and rests upon a rusticated granite basement. The building is capped by a truncated hip roof surfaced with clay tile. The structure is seven bays wide by three bays deep and features a slightly protruding entrance pavilion on the main (south) facade. This pavilion is complemented by a short wing found on the north elevation of the library. The major decorative features of the building are concentrated in the grand entrance bay which consists of massive brick pilasters flanking paired Tuscan columns that frame the main entranceway. The pilasters and columns support a wide entablature surmounted by a massive stepped parapet. A flared granite stairway leads to the main entrance and focuses attention on the center of the facade. The other bays of the building are defined by large 1/1 light double hung sash windows surmounted by two light transoms and radiating jack arches.

Supporting Narrative

Classical features contained in the grand central entrance bay, other than the brick pilasters and Tuscan columns that support the cast stone entablature and stepped parapet, are the triangular pediment supported by consoles over the entry doors. Above the pediment is an arched transom with latticed window lights. Running along the juncture of the exterior walls and roof is a cast stone entablature and cornice decorated with antefixes that embraces the side elevations but does not extend to the rear of the building. In the center of the stepped parapet is a stele crest crowned with a palmette and decorated with garlands and swags. In the center of the panel framed by the crest is an open book, executed in bas-relief, containing the initials "T F L" (Tampa Free Library) in raised script. The words "FREE LIBRARY" are inscribed in the frieze above the entrance.

Dividing the front elevation into three bays on either side of the entry are large 1/1 double hung sash windows with two-light transoms and flat arch radiating brick lintels and marble sills. Two six light wood casement windows with cast stone block and pilaster surrounds flank the entry between the paired Tuscan

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columns and brick pilasters. At the basement level, inset within the granite basement, are paired 1/1 double hung sash windows aligned with the first floor windows above. Two small six light casement windows flank the granite stairs. On both sidewalls of the granite stair lie round arched openings in the basement with decorative metal grilles.

The east and west elevations are similar in detailing to the front elevation, each with three bays of large 1/1 light double hung sash windows with 2-light transoms at the first floor and paired 1/1 light double hung sash windows at the basement level. At present, the basement windows are covered with plywood for protection. Both the granite basement and ornate cornice and entablature terminate at the north elevation of the building. The exterior walls of the building are constructed of buff colored brown brick laid in common bond with headers laid on every seventh course.

The eastern end of the north wall of the central block of the library has four large windows, while the western end has only three. The western end of the north elevation is unusual in that its bays contain 3/3 light double hung sash windows with 3-light transoms. Separating these two sets of window bays is a central wing that extends north from the main body of the building. The north wall of the wing has six window bays in both the basement and the main stories. At the northeast juncture of the rear wing and central block is a small, modern carport that apparently replaced an original service entrance canopy that occupied the same location. This structure consists of a simple corrugated metal shed roof supported by metal posts.

The exterior of the building remains in good condition. The few exterior alterations include a number of windows on the north elevation which have been boarded up or covered by metal security screens, the replacement of the wood double door entry with aluminum and glass, and the missing globe lights that once stood on the sidewalls of the granite steps. The latter were cast iron fixtures that held four globes each.

Interior

The library's main entry foyer lies within the central bay of the south elevation. The foyer has sixteen-foot ceilings and is flanked on the west by an open stairwell with wood railing and metal balusters that leads to the basement. To the east of the foyer one finds the public restrooms. The interior finishes

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Description

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include plaster walls and ceilings, decorative wall cornices, marble and wood baseboards, and wood chair rails.

Just north of the entry foyer is the original librarian's desk and reception area. Just north of the desk is the two level bookstack that occupies the north wing of the building. Access to the upper level is gained by a mezzanine floor. A glass and wood panelled audio room (a modern addition) subdivides the bookstacks on the first floor. A metal staircase to the east of the stacks leads to the mezzanine and to the basement. Reading rooms are found east and west of the reception area. Both rooms are three bays wide and two bays deep.

To the north of the east reading room are two offices and a staff restroom. The offices retain most of their original finishes. To the north of the west reading room is a large meeting room with its original hardwood floors still intact. The basement level of the library was subdivided in recent years into a variety of storage spaces and meetings rooms. Interior finishes are plaster walls, 10-foot high ceilings, concrete floors, plain wood baseboards and simple window trim.

The interior of the library is in fairly good condition. Modern changes include the installation of fluorescent light fixtures, vinyl floor covering, and the audio room in the north wing. Original bathroom fixtures still remain throughout the building.

Although the Old Tampa Free Library is seventy-four years old, it remains in very good condition. Original windows exist, though most ground floor windows have been boarded. No alterations or significant additions have been made except for metal grilles placed over several rear elevation windows for protection against vandals. Presently the building is vacant.

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Photographs

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1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. View Looking North
7. Photo No. 1 of 8

1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. View Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 2 of 8

1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. View Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 3 of 8

1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. View Looking West
7. Photo No. 4 of 8

1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. Interior, View Looking North
7. Photo No. 5 of 8

1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. Interior, View Looking South
7. Photo No. 6 of 8



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Photographs

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1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. Interior, View Looking West
7. Photo No. 7 of 8

1. Old Tampa Free Public Library
2. 102 E. Seventh Ave., Tampa (Hillsborough County), FL
3. Lori Thompson
4. 1989
5. Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board
6. Interior, View Looking Southeast
7. Photo No. 8 of 8

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Significance

Summary Statement

The Old Tampa Free Public Library is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by fulfilling criteria A and C in the areas of Education and Architecture. The period of significance for this facility extends from its date of completion in 1915 to 1925 when the annexation of the neighboring community of West Tampa provided the city of Tampa with a second municipal library. The building was constructed with funds provided by the Carnegie Foundation and is significant for the role it played in enhancing the educational opportunities of Tampa residents during the early decades of the twentieth century. The library is a fine example of the adaptation of Classical Revival style, planning, and decorative details to a small public building. The structure also reflects the rapid physical development of the city of Tampa prior to 1920 and demonstrates the effort of the community to provide its citizens with cultural and educational amenities.

Historical Context

The City of Tampa is located in the western section of central Florida, approximately 170 miles southwest of Jacksonville. It is situated at the mouth of the Hillsborough River on Tampa Bay, an inlet to the Gulf of Mexico. It occupies almost all of the Hillsborough Peninsula, spreading north along the Hillsborough River for several miles. The city is the seat of Hillsborough County, a leading phosphate shipping port and a major commercial and banking center. Manufacturing has played a significant role in the local economy since 1885 when Vincent Ybor Martinez moved his cigar manufacturing operations from Key West to Tampa. Soon Tampa became the largest center of cigar manufacturing in the United States, employing thousands of workers.

Prior to the introduction of the cigar industry to the community, Tampa had been only an obsolete military post and an associated village with a population of a few hundred people. The industry initiated a phenomenal period of growth that caused the population to increase by several thousand persons each year over the next two decades. Cigar manufacturing also dramatically changed the ethnic character of the city by introducing large communities of persons of Hispanic and Italian heritage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though only a few factories remain in operation today, Tampa remains an important

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manufacturing, commercial shipping, and financial center. Tampa presently has a population of more than 300,000 in a county of about 700,000 residents. The nearby beaches, amusement parks, sporting facilities and mild climate attract thousands of tourists to the area each year. The tourist influx adds to the economic vitality of the area.

The Development Of Tampa's Free Libraries

The rapid growth of Tampa at the beginning of the twentieth century prompted the city's leading citizens to improve the educational facilities available to its constantly increasing citizenry. Plans were drafted for the construction of a number of new schools; however, some of the civic-minded residents of the community felt that the public school system should be supplemented by creating libraries that would make books of educational and literary interest available to adults and to those children who wished to improve upon the knowledge acquired in the classroom.

The attempt to provide a public library for the city of Tampa was initiated in 1900 by Mrs. Willie M. Lowry, one of the city's leading club women, who wrote to steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie requesting funds for the construction of such a public facility. Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) had donated millions of dollars for the construction of free public libraries in the United States and throughout the English speaking world. Though virtually nonexistent prior to 1880, the free public library became almost as common a part of the American landscape as the schoolhouse or church, thanks to Carnegie's generosity. Carnegie had begun his life in poverty but eventually rose to become one of the world's richest men. In 1865, he founded the Carnegie Steel Corporation, which he sold in 1901 for approximately \$500,000,000. Upon his death in 1919 he had dispersed over \$300,000,000 of his personal fortune for charitable causes and civic enterprises, much of the money being used for the construction of public libraries.

In 1902, the Carnegie Corporation agreed to build a library in Tampa at a cost of \$25,000, provided that the city would contribute a construction site and provide a sum of \$2,500 each year for maintenance of the facility. The Tampa City Commission agreed to the terms of the bequest but failed to settle upon a suitable site on which to erect the building, thereby losing the grant. Subsequent efforts to revive interest in obtaining a

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municipal library for Tampa failed until 1912 when the West Tampa Civic Association and the Tampa Board of Trade jointly requested grants from the Carnegie Corporation for the construction of two libraries, one to be erected in Tampa and the other to be built in the separately incorporated city of West Tampa located immediately adjacent to the city of Tampa on the west side of the Hillsborough River. The requests were granted, allowing \$50,000 for the city of Tampa and \$17,500 for the much smaller community of West Tampa.

The Carnegie Corporation once again stipulated that the grantees had to provide a construction site for each library and pledge annual appropriations to purchase books and maintain the buildings. The citizens of both communities readily voted to approve construction of the libraries. The Tampa City Commission purchased a building lot at the intersection of Seventh Avenue and Franklin Street to be used as the site of the city's proposed library, but construction of the facility did not begin immediately. The city of West Tampa, however, encountered no delays in completing the library project, and the facility located at 1718 North Howard Avenue was finished in 1913.

Construction on the much larger and more elaborately styled library at Seventh Avenue was not completed until 1915 and two more years passed before the facility could be completely furnished, stocked with books, and provided with staff to serve the public. The City Council approved the needed funds and several thousand volumes of books were donated to the library by wealthy local patrons. The Tampa Free Public Library formally opened on April 27, 1917.

The building functioned as a library until 1968, when library services were moved to a new library building in downtown Tampa. The Library Board of Tampa then leased the 7th Avenue building to the Hillsborough County School Board for a twenty year period to be used as the location of the Learning Center for Exceptional Students. In 1986, the school board moved its program to another location and the building was vacated. The building remains vacant; however since 1988, the City of Tampa has been developing plans to convert the building into an office complex and a museum.

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Significance

Educational Significance

The Tampa Free Public Library fulfilled its function for more than fifty years. The centrally located facility provided access to books, documents, maps, photographs, and a variety of other educational materials to those persons living in the residential neighborhoods bordering on downtown Tampa. The library was also available to the students of the primary and secondary schools associated with those nearby neighborhoods. Persons working in the commercial center of the city also found the location of the library convenient, often being able to visit the facility during their lunch break or after work. The library worked closely with the Tampa School Board in order to acquire those books and other educational material that would supplement regular classwork programs. Since the library was able to lend books to the public free of charge, many persons too poor to purchase literary or entertaining publications could still have the opportunity to read and enjoy books. That this service is still considered to be a necessary component in the daily activities of the downtown area of modern Tampa is evidenced by the fact that present public library is located only a few blocks from where the historic structure stands.

Architectural Significance

The Old Tampa Free Public Library is a fine and well-developed example of the Classical Revival style adapted to a small public building. It was designed by Fred J. James (1869-1932), one of the city's most prominent and successful architects. Among the important buildings he is credited with designing are the Centro Espanol of West Tampa (listed in the National Register 7/30/74) and the LeClaire Apartments (listed in the National Register 11/16/88). Other buildings in Tampa designed by James are local landmarks, some of which may be eligible for listing in the National Register.

The Classical Revival style evolved from a renewed interest in the architectural forms of the ancient Greeks and Romans. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the Classical Revival style was employed in the design of educational and public buildings to reflect the tradition of the "love of learning" and the virtue of public service that was thought to characterize the society of ancient Greece. The revival of interest in classical models in the United States dates from the

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## Significance

Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. Many of the best known architects of the day designed buildings for the Exposition based on Adam, Georgian, and early Classical Revival residences built in the United States in the eighteenth century. The exposition was well attended and publicized and soon the Classical Revival style became the fashion.

In Florida, the Classical Revival style became a popular style for commercial and government buildings, such as banks and courthouses. The application of the Classical Revival style to residential architecture is less common. Some of the characteristics of the style include a symmetrical facade dominated by a full height porch on classical columns, typically with Ionic or Corinthian capitals; gable or hip roofs with boxed eaves, frequently with dentils or modillions beneath the roof and a wide frieze band surrounding the building; doorways featuring decorative pediments; double-hung sash windows, usually with six or nine panes per sash; and roof line balustrades.

No other historic public building of comparable scale and period of construction in Tampa so fully and successfully embodies the characteristics of the Classical Revival style. The West Tampa library is a smaller and plainer structure. Also, that facility is initially associated with the history and development of the independent community of West Tampa rather than Tampa itself. West Tampa was annexed by the City of Tampa in 1925, and its library became a unit in the greater municipal library system. The Old Tampa Free Library is therefore significant for its contribution to the educational welfare of Tampa's residents. It is also a local architectural landmark that represents the period of rapid development experienced by the city during the early 1900s. The library is an important link to Tampa's past and symbolizes those persons who strove to insure the growth and prosperity of Tampa's future.

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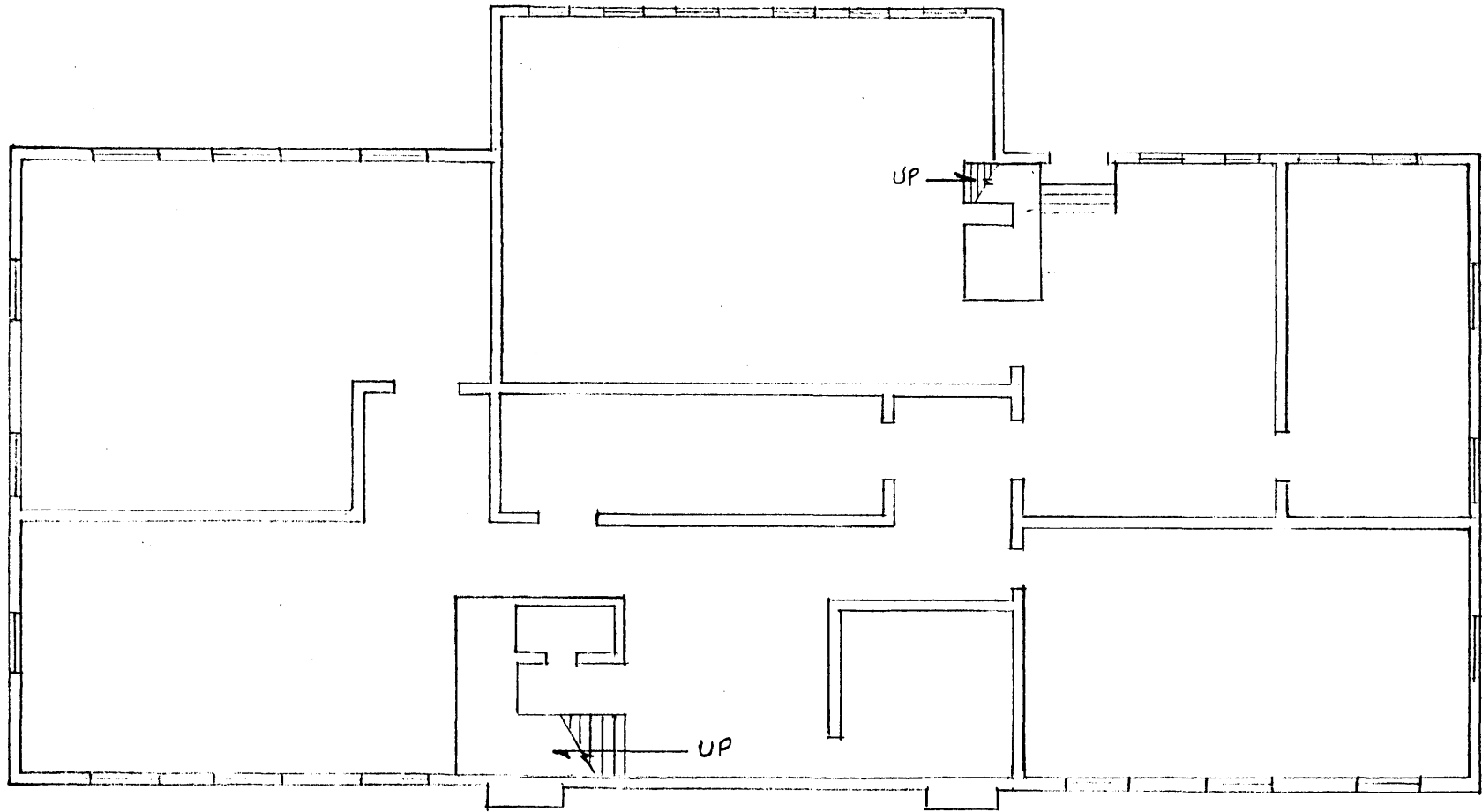
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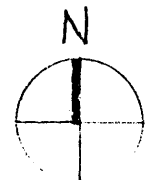
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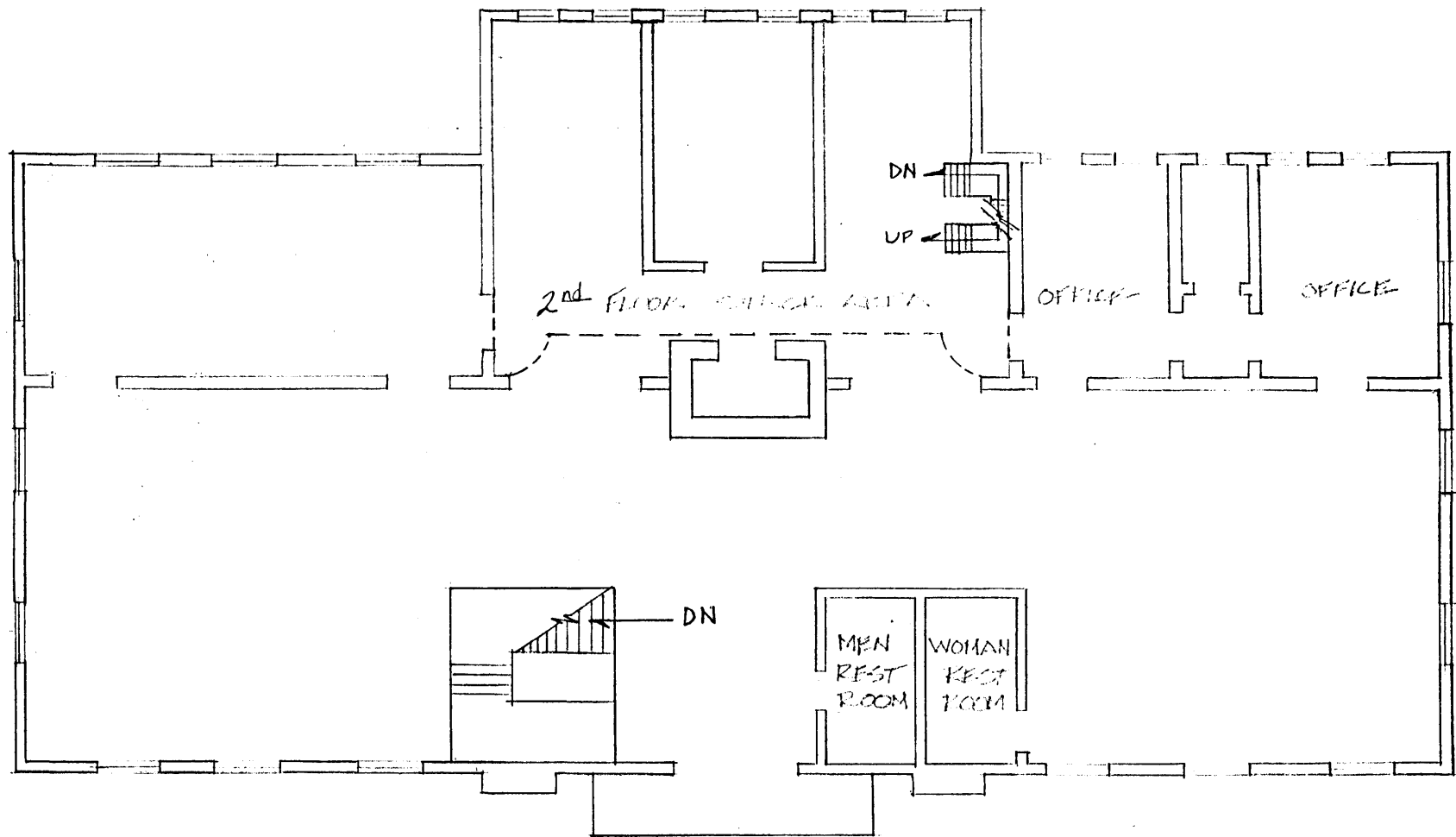
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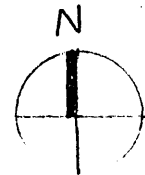
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