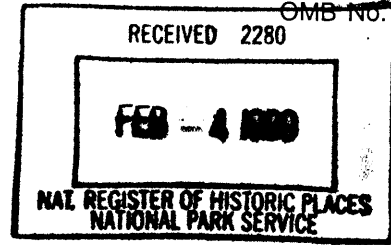


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Colorado Women's Prison
other names/site number Colorado Territorial Prison Museum / 5FN55

2. Location

street & number 201 North 1st Street [N/A] not for publication
city or town Cañon City [N/A] vicinity
state Colorado code CO county Fremont code 043 zip code 81212

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Georganna Courtwright State Historic Preservation Officer 1/29/99 Date
Signature of certifying official/Title

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- removed from the
National Register
- other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper 3/5/99 Date

Colorado Women's Prison
Name of Property

Fremont County, Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/correctional facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete

roof Asphalt; Synthetics
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Colorado Women's Prison
Name of Property

Fremont County, Colorado
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- # _____

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History
Architecture

Periods of Significance

1934-1948

Significant Dates

1934

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:
Local History Center, Cañon City Public Library

Colorado Women's Prison
Name of Property

Fremont County, Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 478480 4254380
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Allan Griffith/Historian and Cara D. Fisher/Curator

organization Local History Center, Cañon City Public Library date 12/97

street & number 516 Macon Avenue telephone 719-269-9021

city or town Cañon City state Colorado zip code 81212

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Colorado Department of Corrections

street & number 2860 South Circle Drive, Suite 2200 telephone 719-579-9580

city or town Colorado Springs state Colorado zip code 80906

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

DESCRIPTION

The Colorado Women's Prison, now serving as the Colorado Territorial Prison Museum, is a two-story, L-shaped plan building with concrete stucco walls and a multi-plane roof. It is located just outside the eastern wall of the Colorado State Penitentiary in Cañon City. The elongated parcel of land on which the building sits fronts First Street near the intersections of Macon and Greenwood avenues. Stone walls mark the perimeter of the property. On the west is the 20-foot high stone wall built in 1895 that forms the eastern boundary of the Penitentiary. Guard Tower #6 rises above this wall at the southwest corner. (Although it serves as a boundary, this east wall of the main prison plant is not considered a part of the nomination.) The north, east and south walls were constructed shortly after the building was completed. These lower walls consist of rough-cut, irregularly coursed stone capped with concrete and topped with a chain link fence. An extension above the chain link contains several strands of barb wire. Two large (four-foot square and twenty-two feet high) gate posts mark an oblique entrance at the southeast corner of the yard. The north pillar has a cast concrete plaque reading "Erected 1935, Roy Best, Warden." The southern wall is broken by two other entrances--an original wire gate near the foot of Tower #6 and a steel turnstile gate midway. To the south of the site is the Canon City Hydraulic Ditch, and to the east is the Old Canon City Neighborhood within the original 1869 town plat.

Using prison labor, construction began on this building in 1934 and it was completed the following year. The walls and foundation are steel reinforced poured concrete. Faced with concrete stucco, the smooth expanse of wall is broken only by an eight-foot high water table. The L-shaped structure has a complex roof line. The base of the "L" consists of a side gable roof with an 'offset projecting front gable and a flat roof porch. The pitched roof sections are covered with asphalt shingles. The shaft of the "L" (the cell block wing extending northward) has a flat roof finished with a bitumen, or built up tar roof. This roof has two raised eighteen light rectangular skylights. The majority of windows are metal, multi-light casement, of various dimensions. With the exception of the sun porch and infirmary, three-inch steel bars cover all windows and doors.

The main entrance to the building is on the south side where a central, ten foot wide, cast concrete, solid rail staircase leads to the upper story. A flat roof with exposed decorative rafter tails protects the recessed entry and the now enclosed porch area. These "rafter tails" are all that remain of the once pergola-like covering over the entire front porch. The inset entry has two sets of French doors. The French doors accessing the hallway also have a transom. A series of windows divided by stuccoed square pillars fill out the rest of this flat roof section. The windows that wrap around the southeast corner are twelve light; the remainder are nine light sash windows. (These are the only windows in the entire building that are not covered by steel bars.) The gabled projection at the southwest corner has a semi-circular louvered attic vent above a coupled, multi-light casement window covered with steel bars. The fenestration pattern on the lower level of this facade is more limited. There is one small, coupled, multi-light casement window on one side of the staircase and two on the other. Below the staircase on the west side is an entry to the lower level. This opening is enclosed by steel bars.

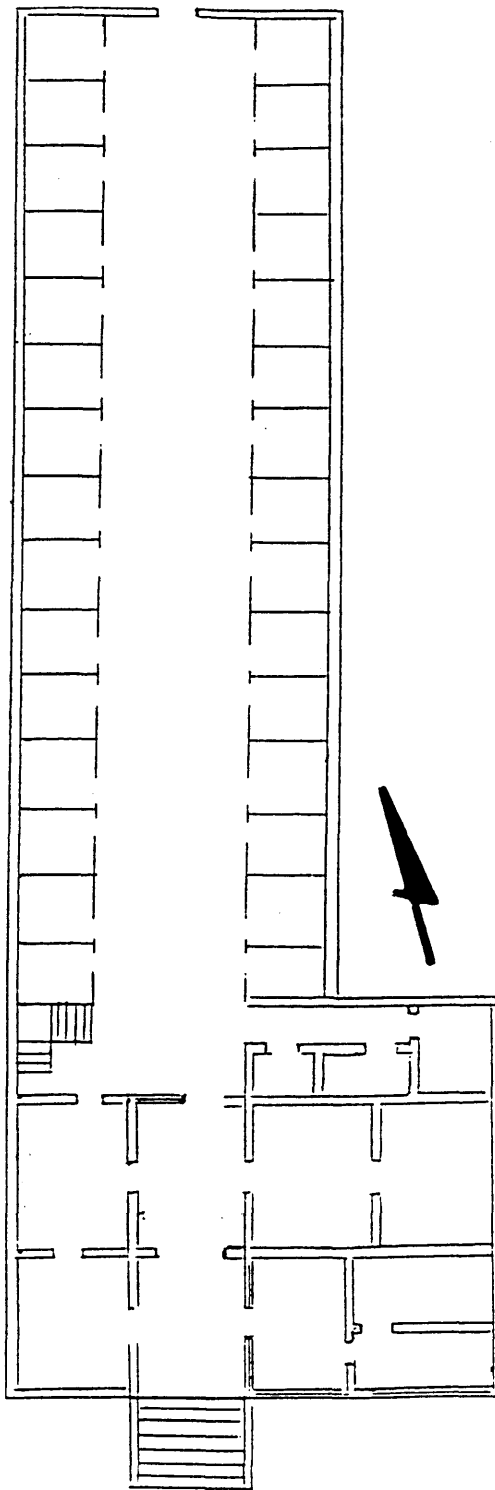
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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

floor plan - upper level



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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 3

The east side of the building also contains a variety of windows. On the upper level, there are six, twelve-light windows that complete the enclosure of the sun porch. Below these are two steel-barred casement windows on the lower level. The gabled roof section has a semi-circular, louvered attic vent high on the wall above two windows on the upper level and three on the lower level. At the juncture of the gabled "base" with the "shaft" (cell block wing), there is a chimney and two windows--one above the other. Along the upper level of the cell block wing, the expanse of wall is evenly punctuated by fifteen tall narrow six-light windows--one for each of the cells. The lower level is pierced with eleven windows.

The facade of the north side is broken only by a door on the upper level accessed by a concrete double staircase from the ground level. The centered door is metal with a rectangular light and includes a security door of steel bars. The adjacent north parking lot is raised at the same level as this door.

The west side is punctuated with 32 windows, fifteen of which are the upper level cell windows. There are two doors on this side. One is a small four-foot metal coal door and the other is a wooden three-panel, single light door.

The interior of the prison is also poured concrete; its walls painted institutional green. A redeeming feature of the interior is the light from the numerous windows and the opening of space through the use of French doors throughout.

The south end of the upper level contained the administrative offices and the prison infirmary. According to a floors plans drawn by a former Matron, this administration section included the Matron's office (which contained a drug cabinet and a tiny library), an office-like interview room, another office, a hospital and examination room, shower baths, and a Matron's washroom. The cell house section of this upper floor contained thirty cells, fifteen on each side, each with its own window. The cells were off-set, not opposite one another. The center hallway with its skylights was twelve feet in width. Each cell contained a sink and a toilet.

The lower level contained the dining room, kitchen, and stairs leading to the upper floor at the south end. To the north were two solitary cells, a recreation room, a laundry room, and a storage room for inmate property. The various room spaces were entered through French doors. Much of this remains.

The building is in good condition and has undergone very little alteration. Sometime in the 1950s, the eastern portion of the porch was enclosed to form an office, which extends nearly to the stairway. The remaining open (pergola-like) section of porch was also roofed at this time. It is not known when the small door on the west side was installed as it is not apparent in the 1935 photographs.

In 1988 a rehabilitation of the building was conducted to prepare the building as a museum. Deteriorating portions of the wall were re-plastered and several alterations to the interior also occurred. Public bathrooms replaced the surgery/examination room on the upper floor. Most of the original cell

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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

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toilets were removed. Floor tile in the hallway separating the cells was removed. Most of the cell doors were tack-welded in an open position. On the north wall of the cell block an emergency door was installed, replacing a barred metal door. The building's interior integrity was impacted by the welding of the cell doors and by the removal of original toilets, sinks and some French doors. However, replacement material was kept to a minimum. It is estimated that 90% of the historic material remains.

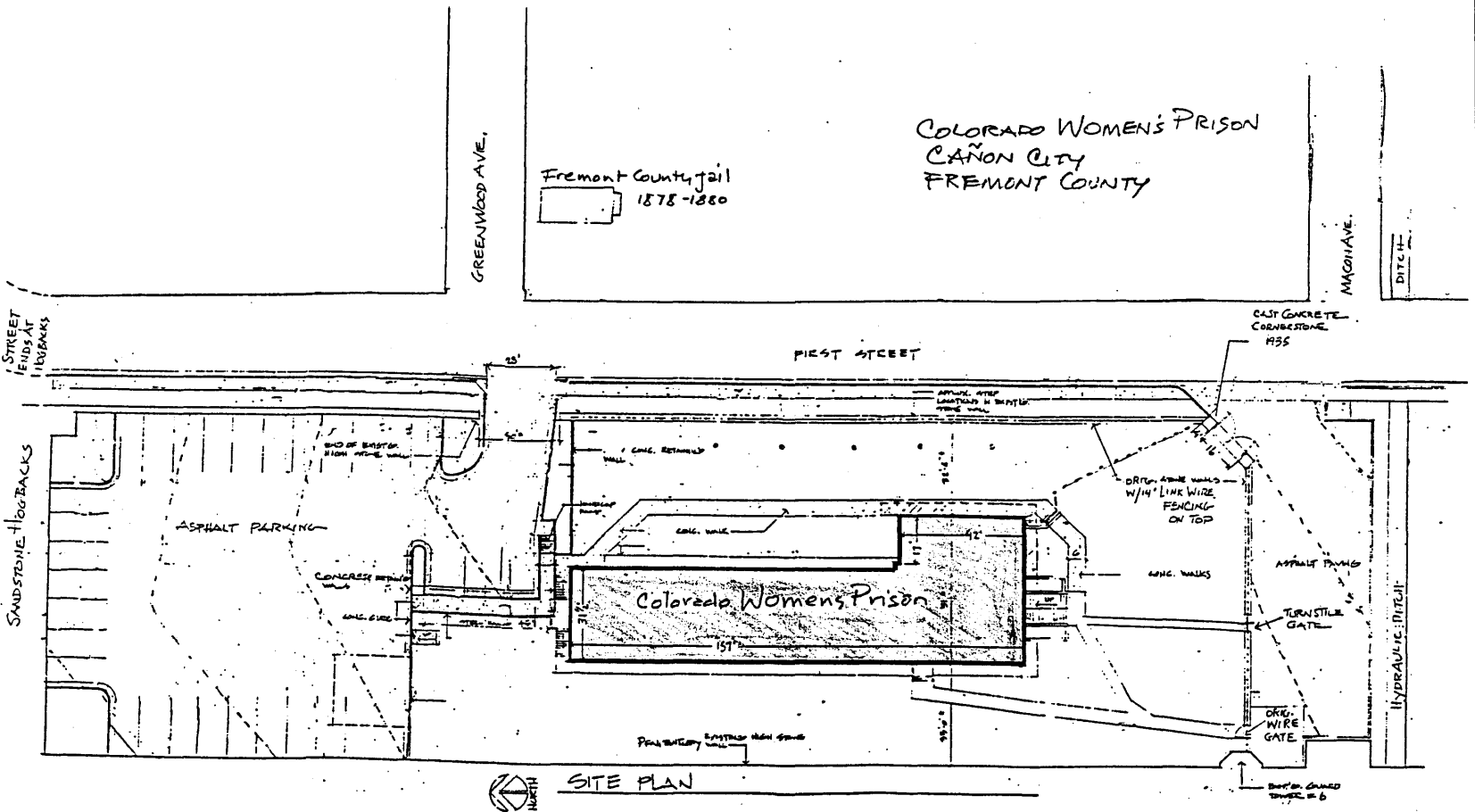
Landscaping has changed over the years. To the north was a grassy recreation yard, where female inmates were allowed to grow gardens. A few rose bushes and lilacs still exist. The turnstile was installed in the south wall in 1977-78. The grounds were also altered by the new use as a museum. To the south of the building a blacktop parking lot was made between the outer south wall and the Canon City Hydraulic ditch. To the north, the yard and rose garden once present during female residency were also blacktopped to accommodate parking for visitors. A twenty-eight foot opening was cut out of the east wall to allow entrance to the new parking lot. Existing walkways were upgraded and repaired with some minor replacements due to weathering. As the building now serves as a museum, several large artifacts have been positioned throughout the prison yard. Within the yard are ten objects. As all these were installed since 1989, they are considered noncontributing elements. Despite these impacts to the setting and the interior alterations, the Women's Prison retains its integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado



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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 6

SIGNIFICANCE

The Colorado Women's Prison meets criterion A for its historical significance in the area of Social History, specifically Women's History. The building is associated with the development of state correctional practices for women. Colorado was one of the first states in the Rocky Mountain West to have a women's prison. Prior to construction of this building in 1934, three other buildings designated for female inmates had been built on the State Penitentiary grounds. As the penitentiary expanded, each one of those buildings was absorbed into the main complex that housed the men. This is the only one of those buildings that remains outside the main compound, reflecting the more relaxed attitude towards female prisoners and the segregation of the sexes. The building also meets criterion C for its architectural significance. This nicely articulated, Mediterranean-inspired building set a precedent within the context of Cañon City's prison architecture. Subsequent construction would embrace the Mediterranean style. The building has undergone very little alteration and retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Although the building continued to be used as a correctional facility for women until 1968, the period of significance arbitrarily ends in 1948 to comply with the National Register's fifty year rule.

The mouth of the grand canyon of the Arkansas River--the site of Cañon City--was a favorite camping ground of the Ute long before the coming of Euro-Americans. Pike and his party camped here in December of 1806. In the spring of 1859, a small village known as Cañon City was established on the north side of the Arkansas River. The town flourished with the influx of gold seekers. The United States Congress authorized the building of six territorial penitentiaries in the western part of the country to restrain the many criminals who were migrating west. The Colorado Territorial Penitentiary was established by an act of the Colorado Territorial Legislature approved January 7, 1868. It was the first of the six Territorial Penitentiaries to be constructed. The Territorial Penitentiary was located in Cañon City as a result of votes being traded by the legislators of Cañon City and Denver. Denver and Golden were vying to become the State Capital. With the help of votes from Cañon City, Denver was selected as the state capital and Cañon City was chosen as the site for the Penitentiary. Local citizens welcomed it as a deterrent to the lawlessness of the region and as a better solution than the frontier jails, often unfit for human beings.

Construction of the Territorial Prison by the federal government began in 1870. The 2-1/2 story stone building with 42 cells was ready for prisoners in June the following year. Built of native stone quarried on the site, the building was located in the middle of a 25-acre site donated by Jothan Draper. Overcrowding was a frequent and recurring problem. Soon other buildings were added as the convict population grew. The prison was officially transferred to Territorial authorities in April 1874. The following year, stone walls were erected around the prison compound. When Colorado became a state in 1876, the facility became the Colorado State Penitentiary.

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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

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Previously in England and America, the problems of punishment, reform, and treatment of offenders had become a public issue. Reforms centered on the idea of a penitent offender in an environment which encouraged education and personal change in the offender. As a result of the Penitentiary Act of 1779 passed by the English Parliament, reforms were begun to remove the appalling conditions of the prisons. Women and children were separated from the hardened criminals. Serious offenders were segregated. The philosophy of penitence and the basic dignity of human beings encouraged the idea of corrections rather than punishment. These reforms reached the United States, itself wrestling to overcome the effects of the treatment of women and men who had transgressed Puritan beliefs.

One hundred years later, in 1870, while the Colorado Territorial Prison was being built, the newly formed National Prison Congress issued a "Declaration of Principles" to guide prison administrators. It stated that "Reformation, not vindictive suffering, as the purpose of penal treatment of prisoners." Total silence, lock step and total segregation had been found to be destructive of human nature. Varying the activity of the prisoners in the daytime was also helpful to the administration. Keeping people working was of mutual benefit. When the Colorado Territorial Penitentiary opened the following year, the idea of a penitentiary as a moral hospital was accepted by those in charge.

When the first woman prison, Mary Solander, arrived in March 1873, she was probably a great challenge to the administration. The practice had been to confine women in jails (often run by the sheriff and his wife) and not send them to prison. Sentenced to three years for manslaughter, it was believed Solander was housed in a cell on the upper level of the original prison building.

Historically, society has been reluctant to incarcerate women. "When women defy their nurturing stereotypes they are usually made to pay....There's a tendency to believe in female innocence," said a researcher at the Cato Institute. Women have also made up a significantly smaller percentage of prisoners. Until recently, they have very rarely been given life sentences and very seldom executed. Keeping women separated, their small numbers, and the paternalistic attitude of the administration served to keep the women in a low profile position among the prison population.

The first separate women's prison was built in 1884 under the direction of Warden Robert C. Cameron. The cell house was built at the far north wall, away from the main prison. The two-story building had six cells that were reached by a gated stairway. Cameron in his Biennial Report of 1886 quoted reformation guidelines and methods which he "learned from the National Prison Association and writings and doings of men of humane feelings."

By 1895, the steadily increasing male inmate population forced the relocation of the female prisoners and the construction of a second building for the women. A forty-cell, two-story, stone building was built outside the main prison and surrounded by a wall. In 1899-1900 mention is made of raising the wall nine feet as well as re-stuccoing the building.

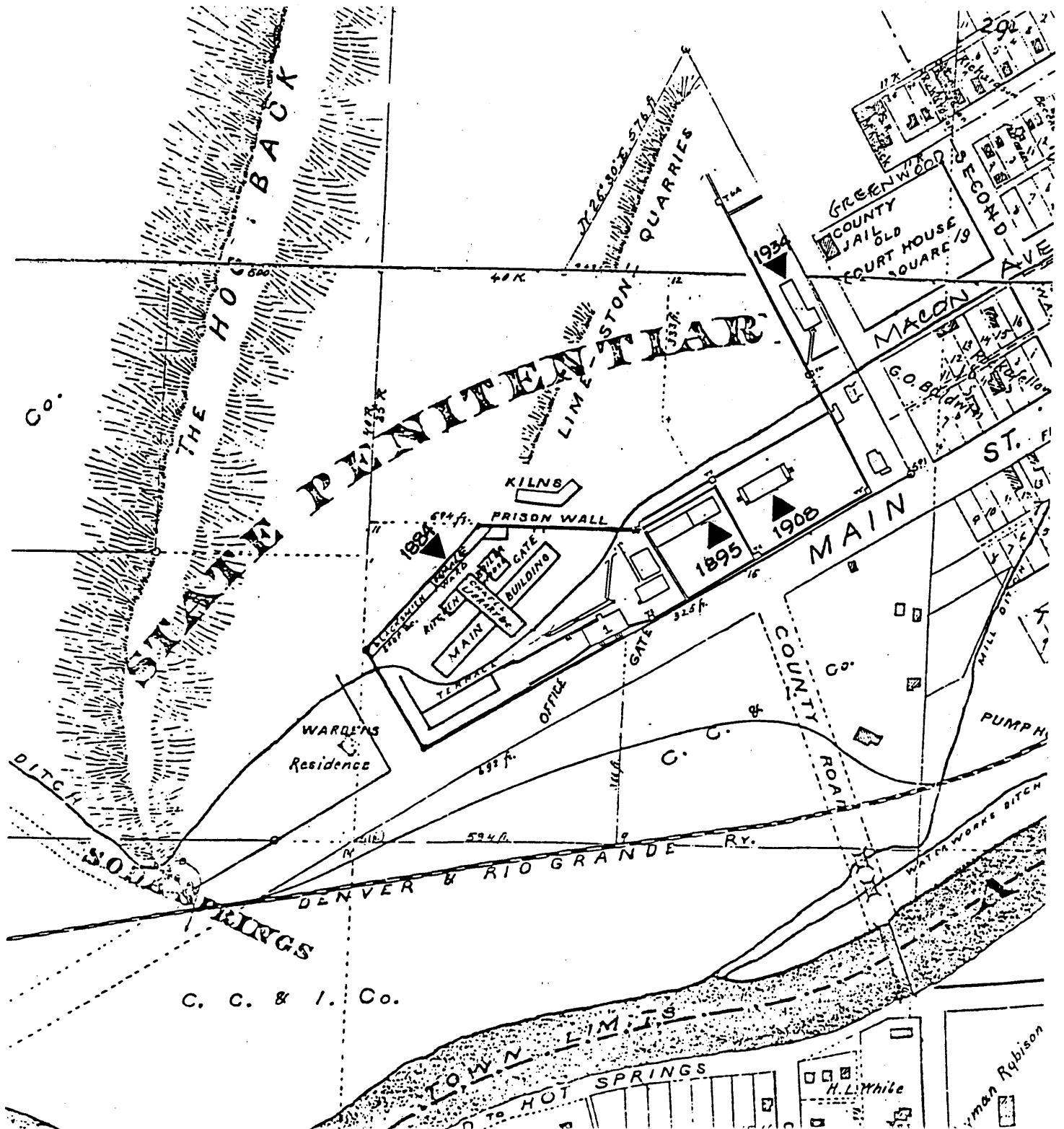
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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

Composite map showing the four locations of women's facilities at the State Penitentiary



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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

In 1908, a third building for female inmates was added to the prison complex for the "comfort and well being of the prisoners." Of dressed stone, it had two stories and a basement. The first floor was reached by a wide stone staircase. It had forty cells, a basement dining room, kitchen, laundry, and storeroom, in addition to a large apartment. The first floor had the matron's room, a large well-lighted and well-ventilated sewing room, closets and bath. The cells were two tiers high, arranged along the outside walls. The space between the cells was to be converted into an enclosed courtyard 28 x 75 feet in size, "making a splendid place for reading and recreation." The ceiling of the court was 22 feet above the floor. The cells were constructed of cut stone with concrete arches and considered fireproof. There was plumbing, hot water heat and electricity provided by the power plant that serviced the entire penitentiary. Again, this building (referred to as the Women's Building) was outside the walls on the east, surrounded by a new wall. (The previous 1895 women's ward was remodelled into a hospital and insane ward. Enlarged, it still serves as the prison hospital today.)

From 1904 to 1914, the women were employed in cleaning duties around the State Penitentiary as well as cooking, laundry, and making underclothing for male inmates. The Matron at this time, Mrs. Sue Anderson, pleaded in her annual reports that while this kind of work kept the women busy, it was of no value to them upon their release from prison. Women inmates were still taught Domestic Science and they were allowed to work in the flower and vegetable gardens. The recreation grounds afforded "croquet and other amusements at their disposal as a reward for good behavior". Female inmates were also given the opportunity to further their education through elementary reading and writing classes. Life in this manner continued for women inmates through the 1920s.

Throughout the country prison populations were increasing, causing serious overcrowding. By 1929, the need to expand the Colorado prison, due to the growing male prison population, was evident. The prevalent philosophy of punitive treatment of male convicts with hard labor to keep them busy, as well as overcrowded conditions, combined to contribute to the infamous Colorado Penitentiary riot of 1929. The burden of repairing the damage done to prison buildings was enormous and improvements began under Warden F.E. Crawford. Warden Crawford was concerned by the conditions and wanted to expand. However, the opportunity to build and expand eastward was deterred by the Female Department building, and it was impossible to expand westward because of the terrain. Crawford had applied for \$155,000 from the legislature to build another women's prison, but was removed from office for his alleged inept handling of the 1929 riot. In 1932, Roy Best was installed as Warden.

That same year, the Board of Corrections brought before the public the issue of segregating unruly prisoners from other convicts. Following the segregation policy of male and female inmates, the Board of Corrections recommended a new women's prison be constructed outside the wall of the main prison and that no facilities be shared by men and women except the chapel, theater and canteen (all located within the main complex). The Board suggested that a "Women's Cottage" be erected and that the older women's prison be remodeled as a house for unruly male prisoners. The Board of Corrections claimed that the Women's Prison was much larger than was needed for female convicts. The Board also

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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

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suggested that an intensive study of feasible occupations within the walls for male inmates be carried out.

When Warden Roy Best took over at the Penitentiary, he began an enormous building program to relieve overcrowding. In 1934, under his direction, and with the use of inmate labor, construction of the Colorado Women's Prison began outside the east wall of the Colorado State Penitentiary. The amount appropriated for its construction was \$27,379.23 and according to Warden Best, this was used to "exceptional good advantage". The smaller size of the new construction and the reduction in the number of cells from 40 to 30 perhaps revealed a belief that while women offenders were a fact of life, their numbers would remain low as they always had been.

The design of the 1934 women's prison is reminiscent of the building constructed for the female inmates in 1908. The earlier building also had a basement for housekeeping activities and a wide staircase to the first floor, but was much more massive in its proportions. The new building is a scaled down version in concrete and stucco instead of stone. As the penitentiary expanded, the extensive building program on the Prison Ranches east of town also utilized stucco and in some cases, adobe. But this prison building with its concrete construction, smooth stuccoed wall surface, low pitched roof, and restrained ornamentation is unique among the buildings erected during Roy Best's building program. Its Mediterranean-inspired design would set a building precedent. Subsequent construction, notably the nearby 1935 Officer's Quarters and the Prison Ranches east of town, would more obviously embrace the Mediterranean style.

Upon completion of the building in 1935, all vocational training, including the industrial sewing, was removed from the women inmates and given to the men. It would remain this way until 1947.

While there was much concern regarding the male inmate's need for vocational training in order to prepare for a life "on the outside," there are no records of the female population being included in these plans. Inside the State Penitentiary the male prisoners were engaged in a variety of vocational and educational classes. In the early 1930s, an intensive study was done on feasible occupations for male inmates. Admittedly, the emphasis was on production and profit, but there was clearly a program of moral improvement and education, often provided by interested community volunteer teachers and clergy.

There was no such program for the female inmates and the new building did not have room for classes or equipment for vocational training. Activities by the women were carried out either in the hallway separating the cellblock or in the lower level dining room. Eventually volunteers from various clubs and other individuals were allowed to come and teach the women sewing, music and some other skills, "which it was hoped would be of use to them upon release." (The male population had more restrictions and were trained under guard by a civilian overseer.)

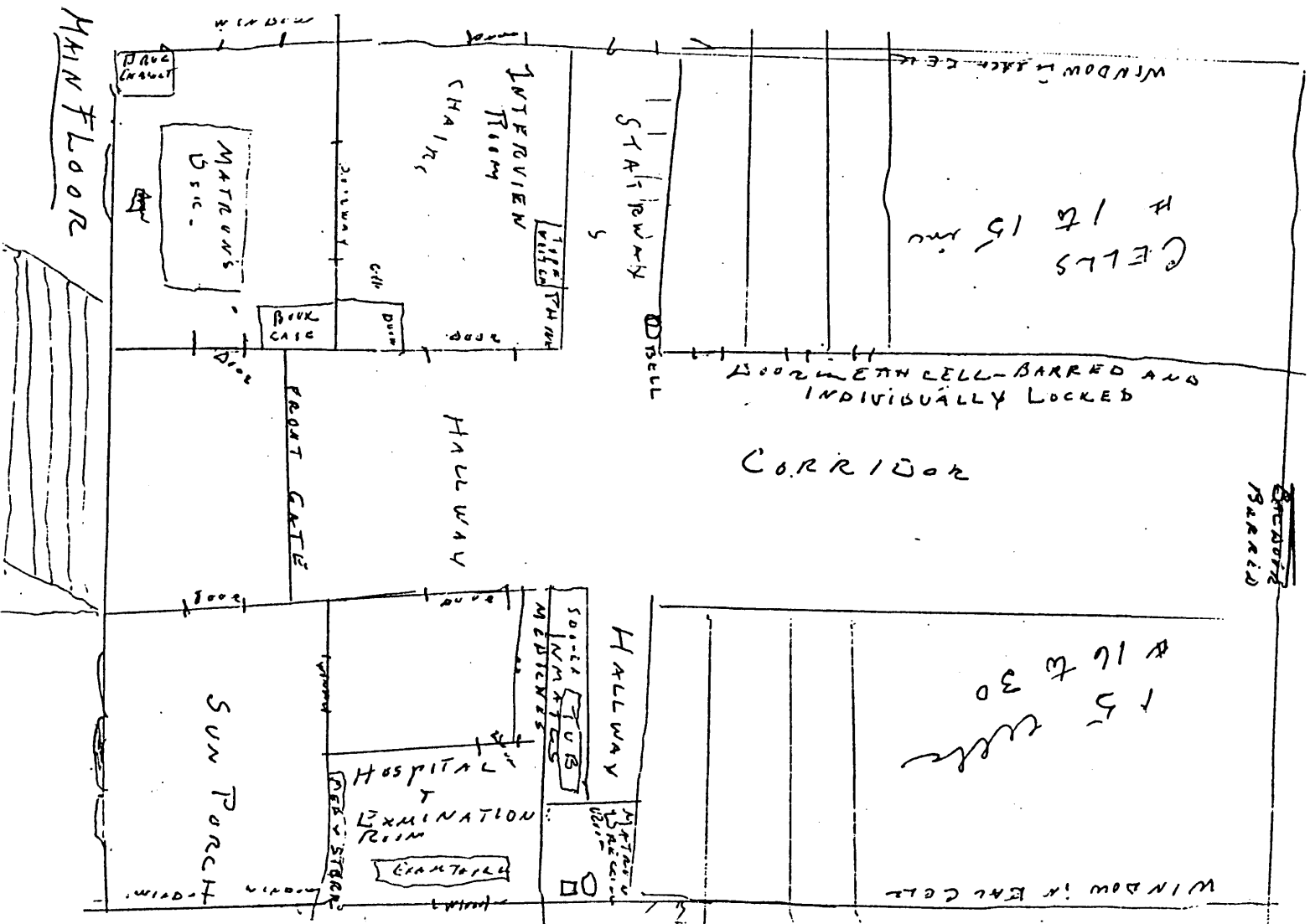
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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

Floor plan of upper level drawn in 1988 by Helen Kinney, who served as a Matron between 1942-1949.



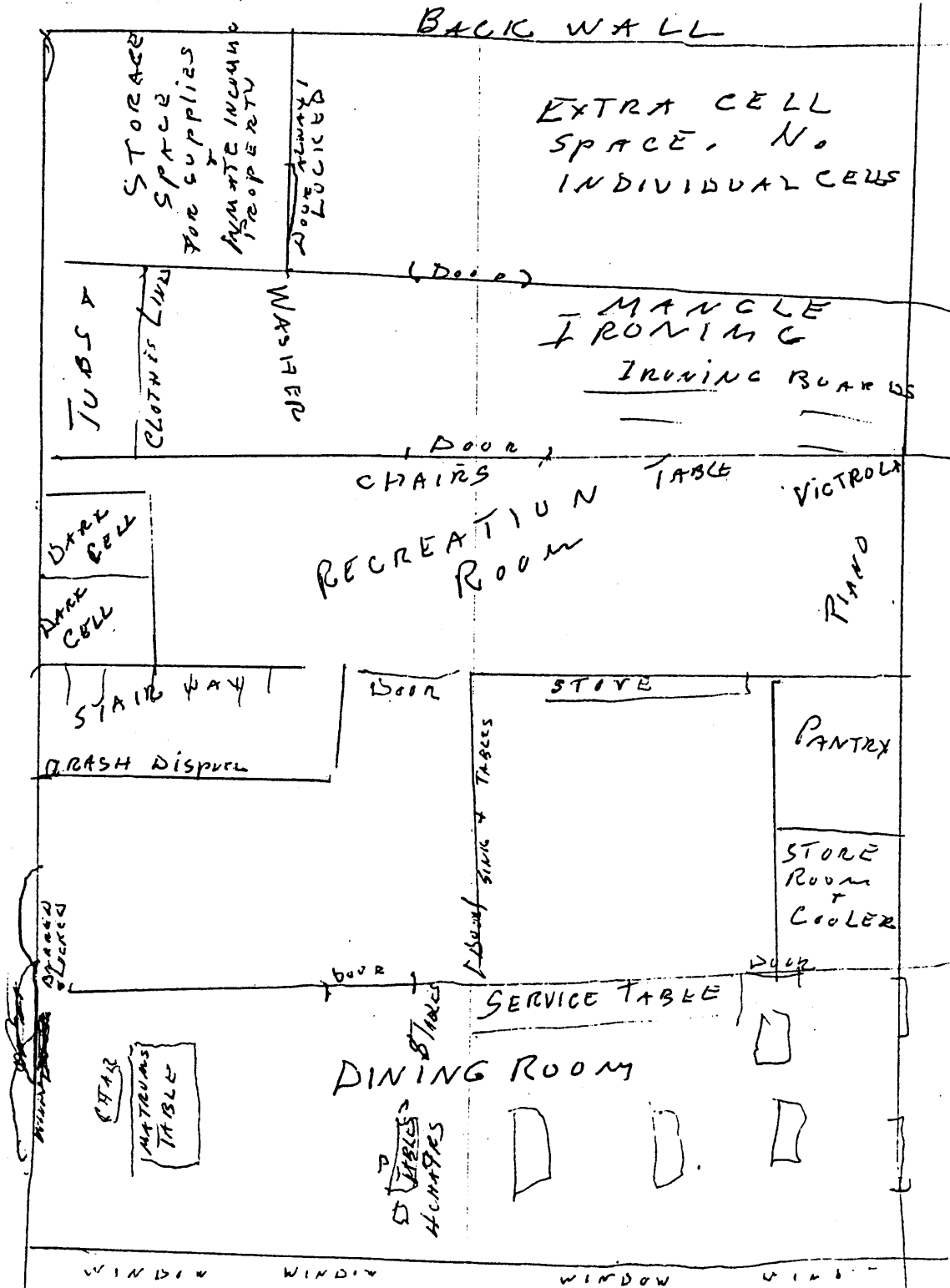
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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 12

Floor plan of lower level drawn in 1988 by Helen Kinney, who served as a Matron between 1942-1949.



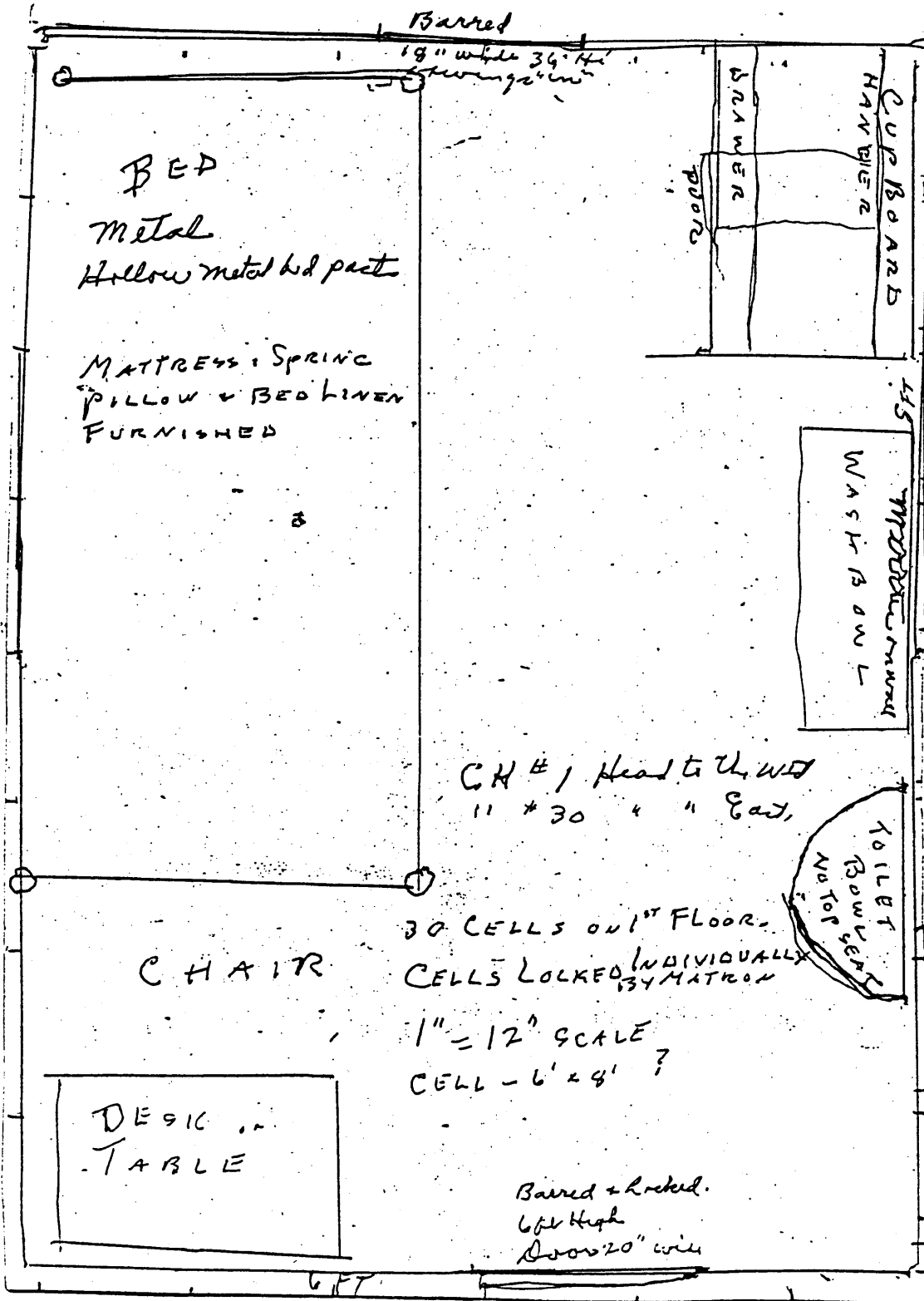
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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

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Floor plan of a prison cell drawn in 1988 by Helen Kinney, who served as a Matron between 1942-1949



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Colorado Women's Prison
Fremont County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 14

The situation would not improve over the years. In 1955, the lack of vocational opportunities and work programs for women inmates was still recognized, but with little attempt to correct the situation.

One of the biggest drawback in the [female] department is the lack of a constructive work program. This has been occasioned by the small number of people involved and further complicated by the fact that of this number, some are from other states whose laws in this respect differ from our own. Regular maintenance and housekeeping duties serve to keep the inmates occupied for a good portion of the day.

The use of the 1935 building followed standard prison practices that inmates themselves do as much of the work needed to keep the institution going. One drawback was that the small population of female inmates made little work. Another was that women were not being taught anything to prepare themselves for being self-sufficient after release. They were not perceived as needing to know anything more than domestic science. The presence of a civilian cook made it appear more like a dormitory. The inmates were considered the matron's "girls" and the matron performed many duties that a mother would perform. The female inmates referred to their cell as their "house." Each house contained a single bed, a cupboard, a wash basin and a toilet. All inmates were required to keep their houses clean at all times. This family-like atmosphere was confined to the women's prison.

Historically the terms used to describe the female inmates and their quarters differed through the years. Reports to the legislature referred to the females as "girls" or "women residents." The term resident, rather than inmate, was thought to give more individual dignity. These same reports referred to their facility variously as the women's house, women's cottage, the female ward, female department and female division. Prison management could not decide on a consistent classification.

Daily life for female inmates in this new prison has been wonderfully documented by Helen Kinney, who was a Matron from 1942-1949. Her account reveals the activities, facilities, administration, daily schedule, visitation, and paroling of women inmates. She recalled how the female inmates were allowed to hand sew decorations for their cells and decorate with personal belongings. The women inmates took pride in the yard and garden and spent many hours caring for the rose bushes and garden.

The facilities described on the floor plans drawn by Mrs. Kinney (excluding the cells) consisted of a dining room; recreation room; a laundry room with tubs, clothes lines, and washers; kitchen; pantry; shower stalls; storage for inmate belongings; the Matron's office and an interview/visitor office. Of particular interest was the hospital and examination room with the medicinal storage located on the sun porch. This small infirmary possessed no bars on any of its windows and female inmates were able to recover under the relative freedom of a well ventilated and lighted environment with few restrictions. Also, the infirmary examination room allowed for privacy in a medium security setting. (Strangely, the Colorado State Penitentiary did not have a full time doctor until 1935.) Mrs. Kinney also recalled that many women came in with tatoos, especially those who had been in the Navy. Dr. Howe, the

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dentist was able to remove the tatoos. Cosmetic surgeries of all kinds were part of the humanitarian reform treatment for both men and women.

The Women's prison was administered by three Matrons who worked different shifts. These shifts ran from 7:00am to 3:00pm, from 3:00pm to 11:00pm, and from 11:00pm to 7:00am. At the beginning and end of each shift, all inmates were returned to their cells (if they were not there already) and a count was taken. The results were called into the Deputy Warden's Office at the Penitentiary headquarters. It was the duty of the Matrons to guard over the inmates, attend their needs, and discipline them when necessary. While Matrons were responsible for administration of the prison, they also figured more prominently in the daily lives of the female inmates. Matrons escorted female inmates to church, picture shows, and other events located inside the penitentiary complex. Matrons also escorted female inmates to the penitentiary when minor surgeries or dental work was required. When needed, an additional matron was called to work if an inmate needed to be escorted to the prison hospital or to a court hearing. If a female inmate were pregnant, she was taken to the prison hospital to deliver her baby.

The Head Matron usually worked the "morning shift" from 7:00am to 3:00pm. The morning Matron assigned the female inmates their duties for the day. Duties consisted of working in the dining room and kitchen, and washing and ironing clothes and linen. The kitchen work entailed preparing the meals for the day and informing the Matron of the goods that needed to be ordered from inside the penitentiary. All meat, bread, butter, eggs, vegetables, coffee, tea and milk were supplied from the penitentiary central supply storage. The morning Matron planned all meals, ordered supplies and medications for the women, and even shopped in town for craft supplies that female inmates could not obtain at the prison canteen. It was not uncommon for the Matron to purchase a present for an inmate's visitor. Both breakfast and noon meals were monitored by the morning Matron, who enforced all assigned duties.

Meals for women inmates were buffet style and inmates were allowed to eat as much as they liked, but were required to eat everything they had taken to discourage wastefulness. No food was allowed to leave the dining room area. During holiday seasons, female inmates were served the same menu of turkey or chicken dinners that male inmates were served. After meals, female inmates were allowed to walk about in the recreation yard outside the building.

When the afternoon Matron arrived at 3:00pm she assured that all assigned duties had been carried out. It was the responsibility of the "afternoon Matron" to make sure that female inmates bathed periodically and that evening meals were finished by 7:00pm when "lockdown" occurred. Before the women were locked in for the night, the Matron distributed their medicines. A lock-up bell was sounded which signalled that all female inmates were to remain in their cells. When all inmates were accounted for the doors were locked for the night. At 9:00pm, all cell lights were turned out and the Matron retired to her office. She performed hourly checks on the inmates by walking the hall and checking each cell.

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At 11:00pm, the "night Matron" arrived to relieve the afternoon Matron and a count was taken of all female inmates as they lay sleeping in their cells. The night Matron also remained in the Matron's office to answer any needs of the inmates and calls from prison headquarters. Every hour she walked the cellblock to make sure that all was well and in good order. At 6:00am the cells were unlocked and inmates awakened. They were ordered to clean their cells and prepare for breakfast. At approximately ten till seven, the morning Matron arrived, took count, and relayed the number to the Deputy Warden's office.

Visitors to the State Penitentiary were allowed to buy craft items from the curio shop in the main prison. Women inmates constructed some of the items offered for sale, including "leather work, aprons, pillow slips, ceramics, stuffed animals, scarves and other fancy work." All cash proceeds were forwarded to the Chief Clerks office to be credited towards the needs of the inmate.

When a female inmate was paroled, the Matron escorted the inmate to the bus station with her belongings. The inmate was also given a stipend to help her with her needs if she had no money of her own. In 1932, the stipend was twenty five dollars.

The women's facility at Cañon City was considered to be well above the average for a penal institution. Termed a medium security prison, it had few custodial problems. In contrast to male inmates, women served shorter sentences, were convicted for less violent crimes, and had less opportunity to engage in programs for reform. Between 1928 and 1936, the average sentence for women was three to seven years, while for men it was five to eight years. The median age of both men and women inmates was about 31 years, with women being slightly older. Women during this period were sentenced for a higher percentage of crimes against persons. The women who went this prison were the worst offenders, as other women criminals were put in county jails or into community facilities. The crimes committed by the women incarcerated in this prison were usually, but not always, more violent--murder, aggravated robbery, statutory rape, and kidnapping. But other crimes included blackmail, bigamy, larceny, burglary, procuring an abortion, and (like their male counterparts during Prohibition) the possession of intoxicating liquor or operating and owning a still.

(Prior to 1985, when the new sentencing guidelines cost judges most of their sentencing latitude, judges were more lenient with women. Now women are being convicted of lesser felonies and being imprisoned more often for non-violent crimes, usually involving drugs. Drugs were seldom part of prison crime statistics before the 1950s. According to a spokesman for the Department of Corrections, women are the fastest growing inmate population in 1998. They are no longer on the periphery, which makes it important to document how the numbers, the crimes, and the punishments have changed since the construction of the 1935 Women's Prison.)

The small size of the 1935 prison building perhaps revealed a belief that although women offenders were a fact of life, their numbers would continue to be as low as they always had been. However, as not every state had a women's prison, Colorado quartered and maintained women prisoners from several

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other states, including Wyoming, Utah, and South Dakota. As late as 1955, prison officials stated that the facility would be "adequate for some time." However, by about 1960, serious overcrowding ended the practice of accepting prisoners from other states. Colorado would need its facility for its own growing number of female inmates.

By 1965 overcrowding at the Women's Prison warranted the construction of a larger facility east of town. On January 2, 1968, Mrs. May Gillespie and Warden Wayne K. Patterson supervised the transfer of approximately 42 women from the overcrowded and outdated 1935 building to the new Colorado Women's Correctional Facility. Today, the Colorado Women's Correctional Facility has extensive programs to help women become self confident, make positive changes in their lives and learn skills which will help them survive when they return to society.

After the building was vacated, it was used to house male trustees until 1977 and a protective custody program through 1978. In 1979 the building was used for SWAT team training and then left vacant. The Department of Corrections did not have the money or manpower for the upkeep of the empty building and its future was in question.

In 1982, a group of local citizens attending a Chamber of Commerce retreat proposed the idea of a prison museum. The prospect grew and a board was formed to further pursue the idea. In April 1984, the Colorado Legislature passed a bill that would allow the Department of Corrections to lease the building to the City of Cañon City, which in turn would lease the building to the Colorado Territorial Prison Museum and its Board of Directors. The building was modified to bring it up to ADA standards and opened as the Colorado Territorial Prison Museum in June 1988. The Museum continues to improve its services with the help of American Association of Museums Assessment Programs. The Museum also provides an ongoing educational program to the public, especially interpreting the incarceration of women. In the ten years of the museum's operation, there have been over 170,000 visitors, coming from every state in the U.S., its territories, and more than 50 foreign countries.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Women's Prison is shown as the heavy line on the accompanying map entitled "Existing Plan 1983."

(Note that the boundaries include the north, east, and south stone walls. These walls were constructed at the same time as the building and form the critical perimeter of the women's facility. The 1895 east wall is part of the main prison complex. Although this wall is an important boundary defining element, it is not included within the boundaries.)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

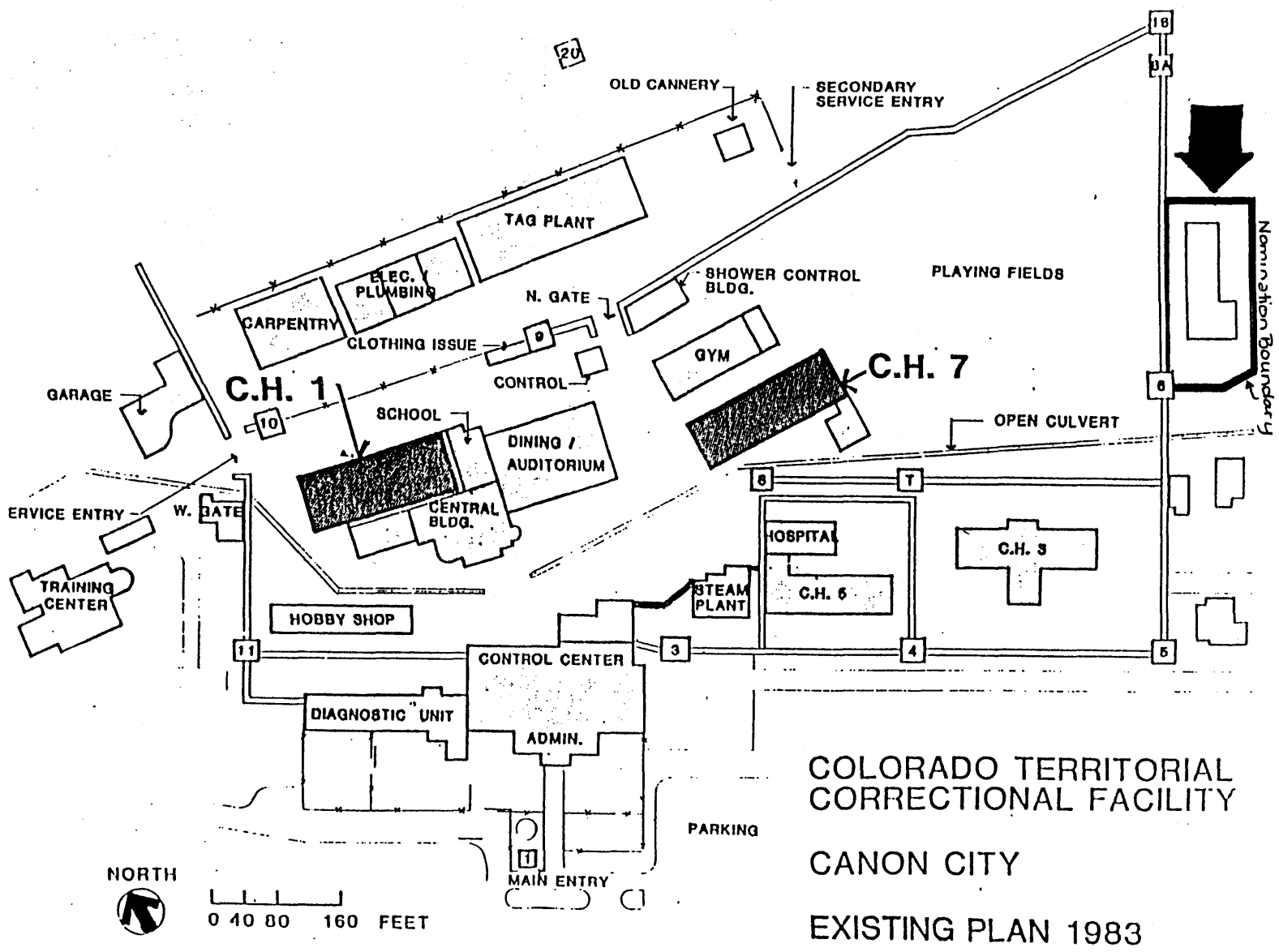
The nominated property includes the entire parcel of land historically associated with the building.

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COLORADO TERRITORIAL
CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
CANON CITY
EXISTING PLAN 1983

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city map



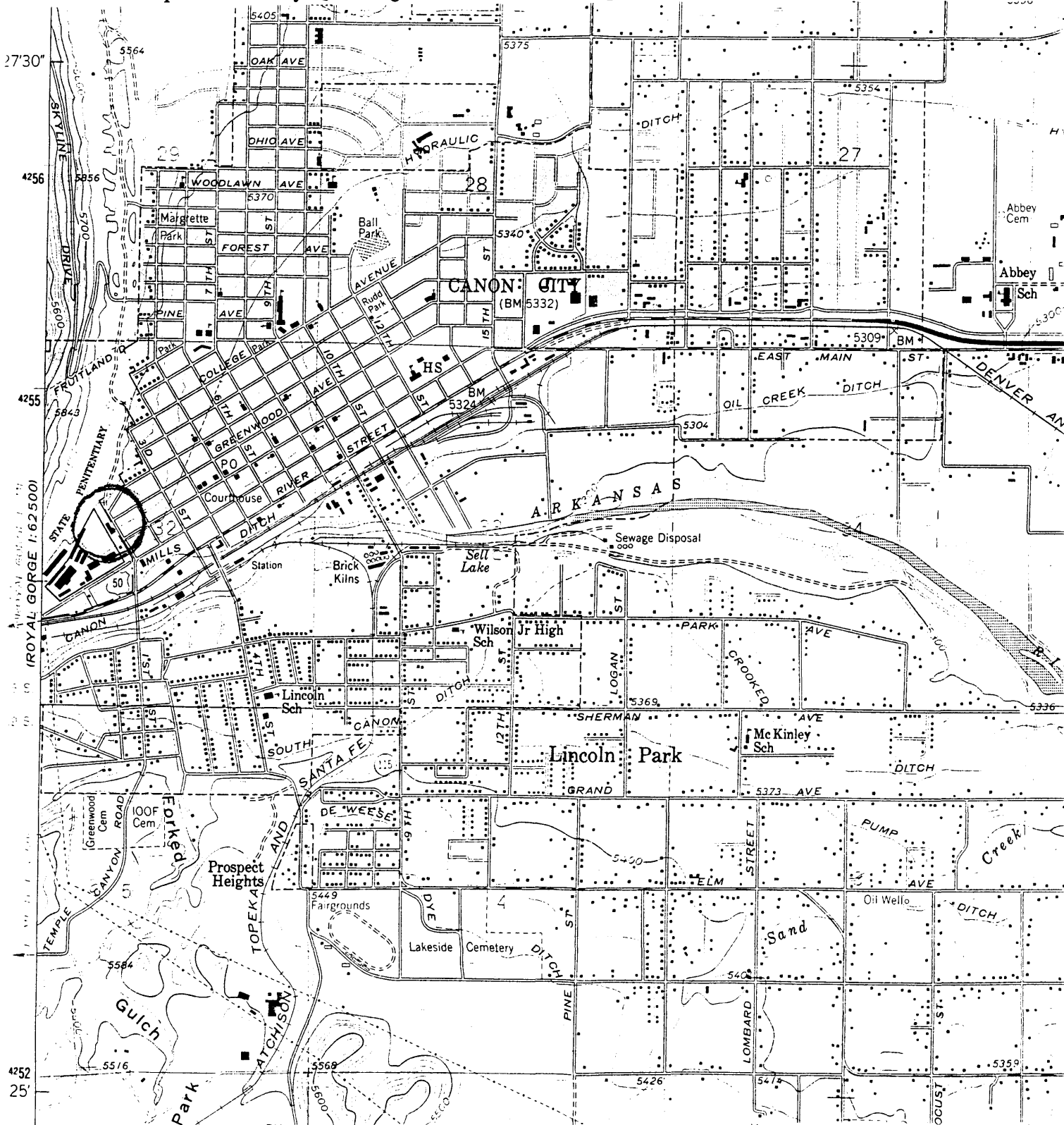
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U.S.G.S. map - Canon City Quadrangle, 7.5 minute series, photorevised 1976



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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information is the same for all photographs, except where noted.

name of property: Colorado Women's Prison
city, county, state: Cañon City, Fremont County, Colorado
photographer: Elmer Ahart
date of photograph: November 1997
location of negative: Cañon City Public Library

<u>photograph</u>	<u>description</u>
1	front entrance; camera facing northeast
2	stairway with lower entry; camera facing northeast
3	southeast corner, windows without bars are the infirmary; camera facing west
4	east side of building with cell block set back; camera facing south
5	southwest corner; camera facing northeast
6	north end and west side of building; camera facing southeast
7	rear (north end); camera facing south
8	unknown photographer; June 1935; view of building just after construction was completed; camera facing northeast