

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



**1. Name**

historic Milwaukee Fire Department High Pressure Pumping Station (preferred)  
and/or common Kinnickinnic River Pumping Station

**2. Location**

street & number 2011 South First Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Milwaukee \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 4  
state Wisconsin code 55 county Milwaukee code 079

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Milwaukee; Hon. Henry W. Maier, Mayor  
street & number 200 East Wells Street  
city, town Milwaukee \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 53202

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Milwaukee County Courthouse  
street & number 901 North Ninth Street  
city, town Milwaukee \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 53233

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1979 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local  
depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
city, town Madison \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisc. 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Milwaukee High Pressure Pumping Station is a governmental special purpose building substantially representing an unusual engineering project in public safety service. The building, sited near the edge of the KK River served originally as a pumping station, for the Milwaukee Fire Department, to feed an extensive fire hydrant system in an industrial district.

The major exterior material of the building is brown blend face brick upon a steel skeleton with limestone and wood trim. By design, the central machinery hall of the building has exterior dimensions of 62'8" in width, 57' in depth, and 28'3" in height. The entrance, facing east on First Street (formerly Clinton Avenue) is of grand proportions in design for the size of the building, but practical for temporary removal, if needed, to change large equipment in the building. The front doors are centered between two plate glass windows, and above, to nearly the interior roof level, seven lights with stone mullions extending upward to recessed three rowlock coursed segmental pointed arch.

Flanking the main body of the central hall section, are one-story wings paralleling most of the depth of the central hall. The roof is flat with pierced embattled parapet.

The interior of the central machinery hall rises to twenty-five feet. Along the center line of the red tiled floor are three massive machinery mounting pads, originally supporting the pumps and electric motors. The walls within are of tan glazed tile. The side rooms in the wings were personnel quarters, service, and working areas.<sup>3'</sup>

The High Pressure Pumping Station building remains in a nearly unchanged state except for removal of the pumps, motors and associated equipment. The stability of its construction in a river-bed environment has been recognized by engineers.

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (cont):

Intensive Survey of the City of Milwaukee  
1979 local  
Department of Development, City of Milwaukee  
Milwaukee Wisc.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1931 **Builder/Architect** Milwaukee's Water Engineering Div.

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The significance of this building and site is based upon: the unique historical elements creating the purpose for which the facility was constructed, and the high qualities of municipal engineering and municipal architecture represented in executing this central building. It is appropriate that it be preserved as a landmark or monument being representative of excellence in public works and engineering.

Historical Significance

The singular purpose of the High Pressure Pumping Station was the replacement of Fireboat No.17 in a heavy industrial area, where the streets and river were crossed several times by bridges and railway tracks. An assured year-round capability of early delivery of high pressure water was needed. The area served, was roughly bounded by the Kinnickinnic River on the north and west, Lincoln Avenue on the south, and east along Stewart Street to Car Ferry Road. In contrast to the sixteen men assigned to the fireboat, only six were needed to man the High Pressure Pumping Station. 4.

In the era of the planning and construction of the High Pressure Pumping Station, there remained survivors of the tragic Chicago, Peshtigo and Newhall House fires, and those who remembered these tragedies. In the city's history, there had been a concentration of factories on the rivers for power, in some cases for water itself, or for boat transportation. Thus fireboats played an important role in fighting industrial fires, both for riverside buildings and as suppliers of water pumped to land lines and special hydrants.

The High Pressure Station is unique to Milwaukee as it is the only such facility constructed here. The change in economic conditions and industrial plant construction eliminated a need for such a facility in other parts of the city and ultimately led to retirement of the station. The general factors most associated with that period of time following its construction were the depression and closing of factories. The government work project programs led to an improved water supply system, including firefighting and by the end of World War II, the early concentrations of factories and industry had been broken by obsolescence, and the flight to the suburbs of industry and people, negated further need for such systems. Thus after more than twenty years of service, the station was retired.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Item 8 - Footnotes

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED  
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property less than one  
Quadrangle name Milwaukee, WIS Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 6	4 2 5 7 2 0	4 7 6 1 6 6 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

## Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 1 in Assessor's Plat No. 291, in the Southeast One-Quarter Section 5 (SE $\frac{1}{4}$  5), Township 6 North (T. 6 N.), Range 22 East (R. 22 E.) in the City of Milwaukee.

## List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shirley du Fresne McArthur

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date June, 1980

street & number 2405 East Wyoming Place telephone 414-271-2395

city or town Milwaukee state Wisconsin 53202

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Richard Murray*

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 5/15/81

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Entered in the  
National Register

date 7/7/81

*Delores Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HGHS use only

received

date entered

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Engineering Significance

The hydrant system as well as the building were designed in 1931 by the Water Engineering Division of the City of Milwaukee, under City Engineer, Joseph Schwada; Engineer in Charge, Herbert H. Brown; Senior Engineer, Fred A. Westfall.<sup>2</sup>

The high pressure hydrant system totaled 8,468 feet of mains of which 6,529 feet were twelve to twenty inches diameter, tested at pressures over 475 pounds per square inch. These mains served 31 special high pressure hydrants, each with four hose outlets. Due to the extreme pressure involved, a telegraphic signal system from the hydrants to the High Pressure Pumping Station was necessary to indicate whether more or less water pressure could be handled by firemen manning hoses or by other equipment attached to the hydrants.

In significant contrast to normal firehydrant systems which are usually part of the low pressure city water distribution network, this separate high pressure system fed by the HPPS could rapidly deliver large quantities of water without the requirement of fire department pumpers. In serving an industrial area containing many multi-story buildings, typical of late 1800's factory construction, speed in hooking up and delivering water to a fire, as well as pressure to reach upper stories, was critical.

The HPPS houses 600 h.p. Allis-Chalmers three-stage centrifugal M-1 type pumps, three each rated to deliver 2,500 gallons of water per minute into the system. The station obtained electric power from two power lines, the main source from the Commerce Street Powerhouse, and the other or emergency, from the Lakeside Powerhouse. When called into operation by the Milwaukee central fire alarm signal system, the pumps could be in operation ready to make full delivery of water within one minute.<sup>3</sup>

Also of civil engineering significance, is the excellence in design and strength of the foundation and basement structure of the HPPS.<sup>1</sup>

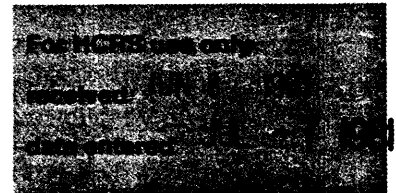
Architectural Significance

The High Pressure Pumping Station building was designed within the Water Engineering and City Engineer's departments of the City of Milwaukee, rather than by outside architects.<sup>2</sup> It exhibits excellence in design, representing a type of period construction suggesting the Neo-Gothic Perpendicular English Style of the 14th Century.

The verticality of the building is characteristic of the Perpendicular design as well as the two centered light above the entrance imitating tracery. The Neo-Gothic is further carried out in crenelations approximated in the stone coping and inserts and simulated flanking towers in brick. Side wings are consistent with the style. Emphasized vertical elements are carried out in tapestry glass lights, brown blend patterned and corbeled face brick, and panelled two-story revealed or recessed bays. The degree to which the style was accomplished is unusual in terms of the purpose of the structure,

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the financial limitations of government spending, and economics of the time.

Building History<sup>2.</sup>

Excavating Piling, Concret-Mason Work S. Czaplewski & Sons Inc.. February 16, 1931	\$31,328.00
Structural & Ornamental Iron Work W.F. Eichfeld & T. Ramsthal February 17, 1931	2,098.00
Plumbing, Gas and Sewerage Work O.A. Waskow February 17, 1931	3,698.00
Glass & Glazing Work S. Lurie & Co., Inc. February 17, 1931	325.00
Lathing & Plastering Work O.A. Kath & G.A. Kath February 18, 1931	684.00
Cut Stone Work John E. Kies February 20, 1931	581.00
Power Piping S.V. Hanley February 21, 1931	5,990.00
Carpenter Work Frank Laenzmann February 24, 1931	232.00
Roofing Work F.J. A. Christiansen February 26, 1931	539.00
Heating Work W.A. Bowers Heating Co. March 3, 1931	2,852.00
Electrical and Miscellaneous Work	21,818.00
Total Cost of Building	<u>\$70,145.00</u>

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The total cost of the entire system was reported as approximately \$300,000.00 by Chief Peter Steinkellner on the station's dedication January 15, 1932.<sup>5/6.</sup>

Ownership History:<sup>7.</sup>

The history of title ownership begins with Lorin Carlton in 1836. Successive owners were James Sanderson (1841); Eliphalet C. Cramer (1844); Enoch Chase (1846); Frederick Ziemer (1860); John August Becher (1872); Angus Smith (1882); and Jacob Wellauer (1891)..

The City of Milwaukee purchased this piece of land, a part of a greater portion, in 1907 from Jacob Wellauer, a prominent merchant of this city and resident of Wauwatosa. The land remained vacant until the High Pressure Pumping Station was built in 1931.



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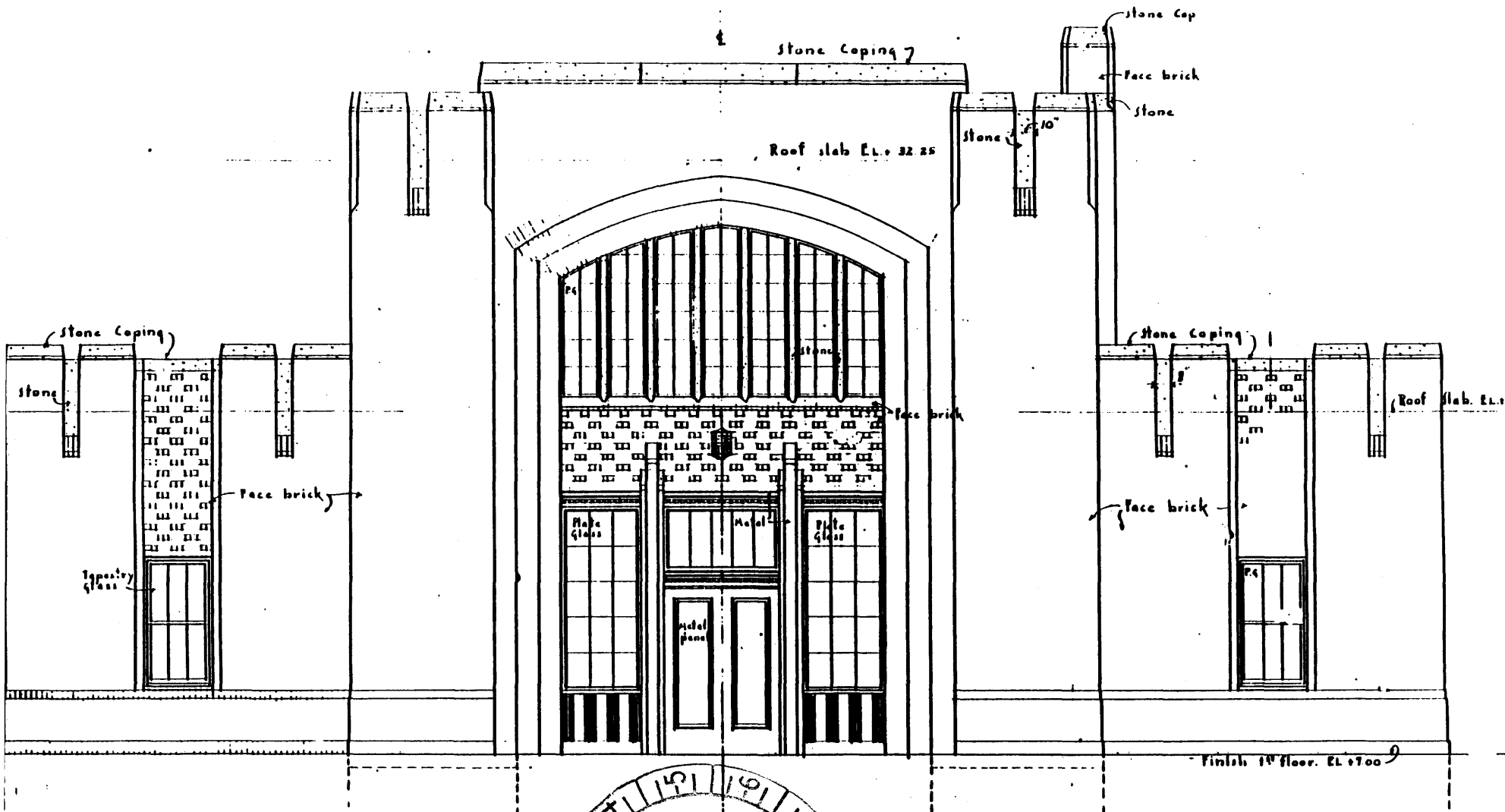
8

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(Footnotes)

1. Building permits and other records, 1890-1980, General Office, Department of Building Inspection and Safety Engineering, 1010 Municipal Building, Milwaukee.
2. Bureau of Engineers, 612 Municipal Building, Milwaukee.  
City Engineer, Edwin J. Laszewski, P.E.
3. Inspection of the High Pressure Pumping Station, May 28, 1980.  
George Draelos, Real Property Appraiser, Department of City Development.
4. Interviews:
  - Chief Joseph Shanaham, Milwaukee Fire Department  
Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, 118 W. Virginia.  
June 4, 1980. June 11, 1980.
  - Ross Lanza, Milwaukee Fire Department, 118 W. Virginia.  
June 11, 1980.
  - Steve Czaplewski, descendant of the original mason contractor  
June 13, 1980.
  - Eugene Stack, Stack Construction, a mason on the pumping  
station in 1931. June 14, 1980.
  - Marcello Zanchetti, mason extraordinaire, 2359 S. Kinnickinnic  
Avenue. June 17, 1980.
5. Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, 1930-1932.
6. Milwaukee Journal, 1930-1932.
7. Register of Deeds, County Courthouse, 901 N. Ninth St., Milwaukee.
8. Wisher, Edward E., Milwaukee Fire Department Training Manual,  
Vol. No. 1, 1944. Arranged under the supervision of  
Peter Steinkellner, Chief Engineer.
9. Wright, Alfred G., Milwaukee City Directories, 1900-1910.

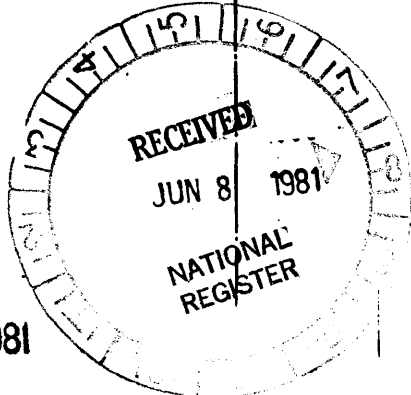


CITY ENGINEER'S OFFICE, MILWAUKEE, WIS  
 MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

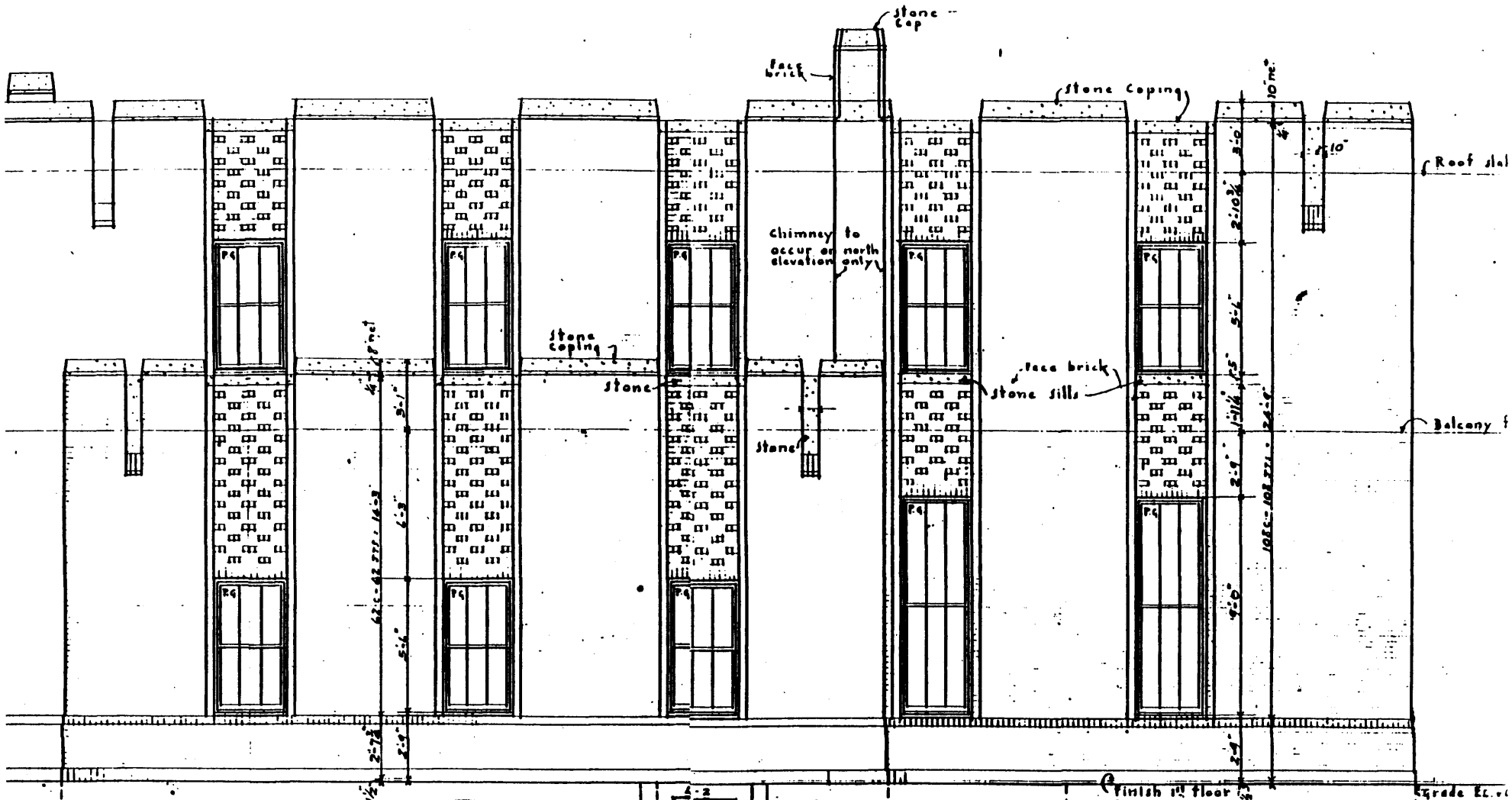
**HIGH PRESSURE PUMPING STATION**

PLAN SHOWING

**ARCHITECTURAL  
 ELEVATIONS**

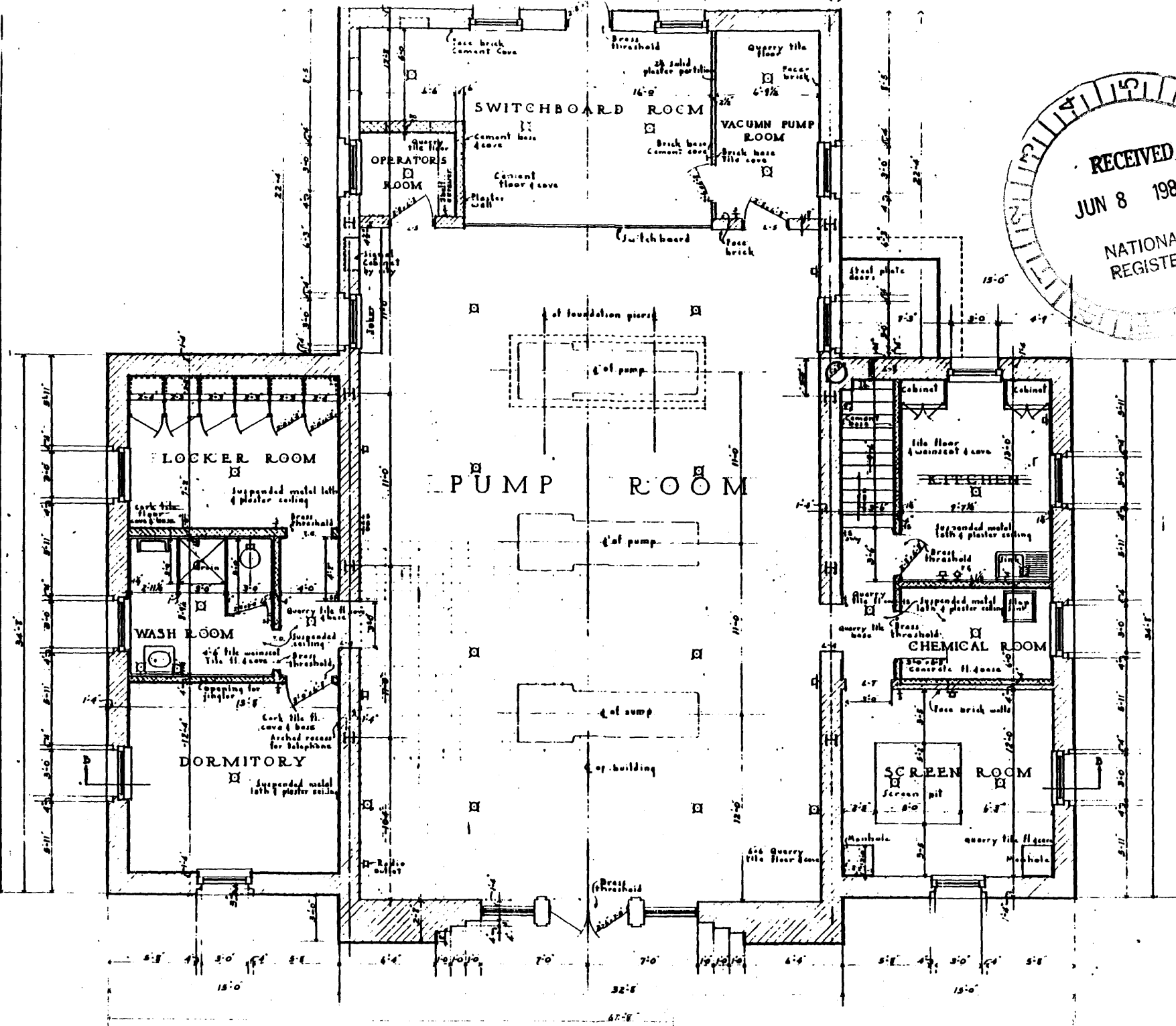
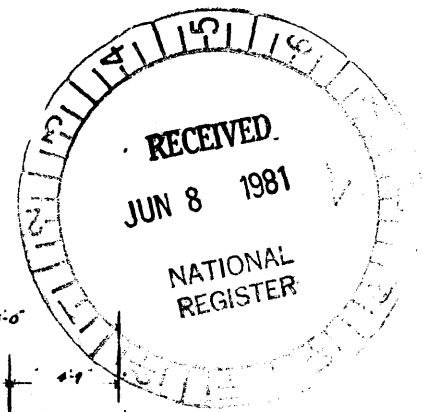


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