

VLR: 10-19-94  
NRHP: 2-8-95

127-370

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 determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 any 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 Steamer Company Number 5

other names/site number VDHR File No. 127-370

2. Location

street & number 200 West Marshall Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Richmond vicinity N/A  
state Virginia code VA county Richmond (independent city) code 760 zip code 23220

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide x locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Julie O. Patrick 12-30-94  
signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    docs not meet the national Register criteria. (    See continuation sheer for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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):

   Signature or Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- x building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: GOVERNMENT Sub: Fire station

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: granite
walls STUCCO
BRICK
roof METAL: tin
other METAL

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

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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1883-1944

Significant Dates 1883

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder unknown

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 (Jackson Ward Historic District)
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

- Primary Location of Additional Data
State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository: City of Richmond Archives at Richmond Public Library, Richmond, Virginia

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**10. Geographical Data**  
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**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	284160	4158220	2		
3				4		

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 Selden Richardson  
 organization Virginia Commonwealth University date August 11, 1994  
 street & number P. O. Box 3441 telephone 804-320-9799  
 city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23235

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**Additional Documentation**  
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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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Steamer Company Number Five, Inc.  
 street & number 200 West Marshall Street telephone 804-644-1849  
 city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23220

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

**Steamer Company Number 5  
Richmond, Virginia**

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NOTE: PLEASE REFER TO ATTACHED PLAN FOR REFERENCES TO SPECIFIC INTERIOR SPACES

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Steamer Company Number 5 is located at 200 West Marshall Street in Richmond, Virginia. This former Richmond fire station is of a triangular plan to conform to the shape of its lot at the intersection of Brook Road and Marshall Street. The two-story building was constructed of brick on a foundation of granite ashlar and covered with stucco which was scored to simulate stone. Steamer Company Number 5 is a late example of the Italianate style. This is a decorative fashion the building shares with many houses in the surrounding Jackson Ward area it served as firehouse from 1883 to 1968. There is a later two-story brick addition in the rear of the building. The elaborate bracketed cornice, window and door hoods, and a decorative belt around the building are all fabricated from pressed metal, and the low, hipped, standing seam roof is tin. Two bays project from the Marshall Street front and support a balcony between them with a distinctive cast-iron railing. The interior retains many interesting details from the building's long use as both firehouse and, for a period, police station, including brass fire poles and pressed metal ceilings, as well as vestiges from the era of horse-drawn fire fighting equipment. The building is in excellent structural condition and has had relatively few alterations since it was constructed. Appropriately, Steamer Company Number 5 is currently used as a museum of police and fire fighting history.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Steamer Company Number 5 is a distinctive combination of municipal firehouse and elaborate Italianate decoration, located in a composite residential and commercial area of the Jackson Ward Historic District with two-story residences of the period, small stores, and large commercial buildings all within a block of the building. The oblique angle with which Brook Road crosses Marshall Street gives the building an interesting triangular form due to its three-sided site. The delicate decoration of Steamer Company Number 5 forms a visually dramatic counterpoint to the Richmond Dairy building (1913), with its milk bottle-shaped towers, on the opposite side of Marshall Street,

The triangular plan of Steamer Company Number 5 was used to take advantage of the space of the intersection of Brook and Marshall, for this arrangement afforded the maximum area to maneuver horse-drawn equipment as opposed to emerging from the building at a right angle to the street. Having the main apparatus bay on the Brook Road side of the triangular site also in effect directed the equipment toward Richmond's principal thoroughfare, Broad Street, two blocks away. The arrangement of the interior spaces are designed around this main equipment bay, and this organization effectively overcomes the challenges and constraint of the triangular site, forming interesting interior rooms with little lost or awkward space.

This is a two-story building, divided generally speaking into two principal areas of rooms on each floor, with a two-story red brick addition in the rear. The foundation is one of rough-finished granite, exposed more on the Brook Road side due to a slight difference in grade. The walls are of brick, laid in common bond, with five stretchers per header row. On the Brook Road (eastern) and Marshall Street (south) sides of the building, the stucco that covers the brick has been scored into blocks to resemble stone, while the western side of the building has been left without stucco and is undecorated.

The decoration above the windows, equipment doors, and personnel doors on the original part of the building are made of pressed metal, as is the decorative belt that runs around this part of the structure. The windows and doors of both the rear addition and the undecorated western side of the building have plain granite sills, and are otherwise unadorned. The balcony between the two bays on the Marshall Street side

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of the building has steel members supporting a tin-covered wood deck. The railing of this balcony is made of painted cast iron, with decorative panels.

Along the *Marshall Street and Brook Road sides of the building, and continuing around the edge of the roof above the addition in the rear*, is an elaborate bracketed cornice, made of pressed metal. This cornice extends along the length of the northern edge of the roof above the addition, but the western side of the building has only a plain wooden cornice. Six small brick chimneys rise above the low standing-seam tin roof, and the flat-roofed addition has one brick chimney.

The principal structural element is a interior brick wall which runs the length of the building and is the main support for the second floor, although it is supplemented in the original portion of the building in two places by large wooden posts on the first floor, and a metal column on the second floor in room (2-D), beside the stairway. The floor at ground level is concrete, and wood on the second floor of both the original firehouse and the addition to the rear. A single wooden stairway (of two flights of steps and a landing) located at the rear of the main apparatus bay (1-A) gives access to the second story.

The balcony between the bays on the Marshall Street side of Steamer Company Number 5 has a low, decorative cast iron railing consisting of eleven panels, with a heavy floral rosettes in the center of each. Access to this balcony is through room (2-B), the bottom sash of whose floor-length windows push up far enough to serve as a doorway.

Bathrooms have been installed in rooms (1-D) and (2-H), and room (2-F) has been remodeled into a modern kitchen.

Windows in the original portion of the building and the addition are of a two-over-two arrangement with granite sills, except for a small altered window in room (1-F), a small bathroom window in room (1-D), and a modern casement window above the sink in the kitchen (2-F). The window looking out into Brook Road in room (2-G) retains the bars from the period that this particular interior space was a jail. Two original windows in the western side of the structure have been bricked up.

The main personnel double door under the Marshall Street balcony has four lights above it, as does the equipment doors of room (1-B), even though this particular door is a much later modification. The exterior door under the balcony into room (1-A) is also a later modification of an original window, and retains the upper sash above the door frame. The large loading door in room (1-F) has a massive granite sill and is raised above the sidewalk, presumably to wagon level. An inventory of windows and doors finds two small windows on the western side of the building, eleven windows, two personnel doors, and two equipment doors on the Marshall Street side, and sixteen windows and one door on the Brook Road side.

The outstanding decorative element of the exterior of Steamer Company Number 5 is the pressed metal decoration on the cornice, doors, and windows. The decoration above the doors and windows (which might best be described as a linear segmental arch) is pierced with a symmetrical stylized vine motif. It is noteworthy that this decoration was carefully copied for the equipment door of room (1-B) where a window had originally been. These doors and windows are set in panels recessed in the brickwork between pilasters, and as is typical of the *Italianate style* a belt course of pressed metal decorates the exterior of the original building at the level of the second floor.

The cornice is an extremely elaborate combination of panels, dentils, and small brackets, divided by larger brackets with pierced decoration that extend down over the brickwork, all fabricated in the same type of pressed and soldered metal. With the exception of one or two small missing pieces, this metalwork is in very good condition.

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Despite long use by the Fire Department, Steamer Company Number 5 retains some interesting interior details from earlier periods in its history. Outlines of the four stalls that once accommodated the horses that pulled steam-powered pumpers are visible in the concrete floor of room (1-A), and the center of the floor has a ribbed surface down the center to afford traction for the horses. The outline of what appears on the original architectural drawings as a "feed room" is still visible on the floor at the rear of this room near the present stairs. The large wood column in this room retains the slots that held the side rails of one of these stalls. Two brass sliding-poles give rapid access from room (2-A) to rooms (1-A) and (1-B) on the floor below, passing through circular holes lined with tongue-in-groove paneling in the upstairs floor. The ceiling of rooms (1-A) and (1-B) appear to have originally been of the same tongue-and-groove paneling used on the upstairs wainscoting, but were later covered with decorative pressed tin ceilings. The tin ceiling in room (1-A) is particularly noteworthy, having a decorative field surrounded by a rich border of griffins, urns, masks, and other classical motifs. This ceiling design has been located in the 1911 catalog of the Wheeling Comugating Co. Room (1-B) and upstairs, room (2-A) also have ornate pressed tin ceilings, but not as elaborate as that in room (1-A).

The ground floor storage rooms of the brick addition to the building have been greatly modified and changed, and are generally not noteworthy, with one exception. The large granite lintel above the small door in the wall that divides room (1-E) from room (1-F) suggests an exterior use, and this may be the remains of a supporting wall of a hose-drying tower that stood in this location behind Steamer Company Number 5 in period photographs. There is no documentation to support this theory, but the presence of this lintel, and the unusual thickness of this wall tend to support this idea

With the building of the addition in the rear of the firehouse, accommodation was made for drying hoses by cutting the floor of room (2-F) and installing heavy pegs in the rafters. This was enclosed by a thin wall and the hoses dangle through the floor into room (1-C) below. Access to this space, labeled (E-2), is from a large door in room (2-F) and from room (2-G) through what had originally been a window in the rear wall of the building.

The plaster of rooms (1-B), (2-A), (2-B), (2-I) and some of the walls of room (2-G) have received the same treatment of the exterior stucco: they have been scored into large squares to resemble stone. This plaster meets a tongue-and-groove wainscoting on the second floor; there is evidence this element was removed from room (1-B). Room (2-C) is presently wallpapered, but is presumed to have the same scoring treatment on the walls.

For structural changes to Steamer Company Number 5, refer to Floor Plan "Alterations".

There have been some important modifications to the building, and on the exterior these take the form of the brick addition in the rear, and the loss of a bell tower on the roof. No date for the rear addition has been found, although it may have been the result of what is termed "special appropriations" to modernize the older Richmond firehouses in 1912. The accompanying period photograph "A" shows the addition dates to later than 1890.

Research has found no exact date for the removal of the bell tower, but as late as 1934 a record of repairs to it exists. Italianate awnings appear in Period Photograph "A", but again, there is no documentation associated with their installation or removal.

What had been the center window of room (1-B) was changed to an equipment door in 1916, and the present personnel door into room (1-A) may date from that time as well, although there is no record for this second modification. Period photograph "B" seems to indicate this modification was in place before the elimination of horse-drawn equipment at this particular station which occurred some time between 1917 and 1920.

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This change from horse-drawn to motorized equipment saw the elimination of the horse stalls in the main equipment bay. There is no documentation to date the walling-up of what had been a rear equipment door out into Brook Road in the angled portion of the rear wall of room (1-A). This also may date from the period of mechanization, since the motorized equipment could now be easily backed in and there was no longer a need for a rear door which would properly position the horses when they returned to the building.

Evidence from an important period in the history of Steamer Company Number 5 can be found in the ghost marks on the ceiling of room (2-G). These marks outline the position of the four cells that date from the period when the building was a police station house upstairs, and fire station on the ground level. Clearly outlined are the two square and two triangular cells shown in the original plans of the building.

A major change to the interior came with the departure of the Third Station House from the second floor in 1898. This meant the eventual removal of the cell block from room (2-G). Presumably the record of the 1916 installation of the equipment doors in room (1-B) signals the tearing up of what had been a wood floor and moving of the stairs from room (1-B) to the present location to accommodate equipment in the room, as opposed to the original use as the firemen's dormitory. The second floor now being the domain of the fire department would, logically, be the period for the installation of the sliding-poles, the removal of the upper stair hall wall, and the new doorway to the stairs from room (2-A).

1902 saw the introduction of electric lighting to Steamer Company Number 5. The original double doors on the main equipment room (1-A) were replaced with roll-up doors in 1932, and the wainscoting in room (1-B) was removed in 1940.



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**KEY TO FLOOR PLAN**

DIAGRAM LABEL	ROOM USAGE
1-A	Main equipment bay, formerly "Engine Room" with four horse stalls and a feed room on back wall.
1-B	Small equipment bay, formally firemen's dormitory.
1-C	Storage. Bottom of the two-story hose-drying area (no ceiling).
1-D	Bathroom
1-E	Storage.
1-F	Utility room. Contains furnace and water heater.
2-A	Meeting room. Formerly "Sergeant's Office or Assembly Room."
2-B	Small office. Formerly "Cloak Room."
2-C	Large office. Formerly "General Consulting Room."
2-D	Exhibit area. Formerly part of cell block area.
2-E	Hose drying area (no floor).
2-F	Kitchen. May have formerly been used for storage of feed.
2-G	Exhibit area. Formerly four cells occupied this space, the ghost marks of which are visible on the ceiling. This room also had a flight of steps to the bell tower on roof.
2-H	Bathroom.
2-I	Storage. A wall has been removed that divided this space.

Remarks as to former use refer to room labeling found in the original design drawings of Steamer Company Number 5, in the collection of the Richmond Department of Public Works. (See below).

Concerning the building plans (see reproductions included with this nomination):

In 1993 Richmond Historic Planner Tyler Potterfield re-discovered a large body of architectural drawings in the basement of Richmond City Hall. Among these were several sheets showing an elevation, two floor plans, and a roof plan, for Steamer Company Number 5 (City of Richmond, Department of Public Works, Bureau of Surveys, Miscellaneous Files, Drawings file number 15-B-2).

These drawings do not exactly represent the building as built. For example, there are seven windows on the Brook Road side of the building, while there are only six, as the building was constructed. The bell tower in the drawings is shown as having windows, rather than being open, as shown in photographs. Nevertheless, the drawings are an excellent record of the building and allow comparisons to determine the changes that have taken place to the structure.

The drawings are undated and unsigned, except for an autograph on the first floor plan of "H. Wiley Tyler," who is listed in the 1883 Richmond City Directory as a "tinner" living nearby at 527 Brook Road.

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KEY TO ALTERATIONS

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

1. This storage area shows extensive rebuilding and alterations to walls and windows.
2. This interior wall may be the supporting wall of a detached hose-drying tower, ca. 1880s.
3. Brick two-story addition to rear of building, ca. 1912 (?).
4. Former equipment door, filled in ca. 1910 (?).
5. Ghost marks of "feed room" shown in original drawings are visible on the floor in this area.
6. This former window was converted to an equipment door in 1916.
7. Four horse stalls were removed from these areas ca. 1918. Ghost marks on floor show their exact position.
8. This window may have been converted into a personnel door at the same time as #6 (1916).
9. The original "bam" doors were converted to "roll-up" in 1932. The door frame shows extensive modification.
10. A doorway bricked-up ca. 1900 (?).
11. The original stair and the wall that formed a small lobby inside the front door was removed, perhaps with the change of the function of to an equipment-oriented function in 1916.
12. The wood floor was removed from this room ca. 1916 (?) and wainscoting removed from the walls in 1940.
13. Two windows were bricked-up in this wall, date unknown.

**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**

1. This space, which may have been feed storage, was converted to a kitchen. (pre-1968).
2. The floor was cut out of this space and a wall installed around it as a hose-drying area, date unknown.
3. This area was once a four-cell jail. Presumably these cells were removed after the Third Police Station moved to another facility in 1898. Ghost marks of the individual cells can be observed on the ceiling of this space. There was also access to the bell tower on the roof from this room.
4. The stair was moved to this area from the front of the building, ca. 1918 (?).
5. A wall that had formed a small upper stair hall was removed at this point (ghost marks are detectable under the present carpet) and this sliding pole installed some time after 1898.
6. Wall removed. These rooms have undergone several changes and modifications, date unknown.
7. Sliding pole installed post-1898.
8. This doorway is a result of the stairway being moved to this location.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Steamer Company Number 5 was built in 1883 to continue the function of fire fighting and police station for the Jackson Ward neighborhood begun in 1849 by a previous building on the site. The building is architecturally significant in that it is directly related to the Richmond tradition of two-bow-front houses (as seen in the 1876 Pace House on West Franklin Street, for example) and combines this local form in a singular manner with municipal functionality. It also continues another Richmond trend in its late date for the Italianate style, typical of municipal schools and other buildings constructed by the city during the period. This style can be observed as late as 1896, in Richmond's Randolph Street School. The firehouse reflects the growing urbanism of its day in its design, and is situated to take advantage of both its unusual lot and the particular street arrangement of the area. Steamer Company Number 5 is unique in that it is the best-preserved of Richmond's few surviving nineteenth-century firehouse buildings, and in its fabric illustrates the change from horse-drawn to motorized fire equipment. It retains almost all of its original exterior decorative elements, and is an excellent subject for the study of pre-fabricated pressed-metal decoration, both on the exterior, and inside with its well-preserved tin ceilings. Steamer Company Number 5 is the visual centerpiece of this part of the Jackson Ward neighborhood; it could easily become the architectural focal point of the revitalized Jackson Ward Historic District.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

In August, 1849, William Walthall sold the City of Richmond a small parcel of land at the intersection of Brook Road and Marshall Street. As recorded by the City Surveyor in the plat, the new municipal property was intended for a fire engine-house, and "laid out so to build thereon a house 18 feet square..." An addition was constructed to this original building in 1871, but as both firehouse and the Third Police Station it proved quite small and inadequate.

City Engineer W.E. Cutshaw reported in early 1883 that "A plan has been made for a new engine-house and police station to replace the one at Brook Avenue." The following May action was taken when the Committees on Finance and Fire Department jointly announced the appropriation of \$10,000 for a new building on the site of the 1849 structure.

Throughout the Fall of 1883 the new firehouse drew considerable interest and comment, mentioned in the "Personals and Briefs" column of The Dispatch as "an imposing building...it covers much more ground than the old building, its predecessor." One of the more complete descriptions was furnished by a weekly Richmond newspaper, The State, on November 1, 1883:

This is quite a pretty-looking building, much larger than the old one, and designed in a much more convenient and substantial manner and as it stands out in its good proportions presents a very handsome appearance. The ground floor, which is to be occupied by the No. 5 engine and hose companies, with their horses and apparatus, is arranged especially with reference to their facilities of quick hitching up and exit. The upper floor, for the accommodation of the police of the Third District is provided with four roomy cells from which there is no chance of breaking. Surmounting the whole will be the fine old bell for tolling the hours and sounding the alarm of fire. Wind and weather permitting, it will be ready for occupancy on the first of the coming month.

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The tone of the newspaper article reflects the sense of civic pride the new building generated, and the importance of the firehouse for the growing Jackson Ward neighborhood. The decorative scheme of the building that would become known as Steamer Company Number 5 was quite appropriate in that it mirrors the Italianate style so prevalent in Jackson Ward (where entire blocks can still be found of Italianate townhouses), and thus represents an architecturally sympathetic municipal presence in the area.

Steamer Company Number 5 follows a long Richmond tradition of the double-bow form, which can be traced back as far as the Hancock-Caskie House (1808-09). An imposing continuation of this building type constructed just seven years before the firehouse and which combines the form with the elaborate Italianate style is the Pace House (1876), on Franklin Street. The influence of this building, with its double bays and rich bracketed cornice, can be felt in the design of Steamer Company Number 5, which combines municipal practicality with the double-bow form and the Italianate style.

When the Richmond City Council Committee on Buildings and Grounds was called upon in 1882 to investigate designs for a "modern engine house" for the site, the phrase reflected the trend of urbanism and progress of the day. As designed, Steamer Company Number 5 represented a effective and compact grouping of two vital city functions: that of police station and firehouse. This combination building integrated into the surrounding architectural program, and efficiently utilized the design to accommodate the latest in fire fighting apparatus as well as secure detention facilities for the Police Department. Steamer Company Number 5 was unique among Richmond firehouses in that it also accommodated a police station house and cell block, and the city is fortunate that this rarest survivor is also the best-preserved. Architectural drawings of the plans and elevations for Steamer Company Number 5 were rediscovered in 1994 and the labeled spaces of the floor plans illustrate how the designer overcame the constraints of the space at Marshall and Brook with the challenges dictated by the function of the building.

Within the walls of Steamer Company Number 5 can be traced the history of fire fighting techniques in Richmond. The era illustrated dates from the use of the first steam-powered horse-drawn equipment (introduced in 1860) to the modern motorized equipment found fighting city fires in 1968. The clearly visible floor positions of the horse stalls and feed room in the main equipment bay are speak eloquently of the fire fighting equipment of a hundred years ago, as do the ribs built into the floor for the traction of hooves, and the poignant wear to a window sill in one of the stall areas which is the result of horses' nibbling.

Research has not discovered the source for fabrication of the exterior decoration of Steamer Company No. 5 in either the case of the pressed metal work or the unique cast-iron railing on the balcony. These elements do represent extraordinary examples of this type of decoration, and are in an excellent state of preservation. Close examination of the tin work reveals not only its complexity, but also shows how the metal was pierced and soldered into its form. The pressed tin ceilings are also in good repair, and the ceiling of the main equipment bay, with its classical decoration, can be examined in the 1911 manufacturer's catalog. The condition of these elements and their decorative richness makes them valuable for the study of prefabricated metal decoration of the late nineteenth-century.

The need for increased space and more modern accommodations resulted in a replacement for Steamer Company Number 5 being built several blocks away at 320 West Leigh Street. Company Number 5 transferred operations to the new building in June, 1968, ending 119 years of fire fighting tradition at the intersection of Brook and Marshall. After use as a community center for some years, the building was declared surplus and sold by the City of Richmond in 1976 to Thomas Robinson, who began a process of renovation. In 1988 title of the building was transferred to Steamer Company Number Five, Inc., which operates the building today as The Virginia Fire and Police Museum.

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Steamer Company Number 5  
Richmond, Virginia

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**Steamer Company Number 5  
Richmond, Virginia**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**Steamer Company Number 5  
Richmond, Virginia**

Boundary Description

The Steamer Company Number 5 property is a triangle with 78 feet on Marshall Street and 114.50 feet along the western edge of the building.

Boundary Justification

The above dimensions are those given in the legal description in the latest (1988) change of title (Ref. 189-0306). This information conforms to the information given in the descriptions of the three parcels that make up the property: William and Jane Walthall to the City of Richmond, 1849 (D.B. 55 page 324), James Kelly and wife to the City of Richmond, 1871 (D.B. 93-A page 305) and James Kelly and wife to the City of Richmond, 1883 (D.B. 123-C page 501).

In addition, since the structure itself occupies virtually all of the lot it stands on, and is bordered on two of its three sides by a city sidewalk, the boundary of the property is well defined.

United States Department of the Interior  
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**Steamer Company Number 5  
Richmond, Virginia**

Section      Photo      Page 12

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All photographs are of:  
STEAMER COMPANY NUMBER 5  
200 West Marshall Street  
Richmond, Virginia  
VDHR File Number 127-370  
Selden Richardson, photographer

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: south (Marshall St.) elevation, looking north  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 1 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (2-G), north wall  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 10 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: south (Marshall St.) elevation, looking north  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 2 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (2-D), south wall  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 11 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: west elevation, looking north east  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 3 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: ceiling, room (2-G), showing cell block ghost marks  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 12 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: east (Brook Rd.) elevation, looking south west  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 4 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (2-B), looking east  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 13 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: east (Brook Rd.) elevation, looking west  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 5 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (2-C), looking east  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 14 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: south (Marshall St.) elevation, railing detail  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 6 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (1-B), looking south  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 15 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (2-A), looking south  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 7 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (1-A), looking south  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 16 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (2-A) looking north  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 8 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (1-A), area above stair, ceiling detail  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 17 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (2-A) looking south  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 9 OF 18

DATE: July 16, 1994  
VIEW OF: room (1-A), looking north, stair area  
NEG NO: 13815  
PHOTO 18 OF 18

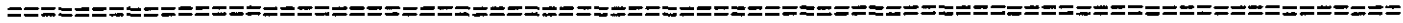


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National Park Service

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CONTINUATION SHEET

**Steamer Company Number 5  
Richmond, Virginia**

Section      Photo      Page  13



OTHER HISTORIC MATERIALS:

Period Photograph "A"

SOURCE: The Virginia Fire and Police Museum (Steamer Company Number 5 archives).  
DATE: ca. 1890-1910 PHOTOGRAPHER: Unknown (Foster Studio)  
VIEW OF: South (Marshall Street) elevation, looking north.  
COMMENT: Shows bell tower on roof (removed post 1930s) and hose-drying structure (removed post 1900) in rear of building. Note Italianate awnings, pre-motorized equipment, and streetcar tracks in Marshall Street.

Period Photograph "B"

SOURCE: The Virginia Fire and Police Museum (Steamer Company Number 5 archives). DATE: ca. 1916-1920  
PHOTOGRAPHER: Unknown  
VIEW OF: South (Marshall Street) elevation, looking north.  
COMMENT: Shows transitional period between horse-drawn and motorized equipment. Note bell tower on roof and post-1916 alteration that created smaller equipment door and small personnel door.

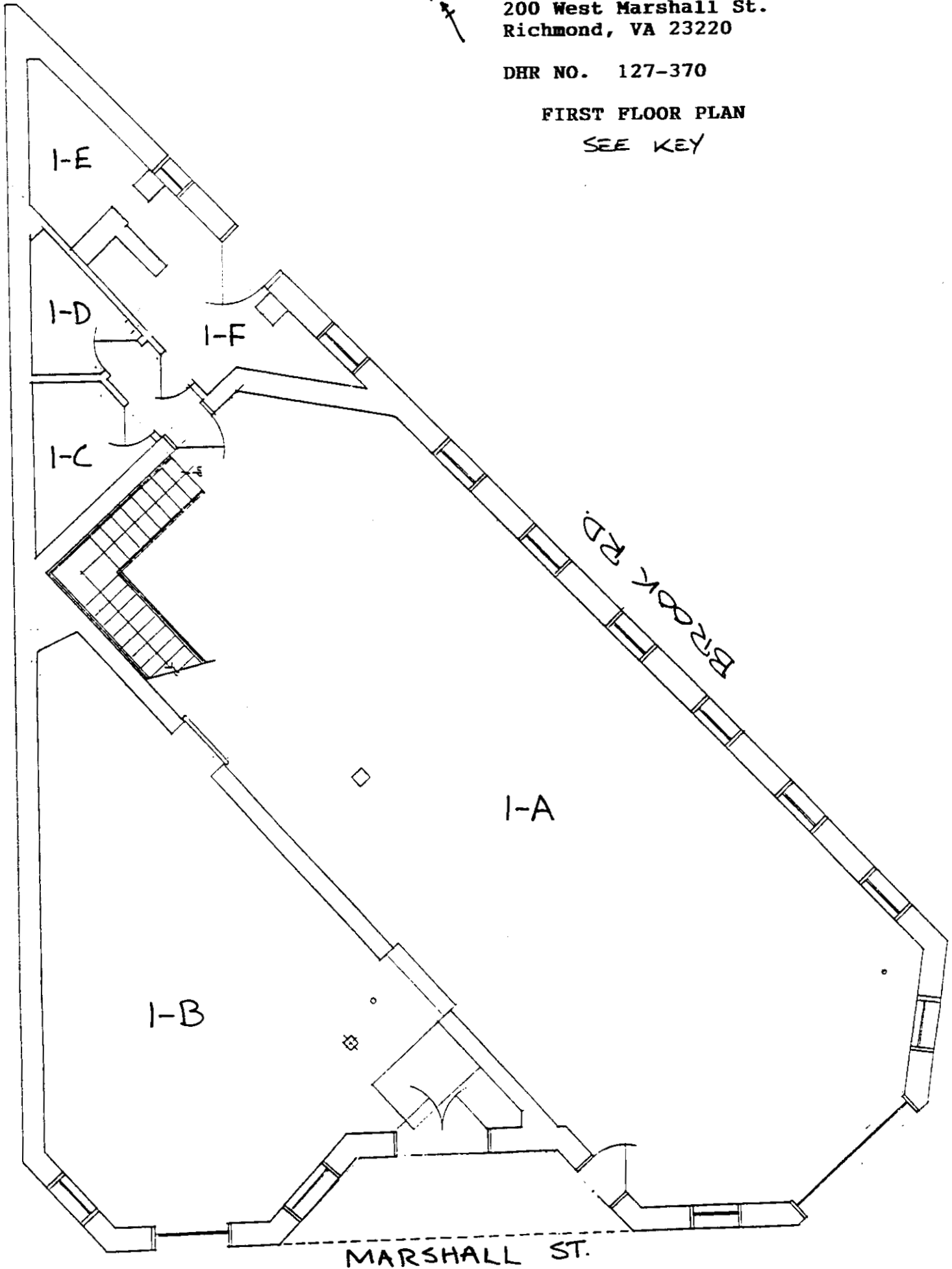


Steamer Company No.5  
200 West Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220

DHR NO. 127-370

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

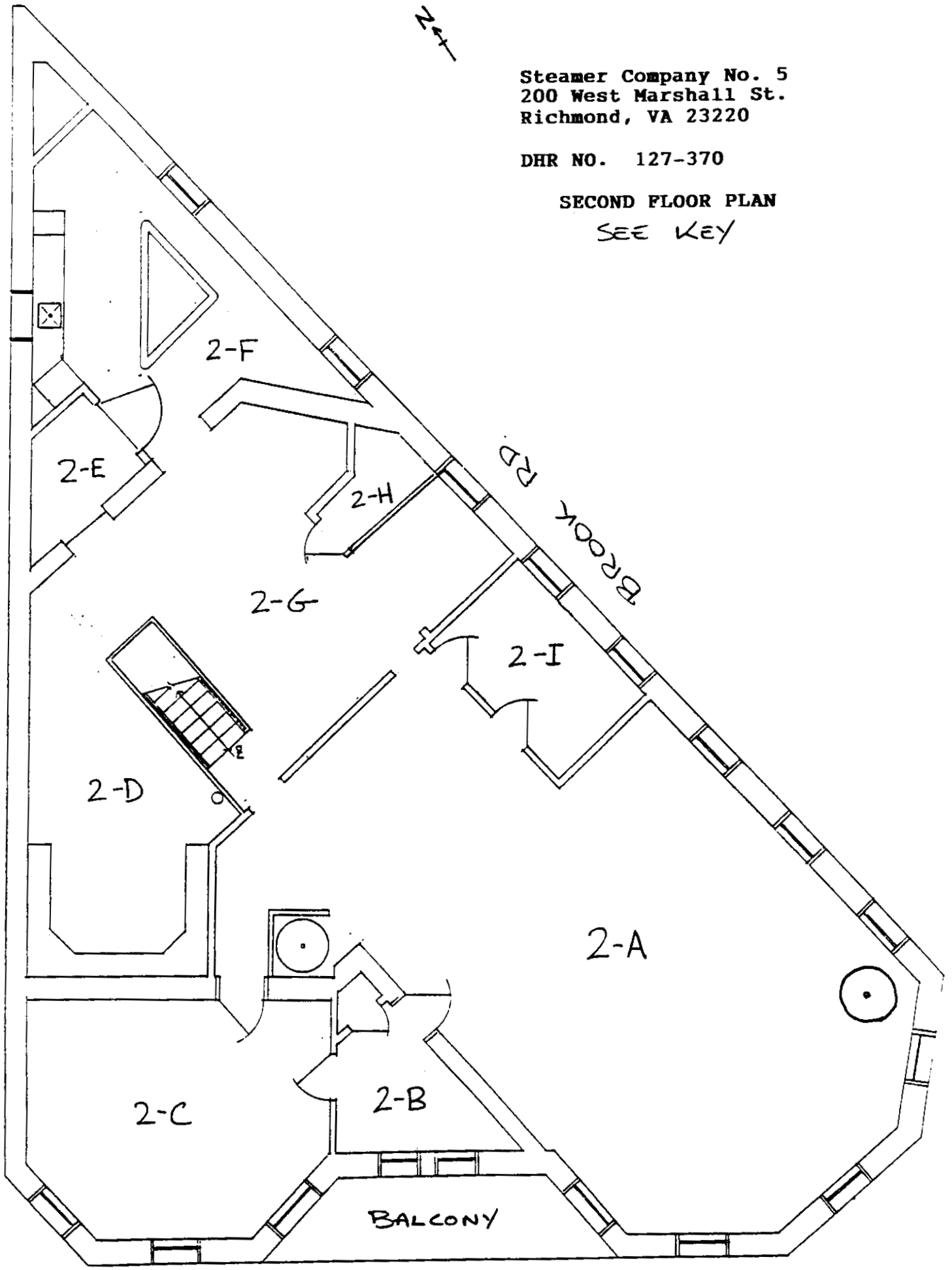
SEE KEY



Steamer Company No. 5  
200 West Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220

DHR NO. 127-370

SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
SEE KEY

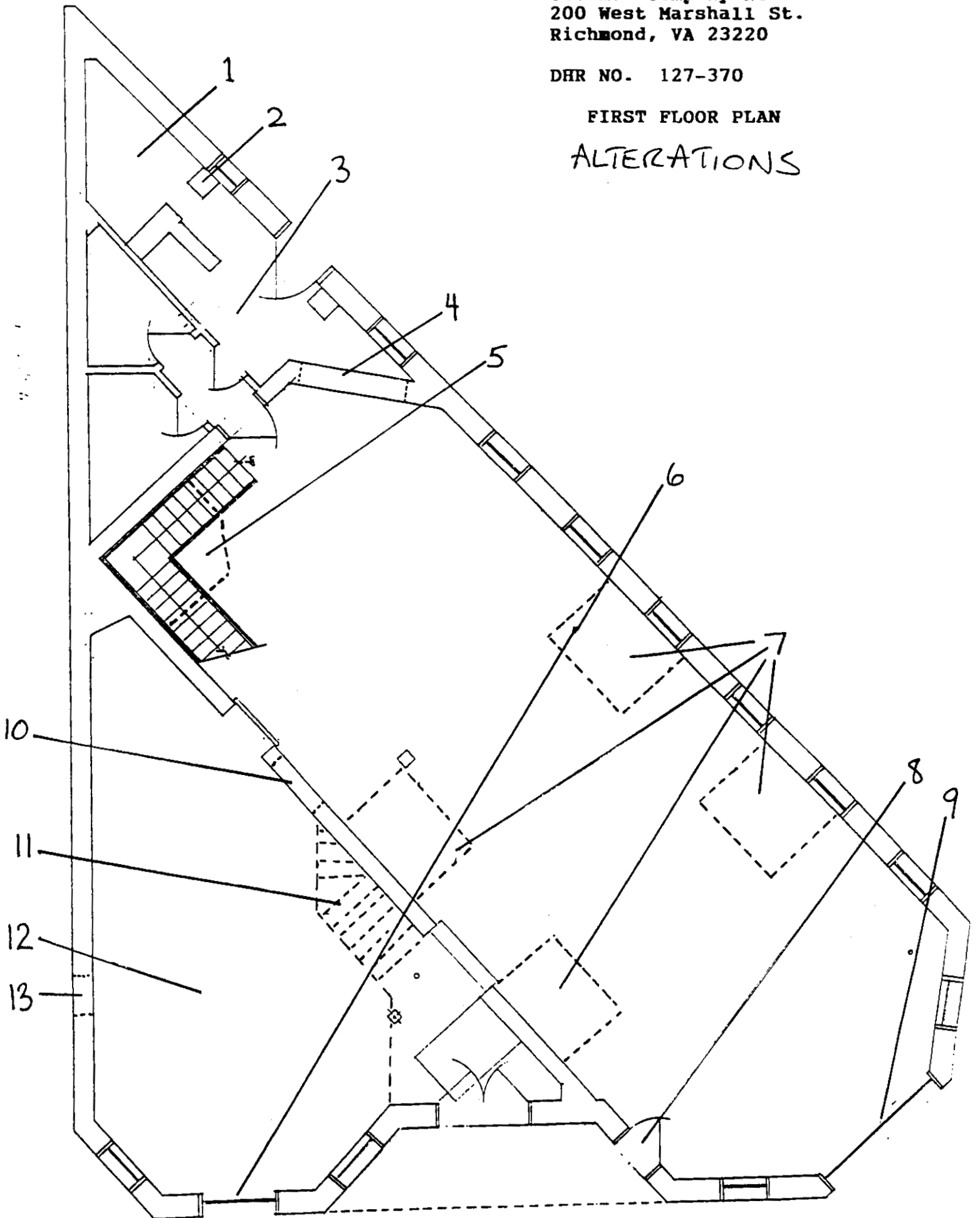


MARSHALL ST.

Steamer Company No.5  
200 West Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220

DHR NO. 127-370

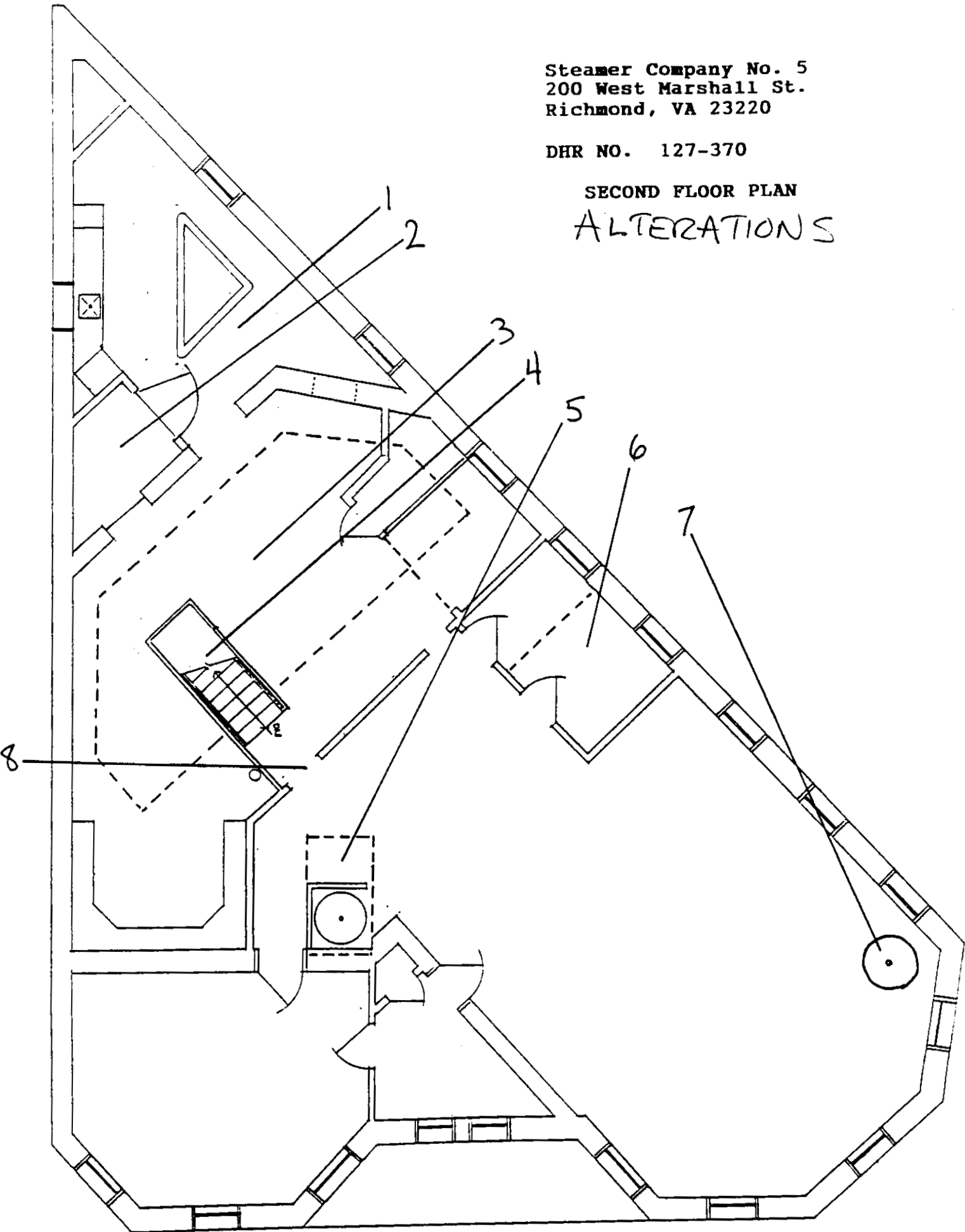
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
ALTERATIONS



Steamer Company No. 5  
200 West Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220

DHR NO. 127-370

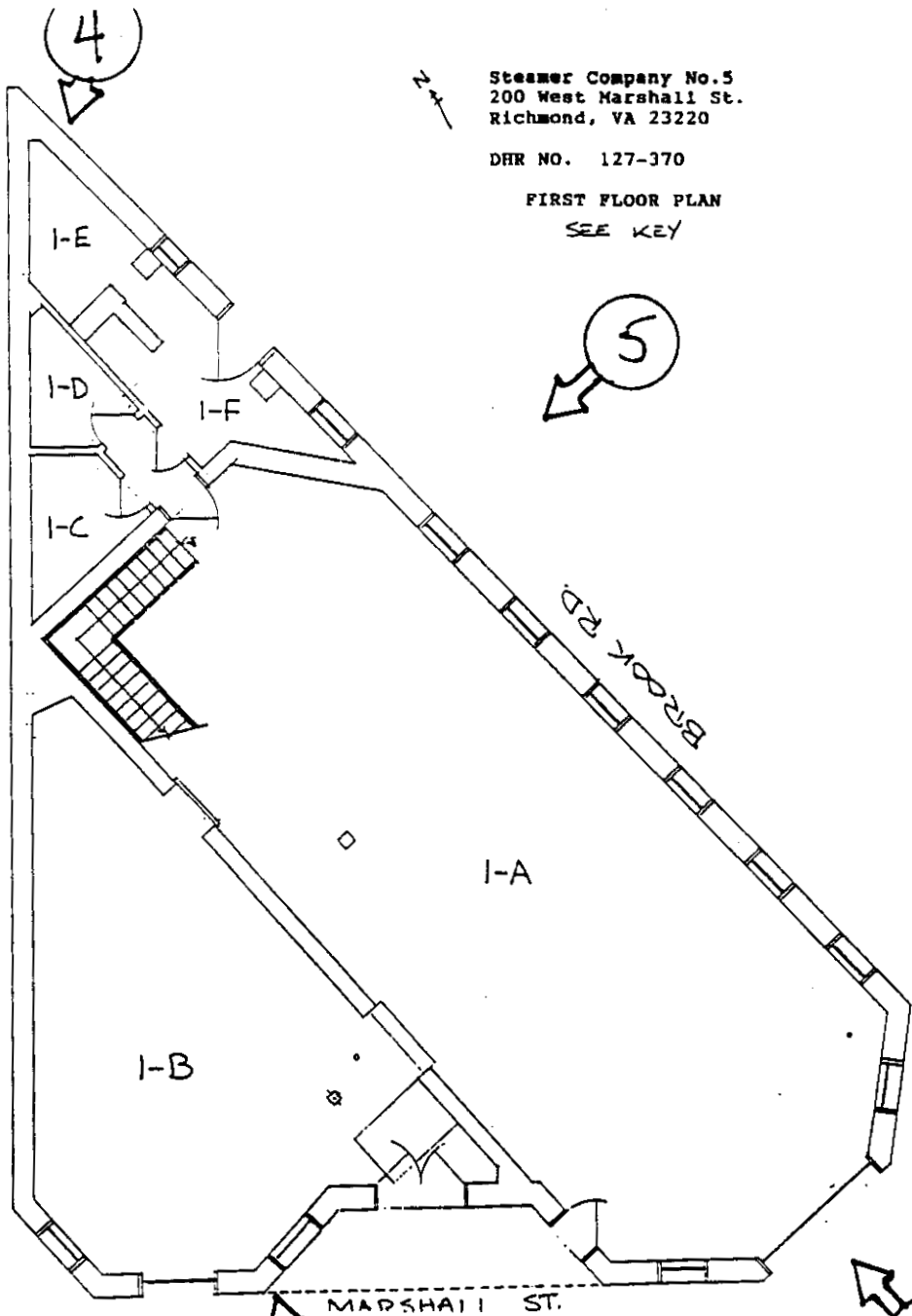
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ALTERATIONS



Steamer Company No. 5  
200 West Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220

DHR NO. 127-370

FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SEE KEY



PHOTOGRAPH  
POSITIONS

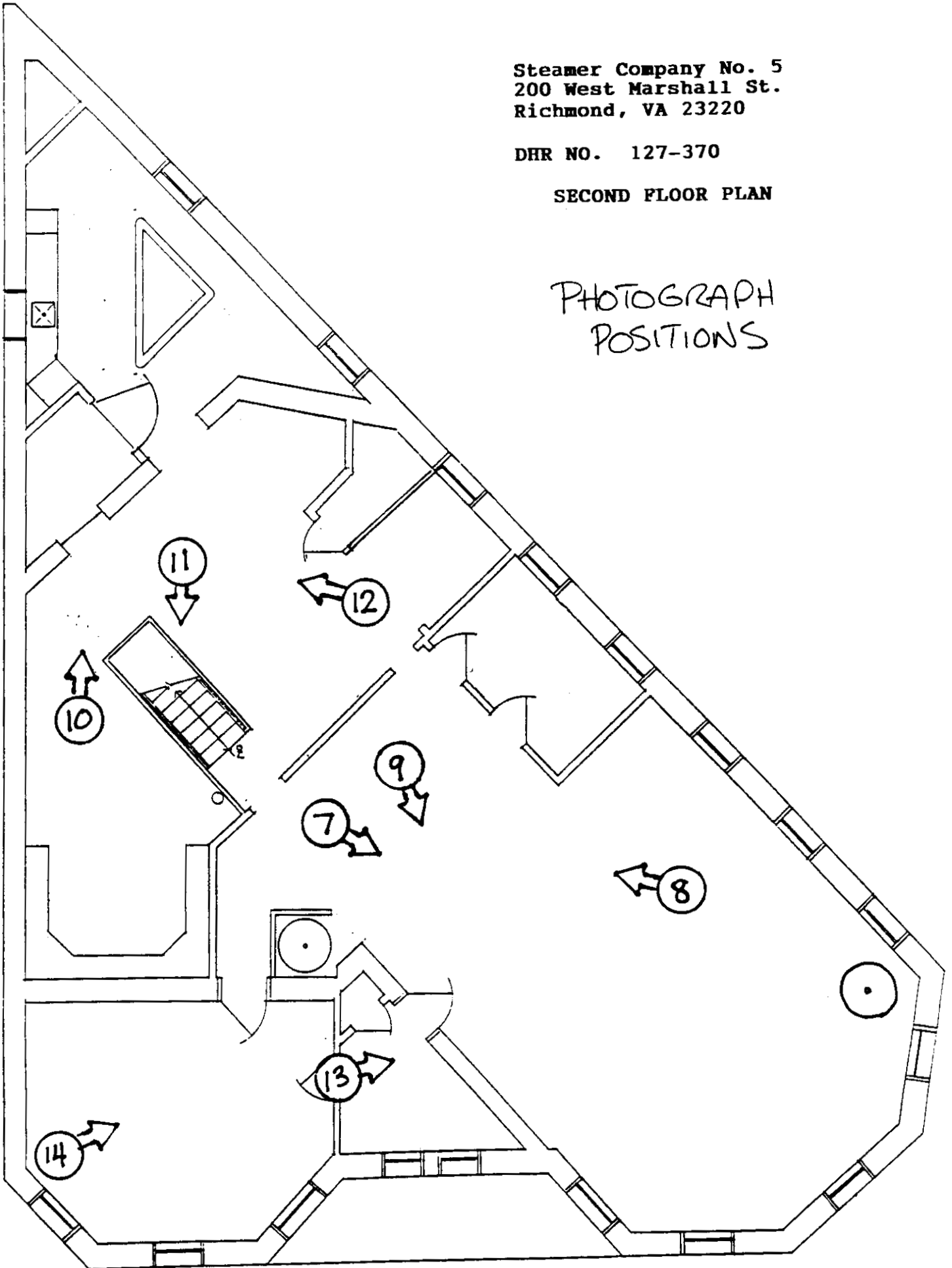


Steamer Company No. 5  
200 West Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220

DHR NO. 127-370

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

PHOTOGRAPH  
POSITIONS

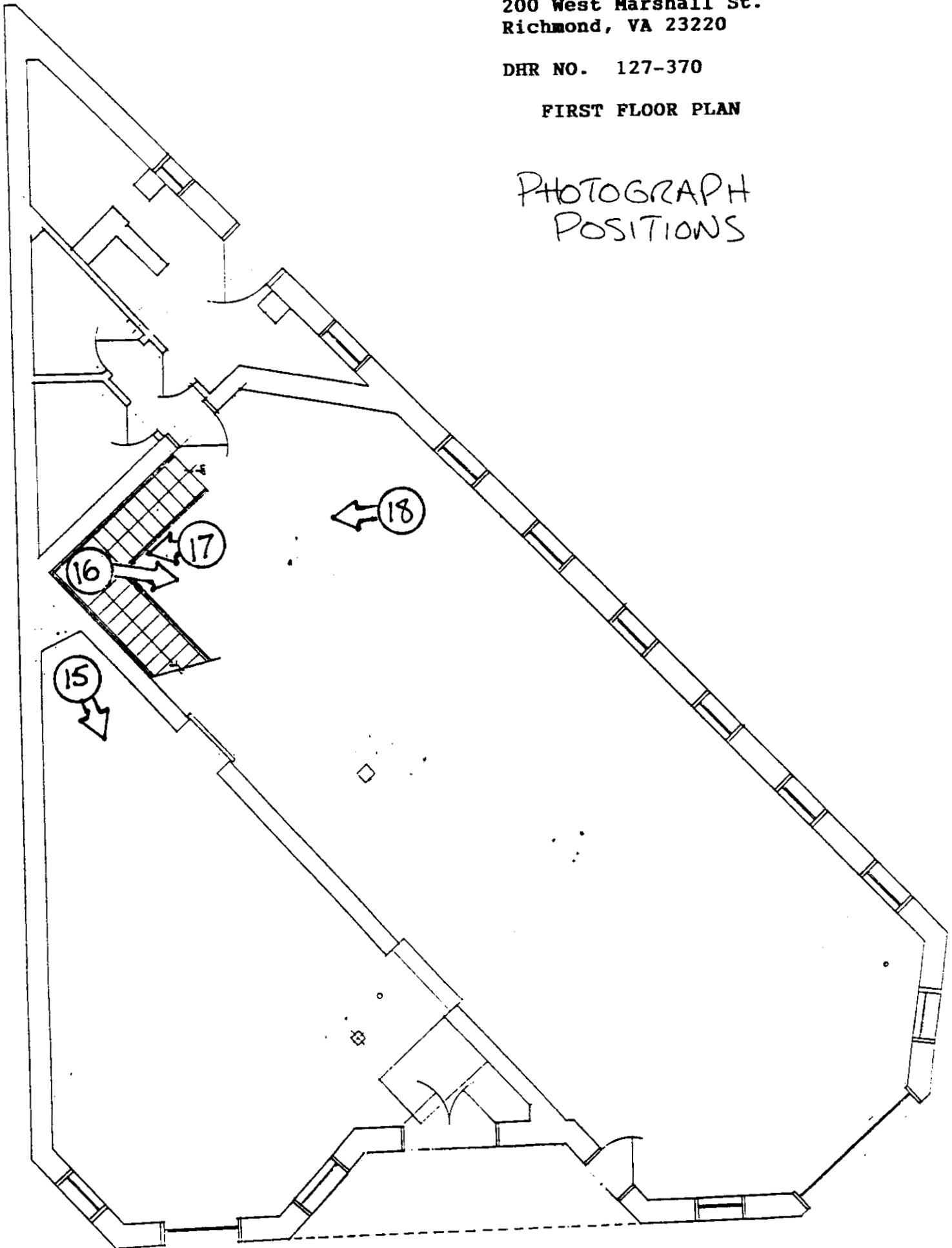


Steamer Company No. 5  
200 West Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220

DHR NO. 127-370

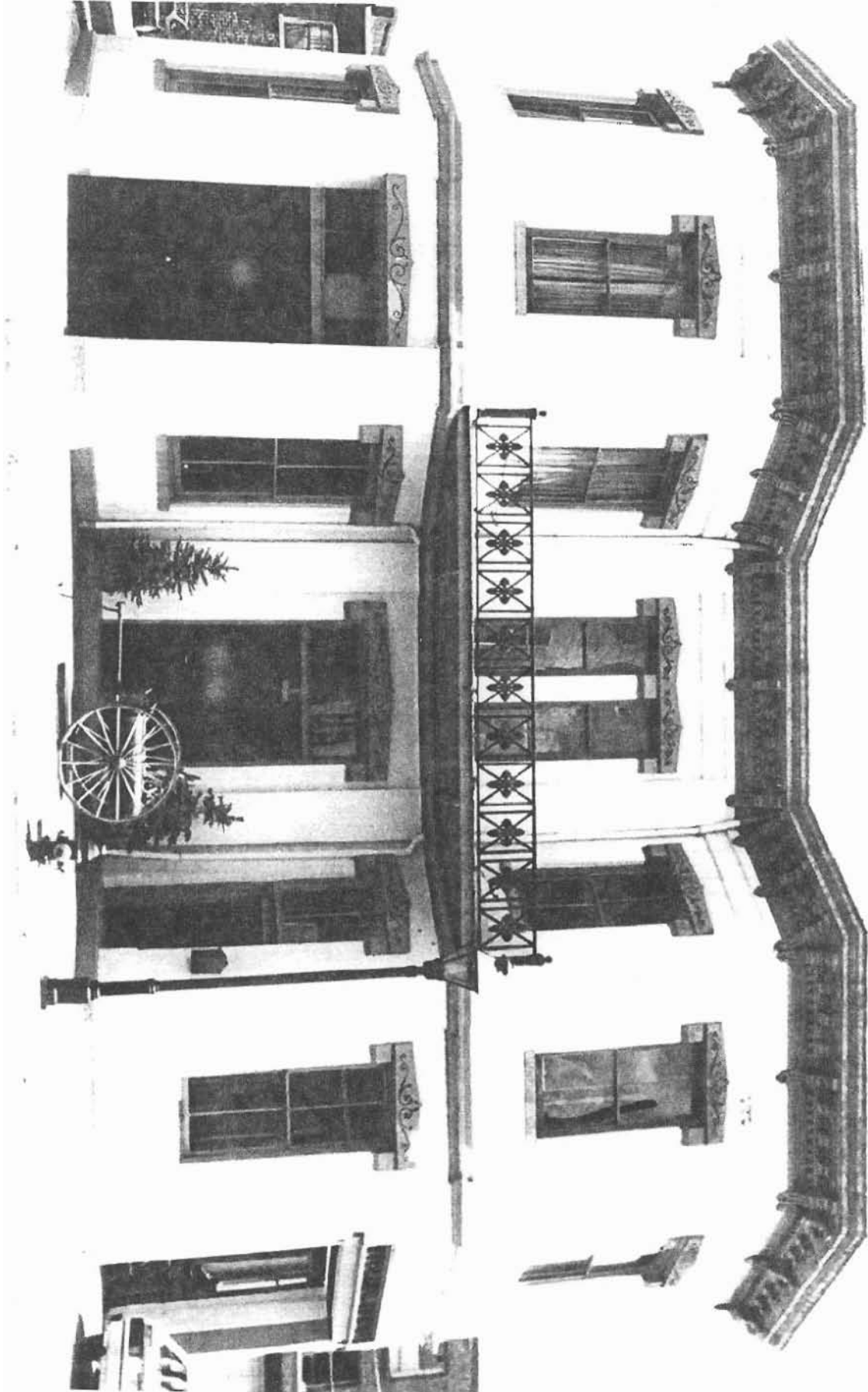
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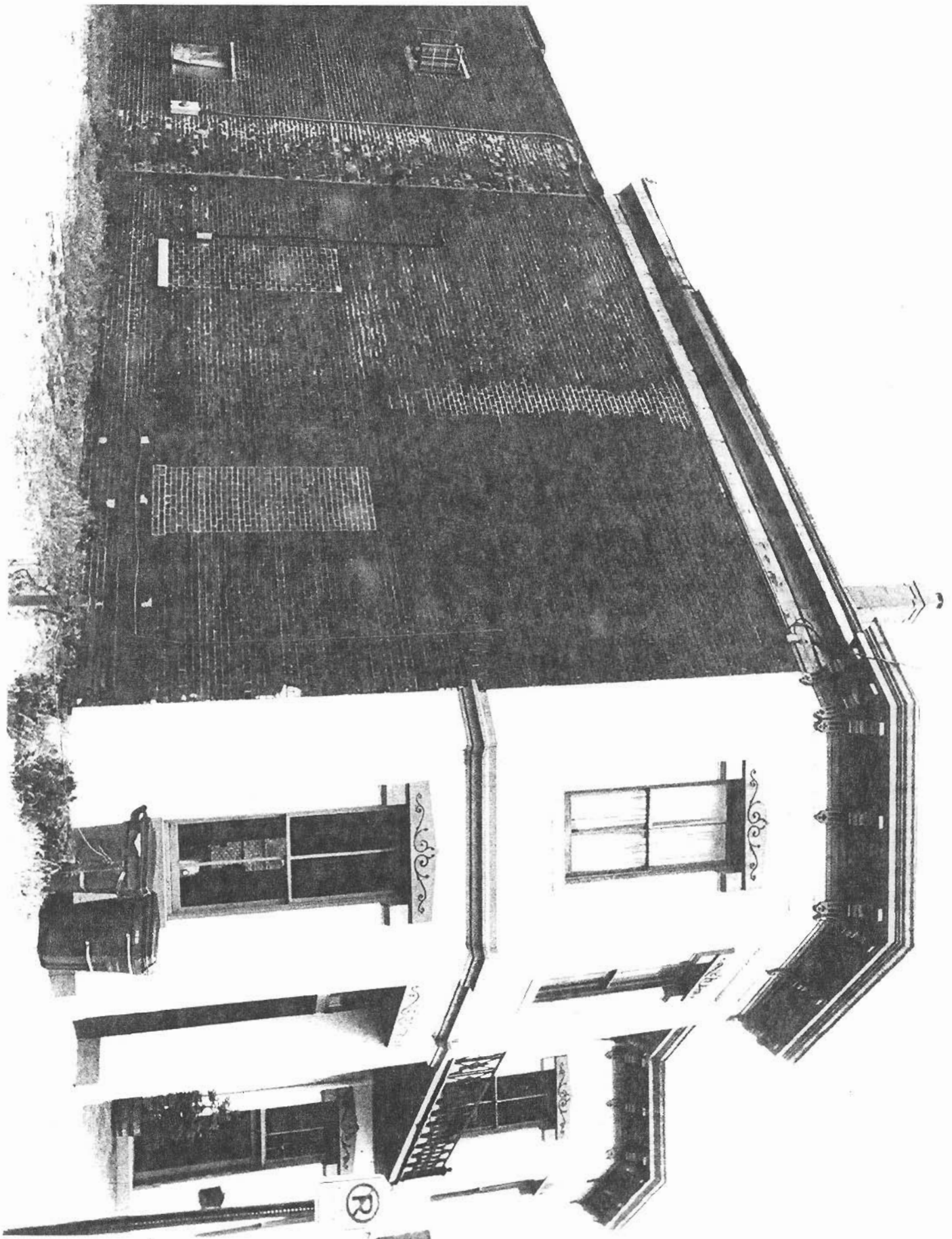
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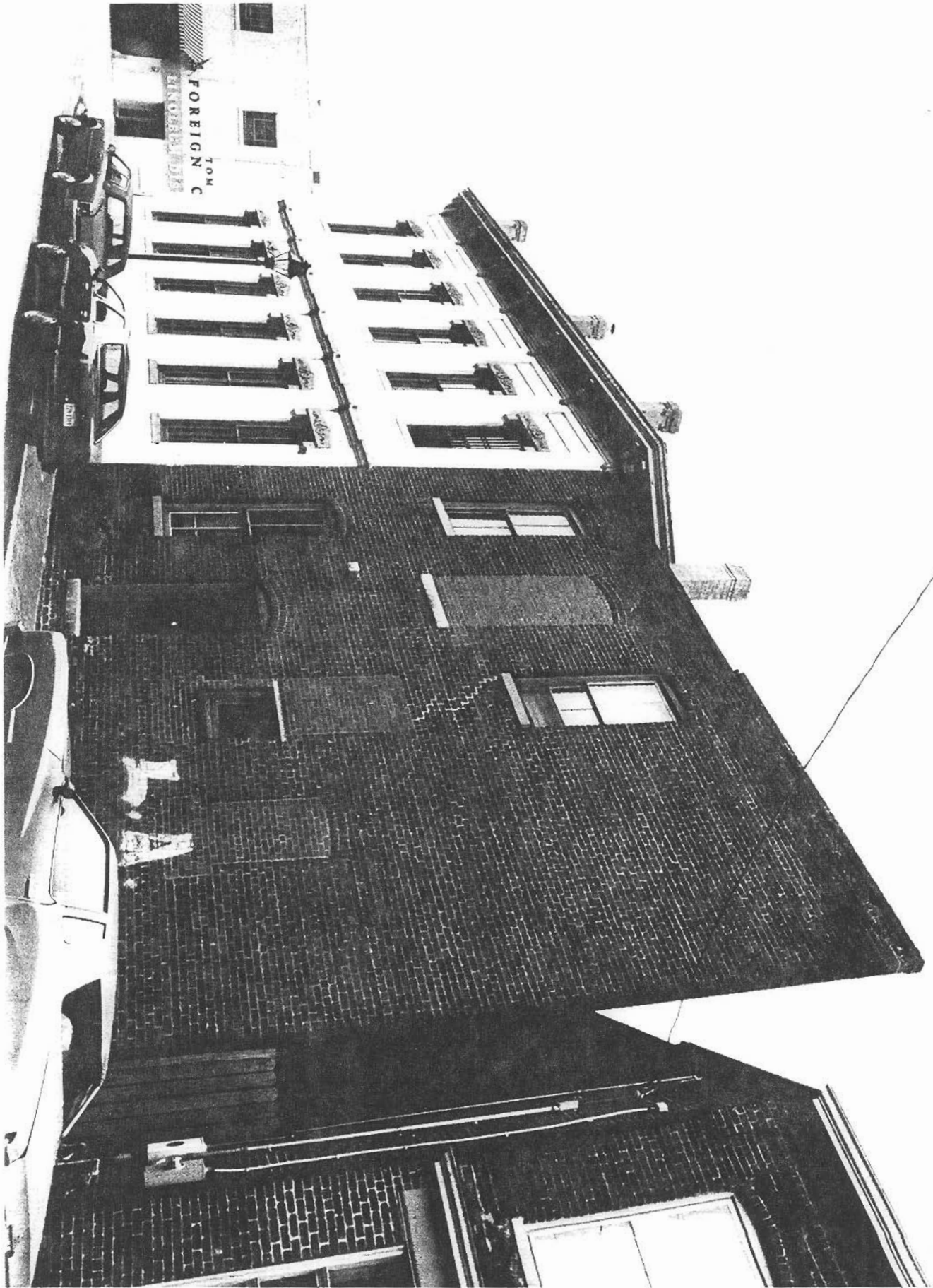


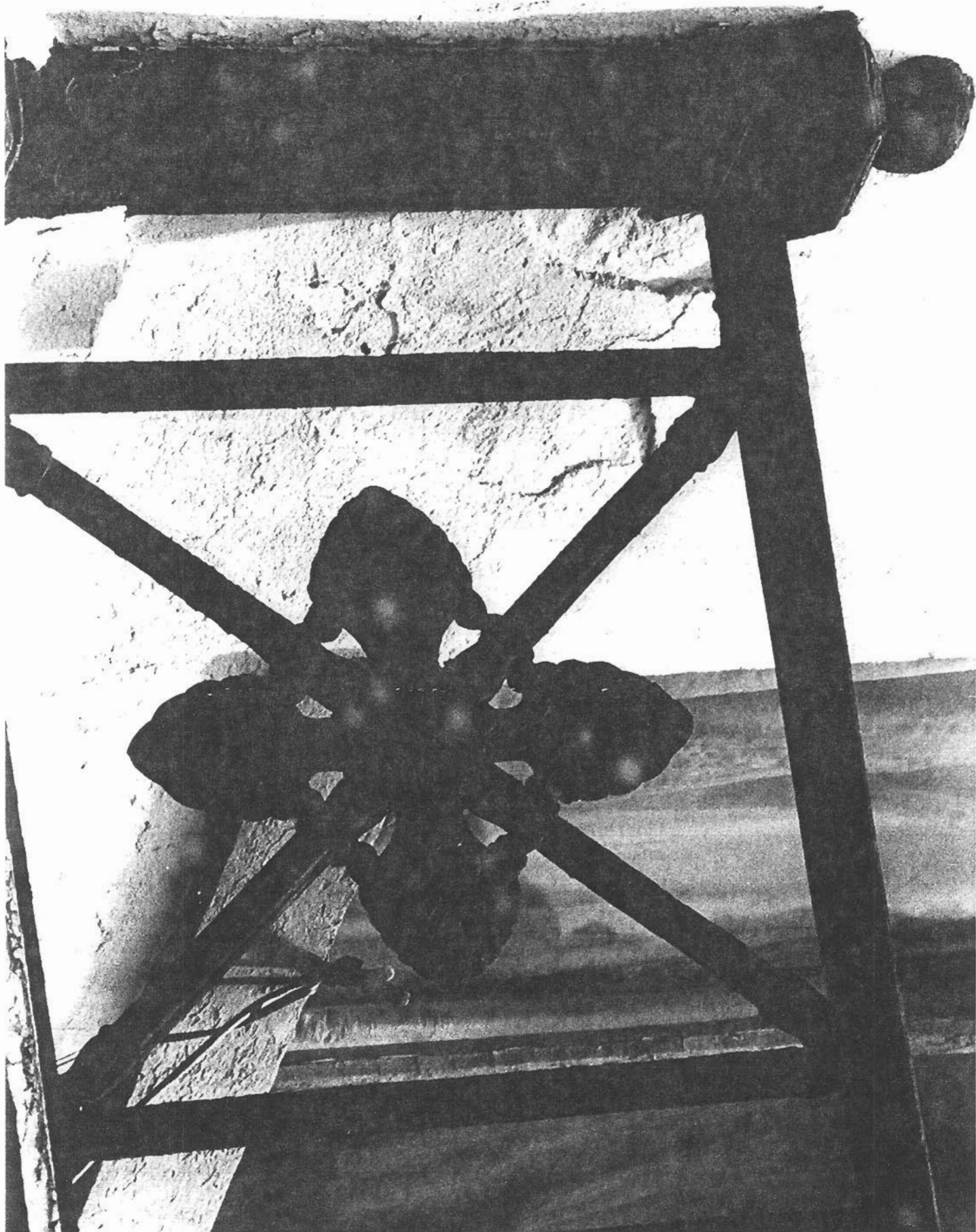


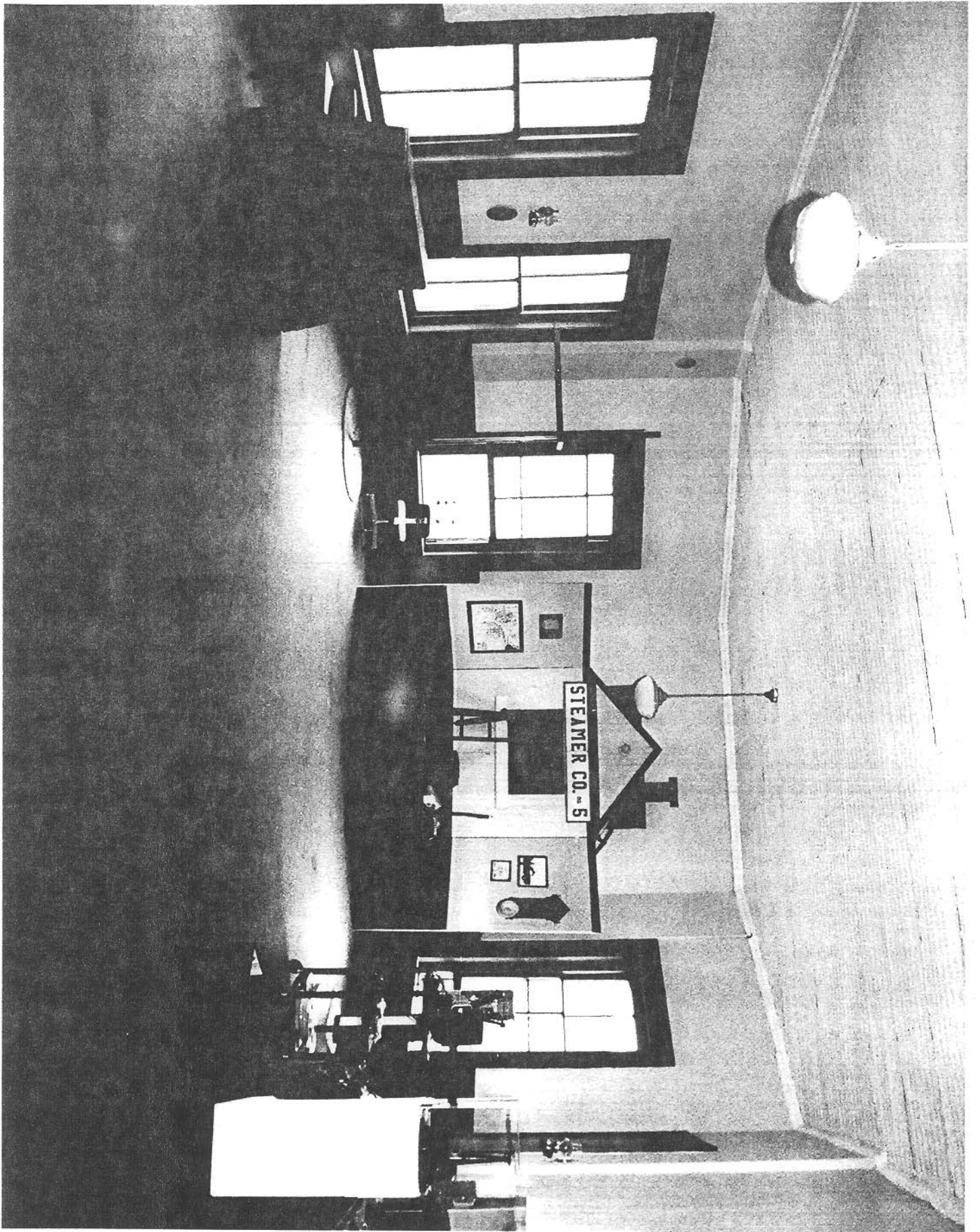


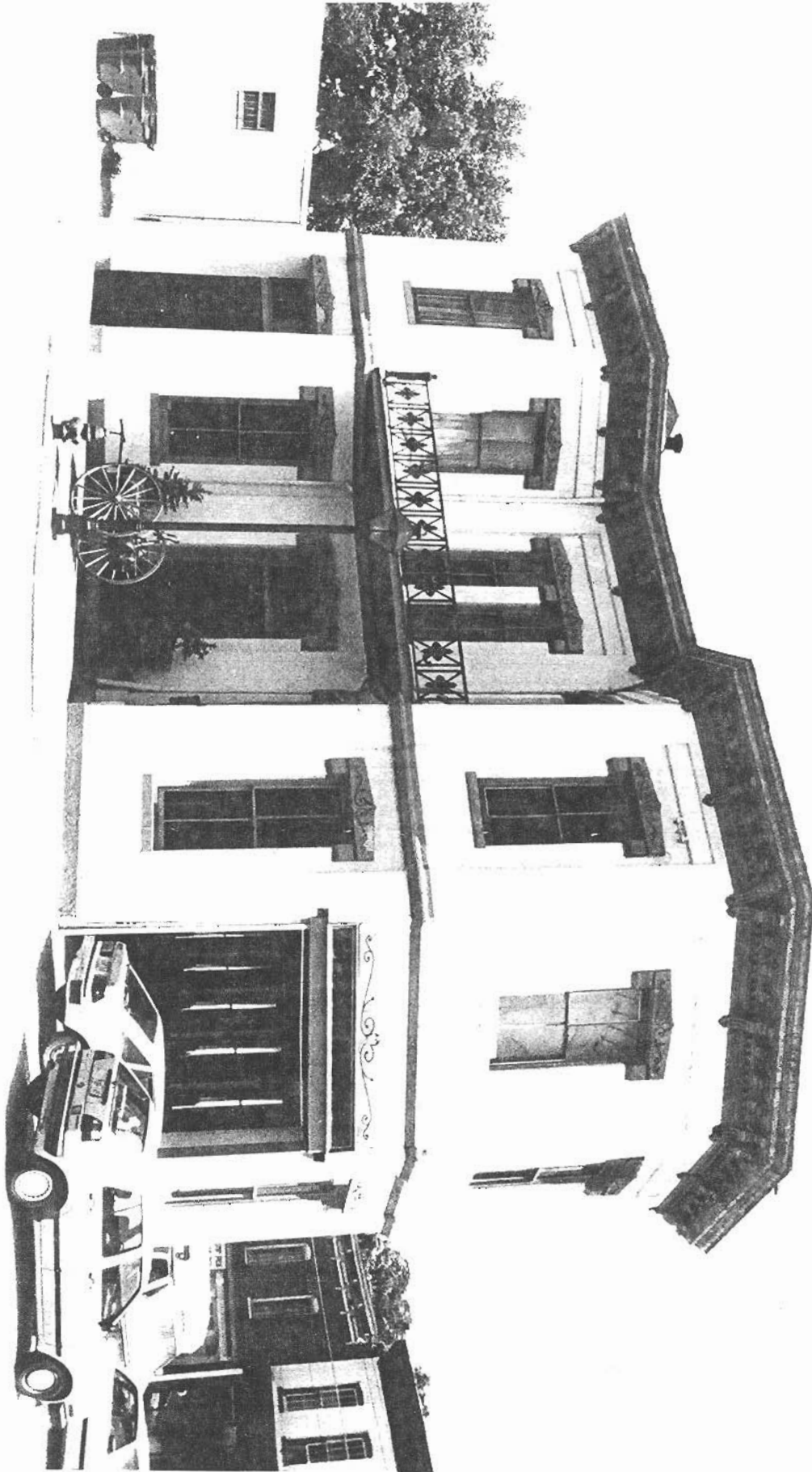


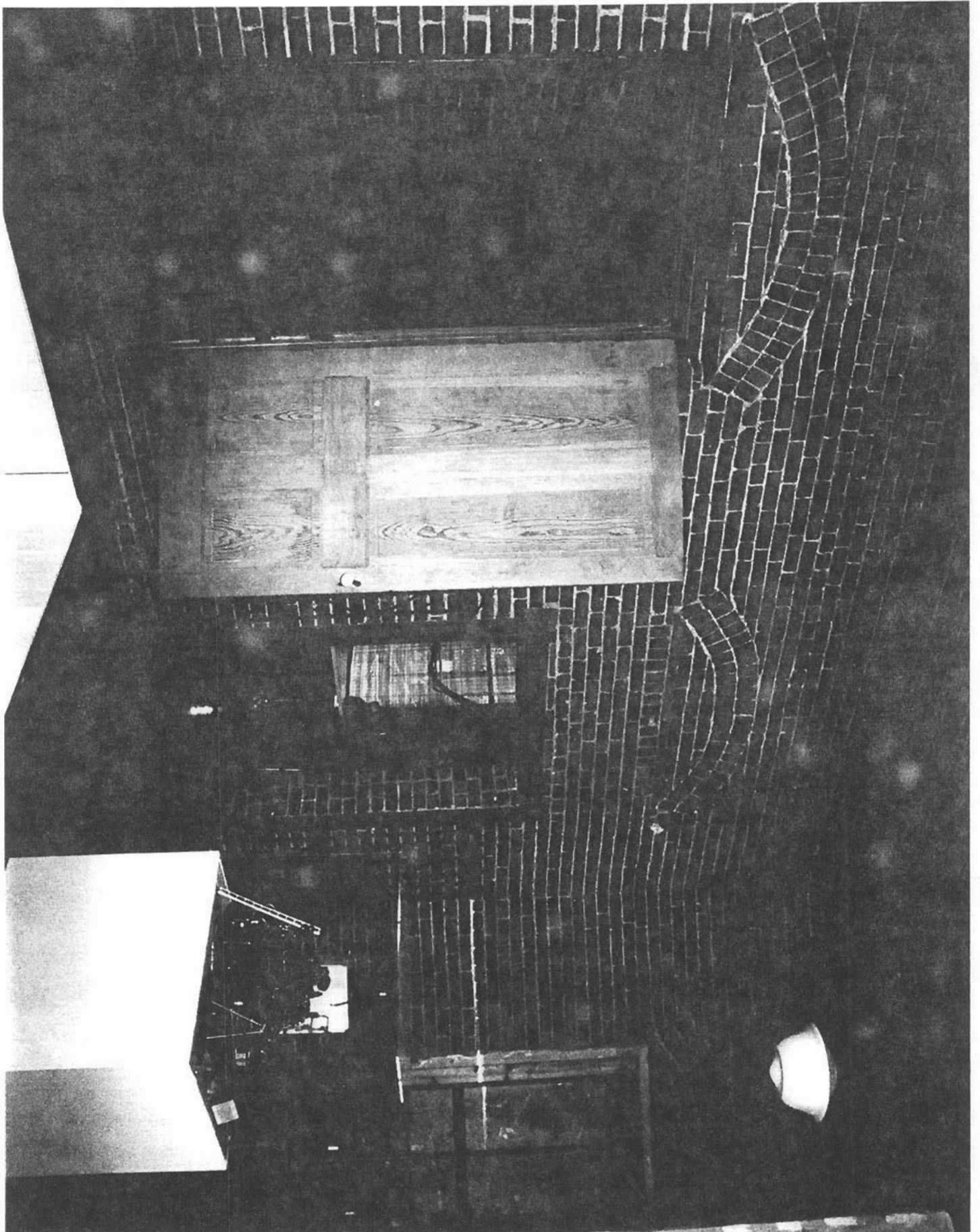




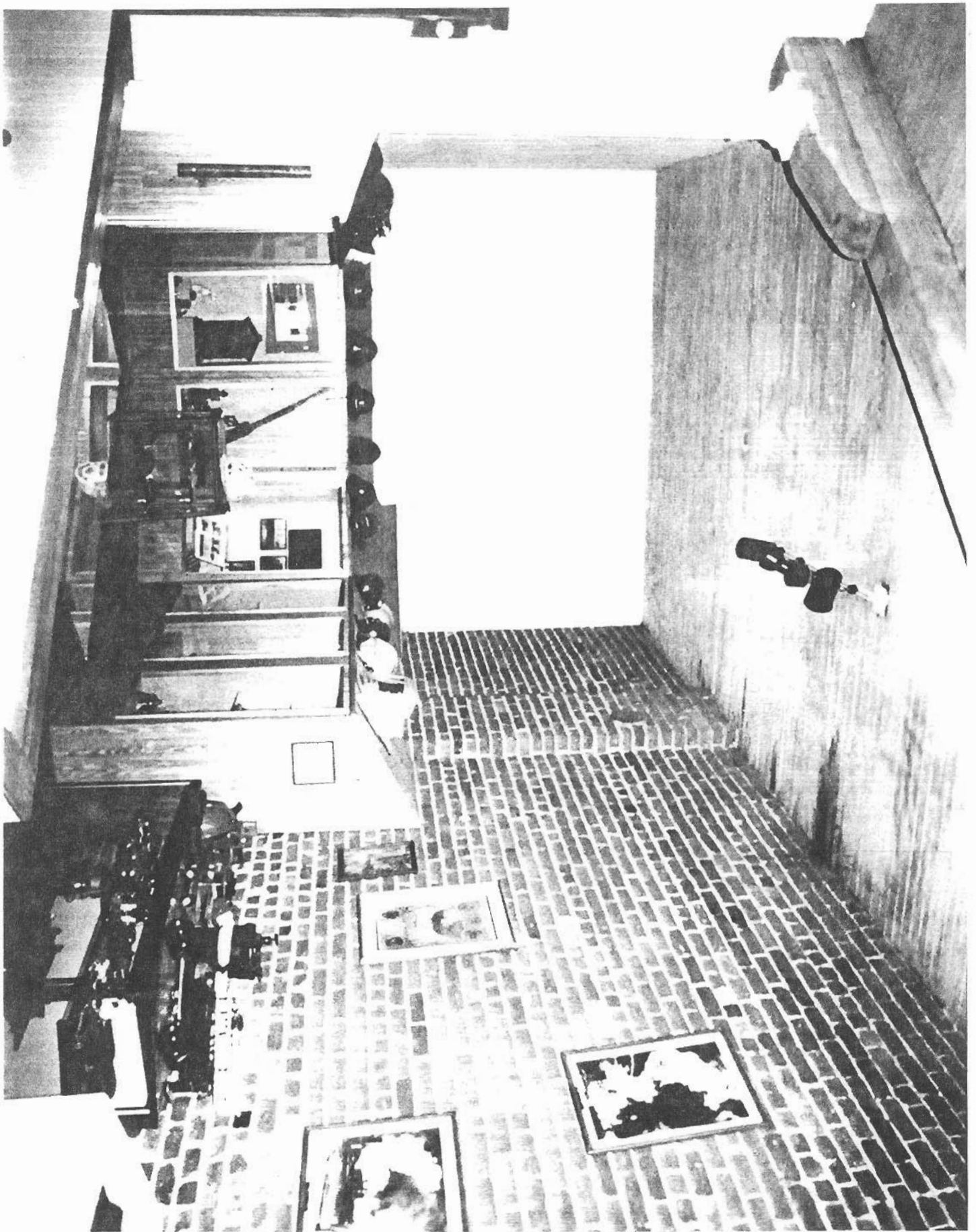


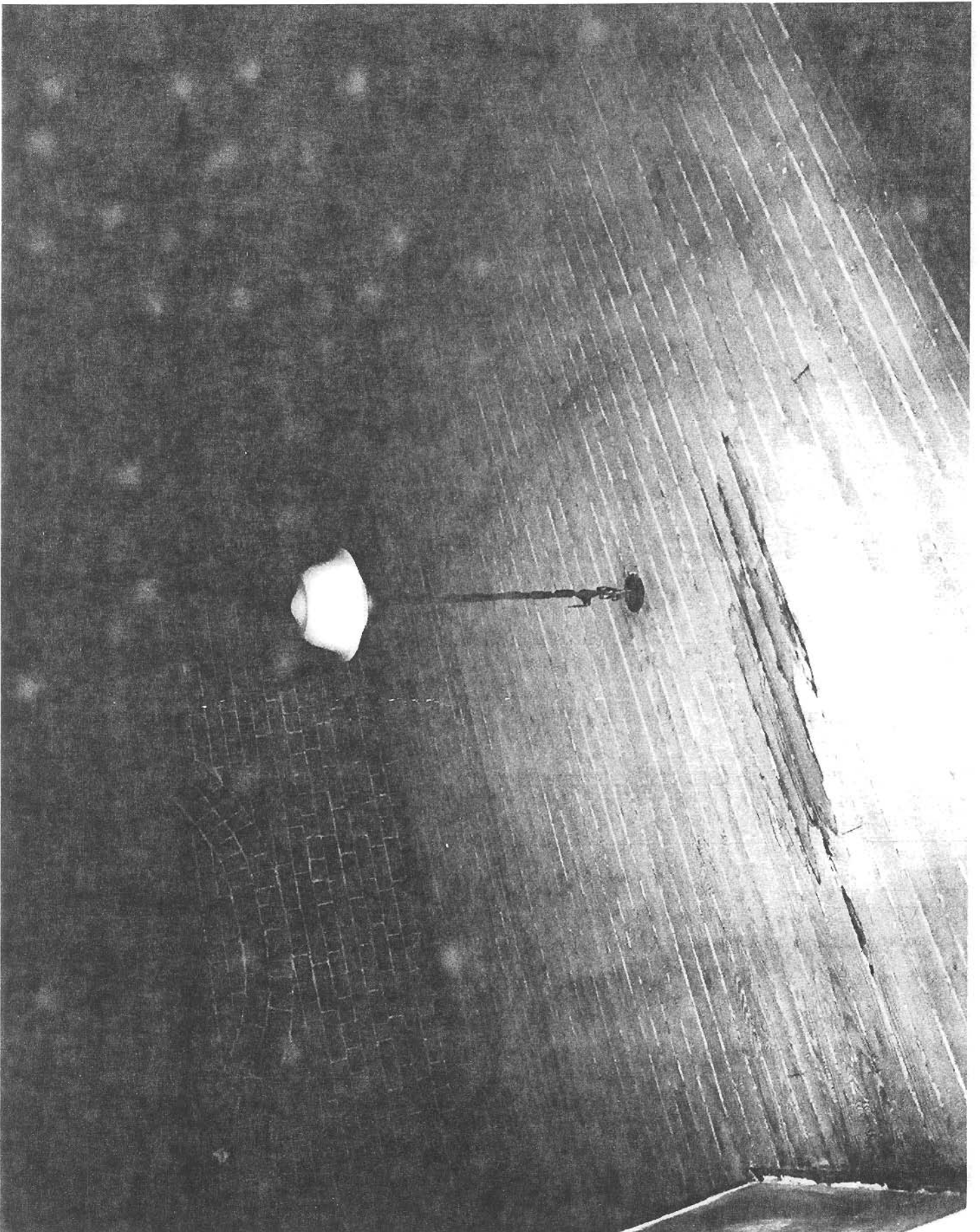


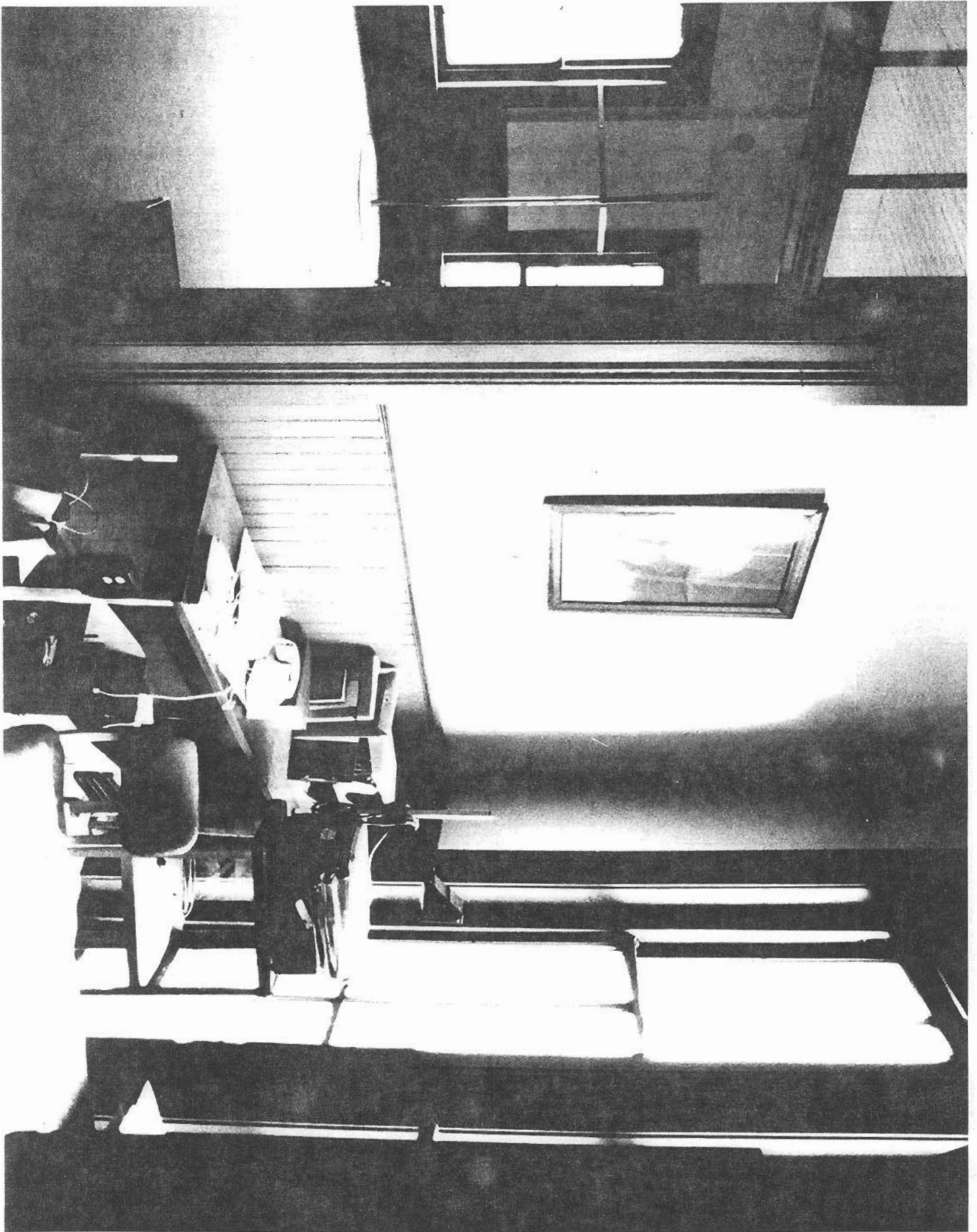


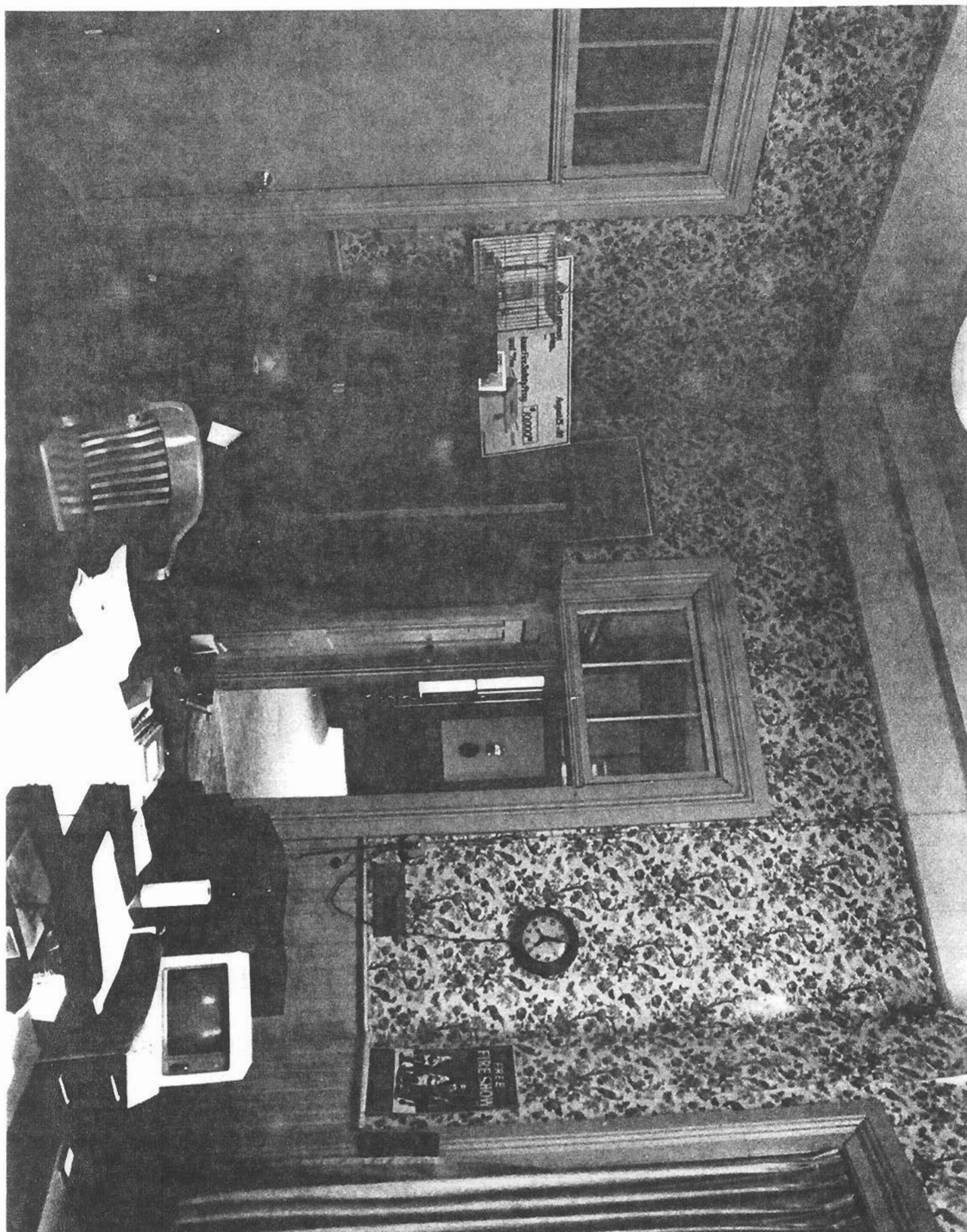


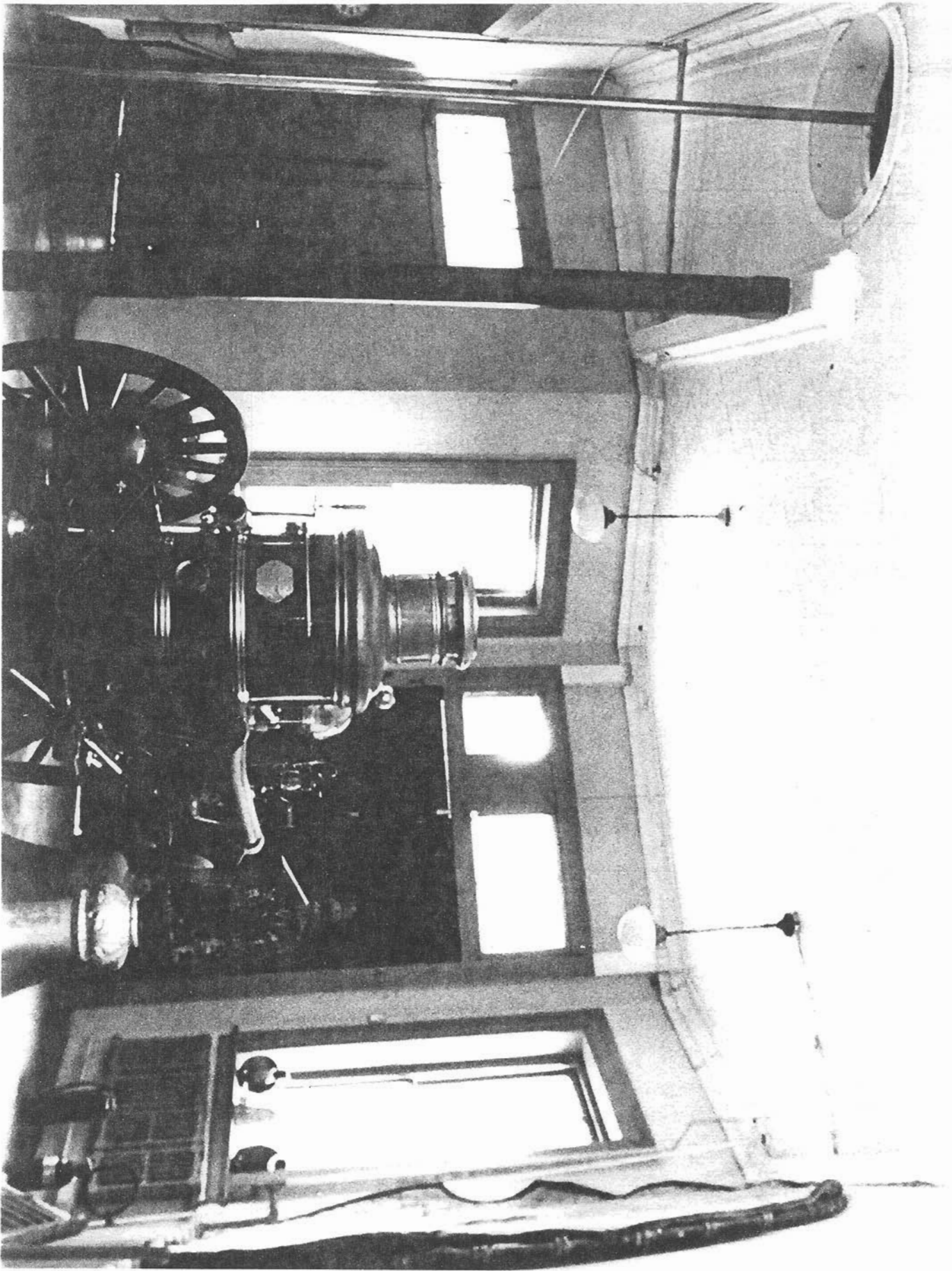


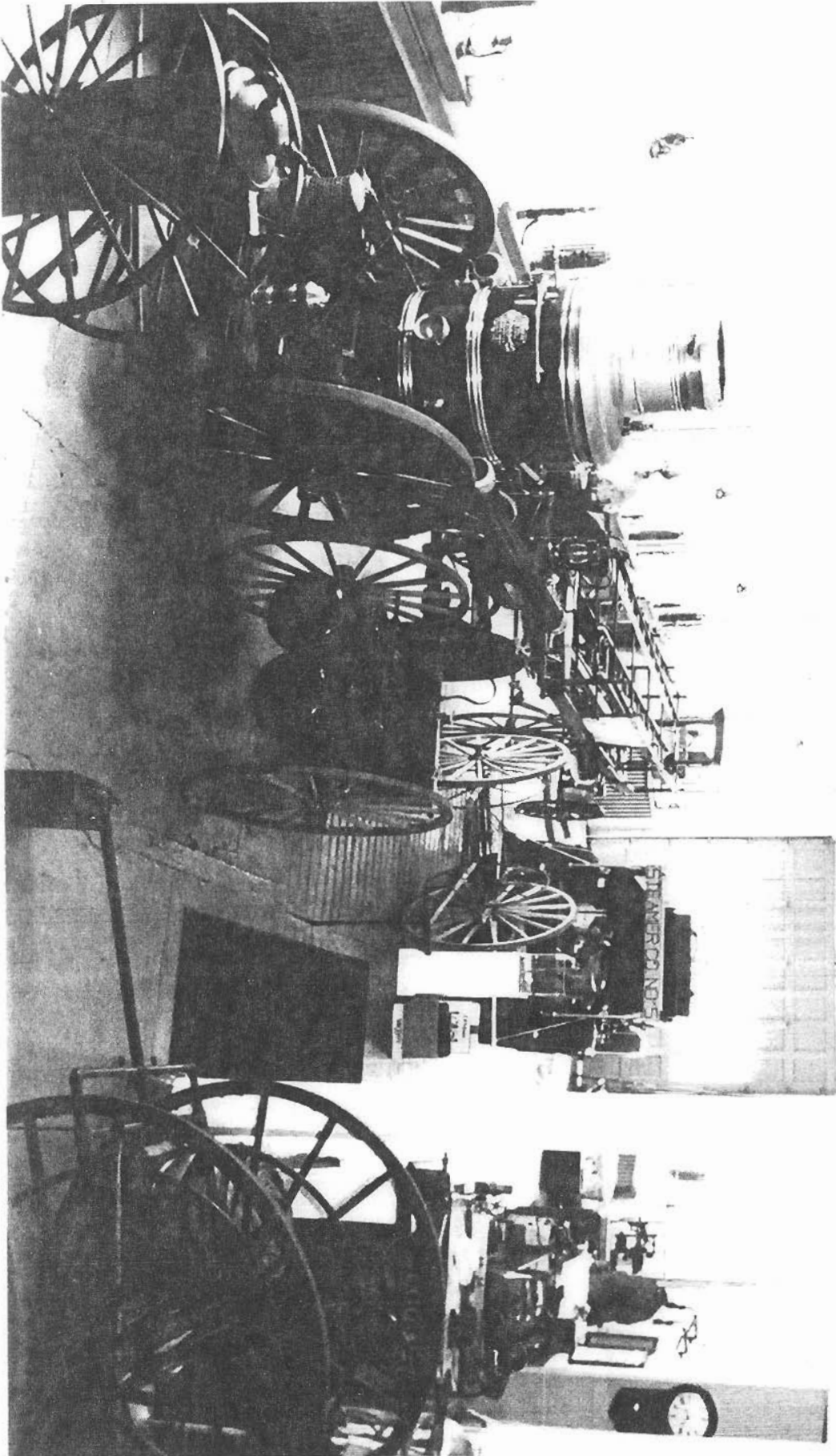












Steamer Company No. 5, City of Richmond (DIR № 127-370)



