

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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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

U.S. Marine Corps Barracks and Commandant's House

AND/OR COMMON

U.S. Marine Corps Barracks and Commandant's House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

801 G Street, SE.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

District

STATE

D.C.

CODE

11

COUNTY

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

United States Government

STREET & NUMBER

Department of Defense, The Pentagon

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th and D Streets, NW.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Register of Historic Places

DATE

1968; 1972

☒ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS 1100 L Street, NW.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

23

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

☒ EXCELLENT

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ GOOD

☐ RUINS

☒ ALTERED

☐ MOVED DATE _____

☐ FAIR

☐ UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

(Much of the following is based on National Register nominations prepared in 1972 by Alfred Branam, Architectural Historian, National Capital Planning Commission. Facts have been verified through additional research and an on-the-spot inspection, however.)

The U.S. Marine Corps Barracks and Commandant's House comprise the Nation's oldest continually active Marine Corps installation. Situated in southeast Washington, the post occupies a rectangular site about 250 feet wide and 630 feet long. It is bounded by G Street on the north, I Street on the south, 8th Street on the west, and 9th Street on the east. The post includes the Marine Corps Commandant's House, a range of barracks, a band hall, a row of five officer's quarters, and a modern service building that abuts the north end of the barracks. These structures form a quadrangle that encloses a rectangular parade ground measuring approximately 160 feet by 385 feet. Except for the Commandant's House, which faces north, all the buildings face the parade ground.

Originally, the post consisted of the Commandant's House and a range of barracks on the west side of the parade ground. Generally believed to have been designed by George Hadfield, these were completed in 1801-6. In the middle of the one-story barracks was a two-story "Center House," or officers' quarters, which burned in 1829 and was subsequently replaced with a three-story structure. As time passed in the 19th century, the post garrison grew, and between 1834 and 1900 a hospital, band hall, and shooting gallery were added. In 1900, however, following successive complaints from several commandants about the inadequacy of the facilities, a sanitary commission recommended that all existing structures except the Commandant's House be replaced. The recommendation was carried out soon afterward, leaving only the Commandant's House remaining from the original post. Architects Hornblower and Marshall received the commission to design the new barracks, and they located them along the east side of the parade ground. They also designed the band hall that joins the barracks at a 90 degree angle and crosses the south end of the post. There is no evidence that Hornblower and Marshall drew the plans for the new officers' quarters erected at the same time on the west side of the parade ground, but the design of the structures suggests that this was the case. The new construction was carried out between 1903 and 1907. Today, except for the below-described changes in the Commandant's House, the post remains much as it appeared about 1910.

(continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

MILITARY AND MUSIC

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☒ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☒ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1800-present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Cdt's House: George Hadfield
Barracks: Hornblower & Marshall

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

More than any other structures, the U.S. Marine Corps Barracks and the adjacent Marine Corps Commandant's House are symbolic of the dedication and pride that have made the U.S. Marine Corps one of the world's most elite fighting forces. According to military historian B. H. Liddell Hart, the Corps "has gone further than any armed force in any country towards demonstrating the potentialities of a three-in-one force, combining sea, land, and air action."¹

The oldest continually active post in the Corps, the Marine Barracks served as Marine Corps Headquarters from 1801 to 1901. Here recruits and officers were trained, and vital decisions were made affecting Corps development. Troops quartered at the Barracks played significant roles in the wars with the Barbary pirates, the War of 1812, the Seminole War, the capture of John Brown at Harper's Ferry, and the conquest of Cuba in the Spanish-American War.

As the home of the Marine Band, which has played for every President since John Adams, the Marine Barracks witnessed a significant epoch in American musical history when John Philip Sousa, the "March King," served as leader from 1880 to 1892. During his tenure, Sousa wrote some of his most famous marches including the "Washington Post March" which, says Arthur M. Schlesinger, "was probably the best known instrumental piece in the world at the time."² The Marine Band is still stationed at the Barracks and remains the official White House musical unit.

As American military might increased in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Marine Corps expanded in size, necessitating the transfer of the Headquarters and the recruit

(continued)

¹ Quoted in Robert D. Heinl, Jr., Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962, (Annapolis, 1962), vii.

² Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York, 1933), 306.



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Heinl, Robert D., Jr., Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962 (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1962).

Pierce, Philip N. and Hough, Frank O., The Compact History of the United States Marine Corps (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964).
(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 6 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 118 32691810 4310511610
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(see last page of description)

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 George R. Adams, Managing Editor
Ralph Christian, Assistant Editor

ORGANIZATION	DATE
American Association for State and Local History	November 1975
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
1400 Eighth Avenue, South	(615) 242-5583
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Nashville	Tennessee 37203

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET Marine Corps ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

Commandant's House. Situated at the north end of the parade ground (at 801 G Street, SE.), this impressive 2½-story, white-painted, Flemish-bonded brick residence is the home of the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, a function it has served continually since its construction in 1801 as a symmetrically composed, Federal Style dwelling. Initially only about 25 feet wide, the house over the years has undergone several renovations and received several additions. In 1840 a 16-foot-long, two-story, brick extension was added to the northeast corner, and a longer two-story, brick, servants' wing was attached to the northwest corner. The present mansard roof and hooded dormers were added in 1891, covering both the original block and the 16-foot extended section. That same year a one-story porch was placed across the rear of the original block making the house about 60 feet deep on the first floor. In 1934 a one-story, brick, kitchen-pantry-service wing was added to the east side of the 1840 extension. Despite all these changes, it is still possible to discern the original outline of the building.

Today one of the most striking features of the Commandant's House is its mansard roof, the tiles of which are regularly laid except for four center rows that display an imbricated pattern. Four hooded dormers grace the front slope, seven adorn the rear slope, two jut from east slope, and three protrude from the west slope. Surrounding the whole is a dentiled cornice, below which on the front facade is a fret design in wood. Initially the main block of the house had a three-bay front, but the 1840 extension added a fourth. The entrance, therefore, is to the right of center and in the second bay from the right. One approaches it by a series of brownstone steps. These rise from the pavement to wooden, tripaneled, double doors set under a fanlight and an arch of gauged brick that springs from limestone pilasters to a limestone keystone. The pilaster capitals and the keystone all are highlighted by a star design. To the left of the doorway are two two-over-two, shuttered, sash windows, each of which is surmounted by a transom and stone lintel. There is a like-rendered window on the right. Across the second story are four similar windows aligned with the openings below but lacking transoms. The fronts of the wings differ from the main block. The one-story, kitchen wing has a plain brick facade with three, small, shuttered, sash windows and a dentiled brick cornice; the two-story servants' wing is similarly designed.

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At the rear of the house, the 1891 porch dominates the ground floor facade. Composed of five brick pilasters spaced at 3½-foot intervals, the porch has two large mullion windows flanking a central, glass, double door that opens onto a small stoop with double side steps. These join walkways that lead through a small garden and a hedgerow to the parade ground. Above the porch one can see two original, contiguous, apsidal bays that rise two stories high and project beyond the main block facade in an arc of four feet. Fenestration on both stories is six across in groups of three. Each apsidal projection is capped by a curving extension of the mansard roof.

The interior decor of the house changes with each occupant, but recently the wife of Gen. Robert E. Cushman, Jr., the 25th Commandant, carried out a successful campaign to return many of the original furnishings to the residence, which is little-altered inside. Air conditioning, electric lighting, and other modern conveniences have, of course, been added. The basement, which extends under the main block and kitchen wing, contains a boiler plus laundry facilities and recreation and storage rooms. On the first floor of the main block, the front door opens into a vestibule and east-west hall, the crossing of which is accented by a plastered groin vault that rests on four delicately molded fluted pilasters. To the right of the vestibule is a reception room, and south of it, across the hall, is the formal sitting room. To the left of the vestibule is a dining room that extends into the kitchen wing, and, across the hall from it, is the music room. The second floor contains an east-west hall and four bedrooms. There are four more plus a servant's room on the upper floor. The servant's wing consists of a sitting room and bath on the first floor and two bedrooms and a bath on the second.

Barracks. The barracks, band hall, and row of officers' quarters all are constructed of glazed brick in multiple shades of red. The 40-foot-long, hip-roofed, slate-shingled barracks extends about

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490 feet along the east side of the post. Basically, it is a rectangular-shaped, two-story structure with a limestone string-course separating the first-story facade and its segmentally arched openings from the second-story facade and its flat-arched openings. The building's greater expanse is interrupted at three points by pavilions that project slightly beyond the principal facade, both front and rear, and rise slightly above the roof of the rest of the structure. The two endmost pavilions are three storied and hip roofed. The central one is larger. It is a 3½-story tower topped by a machicolated brick cornice and crenellated limestone parapet. On the ground floor, an aracded loggia runs the entire length of the barracks. Until recently the first story housed various Marine offices, while enlisted men's quarters comprised the second floor. A new multistory barracks has been erected across I Street to the southeast, though, and so the barracks will soon be used almost solely for administrative purposes. The building is in excellent condition and should serve the new function well. It will continue its long-standing role as the traditional parade ground entry and exit for Marine units on parade at the post.

Band Hall. This rectangular-shaped, hip-roofed, 2½-story, brick structure measures about 200 feet in length and is 60 feet deep. Facing the parade ground, it extends almost entirely across the south end of the post and forms a right angle with the barracks. Like the barracks, the band hall has an arcaded loggia across most of the ground floor of the front facade and a limestone stringcourse that separates the first and second stories. Door and window openings are semicircularly arched on the north side of the ground floor, segmentally arched on the south side of the ground floor, and flat-arched on both the north and south sides of the second story. Eight hip-roofed dormers grace both the north and south roof slopes. There is a full basement, which presently houses the post exchange, NCO and enlisted men's clubs, a barber shop, and band dressing rooms. The first floor contains a guard shack, a press shop, band offices, and the Sousa Band Hall. On the second deck

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there is a gymnasium, band library, recording studio, and more storage space. Also housed in the building are valuable artifacts related to Sousa's career. When the move to the new barracks is complete, the band will occupy all areas of the band hall.

Officers' Quarters (buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5--corresponding respectively to numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 on the attached sketch map). Situated along the west side of the post, these houses are believed to have been designed by Hornblower and Marshall despite the fact that there is no conclusive supportive documentation and that the dwellings are more severe in design than these architects' usual residential structures. In any case, the houses have the same roof and cornice height and same roof shape that is displayed by the barracks and band hall. The five houses are almost identical. All are 2½ stories, hip roofed, and basically square shaped. Two interior brick chimneys pierce most roofs on both the north and south sides, and two hip-roofed dormers adorn each north and each south roof slope--except on building 1(4) which is slightly larger and shows three front dormers. A one-tiered, four-bay, hip-roofed, glass-enclosed porch passes fully across the front of residences 2(5), 3(6), 4(7), and 5(8), and a similar five-bay gallery graces the front of building 1(4). A brick foundation and brick pillars support each porch, and entrance to each is by straight steps on each end. Each structure has a small one-story, rear entrance wing at the northwest corner and displays one-over-one, double-hung, sash windows with limestone sills and lintels. The typical interior arrangement is a modified sidehall plan with two rooms on the ground floor front--a reception room and parlor--and two on the ground floor rear--a dining room and kitchen. Upper stories contain bedrooms. At present senior general officers occupy three of the houses; the post commander lives in the fourth; and the fifth serves as a bachelor officers' quarters and officers' mess.

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Boundary Justification. The boundary, which is outlined in red on the accompanying maps, includes the original limits of the post plus the tree-lined sidewalks on the north and west sides, where are situated the entryways to the Commandant's House and the Marine Corps Barracks.

Boundary. As indicated in red on the accompanying U.S.G.S. and sketch maps, a line beginning at the intersection of 8th and G Streets, SE., and running approximately 300 feet eastward along the right curb of G Street to its intersection with 9th Street; thence about 680 feet south along the right curb of 9th Street to its intersection with I Street; thence approximately 300 feet westward along the right curb of I Street to its intersection with 8th Street; thence about 680 feet north along the right curb of 8th Street to the starting point.

Continuation Sheet Marine Corps Item Number 9 Page one

Schlesinger, Arthur M., The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933).

Schuon, Karl, Home of the Commandants (Washington: Leatherneck Association, Inc., 1966).

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and officer training facilities to more spacious quarters. Over the years, the Barracks' function has become increasingly ceremonial. At present, the post consists of the Commandant's House, the headquarters of the Marine Band, and a contingent of crack Marines who perform various ceremonial duties at the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, and elsewhere.

Early in the 20th century, the Marine Barracks underwent extensive renovation. The 2½-story, brick Commandant's House, completed in 1806 and the home of all Commandants since Franklin Wharton, is the only structure remaining of the original barracks complex. The oldest public building in Washington with the exception of the White House, it served as home for men like Archibald Henderson, Charles Heywood, and John A. Lejeune, all of whom played vital roles in the development of the modern Marine Corps. Other structures on the old post grounds include a barracks building, a band hall, and a row of five officers' quarters. All these brick structures were erected between 1904 and 1907. They fill the original post bounds and are in excellent condition.

History

Although the U.S. Marine Corps traces its origins to the Continental Marines of 1775, the modern Marine Corps was not founded until 1798 as part of the response to the undeclared naval war with France. Headquartered in Philadelphia, then the Nation's Capital, the new Corps was put on a firm footing by Commandant William Ward Burrows, who quickly raised the authorized number of men. Burrows also organized the Marine Band by levying monthly assessments on each officer for its support.

In 1800, under orders from Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert, Burrows transferred his command from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. After their arrival, the Marines set up camp first in Georgetown and later on E Street while their Commandant

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sought a site for a permanent barracks. In his search Burrows was often accompanied by his friend President Thomas Jefferson, and in 1801, they decided on a site near the Washington Navy Yard. After acquiring the necessary land, Burrows ran an advertisement in the National Intelligencer, offering \$100 for the best design for a barracks and commandant's house. Apparently, George Hadfield, an English architect who had designed the Custis-Lee Mansion and had served as Superintendent of Capitol Construction, submitted the best plans. Recently discovered documentary evidence seems to establish him as architect of the Barracks, and it appears likely he designed the Commandant's House as well.

Because the \$20,000 appropriated by Congress was insufficient to cover the costs of the proposed project, Marines did much of the construction work themselves. In the words of Marine historians Philip N. Pierce and Frank O. Hough, "the Marines, as they were to do so many times again in their long history, stacked arms, laid aside their fancy uniforms and set about to take care of their own needs."³ The project proceeded slowly because of other duties like fighting the Barbary pirates, and not until 1806 were the last bricks put in place.

Meanwhile, in 1804 Commandant Burrows resigned because of poor health. He was succeeded by Franklin Wharton, the first Commandant to occupy the Commandant's House. When the British captured Washington in 1814, Marines from the Barracks fought valiantly at Bladensburg, delaying the British advance for 2 hours. Unlike the adjacent Navy Yard, the Marine compound escaped unscathed from the British occupation. Although some have argued that the British spared the Barracks because of their admiration for Marine fighting qualities, it seems more likely they were saved by the pleas of private citizens whose adjacent property was endangered.

(continued)

3 Philip N. Pierce and Frank O. Hough, The Compact History of the United States Marine Corps (new York, 1964), 41.

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A new era in Marine Corps history opened at the Barracks in 1820 when Archibald Henderson moved into the Commandant's House. For the next 38 years "under his leadership the Corps' status was clarified, its strength doubled, and its efficiency multiplied many times."⁴ Desirous of making the Marines the world's finest fighting men, Henderson required that every new officer of the Corps be stationed for a time at the Barracks, where they could receive training under his supervision. In 1836 Henderson led most of the Corps on an expedition to Florida against the Seminoles, and in 1859 a detachment of his men under Robert E. Lee captured John Brown at Harper's Ferry. When Henderson died in 1859, says historian Karl Schuon, "he left his Marine Corps with an esprit de corps and a heritage of tradition."⁵

During the Civil War, the Marines saw little significant action and in the early postwar years stagnated like the rest of the military establishment. One branch of the Corps prospered, however. The Marine Band had always been popular, playing for every President since John Adams, but it had not been recognized by law until 1861. In the 1880's, the band gained an international reputation under the leadership of John Philip Sousa, the "March King." While he served as band leader at the Washington Barracks from 1880 to 1892, Sousa wrote such favorites as "Stars and Stripes Forever," "Semper Fidelis," and the "Washington Post March." The latter, according to Arthur M. Schlesinger, with "its lively rhythm established the vogue of the two-step as successor to the old-time waltz."⁶

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American military power expanded as the United States became a global power. From 1891 to 1903 the Barracks witnessed another period of growth in the Marine Corps. Commandant Charles Heywood led the way in emphasizing new military tactics; establishing the School of

(continued)

4 Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 68.

5 Karl Schuon, Home of the Commandants (Washington, 1966), 169.

6 Schlesinger, Rise of the City, 306.

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Application, an intensive training course for officers; and increasing the strength of the Corps fourfold.

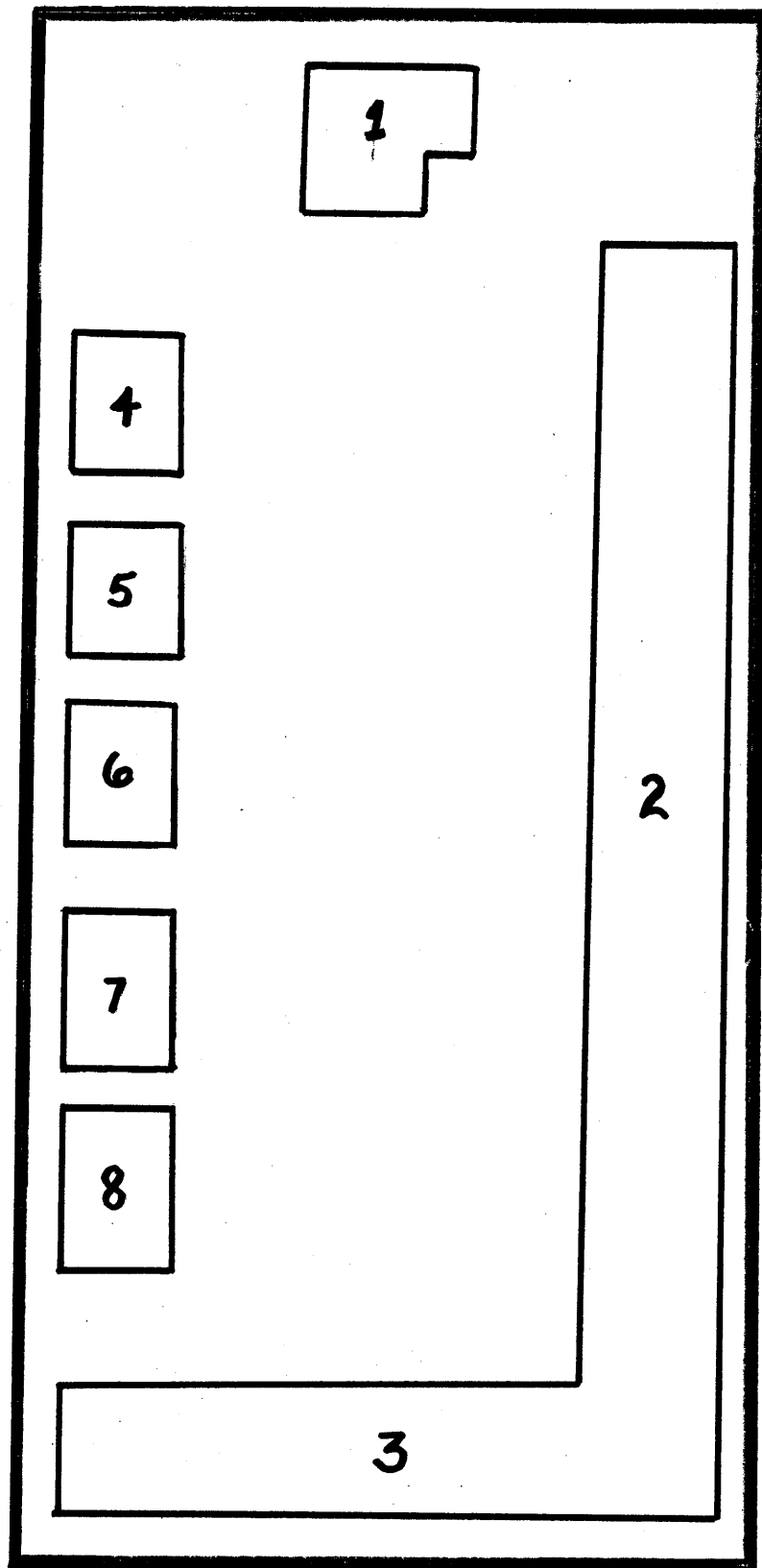
Expansion of the Marine Corps in turn changed the function of the Barracks. In 1901 Marine headquarters were transferred to offices in downtown Washington, and in 1911 the Barracks lost its recruit training function when a recruit depot was established at Parris Island, S. Car. The Barracks also underwent extensive renovation, leaving the Commandant's House, completed in 1806, as the only structure remaining of the original complex. At present, the post's physical facilities occupy the original post bounds and include the Commandant's House, the headquarters of the Marine Band, a row of five officers' quarters, and barracks for a contingent of crack Marines who perform various ceremonial duties at the White House, Camp David, Arlington National Cemetery, and various national monuments.

G Street, SE.



Eighth Street

Ninth Street



I Street, SE.

Marine Corps Barracks and
Commandant's House
1-Commandant's House
2-Barracks
3-Band Hall
4-8--Officers' Quarters #1-5

Prepared by:
George R. Adam
AASLH, 1975
Not to Scale

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