



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 043-7166

1. General Property Information

Property name: Masonic Home of Virginia

Property address: 500 Masonic Lane

City or Town: Richmond

Zip code: 23223

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Henrico

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building Site X Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 90 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban Suburban X Town Village Hamlet Rural

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The Masonic Home of Virginia sits on its original location on Nine Mile Road in Eastern Henrico County. The Masonic Home is unique in having preserved the landscape of Cedar Lawn Farm, site of the first Masonic Home for children in Virginia, which continues to serve the mission of helping Masonic families in need - beginning as a Home for children and continuing today as a retirement community for Masons, their wives and widows. Opening in 1890 on 44.5 acres of land gifted by A.G. Babcock, the Masonic Home gradually expanded to 90 acres and today is proud to have preserved the integrity of the original campus. Along with a modern continuing care facility, the present campus includes the Babcock Memorial Building (1921) built as a girls' dormitory, the Infirmary (1935), Chapel (1949) and vernacular outbuildings that have been well maintained and are still in use as part of the Home's role as a retirement community for Virginia Masons, their wives and widows. The site also includes potential archeological sites of the original c. 1850 Babcock House and the 1894 Main Building that was demolished in 1972 with only the front steps remaining. The meticulously maintained property is fenced and includes working farmland in contrast to the adjacent commercial corridor.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Classical Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _____

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1921

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The Babcock Memorial Building was built as a Girls' Dormitory originally connected to the large, brick structure that was the Masonic Home for Children. Today, the building remains in use as administrative offices. The Babcock Building is clad in red brick, features sixteen-over-sixteen double hung windows, a slate-tile roof and quoins at the corners. The front entrance features a fanlight and ionic pilasters. While modifications have been made to the main floor to accommodate daily use as office space, the third floor and basement are in their original state.

The Infirmary (1936) is being transformed into a museum for the affiliated bodies of the Masonic community. Some modifications have been made to the interior for continued use.

The Chapel (1949) has been well-maintained and is in use. The front step of both the Alexander G. Babcock House (c. 1850) and the Main Building (1898-1972) remain just West of the Babcock Memorial Building. The long, tree-lined lane and original circular entrance to the house remain.

The chapel is a one-story, single-bay brick building with two, lower one-story wings. The south wing connects to a narrow, L-shaped, gable-roofed hallway, which connects to a large residential complex. The exterior walls of the chapel are brick and the front gable roof is clad in asphalt shingles. The front gable-roofed portico is enclosed and features a broken elliptical pediment with Colonial Revival door surround. The remaining fenestration includes round arched window on the south and north elevations of the chapel and sash windows on the wings.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- Two vernacular outbuildings (c. 1925) are situated at the rear of the Babcock building. They are brick structures originally used as vocational educational buildings for the Masonic Home for Children. One vocational building was the press room and bindery for the Mason Home Press, Inc. and the print shop for the Virginia Masonic Herald.
- Foundational remains of the original water tower are directly east of the outbuildings.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The present-day Masonic Home of Virginia (MAHOVA) occupies property continuously used by the Masons of Virginia to care for their community members in need since its donation by Alexander Gulick Babcock in 1889. With an initial gift of \$5,000, a c. 1845 home and 44-acre farm, Col. Babcock initiated the creation of the Virginia Masonic Home for children. It was not an orphanage, but rather a home for children of Masons who had died, to ensure their success in life and relieve the burden on distressed widows who often no longer had the means to care for them. The property, originally known as Cedar Lawn Farm, now includes the potential archeological site of the Babcock House, built c. 1845 and torn down c. 1940 and the main building (1898-1972).

The property's main building was designed by W. Duncan Lee, constructed in 1894 and served as the center of activity until it was destroyed in 1972. The campus included a working farm and several additions to accommodate the needs of the Home. A school building and second story dormitory for boys were added in 1915. The Babcock Memorial Building built in 1921, and still in use today as administrative offices, became the girls' dorm. In 1955, an elderly division was added to the children's home and in 1975, due to the changing social landscape, the home became solely devoted to the care of elderly Masons, their wives and widows. Today, MAHOVA is one of only three known communities in the United States exclusively caring for elderly Masons, their wives and widows. While the Home has gradually expanded its facilities through the years, its unwavering mission continues to reflect the Masonic spirit of benevolence, brotherly love and charity, which was the foundation of modern Masonry in 1717.

The Home cared for more than 875 children, thousands of elderly Virginia Masons and now supports the continuing retirement care of 180 residents. The Masonic Home of Virginia stands as a living testament to over 135 years of continuous charitable service, making it one of the longest operating fraternal care facilities in American history. Its unbroken mission of supporting Masons in need demonstrates the enduring strength of fraternal bonds and mutual aid principals that have survived across three centuries.

A social history landmark, the MAHOVA site is important as it represents institutional continuity – the Home has adapted and persisted through the two World Wars, the Great Depression and massive cultural changes. The Home also reflects the philanthropic infrastructure that fraternal organizations built before modern social safety nets existed, providing historical context for understanding American social welfare development. Its continuous operation embodies the practical application of Masonic values beyond ritual and symbolism. It shows fraternal ideals translated into sustained, tangible care for vulnerable members across generations.

Physically, while many of the original buildings are no longer, the campus remains intact – spanning 90 acres that still include fields worked by neighboring farmers. It is a respite from the busy commercial corridor of modern Nine Mile Road.

The site is also the home to the Grand Lodge of Virginia, which includes archives and a museum - preserving historical records and artifacts that illustrate the history of Freemasonry in Virginia – notably including many that have a connection to prominent Virginians or national figures of importance.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

- Published leaflets, institutional historical records
- DHR archival files

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: Public\Local Public\State Public\Federal

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

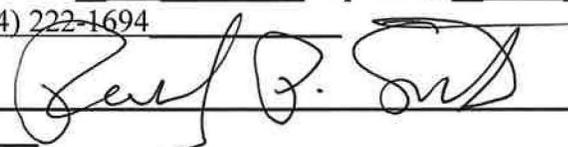
name/title: _____

organization: Masonic Home of Virginia

street & number: 500 Masonic Lane

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23223

e-mail: _____ telephone: (804) 222-1694

Legal Owner's Signature: 

Date: 12/30/2025

• • *Signature required for processing all applications.* • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Randy P. Smith, CEO

Daytime Telephone: (804) 222-1694

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Allen Watts, Director of Development

organization: Masonic Home of Virginia

street & number: 500 Masonic Lane

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23223

e-mail: awatts@mahova.com telephone: 804-222-1694

Date: 12/30/2025

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!



Feet



1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

Title: Masonic Home of VA

Date: 1/9/2026

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.



RABCOCK MEMORIAL







BARCOCK MEMORIAL









The Babcock Building
is open
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
For us, please
press the button
the Ring device
located to your left.



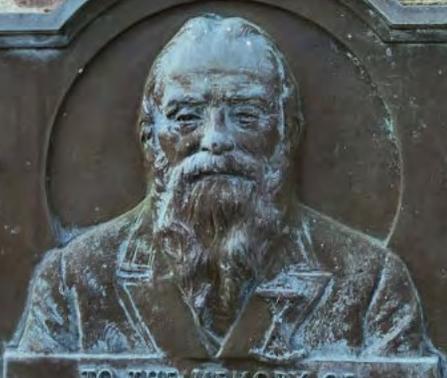






1836

1934



TO THE MEMORY OF
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
GEORGE POTTS

WHOSE VISION AND ENTHUSIASM INSPIRED HIS BRETHREN
TO ESTABLISH THE MASONIC HOME OF VIRGINIA
THIS TABLE DEDICATED ON THE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOME SEPT 14TH, 1940
BY THE GRAND LODGE OF VIRGINIA























FALLOUT SHELTER











1947



A. D. 1935

A. L. 5935



1889



1945

ERECTED BY
THE FREEMASONS OF VIRGINIA
TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND

IN MEMORY OF

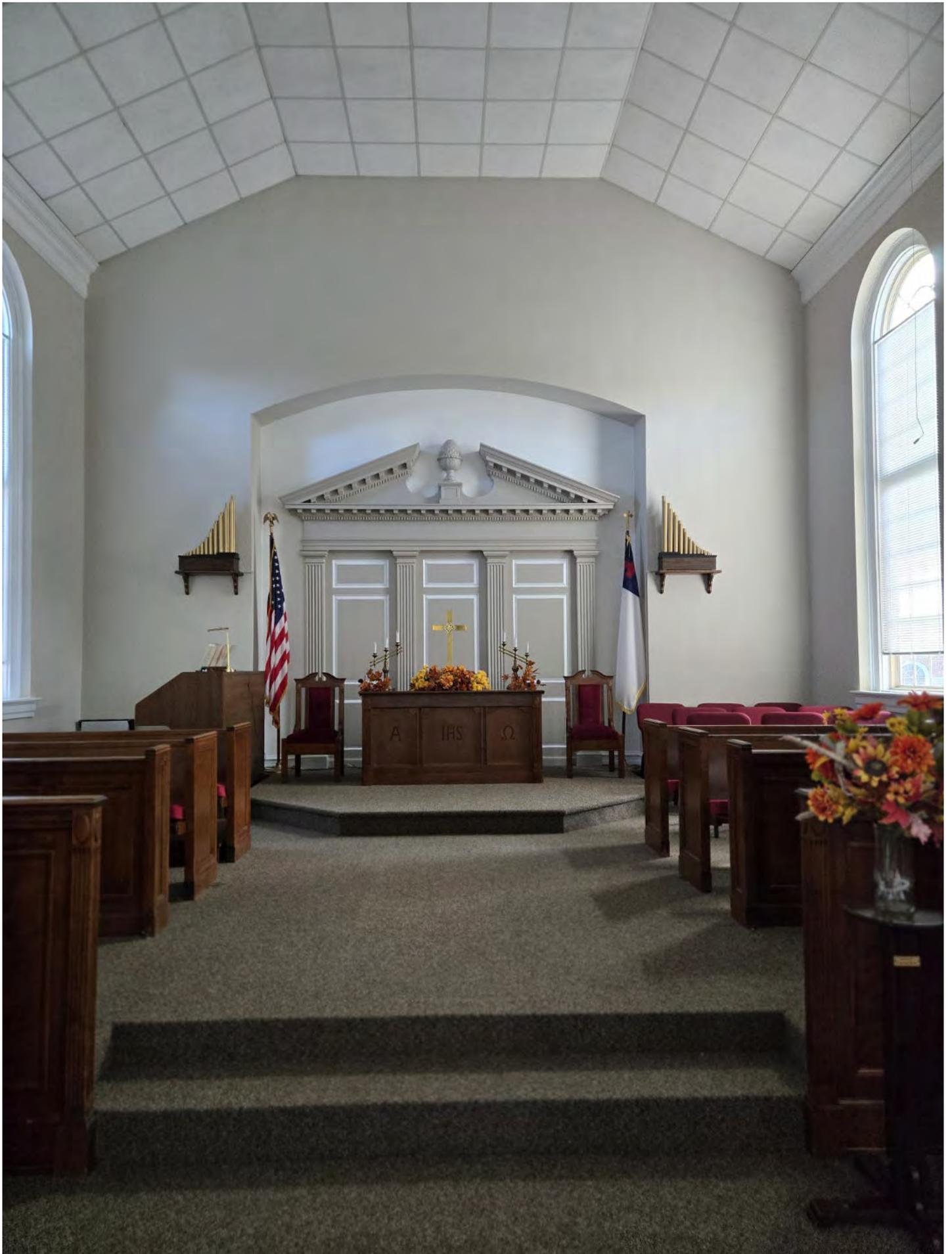
WORSHIPFUL
HOLMES CONRAD TURNER

SUPERINTENDENT 1924 - 1945

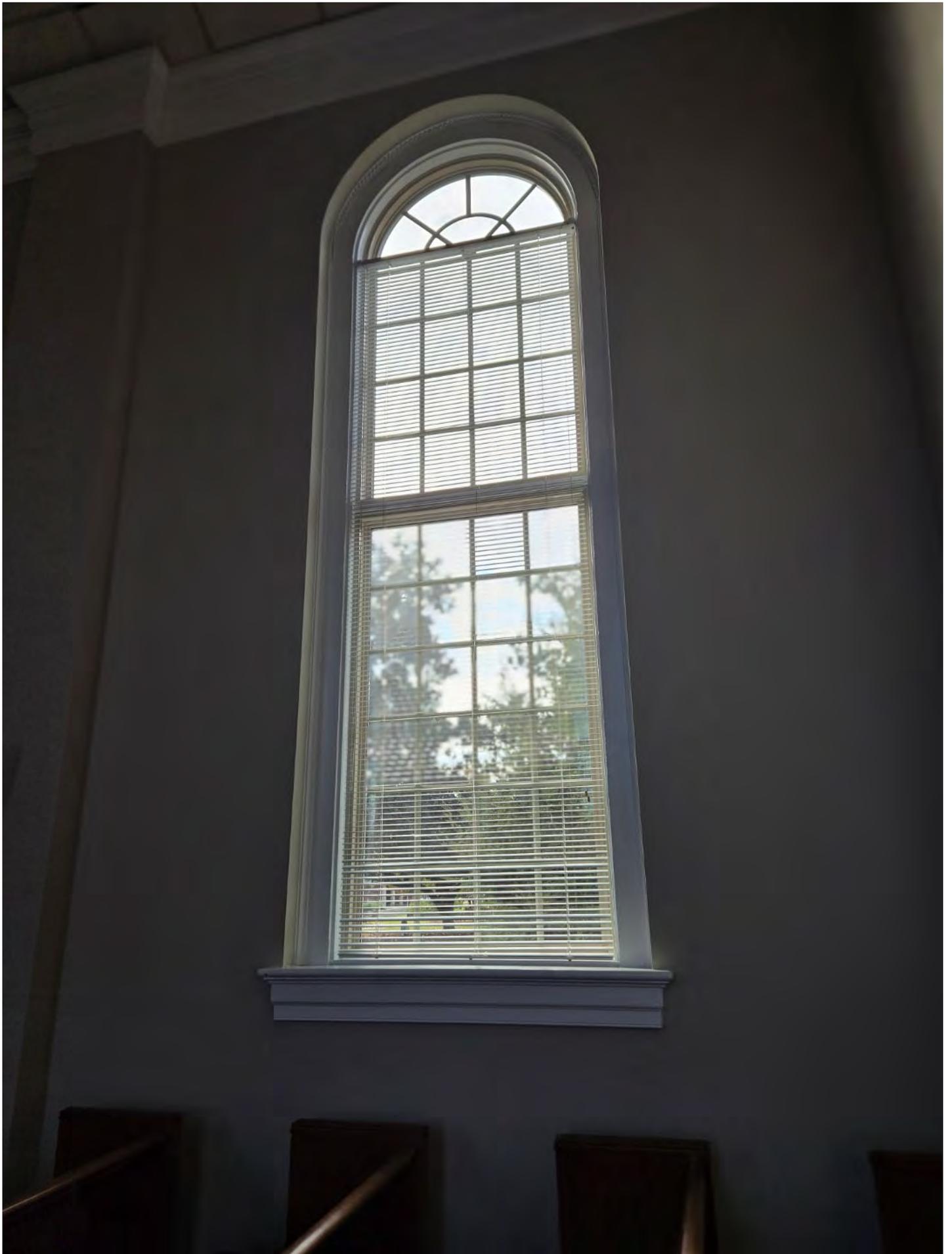
WHOSE LIFE, A SERMON IN SERVICE,
INSPIRED CHILDREN TO BELIEVE,
BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTOOD
AND LOVED HIM

THE MOVEMENT FOR THIS BUILDING
SPONSORED BY THE PENTAGON CLUB, A.D. 1945
DEDICATED MAY 24, 1949















YORK RITE









A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

THIS BUILDING ERECTED
IN MEMORY OF
ROBERT SOUTH BARRETT, III
ALEXANDRIA, VA.
BORN 1908 - DIED 1910

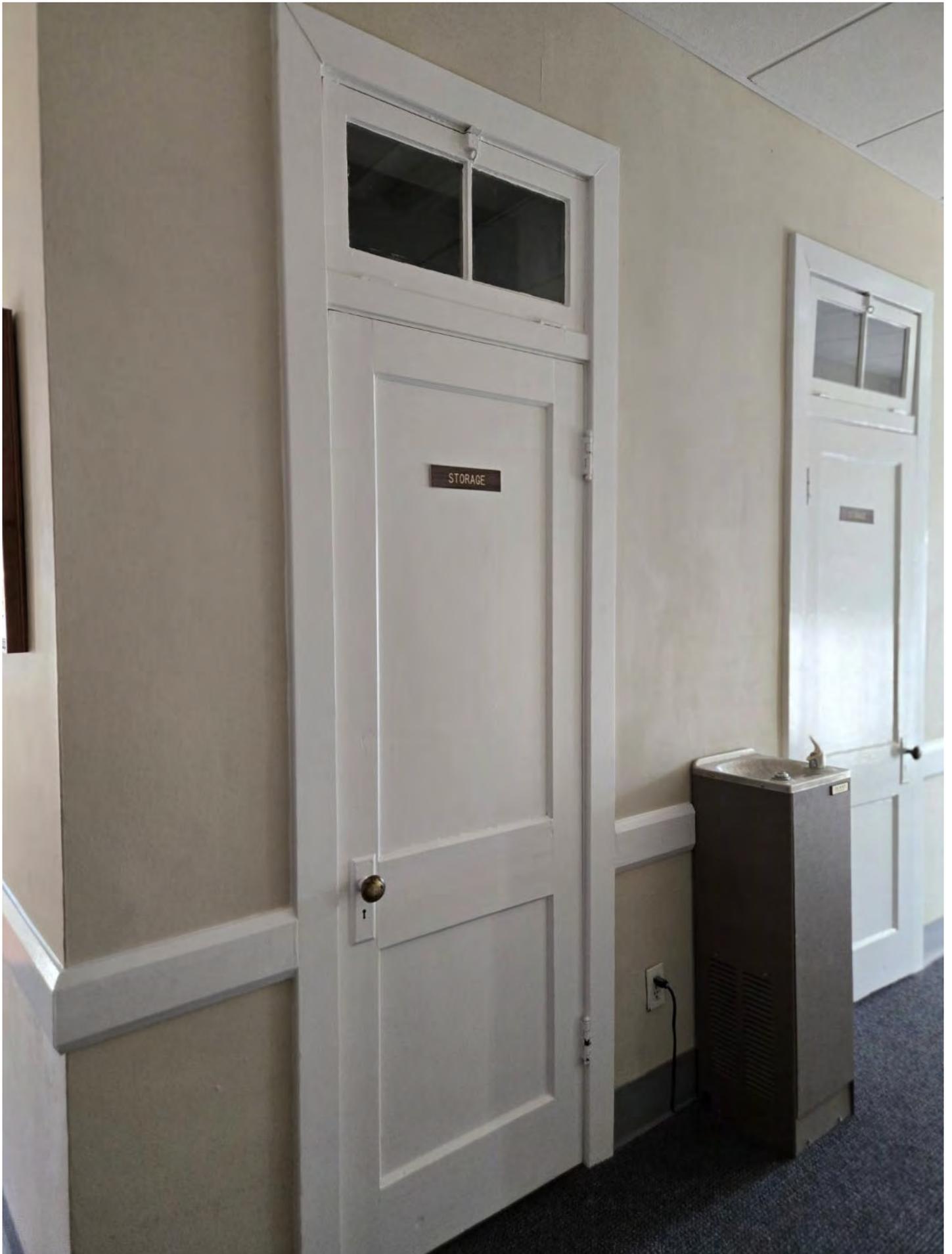
ROBERT SOUTH BARRETT
HOSPITAL
DEDICATED FEBRUARY 13, 1957

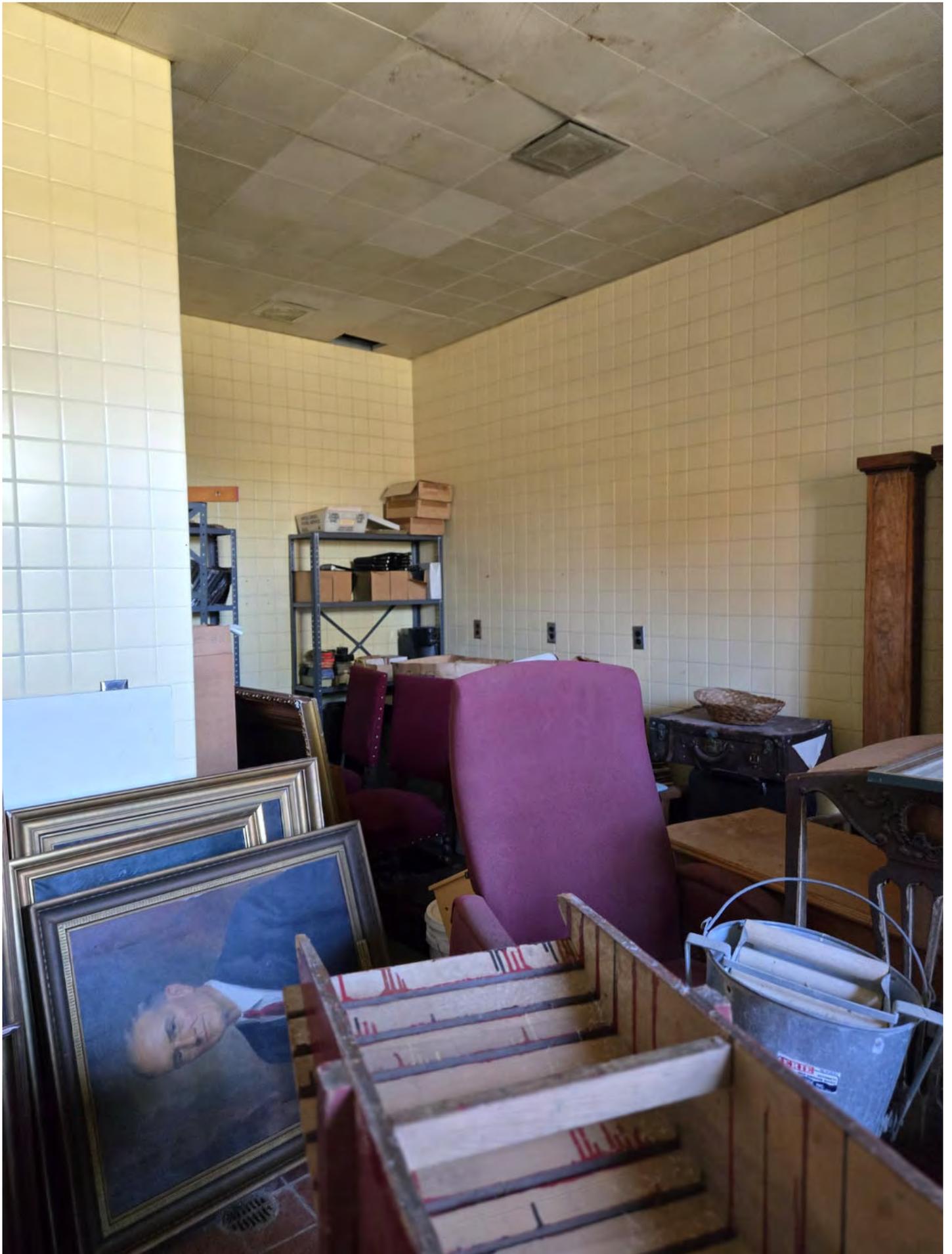
 KNIGHTS TEMPLAR 

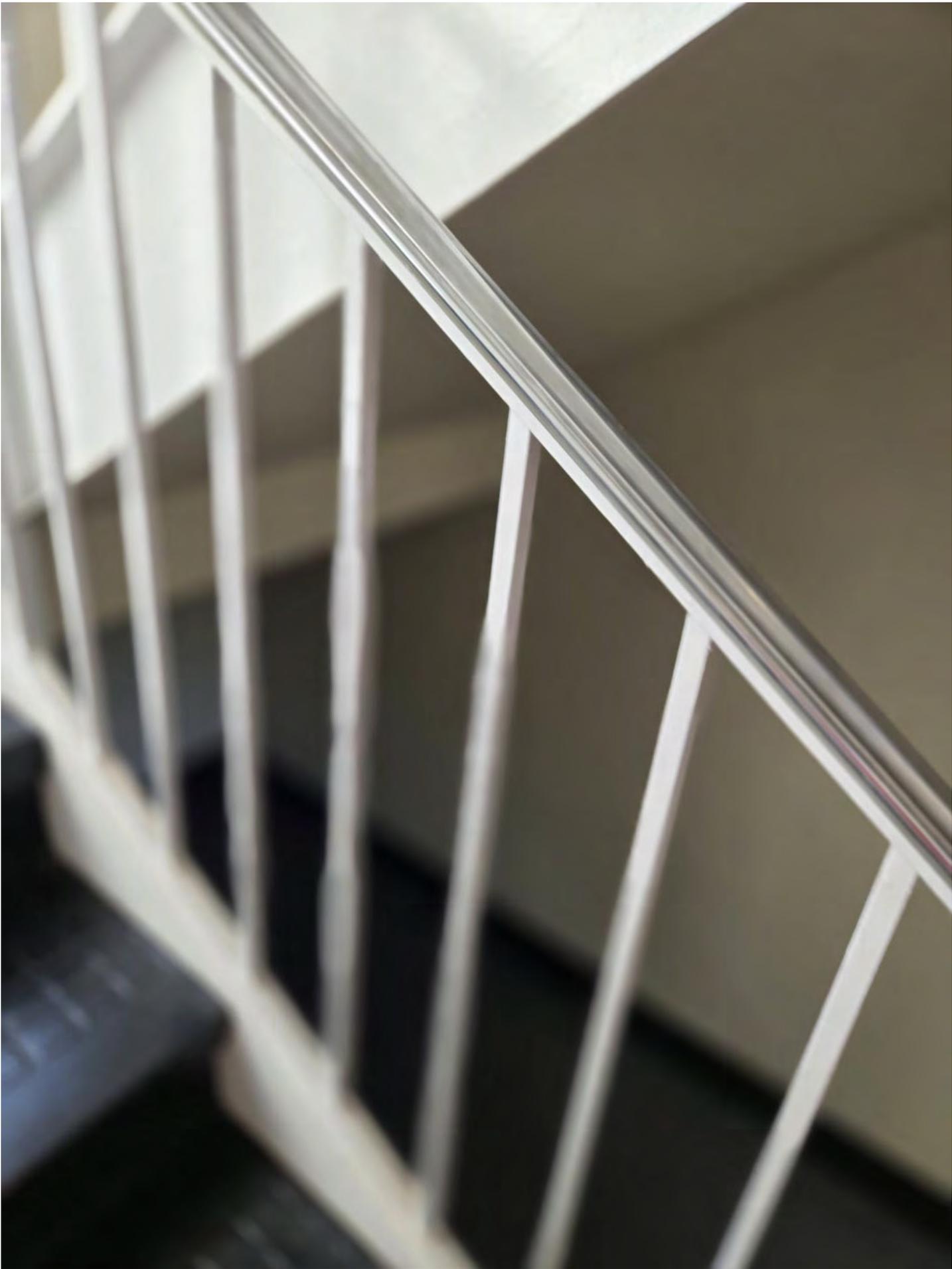
GRAND RECORDER
GRAND COMMANDERY
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
←

GRAND SECRETARY
GRAND ROYAL ARCH
CHAPTER 2nd FLOOR
→

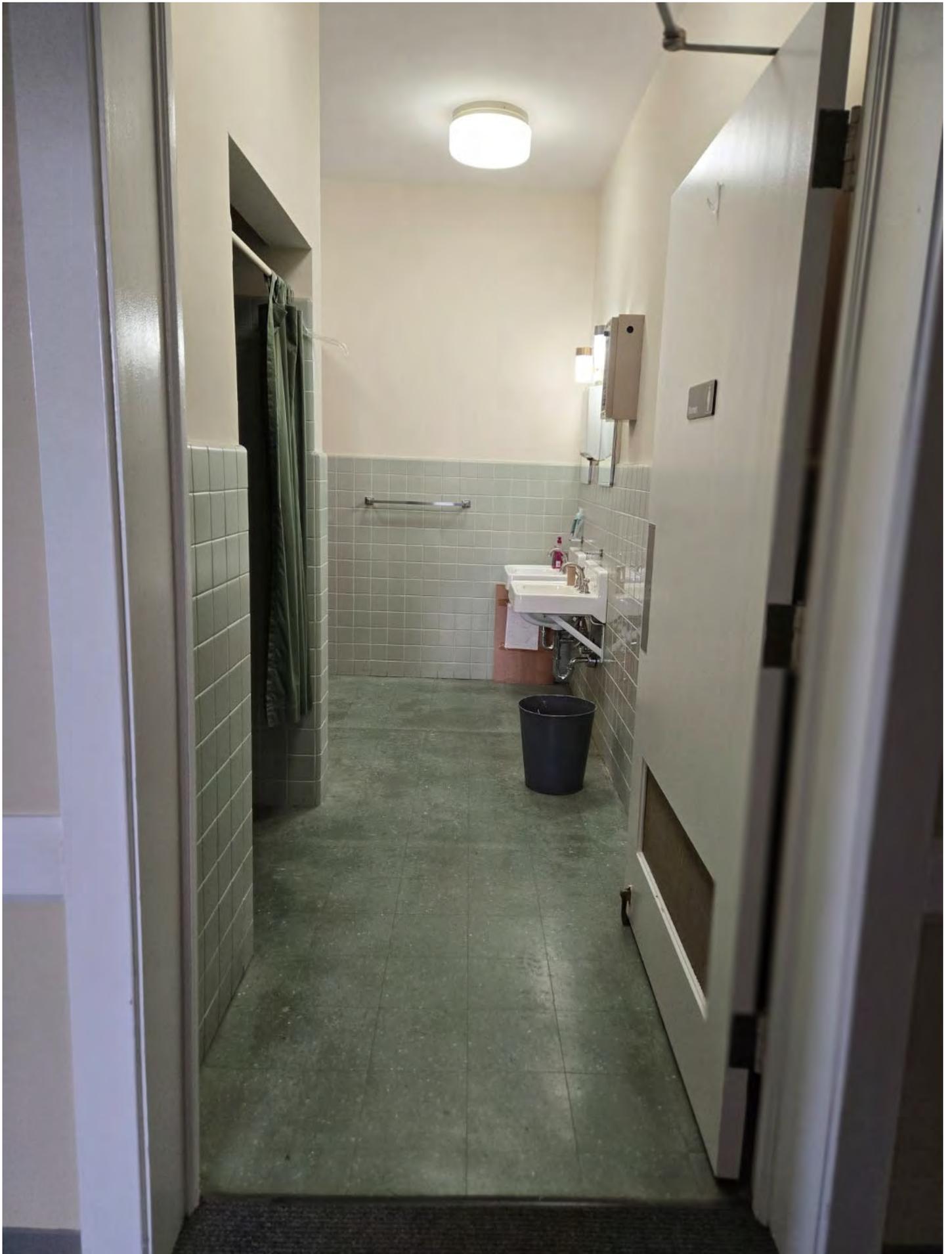
















WOOD SHOP

WOOD SHOP
NO
PARKING

WOOD SHOP
NO
PARKING

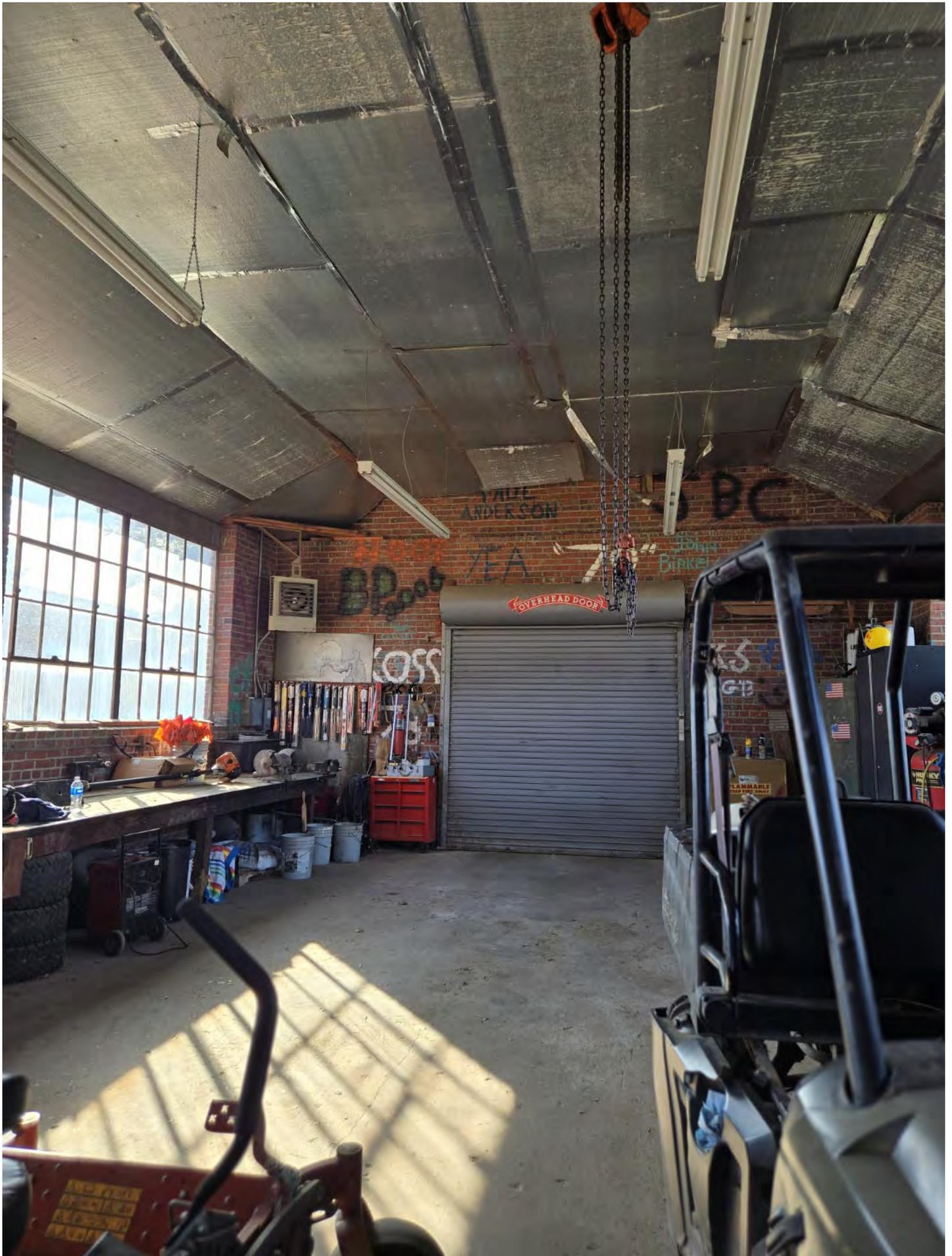
















WOOD
SHOP
NO
PARKING
VEHICLES
WILL BE TOWED AWAY
AT VEHICLE OWNER'S
EXPENSE



