

KROEHLER HALL SOUTH
619 E. Franklin Avenue
Naperville
DuPage County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1270-C

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Midwest Region
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

KROEHLER HALL SOUTH

HABS No. IL-1270-C

Location: Kroehler Hall South is located at 619 E. Franklin Avenue, Naperville, Lisle Township, DuPage County, Illinois.

Kroehler Hall South Name is located at latitude: 41.776039, longitude: -88.138406. This coordinate was taken from entering the physical address in Google Earth on October 20, 2021.

Present Owner/

Occupant: Present owners: RAM West Capital, LLC
The building is currently vacant. It had been occupied by Little Friends School until December 31, 2020.

Present Use: Educational facility; currently vacant.

Significance: Kroehler Hall South is a good example of postwar era, small-college dormitory design, built to house soldiers returning home and resuming their educations by taking advantage of the GI Bill. It was designed to harmonize with its site by hugging a corner of the property to preserve open greenspace, and taking design cues from the neighboring Peter E. and Josephine Stephens Kroehler house for architectural continuity.

Historian: Andrew J. Elders, Architectural Historian. Independent contractor.
The completion date of this report is May 20, 2022.

Project

Information: Those involved in preparing the documentation for this report include Andrew J. Elders and Susan S. Benjamin, of Benjamin Historic Certifications, LLC.

This documentation project was prepared pursuant to Illinois Historic Resources Preservation Act (20 ILCS 3420) and its rules (17 IAC 4180) to address Stipulation I. MITIGATION of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Regarding Demolition the North and South Dormitory structures at 140 North Wright Street and 619 E. Franklin Avenue along with the Carriage House at 148 North Wright Street (Additions), construct residential units within the Peter E. and Josephine Stephens Kroehler Mansion at 126 North Wright Street (Mansion), and construct 41 single-family attached dwelling units on the site bounded by North Wright

Street to the west, School Street to the north, Columbia Street to the east, and North Franklin Avenue to the south (Site) in Naperville, DuPage County, Illinois.

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** 1948.
2. **Architect:** Herbert Amery Brand was born in Danville, Illinois on April 5, 1885 to parents William F. and Fannie Harriet Kitchener Brand. William Brand was a local merchant of wholesale and retail millinery, notions, white goods, and women's finery.¹ Herbert Brand was educated in Danville schools, and graduated with a degree in Architecture from the University of Illinois in 1908, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1910. His first job was spent as a draftsman and superintendent in the Chicago office of well-known architect Frederick L. Foltz, with whom he joined as partner in 1915, forming the firm Foltz & Brand.² After Frederick L. Foltz' death in 1916, Brand continued the firm with Foltz' son, Frederick Corning Foltz.³ During World War I, Brand served as a supervising architect for the U.S. Army Ordinance Department in Chicago. On his return to Chicago, he continued his architectural practice with Frederick C. Foltz until 1925, when the partnership dissolved and Herbert Brand practiced alone.⁴

In 1921, Herbert Brand married Esther Hoover of Oak Park, and the couple had four children. They eventually settled in Western Springs, Illinois, living in a house Brand designed for them at 4077 Central Avenue. His few residential commissions are located in Western Springs and its immediate neighboring communities.⁵

In his practice, Brand specialized in religious architecture throughout the region. Among his works are Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church in Oak Park, IL (1927), Central Methodist Episcopal Church in Muskegon, MI (1930), Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Chicago (1941), Christ Lutheran Church in Geneseo, IL (1949), and St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Whiting, IN (1956). He also designed several educational facilities, including North Central College's Kaufman Hall in 1928.⁶ Herbert Brand's son William Hoover Brand joined him in practice in 1946, and as a partner in 1952, forming Brand & Brand

¹ "Danville," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, January 30, 1886.

² George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, Second (New York, NY: R.R. Bowker Company, 1962), 75.

³ "Beg Your Pardon!," *Chicago Tribune*, January 9, 1918.

⁴ Koyl.

⁵ Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archive, *Herbert A. Brand Collection, 1903-2014 (bulk 1920-1959)*, Accession Number 2016.3, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2018).

⁶ *Ibid.*

Architects and Engineers.⁷ Herbert Brand retired from practice in 1959, and died in 1972.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners:

The Legal Description for the property at 619 E. Franklin Avenue is Block 2 in Kroehler's Addition to Naperville, in Section 18, Township 38, Range 10, East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the plat thereof recorded on May 14, 1906, as document 87553 in DuPage County, Illinois.

The original owners of the property were Peter E. and Josephine Stephens Kroehler, but Kroehler Hall South was built after the family's ownership, and the site of the building was the yard for the adjacent Kroehler residence.

The Kroehler property was purchased by North Central College from Josephine Stephens Kroehler Frech in 1945. What is now North Central College opened in Plainfield, Illinois as The Plainfield College of the Evangelical Association of North America on November 11, 1861, with 40 students studying in a two-story frame house.⁸ Plainfield is now a suburb of Chicago, lying 35 miles southwest of the city, but was an independent rural community for much of its history. The college's founders, the Evangelical Association of America, were part of a Protestant organization founded in 1816 that grew from the Methodist Church, with emphasis on simple worship, evangelism, and itinerant ministry.⁹ The college was co-educational from its founding, with most of the original faculty having been educated at Oberlin College, and the original faculty included a female English instructor named Catherine M. Harlacher.¹⁰ At the beginning, most of the college's students were from the surrounding area and of German descent. With an eye toward growth, the school's board of trustees renamed it North Western College in 1864. Its growth was unlikely, however, as the village of Plainfield remained inaccessible by railroad. Needing greater accessibility and more room to expand, North Western College thus moved northeast to Naperville in 1870.¹¹

At the time Peter Kroehler attended the college, an addition was made to Old Main on the Naperville campus and electric light was added to the facility, preparing the school to grow and move into the new century.¹² Professor J.L. Nichols, an early mentor of Peter Kroehler, died in 1895 and left \$10,000 to the school, to be used as investments

⁷ Koyl.

⁸ Clarence N. Roberts, *North Central College; A Century of Liberal Education, 1861-1961*, (Naperville IL: North Central College, 1960), 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹ Janice L. Reiff, Ann Durkin Keating, and James R. Grossman, *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Historical Society, 2005), 575.

¹² Roberts, 125.

and to construct a new gymnasium called Nichols Hall.¹³ Despite bequests such as this, the school struggled financially for several decades (fighting successfully to maintain accreditation throughout the 1920s), though its student body and course offerings continued to increase. In 1926, in part to differentiate the college from Northwestern University in Evanston, the name was again changed.¹⁴ North Central College flourished for the rest of the century; in 2022 it served over 2,700 students from its 56-acre campus in the Naperville Local Historic District, awarding bachelor of arts and science degrees in more than 50 majors and offering six graduate programs. Though still affiliated with the United Methodist Church, a successor to the Evangelical Association, North Central remains nonsectarian in hiring and admissions.¹⁵

North Central College sold the Kroehler campus to Little Friends – Sheltered Workshop Inc. in 1975. Little Friends is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1965 and today is a multi-faceted human services agency serving people of all ages experiencing autism, intellectual and emotional disabilities as well as their families.¹⁶ Beginning as a nursery school for five children, they now operate three schools, vocational training programs, community-based residential opportunities, and the Little Friends Center for Autism, a valued resource for diagnosis, comprehensive evaluations, therapies, and trainings for parents and professionals. Little Friends' Krejci Academy serves autistic students from over 60 school districts by providing therapies, small class sizes, and high staff-to-student ratios.¹⁷

4. **Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:** Not known.
5. **Original Plans and construction:** Kroehler Hall South, originally constructed as the Peter E. Kroehler Memorial Dormitory, was designed as an L-shaped residence hall that would complement the original Kroehler family property. The siting of the building allowed it to be surrounded by and benefit from the property's many mature trees and park-like atmosphere, while anchoring the corner of the campus.
6. **Alterations and Additions:** The west façade of the south wing originally had a two-story portico which was removed sometime in 2013 and converted into an open patio (figures 8, 9). Remnants of this portico include two engaged pilasters on the west wall and the bases of the four outer columns now utilized as piers supporting the modern painted wood balustrades. A paired window opening in the west wall of the north wing was bricked in at an undetermined date. Original iron railings flanking the south entrance

¹³ Ibid., 126.

¹⁴ Reiff.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "About Us," Little Friends, Inc., accessed May 18, 2022, <https://www.littlefriendsinc.org/about-us-1>.

¹⁷ "Hometown Heroes," *The Daily Herald*, May 23, 2008.

stoop were replaced with metal railings of a design that repeats the square baluster/gap/X motif of the house's porch balustrades (figure 11).

B. Historical Context:

Educating the returning GIs

Ground was broken for Kroehler Hall South in July 1946. While ultimately planned to be a dormitory for women, its earliest occupants were to be 150 men, specifically veterans. In order to obtain the needed building permits, it was necessary that the new structure be used for veterans' housing until the postwar materials shortage ended.¹⁸ In 1947, North Central College opened the academic year with 900 students. Kroehler Hall South was not yet completed, so the college housed veterans and their families in nine barracks-style dormitories, six of which were built on Fort Hill Campus and three on the main campus north of Goldspohn Hall. The Federal Housing Authority built these for use specifically for veterans.¹⁹

The Serviceman's Readjustment Act, better known as the Federal GI Bill, was signed into law in 1944 to address the challenges that nearly 16 million Americans would face when leaving the Armed Forces after the conclusion of World War II. To avoid the economic instability this would bring to our postwar economy, the bill included provisions for federal aid to help veterans buy homes, get jobs, and pursue an education. To facilitate education, the bill provided assistance for tuition, books, supplies, counseling services, and a living allowance. These provisions were strategic, as they also diverted a number of veterans into educational pursuits, thus they weren't flooding the job market all at once. Within the first seven years of the GI Bill going into effect, about 8 million veterans took advantage of its assistance programs. College and university degree-holders more than doubled between 1940 and 1960. The GI Bill was initially scheduled to expire in July 1956 but it has been extended several times. After the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the GI Bill helped more than 10.3 million more veterans with housing and educational needs. Most recently as the Forever GI Bill with expanded benefits for veterans. Today, several versions of the GI Bill are active, and their benefits continue to be enjoyed by military veterans.²⁰

¹⁸ "Break Ground for Dormitory in Naperville," *Chicago Tribune*, July 21, 1946.

¹⁹ "Four Colleges Ready to Begin Record Terms," *Chicago Tribune*, September 14, 1947.

²⁰ "75 Years of the GI Bill: How Transformative It's Been," U.S. Department of Defense, January 9, 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/1727086/75-years-of-the-gi-bill-how-transformative-its-been/>.

Part II. Architectural Information

A. General Statement

- 1. Architectural Character:** Kroehler Hall South was designed with elements of the neighboring Kroehler house carrying over to the dormitory, albeit in a somewhat more classical manner. The wall planes of the south and east facades are broken up by projecting rectangular bays, mimicking those on the west façade of the Kroehler house. A Spanish tile roof and copper fascia and downspouts on the dormitory repeat the original roofing material of the house. The roof is punctuated by shed dormers, again referencing those of the original house. Elements from the porch of the Kroehler house were also employed in the dormitory's design, notably on the west wall of the south wing where a two-story portico was built with square brick pillars and topped by a railed balcony. Overall, the design harmonizes with the original Kroehler house while assuming a different, more formal character.
- 2. Condition of Fabric:** The general condition of the building is fair. It remains structurally sound although heavily used.

B. Description of Exterior

- 1. Overall Dimensions:** The footprint is an L-plan, measuring approximately 120' x 88'. The attached and contemporary dining hall is rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 84' x 61'.
- 2. Foundations:** Most of the building does not have a basement, only an excavated crawlspace housing the footers for structural columns. Foundations are of reinforced concrete, 4' deep x 1'1" thick. A 5" stone water table rests slightly above ground level.
- 3. Walls:** Exterior walls are faced in a yellow iron-spot brick measuring 2 ¼" x 8" laid in common bond with ½" mortar joints.
- 4. Structural System:** Exterior walls are 1'-1" thick, with face brick laid over hollow clay tile. The interior structure is composed of concrete T-beams overlaid with 2 ½" concrete floors supported by columns extending upward from the crawlspace. Interior partitions are made of 4" "Waylite" concrete blocks.
- 5. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticoes, bulkheads:** The principal entrance to Kroehler Hall South is positioned on the south façade of the building, facing Franklin Avenue. It is accessed via a concrete stoop rising four steps above sidewalk level. This stoop is flanked by white metal railings on either side that repeat the square baluster/gap/X

motif of the house's porch balustrades. An identical handrail is located in the center of the flight of steps. The entrance stoop is sheltered by a modern blue canvas canopy attached to the building (figure 11). The west façade of the south wing has an open patio, the base of which is remaining from the former portico. Other remnants of this portico include two engaged pilasters on the west wall, and the bases of the four outer columns now utilized as piers supporting the modern painted wood balustrades (figure 8).

6. **Chimneys:** Two rectangular chimneys are present, one connected to the lounge's fireplace that extends up the south façade, and another extending up the east façade venting the building's boilers for the heating system.

7. Openings

- a. **Doorways:** There are three entrances to Kroehler Hall South. The principal entrance is set near the western end of the south wing, facing Franklin Avenue. This entrance is framed by fluted limestone panels topped by sconces and supporting a limestone lintel. The entrance door is a modern brown aluminum commercial door containing a sidelight with two panels of glass divided horizontally (figure 11). The entrance to the patio on the west façade is framed by flat panels of limestone, with "Peter Kroehler Memorial Dormitory" carved above the opening. The doors appear to be historic. They are wood double doors with single lights above flat panels and interior screen doors (figure 8). The third entrance is placed in the connector between the dining hall and main building. It is set in the west wall and contains a modern steel and glass security door that is painted white. The opening in the brickwork is reduced from its original size.
- b. **Windows and shutters:** Windows throughout are modern white vinyl double-hung, single-light replacements. Generally, windows are paired and regularly spaced, with one pair of windows opening into each original dorm room. Two projections on the south facade each contain two single double-hung windows. The south wing stairs are lit by half-size windows set into blind openings that repeat the rhythm of the surrounding full-size windows. A grouping of three round-arched windows with the center window being taller is present on the third story of the south wing's west wall (figure 8). Windows rest on limestone sills and beneath steel lintels.

8. Roofs

- a. **Shape, covering:** The roof of the building is in a side-gable configuration. It is covered with historic clay S-type Ludowici tile in a natural terra cotta color.

- b. **Cornice, eaves:** There is no cornice on the building. Eaves are wood box eaves, unadorned and painted white. The original copper gutter system is present, along with copper downspouts.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas and towers:** Four shed dormers are present, one on each of the four roof surfaces facing the cardinal points (figures 6, 8). Each dormer contains two pairs of horizontal sliding windows. There is a small, louvered copper cupola present on the ridgeline of the east wing, near its intersection with the south wing (figure 6).

C. Description of Interior

1. **Floor Plans:** The building is representative of a postwar dormitory building. It is arranged in an L-plan, with each wing of the building being split down the middle by a full-length corridor with dormitory rooms (currently classrooms) opening from it. Gathering spaces are arranged at the far ends of the building on the first floor (figure 2). The hall-and-dorm room arrangement is repeated on the second and third floors (figures 3, 4). The fourth floor of the east wing is taken up by a large “gym” set beneath the roofline, and the south wing contains five offices and classrooms (figure 5). Approximately 39’ of the northernmost section of the east wing is excavated into a full basement, housing a boiler room, laundry room, and storage area.
2. **Stairways:** There are two interior stairways in the hall, one on the north wall of the east wing, and one on the north wall of the south wing. These stairs allow access to all floors and are constructed of painted steel with square newels and balusters and a brushed metal railing. Both sets of stairs are of halfspace landing configuration.
3. **Flooring:** Most flooring in the corridors and classrooms of the building is modern resilient vinyl flooring, patterned to look like hardwood floors (figure 16). Some spaces such as the first-floor lounge and third-floor gymnasium are covered in commercial grade carpet. Other classrooms and the kitchen are floored with 12” vinyl composite tiles. The former dining hall is covered in modern sheet vinyl (figure 12). Some individual bathrooms retain their original tile floors in an octagon-and-dot pattern, with black dots set into an ochre field (figure 13).
4. **Wall and ceiling finishes:** All walls and ceilings are finished with smooth plaster and painted. Some spaces in the building such as the lounge, dining hall, and first-floor corridor have textured plaster ceilings. Third floor ceilings are dropped with a grid-and-tile system.
5. **Openings**

- a. Doorways and doors:** Many original interior doors are present, with flat solid-core doors in the corridor and flat hollow-core doors in other spaces. Most hall doors have windows of various dimensions cut into them to allow view and light into the interior hallway. Hall doors also had transom windows that are now painted over. Doors are trimmed with flat wood casings, some with later applied rosette corner blocks.
 - b. Windows:** Windows are all white vinyl on the interior surfaces, and trimmed with flat casings and a projecting sill and apron.
- 6. Decorative features and trim:** The only real decorative features are arch-topped phone niches in the hallways placed at the intersection of the south and east wings on each floor (figure 16).
- 7. Hardware:** Some former dorm rooms retain their original closet door hardware, consisting of plain brass-plated knobs and backplates (figure 14). Other door hardware consists of modern commercial brushed silver levers and knobs.
- 8. Mechanical equipment**
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The building is heated with a hot water system, with radiators enclosed in vented metal cases placed beneath windows. Air conditioning is supplied by window units.
 - b. Lighting:** All lighting consists of modern flush-mount fluorescent tube fixtures.
 - c. Plumbing:** Plumbing is original to the building, with bathrooms having modern porcelain toilets and historic sinks and tubs.
- 9. Original furnishings:** N/A

D. Site

- 1. Historic landscape design:** Several old specimen trees are present on the property, likely dating back to the period when the property was a residence. All other original landscape features have been removed. The Kroehler house, Kroehler Hall South, and Kroehler Hall North are accessed via a curved drive with a sidewalk on its east edge that follows part of the original drive path to the Kroehler house (figure 1).
- 2. Outbuildings:** N/A

Part III. Sources of Information

"About Us." Little Friends, Inc. Accessed May 18, 2022. <https://www.littlefriendsinc.org/about-us-1>.

"Beg Your Pardon!" *Chicago Tribune*, January 9, 1918.

"Break Ground for Dormitory in Naperville." *Chicago Tribune*, July 21, 1946.

"Danville." *The Daily Inter Ocean*, January 30, 1886.

"Four Colleges Ready to Begin Record Terms." *Chicago Tribune*, September 14, 1947.

"Hometown Heroes." *The Daily Herald*, May 23, 2008.

Koyl, George S., ed. *American Architects Directory*. Second ed. New York, NY: R.R. Bowker Company, 1962.

Reiff, Janice L., Ann Durkin Keating, and James R. Grossman. *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Historical Society, 2005.

Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archive. *Herbert A. Brand Collection, 1903-2014 (bulk 1920-1959): Accession Number 2016.3*. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2018.

"75 Years of the GI Bill: How Transformative It's Been." U.S. Department of Defense, January 9, 2019. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/1727086/75-years-of-the-gi-bill-how-transformative-its-been/>.

Appendix I - Site Plan

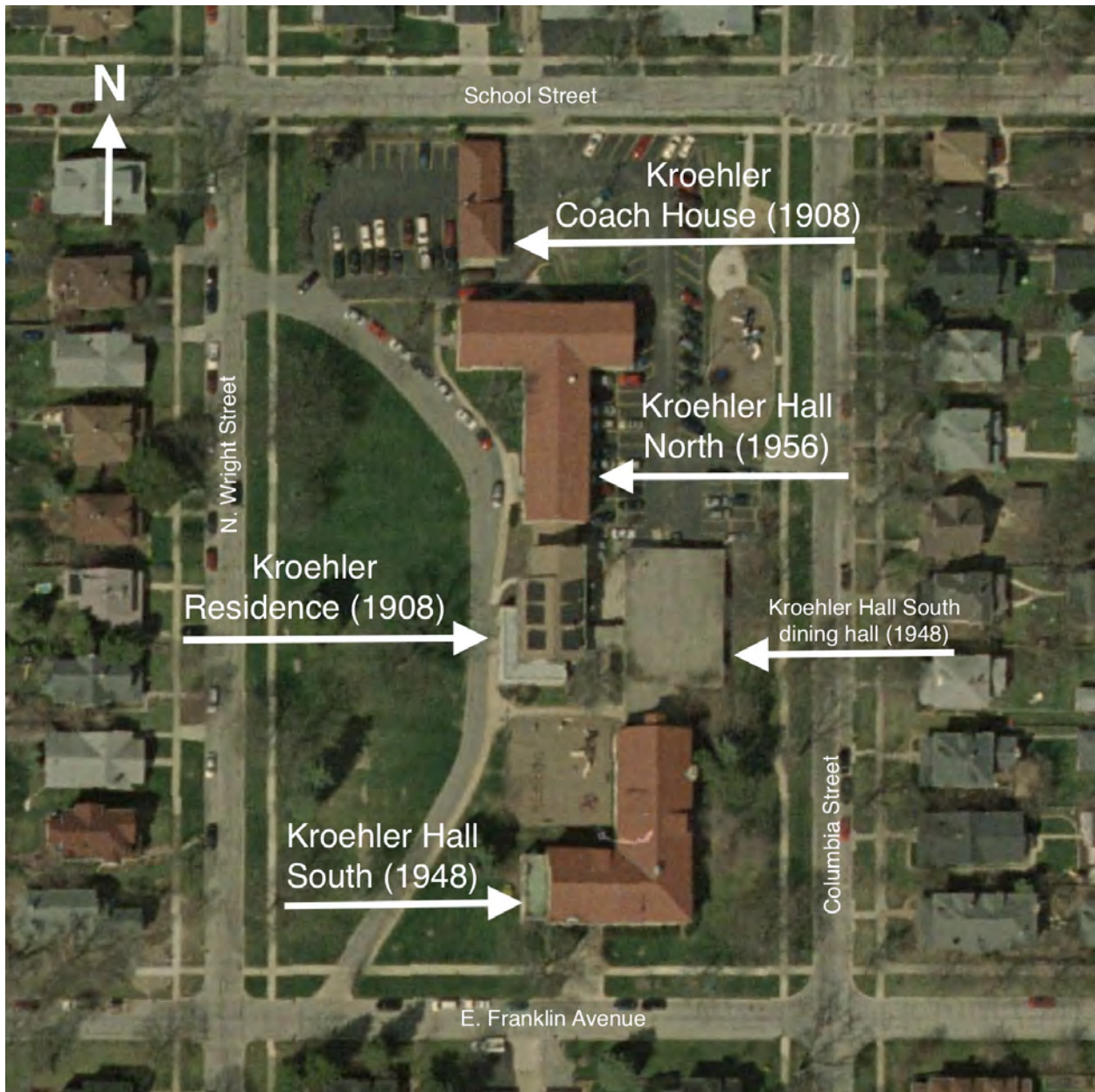


Figure 1: Aerial photo, 2002
Source: *historicaerials.com*

Appendix II – Floor Plans

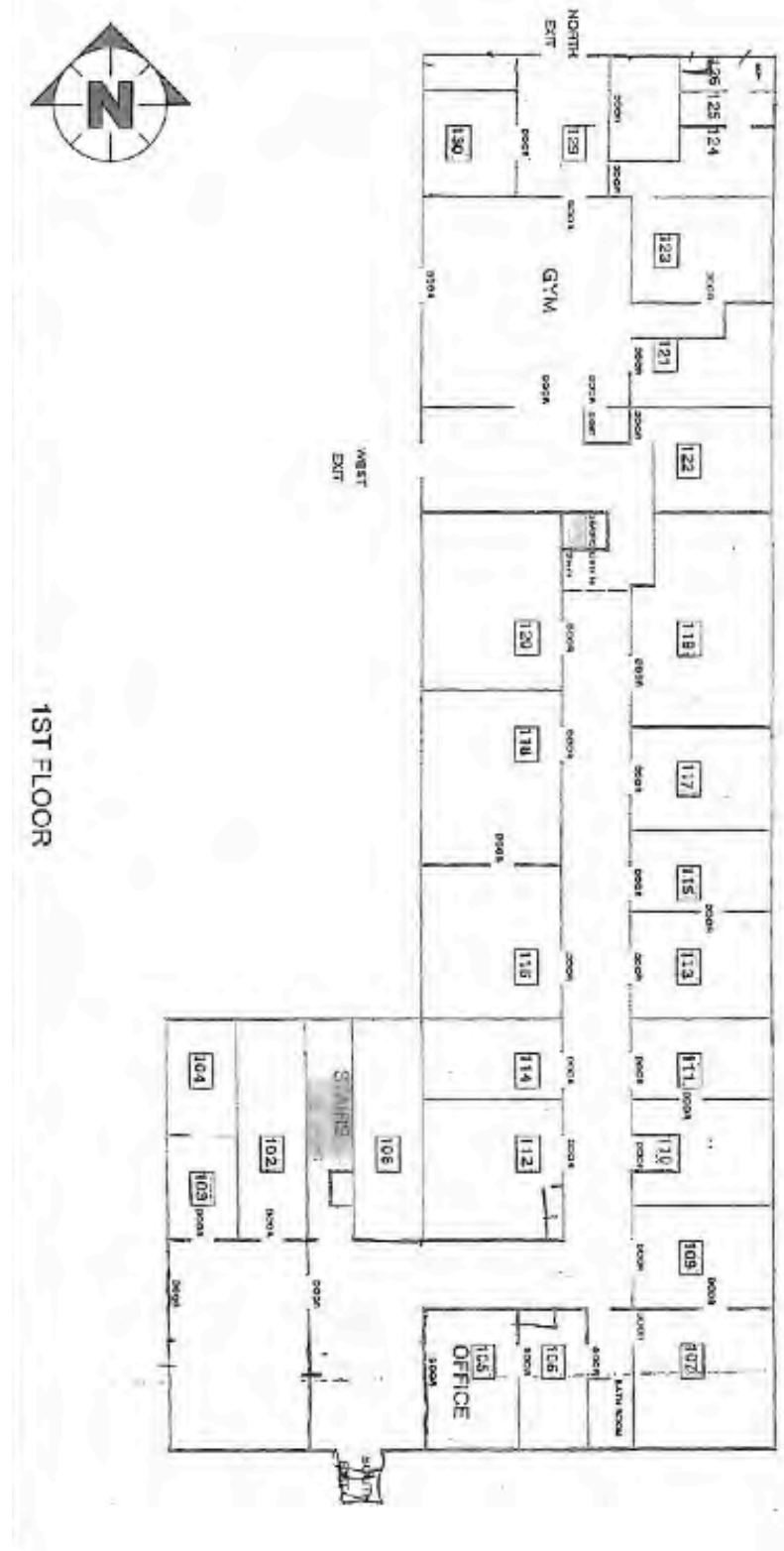


Figure 2: Kroehler Hall North, first floor

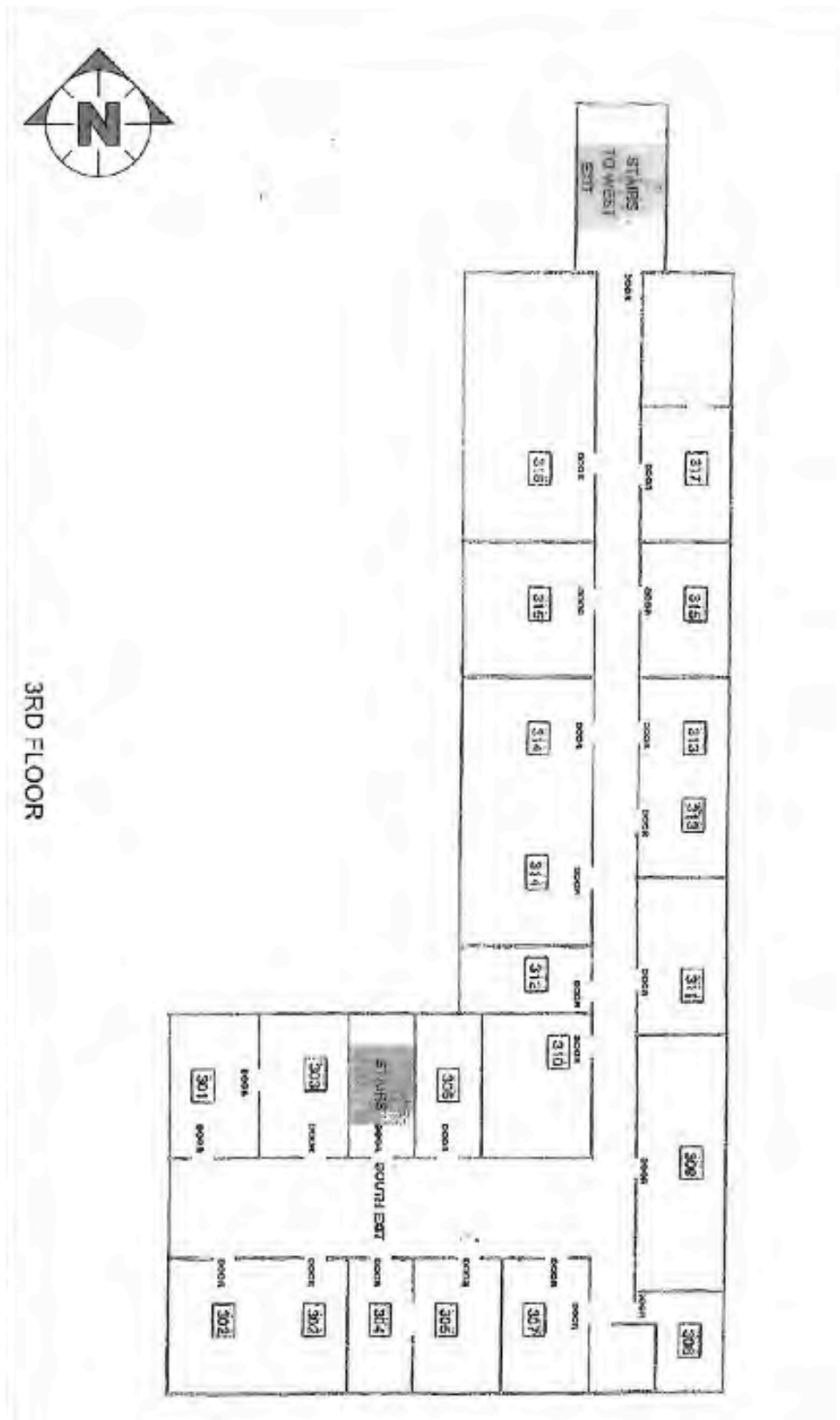


Figure 4: Kroehler Hall North, third floor

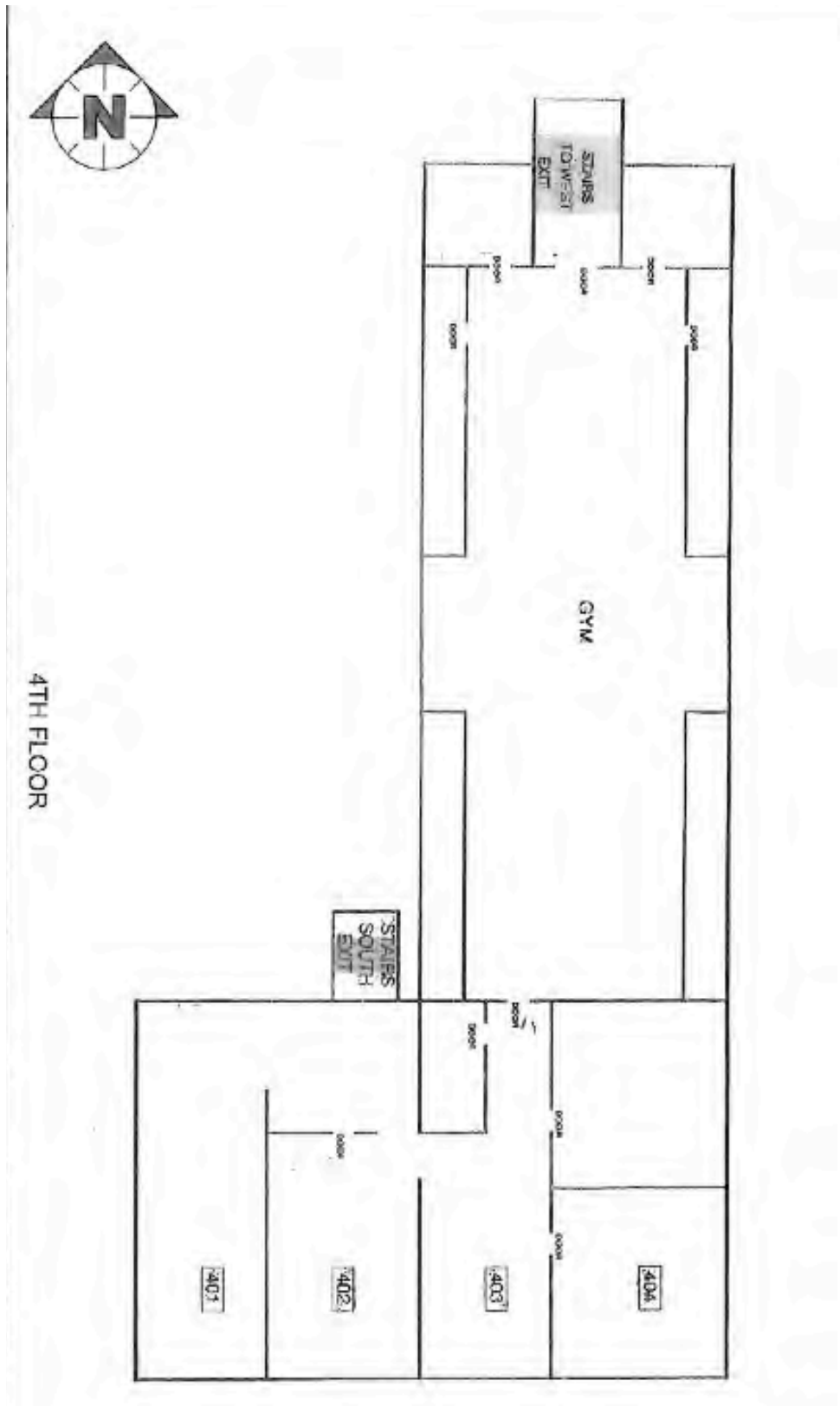


Figure 5: Kroehler Hall North, fourth floor

Appendix III – Supporting Images



Figure 6: East and south walls, looking northwest
Source: author



Figure 7: Same view, 1954
Source: The Spectrum 1954, North Central College yearbook, public domain.



Figure 8: West and south walls, looking northeast
Source: author



Figure 9: Same view, 1952
Source: The Spectrum 1952, North Central College yearbook, public domain.

All following images were taken by author



Figure 10: Dining hall, looking south southwest



Figure 11: Principal entrance detail



Figure 12: Dining hall interior, looking northwest



Figure 13: Original bathroom tile floor



Figure 14: Original closet door hardware



Figure 15: Third floor gym area



Figure 16: Original telephone niche



Figure 17: Fireproof construction in third floor

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Leslie Schwartz, Photographer, December 2020

- IL-1270-C-1 General view of Kroehler Hall South, looking northeast.
- IL-1270-C-2 Interior view of Kroehler Hall South sitting room, looking southwest.
- IL-1270-C-3 Detail view of Kroehler Hall South stairway, looking north.
- IL-1270-C-4 Interior view of Kroehler Hall South corridor, showing telephone niche, looking north.
- IL-1270-C-5 Interior view of Kroehler Hall South dormitory room.









