



## Rehabilitation of Engineering Officers' Quarters



### Introduction

The established period of significance for Fort Jefferson is the Army period which extends from 1846 to 1898. Subsequent periods of occupation and development are not currently recognized as being historically significant. Recommendations are being made for the periods of significance to be expanded to include occupation and use until the acquisition of the site by the National Park Service in 1992.

The Engineering Officers' Quarters consists of two buildings that are some of the earliest structures built at Fort Jefferson. These are great tangible examples from history still standing of many of the important periods of occupation and use of Fort Jefferson and its contributing structures that have endured. Historic documentation such as letters and photographs have helped the Park Service understand the history and use of these structures from the time the Army constructed them and occupied the fort until now. Since 1940-41, these buildings have been continuously used as NPS housing.



*The earliest known photograph showing where HS-08 is located is dated 1867. The date for the image cannot be before 1866 as the 10-inch "Parrott" rifles on the terreplein on barbette platforms were installed in 1866.*

### History

After years of deferred maintenance and many active tropical hurricane seasons the park service is beginning a comprehensive rehabilitation of these two buildings to correct the accumulation of deferred maintenance, improve park housing, and enhance the visitor experience through a more accurate representation of key architectural features from the period of significance. The ruin to the north of these two buildings will not be part of this rehabilitation and is known as the Commanding Officer's Quarters Ruin.

Since initial construction in the mid 1800's and through the Navy years (1898-1916) very little changes occurred to the form and features of the main buildings other than the addition of privy and kitchen structures.

From 1916-1937 very little is known about the use of these buildings. How the buildings became ruins by 1937 is unknown although two major hurricanes struck the keys during that period.

In late 1938 and early 1939, the NPS Branch of Plans and Design, Eastern Division prepared floor plans, elevations, schedules, and details as part of PWA Project No. O.P. 752-05-218 to construct the superintendent's quarters. The drawings show the National Park Service's intent to maintain the historic exterior appearance of the structure, except for the addition of the Hyphen, or wood addition between the two buildings, (which does not appear in the historic images) and some changes to the fenestration.

Reconstruction began in the spring of 1939 and was completed in 1941. Since the reconstruction of 8A, the Hyphen and 8B was completed in 1940-41 these buildings have been continuously used as NPS housing and very few changes have occurred on the exterior of the structures.



*Image above c. 1900 of rear of buildings with kitchen and privy additions. Image below from 1934 showing Engineering Officers' Quarters in ruined state prior to 1938-1941 rehabilitation.*



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## Work in Progress

The existing conditions of HS-08 warrant execution of a total Rehabilitation. The NPS intent between 1935 and 1941, when HS-08 was converted into park housing, was an adaptive reuse of the structure to provide for housing while restoring the character of the structure as it would have appeared during the Army Period (1866-1898). Current work will follow this same intent.

Treatment will be completed on the buildings over a three year period and will begin on the exterior and then focus on the interiors.

Work to be completed includes; documentation, stabilization and repair or porches, removal of iron lintels and restoration of granite lintels, masonry repairs and repointing, and repairs to interior walls, floors, fixtures and utilities.

Currently work is being performed by the Historic Preservation Division of Facilities Management located at Bandelier National Monument in Los Alamos, New Mexico. All workers are National Park Service Employees and funds are provided from the park

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## Contact Information

For further information about this project or other on-going preservation work at Fort Jefferson and the rest of Dry Tortugas National Park please contact:

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