# THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
# (THE RYAN CENTER)

## Gateway National Recreation Area
## Floyd Bennett Field Unit
## Brooklyn, New York




## Historic Structure Report

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Cultural Resources Center
Boott Cotton Mills Museum
400 Foot of John Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852-1195

IN REPLY REFER TO:

October 30, 2000

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**Memorandum**

To: Technical Information Assistant, Technical Information Center
Division of Graphic Systems (DSC-PGT), Denver Service Center

From: Chief, Northeast Building Conservation Branch

Subject: Transmittal of Historic Structure Report for the Administration Buildyan Center)

Enclosed please find one copy of the completed historic structure report for thministration Building (Ryan Center) at Gateway NRA. If you have any questions, or woue additional copies, please contact the branch's Publications Editor, Sharon Ofenstein, at (978)5141.

(Sgd) STEPHEN M. SPAULDING

Stephen Spaulding

Enclosure

# THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
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By
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Northeast Cultural Resources Center
Northeast Region, National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
Lowell, Massachusetts

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# I. INTRODUCTION

# Executive Summary

*[**Editor's note:** When this report was written, the author was an employee of the Building Conservation Branch (BCB) of the Cultural Resources Center (CRC), part of the North Atlantic Region (NAR), National Park Service (NPS). The North Atlantic Region was later incorporated into a new Northeast Region (NER), and the name of the CRC was changed to the Northeast Cultural Resources Center (NCRC). The terminology in this report has been updated to reflect current organizational conditions.]*

This historic structure report (HSR) was intended to function as an addendum to the 1981 historic structure report for Floyd Bennett Field, part of Gateway National Recreation Area (NRA), Northeast Region, NPS. The 1981 report was written for the entire Floyd Bennett Field Unit, so the Administration Building is just one of many elements of the field discussed in it. In light of the upcoming preservation projects at the Ryan Center, a more specific examination of the construction history and evolution of the building was thought to be necessary.

As per the task directive, research for revising the extant HSR was guided by the sources identified by Denver Service Center (DSC) of the NPS in 1981. Existing reports, documents, and sources were reviewed, and new sources of documentation were pursued and exhaustively investigated. A more detailed understanding of the construction and evolution of the Administration Building was developed. A nondestructive investigation of the building was carried out during a number of site visits to assess current architectural conditions, and to examine the building's structural evolution.

The task directive likewise called for a careful examination of the areas of the interior of the building with original decorative painting. An examination was made and the areas documented with photographs, sketches, and tracings of designs where possible. Extensive paint samples were removed from painted surfaces throughout the building for a future in-depth analysis of both the decorative program and the finishes applied room-by-room. Sample locations were carefully noted on floor plans and in many cases individual site sketches of exact locations were made for future reference.

Also according to the task directive, character-defining features of the building were determined and included in order to guide recommendations for the restoration and adaptive use of the structure. Character-defining features (CDFs) are those elements or treatments that give a structure its distinction and character, and without which the architectural or historical integrity would be diminished or lost. CDFs can date to original construction or to later alterations. Preservation and rehabilitation efforts should minimize any adverse effects to the CDFs of the building.

The report resulting from the above-described investigations is more than an addendum or revision of the original HSR, so it will remain a separate document entitled *The Administration Building, Floyd Bennett Field: Historic Structure Report.* This new HSR will incorporate findings and documentation included in the 1981 report that relate to (a) the general history of the site, and (b) events and features specific to the Administration Building.

The recommended treatment for the Administration Building is the preservation of the exterior and the rehabilitation of all interior spaces. (Restoration of the lobby and main north/south corridors is currently under consideration by park management.)

The 1993 draft of the *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* defines the selected treatments as follows:

> Preservation maintains the existing integrity and character of a historic structure by arresting or retarding deterioration caused by natural forces and normal use. It includes both maintenance and stabilization.
>
> Rehabilitation improves the utility or function of a historic structure, through repair or alteration, to make possible a compatible contemporary use while preserving those portions or features that are important in defining its significance.[1]

The recommended use for the Administration Building is adaptive use as a visitors' center, and as space for exhibits, staff offices, and training services. Use of the building for these functions is compatible with the structure.

Maintenance conditions will be determined and included in the upcoming design package to be developed by an architectural and engineering firm and the Division of Cultural Resources, Gateway NRA. Recommendations related to maintenance concerns will evolve from this assessment.

## Administrative Data

The Ryan Center/Administration Building *(LCS # JB-001)* is located at Floyd Bennett Field in South Brooklyn on Jamaica Bay. One of the primary buildings included in the Floyd Bennett Field Historic District, it was constructed in 1931 as the airport terminal building for Floyd Bennett Field, New York City's first municipal airport.

The Administration Building was the focal point of the Floyd Bennett Field airport. Located just north of the main runway, it is sited about 250 feet east of Flatbush Avenue. It is oriented on a north/south axis, with the official front of the building facing west toward Flatbush Avenue, and the control tower facing the airfield behind.

Floyd Bennett Field (including the Administration Building) was never a large commercial success. It transferred from the city to the Department of the Navy in 1941, which modified and enlarged it for use as a major naval air station. The Navy made continuous use of the field until the site was transferred from the Defense Department to the Department of the Interior on October 27, 1972.

Construction drawings outlining repairs and partial restoration of the Administration Building were first prepared in 1978. As described previously, a historic structure report for Floyd Bennett Field, including the Administration Building, was completed by the Denver Service Center in May 1981. The HSR included a historical data volume and an architectural data volume. Formal recommendations for rehabilitation of the building were again proposed in 1982. A conditions survey and assessment of the building was conducted in 1984. Preservation of the control tower was

[1] *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management*, Release No. 4. Draft (February 1993), p. 140.

carried out in 1992 by park staff and the Building Conservation Branch of the Northeast Cultural Resources Center.

A National Register nomination for the Floyd Bennett Field Unit was prepared and submitted in 1978. The nomination was accepted, and the unit–original runways, Administration Building, eight original hangars, and several dependant buildings–was designated as a historic district.

The proposed treatment of the Ryan Center is exterior preservation and interior rehabilitation, with the possible restoration of several interior features (e.g., the lobby). As explained previously, the proposed use of the building is adaptive use as a visitors' center, and for staff offices, exhibit spaces, and training services operations.

The proposed treatment and use of the Ryan Center are in agreement with available planning documents regarding the management of the cultural resources of the Floyd Bennett Field Unit of Gateway NRA. The *General Management Plan* of 1979 identifies the Administration Building as one of the most significant cultural resources of the unit, and identifies the following management objectives for Floyd Bennett Field:

> The proposed historic district, which will include the site of the historic central runway system, the administration building/control tower, and six hangars that date from the 1929-1931 period, will be planned to maintain the historic ambience....interior space in the hangars and attendant buildings as well as adjacent open space on and near the runways will be adaptively reused [sic] and rehabilitated as part of the larger design.

The intent was to emphasize "preservation and adaptive reuse of historic resources...."[2] The proposed use of the building, according to the GMP, was "Interpretation and Administration - small auditorium, exhibit room, interpretive use of control tower, environmental, education, administrative offices."[3] Some of these uses are still planned for the building.

The proposed treatment and use are also compatible with the information in the List of Classified Structures (LCS). The LCS identifies the Ryan Center/Administration Building as a historic structure in the "Should Be Preserved" management category, with adaptive restoration proposed for its ultimate treatment.

Related studies that examine the Administration Building include the following:

Porter R. Blakemore and Dana C. Linck, *Historic Structure Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area, Volume I* (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, Mid-Atlantic/North Atlantic Team, Branch of Historic Preservation), May 1981.

Richard Greenwood, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Floyd Bennett Field Historic District" (National Park Service), April 1978.

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[2] *General Management Plan, Gateway National Recreational Area* (1979), p. 136.

[3] Porter R. Blakemore, "Historical Data Section," p. iii, in *Historic Structures Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area*, Vol. I, by Porter R. Blakemore and Dana C. Linck (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, May 1981).

Sam Holmes, *Historic Structure Report, Administrative Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area, Package No. 109* (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, Mid-Atlantic/North Atlantic Team), August 1979.

Frank Matero, "Emergency Documentation/Analysis of the Interior Decorative Finishes of the Lobby-Waiting Room of the Administration Building, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area" (National Park Service: North Atlantic Historic Preservation Center, Boston, MA), February 7, 1981.

Susan Simpson, *Historic Structure Report, Architectural Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area, Volume II* (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, Mid-Atlantic/North Atlantic Team, Branch of Historic Preservation), May 1981.

Tonetti Associates, "Facade Investigation, Visitors Center, Floyd Bennett Field," January 30, 1984.

The materials generated by this report will be copied and distributed to park and regional personnel for review. Original photographs, drawings, and text will remain at the NCRC until a final draft of the report is completed and accepted. Original materials will then be delivered to the archives of the Floyd Bennett Field Unit, Gateway NRA for cataloging and storage. A final draft of the report will be maintained at the NCRC, the Boston System Support Office of the NPS, and the DSC's Technical and Informational Center.

## Statement of Significance

The significance of the Administration Building according to the 1978 National Register nomination is threefold. The significance of the Floyd Bennett Field Unit (including the Administration Building) was determined to be:

- its role in the evolution of aviation history and municipal airport construction;
- its association with individuals significant in early aviation (i.e. Wiley Post, Howard Hughes, Jackie Cochran); and
- the remaining integrity of its original structures and setting, which tell the story of the early years of aviation.

The National Register nomination does not specifically identify a period of significance, although the above-listed determinations of significance roughly bracket the period from construction in 1931 to the establishment of a Naval Air Station in 1941.

In addition, however, Floyd Bennett Field played a major role throughout World War II as a naval air station. The field provided invaluable services as the East Coast terminal of the Military Air Transport Service, serving as the main receiving point of all air traffic and supplies heading for Europe, and as the primary communications link with ships in the Atlantic. It also served as a base for anti-submarine squadrons and as a center for training air cadets. Therefore, a broader period of significance reflecting an extended continuum of occupation, function, and changes to the site is currently under consideration.

# II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

# EXTERIOR ELEMENTS

The Ryan Center/Administration Building is a two-story brick structure with a full basement. The building measures 182 feet by 74 feet in plan; it is rectangular in shape, except for a projecting entry pavilion on the west side and a projecting tower on the east side.

The style of the building is an eclectic mix of elements from the Renaissance Revival, Colonial (Georgian) Revival, Neoclassical, and Art Deco styles. These have been combined to form a type of stylistic hybrid that was frequently employed for the construction of public structures from ca. 1900 to 1940. The "municipal hybrid" borrowed stylistic elements from a variety of classical styles to create an imposing formal appearance with clear historical precedents. However, it also simplified the details of those styles, to project the functional and public nature of the building. In order to attract the acceptance and respect of the general public, buildings constructed in the "municipal hybrid" style are generally large, impressive structures that employ–and frequently exaggerate–the most associative features of certain traditional styles. Visitors were therefore both impressed by the size and scope of the architecture, and comforted by the use of familiar, popular, and repetitive features, such as the symmetrical placement of windows and doorway.

Renaissance Revival elements employed in the design of the Administration Building include:

- the flat roof with eave parapet
- the prominent entablature with cornice dentils
- the different window treatments to emphasize each story
- the use of quoins and the stucco surface of the recessed entry
- the rusticated foundation[1]

Colonial Revival features of the design include:

- the Flemish bond red brick of the walls
- the light-colored trim, including the keystones in the window lintels
- the blind arches over first-story windows
- the use of transom lights and sidelights at first-floor doorways
- the double-hung sash with multi-pane glazing in upper sash
- the paired and triple windows
- the segmental pediments of the front entry doorways[2]

[1] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), pp. 396-398.

[2] McAlester and McAlester, pp. 320-325.

Neoclassical features of the design include:

- the façade, which is dominated by a center projecting pavilion containing a recessed entrance portico with two classical columns in antis[3]

In addition, Art Deco aesthetics are evident in the translation of the more traditional styles. Art Deco elements can be seen in the:

- stylized simple geometric shapes employed, particularly for window openings, transom designs, portico columns, and roof cornice
- the spare, sharp lines of the building
- the pattern of flush brick arches and lintels
- the smooth, unornamented surface of most of the exterior walls
- decorative brickwork in the walls of the control tower, and above the front entry on the roof parapet, consisting of flat geometric patterns of squares and triangles.

Therefore, the overall appearance of the exterior is an eclectic combination of traditional and popular styles interpreted by the architect for use in a public/municipal building with a new and modern function–the facilitation of air travel. This stylistic marriage and public function dominated the design of the interior features of the building, as well.

The building has changed very little since initial construction in 1930. Walls are of red Harvard brick laid in Flemish bond. White cast stone is used for contrasting trim, water table, stairways, and portico columns. Trim includes quoins, parapet coping, entablature, blind arched panels above the windows, window keystones, window sills, doorway surrounds at north and south ends, arched pediments over the west entry doorways, terrace balustrades, and a decorative globe above the main entry on the roof parapet. Decorative brickwork is found on the roof parapet above the main entry, on the walls of the control tower, and around doorways and windows. The decorative brickwork generally consists of raised or inset geometric designs of white cast stone.

The continuous concrete building foundation measures 2 feet 4 inches wide, and is faced with a water table of cast-stone blocks. The size of the blocks vary, but they generally measure 1 foot by 3 feet and are several inches thick. They are laid to resemble ashlar block. Joints are recessed and tooled smooth. A smooth curved band of cast stone caps the water table. The foundation rests on a bluestone sill that is footed on reinforced concrete piles 35 feet long and 14 inches square. Numerous windows and doorways pierce the water table and foundation to provide light and access to the basement rooms.

The perimeter walls are 12 inches thick, and consist of partially bearing common-bond brickwork faced with red Harvard brick laid in Flemish bond. Exterior walls rest on the concrete foundation.

The walls feature a cast-stone entablature at the roofline. The entablature consists of an architrave, frieze, and cornice that run the full perimeter of the building, except at the tower. From bottom to top are: a double fascia, cyma reversa, and fillet in the architrave; a plain frieze of one course of cast-concrete block; a fascia, dentil course, fascia, fillet, cyma recta, and two fillets in the

[3] McAlester and McAlester, pp. 343-345.

cornice.[4] (The dentil course was divided into runs of 33 small dentils by a larger concrete square.) The frieze on the east and west sides of the building served as a background for bronze letters which spelled out the name of the field and administering agency. Lettering is extant only along the east frieze, and reads "NAVAL AIR STATION - FLOYD BENNETT FIELD." The FLOYD BENNETT FIELD letters are original.

A four-story control tower centered on the east (airfield) side of the building dominates this elevation. The tower projects from the main block of the building, and exhibits in plan half a hexagon. The tower is dominated by large paired and triple rectangular windows at the lower three levels, and by a steel-framed glass enclosure at the fourth/top level. Windows cant out at a 45-degree angle at the fourth level for a better vantage of incoming planes. (This steel frame viewing room replaced the original in 1943.) The original ornamental aluminum railing and cornice are extant on the control tower.

The roof of the building is flat with a 1-foot-thick brick parapet wall around the perimeter. The gravel-ballasted built-up roof is slightly pitched to roof drains. The current surface of the roof is an asphaltic waterproof coating. A 10-foot-square glazed skylight is located at the center of the roof, allowing natural light to reach the stained-glass skylight directly below in the lobby.

The building features several porches, ramps, and stairways providing access to the basement and first-floor levels of the interior. A two-story projecting pavilion is centered on the west (front) side of the building; it projects approximately 10 feet from the main block of the building. The center of the pavilion contains a recessed portico that features two Tuscan columns supporting the cornice. A 30-foot wide granite stairway with nine steps lead up to the portico. Also on the west side of the building are two concrete ramps descending from grade into the basement.

The east side of the building features two terraces running nearly the full length of the building at the first-floor level. Both terraces extend from the control tower toward the ends of the building. The north terrace stops 16 feet short of the north end of the building. The south terrace extends all the way to the south end. The terraces are rectangular and bounded by a balustrade of cast-stone balusters, brick piers, and a cast-stone railing. Stairways lead from the terraces to the field at either side of the control tower. In addition, a stairway at the south end of the south terrace leads to the walkway at that end of the building. Steps are granite. Stairway walls are faced with cast stone. Three concrete ramps leading from grade into the basement are located on the east side of the building beneath the terraces. One ramp leads into the south end of the basement, and two ramps lead into the north end of the basement.

In addition to the east and west entrances into the building, an entry with stairway is located at both the north and the south ends of the building. Steps are granite, with cheek walls of brick and concrete faced with cast-stone blocks.

Fenestration is arranged symmetrically on all sides and at all levels. Window openings at the basement level alternate in an ordered pattern between narrow rectangular openings and wide rectangular openings, all cut into the water table. First-floor window openings are likewise a balanced composition of narrow and wide openings. Each first-floor opening is topped by an arch composed of header brick and accented with a cast-stone keystone and cast-stone blocks at the spring

[4] Porter R. Blakemore, "Historical Data Section," p. 7, in *Historic Structures Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area*, Vol. I, by Porter R. Blakemore and Dana C. Linck (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, May 1981).

points of the arch. In addition, all first-floor arches are infilled with segmental cast-stone panels. Second-floor window openings follow the placement pattern established on the first floor (except in the tower). All second-floor window openings are rectangular and feature straight soldier-brick lintels accented with a cast-stone keystone. First- and second-floor window openings have cast-stone sills. Most windows currently contain stationary steel window frames and sash. (These steel windows replaced original wood windows in 1954.) Four window openings (W 1-21, W 1-22, 1-23, and W 1-25) have been infilled with glass blocks (see figures 1-2).

Doorways on the exterior of the building include the tri-portal entry on the west side, the single entries on north and south ends of the building, and three doorways opening to the terraces along the east side of the building. In addition, five doorways are located in the foundation accessing the basement–two on the west and three on the east side of the building. All doorways contain double doors.

The tri-portal doorways on the west facade are the most elaborate openings, featuring cast-stone segmentally arched pediments. The doorways at the north and south ends have plain rectangular cast-stone surrounds with molded caps. Of the three doorways on the east side of the building, two (D 1-24, D 1-31) are located on either side of the control tower. These are original, rectangular openings with soldier-brick lintels accented with a cast-stone keystone). A header-brick arch above these doorways is evidence of original arched canopies (now removed). The third east-side doorway (D 1-35) is located near the south end of the south terrace. Wider than the other two, it has an arched top containing a cast-stone panel, and sidelights of glass block. Three more east-side openings of similar size and placement, which are currently windows (W 1-11, W 1-12, and W 1-22,) were also doorways originally. They have been altered at various times in the building's history.)

All doors are double steel fire doors with one light in the top half of each panel. Several doorways also feature glass transoms. See the subsequent doorway schedule for specific locations and details.

## INTERIOR ELEMENTS

The arrangement of interior space is generally similar from floor to floor. The focus of the plan is a large open central space, from which corridors extend north and south, with smaller rooms opening off the corridors on either side. At the basement level the center space is enclosed and less dramatic than on the first floor, where the large central space is an open two-story lobby. Two sets of doorways are located at the east and west sides of the lobby on the first-floor, opening to the field-side terraces and the front portico, respectively.

A major variation to the plan is found on the basement level. A passenger-loading tunnel runs underground from the main block of the building due east for 124 feet, and then branches at right angles to the north and south forming a 240-foot "T." The tunnel was added to the building in 1935. It is completely defunct as of this writing, and in rapidly deteriorating condition

The traffic circulation within the building is linear: end-to-end through the corridors, and back and forth through the lobby. Vertical circulation is provided by six main staircases. Staircases at the north and south ends of the building (Stairways #1 and #6) run from first to second floors. A staircase in the northwest corner of the lobby (Stairway #2) runs from the basement to the second floor. A staircase in the northeast corner of the second floor of the lobby (Stairway #3) runs from the second to the third floors. A stairway descends from the center east side of the lobby on the first level (Stairway #4), providing access to the basement and passenger-loading tunnel. This stairway is currently concealed and not functional. The main staircase of the building is located in the southeast corner of the lobby (Stairway #5); it runs from the basement to the third floor of the control tower.

The control tower is an important element of the floor plan. It is a four-story shaft of half-hexagon shape located prominently on the center of the east wall of the building, projecting some 10 feet beyond the main block of the structure. The tower room on the first floor has been subdivided into three small rooms, but remains one large open space on the second, third, and fourth levels.

The structural system of the building consists of riveted steel. Steel columns are spaced around the perimeter at 16 feet on center. Interior framing is provided by a double row of columns flanking the north-south axis. The central floor area is left open, with support provided by columns in the corners of the square space. Girders span columns east to west, with beams spanning girder to girder at 5 feet on center.[5] Partition walls are generally of terra-cotta blocks.

Interior finishes of the rooms on the first and second floors (excluding the lobby and north-south corridors) generally consist of plaster walls and ceilings on diamond metal lath, wooden baseboards and chair rails, and molded plaster cove cornices. Many of the second-floor rooms also have wood moldings on their walls forming decorative panels above the chair rail. Floors throughout are reinforced cinder concrete with a granolithic finish, covered with linoleum tiles in a checkerboard pattern. Bathrooms generally feature white enamel tile wainscots with raised decorative borders in contrasting colors (blue or yellow), mosaic tile floors, and Carrera-glass shower and toilet stalls. Doors are generally of birch veneer or white pine. Thresholds are either marble or oak.

The finishes of the north and south corridors and the lobby are more elaborate than elsewhere. The first-floor walls feature a black marble baseboard, a buff marble wainscot, and upper

[5] Blakemore, p. 7.

walls of scored stucco designed to imitate Caen stone. The second-floor walls of the lobby were treated in a similar manner. However, the walls of the second-floor corridors differ somewhat: they have black marble baseboards, a molded wooden chair rail (no buff marble wainscot), and scored plaster walls painted and glazed to imitate Caen stone. Lobby areas have an ogee cornice molding. Second-floor corridors have a plaster cove cornice. The imitation Caen stone in all areas has been painted over. The buff and black marbles are extant throughout.

Stairways #2 and #4 retain their original latticework balustrades of cast iron, with bronze rosettes at the center of each lattice panel, and wood handrails. The ornamental balustrades run from first to third floors at both stairways.

Additional ornamentation is found in the lobby at the second-floor level. The sides of the balcony facing the lobby have panels with cast-plaster bands of geometric dentils along their tops and bottoms. A plaster winged shield is mounted at the top center of each panel. Column capitals are elaborately decorated with plaster leaves and medallions. The lobby ceiling likewise features an ornamental plaster cornice of stylized leaves, as well as a stained-glass skylight.

The finishes in the basement are generally plastered walls with a simple wood baseboard.

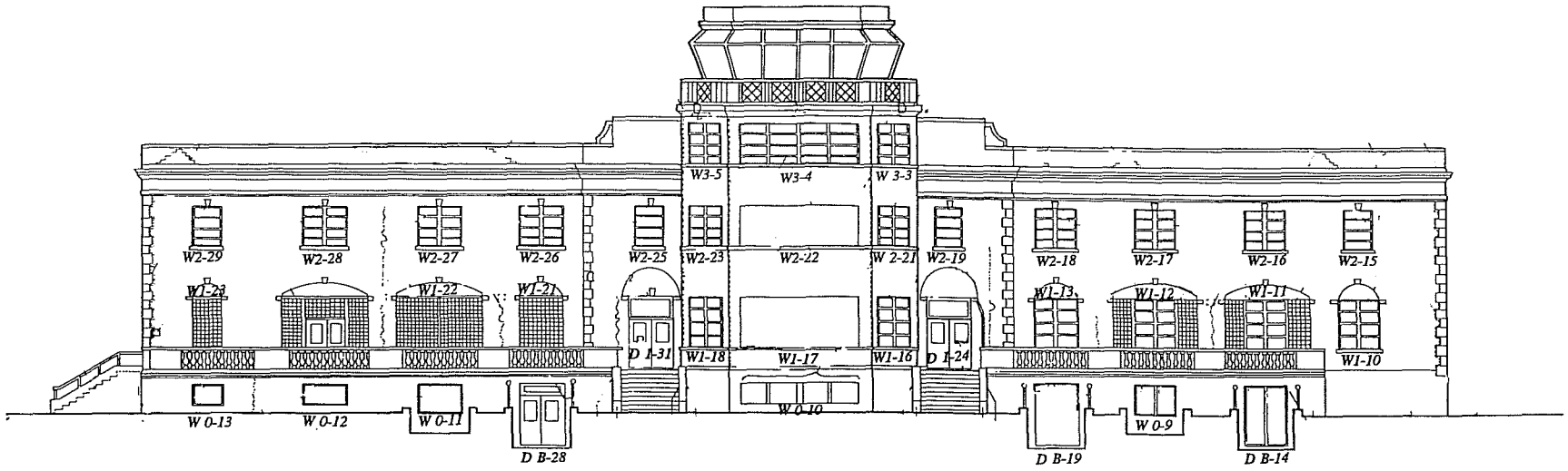
* * *

The following report utilizes a system of schedules in order to facilitate the discussion of specific architectural elements. All windows have been assigned a number that includes a designation of the level at which they are located. Thus, basement windows are W B-*n*; first-floor windows are W 1-*n*; second-floor windows are W 2-*n*; and so on. Numbering for the window schedule begins at the main entry of the west (front) side of the building and moves in a clockwise direction. Thus numbering begins at the center of the west elevation and proceeds north.

Doorways are also numbered according to floor level (doorways in the basement are B-*n*, doorways on the first floor are D 1-*n*, doorways at the second floor are D 2-*n*, and so on). Numbering for the doorway schedule follows a similar pattern as used for the window schedule. It is a pattern established on the original drawings. The doorways are scheduled on floor plans beginning with the center portal on the west (front) side of the building, and moving in a clockwise direction through the building to include all exterior and interior doorways.

Rooms are also scheduled for this report. Rooms are numbered beginning with the open central space on each floor as Room 001, 101, or 201 and moving in a clockwise direction from the northwest corner of the central space. Thus, all scheduled elements of the structure are treated in a consistently clockwise manner.

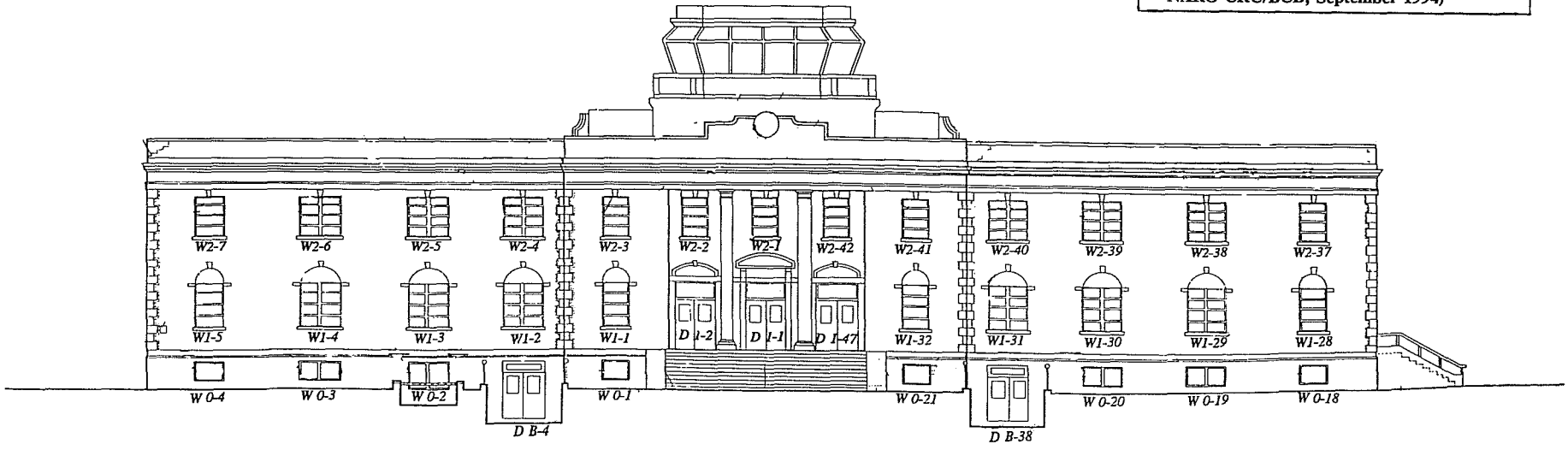
The drawings immediately following are annotated to provide a visual guide to the scheduled number designations of windows, doorways, and rooms of the Ryan Center/Administration Building as they will be referenced throughout this report. Photographs are a sampling of the current appearance of the building, and are intended to illustrate the preceding architectural description.




EAST ELEVATION

**WINDOW AND DOOR SCHEDULE**

**(Annotated and updated by Judith Quinn, NARO CRC/BCB, September 1994)**



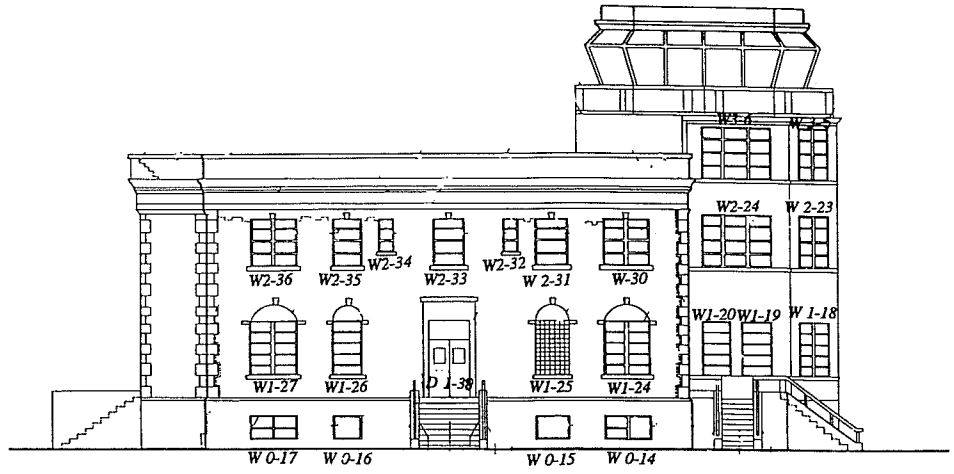

WEST ELEVATION

SCALE OF FEET

**Original drawings by Joseph Tonetti Associates, NYC, January 30, 1984.**



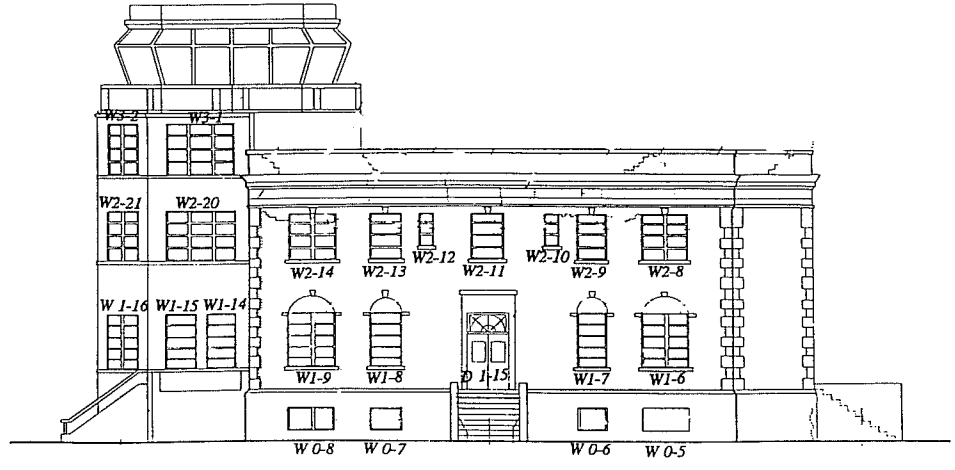
**Figure 1.** Window and doorway schedule, east and west elevations.

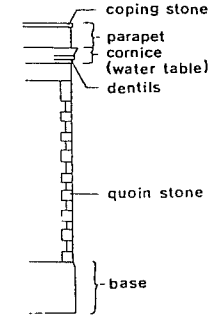



SOUTH ELEVATION

**WINDOW AND DOOR SCHEDULE**

**(Annotated and updated by Judith Quinn, NARO CRC/BCB, September 1994)**




NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE OF FEET

**Original drawings by Joseph Tonetti Associates, NYC, January 30, 1984.**

**Figure 2.** Window and doorway schedule, south and north elevations.

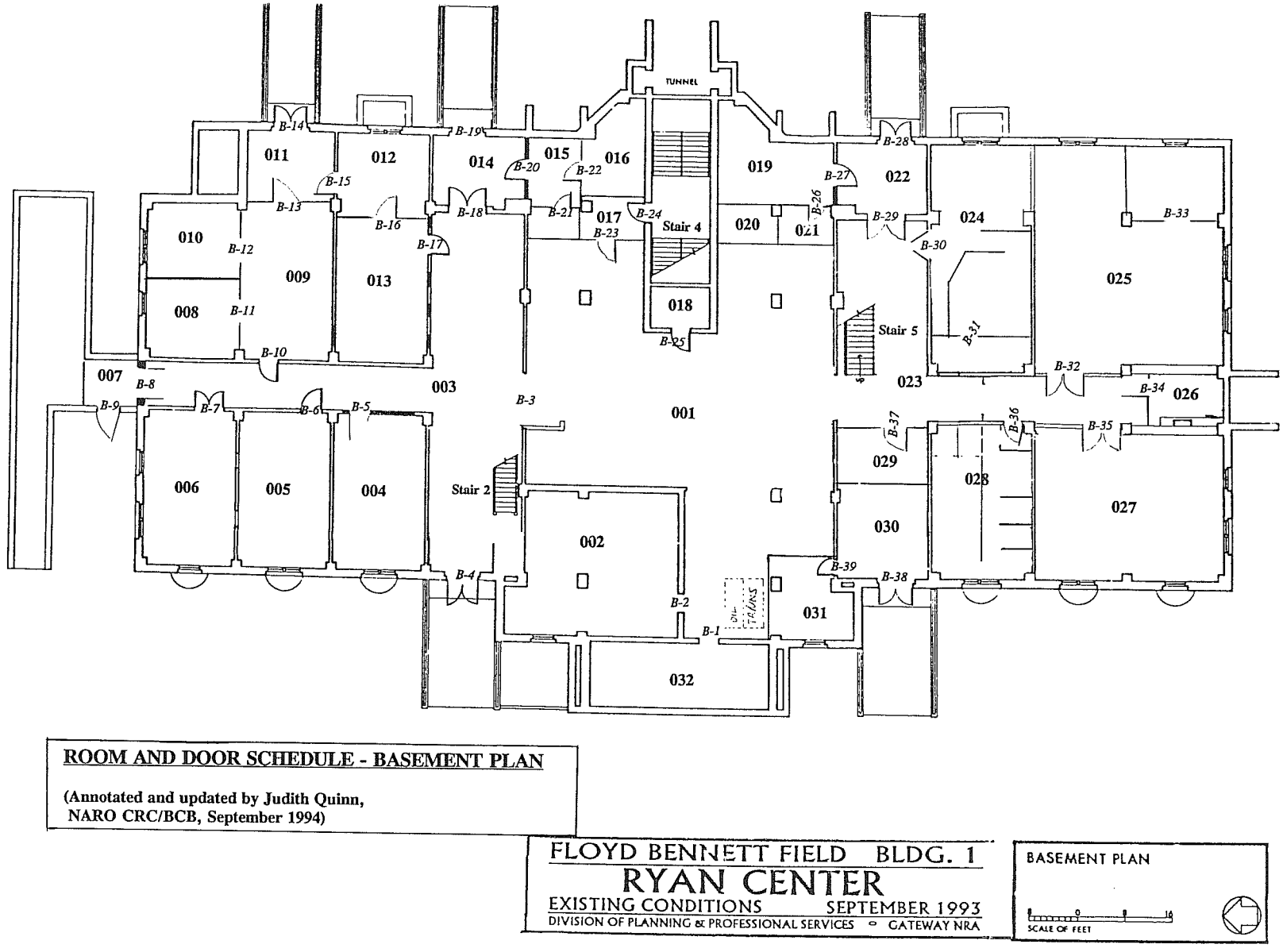
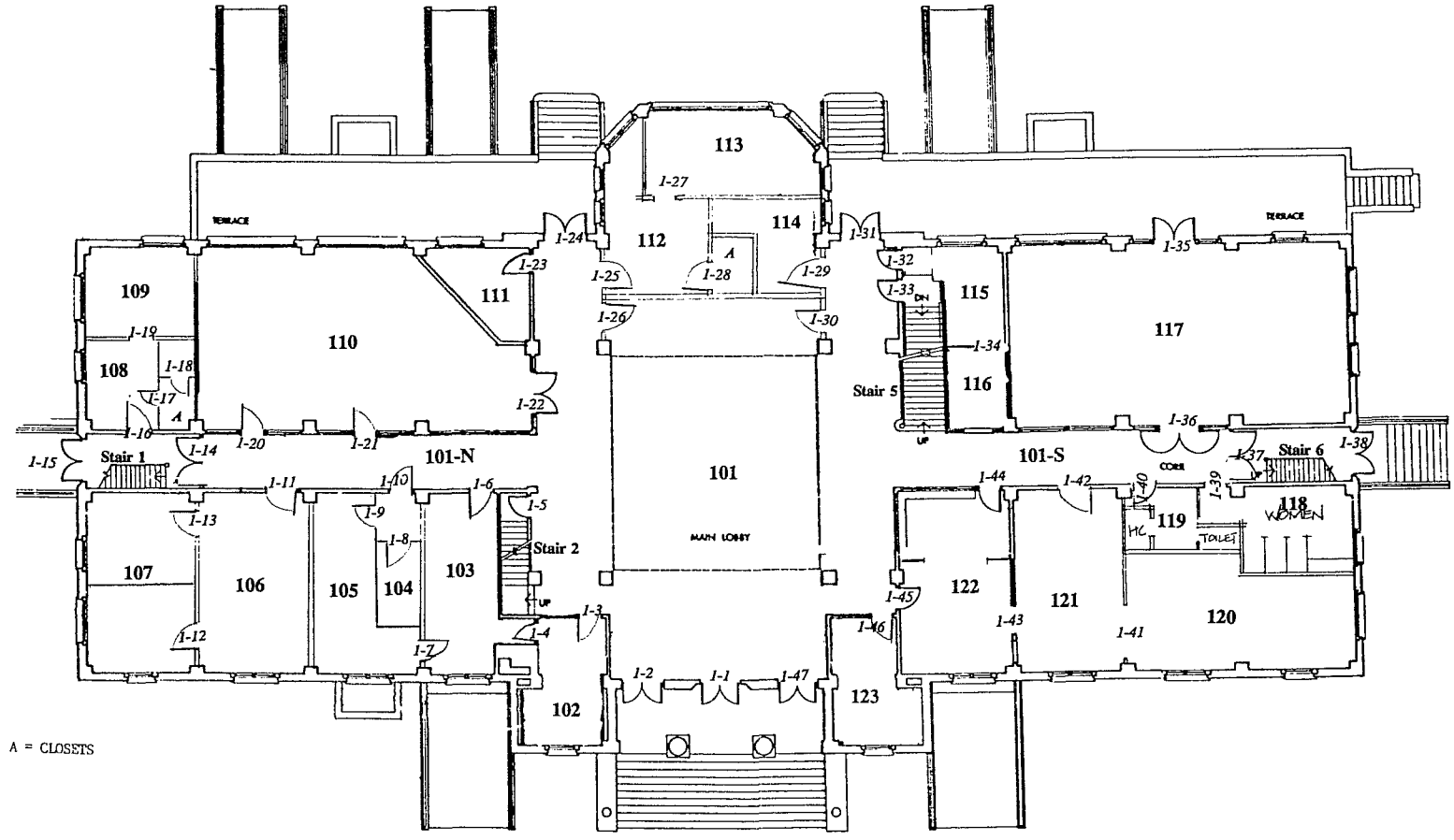



**Figure 3.** Room and doorway schedule, basement plan.




**ROOM AND DOOR SCHEDULE - FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

**(Annotated and updated by Judith Quinn, NARO CRC/BCB, September 1994)**

FLOYD BENNETT FIELD BLDG. 1
RYAN CENTER
EXISTING CONDITIONS SEPTEMBER 1993
DIVISION OF PLANNING & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES • GATEWAY NRA

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE OF FEET

**Figure 4.** Room and doorway schedule, first-floor plan.

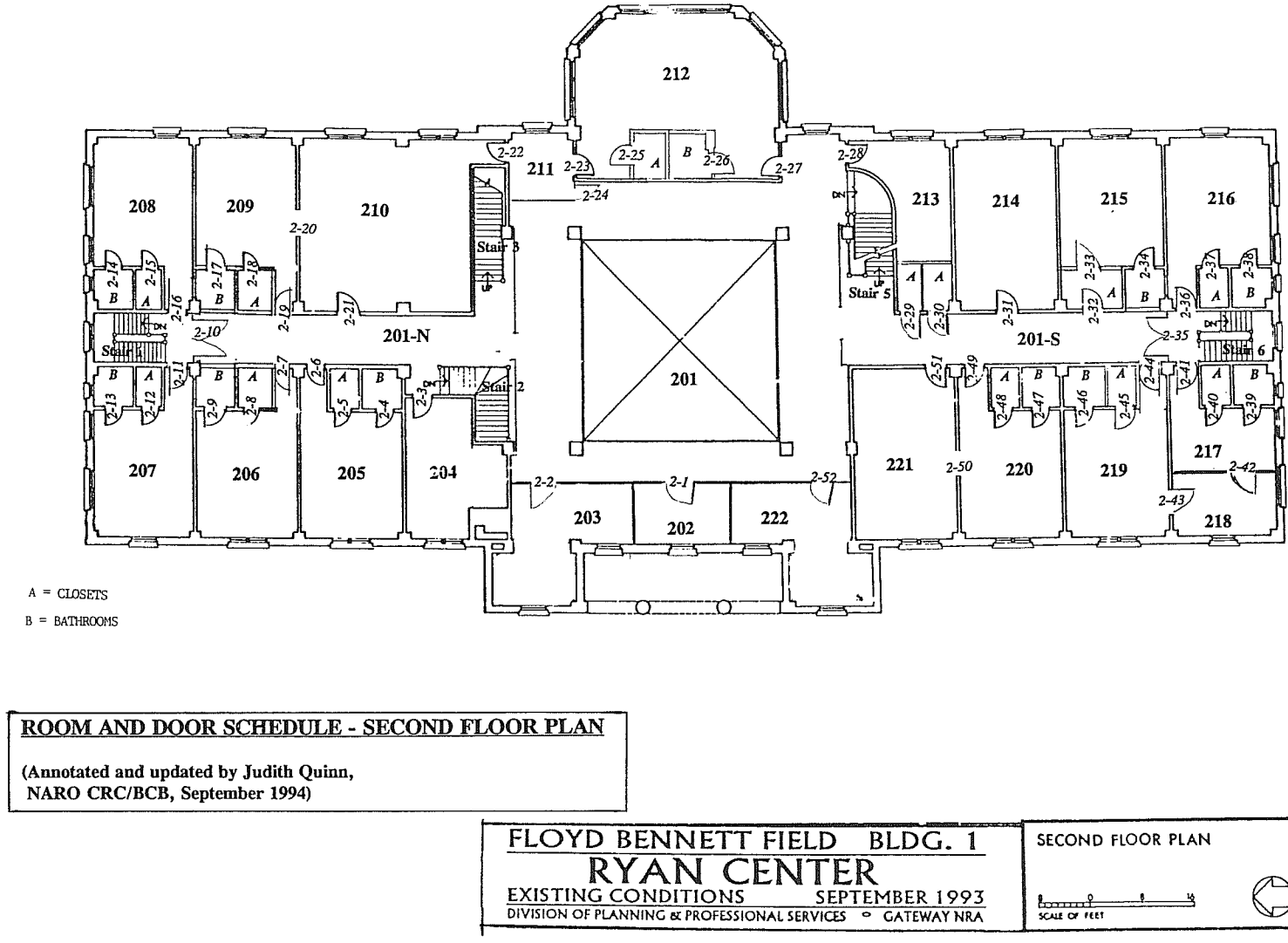



**Figure 5.** Room and doorway schedule, second-floor plan.

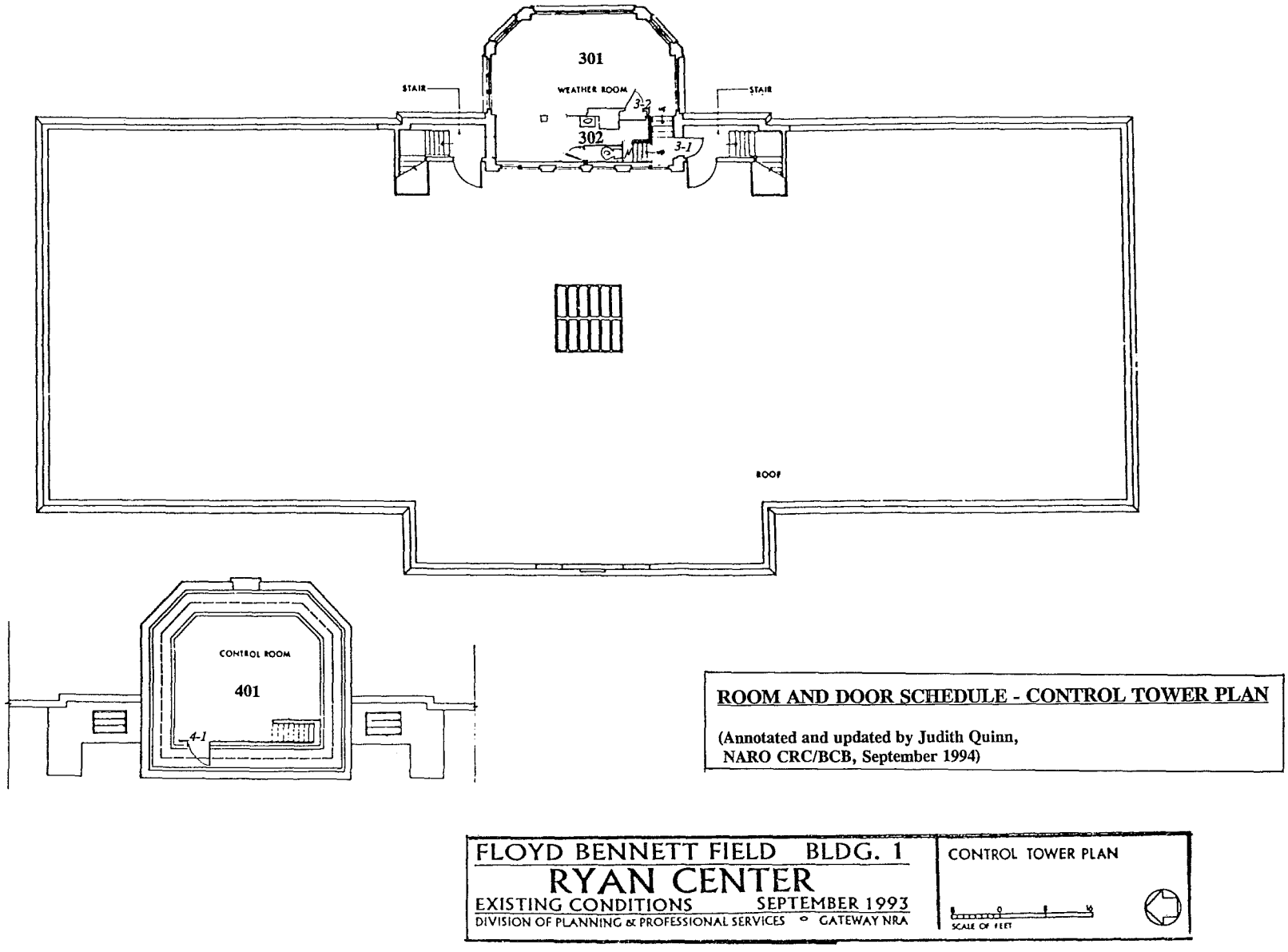



**Figure 6.** Room and doorway schedule, third- and fourth-floor plans (tower).

# CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS



**Figure 7.** The Administration Building, west (front) and south sides.



**Figure 8.** Detail of the west side: projecting center pavilion with entrance portico.

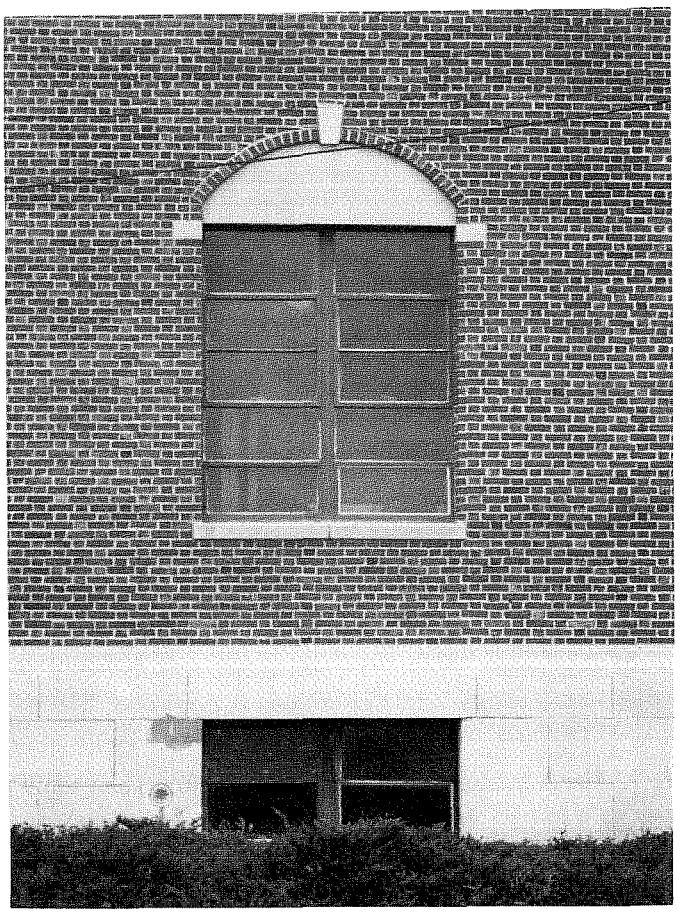


**Figure 9.** West side of building, detail of first-floor window, W 1-4.

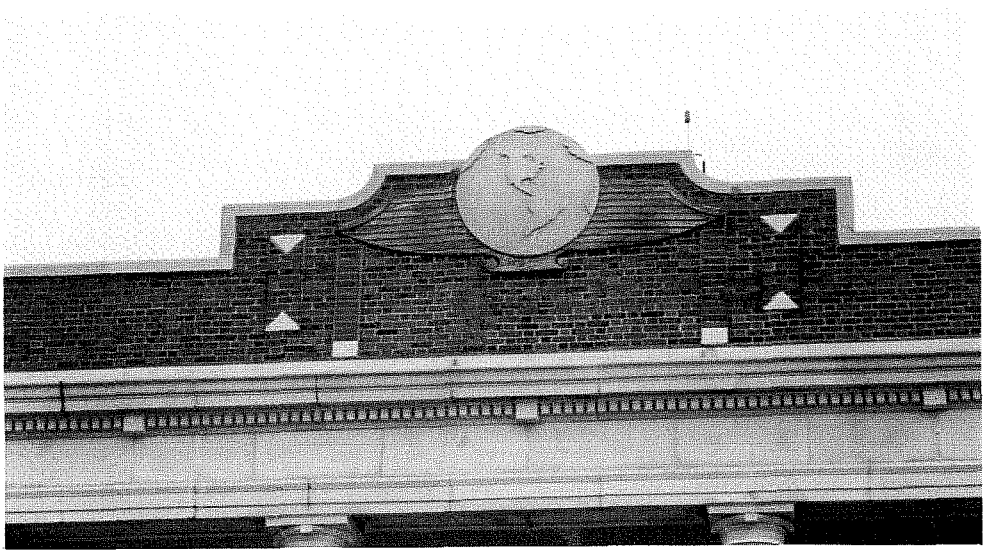


**Figure 10.** West side of building, detail of parapet ornament above main entry.



**Figure 11.** South end of building and part of east side with terrace stairway at right.

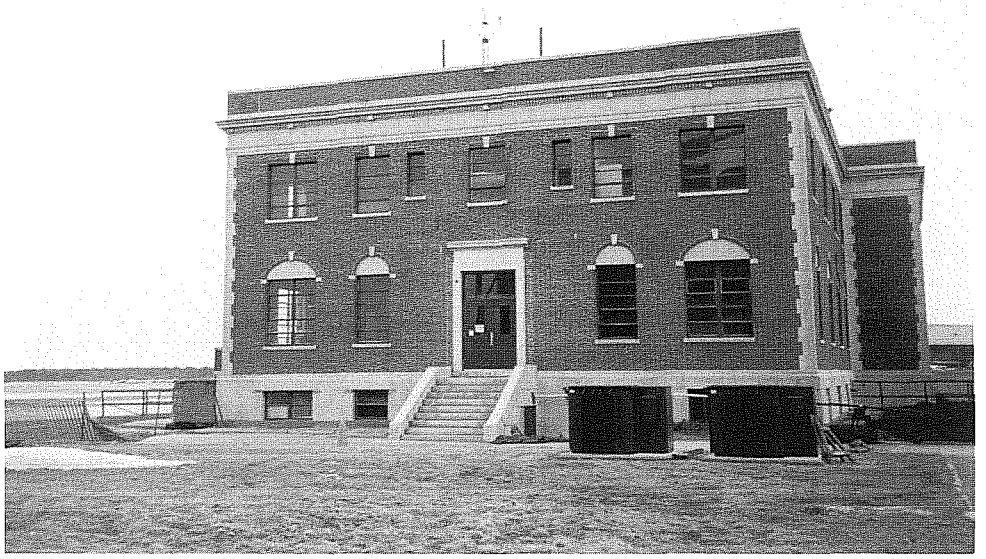


**Figure 12.** North end of building. Note ghost of former extension in brickwork around doorway.




**Figure 13.** East (field) side of building, south terrace.



**Figure 14.** East side of building, north terrace.



**Figure 15.** East side of building, control tower.



**Figure 16.** East side of building, looking south.



**Figure 17.** East side of building, detail of control tower. Note 1930 perimeter walkway and cornice, and 1943 glass enclosure.

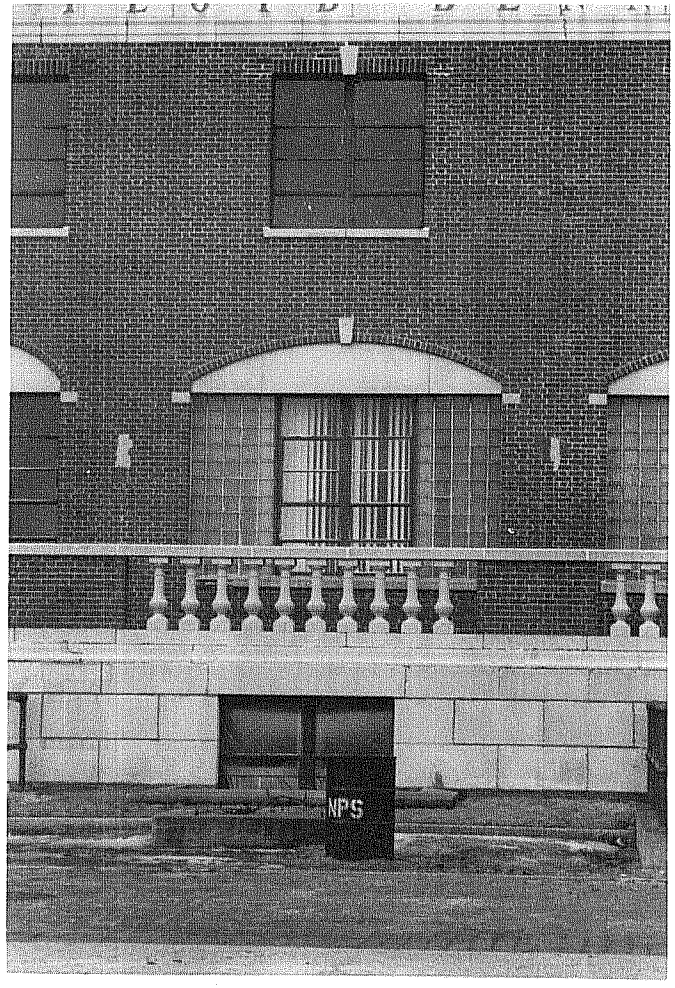



**Figure 18.** East side of building, north terrace, window 1-22, originally a doorway. Note scars on wall from former light fixtures.

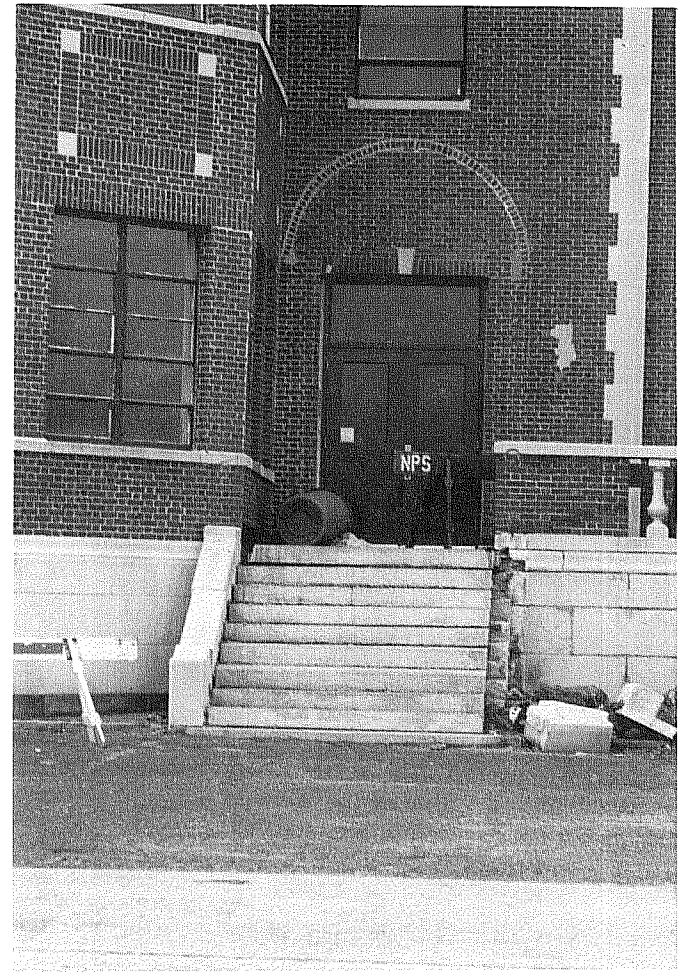



**Figure 19.** East side of building, north terrace, doorway D 1-24, tower to left. Note ghost of former doorway canopy.



**Figure 20.** Roof of building, looking south.

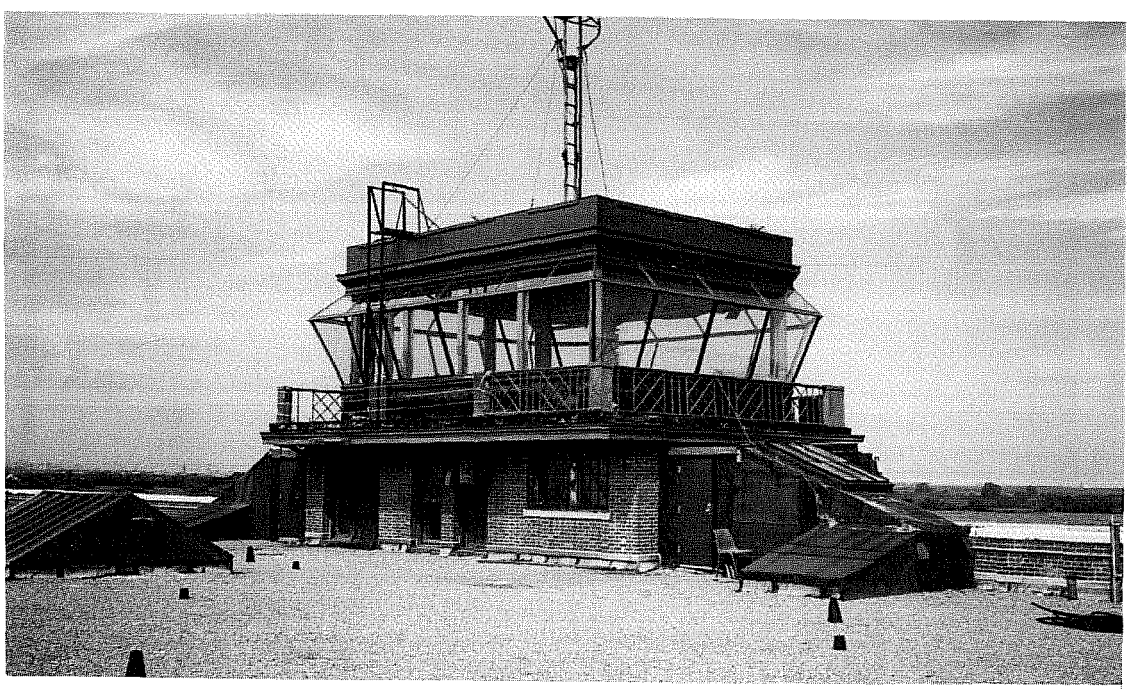


**Figure 21.** Roof of building, looking northeast.

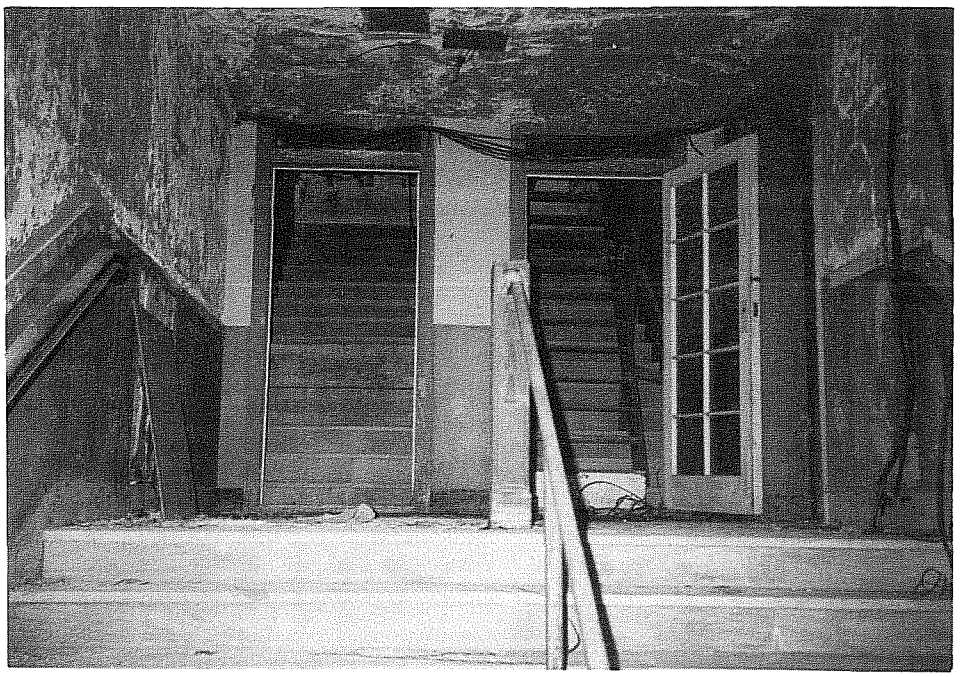


**Figure 22.** West end of passenger-loading tunnel, looking west toward Stairway #4 leading up to lobby.

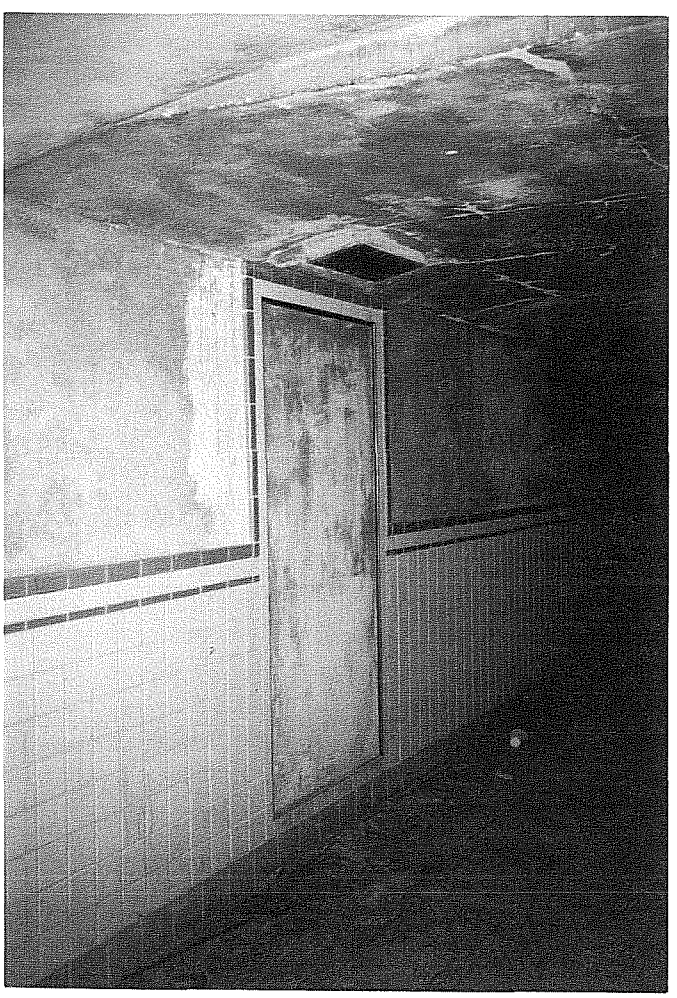


**Figure 23.** North wall of passenger-loading tunnel, showing tile wainscot and display panel.

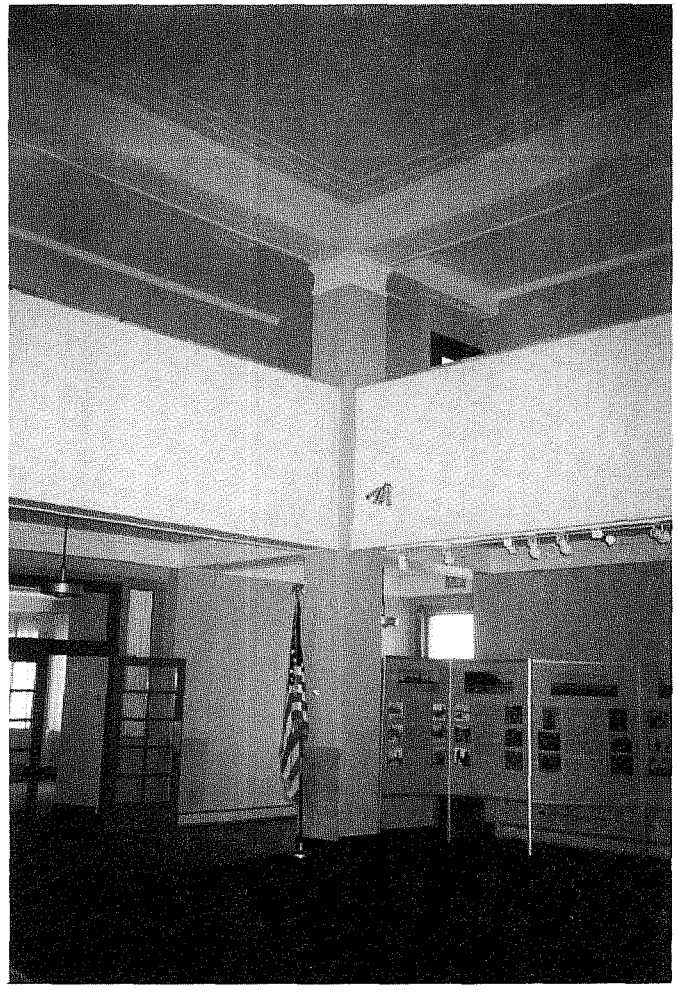


**Figure 24.** Interior of lobby, northeast corner.



**Figure 25.** View from lobby, looking south down south corridor. Main stairway (#5) visible at left.



**Figure 26.** Interior of lobby, main staircase (Stairway #5) in southeast corner.

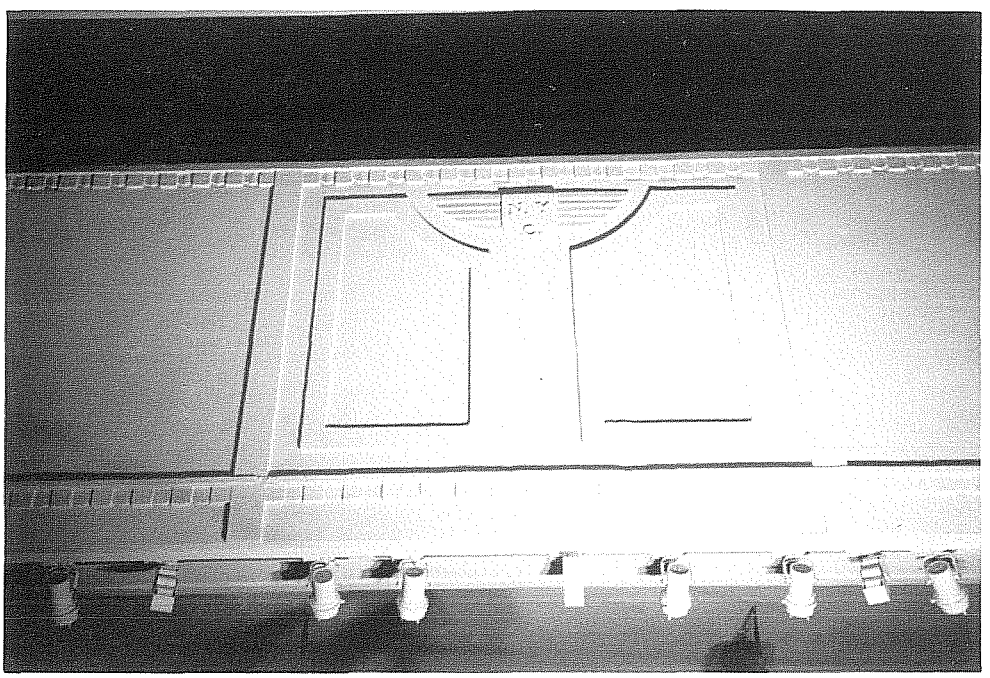


**Figure 27.** Interior of lobby, east balcony panel with plaster ornamentation.



**Figure 28.** First floor, north corridor, west wall: detail of buff marble wainscot with scored stucco above.

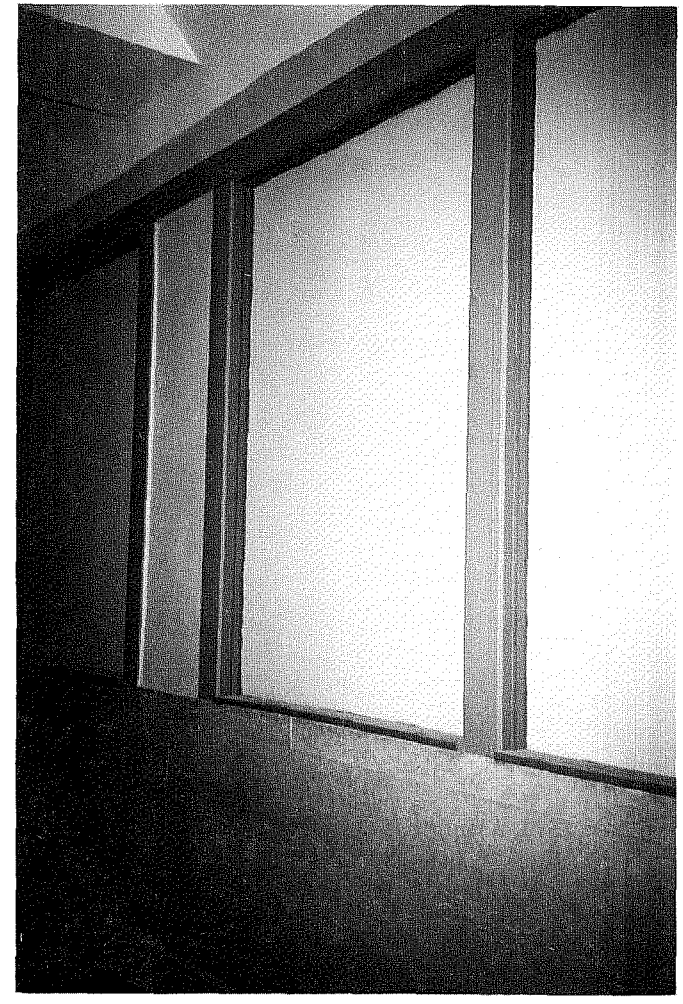


**Figure 29.** North corridor, east wall: former window wall looking into Room 110, plate glass now replaced with plywood.



**Figure 30.** Second floor, at top of Stairway #2, Room 204 at left. Note marble wainscot separated from plaster by wood rail.



**Figure 31.** Second floor, north corridor looking south, Room 209 and 210 at left. Note checkerboard linoleum, plaster wainscot, scored stucco, and plaster cove cornice.

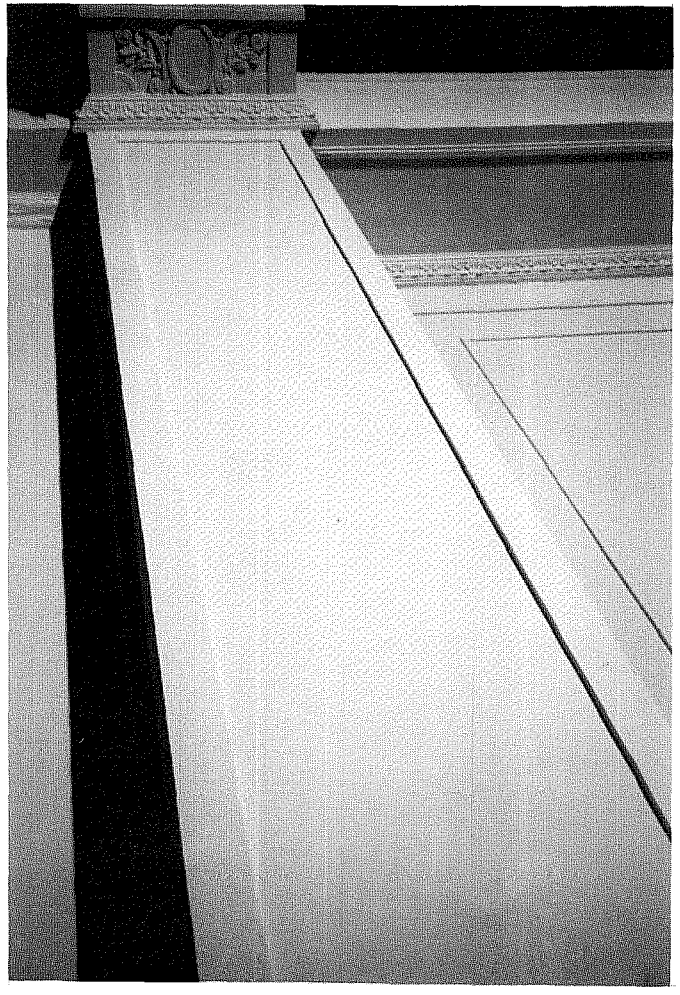


**Figure 32.** Second floor, lobby, northeast corner near ceiling, showing plaster ornamentation of pier capitals and cornice.



**Figure 33.** Second floor, south corridor, looking north toward lobby balcony.



**Figure 34.** Second floor, Room 209, west wall, showing plaster cove cornice, panel moldings, chair rail, and birch veneer door.

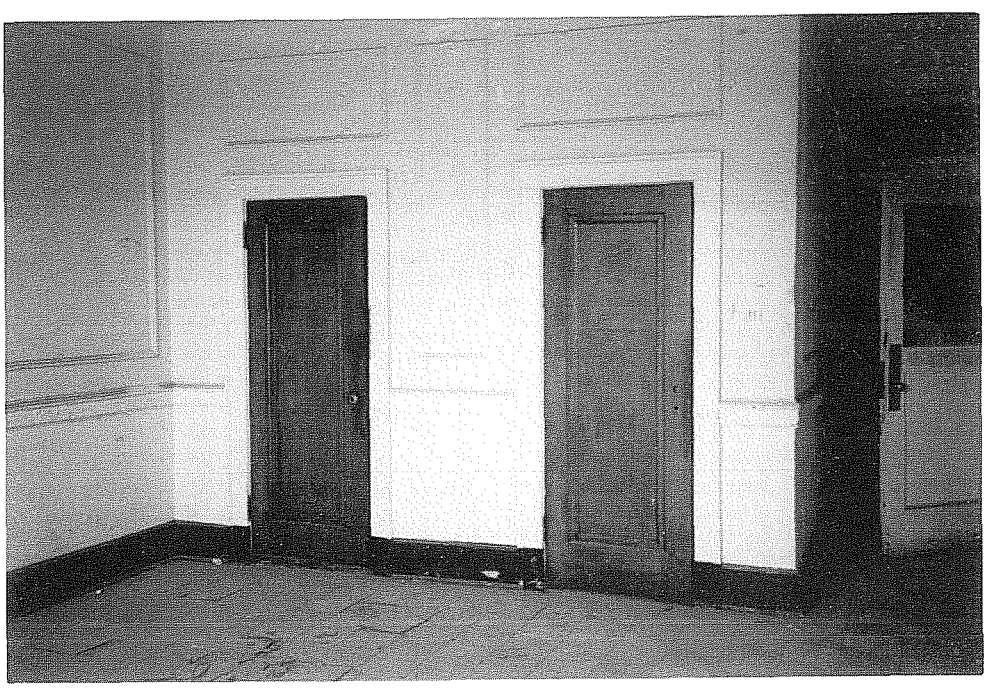


**Figure 35.** Second floor, Room 219, west wall. Note baseboard, plaster wainscot, chair rail, panel moldings, and veneer doors.



**Figure 36.** Second floor, tower room, looking south through windows W 2-23 and W 2-24.

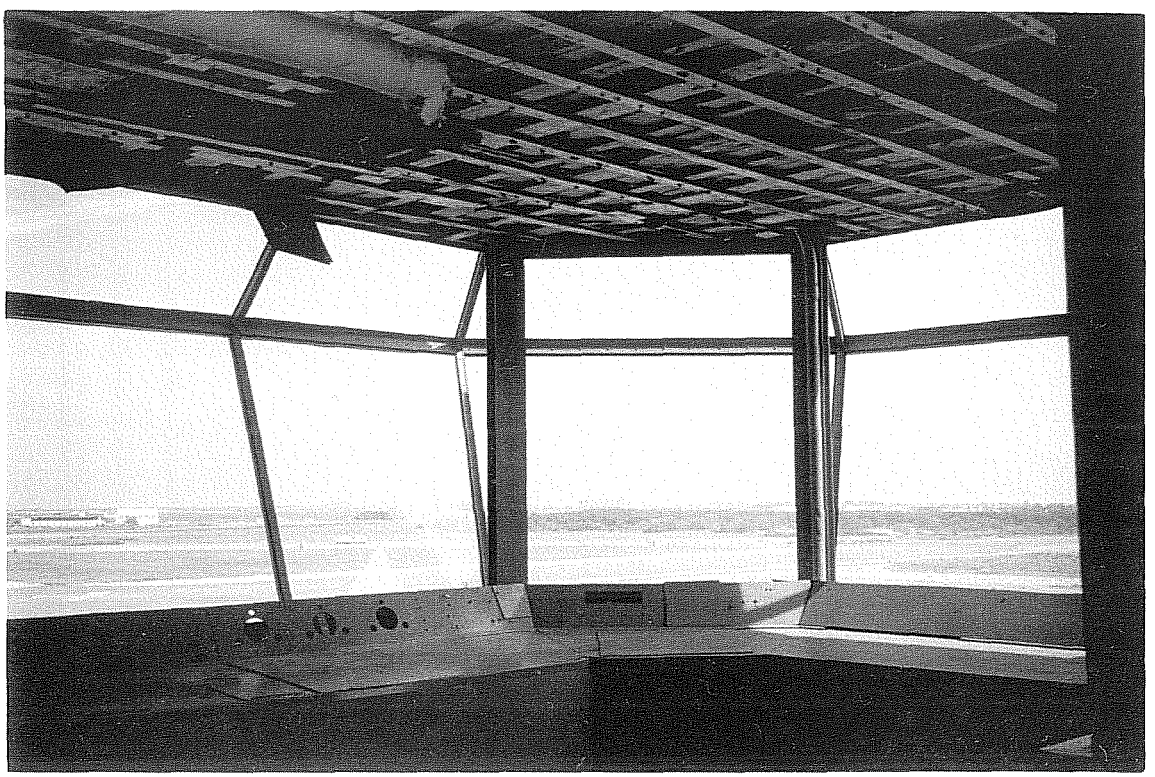


**Figure 37.** Fourth floor of control tower, looking southeast.

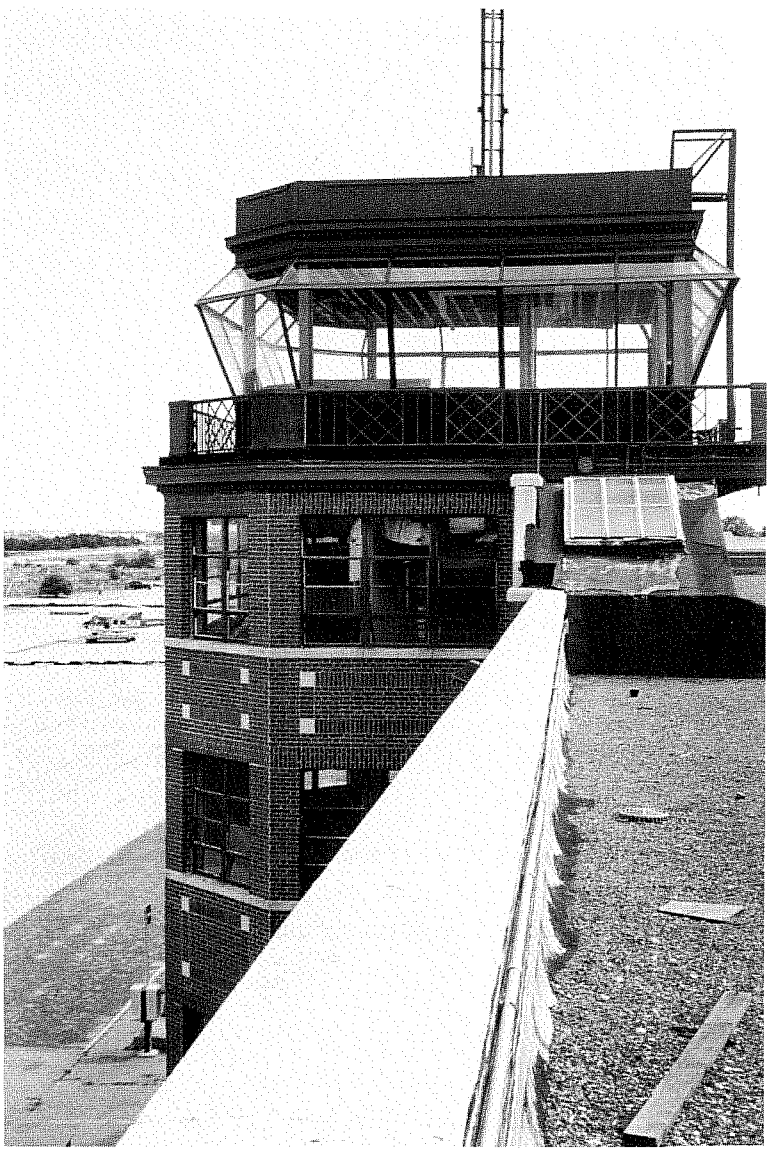


**Figure 38.** Exterior north side of control tower.

# III. INTRODUCTORY HISTORY OF THE SITE

*[**Editor's note:** This section is based entirely on Porter R. Blakemore's "Historical Data Section" in the* Historic Structures Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area, *Vol. I.*[1] *Thus, rather than using repetitive footnotes, only the page number of Blakemore's report has been cited in parentheses.]*

* * *

> Floyd Bennett Field, the first municipal airport built by New York City, played a key role in the technical and commercial development of American aviation in the 1930s. The field was never the most important airport in the country. Yet, its location and the quality of its facilities led to extensive use. Numerous record breaking flights either originated or terminated there. An airmail controversy between Floyd Bennett Field and Newark Airport, which the New York airport lost, led to the field's commercial failure and shows the importance of postal business to the struggling airlines at the time. Finally, after the airport was sold to the Navy in 1942, it played a significant military role in World War II.

Thus reads the introductory paragraph of the historical data section of the historic structure report for Floyd Bennett Field, as written by Porter Blakemore in 1981 (p. 1). The following abbreviated history of Floyd Bennett Field is likewise gathered, and in many cases paraphrased, from this 1981 report. The inclusion of an introductory history in this report is an attempt to briefly familiarize the reader with the overall historical context of the site to which the Administration Building belongs–"to set the scene." It is not in any way intended to replace the 1981 HSR. Indeed, for a more detailed account of the site history, and for primary source citations, it is recommended that the 1981 HSR be consulted.

The city of New York began considering the construction of a municipal airport in 1925 on the initiative of the Board of Trade and Transportation's Committee on Landing Places for Commercial Air Lines. No formal action was taken. The issue was again addressed in 1927 by the Port of New York Authority, the agency responsible for promoting and protecting the commerce of the metropolitan area. A report was compiled recommending that New York have "one or more thoroughly modern airports or terminal flying fields" (p. 2). Again, no specific action was taken.

By this time, the federal government began to show an interest in the airport issue. The Department of Commerce was increasingly concerned by New York's lack of a commercial airport. A "Fact-Finding Committee on Suitable Airport Facilities for the New York District" was established under the Secretary of Commerce; it produced a report in November 1927 that recommended six primary and four secondary areas for landing fields in New Jersey and in New York (pp. 4-5).

Additional pressure was put on New York City officials by a number of successful trans-Atlantic flights that drew the attention of the American public, and by the start of construction of the Newark (New Jersey) Municipal Airport in early 1927. The Newark airport opened in October 1928 and became the primary landing field in the metropolitan area (p. 5). New York City was caught unprepared for the burgeoning interest in, and commercial possibilities of, air travel; it thus began to make an earnest effort to catch up with developments in the field.

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[1] Porter R. Blakemore and Dana C. Linck, *Historic Structures Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area*, Vol. I (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, May 1981).

One of the secondary sites selected by the aforementioned "Fact-Finding Committee" was Barren Island in Brooklyn, located at the end of Flatbush Avenue on Jamaica Bay. The Barren Island site was selected by city officials and is the current location of Floyd Bennett Field. The site was chosen for a number of reasons, including the following: (a) the city owned Barren Island; (b) work to create a major shipping harbor out of Jamaica Bay was well advanced and would tie in nicely with an airport; (c) no obstructions were nearby to endanger planes; (d) the proximity to Jamaica Bay would accommodate seaplanes; and (e) there was little history of fog, haze, or bad storms in the area (p. 9).

The agency in charge of the construction of the municipal airport was the Department of Docks. The Department of Docks had gradually inherited the administration of the New York City port facilities. It received the airport project because it was in charge of developing the Jamaica Bay harbor project at the time (p. 13).

The first step in constructing the airport was the enormous job of the hydraulic filling and grading of "an area of about 350 acres between Jamaica Bay Main Interior Channel and Flatbush Avenue" to a height of 16 feet above mean low tide. The initial filling and grading was completed in late 1928 (p. 13).

Plans for the field and the service structures were prepared in 1929 by the Department of Docks. The plans called for two runways, a row of hangars, and an Administration Building on the west side of Flatbush Avenue, as well as a seaplane base at the southeast corner of the field on Jamaica Bay (p. 74).

Construction of two reinforced-concrete runways, a privet hedge on the northern border of the field, gravel strips along the runways, subsoil, topsoil, topsoil treatment, and seeding followed the hydraulic filling operation. This work was begun in the summer of 1929 and completed by late 1929 (pp. 74-79).

The city awarded the first building contract in early 1930 to the Woodrest Construction Company. The contract was for eight hangars and a concrete apron. (Plans had originally called for 14 hangars but funds were not available.) The work was completed in May 1931 (p. 97).

The contract for the Administration Building was awarded in late 1930 to the Longacre Engineering Company. The building was completed in May 1931. The hangars were situated both north and south of the Administration Building in two groups of four. The concrete apron ran in front of the hangars and the Administration Building, leading to the runways.

Additional structures erected as part of the initial construction phase were a metal building housing a sewage-disposal system with pump well on the southern part of the field, and a brick transformer vault next to the pump well (p. 99). Therefore, a total of 11 buildings and two runways were erected at the airport between 1929 and 1932.

Flight activities commenced at the field after a short dedication ceremony on June 26, 1930. At this time the runways, taxiways and aprons, and some of the hangar facilities were completed (p. 29). The official dedication of the airport was held nearly a year later on May 23, 1931. An estimated crowd of 25,000 attended the ceremonies and accompanying air show. All of the hangars were complete, and the Administration Building was nearing completion, at the time of the dedication (p. 30).

An important controversy arose shortly after the dedication of the airport. The Department of Docks and New York City officials assumed that upon completion, Floyd Bennett Field would be able to take over the air-mail business for the metropolitan area. In order to insure this, special care was taken to meet all federal government requirements for airports seeking Post Office Department contracts. However, Newark Airport had also taken care to meet the Post Office Department requirements, and it was designated the air-mail terminus within the New York metropolitan area the year it was completed–1928 (pp. 33-34).

Despite intense lobbying efforts by New York City officials to convince the Post Office Department that Floyd Bennett Field was a better facility than Newark Airport, the air-mail business remained in Newark, New Jersey. The fight for the recognition of Floyd Bennett Field as the air-mail terminus was led by Fiorello H. LaGuardia (who became mayor on January 1, 1934). The controversy raged from the completion of the airport in 1931 to March 1936, when the Postmaster General finally decided the issue in favor of Newark Airport. As historian Blakemore explains,

> This decision, along with the inability of New York officials to solve the accessibility problem, killed Floyd Bennett Field's chances of commercial success. Though the issue was brought up again on a number of occasions, largely by the press and certain business leaders, the city went ahead with plans to build another airport, LaGuardia Field, which would be more accessible to Manhattan and the railroads. Floyd Bennett Field stayed out of the center of commercial aviation in the New York metropolitan area (p. 44).

While not a huge commercial success, Floyd Bennett Field became a mecca for aviation enthusiasts, and was both start and terminus for dozens of record-breaking flights throughout the 1930s.

Improvements continued at the field. The second major phase of work (after initial construction) occurred from 1934 to 1938. It consisted of a large number of major and minor alterations, repairs, and new constructions carried out by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Primary among the WPA projects was the expansion of the concrete runway, taxiway, and apron system (including two new runways). WPA work also included the construction of a boiler room and machine shop, infill buildings between Hangars 1 and 2 and Hangars 5 and 6, a field house beside the Administration Building, a sprinkler system pump house, a gasoline pump house, a second transformer vault, and the addition of a passenger-loading tunnel at the Administration Building (pp. 134-135). Other improvements to the field by the WPA included new fencing, landscaping, field grading; construction of dirt and bituminous roads, sidewalks, sewers, water mains; and the installation of manholes. The seaplane ramp at the southeast corner of the field on Jamaica Bay was likewise constructed by the WPA (p. 140).

Throughout the 1930s the field was used not only by professional aviators embarking on historic flights, but also by the following: private aircraft companies, to store and maintain aircraft; American Airlines, as a base for their New York/Boston flights; individual pilots and instructors; the City Police Department aviation unit; the U.S. Coast Guard; and the U.S. Navy (pp. 52-53).

Because Floyd Bennett Field was not a huge commercial success, it became a financial burden to the City of New York. Not surprisingly, an offer by the U.S. Navy to purchase the field and turn it into a naval air station was warmly received by city officials. Negotiations for the Navy's purchase of the field began in late 1940. The field was closed to commercial traffic on May 26, 1941, and the New York Naval Air Station, Floyd Bennett Field, was commissioned on June 2, 1941. The Navy agreed to pay $9,750,000 for Floyd Bennett Field and the adjacent city-owned and

privately owned areas, totaling more than 1,200 acres. The arrangements were finalized on February 18, 1942 (pp. 59-60).

The alterations and improvements by the Navy represent the third major phase of construction at Floyd Bennett Field. In preparation for the field's use as a naval air station in wartime, many additional facilities were necessary. Between 1941 and 1944 major construction projects were carried out. Blakemore gives a complete list of Navy construction on pages 63 and 151-165. This included the following work:

> Three of the four existing runways were widened to 300 feet and lengthened to 5,000 feet. In addition a new Runway 6-24, measuring 300 feet wide and 5,000 feet long, was constructed on the northern part of the field. A new seaplane hangar was built on the eastern side of the field and two seaplane runways were dredged out of Jamaica Bay. Also barracks, training classrooms, a BOQ [bachelor officers' quarters], officers' club, enlisted men's club, warehouses, machine shops, high explosive magazines, and a gunnery range were built.... (p. 63).
>
> ...the Navy erected recreation buildings, additional officer and enlisted men's barracks, married housing for enlisted and officer personnel, Marine barracks and married housing units, more gasoline pump houses, storage buildings, a public works office and police station, a dispensary, a fire station and garage, numerous maintenance buildings, a torpedo overhaul shop, a power plant, and various smaller structures (p. 155).

The Navy also installed a new lighting system to aid night landings, and modified many of the original 1930s structures. The Administration Building was the structure most extensively remodeled, including a new modernized control tower and a wood-frame extension on the north side of the building. These alterations will be discussed in Section IV ("Architectural History") of this report.

During World War II, the naval air station fulfilled many missions. One of its primary functions was the training of aviation cadets for the Navy fleets. It was also a base for anti-submarine squadrons that protected ships entering and departing New York Harbor. Floyd Bennett Field was a base for the Fleet Service squadrons, which consisted of carrier aircraft that served as a communications link with ships in the Atlantic by carrying mail, personnel, and vital supplies. Floyd Bennett Field was the midway point for aircraft and supplies that went to the European Theater of combat. Aircraft and supplies were continuously stored at, and shipped overseas from, the station. In 1943, Floyd Bennett Field became the east coast terminal of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS). As such, it was the receiving point for much of the traffic heading for Europe and the North Atlantic. Historian Blakemore reports that "The volume of MATS traffic made Floyd Bennett Field one of the busiest airports in the United States during the war..." (pp. 63 and 71).

Following World War II, the staffing and activity at Floyd Bennett Field was dramatically and rapidly downsized. It became a naval air reserve training station. From 1946 until 1971, the field experienced varying degrees of activity corresponding to the national and international climates. Therefore, the Korean War reinvigorated the life of the field when naval air reserve and marine air reserve squadrons were recalled to active duty in 1950. The field remained active through the Vietnam War era, with a total of 34 aircraft squadrons constantly training for present and future combat. As the United States withdrew from Vietnam and a national demobilization effort commenced, the Navy began to consider the closing of Floyd Bennett Field. The Naval Air Station

was finally decommissioned in mid-1971 and transferred in 1972 to the Department of the Interior (pp. 71-73).

Following World War II little new construction was undertaken at Floyd Bennett Field. However, with the advent of the Korean War and escalation of the Cold War, a modest expansion of the facilities commenced. This work represents the fourth and last phase of construction at the field prior to National Park Service occupation.

In 1951-1952, 1,000 feet were added to Runway 6-24, and the following were constructed: a new parking area, two new radio towers, new lean-tos for the hangars on the eastern side of the field, a new barracks and mess hall, a public works garage, and four maintenance buildings. Fire-alarm and sprinkler systems were repaired, the main entrance gate was relocated, and a jet-fuel storage tank was built. A new airport beacon tower was erected south of the Administration Building in 1957 (p. 166). Historian Blakemore indicates that little change was made to original structures during this period. He writes

> In many instances the buildings went unused, since the Navy centered its activities at the field in the late 1940s away from the original hangar row. Nevertheless, the New York City Police Department maintained its air patrol unit in Hangar 3, and the New York Air National Guard occupied several of the hangars north of the Administration Building (p. 167).

The only major addition to the field in the later history of the site was the construction of the Blue Hangar immediately north of the Administration Building. The hangar was erected by the Air National Guard in 1964-1965.

# IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

# BRIEF CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY OF THE SITE

*[**Editor's note:** This construction chronology is largely copied from Porter R. Blakemore's "Historical Data Section" in the* Historic Structures Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area, *Vol. I, pp. 215-217.*[1] *However, it has been annotated and augmented by the author, using information extracted from the Department of Docks (DOD) annual reports, and from historic drawings and photographs collected for this report.]*

* * *

Items specifically related to the Administration Building are highlighted in bold type.

**1927 -** **Barren Island at Jamaica Bay selected as site for municipal airport**

**Oct. 1928 -** **City decided on name "Floyd Bennett Field"**

**Jan. 30, 1928 -** **Plans completed for proposed municipal airport including Administration Building, 14 aircraft hangars, and runways: "City of New York, Department of Docks, Proposed Municipal Airport, Borough of Brooklyn, General Location Plans"(revised April 15, 1931)**

Jan. 19, 1929 - Contract 1935 (Supplementing Contract 1917) completed: filling and grading sand areas–R.A. Perry, $74,970

Jan. 26, 1929 - Contract 1917 completed: filling in the site of the municipal airport at the foot of Flatbush Avenue–R.A. Perry, $591,805

**1929 -** **Plans for Administration Building accepted**

**Nov. 17, 1930 -** **Contract 2000, drawings completed: "For the Construction of Administration Building with Appurtenances at the Site of The Municipal Airport Floyd Bennett Field"**

**Late 1930 -** **Contract 2000 awarded to Longacre Engineering Company for the Administration Building, $249,079.45**

**Feb. 2, 1930 -** **Contract 1941 completed: privet hedge along north side of airport, two concrete runways, gravel strips, placing subsoil and topsoil, topsoil treatment, and seeding–John L. Walsh of Northport Sand & Gravel Company, $722,407.58 (begun 5/6/29)**

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[1] Porter R. Blakemore and Dana C. Linck, *Historic Structures Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area*, Vol. I (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, May 1981).

May 20, 1930 - Contract 1963 completed: widening the two runways to 100 feet each–Fleming and Sheppard Company, Inc., $103,651.80 (contract let 7/29, work begun 11/14/29)

June 2, 1930 - Contract completed: placing additional topsoil–J.L. Walsh, $10,800

Aug. 2, 1930 - Contract 1978 completed: wood screen fencing–M.D. Lundin Company (awarded 1928)

Mid-1930 - Navy installed a new lighting system

**May 14, 1931 - Contract 1997 completed: parking area–Fleming and Sheppard Company, Inc., $19,160 (contract let July 1929)**

May 1931 - Contract 1967 completed: plans and specifications for 14 hangars and concrete apron (number of hangars reduced to eight by Board of Estimate and apportionment)–Woodrest Construction Company, Inc., $1,051,000 (contract awarded 1/30)

**May 23, 1931 - Formal dedication ceremonies for Floyd Bennett Field, field opens to public**

**1931, summer - Contract 2028 completed: sewer disposal plant and transformer vault–Rosoff Brothers, Inc., $79,800**

1931, summer - Contract 2020 A completed: construction of offices, shops and enclosures, etc., in four lean-tos; construction and erection of two temporary comfort stations–Rosoff Brothers, Inc.

**1931, summer - Contract 2020 B completed: plumbing, drainage, water supply, etc., for Administration Building, lean-tos, comfort stations, etc.–Thomas F. Mulligan, $25,333**

**1931, summer - Contract 2020 C completed: electric wiring for fire alarm, light and power; telephone conduits; manholes, light and power for Administration Building, lean-tos, hangars, comfort stations, pumping stations, etc.–J. P. Morrissey, Inc., $99,899**

**1931, summer - Contract 2020 D completed: oil-fired steam system heating system, oil-fired hot-water supply plant, fuel-oil supply system, and incidental work for the Administration Building–Jacob E. Brown, Inc., $11,328**

**1931, summer - Contract 2032 completed: furnishing and installing landing equipment together with all incidental work thereto–General Electric Company, $73,200**

**1931, summer - Contract 2038 completed: preparation of areas for parking of motor vehicles, including the furnishing and installation of wire mesh fencing–Robert E. Orr Company, Inc., $51,500**

**August 1931 - Administration Building, contract 2000, fully completed**

**Oct. 14, 1931 - Formal completion date of Administration Building Contract, initial construction**

Oct. 21, 1931 - Contract 1999 completed: seaplane base–Charles F. Vachris, Inc., $148,164

**Jan. 17, 1932 - Contract 2031 completed: furnishing and installing a complete landing area floodlight system, including necessary buildings, appurtenances, auxiliaries and all required work incidental thereto–Sperry Gyroscope Company, $26,356**

Feb. 2, 1932 - Contract 2053 completed: construction of sand fences, new removable wire fence 943 feet in length–Independent Fence Company, $3,510

April 4, 1932 - Contract completed: construction of three taxi strips–Thomas McMillian Company, $18,495

1934 - WPA constructed a boiler room and machine shop

**1935 - WPA began construction of passenger-loading tunnel in the Administration Building**

**Aug. 1935 - WPA began construction of stairway at south end of terrace of Administration Building**

1935 - WPA expanded concrete runways, taxiways, and apron system

**1935 - Decorative program begun at Administration Building**

**1936 - WPA "History of Aviation Murals" begun**

1936 - WPA built a field house (just north of Administration Building), sprinkler system pump house, and gasoline pump house

1936 - WPA constructed the Coast Guard Air Station

1936 - WPA constructed infill buildings between Hangars 1 and 2 and Hangars 5 and 6

**1936 - WPA installed new fencing, landscaping, roads, air beacon, sidewalks, sewers, water mains, manholes, and seaplane ramp**

Feb. 1937 - Contract awarded for a hangar and barracks building, seaplane ramp, and other facilities

**1937 - Octagonal baggage counter completed in lobby of Administration Building**

**1937 - Interior stencils, ornamental plaster, painting, etc. completed in Administration Building**

Early 1940 - New seaplane facility constructed

| | |
|---|---|
| Mid-1940 - | Erection of Bachelor Officers' quarters and enlisted men's barracks, and office buildings |
| Late 1940 - | U.S. Navy asked to build barracks for 100 aviation students |
| Early 1941 - | A second seaplane hangar constructed |
| **May 26, 1941 -** | **Floyd Bennett Field closed to commercial traffic** |
| 1941 - | Construction of barracks and mess hall building by U.S. Navy |
| 1941, June - | U.S. Navy constructed an On-Shore Patrol Base |
| 1941, summer - | Runways extended, a new seaplane hangar and several smaller buildings built |
| **Feb. 18, 1942 -** | **U.S. Navy purchased Floyd Bennett Field from New York City** |
| **1943 -** | **Alterations to the Administration Building made by the Navy, including new control tower** |
| **1943 -** | **Single-story frame extension added to the north end of the Administration Building** |
| 1941-1944 - | U.S. Navy built a marginal wharf, a seaplane parking area, and seaplane ramp |
| 1941-1944 - | U.S. Navy built recreational buildings, additional offices, enlisted men's married housing, and various other structures |
| 1946 - | Installation of new instrument approach system, new Radio Compass Location Station, ground control approach equipment, and a taxiway |
| July 1951 - | Contract awarded to Albert A. Lutz Company for expansion of the naval air station |
| 1954 - | Original wood sash windows and wood doors on Administration Building changed to steel casements |
| 1957 - | New beacon tower constructed to south of Administration Building |
| **1964 -** | **Blue hangar immediately north of Administration Building constructed by the National Air Guard** |
| Mid-1971 - | Naval air station decommissioned |
| October 1972 - | Department of Interior takes over administration of Floyd Bennett Field as part of Gateway NRA |

# INITIAL CONSTRUCTION

The Administration Building was designed and constructed as a primary element of the initial phase of construction at Floyd Bennett Field. From the beginning of the planning stages in 1928, an administration building was included in the designs for the field. The plan that was finally accepted in 1929 called for two runways, a concrete apron, a row of 14 hangars, an administration building, and a seaplane hangar. Hangars and administration building were to be constructed parallel to, and on the west side, of Flatbush Avenue, with the airfield to the east of these structures, and the seaplane hangar located at the southeast corner of the field on Jamaica Bay. Although no seaplane hangar and only eight of the 14 regular hangars were built initially, the basic layout and scope of the 1929 plan was retained during actual construction.[2]

The building was designed and constructed under the administration of the Department of Docks (hereafter DOD). The DOD architect in charge of the project, and responsible for the rendering of architectural drawings, was Hugh McLaughlin. At the time that he designed the Administration Building he had been with the department for 26 years. Very little else is known about the architect. Also on the design and planning team were John McKenzie, newly appointed commissioner of DOD; T.F. Keller, chief engineer; and James S. Kenny, assistant engineer-in-charge.[3]

The original set of architectural drawings for the building was located during the research efforts of 1981. They consist of 18 sheets and are included in this report as Section VI ("Historical Drawings"). They were approved on November 17, 1930, by Michael Cosgrove, then Commissioner of the DOD. Dimensions, materials, and details set out on the drawings were generally followed in the construction of the building.

No work orders or record of the construction of the Administration Building were discovered. The original drawings, and several general comments in the annual reports of the DOD, stand as the only record of the initial phase of construction. The drawings should be closely examined, since they provide the best view of the building in new condition. However–although the drawings are beautifully rendered and annotated as to the intent of the design elements–there are few details as to how the building was actually put together (i.e., stone attachment, roof details, tower construction details, etc.).

The design called for a two-story building with a four-story tower centrally located on the east (airfield) side of the structure, and a two-story portico centrally located on the west (entry) side. The building was rectangular, measuring 182 feet by 74 feet in plan. All exterior features were very regular and symmetrical.

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[2] Blakemore, p. 75.

[3] Photograph from the *Brooklyn Times* dated May 24, 1931. City of New York, Municipal Archives, James Walker Papers, Box 252, Folder II.

Below are listed most of the exterior features as specified on the original drawings.

| | |
|---|---|
| Foundation - | Bluestone course with ashlar cut white marble coursing above |
| Walls - | Harvard brick, Flemish bond |
| Terraces - | Floor, red cement scored to look like pavers<br>Railing, white marble balustrades and brick piers with marble coping |
| Portico - | Floor, red cement scored to look like pavers<br>White marble Tuscan columns<br>White stucco walls |
| Quoins - | White marble |
| Windows - | Wood frames and sash<br>12-over-1 and 6-over-1 lights, double-thick sheet glass<br>Brick lintels<br>White marble sills, keystones, and arched panels |
| Doorways - | White pine doors and sash<br>Double French style with one-eighth-inch plate glass<br>Transoms of simple fan design<br>West entry, white marble arched pediments with cast bronze eagle in center pediment<br>Canopies on west terrace doorways, obscure leaded glass with copper ribs and flashing |
| Cornice - | White marble<br>Copper lettering on west:<br>"Department of Docks Floyd Bennett Field Municipal Airport"<br>Copper lettering on east:<br>"City of New York Floyd Bennett Field" |
| Parapet - | Brick with white marble coping<br>Copper lettering on west:<br>"City of New York 1930"<br>Winged globe, center, west:<br>White marble with blue glaze, copper wings<br>Wood flagpole, center, west |
| Control Tower - | Aluminum covered walls, aluminum railing, aluminum sash<br>Clock affixed to center of walkway |

Although the original drawings of the exterior indicate that white marble was intended for all trim–including quoins, window panels and keystones, water table coursing, terrace balusters, roof cornice, and roof parapet coping–cast stone was eventually substituted for all white marble elements. The substitution of materials was probably due to financial constraints and construction expediency. In addition, the granite specified for steps on the west front and east terraces was replaced with

concrete during construction. In all other details, construction of the building appears to have been true to the original design.

The contract for the Administration Building (#2000) was awarded to the Longacre Engineering Company in late 1930. Construction began shortly thereafter with the excavation of the basement and the sinking of reinforced-concrete foundation piles. Piles were generally 35 feet long and 14 inches square. They were arranged in 54 groups of four. Square concrete footings capped each group of four piles. Footings measured either 5 feet by 5 feet or 6 feet 3 inches square, and were from 2 feet to 2 feet 7 inches high. Each footing supported a single steel column of the structural framing system (for a total of 54 steel columns).

The plan of the building was a simple rectangle with a crossing transept at the center. The center crossing consisted of a central two-story atrium, with the control tower projecting beyond the basic rectangle of the plan on the east, and the front entry pavilion projecting on the west. A long main corridor led off the central atrium to the north and south on both first and second stories. With the exception of the rooms in the control tower and the rooms located above the entry portico, rooms were arranged symmetrically along both sides of the north and south corridors. Circulation was by means of six separate stairways: one on each end of the building (north and south), one at each side of the lobby atrium (north and south), one stairway in the center of first-floor lobby leading down to the subterranean passenger-loading tunnel, and one stairway beginning at the northeast corner of the lobby on the second floor and accessing the third floor of the control tower.

Footings and columns were arranged approximately 16 feet on center along the perimeter of the building, with a double row of columns along the north-south axis, and a double row of columns along the east-west axis at the north and south sides of the central open area of the plan. In addition, four columns framed the tower on the west elevation. Exterior stairways, ramps, and terraces were supported by wooden piles and wall footings. See sheet no. 13 of the original drawings (fig. 163) for a foundation plan and column.

The structural steel framing system of the building was bolted and riveted together. Horizontal framing members consisted of girders spanning the columns east to west, with beams spanning girder to girder at 5 feet on center.

The original drawings called for the following interior features. They are listed here as they are noted on the drawings, and as they appear floor by floor.

**Basement**

| | |
|---|---|
| Floors - | 4-inch reinforced cinder-concrete slab with 2-inch granolithic finish and linoleum cover |
| Walls - | 4-inch terra-cotta partitions, metal lath, plaster |
| Trim - | some plain wood baseboard and doorway trim |
| Ceiling - | plaster on metal lath |
| Doors | wood with obscured glass |
| Stairways - | steel treads and risers, safety treads (Stairways #1, #3, and #6) |

Special Features - metal shelving, hollow metal counter and gate, metal lockers

**First Floor**

Floors - 4-inch reinforced cinder-concrete slab with 1-inch granolithic finish and linoleum cover

Walls - 4-inch terra-cotta with metal lath and plaster
quarter-inch polished plate glass (fixed)

Wall Finish - generally plaster on metal lath
faux Caen stone stucco (lobby only)
buff marble wainscot (halls and lobby)
"Fabrikoid" wall covering (lounge & restaurant)
tile wainscot (rest rooms)

Trim - buff marble doorway trim (lobby).
1 ¾-inch ornamental cast brass molding (halls)
aluminum trim (around plate-glass window walls)
black marble baseboard (halls and lobby)
molded wood baseboard (rooms)
galvanized steel kalameined trim (exterior doorways)
molded wood chair rail (rooms)

Ceiling - plaster on metal lath
ornamental plaster ceilings (lobby, restaurant)
"All 1st floor rooms except lobby, restaurant and women's rest room to have plain molded plaster cornice"
ornamental plaster cornice, triglyphs and medallions (restaurant)

Stairways - steel stringer, steel treads & risers, safety treads, steel balustrade with wood handrail (Stairways #1, #3, and #6)
marble risers, marble treads, steel stringer, ornamental bronze balustrade with molded birch handrail (Stairways #2, #4, and #5)

Doorways - see doorway schedule, sheet 11 (fig. 61)
all lobby and hall doorways have transoms
polished glass and white pine doors
obscured glass and white pine doors
polished glass and birch veneer doors

Special Features - fireplace in lounge
decorative painting (lobby)
decorative linoleum (lobby)
marble counters (lobby)

**Second Floor**

| | |
|---|---|
| Floors - | 4-inch reinforced cinder-concrete slab with 1-inch granolithic finish and linoleum cover |
| Walls - | 4-inch terra-cotta partitions with plaster on metal lath |
| Wall Finish - | imitation Caen stone stucco (lobby)<br>buff marble wainscot (lobby)<br>plaster on metal lath (halls, rooms)<br>damask covering/panels on plaster (parlors)<br>glazed tile wainscot (rest rooms) |
| Trim - | black marble baseboard (halls, lobby)<br>buff marble doorway surrounds (lobby)<br>molded wood baseboard (rooms)<br>molded wood chair rail<br>wood panel moldings<br>wood (birch) doorway surrounds<br>kalameined galvanized steel trim in stair halls |
| Ceiling - | hung ceiling, plaster on metal lath with coved plaster cornice (rooms, halls)<br>obscured glass skylights (halls)<br>leaded, colored glass ceiling light (lobby)<br>gilded plaster-leaf cornice (lobby) |
| Stairways - | steel stringer, steel treads & risers, safety treads, steel balustrade with wood handrail (Stairways #1 and #6)<br>marble risers, marble treads, steel stringer, ornamental bronze balustrade with molded birch handrail (Stairways #2, #4, and #5)<br>steel treads & risers, safety treads, decorative cast-iron balustrade with birch handrail (Stairway #3) |
| Doorways - | all hall doorways have transoms<br>birch veneer doors<br>white pine doors |
| Special Features - | decorative paint program (lobby atrium)<br>decorative column capitals (lobby atrium)<br>decorative balcony panels (lobby atrium) |

**Third Floor (Control Tower only)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Floor - | 4 inch reinforced cinder-concrete slab with granolith finish and linoleum covering |
| Walls - | terra-cotta partition and brick exterior wall |
| Wall Finish - | plaster over metal lath |
| Trim - | molded wood baseboard<br>plain wood window trim |
| Ceiling - | plaster over metal lath |
| Doorways - | white pine doors |
| Special Features - | none |

**Fourth Floor (Control Tower only)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Walls - | all terra-cotta (and windows) |
| Wall Finish - | plaster over metal lath |
| Trim - | molded wood baseboard<br>birch doorway trim |
| Ceiling - | plaster over metal lath |
| Doorways - | none |
| Stairway - | iron spiral stairway |
| Special Features - | oversized plate-glass aluminum sash windows<br>Walkway surrounding control room |

Interior features included on the original drawings that were never realized during construction were: the elevator shaft designed for the east side of the central lobby; the fireplace shown on the north wall of the first-floor lounge; the ornamental plaster ceiling in the first-floor restaurant; and damask panels in some of the second-floor rooms. Judging from extant conditions, as well as post-construction photographs and historic drawings, all other construction details seem to have been executed. Exterior photographs dating to the last phases of construction show how closely the finished building adhered to the design. Unfortunately, interior photographs of the building upon completion were not found. The earliest interior photographs date to 1935.

The DOD annual report for 1931 recorded completion of the Administration Building in its list of "Contract Work Advertised in 1931 and Completed in 1931" as follows:

> Contract 2000--Administration Building Airport. Completed October 14, 1931, by Longacre Engineering Co., at a cost of...$249,079.45.4

Another passage in the report records the conflicting account that

> The Administration Building a structure about 200 feet long by about 70 feet wide, of Colonial type, has been fully completed since August and has received many favorable comments from all sides as the quality of the work therein, and also of the architecture of the building itself.[5]

The October 14 date represents the official completion of the contract and therefore, for the purposes of this HSR, October 14, 1931 is considered the formal completion date of the initial phase of construction.

However, the building first opened to the public at the official dedication ceremony on May 23, 1931. The DOD report for 1931 recorded that work at the airport began to be pushed as rapidly as possible for the formal opening in May.

> To do this necessitated a great deal of emergency work by the Dock Department, aided by several other City departments. Contracts for plumbing, heating, paving, grass seeding, sodding, electric light and power including both the hangar and administration building system, as well as the flood lights, border lights, etc., on the field itself. All of these contracts were completed late in the summer.[6]

In addition, "Several thousand feet of wire fencing to protect the spectators from any danger of accident and still give the planes ample room to manoeuver, take-off and land" was installed along the east side of the building.[7] The building contained "facilities for a restaurant, cafeteria, post-office, dormitories, lounge; weather bureau and Dep't of Commerce rooms."[8]

A photograph (fig. 127) dated May 19, 1931, shows the north and west sides of the building just four days before the dedication. Work is clearly still in progress including the installation of most of the windows.

The dedication ceremonies were extravagant, including an air show, extensive decorations, speeches, and a catered dinner. A crowd of more than 10,000 people was reported. An itinerary of some of the activities was found in the files of Gateway NRA.

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[4] Department of Docks (DOD) Annual Report, 1931, p. 31. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

[5] Annual Report, 1931, p. 35.

[6] Annual Report, 1931, p. 35.

[7] Annual Report, 1931, p. 35.

[8] Annual Report, 1931, p. 19.

For May 23, 1931, the following activities were planned:

| | |
|---|---|
| Floyd Bennett Field | Open all day, sunrise to midnight |
| 10:30 a.m.- | Air cleared and airport receives Army planes from adjacent fields |
| 12 noon- | Army squadron formation over airport |
| 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.- | Official dedication ceremonies. Hon James J. Walker, presiding |
| 3:20 to 4 p.m.- | Army planes pass in review |
| 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.- | Exhibition Flying by Army Pilots |
| 5:30 to 11:00 p.m.- | Commercial Flights and Demonstration of Airport Lighting facilities[9] |

A folder in the Mayor Walker papers at the New York City Municipal Archives contains a breakdown of the costs for the opening events as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Caterer | 900.00 |
| Processed letters | 100.00 |
| Letters, indiv. processed | 14.42 |
| Photographs | 39.90 |
| Beefsteak dinners | 400.00 |
| Officers and pilots dinner | 4,000.00 |
| 7.5 coils of rope | 142.33 |
| American beauty roses | 27.00 |
| Iron stakes | 165.00 |
| P.A. System | 75.00 |
| White wool felt arm bands | 61.20 |
| Busses | 80.00 |
| Chairs, platform, decorations | 2,607.00 |
| Total: | 8,611.85[10] |

A proposal for decorations at the dedication was also found in the Mayor Walker Papers. The C.H. Koster Co. wrote to the Mayor's Committee on Receptions proposing a comprehensive plan of decoration for the hangars and the Administration Building using flags, banners, fans, festoons, and sunbursts. For example, for the Administration Building was suggested

From roof flagpole, Flatbush Avenue side, to the roof cornice each way

> We would arrange streamers of burgees 2-½ x 5 ft., showing the emblems, twenty-four pieces, twenty-four different emblems, as used on aeroplanes of the Air Service.

From roof turret to roof cornice each side, field side of the building

> We would arrange streamers of burgees 2-½ x 5 ft. showing the emblems, twenty-six pieces, twenty-six emblems, as used on aeroplanes of the Air Service.

[9] Archives, Floyd Bennett Field Unit, Gateway NRA.

[10] Mayor Walker Papers, Box 248. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

Inside rotunda of building

> Here we would mass the colors, using 3 x 5 ft. flags on staffs in metal bases or standards, approximately sixty nations.

The Two sides of the building

> Each decorated with eight half-sunbursts about nine feet deep - four red, white and blue, and four in the City colors.

Turret rail

> Decorated with a festooning of red, white and blue about nine feet deep.

Side facing Flatbush Avenue

> Here the decorations would consist of red, white and blue and City colors, in festoons, extending down about nine feet. There would be eight units of red, white and blue, and six pieces of City colors, for the roof cornice.[11]

Since the cost of this proposed decorative scheme was $2,806, it is unlikely that the city accepted the offer of services. In the absence of dedication photographs, it does, however, give some idea of what types of decorations may have been used for the ceremonies.

Several contracts for the Administration Building were completed the following year (1932), including the contract with Sperry Gyroscope for floodlighting the airport, and a contract with the Independent Fence Company for 943 feet of removable wire fence. The annual report of DOD described the fence as follows:

> A wire mesh fence was built along the apron and around the parking areas, which while allowing visitors to the airport a clear view of everything happening at the field, protects them from moving airplanes and propellers, and allows the handling of a large attendance with less police protection.
>
> A complete new drainage system with catch basins and over 600 linear feet of vitrified pipe was laid down in the main parking area surrounding the Administration Building.[12]

The first available images of the completed building date to ca. 1932 (e.g., fig. 128). This photograph provides a look at the exterior of the east side of the building.

Although landscaping around the building was planned, it was not realized until the mid-1930s. For the first few years of operation, the site surrounding the building was one large level sandy parking area, with just an apron of grass and small shrubs immediately adjacent to the building. This is clearly seen in an aerial photograph taken during a well-attended air show ca. 1932 (fig. 129).

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[11] Mayor Walker Papers, Box 248, Folder – General Correspondence. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

[12] DOD Annual Report, 1932. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

As previously mentioned in this report's "Introductory History," the early 1930s at the airport were dominated by the efforts to have the federal government designate the field as an air terminal for the delivery of the U.S. Mail. Improvements at the airport, and to the Administration Building, were made with this goal at the forefront. As the *Airport Beacon* bluntly assessed in March 1933:

> Admittedly no single item could possibly mean more to the development of Floyd Bennett Field than securing the contract for the U.S. Mail, for in its wake would come passenger lines to all parts of the country. Since this is conceded to be the stepping stone upon which the municipal airport's future greatness depends, every effort is being bent toward that end.[13]

A pending contract with Trans World Airlines (TWA) dated October 3, 1934, added additional pressure on airport administrators. In the contract, the use of Floyd Bennett Field as TWA's central headquarters was contingent on the airfield receiving the air-mail contract, as well as on the successful completion of a specific list of improvements from widening the runways to providing a loudspeaker system in the Administration Building.

[13] *The Airport Beacon, Aviation News and Views*, March 1933. Archives, Floyd Bennett Field Unit, Gateway NRA.

# CHANGES AND ALTERATIONS

Although neither the air-mail contract or the TWA contract ever materialized for Floyd Bennett Field, strong efforts were made during the negotiating period to carry out the improvements deemed necessary. The need for early improvements and finishing touches at Floyd Bennett Field coincided with the establishment of President Roosevelt's New Deal agencies such as the Works Projects Administration and the Federal Artists Project. These agencies began to put the burgeoning ranks of the jobless back to work across the nation. One of the main concerns of the relief work was the development and improvements of airports. Because Floyd Bennett Field was a municipal airport, it received a significant share of the federally assisted funds for work projects allocated to the City of New York. Indeed, most of the projects carried out at Floyd Bennett throughout the 1930s were administered by the Works Projects Administration (WPA). The work was carried out by WPA crews.

## Works Progress Administration

An index of WPA projects carried out at Floyd Bennett Field was found in the Mayor F.H. LaGuardia papers at the New York City Municipal Archives. The index is typed on graph paper and includes small schematic sketches of each building at Floyd Bennett Field, along with abbreviated descriptions of dimensions, materials, and total costs of WPA projects. Jobs noted in the index with regards to the Administration Building are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Job #12 WPA | Weather Proofing | 19,005.00 |
| Job #17 WPA | Ticket & Doctors office | |
| | Restaurant | 40,873.00 |
| WPA | Public Address System | 1,985.00 |
| Job #60 WPA | Alt. in Control Room | 2,513.00 |
| Job #65 WPA | Alt. on Elevator Shafts | 33,064.00 |
| Job #84 WPA | Decorations | 5,385.00 |
| WPA | Storm Doors & Sash | 8,046.00 |
| Job #66 WPA | Radio | 25.00 |
| Job #5 WPA | Transmitter & Receiver | 6,624.00 |
| Job #26 | Passenger Tunnel | 83,270.00 |
| TOTAL | | 181,785.00 |

Landscaping:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| WPA | Field Grading & Seeding | 511,093.00 |
| WPA | North Parking Area | 113,407.00 |
| WPA | Drainage | 212,697.00 |
| WPA | Grading West of Hangars | 7,320.00 |
| WPA | Road on North & East boundary | 15,702.00 |
| WPA | Covering Sand Areas | 38,136.00 |
| WPA | Landscaping Adm. Bldg. | 158,101.00 |
| WPA | Landscaping Field House | 5,619.00 |
| WPA | Storm Manholes | 4,082.00 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| WPA | Storm Manholes | 4,082.00 |
| WPA | Rebuilding Terraces Admin. Bldg. | 12,056.00 |
| TOTAL | | 1,078,213.00 |

Pages of the index relevant to the evolution of the Administration Building are included as Appendix E at the end of this report. Information in the index is used in combination with the annual reports of the DOD, DOD/WPA drawings, and period photographs to provide the most comprehensive examination possible of changes and alterations to the Administration Building by the WPA. However, it is important to note when using this report that the documentation contains many gaps. Some jobs that are listed above have no further record, and some jobs not listed above are documented in reports and drawings.

The major WPA work at the airport began in 1935. The DOD report for 1935 lists the major projects undertaken as follows:

- two new concrete runways, one running southeast to northwest, and one running north to south

- A modern Department of Commerce approved antennae system was installed north of the field....a receiving station and a wooden building constructed to house Radio Receiving equipment. South of the Field there was constructed a modern transmitting antennae system, together with a brick building to house radio transmitting equipment. The radio range is remote control by means of underground cable from Avenue U to the Administration Building....

- Taxi strips widened from 30 to 100 feet.

- The apron in front of Administration Building [east side] was widened 54 feet for a distance of approximately 400 feet.

- This apron widening was done in connection with the construction of a loading tunnel beneath the concrete apron immediately in front of the Administration Building [east side]. Purpose of the loading tunnel is that arriving passengers may disembark from the plane, go down one flight of steps to the loading tunnel and go into the Administration Building, where another flight of stairs goes up to the lobby.

- Four turn tables were installed in this area to facilitate quick arrival and departure of planes by cutting down turning radius required for large transports.

- Consolidated ticket counter was constructed in the lobby. A baggage chute from the ticket counter to the baggage room in the Administration Building basement was built.

- The restaurant was outfitted with a ventilating system.

- The main parking area on both sides of Administration Building was completely landscaped. Modern driveways installed. Paving blocks transferred from North of Field and used in paving driveways.[14]

Therefore, important alterations to the Administration Building begun in 1935 included the construction of a passenger-loading tunnel, landscaping of the grounds, construction of a ticket counter and baggage chute in the lobby, and work in the restaurant. Drawings for most of the projects cited were found at the New York City Municipal Archives, and are included as Section VI ("Historic Drawings") of this report.

## Passenger-Loading Tunnel

The passenger-loading tunnel was designed to project in a T-shape from the center of the east side of the building at the basement level. The main corridor therefore ran east-west and was 10 feet wide and 124 feet long. The T-crossing ran north-south and was 8 feet wide and 240 feet long. The north and south ends of the T-crossing were likewise crossed by short corridors; these had a stairway at each end, covered by a hydraulic hatch, ascending to the tarmac of the airfield above. The tunnel was constructed of concrete with steel reinforcement bars and sunk below grade. Sixteen drawings provide original construction and finish details for the passenger-loading tunnel (see figs. 84-86 and 89-102). The tunnel is extant, although non-functioning, and appears to have been constructed and finished exactly as designed in these drawings.

According to construction drawings, the tunnel was planned as a square concrete tube. The floor consists of a 4-inch concrete base, a five-ply membrane waterproofing of a 15# felt, a 1-inch coat of mortar protection, and 10 inches of concrete reinforced with steel bars one-half inch and five-eighths of an inch thick. The floor pitches a maximum of 3 inches toward drains along the sides. The pitch of the entrance tunnel follows the slope of the concrete apron above. The concrete floor surface features several half-inch expansion joints. The concrete mix specified for the floor was 1:3:6.

The floor was to be finished with asphalt tile three-sixteenths of an inch thick over a plastic layer over cement grout over the concrete base (see fig. 94). The asphalt tiles were laid in a checkerboard pattern of alternating large and small rectangles on a solid background. Large rectangles were surrounded by a narrow solid border, and the small rectangles featured a diamond in the center and a narrow solid border. A solid border was also designed for the perimeter of the floor as well. Asphalt floor tiles were specified in the following colors:

| | |
|---|---|
| Checkerboard - | 12" x 24", alternating azure blue & steel gray |
| Diamonds in small rectangles - | regal blue |
| Narrow borders - | 2" wide, Spanish red |

[14] DOD Annual Report, 1935. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

| | |
|---|---|
| Background - | 3-½ inches, lead gray |
| Perimeter border - | 10-½ inches, regal blue |

The walls of the tunnel were designed from exterior to interior as follows: first, a three-ply waterproofing felt membrane, followed by a brick wall 2 feet 2 inches thick; a five-ply membrane waterproofing of 15# felt; and a 10-inch-thick concrete wall reinforced with steel bars. The mix specified for the concrete walls was 1:2:4, with three-quarter-inch stone. The overall wall height was 7 feet.

The lower wall zone was to feature tiled baseboard and wainscot. The tile design consisted of a 6-inch baseboard and a wainscot field of tiles measuring 4-½ by 4-¼ inches with joints three-sixteenths of an inch wide, topped by a 1-inch strip, a 2-inch band, and a 2-inch cap. Colors for the tiles included peach for the baseboard, cream for the wainscot field, blue for the strip, cream for the band, and blue for the cap. The baseboard was to be "the scotia type and the asphaltic floor tile to be set level with the lower edge of the scotia on the wall tile."[15] Vents were placed in the baseboard every 5 feet on center. Tiles were one-quarter of an inch thick laid in a half-inch setting bed of tile plaster. The setting bed was applied to a cement plaster scratch coat over expanded metal lath on wood furring. A 1-inch air space was included between lath and concrete wall for ventilation purposes (see figs. 44-45).

The upper wall zone was to be a "cement plaster." The cement plaster was to be sanded, sized with "shellac white, 5 lb. cut," and painted with a flat finish in a light cream color.[16]

Display panels measuring 3 feet wide by 5 feet 10 inches tall were planned for the walls. A total of 11 display panels were included in the design. Four panels were included on each side of the main east-west section of the tunnel, three panels were placed on the east wall of the T-section of the tunnel, and two panels were placed at either end of the T-section near the hatches accessing the airfield. The panels were of plaster, finished smooth with bronze moldings measuring five-eighths of an inch around the inner edges and a 4-inch tile border on the outer edges. The panels were for advertisements and informational posters (see figs. 42-44).

The ceiling of the passenger-loading tunnel was to be squared off with a dropped ceiling furred to a curve. The squared ceiling consisted of a 10-inch concrete slab reinforced with steel bars one-half and five-eighths of an inch thick. The 10-inch slab was found below the 4-foot 4-inch concrete slab and five-ply waterproofing membrane of the airfield apron. The mortar mix specified for the 10-inch concrete ceiling slab was 1:2:4, with three-quarter-inch stone. Within the squared-off concrete slab was a drop-in ceiling, furred out and curved to a barrel vault with a groined vault at the T-intersection and at intersections at the ends of the north-south section of the tunnel (figs. 39-42).

---

[15] *1/8" scale Layout of Passenger Loading Tunnel, Showing Outline of Interior Treatment.* DOD drawing, January 29, 1936. Municipal Archives, City of New York. A scotia is a concave molding used especially in classical architecture in the bases of columns.

[16] White shellac is made by bleaching shellac with chlorine. The "5 lb cut" may refer to the amount of alcohol cut with the shellac to create the desired mix.

The furred-out curved ceiling was attached to channel irons (2 by 1 by three-sixteenths inches) spaced 2 feet 8 inches on center. Channel ribs were set in 2-inch-wide pockets in the side walls and packed with cement mortar to insure full bearing on the ends of the channels. Metal lath (Truscon three-eights-inch diamond-rib lath) was wired to channel ribs and carried the three-quarter-inch cement plaster ceiling surface. One drawing described the surface finish as "cement plaster, sand finished and painted." Ventilation grills measuring 6 by 20 inches were placed in the ceiling at the spring line over all display panel and doorway heads.

Additional primary features of the passenger-loading tunnel included the hatches opening onto the airfield and the drainage system designed for the tunnel, an essential consideration in subterranean construction.

Four hatches were to cover the four stairways leading up from the passenger-loading tunnel (see figs. 78, 80). The hatches measured 10 feet 10-1/2 inches long by 5 feet 4 inches wide and consisted of a metal cover and a frame. The hatch frames were inset approximately 6 inches into the apron surface and the covers laid flush with the apron grade. The hatches were accessed by concrete stairways and activated by a one-quarter-horsepower motor at each hatch. Switches marked for the hatch motors and "Raise-Lower" were controlled from the check-in desk in the center of the lobby of the main building. Three-quarter-inch conduit ran from the hatch motors along the ceiling in the tunnel and under the floor of the lobby to the control box at the desk.

Drainage in the tunnel was accomplished through a combination of sloping grades, ventilation, and a 14-horsepower centrifugal sump pump (electric) in a sump pit located on the east wall at the T-intersection of the tunnel. (See figure 86.) The pump room walls were to be covered with two coats of bituminous paint. Floors of the tunnel were designed to pitch to the sides. A main drainage trench was located to the east of the tunnel.

Alterations related to the construction of the tunnel included changes to Administration Building windows at the tunnel entrance, as illustrated on a DOD drawing dated July 7, 1935. The basement windows on the east face of the tower were changed when the tunnel was constructed. The original window heights were retained but the window frame was cut down, new brick mullions were built, and obscure glass (glass block) was installed (see fig. 84).

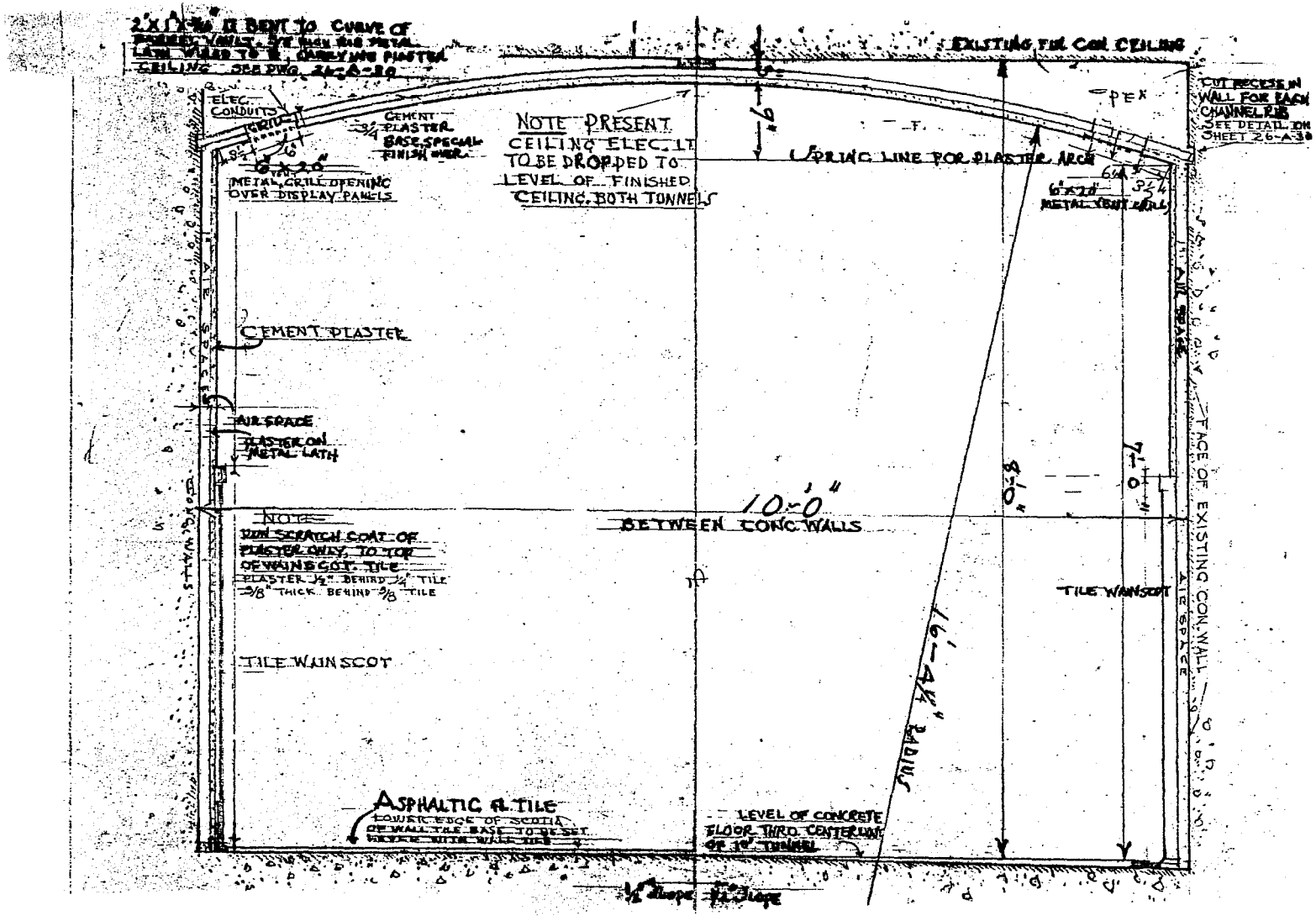



**Figure 39.** Passenger-loading tunnel: Section through barrel vault in 10-foot-wide portion, January 22, 1936.

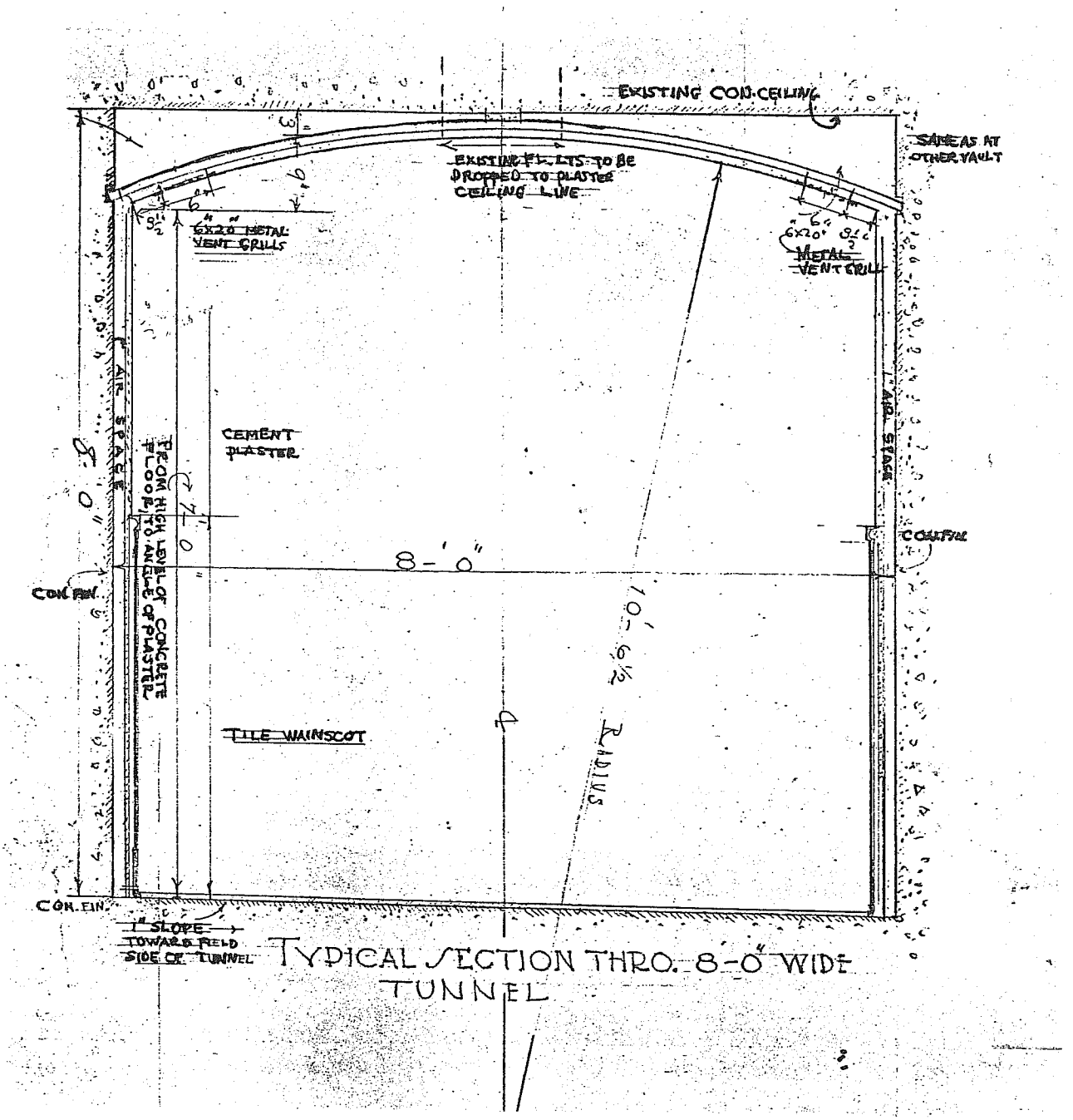



**Figure 40.** Passenger-loading tunnel: Section through barrel vault in 8-foot-wide portion, January 22, 1936.

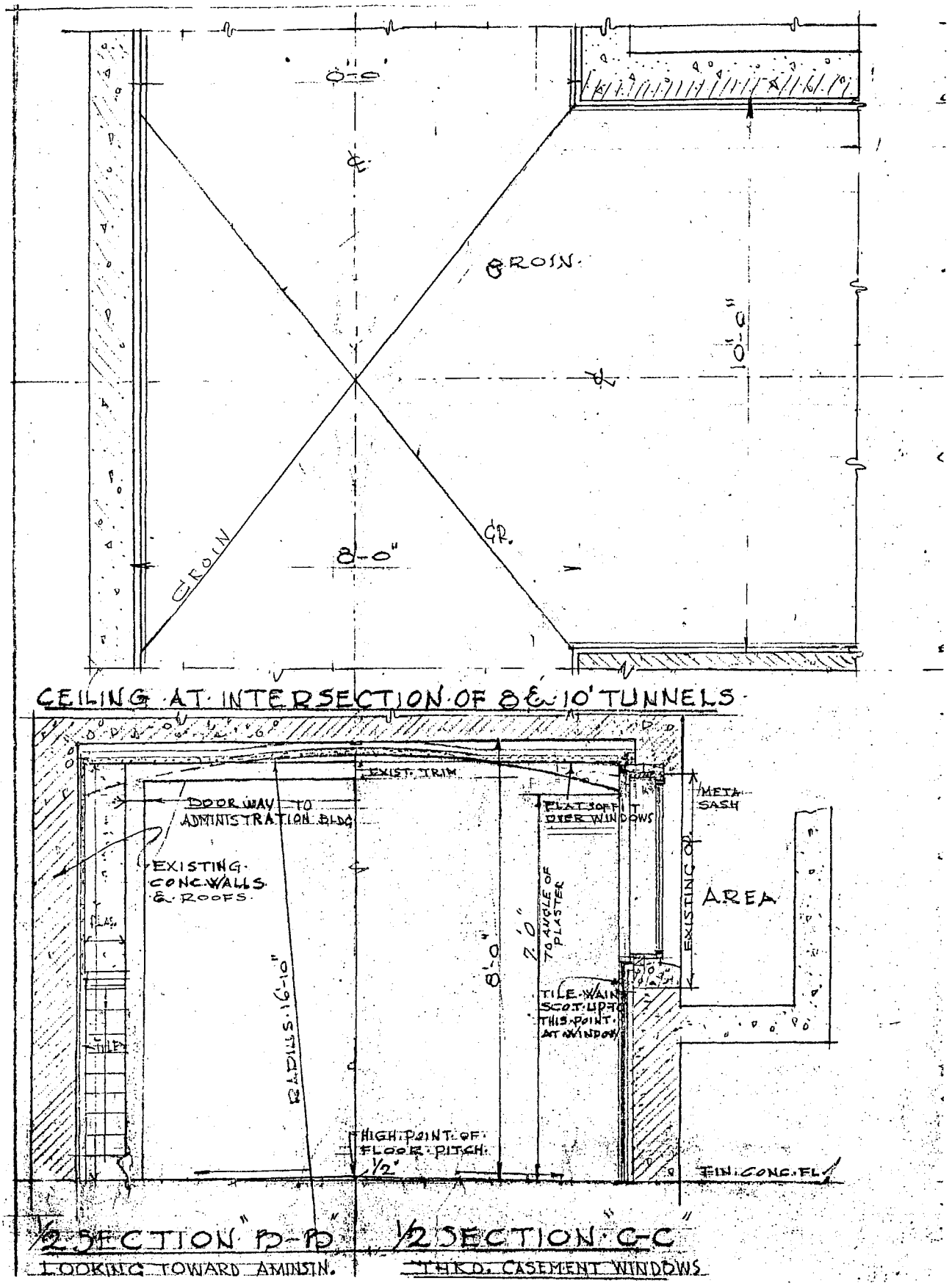



**Figure 41.** Passenger-loading tunnel: Section showing architectural treatment at intersection of 10-foot and 8-foot-wide portions, January 22, 1936.

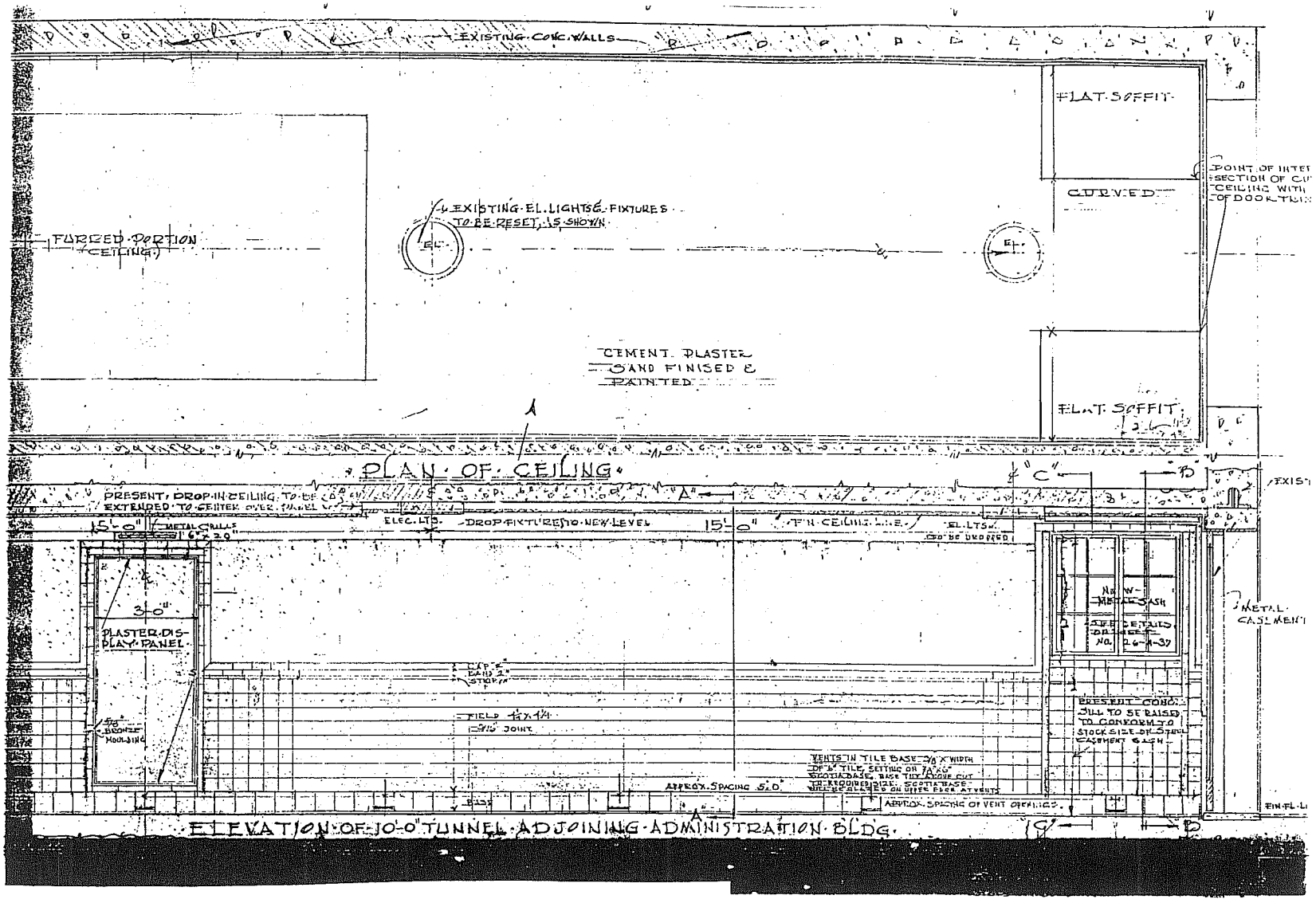



**Figure 42.** Passenger-loading tunnel: Elevation showing architectural treatment of 10-foot-wide portion, and plan of ceiling, January 22, 1936. *(Reduced from original.)*

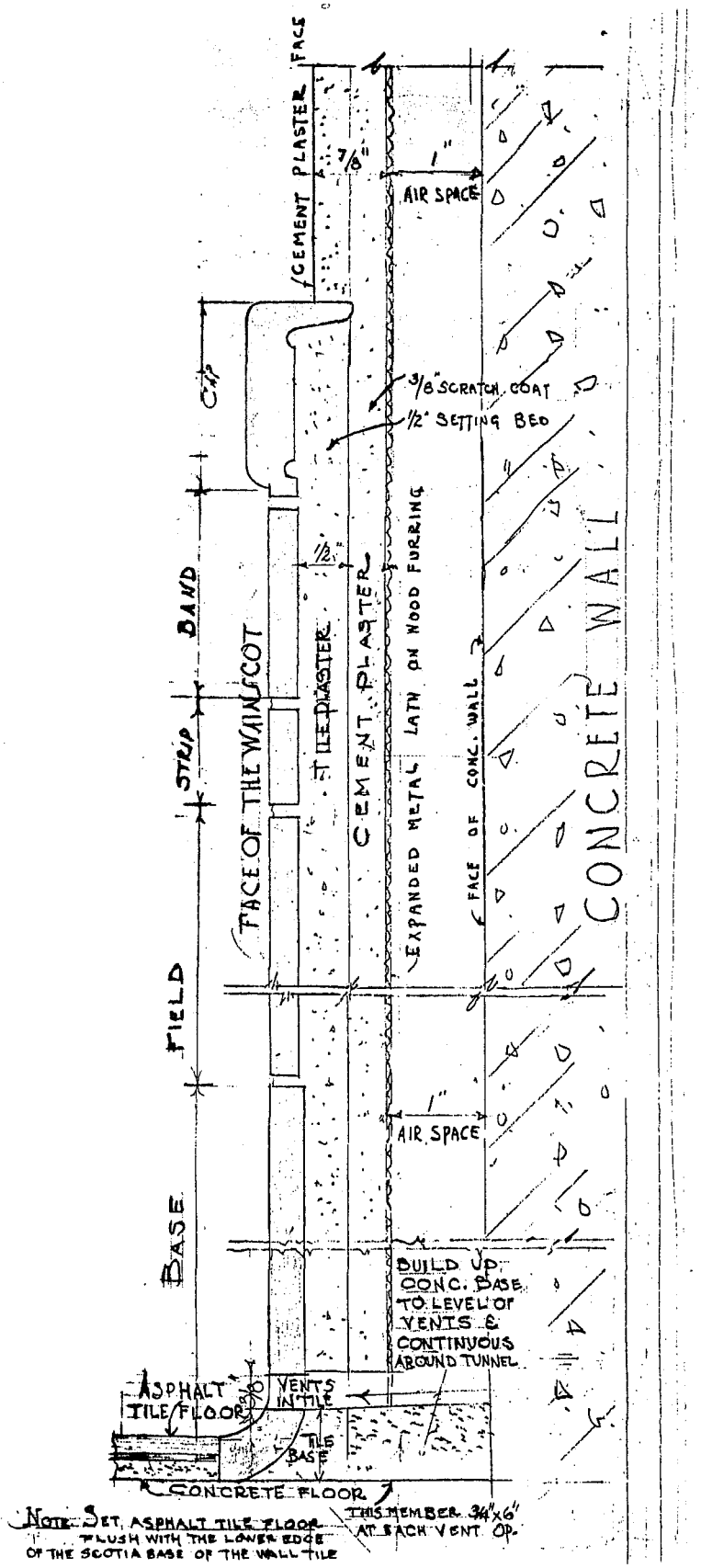



**Figure 43.** Passenger-loading tunnel: Section through wall in 10-foot and 8-foot-wide portions, January 22, 1936.

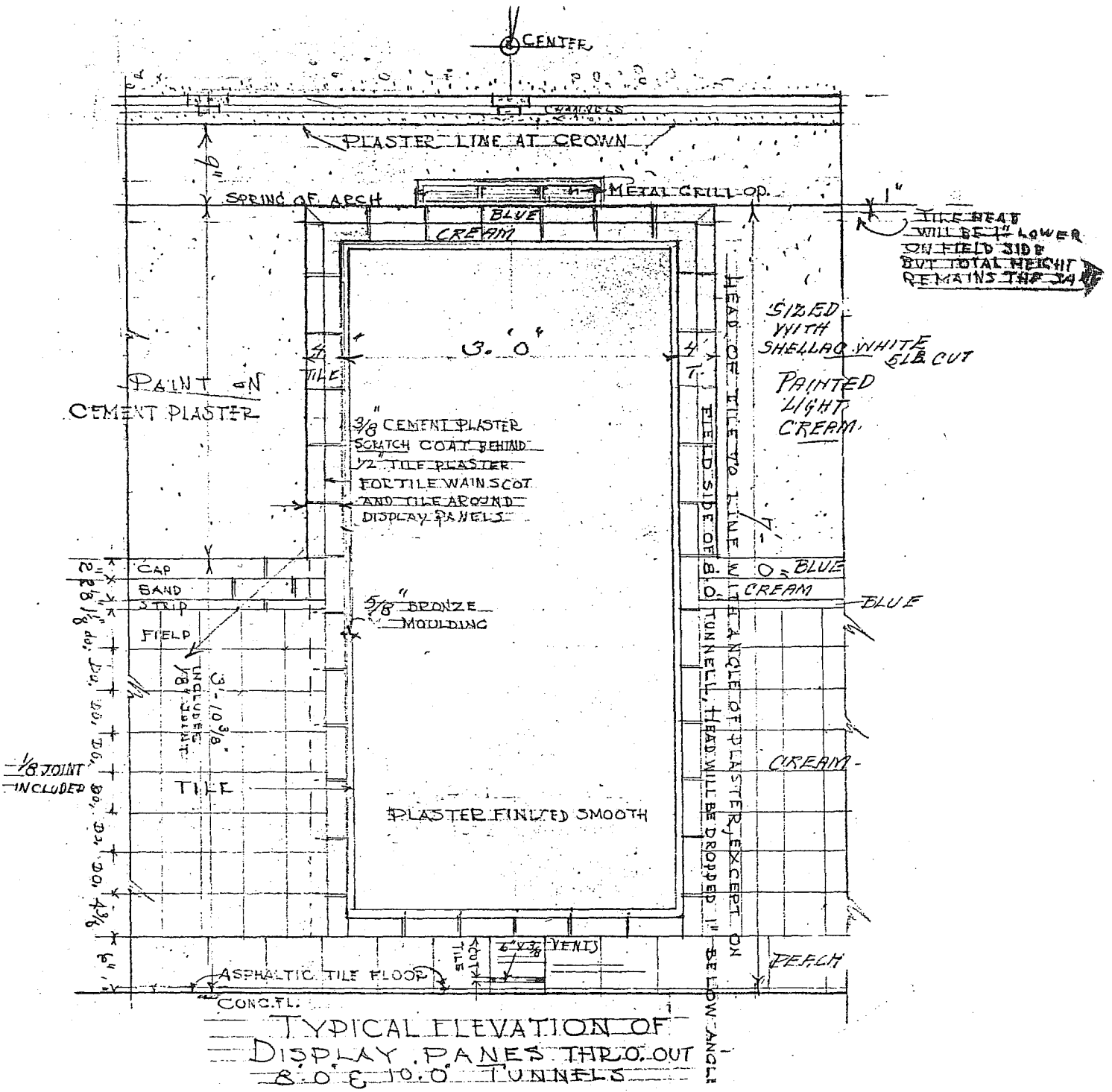



**Figure 44.** Passenger-loading tunnel: Elevation showing typical display panel, January 22, 1936.

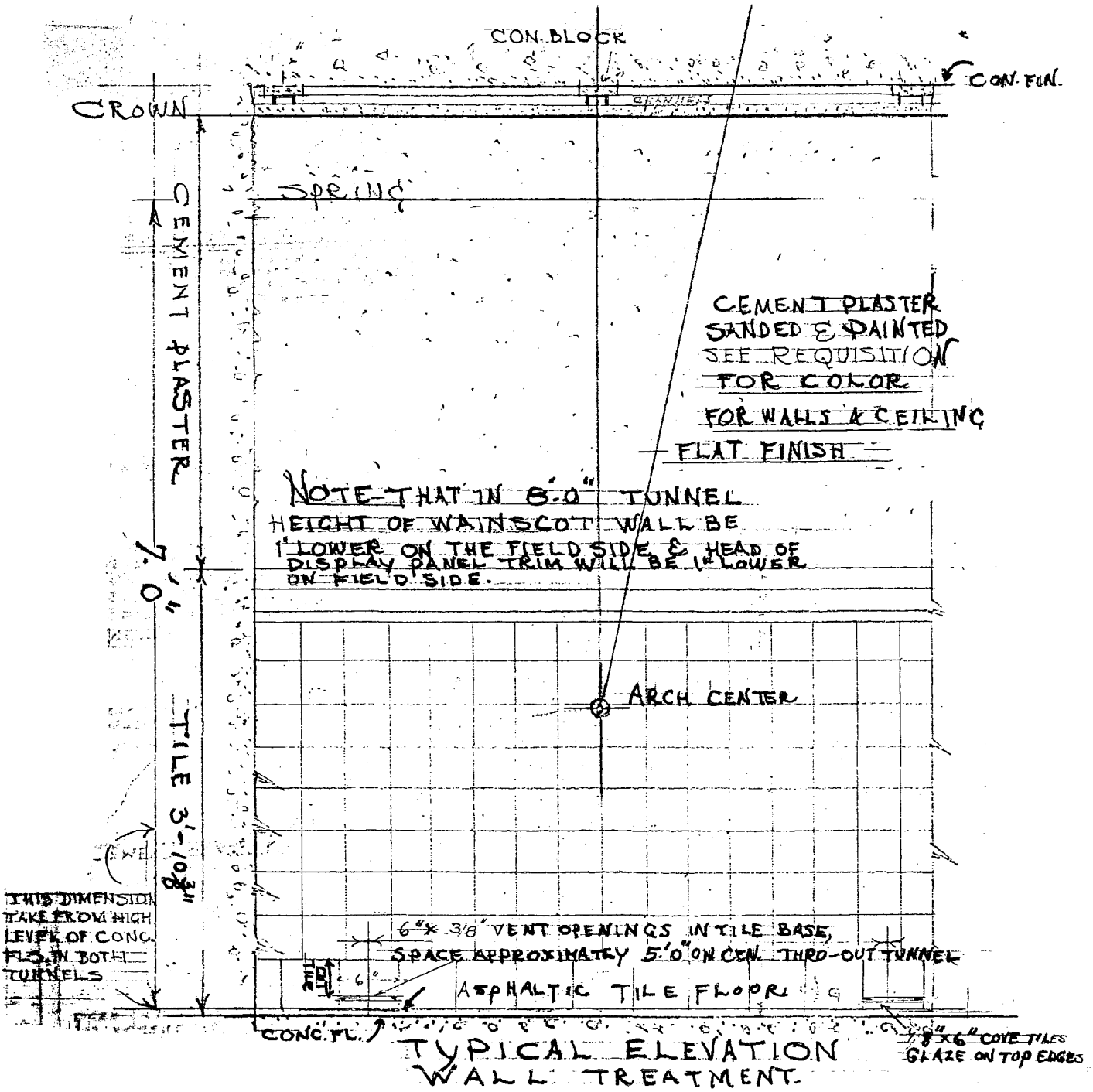



**Figure 45.** Passenger-loading tunnel: Elevation showing typical wall treatment in 10-foot and 8-foot-wide portions, January 22, 1936.

## Landscaping

The landscaping of the grounds surrounding the Administration Building was another major project undertaken by the WPA. At least five DOD/WPA drawings relate specifically to landscaping designs. Several photographs dating to the late 1930s and early 1940s indicate that most of the landscaping was realized as designed (figs. 81-83, 87, 100, and 103). Features of the landscaping plans included sidewalks, curbs, driveways, parking areas, lawns, shrub plantings, light standards, water fountains, flagpole, and a decorative field sign and stand.

A small parking area was located immediately in front of the Administration Building, while larger parking areas were designated to the north and south of the building. Driveways extended to the north and south at a 90-degree angle from the front stairway of the building to Flatbush Avenue. Sidewalks surrounded the building, flanked the driveways, and extended front and center from the central parking area to a flagpole on the front lawn and continued onto Flatbush Avenue. A large, generally triangular lawn was planned in front of the building beyond the central parking area. Two small rectangular lawns were indicated to the north and south of the entrance driveways at Flatbush Avenue. Three additional small grassy areas were planned adjacent to the south end of the building.

The May 19, 1935, WPA drawing for "Landscaping in Front of Administration Building, Construction Plan" described some of the landscape features in detail as follows.

> Sidewalks: To consist of a 4 ½" course 1-2-4 concrete on a well tamped subgrade. The slope should be about 1/3" per foot. The walk should be cut into entirely separate blocks not more than 6' in either direction. Expansion joint about every 50'. Expansion joint at intersection of walks.
>
> Curbs: A 4" curb 18" deep of 1-2-4 concrete with a ½" [?] Reinforcing rod at the top and bottom. Outside corners to expansion joints every 25'.
>
> Piers: 3 piers of concrete under every 25' of curb spaced equally.
>
> Driveways: To consists of 3" asphalt blocks on well prepared subgrade, crowned, and expansion joints at curbs. All drainage, water and electric piping to be completed before any paving works, as well as catch basins, hydrants, gate valve manholes and all other subgrade structures.

This drawing also details the existing and planned locations of catch basins, drains, storm sewer, water main, fire hydrants, and manholes (see fig. 82).

Another WPA drawing for "Landscaping in Front of Administration Building" identified the plants and shrubs proposed for use in the landscaping scheme. The number and selection of plants was extensive. A total of 1,067 decorative plants were included on the plan, in addition to 5,100 privet hedge plants to be used along sidewalks and driveways. Among the varieties of plants included in the design were rhododendrons, azaleas, hydrangeas, lilacs, junipers, bridal wreath, and roses. Photographs dating to 1936 and 1938 indicate that this ambitious planting schedule was never implemented. Although the configuration of the landscape design was maintained, the actual shrubs and plants were much reduced in variety and number (see fig. 81).

An important element of the landscape design was the flagpole and sign placed prominently in the center of the front lawn. A sidewalk extended from the central parking area (on a direct axis from the main entry of the building), circled the flagpole, and continued to Flatbush Avenue. This

arrangement served as the primary pedestrian entrance to the site. The flagpole and field sign were placed in the island of grass encircled by the sidewalk.

Much care was taken in the design and construction of the field sign and its housing (see fig. 87). Both a full-size drawing of the sign and a scaled drawing of the sign and its housing were found in the DOD collections at the New York City Municipal Archives. The sign was a rectangular oak plaque with carved lettering spelling out "FLOYD BENNETT AIRPORT" and a carved seal of the city of New York. Incised lettering was to be covered with silver leaf and outlined in black. The sign hung by an iron chain in a small roofed structure measuring 6 feet 8 inches wide, 1 foot 8 inches deep, and 8 feet 5 inches tall. The structure was designed with a brick base 1 foot 8 inches high laid in common bond ("laid up with a little rustic texture"), and two chamfered posts on each side of the suspended sign supporting a pitched slate roof. A 1936 photograph of the sign (fig. 140) indicates that the construction drawings and specifications were closely followed.

A final element of the landscape design planned for the grounds and executed was a lighting system that consisted of floodlights, standard street lights, and lights highlighting the flagpole and field sign. A drawing dated April 14, 1936, includes plans and several details for the "Electrical Layout for Landscaping and Floodlights" (fig. 100). A single floodlight was mounted on the northwest and southwest corners of the roof parapet facing directly west out onto the landscaped grounds of the front of the building. A 300-watt lamp on a wood standard was planned for the northwest and southwest corners of the central parking area. Two blue obstruction lights were to be placed at the top of the flagpole, and two General Electric reflector units were to be included in the construction of the sign housing, lighting the sign from beneath the roof canopy. Finally, two 300-watt street lamps on steel standards are indicated at the entrance to the pedestrian sidewalk at Flatbush Avenue. A photograph dated November 20, 1936, exhibits floodlights, wood-standard streetlights in the parking lot, flagpole hazard lights, and both of the steel-standard street lamps (fig. 139).

## Decorative Program

A third major project carried out by the WPA in the Administration Building was the interior decorative program. The program included murals, stenciling, decorative finishes, and polychrome highlighting of architectural features. Work was begun in 1935. The extensiveness of the program requires a separate discussion of the design and evolution of the decorative program. The discussion is found in a subsequent section, "Decorative Program."

## Radio Transmitter and Receiver

The WPA was also involved in upgrading the technological aspects of the airport, in particular the radio transmitting and receiving capabilities. Four drawings reflect the impact of this work on the Administration Building (figs. 76-79). As illustrated in the drawing labeled "Radio Control Receiving Antennae, Administration Bldg.," several new features were planned for the roof, including four pipe masts 2 inches in diameter and 15 feet tall, connected with guy wires. All four pipe masts were also connected by guy wires to a new 4-foot-high wood post at the top of the control room roof. A photograph dated to 1937 indicates that this work was carried out: the pipe masts are visible in the distance (fig. 141).

The other three drawings detail changes to the interior of the control tower to accommodate new equipment. The drawings are titled: (a) "Radio Facilities in Control Room, Administration Building," March 29, 1935; (b) "Tables for Radio Operating Room in Administration Building, March 28, 1935"; and (c) "Traffic Control Radio Transmitter - Control Tower - Showing Tentative Location & Installation," January 13, 1937. All three drawings are valuable for their illustration of the types and arrangement of furniture proposed for the control room during this period. It is not known if the work was executed, since no photographs of the interior of the control tower predating the 1950s were located.

## Ticket Counter and Restaurant

Smaller undertakings of the WPA noted in the 1935 annual report included the construction of an octagonal ticket counter in the lobby and the installation of a ventilation system in the restaurant. The ticket counter first appears in drawings dating to 1935 and in photographs dating to 1936. The counter was located in the center of the lobby approximately 5 feet from the stairway leading down to the tunnel (Stairway #4). It was octagonal with black counters, faux marble siding, and a black baseboard. The siding was light-hued with dark veining, and matched the wainscot lining the stairway wall from the lobby down to the passenger tunnel. Siding material along the stairway wall and tunnel entrance area is extant but deteriorated. It appears to be quarter-inch composite board overpainted with a faux-marble finish. The faux finish may be machine-generated. The counter was designed with a gated opening on the east send to allow entry to personnel staffing the desk. The counter also featured six knee-high slots measuring 1½ feet wide around its perimeter for checking baggage. A baggage chute was housed in a square section of counter in the middle of the open area behind the counter. Drawers and shelves were also located behind the counters (see figs. 154-157).

No details were found concerning the installation of the ventilation system in the restaurant.

## Miscellaneous WPA Projects

A drawing for a burglar-alarm system illustrates intentions to install a protection system for some of the areas of the Administration Building, and for the external radio-receiving station, radio-beacon station, and radio-transmitting station (fig. 88). The drawing is dated December 30, 1935, and includes a plan of the first floor as well as details of the burglar-alarm relay and signal cabinet. The system consisted of a series of closed-circuit door switches (i.e., when the door opened, the alarm was activated). Whether this system was actually installed is not known.

A WPA drawing was also discovered for the installation of a public-address system. The drawing was approved on December 16, 1936, and included a first-floor plan with the location of loudspeakers, receptacles, and conduits marked on it (fig. 104). Loudspeakers on the first floor were intended for the men's room, the lounge, the lobby, the restaurant, the ladies' room, and the operations office in the tower. Speakers were also intended for the manager's office on the second floor of the tower, and for the control room on the third floor of the tower; additionally, two large speakers were to be installed on the roof of the building. Messages and announcements could be broadcast from microphones in the operations office, the manager's office, and the control room. Conduits were to run under the floor. Whether the public-address system was actually installed is not known. The drawing was labeled "Strictly Schematic."

The DOD annual report from 1937 reported the following:

> Among the numerous jobs completed during the year 1937 under Project No. 65-97-1661 of the Works Progress Administration....
>
> Alterations to tower of Administration Building in order to have a modern airport traffic control tower, necessitating structural changes to the building and new architectural layouts.
>
> Completion of the parking area at the North end of the Field.
>
> Construction of a Field House which is a building used for the sale of refreshments, located North of the Administration Building, at either end of which, entirely cut off from Field House proper, is a comfort station.
>
> Storm sash doors and vestibules for airport buildings are being made.
>
> The reconstruction of both terraces of the Administration Building is under way.[17]

Follow-up documentation for the above-described jobs is scant and is largely limited to the examination of period photographs. Exceptions were found in a drawing detailing some of the storm door and window work, and in a proposal submitted to the Art Commission of the City of New York for the Field House.

Two drawings of the Works Progress Administration for the "Development and Improvement of Airports" are titled "Storm Doors and Storm Sash Location Plan," and "Storm Doors and Storm Sash Details" (fig. 105). They were drawn December 4 and 8, 1936, and approved January 6, 1937. The location plan notes that storm vestibules are present on two main doorways on the east side, and on the main entry on the west side. The detail drawing includes plans of the first, second, and tower levels of the Administration Building, which show the windows to have storm sash. Also included on the sheet are elevations of 12 different sash types to be installed, sash schedules, and vertical sections through a typical storm sash and storm door. It appears that only the openings on the north and east sides of the building were to be outfitted with storm protection. Notes on the drawing include the following details:

> Silent-Nite Storm Sash, Adjuster no. 40. Curtis Cat. Feb. 1, 1936 page 199 or equal
> All material white pine
> Painted - 3 coats
> All sash to be numbered and marked for storage
> All muntin bars to line up with those of existing double hung windows
> All sash and doors to have metal corner angles
> Wood sill pieces to be applied on wood sill and stone sills where needed

[17] DOD Annual Report, 1937, pp. 28-29. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

The proposal for a "field house" was submitted to the Art Commission on March 25, 1936, and approved. The proposal called for

> One story brick Field house with refreshment room - men and women's comfort station on adjunct to building entirely cut off from main structure....Along west side of apron between hangar #5 and Administration Building at Floyd Bennett Field - Brooklyn, N.Y....Designed by Department of Docks per James S. Kenny....18

A list of WPA jobs at Floyd Bennett Field briefly outlines the construction of the field house. It identifies the building as WPA project number 65-97-1661, Job 55, "Concession Stand & 2 Lavatories." Architectural features were listed as

> Walls: Brick and Artificial Stone. Interior Finish: Plaster, Tile Floor. Footings: Reinf. Concre. 4" Floor Slabs. Sash etc.: Steel. Roof: Composition.19

The building contained a cellar, oil-tank enclosure, and first floor. The total construction cost was $60,261. This field house presumably replaced two white snack stands that were located north and south of the Administration Building along the apron. (The snack shacks are visible in several ca.-1935 photographs that were taken from the roof and included in the 1981 HSR.) The field house was torn down by the U.S. Navy in 1964 when a large National Guard hangar was built.[20]

Period photographs taken mostly by the airport photographer, Rudy Arnold, provide visual documentation of some of the changes and alterations to the Administration Building during the 1930s. For example, an August 10, 1935, view of the building looking northwest clearly shows the stairway on the south end of the south terrace under construction (fig. 137). A gap in the formerly solid brick wall has been made and a board has been placed across the new opening. (See figure 130 for a comparative view of the terrace wall as original constructed.) The alteration was mentioned briefly in the 1937 DOD annual report.

A photograph of the female aviator Beryl Markham taken on the steps of the front entry September 6, 1936, provides good details of the storm vestibule installed over the main doorways. The storm vestibules were installed by the WPA in 1936.

A photograph of the WPA-designed and -constructed field sign was taken November 11, 1936 (fig. 140). Several days later a photograph of the whole west front of the building and site was taken that shows the field sign, the completed landscaping, and the two new floodlights installed on the west roof parapet (fig. 139). Another photograph of the west front of the building taken in 1937 at a memorial ceremony for Amelia Earhart (fig. 141) provides better details of the flagpole and the new steel lamp standards with crushed opaque glass globes, decorative finials, and octagonal shafts.

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[18] "Design for a Public Structure - Proposal," March 25, 1936. Floyd Bennett Field Folder, Art Commission of the City of New York files.

[19] Index of Works Progress Administration projects at Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, N.Y., n.d. Mayor F.H. LaGuardia Papers, Box 3365, Folder 3. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

[20] Blakemore, p. 140.

A close-up shot of the anemometer, flood lamp, beacon lamp, and weathervane on top of the control tower illustrates the original configuration of these essential air-traffic control features. The photograph was taken on July 16, 1937 (fig. 142). A photograph the following year (May 6, 1938) shows a different arrangement of control tower features, suggesting that WPA improvements to radio-transmitting and receiving equipment had been executed. Features are no longer contained close together within a metal frame; they are redistributed at wider distances on the tower roof. A new beacon lamp is visible on the west. In addition, the field clock has been moved from its original position on the walkway railing to the cornice of the control tower roof.

The same photograph shows the completed field house for the first time. The field house, located several hundred yards north of the Administration Building, was designed and constructed by the WPA. The field house replaced the concession function of the two white snack shacks that appear in photographs of the field dating to 1935 (e.g., fig. 143).

An aerial view of Howard Hughes' departure for an around-the-world flight (fig. 144) captures several completed WPA projects at the building. The photograph dates to July 14, 1938. Visible improvements include the extensive landscaping, the completed parking areas, the completed stairway at the south end of the southern terrace, the four access hatches in the apron to the passenger tunnel, the new arrangement of the control-tower clock, antennas, etc., and four turntables in the tarmac for aircraft turn-arounds.

## U.S. Navy Alterations

### Changes 1931-1946

### The Need for Repairs

The U.S. Navy was a presence at Floyd Bennett Field as early as the spring of 1931, and it expanded its facilities there in 1937 and 1939.[21] However, it was not until 1939, with the outbreak of war in Europe, that serious consideration was given to turning the entire field over to Navy ownership. Negotiations for the purchase of the airfield began late in 1940; the field was closed to commercial traffic May 26, 1941, and commissioned as the New York Naval Air Station, Floyd Bennett Field, on June 2, 1941. The final deal was consummated on February 18, 1942. The purchase price was $9,750,00.[22]

The new function of the site required both new facilities and improvements of existing facilities. Extensive new construction was begun. According to historian Blakemore, "The field was increased 300 percent in size and the facilities greatly expanded into a sprawling complex."[23]

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[21] Blakemore, pp. 53-54.

[22] Blakemore, pp. 59-60.

[23] Blakemore, p. 63.

The Navy presence involved few major changes to the exterior appearance of the Administration Building, and few structural modifications to the interior. It did involve a good deal of maintenance and general remodeling work, as well as changes in the use of individual rooms. (Changes in the use of individual rooms are extensively documented in Section V ("Use and Function of the Building").

A survey of existing conditions of the facilities at the field was carried out in May 1941 in preparation for Navy occupation. The report of the survey reveals the condition of the structures at the site and the types of work needed to bring the buildings and grounds up to standard. The report includes a survey, a summary, and recommendations. Notes concerning the survey of the Administration Building are also included. Room designations are those found on the original 1930 drawings (figs. 55-57). The current room designations are included in brackets when possible. The report is included in full as Appendix D.

> Administration Building: - Basement.
>
> Restaurant Kitchen [023] - Plastered pier shows signs of leaks. Plaster is peeled and cracked and shows signs of efflorescence. Concrete floor is cracked. Needs paint.
>
> Field Employees Rooms and Timekeeper's Room [025] - Ceiling paint is peeling. Plaster is in poor condition on walls and terra cotta partitions. Composition floors on concrete base are cracked and broken. Services and utilities are not finished through walls and ceilings. Need painting.
>
> South Corridor [022] - Composition floor is cracked and broken. Pipe covering is broken and some is missing. Plastered ceilings show leaks and efflorescence. Ceilings have been patched, but not painted over patches. Need painting.
>
> Field Force Room [027] - Plaster and metal lath are missing over an 18 ft. by 18 ft. area on ceiling and also on a plastered pier enclosing pipes. Exterior plastered walls are cracked and show efflorescence. Composition floors are broken and missing. Some door hardware is missing. Concrete slab where exposed from below has been broken away from pipes. Much unnecessary concrete was broken. Concrete shows some honey-comb. Room is very dirty. Needs painting.
>
> Toilet [028] - Wood window frame broken. Toilet stall doors missing. Plaster ledge over wash basins badly damaged by water. Tile base cracked. Tile floor, plaster walls and ceiling in good condition but need cleaning and painting.
>
> Room under west stairs [032] - Bad honey-comb in stair concrete. Wood doors fit poorly.
>
> Boiler Room [002] - (Not shown on plan.) Plaster is broken and falling away from entrance of boiler exhaust to stack. Room is unfinished except for poorly plastered ceiling.
>
> Large Room, center of basement [001] - Good condition. Needs painting.

Entrance to tunnel on basement level - Plaster walls and ceiling are badly effloresced. What appears to be marble wainscot is merely painted masonite.

Pedestrian Tunnel under apron (not used) - Composition flooring has been under water and is badly warped, cracked and broken. Painted concrete walls and ceilings are marked by mold. Metal doors do not fit.

North Corridor [003] - Composition flooring is broken and missing. At entrance from field, plaster and brickwork are effloresced. Plaster walls need patching. Plaster shows signs of bad leaks. All plaster around window is rotten. Wood window sash and frame are decayed.

Customs Room [013]- Good condition. Needs painting.

Storeroom [005-006] - Concrete floor is cracked. Open holes for pipes in concrete floor. Plaster walls and ceiling need patching.

Transformer and Switch Room [007] - Unfinished. Scratch coat plaster ceiling, brick walls, concrete floor. Good condition.

Express and Freight Room [008-010] - Unfinished. Concrete ceiling on steel beam, brick exterior walls, terra cotta partitions - Good condition. Concrete floor cracked. Unpainted wood partition. Some efflorescence evident on brick walls. Walls show leaks near floor.

Administration Building - First Floor.

Restaurant [117] - Linoleum floor is worn and broken. Wallpaper is cracked, peeling and discolored. Walls show signs of efflorescence. Painted ceiling is cracked and peeling. Interior window frame and sash are worn and scarred. Ornamental plaster molding is chipped and broken. Linoleum flooring is rotten at edges. Some door hardware is missing. This room is very dirty and has a disagreeable sour smell.

Kitchen [115] - Concrete floor is cracked. Paint is peeling on plastered wall. Plaster needs patching. This room is very dirty.

Men's toilet [118] - Condition fair. Needs painting.

Newsstand [123] - Good condition.

Corridors and lobby [101] - Linoleum floor, marble wainscot, scored plaster walls, plaster ceiling, metal door frames, wood doors. Good condition. Needs painting.

Manager's Office [113] - Cracks in plaster walls near corners. Wood doors and trim worn and scarred. Some hardware missing. Linoleum cracked. Plaster broken. Evidence of leaks and efflorescence in ceiling.

Telephone Room [102] - Good condition.

Telegraph Room (used as barber shop) [103] - Chimney apparently in bad condition. Walls covered with plywood and painted. Shows signs of leaking smoke. Plaster molding broken. Door check missing.

Barber Shop [107] - Plaster shows leaks in ceiling. Holes in plastered wall. Wood trim is badly scarred.

Storeroom (formerly Men's Toilet) [106] - Tile floor and wainscot. Plastered walls and ceiling. Wood doors and windows. Good condition. Needs paint.

Radio Room and Press Room [104-105] - Plastered walls and ceiling. Linoleum floor. Good condition. Needs painting.

Stairs [#1] - Concrete floors cracked. Metal stairs in good condition.

Lounge [110]- Interior wood trim scarred. Door hardware missing. Leather upholstered lounge furniture appears to be built-in. Papered walls. Linoleum floors. Plastered ceilings, ornamental plaster moldings. Good condition.

Baggage Room [111] - Plaster cracked under windows. Needs painting.

Post Office [108-109] - Linoleum floor cracked and broken.

Women's toilet and rest room [122] - Tile floor and wainscot. Plaster walls and ceiling. General condition good. Needs painting.

Doctor's office (Dept. of Commerce) [120-121] - Light fixtures missing. Holes in plaster. Walls cracked. Wood window trim warped.

Administration Building - All rooms and Corridors on Second Floor:

Plaster walls and ceilings show many signs of leaks, particularly around chimney. Wood window frames warped and checked, and in some cases decayed. Many door checks and other hardware missing. Bad cracks in plaster at door in corridor.

City Officials Office [212] - Linoleum floor, plaster walls and ceilings. Condition excellent. Newly painted.

Weather Room - Third Floor [301] - Plaster walls broken and cracked due to leaks and settlement. Plaster repair job unfinished. Electrician working on controls.

Control Tower [401] - In process of remodeling. Electricians and carpenters changing controls.

Control Tower Exterior - Sheet metal and glass. conditions good. Needs paint. Roof good.

Administration Building Roof - Flat tile roof. Seems to be poorly pitched. Water can stand in pools near parapet. Parapet brickwork needs painting. Exterior woodwork on storm entrances is rotten in some places. All need paint. Copper flashing has been patched and sealed with pitch. Tile roof joints have been patched and painted with tar and pitch in an apparent attempt to combat leaks. Seems to be unsuccessful.

> Grounds Around Administration Building - Concrete roadways and sidewalks in good condition. Occasional broken places in concrete curbs. Bituminous black paving in poor grade alignment. Front ground landscaped with grass, shrubs, hedges. Condition good. Parking areas surfaced with fine crushed stone. Fair grade alignment.
>
> Administration Building, Exterior (from ground level) - Many ornamental pre-cast white cement blocks are cracked and checked. Joints need pointing. Some blocks heaved by frost. Paint cracked and peeling on exterior wood doors. Some doors do not fit. Some hardware is missing. Areaway concrete cracked. Stucco front cracked and discolored. Granite slab stairs need pointing. Exterior steel lintels rusting. Exterior wood trim is badly weathered, cracked, checked, warped and palled away from joints. In some cases decayed.[24]

From this 1941 conditions survey it is clear that the building suffered from a number of problems caused by water infiltration, settlement cracks, wear and tear, and deferred maintenance. The extent of the reported deterioration is surprising, considering that the building was only 10 years old. However, the overall exterior and interior appearance must have been rather shabby. Recommendations in the report focused on repairing the identified problem areas, and included substantial cleaning, painting, plastering, patching, and replacing missing hardware and fixtures. In addition, it was recommended that the roof be rebuilt, the exterior brickwork be pointed and patched, and decayed wood windows and doors be replaced. Whether all of the recommended measures were actively pursued is not known. However, a substantial rehabilitation of the building was clearly felt to be necessary before the Navy occupied the structure.

## Documented Alterations

Specific work by the Navy on the building for which documentation exists includes the following changes. A 60- by 73-foot single-story frame extension was added to the north end of the building. It was connected by a narrow 10-foot-wide corridor leading to the first floor. The extension contained 11 separate rooms and was intended for communications activities.[25] A drawing dated February 13, 1943, for the heating and plumbing of the extension suggests that the addition was under or near construction at this time (fig. 111). The extension appears in several photographs dating to the late 1940s. The extension was demolished in 1965.

The second major alteration to the building undertaken by the Navy was the reconstruction of the control tower. A drawing dated February 15, 1943, titled "Control Tower on Administration Building, Temporary Construction Enclosure" seems to be plans for constructing an enclosure around the original control tower in order to make the alterations. Changes would be made within the enclosure. The enclosure was to be built up on the existing railing and extend above the existing cornice.

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[24] "Report of survey of existing condition of facilities at Floyd Bennett Field," May 13, 1941. Headquarters of the Commandant, Third Naval District. (National Archives Record Group 72, Records of the Bureau of Aeronautics, Box 3898, Vol. 5).

[25] Blakemore, p. 164.

Three sheets of drawings dated March 5, 1943, are titled "Alterations to Existing Control Tower" and "Administration Building Control Tower, Construction Details for Glass Enclosure" (figs. 112-114). These drawings represent the work carried out on the tower.

The drawings show: an elevation of the existing tower, and an elevation of the tower with the alterations; the existing floor plan and the new floor plan; the existing railing and the new railing (never installed); a section of the new windows with the original configuration dotted in; and details of the new windows' hinge mechanism. In essence, the new construction consisted of installing new windows between the original metal-covered wood sill of the existing windows and the wood fascia of the original roof. The new steel sash, fitted with quarter-inch plate glass panels, canted out from the top of the tower at a 45-degree angle and from the bottom at an angle of 30 degrees. The upper glass panels measured 5 by 2 feet and the lower glass panels measured 4 by 5 feet. The new configuration of the control tower allowed for a much wider and unobstructed view of incoming and outgoing planes. The changes to the control tower are obvious in all photographs postdating 1943 (figs. 148-150). In addition, new electronic equipment was installed, including radar and radio and communications equipment.[26] The extent of the technological improvements is evident from the many new antennas, wires, and related equipment visible on the roof of the building.

## Apparent Alterations - Exterior

Observing the building in period photographs reveals smaller changes made to the exterior and grounds, including the following:

- The lettering on the cornice entablatures was changed to read "Naval Air Station, Floyd Bennett Field, New York" on the east, and "Naval Air Station, Floyd Bennett Field" on the west. As determined from photographs, lettering changes were made between 1941-1943. A photograph taken in 1941 shows the original lettering intact on the west side. A photograph dated ca. 1942, during Navy occupation but before the control tower was changed, shows the most of the lettering removed from the east cornice (fig. 147). This suggests that the lettering was being changed at this time. In addition, a brochure dated November 25, 1943, features a full view of the west, front of the building with the new lettering in place (fig. 148).

- Glass block was installed in first-floor windows 1-25 and 1-24 on the south end and window 1-23 on the east side by October 13, 1946.

- A wire-link fence was in place across the west boundary of the site along Flatbush Avenue by ca. 1945 (see fig. 148). Access to the Administration Building by the various sidewalks of the WPA landscaping on the west was therefore curtailed.

[26] Blakemore, p.164.

## Apparent Alterations - Interior

Alterations to the interior were determined from the examination of floor plans. Two plans of the building survive from the early years of Navy occupation. Comparing them to original 1930 plans, and to each other, reveal a number of interior alterations made to the plan of the building. The plans date to ca. 1942 and 1946 (figs. 107-110 and 155-118). Alterations that are currently extant are preceded by an asterisk (*).

### *Basement*

1931 DOD

*A new boiler room (Room 002) was created in the northwest corner of the center hall.

1937 WPA

*The passenger-loading tunnel running due east from the center of the east side of the building was constructed.

*A central stairway [Stairway #4] was added at the east side of the building, descending from the first-floor lobby down to the passenger tunnel.

*A hallway was added at the bottom of Stairway #4 leading into the tunnel; this required the removal of an original bearing wall.

*The elevator shaft and elevator machine rooms were converted to an entryway (Room 017) to the tunnel from the basement rooms, and to storage space (Room 020).

By 1942

No basement plan was contained in this set of drawings

By 1946

*The metal rail and gate at the northwest stairway (Stairway #2) were removed.

*The original doorway on the south wall (east corner) of Room 004 was filled in.

*The wall between Rooms 005 and 006 was added.

*Doorway B-6 from the north corridor into the newly created Room 005 was added.

*The counters and shelving were removed from the south and east walls of Room 005.

*Doorway B-10 from the north corridor into Room 009 was added.

*A new partition wall was built along the east side of Rooms 009 and 013, creating new spaces under north terrace.

*Doorway B-15 was created in the original wall between Rooms 011 and 012.

*Room 021 was created and a bathroom installed.

*The south end of the south corridor (Room 023) was partitioned off to create a large storage closet, currently Room 026.

*The lockers in Rooms 025 and 027 were removed.

*The "Timekeeper's Room" in the northeast corner of Room 025 was removed.

*The bathroom (Room 028) was divided into a men's and a women's room.

Changes made 1941-1946, no longer extant:

The whole center hall (Room 001) was transformed with partition walls into a Navy Air Transport Service (NATS) office, NATS waiting room, and Red Cross office.

*First Floor*

1937 WPA

An octagonal baggage counter was built at the east side of lobby.

A stairway [Stairway #4] down to the passenger tunnel was constructed in the lobby at the center of the east side.

By ca. 1942

*The octagonal baggage check-in counter was removed from the lobby (Room 101).

*The stairway (#4) from the lobby (Room 101) to the passenger tunnel appears to be closed off, with an office on top.

A rest room for Room 103 was carved out of the southwest corner of Room 105, with a doorway [D 1-7] cut through the west end of Room 105's southern partition wall. (Doorway 1-7 is still extant.)

*Room 106 was changed from a men's room to an office.

The wall between Rooms 108 and 109 was changed from a wall with windows to a solid wall. The doorway between the two rooms was moved from the north end to the south end of the partition.

Room 110 was subdivided by the construction of a partition wall with a communicating doorway, spanning east-west between piers.

Room 111 was eliminated.

The east partition wall of Room 112 was removed to combine Rooms 112 and 113.

*In Room 112 and 113, the doorways on the north and south walls of the former manager's office leading the terraces were converted to windows W1-15 and W1-19.

Rooms 118, 119, 120 were created out of two original (1930) rectangular rooms, to form one large office with a "head" in the southeast corner and two closet spaces in the northeast corner. The bathroom was entered from the hall only. The office was entered between the closets in northeast corner.

Room 121, originally a women's toilet, had all its fixtures removed. Much of original southern partition was removed, and a new partition was built approximately 4 feet south of the original (no longer lined up with piers).

By 1946

The stairway from the lobby (Room 101) to the passenger tunnel is indicated, but a counter runs across it.

A partition running between the north and south columns on the west side of the lobby (Room 101) blocks off open access to the lobby. The entrance into the lobby space is now through new, narrow doorways at the ends of the partition.

*A new doorway was cut in the west side of the partition wall between Rooms 106 and 107.

*The original anteroom of Room 107 was removed.

*Doorway D 1-19 between Rooms 108 and 109 was moved from the south end of the partition to its center.

*A washroom and closet were created in the southwest corner of Room 108.

*The ca.-1942 partition in Room 110 was removed, creating one big room again.

Original doorways from Rooms 112 and 113 to the terrace [later converted to windows W1-15 and W1-19] are again indicated as doorways. (This may be an error, since the openings remain as windows today.)

*The doorway from Room 117 to the terrace was converted to window W 1-22.

*The partition wall between Rooms 120 and 121 seems to be back in its original location, and is keyed as being of terra cotta. (Perhaps the wall was not changed as indicated on the ca.-1942 drawing.)

The extension on the north end of the building is indicated for the first time.

*Second Floor*

WPA ca. 1937

*In Room 212, a bathroom was built in the former elevator shaft space. The color and type of tile matches the materials used in the passenger tunnel.

By ca. 1942

The area remained basically unchanged.

*Doorway D 2-20 was made in the terra-cotta partition wall between Rooms 209 and 210.

*Room 211 was added.

*The doorway between Room 214 and 215 was filled in.

A doorway was created in the terra cotta partition wall between Rooms 215 and 216. (It is now infilled.)

*Doorway D 2-50 was made in the terra-cotta partition wall between Rooms 220 and 221.

By 1946

*Doorway D 2-43 was made in the terra cotta partition wall between Rooms 218 and 219.

*A closet and a bathroom are shown in Room 212 for the first time on any drawing, but their materials indicate that they were actually added ca. 1937, as described above.

*Third Floor - Tower*

By1942

The elevator shafts were transformed to a storage closet or office.

By 1946

*The stairway up to the control tower was relocated and changed from a spiral staircase to a straight staircase.

*A new partition configuration created two offices and a closet along the west wall. A closet was built in the former location of the stairway to the control room. [This is partially extant.]

A doorway was added at the bottom of the stairway accessing Room 301.

Doorway D 3-1 was built in the southwest corner of the room facing the stairway down to the second floor. The former access doorway in the west wall was filled in.

Weather vestibules were added to the doorways at the north and south ends accessing the roof.

By 1993

The offices in the northwest corner of Room 301 were removed.

The weather vestibules at the doorways to the roof were removed. (These were removed ca. 1959, as explained subsequently.)

***Control Room - Fourth Level, Tower***

By ca. 1942

*The space remained unchanged, except that no elevator shafts were installed along the west wall.

By 1946

*A new window configuration was in place.

*The stairway was altered from a half-spiral stair to a straight-run stair, which is still extant in the southwest corner.

*The doorway from Room 401 to the exterior walkway was moved from the southeast to the northwest corner of the room.

A set of preliminary plans for the post-war use of the Administration Building was developed by the Long Island engineering firm of Madigan-Hyland on January 20, 1947. The proposed alterations to the building were extensive and clearly related to returning the airfield to commercial use. The set of preliminary plans as well as a schematic sketch of the east elevation of the building are included in the "Historic Drawings" section of this report as figures 119-122. None of the proposed alterations were made, and the field remained the property of the U.S. Navy.

## Changes 1946 – 1969

During the 1950s, Floyd Bennett Field, now an air reserve training station for the U.S. Navy, experienced reduced activity. The old hangar row was largely evacuated. As historian Blakemore reports, "They [the Navy] continued to use the Administration Building but centered their activities on the southern and eastern sides of the field."[27]

[27] Blakemore, p.72.

Two drawings dating to the 1950s reveal important changes to the Administration Building by the Navy during this decade. The first job with surviving documentation is an effort to "weather proof" the building. The construction drawing is dated December 23, 1954 (fig. 123). The most dramatic element of the project was the replacement of all of the original double-hung wood windows with the current steel casements. Original exterior doors were also replaced. Notes on the drawing specify the work to be done as follows:

1. Point up brickwork, masonry and make necessary repairs to outside walls.

2. Spray entire outside of Building with transparent water-proofing material.

3. Remove all windows & exterior doors and replace with steel; windows to be architectural type projected windows. Doors to be 2 panel type with top panel of clear ¼" wire glass.

4. All sills, jambs, & heads to be weatherstripped.

5. Caulk completely around all work at masonry and metal.

6. Glass blocks to be installed on Field side as indicated. [W1-12, W1-11]

7. Brick-up door to sill line as indicated [now W1-10]

Windows and doors were replaced as specified. Glass blocks were installed in the side panels of W 1-12 and W 1-11. The glass blocks installed in W 1-6 on the east elevation in the 1940s were removed and replaced with the new steel casement window. The glass blocks installed in W 1-7 and W 1-6 in the 1940s were retained. The post-office loading doorway, currently W 1-10, was bricked up to the sill to create a window. Presumably the specified caulking, weather stripping, and sealing were also carried out.

However, by 1959 there were once again concerns with water infiltration. A drawing dated March 23, 1959, addresses problems of leakage at the windows and doorways, the roof, and the terraces. The drawing is titled "Administration Building, Weatherproof Bldg. No. 1" (fig. 124). Notes on the drawings present the following instructions:

windows: Re-caulk all metal windows and frames.

Remove all loose existing putty on all windows and re-putty as required.

Paint all exterior steel windows, frames and trim . . . with two coats of paint.

All window ventilators in steel windows to be straightened and adjusted for proper operation and made watertight.

doors: Re-fit all metal exterior doors. Replace existing thresholds with aluminum thresholds.

Paint...all exterior doors and trim with two coats of paint.

Install new bolts, locks and door closers on doors marked X. [D 1-1, D 1-2, D 1-?, B-4, B-25, D 1-east, D 1-east, D 1-east]

A detail section on the sheet illustrates the installation of new drains and the resurfacing of the terraces as follows:

Remove and reset existing drains, install new 4" copper flange on all terrace drains.

Remove existing caulking and caulk with lead wool - at juncture of balustrade base and terrace wall.

New pre-molded expansion joints filled with asphalt filler.

New copper flashing at walls.

Repair all cracks in stairs and wall at terrace.

In addition, a new floor surface was to be laid on top of the existing concrete slab of the terraces. The new surface was composed of a new four-ply membrane covered with a 2-inch-thick concrete finish. The new terrace floor was to pitch 2 inches to existing drains along the east side.

Major work was outlined on the drawing for the roof of the building. Roof features included on the drawing are drains, antenna poles, a flagpole, the central skylight, stairways flanking the control tower, stairway skylights, coping on the perimeter parapet walls, a scuttle hatch at the north and south opening into the second-floor corridor below, and an air-cooling unit at the south side of the control tower. Instructions for roof work were noted as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Roof surface: | Remove existing gravel and apply 2 layers of 15" roofing felt and gravel. |
| Drains, antennas, flagpole: | To remain unchanged |
| Parapet walls: | Caulk all joints in existing pre-cast concrete coping.<br>Existing copper flashing at walls to remain. |
| Central skylight: | Re-putty glass in skylight.<br>Re-caulk skylight frame.<br>Solder ribs where necessary. |
| Air cooling unit: | Remove existing air cooling unit including I-beams on roof and reinstall unit & reset beams after roofing is completed. |
| | Provide new 1-½ inch copper pipe drain from air cooling unit to nearest roof drain. |
| Stairways: | Vestibules protecting doors to stairs to be removed. Existing double doors and frames to be removed and new 3'-0" x 6'-0" hollow metal doors and frames installed. Provide new concrete curb with aluminum saddle for each door. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Provide new roofing in areas where vestibules are removed of sufficient number of plys to finish on same level at completion. |
| | Remove plastic rock coating and quarry tile floor and cove base on existing concrete slab [in vestibule areas]. Apply 4 ply membrane waterproofing over slab and approximately 2" of concrete finish with waterproofing compound and wire fabric. |
| | Apply asphaltic coating on metal surfaces [stairway roofs]. |
| | Re-caulk stairwell enclosures. |
| Stairway skylights: | Re-caulk skylight frames. Re-putty glass in skylight. Solder ribs where necessary. |
| Scuttles: | Existing scuttles to remain. Remove existing counter-weights. Remove existing pipe rail. |

Comparison of the 1954 and 1959 drawings shows that W 1-11 and W 1-12 were created from former double doorways sometime between 1954 and 1959. This brought the arrangement of doorways and windows on the east elevation to its present form.

Only one other piece of documentation concerning changes to the building during the U.S. Navy presence was discovered. A drawing dated September 23, 1966, detailed the replacement of an air-conditioning unit in the control tower. The old equipment was to be removed and a new air-conditioning unit, condenser tower, return and supply air ducts, and summer-winter thermostat installed. The new equipment was to be centralized in the radio-receiving room (Room 301), and was to service this room and the control tower room through vents. Air ducts from this system are still visible in Room 301.

No further Navy-generated drawings or work orders were discovered. However, a set of 1978 construction drawings includes floor plans of the basement and first floor (figs. 125-126). Because the Navy and the Coast Guard vacated the Administration Building ca. 1969, it remained empty and unused throughout the 1970s. Thus, the 1978 floor plans ought to reflect the interior as it appeared in the last years of Navy use.

A comparison of the 1946 floor plans described previously and the 1978 floor plans indicates that some very slight alterations and additions were made to the structure between 1946 and ca. 1969. A list of changes identified in the comparison follows. Changes that are currently extant are marked with an asterisk (*).

***Basement***

*Room 001 – The Red Cross office was removed; all NATS partitioning was removed.

Room 005 - Two east-west counters were installed. (They have since been removed.)

Two doorways were created in the partition wall between Rooms 005 and 006. (They are now infilled.)

A new partition with doorway was built, dividing a previously single space into Rooms 008 and 010. (This has since been removed.)

*The west half of Room 024 was partitioned off to create a darkroom.

Room 025 was divided by partitions installed in a cross-shape into four separate rooms; two small square rooms on the east and two long rectangular rooms on the west. (Only the partition in the southeast corner remains.)

*The current configuration of Rooms 015, 015a, and 016 was created by the installation of vertical-board partitions in a previously single space.

***First Floor***

The whole central area of the lobby (Room 101) was partitioned into four north/south rectangular office spaces. (The partitions have since been removed.)

The former partition in the southwest corner of Room 105, which created a rest room for the telephone operators, was removed.

*A partition wall was installed in Room 107, dividing the room in half and creating two smaller offices.

*All doorways along the east wall of Room 110 were converted to windows [W 1-10, W 1-11, and W 1-12].

*Room 113 was created with a partition.

*The doorway from Room 116 to the hall was infilled.

*A partition was built at the north end of Room 117; it extended to the west wall, blocking off the northwest corner of the room and creating a separate little room (Room 116).

Wood-stud partitions running east-west were installed in Room 117 between the piers on either side of the double doorways, creating three offices out of one room. (These partitions have since been removed.)

*A opening was cut through the original partition wall that ran north-south dividing Room 122 into two rooms. (This entire partition has since been removed.)

## National Park Service Alterations

### Changes 1972-1994

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), received Floyd Bennett Field from the Department of Defense on October 27, 1972. The most recent changes to the building have been made by the NPS staff of Gateway National Recreation Area (NRA). The Administration Building was unoccupied at the time of the transfer and remained so for several years. Photographs taken in 1979, and included in the 1981 HSR, reveal extremely dilapidated conditions for the interior and exterior of the building.

A list of the known work on, and proposed projects for, the Administration Building by the NPS is included below and was collected from the files of Gateway NRA, Floyd Bennett Field Unit.

**1978** Castro-Blanco construction drawings for "Repairs and Partial Restoration of the Administration Building."

> 18 sheets - Title Sheet, Basement Plan, First Floor Plan, Roof Plans, North & South Elevations & Notes, East & West Elevations, Roof Details, Deck & Miscellaneous Details, Plumbing-Basement, Plumbing-First Floor, Plumbing-Second Floor, Plumbing-Roof, Heating & Ventilation-Basement, Heating & Ventilation-First Floor, Heating & Ventilation-Second Floor, Heating & Ventilation-Roof, Electric Parts, Electric Work Notes.

Recommended repointing exterior walls. Also recommended removing the clock from the control tower, restoring it, and rehanging it. (Clock disappears by 1979 and has not been located.)

October Photograph of the west elevation in the 1981 HSR shows that the copper letters on entablature and bronze eagle above front doorway were no longer in place.

Changes made to accommodate a new PABX switchboard; location not known.

**1979** Photographs show five of the original lights still on the east parapet, and the flagpole in place on the west side of the roof over the entrance. All are now missing.

Photographs show no clock on the control tower.

**1981**

March 20 Triple X form for the rehabilitation of planned public areas of the building. Work is described as follows:

> Remove all rubble from basement.
>
> Remove flaking paint from walls and repaint with as historic colors as possible.
>
> Patch plaster where necessary.

Rehabilitate electrical and plumbing systems to usable condition.

Seal off closed-off areas to public with use of temporary doors and partitions.

Remove dilapidated partition at west side of the lobby.

Paint over intricately detailed paint design in atrium area in such a way as to preserve as much as possible of the decorative designs underneath; to be guided by the advice of conservator Frank Matero.

Replace individual panes of broken stained glass in skylight.

Remove loose vandalized equipment in control tower and store for future evaluation (currently missing)

April 29 A work order for replacement of seven plate-glass windows in control tower carried out.

June 20 Dedication of the building as the Ryan Visitors' Center.

Ryan Center plaque put up inside main entrance on north wall for dedication.

Drop ceiling installed in Room 117. Work order.

**1982** News release, exhibits for lobby in place or initiated.

**1984** Tonetti Associates conducted a conditions survey of the exterior of the building. Report titled "Facade Investigation, Visitors Center, Floyd Bennett Field." Found extensive rust on all steel elements, missing cast stone, deteriorated cast stone, defective mortar joints, structural cracks, stone displacement, and defective flashing.

Fire-suppression system installed as part of a contract for all of Floyd Bennett Field.

Selective lintel and window replacement. Plans called for the selective replacement of second-floor window lintels on the north side, and on the north half of the east and west sides, of the building. Work by Gateway NRA Professional Services.

Masonry Repairs - Phase I. This contract included the repairs to the entablature and parapet walls. Corner areas of the parapet as well as the west portico section were dismantled and rebuilt. Remaining areas of the parapet were repointed. Cast-stone joints were raked and caulked. Several entablature stones were replaced. Previously patched stone was repatched.

**1980s** Miscellaneous plaster patching and repairs carried out on many walls as practice for youth job corps over the years.

**Ca. 1990** Handicap bathroom installed in Room 119.

Painting campaign in all public areas, including scraping and painting the lobby.

Wood-grain vinyl tile floor installed in the lobby.

Carpet installed in conference rooms and the lobby.

A projection room (Room 111) was added.

**1992** New metal doors were installed at all doorways, including those to the roof.

**1994** Remodeling of the former Coast Guard room in the basement, including the partitioning of space and the alteration of some doorways (Rooms 008, 009, and 010.)

Partitioning in Room 105, creating Room 104.

Partition remodeling in Room 013.

Broken glass replaced in windows.

# DECORATIVE PROGRAM

## Overview

The original drawings for the Administration Building include sketches and notes concerning a proposed interior decorative program. The program was to include the use of decorative painted finishes, decorative materials, molded plaster ornament, and the installation of fine artwork. The bulk of the decorative work was restricted to the lobby areas. Decorative elements for the lobby are specified on the 1930 drawings as follows. (Asterisks indicate which elements of the original decorative program were actually executed.)

*Eight mural paintings on the gallery face showing the development of aviation

*Stencils in color showing the development of travel: a stagecoach, a steam railroad, an autobus, a sailing ship, a steamship, a dirigible, and an airplane

*Molded plaster ornament on gallery panels and atrium pier capitals

*Gilded plaster leaf ornament

*Leaded, colored glass ceiling light

*Ornamental bronze stairway railing [Stairways #2 and #4]

*Imitation Caen-stone finish on upper walls with quarter-inch white joints (first and second floors)

*Lower walls - buff marble wainscot and wainscot cap with black marble baseboard

*Linoleum floor with pattern of an eight-point star contained in a circle at the first-floor west entrance (suggestive of a compass rose)

Decorative elements for the north and south corridors on the first floor were indicated as follows:

Plaster painted light buff with gray border and green stripe

*Buff marble wainscot and wainscot cap with black marble baseboard

Decorative elements for the north and south corridors on the second floor were as follows:

Light buff plaster walls (upper)

*Gray plaster wainscot with black marble baseboard

*Birch doorway trim and wainscot cap

Additional areas identified in original drawings for decorative treatments were the "Restaurant" (Room 117) and the "Lounge" (Room 110). Room 117 was to be finished with an ornamental plaster ceiling and entablature. Walls were to be covered with a "Fabrikoid wallcovering" and a black marble baseboard. Room 110 was to feature an ornate "Adamesque" fireplace with paneled overmantel on the north wall. "Fabrikoid wall covering" was also planned for this room.

Most of the decorative work noted on the original drawings and listed above (except for wainscots and baseboards) was not included in the first contract for the construction of the building. Unfortunately, the contracts for the decorative work have not been found by this or earlier research efforts. However, by examining extant conditions, and by using historic photographs, DOD annual reports, WPA documents, New York City Art Commission papers, and a 1981 report by architectural conservator Frank Matero,[28] it has been possible to reconstruct the development and execution of the decorative elements of the interior. It appears that the executed decorative program was both more and less than specified on the original drawings.

Items appearing in the proposed 1930 decoration of the lobby and carried out included molded plaster ornament on the gallery panels and atrium pier capitals. The gallery sides feature raised strips separating the plaster plane into five sections. The middle and end sections were decorated with pairs of raised rectangles creating a paneled effect. The two "unpaneled" sections were left smooth for the installation of murals. A raised course of alternating square and curved shapes runs along the top and bottom of the gallery to form a type of dentil course. Dentil courses were part of the original design. Winged plaster shields with the raised letters "N.Y.C." were also part of the original design and are extant today, one at the top center of each side of the gallery.

Pier capitals at the second-floor level were decorated with molded plaster ornament closely resembling that depicted on the 1930 drawing. Likewise, the gilded plaster leaf ornament at the ceiling cornice, the leaded colored glass ceiling light, and the ornamental stairway balustrades with lattice work and bronze rosettes were also installed. All of these elements are extant today.

The imitation Caen-stone finish with quarter-inch white joints called for in the upper zones of the walls of the first and second floors in and around the lobby was executed. The lower walls were covered with buff marble wainscots and wainscot caps, and black marble baseboards as specified.

The linoleum floor pattern shown at the west entrance in the 1930 drawings, which included a checkerboard field and a star within a circle, is visible in at least one period photograph (fig. 169).

Several items from original drawings were carried out, but in a modified version. For example, mural paintings showing the development of aviation were indeed commissioned, but it was no longer intended that they should fit in the eight smooth gallery panels facing the lobby. Instead, four canvases 30 feet long were painted to span the entire length of each side of the gallery (covering all the plasterwork).

[28] Frank Matero, "Emergency Documentation/Analysis of the Interior Decorative Finishes of the Lobby-Waiting Room of the Administration Building, Floyd Bennett Field," February 7, 1981. (Copy of report located at the NCRC, Lowell, MA.

Likewise, color illustrations of the development of travel were in fact executed around the second-floor balcony frieze, but not as stencils. Instead, a series of seven canvases were painted and glued on the plaster frieze. The seven canvases were repeated on each side of the atrium in the order depicted on the 1930 drawing: stagecoach, steam railroad, autobus, sailing ship, steamship, dirigible, and airplane. Canvases were separated by a repeating stenciled motif not included in original drawings. (Six of the canvases survive today in the curatorial collections of Gateway NRA.)

In the first-floor corridors, the buff marble wainscot and wainscot cap and the black marble baseboard were introduced as specified. However, the painted plaster (light buff with gray border and green stripe) of the upper wall zones dictated on the 1930 drawings was not introduced. Instead, the imitation Caen-stone wall treatment was extended into the corridors. (Slight variations of the imitation Caen-stone application are found in corridors, as will be explained subsequently.)

In the second-floor corridors, the painted plaster wainscot, black marble baseboards, and birch wood trim were executed, but the buff plaster treatment of the walls above the wainscot was not realized. As in the first-floor corridors, an imitation Caen-stone wall treatment was extended from the second-floor lobby areas into the second-floor corridors. (As in first-floor corridors, here also was found a slight variation in the application of the imitation Caen stone.) Therefore, in both the first -and second-floor corridors, a fancier wall treatment than originally intended was executed.

Decorative details specified for Room 110 and 117 were largely unrealized. Evidence suggests that no fireplace was ever installed in Room 110, and that no ornamental plaster ceiling was ever installed in Room 117. However, the ornamental plaster entablature around the perimeter of Room 117 was executed. It survives today in the former northwest corner of the room that is now partitioned off and designated as Room 116. The entablature consists of a molded cornice, blank frieze, and an architrave featuring a crenelated molding above a repeating design of floral rosettes and decorated triglyphs (see fig. 207 and Appendix C, "Molding Profiles and Ornamental Plaster").

A photograph dated 1938 depicts a textured and patterned wall covering on the walls of Room 117 (fig. 161). It is possible that this represents the "Fabrikoid" wall covering noted on the 1930 drawing.

Items not on the original drawings but which became an integral part of the interior treatment of the lobby included various stencils on the ceilings, soffits, gallery panels, and balcony frieze; polychroming of ornamental plaster; and the inclusion of an oil portrait of Floyd Bennett in the center panel of the east gallery face of the balcony.

Available documentation suggests the following chronology of the decorative program.

Ca. 1931

Marble wainscot and baseboards in place

Staircase balustrades and rails installed

Linoleum floors laid

By October 1935

Imitation Caen stone in place but unfinished

"Development of Transportation" canvases complete and newly installed on second-floor balcony frieze

Simple triglyphs painted between transportation canvases (design later changed)

Stencil on second-floor balcony soffit lightly sketched in (design later changed)

Molded plaster dentil courses, panel frames, and borders in place on balcony face

Ornamental plaster at pier capitals and ceiling cornice in place and primed for painting

Photograph of Floyd Bennett unveiled and hung on the center panel of the east face of the balcony

Ornate Art Deco lamps in place on balcony rail, two on each side of the lobby

By 1937

Caen-stone stucco of stairwells and second-floor walls exhibits three-dimensional glazed finish

Caen-stone stucco of lobby walls painted white or cream

Clock face painted black

Ornamental balustrade and railing at stairway down to tunnel newly installed

Balcony panels exhibit painted enframements with stenciled corners (east only)

Raised plaster panel dividers on balcony face (east only) painted a contrasting color to the background field

Photograph of Floyd Bennett still hanging in center of east balcony panel

Molded plaster dentil course of balcony face (north, south, east and west) polychromed

Winged NYC shields painted red, white, and blue with gilt wings

Stencils between transportation murals on balcony frieze complete

Pier capitals polychromed

Ceiling cornice above balcony frieze gilded

Ceiling stenciled around outer perimeter and around perimeter of skylight

Ornamental plaster entablature in Room 117 executed and polychromed

By October 1939

Decorative wrought-iron barricade in place across stairwell to tunnel (Stairway #4)

Stenciled geometric designs around recessed light fixtures in second-floor lobby corridors in place

Oil portrait of Floyd Bennett unveiled and hung in center panel of east balcony

Caen-stone stucco of lobby walls **still** just painted a uniform light color

Caen-stone stucco of second-floor lobby walls and pier columns at the second level **still** painted with three-dimensional glaze finish

October 1939 - July 1940

Floyd Bennett portrait moved from second-floor balcony panel to the first floor above the stairway to the tunnel

By July 1940

Murals complete. Mythology mural had been hung along east balcony face but being removed at this time

Floyd Bennett portrait rehung in original location on east balcony face after removal of mural

All other decorative elements unchanged

Still no stenciling visible on first-floor balcony soffits

Still no glaze finish on first-floor imitation Caen-stone stucco in the lobby

The decorative work carried out from 1935 to 1940 was under the direction of the WPA. An index of WPA work at Floyd Bennett Field includes WPA Job #84 for $5,385 worth of "Decorations" in the Administration Building. Despite a search through WPA records at the National Archives, information detailing the specifics of Job #84 was never found. It is assumed that Job #84 included most of the painted finishes, as well as the finishing work on plaster and stucco surfaces.

Several proposals for works of art at Floyd Bennett Field were submitted to the Art Commission of the City of New York. They were WPA-sponsored federal projects under the Federal Art Project. Two proposals were found in the commission files for the oil-on-canvas aviation murals to be hung in the lobby of the Administration Building. The mural proposal was received and approved in the spring of 1936; the proposal for the installation of the murals was received and approved a year later in March 1937.[29] The proposals are discussed more fully subsequently.

[29] "Floyd Bennett Airport - Brooklyn, Murals in Administration Building." Proposal for a work of art submitted

No interior photographs were located post-dating 1940, except for photographs taken in 1981 documenting the condition of the lobby decoration[30] (see the figures in Appendix A). It is therefore difficult to trace any additions or alterations to the decorative program, particularly during the years that the U.S. Navy occupied the building. The 1981 photographs show the following conditions in the lobby areas:

- Shadow-glazed imitation Caen-stone stucco on stairwells and second-floor walls and piers–overpainted and dilapidated
- Imitation Caen-stone stucco on first-floor walls–overpainted
- Balcony faces (north, south, east, and west)–overpainted and dilapidated
- Piers and pier capitals–overpainted and dilapidated
- Transportation canvases on second-floor balcony frieze–missing
- Stencils between transportation canvases on second-floor balcony frieze–overpainted
- Molded plaster leaf cornice–overpainted and dilapidated
- Stenciling on first-floor balcony soffits–extant but dilapidated
- Stenciling on second-floor balcony soffits–extant but dilapidated
- Ceiling stencil, skylight border–overpainted
- Ceiling stencil, main border–extant but dilapidated
- Ceiling stencil, ceiling–extant but dilapidated
- Stenciling on ceilings, stairwells, and second-floor halls around lobby–extant but dilapidated

The photographs indicate, therefore, that some of the decorative finishes remained unchanged as late as 1981. Unfortunately, the entire lobby area was scraped and repainted by the NPS shortly after the above-described survey was completed. With the exception of the imitation Caen-stone finish, current analysis of painted finishes will be limited to locating patches of original paint beneath the present paint layers. Fortunately, extant examples of the shadow glazing of the Caen-stone stucco are abundantly visible beneath later layers of paint in the currently nonpublic areas of the north and south corridors, particularly on the second floor. A more detailed examination of certain elements of the decorative program follows.

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to the Art Commission for its approval, March 27, 1936." "Floyd Bennett Airport, Brooklyn, Administration Building, Alterations for Murals." Proposal for designs for a public structure submitted to the Art Commission for its approval, March 5, 1937. Both from the New York City Art Commission, Floyd Bennett Field File, Series 1951.

[30] Matero.

# Materials

## Imitation Caen Stone

Caen stone is a French limestone that was extracted from quarries in the Caen plain, Calvados, Normandy, France, as early as the 11th century and exported for use as structural stone. As noted by the editors of Conservation of Building and Decorative Stone:

> Caen Stone has been used since Gallo-Roman times, with large-scale exploitation developing in the 11th century boosted by the conquest of England by William, which opened up a huge new export market.[31]

Caen stone is a fine-grained, homogeneous limestone, yellowish to yellow-white or quite white in color, with areas of crystalline calcite. A geological description is as follows:

> the stone consists of pellet limestone, having rounded and ovoid pellets of cloudy calcite mud up to 0.15mm diameter set in a matrix of clear calcite crystals of rhomboid habit, averaging about 0.1 mm....[32]

Caen stone is no longer available. The export of Caen stone continued into the 19th century, with production effectively ceasing in 1914.[33] Imitation Caen stone, therefore is an attempt to replicate the appearance of this very old, venerated, and now-unavailable stone.

Two different techniques were used in the application of the imitation Caen-stone finish at the Administration Building. All walls of the lobby areas on both first and second floors, including the surfaces of the pier columns, reveal the application of two coats of a pigmented lime and cement pargeting each one-eighth of an inch thick over a cement brown coat and cement scratch coat applied directly to the terra-cotta walls.[34] The pargeting is a rich golden yellow in color with a glittery quality due to quartz, mica, or limestone particles in the mix. Both the brown coat and pargeting were deeply scored to resemble uniform ashlar blocks measuring 1 by 2 feet. Original drawings specified "1/4 inch white joints."[35]

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[31] John Ashurst and Francis G. Dimes, eds., *Conservation of Building and Decorative Stone, Volume 2* (London: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1990), p. 226.

[32] Ashurst and Dimes, Vol. 1, p. 121.

[33] Ashurst and Dimes, Vol. 2, p. 227. (There is some record of extraction up to 1930, 1952, and even 1960 at various quarries.)

[34] Matero, p. 2. According to this materials analysis, "a thin bonding layer of mastic adhesive" was identified on the terra-cotta substrate. It is more likely that this layer represents a damp-proof coating applied to the terra-cotta surfaces.

[35] Matero reports that "joints were emphasized by a white filling still surviving under the many layers of paint...." Historic photographs do not support the supposition that white filling was used in the joints of the imitation Caen stone. The white discerned in the limited 1981 investigation may simply be the cement of the scratch coats showing through the deeply scored joints. Further analysis of the finishes is necessary to satisfactorily substantiate this claim.

The pigmented finish coats represent the "Caen stone" element of the wall finish and were most likely produced from a commercial mix. No specifications for the pargeting treatment for this building are extant. However, specifications do exist for "Artificial Caen Stone" in the registry room at Ellis Island, and the finish they describe is remarkably similar to the work at the Administration Building. The specifications date to ca. 1916; they are reprinted in full as Appendix B of this report. In short, the brick and terra-cotta walls at Ellis Island received a coat of damp-proof material, a cement mortar scratch coat, a cement mortar brown coat, and a finish coat (no less than one-quarter-inch thick) of "Monarque Brand" or equal, artificial Caen stone. The finish coat was to be deeply scored into 1- by 2-foot blocks with joints three-sixteenths of an inch wide and deep. The surface of the "Caen stone" was roughened with emery paper to produce a stone-like texture, and joints were filled with fine white Keene's cement.[36] The appearance of the imitation Caen-stone walls of the lobby areas at the Administration Building strongly suggests that a similar process and technique was employed there.

A different technique was employed on the upper wall areas of the north and south corridors. Although the appearance was also intended to imitate a Caen-stone finish, no commercial pargeting mix was used. Instead, corridor walls were simply plastered. Plaster layers include a thick cement scratch coat keyed into the terra-cotta block wall, followed by a cement brown coat and a fine white chalky finish coat. The final finish coat was smooth-floated and scored into 1- by 2-foot sections. The transition from pigmented pargeting to plain plaster is most evident where corridor walls turn the corners into the open lobby areas (see figs. 47-48).

The incised plaster of the hallway walls was then given a painted finish. On the first floor this finish appears to have been a simple cream paint. On the second floor, however, a tinted shadow glazing was applied to the incised plaster. Each "stone" was painted a brownish-gold on one half that gradually lightened to a yellow-gold on the other half. The pattern of dark-to-light repeated from block to block and created an illusion of depth enhanced by a clear glaze coat on the surface. The golden-brown shadow glazing was carried over onto the pargeted "Caen stone" of the upper lobby, as well as along the stairway walls of the main staircases (#2 and #5). The shadow glazing does <u>not</u> appear to have been applied to any of the first-floor "Caen stone." (An in-depth paint analysis will address the exact nature of the painted finishes.)

Several photographs that follow illustrate the two different imitation Caen-stone applications.

[36] Harlan D. Unrau, *Historic Structure Report, Ellis Island, Historical Data, Statue of Liberty National Monument* (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, May 1981), p. 617.



**Figure 46.** Imitation Caen stone on wall of Stairway #5 between second and third floors, showing pargeting spalling from scored cement brown coat.



**Figure 47.** Imitation Caen stone at juncture of wall of Stairway #5 and east wall of south corridor, second floor. Exposed cement brown coat of imitation stone on left, scored plaster on right.

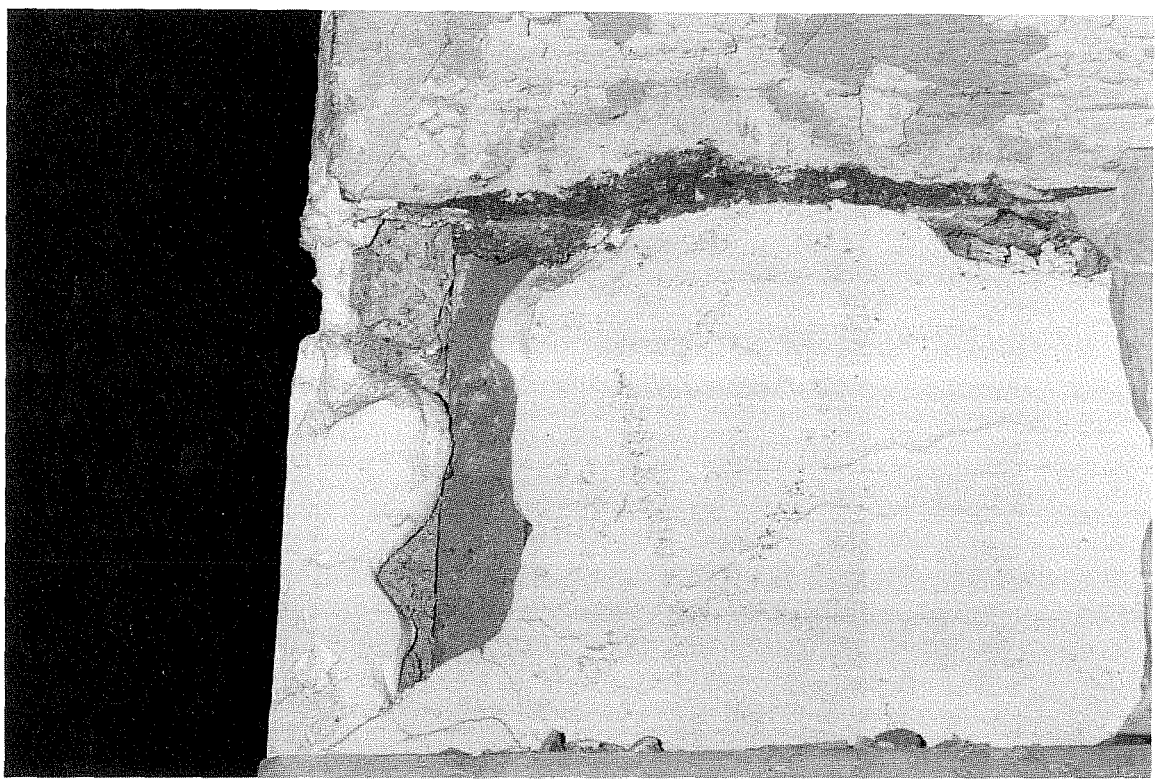


**Figure 48.** Imitation Caen stone at junction of wall of Stairway #3 and east wall of north corridor, second floor. Shows pigmented imitation-stone pargeting on stairway wall and plaster application on wall of corridor.



**Figure 49.** Imitation Caen stone at corner of original lobby wall now enclosed in Room 211, showing buff marble wainscot, and pigmented pargeting below later paint.



**Figure 50.** Imitation Caen stone on south corridor, second floor, west wall. Shadow glaze on plaster visible beneath later paint. Scratch and finish coats of plaster also visible.

A photograph dated October 25, 1935, shows the east wall of the lobby (fig. 152). Application of the imitation Caen-stone finish appears to be in progress. First- and second-floor pargeting has been applied, but tool marks and tonal variations are quite evident. There is no discernible white filling in the joints as yet.

Several photographs taken two years later in 1937 show the lobby from various angles (figs. 154-157). The imitation Caen-stone finish is completed by this time. It is clear that the surface of the imitation Caen stone of the first and second floors of the lobby have been treated quite differently. The first-floor pargeting (walls and piers) appears to have been painted a light color, creating a smooth uniform surface. Scored joints are visible only as shadowed lines. In contrast, the second-floor pargeting on the lobby walls, stairway walls, and piers clearly has been painted with the undulating shadow glazing described above. The scored joints of the shadow-glazed areas appear to be emphasized with a darker paint (although shadow may account for this effect as well). The different painted treatment of the lower and upper imitation Caen stone is clearly illustrated in these 1937 photographs.

Photographs of the lobby dating to 1939 and 1940 reveal that the first-floor Caen stone remained a uniform light color, while the upper Caen stone retained its shadow glazing. Therefore, the dramatically different treatment of the first- and second-floor stucco in the lobby was not a case of unfinished business, but an intentional aesthetic decision that juxtaposed the plain unadorned appearance of the more utilitarian lobby spaces with the highly decorated surfaces of the loftier realms of the lobby atrium.[37] (See figures 163, 167, and 170.)

## Stenciling

In comparing original drawings to photographs of the lobby dating to the 1930s, it becomes clear that much more decorative stenciling was carried out in the lobby than initially specified. Indeed, original drawings called only for stencils depicting the development of travel to adorn the second-floor gallery frieze. The use of stenciled decoration was extended to include the

- first-floor balcony soffit
- panels on the east face of the balcony
- second-floor balcony soffit
- second-floor balcony frieze, between travel canvases
- second-floor balcony frieze corners
- main ceiling border, just above the cornice
- main ceiling field at the corners
- main ceiling, skylight border
- second-floor staircases, ceiling
- second-floor corridor around the lobby, ceiling

[37] Matero concluded that all of the imitation Caen stone was initially unpainted, with the shadow glazing following sometime later. However, he did not have the benefit of the photographs of the lobby from the 1930s, which clearly substantiate the conclusions reached in this report.

Each of the above-listed areas was treated with a distinct design. The stencils can be characterized as simple geometric patterns executed in two or three colors. Colors used were generally in the gold to brown range. A paint analysis will be conducted to provide exact color matches. Sketches of each stencil pattern are included in Appendix A. With the exception of four patterns scaled and drawn by the conservator in 1981, sketches were drawn from available historic and current photographs. Details of the patterns are thus sometimes less than precise.

The stenciled decoration was begun in 1935 and largely completed by 1937. The October 1935 photograph of the east side of the lobby (fig. 52) shows the stenciling in its very early stages. The transportation canvases (not stenciled, as specified) are in place on the second-floor balcony frieze but may be in progress: the background fields of both the stagecoach and airplane paintings appear incomplete. Between the transportation canvases are what appear to be painted stylized architectural triglyphs. Whether this was the initial design considered for these areas, or simply a masking system for the installation of the canvases and the application of the final stencil design, is not known.

The October 1935 photograph also shows the second-floor balcony soffit with a very faint stencil design. This faint rendering probably represents the proposed sketch for the final application. However, later photographs show that this particular design was not ultimately painted in this location. (The design was actually painted on the first-floor balcony soffit, at an as-yet-undetermined date.) Therefore, the decoration of the second-floor balcony soffit was in progress, but the final design for it had not yet been executed, by October 1935. No stencils had been begun in any other areas at this time, either.

The series of photographs dating to 1937 shows most of the stenciling completed (figs. 154-157). A new (and final) design is present between the transportation canvases, and dark borders have been painted around each of the panels. A new (and final) design is present on the second-floor balcony soffit. The main ceiling and skylight stencils are complete, as are the painted ceilings of the lobby corridors. In addition, the east face of the balcony now features painted panels with stenciled details. The single known element of the stencil program that remains incomplete by this date is the stencil on the first-floor balcony soffit. No design of any kind is visible on this surface in any of the four photographs.

Curiously, photographs from 1939 and 1940 (figs. 167, 170) show that the first-floor balcony soffit did not receive its stenciled design until sometime after 1940. No interior photographs post-dating 1940 were located, so the date of the stenciled design seen in this location in the 1981 photographs is not known. Even stranger, this design and pattern clearly match those seen sketched on the second-floor balcony soffit in the in the 1935 photograph. Why the designs were reversed, and when the first-floor soffit was painted, remains a mystery.

## Polychrome and Ornamental Plaster

An integral part of the decorative program was the painting of certain plaster elements in the lobby and corridor areas, as well as in Room 117. The polychromed plaster worked in conjunction with, and complemented, the stenciled decoration.

An examination of historic photographs reveals that painted plaster features in lobby and corridor areas included:

- the geometric dentil course along the top and bottom of the balcony faces
- the ornamental plaster winged shields in the center of each balcony face
- the panels and dividers of the east balcony face only
- the ornamental plaster of all four pier capitals
- the water leaf cornice molding of the main ceiling
- all second-floor corridor ceilings
- the ceilings of the main staircases (Stairways #2 and #5)

According to the limited paint research carried out in 1981, the "teeth" of the dentil courses were painted alternating light (buff) and dark (green) colors, with the underside of the dark pieces gilded. However, historic photographs indicate that the color scheme was slightly more sophisticated than indicated in the early analysis. The flat, square teeth of the top dentils featured a buff-colored diamond painted on each face, while the alternating hexagon teeth of the upper dentil course were painted in a two-tone pattern with a dark background (see fig. 163).

The ornamental plaster shields were painted red, white, and blue, with gilded wings and lettering. The pier capitals incorporated red, blue, green, black, and gold paint, as well as a clear glaze coat. The leaf molding of the pier capitals and the ceiling cornice was gilded.[38]

The two flat stenciled panels of the east balcony face were painted a light cream color with dark buff borders and cream-colored corner embellishments. The vertical raised plaster dividers were dark buff highlighted with pale cream stripes along the edges, as were the raised plaster frames for the end and middle panels. (Samples were not taken from these areas in 1981; colors are interpreted as they appear in the 1937 photographs.)

The corridor and stairway ceilings were painted a dark gold with brown borders highlighted with a dark brown stripe. Some of this paint survives.

Polychrome plaster in Room 117 was limited to the ornamental entablature. A distant view through the plate-glass window of the north wall of Room 117 (ca. 1937) shows that the floral rosettes and borders of the architrave were painted a dark color. Removing samples for later analysis revealed that the plaster flowers were painted blue, and the center of the flowers and the crenelated molding were gilded.

The polychrome plasterwork was not completed until 1937. A photograph dating to 1935 (fig. 152) shows that none of the molded or ornamental plaster (or the ceilings) is painted, although the cornice molding and pier capitals appear to be primed for painting. Not until 1937 do these plaster elements exhibit polychrome finishes (see fig. 157). The polychrome finishes and detailing

[38] Matero, p. 3. In addition, the buff and green colors on the dentils were specified on the 1930 drawings.

were maintained at least into the 1940s, and in most cases are extant beneath several layers of modern paint today. The ceilings of the second-floor corridors to the north and south of the lobby, as well as the ceilings of the staircases to the third floor, retain their original gold and brown paint scheme (albeit in terribly dilapidated condition). An in-depth finish analysis of all samples removed during the investigations for this report is necessary, and will provide a full palette of original colors for the formerly polychromed plasterwork.

Schematic sketches and photographs of selected examples of the ornamental plasterwork are included in Appendix C ("Molding Profiles and Ornamental Plaster").

## "Development of Transportation" Canvases

Very little is known about the transportation canvases. No work orders or specifications were found for these paintings, although the original drawings called for stenciled renderings of the same on the second-floor balcony frieze. It is not known when it was decided to substitute oil paintings for stencils. The completed canvases follow the design of the original drawings quite closely, with seven repeating panels depicting the evolution of travel from left to right on each side of the atrium. The panels depicted a stagecoach, steam locomotive, autobus, sailing ship, steamship, dirigible, and airplane. The paintings are stylistically quite simple, with the subject placed in front of a flat plain background field.

The canvases were one of the first elements of the decorative program to be installed. They appear in place on the east side of the atrium by October 25, 1935 (see fig. 152). By 1937 a dark border was painted around each canvas, framing the panels, and a stenciled pattern has been added between each panel (see figs. 154-157). The canvases are most surely the work of WPA artists.

The canvases were stolen from the building sometime during the 1970s. However, several of the panels were returned to Gateway NRA and are currently stored at Fort Hancock NHS.

## "History of Aviation" Murals

According to the original drawings for the Administration Building, mural paintings were included as a part of the initial design of the lobby. The faces of the balcony were to be divided into five panels: a center panel with the winged shield ornament flanked by a "mural panel" on each side, flanked in turn by a small panel at either end. The "mural panels" were to feature "8 mural paintings on gallery face showing development of aviation." The murals, it was noted, were "not in this contract."[39]

The faces of the balcony were each divided into five panels as planned. However, the murals that were eventually commissioned and completed for the building were not designed to fit into the "mural panels." There were four final murals, each measuring 6 feet high by 30 feet wide. One mural was intended to span the width of each side of the balcony covering the balcony faces from top to bottom and side to side.

[39] Contract No. 2000, For the Construction of Administration Building, November 17, 1930. Archives, Floyd Bennett Field Unit, Gateway NRA.

A proposal for the murals was found in the files of the Art Commission of the City of New York. The proposal was received on March 27, 1936, and approved as a preliminary plan on April 14, 1936. The proposal explains that

> The labor for these decorations is being furnished through WPA Sponsored Federal Project 1, Federal Art Project and the materials by the Floyd Bennett Airport, Brooklyn, N.Y.[40]

The project supervisor was a Mr. Harry Knight, and the supervising artist was Eugene Chodorow.

The proposal contained a description of the project, including the medium (oil on canvas), the size (720 square feet), and the general subject ("Aviation)." At the time of the proposal, the more specific titles for the four murals were as follows:

1) "The winged Deities and legends of primitive man."
2) "Man's scientific approach to flight, starting with Leonardo Da Vinci."
3) "Aviation and Modern Warfare."
4) "Peace and Humanity's progress through Aviation."

These titles became shortened upon execution to: 1) "Mythology of Flight"; 2) "First Practical Beginnings"; 3) "Aviation in War"; and 4) "Aviation in Peace." A schematic plan included in the proposal indicated that mural 1 ("Mythology") was to be installed on the east, mural 2 ("Beginnings") on the south, mural 3 ("War") on the west, and mural 4 ("Peace") on the north. A *New York Times* article dated July 8, 1940, stated that the "Mythology" mural was indeed hung on the east and the "Beginnings" mural on the south. However, the placement of the "War" and "Peace" murals was reversed, with "War" on the north and "Peace" on the west. (More discussion of this article follows.)

The proposal to the Art Commission included the following resolution,

> RESOLVED, That the Art Commission, having considered the designs for, and location of, murals for the Administration Building Foyer, Floyd Bennett Airport, Brooklyn, submitted by the Department of Docks...hereby gives to the same preliminary approval, with the understanding that the artist is to consult with the Painter Member of the Commission in the development of the designs; that large scale or full sized drawings of such of the designs as may be agreed upon are to be submitted for approval before the final work is begun, and that the executed work is to be submitted for final approval before installation of the same.[41]

With this resolution, work on the murals began.

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[40] "Proposal, Work of Art, Floyd Bennett Airport Murals in Administration Building," to the Art Commission of the City of New York, March 27, 1936. Art Commission of the City of New York, Floyd Bennett Field File, Series 1951.

[41] "Proposal," March 27, 1936.

The artists for the project were Eugene Chodorow and Augustus Henkel, an illustrator for Vanity Fair magazine and a friend of Chodorow's.[42] As Chodorow recalled in an interview in 1980,

> I was always fascinated by airplanes, so I conceived the idea of a set of murals on the history of aviation, contacted an old friend, August "Gus" Henkel . . . He agreed that aviation murals would be a worthwhile project especially since at the time the adventures of airmen were big news. Over a period of several months we both did a lot of research finally designing four panels, two each.[43]

The two artists worked on the murals for more than three years in one of the hangars at Floyd Bennett. Henkel designed the "Mythology of Flight" and the "First Practical Beginnings" murals. Chodorow designed the "Aviation in Peace" and "Aviation in War" murals. Both artists contributed to the actual execution of each mural.

A second proposal was submitted to the Art Commission in 1937 for the "Administration Building, Alterations for Murals." A description of the proposed project was as follows:

> To cause changes in the first and second floors of main lobby of Administration Building present interior, which will affect with the murals now being painted, a unified and completely harmonized interior decoration.[44]

The work was to be "done as WPA job" under the supervision of the "Mural Division - Federal Art Project." Originally the proposal included "2 floor plans 6 & 7 of contract 2000, 4 studies in color of proposed work, 4 photographs of present interior, and 1 list of changes (physical) to be made."[45] The four-color studies survive and two are reproduced here as figures 158 and 159. The four photographs likewise survive and are reproduced in the "Historic Photographs" section as figures 154-157. The list of changes does not survive. However, an examination of the color studies indicates that no major changes were intended, except for the installation of the murals across the faces of the balcony.

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[42] It is not known how Chodorow was chosen for the project. Interestingly, one of the first artists to offer his services for the murals was the well-known American artist, Eric Sloane. A letter to that effect was sent to the airport manager and documented on June 14, 1934, in the papers of Mayor F.H. LaGuardia. Apparently, Sloane's services were too expensive and his offer was declined. F.H. LaGuardia Papers, Box 3364, Folder 7, Municipal Archives, City of New York.

[43] Geoffrey Arend, "The Lost Murals of Floyd Bennett Field," reprinted from *Great Airports: Kennedy Picturebook*, 1981.

[44] "Proposal, Floyd Bennett Air Port, Brooklyn, Administration Building Alterations for Murals," submitted to the Art Commission of the City of New York, March 5, 1937. Art Commission of the City of New York, Floyd Bennett Field File, Series 1951.

[45] "Proposal," March 5, 1937.

The fate of the murals remains a mystery, although there is substantial evidence that they were destroyed by overzealous censorship in 1940. A series of photographs taken in July 1940, documenting the removal of the murals, suggests that all four murals had been completed by 1940, and that at least one mural was hung in the lobby as planned. The series includes:

- a photograph of the completed "Aviation in Peace" and "First Practical Beginnings" murals lying flat in an undesignated location;
- two views of the "Mythology of Flight" mural being lowered from the face of the east balcony;
- a view looking down into the lobby in front of the west entrance as the "Aviation in War" mural is rolled up on a cardboard tube; and
- a final view of the east balcony as the Floyd Bennett portrait is put back into place in the center panel.

All of the photographs were taken on July 8, 1940.[46] The clock on the east wall is visible in three of the views and indicates that the removal work took place very quickly. It appears that the workers began lowering the "Mythology" mural at 12:30 p.m. and by 1:00 p.m. the murals were gone and the portrait was nearly in place. (According to reports quoted subsequently, the canvases were destroyed by late that afternoon.)

Letters and memorandums located in the F.H. LaGuardia Papers at the New York City Municipal Archives shed some light on the order of events that led to the removal of the murals. The events were spearheaded by Colonel Brehan Somervell, the WPA Administrator for New York City. Somervell, on his own initiative, determined the murals to be filled with communist propaganda and ordered the destruction of the murals. According to aviation historian Geoffrey Arend, Colonel Somervell was obsessed with "cleansing the WPA of Reds" and stated his intentions of doing so quite frequently.[47]

An official "Statement on the Burning of the Floyd Bennett Murals" was compiled by the executive secretary of the United American Artists after the fact and sent to the Commissioner of the Federal Works Agency on August 1, 1940. The statement provides a valuable chronology of the incident. It reads as follows:

> Complaints against the Floyd Bennett murals painted by August Henkel and Eugene Chodorow came into the office of the WPA Administration during the first week of July. The first notice of it appeared in the Sunday press of July 7th. On July 8th, the United American Artists, hearing of a threat to burn the murals, requested of Colonel Somervell that an impartial jury of prominent artists, aviation experts and private citizens be set up to decide on the validity of the complaints. A copy of this request was forwarded to the Washington WPA Administrator, Colonel Harrington. It has come to our

[46] The photographs were dated by the photographer, Rudy Arnold (the airport photographer), who was meticulous in dating and identifying his negatives. Original negative envelopes survive with the Rudy Arnold Collection at the National Air and Space Museum.

[47] Arend. Unfortunately, Arend does not include citations for any of his information.

> attention that on the same day, Dean Cornall, NY City Art Commissioner phoned the WPA Administration office and asked to see the murals but was requested not to.48

In addition, a telegram was sent to Mayor LaGuardia from the vice president of the United American Artists (UAA) on July 8, 1940, informing him that the UAA had already contacted Somervell and "requested him to form jury of artists aviation experts and private citizens to judge them and that they [the murals] be left intact until then." The telegram urged the Mayor to use his influence with Somervell to stop the destruction of the murals.[49] As we know from the photographs dated July 8, 1940, it was already too late when this telegram was sent, since the murals were being removed that very day.

The "Statement of the Burning of the Floyd Bennett Murals" substantiates the evidence provided by the photographs concerning the timing of the murals' removal. It reports:

> During the **late afternoon of July 8th**, the murals were burned at a WPA workshop located at 628 West 24th Street. An eyewitness to the burning was Anton Refrigier, an artist reporter on the PM. [emphasis added]

On July 9, 1940, Mayor LaGuardia belatedly responded to the telegram from the UAA. His response was unabashedly unsympathetic. The letter, written by the Mayor's secretary, reads as follows:

> This will acknowledge receipt of your telegram addressed to His Honor, Mayor La Guardia. The Mayor has directed me to inform you that in his opinion the murals have no artistic value and therefore, does not believe that the art of the future will lose anything.50

Likewise on July 9, the representatives of the UAA met with Colonel Somervell to discuss the matter. But, the damage had been done and there was little to be accomplished. During the meeting Somervell had the nerve to admit that "as an artist, I'm a good brick-layer." He added that while he was not an artist, he could recognize propaganda when he saw it.[51]

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[48] "Statement of the Burning of the Floyd Bennett Murals," United American Artists (UAA) to the Commissioner of the Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, August 1, 1940. LaGuardia Papers, Box 3365, Folder 5.

[49] Postal Telegram, Vice President United American Artists to Mayor La Guardia, July 8, 1940. La Guardia Papers, Box 3365, Folder 5.

[50] LaGuardia Papers, Box 3365, Folder 5.

[51] Letter to the UAA. LaGuardia Papers, Box 3365, Folder 5.

The nature of the charges made against the paintings by Colonel Somervell were included in an article that appeared in the *New York Times* on July 7. The article was entitled "Red Propaganda in WPA Murals at Floyd Bennett Charged." The article provides a description of some of the elements that Somervell determined objectionable on the grounds of promoting communism. These elements included:

- in the "Practical Beginnings" mural –

  the Wright Brothers wearing Russian style costumes, persons "strangely un-American in expression and garb" with upraised clenched fists. "A likeness of Joseph Stalin with a fallen aviator at his feet."

- in the "Aviation in Peace" mural –

  along with Floyd Bennett, Charles Lindbergh, and Wiley Post was Jimmy Collins, "A radical aviator." Also, "one of the planes sported a red star rather than the correct white star insignia," and a "soviet plane" was included.

- the "Aviation in War" mural –

  judged inappropriate for a civilian airfield.[52]

This article must be the news source referred to by the UAA in their recounting of the events. No complaints were lodged against the "Mythology in Flight" mural. There is some speculation, but no substantiating evidence, that the canvas survived for this reason.

By July 11 news of the destruction of the murals had spread to other artists' organizations. A letter from the American Artists' Congress to the Mayor reflects the outrage generally felt in the artistic community. Much of the letter is included below.

> The American Artists' Congress sharply condemns the destruction of three WPA murals at the Floyd Bennett Airport by administrative order of Col. Brehan Somervell.
>
> Acting upon loose charges of "red propaganda," which it is difficult to believe an adult mind could take seriously, Col. Somervell rushed through the removal and burning of works on which responsible artists had expended three years of exhaustive, painstaking effort. By this fuehrer-like action Col. Somervell reveals his contempt for culture and freedom of expression and a disregard for administrative responsibilities which makes him unfit for his office.[53]

As has been demonstrated above, the action taken on the murals was extremely swift. They were completed and inspected in May 1940, briefly hung in the lobby of the Administration Building, and removed and presumably destroyed on July 8 of the same year. It is likely that the

---

[52] "Red Propaganda in WPA Murals at Floyd Bennett Charged," *New York Times*, July 7, 1940.

[53] Letter to Mayor LaGuardia from the American Artists' Congress, July 10, 1940. LaGuardia Papers, Box 3365, Folder 5.

murals were just beginning to be installed when the furor over alleged communistic content erupted. The murals were condemned before they were even properly hung.

The UAA initiated an investigation into the event in order to both refute the charges of propaganda and to determine the sources of the original complaints against the murals. They were able to do both. Apparently, protests against the murals came from just three specific organizations: the Floyd Bennett branch of the American Legion, the Flatbush Chamber of Commerce, and the Women's International Aeronautical Association. After some investigation the UAA was able to report that

> We have been informed that the so-called "spontaneous indignation" against the murals, has been instigated by the manager of the airport, Mr. Kenneth Behr, and that he had asked the Floyd Bennett post of the American Legion and the Flatbush Chamber of Commerce to send telegrams of protest. As to the Women's International Aeronautical Association, we have been unable to find any trace of that organization though we have checked with several aeronautical publications and with the Aeronautical Year Book.[54]

It seems, therefore, that the attack on the murals was driven by the opinions and attitude of a single person who took a dislike to the paintings and began a personal campaign to see that they, and their creators, were discredited. All evidence points to the long-time manager of the airport, Ken Behr, as that person. Biographical information on Ken Behr was not pursued for this report, so his motivations and agenda remains a mystery.

The UAA investigation into the alleged propaganda likewise revealed that the charges were generally sheer fabrications that in no way justified the destruction of the murals. The refutation of several of the charges is included in full below.

> The "portrait of Stalin" was actually a portrait of Franz Reichelt, an Austrian pioneer in parachuting who was killed in an experimental flight from the Eiffel Tower. The photograph from which this figure was copied was borrowed from the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce by the artists.
>
> The "Soviet plane" was an American-made and designed Vultee which was copied from a photograph borrowed from Rudy Arnold, field photographer of the airport.
>
> The "red star" was an incorrect transcription mistakenly drawn by one of the assistants who painted a red star on a white background instead of a white star on a red background which is the insignia of the U.S. Naval Reserve.
>
> There were objections to the inclusion of Jimmy Collins in the mural. Jimmy Collins was one of the most colorful figures in American aviation, a test pilot who died at his post testing a Navy Grumman. There were also objections to the inclusion of Joseph Rosmarin, who was pictured as part of a group of typical pilots on the field since he is a well-liked and spectacular figure at the airport.55

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[54] "Statement of the Burning of the Floyd Bennett Murals."

[55] Letter to Mayor LaGuardia from the American Artists' Congress, July 10, 1940. LaGuardia Papers, Box 3365, Folder 5.

Unfortunately, none of the efforts of the UAA were able to save the murals. Although a search continues today in the hope that they were in fact spared from destruction, all evidence points to a fiery end at the WPA workshop on July 8, 1940.

## Floyd Bennett Portrait

A portrait of Floyd Bennett hung in the lobby of the Administration Building from 1935 until at least 1940 when the U.S. Navy took over the field. Although this portrait was not a part of the initial decorative program, it became a prominent fixture of the overall lobby decoration, hanging in a place of honor in the middle panel of the east balcony face.

A proposal for the portrait was submitted to the Art Commission of the City of New York on May 28, 1935. At this time, the proposal was simply for an enlarged photograph of Floyd Bennett to hang "in the center panel in the Administration Building." The photograph was being donated by the Women's International Association of Aeronautics & Friends. The photograph measured 3 feet 2 inches long by 2 feet 6 inches wide. It was enlarged to this portrait size by the airport photographer Rudy Arnold and framed. The proposal for the "fixed decoration" was disapproved by the Commission on July 9, 1935. No reason for the disapproval was provided.[56]

Despite the rejection of the proposal, the photograph-portrait was hung and unveiled on the east balcony in the lobby on October 25, 1935. A photograph of the event documents the small unveiling ceremony (fig. 152).

The photograph-portrait was replaced by a much larger oil portrait of Floyd Bennett on October 25, 1939. The oil portrait was clearly modeled on the seated and uniformed figure in the photograph, with the addition of an impressionistic background of an arctic seascape with a solitary airplane soaring above the icebergs. The portrait was painted by the WPA artist Charles Polowetski. A June 1939 photograph of the artist at work on the painting in his studio shows the portrait near completion (fig. 162). A photograph of the unveiling on October 25, 1935, shows the portrait framed and hung. A short note in a local newspaper the following day reports the unveiling as follows:

> A painting of the late Floyd Bennett was unveiled in the Administration Building at Floyd Bennett Airport Wednesday afternoon by Mrs. Floyd Bennett, under the auspices of the local branch of the Women's International Association of Aeronautics. Mrs. Audrey McMahon, director of the WPA Art Project, introduced Charles Polowetski, artist, who painted the portrait.57

It is not known if the portrait continued to hang in the lobby during the U.S. Navy occupation of the field. The portrait is extant today and is located in storage at Gateway NRA. It is in need of restorative cleaning work.

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[56] "Floyd Bennett Airport, Brooklyn; Administration Building, Floyd Bennett Picture." Proposal submitted to the Art Commission of the City of New York, May 28, 1935. Art Commission of the City of New York files, Series 1951-G.

[57] "Floyd Bennett Portrait Unveiled at Ceremonies Held Yesterday at the Field," *The Chat, Newspaper of Brooklyn*, October 26, 1935. Gateway NRA files.

# V. USE AND FUNCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

# ORIGINAL ROOM DESIGNATIONS

The 1981 HSR includes the following description of the plan and proposed uses of space as illustrated on the original drawings. The description is thorough and is included here in full.

> A person walking into the building on the first floor entered a lobby and waiting room area that also contained a clerk's office, information booth, and two sets of stairs leading up to the second floor and down to the basement. In the eastern center of the lobby were two elevators. [Never installed.] Two corridors branched off from the lobby area, one running north and the other south. To the right of the north corridor was a baggage check station and a large lounge area that opened onto the terrace facing the field. To the left of the corridor was a telegraph office, a press room, a men's toilet, and a barber shop. Down the southern corridor, on the left, one found the restaurant that seated 124 people inside with room for an additional 84 outside on the terrace facing the field. To the right of the southern corridor there was a newsstand, a women's rest room, a women's toilet, an office for the Department of Commerce, and an unassigned office. Finally, before leaving one passed a telephone area and a radio room. Outside the door there was a flight of stairs leading down to the parking area.
>
> The second floor of the building contained other offices and rooms to care for the needs of the public, officials, and pilots. Above the pilot's control room in the center on the field side was the airport manager's office. In the center of the floor, a balcony surrounded a square well that looked down on the lobby area of the first floor. There was a file room flanked by two offices on the west side of the building in the center. Off the right side of the north corridor on the second floor there was a pilot's room, which was essentially a lounge area, and two dormitories with baths. On the left there were three bedrooms, each with a bath, and another small lounge area. Off the left side of the south corridor on the second floor was a men's toilet, a parlor with a bedroom and bath, and an unassigned office with bath. On the right side there was an office, two bedrooms with baths, and two maids' rooms with a bath.
>
> Three ramps led down to the basement from the east or field side of the building. In the center of the basement was a large unassigned space with a linoleum floor. To the north were office and storage space for the public health officials, the U.S. Customs Service, express and freight baggage, and an additional storeroom. To the south were the restaurant kitchen, an employees' locker room, a men's toilet, and office space for the "field force," which must have been the airport security guards.
>
> The Administration Building had two other levels projecting above the second floor and facing the field [in the tower]. The lower level, above the airport manager's office...was a Weather Bureau chart room. The highest level contained the control room.... The control room was glassed in, and

> surrounded by a balcony walkway that gave airport officials an excellent view of the field and hangars.[1]

Although it is impossible to know for certain if the building spaces were used exactly as designated on the original plans, it is likely that most of the spaces served the functions assigned to them by the Department of Docks. Future reports and drawings substantiate the presence of the lobby, restaurant, lounge, newsstand, barber shop, telegraph room, radio room, telephone room, men's and women's toilets, airport manager's room (second floor), weather bureau room (third floor), control room (fourth floor), and several bedroom/dormitory rooms with baths on the second floor. (See room charts at the end of this section of the report.)

A second set of 1930 plans for the first and second floors show the proposed arrangement of furnishings for the building (figs. 73-74). Although it is unlikely that the furnishing plan was implemented exactly as planned, it is a valuable record of the initial intentions of the architect and airport staff. The few early photographs of the interior that were discovered show that some of the ideas were incorporated and some were not.

For example, photographs of the lobby in 1937 clearly indicate that no seating arrangements were introduced in this space. The space is vacant except for an octagonal check-in counter. On the other hand, 1936 and 1938 photographs of the manager's office on the second floor indicates that the sparse, utilitarian look on the furnishing plan, including just one large desk and four smaller secretarial-type stations, was generally adopted in this room (figs. 153, 160). Likewise, a photograph of two pilots taken in the restaurant in 1938 illustrates that the proposed tables for two along the perimeter walls of the room were indeed installed (fig. 161). Finally, a 1932 view of the east side of the building indicates that the proposed terrace seating outside of the restaurant was implemented (fig. 128). The photograph reveals approximately 19 tables with umbrellas on the south terrace.

[1] Porter R. Blakemore, "Historical Data Section," pp. 100-111, in *Historic Structures Report, Historical Data Section, Archeological Data Section, Floyd Bennett Field, Gateway National Recreation Area*, Vol. I, by Porter R. Blakemore and Dana C. Linck (National Park Service: Denver Service Center, May 1981).

# TENANTS AND ACTIVITIES, 1931-1941

An examination of the annual reports of the Department of Docks and several files in the F.H. LaGuardia papers provide the bulk of the information available concerning the use and function of the airport and thus of the Administration Building. The information is recounted here in an abbreviated, list format for easy reference. Unfortunately, no U.S. Navy files on the operation and maintenance of the field facilities were discovered in the examined groups of military records. A condition survey taken in 1941 by the Navy before it occupied the building, and a labeled floor plan of 1946, are the only two documents currently available that provide information on the interior use of the building during the Navy's tenure. Therefore, the dates for the following "Use and Function" section are 1931-1946.

## 1931

Between May 23, 1931 (Dedication Day), and December 31, 1931, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| Commercial flights - | 1,153 |
| Military flights - | 605 |
| Passengers - | 17,700 |
| Mail - | 4,100 lbs.[2] |

In addition, a "Four Field Flying Show" was held on October 17 and 18, 1931, for the benefit of the unemployed. "Many thousands people attended the Air Show at FBF, despite cold and unpleasant weather...."

Uses/Activities:

Storage of planes
Taking up passengers for flights
Sell gas and oil
Flying school
Maintain stands at Municipal Airport - Albert Gorman[3]
Maintain stand on west side of Flatbush Ave. - "

Tenants:

Mohawk Airways Inc.
Pan-American Airways
United Air Services
Curtiss-Wright Flying Service
Eastern Aeronautical Corp.
Empire Flying Service
Roosevelt Flying Corp.
New York Aircraft Distributors Inc.
Pennsylvania Air Transport Co.

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[2] Department of Docks (DOD) Sixtieth Annual Report - 1931. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

[3] These stands must be the small white frame "snack shacks" visible to the north and south on the east (field) side of the Administration Building in early photographs of the site. (See Photograph No. 7 in Blakemore, p. 31.)

Morgan Oil Co.
Colonial Beacon Oil Co.
Shell Eastern Petroleum Products Inc.
Standard Oil Co.
Texas Oil Co.
Gulf Refining Co.
Navy Dept.

## 1932

Between January 1, 1933, and December 31, 1932, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| Landings - | 60,000 |
| Transport passengers - | 235 |
| All other passengers - | 15,581 |
| Pounds of mail - | 8,250 |
| Students instructed - | 39 |
| Visitors - | 425,000[4] |

Tenants And Activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Rudolph Arnold - | space in Administration Building to conduct photographic business |
| Berthold Gessler - | sell refreshments on the "Apron" through use of small portable stand or table |
| Albert Gorman - | " |
| Colonial Beacon Oil Co. - | sell gasoline and oil |
| Richfield Oil Corp. - | " |
| Texas Oil Co. - | " |
| Shell-Eastern Petroleum Products, Inc. - | " |
| Erickson & Remmert - | operation of a flying school, occupation of Hangar 6 and 8 |
| Metropolitan Aircraft Co. - | operation of a flying school |
| Erickson & Remmert - | " |
| N.Y. Aircraft Distributors - | " |
| United Air Service - | " |
| John J. Gore - | take up passengers for flights |
| Robert F. Hoey - | " |
| Robert H. Jackson - | " |
| United Air Service - | " |

[4] DOD Sixty-first Annual Report - 1932.

| | |
|---|---|
| Navy Department, Bureau of Aeronautics | occupation of Hangar 5 |

In addition, Floyd Bennett Field was selected as the eastern terminal for Air Express Corporation in December 1932. The air express line operated on a 17-hour schedule between New York and Los Angeles.

Likewise, the Air Service Division of the New York Police Department (formerly housed at North Beach) began to be headquartered at Floyd Bennett Field during 1932.

Several media events were introduced as activities at the field in 1932. For example, the municipal radio station WNYC conducted a weekly broadcast from Floyd Bennett Field during the year presenting a well-known flyer as a guest speaker each week. The broadcast was surely made from the Administration Building. It was also reported that motion picture records of various activities at the airport were made by airport inspectors Samuel Levy and George Schloer.

## 1933

Between January 1, 1933, and December 31, 1933, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| Landings - | 71,542 |
| Air transport passengers - | 52 |
| Other passengers - | 8,241 |
| Mail handled - | 210 lbs. |
| Express handled - | 140 lbs. |
| Students instructed - | 58 |
| Visitors - | 797,000[5] |

Tenants And Activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| NY Good Humor, Inc. - | park two autos in connection with sale of products along the boundary fence on north side of field |
| Standard Booking Exchange - | two temporary stands in front of Administration Building together with the use of restaurant, tower, and roof |
| Mrs. Emma Gessler - | sell refreshments from portable stand on apron |
| Albert Gorman - | " |
| Arnold Photo Syndicate - | sell photos on field |
| Rudolph Arnold - | space in Administration Building for photo business *(room unspecified)* |

[5] DOD Sixty-second Annual Report - 1933.

| | |
|---|---|
| Texas Oil Co.- | sell gas and oil |
| Colonial Beacon Oil Co.- | " |
| Gulf Refining Co. - | " |
| | |
| United Air Services - | operate a flying school |
| Erickson & Remmert - | " |
| | |
| Erickson & Remmert - | provide passenger flights |
| United Air Services - | " |
| Metropolitan Air Service - | " |
| Burns Aero Service - | " |
| Red Bat Flying Service - | " |
| Wings Flying Service - | " |
| City Air Services - | " |
| Andrew Speyerer - | " |
| John Fitkalo - | " |

Featured prominently in the annual report of 1933 was the information that Floyd Bennett Field was now connected to the Department of Commerce teletype circuit, providing "Complete up-to-the-minute weather reports from all over the country, as well as weather maps...." This service was probably installed in the weather room on the third floor of the control tower of the Administration Building.

Many outstanding aviation events took place at the field during 1933, including the Second Annual Annette Gipson All-Women Air Race, the Bendix Trophy Race (Roscoe Turner and Amelia Earhart participating), the departure of Jimmy Mattern on his round-the-world flight, the departure and arrival of Wiley Post on his round-the-world flight, and the arrival of the record-setting transcontinental flight of Roscoe Turner.

## 1934

No compilation of statistics for the total number of flights, passengers, visitors, etc. was included in the 1934 annual report.[6]

Tenants And Activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| American Escadrille - | "Room 291," Administration Building office purposes *[current room # unknown]* |
| Rudolph Arnold - | Room in Administration Building to conduct a photographic business *[probably Rooms 217 & 218]* |
| Aviation Restaurant & Trading Corp. - | Certain portions of Administration Building for the purpose of operating a restaurant, bar, and cafeteria |

[6] DOD Sixty-third Annual Report - 1934.

| | |
|---|---|
| Peter Gianopoulos - | Operate a temporary portable stand for sale of candies, sodas, cigarettes, and light refreshments |
| Salvatore Scalici - | Room 106, Administration Building, barber shop *[currently Room 103]* |
| U.S. Coast Guard - | "Rooms 270 & 295," Administration Building, quartering the officers and men of the organization *[currently Rooms 220 & 206]* |
| U.S. Navy - | "Room 287," Administration Building, quarters for student cadets *[current room # unknown]* |
| Constantine Carvouniaris - | Operation of refreshment stand located on westerly side of Flatbush, near Hangar 6 |
| Colonial Beacon Oil Co. - | sell gasoline and oil |
| Gulf Oil Corp. - | " |
| Morania Oil Co., Inc. - | " |
| Texas Oil Co. - | " |
| Erickson & Remmert - | Hangars 6, 7, 8, passenger flights, active and dead plane storage, flying school |
| Hoey Air Service - | passenger flights, plane storage, Hangar 4 |
| Swiflite Aircraft Corp. - | Hangar 4, plane and equipment storage |
| Nicholas-Beasley Airplane Co. - | Building between Hangars 3 & 4 |
| Mr. E.G. Wiemer - | Hangar 4, manufacturing and storing cloth tow banners |
| U.S. Naval Reserve Aviation Base - | Hangar 5 |
| U.S. Navy - | Hangar 5 |
| U.S. Treasury Department | |
| U.S. Coast Guard | |

## 1935

Between January 1, 1935, and December 31, 1935, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| Passengers - | 11,099 |
| Flight students - | 600 |
| Planes stored - | 85 |
| Visiting Naval Planes - | 1,050[7] |

The general operation of Floyd Bennett Field was overseen by an Administrative and Office staff of one manager of operations, three airport inspectors, one clerk, and one telephone operator. This staff carried out "the necessary administrative and clerical work, teletype and telephone switchboard operation, weather observations and reports." Their offices were located in the Administration Building. The general maintenance staff of the field consisted of one electrician, one plumber, one foreman laborer, 10 laborers, and two watchmen.

Tenants And Activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Arnold Photo Service - | operate photo syndicate in Administration Building selling mainly to newspapers |
| Salvatore Scalici - | operates first class barber shop in Administration Building *[currently Room 103]* |
| Aviation Restaurant & Trading Corporation - | operate Bar and Grill, Concession, Restaurant, and Cigarette Stand |
| Viair Lines, Inc. - | occupation of "Room 298" *[current room # unknown]* |
| U.S. Coast Guard - | occupation of "Rooms 270 and 296" *[currently Rooms 220 & 205]* |
| U.S. Navy - | occupation of "Room 287" as sleeping quarters for the unit of Naval Reserve *[current room # unknown]* |
| Constantine Carvouniaris - | operates refreshment stand |
| Hoey Air Service - | Hangar 3, repair station, sell gas, store planes |
| Erickson and Remmert - | Hangar 6, store planes, repair station, sell gas, flying school |
| Swiflite Corp. - | store plane |

[7] DOD Sixty-fourth Annual Report - 1935.

| | |
|---|---|
| Gulf Refining Co. - | sell gasoline and oil |
| Colonial Beacon Oil Co. - | " |
| Texas Oil Co. - | " |

In addition to the tenants and activities listed above, the U.S. Navy trained 79 cadets as Naval pilots at the field in 1935, while the Naval Reserve had a permanent presence of 31 men and 6 officers on active duty. The Coast Guard carried out rescue and patrol work from the field, and the New York Police Department continued their use of the field as headquarters for their aviation division.

## 1936

Between January 1, 1936, and December 31, 1936, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| Passengers - | 15,424 |
| Pilot students - | 700 |
| Hangared planes - | 95[8] |

Tenants And Activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| American Escadrille - | student flying club and school, office space in Administration Building, "Room 291" *[current room # unknown]* |
| Rudolph Arnold - | Room in Administration Building for photographic business |
| Aviation Restaurant & Trading Co. - | operate restaurant, bar, and cafeteria |
| Constantine Carvouniaris - | operate refreshment stand located on the west side of Flatbush Ave. in vicinity of Hangar 6 |
| Peter Gianopoulos - | operates a temporary portable stand for sale of candies, sodas, cigarettes, and light refreshments |
| Nicholas Beazley Airplane Co. - | retail airplane parts |
| Weimar Sky Banner Co. - | sky banners for advertising purposes are prepared |
| Swiftlite - | office space in hangar 4, storage of plane |
| Erickson & Remmert - | planes stored, passenger flights, gas agents |
| Hoey Air Service - | planes stored, passenger flights, repairs done |

[8] DOD Sixty-fifth Annual Report – 1936.

| | |
|---|---|
| Gulf Oil Corp. - | sell gasoline and oil |
| Morania Oil Co. - | " |
| Colonial Beacon Oil. - | " |
| U.S. Naval & Marine Reserve Base at Floyd Bennett Field | cadet training, active duty for reserves, Room 287, Administration Building, quarters for student cadets |
| U.S. Coast Guard - | Hangar 4, patrol and rescue duties, contracts let to build the main aviation base for Coast Guard at the field |
| | Rooms 270 and 295 for quartering officers and men, Administration Building *[currently Rooms 220 & 206]* |
| New York Police - | Hangar 4, rescue and patrol duties |

Many outstanding aviation events took place at the field during 1936, including flights by Howard Hughes, Amelia Earhart, Laura Ingalls, Beryl Markham, and Louise Thadden.

## 1937

Between January 1, 1937, and December 31, 1937, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sightseeing passengers - | 20,790 |
| Planes hangared - | 135 |
| Visiting Naval planes - | 1,100[9] |

According to the report, "At the close of 1937 all the hangars, with the exception of No. 4, were occupied under permit. Hangar No. 4 houses the U. S. Coast Guard, New York City Police Aviation Division and the Swiftlite Corporation." In addition, "The United States Naval and Marine Base continued its usual operations from Hangar No. 1 and Building 'A'....There was a permanent complement of three Officers and Forty-three enlisted men at the Base."

A major addition to field activity was the commencement of American Airlines' daily Boston-to-New York/New York-to-Boston schedule. Approximately 2,400 passengers were carried on this schedule in 1937.

Tenants And Activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Rudolph Arnold - | Room in Administration Building for photographic work *[Rooms 217, 218]* |

[9] DOD Sixty-sixth Annual Report - 1937.

| | |
|---|---|
| Aviation Restaurant & Trading Corp. - | occupy certain portions of Administration Building to operate, restaurant, bar, and cafeteria |
| | occupation of brick bldg. designated as the field house located in the north parking area, for sale of refreshments, etc. |
| American Escadrille - | Administration Building, Room 291 *[current room # unknown]* |
| Salvatore Scalici - | barber shop in Admin. Bldg, Room 106 *[currently Room #103]* |
| U.S. Dept. of Agricultural/ U.S. Weather Bureau - | third floor room of control tower in Administration Building |
| Metropolitan Vending Machine Corp. - | permission to install two weighing machines |
| American Airlines - | passenger flights, maintain office in lobby of Administration Building |
| O.J. Whitney, Inc. - | occupation of Rooms 273, 274, 275 in Administration Building *[currently Rooms 214, 215, 216]* |
| | passenger flights, storage of planes, Hangar 2 |
| Erickson & Remmert - | flying school, passenger flights, plane storage, hangars 5 and 6 |
| North Beach Air Service, Inc. - | airplane storage, passenger flights |
| Brooklyn Flying Service - | passenger flights |
| Robert F. Hoey - | passenger flights |
| Swiflite Aircraft Corp. - | plane storage, office space, Hangar 4 |
| U.S. Treasury Department and U.S. Coast Guard - | plane storage, hangar 4 |
| Chester A. Snow, Jr. - | plane storage hangar 4 |
| E. C. Wiener - | office space in hangar 4 |
| Wheeler W. Parish - | plane storage |
| George C. Pomeroy - | plane storage |

| | |
|---|---|
| Charles H. Babb - | plane storage, brokers oil, office |
| U.S. Navy - | Hangar 1 |
| Nicholas-Beazley Airplane Co., Inc. | |
| Everready Motor Equipment Co., Inc. - | sells gasoline and oil |
| Colonial Beacon Oil, Co. - | " |
| Gulf Oil Corp. - | " |
| Shell Union Oil Corp. - | " |
| The Texas Company - | " |
| City Service Oil Co. - | " |
| Moravian Oil Co., Inc. - | " |
| Socony-Vacuum Oil Co., Inc. - | " |

## 1938

Between January 1, 1938, and December 31, 1938, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| American Airlines Passengers - | 1,269 |
| Sightseeing Passengers - | 18,904 |
| School group tours - | 100 |
| Private Planes hangared - | 135 |
| Coast Guard Planes hangared - | 8 |
| U.S. Navy Planes hangared - | 17 |
| Visiting Naval Aircraft - | 1,400[10] |

The permanent complement of men assigned to the U.S. Naval and Marine Base at Floyd Bennett Field consisted of nine officers and 39 men. In addition, 170 officers and 300 enlisted men were attached to, and drilled with, the Reserve Squadrons assigned to the base.

The U.S. Coast Guard discontinued storage of one amphibian in Hangar 4 and moved to their newly constructed base on the east side of Floyd Bennett Field on March 3, 1938. This base was the main aviation base of the U.S. Coast Guard on the Atlantic Coast at the time.

Tenants And Activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Erickson & Remmert - | Occupation of "Room 108" in Administration Building for blind flying instructions *[currently Room #104-105]* |
| Rudolph Arnold - | Occupation of "Room 272" for the conduct of a photographic business *[currently Rooms #217 & 218]* |

[10] DOD Sixty-seventh Annual Report - 1938. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

| | |
|---|---|
| O. J. Whitney - | Occupation of "Rooms 274 & 275" In Admin. Bld. for office purposes *[currently Rooms #215 & 216]* |
| Salvatore Scalici - | Maintenance of a barber shop in "Room 106" of Administration Building *[currently Room #103]* |
| American Escadrille - | Occupation of "Room 291" in Administration Building for office purposes *[currently ?]* |
| Aviation Restaurant & Trading Corp. - | Maintenance of restaurant, bar, and cafeteria in Administration Building |
| | Occupation of "Room 124" in Admin. Bldg. for use as an Annex to the restaurant *[currently ?]* |
| | Occupation of the field house located in the north parking area for the sale of cigars, cigarettes, and light refreshments |
| U. S. Dept. of Agriculture - (Weather Bureau) | Occupation of two rooms in Administration Building and space on roof of Hangar No. 1 *[Third floor, tower]* |
| Metropolitan Vending - Machine Corp. | Maintenance of two weighing machines in the Administration Building |
| Constantine Carvouniaris - | Maintenance of refreshment stand on the easterly side of Flatbush Avenue adjoining the north boundary fence of Floyd Bennett |
| Erickson & Remmert - | Passenger flight, plane storage, flying school, office in Administration Building |
| Transcontinental & Western Air, Inc. - | Passenger flights |
| Eastern Air Lines - | " |
| United Air Lines - | " |
| O.J. Whitney, Inc. - | " |
| Hoey Air Service, Inc. - | " |
| Swiflite Aircraft Corp. - | plane storage |
| North Beach Air Service, Inc. - | " |
| Charles H. Babb - | " |
| Chester Snow - | " |
| W. W. Parish - | " |

| | |
|---|---|
| Cities Service Oil Co. - | Sell gasoline and oil |
| Colonial Beacon Oil Co. - | " |
| Everready Motor Equipment Co. Inc. - | " |
| Gulf Oil Corp. of PA. - | " |
| Morania Oil Company, Inc. - | " |
| Shell Union Oil Corp. - | " |
| Socony-Vacuum Oil Co. Inc. - | " |
| Texas Co. - | " |

## 1939

Between January 1, 1939, and December 12, 1939, the airport reported:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sightseeing passengers - | 19,329 |
| Guided tours - | 75 |
| Private planes hangared - | 140 |
| U.S. Coast Guard planes hangared- | 7 |
| U.S. Navy planes hangared - | 19 |
| Visiting Naval aircraft - | 1,900 |
| Permanent U.S. Navy personnel - | 9 Officers, 62 Enlisted |
| Permanent U.S. Coast Guard personnel | 7 Officers, 65 Men[11] |

Only a short list of tenants was discovered in the annual report for 1939, suggesting that commercial activity was slowly winding down at the field. The tenants included:

| | |
|---|---|
| American Export Airlines, Inc. - | "Rooms 274 and 275" in Administration Building *[currently Rooms #215 & 216]* |
| Sampson Held Flying Service - | Booth in Administration Building Lobby |
| Aviation Restaurant & Trading Corp. - | Restaurant, lounge, newsstand, Field House and California-type stand |
| | Two office rooms and two basement storage rooms in Administration Building |
| Erickson & Remmert, Inc. - | plane storage, passenger flights, office in Administration Building |
| North Beach Air Services - | plane storage |
| American Bluefriesveem, Inc. - | plane storage |
| Gulf Oil Corp. - | sell gasoline and oil |

[11] DOD Sixty-eighth Annual Report - 1939.

Several miscellaneous rentals are also listed in the report. For example:

> American Airlines, Inc., acting for the Russian Embassy, leased Rooms no. 287 and 288, Admin. Bldg., from April 20th to April 30th, 1939, to handle weather for Russian Flight.
>
> Hughes Tool Corp. leased Room no. 287, Admin. Bldg., from August 15th to Sept. 5, 1939, to prepare for proposed flight by Howard Hughes.
>
> Naval Reserve Aviation Base leased Rooms no. 288 and 295, Admin. Bldg., from July 10 to Nov. 9, 1939, to house Naval personnel assigned to the World's Fair.

An important loss to the commercial success of the airport was the cessation of American Airlines' schedule from New York to Boston. On April 30, 1939, American Airlines, Inc., vacated the ticket booth in the lobby of the Administration Building. Likewise, Hoey Air Services, and much of the business of North Beach Air Services, Inc., vacated the airport in 1939.

## 1940

The negotiations for the transfer of Floyd Bennett Field from the city of New York to the Department of the Navy were underway during the years 1939-1940.[12] As a result, the records of rentals and activities at the field as reported by the Department of Docks were less complete than in former years. By 1940, the annual reports of the DOD no longer contain statistics for the field. Several documents surviving in the F.H. La Guardia papers provide a partial account of businesses and occupants remaining at the field. As in earlier years, all of the tenants listed did not necessarily affect the use of the Administration Building. Occasionally the use of rooms in the building were noted. For example, the 1940 list includes:

| | |
|---|---|
| Metropolitan Vending Machine Corp. - | For weighing machine in basement, Admin. Bldg. |
| Sampson Held Flying Services - | For office in lobby *[currently Room 101]* |
| A.J. Baxter Flying School - | Room in Administration Building *[currently Room 111]* |
| Erickson & Remmert - | For flying school office, "Room 108" *[currently Room 109]* |
| Salvatore Scalici - | For a barber shop, "Room 106" *[currently Room 103]* |
| Dr. Erwin Ray - | Flight surgeon for medical quarters, "Room 145" *[currently Room 119 & 120]* |

[12] F. H. La Guardia Papers, Box 3365, folders 6, 7, and 8. Municipal Archives, City of New York.

| | |
|---|---|
| Aviation Restaurant & Trading Company - | Restaurant and Grill *[currently Room 117.]* |
| | Cocktail Lounge *[currently Room 110]* |
| | Candy & Newsstand *[currently Room 122]* |
| | Office *[currently Room 123]* |
| | Storeroom *[currently Room 106]* |
| | Office *[currently Room 206]* |
| | Storeroom and Icebox, basement *[currently Rooms 008-010 & 025]* |
| Deane Flying School - | For office, "Room 118" *[currently Rooms 108 & 109]* |
| Sylvester Pittoni - | For office, flying school, "Room 115" *[currently Room 107]* |
| Rudy Arnold - | For photography business, "Room 272" *[currently Room 217 & 218]* |
| Civil Aeronautics Authority - | For office, "Room 273" *[currently Room 214]* |
| American Export Airlines - | For offices, "Rooms 274-275" *[currently Rooms 215 & 216]* |
| U.S. Naval Reserve - | "Room 270" *[currently Room 220]* |
| Marine Corps Reserve - | Rooms in Administration Building |
| --- | --- |
| Bluefries, New York Inc. - | passenger flights, storage, freight |
| H.J. Kohlman - | " |
| Frey Instrument Co. - | " |
| Cities Service Oil Co. - | sell gasoline and oil |
| Colonial Beacon Oil Co. - | " |
| Morania Oil Co. - | " |
| The Texas Co. - | " |
| Shell Oil Co. - | " |
| Socony Vacuum Oil Co. - | " |

The airport was formally removed from city jurisdiction, and was operating as a U.S. Naval Air Station, by June 1941. No useful records of occupants and activities at and around the Administration Building were found from this date forward, except for two floor plans of the building dating to 1942 and 1946, which note the function of the rooms. The changing function of the rooms is reflective of the new role of the naval air station as an important element of the national defense system both during and shortly after World War II.

# ROOM-USE CHARTS, 1930-1946

The following charts of the changing uses of certain rooms in the Administration Building as described previously were compiled for easy reference. The charts are the best reflection of the use of spaces in the building over time, as determined from DOD annual reports and existing floor plans that include room designations.

Charts compiled using:

Original drawings - 1930
Tenant List w/labeled floor plans - Feb. 13, 1941
Set of floor plans - ca. 1942
Set of floor plans - 1946, USN

## Room Functions Over Time

### Basement

| | Room 001 | Room 002 | Room 003 | Room 004 | Room 005 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | unassigned space | not extant | corridor | public health | storeroom |
| **1941** | large room, center of basement | boiler room and baggage area | corridor | store room | transformer room |
| **ca. 1942** | unknown | unknown | corridor | unknown | not known |
| **ca. 1946** | NATS office, NATS waiting room, Red Cross office | boiler room with new boiler/heater/ tank, etc. | corridor | armory | electric |
| **1994** | open space | boiler room | corridor | NPS lockers | electric |

| | Room 006 | Room 008-010 | Room 013 | Room 014 | Room 018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | storeroom | express & freight | Customs room | vestibule | not extant |
| **1941** | transformer room | storeroom of concessionaire | storeroom | vestibule | closet |
| **ca. 1942** | unknown | unknown | unknown | unknown | unknown |
| **1946** | electric | post office | post office | vestibule | closet |
| **1994** | electric | NPS offices | NPS office | vestibule | closet |

**Basement (con't.)**

| | Room 021 | Room 022 | Room 023-024 | Room 025 | Room 027 | Room 028 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | vestibule | corridor | restaurant kitchen | field employees, timekeeper offices | field force office | men's toilet |
| **1941** | vestibule | corridor | electric room | concessionaire store room w/ice box & paint room | locker room | toilet |
| **ca. 1942** | unknown | corridor | unknown | unknown | unknown | toilet |
| **1946** | vestibule | corridor | electrical room | cafeteria | storage | men's & women's toilet |
| **1994** | vestibule | corridor | vacant | storage | vacant | toilet |

## Room Functions Over Time

### First Floor

| | Room 101 | Room 102 | Room 103 | Room 104-105 | Room 106 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | lobby & waiting room, info booth, clerk's booth | telephones | telegraph office | press room | men's toilet |
| **1934** | | | barber shop | | |
| **1937** | lobby booth, American Airlines | | barber shop | | |
| **1938** | lobby booth, American Airlines | | barber shop | Erickson &Remmert flying school | |
| **1939** | lobby booth, Sampson Held flying service | | barber shop | | |
| **1941** | lobby booth, Sampson Held flying service | public telephones | barber shop | Erickson & Remmert flying school office | concessionaire storeroom |
| **ca. 1942** | lobby, officer of the day office | not labeled | telephone central | chart room & a rest room | NATS flight control |
| **1946** | lobby, foyer, information office | office | telephone switchboard office | flight crew locker room & telephone operator rest room | flight control |
| **1994** | exhibits, functions | NPS district operations | NPS district operations | NPS district operations | vacant |

**First Floor (con't.)**

| | Room 107 | Room 108 | Room 109 | Room 110 | Room 111 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | barber shop | post office | post office | lounge | baggage |
| **1941** | Pittoni flying school | Deane flying school | Deane flying school | cocktail lounge | Baxter flying services |
| **ca. 1942** | NATS general office | office | operations officer | aerology operations (2) offices | *eliminated* |
| **1946** | flight control | secretary office w/closet & wash room | operations officer | aerology operations (1) office | |
| **1994** | vacant | vacant | vacant | conference/meeting room | projection room |

| | Room 112 | Room 113 | Room 114 | Room 115 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | office | port manager | unlabeled | pantry |
| **1941** | clerk's office | operations office | switchboard | kitchen |
| **ca. 1942** | *part of* NATS office | *part of* NATS office | transportation office | office |
| **1946** | *part of* transport service office | *part of* transport service office | transportation office | office |
| **1994** | vacant | vacant | defunct circuit board | storage |

**First Floor (con't.)**

| | Room 117 | Room 118 | Room 119 | Room 120 | Room 121 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | restaurant | *not extant* | *not extant*, Dept. of Commerce office here | Dept. of Commerce office & unspecified office | women's toilet |
| **1941** | restaurant and grill | toilet | *not extant* | flight surgeon office | women's toilet |
| **ca. 1942** | disbursing office | head (toilet) | closets in accounts officer room | accounts officer | disbursing crew |
| **1946** | disbursing office | men's toilet | hall, closet, wash room to naval air bases office | naval air bases office | disbursing |
| **1994** | function room | women's toilet | handicap toilet | concession storage | concession storage |

| | Room 122 | Room 123 |
|---|---|---|
| **1930** | newsstand and women's rest room | radio room |
| **1941** | newsstand and ladies' lounge | concessionaire's office |
| **ca. 1942** | paymaster office | disbursing officer |
| **1946** | waiting room and disbursing | office |
| **1994** | concessionaire storage | concessionaire's office |

## Room Functions Over Time

### Second Floor

| | Room 201 | Room 202 | Room 203 | Room 204 | Room 205 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | balcony/corridors | office | office | no label w/bath & closet | no label w/bath & closet |
| **1941** | balcony/corridors | empty | empty | empty | restaurant office *(#296)* |
| **ca. 1942** | balcony/ corridors | legal office | public relations office | printing room | AWVS room |
| **1946** | balcony/ corridors | legal office | public relations office | duplicating room | women officers of AWVS |
| **1994** | balcony/corridors | vacant | vacant | vacant | vacant |

| | Room 206 | Room 207 | Room 208 | Room 209 | Room 210 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | no label *w/bath & closet* | pilots' dormitory *w/bath & closet* | pilots' pormitory *w/bath & closet* | pilots' dormitory *w/bath & closet* | pilots' room |
| **1941** | U.S. Coast Guard | surveyor's office | engineer's office | empty | empty |
| **ca. 1942** | reception room | captain's cabin | watch-cabin | central office | central office |
| **1946** | officers records | senior duty officer | officer of the day | stenographers | central office files |
| **1994** | vacant | vacant | vacant | vacant | vacant |

**Second Floor (con't.)**

| | Room 211 | Room 212 | Room 213 | Room 201a-S | Room 214 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | not extant | city officials | men's toilet | linen & porter closets | parlor |
| **1937** | | | | | O.J. Whitney, inc. *(#273)* |
| **1938** | | | | | O.J. Whitney, inc. *(#273)* |
| **1941** | not extant | manager's office | men's toilet | closet | Civil Aeronautics Authority *(#275)* |
| **ca. 1942** | captain's aide | captain's quarters | head | unlabeled | aerology |
| **1946** | administrative assistant | commanding officer *w/bath & closet* | women's toilet | linen closets | insurance |
| **1994** | vacant | vacant | men's toilet | vacant | vacant |

| | Room 215 | Room 216 | Room 217 | Room 218 | Room 219 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | bedroom *w/bath & closet* | bedroom *w/bath & closet* | maid's room *w/bath & closet* | maid's room | no label w/ *bath & closet* |
| **1937** | O.J.Whitney, Inc. passenger flights *(274)* | O.J. Whitney, Inc. *(#275)* | Rudy Arnold photography *(#272)* | Rudy Arnold photography *(#272)* | |
| **1938** | O.J. Whitney, Inc. *(#274)* | | Rudy Arnold photography | Rudy Arnold photography | |
| **1941** | American Export Airlines *(#274)* | American Export Airlines | Rudy Arnold photography | Rudy Arnold photography | blueprints |
| **ca. 1942** | executive officer *w/ bath & closet* | executive officer *w/ bath & closet* | unlabeled | intelligence office | safety engineer *w/ bath & closet* |
| **1946** | executive officer *w/vestibule & bath* | executive officer *w/ bath & closet* | office *w/bath & closet* | demobilization office | demobilization office *w/bath & closet* |
| **1994** | vacant | vacant | vacant | vacant | vacant |

**Second Floor (con't.)**

| | **Room 220** | **Room 221** | **Room 222** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1930** | unlabeled *w/bath & closet* | office | office |
| **1934** | U.S. Coast Guard *(#270)* | | |
| **1935** | U.S. Coast Guard *(#270)* | | |
| **1941** | U.S. Naval Reserve | empty | dock master |
| **ca. 1942** | personnel office *w/ bath & closet* | personnel office | personnel office |
| **1946** | personnel office *w/ bath & closet* | personnel office | personnel office |
| **1994** | vacant | vacant | vacant |

# VI. HISTORIC DRAWINGS OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

*Editor's note: The following copies of historic drawings have been reduced by varying amounts to fit the format of this report. They should be considered as illustrative of the original drawings that are available.*

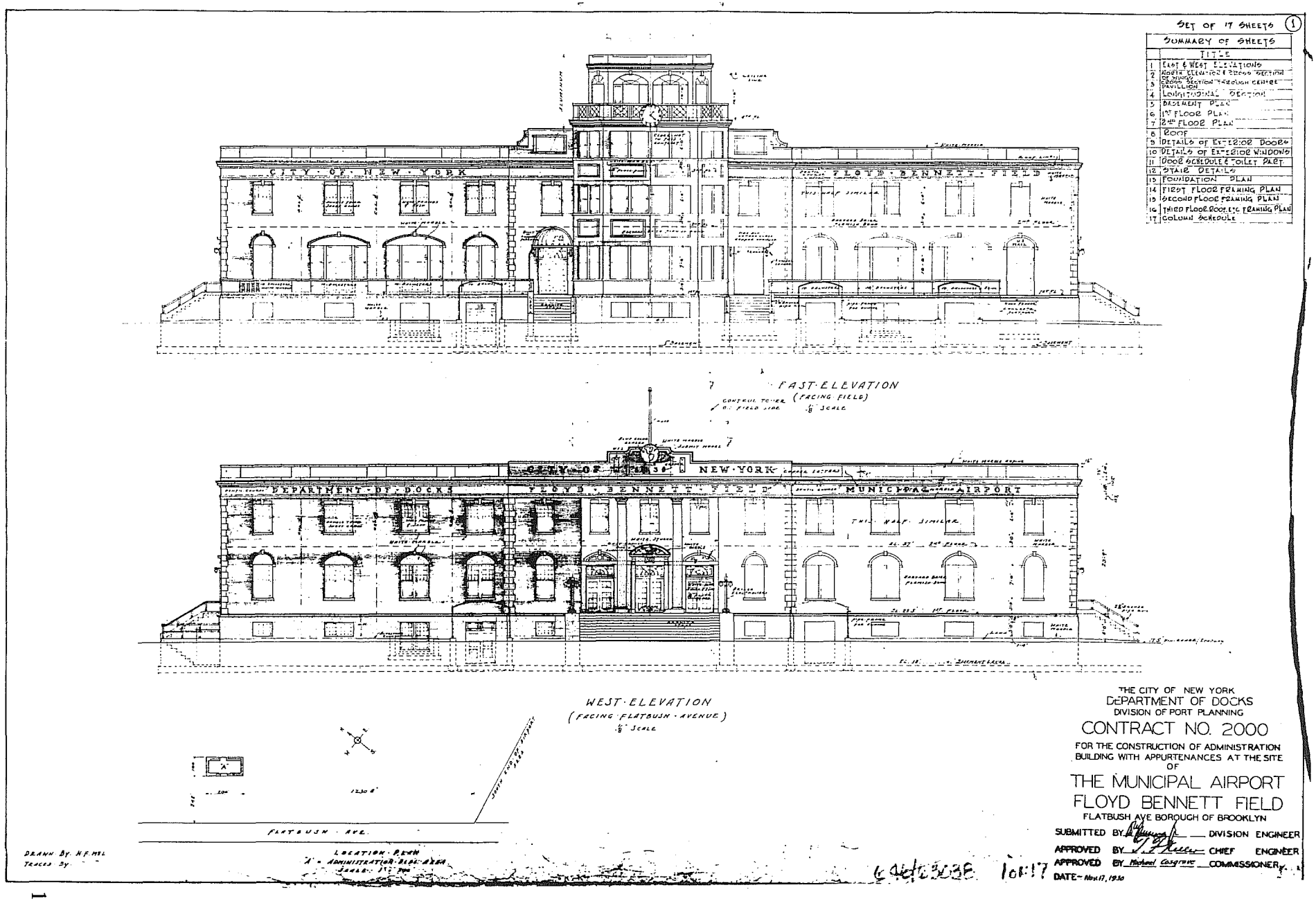



**Figure 51.** East and west elevations, November 17, 1930.

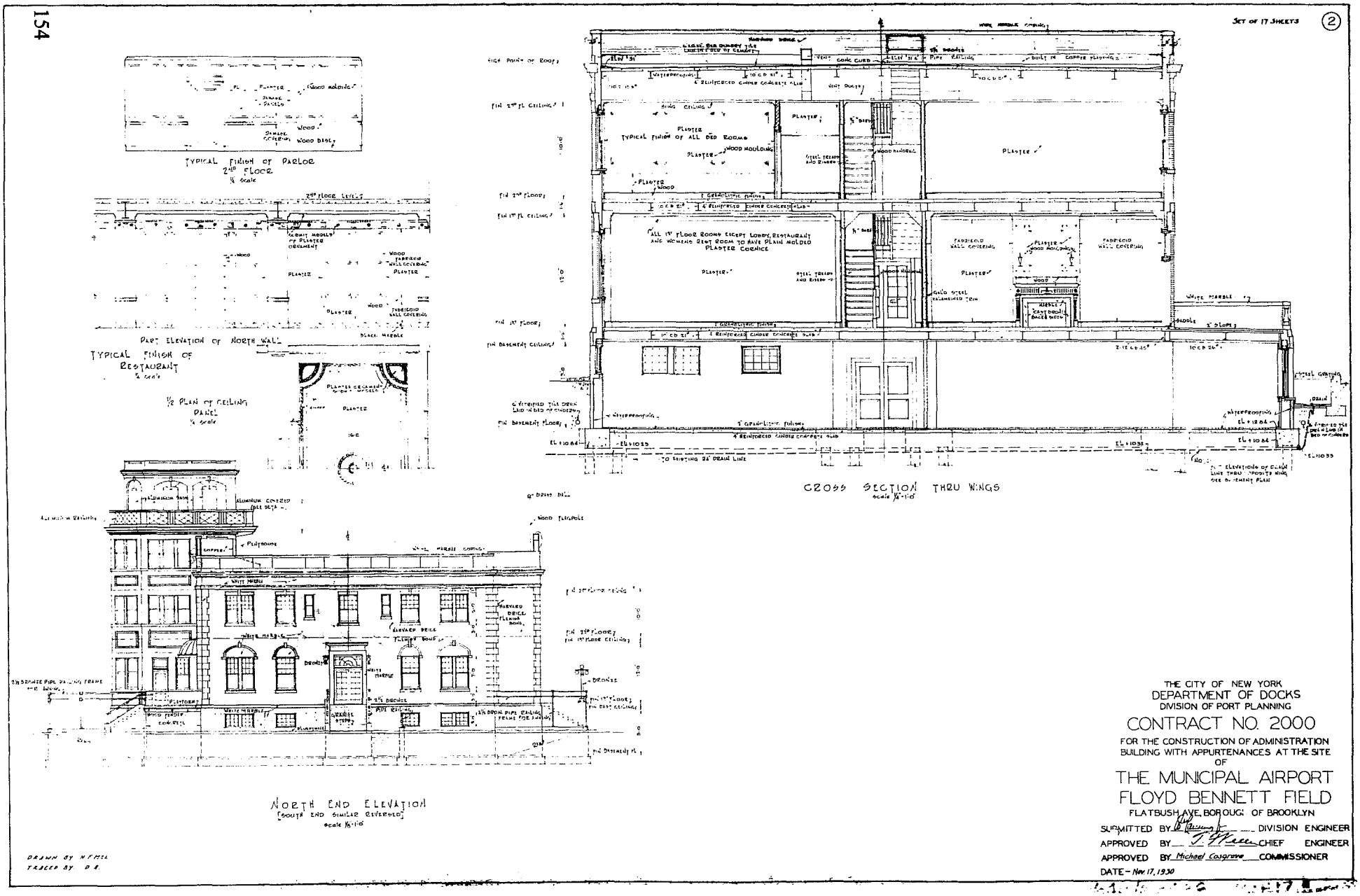



**Figure 52.** North-end elevation and cross-section through wings, November 17, 1930.

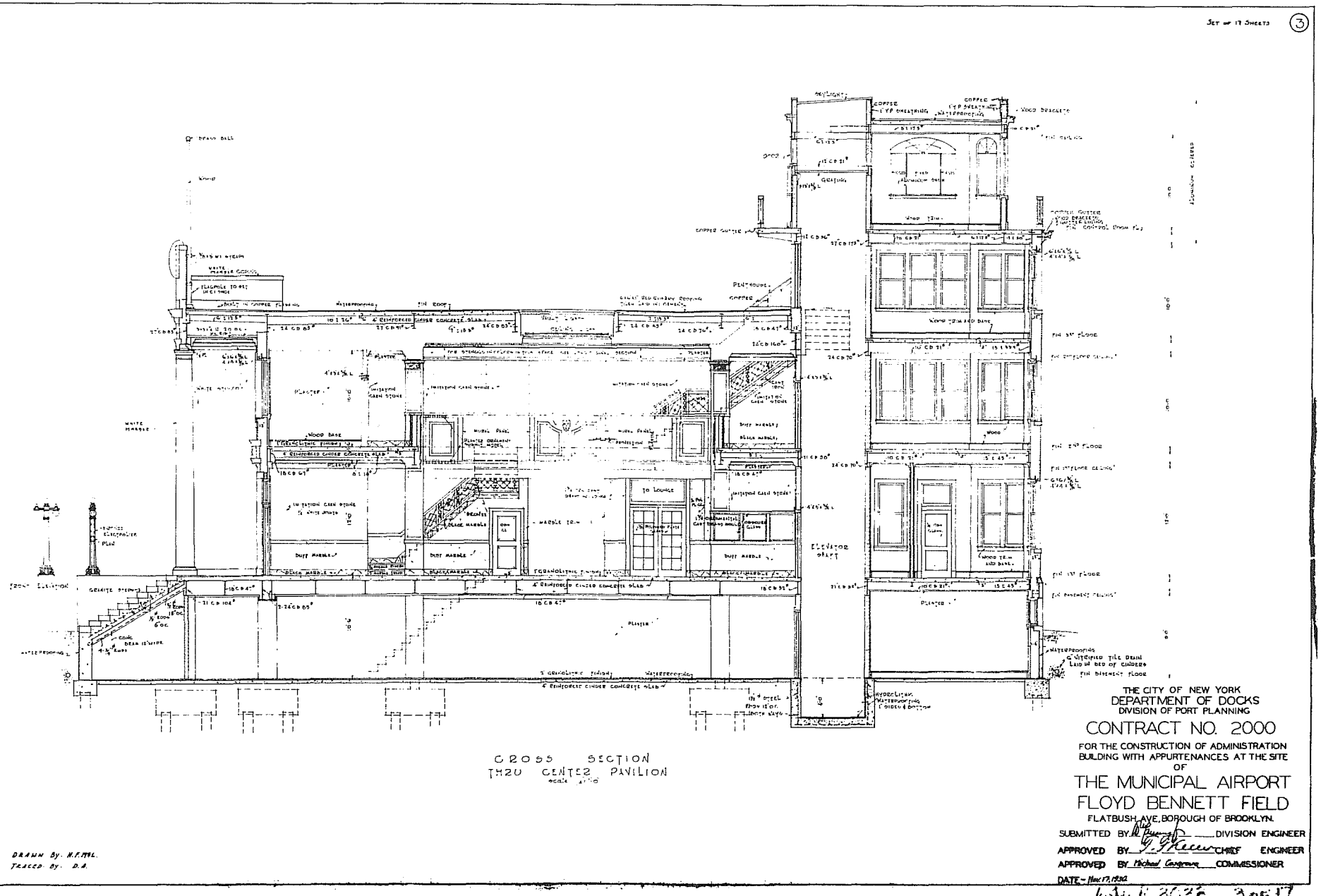



**Figure 53. Cross-section through center pavilion, November 17, 1930.**

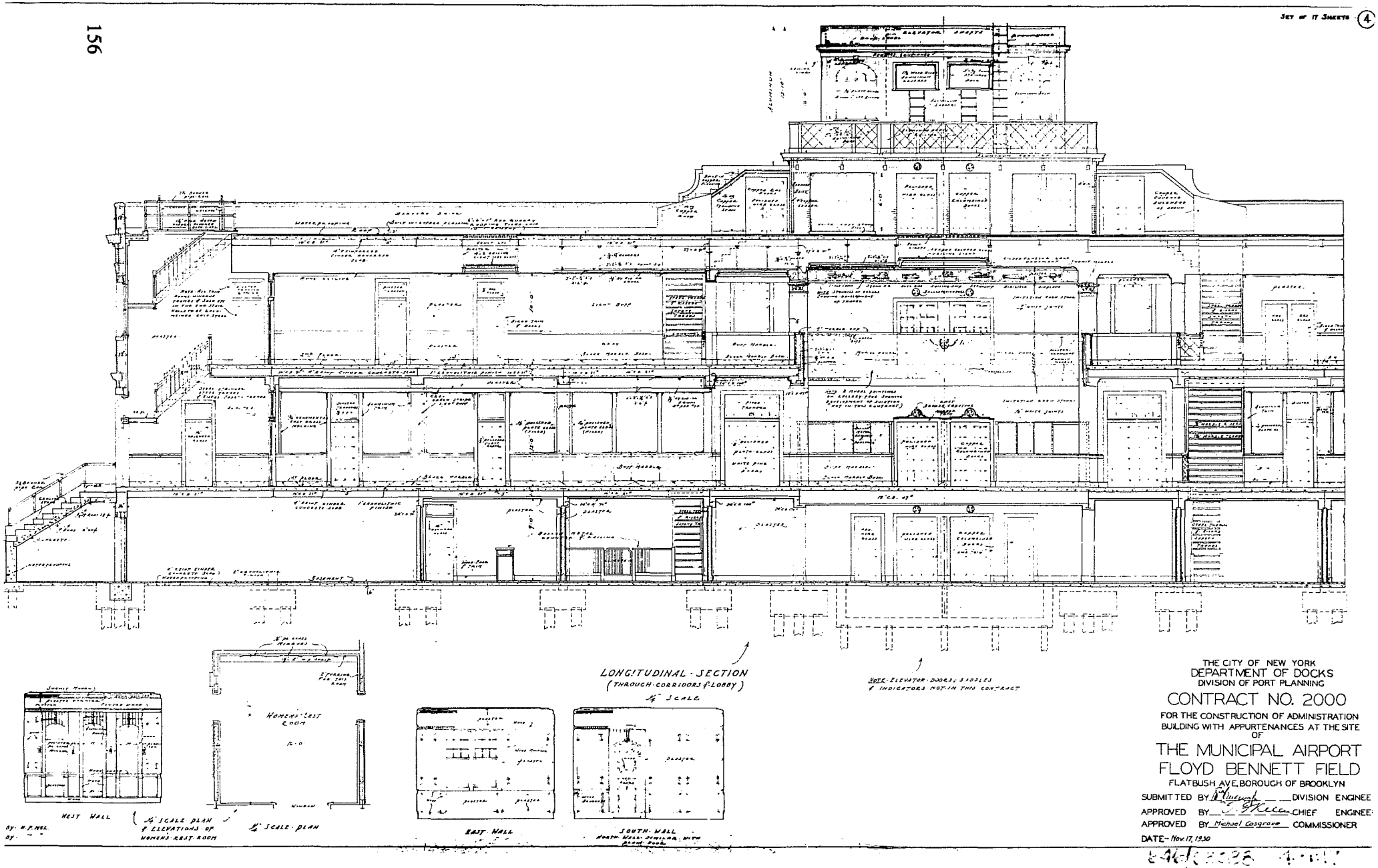
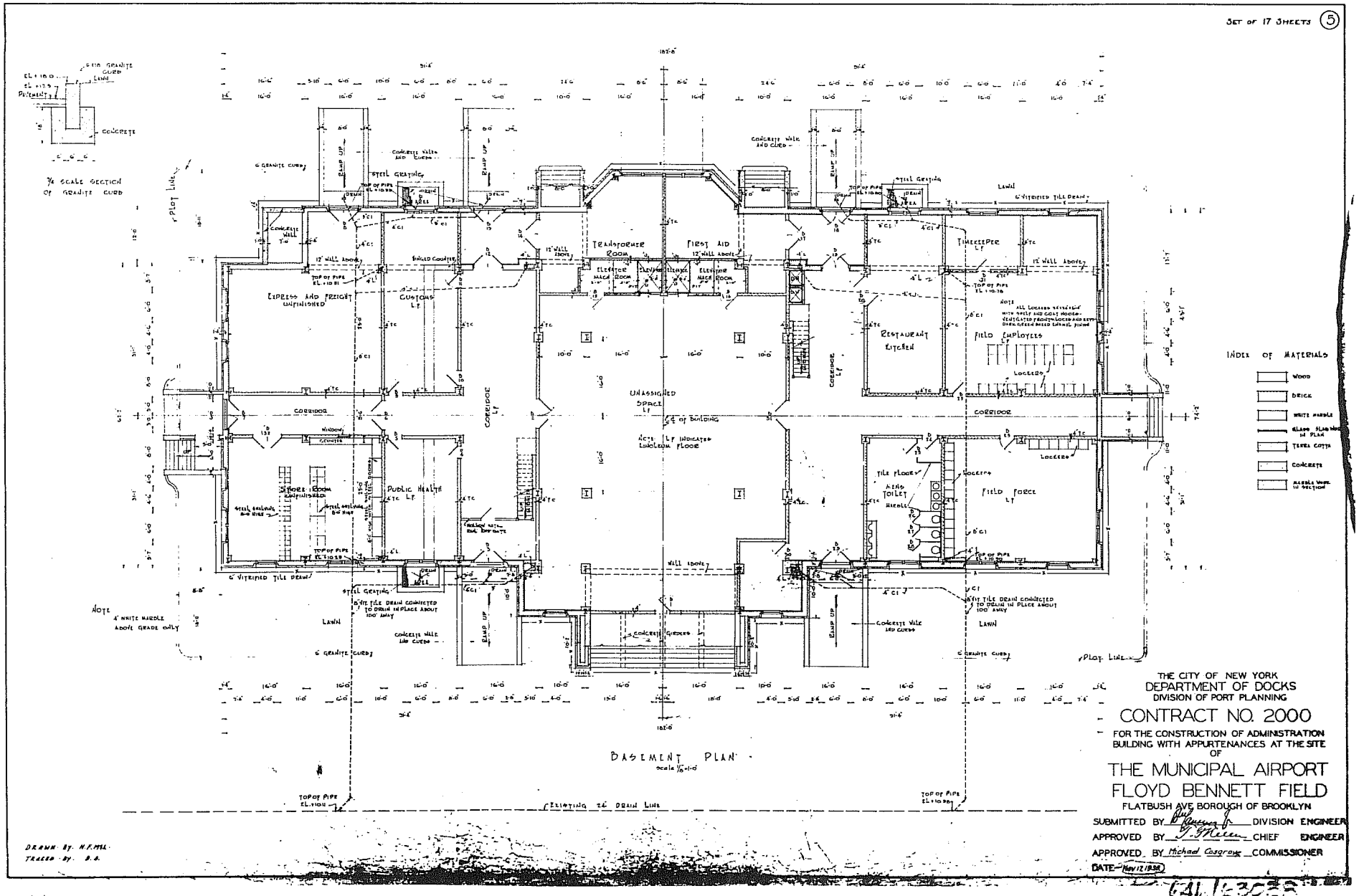



**Figure 54.** Longitudinal section through corridors and lobby, November 17, 1930.




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**Figure 55. Basement plan, November 17, 1930.**

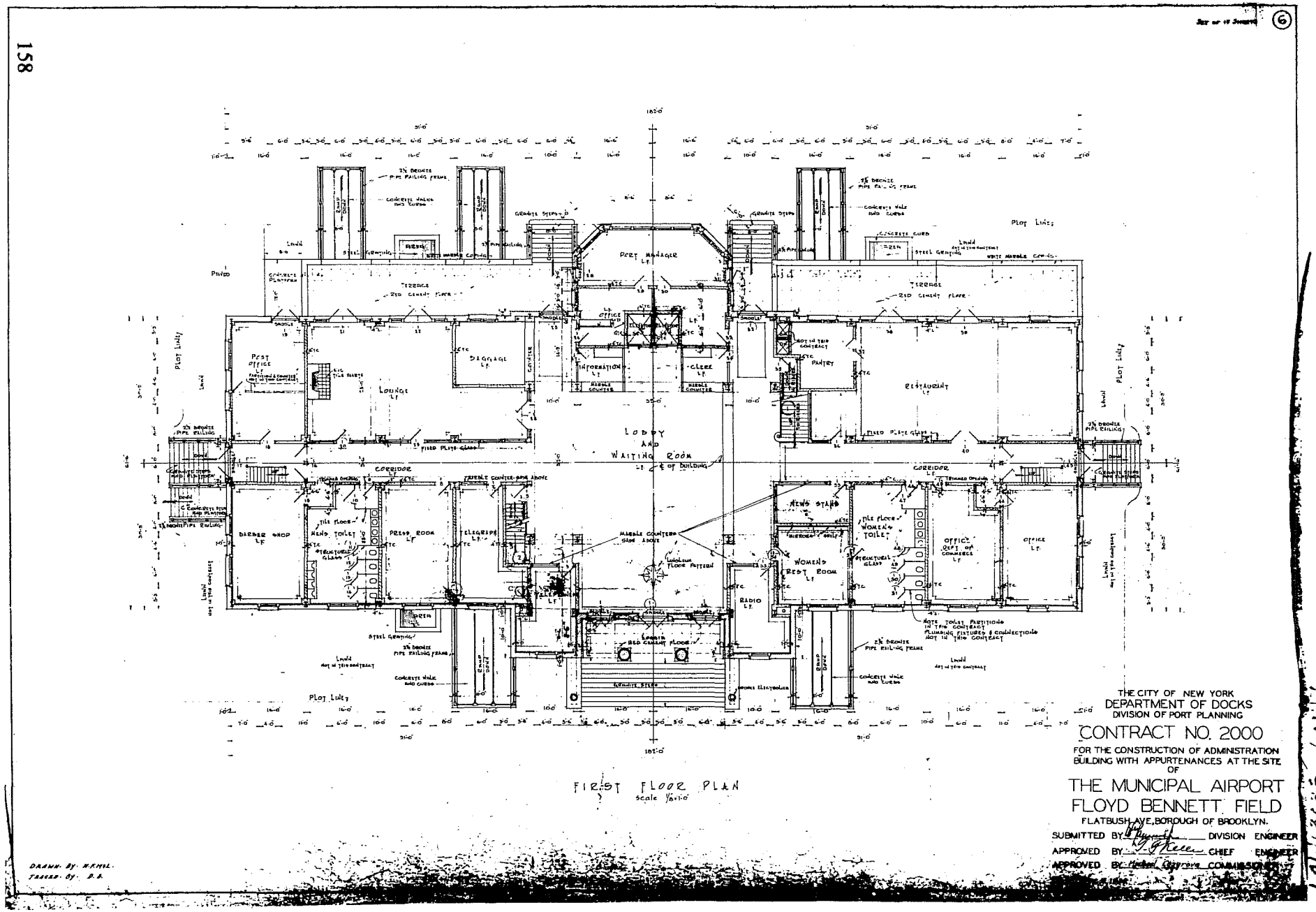



**Figure 56.** First-floor plan, November 17, 1930.

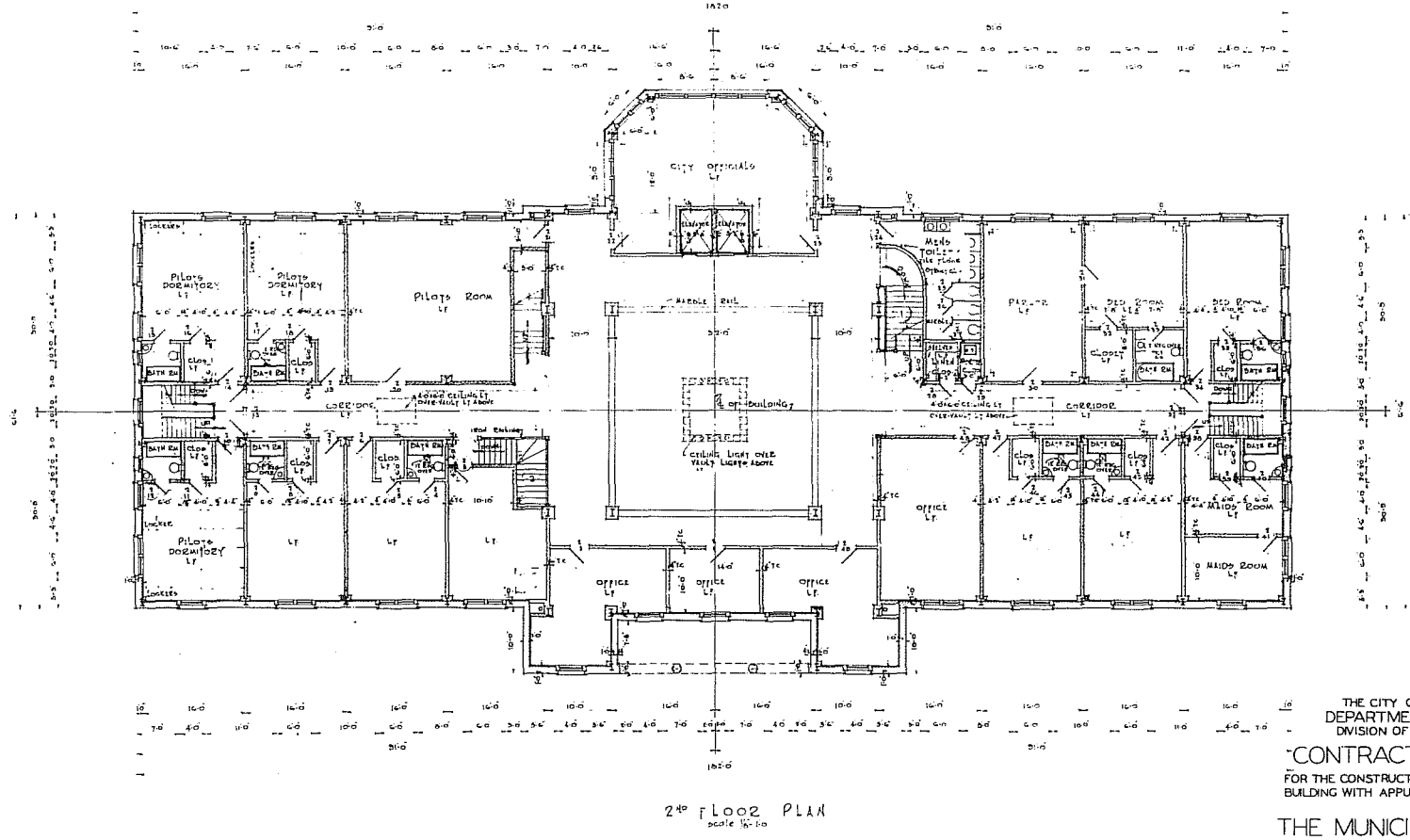



**Figure 57.** Second-floor plan, November 17, 1930.

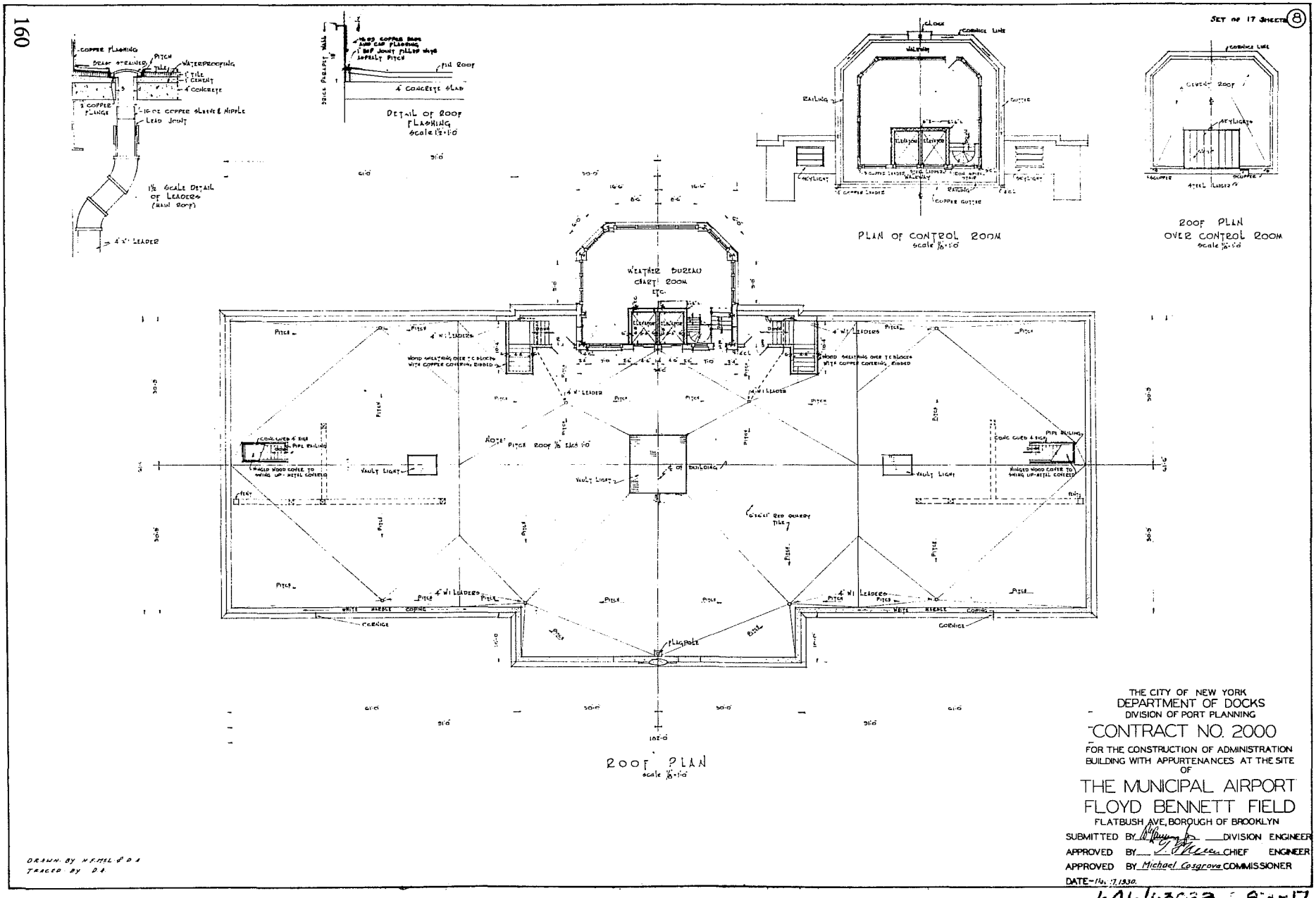



**Figure 58.** Roof plan and plan of control room, November 17, 1930.

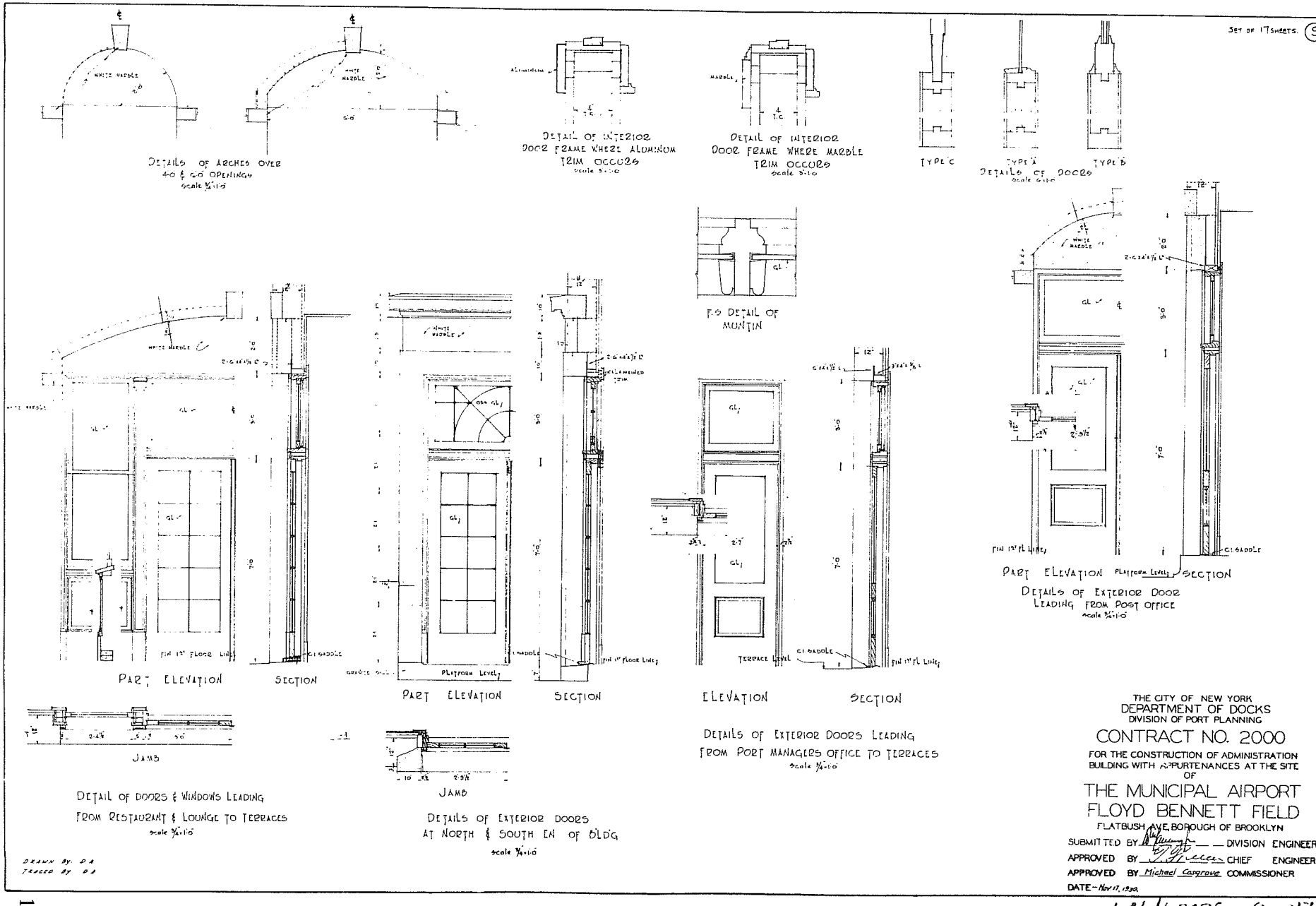





**Figure 59. Details of doorways and windows, November 17, 1930.**

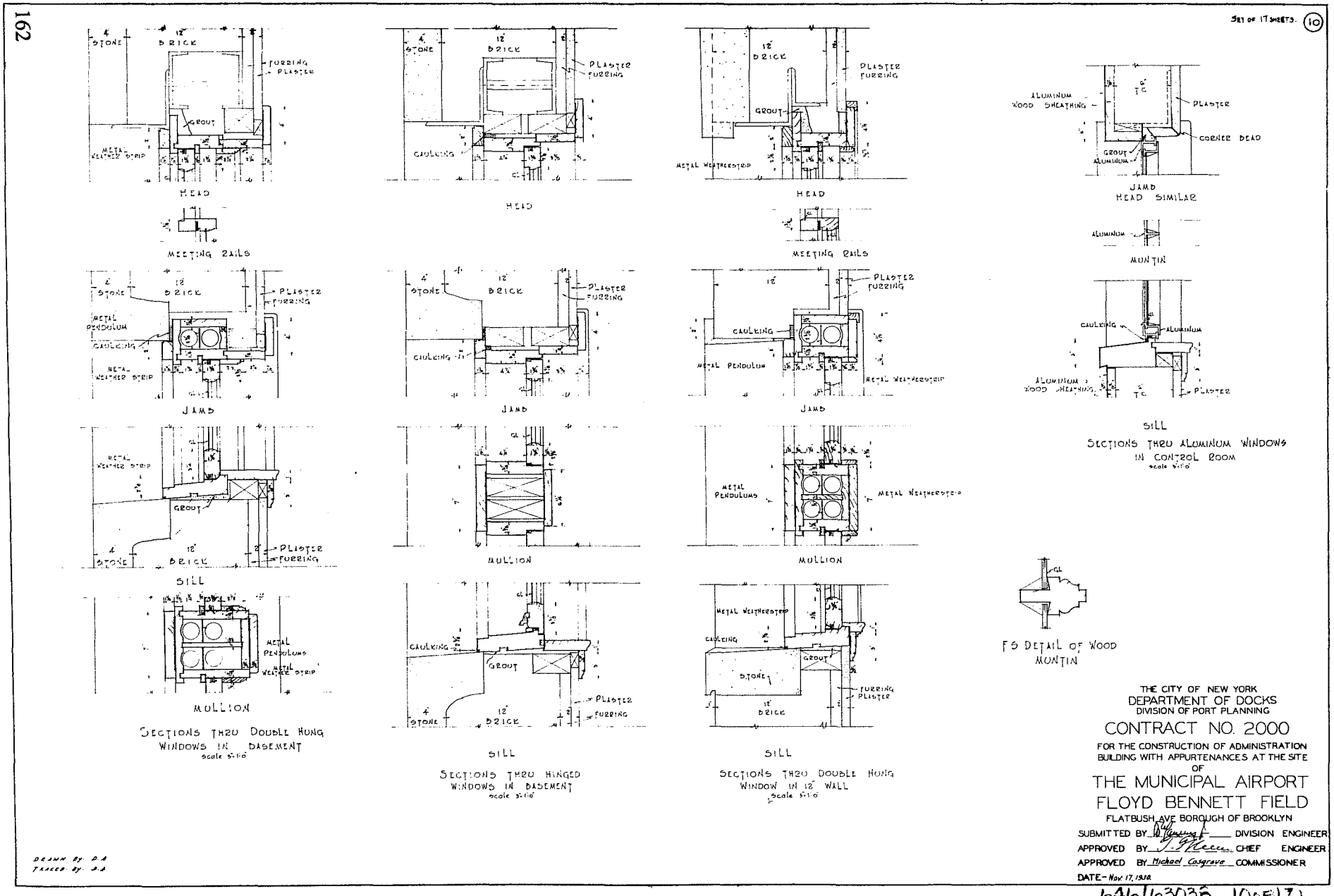



**Figure 60.** Sections through double-hung windows, November 17, 1930.

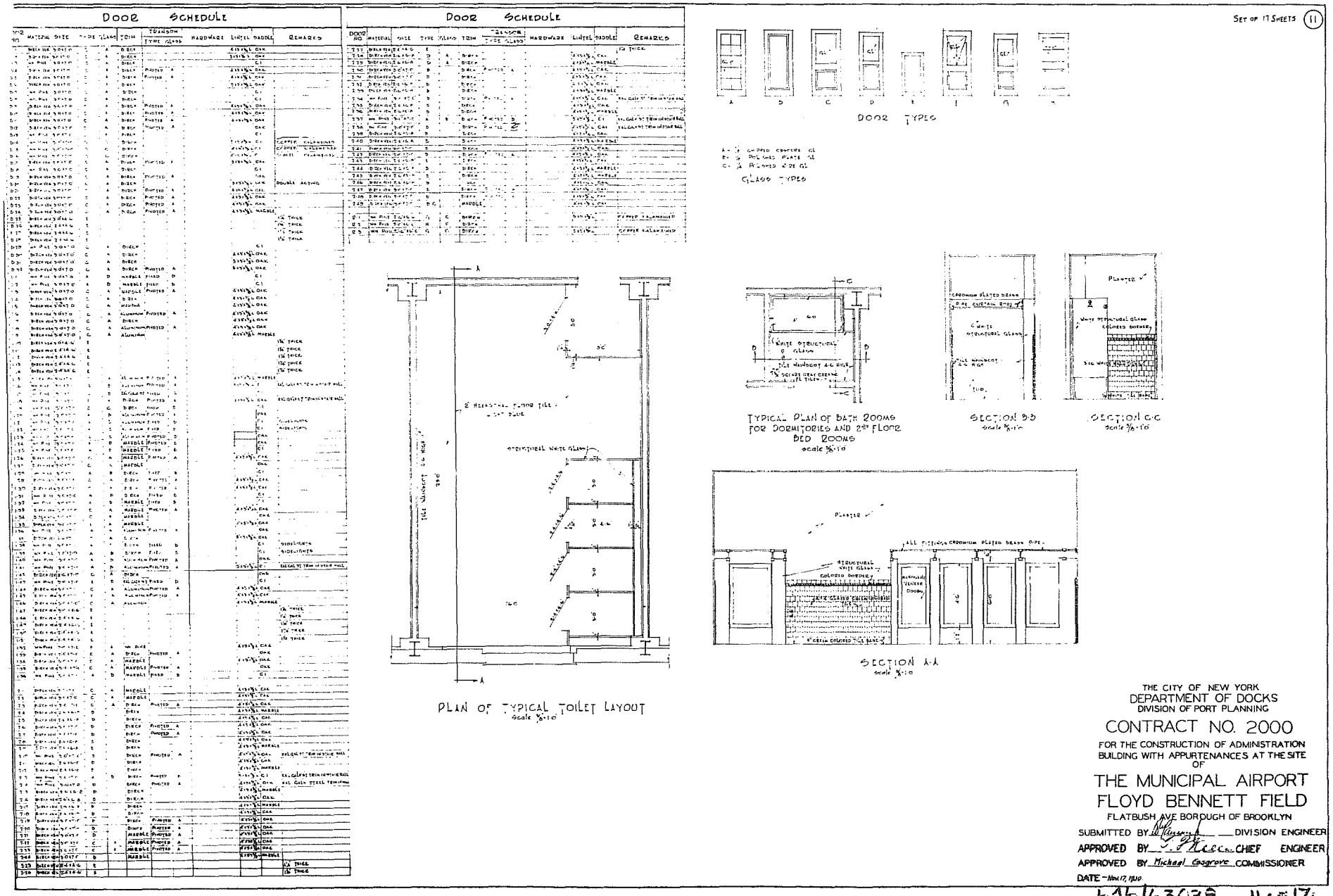



**Figure 61.** Door schedule, November 17, 1930.

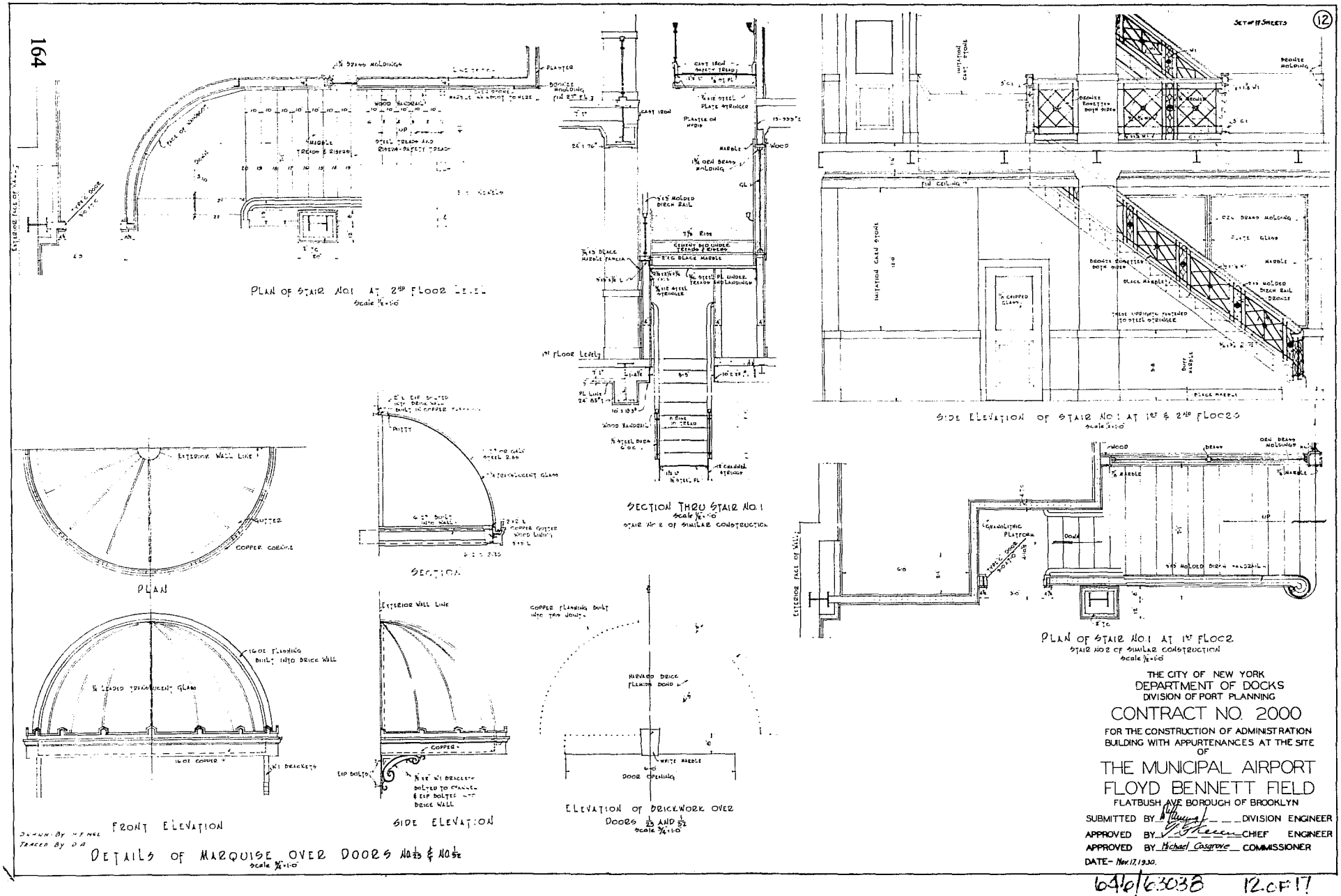



**Figure 62.** Details of marquees over doorways D 1-24 and D 1-31, and plan, elevation, and section of Stairway #5, November 17, 1930. (Note: The numbering of these doorways and the stairway on the drawing differs from the numbering system used by this report.)

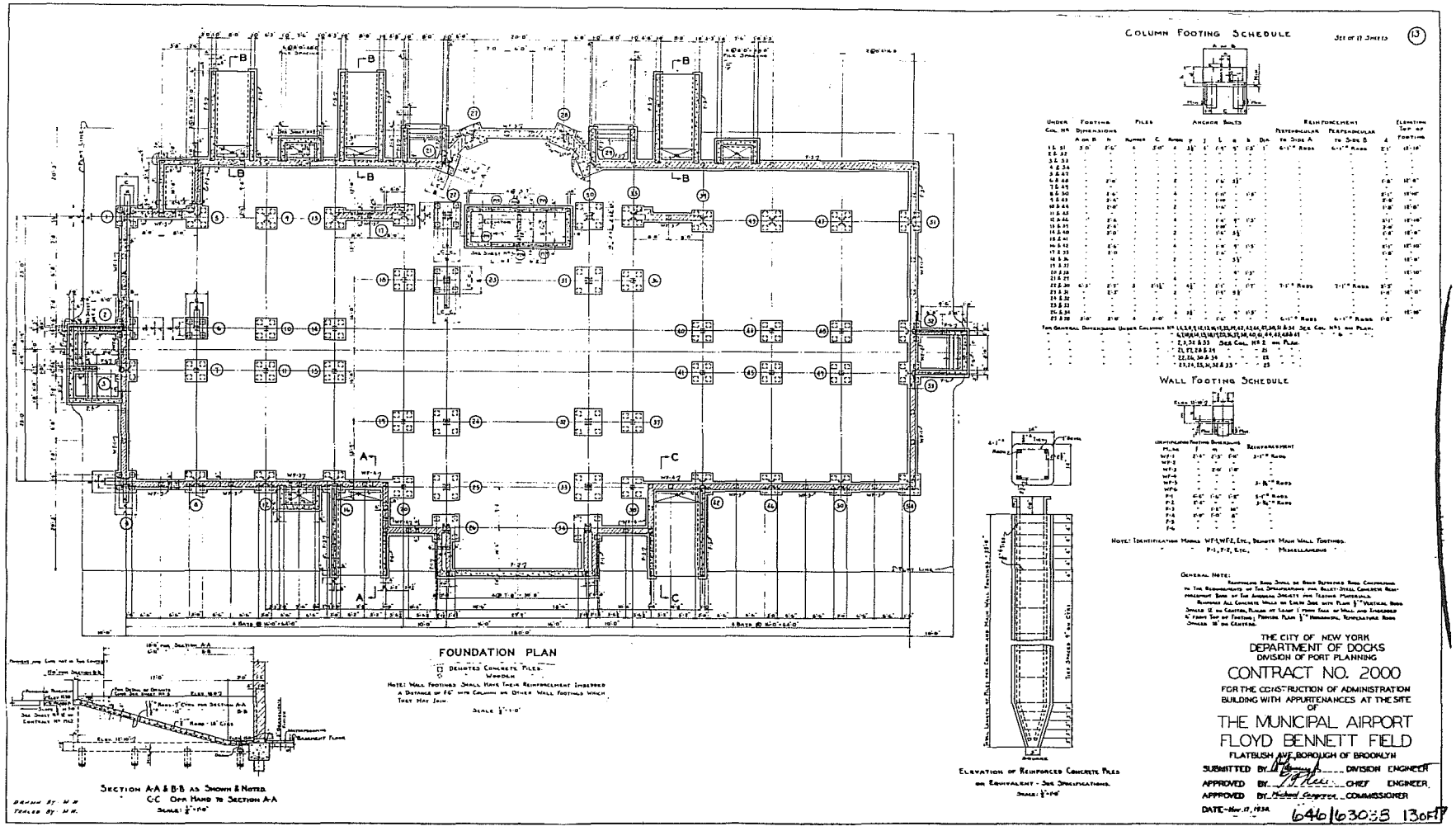



**Figure 63.** Foundation plan and footing schedules, November 17, 1930.

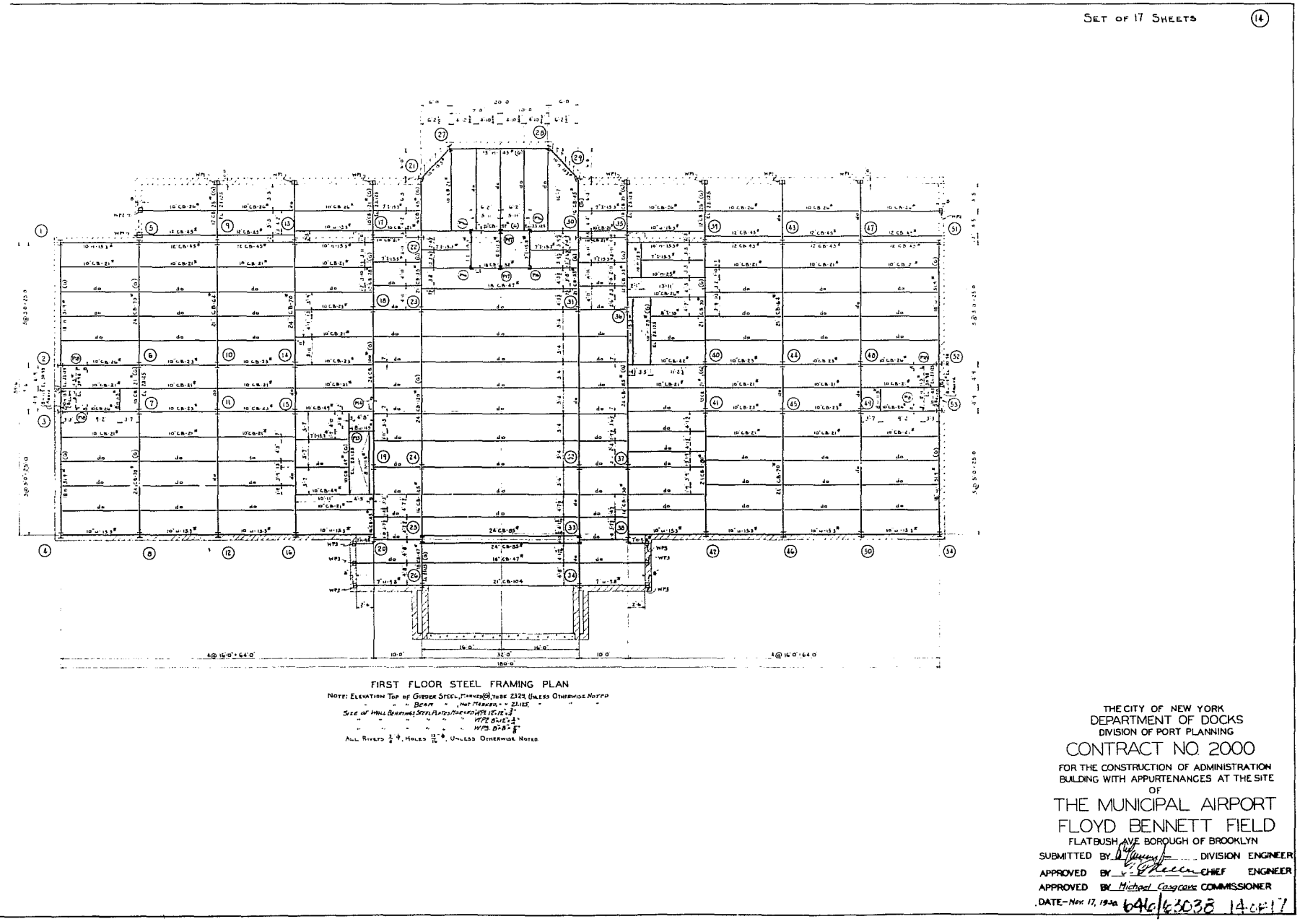
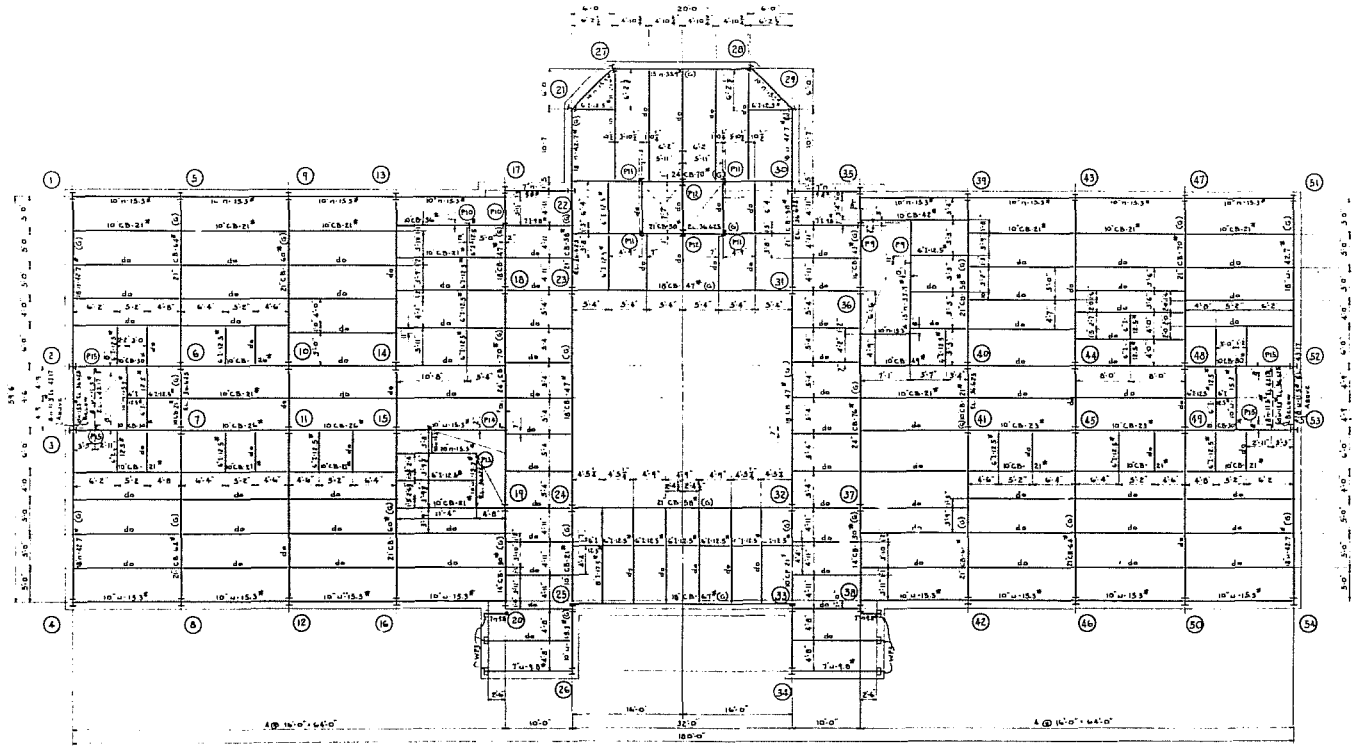



**Figure 64.** First-floor steel framing plan, November 17, 1930.



SECOND FLOOR FRAMING PLAN

NOTE: ELEVATION TOP OF GIRDER STEEL MARKED (G) TO BE 36.792, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
- - BEAM - (NOT MARKED) - - 36.625, - - -
SIZE OF WALL PLATES MARKED WP3 - 8"x8"x⅝".
ALL RIVETS ⅞", HOLES 15/16", UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF DOCKS
DIVISION OF PORT PLANNING

CONTRACT NO. 2000

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADMINISTRATION BUILDING WITH APPURTENANCES AT THE SITE OF

THE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
FLOYD BENNETT FIELD

FLATBUSH AVE., BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

SUBMITTED BY _____ DIVISION ENGINEER
APPROVED BY _____ CHIEF ENGINEER
APPROVED BY Michael Gaynor COMMISSIONER
DATE - Nov. 17, 1930. 646 & 3028 15 of 17



**Figure 65. Second-floor framing plan, November 17, 1930.**

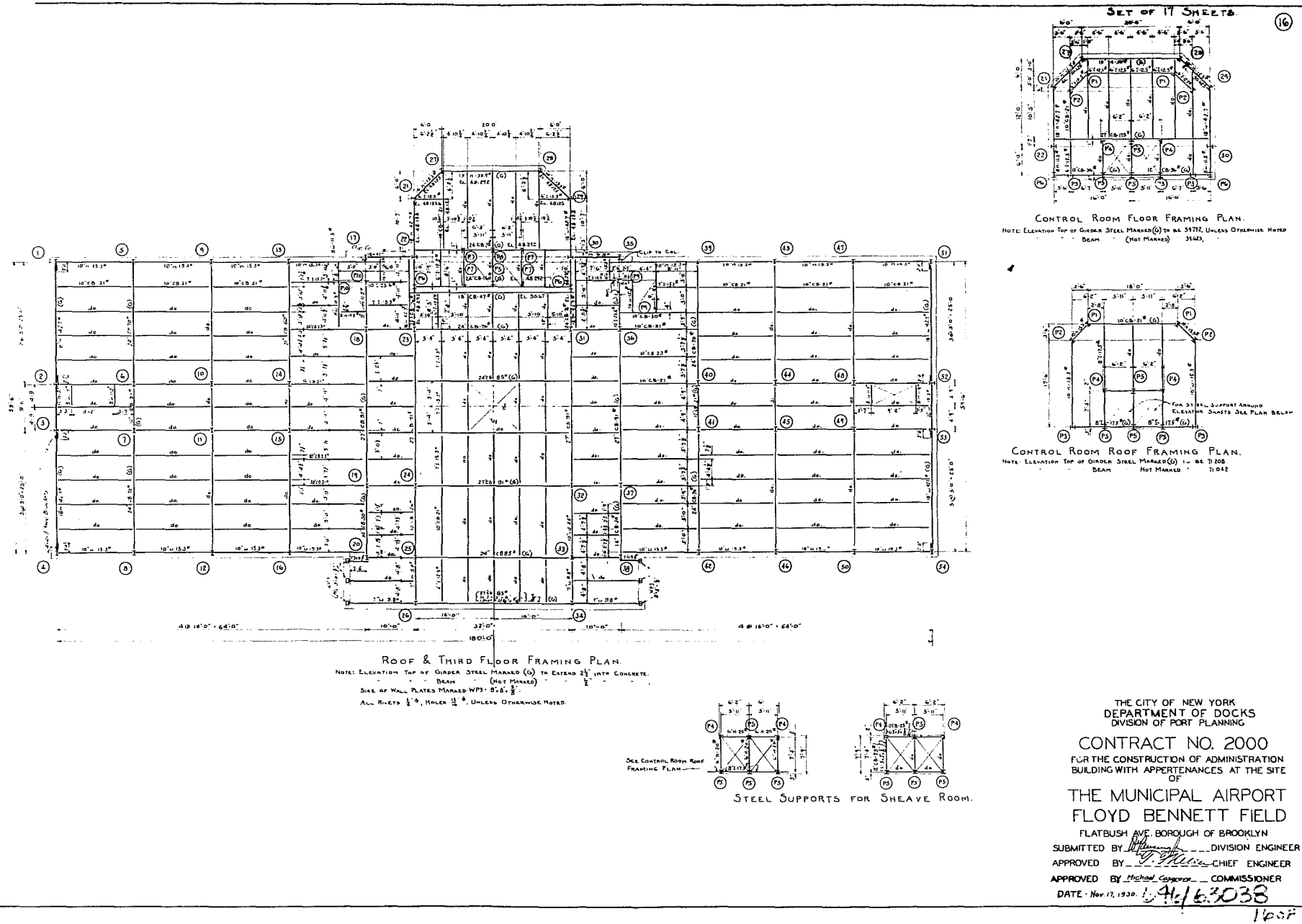



**Figure 66.** Roof and third-floor framing plan, November 17, 1930.

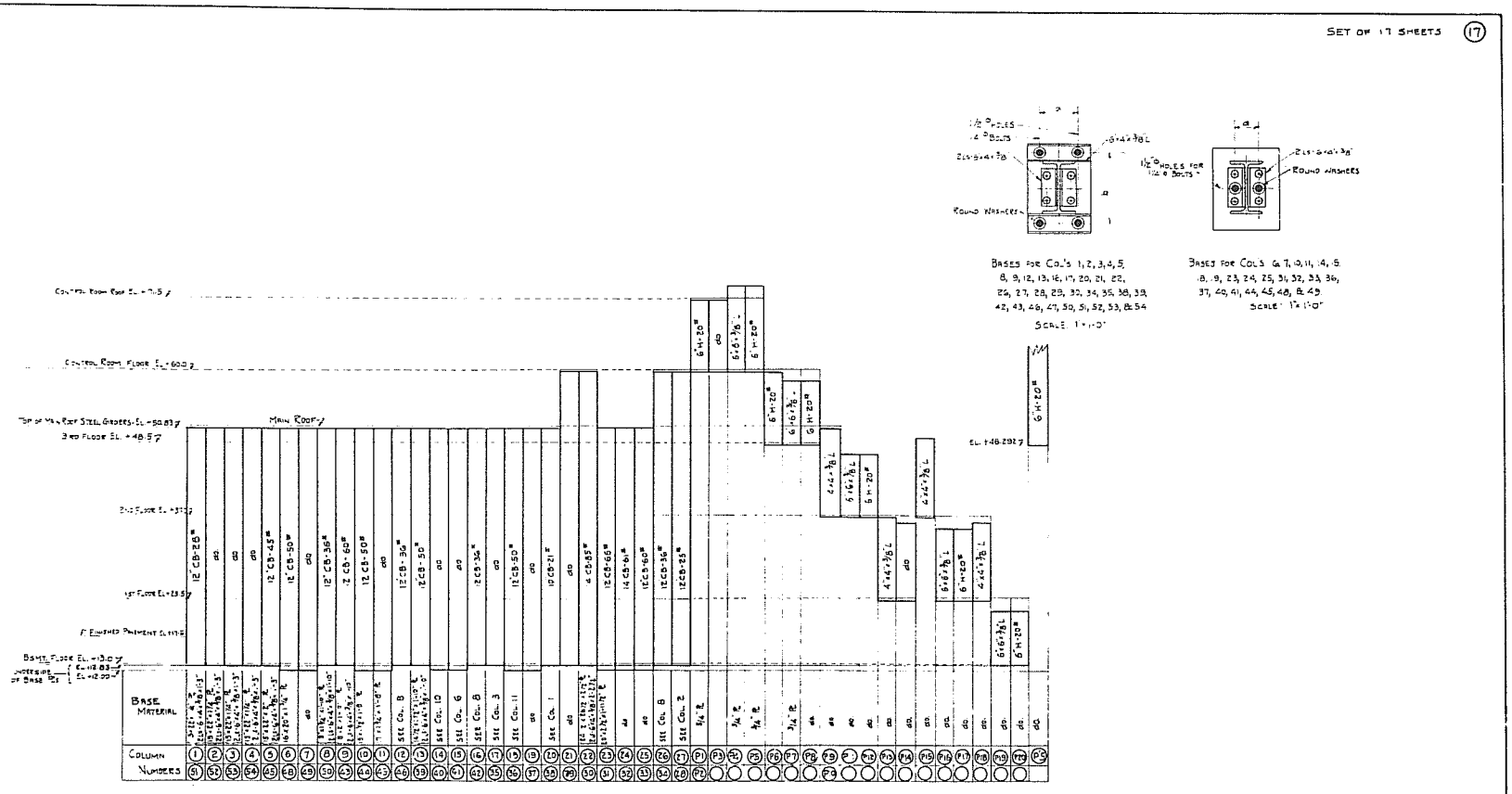
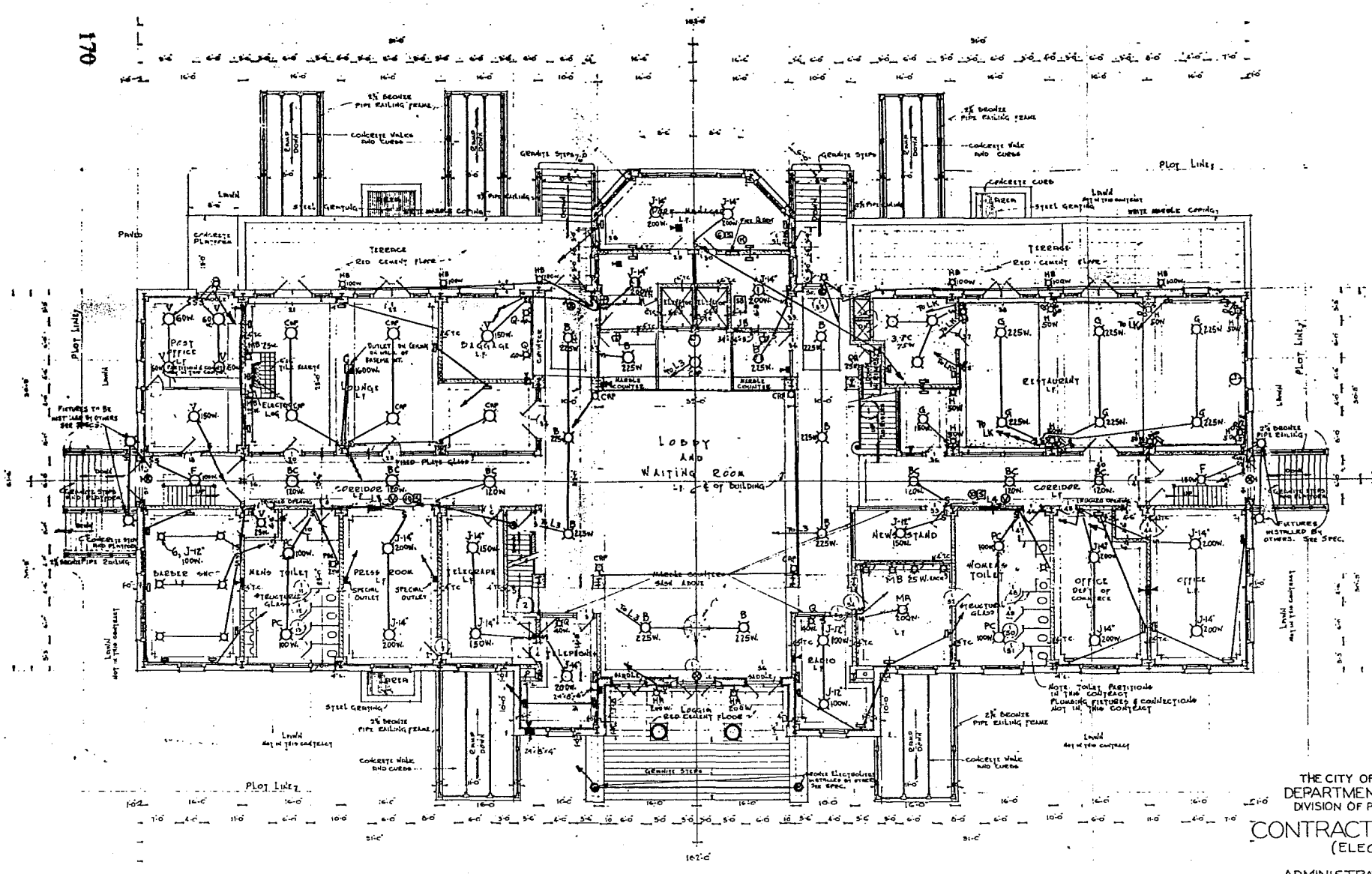



**Figure 67. Column schedule, November 17, 1930.**




FIRST FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

ELECTRIC WORK
JOB NO. 3014

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF DOCKS
DIVISION OF PORT PLANNING

CONTRACT NO. 2028C
(ELECTRIC)

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
THE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
FLOYD BENNETT FIELD
FLATBUSH AVE., BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN.

SUBMITTED BY _____ DIVISION ENGINEE
APPROVED BY _____ CHIEF ENGINEE
APPROVED BY Michael Cosgrove COMMISSIONER
DATE - FEB. 16, 1931.

**Figure 68.** Electrical work, first-floor plan, February 16, 1931.

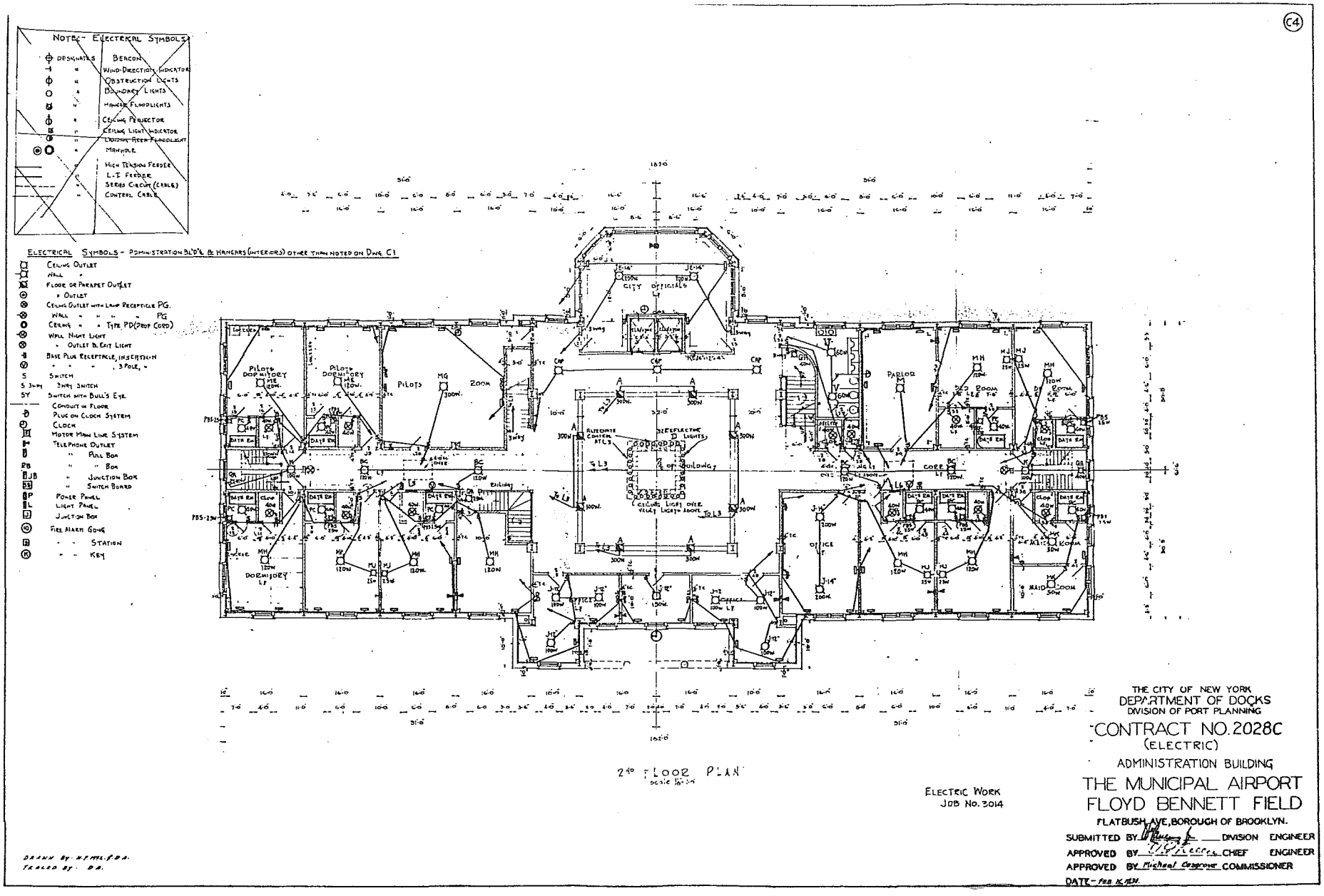



**Figure 69.** Electrical work, second-floor plan, February 16, 1931.

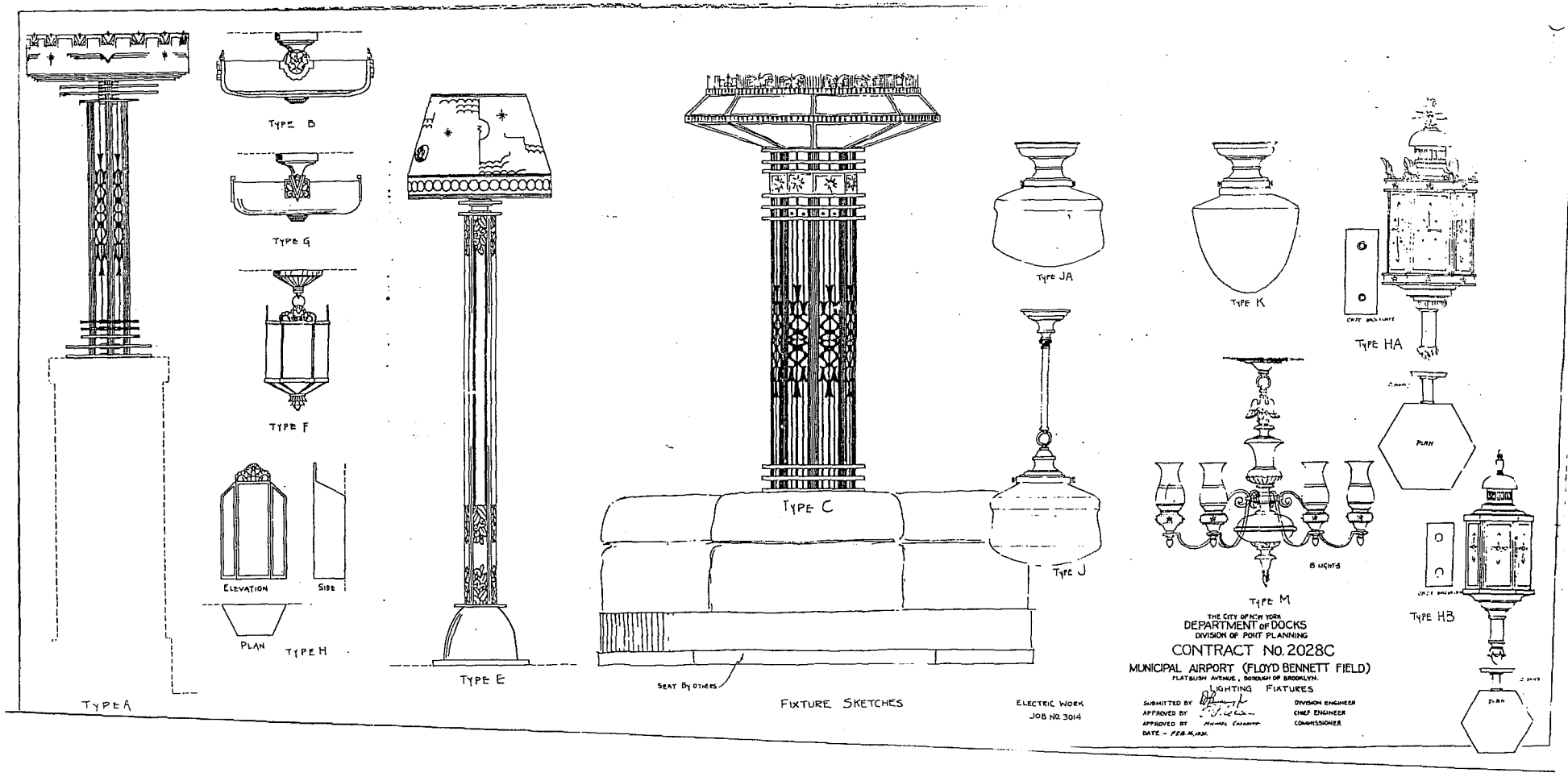



**Figure 70.** Sketches of lighting fixtures, types A-M, February 16, 1931.

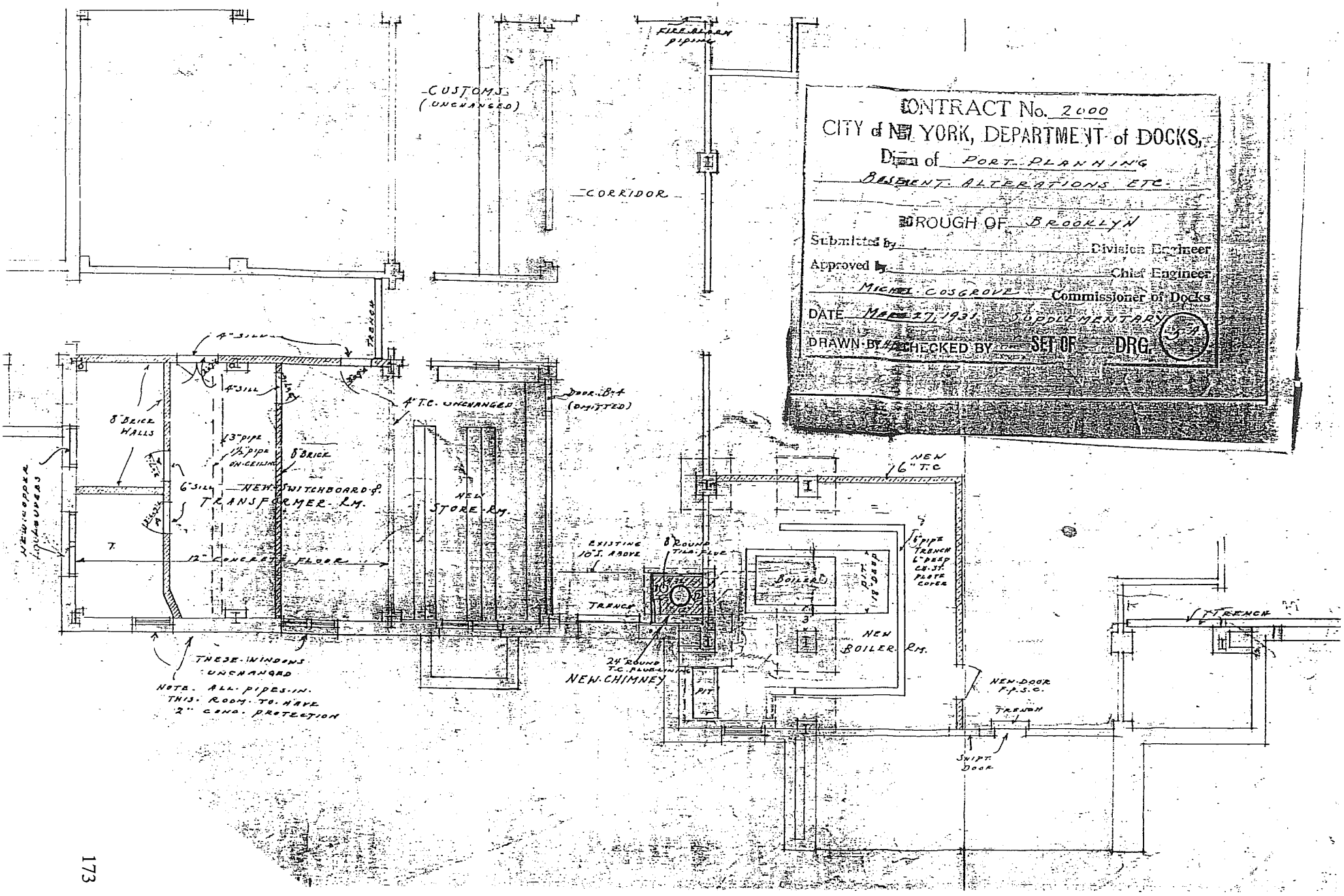



**Figure 71.** Basement alterations, showing new chimney, boiler room, transformer room, and storeroom, March 27, 1931.

SPECIFICATION

CUT NEW DOORWAY AT HEAD OF SOUTH STAIRWAY PROVIDE COPPER KALAMEINER SASH DOOR TO MATCH ADJOINING DOORS COMPLETE WITH FRAME, TRIM, WOOD JAMBS, SADDLE HARDWARE ETC REVERSE PRESENT DOOR INTO TOWER TO SWING OUT

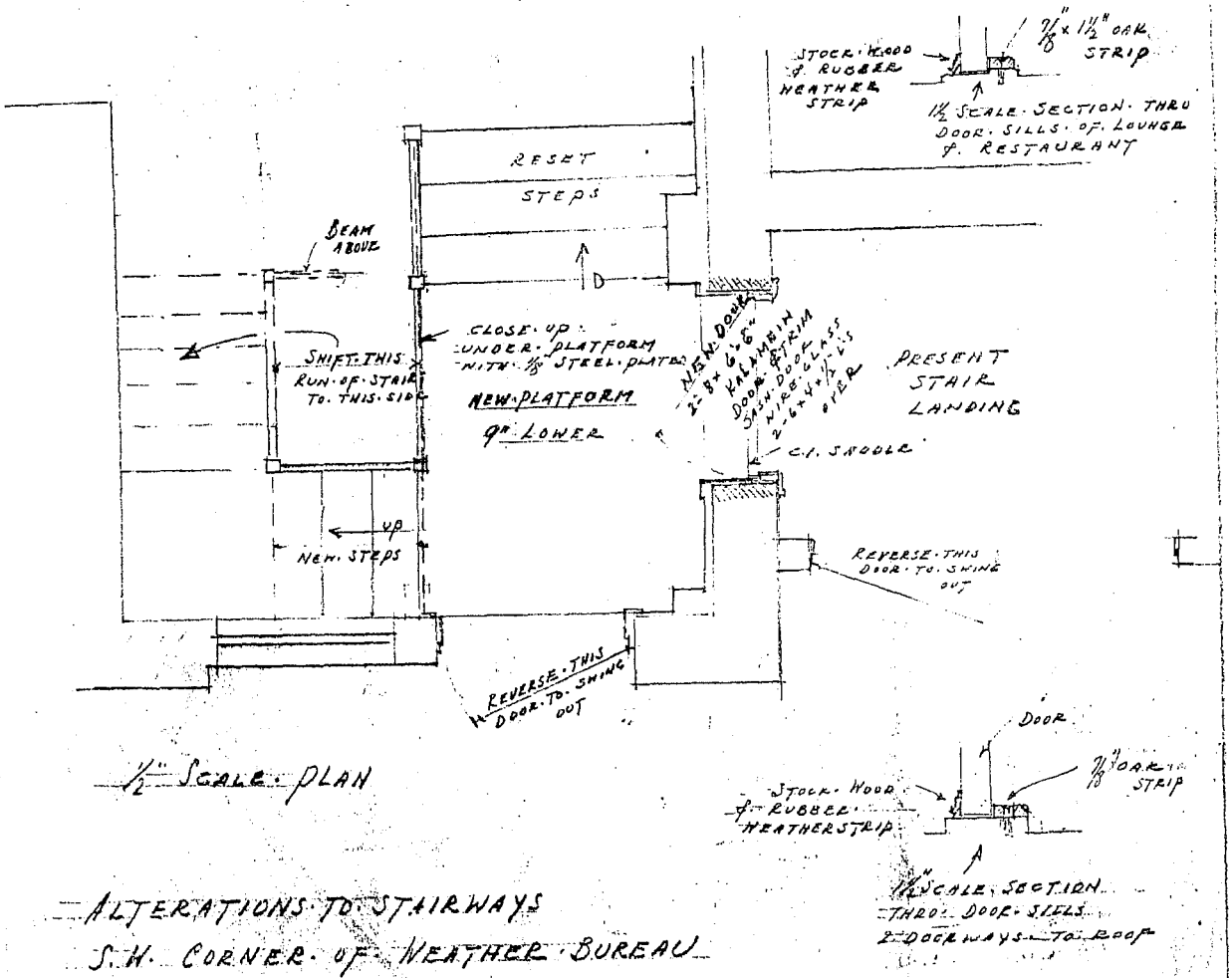
REVERSE THE (SWING IN) DOOR AT HEAD OF EACH STAIRWAY TO ROOF TO SWING OUT

REBUILD STEEL STAIRWAY & PLATFORM AS SHOWN ON PLAN

PROVIDE WEATHERSTRIPS FOR DOORS AT HEAD OF THE 2 STAIRWAYS ADJOINING TOWER AND FOR 2 DOORWAYS IN LOUNGE & 3 DOORWAYS IN RESTAURANT

DO ALL NECESSARY PATCHING SUCH AS PLASTER WORK, TILE FLOORING ETC.

REMOVE ALL RUBBISH & CLEAN UP ALL WORK




1/2" SCALE PLAN

ALTERATIONS TO STAIRWAYS
S.W. CORNER OF WEATHER BUREAU
ROOM OF TOWER

CONTRACT No. 2000
CITY of NEW YORK, DEPARTMENT of DOCKS,
Division of PORT PLANNING
ALTERATIONS TO STAIRWAY S.W. COR. OF WEATHER BUREAU ROOM, ETC.
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
Submitted by H.M. LANSING Jr. Division Engineer
Approved by FRANCIS T. O'REEFE ACTING Chief Engineer
JOHN McKENZIE Commissioner of Docks
DATE JULY 14, 1931 SUPPLEMENTARY DWG.
DRAWN BY H.F.M. CHECKED BY SET OF DRG. 9

PETER BRADY
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER



**Figure 72.** Alterations to stairways of Weather Bureau Room, July 14, 1931.

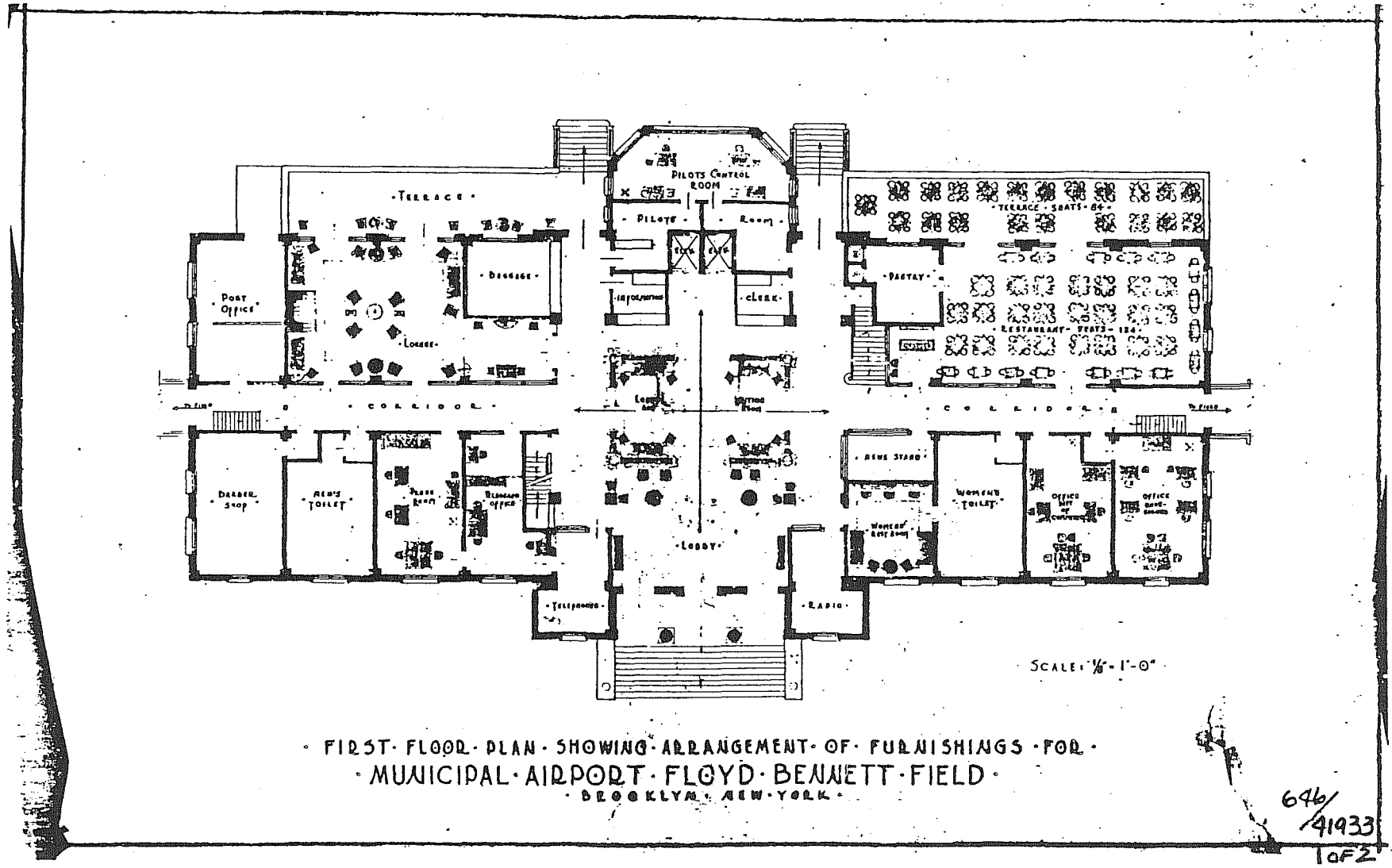



**Figure 73. First-floor plan showing proposed arrangement of furnishings, ca. 1931.**

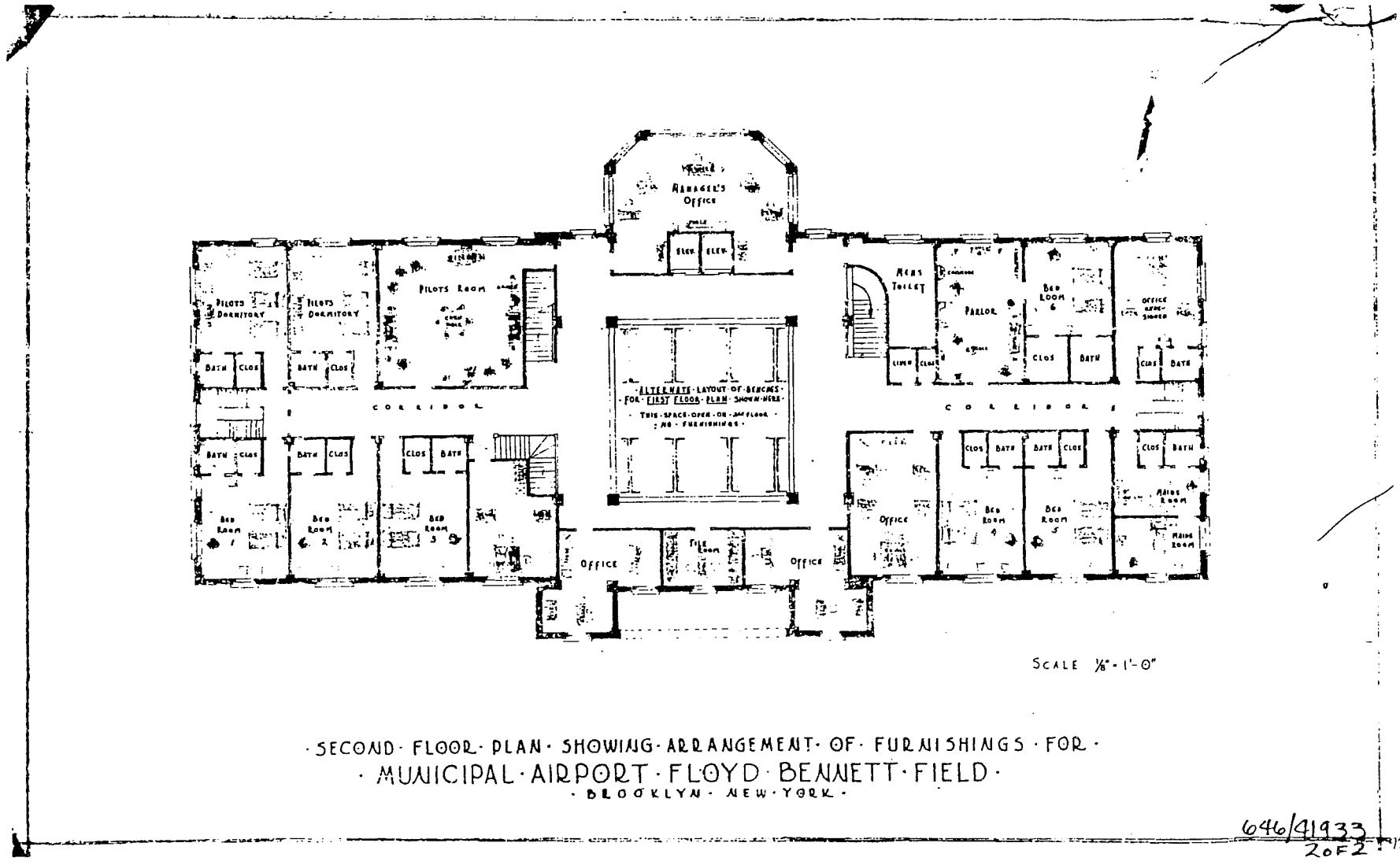



**Figure 74.** Second-floor plan showing proposed arrangement of furnishings, ca. 1931.

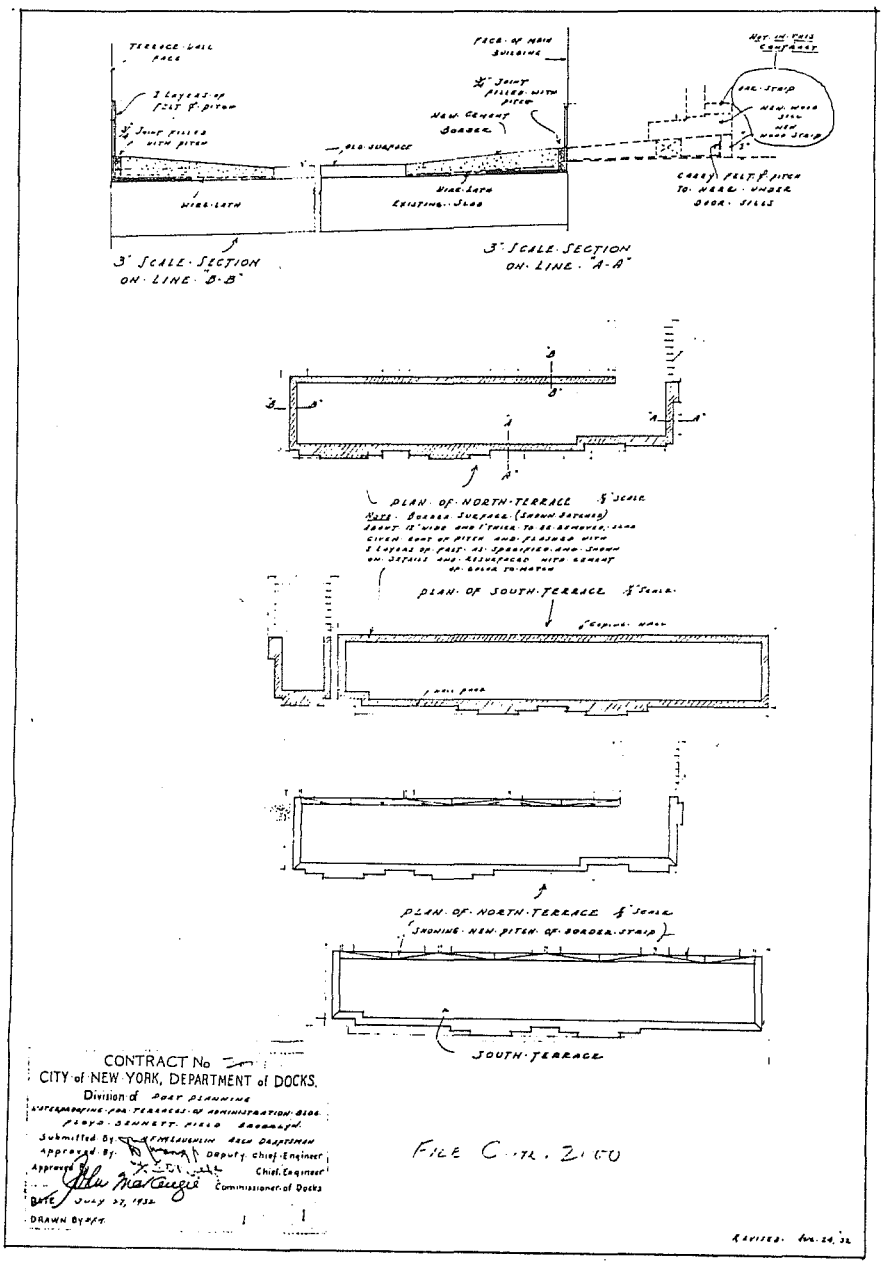



**Figure 75.** Waterproofing for terraces of Administration Building, July 27, 1932.

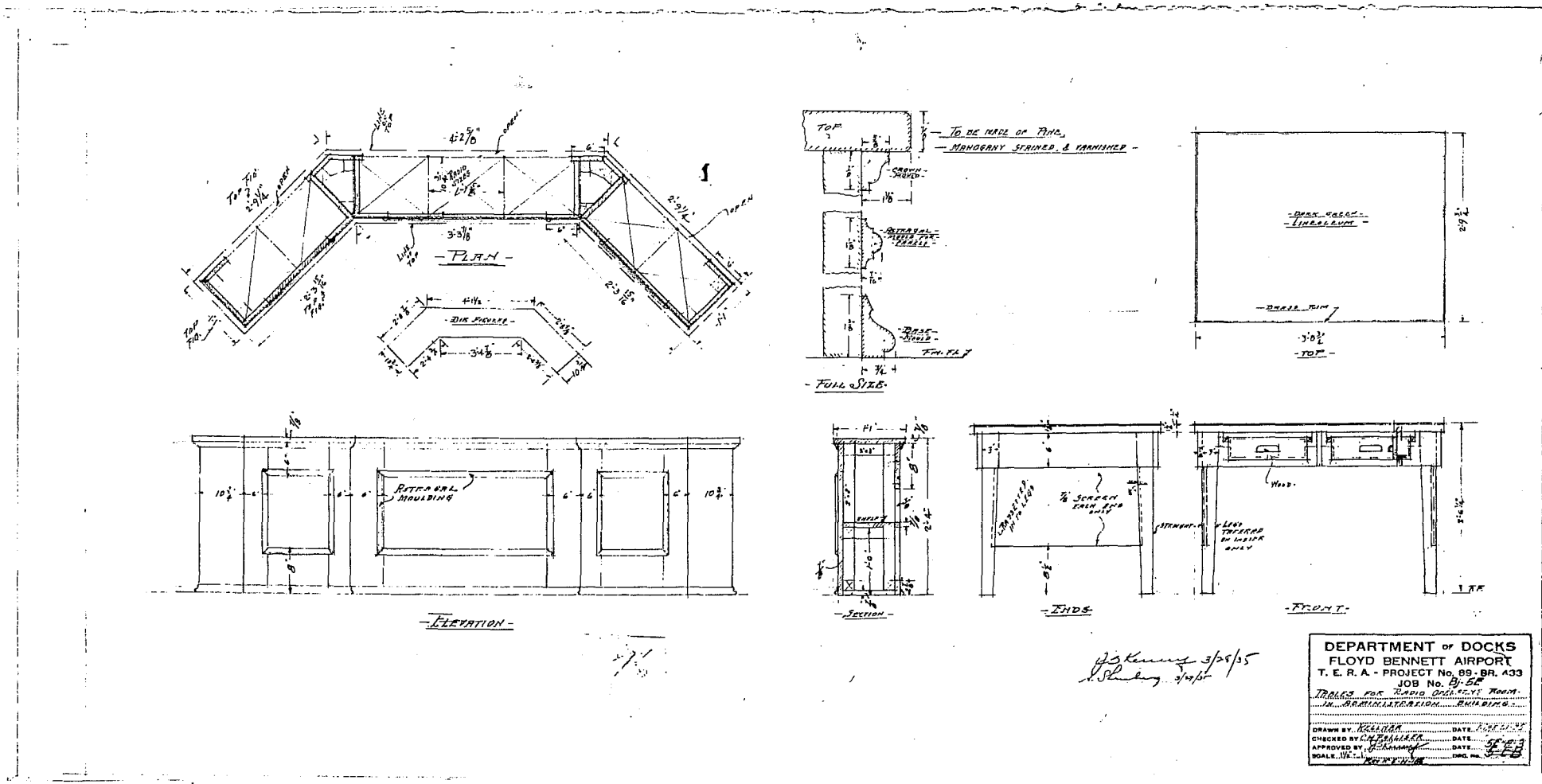



**Figure 76.** Tables for Radio Operating Room in Administration Building, March 28, 1935.

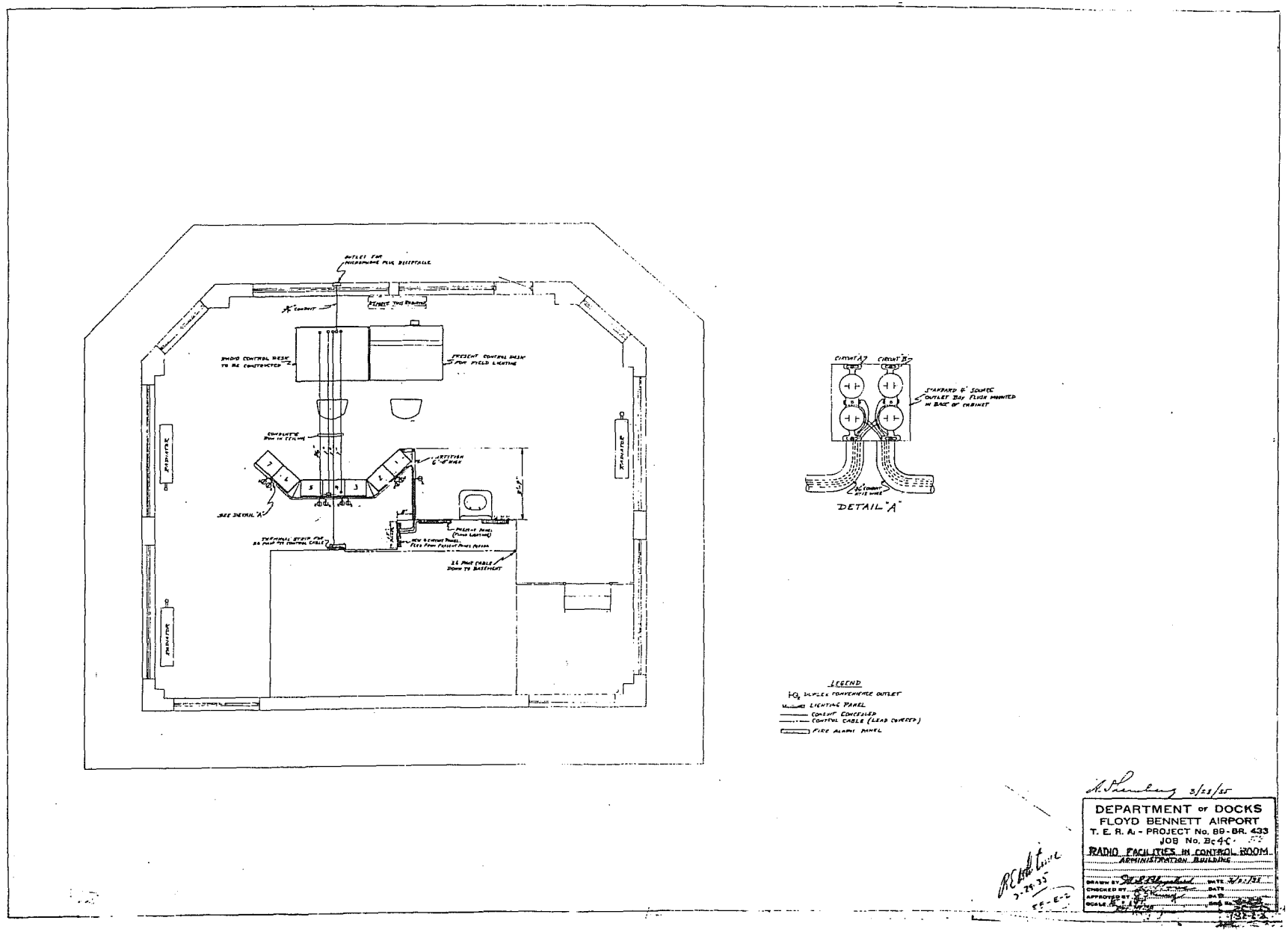



**Figure 77. Radio facilities in Control Room in Administration Building, March 28, 1935.**

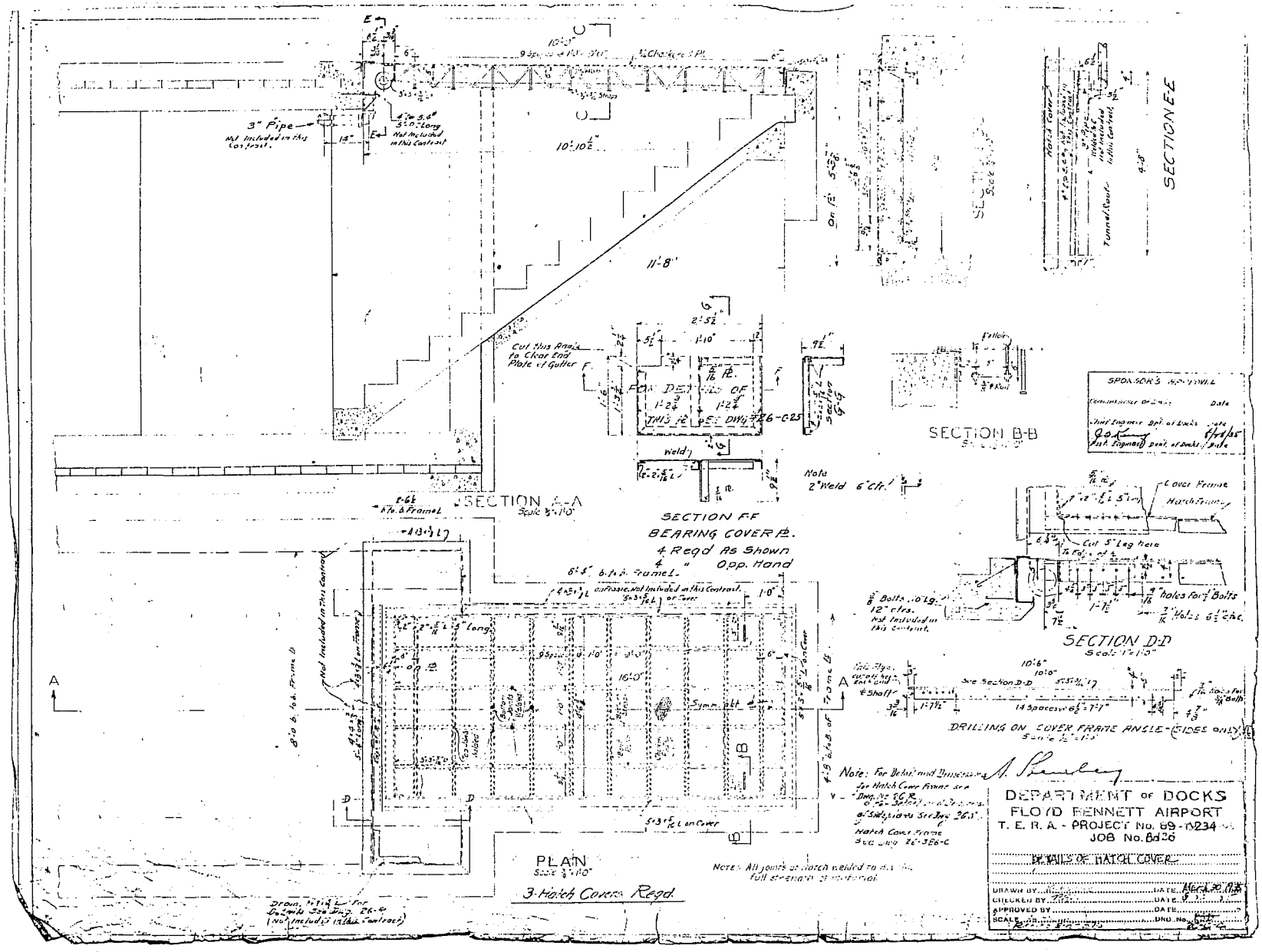



**Figure 78.** Details of hatch covers for passenger-loading tunnel, March 30, 1935.

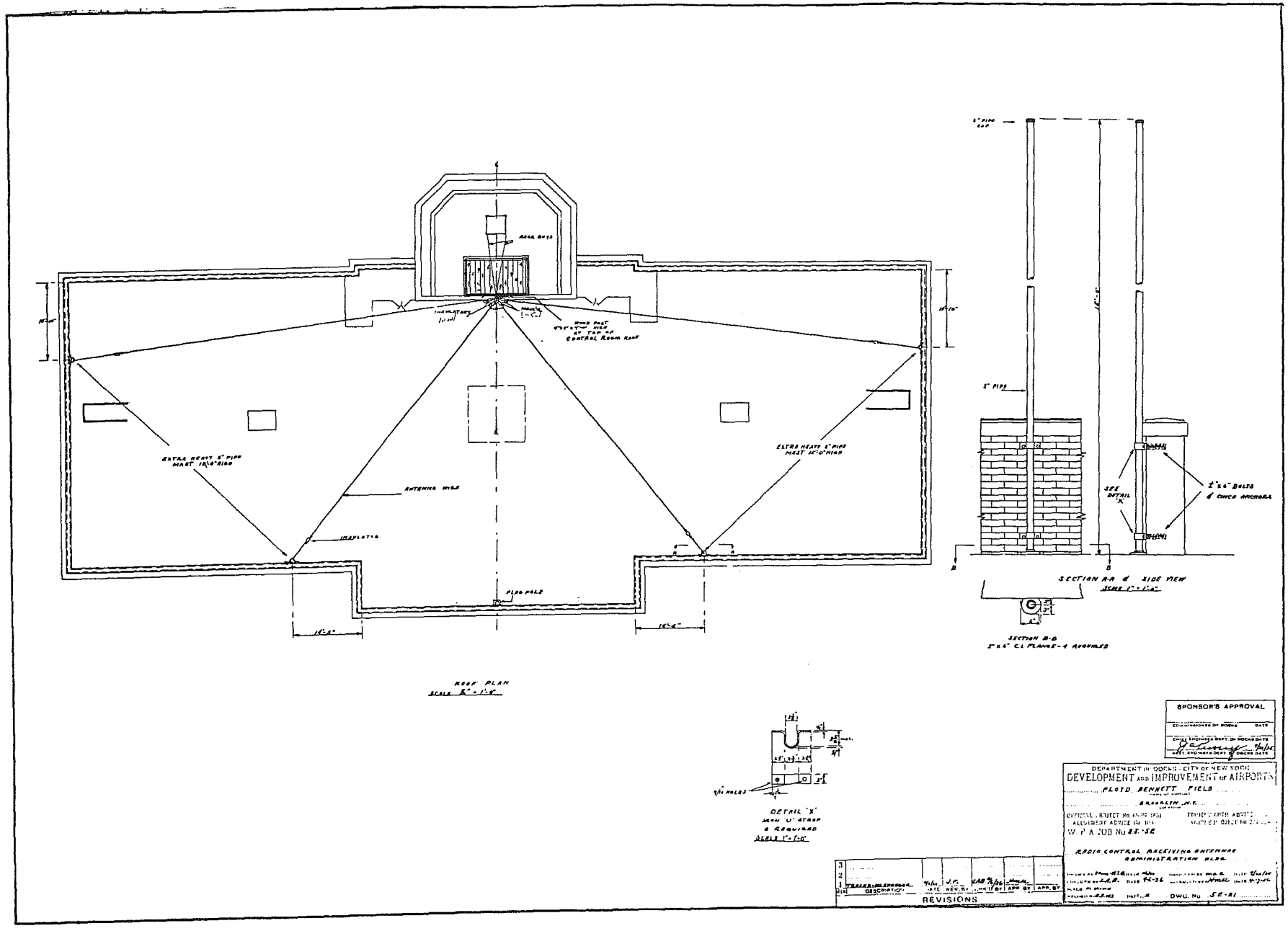



**Figure 79.** Details of radio-control receiving antennae, April 26, 1935.

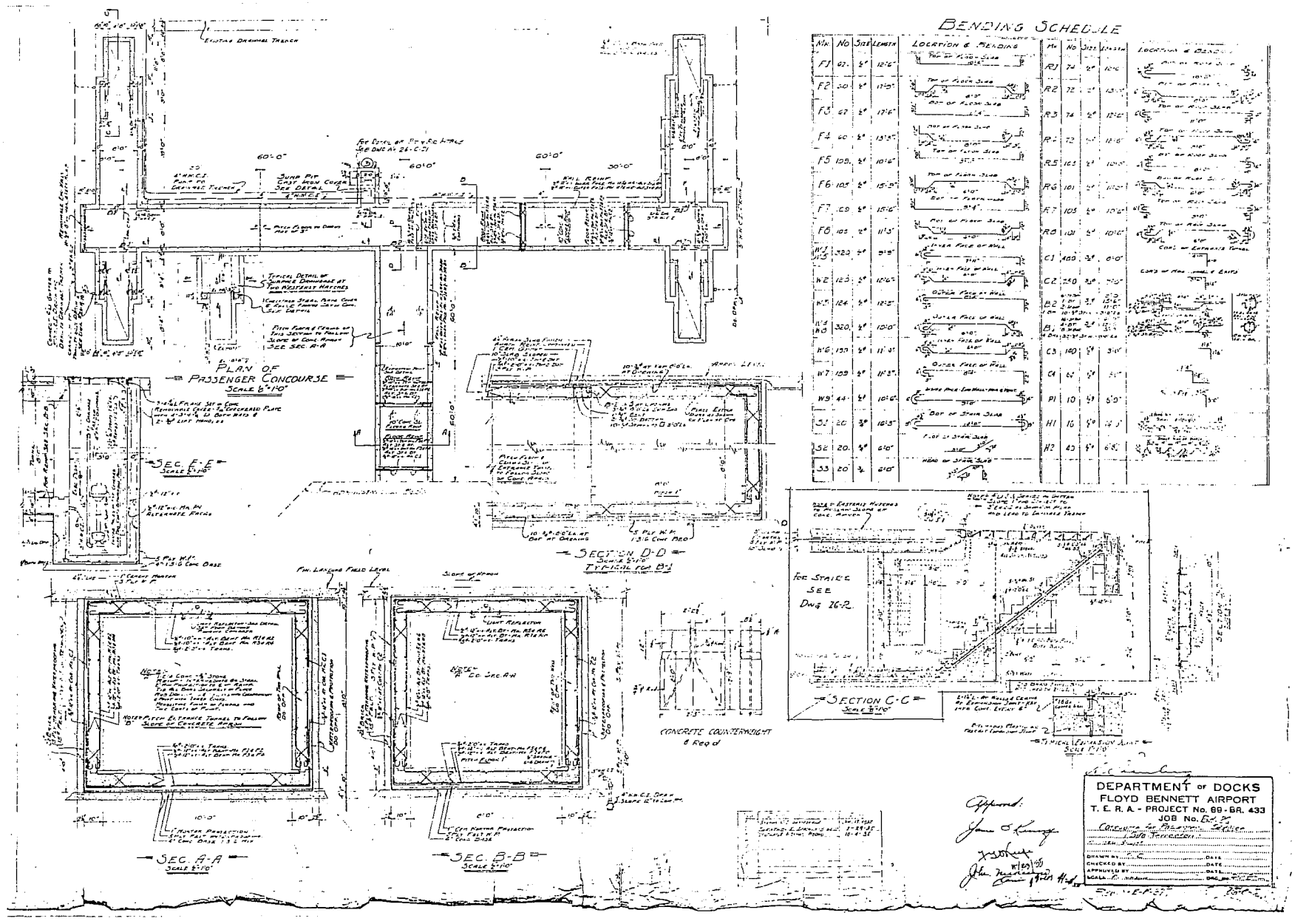



**Figure 80.** Details of passenger-loading tunnel, April 23, 1935.

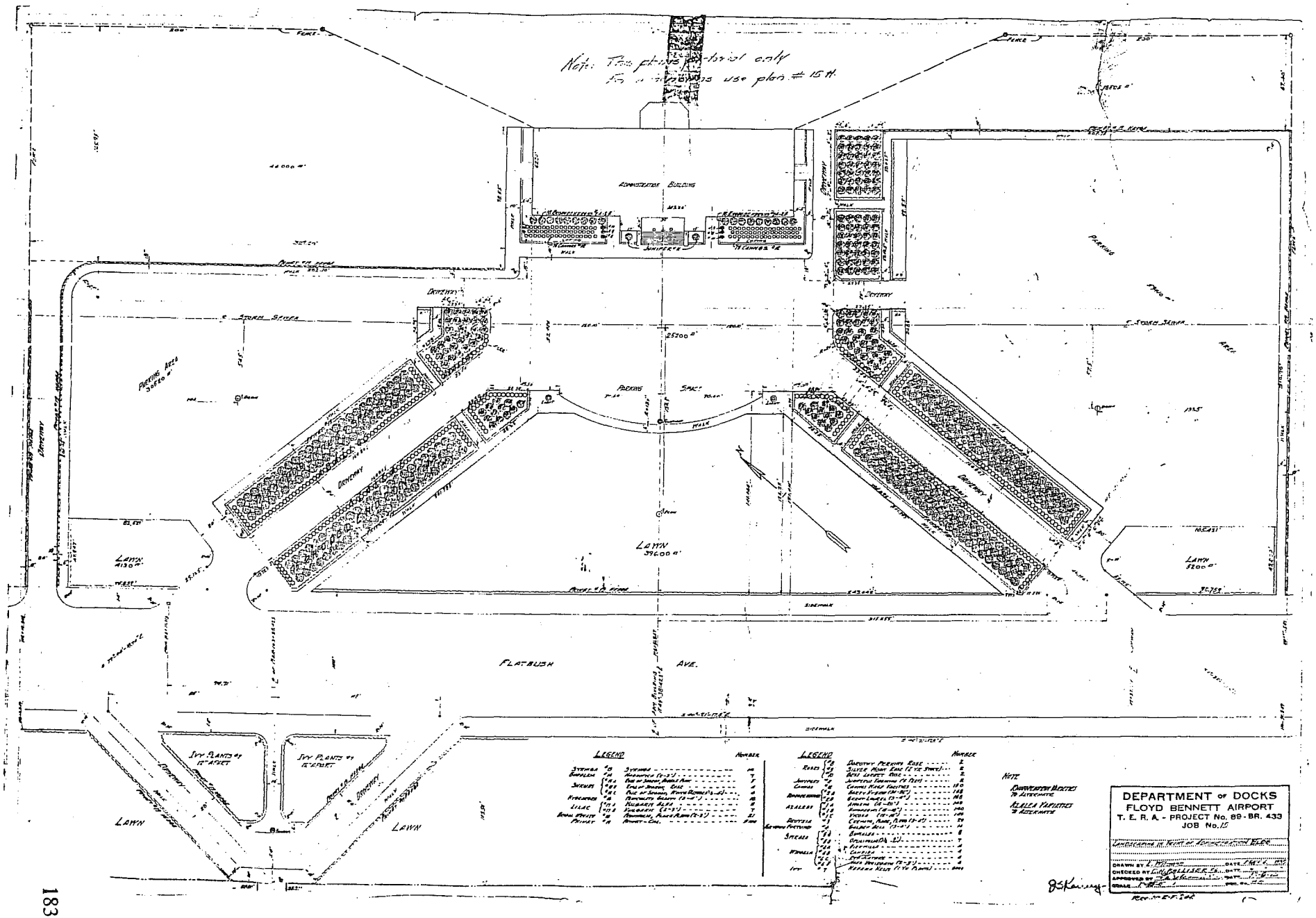



**Figure 81. Landscaping in front of Administration Building, May 6, 1935.**

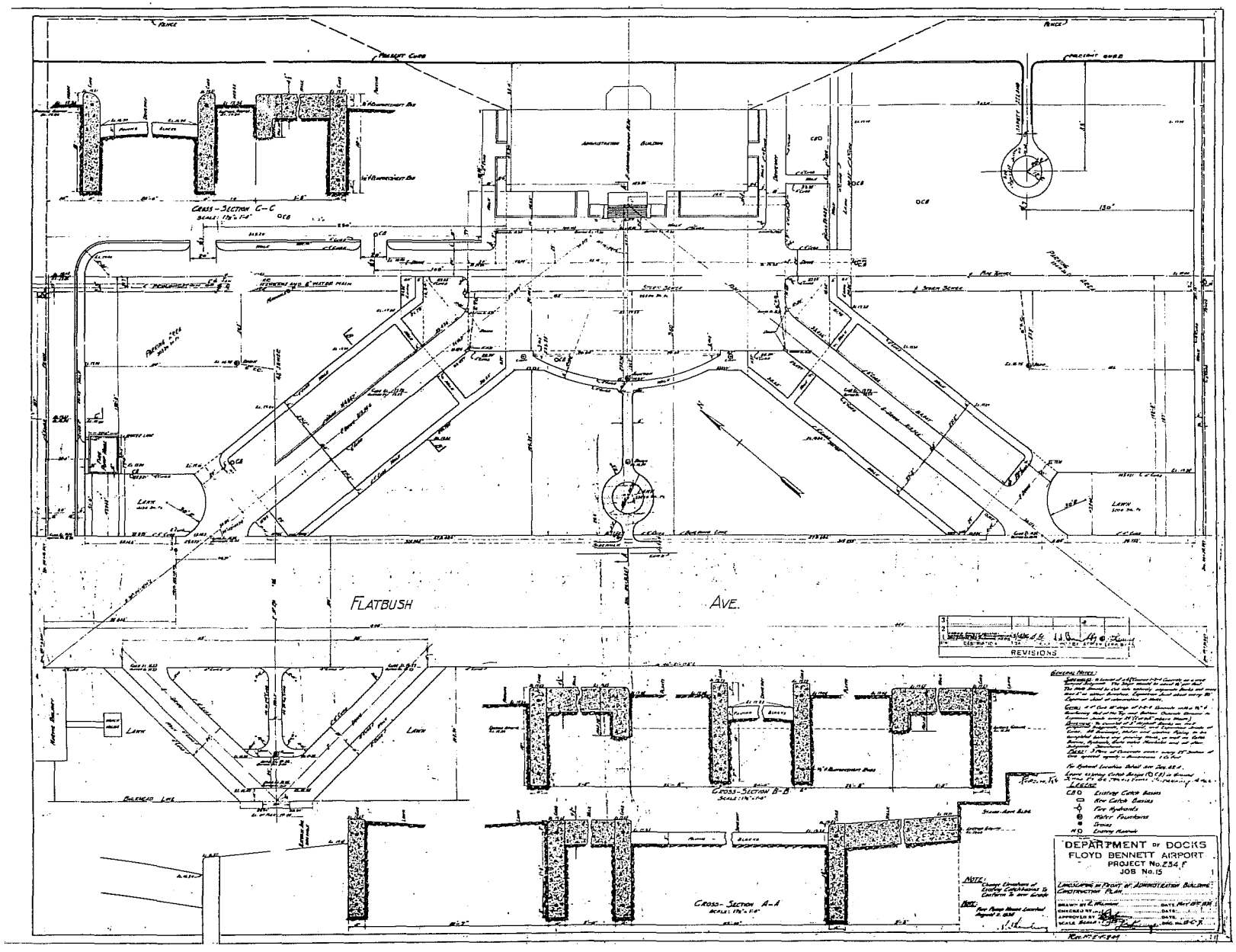



**Figure 82.** Landscaping in front of Administration Building, construction plan, May 19, 1935.

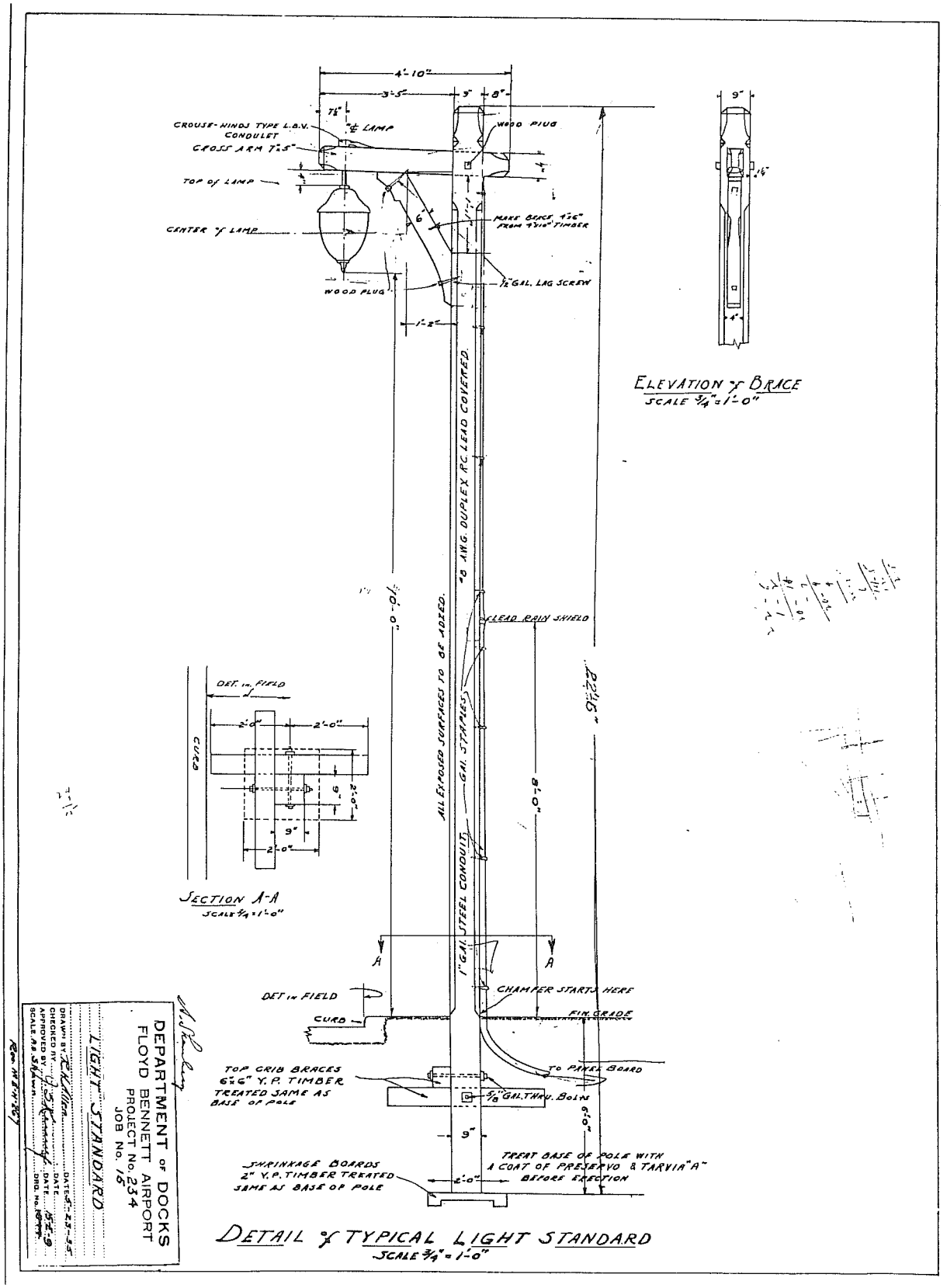



**Figure 83.** Detail of typical light standard, May 23, 1935.

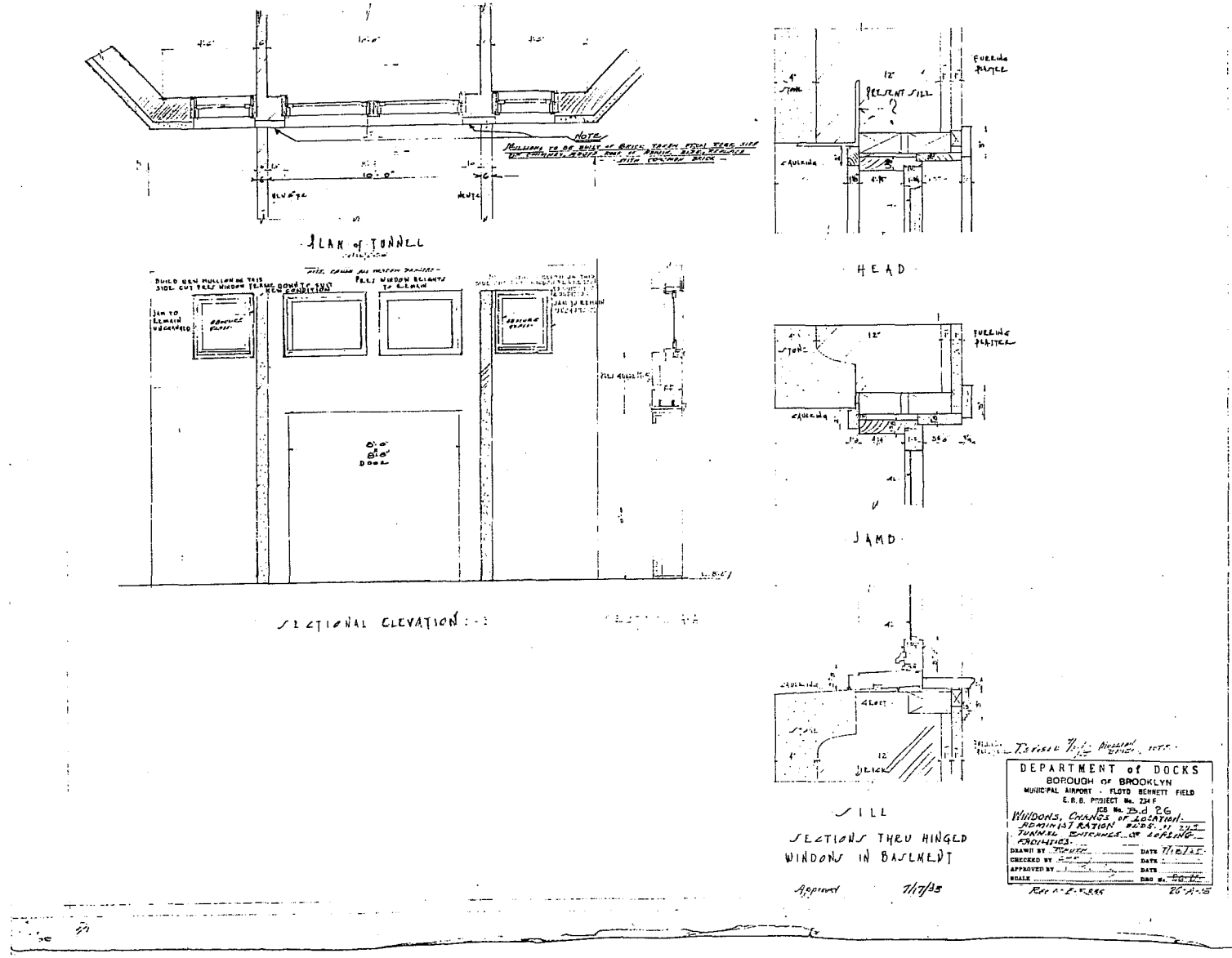



**Figure 84.** Change of window locations at entrance to passenger-loading tunnel. Drawn July 18, 1935; approved July 17, 1935.

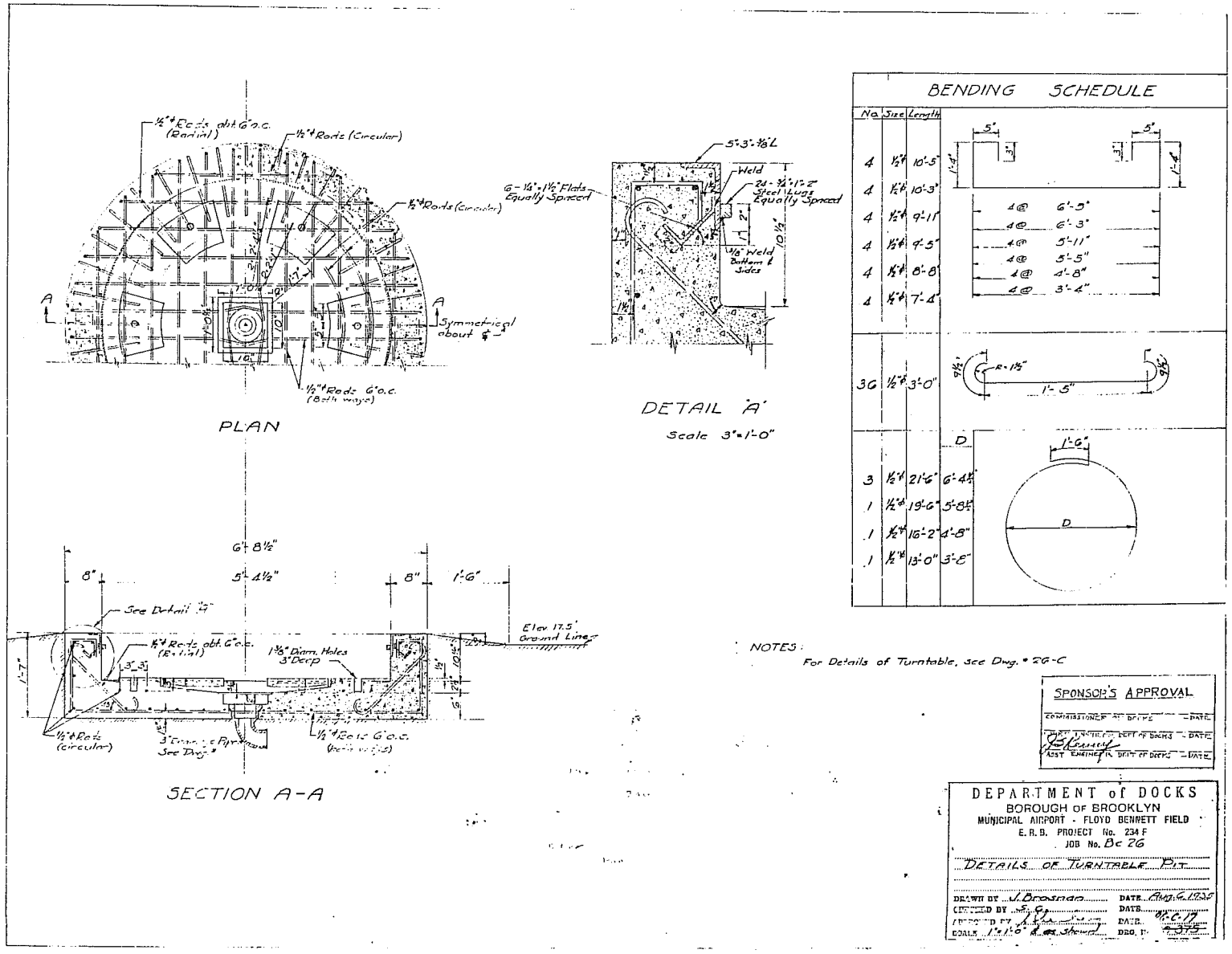



**Figure 85.** Details of turntable pits, August 6, 1935.

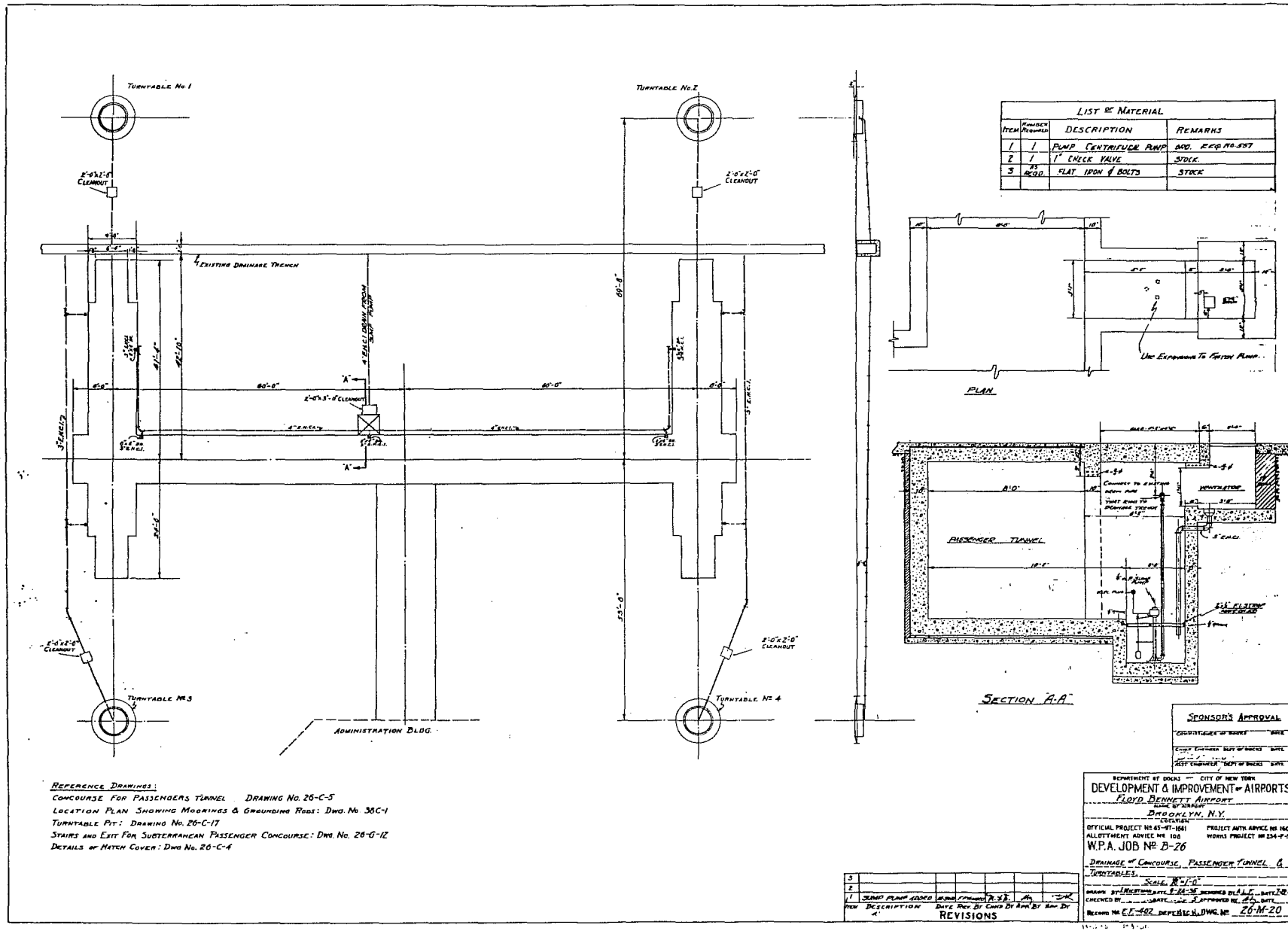



**Figure 86.** Drainage of passenger-loading tunnel and turntables, September 26, 1935.

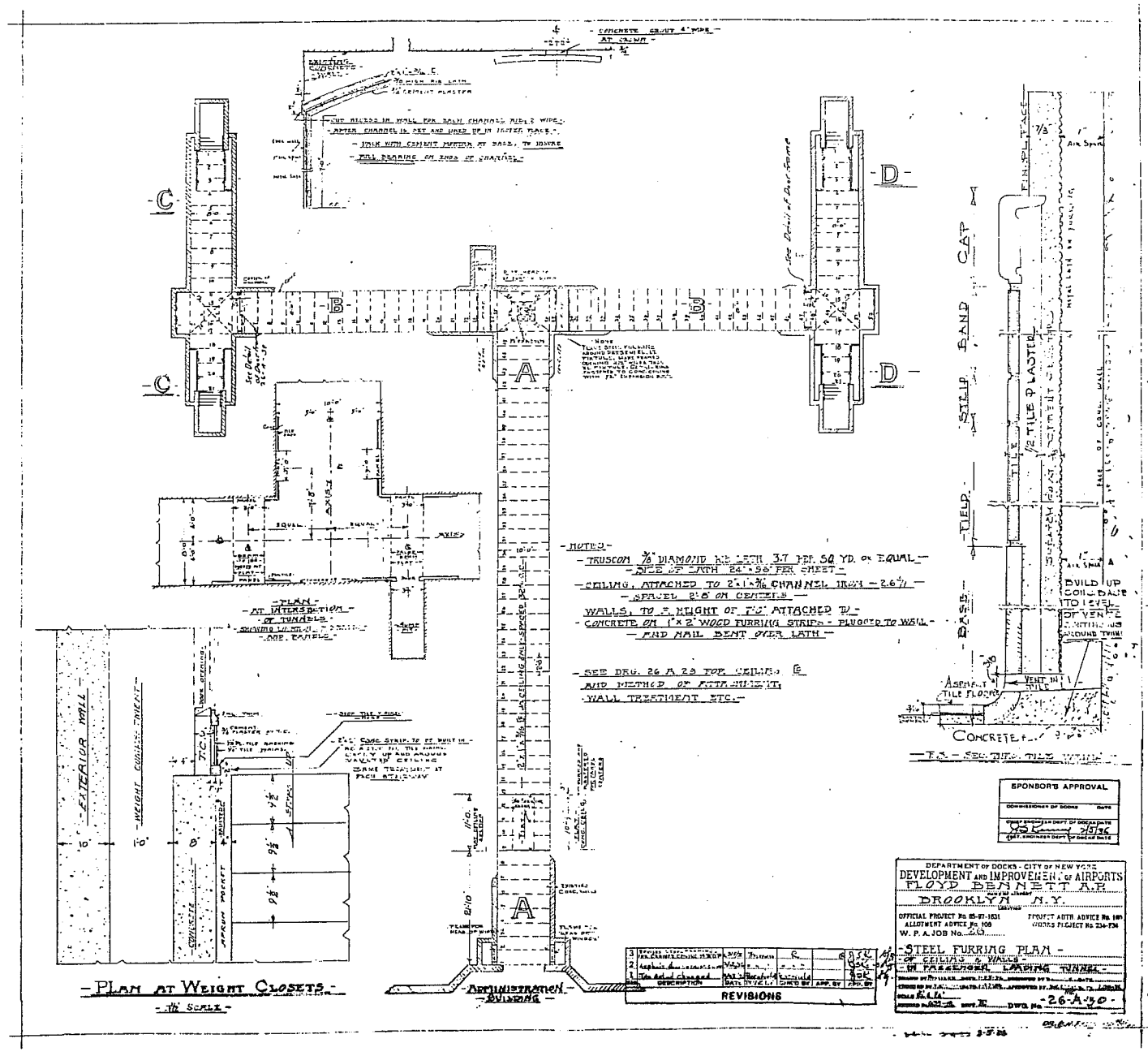



**Figure 89. Steel furring plan of ceiling and walls in passenger-loading tunnel.**
Drawn January 25, 1936; approved February 5, 1936.

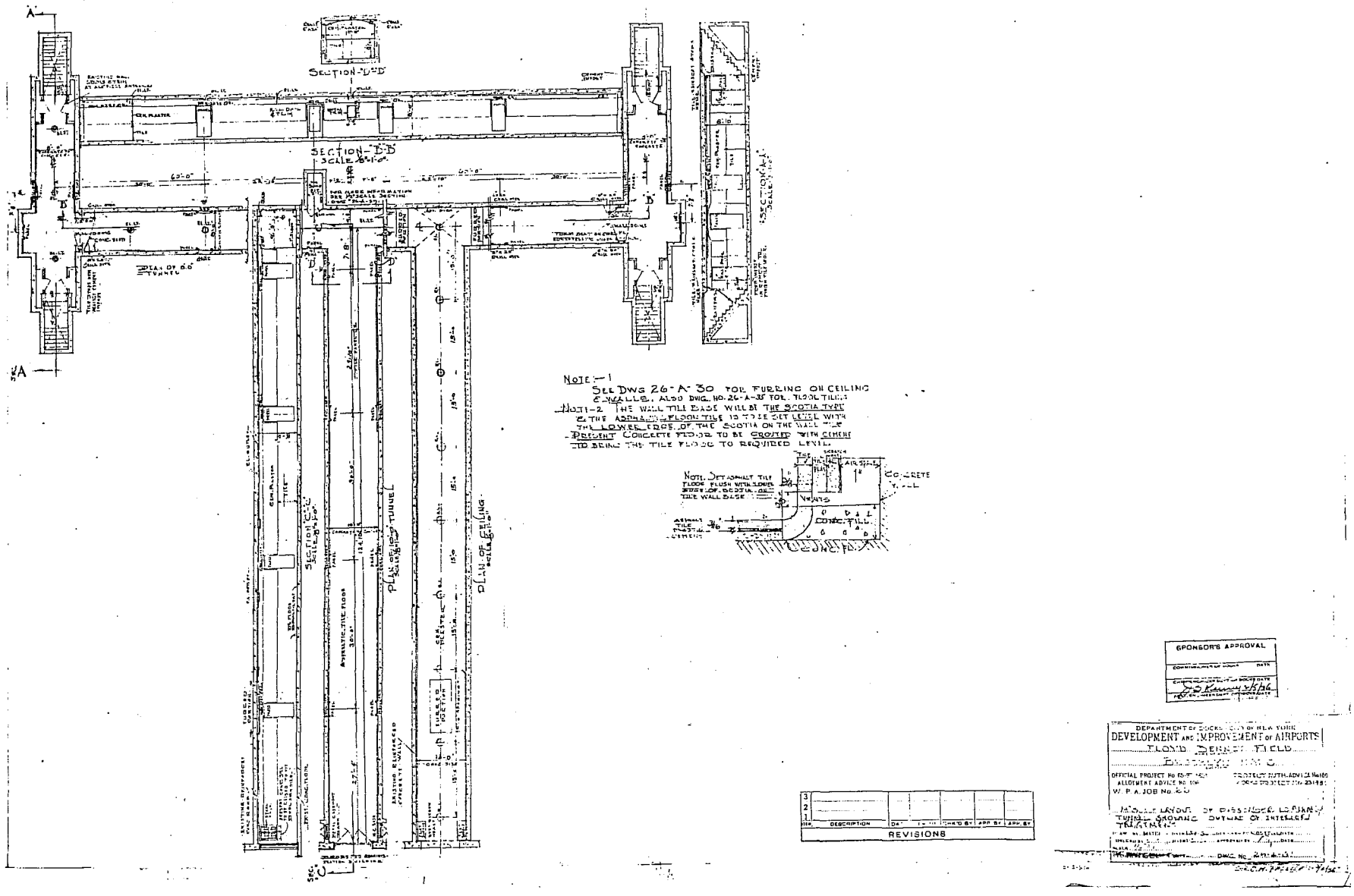



**Figure 90.** Layout of passenger-loading tunnel, showing outline of interior treatment. Drawn January 29, 1936; approved February 5, 1936.

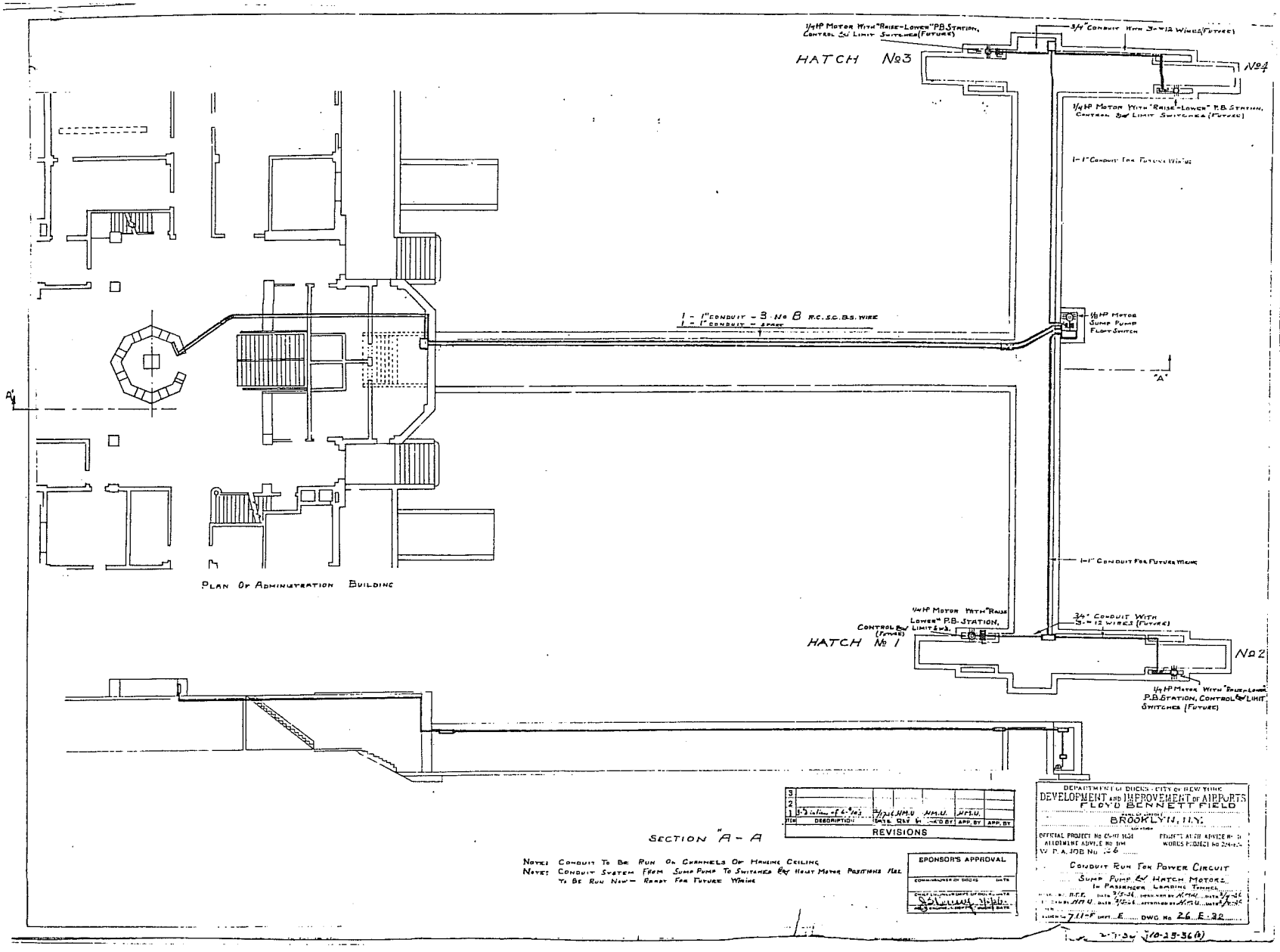



**Figure 91. Conduit run for power circuit, sump pump, and hatch motors in passenger-loading tunnel, February 5, 1936.**

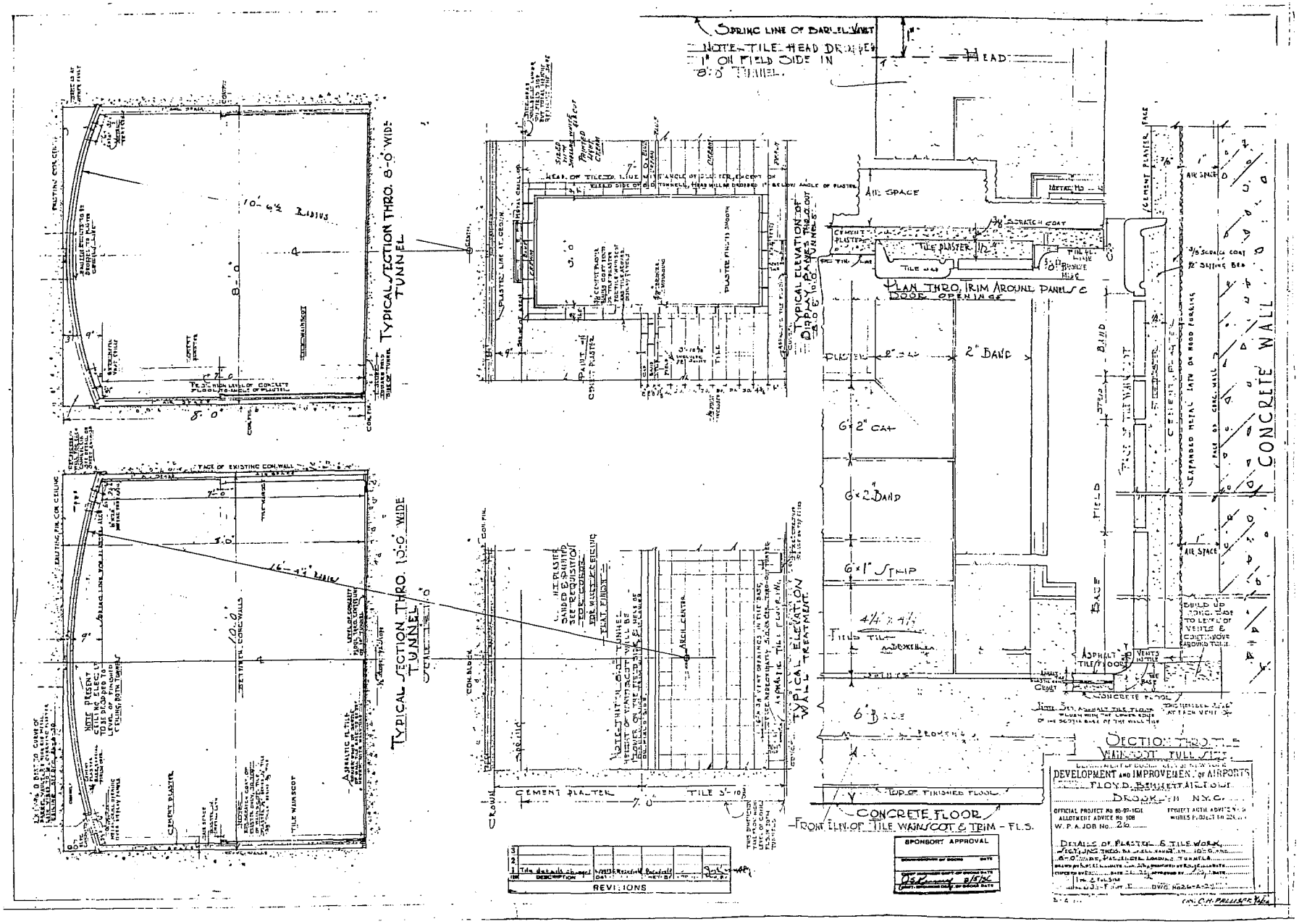



**Figure 92.** Details of plaster and tile work, sections through barrel vaults in passenger-loading tunnel. Drawn January 22, 1936; approved February 5, 1936.

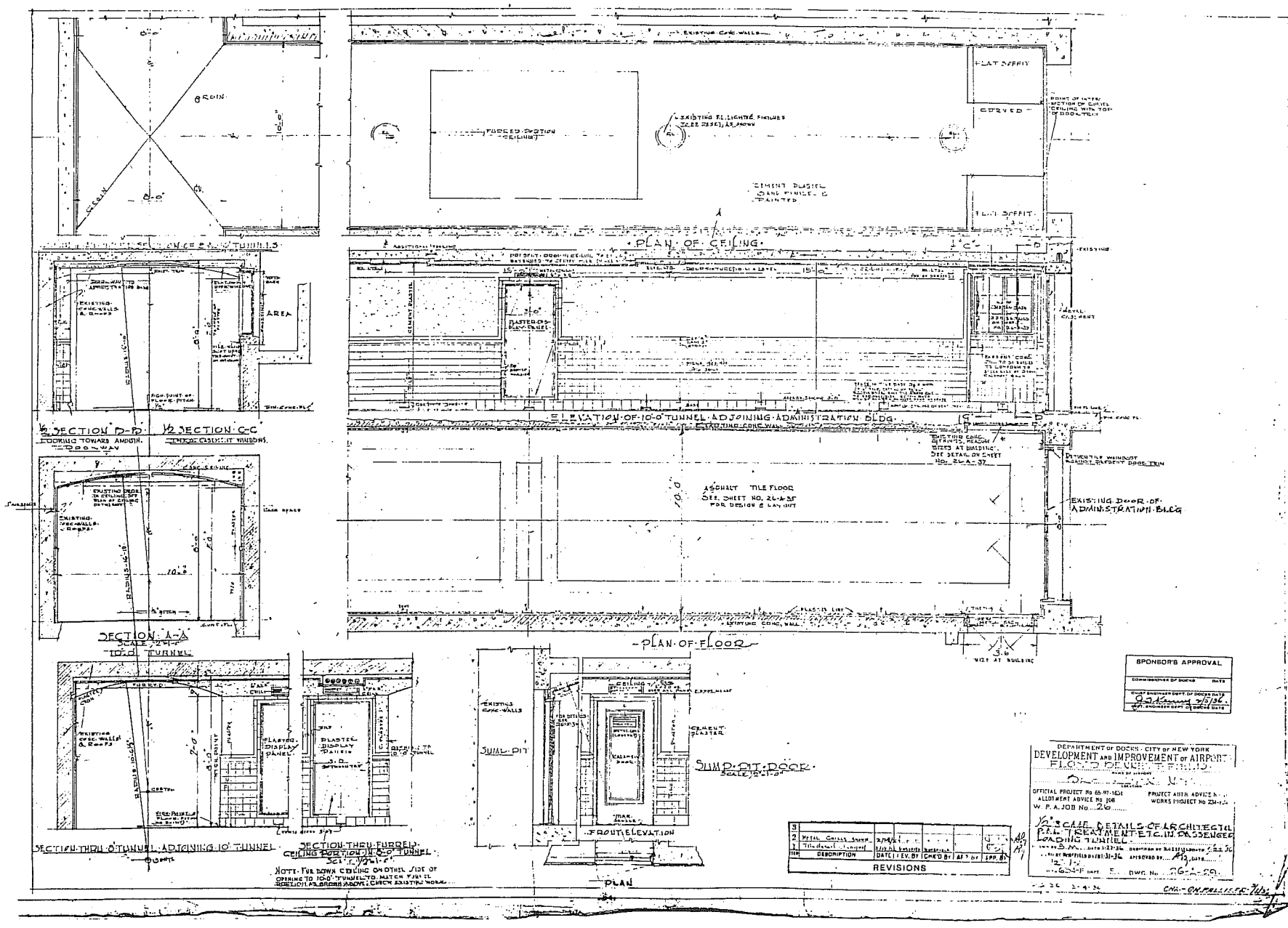



**Figure 93.** Details of architectural treatment in passenger-loading tunnel. Drawn January 22, 1936; approved February 5, 1936.

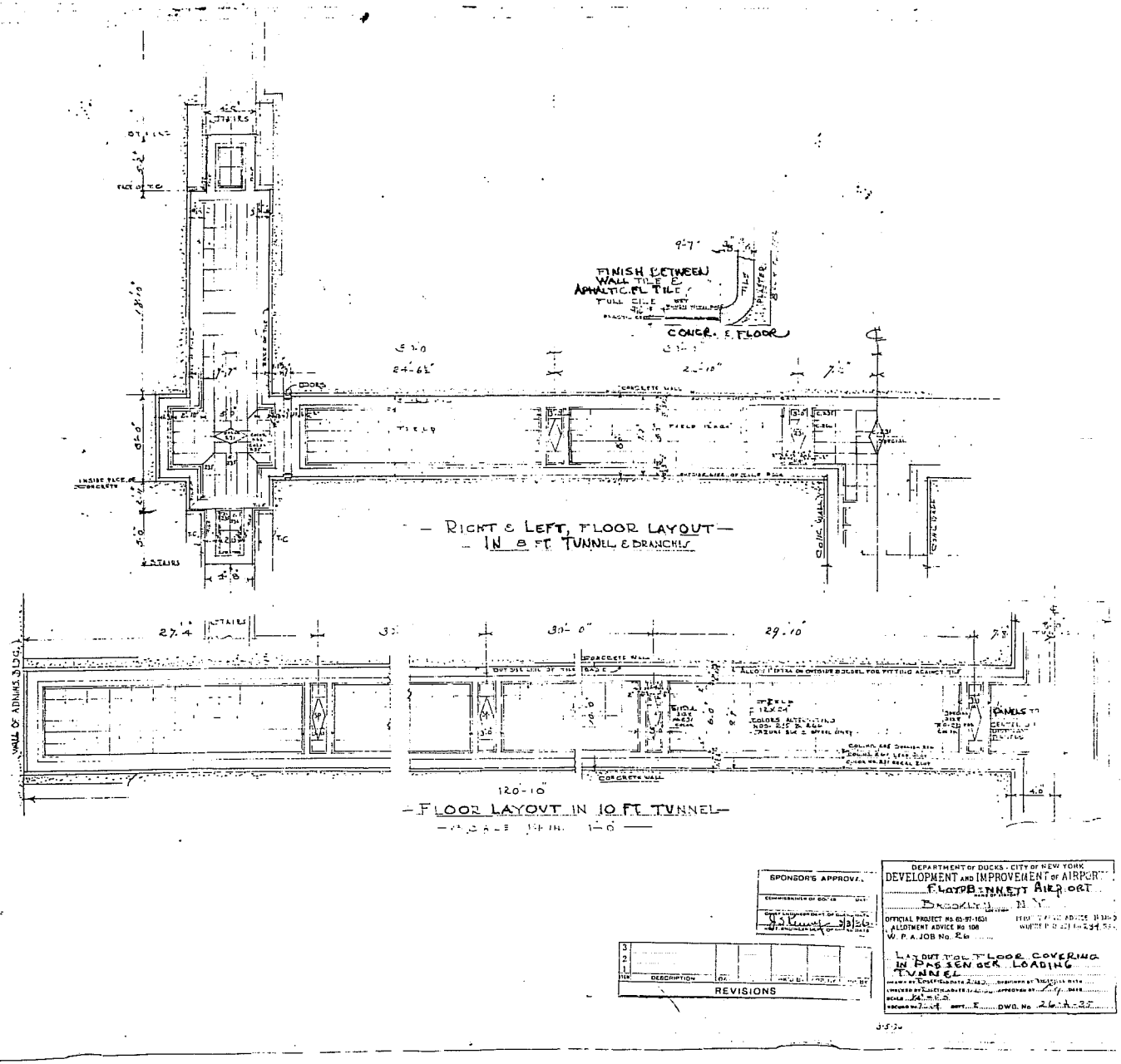



**Figure 94.** Layout for floor covering in passenger-loading tunnel. Drawn February 23, 1936; approved March 3, 1936.

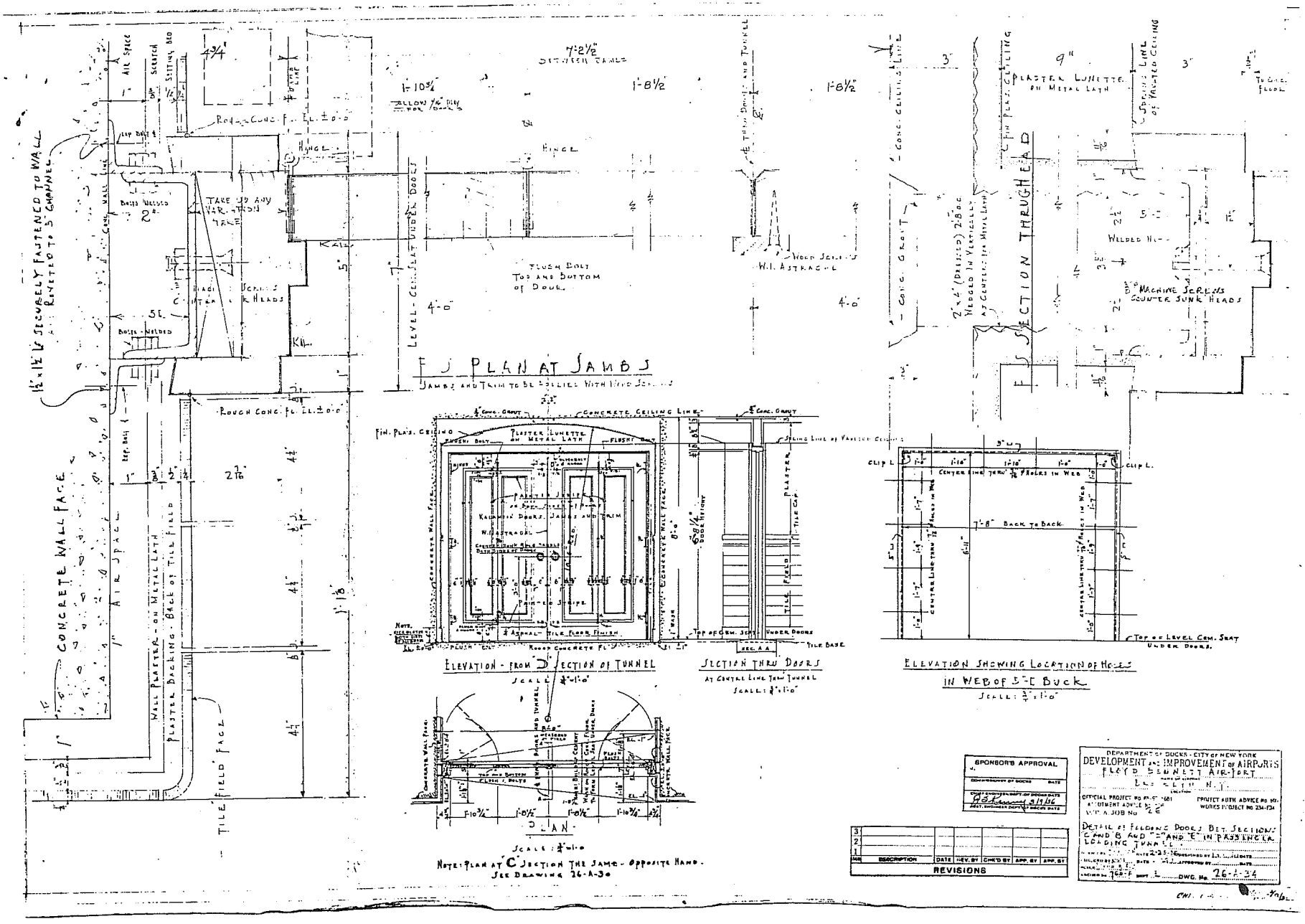



**Figure 95.** Details of folding doors in passenger-loading tunnel. Drawn February 25, 1936; approved March 9, 1936.

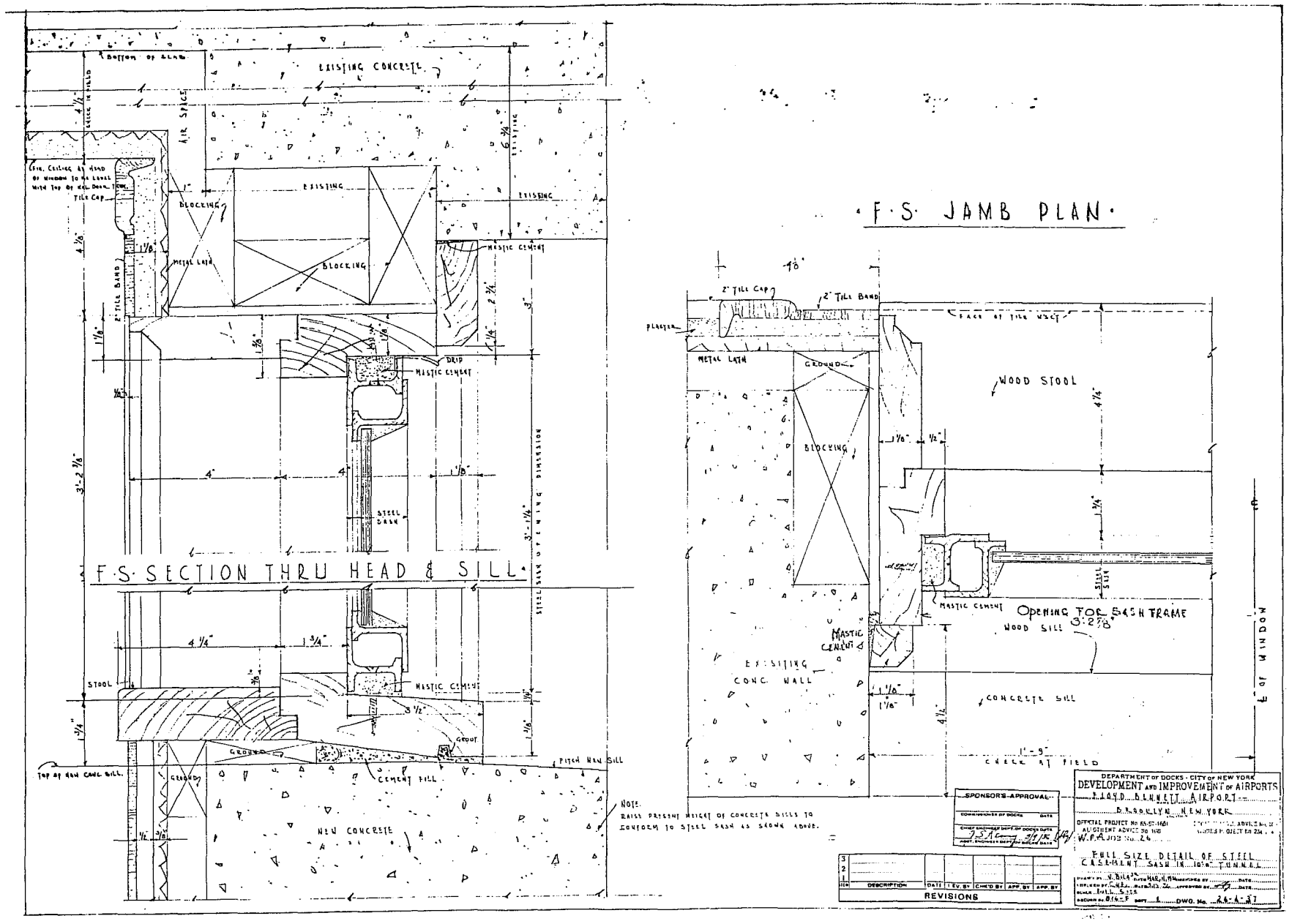



**Figure 96.** Details of steel casement sash in 10-foot section of tunnel, March 11, 1936.

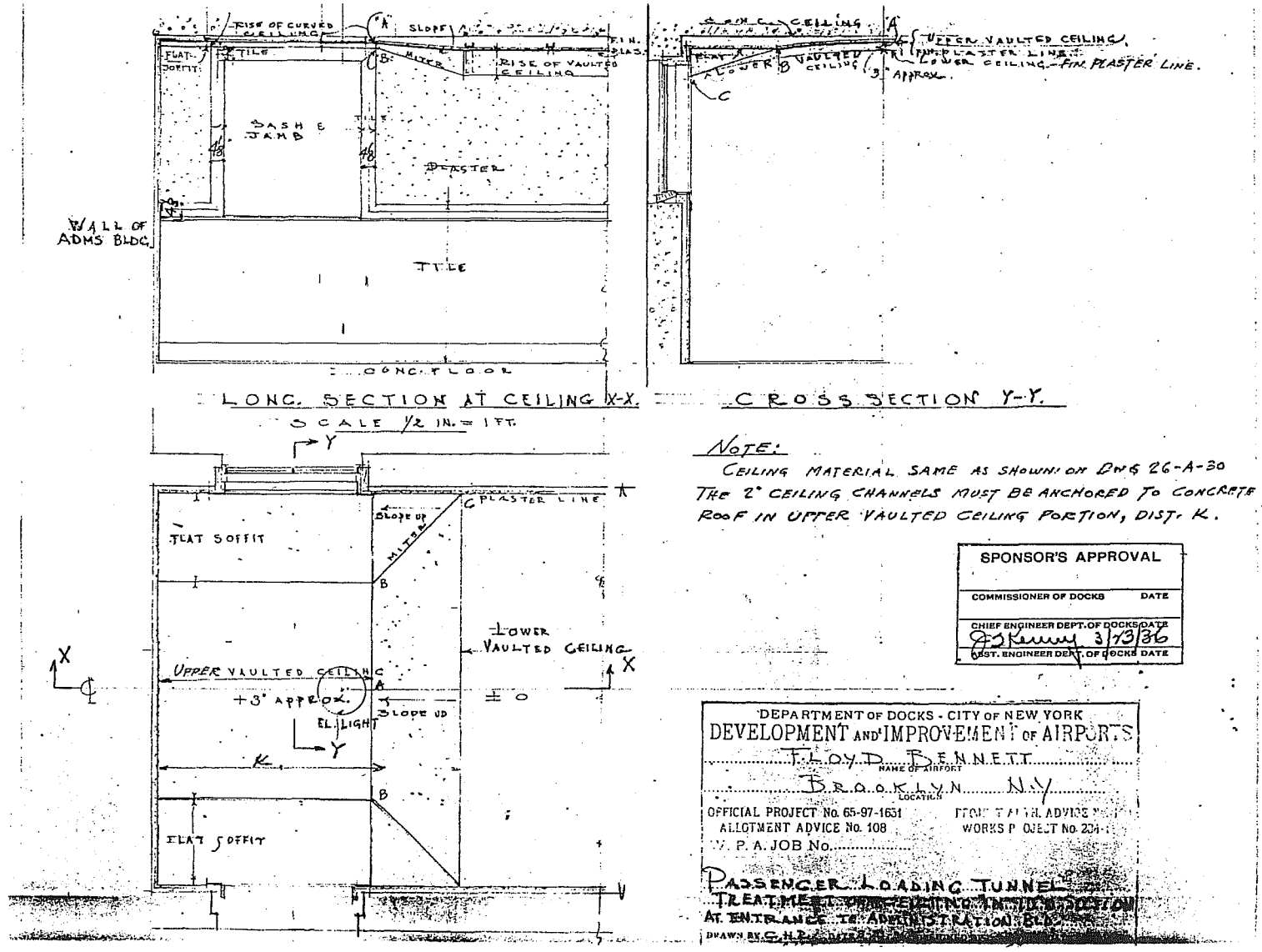



**Figure 97. Treatment of tunnel ceiling at entrance to Administration Building, March 23, 1936.**

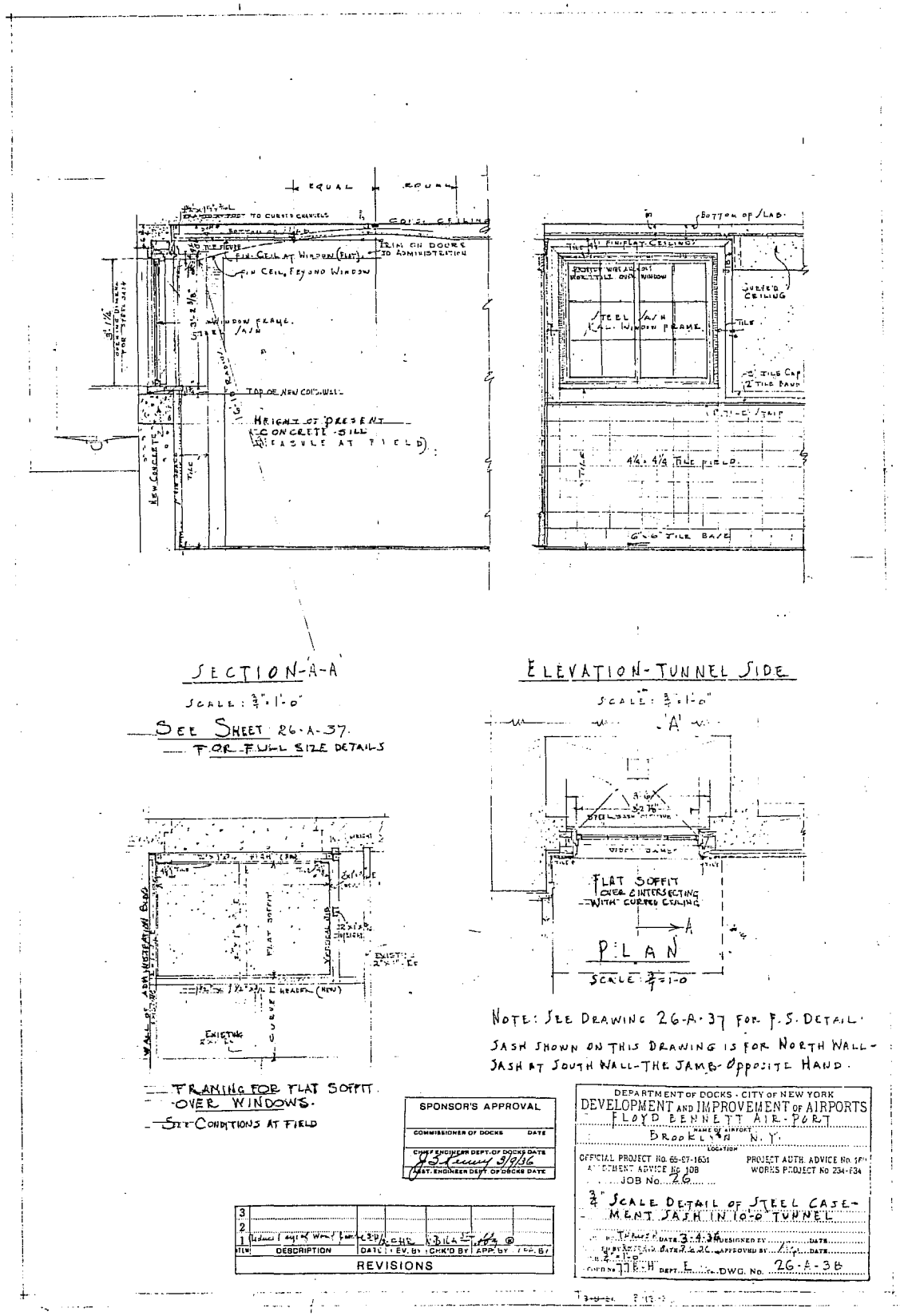



**Figure 98.** Details of steel casement sash in 10-foot section of tunnel. Drawn March 4, 1936, approved March 9, 1936.

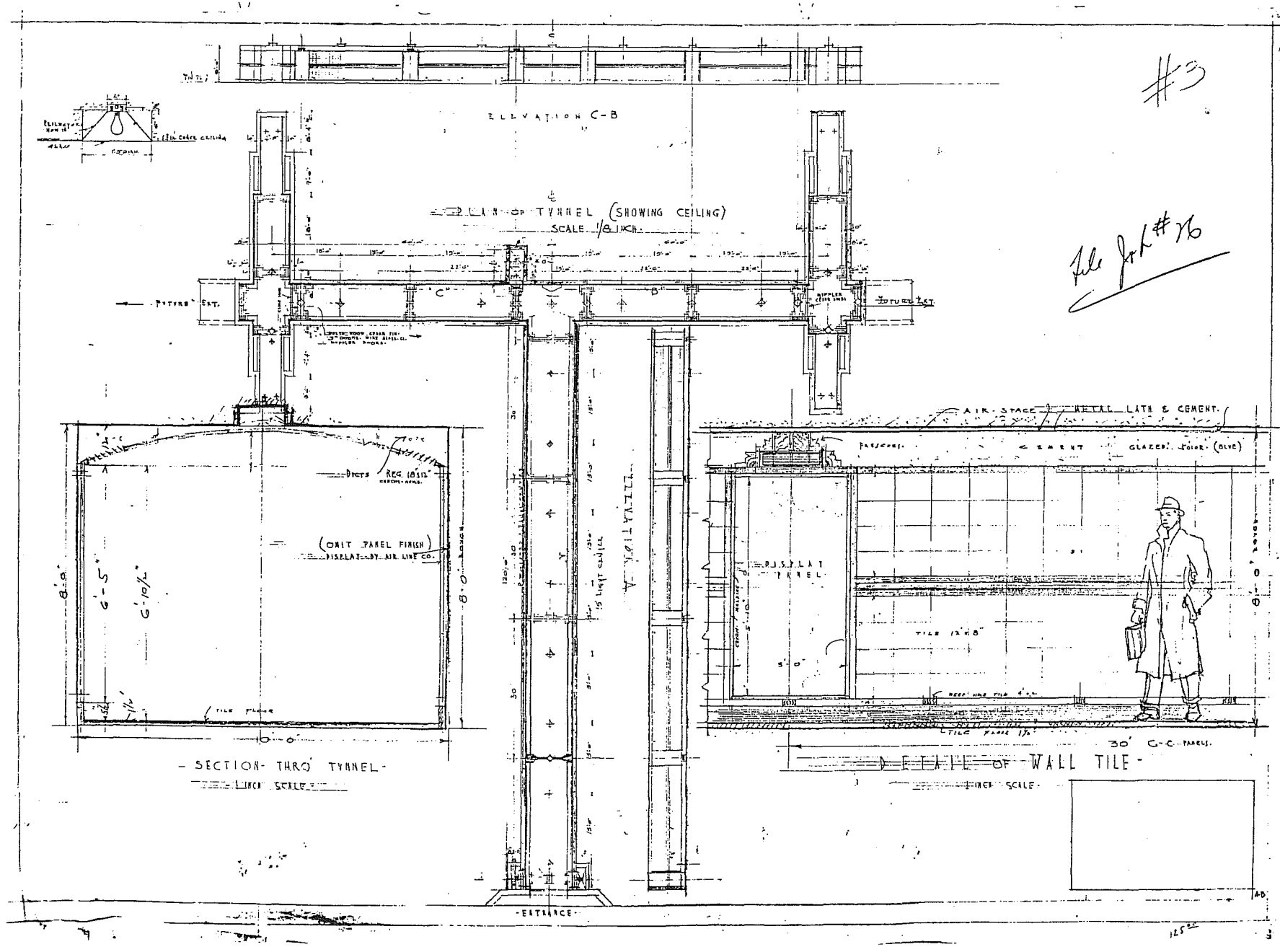



**Figure 99.** Proposed plan, section, elevation, and detail of passenger-loading tunnel, ca. 1935. (Original rendered in color pencil.)

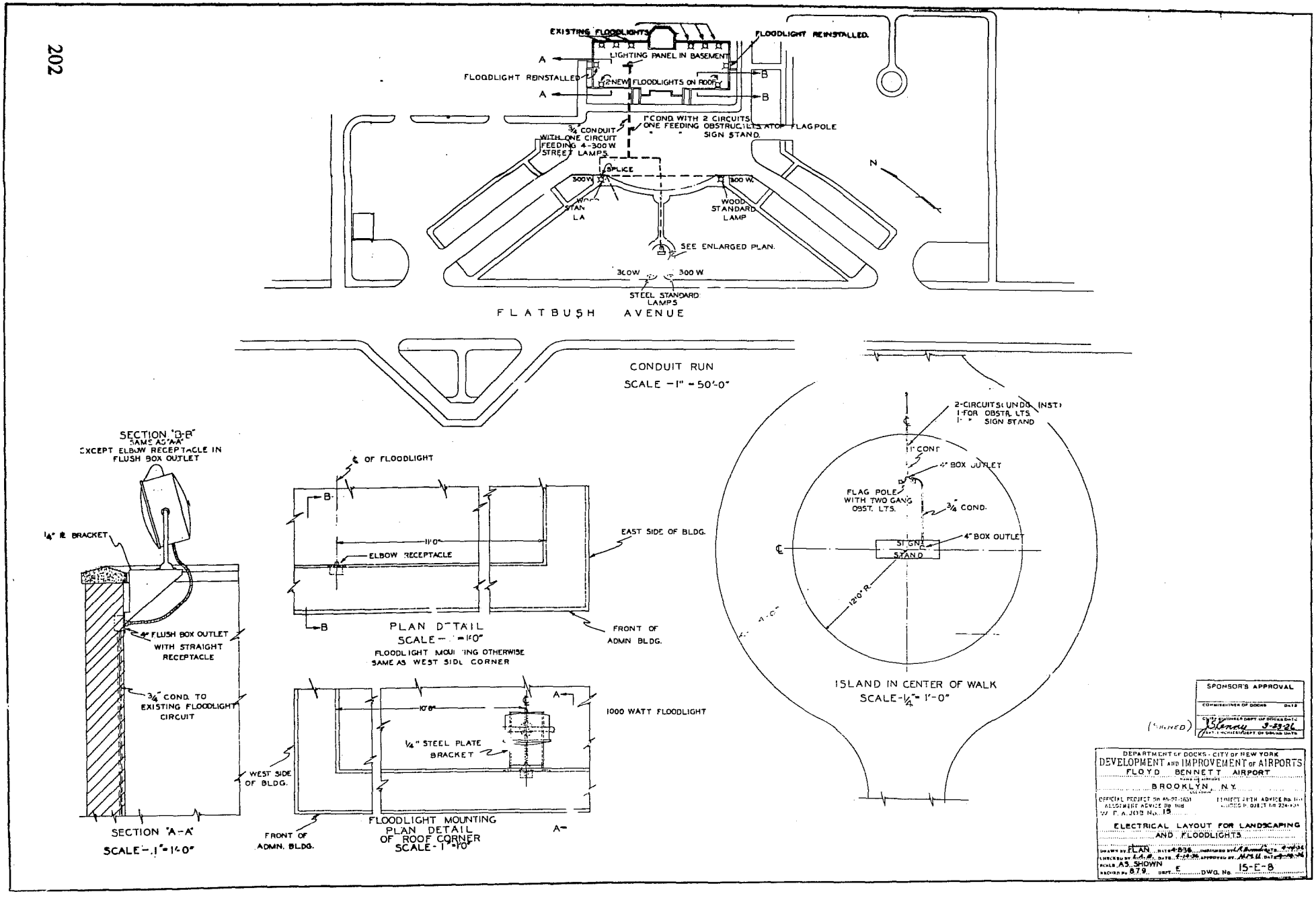



**Figure 100.** Electrical layout for landscaping and floodlights. Drawn April 8, 1936; approved April 14, 1936.

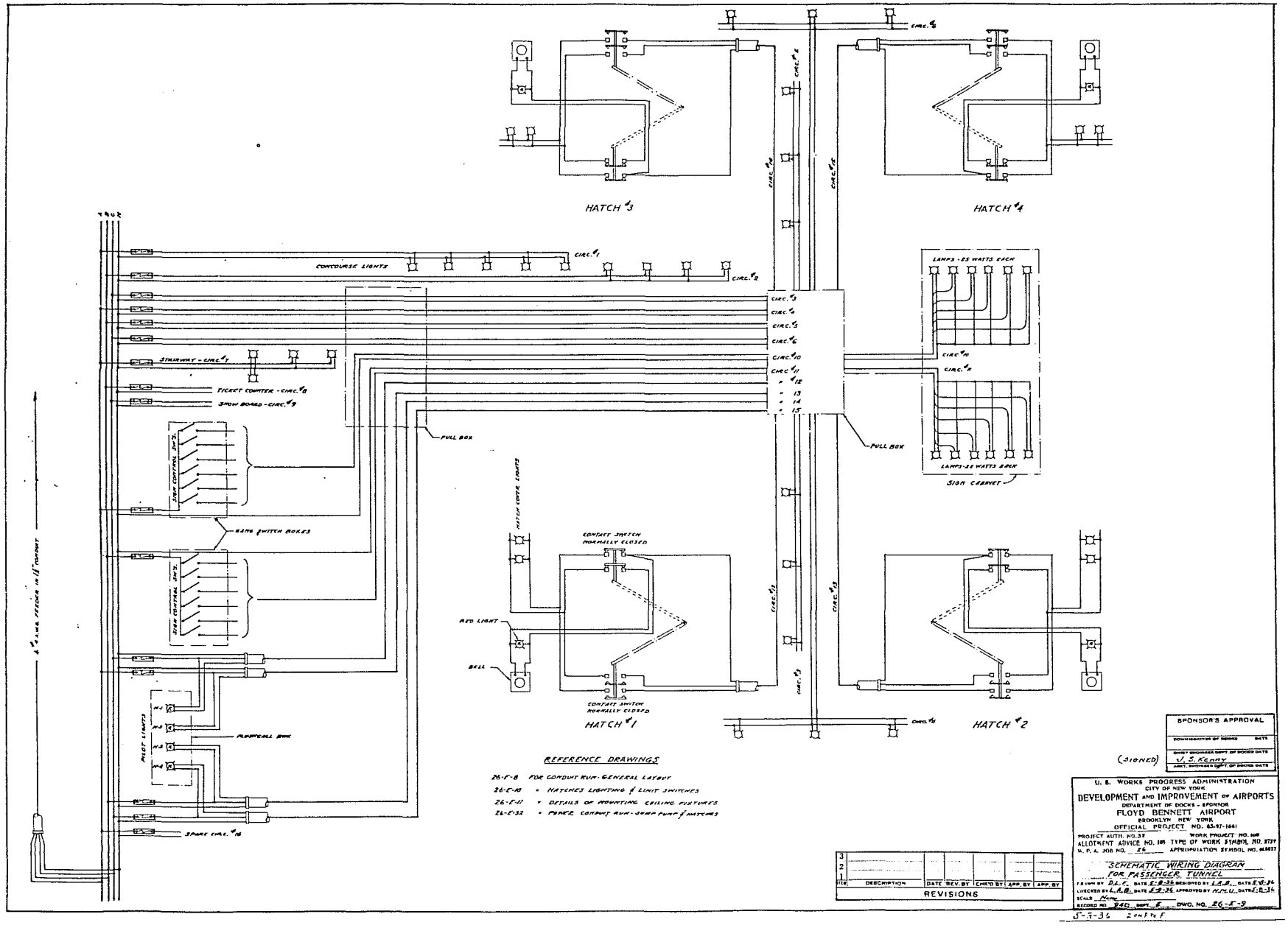



**Figure 101.** Schematic wiring diagram for passenger-loading tunnel. Drawn May 8, 1936; approved May 8, 1936.

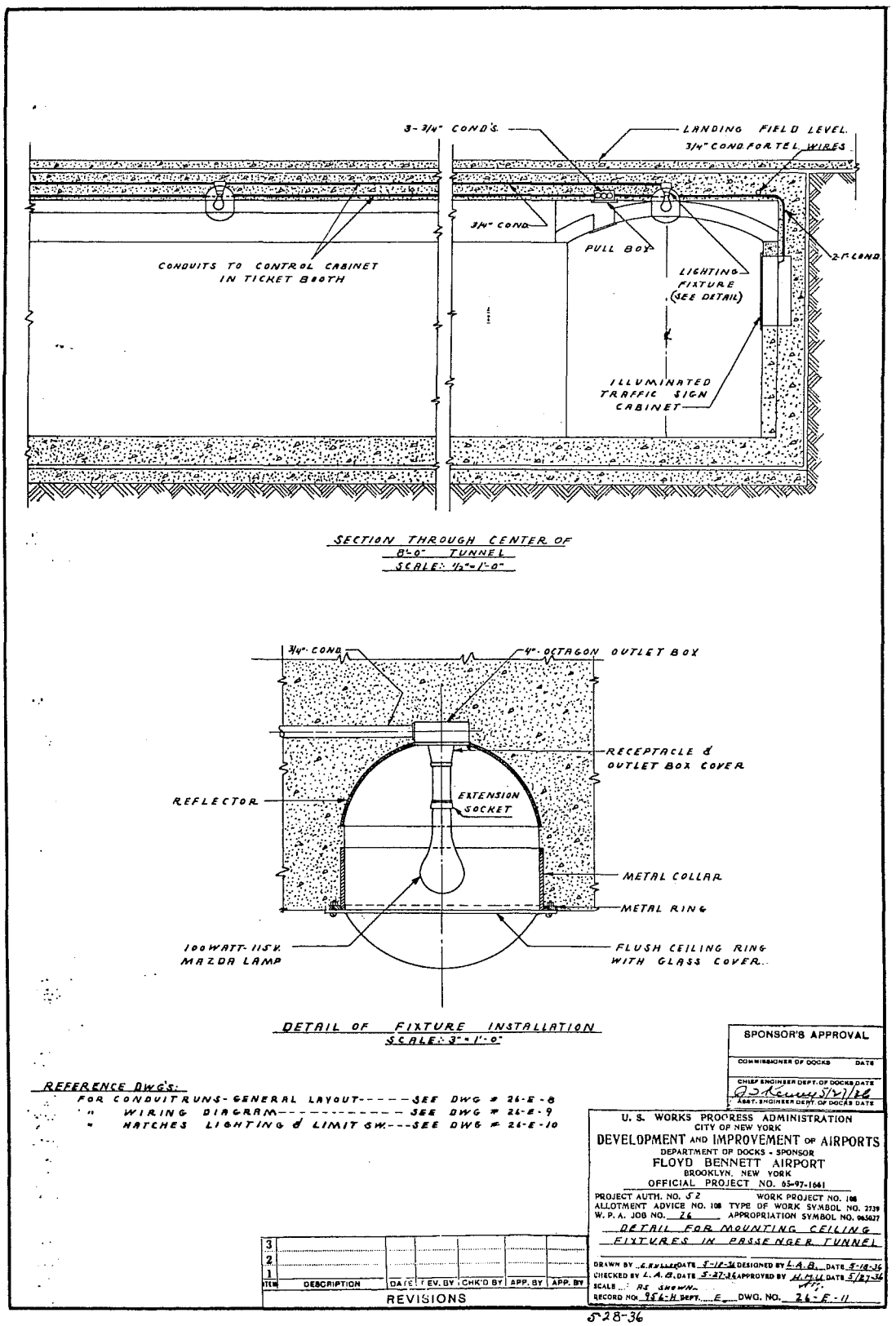



**Figure 102.** Detail for mounting ceiling fixtures in passenger-loading tunnel. Drawn May 18, 1936; approved May 27, 1936.

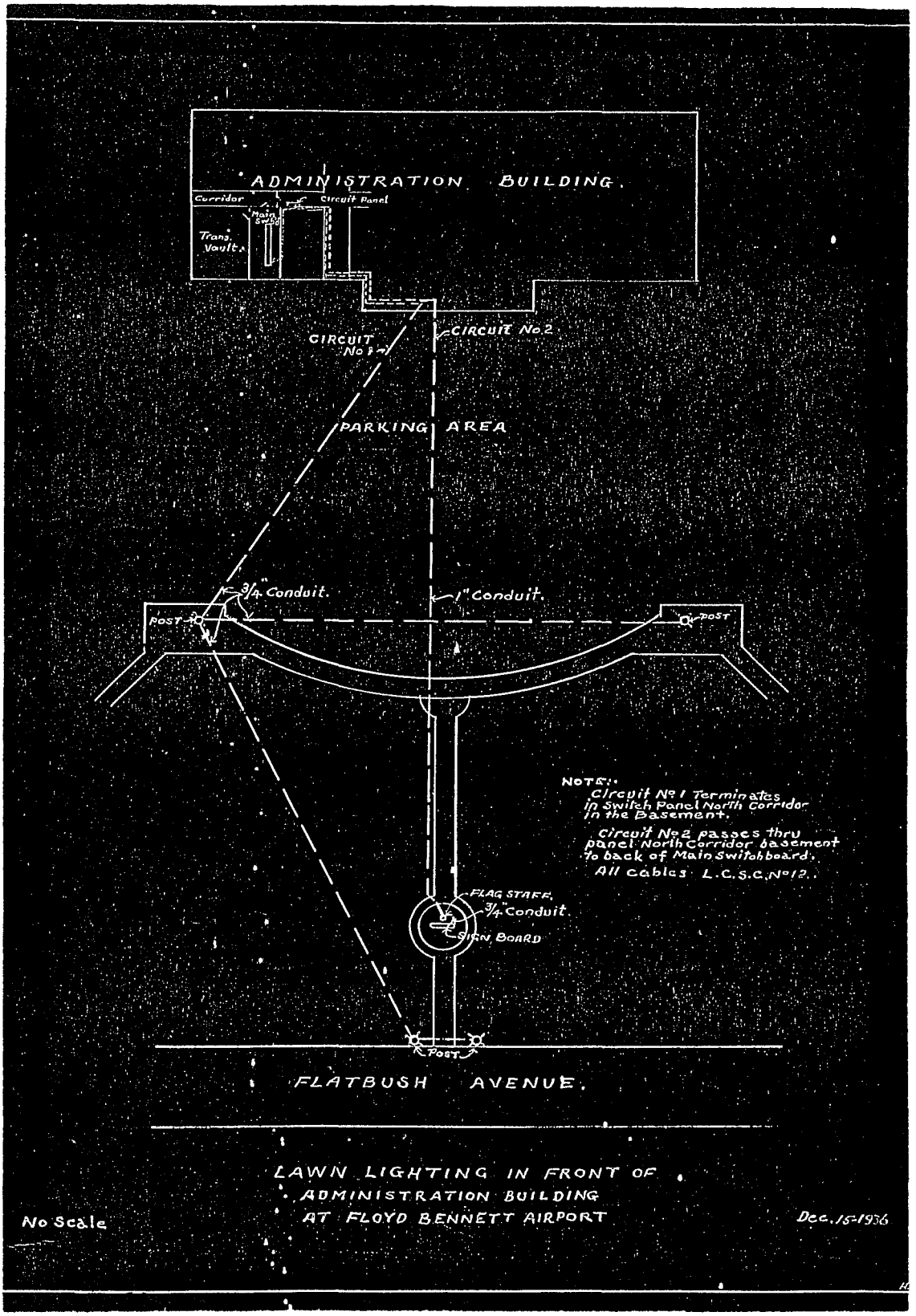



**Figure 103.** Lawn lighting in front of Administration Building, December 15, 1936.

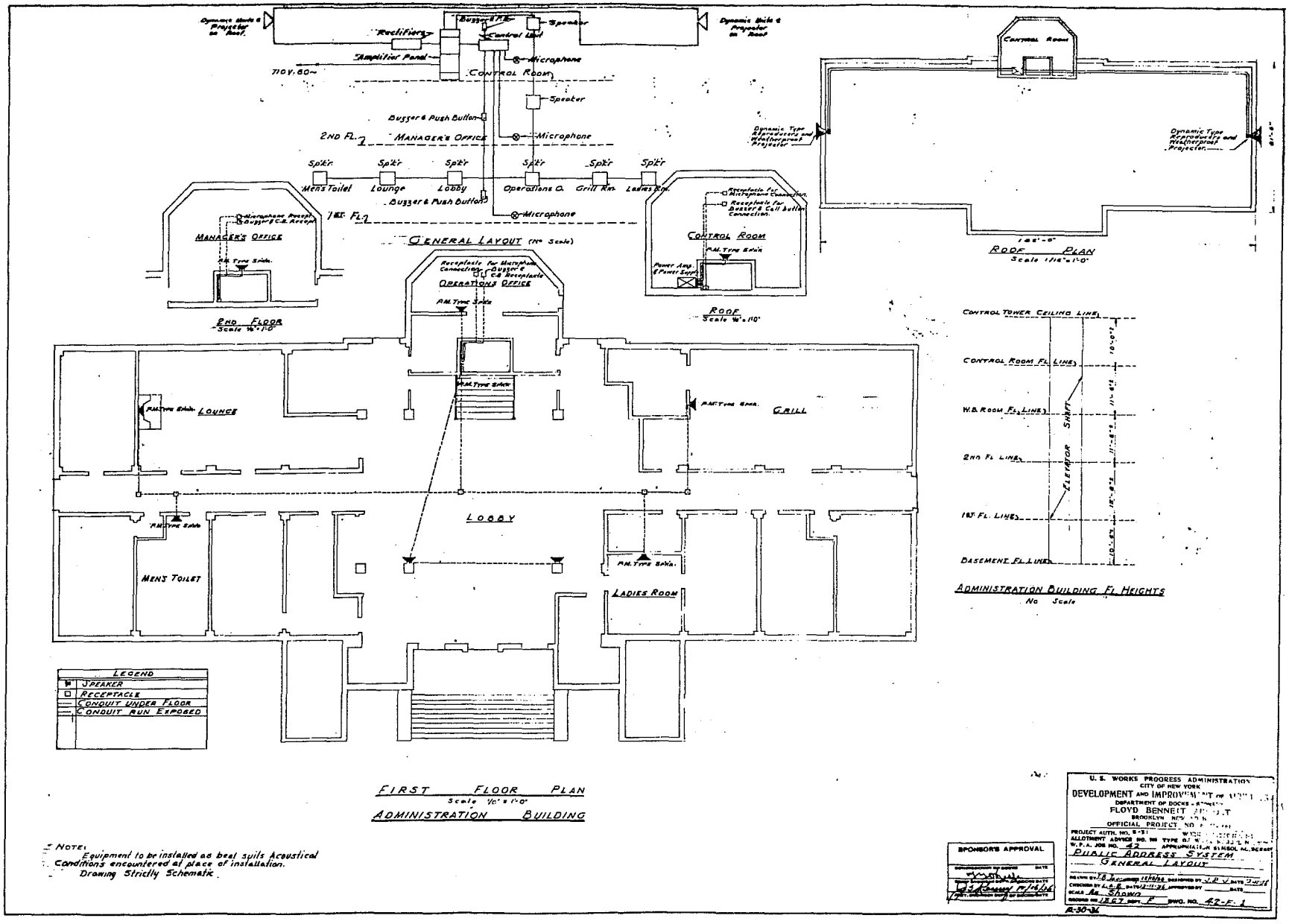



**Figure 104.** General layout of public-address system, first-floor plan. Drawn December 13, 1936; approved December 16, 1936.

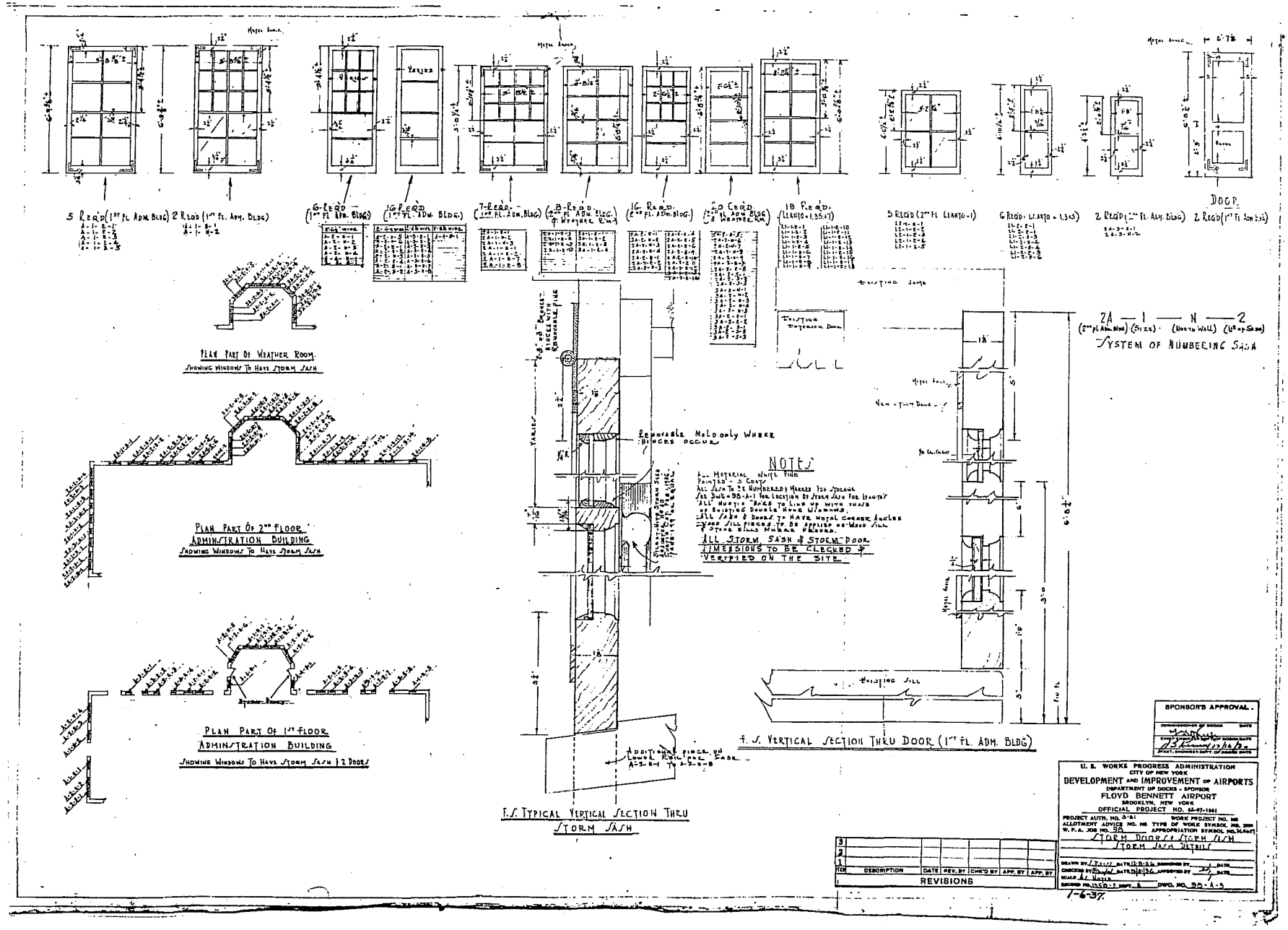



**Figure 105. Drawing showing storm doors, storm sash, and storm-sash details, December 6, 1936.**

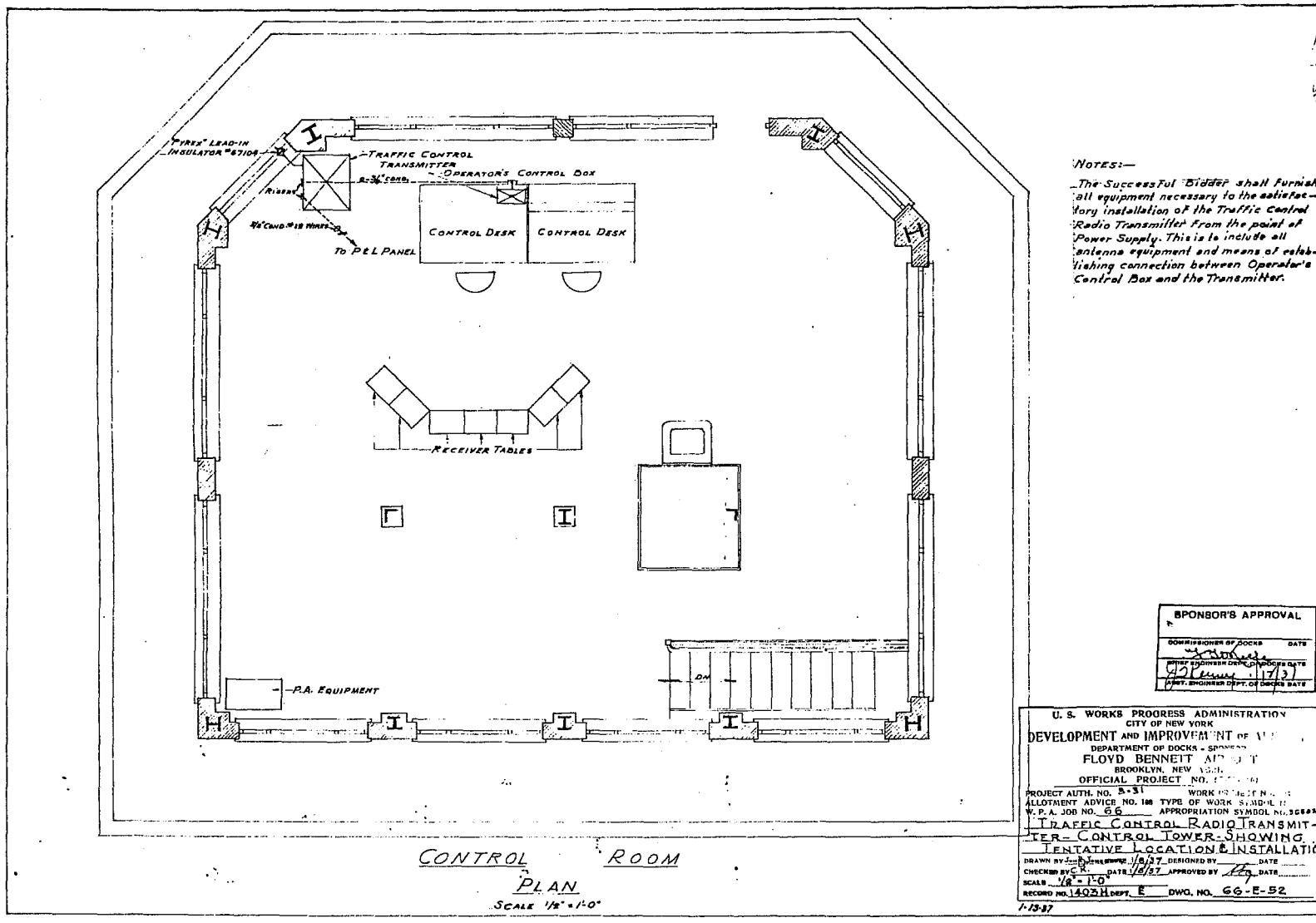



**Figure 106.** Drawing showing location and installation of traffic-control radio transmitter in Control Tower. Drawn January 8, 1937; approved January 12, 1937.

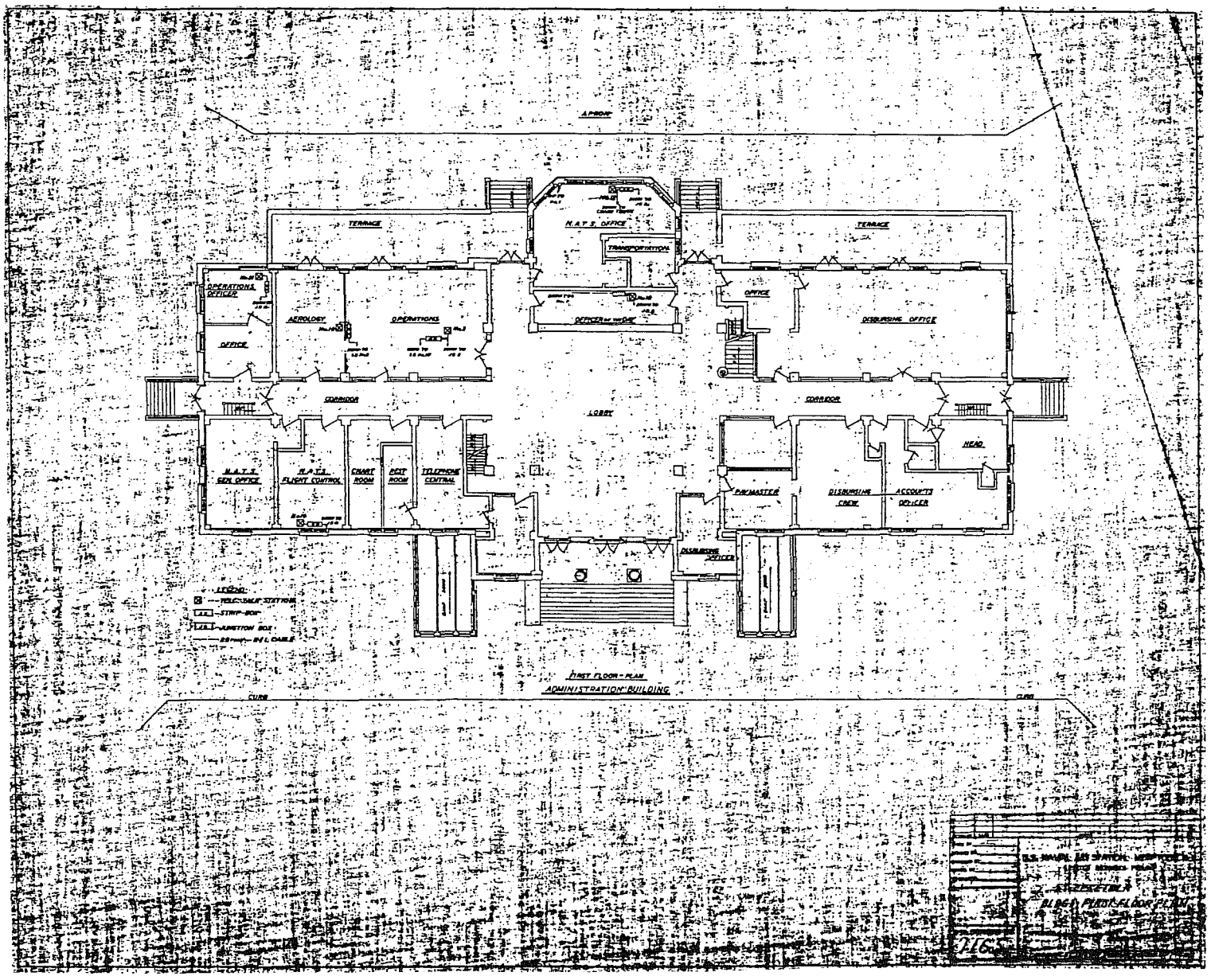



**Figure 107.** Plan showing "Teletalk" system, first floor, ca. 1942.

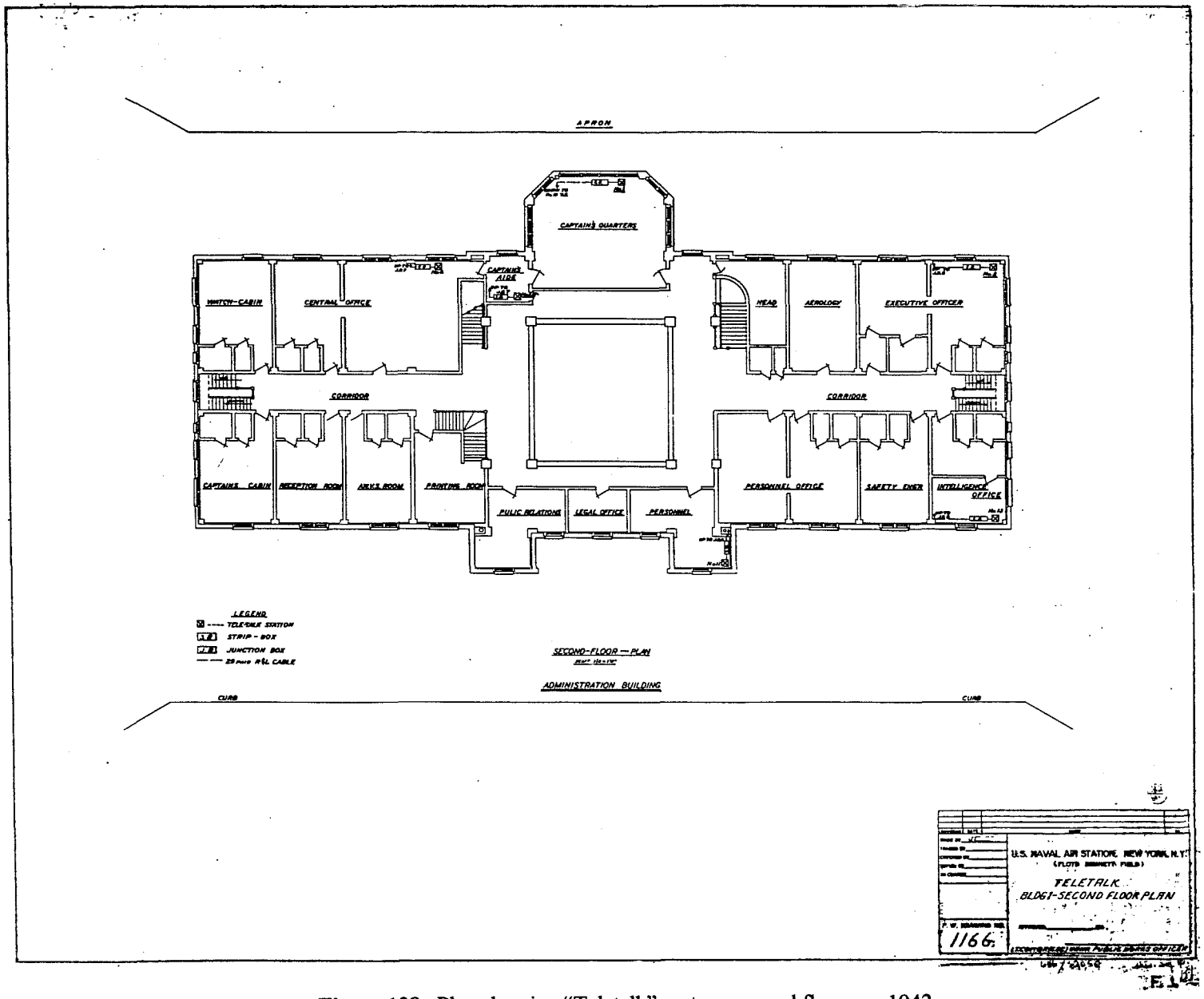



**Figure 108.** Plan showing "Teletalk" system, second floor, ca. 1942.

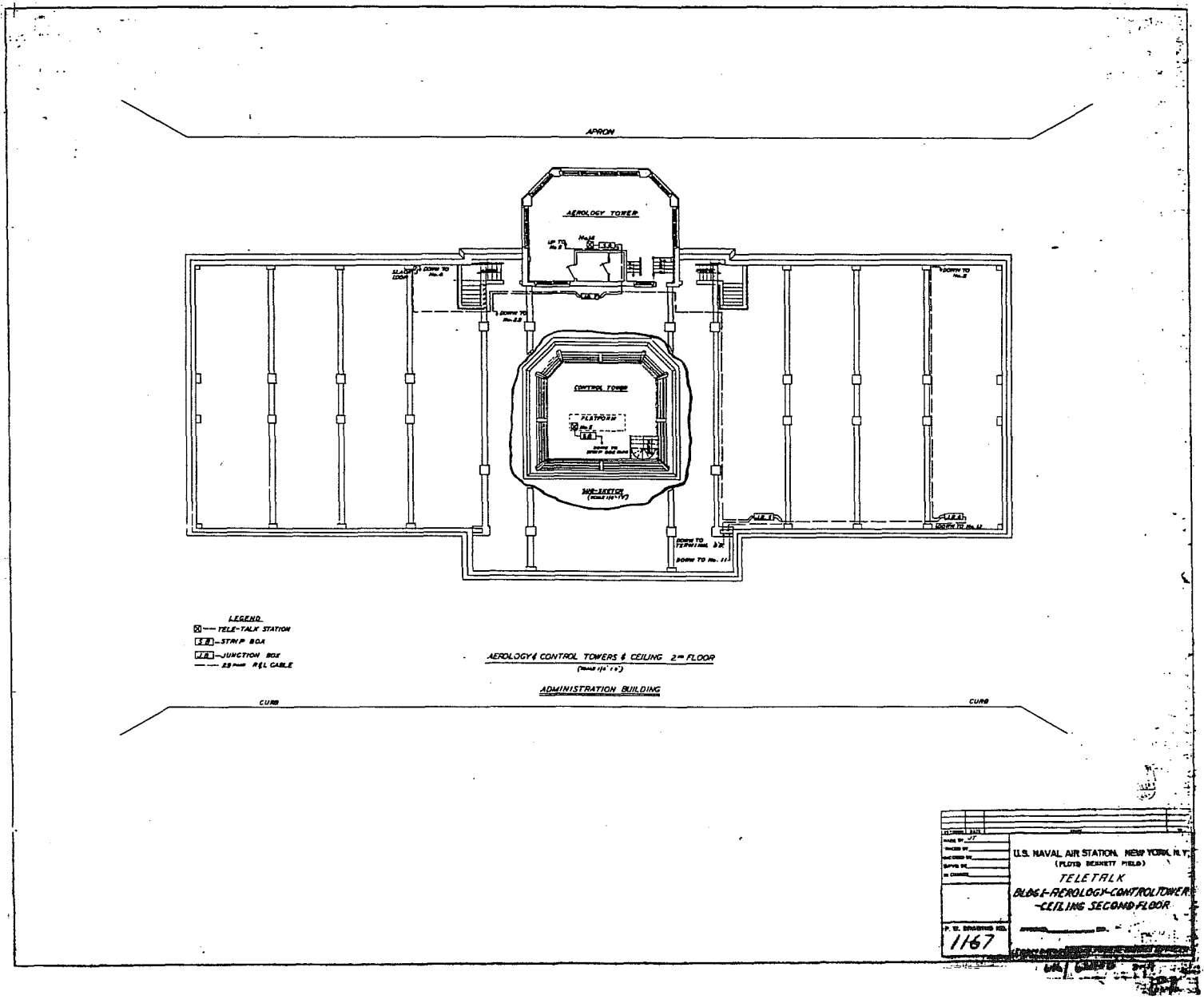



**Figure 109.** Plan showing "Teletalk" system, Aerology and Control Towers and ceiling of second floor, ca. 1942.

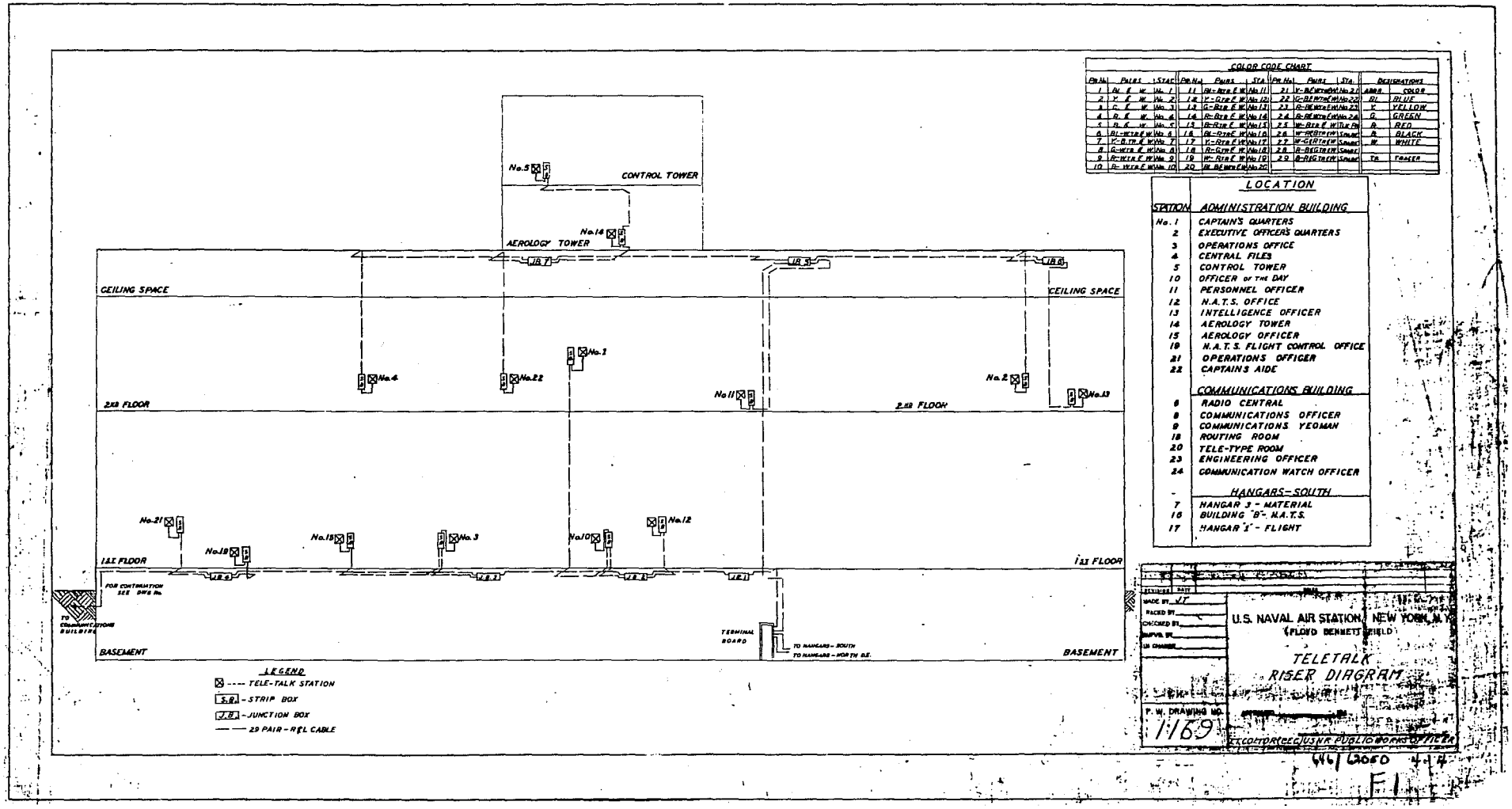



**Figure 110.** "Teletalk" riser diagram, ca. 1942.

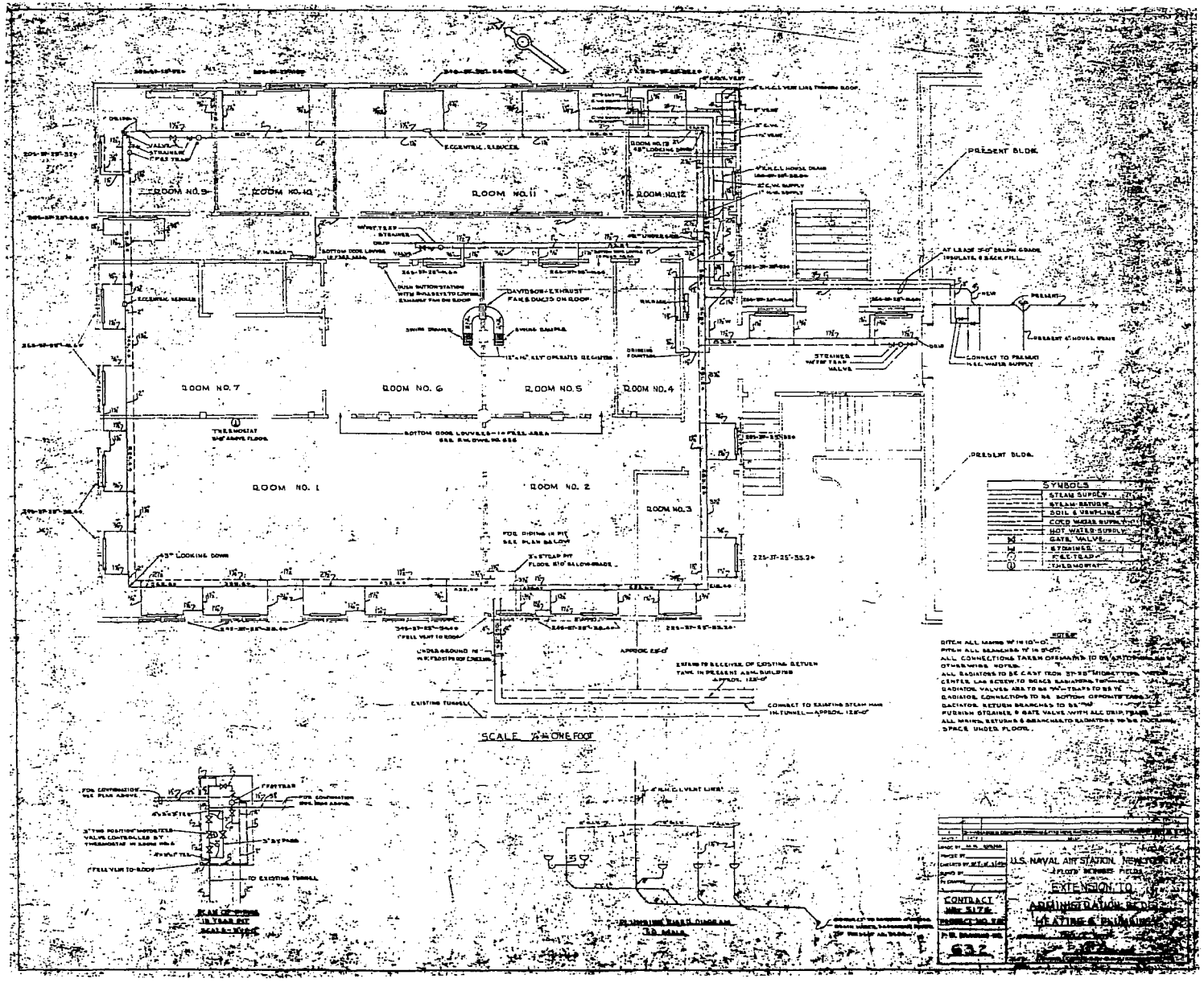



**Figure 111.** Extension to Administration Building, heating and plumbing floor plan, February 13, 1943.

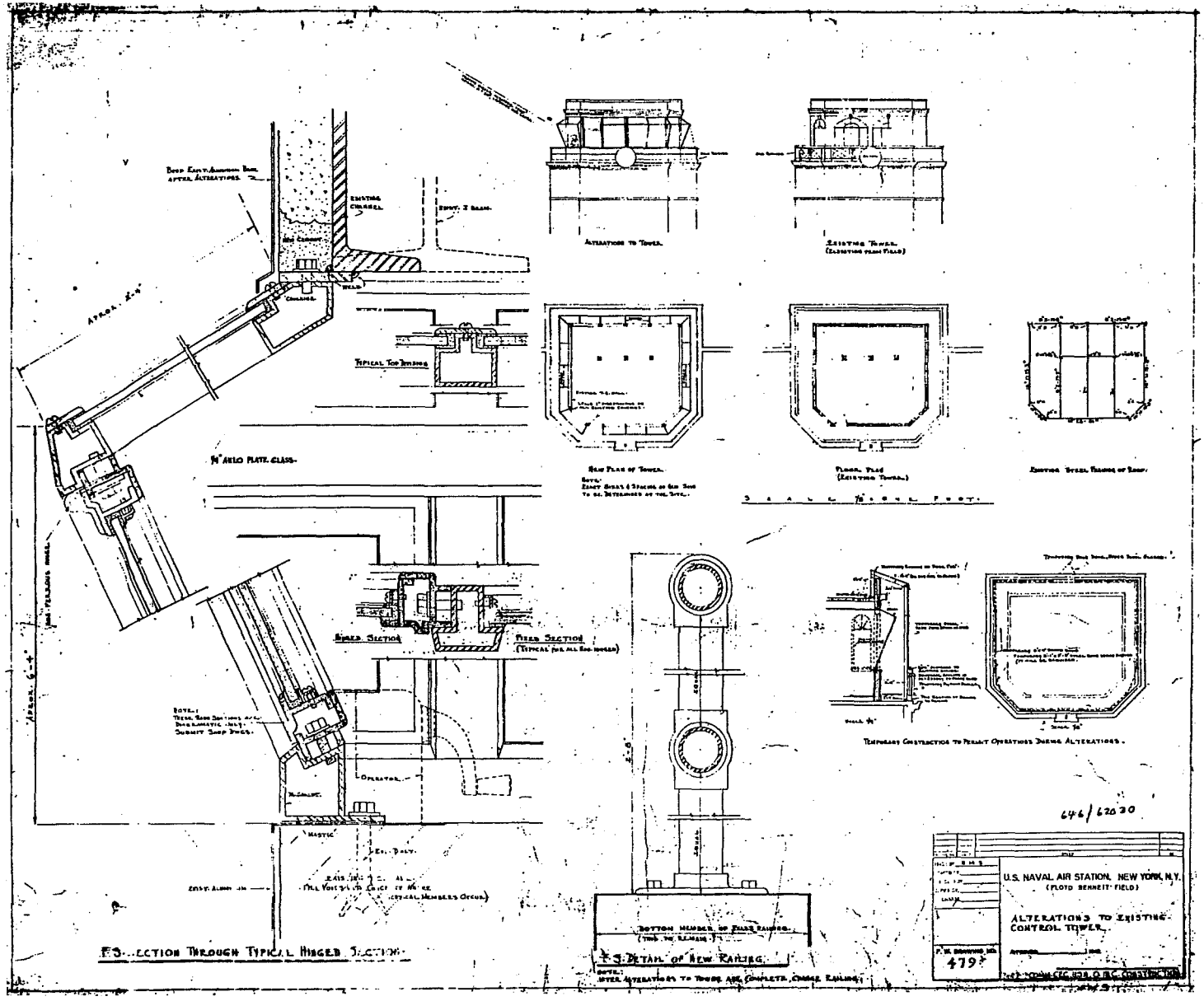



**Figure 112.** Alterations to control tower. Plans, elevations, and sections, ca. December 1942.

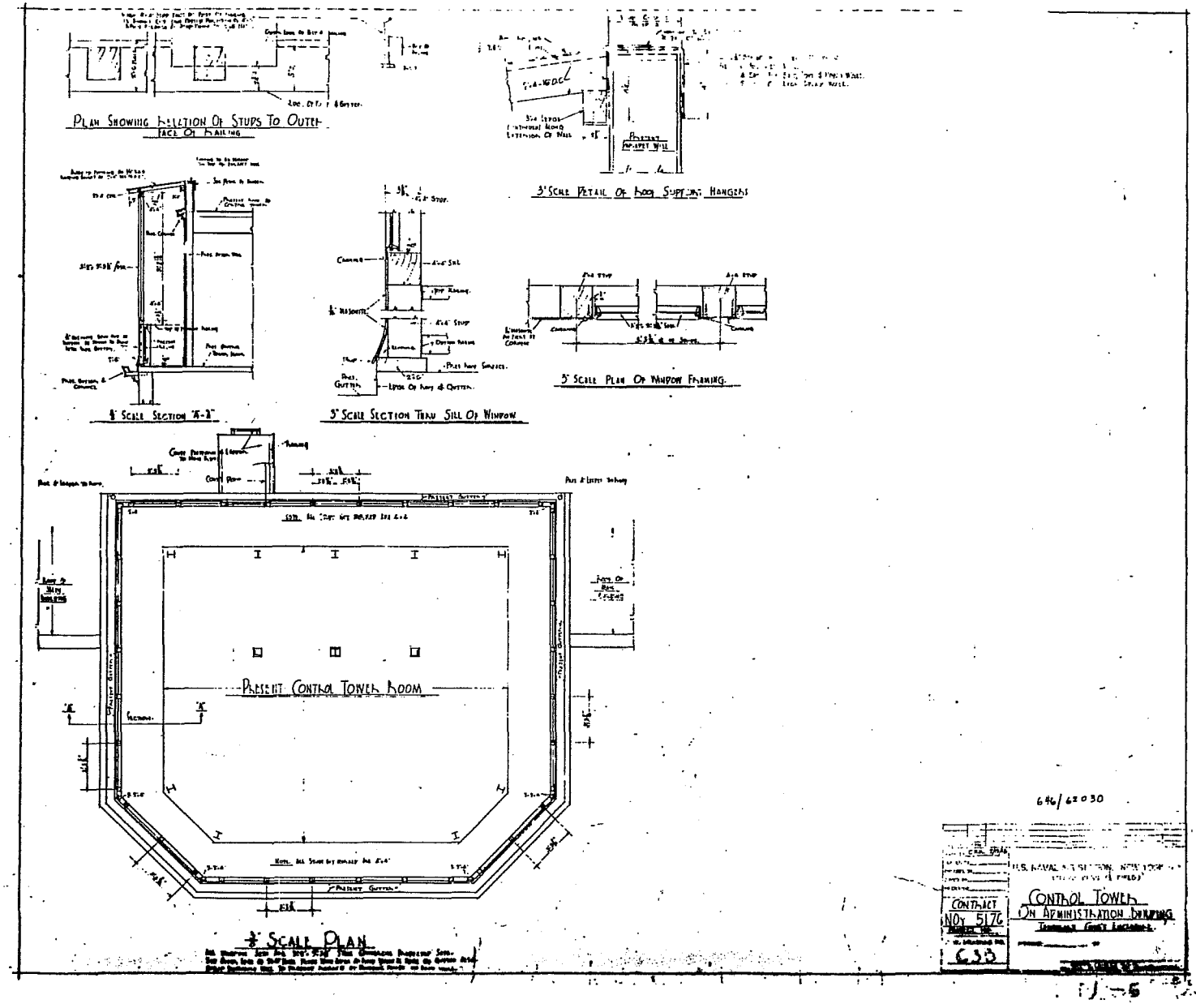



**Figure 113. Control tower, temporary construction enclosure. Plan and sections, February 15, 1943.**

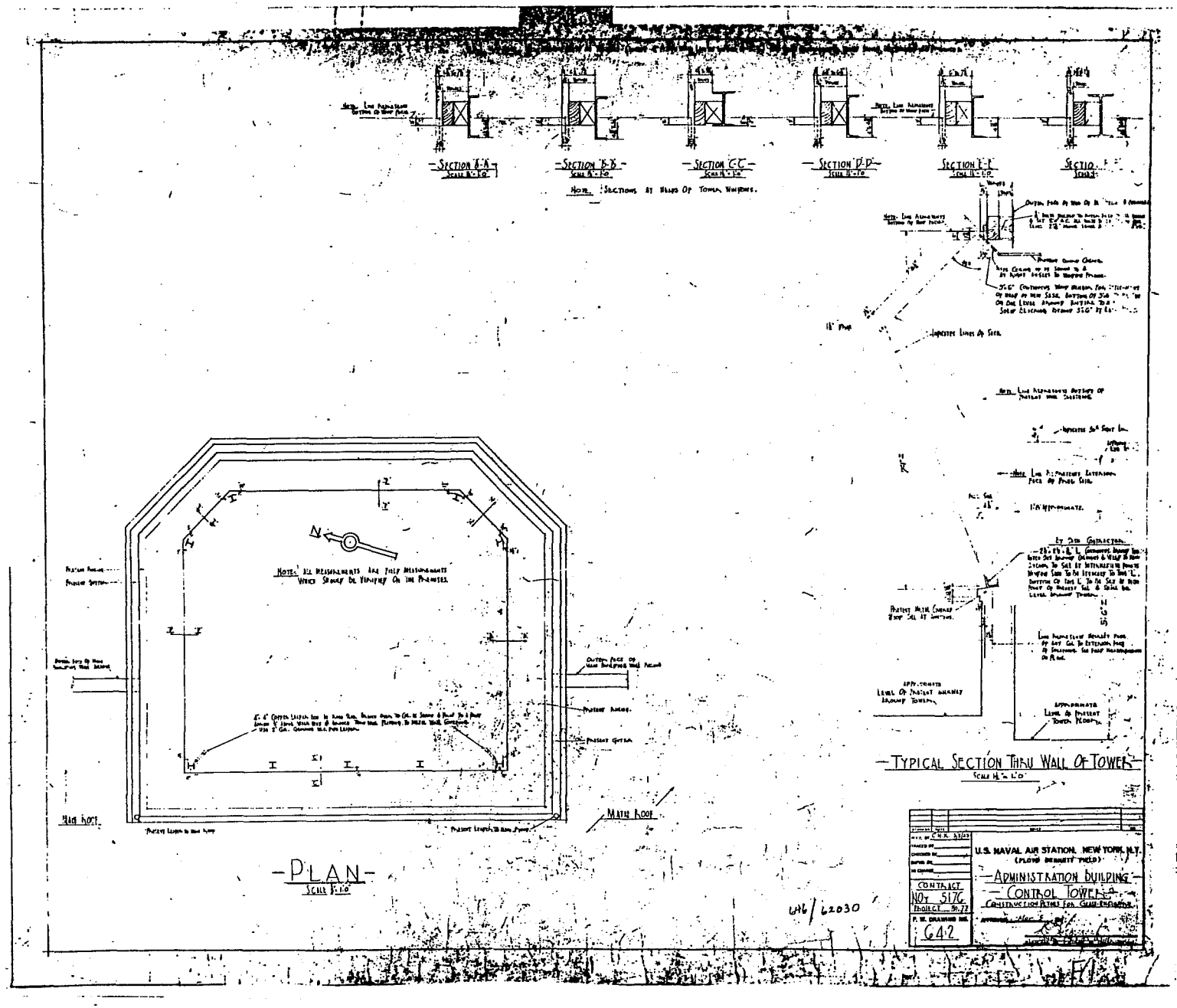



**Figure 114.** Control tower, construction details for glass enclosure, March 5, 1943.

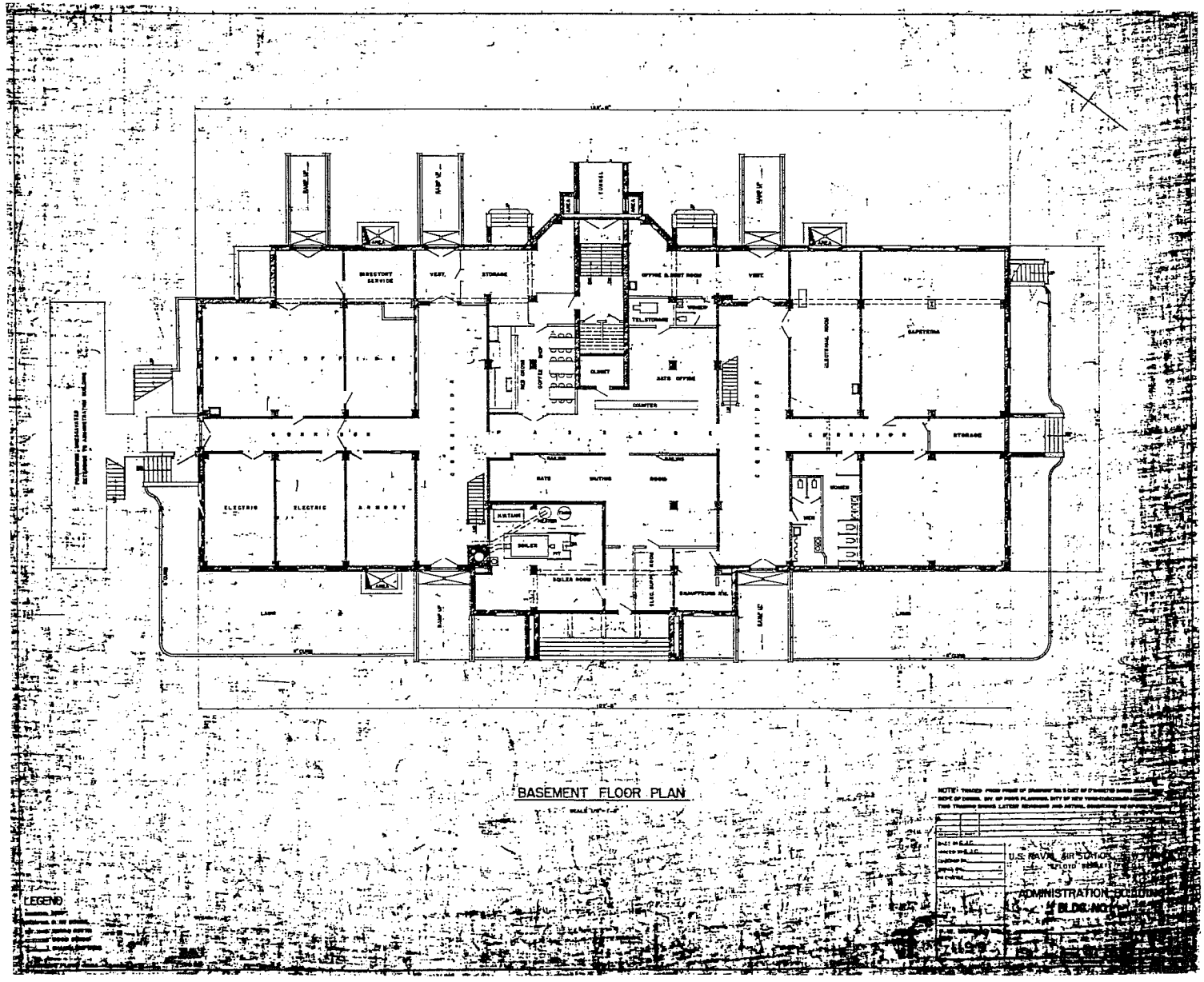



**Figure 115.** Basement floor plan, February 1, 1946.

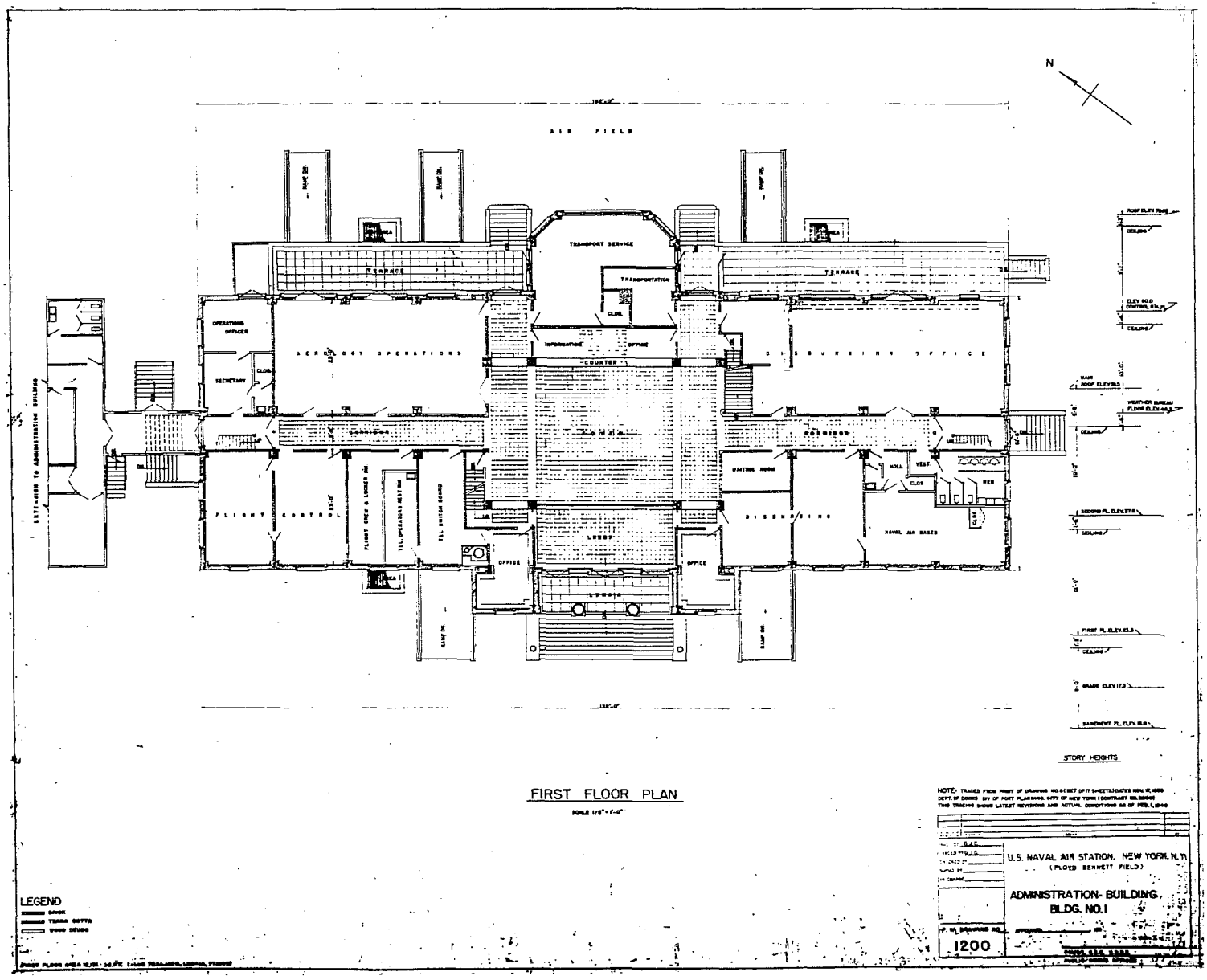



**Figure 116.** First-floor plan, February 1, 1946.

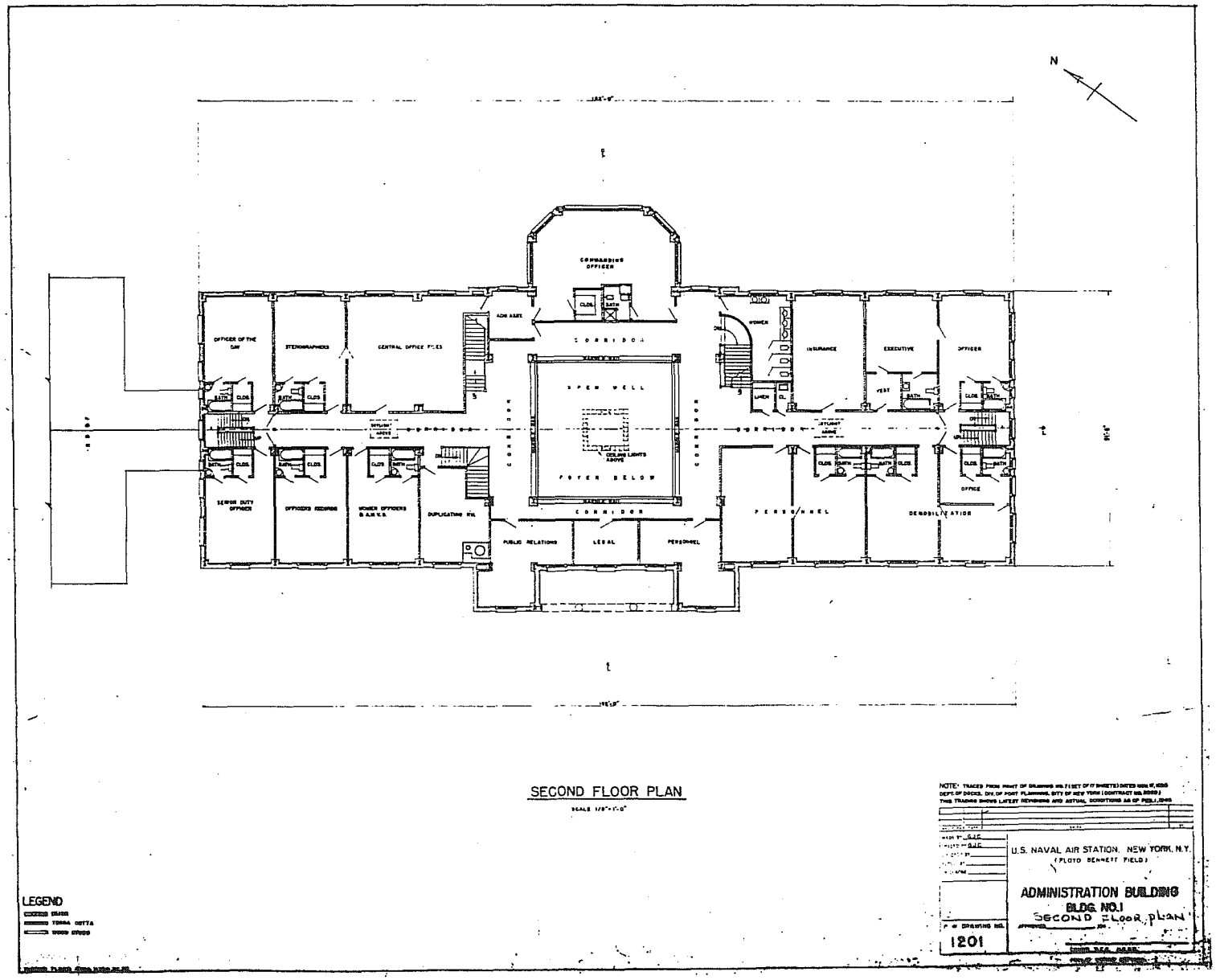



**Figure 117. Second-floor plan, February 1, 1946.**

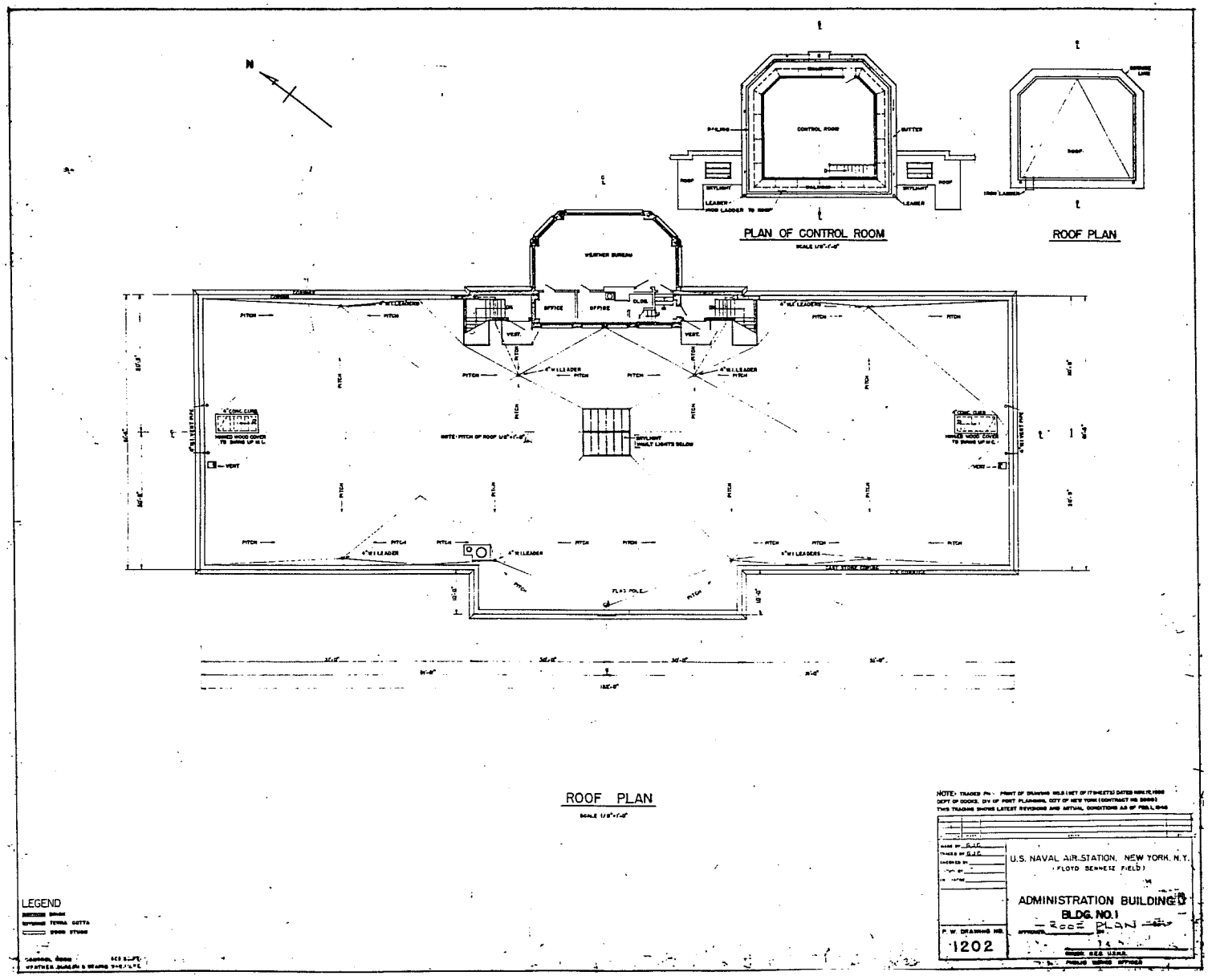



**Figure 118.** Roof plan, February 1, 1946.

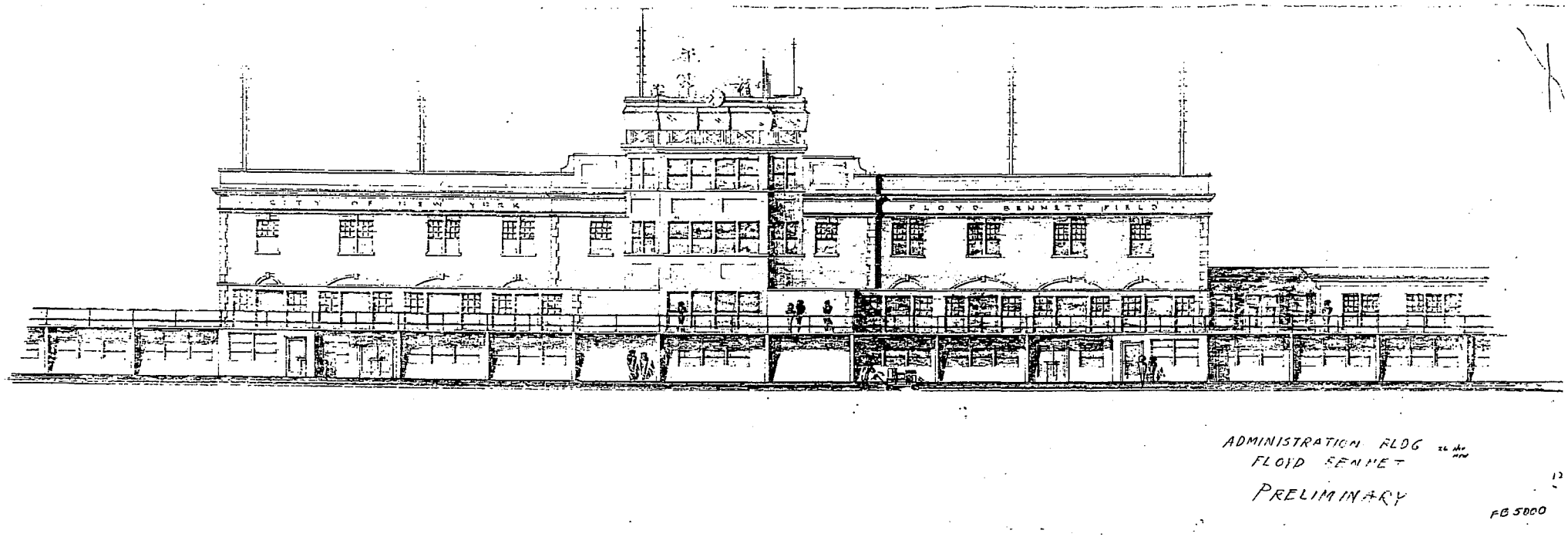



**Figure 119.** Proposed plans for alterations to the east elevation, November 26, 1947.

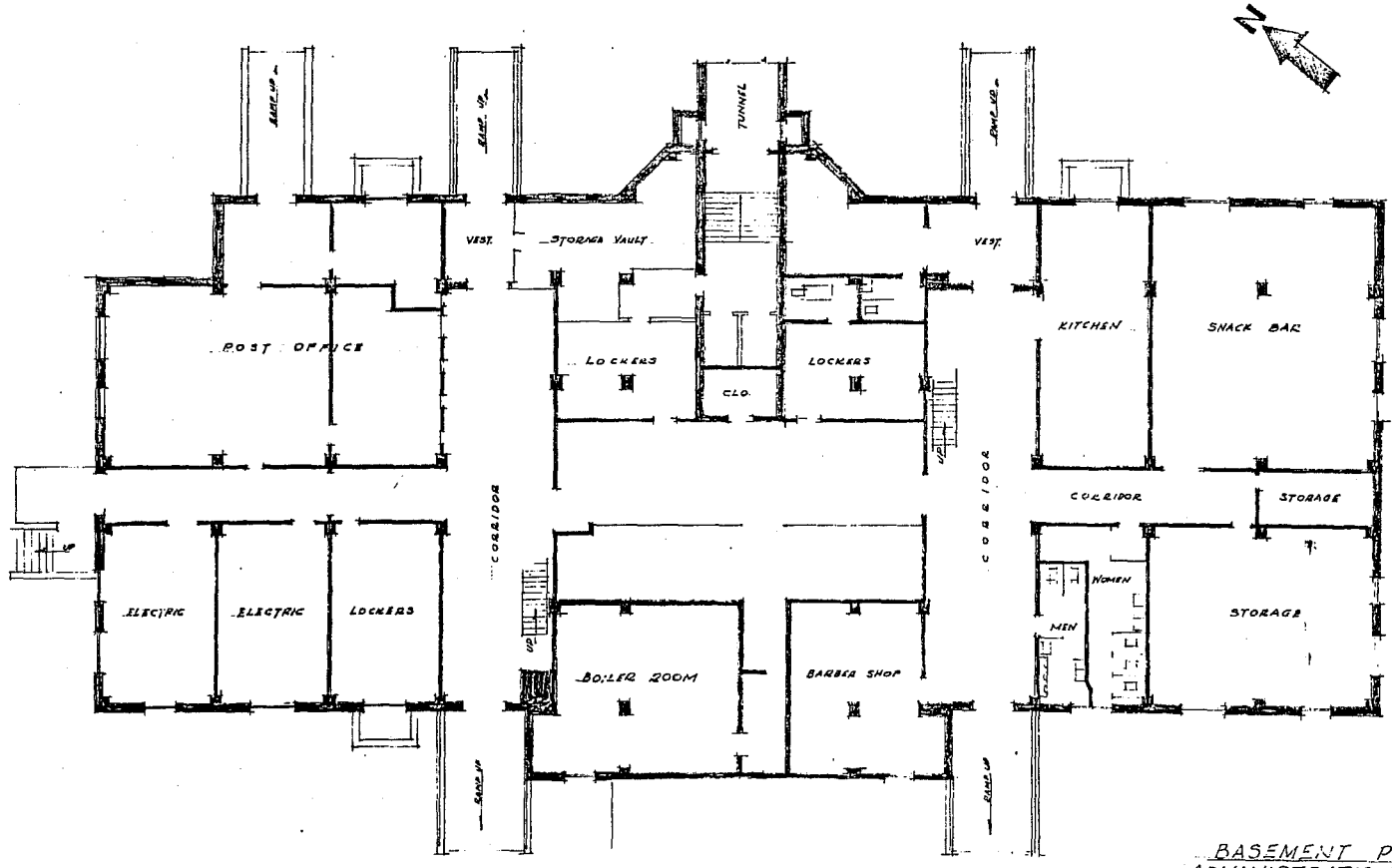



**Figure 120.** Proposed changes to the basement, January 20, 1947.

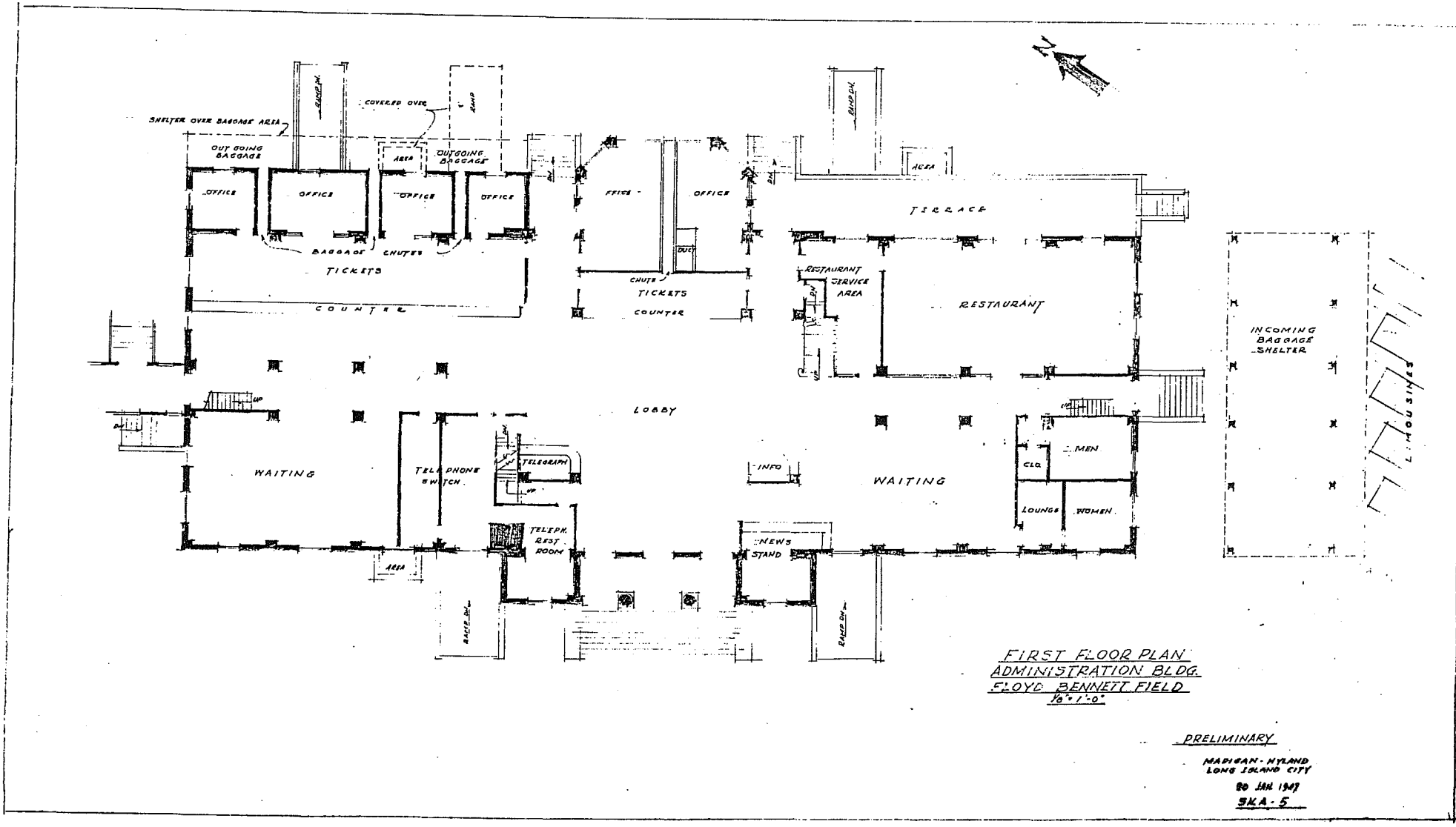



**Figure 121.** Proposed changes to the first floor, January 20, 1947.

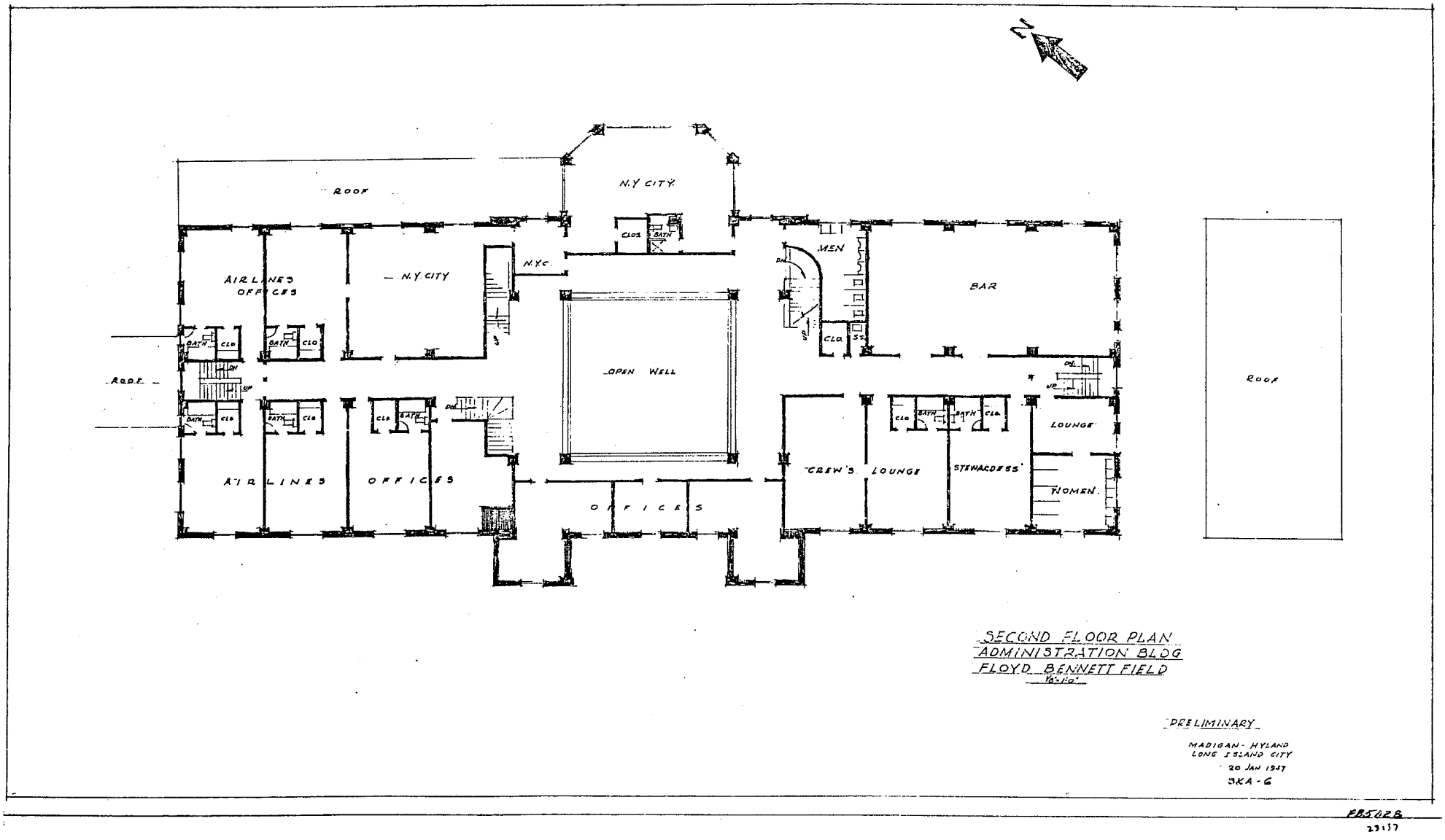



**Figure 122.** Proposed changes to the second floor, January 20, 1947.

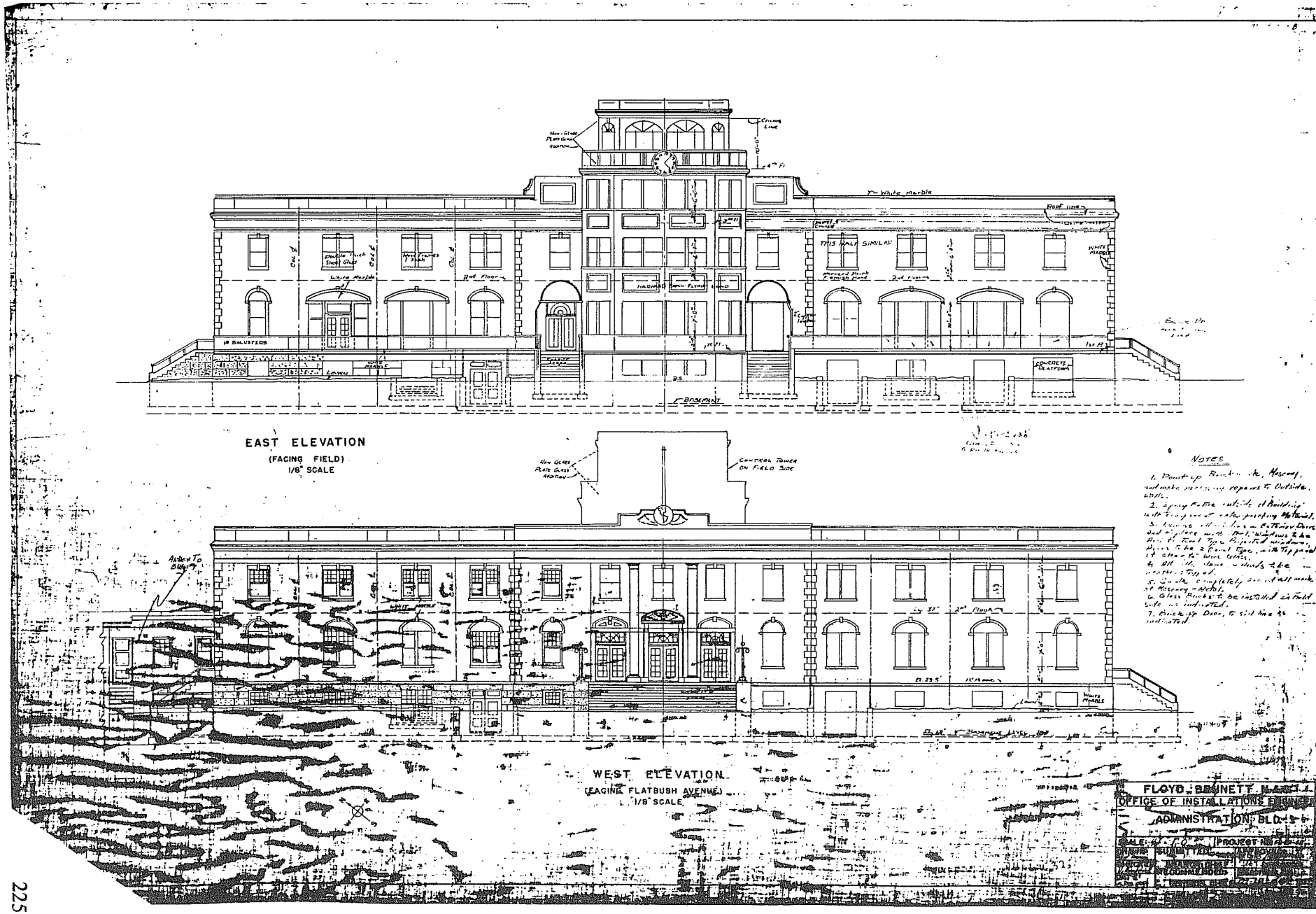



**Figure 123.** **Weatherproofing the Administration Building**, west and east elevations, December 23, 1954.

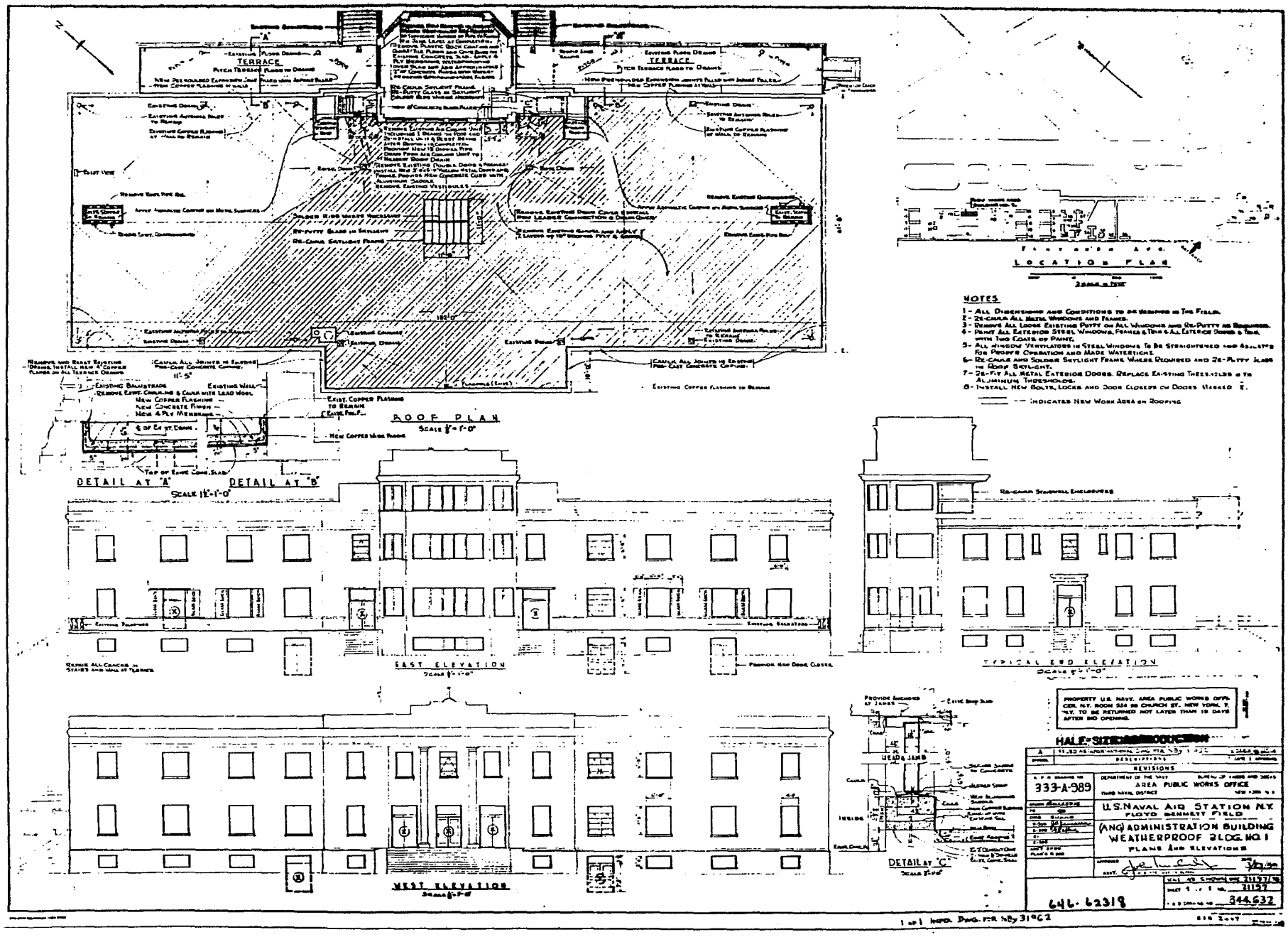



**Figure 124.** Plans and elevations for weatherproofing the Administration Building, March 23, 1959.

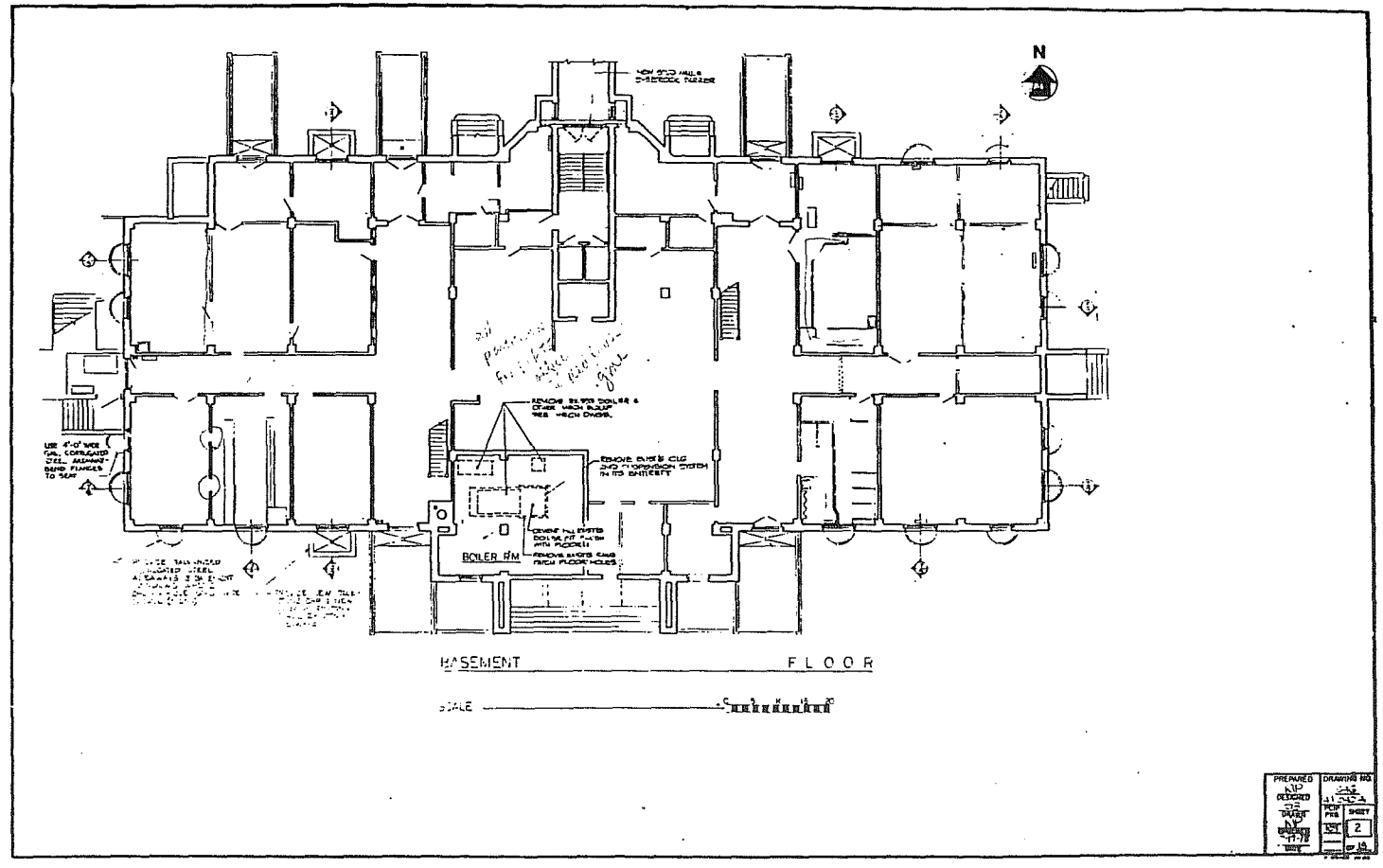



**Figure 125.** Basement floor plan with proposed changes, July 17, 1978.

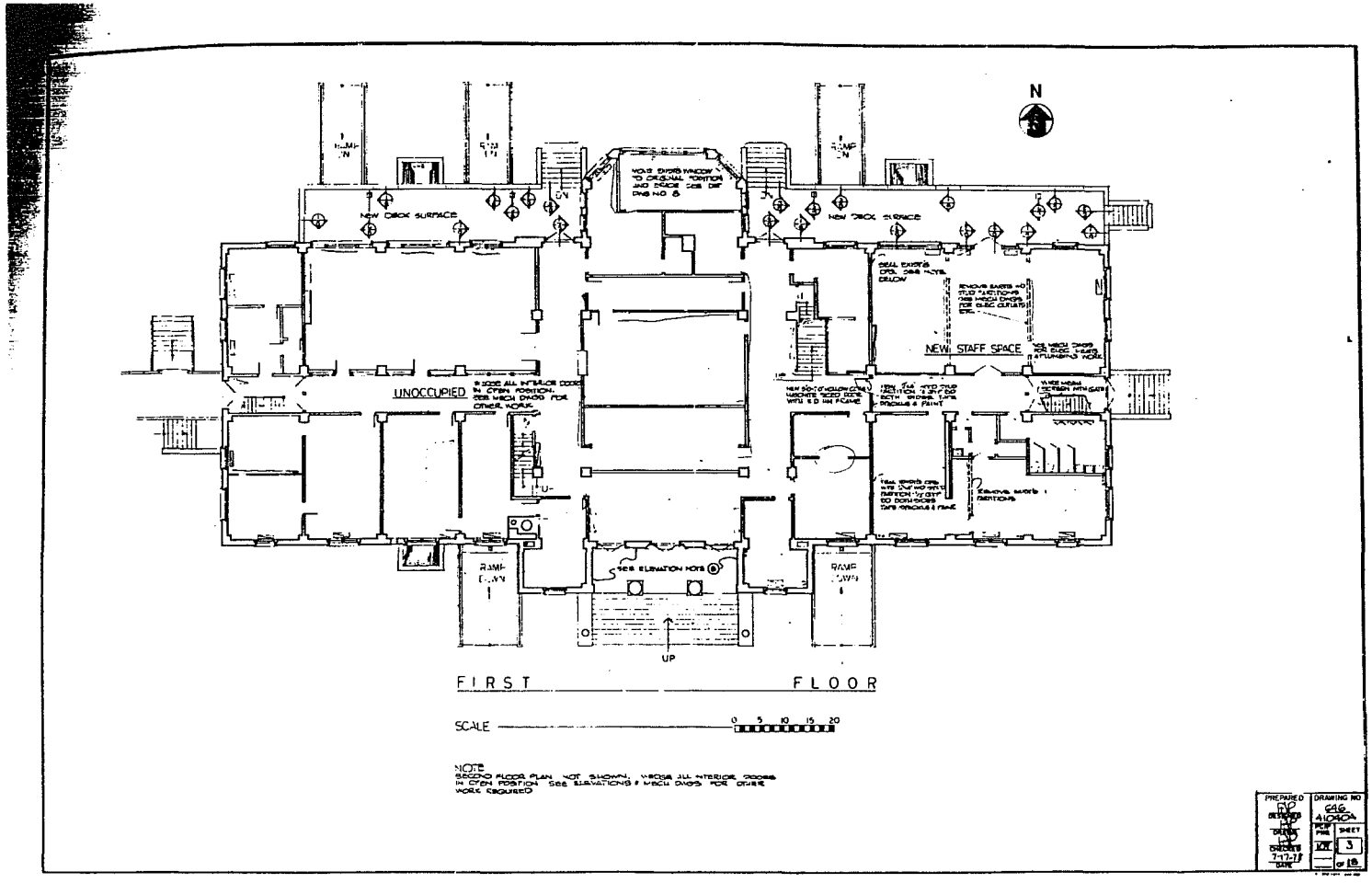



**Figure 126.** First-floor plan with proposed changes, July 17, 1978.

# VII. HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

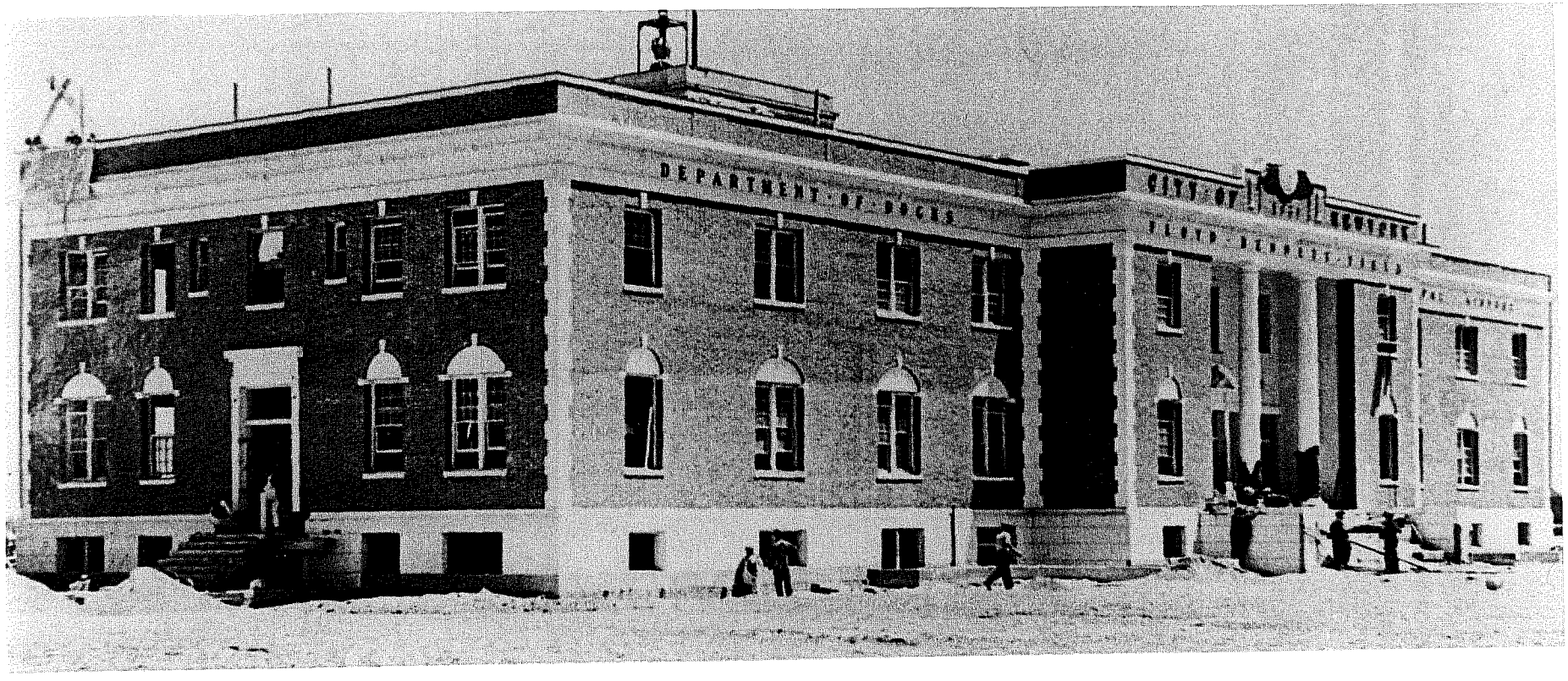



**Figure 127.** The Administration Building under construction, north and west sides of building, May 19, 1931.




**Figure 128.** The Administration Building newly constructed, south and east sides of building, ca. 1932. 1932

34 Brd

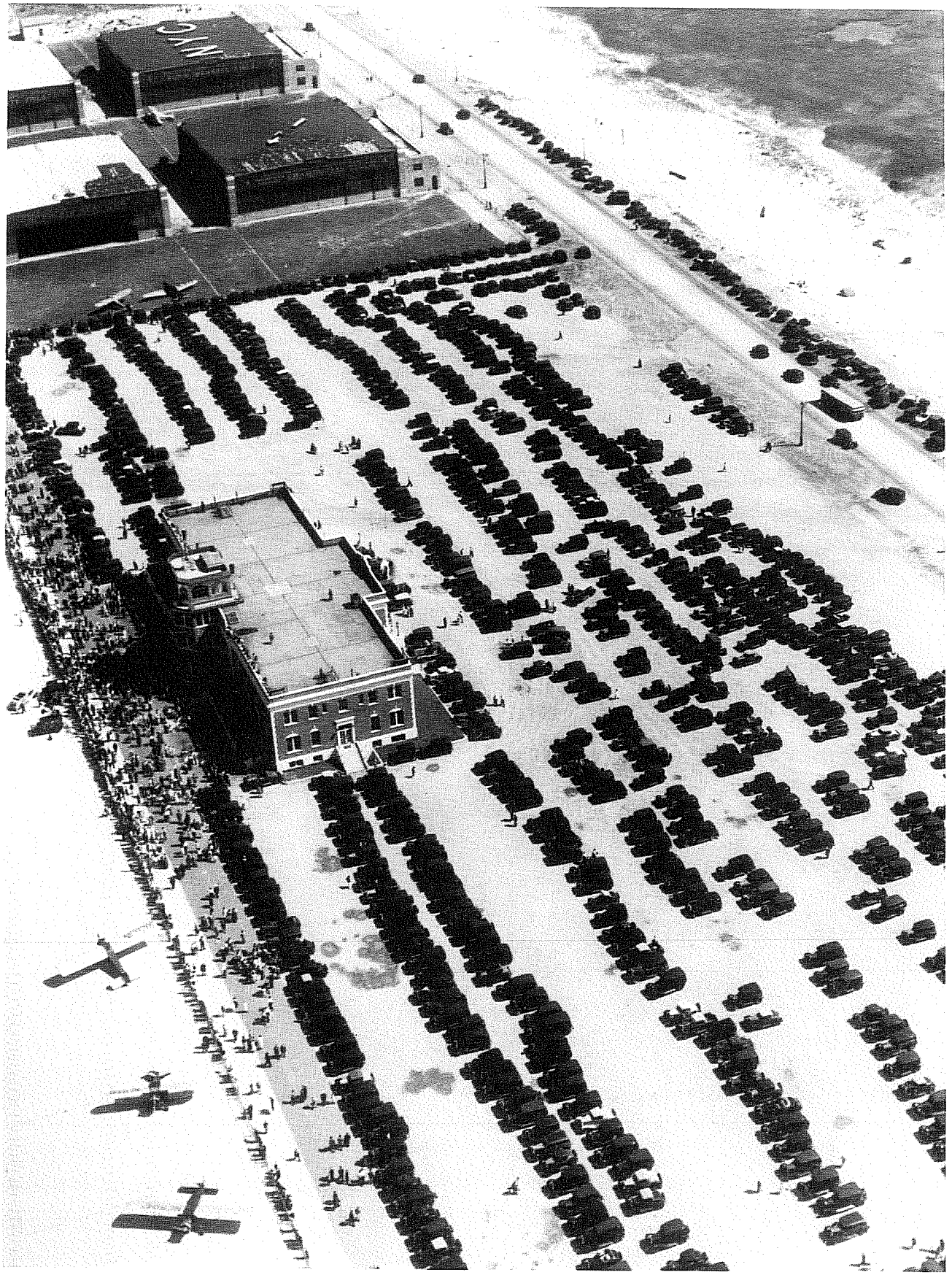


**Figure 129.** An air show at Floyd Bennett Field, spring 1932. Administration Building and surrounds, looking south.

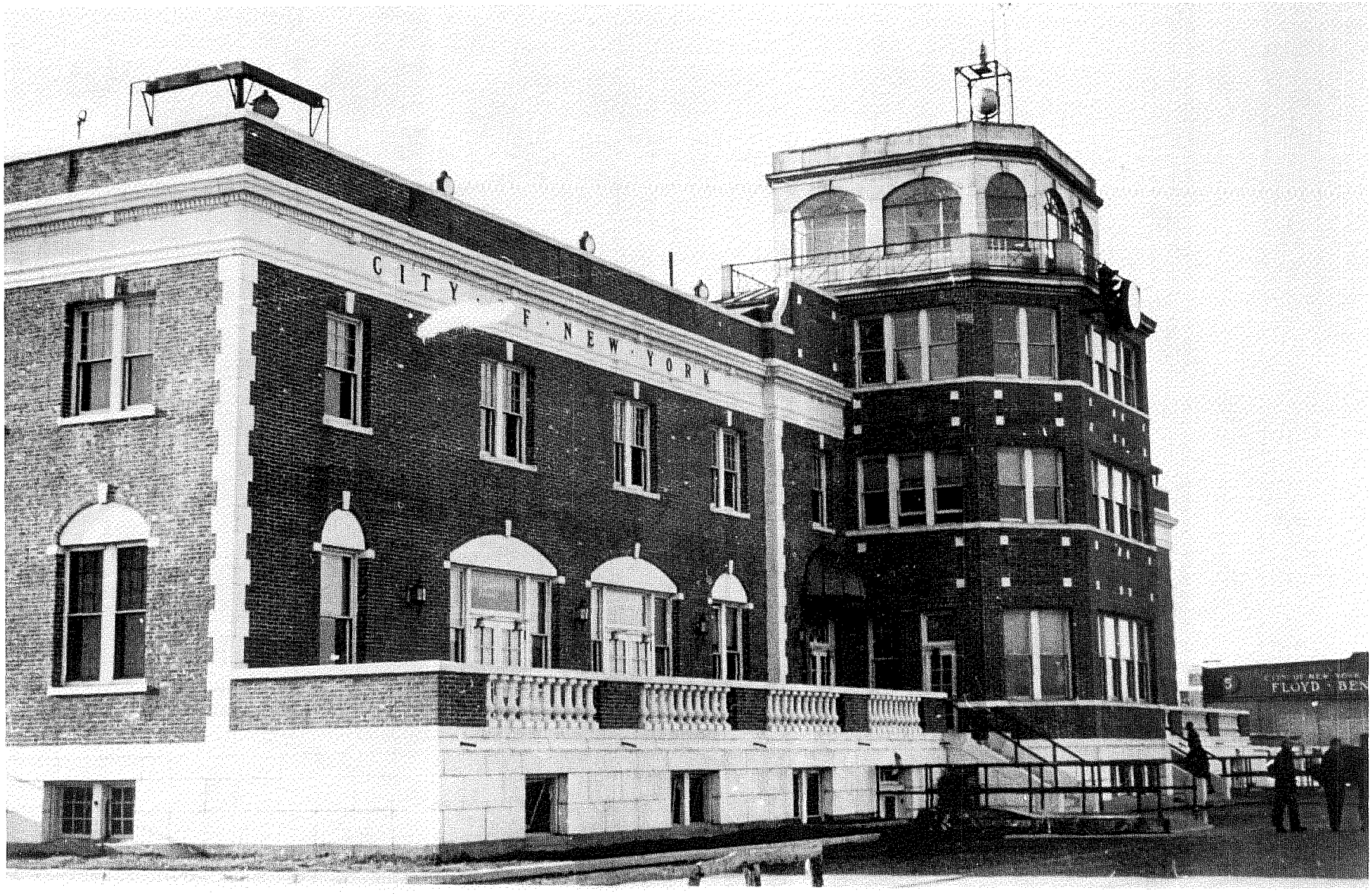



**Figure 130.** The Administration Building, looking north, ca. 1933. (Note that no stairway is yet present on the south end of the terrace, and no glass block has been installed into the windows.)



**Figure 131.** The Administration Building, looking southwest, ca. 1933.



**Figure 132.** Third and fourth levels of the control tower, west and south sides, ca. 1935.




**Figure 133.** Southeast corner of Administration Building roof, looking south, ca. 1935. (Note spotlights and square pavers of roof surface.)



**Figure 134.** Northwest corner of Administration Building roof, looking west, ca. 1935. (Photograph does not show spotlights installed on the west parapet in 1936.)



**Figure 135.** Control tower of the Administration Building, looking north, ca. 1935.

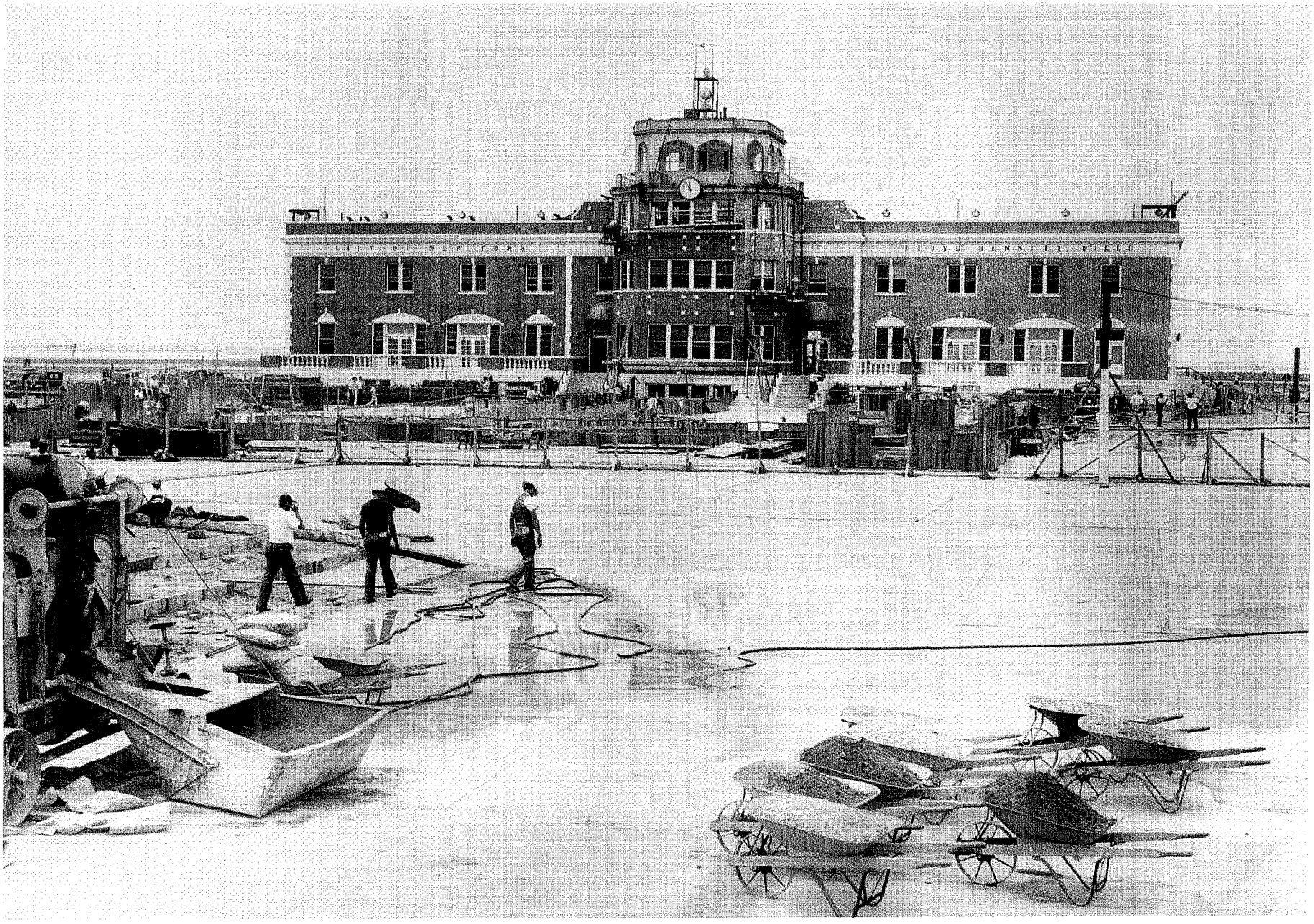



**Figure 136.** East side of the Administration Building with WPA projects underway, including construction of the passenger-loading tunnel, July 1935.



**Figure 137.** The Administration Building, south and east sides, August 1935. Note gap in the south end of terrace wall to accommodate new stairway. (Sawhorse placed across gap in this photograph.)



**Figure 138.** West, center front doorway with aviatrix Beryl Markham and crowd, September 6, 1936. (Note weather vestibule on doorway.)



**Figure 139.** West side of the Administration Building, November 20, 1936; shows WPA landscaping projects newly completed.

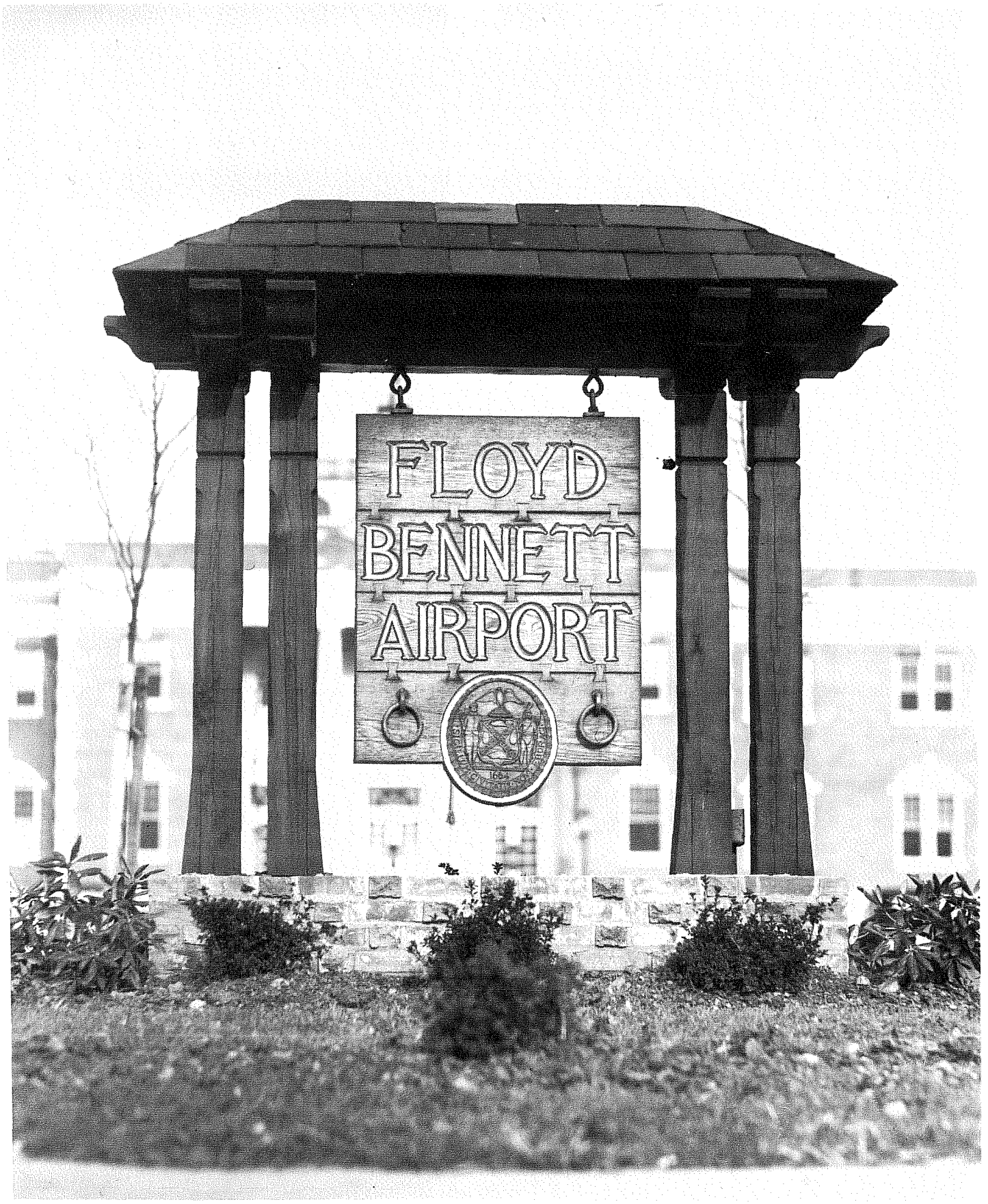



**Figure 140.** Field sign designed and constructed by the WPA, west lawn of the Administration Building, November 11, 1936.




**Figure 141.** West lawn of the Administration Building, flag ceremony for Amelia Earhart, spring 1937.

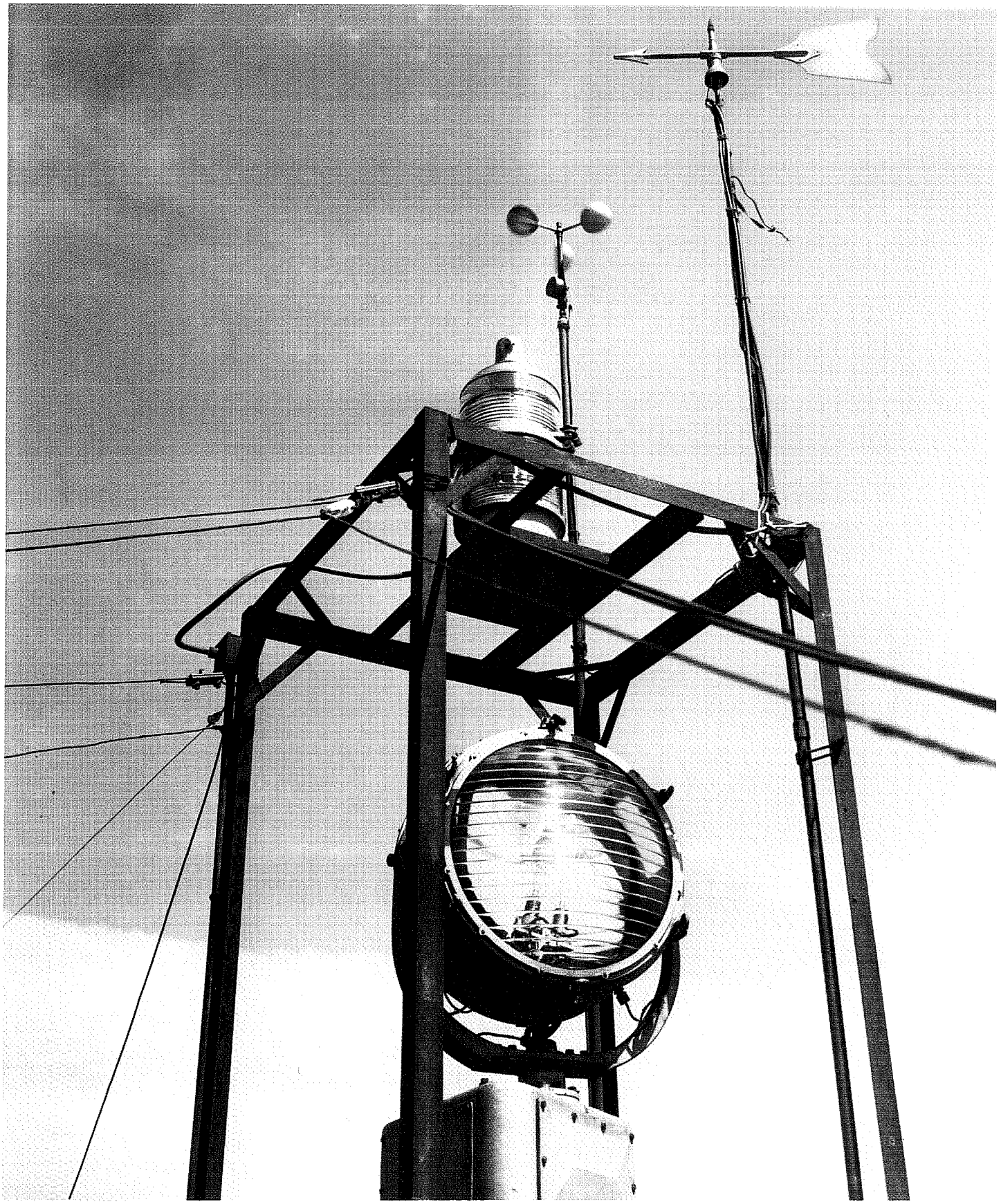


**Figure 142.** Flood lamp, beacon lamp, anemometer, and weathervane on top of the control tower of the Administration Building, July 16, 1937.




**Figure 143.** Fleetwing F-5 Seabird aircraft, with east side of the Administration Building behind, May 6, 1938.

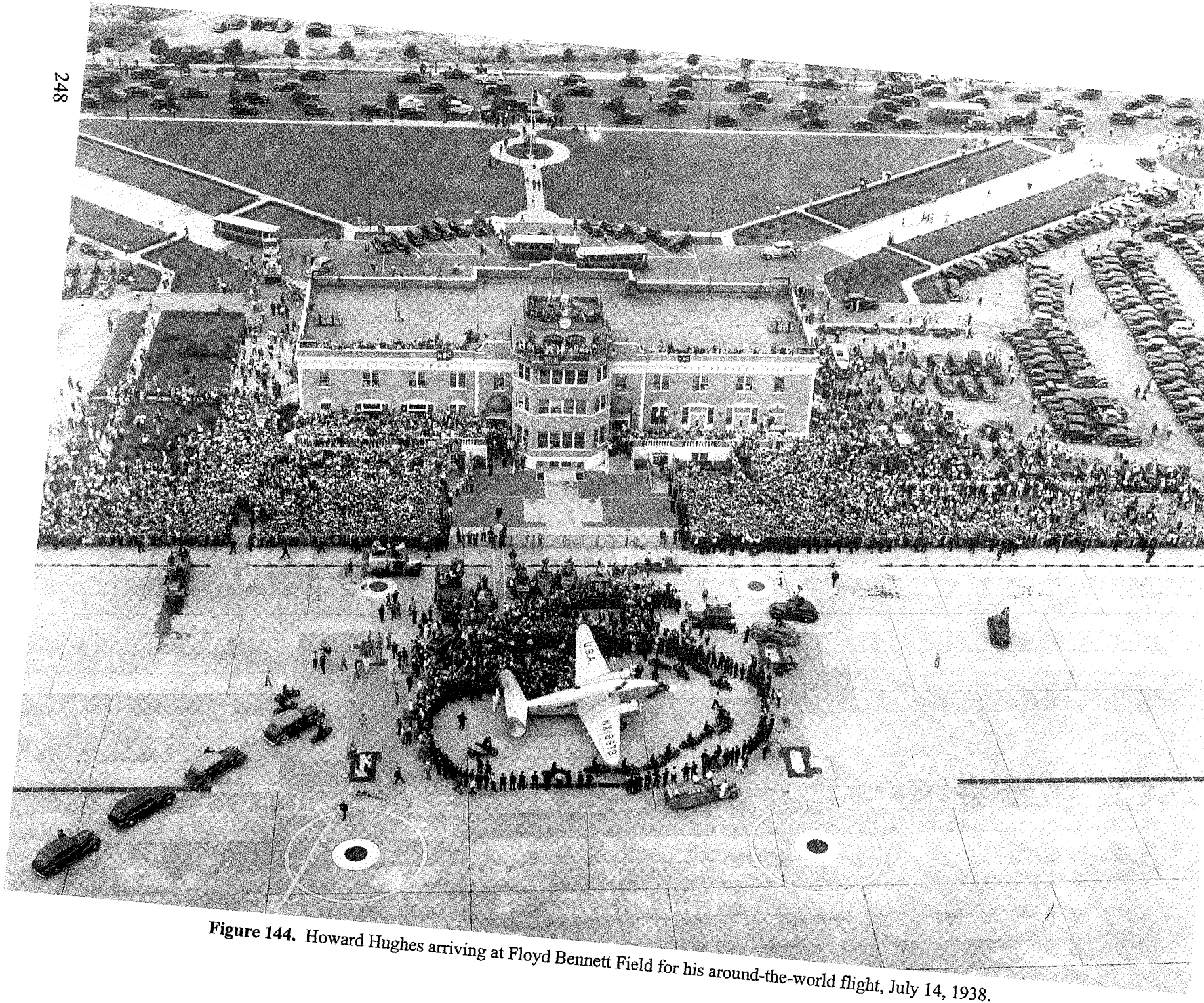



**Figure 144.** Howard Hughes arriving at Floyd Bennett Field for his around-the-world flight, July 14, 1938.

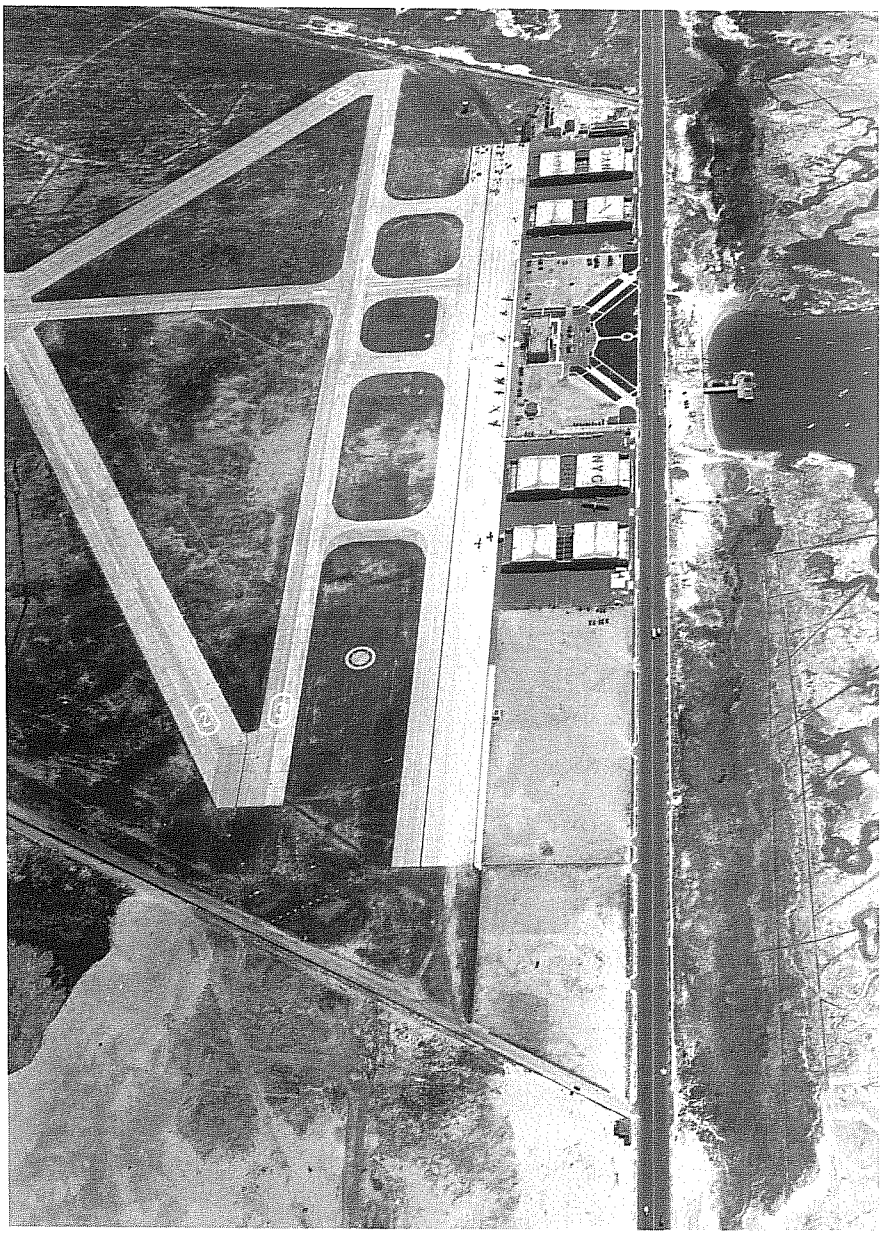


**Figure 145.** Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field looking south, showing hangars, runways, and Administration Building, August 1938. (Note Field House constructed by the WPA north of the Administration Building.)




**Figure 146.** General Aircraft Corporation Skyfarer, with east side of the Administration Building behind, May 10, 1941




**Figure 147.** West side of the Administration Building, showing wartime guard booth at street entrance, 1942. Conversion of the field from commercial facility to naval air station in progress. (Note lettering on entablature in flux, and control tower not modernized.)

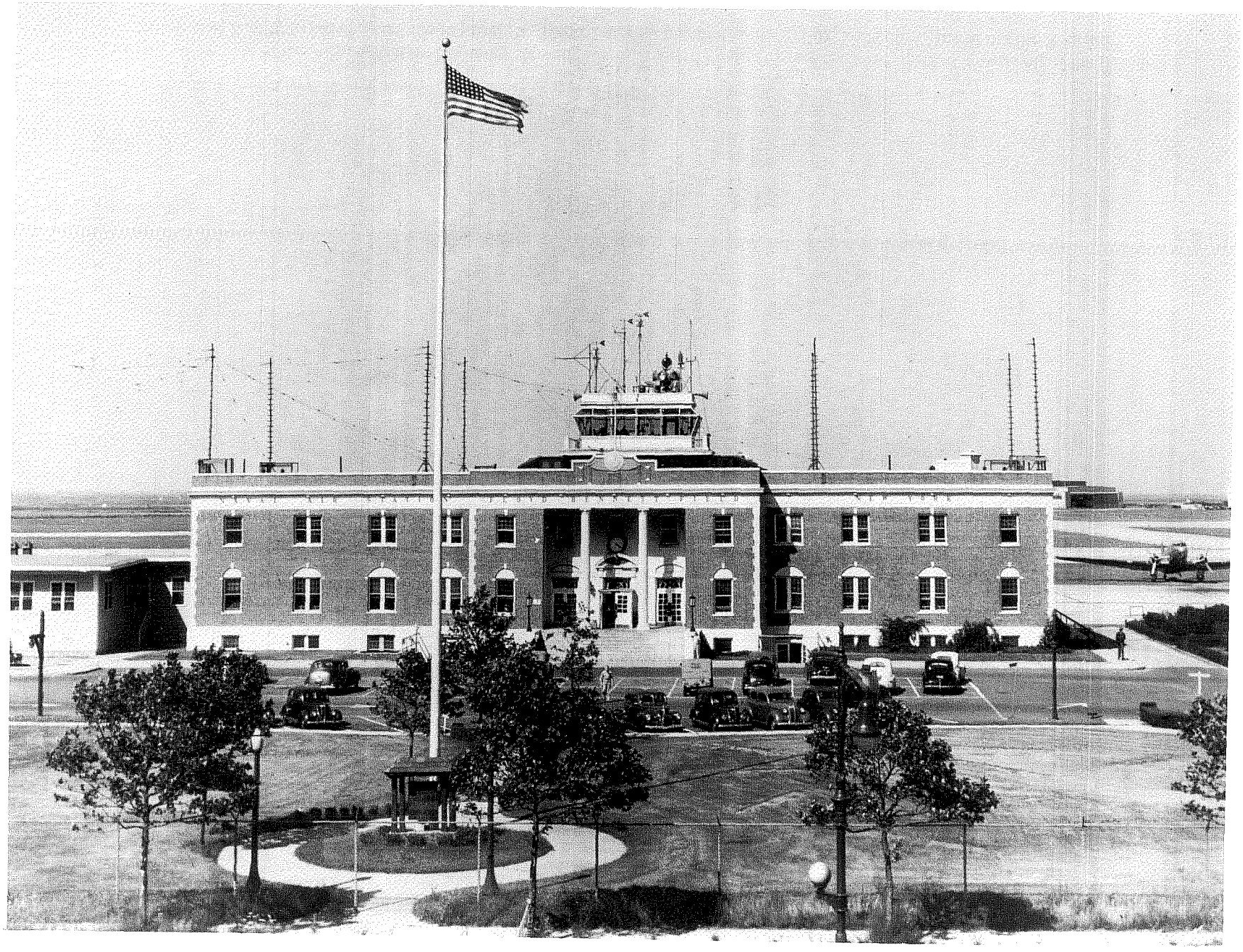


**Figure 148.** West side of the Administration Building, with modernized control tower and new extension at north end, ca. 1945.



**Figure 149.** West and south sides of the Administration Building, showing glass blocks installed in windows W 1-24 and W 1-25, ca. 1945.



**Figure 150.** View of the Administration Building looking northeast, ca. 1954. (Note that original wood windows – replaced in 1955 – are still extant.)




**Figure 151.** East side of the Administration Building, 1979.



**Figure 152.** Mrs. Floyd Bennett unveiling photographic portrait of Floyd Bennett on east wall of lobby, October 25, 1935.



**Figure 153.** View of the airport manager's office, looking north, second floor of the control tower (manager Ken Behr at left), September 5, 1936.



**Figure 154.** View of lobby, looking east, showing interior finishes, original flush-mount glass lighting fixtures, and baggage-check counter, 1937.



**Figure 155.** View of lobby, looking northeast, showing interior finishes, stairway down to passenger-loading tunnel, and baggage-check counter, 1937.



**Figure 156.** View of lobby, looking southeast, showing interior finishes, stairway down to passenger-loading tunnel, and baggage-check counter (view into restaurant at right), 1937.



**Figure 157.** View of lobby, looking east, showing interior finishes and baggage-check counter, 1937.

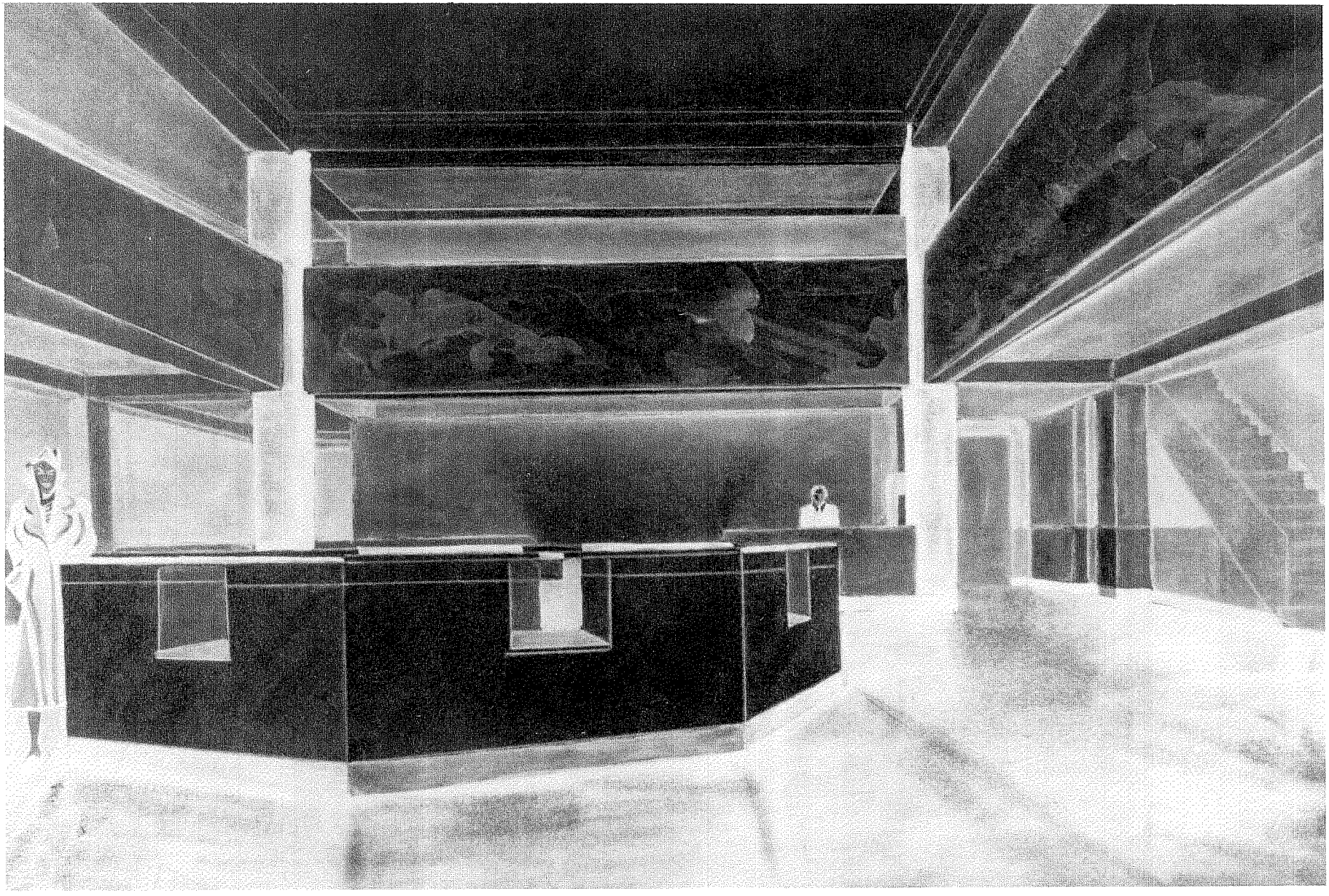


**Figure 158.** Sketch of lobby showing proposed placement of murals, March 1937.

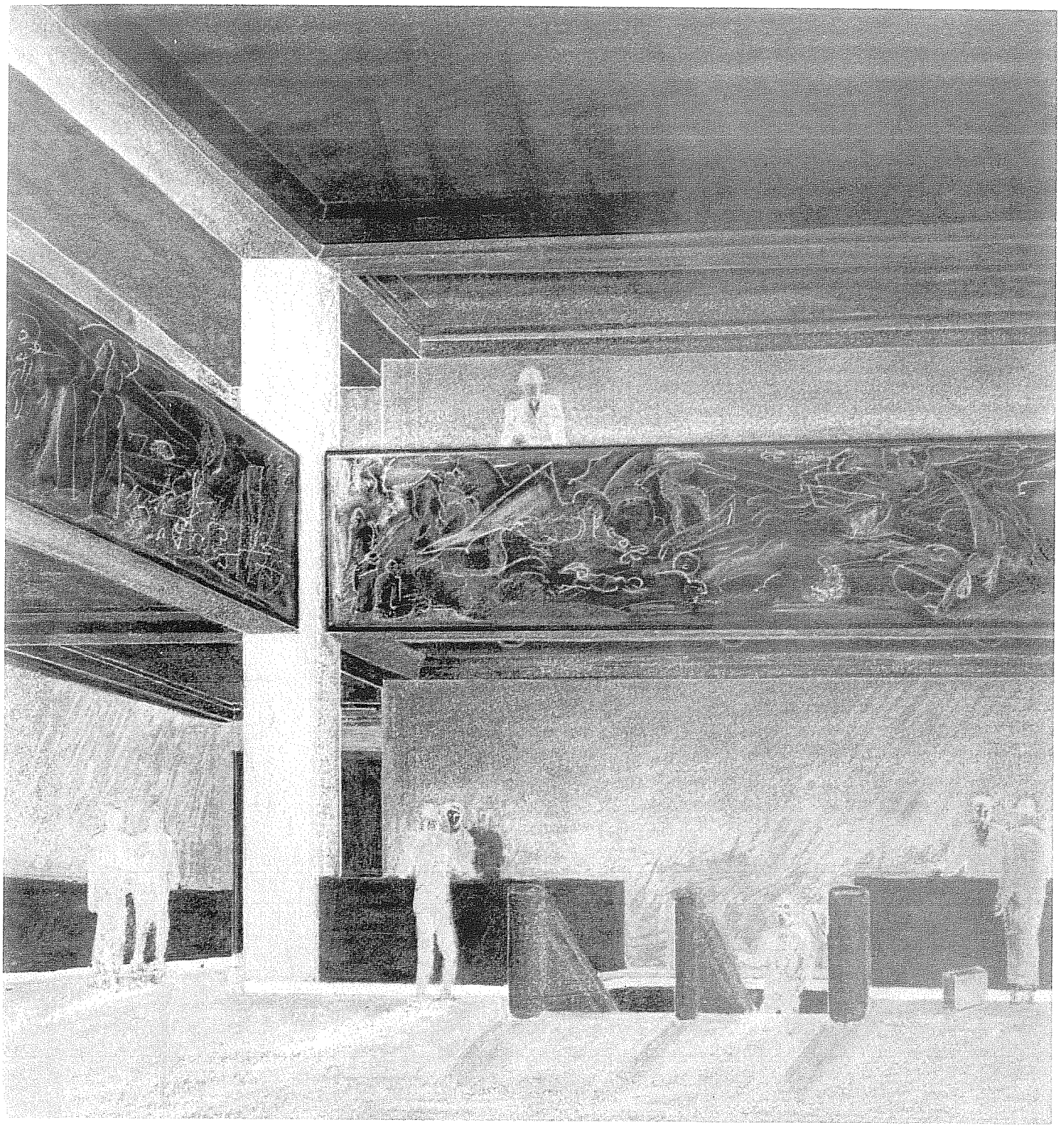


**Figure 159.** Sketch of lobby showing proposed installation of murals, March 1937.




**Figure 160.** View of airport manager's office, second floor of the control tower, showing south side of room, August 13, 1938.



**Figure 161.** View of pilots examining a flight plan in the restaurant (Room 117), showing west side of room, wall treatment, furnishings, and floor, May 18, 1938.



**Figure 162.** WPA artist Charles Polowetski, in his studio with the oil portrait of Floyd Bennett to replace photographic portrait in lobby, June 24, 1939.



**Figure 163.** Mrs. Floyd Bennett unveiling Polowetski's oil portrait of Floyd Bennett on east face of lobby balcony, showing new Art Deco pendant light fixtures, October 25, 1939.

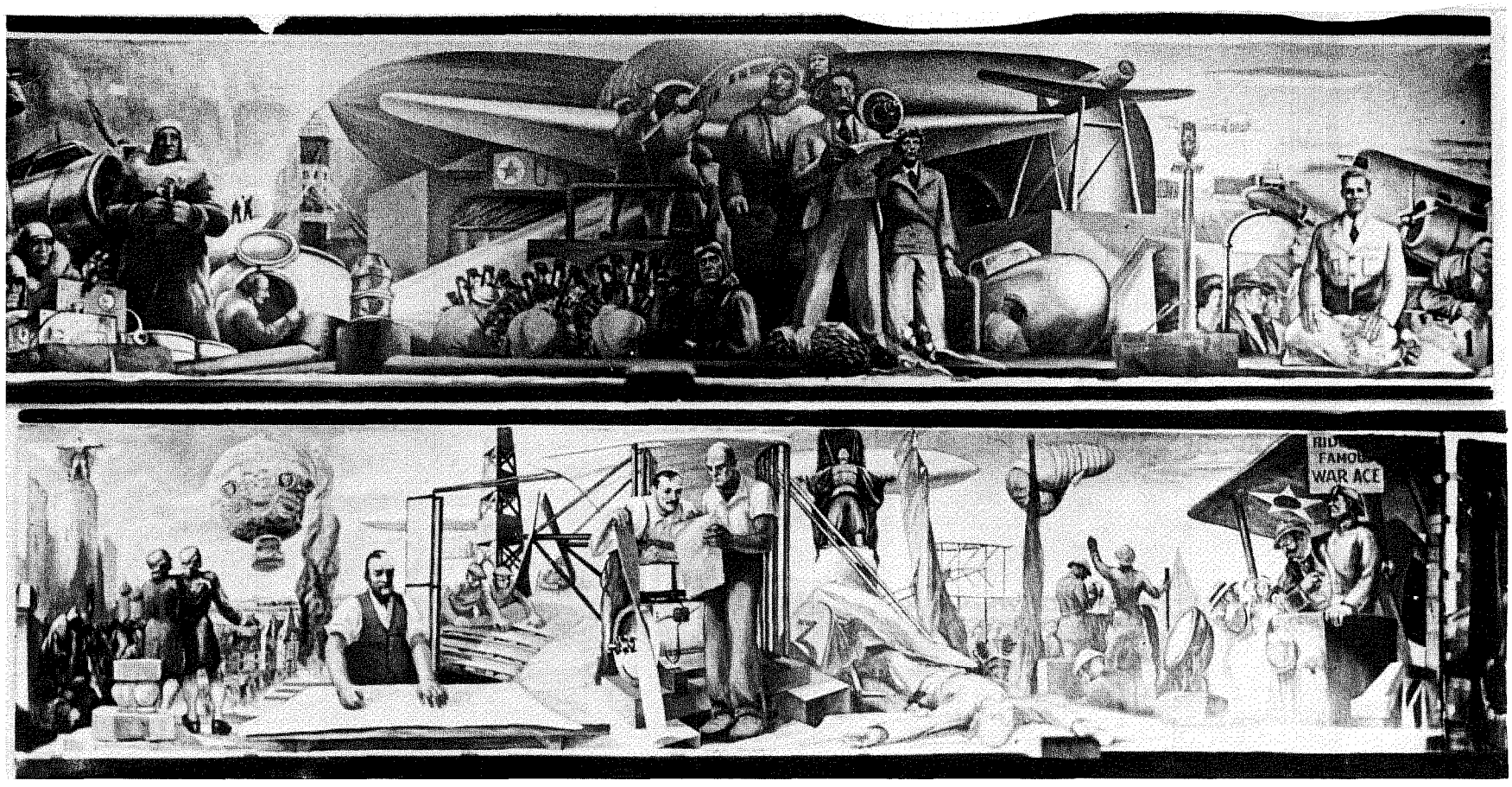



**Figure 164.** Two of the murals by Eugene Chodorow and August Henkel, July 1940: "Aviation in Peace" at top, and "First Practical Beginnings" at bottom.



**Figure 165.** "Mythology of Flight" mural being removed from east face of lobby balcony, July 8, 1940.

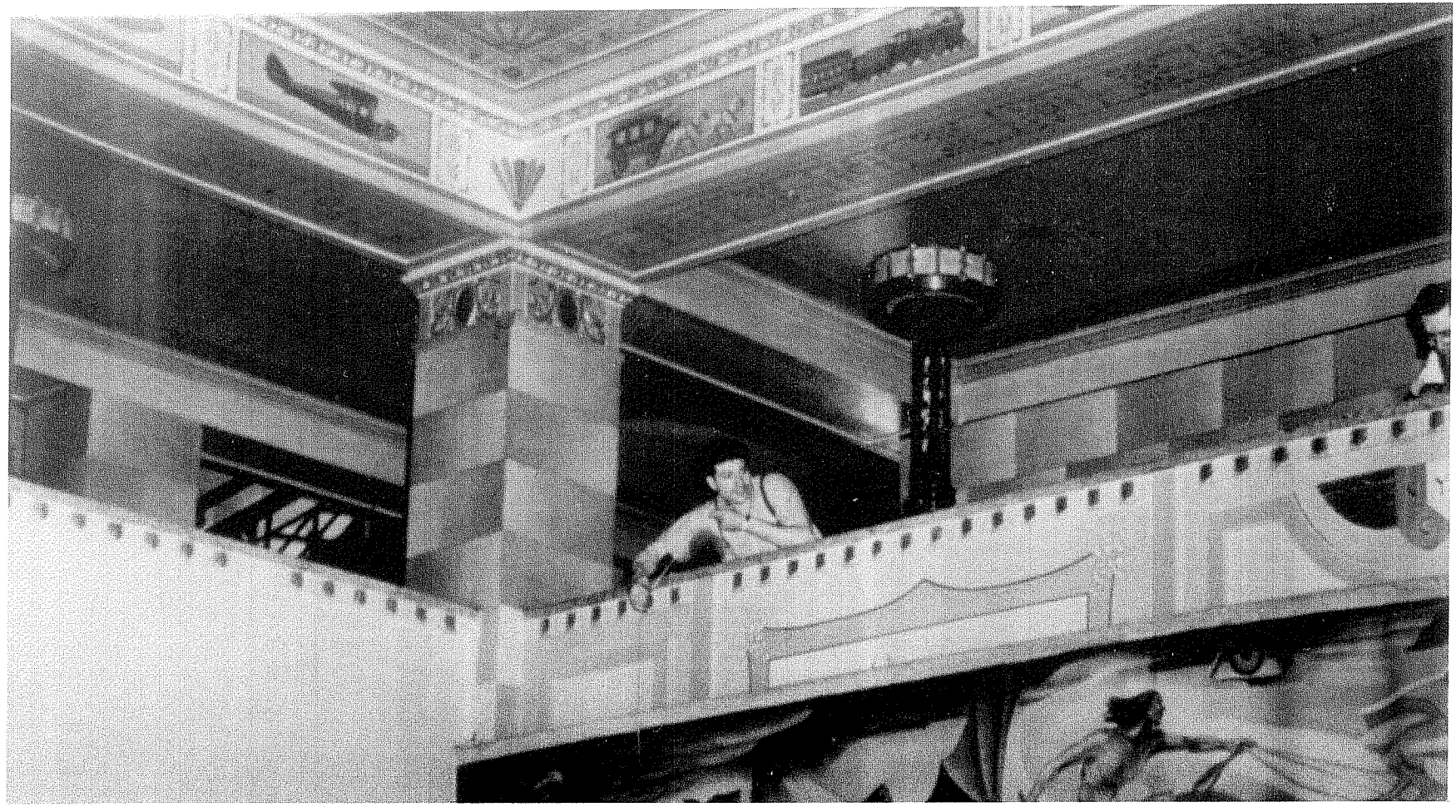


**Figure 166.** Detail of figure 164, showing decorative finishes in northeast corner of second floor of lobby.

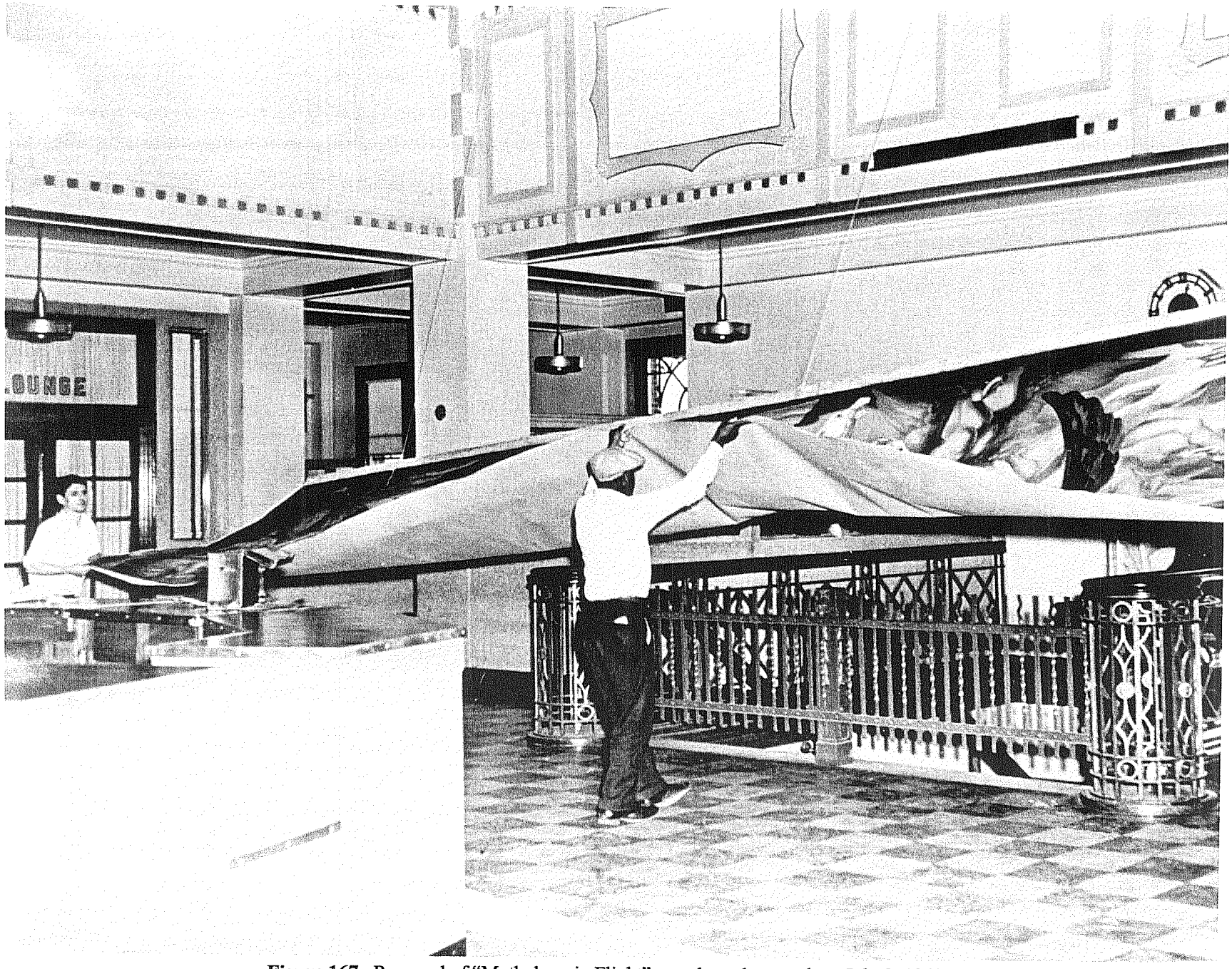



**Figure 167.** Removal of "Mythology in Flight" mural nearly complete, July 8, 1940.



**Figure 168.** Detail of figure 167, showing elaborate metal gate at top of stairway down to passenger-loading tunnel, July 8, 1940.

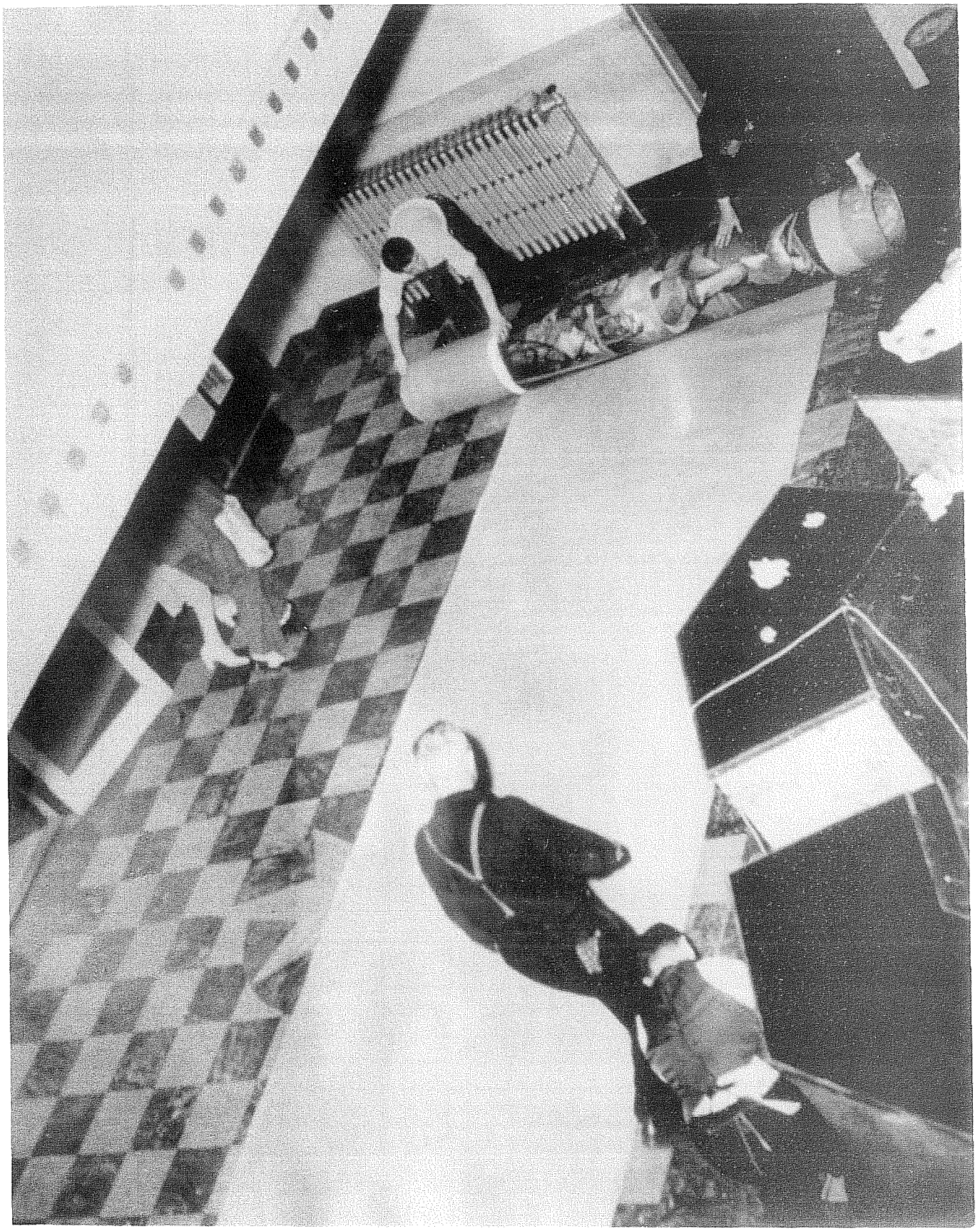


**Figure 169.** View from lobby balcony looking down and northwest as the "Aviation in War" mural is rolled up, showing star design in linoleum floor, July 8, 1940.

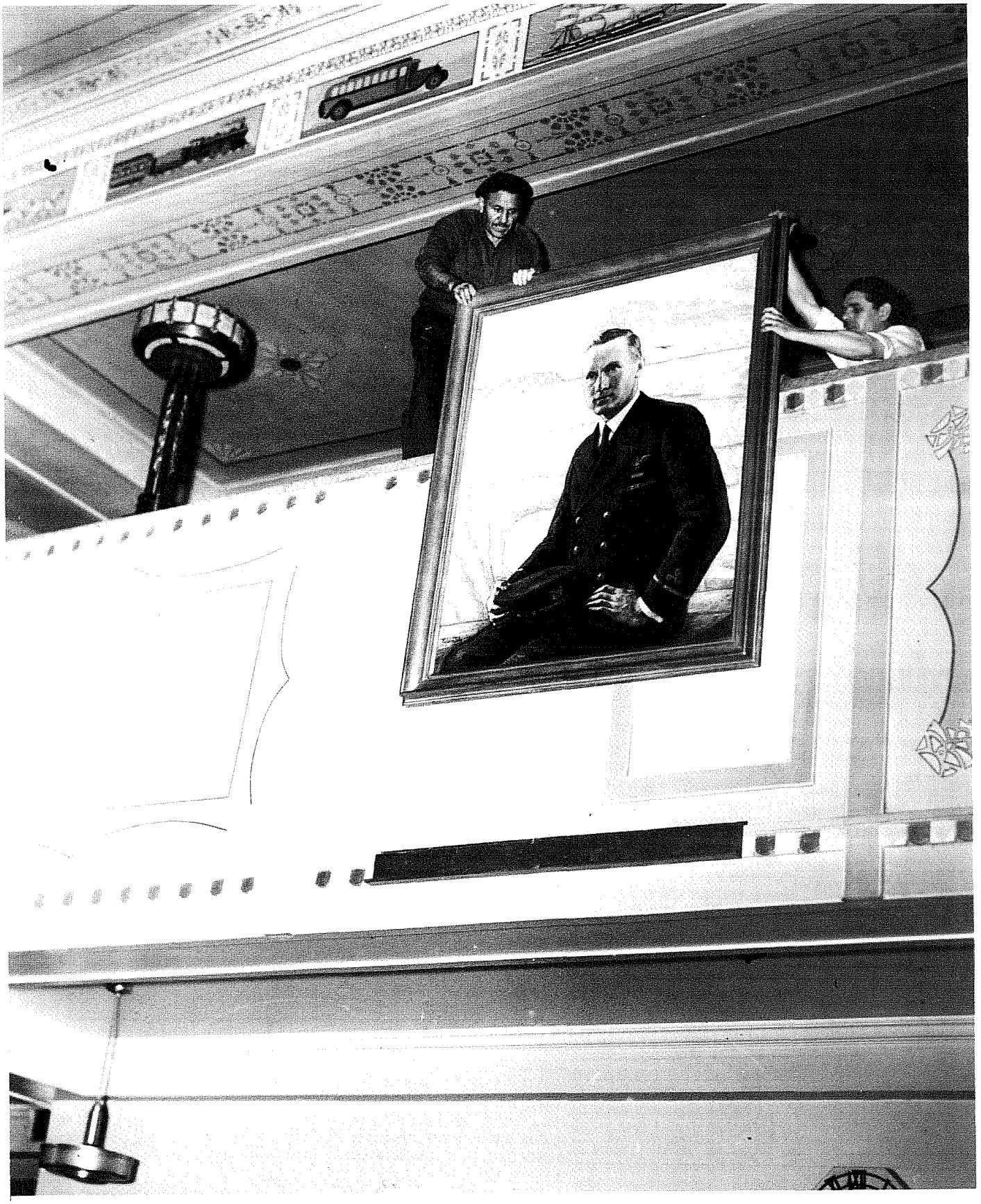


**Figure 170.** Oil portrait of Floyd Bennett being rehung on east face of lobby balcony after removal of the "History of Aviation" murals, July 8, 1940.

# VIII. CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# INTRODUCTION

## Definitions

*[**Author's note:** The following discussion of character-defining features was drawn largely from a similar discussion by Carole L. Perrault in the "Building 19 Historic Structure Report, Springfield Armory National Historic Site."[1]]*

The philosophical and practical foundation for the following discussion on character-defining features (CDFs) is based on several critical documents, which are listed below.

> *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, rev. 1990).
>
> *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, rev. 1992).
>
> Lee H. Nelson, *Preservation Briefs 17 - Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1988).
>
> H. Ward Jandl, *Preservation Briefs 18 - Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings: Identifying and Preserving Character-defining Elements* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1988).

Familiarity with the above-listed documents should be a prerequisite for all those participating in any decision-making on the rehabilitation and preservation of the Administration Building.

A CDF of a historic structure may be described as that element or treatment that imparts a certain quality or distinction to the structure, and without which the architectural or historical integrity of that structure would be diminished or lost. According to *Preservation Briefs 17*, a CDF may relate to the structure's shape, materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as various aspects of its site and environment. CDFs may be solely of an architectural nature, or represent a historical association with a particular event, person, or complex/district. A CDF may date to initial construction or to a later alteration.

Each CDF becomes a dynamic entity in any future planning or actuated work on the structure. A primary goal of this HSR has been the definition of the structure's CDFs.

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[1] Carole L. Perrault and Judith A. Quinn, "Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Springfield, Massachusetts, Building 19 Historic Structure Report," Vol. I (National Park Service: Building Conservation Branch, Cultural Resources Center, Boston, MA, November 1991), pp. 213-216.

The proposed treatment for the Administration Building is the preservation of the exterior and the rehabilitation of the interior. According to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, preservation is defined as

> the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property.

The same document describes rehabilitation as

> the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Standards 1, 2, and 5 of both preservation and rehabilitation treatments to historic properties specifically address the issue of character-defining features. The standards are as follows:

> Standard 1 A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
>
> Standard 2 The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The replacement [or removal] of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided.
>
> Standard 5 Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

Therefore, an assessment and definition of the significant CDFs during the project's planning stages is critical for the preservation or rehabilitation of any structure under the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines*.

One of the primary reasons for identifying the CDFs of a building is to protect these features from alteration or demolition. The CDFs determined for the Administration Building, and listed subsequently, should be carefully considered during the planning and construction phases of the project.

Limited restoration of certain exterior and interior features is also under consideration for the Administration Building. As defined in the *Guidelines*, restoration is

> the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

Features under consideration for restoration are included in this section as CDFs that are no longer extant. Restoration of these features will be determined by the cultural resource management staff of the park.

# EXTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

## Style

### CDFs

- Eclectic combination of the Renaissance Revival, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, and Art Deco styles. The eclectic mix represents a type of municipal hybrid employed frequently in the design of municipal buildings from 1900 to 1940.
- Large-scale treatment of architectural styles (due to size of building).
- Symmetry and classic proportionality of features on all elevations.
- Spare, clean lines and flat geometric treatment of architectural features.
- Simple materials and details reflecting underlying functionalism of building.

### Recommendations

- Preserve the elements (original and later) that contribute to the Renaissance Revival, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, and Art Deco styles of the building.
- Preserve the symmetrical arrangement of architectural features on each elevation.
- Maintain, and replace where necessary, original materials used.

## Shape

### CDFs

- Overall rectangular mass with sharp squared edges and flat roof.
- Projecting full-height pavilion at center of west side.
- Recessed entry portico in central pavilion on west side.
- Control tower at center of east side.

### Recommendations

- Preserve rectangular shape of the main building.

- Retain recessed portico in current configuration. (Do not introduce handicap access at this main entrance.)

- Preserve the geometric volumes of both the central pavilion and entry portico on the west side, and the control tower on the east side, of the building.

## Roof and Roof Features

**CDFs**

- Flat roofline and surface of main roof.

- Continuous brick parapet wall with concrete coping.

- Stepped/raised portion of parapet wall at center of west wall above main entry, embellished with decorative winged globe.

- Raised portions of east parapet wall flanking control tower.

- Third and fourth levels of the control tower projecting above flat roof line and creating distinctive silhouette reflecting original function of building.

- Antennas rising from control tower roof.

**Recommendations**

- Maintain flat roofline and roof surface.

- Repair, repoint, and reflash parapet wall. Replace concrete coping in kind if necessary.

- Clean and rehabilitate concrete and bronze of decorative winged globe in center of west parapet wall.

- Maintain antennas on the roof of the control tower.

## Walls

**CDFs**

- Flemish bond brick pattern.

- Contrasting white stucco surface of recessed entry portico on west side.

- Cast-stone entablature, including a molded cornice with dentil course, plain frieze, and molded architrave.

- Bronze lettering on entablature frieze along east side - *NAVAL AIR STATION - FLOYD BENNETT FIELD.*

- Cast-stone quoins at all corners of building.

- Contrasting patterns of flush white cast-stone insets in selected areas of brick walls, including diamonds, squares, triangles, and keystones.

- Cast-stone, three-course, ashlar-block water table with molded cap.

**Recommendations**

- All recommendations concerning materials used in the construction of exterior walls are included in the subsequent CDF #9 ("Materials)."

- Remove, clean, and rehabilitate bronze lettering. Reinstall on east entablature.

## Windows and Doorways

**CDFs**

- Symmetrical placement of windows and doorways to create a very regular and balanced appearance.

- Pattern of window openings emphasizing each story, i.e., arched openings on first floor and squared openings on second floor.

- Decorative treatment of window openings emphasizing each story:
  - basement level - plain rectangular openings cut in water table.
  - first floor - header-brick arches, cast-stone semicircular panels, springer blocks and keystones.
  - second floor - straight soldier-brick headers with cast-stone keystones.

- Original cast-stone sills.

- Distinctive size and treatment of window openings in the control tower, distinguishing these windows from all others: oversize rectangles with plain soldier-brick headers and continuous cast-stone bands at sills.

- Flat treatment of all window openings; opening and treatment flush (or nearly so) with plane of wall.

- Original cast-stone doorway architraves on north and south sides of building.

- Original cast-stone doorway architraves and arched pediments at west-entry doorways.

- Original header-brick arches and cast-stone panels above former doorways opening to east terraces.

- Wooden sash windows in wooden frames (no longer extant - removed 1954; see below).

- Wooden doors in wooden frames (no longer extant - removed 1954; see below).

**Recommendations**

- Maintain the existing configuration of openings, excluding W 1-11, W 1-12, and W 1-22.

- Clean all cast-stone sills (remove rust stains) and make repairs where necessary.

- Recreate doorway openings at original doorway locations on the east side of building (i.e., W 1-11, W 1-12, and W 1-22).

- Repair and repoint masonry at window and doorway openings where necessary.

## Control Tower

*(Entire tower is a CDF of the building.)*

**CDFs**

- Shape: three-story, five-sided projecting bay capped with the distinctive profile of the metal and glass control room.

- Height: rises two stories above main block of building.

- Windows: banks of two, three, and four windows wrap around each floor facing the field, forming a nearly continuous band of windows.

- Continuous cast-stone bands around tower walls at first-, second-, and third-level window sills.

- Decorative brickwork below each window of first and second floors of tower: header-brick rectangles with contrasting cast-stone insets at corners.

- Steel and glass control room at top of tower (restored by the BCB 1991-1993.)

- Original decorative aluminum railing and metal cornice of control room.

**Recommendations**

- Preserve shape of tower.

- Preserve height of tower.

- Maintain existing configuration of window openings, but reinstall replicas of original wood-sash windows (first through third stories).

- Strip deteriorated fabric-reinforced bituminous coating and metal at the base of the tower and deck. Apply waterproof membrane to lower section of walls, and reinstall metal cladding to match the original.

- Restore original aluminum railing and replace missing sections.

- Continue to monitor metal, steel, and glass of control-room elements for signs of deterioration caused by weathering and water infiltration.

- Restore copper-clad stairway bulkheads and skylights.

## Porches, Stairways, and Ramps

### CDFs

- West entry portico: recessed two-story space, stuccoed white to contrast with brick, two full-height Tuscan columns supporting portico roof, red-colored concrete floors scored to look like tile pavers.

- Main stairway leading to portico: 30 feet wide, consisting of granite steps with cast-stone cheek walls and stanchions.

- North and south stairways: simple, short, straight runs accessing building through doorways D 1-15 and D 1-38, with granite steps and cast-concrete cheek walls.

- East terraces: rectangular area enclosed by balustrade of cast stone between brick piers, with floors of red-colored concrete scored to look like tile pavers (now covered with asphalt).

- Ramps: descending from grade into basement; two on west side, three on east side of building (at doorways D 0-1, D 0-2, D 0-3, D 0-4 and D 0-5); concrete walkway with walls faced with cast stone.

### Recommendations

- Examine stucco walls of west entry portico for structural cracks and damaged surfaces. Restucco and patch where necessary.

- Remove deteriorated cast-stone facing blocks from cheek walls and stanchions of west-entry stairway. Replace in kind.

- Remove deteriorated cast-stone facing blocks from north and south stairway walls where necessary. Replace in kind.

- Remove bituminous coating; improve pitch for drainage and replace the red scored concrete floors of both terraces along the east side of building.

- Repair any cracked or broken pieces of cast-stone balustrades on the east terraces.

- Replace badly spalled, cracked, or damaged bricks of east-terrace balustrade piers and repoint where necessary.

- Remove and rebuild steps and cheek walls of both east-terrace stairways leading from the terrace to the apron.

- Reinstall 2 ½-inch pipe railings at north, south, and east-terrace stairways. (See original drawings.)

- Replace deteriorated pipe railings in kind where necessary at ramps leading from grade into basement on the east and west sides of building.

## Materials

### CDFs

- Red Harvard brick walls, parapet, and terraces.

- Cast stone: parapet coping, entablature, decorative insets, quoins, window sills, semicircular panels and keystones, doorway surrounds, water table, west portico columns, east terrace balustrades and railing, and access-stairway cheek walls.

- Granite: all exterior stairways.

- Metal: control tower above the second level, and railings at north, south, and east stairways, as well as at access ramps into basement.

- Concrete: floors of west entry portico and east terraces of building, colored red and scored to resemble tile pavers; also ramps to basement, curbing, and sidewalks.

### Recommendations

- Historic materials, identified as CDFs, should not be substituted; repair in kind.

- Determine a matching mix for cast-stone replacement work.

- Monitor, evaluate, and repair brick deterioration caused by moisture penetration and weathering.

- Monitor, evaluate, and repair mortar joint deterioration caused by moisture penetration and weathering.

- Monitor, evaluate, and repair structural cracks in masonry walls.
- Monitor, evaluate, and replace or repair deteriorated cast stone.
- Monitor, evaluate, and replace or repair deteriorated concrete.
- Replace in kind the following: broken, mechanically damaged, or spalled brick and cast stone.
- Closely monitor the newly restored metal-and-glass control tower for signs of deterioration caused by moisture penetration and weathering.

## Landscape

### CDFs

- Paved expanse of the airfield along east side of building.
- Green zone of grass and shrubs around building.
- Parking area in front of building.
- Front lawn stretching north to south in front of center parking area.
- Sidewalk around front and sides of building.
- Drives radiating from west (front) entrance and angling straight to Flatbush Avenue.
- Sidewalks running parallel to driveways leading to Flatbush Avenue.
- Concrete sidewalk leading to and around flagpole on west/front side.
- Curbing.
- Trees flanking sidewalk to flagpole and planted around flagpole circle.
- Flagpole.
- Light standards flanking walk in front of flagpole.

### Recommendations

- Maintain green apron around building.
- Maintain front lawn.

- Maintain current configuration of drives (WPA design).
- Reopen access to the building from Flatbush Avenue by way of historic drives.
- Maintain current configuration of sidewalks (WPA design).
- Where necessary, replace sidewalks with concrete matching the original.
- Preserve all curbing around building and bordering sidewalks; replace in kind where necessary.
- Preserve flagpole and surrounding trees and sidewalks.
- Restore two cast -iron light standards still extant between flagpole and Flatbush Avenue.
- Reinstall a site sign in front of flagpole. (Foundation of original 1935 sign still extant.)

## Exterior CDFs - Photographs

See also Figures 7-22 in Section II ("Architectural Description of the Building")



**Figure 171.** Exterior of building, north and west sides.



**Figure 172.** Exterior of building, east and north sides.



**Figure 173.** View of roof and roof parapet wall, looking northwest.

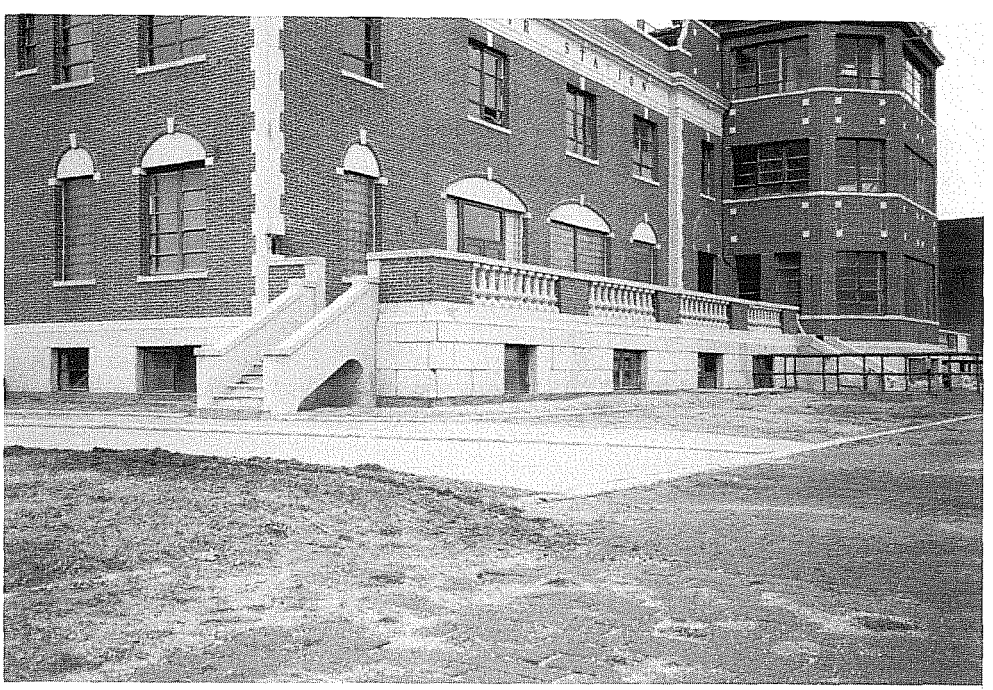


**Figure 174.** Exterior of building, south end of east side.

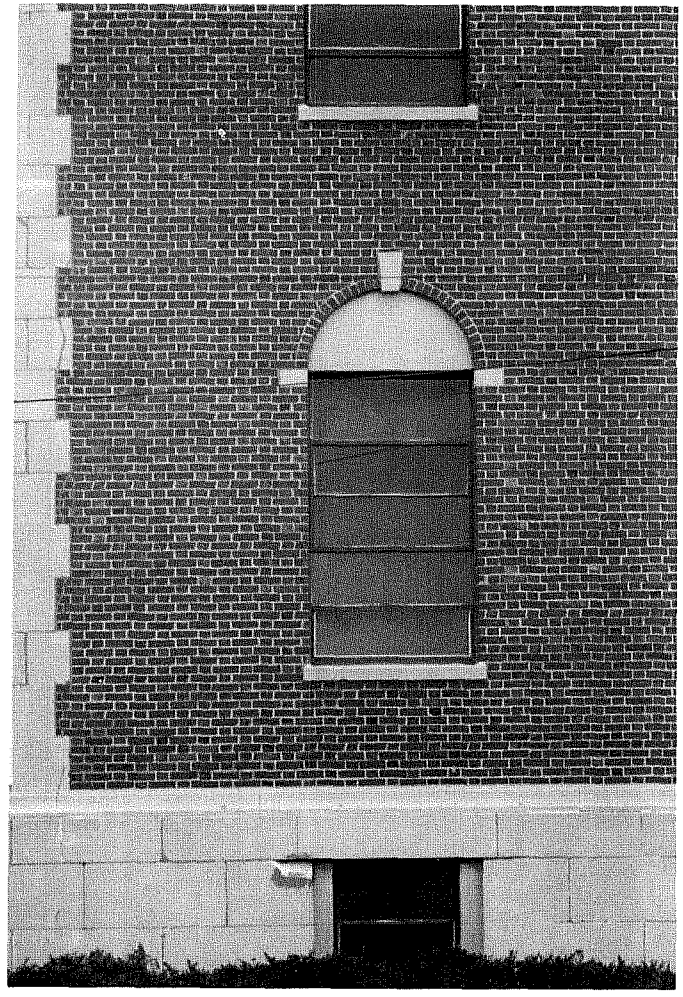


**Figure 175.** Window W 1-5, west side of building; note arch, quoins, and water table.

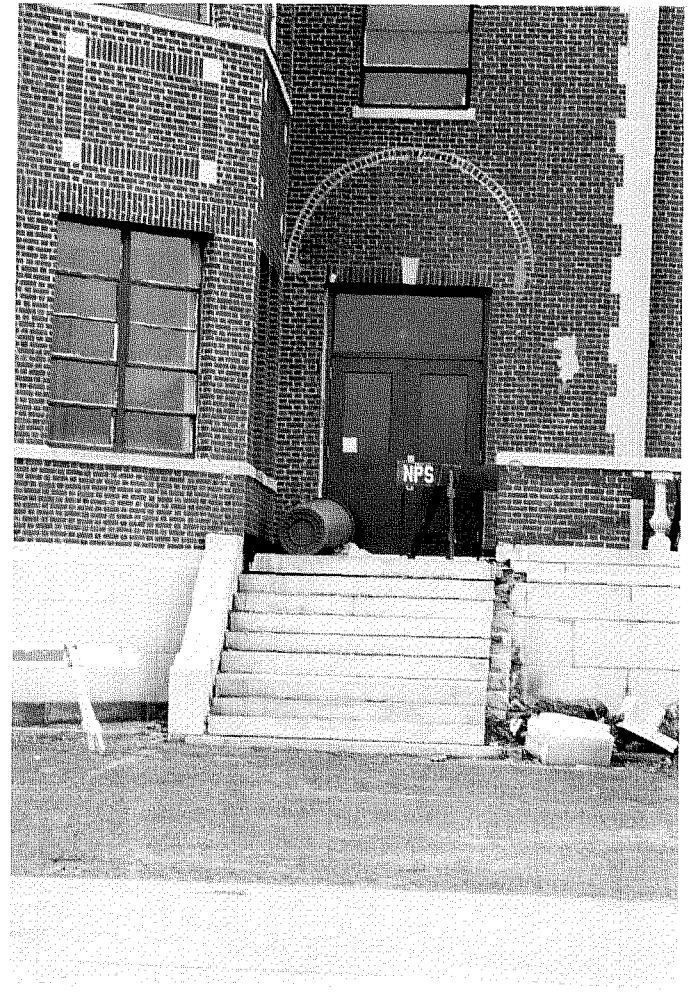



**Figure 176.** Doorway D 1-24, east side of building; note scar from former marquee and decorative brickwork.



**Figure 177.** Third and fourth levels of control tower, looking northeast from roof.

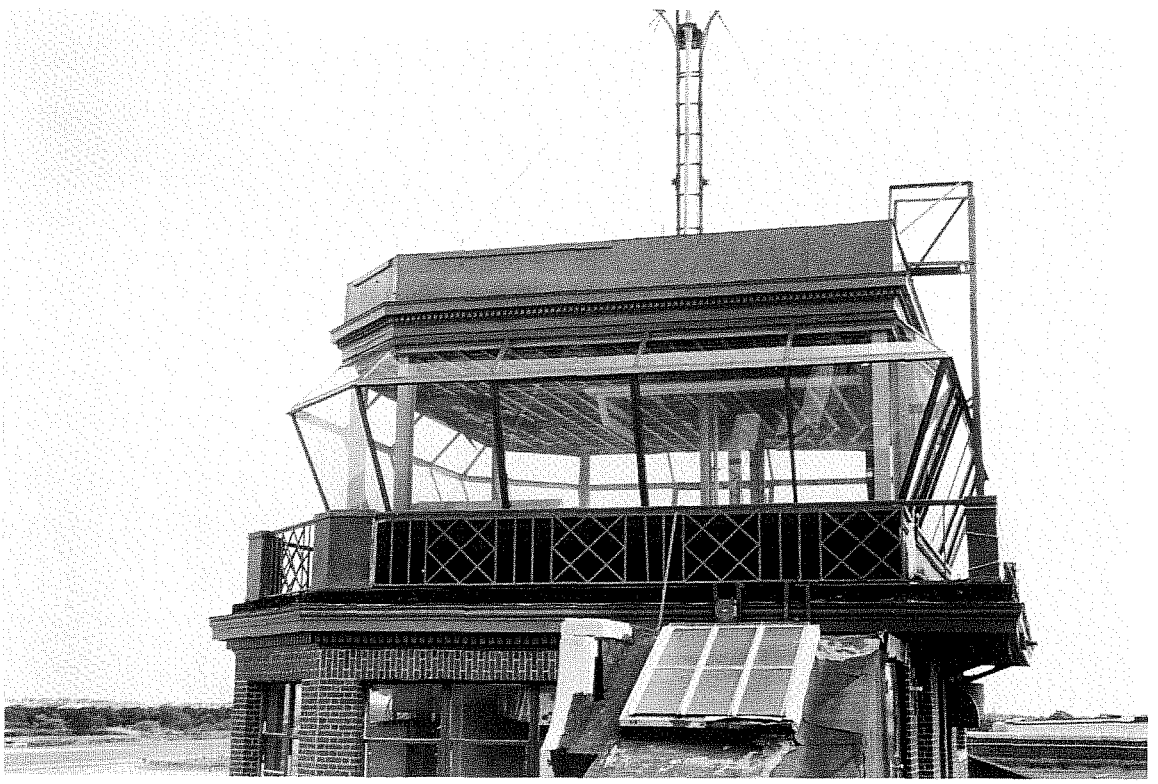


**Figure 178.** Control room of control tower, looking south; note original railing and cornice.



**Figure 179.** East side of building, ramp accessing doorway B-14; note hollow pipe railing and concrete cheek walls.



**Figure 180.** East side of building, stairway north of tower, leading to terrace; note granite treads and cast-stone railings.

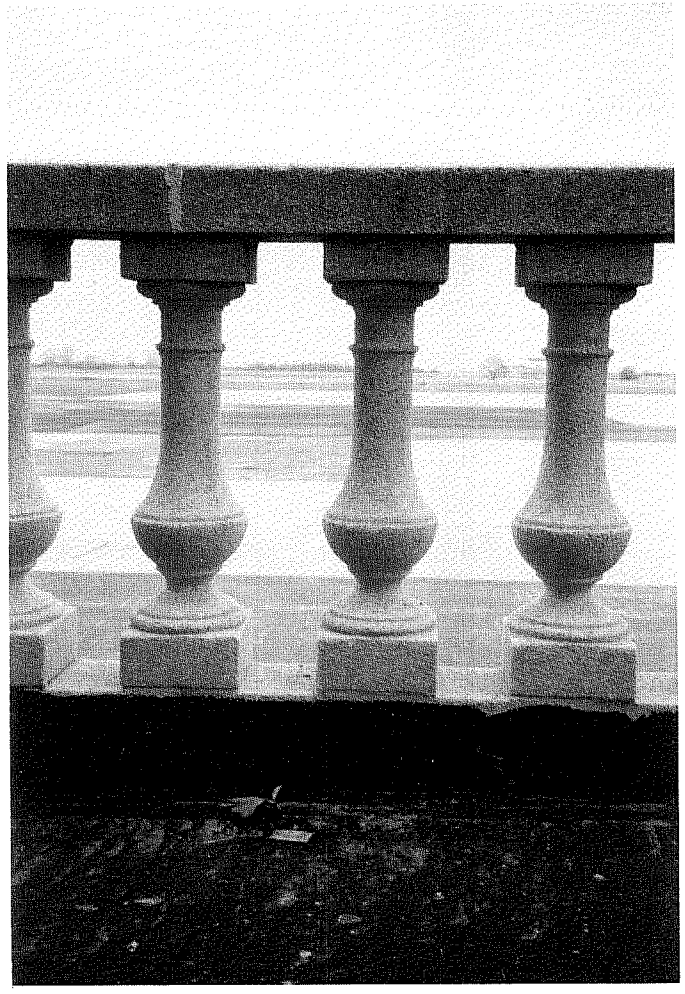


**Figure 181.** Cast-stone balusters, south terrace along east side of the building.



**Figure 182.** Southeast corner of building, showing cast-stone quoins and terrace railing, as well as facing blocks on stairway.



**Figure 183.** View looking north, showing southeast corner of building and landscape, including green zone planted with grass and original curbing

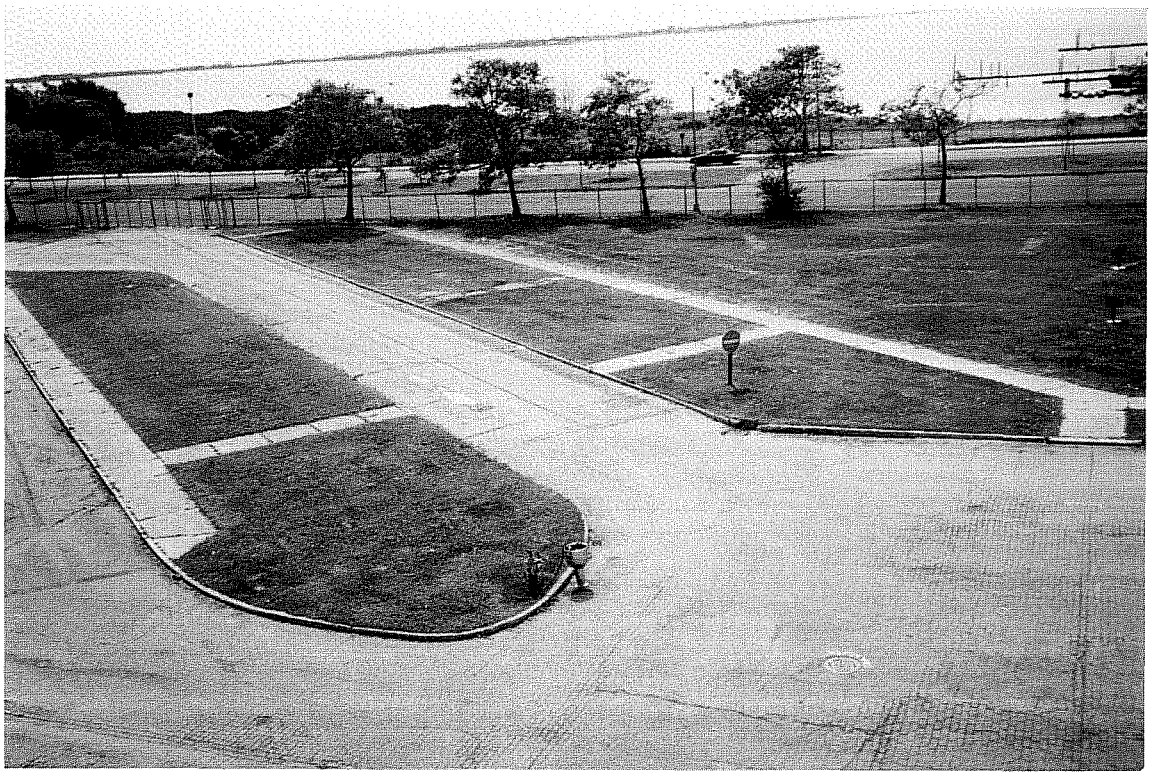


**Figure 184.** View looking southwest toward Flatbush Avenue, showing landscape west of building, including drives, sidewalks, green space, and outline of original paving blocks beneath asphalt.



**Figure 185.** View looking west toward Flatbush Avenue, showing landscape west of building, including parking area, walks, trees, and flagpole.



**Figure 186.** View looking northwest toward Flatbush Avenue, showing landscape west of building, including drives, sidewalks, and green space.



**Figure 187.** Original light standard with cast-iron base, lantern with finial, and crushed-glass globe; located in front of flagpole circle at former Flatbush Avenue entrance.

# INTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

## Plan

**CDFS**

- Central, open, three-story space at core of plan.
- Four square columns at corners of central open space.
- North/south halls, leading from central open space, flanked by rooms on either side.
- Four-story tower, centered on east side.
- Entry foyer and portico, centered on west side.
- T-shaped subterranean tunnel extending 184 feet due east from center of east side of building.

**Recommendations**

- Preserve central open space of plan on first and second levels.
- Preserve four square columns at corners of central open space in current freestanding condition. (Do not obscure.)
- Preserve north/south corridors as main axis of building on all floors.
- Remove the partitions separating the second-floor hallways (Rooms 201N and 201S) from the lobby atrium; these partitions obscure the original open access between the spaces.
- Preserve the shape and spaces of the tower on all four levels.
- Preserve the open entry foyer on the west side of building, first floor.
- Restore tunnel to original functioning status.

## Flooring

### CDFs

- Linoleum floor with inlaid pattern of checkerboard, diamonds, and rectangles with solid borders (colors include green, red, and blue).
  *Extant in passenger tunnel but extremely deteriorated and water-damaged.*

- Checkerboard-pattern linoleum flooring with solid perimeter border of 9-inch squares (generally buff and dark brown).
  *Extant but deteriorated in Rooms 107, 108, 109, 202 - 210, and 214 - 222.*

- Marbleized linoleum, dark green and white, 12-inch squares.
  *Extant but very deteriorated in second-floor lobby; removed from first-floor lobby in 1980s to make way for "wood" vinyl tiles.*

- Floors of white, 1-inch square ceramic tiles.
  *Extant and in good condition in original bathrooms in Rooms 205-209, 213, and 215-220.*

### Recommendations

- Restore passenger-tunnel flooring; replicate original linoleum colors and pattern and install.

- Replace all first- and second-level linoleum floors with new linoleum flooring in colors and patterns matching the original.

- Maintain ceramic-tile floors in all bathrooms that are included in the rehabilitation plan.

## Walls

### CDFs

- Glazed ceramic-tile baseboard, wainscot, and wainscot cap: multicolored (buff, yellow, blue).
  *Extant and in good condition in the passenger tunnel.*

- Rectangular display panels, framed with blue ceramic tiles, spaced along walls of passenger tunnels.
  *Extant and in good condition in the passenger tunnel.*

- Black marble baseboard.
  *Extant and in good condition in hallways (Rooms 101N, 101S, 201N, and 201S) and in lobby/atrium areas (Rooms 101 and 201), including along the walls of Stairways # 2 and 5.*

- Buff marble wainscot and wainscot cap.
  *Extant and in good condition in first-floor hallways (Rooms 101N and 101S) and first-floor lobby (Room 101), including along the walls of Stairways # 2 and 5.*

- Imitation Caen-stone finish, upper wall zone.
  *Extant below layers of paint in hallways (Rooms 101N, 101S, 201N, and 201S) and in lobby/atrium areas (Rooms 101 and 201), including along the walls of Stairways # 2 and 5 and on square columns.*

- Plaster on wire lath with molded cove cornice and wood trim.
  *Extant in some first-floor rooms and most second-floor rooms; condition varies.*

- Plate-glass window wall, Room 117.

- Wainscot of white ceramic glazed tiles in bathrooms, with decorative wainscot cap/border of colored tiles (pale blue and pale yellow).
  *Extant and in good condition in Rooms 205B, 206B, 207B, 208B, 209B, 213, 215B, 216B, 217B, 219B, and 220B.*

**Recommendations**

- Clean and preserve ceramic-tile baseboard, wainscot, and wainscot cap of the passenger tunnel.

- Maintain exhibit wall panels in the passenger tunnel.

- Preserve all marble baseboards.

- Preserve all marble wainscot and wainscot caps.

- Clean all imitation Caen stone, remove layers of paint, and restore to original finish as determined by a detailed finish analysis.

- Preserve original plaster walls where possible, and replace in kind where deterioration is too severe for restoration.

- Preserve plate-glass window wall of Room 117.

- Preserve ceramic-tile walls and decorative tile borders in situ where possible. Remove and save samples of materials for documentation if bathrooms are eliminated.

## Trim

**CDFs**

- Three-piece wooden baseboard.
  *Extant on at least one wall and in varying condition in Rooms 004 and 005; Rooms 103, 104, 107, 108, 110, and 114; and Rooms 202-210, 212, 214-218, 220, and 221.*

- Molded wooden chair rail.
  *Extant on at least one wall and in good condition in hallways 201N and 201S, and Rooms 110, 117, 202, 203, 205, 206, 214, 215, 216, and 220.*

- Wall panel moldings.
  *Extant on at least one wall and in varying condition in Rooms 205, 206, 214, 215, 216, 219, and 220.*

- Molded wooden doorway trim and all doorway frames facing the lobby/atrium on the first and second floors. (See Appendix C for molding profile.)

- Plain wooden doorway frames with simple curved edge in second-floor entry, bathroom, and closet doorways, except those facing atrium. (See Appendix C for profile.)

**Recommendations**

- Preserve original baseboard where possible; replicate materials, dimensions, and profile of original baseboard where replacement baseboard is needed.

- Preserve or replace in kind original chair rails in rooms where extant, particularly in Rooms 110 and 117, and in the second-floor hallways.

- Preserve panel moldings where extant in second-floor rooms as an example of original appearance of room.

- Preserve all original wooden doorway frames and trim.

## Doors

**CDFs**

- Original wooden doors with "chipped glass" light in upper panel.
  *Examples extant at D 1-3, D 1-23, D 1-26, D 1-29, D 1-30, D 1-46, D 2-1, D 2-2, D 2-23, D 2-27, D 2-52.*

- Original double French doors, wood with 10 lights per leaf.
  *Extant and in good condition at D 1-22 and D 1-36.*

- Original wood-veneer single-panel doors.
  *Extant in most second-floor hall doorways, closets, and bathrooms.*

- Metal-clad fire doors, painted and grained. (Metal doors open to Rooms 108, 112, 207, 208, 216, and 217.)
  *Extant but in rusted condition in D 1-16, D 1-25, D 2-11, D 2-16, D 2-36, and D 2-41.*

- Transoms: rectangular, with obscure glass in wood frames; above most hallway doorways on first and second floors.

**Recommendations**

- Preserve and reuse original doors at all possible locations on first and second floors.

- Replace missing and damaged interior doors with doors that match the originals in material and design.

- Maintain glass transoms above doorways leading into rooms from the lobby and hallways.

## Ceilings

**CDFs**

- Stained-glass skylight above lobby/atrium.

- Decorative molded ogee cornice.
  *Extant and in good condition in Rooms 101, 107, 110, 117, and 201.*

- Plaster cove cornices.
  *Extant and in varying condition in Rooms 105, 108, 204-210, and 214-221.*

- Decorative painting.
  *Extant and in extremely deteriorated condition in Rooms 201 and 201S, and on the stairwell ceiling of Stairways #2 and 5.*

**Recommendations**

- Clean skylight. Replace missing and broken pieces of glass with matching pieces.

- Remove drop ceiling in Room 117 to expose original cornice.

- Preserve molded plaster cornices in Rooms 101, 110, 117, and 201.

- Preserve or replace in kind plaster cove cornices where wholly or partially extant.

- Document design and colors of decorative ceiling painting. Scrape and prepare surfaces. Replicate design on ceiling surfaces.

## Stairways

**CDFs**

- Location of two main stairways, in opposite corners of lobby.
- Prominence of Stairway #5 as the "grand" stair from first to second floors, due to its openness and graceful curves.
- Decorative metal balustrade with latticework, bronze rosettes, and molded wooden handrails, of Stairways #2, #3, and #5.
- Marble treads of Stairways #2, #3, #4, and #5.
- Marble stringer cladding of Stairways #2 and #5.
- Marbleized-masonite wainscot panels on cheek walls of Stairway #4.
- Decorative cast-iron newel posts of Stairways #3 and #5 at third-floor landings, and of Stairway #4 at entrance to tunnel.

**Recommendations**

- Preserve current configuration of Stairways #2, #3, #4, and #5.
- Open Stairway #4 so that it once again connects the lobby directly to the tunnel below.
- Open Stairway #3 to second-floor lobby area as originally designed, by removing modern partitioning currently in place.
- Preserve all metal balustrades and newels. Scrape, clean, and repaint where necessary.
- Preserve molded wooden handrails where extant, and replace missing handrails in kind.
- Preserve marbleized-masonite wainscot panels of Stairway #4. Remove for safekeeping and reinstall after rehabilitation of building.

## Ornamental Plaster

**CDFs**

- Decorative plaster panels of atrium balcony.
- Decorative plaster dentil course framing top and bottom of balcony panels.
- Plaster shield at center top of all four balcony panels.
- Ornate molded capitals of the four square columns.
- Plaster leaf molding, atrium cornice.
- Plaster ogee cornice molding in Room 101, 110, and 117.
- Plaster entablature (formerly used throughout restaurant, Rooms 116-117; currently extant only in Room 116). Entablature consists of the following, from top to bottom: an ogee cornice molding, a plain frieze, and an architrave with crenelated molding band above a repeating pattern of triglyphs and rosettes.

**Recommendations**

- Preserve all extant ornamental plasterwork.
- Carry out an in-depth paint analysis of ornamental plasterwork to determine original polychromed areas. (Samples have been taken and are stored at the NCRC.)
- Remove layers of paint and dirt from all molded and applied ornamental plasterwork in order to restore clean profiles. Cleaning to be carried out by professional conservators only after paint analysis is complete.
- Replicate and reinstall plaster entablature in Room 117.

## Materials

**CDFs**

- Imitation Caen-stone stucco.
- Marble, used for wainscot, baseboards, and stairway treads.
- Wood veneer, used for some doors.
- Decorative plaster.

- Linoleum (solid colors and veined).
- Carrera glass, used for shower and toilet stalls.
- Glazed ceramic tile, used for walls of bathrooms and tunnel.
- Marbleized masonite, used for wainscot of Stairway #4's cheek wall, and for wainscot at entrance to tunnel.
- Steel, used for the frame of the control tower.
- Cast iron and bronze, used for the balustrades and newels of Stairways #2, #3, and #5.
- Plate glass, used for the control-tower windows, and for the window wall of Room 117.

**Recommendations**

- Historic materials identified as CDFs should be preserved in situ where extant and where condition permits.
- Historic materials identified as CDFs should not be replaced with substitute materials; repair or replace in kind.

## Interior CDFs - Photographs

See also Figures 23-38 in Section II ("Architectural Description")

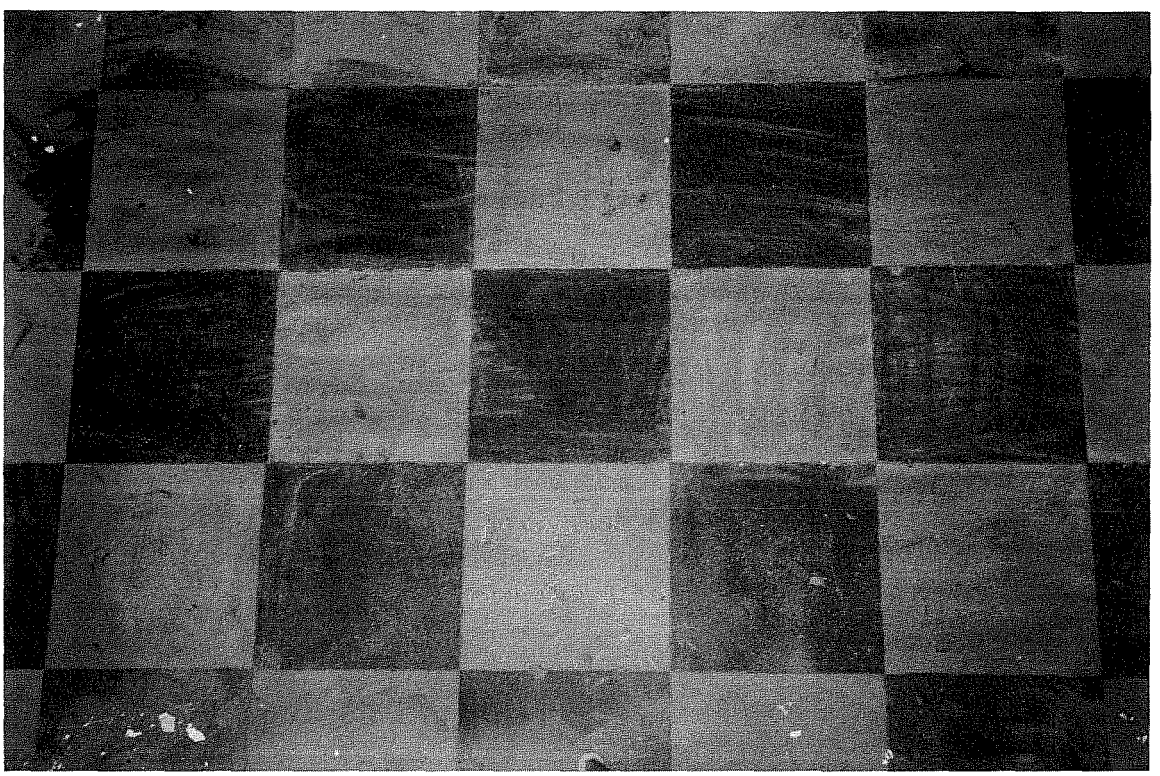


**Figure 188.** Original linoleum flooring, Room 107.

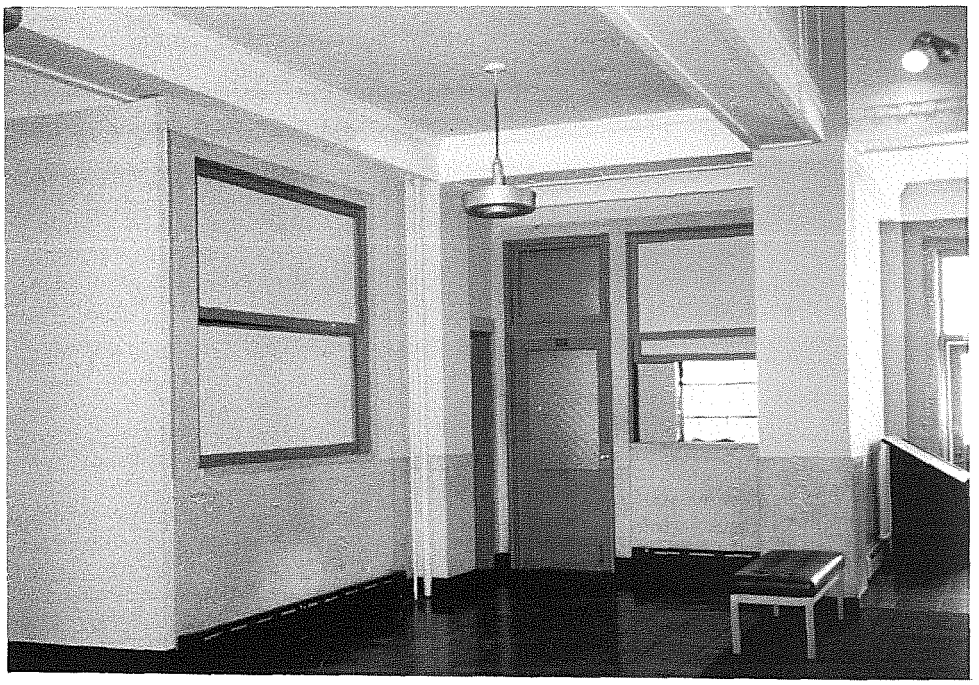


**Figure 189.** Wall treatment, Room 101, southwest corner: black marble baseboard, buff marble wainscot, imitation Caen stone upper walls.



**Figure 190.** Imitation Caen stone stucco finish along north wall of Stairway #2; scoring of blocks visible.



**Figure 191.** Glazed ceramic-tile baseboard, wainscot, and display panel in passenger-loading tunnel.

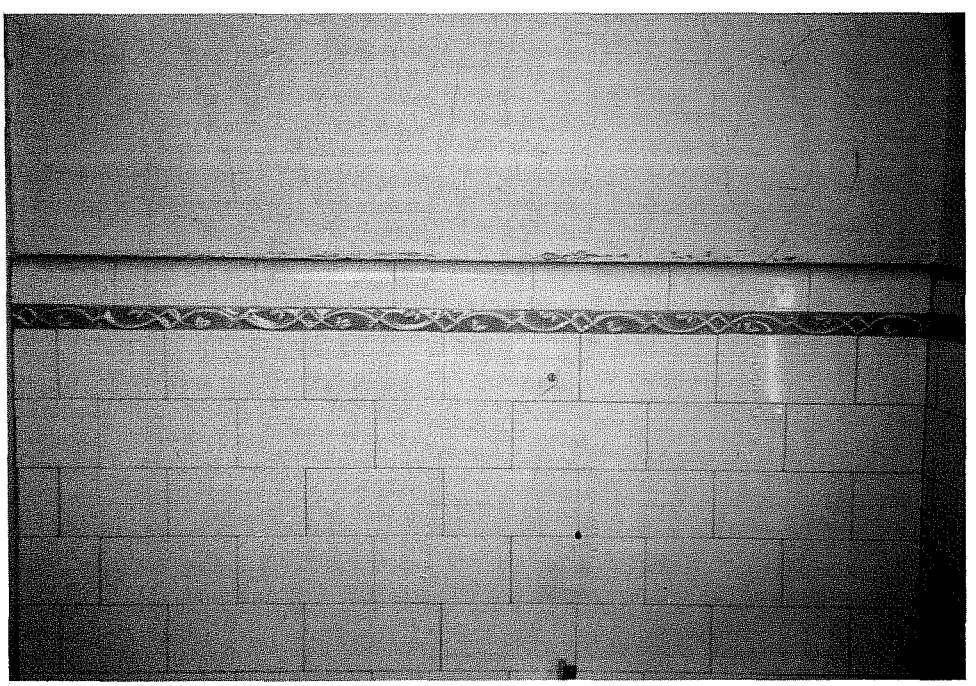


**Figure 192.** Glazed ceramic-tile wainscot with decorative border, Room 208B (typical of all original bathrooms).



**Figure 193.** Window wall of Room 117, looking north toward lobby; note plate glass and buff marble.

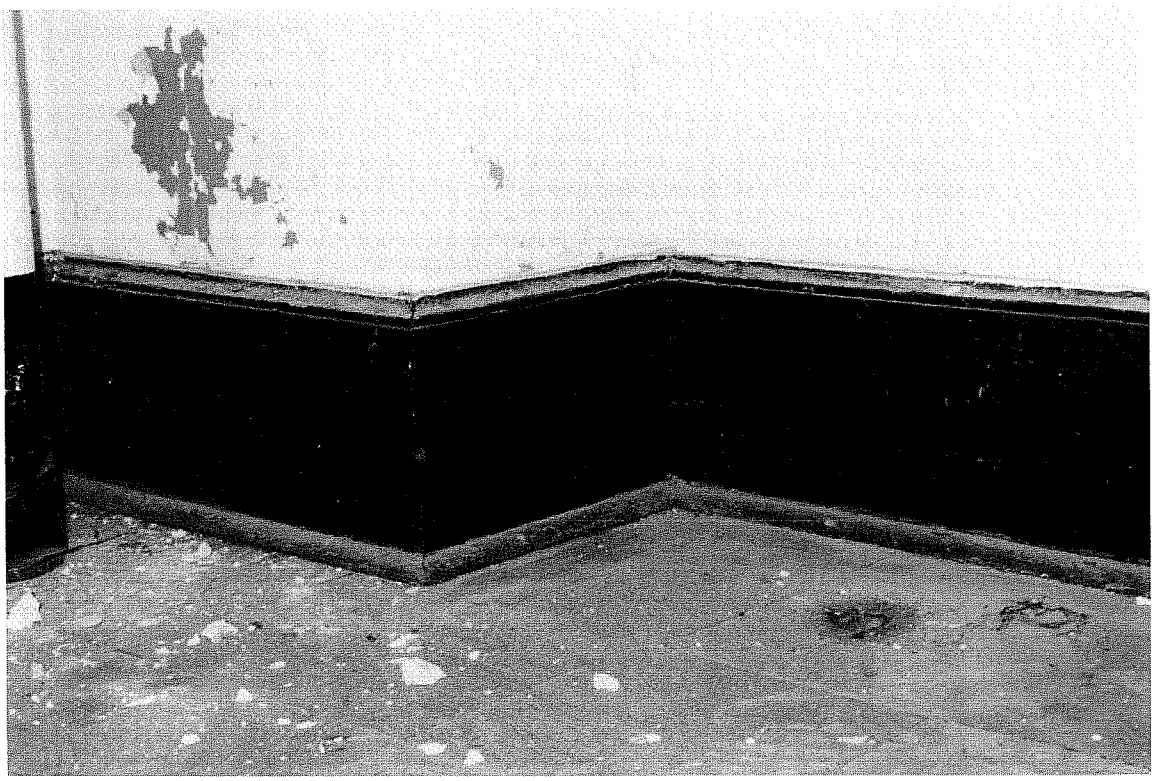


**Figure 194.** Original three-piece baseboard, Room 108, northwest corner.

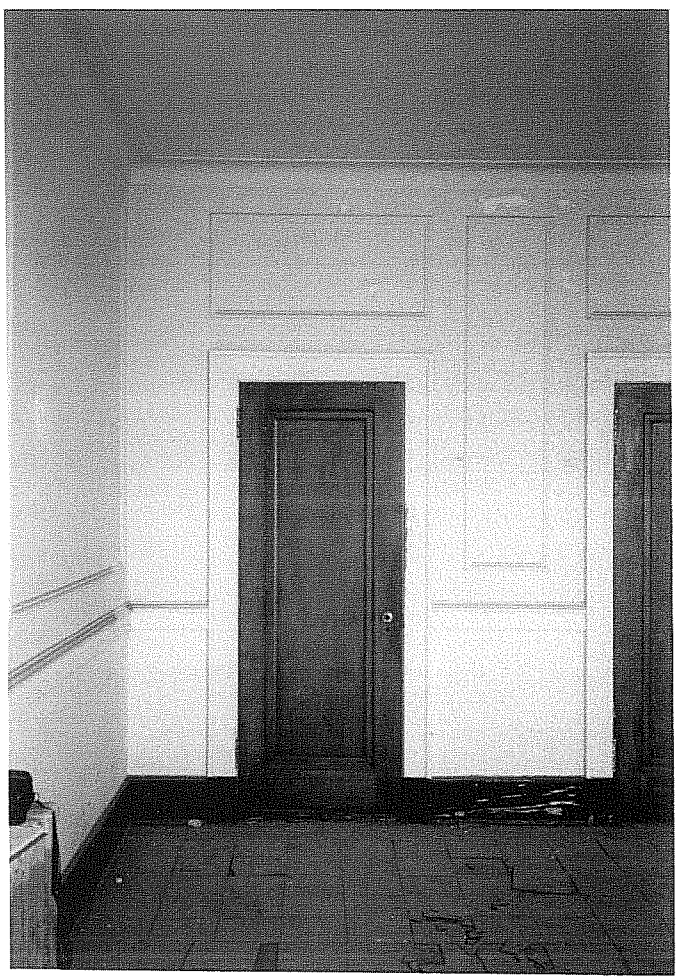


**Figure 195.** Typical example of wall panel moldings, Room 220.

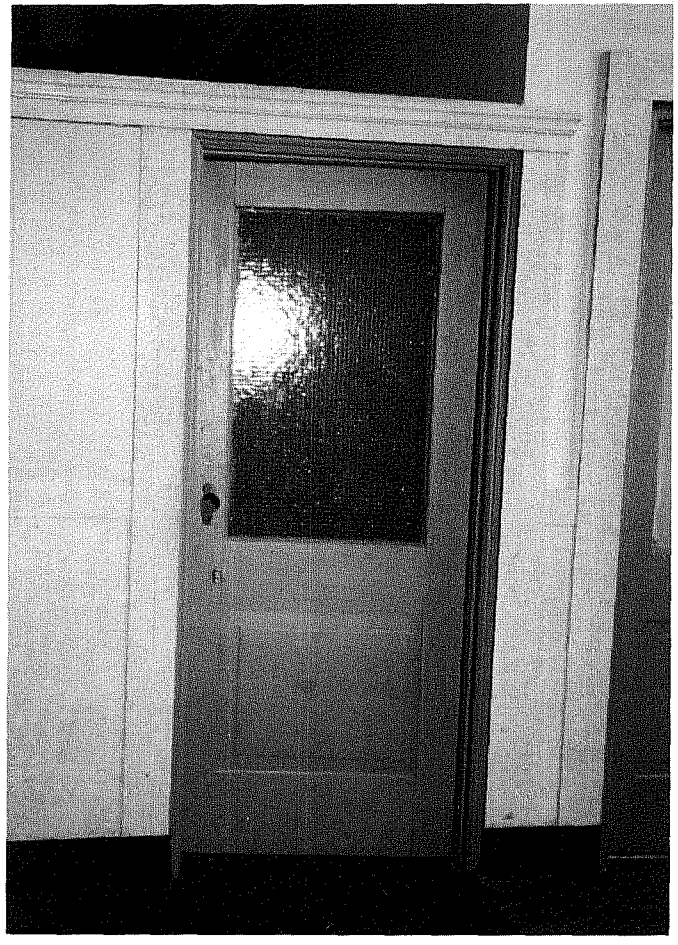


**Figure 196.** Original wood door with "chipped" glass in upper panel (D 1-30).



**Figure 197.** Original French doors in Room 110 (D 1-22), leading from former lounge to lobby.



**Figure 198.** Original wood-veneer single-panel door, Room 208.

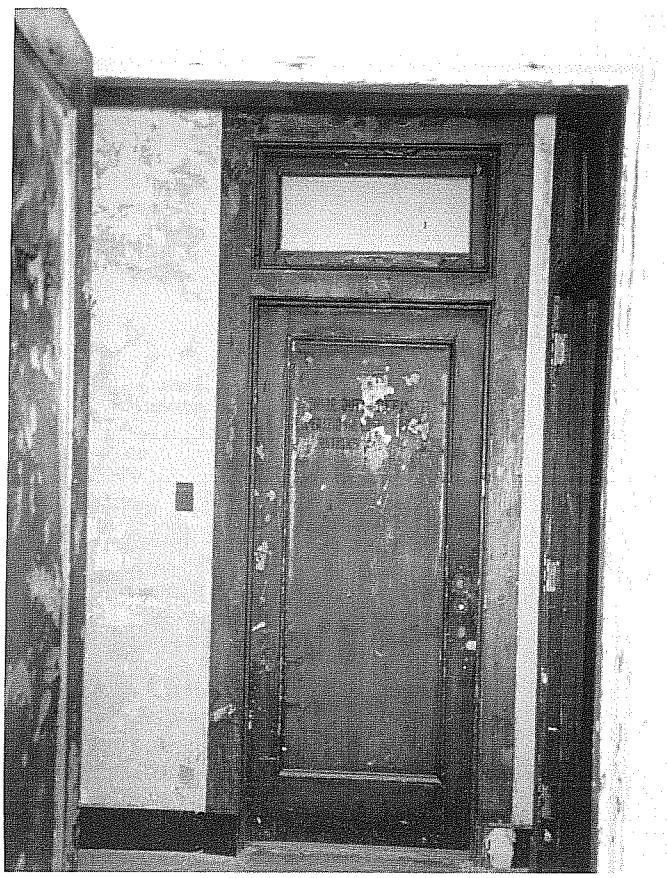


**Figure 199.** Metal-clad fire doors, painted and grained, Room 208 (D 2-16).

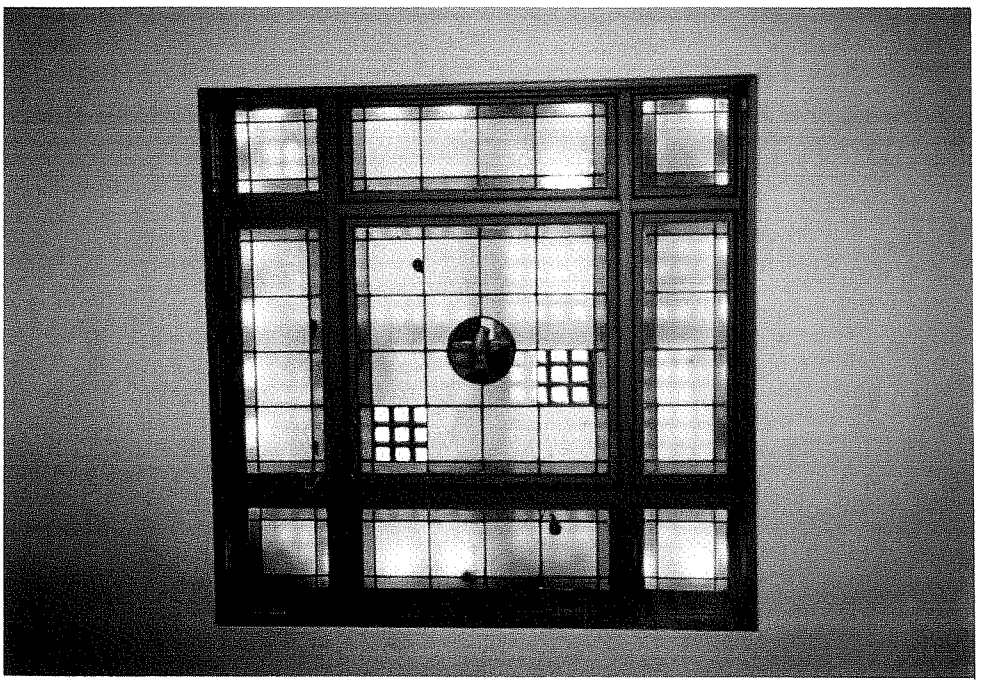


**Figure 200.** Stained-glass skylight in lobby ceiling.

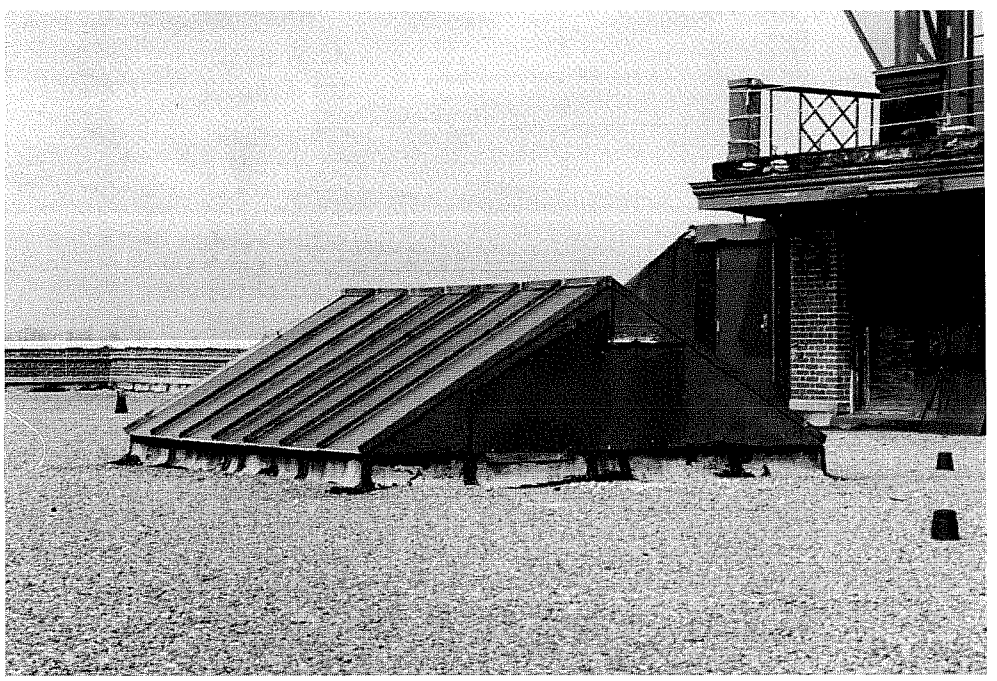


**Figure 201.** Lobby-skylight housing on roof.



**Figure 202.** Decorative painting, second floor, south hallway, ceiling above Stairway #5 leading to third floor of tower.

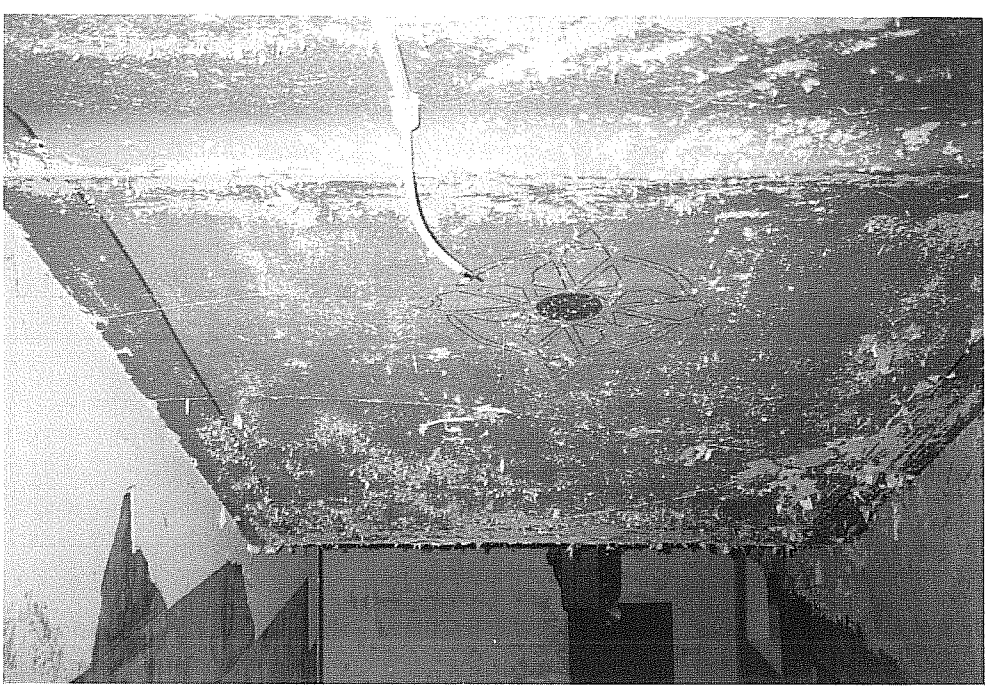


**Figure 203.** Decorative painting, second floor, south hall, ceiling above Stairway # 5 leading to third floor of tower.



**Figure 204.** View of Stairway #5, showing black marble stringer, buff marble treads, cast-iron and bronze balustrade, and molded wood handrail.



**Figure 205.** Stairway #5: cast-iron newel at third-floor landing.

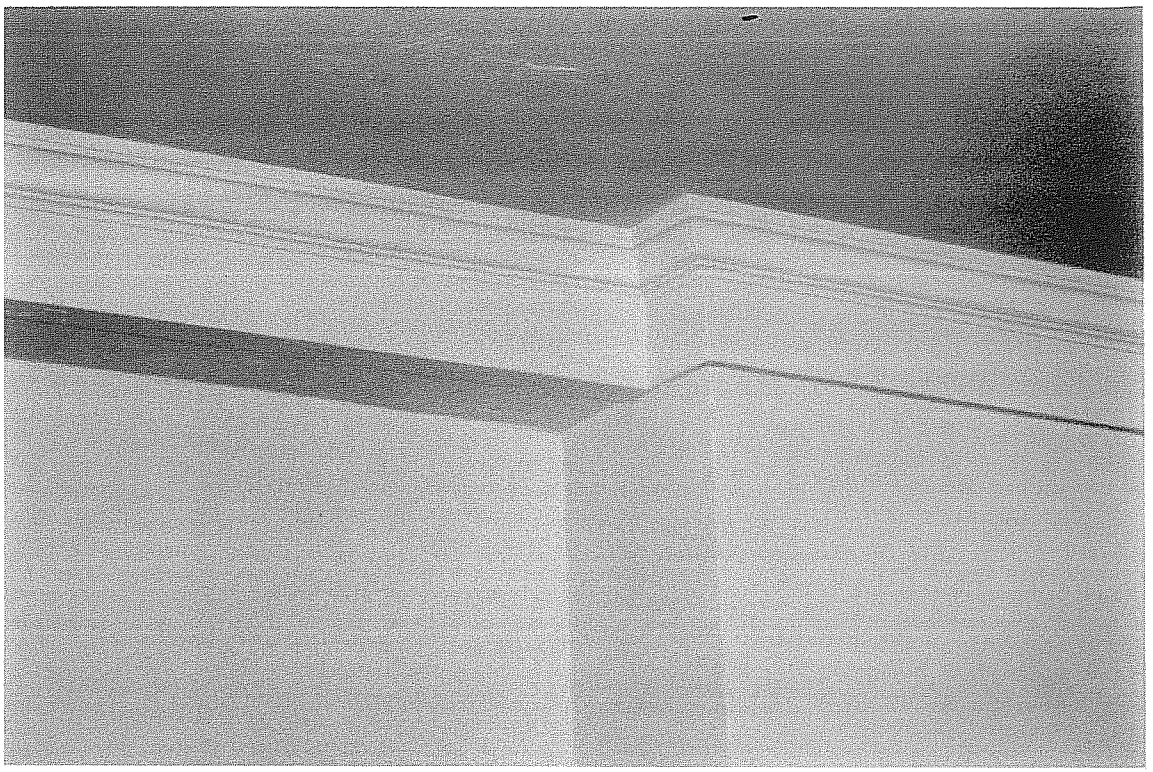


**Figure 206.** Molded plaster ogee cornice, Room 110.

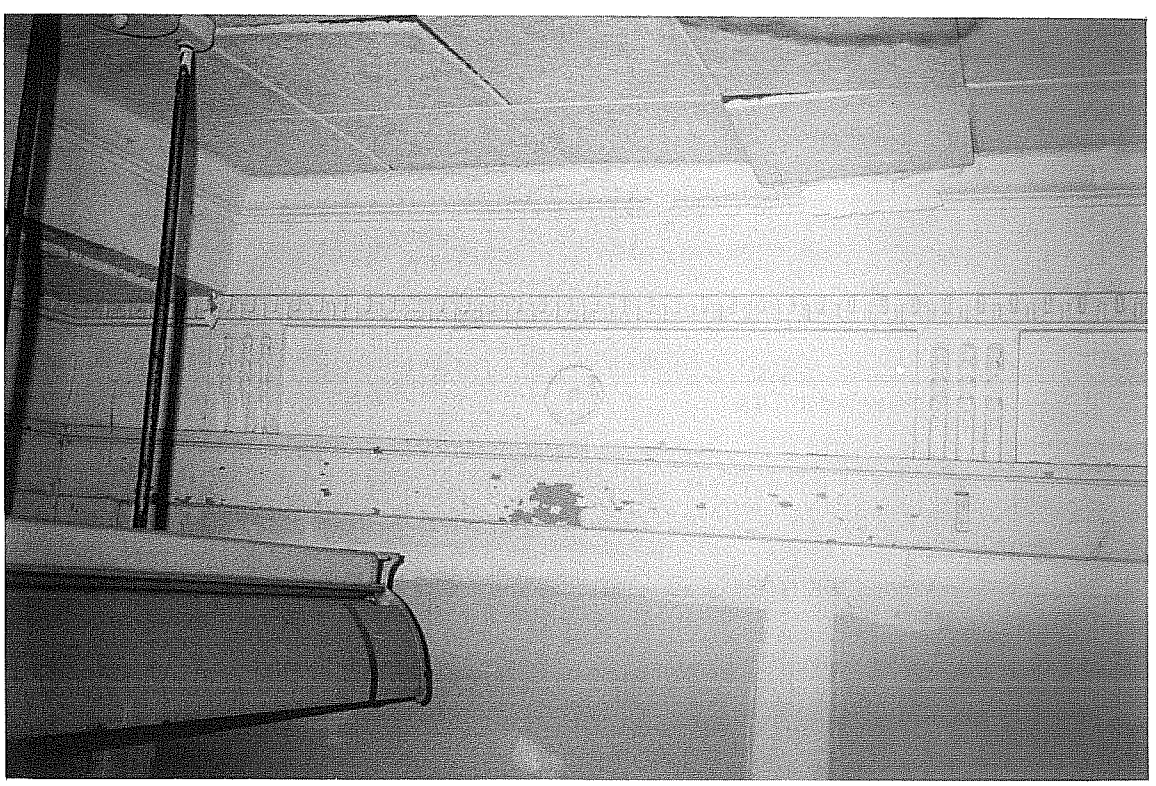


**Figure 207.** Plaster entablature, Room 116, north wall. Entablature consists of a molded cornice, plain frieze, and ornamented architrave with crenelated molding, triglyphs, and rosettes.



**Figure 208.** Carrera-glass and wood bathroom stalls, Room 118.

# CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES NO LONGER EXTANT

## Exterior Elements

### CDFS

- Wooden sash windows in wooden frames: 1-over-1, 9-over-1, and 12-over-1 light sashes.
- Wooden doors in wooden frames: double French doors, 10 lights of one-eighth-inch plate glass per leaf (doorways D 1-1, D 1-2, D 1-15, D 1-24, D 1-31, D 1-35, D 1-38, and D 1-47; and windows W 1-10, W 1-11, W 1-12, and W 1-22).
- Stylized fanlights in rectangular doorway transoms, with wooden muntins (doorways D 1-1, D 1-2, D 1-15, D 1-24, D 1-31, D 1-38, and D 1-47).
- Marquee-canopies over doorways D 1-24 and D 1-31, of quarter-inch leaded translucent glass with steel ribs and copper cornice.
- Light fixtures:
  - lamp posts with lantern-type lights on each of main-stairway stanchions
  - wall-mounted fixtures with lantern-type lights flanking north and south entrances
  - wall-mounted fixtures with lantern-type lights between wall openings on east side of building (seven total)
- Spotlights along roof parapet on east side of the building (six total).
- Flagpole at center of west parapet wall above main entry prior to removal ca. 1980.
- Expanse of original red square pavers surfacing the roof prior to replacement with asphalt ca. 1980.
- Bronze lettering on west entablature – "NAVAL AIR STATION - FLOYD BENNETT FIELD - NEW YORK."
- Landscape: 1935 field sign designed and installed by the WPA.

### Recommendations

- Replace current steel windows with replicas of original wooden sashes, using specifications on original drawings.
- Replace current steel doors with doors more closely resembling original French doors (must meet fire code).
- Replicate original fanlight transoms above doorways D 1-1, D 1-2, D 1-15, D 1-24, D 1-31, D 1-38, and D 1-47, and install.

- Replicate original glass and copper marquee at doorways D 1-24 and D 1-31, using original drawings, and install.

- Replicate original light fixtures and install in exterior locations as indicated by original drawings and historic photographs.

- Install spotlights similar to the originals along the east parapet. (Originals were removed by the NPS; a search of park facilities may find them.)

- Reintroduce a roof flagpole at the center of the west parapet wall above the main entrance.

- Replace asphalt roofing surface with material imitative of original square pavers.

- Replicate and install lettering on west entablature. (Lettering was removed by the NPS; a search of park facilities may find them.)

- Replicate 1935 WPA field sign and install in front of flagpole at west side of site.

## Interior Elements

### CDFs

- Imitation Caen-stone walls.

- Decorative painted stencils and decoration.

- Polychrome plasterwork.

- Linoleum floors in lobby, first floor, with star design at west entry.

- Marble and glass information booths flanking Stairway #4 on the north and south in the lobby.

- Stairway from lobby to tunnel.

### Recommendations

- Maintain imitation Caen-stone treatment of walls. Clean and restore original finish as determined by a detailed paint/finish analysis.

- Document colors and designs of former decorative painting program in a detailed paint/finish analysis. Replicate decorative painting on documented portions of the lobby and hallways according to the findings of the analysis.

- Restore polychrome scheme to plasterwork in the lobby (Room 101 and 201), as determined through historic photographs and a detailed paint/finish analysis.

- Remove current faux-parquet vinyl tile floor and replace with linoleum tiles matching the original in color and design.

- Restore marble and glass information booths on either side of the stairway leading to the tunnel (Stairway #4).

- Reopen Stairway #4 to the first floor of the lobby.

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Brooklyn Public Library, Local History Collection.

- *Brooklyn Eagle* newspaper photograph file

Cradle of Aviation Museum

Gateway National Recreation Area, Floyd Bennett Field Unit, Archives

Kingsborough Historical Society, Kingsborough Community College

- Valuable photograph collection

## New York City

Art Commission of the City of New York

- Exhibition File #1951. Floyd Bennett Field/Administration Building. Proposals for WPA projects at Floyd Bennett Field

Department of Records and Information Services, Municipal Archives

- Department of Docks, annual reports, 1928-1940
- Department of Docks, glass plate negatives on microfilm (too early)
- Fiorello H. LaGuardia Papers (Boxes 3364-3365, 3925-3926)
- Ports and Trades, Accession no. 93-15. Works Project Administration - Floyd Bennett Field Drawings
- Vertical Files. New York City Airports. New York City Unemployment
- James J. Walker Papers (Boxes WJJ-247 to WJJ-252)
- WPA Federal Writers Project, photograph negatives on microfilm (Rolls 43 - 46)

Museum of the City of New York

- Just one photograph dating to ca. 1945 found in these collections

The New York Public Library

- Collection of the City of New York and Collection of Prints and Photographs

The National Archives and Records Service (Regional Center)

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- Record Group 71

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- Record Group 80

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Wren, Tony, and Richard E. Greenwood. "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Floyd Bennett Field Historic District." National Park Service: North Atlantic Region, June 28, 1976.

# X. APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A.

## Finishes Analysis

## List of Paint Samples

The individual number for each of the following paint samples is preceded by the designation "GATE JB 001," signifying that the samples were taken from Gateway National Recreation Area, Jamaica Bay Unit, building no. 1 (the Administration Building).

P001 Tunnel, north wall of 10' 0" wide section, concrete zone above tile wainscot

P002 Tunnel, south wall of 10' 0" wide section near entrance to Admin. Bldg., concrete zone above tile wainscot

P003 Tunnel, ceiling of 10' 0" wide section

P004 Tunnel, north wall at entrance to tunnel above faux-marble composite wainscot

P005 First floor, lobby, north wall at Stairway #5, imitation Caen stone

P006 First floor, lobby, south wall of foyer area at west entrance, imitation Caen stone

P007 First floor, lobby, south wall of foyer area at west entrance, imitation Caen stone

P008 First floor, lobby, north wall of foyer area at west entrance, imitation Caen stone (plaque covered this area at one time)

P009 First floor, lobby, south wall, west end above service window, imitation Caen stone

P010 First floor, lobby, east wall, north end, above doorway D 1-25, imitation Caen stone

P011 First floor, lobby, northeast pier, south face, imitation Caen stone

P012 First floor, lobby, southeast pier, south face, imitation Caen stone

P013 First floor, lobby, southeast pier, south face, imitation Caen stone

P014 First floor, lobby, east side, balcony soffit, center of center

P015 First floor, lobby, west side, balcony soffit, underneath balcony section I, at dentils 15-18

P016 First floor, lobby, west side, balcony soffit edge, underneath balcony section I, at dentils 15-18

P017 First floor, lobby, west side, center of balcony soffit, underneath balcony section I, at dentils 15-18

P018 First floor, lobby, west side, east edge balcony soffit, underneath balcony section I, at dentils 15-18

P019 First floor, lobby, north side, edge balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 23-26

P020 First floor, lobby, north side, balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 23-26

P021 First floor, lobby, north side, balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 23-26

P022 First floor, lobby, north side, balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 23-26

P023 First floor, lobby, north side, balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 15-18

P024 First floor, lobby, north side, balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 15-18

P025 First floor, lobby, north side, balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 15-18

P026 First floor, lobby, north side, edge of balcony soffit, underneath balcony section H, at dentils 15-18

P027 First floor, lobby, east side, doorway D 1-25, frame

P028 First floor, lobby, east side, doorway D 1-25, metal-clad fire door

P029 First floor, lobby, south wall, service window, wood frame

P030 First floor, lobby, south wall, service window, wood frame

P031 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), west wall, north end, imitation Caen stone

P032 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), east wall, north end between plate-glass windows, imitation Caen stone

P033 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), north end, west wall, imitation Caen stone

P034 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), west wall, south end outside Room 104, imitation Caen stone

P035 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), west wall, south end outside Room 105, imitation Caen stone

P036 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), east wall, north end, molding strip around windows and on top of marble wainscot

P037 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), west wall, north end, doorway D 1-20, south jamb

P038 First floor, north hall (Room 101N), east wall, south end, window stop of former plate-glass windows looking into Room 110

P039 First floor, Room 110, west wall, ceiling cornice

P040 First floor, Room 110, west wall, window trim

P041 First floor, Room 110, west wall, north pier, upper zone, south face

P042 First floor, Room 110, north wall, center of projecting "fireplace" bay, 3 feet above floor

P043 First floor, Room 110, north wall, front edge of projecting "fireplace" bay, 3 feet above floor

P044 First floor, Room 110, west wall, north of north pier, baseboard

P045 First floor, Room 110, west wall, north of north pier, chair rail/window ledge

P046 First floor, Room 110, plaster, west wall, south of north pier, bottom zone

P047 First floor, Room 110, doorway D 1-22, trim facing lobby, west side

P048 First floor, Room 116 (formerly part of Room 117), north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, small petal of rosette

P049 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, crenelated molding

P050 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, background

P051 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, bell feature of triglyph

P052 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, ball feature of triglyph

P053 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, arched triglyph frame

P054 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, main petal of rosette, raised edge

P055 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, main petal of rosette, main body of petal

P056 First floor, Room 116, north wall, ornamental plaster architrave, center of rosette

P057 First floor, Room 117, west wall, plaster architrave, background (all currently plastered over)

P058 First floor, Room 117, west wall, plaster architrave, triglyph area (all currently plastered over)

P059 First floor, Room 117, west wall, plaster architrave, rosette area (all currently plastered over)

P060 First floor, Room 117, west wall, plaster architrave, rosette area (all currently plastered over)

P061 First floor, Room 117, west wall, north of doorway D 1-36, baseboard

P062 First floor, Room 117, doorway D 1-36, door, room side

P063 First floor, Room 117, west wall, north pier chair rail

P064 First floor, Room 117, east wall, south pier plaster

P065 First floor, Room 117, west wall, north end near north pier, window ledge/chair rail

P066 First floor, south hall (Room 101S), west wall, imitation Caen stone

P067 Second floor, lobby, east side, center balcony panel, south side, middle of raised trim

P068 Second floor, lobby, east side, center balcony panel, south side, edge of raised trim

P069 Second floor, lobby, east side, center balcony panel, plaster ground of south side within raised trim

P070 Second floor, lobby, east side, center balcony panel, general background

P071 Second floor, lobby, east side, above center balcony panel, upper dentil band, recessed ground of hexagonal dentil

P072 Second floor, lobby, east side, above center balcony panel, upper dentil band, recessed ground of hexagonal dentil

P073 Second floor, lobby, east side, above center balcony panel, upper dentil band, projecting face of hexagonal dentil

P074 Second floor, lobby, east side, above center balcony panel, upper dentil band, projecting face of hexagonal dentil

P075 Second floor, lobby, east side, center balcony panel, plaster shield, letter "N"

P076 Second floor, lobby, east side, center balcony panel, plaster shield, background

P077 Second floor, lobby, east side, center balcony panel, plaster shield, wings

P078 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, bottom right, in decorative band?

P079 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, center zone of panel

P080 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, upper north corner

P081 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, bottom south corner

P082 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, inside edge of panel frame

P083 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, flat face of panel frame

P084 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, bottom south corner

P085 Second floor, lobby, east side below balcony panel south of center, bottom dentil band, square dentil bottom edge

P086 Second floor, lobby, east side below balcony panel south of center, bottom dentil band, square dentil, area of painted triangle

P087 Second floor, lobby, east side below balcony panel south of center, bottom dentil band, flat face of U-shaped dentil

P088 Second floor, lobby, east side below balcony panel south of center, bottom dentil band, underside of U-shaped dentil

P089 Second floor, lobby, east side below balcony panel south of center, narrow band above dentils

P090 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, bottom edge

P091 Second floor, lobby, east side, balcony panel immediately south of center, background

P092 Second floor, lobby, west side below panel north of center, section "I," bottom dentil band, square dentil #15

P093 Second floor, lobby, west side below panel north of center, section "I," bottom dentil band, face of U-shaped dentil #16

P094 Second floor, lobby, west side below panel north of center, section "I," bottom dentil band, underside of U-shaped dentil #16

P095 Second floor, lobby, west side below panel north of center, section "I," band above dentil #17

P096 Second floor, lobby, north side, below center balcony panel, section "H," edge below dentil #25

P097 Second floor, lobby, north side, below center balcony panel, section "H," edge below dentil #23

P098 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, background

P099 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, (former) decorative painted frame, bottom

P100 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, center background

P101 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, background along west edge

P102 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, face of raised frame on west side

P103 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, bottom dentil band, square dentil #21

P104 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, bottom dentil band, U-shaped dentil #20

P105 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, band above bottom dentil band

P106 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, bottom edge of panel

P107 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, bottom east corner

P108 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, bottom dentil band, underside of U-shaped dentil #20

P109 Second floor, lobby, north side, balcony panel east of center, bottom west corner

P110 Second floor, lobby, north side, above balcony panel east of center, top dentil band, face of hexagonal dentil #12

P111 Second floor, lobby, north side, above balcony panel east of center, top dentil band, underside of hexagonal dentil #12

P112 Second floor, lobby, north side, above balcony panel east of center, top dentil band, face of square dentil #1.

P113 Second floor, lobby, north side, above balcony panel east of center, top dentil band, recessed background of hexagonal dentil #21

P114 Second floor, lobby, north side, above balcony panel east of center, top left corner in (former) decorative painted frame

P115 Second floor, lobby, north side, above balcony panel east of center, center background

P116 Second floor, lobby, east wall, just north of "elevator," imitation Caen stone, scored joint

P117 Second floor, lobby, east wall, just north of "elevator," imitation Caen stone, ashlar block

P118 Second floor, lobby, east wall, adjacent to "elevator" on north side, imitation Caen stone, ashlar block at juncture of wainscot

P119 Second floor, lobby, Stairway #5, south cheek wall between second and third floors, imitation Caen stone, ashlar block

P120 Second floor, lobby, Stairway #5, south cheek wall at landing between second and third floors, imitation Caen stone, ashlar block

P121 Second floor, Room 211, original lobby area, imitation Caen stone, ashlar block (water-damaged)

P122 Second floor, lobby, southeast column, south face, imitation Caen stone

P123 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face in plaster medallion.

P124 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, plaster scroll

P125 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, plaster framing band on left

P126 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, outside edge of plaster medallion

P127 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, plaster leaf

P128 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, plaster leaf

P129 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, left corner swag

P130 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, background

P131 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, plaster berry

P132 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, plaster leaf at top of scroll

P133 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, bottom band at base of capital

P134 Second floor, lobby, southeast column capital, south face, cap, leaf molding

P135 Second floor, lobby atrium, north side, northeast corner, raised bands of architrave (below frieze)

P136 Second floor, lobby atrium, north side, east end, bottom flat band of architrave (below frieze)

P137 Second floor, lobby atrium, north side, east end, frieze, (former) stencil design between (former) painted canvases

P138 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end, frieze, (former) stencil design between (former) painted canvases; may be center of design

P139 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end, frieze, (former) painted borders for (former) painted canvases

P140 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end, frieze, background

P141 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end, frieze, (former) stencil design between (former) painted canvases, bottom

P142 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end, frieze, (former) stencil design between (former) painted canvases, top

P143 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end, frieze, ground behind (former) painted canvas

P144 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end, frieze; should be background

P145 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end (1-½ inches in from corner), frieze; should be (former) fan stencil in corner

P146 Second floor, lobby atrium, west side, south end (8 inches in from corner), frieze

P147 Second floor, lobby, east gallery, frieze facing "elevator" on east wall

P148 Second floor, lobby, east gallery, molded cornice facing "elevator" on east wall

P149 Second floor, lobby, east side, north end, soffit (above former light fixture on balcony rail), outer band

P150 Second floor, lobby, east side, north end, soffit (above former light fixture on balcony rail), background along outer edge

P151 Second floor, lobby, east side, north end, soffit (above former light fixture on balcony rail), middle zone

P152 Second floor, lobby, east side, north end, soffit (above former light fixture on balcony rail), middle zone

P153 Second floor, lobby, east side, north end, soffit (above former light fixture on balcony rail); should be edge of painted stencil design

P154 Second floor, lobby, east side, north end, soffit (above former light fixture on balcony rail); should be (former) painted line along soffit edges

P155 Second floor, lobby, east side, north end, soffit (above former light fixture on balcony rail); should be (former) painted stencil design

P156 Second floor, lobby, south side, soffit, along edge of (former) painted stencil

P157 Second floor, lobby, south side, west corner, cornice, top band above leaf molding

P158 Lobby, ceiling, 20 inches out from southwest corner, background or painted line to skylight

P159 Lobby, ceiling, 20 inches out from southwest corner, background or painted line to skylight

P160 Lobby, ceiling, southwest corner, background of striped border

P161 Lobby, ceiling, west side, south corner, raised band of outer edge of (former) stenciled border

P162 Lobby, second floor, west side, south corner, cornice, leaf molding

P163 Lobby, second floor, west side, south corner, cornice, band below leaf molding

P164 Lobby, ceiling, west side, south corner, (former) stenciled border

P165 Lobby, ceiling, west side, south end, (former) stenciled border

P166 Lobby, ceiling, west side, south end, (former) stenciled border

P167 Lobby, ceiling, west side, south end, 3 feet north of corner, (former) stenciled border

P168 Lobby, ceiling, south side, west end, 6 feet east of corner, (former) stenciled border

P169 Lobby, ceiling, southwest corner, rosette of (former) stenciled bordered

P170 Lobby, ceiling, west side, south end, plain striped border

P171 Lobby, ceiling, west side, south end, plain striped border

P172 Second floor, Room 208, west wall between closet and bath, baseboard

P173 Second floor, Room 208, south wall of closet behind main doorway, baseboard

P174 Second floor, Room 208, doorway D 2-14, door

P175 Second floor, Room 208, doorway D 2-16, frame

P176 Second floor, Room 208, north wall inside entrance doorway, original plaster

P177 Second floor, Room 208B (bathroom), northeast wall, original plaster

P178 Second floor, Room 208B (bathroom), doorway D 2-14, trim, south side

P179 Second floor, Room 208A (closet), south wall, baseboard

P180 Second floor, Room 208, north wall inside entrance, plaster, lower zone

P181 Second floor, Room 208, south wall inside entrance, plaster from under trim ghost

P182 Second floor, Room 209, north wall near west corner, baseboard

P183 Second floor, Room 209, southwest corner by entry doorway, baseboard

P184 Second floor, Room 209, north wall, plaster, upper zone

P185 Second floor, Room 209, north wall, plaster, lower zone

P186 Second floor, Room 209, southwest corner, plaster around ghost of light switch

P187 Second floor, Room 209, doorway D 2-18, trim, north side

P188 Second floor, Room 209, doorway D 2-20, trim, east side

P189 Second floor, Room 209A (closet), west wall, plaster

P190 Second floor, Room 209, plaster cove at ceiling

P191 Second floor, Room 209, plaster ceiling

P192 Second floor, Room 209B (bathroom), south wall, plaster

P193 Second floor, Room 209B (bathroom), doorway D 2-17, trim, south side

P194 Second floor, Room 209A (closet), south wall, baseboard

P195 Second floor, Room 210, east wall, baseboard

P196 Second floor, Room 210, east wall, plaster

P197 Second floor, Room 210, doorway D 2-21, trim, north jamb

P198 Second floor, Room 210, doorway D 2-22, trim, east jamb

P199 Second floor, Room 210, east wall, northeast corner, plaster, lower zone

P200 Second floor, Room 210, east wall, northeast corner, plaster, upper zone

P201 Second floor, Room 210, doorway D 2-21, door, room side

P202 Second floor, Room 210, plaster cove at ceiling

P203 Second floor, Room 211, west wall (new), baseboard

P204 Second floor, Room 211, north wall, plaster, imitation Caen stone (overpainted)

P205 Second floor, Room 211, doorway D 2-24 to lobby, door

P206 Second floor, Room 211, doorway D 2-24, trim, east jamb

P207 Second floor, Room 211, doorway D 2-23, trim, east jamb

P208 Second floor, Room 212, north wall, baseboard

P209 Second floor, Room 212, east wall, north of windows, plaster

P210 Second floor, Room 212A (closet), south wall, plaster

P211 Second floor, Room 212A (closet), doorway D 2-25, trim inside closet

P212 Second floor, Room 212B (bathroom), doorway D 2-26, trim on bath side

P213 Second floor, Room 212, doorway D 2-26, door

P214 Second floor, Room 212A (closet), inside closet, pegboard and shelf support

P215 Second floor, Room 212, west wall, plaster

P216 Second floor, Room 213, doorway D 2-28, trim, east side

P217 Second floor, Room 213, doorway D 2-28, door, lobby side

P218 Second floor, Room 213, doorway D 2-28, door, bath side

P219 Second floor, Room 214, southwest corner, south face of corner pier, baseboard

P220 Second floor, Room 214, west wall, north of doorway, flat face of chair rail

P221 Second floor, Room 214, west wall, north of doorway, molding of chair rail

P222 Second floor, Room 214, west wall, south of door, plaster, lower zone

P223 Second floor, Room 214, west wall, south of door, plaster, outside panel

P224 Second floor, Room 214, west wall, south of door, plaster, inside panel

P225 Second floor, Room 214, west wall, north of doorway, panel molding

P226 Second floor, Room 214, south wall, west end, panel molding

P227 Second floor, Room 214, doorway D 2-31, trim, north side

P228 Second floor, Room 214, doorway D 2-31, door

P229 Second floor, Room 214, plaster cove at ceiling

P230 Second floor, Room 214, plaster ceiling

P231 Second floor, Room 215, west wall, baseboard

P232 Second floor, Room 215, west wall south of D 2-34, chair rail

P233 Second floor, Room 215, east wall, south end, chair rail

P234 Second floor, Room 215, doorway D 2-33, trim

P235 Second floor, Room 215, doorway D 2-34, trim

P236 Second floor, Room 215, north wall, west side, plaster, lower zone

P237 Second floor, Room 215, north wall, west side, plaster, upper zone

P238 Second floor, Room 215B (bathroom), north wall, plaster

P239 Second floor, Room 215A (closet), doorway D 2-32, trim

P240 Second floor, Room 215A (closet), doorway D 2-32, trim

P241 Second floor, Room 215A (closet), doorway D 2-32, trim

P242 Second floor, Room 215, plaster cove at ceiling

P243 Second floor, Room 215, west wall, north end, baseboard

P244 Second floor, Room 215, west wall, north end, chair rail

P245 Second floor, Room 215, doorway D 2-34, frame, south side

P246 Second floor, Room 215, west wall, plaster, lower zone

P247 Second floor, Room 215B (bathroom), east wall, plaster

P248 Second floor, Room 215, west wall, plaster, upper zone

P249 Second floor, Room 215, doorway D 2-33, frame, south side

P250 Second floor, Room 215A (closet), pegboard

P251 Second floor, Room 215A (closet), north wall, plaster

P252 Second floor, Room 216, west wall, baseboard

P253 Second floor, Room 216, north wall, west-panel molding

P254 Second floor, Room 216, north wall, chair rail

P255 Second floor, Room 216, west wall, plaster in panel

P256 Second floor, Room 216, west wall, plaster, lower zone

P257 Second floor, Room 216, doorway D 2-33, door

P258 Second floor, Room 216, doorway D 2-33, trim

P259 Second floor, Room 216, west wall, plaster outside of panel molding, upper zone

P260 Second floor, Room 217, west wall, baseboard

P261 Second floor, Room 217, doorway D 2-40, trim

P262 Second floor, Room 217, doorway D 2-42, trim

P263 Second floor, Room 217, north wall, plaster, lower zone

P264 Second floor, Room 217, north wall, plaster, upper zone

P265 Second floor, Room 217A (closet), north wall, shelf support

P266 Second floor, Room 217, north wall, baseboard

P267 Second floor, Room 217B (bathroom), doorway D 2-39, frame, south side

P268 Second floor, Room 217B (bathroom), north wall, plaster

P269 Second floor, Room 218, west wall, baseboard

P270 Second floor, Room 218, east wall, chair rail

P271 Second floor, Room 218, east wall, plaster, upper zone

P272 Second floor, Room 218, east wall, plaster, lower zone

P273 Second floor, Room 218, doorway D 2-42, door

P274 Second floor, Room 219, south wall, baseboard

P275 Second floor, Room 219, north wall, chair rail

P276 Second floor, Room 219, north wall, panel molding

P277 Second floor, Room 220, north wall, plaster inside panel molding

P278 Second floor, Room 219, north wall, plaster, lower zone

P279 Second floor, Room 219, doorway D 2-46, trim, north side

P280 Second floor, Room 219, doorway D 2-44, door

P281 Second floor, Room 219, north wall (new?), baseboard

P282 Second floor, Room 220, south wall, baseboard

P283 Second floor, Room 220, north wall, chair rail

P284 Second floor, Room 220, south wall, panel molding

P285 Second floor, Room 220, south wall, plaster, upper zone

P286 Second floor, Room 220, doorway D 2-47, trim

P287 Second floor, Room 220, south wall, plaster, lower zone

P288 Second floor, Room 220, north wall (new?), chair rail

P289 Second floor, Room 221, south wall, east of doorway D 2-50, baseboard

P290 Second floor, Room 221, doorway D 2-50 (newer?), trim

P291 Second floor, Room 221, doorway D 2-51, trim

P292 Second floor, Room 221, east wall, plaster, upper zone

P293 Second floor, Room 221, east wall, lower zone

P294 Second floor, Room 221, plaster ceiling

P295 Second floor, Room 221, north (west?) wall, window frame, west (north?) corner

P296 Room 201S, west wall, imitation Caen stone

## List of Linoleum Samples

- Tunnel
- Lobby, second floor at top of Stairway #5
- Room 218

## Marble Sample

- North hall, first floor, north end, east wall

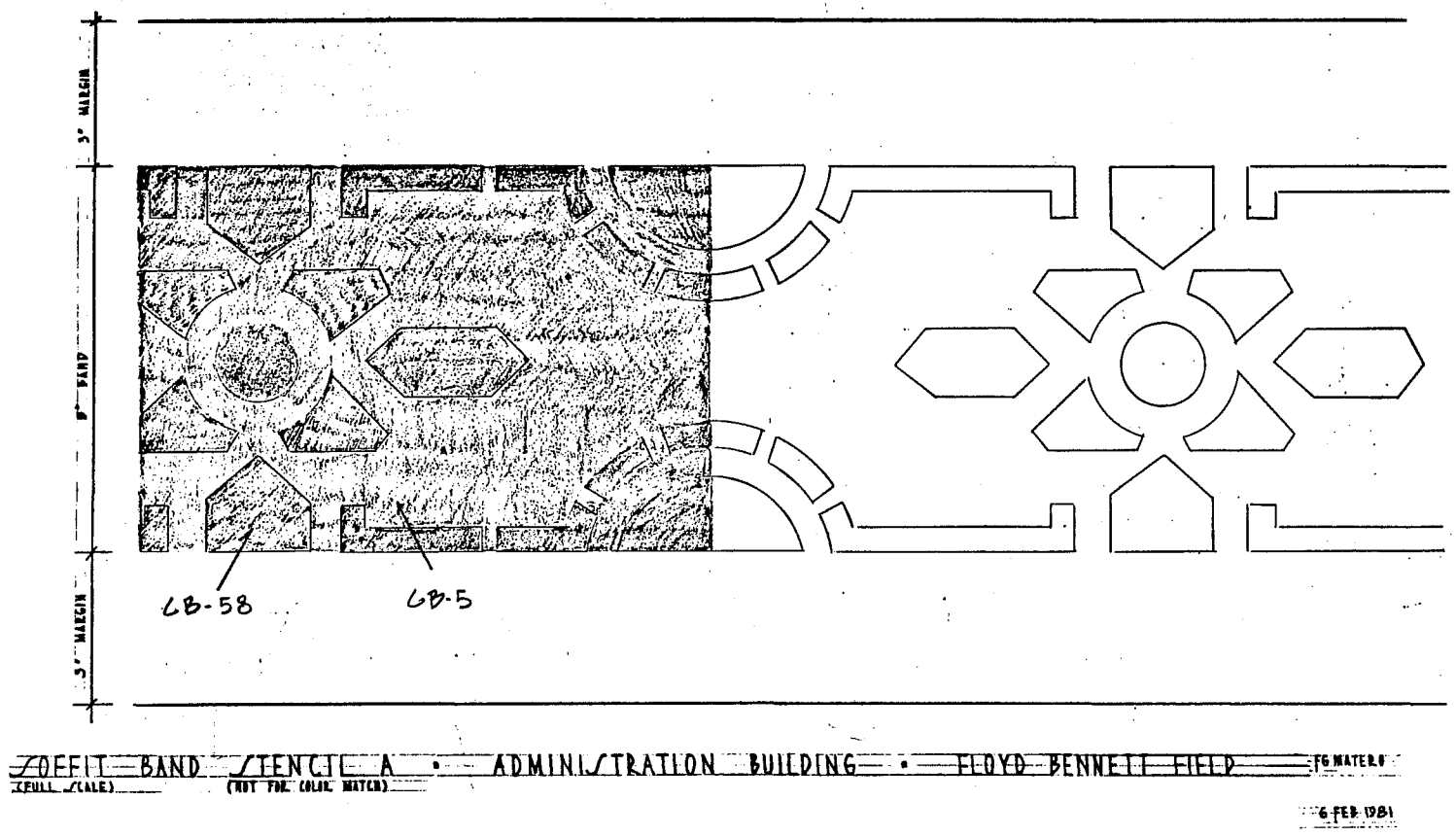



**Figure A-1.** Schematic drawing of stencil pattern, first-floor balcony soffit.

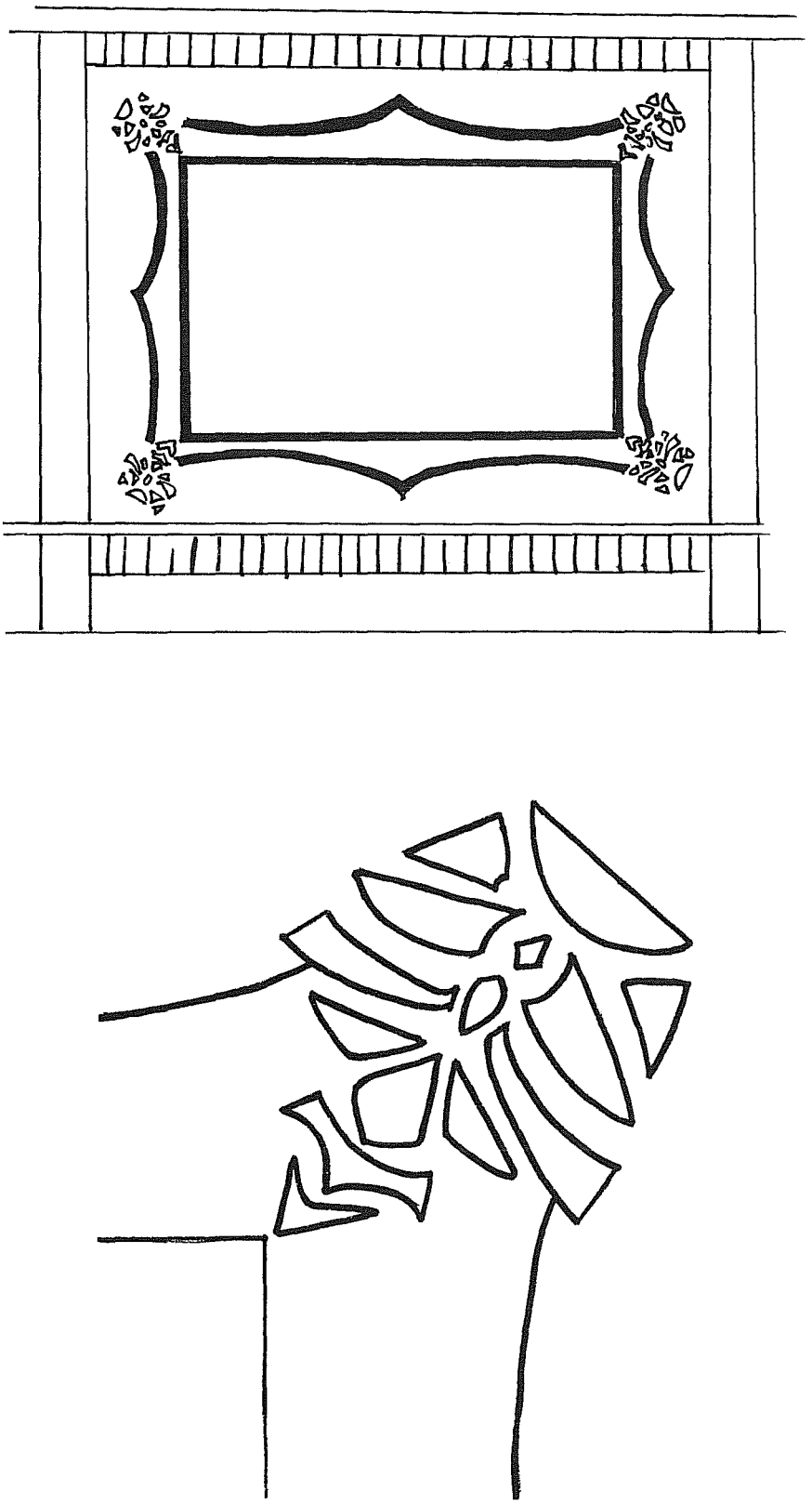


**Figure A-2.** Schematic sketch and detail of stencil pattern at corners of panel on the east face of the balcony.

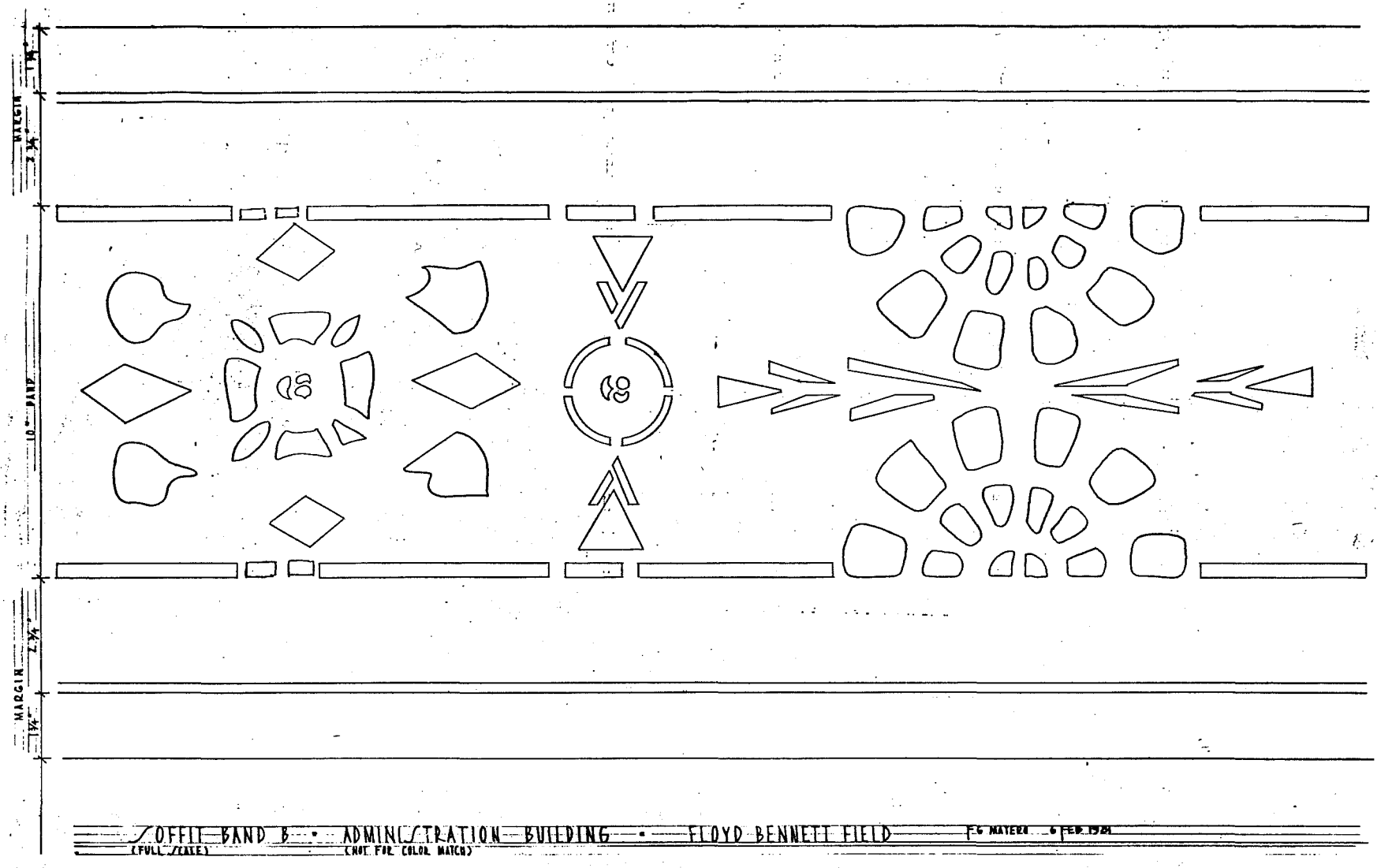



**Figure A-3.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern, second -floor balcony soffit.

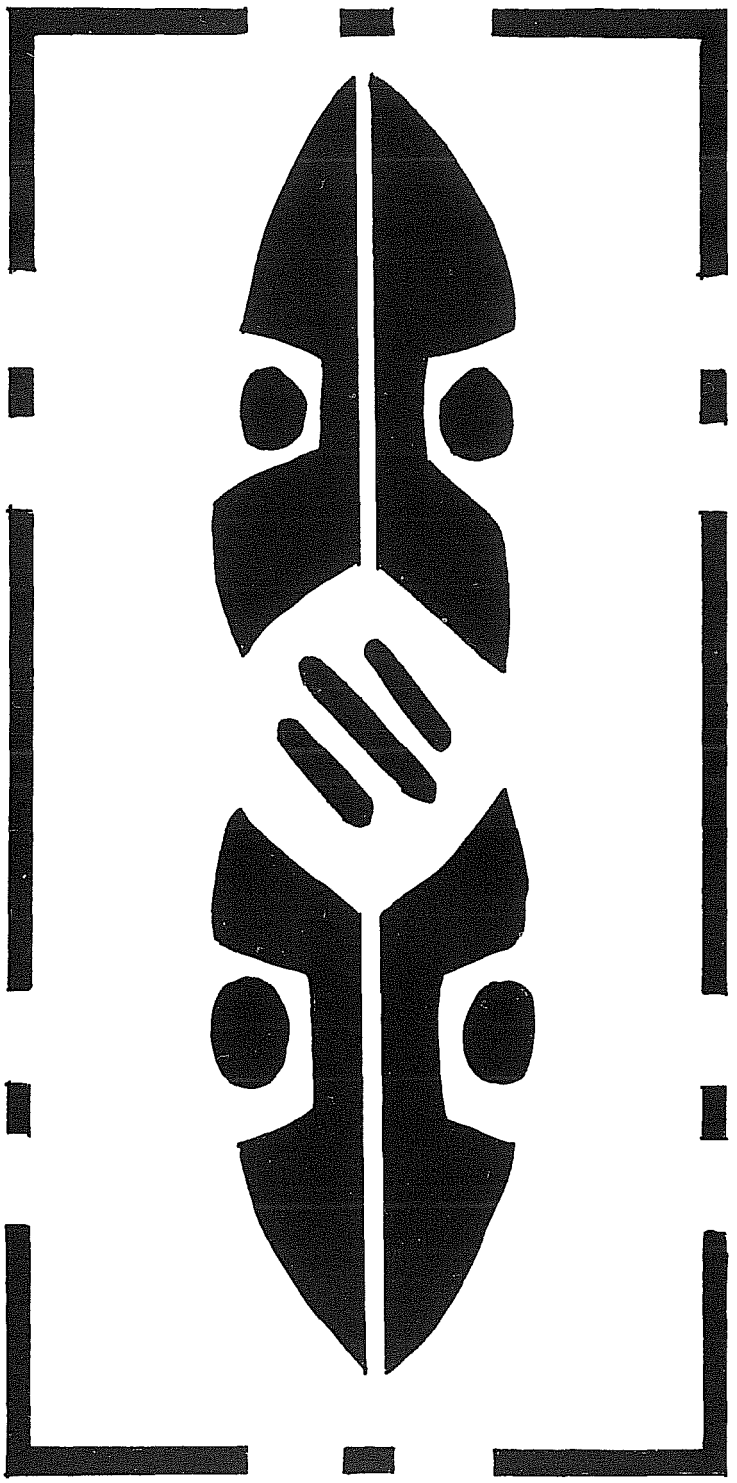


**Figure A-4.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern, second-floor balcony frieze between travel canvases.

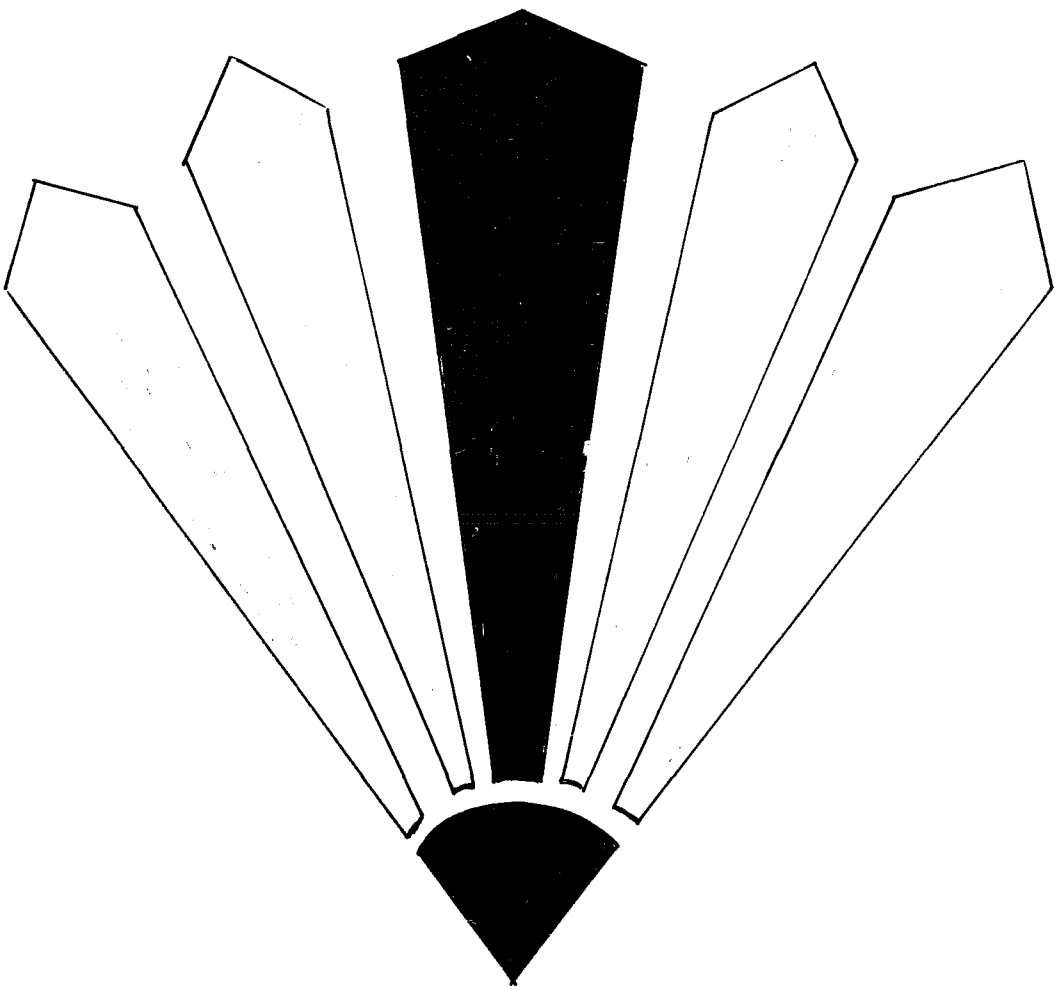


**Figure A-5.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern; second-floor balcony frieze corners.



**Figure A-6.** Schematic sketch of one of two alternating stencil patterns; used for the main ceiling border just above the cornice, and as a border around the skylight.



**Figure A-7.** Schematic sketch of one of two alternating stencil patterns; used for the main ceiling border just above the cornice and as a border around the skylight.

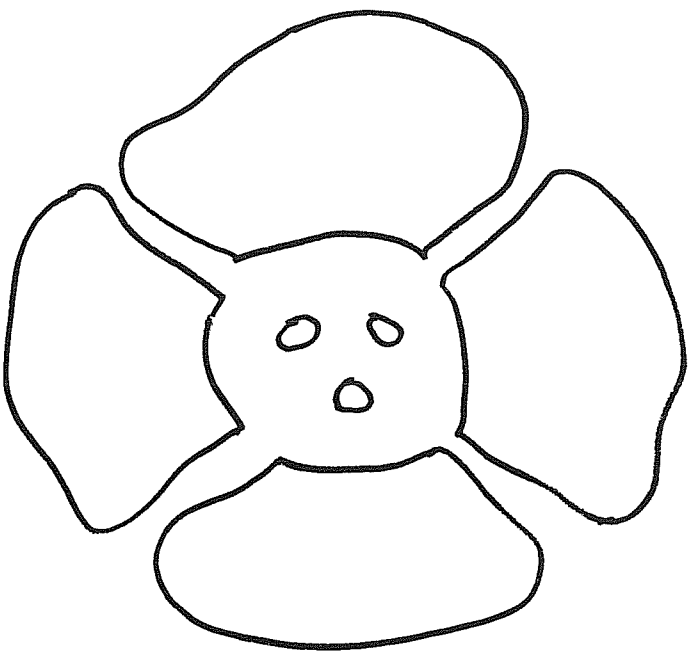


**Figure A-8.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern: floral motif at the corners of the main ceiling border and the skylight border.

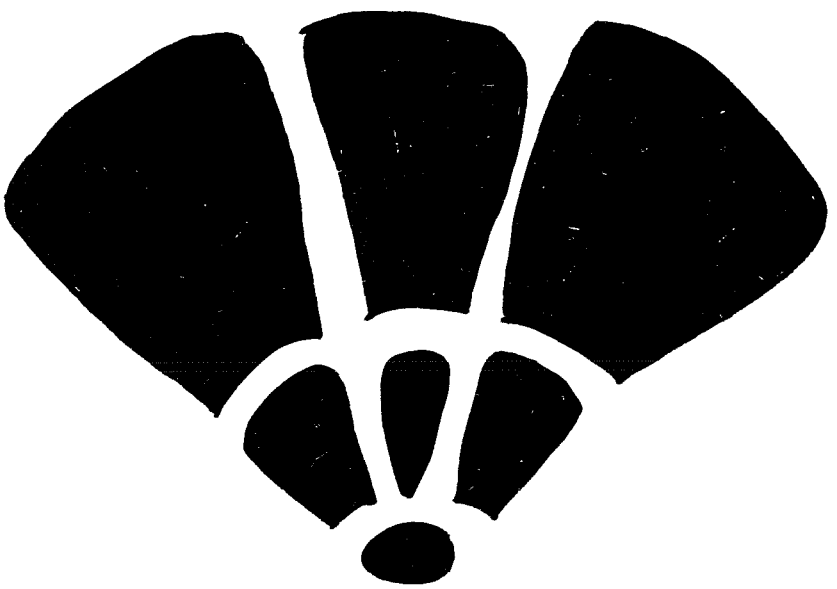


**Figure A-9.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern: fan motif found flanking the center stencil of the main ceiling border on each side.

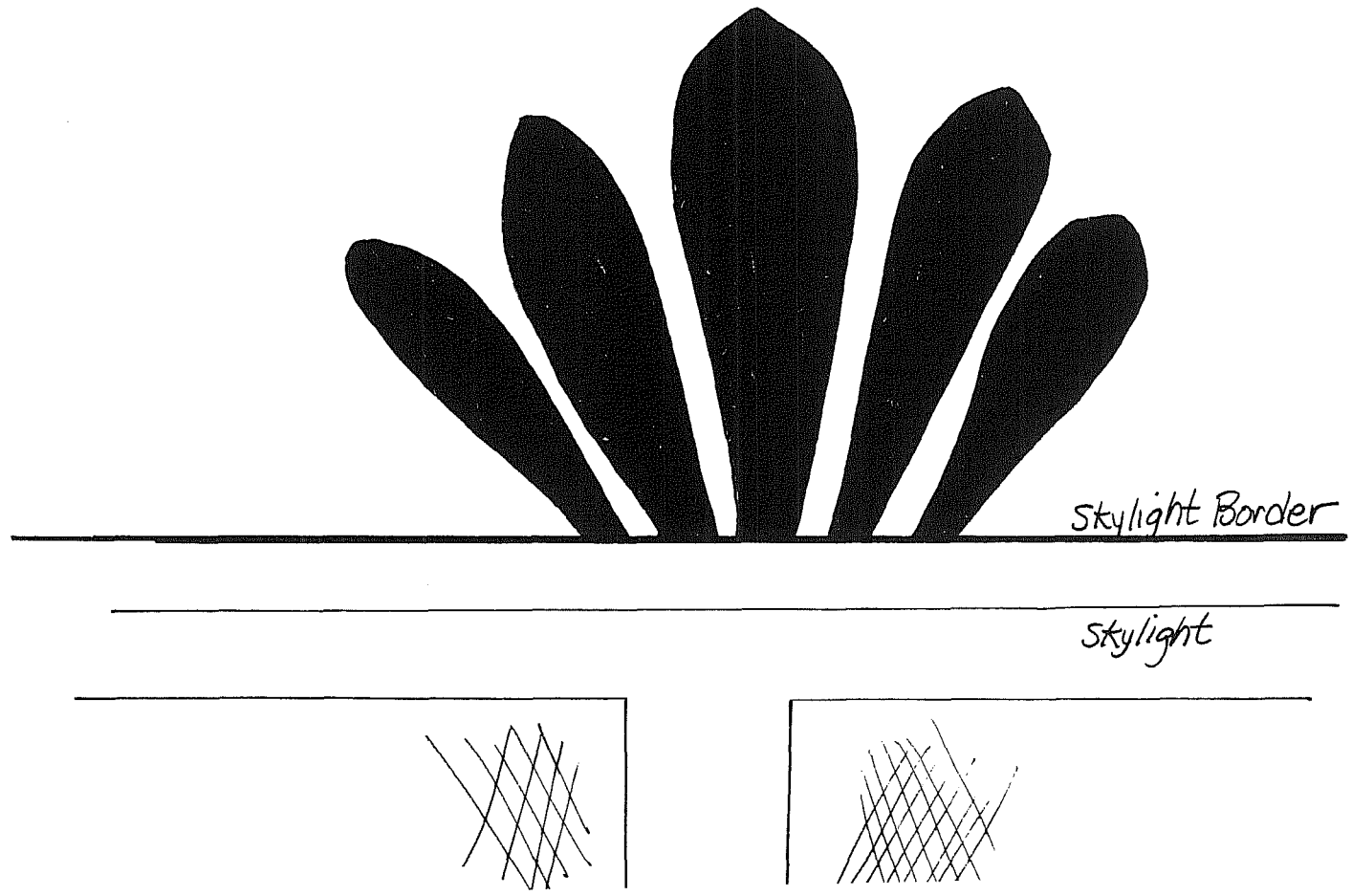



**Figure A-10.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern: fan motif found at certain intervals between alternating patterns of the skylight border (maybe five of these motifs on each side of border).

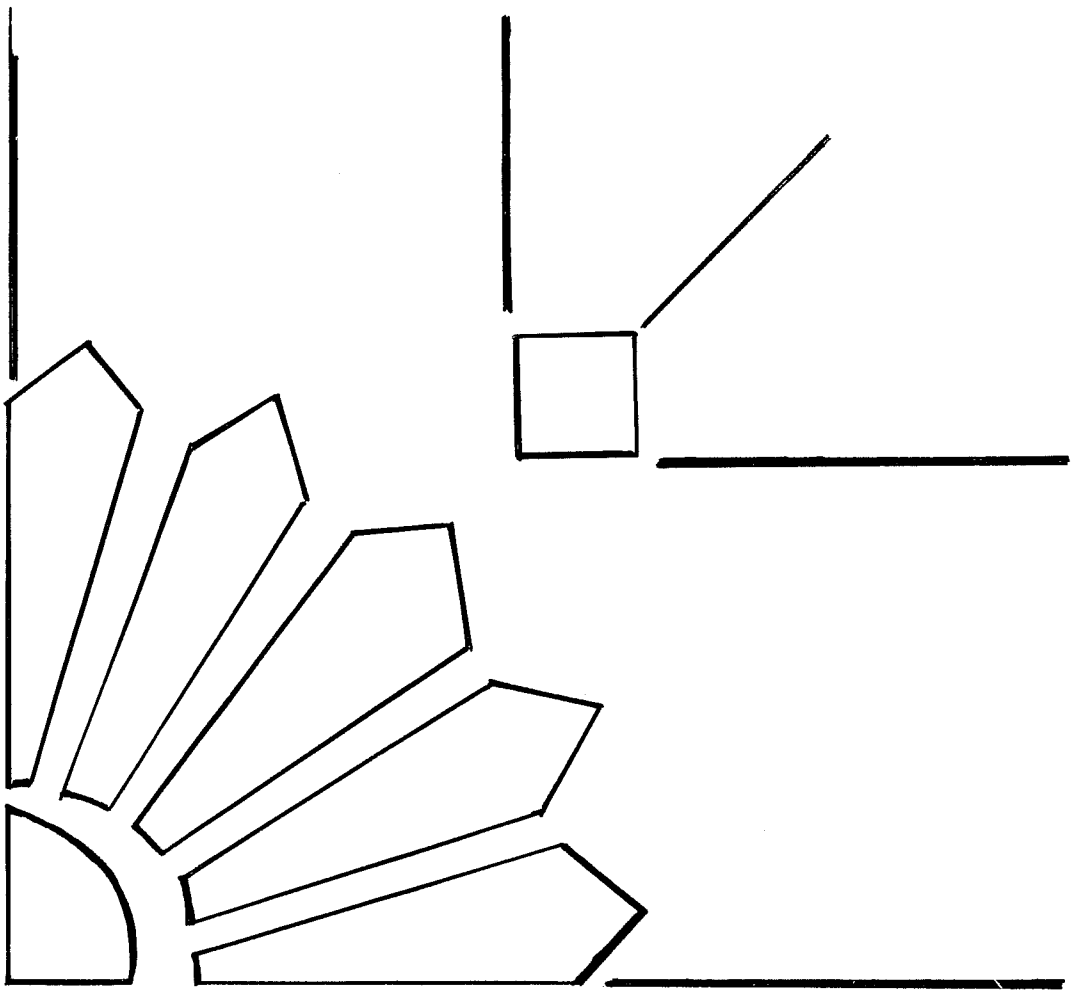


**Figure A-11.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern found at the corners of the main ceiling field, and at corners of skylight.

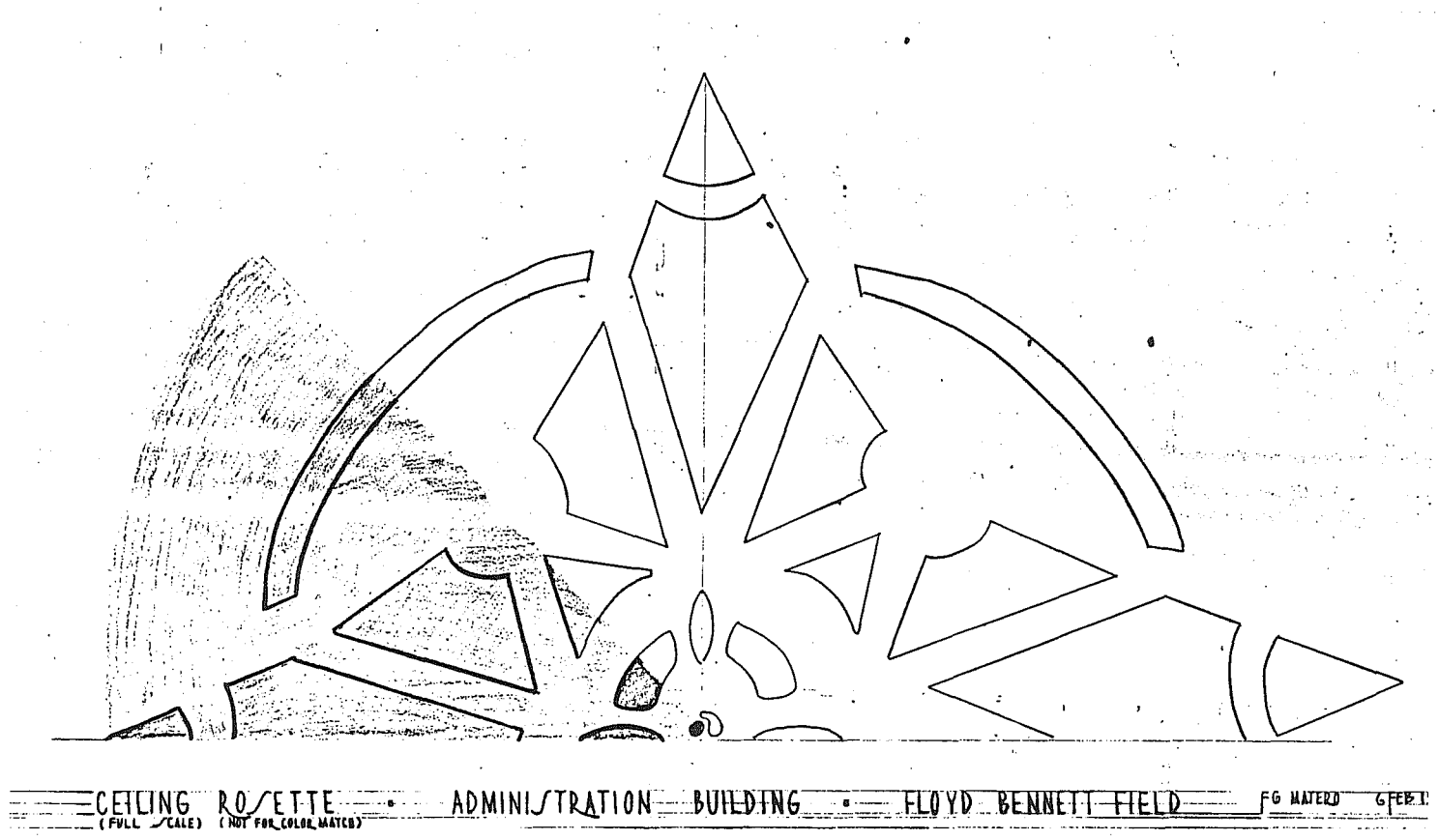



**Figure A-12.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern found on ceiling of Stairway #3, second floor.

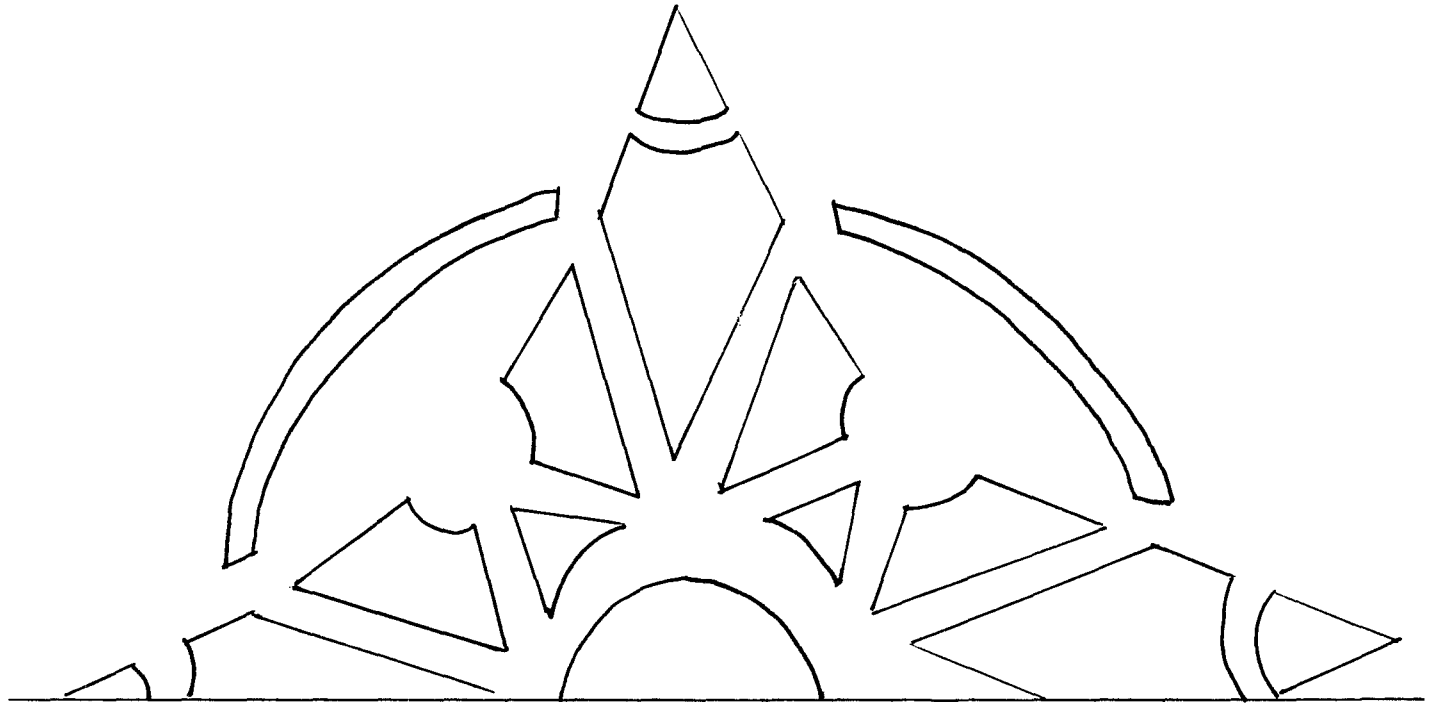


**Figure A-13.** Schematic sketch of stencil pattern found on the ceiling of Stairway #2 and #5 between first and second floors, and on ceiling of the second-floor corridor around the lobby.



**Figure A-14.** Main ceiling stencil border and corner ornament. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 30, 1981)



**Figure A-15.** Main ceiling stencil border and balcony frieze showing panels that once held painted canvases. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 30, 1981)



**Figure A-16.** Soffit stencil, second floor of lobby atrium. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 30, 1981.)

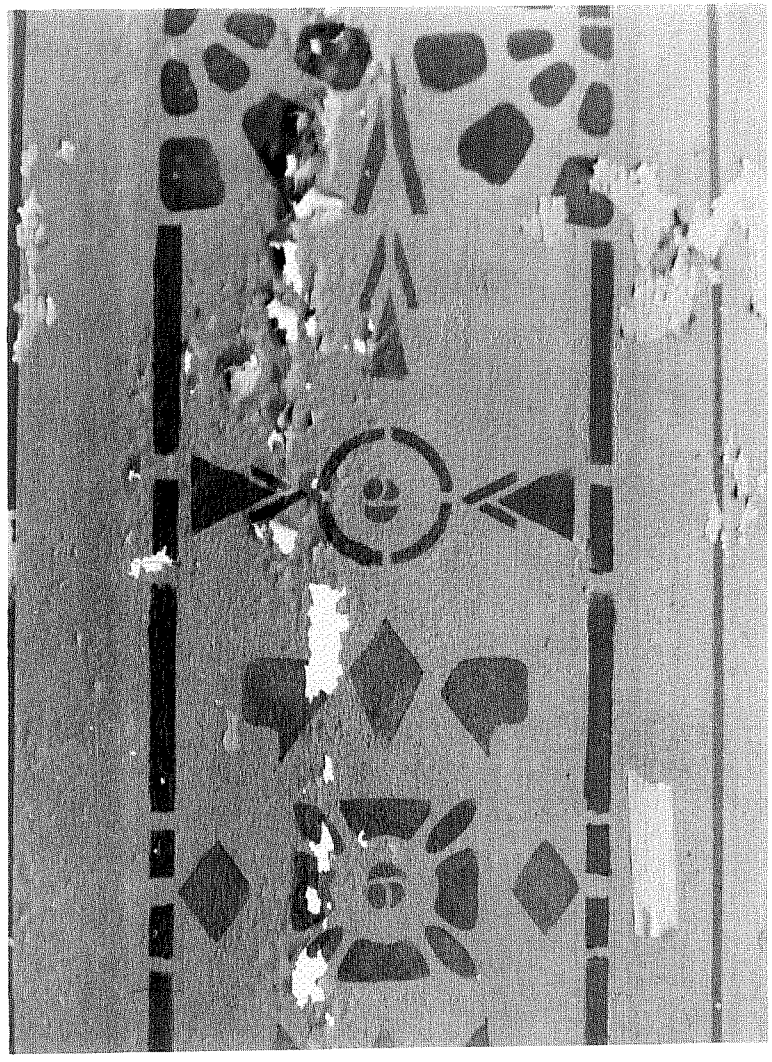


**Figure A-17.** Detail of soffit stencil, second floor of lobby atrium. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 30, 1981.)

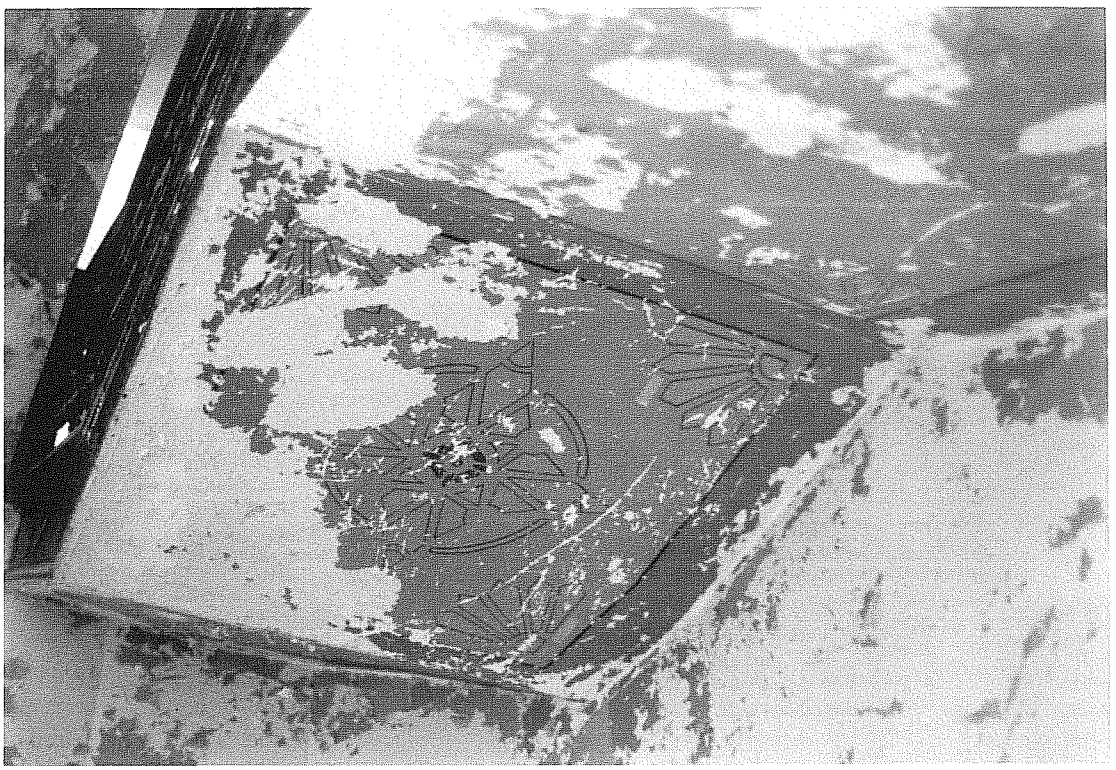


**Figure A-18.** Ceiling stencil, Stairway #3, northeast corner of lobby, second floor. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 30, 1981.)

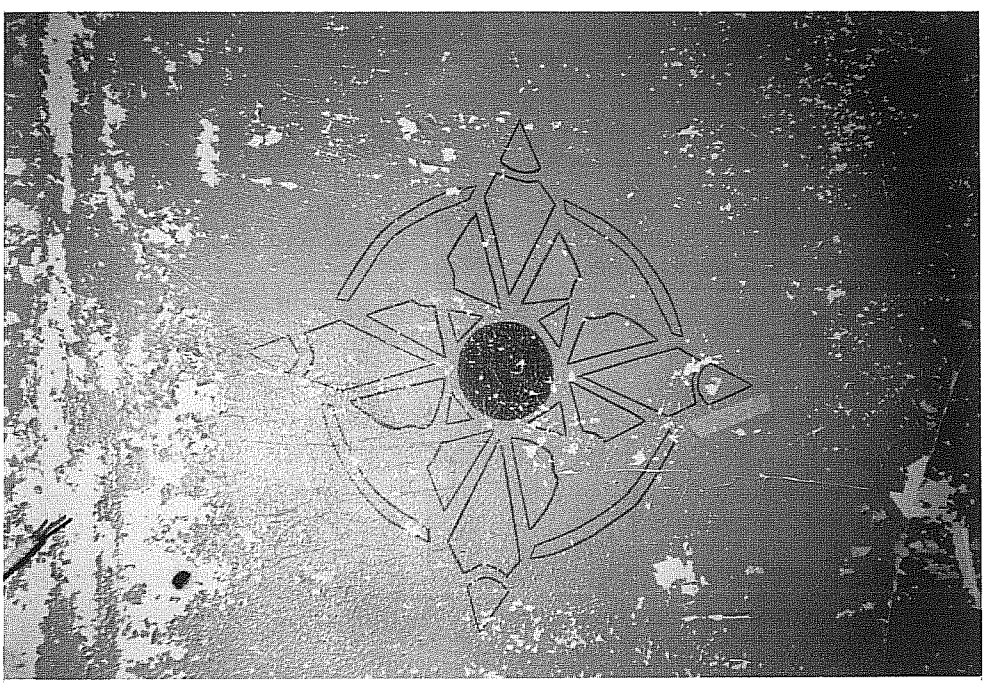


**Figure A-19.** Ceiling stencil, Stairway #5, southeast corner of lobby, second floor. (Photograph by J. Quinn, March 1994.)



**Figure A-20.** Ceiling stencil (corner detail), Stairway #5, southeast corner of lobby, second floor. (Photograph by J. Quinn, March 1994.)



**Figure A-21.** Ceiling stencil, south corridor, second floor, north end corner. (Photograph by J. Quinn, March 1994.)

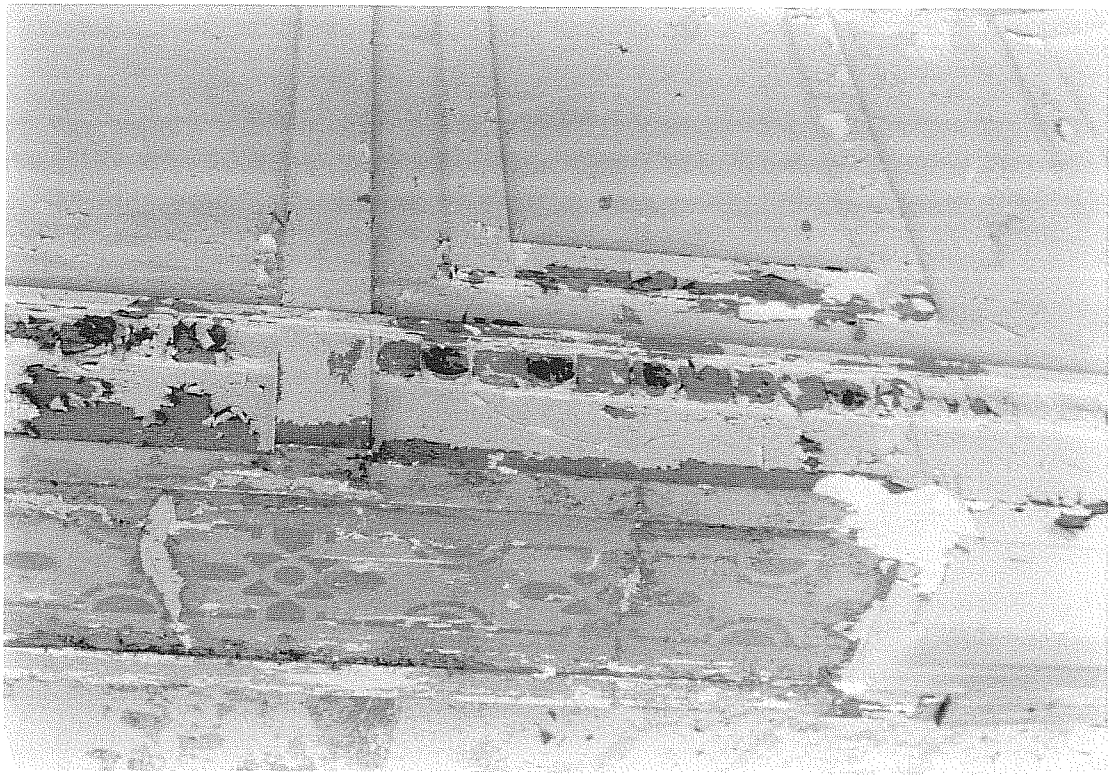


**Figure A-22.** Soffit stencil, first floor, underside of balcony. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 30, 1981)



**Figure A-23.** Detail of soffit stencil, first floor, underside of balcony. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 30, 1981)

# APPENDIX B.

## Imitation Caen Stone Specifications
## Registry Room, Ellis Island

The following specifications are transcribed from the *Historic Structure Report, Ellis Island, Historical Data*, by Harlan D. Unrau, May 1981, pp. 615-617. The specifications are found as Appendix F. in that report and are included here as an example of the technique and materials that may have been used in the treatment of the lobby and corridor walls of the Administration Building.

* * *

Specification for the Installation of a Vaulted Ceiling in the Registry Division, Ellis Island, N.Y. Harbor; and also Installation of Artificial Caen Stone or Artificial Limestone on the Side and End Walls of same room, ca. 1916

Artificial Caen Stone or Artificial Limestone:

The sidewalls from the spring line of the arch to the top of the present tile dado, and the end wall from the soffit of the arch to the top of the tile dado, are to be treated as follows:

> All brick and terra cotta surfaces shall receive a coat of approved damp proof material previous to the application of the scratch coat which shall be applied while the damp proofing is "tacky."
>
> The first, or scratch coat, on brick or terra cotta surfaces shall consist of mortar composed of the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sand | 1500 Pounds | 3/5 |
| Hydrated Lime | 500 " | 1/5 |
| Keene's Cement[1] | 500 " | 1/5 |

> with sufficient goat hair to produce a fibrous material. This mass shall be thoroughly mixed while dry, then temper with water and apply on the walls. Double score and allow the work to set (not dry) before applying the brown coat.
>
> If scratch coat becomes dry, wet same before applying the brown coat. Second, or brown coat, shall consist of the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sand | 2500 Pounds | 2/3 |
| Hydrated Lime | 625 " | 1/6 |
| Keene's Cement | 625 " | 1/6 |

[1] Keene's Cement was a commercial brand mix of the period. According to Fred T. Hodgson's *Cyclopedia of Bricklaying, Stone Masonry, Concretes, Stuccos and Plasters* (Chicago: Frederick J. Drake & Co. for Sears, Roebuck & Company, 1914, p.30, "Keene's Cement is one of the most useful of the artificial cements. It is harder than the other kinds made from plaster of Paris, and is much used for pilasters, columns, etc., as it sets quickly and can be polished, and takes paint excellently."

To this add sufficient cattle hair to produce a fibrous material.

In applying this brown coat around doors and windows, great care is to be exercised in recessing the brown coat the required depth to allow for the installation of the stone cement of the required thickness, which shall in no case be less than 1/4" thick.

This brown coat shall be rodded and floated to an even surface and left plumb and true.

The finish coat shall be "Monarque Brand" or equal, artificial caen stone with an alternate for "Monarque Brand" artificial limestone of same color and texture as are on exhibit in the office of the Supervising Architect, Treasury Department, Washington, D.C. Similar samples are on file at the office of the Commissioner of Immigrations, Ellis Island, New York Harbor.

Gauge the caen stone cement stiff with pure water. Scratch over the surface with a close coat of the gauged material using a steel trowel. The succeeding coats shall be applied with a wood float until a thickness of at least 1/3" is attained. Rod all work plumb, level and true. Fill all voids using a wood float (not a steel trowel). Float until the required fineness and initial set of the work is perfected.

Allow the stone cement work to dry before attempting to joint and finish.

Cut all joints 3/16" in width and of the same depth to retain the Keene's cement. Clean and wet all open joints and point the same with fine, white Keene's cement evenly trimmed, leaving clean, unbroken arrises.

Dimension of stone shall be shown on drawing.

When Keene cement joints are thoroughly dry rub entire surface with Gres-stone or emery paper until the required texture is produced.

Remove all loose particles and dust.

Wherever this work comes in contact with windows or doors, all base and trim shall be set before applying stone cement finish, thereby avoiding all patching, which, under no conditions will be permitted.

Scaffolding for the installation of above - both the arch and artificial stone, on the side walls, will be furnished and erected by the Bureau of Immigration.

A system of Indirect Lighting to be installed....

* * *

An earlier historic structures report for Ellis Island by Building Conservation Technology/The Ehrenkrantz Group, 1978 [p. 83] paraphrased the specifications and describes the artificial Caen stone finish as follows:

> From the top of the tile dado to the spring line of the arch, the wall was to be covered with "Artificial Caen Stone" or "Artificial Limestone." The brick and terra cotta surfaces were coated with a damp proof material and then two plaster coats consisting of sand, hydrated lime, and Keene's cement in varying proportions, with goat and cattle hair added for tensile strength. The finish coat was to consist of "'Monarque Brand'....artificial caen stone, with an alternate for...artificial limestone," scored with three-sixteenths-inch joints in one-by-two foot sections. The surface was roughened with emery paper to produce a stone-like texture, and joints were filled with Keene's cement, "evenly trimmed, leaving clean, unbroken arrises."

# APPENDIX C.

## Ornamental Plaster and Molding Profiles

Five colors

At least five colors

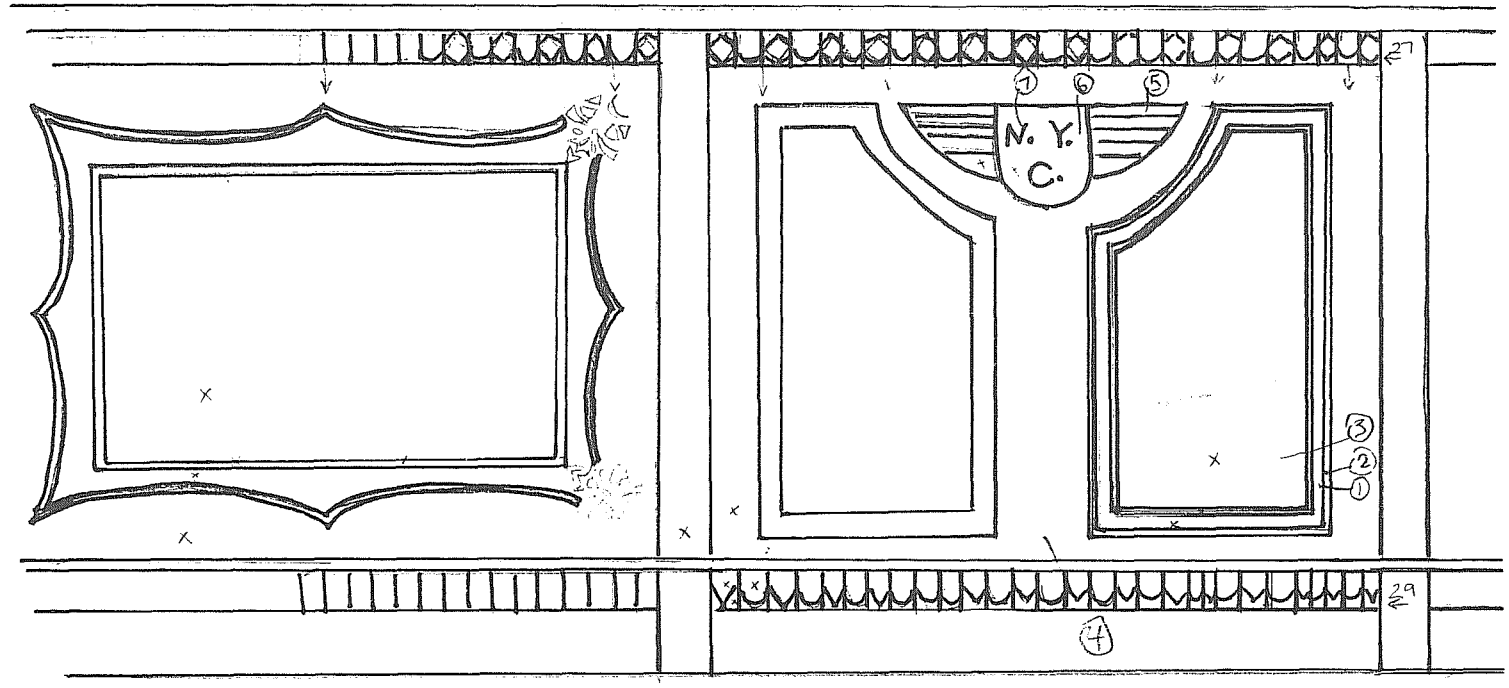



**Figure C-1.** Schematic sketch of east balcony panel.

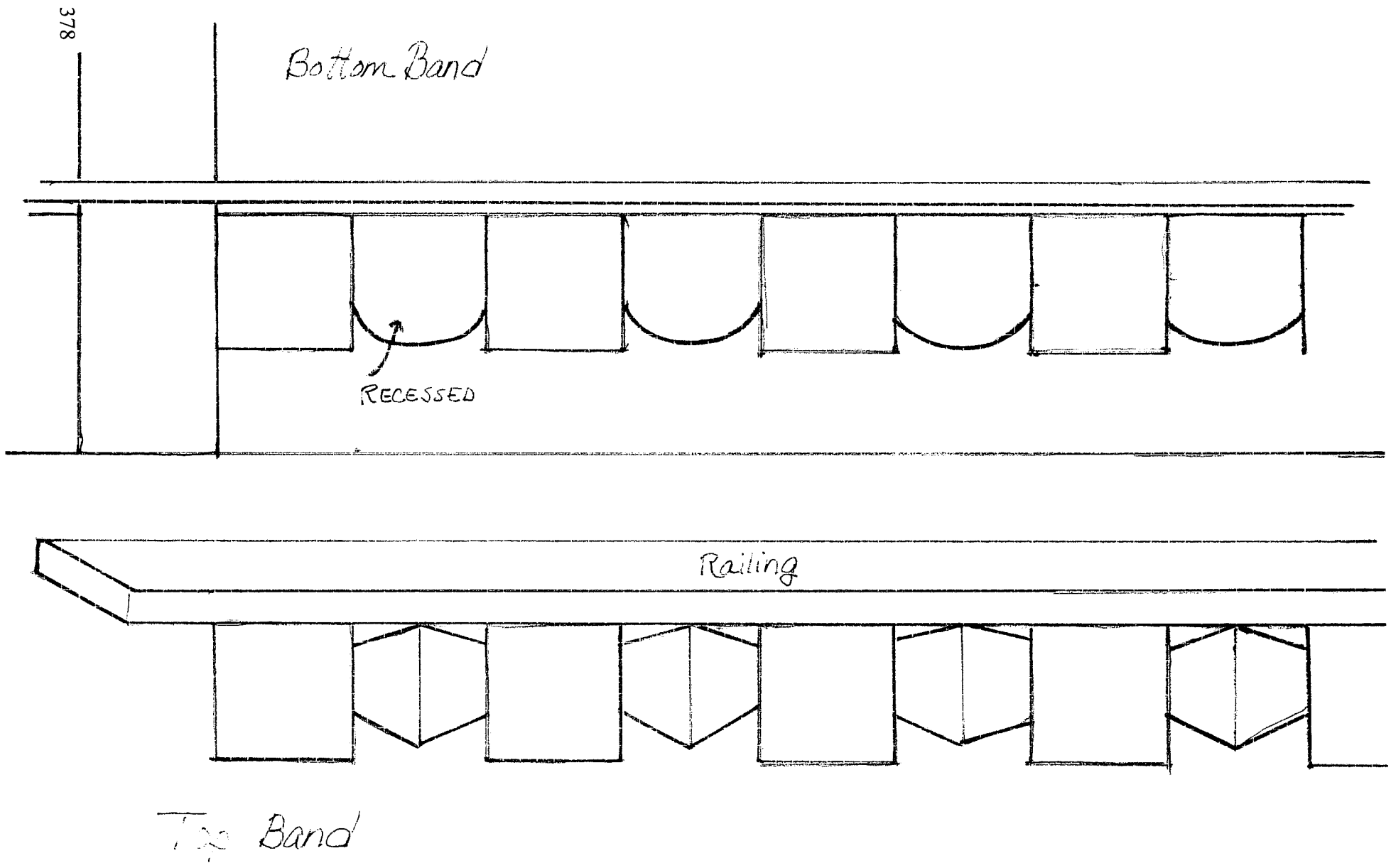



**Figure C-2.** Schematic drawing of upper and lower bands of plaster dentils on balcony faces.




**Figure C-3.** Schematic drawing of ornamental plasterwork found on all pier capitals at the second floor level of the lobby.



**Figure C-4.** Southwest pier capital, second floor of lobby. (Photograph by Frank Matero, January 1981.)

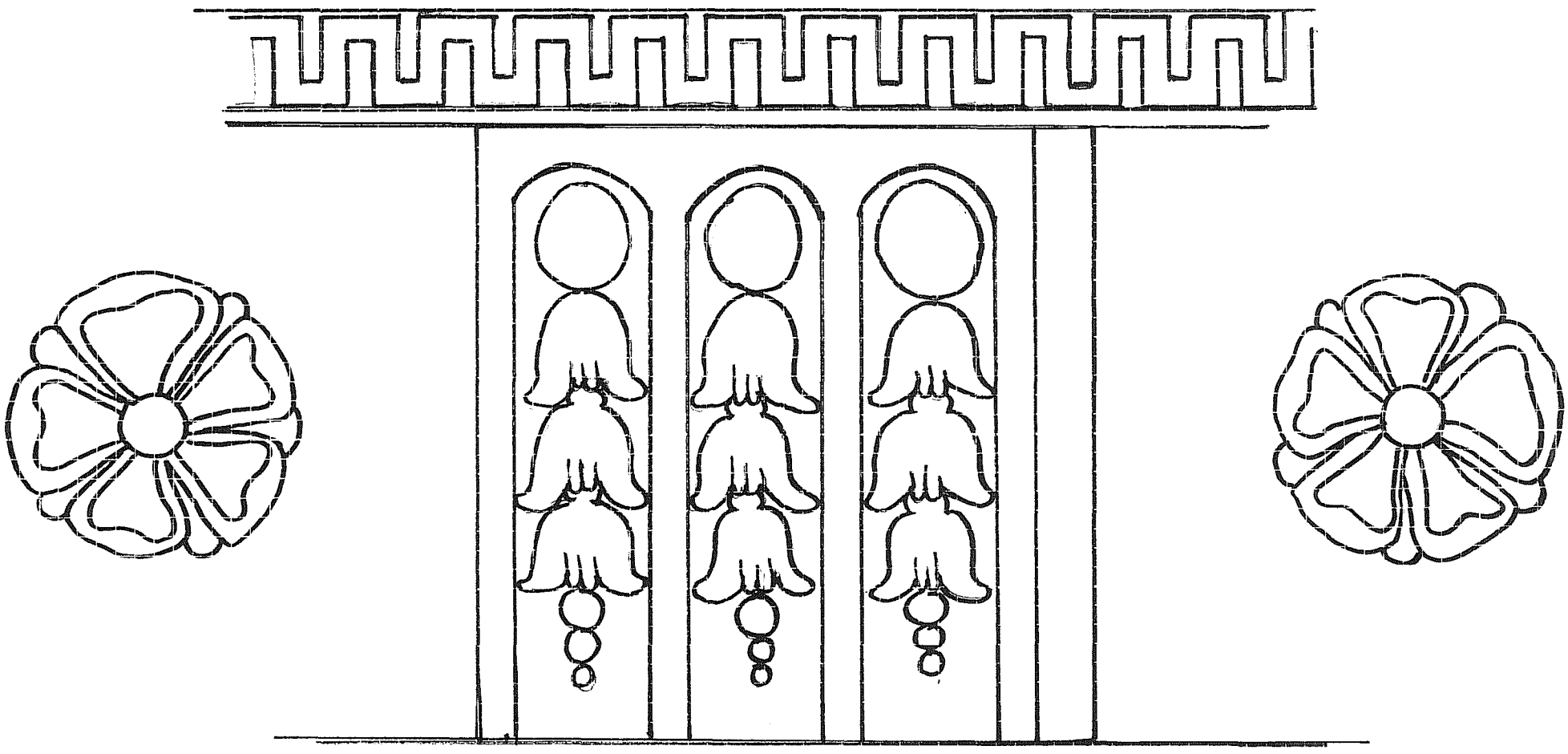


**Figure C-5.** Schematic drawing of ornamental plaster architrave, west and north walls of Room 116 (formerly the northwest corner of Room 117): crenelated molding, triglyph, and rosettes.

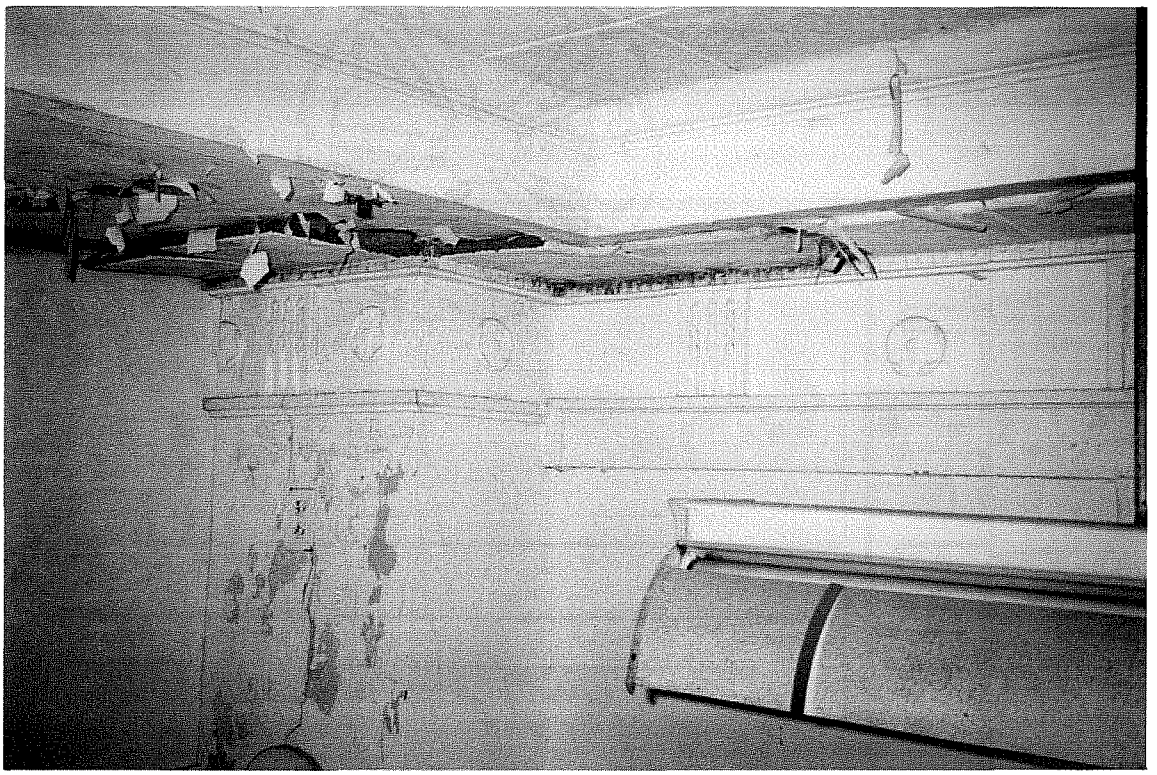


**Figure C-6.** Plaster entablature, west wall of Room 116.

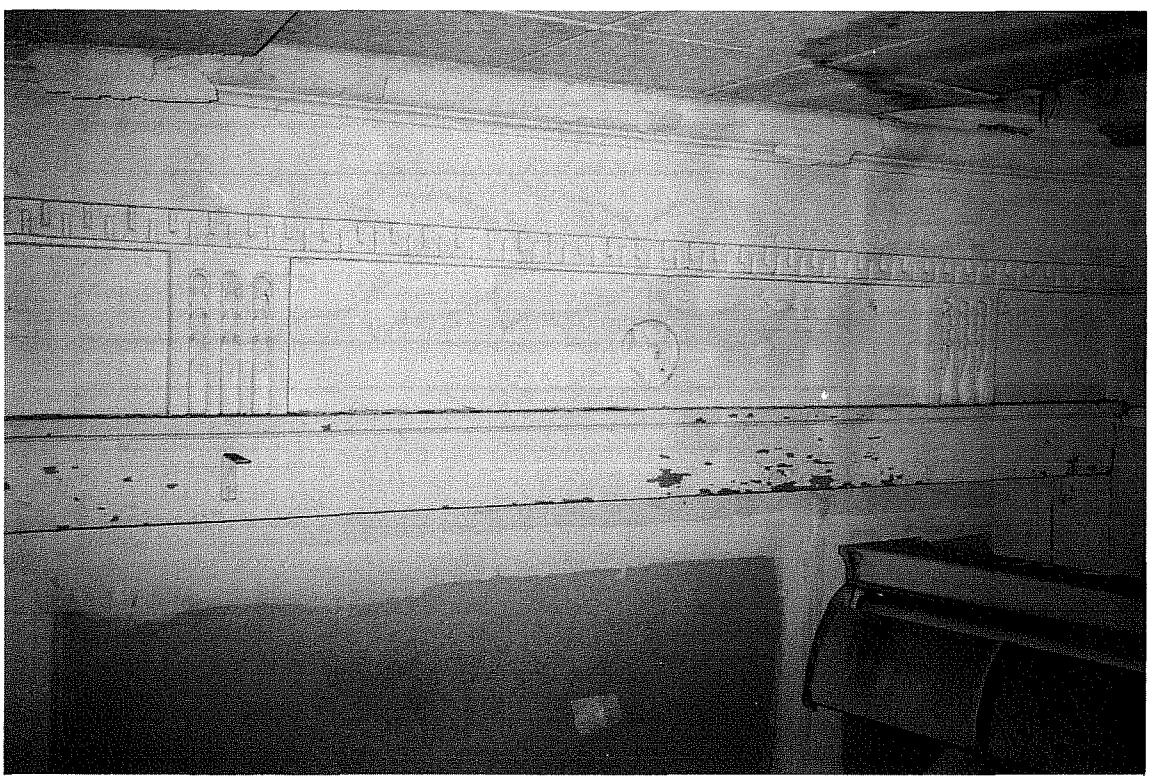


**Figure C-7.** Plaster entablature, north wall of Room 116. Painted wood frame below the architrave originally framed a plate-glass window.

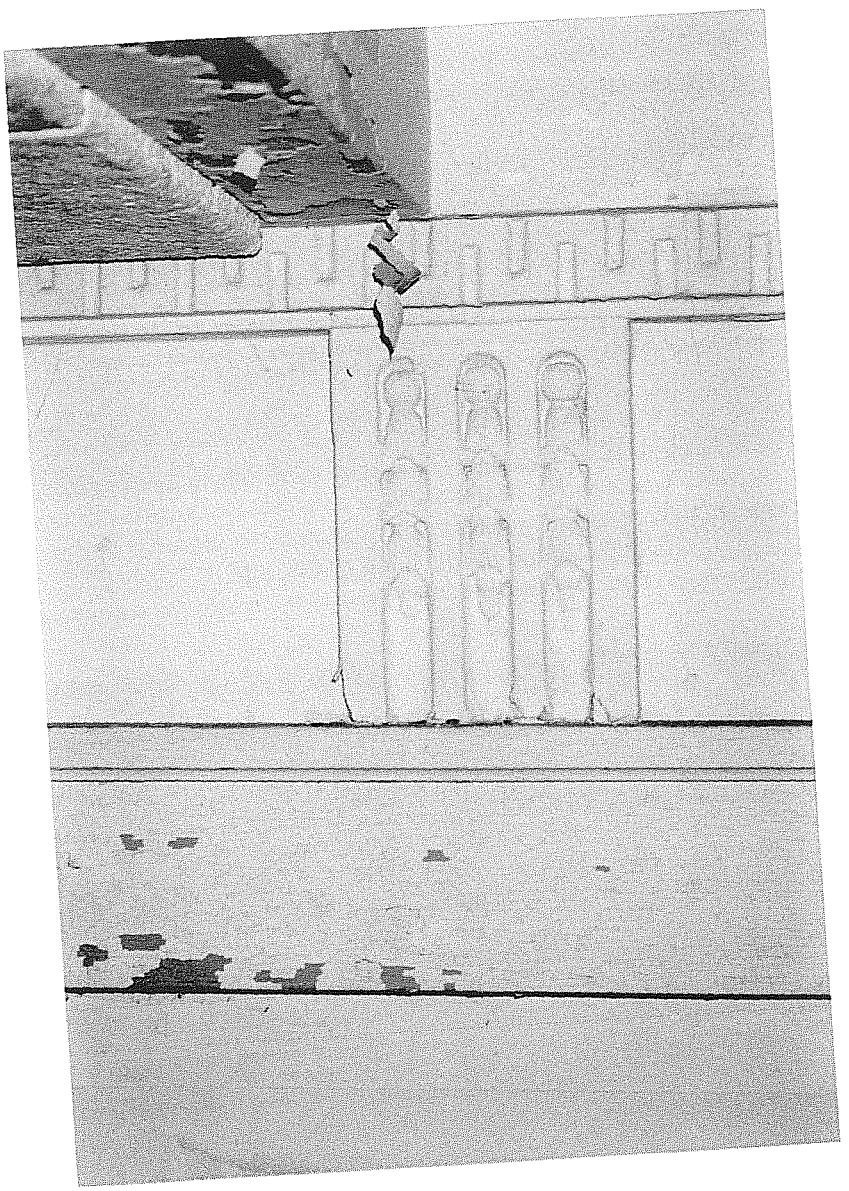


**Figure C-8.** Detail of ornamental plaster architrave, north wall of Room 116. Multiple layers of paint have blurred the edges of the triglyph design.

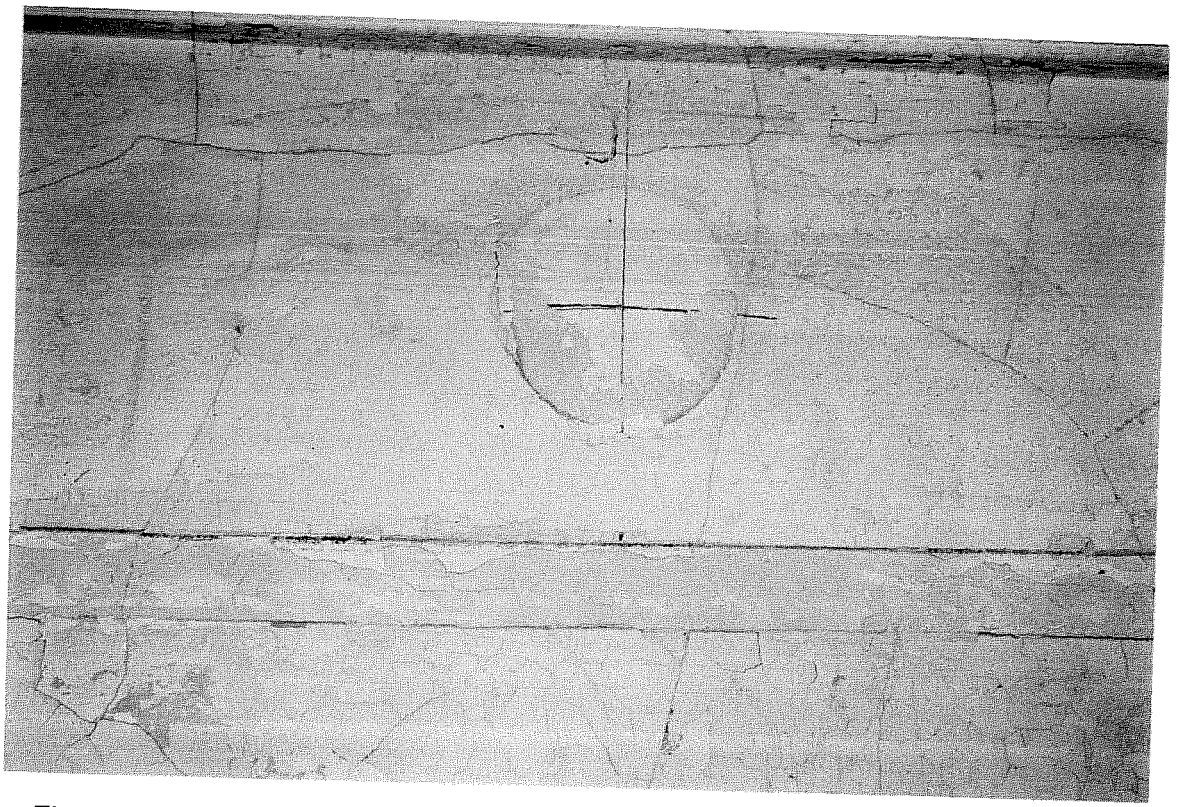


**Figure C-9.** Detail of plaster architrave, east wall of Room 116, showing builder's pencil mark, indicating application of a rosette.

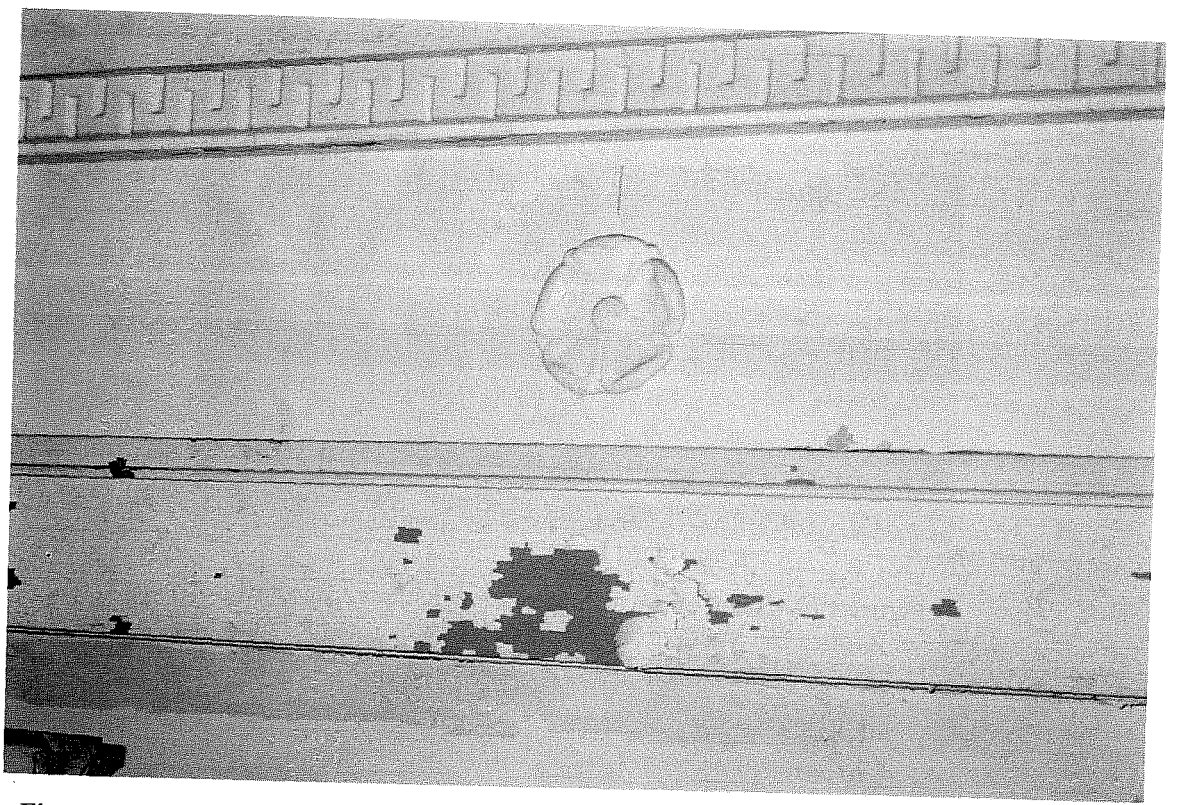


**Figure C-10.** Detail of ornamental plaster architrave, crenelated molding, and rosette, north wall of Room 116.

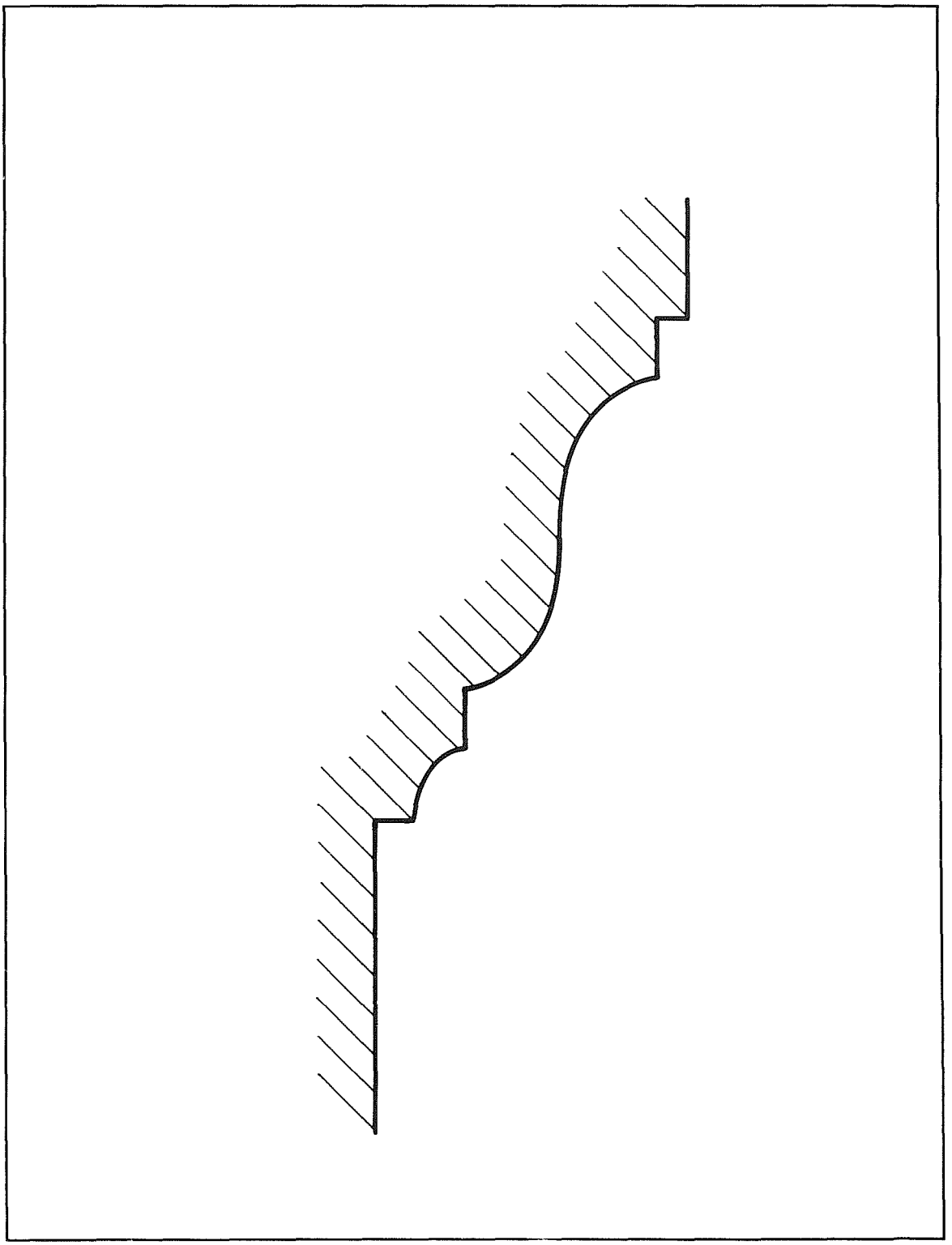


**Figure C-11.** Molding profile, cornice of Lobby (Room 101), south wall. Same profile found on cornice in Room 110. (Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

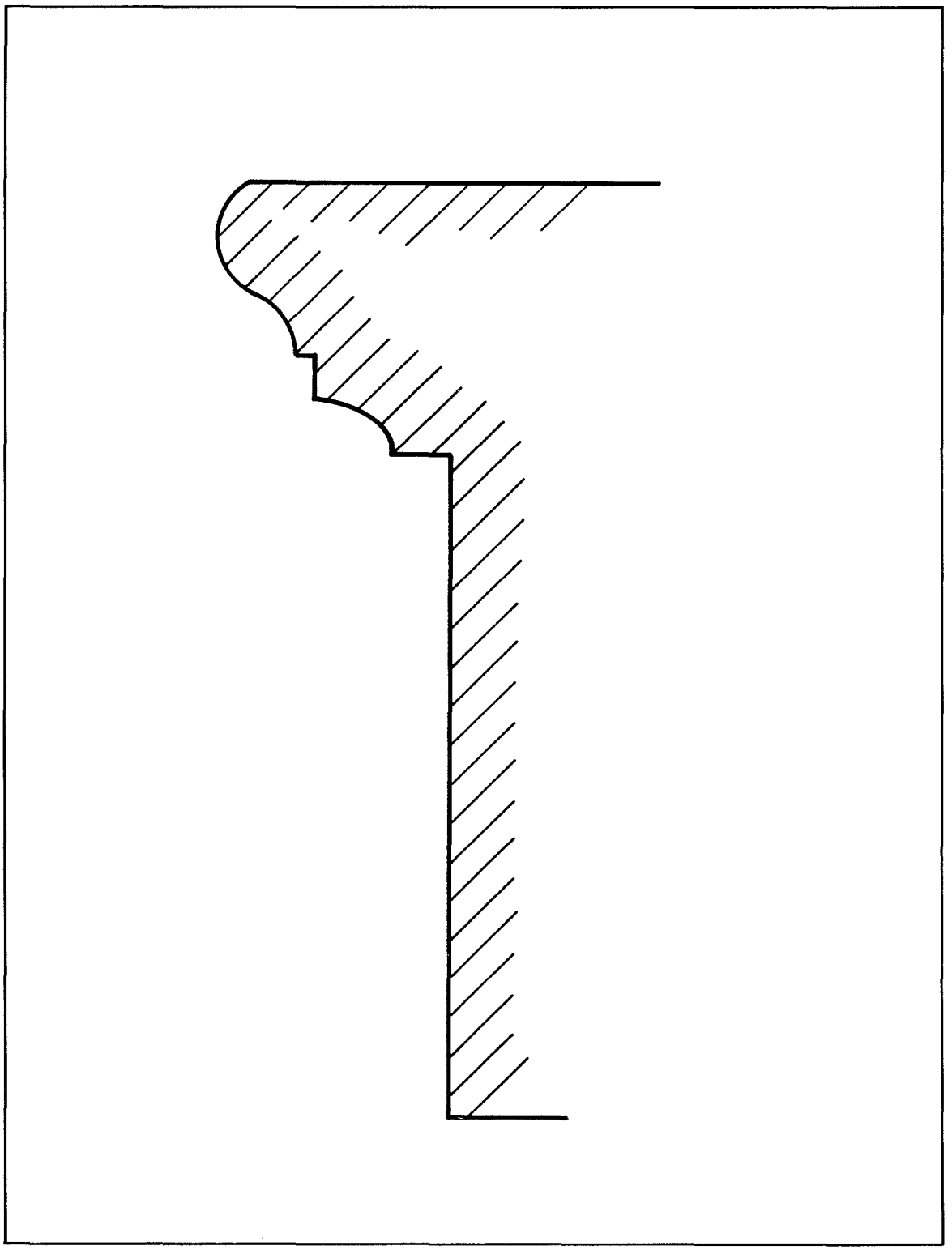


**Figure C-12.** Molding profile, chair rail in Room 110, west wall. (Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

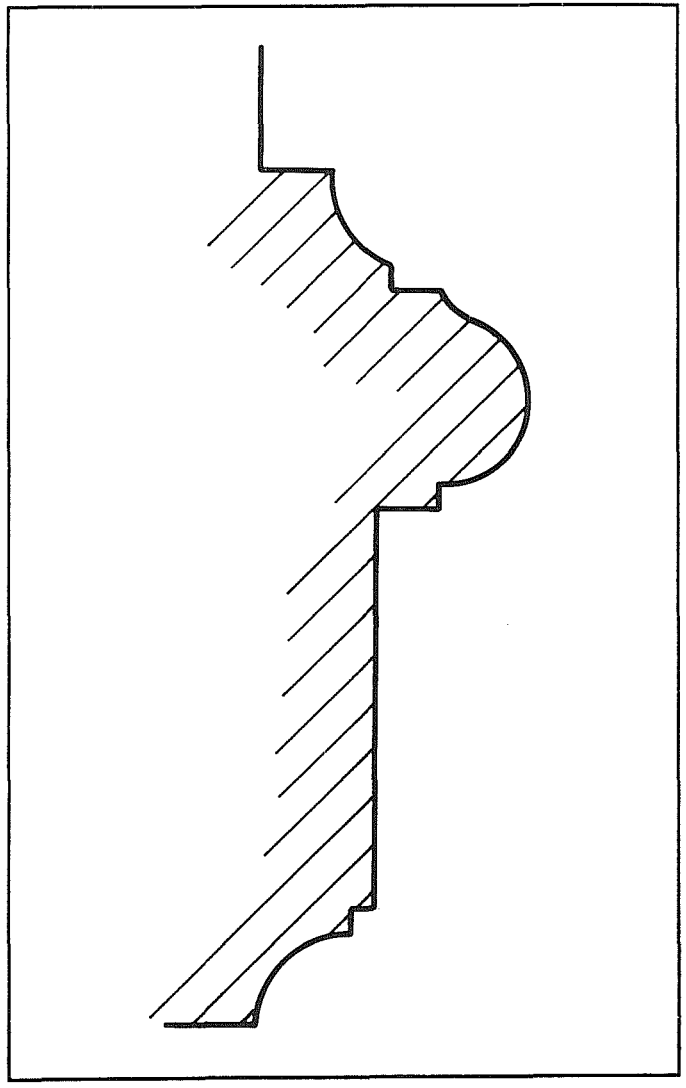


**Figure C-13.** Molding profile, chair rail in Room 117.
(Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

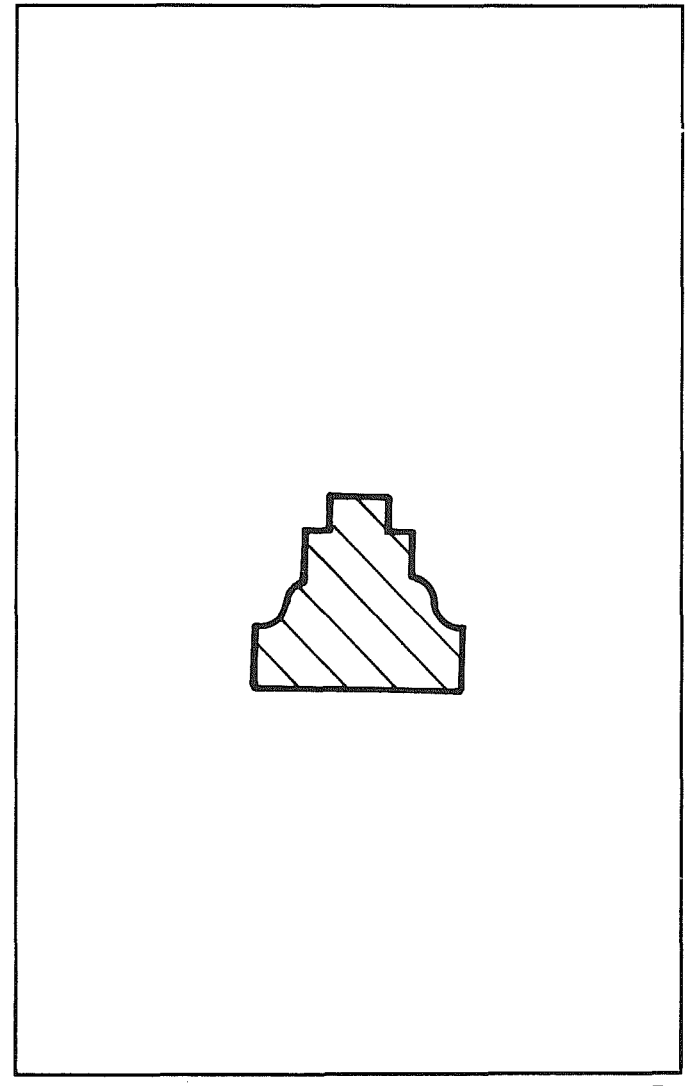


**Figure C-14.** Muntin profile, French doors in Room 117.
(Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

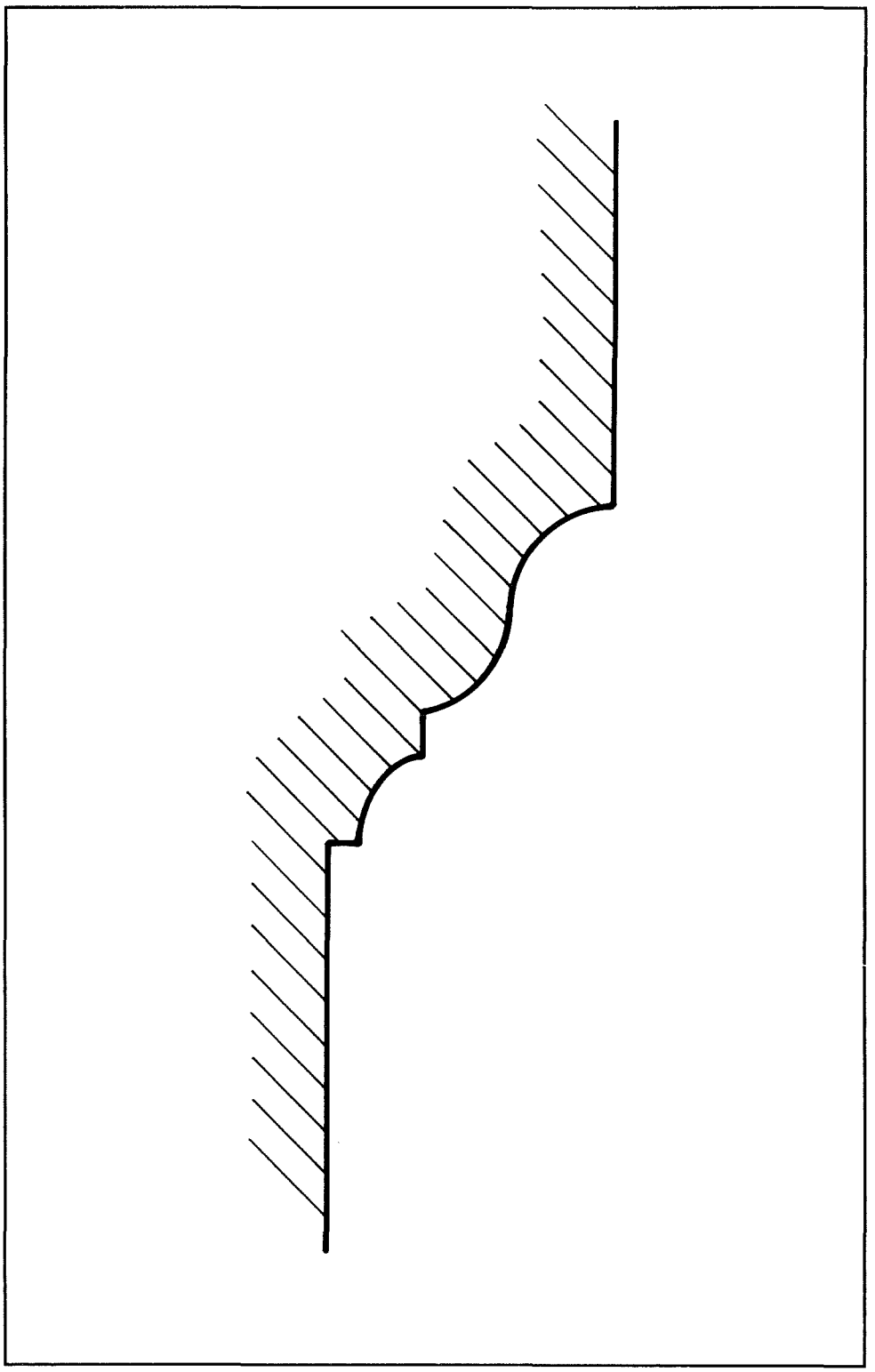


**Figure C-15.** Molding profile, cornice in Room 117, west wall. (Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

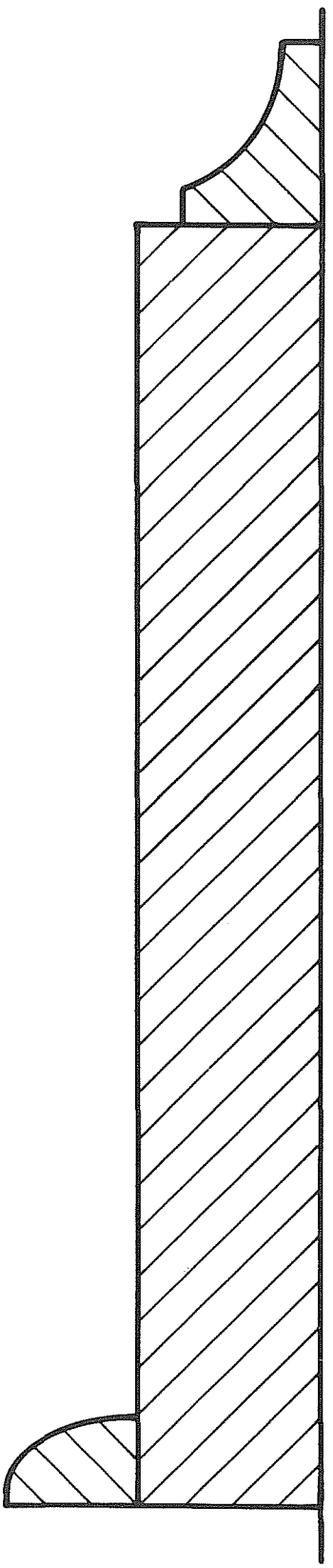


**Figure C-16.** Profile of original baseboard in Room 221.
(Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

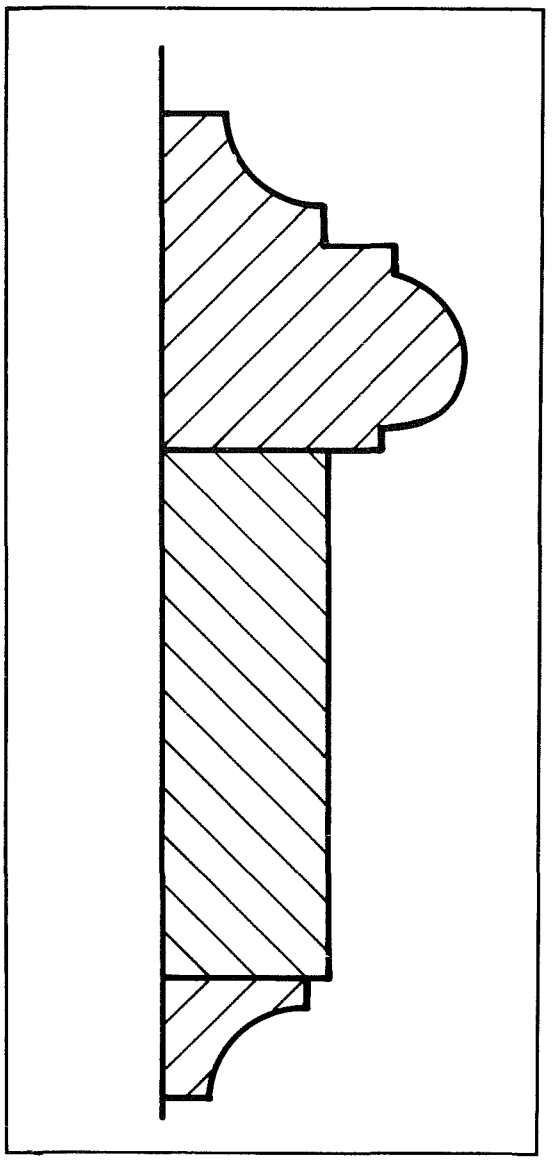


**Figure C-17.** Molding profile, chair rail in Room 221. (Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

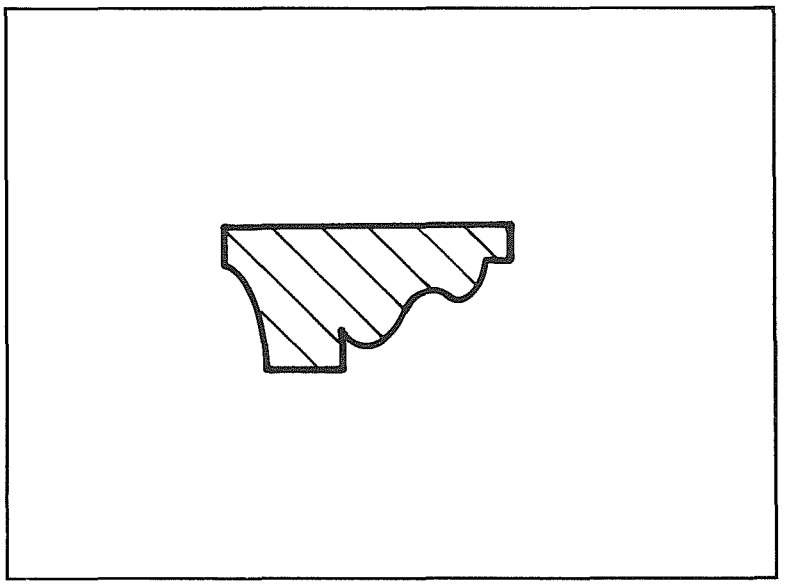


**Figure C-18.** Molding profile, panel molding in Room 221. (Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

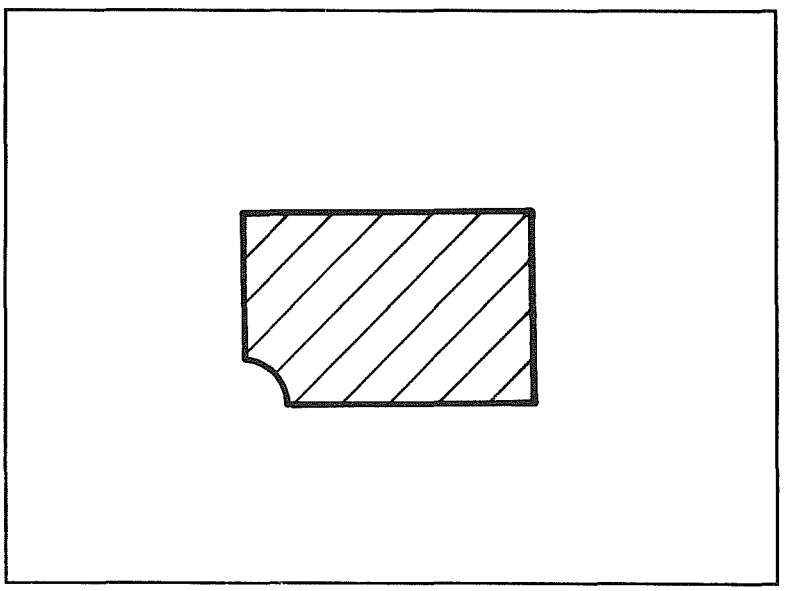


**Figure C-19.** Molding profiles, closet and bathroom doorway frames, second floor. (Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

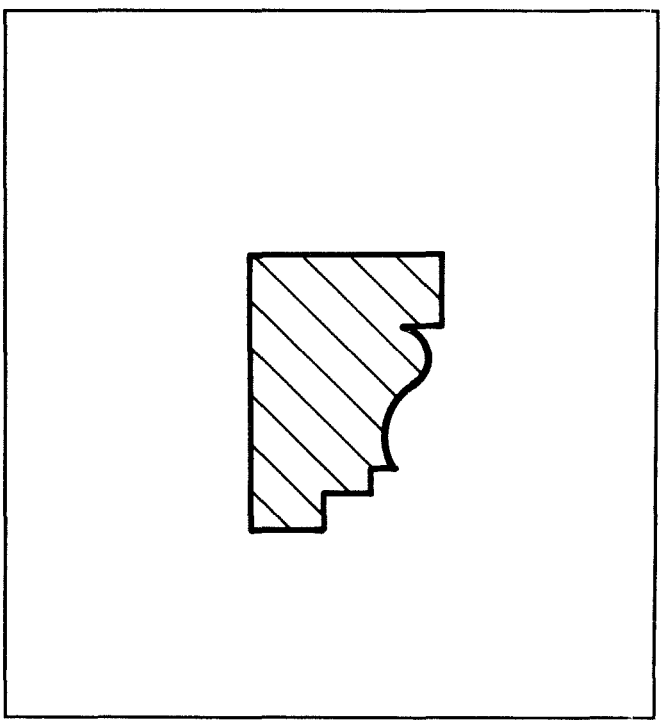


**Figure C-20.** Profile of doorway moldings, all doorways opening into lobby areas. (Full-size drawing by Steve Pisani, BCB-NCRC.)

# APPENDIX D.

## Survey of Existing Conditions, May 1941

From the
National Archives
RG 72 (Records of the Bureau of Aeronautics)
Box 3898, Vol. 5

**Headquarters of the Commandant**
**Third Naval District**
**Federal Office Building, 40 Church Street**
**New York, N.Y.**

13 May 1941

MEMORANDUM

From: Lieut. (jg) Charles J. Simandl, CVC-V(S) USNR
To: Public Works Officer, Third Naval District

Subject: Report of survey of existing condition of facilities at Floyd Bennett Field.

1. Detail inspection of all buildings and grounds:

Administration Building:-Basement. (Room names are as shown on New York City Drawing Contract #2028B[1])

Restaurant Kitchen - Plastered pier shows signs of leaks. Plaster is peeled and cracked and shows signs of efflorescence. Concrete floor is cracked. Needs paint.

Field Employees Rooms and Timekeeper's Room - Ceiling paint is peeling. Plaster is in poor condition on walls and terra cotta partitions. Composition floors on concrete base are cracked and broken. Services and utilities are not finished through walls and ceilings. Need painting.

South Corridor - Composition floor is cracked and broken. Pipe covering is broken and some is missing. Plastered ceilings show leaks and efflorescence. Ceilings have been patched, but not painted over patches. Need painting.

Field Force Room - Plaster and metal lath are missing over an 18 ft. by 18 ft. area on ceiling and also on a plastered pier enclosing pipes. Exterior plastered walls are cracked and show efflorescence. Composition floors are broken and missing. Some door hardware is missing. Concrete slab where exposed from below has been broken away from pipes. Much unnecessary concrete was broken. Concrete shows some honey-comb. Room is very dirty. Needs painting.

Toilet - Wood window frame broken. Toilet stall doors missing. Plaster ledge over wash basins badly damaged by water. Tile base cracked. Tile floor, plaster walls and ceiling in good condition but need cleaning and painting.

Room under west stairs - Bad honey-comb in stair concrete. Wood doors fit poorly.

Boiler Room - (Not shown on plan.) Plaster is broken and falling away from entrance of boiler exhaust to stack. Room is unfinished except for poorly plastered ceiling.

Large Room, center of basement - Good condition. Needs painting.

[1] Have not found contract #2028 but room designations seem to match those on contract #2000 as well.

Entrance to tunnel on basement level - Plaster walls and ceiling are badly effloresced. What appears to be marble wainscot is merely painted masonite.

Pedestrian Tunnel under apron (not used) - Composition flooring has been under water and is badly warped, cracked and broken. Painted concrete walls and ceilings are marked by mold. Metal doors do not fit.

North Corridor - Composition flooring is broken and missing. At entrance from field, plaster and brickwork are effloresced. Plaster walls need patching. Plaster shows signs of bad leaks. All plaster around window is rotten. Wood window sash and frame are decayed.

Customs Room - Good condition. Needs painting.

Storeroom - Concrete floor is cracked. Open holes for pipes in concrete floor. Plaster walls and ceiling need patching.

Transformer and Switch Room - Unfinished. Scratch coat plaster ceiling, brick walls, concrete floor. Good condition.

Express and Freight Room - Unfinished. Concrete ceiling on steel beam, brick exterior walls, terra cotta partitions - Good condition. Concrete floor cracked. Unpainted wood partition. Some efflorescence evident on brick walls. Walls show leaks near floor.

Administration Building - First Floor.

Restaurant - Linoleum floor is worn and broken. Wallpaper is cracked, peeling and discolored. Walls show signs of efflorescence. Painted ceiling is cracked and peeling. Interior window frame and sash are worn and scarred. Ornamental plaster molding is chipped and broken. Linoleum flooring is rotten at edges. Some door hardware is missing. This room is very dirty and has a disagreeable sour smell.

Kitchen - Concrete floor is cracked. Paint is peeling on plastered wall. Plaster needs patching. This room is very dirty.

Men's toilet - Condition fair. Needs painting.

Newsstand - Good condition.

Corridors and lobby - Linoleum floor, marble wainscot, scored plaster walls, plaster ceiling, metal door frames, wood doors. Good condition. Needs painting.

Manager's Office - Cracks in plaster walls near corners. Wood doors and trim worn and scarred. Some hardware missing. Linoleum cracked. Plaster broken. Evidence of leaks and efflorescence in ceiling.

Telephone Room - Good condition.

Telegraph Room (used as barber shop) - Chimney apparently in bad condition. Walls covered with plywood and painted. Shows signs of leaking smoke. Plaster molding broken. Door check missing.

Barber Shop - Plaster shows leaks in ceiling. Holes in plastered wall. Wood trim is badly scarred.

Storeroom - (formerly Men's Toilet) - Tile floor and wainscot. Plastered walls and ceiling. Wood doors and windows. Good condition. Needs paint.

Radio Room and Press Room - Plastered walls and ceiling. Linoleum floor. Good condition. Needs painting.

Stairs - Concrete floors cracked. Metal stairs in good condition.

Lounge - Interior wood trim scarred. Door hardware missing. Leather upholstered lounge furniture appears to be built-in. Papered walls. Linoleum floors. Plastered ceilings, ornamental plaster moldings. Good condition.

Baggage Room - Plaster cracked under windows. Needs painting.

Post Office - Linoleum floor cracked and broken.

Women's toilet and rest room - Tile floor and wainscot. Plaster walls and ceiling. General condition good. Needs painting.

Doctor's office (Dept. of Commerce) - Light fixtures missing. Holes in plaster. Walls cracked. Wood window trim warped.

Administration Building - All rooms and Corridors on Second Floor: Plaster walls and ceilings show many signs of leaks, particularly around chimney. Wood window frames warped and checked, and in some cases decayed. Many door checks and other hardware missing. Bad cracks in plaster at door in corridor.

City Officials Office - Linoleum floor, plaster walls and ceilings. Condition excellent. Newly painted.

Weather Room - Third Floor - Plaster walls broken and cracked due to leaks and settlement. Plaster repair job unfinished. Electrician working on controls.

Control Tower - In process of remodeling. Electricians and carpenters changing controls.

Control Tower Exterior - Sheet metal and glass. conditions good. Needs paint. Roof good.

Administration Building Roof - Flat tile roof. Seems to poorly pitched. Water can stand in pools near parapet. Parapet brickwork needs painting. Exterior woodwork on storm entrances is rotten in some places. All needs paint. Copper flashing has been patched and sealed with pitch. Tile roof joints have been patched and painted with tar and pitch in an apparent attempt to combat leaks. Seems to be unsuccessful.

Grounds Around Administration Building - Concrete roadways and sidewalks in good condition. Occasional broken places in concrete curbs. Bituminous black paving in poor grade alignment. Front ground landscaped with grass, shrubs, hedges. Condition good. Parking areas surfaced with fine crushed stone. Fair grade alignment.

Administration Building, Exterior (from ground level) - Many ornamental precast white cement blocks are cracked and checked. Joints need pointing. Some blocks heaved by frost. Paint cracked and peeling on exterior wood doors. Some doors do not fit. Some hardware is missing. Areaway concrete cracked. Stucco front cracked and discolored. Granite slab stairs need pointing. Exterior steel lintels rusting. Exterior wood trim is badly weathered, cracked, checked, warped and palled away from joints. In some cases decayed.

. . .

Leantos on Hangars 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

Leanto, Hangars 1 and 2 (occupied by Navy)

Hangars 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

Buildings A, B, C, and D

Roofs over Buildings A, B, C, D, and Hangars 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and leantos.

Transformer vaults

Sewage Disposal Plant

North and South Flood-light Towers

Dope Shop

Pump House

Boilers

Concrete Runways

Flying Field

Fencing

Bituminous Block paving

. . . .

2. Summary of survey:

Structural concrete - Some honey-comb, exterior steps, pier bases checked, spalled and discolored.

Cement floors - Some cracks.

Concrete hangar floors - Some settlement, cracking and broken places.

Structural steel - Steel trusses, columns and lintels are rusting.

Exterior brickwork and pre-cast copings - All need painting. Some cracks due to settlement. Precast concrete copings and ornaments checked and discolored.

Interior brickwork - Much efflorescence. Needs painting and some patching.

Interior partitions - Terra cotta. Some cracks due to settlement.

Plastered walls and ceilings - Show much efflorescence and many bad leaks. Many cracks and broken places. All interiors need paint.

Windows - Some steel sash rusting and wood sash and frames rotting. Some windows broken. All need paint.

Doors - Many wood doors broken. Some steel doors badly rusted. Much hardware, including door checks missing.

Linoleum and composition floors - Worn and broken.

Soft wood floors - Worn, scarred and warped.

Interior trim - Worn and scarred.

Roofs - Built-up roofs all leak. All are poorly pitched for drainage.

Rolling hangar doors - Need scraping and paint. Rusting in places. Some wire glass windows broken.

Roof gutters - Copper. Many leaks at joints. Steel pip downspouts and ladders are rusting.

Roof of Administration Building - Flat tile appears to be poorly pitched for drainage. Many leaks show on lower floors.

Plumbing - Some fixtures missing, broken or out of order. System generally seems to be in fair condition.

Electrical - Some fixtures missing. System seems to be in fair condition.

Sewage disposal system - Apparently adequate and efficient.

Heating - Boilers require some repair. System seems to be adequate from reports.

Bituminous block paving - Much settlement apparent.

Concrete runways - Condition good.

Flying field - Occasional sand holes. Poorly graded for flying.

Landscaping - Good.

Fencing - Needs repair and paint.

3. Recommendations of surveying officer:

Roofs - All roofs should be removed and completely rebuilt.

Structural Steel work - All steel work showing signs of rusting should be scraped or wire-brushed, and all steel work should be painted.

Exterior brickwork - All brickwork should be pointed and patched where required. Some places require removing existing work and rebuilding.

Interior brickwork - All brickwork should be pointed and patched where required.

Plastered walls and ceilings - All broken and effloresced plastered walls and ceilings should be removed and replastered. All interiors should be painted.

Windows and doors - All rusted steel sash should be scraped and painted. All decayed wood frames and sash should be replaced. All windows should be puttied where required. All broken windows should be replaced. Broken and badly rusted steel or wood doors should be replaced. All doors should be painted. Missing door hardware should be replaced.

Linoleum and composition floor - All broken and worn floors should be replaced.

Soft wood floors - Should be sanded or replaced where necessary.

Interior trim - Should be replaced where required.

Roller Hangar Doors - Should be wire-brushed or scraped where rusted and repainted. Rolling mechanism should be cleaned, adjusted and repaired.

Roof gutters - Joints should be soldered.

Plumbing - Broken fixtures should be repaired. Missing fixtures furnished and installed where required.

Electrical - Missing fixtures should be furnished and installed where required.

Bituminous block pavement - Should be taken up and relaid in areas where it has settled.

Flying field - Clay should be laid on open sand holes, moistened, and worked into sand subsurface by ploughing or harrowing as a binder to clay, and then black soil should be spread on this mixture, and seeded.

Fencing - All should be repaired and painted.

# APPENDIX E.

# WPA Job Index

# FLOYD BENNETT AIRPORT

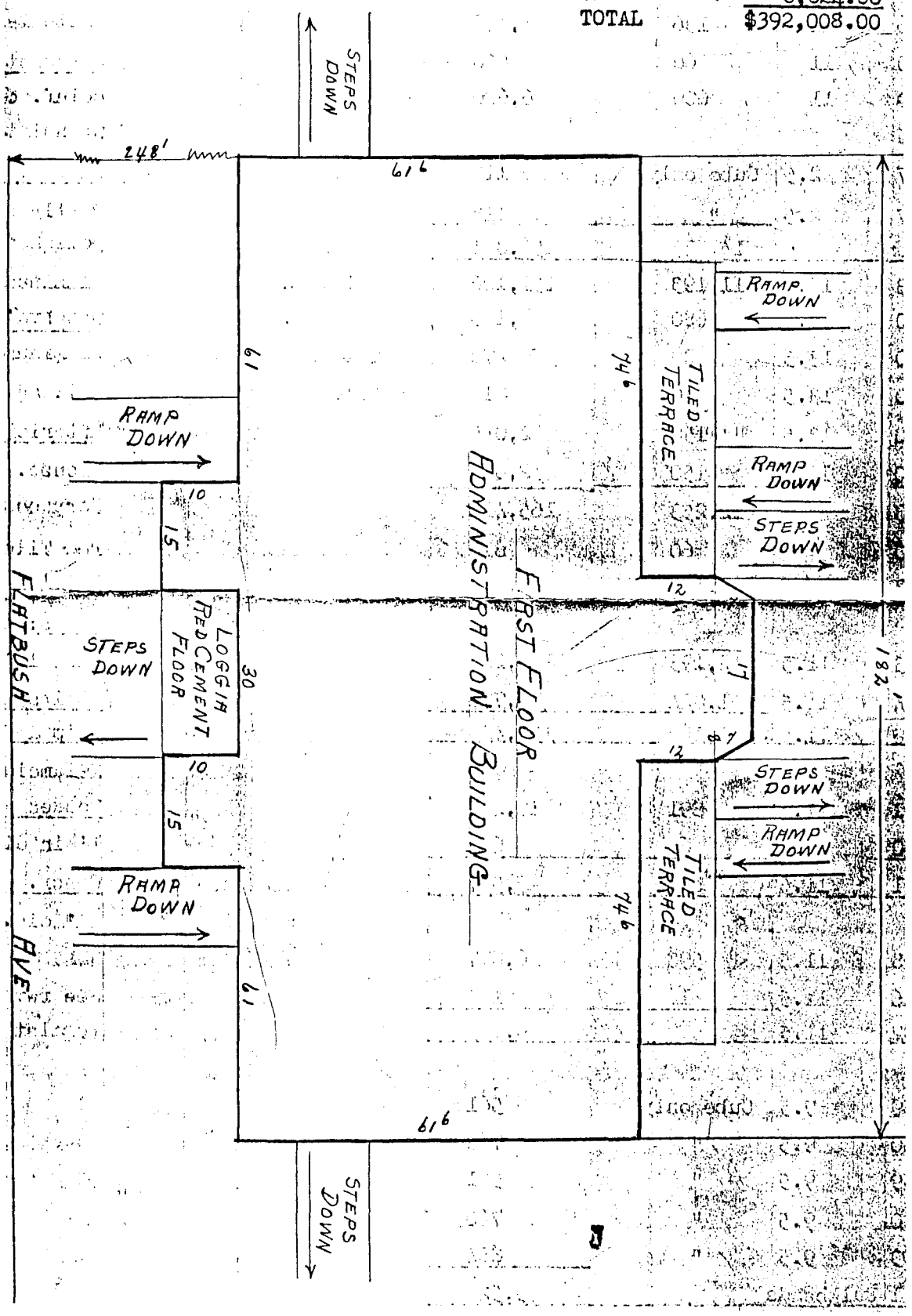
## FLATBUSH AVE.

## BROOKLYN, N. Y. C.

## INDEX.


1. Administration Building.
2. Hangar & Leanto #1.
3. Hangar & Leanto #2.
4. Hangar & Leanto #3.
5. Hangar & Leanto #4.
6. Hangar & Leanto #5.
7. Hangar & Leanto #6.
8. Hangar & Leanto #7.
9. Hangar & Leanto #8.
10. Machine Shop between Hangars 1 & 2.
11. Boiler Room & Machine Shop between Hangars 3 & 4.
12. Machine Shop between Hangars 5 & 6.
13. Machine Shop between Hangars 7 & 8.
14. Passenger Tunnel.
15. Field House.
16. Dope House.
17. Sprinkler Pump House.
18. 2 Flood Light Towers.
19. 2 Transformer Houses.
20. Gasoline Pump Housings & Tanks.
21. Runways.
22. Seaplane Ramp & Pier.
23. Grading & Landscaping.
24. Bulkhead.
25. Recapitulation & Totals.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | N.Y.C. | Contract #2000 | 274,488.00 |
| #12 | W.P.A. | Weather Proofing | 19,005.00 |
| #17 | W.P.A. | Ticket & Doctors off. Restaur. | 40,873.00 |
| #42 | W.P.A. | Public address system | 1,985.00 |
| #60 | W.P.A. | Alt. in Control Room | 2,513.00 |
| #65 | W.P.A. | Alt. on Elevaator Shafts | 33,064.00 |
| #84 | W.P.A. | Decorations | 5,385.00 |
| #93 | W.P.A. | Storm Doors & Sash | 8,046.00 |
| #66 | W.P.A. | Radio | 25.00 |
| # 5 | W.P.A. | Transmitter & Receiver | 6,624.00 |
| | | TOTAL | $392,008.00 |



12,253 | 12,253 | 103,[illegible] | red Tile. Rear 12' X 58'

FLOYD-BENNETT AIRPORT 1.

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.

Brick & Granite Walls - Concrete Footings - Sash & Trim: partly Marble
Floors: 4" reinf. Concr. Slabs, Linoleum covered - Roof: red Tile over 4" concr. Slab.
Framing: Steel - Interior: Plaster, Marble, Fabricoid, Im. Caen stone.

| Identification | Dimension | Area | Ht. | Sq. Ft. | Cubic Ft. | Cost | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cellar | 62.17 X 17.33 | 1,077 | 11 | 1,077 | 11,847 | | Interior: Continued. |
| " | 74.17 X 166.67 | 12,362 | 11 | 12,362 | 135,982 | | Stairs, Railings, Bronz |
| " | 17 X 8 | 136 | 11 | 136 | 1,496 | | White Marble Treads. |
| " | 8 X 7.5 | 60 | 11 | 60 | 660 | | Basement Floor: 4" |
| " | 60 X 10 | 600 | 11 | 600 | 6,600 | | Reinf. Concr. Slab. |
| | TOTAL | 14,235 | | | | See | Granolythic Finish. |
| Elev. Pit | 78 X 6 | 47 | 2.5 | Cube only | 118 | reverse | Partitions & Doors: |
| " | 78 X 6 | 47 | 2.5 | " | 118 | side | Partly obscured Glass & |
| | Total Basement | | | 14,235 | 156,821 | for | polished Plate Glass. |
| 1st. Floor | 61.5 X 182 | 11,193 | 13.5 | 11,193 | 151,196 | detailed | Aluminum Trim. |
| " | 20 X 34 | 680 | 13.5 | 680 | 9,180 | expend. | Observation Tower: |
| " | 20 X 1 | 20 | 13.5 | 20 | 270 | Totals | Aluminum Sash & |
| " | 30 X 2 | 60 | 13.5 | 60 | 810 | below | Railing. |
| " | 10 X 15 | 150 | 13.5 | 150 | 2,025 | | Exterior Railings: |
| " | 10 X 15 | 150 | 13.5 | 150 | 2,025 | | Bronze. |
| | | 12,253 | | 12,253 | 165,416 | | Terraces: Front 8' X 30 |
| Deduct | 7.5 X 8 | 60 | | 60 | 810 | | red Tile. Rear 12' X 58 |
| Total 1st Floor | | 12,193 | | 12,193 | 164,616 | | & 12' X 65' red Tile. |
| | | | | | | | Ramps: 2 at 13' X 20' |
| 2nd. Floor | Total | 12,193 | 11.5 | 12,193 | 140,220 | | 3 at 10' X 20' |
| Deduct | 32 X 32 | 1,024 | 11.5 | 1,024 | 11,776 | | Stairs at ends: Steel. |
| Total 2nd Floor | | 11,169 | 11.5 | 11,169 | 128,443 | | Trim & Doors etc: |
| | | | | | | | Kalamein galv. Steel. |
| Weather Buro | 27 X 33 | 891 | 11.5 | 891 | 10,247 | | Wooden Piles: 94 pieces |
| Deduct | 7.5 X 8 | 60 | 11.5 | 60 | 690 | | 1' in dia., 35' long. |
| Total Weather Rm. | | 831 | 11.5 | 831 | 9,557 | | Concr. Piles: 244 piece |
| | | | | | | | 14" dia., 35' long. |
| Control Rm. | 26 X 23 | 598 | 11.5 | 598 | 6,877 | | |
| Deduct | 4 X 4 | 16 | 11.5 | 16 | 184 | | See reverse side |
| Total Control Rm. | | 582 | 11.5 | 582 | 6,693 | | For 1st Floor plan. |
| | | | | | | | |
| Stair Bulkhd. | 5.5 X 10.83 | 59 | 9.5 | Cube only | 561 | | |
| " | 10 X 8 | 80 | 9.5 | " | 760 | | |
| " | 5.5 X 10.83 | 59 | 9.5 | " | 561 | | |
| " | 10 X 8 | 80 | 9.5 | " | 760 | | |
| Elev. House | 12 X 7.75 | 93 | 9.5 | " | 884 | | |
| | | Total Bulkheads | | | 3,526 | | |
| | Totals entire Building | | | 39,010 | 469,657 | $392,008 | |
| | Note: Above total area includes Basement. | | | | | | |