

MCCABE COLLEGE
(City Hall)
End of Seventh Avenue, East of Broadway Avenue
Skagway
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area
Alaska

HABS AK-202
AK-202

HABS
AK-202

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ALASKA SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
240 West 5th Avenue, Room 114
Anchorage, AK 99501

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McCABE COLLEGE (City Hall)

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(page 1)

- Location: East end of Seventh Avenue, 0.1 mi. east of Broadway Avenue, Skagway, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area, Alaska. The building faces northwest onto Seventh Avenue.
- Present Owner: City of Skagway
- Present Occupant and Use: First floor, city offices and jail; second floor temporarily vacant, some storage
- Significance: One of the few stone buildings in Alaska, the McCabe College building is an expression of Skagway's new sense of permanence, maturity, and civic pride in the years immediately following the Klondike Gold Rush. Its history illustrates the important role of missionaries who established the institutions of early town life in the federal territory of Alaska. Founded by Methodist Episcopal Reverend James J. Walter in 1899, McCabe College was the first school in Alaska to offer a college-preparatory high-school curriculum. The arrival of municipally-supported public education in Alaska quickly caused the private McCabe College to fold. The building has been in public ownership since 1901, serving as an U.S. district courthouse and jail, city hall, and museum.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1899 - 1900. Newspapers and other contemporary sources record that a cornerstone-laying ceremony was held on August 23, 1899; however, this ceremonial cornerstone is not in evidence on the property. Originally set for December 1, 1899, the completion date of the building was postponed several times during construction due to shortages of funds. The building was finished in August 1900.
2. Architect: Not known. Although original plans for the McCabe College building have not been found, its architecture is clearly not derived from Skagway's wood-frame vernacular building tradition, but rather suggests

the work – or at least the influence – of a professional architect and/or building craftsman.

It is known that at least two architects worked in Skagway at the time McCabe College was built. E.J. Liddicoat was a local hardware merchant who also advertised his services as an architect and builder. He arrived in Skagway from Astoria, Oregon, in September 1897 and designed many residences and commercial buildings in Skagway.¹ Liddicoat became a member of the McCabe College building committee in May 1900. No direct evidence links him to the building's original design, although he may have designed later alterations for which he was the contractor (see below). No connection at all has been established between McCabe College and the name of the second architect, S.E. Maxon.²

Another possibility is that Walter himself guided the design of the college, perhaps in collaboration with a builder, using his own ideas and knowledge of buildings in his home state of Oregon. The foursquare building with a classroom in each corner and a central corridor and staircase pavilion would have been known to Walter as a standard schoolhouse plan in the late nineteenth century. The second-floor chapel was his own idea, a concession to his congregation for delaying construction of a church. The building's aesthetics may be rooted in Walter's experience of masonry buildings in Portland, where he lived before his missionary assignment to Alaska. In particular, Walter was probably familiar with the Portland Hotel (1882, 1888-90) by McKim, Mead, and White, the eminent New York firm whose designs, first imported to Oregon by Henry Villard in the early 1880s, "marked a dramatic change in the architecture of the Pacific Northwest." The Queen Anne Style Portland Hotel's combination of quarry-faced ashlar, a novel technique in Portland in the 1880s, on the lower stories with other materials above may have influenced Walter's choices for the McCabe College building.³

3. Original and subsequent owners: Skagway Methodist Episcopal Church (1899 - 1901); U.S. District Court (1901 - 1956); city of Skagway (1956 - present).
4. Builders, contractors: Reverend J.J. Walter, founder of McCabe College, supervised construction of the building himself. Except for William Green, who installed the building's heating system in May 1900, the names of contractors, builders and artisans who worked on the structure

¹ Howard Clifford, *The Skagway Story* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1975), 63.

² Maxon was the architect of the public schoolhouse built in Skagway in 1900 as well as earlier buildings in 1898 and 1899.

³ Architect and author, Leland Roth, personal communication with author, 5 August 1997. The Portland Hotel was demolished in 1951, but there is a picture of it in Thomas Vaughan, ed., *Space, Style, and Structure: Building in Northwest America* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974) Vol. II, 375.

are not known. Green was a trustee of McCabe College and a city councilor. Advertisements for his business in *The Daily Alaskan* read, "W.L. Green, exclusive hardware and stove company. Best plumbing shop in Alaska."⁴

E.J. Liddicoat became a member of the McCabe College building committee in May 1900, suggesting he may have played a role in the final stages of the building's construction. Liddicoat also served as contractor for the building's 1901-1902 alterations.

One other local hardware merchant, Don Carlos Brownell, served on the college's board of trustees. Through this affiliation, Brownell may have been a supplier, contractor, and/or builder of the McCabe College building.⁵

5. Original plans and construction: The 64'6" x 43' building has two stories, an unfinished basement and attic, and a 15' x 19' tower, centered on the front facade, to accommodate the interior staircase. The first floor was planned with a central front-to-back corridor, entered through a door in the west face of the tower, and four 28' x 18' corner classrooms. The upper floor contained a 46' x 40' chapel and two recitation rooms. These had flexible partitions so that the entire second floor could be opened into a single auditorium space. The original staircase rose in two parallel narrow flights, one on the north and one on the south wall of the entrance vestibule, to a single landing halfway to the second floor. Here, after a 180-degree turn, a single, wider, central flight of stairs continued to the second-floor landing before the doorway to the chapel.⁶

In May 1899, the trustees of McCabe College made the decision to build in local granite. As constructed, the walls are granite ashlar from the foundation to a height of 20'; above this to eave level, they are framed in wood. Local tradition maintains that the granite for McCabe College was brought in from Clifton, eight and a half miles distant, by rail.⁷ No quarries are known to have existed in the vicinity of Skagway at the turn of the century. Local speculation that the builders may have used stone blasted from the mountainsides during the construction of the White Pass and Yukon Route railroad is supported by dynamite imprints on the front

⁴ *The Daily Alaskan* New Year's Edition, Jan. 1901.

⁵ Author's note: This interpretation presumes that Walter selected McCabe College's board of trustees at least in part for their ability to support, materially as well as intellectually, the founding, operation, and construction of the school. Even if this was not the case, it is reasonable to believe that trustees would have been more likely than unaffiliated citizens to donate or discount their goods and services to the college.

⁶ The original staircase is shown in sketch plans of the first and second floor drawn on United States Marshal's Office letterhead, dated Jan. 9, 1909 and signed "Fred Fonzo."

⁷ Many believe that Clifton was the staging area for the granite used to build McCabe College. Extensive blasting nearby at Rocky Point suggests that this may have been one source of granite. Judy Munns, personal communication with author, August 14, 1997.

door lintel and other stones.⁸ The building's Gothic-style second-floor windows were shipped into Skagway, probably from Seattle,⁹ and Reverend Walter purchased a Boynton furnace for the building for \$305 on a trip east to raise money and support for Methodist Episcopal mission activities in Alaska.¹⁰

The choice to build in stone appears to have been of as much symbolic as practical significance. Indeed, *The Daily Alaskan* reported, "This will make the building considerably more expensive, but it is believed the citizens will be willing to add a little to their subscriptions for the sake of building in this way. It certainly will be suggestive of greater permanence, not only for the college but for the city as well."¹¹ Another article in the same issue of the paper announced that "Rev. Mr. Walter is proving his faith in the future and permanency of Skagway by his proposition to build the McCabe college of stone instead of wood, and so insuring it against fire and rearing a structure that will be a credit as well as an ornament to the town."¹²

6. Alteration and additions: There have been no enclosed additions to the McCabe College building. Its exterior retains much of its historic integrity, closely resembling the earliest photographs taken at the turn of the century. The most extensive alterations to the building have taken place in the interior, where changes in use have resulted in revision and subdivision of the original floor plan as well as alteration and replacement of original building fabric.

In 1901-1902, the conversion of the building from a school to a courthouse involved the installation of new partition walls to subdivide the interior spaces and application of imitation oak woodgrain finish on the interior woodwork. Although the building was purchased by the U.S. government in 1901 partially to serve as a jail, it is not known when or where a jail cell was first constructed inside. The jail cell which existed for some time in the northeast corner of the building does not appear on a 1909 sketch plan of the building, and may have been constructed as late as 1929, a date

⁸ Granite is generally cut, not blasted, from its beds when quarried.

⁹ In *The Skagway Story*, Howard Clifford states that the building's Gothic windows were "shipped thousands of miles to Skagway" (104) but does not say from where. Steve Peterson, National Park Service Senior Historical Architect and Project Director of this HABS project, believes that the windows were most likely manufactured in Seattle, based on the frequency with which building materials and elements from this city were used in late-nineteenth-century Alaska.

¹⁰ Rev. J.J. Walter in *The Daily Alaskan*, Jan. 31, 1900.

¹¹ *The Daily Alaskan*, May 16, 1899.

¹² Ibid. In the initial flurry of excitement over the decision to build in granite, it was even anticipated that a profitable quarry could be sustained on the demand for more stone buildings, foundations, and chimneys in Skagway. No commercial quarry was ever established, however, and McCabe College remained remarkable for being the only granite building in Skagway or for miles around. Building with granite probably did not catch on in Skagway because it was prohibitively expensive for its citizens' declining means in the early twentieth century.

suggested by the numeral “29” inscribed on the concrete into which the bars on the exterior of the north-facing window are set. The cell was later moved to the center of the north side of the first floor, and a supply closet installed in the former jail space. The bars were left on the former jail windows on the northeast corner of the first floor, and the new jail window was simply blocked with plywood. A second brick chimney (now stuccoed over) was added to the southwest area of the roof by 1905, perhaps indicating a need to provide extra heat to the newly subdivided spaces on the second floor; it does not extend to the building’s foundations. The original interior staircase was removed and replaced with the current staircase after 1909.

In 1954, new porches were added in both the front and the rear of the building; resilient tile flooring was laid over the wood floors in the first-floor hallway; and the ceiling of the second-floor courtroom was dropped to a height of 12’. Original plaster on the courthouse walls and ceiling was either replaced or covered with sheet rock at this time. Mallory and Randall of Juneau was the contractor for these alterations, which cost \$9968. Handicapped access ramps were added to the rear of the building in 1994.

B. Historical Context:

1. Skagway at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

The McCabe College building is located at the east end of Seventh Avenue in the northeastern section of downtown Skagway, Alaska. Skagway began with a single homestead in 1887 and boomed into a “tent city,” then a wood-frame town, during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-98. During the stampede, Skagway served as a transportation stop and supply center at the head of the White Pass trail, one of the major routes to the Klondike gold fields. Skagway’s transportation connections were crucial to its success after the gold rush had subsided.¹³ In 1900, with the completion of the White Pass and Yukon Route railroad, which originated at Skagway and provided the easiest access to the Klondike, Skagway’s survival was assured.

By the time the railroad arrived, however, the gold rush was already over. The population of Skagway had reached its peak of an estimated 10,000 in 1898,¹⁴ when it was the largest city in Alaska. By the time of the federal census in 1900, the number of citizens had dropped by two-thirds.¹⁵ But even with a declining population, in the years following the gold rush, Skagway remained the political center of Alaska and an important point of entry with a deepwater, ice-free port and both U.S. and Canadian

¹³ Robert L.S. Spude, *Skagway, District of Alaska 1884-1912: Building the Gateway to the Klondike* (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Cooperative Park Studies Unit, 1983), 41.

¹⁴ This number varies depending on the source.

¹⁵ The census counted 3117 residents in 1900 and 872 in 1910. Spude 36, 43.

customs offices. The railroad provided a critical land connection to Canada as well as an employment base for the town's permanent residents.

Although Skagway's population and prosperity declined, its citizens remained committed to and optimistic about the future of their city during the first decade after the gold rush. These years were characterized by a smaller but less transient population than that of the boom years, by a transition from a psychology of short-term get-rich-quick schemes to one with considerations of long-term stability, and by town pride and an impulse toward civic improvement.¹⁶ All this manifested itself in the construction of sturdier, finer buildings, such as McCabe College. Scheduled steamer service to the Puget Sound cities and the completion of the White Pass and Yukon Railroad facilitated the use of larger and heavier tools, materials, and elements in construction. Greater sophistication in building was achieved with imported materials and machinery and the arrival of skilled architects and craftsmen.¹⁷

2. McCabe College

McCabe College was founded by Reverend James J. Walter, who arrived in Skagway on March 23, 1899, from Portland, Oregon to assume the responsibilities of Superintendent of Methodist Episcopal Missions in Alaska.¹⁸ When he arrived in Skagway, Walter was impressed by a cosmopolitan town with "a population of over five thousand, not a mining camp in any sense of the term, but a city of families and a high type of social life, with nearly four hundred children and young people of school age."¹⁹ He found Skagway's local Methodists raising money to build a church, but believing the inadequacy of education to be the community's greatest need, Walter determined to build a school first of all.

At the time of Walter's arrival, the town had one frame structure, known as the Union Church, to serve as a general public hall of assembly. The Union Church hall accommodated the worship services of all denominations and also served as a schoolhouse for the town's first- through eighth-graders. Parents and businessmen took up a voluntary subscription to pay a single schoolteacher's salary; there was no money for a separate school building or for enough staff to handle graded classes. The inadequacy

¹⁶ Spude, 41.

¹⁷ Spude 42, 60.

¹⁸ The Methodist Episcopal designation distinguishes this denomination from the Methodist Church, South. The congregations split primarily over the issue of slavery in the nineteenth century and reunited as the United Methodist Church in 1939. (Charlotte Hook, personal communication with author, 21 July 1997) Walter was an ordained Methodist Episcopal pastor of the Oregon conference and ministered at the Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church in Portland before his appointment by Bishop C.C. McCabe to southeast Alaska in 1899. He stayed for two years. In 1901 Walter was classified as "supernumary," meaning that there were more pastors than appointments, and did not get assigned anywhere. He left Alaska in 1901, returned to Portland, and was assigned to the City Mission there by 1904. In 1905, he "located," or withdrew from the conference and its appointment system to minister as an independent missionary. (Stephen Pentek, personal communication with author, 22 July 1997) With this, he disappeared from conference records and his papers, if they exist, have not been located.

¹⁹ Rev. J.J. Walter, *Methodist Episcopal Missionary Report*, 1899, 261-263.

of the Skagway school is revealed in the *Skaguay News* of July 1, 1898, which reports: “not being a public school, in the true meaning of the word, the parents and guardians did not seem to take the same interest they otherwise would, allowing the children to contract tardy habits, and permitting them to remain away from school on the least excuse.”²⁰ The absence of adequate education was keenly felt by the community. Later in July of 1898, in a speech at a school board meeting which was reported in the local paper, a Dr. Campbell entreated that “our school [is] the most important institution in the city A good school . . . will be a source of attraction for bringing respectable families into our midst.”²¹

In 1899, in addition to the so-called “public” or subscription school, Skagway also had “two private or select schools and a kindergarten” and the Skagway Business College, established in the fall of 1898 by Thomas A. Shorthill (who would become a trustee of McCabe College the next year) and offering courses in stenography and typewriting.²² However, none of these institutions offered an academic high school curriculum, and this was the gap that Walter intended his school to fill.

The lot he purchased for the campus was part of Skagway’s original homestead, settled by Captain William Moore in 1887. In 1897, gold stampeder overran Moore’s claim and erected a tent city. By August the squatters had appointed City Engineer Frank Reid and William C. Fonda to survey the town and impose a speculative grid. Moore contested the taking of his land in court, and until the issue could be resolved, an oddly-shaped 5-acre tract was excepted from the grid and set aside for Moore’s home and sawmill. J. Bernard (“Ben”) Moore, William’s son, divided this property into smaller parcels for private sale.

Walter began a subscription to pay for the school itself. For every \$2 raised in Skagway, Walter promised to raise \$1 from outside. The Church Extension Society contributed a \$1500 grant to get the enterprise started. Walter named his institution McCabe College after Bishop McCabe of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who had appointed Walter to his position in southeast Alaska and “who has been a stanch friend to this mission from its beginning.”²³ An important component of Walter’s idea was that the school building would include a chapel for use by the Methodist congregation until a separate church edifice could be built.

The cornerstone for the McCabe College building was laid on August 23, 1899, by Dr. H.W. Kellogg, pastor of the Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church in Portland, Oregon, in a ceremony to which all the city’s important persons and civic societies were invited. While construction was underway, the first term of McCabe College opened on September 19, 1899, in rented temporary quarters at Main Street and Eighth Avenue. The school served children from kindergarten through high-school age with a curriculum designed to prepare them for entrance to the state universities. Walter hired an Oxford-

²⁰ *Skaguay News*, July 1, 1898.

²¹ *The Daily Alaskan*, July 23, 1898.

²² *Skagway Directory and Guide* (Skagway, AK: J. Chester Clinton, 1899), 80.

²³ Rev. J.J. Walter, *Methodist Episcopal Missionary Report*, 1900, 343.

educated instructor to teach subjects from penmanship to classical languages. The tenuous nature of Skagway's population base is evident in the fact that "in cases where patrons may be uncertain about remaining in Skagway, special arrangements may be made to pay by the week."²⁴ By the end of the school's first term in late 1899, enrollment stood at about 50 students.

Despite Walter's attempts to both provide and promote a top-notch education at McCabe College, completion of the building – originally scheduled to be ready for occupancy by December 1 – was repeatedly delayed by lack of funds. By the end of January 1900, Walter noted that he had collected only a little over one-fourth of the amount Skagway citizens had pledged to raise toward construction costs. Not only were many of the school's subscribers delinquent in paying their promised amounts, but additional contributions were needed to meet the full expense of putting up an ambitious building. Skagway's newspapers in late 1899 and early 1900 frequently ran pleas for money from Walter, college president Dr. Lamont Gordon, and parents interested in the progress of McCabe College. In these notices, McCabe's champions pointed to the need for local "higher" (post-grammar school) education. This passage, printed in *The Daily Alaskan* when delays in construction had postponed the start of the school's second term, was typical:

Funds are urgently needed for the completion of the building, and surely all having children to be educated must feel interested. With such a school at home and such able teachers, there is no longer need to send sons and daughters elsewhere to college at a much greater expense and away from parental oversight in case of illness. Rally to our home institution and help, both by patronage and purse, so the work may go on.²⁵

But the impulse to build "the most imposing [building] in Skagway if not in Alaska"²⁶ came just a year too late. By 1899 the town's economic boom was over, and McCabe's trustees struggled to raise enough money to complete their building in a community on the downturn. One supportive parent, even while urging her fellow citizens to commit funds to the college's completion, expressed concern that tuition was too high in the lower grades. "While anxious to have our children under such good instructors as Dr. Gordon and Mrs. McCoomb," she wrote, "we cannot afford such high terms, when the public [sic] schools are so much cheaper."²⁷

Construction progressed slowly. The building's walls were complete by the end of December 1899, the roof in January 1900. Work on the interior of the building proceeded throughout the spring of 1900, so that on May 9 *The Daily Alaskan* noted, "The upper floor, the lower hall and one school room now have floors laid and by tonight the stairs will be completed to the upper story."²⁸ On May 25 the paper reported that "at

²⁴ Rev. J.J. Walter in the *Daily Alaskan*, Dec. 17, 1899.

²⁵ Dr. Lamont Gordon in *The Daily Alaskan*, Dec. 29, 1899.

²⁶ *The Daily Alaskan*, Dec. 29, 1899.

²⁷ Anonymous writer to *The Daily Alaskan*, Jan. 10, 1900.

²⁸ *The Daily Alaskan*, May 9, 1900.

the meeting of the trustees of the McCabe College last evening it was decided to open school June 18, but not to open the entire college building until a later date.”²⁹ Methodist Episcopal services began to be held in the chapel on the second floor on June 17, 1900, while work on the building continued. *The Daily Alaskan* of August 3, 1900, announced “great improvements around the college building,” including the removal of scaffolding, and that “carpenters have a few hours more work to do yet in placing the large Gothic windows in the chapel. When this is done, Skagway will have a college it may be proud of.”³⁰

In the month of August the trustees of McCabe College met to plan an expansion of the school faculty and curriculum. By this time, however, the forces that were to close McCabe had already been set in motion. In June of 1900, the U.S. Congress passed the Carter Act, allowing communities in Alaska to incorporate and raise money through taxes and fees for the support of municipal services such as education. On June 28, Skagway became the first city in Alaska to incorporate. With fifty percent of the monies it raised through taxes and license fees earmarked for public schools, the city elected a school board within a week and began at once to organize a system of graded public education. Parents formerly willing to pay tuition to send their children to private school now found themselves supporting public education with their taxes. “The prospect of a good high school,” McCabe’s trustees reported, “has obviated the immediate necessity for McCabe College.”³¹

McCabe’s enrollment dwindled after the passage of the Carter Act, but the decision to close the school was probably hastened by offers to buy the building which came later that summer. By August 21, the City of Skagway had expressed interest in acquiring the building for its new public schoolhouse, and *The Daily Alaskan* noted that “for some time it has been known that a feeling has existed among certain ones connected with the management of the college that under favorable circumstances the building would be sold to the city.”³² Reverend Walter and the school’s trustees would have realized in June that McCabe would lose students to public education, and informal discussion about selling the building may have taken place through the summer. The McCabe College trustees’ announcement of an expanded program may have been a final effort to attract and retain enough tuition dollars to keep the school viable. However, the building was heavily in debt, and when rumored interest was confirmed in an official offer to purchase it, the trustees likely decided to accept the inevitable and minimize their losses. In any case, while the Skagway school board debated whether to purchase McCabe College or to build a new structure, Judge Melville Brown of the U.S. District Court made a more definite offer. The trustees were quick to accept.

The U.S. Attorney General had authorized Judge Brown to spend \$5000 on a new courthouse and \$3000 on a jail at Skagway. A site for the new courthouse had been selected on the north side of Sixth Avenue, east of Broadway, and had been purchased by

²⁹ *The Daily Alaskan*, May 25, 1900.

³⁰ *The Daily Alaskan*, August 3, 1900.

³¹ *The Daily Alaskan*, September 7, 1900.

³² *The Daily Alaskan*, August 21, 1900.

a group of citizens who offered to donate it to the court. However, the McCabe College property was also considered a desirable location by the judge and marshal, and the building's potential for courthouse use was tested when court convened there on September 3, 1900. Evidently it was swiftly judged suitable, for Brown made the college trustees an offer by September 7.

Reverend Walter circulated a petition among the school's subscribers and stockholders, asking permission to sell the college and use the proceeds to pay off the mortgage and build a Methodist Episcopal Church in Skagway. The petition was almost unanimously accepted, and the U.S. District Court paid \$8000 for the building on June 1, 1901. In his own account of the sale, Walter remarked that "while it is a sad disappointment that the school could not go forward, yet it seemed wiser than to struggle with a debt-encumbered and nonsupporting institution, and by no other method could we have secured so large an amount with which to build a new church."³³

3. U.S. District Courthouse

Although the title to the McCabe College building was not officially transferred until June 1, 1901, the U.S. District Court began occupying the building even before the decision to purchase was final. The September-October 1900 term of court was held in the building, presumably in the large second-floor space, while the classrooms downstairs were used as workspace for the court officers. The court records for the Skagway district, which included Skagway, Dyea, Chilkoot, Haines, Pyramid Harbor, and Chilkat, arrived at the building on December 2, 1900, and in that month a court agent opened his office in the northwest classroom on the first floor.

The Methodist Episcopal congregation continued to hold Sunday services and assorted other functions in the second-floor chapel until their new church was completed in November 1901. After the church vacated the second floor, the court undertook alterations to adapt the space to its new, secular purpose. By 1903, a 36'-8"x39' courtroom occupied the southern part of the second floor, while the area to the north of the tower was divided into four small offices accessed via a short hallway from the court.

At first two civil court sessions a year – spring and fall – were held at Skagway, and a deputy clerk resided in the town year-round. Through the early 1950s, federal court was held at least once a year in the courtroom on the second floor, while the first floor housed the jail and a residence for the federal marshal and his wife. The marshal's wife served as cook for the prisoners, of whom there were many during Prohibition because Skagway received the overflow from overcrowded Juneau. However, Skagway's population had continued to decline since the turn of the century. By the 1950s the town did not generate enough cases to warrant a separate court session and prison facility there and the McCabe College building fell into disuse. There was also a lack of local interest in historic "older buildings" at the time.

³³ Rev. J.J. Walter, *Methodist-Episcopal Missionary Report*, 345.

In 1955, the U.S. government declared its courthouse in Skagway to be surplus property and initiated measures to sell it. In December, the City of Skagway submitted a bid, explaining that “We are interested in securing this building for municipal use as a Town Hall also having jail facilities which we are greatly in need of.”³⁴ The bid was successful, and the title to the building transferred to the City of Skagway on June 1, 1956.

4. City Hall and Museum

Despite the city’s stated intention to occupy it with municipal offices, the building continued to stand vacant and abandoned until 1960 or 1961. A photograph taken in 1959 shows it surrounded by overgrown foliage and broken-down fences. Left unlocked, the building’s interior was vulnerable to looting and vandalism until concerned citizens took the initiative to clean it, box its contents for later sorting, and put a lock on the door. Many of Skagway’s residents were interested in founding a Skagway history museum and proposed that it be housed in the empty McCabe College building.

Skagway had traded on its gold rush history for tourist dollars since the early 1900s, when travelers began stopping in the town for a souvenir or a glimpse of the gold stampede’s adventure. Steamship companies soon built offices along lower Broadway Avenue to accommodate the “excursionists,” and their efforts to glorify Skagway’s colorful past brought an ever-increasing stream of tourists to the port, especially during the 1920s and 30s. During this period Harriet Pullen (the proprietor of the well-known Pullen House hotel), the Kirmse family, and other townfolk amassed private collections of Skagway memorabilia which they displayed for tourists, and shopkeepers exhibited prized gold rush souvenirs in their windows.³⁵

Skagway’s tourism industry collapsed under the economic and social burdens of World War II, but renewed enthusiasm for the city’s history in the 1950s helped to revive the tourist economy and fueled support for a city-run museum. Seeking national recognition for the town’s historic resources, the mayor, local groups, and private citizens worked together to have Skagway named a National Historic Landmark and they were successful on June 13, 1962. The landmark was later listed on the National Register of Historic Places when that program came into existence in 1966.³⁶ Meanwhile, state tourism officials encouraged communities in southeast Alaska to provide museums for the educational entertainment of visitors. The loss of two major local collections – those of Axel Rasmussen and Harriet Pullen – to outsiders had strengthened the resolve of Skagway’s citizens to find a safe hold for the rest of the town’s historic artifacts.

³⁴ O.P. Flynn, Skagway City Clerk, letter to General Services Administration, 7 December 1955. The city originally hoped the Alaska Department of Civil Defense would purchase the building and allow the city to occupy parts of it with municipal offices. In a letter dated February 14, 1955, O.P. Flynn contacted the General Services Administration to inquire about the status of the building. The letter stated, “We are a key point city in Civilian Defense and we are seeking a place to warehouse certain Civilian Defense materials.” A letter from the Department of Civil Defense to Skagway Mayor Cyril A. Coyne, dated November 14, 1955, advised that this would not be possible.

³⁵ Spude, 44, 129.

³⁶ Spude, 131, 134.

On July 11, 1955 the Skagway City Council established a Historical and Museum Commission to study the possibilities for establishing a local museum. The Commission, which met from 1955 to 1960, first considered the Arctic Brotherhood Hall as a location. After the city acquired the McCabe College building, however, many citizens advocated its preservation and reuse as a museum facility. In 1958 Myrtle Keller, a longtime Skagway resident, donated \$500 to the city for use “only toward repairing the old courthouse which is to be used as a museum.”³⁷ Other citizens also made donations toward the repair of the building and the acquisition of a collection of historical materials. Finally, in October, 1960, the city appointed a Museum Committee to carry out renovation of the McCabe College building.³⁸

The city’s Commissioner of Public Works, Paul Sincic, led the efforts to rehabilitate the vacant former courthouse. With the help of volunteer labor and a city crew, he stripped the old and damaged lathe-and-plaster walls on the first floor and replaced them with gypsum board. On the second floor, he removed the dropped ceiling and office partitions but spared the old courtroom with its judge’s podium, jury box, and large wooden tables, recognizing their value in recalling an era of Skagway’s past. A museum board was elected, its collection was installed, and the Skagway Trail of ’98 Museum opened May 27, 1961.

Originally, the museum was to occupy the entire building, but in 1963 Skagway City Hall, in need of new accommodation, moved in to the first floor. The museum and municipal offices coexisted in the building until 1995, when the museum was temporarily moved to the Arctic Brotherhood Hall to allow the McCabe College building’s systems and handicapped accessibility to be upgraded. The second floor has been unused except for storage since that time, while City Hall continues to occupy the first floor.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The McCabe College building presents a solid, serious, official appearance, emphasized by its sound stone walls and prominent center tower. Its design is not without lightness, however, and shows the influence of the eclectic building fashion of the late nineteenth century. Though its footprint and original floor plan are symmetrical, features such as the off-center gable on the front facade and the oriel window on the south work to de-emphasize the building’s foursquare construction. The combination of materials and finishes – random ashlar

³⁷ Keller, Myrtle. Letter to City of Skagway, 14 May 1958.

³⁸ The establishment of the museum and the corresponding rehabilitation of the McCabe College building were accomplished largely through community activism and volunteer effort. More complete information on the names and roles of the many Skagway citizens involved is available through the Trail of ’98 Museum.

and wood clapboard, Stick Style strapping, and shingles in different shapes – contribute to the variety of forms and textures characteristic of Queen Anne Style architecture. The Gothic windows, apse-like oriel, and six-pointed star in the oculus recall the second floor's original use as a chapel.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is in overall fair condition. The stone walls are well-laid and have shown little settling, despite a high water table at the building site; however, the absence of a roof gutter or rain drain collection system is causing damage to eaves, walls, and foundations. Along with the wet ground, this is also likely a major contributor to damp conditions in the cellar.³⁹

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures 64'6" x 43', with a 15' x 19' tower centered on the front.
2. Foundations: The perimeter foundations are of rough unreinforced random rubble stone masonry, approximately two feet thick and faced on the exterior with gray granite ashlar. The foundation wall extends approximately three feet both above and below grade for a total height of about six feet. Three 12" built-up beams were added in the 1950s or 1960s to decrease the span of the first floor joists. The beams are supported on preservative-treated wood pole posts, which bear on continuous reinforced concrete longitudinal grade beams. Infill repair on the interior of the foundation walls is in concrete or brick. There is no moisture barrier in the foundations, although the water table on the site is high.
3. Walls: Up to the middle of the second story, the exterior walls are laid in random, quarry-faced granite ashlar in three colors: gray for the foundations (first 1 ½ -2 feet above grade), green for a 16-inch band above this, and white for the first and second stories. Halfway up the second story, the granite walls end and a wood clapboard finish extends up to the eaveline. Strapping on the clapboards, which was originally painted a darker color than other woodwork, and fish-scale and sawtooth shingles in the gables contribute to the variety of exterior wall textures.
4. Structural system, framing: Walls are load-bearing masonry up to 20'; wood frame above this to eaves.⁴⁰ The original roof framing consists of

³⁹ Alfred Staehli, "Skagway Trail of '98 Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment," 1993, 26.

⁴⁰ In his 1993 report noted above, architect Staehli notes his finding that the building's exterior walls above the foundation are of wood stud framing with a granite veneer. There is no reference to this type of construction in earlier descriptions of the building, nor did field observations by this HABS team substantiate these findings.

scissors trusses of 2x8 wood members; currently present 1x6 struts may have been added later. Flooring is laid on 3 or 4x12 rough cut joists. There is no subfloor.

5. Stoops, exterior stairways and ramps: At the front of the building, three steps lead up to a wooden stoop before the front doorway. On the rear, a wooden stoop at the back door is reached both by a short set of stairs from the south and by handicapped access ramps from the south and north. Another wooden staircase climbs in a single run from the back stoop to the second-story entrance at the northern end of the east facade. This stairway is supported on a framework of wooden trusses constructed on concrete pilings. Both front and back stoops are constructed on platforms of poured concrete.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The building has three exterior doorways located on the front first floor, rear first floor, and rear second floor. All doors are modern replacements.

The front entrance, centered in the front (west) facade of the tower, is a set of double doors beneath a double transom light. Each door consists of a full-length pane of plate glass set into a painted wooden frame with a plain painted surround. The prism-glass transom is partially blocked by a wooden sign set into the top of the doorway. The sign has the words "CITY HALL" in raised gold letters on a black background.

The first-floor rear entrance is a set of double paneled doors, stained and set in a plain surround, beneath a double prism-glass transom light. The second floor rear entrance is a single, plain, stained wooden door with no exterior knob, lock, or handle. This doorway has been set into the opening for the northernmost window on the east facade, resulting in a Gothic-arched transom light over the door.

- b. Windows: Ground floor windows are two over two double hung wood sash with lamb's tongue detail. Some have prism glass top lights, bottom lights, or both, and some are protected by inside mounted wooden storm sash. The windows to the old jail cell at the northeast corner of the building have heavy iron bars and grills set into concrete in the granite window openings.

Second floor windows on the front (west) and north facades have Gothic pointed arch divisions (three over two) in pointed arch frames. Second floor sash on the rear (east) facade are identical

but set into rectangular frames. On both the front and rear facades, the exception is the second window from the south, which is larger than the others and has rectangular rather than Gothic divisions. On the front of the building, the second window from the south is set into a Gothic-arched frame; its counterpart on the rear is set into a rectangular frame.

On the south facade, the only second-floor windows are in the sides of the oriel. These have rectangular and fixed transom sash, separated by the accentuated bottom frieze molding that continues around the oriel from the south wall. Lights are non-original double-glazed “thermal-pane.”

Windows have heavy wooden sills with sill horns extending beyond the masonry window openings. Bars on the former jail windows on the north and east facades are set in concrete, which also covers these windows’ sills. The first floor windows have flat stone lintels of the same white granite as the walls. Window frames are wood with wood molding surrounds.

An oculus window, divided into the design of a six-pointed star, is set into the building’s central tower at second-floor level.

There are non-opening lancet louvered “windows” in the upper tower faces, three each on the north, south, and west. The center “window” in each set is slightly taller and wider than the flanking openings, echoing the pattern of the southern second-story bay beneath the gable on the front facade.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The building has a symmetrical hipped main roof with a gabled dormer on each of the four sides. The tower has a four-face gable roof with a flagpole at the central intersection of the ridges. The main roof, dormers, and tower roof all have the same 12/12 pitch. Originally clad in wood shingles, the entire roof today is covered with composition shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The clapboard-finished wood-frame wall between the top of the granite wall and the eaves forms a simple frieze bordered with small projecting courses of molding at top and bottom. Other than this, there is no obvious cornice treatment. Eaves are shallow. Originally, the building had built-in eaves troughs with gutter drops penetrating down through eave soffits; rainwater was conducted down the walls in metal leader pipes and collected in cisterns on the ground. All original eaves troughs have

been roofed over, however, and gutter drops and leader pipes, where they remain, are abandoned. There is a single section of hung eaves trough above the northeast corner second-floor exit with a downspout leader to grade.

- c. Dormers, tower: Broad, blind gabled dormers are centered on the north, south, and east facades. Their primary effect is on the roof scape and exterior appearance of the building; they do not increase interior space. The shingled roof of the oriel rises into the face of the south dormer. The dormer on the front facade is placed asymmetrically to the south of the central tower projection.

The tower, like the main building, has granite walls to the middle of the second story level and wood frame above. The wooden tower walls are finished in clapboard with bands of strapping and molding, and the tower gable faces are clad in fish-scale and sawtooth shingles. At the top of the second-story level, the eaves of the main roofline continue around the tower.

- d. Chimneys: There is an active metal stack chimney on the north and an inactive brick chimney with a metal smoke pipe extension on the southwest area of the roof. The north chimney dates to the construction of the building but was originally of brick. The southwest chimney, its masonry portion now stuccoed over, is not original to the building's construction but was probably added by 1905.

- 8. Plaques and markers: An Alaska Centennial plaque, installed on the wall south of the front door in 1967, reads:

TRAIL OF '98 MUSEUM

BUILT AS MCCABE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN IN
1899-1900, THIS IS THE FIRST GRANITE
BUILDING IN ALASKA. IT SERVED AS A
FEDERAL COURT HOUSE FROM 1901 UNTIL
STATEHOOD WHEN IT WAS PURCHASED BY THE
CITY OF SKAGWAY FOR A MUSEUM.

STATE OF ALASKA
GOVERNOR WALTER J. HICKEL
ALASKA CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

The plaque is inaccurate in two regards: first, McCabe College was never exclusively for women; and second, the building was actually sold to the city in 1956, three years prior to statehood.

In addition, the building bears a survey benchmark near the southern corner of the rear (west) facade. This is a small, round medallion which reads:

U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY
B.M.
A/1910

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement crawl space is undivided and unfinished, with dirt floors, stone rubble walls, and a clearance of about six feet. Pilings in the northeast section suggest the foundation for another structure on the site that was abandoned when work on the McCabe building was begun.
- b. First floor: Though the first floor spaces have been extensively remodeled and subdivided, the original plan of four corner classrooms off a central corridor can still be read.

Entrance to the first floor is through a vestibule in the tower that leads to a truncated central corridor. Doorways off this corridor lead to restrooms and the police office in the original northwest classroom, and to the city clerk's office in the original southwest room. A small office, storage room, and jail cell are accessible from within the police office. At the eastern end of the corridor is the door to the magistrate's chambers, which are located in the southeast quarter of the building, occupying the original southeast classroom as well as the space which once belonged to the eastern half of the central hall. In the southeast corner, accessible through the magistrate's chambers, is the city manager's office. The northeast quarter of the building contains the furnace room, records room, a small unisex toilet, and storage, accessible from the magistrate's chambers.

- c. Second floor: The large, open second-floor space, subdivided only by partitions that do not reach the ceiling, is entered through double doors from the top stair landing. Another doorway, off a short hallway behind a storage space on the northwest corner, leads to a flight of stairs on the rear exterior facade of the building. Different floor levels probably date from ca. 1901, when the

second floor was renovated to house the chambers of the U.S. District Court.

d. Attic: The attic space is open and unfinished.

2. Stairways: The staircase from the first to the second floor rises through the building's central tower. It makes two 90 degree turns in its 10-stair climb to an intermediate landing, then another 90 degree turn followed by six stairs to a larger landing outside the room on the second floor. The staircase and landing are enclosed by walls and a closed balustrade with painted oak-grain wainscoting. This staircase replaced the building's original staircase after 1909.

The staircase to the cellar is a single-run rough ladder/stair accessed from a closet under the second floor stairway in the entrance vestibule. There is no stairway to the attic.

3. Flooring: Except for a concrete slab in the furnace room, floors are 3 ¼ inch tongue-and -groove boards laid north-south. First floor floors have resilient tile or sheet floor covering and carpet over the original boards. Original floors appear to have been natural finished wood, oiled or varnished.⁴¹ The floor of the basement is dirt.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Very little of the original plaster-on-wood-lathe wall and ceiling finish remains. Most has been replaced or covered over with gypsum board. Lower walls retain original tongue-and-groove wainscot with wood base and chair rail or cap. All finished woodwork was painted to resemble oak graining during renovations in 1902. Some of this historic finish has been painted over, but it remains visible on the stair and second-floor wainscots and on the door and doorway to the former U.S. District Court chambers.

The first floor ceiling has been dropped approximately four feet; the second-floor ceiling, dropped to a height of twelve feet in 1954, was again exposed to its full height of 17 feet ca. 1960. There is a wooden tongue-and-groove ceiling on the underside of the main staircase in the entry vestibule. Walls and ceilings are painted white.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Doors from the first-floor corridor to the police, city clerk's, and magistrate's offices are of painted wood and have plate glass panels in the upper portions and two wooden panels below. The jail cell has an inner, barred iron door, and an

⁴¹ Staehli, 28.

outer, wooden door of painted tongue-and-groove boards with a small square barred window. Other interior doors on the first floor are wooden, paneled and painted.

Entrance from the second-floor stair landing to the former court space is through a set of double paneled wooden doors. "U.S. District Court No. 1" is painted in black and gold block lettering on the outside of these doors, which have a painted oak wood grain finish.

Doors have molded surrounds with bull's-eye keystones except for those leading from the corridor into the offices and rest rooms on the first floor, which have plain jambs and heads.

- b. Windows: Windows are original double-hung sash and transparent or prism glass lights with molded wood frames and surrounds. UV filter film has been applied to second-floor windows, some of which also have interior two-over-two fixed storm sash.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: A fine oak-grain painted finish dating from 1902 (see above, Wall and Ceiling Finishes) is the building's most significant surviving interior decorative feature. The wainscoting and door and window casings throughout the building have been removed and inexpertly reinstalled.
- 7. Hardware: Original metal door knobs and plates, stamped in a stylized floral design, still exist on the first-floor doors from the vestibule to the basement stair and from the city clerk's office to the magistrate's chambers.
- 8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, ventilation: There is a single oil-burning fan forced warm air furnace located in a furnace room in the middle of the north sided first floor. It is vented through the north chimney. The balancing of heat distribution is by manual dampers. Walls are not insulated, and thermal insulation is found only above the second-floor ceiling.

An antique stove on the second floor is not currently in use. It may have been installed ca. 1901, when subdivision of the second floor into smaller enclosed spaces necessitated extra heating appliances, and may be the reason for the new brick chimney which appeared on the southwestern portion of the building by 1905.

- b. Electricity: Combination old knob-and-tube, BX cable, and NM cable distribution wiring.
 - c. Plumbing: First floor only.
9. Original furnishings: The finely oak-grained judge's bench, jury box, and large tables on the second floor are original to the 1901-1902 courthouse renovation.
- D. Site:
1. General Setting and Orientation: The building is located on approximately one acre at the east end of Seventh Street, where Spring Street would cross if it was continued through. The site is a continuation of open space along a creek. A grass lawn and many mature trees surround the building. Seventh Avenue is paved to the front of the building; automobile parking is on paved lots in front and on the north side. A chain cordon strung between wooden posts separates the front yard from the front parking area. The White Pass and Yukon Route railroad passes behind the building along the creek below the rocky mountainside, which rises abruptly behind Skagway on the east. A wood picket fence, painted brown, separates the grounds of the building from the railroad tracks to the south and east. A vintage White Pass and Yukon Route locomotive, rail cars, and caboose are displayed on the south side lawn. Two wood-and-iron benches occupy the front lawn southwest of the building's entrance.
- There is a pile of pre-cast concrete religious statuary pieces in the east yard behind the building. The statuary consists of two large pilasters shipped to Skagway from the East Coast. These were intended to adorn the Pope Pius X Mission School, but after the demolition of the school, the pieces were moved to the museum grounds for safekeeping. Their ownership is currently uncertain, and they will remain on the City Hall grounds until a safe and appropriate place for them can be found.
2. Other buildings on site: When it was sold to the U.S. District Court, the McCabe College lot contained more buildings than at present. One of these was the Methodist Episcopal parsonage; the others were probably associated outbuildings. These were removed from the property shortly after its sale to the U.S. District Court.⁴² Neither the present location of these structures, nor whether they were moved or destroyed, is known.

⁴² The parsonage was gone by the time of the first known photographs of the property, which date from the courthouse, not the college, era. Its existence on the property is known only through an item in *The Daily Alaskan* of Jan. 14, 1900, which reads in part: "The senior students of McCabe college now meet at the M.E. parsonage, on the new college campus." In a letter to the U.S. District Attorney dated June 3, 1901, J.G. Price, presumably a lawyer representing the Methodist Episcopal church in the sale of the McCabe College building, writes: "... the present M.E. Minister resides on the premises, but I understand from

From 1917 to 1922, a small residence for the U.S. Marshal and his family stood to the north of the McCabe College building.⁴³

A small wooden shed located on the property to the northeast of the McCabe College building was torn down in the 1960s or 70s.

3. Historic landscape design: The earliest photographs of the building show that at first it stood in a yard barren of vegetation except for a couple of spruce trees to the south, several to the rear, and one west of the picket fence in front. By 1905, these trees had died or, more likely, been removed, and photographs show a treeless grassy lawn both inside and outside the fence; the area west of the front yard had not yet been cleared to accommodate vehicles. A wooden walkway led from the end of Seventh Street up to the front entrance steps across this lawn.

A wooden picket fence with a turnstile gate directly opposite the building's front entrance enclosed the property to the west and south. At its northern border, the McCabe College property was separated from the house lots on the south side of Spring Street by a less formal board fence. In a photograph taken in 1959, portions of both these historic fences still stand, but are in decrepit shape, and the evidently abandoned property is overgrown. Swings and "rustic seats," proposed in August 1900 to "add charms to the grounds where the students may enjoy their recess,"⁴⁴ were never installed.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: Original architectural drawings, if they exist, were not located during the research for this report. The original floor plan is known through contemporary descriptions in newspapers and Methodist Episcopal missionary reports. Sketch plans of the first and second floor, drawn on U.S. Marshal's Office letterhead on Jan. 9, 1909 by Fred Fonzo, are filed at the Skagway City Clerk's office and comprise the only known documentation of the building's original staircase. It is not clear, however, if the room layout shown in these drawings refers to actual or proposed interior arrangements. Sketch plans of the first and second floors in 1993 are included in the Skagway Trail of '98 Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment, prepared by Alfred Staehli, an historic preservation architect, for the City of Skagway. A copy of this report is also filed at the Skagway City Clerk's office.

Judge Sehlbrede that he is going to remove immediately and take the buildings off that do not belong to the purchase."

⁴³ The Marshal's residence is shown in a ca. 1918 photograph donated to the Trail of '98 Museum by J. Marshall Miller, son of James Marshall Miller, Sr., who served as U.S. Deputy Marshal in the early twentieth century. A letter accompanying the photograph indicates that Miller and his family lived in the residence through 1922.

⁴⁴ *The Daily Alaskan*, August 3, 1900.

B. Early Views: From the collection of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Skagway, AK (collection numbers in parentheses):

Photograph of “U.S. Court House, Skagway, Alaska,” ca. 1901, by Case & Draper (PB7/215). Original at University of Alaska Archives, Fairbanks print number 560-6.

Photograph of “Court House, Skaguay,” ca. 1902, by Harrie Clay Barley (PB5/214). Original at University of Alaska Archives, Fairbanks, print number 65-4-13. Taken before construction of southwest chimney.

“Skagway from bench east of town, June 6, 1903” (SO119/3991). Original at U.S. Geological Survey, Photographic Library, Denver, print number S. page 18. Appears to show stair to second floor on rear facade of McCabe College building.

Photograph of “Court House, Skagway,” ca. 1905 (PB16/1899) Original at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Skagway. Print donated by the Sitka Historical Society, Sitka, Alaska.

Photograph of Skagway from the south, McCabe College building in foreground, ca. 1910 (SO31/140). Original at Alaska State Library, Historical Collections, print number PCA 25-3.

Photograph of McCabe College building from southwest, ca. 1905, by F.H. Nowell (PB9/260). Original at University of Washington, Special Collections and Preservation Division, Allen Library.

Photograph of “Skagway, Alaska, 1934” (SO138/5472). Original at National Archives and Records Administration, Still Picture Branch, print number 18-AA-9-17.

Photograph of Skagway from west, ca. 1945 (SO128/5022) Original at Trail of '98 Museum / Skagway Historical Museum & Archives, Skagway.

Photograph of “Old Federal Courthouse,” June 4, 1959, by Paul F. Schumacher (PB17/2023/N134). Original at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. Shows building apparently abandoned, surrounded by broken fence and overgrown foliage.

Photograph of Skagway from the northwest, ca. 1915, by Rev. Lewis H. Pedersen (SO112/2522). Original at Yukon Archives, Whitehorse, print number 3147.

Photograph of “Skagway looking northwest” (SO110/2535), undated. Original at Yukon Archives, Whitehorse, print number 2652.

“Skagway and AB Mountain from Mt. Dewey,” ca. 1930. Original at Dedman’s Photo Shop, Skagway. (SO43/989).

“Looking east down Seventh Ave., Main St. in foreground,” undated photograph (7th-2/1524)

Undated photograph of Skagway from north, probably early twentieth century (SO30/139/N33). Original at the Alaska State Library. Appears to show rear staircase to second floor on rear facade.

“Skagway 1905,” photograph (SO61/1479). Original at Yale University.

C. Interviews:

Glenda Choate, former curator of Skagway’s Trail of ’98 Museum, July 1, 1997, Skagway, AK

Judy Munns, curator of Skagway’s Trail of ’98 Museum, Arctic Brotherhood Hall, Skagway, AK, June 30, 1997

Oscar Selmer, long-time Skagway resident, July 2, 1997, Seventh Ave., Skagway, AK

Paul Sincic, first curator of the Skagway’s Trail of ’98 Museum, telephone interview, August 5, 1997

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United States Marshal's Office Invitation, Bid, and Award to Mallory and Randall, contractors, for "repairs on building at Skagway, Alaska." Sept. 1, 1954. On file at Skagway City Clerk's office.

Vaughan, Thomas, ed. *Space, Style, and Structure: Building in Northwest America*.
Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974.

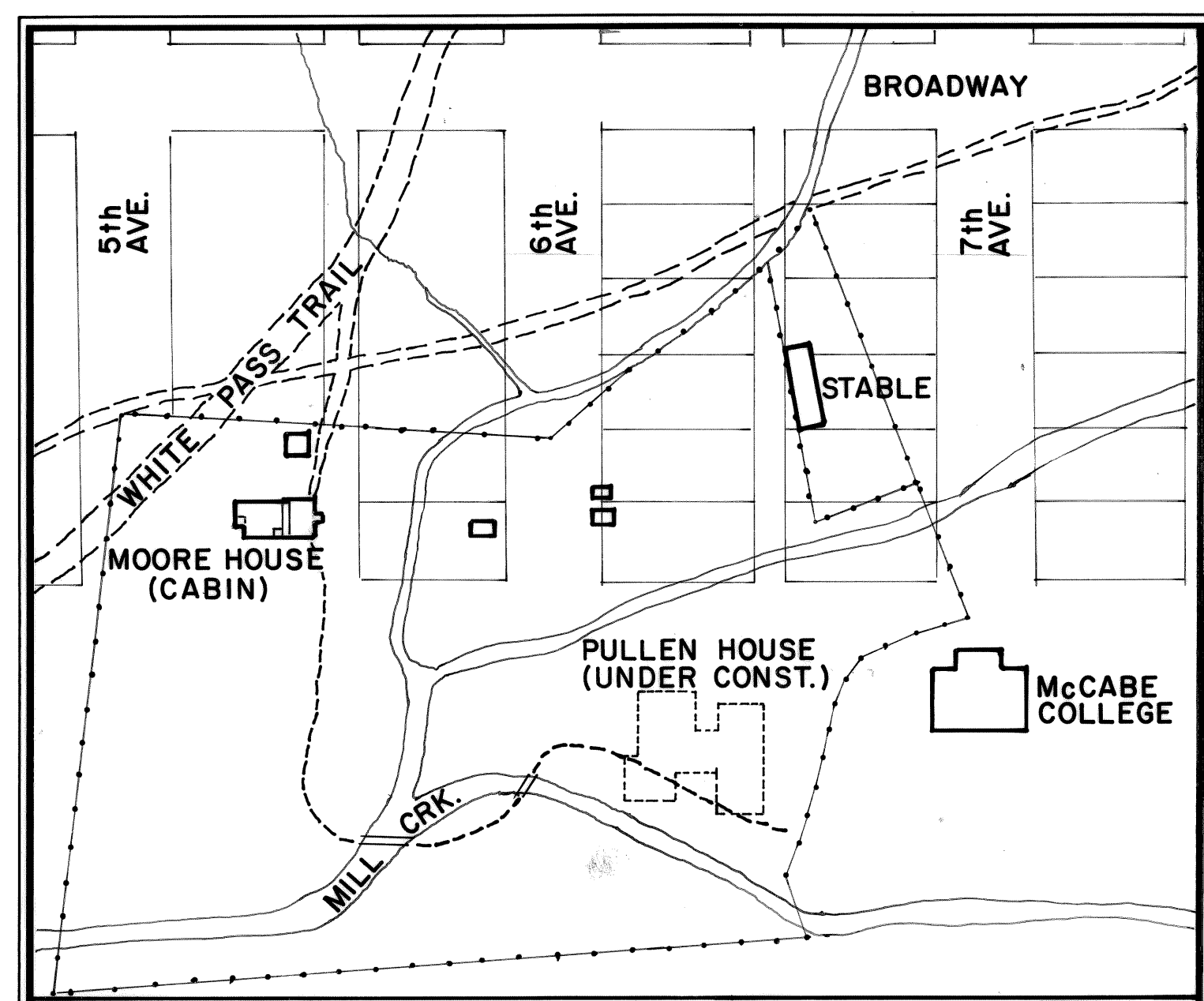
Walter, James J. Methodist Episcopal Missionary Reports, 1897-1900.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

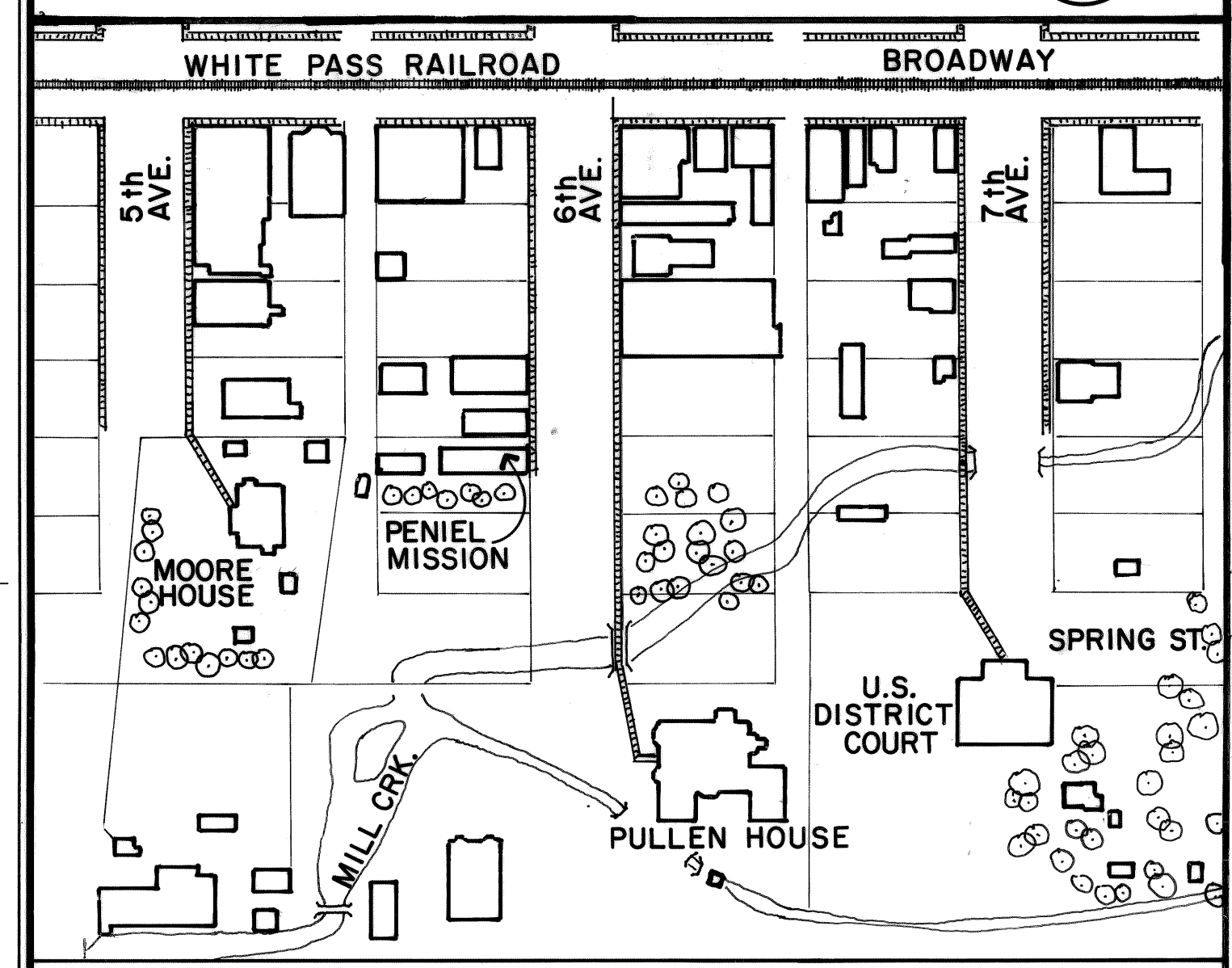
This project was executed under the general direction of Blaine Cliver, Chief of HABS/HAER, and Robert D. Barbee, Alaska Regional Director, NPS. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1997 by Steven M. Peterson, Project Director; Angelique Bamberg and Linda Cook, Historians; and John Pettit and Susan Tillack, Architectural Technicians.

McCABE COLLEGE

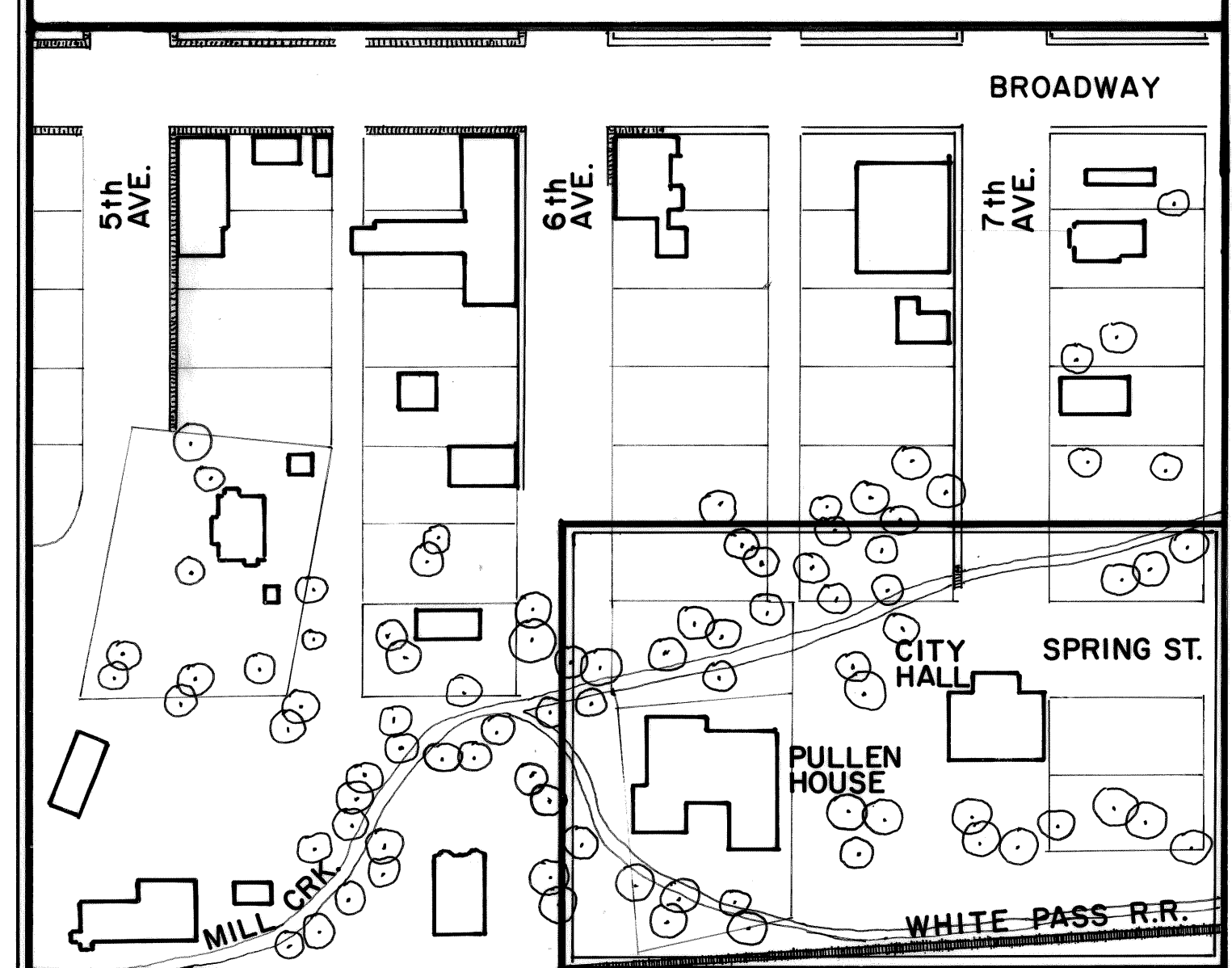
SITE DEVELOPMENT



SITE VICINITY 1899
SCALE: 1" = 100'



SITE VICINITY 1910
SCALE: 1" = 100'



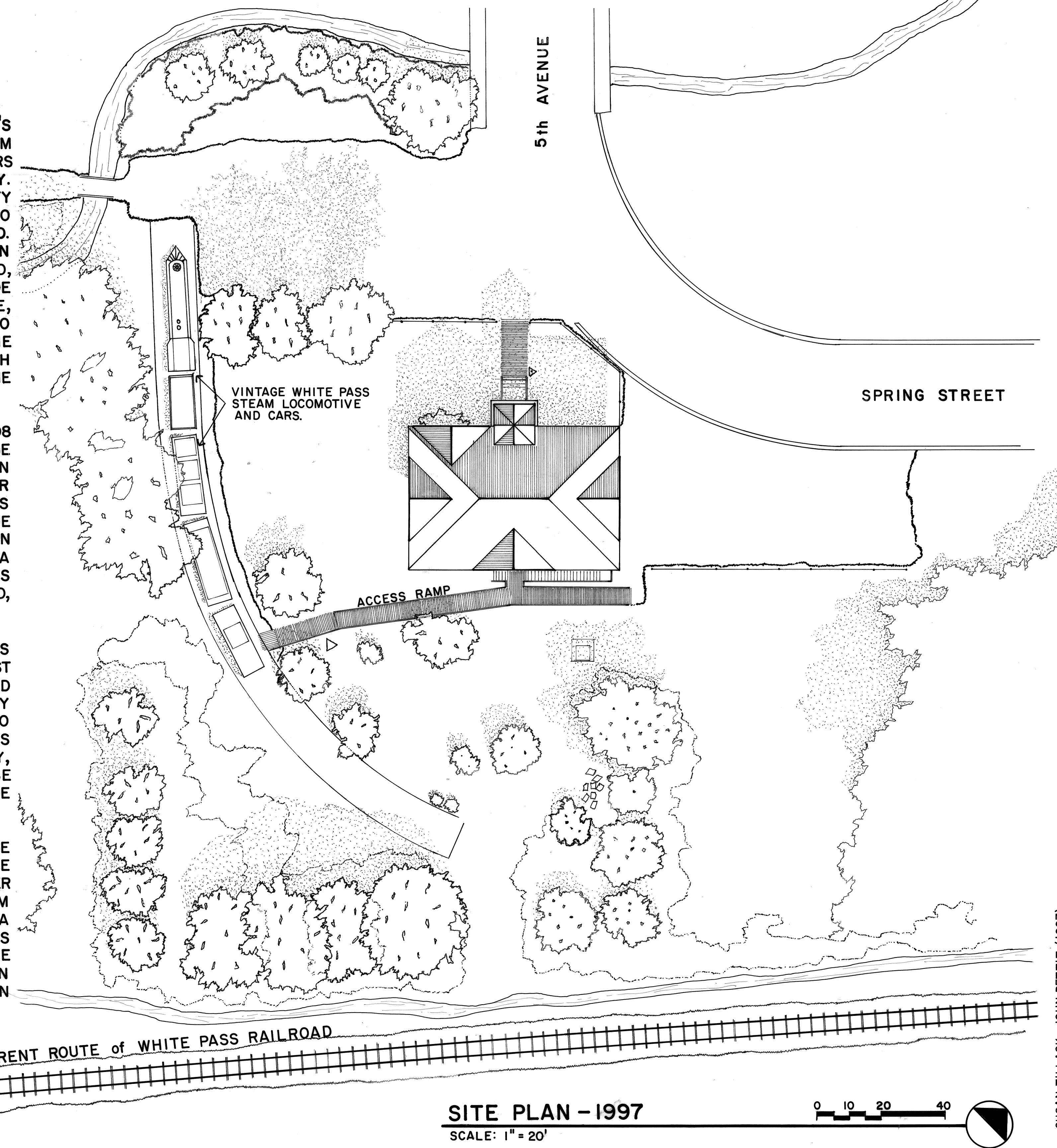
SITE VICINITY 1979
SCALE: 1" = 100'

THE McCABE COLLEGE SITE IS PART OF SKAGWAY'S ORIGINAL HOMESTEAD, SETTLED BY CAPTAIN WILLIAM MOORE IN 1887. IN 1897, GOLD STAMPEDERS OVERRAN MOORE'S CLAIM AND ERECTED A TENT CITY. BY 1898, THE SQUATTERS HAD APPOINTED CITY ENGINEER FRANK REID AND WILLIAM C. FONDA TO SURVEY THE TOWN AND IMPOSE A SPECULATIVE GRID. MOORE CONTESTED THE TAKING OF HIS LAND IN COURT, AND UNTIL THE ISSUE COULD BE RESOLVED, AN ODDLY-SHAPED 5-ACRE TRACT WAS SET ASIDE FOR MOORE'S HOME AND SAWMILL. BEN MOORE, WILLIAM'S SON, DIVIDED THIS PROPERTY INTO SMALLER PARCELS FOR PRIVATE SALE. IN 1899, THE SKAGWAY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH PURCHASED THE NORTHEASTERN CORNER OF THE MOORE LOT FOR THE CAMPUS OF McCABE COLLEGE.

SKAGWAY'S ECONOMIC DOWNTURN AFTER 1898 SLOWED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COLLEGE BUILDING. AFTER A CORNERSTONE-LAYING ON AUGUST 23, 1899, A COMPLETION DATE WAS SET FOR DECEMBER 1 OF THE SAME YEAR, BUT THIS WAS REPEATEDLY DELAYED FOR LACK OF FUNDS. THE IMPULSE TO BUILD "THE MOST IMPOSING BUILDING IN SKAGWAY, IF NOT IN ALASKA" HAD COME JUST A YEAR TOO LATE. CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED AS FUNDS PERMITTED THROUGH THE SUMMER OF 1900, WHEN THE BUILDING WAS FINALLY OCCUPIED.

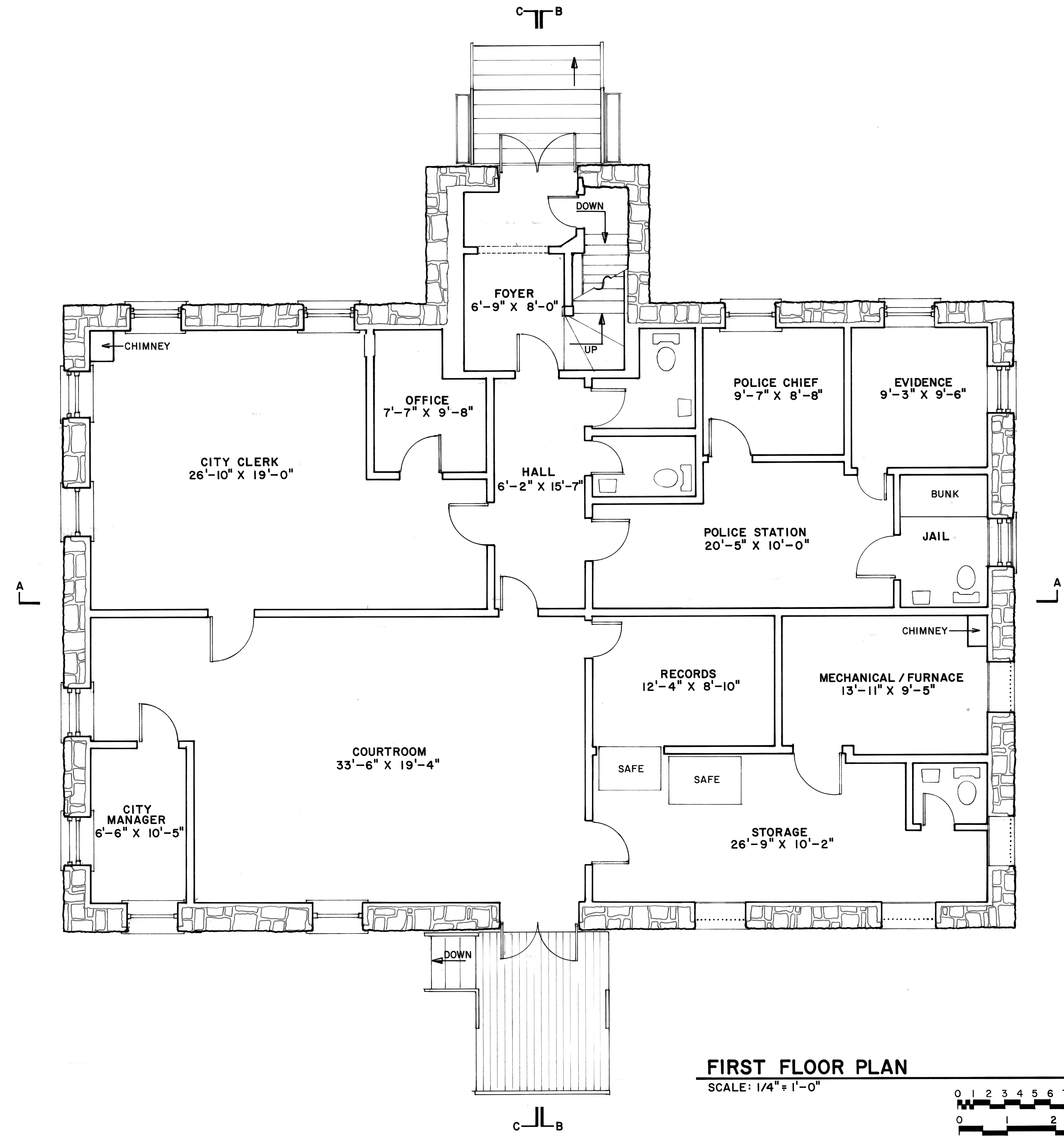
THE WHITE PASS AND YUKON ROUTE RAILROAD WAS COMPLETED IN 1899. IT PROVIDED THE EASIEST ACCESS INTO THE KLONDIKE AND ASSURED SKAGWAY'S SURVIVAL AFTER THE GOLD RUSH BY PROVIDING JOBS AND COMMERCE TO THOSE WHO STAYED. TODAY THE RAILROAD STILL PASSES DIRECTLY BEHIND THE McCABE COLLEGE PROPERTY, AND A VINTAGE WP&Y ENGINE, CAR, AND CABOOSE ARE DISPLAYED ON THE BUILDING'S SOUTH SIDE LAWN.

WHEN U.S. DISTRICT COURT BOUGHT IT IN 1901, THE McCABE COLLEGE PROPERTY ALSO CONTAINED THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL PARSONAGE AND OTHER STRUCTURES. THE METHODISTS REMOVED THEM FROM THE PROPERTY SHORTLY AFTER THE SALE. A RESIDENCE FOR THE U.S. DEPUTY MARSHAL AND HIS FAMILY STOOD ON THE NORTHERN PART OF THE PROPERTY FROM 1917 TO 1922. A SMALL WOODEN SHED LOCATED TO THE NORTHEAST OF THE MAIN BUILDING WAS TORN DOWN IN THE 1960s OR 70s.



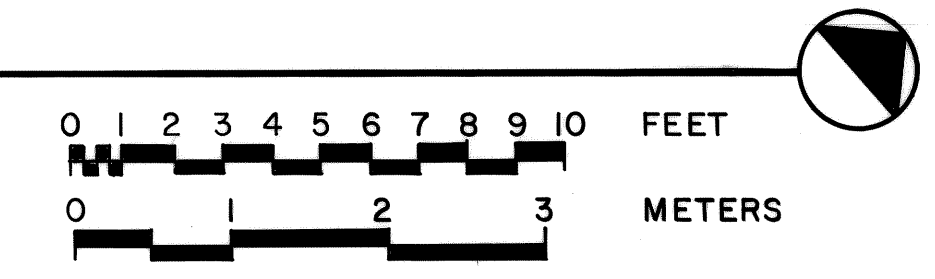
SITE PLAN - 1997
SCALE: 1" = 20'

TRIM LINE



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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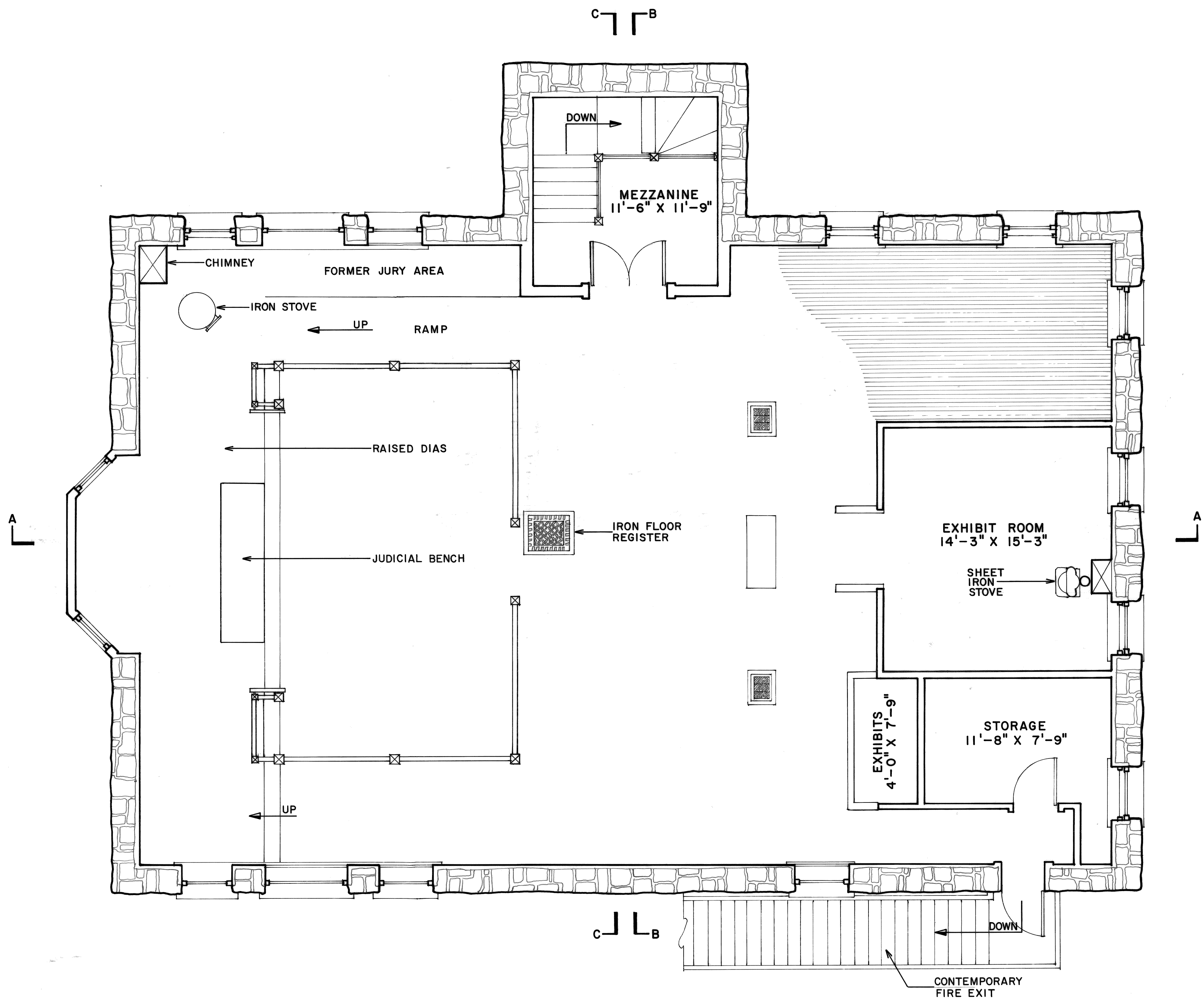
SURVEY NO.
AK 202

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 3 OF 16 SHEETS

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
ARCHIVE NUMBER

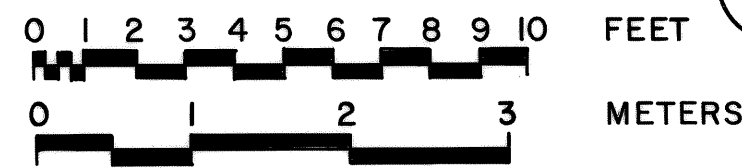
IF REPRODUCED, PLEASE CREDIT: HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NAME OF DELINEATOR, DATE OF THE DRAWING

TRIM LINE



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 4 OF 16 SHEETS

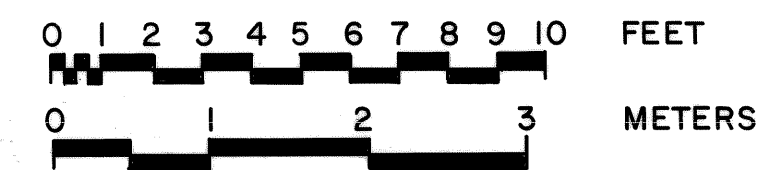
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INDICATOR

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WEST ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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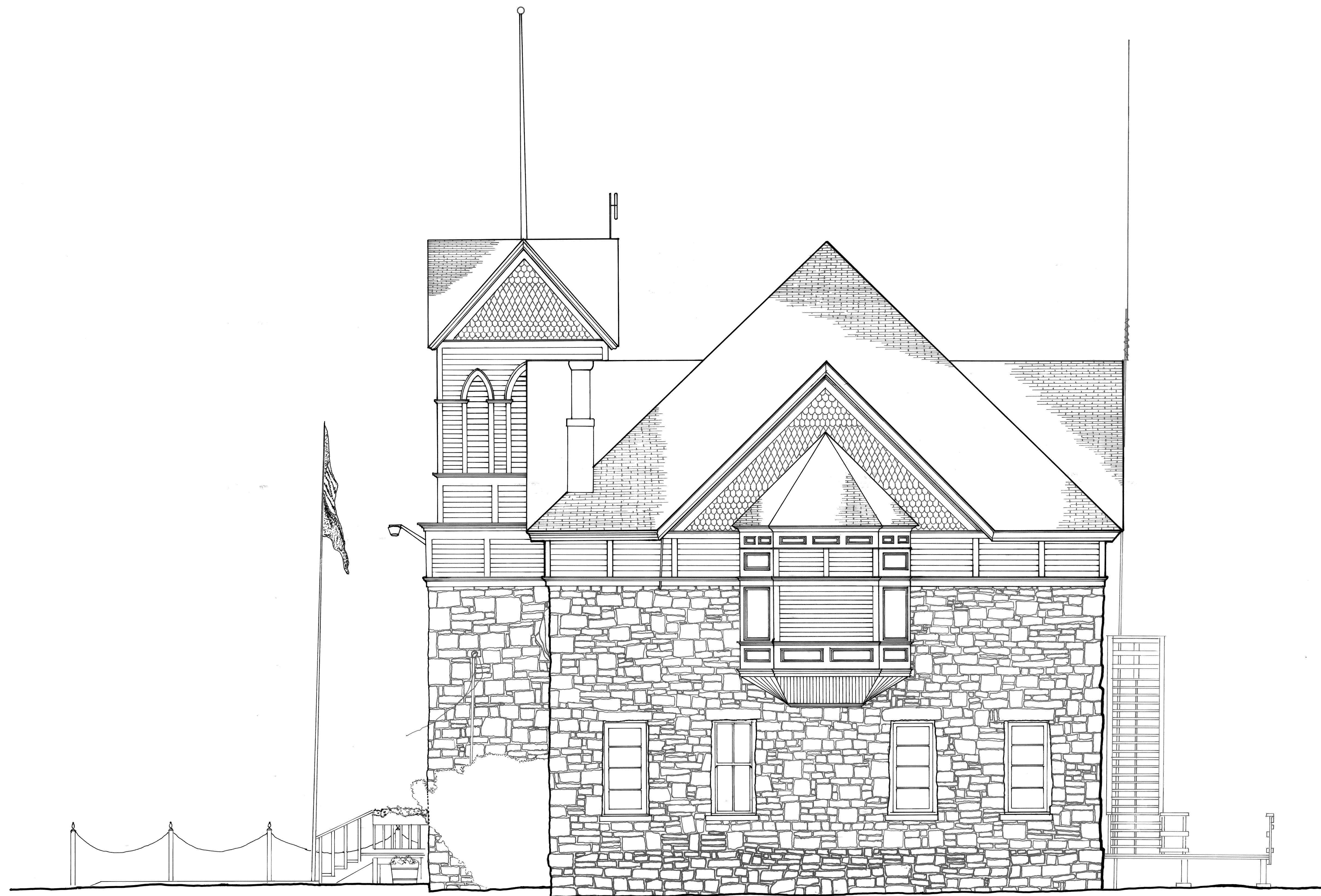
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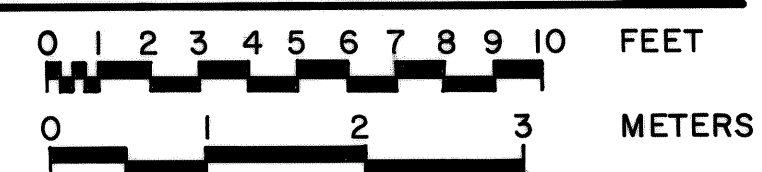
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SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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AK 202

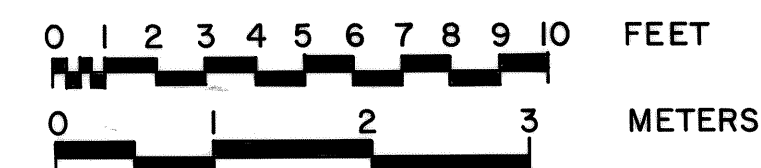
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EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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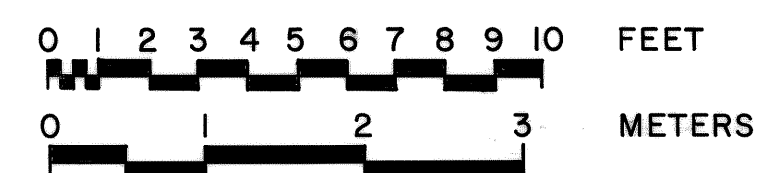
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HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 7 OF 16 SHEETS

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INDEX NUMBER

**NORTH ELEVATION**

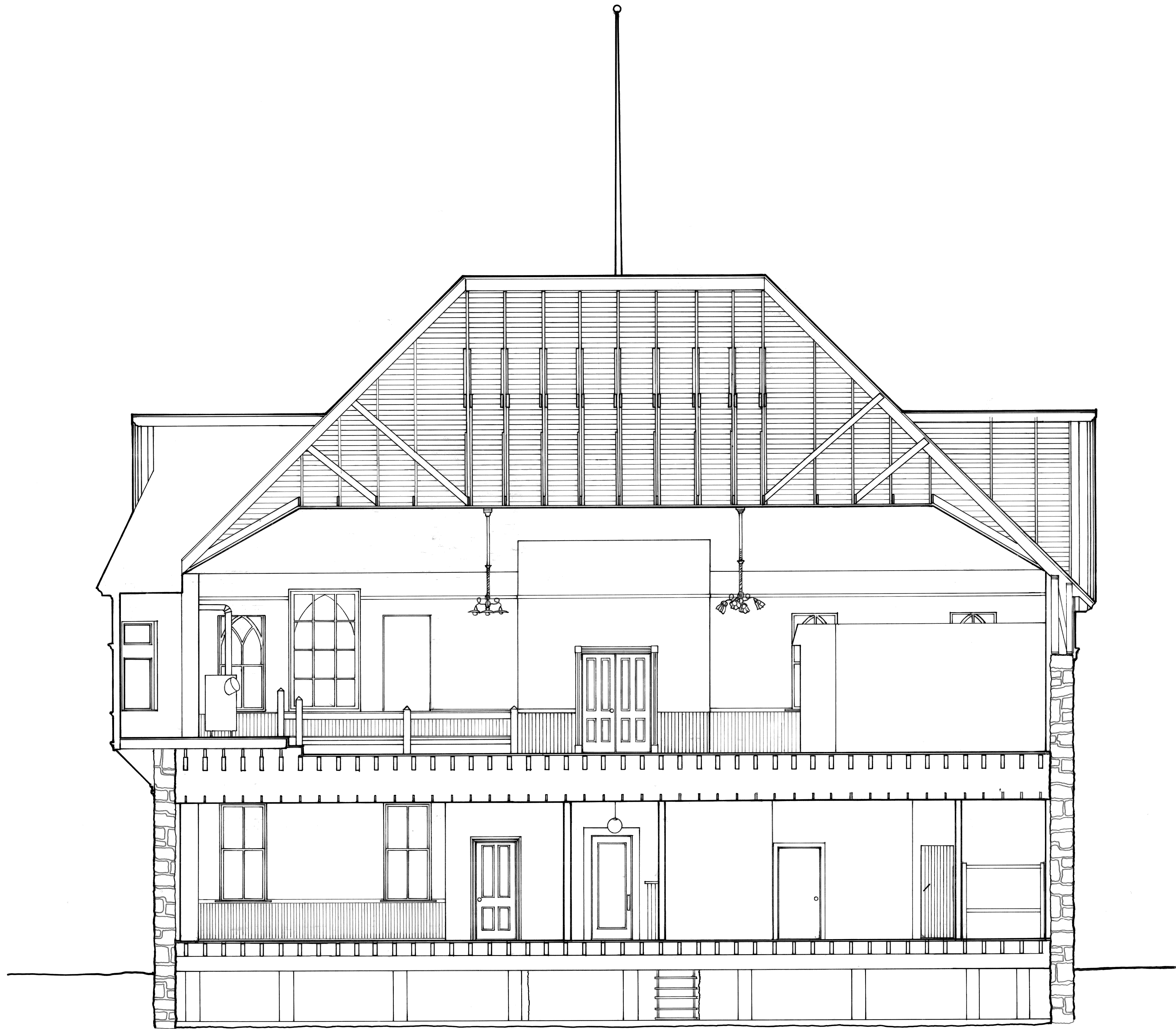
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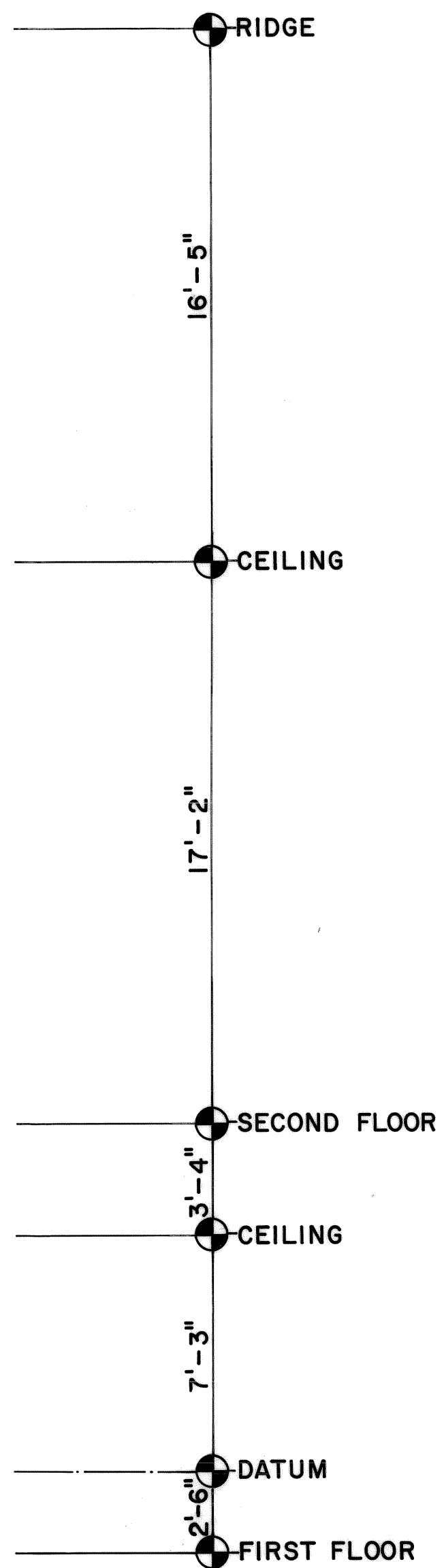
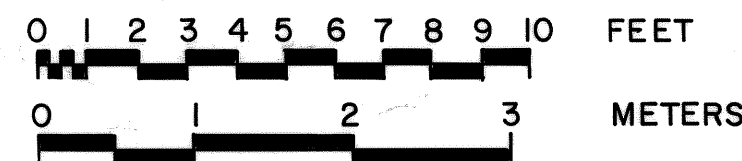
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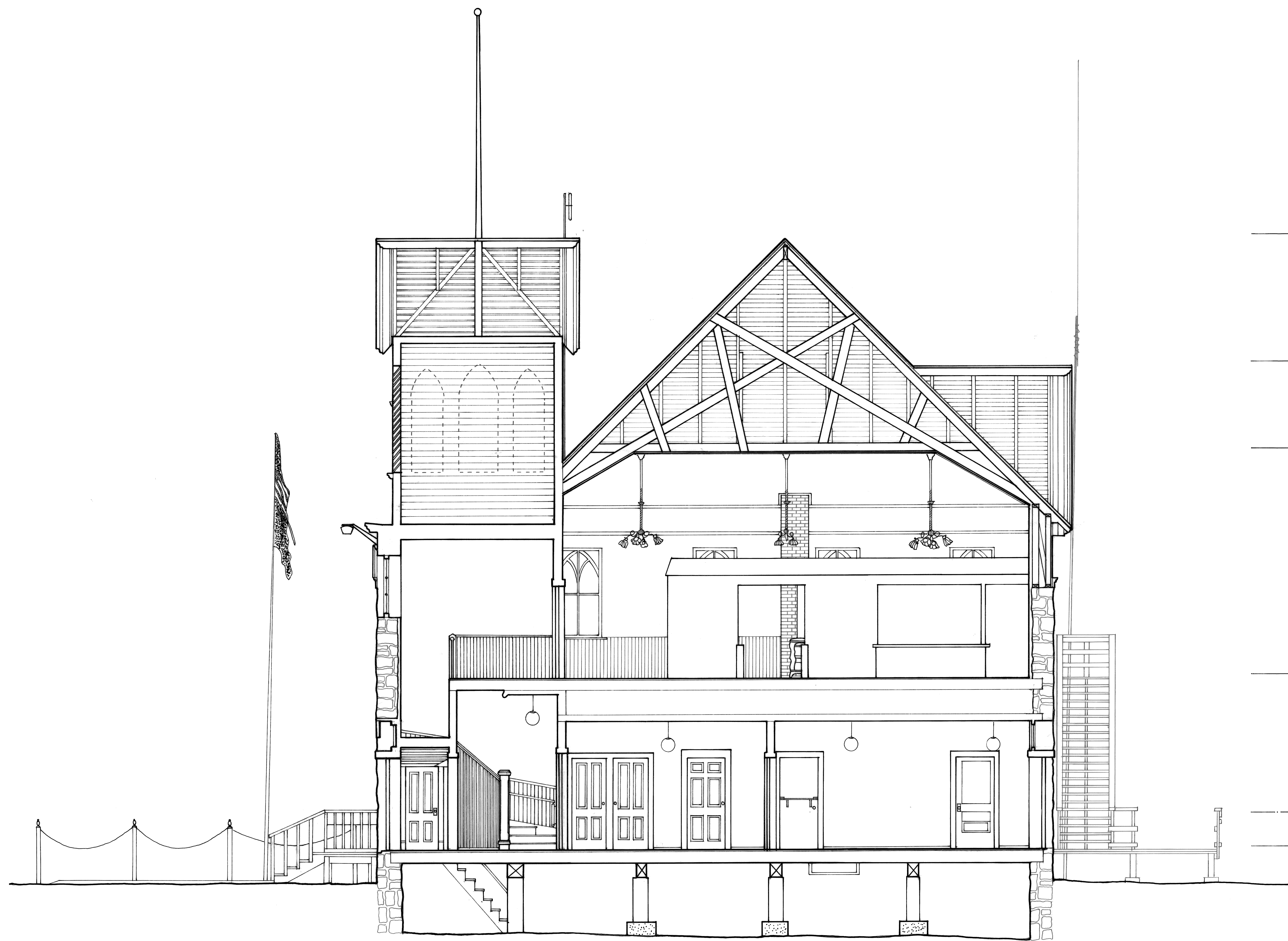
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McCabe College Skagway, AlaskaSURVEY NO.
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BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 8 OF 16 SHEETS

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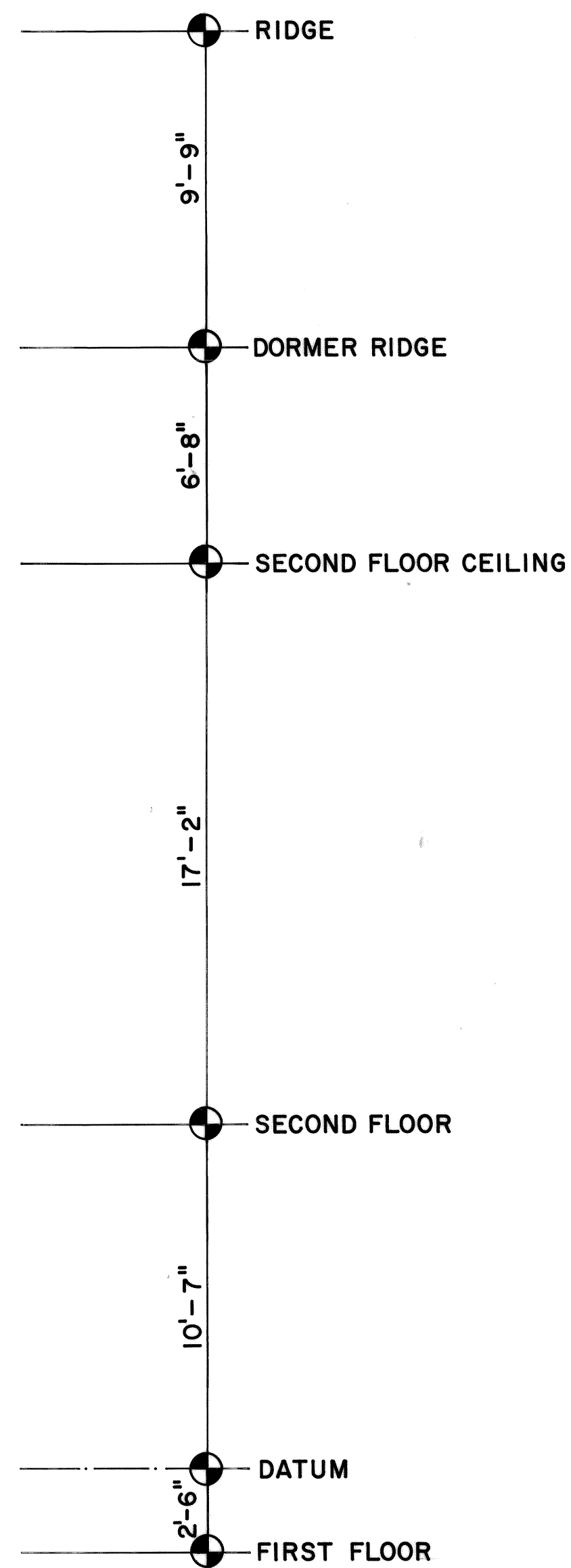
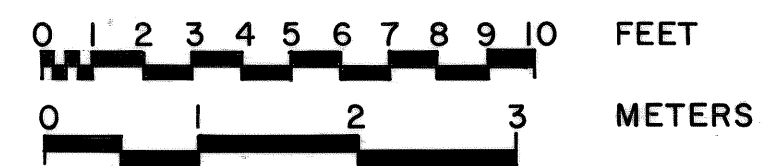


SECTION A-A
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



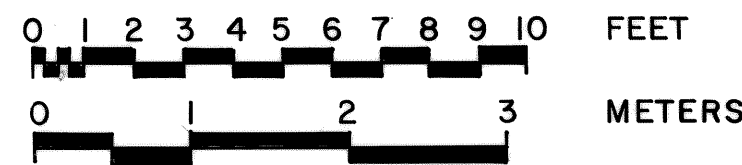
**SECTION B-B**

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"





SECTION C-C
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



DRAWN BY: SUSAN TILLACK, JOHN PETTIT (1997)

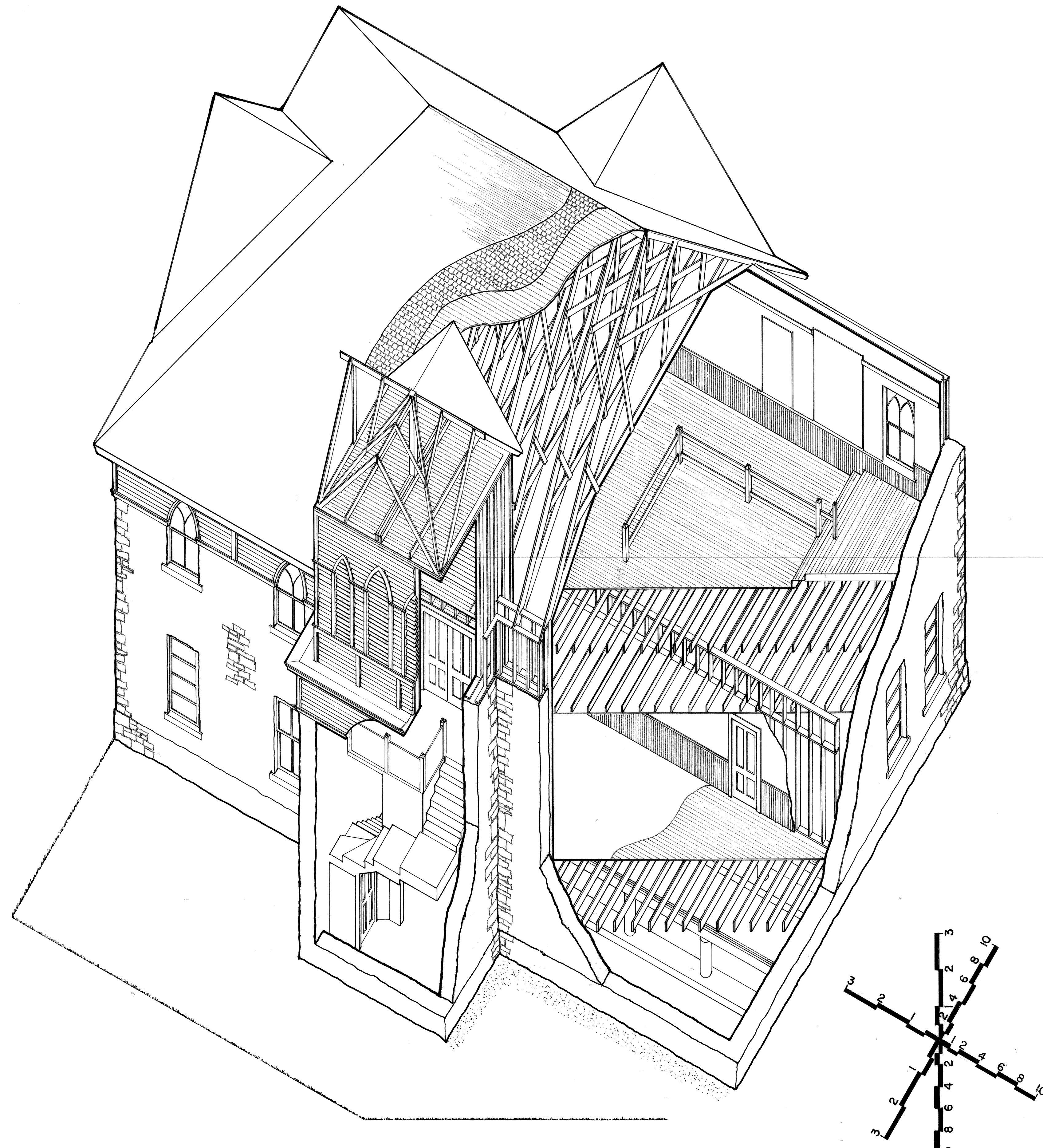
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CONSTRUCTION AXONOMETRIC
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

CONSTRUCTION

ALTHOUGH A STRIKING DEPARTURE FROM SKAGWAY'S WOOD-FRAME VERNACULAR BUILDING TRADITION, THE McCABE COLLEGE BUILDING RETAINS A REGIONAL APPEARANCE THROUGH A COMBINATION OF SCALE AND THE USE OF LOCAL BUILDING MATERIALS. THE FIRST FLOOR WAS PLANNED WITH A CENTRAL CORRIDOR, ENTERED THROUGH A DOOR IN THE WEST ELEVATION OF THE CENTRAL TOWER, AND FOUR CORNER CLASSROOMS, A STYLE TYPICAL OF THE STANDARD SCHOOLHOUSE PLAN IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY. THE SECOND FLOOR CONTAINED A CHAPEL AND TWO RECITATION ROOMS. THE ENTIRE FLOOR COULD BE OPENED INTO A SINGLE AUDITORIUM SPACE. THE ORIGINAL STAIRCASE ROSE IN TWO PARALLEL NARROW FLIGHTS, ONE ON THE NORTH AND ONE ON THE SOUTH WALL OF THE ENTRANCE TO A VESTIBULE. A CENTRAL FLIGHT OF STAIRS CONTINUED TO THE SECOND FLOOR LANDING.

THE EXTERIOR OF THE McCABE COLLEGE BUILDING HAS BEEN NOT BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED. IN THE MID-1950s, THE INTERIOR PLAN AND FINISHES OF THE BUILDING WERE MODIFIED TO MEET CONTEMPORARY USES AS A CITY HALL. THE SECOND FLOOR WAS MODIFIED FOR USE AS A CITY MUSEUM AND THE NORTH HALF OF THE FIRST FLOOR WAS REMODELED TO SERVE AS THE LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT, JAIL, AND MAGISTRATE. THE ORIGINAL STAIRS WERE REMOVED AND REPLACED WITH A SINGLE STAIRWAY TO THE SECOND FLOOR. MOST OF THE LATH AND PLASTER WALL FINISHES WERE REMOVED DURING THE RECENT REMODELING EFFORT.

THE BUILDING'S UNREINFORCED ASHLAR WALLS ARE QUARRY-FACED AND LAID IN THREE COLORS: GRAY FOR THE FOUNDATIONS, GREEN FOR A 16" BAND ABOVE, AND WHITE FOR THE WALLS UP TO THE MIDDLE OF THE SECOND STORY. THE ORIGIN OF THE GRANITE IS ATTRIBUTED TO A QUARRY IN CLIFTON, EIGHT MILES AWAY BY RAIL. LOCAL SPECULATION THAT THE BUILDERS USED STONE QUARRIED FROM THE MOUNTAINSIDES DURING CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILROAD IS SUPPORTED BY THE ROUGH IRREGULAR SURFACE OF THE STONE; USUALLY GRANITE IS CUT, NOT BLASTED. THE MANUFACTURED DOUBLE HUNG AND GOTHIC WINDOWS PROBABLY WERE SHIPPED TO SKAGWAY FROM SEATTLE. THESE, IN ADDITION TO THE APSE-LIKE ORIEL, AND SIX-POINTED STAR IN THE OCULUS, RECALL THE SECOND FLOOR'S ORIGINAL USE AS A CHAPEL.

THE UNREINFORCED STONE WALLS ARE WELL-LAID AND, DESPITE SOFT SOIL, A HIGH WATER TABLE, AND THE DOCUMENTED SEISMIC ACTIVITY OF THE SKAGWAY AREA, THE BUILDING IS IN GOOD CONDITION WITH LITTLE EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE.

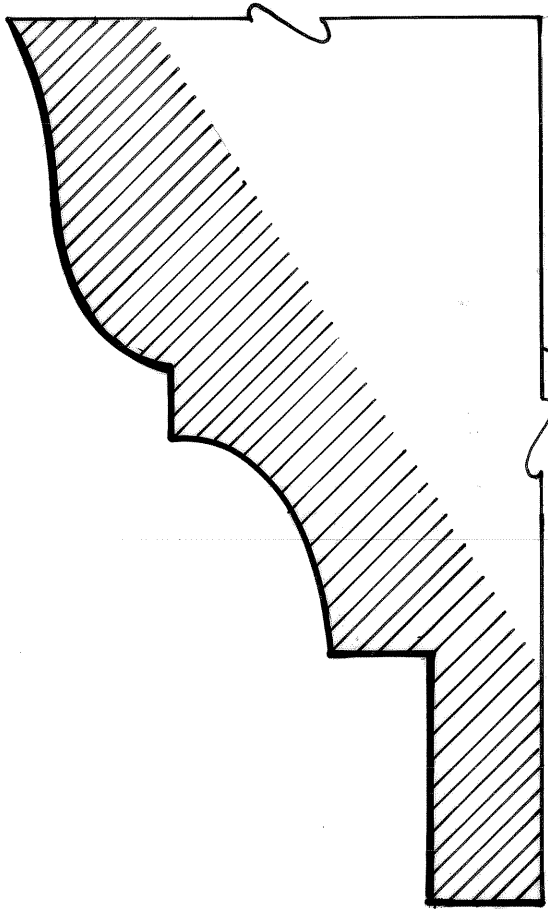
FOUNDATION & WALLS: THE MAIN STRUCTURAL SYSTEM FOR McCABE COLLEGE IS IN THE EXTERIOR LOAD-BEARING STONE MASONRY WALLS. THE MASONRY IS GRANITE, MOSTLY RUBBLE AND SOME ROUGH HEWN STONES FROM THE RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION. WALL THICKNESS IS APPROXIMATELY 18" WITH A SLIGHTLY PROTRUDING WATER TABLE AT GRADE.

FLOORS: ON THE FIRST FLOOR, 1x4" TONGUE AND GROOVE DOUGLAS FIR FLOOR BOARDS ARE NAILED DIRECTLY TO THE FLOOR JOISTS. THE JOISTS ARE ROUGH CUT 4x12's AT 16" ON CENTER. THE JOISTS SPAN THE TRANSVERSE DIRECTION OF THE BUILDING AND HAVE BEEN SHORED UP WITH FOUR LONGITUDINAL BEAMS WHICH HAVE BEEN ADDED IN THE BASEMENT. THE BEAMS ARE SUPPORTED ON 12" DIAMETER POSTS TREATED WITH CREOSOTE. THE POSTS BEAR ON CONCRETE GRADE BEAMS. THE SECOND FLOOR IS SIMILAR TO THE FIRST, EXCEPT THAT JOISTS SPAN FROM A CENTER LOAD BEARING STUD WALL TO THE EXTERIOR MASONRY WALL. THE JOISTS ARE MORTARED INTO THE STONE WALL.

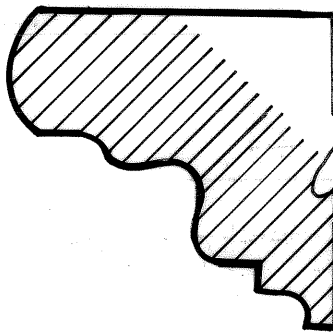
INTERIOR WALLS: THE EXISTING INTERIOR WALLS ARE GYPSUM BOARD NAILED TO 1x3" FURRING STRIPS. THE STRIPS ARE ATTACHED TO THE MASONRY AND WOOD STUD WALLS. THE ORIGINAL INTERIOR WALL CONSISTED OF TRADITIONAL WOOD LATH AND PLASTER. WHILE EVIDENCE REMAINS OF THE PLASTER FINISH, ALL OF THE PLASTER HAS BEEN REMOVED.

ROOF: THE ROOF HAS A DOUBLE HIPPED GEOMETRY WITH SEVERAL BLIND DORMERS. THE DORMERS ARE ATTACHED AT THE HIPS AND OFF THE MAIN ROOF. THE STRUCTURE IS A WOOD SCISSORS TRUSS BUILT OF 2x8" ROUGH CUT BOARDS. ALL ROOF PITCHES, EXCEPT THE TOWER, ARE 12/12. ROOF SHEATHING IS SHIP LAPPED 1x6" BOARDS. THE EXISTING ROOF IS COVERED WITH ASPHALT SHINGLES WHICH ARE LAID OVER THE ORIGINAL WOOD SHINGLES.

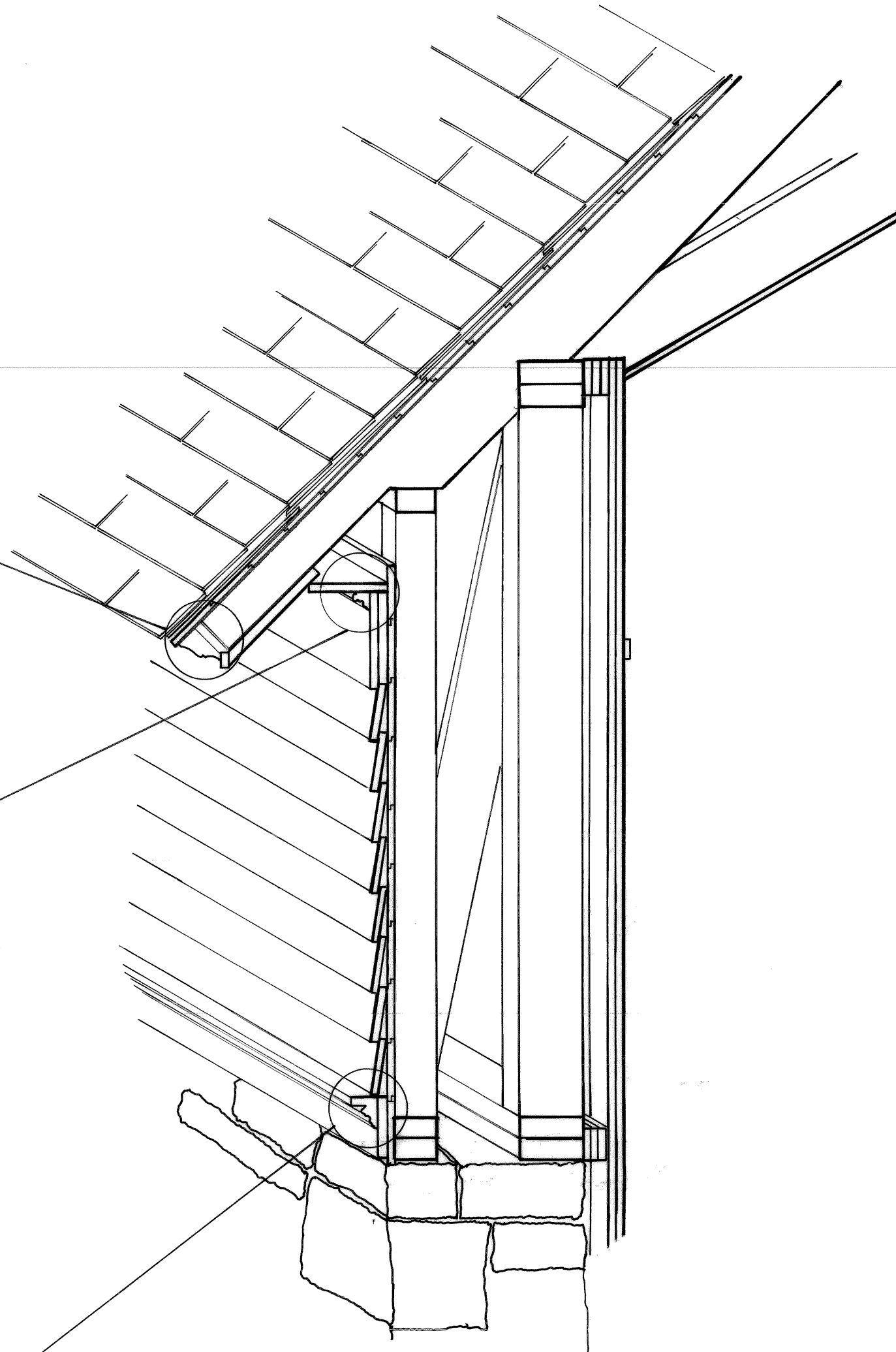
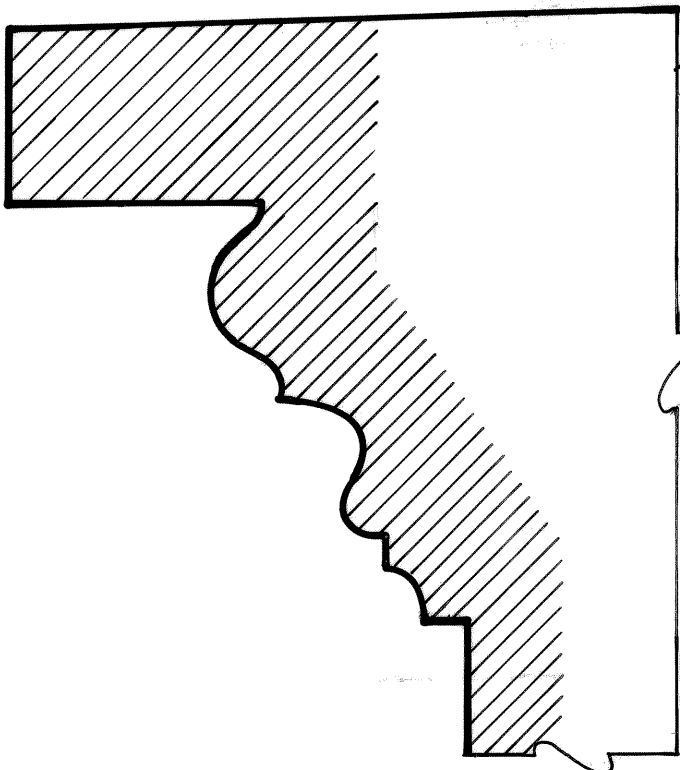
ROOF EAVE MOULDING
FULL SCALE



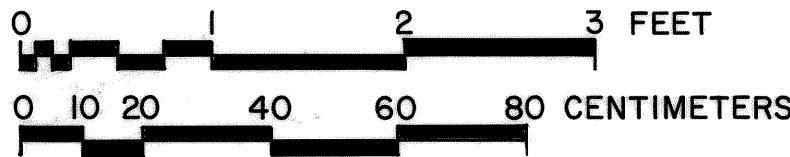
SOFFIT TRIM
FULL SCALE

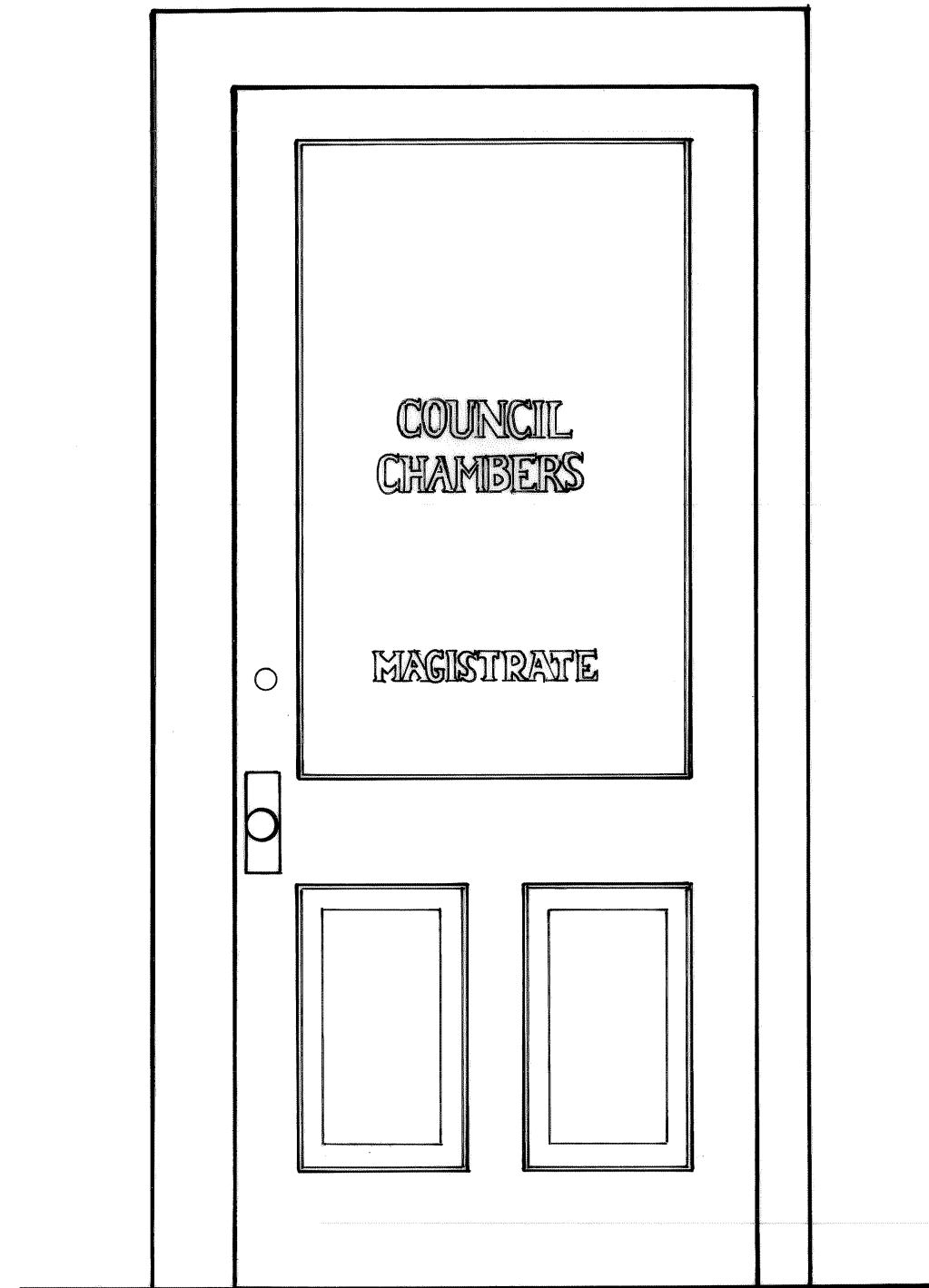


WALL TRIM
FULL SCALE



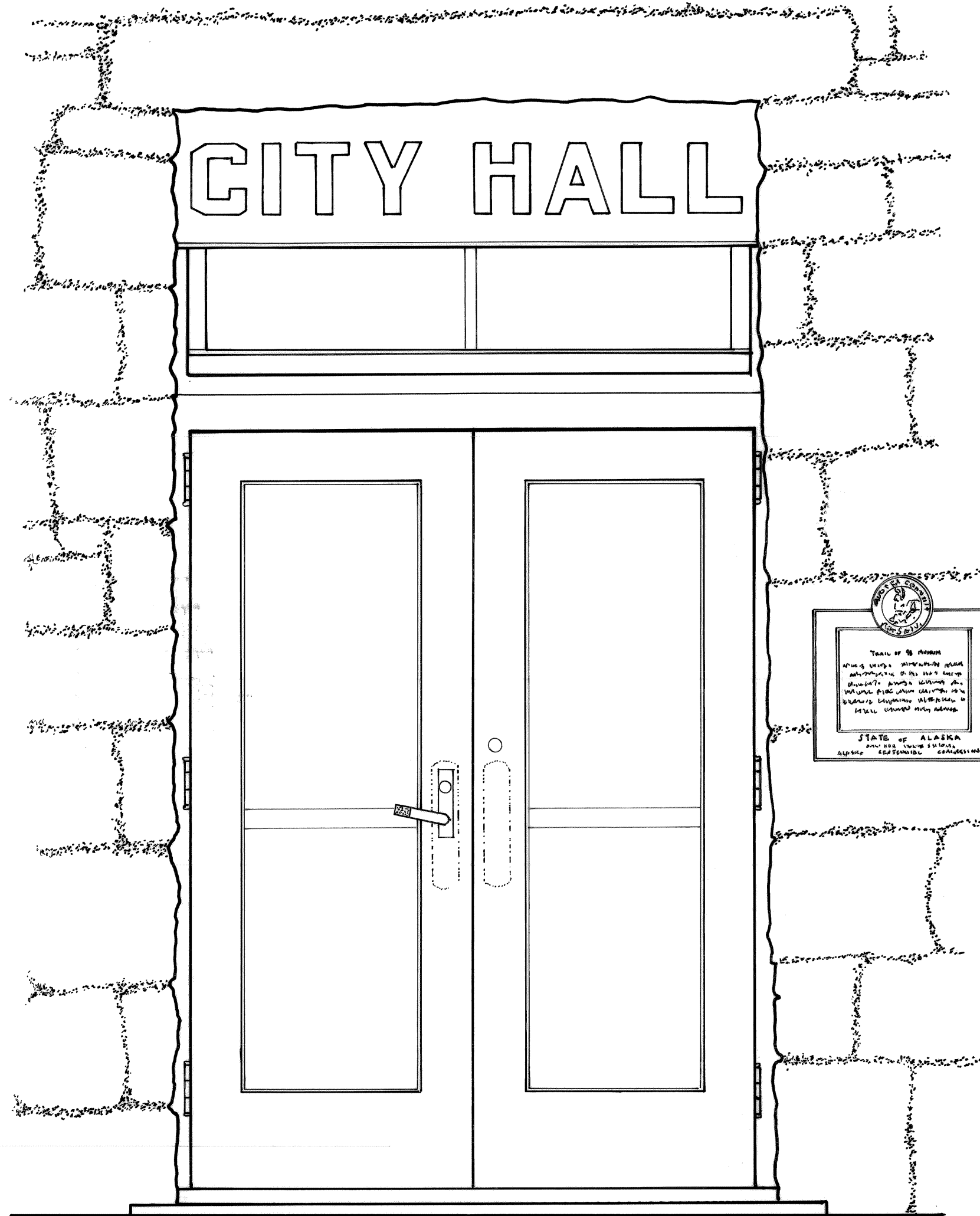
WALL CONSTRUCTION DETAIL
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"





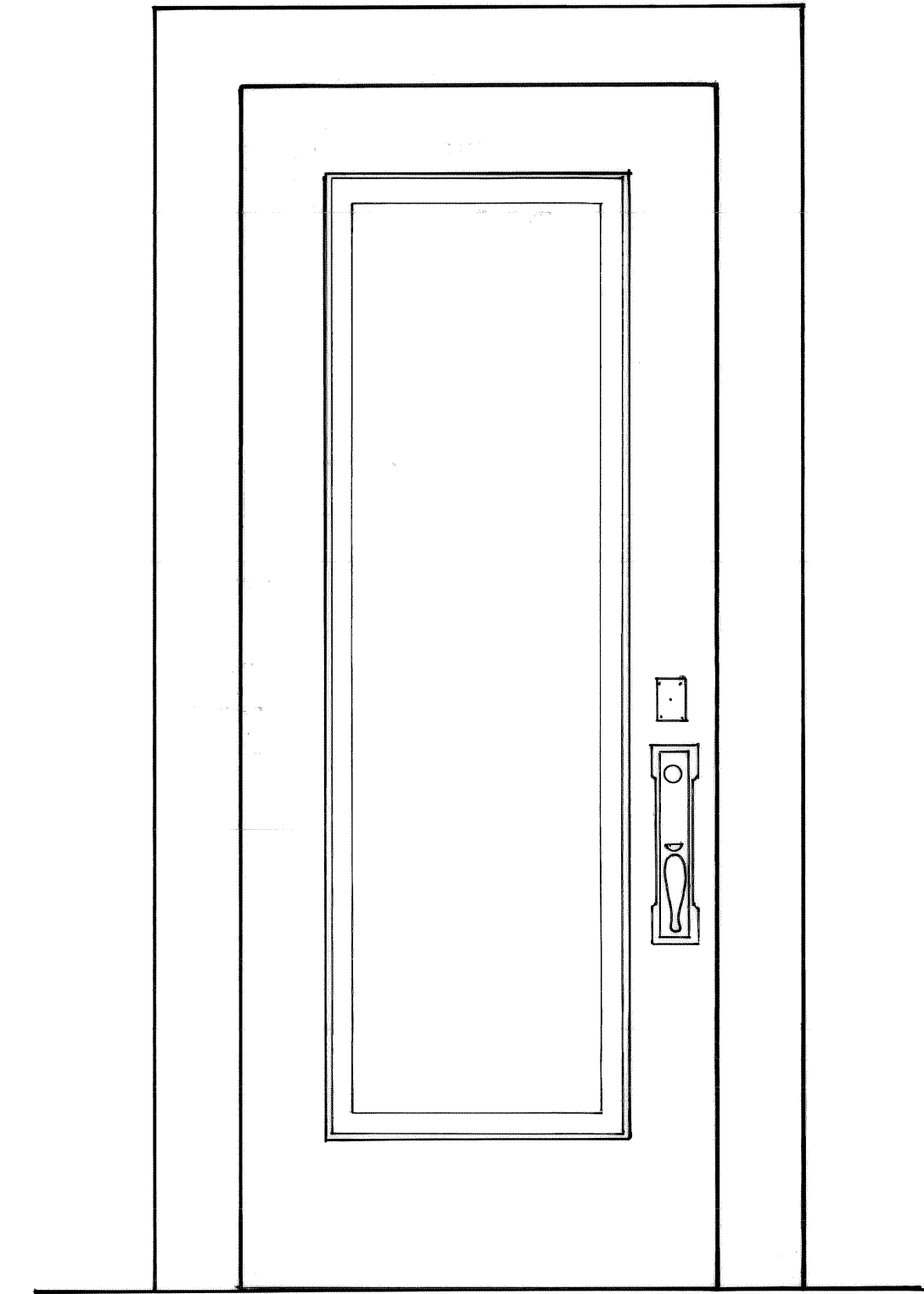
COUNCIL CHAMBERS DOOR

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



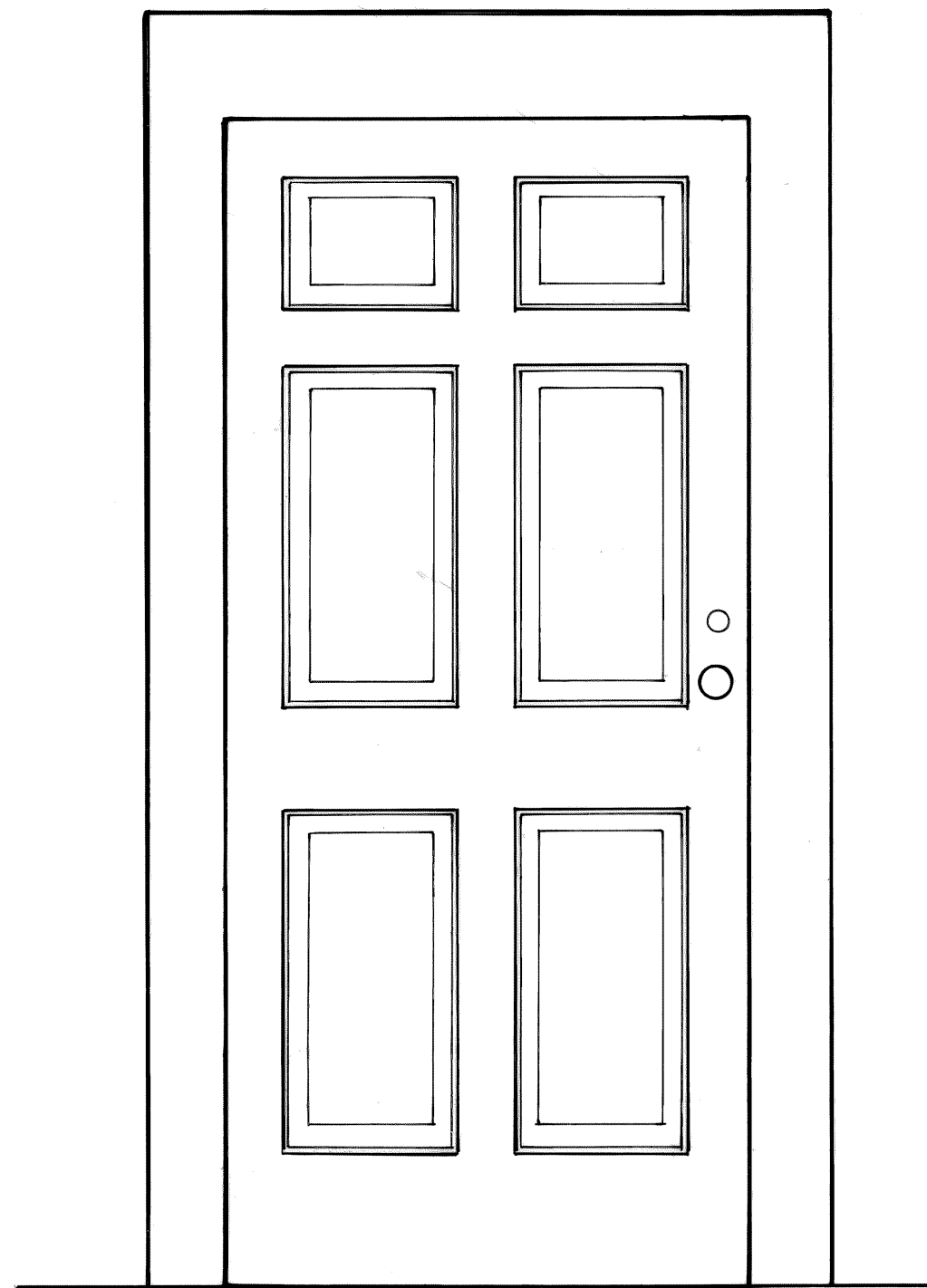
BUILDING ENTRANCE DOOR

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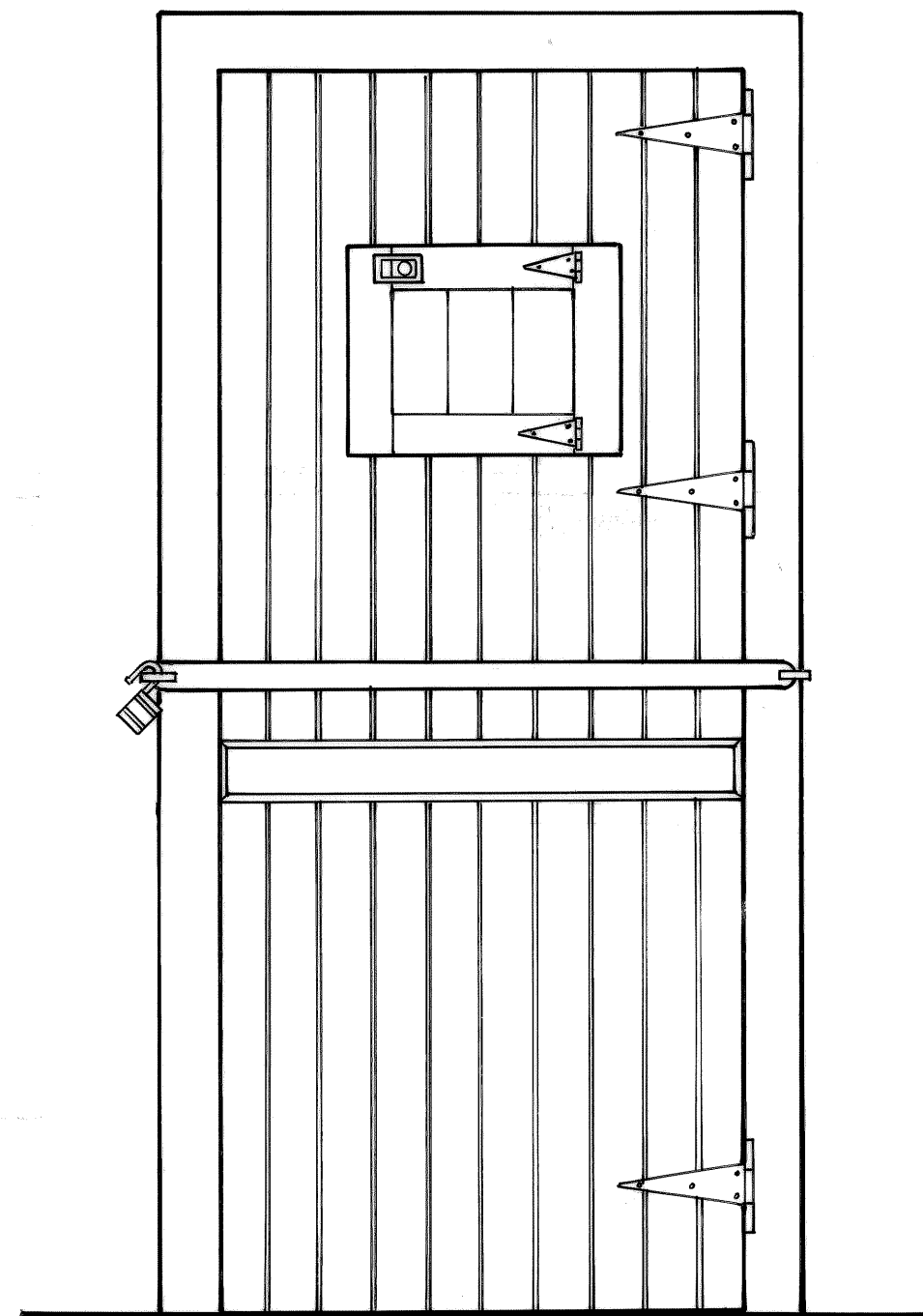
HALLWAY DOOR

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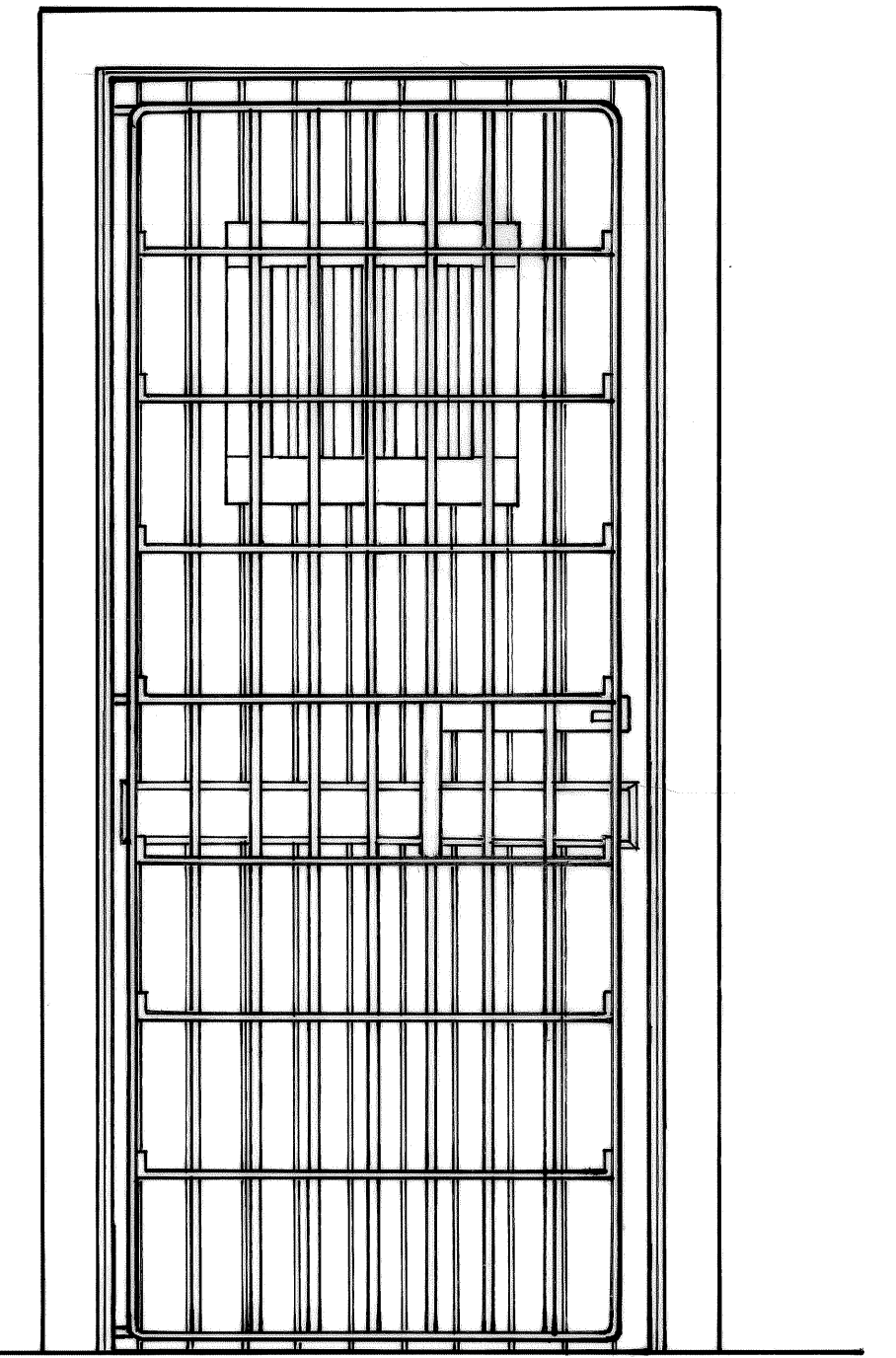
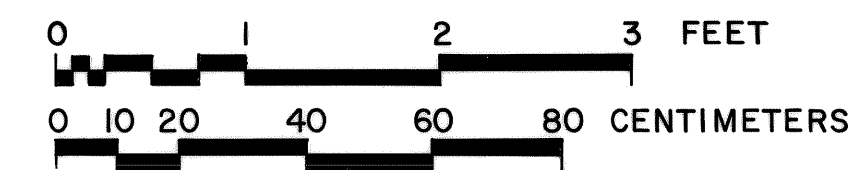
POLICE STATION DOOR

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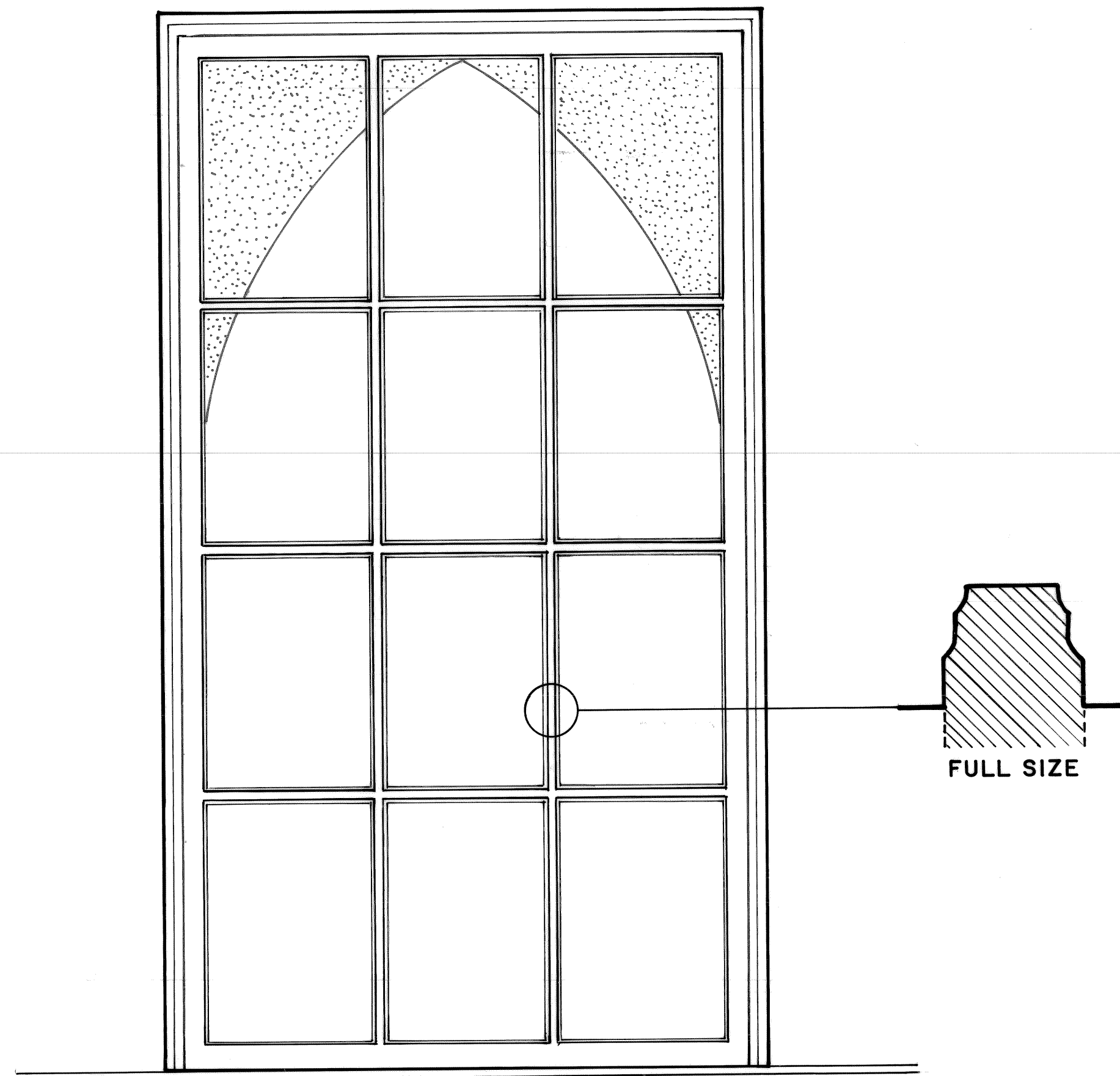
JAIL DOOR (EXTERIOR VIEW)

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

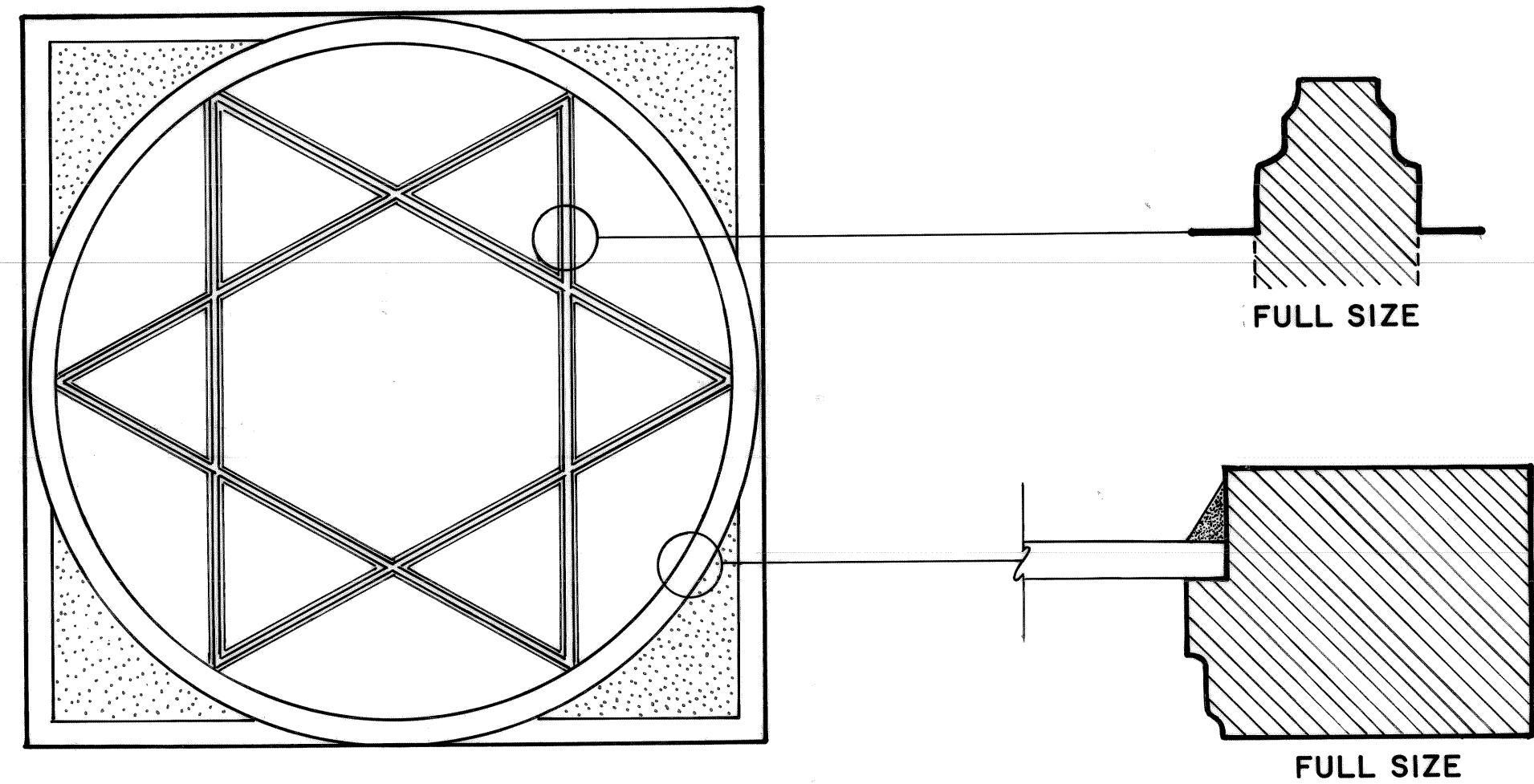


JAIL DOOR (INTERIOR VIEW)

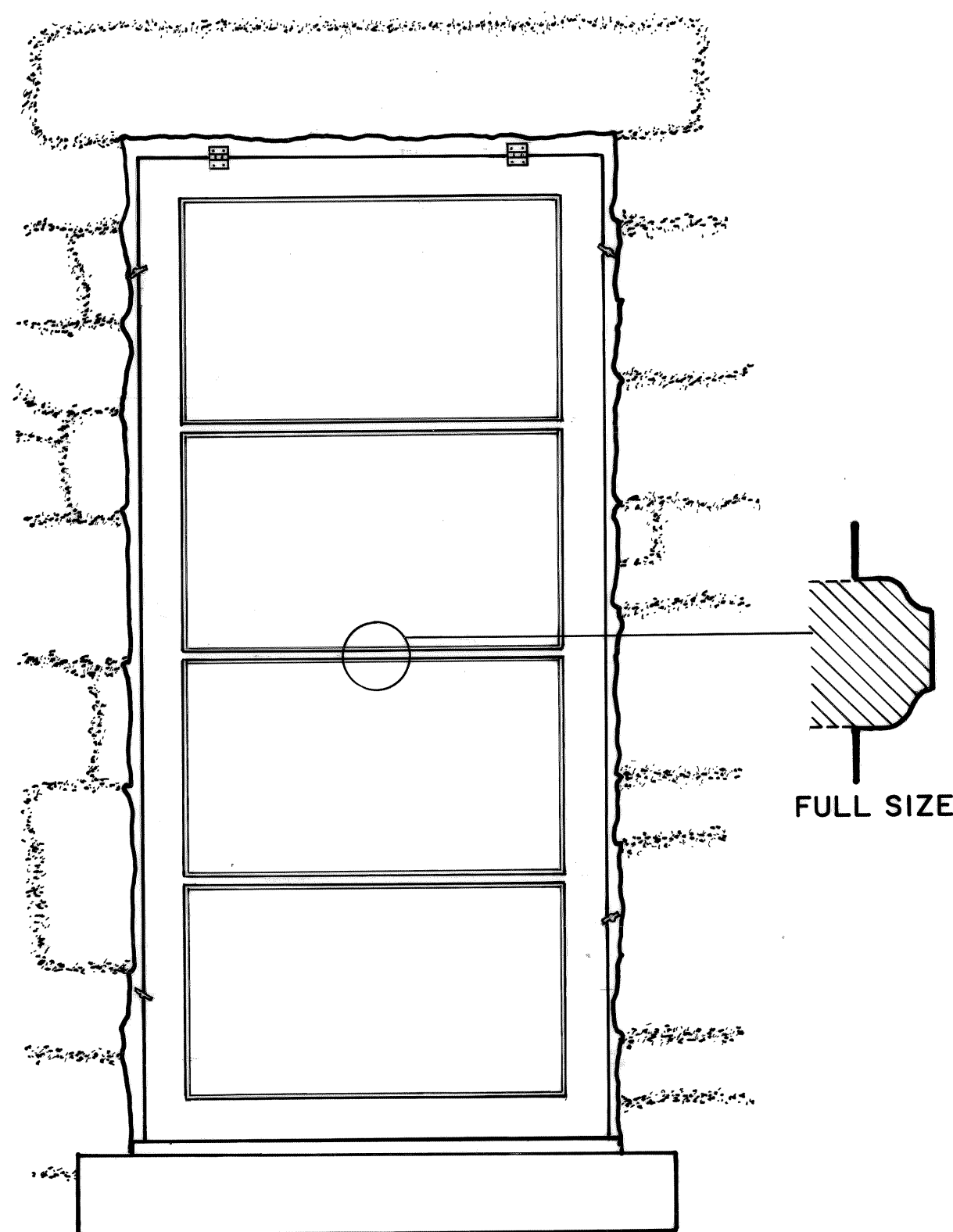
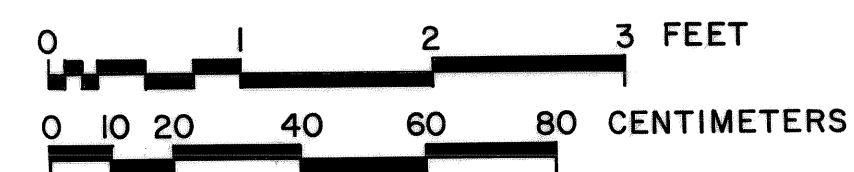
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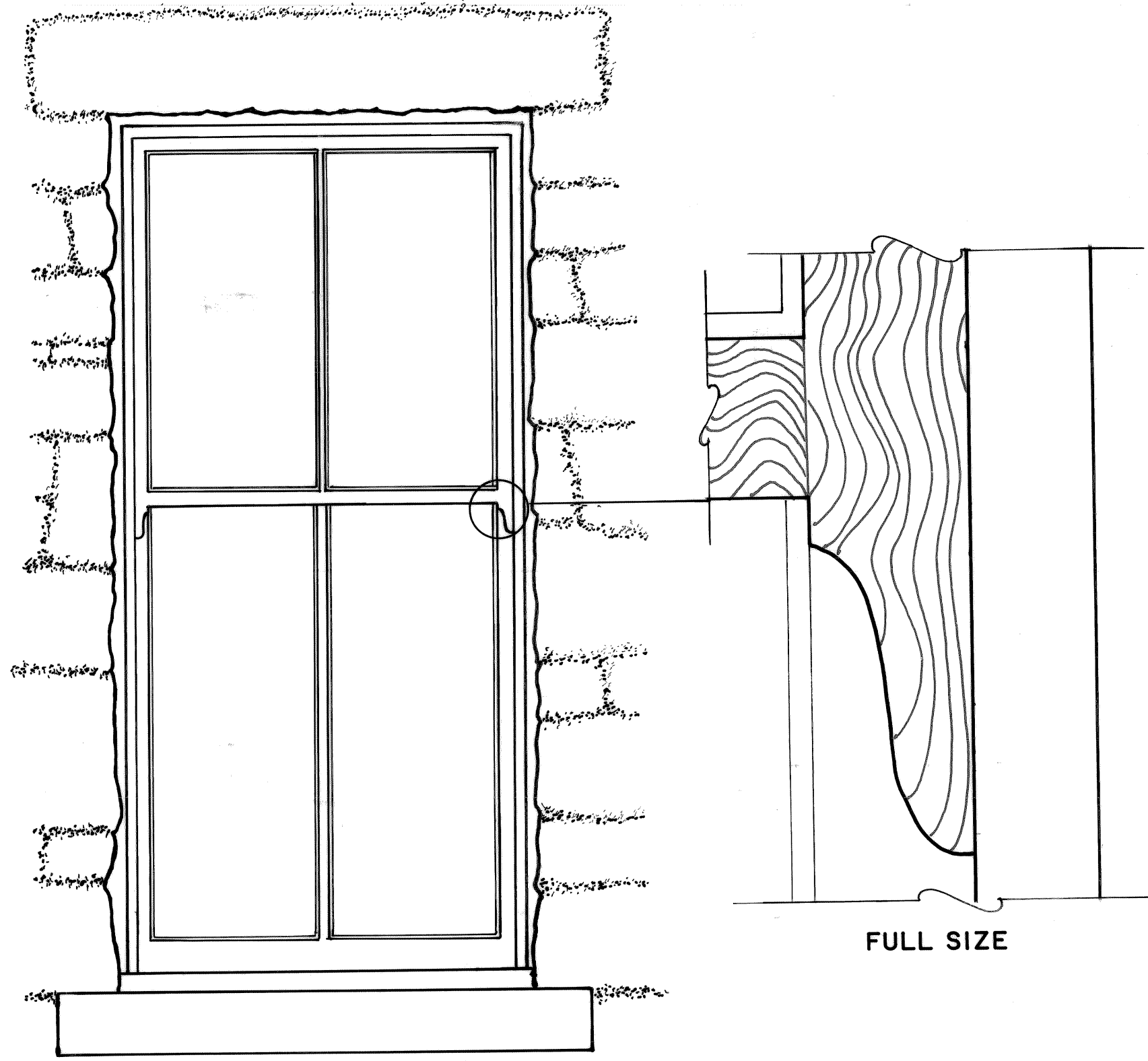
LARGE "GOTHIC" WINDOW
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



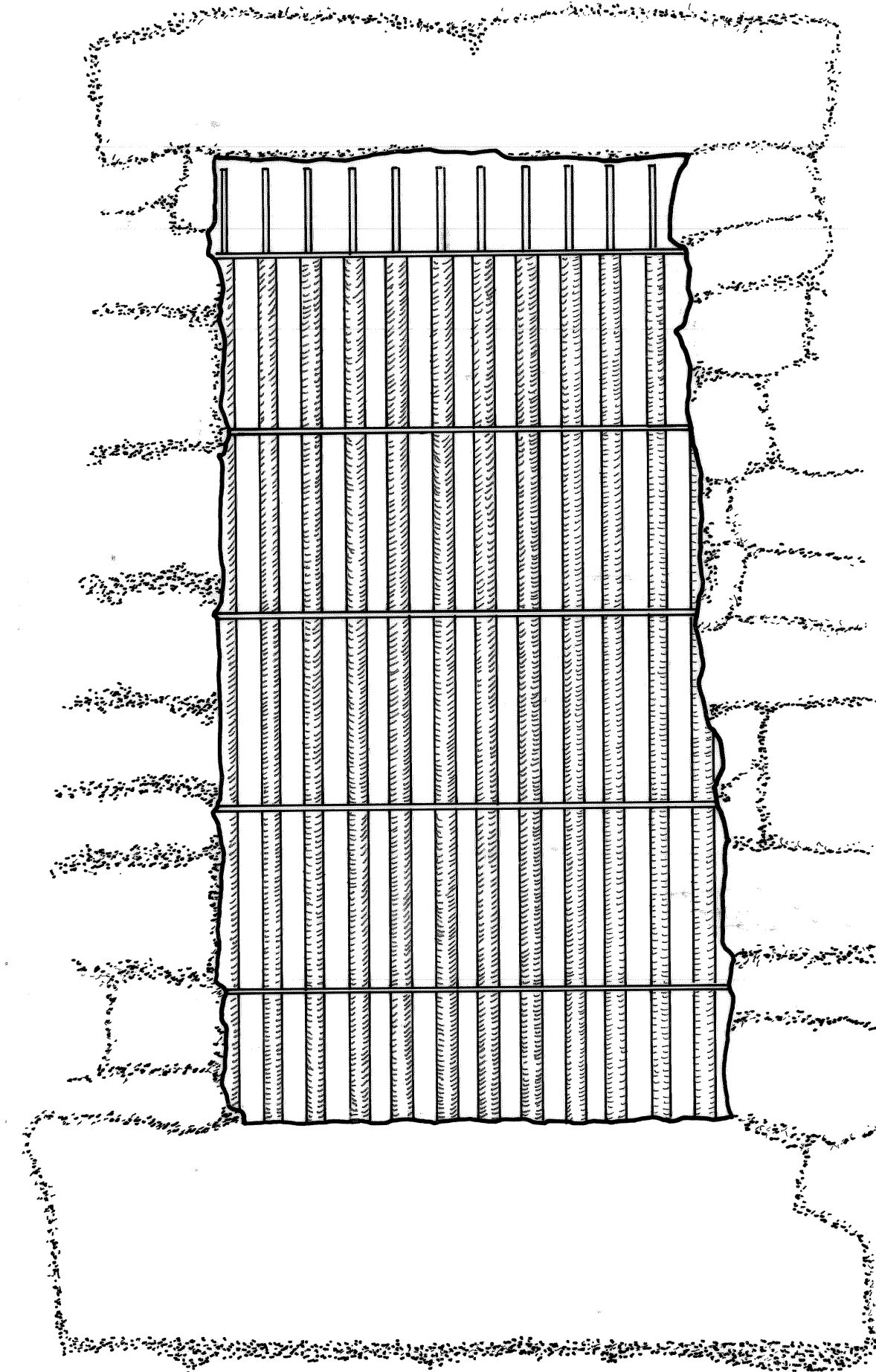
OCULUS
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



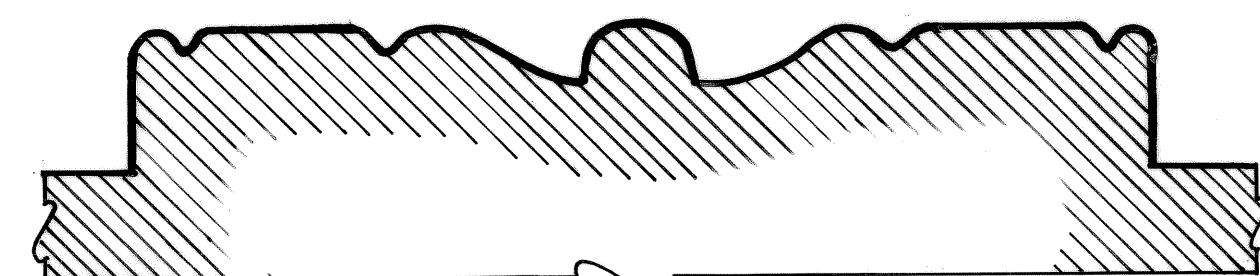
EXTERIOR STORM WINDOW
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOW (EXTERIOR)
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

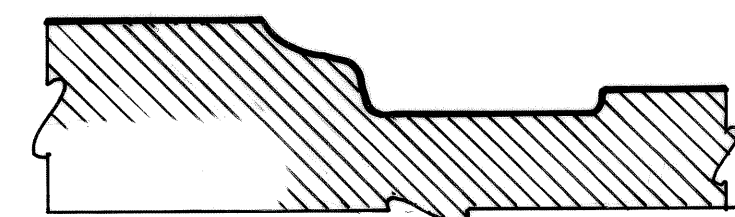


JAIL CELL WINDOW (EXTERIOR)
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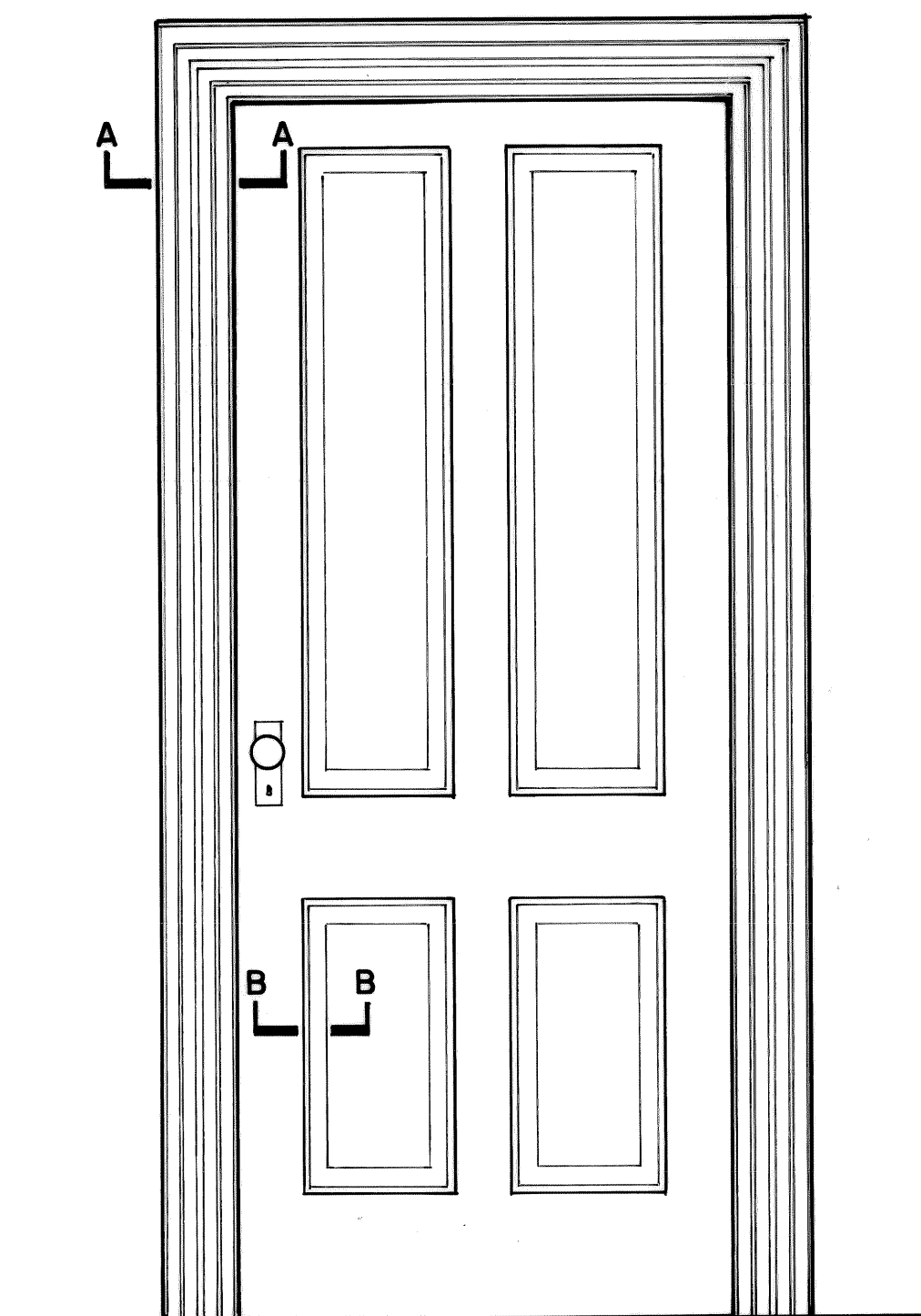
TRIM DETAIL (A-A)

FULL SCALE



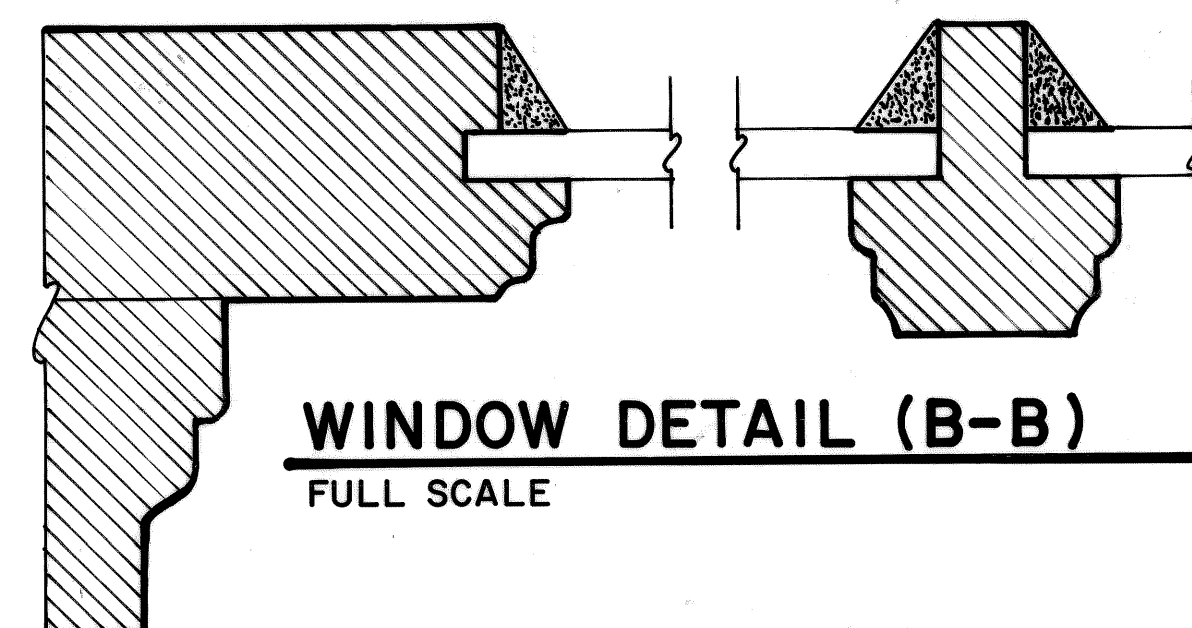
PANEL DETAIL (B-B)

FULL SCALE



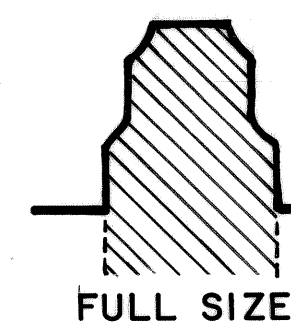
TYPICAL PANELLED DOOR

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

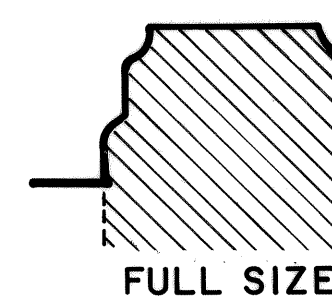


WINDOW DETAIL (B-B)

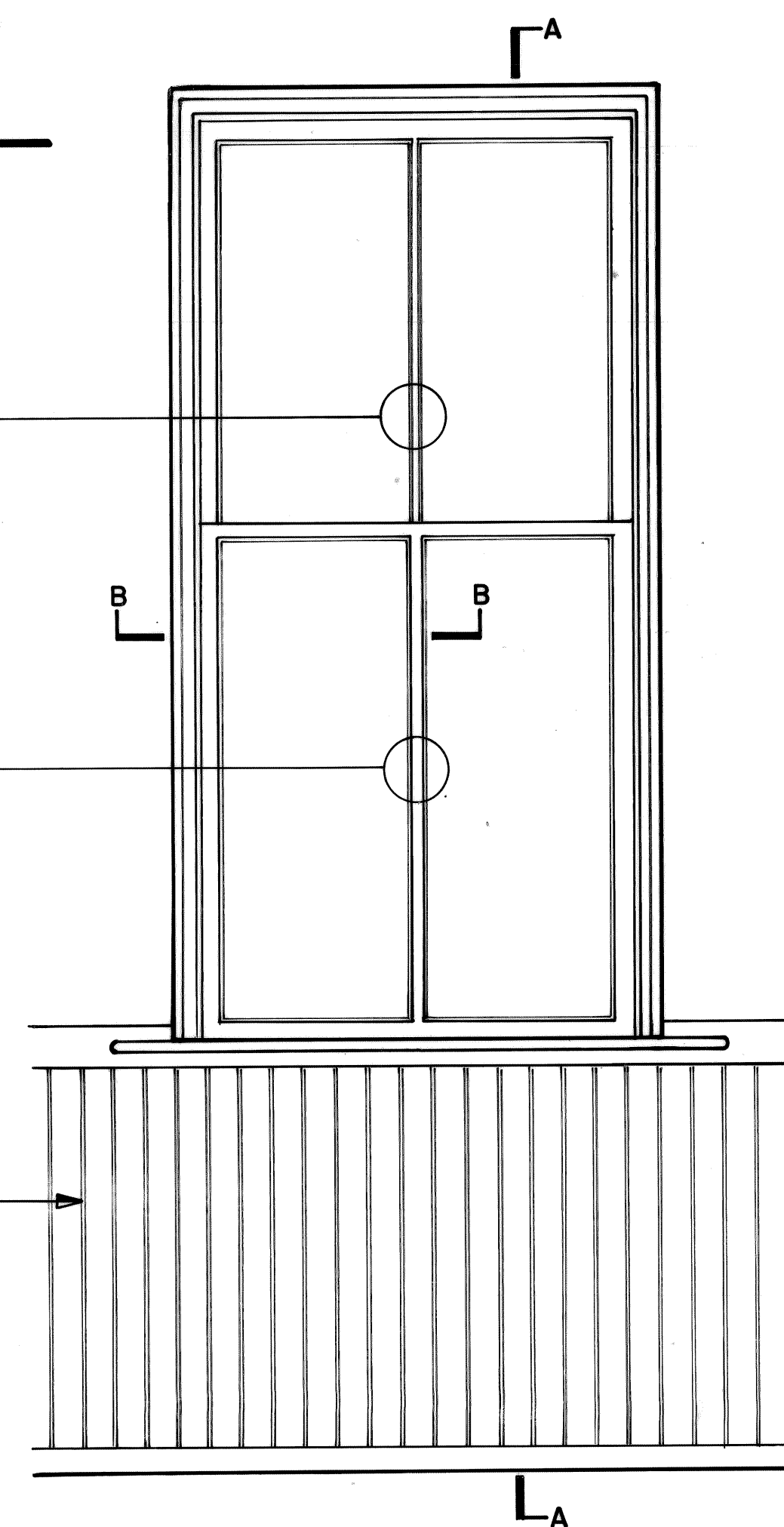
FULL SCALE



FULL SIZE

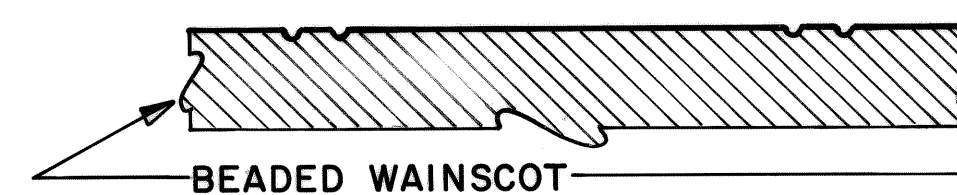


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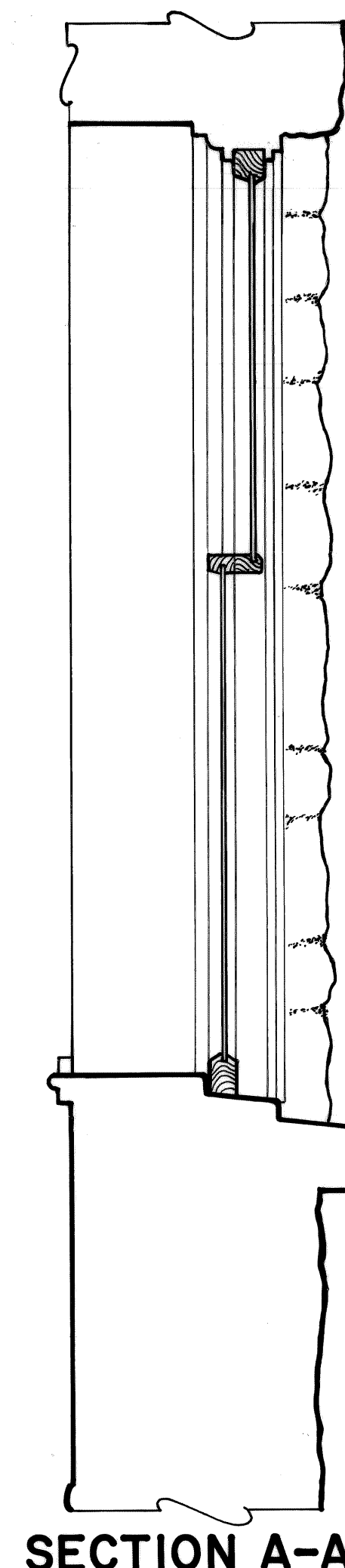


DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOW

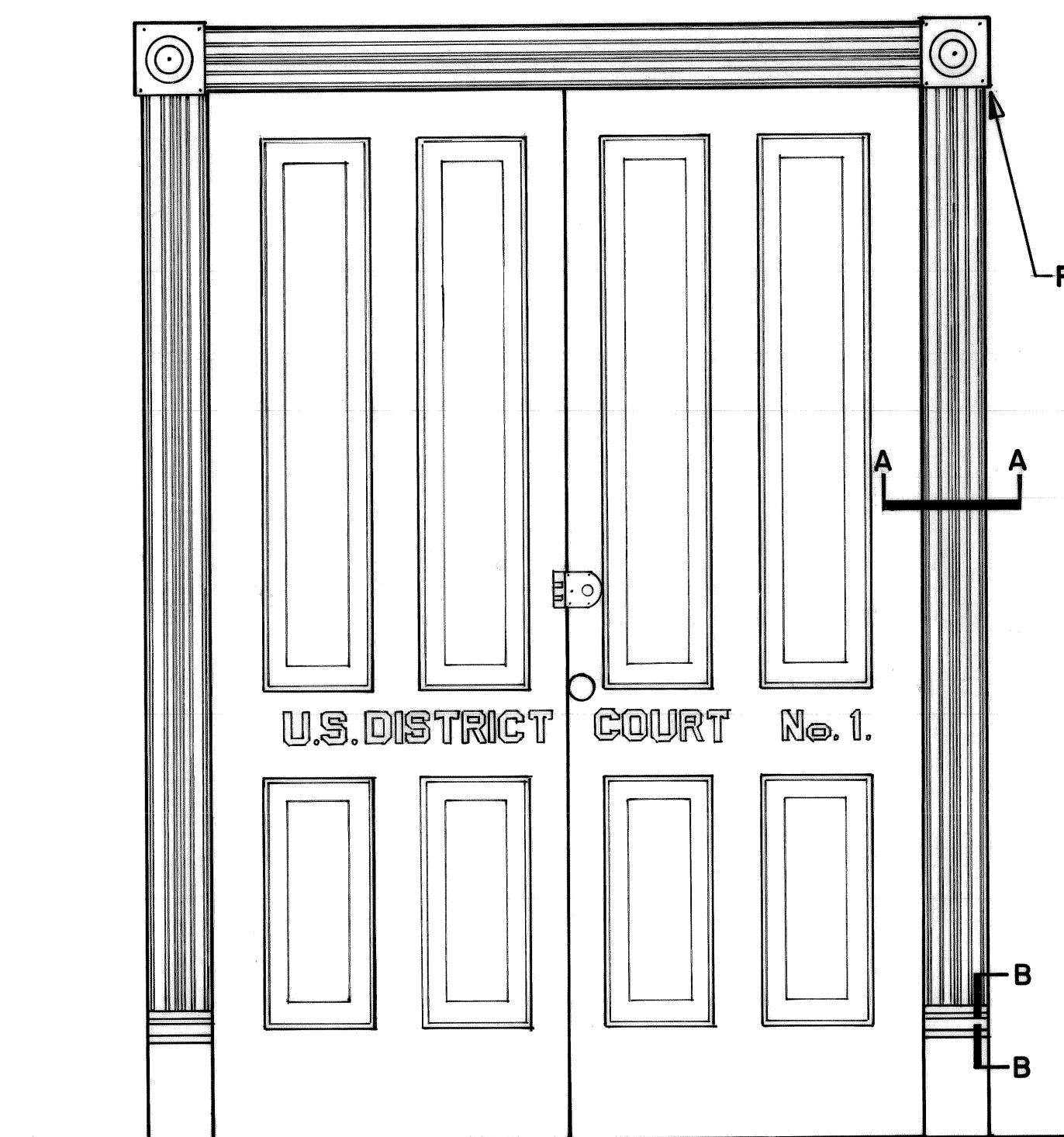
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BEADED WAINSCOT

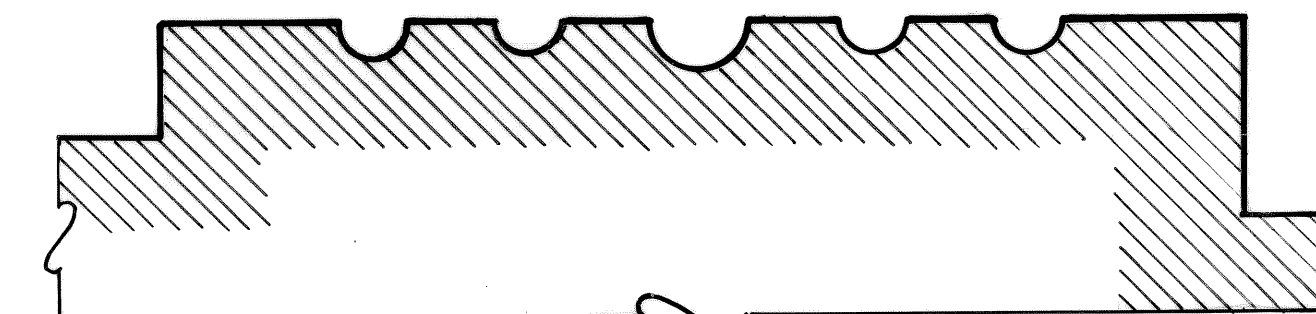


SECTION A-A



COURTROOM DOOR

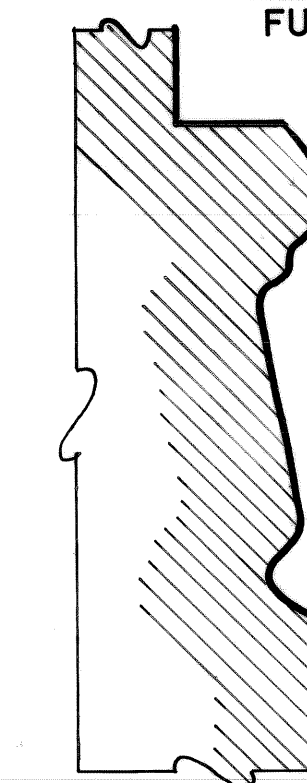
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ROSETTE

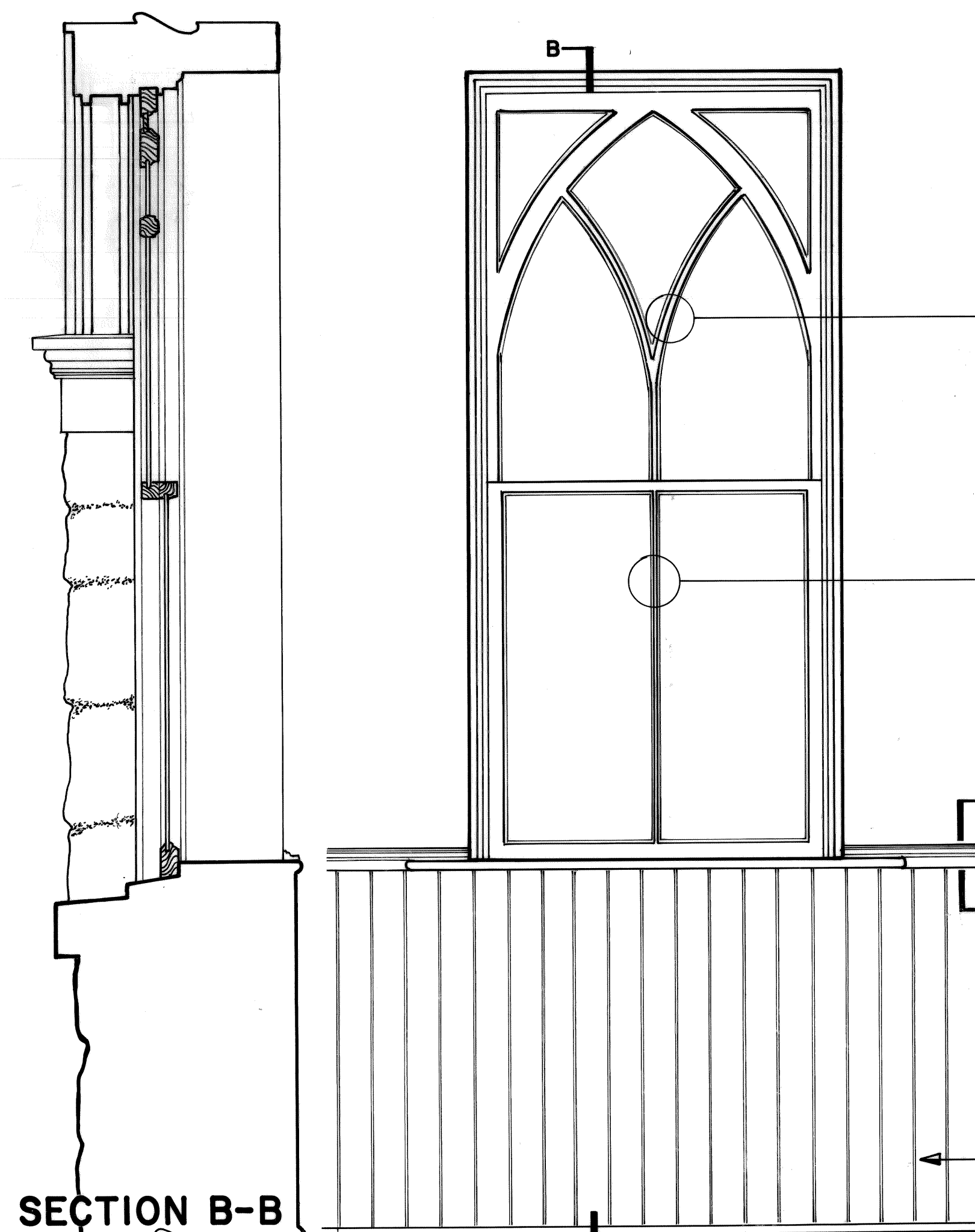
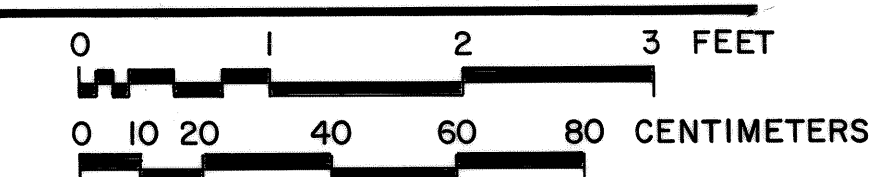
TRIM DETAIL (A-A)

FULL SCALE



TRIM DETAIL (B-B)

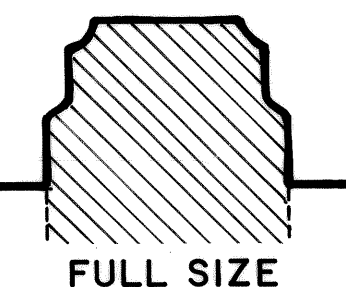
FULL SCALE



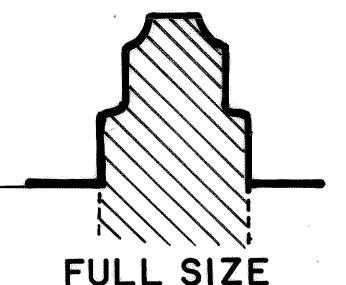
SECTION B-B

SMALL GOTHIC WINDOW

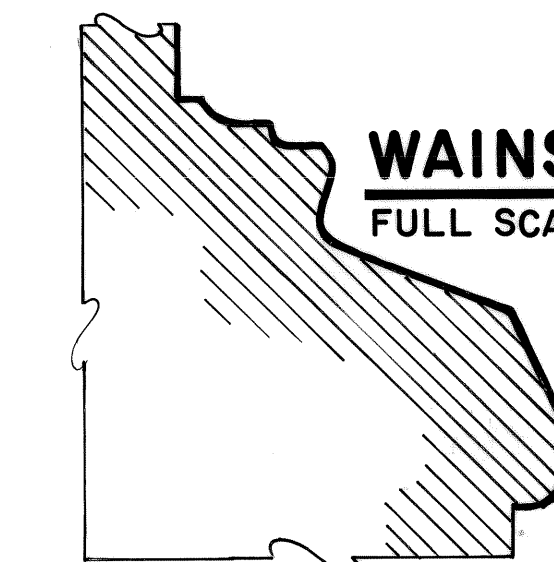
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FULL SIZE

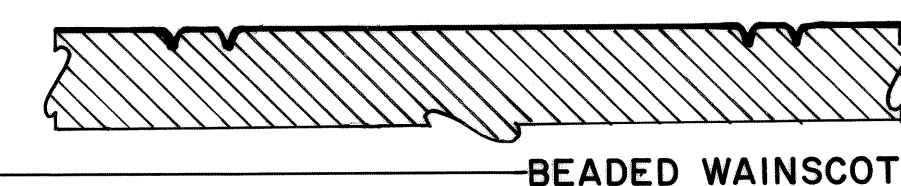


FULL SIZE



WAINSCOT TRIM (A-A)

FULL SCALE



BEADED WAINSCOT