

Tempe Municipal Building
31 East 5th Street
Tempe
Maricopa County
Arizona

HABS No. AZ-142

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P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

TEMPE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Name: Tempe Municipal Building

Location: 31 East 5th Street
Tempe
Maricopa County
Arizona

Present Owner, Present Occupant, Present Use:

The City of Tempe presently owns and uses the facility. The occupants are:

Third Floor: City Manager, City Attorney,
City Clerk, Personnel Director,
Public Works Director,
Management Services Director

Second Floor: Finance Director, Accounting,
Licenses, Purchasing

First Floor: Reception, Customer Service

Basement: Council Chambers

Lower Level: Engineering, Data Processing
Equipment, Duplicating, Building
Safety, Planning, Personnel.

Significance:

The Tempe Municipal Building, erected in 1971, was designed to be a unique and innovative focal point, the purpose of which was to supply adequate space for the growing community's city government. Aesthetics, accessibility, energy conservation, and expandability were the major components of its architectural concepts. In addition, the building was to provide maximum space without overpowering the available site -- near Tempe's Central business district. This particular location was selected by the City Council to show confidence in the downtown area; consequently, it was felt that the building should exemplify progress in government yet have a timeless beauty that would be compatible with future redevelopment.

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. The structure, which was built during 1969-1971, was dedicated on October 2, 1971.
2. The architects selected for the project were Michael and Kemper Goodwin, residents of Tempe, whose previous work included the Language and Literature Building on the Arizona State University campus. The designing architects were Rolf O. Osland and Michael Goodwin.
3. Included among the builders, contractors, and suppliers were:

Structural Engineers: Hanlyn, Mann, and Anderson
Mechanical Engineers: Lowry and Sorensen
General Contractors: M.M. Sundt Construction Company
Phoenix, Arizona

Glass: CE Glass, Pennsauken, N.J.

Aluminum Entrances: Republic Aluminum Company, Richardson
Texas

Windowwall Fabrication and Glazing: Volkmer Mfg., Dallas

Porcelain Panels: Wolverine Porcelain Enameling Company,
Detroit

Structural Gaskets: Standard Products Company,
Port Clinton, Ohio

Part II. Architectural Information

A. Description of Exterior

The central tower of the Tempe Municipal complex (which houses the city's administrative body) is a three-story structure shaped like an inverted pyramid. This tower rises from a basement level (2,025 square feet) in which are located the City Council Chambers (5,000 square feet). The forty-five foot square first floor contains 2,025 square feet; the second is a seventy-five foot square comprising 5,625 square feet; the third is a one-hundred foot square encompassing 10,000 square feet. The tower's roof measures as a one-hundred-and-twenty-six-foot square containing 15,876 square feet. The total tower area comprises 20,000 square feet.

It should be noted that a unique stair tower is attached to the inverted tower via bridges at each floor level. This tower, made of poured-in-place concrete, serves as a fire exit since it is not accessible as an entrance.

B. Historical Context: (excerpted from the Dedication pamphlet)

THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

In the mid 1960's it became obvious that existing municipal office buildings were inadequate. The City Manager and his staff shared a former fire station with the Personnel Officer, the Parks Department operated out of an old house, Engineering services were housed in an old adobe home, and the City Council chambers could hold only a handful of people. Every office was crowded and disjointed.

To show confidence in the downtown area the City Council chose to preserve the historic municipal building site and to construct its futuristic governmental center at the old address. The new complex is exciting in many respects.

In addition to enhancing the effectiveness of the municipal government, the City Council felt that the building should seem accessible and inviting to Tempe's citizens. It was felt that the building should exemplify progress in government yet have a timeless beauty that would be compatible with future redevelopment.

In order to build a structure containing in excess of 50,000 square feet without overpowering the site, the complex was designed to include a central tower with perimeter offices that are partially subterranean. The perimeter offices surround the central tower on three sides with a fourth side reserved for future expansion.

The architects sought to maximize the window area in the central tower but recognized the constraint imposed by Arizona's summer sun.

In most glass-walled structures, reflective glass or sun screens are employed to reduce heat transmitted to the interior. On this building, however, reflective glass would throw excessive heat across the open plaza and into the perimeter buildings. Sun screens would destroy the appearance of the glass cage design. To overcome these obstacles, the building was turned so that the smallest possible area is exposed directly to the mid-afternoon sun. The glass walls are set at forty-five degree angles upward. The building rises from a forty-five foot square first floor to a one hundred and twenty-six foot square roof. The use of sun-bronze tinted glass, together with the shade provided by the tiled walls, allows only eighteen percent of the sun's heat to pass through the windows on the hottest summer day.

Floor space is equally divided between the central pyramid and the perimeter buildings. The Mayor, City Manager and several key management services are located in the central pyramid. The departments with extensive, direct, day-to-day contact with the public, Planning, Building Inspection, Engineering and Parks and Recreation are located in the perimeter.



Because of the initial space requirement (50,000 square feet), the complex was designed to include partially subterranean buildings (20,000 square feet) forming a square with the tower at its center; presently, however, only three sides are being utilized. The roofs of these buildings double as walkways surrounding the tower; bridges over sunken gardens link the perimeter offices with the central structure.

The exterior walls of the inverted pyramid are mostly glass. Since reflective glass would have heated the perimeter area excessively and since sunscreens would have destroyed the aesthetics of the glass cage design, the selected glass was $\frac{1}{4}$ " tempered bronze-tinted polished plate glass. The non-glass portion of the exterior walls is composed of either window mullions or building structure. The exterior surfaces of these are porcelain. The spandrel panels between floors are composed of a laminated porcelain enamel panel, an air space, gypsum board, insulation, plywood (continuous between columns), and carpet.

The perimeter office walls facing the center tower are $\frac{1}{4}$ " tempered clear polished plate glass and insulated porcelain enamel panels; these are framed by an 8" rough-textured concrete structure.¹

B. Description of Interior

The general layout of the exterior consists of perimeter executive offices partitioned with glass panels. Remaining work areas reflect a flexible open-office system utilizing modular desk and shelving arrangements.

The sense of openness is enhanced by the white rough-textured ceiling panels and smooth perimeter walls (the windows of which are draped in open-weave off-white fabric). Gold tweed carpeting covers all floor area. Additional color is provided by yellow filing cabinets, orange and yellow chairs, and orange or yellow shelving. At the center of each level are the elevator and stairwell.

C.

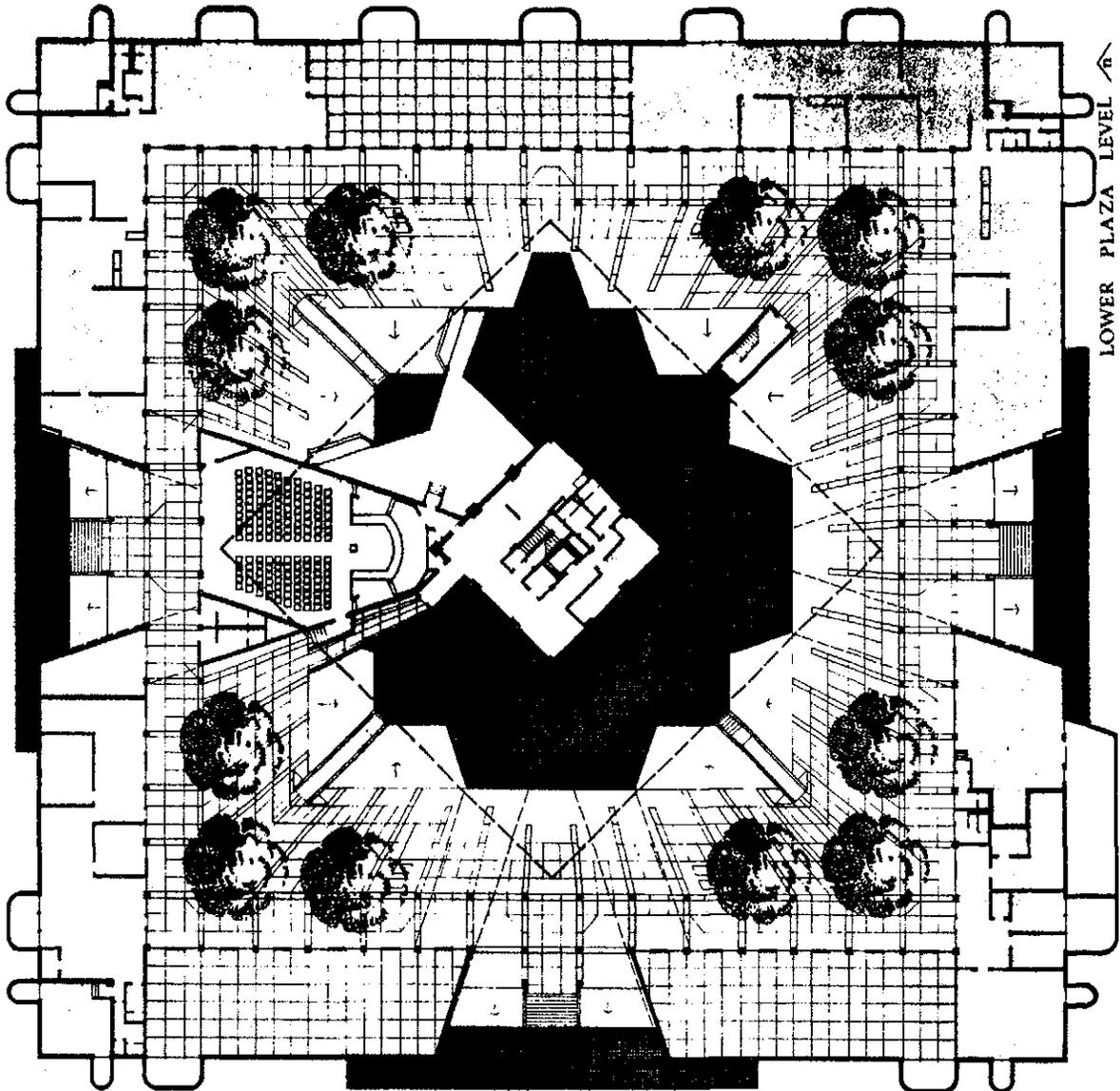
The building faces have been oriented NE, NS, SE, and SW so as to improve the shading effect of the sloped walls. Although the building is accessible on all four sides, the NW entrance is considered to be the primary one.

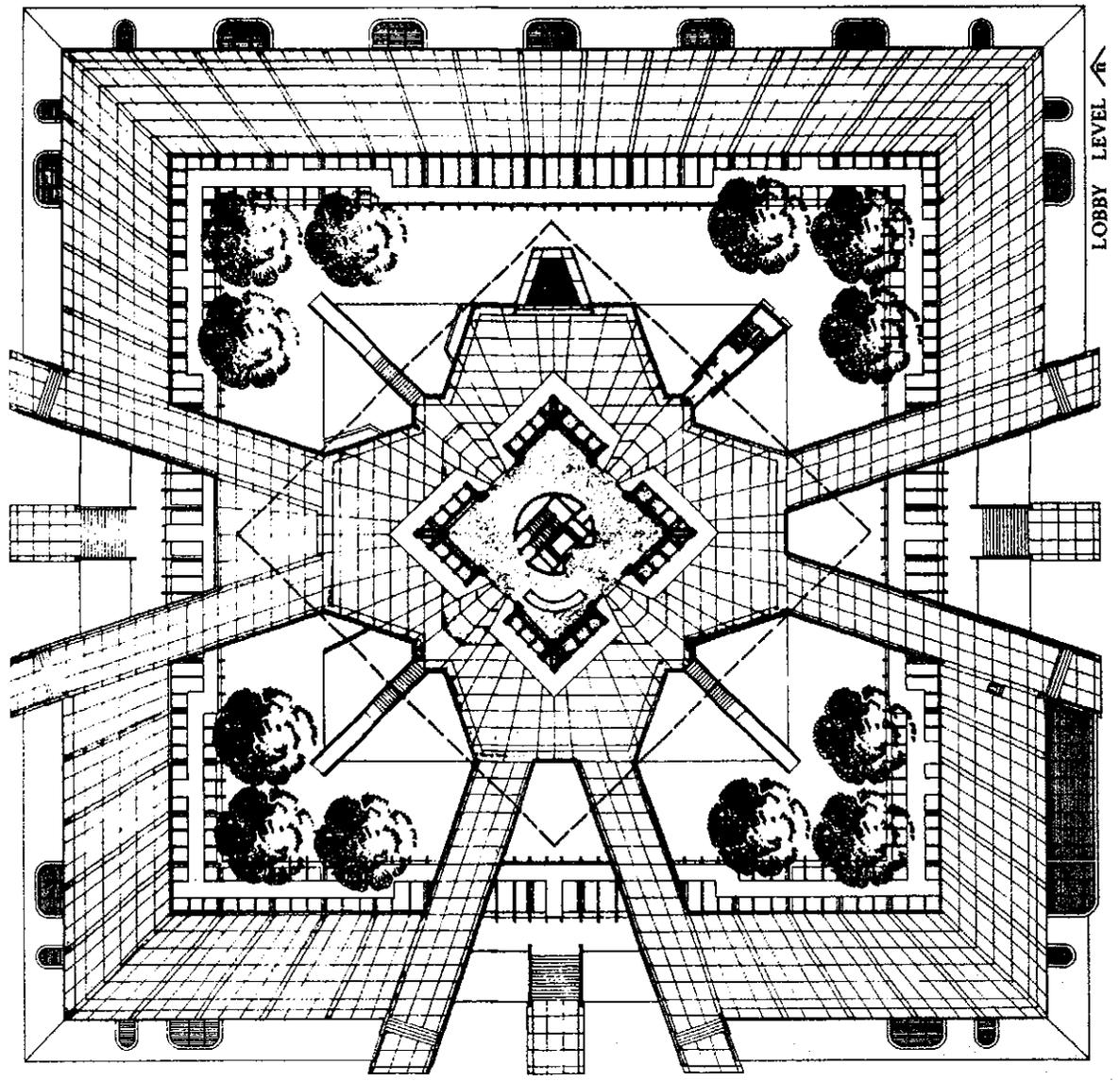
1. This material has been excerpted from Building Description Report on the Tempe Municipal Building by William C. Weinaug, the Pennsylvania State University, October 13, 1980.

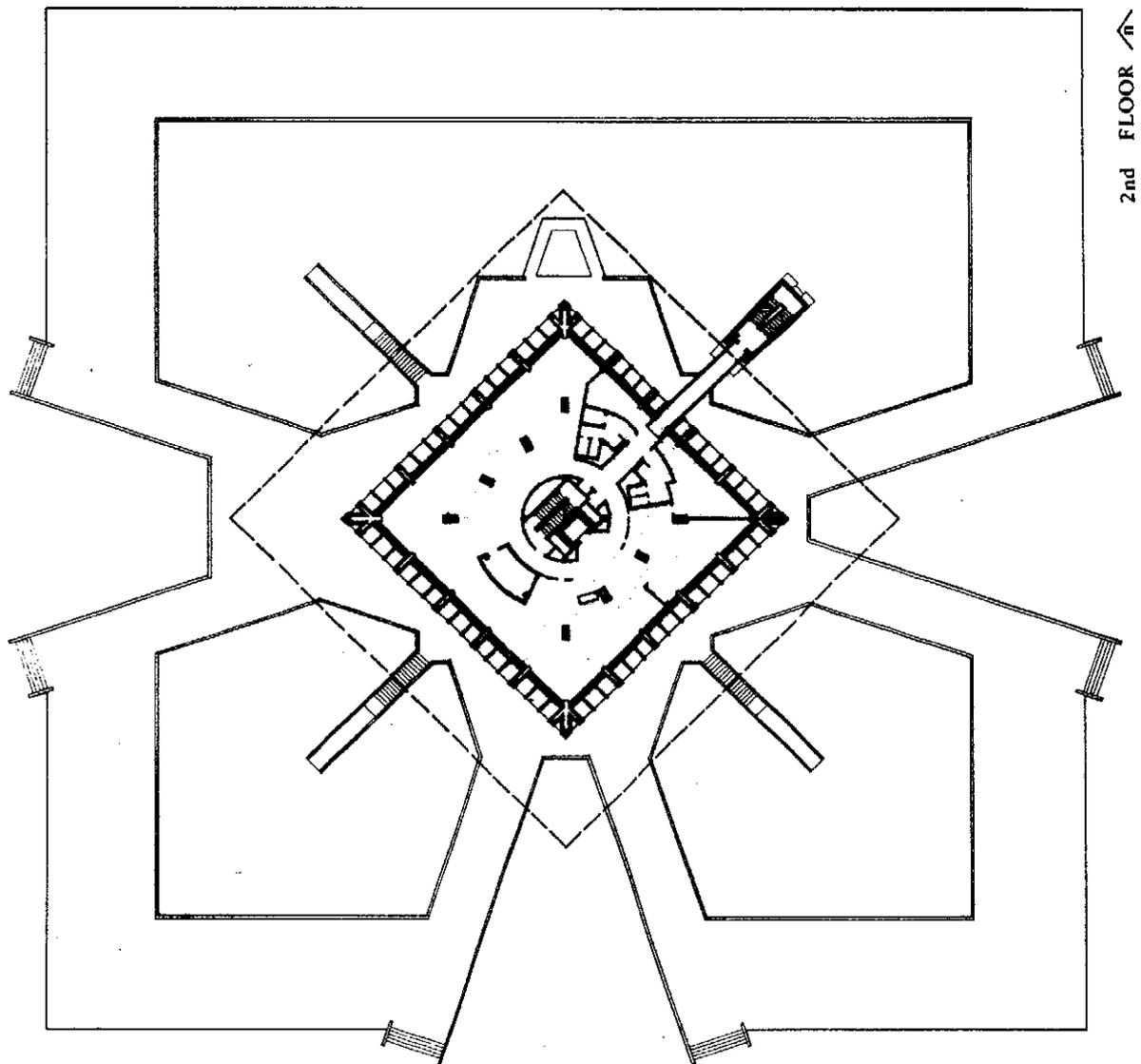
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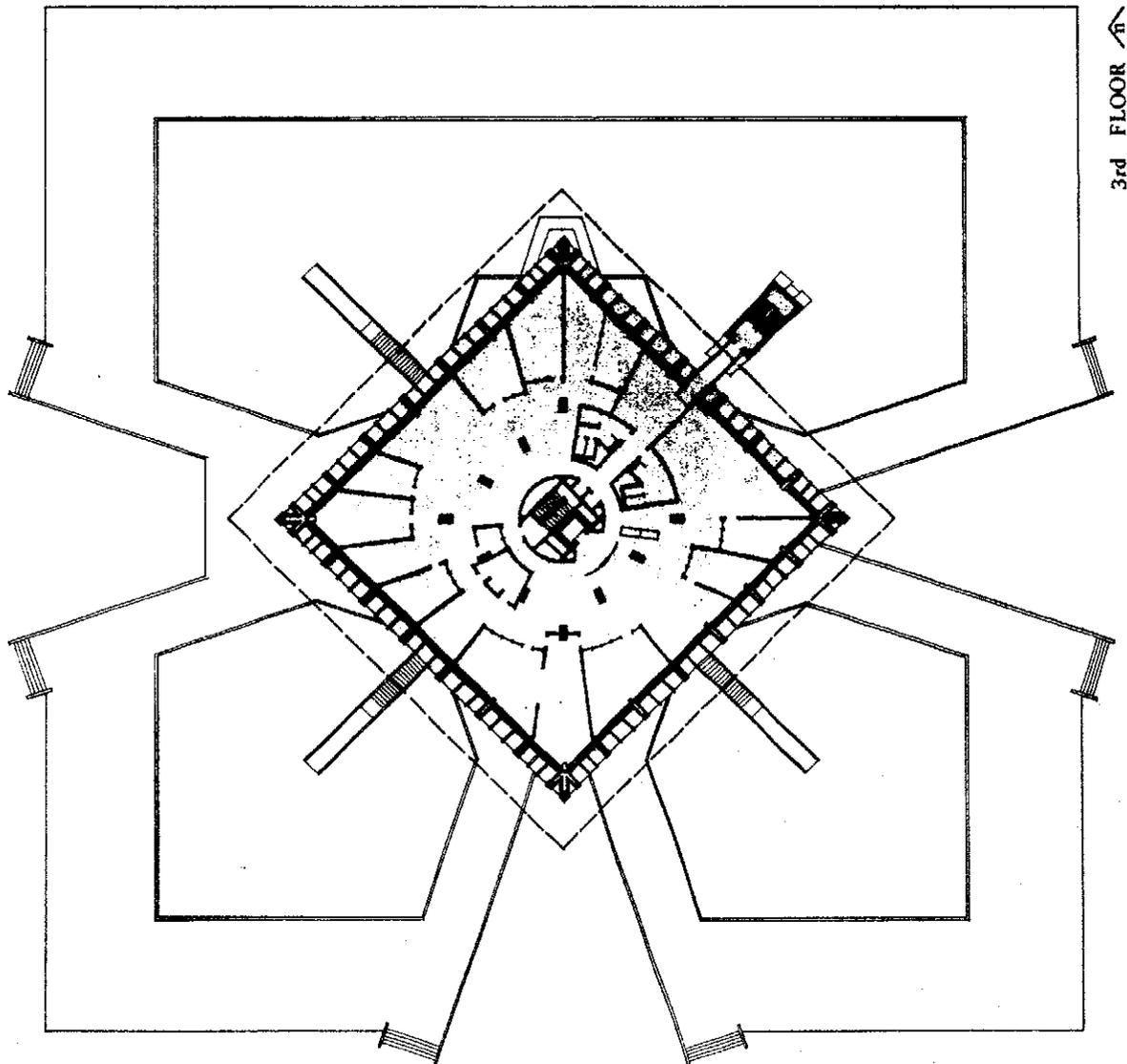
Landscaping surrounding the central tower utilizes a terraced subterranean garden surrounded by the perimeter offices. Plantings include manicured hedges, a variety of trees from pines to palms, and flowering bushes.

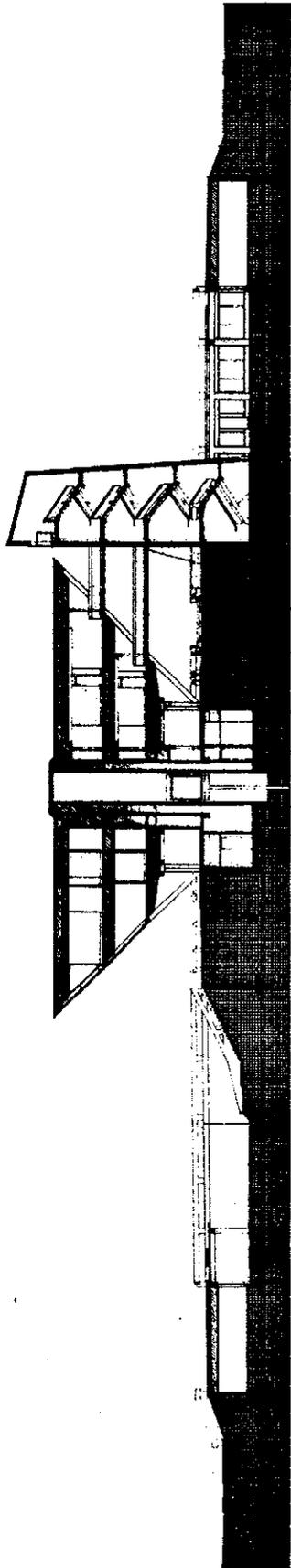
Prepared by Maryanne C. Corder
Management Intern
August 28, 1981











SECTION A-A

1. This drawing shows the construction of the window and door frames. The window frame is shown in section A-A and the door frame is shown in section B-B. The window frame is made of 2x4 lumber and the door frame is made of 2x6 lumber. The window frame is shown in section A-A and the door frame is shown in section B-B. The window frame is made of 2x4 lumber and the door frame is made of 2x6 lumber. The window frame is shown in section A-A and the door frame is shown in section B-B. The window frame is made of 2x4 lumber and the door frame is made of 2x6 lumber.

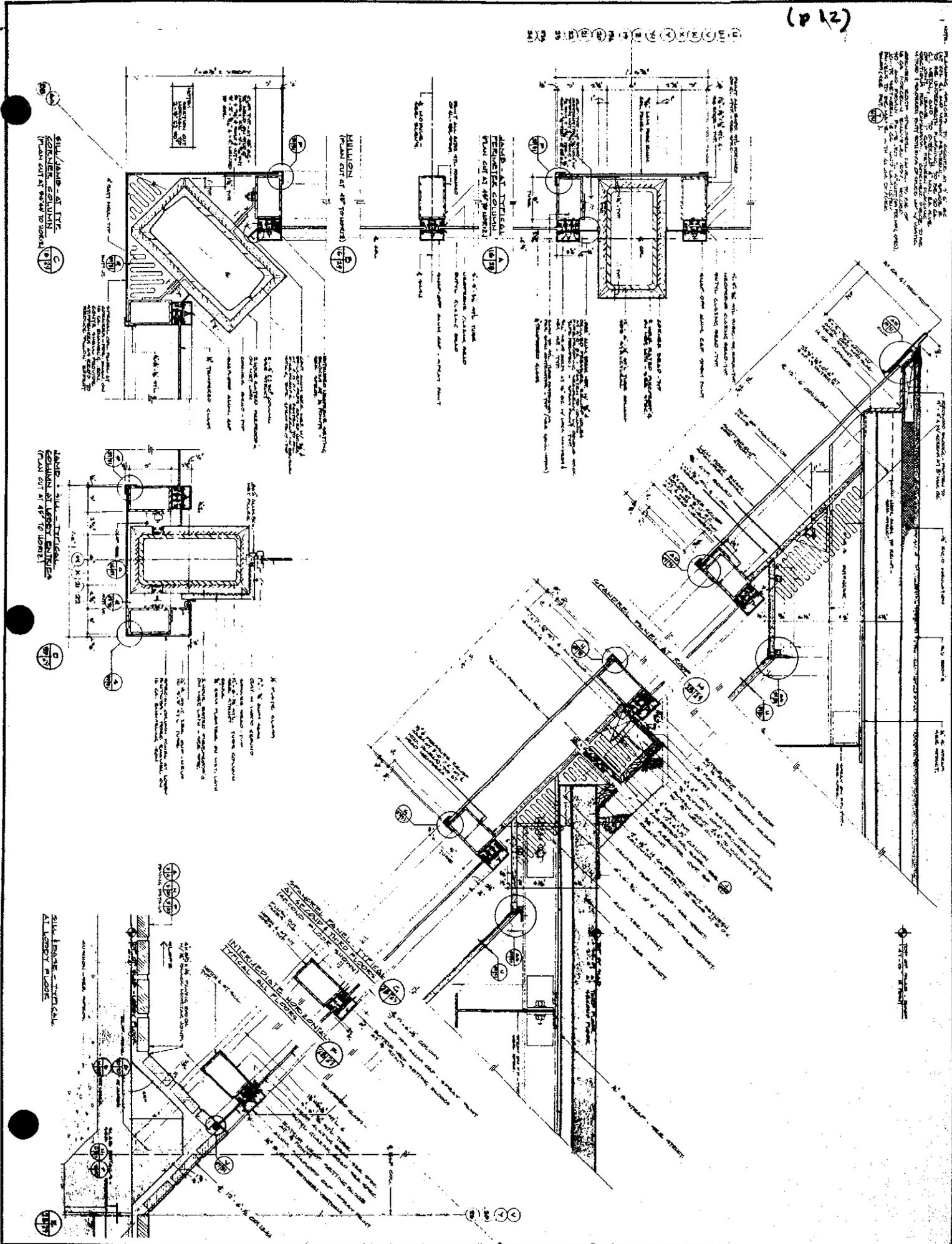
JAMB - AT TYPICAL
FINISHED COLUMN
PLAN CUT AT 48" TO JAMB

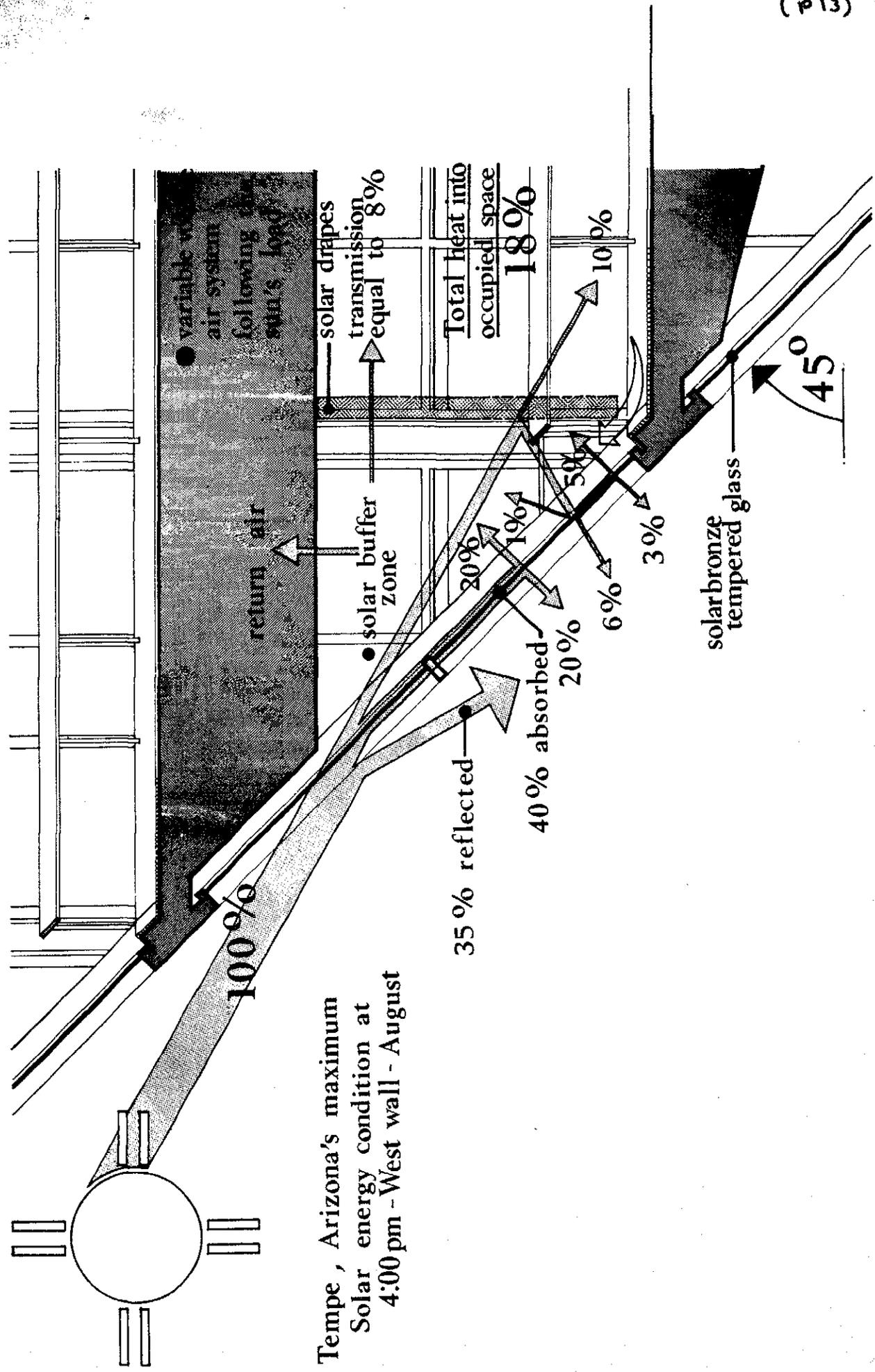
SILL/JAMB - AT TYPICAL
FINISHED COLUMN
PLAN CUT AT 48" TO JAMB

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Tempe, Arizona's maximum
Solar energy condition at
4:00 pm - West wall - August