

ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, HITCHCOCK HALL
2700 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-349-S
DC-349-S

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:
ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, HITCHCOCK HALL
(Building No. 37)
2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Southeast, 588-604 Redwood
Street, Southeast
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-349-S
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, HITCHCOCK HALL (BUILDING 37)

HABS NO. DC-349-S

Location: 588–604 Redwood Drive SE, Washington, D.C., on the West Campus of St. Elizabeths Hospital

Present Owner: General Services Administration, United States Government

Present Use: Vacant, rehabilitation in progress (rehabilitation of St. Elizabeths West Campus in progress)

Significance: Hitchcock Hall is significant for its association with the daily life of patients and staff on the St. Elizabeths campus. As a major public gathering space, Hitchcock Hall was the scene of social gatherings for the entire campus. Starting in the 1940s, Hitchcock Hall was also used for therapeutic purposes. The basement was retrofitted as a theater space for a treatment program referred to as psychodrama. As a major recreational and theater building, Hitchcock Hall is unique on the St. Elizabeths West Campus. Hitchcock Hall is an important component of the development of the campus after 1903 under the guidance of Superintendent William White.

Hitchcock Hall is also significant for its architectural design. Although it post-dates most of the “lettered” group of buildings constructed in a quadrangle arrangement at the south end of the campus beginning in 1903, Hitchcock Hall was designed by Sunderland Brothers Architects to complement the Italian Renaissance Revival-style of the lettered building group designed by Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge. Similar to the buildings of the lettered group, Hitchcock Hall incorporates brick masonry detailing, a clay tile hip roof, and exterior terra cotta ornamentation. Along with the lettered building group, Hitchcock Hall defines the perimeter of the west campus quadrangle. On the interior, the building includes a public lobby and main theater space with high-quality materials and ornamentation. Later alterations to finishes and features of the interior slightly diminish the historic character of some of the interior spaces.

Historians: Mike Ford, Kenneth Itle, Tim Penich, and Deborah Slaton, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1908–1910¹
2. Architect: Sunderland Brothers Architects²

¹ 1908 archival photographs of construction process, 1910 archival photographs.

² *Historic Resources Management Plan*, 78.

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: St. Elizabeths Hospital (then the Government Hospital for the Insane) was placed under the control of the Department of the Interior by an act of Congress on March 3, 1855. Thus when Hitchcock Hall was constructed in 1910, the hospital was under the control of the Department of the Interior and remained so until 1940, when St. Elizabeths was transferred to the Federal Security Agency. The Federal Security Agency was a new government agency that oversaw federal activities in the fields of health, education, and social insurance. In 1953, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was created. At that time several of the functions of the Federal Security Agency, including control of St. Elizabeths Hospital, were transferred to the new department.³ In 1968, St. Elizabeths was transferred to the National Institute of Mental Health, an agency within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Institute wanted to demonstrate how a large mental hospital could be converted into a smaller, more modern facility for training, service, and research.⁴ In 1979, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare became the Department of Health and Human Services with the creation of the Department of Education. In 1984, responsibility for twenty-one buildings, including two west campus structures, Hitchcock Hall and Hagan Hall (Building 38), was transferred to the District of Columbia through the Saint Elizabeths Hospital and District of Columbia Mental Health Services Act (Public Law 98-621).⁵ The District of Columbia retained control of Hitchcock Hall until 2004, when the property was transferred to the General Services Administration.⁶ The campus facilities were stabilized and the buildings were mothballed by 2005.⁷ In 2011, renovation of the building began, as part of the rehabilitation of the St. Elizabeths West Campus. In mid-2012, the renovation project for this building was suspended, and future continuation of the work is uncertain as of this writing.

Hitchcock Hall opened in 1910 and functioned as the auditorium for the St. Elizabeths west campus. It housed religious services, entertainment events, medical student graduations, and general assemblies for the hospital.⁸

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The building was constructed by Pavarini and Wyne, contractors.⁹
5. Original plans and construction: Hitchcock Hall was constructed as a rectilinear structure situated near the center of the west campus. Although completed eight years after the lettered buildings, Hitchcock Hall is associated with the group through similar materials, design aesthetic, and orthogonal positioning fronting the south lawn. The hall defines the north edge of the Richardson west campus expansion. The steel-framed structure was planned in 1907 as a two-story brick building with a steel-truss hip roof and a concrete pier foundation.¹⁰ The building was designed to complement the Italian Renaissance Revival-style of the existing lettered buildings.

Hitchcock Hall was constructed of red brick with a buff-colored water table and corbelled brick quoins and pilasters that separated the building into bays. The main entrance was located on the projecting center bay of the south elevation. The first floor consisted of a terra cotta water table,

³ *Federal Register*, accessed at <http://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/saint-elizabeth-s-hospital>, January 5, 2012.

⁴ 1970 *Annual Report*.

⁵ *Cultural Landscape Report*, Appendix B.72.

⁶ *Cultural Landscape Report*, V.2.

⁷ *St. Elizabeths West Campus Preservation, Design, & Development Guidelines*, 19. A photograph of the building taken in 2005 by FMG Architects shows the building in a stabilized and protected state.

⁸ Public Buildings Administration survey.

⁹ Specifications for the building reference materials and suppliers to match those utilized in the lettered buildings.

¹⁰ 1908 archival photographs of construction process.

rectangular window and door openings with expressed brick and terra cotta voussoirs, and terra cotta transom panels depicting decorative swags. The second floor had bull's-eye windows with square terra cotta window surrounds of a foliate relief. A clay tile hip roof with wide overhanging eaves surmounted the structure and was supported by wood brackets and consoles. The projecting center bay of the south elevation had a gable roof and housed the main entrance. The entry was marked by a two-story arched opening with expressed voussoirs and terra cotta agraffe. A wood-framed door with transom was capped by a broken pediment of terra cotta.¹¹

The interior of the hall consisted of a first and second floor lobby, central auditorium space, stage area with fly gallery, and functional basement. The main lobby and auditorium were significant spaces. A 1910 photograph of the main foyer depicts tall marble wainscot and door frames, tile floors, wood doors, and ornate iron stairways. From the lobby, a pair of leather-covered folding doors led into the theater. The auditorium had a steel-truss framed roof structure concealed by a ribbed barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling with an oculus located at the center.¹² The auditorium finishes consisted of wood floors, wood chair rail, plaster walls, and ornate wood-framed pedimented door frames. A plaster proscenium arch framed the elevated stage and was flanked by theater boxes. Perched above the main floor of the auditorium was a steel-framed raked balcony with wood guardrail supported by columns and accessed from the second floor lobby. A secondary lobby and coat room were located in the basement.¹³ Located in the fly space, above the main stage, was a glass-covered skylight. Designed as a fire protection measure, the rope securing the skylight would either be cut or burned during a fire, making a chimney through which the draft would carry the smoke and flames. The security measure was included to prevent fire from spreading to the front part of the house.¹⁴

6. Alterations and additions: After completion and occupation of the building, focus was placed on routine maintenance and improving the facility to better serve as an amusement hall. Alterations were directed toward improving the interior space and minor repairs were made to the exterior of the structure.

By 1915, the wood floor of the auditorium was badly rotted and thus removed. A new wood floor was laid in replacement.¹⁵ In an attempt to improve the acoustic quality of the auditorium, alterations were made to the walls. The type and extent of the modifications were not specified but according to the 1926 *Annual Report* the changes would “greatly add to the use which can be made of this hall.”¹⁶

The Red Cross Building, a patient recreational hall constructed in 1917 and located northwest of Hitchcock Hall, burned in 1941.¹⁷ The structural integrity of Hitchcock Hall was compromised during the fire and repairs were made to the structure. Sections of the roof were rebuilt and damaged wood-framed windows and doors along the north and west elevation were removed and replaced in kind. During the same period, the basement was retrofitted as a theater space with theatrical lighting and a stage constructed at the north end. The therapeutic theater program was

¹¹ 1908 archival photographs of construction process, 1910 archival photographs, and existing physical evidence.

¹² 1907 construction documents and 1908 archival photographs of the construction process.

¹³ 1910 archival photographs.

¹⁴ Hitchcock Hall, *Washington Post*, October 1, 1911.

¹⁵ 1915 *Annual Report*, 21.

¹⁶ 1926 *Annual Report*, 7.

¹⁷ *Historic Resources Management Plan*, Chapter 5, 81 and the 1938 Key Plan of Buildings. A specific date for construction was obtained from the 1938 Plan.

referred to as “psychodrama.”¹⁸ Designed to augment the hospital’s unique patient therapy methods, the psychodrama stage consisted of three levels. As patients gained confidence in expressing themselves through theater, they could ascend at their own pace to the top tier of the stage.¹⁹

In 1959, a portion of the basement space of Hitchcock Hall was subdivided to provide restroom facilities and additional storage space. Wood-framed walls were constructed just north of the basement lobby and four support rooms were created. New plumbing capabilities and fixtures were retrofitted to address the new function of the space.²⁰

In the early 1960s, Hitchcock Hall underwent an interior renovation that resulted in the installation of a mechanical system, upgrades to plumbing and electrical systems, changes to the theater facility, and alterations to interior finishes. Renovations were documented through detailed construction drawings by architect Ronald S. Senseman dated 1962. A heating and ventilation system was installed to condition the building. The associated ductwork was concealed in ceiling cavities, soffits, and false walls. A one-story red brick structure with flat composition roof and concrete block foundation was constructed on the east end of the north elevation of the assembly hall. The structure housed mechanical equipment necessary for installation of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems in Hitchcock Hall. A contemporary metal door was located on the east elevation of the structure.²¹ Upgrades were made to electrical and plumbing systems throughout the building. Recessed lighting was installed throughout the auditorium and lobby space and new footlights were specified for the stage area. In accordance with the improvements, upgrades were made to the electrical panel and service to the building. Plumbing fixtures were replaced in the basement, and second floor restrooms and fire suppression valves were fit into the existing structure.²² A projection booth was constructed in the rafter space above the second floor lobby. The booth was outfitted with theatrical lighting and controls to enhance the use of the theater. Access was obtained through a spiral steel stair from the upper lobby.²³ New partition walls were constructed in the basement that slightly altered the plan and created additional office space. The basement was retrofitted with a suspended acoustic tile ceiling to improve sound quality in the psychodrama theater and to conceal ductwork and plumbing.²⁴ Changes to the auditorium area included the removal of leather-covered folding doors and replacement with wood doors; the application of non-combustible fabric wall coverings over plaster walls; the removal of wood theater seats and replacement with cushioned metal seats; the infill of transom lights above the main theater entrance doors with damping panels; and the mounting of a wood chair rail around the balcony level.²⁵

In 1970, patients were moved from all pre-1900 buildings. Dormitories constructed during the Nichols and Godding era, which constituted half of the west campus buildings, were cleared and patients were relocated to the east campus or lettered buildings. Despite the dramatic shift of the patient population, Hitchcock Hall continued to function as a patient theater and assembly hall,

¹⁸ 1941 *Annual Report* and the 1845 Public Buildings Administration survey.

¹⁹ Discussion of Psychodrama Therapy, *Washington Daily News*, July 7, 1941.

²⁰ 1959 construction documents

²¹ 1962 construction documents

²² 1962 construction documents

²³ 1962 construction documents

²⁴ 1962 construction documents

²⁵ Comparison of historic photos from 1910, 1964, and 1993, and 1962 construction documents.

hosting speaking engagements and award ceremonies.²⁶ Furthermore, plans were generated for the renovation of the basement into office and storage space in 1969. Construction documents outlined the erection of partition walls to subdivide the space and installation of junction boxes and fluorescent lighting fixtures throughout the rehabilitated basement space.²⁷

In 1971, the wood-framed doors with patterned multi-light transoms on the south elevation were removed and replaced by aluminum-framed storefront systems with single aluminum and tempered glass doors and aluminum-framed tempered glass surrounds.²⁸ The concrete paving and landscaping along the south elevation of the building was reconfigured in 1976. The main entry stair was widened, metal handrails were installed, and a new concrete patio was constructed.²⁹

Plans were outlined in 1982 for the alteration of the interior and exterior of the building to address accessibility requirements. Concrete ramps with pipe metal handrails were installed along the east and west elevations. The ramps and associated doorways provided direct access to the auditorium space. Aluminum guardrails with tempered glass were retrofitted into the existing balcony structure and mounted parallel to the existing balcony rail. The interior staircases were outfitted with new code compliant wood handrails. Wood-framed doorways on the east and west elevations were removed and replaced with steel-framed storefront systems with transoms and sidelights. The existing brick door framing and terra cotta decorative panel remained.³⁰

In 2011, renovation of the building began, as part of the rehabilitation of the St. Elizabeths West Campus. Many interior partitions, finishes, and non-original building elements were removed, and structural reinforcing work was implemented, especially at the stage area. In mid-2012, the renovation project was suspended, and future continuation of the work is uncertain as of this writing.

B. Historical context³¹

In 1852, St. Elizabeths Hospital was established in large part through the efforts of Dorothea Lynde Dix, who led a national crusade for the ethical and humane treatment of the mentally ill. Under the direction of Superintendent Charles Nichols (1852–1877), the hospital endeavored to become a curative treatment center for the mentally ill of Washington, D.C., and the United States Army and Navy. Patients were grouped into wards by their perceived mental condition and emphasis was placed on creating a peaceful, healthy, and serene family environment in which to rehabilitate. In 1877, William Godding assumed control of St. Elizabeths Hospital and adopted the principles of his predecessor. Through the moral treatment of patients, it was believed that mental illness could be cured. Godding encouraged the construction of small free-standing cottage buildings to promote a healthy environment and facilitate the orderly segregation of growing patient groups.

When Alonzo Richardson became superintendent in 1899, St. Elizabeths Hospital was expanding rapidly. The population of Civil War veterans was aging and requiring the services of the federal

²⁶ Ibid., and archival photographs depicting various ceremonial events held in Hitchcock Hall during the 1970s and 1980s.

²⁷ 1969 construction document

²⁸ 1971 construction documents. Alterations are substantiated by 2002 archival photographs.

²⁹ 1976 construction document. Alterations were confirmed by 2002 archival photographs.

³⁰ 1982 construction documents. Alterations were confirmed by 2002 archival photographs.

³¹ A context history for the entire St. Elizabeths West Campus, as well as an overview history of the Culture and Recreation Group, is to be developed under separate cover as part of this HABS documentation project.

government hospital. Richardson was skillful in obtaining appropriations from Congress and was responsible for the expansive development of St. Elizabeths Hospital. During his tenure, fifteen patient wards and service buildings were constructed in the Italian Renaissance Revival-style. The new structures were primarily located on the south end of the west campus and utilized the “cottage plan” of architecture. The free-standing cottage buildings promoted a healthy physical environment and facilitated the orderly segregation of patient groups while embodying the preferred moral curative treatment philosophy.³²

William White was appointed superintendent upon the sudden death of Richardson in 1903. It was under White’s direction that the preferred method of treatment shifted from the humane environment to a more scientific approach. Since the 1850s, emphasis had been placed on creating a healthy and peaceful setting in which a patient could rehabilitate. The architecture focused on providing ventilated and well-lit spaces in which patients were categorized by illness and grouped into small family units. With Superintendent White, the hospital assumed a clinical perspective on mental illness. Research, experimental therapies, and medical prescriptions became the rule for treating patients. The shift in fundamental theory required new laboratory and patient service facilities. White continued the construction plan of the west campus outlined by Richardson but extended it to include the development of the new research and patient facilities on the east and west campuses.³³

William White was a psychiatrist influenced by the psychoanalytic concepts of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. He was a prolific writer who believed in determining and addressing the root causes of mental illness. Clinical research and patient consultations were used to uncover the societal conditions that brought on mental illness, and physical therapies and medical treatments were means to a cure. Thus, White encouraged the academic pursuit of psychiatry and the scientific study of patients. The hospital became a leading psychiatric institution, its reputation enhanced by the development of a clinical psychology department and its accreditation as a medical teaching school. St. Elizabeths was instrumental in the development of therapeutic methods that allowed patients to express themselves without judgment or constraints of societal norms. Hydro, dance, malarial, pastoral, and psychodrama patient therapy programs were among the unconventional treatment techniques developed at the hospital to provide activities and outlets for patients to express and entertain themselves.³⁴

In 1907, White obtained funding from Congress for construction of an amusement hall to augment the newly constructed lettered buildings. The new structure, named Hitchcock Hall, functioned as an assembly hall for campus religious and entertainment events.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Hitchcock Hall, designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival-style, is two stories in height above a raised basement. The structure has brick and terra cotta masonry load-bearing walls, interior concrete columns, and a steel-framed fly loft. The hip roof of the building is covered with clay tile and has painted wood rafter tails at the eave. Primary interior spaces include lobbies at the orchestra and balcony levels, two stair halls, the orchestra-level/auditorium

³² *Cultural Landscape Report*, IV.2.

³³ *Ibid.*, IV.7-8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

and orchestra pit, associated private theater boxes and flanking backstage vestibules, and the balcony seating area.

Character-defining architectural features of the building include the brick masonry with corbelled quoins and expressed voussoirs, buff-colored water table brick laid in a common bond, and red-colored field brick laid in a common bond; terra cotta masonry including main entry surround with fluted engaged columns, bracketed broken pediment and cartouche, bull's-eye window surrounds, expressed voussoirs over window openings, carved agraffe over the distinctive Diocletian window on the south facade, and tablets with festoon over the east and west facade entrances; wood decorative elements including carved roof brackets, molded rafter tails, and mullions and muntins within the bull's-eye and Diocletian window assembly; and the clay tile roof. On the interior, character-defining architectural features include the expressed ribbed barrel vaults and carved brackets on the auditorium ceiling; wood-framed multi-light windows; wood-framed circular pivot windows; chair rail and door trim in the east stair hall; plaster cove molding and picture rail in the entry foyer; molded plaster masks and cartouche over doorways in the foyer and lobby spaces; plaster entablature over the auditorium entrance in the lower lobby; plaster decorative elements and cartouche on the proscenium arch; marble wainscoting in the main foyer; applied fluted columns and trim surrounding theater boxes in the auditorium; tri-colored floor tile in the entrance foyer and lower lobby; and the iron staircases and balustrades in the east and west stair halls.

2. Condition of fabric: At the time of the field survey for the Historic Structure Reports/Building Preservation Plans project in 2009, Hitchcock Hall was in fair to poor condition overall. The exterior masonry had weathering-related deterioration such as eroded mortar joints, staining, and cracking. Exterior windows were in poor condition with wood decay, peeling paint, and broken glass. The clay tile roof and associated downspouts were in good condition and appeared watertight. The building interiors were in fair to poor condition, with deterioration of moisture-sensitive finishes, water damage to plaster, and loss of painted finishes. Some areas, especially the basement level, had been severely affected by moisture and had widespread organic growth.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 80'-0" by 132'-0", rectangular building, 80'-4" to the peak of the roof
2. Foundations: The foundation of Hitchcock Hall is comprised of a concrete spread footing approximately 22 inches thick. Interior load-bearing brick masonry walls, approximately 18 inches thick, with concrete footings, comprise portions of the foundation around the stage and within the lobby.
3. Walls: The exterior walls of Hitchcock Hall are constructed primarily of red clay brick masonry in a common bond pattern. Brick quoins are located at the corners, at the projecting main entrance bay on the south elevation, and at the window and door openings. Terra cotta is used for ornamentation at particular locations on the facades, including window surrounds and pedimented surrounds at the south entrances. There is a buff-colored brick water table with a terra cotta base course and top course on the south, west, and east elevations. Decorative terra cotta panels are present over the doorways on the east and west elevations.
4. Structural system, framing: Hitchcock Hall has perimeter load-bearing brick masonry foundation walls, approximately 22 inches thick, that are supported by concrete spread footings. Interior

load-bearing brick masonry walls, approximately 18 inches thick, with concrete footings comprise portions of the foundation around the stage and within the lobby. The masonry walls are laid in a common bond pattern with headers every fifth to sixth course on the interior. No headers are visible on the exterior, indicating that a blind header assembly or alternate masonry tie system may be present that secures the exterior wythes and terra cotta. The walls located at the upper portion of the stage fly loft are supported by steel girders that flank the stage, and are located above the front of the stage.

The main floor is a reinforced concrete slab supported by the masonry walls and reinforced concrete beams and columns. The balcony structure consists of cantilevered steel trusses. The trusses are supported both by concrete columns and the interior load-bearing masonry wall between the auditorium and lobby. The second and third floor structures at the south end and around the stage are composed of reinforced concrete slabs and steel beams. Additional cat walk areas and elevated platforms that flank the stage within the fly loft area are framed with steel beams and have concrete decks and wood plank walkways.

The stage floor had removable sections that were originally provided with wood post supports from within the basement level below. These posts have been replaced with four, four-inch diameter steel pipe columns that are generally positioned beneath the center portion of the stage.

The roof structure has a cast-in-place concrete deck that spans between steel purlins that are supported by steel trusses and rafters. The concrete deck is pitched, creating the hip roof profile, and supports the clay tile shingle roofing. The roof framing located over the stage fly loft is of similar construction to that above the auditorium and has concrete decking supported by steel purlins and trusses. The roofs also have overhangs located at their perimeter that are supported by a series of wood lookouts set into the masonry walls. The wood lookouts are approximately 2-1/2-inch by 10-inch members spaced at about 26 inches on center.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticoes, bulkheads: Cast-in-place concrete steps and a landing supported on brick masonry sidewalls provide access to the stage doors on the east and west elevations.
6. Chimneys: None present
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to Hitchcock Hall on the south elevation of the building consists of a light bronze-colored anodized aluminum storefront entrance with one door. Two similar storefronts flank the central entrance with each containing one, light bronze-colored anodized aluminum door. There are four painted steel doors with a wood molding lintel above on both the east and west elevations. A steel door is present on the east elevation of the small detached outbuilding directly north of Hitchcock Hall.
 - b. Windows and shutters: At the second floor level of the south elevation, there is a large multi-paned wood arched window in the Diocletian-style, subdivided into six window frames. The large window is flanked by two circular windows with an ornamental square terra cotta surround. There are four similar circular windows on both the east and west elevations. A six-over-six wood double-hung window is present at the south end of both the east and west elevations.

8. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is generally hip-shaped but is divided into several zones. The northern third of the building, consisting of the stage and fly loft area, has a roof area that rises higher than the rest of the building. The middle fly loft rises the highest, and is surmounted by a square pyramidal roof. The east and west sides of the stage area have hip roofs that abut the walls of the fly loft roof. The southern two-thirds of the roof has a hip roof that abuts the stage and fly loft walls at the north end. There are small hip roof extensions to the east and west over the slightly projected bays of the lobby zone. At the center of the south elevation is a cross-gable that defines the central bay of this elevation. All of the roofs are covered with red clay tile.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A projecting painted wood cornice with painted wood brackets surrounds the roof. The roof perimeters include built-in gutters that are lined with copper, according to historic drawings of the building. The built-in gutters connect to copper downspouts.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The main portion of the roof over the auditorium is raised slightly to allow for a continuous attic ventilation opening.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: There are three primary entrances into Hitchcock Hall from the south facade, symmetrically spaced across the theater's orchestra floor level. The main lobby is accessed through the center door, through the long side of a rectangular entrance foyer, and then by passing under a large arched opening into the lobby. The entrances to the east and west of the center entrance access directly into stair halls, which are essentially square-shaped in plan and mirror each other. Both stair halls contain stairs, U-shaped in plan, which rise immediately to the east and west of the respective entrance doors and are open to the two-story stairwells. The stairs also access the basement/lower lobby at the southeast and southwest corners. An upper lobby at the balcony level is located directly above the main floor lobby and the east and west stair halls. The entrance foyer houses a ticket office to the west of the entrance doors and a modern elevator to the east of the entrance doors.

The main theater auditorium orchestra floor occupies approximately two-thirds of the building interior. The space is entered through one of two pairs of doors from the main lobby, or through a single door in the east and west stair halls. Two square columns located approximately in line with the last rows of seats support the balcony. A narrow orchestra pit is located at the north end of the floor.

There is one private theater box on both the northeast and northwest corners of the auditorium floor. Each box is flanked by a backstage vestibule which is accessed from the auditorium floor up a ramp and through an opening. In plan, each box, which is situated at approximately a 120-degree angle to the stage, is essentially a narrow rectangle with rounded short ends; one of the long walls is gently curved. A small set of stairs leads from the west vestibule to the stage entrance.

The stage is at the north end of the building and is separated from the auditorium by a proscenium arch. The stage is approximately half the size of the auditorium in plan. There are four dressing rooms, two on each side of the stage, located above the backstage vestibules, and private theater

boxes on floors two and three. Arranged in a trapezoid shape, the floor plans for these dressing rooms are similar in layout, with a small water closet room and lavatories on the short south wall and wrap-around mirrors over wall counters on two walls.

Located directly above the orchestra floor lobby, the upper lobby is a large open space, extending from the east to the west stairs with women's and men's restrooms in the southeast and southwest corners of the space. The upper lobby provides access to the balcony which projects over the southern one-third of the main auditorium floor.

The basement level contains a lobby space, directly below the main lobby and entrance foyer.

2. Stairways: The U-shaped cast iron stairs in each primary stair hall are continuous from the basement to the balcony levels and are open to the stair halls. A wide stringer finishes and obscures the cast iron carriage, treads and risers. The stringer supports a decorative balustrade with geometric pattern and an open cast iron square bar railing adorned with cast tulips and topped with a sculpted wood handhold. The opposite handrail has a matching wood handhold supported by a continuous linear cast iron section that is supported by cast iron brackets, which are attached to the wall through a finished flat wood board. Treads are finished with carpet and non-slip safety nosing and risers are closed cast iron recessed panels. Cast iron newel posts feature Ionic capitals that support solid wood sculpted newel caps; newels are dropped below the plaster-finished carriage soffits. Two sets of stairs located near the northeast and the northwest corners of the stage access the basement and the catwalks.
3. Flooring: The flooring in the lobby, foyer, and main floor stair halls is small square and rectangular light-colored mosaic tiles, with a perimeter tri-colored fret/key pattern border defining the individual spaces. The basement lobby has similar flooring of small light-colored hexagonal floor tiles, accented with a tri-colored tile fret band between the lobby and the stair halls.

Finish flooring in the ticket office is vinyl tile over wood board flooring and a wood baseboard. Finish flooring at the upper lobby consists of carpet over original wood tongue-and-groove board flooring. The finish flooring at all lavatory areas consists of small light-colored hexagonal ceramic tiles. The auditorium floor is level and finished with carpet over vinyl tile. The stage has its original wood tongue-and-groove floor. Vinyl tile is installed over the original tongue-and-groove board flooring in the theater boxes and the adjacent backstage vestibules. In the dressing rooms above the stage, tongue-and-groove varnished boards comprise the majority of the finish flooring.

The balcony floor is carpet over wood tongue-and-groove flooring. Non-slip safety nosing at the stair tread edges is present at the balcony aisles.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls in the lobby and foyer are finished with a six-foot-high green marble wainscot with lightly-colored painted plaster walls above. These walls are ornamented with a picture rail and cove molding at the plaster ceiling. The ticket office off the foyer has narrow tongue-and-groove boards cladding portions of the wall, as well as painted plaster walls and ceiling. The east and west stair halls have painted plaster walls that terminate at right angles at flat plaster ceilings, a light gray marble base, and a painted wood chair rail. Walls and ceilings at the upper lobby are painted plaster with a wood baseboard and a chair rail. The walls have a cove from the picture rail to a decorative plaster molding on the plaster ceiling.

The auditorium walls are finished with a wood base and a wood and plaster wainscot to approximately forty-six inches above the finish floor. The finish walls above the wainscot consist of fabric wall covering over plywood over metal lath and plaster. A layer of fibrous material (assumed to be an acoustical insulating material) was observed beneath a plaster finish coat in sections of wall closer to the stage. The ceilings above the orchestra floor are gently vaulted in the east-west direction and are painted plaster with plaster furred-out structural ribs. Vaulted ribs are supported at each end by a primary north-south beam. Below the bearing point of each vaulted beam, where it bears on the primary beam, is a decorative plaster scrolled bracket. The field of the ceiling contains a raised dome in the center. The majority of the ceiling below the balcony is painted plaster. The ceiling south of the column row has a coffered appearance, with beams encased in furring and plaster, and flat plaster sections between the beams. The walls and ceilings in the theater boxes and the adjacent backstage vestibules are painted plaster, and both rooms feature a wood baseboard. Each private theater box has a crown molding along the rear wall at the coved ceiling. A decorative scrolled bracket joins the pilaster at both jambs of the box opening to the plaster beam above to frame the front of the box.

The balcony walls feature a wood base and painted plaster up to a wood chair rail, with a fabric wall covering above the chair rail, similar to the walls at the orchestra level. A two-foot-tall wood-paneled safety barrier borders the balcony edge. The balcony shares the expansive gently-vaulted ceiling of the auditorium.

The stage has no baseboard and exposed brick walls. The fly loft ceiling is a slotted metal grid that accommodates operation of the fly system. The dressing rooms above the stage area feature a wood base and painted plaster walls and ceilings.

The basement lobby has painted plaster walls with a marble base. The ceiling has plaster furred-out beams with flat sections of painted concrete between.

5. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: Doorways within the lobby, foyer, and stair halls are through wood-paneled door openings with marble trim. The door to the ticket office is an original solid wood door; the top half is a vision light with an arched pass-through at the bottom center and a projecting wood shelf below. The bottom half of the door is a recessed panel with a square air vent grille near the bottom.

Primary entrances into the auditorium are through four pairs of replacement solid wood-veneered swinging doors: two pairs in the lobby and one pair each in the east and west stair halls. The six exit door openings are trimmed in wood and feature deep head trim with a cornice that supports an ornamental plaster shield, similar to the decorative element located over the main auditorium entrance doors from the lobby.

Primary entrances into the balcony are through two pairs of modern solid wood-veneered swinging doors at the north wall of the upper lobby, similar to the doors at the orchestra lobby below.

- b. Windows: The ticket office interior window, which opens to the west stair hall, is a casement window with a single-light transom above, and a projecting shelf supported by wood brackets. The entrance from the lobby into the auditorium has a large divided light above that

has been removed or painted over, with four square lights subdivided into four squares and then bisected with 45-degree muntins.

Six round pivot windows, in vertical alignment with the orchestra level theater exits, offer natural light at the balcony level to the voluminous auditorium space. All wood trim is typically painted a light neutral color.

6. Decorative features and trim: Columns and pilasters in the lobby, foyer, and stair halls are marble-clad, including the plinth, shaft, and capital. There are two plaster architectural ornaments in the lobby: a painted mask of comedy is located at the top of the arch that separates the lobby and the entrance foyer, and a painted floral crest/shield is situated on top of the center of the cornice of the entablature that frames the theater entrance. The upper lobby has two built-in bench seats set in small niches on either side of the central Diocletian window.

The auditorium seating is primarily arranged in curved rows but does not appear to match the historic seating plan. Aisles are not continuous from back to front except for at the east and west walls. The original wood theater seats were replaced with modern steel-framed, vinyl cushion-covered theater seats.

7. Hardware: Hardware was not documented in available reference material.

8. Mechanical Equipment

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The mechanical systems at Hitchcock Hall consist of direct radiant steam radiators, which are original to the building construction and located throughout the building, fed by incoming steam piping from the underground steam tunnels; a small Carrier chiller and Baltimore air coil cooling tower which serves only Hitchcock Hall; multiple air handling units in the basement and one in the stage area; and exhaust fans in the attic space of the building. Two large mechanical registers or air vent grilles are located in the north lobby wall on either side of the primary entrance to the orchestra floor. These vents are intrusive and appear not to be original. Smaller vents have been added near the top of the short walls in the entrance foyer. Both stair halls have one large radiator adjacent to the entrance door at the first floor level served by exposed piping. The upper lobby has two radiators recessed into the wall and covered by painted metal mesh. Large metal ventilation registers are present in the ceiling under the balcony in the auditorium. There are also small rectangular modern ventilation grilles in all three walls of the balcony.
- b. Lighting: Lighting in the foyer, lobby, and stair halls is provided by surface mounted square metal light fixtures, each with a flat glass lens having a radial textured pattern. Lighting at the upper lobby is provided by round recessed metal-framed ceiling fixtures with flush glass lenses that feature a concentric ring design pattern.

The auditorium has round recessed light fixtures at the main ceiling, and both surface-mounted rectangular florescent light fixtures and small round recessed light fixtures below the balcony. A light cove extends the length of both sides of the auditorium space.

Hitchcock Hall is served by a 2000A, 208Y/120V electrical switchboard located in the basement directly beneath the pad-mounted transformer location. The main switchboard feeds

individual panelboards located throughout the building. There does not appear to be 480V service present within the building.

- c. Plumbing: Plumbing supply and waste is composed of cast iron pipes and fittings with some additions in PVC.

D. Site

1. Historic landscape design: Documentation of the landscape of the west campus of St. Elizabeths Hospital can be found in Historic American Landscape Survey documentation submittal DC-11.

Hitchcock Hall is located south of the Home Building (Building 36) and immediately east of Hagan Hall, in the cluster of buildings south of the Gatehouse No. 1 (Building 21) entrance that also contains the Detached Kitchen (Building 34) and Dining Hall (Building 33). The south (front) elevation of the building sits relatively close to Redwood Drive. From the concrete curb edging this asphalt-paved roadway, a wide concrete stair extends toward the front of the building. There are three concrete steps, with painted steel handrails at either end, that lead from the walk up to a concrete terrace that extends the entire width of the building. The existing steps and paving were installed in 1976. On the east side, the building is bordered by an asphalt-paved parking lot. A paved service drive connects along the north side of the building from the east lot to another parking lot northwest of the building. The west side of the building is bordered by a narrow landscaped lawn area. Only several feet separate Hitchcock Hall from Hagan Hall at their closest point.

2. Outbuilding: North of the main building is a small one-story brick detached outbuilding (18 feet wide by 33 feet long and about 13 feet tall) constructed in 1962 that contains mechanical equipment. The addition has a copper coping, a window opening containing an air conditioning unit, and a steel door surrounded by plywood infill.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: Copies of architectural drawings are included in the attached Supplemental Material. The archival drawing documentation is in the collection of the General Services Administration.
- B. Early Views: Copies of selected early and historical views of Hitchcock Hall are included in the attached Supplemental Material. The original photographs and other archival photographic documentation are in the collection of the General Services Administration, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, or the St. Elizabeths Hospital Health Sciences Library archives on the St. Elizabeths East Campus.
- C. Interviews: No oral history interviews were performed for this documentation project.
- D. Selected Sources:

Centennial Papers: St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1855–1955. Winfred Overholser, ed.
Washington, D.C.: Centennial Commission, St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1956.

Condition & Reuse Assessment: St. Elizabeths West Campus (draft). Oehrlein & Associates Architects. Prepared for the General Services Administration, January 4, 2006.

The DHS Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths: Final Master Plan. Oehrlein & Associates Architects and Robinson & Associates. Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration. November 10, 2008.

General Correspondence and Other Records of the Federal Board of St. Elizabeths Hospital. Records of the Office of the Superintendent, (1855–1967), Record Group 418.

Historic Preservation Report: St. Elizabeths West Campus, John Milner Architects. Prepared for the General Services Administration. December 7, 2005.

Historic Structure Report: Hitchcock Hall (Building 37), St. Elizabeths West Campus, Washington, D.C. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration, March 12, 2010.

Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.: Geography & Maps Reading Room. Collection contains various topographical maps for the District of Columbia and St. Elizabeths campus from 1855–1985.

Maps and Plans of the Government Hospital for the Insane (St. Elizabeths Hospital), 05/27/1839–12/14/1938. Department of the Interior, St. Elizabeths Hospital (1916–06/30/1940). Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1820–1981. Record Group 418, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

National Archives and Record Administration. Textual Documents Division. Washington, D.C. Record Group 418, Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital. Entry 20, Records of the Superintendent, Annual Report of the Subordinate Units, 1919–1966.

National Archives and Record Administration. Textual Documents Division. Washington, D.C. Record Group 42, Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Cartographic and Architectural Drawings Division, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 418, Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Cartographic and Architectural Drawings Division, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Records of the Secretary of the Interior.

Photographic Prints of Buildings, Grounds, and People, 1870–1920. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, St. Elizabeth Hospital (04/11/1953–08/09/1967). Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1820–1981. Record Group 418, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

Photographs of Structures at St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C., 1968. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Public Health Service, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, National Institute of Mental Health, Saint Elizabeths Hospital, Office of the

Superintendent (04/01/1968–07/01/1973). Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1820–1981. Record Group 418, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

St. Elizabeths Hospital Historic Resources Management Plan. Devroux & Purnell Architects-Planners, PC, with Betty Bird, Historian, and Rhodeside & Harwell Inc., Landscape Architects. Prepared for the D.C. Office of Business and Economic Development and the Office of the Assistant City Administrator for Economic Development, Washington, D.C., September 1993.

St. Elizabeths Hospital Tunnel Inspection Report. Burgess & Niple, Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration, Washington, D.C., February 2006. Accessed through the General Services Administration archives.

St. Elizabeths West Campus: Cultural Landscape Report. Heritage Landscapes, Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners, and Robinson & Associates, Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration. April 2009.

St. Elizabeths West Campus Preservation, Design, & Development Guidelines. Oehrlein & Associates Architects and Robinson & Associates, Inc., Architectural and Historical Research. Prepared for the General Services Administration. November 10, 2008.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Extensive research on the history of Hitchcock Hall has been performed for this and other studies, as documented in the publications and other sources listed above.

F. Supplemental Material:

1. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
2. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
3. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
4. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
5. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
6. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
7. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
8. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
9. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
10. National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.
11. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P012.
12. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P019.
13. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P003.
14. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P005.
15. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P004.
16. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P020.
17. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P015.
18. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P036.
19. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P040.
20. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0002.
21. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0004.
22. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0003.

23. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0009.
24. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0110.
25. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0112.
26. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0114.
27. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0116.
28. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0119.
29. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0126.
30. GSA archives, image DC1344SE0131.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

This historical narrative was prepared by WJE in conjunction with Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC, who prepared the measured drawings, and Leslie Schwartz Photography, who prepared the photographic documentation. The HABS documentation was completed for the General Services Administration.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

HITCHCOCK HALL (Building 37)
St. Elizabeths West Campus
588-604 Redwood Drive SE
Washington, D.C.

HABS No. DC-349-S

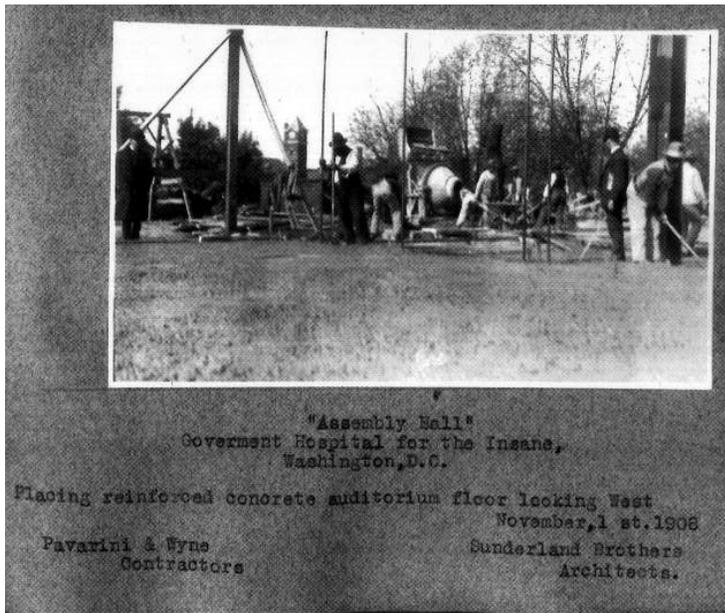


Figure 1. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.



Figure 2. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

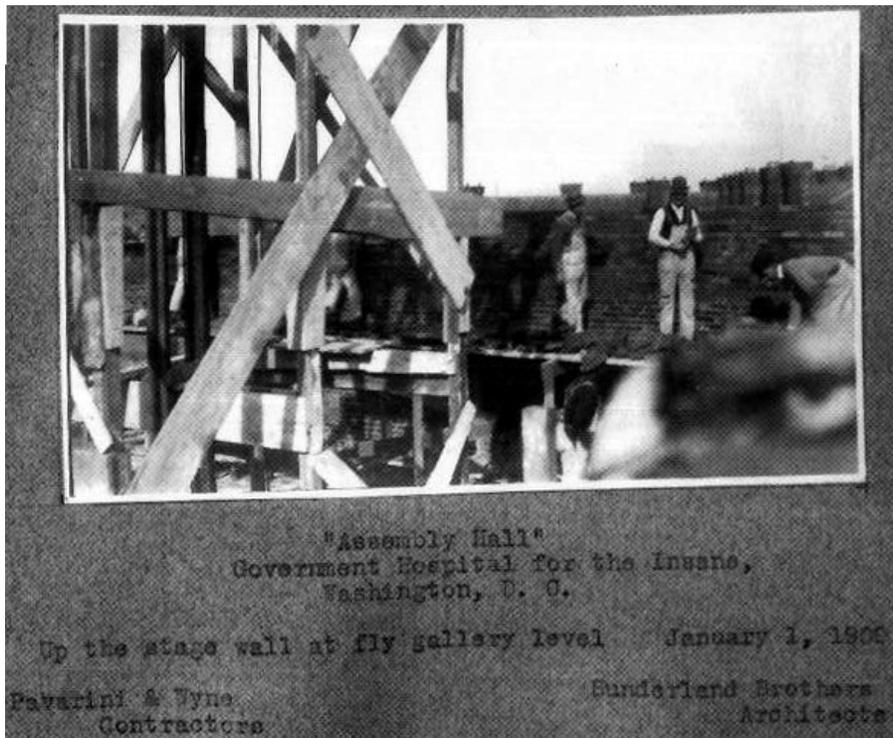


Figure 3. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

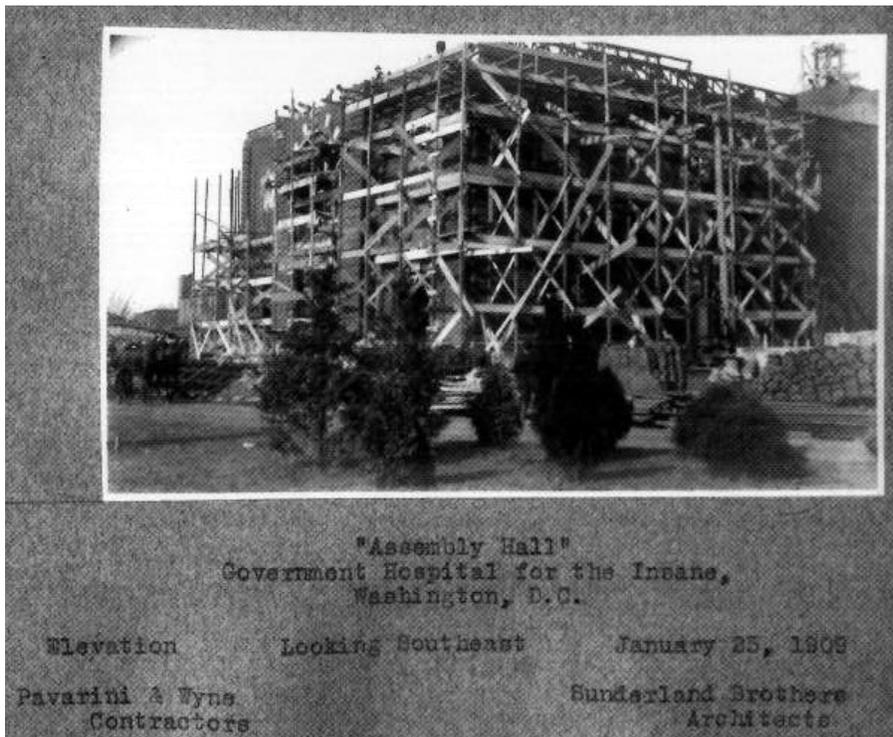


Figure 4. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

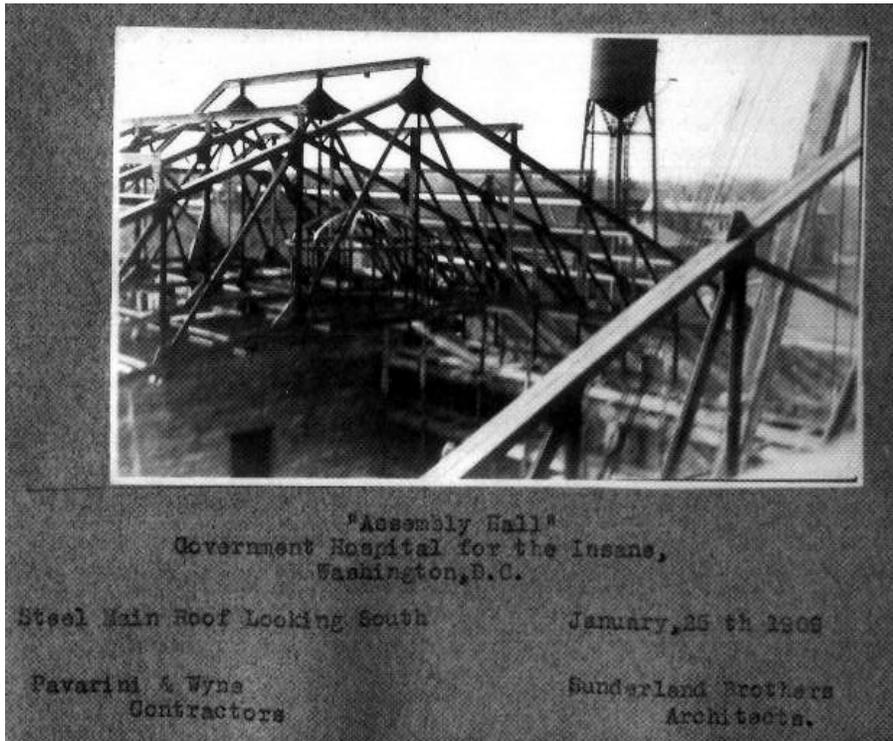


Figure 5. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

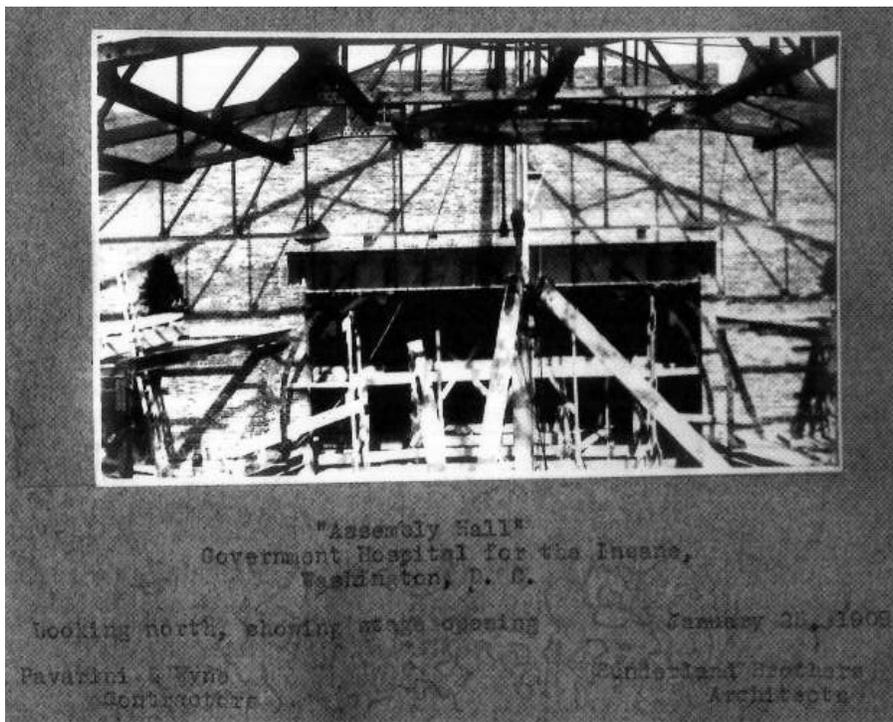


Figure 6. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

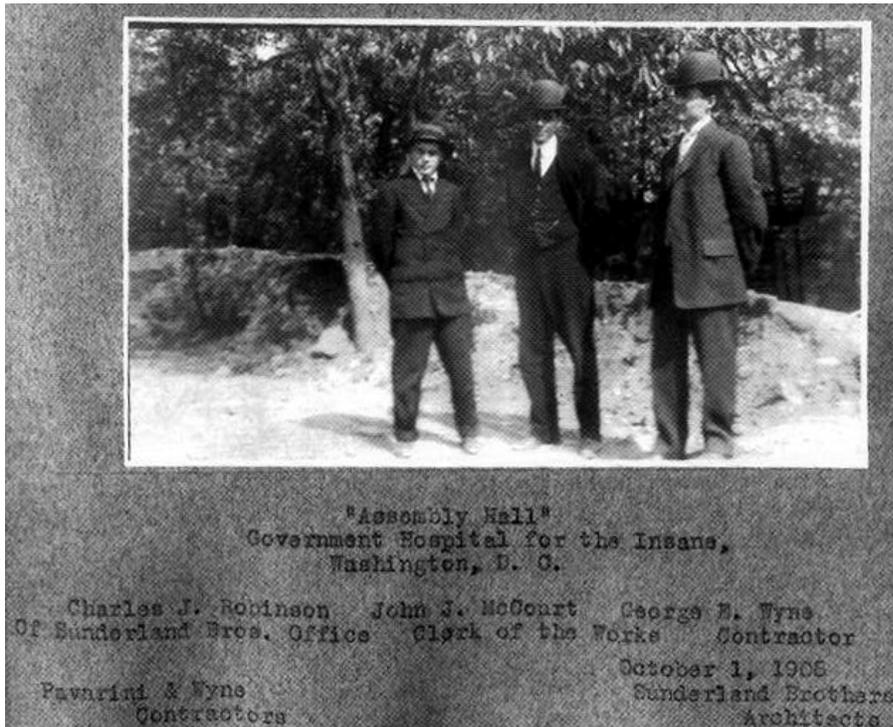


Figure 7. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

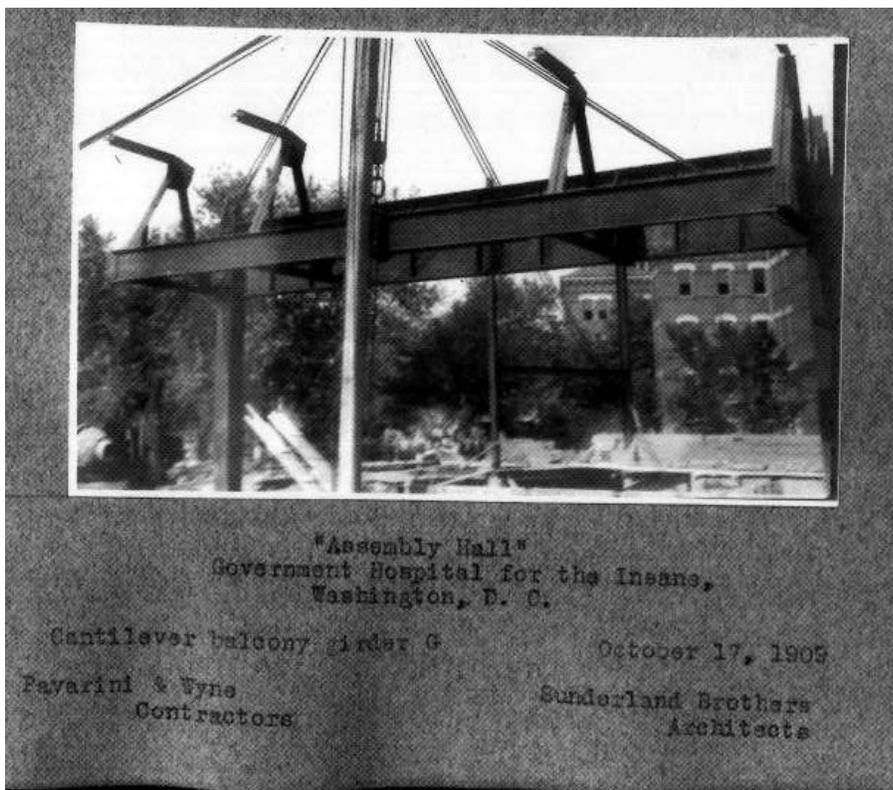


Figure 8. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.



Figure 9. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

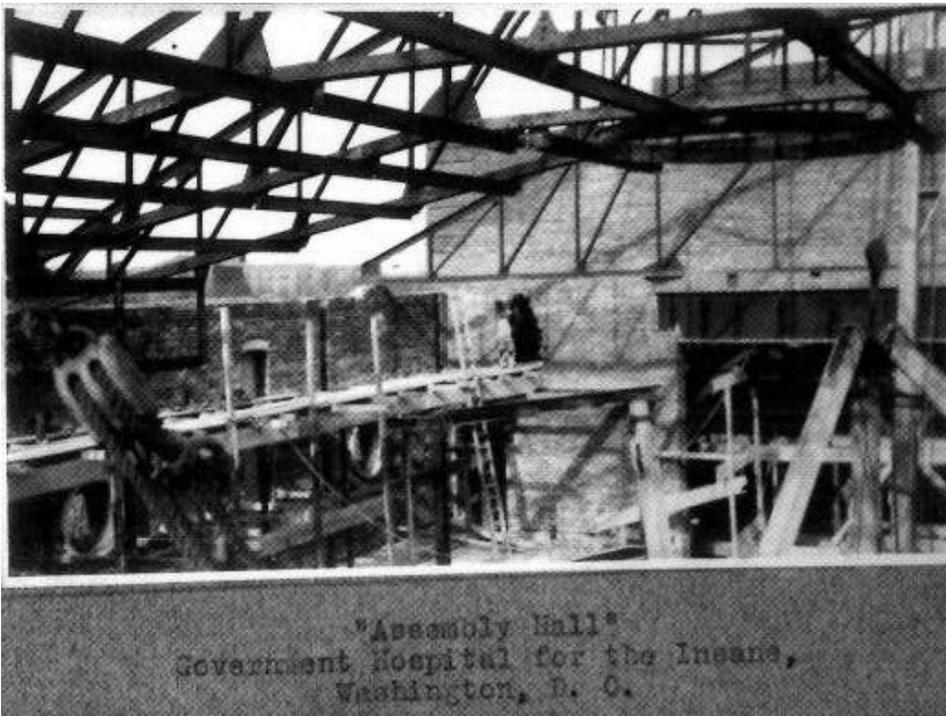


Figure 10. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Entry 300, Box 10.

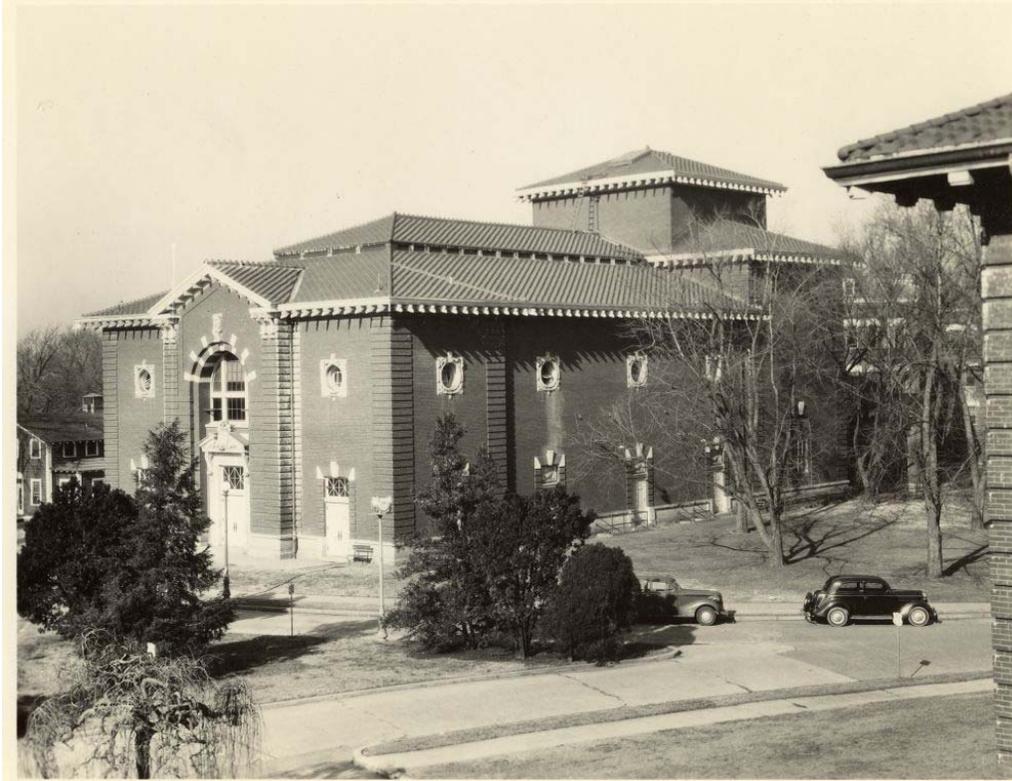


Figure 11. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P012.



Figure 12. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P019.



Figure 13. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P003.



Figure 14. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P005.



Figure 15. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P004.



Figure 16. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P020.

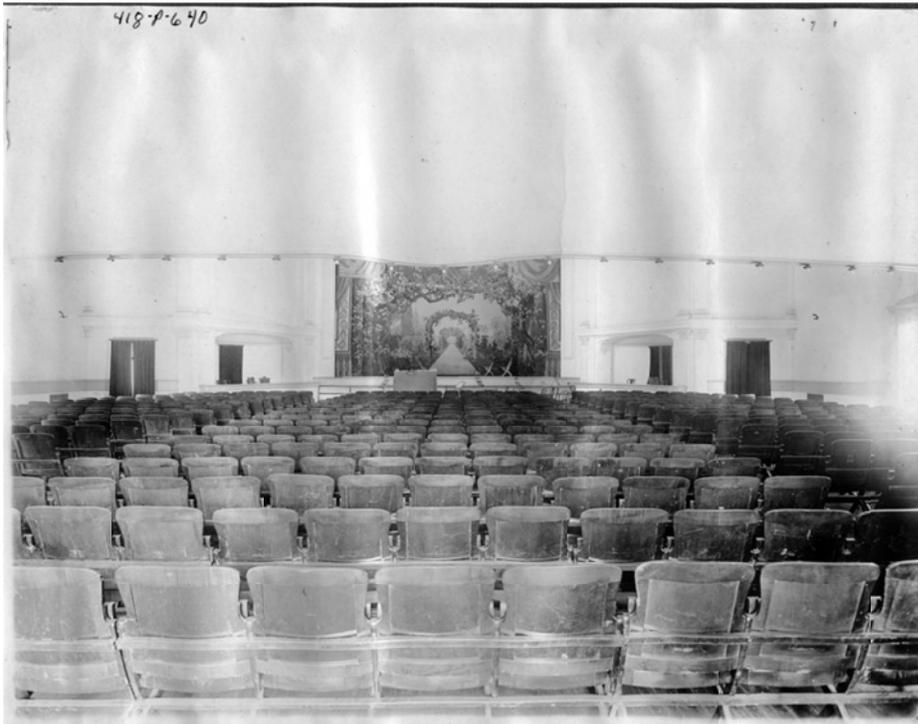


Figure 17. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P015.



Figure 18. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P036.



Figure 19. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0P040.

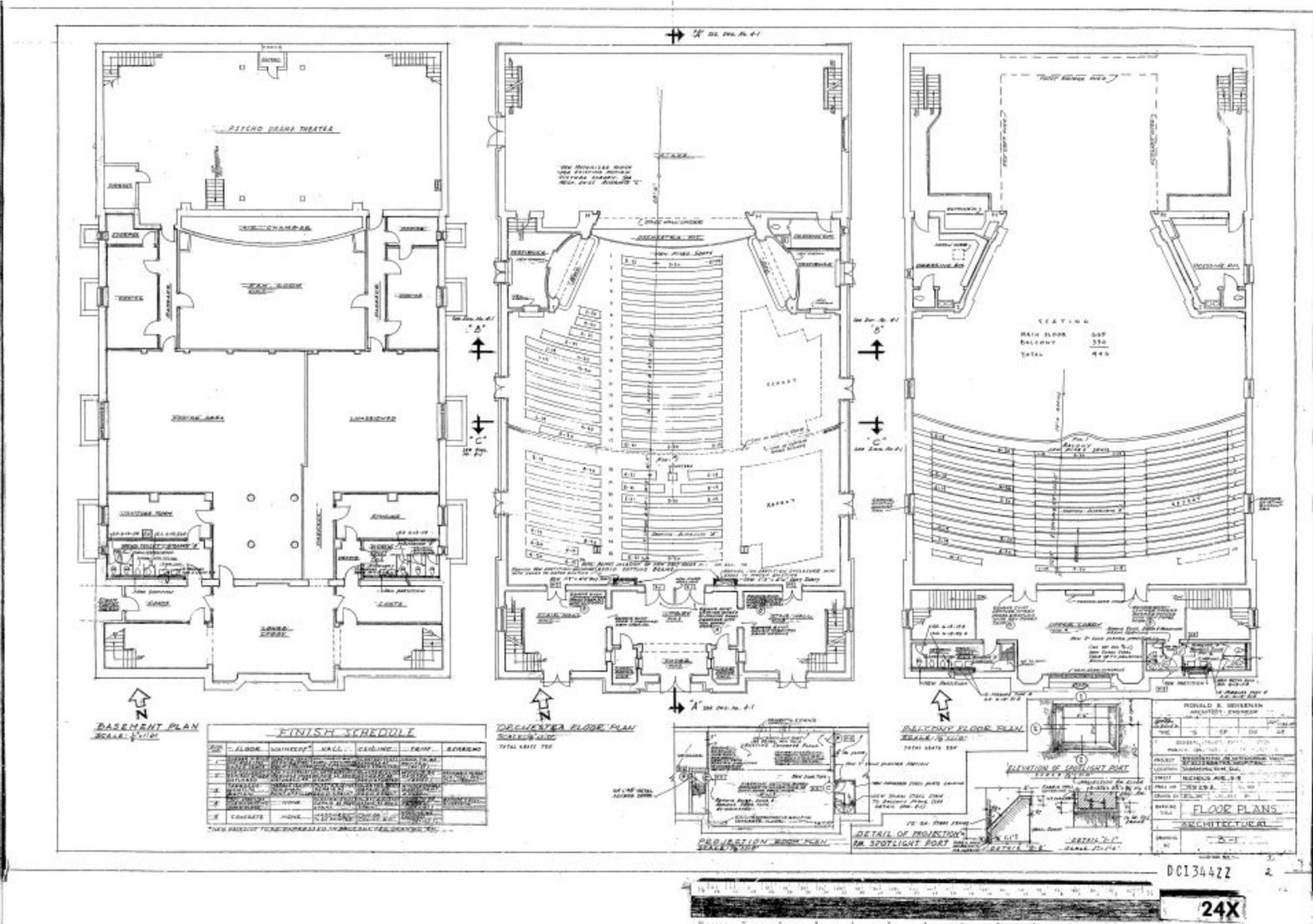


Figure 20. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0002.

DC134422

24X

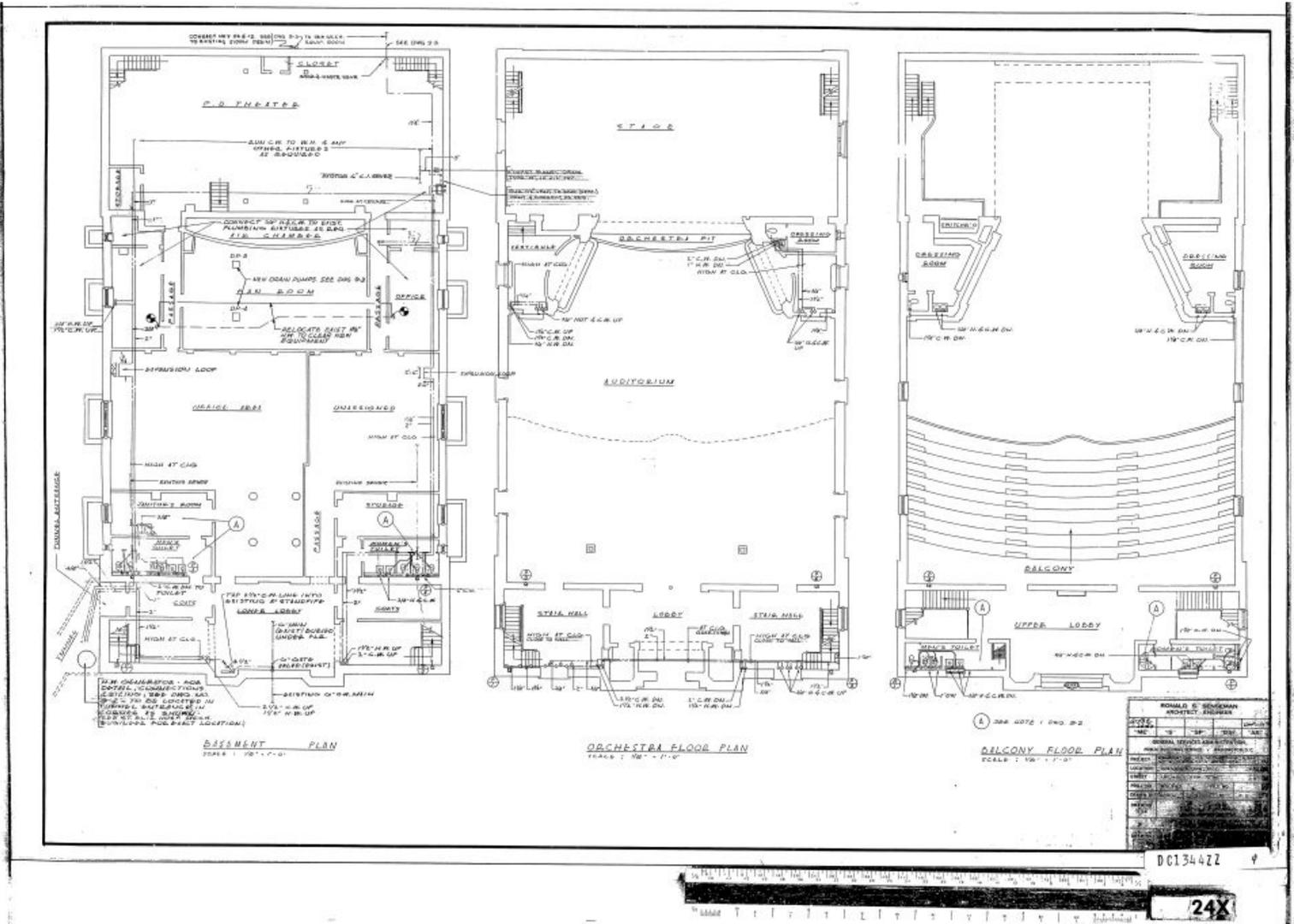


Figure 21. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0004.

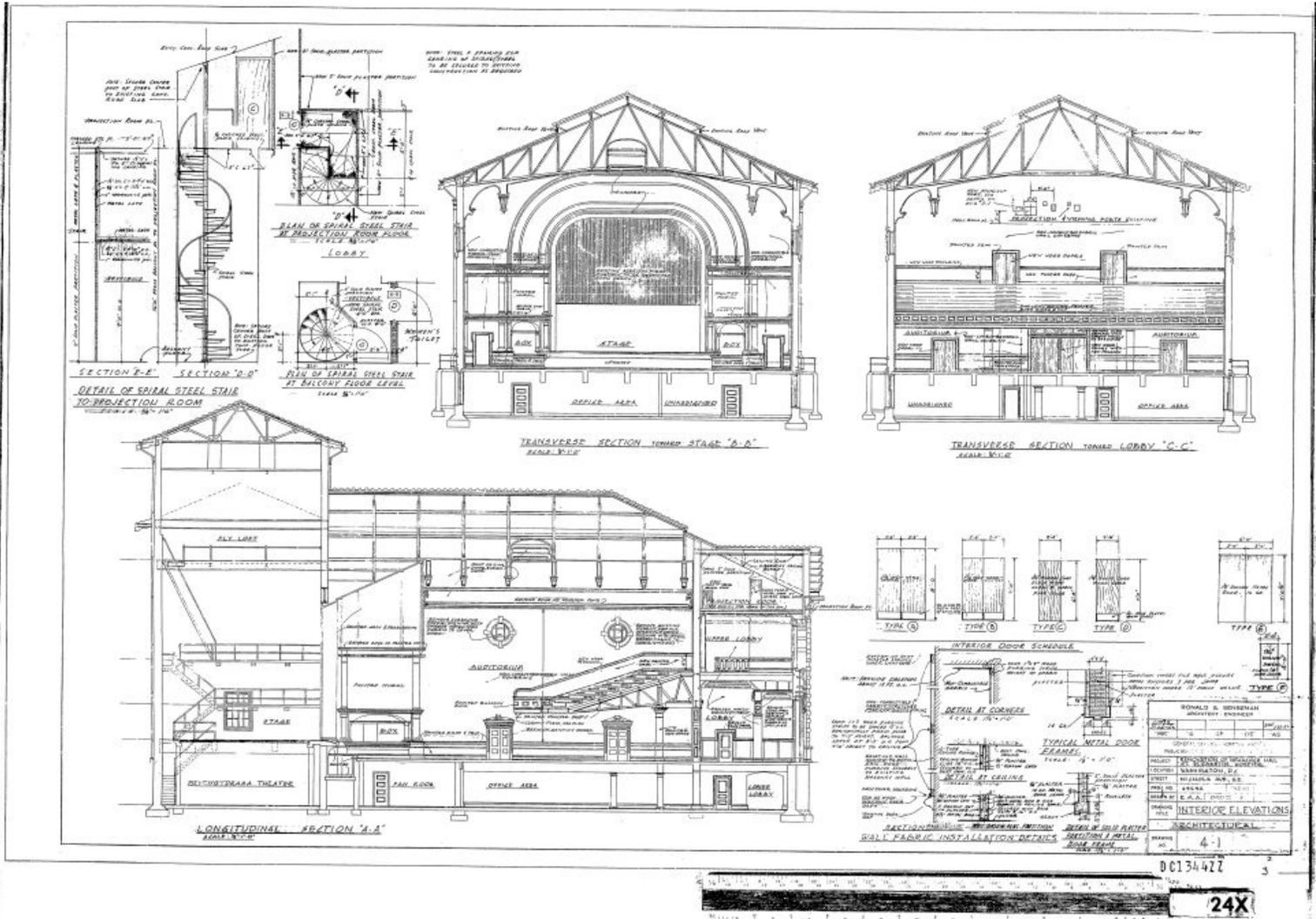
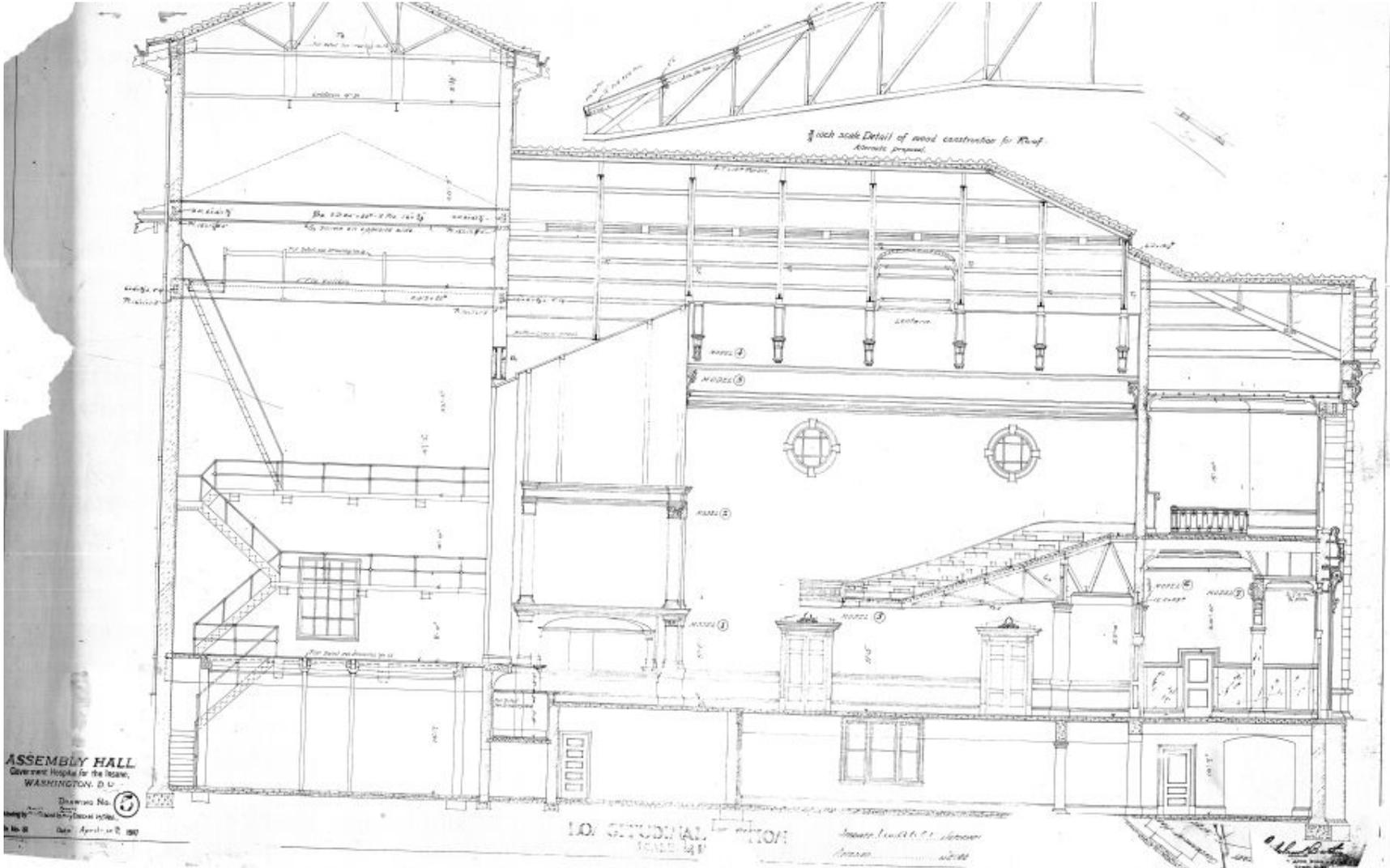


Figure 22. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0003.

DC134422

24X



ASSEMBLY HALL
Government Hospital for the Insane,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
Drawing No. 5
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
Date: April 10, 1907

10. STRUCTURAL SECTION
JAMES H. WOOD & CO. ARCHT.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Figure 24. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0110.

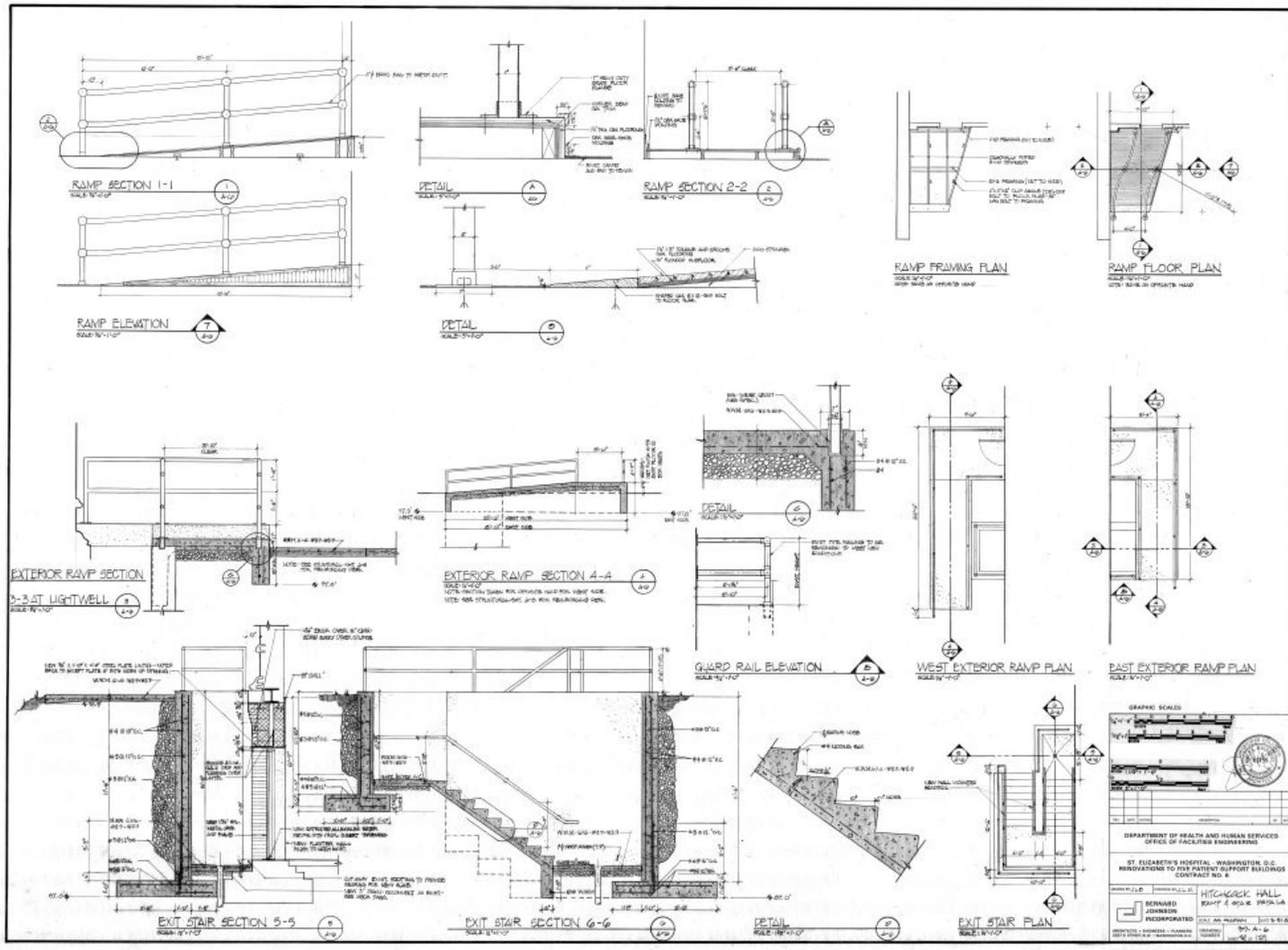


Figure 27. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0116.

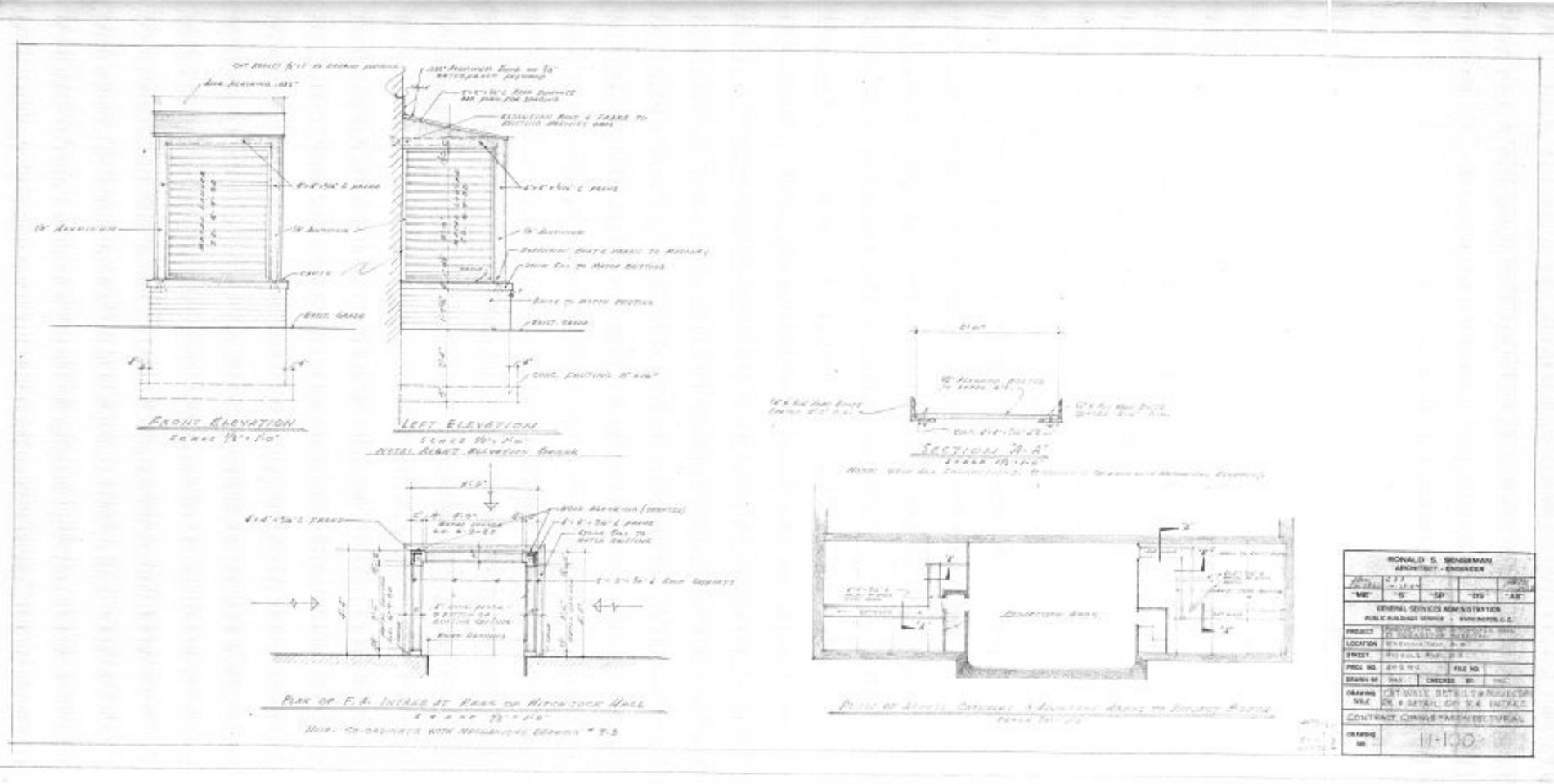


Figure 28. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0119.

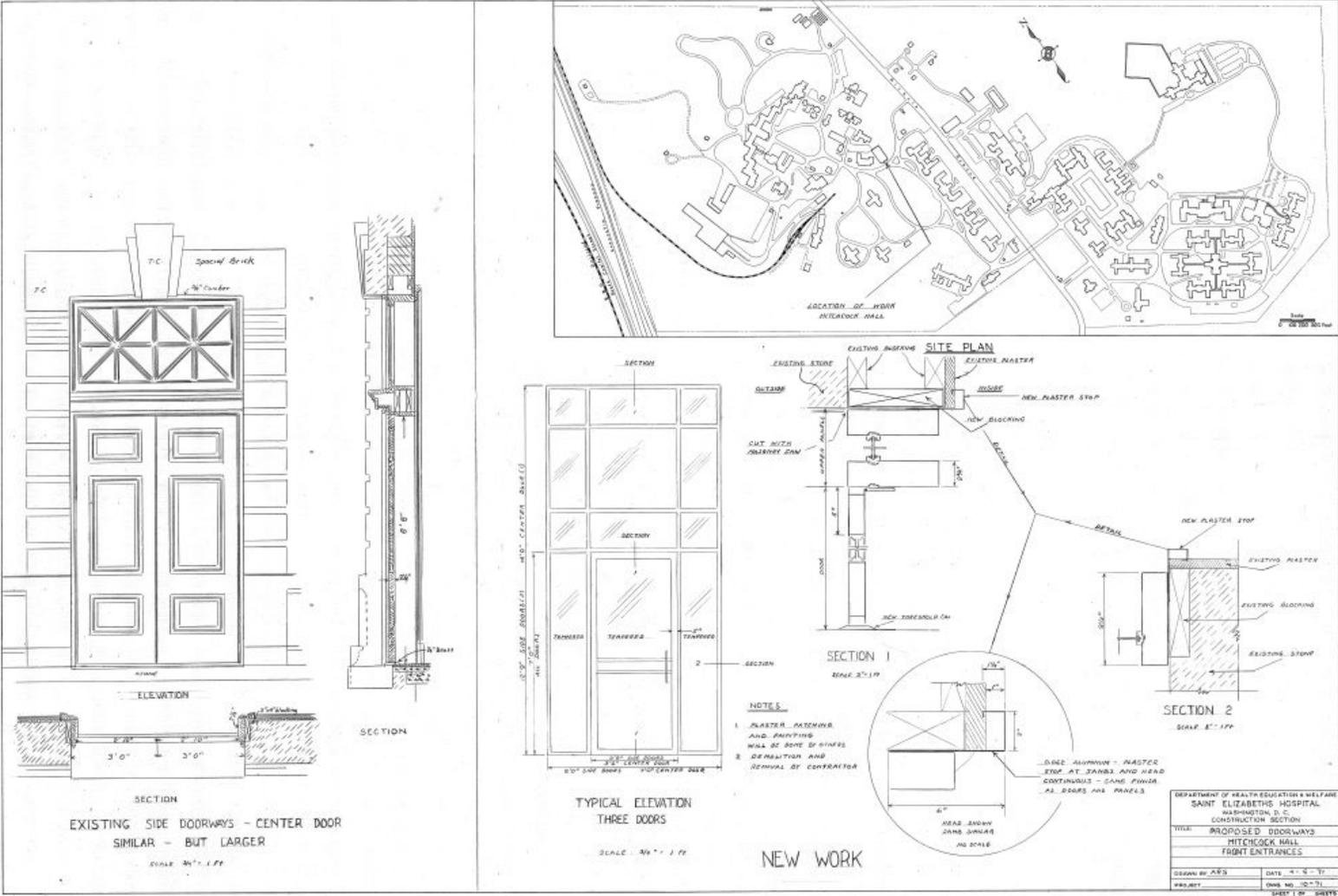


Figure 29. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0126.

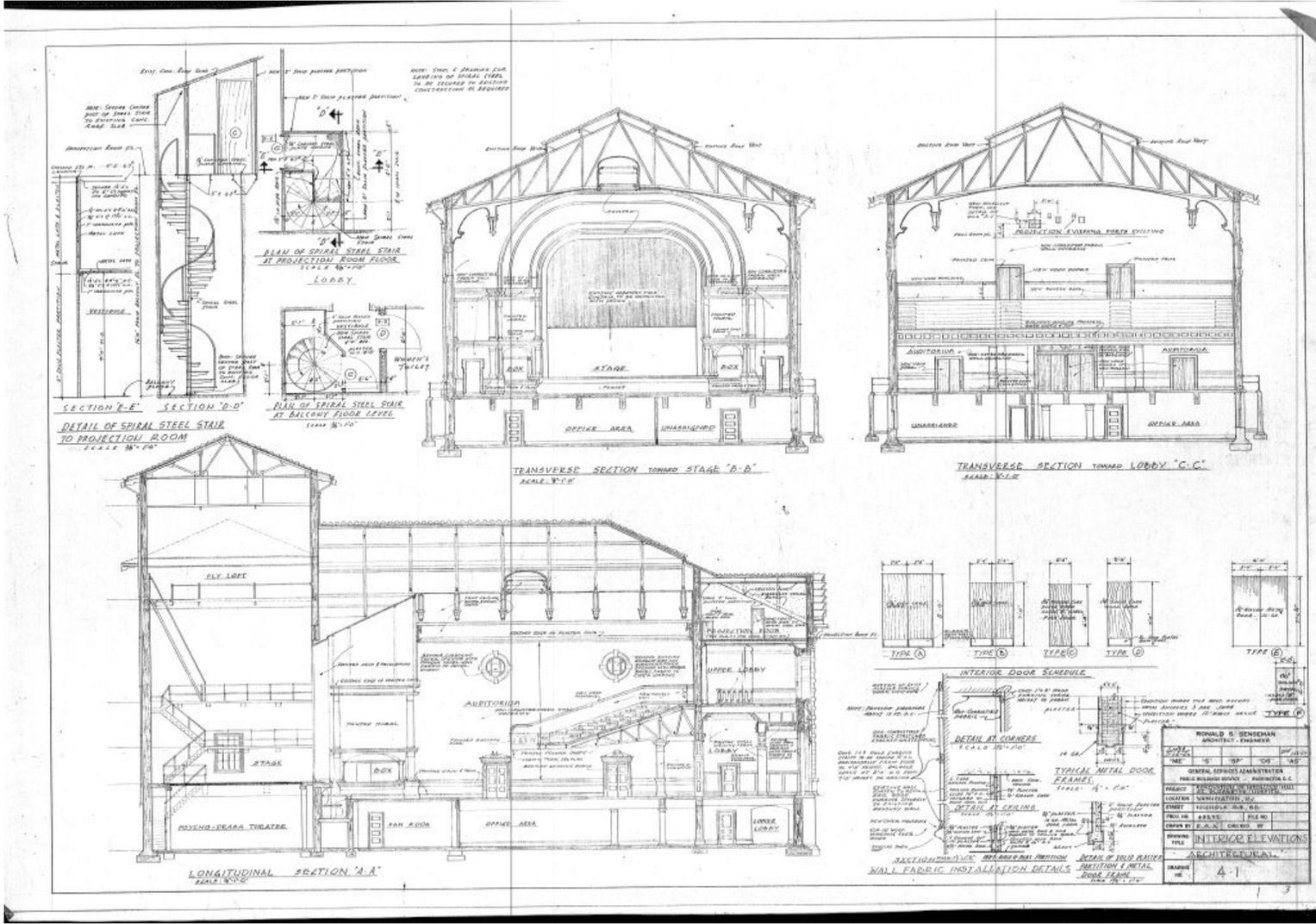


Figure 30. Source: GSA archives, image DC1344SE0131.