

LANCASTER COUNTY CENTER
4845 Cedar Avenue
Lancaster
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-2350

HABS
CAL
19-LANC,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
LANCASTER COUNTY CENTER (~~CEDAR AVENUE STRUCTURES~~)

HABS No. CA-2350

Location: 4845 Cedar Avenue (northwest corner of
Cedar Avenue & Lancaster Blvd.),
Lancaster
Los Angeles County,
California

U.S.G.S. Lancaster West Quadrangle (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
11. E395750. N3839980.

HABS
CAL
19-LANC,
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Present Owner: City of Lancaster
44933 North Fern Avenue
Lancaster, California 93534

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: None. Future undetermined.

Statement of
Significance:

The Lancaster County Center is considered to be historically significant within a local historic context. As the government and community center of Lancaster the complex was associated with community events and provided essential services that welded a sense of community among Antelope Valley residents. The complex as a whole embodies distinctive characteristics that convey a strong sense of time and place by representing the civil and social center of Antelope Valley from 1938 through the late 1950s.

The Memorial Hall was the main center in the valley for social and cultural meetings. During World War II it was the center for the Red Cross wartime food and clothing drive. Local dance and entertainment groups also performed there.

In addition, the entire complex of five buildings was the county administrative center for Antelope Valley and provided essential community services including the Sheriff, Health Center, County Clerk Water and Building Department, Assessors Office, Justice Court and Library. From 1938 to 1950 the complex was the sole center of county business for the Antelope Valley and defined Lancaster as the location for local government institutions. As such the complex represents a pattern of events that made Lancaster the social and local government center for the Antelope Valley community from 1938 to 1950.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide Historic American Building Survey documentation of five public buildings known as the Old Lancaster County Center or Cedar Avenue Building Complex. The structures are located on the southwest corner of Lancaster Boulevard (formerly 10th Street) and Cedar Avenue (Figure 1) in the City of Lancaster, California. Presently the old Lancaster County Center consists of a complex of five buildings that include the former County Memorial Hall and Courthouse-Library Building, the old Sheriff's Substation, Health Center Office, Jail, and Sheriff's Garage. As the government and community center of Lancaster the complex was associated with community events and provided essential services that welded a sense of community among Antelope Valley residents. The complex as a whole embodies distinctive characteristics that convey a strong sense of time and place by representing the civil and social center of Antelope Valley from 1938 through the late 1950s. As a result of archival research and field assessment, it has been determined that the complex is architecturally and historically significant under California Environmental Quality Act Criterion for important resources and is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Van Wormer et al 1993). As a result of the building's historical significance, the City of Lancaster required that HABS documentation be completed. This report combines two HABS documentation styles as suggested by the HABS coordinator, Ann Houston. The first section of this report is a narrative providing a historical background. The second section, consisting of architectural data, is presented in an outline format. Field photographs, in a 35mm format, are found in the project field records.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The city of Lancaster, California is located in the Antelope Valley in Los Angeles County, approximately 70 miles north of the city of Los Angeles. Lancaster was incorporated in 1977 but has been the institutional and community center of the valley region since the 1880s. Primarily developed as an agricultural area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, since the Second World War the region has gained notoriety and interest from the aerospace development and testing at Edward's Air Force Base.

The first known inhabitants of Antelope Valley were Native Americans of the Piute tribes. These peoples occupied the valley for several thousand years prior to the first recorded incursions into the valley by Spanish soldiers and priests in the late eighteenth century. Over the seventy-five odd years in which the Spanish and Mexican governments controlled California and Antelope Valley, the area saw little use except for occasional cattle grazing. After the United States occupation and conquest of California in 1846, the valley still saw little other use until the 1860s when small scale mining in the Mohave Desert helped open use of the Owens River Road from the Tehachapi Pass through the north end of the valley (Roske and von Till Warren 1981:31-32).

In 1876 prospects for Antelope Valley changed with the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Southern Pacific line connected the Mohave Desert with the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles. Traveling from present day Mohave, the line proceeded south through Antelope Valley, rose up through Soledad Pass and over the San Gabriel Mountains. Twenty-five miles south of Mohave in the center of the valley, Southern Pacific established the siding and station of Lancaster (Roske and von Till Warren 1981:36-37; Antelope Valley Union High School 1913:10; Settle 1983:1).

With completion of the railroad, the valley began to develop with Lancaster at its center. Settlers and farmers entered the region to homestead the high desert plains of the valley floor. For these early homesteaders Lancaster and its station became the regions' hub for supplies, transport, and commerce. Most of these settlers found the going rough and many believed large scale development of the region unlikely until Southern Pacific sunk an artesian well at Lancaster in 1883 for supplying its trains (Antelope Valley Union High School 1913:10; Morris 1934).

Exploitation of the water table led to renewed interest and in 1884 M.L. Wicks purchased sixty sections of land from the railroad at \$2.50 an acre and laid out the townsite of Lancaster (Antelope Valley Union High School 1913:11-12; Morris 1934). Over the next few years the town grew slowly but steadily, sparked by the general land boom in southern California during the late 1880s. Lancaster soon became the community center of the valley. By 1887 the town had its own newspaper and in 1890 a two-story brick schoolhouse was constructed along Tenth Avenue (Lancaster Blvd.) near the southeast corner of Cedar Avenue to serve the valley's growing population (Morris 1934:28; Antelope Valley Union High School 1913:14).

During the early 1890s Antelope Valley emerged as an agricultural center. Development centered on dry-farming of grain and fruits along with some cattle ranching. In May 1895 farmers formed the cooperative Antelope Valley Association and met in Lancaster for fairs and parades (Antelope Valley Union High School 1913:17). Droughts in the late part of the decade helped renew interest in mining operations throughout the valley but slowed agricultural growth for roughly ten years (De Witt 1988:68). In 1907 activity in the region boomed anew with the construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct through the valley (Antelope Valley Union High School 1913:20). By 1910 Lancaster had formed a community Chamber of Commerce and had a permanent population of 250 residents which constituted over 50 percent of the valley's population of 415 (Sanborn Map 1910; De Witt 1988:72). The community prepared to develop more services, both public and private, to help seal its role as regional center.

1910 is also the first year of documented occupation of the present study site. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of June 1910 shows a single structure located on the southwest corner of 10th and Cedar in Lot 8. The building is listed as a two story "hall" (Figure 2). This building was known by 1912 as the Women's Independence Hall and housed the

Antelope Valley Union High School classes on its second floor (Settle 1983:27).

The movement of the high school to this building indicates the need for new school facilities in the community. In 1913 construction began on a new grade school two blocks south of 10th on Cedar Avenue and in 1915 the high school moved to their newly completed \$60,000 building at the east end of 10th Street (Settle 1983:27). In February 1916 the Women's Independence Club rented their hall to a motion picture operator and by 1918 the building was used as a movie theater and dance hall (Settle 1983:28; Sanborn Map 1918).

Meanwhile, Los Angeles County and local community institutions and services were beginning to be established in Lancaster to serve the valley residents. In 1913 the county opened one of its 165 branches of the County Free Library in Lancaster. The branch was first set up in a local drug store until the new grade school was completed later that year. The library then moved into the old brick school building (Los Angeles County Public Library 1962:8; Settle 1983:27). In 1915 Lodge 437 of the Masons were formed in Lancaster and took over the old school's second floor as their lodge hall. The building was renamed the Masonic Building. By May 1918 the Masonic Building housed the county library branch and the Chamber of Commerce offices on the first floor and its lodge hall on the second floor (Settle 1983:27; Sanborn Map 1918) (Figure 3).

As the population in the valley grew in the late 1910s, Los Angeles County administrators realized the need to find more permanent facilities for the remote Antelope Valley community. Up to that time policy had been to rent out space, as in the case of the library (Los Angeles County Public Library 1962:27). In January 1919 the county purchased Lot 9 in Block 10 which was located on the present study site (Deed Book 6776:214). The first structure to be built was a new jail. The county appropriated \$4000 for the construction. By February 1920 the bidding process was completed and Los Angeles contractor G.H. Jordan hired to construct the reinforced concrete and steel bar jail house. Jordan estimated the cost to be \$5,983, and the office of the Chief Mechanical Engineer accepted the bid even though it was higher than the appropriation funds. At that time plans were also announced to build a "suitable structure" next to the jail as an office for the district court judge, O.S. Barkley (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 2-27-1920:1). By the summer of 1920 the jail was finished (*Antelope Valley Ledger Gazette* 7-30-1920:30).

Over the next two years the County bought several more lots including Number 8 which had held the Women's Independence Club Hall (Deed Book 1712:281). By March 1923 the W.I.C. Hall had been removed from the property and the L.A. County Water Works facility just to the south of the jail had been completed (Sanborn Map 1923) (Figure 4). The distinctive steel water tank would be a local landmark for decades. Later that year the county contracted with Hull Brothers Company to construct a new building to house both the justice court and branch library. The structure cost roughly \$7,000 and was built with concrete block walls (Settle 1983:58; Morris 1934:43; *Antelope Valley Ledger-*

Gazette 12-27-1927:1; 1-15-1922; 7-13-1923; 5-18-1923). By November 1927 the property housed the new library-court building, the jail, the fire hall, and water works (Sanborn Map 1927) (Figure 5).

The property became the center of county operations and services for Antelope Valley during the 1920s and 1930s. The need for these added facilities was due to the large growth of the valley during the 1920s from 3,000 to nearly 9,000 residents (De Witt 1988:72). In 1929 the Lancaster branch library was established as the first regional operations headquarters of the County Library System and oversaw the operations of 23 branch outlets in seventeen rural communities covering 900 square miles throughout Antelope Valley (Los Angeles County Public Library 1962:8; 1937:66). In 1930 the new County Health Center was completed just to the west of the library-court building. The new building was built with concrete block in Pueblo architectural style. Here the resident nurse provided to the region's health needs (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 11-30; Morris 1934:74).

By the mid-1930s it was clear, even in the midst of the Great Depression, that a larger government facility was needed to provide for the growing community. As with other public agencies during the Depression years, Los Angeles County planners looked to the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal recovery programs for financial support. In 1936 several Works Progress Administration projects were funded to improve the public water system in Lancaster, including installing new water mains and wells (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 8-6-1936:1). However, the big announcement was made by Supervisor Roger Jessup in July 1936 that the County would take advantage of Public Works Administration funds to construct a new larger administration building in Lancaster. The new building would house a public auditorium, larger library quarters, and several other county offices (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 7-9-1936:1).

The need to construct this building became even more necessary when on December 21, 1937 the library-courthouse building that had been completed in 1923 caught fire and was destroyed. Luckily, since the fire had been slow moving, smoldering, and confined to the upper, wooden part of the structure, all records and books were removed from the building prior to the collapse of the ceiling and roof. Ironically, several officials were in town at the time appraising the old building and planning for opening bids for a contract to expand on the old structure (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 12-23-1937:1). The fire changed those plans and Chief Architect for the Mechanical Department of the County Edward C.M. Brett quickly designed several new buildings with "modern" Art-Deco styling for the now vacant lot. In February 1938 the project went out to bid and construction was started soon thereafter (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 2-3-1938:1). The design was for three new structures. One would house the Memorial Auditorium, library, courtroom, and other offices while the other two would be the Sheriff's Substation and garage (Architectural Resources Group 1988:9).

The new county buildings were completed in September and ready for occupation in October of 1938 (*South Antelope Valley Press* 9-8-1938:1). The *Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* of October 20 announced that a

dedication banquet would be held on October 26th at the recently completed Community Hall. A week later the newspaper reported on the gala event and the buildings' significance to the community:

A crowd of 250 civic minded citizens from the four corners of Antelope Valley gathered Wednesday evening in Community Hall in the new County building at a banquet in dedication of that building and the recently finished Sheriff's Lancaster Substation (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 10-27-1938:1).

County Supervisor Roger W. Jessup spoke to the audience, as did district Judge William Keller, and deputy county assessor J.W. Mays. Keller spoke out on the great value and possible use of the Community Hall as a center of social and civic meetings. The banquet itself was a harbinger of things to come for the hall, with a local women's group helping to prepare the "regular Antelope Valley turkey dinner", Rainbow Girls decorating the hall, and an Explorer Scout troop serving the meal (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 10-27-1938:1).

The new Community Hall immediately became the main meeting place for the valley. With a capacity of 500 and an attached kitchen, the hall provided a place for dances, parties, recreational classes, and important meetings of all kinds. Both the Kiwanis Club and Lancaster Women's Club held regular meetings in the hall as would the Future Farmers of America. In fact the first private use of the hall came just four days after the dedication banquet at the Lancaster Women's Club Halloween Social of 1938. In 1941 the Red Cross also began to meet in the building to organize wartime food and clothing drives and coordinate local relief efforts. Local performers and groups such as the Lancaster Women's Chorus gave concerts and produced plays and exhibitions in the hall. Long time Lancaster resident Grace Pickus recalls that the facility was so well utilized that the Red Cross would have to make sure that they vacated the building on Thursdays at precisely 4:30 to allow for the weekly Kiwanis Club dinner/meetings prepared and served by the Lancaster Methodist Church women's group (Pickus 1993).

Along with the social use of the community hall, the new Cedar Avenue complex more completely served as the county administrative center for Antelope Valley. County services provided to the citizens of the region included the Sheriff and Fire Department, Health Center, County Clerk, Water and Building Departments, Assessor's Office, Justice Court, and Branch Library (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 2-27-1941; Orlando 1993; Stark 1993; Primmer 1993). Local residents utilized the complex to borrow library books, pay their water bills and traffic fines, and bring their children to the Health Center to receive immunizations and clear them for return to school after outbreaks of communicable disease (Orlando 1993; Pickus 1993). Until 1950 the Cedar Avenue administrative complex was the sole center of county business for Antelope Valley and defined Lancaster as the location for county institutions (Figure 6).

By the 1950s and 1960s continued growth in the community was creating a need for even larger facilities. From 1950 to 1960 the

valley population grew from 23,000 to nearly 70,000 (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 8-31-1961:7). In 1950 a new library building was completed in Lancaster and the branch library moved out of the Cedar Avenue complex (Los Angeles County Public Library 1962:28; Orlando 1993). Former employee of the Clerk's Office Mike Orlando recalled that the Health Department moved into the vacated library space. In 1962 a new and much larger Antelope Valley Administrative Center was completed and most of the county offices including the Sheriff's office and courts moved to the new complex (Orlando 1993; Settle 1983:110). The County Health Department and Veterans Mental Health Center continued to utilize the complex up until the late 1980s (Architectural Resources Group 1988:8). Since 1979 a community theater group (Cedar Street Theater) has been utilizing the community hall for its performances (*South Antelope Valley Press* 2-2-1989:A3).

In 1977 the city of Lancaster incorporated and in 1985 agreed to purchase the Cedar Avenue complex from the county. City officials considered razing the building but local citizens groups pushed for preservation and the city council voted to preserve the buildings for study of a feasible use for the complex (*Los Angeles Daily News* 9-28-1985; 9-30-1985; 8-9-1987). In 1988 Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco completed a renovation report for the property. Currently the old Sheriff's Substation, Jail, and Garage are used by the City of Lancaster Public Works Department as storage and office facilities.

In conclusion, the Old Lancaster County Complex played an important role in the development of Lancaster and the Antelope Valley during the 20th century. As the government and community center of Lancaster the complex was associated with community events and provided essential services that welded a sense of community among Antelope Valley residents. The complex as a whole embodies distinctive characteristics that convey a strong sense of time and place by representing the civil and social center of Antelope Valley from 1938 through the late 1950s.

The Memorial Hall was the main center in the valley for social and cultural meetings and was used by the Lancaster Rainbow Girls, Explorer Scouts, Kiwanis Club, Women's Club, Farmers of America, Red Cross, and Methodist Church Women's Group. During World War II it was the center for the Red Cross wartime food and clothing drive. Local dance and entertainment groups also performed there. It is remember by long time Lancaster resident, Grace Pickus, as a "marvelous place, everything took place there" (Pickus 1993).

In addition, the entire complex of five buildings was the county administrative center for Antelope Valley and provided essential community services including the Sheriff, Health Center, County Clerk Water and Building Department, Assessors Office, Justice Court, and Library. From 1938 to 1950 the complex was the sole center of county business for the Antelope Valley and defined Lancaster as the location for local government institutions. As such the complex represents a pattern of events that made Lancaster the social and local government center for the Antelope Valley community from 1938 to 1950.

III. ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT

As stated in the introduction, the old Lancaster County Center presently consists of a complex of five buildings that include the former County Memorial Hall and Courthouse-Library Building, the old Sheriff's Substation, Health Center Office, Jail, and Sheriff's Garage (Figures 7 and 8). Architectural details for each building will be presented using the HABS outline format. Details of these descriptions are based on a field assessment of the structures and a previous report by Architectural Resources Group (Architectural Resources Group 1988). Historical information has been provided in the preceding narrative and will not be repeated in the outline formats for the individual structures.

MEMORIAL HALL AND COURTHOUSE - LIBRARY.

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Memorial Hall and Courthouse-Library is a two story "L" shaped "restrained Art Deco" style structure. Art Deco architecture became popular in the 1920s and was especially common for commercial and public buildings. Exterior finishing emphasized geometric elements on facades, towers, and other vertical projections. Simplified or "restrained" Art Deco styles were adopted for many federally funded public buildings during the 1930s (Gleye et. al 1981; McAlester and McAlester 1986).

2. Condition of fabric: The original fabric of the interior is quite intact in spite of some alterations and exhibits sand textured plaster walls, hardwood floors, original varnished moldings, door and window frames, bathroom fixtures, and drinking fountains. One obvious modern addition are circa 1960s ceiling tiles in the auditorium.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is a two story structure consisting of two wings that form an "L" shaped footprint that measures approximately 85 by 104 feet (Figures 9 & 10).

2. Foundations: The building is supported by reinforced concrete foundations and basements. The portions of the structure that do not have basements have a crawl space between grade and the first floor level.

3. Walls: The exterior of the building is finished with painted stucco and exhibits simplified Art Deco motifs expressed in the east (Cedar Avenue) facade which forms a "three part vertical composition" by projecting the main entrance or vestibule from the surrounding facade. Vertical bands framing the entrance and a cornice of 3 horizontal bands that encircle the buildings also are examples of the Art Deco style. The only major change to the exterior of the building is the addition of

a disabled access ramp that extends from the Cedar Avenue entry of the north wing and parallels the sidewalk to Cedar Avenue.

4. Structural systems and framing: The building is of two by four stud frame construction supported by reinforced concrete foundations and basements. Floors and ceilings are supported by 2 by 6 inch joists and rafters. Carpenter trusses above the assembly room support the roof.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors: The structure has two main entrances, both on the Cedar Avenue (east) facade. The southern entrance provides access to the original assembly hall and to the main staircase leading to the original courtroom. The entry is expressed on the facade by projecting this portion of the building forward from the northern section by three and a half feet and by highlighting the entry. Three tile and brick steps, flanked by low concrete buttresses, lead up to recessed double doors, each with a single large pane of glass. A large transom window above spans over the doors. A flat sheet metal canopy with three horizontal bands extends out from the facade above the transom window. On either side of the entry, three sets of stucco bands extends vertically up the facade, each one stepping further inward. They terminate at the heads of three sets of double-hung windows centered over the entry doors below. Above the band is a raised circular medallion. Five decorative windows aligned vertically and set in precast concrete, flank the entry. They are centered above the small buttresses and have opaque glass.

The northern entrance leads into the original Los Angeles County Branch Library that later served as the Health Center. This entry is much more restrained than the southern entrance. The doors and entry canopy are similar in design to those to the south. At the second floor level above the entry are two decorative windows with cast concrete screens. On either side of both Cedar Avenue entries are hexagonal drum wall mounted light fixtures. These are original to the building and in very good condition. Access to the library is also provided by a single door exhibiting 6 parallel lights located on the north facade of the structure's northeast corner.

The west and south facades are functional without elaborate entryways. Plain entry doors with no decorative detail are located on the west elevation of the northern wing. An exterior steel staircase on this side runs from the second floor courtroom to ground level. Concrete stairs on the north side of the auditorium lead from ground level to the basement entrance. On the south facade double doors provide a second access to the auditorium.

b. Windows and shutters: Overall the windows are individual double-hung wood frame sashes slightly set into the stucco facade with four over four lights. Windows along both sides of the Assembly Hall wing are paired with four over four transoms above each double-hung window. The north facade of the Court House-Library wing has three

windows grouped together on both floors. These are centered along the axis of this wing.

8. Roof: The gently pitched composition roof is concealed behind a parapet wall.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The first floor of the structure's west wing contains the Memorial Hall Auditorium which has changed little since the structure was built. The building is entered through the vestibule on Cedar Avenue where a front door opens into the lobby (Figure 11). Doors on the north side of the lobby lead into storage closets and bathrooms, while doors on the right enter a cloak room. The theater or auditorium is entered through two doors centered on the west wall opposite the lobby's main entrance. The theater contains a concrete stage that has been expanded with wooden additions, and dressing rooms. A kitchen is located off the southwest corner (Figure 12).

The north wing of the building is accessed through three doorways. The first floor is entered through doors on Lancaster Boulevard and Cedar Avenue. This floor originally held the County Library and later the Public Health Clinic. The second floor is entered by a doorway and stairwell on the north side of the Memorial Hall's vestibule. This floor contained the former Court House, jury rooms, and other county offices.

The second floor of the building has had the greatest change from the original construction. The upper floor originally had the Courtroom, with two offices, a jury room, Clerk's Room, and Judges Chambers. The courtroom was located in the northwest quarter and measured approximately 26 feet square. When the structure served as the County Mental Health Center the courtroom was divided into several offices. A series of six equally spaced mission revival style rough hewn beams that spanned the room still remain intact, although the partitions go around them. The jury room and clerk's office have each been divided into two offices with temporary partitions.

Both floors exhibit original linoleum floors and plastered walls and ceilings as well as original cabinetry, bathroom fixtures, and many original doors and light fixtures. The first floor woodwork still has the original varnish finish, but much of the second floor woodwork has been painted (Figures 13-15).

2. Stairways: As discussed above the courtroom is accessed through a stairwell on the north side of the Memorial Hall vestibule. The wooden stairs have a plain brown painted baseboard and steel hand rail mounted on the wall for the first flight and a painted wooden banister on the second.

3. Flooring: All flooring appears to be original. The auditorium has a varnished hardwood floor. The bathrooms throughout the building have small hexagonal shaped ceramic tile floors. The remaining

rooms exhibit original tan linoleum. In some areas carpet has been laid over the original flooring.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wall and ceilings throughout are finished with a sand textured plaster. The original auditorium ceiling has been covered with circa 1960 ceiling tiles. Wide classical style wood moldings divide the ceiling into five distinct panels.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: In the auditorium doorways are trimmed with classical style varnished hardwood moldings and have four paneled varnished hardwood doors. Doorways in the Courthouse and Library have identical trimmings to those of the Memorial Hall. In addition to four paneled doors identical to those in the auditorium other styles are present, including single paneled doors on closets and others with a lower single panel and a single pane light on top, which are on some offices. Most doors still have their original hardware.

b. Windows: Windows are trimmed with moldings identical to those used for doorways.

6. Decorative features and trim: The interior finishes are simple and almost all are intact. The building has simple baseboards and chair rails along the walls. The first floor woodwork in both wings still has the original varnish finish but much of the second floor woodwork has been painted.

7. Hardware: As previously mentioned, much of the original interior hardware is still in place including window latches, door knobs, hinges and stops, and cabinet and closet hardware. In keeping with the overall style of the building, hardware items are of a plain functional style with few decorative elements.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating: The building is heated by two furnaces located in the basement. Ducts rise in the walls and wall mounted registers are found in major rooms. In some rooms window mounted air conditioning units have been added.

9. Original furnishings: Both floors exhibit original cabinetry and bathroom fixtures. An original ceramic drinking fountain is mounted into the south wall of the lobby. Fire hoses with brass nozzles in glass covered steel cabinets mounted into the walls are located in the auditorium lobby, library, and courthouse. The original lighting fixtures of the auditorium have been replaced with modern florescent lights. The courthouse and library still retain original fixtures including functional semi circular glass globes, typically found in many public buildings prior to World War II and aluminum Art Deco style florescent bulb fixtures. Original bakeolite light switches and electrical outlets occur throughout the building.

SHERIFF'S SUBSTATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Sheriff's Substation was built at the same time as the Memorial Hall and Courthouse building and is a single story example of the restrained Art Deco Style, incorporating the same elements as the two story building.

2. Condition of Fabric: The original fabric of the substation has been compromised much more than that of the Memorial Hall building. A small kitchen has been added on to the rear of the structure altering its original floor plan. All of the original woodwork has been painted and plaster has fallen from some of the ceilings.

B. Description of Exterior:

The former Sheriffs Substation (Figures 16-17) is an irregular rectangular shaped structure measuring approximately 40 by 55 feet. The front door is centered on the Cedar Avenue facade and is similar in design to the Library entry on Cedar Avenue. The substation entry also has a sheet metal canopy that extends out from the facade with horizontal bands. Double hung four over four light windows, identical in style to those of the Memorial Hall, are paired on each side of the entry into the stucco facade.

The structural system is the same as the Memorial Hall and County Offices-Library building, consisting of two by four stud frame construction supported by reinforced concrete foundations and basement. A concrete stair on the structure's south side leads from ground level to the basement where the furnace is located. The basement takes up a quarter of the southwest corner of the building. The gently pitched composition roof is concealed behind a parapet wall.

C. Description of Interior:

The building is entered through doors on the east and west facades (front and back). The front door leads into a small lobby that opens into a central hallway. On the north side of the hall is a front office with a counter facing the lobby, a central Squad Room, a small office, and a kitchen add on. On the south side are four small offices and a toilet. Original interior trim was identical to that used in the Memorial Hall and Courthouse - Library structure. The interior of the building, however, is much more deteriorated. All interior woodwork is painted, and plaster has fallen from some of the office ceilings. Throughout most of the structure, the original ceiling has been replaced with circa 1960s ceiling tiles.

SHERIFF'S GARAGE

A. General Statement:

The Sheriff's Garage is a single story rectangular structure that measures approximately 20 by 30 feet (Figure 18). It is of stud frame construction and has been severely altered. The front wall on the west side has been expanded and new partitions have been added inside to form individual stalls. It contains no original hardware, furnishings, or finish details. The building is currently used as a maintenance and storage facility. It has been altered to the point that it has very little if any historic integrity left.

JAIL

A. General Statement:

The Jail is a single story poured concrete building with a concrete slab roof. A corrugated metal shed has been attached to the south side. The original door on the east side has been enlarged to single car garage door size and the building is now used for storage (Figure 19).

B: Description of Exterior:

The Jail is a simple rectangle that measures approximately 20 by 24 feet. The structure is built of concrete with concrete footings, floor slab, walls, and roof/ceiling slab. The large rolling metal garage door on the east side takes up half the facade. The north and south facades each have two arched windows with heavy horizontal and vertical bars. The sills are 6 feet above ground. The west facade has no openings. The corrugated metal storage shed on the south side abuts the south wall.

C. Description of Interior:

The building is entered through the enlarged opening. Two large bays on the north side of the structure represent the original cells which held eight bunks each when in use (*Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette* 7-30-1920). Remains of steel bars that enclosed these cells on the south side protrude from the ceiling and can be seen in the concrete slab floor where they have been cut off. Original steel bars are still in place in the arched windows on the north and south walls. A storage area with heavy wire mesh and steel doors is located in the southwest corner (Figure 20).

HEALTH CENTER

A. General Statement:

The former Health Center structure is a single story, rectangular shaped brick building (Figure 21). It is painted a light cream color and faces north onto Lancaster Boulevard. The building was completed in 1930 prior to the Memorial Hall and Courthouse and was originally a Pueblo Revival style building with false wooden rafters or vigas protruding from the front facade at ceiling level.

B: Description of Exterior:

The former Health Center structure is a single story rectangular shaped brick building measuring 35 by 40 feet. The original false vigas have been removed and the structure has very little other exterior ornamental detailing. The Lancaster Boulevard facade is symmetrical in design with a central door flanked by a single window on each side. The windows consist of six over six lights in double-hung sashes set deep into the facade. A lintel of vertically placed bricks spans the doorway and above this is a simple row of dentils, formed by projecting bricks.

The other three sides of the building each have two windows and the rear facade has a central door into the building. The structure's flat composition roof is concealed behind a brick parapet.

The building is supported by a concrete foundation and has multi paned double-hung windows. It is currently used by the Lancaster Old Town Site organization.

C. Description of Interior:

The structure is entered through recessed doors on the front and back (north and south facades). The doors lead into a main hallway. Four individual offices and a bathroom on the east side of the structure are entered from the hallway. In addition, a closet and bathroom separate the offices on the west side of the building. The interior fabric of this structure is very intact in spite of modern carpet and linoleum floors. Almost all interior fixtures appear to be original except for a few doors. All original woodwork has been painted white (Figure 22). expand on fixtures

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken at the request of the City of Lancaster after a previous study based on archival research and field assessment determined that the Old Lancaster County Center complex is architecturally and historically significant under California Environmental Quality Act Criterion for important resources and is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Van Wormer et al 1993). The buildings are vacant at this time and their future undetermined. The following people were involved in preparing the present study:

Project Manager Historian:	Stephen R. Van Wormer
Project Photographer:	William R. Manley
Research Assistant:	James D. Newland
Graphic Artist:	Susan D. Walter

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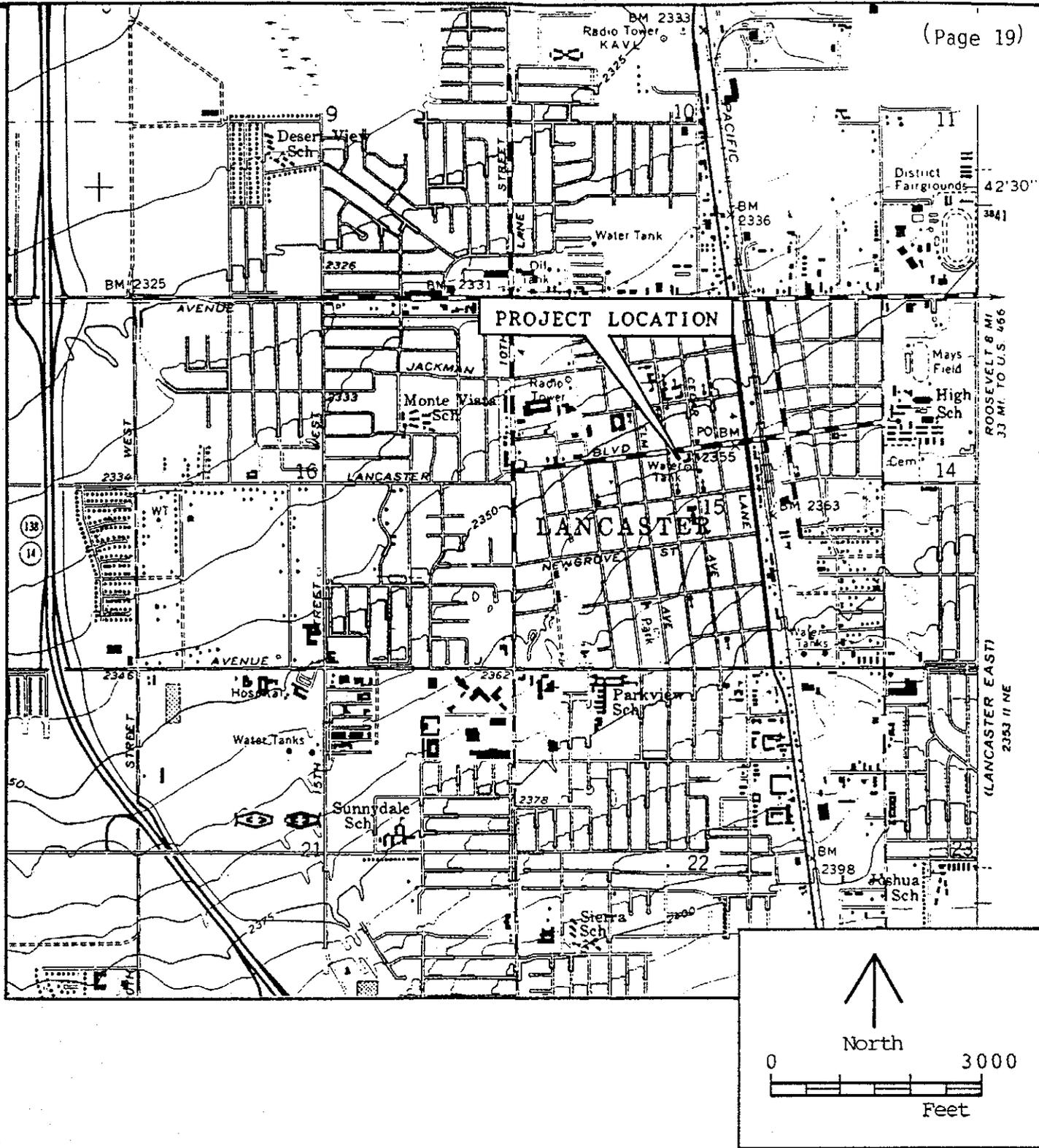
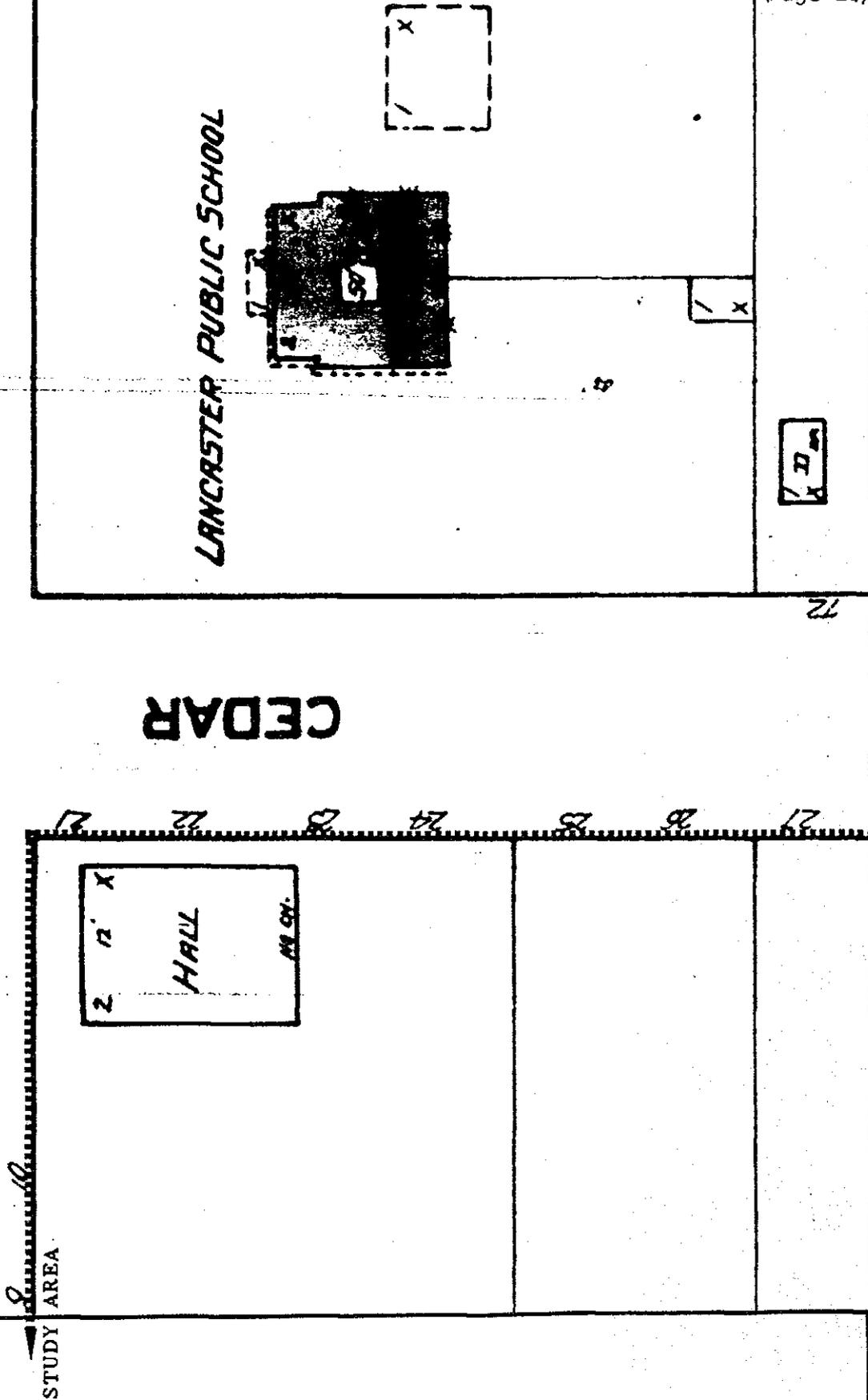


Figure 1. Project location on U.S.G.S. Lancaster West 7.5 minute topographic map.

10TH

Figure 2. 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing the former "Hall" in the present study area. Note the public school across the street.



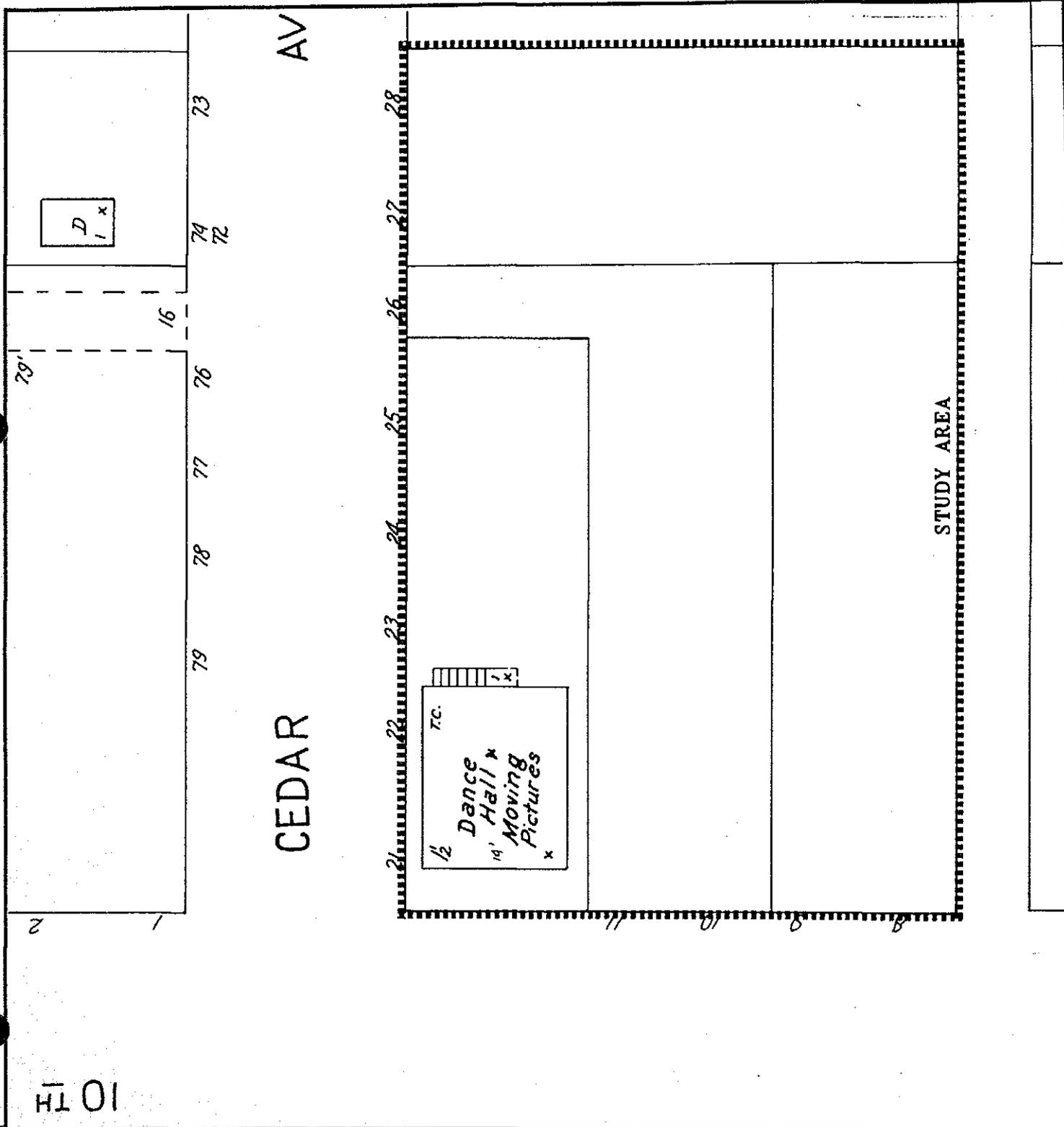
CEDAR

LANCASTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

72

10TH

Figure 3.
1918 Sanborn
Fire Insurance
map showing the
former Dance
Hall and Moving
Picture Theater
in the study
area.



10 TH

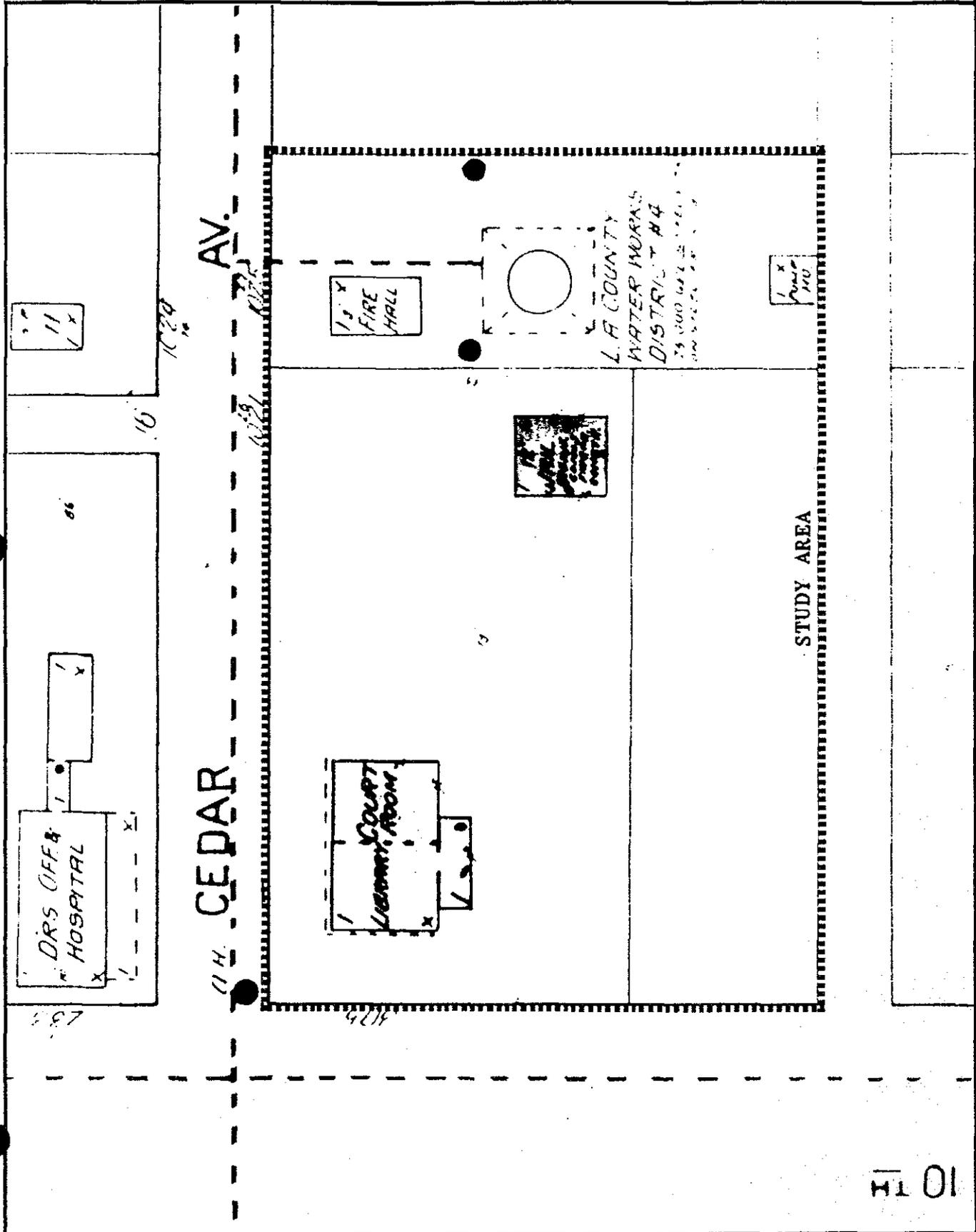


Figure 4. 1923 Sanborn Fire Insurance map of the study area showing the Jail, Fire Hall, Water Tank Tower, and Pump House locations.

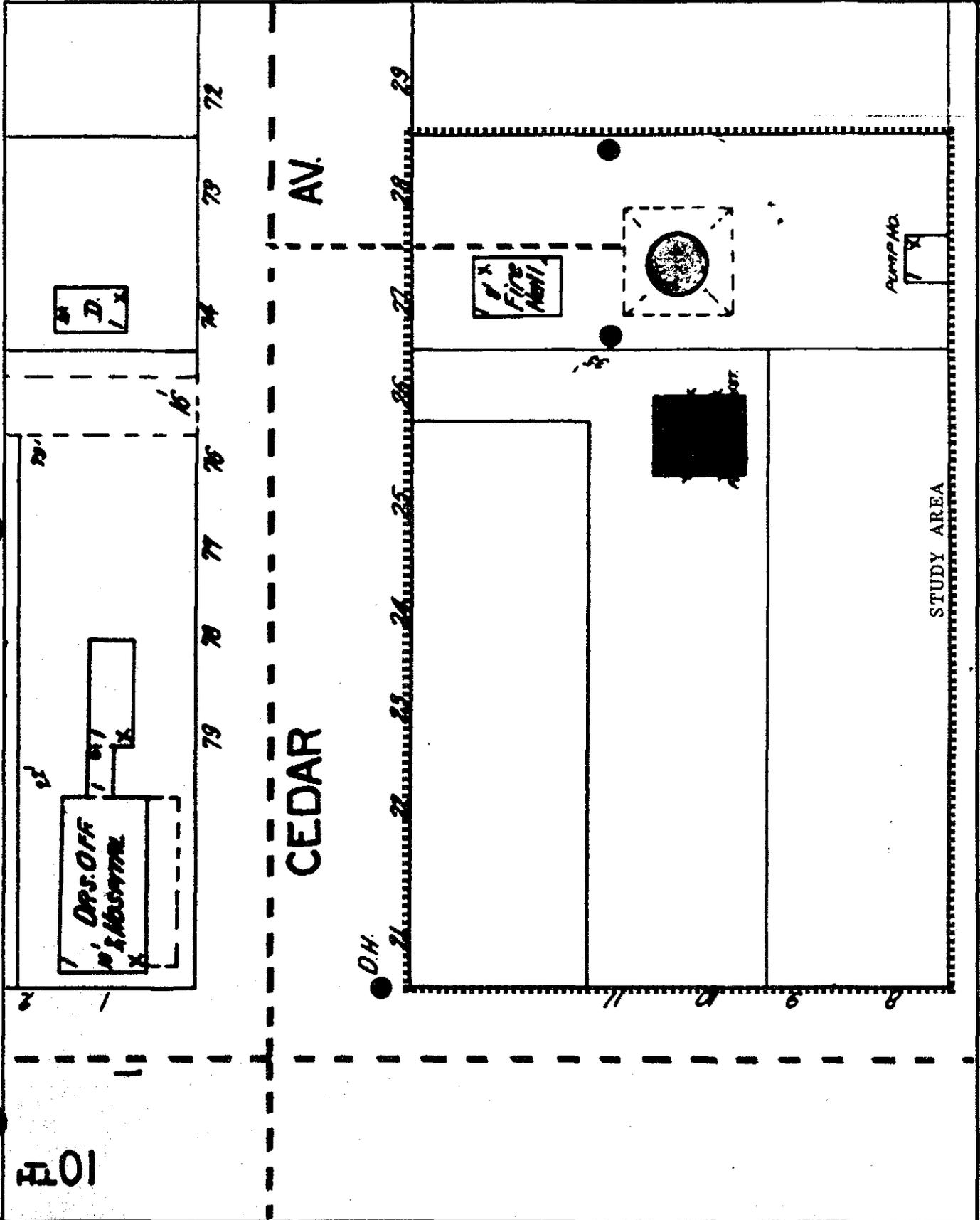


Figure 5. Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing the structures in the study area in 1927.

- A = Memorial Hall and Courthouse / Library
- B = Sheriff's Substation
- C = Health Center Office
- D = Jail
- E = Sheriff's Garage
- F = Water Tower

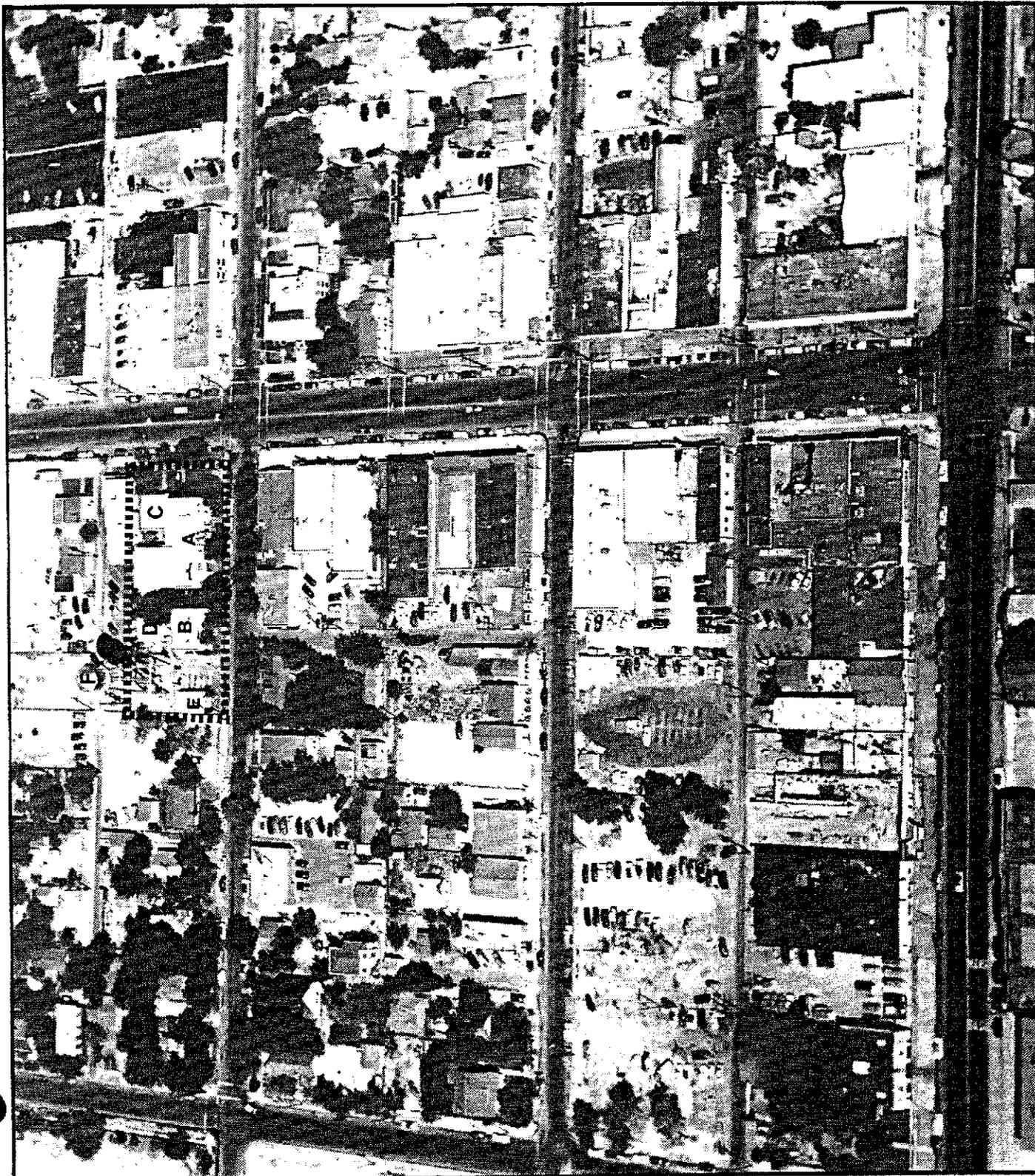


Figure 6. Aerial photograph of downtown Lancaster circa 1950 showing the study area and complex of county buildings.



Figure 7. A view of the study area from the northeast corner of Cedar Avenue and Lancaster Boulevard. The former Memorial Hall and Courthouse/Library is in the central foreground; the former Health Center is on the right; and the former Sheriff's Substation is on the left.

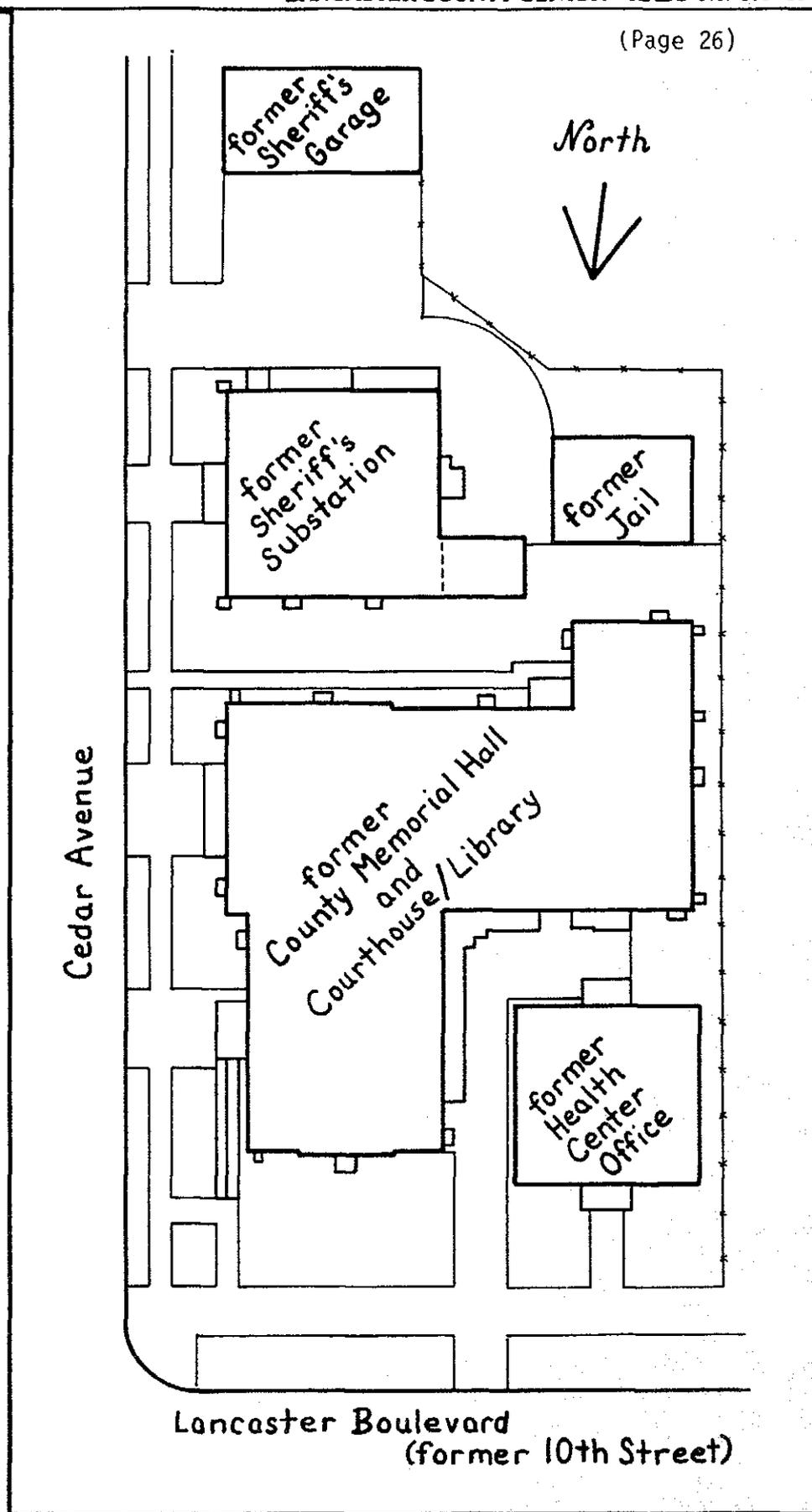


Figure 8. Plot plan of the Old Lancaster County Center.

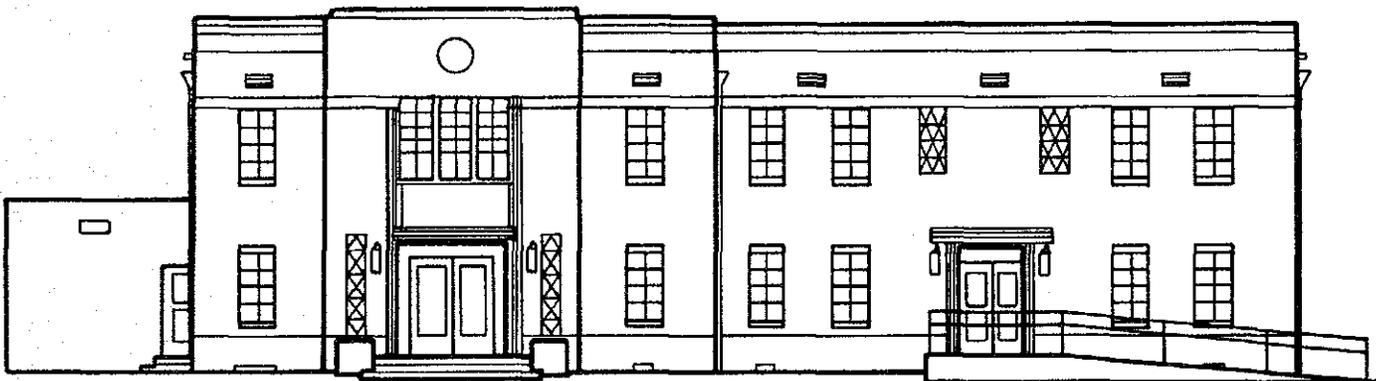
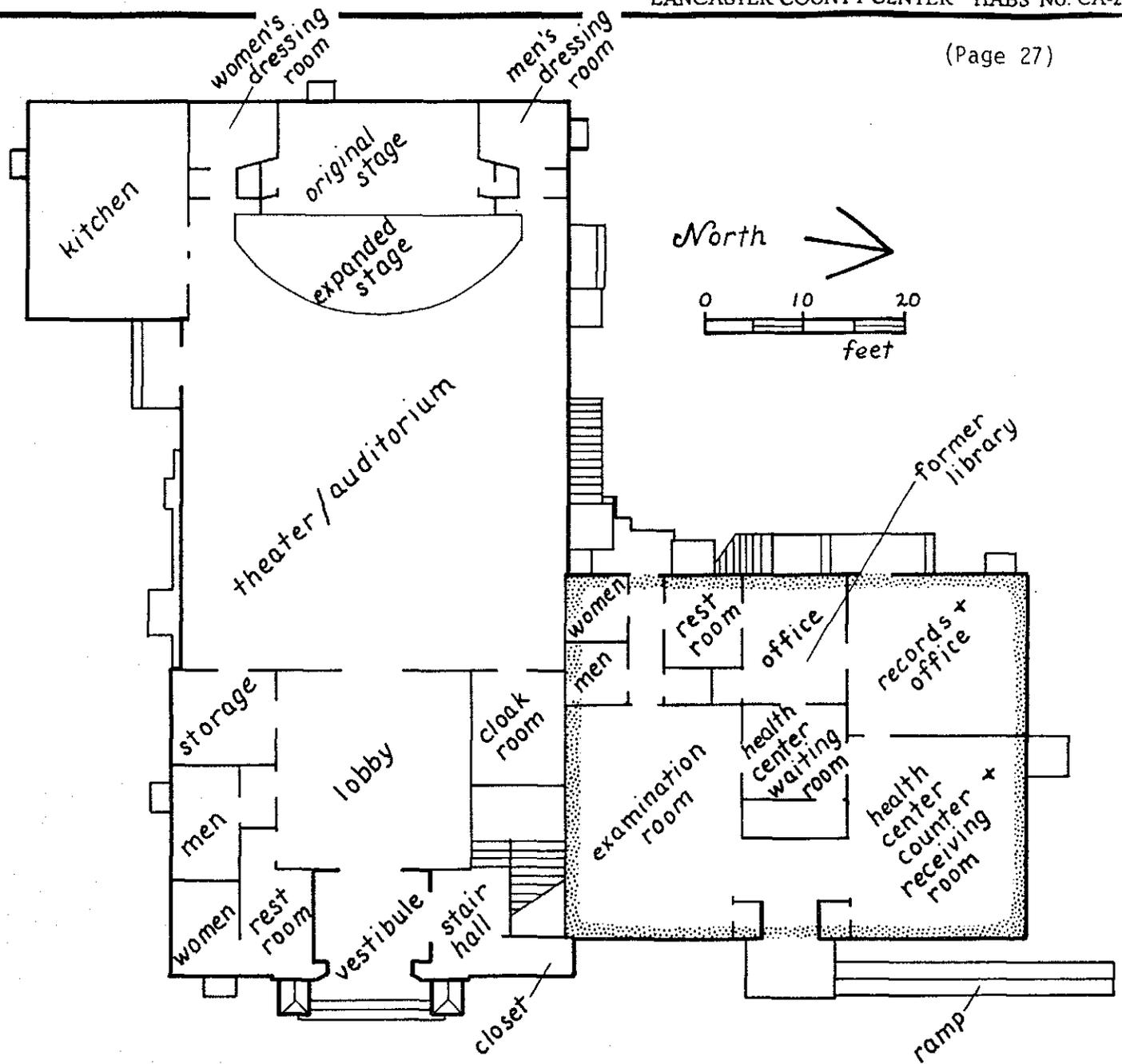


Figure 9. Front (east) elevation and first floor plan of the former Memorial Hall and Courthouse/Library. (From: Architectural Resource Group 1988.)

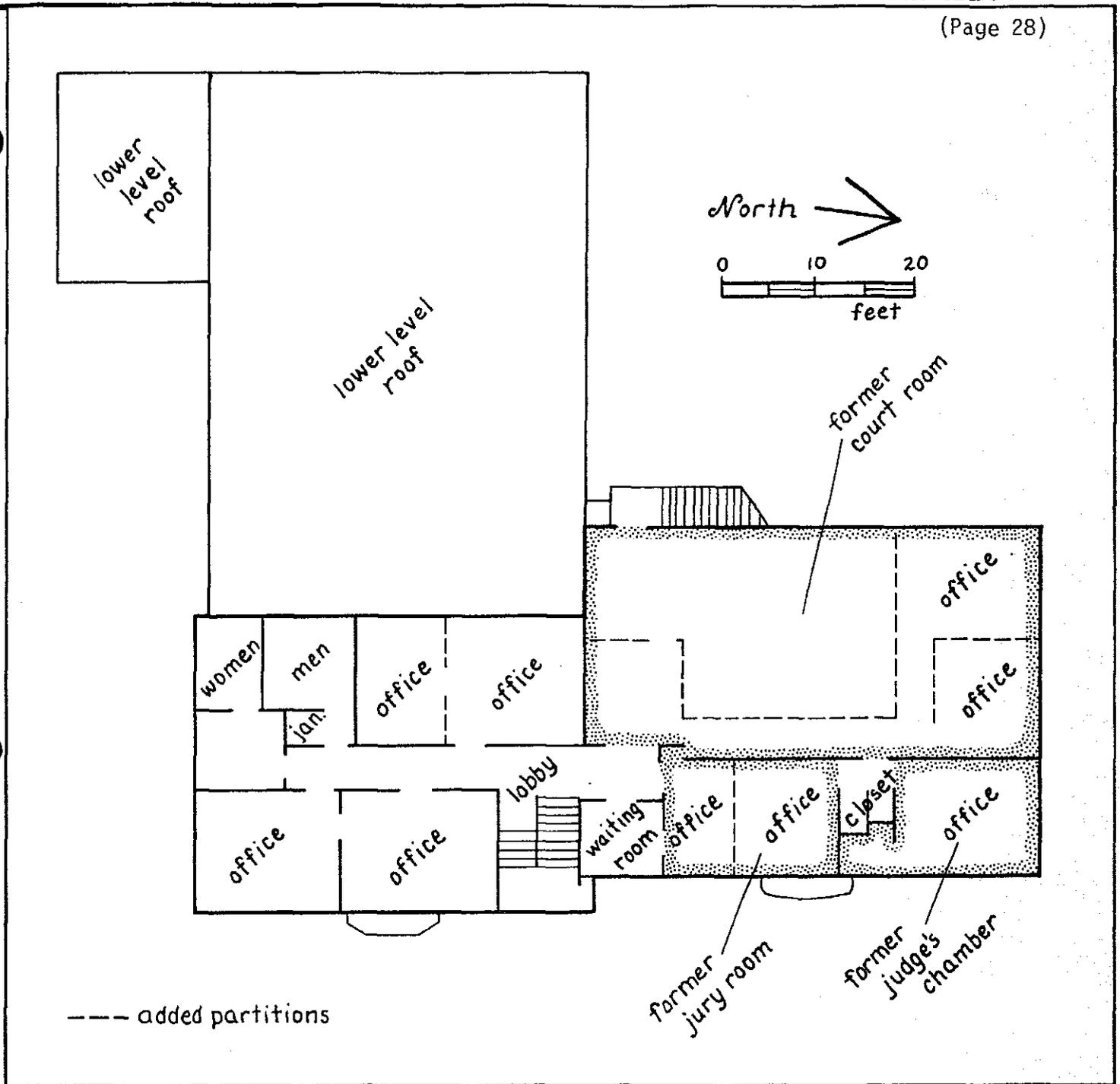


Figure 10. Second floor plan of the former Memorial Hall and Courthouse/Library. (From: Architectural Resource Group 1988.)



Figure 11. Entrance to the former Memorial Hall.
A = Vestibule entrance
B = Front doors and lobby



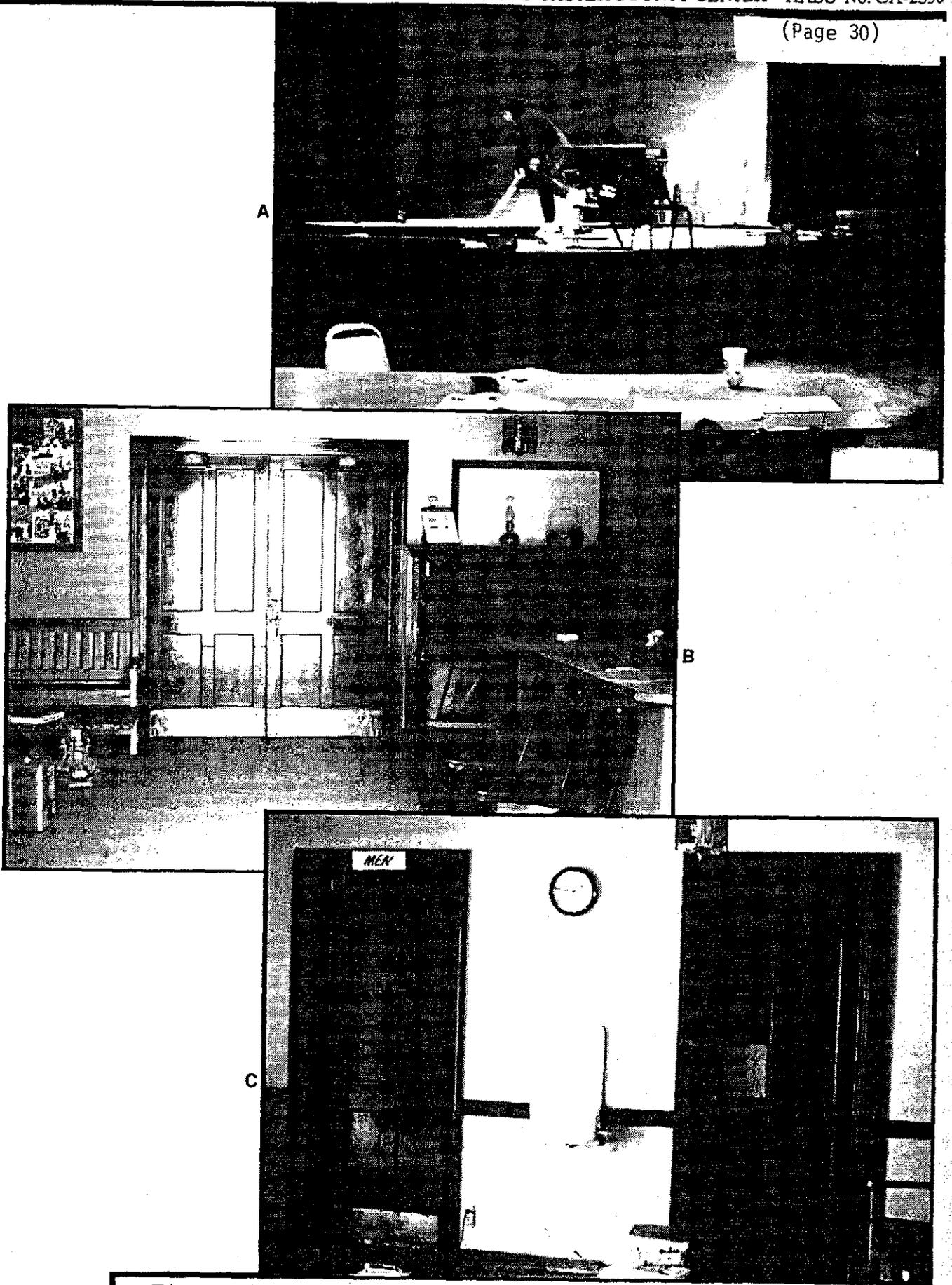
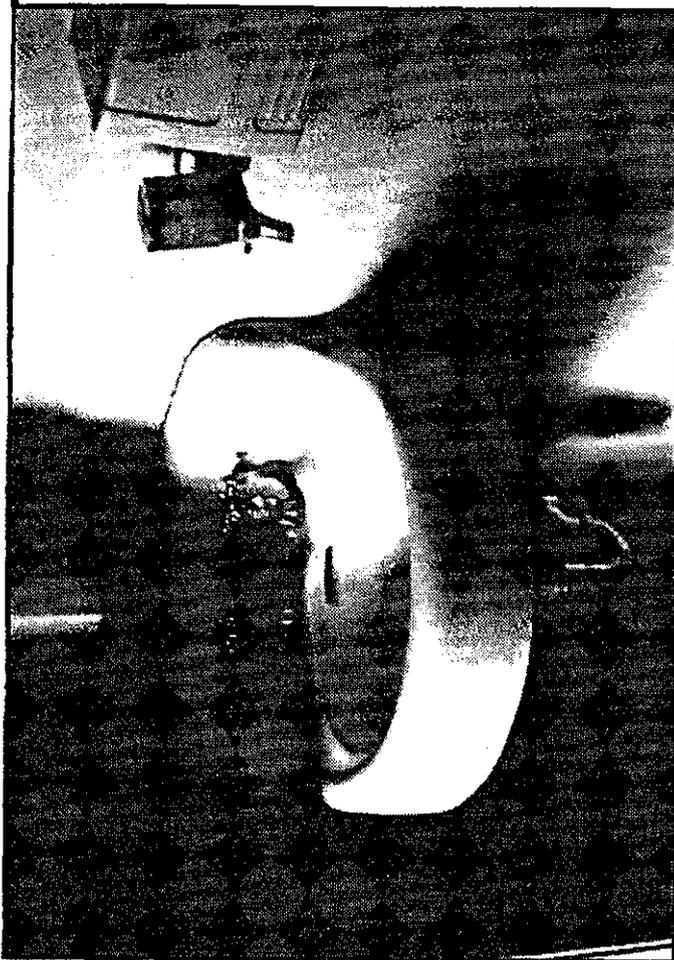
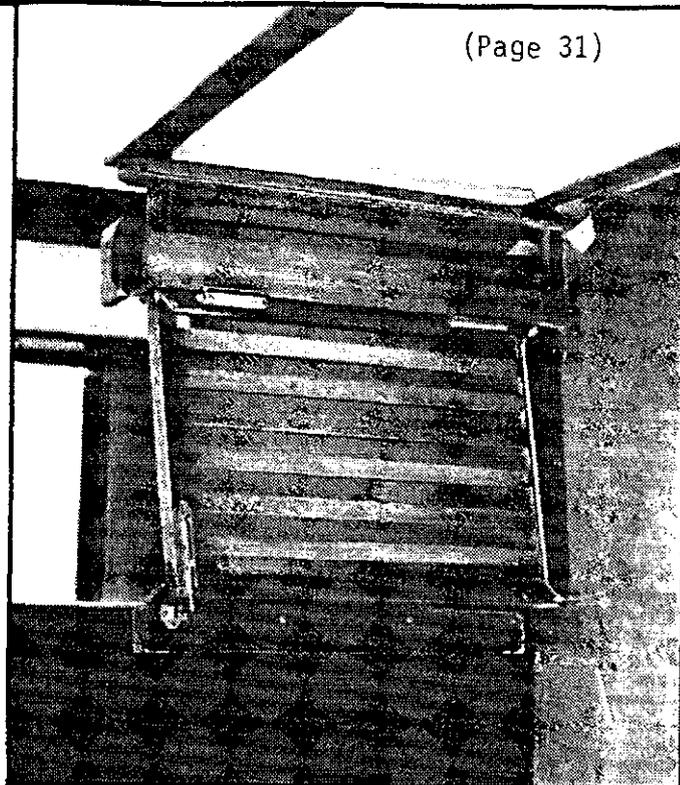


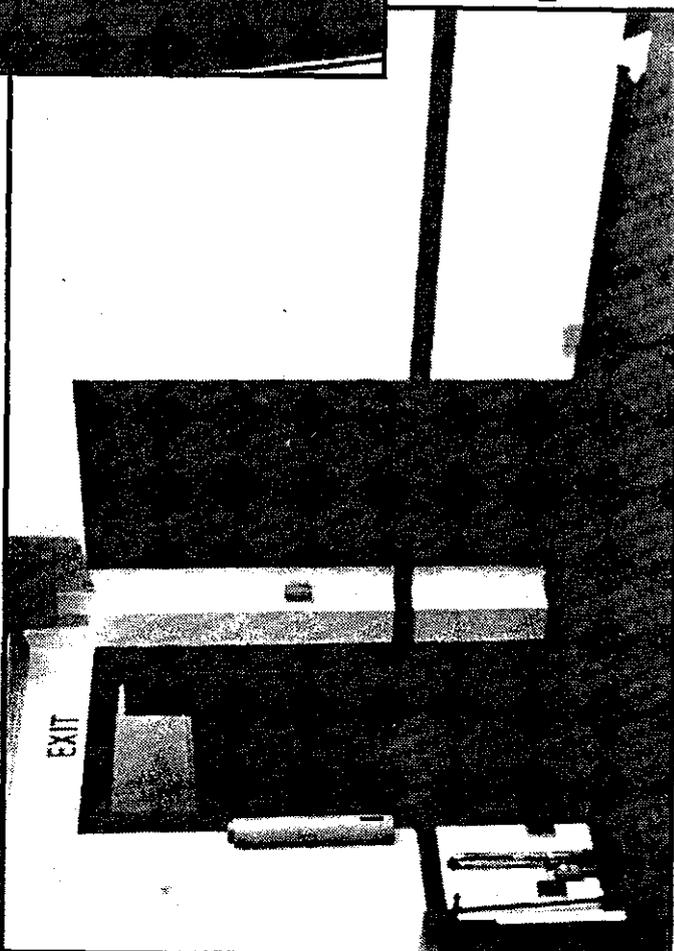
Figure 12. Interior details of the former Memorial Hall.
A = Auditorium and stage
B = Doors from lobby to auditorium
C = Doors and drinking fountain in lobby



A



C



B

Figure 13. Interior details of the former Library and Health Clinic floor of Memorial Hall.
 A = Bathroom sink
 B = Doorways and moldings
 C = Gate

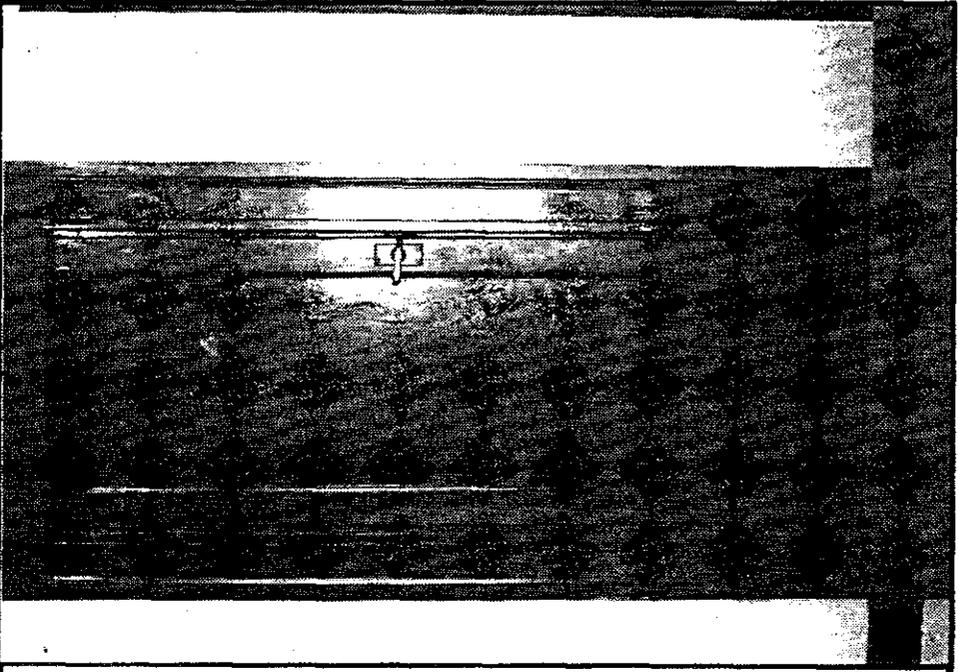
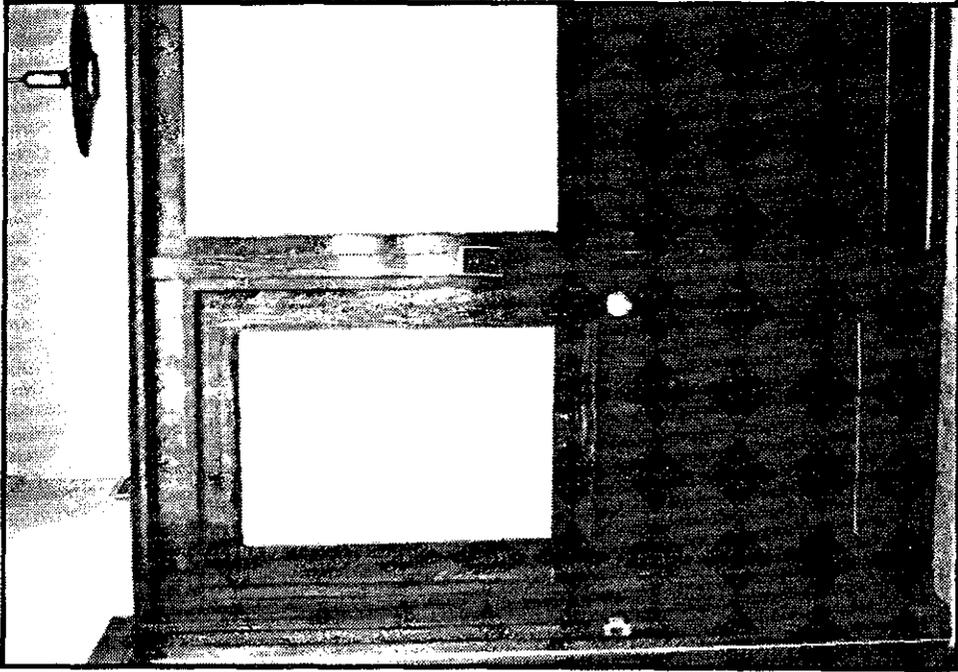


Figure 14. Original doors and wooden room dividers of the former Library and Health Clinic floor.

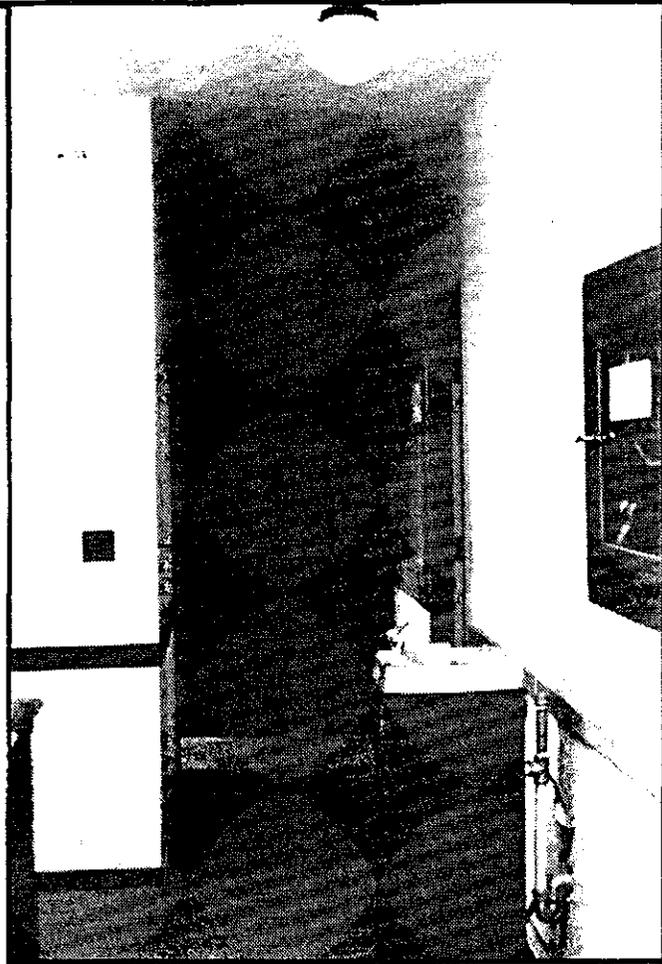
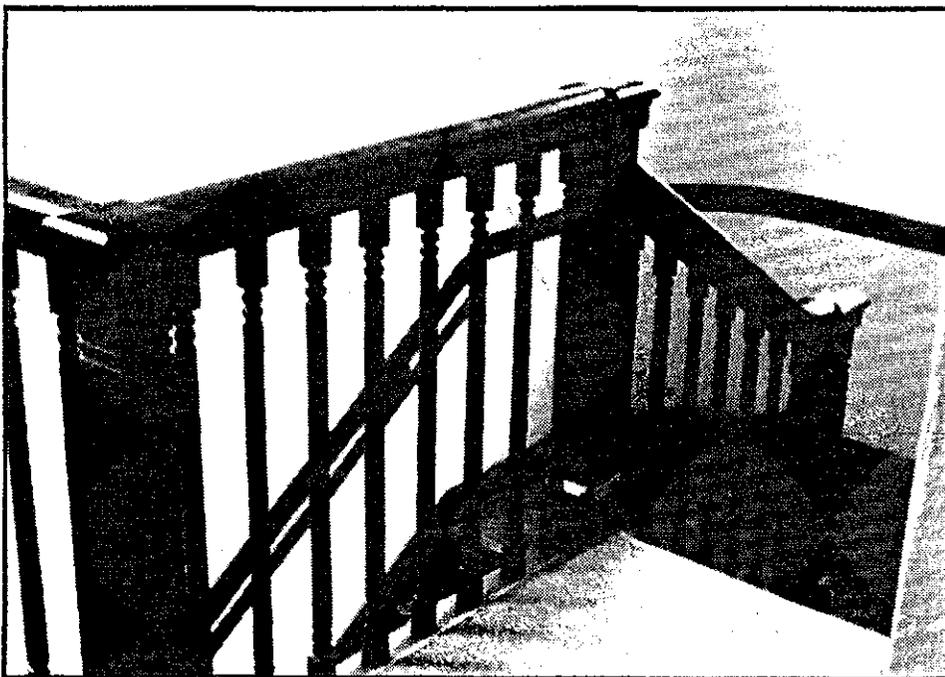


Figure 15. Hallway and stairwell bannister in the former Courthouse and County Offices floor.



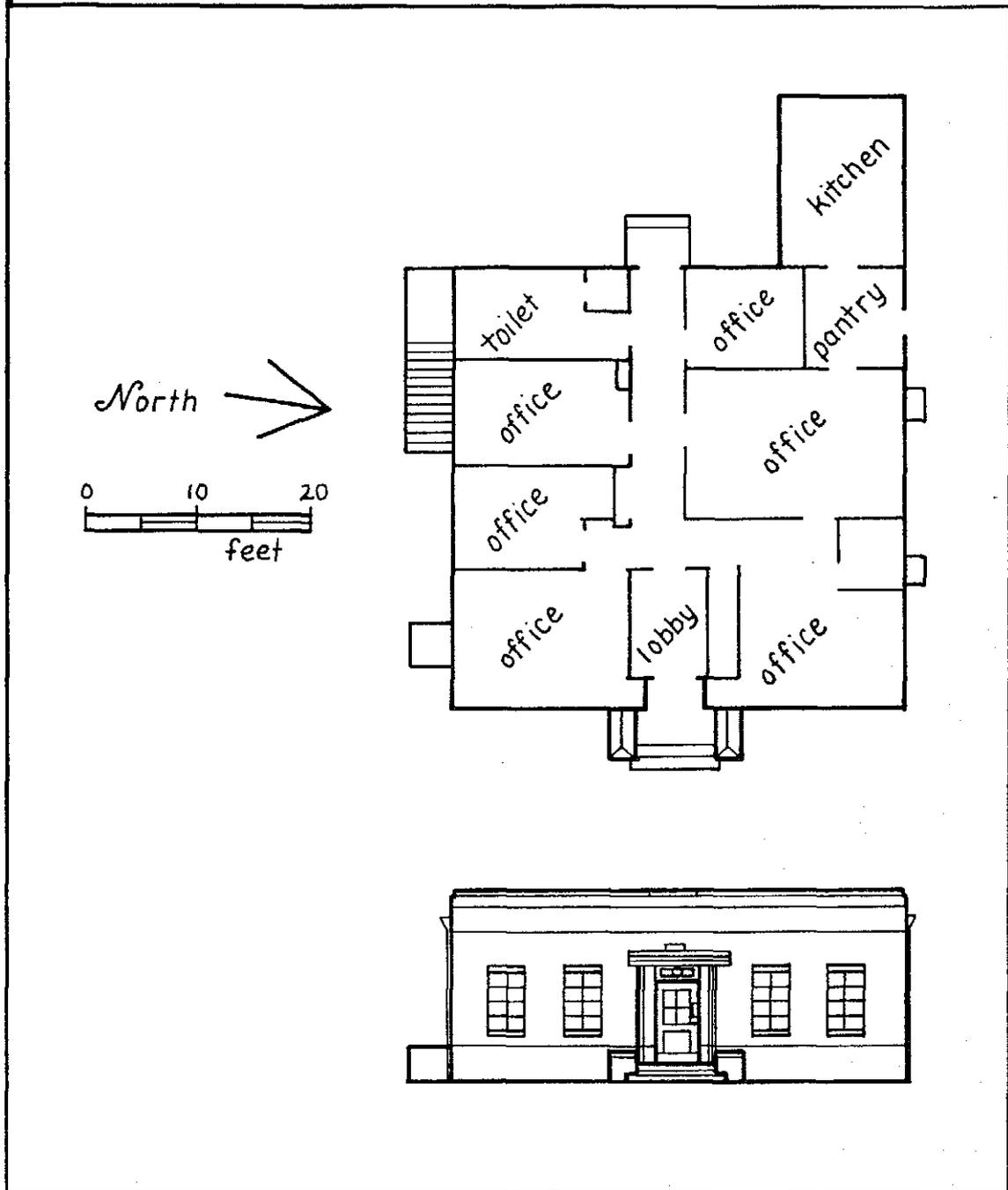


Figure 16. Floor plan and front (east) elevation of the former Sheriff's Substation. (From: Architectural Resources Group 1988.)

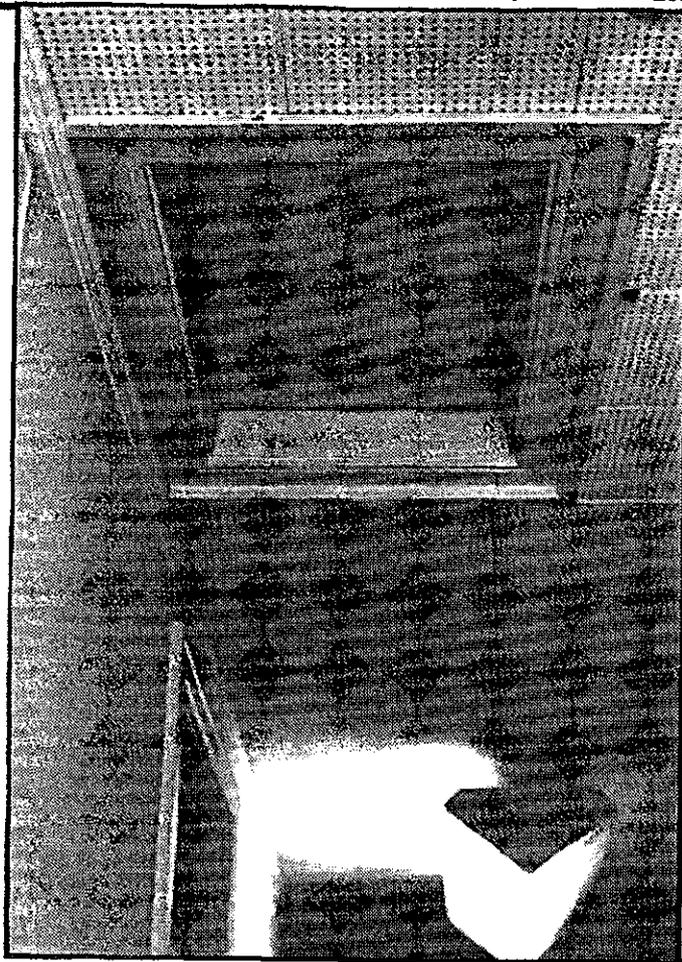


Figure 17. Replaced ceiling in the main hallway of the former Sheriff's Substation.

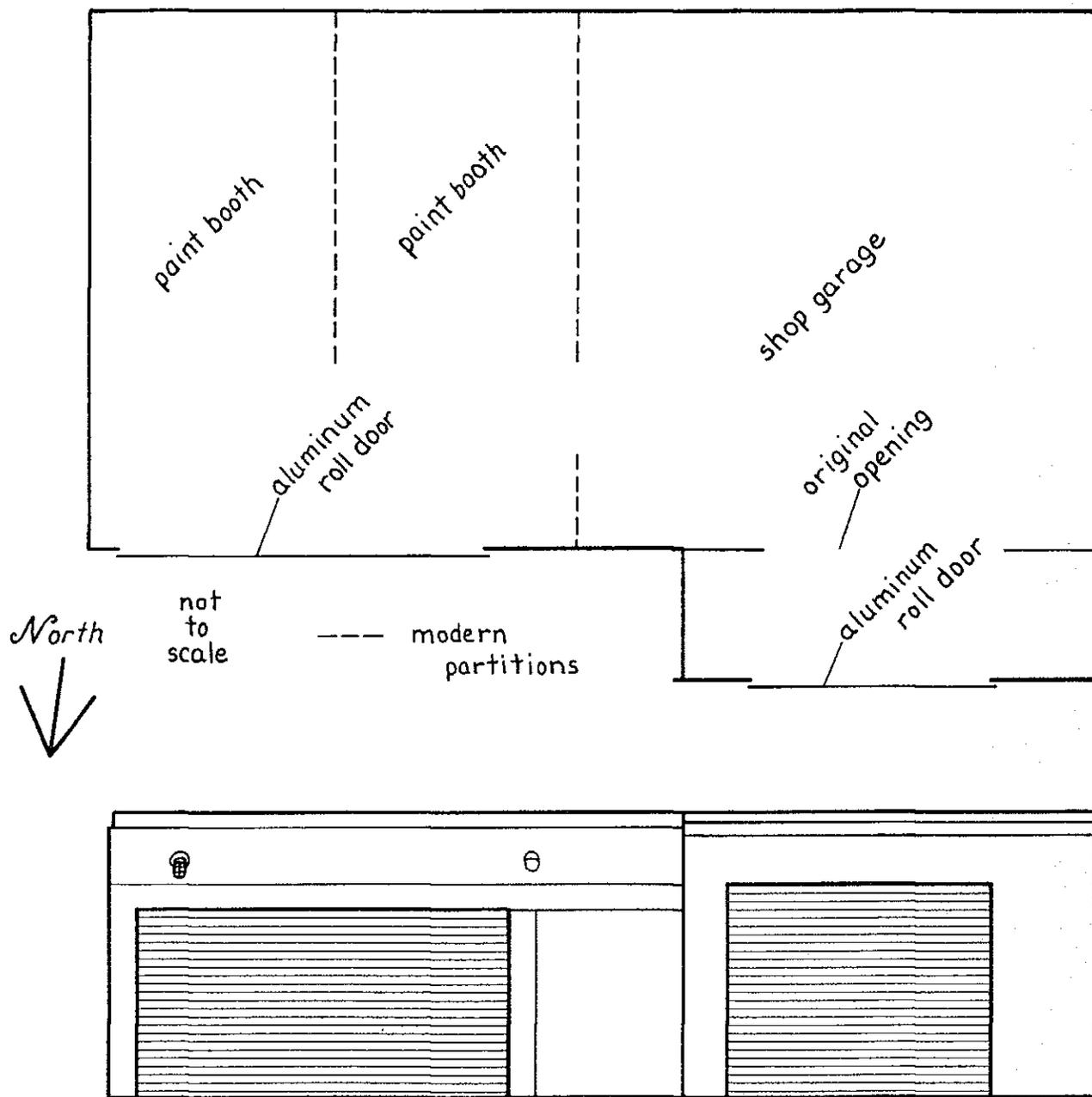


Figure 18. Field sketch of the floor plan and front (north) elevation of the former Sheriff's Garage.

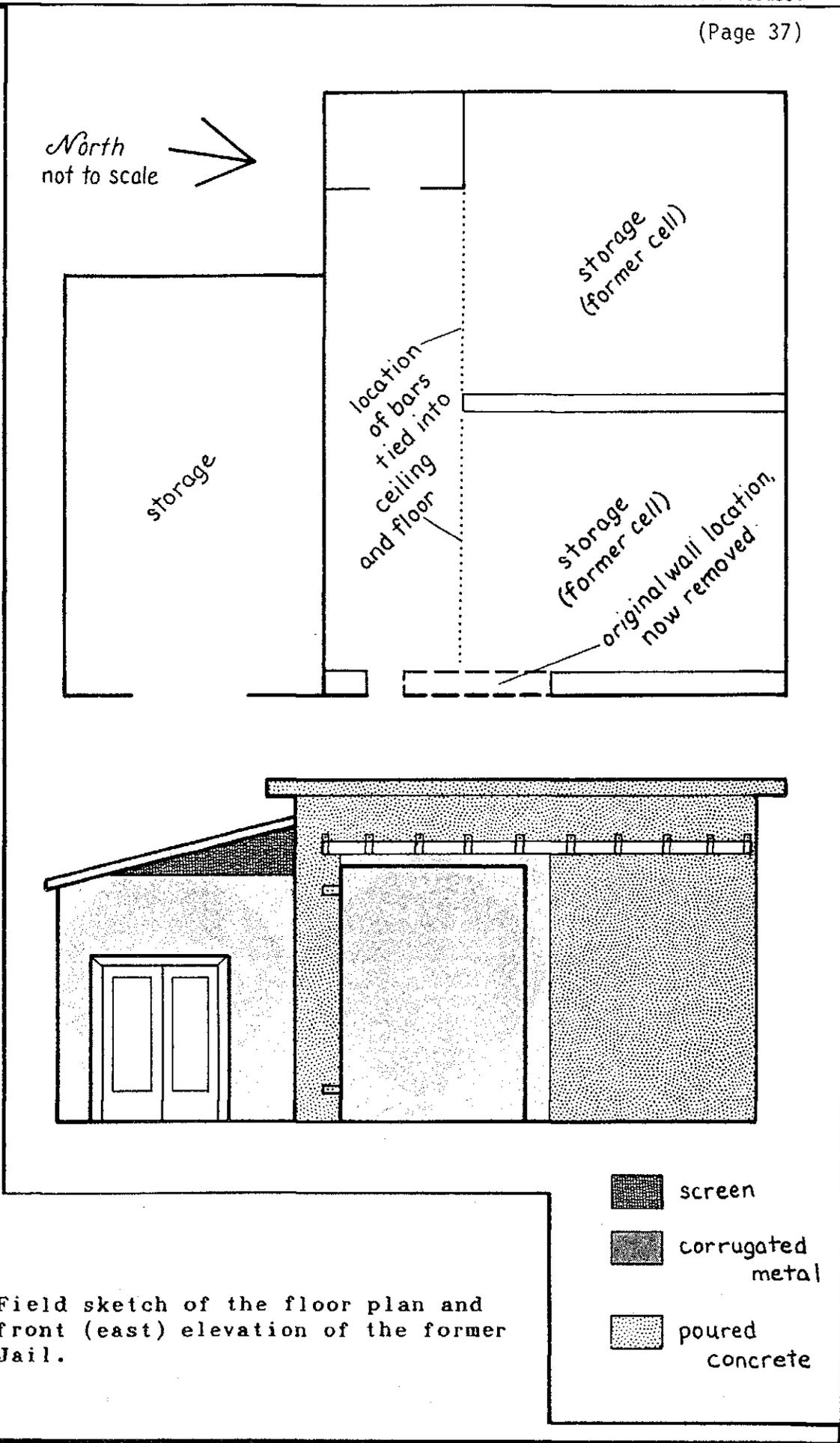
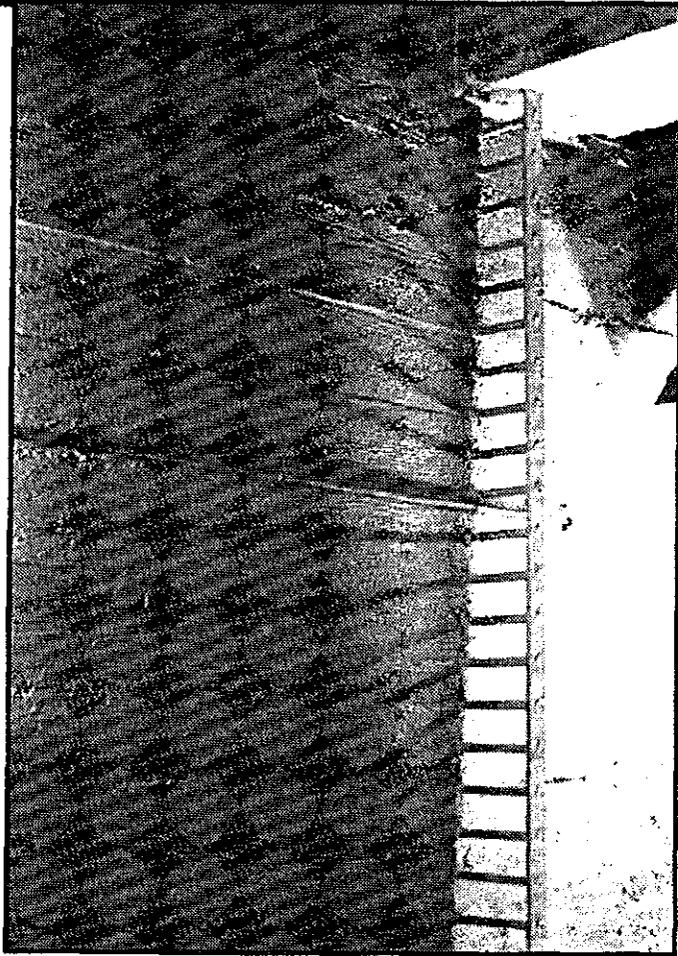
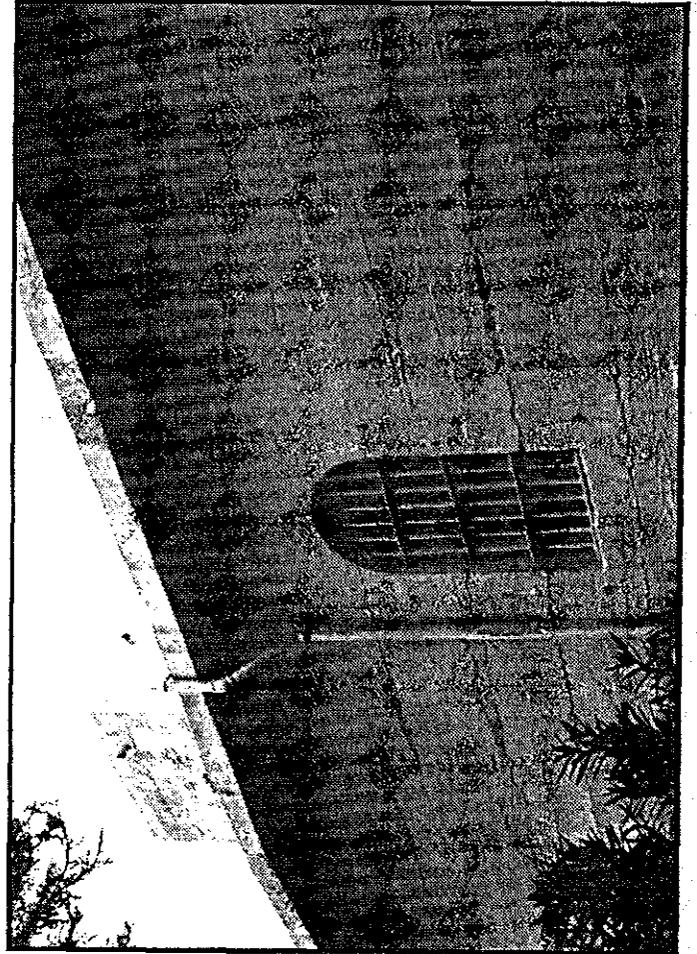


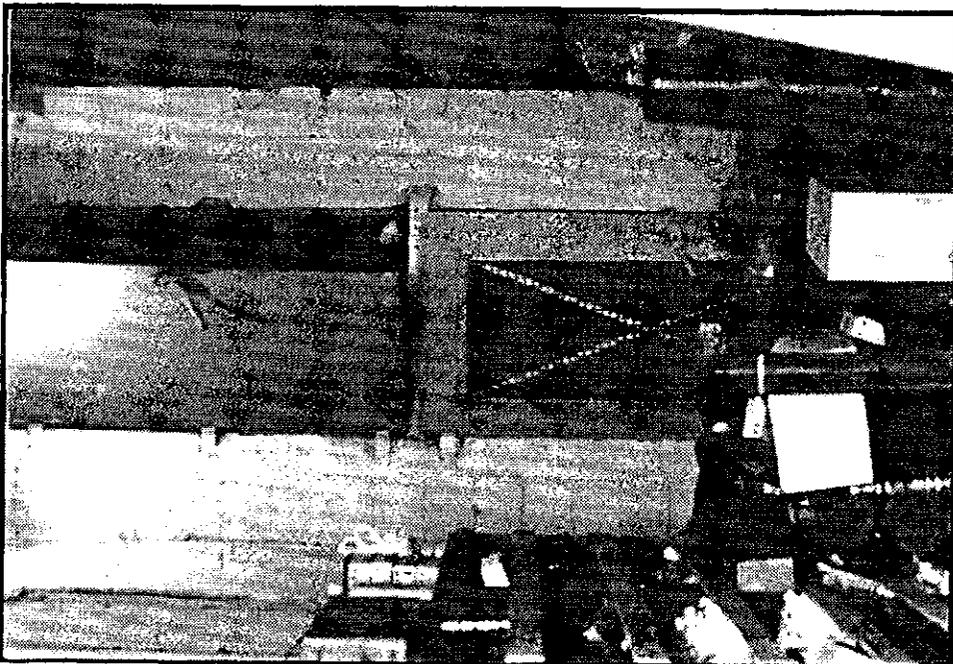
Figure 19. Field sketch of the floor plan and front (east) elevation of the former Jail.



C

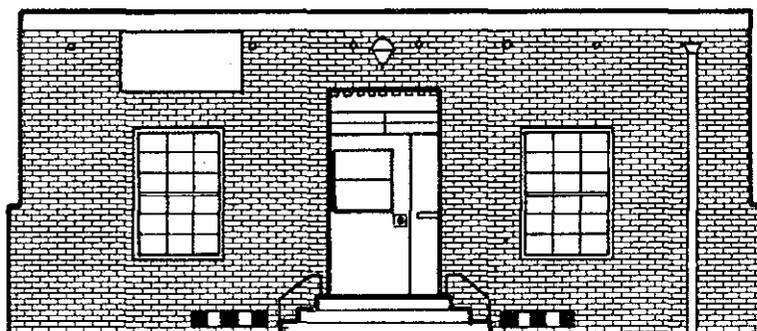
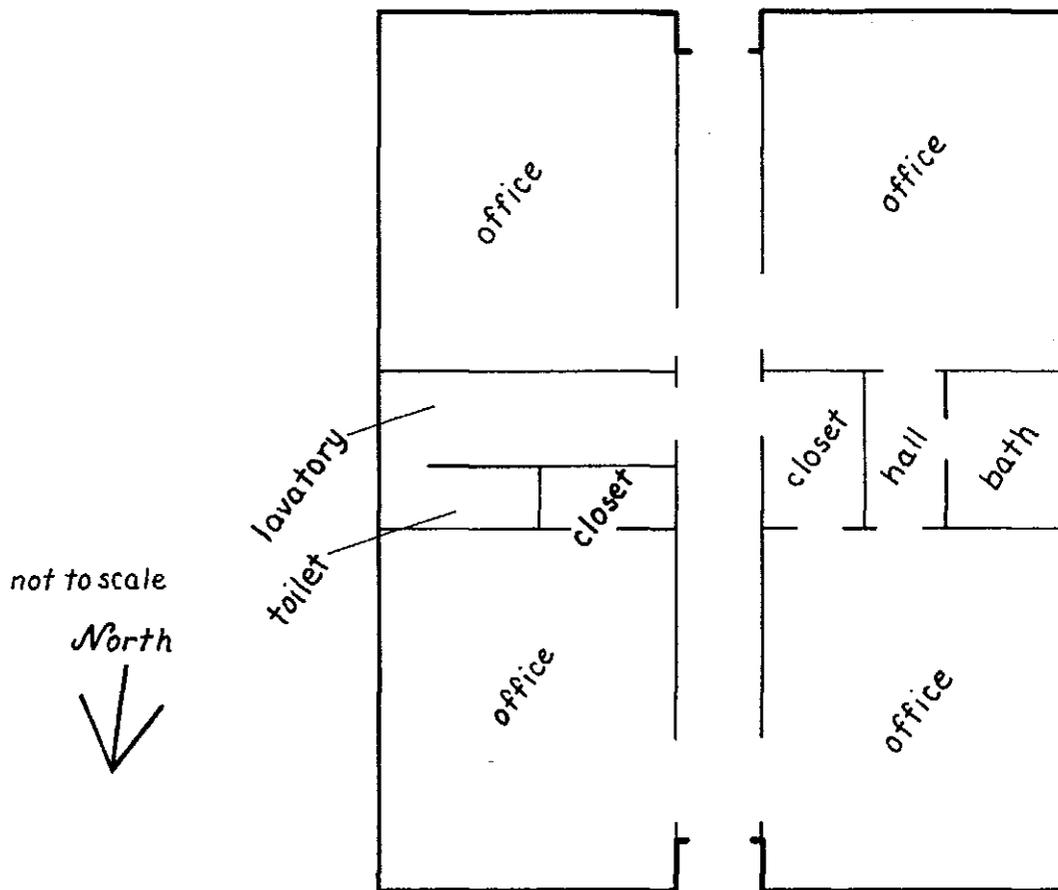


B



A

Figure 20. Details of the former Jail.
A = Storage area doors
B = Exterior showing bars in window
C = Cut off cell bars protruding from ceiling



• plastered over viga

Figure 21. Field sketch of the floor plan and front (north) elevation of the former Health Center.

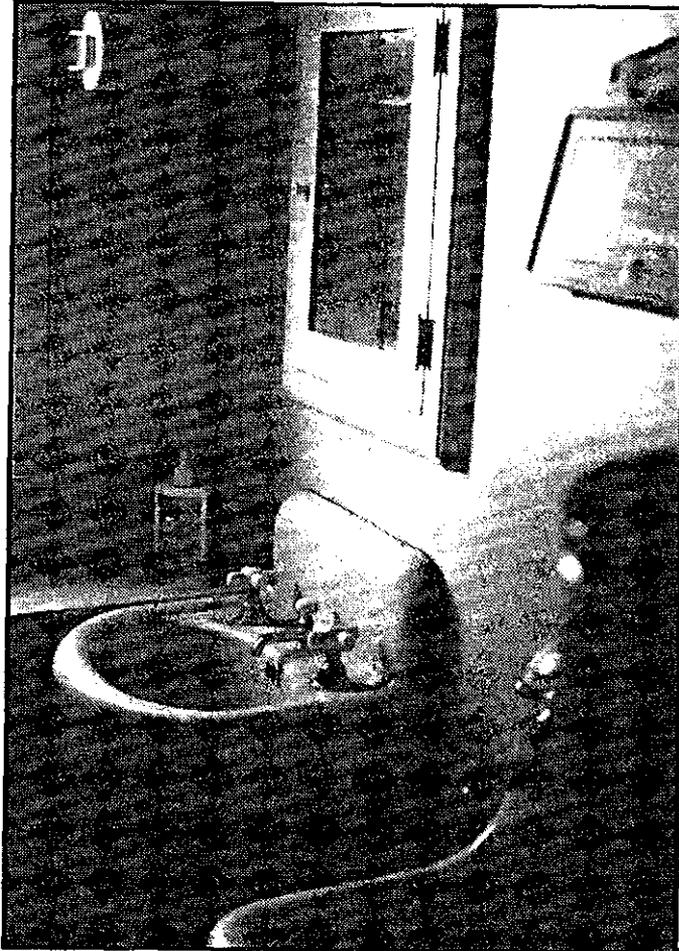
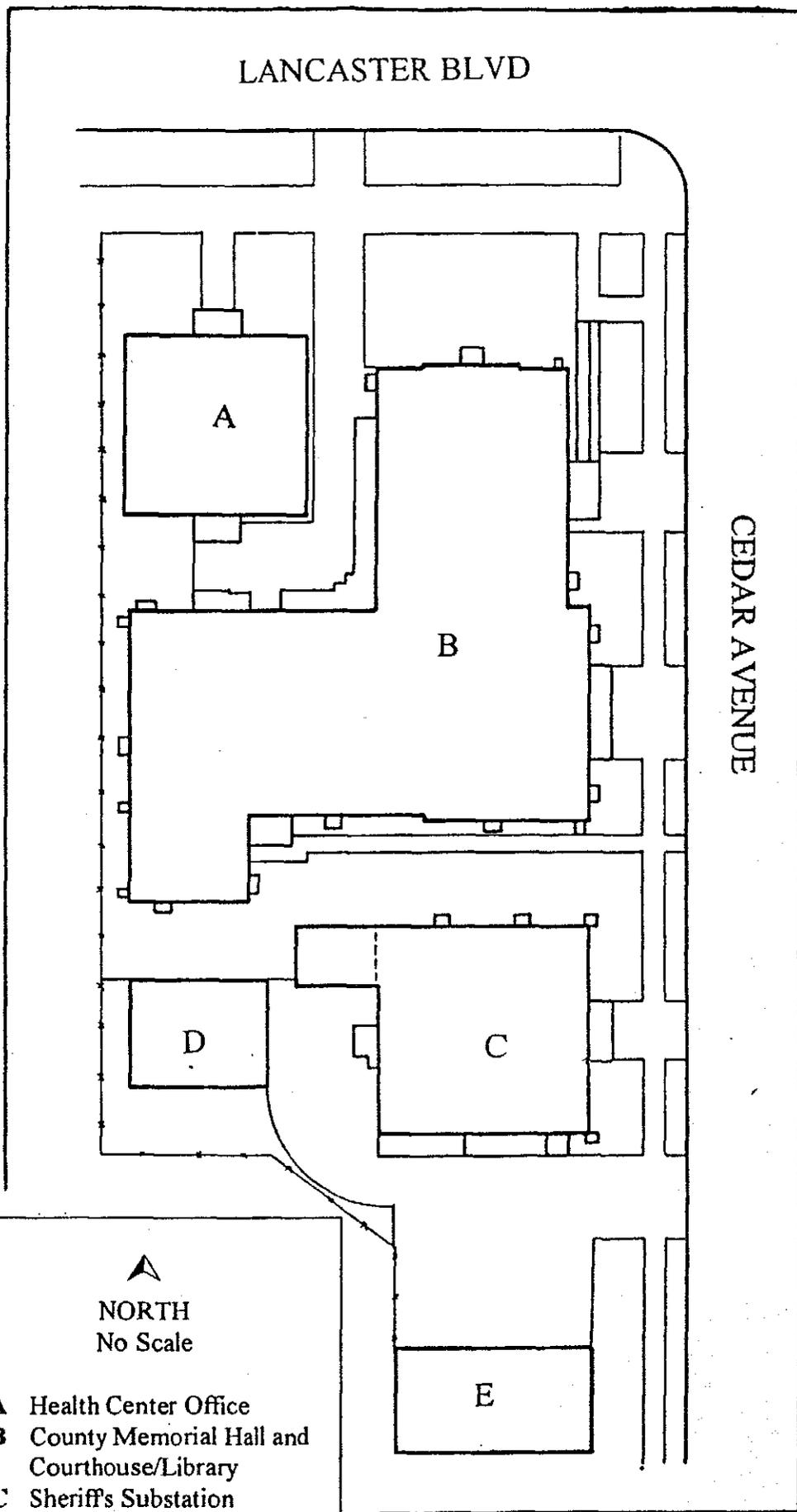


Figure 22. Original bathroom fixtures in the former Health Center.



LANCASTER BLVD

CEDAR AVENUE

A

B

D

C

E



NORTH
No Scale

- A Health Center Office
- B County Memorial Hall and Courthouse/Library
- C Sheriff's Substation
- D Jail
- E Sheriff's Garage