FURNACE CREEK VISITOR CENTER
Death Valley National Park
State Highway 190
Death Valley Junction vicinity
Inyo County
California

HABS CA-2860
HABS CA-2860

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Furnace Creek Visitor Center HABS No. CA-2860

Location: State Highway 190
Death Valley National Park
Inyo County
California, 92328

USGS Furnace Creek Quadrangle
UTM Coordinates:
Zone 11
Easting 0511911
Northing 4035228

Present Owner: United States National Park Service
Death Valley National Park
State Highway 190
Death Valley, California 92328

Present Use: Visitor center and museum

Significance: The Furnace Creek Visitor Center is significant for its association with the National Park Service's (NPS) Mission 66 Program and NPS architect Cecil Doty:

> … the visitor center reflects the NPS's interpretation of modern architecture and landscape design widely prevalent across the United States at the time. The complex is highly intact and remains an excellent example of modern architectural design within the state of California.
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> [The] Furnace Creek Visitor Center Historic District is associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad national patterns of American history, specifically, with the NPS's Mission 66 Program. Mission 66 played a critical role in the modernization of the NPS and, in particular, Death Valley National Park.[1]

[1] Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD, "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (Oakland, Cal: National Park Service, 2009), 8:1.

Historians: National Park Service Architectural Historian Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Ph.D, and Historical Landscape Architect Erica Owens prepared the Draft National Register of Historic Places Nomination Registration Form for the Furnace Creek Visitor Center in 2009. Historical and descriptive information in the National Register nomination was used as the basis for the HABS outline-format historical report prepared by Architectural Resources Group, Inc. in 2010.

Project Information: HABS documentation of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center has been completed prior to the rehabilitation of the visitor center buildings and site. The project was sponsored by the National Park Service under the direction of David Ballard, Project Manager, at the Denver Service Center. NPS contracted with Architectural Resources Group (ARG) in August 2010 to complete HABS documentation of the visitor center complex. The Draft National Register of Historic Places Nomination Registration Form developed by National Park Service Architectural Historian Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Ph.D, and Historical Landscape Architect Erica Owens served as the basis for the HABS historical report. Shayne Watson, Architectural Historian and Photographer at ARG, produced the HABS black and white photographs with the assistance of Katherine Petrin, Senior Architectural Historian. A site plan showing the buildings and site was prepared by MACTEC and ARG. The location map, building floor plans, and courtyard plan were developed by ARG. Blair Davenport, Cultural Resources Manager at Death Valley National Park, provided substantive technical support and material for the documentation efforts. National Park Service Historians Christy Avery and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Ph.D, reviewed the HABS documentation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** 1959-1960

2. **Architect:** Cecil Doty / Welton Becket and Associates of San Francisco, California

3. **Original and subsequent owners, occupants, and uses:** The Furnace Creek Visitor Center has been owned and occupied by the National Park Service since its opening. The use of the buildings – visitor center, museum, auditorium, and administration offices – has not changed since 1959-1960.

4. **Builder:** William A. Drennan of Oildale, California

5. **Original plans:** Original plans are appended to this report.

6. **Alterations and additions:** Relatively few changes have been made to the Furnace Creek Visitor Center since 1960. Alterations to the buildings and site include the following: replacement of the lobby information desk, the reconfiguration of office space within the Administration Building, the addition of limited new interior finishes in the buildings such as the carpet in the lobby and museum, the addition of a metal storage shed and a photovoltaic array in the northern portion of the complex.[2]

B. Historical Context

Mission 66: The Significance of the Program[3]

The developed areas of the American national park system are mainly the result of two busy periods of modernization overseen by the National Park Service. While older parks, such as Yellowstone, Glacier, and Grand Canyon, boast hotels and other remnants from the earlier railroad era, the construction of the modern national park system really got underway in the mid-1920s, when Congress began making generous appropriations for the development of public facilities in national parks, particularly for park roads. This was the "rustic" era of park architecture and landscape design, when Park Service designers and engineers developed a unique approach to "harmonious" site development and "landscape engineering." During the 1930s, the agency oversaw the expansion and development not only of the national park system, but of almost every state park system, as well. Then World War II, followed by low postwar budgets, caused an extended hiatus in federal park sponsorship.

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[2] Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD, "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (Oakland, Cal: National Park Service, 2009), 8:1.

[3] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: National Park Service Mission 66 Resources" by Ethan Carr, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD. and Len Werner (2004), pp. 1-17.

When Congress was again ready to increase park spending in the mid-1950s, a second major wave of national park development occurred. This postwar era of park development was structured around a ten-year program proposed in 1955 by Park Service director Conrad L. Wirth. Characterized by Wirth as "MISSION 66," the program was intended to modernize, enlarge, and even reinvent the park system by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. Wirth and his team of planners proposed a new strategy for park planning throughout the entire system and a budget that convinced Congress to immediately increase national park appropriations and to continue further increases for the next decade. The program responded to a generally perceived crisis that resulted from an extended period of low park funding combined with heavy public use of the park system.

By the late 1940s, a ruinous combination of low budgets and unprecedented numbers of visitors had depreciated the experience of national parks for millions. In the developed zones of parks, or "front country," people found traffic jams, long lines outside bathrooms, overflowing parking lots, and no available accommodations or campgrounds. With too few rangers, superintendents could not adequately protect their parks, much less staff their museums and interpretive programs. Many park concessioners had suffered economically during the Depression and had shut down during World War II. Now they struggled unsuccessfully to reopen aging and inadequate hotels and restaurants for the sudden tide of visitors. Both the Park Service and park concessioners were forced to manage far larger numbers of people with far fewer staff. Limited public facilities in poor repair, little or no office space or support, and a shortage of decent housing for employees made their tasks more onerous. Almost immediately following "VJ Day" in August of 1945, in other words, national park managers were exposed to the overcrowding, limited budgets, understaffing, and other difficulties.

The inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the end of the Korean War in 1953 began the changes that would lead to Mission 66. As armed forces demobilized and recession threatened, Eisenhower looked more favorably on public works spending that would stimulate the economy. The extensive bad press the national parks were receiving was also being noticed. After more than three years as director of the Park Service, Conrad L. Wirth decided the hour had come, and he suddenly proposed a ten-year capital program to modernize and expand the national park system. He assembled key staff into special "working" and "steering" committees and instructed his park superintendents to begin preparing "prospectuses" of the work they needed done in their parks. Within eight months they had outlined the scope of the Mission 66 program with preliminary budget estimates. The name of the program (Wirth's inspiration) captured the desired sense of a crisis, but by evoking the wartime urgency of a "mission," not a return to New Deal social programs. In any case, the name and the image proved effective. Eisenhower personally endorsed Mission 66 after Wirth presented the program during a cabinet meeting in January of 1956. That spring, Congress indicated a willingness to go along with the over $700 million budget for the ten-year program by increasing the agency's budget for fiscal year 1957 to $68 million (up from $32 million in 1955). Further increases led to annual budgets greater than $100 million by 1962. The planning and policy initiative of Mission 66 proved to be the

most effective means of increasing Park Service appropriations since the New Deal emergency spending legislation of the 1930s.[4]

By 1966, Congress had spent about $1 billion on land acquisition, new staff and training, general operations, and all types of construction activity in national parks. Seventy new "units" of the park system were authorized between 1956 and 1966. The Park Service constructed or reconstructed thousands of miles of roads and hundreds of miles of trails. Many parks received adequate water, sewer, and electric service for the first time. Hundreds of park residences, administration buildings, comfort stations, and other buildings for public use and park administration were built. Mission 66 expanded and professionalized Park Service staff and established new "training centers." Above all, Mission 66 funded more than 100 "visitor centers," a new building type invented by the agency's planners and architects, which was at the heart of revised park "master planning" goals. A new identity for the agency was forged, represented by a new idiom of park architecture and by the "arrowhead" agency logo, introduced in 1951 and featured prominently on buildings, publications, and redesigned uniforms.[5] Although the development (or as was often the case, the redevelopment) of national parks at this scale was almost always beset by controversy, in the end Mission 66 accomplished much of what Wirth intended: the reinvention of the national park system, the National Park Service—and to some extent the national park idea—to meet the exigencies of postwar American society.

Mission 66 was greeted with enthusiasm by Congress, government officials, and by many preservationists. From the beginning, however, the program was also criticized for emphasizing capital construction as a one-dimensional solution to the complex social and environmental problems park managers were facing. Critics also complained that Mission 66 construction abandoned the architectural theory and building technology of the rustic era. Postwar park architecture made full use of steel, concrete, prefabricated elements, unusual fenestration, climate control, and other aspects of contemporary architecture. Distinctive new buildings adapted various strains of postwar American modernism to the programmatic and aesthetic requirements of the national parks.[6] The new park architecture also expressed contemporary planning ideas. The visitor center, for example, had similarities to shopping centers and urban cultural centers, since it also sought to make centralized services accessible to large numbers of people in cars. The Interstate Highway system also influenced Mission 66 road design, and sometimes

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[4] Dwight F. Rettie, *Our National Park System: Caring for America's Greatest Natural and Historic Treasures* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c1995). It is difficult to compare total expenditures on the national park system during the New Deal to the cost of Mission 66, but there is no question that New Deal programs represented a greater overall commitment. The Department of Labor's and the U.S. Army's adjusted costs of recruiting, housing, and feeding the Civilian Conservation Corps, for example, alone may have exceeded the Mission 66 total. Mission 66 also did not include the massive state park expansions overseen by the Park Service in the 1930s, nor was it complemented by other federal programs (such as the Public Works Administration, the Resettlement Administration, among others) that greatly augmented Park Service activity during the New Deal.

[5] Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, c1980) 262-274; R. Bryce Workman, *National Park Service Uniforms: The Developing Years, 1932-1970*, (Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, 1998), 31, 33-38; "Mission 66 Progress Report," March 1966 (National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

[6] See Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000).

determined the locations of park developed areas. For preservationists who decried these trends and changes in the American landscape in general, seeing their expression in the frontcountry of national parks was deeply disturbing. If Mission 66 began in an atmosphere of intense optimism, the program soon led the Park Service into bitter controversy, as the postwar environmental movement began to take shape and exert its strength. Mission 66 hastened the advent of environmentalism by creating genuine concern that the Park Service was "overdeveloping" parks while failing to take other steps to preserve "wilderness."

But for Conrad Wirth, his chief landscape architect, Thomas C. Vint, and the other planners and designers of Mission 66, these critics evaded the fundamental challenge at the heart of managing national parks. From Vint's point of view, merely designating parks as wilderness would not "solve the national park problem" because "our national park law includes the words 'for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.'"[7] Whether in the case of scenic or historic places, Vint believed preserving a place as a park required providing for public access. In the 1950s, either this compromise would be renegotiated to serve a larger public, or public access would have to be significantly restricted in some way. Wirth, Vint, and many of their colleagues recoiled at the idea that parks would no longer be truly public landscapes, preserved for the benefit of the public at large. They felt they could expand and adapt the national park system, increase its capacity, provide meaningful experiences of the nation's natural and historical heritage, and still preserve that heritage for future generations. They realized, however, that procedural and even cultural changes would be required of their agency to meet new challenges. Wirth exhorted his colleagues to reconsider all aspects of their professional activities. "Nothing was to be sacred," he recalled, "except the ultimate purpose to be served. Man, methods, and time-honored practices were to be accorded no vested deference. Old traditions seemed to have determined standards far beyond their time."[8]

If it implemented new planning procedures and design concepts, however, Mission 66 also remained profoundly committed to facilitating public enjoyment of the parks. Wirth again and again insisted that Mission 66 should be seen as a "conservation" not a "development" program, that ultimately would preserve and not destroy "wilderness." But he also made it clear that he believed the "parks were for the people," and that preservation outside the context of public enjoyment was simply not what the parks, nor the Park Service, were intended to achieve.

A change of Administration and changes in the Department of Interior and the National Park Service created a framework for the redefinition that was soon to commence on the ground throughout the National Park System. By the end of 1951, Conrad Wirth became director of the National Park Service. In 1953, the arrival of the Eisenhower administration began the changes that would, two years later, result in Mission 66.In

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[7] Thomas C. Vint, "Development of National Parks for Conservation," *American Planning and Civic Annual* (Washington, DC: American Planning and Civic Association, 1938), 69-71. The words are inscribed on the Roosevelt Arch (1903) at the Gardiner entrance to Yellowstone, and are a quotation from the 1872 legislation that created that park.

[8] Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 237-239; Roy Edgar Appleman, *A History of the Mission 66 Program* (Washington: National Park Service, 1958) 242.

addition, the creation of the Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) and the Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC) in 1954 was essential to the subsequent proposal for Mission 66. The two offices answered directly to Washington and created a centralized administrative structure. The architects, landscape architects, engineers, and other professionals in the new offices had hardly settled in before Wirth proposed his ten-year modernization and expansion of the park system, now unofficially estimated to cost at least $700 million.

Wirth conceived of the Mission 66 proposal while contemplating the reluctance of Congress to increase park appropriations since 1945 while other agencies, such as Bureau of Public Roads, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Army Corps of Engineers, were granted with multi-year authorizations for hundreds of millions of dollars that allowed these agencies to efficiently complete massive public works. Capital expenditures for national parks, meanwhile, were inadequate and fluctuated from year to year, making it difficult to plan large projects over extended periods. Wirth struggled with how to present the redevelopment of the national park system to Congress as a national priority requiring a long term, major commitment of funds.[9] He finally came to the realization that the modernization of the national park system could indeed be presented as a ten-year program, requiring extensive coordination and planning nationwide, similar to other agencies' proposals. Wirth would present Congress with a total figure and a schedule for the entire job. He was able to argue that long term, coordinated planning was necessary—just as it was to build highways and dams—in order to let larger contracts, benefit from economies of scale, and minimize the overall disturbance to parks and visitors by completing the work quickly.

From the moment he was taken with his idea, Wirth moved quickly. Wirth laid out the arguments for immediate action. Most of these must have been familiar to members of the working group. The parks were being "loved to death" and the public and popular media had been calling for action for years. Budgets had stagnated at a level that had served 21 million visits annually, while in 1954 there had been 46 million visits recorded. The Park Service faced nothing less than "the destruction…of what it is charged with saving." The task was to "secure a reasonable protection of the parks and yet provide for increased public use in such a way as to not wear them out." Wirth charged the group to elaborate a "reasoned objective" for Mission 66, and to delineate a program to accomplish that objective. The solution "would not be in the books and in regulations" and might not be possible within the terms of existing legislation; but he wanted answers, regardless of what the group determined would be necessary to implement them.[10]

Wirth's program may have been forward looking; however, it was couched in the foundation of the National Park Service. By the end of the first week of planning Mission 66, the working committee prepared a memorandum signed by Wirth to be distributed throughout the Park Service. The "goal to which this Mission is directed," Wirth informed the field, was "nothing new; it was plainly stated in the Act of 1916 establishing the National Park Service." Those concepts were "as sound today as they

[9] Ibid, 1958) 4-5.
[10] Appleman, *A History of the Mission 66 Program*, 8-10.

were in 1916." Wirth decided that the essence of the problem was to "meet fully the responsibilities implicit in those concepts" and "to produce a comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection that is in harmony with the obligations of the National Park Service under the Act of 1916."[11] Wirth's belief in the continued validity of the concepts in the 1916 legislation would remain the ideological bedrock of Mission 66 until Wirth's retirement in 1964. From the outset, the organizers of the Mission 66 program found their most fundamental justifications in existing, prewar legislation and policy.[12] Wirth would repeatedly refer back to the 1916 act that established the Park Service, in particular, as the fundamental mandate of Mission 66.

Within a month, Wirth and his working group offered a set of policies to help guide park planning efforts under the Mission 66 program. Balancing protection and public access, Wirth and his planners advocated removal of development, for both administrative and public service, from within park boundaries or at least outside sensitive areas such as the Yosemite Valley to lesser areas or outside park boundaries. This idea was not completely new. Thomas Vint and members of his staff had advocated removing development to "gateway communities" outside parks, for more than ten years, ever since the postwar situation of the parks had begun to receive serious consideration.

Better roads and faster cars made it desirable, where practicable, to relocate and concentrate overnight and administrative facilities to new "town sites" outside parks. These new "communities" would include residential districts for park employees, who would therefore have to commute to work in the parks (although their families would have easier access to schools and other services). Finally, new plans for national parks would have to consider "completely revamping park transportation systems," particularly to increase the efficient use of buses.[13]

A tremendous amount of new development would be required to achieve the kinds of goals that the Mission 66 planners instructed regional staff and superintendents to consider. New strategies—and a huge amount of money—were needed to reduce the impacts of higher numbers of visitors. If the idea of allowing essentially unrestricted numbers of people to come and enjoy the parks were to survive, a new set of priorities would need to guide revised master plans for every unit in the system. Mission 66 described an initiative for developing completely revised park master plans that would respond to the social, technological, and geographical trends of postwar American society.

The whole tenor of Mission 66—a sudden mobilization to address a national crisis—must have recalled the spring of 1933, when many of the same people had rapidly

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[11] "Informational Memorandum No. 1, Mission 66," February 18, 1955 (Box A8213, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Archive). The seven Mission 66 informational memoranda released by Wirth between February 1955 and November 1956 amount to a manual for planning procedures. The documents are available at the National Park Service Harper's Ferry Archive, as well as the Yellowstone National Park Archives, and the Conrad L. Wirth Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

[12] All of these documents are collected and described in Larry M. Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), 28-52, 135-136.

[13] "Informational Memorandum No. 2, Mission 66—Policies and Procedures," March 17, 1955, (Box A8213, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

implemented emergency spending programs. This is certainly how many of the employees and officials at the Park Service saw it at the time, and they described a similar sense of purpose and excitement. But in other ways, the spring of 1955 could not have differed more from that of 1933. A popular Republican president now watched over a rapidly expanding economy. For many Americans, twenty years of hard work and sacrifice were giving way to unprecedented material comfort and security, new houses, new cars, and growing families. In these ways the period suggested the 1920s, more than the 1930s, and Mission 66 reflected this difference.

This new approach to planning and development in National Park Service units needed to be tested before full implementation across the system. Mission 66 planners decided to begin a new model master plan for a park selected to be representative of many issues and management considerations. Wirth decided to make Mount Rainier National Park in Washington State the "pilot study" for Mission 66 planning. There were many reasons why Mount Rainier was the perfect vehicle to showcase their ideas for how each park should develop a new program of accelerated redevelopment or, as it was soon described, a "Mission 66 prospectus." Larger parks had too many specific issues and interest groups to be instructive case studies. Mount Rainier was smaller and featured what the Mission 66 working committee described as "reasonably difficult problems, many of which would be typical of park problems in general."[14] It was also where Vint had first developed national park master planning in the late 1920s. As it had for Vint in the 1920s, Mount Rainier could again serve as a model park, in which a revised form of national park master planning—the Mission 66 prospectus—could be demonstrated.

In this initial planning effort, a basic premise of the entire Mission 66 program immediately emerged: the impact of larger number of visitors in cars could be absorbed without "impairment" of the parks if the patterns and types of public use were rearranged. It was felt that any form of transportation should be allowed within the parks for visitor convenience. With passenger rail services all but ending nationally, the decisions to increase the capacity of park roads and end monopolistic protections for concessioner transportation services assured that the private automobile would strengthen its dominance as the only practical means of experiencing most parks. In order for larger numbers of cars and tourists to get in and out of parks efficiently, Mission 66 would also require the modernization of hundreds of miles of park roads. To accommodate higher traffic volumes at higher speeds, winding routes would need to be straightened and widened, and bridges would need to be replaced. Mission 66 planners also recommended an end to park transportation concessions, both at Mount Rainier and in general.

Out of the experience of creating the Mount Rainier prospectus, the Mission 66 team developed a generalized procedure for how other Mission 66 prospectuses would update and transform national park master plans. The first task was to "determine and state the important park resources." Following this inventory, planners were told to "fix a road and trail system" that would allow visitors to "see, experience, and enjoy the values to be derived from" the "important park resources" described at the beginning of

[14] Appleman, *A History of the Mission 66 Program*, 18-19.

the document. In the great majority of cases, such road and trail corridors already existed, but might require realignment, extension, or abbreviation. Then they should "determine what visitor facilities, other than roads and trails," would be required in order to "provide a reasonable opportunity to enjoy the Park resources."

The pilot study for Mount Rainier made it clear that a new set of priorities were to be considered. It was an approach that retained much of the traditional ideology of the Park Service—access for public enjoyment—by radically altering the premises of how plans for that access and enjoyment should be made. These new priorities were captured in the "Guiding Precepts of Mission 66" which reiterated the basic themes of Park Service policy that informed the entire Mission 66 project: "Visitor enjoyment" of parks was the "best means of protecting them against exploitation or encroachment"; visitors must be "channeled to avoid overuse" and deterioration in certain areas; "channeling use" in this way required "proper development." Mission 66 would therefore be a "use and development program" that would achieve the "preservation objectives of the Service."[15] The "interpretive presentation" of a park or historic site should "take full advantage of the actual scene, object, or structure as the interpretive exhibit." This implied the location of roads, trails, and visitor centers near the historic landscapes and natural features that were to be interpreted by the Park Service and enjoyed by the public.

Wirth and probably almost all of the Mission 66 planners strongly believed that expanded use of the parks could occur without impairing them. Success would require reconceptualizing how parks should function as public places, and redeveloping them accordingly. Making parks into day use destinations, for example, could be achieved with wider roads, larger parking lots, and expanded "visitor use centers" to provide ample interpretive displays, bathrooms, and administrative areas for larger numbers of people. The new iteration of the national park idea was intended to save the parks as truly public parks, even under the greatly increased pressures of the postwar era.[16]

Mission 66 was the last major period of intense activity and profoundly new ideas to find expression in a system wide program of national park development. Regardless of how one judges the legacy of Mission 66, a close examination of the era is warranted. We would not recognize the developed areas of the national parks today without the visitor centers, roads, housing, and other facilities acquired and built during these years. Mission 66 greatly enlarged the park system, and expanded entire categories of parks, including national recreation areas and national seashores. For better or worse, the national park system and the National Park Service today are still in many ways artifacts of Mission 66.

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[15] "Steering Committee Precepts for Staff Guidance," unsigned draft [Garrison], March 1955, (Box A8213, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Archive).
[16] Lemuel A. Garrison, "Guiding Precepts Mission 66," draft memorandum, August 29, 1955, (Box A8213, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

Significance of the Mission 66 Program at Death Valley National Park[17]

Mission 66 played a critical role in updating and modernizing Death Valley National Park [then Death Valley National Monument]. In 1954, when Superintendent Fred W. Binnewies arrived at the monument, he found that its facilities were inadequate to meet demands and in poor condition. He noted that the monument's power supply was not dependable, water and sewer systems were in disrepair, and the Civilian Conservation Corps-era buildings were deteriorating. He supported the idea of a museum as he "recognized the importance of interpretation programs for visitors and regarded museum construction as a crucial step in serving the monument's growing audience."[18] He placed immediate emphasis on the planning process to address park needs. In the 1954 master plan, Binnewies recommended collecting entrance fees, which was not a common practice for remote parks, and increasing staff in addition to physical improvements. Although this plan initially received little support from the NPS, by 1956 Binnewies' emphasis on planning placed the monument in a position to quickly produce a request for Mission 66 funding. With their up-to-date planning documents, the monument became an early recipient of Mission 66 funds, receiving approval of their plans by September 1956.[19]

Mission 66 resulted in a significant amount of development and infrastructure still found at Death Valley National Park today. By the end of 1958, the monument had new agency residences; new water, sewer, gas, and electrical systems at Cow Creek; an improved water pipeline from Nevares Springs; and four road-related projects under way, including a new parking lot at Ubehebe Crater.[20] In 1959-60, the Furnace Creek Visitor Center was built. The 1960 Master Plan for Death Valley, entitled the "MISSION 66 Edition," optimistically emphasized the future contributions of the visitor center: "Many of our present shortcomings will be solved when we move into the new Visitor Center. No longer will we be plagued with no decent place to attract and contact visitors. There will be offices of sufficient size to conduct naturalist activities. Scientific collections, photographs, library materials and other interpretive materials will be housed in a clean and appropriate manner. The illustrated talks can be held in our auditorium and under our own rules."[21]

The visitor center, a key component of the program, was also an important symbol of elevated importance within the park system. As noted in the Administrative History for the park:

> The most important development that Mission 66 funded was the new visitor center and headquarters at Furnace Creek. . . . A new visitor center was an emblem of importance in the park system, marking the first time since the New Deal that Death Valley received a visible share of available agency resources.

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[17] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD (2009), 8:8-9.
[18] Hal K. Rothman, To Ride Alone in a Forever Unpossessed Country: An Administrative History of Death Valley National Park (Draft) (Henderson, Nev: Hal K. Rothman and Assoc., [2000])
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] As quoted in Carey & Co. Inc, *Determination of Eligibility: Death Valley National Park Visitor Center (Draft)* (San Francisco, Cal: Prepared for the National Park Service, 2001).

> Advocates of the monument celebrated its construction and their involvement in it. The Death Valley 49ers Association played a prominent role and the visitor center even attracted the attention of Horace M. Albright, more than twenty years out of the National Park Service, but still a considerable force. He offered suggestions on a draft plan for the facility and helped shape its final contours. More than any other event since the establishment of the monument, the visitor center's completion signaled a new moment in the history of Death Valley.[22]

Under subsequent superintendents Granville Liles and John A. Aubuchon, the Mission 66 master plan continued to be implemented. From 1960-65, the monument completed construction of a second apartment structure, apartments at the Grapevine housing area, new water systems in all existing campgrounds, a 300,000-gallon reservoir at Furnace Creek, added new sewage systems, diesel-fired power generating plants, a new telephone system, and a dependable source of electricity.[23] By 1965, the Mission 66 master plan had been completed and brought the monument up to modern standards of its time.

Planning and Construction of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center[24]

The need for centralized visitor services was identified early in the park's history. Death Valley National Park was first designated as a National Monument in 1933, but as early as 1938, park documents indicated a need for museum and auditorium facilities. A master plan from that year states: "The need for a museum building of moderate size has become increasingly a necessity for the past five years. . . . There is also a very decided and immediate need of centrally located offices for information, education, and protection." A 1942 'Outline of Work Proposal' confirms museum facilities had not yet been constructed at Death Valley, but that plans for such a facility had been approved. World War II, however, caused the project to be further delayed as the federal budget was strained with the war effort. In 1951, to help address growing needs of the parks, NPS Director Conrad Wirth urged all national park superintendents to meet with their district Congressmen to campaign for federal appropriations and legislation to help update and improve conditions at the parks for the benefit of the American people.[25]

Through efforts by the NPS and the Death Valley '49ers Association, money for the museum was attained. As summarized in the Administrative History of the park:

> Death Valley staff made overtures to the California State Legislature and the U.S. Congress about museum funding. In 1955, California State Senator Charles Brown, a longtime advocate of Death Valley, introduced the first state funding bill for the museum. Despite winning legislative approval, California's Republican governor, Goodwin J. Knight, vetoed the measure along with other

[22] Hal K. Rothman, To Ride Alone in a Forever Unpossessed Country: An Administrative History of Death Valley National Park (Draft).
[23] Ibid.
[24] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD (2009), 8:9-11.
[25] Carey & Co. Inc, *Determination of Eligibility: Death Valley National Park Visitor Center (Draft)*.

> park funding bills. After the veto, the Death Valley '49ers Association, a powerful and vocal constituency founded in 1949 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Death Valley expedition that named the area, lobbied the government to put the museum bill on the 1956 legislative calendar. Knight yielded. The 1956 California state budget included authorization of $350,000 for construction of a museum at Death Valley. By 1957, the museum had been added to the Mission 66 plan for a new visitor center, giving the project greater viability in the federal appropriations process and creating an unusual circumstance: the park stood to receive money for the museum from both state and federal sources.[26]

Several areas were considered for the new visitor center, but as H. Rothman states in the Administrative History,

> Furnace Creek was the most logical location [for the visitor center], for it had become the central area of the monument because of the presence of Furnace Creek Ranch. The land in the vicinity belonged to U.S. Borax, formed by the merger of Pacific Coast Borax and U.S. Potash on June 1, 1956, and the National Park Service needed its cooperation. The company proved a willing partner. In 1957, the National Park Service sought lands near Furnace Creek Ranch to which the borax company held subsurface mineral title. As always, the longstanding relationship and Albright's insistent presence assured that the agency and the company would negotiate successfully. . . . The exchange helped the borax company because the resort needed rights-of-way and water rights near its inholdings; in exchange the National Park Service received important lands for the visitor center. U.S. Borax owned ninety acres just north of the Furnace Creek Ranch, an ideal location for a new visitor center and campground from both National Park Service and company perspectives. . . . On July 2, 1958, Congress ratified the exchange. [27]

Following acquisition of the land, planning efforts were immediately underway. The schematic architectural drawings and principal design for the Visitor Center were drafted in 1958 by Cecil Doty, one of the most prominent NPS architects during the Mission 66 era. As noted by Allaback (2000), "During the Mission 66 program, Doty designed visitor centers for a range of climates and locations, according to varying needs and anticipated visitation. His level of involvement also varied. In some cases, he never visited the site; in some he designed the building and then contract architects prepared the construction drawings (this was what was the case at [Furnace Creek Visitor Center]); and in others, his involvement continued through the final working drawings. At the official conclusion of the Mission 66 program in 1966, Doty received the Department of the Interior's distinguished service award." The final plans were prepared by the architectural firm of Welton Becket and Associates of San Francisco, but very few modifications appear to have been made to Doty's original schematic design.

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[26] Hal K. Rothman, To Ride Alone in a Forever Unpossessed Country: An Administrative History of Death Valley National Park (Draft)
[27] Ibid.

Construction of the visitor center quickly followed the design. The construction contract was "awarded to William A. Drennan of Oildale, California. Museum and visitor center construction began May 23, 1959. Based on inspections conducted early in 1960, the National Park Service declared the building complete on March 24, 1960, although the new museum and visitor center could not be opened immediately as a result of a lack of electrical power required for heating and air conditioning systems. After National Park Service engineers resolved the electric problem, the museum was ready for internal design. The Western Museum Laboratory company completed exhibit installation in October 1960."[28] William D. Berry, "a first-class wildlife artist," hand-painted many of the exhibits.[29] Following completion, a dedication ceremony was held on November 12, 1960. Over 2,000 people attended the ceremony including such notable guests as Director Wirth, State Senator Charles Brown, Lord Clitheros of Borax Limited, President Ralph Merritt of the Death Valley '49ers, and other distinguished politicians and leaders from California and Washington D.C.[30]

Mission 66: The Architecture[31]

By January 1956, Wirth and his agency had elaborated their postwar model for achieving continued "enjoyment without impairment." The new model for park planning represented both continuity and change; but it was the change that many people noticed first. A dramatic new approach to park architecture, for example, was already taking shape by the early 1950s at Grand Teton National Park. The Grand Teton Lodge and Transportation Company, a subsidiary of the Rockefeller family's Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., planned a $6-million lodge complex as part of what Rockefeller hoped would be a "pilot project" for postwar park development. Gilbert Stanley Underwood, the architect of The Ahwahnee and other prewar national park lodges, designed the new hotel and cabin complex, which Rockefeller personally sited on the shore of Jackson Lake, on a small plateau with sweeping views of the Teton Range. The elegant lodge, redolent of an earlier era of national park tourism, in some ways recalled the architect's prewar masterpieces. But the novelty of the outward appearance of the Jackson Lake Lodge startled most observers. Built of rough, exposed concrete, the building's massing was conceived as an interlocking series of large rectangular boxes topped by shed roofs. The massing directly expressed the functions and spaces of the interior volumes. Large horizontal bands of windows and the massive window wall of the main lounge further emphasized and confirmed the influence of contemporary American modernist architectural design.[32] Underwood had come out of retirement for

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[28] Hal K. Rothman, To Ride Alone in a Forever Unpossessed Country: An Administrative History of Death Valley National Park (Draft).

[29] Ralph H. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service, 1904-1982* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Curatorial Services Division, 1993).

[30] Carey & Co. Inc, *Determination of Eligibility: Death Valley National Park Visitor Center (Draft)* (San Francisco, Cal: Prepared for the National Park Service, 2001).

[31] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: National Park Service Mission 66 Resources" by Ethan Carr, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD. and Len Werner (2004), pp. 21-34.

[32] Paula S. Reed and Edith B. Wallace, "Jackson Lake Lodge, National Historic Landmark Nomination." This National Historic Landmark nomination form is available through the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Washington, DC (http://www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/designations/samples). The Jackson Lake Lodge was designated a

this last major commission of his career. While he showed his mastery of a building type he had done so much to develop—the national park lodge—he also made a striking statement about how postwar park architecture could adopt contemporary structural design and construction technology.

Not everyone agreed that the new lodge indicated a positive direction for national park architecture. The Jackson Lake Lodge made passionate architectural critics out of many not previously known for their opinions on such matters. In August, *The New York Times* reported on the "debate over national parks design" that the lodge had incited. "Those who bitterly deride the appearance of the…lodge," noted the reporter, "level their aesthetic barbs at the mammoth central structure chiefly because it does not look 'rustic.'" Unmoved by the building's efficient handling of larger numbers of tourists, or by its minimal visual presence (it was mostly hidden from viewpoints elsewhere in the park), critics were outraged because the lodge did not look more like the Old Faithful Inn in nearby Yellowstone, or like other classic examples of rustic park architecture that they insisted were more effective in "blending with the scenery." Part of their concern stemmed from indications that the lodge would serve as a design precedent for the still mysterious "10-year program" Wirth obliquely mentioned in his remarks at the dedication ceremony. Such a program apparently would mean more contemporary architecture that redefined what it meant to "harmonize" with the unique settings of the national parks.[33]

The trend to modernist planning and architecture could no more be ignored in national parks than it could anywhere else in the United States. In the summer of 1956, as a large number of very noticeable park construction projects proceeded, the Mission 66 program burst on the scene with considerable fanfare. From the beginning, Mission 66 also expressed a fully developed commitment to progressive, sometimes striking modernist architectural design. Mission 66 architecture embodied the revised recreational planning policies that had been developed as the heart of the entire program. Wirth and Vint, in particular, had been the officials responsible for promoting and achieving rustic era design. They now embraced the new architecture because it expressed and enabled the new response they had devised to finally mitigate the conditions that had plagued them for the previous decade. For them, the resurrection of rustic design would have negated what they were trying to accomplish. It would embody prewar planning policies that had proven to be inadequate to new challenges.

At the same time, the commitment to modernist architecture was hardly a radical or daring direction for the Park Service. In fact, it put the agency squarely in the mainstream of American design of the period. By the mid-1950s, modernism had become the ubiquitous stylistic choice of corporations, government agencies, cultural institutions, housing developers, and retailers who together were remaking the American landscape. Corporate clients all over the world—from roadside restaurant chains to multinational businesses—embraced various strains of modernist architectural style. Quite apart from stylistic associations and iconographic meanings, modernist

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National Historic Landmark in 2003, in part for its significance as an influential precedent of Modernist architectural design in the parks.

[33] Jack Goodman, "Controversy Over Lodge in the West," *The New York Times*, Sunday, August 7, 1955.

architecture was simply a more efficient way of producing buildings, especially large ones. America, and much of the world, had "gone modern" for many of the same reasons the Park Service had: more labor intensive, craft oriented construction was no longer economically competitive, and therefore for most clients—including government agencies—it was no longer an option. The armed forces in particular had preceded the Park Service in the adoption of modernism, for many related reasons.

Another major reason the Park Service adopted modernist architectural design was the general adoption of the idiom by professional consultants and in-house Park Service designers. As Mission 66 moved from planning to construction, architects were rapidly set to work drawing up detailed designs. The work they produced simply reflected the current state and tendencies of their profession. The years immediately before Mission 66 were the apogee of the influence of modernism on American architectural practice. As architectural historian Sarah Allaback observes in her history of Mission 66 visitor centers, the influence of contemporary American architectural practice inevitably extended to national park architecture: "The forces at work—capitalism and a society obsessed with progress—were prevalent throughout the country; it was only a matter of time before they would enter the national parks."[34]

Because the Mission 66 program also generated a sudden increase in the amount of work expected from the in-house design force, the agency expanded its use of private consulting design and engineering firms. The increased use of consultants influenced Mission 66 design; but Park Service architects and administrators had already set the policies and outlines that, in almost all cases, consultants were expected to follow. Allaback describes how even longtime Park Service architects (some of whom had produced important rustic buildings in the 1930s) by the early 1950s had developed new approaches in response to postwar conditions. "We couldn't help but change," explained Park Service architect Cecil J. Doty, "I can't understand how anyone could think otherwise, how it could keep from changing." Allaback observes that this statement is "a key to understanding" the purpose of Mission 66 architecture, "which was not to design buildings for atmosphere, whimsy, or aesthetic pleasure, but for change: to meet the demands of an estimated eighty million visitors," and to do so in a reasonably efficient way, considering the availability of new building technologies and the higher costs of labor and materials.[35]

No extensive, official policy statement regarding the adoption of modernist design at the Park Service was ever made. When asked to issue an official policy on architectural design, Wirth responded only with a brief statement: "Structures should be designed to reflect the character of the area while at the same time following up-to-date design standards. Park structures are to conform, to some extent, with the trend toward contemporary design and the use of materials and equipment accepted as standard by the building industry. However, restraint must be exercised in the design so that the structures will not be out of character with the area and so that the structures will be

[34] Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), 10.
[35] Ibid, 12-14.

subordinated to their surroundings."[36] In January 1957, Wirth participated by phone in a WODC conference and verbally gave the following "guiding principles" for architectural design: "Whatever we do in the line of development in the Parks, it must fit the terrain and be inconspicuous; Durability is an important attribute; Sound planning is basic to economic results; Nothing should be built unless the need is already realized…; Don't try to lead your profession in fancy design."[37] Architectural design, in fact, was not a primary concern for Wirth. He felt that park development succeeded by "channeling" public use and therefore mitigating its impacts. In well planned examples, he wrote in 1958, the result would be the same "regardless of decorative colors used, or the style of architecture selected." These were "details," important "in their way." But "park resources [were] neither destroyed nor preserved merely by application of a paintbrush or by a choice of…architectural décor."[38]

The Visitor Center

Modernist park architecture, like the new planning goals of the Mission 66 prospectus, was vital to the implementation and success of Mission 66. But it was not the International Style, or any other style, that primarily interested Wirth, Vint, and their planners; it was the increased functionality and efficiency that could be achieved through modernist design, materials, and building technologies. They did not adopt modernism as a style as much as they invented a distinctly modernist building type—the visitor center—and then used it extensively to implement their revised park planning ideas. The organization of the WODC and the EODC in 1954 brought Park Service designers, engineers, and historians together in their own offices in San Francisco and Philadelphia, independent of the regional administrative offices. By 1960, Mission 66 had swelled the professional ranks in these two design offices to several hundred in-house landscape architects, architects, and administrative employees. Almost without exception, these managers were longtime Park Service employees who, regardless of where they received academic training, received their most formative professional experience working in state and national parks during the New Deal.[39]

It was in the offices of the WODC and the EODC between 1954 and 1957 that idea of the visitor center was elaborated as the successor to park museum and administration buildings. The visitor center adapted modernist ideas of architectural composition to the programmatic and functional purposes of national parks. The integration of indoor and outdoor space in a (usually) one-level, public building evoked the pavilions of Mies van der Rohe; the flow diagrams developed by Cabot and Doty recalled Le Corbusier's

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[36] Conrad L. Wirth, "Design of Structures," memorandum, February 13, 1956 (Box 6, Conrad L. Wirth Collection, University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center).

[37] These statements were transcribed and distributed to WODC design staff. Conrad L. Wirth, "Excerpt From Telephone Conference Between the Director and Chief, WODC…January 9, 1957" (Box 7, Design & Construction File, RG 79, National Archives). The comments were subsequently read to the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments at their March meeting in Washington, DC. The Advisory Board was discussing the issue of architectural design quality as a result of criticism, and praise, appearing in different journals. "Summary Minutes, 36th Meeting, Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, March 5, 6, 7, 1957, Washington, DC," (Yosemite National Park Archives).

[38] Conrad L. Wirth, "Mission 66 in the Headlines," *National Parks Magazine* 32, no. 132 (January 1958): 8-9, 36-37.

[39] Vernon L. Hammons, "A Brief Organizational History of the Office of Design and Construction" (Washington, D.C. : Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, 1963), 3; "Interview with A. Clark Stratton," March 1, 1962, conducted by S. Herbert Evison, transcript, p. 2, (National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

use of architectural procession (a dramatic sequence of spaces and views) to organize the experience created by a building. As developed by the Park Service in the mid-1950s, the visitor center became a viewing platform, in which views from interior spaces, roof terraces, and adjacent outdoor terraces or amphitheaters were calculated as a flowing, sequential experience. They were buildings to see from, not to be seen. In this sense they reversed the premise of prewar park museum design. But the outward stylistic or aesthetic appearance of the Mission 66 visitor center—as long as it was minimal and did not visually contrast with its surroundings or call too much attention to itself—was almost inconsequential. The removal of most ornamentation and historical allusion was another aspect of modernism that fit the purpose of the new buildings perfectly. They were not meant to have a powerful presence themselves, but to recede visually, even as they facilitated the appreciation of park landscapes and resources by larger numbers of people. The architecture, ideally, should be nearly transparent: a composition of functional, overlapping spaces and outward views, not of structural mass and decorative façades. The best Mission 66 visitor centers achieved this appropriate adaptation of contemporary modernist ideas to the goals espoused by Park Service landscape architects and interpreters for the redevelopment of national parks. Many successful examples were less expensive, smaller buildings.

Cecil Doty did much of the preliminary visitor center design early in the Mission 66 program, and contributed greatly to the development of this building type. As the principal architectural designer of the WODC, Doty provided many preliminary design schemes, and in some cases developed those designs much further.[40] Allaback documents a total of 110 national park visitor center projects and sixteen "additions" to existing buildings with construction contracts let between 1956 and 1966. She also lists 54 preliminary visitor center design projects done by Doty while at the WODC during those years. Not all of Doty's preliminary design projects were built, and many others were significantly altered by other architects as they moved to final design and construction drawings. But Doty's contribution to Mission 66 visitor design in the mid-1950s, particularly at the initial, conceptual stage of design, was extremely significant.[41]

Other projects, such as comfort stations (bathrooms), or other small, utilitarian structures were given standardized plans rather than new designs. Housing had its own imposed cost limitations per unit, necessitating a level of standardization as well, although with flexibility for local conditions and materials. Visitor centers and park administration buildings, however, always required unique designs. Landscape architects and interpretive planners, both in the WODC and EODC and in individual parks, took the schematic idea for the project and worked it into the overall development context of the park's Mission 66 prospectus. The new visitor center was

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[40] "Interview with Cecil J. Doty," conducted by S. Herbert Evison, October 26, 1962, transcript, p. 4, (National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Archive); "Interview with Cecil J. Doty," conducted by Jacilee Wray, February 26, 1990, transcript, p. 4, (catalog number GRCA 52220, Grand Canyon National Park Archive); U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Visitor Center Planning* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, n.d. [1958]), 45.

[41] Conrad Wirth gives a total of 114 new visitor centers during Mission 66. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 270. The exact definition of what constitutes a new visitor center (as opposed to an addition or a remodeling) makes it difficult to specify an exact number. Allaback's totals reflect what she could confirm through project records at the Technical Information Center, National Park Service, Denver Service Center. See Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 255-265.

sited, integrated with the park road and trail systems, and planned as part of the overall interpretive strategy for the park. Often "secondary" visitor centers, smaller roadside structures or signs, and short "nature walks" near areas of particular interest composed complementary features of the overall interpretive plan. The landscape architects usually established the footprints of a proposed visitor centers, and even designed parking lots, paths and outdoor amphitheaters that exploited the views of scenery, historic scenes, or other "park resources" in the surrounding landscape. At that point, the architects and engineers (who sometimes never saw the visitor center site) would finish the set of "preliminaries" by developing schematic designs for the building itself including rough cost estimates.

This suite of basic facilities—above all the visitor center—became the *sine qua non* of a functional unit of the national park system. Without a visitor center, it seemed, no park could be expected to adequately preserve and interpret its resources, and a series of the buildings were considered necessary at larger parks. New visitor centers represented not only consistent standard for the convenience of visitors and staff, but also a standard of administration in every park. The construction of visitor centers was linked to the expansion and training of staff to work in them, as well as the use of slide and movie projectors and other technological means of more efficiently interpreting a park to its public.

As a category of development, visitor centers were the most important single category of Mission 66 architectural construction. The new building type was at the heart of revised planning goals and policies for the park system, and the proliferation of the carefully designed new buildings symbolized the entire program. "Administration buildings" also continued to be built, although they rarely had the same importance that prewar administration buildings originally had. A few Mission 66 administration buildings, such as the Ash Mountain Administration Building (Cecil Doty, WODC, and Walter Wagner & Partners, 1962) in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, had similar importance. More often, however, new visitor centers combined administrative functions with the park museum idea, replacing the need for either of the older building types.

Furnace Creek Visitor Center as an Example of a Mission 66 Visitor Center[42]

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center Historic District is one of seven existing Mission 66 visitor centers in California. The other existing visitor centers include the Cabrillo National Monument Visitor Center, the Joshua Tree National Park's Oasis Visitor Center, the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, the Happy Isle Nature Center (at Yosemite National Park), and the Grant Grove and Lodgepole visitor centers at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks. The Mission 66 visitor center at Lassen Volcanic National Park has since been demolished.

[42] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD (2009), 8:16-17.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:**[43] The overall design of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center was influenced by mid-twentieth century modernism especially as it was manifested in California. These features include blurring the demarcation between interior and exterior space, strategic use of large expanses of glass, use of mass produced modern building materials left exposed as part of the design aesthetic of the building, flat roofs, an emphasis on horizontality and the idiomatic California modernist landscape design of the central courtyard with an emphasis on geometrically patterned hardscape, raised planters, and the kidney-shaped pool, iconic of mid-20th century California landscape design.

2. **Condition of fabric:**[44] All existing historic buildings, structures, and circulation features remain in their original locations. Original materials that are characteristic of the district remain intact including: mauve-tinted CMUs, walkways, courtyard surface, and pool; large expanses of glass in the lobby and auditorium; original interior light fixtures and original museum exhibits; and the plantings; and remaining lawns throughout the complex.

   Some changes have been made to the complex, but have had a minimal impact to its overall historic character. The greatest change to the historic buildings has been on the interior of the Administration Building. Although the interior remodeling has impacted flow within the building, the overall building footprint, massing, and exterior appearance remains intact and continues to convey the historic character of the historic district. The non-historic metal storage shed, photovoltaic array, and free-standing visitor center sign by the highway entrance do not significantly impact the overall integrity of the district. On April 28, 2008, the photovoltaic array was determined to have no adverse effect on the historic district by the California SHPO. It is tucked at the back of the Administration Building where it is not highly visible. The metal storage shed is also located in a discreet location. The entrance sign is not in a historic location and is reversible. The historic circulation patterns have changed very little since the period of significance with the original flow of circulation between buildings and parking lots still intact.

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[43] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD (2009), 7:16.
[44] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD (2009), 7:14.

With the extreme climate of the Furnace Creek area, it is not surprising that there has been some loss of individual original plants. However, the character of vegetation is not defined by individual plants, but rather the composition of plantings as a whole. Some of the greatest impacts have been the removal of some lawns due to the damage caused to buildings and walkways by their irrigation. The lawn in front of the complex and the forecourt was replaced with a less water-consumptive, xeriscaped design that included alluvial rock, native shrubs, and forbs. The alluvial rock surface does not provide the green, lush character of the historic lawn, but it still retains the flat horizontal plane that compliments the simple lines of the building architecture. However, over time shrubs and small trees have grown up within the rock and are breaking up the horizontal ground plane. In the courtyard, the plants that have been replaced or added reflect use of plant materials that were used historically and survived, replacing those species like the olive which could not tolerate the intense heat of Death Valley. Most of the date and two of the fan palms are historic, as are the remaining lawns. The overall character of the historic planting plan has been retained through the continued use of native and/or drought tolerant plants that were planted historically and the continued maintenance of the remaining lawns.

B. Description of Exteriors and Interiors[45]

The Museum

Overall Massing and Layout

The Museum is an irregularly shaped building mass with three primary spaces (exhibit wing, lobby, and auditorium) that are housed in three distinct yet interconnected forms, as well as public restrooms that are housed in an attached pavilion south of the auditorium. A varied roof line and profile provide visual demarcation of the functional areas within the building. The roof heights for areas designed to function primarily as pedestrian circulation or transitional space, for the most part, are set at the same height with the same flat roof profile. The exhibit wing also is flat-roofed; however it is approximately 3 feet taller than the circulation areas. The auditorium is the tallest building form in the complex and exhibits a shallow gabled roof, with a ridge beam that is pitched upward from south to north. The public restrooms are located to the south of the auditorium.

Starting from the east, the exhibit area is contained within a double-height, single-story flat-roofed masonry building form oriented with the longitudinal axis running north/south. This places the narrower sides of the rectangular form toward the front and toward the courtyard. The primary exterior doorway into the exhibit wing is located on the south courtyard-side of the building. A cement-plastered wall panel surrounds and demarcates the entryway from the other exterior walls of the museum building. The east, south and west elevations are solid masonry walls of split-face CMU laid in a stack-bond pattern. The mortar is tinted to match the mauve tint of the CMU. The single wythe walls are reinforced with vertical rebar 8 inches on center and horizontal

[45] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD (2009), 7:3-8.

rebar [12] inches on center. The non-standard dimensions of CMU (16" x 8" x 4") give it the appearance of roman brick. This wall system is used throughout the visitor center complex.

On the east end of the south elevation of the exhibit wing, the building name, "Death Valley Museum", is spelled out with enameled steel letters, each 12" tall and 2" deep. Each letter is individually mounted to the wall with approximately a 1-inch gap between the letter and the building. The National Park Service arrowhead logo beneath the building name was added post-period of significance.

The lobby is connected to the north end of the west wall of the exhibit wing. It too is rectangular in plan; however, it is smaller in scale; the longitudinal axis runs perpendicular to the exhibit wing. The long south facing wall consists of floor to ceiling fixed aluminum-frame windows across the entire length. The large expanse of tinted glass provides views out across the landscape toward the Panamint Range in the distance and designed landscape features in the foreground, while reducing reflection. The north wall of the lobby, which faces the courtyard and provides public access to the outdoor space, is flush with the north wall of the exhibit space. In plan, the exhibit wing and lobby together form an L-shape, with the longer leg of the ell (the exhibit wing) extending south and the shorter leg (lobby) extending west.

The auditorium is connected to the west end of the lobby space. In plan, the auditorium forms an elongated hexagon. Most of the auditorium's building mass forms the west edge of the courtyard with only a small portion extending south beyond the connecting lobby area. The connection between the lobby and the auditorium is at a right angle; however the hexagonal form splays away from the other buildings and courtyard, which creates a more open feeling in the courtyard as well as a more dynamic form and aesthetic for the visitor services building. The unique building mass and a distinctive roof profile set the auditorium slightly apart from the rest of the complex both formally and visually; however, the axis of the auditorium was aligned northwest-southeast with a long wall of glass sliding doors on the eastern elevation of the building that open the auditorium to central courtyard with the backdrop of the Funeral Mountains in the distance. Historically, park visitors were presented with a short film in the auditorium, after which the curtains were drawn back from the wall of sliding doors, revealing the panoramic view of the Funeral Mountains; however, today the windows and curtains are rarely opened. The area above the bank of sliding doors is surfaced with the same cement plaster-finished panels that surround the museum building doorway. The north/south axis also served as the datum for the grid of the concrete pavement.

The auditorium features a gabled roof with open eaves that expose steel rafter tails. The height of the ridge beam rises from south to north. Each rafter is supported on the exterior wall by a pilaster that consists of a square tube column enclosed in reinforced split-faced block with mortared cavities. The south end of the auditorium is partially obscured by the public restroom pavilion; however, the gabled roof form of the auditorium is taller than the public restrooms and is visible at the south elevation. A covered walkway, which features steel vertical louvers continues from the restroom walkway and follows the west elevation of the auditorium. The louvers are steel, coated with blue-green enamel, and are 3 inches thick by 18 inches wide by 11.5 feet tall.

Some of the joints in the louvers have failed and have been repaired with sheet metal screws. The louvers have been coated with off-white paint. Two metal service doors are also visible on the west elevation of the auditorium. The north end of the auditorium roof terminates in a projecting gable end with the steel ridge beam exposed. This elevation also has a metal service door which leads to the auditorium mechanical room. A concrete sidewalk leads from this elevation east to the open side of the main courtyard. The east elevation of the auditorium, which faces the main courtyard, features several large, sliding doors. The space immediately outside the sliding doors is a covered outdoor seating area with an adjacent covered colonnade that leads north to the Administration Building.

The public restrooms are located at and connected to the south end of the auditorium by an open ended covered hallway. Placement of the restrooms in this area provides visitors with direct access from the parking area. Visitors enter the restrooms through doors that face the covered hallway. Formally, placement of the restrooms in this location extends the south west portion of the building and creates the west edge of the forecourt. The south wall of the restroom is a solid CMU wall, while the east and west elevations exhibit a recessed wall with a small rectangular slider window set high in the wall plane. Both walls are finished with cement plaster painted off-white. These elevations also feature a row of vertical porcelain metal louvers that create a screen in front of each wall. The row of louvers aligns with the end of the perpendicular CMU walls.

Entrance, Forecourt and Building Interior

The visitor entry to the complex is clearly visible from the parking area located to the south of the building. The low, somewhat dark colored horizontal masonry silhouette created by the museum building is softened and counter posed by the L-shaped lightly framed and colored roofed colonnade over the entry walkway that runs along the west side of the exhibit wing and the front of the recessed lobby area. The freestanding side of the colonnade opens onto a small forecourt. The large expanse of windows in the lobby face out onto this area at the north side and a low CMU wall laid out in a saw tooth or a zigzag pattern in plan defines the southern edge of the forecourt area. The covered walkway extends well beyond the low wall and the exhibit wing to create a free-standing covered entry colonnade. The repetitive rhythm created by the slender columns of the colonnade and the lower height of the roof provide both a more inviting human-scaled feature and an obvious pedestrian circulation path.

The colonnade has a flat built-up roof finished on the underside with enameled steel panels and original light fixtures. A series of frames spaced approximately 16 feet on center that consist of slender, square metal-tube columns, and a small steel I-beam support the roof. The columns, like the louvers, originally were painted blue-green; they are now painted off-white.

The lobby entry features a pair of glazed aluminum doors with aluminum transoms above. The entrance is located on the east end of the lobby. Through this entrance, visitors enter into the east end of the lobby. A curvilinear information desk is located immediately opposite the entrance. The original rectilinear desk was replaced with the current configuration in the early 1980s**.** The lobby has acoustic ceiling tiles with most of

the original fluorescent lighting. Some light fixtures near the eastern end have been replaced. Carpet has replaced the vinyl tiles called for in the construction documents, which may exist under the newer flooring material. At the northeast corner of the lobby there is a small office.

Following a path to the right (or east) takes visitors into the exhibit wing. The large exhibit space contains original displays and diorama depicting the natural and cultural history of Death Valley as installed in 1960. The exhibits highlight the relationship between natural and human history with excerpts from the writings of William L. Manly, one of the original Death Valley '49ers. This space also has original fluorescent lights and acoustic ceiling tiles with several non-historic lighting additions. The white, ceiling-mounted track lights, the black, wall-mounted fixtures above exhibit panels, and the silver, hanging lights above the 3D topography model of Death Valley are non-historic. The exhibit space also is carpeted.

Following a path to the left (or west), visitors find themselves in the lobby, which now serves as a cooperating association bookstore, a non-historic use of the lobby space. The entire south wall of the lobby is composed of the floor-to-ceiling fixed aluminum sash windows. The rear, north elevation, of the lobby/exhibit building faces the interior courtyard. From the east to west this elevation features a metal door with a transom, two tinted plate glass aluminum sash windows, and a glazed aluminum entry door with tinted sidelights and transom. The large expanse of windows in the south wall of the lobby faces out to a forecourt area.

The forecourt is an "outdoor room," or extension of the lobby space defined by the exterior walls and covered walkways of the Museum and a low, approximately 3-foot high CMU wall laid out on its southern edge in a saw tooth or a zigzag pattern in plan. Historically, this small courtyard was planted with lawn, a fan palm (*Washington filifera*) near the public restrooms, and oleander (*Nerium oleander*) along the wall. The fan palm still remains, but the lawn and oleander have been removed and replaced with alluvial stone. The concrete wall along the southern edge of the forecourt creates a partially enclosed feeling within the small courtyard, but still allows views toward the Panamint Mountain Range from the forecourt and from the lobby.

The main interior of the auditorium is reached through the lobby space. The auditorium is a large mostly double height space with exposed roof structure, a raised stage area and projection booth. When the sliding wall of windows is opened, visitors can walk directly into the courtyard. The wood-framed stage at the north end of the building has a single door on the west side that opens to a small utility space behind the stage. The projection booth is built into the south end of the auditorium. An original wall-mounted light fixture is found in the projection booth stairwell. Originally a folding screen, approximately one-third of the distance from the south end, was installed to subdivide the interior space from west to east. The original screen has been replaced with an accordion screen, and the subdivided south end of the auditorium is used for visitor orientation, utilizing a televised presentation. The auditorium still contains its original chairs. The chairs have turquoise-painted metal frames and are attached to one another in groups of two and three, sharing adjoining legs and wooden armrests. The backs and the seats were reupholstered in the mid-1990s in a brown and gold striped fabric. The

seats fold up when not in use. These chairs are not attached to the floor and depending on need, can be rearranged. Typically, the metal chairs are arranged in rows with one central aisle and two side aisles. The interior also can be reconfigured by opening or closing the accordion room divider the screen.

The pitched ceiling is clad in acoustic tile and features an exposed ridge I- beam with steel I-beam joists that bear on the exterior pilasters. Located between the structural beams and echoing their pattern, are thin bands of original fluorescent lights. Located on the upper portion of the auditorium walls, some original brushed stainless steel urn-shaped light fixtures remain. The black, wall-mounted fixtures above the artwork are not historic.

Exterior Pedestrian Circulation
As with most Mission 66 visitor centers, the pedestrian circulation at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center is a key character defining feature of the design, in this case both terms of layout as well as architectural and formal expression. The system of walkways through the visitor complex is highly intact from the period of significance with very few walkways being replaced or added since then. The original system of exterior walkways designed and constructed during the period of significance includes five concrete paved walks that connect the parking lots and buildings. Four of the walkways are associated with the museum building and include the ones leading to the lobby entrance from the visitor parking lot, to the public restrooms from the lobby entrance, to the public restrooms from the visitor parking lot, and from the public restrooms to auditorium's access door on the southwest side. The fifth walkway is associated with the Administration Building and is described below.

The walkways tend to follow straight lines with sharp, angular turns. (The only curvilinear walkway is the sidewalk along the main parking lot, described below.) The walkways are constructed with mauve-tinted concrete. They typically measure 8 feet wide, except the walkway leading to the front entrance of the lobby (approximately 16 feet wide) from the entrance to the lobby to the public restrooms (approximately 12 feet wide). The walkways are scored every 4 feet, creating 4-foot by 4-foot squares. The broom-finish on the concrete squares alternates direction 90 degrees on each square.

One non-historic walkway has been added to the northwest elevation of the auditorium. It is constructed of gray concrete with a wavy-brushed finish and incorporates a historic mauve-tinted concrete pad adjacent to an access door.

Administration Building
Overall Massing and Layout
The Administration Building, located on the north side of the complex, contains NPS administrative functions. The building has a shallow u-shaped form with the legs extended toward the Museum building. The opening of the "u" is an unroofed interior courtyard separated from the larger main courtyard by mid-height CMU wall that is meant to serve as a separate, private outdoor space for park staff.

The main entry to the building features a metal door and transom with the attached raised lettering, "Administration Offices – Reception." To the west of the entry door is a

series of seven tinted, fixed aluminum sash windows with operable hopper units beneath. To the east of the entry are two more of these windows. A covered walkway follows the south elevation of this office building which faces the main courtyard. The inner courtyard is an "outdoor room" or extension of the administration space. Ribbon windows on the south and north walls and the north portion of the east and west walls facing the small courtyard provide natural light and views from the administrative offices. These bands of windows are set in the same type of cement plaster finished walls that surround all of the fenestrations on the courtyard side of the buildings. The southern edge is defined and separated from the larger main courtyard by an approximately 6.5-foot tall CMU wall and the roofline of a covered walkway on the other side of the wall

Employees can enter the small courtyard directly from the office area through four separate entry points – one door is located at the north end of the west wall of the courtyard, a second is at the center of the northern wall, another is at the north end of the east wall, and the last is located at the southeast corner. The roof and bulkhead of the Administration Building extends into the courtyard for approximately four feet along the north and east side to create a covered walkway between the doors. The overhang has its original ceiling-mounted light fixtures and is supported by a single column at each corner; the colonnade feature used elsewhere in the complex is absent. However like the larger courtyard, there is a covered shaded zone and an open area in the small courtyard. The ground plane of the shaded area is surfaced with a cast in place scored concrete walkway; the open area has a sandy surface. The courtyard, which was historically surfaced with lawn, is now surfaced with a sandy material and has a historic date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*). Historic photos show the small area planted with lawn, a runoff strip with loose pebbles between the grass area and concrete walkway, a date palm, and oleander. A satellite dish has also been placed in the space.

The rear, north elevation, features two employee entrance doors and a ribbon of twenty aluminum sash windows, identical to those found at the south elevation. The exterior surfaces of the courtyard, the south entrance, and most of the north elevation of the Administration Building are finished with smooth concrete plaster. Otherwise the Administration Building exterior walls are constructed of the same split-face CMUs used throughout the complex.

Interior

The interior of the Administration Building is composed of a front reception area and several offices with various storage and supply rooms. The floor is carpeted and the ceiling is clad in acoustic tile with fluorescent panel lighting. The interior of the Administration Building has been altered more than the other buildings in this complex. Some interior partitions have been reconfigured to provide more, or larger, office space. A large, open, common area in the east end of the building has been subdivided into cubicles to provide work areas for an increasing staff. The interior of most of the exterior walls have been "furred-out" and insulated, to reduce the air-conditioning load. (The CMU walls were constructed without insulation.)

Exterior Pedestrian Circulation

At the northwest corner of the Administration Building, a gray concrete walkway has replaced a historic walkway from the employee parking lot to an access door. Further east, along the same elevation, a portion of a second walkway has been repaired, but some of the original walkway still remains in a deteriorated state. In addition, the historically concrete paved access area behind the northeast wing of the building has been removed, regraded, and paved with asphalt.

C. Site[46]

The overall design of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center was informed by early to mid-twentieth century modernism especially as it was manifested in California by well-known architects such as Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, Raphael Soriano, and John Lautner. These features include blurred distinctions between interior and exterior space, strategic use of large expanses of glass, use of mass produced modern building materials left exposed as part of the design aesthetic of the building, flat roofs that extend beyond the building envelope and an emphasis on horizontality. The courtyard exhibits the idiomatic mid-twentieth California modernist landscape design with an emphasis on geometrically patterned hardscape, raised planting beds, and the iconic kidney-shaped pool referencing the works of well-known landscape architects such as Thomas Church, Lawrence Halprin, Robert Royston, and Garrett Eckbo.

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center consists of a complex with four distinct functional areas distributed into two separate yet interconnected buildings arranged around a mostly rectangular-shaped, mostly hardscaped courtyard. Visitor service areas are distributed in a somewhat irregularly shaped building mass, historically called the "Museum," that creates the front of the complex; and a shallow u-shaped building that contains NPS administrative functions forms the back or south edge of the courtyard, historically called the "Administration Building." The tops of palms extending above the rooflines provide hints of the courtyard within. The complex is visually unified through consistent use of integrally-colored split-face concrete masonry unit (CMU)walls, selective use of light colored stucco/plastered panels on portions of walls facing the courtyard, and a flat roofed light-colored covered walk way that also physically connects the buildings with one another.

The overall design of the complex, including the site planning, reflects an attempt to be responsive to the climate and geographic features of the area. Framed views of the Armargosa Range rising sharply to the east, the Funeral Mountains (over 5,000 feet) and the Panamint Range are strategically located within the complex. The influence of climate on the design of the visitor center is evident most obviously in the inclusion of shade structures and vegetation plantings that were intended to provide relief for visitors. The central courtyard includes vegetation (palms, shrubs, and lawn) and a small reflection pool and fountain that provided visual relief from the hot and dry desert landscape. The pool has not been filled with water since the 1980s.

[46] The following section is excerpted from the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD (2009), 7:1-3.

Around the perimeter of the visitor center complex, beyond the buildings and courtyard, lawns were historically planted on the north, west, and south sides of the complex. The effect was an open, level ground plane around the building complex that generally complimented the clean, horizontal lines of the architecture and created a contrast to the desert landscape. Since 1960, the lawn areas to the south and north of the complex have been removed because their irrigation with the local, high-salinity water supply has caused pitting and discoloration of the concrete walkways and CMU building walls. To avoid continuing damage, the lawns at the southern and northern edges of the complex and in the forecourt were replaced with a less water-consumptive, xeriscaped design that included alluvial rock, native shrubs, and forbs. The alluvial rock surface does not provide the green, lush character of the historic lawn, but it still retains the simple, flat horizontal plane that is compatible with the architecture. However, over time shrubs and small trees have grown up within the gravel which are breaking up the horizontal qualities of the ground plane. The lawns were historically used for picnicking and gatherings; the remaining ones continue to be used in the same way today.

Along the western edge of the complex is a historic lawn area that still remains. Within this lawn area, near the northwest corner of the Administration Building, is a historic honey mesquite (one of two that were historically planted in that area). Along the lawn's northwestern edge are two fan palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) that are in line with several other fan palms to the north along the western edge of the employee parking lot. This row of fan palms does not appear in historic photos and are probably not historic. However, they are compatible with historic setting because they are planted where the original planting plan called for a row of mesquite to demarcate the edge of the employee parking lot and they are representative of the plant species historically planted within the complex. (A fan palm was historically planted in the forecourt near the Museum entrance and another near the northern end of the auditorium, both of which still remain.)

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center is accessed from Highway 190 by a short entrance road that leads visitors immediately into a flat, open, gently curved parking area. An employee parking lot located on the north side of the complex. It is hidden from view and is accessed by a separate entrance road, north of the complex. The land immediately around the visitor center complex is flat, punctuated with a scattering of shrubs and small trees.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. **Architectural Drawings:** The full set of construction documents by Welton Becket and Associates (1958) can be found at the National Park Service, Death Valley National Park Archives. Copies of the drawings are appended to this report.

B. **Early Views:** Refer to the HABS black and white photographs for historic views of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. The HABS Index to Photographs includes information on each of the views, including photographers and dates.

C. **Interviews:** No interviews were conducted for this project.

D. **Selected Sources:** [47]

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[47] These sources were compiled by Erica Owens and Elaine Jackson-Retondo, PhD, for the "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (2009), pp. 9:1-3.

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_____. "Visitor Center, Furnace Creek, Death Valley." Drawing No. NM-DV/3126C, Sheet 1A of 31. September 26, 1958.

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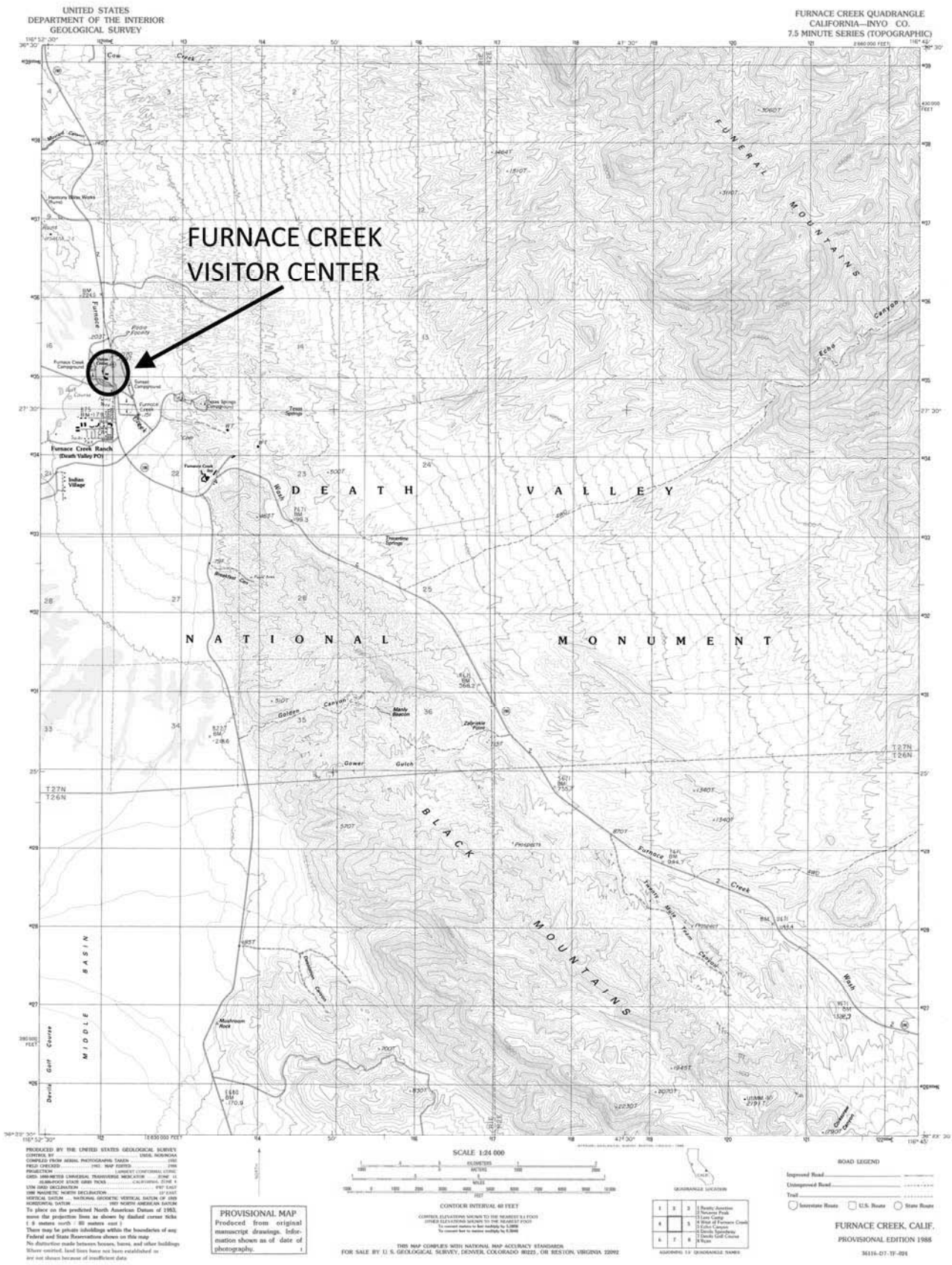
E. **Supplemental Material:** Copies of the original plans for the buildings and site as well as drawings reflecting current conditions are appended to this report.

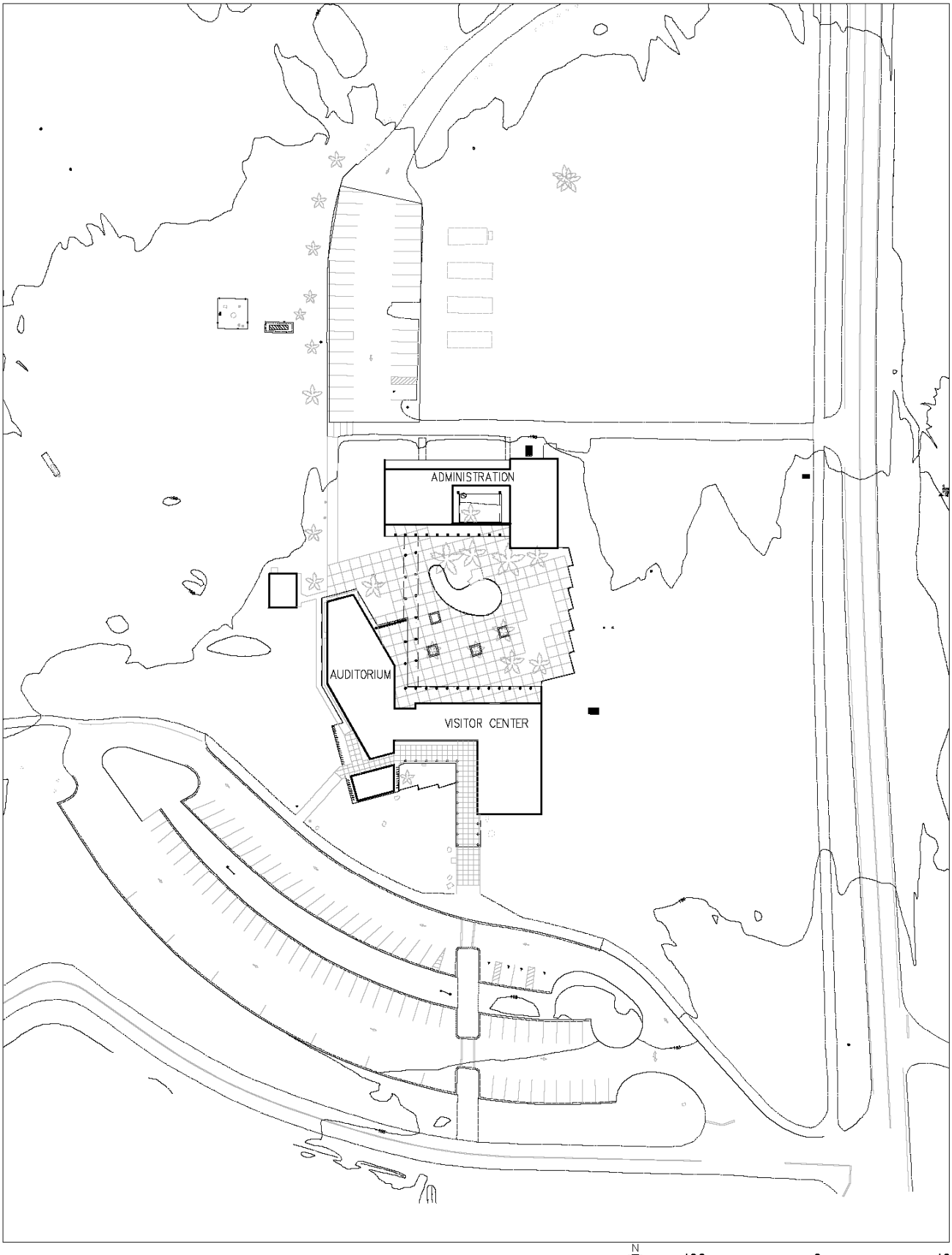
EXISTING CONDITIONS DRAWINGS

Architectural Resources Group, Inc. and MACTEC, 2010



FURNACE CREEK VISITOR CENTER

LOCATION MAP



FURNACE CREEK VISITOR CENTER
SITE PLAN

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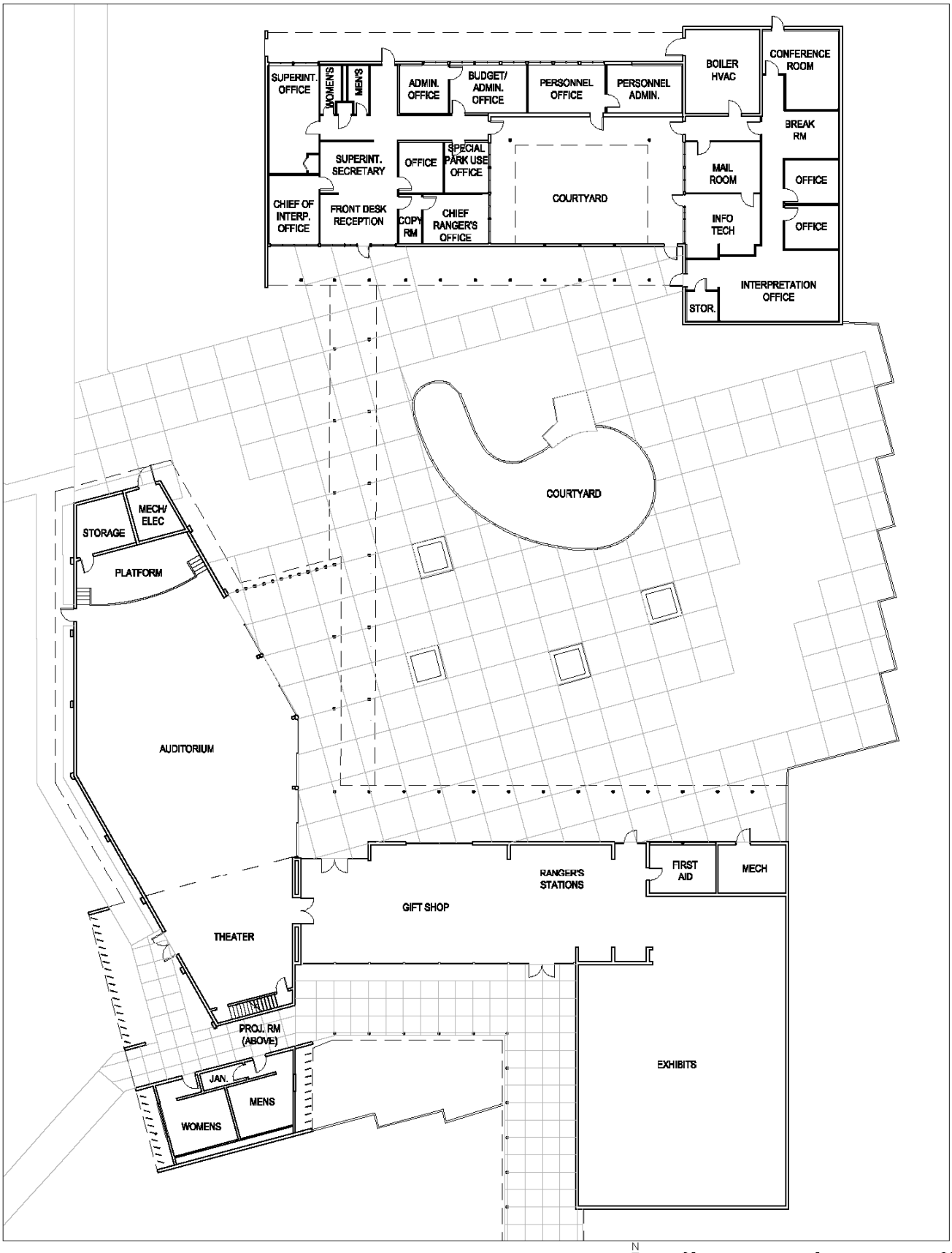

FURNACE CREEK VISITOR CENTER
PLAN

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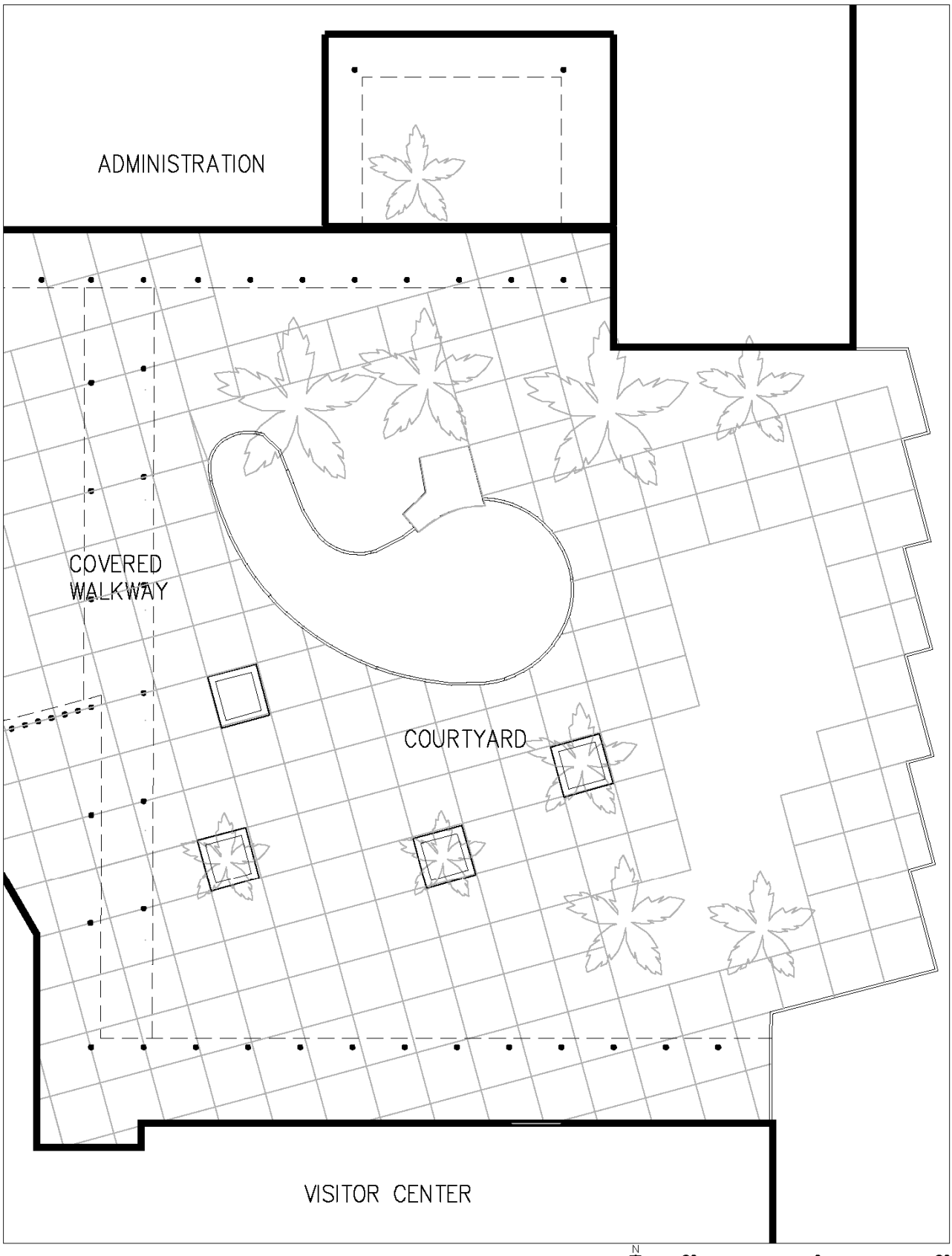


FURNACE CREEK VISITOR CENTER
COURTYARD PLAN

N

20 0 20
1" = 20'-0"

HISTORIC DRAWINGS
Welton Becket and Associates, 1958

DRAWING SCHEDULE

1	SITE PLAN & DRAWING SCHEDULE
1A	PLOT PLAN & PATIO DETAILS
2	FLOOR PLAN — UNIT NO. 1
3	FLOOR PLAN — UNIT NO. 2
4	ELEVATIONS — UNIT NO. 1
5	ELEVATIONS — UNIT NO. 2 & BUILDING SECTIONS
6	¾" WALL SECTIONS — UNIT NO. 1
7	¾" WALL SECTIONS — UNIT NO. 1 & 2
8	WINDOW DETAILS
9	EXTERIOR DETAILS
10	TOILET R.M., STAIR, & MISCELLANEOUS INTERIOR DETAILS
11	DOOR DETAILS
12	CABINET WORK & FOLDING DOOR DETAILS
12A	AUDITORIUM PLATFORM CEILING DETAILS PROJECTION ROOM PORTS
13	EXHIBIT LAYOUT — EXHIBIT R.M. 12-1
14	EXHIBIT LAYOUT DETAILS
15	AUDITORIUM FOUNDATION PLAN & DETAILS
16	EXHIBIT BUILDING FOUNDATION PLAN & DETAILS
17	ADMINISTRATION BUILDING FOUNDATION PLAN & DETAILS
18	AUDITORIUM LOW ROOF FRAMING PLAN & DETAILS
19	AUDITORIUM HIGH ROOF FRAMING PLAN & DETAILS
20	EXHIBIT BUILDING ROOF FRAMING PLAN & DETAILS
21	ADMINISTRATION BUILDING ROOF FRAMING PLAN & DETAILS
22	PLOT PLAN, ONE LINE DIAGRAM & DETAILS
23	PLAN UNIT NO. 1 & DETAILS
24	PLAN UNIT NO. 1 & DETAILS
25	PLAN UNIT NO. 2 & DETAILS
26	PLOT PLAN, LEGEND & SCHEDULES
27	PLAN UNIT NO. 1 & DETAILS
28	PLAN UNIT NO. 2 & DETAILS
29	MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS
30	MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS
31	TEMPERATURE CONTROL DIAGRAMS
TOTAL	33 SHEETS

ARCHITECTURAL — STRUCTURAL — ELECTRICAL — MECHANICAL

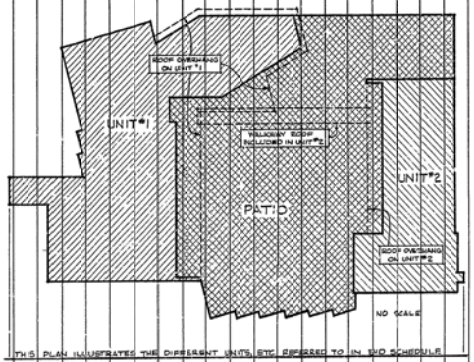
HALF-SIZE REPRODUCTION

ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
80 STONESTOWN, S.F. 27 LO 4-2010

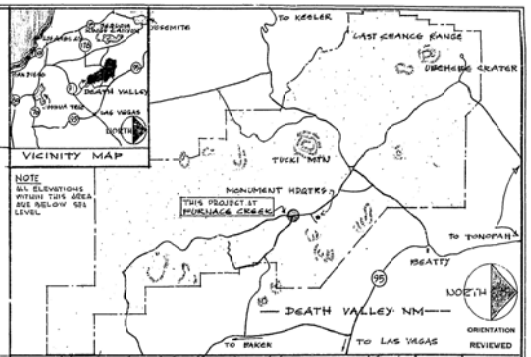
EDWARD HILL JR. AND ASSOCIATES
CONSULTING ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
165 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO

WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
189 MAIDEN LANE • SAN FRANCISCO 8, CALIF.

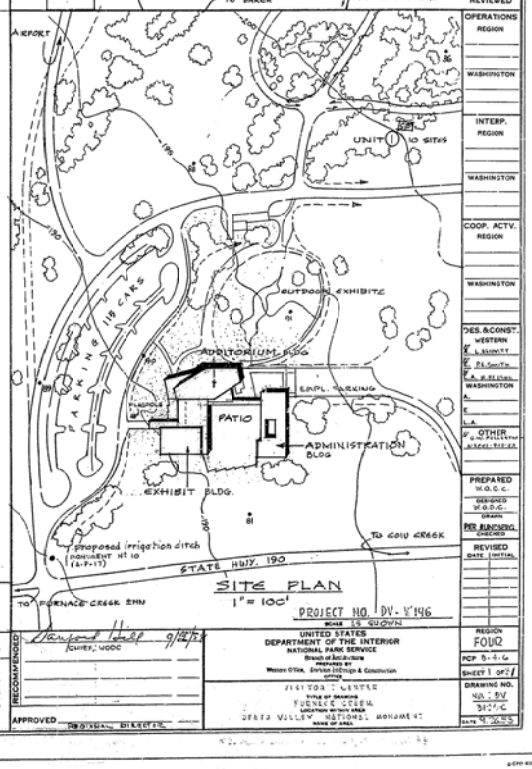
WORKING DRAWING
This drawing has been prepared in compliance with Preliminary Drawing No. NM 90-3063 approved by FRED W. DANIELSON, SUPT. on 1-7-1958
Chief, Planning Office Div. SOC Date 4/23/58



THIS PLAN ILLUSTRATES THE DIFFERENT UNITS, ETC REFERRED TO IN THE SCHEDULE



NOTE
ALL ELEVATIONS WITHIN THIS AREA ARE BELOW SEA LEVEL



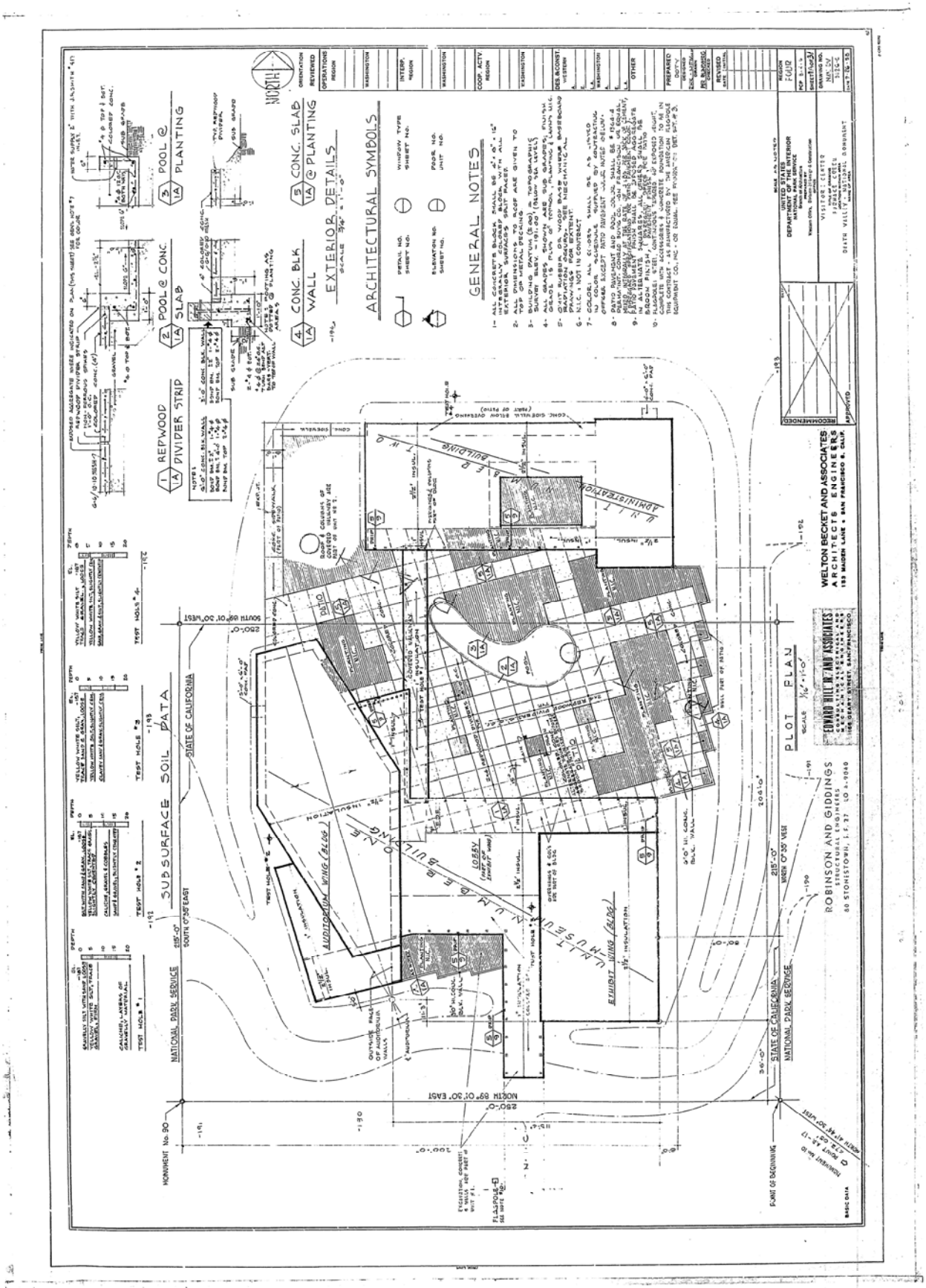
OPERATIONS REGION	
WASHINGTON	
INTERP. REGION	
WASHINGTON	
COOP. ACTV. REGION	
WASHINGTON	
DES. & CONST. WESTERN	
WASHINGTON	
OTHER	
PREPARED	W.O.G.C.
DESIGNED	W.O.D.C.
DRAWN	
PER BUILDING	
REVISED	DATE INITIAL
REGION	FOUR
DRAWING NO.	NM-DV 3127-C

PROJECT NO. DV-V146
SCALE 1/8 SQUARE

RECOMMENDED: Chief, WODC 9/12/62
APPROVED: Director

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Branch of Architecture
PREPARED BY Western Office, Division Of Design & Construction

WELTON T. BECKETT
TITLE OF DRAWING
FURNACE CREEK
LOCATION WITHIN AREA
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF AREA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GENERAL NOTES
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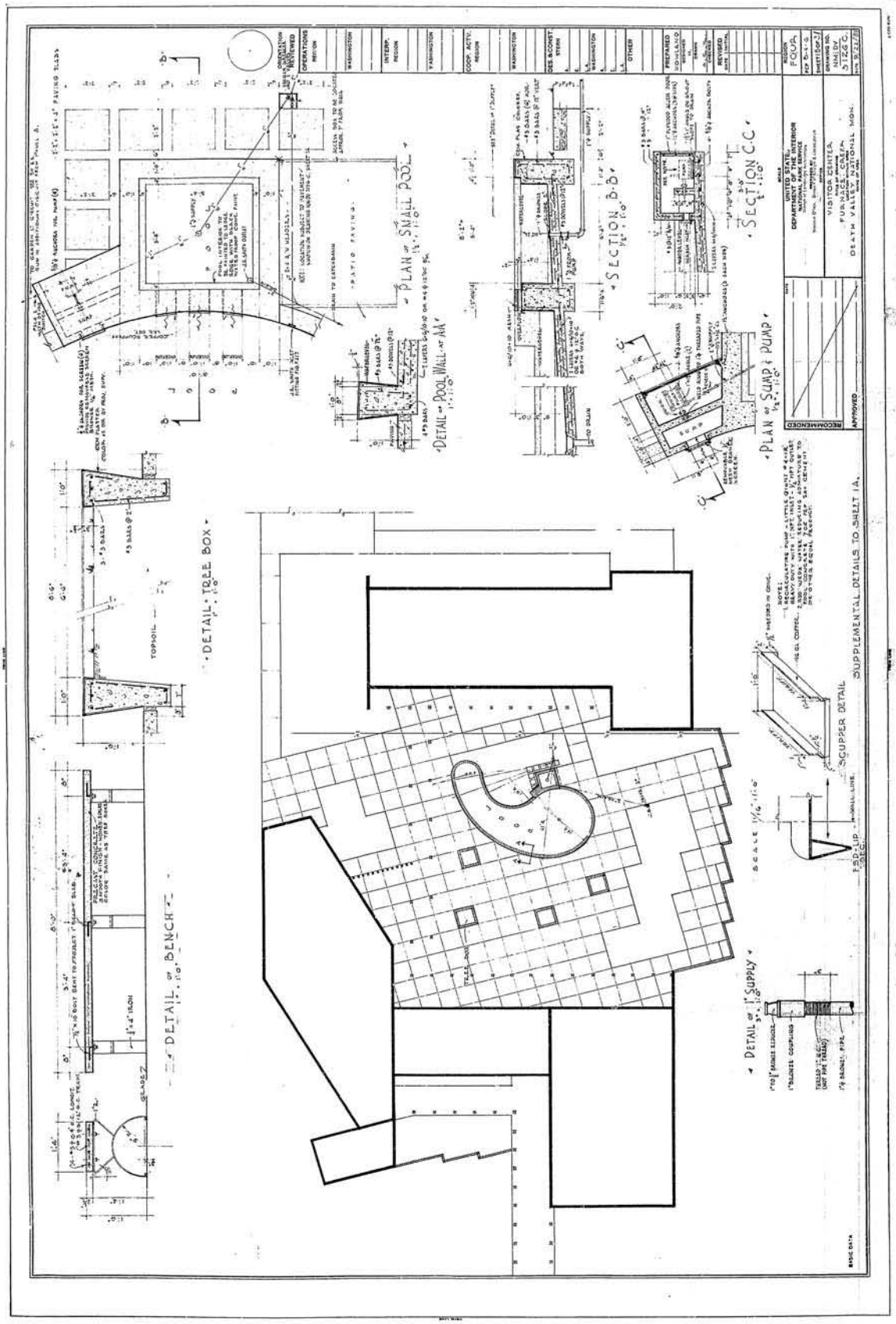
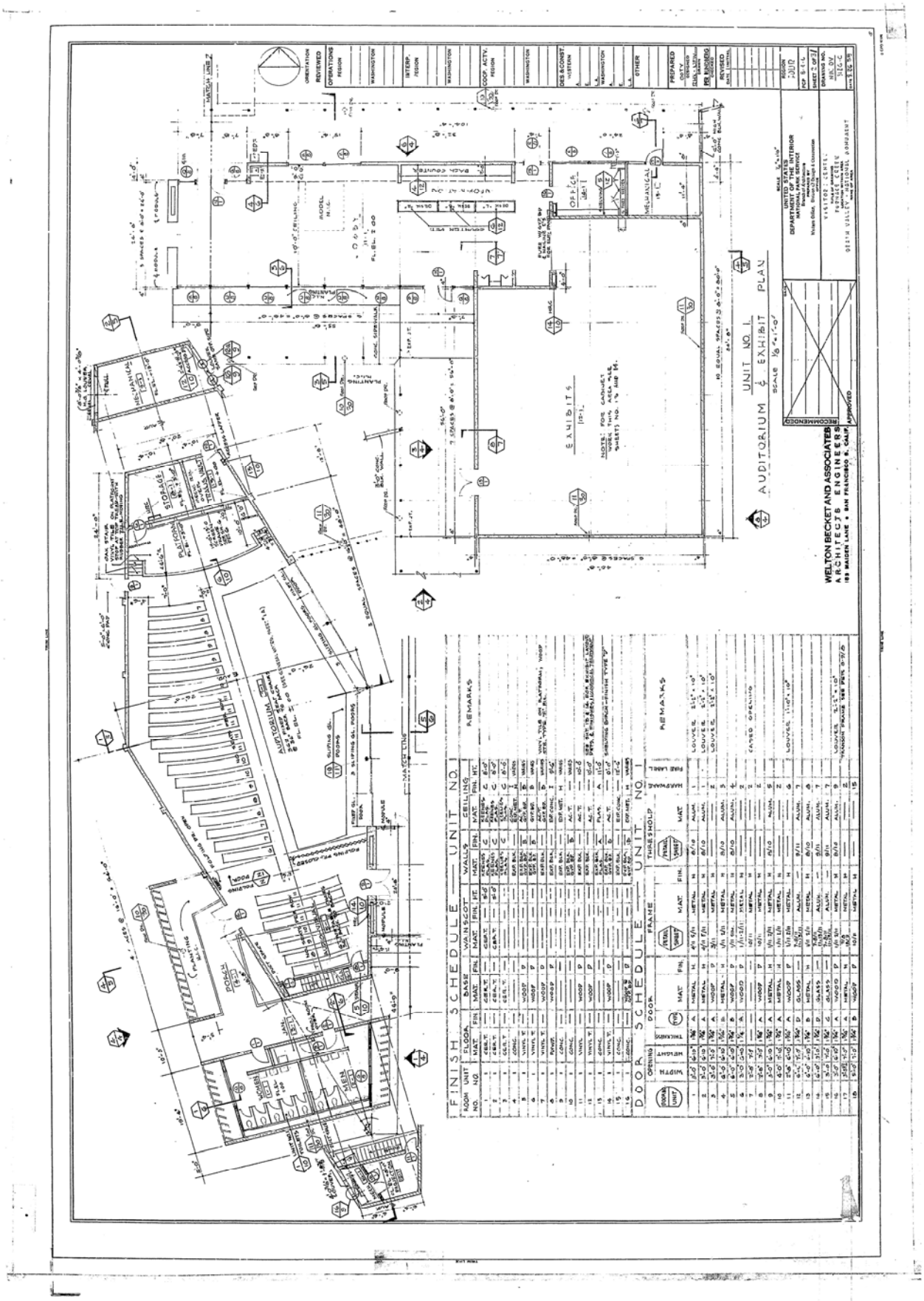
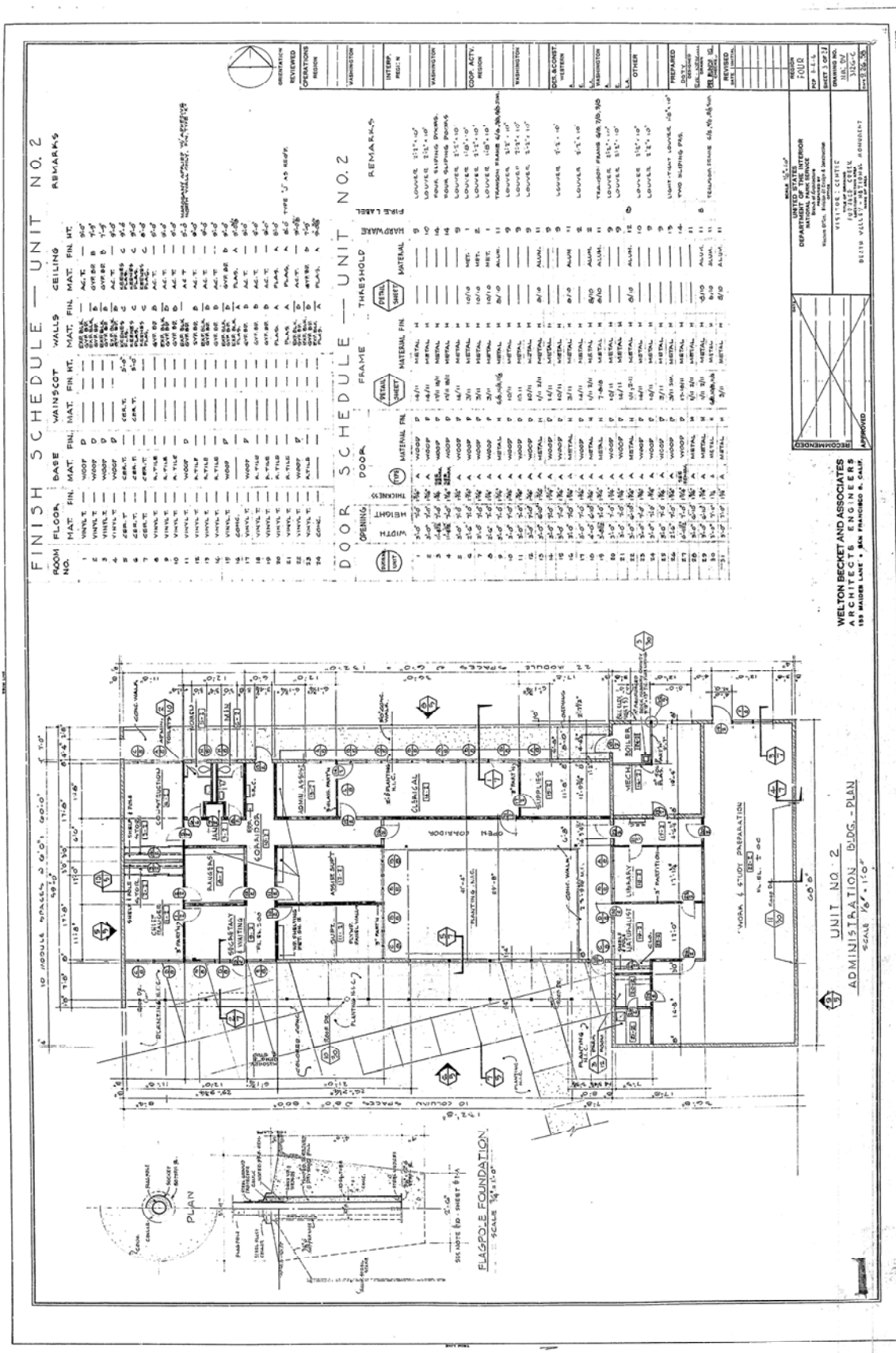
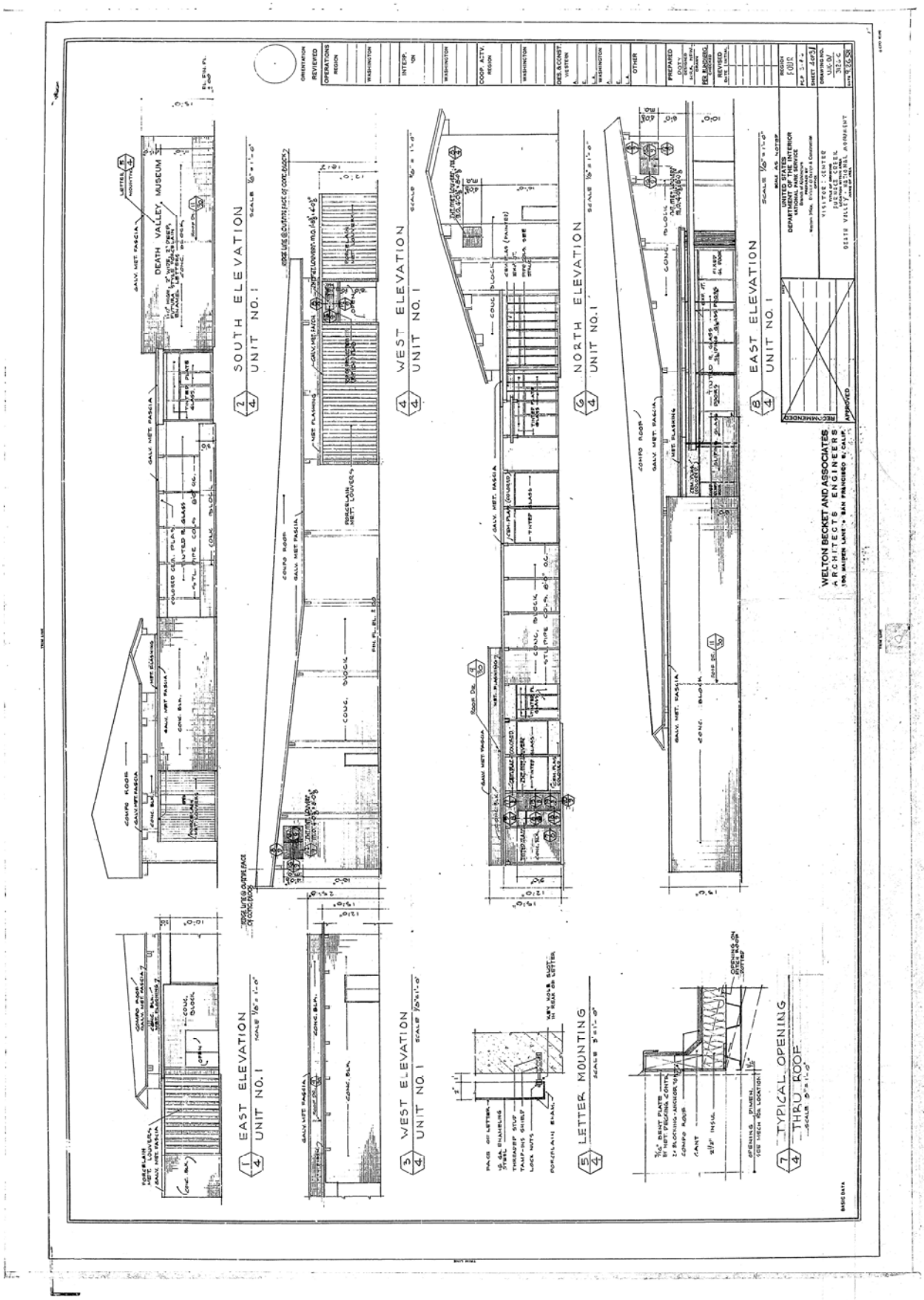
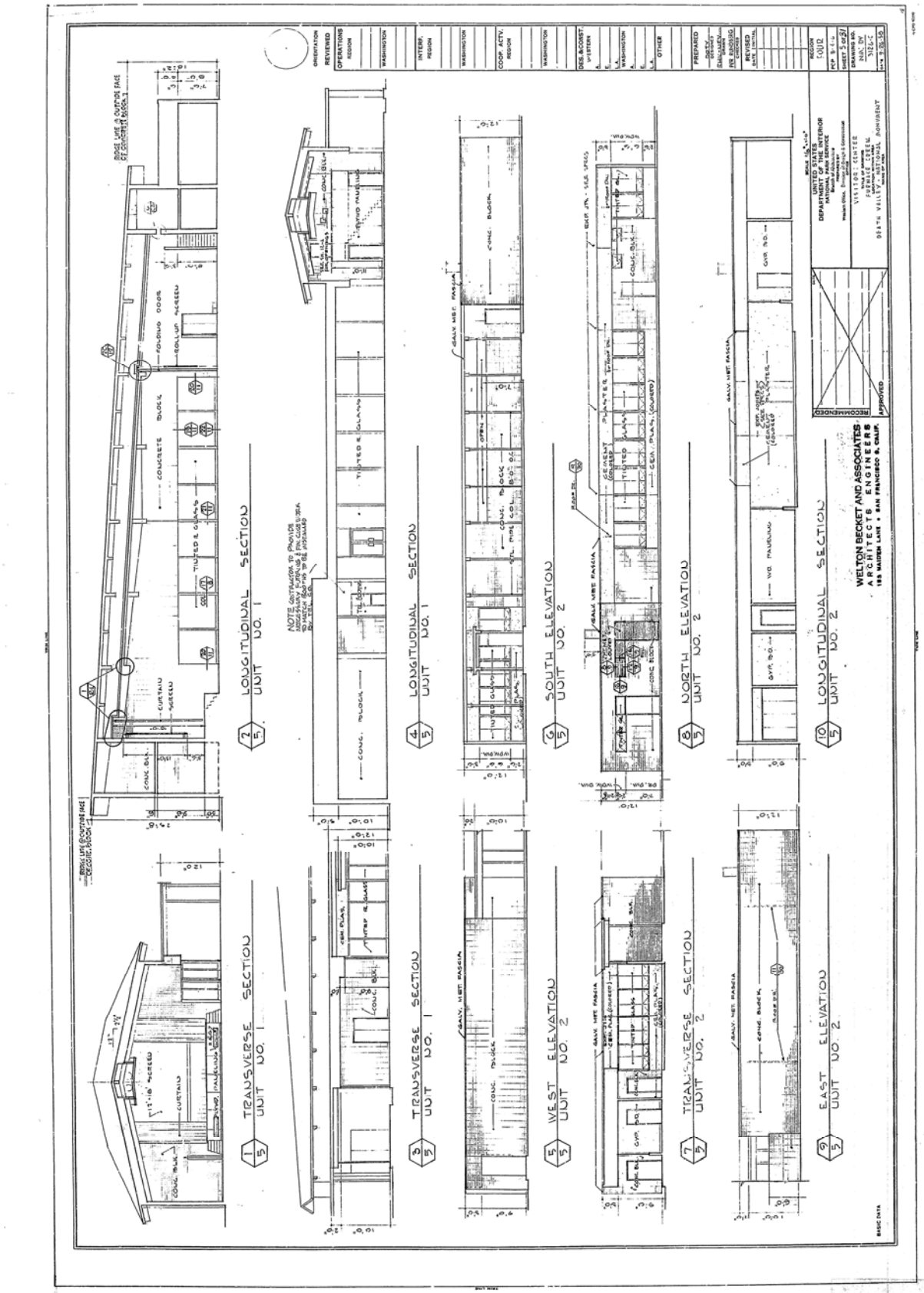
EXTERIOR DETAILS
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
EDWARD HILL AND ASSOCIATES
ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
AUDITORIUM WING (BLDG)
EXHIBIT WING (BLDG)
LOBBY
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
PATIO
POOL
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
MONUMENT No. 90
POINT OF BEGINNING
NORTH 89°01'30" EAST
SOUTH 89°01'30" WEST
SOUTH 0°35' EAST
NORTH 0°35' WEST
280'-0"
215'-0"
100'-0"
REPWOOD DIVIDER STRIP
POOL @ CONC. SLAB
POOL @ PLANTING
CONC. BLK. WALL
CONC. SLAB @ PLANTING
NORTH

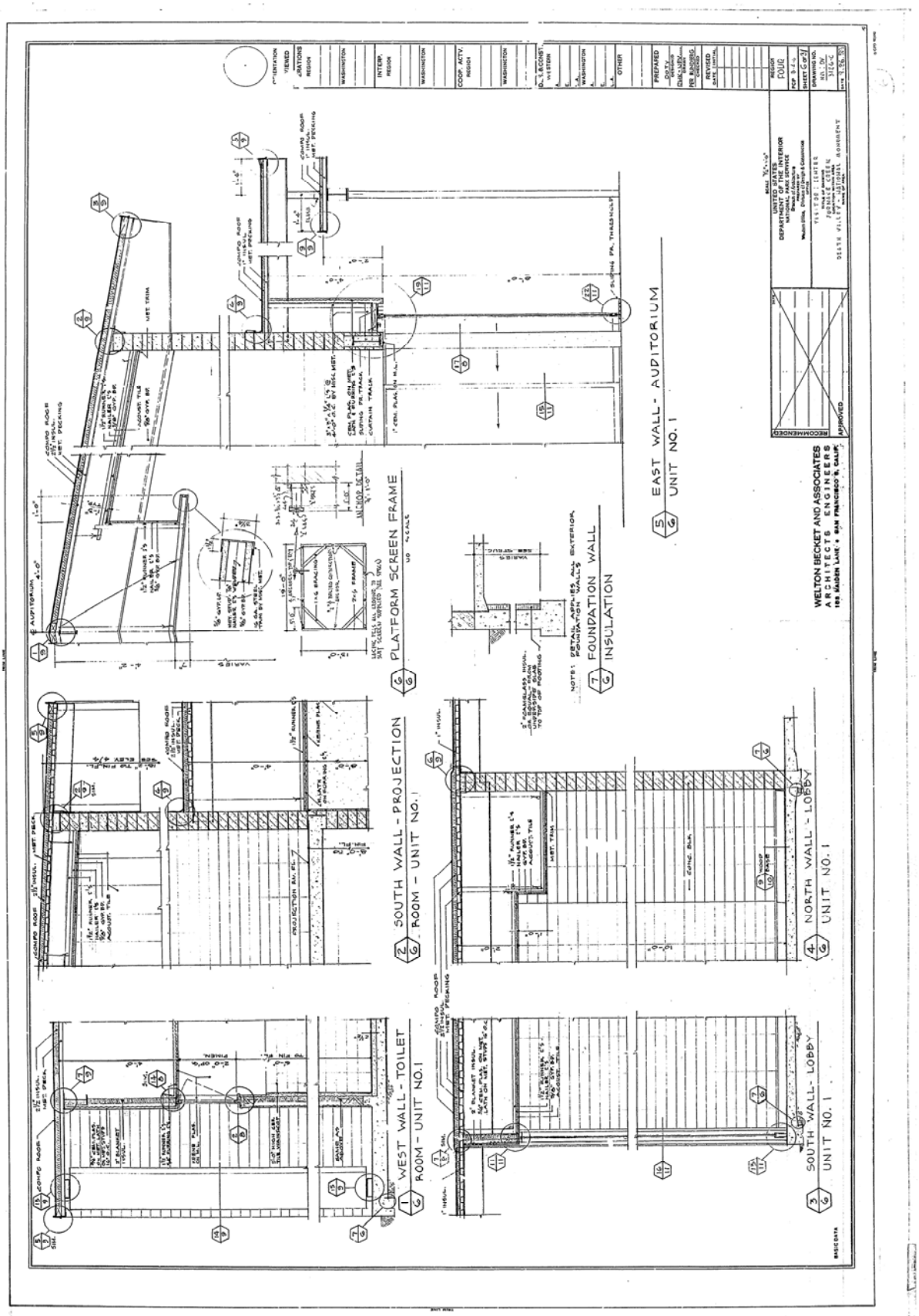

PLAN OF SMALL POOL
SECTION B-B
SECTION C-C
DETAIL OF POOL WALL AA
PLAN OF SUMP & PUMP
DETAIL TREE BOX
DETAIL OF BENCH
DETAIL OF 1" SUPPLY
SCUPPER DETAIL
SUPPLEMENTAL DETAILS TO SHEET 1A
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MON.
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

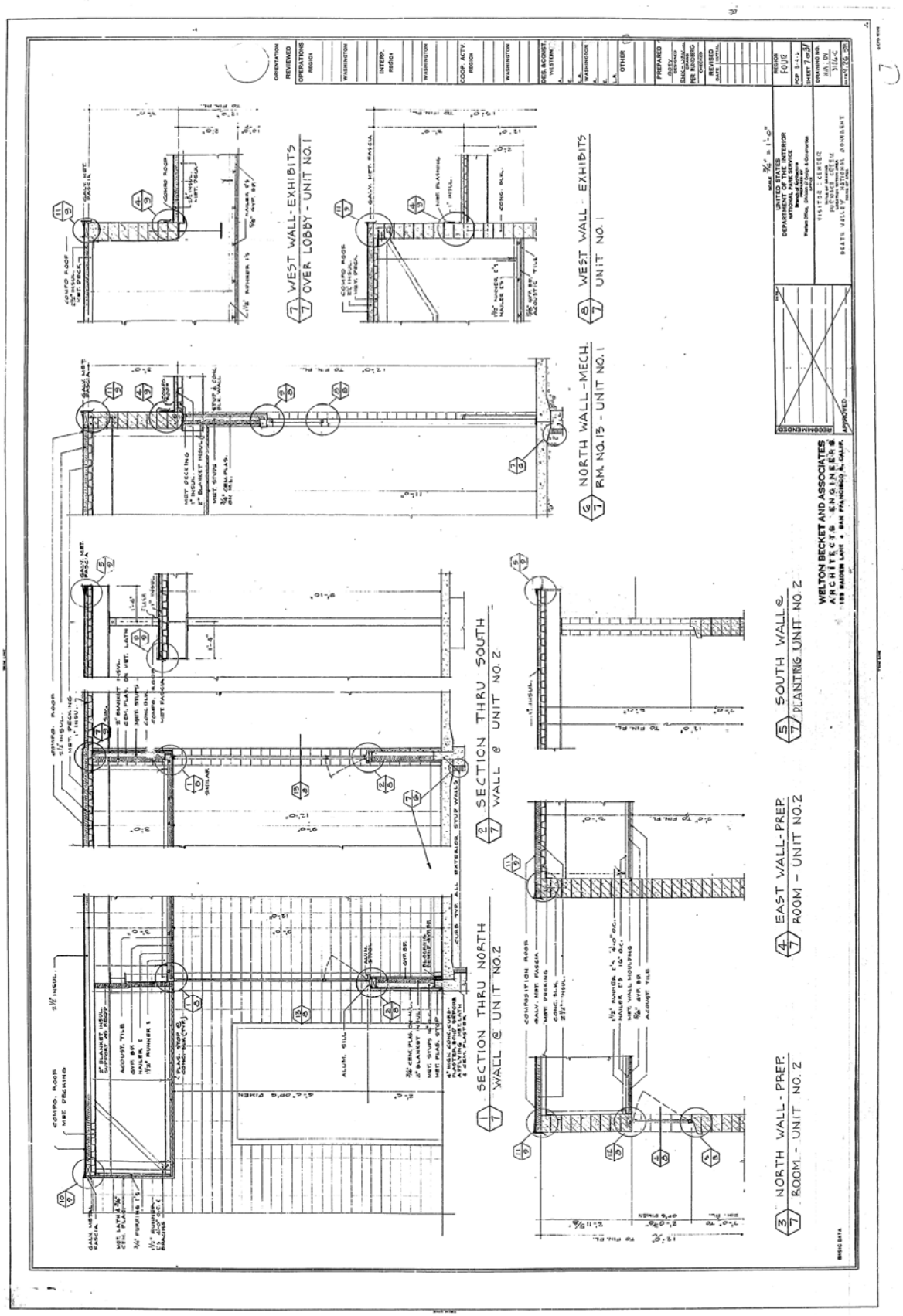

AUDITORIUM & EXHIBIT PLAN
UNIT NO. 1
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"
EXHIBITS
OFFICE
MECHANICAL
STORAGE
PLATFORM
AUDITORIUM
PORCH
WOMEN
MEN
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
188 BAIGEN LANE • SAN FRANCISCO 5, CALIF.
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
FINISH SCHEDULE — UNIT NO. 1
DOOR SCHEDULE — UNIT NO. 1

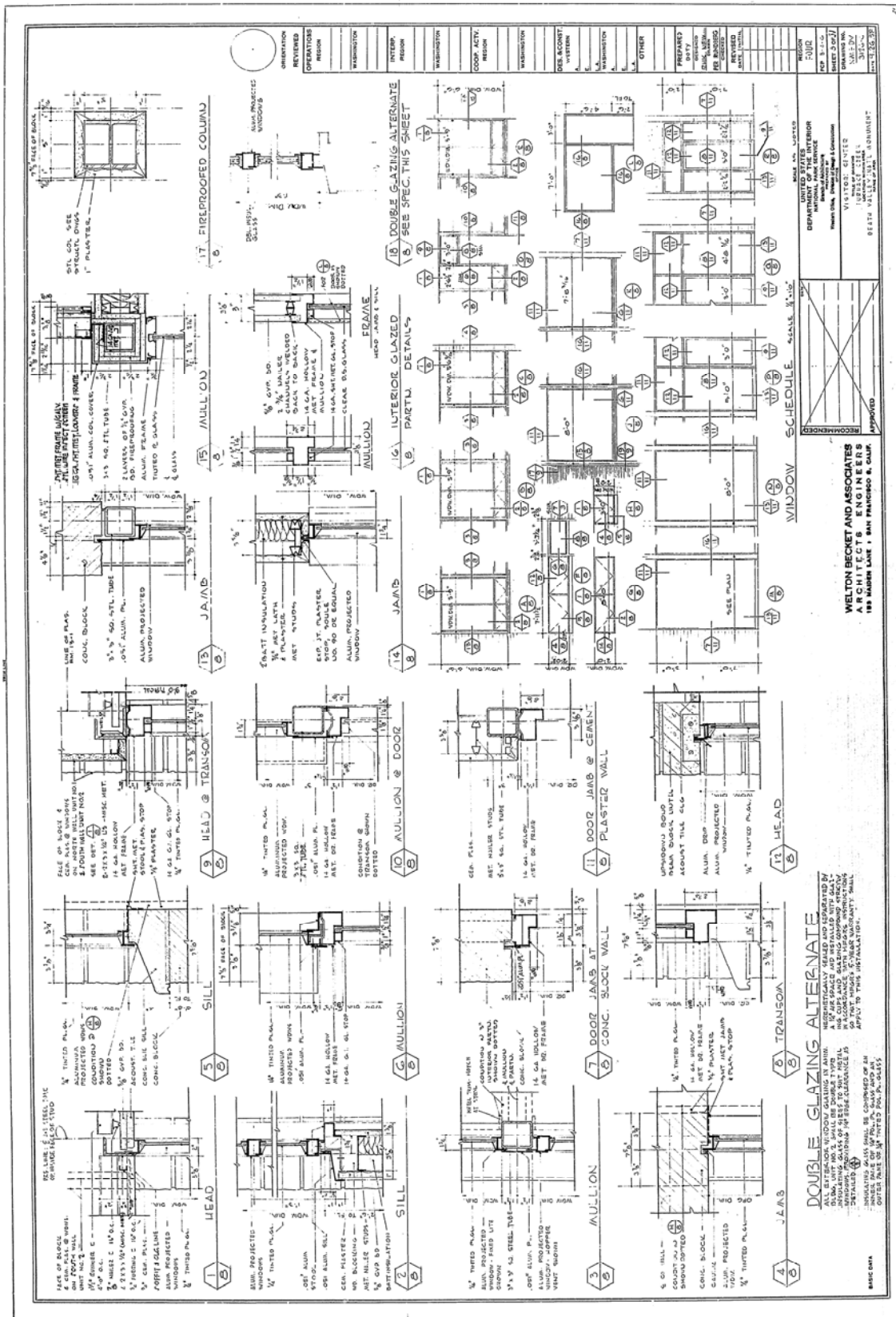

FINISH SCHEDULE — UNIT NO. 2
DOOR SCHEDULE — UNIT NO. 2
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
UNIT NO. 2
ADMINISTRATION BLDG. - PLAN
FLAGPOLE FOUNDATION
PLAN

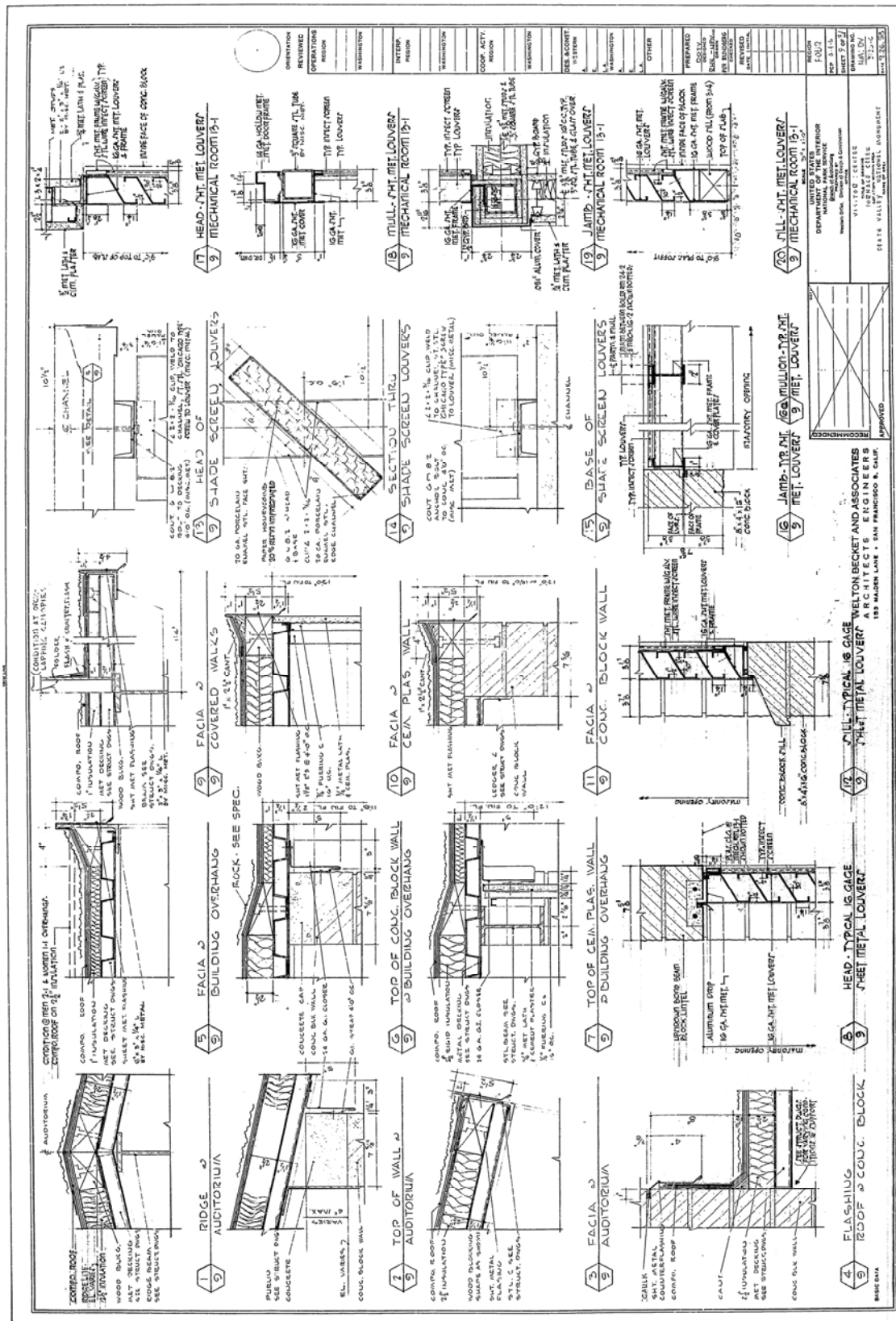

SOUTH ELEVATION
UNIT NO. 1
WEST ELEVATION
UNIT NO. 1
NORTH ELEVATION
UNIT NO. 1
EAST ELEVATION
UNIT NO. 1
EAST ELEVATION
UNIT NO. 1
WEST ELEVATION
UNIT NO. 1
LETTER MOUNTING
TYPICAL OPENING
THRU ROOF
DEATH VALLEY MUSEUM
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

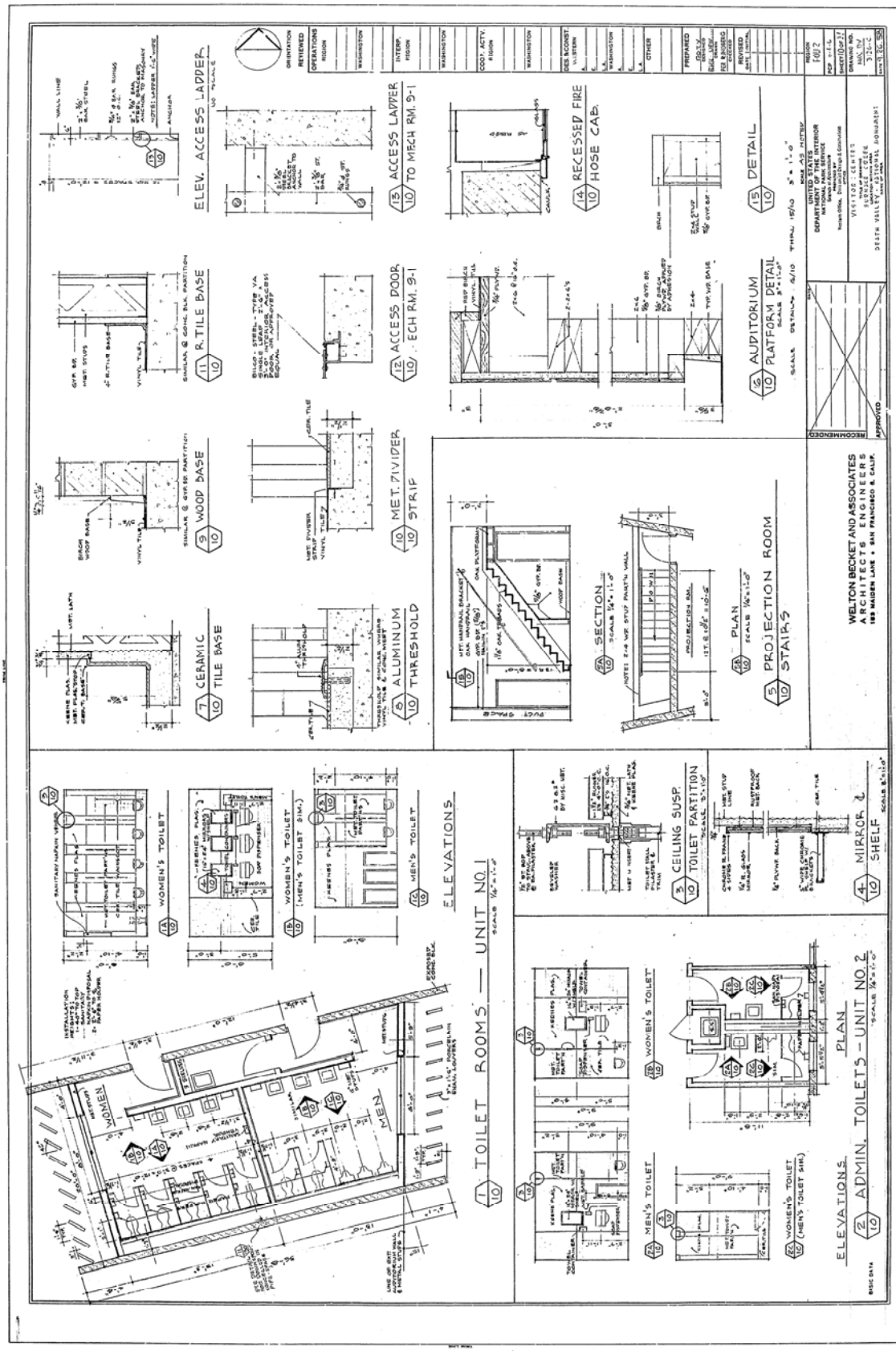

LONGITUDINAL SECTION UNIT NO. 1
LONGITUDINAL SECTION UNIT NO. 1
SOUTH ELEVATION UNIT NO. 2
NORTH ELEVATION UNIT NO. 2
LONGITUDINAL SECTION UNIT NO. 2
TRANSVERSE SECTION UNIT NO. 1
TRANSVERSE SECTION UNIT NO. 1
WEST ELEVATION UNIT NO. 2
TRANSVERSE SECTION UNIT NO. 2
EAST ELEVATION UNIT NO. 2
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

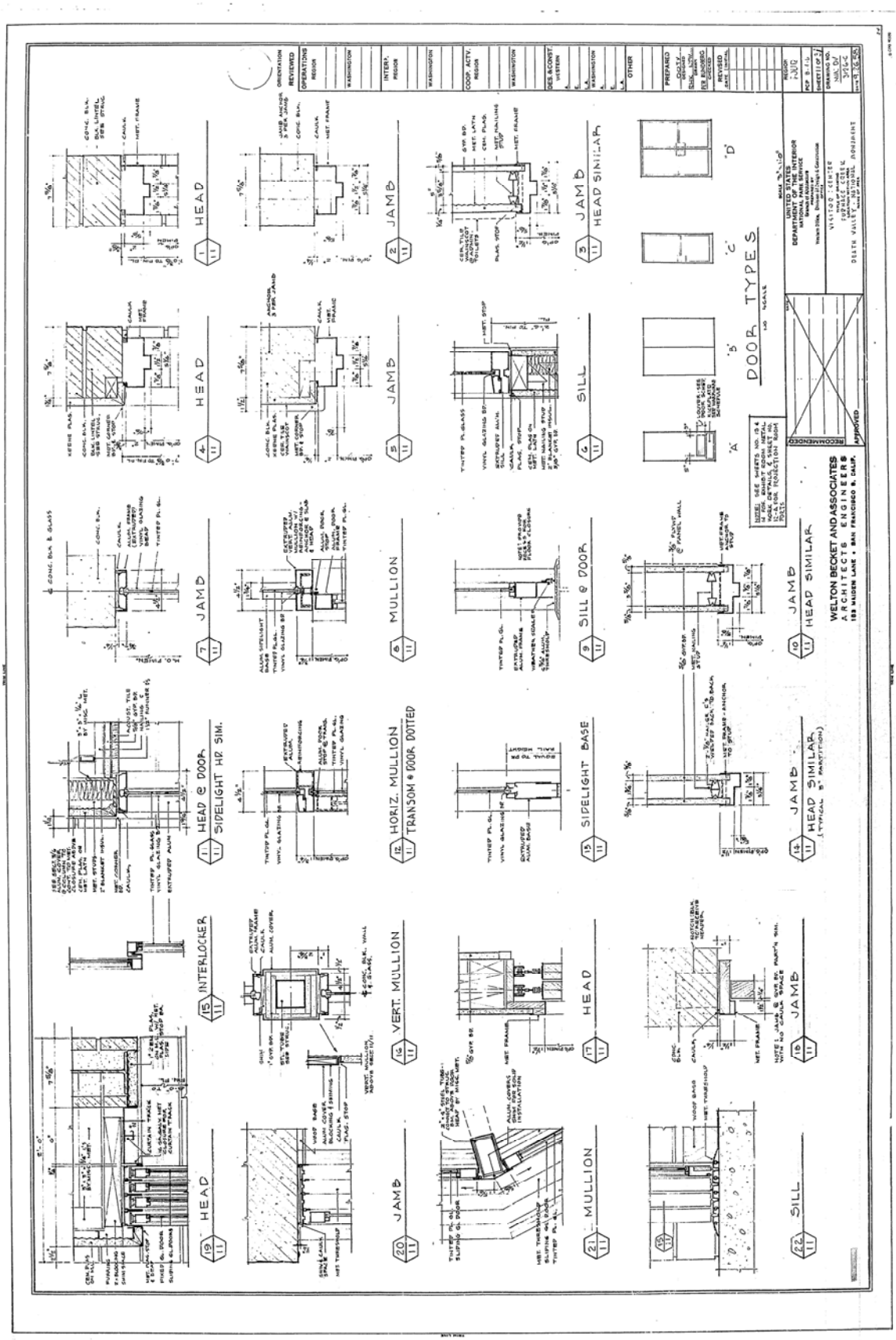

5 6 EAST WALL - AUDITORIUM
UNIT NO. 1
PLATFORM SCREEN FRAME
7 6 FOUNDATION WALL
INSULATION
2 6 SOUTH WALL - PROJECTION
ROOM - UNIT NO. 1
4 6 NORTH WALL - LOBBY
UNIT NO. 1
1 6 WEST WALL - TOILET
ROOM - UNIT NO. 1
3 6 SOUTH WALL - LOBBY
UNIT NO. 1
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

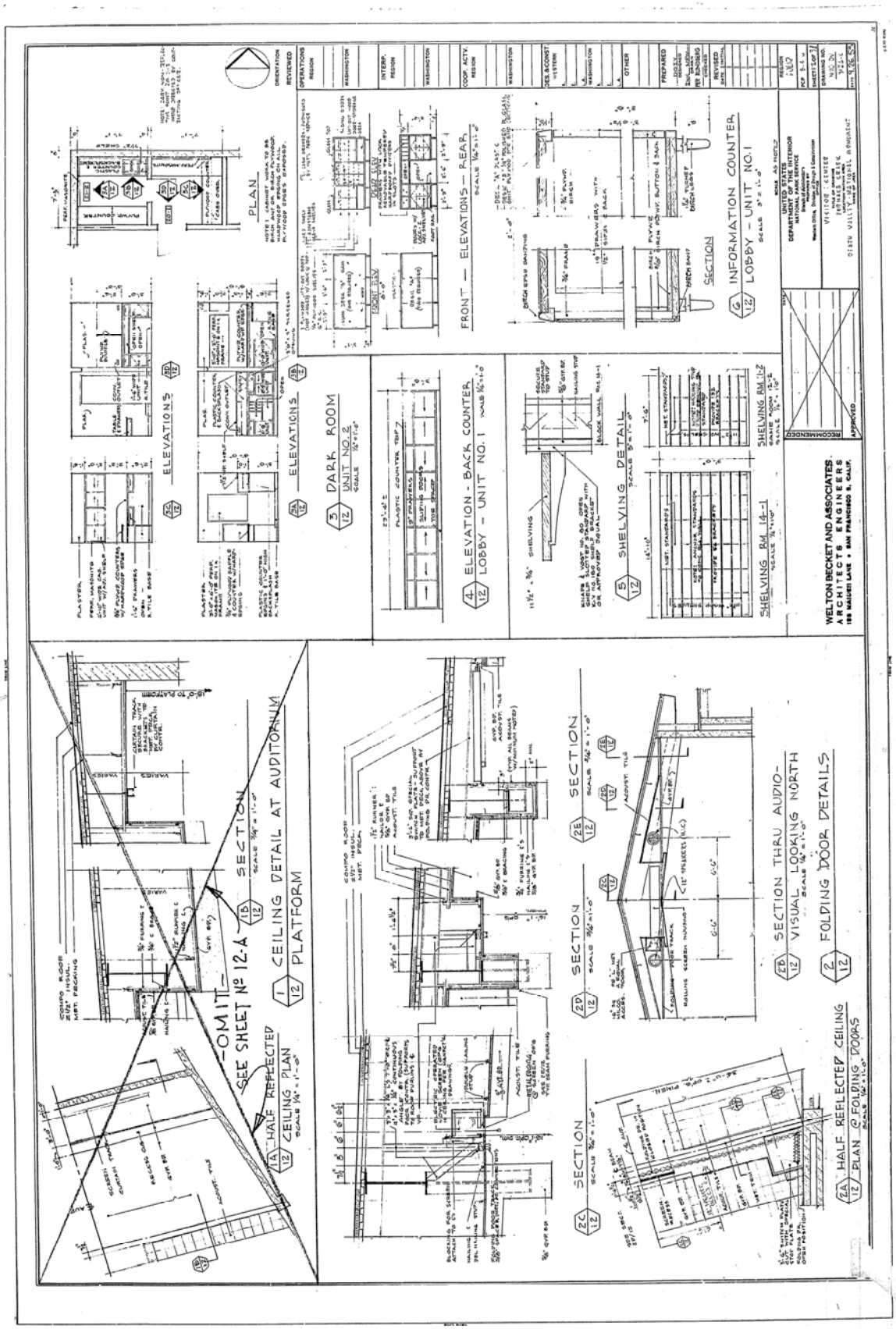

7/7 WEST WALL-EXHIBITS OVER LOBBY - UNIT NO.1
8/7 WEST WALL - EXHIBITS UNIT NO.1
9/7 NORTH WALL-MECH. RM. NO.13 - UNIT NO.1
1/7 SECTION THRU NORTH WALL @ UNIT NO.2
2/7 SECTION THRU SOUTH WALL @ UNIT NO.2
3/7 NORTH WALL - PREP. ROOM - UNIT NO.2
4/7 EAST WALL-PREP. ROOM - UNIT NO.2
5/7 SOUTH WALL @ PLANTING UNIT NO.2
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

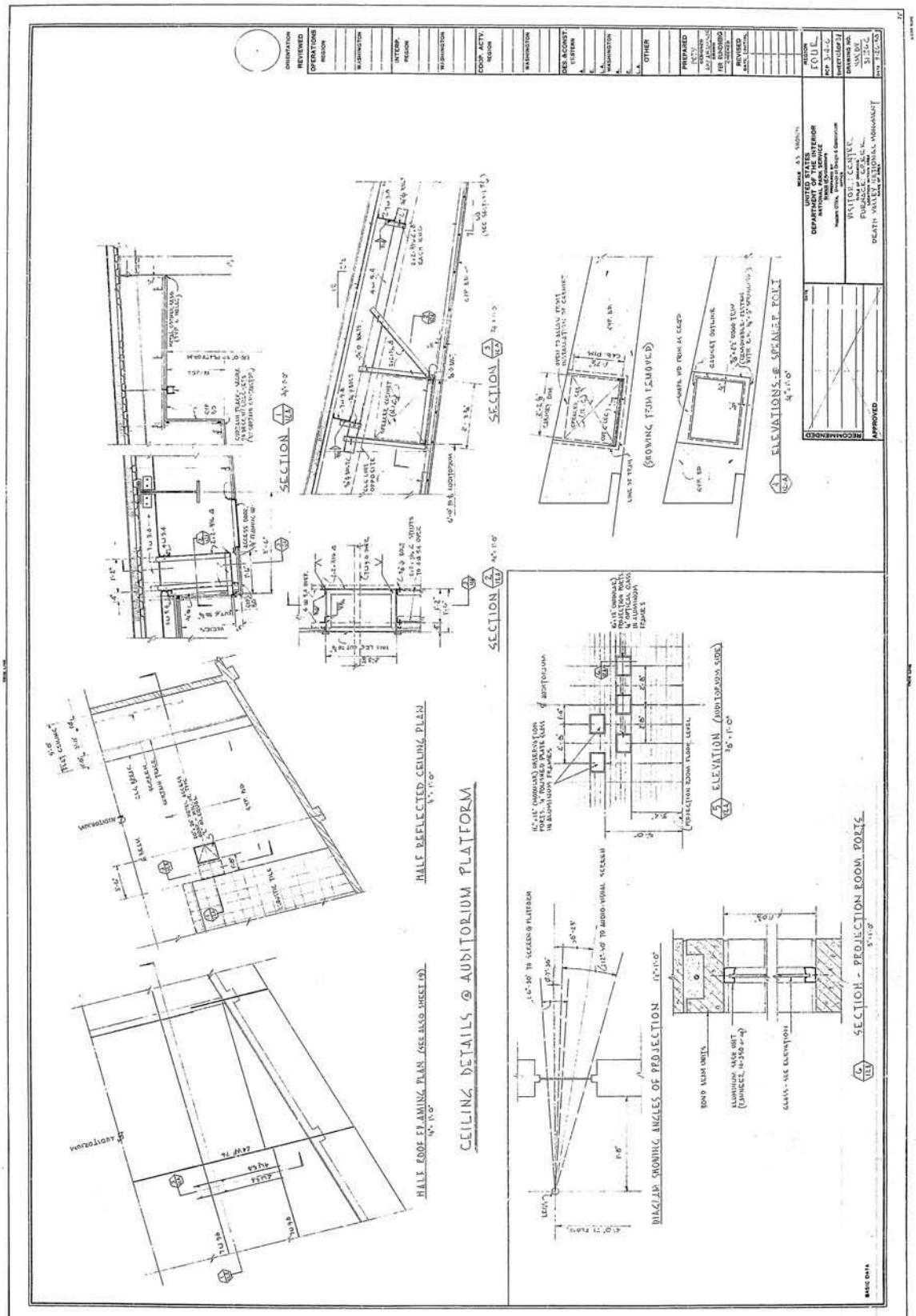

DOUBLE GLAZING ALTERNATE
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
WINDOW SCHEDULE
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

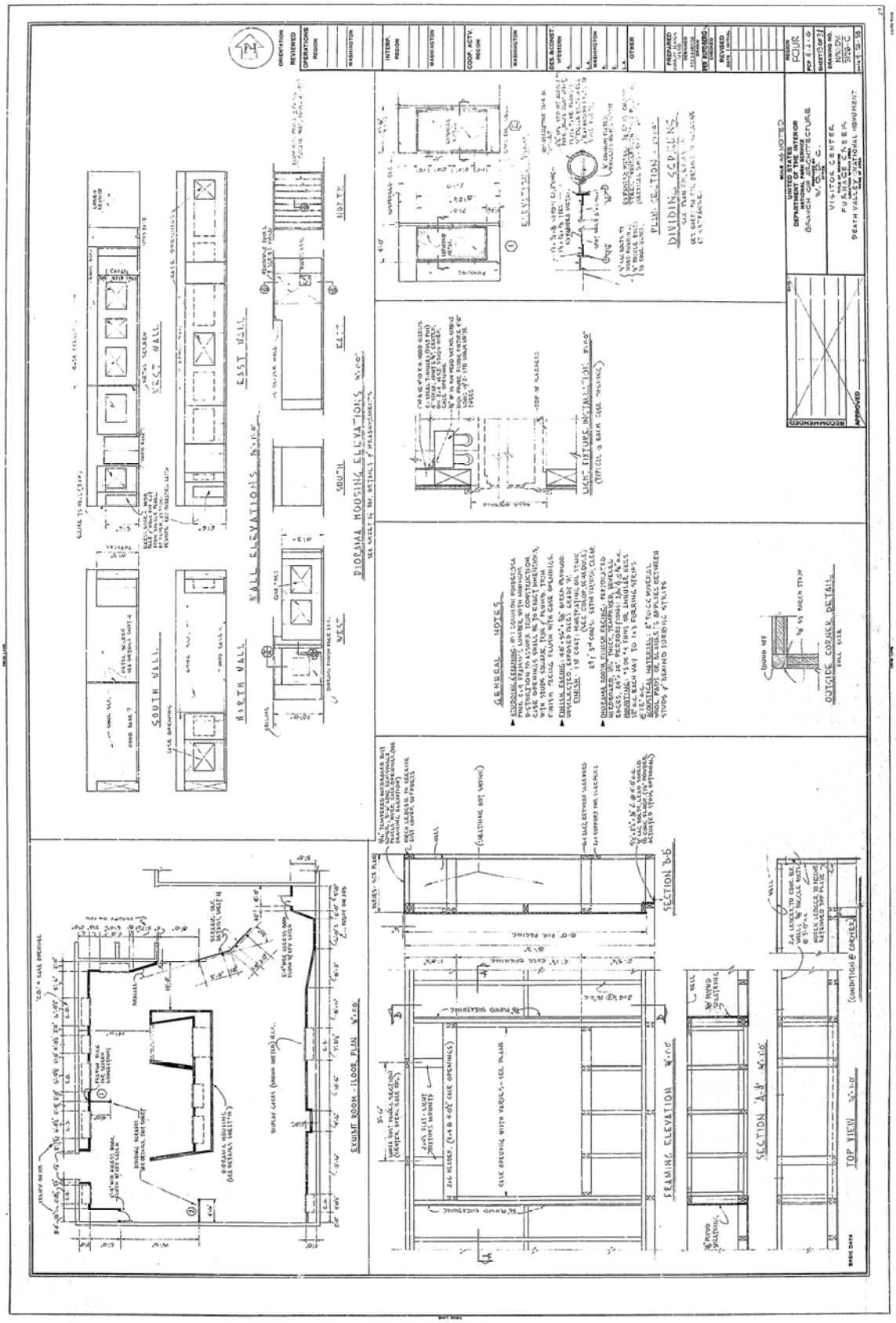

1 RIDGE @ AUDITORIUM
2 TOP OF WALL @ AUDITORIUM
3 FACIA @ AUDITORIUM
4 FLASHING ROOF @ CONC. BLOCK
5 FACIA @ BUILDING OVERHANG
6 TOP OF CONC. BLOCK WALL @ BUILDING OVERHANG
7 TOP OF CEM. PLAS. WALL @ BUILDING OVERHANG
8 HEAD - TYPICAL 16 GAGE SHEET METAL LOUVER
9 FACIA @ COVERED WALKS
10 FACIA @ CEM. PLAS. WALL
11 FACIA @ CONC. BLOCK WALL
12 SILL - TYPICAL 16 GAGE SHEET METAL LOUVER
13 HEAD OF SHADE SCREEN LOUVERS
14 SECTION THRU SHADE SCREEN LOUVERS
15 BASE OF SHADE SCREEN LOUVERS
16 JAMB - TYP. MET. LOUVER
17 HEAD - TYP. MET. LOUVER MECHANICAL ROOM 13-1
18 MULL - TYP. MET. LOUVER MECHANICAL ROOM 13-1
19 JAMB - TYP. MET. LOUVER MECHANICAL ROOM 13-1
20 SILL - TYP. MET. LOUVER MECHANICAL ROOM 13-1
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER FURNACE CREEK DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
189 MAIDEN LANE • SAN FRANCISCO 8, CALIF.
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

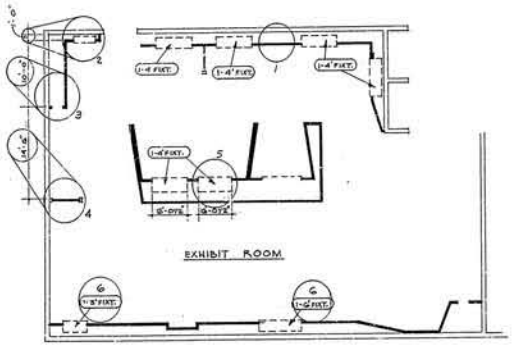

ELEV. ACCESS LADDER
13 10 ACCESS LADDER TO MECH RM. 9-1
14 10 RECESSED FIRE HOSE CAB.
15 10 DETAIL
16 10 AUDITORIUM PLATFORM DETAIL
11 10 R. TILE BASE
12 10 ACCESS DOOR ECH RM. 9-1
9 10 WOOD BASE
10 10 MET. DIVIDER STRIP
7 10 CERAMIC TILE BASE
8 10 ALUMINUM THRESHOLD
18 10
6A 10 SECTION
6B 10 PLAN
5 10 PROJECTION ROOM STAIRS
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
WOMEN'S TOILET
WOMEN'S TOILET (MEN'S TOILET SIM.)
MEN'S TOILET
ELEVATIONS
1 10 TOILET ROOMS — UNIT NO. 1
3 10 CEILING SUSP. TOILET PARTITION
4 10 MIRROR & SHELF
WOMEN'S TOILET
MEN'S TOILET
WOMEN'S TOILET (MEN'S TOILET SIM.)
ELEVATIONS
2 10 ADMIN. TOILETS — UNIT NO. 2
PLAN


HEAD
JAMB
HEAD SIMILAR
SILL
DOOR TYPES
HEAD & DOOR
SIDELIGHT HR. SIM.
MULLION
HORIZ. MULLION
TRANSOM & DOOR DOTTED
SILL & DOOR
SIDELIGHT BASE
INTERLOCKER
VERT. MULLION
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT


PLAN
ELEVATIONS
ELEVATIONS
DARK ROOM
UNIT NO. 2
FRONT — ELEVATIONS — REAR
INFORMATION COUNTER
LOBBY — UNIT NO. 1
SECTION
ELEVATION - BACK COUNTER
LOBBY - UNIT NO. 1
SHELVING DETAIL
SHELVING RM. 14-1
SHELVING RM. 14-2
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
SEE SHEET Nº 12-A
OMIT
CEILING DETAIL AT AUDITORIUM
SECTION
CEILING PLAN
HALF REFLECTED
PLATFORM
SECTION
SECTION
SECTION
SECTION THRU AUDIO-
VISUAL LOOKING NORTH
FOLDING DOOR DETAILS
HALF REFLECTED CEILING
PLAN @ FOLDING DOORS


SECTION
SECTION
SECTION
SECTION
HALF REFLECTED CEILING PLAN
HALF ROOF FRAMING PLAN
CEILING DETAILS @ AUDITORIUM PLATFORM
(SHOWING ITEMS REMOVED)
ELEVATIONS @ SPEAKER PORT
ELEVATION
DIAGRAM SHOWING ANGLES OF PROJECTION
SECTION - PROJECTION ROOM PORTS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED


WALL ELEVATIONS
SOUTH WALL
NORTH WALL
EAST WALL
WEST WALL
DIORAMA HOUSING ELEVATIONS
GENERAL NOTES
OUTSIDE CORNER DETAIL
EXHIBIT ROOM - FLOOR PLAN
SECTION B-B
FRAMING ELEVATION
SECTION A-A
TOP VIEW
DIVIDING SCRIMS
PLAN SECTION
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION FOUR



· FURRING · PLAN ·
(SHOWING CHANGES & LIGHT FIXTURES REQUIRED)

CHANGES REQUIRED

1- ELIMINATE CASE OPENING.
2- CHANGE DIMENSION FROM 2'-0" TO 1'-0".
3- CHANGE DIMENSION FROM 6'-0" TO 10'-0".
4- CHANGE DIMENSION FROM 15'-6" TO 14'-6", MOVING SCREEN 2'-0" EAST.
5- CHANGE LENGTH OF CASE OPENING FROM 5'-0 1/2" TO 6'-0 1/2".
6- CHANGE FROM 4' FLUORESCENT FIXTURE TO ONE 2' FIXTURE & ONE 6' FIXTURE.
ALL OTHER FIXTURES ARE 4'.

FLUORESCENT FIXTURE SCHEDULE

6' CASES : HIGH-POWER FIXTURE 4' LONG W/2 WW TUBES - 6 REQUIRED.
7' CASE : " " " 6' LONG " " " 1 "
4' CASE : " " " 3' LONG " " " 1 "

REVISED EXHIBIT ROOM PLAN

RECOMMENDED ____ DATE
APPROVED ____

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BRANCH OF ARCHITECTURE
PREPARED BY
W.O. D.C.
OFFICE

VISITOR CENTER
TITLE OF DRAWING
FURNACE CREEK
LOCATION WITHIN AREA
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF AREA

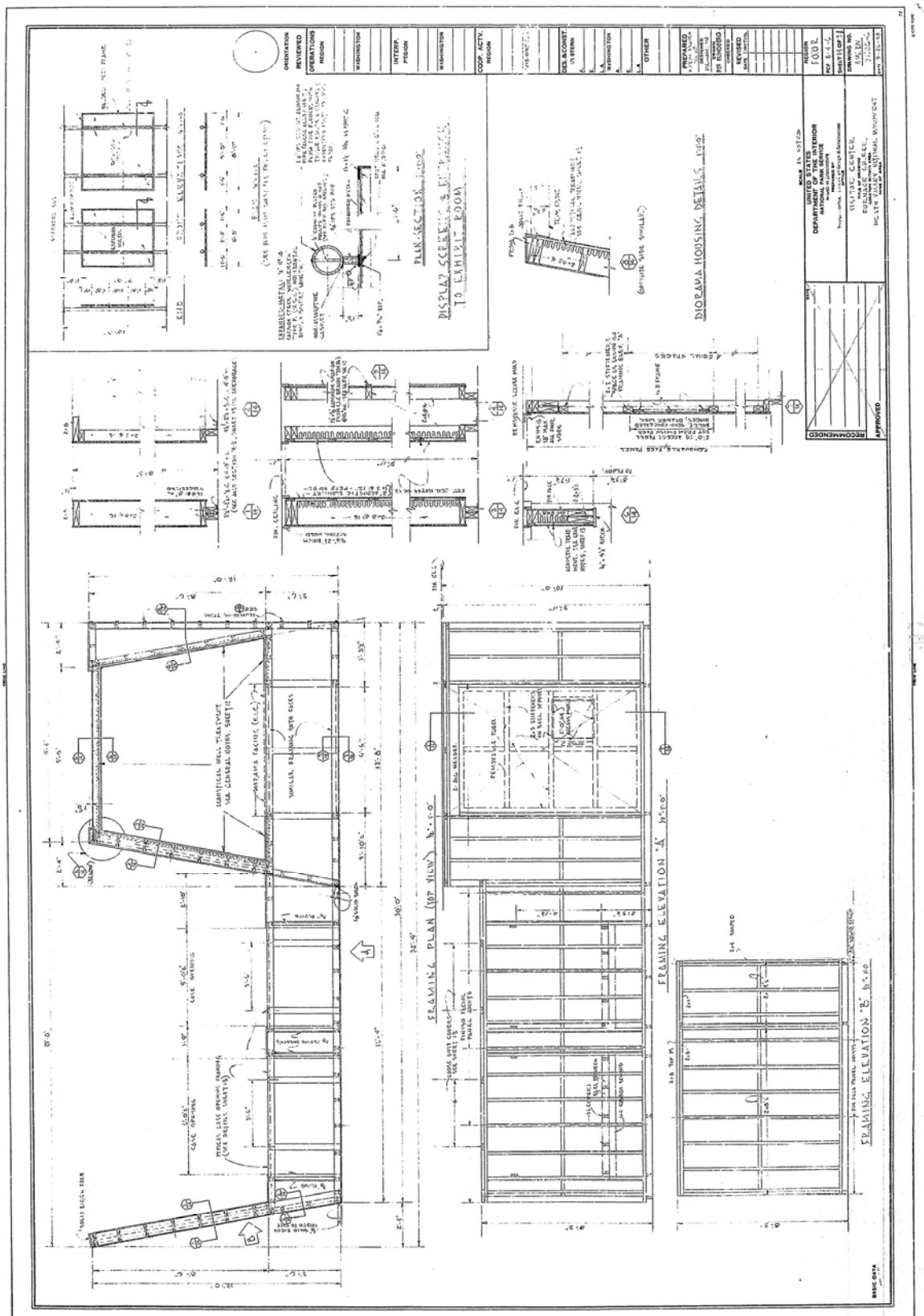
ORIENTATION
REVIEWED
OPERATIONS REGION
WASHINGTON
INTERP. REGION
WASHINGTON
COOP. ACTV. REGION
WASHINGTON
DES. & CONST. WESTERN
A.
E.
L.A.
WASHINGTON
A.
E.
L.A.
OTHER

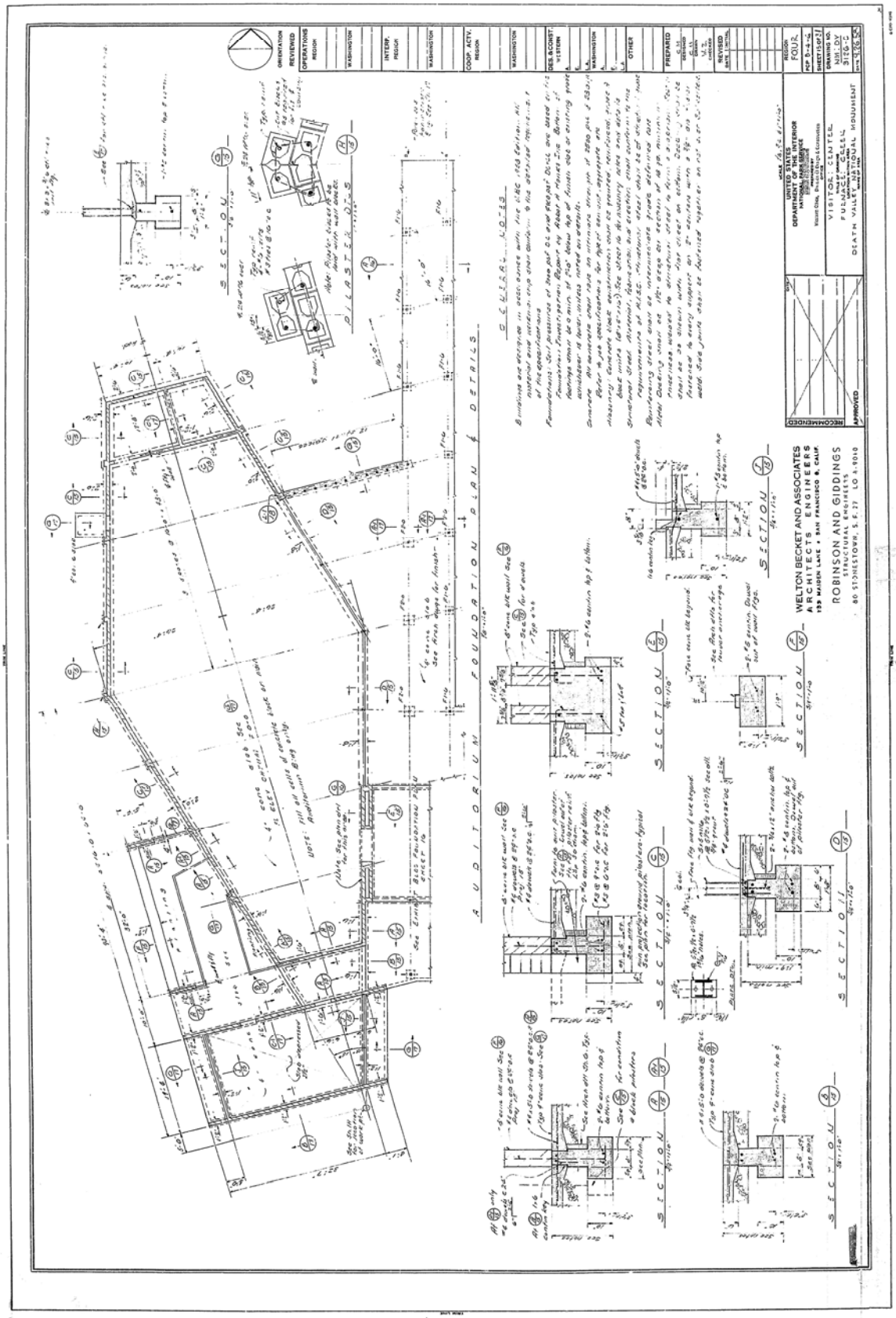
PREPARED
U. MUSEUM LAB.
DESIGNED
DRAWN
CHECKED
REVISED
DATE INITIAL
10-3-59 WDS

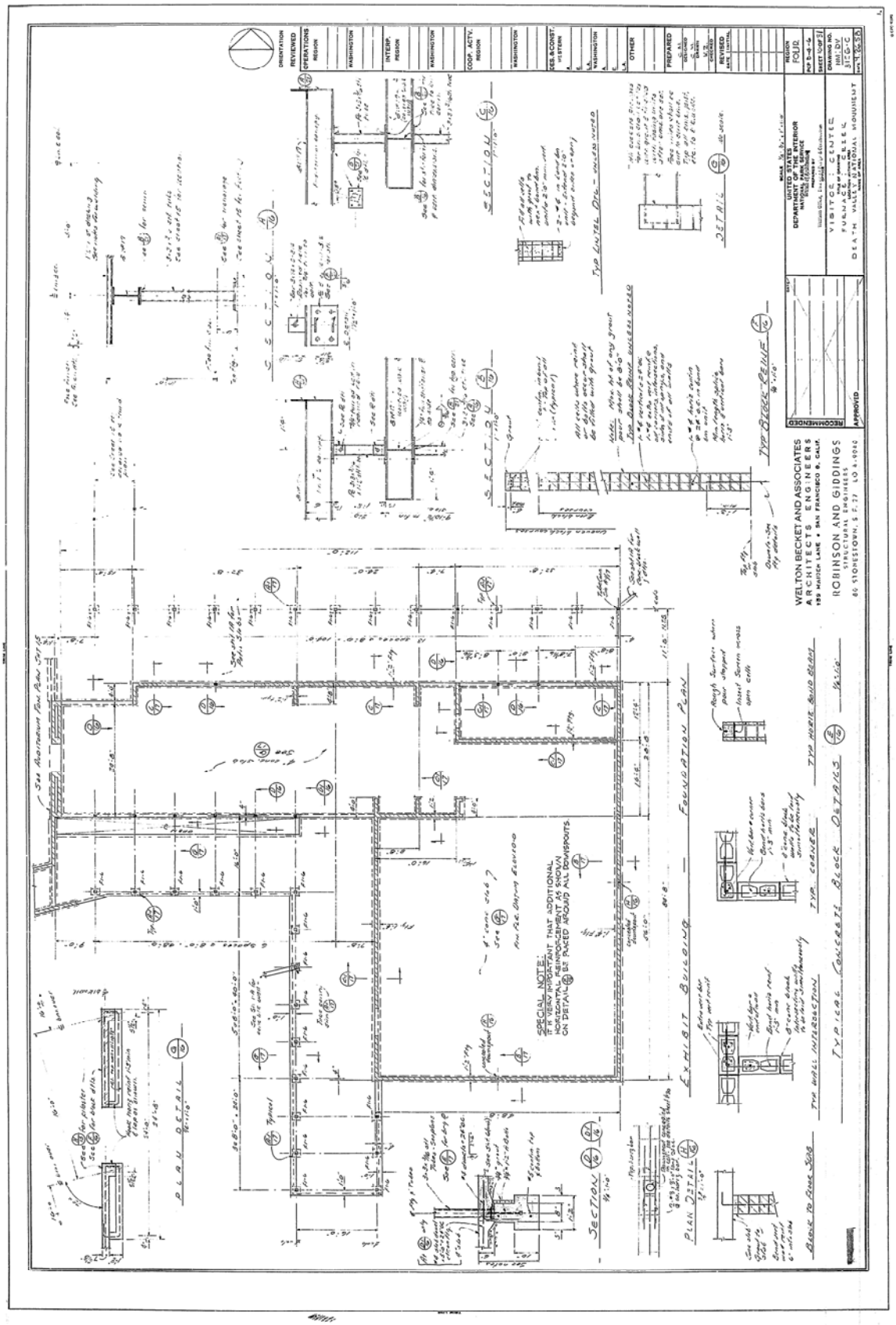
REGION FCUR
NPS 8-4-6
SHEET 13 OF 31
DRAWING NO. NM DV 31:26D
DATE 9/8/59

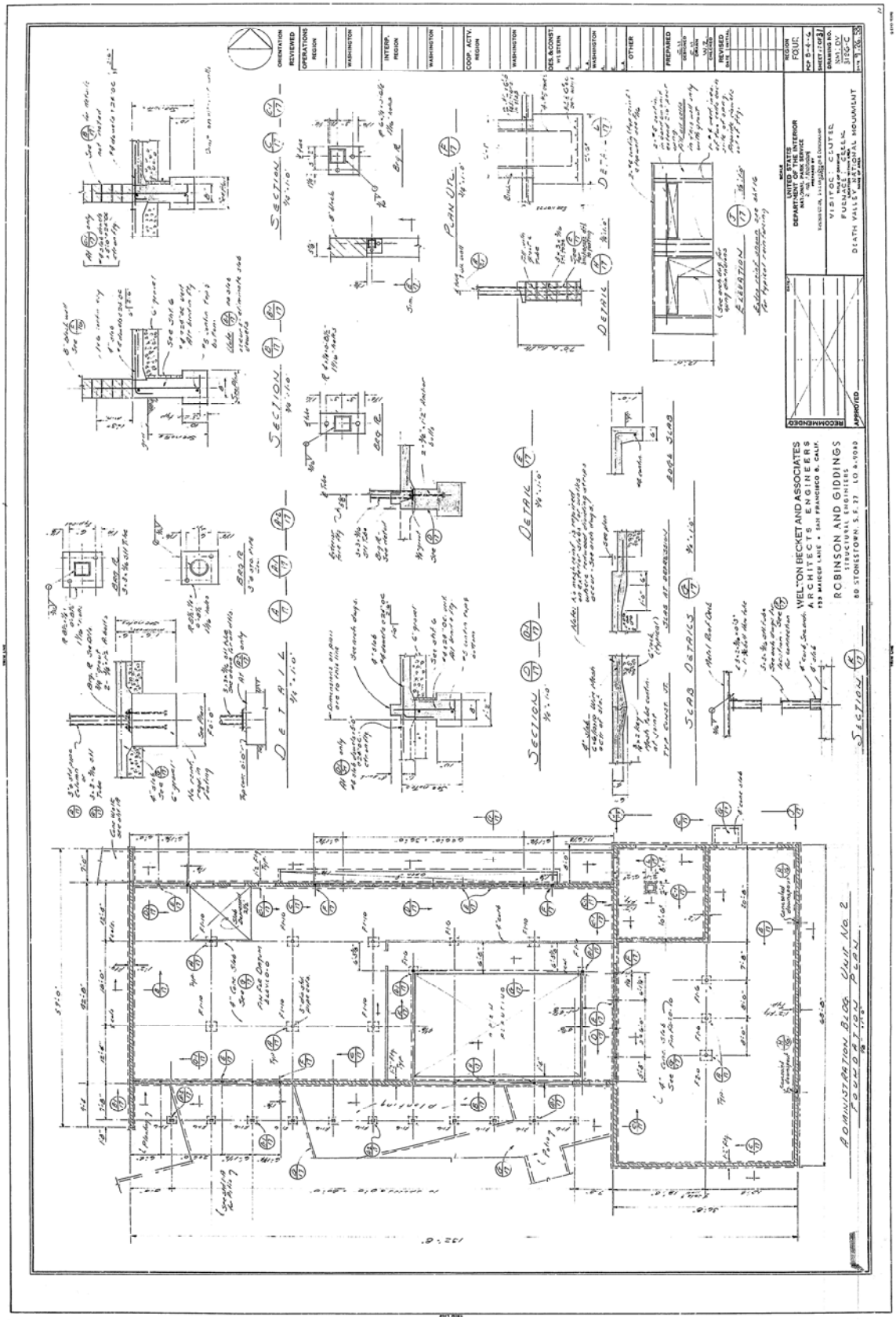
BASIC DATA

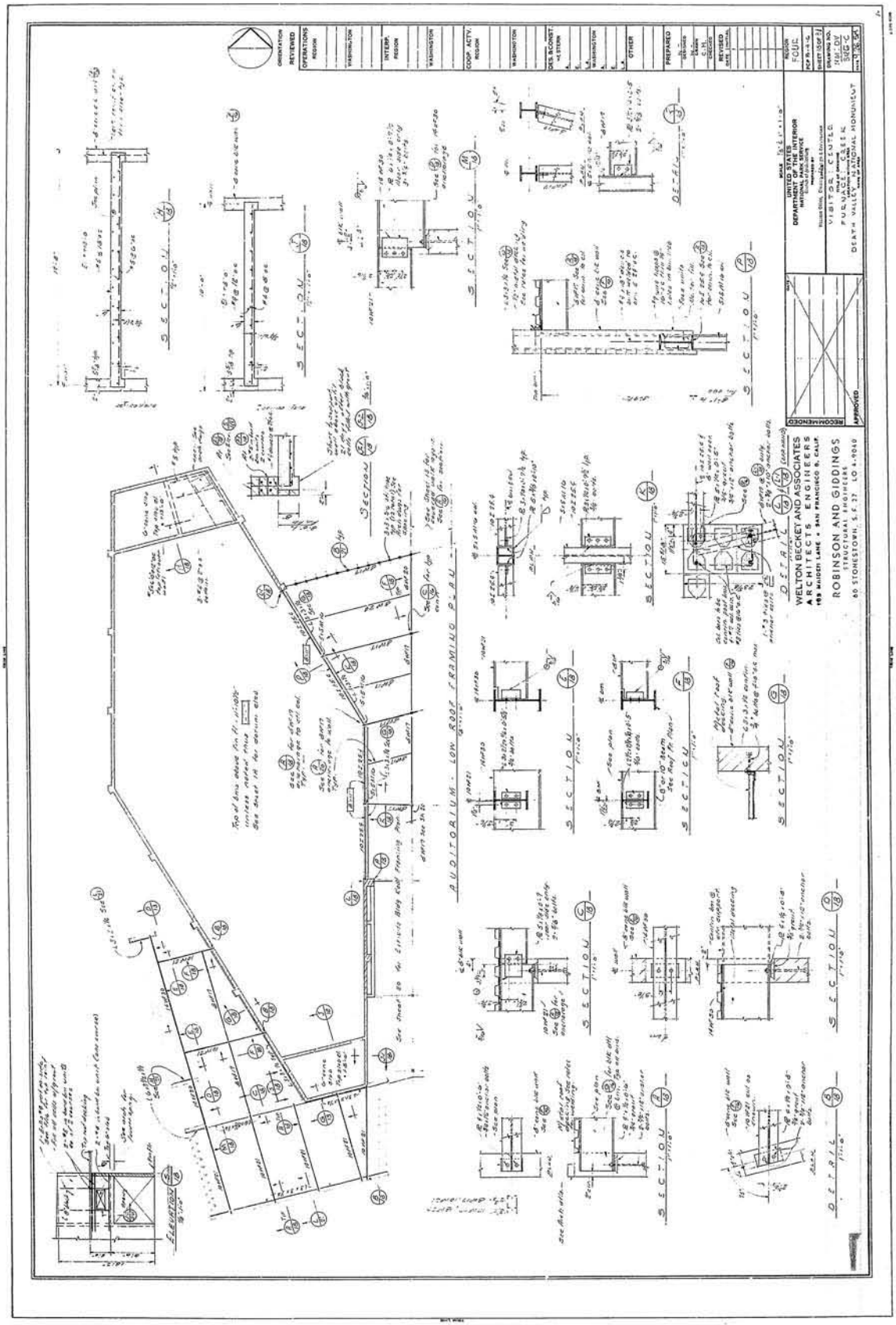
Furnace Creek Visitor Center
HABS No. CA-2860 (Page 55)

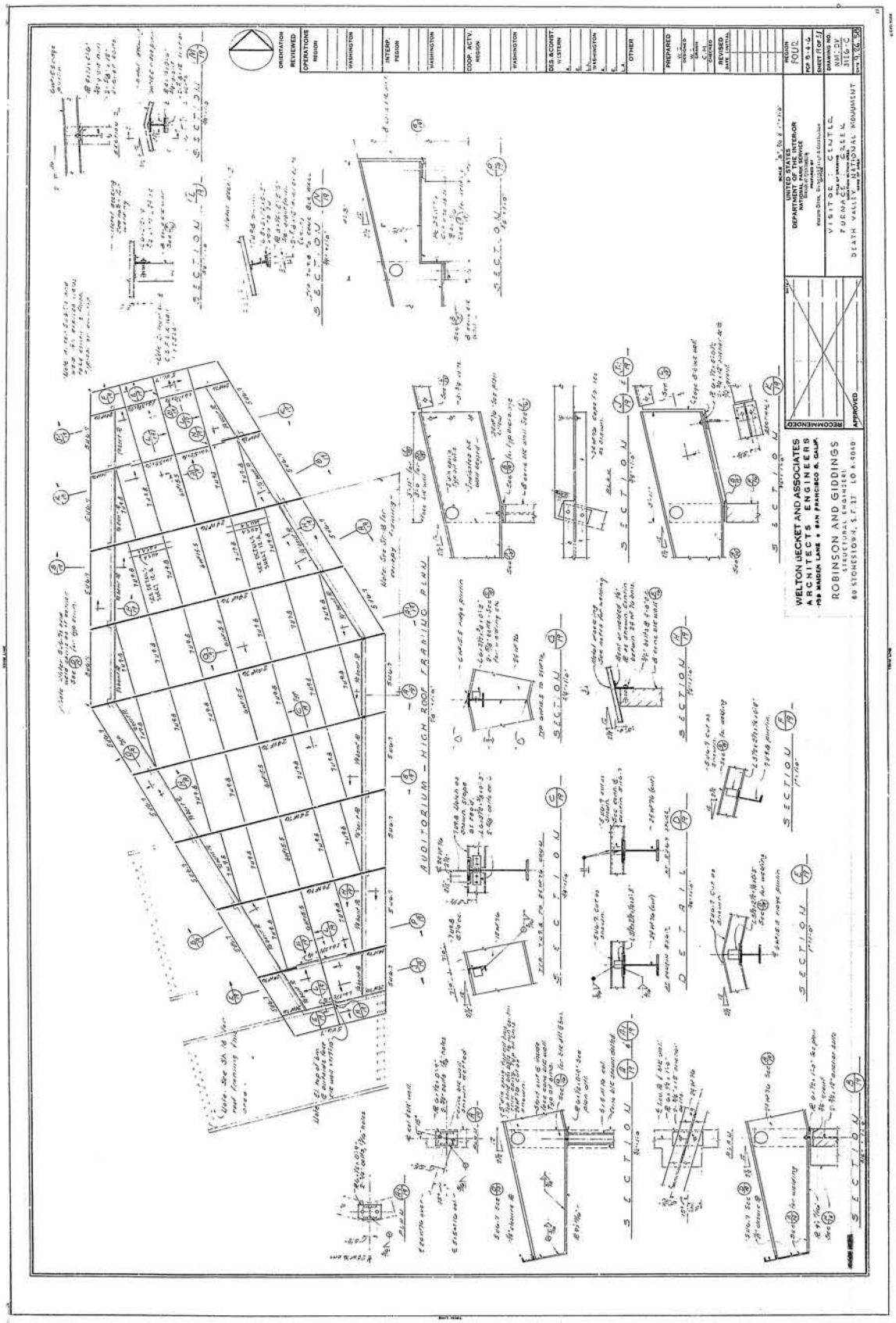

DISPLAY SCREEN & EXHIBIT ROOM
TO EXHIBIT ROOM
DIORAMA HOUSING DETAILS
FRAMING PLAN (1ST FLOOR)
FRAMING ELEVATION "A"
FRAMING ELEVATION "B"
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED

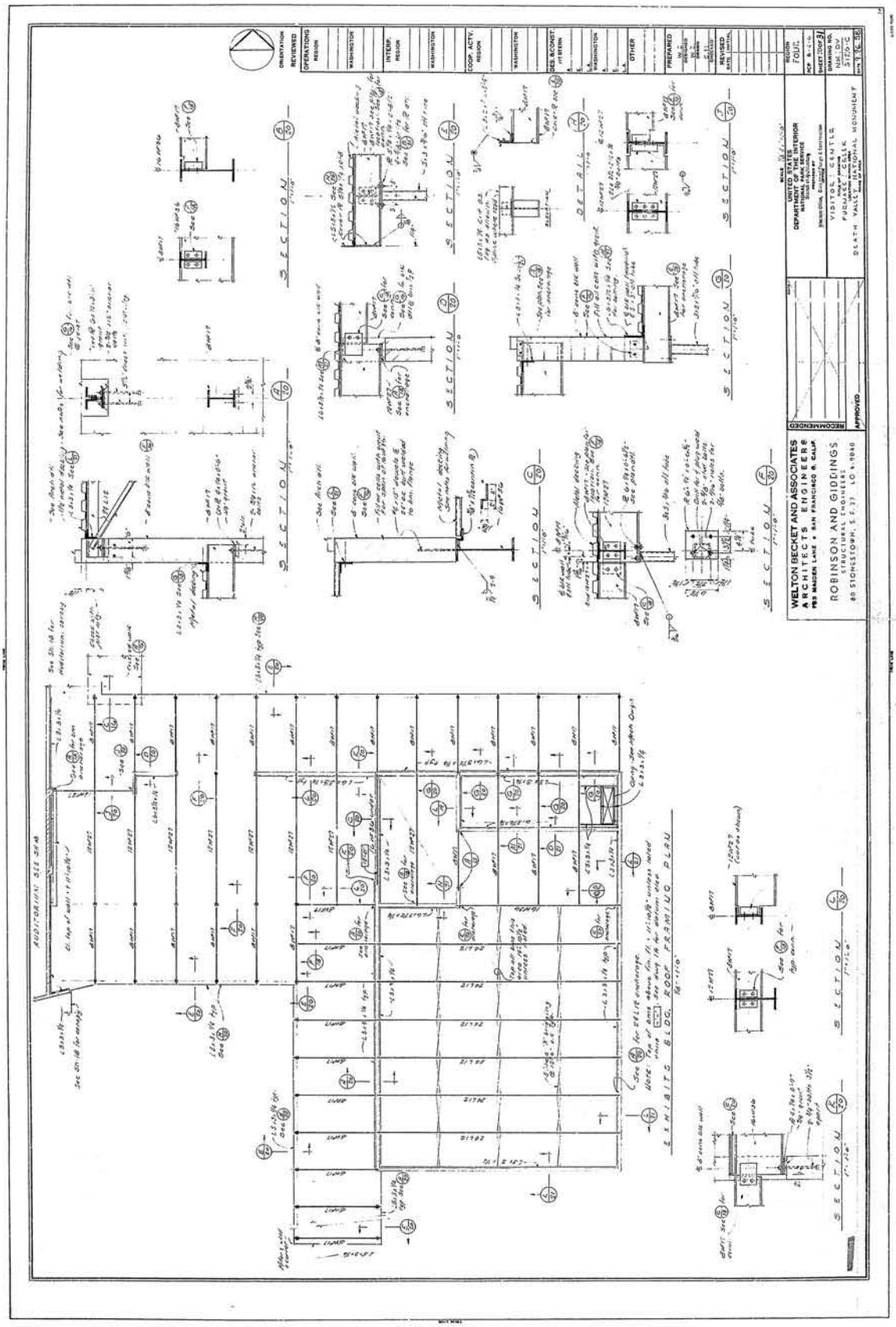

AUDITORIUM FOUNDATION PLAN & DETAILS
SECTION
PLASTER DETAILS
GENERAL NOTES
ORIENTATION
REVIEWED
OPERATIONS REGION
WASHINGTON
INTERIOR REGION
COOP. ACTV. REGION
DES. & CONST. WESTERN
OTHER
PREPARED
REVISED
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED
REGION FOUR
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

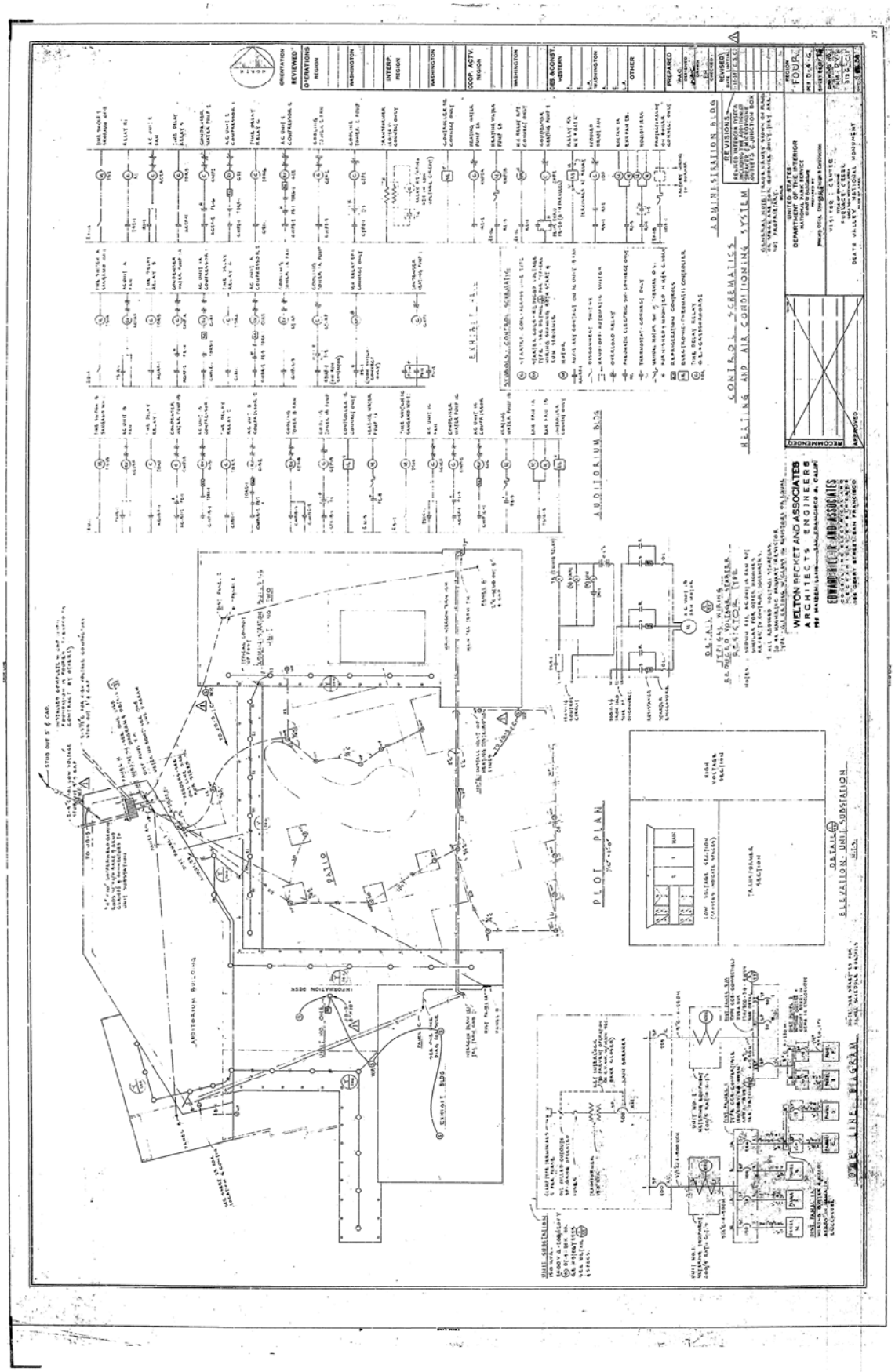

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
REGION FOUR
DRAWING NO. 1001-DV
SHEET 1 OF 3
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
139 MASON LANE • SAN FRANCISCO 8, CALIF.
ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
86 STONESTOWN, S.F. 27 LO 8-9040
SPECIAL NOTE:
IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT ADDITIONAL HORIZONTAL REINFORCEMENT AS SHOWN ON DETAIL 6 IS PLACED AROUND ALL DOWNSPOUTS.
PLAN DETAIL
SECTION
EXHIBIT BUILDING — FOUNDATION PLAN
TYPICAL CONCRETE BLOCK DETAILS
TYP. CORNER
TYP. WALL INTERSECTION
TYP. HORIZ. BLOCK DETAILS
ABOVE TO BOND BEAM
TYP. BLOCK REINF.
TYP. LINTEL DTL. - INTERIOR WALLS
DETAIL
ORIENTATION
REVIEWED
OPERATIONS REGION
INTERP. REGION
COOP. ACTV. REGION
DES. & CONST. REGION
OTHER
PREPARED
REVISED

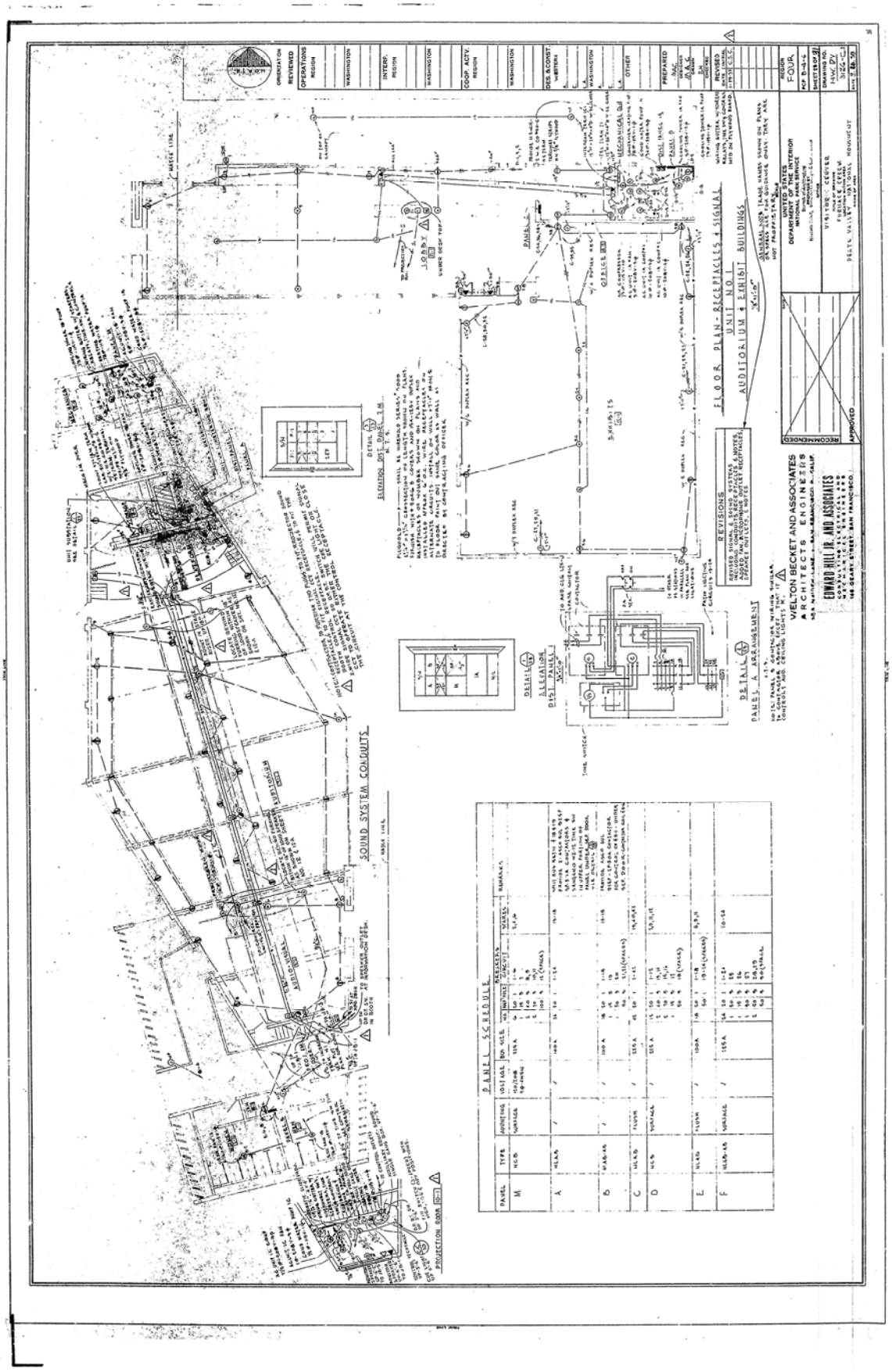

ORIENTATION
REVIEWED
OPERATIONS REGION
WASHINGTON
INTERP. REGION
WASHINGTON
COOP. ACTV. REGION
WASHINGTON
CPES & CONST. REGION
WASHINGTON
OTHER
PREPARED
REVISED
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED
REGION FOUR
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
DRAWING NO. 3051-DV 3150-C
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
SECTION
DETAIL
PLAN UP
ELEVATION
SCALE DETAILS
ADMINISTRATION BLDG. UNIT No. 2
FOUNDATION PLAN

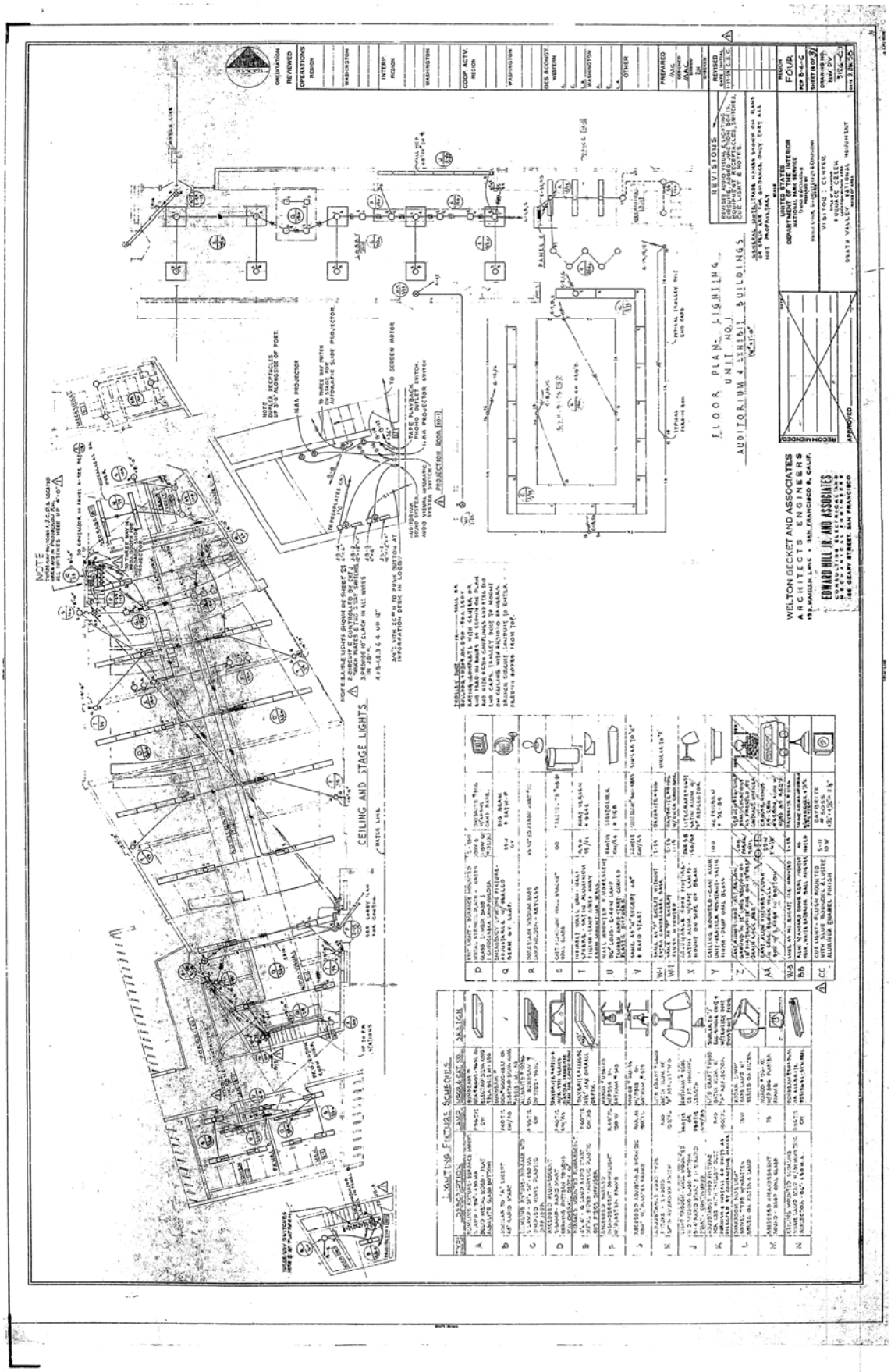

AUDITORIUM - LOW ROOF FRAMING PLAN
SECTION
DETAIL
ORIENTATION
REVIEWED
OPERATIONS REGION
WASHINGTON
INTERP. REGION
COOP. ACTV. REGION
DES. & CONST. WESTERN
OTHER
PREPARED
REVISED
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED
REGION FOUR
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
60 STONESTOWN, S.F. 27 LO 4-9040

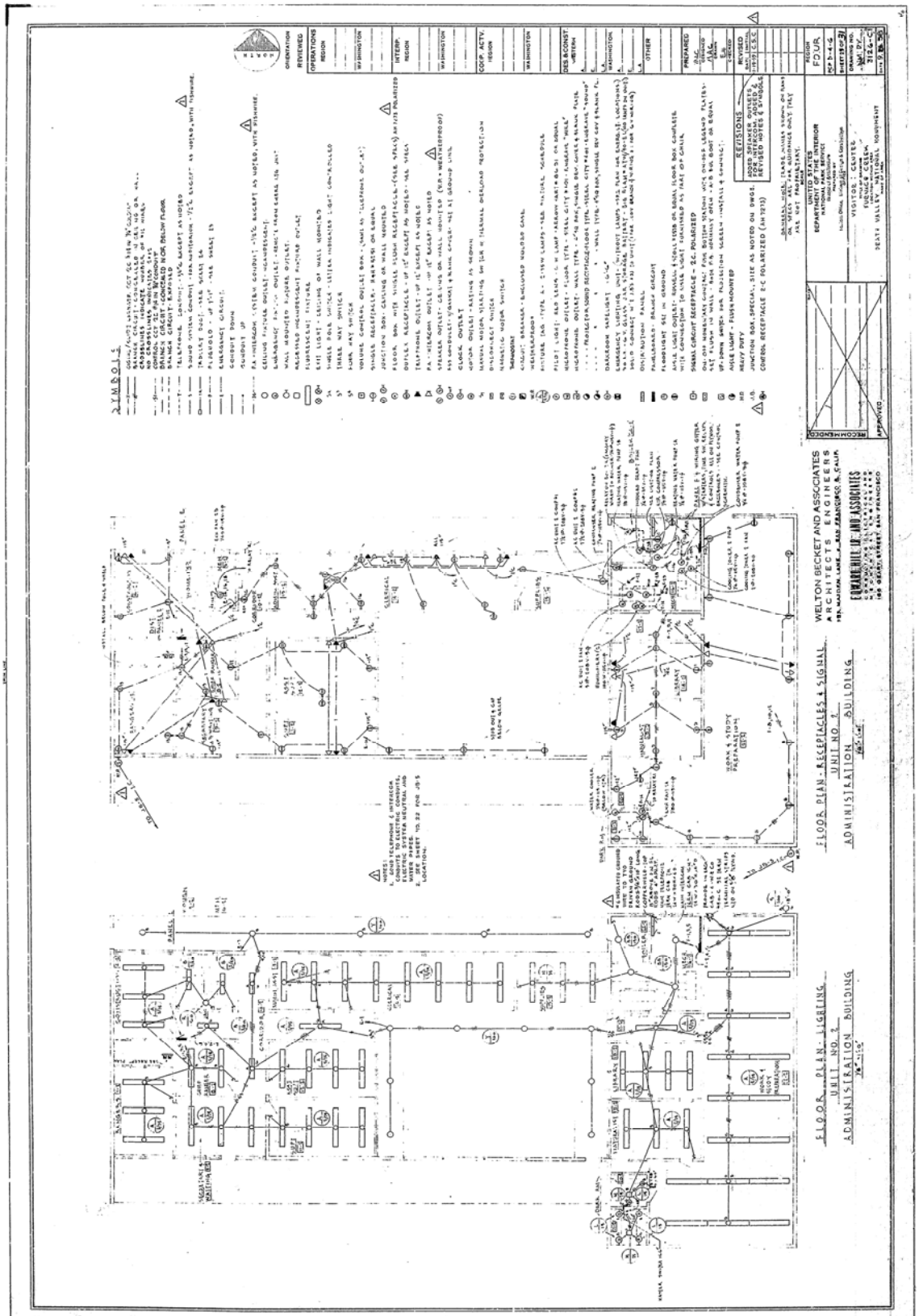

AUDITORIUM - HIGH ROOF FRAMING PLAN
SECTION
DETAIL
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED
OPERATIONS REGION
INTERP. REGION
COOP. ACTV. REGION
DSS & CONST.
OTHER
PREPARED
REVISED
REGION FOUR

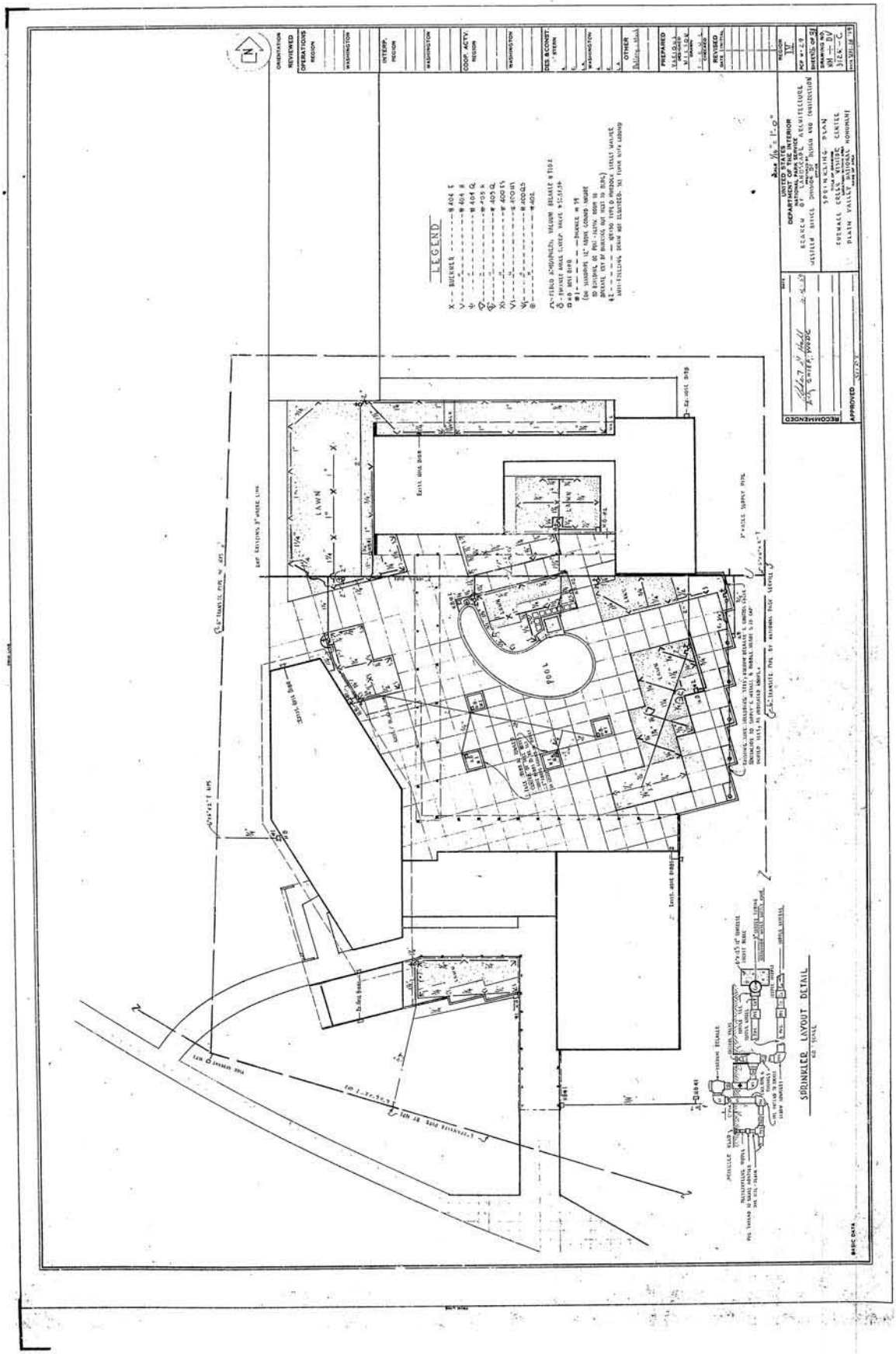

WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
ROBINSON AND GIDDINGS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
FOUR
NM-DV
5120-C
EXHIBITS BLDG. ROOF FRAMING PLAN
SECTION
DETAIL
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED


CONTROL SCHEMATICS
HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATION BLDG
AUDITORIUM BLDG
PLOT PLAN
ELEVATION UNIT SUBSTATION
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
EDWARD HOLLOWAY AND ASSOCIATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES
VISITOR CENTER
FURNACE CREEK
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED
REVISIONS
REVISED INTERIOR PIPING INCLUDING THE ADDITION OF CONDENSATE DRAINS, OUTLETS & JUNCTION BOX
REGION
FOUR
PREPARED
OTHER
WASHINGTON
INTERP. REGION
COOP. ACTV. REGION
OPERATIONS REGION
REVIEWED
ORIENTATION
BALLO
AUDITORIUM BLDG
INFORMATION DESK
STUB OUT 5" ϕ CAP
TO JB-2


FLOOR PLAN - RECEPTACLES & SIGNAL
UNIT NO. 1
AUDITORIUM & EXHIBIT BUILDINGS
PANEL SCHEDULE
SOUND SYSTEM CONDUITS
PROJECTION ROOM
VELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
EDWARD HILL JR. AND ASSOCIATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
FOUR
HW, PV
APPROVED


CEILING AND STAGE LIGHTS
FLOOR PLAN - LIGHTING
AUDITORIUM & EXHIBIT BUILDINGS
UNIT NO. 1
LIGHTING FIXTURE SCHEDULE
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
EDWARD HILL JR. AND ASSOCIATES
REVISIONS
FOUR
APPROVED
RECOMMENDED


SYMBOLS
FLOOR PLAN - LIGHTING
UNIT NO. 2
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
FLOOR PLAN - RECEPTACLES & SIGNAL
UNIT NO. 2
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
EDWARD BIRD JR. AND ASSOCIATES
REVISIONS
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR CENTER
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
FOUR
APPROVED
RECOMMENDED


LEGEND
LAWN
POOL
SPRINKLER LAYOUT DETAIL
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BRANCH OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
WESTERN REGIONAL ORIGINAL PLANNING AND ENGINEERING
SPRINKLING PLAN
FURNACE CREEK VISITOR CENTER
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECOMMENDED
APPROVED