

ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, POWER HOUSE
(Building Nos. 56 and 57)
2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Southeast, Ash Street, Southeast
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-349-BN
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, POWER HOUSE (BUILDING 56/57)

HABS NO. DC-349-BN

- Location:** Ash Street SE, Washington, D.C., on the West Campus of St. Elizabeths Hospital
- Present Owner:** General Services Administration, United States Government
- Present Use:** Vacant (rehabilitation of St. Elizabeths West Campus in progress)
- Significance:** The Power House (Building 56/57) served important support functions for the west campus throughout its history of use. It is significant for its association with the development of campus-wide infrastructure to support the west campus of St. Elizabeths. The Power House is a significant part of the campus plan as it developed in the early part of the twentieth century. The building is representative of the intended self-sufficiency of the campus at that time.
- The Power House is significant for its architectural design, as an example of a distinctive industrial building with Italian Renaissance Revival-inspired design elements on the St. Elizabeths campus. The building is also of interest architecturally for its character-defining masonry construction, brick smokestacks, open interior plan, and associated railroad trestle. With its two smokestacks, the Power House is one of the most visible components of the west campus.
- Historians:** Mike Ford, Kenneth Itle, Tim Penich, and Deborah Slaton, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1904–1910¹
2. Architect: Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: St. Elizabeths Hospital (then the Government Hospital for the Insane) was placed under the control of the Department of the Interior by an act of Congress on March 3, 1855. Thus when the Power House was constructed between 1904 and 1910, the hospital was under the control of the Department of the Interior and remained so until 1940, when St. Elizabeths was transferred to the Federal Security Agency. The Federal Security Agency was a new government agency that oversaw federal activities in the fields of health, education, and social insurance. In 1953, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was created. At that time several of the functions of the Federal Security Agency, including control of St. Elizabeths Hospital, were transferred to the new department.² In 1968, St. Elizabeths was transferred to the National Institute of Mental Health, an agency within the Department of Health,

¹ 1904 *Annual Report*.

² *Federal Register*, accessed at <http://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/saint-elizabeth-s-hospital>, January 5, 2012.

Education and Welfare. The Institute wanted to demonstrate how a large mental hospital could be converted into a smaller, more modern facility for training, service, and research.³ In 1979, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare became the Department of Health and Human Services with the creation of the Department of Education. The Department of Health and Human Services retained control of the Power House until 2004, when the property was transferred to the GSA.⁴ The campus facilities were typically stabilized and the buildings mothballed by 2005.⁵

The first phase of construction on the Power House was completed in 1904 and functioned as the generator and heating plant for the St. Elizabeths west campus. The second phase of construction was completed in 1910 and was used as a boiler room.⁶ The building continued to supply heat for the buildings of the campus throughout its service life.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Horton and Hemenway⁷
5. Original plans and construction: The Power House was constructed in two phases; the original power house (referred to as Building 56) and the boiler house (referred to as Building 57). Building 56 was completed in July 1904 as a one-story brick industrial structure with concrete foundation and low-slope roof with hip roof monitor skylights.⁸ The exterior featured a corbelled brick cornice, window and door openings with brick relieving arches, and brick buttresses. The structure was oriented on an east-west axis and was composed of an east and west wing separated by a brick partition wall. The west wing contained a 330-kilowatt Westinghouse generator and 500-horsepower McIntosh, Seymour & Company compound engine. Electricity generated from these machines was used to provide lighting for the entire west campus. The east wing was divided into two sections: one section functioned as a pump house and the other contained boilers to supplement the heat generated at the nearby Boiler House/Ice Plant (Building 52). By 1906, an elevated railroad trestle was constructed at the east end of the north facade of Building 56 over a series of coal storage bins.⁹

In 1910, Building 57 was completed. The one-story brick structure shared the east facade and smokestack of Building 56 but differed in that it was oriented on a northeast-southwest axis. Building 57 had a concrete foundation, window and door openings with brick relieving arches, a corbelled brick cornice, and a low-slope concrete slab roof with metal-framed monitor skylights. Building 57 had an open rectangular plan consisting of a single room with a 30-foot-tall ceiling height, and functioned as a boiler room. When constructed, the building housed four 300-horsepower boilers, presumably replacing older boilers located in the Boiler House/Ice Plant. Upon completion of Building 57, all heating and electrical systems were centralized at the Power House.

³ 1970 *Annual Report*.

⁴ *St. Elizabeths West Campus: Cultural Landscape Report*, Heritage Landscapes, Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners, and Robinson & Associates, Inc., prepared for the General Services Administration, April 2009, V.2.

⁵ *St. Elizabeths West Campus: Preservation, Design, & Development Guidelines*, Oehrlein & Associates Architects and Robinson & Associates, Inc., Architectural and Historical Research, prepared for the General Services Administration, November 10, 2008, 18.

⁶ 1945 Public Buildings Administration survey.

⁷ *Investigation of St. Elizabeths Hospital: Letter from the Comptroller General of the United States*, 68; 1901 *Annual Report*, 14–15.

⁸ The Power House was historically referred to as the Power, Heating, and Lighting Plant.

⁹ 1906 construction documents.

6. Alterations and additions:

As the sole source of heat and energy for the hospital, the Power House required an ongoing program of maintenance and repair. Annual reports frequently mention large appropriations made for the remodeling of the Power House. It is assumed that this work involved the purchase and installation of large boilers and generators, and associated reinforcement of the floor to support the new equipment. Appropriations made in 1924 for remodeling the Power House provided for the purchase of a new generator and subsequent reinforcement of the concrete floor.¹⁰

Construction documents from 1925 detail the installation of steel beam framing underneath the floor of the generator room.¹¹ The new generator was installed and in use by 1928.¹² A similar series of appropriations and improvements were documented in the 1930s. In 1930, Congress authorized \$115,000 for the remodeling of the Power House through the addition of a new boiler and turbine generator.¹³ As a result, additional concrete foundations were constructed and the floor was reinforced to support the new machinery.¹⁴ By 1933, new quarry tile floors had been laid and white tile wainscot was installed in the generator room of the Power House.¹⁵

Between 1928 and 1937, a second smokestack was constructed to the east of Building 57. The free-standing structure had an octagonal plan. The base of the stack was constructed of red brick on a concrete foundation and capped by a corbelled brick cornice. The upper portion of the stack extended approximately 100 feet above grade and was constructed of light-colored brick.¹⁶

Between 1924 and 1938, an addition was constructed at the center of the south facade of the Building 56. The one-story brick addition had a concrete foundation and a tin shed roof.¹⁷ The structure served as an entrance vestibule for the pump house portion of the building.

In 1934, extensive alterations were made to Building 57, which functioned as the central boiler room. The building was extended 30 feet to the east and a second floor was added to the entire 1910-era structure. The addition had punched window openings with corbelled brick sills and a corbelled brick cornice. The existing brick cornice above the first floor level remained.

In 1942, an appropriation of \$259,000 was made for the remodel of the Power House.¹⁸ The remodel consisted of the reinforcement of floors in the west wing of Building 56 and installation of a new generator. By 1945, new foundation piers had been constructed and the concrete floor had been altered to support the larger generator.¹⁹ During the same time period, a two-story brick water treatment room was erected on the north elevation of the east wing of Building 56.²⁰

¹⁰ 1924 *Annual Report*.

¹¹ 1925 construction documents.

¹² 1928 *Annual Report*.

¹³ *The Sun Dial*, November 1930. *The Sun Dial* was the campus newspaper during the early twentieth century.

¹⁴ 1931 *Annual Report*.

¹⁵ 1933 *Annual Report*.

¹⁶ Observation based on archival photographs.

¹⁷ There is insufficient archival information from which to determine a construction date. Reference is made to a large appropriation and remodel of the Power House in 1924. The addition on the southwest of the building first appears in the December 1938 Key Plan of Buildings. The building description is based on a 1963 documentation of existing conditions prior to the construction of an adjacent locker room addition to the west.

¹⁸ 1942 *Annual Report*.

¹⁹ 1945 *Annual Report*.

²⁰ 1942 *Annual Report*.

In 1948, plans were outlined for the removal of one of the hip roof monitor skylights. Six ventilators were installed in its place. The removal of the skylight was performed in conjunction with the replacement of the Power House roof.²¹

A vent house was constructed at the far west end of the north facade in the 1940s. The one-story brick structure had a door with concrete sill accessible from the exterior. A large vent hood, which projects from the center of the shed roof, was added later.²²

During the 1950s, the Power House underwent an extensive renovation of the electrical system in the generator room. Antiquated generators were removed and replaced with smaller, more efficient models; new circuit panels and meters were installed; and conduit and wiring were replaced. The concrete floors were replaced and wire mesh partition walls were erected to delineate interior spaces.²³

In 1963, roof repairs were outlined for the entire Power House building. It is assumed that changes to the roof of the monitor skylights were initiated at this time. The hip roofs were removed and replaced with corrugated metal gable roofs.²⁴

In 1963, \$50,000 was appropriated for the construction of a locker room addition in the west wing of Building 56.²⁵ The two-story brick building had a concrete foundation, rectangular window openings with concrete sills, and a tin-covered shed roof. A locker room, lavatory, and shower facilities were located in the structure.²⁶

Plans were developed in 1970 for the construction of an addition on the north facade of the west wing of Building 56, adjacent to the east end of the vent house. The one-story brick structure was constructed to house a new generator. The building had a composite shed roof, exterior entrance at the north side, and louvered vent screen.²⁷

Some alterations made to the Power House are not well-documented in available resources. These changes are primarily associated with the interior of the building, for which there is limited archival photographic evidence. Because of the limited information available, a specific date for the following alterations cannot be confirmed.

A south entrance vestibule addition was erected at the east end of the south facade of Building 56, likely in the late twentieth century. The one-story structure was constructed of concrete block and had a wood-framed gable roof with corrugated metal. The entrance vestibule was constructed on the concrete steam tunnel enclosure that connected the Power House to J Building (Building 60).

²¹ 1948 construction documents. 1963 construction documents and a 1955 aerial photograph show that the skylight had been removed by that time.

²² There is no archival information available from which to derive a date of construction. The structure first appears in a 1947 Topographic Survey of St. Elizabeths (GSA archive database no. DC1472SE0139) but does not appear in the December 1938 Key Plan of Buildings. GSA archive database photograph number DC0100SE0P001 shows the addition but not the vent hood.

²³ 1950 construction documents.

²⁴ 1963 construction documents and comparison of 1955 and 1968 archival photographs.

²⁵ 1964 *Annual Report*.

²⁶ 1963 construction documents.

²⁷ 1970 construction documents.

Archival documentation from 1954 indicated that a wood cover protected the exterior opening into the tunnel at that time.²⁸

A west entrance vestibule was constructed on the north end of the west facade. The wood-framed entrance structure with plywood cladding had a gable roof covered with corrugated metal. The building was mounted on the concrete foundation walls of an exterior staircase that provided access to the ground floor of the Power House. The structure is of recent construction.²⁹

A water tank storage enclosure was constructed along the north facade of the east wing of Building 56. The wood-framed structure was clad in plywood and had a wood-framed, sheet-asphalt-clad shed roof. The structure covered a water tank set on concrete footing. A 1954 site plan indicates the existence of a shed roof over the water tank.³⁰ By 1972, construction documents indicate that the water tank storage is an enclosed space.³¹

Rehabilitation of the structure for adaptive reuse began in 2011. The building will be returned to use as a central utility plant for the campus.

B. Historical context³²

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

As development on the west campus began to expand beyond the Center Building complex, new support facilities were required to meet the growing needs. Throughout the Godding era, free-standing support buildings were constructed at the west end of the campus and clustered around the existing stables (no longer extant). A new Boiler (no longer extant), Bakery (Building 46), constructed in 1878, and General Kitchen (Building 45), constructed in 1883, were built on the grounds between the Center Building group and stables. The development was soon followed by the Morgue (The Rest/Circulating Library, Building 40) and Gas House (no longer extant) which were located directly east of the stable. Infrastructure projects, such as the construction of the Tool House (Building 53), Engine House/Fire House (Building 41), Boiler House/Ice Plant, and expansion of the

²⁸ Maddox and Hopkins, *Topographic Survey of St. Elizabeths Hospital Boiler House Area* (Washington, D.C.: GSA, October 1954).

²⁹ The existence of the structure was first documented during the 2009 Historic Structure Report condition assessment survey.

³⁰ Site Plan for GSA drawings regarding the placement of coal handling equipment (GSA archive database no. DC1472SE0230).

³¹ 1972 construction documents regarding the replacement of sanitary and storm sewer systems (GSA archive database no. DC1472SE0531).

³² A context history for the entire St. Elizabeths West Campus, as well as an overview history of the Systems and Infrastructure Group, is to be developed under separate cover as part of this HABS documentation project.

Laundry Exchange building (also known as the Construction Shops, Building 49) were aimed at developing St. Elizabeths Hospital as a self-sufficient campus.

In 1899, newly appointed Superintendent Alonzo Richardson (1899–1903) addressed Congress regarding his concerns about conditions at St. Elizabeths Hospital and outlined a plan for an extensive and important building campaign that would provide adequate space for patients and staff and improve the hospital’s infrastructure. Congress responded by approving the allocation of \$1,500,000 for the expansion of the Government Hospital for the Insane through the construction of fifteen new buildings.³³

The architecture firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge designed the new building group, which included eleven new patient ward pavilions, a new administration building, a nurses’ home, a kitchen facility, and a new power house (Building 56), in the Italian Renaissance Revival-style. Richardson’s tenure was cut short by his untimely death; however, his successor, Superintendent William White (1903–1937), oversaw the completion of the expansion project. In 1910, Building 57 was completed as an expansion to the Power House and all heating and electrical operations were centralized. With the completion of Building 57, St. Elizabeths campus transitioned from the direct current electrical system to the more efficient alternating current.

Throughout the remainder of White’s residency, development at St. Elizabeths was focused on the east campus. With few exceptions, new construction on the west campus was concentrated on maintaining and improving the existing building stock to address the growing patient population and changing hospital needs.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Power House is a series of adjoined buildings that consist of two main structures, two stacks, a coal trestle, a loading platform, and several small additions including the water treatment addition, locker room addition, vent house, water tank addition, and two entrance structures. Of these structures, Building 56 is the oldest portion of the complex. It is rectangular in plan with an east and west wing separated by a brick bearing wall. A brick smokestack (referred to as Stack No. 1) is attached to what was originally the exterior wall of the east wing. Building 57 also has a rectangular plan and is constructed on a slight angle to the west from the centerline of Building 56 to follow the topography of the steep hill behind the buildings. Building 57 was originally constructed as a one-story brick structure; it was later expanded to include a two-story addition that approximately doubled the height of the interior volume. A second brick smokestack (referred to as Stack No. 2) that approximately matches the dimensions and materials of the original stack was erected 10 feet beyond the southeast corner of Building 57. It is connected to the building by a sheet metal duct at the second-story.

The Power House is significant for its architectural design, as an example of a distinctive industrial building with Italian Renaissance Revival-inspired design elements on the St. Elizabeths campus. Character-defining features of the building exterior include the brick masonry construction, steel divided-light window sash, wood double-hung windows, masonry

³³ Sixty-ninth Congress, 2nd Session, House of Representatives, *Investigation of St. Elizabeths Hospital: Letter from the Comptroller General of the United States*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1, 1926), 68.

smokestacks, and roof monitors. At the interior of the building, character-defining features include the exposed structural system, glazed ceramic subway tile wainscot, ceramic tile flooring, and original steel staircase and balustrade.

2. Condition of fabric: At the time of the field survey for the Historic Structure Reports/Building Preservation Plans project in April 2009, the Power House was in fair condition overall. The building is partially set in the steep slope of the hillside. The steep slope of the grade encourages water to saturate the soil. The foundations and south facade of the building effectively act as a dam for this water moving down the slope. On the building exterior, the brick masonry exhibited efflorescence, vertical cracking, and erosion of mortar joints. The roofs were covered in thick patches of moss, grass, and trees. On the interior, the walls exhibited moisture intrusion problems in the form of paint failure and deterioration of the concrete of the south wall.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: approximately 113'-0" by 294'-0". The main portion of the Power House is 47'-0" tall. Adjacent smokestacks are approximately 225'-0" tall.
2. Foundations: Building 56 and 57, both smokestacks, the water treatment addition, vent house, and locker room addition all have cast-in-place concrete foundations.

The water tank addition has no foundation and was constructed directly on the asphalt pavement adjacent to the building. The south entrance vestibule addition was constructed on a previously existing cast-in-place concrete tunnel. The west entrance vestibule addition was constructed on previously existing concrete curbs.

3. Walls: The exterior walls of the Power House are composed of red brick laid in common bond with a header course every sixth course. A corbelled stringcourse is located at the upper floor level of Building 57, aligned with the location of the 1934 upper level addition. Brick buttresses are located along the north elevation of Building 57 and the north elevation of the east wing of Building 56. The water treatment addition, vent house, and locker room addition to Building 56 also have brick cladding laid with a header course every sixth course. The south entrance vestibule structure on the south side of Building 56 is concrete masonry unit construction. The water tank addition and west vestibule addition have walls constructed of plywood siding.
4. Structural system, framing: Each component of the Power House has a unique structural system. Building 56 has a different construction type for each wing of the building. The east wing structure has 28-inch-thick load-bearing brick masonry walls that support built-up steel girders spanning 42 feet north to south across the building width. The girders are approximately 42 inches deep and are spaced about 22 feet 5 inches on center. Masonry pilasters laterally strengthen the north wall at the lower level of this building portion. The steel girders are built-up riveted assemblies with double angle top and bottom flanges and a steel plate web. The top flange of the girders is pitched and supports 12-inch-deep I-shaped steel beams. The 12-inch beams are spaced about 5 feet on center and span between the girders and the masonry walls at the east and west ends. The roof deck is constructed with 2-inch-thick by 16-inch-wide planks that are secured to the 12-inch beams. A monitor is centered on the east wing in the roof.

The west wing structure also has load-bearing masonry walls but instead of girders, the walls support steel trusses. The trusses span approximately 80 feet across the width of the building and support steel beam and concrete plank roof decking similar to the east wing. Two monitors are

located along the center axis of the roof. Additional steel framing along the north and south walls of this area supports an operable crane.

The Building 57 structure has brick masonry walls, with steel columns encased in the masonry at the north and south walls. The columns support built-up steel girders at the roof level. These girders have sloped top flanges and support steel roof beams and a concrete plank roof deck similar to that on Building 56.

Construction of the upper floor level is a combination of brick floor arch and concrete slab systems that have apparently been modified over time. A large centrally located portion of the upper floor level is open to the lower level. The upper level floor structure is supported by a combination of steel and concrete columns that have been altered over time. Column assemblies include concrete, masonry, and steel systems such as pipes, I-shapes, and lattice columns.

The water treatment addition to the north of the Building 56 east wing is a two-story structure with 13-inch-thick brick masonry walls that support the steel and concrete floor systems. The concrete floor and roof slabs have expanded steel diamond mesh reinforcing, span east to west, and are supported by the exterior walls and concrete beams.

The locker room addition has masonry bearing walls constructed with concrete masonry interior wythe and brick masonry exterior wythe. The roof construction over this addition consists of 12-inch-deep steel bar joists, spaced 24 inches on center, which span north to south and bear on the south wall of the west wing building and the added masonry walls. The 1920s southwest addition adjacent to the east end of the locker room has monolithic brick masonry walls, and the roof is wood-framed.

The water tank addition is of wood-framed construction, as is the entrance vestibule structure on the west elevation of the building. The south entrance vestibule has exposed concrete masonry unit exterior walls.

6. Chimneys: There are two smokestacks present. Both smokestacks have an octagonal concrete foundation, a corbelled string course that aligns vertically with the cornice of the adjacent building, a tapered cylindrical stack clad with 6-1/2-inch by 4-1/4-inch molded brick, and a metal-framed catwalk approximately two-thirds up the height of the stack. Stack No. 1 is approximately 225 feet tall and is located at the juncture between Buildings 56 and 57. Beginning approximately 25 feet below the catwalk and continuing up to the top of the stack is a series of steel compression rings. The rings are spaced approximately 5 feet apart. The top of the tapered stack widens slightly with a corbelled brick band. Stack No. 2 is a free-standing smokestack located 10 feet east of Building 57. It is similar in height to Stack No.1 but has a smooth stack cap.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Nearly all of the exterior doors at the Power House have been removed and the door openings boarded up. A metal furnace door is located at the base of Stack No. 2. A wood-framed door surround is located on the east elevation of Building 57 and is composed of a transom and multi-light sidelight. The door has been removed from the opening.

There are three types of exterior door openings on the Power House. The type of doorway is related to the period of construction and construction material. Door openings on the original portion of Buildings 56 and 57 consist of brick relieving arches. Door openings on the water treatment addition, vent house, locker room addition, and south entrance vestibule are framed with steel lintels. The water tank addition and west entrance vestibule each have a single wood-framed door opening.

- b. Windows and shutters: Nearly all of the windows at the Power House have been boarded up. Window openings differ by period of construction and material. Building 56 and the lower floor of Building 57 have arched window openings with brick relieving arches and limestone sills. Many of the openings retain the original six-over-six wood double-hung windows. The 1920s southwest addition has arched window openings with brick relieving arches as well and concrete sills. The adjacent locker room addition has punched window openings with steel lintels and concrete sills. The upper level of Building 57, water treatment addition, and vent house have punched window openings with steel lintels and a sill course composed of a projecting brick header course. Some of the openings retain the original windows. At the upper level of Building 57, one window has been bricked-up from the interior, but the plywood covering has been removed from the exterior. This window is a steel-framed multi-light window, composed of a pair of multi-light casements flanked by four-light fixed windows. Another type of window that appears original to the building is a two-over-two wood-framed double-hung window. Monitor windows are twelve-light steel-framed units.

8. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: Both Buildings 56 and 57 have concrete deck low-slope roofs, a brick parapet, limestone coping, and sheet metal flashing. The roof of the west wing of Building 56 is clad with rolled membrane, while the roof of the east wing is clad with built-up roofing membrane. The shallow parapet wall that divides the east and west wing has a concrete coping. The roof of Building 57 is clad with built-up roofing membrane and has a shaped concrete coping coated with roofing asphalt.

The locker room addition has a low-slope roof covered with built-up roofing, and a brick parapet wall with concrete coping. The vent house and 1920s southwest addition each has a wood-framed shed roof clad with a built-up roofing membrane. The 1920s southwest addition also has a pre-formed aluminum rain gutter and downspout along the south edge of the roof. The water tank addition has a wood-framed shed roof covered with rolled asphalt roofing. Both the west and south entrance vestibule structures have wood-framed gable roofs. The west entrance vestibule is clad with standing-seam sheet metal while the south entrance vestibule is covered in corrugated metal.

- b. Cornice, eaves: Buildings 56 and 57 both feature corbelled brick cornices. The water treatment addition has a single projecting corbelled brick course and simple corbelled parapet. The wood-framed roof structures at the vent house, 1920s southwest addition, water tank addition, and entrance vestibule structures all have exposed wood eaves and projecting rafters.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The east wing of Building 56 features two rooftop monitors. The roofs of the monitors are wood-framed with projecting rafters, and are supported on concrete

piers that divide each monitor into three bays long by two bays wide. Both the roof and the gable ends of the monitors are clad with corrugated sheet metal.

Building 57 features a single large monitor. Brick piers separate the fourteen bay long by two bay wide vent openings. The monitor has a shallow wood-framed gable roof with projecting eave, plywood soffit, and built-up roofing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The west wing of Building 56 is composed of two floors. The lower floor is accessible from exterior doors located on the west elevation. It is divided by brick piers that support the upper floor slab and has two small offices located along the south wall. An opening in the brick bearing wall provides direct access to the east wing. A staircase is centered in the room and provides access to the upper floor. The upper floor is a double-height space with an open floor plan. In addition to the central staircase, it is accessible by a steel staircase from the first floor of the east wing. A staircase and interior door are also located along the south wall of the space and provide access to the southwest addition.

The east wing of Building 56 has one floor level accessed from an exterior door on the north elevation or through interior door openings between the west wing of Building 56 and Building 57. The space is divided into an east and west portion by a masonry partition wall. Both the east and west portions of the east wing are open triple-height spaces that extend from the basement to the roof. This open space is obscured by machinery, catwalks, and stairways that provide access to different levels of the machinery contained in the room.

Building 57 has two floor levels. The lower floor is accessible from an interior door to the east wing of Building 56 and is divided by a grid of steel posts that support the upper floor level. A staircase provides access between the lower and upper floor of Building 57. The upper floor is a double-height open space with an exterior door located on the east elevation.

2. Stairways: The Power House has five staircases. One staircase is located at the center of the Building 56 west wing and provides access between the upper and lower levels. It is a steel-framed stair with textured metal treads and pipe metal handrails. Two similar steel-framed stairs with textured treads and pipe metal handrails are located along the south wall of the west wing and provide access to the southwest addition. The staircase between the lower level of the Building 56 east wing and the upper level of the west wing is a steel stair. It has a decorative balustrade, patterned risers, and textured treads. At Building 57, a utilitarian steel staircase provides access between the lower and upper level. The staircase has a steel channel stringcourse, open treads, and a pipe metal handrail.
3. Flooring: In general, the floors throughout the Power House are exposed concrete. One exception is the red quarry tile flooring located at the upper level of the Building 56 west wing. The tiles are approximately 8 inch-by-8 inch with 3/8 inch mortar joints.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Typical wall finishes throughout the building consist of painted brick masonry. Exceptions to the typical finish conditions are the upper floor of the Building 56 west wing, where the walls have white subway tile wainscoting that extends up 6 feet from the floor, with a band of black tile at the base. Above the wainscoting the walls are covered with painted

plaster over brick. The lower level of Building 57 and lower portion of the Building 56 east wing have an exposed concrete wall on the south facade.

Typical ceiling finishes throughout the building consist of exposed structural concrete at the lower level spaces and exposed structural roof framing at the upper level spaces. The exposed roof framing is composed of concrete panels resting on steel beams and purlins over steel trusses or girders.

5. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: Both metal-framed and wood-framed doorways are found throughout the Power House. Metal-framed doorways are typically fitted with metal doors with vision lights at the top half. Wood-framed doorways typically contain two-panel wood doors.
- b. Windows: Window openings have painted wood trim. The trim at jambs is approximately 6 inches wide and the trim at window heads and sill is 2 inches wide.

6. Decorative features and trim: None present.

7. Hardware: Original interior window hardware consists of metal latches.

8. Mechanical Equipment: The Power House functioned as the center of electrical power and steam heat for the St. Elizabeths west campus. When originally constructed, the power house was fueled by coal. Starting in the 1930s and extending until the 1960s, when the coal train trestle was demolished, the hospital transitioned from coal to oil and then natural gas. As a result, much of the generator and boiler equipment was replaced in the 1950s and 1960s.

At the time of the field survey for the Historic Structure Reports/Building Preservation Plans project in April 2009, some of the equipment associated with the original equipment remained, although it had been decommissioned. The Building 56 west wing contained a large electrical generator, water storage tank, and Roeper 15-ton crane. The east wing contained an assortment of abandoned mechanical equipment as well as exposed cast iron plumbing, electrical conduit, and vent pipes. Building 57 contained a large boiler unit at the upper floor level as well as blower fan units at the lower level.

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Heat is provided in office spaces by cast iron hot water radiators served by an exposed two-pipe system. Ventilation is provided by operable windows.
- b. Lighting: Lighting throughout the building consists of suspended fluorescent tube light fixtures or fluorescent bulb industrial warehouse pendant lights. These fixtures are likely a part of electrical upgrades made to the building throughout the late twentieth century. Electrical conduit throughout the building is surface mounted and exposed to view.
- c. Plumbing: Plumbing is generally exposed and consists of painted cast iron drain pipes.

D. Site

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

The Power House complex is located in a ravine in the south central portion of the west campus, at the base of a steep wooded ridge. To the northeast of the Power House is the Boiler House/Ice Plant, to the south is the Incinerator (Building 123), and to the west and south of the building is a wooded area that extends to the edge of the campus. The old railroad line that served the campus parallels Highway 295 and then makes a turn east to terminate at the Power House.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

Historic Structure Report: Power House (Buildings 56 and 57), St. Elizabeths West Campus,
Washington, D.C. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. Prepared for the General Services
Administration, March 12, 2010.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photographs of Structures at St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C., 1968. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Public Health Service, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, National Institute of Mental Health, Saint Elizabeths Hospital, Office of the Superintendent (04/01/1968–07/01/1973). Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1820–1981. Record Group 418, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

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

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

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

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

- E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Extensive research on the history of the Power House has been performed for this and other studies, as documented in the publications and other sources listed above.
- F. Supplemental Material:
 - 1. Key Plan of lower level of Power House.
 - 2. Key Plan of upper level of Power House.
 - 3. GSA Archive, image DC1472SE0P001.

4. GSA Archive, image DC1472SE0P002.
5. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P010.
6. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P008.
7. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P001.
8. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P012.
9. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P004.
10. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P003.
11. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P016.
12. GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P015.
13. 1948 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0001.
13. 1957 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0010.
14. 1957 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0103.
15. 1906 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0105.
16. 1906 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0106.
17. 1906 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0107.
18. 1906 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0108.
19. 1906 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0109.
20. 1906 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0110.
21. 1906 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0113.
22. 1970 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0153.
23. 1904 Construction Documents. GSA archives, image DC0100SE0170.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

POWER HOUSE (Building 56/57)
St. Elizabeths West Campus
Ash Street SE
Washington, D.C.

HABS No. DC-349-BN

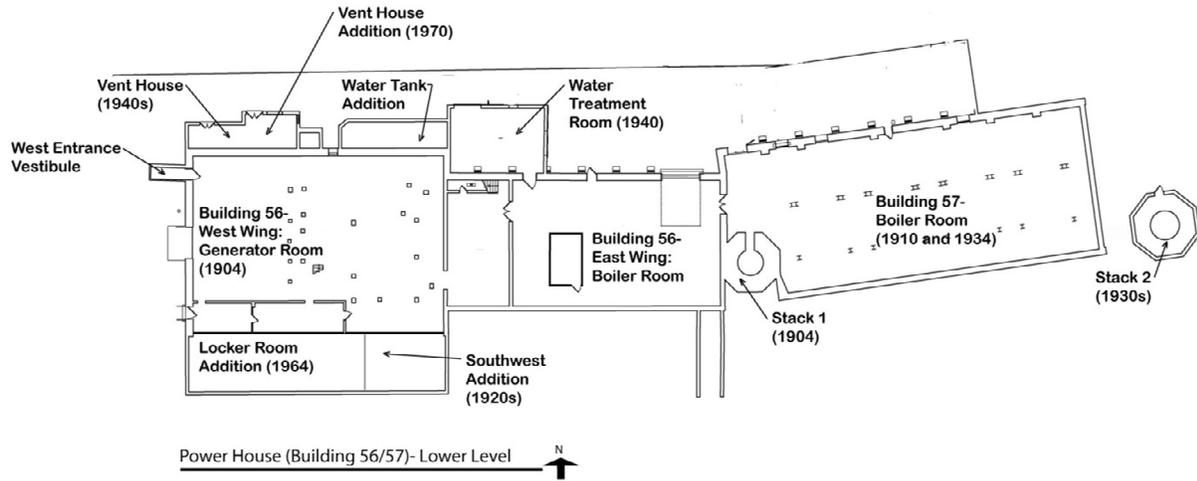


Figure 1. Key Plan of lower level of Power House.

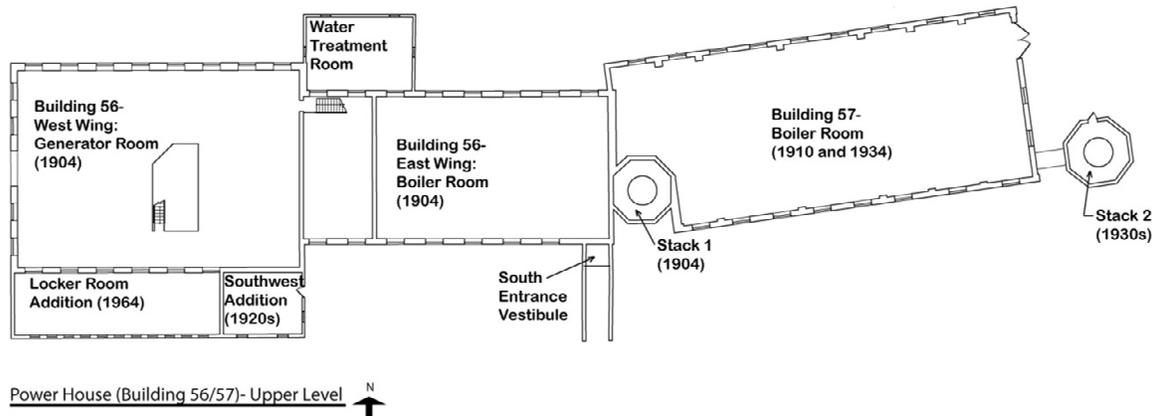


Figure 2. Key Plan of upper level of Power House.



Figure 3. Source: GSA Archive, image DC1472SE0P001



Figure 4. Source: GSA Archive, image DC1472SE0P002

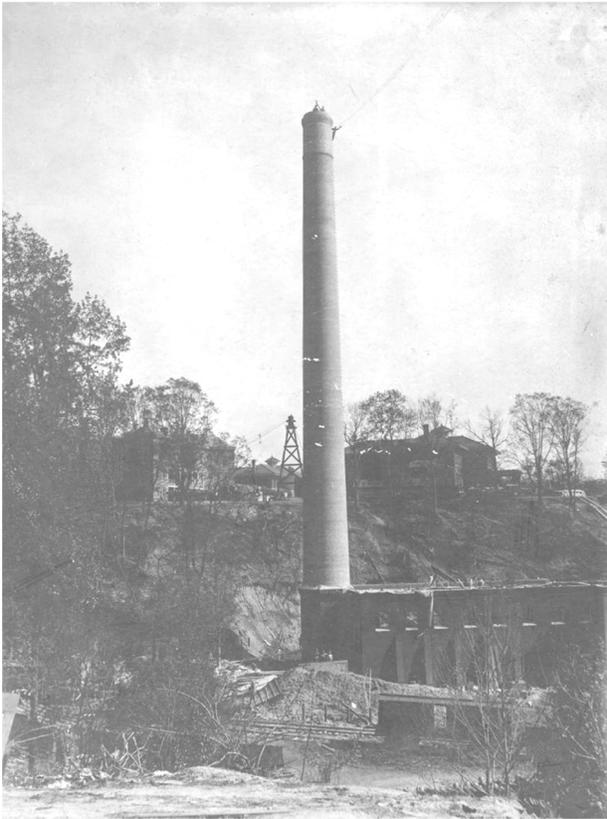


Figure 5. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P010.



Figure 6. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P008.



Figure 7. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P001.



Figure 8. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P012.



Figure 9. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P004.



Figure 10. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P003.



Figure 11. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P016



Figure 12. Source: GSA Archive, image DC0100SE0P015

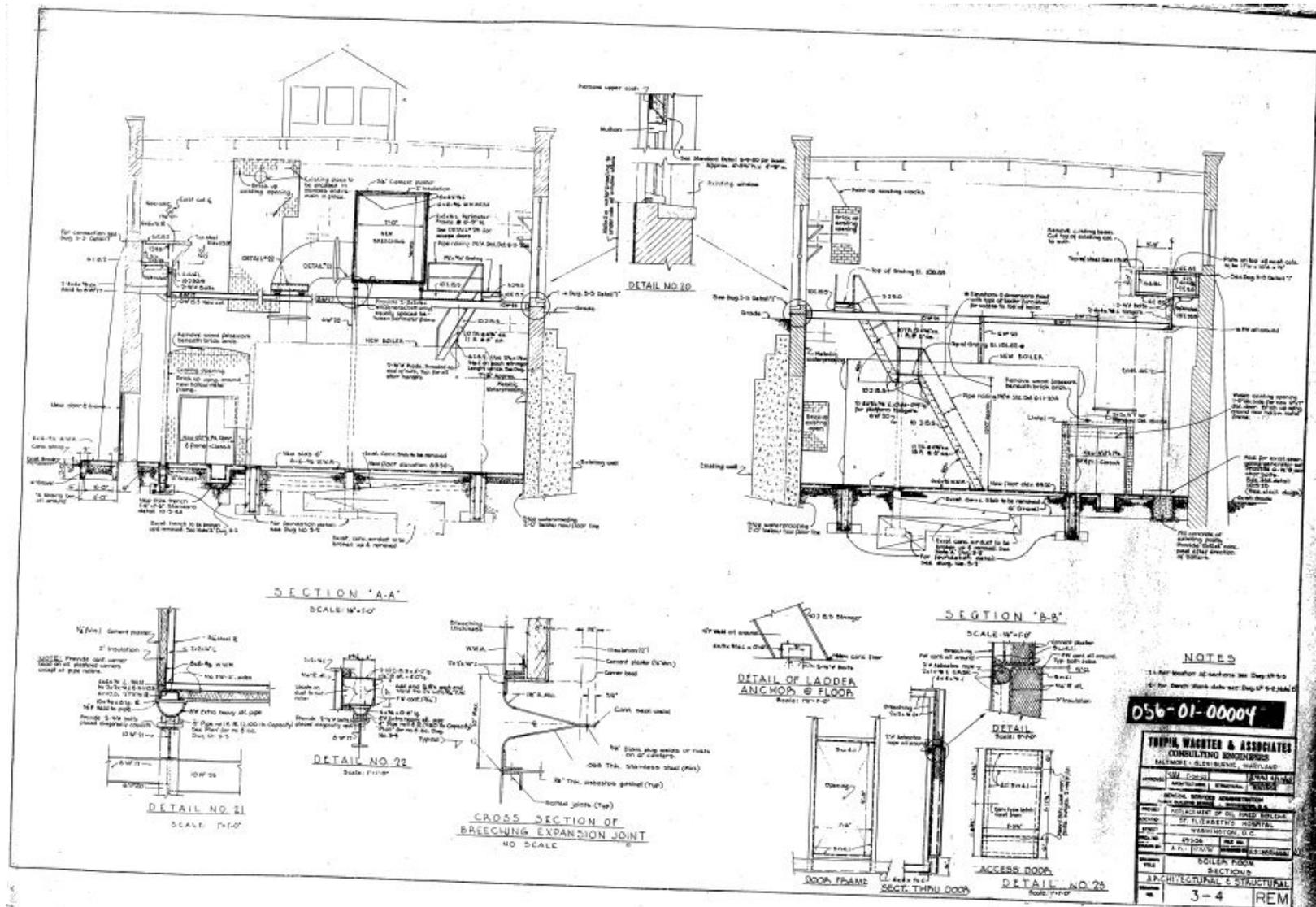
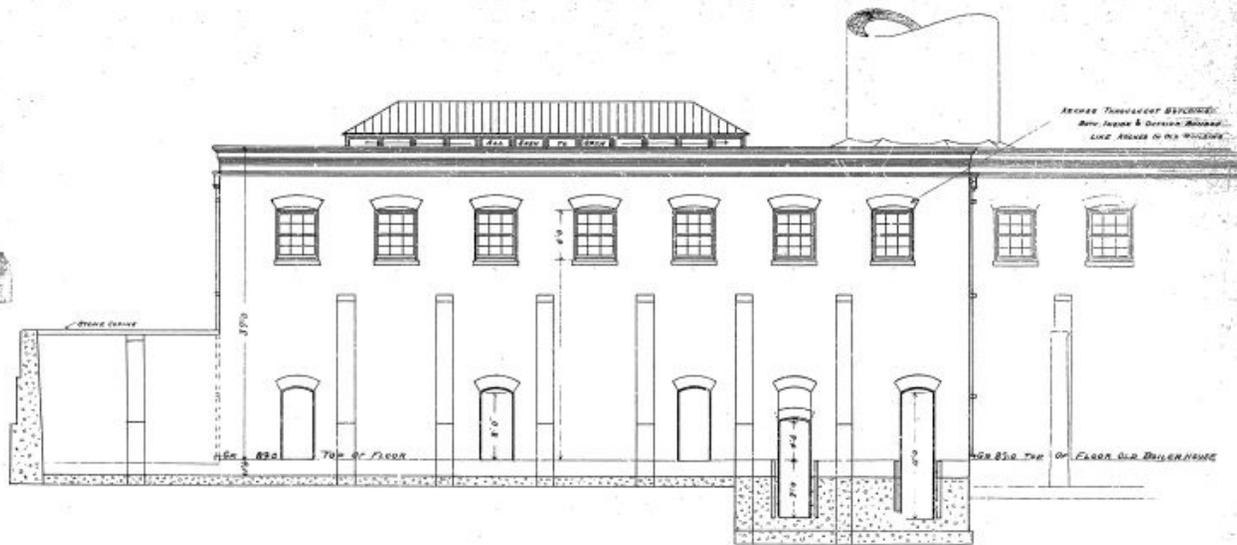


Figure 15. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0103.



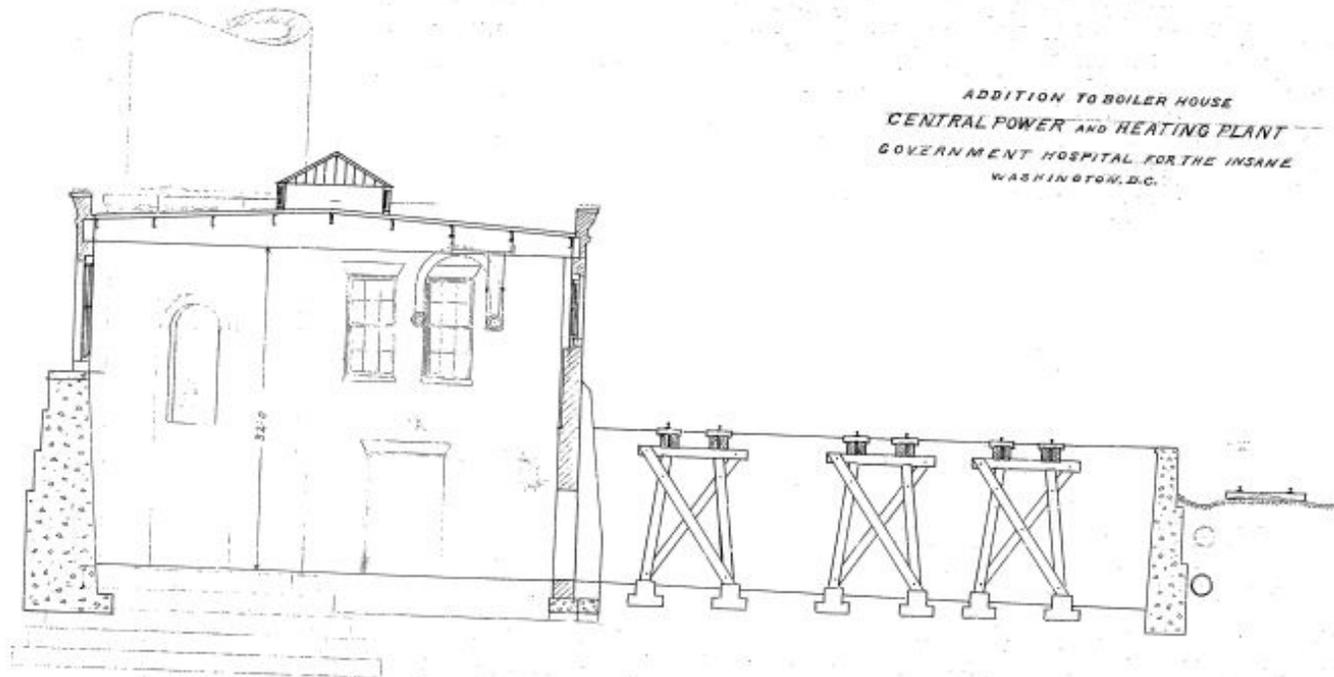
NORTH WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

ADDITION TO BOILER HOUSE
FOR THE
GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL
FOR THE INSANE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

056-01-00009

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Figure 16. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0105.



ADDITION TO BOILER HOUSE
CENTRAL POWER AND HEATING PLANT
GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

SECTION ON LINE A-B
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

056-01-00010

Figure 17. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0106.

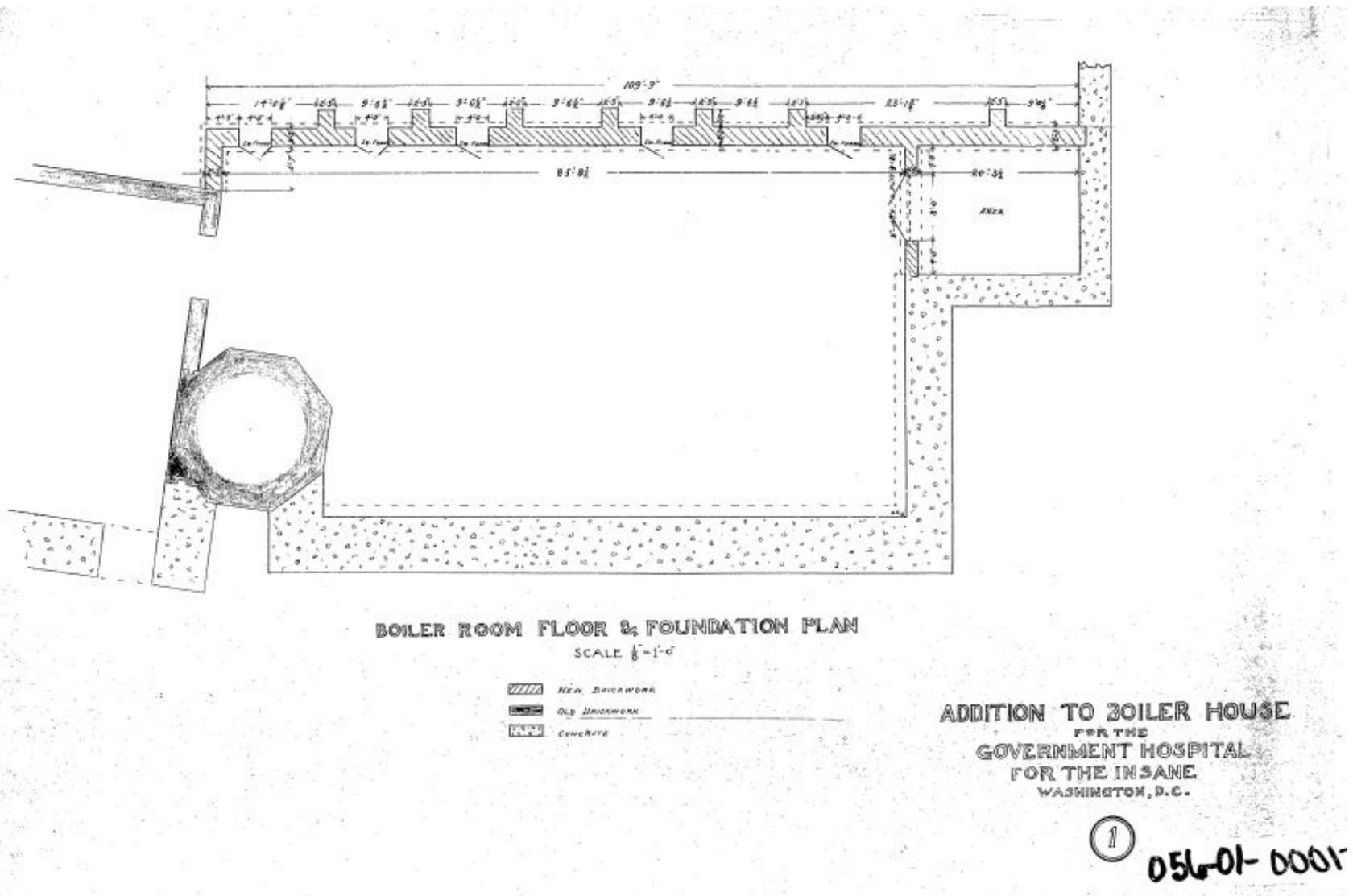


Figure 19. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0108.

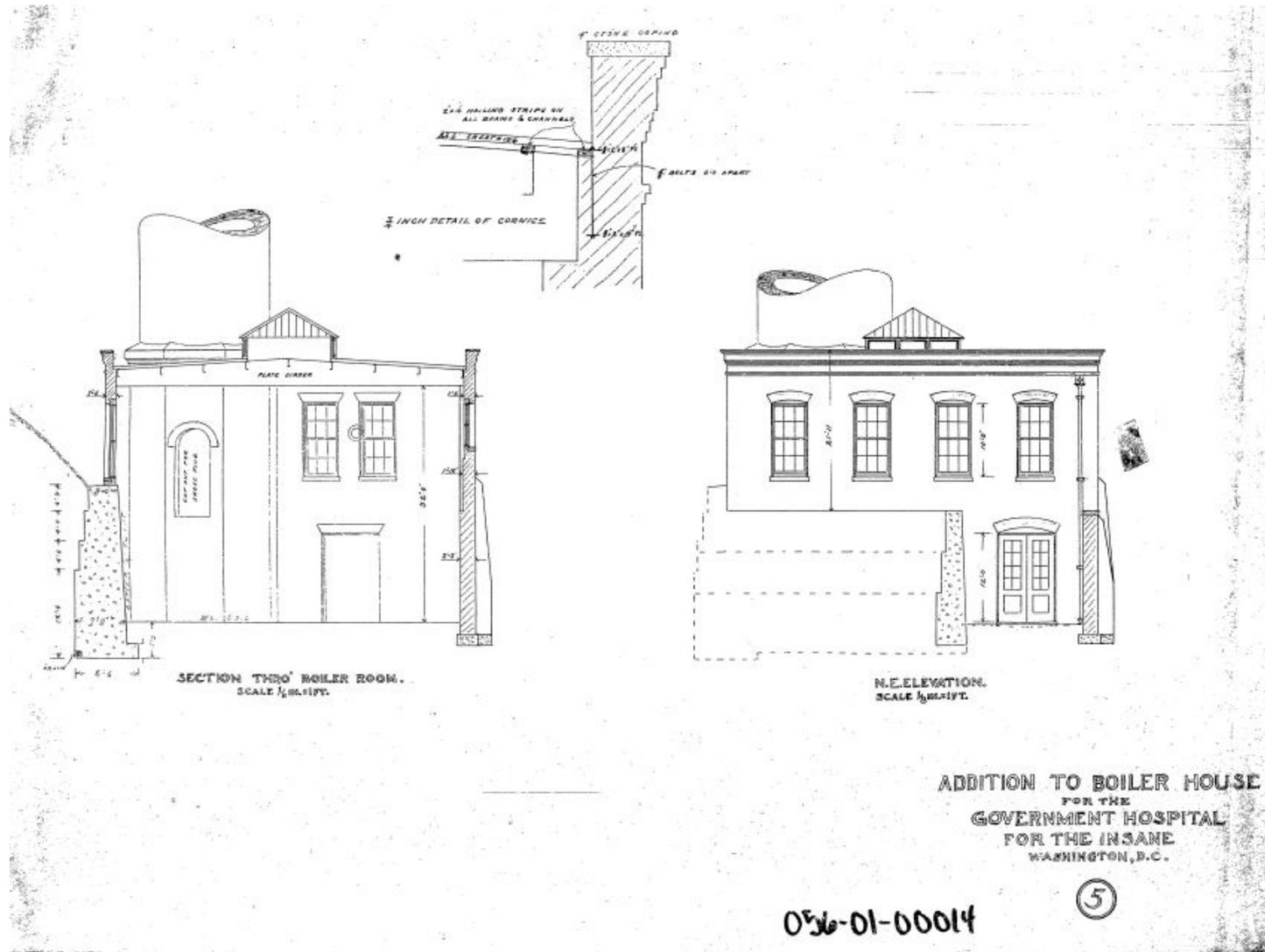
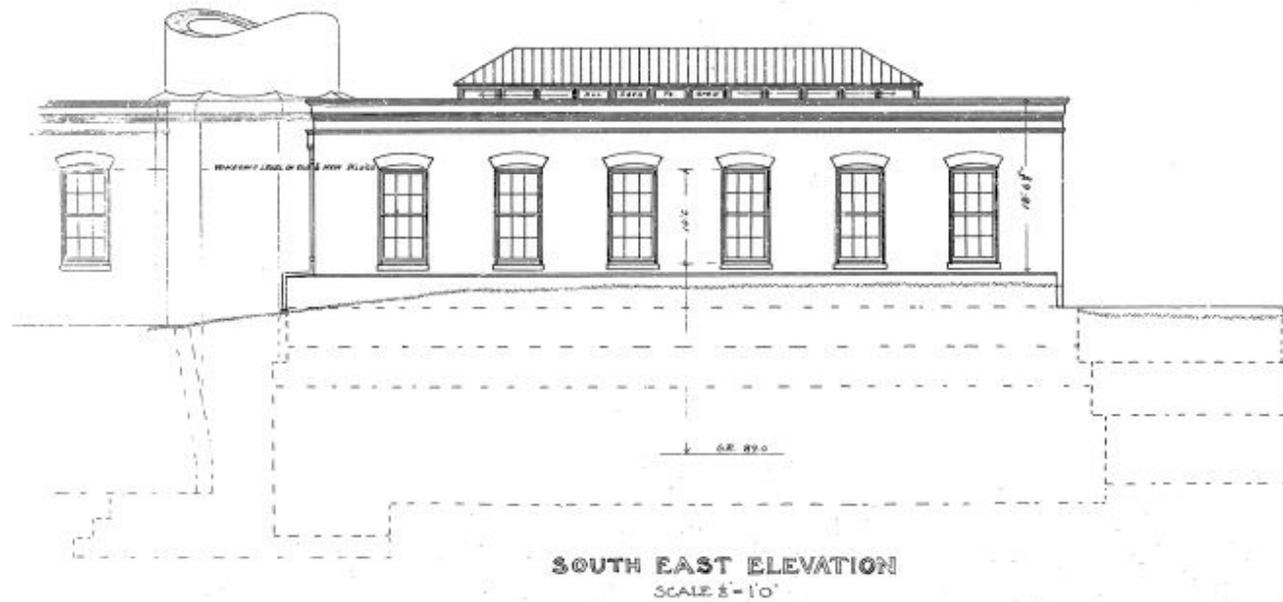


Figure 20. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0109.



056-01-000/5

ADDITION TO BOILER HOUSE
FOR THE
GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL
FOR THE INSANE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

6

Figure 21. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0110.

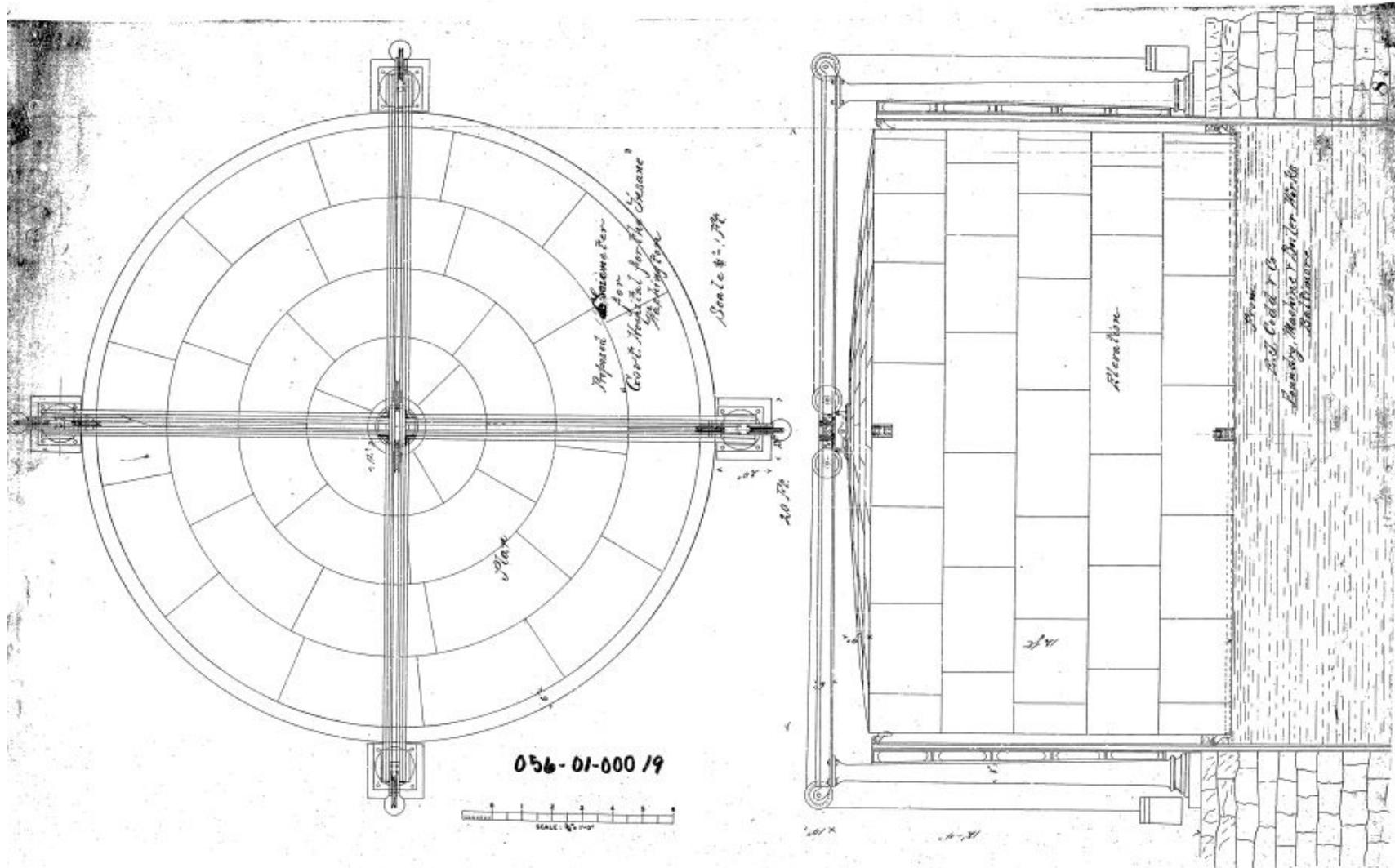


Figure 22. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0113.

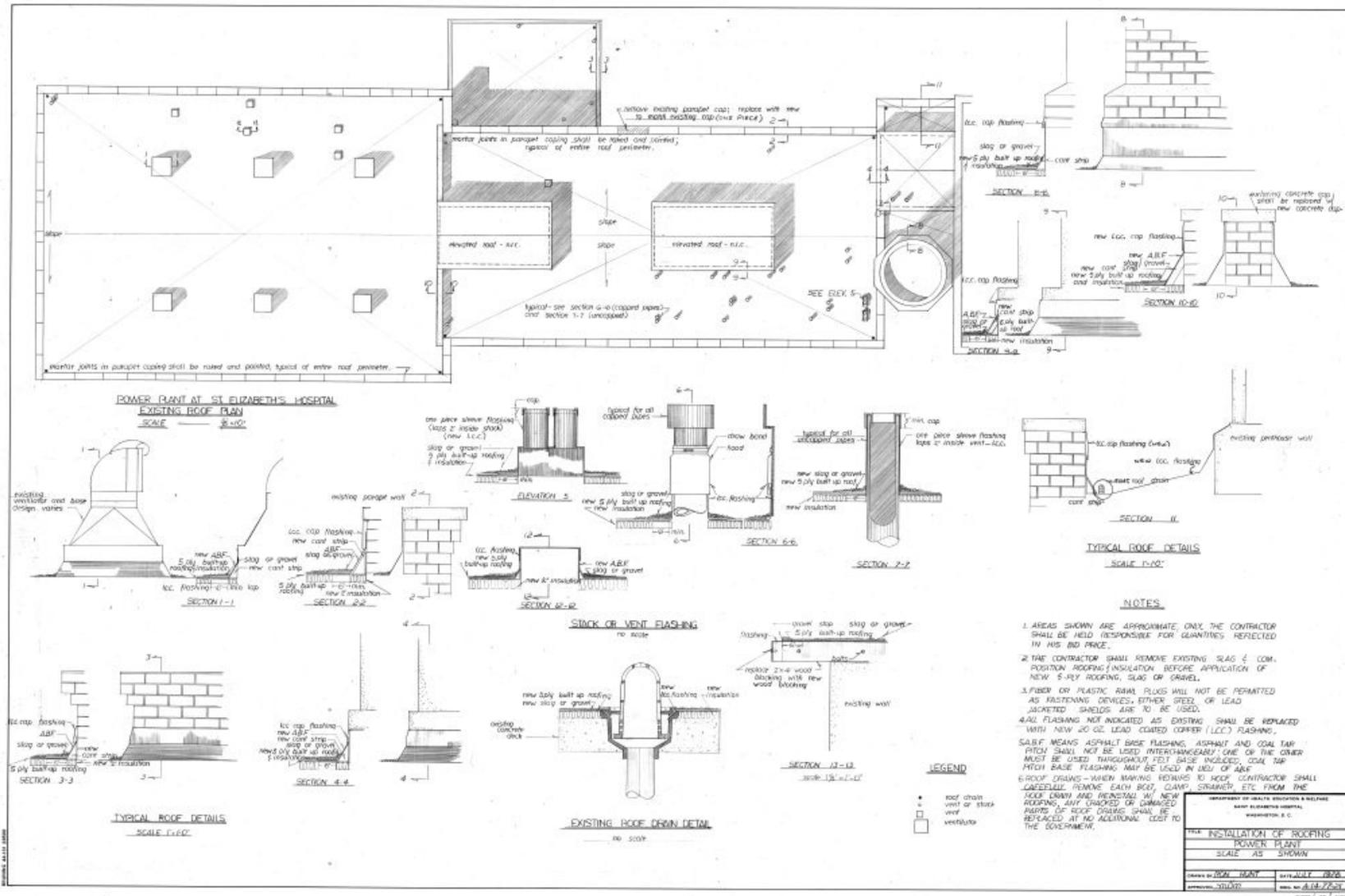


Figure 23. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0153.

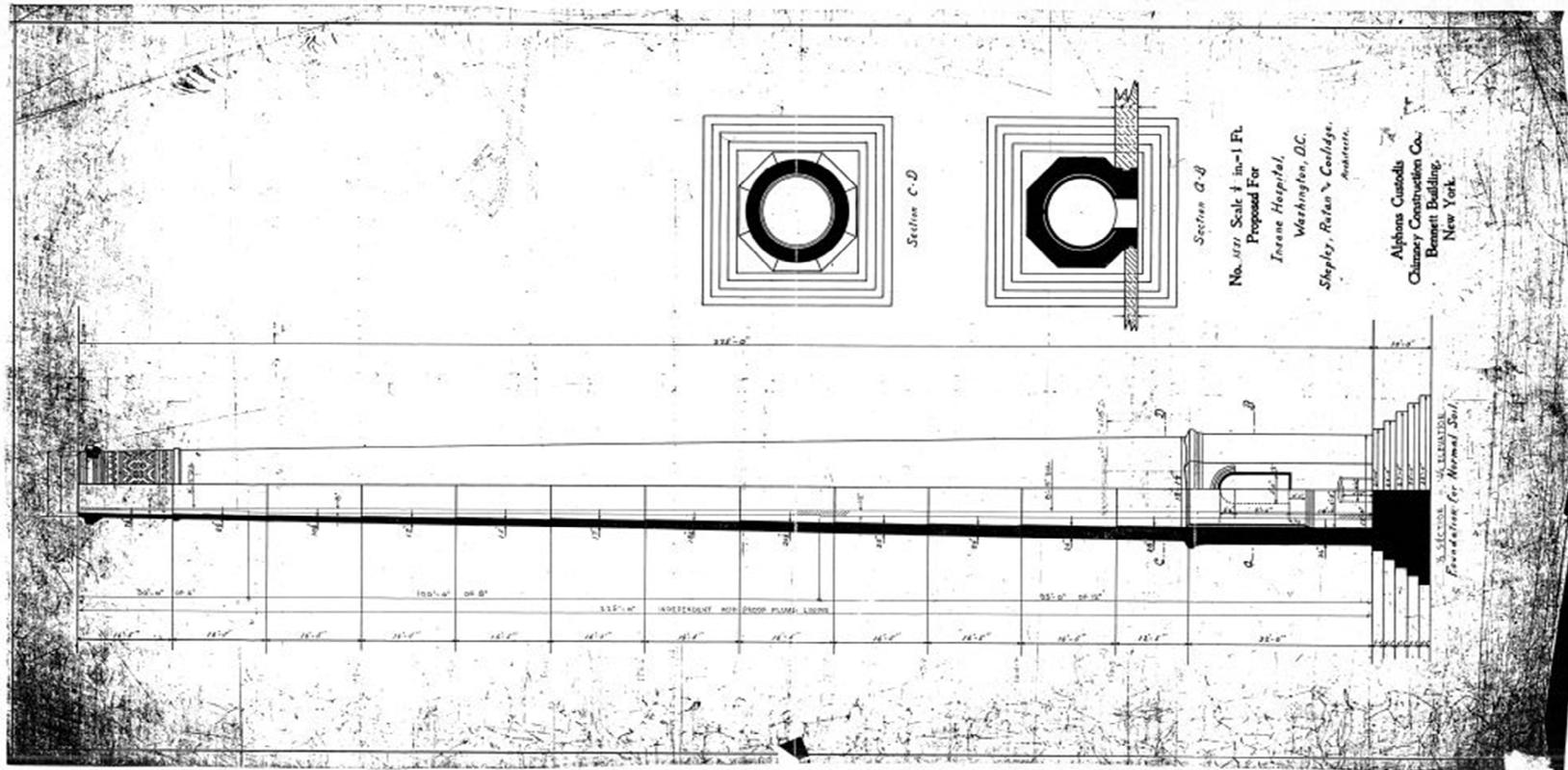


Figure 24. Source: GSA archives, image DC0100SE0170.