

United States Helium Production Plant No. 1, Separation Building
(Building No. 2)
(Federal Aviation Administration Southwest Regional Office)
4400 Blue Mound Road
Fort Worth
Tarrant County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3487-B

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
Southwest System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

UNITED STATES HELIUM PRODUCTION PLANT No. 1
SEPARATION BUILDING, (BUILDING NO. 2)

HABS No. TX-3487-B

LOCATION: 4400 Blue Mound Road, Ft. Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

USGS: Haltom City Quadrangle

UTM COORDINATES: 14.655290.3632700

ARCHITECT, BUILDER: United States Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks

PRESENT OWNER: Federal Aviation Administration

PRESENT USE: Vacant

SIGNIFICANCE: Building 2 is significant for its association with the United States Strategic Materials Program following World War I. It is the original building where the various elements of natural gas were cooled to allow for their separation into individual elements and where the helium was extracted from the other elements. It retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Specification Number 3800, "Argon Production Plant at North Fort Worth, Texas," was created by the Navy Department, and released on February 15, 1919. It contained specifications for Building 2:

Separation Building will be one story in height with a clear story central portion and shall have concrete walls, roof and floor, steel sash, metal-covered bifolding and hinged doors, sheet metal work and ventilators, built-up roofing, tile coping, steel crane girders and tracks, hardware, painting, glazing, heating, plumbing and lighting installations and mechanical equipment. Mechanical equipment is furnished by the Government, except as noted.

In 1921, the Bureau of Yards and Docks of the Navy Department published a book that included a detailed description of the buildings at the United States Helium Plant No. 1 after they were constructed (Navy Department 1921:444-445). Building 2, the Separation Building, contained the Linde apparatus. The one-story building had a central corridor nearly doubling the height of the first story. This central corridor was a feature necessary to accommodate the tall, three-stage stills that were a component of the Linde apparatus. The building was 68' wide, 199' long, 42' high from grade to the top of the central block, and 27' high from grade to the top of the blocks flanking the central monitor (Navy Department 1921:445).

When the Airways Division first moved into the facility, Building 2, in addition to Building 3, was used for storage for airways material, and equipment that required protection from the elements (FAA 1976:5).

In the late 1940s, an addition extended Building 1 to the south by 36', which joined it to Building 2 by a second-story passageway. This began the encroachment on the shop areas by the growing number of offices. When the Civil Aeronautics Administration remodeled the facility for offices for the regional headquarters, a red tile roof coping and awnings were added to the building. Other alterations to the building include the incorporation of two new floors above the ground level, plywood paneled interior wall covering, carpeting, and an acoustic dropped ceiling.

The railroad tracks were paved over in the early 1960s; however the loading dock doors remained (FAA 1976:4).

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

Record Group 71, Entry 649. Bureau of Yards and Docks, Facility Blueprints. On microfilm file, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

B. HISTORIC VIEWS

Record Group 72, Entry 162, Boxes 1, 16, 25. Bureau of Aeronautics, Helium Plant Material, 1919-1930. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1921

Davis, John W., James O. Lewis, and Andrew Stewart. *Report on the United States Helium Project*. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines.

1994

Federal Aviation Administration, Southwest Region. *Reminiscences on the Reservation: A History of the FAA Southwest Regional Office*. FAA, Fort Worth.

1976

Federal Aviation Administration, Southwest Region. *Recollections and Reflections*. Public Affairs Office, FAA, Fort Worth.

1989

Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County. *Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, Volumes I-IV*. Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, Texas.

1921

Navy Department, Bureau of Yards and Docks. *Activities of the U.S. Bureau of Yards and Docks, World War 1917-1918*. Government Printing Office.

Record Group 70, Entry 11. Bureau of Mines, General Records, Correspondence, Reports. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 71. Bureau of Yards and Docks, General Correspondence, Shore Establishments, 1918-1925. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 71, Entry 649. Bureau of Yards and Docks, Facility Blueprints. On microfilm file, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Record Group 72, Entry 62. Bureau of Aeronautics, General Correspondence, 1925-1942. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 72, Entry 162. Bureau of Aeronautics, Helium Plant Material, 1919-1930. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 80, General Records of the Navy, Secretary of the Navy Correspondence, 1916-1926

D. LIKELY SOURCES NOT YET INVESTIGATED

There are a number of repositories and facilities, both in the state of Texas as well as elsewhere, which have the potential to contain records or information pertaining to the former United States Helium Production Plant located at 4400 Blue Mound Road, in North Fort Worth, Texas. In addition to the following list, the potential for oral history accounts is a promising avenue for further research. The two FAA publications listed in the bibliography above were very useful in preparation of this document, and they contain several accounts from local residents employed at the former Helium Plant, many of which could be pursued as further leads. The following is a list for continuation of, or augmentation to, the results of the research presented in this document. The following list is arranged in no particular order, and should not be considered conclusive.

Various archived/microfilmed newspapers/periodicals in the collections of various state public libraries, particularly in Amarillo, Texas, and Wichita Falls, Texas.

Various files and collections at Texas Universities

Federal Aviation Administration Records Facility, Cincinnati, Ohio

City of Fort Worth Planning Department - Historic Building Permits

Navy Historical Foundation

Department of the Interior Library

National Science Foundation

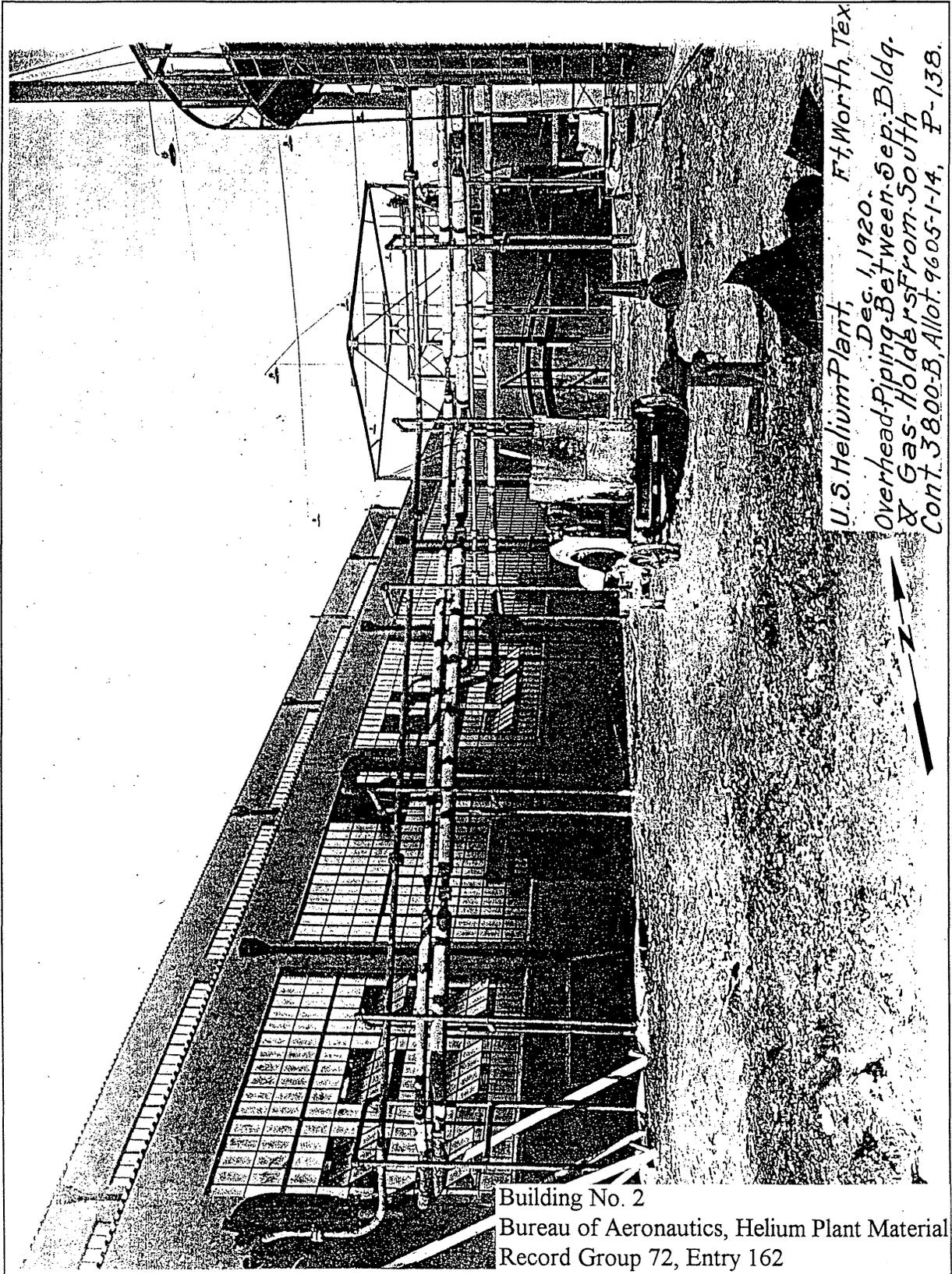
Records of the Lone Star Gas Company

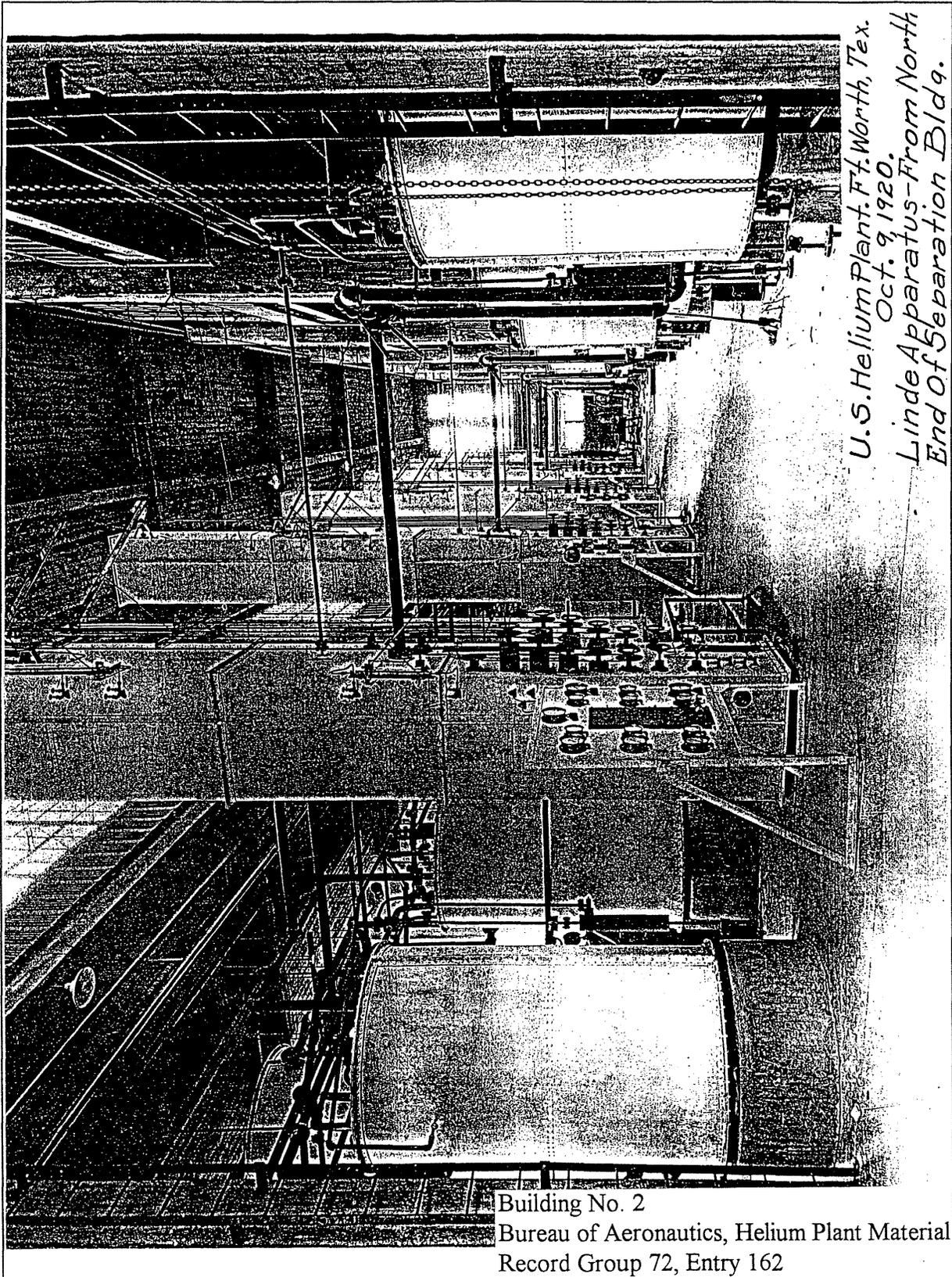
Records of the Linde Company, New York

Records of the Air Reduction Company, New York

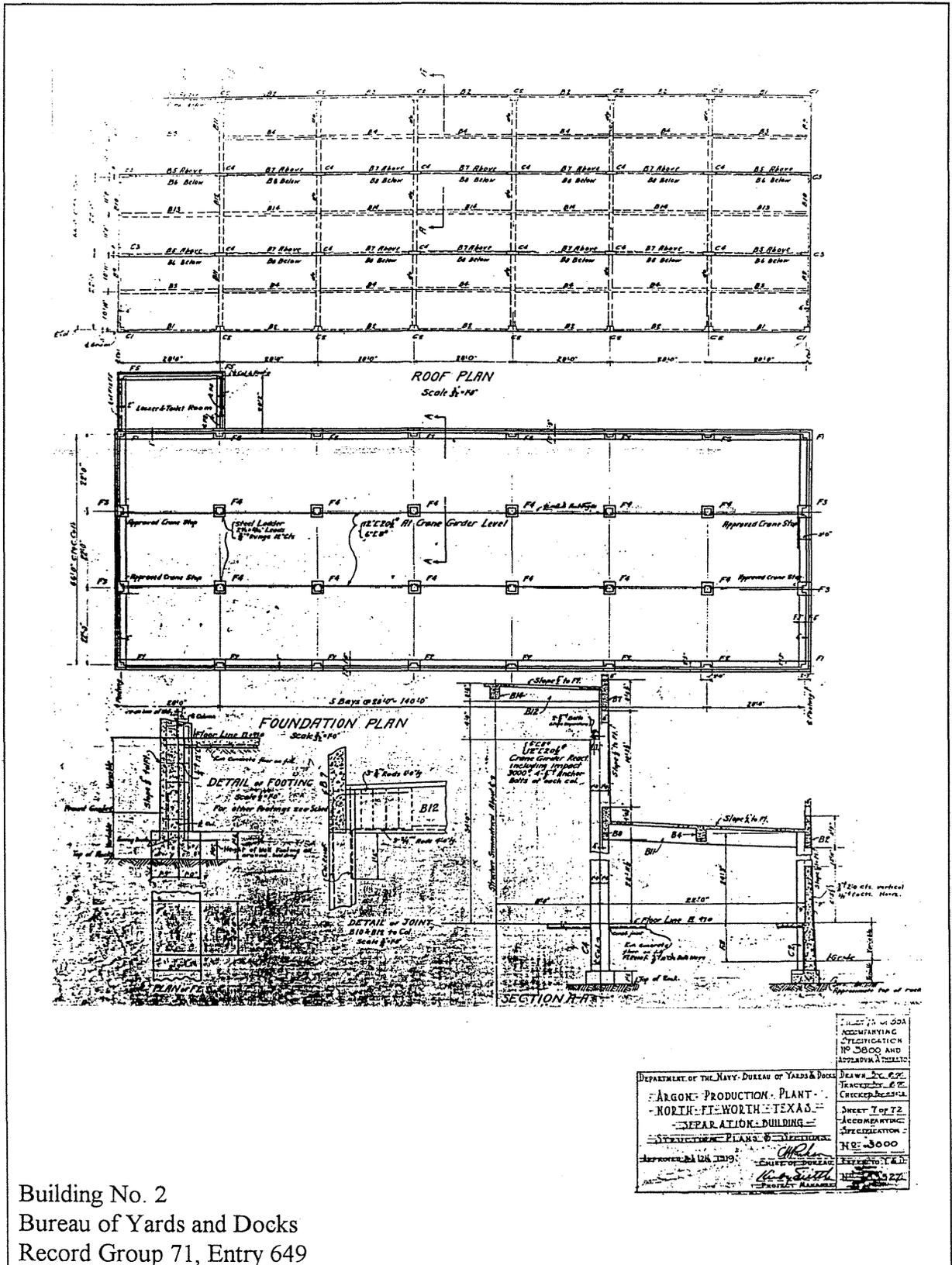
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GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION



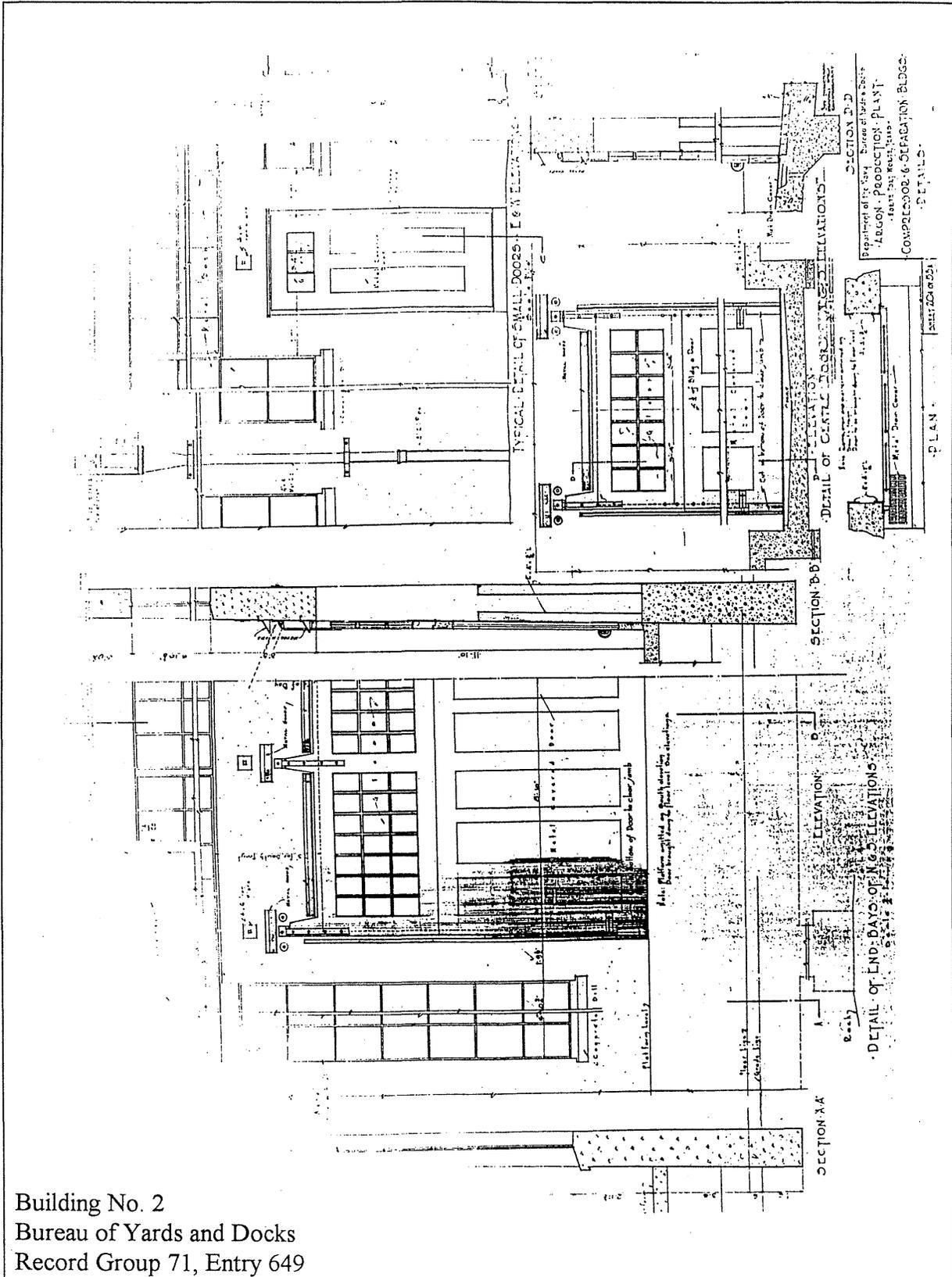


Building No. 2
Bureau of Aeronautics, Helium Plant Material
Record Group 72, Entry 162



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY - BUREAU OF YARDS & DOCKS
 ARGON - PRODUCTION PLANT
 NORTH WORTH TEXAS
 SEPARATION BUILDING
 DRAWING NO. 3000
 SHEET 7 OF 72
 APPROVED BY: [Signature]
 DATE: [Date]

Building No. 2
 Bureau of Yards and Docks
 Record Group 71, Entry 649



Building No. 2
Bureau of Yards and Docks
Record Group 71, Entry 649

