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The Roycroft Inn of East Aurora, New York

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

The Roycroft Inn of East Aurora, New York
by
Randall Lamar Johnson

December 8, 1989

Approvals

Advisor: Elizabeth Fomin

Date: _____

11.16.89

Associate Advisor: Charles Lewis

Date: _____

11-15-89

Associate Advisor: Houghton Wetherald

Date: _____

11/14/89

Associate Advisor: Dorothy Victor

Date: _____

11/16/89

Special Assistant to the Dean for Graduate Affairs: Philip Bornarth

Date: _____

11/27/89

Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts: Robert Johnston

Date: _____

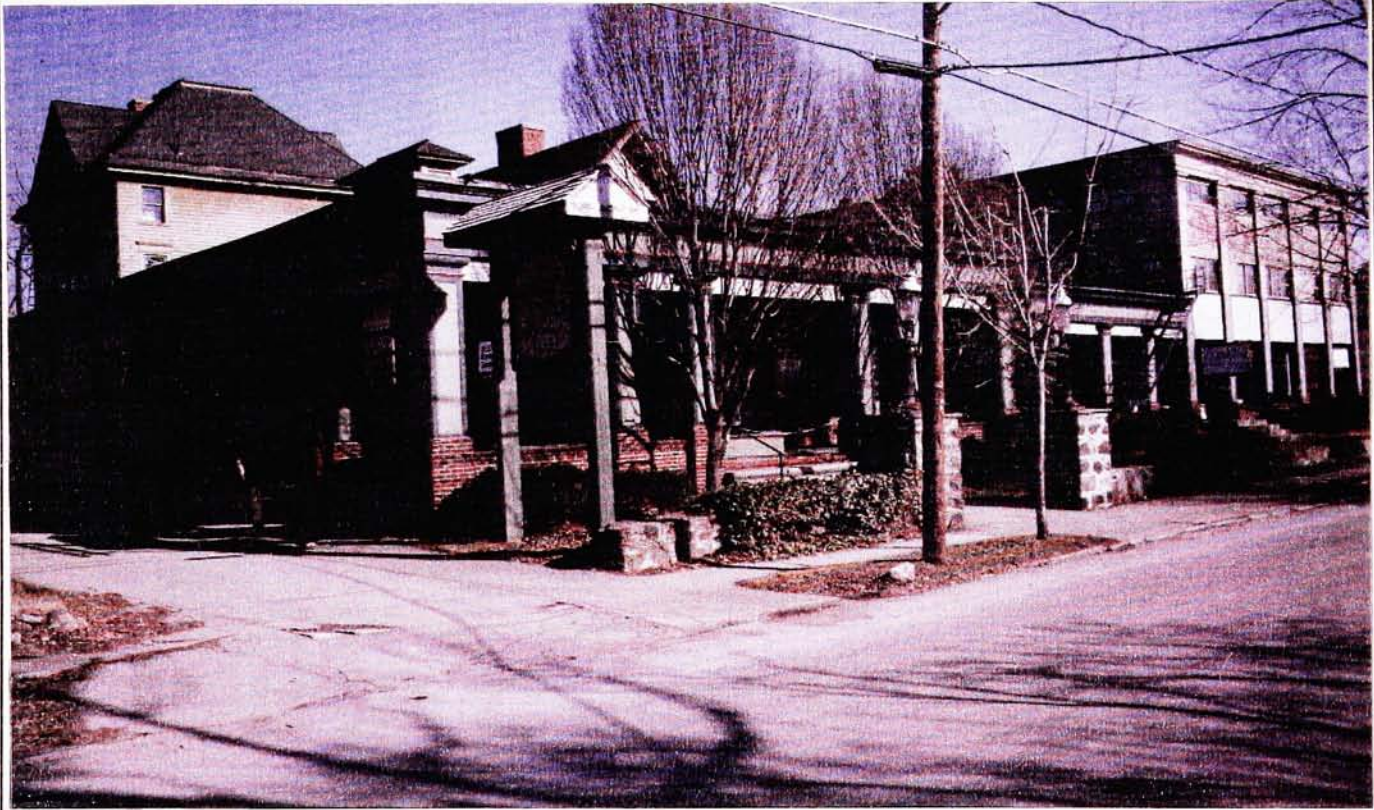
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42 Woodlawn Street
Rochester, New York 14607

Date: _____

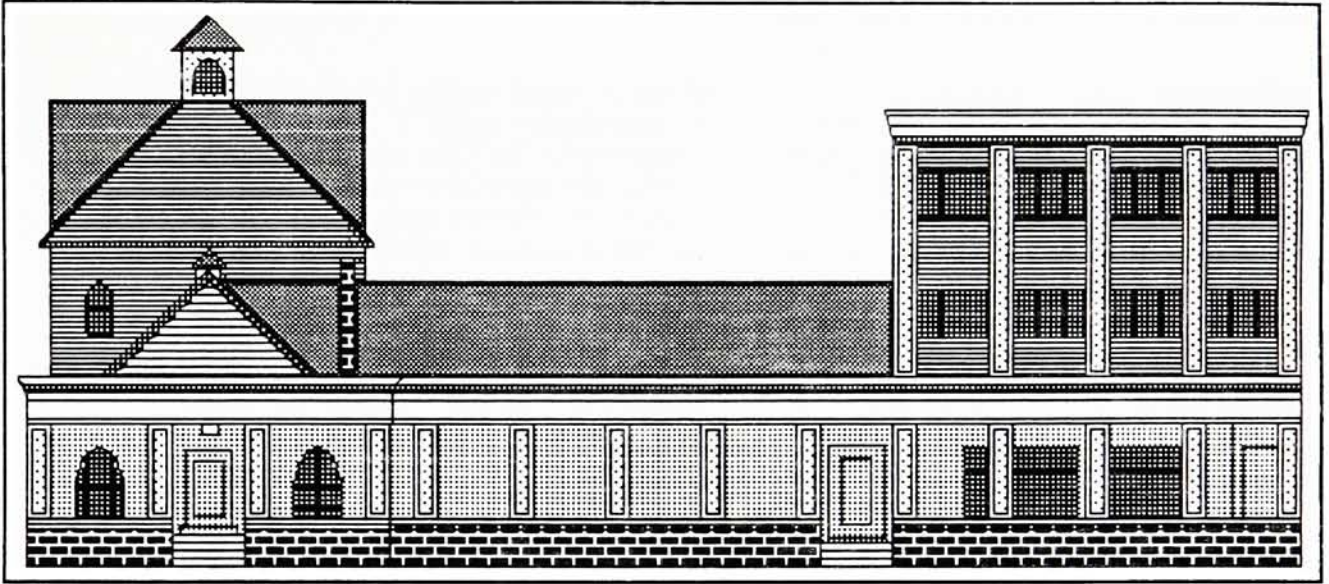
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The Roycroft Inn of East Aurora

Acknowledgements

For their help in completing this project,
my thanks go to Elizabeth Fomin, Charles Lewis,
Houghton Wetherald, Dorothy Victor, Henry McCartney,
The Landmark Society of Western New York,
Al Fontanese, Greg and Kit Engle, The Roycroft Gift Shop,
and especially Robb,
who, with his love and support, carried me through the rough spots
and shared with me the joys



The west elevation of the Roycroft Inn

Preface

I first became familiar with the Roycroft Inn during a summer internship with the Landmark Society of Western New York. The project for which I had been hired was a survey of pre-1930 buildings in Wyoming County, New York. Due to the distance of the work site from Rochester, and its proximity to East Aurora, the survey team spent two nights per week at the Roycroft Inn, a property owned by the Landmark Society. Because of my interests in historic buildings and a desire to explore design for the hospitality industry, I decided that the Inn would be a perfect subject for my Master's Thesis in Interior Design.

The Research

My work on the project began in the fall of 1988, when I began independent research of the Arts and Crafts movement. I felt that to truly understand the spirit of the people who had created the subject of my thesis, I needed to understand their precedents. My study revealed to me the anti-industrial spirit which formed the basis of the movement in writings by and about William Morris, John Ruskin, Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, Gustav Stickley, and Elbert Hubbard. The connection between these men (and their movement) and Frank Lloyd Wright, the Wiener Werkstatte, Hoffman, MacIntosh and Gropius also became evident as design simplicity and material honesty showed themselves to be so basic to the movement.

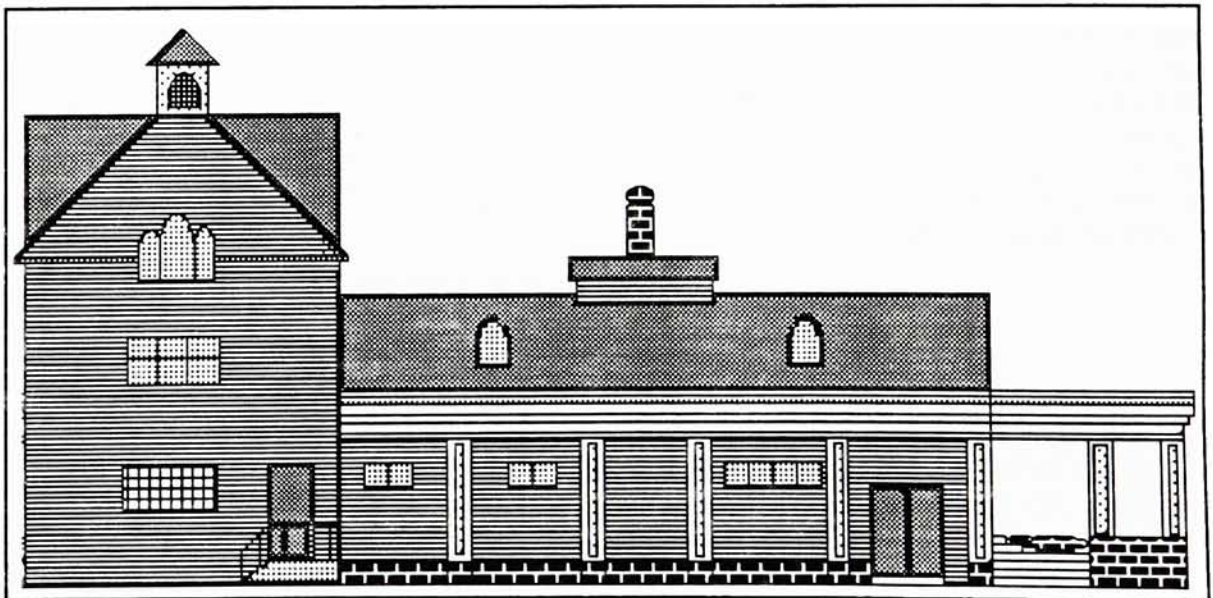
In November of 1988, my attention turned more specifically to the Roycrofters and Elbert Hubbard. Because no specific volume seems to exist regarding the Roycroft Buildings or the Inn in particular, my information on the Inn grew out of bits and pieces drawn out of books on Hubbard, The Roycrofters, their furniture, their catalogs, and more general books on the Arts

and Crafts Movement in Western New York.

In early December I made arrangements to stay at the Inn for two nights while I photographed and field measured the interiors of the building. During my three days in East Aurora I also conducted interviews with members of the local government and with the Hubbard family to determine the potential and historic uses for the building. I was able to locate a set of floor plans of the existing conditions and was given a set of prints by local architect Al Fontanese. These drawings proved to be of immense help, saving me hours of tedious measuring and drawing. All of the dimensions were double checked in the public areas of the building to insure accuracy.

With my research drawing to a close, I began to consider what my approach would be for addressing the needs of the building and its community. Because of the need for hotel, restaurant and meeting space in the town, the first decision was made to retain the building's historic use as an Inn.

Secondly, the size of the building along with the scope of the problems which I would need to address led me to scale



The north elevation of the Roycroft Inn

down the project to encompass only the public areas of the building and those rooms which would support them. Upon consideration by members of my committee, it was decided that I would be short-changing the project by not addressing the guest rooms as well as the public spaces. To incorporate this into the project I elected to focus on space planning and general finish and furnishings considerations, without making specific selections for these spaces.

The Program

Based upon information obtained in an interview with James Berg, President of the East Aurora Chamber of Commerce, I decided that dining space for 90 to 100 people would be desirable in the restaurant. Berg suggested that community need was 60 to 70 seats, but the space available allows for more than that number.

Berg also suggested that banquet space for 200 to 250 would be ideal, and this is the figure which I worked with in organizing the space in Hubbard Hall. While such occupancy is feasible in the hall, the resulting configurations were quite crowded and their layouts unwieldy. I revised this part of the program down to 150 seats, which works reasonably well. The layout which is shown on the plan in the appendix is for 86 people and is presented to show the flexibility of the room by the inclusion of a dance floor, which reduces the possible number of seats.

The program for the kitchen was arrived at based upon the number of dining and banquet seats and anticipated number of meals served at one time. The required space and equipment was derived from charts found in Commercial Kitchens by the American Gas Association and from How to Plan and Operate a Restaurant by Peter Dukas.

My decision to remove the bar from the reception room and create a new, smaller bar in Alice's Office (a room used by the

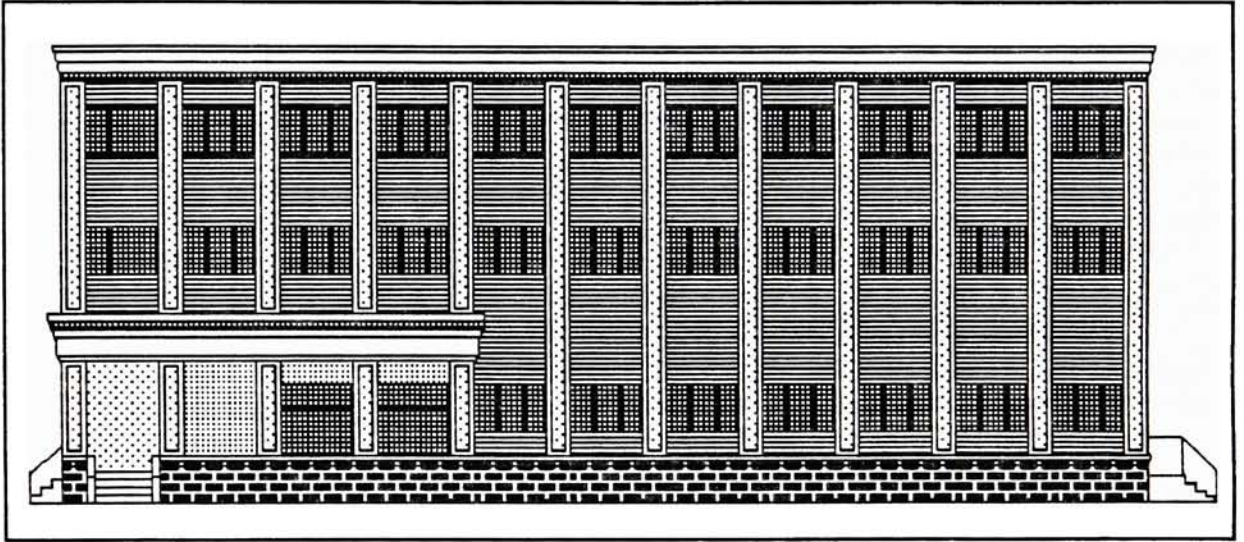
second wife of Elbert Hubbard when she managed the Inn) was the result of several conditions. The first was that the space of the reception / lounge was severely restricted by the inclusion of the bar which now stands within it. Secondly, table service from the smaller bar would justify higher drink prices and discourage heavy drinkers from frequenting the Inn, thus adding to the formal atmosphere which is desired. Additionally, the consumption of alcohol was discouraged by Elbert Hubbard and the position of the bar in a less conspicuous location was in keeping with the 'Roycroft Spirit'.

The number of hotel rooms was dictated solely by the number of doorways which open onto the corridors in that part of the building. If a real client had been involved in this part of the project, more rooms might have been attempted, and could certainly have been included, but with the luxury of having these decisions left entirely to myself, I elected to remain true to the historic fabric of the building by not adding or deleting any existing doorways. My goal was to revitalize the guest rooms by changing their configurations as outlined in the Hotel portion of this paper.

The inclusion of an exercise facility was also suggested by James Berg, and the only viable space for this was in the basement. I wanted to include locker rooms, a hot tub, a sauna, a lounge space, and an office / equipment room. These have all been laid out in the existing basement space.

The Design Process

By January, 1989, the design process was well underway. I had blocked out the usage for the various rooms (the details of which are contained in other sections of this paper) and then had to begin research to determine that the spaces were adequate for those uses. My initial concern



The south elevation of the Roycroft Inn

was that of the kitchen facility. Without any experience in commercial kitchen design, I had to research the fundamentals of equipment and spatial needs, and of circulation within the facility. As I began to delve into what was needed, I soon realized that the needs of the kitchen would have to revolve around the dining spaces (and required number of diners) and more specifically, the menu.

The menu for the restaurant became a stumbling block in the process, for this would ordinarily be supplied by the client.

My research turned to menu planning and I worked along the vein of traditional British as well as contemporary American cuisine. I planned out menus for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and banquets for the sole purpose of calculating the kitchen equipment required to prepare these meals. I also had to develop rough estimates of how many such meals would need to be prepared at a given time and work this figure into the calculations. Once the numbers had been worked out, I calculated the necessary equipment volumes for storage and preparation and then consulted equipment catalogs in order to find the dimensions of the equipment which would fulfill the requirements.

With the figures in hand, I went about finding a layout within the proposed kitchen space which would work according to what I had discovered were the needs of a commercial kitchen. Fortunately, the equipment and circulation space fit into the allotted rooms and I could carry on with other aspects of the Inn's design.

Study of typical restaurant and banquet facilities aided me in laying out the dining rooms of the restaurant and several typical arrangements for the banquet hall. I considered and implemented other equipment needs such as an elevator and dumbwaiters through study of their dimensions and required mechanical spaces.

Consideration of the guest rooms was guided by several goals; 1) increase the number of rooms, 2) retain the existing corridor door configuration, 3) relocate the bath facilities toward the corridor in rooms where they existed and, 4) add such facilities in rooms where they did not exist. The revised layout was made and implemented in the overall plan.

My research also revealed to me that the floorcoverings which were originally used in the Inn were Navajo rugs laid down on hardwood floors. With the maintenance

and safety problems that such a plan would present, I elected to design some carpet patterns based upon Navajo designs. Research into these designs led to the adaptation of several motifs, along with the Roycroft mark into separate border and field designs. The design process was carried out on a Genigraphics PGP computer, where pattern repetition and color variation could be carried out with economy of time.

The Presentation

As the design process was underway, I began to develop a plan for presenting the design in the thesis show. Obviously, the floor plans would have to be included, and I decided that these need to be graphically strong. Inked plans photocopied onto parchment were my decision for this part of the presentation.

Additionally, I wanted to represent the research on the building upon which I had based so much of the design process upon. My chairperson and I decided that a graphic layout representing the building's chronological development would communicate that part of my process. To produce this, I digitized a floor plan onto a Macintosh computer and manipulated the sections of the building using Superpaint. The resulting nine phases of development were photocopied onto parchment and laid out on a board for presentation.

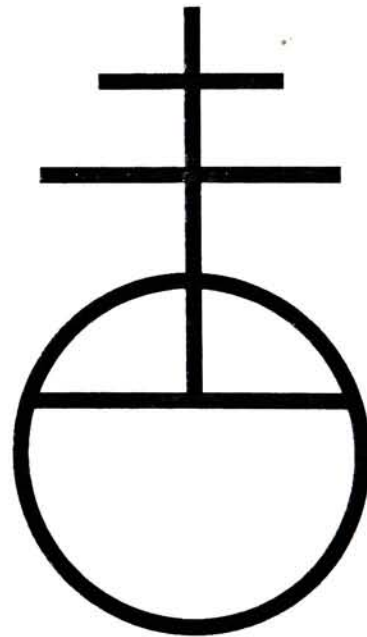
To complete the presentation, I wanted to include several interior perspective views of the Inn. This seemed an opportune area in which to incorporate my minor in computer graphics as well as my undergraduate experience in photography. I decided that I would digitize several of the photographs which I had taken during my stay at the Inn in December, and modify them on a Genigraphics PGP according to my planned design. Furniture was created on an IBM PC and laid out according to my plan. The plots of these layouts were also digitized and overlaid onto the modified

views of their respective rooms.

Once the modifications were complete, each new room was photographed from the computer screen (after several attempts to use the Genigraphics internal camera resulted in unacceptable exposures) and the black and white images were printed. I then ran the prints through a sepia toner and hand colored the prints. Many of the photographs of the Inn which I had discovered during my research were hand colored sepia postcards, and this was another way of alluding to the historical in my presentation.

The interior views were mounted on boards along with the 'before' photographs and the corresponding carpet designs which I printed from slides onto Ilford Cibachrome print material.

The introduction for the presentation was written using Macwrite and laser printed. The laser printed document was also photocopied onto parchment and mounted, accompanied by a photograph of the exterior of the Inn.



The mark of the Roycroft Craftsman

Introduction

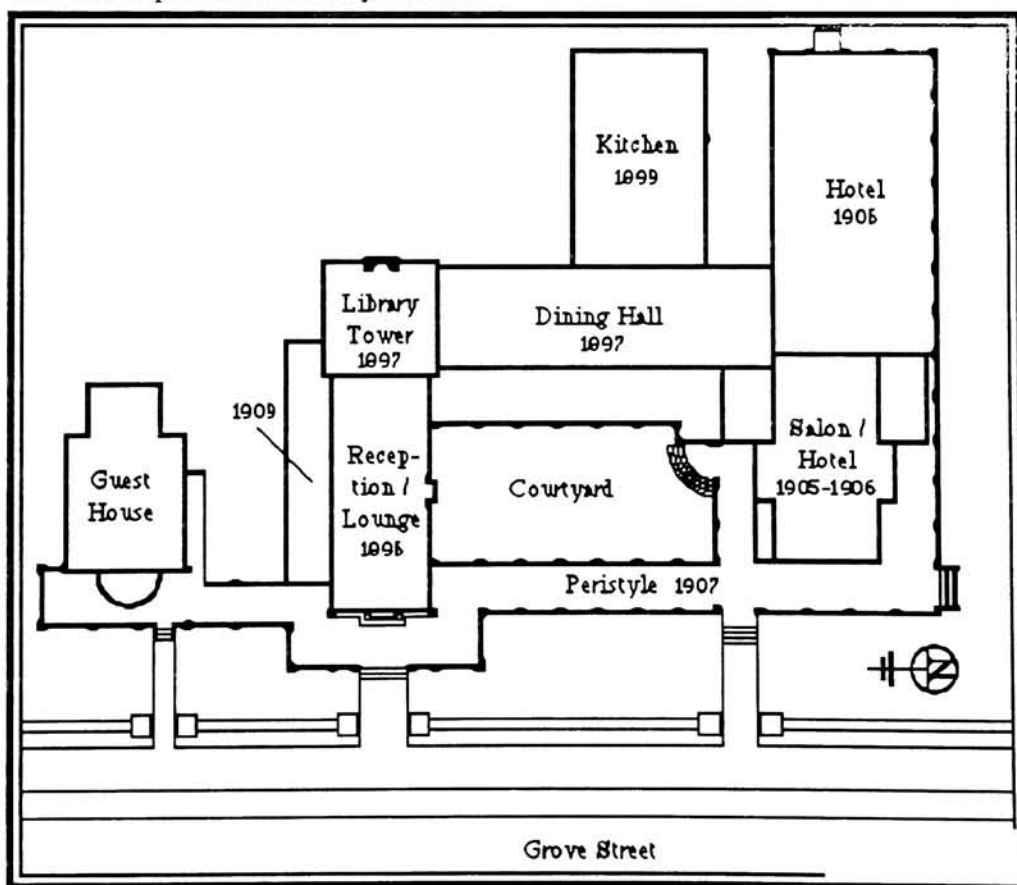
The Roycroft Inn stands as the centerpiece of the Roycroft Campus in East Aurora, New York. Located twenty-five miles southeast of Buffalo, the campus was once a thriving community of printers, artists and craftsmen who sought to bring to Western New York the philosophy of the arts and crafts movement.

The Arts and Crafts movement had its roots in the philosophies of John Ruskin, William Morris and other Europeans whose experiences with the industrial revolution lead them to find an alternative to what they perceived as 'wage slaves' (from Karl Marx) working to produce products of dubious quality with the assistance of

machinery. Morris focused on the design and handmade production of goods ranging from publications and wallcoverings to furniture. Unfortunately, his experiment in handmade production was only a partial success in that the demechanization which he demanded lead to higher prices which excluded the disadvantaged whom he had intended to benefit from his practices.

The influence of William Morris and the arts and crafts movement was brought to Western New York by Elbert Hubbard, a former executive of the Larkin Soap Company in Buffalo. (*Note: While Frank Lloyd Wright is considered by some to have been a part of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and while he did design the*

The development of the Roycroft Inn



headquarters of the Larkin Soap Company, there is no evidence that Hubbard and Wright ever met. The only work that Wright did for Larkin during the time in which Hubbard was with the company was to design toilet partitions in the company's restrooms.) During a trip to England in 1894, Hubbard met Morris and was so taken with his work that, upon return to East Aurora, he began publishing The Philistine- A Periodical of Protest with the help of White and Wagoner's Pendeniss Press in East Aurora. The reaction to his publication was so strong that, in 1896, Hubbard bought out White and Wagoner and began The Roycroft Press (a name taken from the seventeenth century bookbinders Samuel and Thomas Roycroft). In that same year, Hubbard erected a building to house his printing operations. Modeled after a chapel he had seen in Grasmere, England, the Roycroft Print Shop is now a part of the Roycroft Inn.

As his following grew, (Hubbard promised room and board to all who came to see him, as well as employment for those who desired work) it became necessary to find room for all who came. Additions were made to the print shop to accommodate guests who were now too numerous to put up in his own house next to the shop. In early 1897, a three story tower was added to the back of the shop with a first floor library and second and third floor guest rooms. Later that same year, a dining hall was erected stretching from the tower to Hubbard's back door. A third addition was added to the back of the dining hall in 1899 to house a kitchen large enough to feed the many workers and guests in the

hall.

In 1899, Hubbard attained international recognition for a piece of his writing which was published in "The Philistine". The essay, "A Message to Garcia" elevated Hubbard into favor with captains of industry and political leaders with its theme of accomplishment through dedication. Men and women such as Henry Ford, Booker T. Washington, Clarence Darrow, John D. Rockefeller, Clara Barton, and Carl Sandburg as well as 'ordinary' citizens began to visit East Aurora to meet Hubbard and view his operations.



After his divorce in 1904, Hubbard married his long time mistress Alice Moore, who became manager of the operations at the Inn. In 1905, the house that Hubbard had shared with his first wife and children was torn down and a salon was erected on the original foundation. The salon served as a meeting room, for lectures and for concerts. An addition to the salon, in the form of two additional floors and a rear wing was erected in 1906 and contained guest

rooms for the many visitors to Roycroft as well as many of the workers at the campus.

In 1907, a peristyle was added to connect the various parts of the Inn as well as the house next to the print shop. This 'Guest House' was used for prominent visitors such as Henry Ford, who traveled with an entourage of people more easily housed in the same space. The peristyle took the form of a sleeping porch along the sides of all three floors of the hotel. In his back to nature tradition, Hubbard believed that, winter or summer, one would sleep better outside the confines of the hotel walls.

1909 saw the last Roycroft addition to the Inn in the form of a small block added to the side of the original print shop to house Alice's office and several small support rooms.

With all of the additions to the Inn, a need for furniture arose, and Hubbard determined that it would be better to make it than to buy it. A furniture shop was opened in 1905 to build all of the necessary furnishings for the Inn. Additionally, a copper shop, blacksmith shop, and power house were erected on the campus to help support the Roycroft operation.

The furniture built for the Inn was simple in design and of high quality construction.

Unlike Morris, Hubbard made concessions to the machine age in order to cut costs and speed production. Visitors to the Inn were so taken with the design and quality of the furniture that, besieged by requests to buy the pieces, Hubbard was soon in the furniture business. Catalogs of Roycroft furniture and accessories were distributed around the country to market the primarily oak 'mission' furniture (a description which Hubbard rejected). Today, it is the Roycroft furniture, accessories, and lighting fixtures which are most responsible for keeping the Roycroft name alive, and their collectibility has recently sent prices for original pieces skyrocketing.

After the death of Elbert and Alice Hubbard aboard the torpedoed *Lusitania* in 1915, management of the Roycroft Colony was taken over by Elbert Hubbard II. The Colony continued to operate, but suffered from the lack of the elder Hubbard's charisma. The Great Depression effectively put an end to the organization, as debts were paid through the sale of the various buildings on the campus.

The Inn operated continuously throughout this period, going through a progression of owners until bankruptcy forced its closure in 1987, one year after being designated a National Historic Landmark. In order to save the Inn and its increasingly valuable

collection from auction, the Margaret Wendt Foundation of Buffalo approached the Landmark Society of Western New York to act as caretaker of the building until a developer could be found to restore the Inn. The capital necessary to purchase and maintain the Inn was provided by the foundation along with governmental grants and loans.

The future of the Roycroft Inn is currently still unsure. Negotiations are ongoing between the Town of East Aurora, the non-profit organization which will hold the title and lease to the property, the Landmark Society, and a Boston developer who has expressed an interest in restoring the building both physically and operationally.

The Thesis

The purpose of the following project was to examine the Inn in its current state and in its original condition and find a common ground which was true to its origin but was, at the same time, operationally viable.

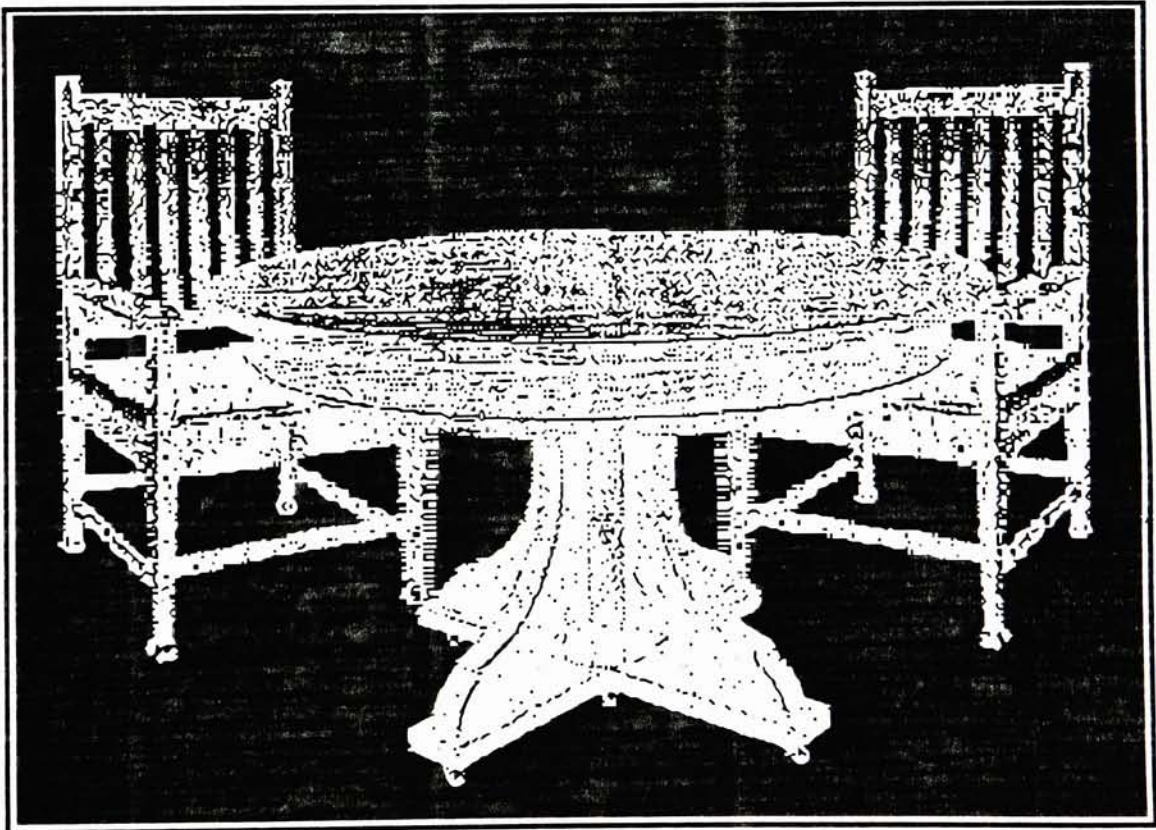
It is more out of community need than historical accuracy that I elected to design the building for continued use as an inn. During interviews with officials of the Town of East Aurora, it became clear that there is a need for hotel, restaurant and banquet/conference facilities in the town.

At the present time, visitors to East Aurora's many businesses (including the world

headquarters of Fisher Price and Moog, with its many government contracts) must find lodging near Buffalo and travel 20 to 30 minutes to East Aurora. Additionally, there is a demand for tourist rooms at the Roycroft Inn, with requests for reservations coming in on a regular basis even after nearly three years of being closed. Recent interest in things Roycroft as well as other attractions (such as skiing, the annual Toyfest in East Aurora, and other western New York destinations) make the Inn viable providing its facilities are updated.

Banquet/conference facilities are virtually nonexistent in East Aurora at the present time. James Berg, director of the East Aurora Chamber of Commerce must schedule his group's monthly meetings in nearby villages where such facilities are available.

Additionally, weddings, conferences, holiday parties, and weekend retreats could,



Roycroft table and chairs from an early catalog of Roycroft furnishings

as they have in the past, become a part of the business at the Roycroft.

East Aurora has very few restaurants (and virtually none if one does not desire spaghetti or pizza), and only one which might be considered worthy of special occasion dining. In such a relatively affluent community, it would seem that a market exists to support the addition of a quality facility.

While endeavoring to fulfill the needs of the community, it is also necessary to bear in mind the historic nature of the building. While it is inevitable that some changes to the historic fabric of any building will need to take place during a renovation, it is most desirable that those changes be kept to a minimum. While in cases where a building will be operated as a museum, this is not necessarily the case, in a project such as this one, where the building must be used by contemporary society, a certain amount of compromise must be reached in order to make the operational element of the design a success.

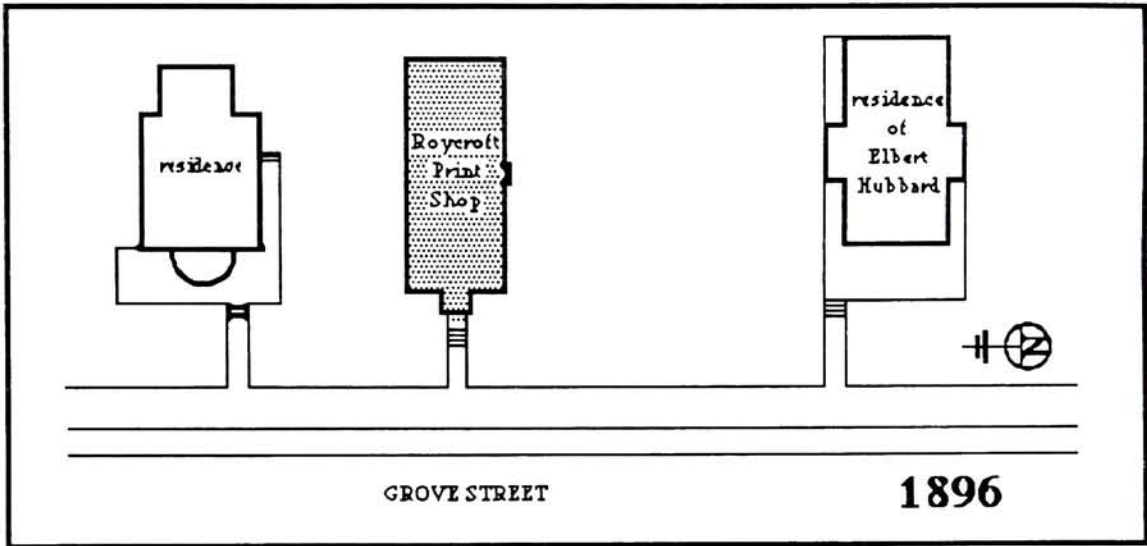
The piecemeal manner in which the building developed creates difficulty in precisely determining the period to which the Inn would ideally be restored. It is my decision that the restoration attempt to convey the period of time just before Hubbard's death. In 1915 the entire building had been constructed and the Roycrofters were in their prime. Many photographs from the period of 1900 to 1915 are still in existence to act as guides in the restoration.

In the Roycroft Inn, alterations have been carried out over the years, not always in the best interest of the historic portion of the building. Environmental controls,

plumbing facilities, decorating schemes, and camouflage for deteriorating conditions have been added without concern for how they fit the building or the philosophical base upon which it was built. It is desirable that these be corrected, and it is the goal of the following sections to suggest ways in which these corrections might be carried out while maintaining the goals set forth in the preceding portion of this paper.

While it is admittedly sometimes more financially advantageous to compromise against the historic precedents set by the building, that is not as much of a concern with this structure due to its status as a National Historic Landmark. Much of the charm of the building, which is its greatest potential attraction, has been compromised and should be restored if only to perpetuate a reason for travelers to end up on the Inn's doorstep. But more importantly, it is necessary to preserve historic buildings such as this, in as accurate a condition as possible, so that future generations may have the pleasure of experiencing what so many now take for granted.

The remainder of this report is written as a guideline to those who might wish to benefit from the time which I have devoted to this building. The recommendations contained therein are offered based upon the information which I have gathered and the thought which I have given to the potential of the building. The suggestions are only one solution to the problems which exist, but I believe they are worthy of consideration.



The Reception/Lounge

Recommendations:

History

The area of the Inn currently known as the Reception/Lounge was the original Roycroft print shop. This was the portion of the Inn which was built based upon the design of the church in Grasmere, England to house Hubbard's printing operations. After the Roycrofters opened the large print and bindery shop across the street, this room was used as a lounge and reception room for the Inn.

During the period from 1950 to 1980, many changes occurred to this room. As stated earlier, the stairway at the east end of the room (added in 1897) was torn away to open up the space to the library / dining room. Ceiling tiles were added between the trusses to hide new mechanical installations and (presumably) to conserve heat. The walls were recovered with cheap paneling which was subsequently covered with rough stucco. A large bar was also installed.

Use

This plan calls for continued use of the room as a reception room for the restaurant. It would no longer be a spot to go specifically to drink and the bar would be removed. A smaller service bar located in 'Alice's office' would provide drinks to patrons and a cocktail server would be employed to service those in the lounge.

The ceiling

The dropped ceiling would have to be removed. The drama created by the open trusses is significant for this space and should be restored. The original bead-board ceiling (above the tiles) appears to be in good condition and probably needs only minor restoration work. The finish should be left with only a dark stain and possible protective varnish.

Removal of the dropped ceiling would necessitate relocation of the mechanicals to

the floor. The sprinkler system could be left intact, as it is more unobtrusive than the ductwork.

Flooring

As is the case in most other areas of the Inn, the floor should be covered in wall to wall carpet. It is my opinion that this treatment is more serviceable and practical than the existing hardwood or potentially hazardous area rugs. While large heavy rugs present little hazard, the typically smaller, lighter weight rugs of the Navajo would have a greater tendency to slide or curl up, presenting a situation which could lead to injuries resulting from tripping over raised edges.

The Inn was originally furnished with Navajo rugs, and it is my recommendation that Navajo designs be utilized through adaptation to wall to wall carpet throughout the Inn. I include herein several examples of such carpets of my own design.

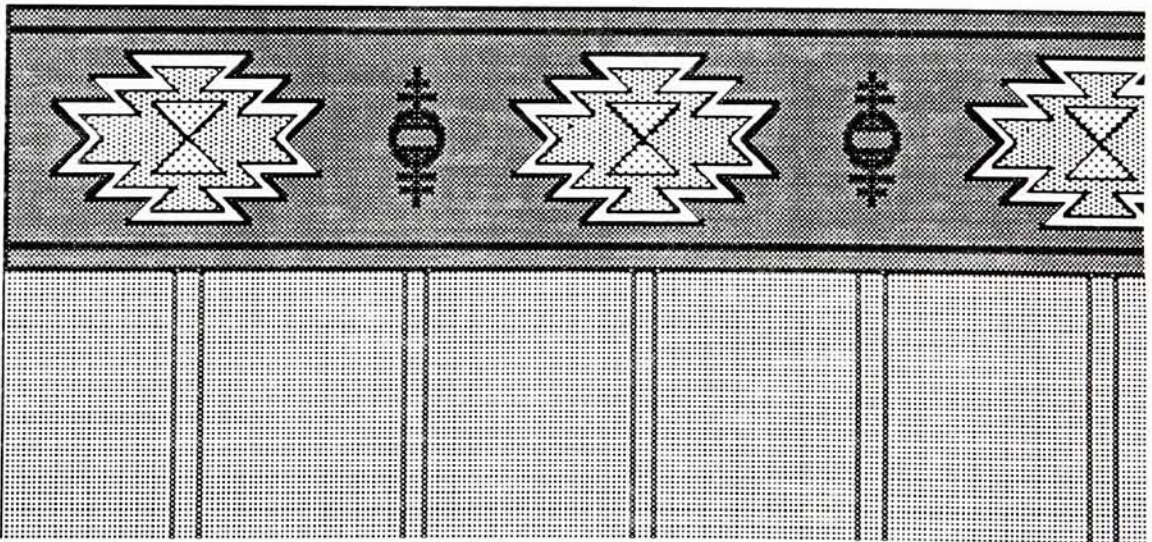
The flooring in the vestibule might be of slate. This material would be consistent with the use of natural materials found

throughout the Roycroft Campus and at the same time be resistant to the elements which would be tracked in from outside.

Walls

The current wall surface needs to be stripped down to either the underlying plaster or wainscoting. If wainscoting is found, as may be the case based upon early photographs of the print shop, it warrants restoration. In the more likely event that plaster is found it could be covered as follows:

Documents indicate that the original wallcoverings of the Inn were burlap seamed with strips of leather and tacks. There is a product called Flexi-wall which would yield a very similar appearance. Flexi-wall (fire rating class A) is made of plaster-impregnated burlap and is applied in such a way that it bonds to the substrate-- at once strengthening, repairing, and covering what could be weak and cracked plaster. The seams of the Flexi-wall (which will probably be inconspicuous anyway) should be covered by 1 1/4"



Proposed carpet pattern comprised of Navajo motifs and an adaptation of the Roycroft mark

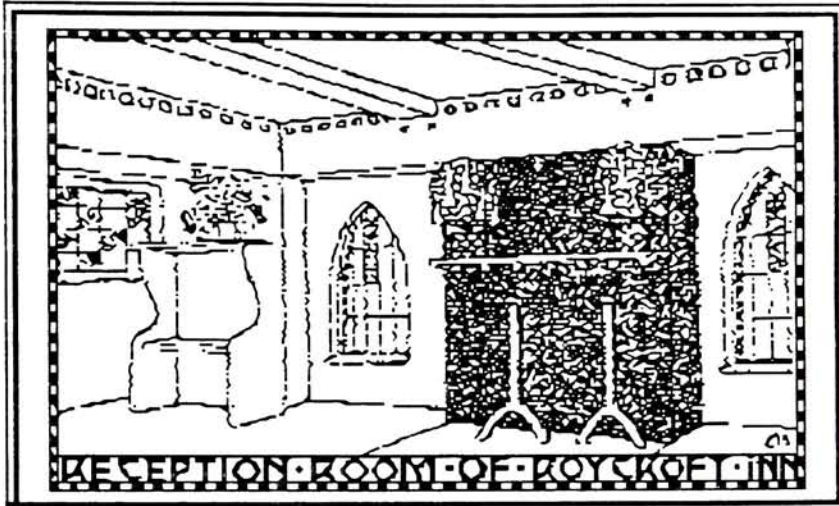


Illustration by Roycrofter Dard Hunter. Hunter worked with both the Roycrofters and the Weiner Werkstatte in Vienna

strips of leather with hammered headed tacks every four inches.

Mechanicals

As stated earlier, it is necessary for the open atmosphere of the room that the air handling equipment be moved from its present location in the ceiling, to a less obtrusive one under the floor. The existing sprinkler system may remain in its location above within the structure of the trusses. Little could be done to conceal the system but its impact upon the quality of the space will be minimal. The small size of the hardware involved along with a color approximating that of the ceiling above and its intrusion would be barely noticeable.

Furnishings

The use of original Roycroft furniture would be ideal throughout the Inn, were it not for two major drawbacks:

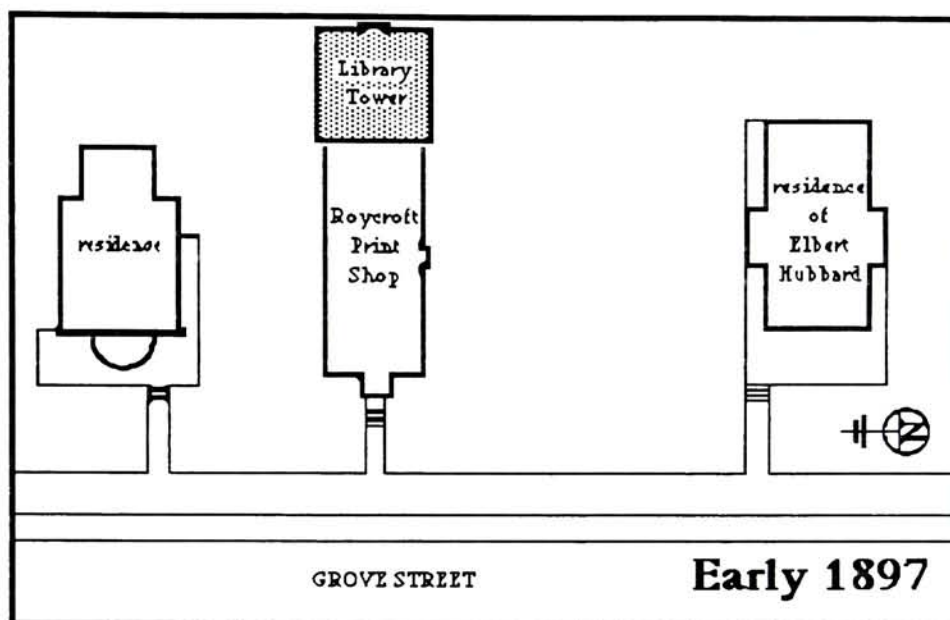
1) The huge expense involved in locating, purchasing, restoring, and

insuring such furniture and,

2) The lack of comfort provided by the Roycroft seating.

In the reception room however, it is important to try to recreate the Roycroft atmosphere, for the physical characteristics of the room itself cannot be denied the simplicity with which the Roycrofters would have treated the space. Under this plan, the reception room would be the first impression of the Inn for the many people who would travel to dine or find lodging in the building. Among these would be many whose purpose for visiting the Inn would be a love of or interest in things Roycroft.

Therefore, it is recommended that the furnishings of the reception / lounge be kept strictly Roycroft originals or, if necessary, reproductions. Because this room will act as a waiting area, or a place where one's stay would be relatively brief, the long term comfort of the seating would be of only minor concern.



The Library

History

The library is part of the building which was constructed in early 1897 as an addition to the print shop (reception / lounge). The addition is a three story tower comprised of the library on the first floor, the Morris Room on the second floor, and the Ruskin Room on the top floor.

The addition was made as a result of the need to house visitors to the Roycroft Colony who, until that time, had been given lodging in Elbert Hubbard's own home across the lawn. While the two upper floors are documented to have been used for this purpose, it is unclear how the 'library' was used. Because of its location behind the print shop, it may be assumed that its use was related to the production of the Roycroft printed materials.

Other than the archway which was opened up when the staircase in the reception room was removed, few major modifica-

tions have been made in the library. Only the rough stucco over plywood paneling, which finds its way into nearly all the public areas of the Inn, stands out as an unoriginal treatment.

Recommendations:

Use

In recent years, the library has been used as one of the dining rooms of the restaurant. One might speculate that, based upon its proximity to the reception room, this use might extend back into the Roycrofter's time. Whether that is the case or not, the need for dining space in the Inn is present and there is little reason to alter the use of the library.

Because of the atmosphere of the room, with its dark, coffered ceiling, stone fireplace, and relatively small size -- yielding a cozy, intimate environment -- the library is best suited for dinner. It should, ideally, be used primarily for dinners and overflow from the other rooms at breakfast and lunch.

Ceiling

The ceiling appears to be in excellent condition, and except for the removal of what appears to be only one or two coats of paint, needs no attention. Paint removal should be carried out and the underlying wood finished to match the boxed beams.

Flooring

As in the reception room, carpeting incorporating Navajo motifs is recommended.

Walls

As mentioned, the stucco and paneling need to be removed, with the walls treated as in the reception / lounge.

Mechanicals

The sprinkler system may remain. A large air handling unit which is now suspended from the ceiling must be removed and replaced with ductwork under the floor.

Furnishings

There are enough armless Roycroft dining chairs in the collection at the Inn to furnish the library. Most of the chairs have been altered by the addition of padding and vinyl screwed onto their backs. This must be removed and the chairs restored, if possible. For the sake of comfort, and also to camouflage the damage caused by the installation of the existing padding, tie on padding may be added to the backs of the chairs. Upholstery could conceivably utilize a fabric created from a design by William Morris. Many such patterns exist and would not be entirely out of place in the Inn in light of charges of plagiarism lodged against Hubbard by Morris' widow, who found the work of the Roycrofters to be extremely derivative of her husband's work. Mrs. Morris refused several invitations from Hubbard to visit the Roycroft Colony after her husband's death.

Tables in the room might also be Roycroft, although few are currently in the collection. Because of the atmosphere of the room and ease of maintenance, tablecloths would be appropriate here -- negating the need to be authentic in the table selection.



The Morris Room

History

The Morris Room, named for William Morris, is one of the aforementioned guest rooms. Located on the second floor of the library tower, the room contains a fireplace, large walk-in closet and a full bathroom. The entrance to the room is at the top of the staircase in the reception room.

Recommendations:

Use

The use of the Morris Room is limited due to the the main stairs as its only means of egress. It is not a space which can be recommended for use by visitors as a guest room. Not only is egress a problem, but the location over the dining room would make it a potentially noisy and unpleasant room in which to relax.

The option which is adopted here is the use of the room for hire to small groups for meetings and private parties. The existing plumbing would lend the possibility of a private bar and handicapped access would not pose a problem because there are other rooms in the Inn which would be available for the same use. While this is also true for use as a guest room, the potential noise above the public space still makes that use undesirable.

Service to the room would be awkward via the main staircase. It would be possible to install a service stair at the end of Hubbard Hall in the proposed service circulation area. The stair would rise to a door centered on the south wall of the Morris Room. A dumbwaiter might also be used, and is included in the plan though the cost effectiveness of this is doubtful based upon research into food service in multi-level facilities.

Ceiling

Little documentation has been found revealing what the original materials of the Morris Room might have been, but it is reasonably safe to assume that there would be a consistency with the rooms above and below it. It is, therefore, likely that behind the gypsum board on the walls and ceiling is wainscoting which must be exposed and restored. If this is not the case, the use of plaster could be made here.

Flooring

Because this would not be a high traffic room, it is appropriate that the hardwood floors be refinished and the use of one large rug incorporating the Navajo motifs be placed on it, allowing the floor to be exposed sixteen inches around the perimeter of the room.

Walls

As with the ceiling, the existing material needs to be examined to determine what is behind it. Wainscoting must be exposed and restored or Flexiwall could be used over the existing wallboard in the absence of the wainscoting.

Mechanicals

The air handling unit which is now suspended from the ceiling must be removed and ductwork run up to the room. The ducts could be run through the proposed service space at the end of Hubbard Hall (see Kitchen), where the above mentioned stairs are to be located.

Furniture

The chairs could be original Roycroft treated as in the Library. Tables need not be Roycroft as they would probably be covered by tablecloths at most times the room is in use.

The Larkin Room

History

The Larkin Room, named for the Larkin Soap Company where Hubbard made his fortune, was originally a part of the peristyle. The time at which it was enclosed is unclear, although the existing windows suggest that it was probably during the 1960s, when so many of the changes in the building occurred. The room has most recently been used as a dining room.

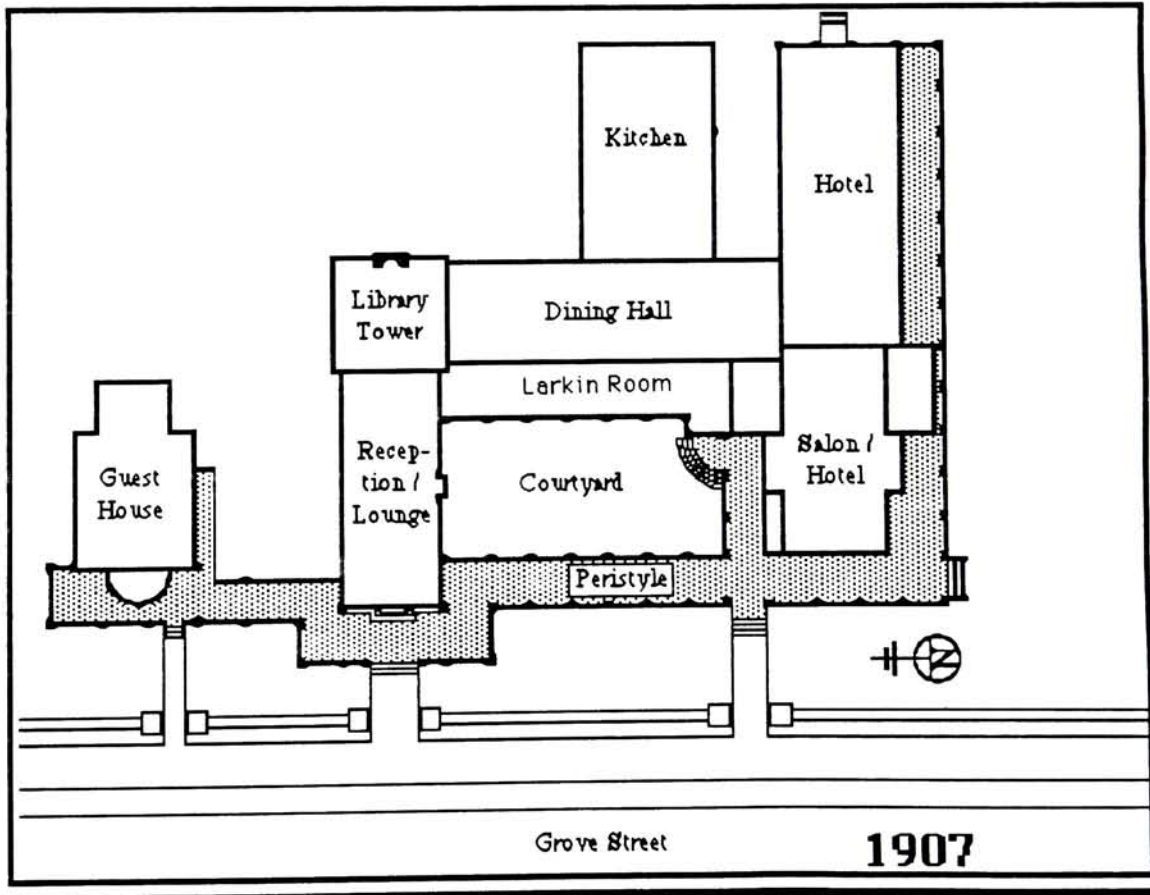
Recommendations:

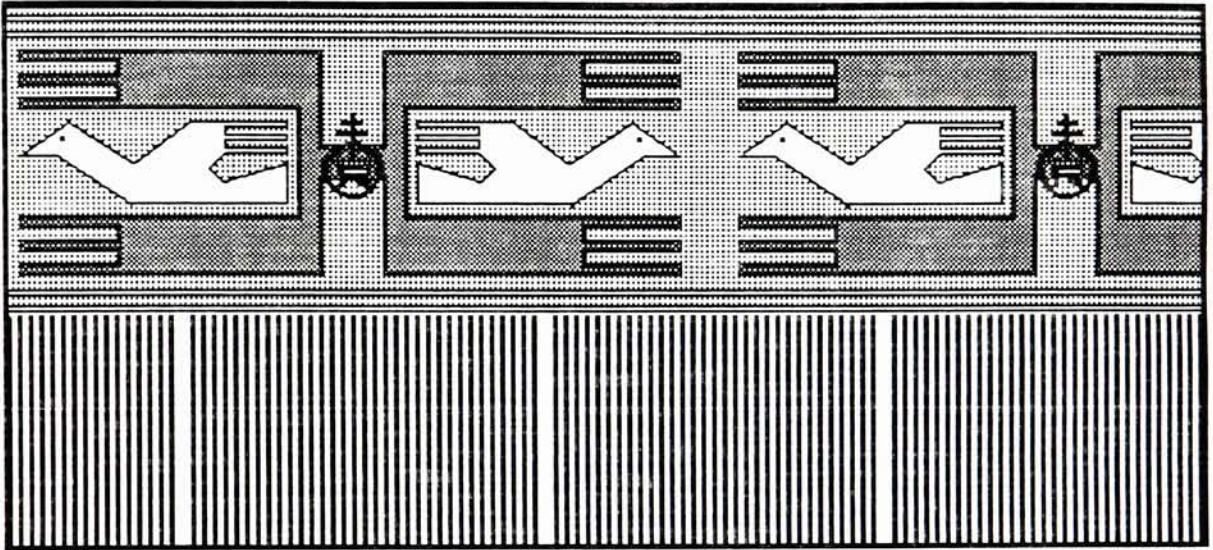
Use

Because there is a need for dining space in the Inn, this room would most appropri-

ately remain a dining room. The view into the courtyard would be spectacular at nearly all times of the year and proper lighting would extend that attraction into the hours of darkness. With the openness of the room, it would be an ideal place for guests at the Inn to enjoy breakfast, and its western exposure would rule out being blinded by the sun in the morning. The direct sun would be a problem in the afternoon and early evening, but would be easily remedied by the use of canvas awnings over each window-- an addition which would be historically correct, as there are many photographs which document the use of awnings on the Inn.

The Larkin Room would also serve nicely as a reception room for events scheduled in Hubbard Hall, although its use in this respect would have to be limited to times at which it was not needed for food service.





Recommended carpet pattern utilizing Navajo motifs and the Roycroft craftsman's mark

Ceiling

As with the other materials mentioned in this section, the information regarding the ceiling comes from observing the materials used in the other areas of the peristyle. In those other areas, the ceiling is sheathed with the same bead board used in the Ruskin Room and is presumed to exist in the other previously mentioned rooms of the Inn. Removal of the material now on the ceiling might reveal the original ceiling, which will undoubtedly need to be restored. If the original materials have been removed, the board is readily available in the same dimensional configuration as the original and could be used on the ceiling.

Flooring

As in the other public rooms the flooring needs to be carpeted, for the previously mentioned reasons.

Walls

Because it is the intent for this room to re-

semble an outdoor space, as it was originally, the walls will have to be restored to their original materials. On the walls which separate the Larkin Room from Hubbard Hall, the reception room, and the foyer (originally exterior walls) the materials should be that of the rest of the building's exterior-- shingles. These will be painted to match the color chosen for the rest of the building's exterior walls (currently an ochre tone but it is most likely that the original color was between olive and kelly green).

The walls along the courtyard side of the room were originally open to the courtyard and must again be opened to the courtyard. This will involve removing the existing windows, whose style is very inappropriate for the building, and the walls surrounding them up to the columns. The resulting opening can be enclosed with insulated glass using as minimal a frame as is possible.

The columns along the wall should be restored to match the other columns of the peristyle, and painted accordingly. To further recall the original atmosphere of

the room, the area of the wall below the fenestration must be cleared of the existing material and the original brick exposed.

Mechanicals

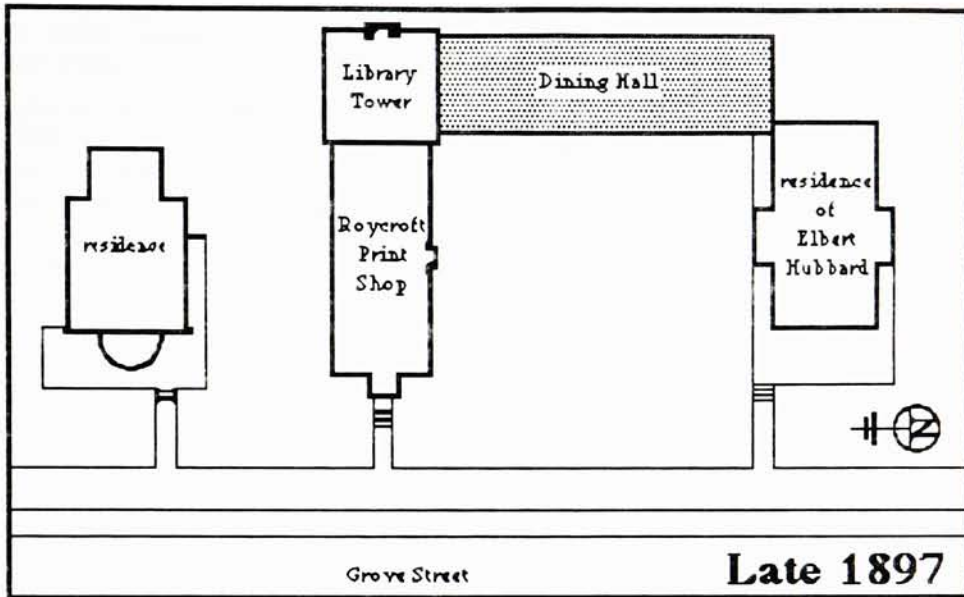
The sprinkler system can be left above the ceiling, as it is now. Ductwork should be moved to the floor, where access from the basement can be easily achieved.

Because this room was originally an outdoor space, it does not sit above the basement, but is open underneath to the outdoors. The piers supporting the structure are spanned by only lattice, allowing the exterior temperature to invade and affect the temperature of the floor. Heavy insulation must be used to avoid the floor being cold-- a complaint of past customers at the Inn. The areas between the piers on the outside and below the floor may be enclosed with masonry covered with lattice. Ideally, a radiant floor could be used if heating to other areas is provided by a boiler. Ductwork would still be necessary for cooling, but the radiant floor would insure that the surface stays warm.

Furniture

As in the other dining spaces, there are enough Roycroft chairs in the collection for them to be used in this space. Here they are especially well suited, since this room will be used as the primary dining room at quick turnover periods when management would not want anyone to feel overly comfortable.

Tables, again, need not be Roycroft pieces, although it is important that they have wood bases, which will be more visible in this room than in the others-- due to the arrangement of furniture which is dictated by the shape of the room.



Hubbard Hall

History

Hubbard Hall was added to the growing Roycroft Inn during late 1897. At that time it spanned the distance between the Library tower and the back porch of Elbert Hubbard's home. The need for such a large room for dining was the result of the growing number of visitors and workers at the Roycroft Campus.

During the 1960s, the tower end of the hall was walled off for the installation of a kitchen. This remodeling was accompanied by the addition of a concrete block structure directly behind the kitchen to create more kitchen space. When one considers the traffic patterns necessary to serve meals in the Library, Larkin Room and Hubbard Hall, it is easy to see why this change in layout was made. Each dining space is directly adjacent to the new kitchen, as opposed to the original kitchen in the wing at the back of Hubbard Hall, which served the original needs adequately when the only dining room was Hubbard Hall.

Recommendations:

Use

The existing kitchen does not sensitively serve the needs of the building in which it is housed. The removal of nearly forty percent of Hubbard Hall dramatically changes the atmosphere of the room and would best be removed to restore the room to its original grand scale. Since service circulation is necessary within the building though, it is necessary that a compromise be found, as relocation of the Kitchen back to its original area would isolate it from all but Hubbard Hall.

The open trusses spaced down the length of the room serve as reasonable division points and while the kitchen occupies three of the 'segments', the use of only one segment would not impact upon the proportions of the room to nearly the extent that the current layout does. A single, separated section could be used for service circulation, as it allows access to all dining rooms, as well as housing the service stair (and possible dumbwaiter) to the Morris Room. Additionally, there would be room for a service counter (coffee, flat-

ware, ice, water, linens, etc.) and a limited amount of storage.

The remainder of the Hall would best be utilized for large private gatherings such as banquets, meetings and conferences, and wedding receptions. Depending upon the layout of the room, occupancy could be up to 200 people.

Ceiling

The existing open structure should remain. This room provides an existing example of what the space in the reception room should eventually become. The material sheathing the ceiling needs to be removed and the original beadboard exposed and restored. If the original material no longer exists, it should be replaced with like material, as in the Larkin Room.

Removal of the existing sheathing will expose several pointed arched dormers which should also be restored. Those on the western side of the room will be blocked from outside light by the roof of the Larkin Room. The installation of lighting in the space above the Larkin Room, designed to illuminate the windows will give them the appearance of being exposed to daylight during the day.

In the case of both this and the reception room, such ceiling treatment leaves no space for insulation, and this should be considered. In both rooms the original material (if existing) would need to be carefully removed and an insulation cavity put in place. The ceiling materials could then be replaced, leaving little clue that a change had been made. While this would be a tedious and expensive process, it would eventually pay for itself in reduced energy costs while maintaining the original design concept.

The trusses will need to be cleaned and restored, especially in the existing kitchen area, where they have undoubtedly become coated with grease.

Flooring

As in other rooms, the flooring finish would ideally be carpet. If the occasion arose for a dance floor, a portable one could be laid down on top of the carpet. Not only would the use of carpet be preferable for previously mentioned reasons, but it would also aid in deadening the acoustics in what is a rather cavernous and 'live' room.

The quarry tile in the kitchen area of the room will need to be removed and the floor sanded smooth before carpet could be placed in the room.

Walls

The walls will have to be stripped of the paneling and stucco as in the other public areas. As in those spaces, original materials should be restored. Plaster, if found to exist, could be repaired and covered with Flexiwall.

Mechanicals

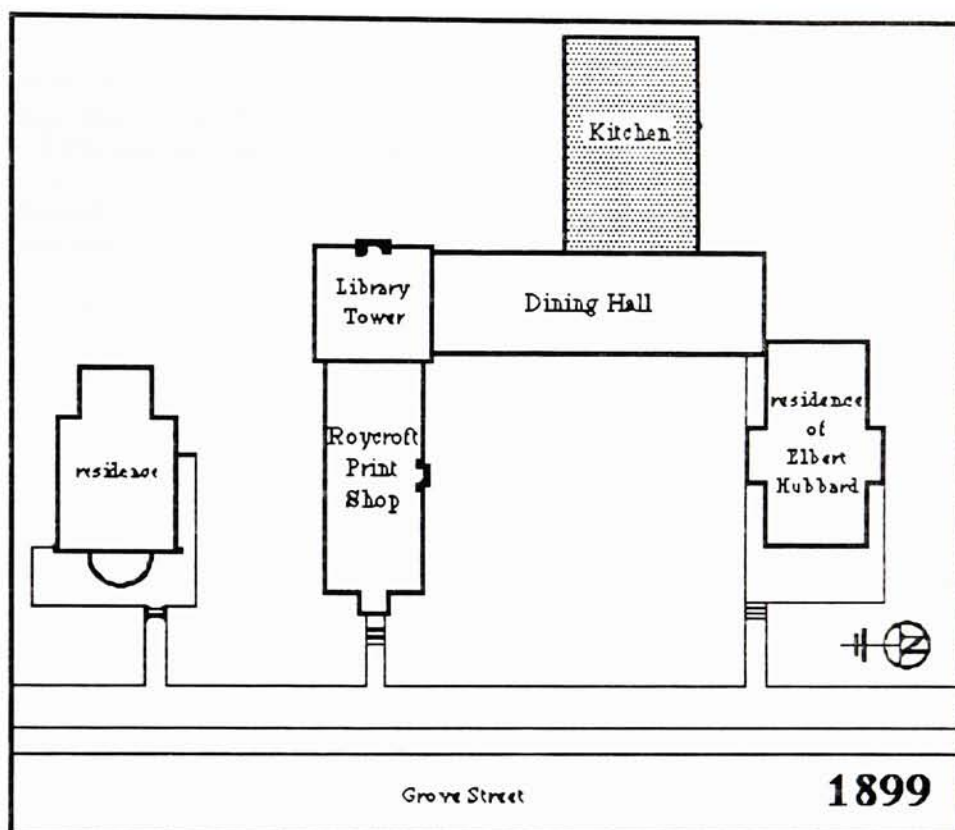
The existing sprinkler can remain, treated as that in the reception room. Ductwork and grilles must be moved from the walls to the floor.

Lighting could be provided by electric stained glass lanterns of the arts and crafts style, and suspended from the trusses.

Furnishings

In this room, original Roycroft pieces must not be used. The necessary flexibility of the space dictates that chairs should either fold or stack and that tables should be collapsible. When selecting the specific chairs, one needs to bear in mind the nature of the Roycroft designs and attempt to find a design suitable to that spirit.

For reasons of acoustics, it will be necessary to hang sound absorbing materials on the walls of the hall. This would be an ideal opportunity to display Navajo rugs.



The Kitchen

History

The proposed area of the kitchen is in a fairly nondescript and historically unimportant area of the building, when compared to the rest of the Inn. It is claimed that the kitchen was added to the Inn by moving a nearby barn to the site and attaching it to the back of Hubbard Hall in 1899 to house kitchen facilities for the ever-growing number of guests at the Roycroft Campus.

The year of 1899 was also the year in which Hubbard published "A Message to Garcia" which brought him worldwide attention with its message of commitment to a goal. The attention greatly increased the number of people who traveled to East

Aurora to meet the writer. Among the visitors were John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, and Booker T. Washington.

When the kitchen was moved to its present location, the original kitchen wing was opened up to Hubbard Hall, creating an 'L' shaped room with reduced functionality when compared with the one long room which preceded its development. The relocation of the kitchen to this wing would not only be more historically accurate, but would also accommodate the better banquet arrangement which originally existed.

Note: The plan which is currently under consideration by the potential developer of the building calls for the removal of the kitchen wing and the

construction of a new kitchen with additional guest rooms on the upper floors. Because of the limited value of this part of the Inn, either historically or architecturally, I cannot find fault with this plan. I had considered a similar plan in the early stages of this project's development, but abandoned the thought in favor of working with the challenges the existing building presented.

Recommendations:

Use

Restoration of the kitchen is by far secondary to its function as a kitchen. Little attention needs to be paid to details of a historical nature, but rather to the details of making the kitchen functional in terms of circulation, preparation, and sanitation.

In addition to the original part of the kitchen, the concrete block addition adjacent to it will be necessary to use as part of the kitchen space. Its use will aid in circulation and food preparation by the additional square footage it will yield.

Ceiling

A false ceiling should be added below the bottoms of the beams. This primarily to aid in cleaning and avoidance of the dust-collecting, horizontal surfaces which are the tops of the beams. The material could be either painted gypsum board or a suspended grid ceiling designed for use in food preparation facilities.

The ceiling in the addition should be treated in a like manner, although it is necessary to raise the height of the walls one or two courses of block to facilitate the drop in the ceiling. The existing roof structure is in terrible condition and will certainly have to be replaced, making its removal an invitation to add the extra height.

Flooring

Resilient sheet goods should be used in all areas of the kitchen for reason of both sanitation and reduced fatigue of the staff. The selected material must be of very high quality in order that it stand up to the heavy use it will receive.

Walls

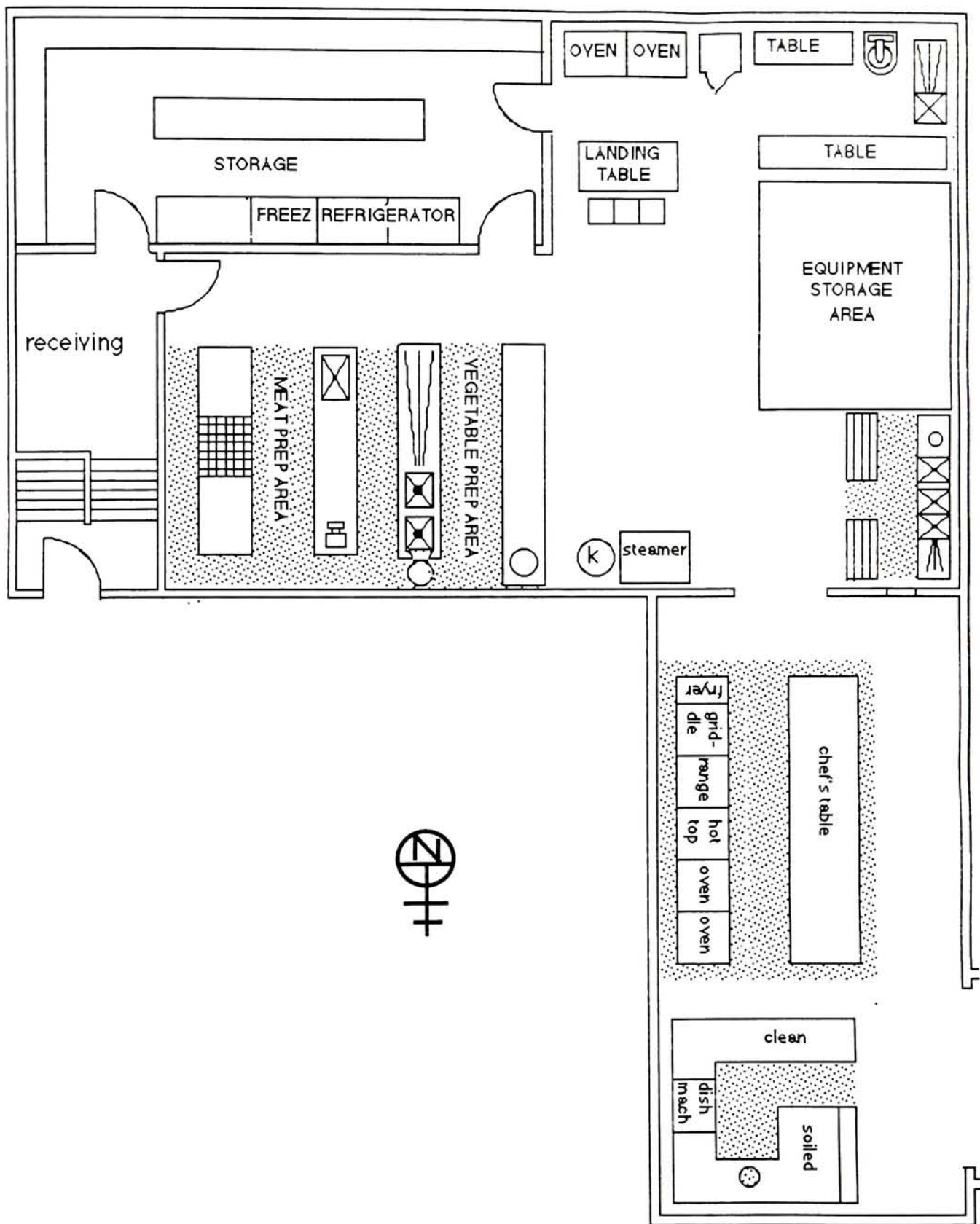
The walls must be covered with a hard, impervious material to aid in cleaning. A plastic or a ceramic material would be ideal.

Mechanicals

The existing sprinkler and ventilation systems can be salvaged, although the latter might need to be replaced due to disrepair.

Climate controls should be handled via a separate furnace and air conditioner to avoid kitchen odors permeating the other areas of the building. Ductwork may run above the ceiling to avoid food items being inadvertently dropped into floor grilles.

The required amount of equipment necessary for food preparation has been calculated based upon maximum expected load in the planned dining and banquet rooms. While it is common for separate kitchens to be used for dining and banquet service, limited space leads to the single kitchen option, which should be able to handle the load effectively.



The kitchen as laid out in the existing space east of Hubbard Hall

The Salon

History

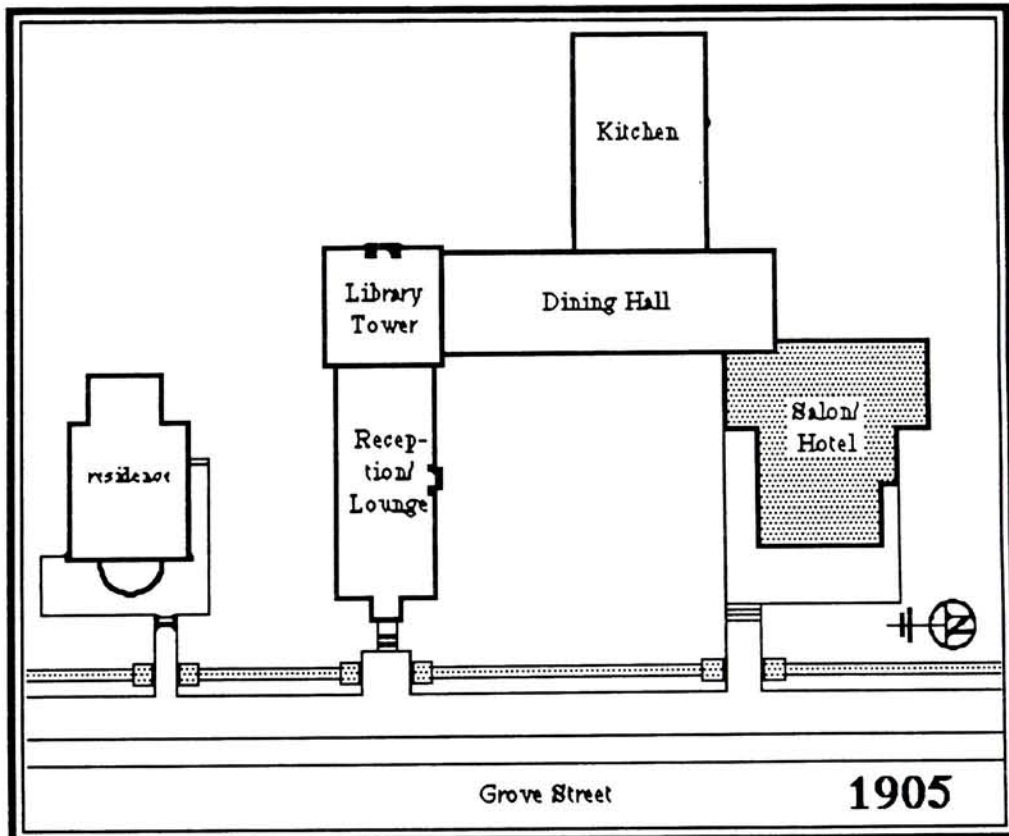
The salon sits on the site originally occupied by the home of Elbert Hubbard, his wife, Bertha, and their children. After his divorce from Bertha in 1904, Hubbard married his long-time mistress, Alice, and the couple moved to a house further down Grove Street.

In 1905, the Hubbard house was razed and the salon built in its place, upon the same foundation. The purpose of the new room was as a gathering place, for lectures and for concerts. It is unclear whether the two stories of guest room which now rest atop the salon were built at the time of the salon or were added later when the hotel was added to the rear of the salon.

Recommendations

The salon poses the greatest challenge of any room in the Inn. While it is far too large to act as a reception room for guests in a hotel with only thirty seven rooms, it is too important a space to be divided into smaller offices, meeting rooms, or retail space. The following solution is one which might be difficult to justify financially, but when combined with the historic, can be argued to be viable.

The portion of the salon between the foyer and the bay across from it would be set aside for use as the hotel lobby proper. While no physical division of the space should be made, furniture placement could act as the division of the room. The remainder of the room would act as a living room for the guests of the Inn. Furnished



with comfortable seating and several sets of tables and chairs, the room would become a place to sit and read, converse or play card and board games. The salon could also function as a place in which to serve afternoon teas, which would be supportive to the atmosphere expected by those who stay at the inn because of an interest in Roycroft. The salon could also be rented out for meetings to local organizations which might find its atmosphere more to their liking than Hubbard Hall.

Kitchen service to the room would be difficult, but for the light fare of teas or continental breakfasts, little service would be necessary and could be carried out via a route from the service area through the Larkin Room, the foyer, and into the salon on a limited basis. This would require that items from the kitchen be presented in the Salon for self or monitored service (i.e. buffet service).

Ceiling

The existing tile should be removed along with the furring strips. It is likely that the plaster above them will need extensive re-

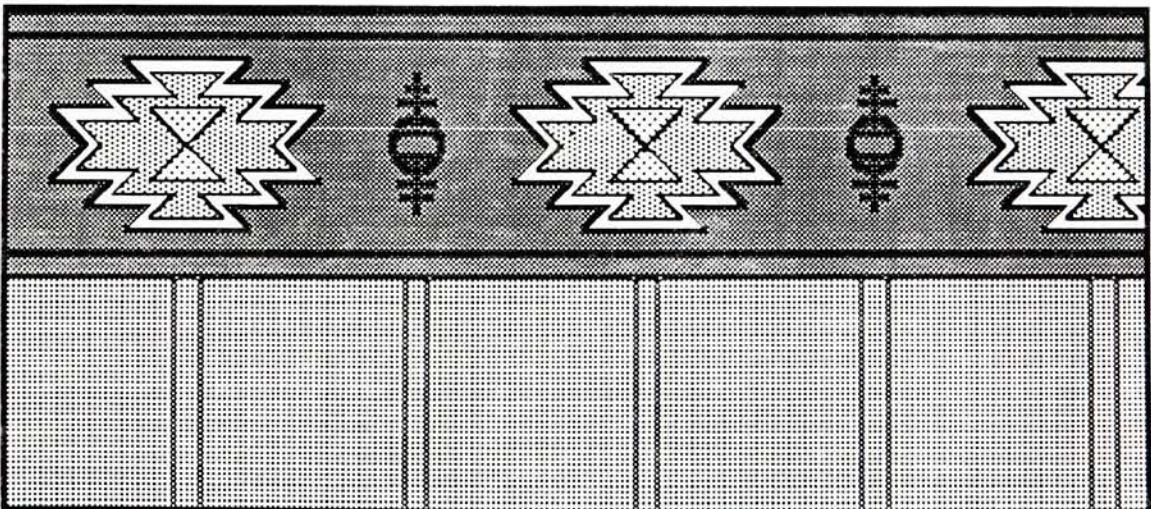
pair, and this must be accomplished in as traditional a manner as possible. Early photographs of the Salon show that exposed beams run across the width of the ceiling and they will also need to be cleaned and repaired as necessary. Their finish should be consistent with the finish on the other exposed beams and trusses in the building. Paint is the finish which is most appropriate for the plaster.

Flooring

As in the other public areas, the floor will be best treated with carpet. A suggested design is included in the appendix under 'The Thesis Show'.

Walls

The lower portion of the walls must be restored by first removing the green wash which was applied over the oak paneling in the 1960s. The color of the restored paneling (and other wood details and trim in the room) should approximate that of the finish that the Roycrofters applied to their furniture.



Recommended design for the carpet in the Salon. The color scheme would be different from the same pattern used in the Reception / Lounge.

Above the paneling around the room are a series of murals painted by Alex Fournier, an original Roycrofter. The murals, depicting the seven wonders of the world, are in need of careful restoration. Several of these will only need cleaning, while others have been heavily damaged by water and by being removed and folded for storage.

Mechanicals

Because of the level of finish in this room, as opposed to that in the other public rooms, the sprinkler system must be relocated above the plaster with only the sprinkler heads exposed. This is currently the case, but the water lines are probably between the plaster and tile ceilings.

Ductwork may remain located in the floor and the boxes on the walls. If during the restoration, the boxed ducts are discovered to be unoriginal (it is unclear from early photographs whether this is the case), they must be removed and the grilles relocated to the floor.

Because photographs show only table lamps used for artificial lighting in the salon, any ceiling fixtures need to be as unobtrusive as possible. Recessed can lights with interior baffles and trim painted to match the ceiling are acceptable.

Furniture

Because the salon is intended to be a comfortable space for the hotel guests, seating must be upholstered and moderately padded. Design simplicity should be utilized in the spirit of Roycroft.

The two sets of tables and chairs, as well as the chairs long the east wall, should be original Roycroft pieces. End tables and coffee tables might also be Roycroft.

Stained glass shaded table lamps must be used on the various end tables. These could be either original or reproduction Roycroft.

The Hotel

History

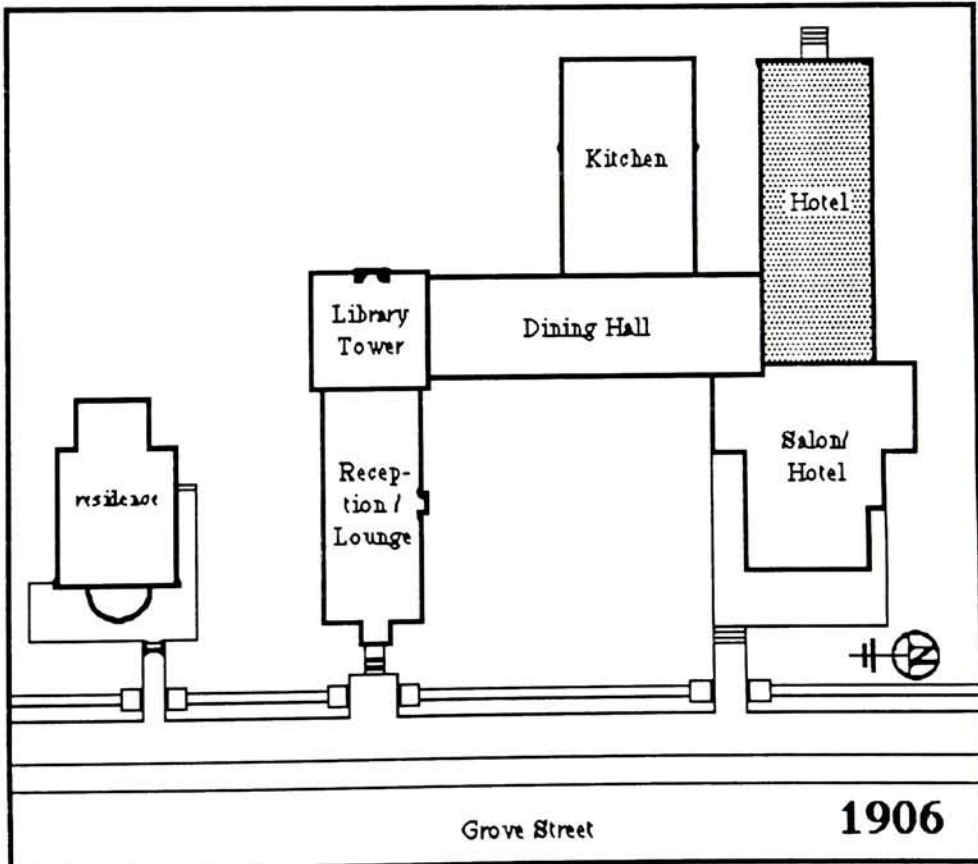
The guest rooms of the Inn are housed in a three story addition which was erected adjacent to and east of the salon in 1906. Additional rooms are located in the two stories above the salon. As stated earlier, it is unclear whether these were built along with the salon, or with the rest of the guest rooms. The lack of access from the salon to those higher floors however, leads to the assumption that they might very well have been built in 1906.

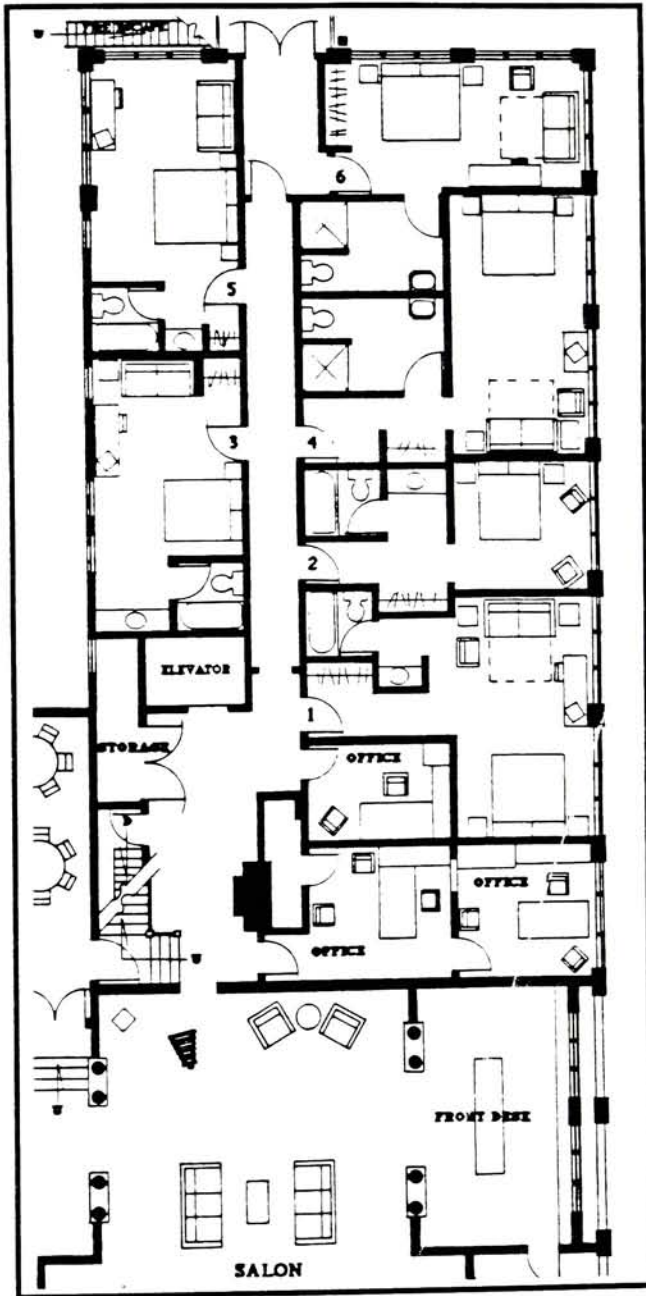
The original guest rooms were comprised of an interior sitting room and an exterior sleeping porch. Due to the consistency of the construction between the peristyle (1907) and the exterior of that portion of the building which contained the sleeping

porches, it is very likely that the porches were not added until 1907. Guests at the Inn were required to use common bath facilities.

Somewhat later, the porches were enclosed and made part of the interior space, creating a suite of sitting room and bedroom. Bath facilities were also added to most of the guest rooms and, in the 1960s, kitchenettes were installed.

Other than the typical finish detail work which needs to be carried out in this portion of the Inn, some reorganization of space is also required. Most of the bathrooms were added on adjacent to exterior walls, robbing some living spaces of the light allowed in through the very large bays of windows on the west, south, and east sides of the building. These should be relocated toward the interior hallway. For





The revised first floor of the Hotel.

the sake of operational convenience, bathrooms need to be added to those rooms which do not currently have such facilities.

Space must also be utilized to the greatest possible extent by increasing the number of guest rooms. This could be accomplished, as mentioned in the Kitchen section, by adding on to the building. An increase in the number of rooms could also be attained by modifying partition locations and subdividing current rooms-- many of which are overly generous and inefficient.

The accompanying plan suggests ways to both relocate and add bath facilities and increase the number of rooms. With an additional constraint of utilizing only existing doorways from the corridor, the increase in rooms is only modest-- from 34 to 37, but preserves what is presumed to be an original corridor arrangement.

The proposed hotel plan contains a wide variety of room arrangements and sizes, guaranteeing that guests will not feel this is just another hotel. Singles, doubles, suites, adjoining rooms, and handicapped accessible rooms are all included in the plan.

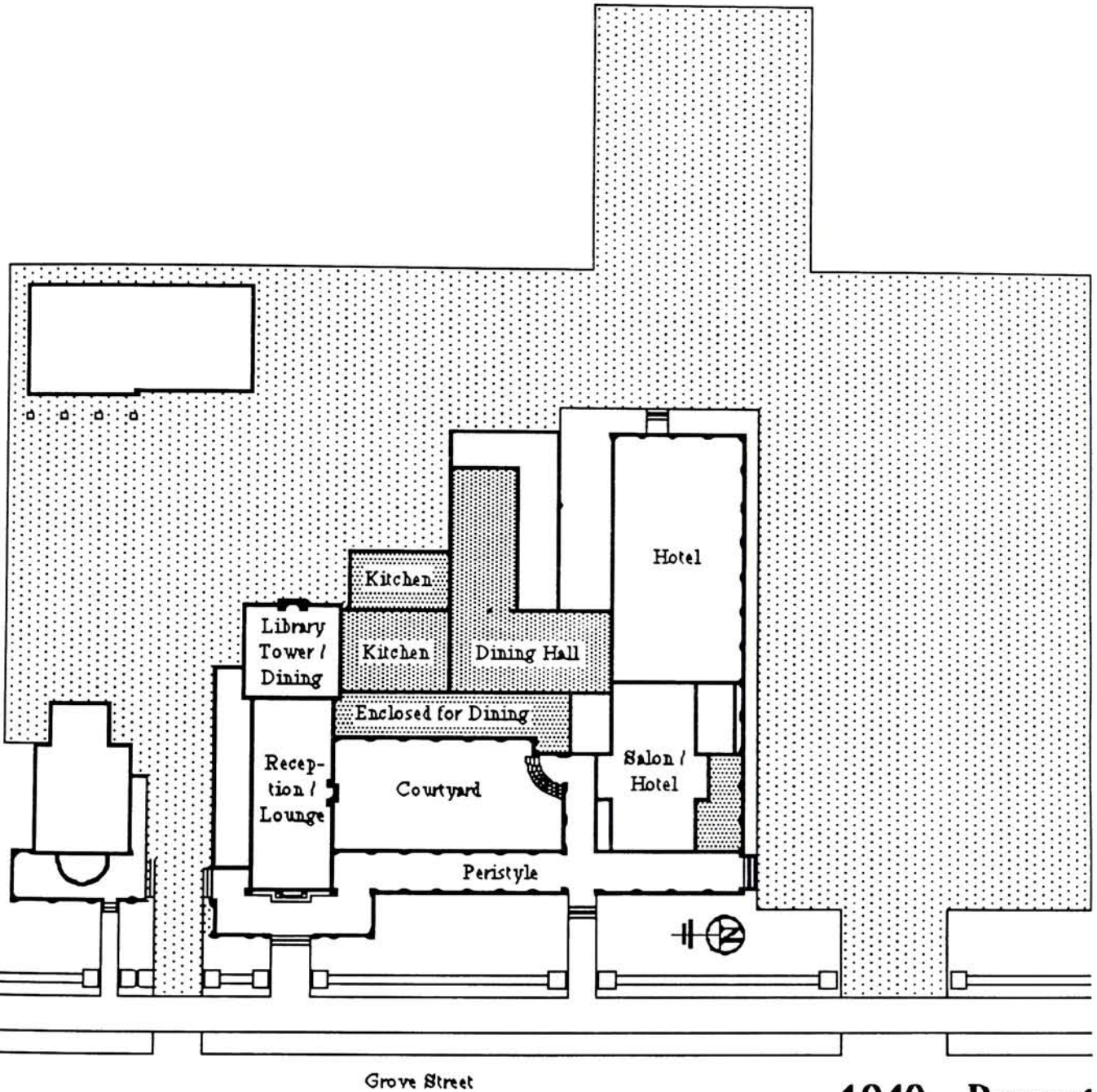
For the convenience of both staff and guests, an elevator has been added in the space originally occupied by a small office or guest room on all three floors. This is the only major change which would be noticeable from the corridor.

The Basement

The basement of the Inn is currently made up of many small rooms, many of which have historically been little or unused. The portion of the basement under the reception / lounge was most recently a bar of the wet T-shirt variety. Originally used by the Roycrofters as a tearoom named 'Twildo' (a contraction for 'it will do'), this portion could be made into another meeting room for special events such as Roycroft lectures, wine tastings, or private parties which do not require extensive catering. The atmosphere of this space, with its exposed beams and fieldstone walls has a rustic charm which could easily be capitalized upon.

The area of the basement underneath the library, Hubbard Hall, and the kitchen combine to form a space which could be used to benefit both the guests at the Inn, the people of East Aurora, and (financially) the operator of the Inn. During interviews with East Aurora officials, it was mentioned that the town, despite its upscale residents, has no health club facilities. Such a facility is designed into this portion of the basement. While lowering of the floor might be necessary for increased headroom, the benefits could be well worth the trouble. Additionally, because there is no space on the property in which to locate a swimming pool (considered to be a major advantage by the hotel industry toward attracting guests), the on-site health club would make up for the absence of a pool.

Access to both the event room and the health club can be easily gained via existing outside entrances to the basement as well as from the hotel elevator. This ease of access is important if one plans to capitalize upon use by the community as well as the guests of the Inn.



1940 - Present

Plan showing changes which occurred to the property after 1940, leading to the current layout. The large shaded area indicates parking areas where the lawn once existed.

Conclusion

The time which I have spent working with the Roycroft Inn has been of benefit to my design education in many ways. It has given me the opportunity to work with an existing building whose colorful and well-documented (through a multiplicity of sources) history provided a great deal of guidance toward what it may once again become. My approach to attain a workable design sometimes fought this history, but the struggle toward compromise enriched the design process and my overall experience. I only regret that there was not an actual client involved in the project, for the realistic input would certainly have enhanced the challenges and the certainty that the final design was a workable design.

The computer processes which were utilized for the thesis presentation proved to be valuable only in that the resulting product created a great deal of attention for my work in the show. The imagery was strong enough to stand on its own and those who spoke to me of it seemed very interested in my process.

That process though, is the undoing of this portion of the project. The amount of time spent generating the images was completely unrealistic for the amount of information which they communicated. Quicker rendering techniques would have served nearly as well and probably taken

one fourth the amount of time to complete.

In May of 1989, after the design portion of this project was complete, I was privileged to meet with the developer currently looking at the realities of the Roycroft and his architect. I presented my plan to them and discussed the various shortcomings of the building.

Copies of my revised floor plans were later forwarded to the developer and in August I was able to look over the plan which the architect had devised. His plan had many similarities to mine, with the exception of the aforementioned replacement of the kitchen wing with a new structure. While the similarities in our two plans might be interpreted as his having taken a shortcut in order to quickly present a plan to the overseers of the Inn, I believe that the correlations serve to support my design.

As of the time of this writing, work has not yet begun nor has an agreement been reached on the future of the Roycroft Inn. The process has been slow, but it is probable that there will be progress made in the near future. I intend to stay in contact with the project, and hope that what I have learned through this thesis may be used to the benefit of the project.

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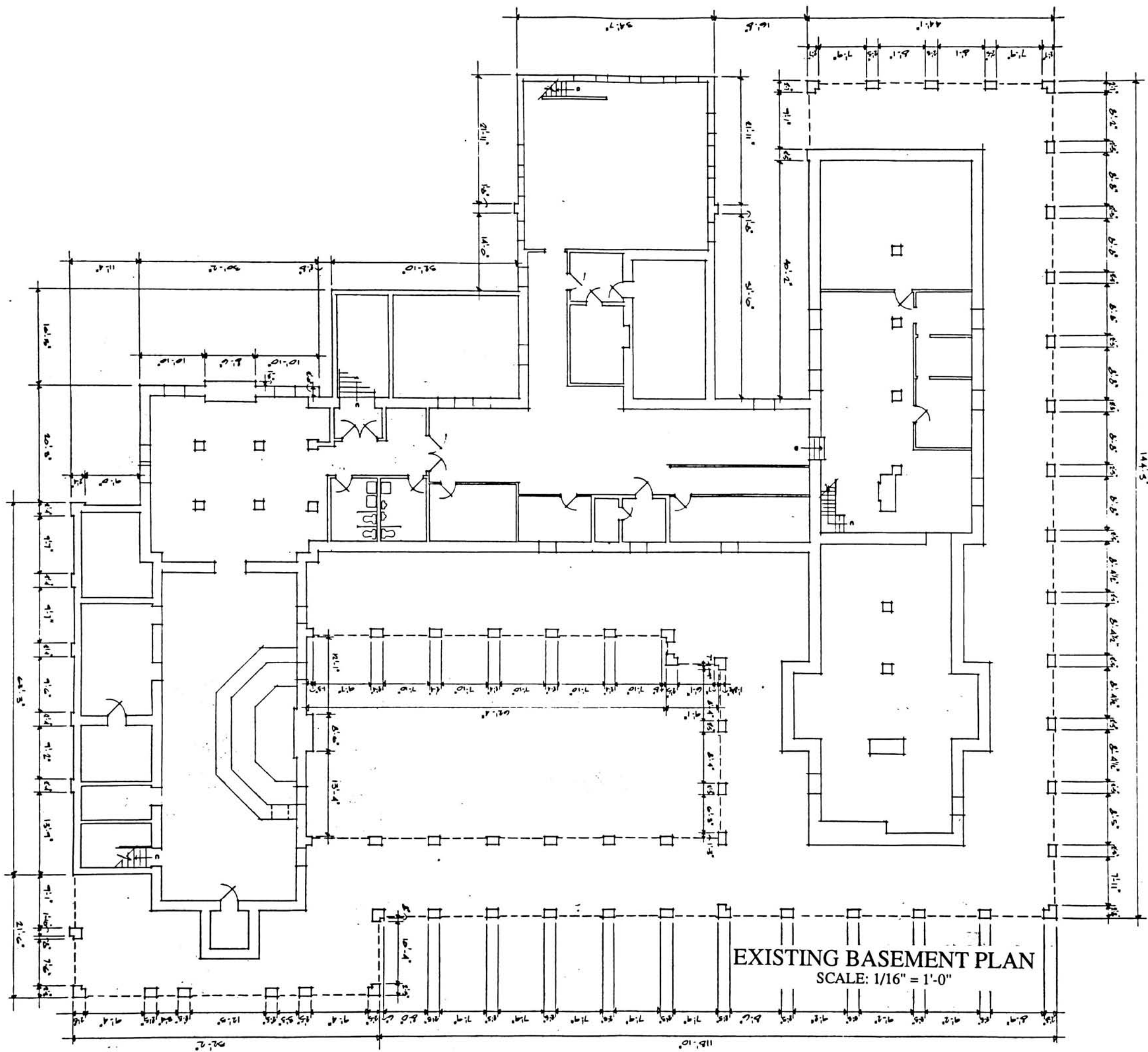
Shay, Felix ; Elbert Hubbard of East Aurora ; William H. Wise & Company, New York ; 1926

Appendix:

The Thesis Show Presentation

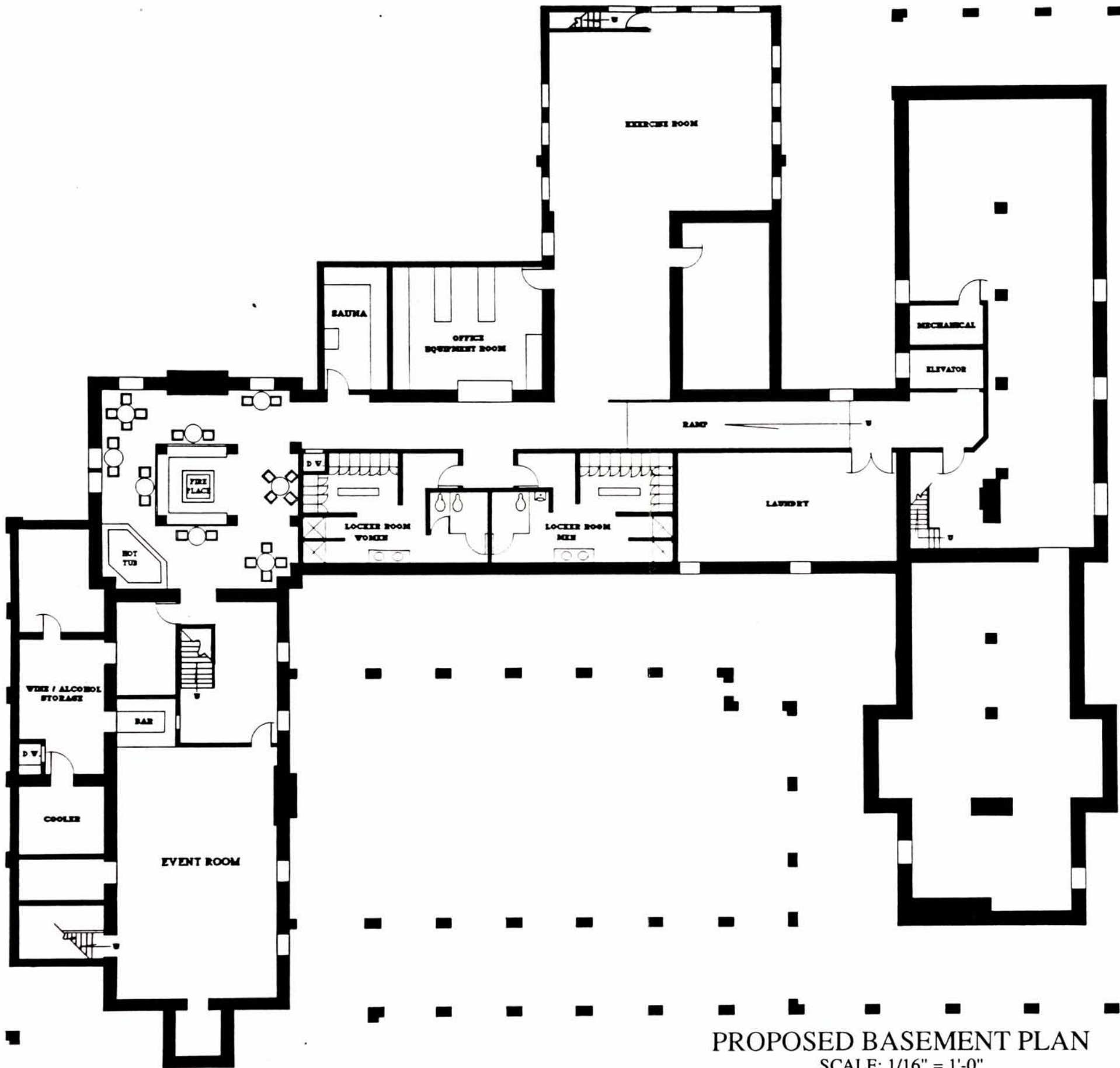
Floor Plans

Reduced fifty percent from those presented in the exhibit.



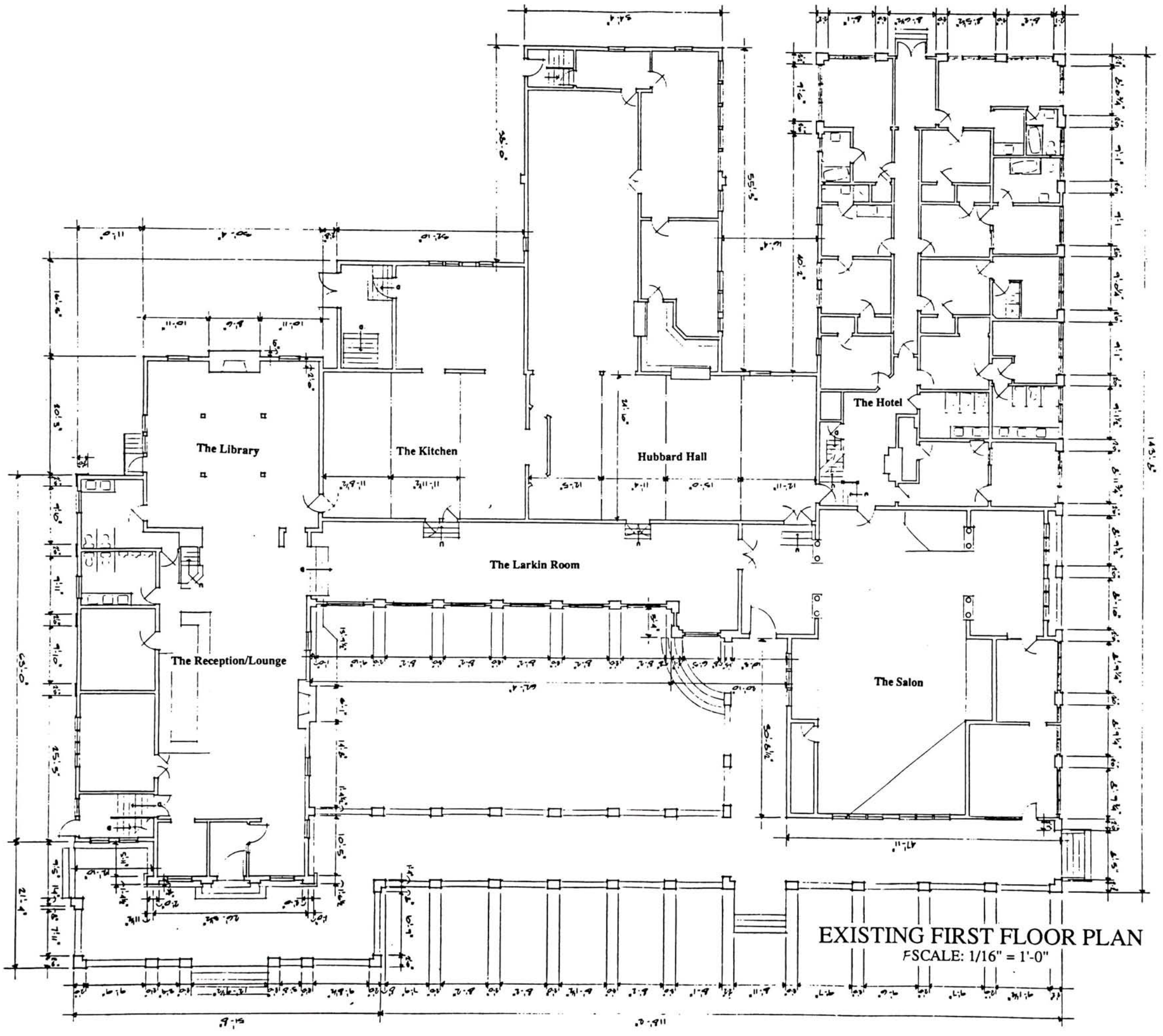
EXISTING BASEMENT PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

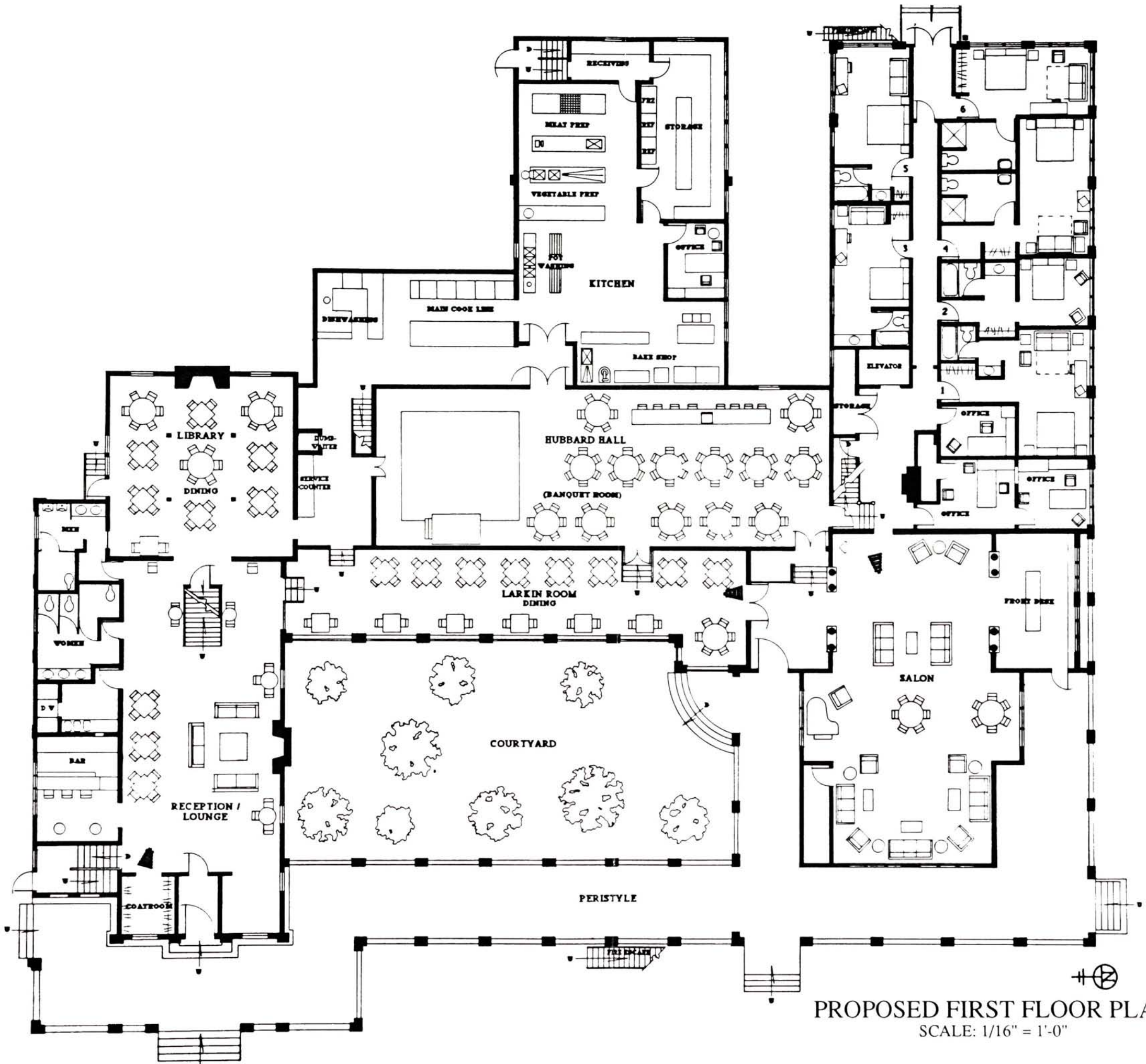


PROPOSED BASEMENT PLAN
 SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

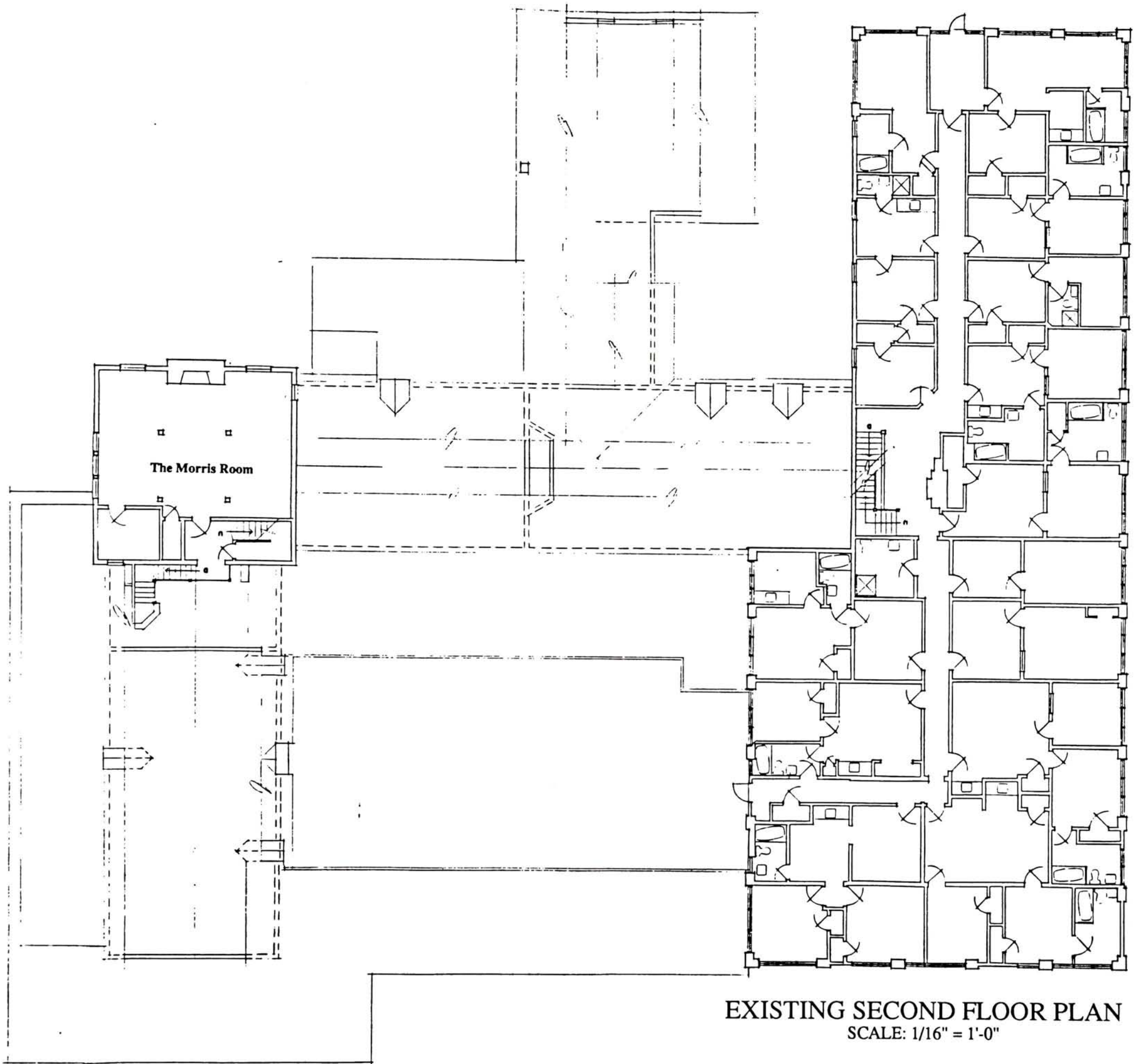




EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

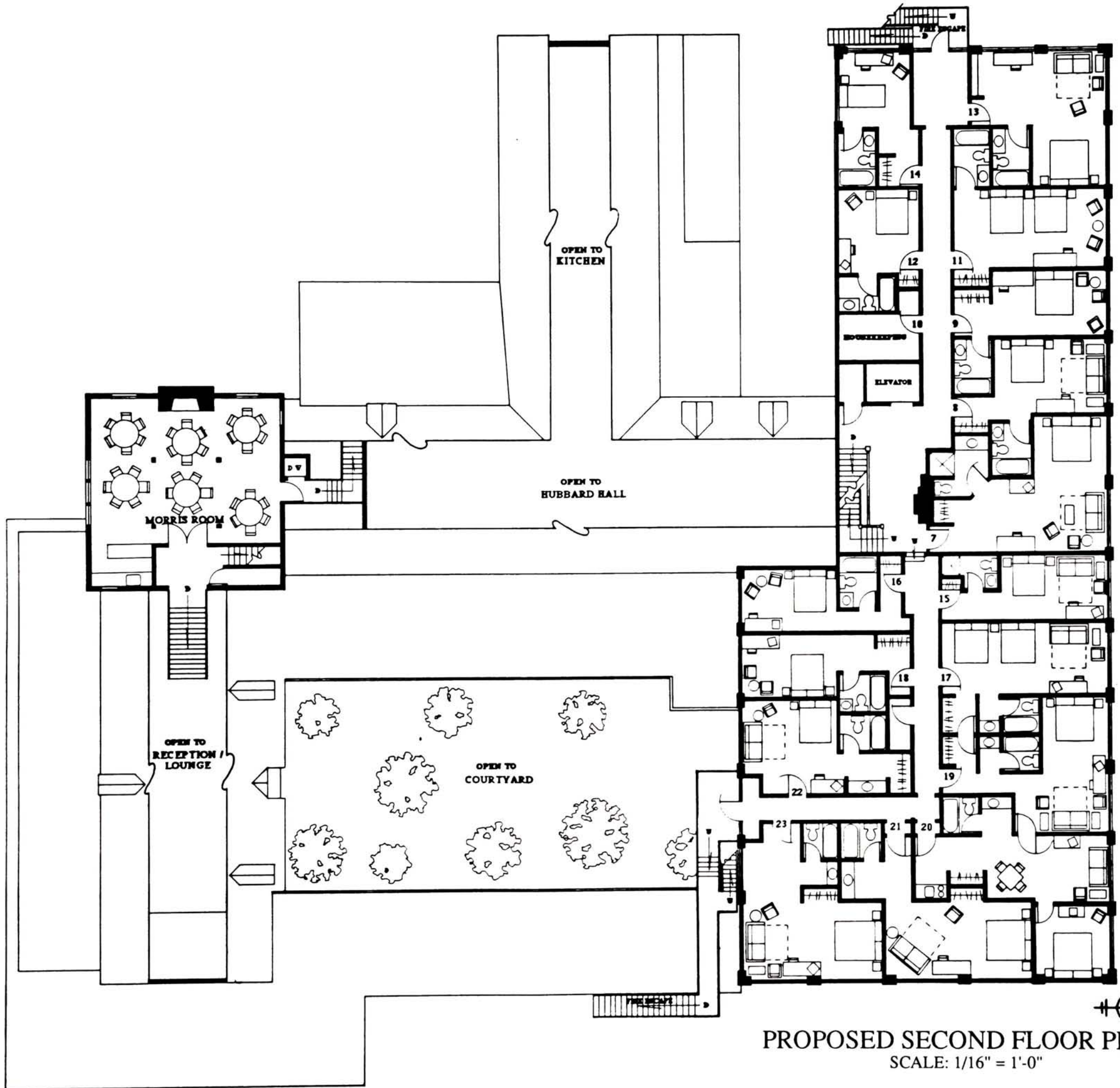


PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

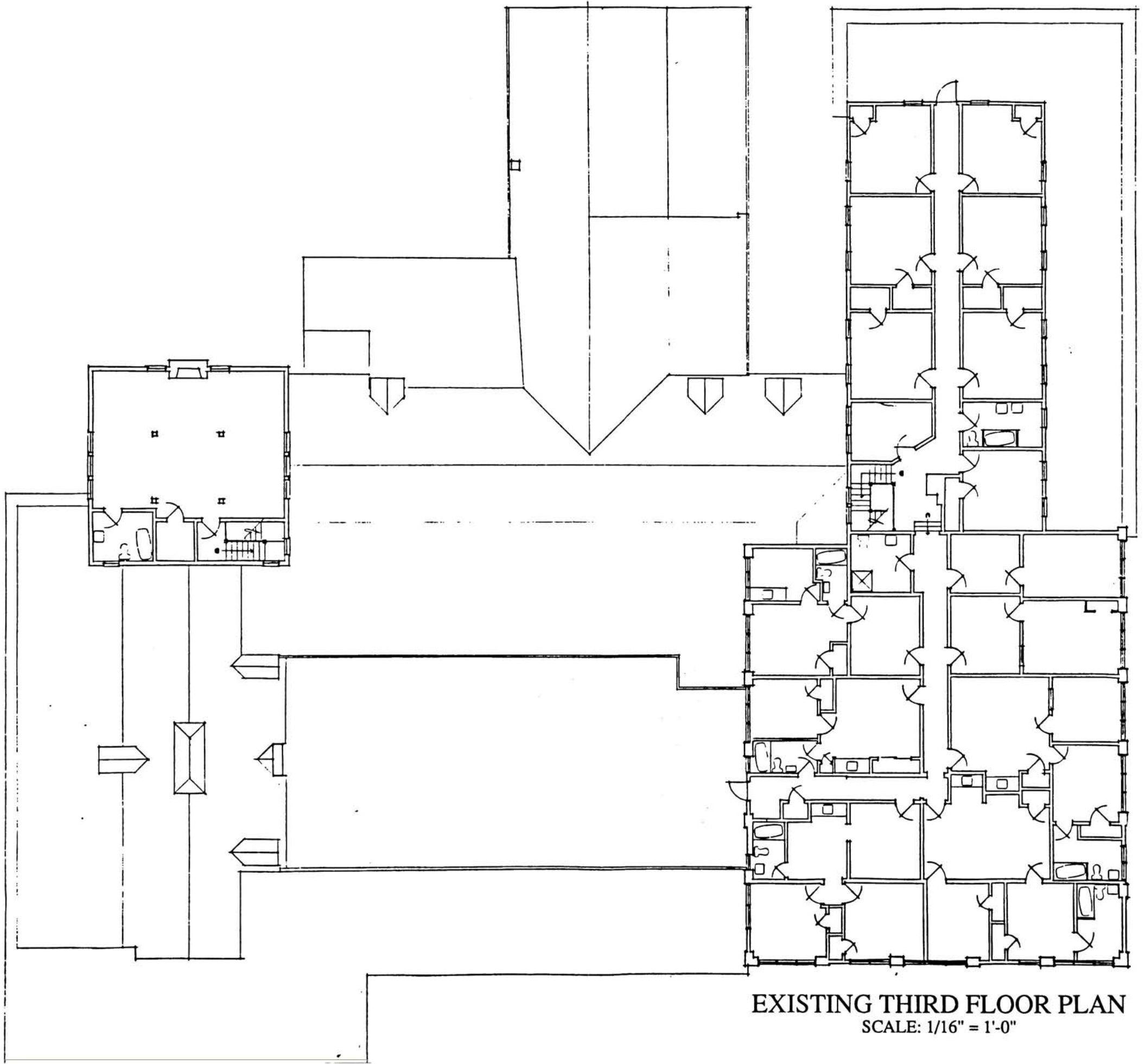


The Morris Room

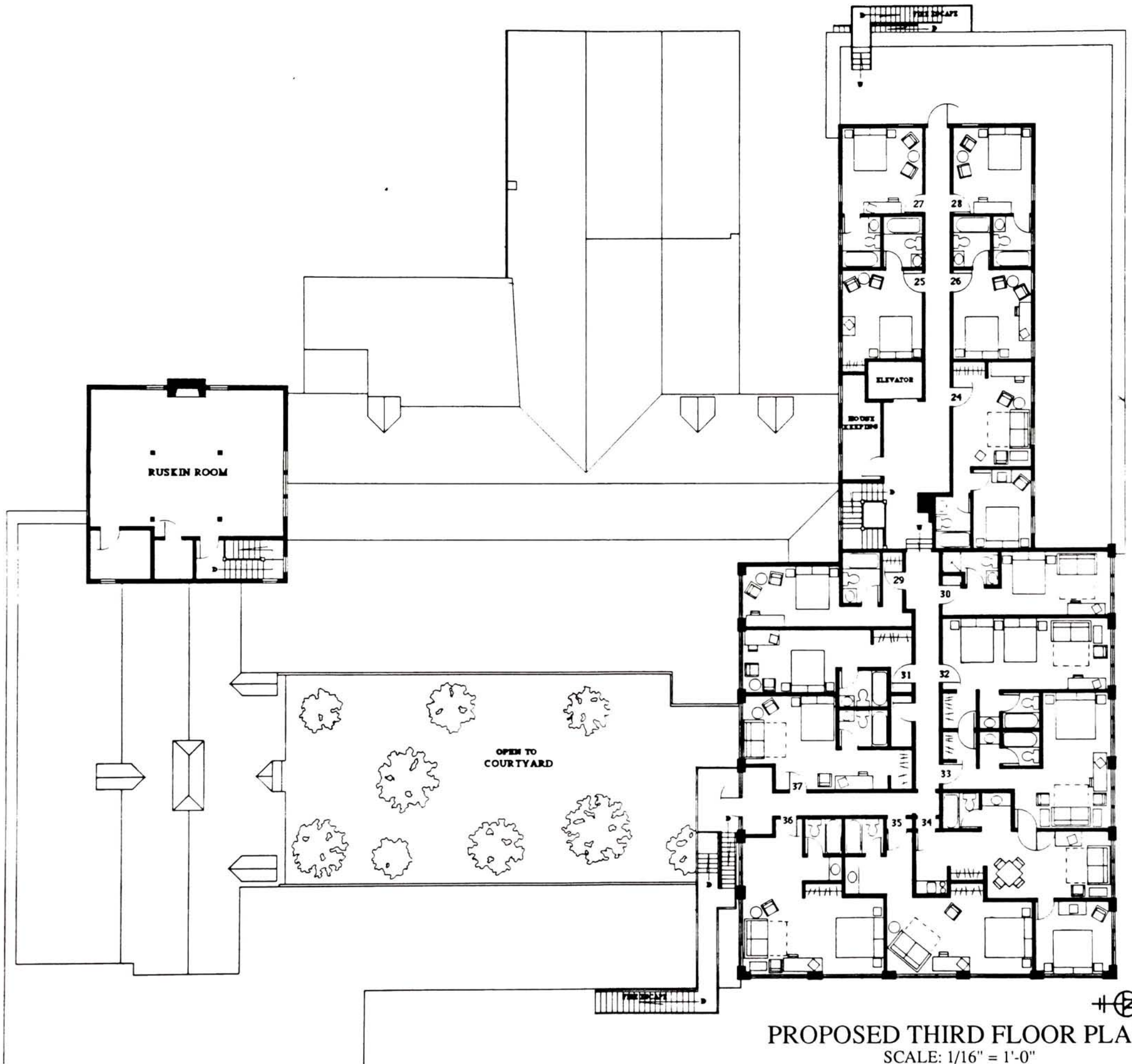
EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"




PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



EXISTING THIRD FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

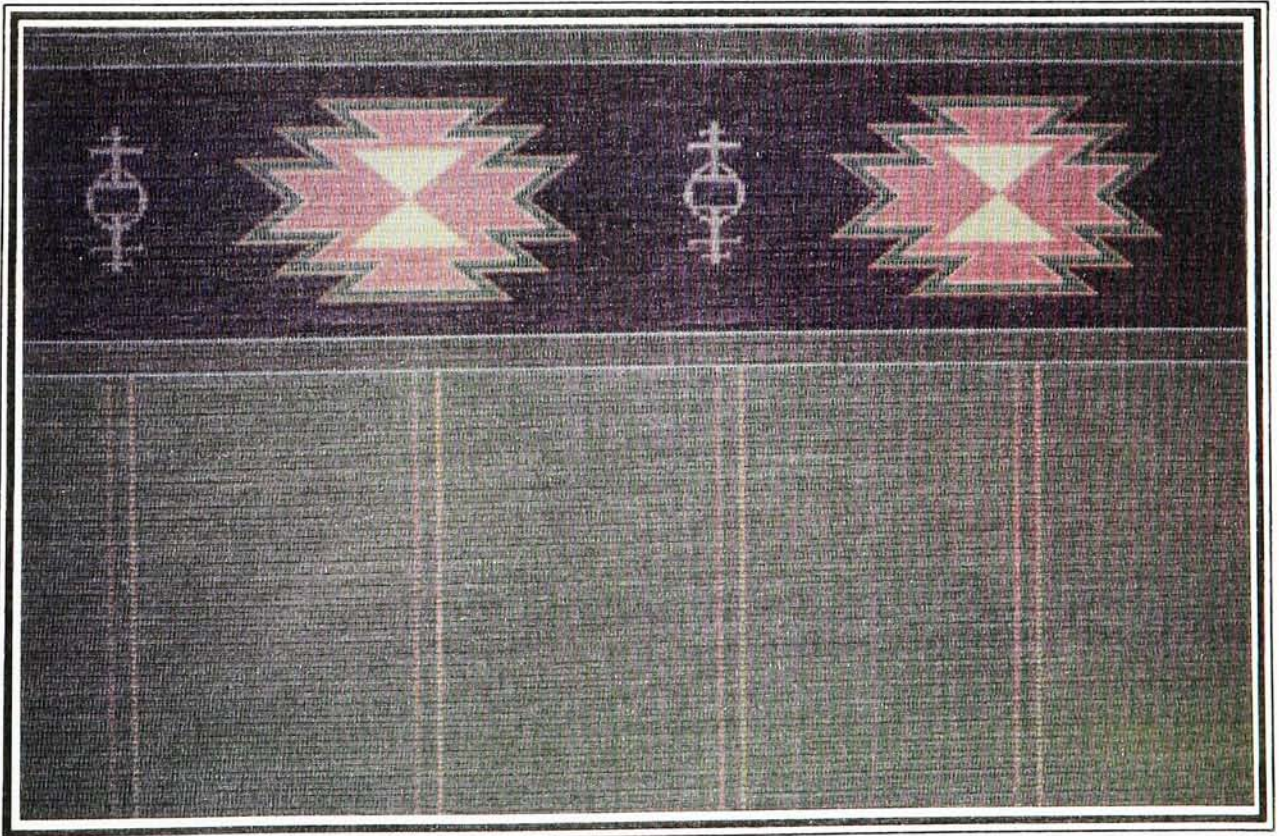



PROPOSED THIRD FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

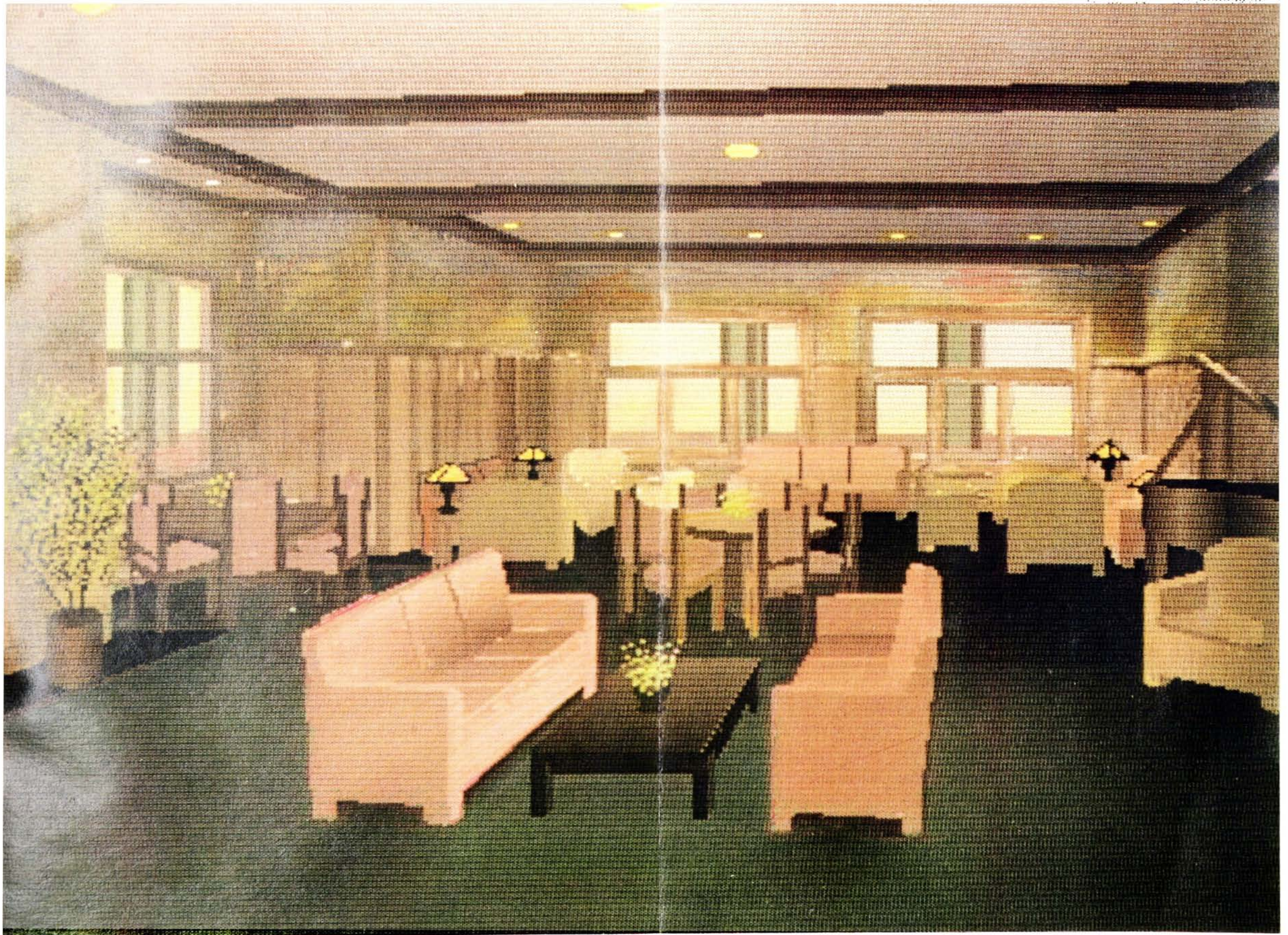
The Salon



Existing

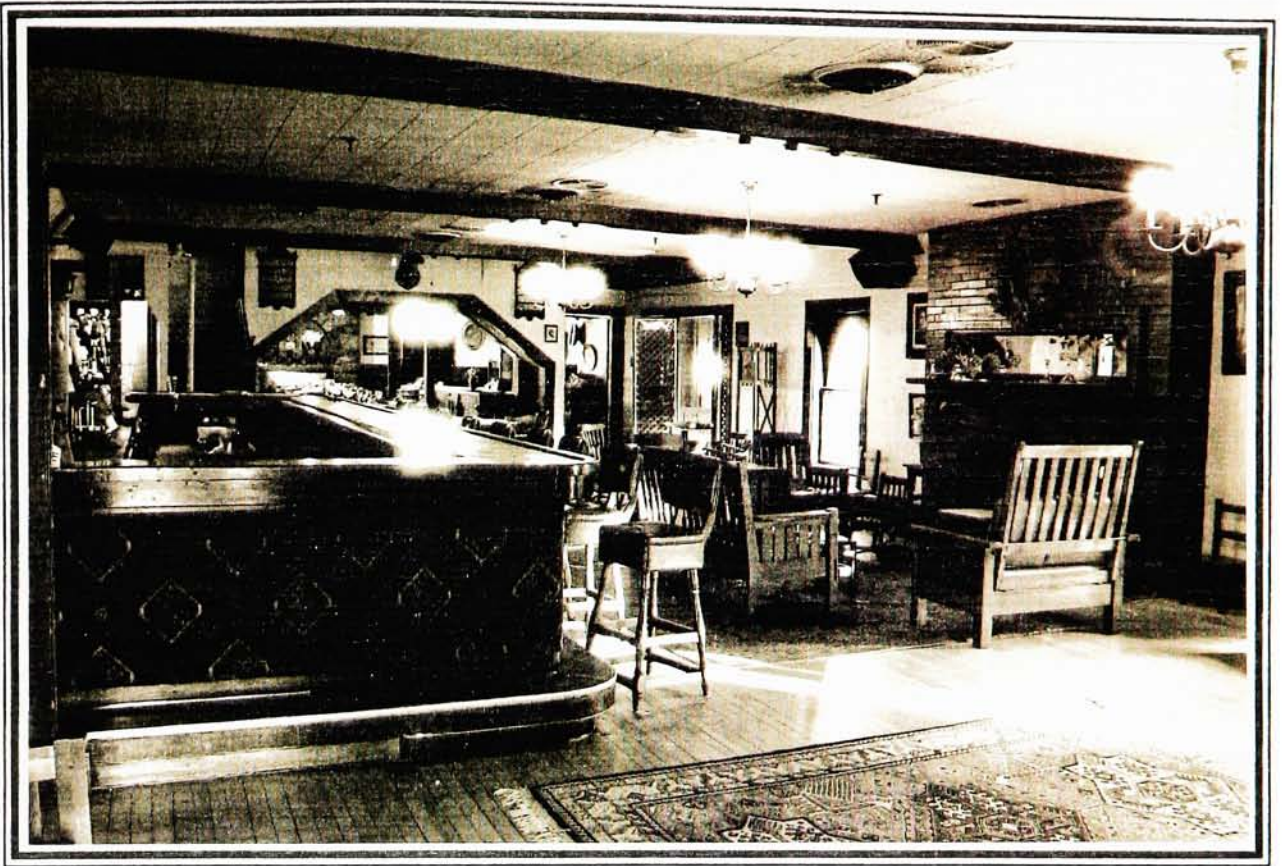


Carpet

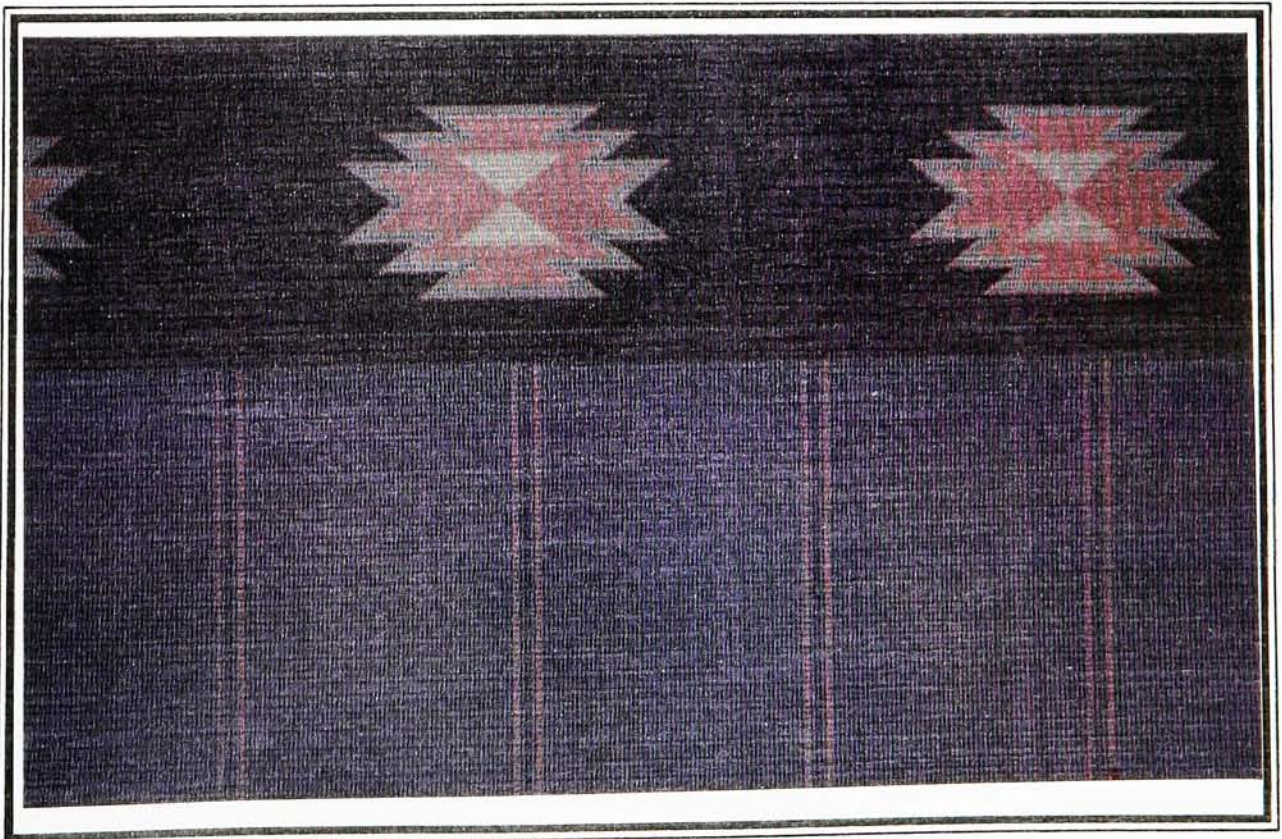


PROPOSED SALON DESIGN

The Reception / Lounge



Existing



Carpet

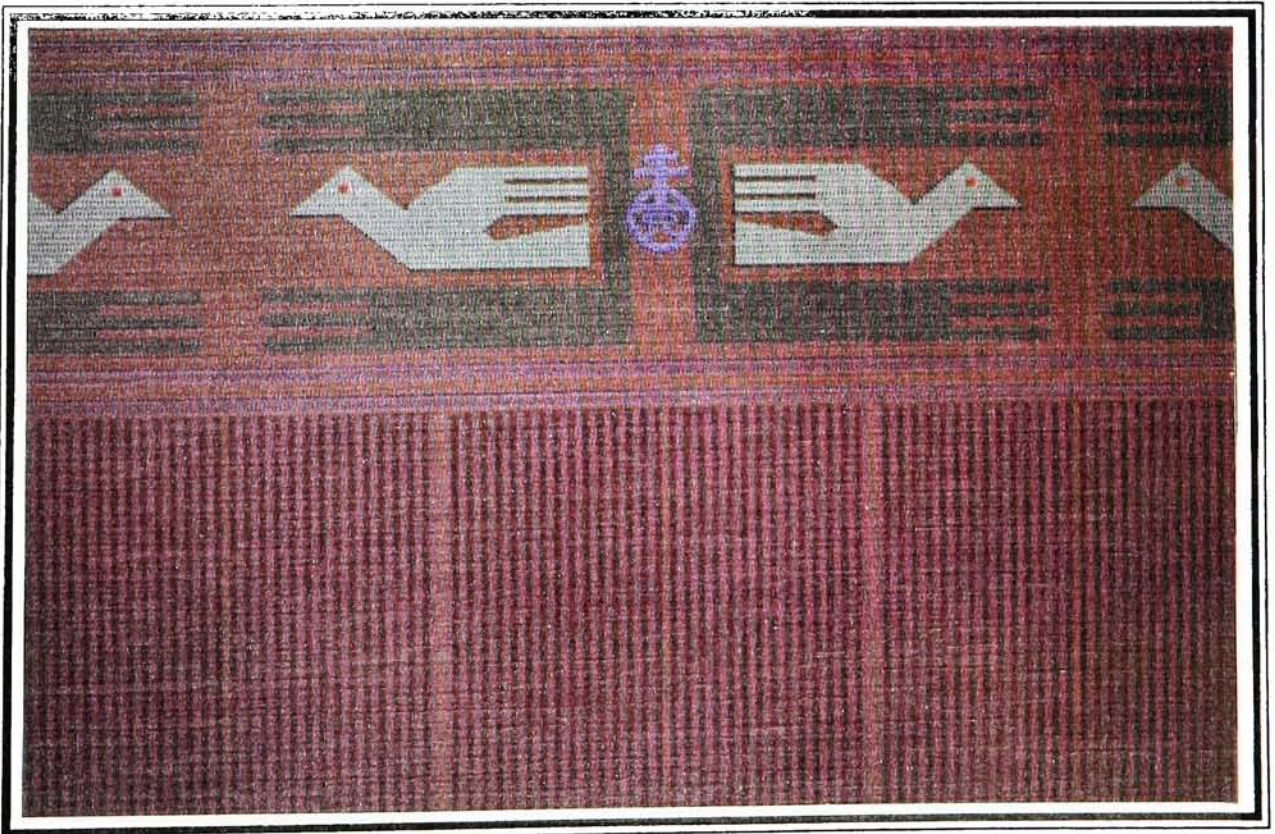


PROPOSED RECEPTION LOUNGE DESIGN

The Larkin Room



Existing



Carpet



PROPOSED LARKIN ROOM DESIGN