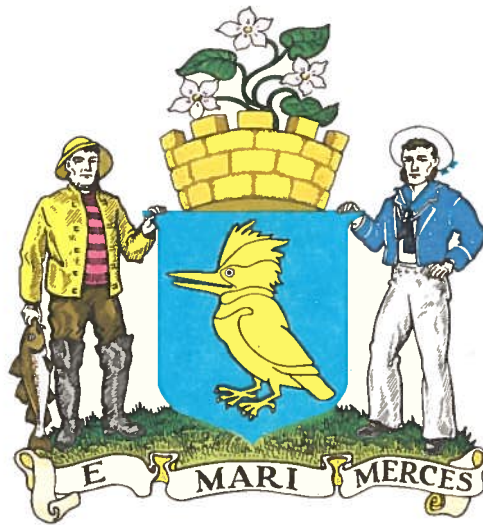


CITY OF HALIFAX



REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON
CITY HALL RENOVATIONS

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COUNSEL
DONALD A. KERR, Q.C.

December 13, 1983

His Worship the Mayor
and Members of Council
City Hall
Halifax Nova Scotia

Your Worship:

I am pleased to submit the Report of the
Advisory Committee on City Hall Renovations which I
understand is to be formally presented on December
15.

Yours very truly



James S. Cowan

JSC:mg

REPORT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CITY HALL RENOVATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Committee was appointed by Council on May 4, 1983 and is now pleased to report on its work.

Council has long been concerned about the state of repair of City Hall and the functions which it ought to serve for the City of Halifax.

In December of 1981 Council approved a resolution directing staff:

- (1) to prepare a long range maintenance program for City Hall, and,
- (2) to prepare a comprehensive space use plan for the building.

The report of the Acting City Manager, which was adopted by Council, spoke of City Hall as representing the Civic Administration of the City and being "...the interface between City Staff and the public". It was suggested that the building uses "should be a reflection and/or projection of this image". It was quickly recognized that the priority need was for exterior repair and over the next several years extensive work was done to clean and repair the exterior stonework, to repaint woodwork and generally to ensure exterior soundness and weather protection for the interior.

The Mayor reported to Council on the completion of the exterior work (with the exception of window replacement) on May 3, 1983 and on May 4, Council struck this Committee and charged it to prepare a plan:

"To enhance the symbolic nature of the building. Proposals such as the creation of a proper reception space and display area for City artifacts respond to this scenario. Administrative functions would be limited. The result would be a reduction in the administrative component of the building and a strengthening of the symbolic image of City Hall consistent with its original intent."

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The Committee has met on many occasions both formally and informally. It has been ably assisted by C.E. Mitchell, the City Architect, Allan M. Wayne, the Executive Assistant to the Mayor, and other members of City Staff. The Committee has also had the benefit of various consultants' reports in the course of its work. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to all those who have thus made its task much easier.

OVERVIEW

The Committee endorses the role of City Hall as defined in Council's Resolution of May 4.

City Hall ought to be the major focus of civic government and interface between that government and the citizens it serves. This symbolism ought to be maintained and strengthened both by continued upgrading of the building's exterior, renovation and improvement of its interior and attention to the uses to which the building is put.

EXTERIOR

Windows

Now that stone cleaning, repairs and painting have been completed, attention needs to be given to the windows. The Committee recommends that the stained glass windows be restored, repaired and retained wherever possible. The Committee also recommends the installation of aluminum clad window units in place of the existing casements and glass block units. A sample of the type of recommended installation is already in place to the right of the main entrance.

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Bell and Clock Tower

As Council is aware, the clock and bell which for many years adorned the tower atop City Hall fell into disrepair and had to be removed. The Committee strongly recommends that the clock and bell mechanisms be rehabilitated and restored to their original position protected so far as possible from damaging weather conditions. Some preliminary costing has been done by staff but additional analysis would, of course, be required before a decision were taken.

Grand Parade

The Grand Parade is a priceless asset and every effort ought to be made to enhance its use as a centre of city life. Recent years have brought an increasing awareness and use by our citizens and visitors not only for ceremonial activities but for day to day enjoyment.

The Committee recommends that the existing "moat" be covered over and the grassed area extended up to the building.

The possibility of relocating parking from on the Grand Parade to under it ought to be investigated. While roadways would have to be retained for ceremonial purposes, the elimination of most traffic and all parking would enhance the attractiveness of the area and permit the use of more appropriate paving materials.

Access for Handicapped

The Committee, with the assistance of City Staff, explored a number of alternative suggestions with respect to access for the handicapped.

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The Committee recommends the concept illustrated by Figures 1 and 2. This concept would provide a level pathway to the main entrance from Argyle Street. Construction of the pathway would involve minor changes to the existing main entrance steps and the replacement of the western portion of guardrail with a modified but sympathetic curb and guardrail.

Facades

Further steps ought to be taken to make the exterior faces of the building more attractive, particularly the north facade opposite Scotia Square. This could be accomplished by the introduction of planters and innovative paving patterns.

INTERIOR

As the exterior work was largely underway when the Committee was appointed its primary focus of attention has been the interior of the building itself. The Committee's recommendations with respect to the interior are as follows:

General Criteria

In making its recommendations for interior renovation, the Committee urges that while the spirit and original purpose of the building must be retained, every advantage ought to be taken of the latest energy saving techniques, building materials and office layout concepts. Where possible, of course, existing period woodwork and fixtures ought to be restored and retained, particularly on the main and second floors. On the other hand, the basement and third floor were originally designed as ancillary spaces and can be more radically altered. In summary, while it may be possible to authentically restore certain components of the building, the Committee urges the overall importance of ensuring the tasteful renovation of City Hall as a political and symbolic centre of City life capable of adapting to the City's changing needs.

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Space Use. The Committee endorses the recommendation of Council:

"... that the types of use within the building satisfy one or all of the following criteria:

- a) have static space demands;
- b) be supportive of the ceremonial image of City Hall;
- c) be an activity generating use; or
- d) further project the symbolic nature of the building."

The City has many interesting and valuable historical artifacts which have never been adequately catalogued much less available for display to citizens and visitors. The Committee strongly recommends that all historical artifacts belonging to the City be catalogued in consultation with the "Heritage Advisory Committee". These artifacts are an important asset which require secure storage in a location (not necessarily at City Hall) where they can be adequately cared for and prepared for display. The display of these artifacts is seen by the Committee to be closely related to the criteria for the renovation program. Rather than isolate displays in a single room or rooms of the building, the Committee recommends establishing the entire building as a display case for historical material which could be scheduled for display throughout the building without competing with the other activities and functions being carried on. The Heritage Advisory Committee ought to be consulted with respect to the selection, design and scheduling of these displays.

The conclusions of the Committee regarding space use on a floor by floor basis may be summarized as follows:

Main Floor. To promote activity and interaction with the public a public information/referral service should be established on the main floor. The Committee has not addressed the issue as to what components this service should comprise. The Vital Statistics office, of great symbolic importance in any City, ought to be retained at this level although not necessarily in its present location. The Health Services offices should not be located at City Hall.

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The space formerly occupied by the Halifax Transit Commission should be renovated as a reception hall which, while formal in decor, ought to be extremely flexible in its use. Such a facility is sadly lacking at present and, in the view of the Committee, this space is ideal for this purpose. All partitions in the proposed reception area had been removed prior to the formation of the Committee and the Committee recommends that the remaining brick dividing wall be removed to make the space more useful for the City's purposes. Adequate cloak room space must of necessity be located nearby.

Figure 3 illustrates one possible layout to achieve the recommendation of the Committee. It takes into account all physical and service recommendations made elsewhere in this report.

Second Floor.

In the Committee's opinion, the present uses of this floor are appropriate and ought to be retained and upgraded. It is seen as the "political" centre of City Hall and uses of this floor ought to be supportive of this function.

Figure 4 illustrates physical alterations to accomodate new washrooms, fire stairs and heating and ventilation improvements.

Third Floor.

It is on the third floor that the Committee proposes the most radical changes. In its view the third floor ought to be established as a meeting/conference centre with necessary ancillary support services. It is proposed that all non-structural partitions be removed so as to achieve the greatest flexibility of use.

Figure 5 shows the space available for such purposes after removal of all non-structural partitions and the installation of new fire stairs and washroom facilities.

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Basement.

The Committee recommends that the space presently occupied by the Planning Information office be renovated to accommodate the City Clerk's microfilm operation and that the space now used by the transit drivers be renovated for uses ancillary to the reception room immediately above on the main floor.

Mechanical and Electrical Services

The concept being recommended by the Committee with respect to the mechanical and electrical system is illustrated in Figures 6 and 7. The suggestion is to renew the heating units while at the same time provide a continuous raceway around the perimeter of the building. This provides flexibility as far as spatial allocation is concerned by providing power, heat and communication hookups to meet any required use.

The Committee's consultants, while approving the concept of providing a continuous false space below the windows for electrical and heating installations, concluded that it was not possible to install cooling in that space and recommended that consideration be given to an all electric heating system in the interests of economy. The consultant advised that a ventilation system be installed in the hallways of the building with branches to each room or area.

The Committee recommends this approach and suggests that further study be undertaken as to the type of system to be installed.

Insulation

In 1982 the City commissioned a study by All-Energy Engineering Limited of steps which could be undertaken to reduce

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energy consumption at City Hall. At the time the Committee was appointed the Aldermens' Lounge had been insulated on a trial basis and the former transit offices were being gutted in preparation for similar work. Resulting exposure of exterior stone and brick walls raised for consideration by the Committee the question as to whether or not those walls should be similarly insulated. In light of the energy savings achievable through the proper insulation of exterior walls, the Committee recommends that all exterior walls be stripped, studded, insulated with R-20 insulation, airsealed and refinished.

Fire Escapes

On June 29, 1983 Council approved the award of a tender for Phase 1 of the program to install proper fire exits from the building. The Committee recommends that two fire escapes be constructed to comply with the provisions of the National Building Code.

Ceiling Heights

Council will be aware that much discussion has taken place since the outset of the renovation program regarding the proper height of ceilings. Suggestions were made that energy savings could be achieved if the ceilings were dropped although obviously this would preclude the retention of the stained glass portion of the windows.

The Committee asked its consultants for advice on this matter. The consultants concluded that "... there would be no benefit in lowering the ceilings from the standpoint of energy ... in fact (they could) increase the energy usage due to the requirements of larger ventilation systems to handle peak people loadings on a non-regular basis (such as reception halls)".

This opinion, along with the Committee's strong desire to retain the stained glass windows, leads to our recommendation

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that ceiling heights be restored to the original level wherever possible.

CONCLUSION

The Committee has deliberately attempted to make its report as brief and concise as possible. Additional information is of course available should Council or Staff wish to receive it.

The Committee has purposely avoided dealing in architectural and interior design detail. This is not to suggest that these matters are not of concern to the Committee and it must be emphasized that they must be carefully monitored during the course of the renovation program.

Finally, the Committee hopes that this report will be helpful to Council and would be pleased to further assist Council and Staff in the implementation of the program.

Respectfully submitted.

Maud Rosinski

Andrew B. Lynch

William B. Hardman

James S. Cowan
(Chairman)

December 12, 1983

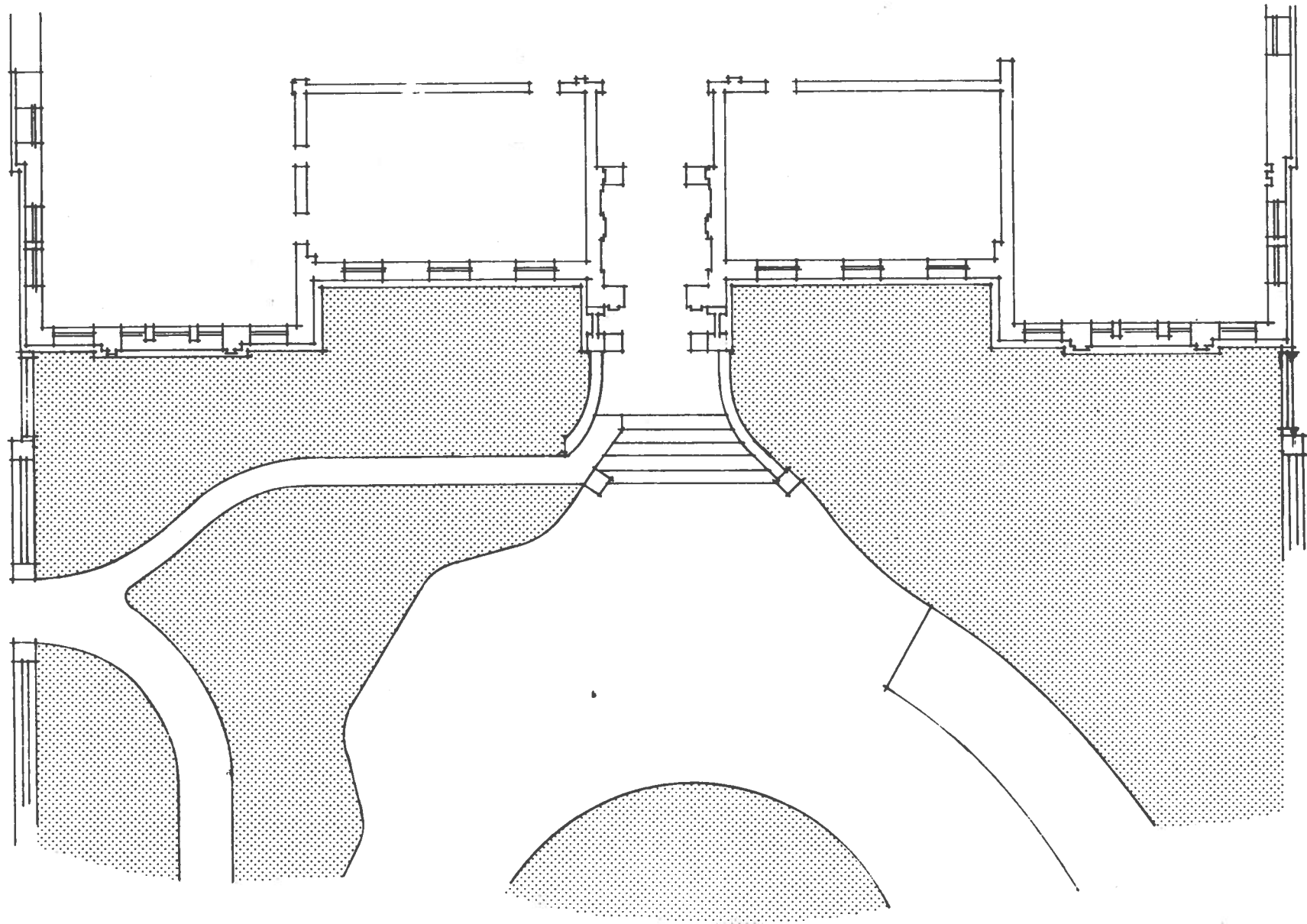


FIGURE-1

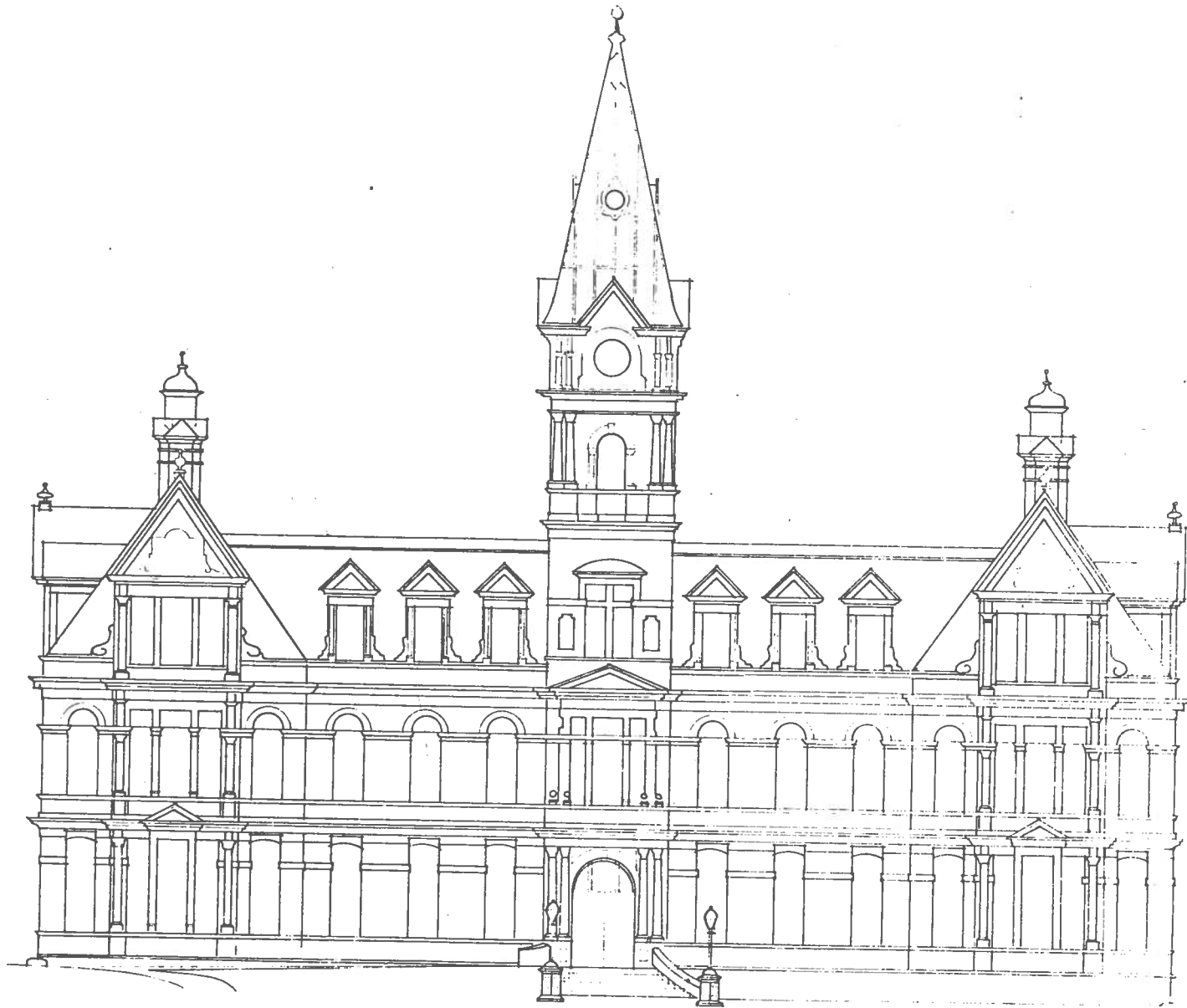


FIGURE - 2

PROPOSED
FIRE STAIRS

FIRE STAIRS

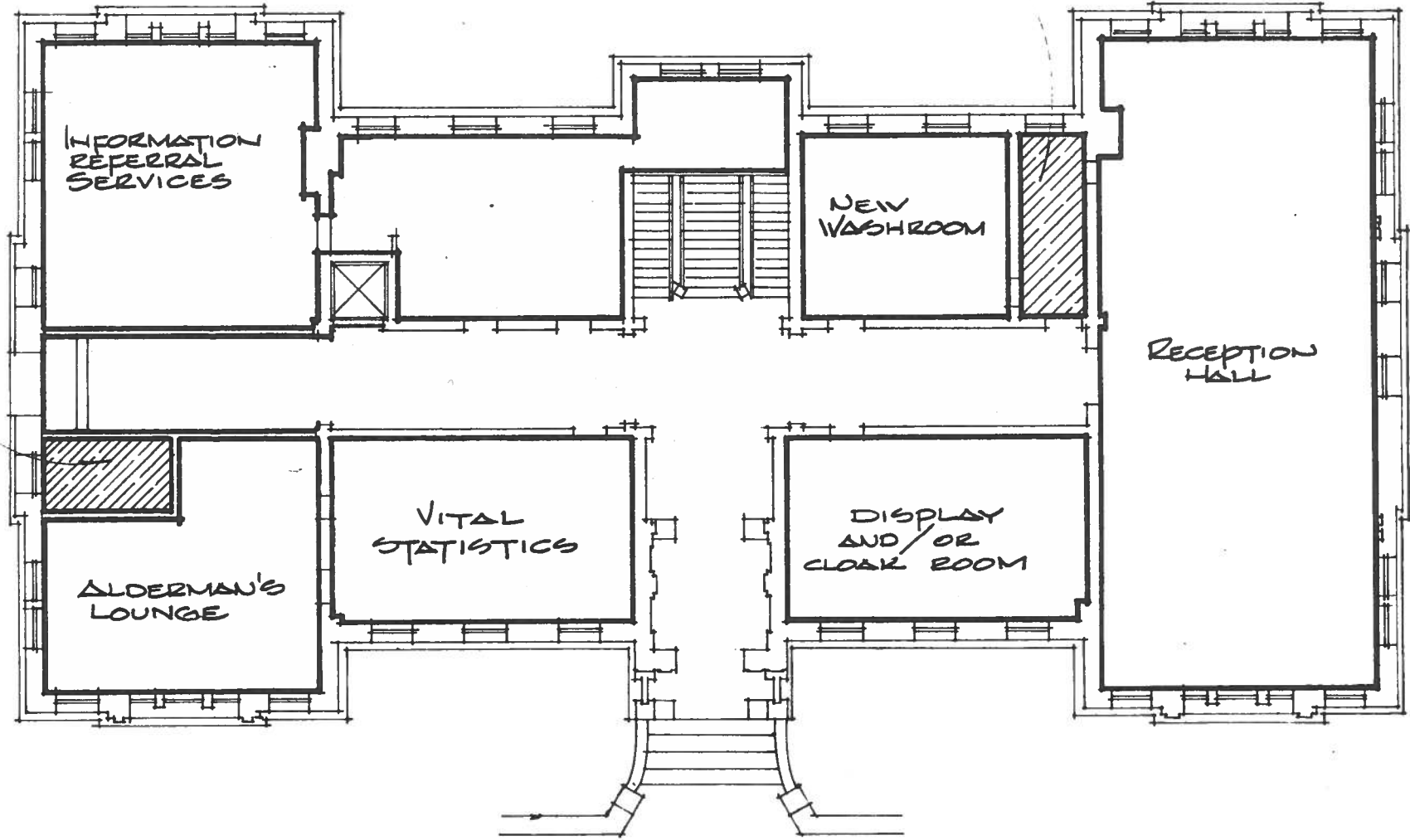
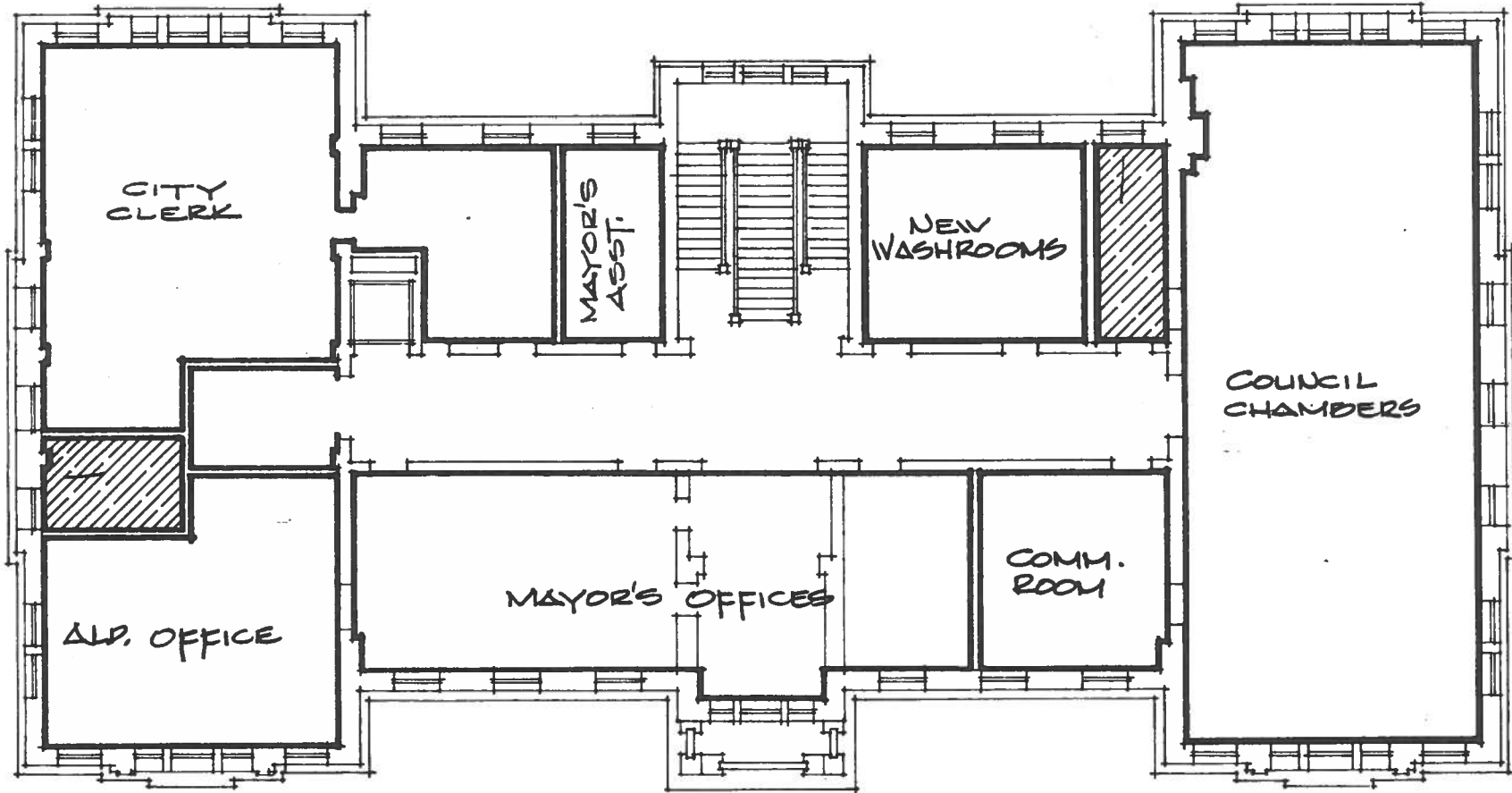


FIGURE - 3

NEW FIRE STAIRS

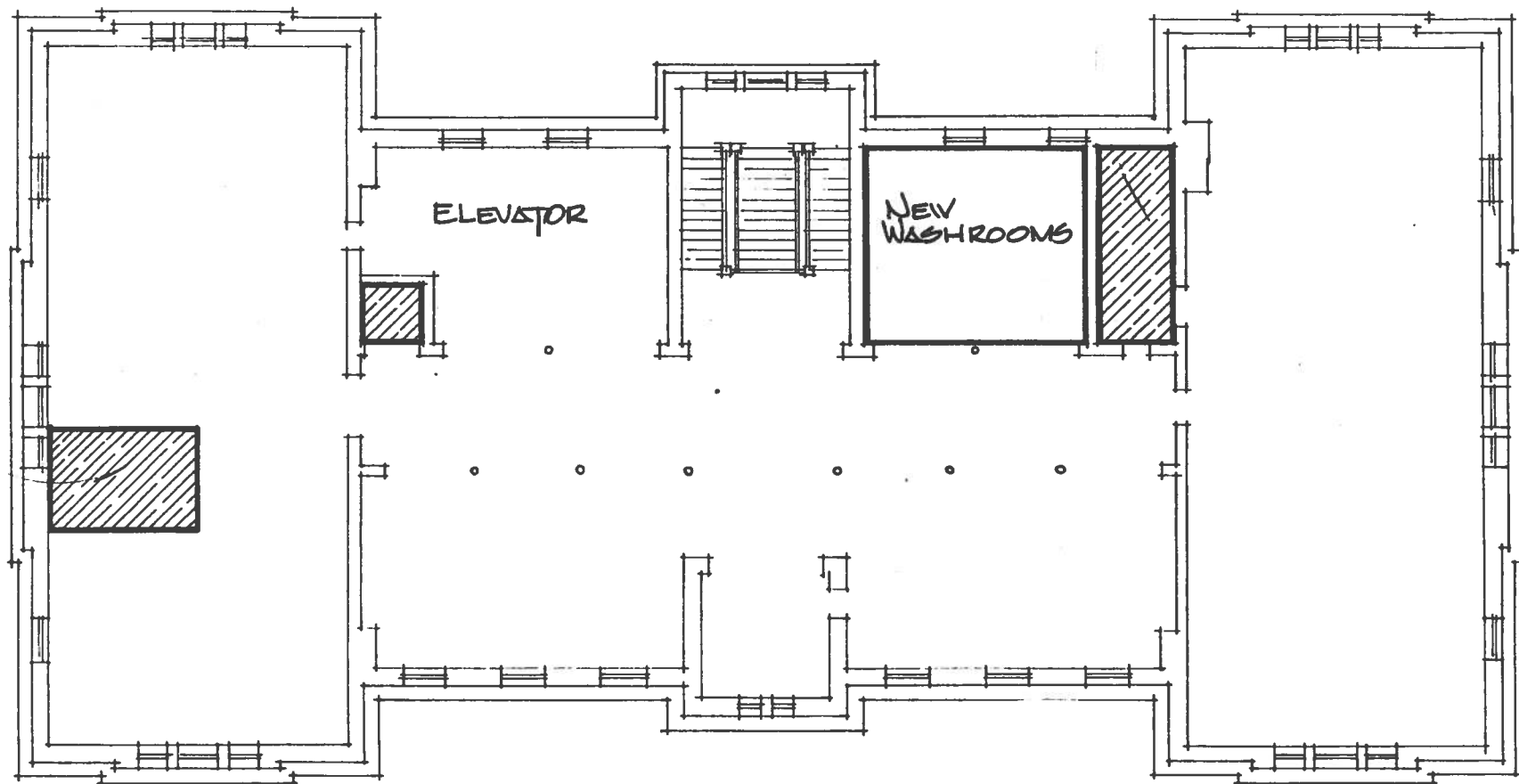
PROPOSED
FIRE STAIRS



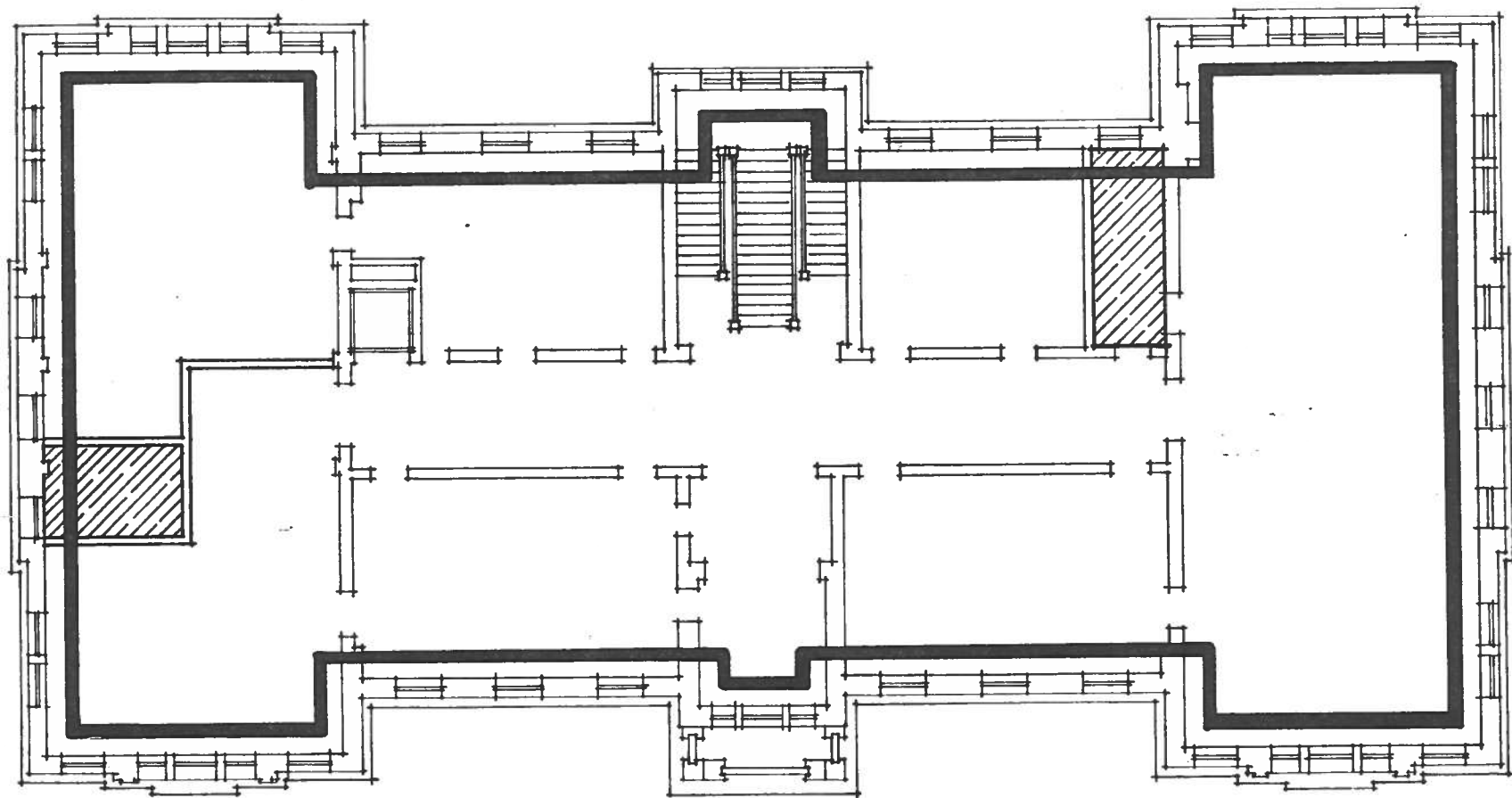
"PROPOSED 2ND FLOOR PLAN"
FIGURE - 4

NEW FIRE STAIRS

PROPOSED
FIRE STAIRS

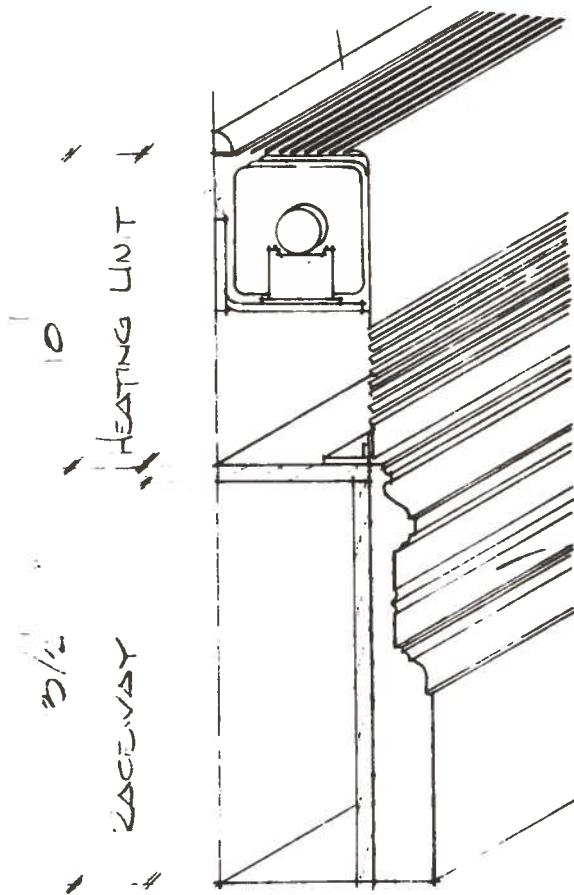


" 3RD FLOOR PLAN "
FIGURE - 5



"RACEWAY CONCEPT"
FIGURE - 6 (TYPICAL)

12V VOLT



NEW CASEWORK

"CROOKED HEATING SYSTEM"
FIGURE - 7