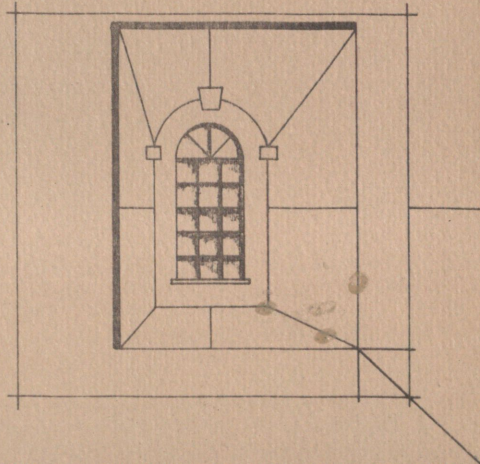
ALLEN, GREGG W

A FIRE AND POLICE STATION FOR
THE TOWN OF SARATOGA, WYOMING

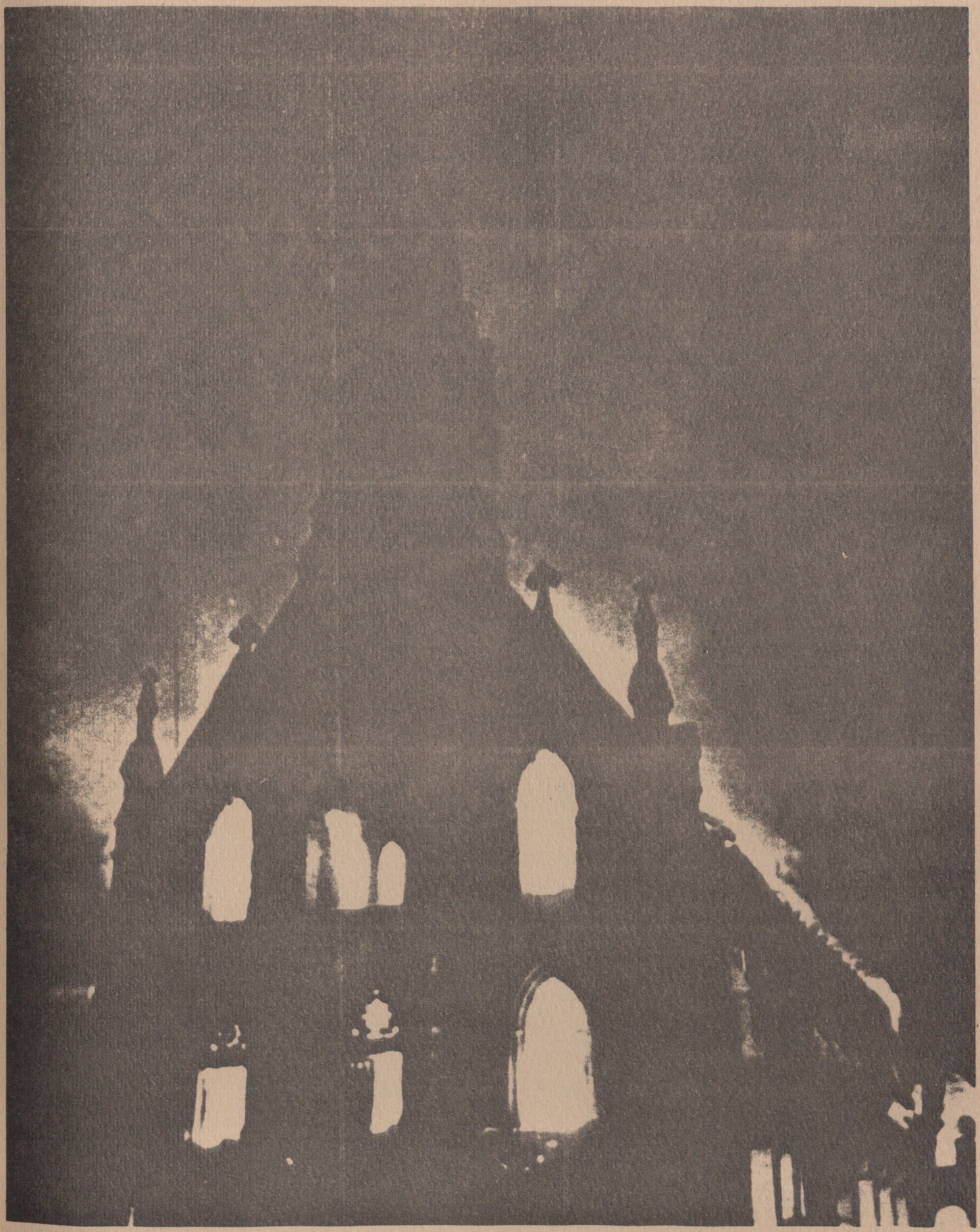
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A FIRE AND POLICE STATION FOR THE TOWN OF SARATOGA WYOMING

by

Gregg W. Allen

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE

Approved:

Marvin S. Woods
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Head, Major Department

~~Graduate Dean~~

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
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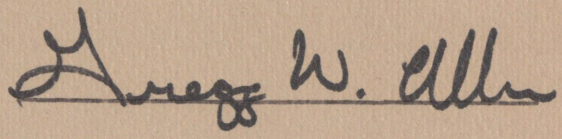
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thesis statement

A design vocabulary can be developed from the existing environment to bring about a building of the same spirit as that which exists.

introduction

"The true basis for any serious study of the art of architecture still lies in those indigenous, more humble buildings everywhere that are to architecture what folklore is to literature, of folksong to music and which academic architects were seldom concerned."[1]

Frank Lloyd Wright

It is the intention of this thesis to design a new building that embodies and enhances the existing character of a small Wyoming town. The building will take advantage of the existing environment to derive a vocabulary of visual forms that capture the spirit of the people and the place.

To accomplish the above goal I shall objectively analyze the physical make-up of the existing built environment in terms of mass, scale, style, texture, proportion, form, building materials, details, and other physical properties that are now prominent to the site. Also, I need to go beyond the physical aspects of the town to derive symbolic references in the building that relate to the townspeoples culture, life style, and future aspirations.

Finally, in the design solution an attempt will be made to combine the character of the town with the character of the project (a police and fire station). Neither character should work separately but instead work in combination to complement one another not only physically but spiritually.

facts on saratoga

"A town is the reflection of peoples way of life."[2]

Bernard Rudofsky

"In Wyoming frontier towns the false front building was typical. It was a structure with a square front extending beyond the ridge of the roof to give the effect of another story. The first dwellings in these small communities were erected with whatever materials were at hand and in any fashion suited to the builders craftsmanship."[3]

T. A. Larson

Saratoga is located in south central Wyoming. It is close to the Colorado border and sits in a small valley at the base of the Sierra Madre mountain range.

It primarily started as a ranching community to serve the local ranchers. Then, in the early 1900's copper was discovered in the nearby mountains. The mine was called the Ferris-Hagerty and it is estimated that two million dollars worth of copper was taken in two years. In this time Saratoga boomed. The worlds longest aerial tram (16 miles) was built to transport the copper ore from the mine to the smelter. And a railroad line was built to connect Saratoga to other parts of the county. This popularity was short lived, once the ore was depleted, and Saratoga rapidly decreased in size.

One of the major attributes of the town was a natural hot springs that many people believed had theraputic value. Because of the springs and Saratogas beautiful surroundings, the town came to be known as a resort community. Until just recently this status was the major part of the towns economy.

Until the energy boom came into effect the town had a slow but steady increase in population. In fact the 1970 census showed that Saratoga was one of only two Wyoming towns that gained in population from 1960. But more recently the gain has been more dramatic. The towns population has increased to over 5,000, which represents a 27% increase from 1970 to 1977 and this trend is expected to continue.[4]

The entire county is now having growing pains brought on by the energy situation. Rawlins (the largest local town) is expected to receive the major growth. However, Saratoga is close enough (42 miles) to feel the impact, both good and bad.

One projected coal mine within 40 miles of the town is to directly employ 1,200 people by 1985. This mine would be the largest underground mine west of the Mississippi.[5] Within this same 40 mile radius there is a minimum of 6 other major coal or uranium mines that are to open in the 1980's.[6]

If an 80 mile radius is to be considered there is an additional 12 mining projects for the 1980's.[7]

These projects are expected to directly bring in over 3,000 families to the area and that would not include the supportive families that would naturally follow.[8]

Of course not all of the people will settle in Saratoga but a population increase is quite apparent. In the building design it will be important to allow the building to relate to the present townspeople but it must also be able to adapt to the future needs of the inhabitants as the town grows.

thoughts on architecture

"The traditional focus of architectural theory has been on the relationship of the architect to the artifact he produces and thus on the ideologies and testaments of the individual designers, rather than on the relationship between people (either as individuals, or in general) and the built environment. It has not focused on understanding how the environment is perceived, the meaning it has for different people in either concrete or symbolic terms, or the opportunities that different people perceive in it."[9]

Jon Lang et. al.

In recent years the architectural profession has been focused on the exploitation of ideas and materials, until they could be explored no further. But, an unfortunate side effect has been the exploitation of the common people who do not understand architectural theory. As Brent C. Brolin states, "The majority of people are disturbed by the sterile appearance of modern buildings and are not interested in the intellectual ideas a building represents."[10]

To me, one of todays problems is that many architects feel a need for their buildings to make a statement and have meaning. But the profession has failed to realize that we cannot communicate our ideas because we have not met the requirements put forth by Charles Rush, Conception Perception Communication (1969), "So, to communicate an idea, first we need a set of symbols, second these symbols have to exist apart from ourselves, that is, we have to hold them in common with someone else. Finally, we must use the right symbols, that is, symbols which are embedded in the mode of representation that is appro-

priate to the information we are trying to convey."[11] The aspect that architecture has primarily failed in is the ability to use symbols that apply to the masses, not just an elitest few.

Some psychologists believe that developing a language is the first step to a higher form of learning and thus knowledge.[12] But, for a language to be developed, a vocabulary must first be monotonously produced and then reproduced time and time again until a context and specific meaning is obtained. In architecture we have failed to do this. Instead we have allowed individuals to vocalize on symbolism and meaning to their personal pleasure. And what has come about is an unorganized and confusing set of images that have value to very few people.

To increase the number of people that can appreciate a building, what needs to be done is for the designer to take into account objects and ideas that have already been defined, as the 19th century philosopher William James states, "Whilst part of what we perceive comes through our senses from the object

before us, another part (and maybe the larger part) always comes . . . out of our own head."[13] In doing this people can relate more closely to the final design.

Finally, I believe that architects don't have the right to force their ideals on the populace. We do not have the privilege to cast value judgements on the way people live and on their goals.

Today we have a great number of mobile home parks and suburban neighborhoods which seem to disgust the average architect, but which also pleases many of the people who live in these types of dwellings.

A building has the ability to enhance or deter its surroundings. But no building has the capacity to change the way people live or think. We can no longer continue building and trying to force people to accept our ideals. Instead, we need to accommodate the users needs and the peoples needs who are forced to live with a building.

In the town that I am concerned with there is an environment built by the people to satisfy their needs and this should be respected for its inherent values.

thoughts on the project

"By using what exists as a stepping stone for what is to come, the architect can reinforce rather than undermine the character of a neighborhood and cities everytime a building is added."[14]

Brent C. Brolin

At the beginning of this thesis I had researched what I felt a designer needed in order to develop a building that related to peoples needs (culturally, socially and emotionally). I read about character, meaning and perception trying to formulate ideas that would bring about character and take on the spirit of the existing town.

I was working with an ambiguous idea and was attempting to formulate concrete expressions. This can not be done. I now believe that an ambiguous idea can only be expressed in personal terms and thus is always ambiguous to the large part of the population. What is really needed is to develop a vocabulary of design from the existing built environment and from the natural characteristics of the site.

At any location there will be objects that hold a greater importance to the ideals of a town than others. These more important aspects apply to the senses, primarily visual, but also touch, taste, smell and auditory. This could be termed awareness, "Awareness, then, is the sensitivity to the textures, materials

and colors of objects. It is a sensitivity to people and their response to one another and to the objects and spaces which surround them. It is an immediate and instantaneous recognition of the rightness or wrongness of forms. And above all it is remembering all these impressions and the ability to recall them on command. Awareness is living on the surface of your senses."[15]

To me the call is for physical precedent that can relate to a personal view of character. What I feel is character, either good or bad, is a matter of personal preference and opinions which do not necessarily represent the opinions of the townspeople whom I am trying to satisfy.

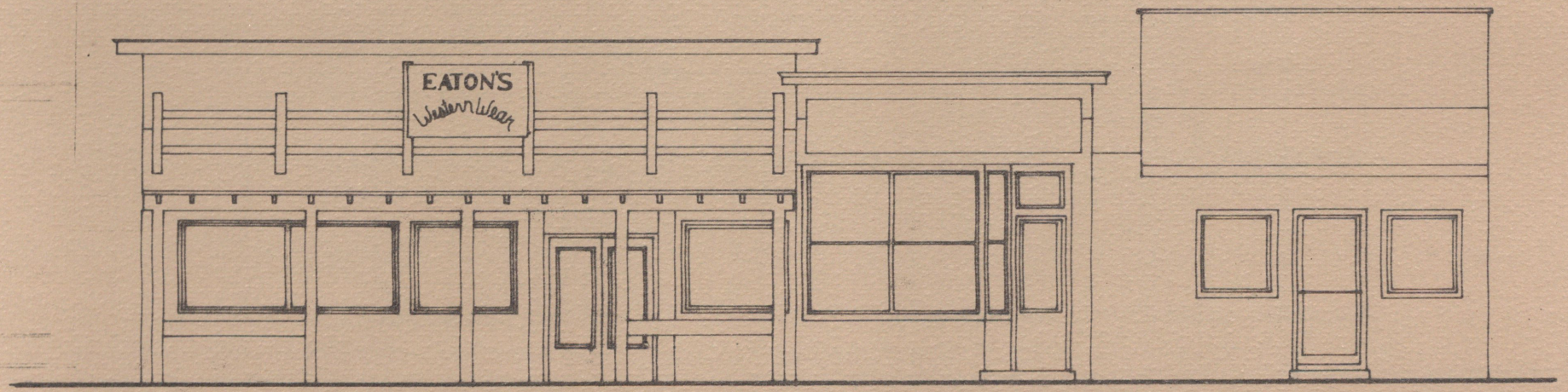
By going to a physical vocabulary and constant syntax I can formulate a building that is closer to existing values. Of course any building designed will have personal bias, but by using the existing to develop the new the language of architecture can become less symbolic and more meaningful for a greater number of people.

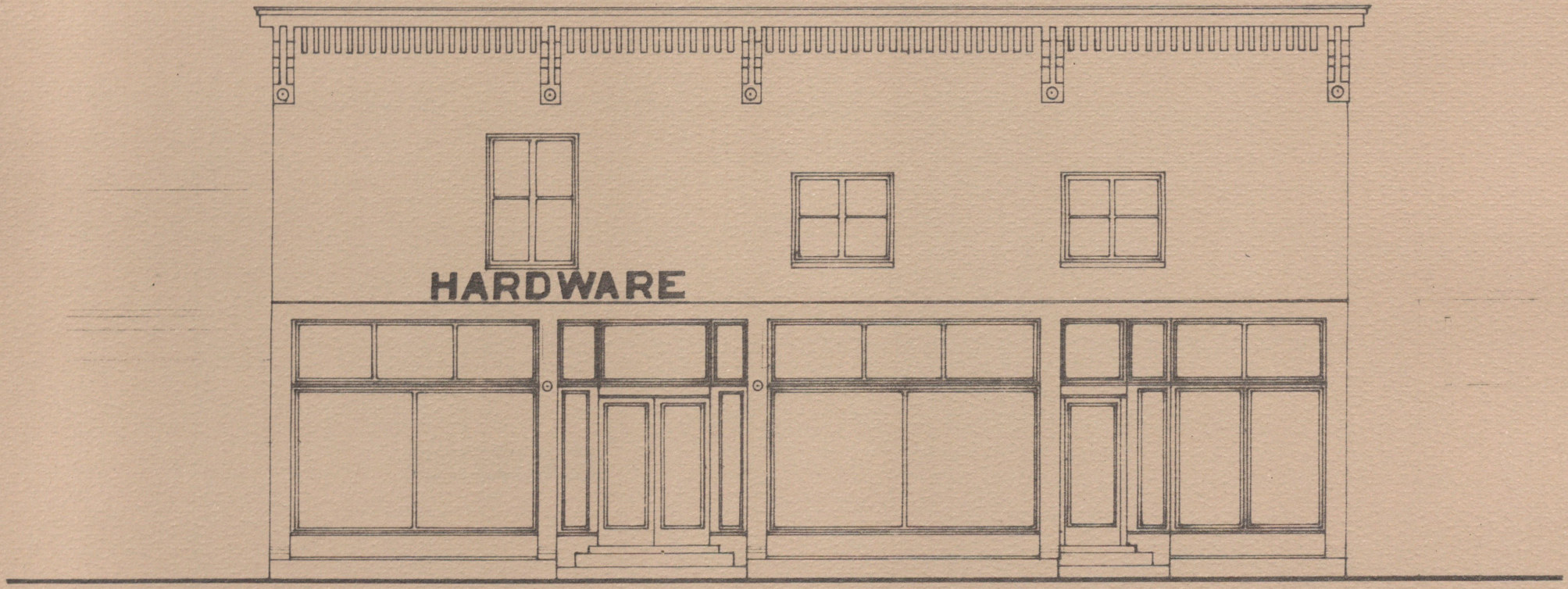
Therefore the objective of the project is to bring the prominent physical aspects of the town into a single building that reflects the major ideals of the community. Some of the aspects to be explored are proportions, scale, materials, signage and texture. Although the physical aspects of the town are to have a greater importance, the ideological basis of the town shall not be ignored. It, too, will be exploited to bring about a combination of physical forms that give emotion to a structure.

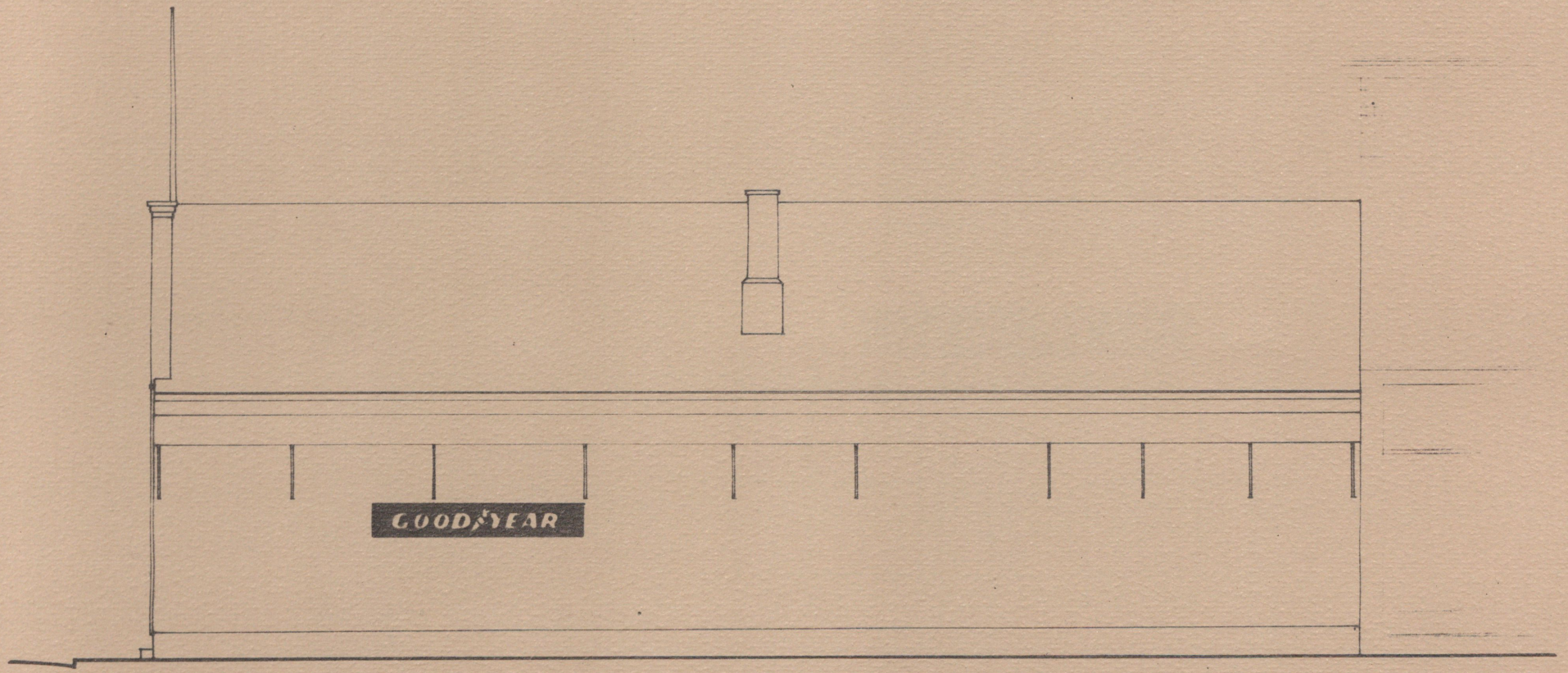
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HOTEL WOLF

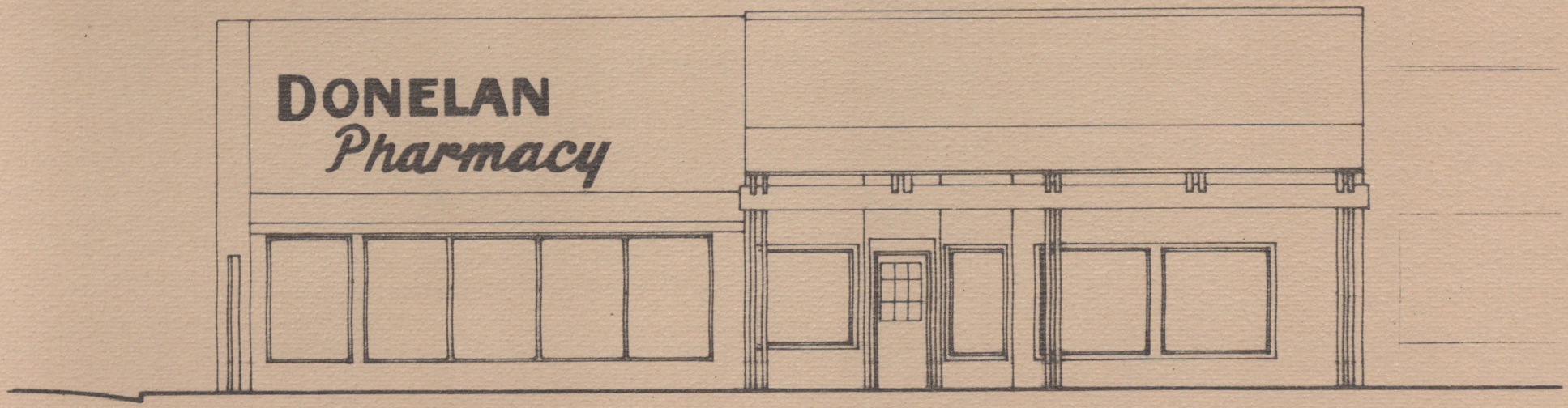

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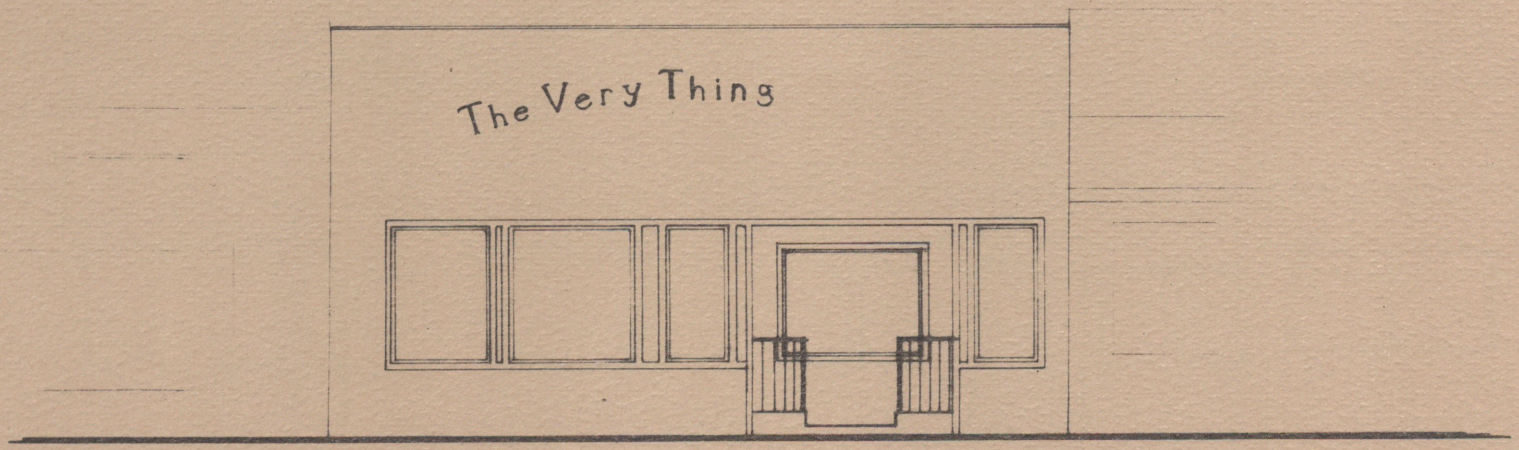

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Western Wear

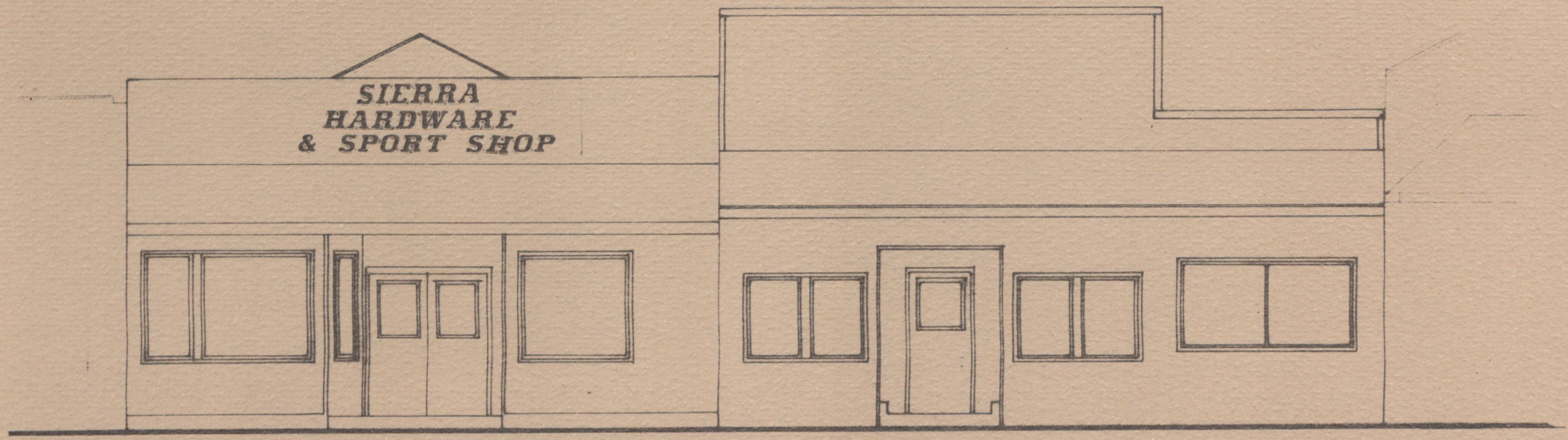

HARDWARE

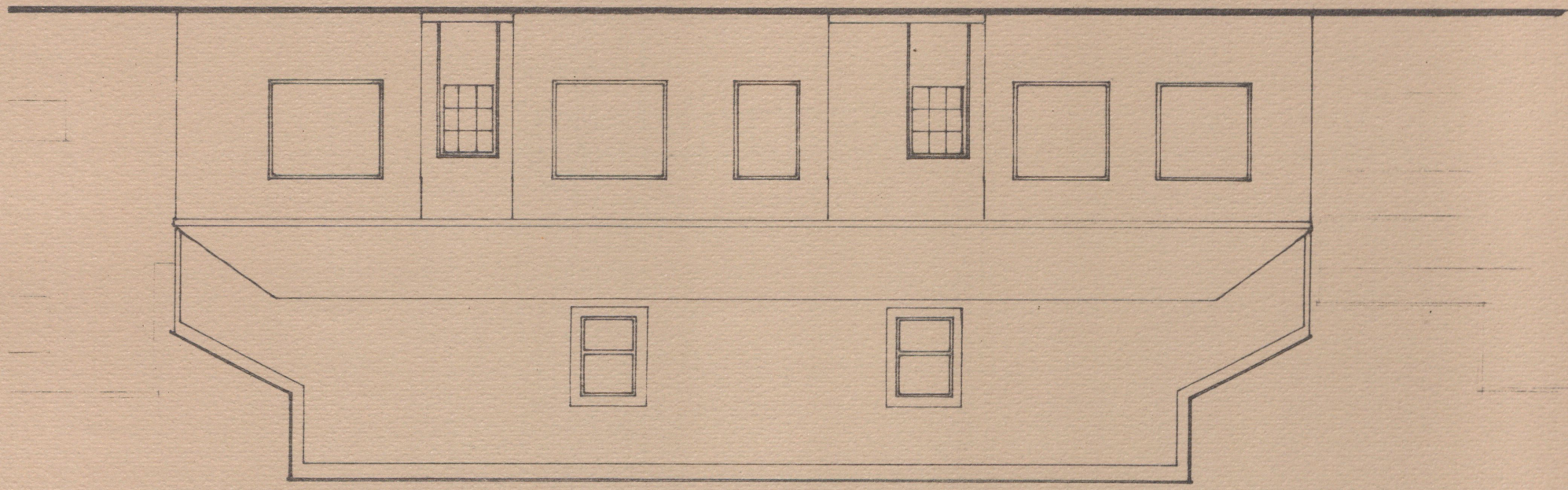

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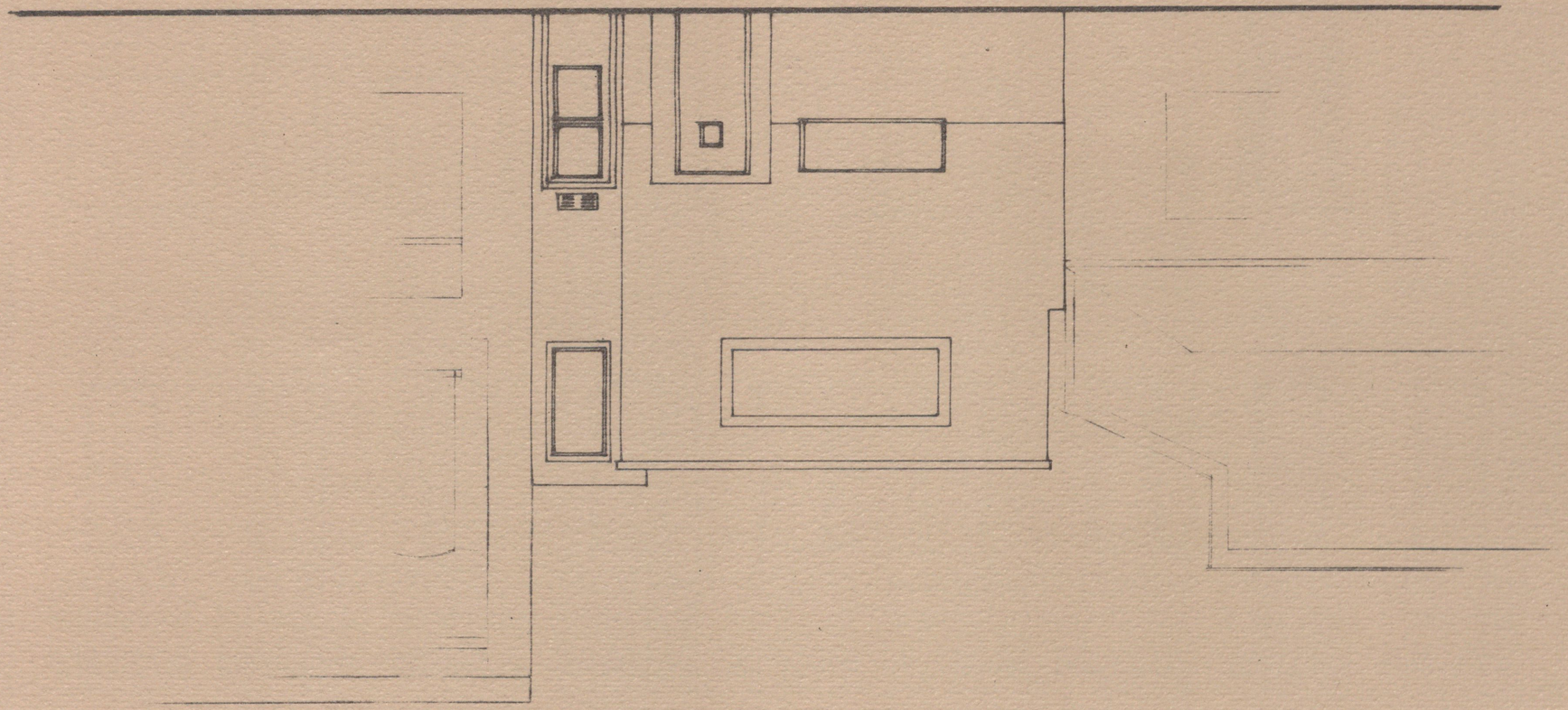

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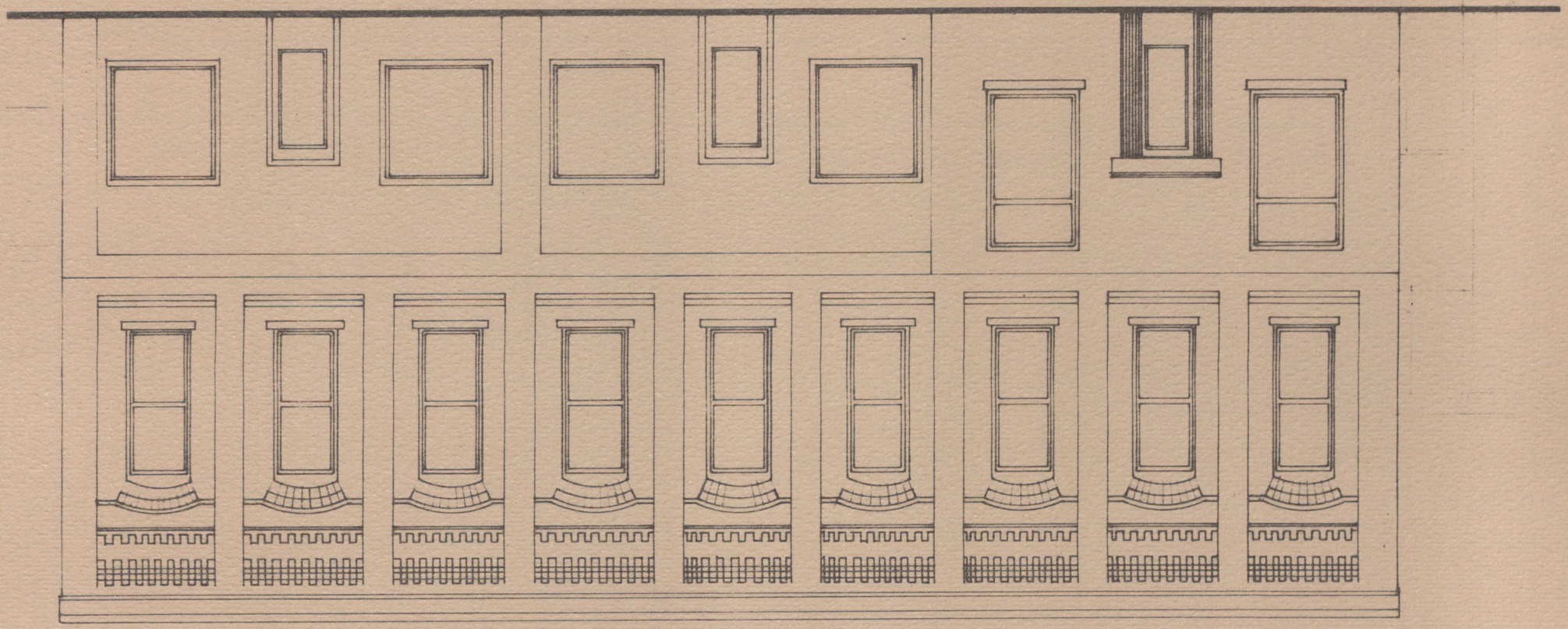

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Pharmacy

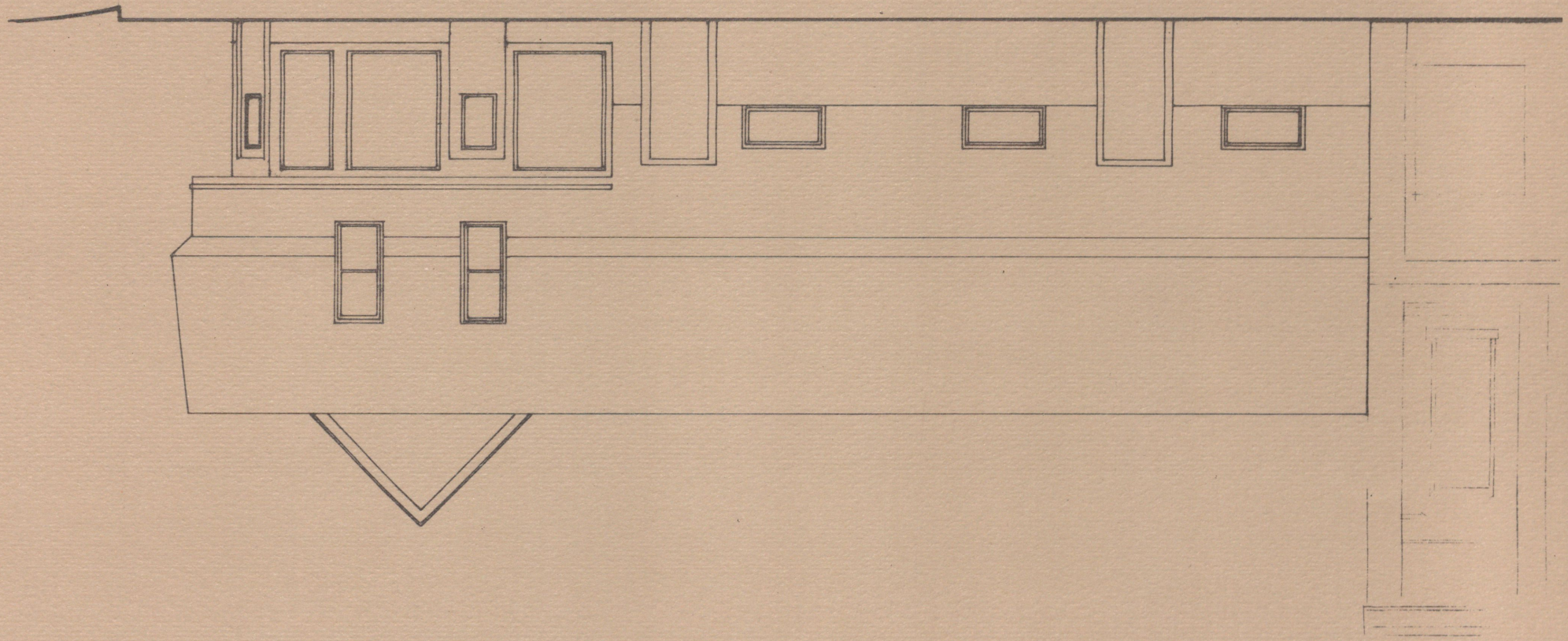

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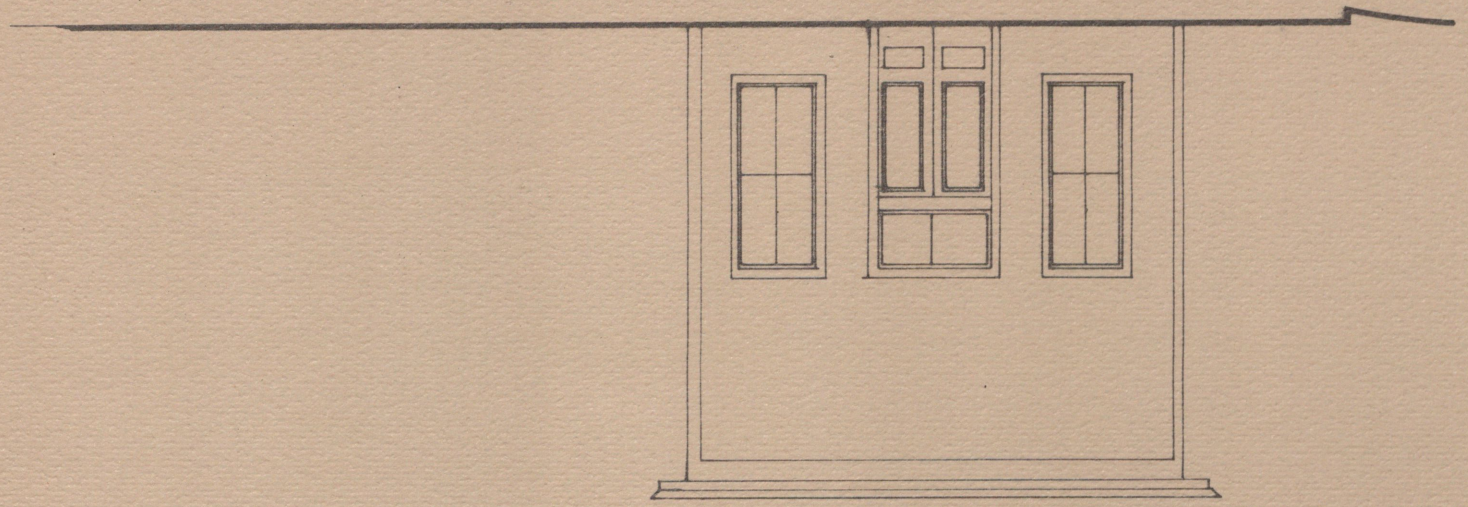

SIERRA
HARDWARE
& SPORT SHOP







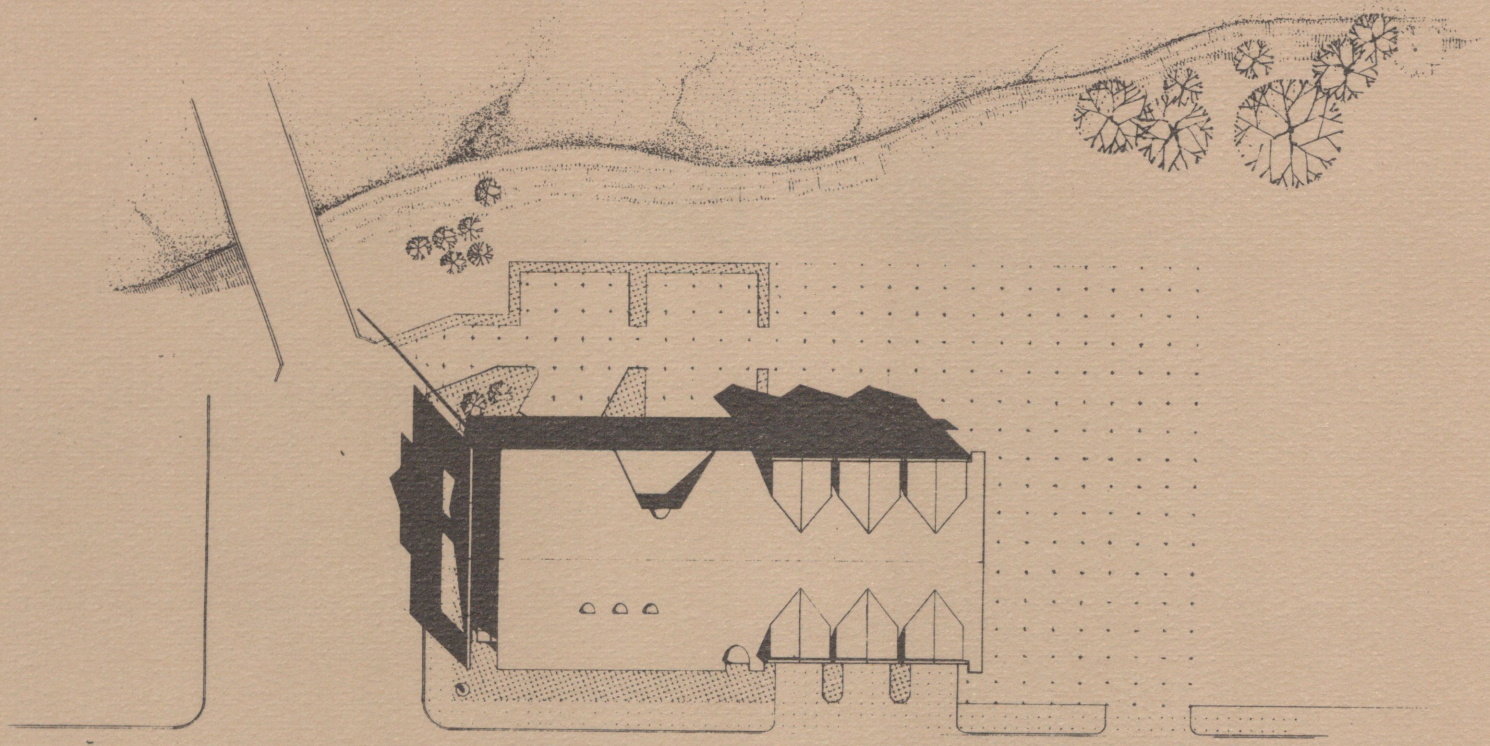




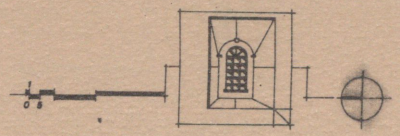
the project

THESIS STATEMENT

A DESIGN VOCABULARY CAN BE DEVELOPED FROM THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT TO BRING ABOUT A BUILDING OF THE SAME SPIRIT AS THAT WHICH EXISTS.

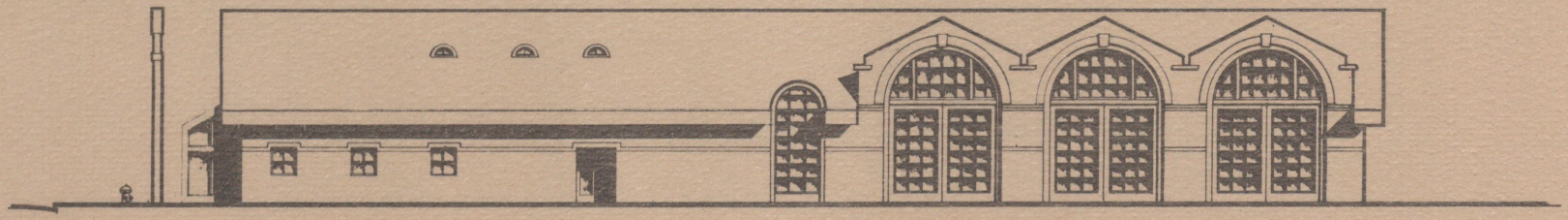


SITE PLAN

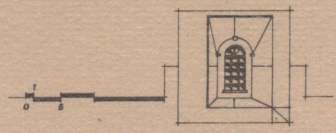


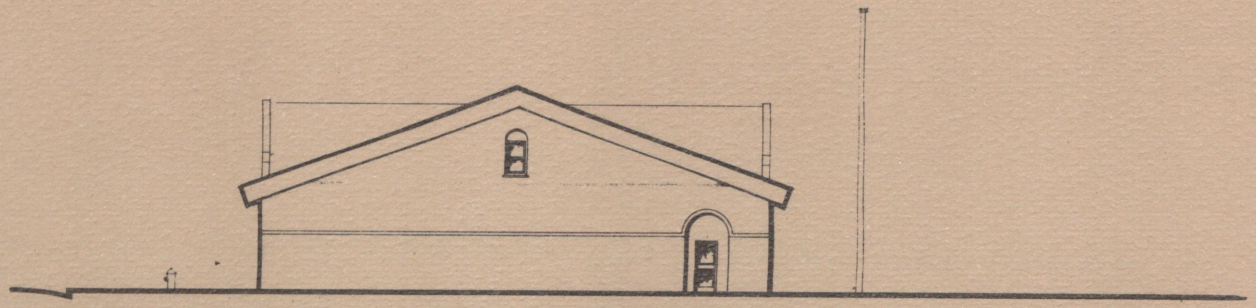


NORTH ELEVATION

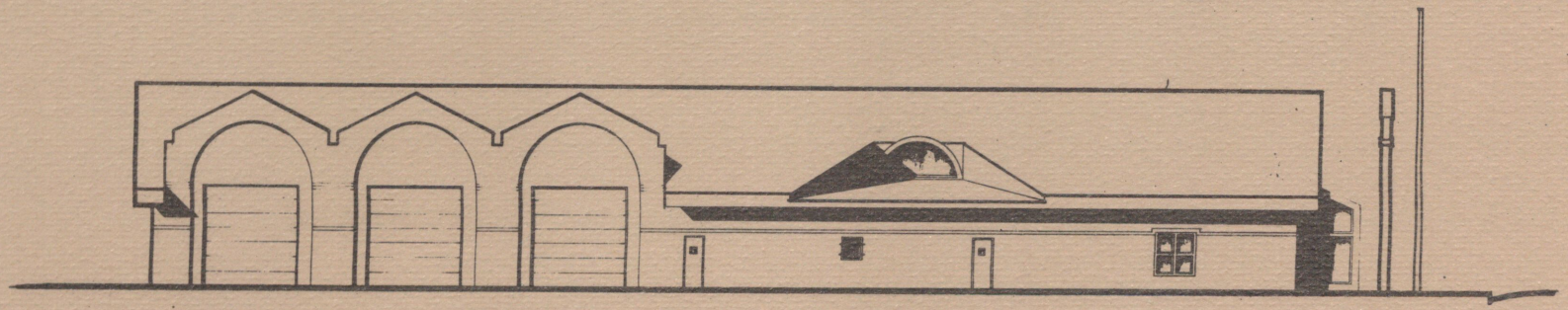


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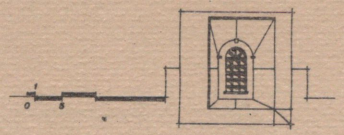


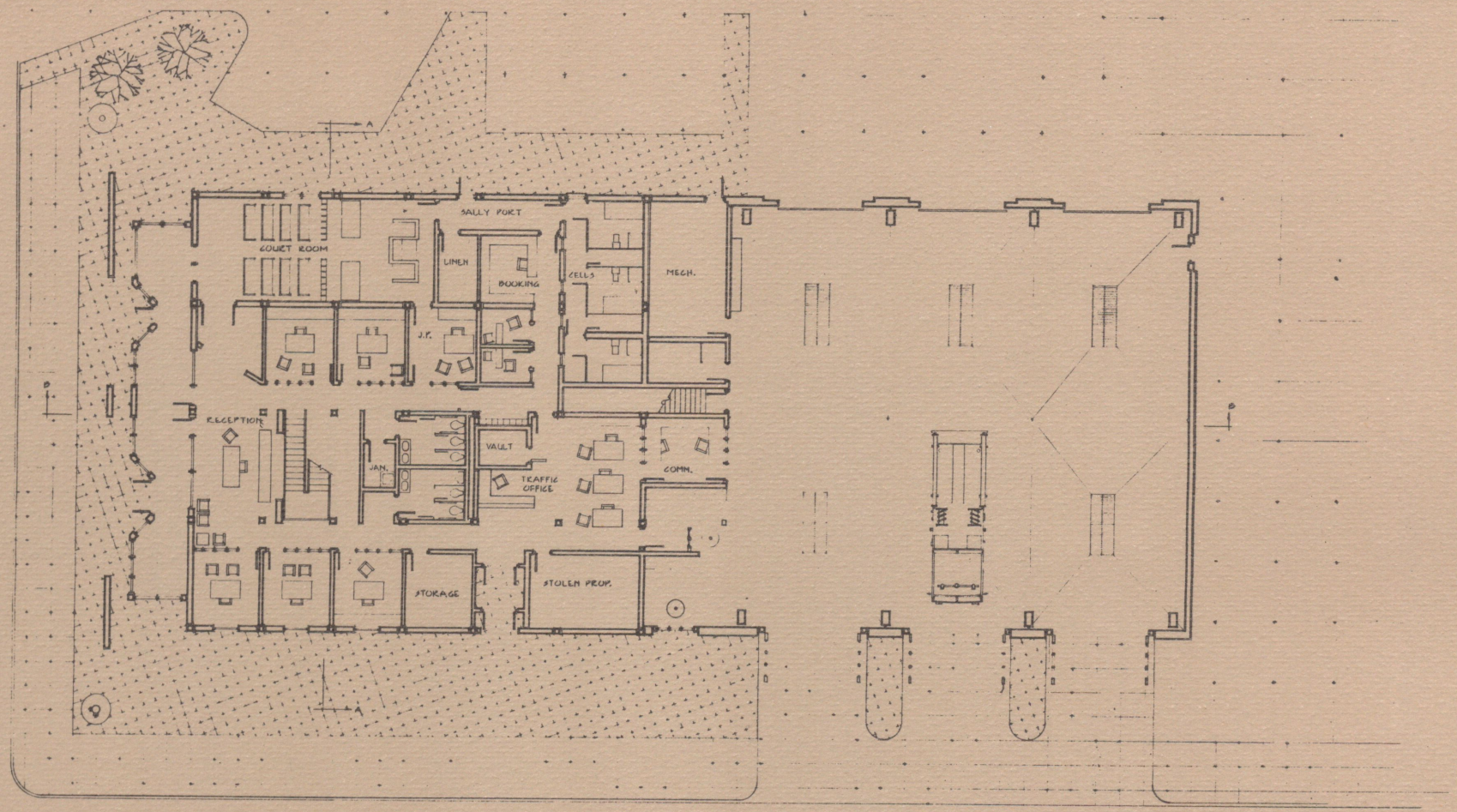


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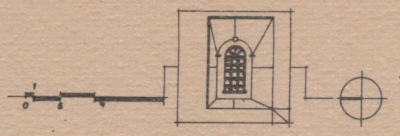


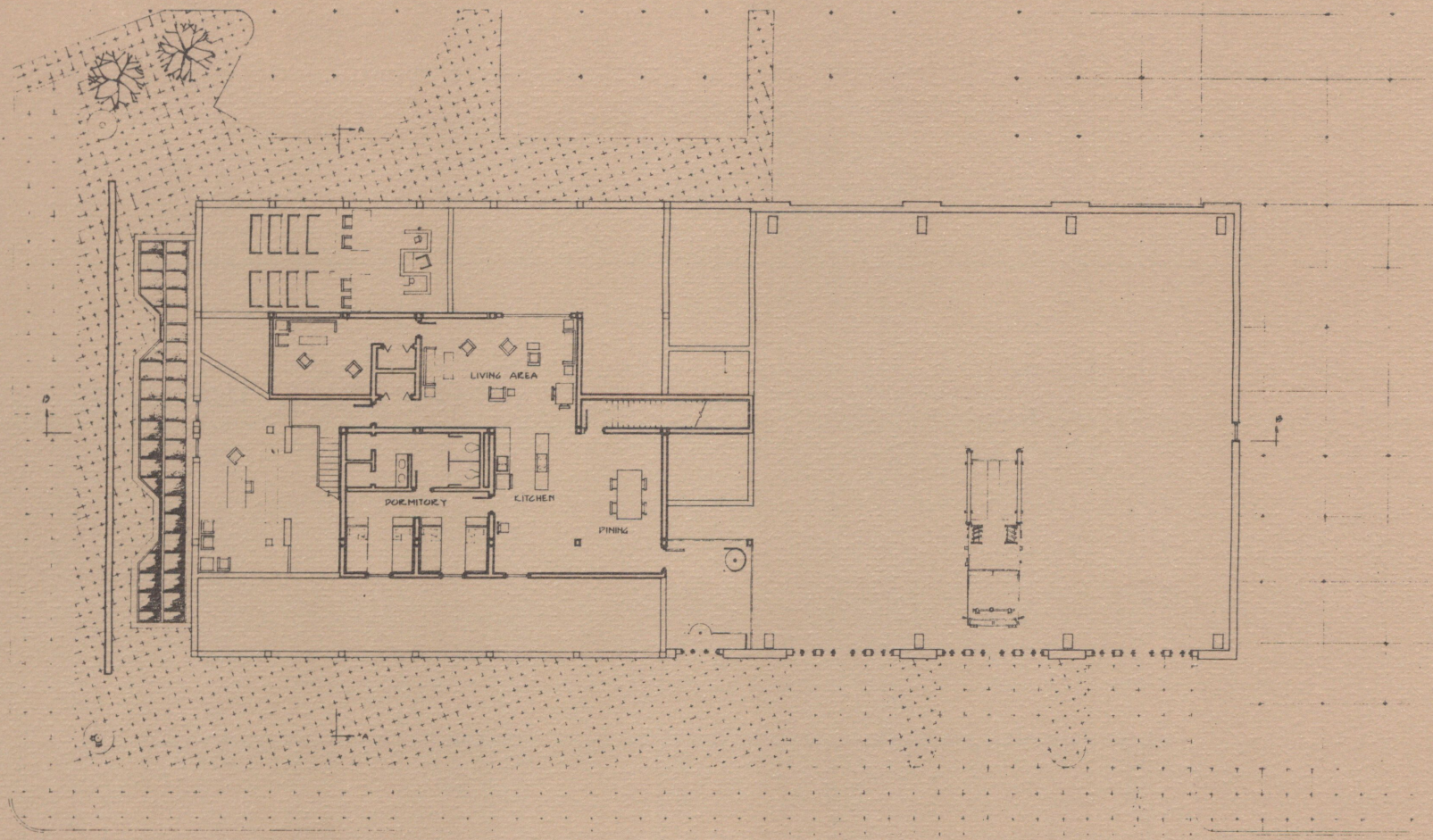
EAST ELEVATION



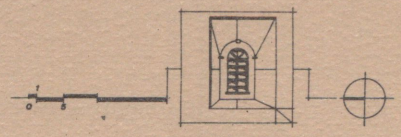


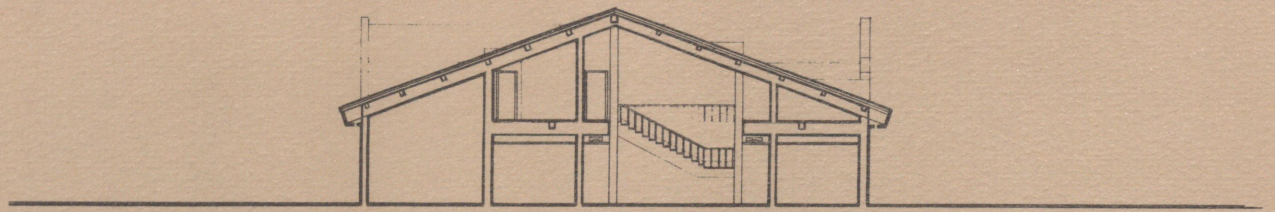
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



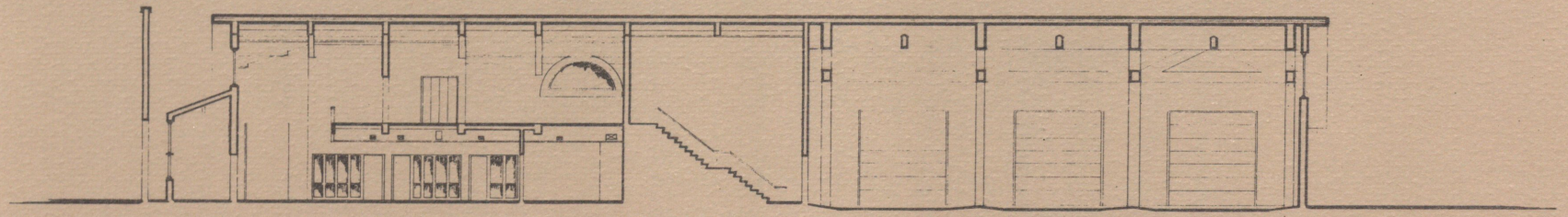


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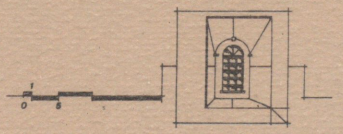


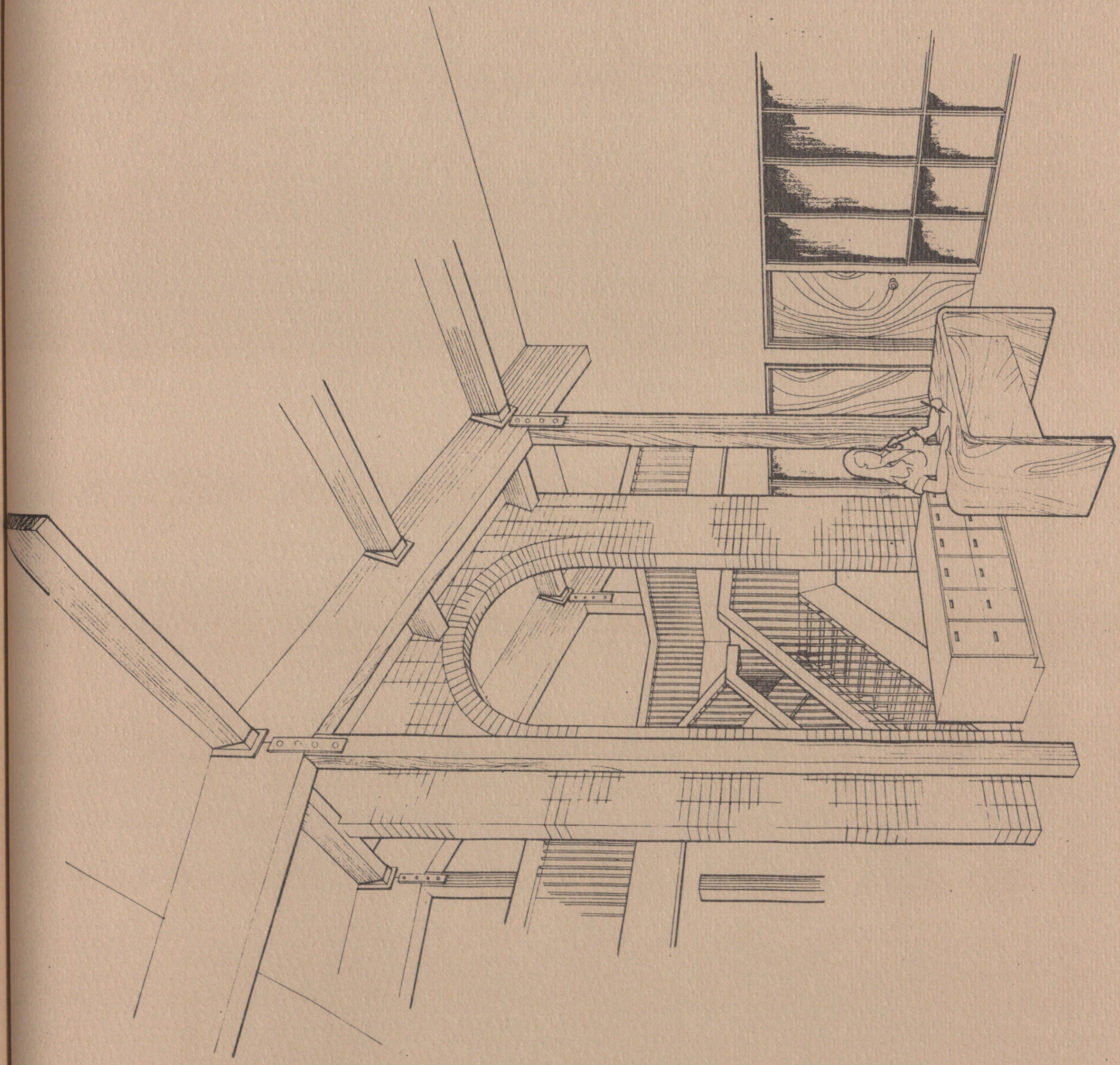


SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B





endnotes

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