

LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (LEAA)

POLICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

SUBJECT Consolidation of Police Records and
Communication

REPORT NUMBER 75-046-004

FOR Mineral Wells, Texas, Police Department

1. City of Mineral Wells, Texas
 - Population: 17,000
 - Police Strength (Sworn): 25
 - Total: 30
 - Square-Mile Area: 11
2. Palo Pinto County Sheriff's Department
 - Population: 26,000
 - Police Strength (Sworn): 8
 - Total: 8
 - Square-Mile Area: 948

CONTRACTOR Public Administration Service
1776 Massachusetts Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20036

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CONTRACT NUMBER J-LEAA-002-76

DATE October 14, 1975

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Mineral Wells and Palo Pinto County, Texas, are proposing the construction of a Law Enforcement Center to house both the Mineral Wells Police Department and the Palo Pinto County Sheriff's Department. Also to be included in the facility are a new county jail, Justice of the Peace Office, and Municipal Courtroom. The city and county sought technical assistance in overall building and program design.

Following is a list of persons contacted during the conduct of this technical assistance assignment:

Bill Rivers, City Manager
Mineral Wells, Texas

Sgt. Bennie Hutchason, Director
of Services Bureau, Mineral Wells
Police Department

Larry Watson, Investigator
Mineral Wells Police
Department

Ruth Davis, Dispatcher
Mineral Wells Police
Department

James Foley, Chief Deputy
Palo Pinto County Sheriff's
Department

Fred W. Forman, Chief of
Police, Mineral Wells Police
Department

G.S. Sommerfeld, Chief
Investigator, Mineral Wells
Police Department

Donald Fairrell, Patrolman
Mineral Wells Police Depart-
ment

Bill Harris, Sheriff
Palo Pinto County Sheriff's
Department

Bonnie Smith, Secretary/Deputy
Palo Pinto County Sheriff's
Department

General Background Information

The City of Mineral Wells, Texas, is a community of 17,000 persons, approximately 60 miles west of Fort Worth, Texas, in Palo Pinto County. During the past three years, this population figure has fluctuated dramatically.

During the 1950's and 1960's, Mineral Wells was the home of Fort Wolters, the U.S. Army's primary helicopter training base. In 1972, the Army decided to consolidate all of its helicopter training in Arkansas; Fort Wolters started to phase out its entire operation. By the end of 1973, Mineral Wells had lost its Army post and 15,000 people.

Since the closing of Fort Wolters, Mineral Wells has developed new industrial areas and has increased its population by 3,000 in the past two years. This industrial development and population increase is expected to continue for many years as more and more companies move from the metropolitan areas to areas of the state having lower taxes and less expensive land for future expansion.

The City of Mineral Wells presently encompasses an area of 11 square miles and expects to increase that area by approximately 25 per cent by acquiring 3 square miles of the former military installation.

Police Department manpower is comprised of:

- 1 Chief
- 1 Assistant Chief
- 1 Director of Service Bureau
- 2 Investigators
- 3 Patrol Sergeants
- 17 Patrolmen
- 4 Dispatchers
- 1 Animal Warden

Police Department vehicles are comprised of:

- 7 Patrol Cars
- 1 Animal Warden Vehicle
- 3 City/County Ambulances

In addition to the police department, the chief is responsible for overseeing the operation of the City/County Ambulance Service.

The present manpower level of the police department is not expected to increase for at least 10-12 years even though the city's population is increasing. The present manpower authorization has remained constant for the past several years even though the local population decreased by 15,000 two years ago.

The County of Palo Pinto comprises a land area of 948 square miles and is fairly sparsely populated. The entire county population outside of Mineral Wells is 9,000. The terrain is rugged and somewhat hilly. It is primarily a cattle raising area. There are a few small communities in the outlying areas of the county, none of which have a law enforcement agency. Approximately 75 per cent of the entire county population resides in the eastern half of the county in and around Mineral Wells.

The Sheriff's Department is comprised of the Sheriff, six deputies, and two jailers. The deputies are each assigned a patrol vehicle. Two of the six deputies live in the lesser populated areas of the western part of the county. The remainder reside in the more populated half of the county.

The existing facilities for both the Sheriff's Department and Police Department are inadequate for present-day needs.

The police offices are in a combination fire and police building. The department outgrew these quarters many years ago. There is virtually no security in the building whatsoever.

The Sheriff's offices are in the basement of the county courthouse with the jail on the top (3rd) floor. The facilities are inadequate for the department's present-day needs. The jail has a capacity of 32 and at times during the past few years has had as many as 47 prisoners. To verify the inadequacy of the present jail, it should be noted there have been three escapes in as many years.

Because of the lack of sufficient office space and adequate jailing facilities, the City of Mineral Wells and Palo Pinto County have decided to construct a new law enforcement center to house both law enforcement agencies. The request for technical assistance was generated because of the desire on the part of the city and county to design a facility which would meet the needs of both agencies not only for today but for the next 50 to 60 years.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to assist the city and county in planning a joint law enforcement center.

The original technical assistance request form stated the city was seeking information on space requirements, cost estimates, and functional capability for radio communications, records, and jail facilities. Conversations with the City Manager and Chief of Police slightly altered the request in that cost estimates were eliminated from the original request. It seems the city has been in contact with an architectural firm since the original technical assistance request was submitted. Therefore, the study was conducted to provide guidance for suggestions for:

- a. Jail size, capacity, and general floorplan
- b. Office sizes and general floorplan for both departments
- c. Adequacy of proposed new communications equipment
- d. Adequacy of new recordkeeping equipment

Having had previous experience in law enforcement center design, this consultant was able to make recommendations concerning the four areas mentioned above as well as building security.

As mentioned previously, the present office and jail facilities for both departments are inadequate for present-day operations, not to mention future needs.

A feasibility study for a new law enforcement center was conducted in 1972 as phase one of a projected grant application for federal financial assistance in constructing a new facility. The study confirmed this consultant's opinion that a new facility is badly needed by both law enforcement agencies.

III. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

As noted in the previous section, four main areas were studied regarding the new law enforcement facility for Mineral Wells and Palo Pinto County:

- a. Jail size and capacity
- b. Office space needs for both departments
- c. Communications equipment
- d. New records equipment

Jail

The existing county jail on the top floor of the courthouse in Palo Pinto is designed to hold 32 prisoners. It does not provide for adequate separation of felons from misdemeanor offenders, separation of juveniles from adults, or males from females. Jail populations are not expected to decrease in the years to come. With the population of Mineral Wells increasing at a rather substantial rate and new industry moving in, there is an ever-increasing need for more adequate law enforcement facilities.

This consultant was fortunate to be able to discuss jailing needs not only with the present sheriff, but also the two previous sheriffs. The chief of police and chief investigator of the Mineral Wells Police Department are both former sheriffs of Palo Pinto County. By having these resources available, it was much easier to ascertain jailing needs and problems on both a past and present need basis. All three of these gentlemen were interviewed separately. When queried as to the number of beds needed in the new jail, now and 50 years from now, all three related that 50-60 bed spaces would adequately handle jailing needs for Mineral Wells and Palo Pinto County now and for many years in the future.

In addition to these resources, the State of Texas had input into planning the new jail facility. On June 19, 1975, the state legislature created a Jail Commission

and established minimum standards for jail and correctional facilities state-wide. These standards were followed in making recommendations. In fact, the square footage of the cell areas in this report are 35-40 per cent in excess of Texas' minimum requirements. If Texas follows the lead of many other states, such as Minnesota, these minimum square footage requirements will most certainly be increased in the future.

The security design of the jail area is based upon previous experience in law enforcement center design by this consultant.

Office Space

The office space needs were determined by interview and analysis of present departmental needs and future expansion. In addition, the building is designed to provide future office space as well as areas for constructing additional office and/or storage space in years to come.

Communications

The existing radio communications equipment was studied to determine whether or not it is adequate for present and future needs. This includes output wattage, number of frequencies available, and area of coverage.

The present mobile equipment is not adequate for present and future needs. However, both departments are embarking on phase two of a statewide communications upgrading project, similar to Minnesota's, which is being funded with federal L.E.A.A. funds. The new mobile radios will have eight-channel capability, will have 100 watts of transmitting power, and will be equipped with a repeater on local frequency, and an encoder and decoder for both car-to-car and base-to-base emergency or point-to-point transmitting and receiving capability. This consultant just completed a similar communications upgrading program in a 20-county area of

southeastern and south central Minnesota. Based upon this experience, a fairly accurate appraisal of communications needs was possible.

Records

The city and county will microfilm all records when the new facility is occupied. A "jacket file" was recently purchased by the city in anticipation of immediately implementing the new system within the Police Department.

There are two basic microfilm systems currently used by many governmental agencies. One is the "jacket file" system; the other is a magazine or cassette film system.

The "jacket file" system is an excellent method of information storage. It is widely used in systems, such as hospital records, where the only requirement is storage of information by name. Unfortunately, this type of system does not allow information retrieval except by name. It does not allow analysis of records or the information contained therein.

A magazine or cassette film system serves not only as a method of storing information, but also as an excellent management tool in that it affords the agency an analysis capability. This latter quality is extremely important to law enforcement agencies. Records sections of most law enforcement agencies have been primarily a place where reports are put into folders and filed in drawers. There has been no way of analyzing the information contained in those records. A "jacket file" system is, for the most part, a miniaturization of this same system. Only a magazine or cassette film system allows analysis as well as storage and retrieval.

This consultant has seen both types of systems in operation and is aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each.

IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the information gathered during the on-site visit, the recommendations of the feasibility study, and the previous law enforcement center design experiences of this consultant, it is highly recommended the city and county proceed as expeditiously as possible to construct a new law enforcement center in Mineral Wells.

It is recommended that a two-story facility be constructed with the jail on second floor and all law enforcement agency offices as well as a municipal courtroom on first floor. A basic design and floor plan are attached in Appendices A and B.

Specifically, recommendations for the four areas of this study are as follows:

Jail

The second floor jail area of the new law enforcement center should be a 61-bed facility containing maximum security, moderate security, and minimum security sections. Physically segregated from these areas should be juvenile and female sections. Also to be included are an eight-bed area for inebriates, two rooms for mental/psych clients, and one isolation cell. Additionally, the jail area should include an area for visitors, a janitor room, program space, storage space (mattresses, blankets, etc.), lawyer/client privilege information rooms, a room for lineups, a booking room, a room for storing prisoners' clothing and personal items, a kitchen, an infirmary, and a control room.

In order to maximize security in the jail area, it is recommended that an elevator be used instead of stairs for access to second floor from first floor. There should be one emergency stairway from second to first floor in case of fire.

There should be no windows on second floor which can be opened. All glass in the control room and maximum security areas should be bulletproof. All other glass should be shatterproof and bullet-resistant.

All doors in the cell areas should have combination electric and manual locks, all of which should be controlled by the jailer in the control room.

The entire second floor should have an intercom system installed capable of being monitored by both the jailer and dispatcher. This would have a twofold advantage. One, the jailer could communicate with anybody on second floor without leaving the control room. Secondly, the jailer could be on an audio monitor to the dispatcher when making cell checks or when in the cell block areas alone.

The "Tank" area and isolation cell should be wired for installation of closed circuit television cameras which would be monitored in the jail control room. In addition, the controlled entrance area at the elevator and the booking room should be covered by closed circuit television monitored in the dispatch room on first floor.

Office Space - First Floor

The recommended first-floor area is approximately 97'x97'; thus, the second floor will hang over one side of the first floor by approximately 18 feet. This area should serve as a carport area for parking ambulances and squad cars. If more office space is required in future years, offices and a hallway could be constructed in the area now programmed for the carport area.

The square foot floor spaces of offices, hallways, and courtroom are detailed on the attached floor plan in Appendix B. The two doorways on the left side of first floor should be electric doors equipped with a card lock system, accessible to employees only. The outer doors of the public entrance should be unlocked at all

times. However, the inner doors of the public entrance should be locked after normal workday hours and electronically controlled by the dispatcher. The area between the inner and outer doors should be equipped with a closed circuit television camera and intercom controlled and monitored by the dispatcher.

The two doors leading to the elevator entrance area should also be equipped with electric locks controlled by the dispatcher. The three garage doors should also be electronically controlled by the dispatcher.

The uncommitted 9'x14' room on the left side of first floor could be designated as a temporary holding area.

The two-stall garage area should be equipped with a closed circuit television camera monitored by the dispatcher.

The reception/clerical room should have a counter on the lobby side equipped with a pull down, locking door. All persons entering the lobby area during normal work hours would have access to the reception area. Only after contacting the reception area could the public have access to law enforcement offices or the second floor.

Communications/Dispatch

The dispatch room should have bulletproof glass on three sides (not the side facing the records room). The side facing the lobby should be equipped with a Mosler type pass-through drawer and an intercom for communicating with persons admitted to the lobby area after hours. In order to insure the most effective acoustics in the dispatch room, it is recommended that the floor and all walls and portions of walls that are not glass be carpeted, while the ceiling should be of acoustical tile. By carpeting the walls, the noise level would be greatly reduced.

The present dispatch radio console from the police department should be installed in the new building along with fire and burglar alarms. Preferably, the burglar alarms should be installed in a monitoring cabinet, but because of different brands of alarms installed throughout the city, this would be very difficult. The present alarm system could be installed on a shelf, such as a bookshelf, in the dispatch room, probably against the wall adjoining the records room.

The city and county will acquire new eight-channel mobile radio equipment in the very near future. The present console should handle the new eight-channel system. However, if it proves to be inadequate, the present console in the sheriff's office could be installed either next to or on top of the police department console and more than meet the radio communication needs of both departments.

Because the dispatch room is subject to occasional repair and replacement of equipment, it is recommended a computer floor be installed in that room. This would allow for stringing wires below the floor instead of along walls and in the ceiling.

Telephones. Because all dispatching for both departments will be done from the new building, it will be necessary for all county residents to be able to telephone the law enforcement center without going through long distance direct dial. It is recommended that county telephone subscribers not served by the Mineral Wells exchange have access to a Zenith telephone line. This would allow direct telephone communications from the entire county at no charge to the subscriber.

The city plans to keep the fire department at its present location, but will take all fire calls and dispatch the fire trucks from the law enforcement center. This will necessitate the installation of a "hotline" from the dispatcher to the fire department. The emergency lines should be "jump lines," thus necessitating the publishing of only one number. The number should be one which is easy to remember,

such as 325-9111. Thus, the three incoming lines would be 325-9111, 9112, and 9113. The only number to be published would be 325-9111. The important aspect of the numbering system is that the emergency number should be one which is easy to remember.

The police department and sheriff's department should each have three non-emergency or administrative lines. This allows ease in billing for long distance telephone calls and would afford each department an ample number of lines for both incoming and outgoing non-emergency calls. These lines should be answered in the clerical/reception room during normal working hours. The only time the dispatcher should answer these non-emergency lines after normal hours and on weekends. Telephones for the Justice of the Peace offices should be handled separately and have a separate number only if the J.P. offices are occupied on an 8-hour, five-day basis.

Records

As discussed in Section III, the city purchased a "jacket file" microfilm system. The disadvantages of this type of microfilm system were also discussed at some length in the previous section, but to briefly restate, the "jacket file" system allows information retrieval by name only. The key to effective law enforcement recordkeeping is having the capability to analyze the information contained in those records. A magazine or cassette film system is the only microfilm system which allows a department this analytical capability. Therefore, it is recommended the city negotiate a return of the "jacket file" system and the subsequent purchase of a magazine or cassette film system.

It is further recommended that one person be designated as records clerk and be totally responsible for all microfilm operations.

All law enforcement records, including misdemeanor offenses, incident reports, criminal histories, and case files, should be microfilmed. The present indexing system should be retained.

General Comments

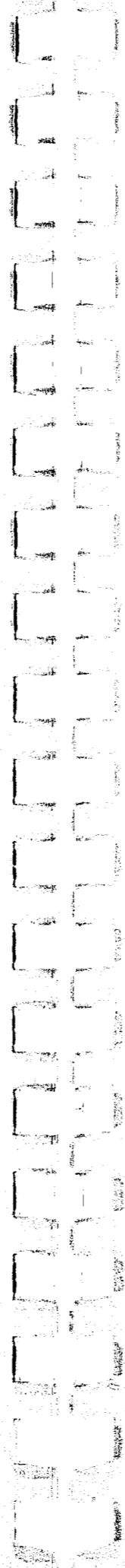
The jail proposed in this study is substantially larger than the present jail. It will be a costly facility, but it is extremely important to remember two points: one, the population of Mineral Wells is increasing rapidly and planning for this facility must include not only today's needs but also jail needs for the next 50-75 years; secondly, the new Texas Jail Commission has set forth new standards for all jails. Many of the existing jails which cannot comply will be closed down and those counties will be required to contract with neighboring counties for jailing services. The geographical situation of Palo Pinto County is such that contracting with neighboring counties may be a very real possibility in the near future.

The magazine or cassette film system is more expensive than the "jacket file" system. However, the management and analytical capabilities will greatly enhance the department's ability to research its information.

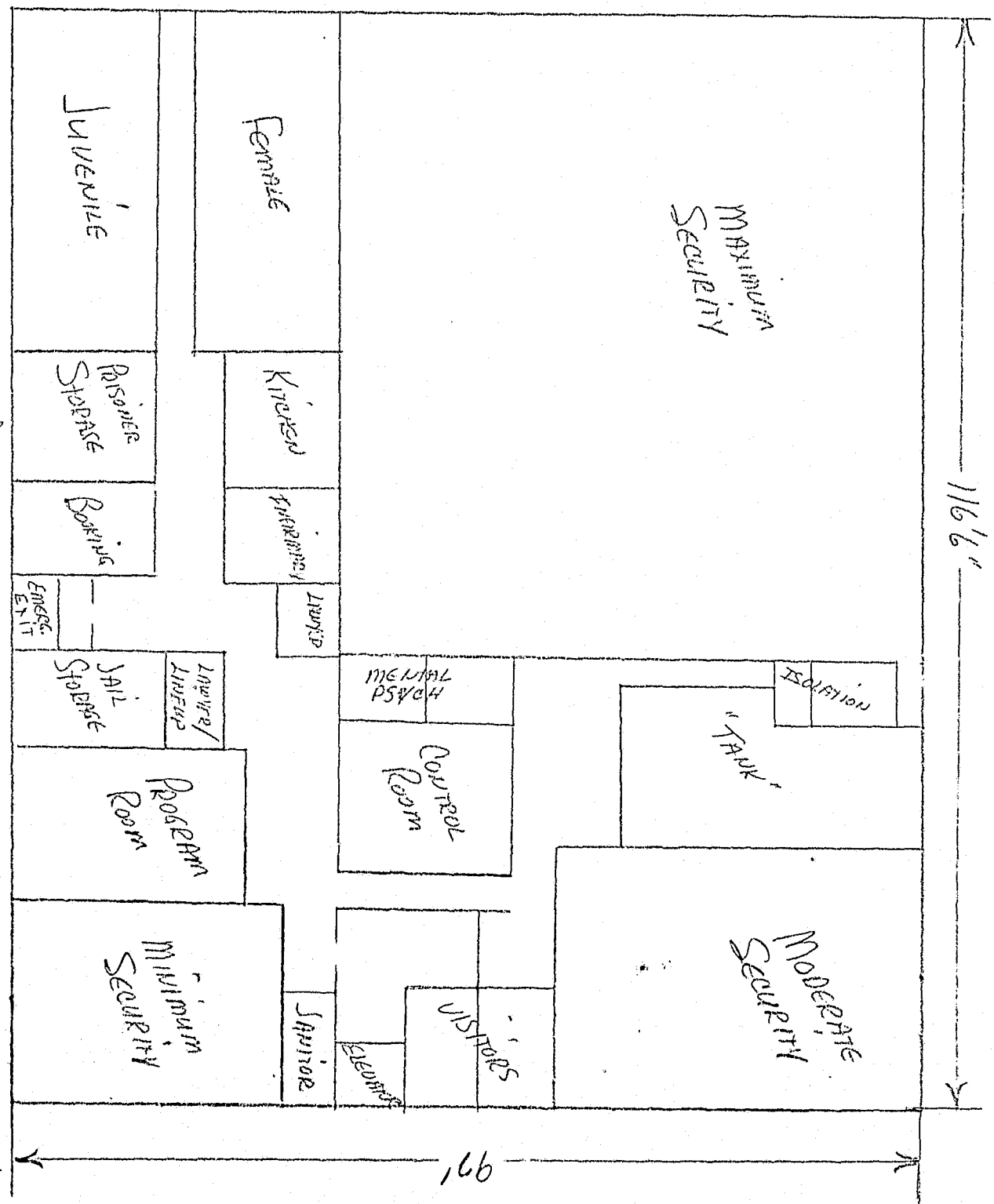
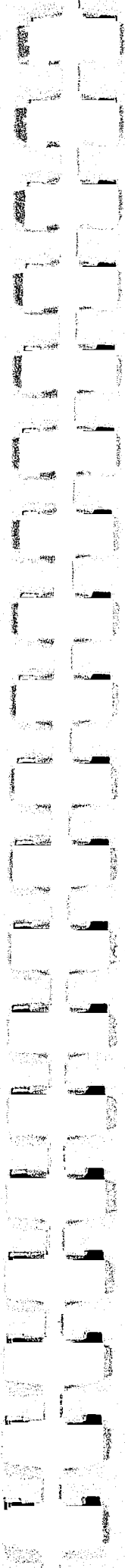
If the city and county are interested in detailed information on building furnishings, it is recommended that a booklet entitled "Life Cycle Costing Techniques Applicable to Law Enforcement Facilities" be acquired through L.E.A.A. The cost is 70¢ and can be ordered under stock number 2700-00274 from:

Superintendent of Documents
U. S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

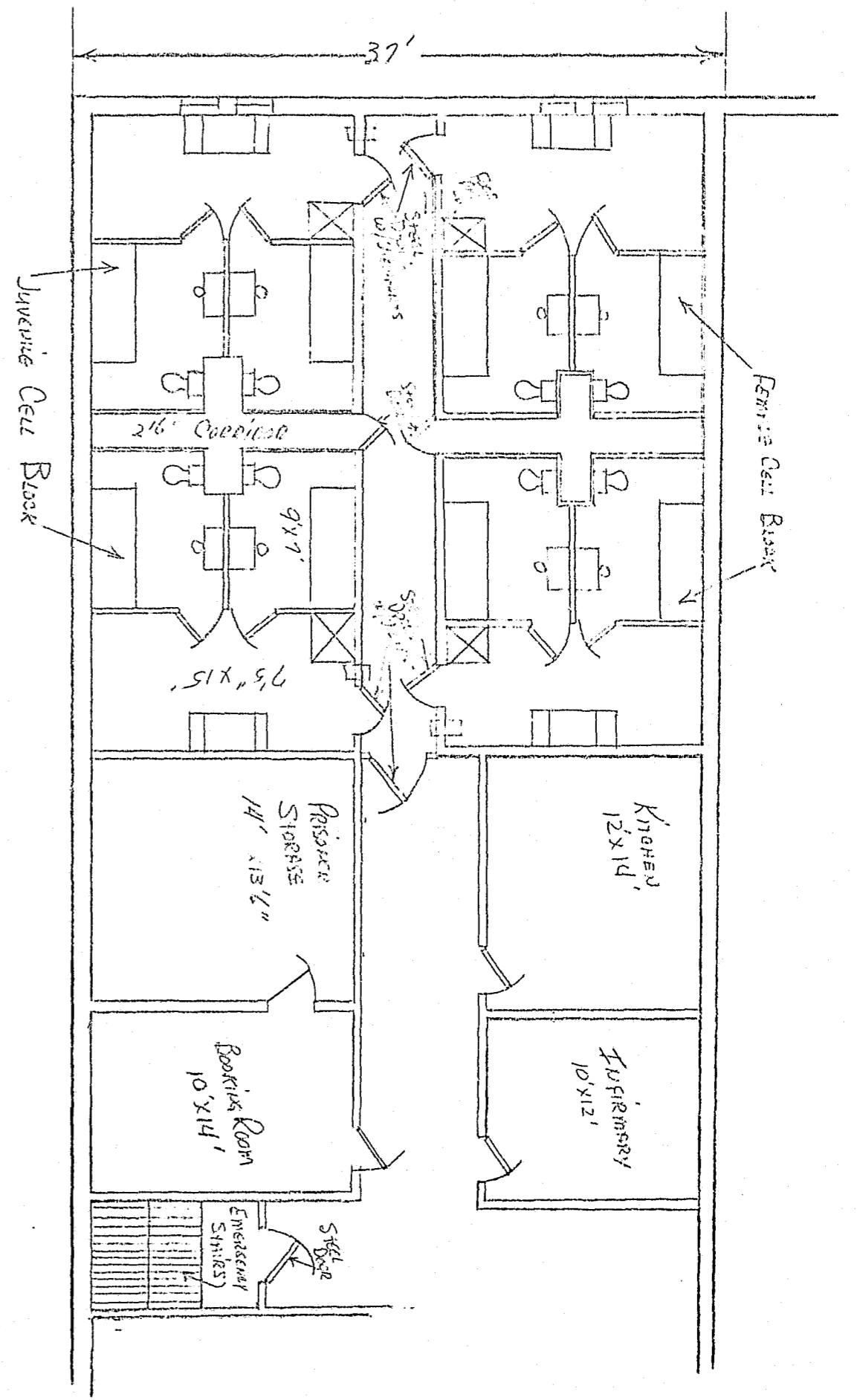
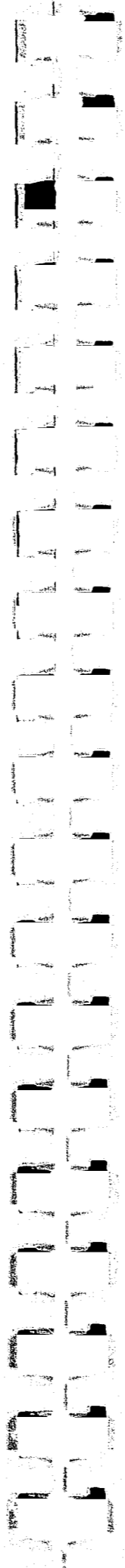
Another informative publication is entitled "Methods of Building Cost Analysis." Published in 1962, it is available through the National Academy of Science, Washington, D.C. 20418.



APPENDIX A
Second Floor

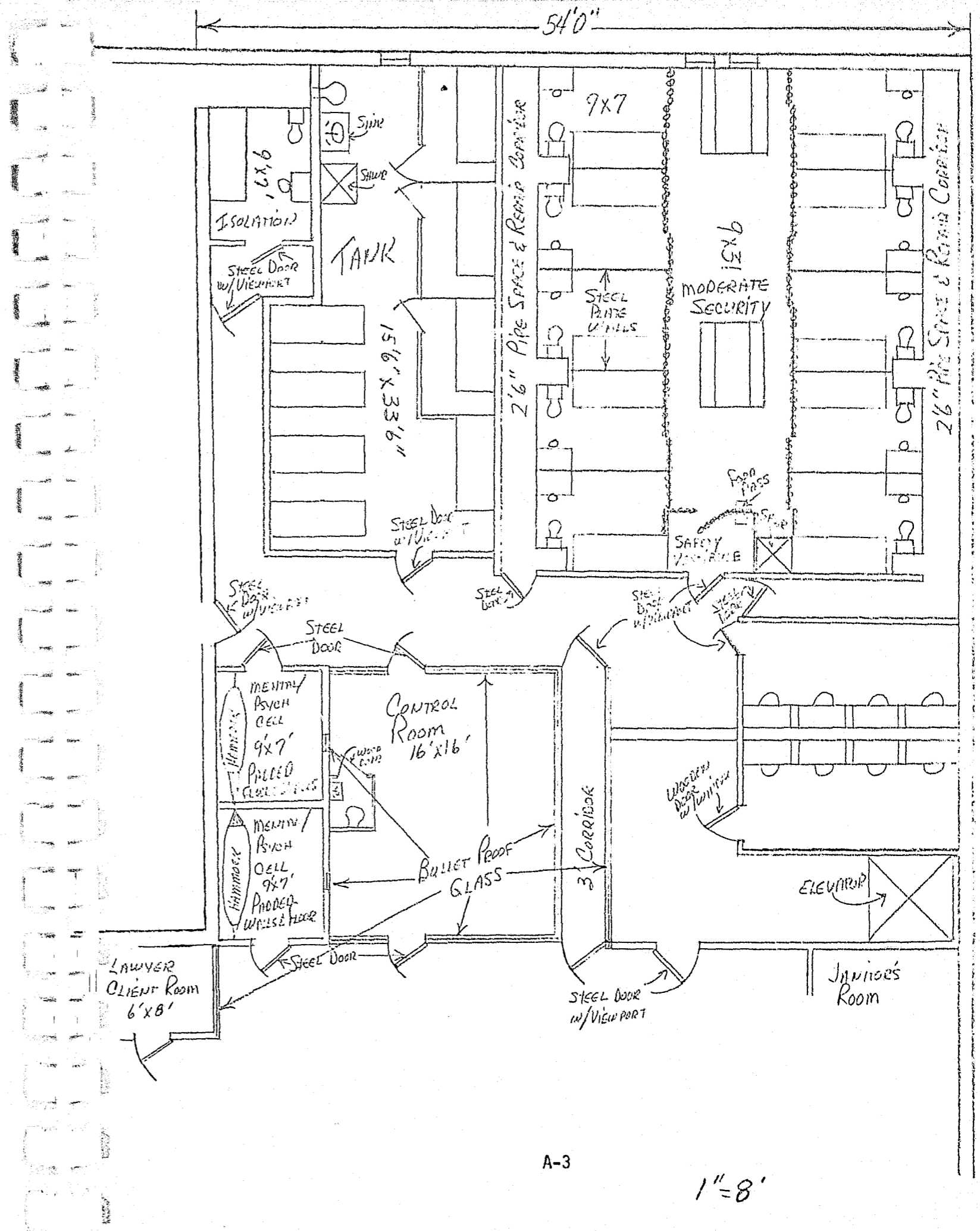


A-7



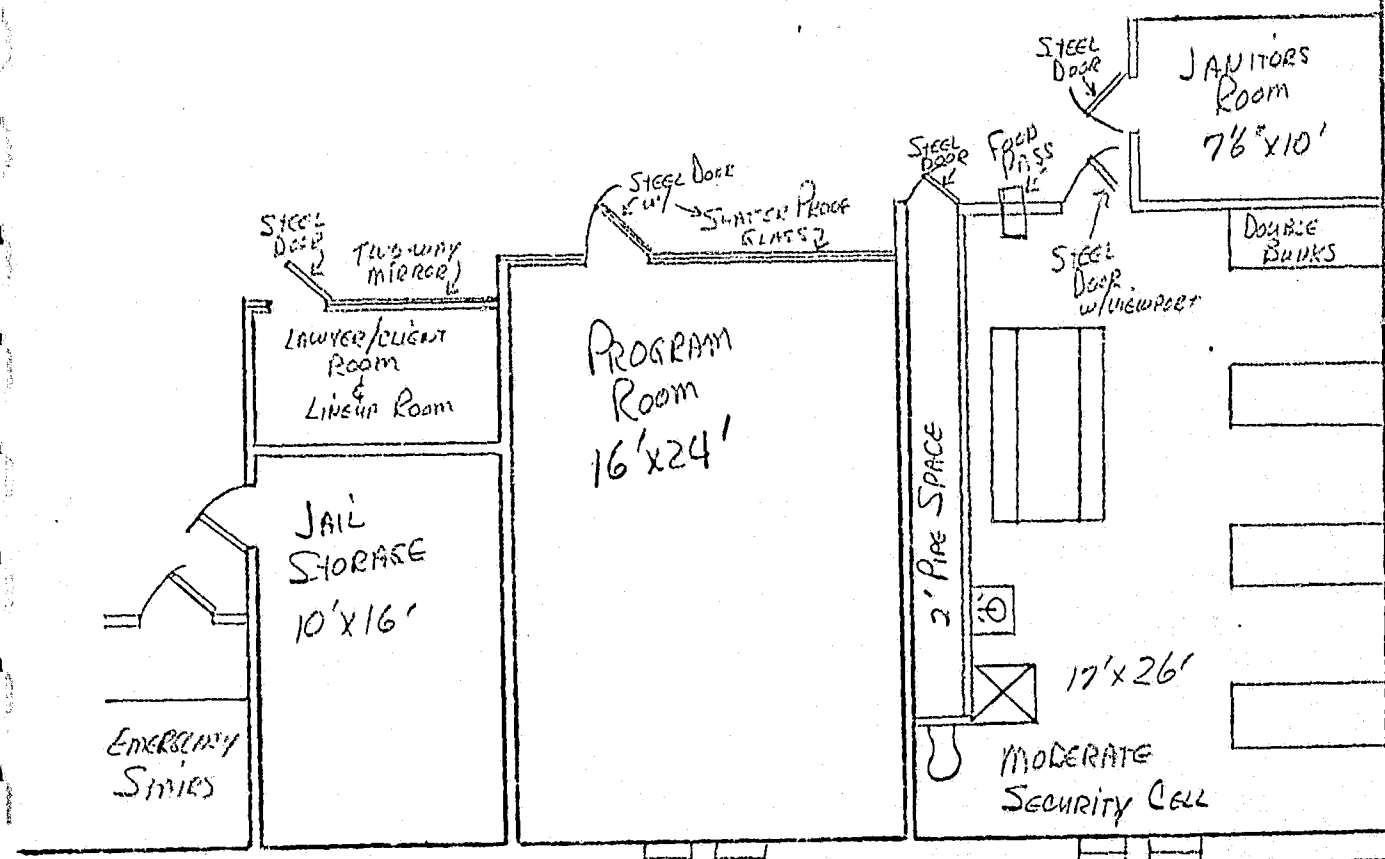
A-2

1"=8'

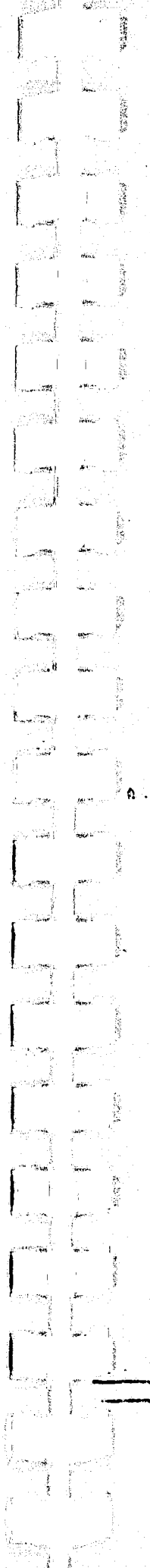
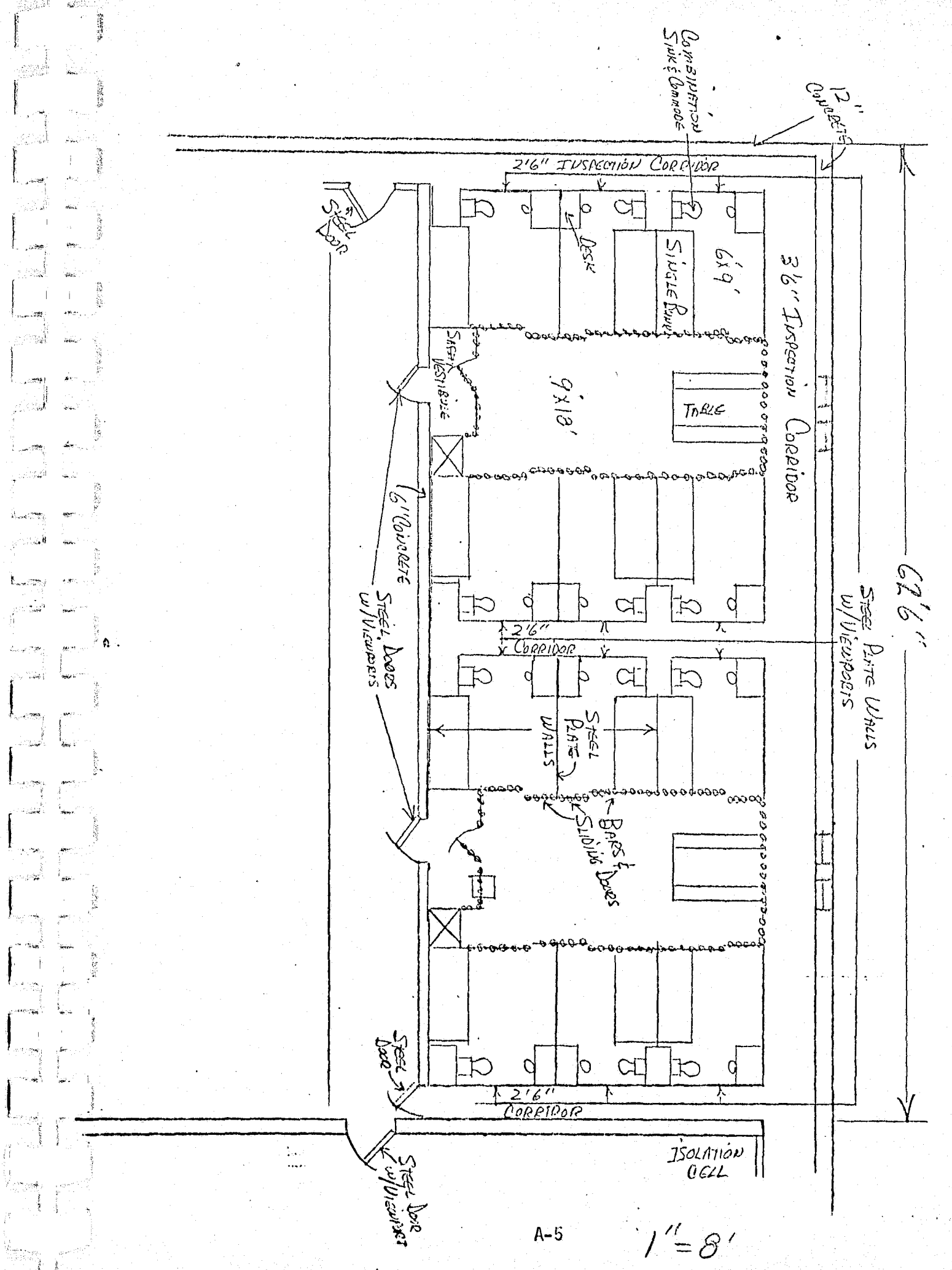


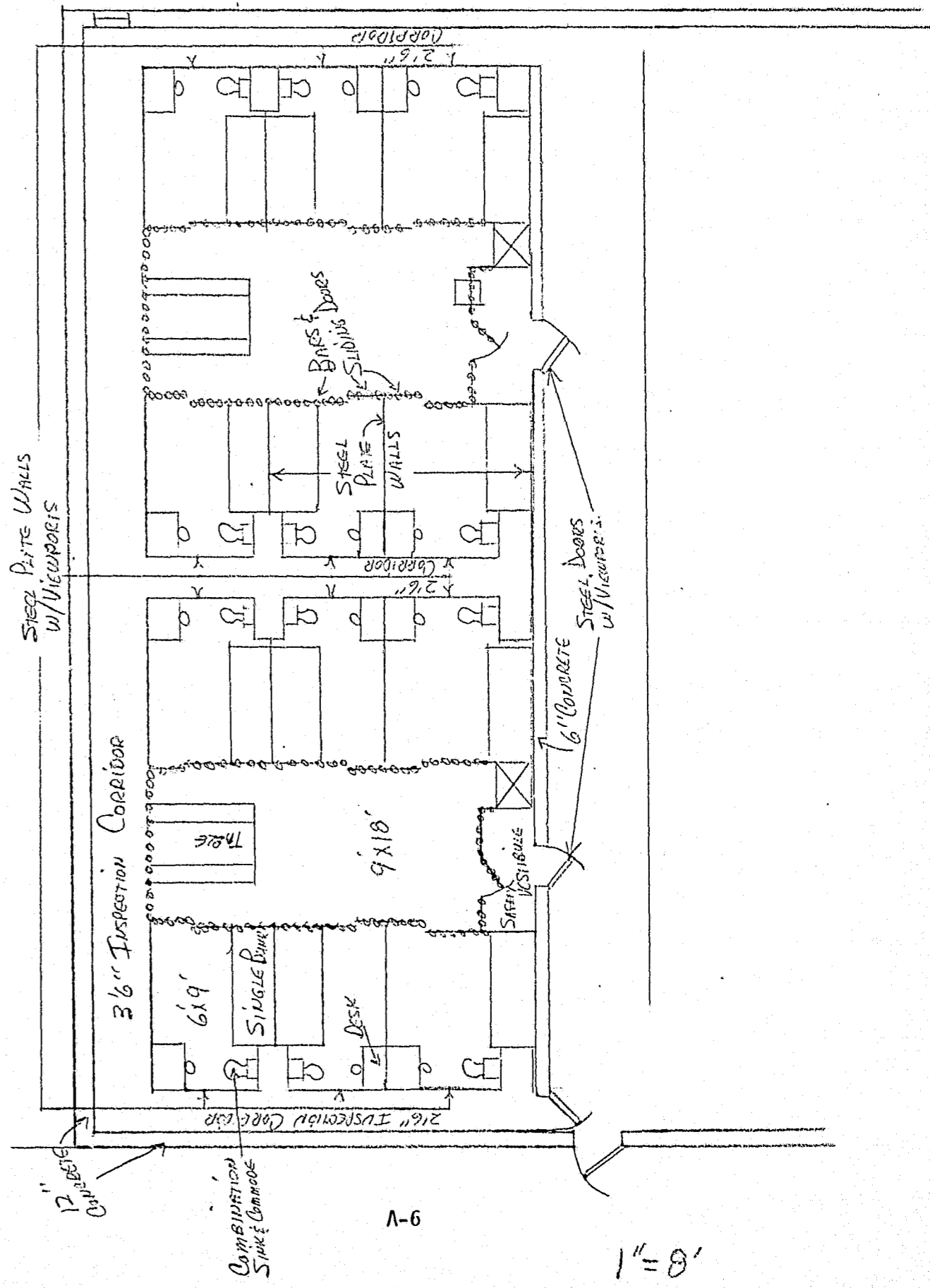
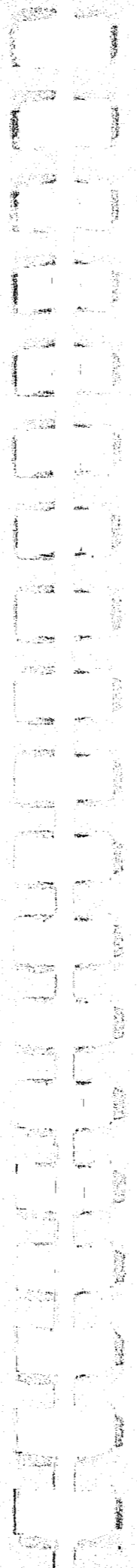
A-3

1"=8'



A-4 1" = 8'

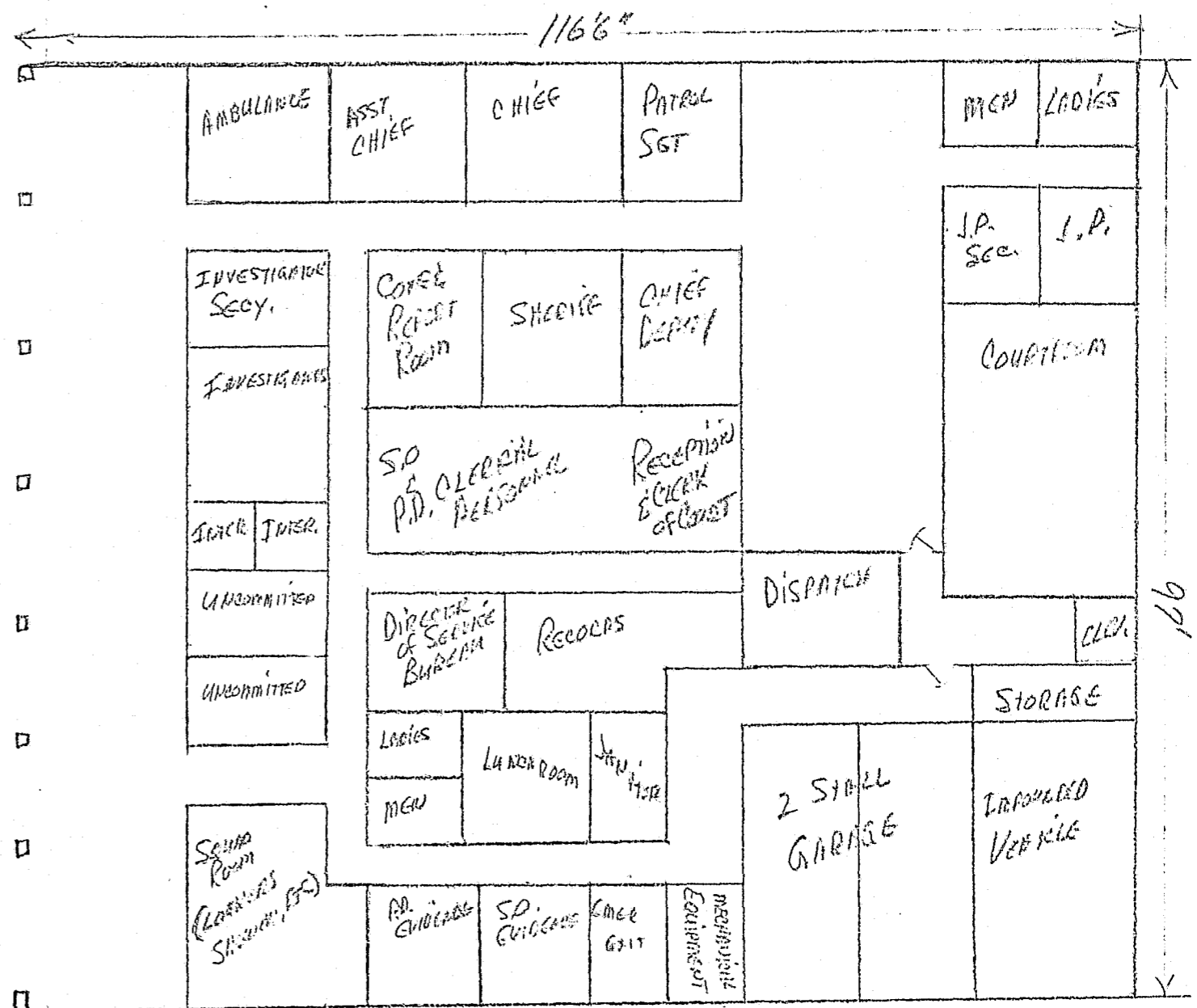




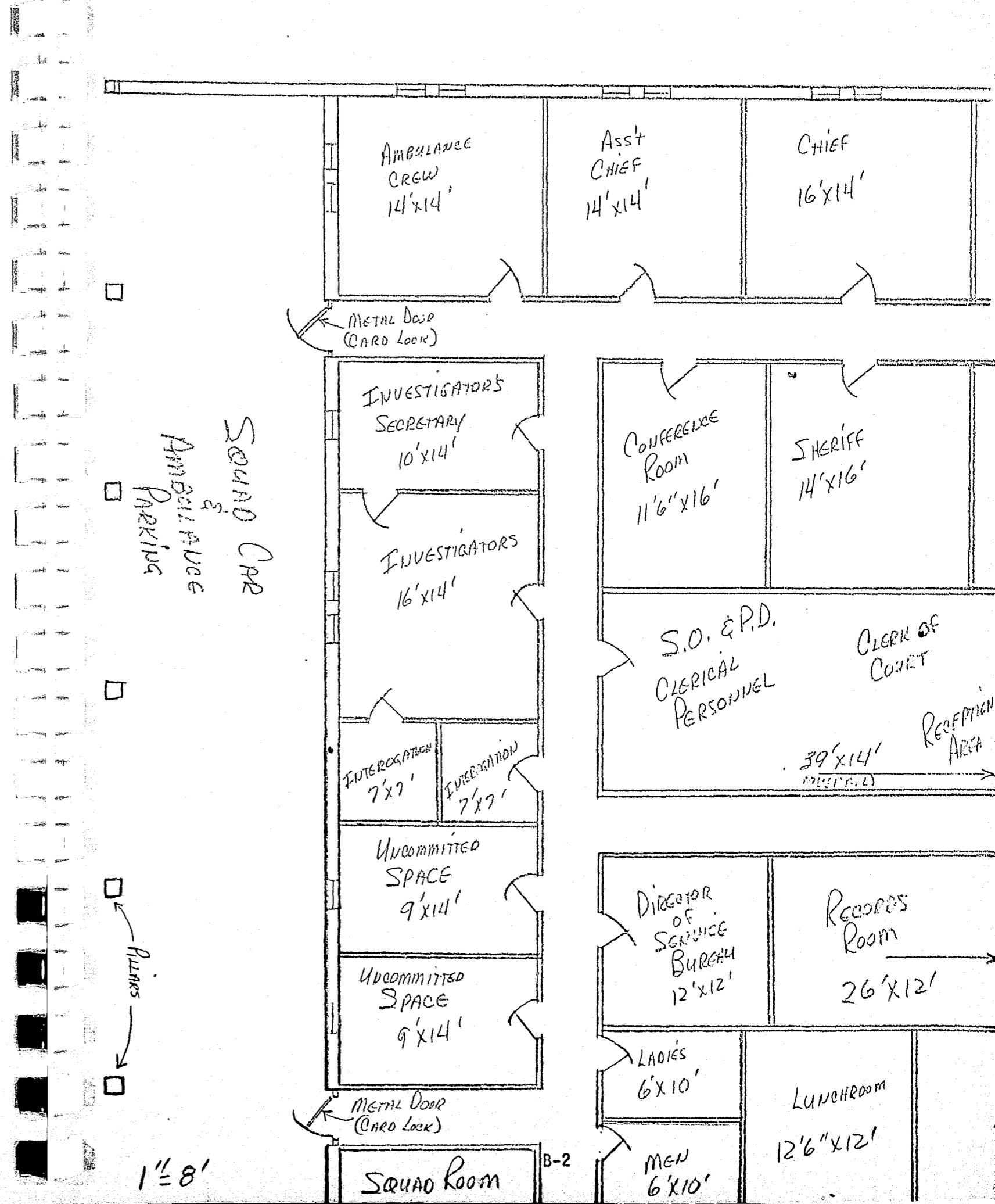
A-6

APPENDIX B

First Floor



1"=16'



AMBULANCE CREW 14'x14'

ASST CHIEF 14'x14'

CHIEF 16'x14'

METAL DOOR (CARD LOCK)

INVESTIGATOR'S SECRETARY 10'x14'

CONFERENCE ROOM 11'6"x16'

SHERIFF 14'x16'

INVESTIGATORS 16'x14'

S.O. & P.D. CLERICAL PERSONNEL

CLERK OF COURT

INTERROGATION 7'x7'

INTERROGATION 7'x7'

UNCOMMITTED SPACE 9'x14'

39'x14' (MUST P.L.)

RECEPTION AREA

UNCOMMITTED SPACE 9'x14'

DIRECTOR OF SERVICE BUREAU 12'x12'

RECORDS ROOM 26'x12'

LADIES 6'x10'

LUNCHROOM 12'6"x12'

METAL DOOR (CARD LOCK)

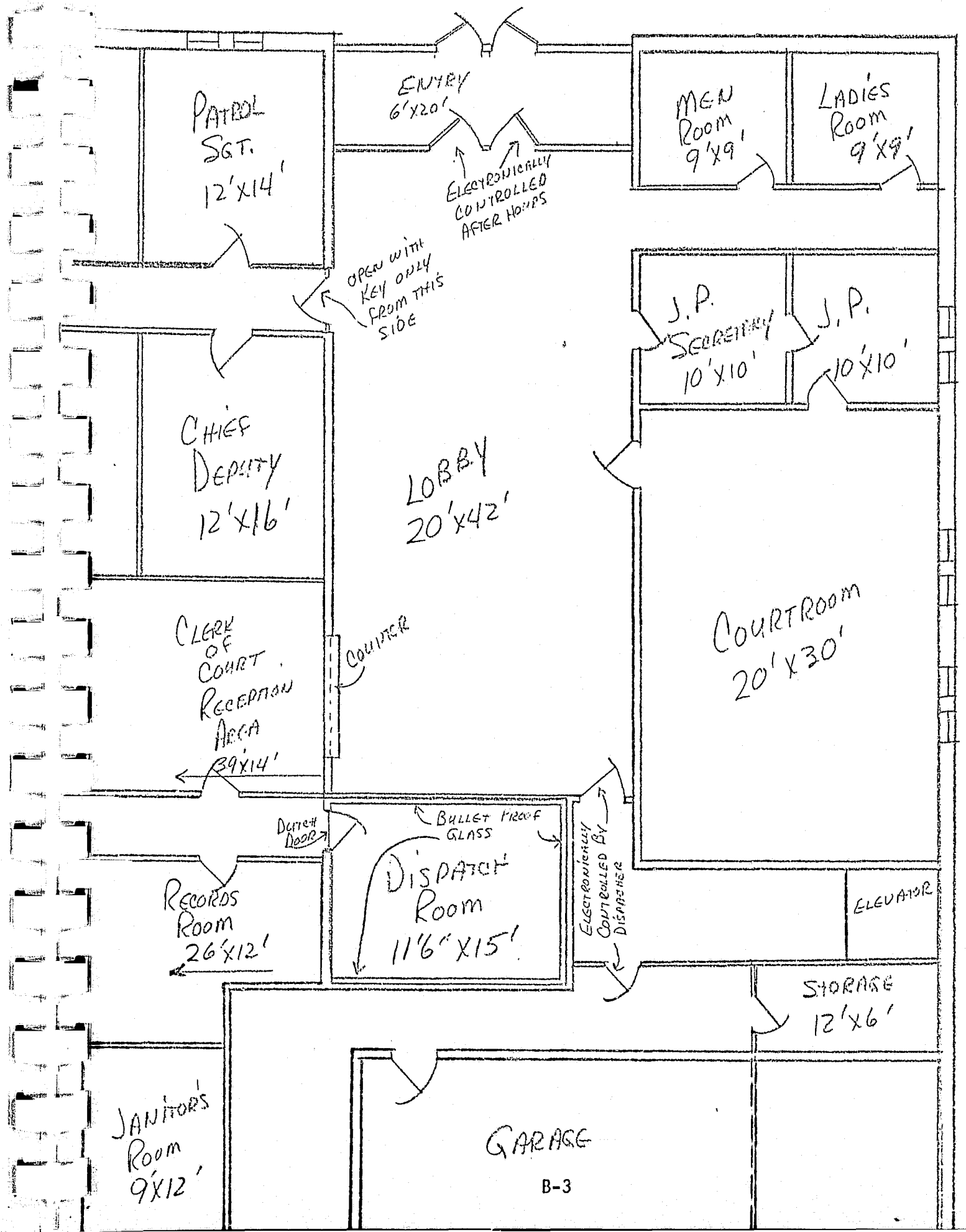
SQUAD ROOM B-2

MEN 6'x10'

1" = 8'

SOUND CR2
AMBULANCE
PARKING

PLANKS



PATROL
SGT.
12'x14'

ENTRY
6'x20'

MEN
Room
9'x9'

LADIES
Room
9'x9'

ELECTRONICALLY
CONTROLLED
AFTER HOURS

OPEN WITH
KEY ONLY
FROM THIS
SIDE

CHIEF
DEPUTY
12'x16'

J.P.
SECRETARY
10'x10'

J.P.
10'x10'

LOBBY
20'x42'

COURTROOM
20'x30'

CLERK
OF
COURT
RECEPTION
AREA
13'x14'

COUNTER

DUTCH
DOOR

BULLET PROOF
GLASS

DISPATCH
Room
11'6" x 15'

ELECTRONICALLY
CONTROLLED BY
DISPATCHER

RECORDS
Room
26'x12'

ELEVATOR

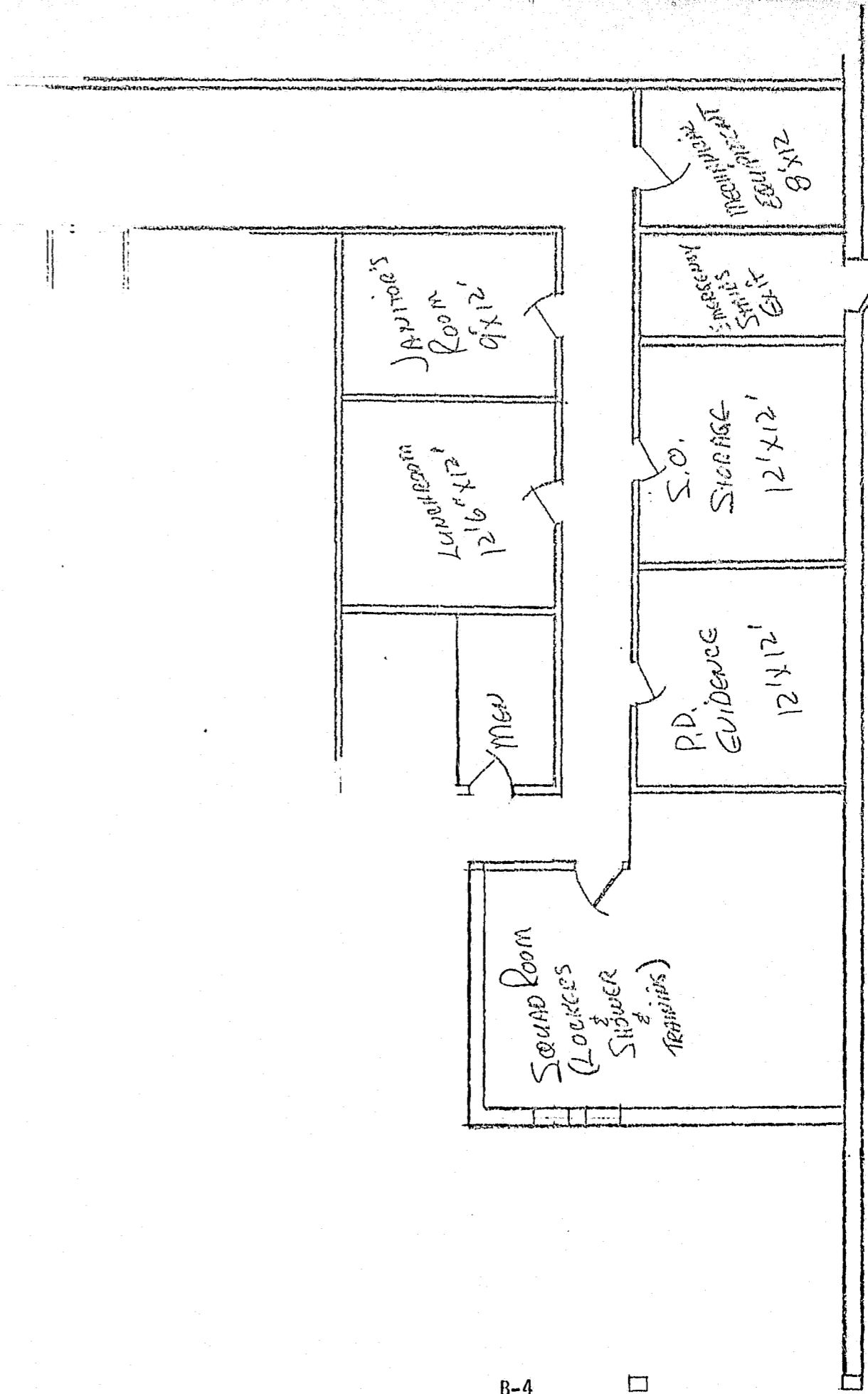
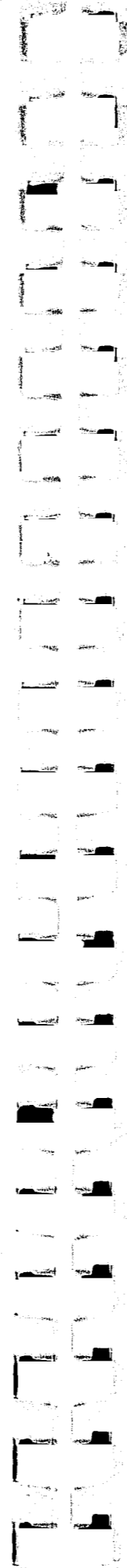
STORAGE
12'x6'

JANITOR'S
Room
9'x12'

GARAGE

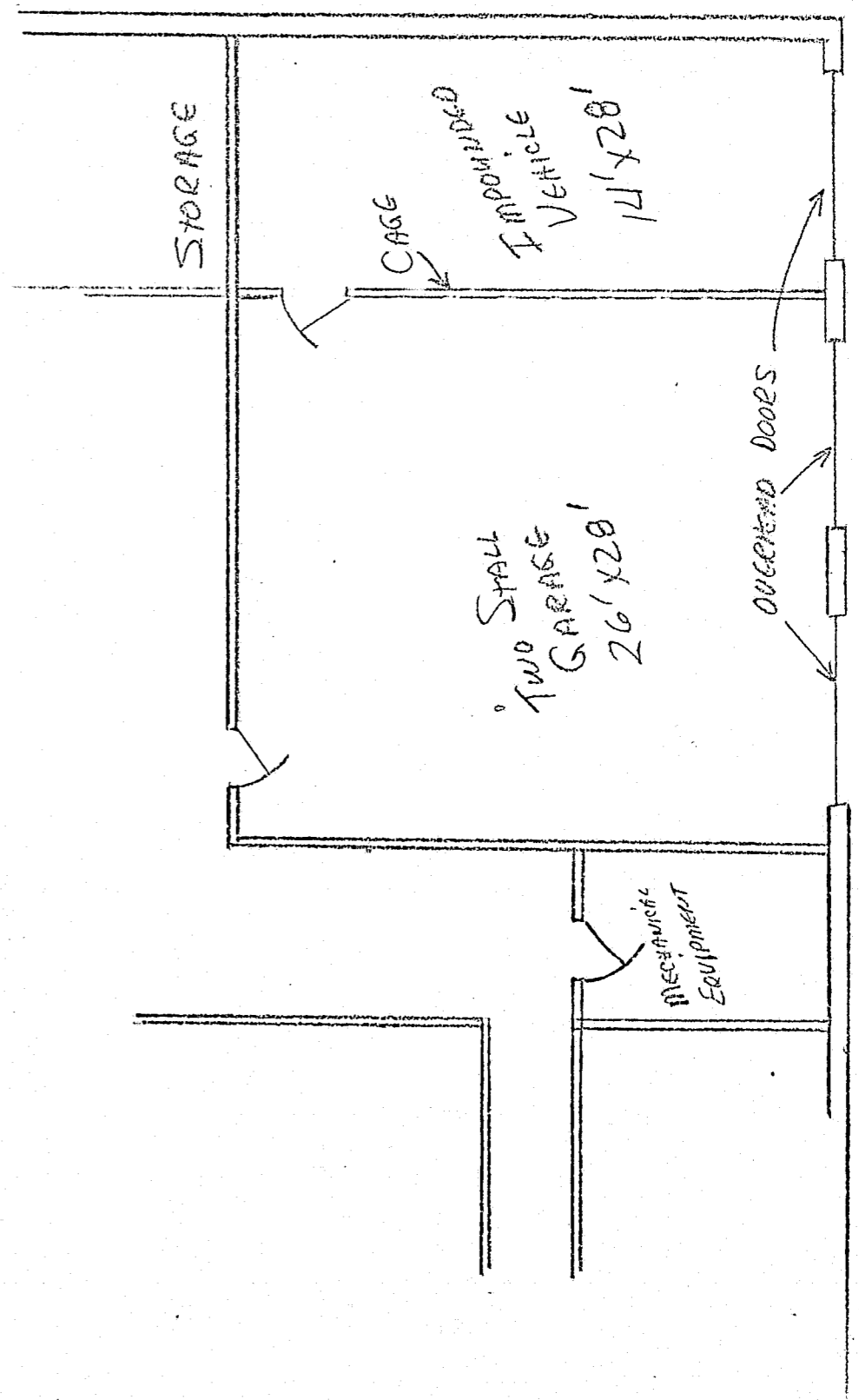
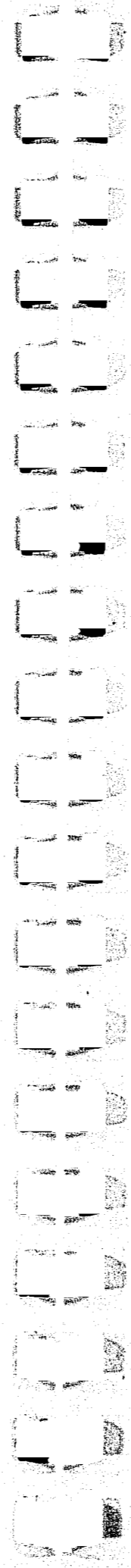
B-3

1/8"



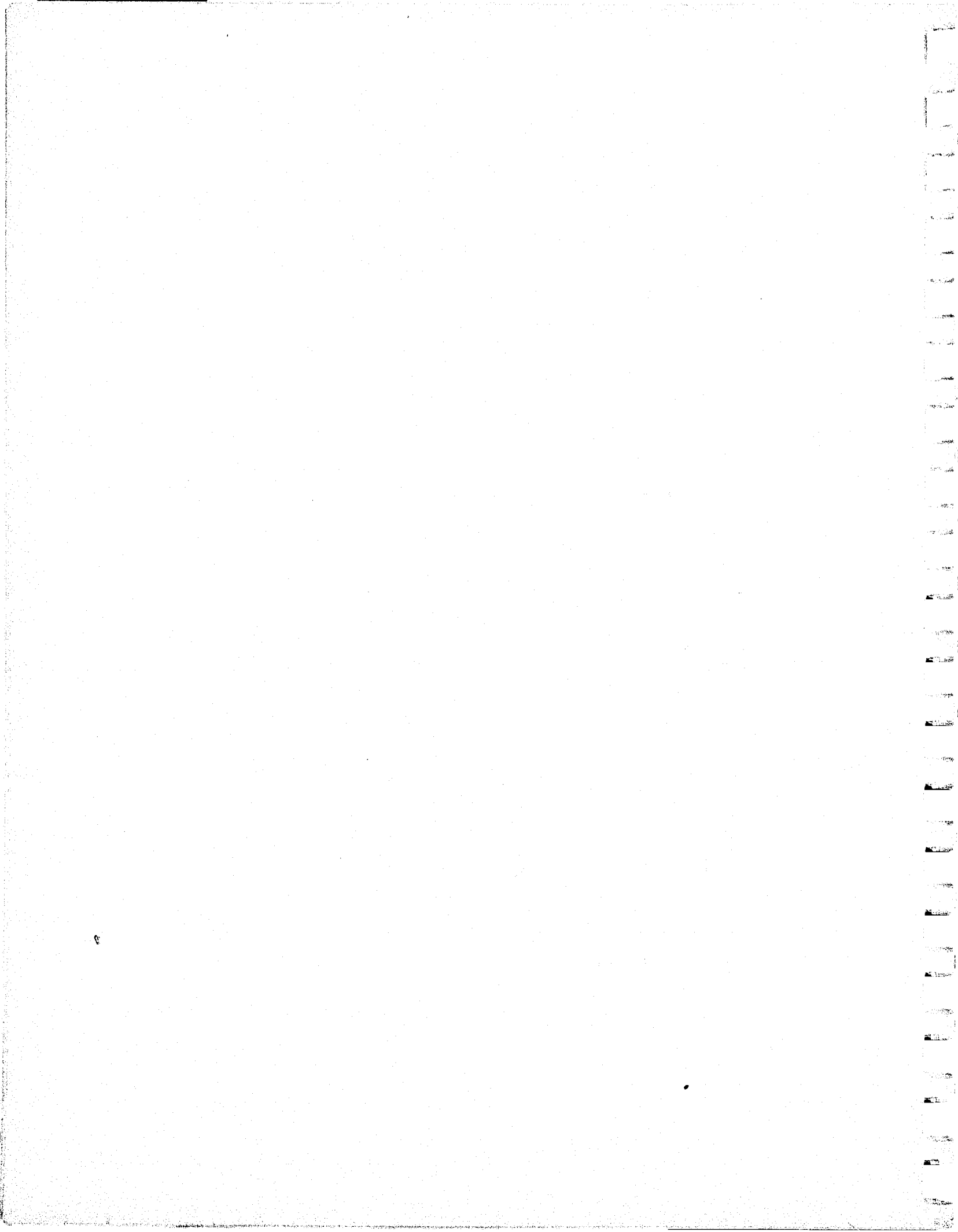
B-4

1"=8'



B-5

1"=8'



END