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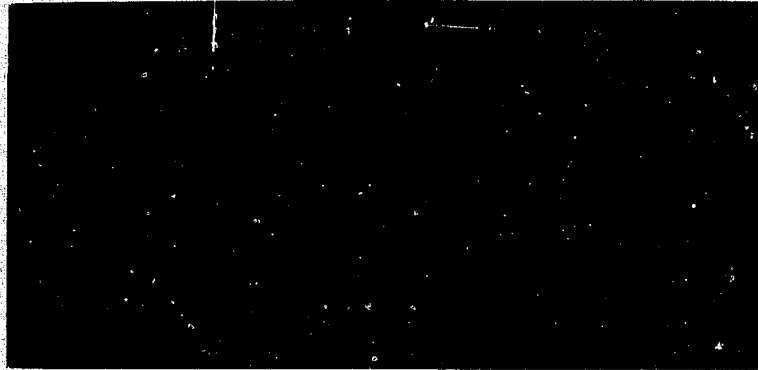
The American University Law School

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ANALYSIS OF SECURITY
AND SPACE NEEDS OF THE
STANISLAUS COUNTY COURTS,
MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

March 1978

NCJRS

AUG 11 1978

ACQUISITIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Court Administrator of the Stanislaus County, California Courts, Mr. Don R. Vera, requested technical assistance, on behalf of the judges of the courts, from LEAA's Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project at the American University to study security and space utilization needs of the county and municipal court facilities. In making this request, Mr. Vera identified a number of acknowledged problems which underscored the need for expert assistance. These included: unsecure prisoner movement routes; understaffed courtroom security personnel; uncontrolled access to "secure" areas; no on-going training programs for security personnel; inadequate court space allocation; fragmented office locations; and, unorganized record storage areas.

In August of 1978, Mr. Lawrence Siegel, a criminal justice facility planner and space management consultant, conducted a two day technical assistance site visit to the Stanislaus County Courts. During this time, he worked closely with Mr. Vera and also met with the judges of the courts and other appropriate court personnel. Mr. Siegel identified the inadequacy of existing court space allocation as the central problem facing the courts, while also pointing out related, secondary problems such as the inadequacy of the existing jury assembly room and numerous security problems. Mr. Siegel recommended that a detailed facility needs study be undertaken to determine short and long term needs. He also advocated moving the jury assembly to the area formerly used by the Juvenile Traffic Court and constructing a courtroom and chambers in the vacated jury space. A memorandum report from Mr. Siegel to Mr. Vera discussing the site work and analysis in detail is attached at Appendix A.

In late October of 1977, Mr. Siegel conducted a second site visit in Stanislaus County. The purpose of this visit was to assess, in detail, the adequacy of existing facilities with particular attention to security and space management needs. Included in these tasks were the development of detailed alternative design plans for a courthouse addition. This was done within the context of the fact that in the interim period between the two site visits, the county had budgeted funds for the purpose of studying the feasibility of a courthouse addition, which resulted in a shift of the focus to include an analysis of the addition site's functional feasibility.

Mr. Siegel's analysis and recommendations are included in the following report.

II. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING SITUATION

A. Courthouse Security

1. Evaluation of Security Provisions

Security in the court-related spaces of the Stanislaus County Courthouse is primarily a personnel function which is presently provided by the Marshal's Office for the Municipal Court and the Sheriff's Department for the Superior Court. Although security is not the sole responsibility of either of these two departments, it is viewed as a vital function by the courts and the citizenry. The judges of both courts have expressed a desire for improved security and placed the responsibility for improvement upon each department. Unfortunately, the present building's design is deficient in several security features which, when combined with case and judicial assignment methods reduce the level of security which can be achieved within the current level of expenditure.

A brief review of the courthouse's security features may be useful background. One major aspect of security involves detainees: the integrity of their custody, the safety of others in the courthouse with them and their own safety. Another equally important aspect is the safety of all persons in the courthouse faced by:

- ① the tension that accompanies court proceedings,
- ① the potential physical dangers of building occupancy, e.g., fire,
- ① and, the problems caused by crowding.

A key security consideration in planning court facilities is the control of accessibility. The floor plan of a courthouse should provide separate means of circulation, i.e., corridors, elevators and stairs,

for detainees, for persons whose functions require privacy and for the public. Circulation for detainees should be secure, i.e., completely separated from all other means of passage through the building. Private circulation should be provided for persons whose work requires privacy, e.g., judges' chambers connected to courtrooms by private corridors inaccessible from public areas except via reception areas.

When the physical features of the building fail to accommodate the custody of detainees, security personnel must be substituted. In the Municipal Court's felony arraignment sessions in which twenty or more detainees may be brought into a courtroom together and arraigned in sequence, security currently is a personnel operation provided by the Marshal's Office. None of the courtrooms include such design features as secure seating areas for detainees, a dock or holding area viewing the courtroom, or a private passageway between the courtroom and the security corridor. Any of the Municipal courtrooms can be assigned for felony arraignments, including those without access to the security corridor. Detainees are escorted into the courtroom by two or three Marshal's Deputies, one of whom also acts as bailiff for that court. The other two deputies seat the detainees on one side of the spectator seating area and remain with them as guards, barring all others from that seating section.

Effective supervision of detainees includes maintaining custody and preventing contact with spectators. With only one or two security officers available, the situation is difficult, and creates stress for all court personnel and spectators, as well as for the deputies and detainees. Any effort to cause trouble (i.e., escape, injury to

detainees or specators, injury to the judge, intimidation) would be extremely difficult to control.

Among the security problems illustrated by this example, several are noteworthy:

- ① Detainees are escorted across a public corridor to reach the west-side courtrooms.

Public corridors are not secure areas, making escape and interference with other persons in the public corridor possible. Adequate security for this operation requires sufficient personnel to escort the detainees safely. Chains or handcuffs could be used, but the sight of a group of detainees crossing the public corridor is sufficiently disturbing on its own without additional stimulus.

The Modesto Police Department and the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department each have one liaison officer in the courthouse during felony arraignments who are occasionally available to assist the escorting officers. At other times when detainees are moved across the public corridor to and from west-side courtrooms, additional personnel are available only on special call. The Marshal regularly assists his deputies in such operations for Municipal Court cases, but Sheriff's Deputies on Superior Court bailiff duty normally handle their assignments without additional help.

- ② The security corridor, which connects to the jail, is located on the east side of the courthouse, adjacent to one courtroom on the basement floor and two each on the first and second floors. Access to these courtrooms is through what should be private areas, the vestibules of judges' chambers and jury deliberation rooms.

These areas are not secure. Each is reached from public areas of the courthouse through a corridor off the main public corridor. These private corridors are locked from the public side in Superior Court spaces, but not in Municipal Court spaces. In both courts, however, locked doors do not prevent egress from the private areas.

The security corridors, themselves, present security problems. Their sally ports, which connect the security elevator to the judges' vestibules, are quite small. Each has a door which can be manipulated by detainees attempting to escape or injure security officers or other detainees. On the second floor, there is no call button for the elevator, although the wiring for a key-controlled call button is still intact. If the elevator is not held at the second floor by turning off its power control from inside the cab, it will automatically return to the basement. Thus, a deputy may find himself locked in a space of about sixteen square feet with a group of detainees, without direct visual or aural contact outside that space. The usual procedure for bringing the elevator to the second floor is to telephone the jail to have it sent up from the basement or to ride it from the basement or first floor.

- ① The only holding cells for detainees are in the security tunnel between the courthouse and jail, and in the jail itself.

Detainees must be escorted from the basement tunnel each time their presence in court is required, unless they are either held in unused jury rooms or the small elevator landings referred to earlier. As a result, case flow is slowed, the integrity of custody is reduced, and more security personnel are required.

2. Feasible Security Improvements

Security problems in the court wing of the Stanislaus County Courthouse stem from the building's physical plan and the administrative or operational responses to facility problems. Improvements in both are recommended here, but the major underlying assumption behind them is based upon the publicly expressed intention of county officials to construct an addition to the courthouse. Given a commitment of that scope, it should prove more satisfactory and economical to plan the addition to include as many courtrooms as necessary for criminal proceedings and all the required security features.

Good security is important in any court facility. Modifying the existing building to improve its security, however, can be quite expensive, compared to planning the addition for proper security. Consequently, only minor facility changes are suggested for the existing court wing, which are consistent with good security planning for the addition, as well. The recommended changes can be adopted without waiting for the addition to be constructed, because they will have an immediate and lasting beneficial impact upon security.

The methods of achieving good security in the facility plan are similar for the addition and for the existing court wing. Although the scope of security improvement included here are limited to those affecting the court wing, a more comprehensive improvement in the entire facility should be considered when planning the addition.

Several options for improvement are outlined in Figure 1 as combinations of administrative and facility changes. Administrative changes are often less expensive to implement than facility changes and should be the initial step, if feasible. The major administrative

FACILITY MEASURES	None Judges assigned criminal cases move to secure courtrooms	None Judges use Jury Rooms, East Side, as Robing Rooms	Construct Robing Rooms in East Side Judges' Vestibules	Construct Holding Cell in Jury Room adjacent to Security Elev. East Side, 1st & 2nd flrs.	Convert One Jury Room, 1st & 2nd flrs. to Holding Cell	COMMENT
ADMINIS- TRATIVE MEASURES						
Schedule Jail Cases East Side only	<div><div>○</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div></div>	<div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>○</div></div>	Adjacent to Security Elev. <div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>—</div><div>○</div></div>	Eliminates escorting of detainees across Public Corridor
Schedule Jail Cases East and West Sides	Current practice			East East & } West }	Adjacent to Security Elev.	Additional security personnel to escort detainees

FIGURE 1: COMBINATIONS OF SECURITY MEASURES

changes suggested are to schedule in-custody cases only in courtrooms located on the east side of the court wing (see Drawing 4), the side with direct access to the security corridor, and to provide additional security personnel in appropriate courtrooms where in-custody matters - especially felony arraignments - are heard. The facility changes recommended are the minimum improvements needed to implement the administrative changes, including the use of small robing rooms that would allow judges with west side chambers to be assigned to east side courtrooms and the construction of holding cells on each floor.

The report of the initial technical assistance site visit in July, 1977, recommended construction of a twelfth courtroom in the space currently occupied by the jury assembly area. That recommendation is still valid, although it cannot be implemented until the jury assembly space is relocated, potentially in the new addition. Because of the proximity of that space to the security tunnel, this new courtroom would best be planned as a secure space with special provisions for holding felony arraignments for twenty to thirty detainees.

Because criminal cases in Municipal and Superior Courts are assigned to all judges in rotation, approximately half the assignments are to courtrooms on the west side of the public corridor. Judges do not rotate courtrooms or chambers as their case assignments are changed. West side courtrooms lack detainee holding facilities and are on the opposite side of the public corridor from the security corridor which connects to the jail. There are two deficiencies here: secure detainee spaces are lacking on the west side, and detainees must cross the public corridor - under escort - between courtrooms and the security corridor each time they enter or leave a courtroom. The simplest remedy is to

schedule in-custody cases only on the east side where security is better. That is made difficult, however, because the judges' permanent offices are their chambers, which all are adjacent to either one or two courtrooms. Thus, a judge assigned to a courtroom across the public corridor from his chambers would be separated from his office and dependant upon the availability of another judge's private office for conferences and recesses. The difficulties here are apparent, although they can be avoided if an office can be provided near each courtroom for the use of the judge sitting in that courtroom. Such an office generally is known as a robing room.

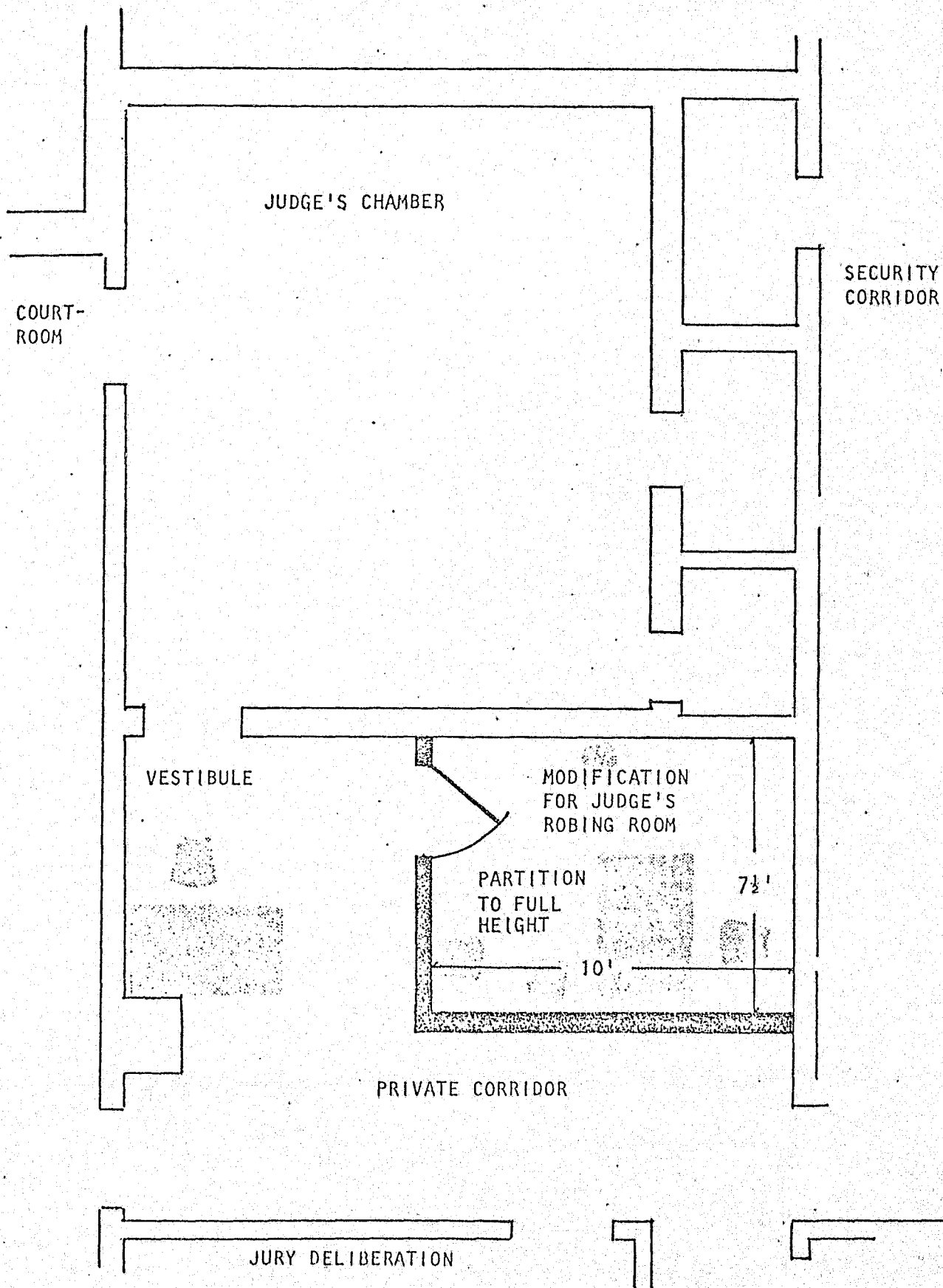
Drawings 1, 2 and 3 sketch plans for constructing robing rooms in the vestibules outside each chamber. The vestibules are presently used by bailiffs, one per judge, for reception and security purposes. Each modification shown is a minimal robing room with furniture locations noted as indications that the spaces will suffice. The rooms are minimal in size and amenities, e.g., the absence of toilets. If they are used extensively for case conferences, only one judge could be assigned, as space is not available in any of these locations for two robing rooms.

The practical value of these robing rooms would rely upon the method of assigning criminal cases to judges in that only one judge from a west side chambers should be assigned to a criminal courtroom on each floor at any time. That need not be a serious impediment if the first call on east side courtrooms is reserved for in-custody cases and criminal matters without detained defendants are scheduled for west side courtrooms.

Drawing 4 illustrates how the eleven courtrooms currently are assigned between Municipal and Superior Courts. The municipal court uses three east side courtrooms and Superior Court uses two. When the current jury space is converted to a twelfth courtroom, Municipal Court will occupy four

of the six east side courtrooms and an analysis should be made of the percentage of courtroom usage required for in-custody cases in each court. The ratio of east side courtrooms between the two courts which would best match the actual need for secure facilities should be determined. If it appears that Superior Court requires one additional east side courtroom at that time, it might be possible to reassign one of the first floor east side courtrooms for Superior Court use and one of the west side courtrooms for Municipal Court use.

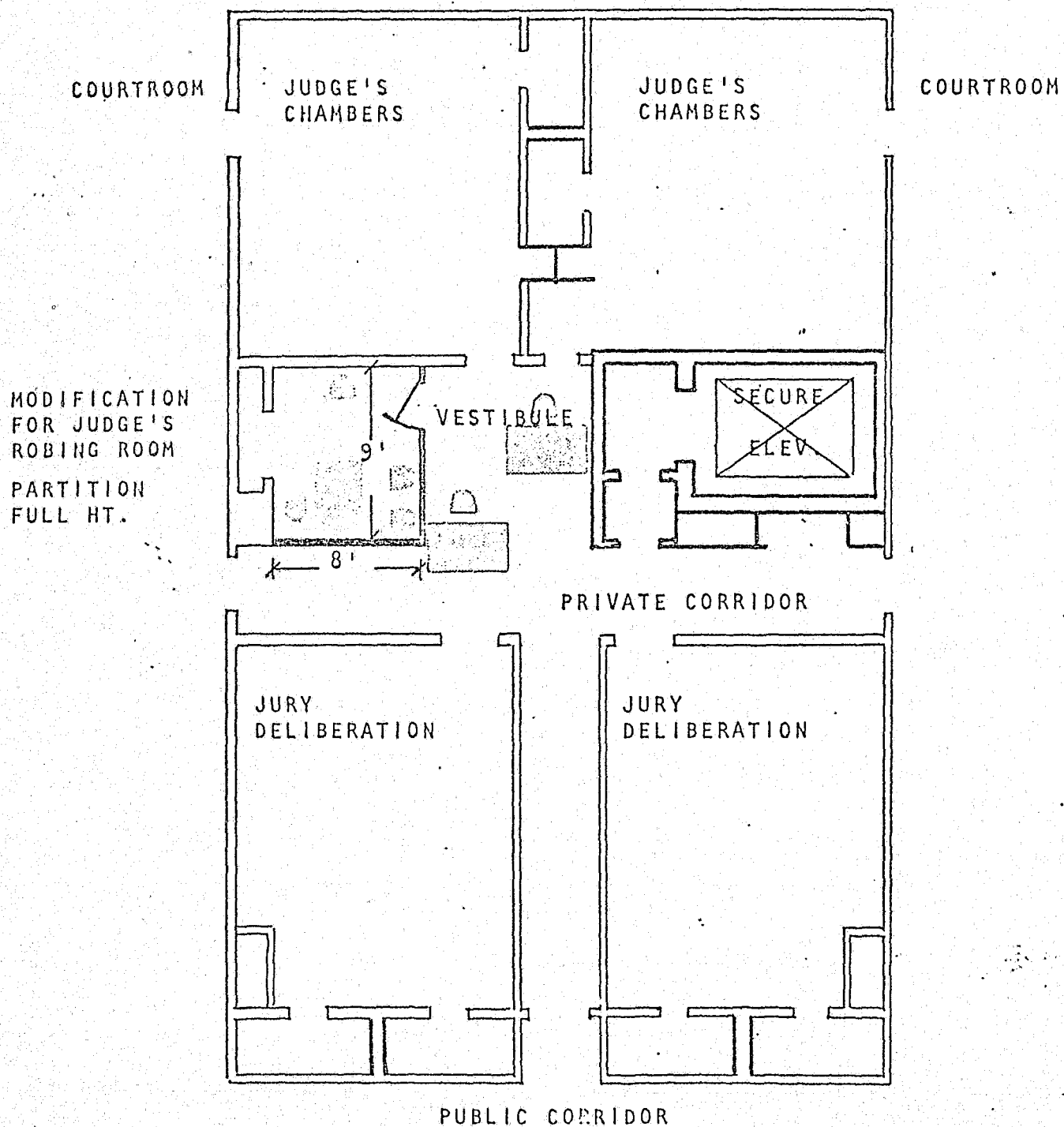
Drawing 5 sketches small holding cells which could be built into existing jury rooms on the first and second floors on the east and west sides. Jury rooms on the basement west side could be similarly treated if the small vestibules outside their toilets were removed. The purpose of these cells is to provide readily accessible secure holding spaces near those courtrooms in which they are currently lacking. Only the east side basement courtroom is close to a holding cell, which is the first cell in the security tunnel, being used to store mattresses for the jail. A cell located in the private area between each pair of courtrooms should speed the flow of in-custody cases through those courtrooms and reduce the need for additional security personnel. This would not eliminate the need for detainees to cross the public corridor to reach west side courtrooms, but will permit better scheduling of their movements.



DRAWING 1: EAST SIDE, BASEMENT

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COURT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE FACILITIES

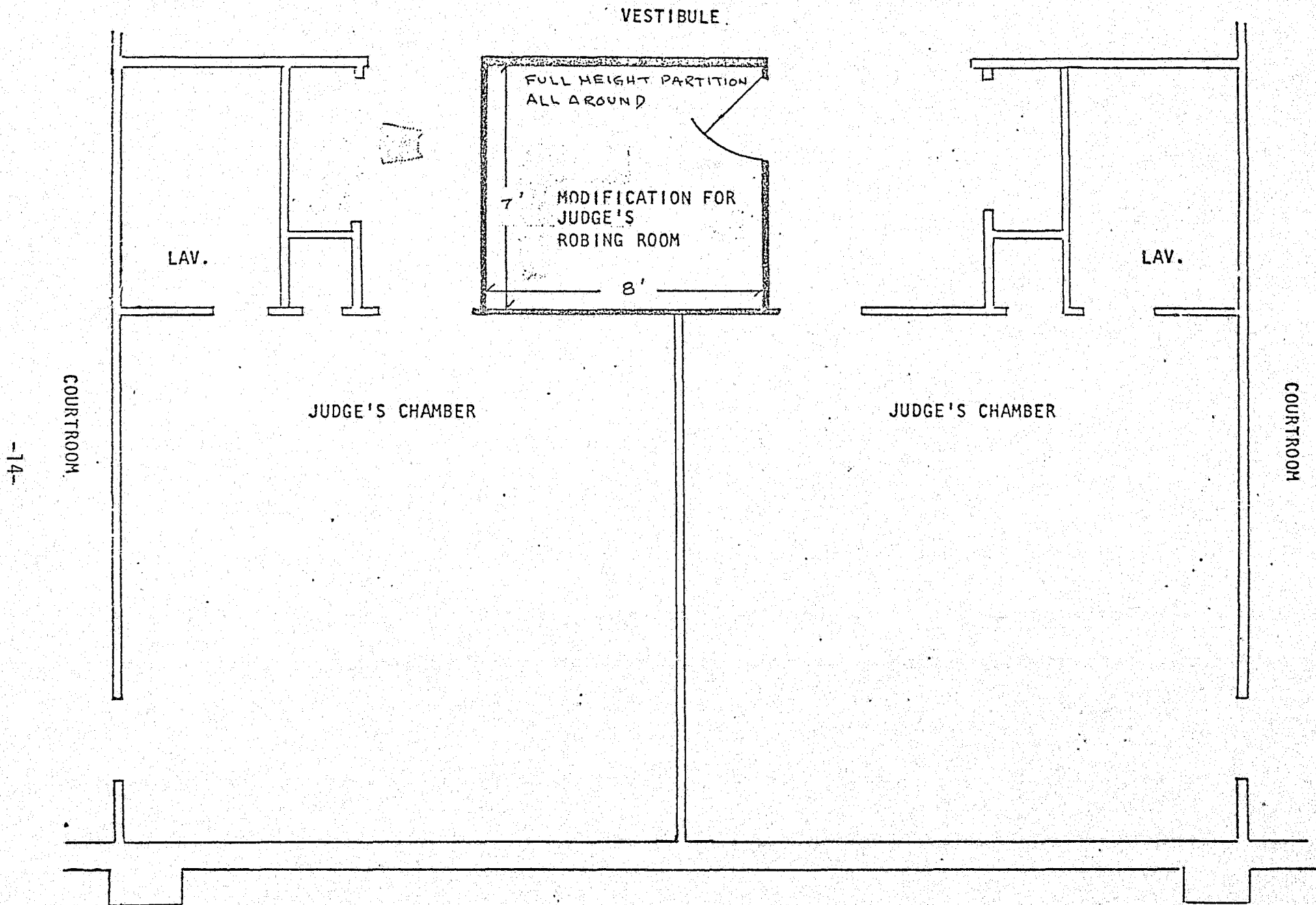
200 1/2 East 20th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003 212/220-9582



DRAWING 2: EAST SIDE, TYPICAL FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS

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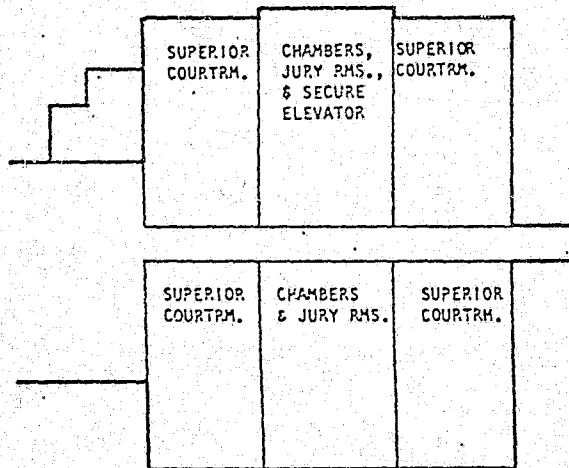


DRAWING 3: WEST SIDE, TYPICAL ALL FLOORS

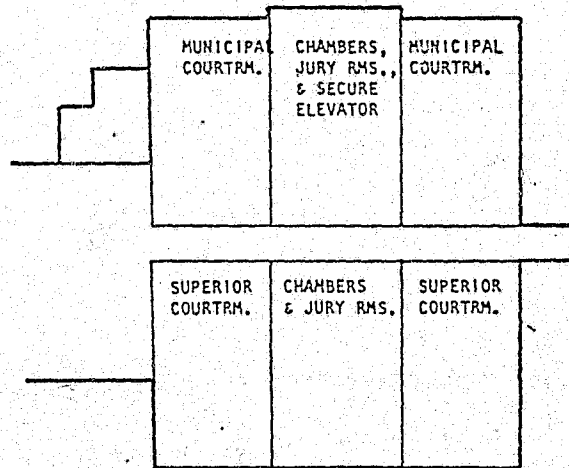
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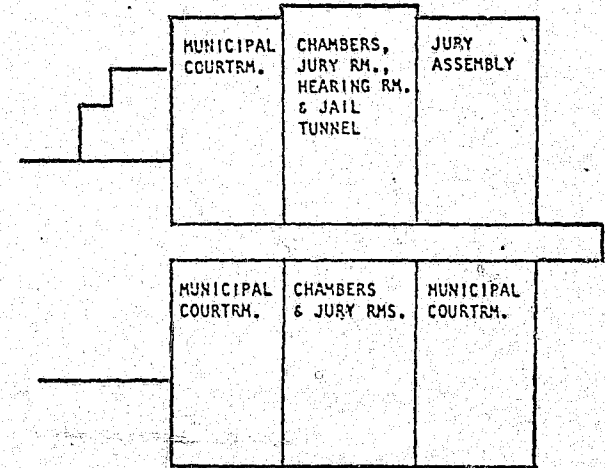
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SECOND FLOOR



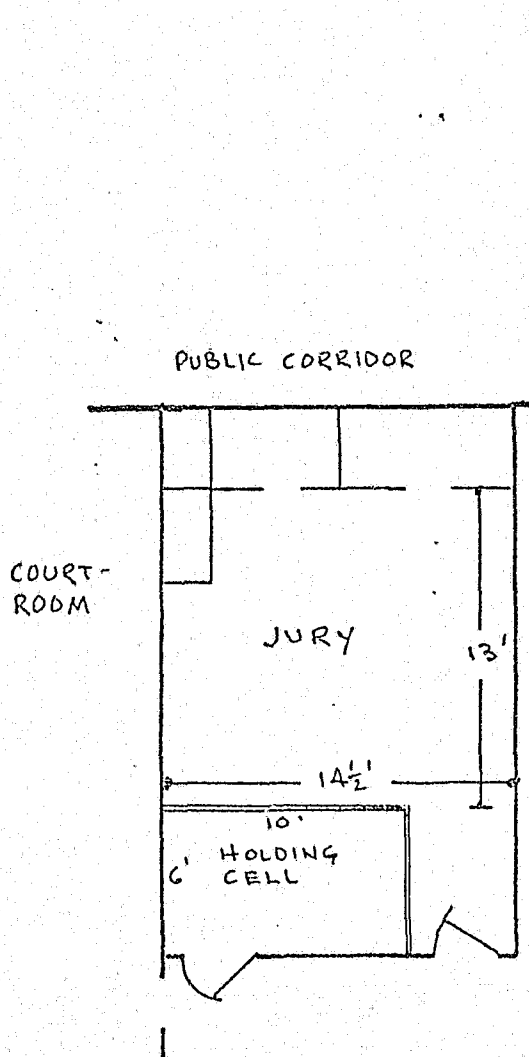
FIRST FLOOR



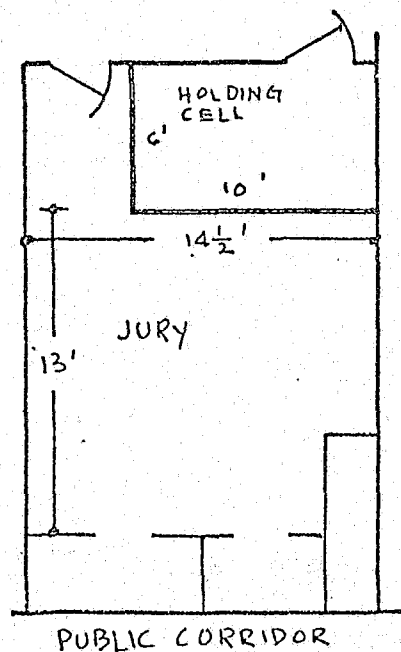
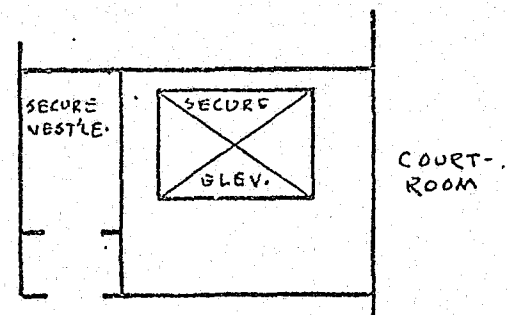
BASEMENT



DRAWING 4: COURTROOM LOCATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS



WEST SIDE OF
FIRST AND SECOND
FLOORS



EAST SIDE OF
FIRST AND SECOND
FLOORS

DRAWING 5: HOLDING CELLS ADDED WITHIN JURY ROOMS

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3. Analysis

Figure 1 present several combinations of robing rooms and holding cells suitable to use as tools for enhancing the security of criminal proceedings. Each is a combination of administrative and facility measures, which can be assessed in terms of relative capital and operating costs and the security benefits which can be expected. In order to eliminate the undersirable practice of escorting detainees across the public corridor, it is clearly necessary to limit in-custody cases to the east side courtrooms, which involves the operational difficulties of using the minimal robing rooms.

Figure 1 includes two facility measures not previously described. One is the use of east side jury rooms as robing rooms, the other is the conversion of one jury room per floor into holding cells. Using existing jury rooms as robing rooms is attractive in its simplicity and low cost. Conflict between jury trials and robing room requirements for the same space present a problem, depending upon the relative frequency of simultaneous jury trials in both courtrooms on the east side of any floor. The two courtrooms would have to share one jury room and one robing room whenever at least one judge from the west side was using the east side courtrooms. At other times both jury rooms would be available.

Converting one jury room on the first and on the second floor to holding cells does not seem attractive, as it would entail approximately equal expense to make the jury rooms secure, as to build a small holding cell in them. The large jury room is not necessary for the number of detainees on either floor and its use as a holding cell makes it unavailable for jury deliberations. If one jury room were used as a holding cell and one as a robing room, the number of usable jury rooms could be unacceptably

reduced.

Figure 2 is a flow chart of the detainee escort process. Each box represents a location involving specific security activities, while the lines joining the boxes represent the movement of detainees and escorts between those locations. The flow chart is presented to assist in analyzing security personnel needs, which are further developed in Figure 3. For each activity in which detainees either are moved from one security location to another or are held in courtrooms, the minimum number of security personnel to safely manage each process in relation to the number of detainees in their custody is proposed. These recommendations are based upon the use of trained and competent security officers.

Figures 1 and 2 identify the floors as B (basement), 1 (first) and 2 (second) and the two sides of the court wing as E (east) and W (west). Figure 2, the flow chart, assumes the use of holding cells in one jury room on each side of each floor. The existing and future east side basement courtrooms could use the 'mattress locker' inside the jail tunnel as a holding cell, if another location to store jail mattresses can be found. The term 'buffer cell' is used in Figure 2 to refer to the jail tunnel holding cell, which temporarily holds detainees moving between the jail and the courts.

A critical point in this analysis is the number of security personnel required to escort detainees across the public corridor. Movement across the public corridor brings detainees to either felony arraignments or other criminal proceedings. For the large number of detainees usually escorted to felony arraignments, a minimum of 4 security officers, and preferably more, is needed: two in the public

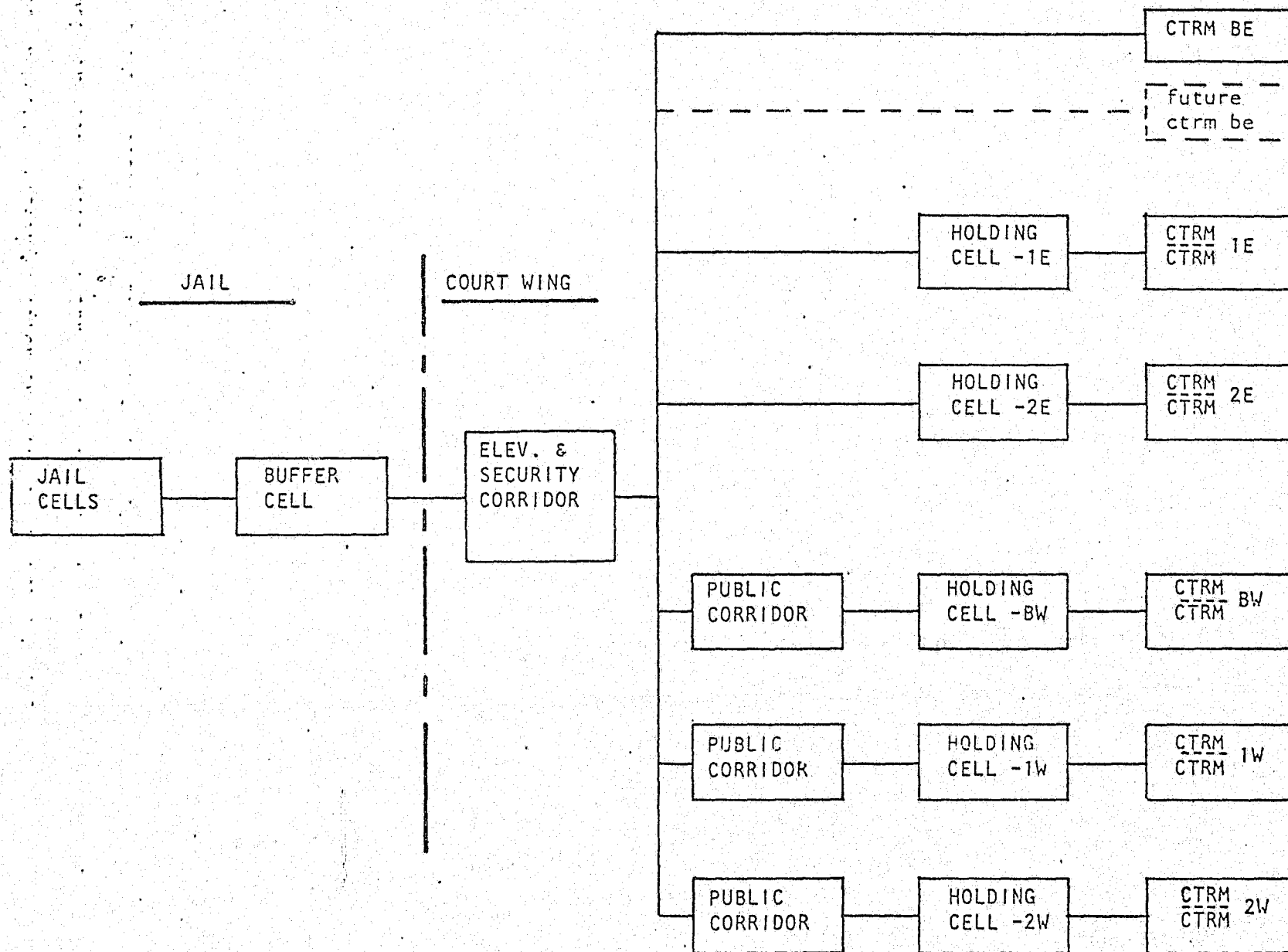


FIGURE 2: FLOW CHART OF DETAINEE SECURITY PROCESS

ACTIVITIES		PEOPLE	
		SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES	DEPUTY MARSHALS
MOVEMENT	JAIL CELL TO BUFFER CELL		N.A.
	BUFFER CELL TO ELEVATOR	2 per 10 detainees	2 per 10 detainees
	ELEVATOR TO HOLDING CELL E	2 per 10 detainees	2 per 10 detainees
	ELEVATOR TO HOLDING CELL W	4 minimum	4 minimum
	HOLDING CELL TO COURTROOM	1 per 1 to 2 detainees	1 per 1 to 2 detainees
IN-PLACE	FELONY ARRAIGNMENT	N.A.	1 Bailiff plus 3 per 10 detainees
	OTHER CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS	1 Bailiff plus 1 per 2 detainees	1 Bailiff plus 1 per 2 detainees

FIGURE 3: SECURITY PERSONNEL NEEDS

corridor, one directing detainees through the private area towards the corridor and one receiving detainees after crossing the corridor. If the number of detainees exceeds 10, one additional security officer is recommended for each five detainees. If holding cells are not available, a minimum of two additional officers should be assigned to the felony arraignment courtroom, unless a secure holding area in a newly designed arraignment courtroom is provided. This step is strongly recommended for the courtroom that will replace the jury assembly space.

In the other criminal proceedings of trials and hearings, which usually involve a far smaller number of detainees, one detainee could be escorted by a single security officer, three detainees should have one additional officer, five detainees should be escorted by three security officers, and so on. If the recommended holding cells are provided, it should not be necessary to have as many officers on permanent assignment, as detainee movements can then be scheduled to make best use of available personnel. When the time of detainee movements can be controlled, it may be feasible to re-schedule security officers from other duty assignments.

In order to derive total staffing needs from the guidelines of Figure 3, the statistics of daily criminal caseloads must be known. It would be desirable to call the in-custody cases in sequence, and, if possible, in a limited number of courtrooms. This is primarily a matter of schedule control, involving the grouping of in-custody cases to minimize first, the number of courtrooms used and, second, the number of security personnel needed for adequate security.

Mention has been made of felony arraignments, with recommendations for security improvement, while maintaining optimum flexibility for

Municipal Court to schedule and assign these proceedings without compromising that security. Alternatives to current procedures for arraigning felony defendants could be considered, however, derived from procedures in other states, notably Arizona. Because the idea is essentially procedural and contains many implications for the judicial process, it is offered without comment or endorsement, simply as something Municipal Court might wish to consider.

Felony arraignments could be held in the jail in any of several ways. The arraignment is a mass proceeding, which does not include a pleading or any other substantive or adversary component. Defendants are advised of their rights, are assigned counsel (if necessary) and have bail set, making it possible for the proceedings to be handled by commissioners or masters in a special courtroom constructed in the jail or in cells in the intake section. Alternately, if an arraignment courtroom were constructed in the jail, the arraignment judge could conduct arraignment sessions there.

It should be remembered that the proposed courtroom can be directly connected to the jail tunnel and provided with ample security features. It will also be available for other criminal proceedings and would probably be a more economical option, overall, than an additional courtroom solely for arraignment purposes.

4. Recommendations

In summary, the following steps are recommended to improve security in the court wing of the Stanislaus County Courthouse:

- 0 Schedule in-custody cases in sequence in a limited number of courtrooms, which have direct access to the security corridor.

- 0 Schedule in-custody cases in sequence in a limited number of courtrooms in order to minimize the locations and duration for which additional security officers should be on duty.
- 0 Construct small robing rooms in the judges' vestibules of east side courtrooms, for use by judges whose chambers are on the west side of the public corridor assigned to hear in-custody cases.
- 0 Construct small holding cells within jury rooms on the east side, first floor and second floor, if in-custody cases are scheduled only on the east side. If in-custody cases continue to be scheduled on both sides of the court wing, construct small holding cells within jury rooms on both the east and west sides of the court wing on the first and second floors and on the west side of the basement.
- 0 Convert the jury assembly space into a secure courtroom for felony arraignments.
- 0 Use the holding cell closest to the court wing in the jail tunnel as a holding cell for detainees appearing in the east side basement courtroom(s).
- 0 Install a key-operated call button on the second floor for the security elevator.
- 0 Concurrent with the implementation of these recommendations, increase the staff of security personnel in the Marshal's Office and the Sheriff's Department to provide adequate security in the various stages of custodial operations.

B. ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED COURTHOUSE ADDITION

1. Background

In the interim period between the first and second technical assistance site visits, Stanislaus County budgeted funds for the purpose of studying the feasibility of constructing an addition to the existing courthouse. It is envisioned that this addition would be placed in the areas now used for interior parking and patio space. As a result of this, emphasis of technical assistance was shifted to include an analysis of the site's functional feasibility, in relation to the existing building and to the needs of Superior and Municipal Courts. This analysis should have two near-future applications: 1) it will provide information for the County Administrator's Office to use in developing a capital improvements program, and 2) it will indicate the general direction to be taken by the proposed design study.

The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the site as a location for a courthouse addition that could:

- 0 Provide for the growth needs of Superior and Municipal Courts for a reasonable period forward.
- 0 Remedy security deficiencies in the existing court facility.
- 0 Provide for an adequate jury assembly space.
- 0 Improve the overall quality of the combined facility.

Security deficiencies were described in a preceding section of this report, which also suggested that it would be very difficult to markedly improve the existing court wing. Another section of the report submitted after the first site visit analyzed the court's immediate growth problems and described the limits of the existing court wing in meeting growth needs.

One space was identified that would be feasible for an additional courtroom; the jury assembly area in the basement of the courtroom wing. If a courtroom were to be constructed in that space, however, jurors would have to assemble elsewhere. Although the suggested jury assembly location proved to be unavailable because of prior commitments (which had not been made known to the consultant), the county subsequently announced its intention to study the construction of a courtyard addition where jury assembly and courtroom space would be provided. The objective was to remedy deficiencies in the amount of space available in the existing wings of the complex.

With this background in mind, the proposed site has been analyzed to determine whether it can provide the space needed for a functionally adequate addition. Based upon the analysis, the proposed site has been found to offer a useful opportunity to realize the four goals just mentioned. Construction of an addition on that site is recommended as an immediate future activity for inclusion in the county's capital improvement program.

2. Feasibility Analysis

A feasibility study normally examines only the functional characteristics of a proposed facility, to the exclusion of architectural and engineering studies of site, soil and other elements relevant to constructing additions to existing buildings. These elements should be studied when, and if, the functional quality of the proposed site has been found to be adequate. In this analysis, reliance has been placed on many of the same factors that were probably considered when the proposed addition was initiated. Foremost among these is the fact that the existing complex now consists of several wings which have been added at different times. It

appears, however, that potential architectural and engineering problems resulting from the piece by piece expansion of the complex are surmountable.

Functionally speaking, the proposed addition site will be feasible if certain conditions can be met at reasonable costs. An addition in the court yard would be feasible if it were large enough to result in a cost-effective expansion existing structure, and it if could be made to fit the available space and to connect to the existing major access points. The specific conditions of feasibility which must be met include the following:

- 0 The site's dimensions should be large enough to support effective court floor plans.
- 0 Secure private and publication circulation systems, albeit separate, should be provided for.
- 0 The circulation systems should easily connect with those in the existing facility.
- 0 The quantity, area, and space relationships of courtrooms and related areas must be adequate to meet the specific needs of the court.

3. Method of Analysis

In conducting a feasibility analysis of this type, schematic plans must be prepared and analyzed depicting alternative ways of assuring effective floor plans within the limitations of the site's dimensions. Schematic plans do not directly include several features necessary to completely specify an actual building, such as wall thicknesses, supporting columns, and ducts and runs for plumbing, mechanical, and electrical services. These details would be superfluous in a feasibility

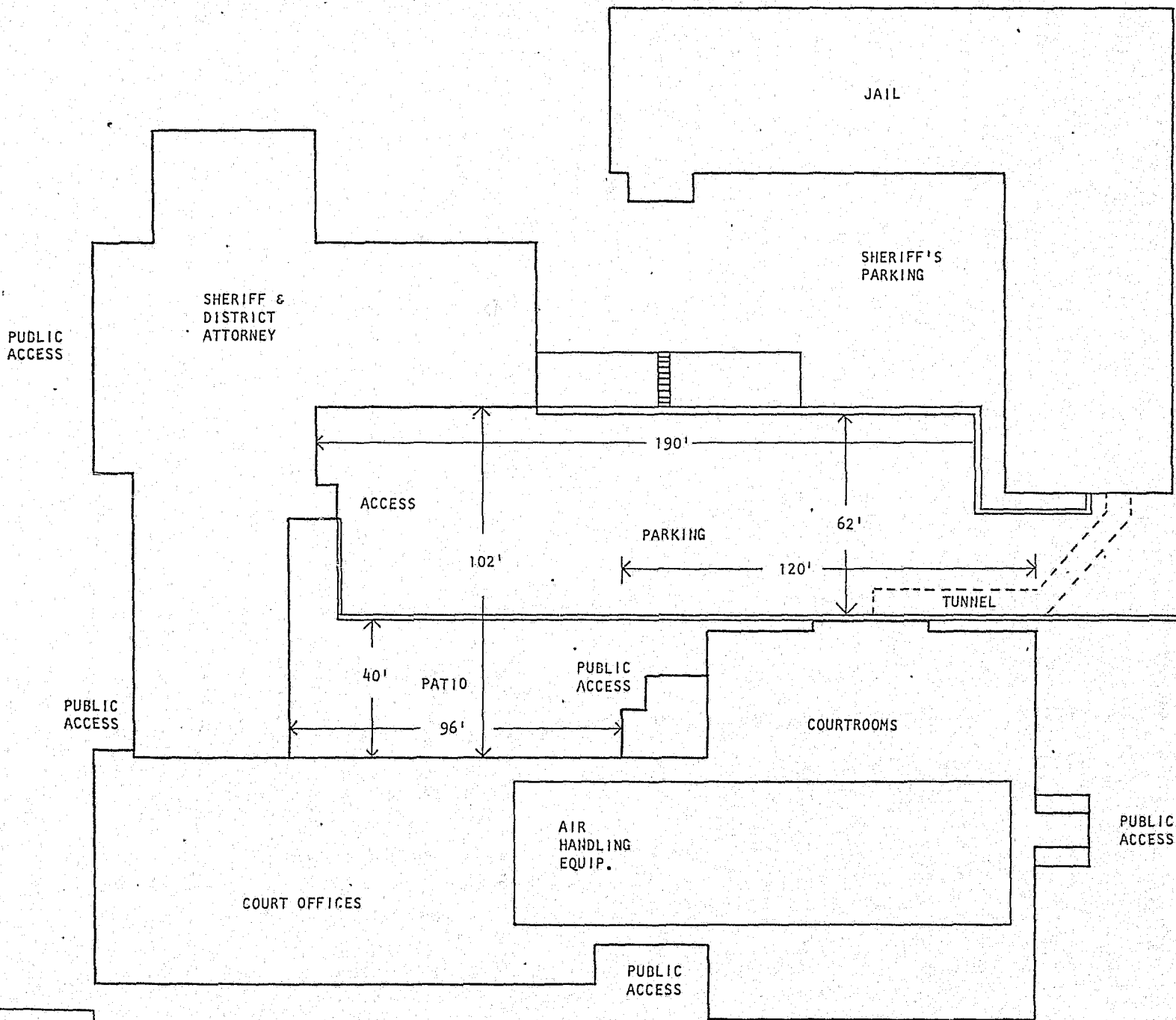
study, but, by examining schematic floor plans in detail, functional feasibility can be assessed with a high degree of reliability.

In this instance, many plans were developed for the arrangement of a single floor of criminal and civil courtrooms. Each plan was intended to fit several courtrooms and related spaces into a portion of the site. For example, one approach was a northward addition from the south end of the site; another ran south from the north end. The reasons for those approaches will become clear when siting relationships are discussed, but, in the final analysis, the only plans that promised to meet all conditions of feasibility turned out to occupy most of the available site area.

Utilizing this method of analysis allowed a representative schematic plan of a courtroom floor to be developed and analyzed. In addition to demonstrating feasibility, it offers a reasonable and specific basis for a design study to follow and also should dramatically reduce the subsequent programming effort needed for that study.


4. Siting Relationships

The proposed location is depicted in Figure 1 (page 28) and identifies the major occupancy of the surrounding wings. From west to east (illustrated on the plan from bottom to top), the site elevation drops abruptly at the retaining wall which extends south from the Sheriff's wing towards the jail, thereby creating a natural dividing line. Dimensionally, the site divides into north and south sections. The northern section is about 96 feet by 102 feet, and the southern is about 120 feet by 62 feet. Major existing public access is from the exterior stairway adjacent to the courtroom wing (midway on plan bottom). Another existing access point is located at the site's north end, leading into




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NORTH 

SITE PLAN

 50'

the Sheriff's and District Attorney's wing. Located at the south end of the site, between the jail and courtroom wing, is a vehicular entrance with a security tunnel underneath connecting the jail and courtrooms.

As a result of the proximity of the existing courtrooms, public access to new courtrooms in the addition should be directly from the existing public lobby, via either the standing exterior stairs, or a modification thereof which absorbs them into the addition's interior. Secure access can be connected to the existing tunnel which should be maintained to allow for criminal matters to be heard in the east side courtrooms as is now the case. Convenient private access for judges and staff could be created at the north end stair and elevator in the Sheriff's and District Attorney's wing. The elevation of the patio and parking lot presents a minor problem since it does not match the floor levels of the existing wings. New construction should match all existing floor levels.

It was a fundamental planning assumption of this study that parking and a vehicular entrance would continue to occupy some portion of the new wing's lowest level. In order to connect up with existing circulation systems and access points, the new wing probably should extend over most of the full north-south dimension, but it is not immediately apparent how much of the east-west dimension will be needed. To analyze that question, several plans were studied that are best summarized by Figure 2 (page 29). This plan represents a module of criminal courtrooms and related spaces based on minimum dimensions needed to meet all security and accessibility requirements. As a module, it can be repeated and varied to build up a larger floor of courtrooms. Measuring 72 feet by 90 feet, it provides judges' chambers and jury deliberation rooms slightly larger than the

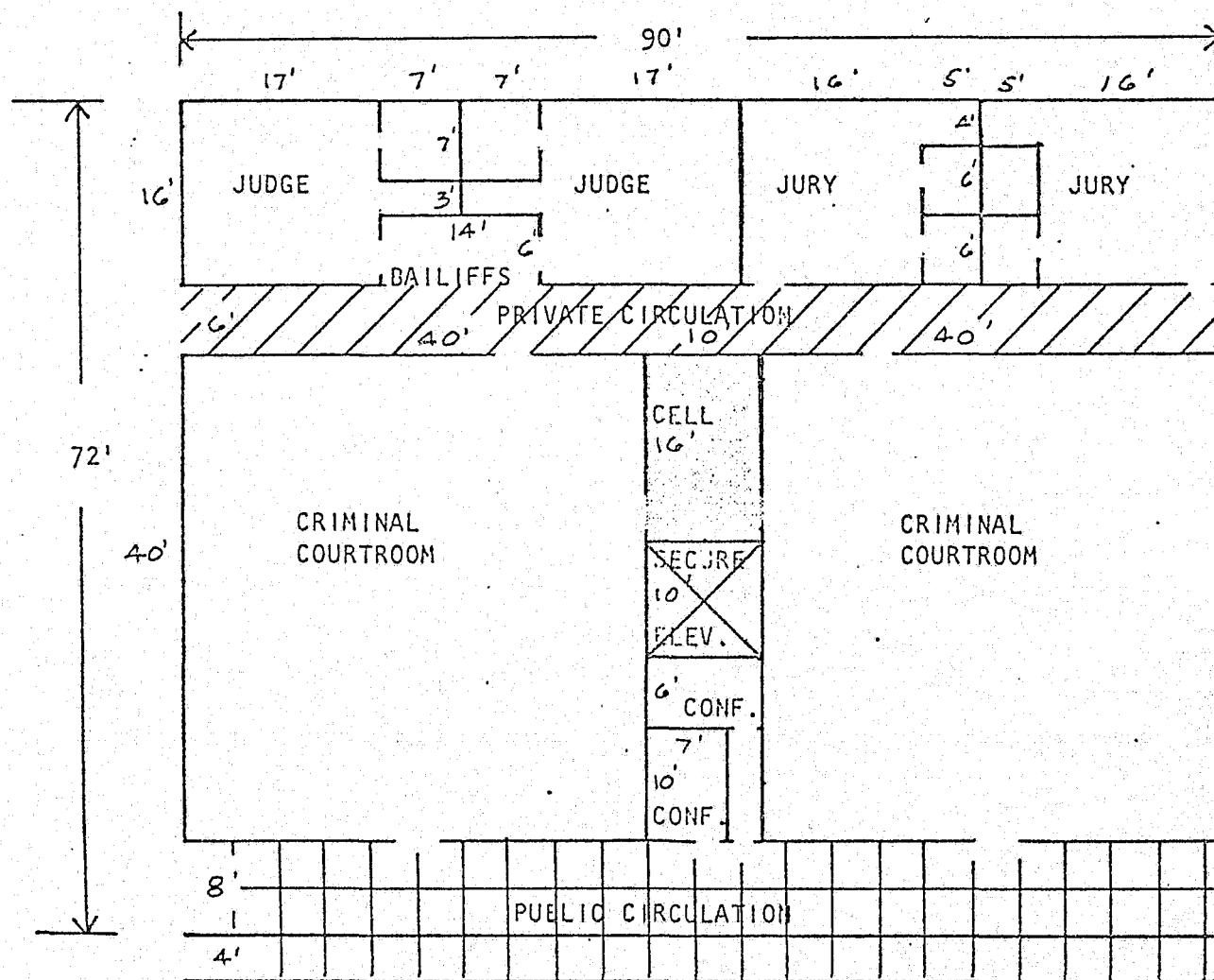


FIGURE 2

PLANNING MODULE: LINEAR PLAN, TWO CRIMINAL COURTROOMS WITH JURIES

(1/16" = 1')

current ones, and forty foot square courtrooms. By comparing the planning module to Figure 3 (page 31) (a site plan of the parking lot and patio redrawn to the same scale), the essential dimensional constraints of the site can be better understood. The module fits comfortably in the northern section with its corridors aligned either north-south or east-west, but it cannot fit in the southern section with either orientation. Thus, one can be reasonably confident that the full width of the north section should be used in any practical plan. The utility of the southern section can best be determined by attempting to specifically plan that section as an extension of the north section.

5. Feasible Plans

Using the methods described above, a number of plans were developed depicting different arrangements of circulation systems and space relationships. These included clustering the private spaces (judges' chambers and jury rooms) and surrounding them with courtrooms, placing one pair of courtrooms and all related spaces in each section of the site, and variants of linear circulation arrangement. Several major conclusions can be drawn from these studies.

It is felt that the most economic result would be a plan allowing for a repeatable floor containing four courtrooms and all related spaces. This would allow an initial increment of expansion to the existing facility amounting to about 33 percent of its current capacity and a later increment, when necessary, of about 25 percent additional capacity. The first stage of construction would contain two floors, one with courtrooms and one for jury quarters and parking. The second stage would add another courtroom floor. Fewer courtrooms per floor would, it is felt, be too small an increment, and require far too frequent stages of construction

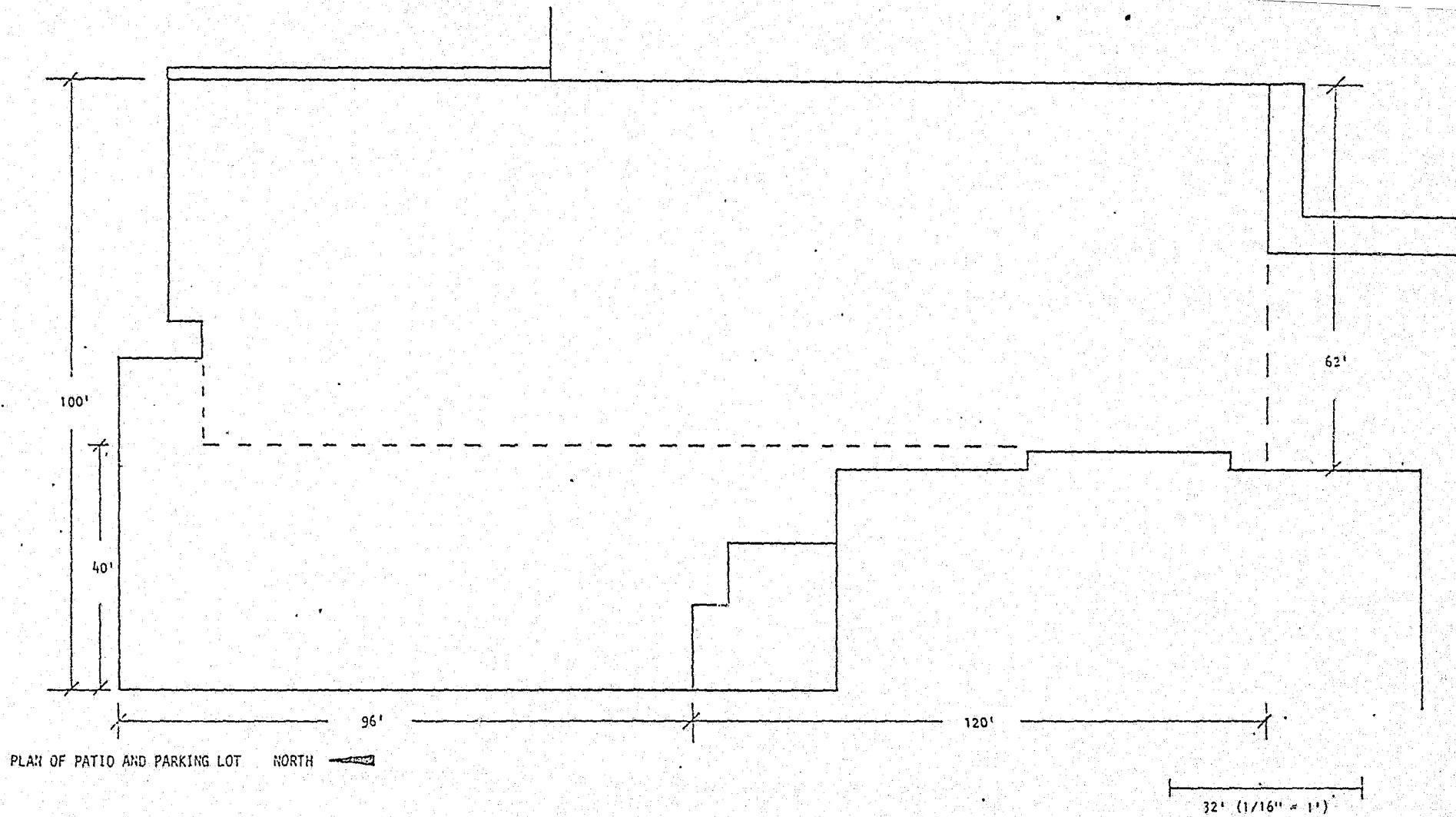
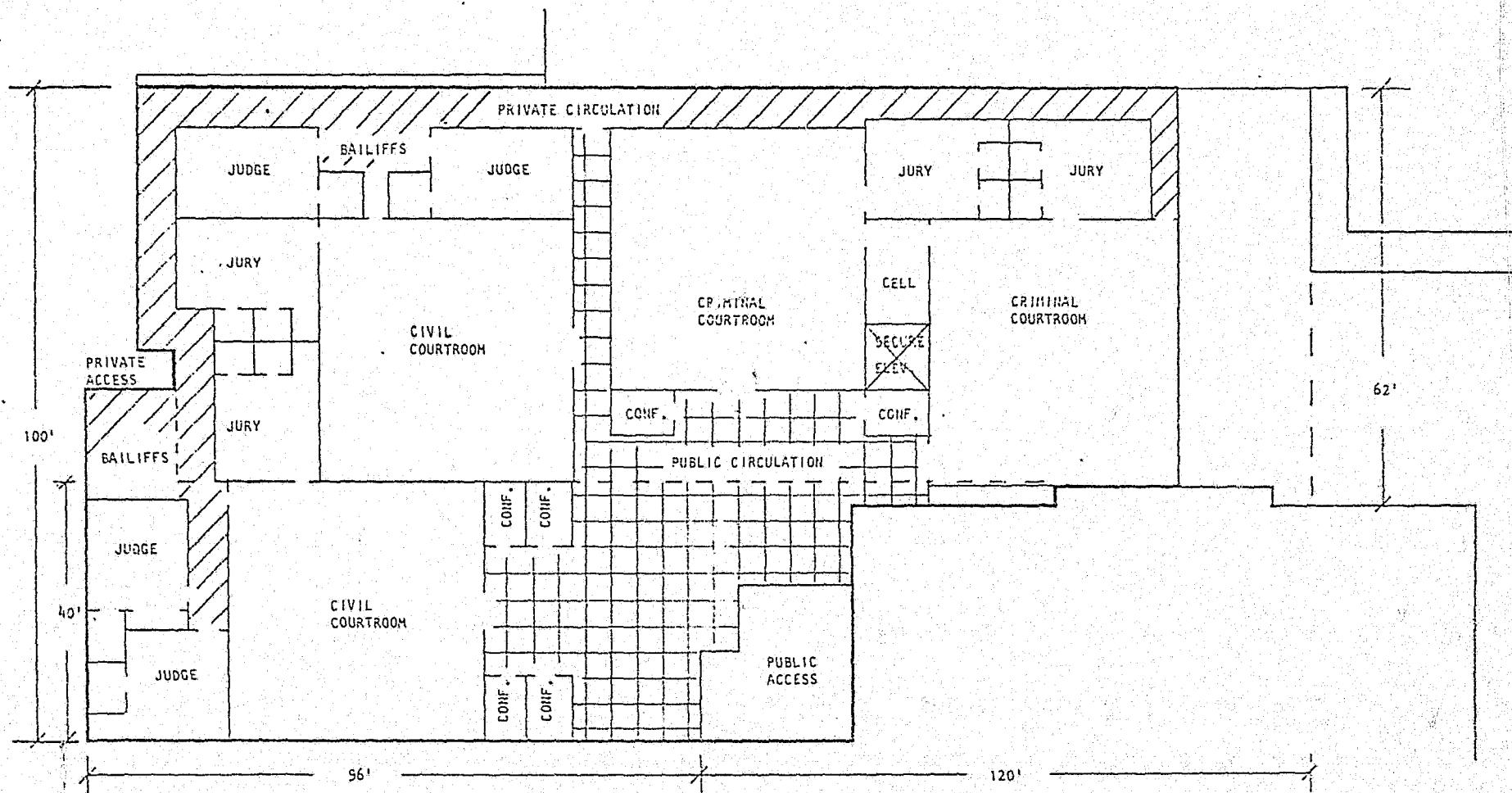


FIGURE 3

if growth continues. More courtrooms per floor could be achieved by reducing the size of all spaces or by separating related spaces and courtrooms on different floors, however, neither option seems appropriate. The first would unacceptably reduce the quality of new court spaces when compared to their current use. The drawback of the second approach is that it would create more chambers and jury rooms (enough for about sixteen courtrooms) than the probable maximum height of the structure would warrant. More complex combinations of different size courtrooms, fewer jury rooms, and vertical separation of related spaces from courtrooms might well succeed, however, in reducing the cost of construction or increasing the efficiency of space use. These prospects reinforce the judgment that the site is functionally feasible.

A repeatable floor plan of four courtrooms and all related spaces is illustrated in Figure 4 (page 33). It may be viewed as the second level of the addition, matching the first floor of the court wing, and could be repeated as a third and, perhaps, a fourth level. The first level, matching the court wing basement, could conveniently contain a jury assembly area in the patio area (96 square feet by 40 square feet) while parking could remain in approximately the same area as it is now. Table 1 compares functions and areas in the courtroom floor to the existing court wing and Table 2 compares jury and parking areas.

Comparing the feasibility study with a typical existing court wing floor in this way reinforces the site's feasibility. The total area is approximately 17 percent larger than the existing wing (2108 square feet), and uses about 91 percent of the maximum site area. Compared to the existing wing, the maximum site area is larger by about 3,340 square feet, an ample margin for future architectural design additions. The



FEASIBILITY STUDY: COURTROOM FLOOR WITH TWO CRIMINAL AND TWO CIVIL COURTROOMS

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FIGURE 4

(AREAS IN NET SQUARE FEET)

ITEM	FEASIBILITY STUDY		EXISTING
JUDGE'S CHAMBERS	272 - 284 48 24 <hr/> 1400	Office Toilet Closet Total (4)	264 35 4 <hr/> 1212
BAILIFF'S VESTIBULE	126 - 224 <hr/> 350	Each Total (2)	140 <hr/> 280
JURY ROOM	256 - 308 60 20 <hr/> 1464	Conf. Toilet (2) Closet Total (4)	266 40 none <hr/> 1224
COURTROOM	1600 <hr/> 6400	Each Total (4)	1268 <hr/> 5072
ATTY. CONF. / WITNESS ROOM	70 <hr/> 420	Each Total (6)	63 <hr/> 378
PUBLIC LOBBY	1912	Total	1390
PUBLIC ACCESS	From existing Public Lobby		From street and Patio
PRIVATE CIRCULATION	747 Total Each chambers connects to all courtrooms on all floors		486 Two chambers connect to two courtrooms on one floor
PRIVATE ACCESS	From Sheriff's & District Atty's. Wing		None
SECURE CIRCULATION	260 nsf Holding Cell & Elevator adjoin 2 courtrooms. Completely separate circulation.		112 nsf Elevator connects to private (judge and jury) corridor. Cell in jail tunnel. No secure corridor at courtrooms.
SECURE ACCESS	From Jail Tunnel		From Jail Tunnel
GROSS FLOOR AREA	14297 sq. ft.		12189 sq. ft.

TABLE 1: FUNCTIONAL AND AREA COMPARISON, COURTROOM FLOORS

(AREAS III NET SQUARE FEET)

ITEM	FEASIBILITY STUDY		EXISTING
JURY ASSEMBLY	3840	Total	1283
PARKING	12088	Total	12088

TABLE 2: AREA COMPARISON OF FIRST LEVELS

feasibility study achieves far greater security and propriety from its arrangements by adding only 409 net square feet to the secure and 'private' areas of the existing floor, an increase of only three percent. This small increase also permits any judge to hear a case in any courtroom with all the advantages already mentioned. If the feasibility study's courtrooms, jury rooms, and public lobby all were comparable to existing areas, it actually would be slightly smaller than the existing wing.

No elevators or fire stairs are shown in the schematic plan of Figure 4 (page 33) although the existing exterior stairs should become part of the new wing. The plan allows enough flexibility to add an elevator in the public lobby if necessary. Fire stairs and exits also may be needed, probably at the south end of the wing. In that event, a public corridor can be accommodated between the old and new wings.

Although this feasibility analysis is not directly concerned with aesthetic quality, one suggestion does seem appropriate. As the patio disappears in the new wing, both the present statue of Justice and the old courthouse bricks will need a new site. Either the main entrance lobby or the jury assembly area in the new wing might be suitable architecturally, as well as symbolically. It is to be hoped that they will become part of the new wing.

6. Assessment and Recommendations

The addition of a twelfth courtroom in the jury assembly area will result in courtroom space for all judges of the Stanislaus County Courts. It is difficult to question the probability of continued growth of the Courts' caseload in years to come, and the related need for additional case processing capability. This need translates into case processing

units: personnel, space and equipment in all functional categories. In simpler terms, it means judges, jurors, prosecutors, defenders, and the operations of clerical, reporting, security, and all other related services.

Presently allocated space in the Municipal and Superior Court Clerk's office appears adequate for the processing of a caseload approximately one-half greater than the current one, if improvements in storage and equipment use is continued. Recent additions to the District Attorney's and Public Defender's spaces also allow a margin for future caseload growth in these offices, and space increases for the Marshal and Sheriff will improve their situations. The major remaining space deficiency in terms of future growth needs is for courtrooms, chambers, and jury spaces. Because the recent reorganization of space use elsewhere in the facility has increased its case handling capacity in other respects, expansion of judicial and related spaces on-site is a reasonable approach.

This expansion could occur vertically or horizontally. Vertical additions to the existing courtroom and office wings would only slightly improve the courtroom deficiency. Air handling equipment located on the courtroom wing roof is a formidable obstacle to vertical expansion there, and vertical expansion of the office wing would be better reserved for office spaces. Horizontal expansion offers many more functional and economic advantages and has been studied in more detail.

The patio and parking lot area is large enough to allow construction of adequate courtroom floors and a jury assembly area. Several schematic studies, prepared in reference to generally accepted standards for the type, area and accessibility of court and related spaces, indicate the feasibility of a courtroom floor plan including four courtrooms, chambers, and jury

rooms as well as related spaces. Compared to the areas and features of the existing court wing, these studies give the addition every promise of superior quality.

If the first level of the addition contains jury assembly parking areas, the second and higher levels can be courtroom floors. Initial construction should include the two levels and at least the shell of an additional courtroom floor. The structure should be designed for a minimum of three courtroom floors. Each floor can contain two civil and two criminal courtrooms or four courtrooms of either type. The second level must then include criminal courtrooms so that in-custody cases can be discontinued in the six existing courtrooms which lack secure access routes. On the long run, criminal cases should be scheduled only in courtrooms with adequate security. Included in the existing wing would be the yet-to-be built twelfth courtroom (basement, east-side) and, possibly, the other east-side basement courtroom. This implies the construction of four criminal courtrooms in the initial stage of the addition, and would result in four criminal courtrooms on the second level, two for Municipal Court and two for Superior Court. A second secure elevator and holding cell would then be required between the two north end courtrooms which would connect the security corridor and the jail. The security corridor could be in a tunnel or a securely enclosed corridor on the first level.

A cost estimate for any configuration described here cannot be made until a complete facility program is prepared and the structural and service relationships are determined with the existing buildings. This is well beyond the scope of a functional feasibility study, but an order of magnitude projection can be made for one typical courtroom floor,

based only upon the costs of free-standing construction of the gross square foot area. Depending upon local construction costs at the time, one courtroom floor might be expected to contribute between \$850,000 and \$1,000,000 to the total construction cost.

During the facility programming phase, a number of other important questions should be examined to establish the most economical and effective building program spanning the initial stage of construction and subsequent additions. For example, the optimum number and sizes of courtrooms per floor should be evaluated in relation to the expected growth of caseloads and the resultant stages of construction. If three of the courtrooms were reduced in size about 25 percent to 1200 net square feet, a fifth non-jury courtroom and chambers probably could be included on the floor. Such questions should be studied, not only in reference to the new wings, but also in relation to possible vertical additions to the existing office wings, and to possible future reorganizations of space use if the Sheriff's Department relocates to another site.

APPENDICES

August 22, 1977

Mr. Don Vera
Administrator
Municipal Court of California
County of Stanislaus
Modesto Judicial District
Stanislaus County Courthouse
Modesto, California

Dear Don:

During my technical assistance visit to your court on August 3 and 4, sponsored by The American University's Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project, I had the opportunity to confer at length with you; with Presiding Judge Stone and Judges Accurso, Cantwell, Carner, and Taylor; with Municipal Court Clerk Janis Shanahan; with Marshal Robert Earl; and with Jury Clerk Jess Rinehart in addition to many other court staff members. We also toured the court spaces and now-vacant county spaces in County Complex No. 1 with which this letter report is concerned and reviewed their architectural plans.

As a result of these conferences and studies of the court facility, the facility needs which derive from Municipal Court's current and anticipated near-future operations, and the facility deficiencies and opportunities presented within that framework, I have reached a number of professional conclusions.

You already are familiar with these conclusions as discussed between us and with Judges Stone and Cantwell, but this letter will confirm them for the record.

The Central Problem

Court space is provided in one wing of County Complex No. 1 for the Municipal and Superior Courts of Stanislaus County. Included are six courtrooms for Superior Court and five courtrooms and one hearing room for Municipal Court as well as Chambers, administrative and some ancillary clerical spaces for each court, and a shared jury assembly area. Another wing of the Complex is currently being remodeled for occupancy by Sheriff, District Attorney and Elections units. This wing became available when all its county offices were relocated.

From my related experience assessing court facility needs and based upon the information collected and analyzed during this visit, I am satisfied that caseload growth of Municipal Court will continue and should create a need for at least one additional courtroom within the next three to five years. It would be reasonable to expect a concurrent growth of Superior Court caseload and a probable need for an additional Superior Courtroom in that same period. It then seems a supportable estimate that at least one additional courtroom will be needed -- together with all related and ancillary spaces comprising a case processing unit -- within, perhaps, three years.

At the present time, the most suitable space for one courtroom and chambers is that area occupied by the Municipal Court Hearing Room and the jury assemble area. Possible, that was the ultimate purpose for which they were originally planned.

In addition to its desirable location in a courtroom wing, this space is also of the same size and general arrangements as the other courtrooms and has access

to the detainer holding area. Because the jury assembly now occupies the courtroom space while a small hearing room with column-obscured sight lines occupies the chambers area, effective expansion for courtroom use is blocked.

Secondary Problems

The Municipal Court Hearing room, best described as inadequate, is entirely too intimate and informal for most of the criminal matters scheduled there. Because this space does not have a chambers, one judge has no office space in the complex. The Jury Assembly Room is utterly insufficient in size, inadequate in facilities and amenities, and inappropriate in location. In recognition of the jury area's deficiencies, the Board of Supervisors recently publicly announced its intention to improve the space and has suggested several alternatives to the courts.

Currently, the court administrator's office is in a storage room and the secretary's location is in the Clerk's office. These spaces are too small, fragmented, improperly located, and inadequate in accommodations. The Marshal's office is far too small for current staff and is inappropriate to the Marshal's civil and court security activities. In the Clerk's office, the traffic counter, although well-located near public access, is awkwardly organized to facilitate public movement. The organization of the civil, small claims, and criminal counter also needs improvement. Storage and supply rooms, employee rooms, and file areas are located in poor relationship to work flow and task assignments but could be replanned to enhance the effectiveness of space use in the Clerk's office, overall.

Other deficiencies include security problems in relation to the limited size of the Marshal's staff and the lack of separate secure circulation for detained defendants as well as to the too-free access to private and secure areas. Signs and directional information inside and outside the buildings are too few, limited in information content, and not sufficiently discernable. Juror's and public parking spaces are too few in number and the duration of metered time is too short.

Analysis

Given the problems just stated, it is clear that the facility's capacity to meet court needs is close to exhaustion. In the very near future, a major question will have to be faced: how can the growing space needs of the county's courts be provided for?

Suitable options are few. Growth within the complex is limited by the absence of column-free areas for courtrooms except for the existing jury assembly room. Improvements in secure and separate circulation would be made only with considerable and difficult expense. Thus, expansion potential within the complex is limited to that of one courtroom and chambers. Although improvements are feasible and inexpensive within the clerical/administration area which would provide ample capacity for a number of years and although microfilming, computerization, increased segregation of aged and inactive files, and changes in the file storage limits could increase its capacity even further, the lack of suitable future courtroom space leads to the possibility of fragmentation and separation of court functions. That would represent a major and undesirable change in the way Municipal Court conducts its business.

The problem of inadequate jury facilities, although serious, is symptomatic of the more comprehensive problem of the inability of the Court wing to provide adequately for Municipal and Superior Court space needs. Given the similarity of technical requirements for types and amounts of space common to both the courts but distinct from all non-court agencies, total court space needs should be examined and planned in coordination. A move to reduce only one of the several jury facility problems by adding more space at the expense of other court space needs is not a recommended approach, even for an interim period.

Improved jury management, with the goal of reducing the total number of jurors reporting to the assembly area at one time is a useful way of controlling space needs as well as improving the treatment of those citizens who serve this vital community function. A study of feasible jury management techniques including telephone alerting, reserved parking with identification against overtime ticketing, and other concepts in use should be an excellent step at this time. Concurrently, an improved jury assembly facility should be established in any event.

In the renovated wing, the area formerly occupied by Juvenile Traffic Court presents advantages for jury assembly. Its second floor location is central to the three court floors. It is close to public access and closer to public toilet facilities. It is private and free from intermingled juror court participant corridors. The existing arrangement of partitions, while less than optimal, is tolerable and could be used to provide some separation for smokers, non-smokers, readers, talkers and other categories of users. A net increase in space is about 30 percent (from approximately 1300 net sq. ft. to approximately 1600 net sq. ft.) would be gained using the existing space. A further increase to about 2000 net sq. ft., about 50 percent more than existing, could usefully be made by including the corridor, however.

As part of the assembly space, two options seem feasible. One is to include most of the corridor length from the adjoining wing back towards the access stairs. The other is to trade space with the Sheriff's Division Commander and clerical area across the corridor to create a more nearly square jury assembly area stretching across the corridor at the right-hand end of the wing (in the plans).

Either of the latter jury area options should include replanning the total space to eliminate the corridor walls and integrate the complete area. Access to the adjoining wing for emergency egress would remain because doors would be installed at each end simply to reduce unofficial traffic and control noise. Locks would not be needed.

With the jury panels moved to a larger area, appropriately located; and provided with amenities, it is then feasible to remodel the jury assembly/ Municipal Court Hearing Room space into a courtroom and chambers. When that is done, however, courtroom space potential will have been exhausted and other solutions for future growth problems will have to be pursued.

Independently of the jury - courtroom sequence, replanning of the Clerk's Office Marshal's Office, and Administrator's Office should commence as soon as the Sheriff's Civil Division relocates to the renovated wing. Details of these changes would have to be worked out in the immediate future.

Finally, the problem remains of defining the near and long-term future facility needs of Municipal Court and Superior Court. With the probable imminence of the end of growth potential in existing space, a major county and court decision is also imminent. How best to provide needed court facilities is now a frustration whose time has come.

Recommendations

1. Institute a detailed facility needs study to define - in terms of anticipated caseload and workflow - the facility needs of Municipal and Superior Court. Short and long-term growth of needs for case processing units should be estimated. Security, equipment use, accessibility, accommodations, and areas should all be accessed to arrive at a statement and ranking of alternatives for action. The goal is to remove the management of court facilities from the arena of crisis response to that of planning the cost effective delivery of justice.
2. Move the jury assembly to the former Juvenile Traffic Court area, expanded into the corridor along its length or expanded across the corridor.
3. Construct a courtroom/chambers in the vacated jury space and the hearing room.
4. Replan the Municipal Court Clerk's Office, Administrator's Office, and Marshal's Office to improve the effectiveness of space use, ease the flow of public traffic, and increase space for now-crowded activities.
5. The sequence of actions:
 - Item 1: As soon as possible
 - Item 2: As soon as possible
 - Item 3: When Item 2 is completed
 - Item 4: When Sheriff's Civil Division space is available

Conclusion

The analysis and recommendations offered here have been derived from the discussions and observations made on-site and in consonance with my experience as a court facilities planning consultant. May I take the opportunity here to thank you for your courtesy and cooperation and most particularly for your hospitality. - My thanks also to all the Municipal Court judges and staff for making this visit pleasant as well as productive.

Very truly yours,

Lawrence Seigel
Lawrence Seigel

LS/cnr

APPENDIX B

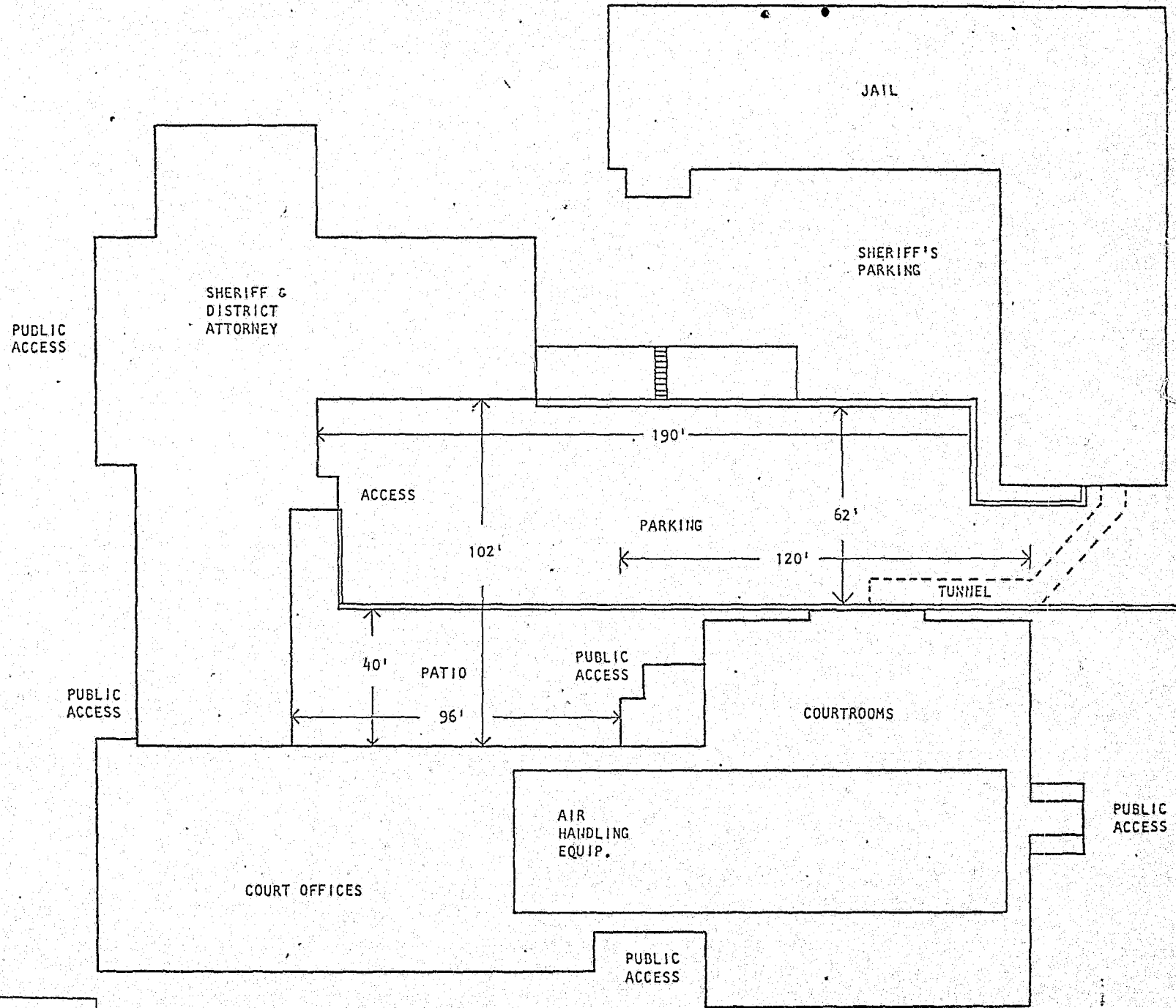
CONSTRUCTION

Robing Rooms


Three robing rooms to be built in the vestibules outside judges chambers are intended to be minimal in construction cost by virtue of their specific locations and features. Construction should be of interior partitioning, with soundproof floor-to-ceiling walls. Lighting and air ducts must be provided. The existing railings should be removed, as shown on Drawings 1, 2 and 3, to facilitate movement through the areas. Construction cost of the three robing rooms should not exceed about \$5,000, exclusive of furnishings and telephones.

Holding Cells

Small holding cells to be built in four jury rooms are intended to be secure short-term holding spaces for not more than five detainees. Two interior walls, probably of cement block, would have to be constructed for each cell and the interior finish of the existing walls and ceilings improved. All walls should be soundproofed. Lighting fixtures and air ducts would have to be redone with secure components. The cell door should be of secure construction with a large visibility panel, but need not be a steel jail door because of the short duration of cell occupancy. The maximum cost of the four holding cells as described should not exceed about \$20,000.



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