

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

OCT 19 1987

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name Woman's Club of Tallahassee other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1513 Cristobal Drive city, town Tallahassee state Florida code FL county Leon code 073 zip code 32312

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: George W. ... Date: 10/12/87 State or Federal agency and bureau: State Historic Preservation Officer, Florida Department of State

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Date: State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: Helen Bryan Date of Action: 11-20-87

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social/Clubhouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social/Clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Mediterranean Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Stucco

roof Terra Cotta

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

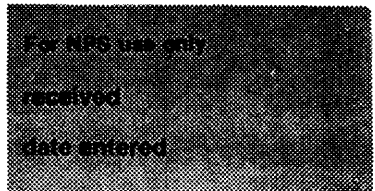
The Woman's Club of Tallahassee is part of a well defined residential subdivision located at the intersection of Thomasville and Meridian Roads. The subdivision covers a triangular piece of property on 37 acres of land and contains 138 lots. The clubhouse is a one story Mediterranean Revival structure, built of concrete block and finished with textured stucco. The roof is a low hip covered in pantile tiles. The Spanish style of the clubhouse was to be the first example of Mediterranean Revival architecture proposed for Los Robles, the Oaks, subdivision built in 1927. Surrounded on three sides by several large old live oak trees hung with Spanish moss which creates a protective canopy over the clubhouse and its surroundings, the Woman's Club stands just inside the Mediterranean portal, at the junction point of Cristobal and Fernando Drives.

The main entrance is located on the south side of the building. It features a three bay loggia asymmetrically placed on the building facing the Mediterranean Revival entrance portal to the subdivision. Round-headed fenestration lends a strong Mediterranean accent to an otherwise unadorned exterior. Two portals, flanking the three bay loggia, are casement windows with semicircular tympanum above and a blind balustrade below. A sixth bay located on the facade of the auditorium portion of the building duplicates the two end windows of the porch. The main entry is through the porch loggia, which has glazed multipaned doors, a double door in the center of two single doors. Heavily carved wooden brackets under the eaves lend balance to the red clay pantile roof tiles. Azaleas and dogwood trees on the south side of the entry drive create a park-like setting.

The only decorative feature on the west facade of the building is the group of three large, beautifully proportioned, arched double-hung windows with semicircular windows in the tympanum. The windows are centered on the auditorium block between the south porch and the northern stage wing. Two smaller rectangular double-hung windows flank the triple arched fenestration. All windows have stone slab sills. A single door is located at the northwest corner of the building.

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Continuation sheet

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On the east facade there are two double doors with semicircular tympanums which open onto the large curved brick patio area off the dining lounge. A large end chimney dominates the western wall between the doors and is finished in decorative rough cast stucco. A plain plaster shield placed over each of the two doors is the only other adornment to the eastern wall.

The north facade is part of a 1953 addition to the clubhouse which added 18 feet in depth and 58 feet in width to the building. The design of the addition is sympathetic with the original plan. The fenestration of the rear facade includes one single door with a small wooden porch roof, and two small rectangular windows. The air conditioning unit and a corrugated metal storage unit are located on the rear wall facing the parking area.

The interior space is divided into functional areas for meetings and entertainment. The main room is an auditorium which measures approximately 68 feet by 40 feet and has a ceiling height of 16 feet. The original oak floor remains in excellent condition. A lounge area on the east side of the auditorium measures approximately 30 feet by 38 feet. The fireplace dominates the room and is its most distinctive element. The large chimney piece is built of carved and painted wood and brick with a decorative crown molding, carved pilasters and a blind panel. The hearth is laid with six-inch unfired Mexican tiles in a mellow burnt umber color. The area is furnished with wall to wall carpet, large overstuffed sofas, chairs, side tables and lamps. The intimate area is used for meetings and small luncheons and dinners. The stage area runs the full width of the north wall. Stairs at each side of the stage lead to small triangular shaped dressing areas. A three-foot corridor runs behind the curtained stage connecting the two dressing areas. The kitchen and pantry are large, functional areas providing much storage for utility articles. The work area of the kitchen contains large sinks, a chopping block, oversized refrigerator, several work tables and lots of storage cabinets. Two range top stoves provide ample cooking facilities. A pantry provides storage room for dishes, a desk and work area for day-to-day secretarial duties and storage area for records.

Alterations and Present Appearance:

The 1953 addition to the rear of the clubhouse added an area of 1044 square feet. A new stage area and several square feet were added to the auditorium and the kitchen was greatly expanded. The addition was built by Culpepper Construction Incorporated and designed by A.P. Woodward, architect. The engineer was R.M. Marshall. The construction is frame with brick veneer and stucco overlay to match the building's original exterior. The roof area over the kitchen is built-up gravel, and the area over the stage is a low-pitch hip in pantile tiles. All original blueprints for both the original building and the addition are on the premises of the Woman's Club.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social history

Period of Significance

1927-1937

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

E.D. Fitchner

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Los Robles was Tallahassee's venture into Florida's twenties-era Mediterranean Revival subdivisions. As the only building in the subdivision actually built in that style, the Woman's Club stands as a reminder that Tallahassee belonged to the "other Florida." North Floridians preferred more traditional architecture in the twenties. The structure meets Criteria A and C on the local level because of its association with a women's organization that provided civic leadership in the areas of charitable and humanitarian concerns and its twenties architecture designed by the noted Florida architect, E.D. Fitchner.

Soon after its opening in 1927, the Woman's Club became the unofficial civic and entertainment center of Tallahassee. Organized in 1903 by the wives and daughters of prominent educators, business and professional men, the club served as a focal point for providing social services to the community in an era before government became greatly involved in such activities. Governor Sidney J. Catts pushed some social welfare programs, such as compulsory school attendance and assistance to mothers with dependent children, through the state legislature during his term (1917-1921), but city expenditures for social services were quite small until the Great Depression.

Most of the women in the club were college educated, but in that period before women's suffrage and equal rights, few middle class women worked outside the home. The training and energy of these women were funneled into important and progressive innovations in charitable and humanitarian programs that were designed to make the capital city a better place to live.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

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3	3	7	2	8	0	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, and 20, Block B, in the Los Robles Subdivision
IN, W $\frac{1}{2}$ of N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 30 IN, IE.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

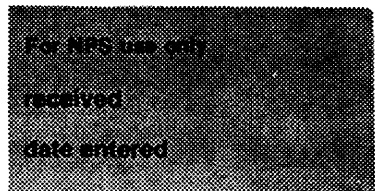
See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donna Climenhage & Lea Wolfe, Ph.D., Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date 10-12-87
 street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 So. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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Most of the activities of the Woman's Club centered about improving health care and providing better education for the youth of Tallahassee. It was mainly through the efforts of the members of the club that in 1910 a bond issue was floated enabling the building of the first Leon High School. During the same period, the members raised funds and for two years maintained the first kindergarten in the area. They also funded the first library in county schools. During the 1920s members backed the Girl Scout movement and the 4-H Club in the city. Many meetings at the clubhouse during this period were based entirely on efforts to help Tallahassee's less fortunate. During the Depression years, the club raised funds, purchased and distributed shoes for the shoeless of the city, and collected items for layettes for newborn babies. A health nurse was hired by the members and money was given to establish a health unit in Leon County for those who could not otherwise afford health care. Funds for free milk for under-nourished children were established by the members. Free seeds for fruit and vegetables were supplied to provide basic food staples for the poor.

During World War II the clubhouse was turned over to the American Red Cross. Members volunteered their time and energies to sew surgical garments and wrap bandages. Many members served on committees that wrote letters to soldiers abroad. Some members also staffed the U.S.O. clubs in the area. The Woman's Club was a major supporter of the drive to purchase War Bonds.

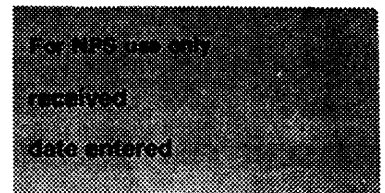
Throughout the club's history, members have maintained an active program of beautification for the city. Tallahassee was one of the first municipal governments in the country to pass a tree protection ordinance. Club members drummed up public support for the measure. They planted and maintained memorial trees, identified "Patriarch Oaks" that were alive at Tallahassee's founding, and decorated public roadways with shrubs and flowers.

During the 1950s through the 1980s the clubhouse continued to be the site of many charitable functions. The members kept up their civic duties and provided scholarship funds for university students. Yearly fund raisers were held in the clubhouse for such charitable causes as the Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center, the Ronald McDonald House in Gainesville and the Multiple Sclerosis Campaign. Since the twenties, the clubhouse has been the most popular place in Tallahassee for wedding receptions. Three generations of Tallahassee brides have celebrated their marriages in the structure.

The developers, Leon F. Lonnbladh and Albert E. Thornton, planned a Mediterranean Revival style subdivision in Tallahassee to rival the Mediterranean Revival architecture used in the Coral Gables boom time developments. Calling their subdivision Los Robles, the men purchased 37 acres of farmland outside the city limits adjacent to Thomasville Road. Los Robles was the first completely planned subdivision in Tallahassee. The city's population was only about 3,000 in 1926; few of the streets were even paved. The Los Robles developers offered paved streets, concrete sidewalks, landscaping, street lights, and modern gas, water and sewer systems. All of these amenities were just a few minutes from the Capitol and on a street car line.

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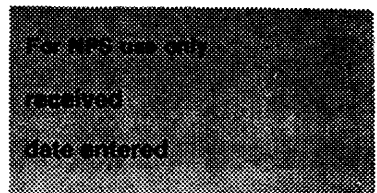
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The Woman's Club was the largest structure built in Los Robles, and besides the Mediterranean Revival entry portal, was the only Mediterranean Revival structure built. The remainder of the subdivision was finished in the more traditional English Cottage, Tudor Revival and American Colonial architecture. Tallahassee in the 1920s was steeped in the traditions of the old south and was not ready for Mediterranean Revival architecture. Even the design of the clubhouse is not a pure example of Mediterranean Revival architecture. While studying the original plans the writer discovered that the building was originally designed by the architect for a site nearer the center of the city on Calhoun Street. The original plans called for the same functional interior we see today; however, the exterior was a more traditional and classically balanced brick facade with arched transom windows. When the Woman's Club received the gift of three lots to build its first clubhouse, the developers included the proviso that the building be built according to a thematic plan for Los Robles, namely Mediterranean Revival. The building, the largest and most prominently sited structure in the subdivision, was planned to set the stylistic example for the entire subdivision. The architect used his original plan and with the addition of plaster on the exterior walls, a tiled roof, heavy carved wooden brackets under the eaves, a large prominent end chimney, black wrought iron light fixtures, and turned wooden balusters in the under casement windows, produced the effect the developers wanted to see on the site.

The Woman's Club was designed by E.D. Fitchner. He was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1887 and graduated from college, but to his family's knowledge, did not receive formal architectural training. Fitchner instead took the state architectural examination after serving an apprenticeship and receiving much practical experience. He was licensed to practice architecture in the same way other notable architects of the time were licensed, namely Addison Mizener, Stanford White and Frank Lloyd Wright. Fitchner worked in several traditional and revival styles. He designed the blended Mediterranean Revival style of the Floridan Hotel in Tallahassee, a National Register listing which was demolished in 1985. Fitchner also designed the Jacobean Revival Ruge Hall on the Florida State University campus in 1931 and the Tudor Revival and English Cottage style homes built in Los Robles in the mid-1930s. Fitchner also designed the Lutheran Bible School in Jacksonville, the Bay County High School and Bay City Jail, the Leon County Armory and the Elks Lodge, Tallahassee. He supervised the remodeling of the State Capitol Building and the Leon County Courthouse in Tallahassee during the 1930s. At the time of his death in 1941, Fitchner was the Supervising Architect for the State Hotel Commission of Florida.

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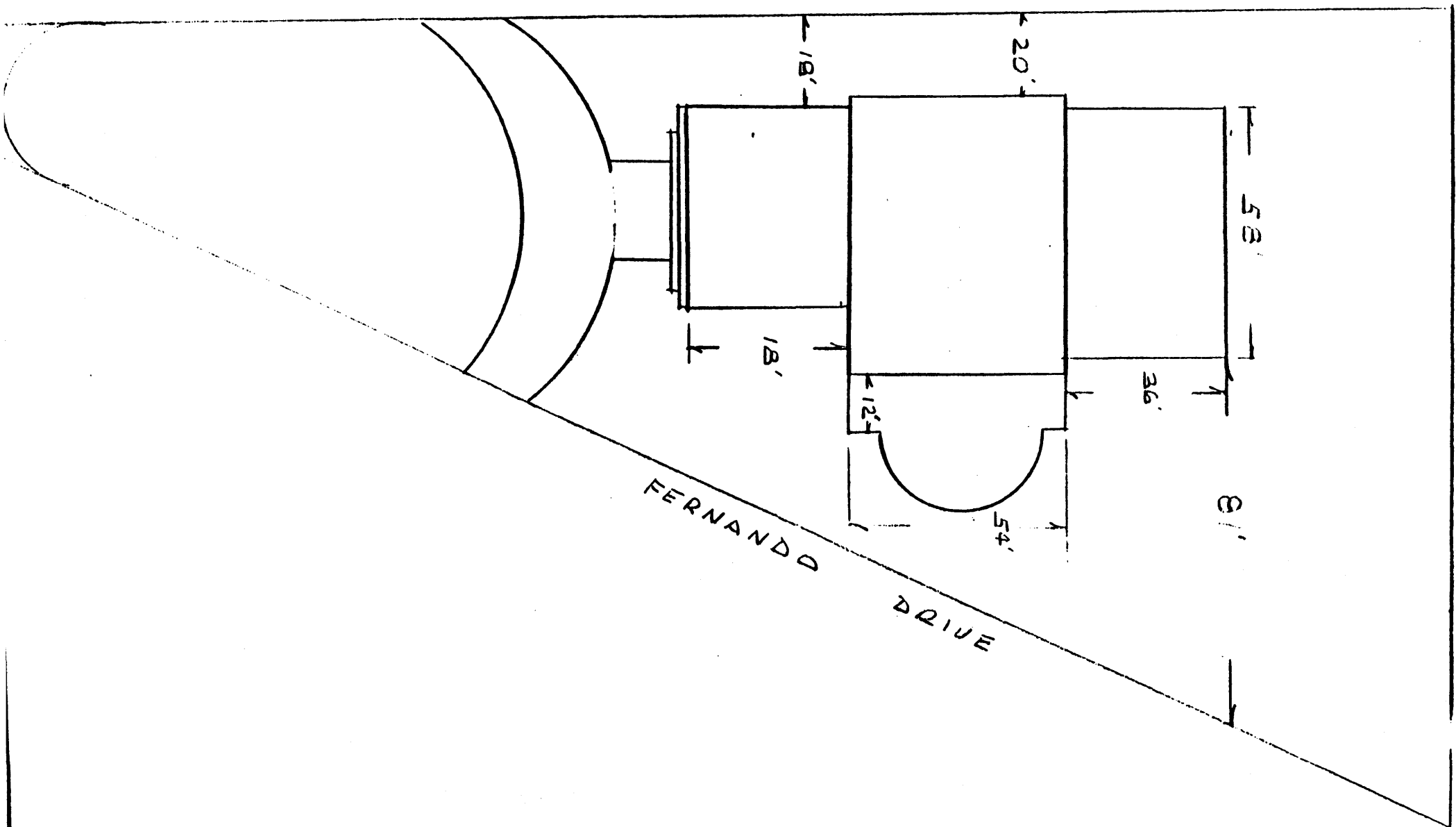
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CRISTOBAL DE.



FERNANDO DRIVE

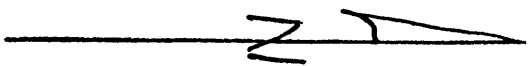


Fig A

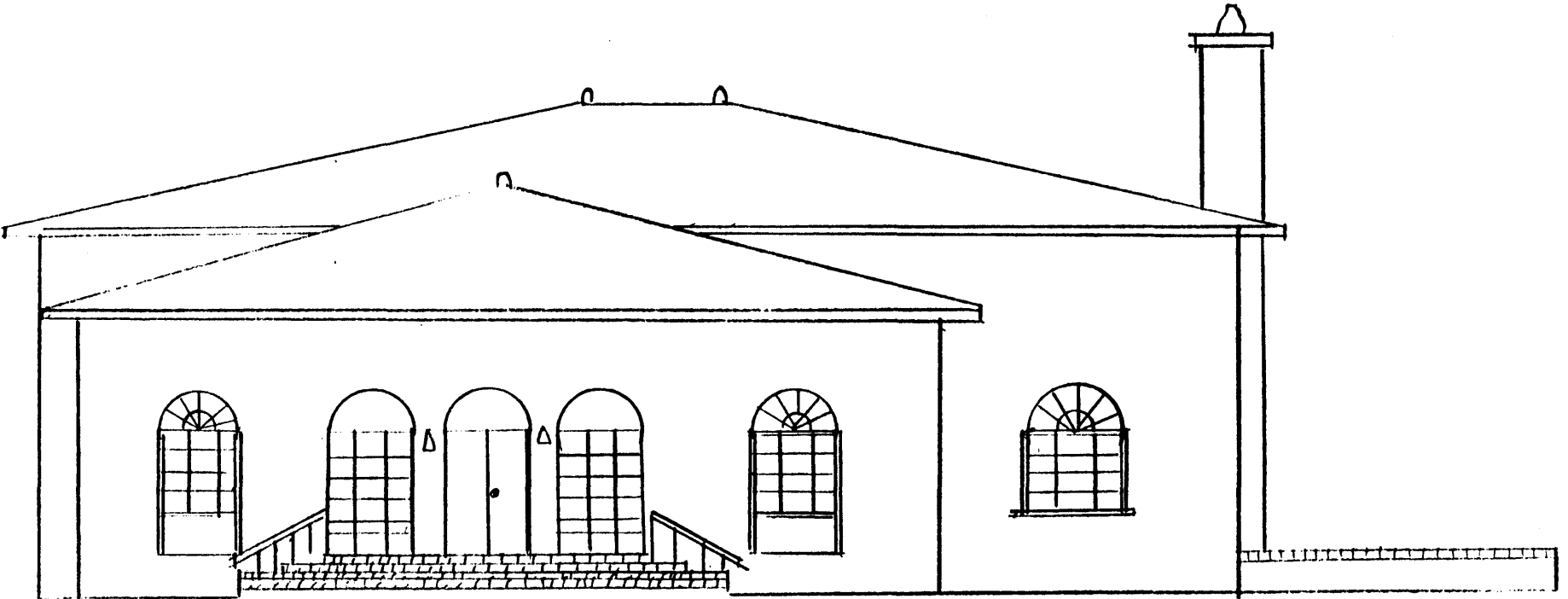


FIG. B

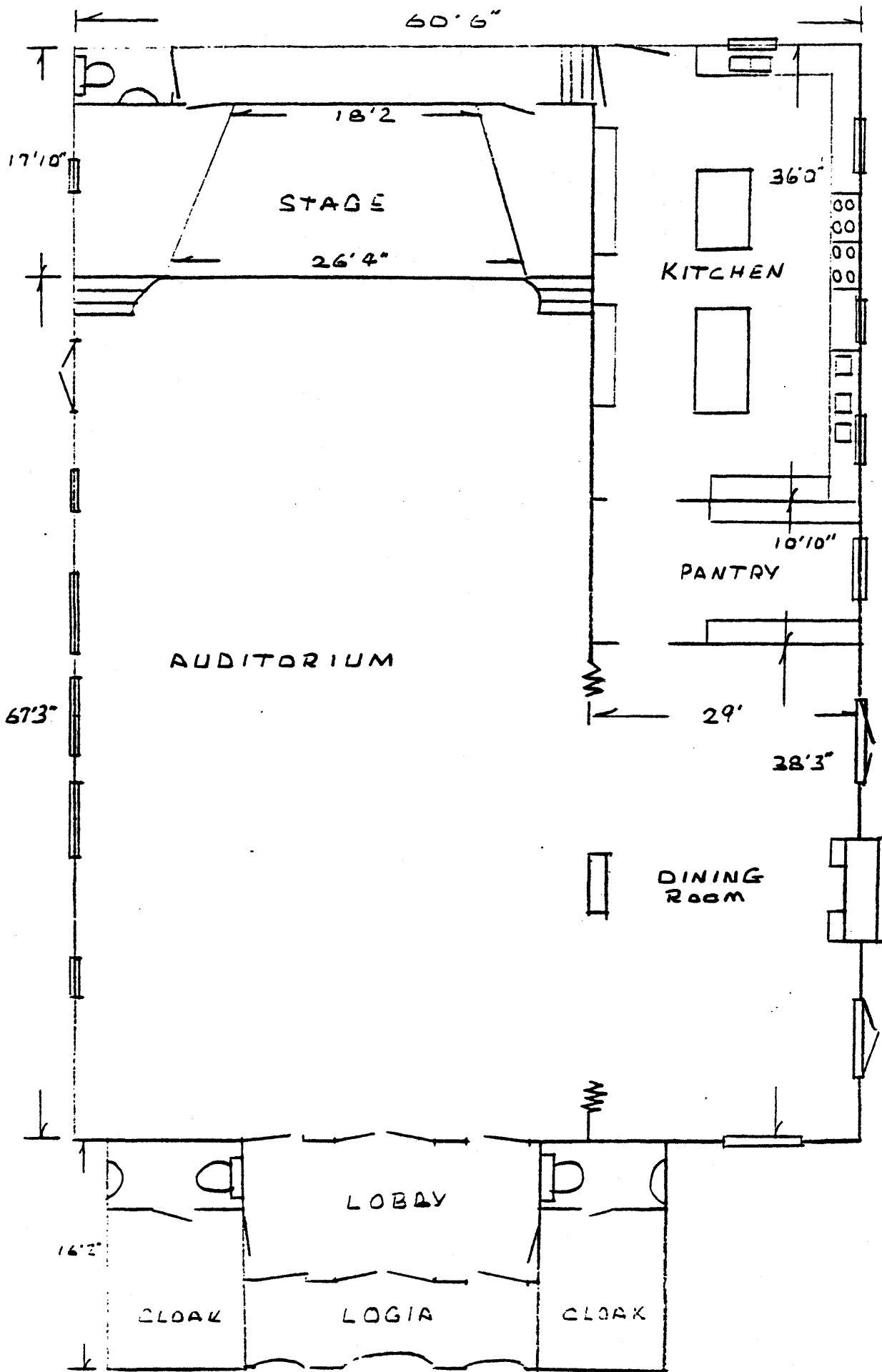


Fig. C

