

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Troy Savings Bank & Music Hall

and or common

**2. Location**

street & number 32 Second Street

\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Troy

\_\_\_ vicinity of

state New York

code

county Rensselaer

code

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	___ unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: theatre/bank

**4. Owner of Property**

name Troy Savings Bank

street & number 32 Second Street

city, town Troy

\_\_\_ vicinity of

state New York

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rensselaer County Courthouse

street & number Second and Congress Streets

city, town Troy

state New York

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title National Register of  
Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible?  yes \_\_\_ no

date August 1974

\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records National Park Service, 1100 L Street, NW

city, town Washington

state DC

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Troy Bank and Music Hall was one of George B. Post's most successful early buildings combining his skill as an engineer with his style of extracting historic references from the history of architecture. In this building he successfully combined the Italianate and Second Empire styles.

A complete, detailed description of the building was noted in the Troy Daily Times, Thursday, April 15, 1875:

The Finest Concert Hall in the state--An Elegant Affair. The new Music Hall in the Troy Savings Bank is a \$350,000 building and will be opened to the public for the first time next Monday. The building has long been finished, so far as outward appearances indicated, but work on the Music Hall had been continued even up to yesterday, when it received the finishing touches and was for the first time entire and complete, ready for inspection, and for description at our hands....

The only entrance to the hall is from Second street, up the broad granite steps and to doors swinging on hinges so as to move either way. A flight of broad iron stairs of elaborate pattern and solid construction, leads on either side of the portico to a low but broad apartment with tiled floor, and hard finished plain white walls, where tickets can be purchased at two windows. Ladies while waiting for their escorts to purchase can sit on settees conveniently placed at the sides of the room. A broad and short iron staircase of the same construction as those below, leads towards the front corridor from which ready access is had to the hall directly ahead. The large arched windows on Second street flood the gallery with light, and when the present plate glass is removed and richly colored cathedral windows placed in position--a substitution that is to be made shortly--the mellow light will lend even a greater charm to the place. Passing toward the hall proper the visitor notices a number of light doors swinging either way and lettered "Dress Circle," "E," "F," "C," etc., indicating to the ticket holder the entrance he needs to take to secure his seat with the least trouble. Swinging open a door and entering, the visitor stands underneath the balcony extending but a short distance forward, and is in the gorgeous new Music Hall. Of course the best view can be had from the centre of the stage. Sitting here one sees, before him, densely packed coffee-colored iron chairs, the parquet separated by an elliptical railing covered with plush, from the dress-circle seats beyond, and two narrow aisles leading from the stage to the doors. On either side six doors extend to the corridors which lead to the entrances or the exits, while four more doors lead directly from the dress circle out to the main entrance. On either side are the boxes in tiers, one above the other, six below and six above--or twenty-four in all--with five chairs in each. In the back part of the hall, up stairs, is the balcony with coffee-colored chairs of exactly the same style as those below, and still farther up is

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1872 **Builder/Architect** George B. Post (1837-1913)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Troy Savings Bank and Music Hall was symbolic of the prosperity of this central New York commercial city. The hall was comparable in scale and embellishment to auditoriums in Europe and America and served as a cultural center when it was built. It remains one of the finest nineteenth century auditorium structures in the United States. The Bank and Music Hall building is an early example of George B. Post's mature style and is one of the very few of his buildings that remains basically unchanged. Many of his later works have been demolished. Post was one of the first generation of American architects who had trained with Richard Morris Hunt who himself had been trained in Europe and was a favored architect among the wealthy. They wanted buildings that reflected their power and prestige. George B. Post learned from Hunt the use of lavish materials and beautiful exterior decoration which recalled the great architecture of the past and provided a suitably tasteful image of power and prosperity. The Troy building complex was designed to include a banking floor, adjacent commercial rental space with the Music Hall located high above the bank on the upper floors. The massive structure still dominates downtown Troy, a city of comfortable three story brownstones.

Troy enjoyed a boom during the Civil War as one of the major iron producing centers and became the location of the first manufacturing of steel using the Bessemer process in the United States. There were also a number of factories producing shirts, collars, stoves, railroad rails and wheels, and surveying instruments that brought great wealth to Troy. This new wealth led to the desire to expand the Bank's quarters into a new and impressive structure, while at the same time to satisfy the state banking law requiring some funding of public amenities such as a concert hall:

Thus, with ample funds in hand, the public-spirited Troy Savings Bank board began their ambitious building program on February 2, 1870 with the resolution to purchase land for a new building site at the northeast corner of State and Second Streets. The bank proceeded to clear the site of buildings during the course of that year. A building committee was selected from officials of the bank.... In May of 1870, the committee was instructed to submit sketches, advertise in the Troy daily papers, and go elsewhere if necessary for the best terms on the new structure. Five leading architects were subsequently asked to submit designs for a combined bank and music hall. By December, the competition designs were completed, and submitted by the committee to the Bank Board.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Troy, South Quad.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	8	6	0	7	0	8	0	4	7	3	1	4	7	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Bank and Music Hall Building is on Lot 156 bounded by 100 feet on Second Street, 126 feet on State Street, 100 feet on Franklin Street and 126 feet along Lot line between 156 and Lot 157. The boundary is the building itself.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Pitt, Historian

organization National Park Service, History Division date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 1100 L Street, NW telephone (202) 343-8166

city or town Washington state DC 20013-7127

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

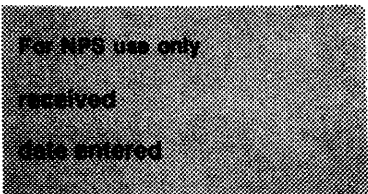
Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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the gallery, with plain, substantial long seats. The front of the gallery is low, so as not to obstruct the view, and is surmounted by an iron railing to prevent accidents.

The frescoing work is that of a master hand. Back of the stage it is elaborate, as indeed it is all over the ceiling. Remembering that the ceiling is sixty feet high, the reader can form some estimate of the vast field of decorated surface back of the stage, extending as it does all the way up....

Standing on the stage the visitor takes in with a sweep of the eye the highly colored frescoing, the seats beneath the balconies in the rear with fronts of iron fret work, painted a light grey, touched with gilt and underneath a stripe of pink, all surmounted by heavy crimson plush; the two tiers of boxes on either side upholstered with crimson silk cotiline and silk trimmings....

The gorgeous chandelier, is the richest one without exception that hangs in any public hall in the state, if not in the country. It hangs 14 feet from the centre of the large ventilator in the ceiling, is 19 feet in height, and has a spread of 13-1/2 feet. It has 260 burners, 100 inside of a reflector and 160 outside; the burners are all of porcelain, lighted instantaneously and with a sudden burst of fire by Bogert's patent electro apparatus. The chandelier is the work of the United States Reflector Company of New York. It contains over 10,000 pieces of the finest crystal glass in prisms and other forms, and cost about \$2,000. It weighs three-fourths of a ton, and is securely supported by a differential twelve-inch pulley, tested to hold two tons' weight, and further by two wrought iron rods, each one inch in diameter, and fastened to one of the main trusses. Ladies who sit underneath this mountain of silver light need, therefore, nurture no fear of having their bonnets ruined by the falling of the chandelier. There is not a particle of gilt or color other than that of glass and silver about it, and it hangs in its lofty position a thing of beauty if not a joy forever. It lights the entire hall perfectly, but under each of the galleries five crystal and gilt brackets of unique design have been placed besides, one at each side of the stage and others in the corridors....

From the first tier of boxes the balcony doors open to a seven foot corridor on each side, and from the gallery doors lead to the third.... During intermissions or during performances, ladies and gentlemen can promenade the corridors, and this fact will make the seats in proximity to the doors especially desirable for young people with affectionate dispositions and a longing for arm-in-arm promenades....

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The stairways are at least six feet wide, and of solid iron--as all the stairways in the building are, excepting those leading above the first corridor. There is almost nothing about the hall that is inflammable, excepting the window sills and casings. The floors of the entrances are tiled, and all the floors underneath the hall rest upon iron beams and brick arches. But even in case of fire there would be no danger. In the south corridor are two fire plugs, with a nozzle and fifty feet of hose to each, and one plug at the north side, while underneath the stages a 1-1/2 inch pipe and 100 feet of garden hose afford abundant protection to solid fire-proof walls and floors... The hall is heated by steam by indirect radiation. There are eight coils of pipe under the floor, besides five in each corridor and others in the hall. These are furnished with steam by two large boilers in the northeast basement. There are four 40" ventilating ducts, and the heating apparatus is made of as much service for ventilation as for anything else. Each of the ducts has a coil of steam pipe at its bottom. In the floor of the hall are registers opening into a sheet from ventilating ducts, which carry the foul air, as it falls to the floor, out into the main ventilating pipes in the four corners of the hall.

The seating capacity of the hall is 1,250. It is sixty feet high, 110 feet deep, and 75 feet wide. The stage is 21 feet deep, and extends across the width of the hall. There are 476 seats in the parquet, 369 in the dress circle, 186 in the balcony, 99 in the gallery and 120 in the boxes.

The chairs are covered with plastique morocco, a new style of covering, quite expensive but very durable. The seats are also of new pattern and are one inch deeper and wider than those in general use. They are very comfortable, and so situated on a rising floor that a full view of the stage can be had from any part of the house.

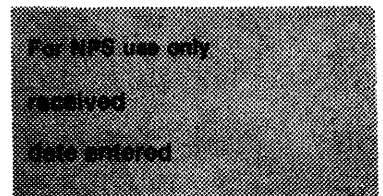
All the iron work of the staircase was designed by the architect, and made from new patterns, which are owned by him. The staircases are of splendid workmanship, and have attracted so much attention that the designs were recently given in a scientific paper. The building cost between \$300,000 and \$400,000.

Some idea of where the money goes in putting up a first-class hall may be derived from the statement that the painting of the Music Hall cost \$4,000, the upholstering and seating \$12,000, the heating apparatus \$7,000, and other little things in proportion.

A feature of the building is its private rooms on either side of the staircases of the main entrance, one for ladies and the other for gentlemen. These are fitted up with lavatories and water closets. Under the stage are five dressing rooms and about a dozen smaller apartments.

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The persons who have done the work on the new hall deserve to be remembered. First of all stands the architect, George B. Post of New York, who made the plans of the Western Union Telegraph Company's building at New York, on the Williamsburg bank and other costly structures. He heard the suggestions of the bank directors, and then made all the elaborate drawings. It is creditable to his judgment that in every minor detail the building is satisfactory, and that even could changes be made at this time there are none that the directors would ask. The iron was from the Architectural Iron Works, New York, the tiling by Mark Dickerman, the mason work by Button & Buckley and the carpenter work by Shannahan & Meeker, who especially deserve praise for the taste and good workmanship exhibited in all that they did. The building committee of the bank under whose direction the work was done was made up as follows: E. Thompson Gale, D. Thomas Vail, C. W. Tillinghast, John B. Pierson, Jared S. Weed and S. M. Vail.<sup>1</sup>

There have been some alterations to the original building:

In 1890, the Troy Savings Bank purchased and installed the existing pipe organ at a cost of \$9,450. The organ came from the residence of William Belden in New York City and was made by Odell in Yonkers, New York. In 1929, the Post architectural firm added safety features to insure fire protection. The original crystal chandelier was removed in 1929 and many of the elaborate frescoes were painted over. The original entrance to the Music Hall from Second Street was gained by cast iron steps, no longer extant.

The banking floor was remodelled in 1948 by Hoggson Brothers Architects. The current program to refurbish the Hall is being done by the Albany firm of Mendel, Mesick, Cohen and Waite, Architects.

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On January 3, 1871, the committee reported that of the five architects submitting designs, all but one had been prepared with "estimated costs far beyond the limits fixed by the Board." The architect was 33-year-old George Browne Post, who was selected as the architect of the new bank building. Construction of the building commenced on July 8, 1871.<sup>2</sup>

Born in New York City into a wealthy New England family, Post graduated from New York University with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1858. That same year he entered the studio of Richard Morris Hunt. He studied with Hunt for two years, learning all the important styles of architecture, as well as the Beaux Arts approach. After a brief partnership with Charles D. Gambrill, Post left architecture for the next four years to serve in the Union Army. The resumed association with Gambrill was succeeded by a partnership with another architect, Mead, formed in 1867, but by 1868 Post was on his own and designing major buildings, including the Equitable Building in New York City. As with any other architects of the time, Post developed an approach to architectural design which was heavily dependent upon the major historic styles while reflecting Beaux-Arts-influenced training. Essentially, however, he was a mechanical innovator, focusing his attention especially on structural developments and combining those with his own modification of contemporary architectural styles. Along these lines, he became popular as an architect of commercial buildings, being renowned for his tall office buildings, as well as for banks and exchanges. His other works range from the Cornelius Vanderbilt II Mansion in New York (1879-82) to the Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. President of the American Institute of Architects from 1896 to 1899, Post was not only immensely prolific but much honored in his lifetime.

Post is best remembered as a pioneer in the development of the modern passenger elevator which allowed for taller and taller buildings. He also employed the use of innovative structural systems that permitted the design of the "skyscraper," a number of which his firm produced in the 1880s and 1890s in New York City. These include the Produce Exchange (1885), the Cotton Exchange (1892), the 15-story Mortimer Building or World Building (1892), and the 25-story St. Paul Tower in 1900. In 1898, the firm was described as one of the two or three largest architectural firms in the United States, employing 70-80 architects and draftsmen.

Post's sons entered in partnership in 1904, after which the firm was known as George B. Post & Sons, Architects. Major commissions begun by the firm before the elder Post died in 1913 included the New York Stock Exchange, the Wisconsin State Capitol, and the Cleveland Trust Co. At the time of Post's death, the firm had begun to establish a specialization in modern hotel planning. The firm continued to design large urban hotels in major United States cities for several decades. The same firm was retained by the Troy Savings Bank in 1929 to carry out modifications to the Music Hall. The original 1871 drawings for the construction of the Troy Savings Bank Building and tracings for the 1929 alterations are now conserved in the collections of the New York Historical Society.



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The Troy Savings Bank and Music Hall Building is a fine example of George B. Post's ability to combine his talent for engineering while designing an exterior "skin" of refined French Renaissance ornament. This is seen in the great Mansard glass roof, which allowed light into the banking room below. The roof is topped by a temple-like attic story with a long cupola across the roof-top. Winston Weisman has suggested that this motif was perhaps inspired by Karl Friedrich von Schinkel in his design for the Berlin Schauspielhaus of 1818-1821 and it became a favorite of Post's during the 1870s. The style of Post's teacher, Richard Morris Hunt, is also evident here. The facade of the Music Hall is divided into three distinct parts articulated by squat piers on the first level; on the second level, the center is opened up with large arched windows separated by coupled columns. The drama of "light and dark" and the rich effects of ornament are enhanced by setting these windows substantially back behind the protruding wall surface, further dramatizing the arcade. This kind of romanticism is also seen in the work of another of Hunt's students, Frank Furness.

As the new Music Hall neared completion, the proud citizens of Troy followed the news in the Troy Daily Times. The April 20, 1875, edition described the Grand Inaugural Concert the evening of the 19th:

Early in the evening a large crowd began to gather across the street from the Music Hall to watch the arrival of the privileged guests and their entrance into the Music Hall. Some sense of the enthrallment the first audience experienced can be felt by reading the following passage, describing the instantaneous illumination of the Hall's huge gas-lit chandelier.

... soon after eight the members of the orchestra began to assemble, and as Thomas stepped upon the stage the electric spark was flashed over the wires, pouring a flood of light from the immense chandelier down upon the scene below with grand effect, and immediately the opening march by Thomas commenced, in which the national air "Hail Columbia," was the burden of the theme.

The programme included selections from Beethoven, Raff, Handel, Liszt, Wagner, Schumann, Sullivan, Strauss and Weber. It was broken midway by an intermission to allow the guests to greet one another and enjoy the fully-lit interior with its rich accountments.<sup>3</sup>

The Troy Savings Bank and Music Hall is currently undergoing a rejuvenation and should retain its place as one of the best performance halls in America.

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Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Mendel, Mesick, Cohen, Waite, Architects. "Development Plan." Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, Troy, New York. 1983. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>University Gallery, University of Delaware. Architecture and Ornament in Late Nineteenth Century America. Edited by Damie Stillman March-April 1981. Newark University of Delaware. p. 40-41.

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Mendel, Mesick, Cohen, Waite, Architects with Douglas Bucher. Development Plan. Troy Savings Bank and Music Hall. Troy, New York. 1983.

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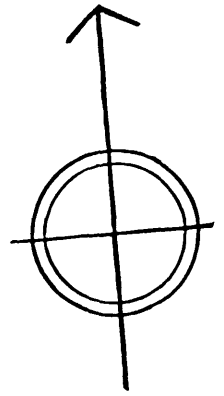
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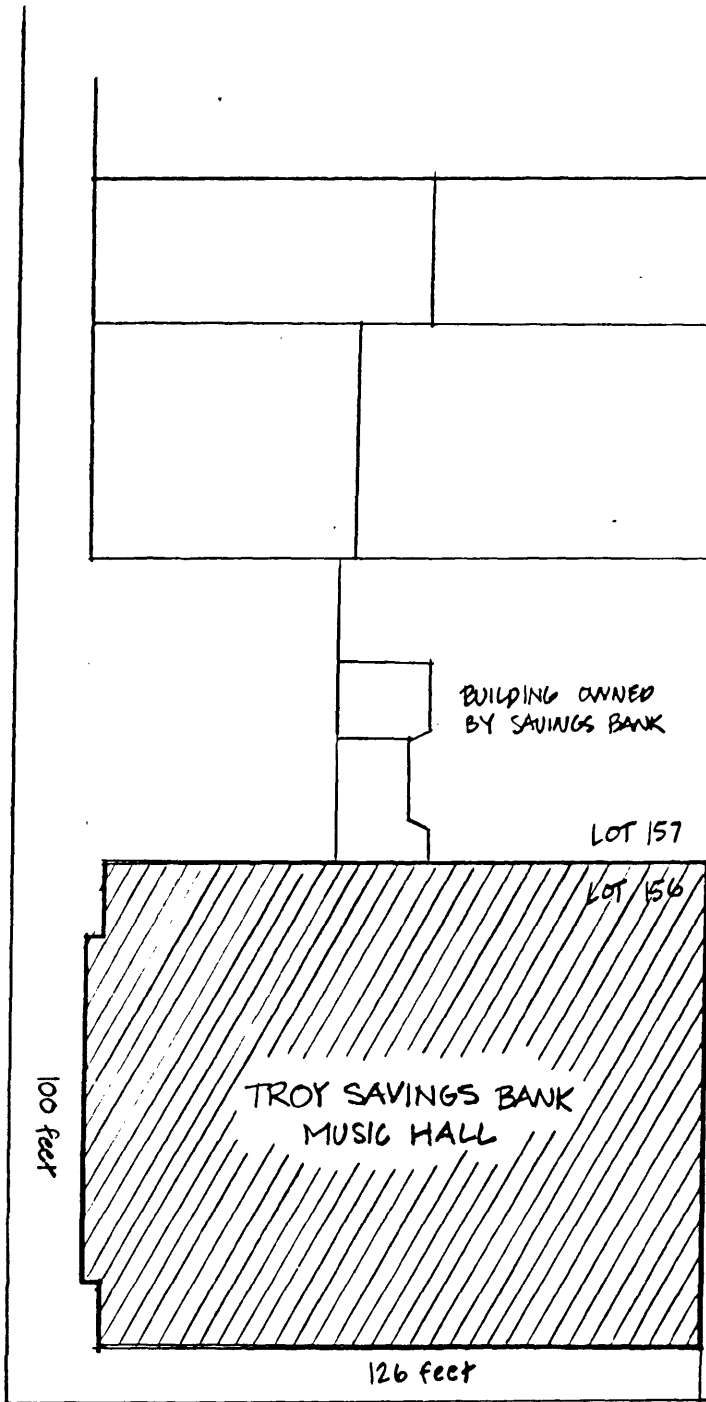
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\_\_\_\_\_. "The Commercial Architecture of George B. Post," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH), XXI (Oct., 1972), 176-203.

NORTH



SECOND STREET

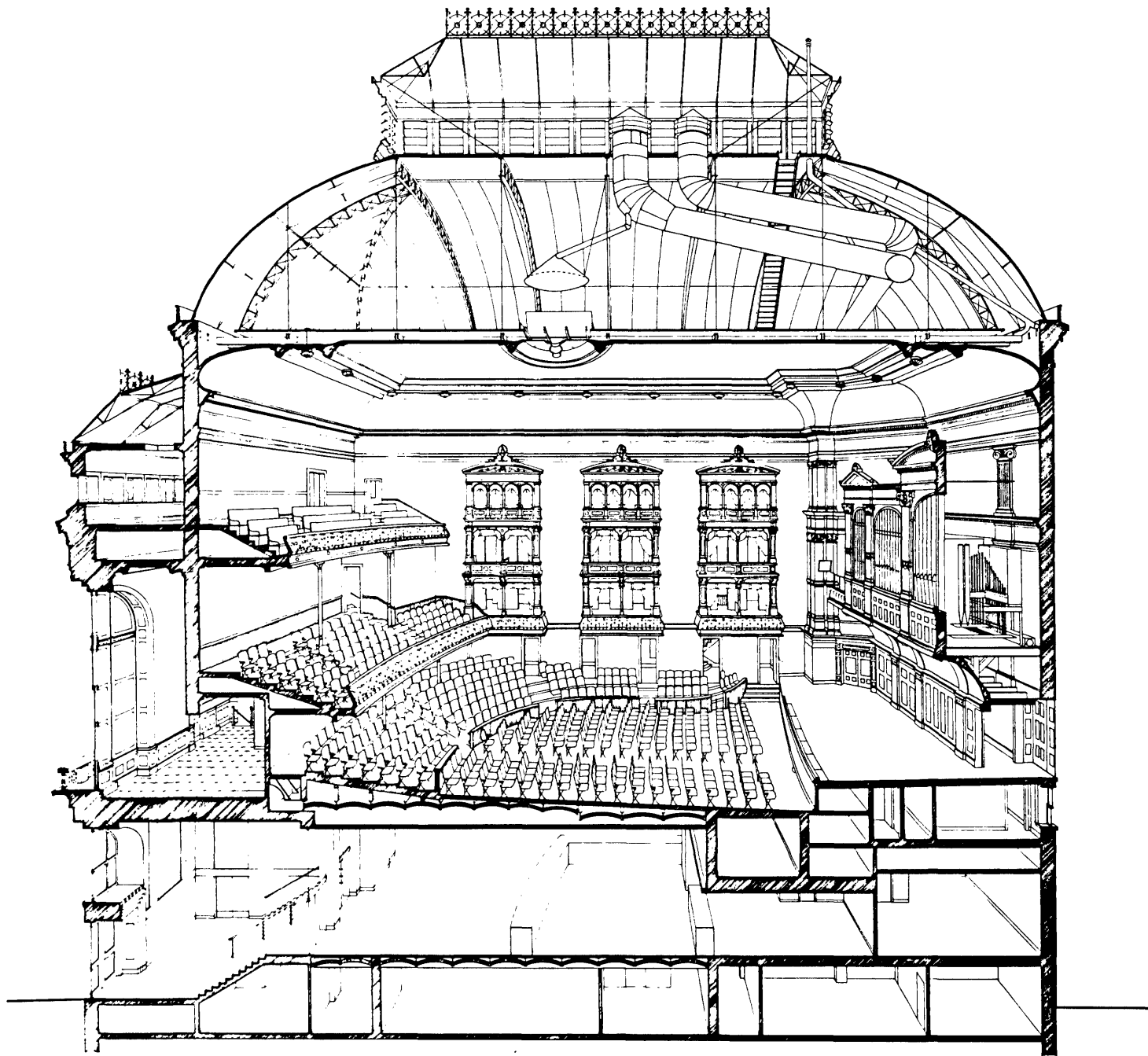


FRANKLIN STREET (ALLEY)

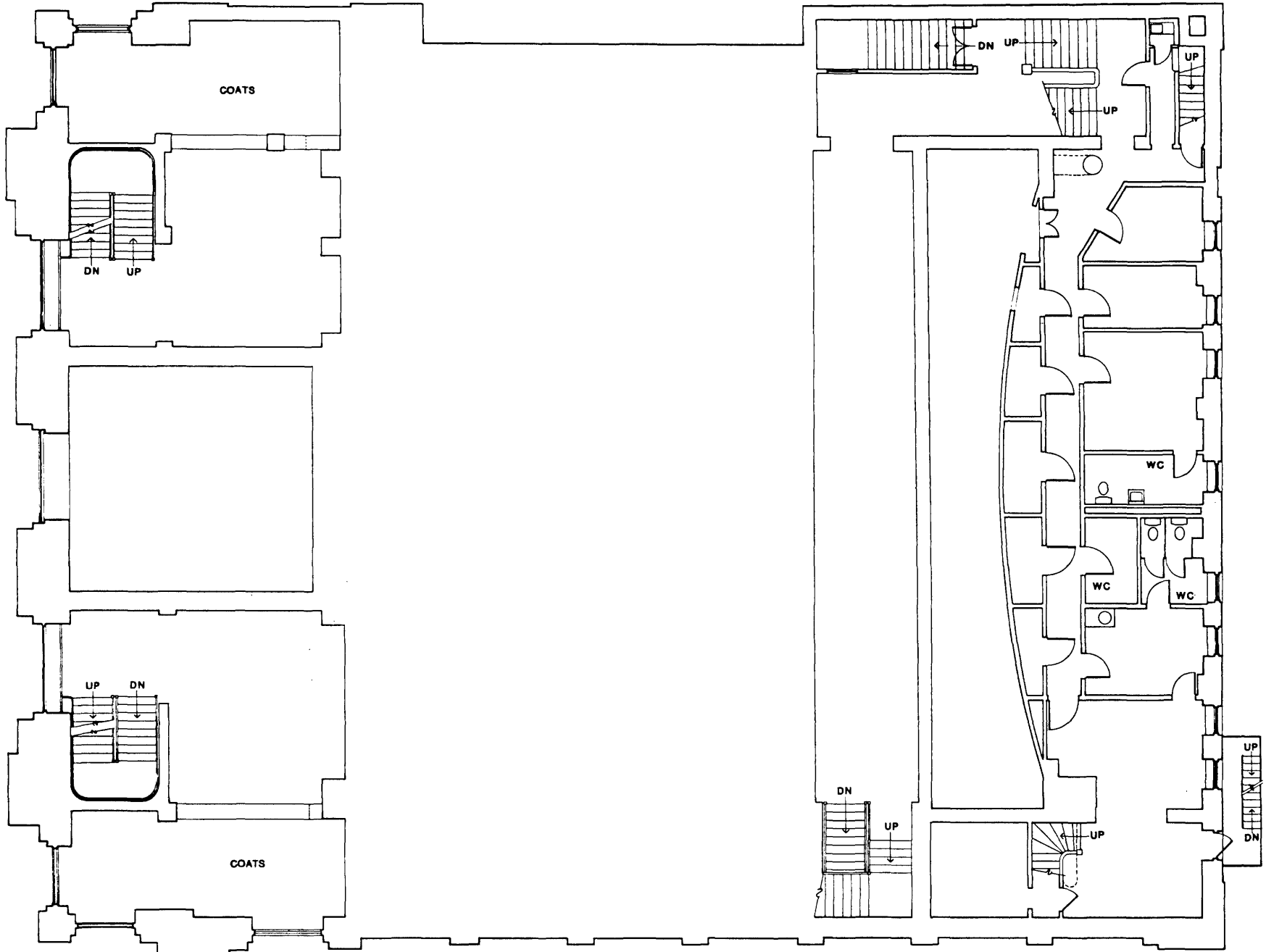
STATE STREET

BANK PARKING LOT

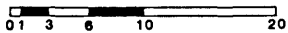
TROY SAVINGS BANK MUSIC HALL - 34-36-38 SECOND ST.

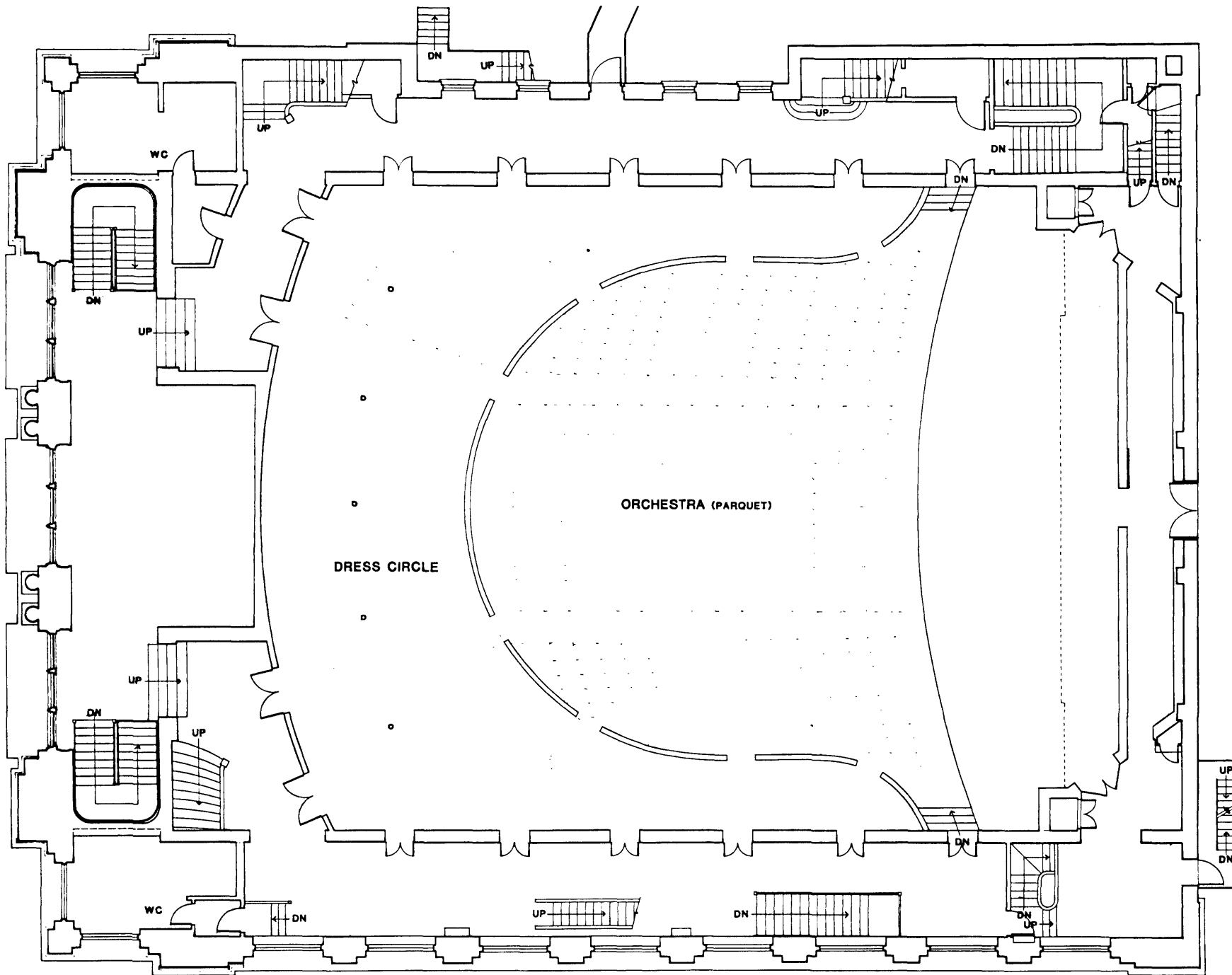


LONGITUDINAL SECTION LOOKING NORTH

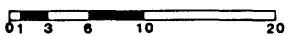


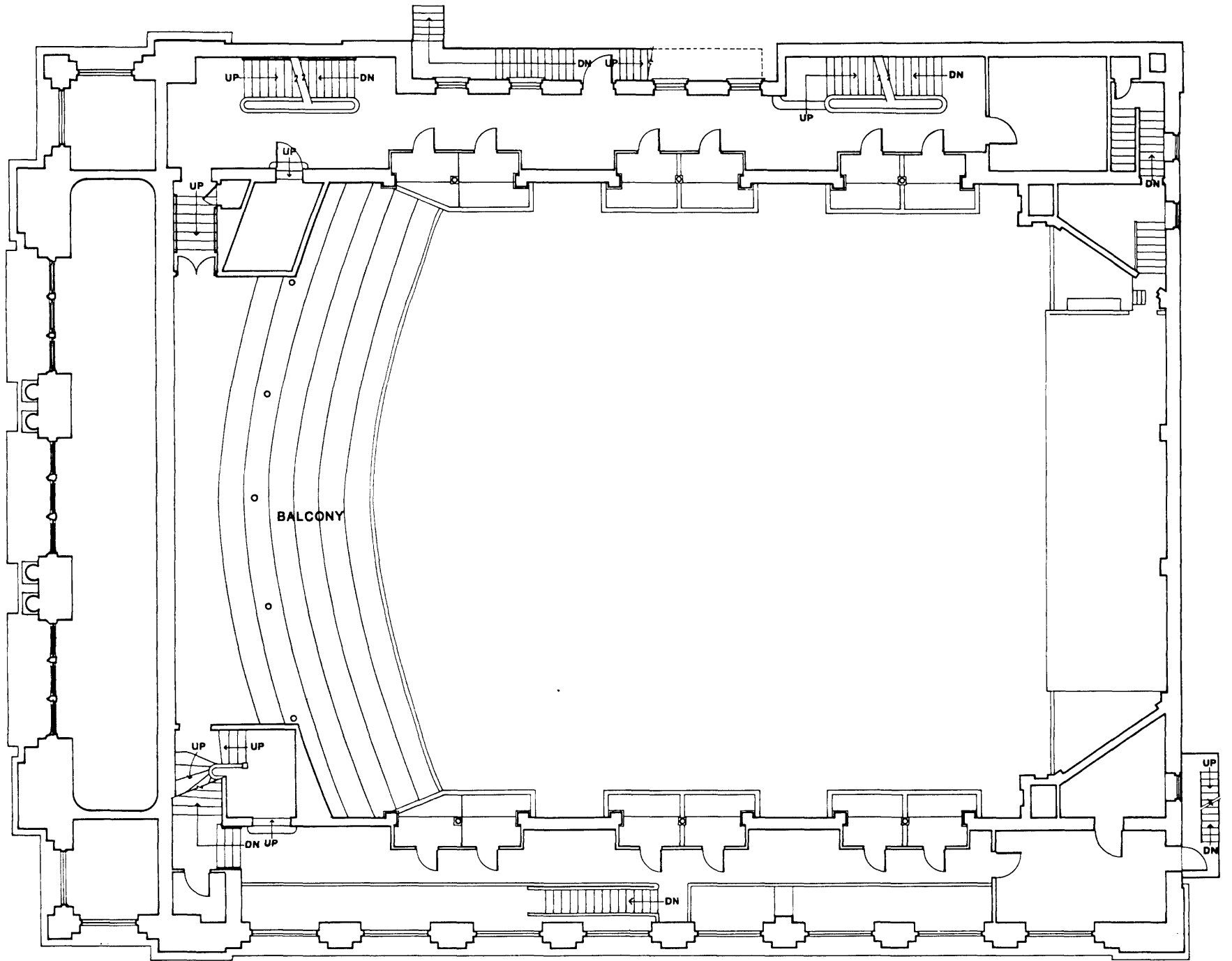
MEZZANINE FLOOR



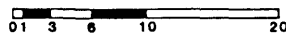


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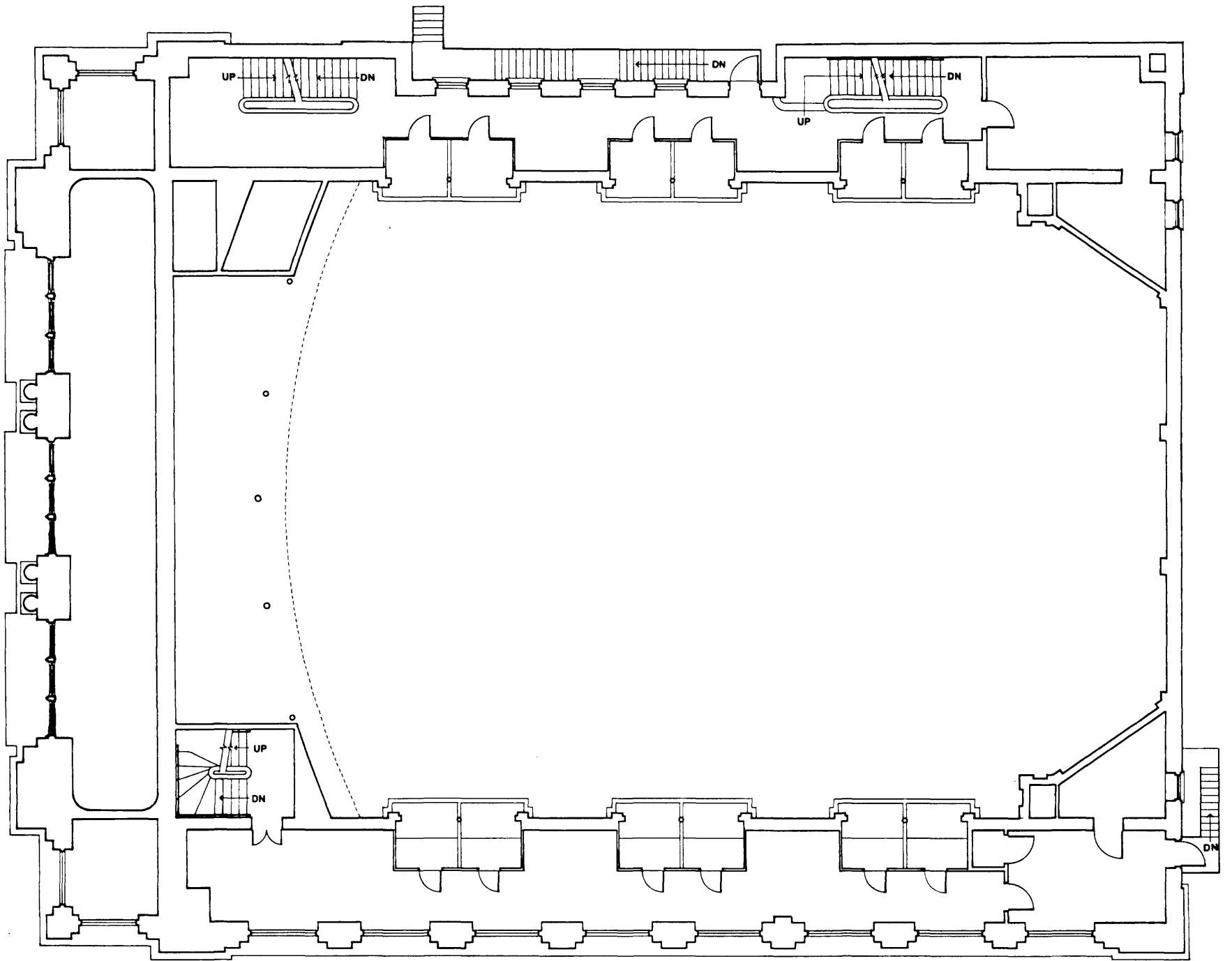




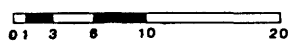
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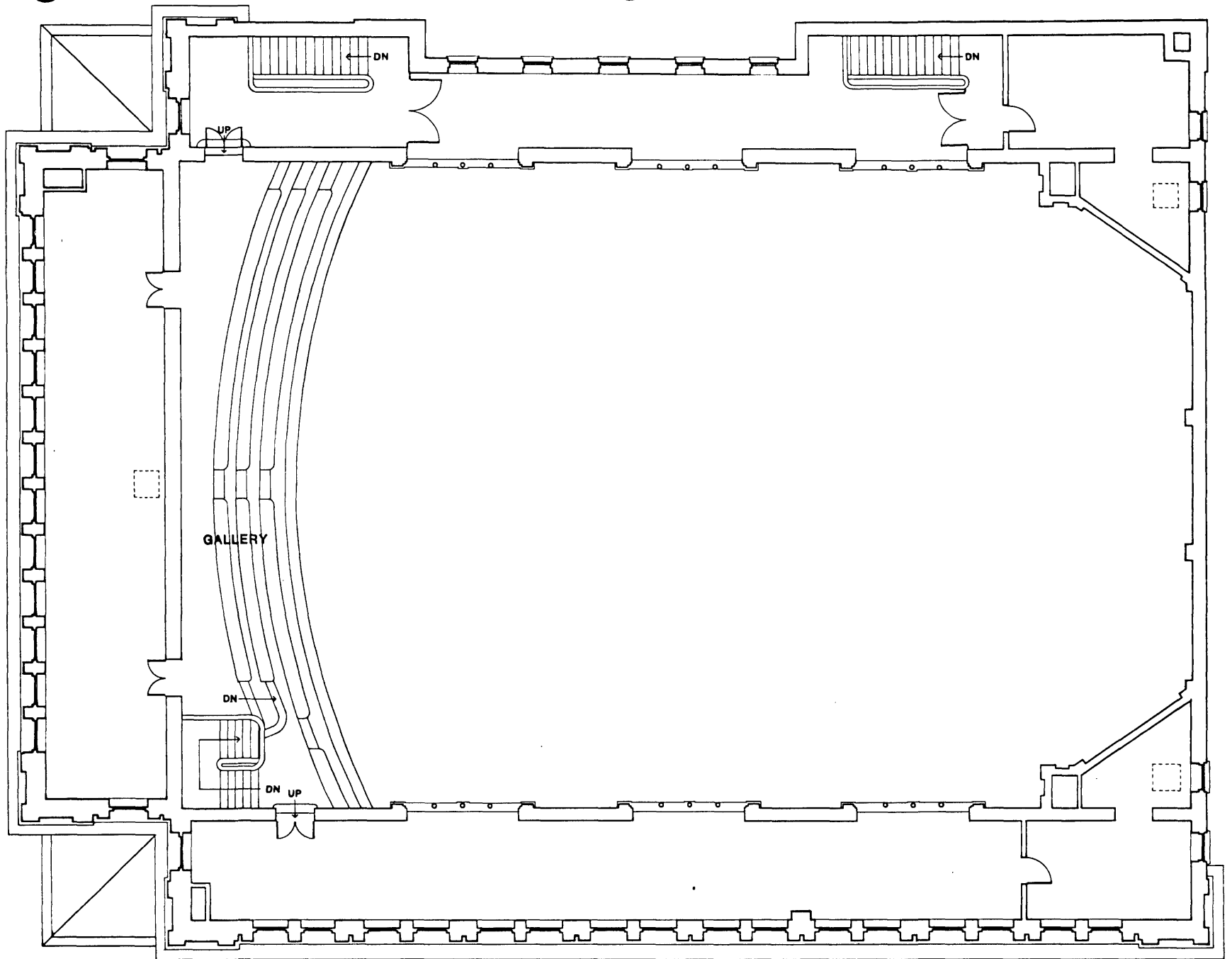






FOURTH FLOOR





FIFTH FLOOR

