

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

ORCHESTRA HALL

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: ORCHESTRA HALL

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 220 South Michigan Avenue

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Chicago

Vicinity: N/A

State: IL

County: Cook

Code: 031

Zip Code: 60604

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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 Keeper

Date of Action

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Recreation & Culture	Sub:	Music Facility
Current:	Recreation & Culture	Sub:	Music Facility

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals
(Colonial Revival)

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Limestone
Walls: Brick, Limestone
Roof:
Other:

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B X C D

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

NHL Criteria: 1, 2

NHL Theme(s): XXII: Music
 J. Forums (Halls and Auditoriums)

Areas of Significance: Performing Arts

Period(s) of Significance: 1904-1942

Significant Dates: 1904, 1905, 1907

Significant Person(s): Theodore Thomas
 Frederick Stock

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Daniel H. Burnham & Co. (original concert hall)
 Howard Van Doren Shaw (club addition, 1907-08)

ORCHESTRA HALL**Page 12**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**Primary Sources:**

The chief repository of documents on Orchestra Hall and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Archives, founded in 1990 during the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's centennial. The collection includes all audio-visual materials, programs, photographs, and institutional records documenting the activities of the CSO and other events held at Orchestra Hall, along with architectural documentation on the construction and alterations of Orchestra Hall. Of particular interest is "Orchestra Hall: A Chronicle of Its Architecture and Acoustics" prepared for the Orchestral Association by the architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, October 1980.

The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, houses the Theodore Thomas papers, and a wide range of secondary sources in music history and theory.

The Art Institute of Chicago houses the Daniel H. Burnham papers which include correspondence between Burnham and Theodore Thomas, Rose Fay Thomas, and Frederick Stock. Of particular interest is microfilm roll #20 "D.H. Burnham and Co., Orchestra Hall, 1905."

Secondary Sources:

Beranek, Leo L. *Music, Acoustics and Architecture*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962.

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Hines, Thomas S. *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Hitchcock, H. Wiley. *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988.

"Home of Symphony to Mark 50th Year—Jubilee for Orchestra Hall." Art Institute of Chicago: Scrapbook of Art & Artist of Chicago, 1954.

ORCHESTRA HALL**Page 14**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository): Chicago Symphony Orchestra Archives
 Newberry Library, Chicago
 Art Institute of Chicago

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than one (1) acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
A 16 448160 4636280**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The nominated property is identified with the city of Chicago Index Number 17-15-105-014.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary is that which has historically been associated with the property. Chicago identifies each parcel with an Index Number for the purpose of tax identification. The Index number is the most accurate way to identify a single structure within the city boundaries.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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 Historian James H. Charleton of the National Park Service

Telephone: 202/343-3793

Date: January 5, 1994

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 4

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**DESCRIPTION OF SITE:¹**

Constructed in 1904-05 to the specifications of architect Daniel H. Burnham, Orchestra Hall consists of an auditorium seating 2600, a ballroom, and some office space. The facade fronts on Michigan Avenue and Lake Michigan in Chicago, and is of Georgian Revival design.

The ground floor has three major limestone portals leading to a vestibule containing ticket offices, to the west of which is the main lobby leading to the auditorium. The second floor exterior has three two-story arched windows surmounted by Georgian fanlights that light the second floor ballroom. On either side of this row of windows is a smaller window capped by a classical pediment. This level has limestone quoins, window surrounds, and arched spandrels. Above the second level, a projecting limestone band inscribed with the names of five composers (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Wagner) separates the three-story base from the next four floors. These four floors have simple double hung windows whose lower lights are single paned and the upper ones have two-by-four patterns of small panes. This portion is all brick except for limestone quoins and flat window arches. Above these four floors is an elaborately treated limestone top floor which acts as an entablature for the entire building. Its double hung windows, smaller than their mates below, are placed at the frieze level, with brick only in the spaces between the windows. Below, a string course acts as an architrave. A classical cornice terminates the building and is surrounded by a limestone balustrade. To the south is a narrow section only one window wide, more simply treated than the rest of the facade.

The Michigan Avenue frontage of Orchestra Hall rises a full nine stories. Above the fourth floor, the building is only one office space deep to either side of a hall paralleling the street facade along Michigan Avenue. The auditorium space behind this "office tower" is only four stories high but extends back the entire depth of the lot.

The auditorium spreads back fan-like from a stage that thrusts outward slightly. The graceful curve of the stage's back complements the curves of the seating rows, balconies, and boxes. There are four levels of seating: the main level, a string of boxes entered from the second floor, a lower and upper balcony, and finally a gallery. There is no proscenium to separate the hall from the stage, rather a series of arches draw the stage and the hall together. The hall's decoration is simple, including Georgian wreaths and mouldings in the hall, and three great arched openings housing organ pipes at the back of the stage.

The second floor ballroom is a two-story space at the front of the building, facing Michigan Avenue. This room is used for receptions and small chamber concerts.

¹ The information for this section draws on the following sources: "Orchestra Hall: A Chronicle of its Architecture and Acoustics," prepared for the Orchestral Association by the architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; Leo L. Beranek, *Music, Acoustics and Architecture* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1962), 117-22; "Orchestra Hall," preliminary summary of information prepared by the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks, June 7, 1976; National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, prepared by Carroll William Westfall, Landmarks Preservation Council, Chicago, May 6, 1977.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 5

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

In 1907-08, Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw designed a ninth floor addition to house the Cliff Dwellers Club. The barrel-vaulted room runs the full length of the building but is set back from the balustrade to provide a terrace overlooking Michigan Avenue.

Orchestra Hall has undergone a number of renovations since 1904, most of which were to improve the acoustical qualities of the concert hall. The size of the hall is considered small given the audience capacity, and acoustical problems have been attributed to the configuration of the stage shell. The hall was modified four times, each alteration affecting the acoustical quality.

In 1905, the first major alteration to Orchestra Hall occurred. Lockers located behind the stage were removed, and the rear wall was moved back about three feet. A curtain was hung behind chorus seats and organ bays, much plaster ornament was removed from the shell and wire mesh infill material was replaced with painted flannel and canvas. Furthermore, the panels between the organ bays were made smaller, covered in painted canvas highlighted with gold trim. Also, the balcony's right and left aisles were straightened so as to lead directly to the tunnel exits. In 1911-12, the original hard back seats in the auditorium were replaced with upholstered seats. In 1929, the canvas infill of the shell was replaced with acoustical plaster.

Extensive renovations were conducted again in 1966 in order to improve on-stage hearing for the orchestra, incorporate a full range sound system, and control the noise of a new air conditioning system. As a result, a new perforated metal ceiling was installed, the stage was lowered one foot and the depth increased by three feet, and the seats were reupholstered. In 1967, gypsum board was placed over the shell from above and behind, thus hardening it and improving sound quality.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 7

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**SUMMARY**

Chicago, often characterized as Carl Sandburg's "Hog Butcher to the World" or "City of the Big Shoulders," became a city with well merited national and international reputations in the arts, architecture, literature, and science within barely 20 years of the disastrous 1871 fire that leveled much of the city. Among the cultural institutions that were part and parcel of this extraordinary cultural flowering was the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

During its first half century, under the leadership of only two conductors, both of major repute—Theodore Thomas (1891-1905) and Frederick August Stock (1905-18; 1919-42), the orchestra assumed and held a premier place in American music.¹ Since the 1940s, particularly under Fritz Reiner and George Solti, it has remained among the very first rank in the Nation. Orchestra Hall has been the Symphony's home since its construction in 1904-05 from a design by one of Chicago's and the Nation's major architects, Daniel Burnham.

Theodore Thomas and Walter Damrosch are often described as epic cultural figures, the most eminent conductors—and bitter competitors—of the late 19th century.² Both were in the first rank of the New York City musical world in the 1880s. Thomas also traveled extensively and had organized the Cincinnati music festivals that placed that city on the musical map. (These festivals took place in the Cincinnati Music Hall, a National Historic Landmark.) Thomas' efforts reached a low ebb in the late 1880s and he disbanded his personal orchestra in 1888. In 1891 he was invited to Chicago to head the new symphony orchestra. He quickly put the city on the musical map and by the early years of the new century was looking toward the erection of a permanent home for the orchestra. Thomas' friend, the nationally renowned architect Daniel Burnham, would oblige with the design.

Although not commonly regarded as significant in the history of architecture or as outstanding among Burnham's works, Orchestra Hall had intimate connections with him. Burnham was an ardent lifelong supporter of the orchestra and raised funds for construction of the hall, as well as donating his services.³

Thomas died only a few weeks after the hall opened in 1905. Frederick August Stock—like Thomas a German immigrant—stepped into his maestro's shoes on a temporary basis in 1905 when he was a mere 32 years old and was soon confirmed as permanent conductor. During his long tenure, the Orchestra won praise both for the quality of its performances and the

¹ This summary discussion of the careers of Thomas and Stock is based on the sketches of their careers in John Tasker Howard, "Christian Friedrich Theodore Thomas," *Dictionary of American Biography* 18: 424-426, and Dana J. Epstein, "Frederick August Stock," *Dictionary of American Biography Supplement* 3: 740-742.

² Gilbert Chase, *America's Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 623.

³ Thomas S. Hines, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 227-230.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 8

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

diversity of its repertoire. Stock also experimented; he staged a Mahler festival in 1917 and performed Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* long before it was played in New York.⁴

Both Thomas and Stock were great popularizers of orchestral music whose influence was particularly great in the Midwest and South. In addition to the high quality of their performances, their work can be said to have played an important role in making classical and symphonic music available to and influential on a far broader spectrum of the American population than would otherwise ever have experienced it. Orchestra Hall, which Thomas "built," and where Stock long reigned, is an historical monument to the role of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, its great conductors, and history of American music—and a testimony to the role of the city of Chicago in American cultural history.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In the period between 1860 and 1920, institutional foundations of music were organized. This period saw the establishment of music conservatories, the addition of music to the curriculum in schools and universities, and the building of major concert halls across the country. These concert halls were built as a result of private fundraising and included the Philadelphia Academy of Music (1857), Cincinnati's Music Hall (1878), the Auditorium in Chicago (1889), and Carnegie Hall (1891) and the Metropolitan Opera House (1882), both in New York City. New York City quickly emerged as the performance center due to its large population and audience support; the first permanent orchestra had been established in that city in 1842.

Chicago's cultural institutions were firmly established in the late nineteenth century, around the time of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Prior to 1893, professional and amateur artists performed in Chicago; the Musical Union, an amateur singing society, gave its first concert in 1857 and the city's first semi-professional orchestra, the Philharmonic Society, was founded in 1850.

Conductor Theodore Thomas first visited Chicago in 1869 with his newly formed Theodore Thomas Orchestra. Based in New York City, this musical troupe spent most of the year travelling. They visited Chicago frequently, performing at various halls and were always well received. In 1877 the Thomas Orchestra began a series of Summer Night Concerts at the Exposition Building on the lakefront. This series continued until 1891, when Thomas was offered a permanent orchestra in Chicago.

Theodore Thomas had absolute control over the new Chicago based orchestra; he had the right to create all musical programs without regard to box office receipts. The orchestra consisted of eighty-six men, forty-three of whom were Chicagoans. They performed twenty weeks each year, on Friday afternoons and Saturday evenings, in the new Auditorium building. The business affairs were handled by the Orchestral Association, formed to provide \$50,000 each year for the first three years in order to guarantee against box office losses. Thomas' new orchestra premiered October 16 and 17, 1891, performing works by Wagner, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Dvorak to a full house.

⁴ Epstein, *op. cit.*, p. 741.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

In 1893, Thomas was selected as the Director of the Bureau of Music of the World's Columbian Exposition. He persuaded a number of prominent musicians such as Anton Dvorak and Ignacy Jan Paderewski to appear with the Exposition Orchestra (the Chicago Orchestra augmented by 30 musicians). Unfortunately, after three months of poorly attended concerts, disagreements between Thomas and the fair's committee members led him to resign and the remaining concerts were conducted by concertmaster Max Bendix.

Nevertheless, Chicagoans continued to support Thomas' orchestra. By the 1896-97 season, Thomas felt they needed a smaller, more permanent concert hall. Sharing the Auditorium with others proved to be difficult when conflicts in engagement dates occurred. Furthermore, the orchestra rarely filled the large 4,500 seat Auditorium, and empty seats resulted in deficits and low morale.

At this time, the Orchestral Association was experiencing financial problems and was unable to support a new hall. By 1902, however, the Association's trustees concluded that a move to a smaller hall was the only solution to continuing financial difficulties. Bryan Lathrop, President of the Association, placed a deposit on property at 220 South Michigan Avenue and notified the Chicago newspapers that the Orchestra would be disbanded unless \$750,000 was raised for the construction of a new hall. Architect Daniel Hudson Burnham donated his time to design Orchestra Hall according to Theodore Thomas' specifications and construction began in May of 1904.

On December 14, 1904 the first concert in the new Orchestra Hall took place. Theodore Thomas conducted, and the program included works by Wagner, Strauss's "Death and Transfiguration," Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, and the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah." Thomas died less than a month after the inaugural concert, on January 4, 1905. As a result of his hard work in establishing a permanent orchestra in Chicago, the Orchestral Association renamed the orchestra the Theodore Thomas Orchestra.

Following Thomas' death, violinist Frederick Stock moved into the position of conductor. A member of the viola section since 1895-96, he occasionally aided Thomas by conducting out of town concerts and had been officially appointed Assistant Conductor by Thomas in 1899. With Thomas' death, the Orchestral Association was in chaos; Thomas had not only conducted the musicians, he also arranged tours and provided inspiration for the orchestra. The orchestra needed a strong personality in order to continue.

Stock was appointed acting conductor while The Orchestral Association searched for a suitable candidate. Various conductors were approached but none would accept the post. Meanwhile, Stock had become very popular with subscribers and the trustees voted to name Stock as Thomas's permanent successor in April of 1905, resulting in a unique instance of a conductor being chosen from the ranks of the orchestra.

The Theodore Thomas Orchestra continued its popularity under Stock. By 1909, Friday concerts were completely sold out, and other performances had good attendance. Stock frequently programmed works by Weber, Dvorak, Liszt, and Strauss, appealing to audience preferences. He also introduced the works of many contemporary composers to Chicago, including Schoenberg, Scriabin, Prokofiev, and Mahler. American composers in particular

ORCHESTRA HALL**Page 10**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

were championed by Stock who programmed no less than 321 works by 112 different "native and resident" composers during his tenure.

Stock led the Orchestra in a summer concert series at Ravinia Park, located 25 miles north of Chicago in Highland Park, beginning in 1906. Since the formation of the Ravinia Festival in 1936, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra has performed annually as the resident orchestra. In 1913, the name of the Theodore Thomas Orchestra was changed to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Also at that time, the Orchestra began a popular concert series, performing works such as Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite," and other favored Wagner and Strauss works. By the 25th anniversary of the Orchestra in 1916, fifteen musicians had been members 25 years. Frederick Stock composed "Festival Prologue" especially for the silver anniversary celebration.

Following World War I, Stock began a series of Youth Concerts in order to educate young Chicagoans. He also organized the Civic Orchestra which served as a professional training orchestra. It opened with 54 students who studied using the scores of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The 1940-41 season marked the 50th anniversary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Stock commissioned several works in celebration, including Stravinsky's "Symphony in C," Roy Harris's "American Creed," Milhaud's "Symphony No. 1," Kodaly's "Concerto for Orchestra," Gliere's overture "Fete Ferghanaise," Casella's "Symphony No. 3," and Walton's "Scapino Overture." This season also marked Stock's 35th year as conductor. He died unexpectedly the following year, on October 20, 1942.

The Cliff Dwellers Club is housed in the ninth floor of Orchestra Hall. Founded in 1907 as an arts club by Chicago novelist Hamlin Garland and sculptor Lorado Taft and their friends Charles Francis Browne and Ralph Clarkson, it served as a meeting place for practicing artists. The name is from the novel *The Cliff Dwellers* by Chicagoan Henry B. Fuller. Prominent members included architects Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan and Dwight Perkins, writer George Ade, and conductor Frederick Stock. The Cliff Dwellers hosted informal concerts by members, and was visited by guest artists performing at Orchestra Hall.

Orchestra Hall has been host for an incredible variety of performances and presentations since its dedication in 1904. During the first 50 years, Orchestra Hall was the regular home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as well as the Apollo Musical Club, the Mendelssohn Club of Chicago, the Chicago Business Men's Symphony, the Commonwealth Edison Orchestra, and the Marshall Field Choral Society. Mayors Harold Washington and Richard M. Daley, Jr., were both inaugurated during ceremonies held at Orchestra Hall. In addition, the hall has hosted countless travel lectures, movies, commencement ceremonies, religious services, visiting orchestras from all over the world, and other performing groups including choirs and dance companies.

The Allied Arts series, which began in 1928, has brought to Orchestra Hall the most celebrated solo performers in the world. These artists have included Vladimir Horowitz, Myra Hess, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Jascha Heifetz, Fritz Kreisler, Jacqueline du Pre, Leontyne Price, Beverly Sills, Robert Merrill, Jussi Bjoerling, Rosa Ponselle, Marian Anderson, Kirsten Flagstad, John McCormack, Benny Goodman, and Andres Segovia.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Daniel Barenboim, the current Music Director, made his Orchestra Hall piano recital debut in an Allied Arts concert at the age of 15 in January of 1958.

Many composers have appeared as guest conductors and/or soloists with the orchestra, including Richard Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev, Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, and Leonard Bernstein.

Between 1943 and 1953, Desire Defauw, Artur Rodzinski, and Rafael Kubelik prepared the way for Fritz Reiner, whose passion for perfection established the modern-day Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 1957 Reiner invited Margaret Hillis to establish the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the first chorus affiliated with an American orchestra. This vocal ensemble has participated in 11 of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's 46 Grammy winning recordings.

Since 1943, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra has continued its practice of performing the world premieres of music by American composers, including Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, William Grant Still, Roy Harris, George Crumb, Jacob Druckman, David Del Tredici, Morton Gould, and John Corigliano.

In 1969, following the tenure of Music Director Jean Martinon, Sir Georg Solti became the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's eighth Music Director. The Orchestra's current preeminence is due in large measure to Solti, who, through tours and records, showed the world what Chicagoans had known all along: that there was an extraordinary orchestra in America's heartland. Maestro Solti has won 31 Grammy Awards (24 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra)—more than any other recording artist in any musical category. The Solti/Chicago Symphony Orchestra combination has sold more than 5 million records. On December 5, 1993, president Clinton bestowed the Kennedy Center Honor on Sir Georg Solti in recognition of his contribution to the arts in America. At the close of the 1990-91 season—the Orchestra's centennial season—Maestro Solti passed his baton to Daniel Barenboim, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's ninth Music Director. Maestro Barenboim has earned a world-wide reputation as both a pianist and conductor.

ORCHESTRA HALL**Page 13**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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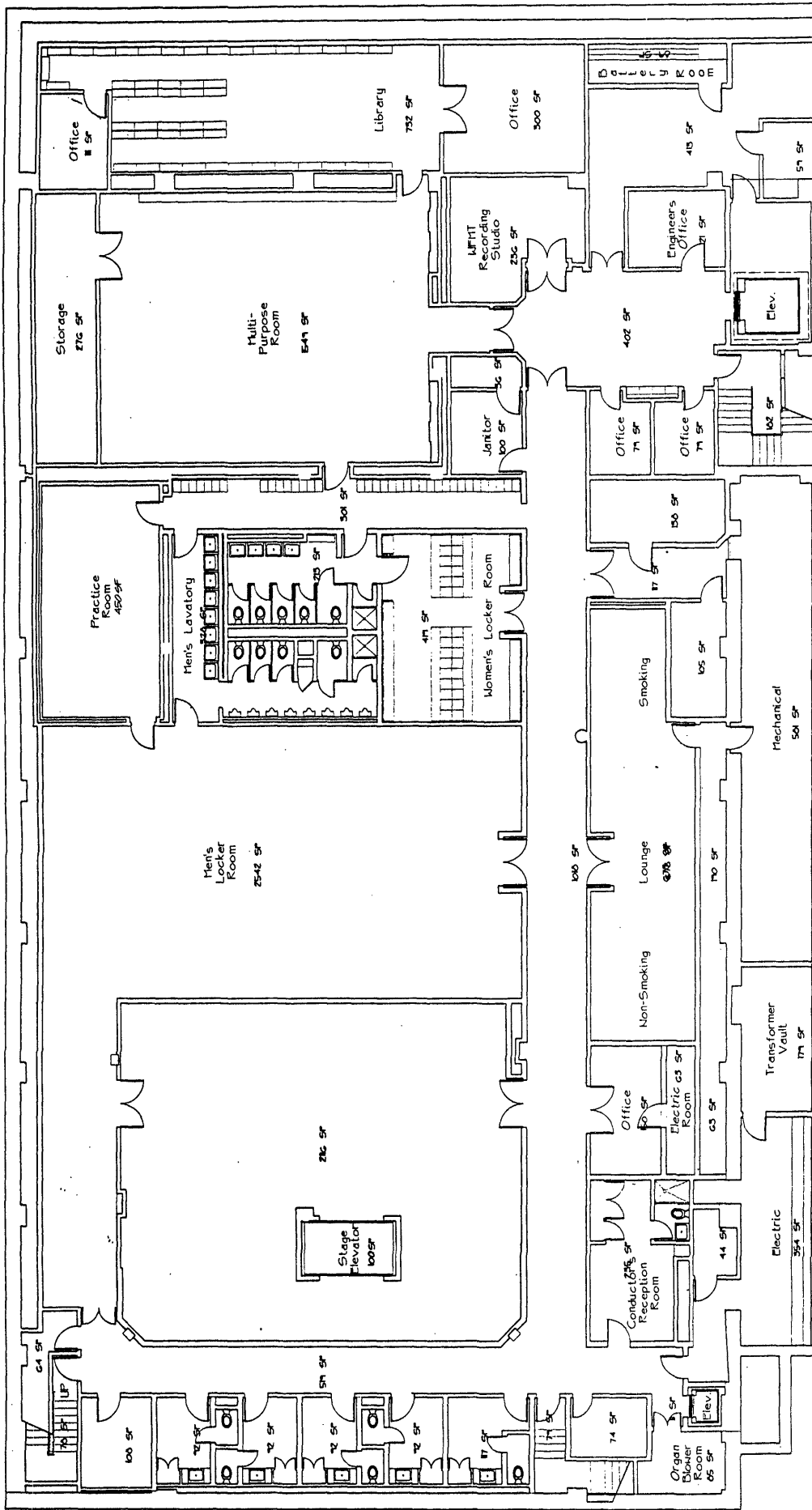
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Sturgis, Russell. "The New Thomas Music Hall." *Architectural Record* 16 (August 1904).

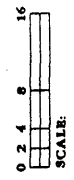
Sullivan, Louis H. *The Autobiography of an Idea*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1956.

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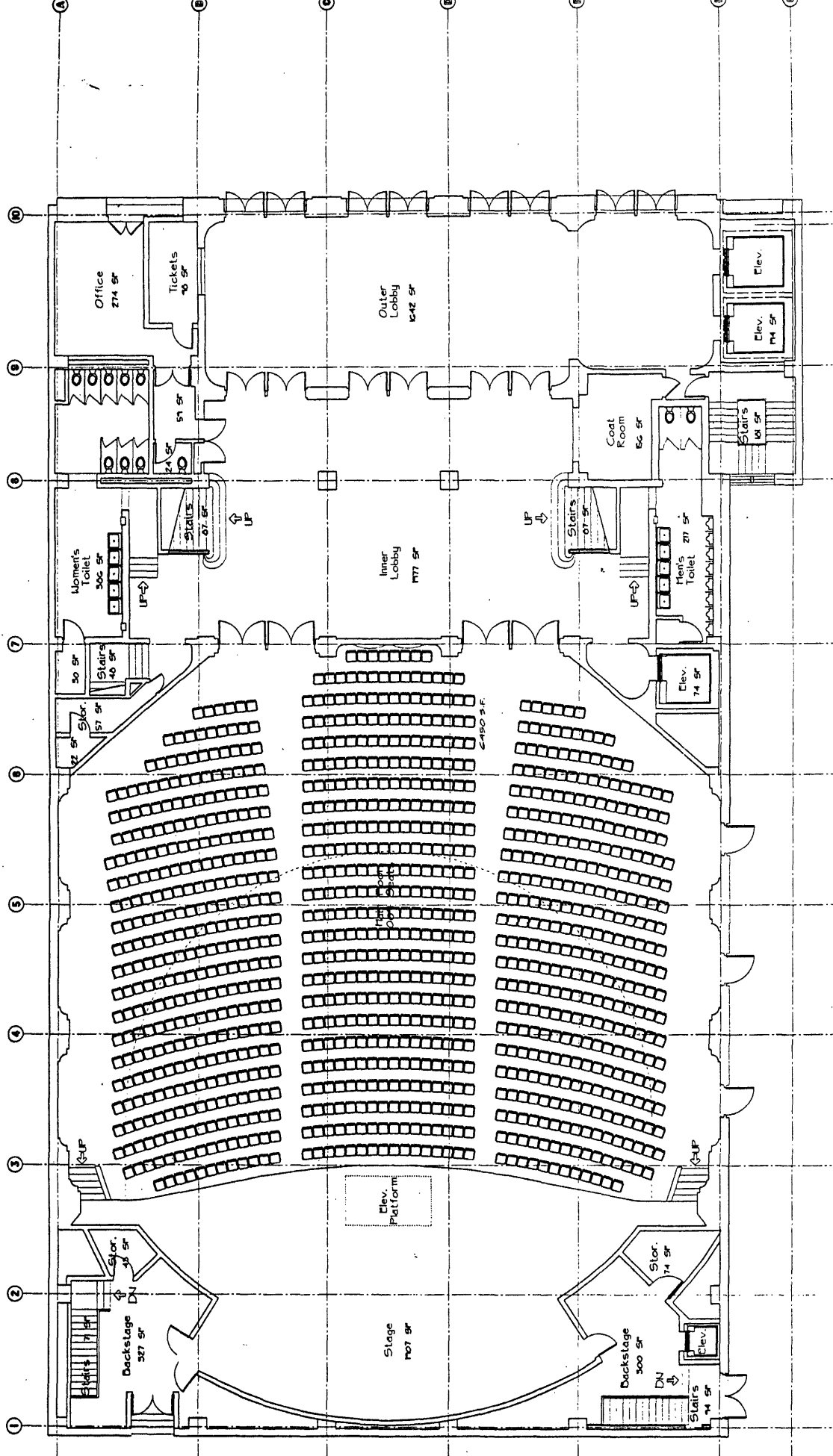
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- Previously Listed in the National Register. [PART OF HISTORIC DISTRICT]
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #



Basement Floor Plan

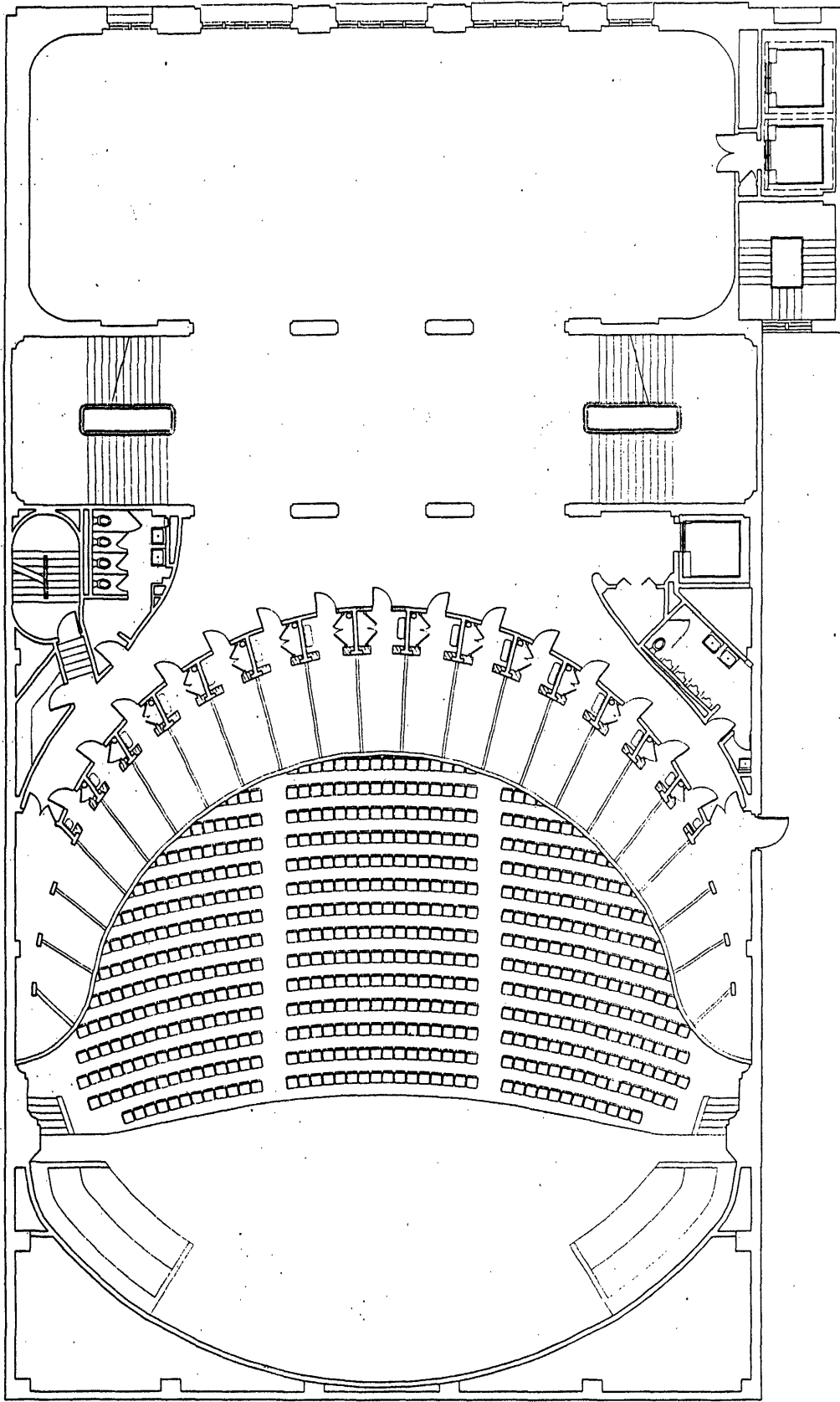


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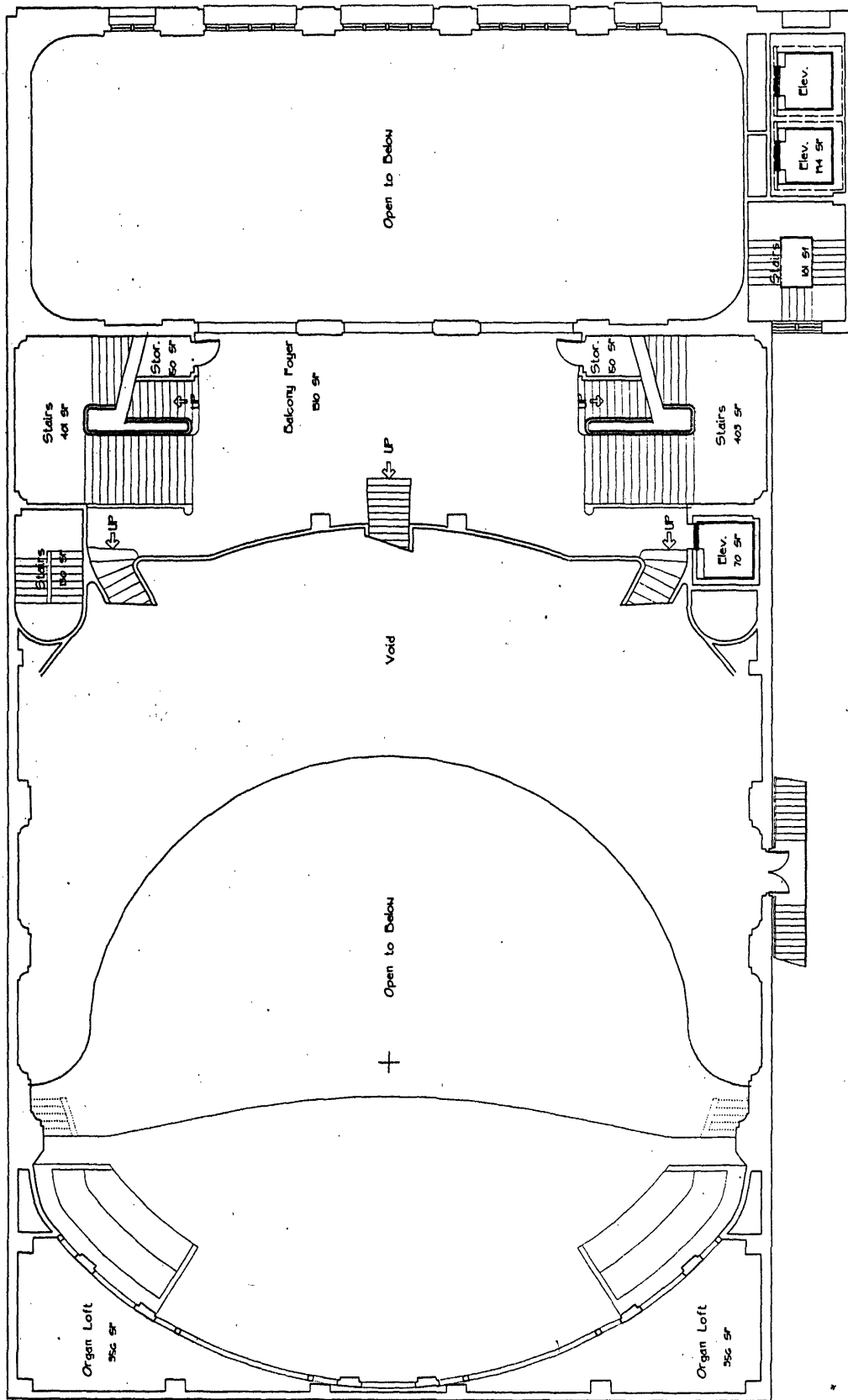
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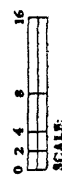


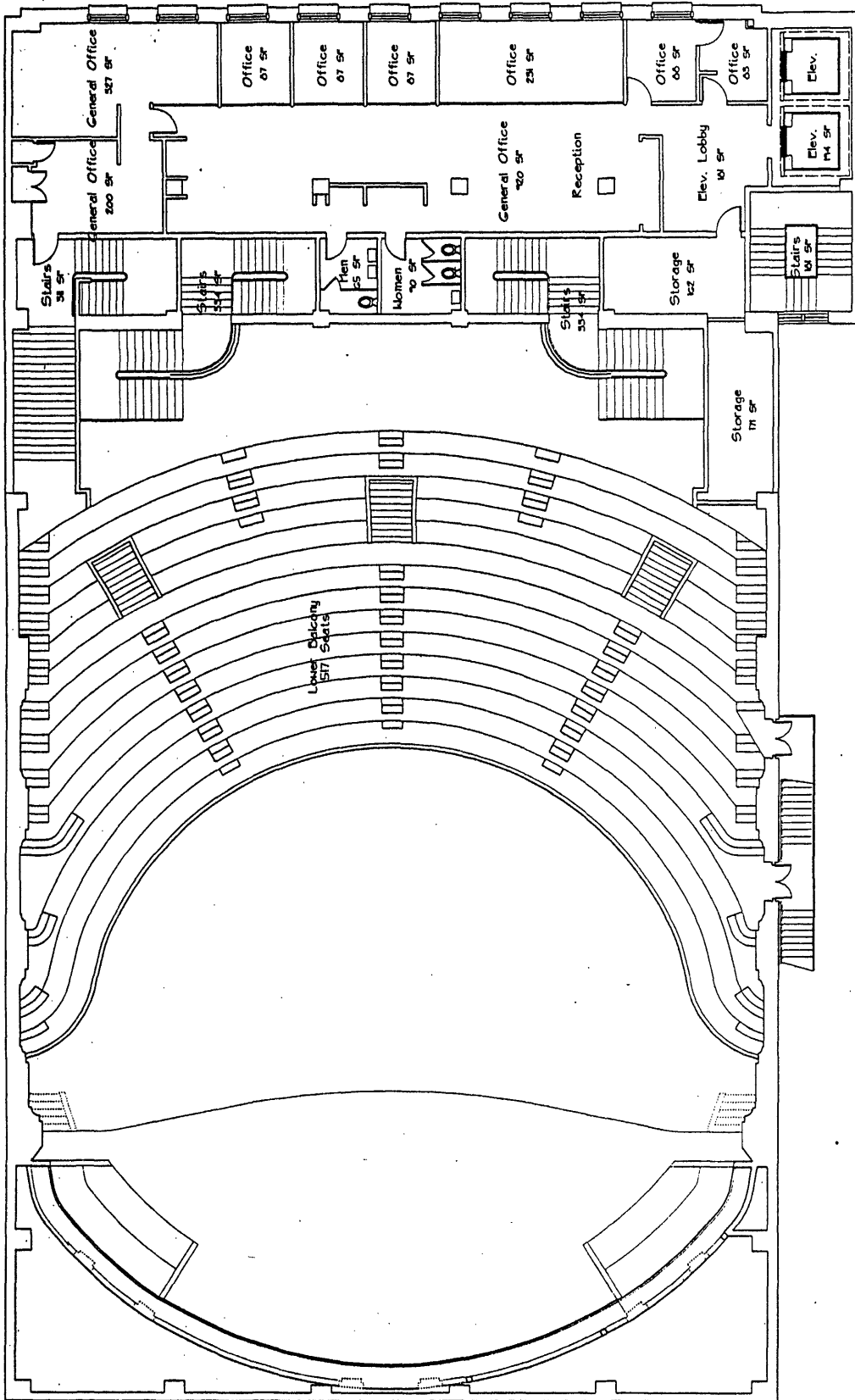
Second Floor Plan

1 2 4 8 16
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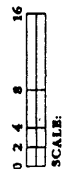


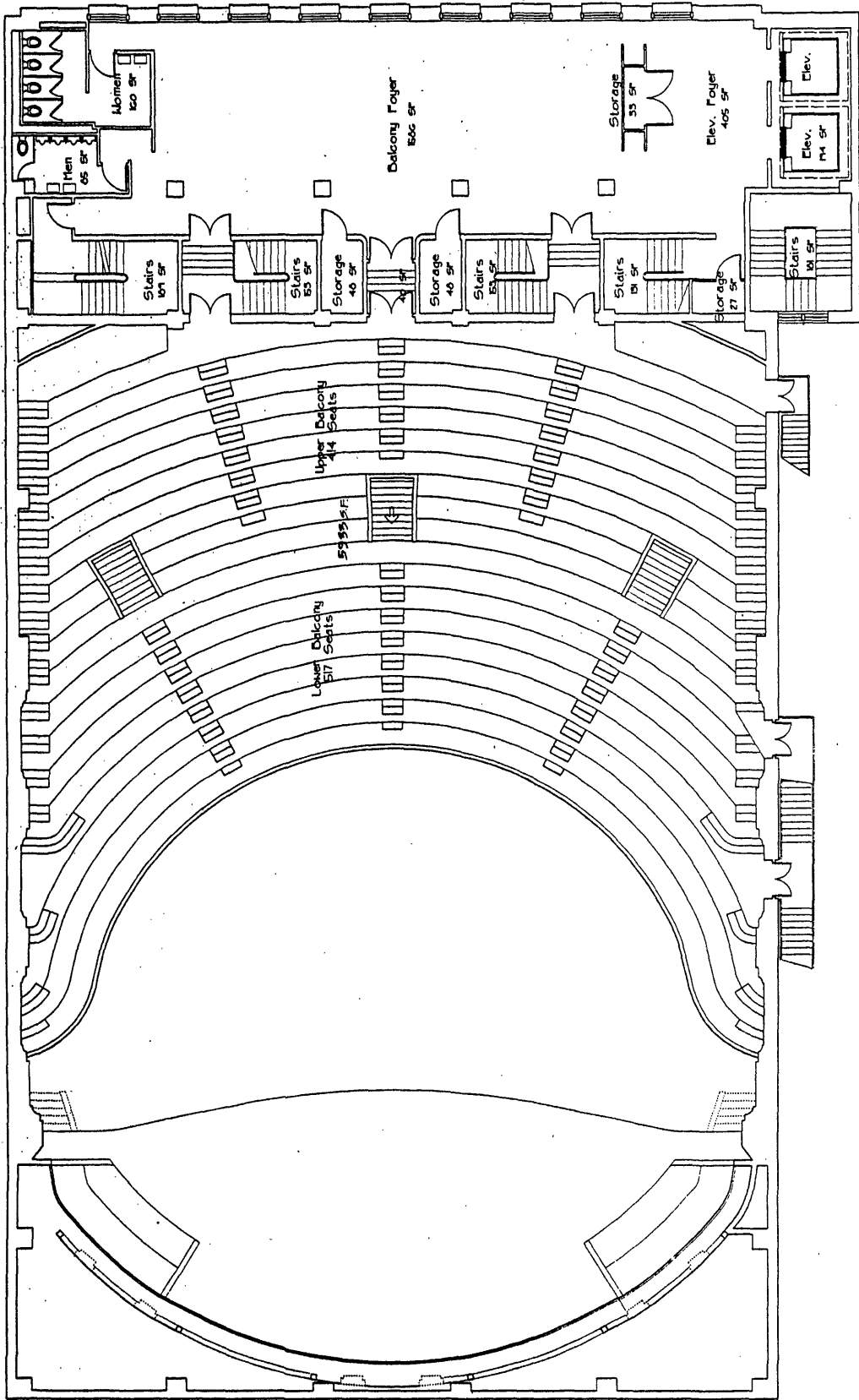
Third Floor Plan



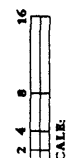


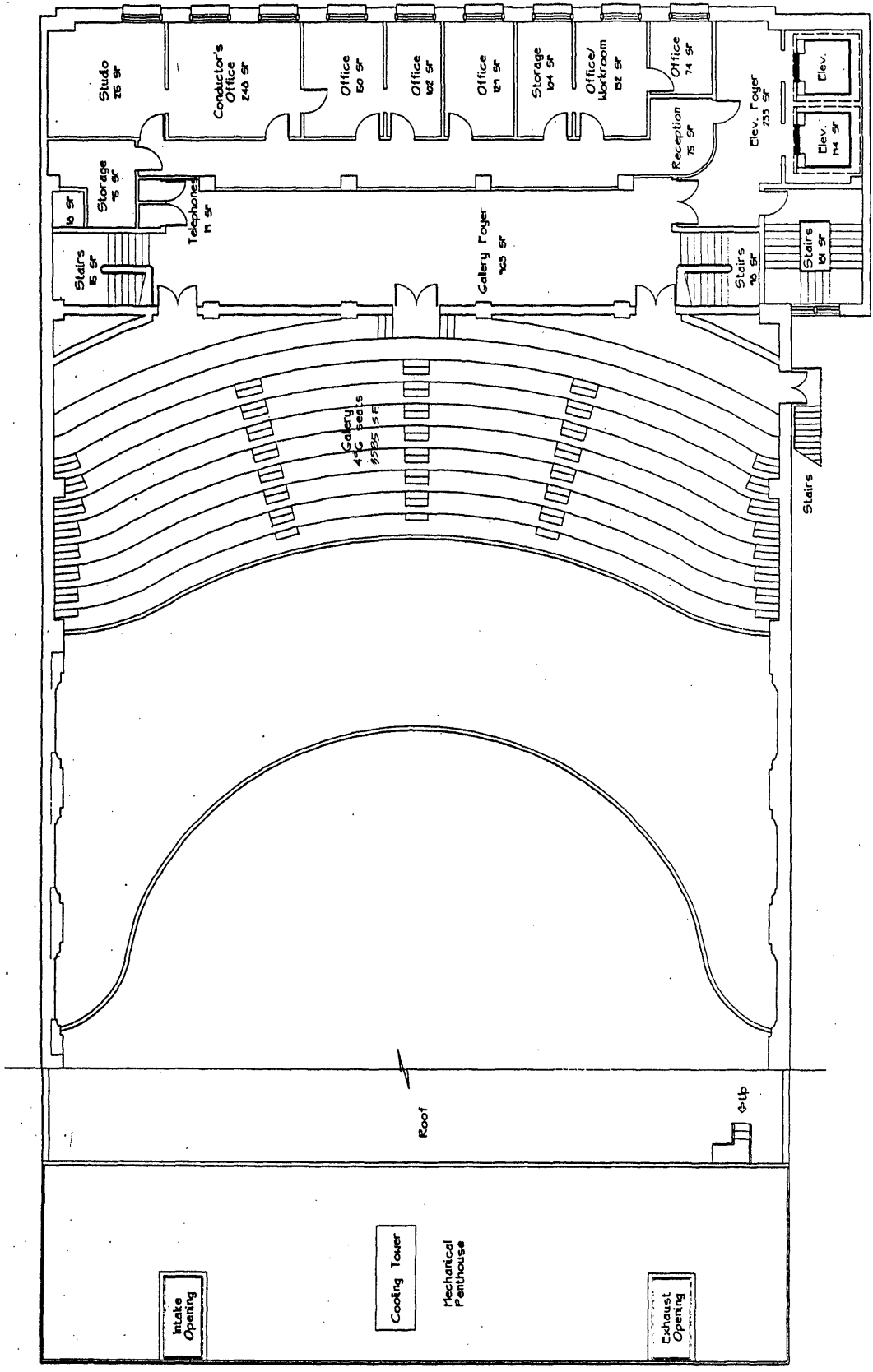
Fourth Floor Plan



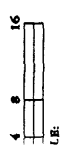


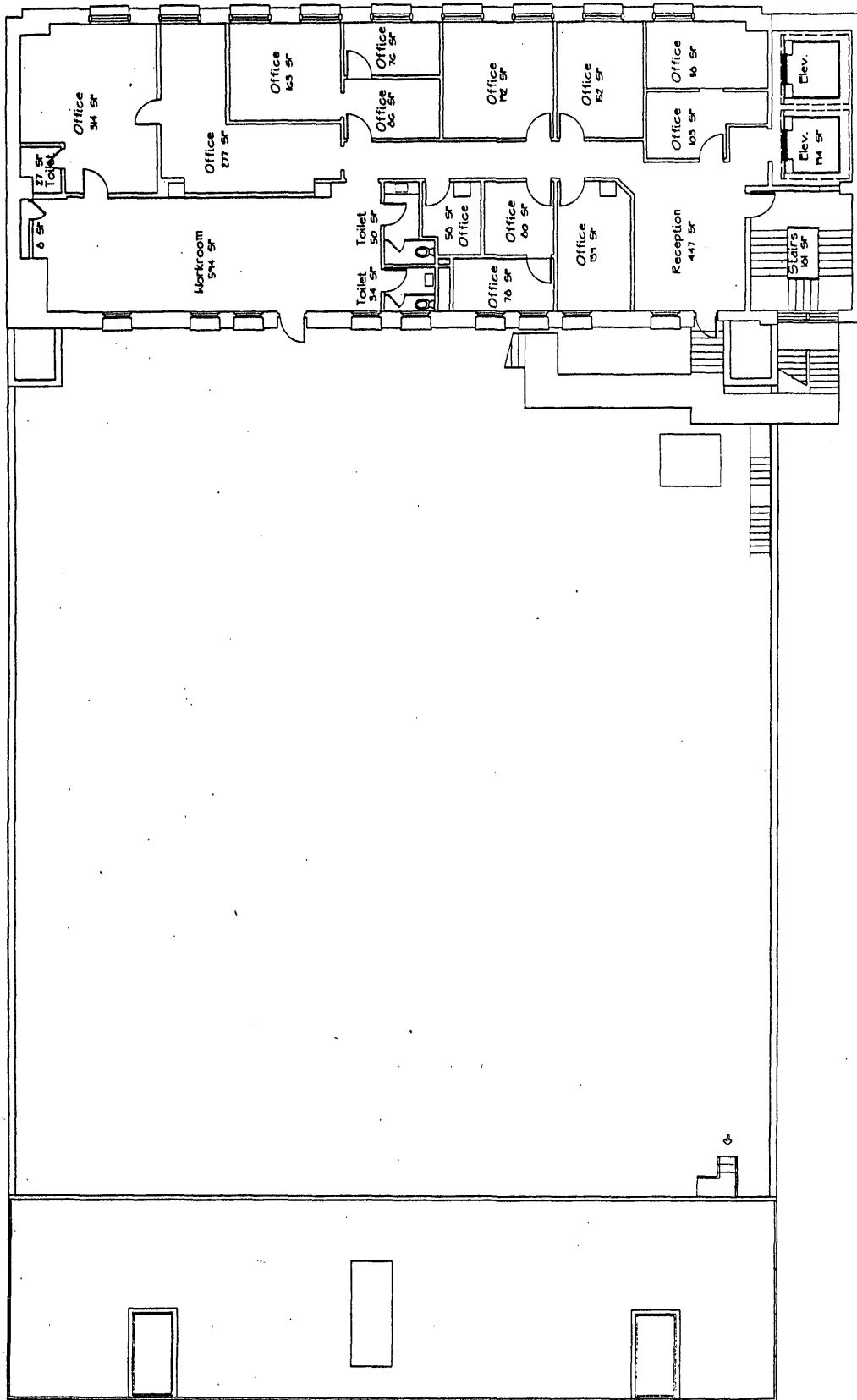
Fifth Floor Plan





Sixth Floor Plan

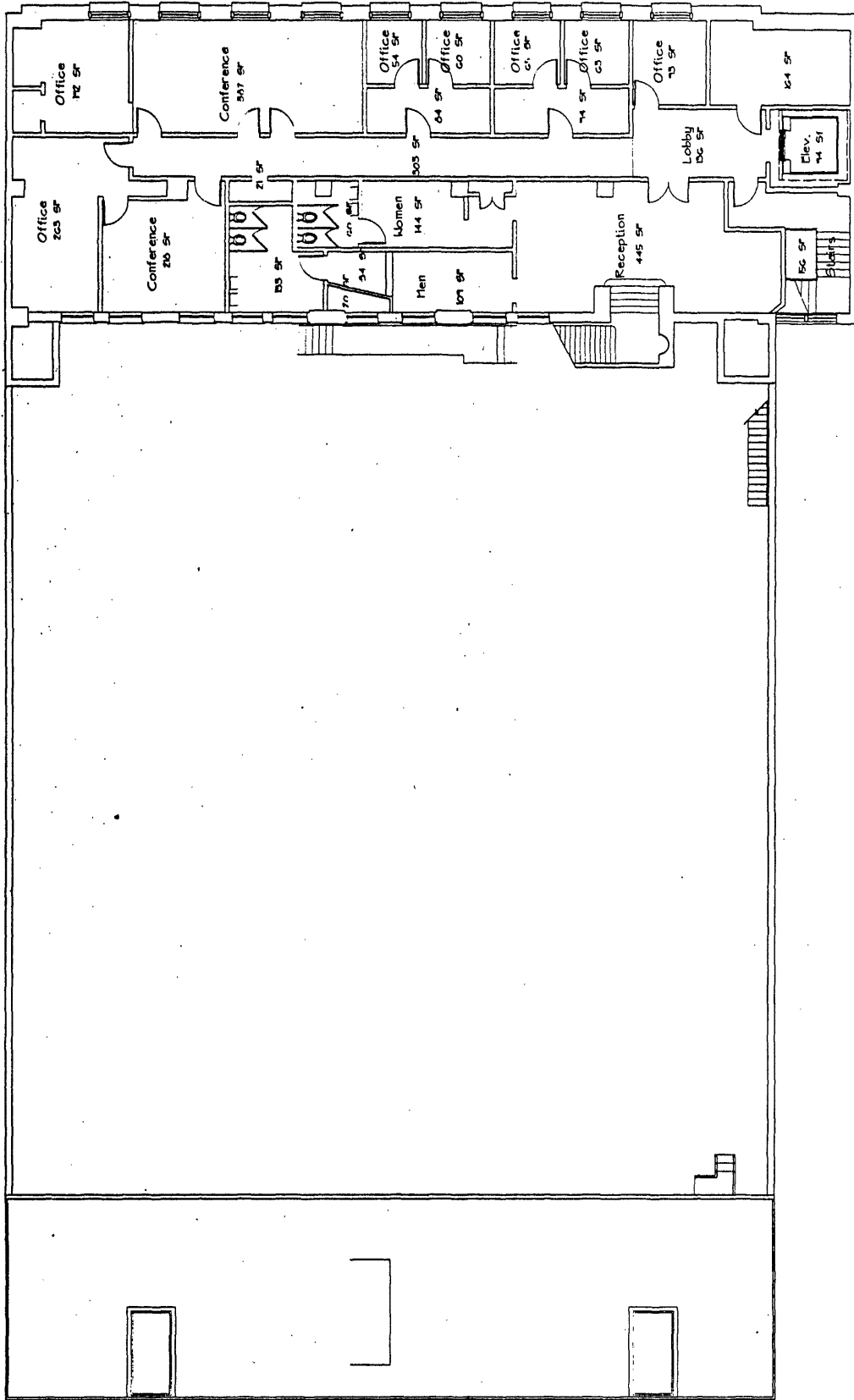




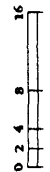
Seventh Floor Plan



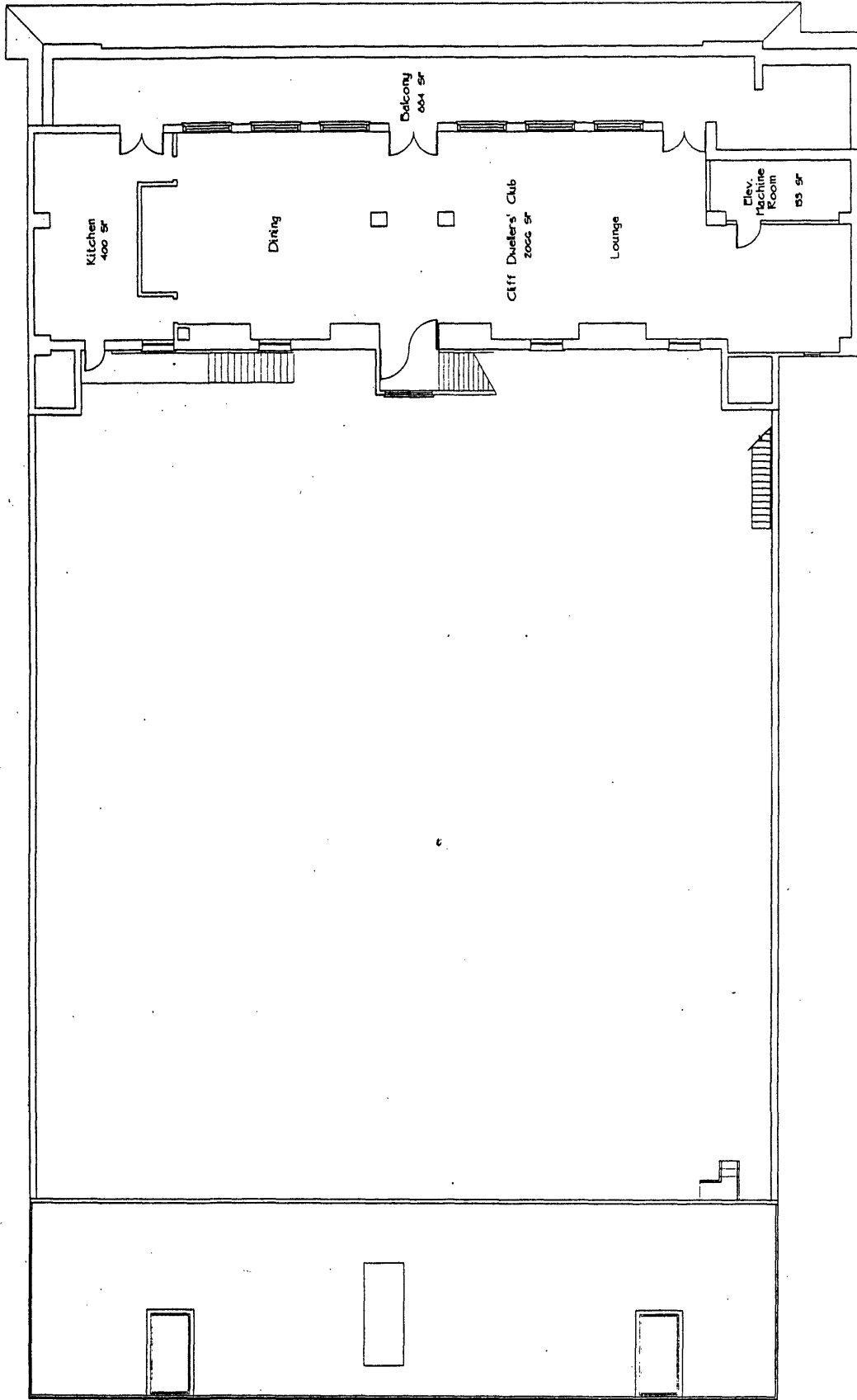
O R C H E S T R A - H A L L



Fifth Floor Plan



O R R C H I E S T I R A H A L L



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