

Final Report

MAYOR'S
AFRICAN AMERICAN
HERITAGE MUSEUM
AND CULTURAL CENTER
COMMITTEE

February 1994

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MAYOR'S AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER COMMITTEE

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Rationale

"I know that I am asking the impossible. But in our time, as in every time, the impossible is the least that one can demand - and one is, after all, emboldened by the spectacle of human history in general, and American Negro history in particular, for it testifies to nothing less than the perpetual achievement of the impossible."

James Baldwin,
The Fire Next Time (1963)

*"Soul Pole,"
depicting "400 years of
the Black in America,"
at the Douglass-Truth
Library.
(Don Mumford)*



There are times in history when ordinary men and women set out to achieve seemingly impossible goals. The effort to establish an African American Museum is one such instance in Seattle's history. This quest can be traced to the summer of 1983 when 400 Central Area residents petitioned then Mayor Royer to create a heritage center to honor and preserve African American culture. In 1985, in perhaps the most potent symbol of the African American community's determination to create such a museum, the old Colman School was occupied. The longest occupation of a public building in America has ended, and the dream of an African American Museum is stronger than ever. This report reaffirms that seemingly impossible dream, and in itself, represents an important milestone in the realization of that dream.

The Mayor's committee welcomes this opportunity to explain and share this dream of the African American community. We welcome the public scrutiny that such an achievement will demand. We begin with the central question: Why do we need an African American Museum in Seattle?

Having an African American Museum and Cultural Center would increase the awareness of and appreciation for the contributions of African Americans to American life, history, and culture, particularly as it relates to the Pacific Northwest.

There are no major repositories of African American culture in Washington, despite the magnitude of the contributions of African Americans to the development of our state and region. For the most part African Americans remain largely invisible on the historical landscape of this state. Much of the historical record that presently exists, in the form of artifacts and memory, will vanish because it is not properly collected and stored. Seattle is home to the largest number of African Americans in Washington, and it is here that African Americans have made, and continue to make, many of their most notable contributions. This region was built and has flourished because of the creativity and industry of many peoples. The contributions of African Americans are as significant as those of any ethnic group, and yet they are not readily accessible to the people who live here.

It is important to preserve that history and culture as a reservoir of support for African Americans of all ages in our community today.

We live in a time of grave threat to the African American community. A whole generation of African Americans are in danger of losing their way, and often their lives; to drugs, gang warfare, and despair. This threat is more serious now than at any time in our history. To paraphrase the writer Cornell West, "the genius of our black foremothers and forefathers was to equip us with cultural armor to beat back the demons of hopelessness, meaninglessness, and lovelessness." This museum can be an embodiment of that cultural armor. It will be a place where the African American tradition of creating, building, and thriving in the unusually harsh conditions of America are readily accessible to inform, to educate, to nurture, to inspire, and to provide positive alternatives for our young people.

This museum is not only for African Americans, it is for all Americans.

Many American art forms and artifacts that are African American in origin, have broad acceptance in American culture, and have a role in the education and cultural appreciation of all peoples. In addition, the experience and achievement of Black America is one that provides lessons for the human experience worldwide. The international appeal of that achievement was evident two years ago when Americans watched student protesters in China singing "We shall overcome."

This facility can help to heal many of the racial wounds of America. The Los Angeles riots highlighted the separateness between Black and White America which continues 30 years after the civil rights struggle. We know that what is good for Black America continues to be good for all America. Ours is a common destiny, which can end in despair and confusion or in hope and celebration. That the people of this City and region share in that hope is evidenced by the election of an African American mayor. This museum can be a place where any American can appreciate the remarkable achievements of African Americans and celebrate the promise of America as an ethnically diverse experiment in democracy.

Finally, because we can do it.

After many years of talking and negotiating, we have a proposal, and just as importantly, the people, the support, and the commitment to build an African American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center. We are committed to the concept that this be a private rather than a City facility, although we will need a strong commitment from all branches of government, including the City, to raise the capital to construct this museum. In the years to come we will have to reach out to the African American community and to the broader community for additional support. The task is enormous but certainly not impossible, given the distance that we have already traveled.

Executive Summary

Overview

The Mayor's African American Museum Committee has been charged with developing a plan for an African American Museum and Cultural Heritage Center in the old Colman School building. Establishing this facility has been a community dream for more than a decade. In undertaking this task, the committee has looked at other museums in the Seattle area and throughout the country, and we have had serious discussions with leaders of many communities. We are convinced that this community can successfully build and operate such a facility. Moreover, we feel we can be part of a core group that galvanizes the larger community toward this goal. Since the committee was given its charge in March of 1993, a number of small but significant goals have been achieved. Our achievements include:

- ▣ Agreement on the mission for the new museum.
- ▣ Development of a Governance concept for the new museum.
- ▣ A \$3,000 Small and Simple Matching Fund Award for creative signage and cleanup of the old Colman School.
- ▣ A \$65,000 Neighborhood Matching Fund Award to limit deterioration to the old Colman School building. In developing this application for the large grant, the committee has secured over \$100,000 in pledged contributions.

Although much has been done to date, the committee recognizes that much more remains to be done. The factors involved in acquiring and renovating the old Colman School are daunting even for a long established organization. The committee also recognizes that the success of this museum effort will require a strong organization with broad support throughout the community. Consequently, the committee's focus for the upcoming year is to build the organization, while simultaneously refining program elements and securing financial commitments from government agencies and the broader community. For these reasons, the community in its desire for an African American museum will have to rely on a strong partnership with the City of Seattle, other local governments, and the corporate community at the outset. The elements critical to making this museum succeed are a strong commitment from both the City and this committee and its successor group.

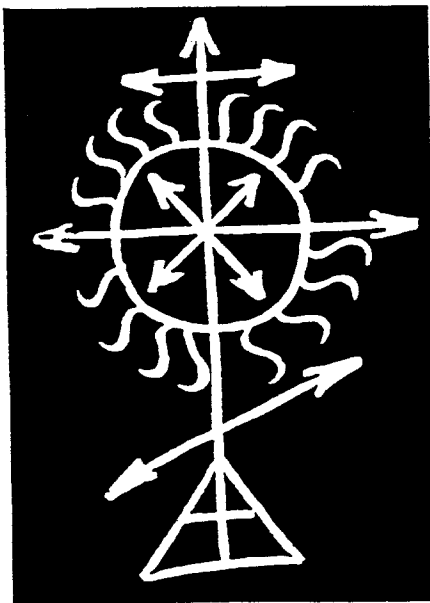
These circumstances and the massive investment to renovate the Colman School leads this committee to recommend the use of a Public Development Authority (PDA) to address issues of building transfer, design, and development; and the establishment of a nonprofit museum corporation to focus on program elements and conduct the day-to-day business of operating a museum.

Although this represents a significant commitment from the City, the committee will also make a major commitment to the project. The committee agrees to re-configure itself for its changing mission and to use a 501(C)(3) non-profit corporation to begin program development, to establish a fund raising effort, and to build a professional organization that will operate the museum. Moreover, the committee agrees to provide a stable and reliable governance system for the museum through the establishment of a Museum Board and the election of responsible officers. To demonstrate our commitment to this venture, the committee has undertaken to raise \$200,000 to develop a list of 2,500 contributors/supporters, to encourage the City to use a PDA.

Because of the magnitude of the task at hand, the committee requests the City's endorsement of a committee proposal to seek a loaned executive from a local corporation to spearhead its initiative for 1994. This is a full-time job.

This report, is but one step in a continuing process, provides greater detail on the committee's development concept. It is organized as follows:

- I. Mission
- II. Program Outline
- III. Governance
- IV. Facilities
- V. Fund-raising Plan
- VI. Renovation Approach, Workplan and Schedule
- VII. Conclusion



1. Mission

In 1994 the Museum Board will work with the community to develop and refine the exact activities to be housed in the old Colman School. These activities take into account the diversity of African Americans history and of creative expression. In order to prosper the museum must constantly respond to changing community directives. The mission statement must therefore be broad enough to encompass those changing needs. This committee believes that the new facility should be called "Heritage Museum and Cultural Center" and adopted the following mission statement:

Mission Statement *African American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center*

The African American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center exists to promote and preserve the history, culture, traditions, and achievements of African Americans and will serve as a focal point for African Americans of all generations as well as for the broader community to celebrate and to share an appreciation and reverence for the African diaspora, through exhibits, tours, research, educational programs, performances, and various cultural activities.

The committee adopted the following goals to assist the museum in achieving its mission:

- Goal 1:** Establish a community based facility to promote the history, culture, traditions and achievements of African Americans.
- Goal 2:** Acquire the former educational building, the Colman School, for use as a museum and cultural center.
- Goal 3:** Provide and promote educational programs in the arts and heritage disciplines.
- Goal 4:** Provide positive learning alternatives for youth.
- Goal 5:** Adopt and execute strategies for the operation of the museum and cultural heritage center, based a sound planning process, research, and communication.

11. Program Outline

Although the major program issues will be addressed in the upcoming year, it is essential to clearly articulate the principles for program development. These principles will enable us to devise a practical outline to guide the future development of programs and provide a framework for space planning within the facility.

The museum will serve the Seattle-King County region, school districts, domestic and international visitors, and other ethnic and historical groups. While the museum's focus should be intergenerational, programs for the education and enrichment of young people are of paramount importance and should be an integral part of all program centers. It is anticipated that the museum will work with the Seattle School District and other educational organizations to develop enrichment programs on African American arts history and culture for school age children from kindergarten through grade 12.

Criteria for deciding what program elements should be pursued include:

- Limit the duplication of existing community programs; instead the museum should develop a strong network to enhance existing programs in the surrounding community.
- Develop a strong historical focus.
- Develop a strong educational focus.
- Encourage shared learning.
- Capitalize on nearby public facilities e.g., Langston Hughes Center and Garfield Community Center, to avoid duplication.
- Working with the Pratt Fine Arts Center and the Cornish School of Fine Arts to develop an artist-in-residence program.

Potential functional centers within the Museum include:



- Archives or Northwest History
- Visual arts
- Music
- International Studies
- Conferencing
- Science & Technology
- Revenue centers including fashion and design

Archives or Northwest History

The archives and Northwest History Center could preserve artifacts of African American pioneers and provide exhibits on the history of African Americans of note, trends or particular events in local African American history. The museum could work with the Museum of History and Industry and other heritage institutions to develop displays highlighting the role of African Americans in local history. Displays could move the viewer through time. The center could also archive African American art by such means as written histories, news clippings and story telling. Themes for permanent collections will be developed within the coming year.

Visual Arts

The purpose of the visual arts center should be to depict African American history positively, honestly, and accurately in a permanent display. It should display all forms of art and the work of artists past and present. There should also be artifacts representing countries in Africa and the African diaspora, the migration from the south to the north in the United States, and the settlement of the Pacific Northwest.

Art shows could feature the work of a single artist or a group of artists, or focus on a theme. In conjunction with the Pratt Fine Arts Center, the museum might conduct art workshops for all age groups.

Science and Technology

The Science and Technology topics should be incorporated within the other centers. For example, the physics of music could be included in the musical center, or the chemistry of paint in the visual arts center.

Music

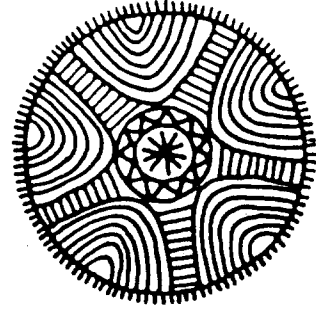
The concept for a musical center should be evaluated in light of the proposal of the Central Area Youth Association (CAYA) to set up a recording studio and music program at its new facility. The Museum musical center should be designed to enhance and complement the CAYA facility.

The purpose of the musical center is to depict African American history in music positively and to encourage development in all musical styles, performance and composition. It could portray African American contributions both locally and nationally and increase cultural awareness among the community.

III. Governance

Future Role of this Committee

Mayor Rice charged this committee with making a recommendation on how the museum could be created. This report recommends the formation of both a nonprofit corporation and a public development corporation to carry out the museum's mission.



The transmittal of this report signals that we have been successful in broadening our existing nonprofit corporation to see the museum completed. Upon submittal of this report, the work of this committee will end. Most of us have volunteered to continue on by serving on the board of the nonprofit organization, others may serve on the board of the PDA, still others will choose to work on one of the many subcommittees needed to complete this project. Our recommendation for the governance of this museum follows.

Recommendation

The committee fully understands that implementation of this proposal will require an accountable board capable of handling large sums of money, negotiating a complex construction contract, and managing the ongoing operations of the museum. The Board therefore must be composed of responsible individuals with appropriate credentials and credibility. The committee also understands that implementation of the project will require a broad base of support from many other ethnic, governmental, and philanthropic groups.

To achieve these multiple goals, the committee recommends the use of both a public corporation (PDA) and a nonprofit corporation as outlined below:

Public Corporation. The committee recommends that the Mayor establish an African American Cultural Heritage Center Authority pursuant to RCW 35.21.745 and ordinances of the City. This single purpose PDA would have the express purpose of:

- ☐ Accepting title to the old Colman School and other properties related to the museum's mission such as the landmark James W. Washington, Jr. house.
- ☐ Developing a lease and development agreement with the nonprofit corporation described elsewhere in this document.
- ☐ Developing a plan for the renovation of the property.
- ☐ Accepting public grants for improvements to the facility and accepting moneys collected by the nonprofit for the same purpose.

When the renovation is completed, the PDA may no longer be needed. On the other hand, it may remain as lessor if that arrangement is acceptable to the nonprofit, the PDA, and the City

PDA board members should have demonstrated experience in museum operations, finance, development, construction, community involvement, and business. A majority of the Board should be African Americans. The Mayor would appoint all members of the PDA Board except that the nonprofit corporation would submit recommendations for up to one half of the Board members.

The major responsibilities of the PDA Board include:

- Negotiating a lease and development contract with the nonprofit corporation.
- Hiring a development director or project manager to direct and complete the facility.
- Hiring architects, engineers etc.
- Supervising construction contracts.
- Obtaining construction contracts, preparing Environmental Impact Statements or other permit documents.
- Making reports on the construction progress to the Mayor and the City Council and to the board of the nonprofit.

Nonprofit Corporation. The committee believes strongly that the development of the museum must emanate from the African American community and other interested groups in the larger community. In order to assure both the City and the African American community that community support is and will be an integral part of museum development and operations, the committee proposes that a Washington nonprofit corporation formed to develop the museum be expanded to develop museum programs, raise funds, and operate the museum.

The board of the nonprofit should consist of:

- The original community leaders who began this long and arduous struggle.
- Members of the Mayor's committee who want to continue their role as board members of the museum nonprofit.
- African American artists, historians, and celebrities of regional or national stature.
- Interested corporate donors and fund-raisers.
- Persons with demonstrated experience in museum development, finance, management, programming etc.
- Youths

The initial purpose of this nonprofit corporation would be to solicit broad-based public support for the museum. This will be done by selling annual organizational memberships (e.g., \$15 per person or \$25 per family). Most of the money raised would be held and contributed to the public corporation for capital costs related to the museum and the remainder would be used by the nonprofit corporation for administrative costs and to provide semi-annual newsletters informing members about the progress of museum development.

To institutionalize the linkage between the public corporation and the nonprofit, the committee recommends that the nonprofit corporation nominate citizens to sit on the board of the public corporation. Initially, the nonprofit corporation would act as a private auxiliary of the public corporation. The nonprofit corporation would be the tenant of the old Colman School; would contract with the public corporation to provide development services; and ultimately would become the museum's major fund-raising arm. While the role of the PDA may diminish upon the completion of construction, the nonprofit will remain the museum's operator, its fund-raising and management role will continue in perpetuity.

Advantages of this Model

The committee recommends this two-pronged approach for several reasons.

1. First, use of a public corporation would provide immediate credibility for the project in the eyes of the larger community and to potential funding sources, both private and public. This credibility is derived from direct mayoral involvement and the City's ongoing oversight responsibilities.
2. The use of a public corporation will enhance the availability of public funds for the museum. We expect that in an era of scarce public resources, projects with local political ties and public oversight may have a competitive edge.
3. It is important that the museum be perceived as a truly public-oriented facility. Part of the museum's mission will be to teach our entire community about the richness of African American heritage. A nonprofit corporation underscores this important outreach and educational function and the importance of this facility to the public.
4. The nonprofit corporation could help increase enthusiasm for and participation in museum planning and fund raising and provide a critical linkage to the African American community.

Challenge

The committee appreciates that the use of a public corporation represents a significant commitment of the Mayor and the City. The committee therefore invites the Mayor to challenge the proponents of the museum to demonstrate support for the museum as follows:

- ▣ The City will continue to work with the committee to further refine of the plans for the museum but will not move to use a public corporation until the nonprofit corporation has available \$200,000 (net costs) to contribute to the public corporation towards the development of the museum and has at least 2,500 individual or family memberships.
- ▣ The nonprofit will also raise approximately \$100,000 toward the first year of the PDA's operating expenses. This initial dollar amount and the list of members, will provide a basis for the public corporation to hire staff and proceed toward further development.

While this will require a tremendous amount of work by museum supporters; this achievement will demonstrate a level of commitment that can be welcomed and matched by the City. The committee requests that the City begin the process to obtain title to the building immediately. The title of the building would be transferred to the PDA upon its formation. During the period between the submission of this report and the formation of the PDA only stabilization improvements (e.g., roof repair, hazardous material removal) will be made to the building. Therefore in the event that the City, the School District and the nonprofit cannot agree on the formation of a PDA, the City will be in possession of a building that is in significantly improved condition and the parties can design a building transfer/development process that is preferable.



IV. Facilities

Background

In 1992, Streeter/Dermanis Associates conducted a structural assessment of the old Colman School. The consultants concluded that the 48,000 square foot school building can be totally renovated with the first two floors (34,000 s.f.) designed for re-use as a cultural center/museum at a cost that is less than the cost of a new building, provided the program for the new building is equal or greater than 34,000 square feet. (See Addendum 1)

The consultant further recommended the retention of the building because of its strong physical presence, its handsome architecture, and its role as a symbol of community stability across generations. Further, the building has become an immediate symbol of community achievement in the face of adversity and has the potential to become a more potent symbol of reconciliation.

Cost Estimates

Streeter/Dermanis prepared three design options for the reuse of the structure. The cost of these options range from \$6.3 million to \$7.2 million, depending on the design configuration (See addendum 1). These costs include building stabilization costs estimated at \$1.9 million. Cost estimates for a new building range from \$4.2 to \$7.6 million, depending on the design configuration. However, a new building would preclude the potential for approximately 2,000 square feet of additional space within the old Colman School. In light of this information the Mayor's committee was directed to plan for the renovation of the old Colman School.

Building Transfer

At this time the Seattle School District retains ownership of the old Colman School. The committee recommends that the School District transfer ownership of the building to the City immediately after the museum PDA has been established. The City will subsequently transfer ownership to the museum PDA. The School District as landlord should assume responsibility for the removal of asbestos and other hazardous materials from the building before the City accepts the building. The nonprofit will attempt, with the support of the City and the School District, to obtain an Environmental Justice Grant from the Bullitt Foundation for this work, on condition that



the nonprofit assumes no responsibility for the removal of hazardous materials from the building.

In the interim, the School District needs to approve the building renovations to be done under the auspices of the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF). The committee has proposed a series of activities to be funded by the Neighborhood Matching Fund which will allow the community to reclaim the structure. Access to the building by committee-organized work crews is a cornerstone of our facilities approach. Moreover, successfully completing these activities in the public eye will constitute a major public relations opportunity for the museum.

Building Stabilization

The major building elements in need of attention are upgrade of the seismic system and roof, removal of hazardous materials, brick and terra cotta work, plumbing system, mechanical and electrical systems, elevator and handicap systems, and windows and doors. The Streeter/Dermanis Study estimated these "building stabilization items," at \$1.9 million. An additional \$200,000 was added for architectural/engineering fees. The committee's most immediate facility task has been identified as installing a new roof to limiting deterioration to interior spaces and brick and terra cotta surfaces. The committee additionally recommends the investments in the facility listed below once building control issues are resolved.

Activity	Cost	Status
New Roof	\$150,000	\$65,000 Funded NMF
Hazardous Material Removal	200,000	
New Shear Walls	400,000	
Brick Work	100,000	
Terra Cotta Work	100,000	
Windows & Doors	250,000	
Elevator	100,000	
Handicap Access Work	170,000	
Electrical	90,000	
Environmental Controls	100,000	
Site work	100,000	
Plumbing	100,000	
Permits & fees	100,000	
Arch/Engineering	200,000	
TOTAL	\$2,110,000	

V. Fund-raising Plan

This section addresses potential sources for initial stabilization costs and the first two years of operating costs. A more detailed fund-raising plan that addresses the needs of later years will await the formation of a museum board. It is important to note that the funding sources listed here do not represent a financial commitment at this time. Rather they represent the committee's commitment to approach these sources with funding proposals.

Sources for Stabilization Funds

Funding Source	Amount	
Washington State Legislature	\$ 500,000	
King County Legislative Appropriation	200,000	
King County Capital Facilities Grant	100,000	
City of Seattle	300,000	
Seattle School District	300,000	
Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant	65,000	* Awarded
Pledged Community Match	145,000	
Private Contributions (including foundations)	500,000	
<hr/>		
TOTAL	\$2,110,000	

Other Capital Costs

Streeter/Dermanis Architects developed three preliminary design schemes for the proposed museum (see Appendix A). These require an additional \$2-\$6.3 million. In 1994 the nonprofit organization and the PDA will select and refine a design scheme for the museum. It is anticipated that the realization of this scheme will be the subject of a 5-10 year fund-raising plan that will be conducted while there are small scale programs and exhibits in the building. The costs of these schemes are summarized below:

Minimal Intervention Scheme - Scheme 1	
34,000 square foot museum	\$4,862,600 *
(+ 14,000 s.f. space opportunity)	
30% soft costs	1,458,780
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$6,321,380



New South Entrance/New Auditorium - Scheme 2

38,000 square foot museum	\$5,614,600 *
(+ 14,000 s f space opportunity)	
30% soft costs	1,684,380
TOTAL	\$7,298,980

Enhanced Lobby Scheme - Scheme 3

34,000 square foot museum	\$4,912,600 *
(+ 14,000 s.f. space opportunity)	
30% soft costs	1,473,780
TOTAL	\$6,386,380

* Includes \$1.9 million already expended for stabilization

Operating Costs/Potential Revenues

Due to the heavy reliance on volunteers, operating costs for the Wing Luke Asian Museum, the Nordic Heritage Museum, and the Phinney Neighborhood Center are estimated at \$100,000 to \$175,000 per annum. Operating expenses for the African American Museum are estimated at \$100,000 for the first three years. Operating expenses will be significantly higher once the museum is fully operational. These funds and the estimated \$100,000 needed for the first year of PDA operations will be raised from private sources. Since staff salaries constitute 45% of operating costs, a corporate loaned executive for the first year would significantly reduce costs. Operating needs, estimated at \$100,000, are proposed to be raised from private sources. As a rule, memberships and admission fees never completely meet the need for funds to operate museums. In order to limit fluctuations in revenue and to stabilize operations over the long term, the committee decided to examine a variety of revenue producing activities: These include development and leasing options for the additional 14,000 square feet of space not required for museum use. In addition to the public uses for sharing the building cited elsewhere in this report, the program subcommittee evaluated other revenue producing activities to supplement ongoing operations. Given the additional space in the building, the following activities could provide additional income for the museum.

International Center

The purpose of the International Center would be to provide a link between the African American community in Seattle with other communities. It would house displays from various countries, and could participate in a sister city program. It would contain a visitor center that would feature information about the African American community in the Pacific Northwest and local places important to its history. It would also provide travel information on related cities elsewhere. The museum could stage events at the International Center, and outside groups could rent the center for related events.

Conference Center

A conference center is a possible use for the third floor of the old Colman School building. It would be available for use by the community and might contain workshops, classrooms, and meeting rooms. Space rental fees from it would provide additional revenue to the museum.

Other Revenue

Other potential revenue generators might include:

- Chop bar food concession
- Gift Shop
- Catering service with contracts awarded to minority businesses
- Conference/lecture hall
- Research facilities
- Offices
- Commissions on art and craft sales
- Commissions on clothing sales and design items

The gift shop would offer for sale items on commission from local producers as well as retail items. In addition, the cultural center could contract with the Seattle School District to provide enrichment programs for school-age children similar to the current arrangement between the Seattle School District and the Pacific Science Center. Annual operating revenues for this program could be in the range of \$100,000 per year. It is expected that within five years from the opening of the museum, revenue generators can supply up to 30% of needed operations income.



VI. Renovation Approach, Workplan and Schedule

The magnitude of the initial stabilization effort suggests that the committee must focus on the two lower floors (34,000 square feet) as recommended by the consultant report. This allows for joint funding for stabilization of the structure by one of a number of compatible potential co-users. The nonprofit can explore such co-location opportunities in 1994. These may include City facilities, which are eligible for City CIP funds and/or programs dedicated to education/cultural enrichment of youth in the adjacent community which qualifies for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Committee members have been contacted by other local organizations interested in sharing the building. The feasibility of such opportunities will be examined in 1994. The following workplan overleaf outlines the activities to be begun immediately in the first phase.



VII. Conclusion

This report is submitted in a spirit of hope. We have addressed the practical issues of governance, property transfer, and fund-raising. In addition, we have addressed the cultural and artistic issues of community aspirations and appropriate programming for the facility. While many details will need to be refined in the months ahead, we believe that we have developed a proposal that the City can accept because of its fiscal responsiveness and because it is both reasonable and ambitious. Recognizing that enormous challenges lie ahead, we undertake this assignment with cautious optimism and a commitment to hard work in the months ahead.



APPENDIX

Summary of Assessment of Colman School for Reuse

Introduction

The study done by Streeter/Dermanis and Associates Architects in 1992 was the fourth in a series related to the development of an African American Cultural Heritage Center in Seattle. The first study, done in 1987 by ERA, focused on program alternatives and community support for such a facility, and examined similar museums locally and nationwide. The second study in 1988, lead by Myriad Systems and Services, examined potential sites and the possibility of reuse of existing structures. It also provided information on potential attendance, a cost/revenue analysis, financing alternatives, and possible management structure. Four sites were identified:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park site
- Colman Elementary School
- Lot 29-C at Yesler Street and 25th Avenue, adjacent to the Randolph Carter Center
- Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center

In 1990, a third study by Stripling Associates included eight public meetings and a survey of the community to elicit consensus on the choice of site. The community preferred the Colman School site, though the survey did not ask whether preference was for a new building or a renovated one at that site. The community preference was for a site on a hill rather than one in a valley. The study also discussed the issues of selecting a board, fund raising, and by-laws.

The recent Streeter/Dermanis study found that the cost of renovating the entire 48,000 square-foot Colman School building and using the first two floors (34,000 square feet) for the Cultural Center would be less than the cost of constructing a new building 34,000 square feet or larger. The architects examined five schemes in terms of layout, use, cost, and advantages and disadvantages.

Program Issues

The 1987 study found that of other African American museums the most successful ones functioned primarily as museums. By focusing on exhibits, the museums ensured funding from outside sources and developed a steady stream of visitors. Through the quality of the exhibits, they developed the name recognition necessary to survive. More recently, these museum-oriented facilities have been looking into the addition of performance and instructional activities, and the facilities to house them, in order to increase revenues and to expand their role in their communities.

The 1992 study found that the original layout of rooms in the Colman School building is well suited for conversion to a museum. The average classroom size of 900 square feet is equivalent to a small-to-medium sized gallery. The connections of rooms to halls and between classrooms allows visitors' paths to loop through spaces as is ideal for museums. However, the fixed size of the spaces limits the way in which exhibits can be displayed. The long, broad hallways present a challenge to design displays which can provide a continuous experience as the visitor moves through them.

In a new building, the potential for centralized organization allows one person to cover admissions and supervise the public spaces. Moreover, the exhibit area could be designed as one large, dividable space, which would accommodate all kinds of exhibits. It would also be possible to separate the performance and museum spaces, while allowing both to be adjacent to the entry hall which functions as a foyer, a display space, and an area for smaller functions.

Design Alternatives

Five alternatives were analyzed by Streeter/Dermanis. The first three design schemes use the renovated school building with three different levels of alteration and use. The last two are schemes for new construction of space comparable to 1) the largest in program of the first three (i.e., museum and new performance area) and 2) a program for only the museum space. The cost estimates were based on existing knowledge of the building and average costs. Factors that may arise later in the development process can increase the cost. In the case of renovation, other conditions may be discovered during construction that would require additional work. In the case of new construction, costs can increase due to delays in decision making, increases in program scope, and quality upgrades. Costs cited include design, construction, permit and project management fees. Streeter/Dermanis projected the cost estimates to 1994.

Basic Stabilization (for all schemes): Removal of hazardous materials, structural repair, new roof, and systems for future expansion without tenant improvements.
Area: 20,000 s.f. of useable space with 28,000 s.f. for future expansion.
Cost: \$1.94 million

Remodel Options

Scheme One: Renovation of existing structure, minimal alteration the interior using existing configuration for exhibit areas, and a 200-seat performance space.
Area: 34,000 s.f. of museum with 14,000 s.f. for future expansion
Cost: \$6.32 million

Scheme Two: Addition to existing structure of new south entrance, a new 400-seat auditorium, and expansion of east entry into a central lobby with concession area.
Area: 38,000 s.f. of museum with 14,000 s.f. for future expansion.
Cost: \$7.30 million

Scheme Three: Same as Scheme One plus expansion of east entry into central lobby with concession area.

Area: 34,000 s.f. of museum with 14,000 s.f. for future expansion.

Cost: \$6.39 million

New Building Options

Scheme Four: Removal of hazardous material and demolition of existing building. Construction of new two-story structure for exhibit and performance spaces.

Area: 37,000 s.f.

Cost: \$7.67 million

Scheme Five: Removal of hazardous material and possible demolition of existing building. Construction of new two-story structure with emphasis on exhibit space, and potential for expansion.

Area: 20,000 s.f.

Cost: \$4.26 million

Site Development

The study did not include specific designs for the site. Site improvements could add another \$250,000 to the cost. Currently, there is asphalt on the east side; the south side was dug up during the I-90 lid construction and remains bare dirt; on the west, the ground slopes away steeply down to 23rd Avenue South; and the north is scheduled to be landscaped as part of the I-90 lid restoration.

The site could be reached by foot, bicycle, transit or car. On-street parking could be developed on Massachusetts Street and 24th Avenue South, and on-site parking could go either on the existing paved area or a new lot. The site development needs to make the entrance to the Cultural Center obvious and inviting.

Other Issues

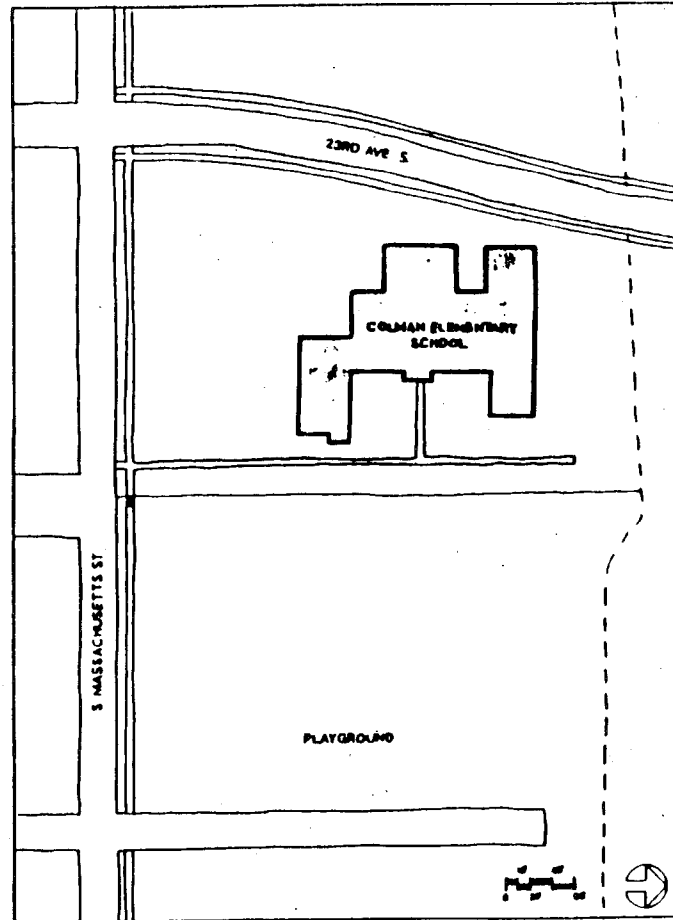
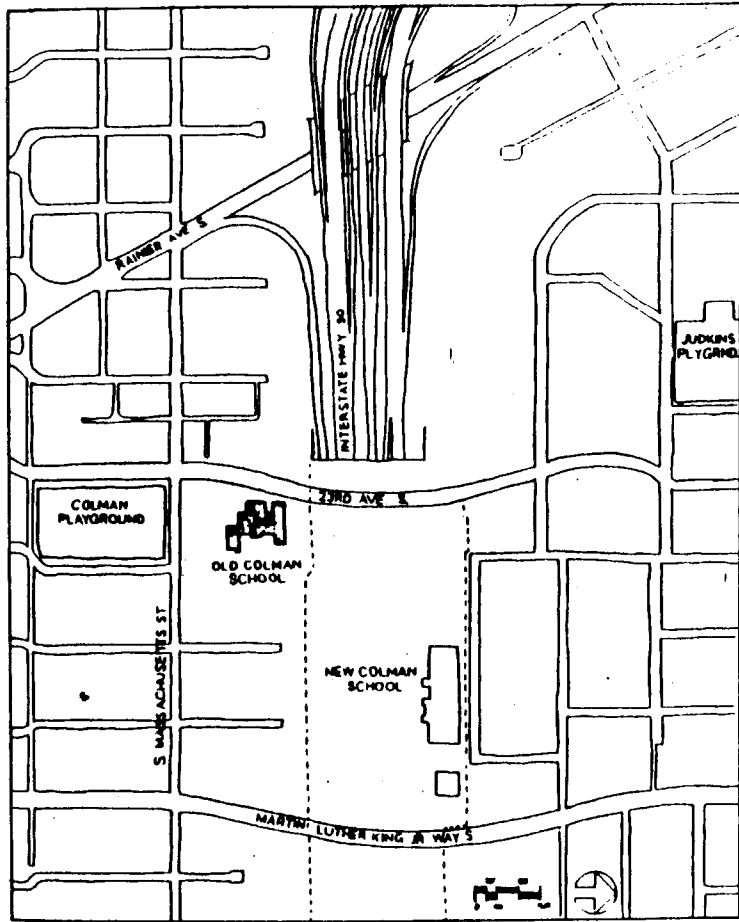
Structural: The existing structure does not meet current requirements for seismic design. Structural remediation is needed to tie the walls, floors, and roof together so that the structure can resist seismic forces.

Hazardous Materials: Asbestos-containing materials were found on piping, ducts, tanks and boilers. The ground floor contains areas of significant hazard where asbestos-containing materials are exposed and damaged around the boiler. The attic also has hazardous areas where pipe insulation is exposed and damaged. Areas of lesser hazard are on other floors and the roof. In either renovation or demolition, the asbestos-containing materials must be contained and removed. Destructive investigation is needed to determine the extent of asbestos placement behind walls and under floors.

Mechanical: Asbestos removal normally takes out the pipe or duct as well as the insulation. This will eliminate much of the existing heating system. A new heating system will be needed or reuse of the building, preferably a room-specific one which would lower energy costs.

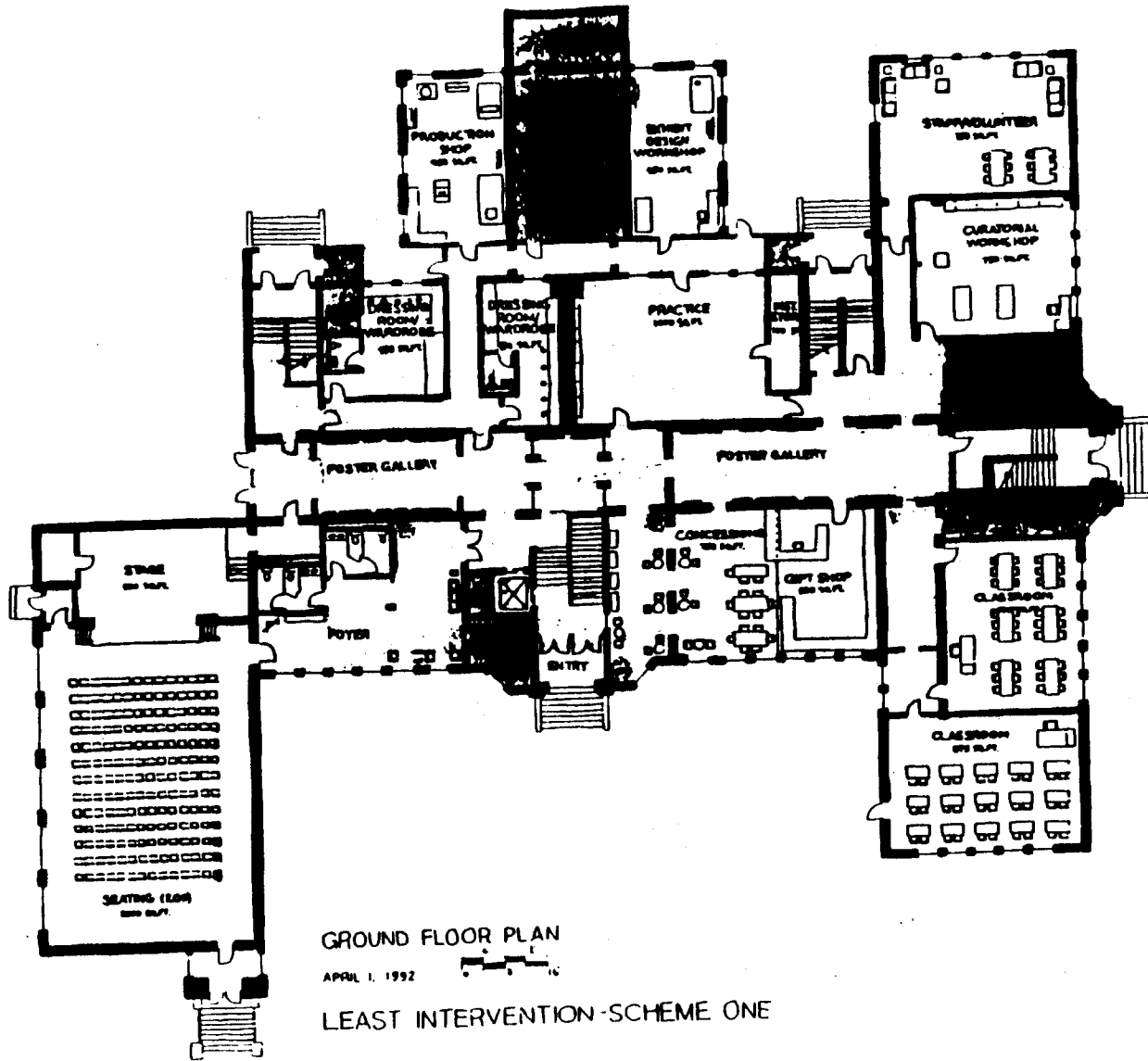
The fire sprinkler system does not meet current coverage requirements. Much of the existing system would be removed in the seismic remediation work.

Electrical: The current electrical system is not adequate to modern usage such as electrical heating and appliances, computers, security systems, fire alarms, and communications equipment. Museums and performance facilities require extra lighting capability. New electrical service and wiring throughout the building must be installed.



SITE MAPS
APRIL 10, 1992

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



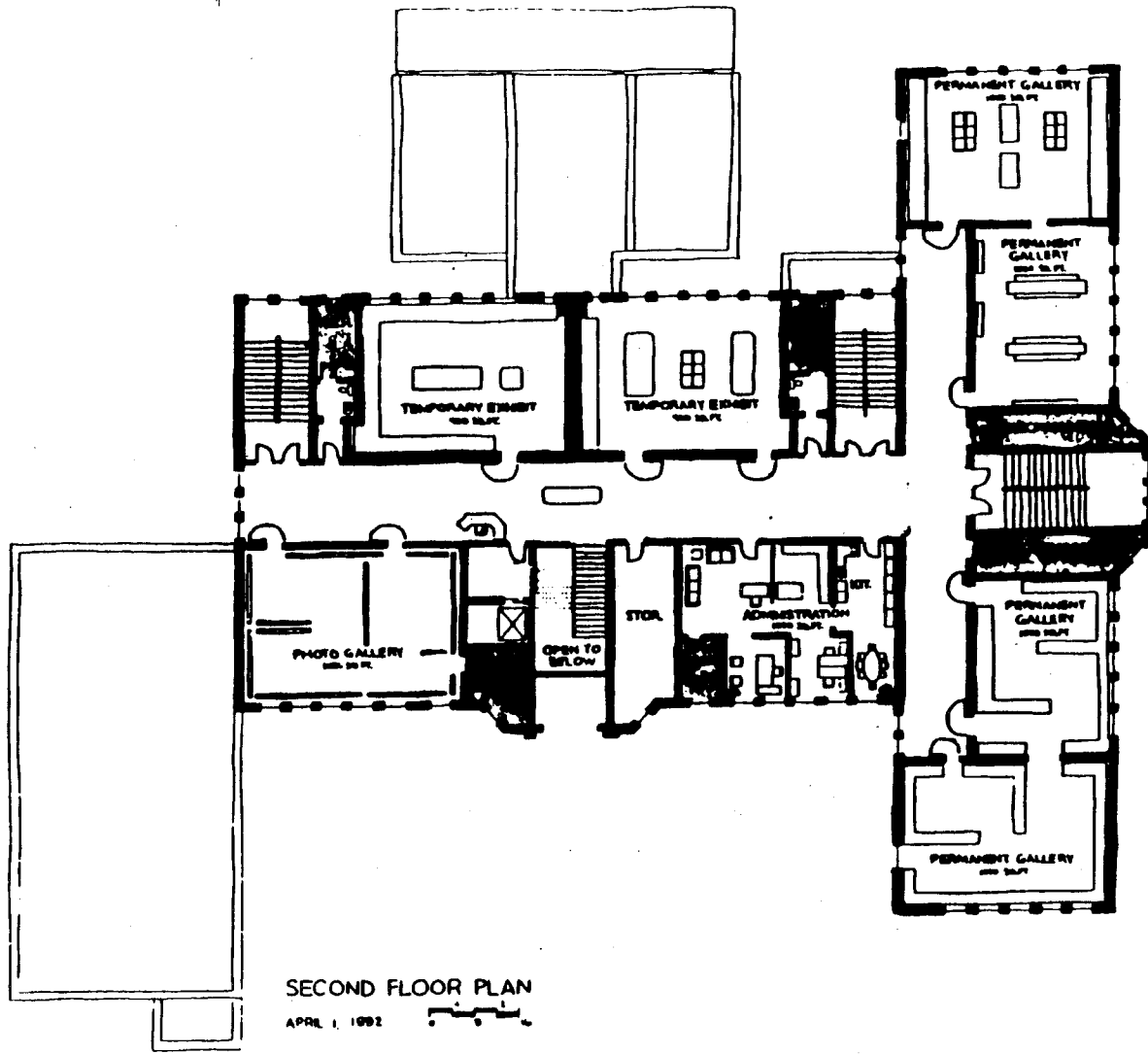
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

APRIL 1, 1992



LEAST INTERVENTION - SCHEME ONE

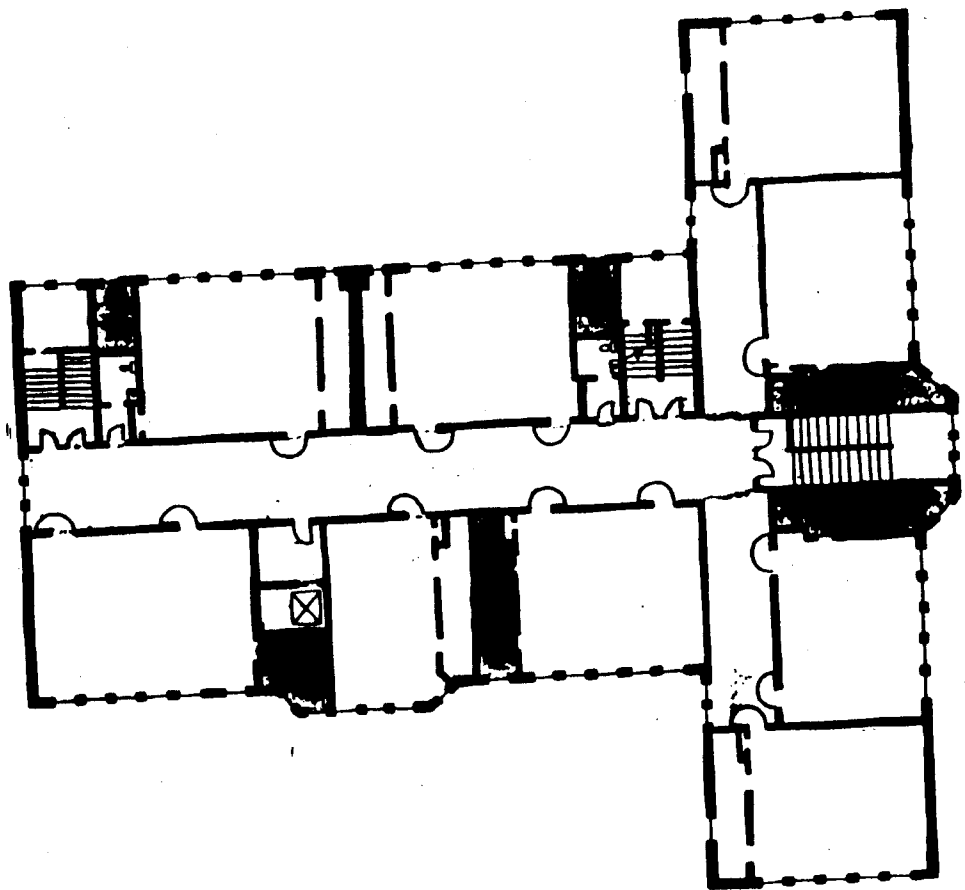
African American Heritage Museum at Calverton School



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

APRIL 1, 1992

LEAST INTERVENTION-SCHEME ONE



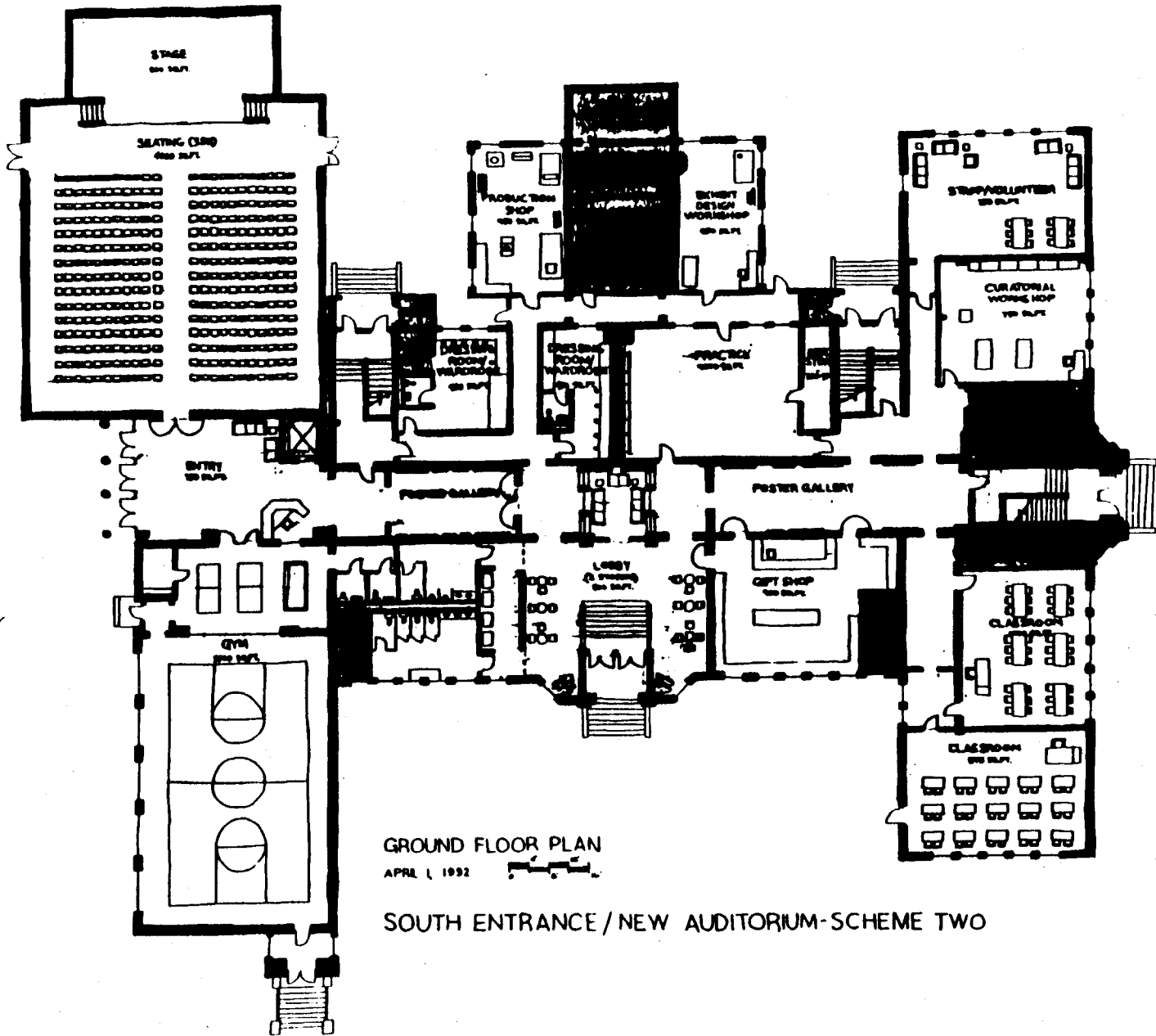
THIRD FLOOR PLAN (UNUSED)

APRIL 1, 1992

LEAST INTERVENTION - SCHEME ONE

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School

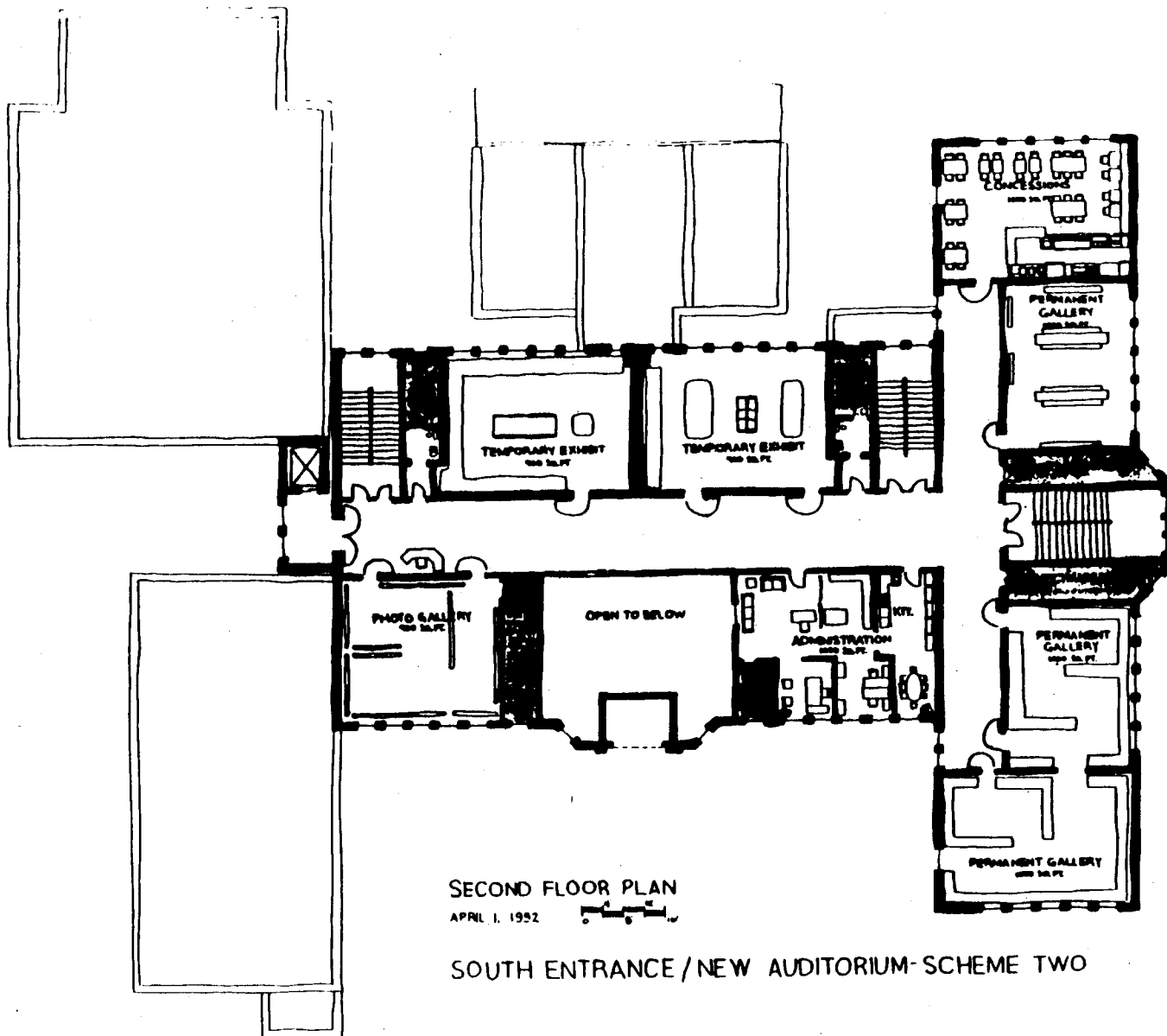




GROUND FLOOR PLAN
 APRIL 1, 1992

SOUTH ENTRANCE / NEW AUDITORIUM - SCHEME TWO

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

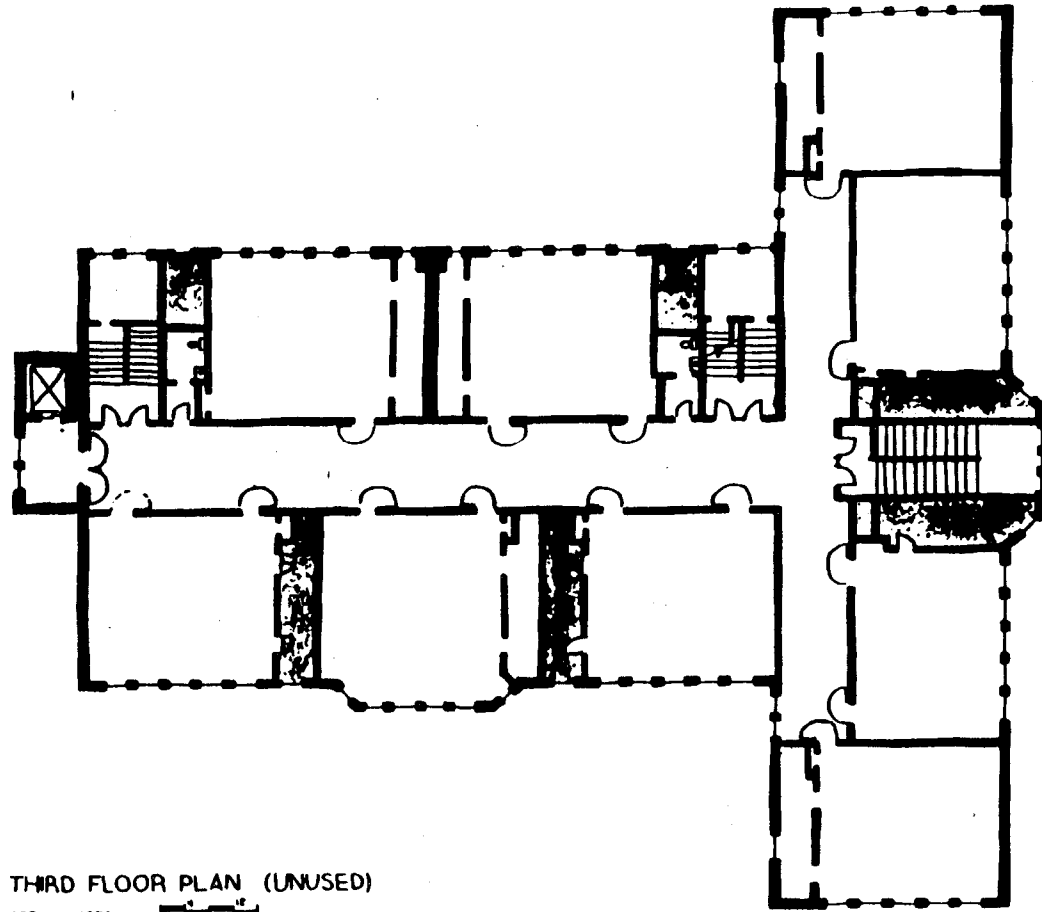
APRIL 1, 1992



SOUTH ENTRANCE / NEW AUDITORIUM- SCHEME TWO

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School

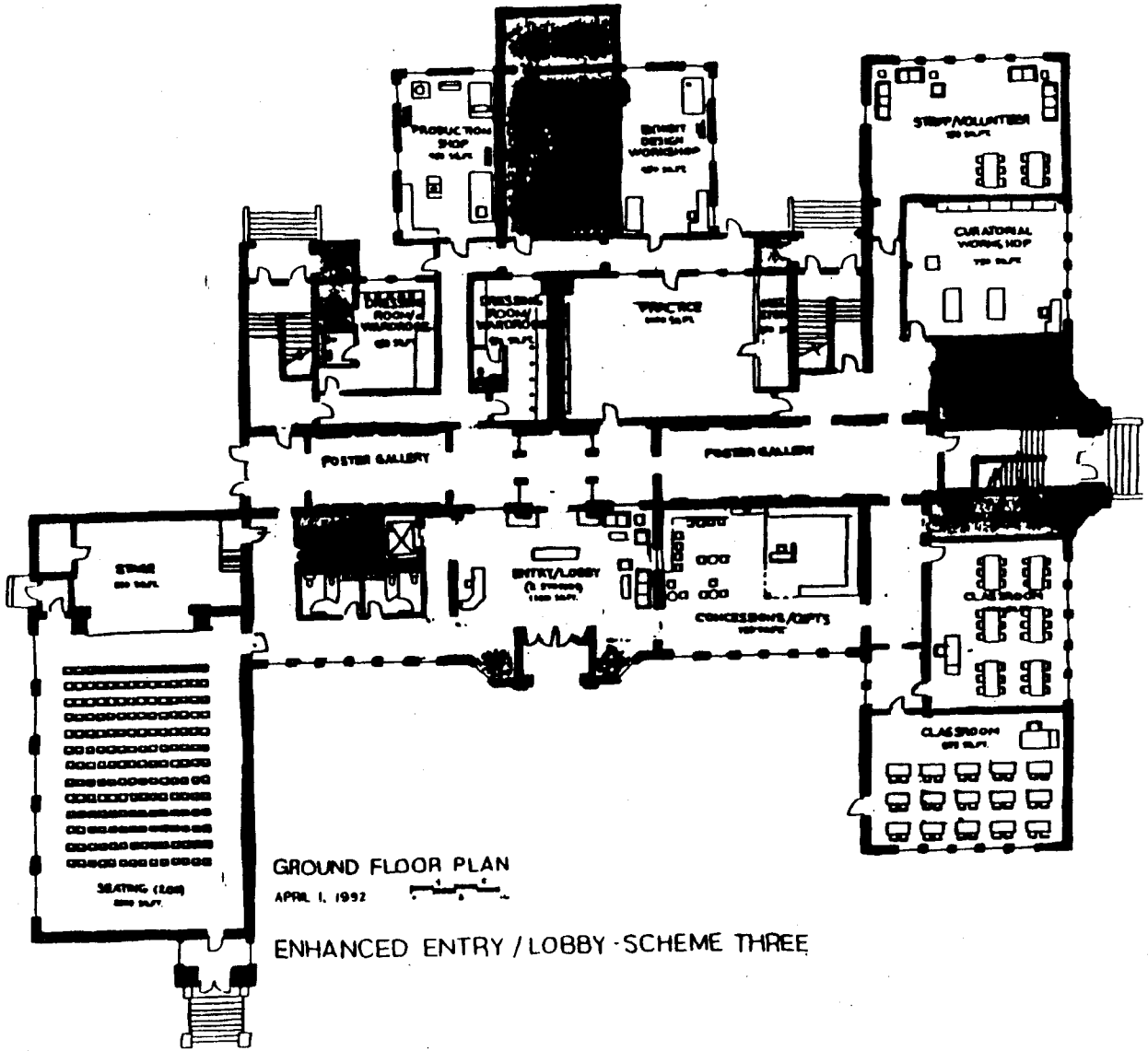




THIRD FLOOR PLAN (UNUSED)

APRIL 1, 1992

SOUTH ENTRANCE/NEW AUDITORIUM-SCHEME TWO



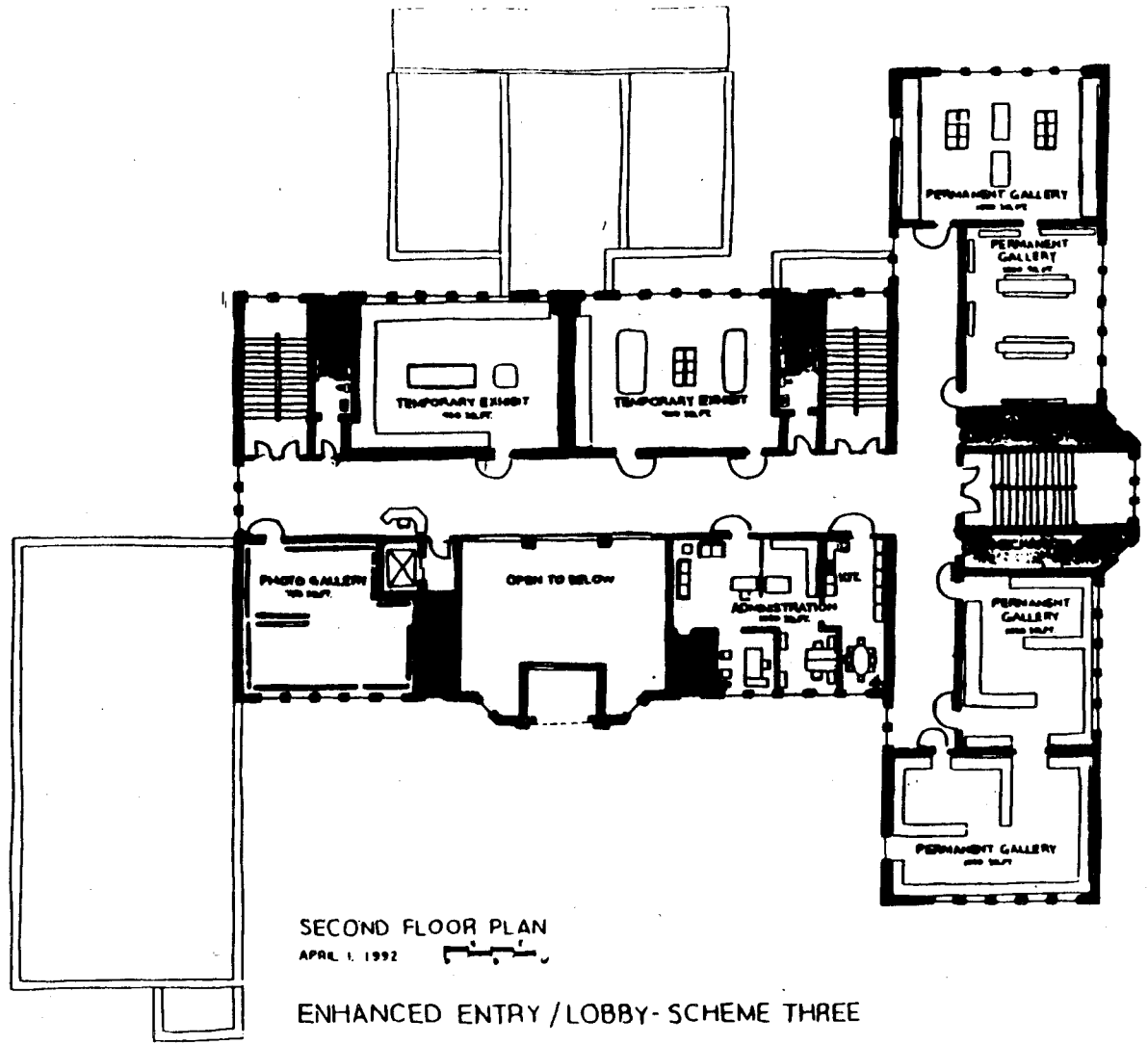
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

APRIL 1, 1992

ENHANCED ENTRY / LOBBY - SCHEME THREE

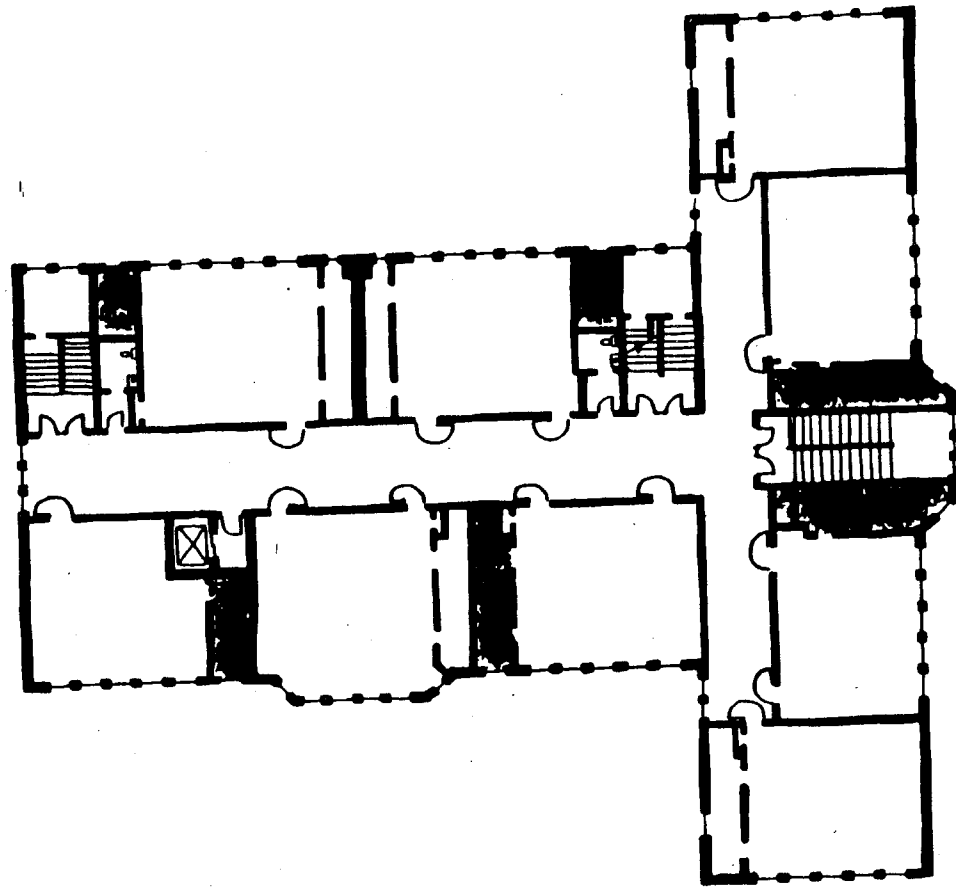


African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
APRIL 1, 1992

ENHANCED ENTRY / LOBBY- SCHEME THREE



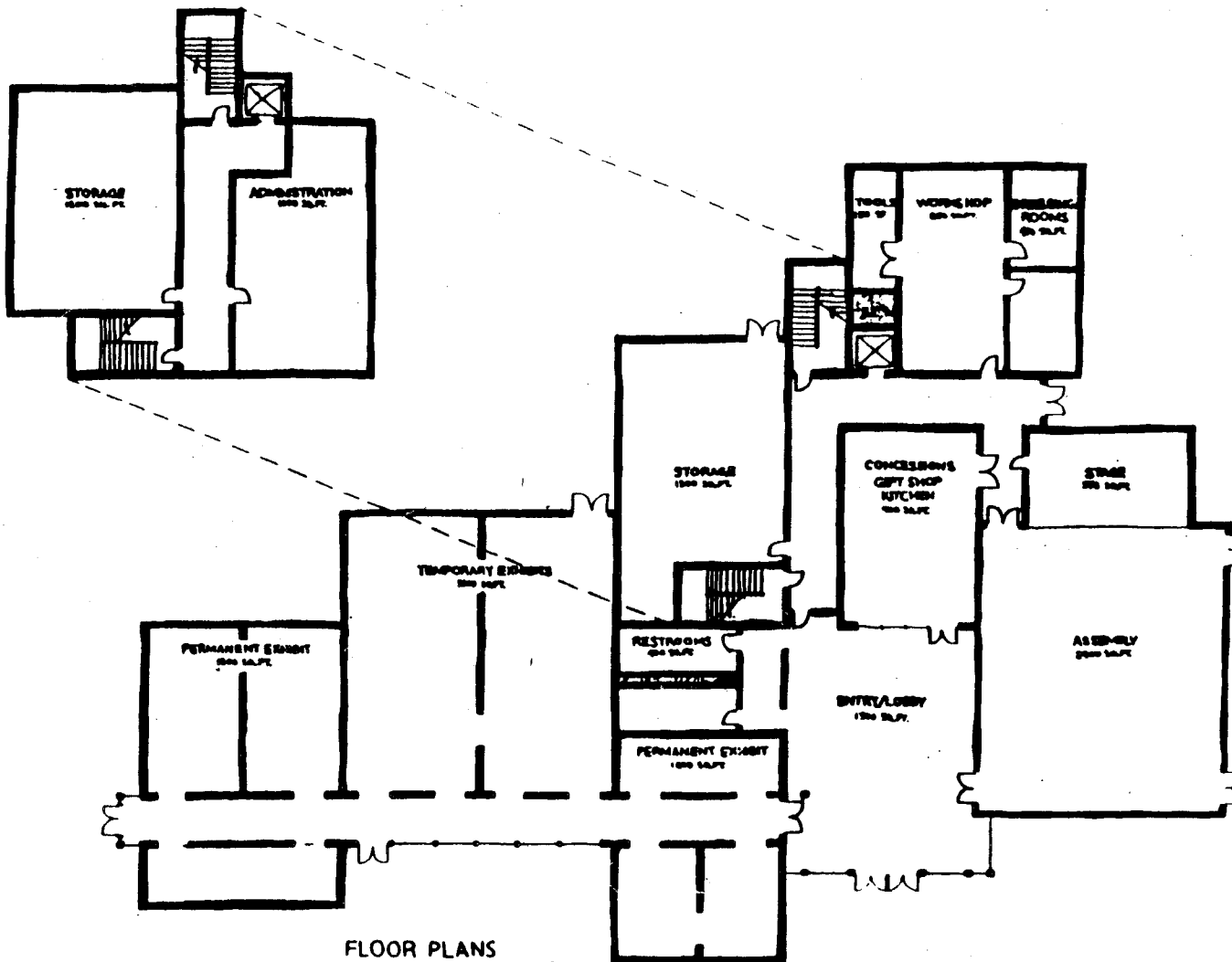
THIRD FLOOR PLAN (UNUSED)

APRIL 1, 1992

ENHANCED ENTRY / LOBBY - SCHEME THREE

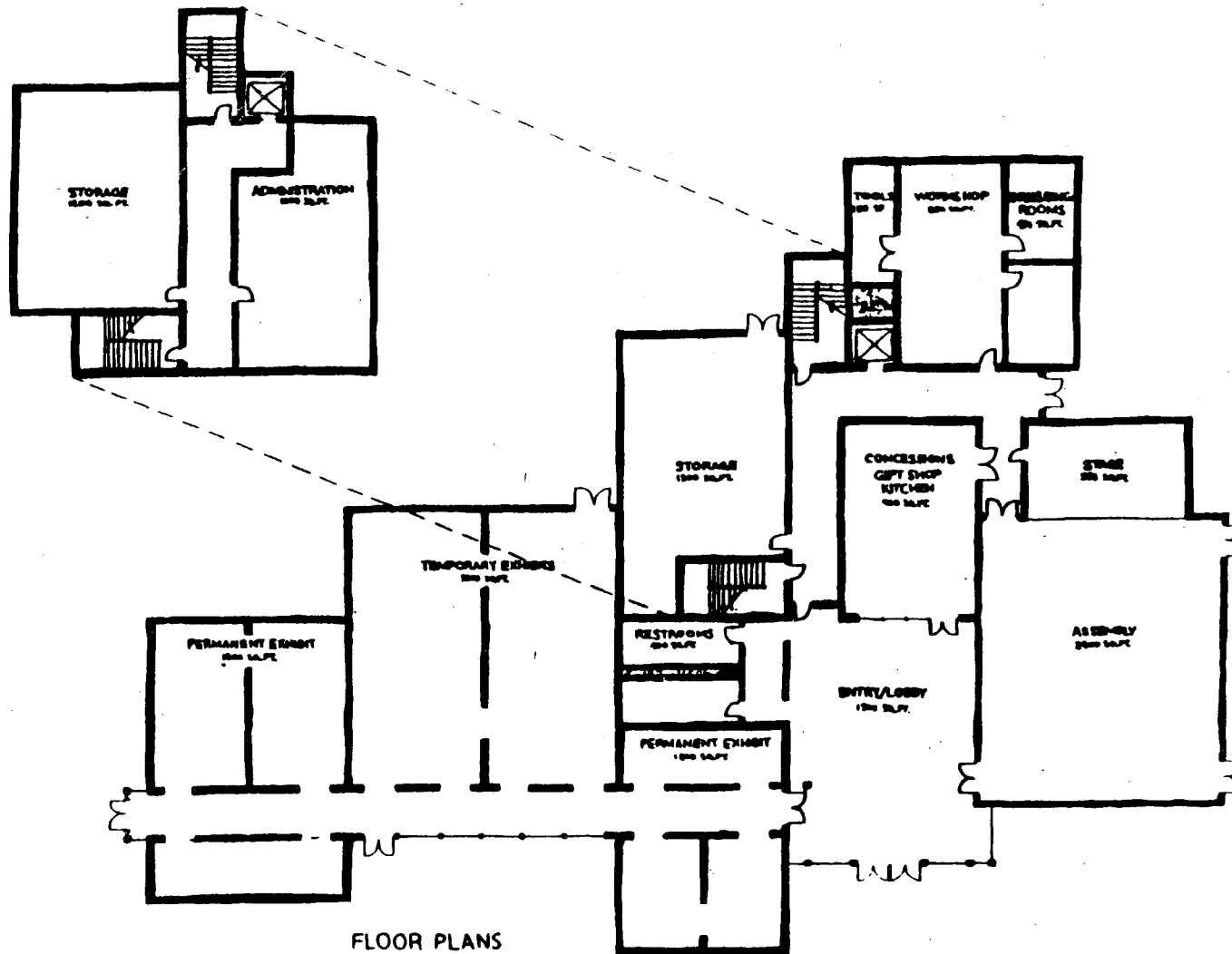
African American Heritage Museum at Colman School





FLOOR PLANS
 APRIL 8, 1992
 NEW CONSTRUCTION

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School

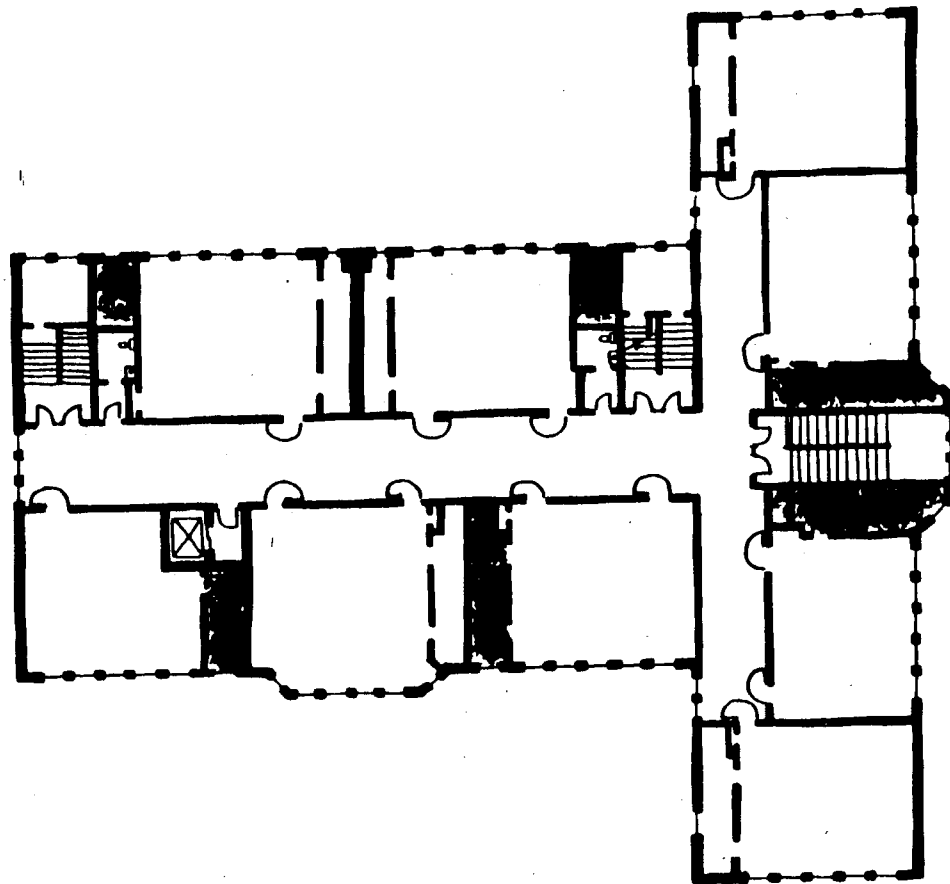


FLOOR PLANS

APRIL 8, 1992

NEW CONSTRUCTION

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



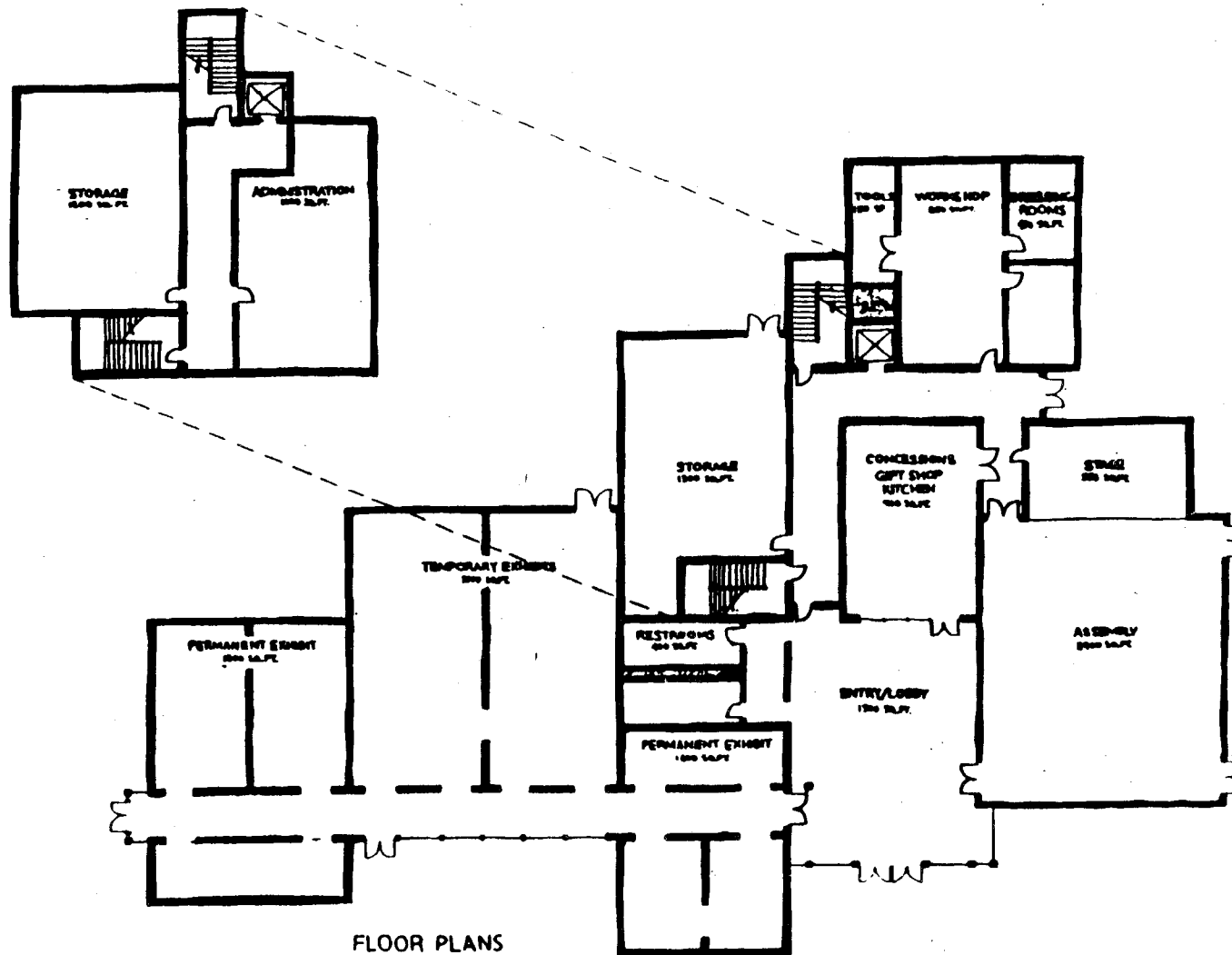
THIRD FLOOR PLAN (UNUSED)

APRIL 1, 1992

ENHANCED ENTRY/LOBBY- SCHEME THREE

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



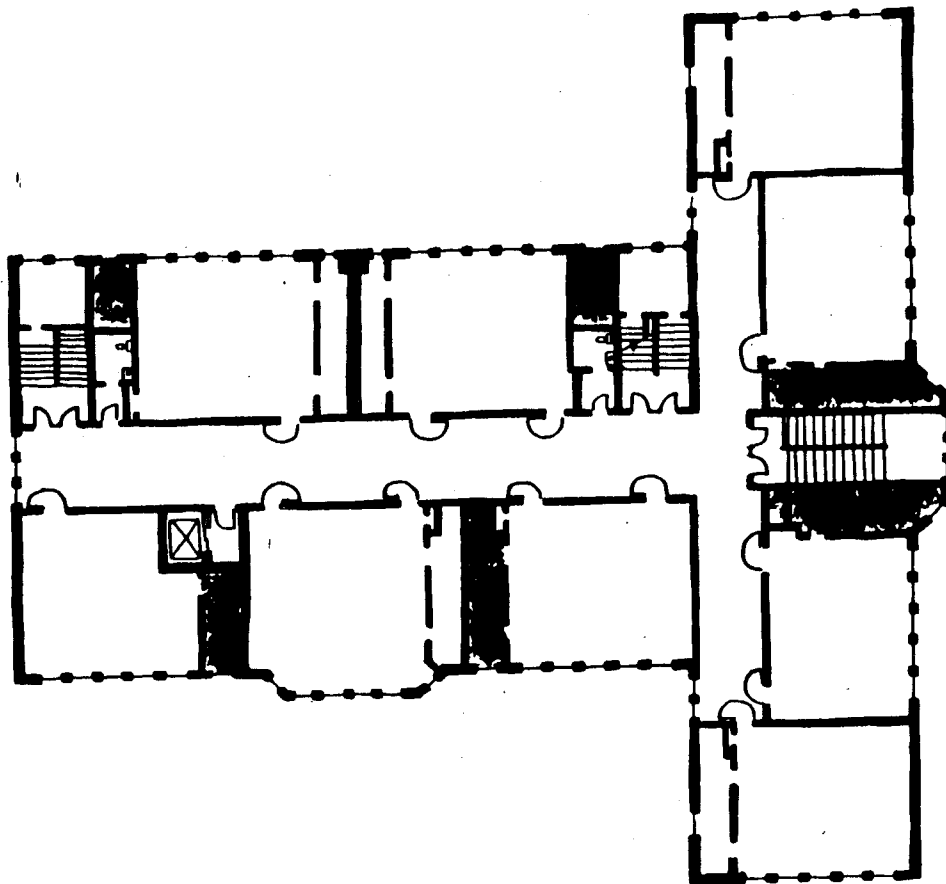


FLOOR PLANS

APRIL 6, 1982

NEW CONSTRUCTION

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



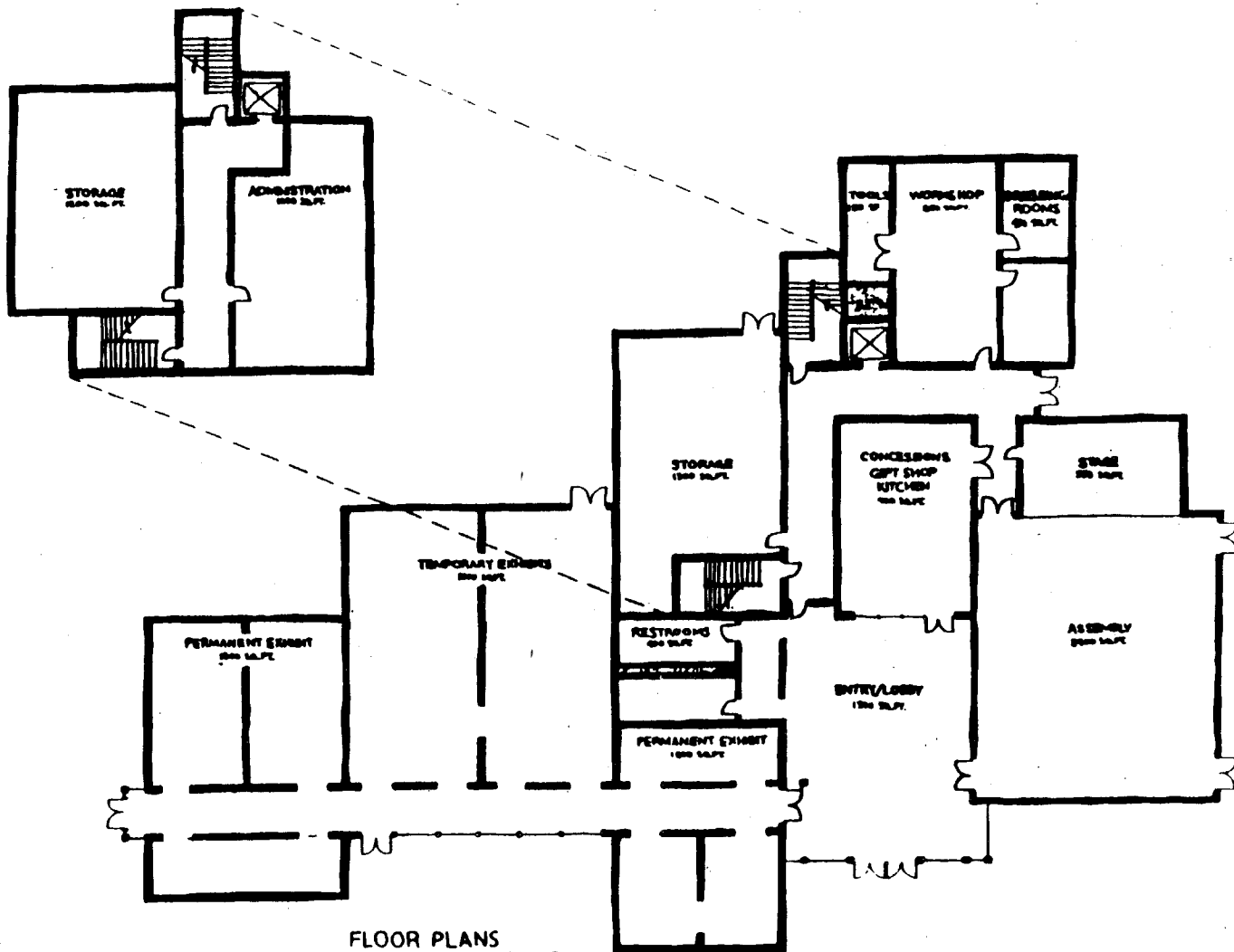
THIRD FLOOR PLAN (UNUSED)

APRIL 1, 1992

ENHANCED ENTRY / LOBBY- SCHEME THREE

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



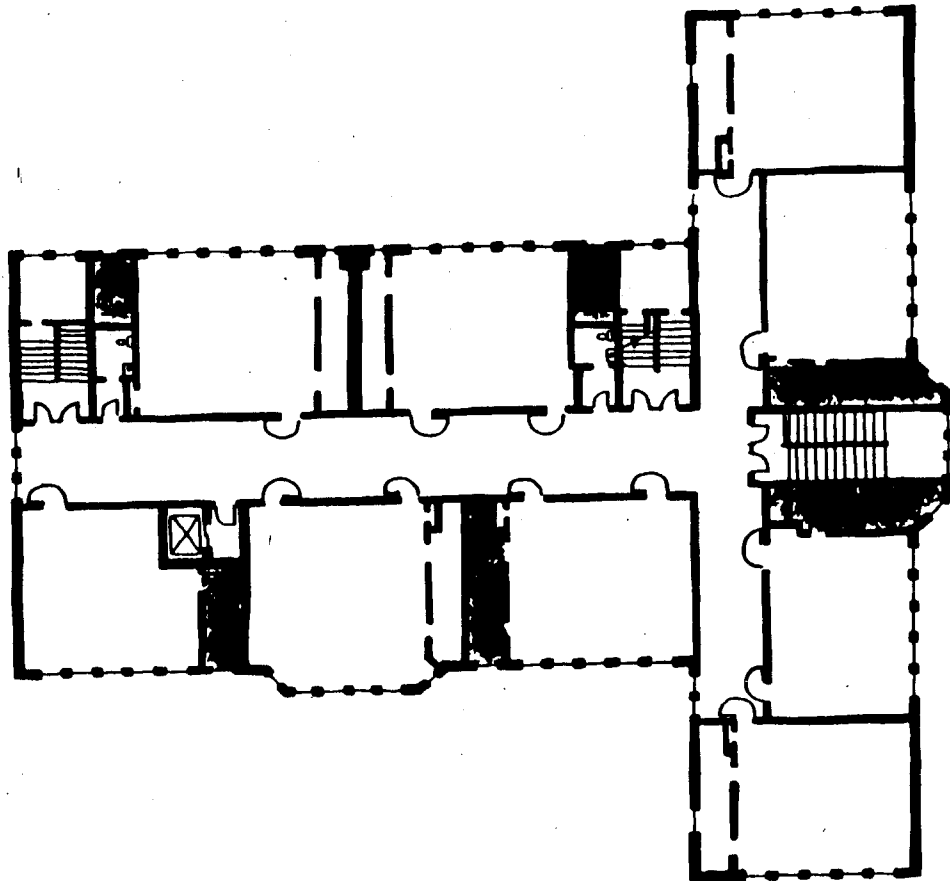


FLOOR PLANS

APRIL 8, 1992

NEW CONSTRUCTION

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School



THIRD FLOOR PLAN (UNUSED)

APRIL 1, 1992

ENHANCED ENTRY/LOBBY- SCHEME THREE

African American Heritage Museum at Colman School

