SOMERVILLE CITY HALL EMPLOYEE WORKSHOPS:
A CASE STUDY IN PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

by

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ABSTRACT

Somerville City Hall Employee Workshops: A Case Study in Participatory Design
Victor W. Karen
Submitted to the Department of Architecture on Jan. 19, 1979 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

This thesis concentrates on the development and implementation of a participatory design process through which employees of the Somerville (Mass) City Hall were able to articulate their needs and desires with respect to the place in which they work. Included is a general normative discussion of the value of user participation in environmental decision making, as well as a specific description of the participatory process design in the present case.

The results of this interaction among users and the professional are summarized in a series of issues and recommendations around three general areas of concern for the employees. The process is also evaluated as to its utility in stimulating creative exploration of problems and solutions as well as implementing incremental improvements and creating an on-going constituency for environmental quality within this user population.

The study is an action oriented one, in that its underlying aim is to help affect enhancement of the City Hall environment. Towards this end it seeks to inform further decision making in this direction by summarizing various program and design options, funding sources and an overall process for expanding the present group of participants to include members from all user populations of the building. The sucess of the present round of participation is seen as illustrating the value of including such additional input.

Thesis Supervisor: Julian Beinart
Title: Professor of Architecture

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Victor Karen, october 1978

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Introduction

We have come to imagine that "to produce, no matter how, or why, or by whom, means civilization. Whereas, on the contrary, civilization is concerned with the interaction between people and their activities in terms of each other and their environment. When these activities result in tangible forms, these are the symbols of a civilization only by virture of the manner in which they came about and which is reflected in their form."[1]

This study of problems and opportunities for change within the existing Somerville (Massachusetts) City Hall responds to the foregoing through a concern not only with an improved physical form for local governmental activities, but also with an improved process for actualizing this form. Its focus is thus two-fold on:

1. The development and testing of a participatory design methodology to enable users of the environment to articulate their needs and desires for it;
2. The specification of various guidelines and options for improving the existing environment based on this input.

The central normative position of this study is that users should be involved in evaluating and prescribing changes to

the environment they inhabit. By demonstrating the effectiveness of involving one particular user population - city hall employees - in such an effort, the study seeks to illustrate the value of participation to present decision makers. It is also seen as a constituency building mechanism for environmental quality by enabling participants to better understand, articulate and carry forward their own concerns with respect to the place in which they work.

This study also seeks to create a more informed understanding of the deficiencies and various possibilities for change within the present environment. It does not attempt to specify a single design solution which is appropriate for the City Hall. At present this is premature. Rather, a number of form and process considerations and suggestions are surfaced in order to better inform future discussion on this matter amongst an expanded set of decision makers.

It is based on the notion that the design process ought not be conceived as a linear progression from problem statement to space program to final design. Instead, it should be iterative - in which problem statement and program are "modified continuously as design proceeds and new possibilities, new data and new clients accrue."[2] For if the program is idelibly fixed before design begins, "The environment (will be) unwittingly predesigned by financial and administrative

considerations that have unforseeable side effects and are limited to routine categories of form."[3]

The actual body of the study is composed of the following elements:

- Chapter 1 outlines the general value of user participation in architecture and discusses various criteria which other successful participatory processes possess.
- Chapter 2 presents a brief summary of the historic and physical context of the Sommerville City Hall.
- Chapter 3 identifies various user populations within this environment and discusses their roles within the present decision-making context for prescribing environmental changes. It also further developes the focus and rationale behind the participatory aspects of the present study.
- Chapter 4 outlines the participatory method developed and implemented to structure the input of one particular user group--City Hall employees.
- Chapter 5 summarizes basic issues and areas of concern for this user group based on an initial round of employee interviews.
- Chapter 6 further elaborates on these issues on the basis of more interactive techniques developed to facilitate user input.

- Chapter 7 presents a series of design guidelines and recommendations which evolved over the course of dialogue between users and professionals.
- Chapter 8 evaluates the utility of this process in stimulating user input as well as furthering the objectives of user participation described in the first chapter.
- Chapter 9 contains a number of summary observations and recommendations for actualizing an improved environment for the City Hall.

Because this study is one of the values, needs and desires of a specific group of people, it endeavors to make extensive use of their direct written and verbal expressions to better reflect and document attitudes. All quotations ("...") in the text not otherwise identified are such expressions. They have not been individually referenced in order to enhance the readability of this document, as well as simplify the author's task.

Chapter 1: Architecture and User Participation

This chapter summarizes the general value of user participation in environmental decision making. It illustrates that the lack of participation is one aspect related to the deleterious quality of much of our built environment, as well as a significant social problem - the lack of 'sense of community' in our society.

At the conclusion of the chapter three basic ingredients that characterize sucessful participatory processes are presented and discussed.

The Value of User Participation

One of the major criticisms of much contemporary architecture is that it is not a meaningful representation of the needs, wishes and aspirations of its users. These wishes are either "ignored on principle or overthrown by the application of models which suit the interests of promoters or the visions of the designer." [1] Environments so created are more likely to alienate people rather than support their desired activity patterns. They demean the human relationship with the environment to that of a 'typical consumer' consuming standardized products.

A review of the built artifacts of our industrialized society quickly reveals that they are indeed more akin to consumer goods than human habitation. Our newly produced housing may work well for the 'typical user' with 'minimal FHA requirements', but does not nurture creativity and joy for real people, let alone satisfy real individual requirements. Our offices are more like rows upon rows of pigeon slots, rather than places for people to engage in creative and satisfying work tasks. Our public spaces are monuments to a single man's vision, rather than places for citizens to gather, to play, to enjoy communion with others.

Small wonder that such a physical context frustrates people's desires for identification with the places in which they live,

work and play, thus adversely affecting the 'sense of community' amongst our populace. For "only a person who has a well developed strong personal self can venture out to participate in communal life,"[2] and these environments encourage but stereotypical, passive, consumer-oriented behavior patterns rather than personal growth and development.

What then of the conventional remedies that seek to address this state of affairs? Houses have been arranged in 'neighborhood clusters'. Offices have been 'landscaped'. Public spaces have been 'beautified'. Still the 'sense of community' lies dormant. One reason for this can be traced to a number of misapprehensions that have guided those to whom was entrusted the shaping of our environment.

The way they approached man's requirements "assumed without question the possibility of translating these requirements into architectural designs... This would be fine if it were indeed possible to deal with requirements in purely material terms."[3] A building or other piece of environment is however "appropriated in a two-fold manner: by use and by perception."[4] If attention is not paid to both manners of appropriation, serious defeciencies can result. Witness the 'landscaped office' that expedites and rationalizes use patterns. Various studies nevertheless report overall negative reactions on the part of users.[5] In these cases too much attention was paid to efficiency and not enough to the image of the place.

In the 1920's the Modern Movement in architecture provided a theoretical basis for such design intervention. This notion, "stating that function generates form represented the correct answer for which the (rapidly industrializing society's) ideology of the city (as a) machine-commodity was waiting." [6] The form-function equation "however disputable it may now seem - could have been much more fruitful if the second factor had not been limited to a bare representation of conventional behaviors, but instead, had been expanded to include the entire range of social behaviors. But this sort of comprehension would have required the direct participation of (users), whereas according to the method pursued, (they) were inevitably unheeded and even strictly excluded." [7]

The flip side of this ideology is that of 'environmental determinism'. "In its simplest interpretation, it holds that man can manipulate environments to produce specified behaviors." [8] A strict application of this design notion asserts that to enhance the 'sense of community', one need only to arrange physical form to be like one's vision of a community. "This may be intriguing design but poor psychology, since it ignores the feedback role of the participant - the degree to which his own perceptions of, and reactions to, a situation modify the very (environment) he is responding to." [9]

Physical form can set the stage for certain kinds of human behavior. Witness the relation between friendship patterns and distance between dwelling units reported by Leon Festinger in a study conducted of graduate student housing at MIT.[10] "However, in another project with a similar layout (but different user group) ... neighbors were hostile and did not choose to associate with each other."[11] Based on these studies he concludes that "when looked at from the perspective of complex forms of social life, the influence of spatial organization is uncertain and variable."[12] From a number of similar studies it appears that physical form can easily constrain the kinds of things people want to do, but has a more difficult time coercing people to do things for which they are not predisposed.

The frame of reference which used as guiding principles the notions of 'environmental determinism' and 'form following (typical) function' with its concentration on the physical environment inevitably overlooked the true essence of 'sense of community'. For "in order to be a member of a community, one has to feel that one can take part in the decision making processes (for that community). 'Community' actually means that it is possible, as a member of a social group, to make decisions affecting the behavior, life-style and three dimensional expression of that group." [13]

To be a member of a community means having communication or dialogue with other members. This dialogue is not simple conversation to pass the time but "is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to 'name' the world, and thereby set the stage for transformation."[14] Any situation in which "some men prevent others from engaging in this process of inquiry is one of violence. To alienate men from their own decision making is to change them into objects."[15] It is precisely this sort of alienation that today's prevalent design methodologies help perpetuate.

This is not to lay the entire burden for the lack of 'sense of community' onto the design professions. Neither is it asserted that by solely changing the process for shaping our environment a 'sense of community' will spring amongst the populace. There are certainly numerous, even more significant factors to which present day alienation is traceable - among them economic powerlessness, political disaffection and disintegration of traditional social bonds and beliefs. Rather the foregoing simply illustrates the correlation between the ideology which permeates design decision making and the lack of community in our society.

A number of social critics would argue that this is inevitable since the design professional is but a "soft cop (who) can at best only ameliorate the condition produced by the

status quo." [16] In their view changes within this sphere of decision making have all too often been implemented as a guise to manipulate and appease, thus contributing to the maintenece of the status quo and that without a true re-distribution of power little social change will be engineered. [17]

"Helping our citizens establish a sense of community with which they can identify and over which they can exercise meaningful influence is one of the major social challenges of our time." [18] It requires far-ranging changes in the social, economic and political structure of our society. The way we shape the environment around us is perhaps not a critical aspect towards ameliorating this problem. It is but a step along one avenue of change towards enhancing the quality of life for our citizens.

To help affect such change it has become increasingly commonplace to advocate various forms and degrees of user participation in environmental decision making over the past 10 to 15 years. This concept is not of recent

invention, however. Throughout history users have been intimately involved in shaping the settings which they inhabited. Until recently there was in fact little alternative to direct involvement for the majority of people, as deleterious economic and social conditions made self-build a necessary aspect of life.

It is not argued here that this participation resulted in an overall better quality of life than presently enjoyed by people in advanced industrial societies. Nevertheless, the continual adjustment of past environments in response to user needs and wishes has resulted in settings that are now much admired for their diversity, personalization and qualities of organic growth and change. They exhibit a richness, variety and fit to activities that are seldom found in contemporary environments desinged and built exclusively by professionals.[19]

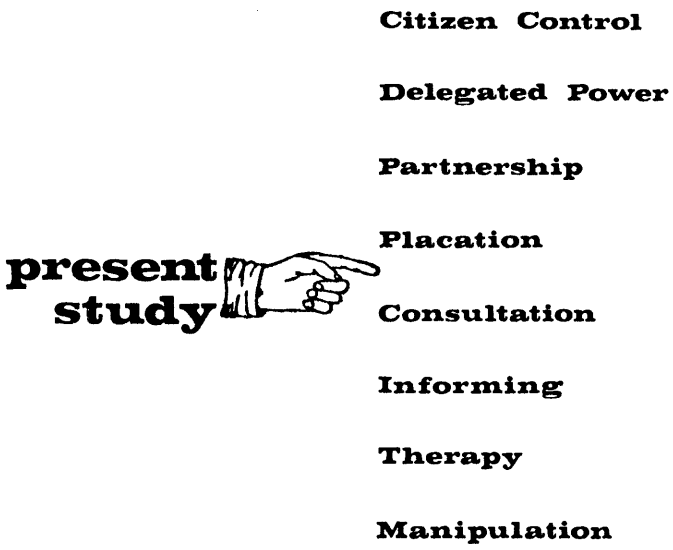
It is in the context of increasing specialization of work tasks and urbanization of society that the notion of user participation has assumed an extraordinary character. Environmental decisions are now consigned to well intentioned experts and "bureaucrats who have been given mandates by their superiors and who carry them out no matter what happens."[20] Users are "left gasping at the rate and increasing amount of change, and most of all, at their complete lack of control over the future of their own lives and

environments."[21] The recent incidence of many such cases makes the need for and value of participatory design easy to understand.

Users themselves are in the best position to know most about their own needs. Since much of this "most important kind of information about the environment, such as information about behavior and feelings tends to be non-quantifiable, there is overwhelming evidence that (sole reliance on) improved techniques of data collection by professionals engaged in building for other people will not work."[22] Rather a design process that enables users to express and clarify their needs and then translate them into design decisions is necessary to result in settings that are better fitted to user activities.

The user's mental sense of connection and identification with the part of the environment they inhabit will also be strengthened through such a participatory process. In addition participation provides basic human educational and developmental opportunities by increasing people's sense of competence in making decisions about their environment.

Few cases that come under the rubric of participatory design provide users a "degree of power which guarantees that (they) can govern a program or institution and be in full charge of policy and management." [23] Many are however "legitimate steps toward full participation." [24] As further discussed in



"Ladder of Citizen Participation"

chapter 3 - the Present Study, this round of participation falls somewhere midway between 'manipulation' and 'citizen control' on Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation.[25] It is but one step towards achieving the broader social goals described in this chapter.

Criteria for a Sucessful Process

Although no complete theories exist about the best ways to work with users in the design of environments, a number of techniques and approaches have recently been developed and tested with excellent results. These cases have demonstrated that users can contribute valuable normative input about how a place should be and also engage in sophisticated design decisions involving various tradeoffs and constraints.

Which approach is best depends on the particular situation. Sucessful participation projects do however have the following"common ingredients: education, communication and the identification of human resources."[26] The first - education - is extremely important since "one of the main problems facing (user) involvement is the present lack of awareness among people of the environment itself." [27] In order that this education be the "means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world,"[28] it must consist in "acts of cognition and not simple transferrals of information."[29]

Such education cannot be carried out by 'A' for 'B' as typically happens when users are presented 2 or 3 alternatives from which to choose, without having had an opportunity for creative input in generating these alternatives. Neither can

it be carried out by 'A' about 'B' in which cases participation may be limited to questionaire type user surveys. Rather it should be education carried out "by 'A' with 'B', mediated by the world."[30] Authentic education bases itself on "creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation." [31]

It is thus incumbent on the professional to work in partnership with users to enable them to become more aware of their environment, "to loosen up and help clarify a situation." [32] "Experience indicates that when users are carefully prepared for the task, they are capable of projecting beginning designs based on their own understandings of their needs and aspirations."[33] When this occurs, "the professional's role is extended, not reduced. It is he or she who must then turn tentative impulses into full-blown solutions... integrating all design inputs into a single cohesive proposal for change."[34]

The second ingredient - that of communication or dialogue - is vital in order to reach a deeper understanding of environmental problems and issues. For "in order to create order... people must have some shared principles...some base in common"[35] that can only be built up through dialogue with others.

Users often experience great difficulty in trying to articulate their own needs and desires for a place, especially at the start of a participatory process. It is an understandable result of the fact that they have largely been excluded from making decisions about the shaping of the environment.

Due to this, most participatory processes begin by organizing users into 'affinity groups'. "Work is then started with small groups of similar people who can easily share experiences and feelings and work effectively together to achieve in-depth participation."[36]

The core of participatory methodologies, such as Ecologue and the Washington Streets for People "consists of experiences designed to help individuals clarify their own thoughts and feelings."[37] "At each step of the (Ecologue) process, individuals are asked to express their own perceptions first, followed by group constructions which aid the individual in understanding how his or her own experience is similar and different from that of friends."[38]

One of the essential ingredients of Lawrence Halprin's 'Take Part Workshops' is also the "establishment of a common language of experience,"[39] which is developed through individual and group "awareness exercises". Having completed these exercises enables participants to begin their dialogue from a shared basis. A structured opportunity for each user

to relate his or her individual responses to these common tasks also helps equalize and reinforce the value of each member's contributions.

This is a critical aspect in establishing authentic dialogue. It immediately legitimizes the user's subjective perceptions and sets the stage for user definition of the significant issues and problems from their own perspective. Were it the other way around, and the professional first presented a series of options for changes, users would have great difficulty even penetrating the material, let alone considering that their subjective needs and desires have much importance. They would literally be swamped in professional jargon and their role reduced to a simple acceptance or rejection of various proposals.

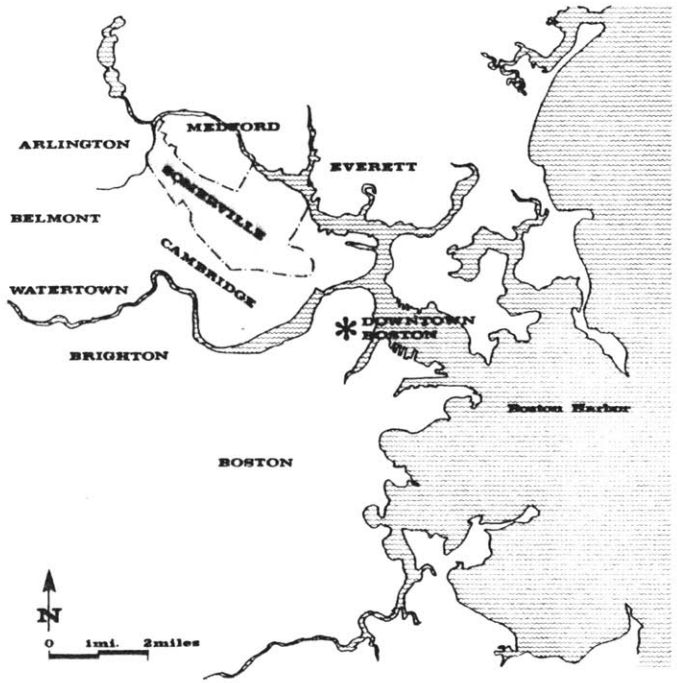
The third ingredient - the identification of human resources- is essential to establishing on-going user interest and commitment to environmental quality. To the extent that participatory processes broaden the user's awareness about the environment and stimulate creative reflection about new possibilities, they are a constituency building mechanism for environmental quality. In many cases, however, actual decision making is long and drawn out. Thus, the users must have a certain amount of staying power and on-going commitment to a place.

Quite often, it requires a major issue or soon to be implemented intervention to stimulate user interest. By this time, the decisions have already been made and the participatory process is more akin to that of advocacy planning. "Participation (however) implies the presence of the users during the whole course of the operation."[40]

"The involvement of (users) in decision making does not (necessarily) call for formal meetings, heavy discussions, rigid time-tables and severe discipline. Rather, it can be a spontaneous, light hearted but at the same time serious in nature, enjoyable - and above all - a social event."[41]

Chapter 2: Somerville City Hall: History & Physical Context

This chapter outlines the history and physical development of the city of Somerville and the area in the immediate vicinity of the city hall. A brief history of this building is also included.



Regional Context

Somerville: General Context and Historic Development

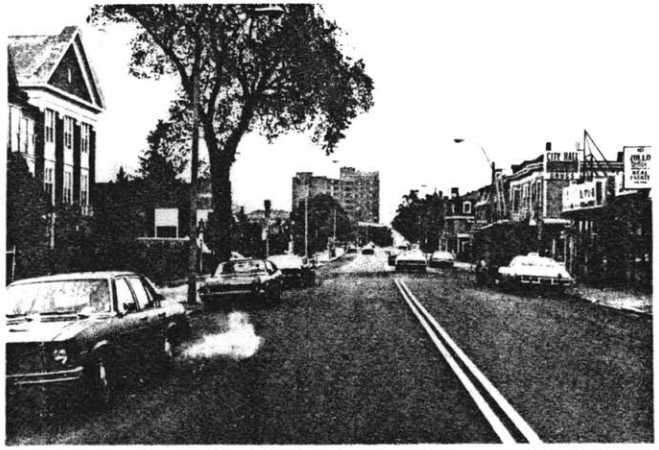
The city of Somerville is within the inner ring of 'older suburbs' in the Boston Metropolitan area. It is located to the northwest, within a short commute by auto or public transportation from the downtown Boston peninsula. Predominantly a working and middle class residential community of 4.2 square miles, it has two major business areas at either end - Union Square to the east and Davis Square to the west.

Somerville has a higher proportion of its total land area devoted to residential uses than do any of the other inner cities in the Boston area. Its gross residential density of 18.9 du/acre is the densest overall within the metropolitan region.[1]

The age of automobile transportation has not been kind to this city. In the past few decades, much of Somerville's industry as well as a significant portion of its population has moved to more convenient and commodious locations in Boston's outer, suburban fringe. Somerville's retail areas which were well situated and suited for customers doing their shopping on foot are now hard pressed to compete with newer shopping centers that have plenty of parking and are located on major arterials just outside the city's boundaries.



View up School st. from bridge across B&M railroad tracks - with City Hall at left.



View down Highland Ave. - City Hall on left.

The interstate highway planning and construction of the 1960's has also left deep scars in many of Somerville's neighborhoods. Much land still remains vacant in East Somerville following demolition for the ill-fated Inner Belt. And, numerous residents must put up with incessant noise and pollution along the completed I-93 corridor.

Somerville is sometimes referred to as 'the city of seven hills'. These hills have had an extremely important influence on historical as well as current use patterns within the city. They channeled the initial development of streets and railways into the valleys and on to lower, flatter sections of land. Consequently, the major retail centers and industrial areas which grew around these transportation elements in the mid and late nineteenth century are generally located in the low-lands of the city. The sloping high ground is predominantly residential.

Spring Hill, Central Hill, and Prospect Hill, a chain across southern Somerville, constrained the development of any major streets in the north-south direction and has resulted today in poor access on narrow streets such as School, Central, Lowell and Cedar. East-west access was first provided by streets on level ground at the foot of the hills and later along their ridge. These streets - Somerville Ave, Highland Ave, Broadway and Mystic Street - are generally broader and more continuous than the north-south ones.



10' contours: —·—00—·—·—

scale: 0 1000' 2000'

City of Somerville, Ma.

Population of Somerville

Year

1840 - 1,000
mar. 14, 1842 (established as 'town')
1850 - 3,540
1860 - 8,025
1870 - 14,685
apr. 14, 1871 (incorporated as 'city')
1880 - 24,933
1890 - 40,152
1900 - 61,643
1910 - 77,236
1920 - 93,000
1930 - 104,000
1940 - 102,000
1950 - 102,000
1960 - 95,000
1970 - 88,000
2000 - 80,000 (projected)

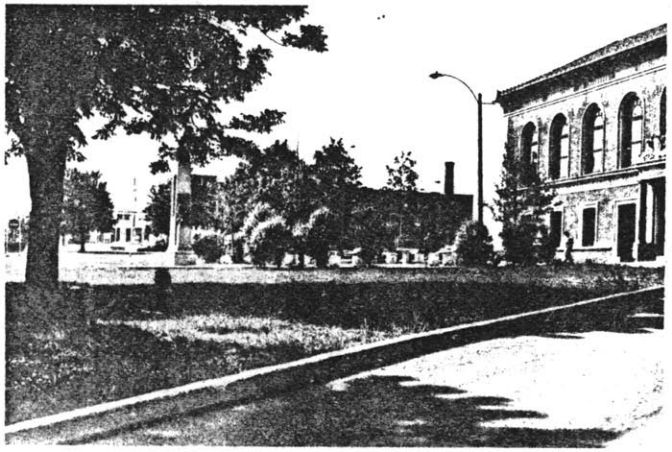
In 1842, when Somerville was officially established as a town, a little over 1,000 people resided within its present day boundaries. At this point it was predominantly a community of farms and large estates with a village center in Union Sq. Its major thoroughfares were laid out to provide access between Union Sq., the bridges into Boston and the commercial areas that were developing in Cambridge around Harvard Sq., Central Sq. and in East Cambridge. Other smaller roads provided access to the farms and estates in the hinterland.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the population of Somerville began to increase dramatically. This was the result of growing industrialization in the Boston area and the successive waves of European immigrants who found employment in the factories and other related business enterprises of an expanding economy.

Most of the city's homes, schools and commercial structures were built in the period from 1880 to 1930, during which time Somerville's population increased from 25,000 to a peak of 104,000. "According to the 1940 housing census, 76.4% of all dwelling units in Somerville were built between 1880 and 1920 and (a full 50%) were constructed (in the ten years) between 1890 and 1900." [2]

Around the 1850's at the start of this period of rapid population growth, members of the working and middle classes in the Boston area were severely limited in their choice of housing accommodations. Due to a relatively deleterious economic situation, they had to find places to live that were within walking distance of their work places. The opportunities inherent in such a 'captive market' were not lost on land speculators who proceeded to construct housing districts around business, office and factory areas - such as East Somerville, East Cambridge, and Cambridgeport. Tremendous profits were realized by this group of speculators as a result of the 'class monopoly' they had over buildable land. The housing they built was far denser and less amenable than that which characterized the city prior to this period of expansion.

Central Hill: History and Present Context



View of Central Hill Park from Highland and Walnut st, looking towards City Hall in the background. Central Library is at right; High School building in center.

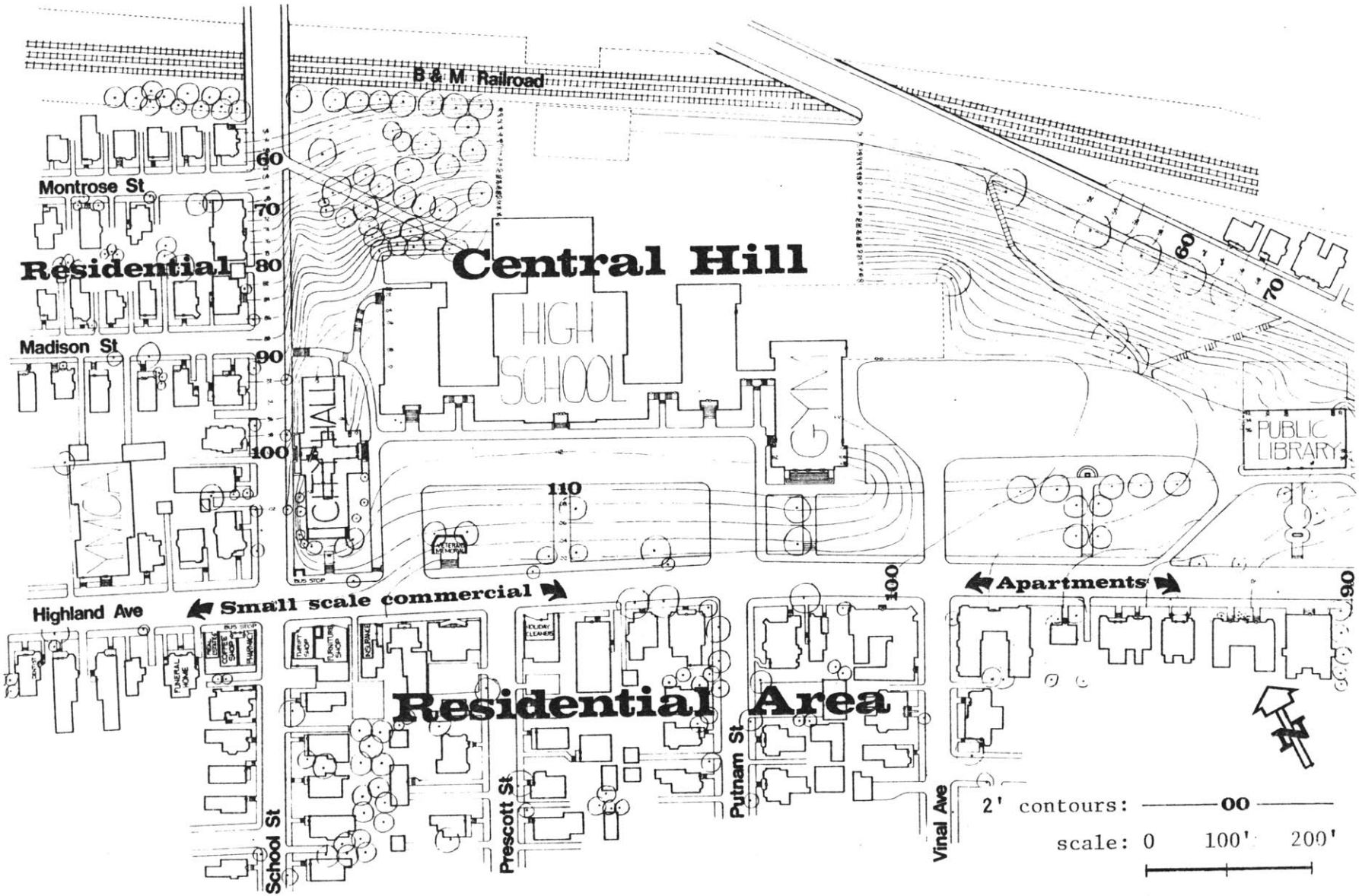


Highland Ave. - small scale commercial opposite City Hall.

The Somerville City Hall is located at the crest of Central Hill , at the corner of Highland Ave. and School Street. It is within a predominantly residential area with small-scale neighborhood retail and service establishments along Highland Avenue. The City Hall occupies a corner of a rather large piece of land known as Central Hill Park. Somerville's high school as well as the Central Library are also located within this block bounded by Highland Avenue, School St., Walnut St., Medford St. and the B & M railroad tracks.

Most of the houses in the Central Hill area were constructed after the town of Somerville was incorporated as a city by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature on April 14, 1871. Prior to this time the sloping ground of the hill was occupied by large estates and farmland. This was largely due to the fact that the primary means of transport by foot for the working and middle classes severely limited the expansion of denser, speculative housing patterns which were already prevalent in East Somerville.

In the decades around the turn of the century, though, a new transportation element was being introduced throughout the Boston area, which had a far-reaching impact on land not previously prone to speculation. This was the horse-drawn



Central Hill Area

and later electrified street railway.

The first such line was established in 1852 between Harvard Square in Cambridge and Union Square, with a later extension into Boston. In 1887, streetcar tracks were laid from Davis Square through the Central Hill area along Highland Ave., Medford St., Somerville Ave. and into downtown Boston. By 1896, Somerville had 37 separate lines starting within its limits, running along approximately 11 total miles of track. An 1897 history of the city reported that "Somerville has perhaps the best street railway facilities of any suburb of Boston, and to this fact is largely attributed the phenomenal increase"[3] in the city's population in the final decades of the 19th century.



Madison st. - residential area.

The street railway system expanded the spatial range available for working and middle class housing development. Now, instead of having to secure homes within walking distance to work places, people could locate within walking distance to the streetcar lines and then commute to their jobs. This housing market, although significantly expanded, was nevertheless firmly controlled and exploited by speculators who began to increase the residential density in areas such as Central Hill by subdividing the estates and erecting new structures bewteen the large existing homes.[4]

Thus, the residential area around the Somerville City Hall



Putnam st. - residential area.

contains a wide range of housing types and styles. It is not uncommon to find large single-family structures dating from the 1850's and 1860's next to smaller two- and three-family houses and apartment blocks from the latter decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries in close proximity.

By about 1930 most of the land on Central Hill, as well as the rest of Somerville, was fully occupied by residential, commercial and industrial uses. Since that time almost all new construction that has occurred has been the replacement of older structures by newer, generally denser and taller apartment blocks. Many of the large homes on Central Hill have instead been remodelled into two or more apartment units. Thus, the streets of the area still retain a pleasant sense of scale and historical continuity.

Central Hill Park itself was purchased by the city in 1870 - just prior to the period of extensive residential development in the surrounding area. The oldest section of the Somerville high school, located adjacent to the City Hall, was built in 1895, with subsequent additions made in 1906, 1918 and 1928. The remaining building on this site, the Central Library, was built in 1885 and has recently been completely renovated inside.

At one time this Park had a redoubt with earthworks and



Parking has encroached and adversely impacted open space on Central Hill.

Civil War cannons to commemorate the site of a Revolutionary War fortification used by the colonists during the seige of Boston. This historic reference has been completely obliterated by a macadam parking lot between the high school and library building. The portion of the Park in front of the City Hall and high school has also succumbed to the automobile's insatiable hunger for parking space. Such use of publicly owned open space seems especially inappropriate in Somerville, since there is a severe scarcity of recreationally developed land within the city.

Somerville City Hall: A Brief History

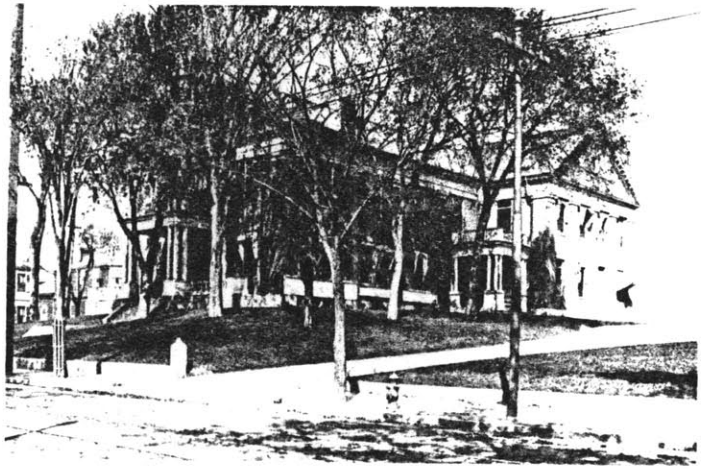
In 1850, an already expanding population had "produced in the minds of many citizens considerable solicitude for the establishment of a high school"[5], in order to increase the educational opportunity afforded the town's 672 school-aged (5-15 years old) inhabitants. The town's school committee was instructed by a vote of the town meeting to prepare a series of options for such a project, which were presented to the town in March 1851. In April, the town meeting voted favorably on the one which included the purchase of 25,000 square feet of land on Central Hill and the erection of a two-story building on this site. The land so purchased is at the present corner of Highland Avenue and School Street. The two-story building constructed on this site was dedicated on April 28, 1852, and presently forms the south wing of the Somerville City Hall.



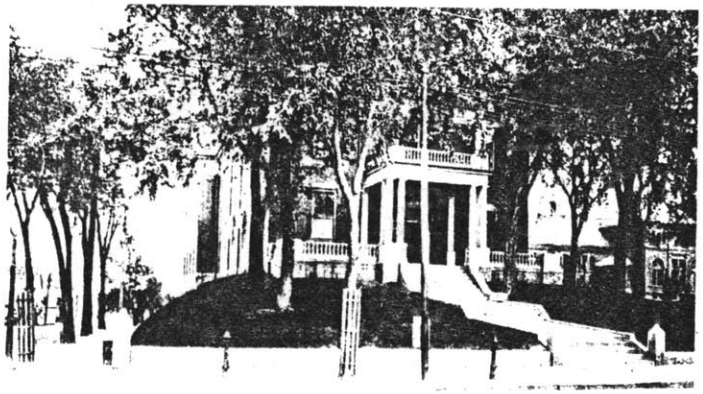
City Hall in 1860's.

For 15 years after its dedication, this building was occupied on the second floor by the new high school. The first floor was utilized for the purposes of town government. Between 1867-73, the entire structure was used as a school, the town offices having been moved to larger accommodations in the newer Foster school house.

Incorporation as a city in 1871 brought with it additional



City Hall after 1896 addition.

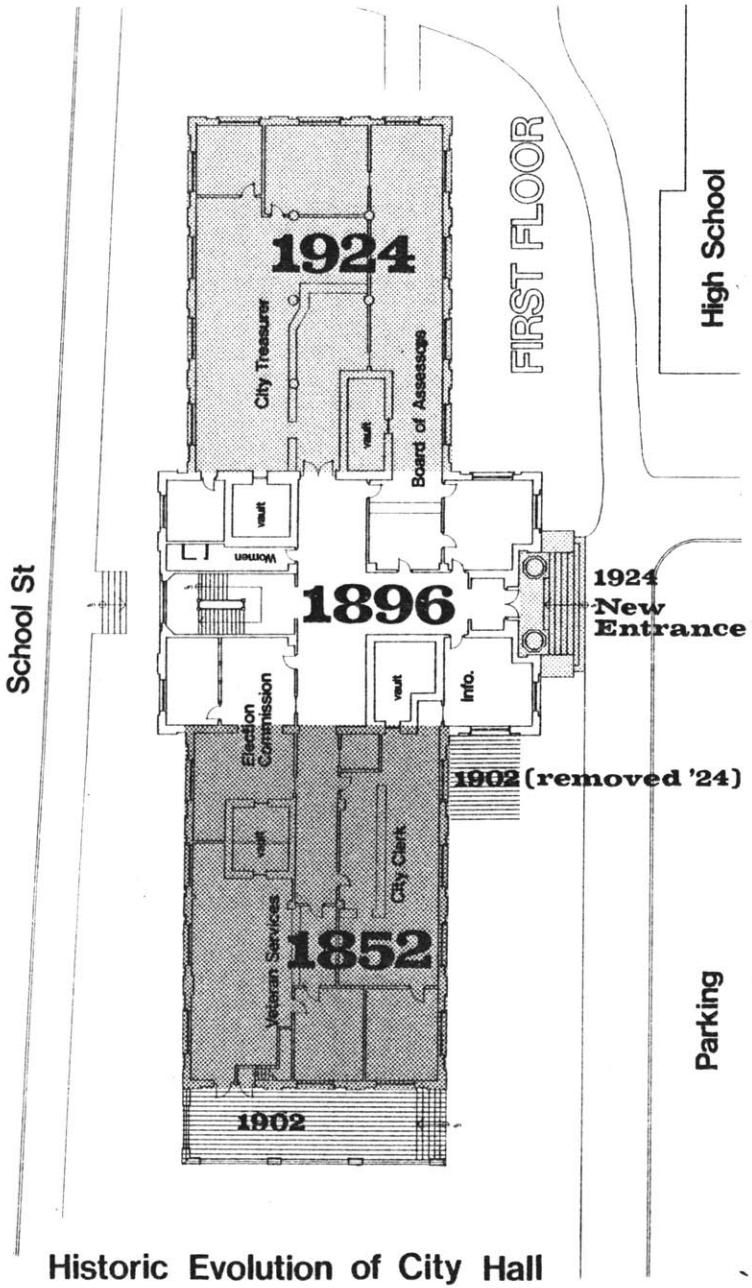


Front porch on Highland Ave. - added in 1902; removed in 1924

requirements for an expanded local government operation. At this time the high school was also in need of new facilities due to the town's population increase. Thus, when a new high school was built in January 1872 on Central Hill, the older building was converted once again to governmental use. This time, the entire two-story structure was utilized by the newly incorporated city government.

By 1895 "the increase of public business incident to the rapid growth of the city (had, once again) taxed to the utmost the capacity of City Hall".[6] Numerous plans for a new city hall were submitted, but all finally rejected due to the costs involved in constructing a new building. In 1896, the problem was resolved by adding a three-story extension at the north end and remodelling the first floor of the existing building. This addition, which was designed by T.M. Sargent from sketches made by John F. Cole, then city treasurer, now forms the center section of the present City Hall.

In 1902 a broad veranda with a porch was constructed in front of the main entrance to the City Hall, with a stairway leading down to Highland Avenue. A smaller porch of similar detailing was added in the corner between the 1896 addition and the original building. These were characterized in a newspaper article of the time as having made a "marked



Historic Evolution of City Hall

improvement in the appearance of the building and (being) of great utility in stormy weather, as formerly there was no shelter of any sort at the front entrance."[7]

By the 1920's the building had once again become cramped. Thus, in 1924, the present north wing was added to the center section, and the interior spaces within the existing structure were completely reorganized. The major entrance was removed from the Highland Ave. side to the center section of the City Hall where it is today. Much of the exterior detailing and articulation added in 1902 was removed. Aside from various interior changes, the 1924 addition marks the last significant change in the amount as well as the quality of space within the City Hall.

Since this time, various city departments and agencies have either moved to outside accommodations or been forced to operate under increasingly cramped conditions. This problem has especially intensified in the last decade with the creation of a number of new offices within city government to administer various federally sponsored programs such as planning, community development and human services, among others.

Although some may feel that the building has completely outlived its usefulness as a city hall, most people who



City Hall - east facade, 1978

use it would hate to see the building torn down and replaced with a new structure. It is a significant historical reference and connection to the past. There are, nevertheless, a number of substantial improvements that can and should be initiated to improve conditions on the site and within this building, for employees and citizens alike. These improvements should be guided by an attitude that respects the past and seeks to build on its valued aspects, to accommodate present-day needs and use patterns, rather than one which blindly replicates the exact style and details of historical precedent.

Chapter 3: Users, Decision Making Structure & the Present Study

This chapter identifies four major user groups within the city hall and discusses their roles in the present decision making context for changing this environment. In addition, the focus and rationale for the present study are outlined and discussed.

City Hall User Groups

The overall user population of Somerville City Hall is composed of four general user groups:

1. The mayor and various other elected officials of the city comprise one group. This group also includes mayoral appointees to head city departments and agencies. Its composition is susceptible to radical change as the result of biennial city elections.
2. The civil service employees within the various departments comprise the second user group. It is characterized by a much greater stability in composition. Changes in administration do not usually result in widespread replacement of these employees.
3. CETA employees who mostly staff agencies created as a result of federal interest in local human service programs comprise the third group. The composition of this group is more susceptible to change than that of civil service employees, due to the fact that many CETA appointments are for 1 year terms.
4. Somerville citizens and other visitors who come to the City Hall on business are the fourth group. The majority of this group uses the building on an infrequent basis when the need arises to pay taxes, secure services or lobby to redress grievances.

Current Decision Making Structure

The decision making power with respect to changing the existing environment of Somerville City Hall is firmly vested in the first group of users. Of this group, the elected officials are understandably wary of implementing improvements financed by local revenues because of the potentially detrimental consequences at the next election. A widespread perception that the current tax rate is already too high adds to this reticence.

Thus, the decision making structure has built into it a high degree of inertia that constrains the development and implementation of substantive environmental changes. Within this context, changes are oft-times made on an ad-hoc basis largely in response to short-range needs and problems. There are however, a number of problems within the City Hall that require a committment to a longer time frame. The benefit of initiating these changes will transcend numerous administrations.

One such example is the storage problem which has reached massive proportions in many departments. Implementation of a microfilming system would help alleviate this condition for a long time to come. The expenditure, however, must be made now. If evaluated in terms of potentially harmful political consequences, it may indeed make sense

to put it off for one more year. The cycle can be repeated endlessly until departments are literally buried in a mass of stored paper, at which time the solution will be even costlier. Frequently, just as the scope of such problems is beginning to be understood and a commitment to action fashioned, the cast of actors in this first group of users changes once again.

The second and third group of users - lower echelon City Hall employees - who have lived with these problems over a longer period of time have a very limited say in the actual decision making process. There has rarely been any consultation or actual dealings with members of various departments in the planning of office space in the City Hall. [1] One reason for this is the extreme crowding and lack of space within the building. Thus, if a certain office is vacated, other departments are often reshuffled with little thought given to their functional needs and requirements.

The Auditors were moved from the first floor to the second as part of a spatial reorganization when the Building department moved out of City Hall to a new facility. The amount of space for this department was thus increased. The move however resulted in an undesirable separation from the Assessor's and Treasurer's office on the first floor.

More recently a much needed mail and copying room was created by removing space from Human Services on the second floor. Half of this office's staff was moved into the basement by decreasing the amount of space occupied by the Educational Cable and After School Program. These two departments must now function under extremely crowded conditions.

The functioning of Human Services is also susceptible to detrimental impact due to the split. In this case too, the extreme lack of space in City Hall and politically motivated inertia to undertake more substantive changes combined to dictate an ad-hoc reorganization that could create a number of functional difficulties for the affected departments.

The fourth group of users - citizens of Somerville - have a collective voice in the decision making structure by virtue of the political pressure they can exert on elected officials. This pressure need not however reflect the majority's views. Quite often the 'squeaky wheels' of a minority are the ones that 'get the grease' due to the structure and functioning of local government.

The Present Study

The underlying normative position of this study is that the present decision making structure for proposing and implementing changes to the Somerville city hall should be adjusted to include and respond to the needs, values and desires of all four user groups. The specific focus is on the development and implementation of a participatory process to enable a number of lower echelon city hall employees articulate and formulate their concerns and desires for environmental improvement.

Members of this user group have inhabited the environment over a much longer period of time than the first group of users and are thus well aware of the existing problems. While many department heads are in and out of their offices continually on city business, these employees spend eight hours per day in the City Hall environment, interacting directly with citizen-users. Their accumulated expertise is much too valuable a resource to overlook in the programming and design of improvements.

There is another even stronger argument for their involvement. "People have a need to acquire, personalize and identify with spaces." [2] Even in office environments that are considered by employees to be aesthetically pleasing, various studies report overall negative reactions. This

"may reflect the feeling on the part of the worker that he or she has no real control over the setting, no matter how pleasant it may be." [3]

An extremely effective way to enhance the user's sense of connection to the environment is to involve them in decisions about how the place should be. "Questionaires can begin the process of involvement, but are rarely intensive or projective enough on their own ... they are most effective if used in combination with continuous and direct interaction over design issues."[4] Results of the present round of interaction with employees are summarized in a series of programmatic and design guidelines in chapter 7 which are intended as a resource for making future decisions. This study does not pretend to identify and prescribe the only possible way of resolving current problems. Rather, it seeks to offer a range of possibilities and choices that are available.

The timing is appropriate since many of the problems are becoming critical, while at the same time no systematic evaluation of the possibilities for change has yet been undertaken. Thus, there is an excellent opportunity to involve these users right at the inception of the decision making process.

"The idea of participation is a little like eating spinach -

no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. Participation is in theory the cornerstone of democracy."[5] In actual practice though it can easily be perceived as a direct challenge and threat to the experts and decision makers who have been entrusted with the shaping of the environment. Thus, the call for user participation in architecture is to a certain degree revolutionary.

In the ideal case, users would be included in the decision making structure at the very start as co-equal participants. For "we have participation, in fact, only when everyone takes part equally in the management of the power structure."[6] "A critical analysis of reality may, however, reveal that a particular form of action is impossible or inappropriate 'at the present time.'"[7] This can easily be the case with actions directed at the immediate inclusion of users into a province of decision making currently the realm of 'experts'. It is thus not uncommon for an unequivocal demand for user inclusion to polarize a situation and retrench the present decision maker's attitude of user exclusion. Meaningful participation in such cases can easily degenerate into sloganizing and activism.

Some may feel that it is completely inappropriate to involve users in 'dialogue' prior to securing a firm commitment for their complete inclusion in the decision making process. This is a rather static view of social

processes, in which the inclusion of users is seen as some sort of magic dividing line between a 'before' and an 'after'.

The "taking of power (however) constitutes only a decisive moment of a continuing process." [8] Were it not possible "to dialogue with people before power is taken, because they have no experience with power, neither would it be possible for people to come to power, for they are equally inexperienced in the use of power." [9] At the other extreme it is no more reasonable to involve users in participatory design when it is immediately apparent that their efforts have no hope of impacting present decision making.

Between these two poles of black and white are various shades of grey. These are the situations where decision makers are willing to listen, but unwilling at present to make a categorical commitment to the inclusion of users as co-equals in shaping the environment. Such an attitude can just as easily stem from an ignorance of the value of participation as it can from malicious intent to exclude. The argument in chapter 1 illustrates that these shades of grey can begin to assume wonderful hues with the inclusion of user input in the way we shape our environment. For "citizen participation, by providing a sense of community and participatory relationships is the key to improving the quality of life" [10] in our society.

The present study falls within such a grey zone. It does not represent a commitment on the part of present decision makers to implement the recommended changes. However, by demonstrating the effectiveness of participation in developing ideas for improvements, it seeks to convey the value of including employee input, thereby laying a firmer groundwork for employee inclusion in future decision making.

Since this user population is characterized by a much greater stability in composition than the other groups, there is a good potential for establishing an on-going constituency for environmental quality amongst its members. Participants in the present study will be in an excellent position to act as the nucleus of such a constituency once an actual commitment for improvement crystalizes.

This study can thus be seen as a first pass, the ultimate value of which lies in enhancing the potential for understanding and resolving current problems through:

1. Establishing an information base that is useful in future discussion and deliberation.
2. Identifying various opportunities for changing the present environment.
3. Establishing a constituency for environmental quality.
4. Developing and testing an appropriate participatory framework for decision making.

Chapter 4: Structuring User Input

This chapter outlines the approach developed and utilized to structure the input of one particular user group - city hall employees. It includes a description of a questionaire sent to all employees, a first round of interviews with a representative sample of employees as well as all department heads, and a workshop/charette conducted with interested employees.

The major issues which emerged over the course of the interviews are presented in chap 5. Further elaboration of these issues which occured during the workshop is summarized in chap 6. Workshop results and recommendations for change based on employee input are in chap 7.

Structuring Employee Input: Overall Format

Three progressively interactive techniques were utilized to solicit employee input over the course of this study. The first was a questionaire distributed to every employee within the building, with the intent of:

- introducing the study to all city hall employees;
- compiling basic demographic information about the user population;
- compiling a preliminary assessment of user percieved issues and deficiencies;
- informing all employees about the possibility of further involvement in the study.

The demographic information was used to select a representative sample of 30 employees who were then personally interviewed. Each person who indicated interest in recieving information about further participation was also included in the sample.

The final and major component of employee input occured during a workshop/charette held with people recruited from the initial round of interviews.

Since the study did not represent a concrete commitment on the part of decision makers to implement changes at the

Dear Employee:

I would appreciate your taking a few minutes to fill out this questionaire. It is for a user needs and attitudes assessment of City Hall that I am doing for my masters thesis in architecture at MIT. The study does not represent a commitment on the part of the city to implement any changes at present. It will however provide a valuable resource for any future considerations of changes to the existing city hall.

Name _____

Position & Department _____

Sex male ☐ female ☐

Age 20-30 ☐ 30-40 ☐ 40-50 ☐ 50-60 ☐ 60+ ☐

How do you get to and from work? Auto ☐ Bus ☐ Walk ☐

Home address _____

How long does it take you to get to work? _____

If you drive, where do you usually park?

What if this space is taken?

Do you have a sticker for the concourse? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are there any improvements to service that might make the use of public transit more attractive to you?

In your opinion, what are the major problems and deficiencies within the existing city hall environment? This might include things such as the ammount of space, temperature, physical appearance, etc. Write down anything that comes to mind. Feel free to use the back of this page.

Sometime in April or May I am planning to involve interested employees in further clarifying their concerns and formulating various options for changes based on your needs and ideas. If you are interested in further information about participating in this please check this box .....☐ and I will be in touch with you shortly.

In addition, I hope to speak with as many of you as possible in the coming months to get your personal assessment of problems and opportunities within the existing city hall spaces.

Thank you very much,

Reduced Copy of Employee Questionaire

present time, participants had to be recruited on the basis of their interest in getting involved. Thus, they comprised an admittedly select set of all city hall employees. Nevertheless, many of the ideas developed during the workshop meetings are in direct response to major issues and areas of concern identified in the initial round of interviews, which were conducted with a more representative sample of employees. Although the guidelines and subsequent recommendations may require a certain amount of adjustment to better reflect the needs and desires of other employees, the general principles upon which they are based thus seem valid for this user population.

First Round of Interviews

The intent of the initial round of interviews was to:

- compile a more detailed assessment of the significant issues and problems within the present environment;
- solicit participants for the workshop/charette;
- stimulate more deliberate reflection and awareness of the environment, especially on the part of those employees who indicated a willingness for further involvement in the study.

In order to get at the reasons people have for liking/disliking certain aspects of the city hall environment, an open-ended interview format was used. These interviews proceeded as follows:

Intoduction and orientation to the study.

Warm up questions:

1. Short description of employee's job tasks.
2. Length of employment.

Main body of interview:

3. What things do you like about the present city hall?
4. What things do you dislike?
5. Do you recall any complaints or deficiencies others have mentioned to you?
6. Are there any activities, facilities or spaces that are not presently within the building, but which you would like to see be part of the city hall?

7. Is your department's space satisfactory for the various functions and activities that occur there? What changes would make it better?
8. Is there enough space? How much more would be ideal?
9. What do you think of your department's location? In terms of access to other departments? In terms of access for citizens?
10. With which departments does your's have most interaction? Which ones would you like to be closer to?
11. Is your personal work space satisfactory? What changes would make it better?
12. How does this building compare with other offices or city halls you are familiar with?

The results of these interviews are summarized in chapter 5, Issues and Areas of Concern.

Workshop/Charette

Rationale and Organization

A series of workshop meetings with city hall employees comprised the next phase of user involvement in this study. Their intent was to enable participants to:

- discuss and evaluate issues and problems identified in the initial round of interviews as well as those which emerged during the meetings;
- formulate program and design recommendations for possible changes to the existing situation;
- articulate and carry forward their own concerns, needs and desires once an actual commitment to changing the existing environment is made.

Based on the following considerations, a rather short-term, intensive process was developed to achieve these objectives.

Since the actual decision making process was at a very early stage of problem identification, the low profile of possible changes diminished user awareness and interest in commiting a substantial amount of time to a participatory process. The long and uncertain time frame for implementing any changes also suppressed user interest.

A short-term charette was seen as creating a level of intensity that would help mitigate these factors and catalyze user involvement. To strike an optimum balance between em-

ployee time commitment and sense of accomplishment, the workshop process had a clearly defined time frame and series of objectives. If and when the actual project moves forward, further user involvement will be needed, but at this stage the workshop was structured to provide a strong degree of closure to offset uncertainty about the eventual utility of participant's efforts.

Engaging the employees in a long term process of deliberation leading to a consensus on a design solution was also felt to be premature, since the views of other user populations need to be taken into account prior to the detailed development of any one design. Therefore, this workshop/charette was concieved as a first round of user input into the programming and design of various options and elements for improvement based on the needs of one user group.

From amongst those indicating interest on the employee questionaire, fifteen people were recruited for participation in the workshop during the first round of interviews. This group was eventually reduced to ten active participants over the course of the work sessions.

The original intent was to bring all people together for a first workshop meeting. After this, the group was to have been divided into smaller work-groups for a second session

during which the three issue areas identified in the first round of interviews would be investigated in more detail.

However, due to last minute cancellations only four people showed up for the first meeting which was held at city hall on a saturday morning. This small turn-out immediately affected subsequent plans for session 2. The fact that all four participants were from the Planning and Community Development department also made an already admitedely select set of all city hall employees even more so.

Session 1 was nevertheless completed with this group. Plans for the next meeting were scaled down in scope to include only one issue area - departmental work spaces. This worked out reasonably well since the four employees were from one of the departments most appropriately located in under-utilized storage space on the 3rd floor of the building which was to be the 'site' for detailed investigation. (For a discussion of appropriate departmental locations within the building see: chap 7 - Overall Program and Design Considerations.)

After the first meeting word had filtered through the city hall that this was indeed a worthwhile activity to be engaged in. Subsequently, a number of other employees approached this author to express interest in the study. As a result of this,

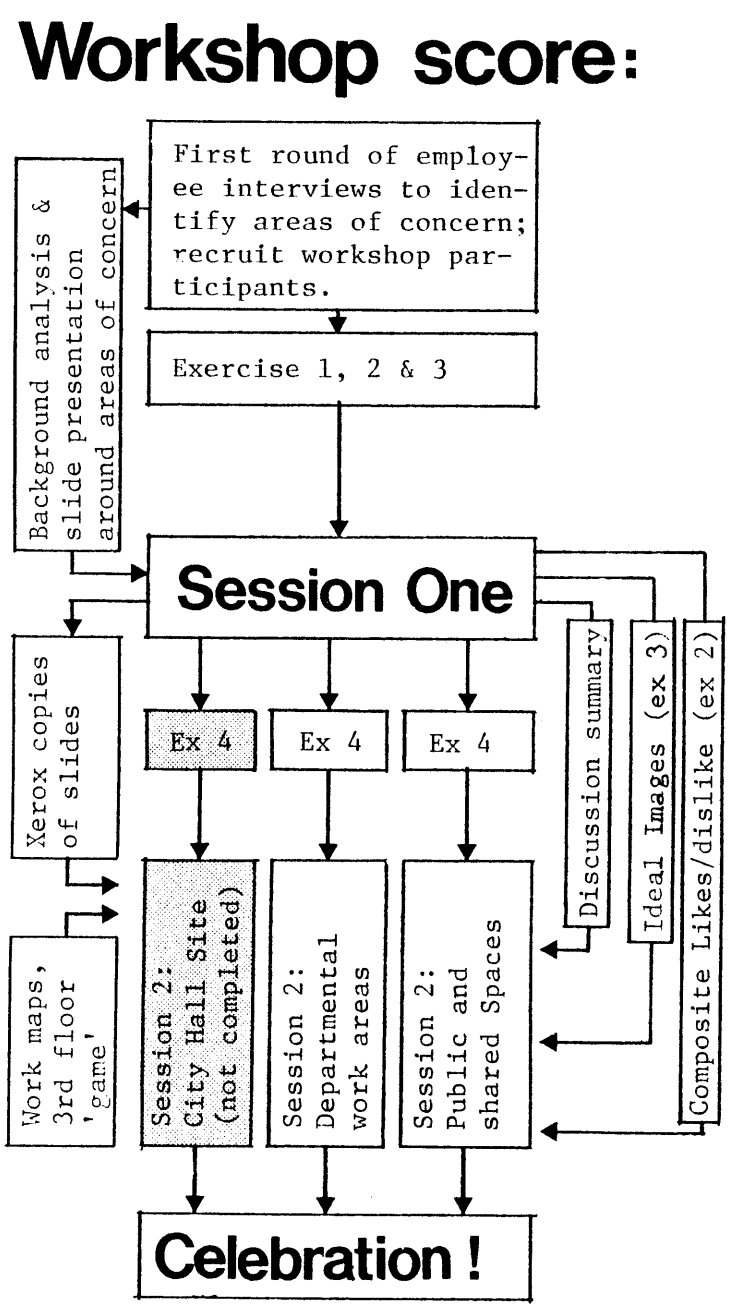
a repeat of session 1 was scheduled for a weekday evening after work. People unable to attend the original meeting were also notified and invited to the make-up session.

Of this expanded group five additional participants were recruited from the following departments - Auditors; CETA; Educational Cable; Election Commission; and Veteran's . The group thus included at least one employee from each floor of the building. In terms of age and length of employment, it was also more closely representative of the overall city hall employee population. The session 1 format remained the same for this group of participants, who then undertook to investigate the public and shared spaces of the city hall during their session 2.

Overall Workshop Description

Thus, the workshop/charette consisted of two work sessions of approximately 3-4 hours duration held at the Somerville city hall:

- Session 1 was oriented towards enabling employees to articulate and discuss their individual perceptions of significant problems within the existing environment;
- Session 2 concentrated on formulating program and design guidelines to resolve deficiencies in two major areas of concern:
  1. Departmental work areas;
  2. Public and shared spaces within the building.



The third area of concern identified in the initial round of interviews - the city hall site - did not recieve as detailed exploration by participants as the other two. Nevertheless, various ideas for upgrading the site did emerge over the course of the workshop and are summarized in chapter 7 - City Hall Site.

The two session format was designed to first help people clarify and express individual needs and desires to others in a group (session 1) and then to collectively translate these into recommendations for change (session 2). It is based on the superiority of "group problem solving processes which separate problem identification from evaluation of solutions"[1]

In order to increase individual contribution and enhance overall group creativity the workshop sessions were structured in such a way that all ideas were shared and the participation of each group member equalized.[2] To help achieve this objective, participants were asked to complete individual exercises prior to the meetings. These were intended to introduce and familiarize employees with graphic representations of the environment, as well as sensitize and educate them to the kinds of activity patterns that presently occur and others that may be desired within the city hall. In addition, the exercises were seen as providing a common experience around which participants could begin to dialogue.

Responses to the exercises were shared with the rest of the group at the beginning of each meeting, thus insuring that each person had a structured opportunity to make input right from the start. The intent here was to legitimize the value of individual perceptions as well as establish an atmosphere conducive to more active involvement .

After both groups had completed their work sessions a summary/ celebration/evaluation party was held with all participants. Workshop materials were displayed and spokes-people from each work group described that group's activities to the rest of the participants.

Workshop Session One

Session One Exercises

Three exercises were given participants prior to session 1:

- exercise 1 - a free form 'image mapping' which was intended to loosen up people's perceptions, as well as provide an understanding of various individual's 'mental maps' of the environment;
- exercise 2 - an exploration of individual 'likes/dislikes' and 'use patterns' within the environment;
- exercise 3 - an exploration of the 'image or sense of place(s)' people felt should be included in an 'ideal city hall' environment.

The first workshop session was deveted to the compilation and discussion of these exercises. Although the first two provided a flexible enough framework to accept highly individual interpretations and reaction to the environment, the third one was more constraining. It was seen as a way to begin dialogue about the "image or sense of places" which were evocative for participants. Since current architectural periodicals provide a limited set of such images, they were supplemented by a slide presentation at the end of session 1.

The intent of this slide show was to show as wide a range of spatial organization and detailing within the three

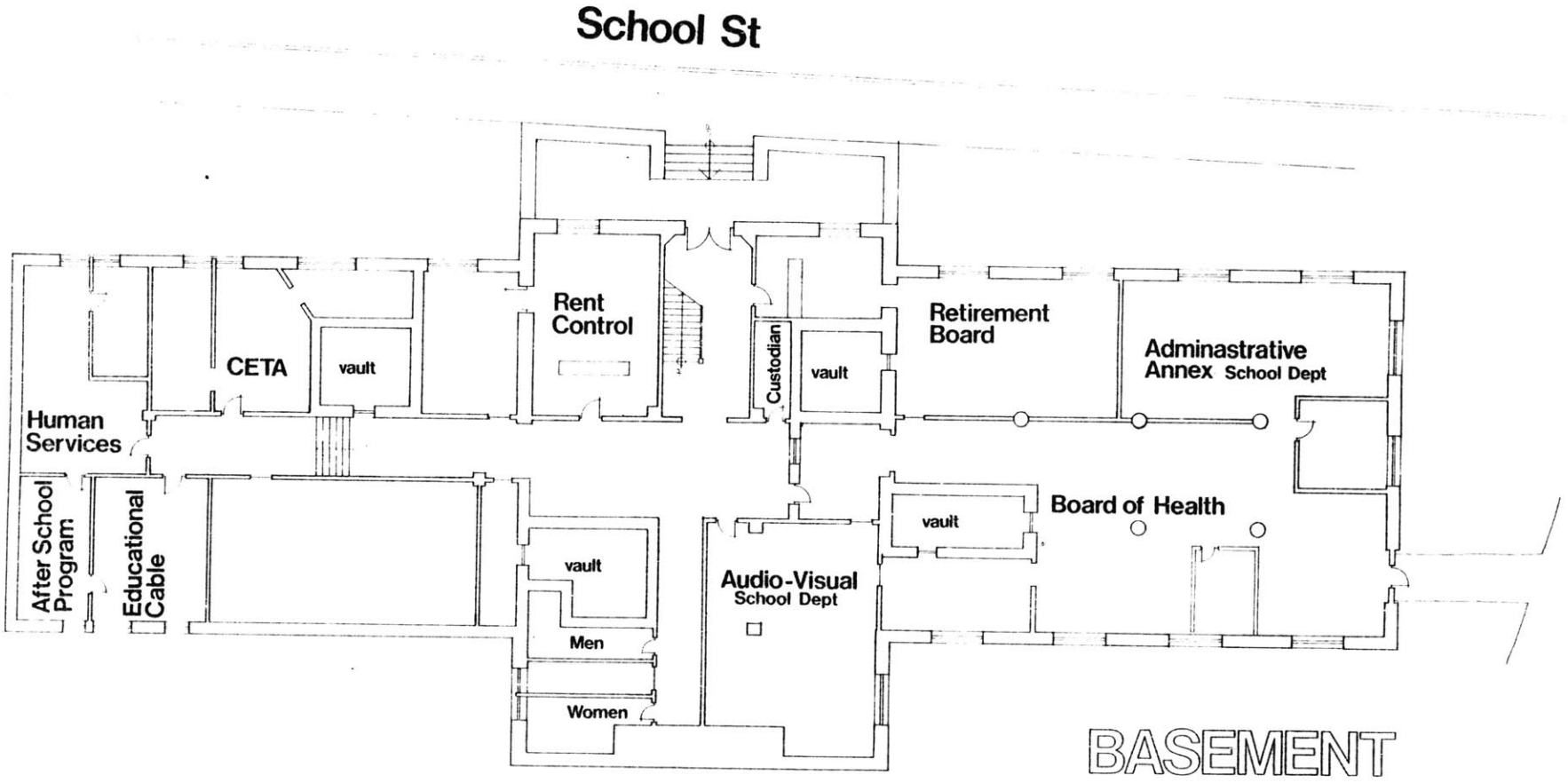
Exercise 1 

Draw a plan of the portion of city hall you use from memory. Include as much detail as you can or want. Don't worry about making things completely accurate as this exercise is not a test of anyones drawing ability. Its sole intent is to see what things are most important or memorable about your environment. Feel free to use additional sheets of paper if you want.

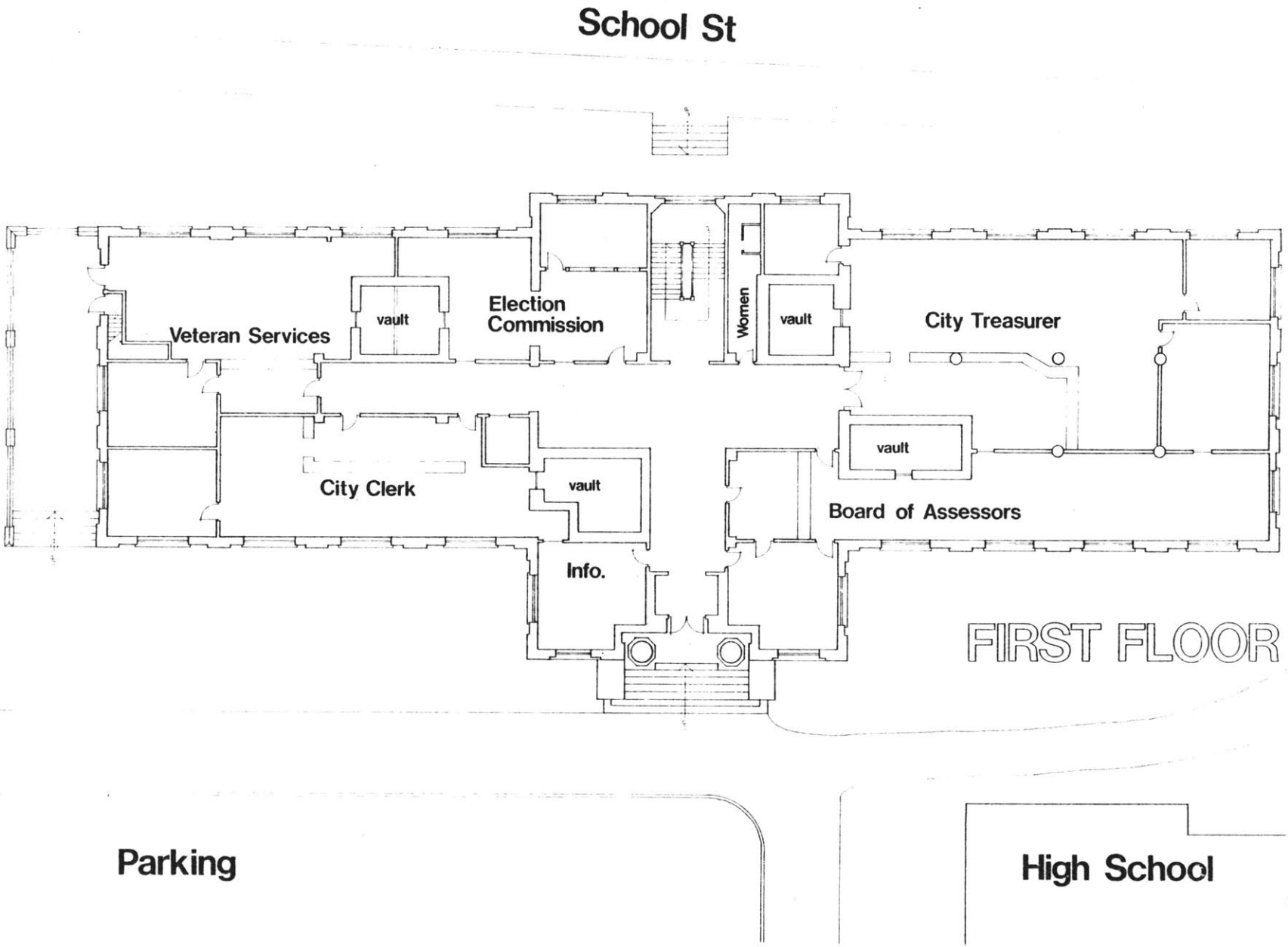
Exercise 2

Keep track of your activities for one work day by noting on this set of plans your work space and the various trips you made within the city hall. Use a line to indicate each path you took. Mark destinations with an (X).

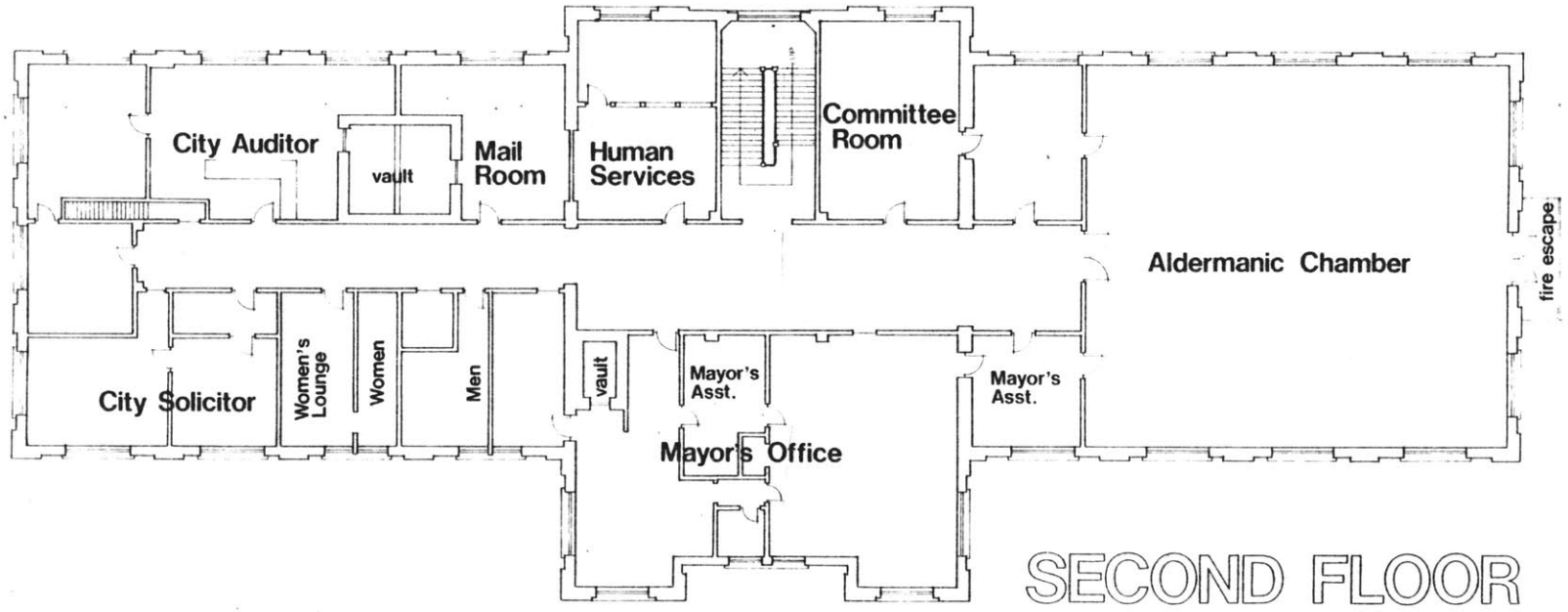
Also, circle the places and things you like about the city hall in blue, and the spaces you don't like or any deficiencies in red.



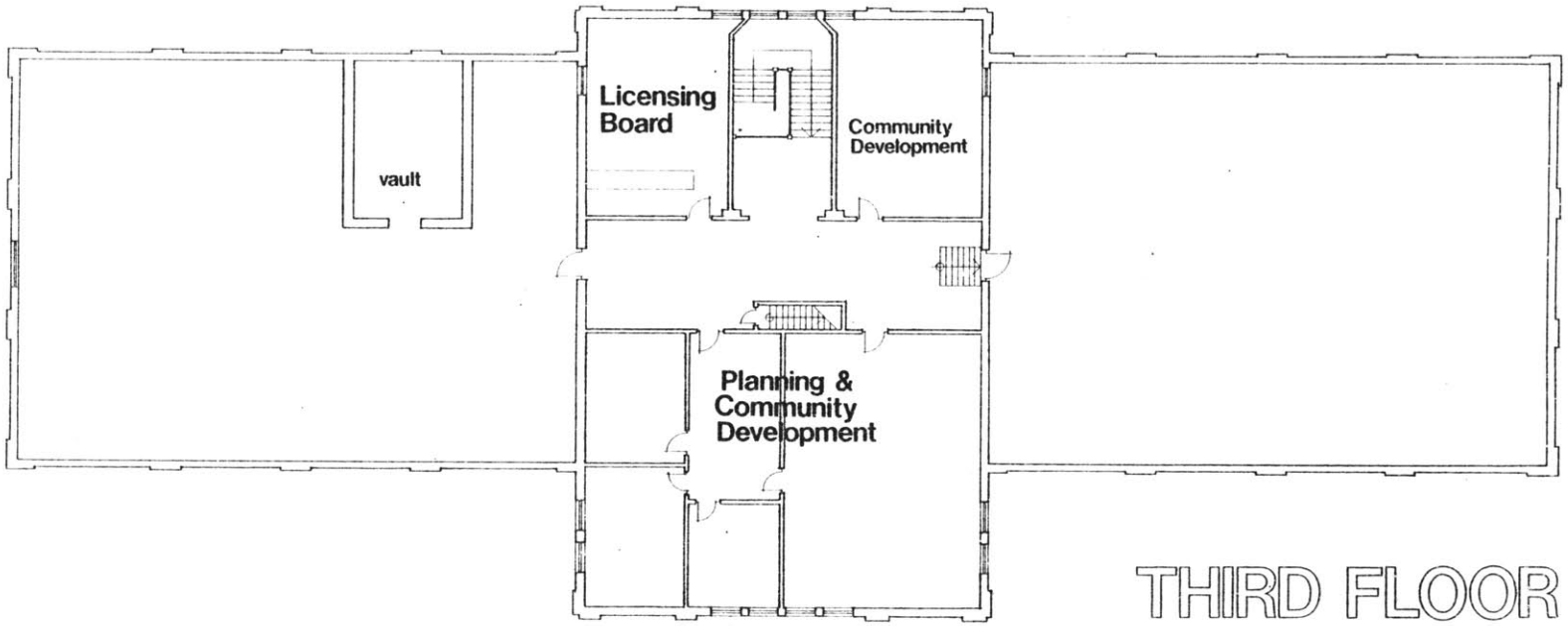
Exercise 2


School St
Veteran Services
vault
Election Commission
Women
vault
City Treasurer
vault
City Clerk
vault
Info.
Board of Assessors
FIRST FLOOR
Parking
High School

Exercise 2


City Auditor
vault
Mail Room
Human Services
Committee Room
Aldermanic Chamber
fire escape
City Solicitor
Women's Lounge
Women
Men
vault
Mayor's Asst.
Mayor's Office
Mayor's Asst.
SECOND FLOOR

Exercise 2


Licensing Board
Community Development
vault
Planning & Community Development
THIRD FLOOR

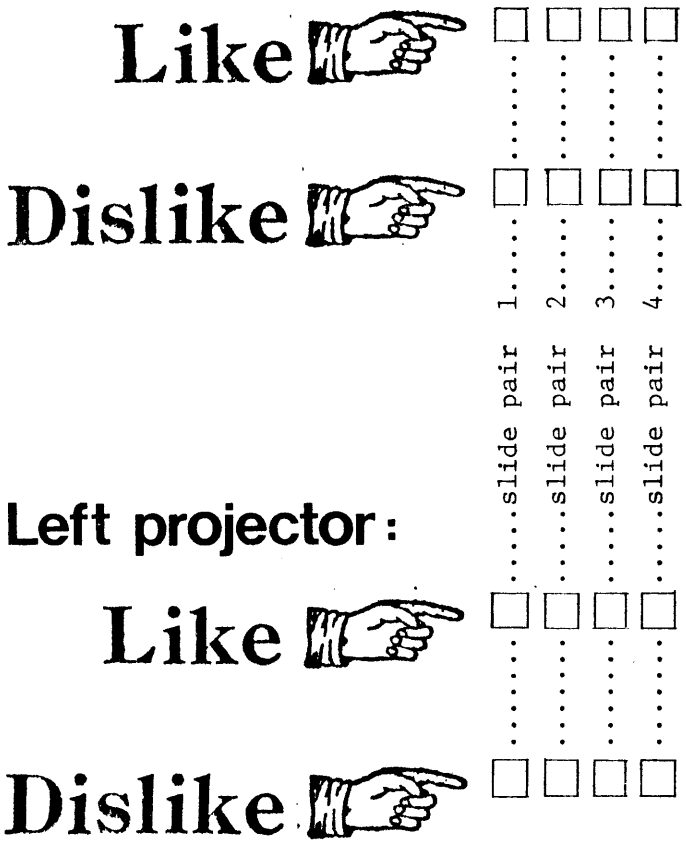
Exercise 3



Look through the magazine you have been given, concentrating on the pictures in the articles as well as the advertisements. Cut out any that you feel are good examples of spaces and activities that should be in an "ideal city hall" environment. Also, cut out any that you feel are negative examples.
The pictures you select need not be from actual city halls. Rather, the idea is to choose those that convey a desireable environmental quality for you.



You might want to supplement these with photos from other magazines and/or written statements or diagrams about what an "ideal city hall" would be like. If you know of positive examples from other city halls or offices write them down too. Use this page and others if you need more room.



Portion of Slide Voting Sheet

general areas of concern as possible. Slides were projected in pairs to accentuate certain qualities and various attitudes about form. Participants were given voting sheets in order to record which ones they liked and those they disliked. They were told that it was not necessary to like one of a pair and dislike the other. If in some cases they liked a certain quality of one image and another quality of the other one, people were encouraged to mark both as liked and vice versa.

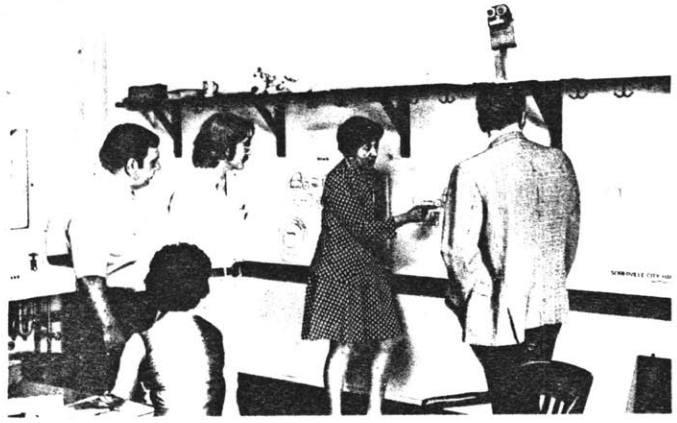
Process Description

The first workshop session got underway with participants sitting around a large table in the Committee Room of the city hall. After a brief introduction to the study, each person was asked to introduce him or herself to the rest of the group and mark their workspace location on 1/ 8"=1' floor plans of the building which were hung on a wall. The introductions completed, everyone taped their exercise 1 on another wall. The intent of these two activities was to help loosen the meeting up by establishing an atmosphere where participants would feel free to get up, look at, and point things out on the maps, rather than being glued to their chairs for the entire meeting.

While people were putting up and commenting on the 'image maps', exercise 2 (likes/dislikes) was collected and com-



Workshop session one.



Discussion of ex. 2 composite maps.

piled by an assistant on the 1/8"=1' palns. Each space circled on these composite maps was then discussed one-by-one. The person who had circled it was asked to relate his or her reasons to the rest of the group. As they did, other participants would either agree or disagree, thus resulting in a sharpened examination of why certain spaces and things were liked and others disliked. At times of strong reaction, other people were encouraged to mark additional circles on the maps. The notion behind this was to stimulate participant involvement in producing the materials generated during the work session.

During the discussion period, participant comments were also recorded on large sheets of newsprint to compile a visible log of the proceedings. This log plus the summary maps were intended as early group rewards.[3] In addition, they were seen as providing a continuity of participant generated input between session 1, session 2, the summary/celebration as well as this final report.

At the conclusion of the exercise 2 discussion there was a short break. Once the meeting reconvened, participants spread out the pictures they had cut out of their magazines for exercise 3. These were then gone over one-by-one in much the same manner as exercise 2.



Participants discussing ex. 3 images.

The slide show was presented next. Everone recieved a voting sheet and slide pairs projected at approximately ten second intervals. The voting sheets were collected and tabulated after this first pass, and the slides repeated at a slower rate. This time participants were asked to relate their reasons for liking and disliking various images.

In addition to stimulating discussion and evaluation of the 'image or sense of place', the slide show was intended to end the first session on an upswing. Slides which were particularly liked were then xeroxed for use as 'image pieces' during session 2, thus supplementing the pictures that had been cut out for exercise 3. This too increased continuity between the two sessions.

Session Two: Departmental Work Areas

This session focused on the more detailed considerations for improving the work space of one particular department--Planning and Community Development. As such, it can be seen as a 'test case' of a participatory process that can be used for other departments in improving their work areas.

In order to stimulate creative user imput participants were asked to complete another short exercise prior to the meeting. Exercise 4--Departmental Work Areas was again seen as a way of structuring user input in order to provide a point from which dialogue could begin. Whereas the first three exercises were oriented to the subjective evaluation of spaces, Exercise 4 asked people to specify the kinds of activities that currently take place within their department. In addition, they were asked to list any activities and/or space not presently within their department, but which they would like to see included in their work areas. Instant polaroid cameras were provided so that people could photographically document their observations.

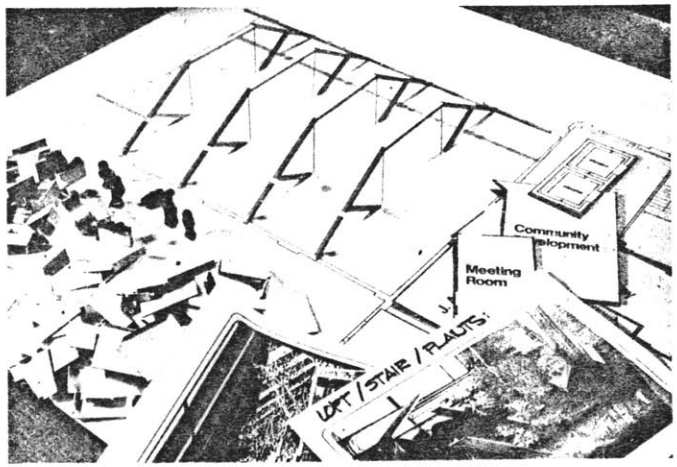
A ¼" = 1' model of the third floor storage area in the south wing of the building was prepared for use as a game-board on which detailed work space recommendations and departmental layout for the Planning department could be developed. This simu-

Exercise 4

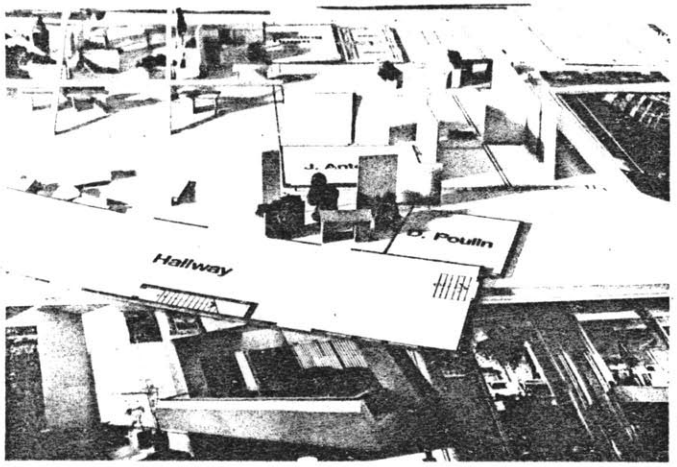
Departmental Work Areas

Write down the various activities that take place in your departmental work area. Assess how well suited your space is for these activities. You are encouraged to use photographs to document your observations - instant cameras and film will be provided.

Also, list any other activities you feel should be provided for within your department. What kind of environment would these activities require?



Third floor "site" model.



"Game" elements.

lation was intended to "help obtain information about how people percieved their requirements as an integrated whole,"[4] as well as create "an opportunity for participants to perform interpretive and developmental tasks."[5]

In addition to the 'site model, the following elements were fabricated for this activity:

- people models for scale;
- partition elements cut to various sizes;
- desk, chair, planter and file cabinent elements;
- 'scaling pieces'--cutouts of the spaces currently occupied by the department;
- 'image pieces'--included the pictures cut out by participants for Exercise 3, supplemented by xerox copies of slides which were 'liked' from the Session 1 slide show;
- instant cameras to record various layouts.

Session 1 materials, such as the composite "likes/dislikes' were also displayed on the wall for reference.

Process Description

During this meeting employees participated in the formulation of guidelines for the design of their work area by specifying

- the amount of work space required for various departmental activities;
- the organization of spaces;
- the number of people in work groups;

- the levels of privacy required for various activities;
- the spatial definitions and design treatments that are appropriate.

At the start of the meeting, each person was asked to relate his or her observations from Exercise 4 to the rest of the group. From the discussion of this exercise, a preliminary activity program that included an assessment of the kind of environment required for each activity was compiled. Once accomplished, the focus of discussion shifted to a 1/4" - 1' scale workmap of the space currently occupied by the department and the 'site' for expansion.



Working on the third floor model during session 2 - departmental work areas.

The first cut at organizing departmental activities was made on the basis of which ones required most public accessibility. The 'scaling pieces' were then arranged on the workmap to give a sense of how much space each activity needed in its new location. After this, participants looked through the 'image pieces' and chose those which best conveyed the 'sense of place' they would like to have in their work area.

The work then shifted to the model at which point participants constructed a new departmental layout using the premade desks, planters and partition elements. This discussion got very detailed and involved the evaluation of how much and what kind of space was adequate for various people in the office, given

their job activities. In addition, the system of space division as well as the kinds of improvements necessary to make the site 'habitable' were discussed. At the conclusion of the session, participants went on a 'site visit' at which time more ideas for actual subdivision and detailing of the space were surfaced.

Session Two: Public and Shared Spaces

This meeting focused on a more detailed discussion of various improvements to the public and shared spaces within the City Hall. Prior to the work session, participants were also asked to complete a short exercise which provided a common experience around which to begin dialogue. Exercise 4--Public and Shared Spaces--asked them to take a 'scored walk' through the City Hall. At eleven different points along the 'walk' participants were asked to respond to various questions which were intended to stimulate reflections about activities, transitions and form within the public environment.

In order to enhance creative observation, people were instructed to think of the City Hall as if it were a 'town' rather than a building. The halls were analogized to streets and the departmental spaces to houses along the streets. The intent of this analogy was to provide the experience a degree of fantasy so that people would feel less constrained by the present spatial organization in their thinking about desirable changes. It was also seen as a way of loosening up their perceptions, by having them approach the environment from a viewpoint which was unlike their everyday use pattern.

A slide show, with images from the points of observation sequenced in the same manner as the 'walk,' was prepared in order

Exercise 4 

Public and Shared Spaces

Take a walk through the city hall, following the route indicated on the accompanying maps.

During your walk, try to imagine that the city hall is a town, rather than a building. The halls are then the streets of our town and the various departments - houses along the streets.

As you take the walk through our town try to answer the questions posed at various points. Use the last sheet to record your comments and observations.

This technique of analogy is quite often used by architects in order to gain deeper insight into a problem.

Point 1: What is the first thing you notice upon entering this town?

Point 2: Are there any differences between the streets that come together here?
Which one do you like better? Why?

Point 3: What do you think about this house?
How do you like its entry?

Point 4: Take a moment to look closely at the walls and doors of these houses. What do you think of them?
Do you think the houses need windows or front yards?
Do you think the streets need trees or benches?

Point 5: Is this the town's community center?
What do you think of it?

Point 6: What about this house and entry?

Point 7: What do you think of this one?

Point 8: Do you know who lives here and what they do?
Do you like their house?

Point 9: What about these rooms?

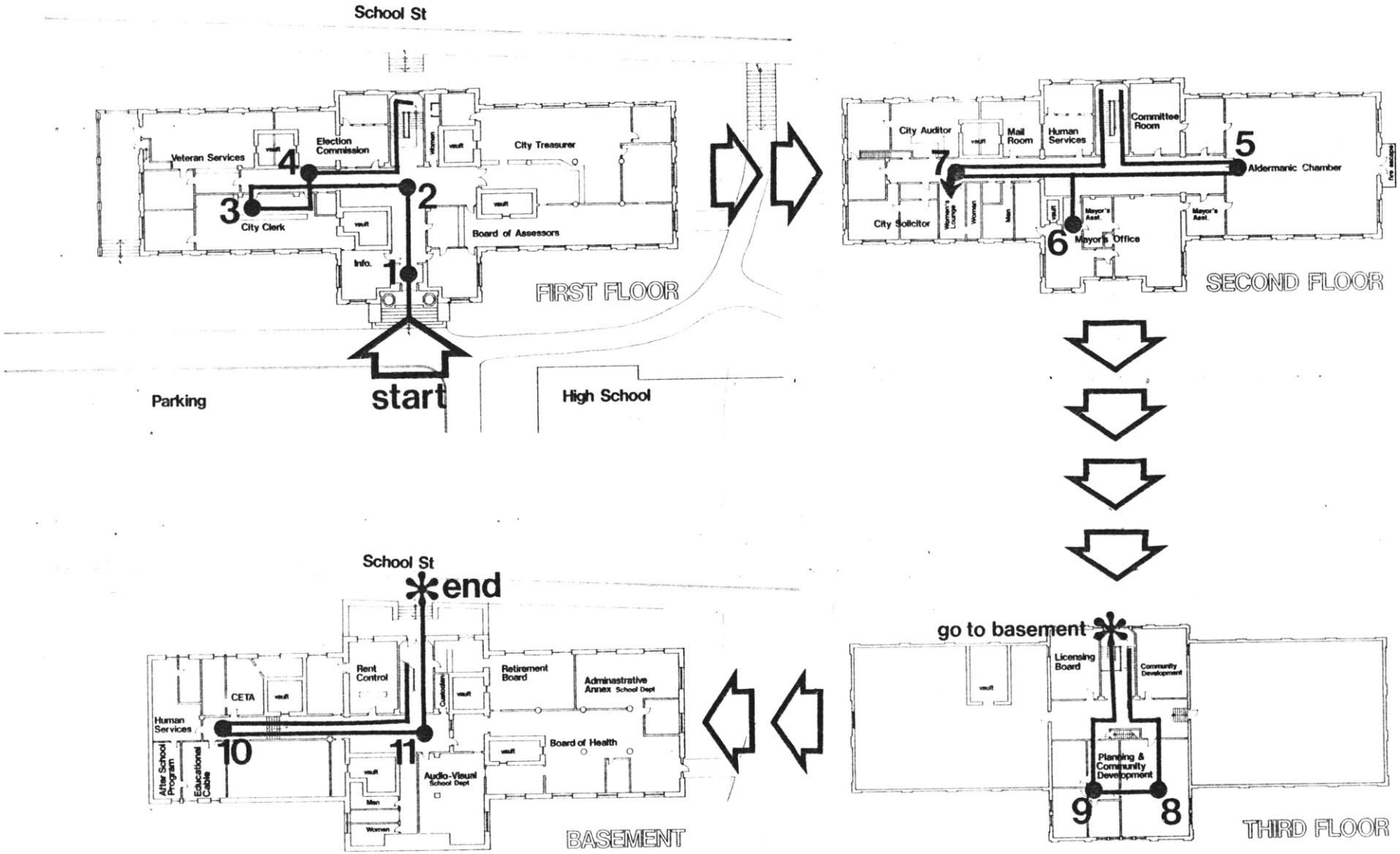
Point 10: What do you think of these houses and the street?
Do you know who lives here and what they do?

Point 11: Is this a major intersection?
Do you like these streets? Why or why not?

Finish: Mark on your map where the major crossroads of the town is. What makes it so? Are there any things which might improve this area?

Also mark on your map the community center and various social clubs. Are they all in the right places?

Exercise 4


School St
Veteran Services
Election Commission
City Treasurer
City Clerk
Board of Assessors
Info.
1
2
3
4
FIRST FLOOR
Parking
start
High School
City Auditor
Mail Room
Human Services
Committee Room
5
Aldermanic Chamber
7
City Solicitor
6
Mayor's Office
SECOND FLOOR
go to basement
Licensing Board
Community Development
Planning & Community Development
9
8
THIRD FLOOR
School St
end
Rent Control
Retirement Board
Adminastrative Annex School Dept
CETA
Human Services
After School Program
Educational Cable
10
11
Board of Health
Audio-Visual School Dept
BASEMENT

Exercise 4



Use this sheet to record your responses at the various points along your walk. You might also want to indicate your general impression of the places you visited and the activities you observed there.

to provide a visual reference for the discussion of this exercise. Existing 1/8" = 1" scale workmaps were provided for participants to develop their suggestions for improvements. The pictures cut out for Exercise 3, as well as xerox copies of images 'liked' from the Session 1 slide presentation were on hand for use as 'image pieces.' Materials generated during the first workshop session, such as the composite "likes/dislikes' were also available for reference during this meeting.

Process Description



Working on the collages during session 2 - public and shared spaces.

This work session began with the presentation of the slide show and discussion of the 'walk.' As the various points were shown, participants related their observations to the questions posed in the exercise. From this discussion of existing deficiencies, a list of desired facilities, activities and improvements to the public environment was compiled.

After the conclusion of the slide show, the focus shifted to the workmaps, at which time employees participated in the formulation of program and design guidelines for these improvements by specifying:

- the kinds of facilities and activitits that should be included within the public and shared environment;
- the kind of physical spaces required for these activities;
- the kinds of interfaces appropriate between the shared/public environment and departmental work spaces.



Defining a 'sense of place' with the 'image pieces'.

In addition, the most appropriate locations for these new activity spaces, as well as various existing departments were discussed.

Any consensus locations which emerged were marked on the maps. Participant comments were also written on them. People were encouraged to look through, select, and arrange on these work-maps any 'image pieces' which conveyed the 'sense of place' they desired for the various spaces. The final product of this group's efforts was thus a written and image collage of ideas for improving the public and shared spaces of the City Hall. Refined versions of these collages are reproduced in Chapter 7.

Summary/Celebration

After both groups of participants had completed their work sessions, they were all invited to the author's home for a summary/party. One of the intents of this was to provide closure to this round of participation in a non-task oriented, social setting. All workshop-generated materials were displayed at this party so that participants could begin to get a sense of the overall structure and content of the entire study and how their individual inputs fit into it.

Spokes-people from the two groups were recruited to describe the various tasks they engaged in and the consensus and suggestions which emerged over the course of their work session. In addition, two other participants were asked to present a summary of the history of the building and the problems and deficiencies identified in the first round of interviews. Each person so recruited was provided with a set of slides from which they could choose any that were relevant to their presentation. This activity was seen as a constituency building mechanism. Taking charge of presenting their work to others was intended to help increase participant's confidence and ability to carry forward their own concerns once an actual commitment to changing the existing situation is fashioned. In essense, it was seen as enabling them to assume a greater degree of authorship for the present study.

Chapter 5: Issues & Areas of Concern

This chapter focuses on three major areas of concern which emerged from the interviews conducted with 30 city hall employees and all department heads:

1. City hall site - the most widely percieved problem being the lack of adequate off-street parking.
2. Departmental work areas - problems included the lack of work space, storage facilities and meeting rooms.
3. Public and shared spaces - these were percieved to have a seriously deficient physical appearance and image. There was also a widespread agreement on the desireability of an employee lounge and elevator.

Employee assessments of the various issues are supplemented by further elaboration undertaken by the author.

City Hall Site

Off Street Parking



Overcrowding, illegal and double parking occur continually in the City Hall parking lot.

A lack of enough off-street parking was mentioned by virtually every employee interviewed. There are presently 65 legal spaces (including 11 reserved for visitors) within an at-grade lot in front of the city hall and high school. In addition, approximately 20-25 cars were observed to be parked illegally on a regular basis, resulting in an overall lot capacity of 85-90 cars, which was judged to be far less than adequate.

Parking privileges in the lot are theoretically limited to City Hall employees with stickers. However, enforcement of this regulation has been sporadic. On a number of occasions close to 30% (excluding non-stickered cars in visitor spaces) of the cars parked there did not have such stickers. Most of these cars are reported to belong to students and various other personnel of the high school.

The conflict between City Hall and high school parking demand also occurs in the evenings, when night school students compete for available spaces with citizens attending various board meetings. At this time, though, the problem is not nearly as severe as it is during the day.

Since the high school opens ½ hour before City Hall, the lot is often completely full by 8.00 in the morning. Many people mentioned that they regularly arrive at work before this time just to be able to secure a parking space. This situation poses a nuisance, especially for employees who must utilize their cars during the day on business and upon returning find no place to park.

Due to the congestion in the rest of the lot, 3-5 autos with stickers were observed in the spaces reserved for visitors, thus reducing the number of spaces available for people coming to the city hall on business. The current 20 minute limitation on these spaces was also judged to be insufficient as a number of citizens spend closer to an hour per visitation.

Numerous employees mentioned that an expansion of the at-grade lot has been advocated on many occasions. Quite a few proposed such an action be taken during the course of the interviews. As one employee put it, "grass is nice but it's out of place here ... we have to make a choice between a piece of lawn or better access."

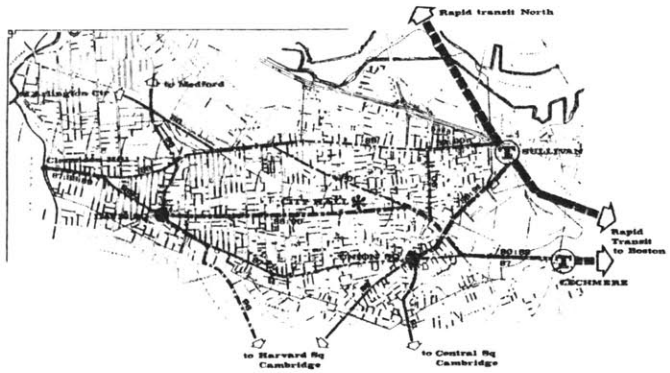
This is not however recommended. An at grade lot expansion can only have detrimental impact on city hall's setting as anything short of doubling the present parking area will

have little impact on the parking problem. Rather, for reasons discussed in chapter 7 (City Hall Site Improvement Recommendations), a below grade structured parking solution is proposed.

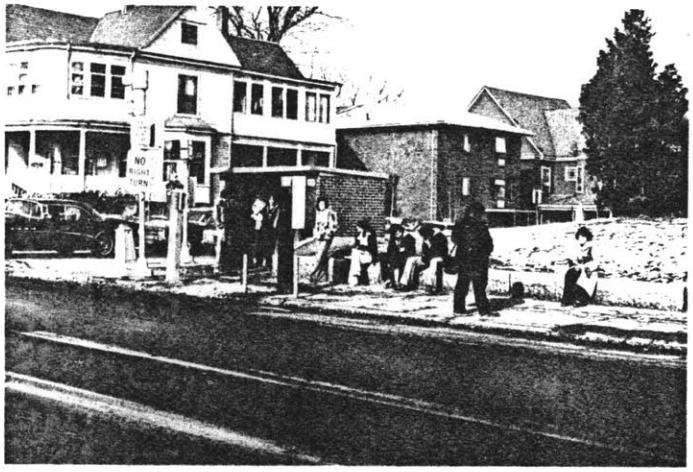
Access to the City Hall

The parking problem is but one manifestation of general access deficiencies to the Somerville City Hall. The city's Comprehensive Plan reports that the Library "is poorly situated because of its distance from the center of pedestrian traffic."[1] The same is then true of the City Hall, since it too is located on Central Hill. Its users must rely more heavily on modes of access other than foot than is the case for many other city halls in urban communities.

In addition to the automobile, 20% of city hall employees and numerous citizens use public transit to get to and from the building. They reach it on either of two bus routes which run along Highland Ave, providing access from the east and west. Route 90 runs from Davis Square to Sullivan Station at 15 minute headways; route 88 - from Davis Square to Lechemere Station at 6-9 minute headways during peak hours and 17-30 minute off-peak. Connecting routes at Davis Square provide access to West Somerville as well as Cambridge, Arlington and Medford. At the other termini, the two routes connect to the regional rapid transit system.



MBTA Service in Somerville



Bus stop shelter at Highland Ave. and School st.



Coffee shop across Highland Ave. provides a comfortable waiting space for bus riders.

Access from the north and south of City Hall is far less direct. From Union Square, which is but ½ mile from the building, one can take a bus either to:

- Sullivan Station and then transfer to the 90 bus, with an average trip time of 30-45 minutes, or
- Lechmere Station and then transfer to the 88 bus, with a similar trip time.

Both combinations cost 50¢ each way (20¢ for elderly). Neither is very satisfactory, but they provide the only alternative to walking or taking a cab for those who do not drive.

Both the 88 and 90 routes stop in front of city hall along Highland Ave. These stops are to a certain degree unique in that there are places for people to wait under cover in inclement weather. On the north side of Highland is a brick shelter with a bench where passengers can find protection from rain, wind and snow. A low retaining wall also provides a place to sit in better weather. On the south side, passengers can wait in the coffee shop in relative comfort.

Access by public transit can and should be further enhanced as part of an overall access strategy for the City Hall. Suggested improvements for this are identified and discussed in chapter 7.

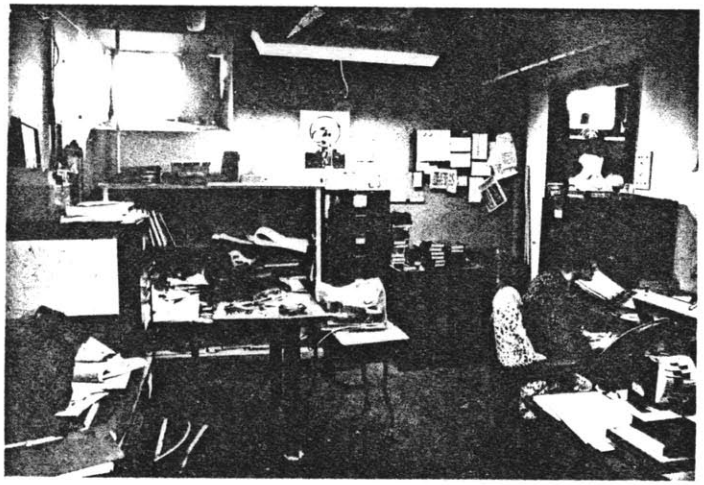
Departmental Work Areas

Amount of Workspace



Severe overcrowding in departmental work areas (ex. Auditor's)

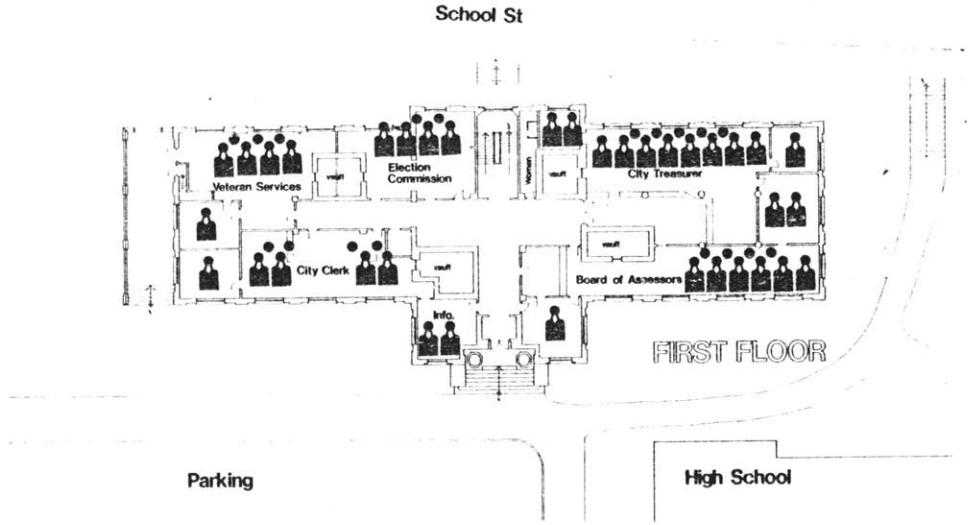
One of the major impetuses to undertaking changes to the City Hall is that current workspaces in many departments are severely overcrowded. A Massachusetts State Department of Corporations and Taxation report specifically tied such overcrowded work conditions in the Assessors office to inefficient and poor administrative practices.[2] Without additional space this department will be hard pressed to implement many of the report's recommended revisions to assessing practices in the city. Although the State critique has been the most visible surfacing of this problem to date, overcrowding occurs at equally severe levels in many other departments as well.

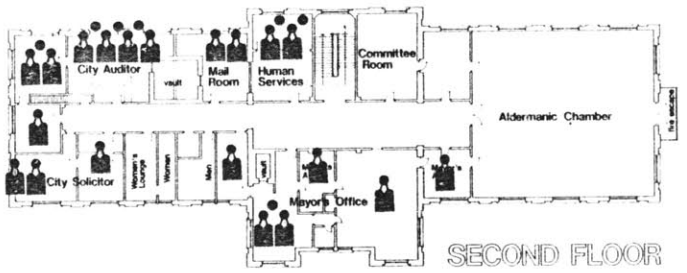


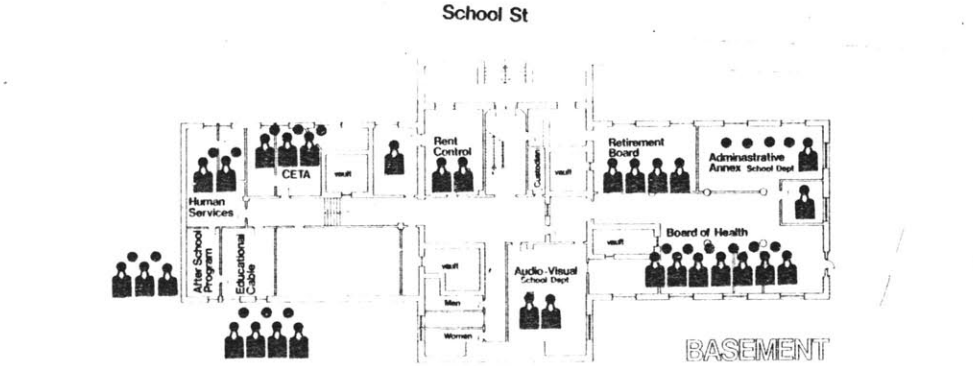
Space shared by seven people in basement (Educational Cable)

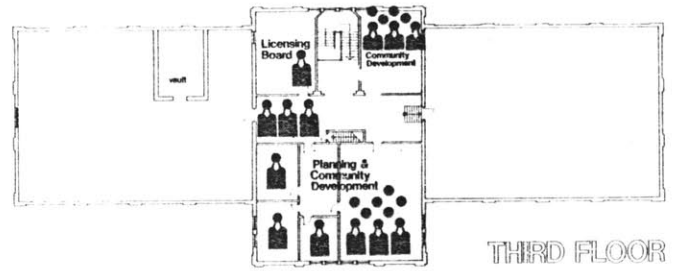
How much additional space then is adequate for the functions of various departments? There are no precise answers to this question. Although we know with a great deal of certainty how much space a filing cabinet or desk requires, the amount of space necessary for people to effectively carry out work tasks is in the final analysis a value judgement that reflects trade-offs based on cost and status. When a person is considering an addition to his or her house these trade-offs are obvious and very real.

In the case of non-owned or shared space, the valuation of trade-offs is much more ambiguous. Who decides plus the









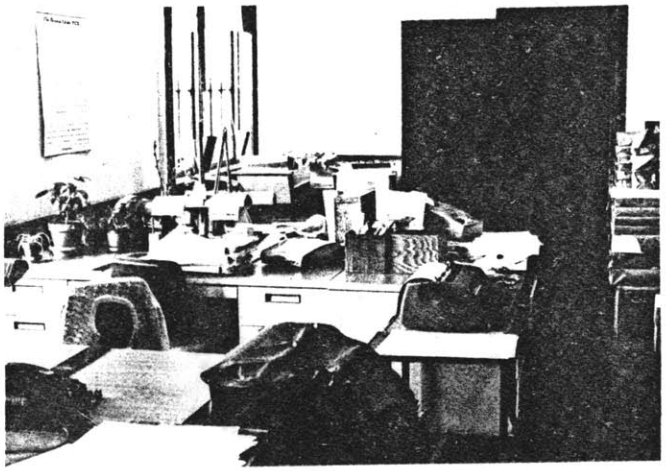
Workspace Occupancy

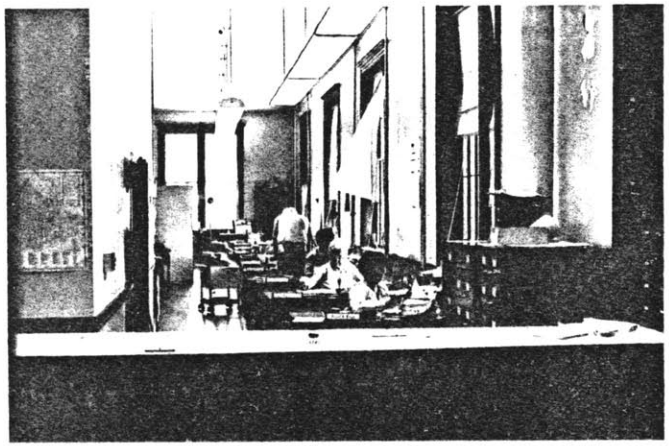
values of the decision makers are then the most important factors determining how much space is enough. This study attempts to expand on the set of decision makers that usually are entrusted with the determination of space programs by asking employees to participate in the evaluation.

Since no overall consideration has been given this question, the first round of interviews was used to bracket a preliminary space program for the building. The following chart summarizes interview responses of department heads as well as employees who were asked if their present space was adequate for the functions of their department. If judged to be inadequate, people were further asked how much more space would be 'ideal'. Those who had difficulty with this question were prompted to respond in terms of their existing space (i.e. half again as much, double the amount, etc.), or whether they felt some other department had an amount of space which would be adequate for theirs.

These figures should be taken with a grain of salt, due to the factors discussed in chap 7 - Overall Program and Design Considerations. They are presented here to indicate the scope of spatial deficiencies within the existing building and should be considered but a first pass at an overall program, to be adjusted on the basis of further necessary dialogue as recommended in chapter 7.

BASEMENT	# of Employees	Existing Gross Area ϕ	Additional Workspace Desired ϕ	Other Spaces Desired
Retirement Bd.	4	900		
Rent Control	3	650		meeting room
Audio-Visual	2	670	350	dark room; storage
School Annex	6	1100		
Bd. of Health	13	1450	500	
After School Program	5 (+7)	170		meeting room; storage
CETA	6	450	450	mtg. rm.; interview space
Cable T.V.	7	285	200	meeting room
Human Services	4	475		
FIRST FLOOR				
Assessors	11	1400	800	meeting room
Information	2	270		
Treasurers	18	2100		storage
Election Comm.	6	750	400	storage
Veterans Services	8	1100		
City Clerk	9	1200		storage
SECOND FLOOR				
Auditors	10	1000	500	storage
Human Services	4	400	300	mtg. rm.; interview space
Mayor's Office	7	1600	250	reception area
City Solicitor	3	450	300	
Aldermanic Chamber		2450		
Committee Rooms		650		
Mail Room		350	(500 to accomodate City Messenger)	
THIRD FLOOR				
Licensing Bd.	1	400		
Planning & Community Development	13	2000	1000	See chap 7 for detailed description





Dysfunctional work space layout (Assessor's)

Organization of Workspace

In a few departments, employees felt they had enough work space per se, but that significant improvement could be achieved if the space were reorganized. This was the case in the Treasury, where removal of stored records from departmental work areas would enable a more commodius layout. Several people also mentioned that this office was 'too open' - that there were not enough partitions or shelves to put plants and other things on.

Employees of the Assessing department also mentioned a substantial functional difficulty with the shape and organization of their space. This office has a public waiting area separated from a rectangular work space by a counter. If the first three or four employees are busy at their desks, then other employees must walk all the way from the back of the office to take care of any new visitors. This situation causes a nuisance for both employees and also for citizens, since they must wait patiently until someone in the rear of the office notices them.

Several employees in both the Department of Human Services and Veteran's Services mentioned the desirability of having private rooms or cubicles to conduct client interviews. Both offices have work areas that are shared by a number of people, so interviews must currently be conducted at one's desk 'out in the open.' Since a number of people



Lack of privacy for client interviews (Human Services)

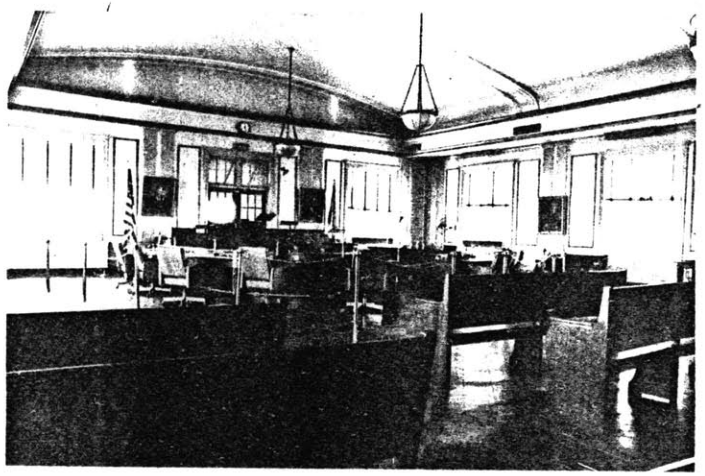
who come to these departments are in need of financial or personal help, a confidential rapport between employee and client must be established. The present environment makes this impossible.

This does not mean that each person or group of people needs or wants a closed off private office. The totally private office can have a "devestating effect on the flow of human relationships within a work group, and entrenches the ugly quality of office hierarchies."[3] In fact a survey of office workers in the Berkely (California) City Hall found that most people prefer to be part of a work group that ranges from two to eight.[4] Most work spaces in the Somerville City Hall however, currently accomodate work groups at the high end or in excess of this range.

Meeting Rooms

The preceding chart also shows which departments indicated a need for meeting or conference rooms to accommodate both internal staff discussions as well as board meetings. At present, only employees of the Retirement Board felt they had adequate facilities for such activities.

The Rent Control Board, which regularly meets in the Rent Control office to consider eviction orders and rent adjustments, must often conduct its business in the basement

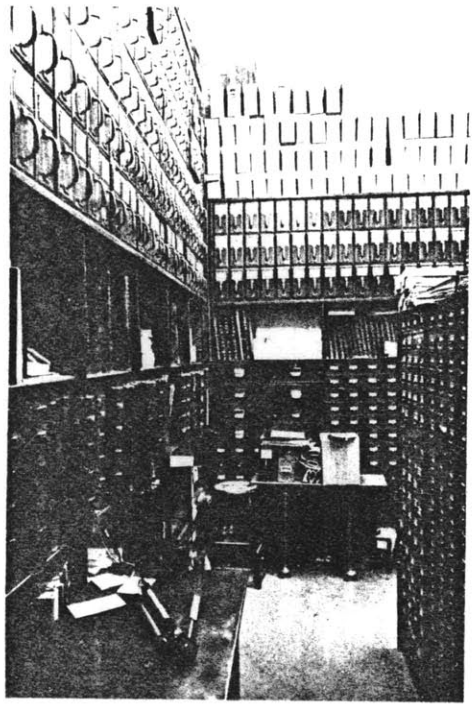


Aldermanic Chambers

corridor, especially when the agenda includes issues that draw large public attendance. The Board of Assessors conducts its meetings in the director's office. Quite often a large public turnout forces them to move up to the Aldermanic Chambers. The Planning and Redevelopment Boards also have little room to accommodate the public at their meetings.

Many employees felt that the Aldermanic Chambers were ill-suited for meetings of their respective boards. During the course of such meetings, there is often a need to check office records and files. Thus, conducting them in the Chambers, located on the second floor, poses a nuisance to the staff and board and results in delays of the proceedings.

The Aldermanic Chambers is quite large and set up in such a way that it is difficult for the public to follow or participate in the discussion. This was the case at a recent Board of Assessors meeting held to consider a 121A tax proposal from a developer. It was moved to the Chambers since close to 50 people were in attendance. The architect made a presentation of the proposal to the Board from within the ring of alderman's desks. People in the audience could barely hear his comments, let alone see the model on which he was indicating various aspects of the proposal



Storage vault filled above capacity (City Clerk)

The only other shared meeting/conference room is the Committee Room on the second floor. Usually one must schedule this room two weeks in advance to insure its availability. The Board of Aldermen however has first priority for this space, so quite often evening meetings cannot be held here or must be cut short because of conflict with a committee hearing. Multiple demands on this room (it serves as the City Messangers space too) leaves the aldermen without an administrative space of their own.

Many employees felt that meeting rooms shared by several departments in a wing of the building would adequately resolve this problem. This was especially advocated to alleviate the severely overcrowded conditions in the south wing of the basement where CETA, Human Services, After School Program and the Educational Cable currently occupy extremely small spaces.

Storage Facilities

The preceding chart also indicates those departments that currently have a severe lack of space for storing their records. Many of these departments have vaults that are literally filled to their absolute capacity with large, bound volumes of old documents. In the Treasurer's office, the problem has become so bad that portions of other departmental vaults must be used to satisfy storage needs.



Storage overflow into work area (Auditor's)

Space is at such a premium in the City Hall that a significant part of this department's work space is also used for storage, further reducing effective work areas.

The current system makes the access of records very tedious and time consuming. It poses substantial danger to people who must balance on ladders or chairs to retrieve old documents bound in heavy books.

This problem is not going to get any better since most departments are required by law to have access to all their old records. The only conceivable improvement that can be realized involves conversion to a microfilming system. This course of action was advocated by virtually all employees interviewed.

Substantial preparatory work for such conversion has already been done under a CETA funded study a few years ago in which all departmental records were catalogued in detail. The actual microfilming was not undertaken at that time due to the large start-up costs involved in purchasing the necessary camera equipment. There are, however, other options that can reduce this cost such as the leasing of equipment.

This action should be undertaken right away, since the

problem can only grow in size and in a few years there is a very real possibility that many departments will be buried in a massive pile of stored paper.

Other Problems and Deficiencies

Heating - Cooling: The inability to control the temperature within work areas was mentioned by virtually all employees interviewed. This problem is composed of two aspects. During the winter months office temperatures vary between too hot and too cold, due to the fact that the forced hot air heating system is connected to the high school and centrally controlled from there. Individual radiators do have regulators, but it appears that they can only be adjusted to either on or off. Sometimes even this does not work and the temperature is adjusted by opening and closing windows. In the summer, many employees reported that the heat in their office is so unbearable, that they must close up and go home.

Although some offices are air conditioned, most are not, since the existing wiring cannot handle the current drawn by air conditioners. To rewire the entire building has been judged on numerous occassions to be too expensive. This argument has caused consternation amongst a number of employees in light of the fact that "a priveleged few do have it" despite the cost. When compared to the amount of

"money the city would save in man hours lost because of time off and lackadaisical attitude due the excessive heat," such an expenditure for all departments is easily justified.

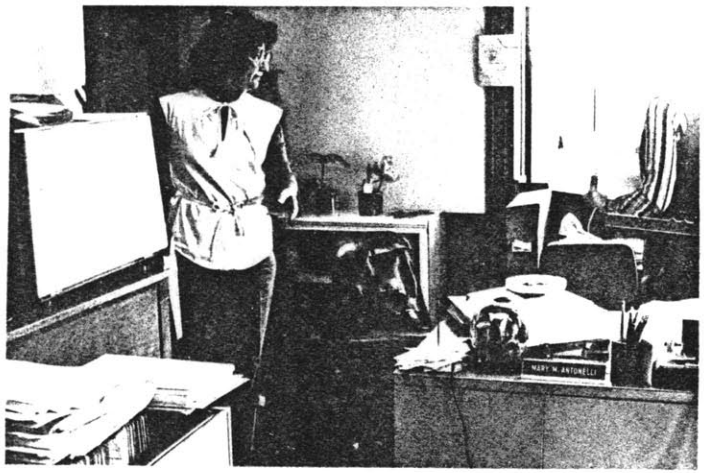
One commonly advocated method for improving the current situation involves the installation of a solar heating/ cooling system for the city hall. As discussed in chapter 9, one of the strong arguments for moving in this direction is the current level of interest at the federal level in sponsoring and funding such projects.

Water Leakage: The Board of Health currently experiences severe water incursion from an outside wall every time there is a significant rainfall or melting of snow. This problem should be corrected immediately since it poses a substantial hazard due to its proximity to electrical outlets. The situation will not get any better and will cost much more to remedy the longer it is put off, due to the possibilty of structural damage. It is also somewhat ironic that the space occupied by the Board of Health is in violation of the code they are charged with enforcing.

The City's Comprehensive Plan of 1969 noted in passing that no significant repairs were needed at that time to the building's exterior envelop.[5] This conclusion should be re-evaluated since over the course of nine years it appears

that problems have developed with the integrity of flashing and exterior masonry in certain areas. In addition, numerous employees report that their windows are quite drafty.

Security from break-in and theft was felt to be problematic in two departments - Veterans Services and the Audio-Visual space occupied by the School Dept. A xerox machine was stolen from Veterans Services a few years ago by thieves who gained entry through a first floor window off the front patio of City Hall. Although another incident has not occured, the department head was apprehensive because of the deteriorated condition of the door onto the patio. The Audio-Visual department occupies a corner location in the basement that is probably most prone to illegal entry at night. It is virtually impossible to see this portion of the building from either School St. or Highland Ave. Even though there have been no break-ins, the director was concerned due to the large amount of video equipment stored in this space.



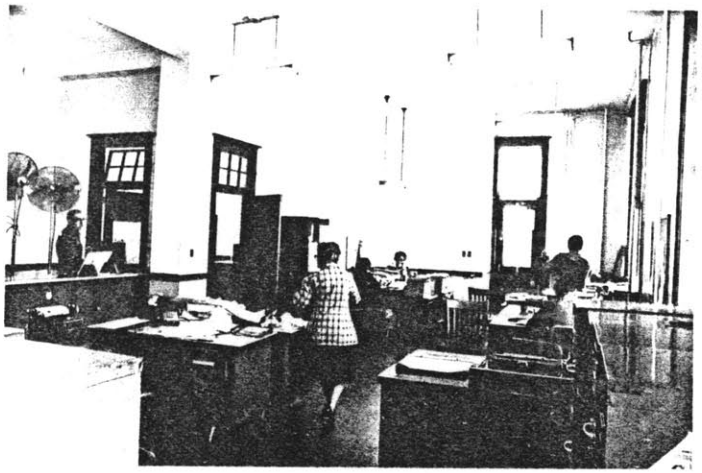
Xerox machine in crowded work areas causes acoustic conflict amongst activities (Auditor's)

Acoustics: A number of employees indicated dissatisfaction with the noise levels in their departmental work spaces. This was partially attributed to the number of people sharing work areas and the range of activities occuring there due to a lack of space. The problem is intensified by the non-sound absorbing materials used on walls and floors of the City Hall. Most employees felt that

carpeting would help alleviate this condition. In many departments, carpeting would also greatly improve office appearance, since floors are covered with linoleum that is in very bad shape.

Wall Outlets: Lack of wall outlets in work areas was mentioned as a problem in most departments. This has forced employees to string extension cords "all over the place", resulting in a potentially dangerous condition.

Maintenance: The current level of maintenance was judged to be inadequate by most employees. There was a widespread feeling that departmental work areas are not cleaned properly. A number of departments in the basement have had broken windows remain unfixed for close to six months.



High ceiling hung lights provide inadequate illumination (Veteran's Services)

Lighting: Inadequate lighting was considered to be a problem throughout the building. The ceiling-hung flourescent fixtures do not provide good levels of illumination and should be replaced with a system that relies more on individually controlled desk lamps in conjunction with more functional area illumination. Since employees could turn on their individual desk lamps only as needed, it would result in a more energy efficient environment.

Public and Shared Spaces

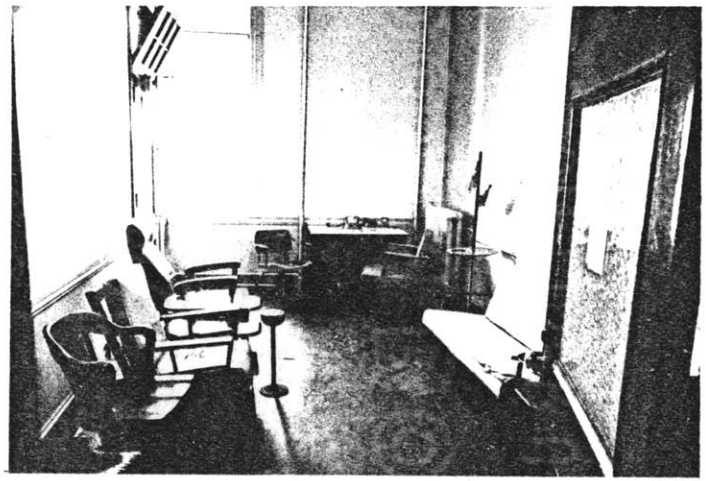
Although a few employees felt that the City Hall had completely outlived its usefulness, most thought the exterior was of irreplaceable historic value and would hate to see it torn down and replaced by a new building. The interior, on the other hand was judged by all to be in serious need of physical change and upgrading. When asked how the Somerville City Hall compared with other city halls and offices they knew about, employees responded by saying:

- "the present interior gives people a very poor image of city hall and city government"
- "it is very depressing and can't help but affect people's attitudes - both workers and visitors"
- "as a matter of civic pride this place needs a complete facelift, especially for those departments that deal with the public"
- "the hall is very run down"
- "it is shabby and dirty; when compared with other city halls, this place is depressing"
- "the decor certainly leaves a lot to be desired"
- "the inside looks very derelict"

A number of employees mentioned that the interior of the building reminded them of an "old grammar school". The public

spaces are composed exclusively of circulation elements: corridors and stairways. Transitions to departmental work areas are abrupt: doors off the corridors. Many felt this conveyed a distinct impression that the presense of citizens was but slightly tolerated in this public building. Recommendations to reverse this image are contained in chapter 7.

Employee Lounge



Women's lounge - second floor.

There is presently a women's lounge on the second floor of the City Hall. The space is very small, "filled with furniture that even goodwill would not take" and provides the only means of access to the women's bathroom. It is therefore not open for use by male employees. This lounge was judged to be inadequate by almost all employees interviewed. They strongly felt that a larger, better furnished lounge was needed to provide a place for eating lunch and relaxing on coffee breaks.

Some people suggested that a cafeteria might also be located in the city hall, as there is no place to go for a hot lunch, except a little coffee shop across Highland Ave. Others felt that a cafeteria was too extravagant, but that a centrally located coffee and donut stand was more appropriate for the scale of city hall.

Bathrooms

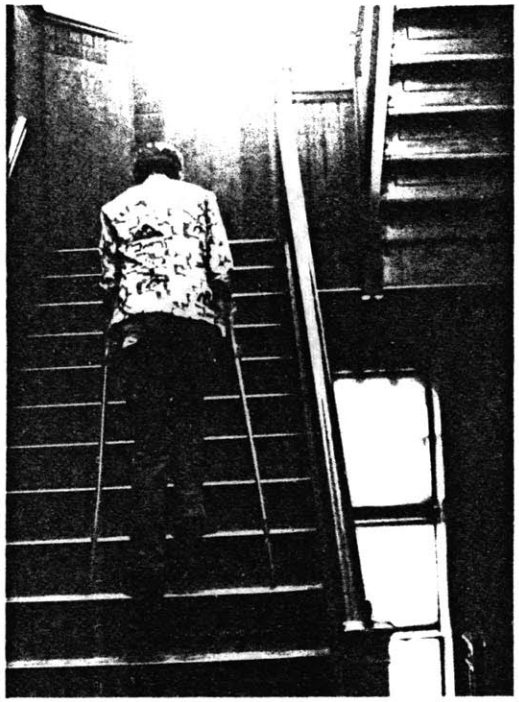
All employees mentioned the deleterious state of rest room facilities in the city hall. Their physical appearance was judged to be "disgusting" and in serious need of upgrading. In addition a number have leakage problems with the plumbing.

Except for the two bathrooms in the basement all others are prominantly identified with the word "private" lettered across the door. Employees felt that this was a silly anachronism and very inconsiderate of citizens who visit city hall.

Stairway and Elevator

A number of employees mentioned that the existing stairway is quite dangerous, since on many stairs the tread has been worn down to the point where the metal caps protrude above it. Several people have already had near-accidents because of this condition.

Employees also mentioned the need for an elevator, especially to enhance accessibility for the elderly and handicapped. They reported that numerous visitors to the second and third floors complain about the long trek upstairs. For elderly people or those with a heart condition this climb could easily result in a serious medical complication.



Existing stairway poses a substantial barrier to elderly and handicapped. It is also quite dangerous for all users due to worn down treads.

Exercise Room

Although virtually all employees mentioned the desirability of an elevator, many also said that they would not use one if installed. This was because walking up and down the stairs was felt to be the only significant exercise they got all day.

In this regard the suggestion made by some employees of the Board of Health for an exercise room/facility would provide a space for interested employees to "substitute an exercise break for a coffee break." Such a program was tried out last year with exercise sessions held in the Aldermanic Chamber. Interest fizzled apparently due to a lack of adequate accommodations. The exercise room could also provide a place to shower and change for those employees who might be interested in jogging to work.

Chapter 6: Individual Exercises

This chapter contains further elaboration of the issues and areas of concern presented in the previous chapter. It is based on the compilation and discussion of individual exercises completed by participants over the course of the workshop/charette. The material is presented separately from chapter 5 in order to illustrate the utility of such exercises in getting at a wider range of user values, needs and desires than is possible with sole reliance on interview techniques.

Included are the following exercises oriented toward the evaluation of the existing environment:

- Exercise 1 - Image mapping
- Exercise 2 - Likes/dislikes
- Exercise 4 - Departmental work areas
- Exercise 4 - Public and shared spaces

Discussion of the results of exercise 3 - Ideal city hall is contained in chapter 7.

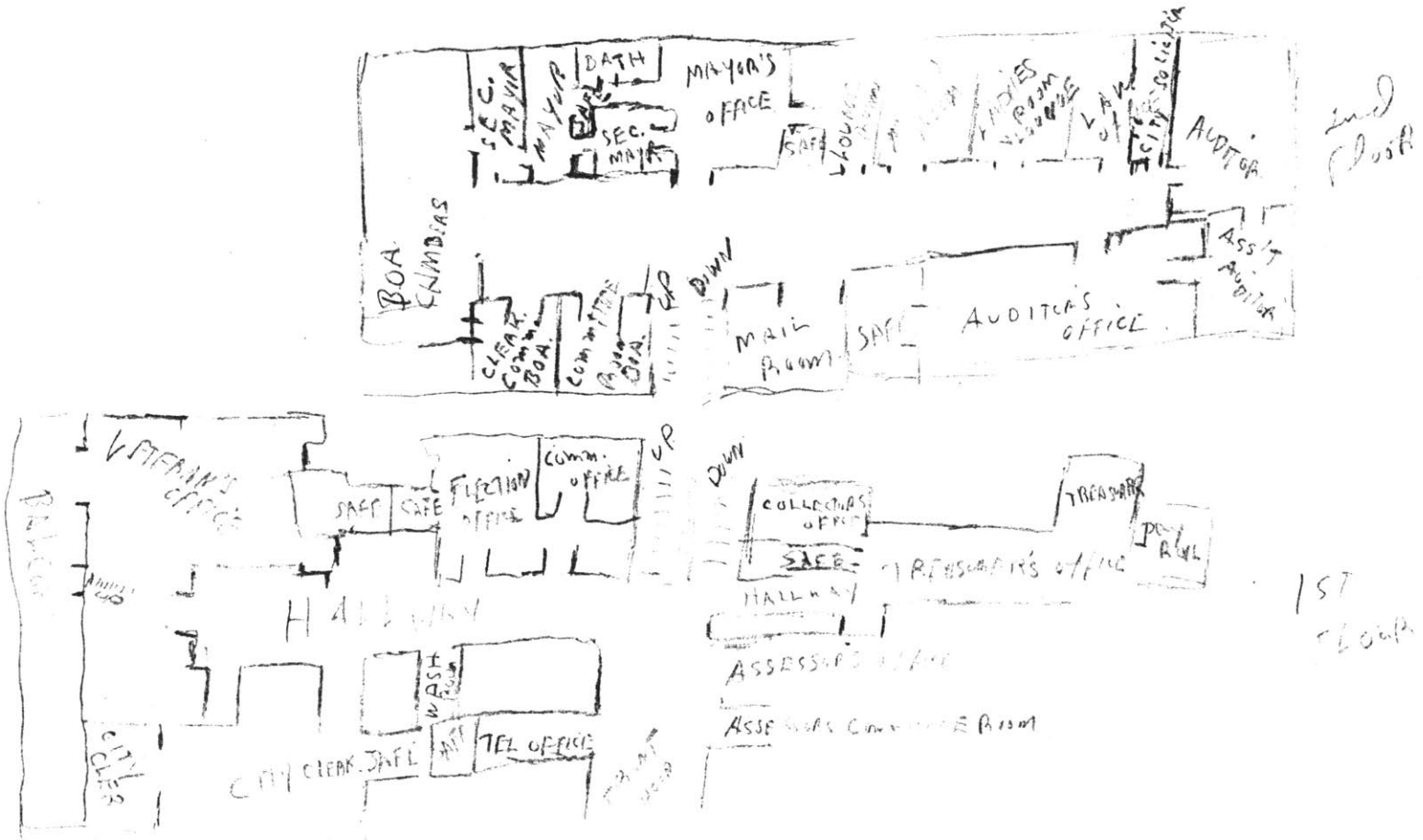
Exercise One - Image Mapping

The following are sketches drawn by workshop participants for exercise one. Due to the small number of people (and therefore sketches) at each of the two session 1 meetings and the increadible richness and individuality of the maps a systematic comparison of this exercise was not undertaken during the workshop.

Its greatest value however was in providing participants an opportunity to bring in something completely of their own creation to begin the process of dialogue. Understandably there was a level of excitement within the group as the exercises were put up and people saw what others had drawn, thus setting an active atmosphere for the rest of the meeting.

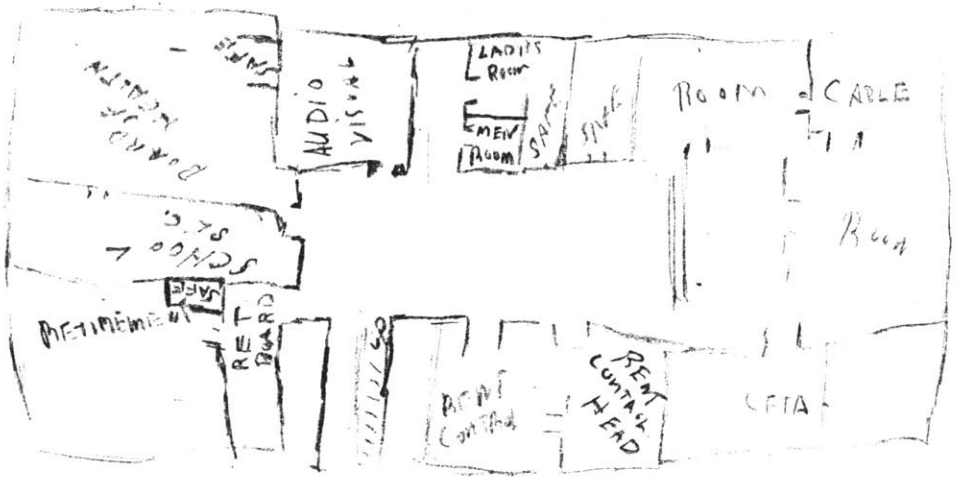
Exercise 1

Draw a plan of the portion of city hall you use from memory. Include as much detail as you can or want. Don't worry about making things completely accurate as this exercise is not a test of anyones drawing ability. Its sole intent is to see what things are most important or memorable about your environment. Feel free to use additional sheets of paper if you want.



Exercise 1

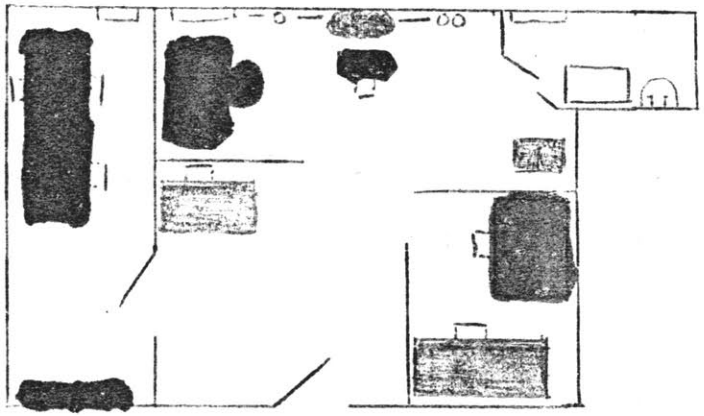
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BASEMENT

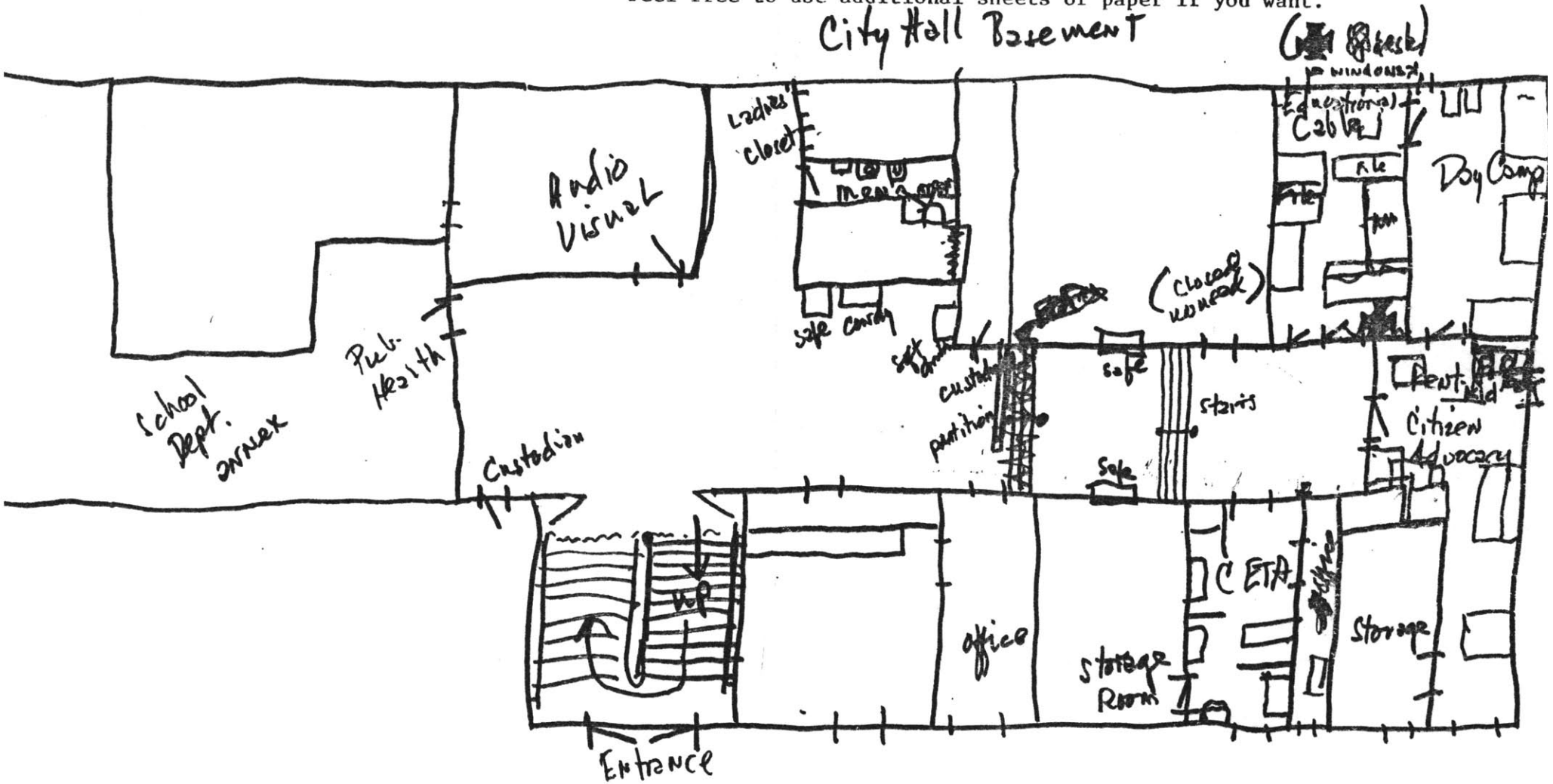
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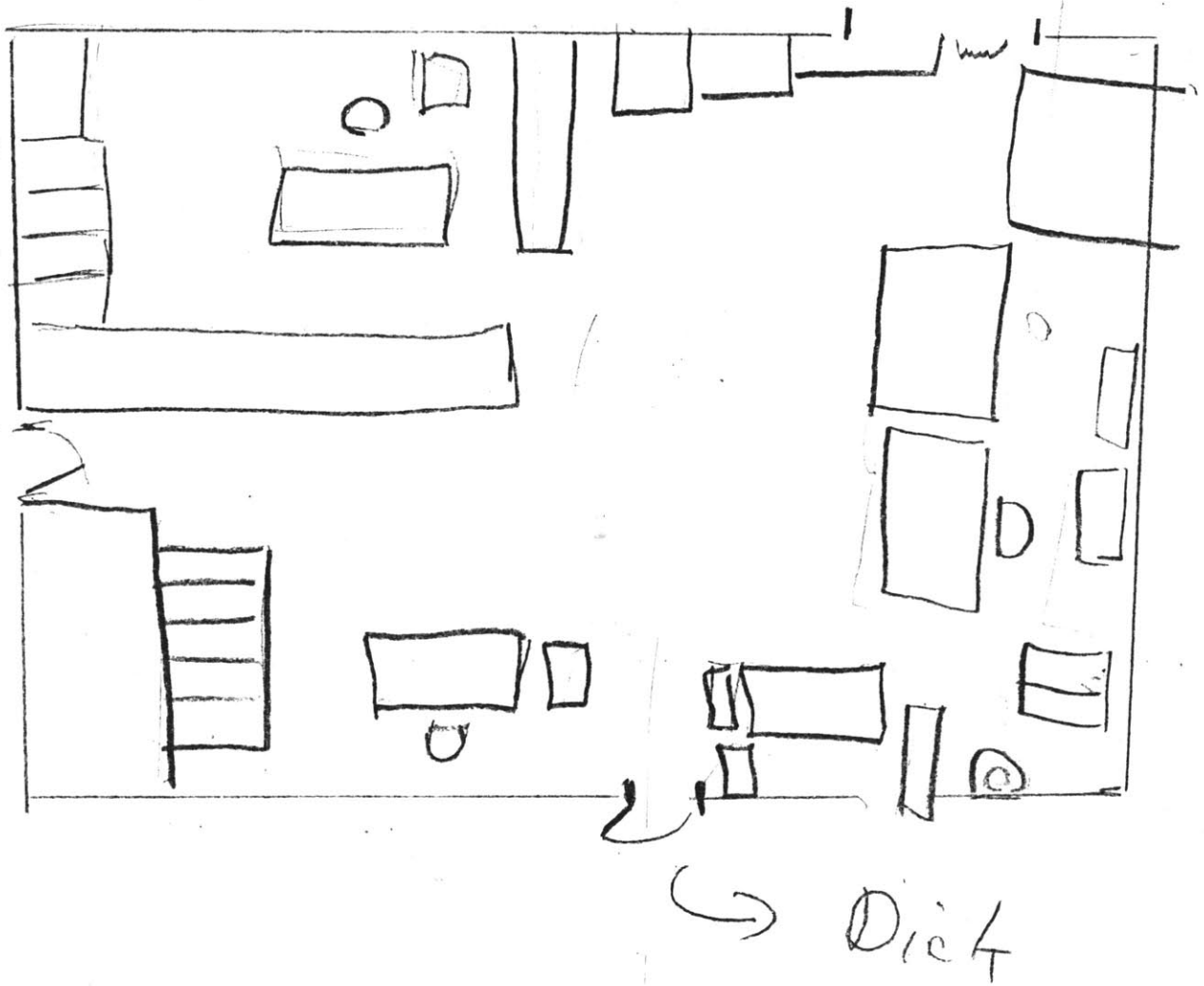
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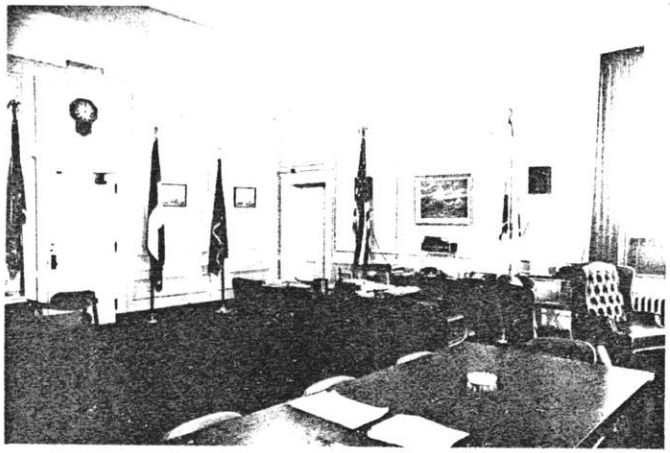




Exercise Two - Likes/Dislikes

Spaces/activities which participants from both groups circled as liked or disliked for exercise two are summarized on the following composite maps. They are indicative, especially in areas of consensus of the most widely perceived spatial and functional deficiencies within the city hall. Areas and things which people felt were good qualities about the existing environment also begin to emerge from these maps.

The composite maps and subsequent discussion summary from the workshop session can be used to help guide changes toward dislikes while preserving and accentuating liked qualities of the present building.

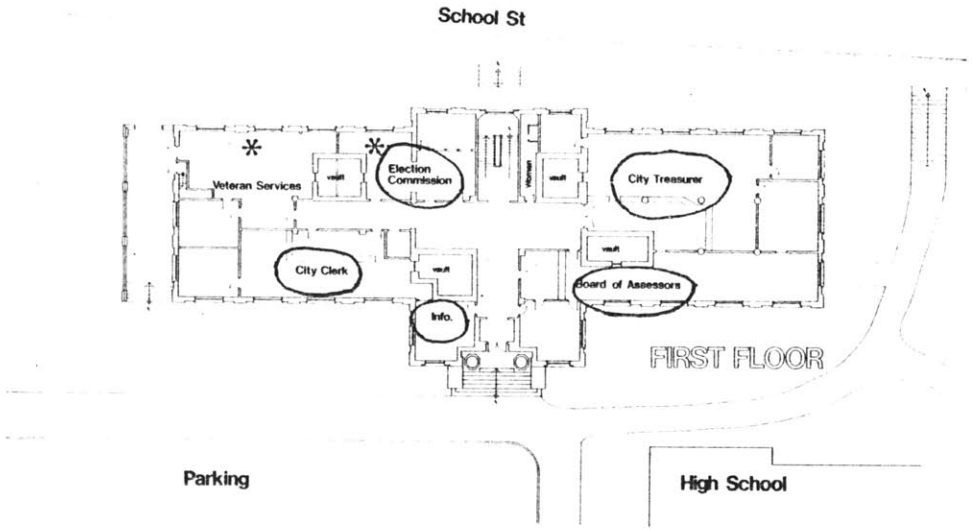


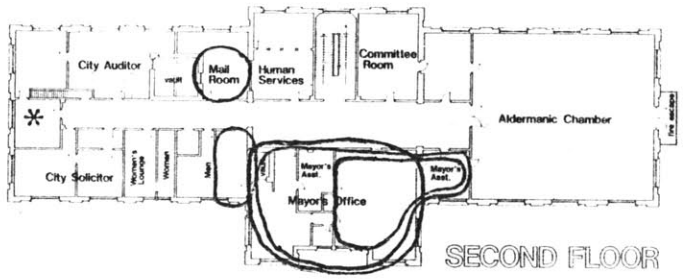
Mayor's office

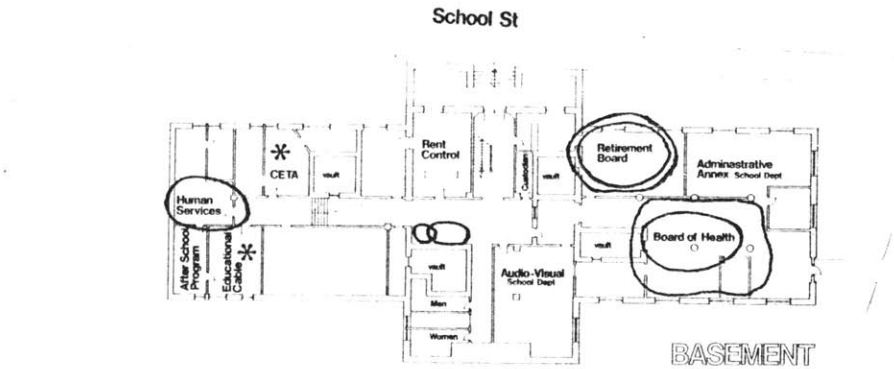
Spaces/Things Liked

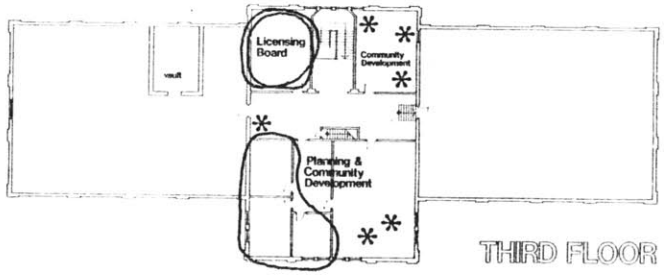
The Mayor's Office was one of the most liked spaces in the entire building. Participants felt it was the only place within the City Hall which had a positive "historic character or quality." It was also judged to be "brighter and cleaner than any other office." Juxtaposition of this space to other work areas surfaced an opinion shared by many participants that "we have nothing worthwhile, that is nice and would create a pleasant work environment."

Another office liked was that of the Licensing Board. One









Participant's work stations *

Composite Likes

reason is its relatively generous amount of space per person. Another contributing factor was a preceived "personal imprint" which both this office and the Mayor's evince.

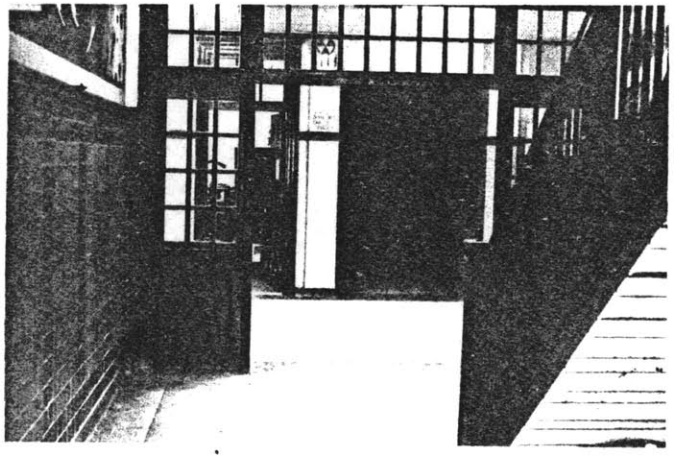
The Mayor's Office had been completely refurnished and repainted with the advent of a new administration in November, 1977. In the case of the Licensing Board, the space had been gradually personalized through the accumulation of plants and pictures. The employee in charge also had it well-organized for her various work tasks. No other departmental work area was perceived to contain such opportunities for personalization and control.

Other liked spaces included the mail/xerox room and the candy/soda machine area in the basement, because these were the "only places to meet other employees informally." The mail room was, however, disliked due to its perceived poor location within the building as well as inefficient operation. The location of the machines was also disliked because "they are like a magnet to high school kids" that hang out in this "unsupervised space." The machines themselves were felt to provide "an extremely limited and poor selection."

Another thing generally liked about the existing environment was the location of certain departments with large amounts of citizen visitation/interaction. These include the Retirement Board, Veteran's Services, Election Commission, Assessors,



Carpetting and acoustic ceilings were well liked (Board of Health)



Entry from School st.

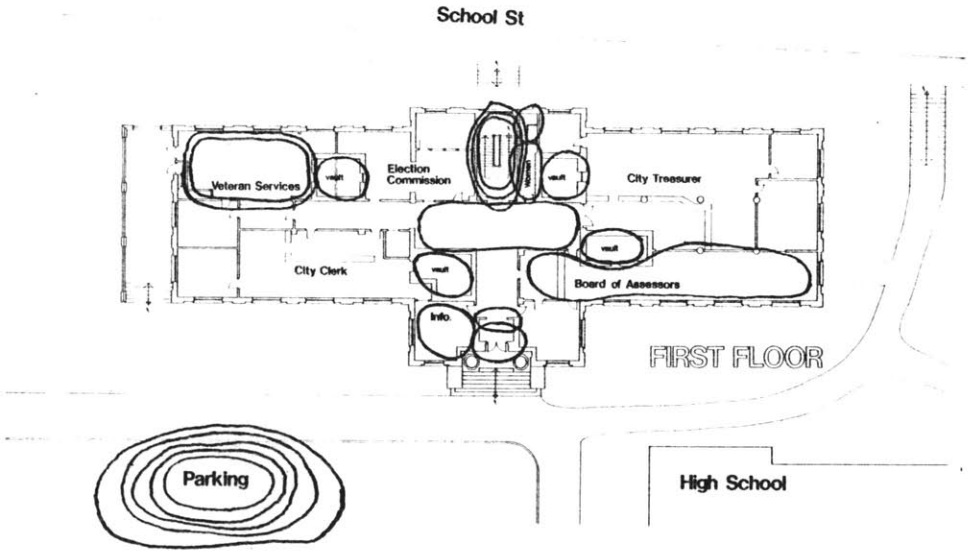
City Clerk, Treasurer's and the Board of Health. This last space was also liked because of carpeting, hung ceilings and fluorescent light fixtures which were lower than in most other departments. Other spaces liked because of their carpeting were the Information Room and the office of the Mayor's assistant.

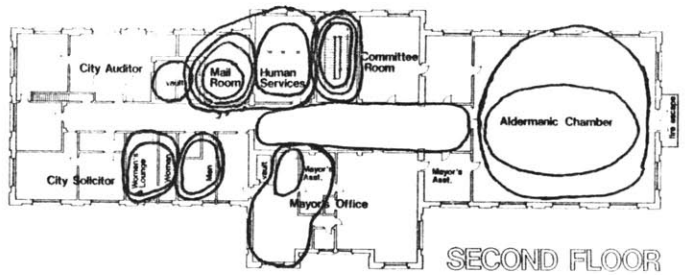
Dislikes

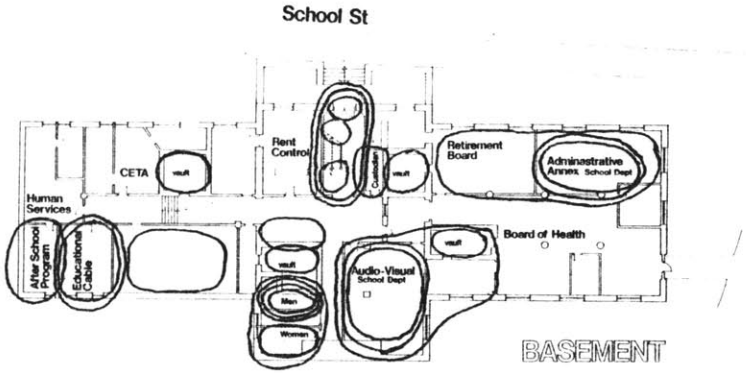
These departments were judged to have a poor location within the building and therefore disliked:

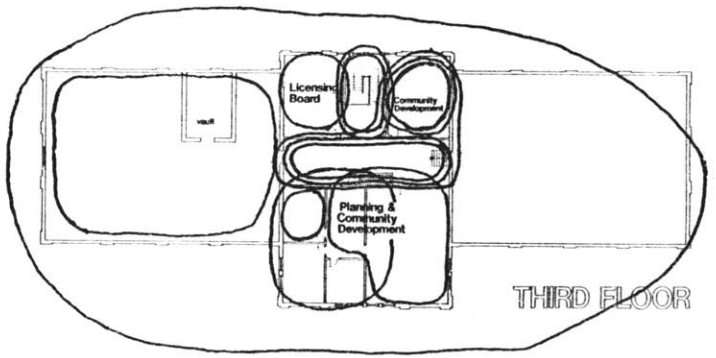
- Human Services and Licensing Board--because of high levels of public interaction it was felt these two should be located on lower floors.
- Auditors--due to its separation from the Assessors and
- Treasury which creates functional problems.
- Mail Room--participants felt it should be located in a more central place on either first floor or basement.
- Audio-Visual and School Dept. Annex--it was felt that these two functions should not even be within the building, especially in light of severe crowding in city administrative offices.

The School Street entry was especially disliked because the custodians currently store garbage right next to the doorway. The first floor entry off the concourse was also disliked due to the extremely low visibility of the public Information Station. People felt that it was "not terribly inviting" and

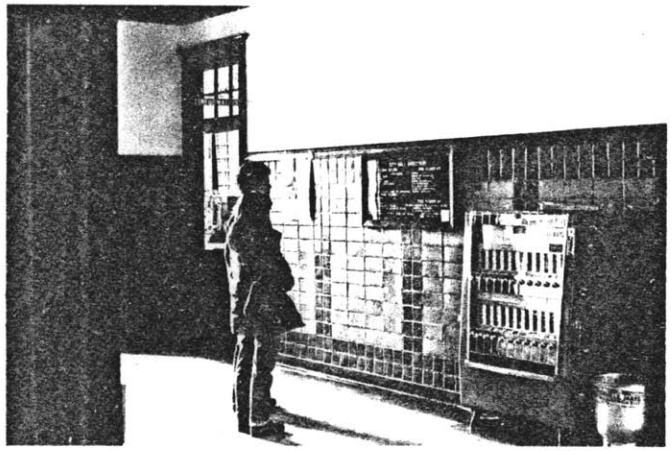

School St
Veteran Services
vault
Election Commission
Women
vault
City Treasurer
City Clerk
vault
vault
Board of Assessors
Info.
FIRST FLOOR
Parking
High School


City Auditor
vault
Mail Room
Human Services
Committee Room
Aldermanic Chamber
City Solicitor
Mayor's Asst.
Mayor's Office
Mayor's Asst.
SECOND FLOOR


School St
CETA
vault
Rent Control
Women
vault
Retirement Board
Administrative Annex School Dept
Human Services
After School Program
Educational Cable
vault
Board of Health
vault
Men
Women
Audio-Visual School Dept
BASEMENT


vault
Licensing Board
Community Development
Planning & Community Development
THIRD FLOOR

Dislikes

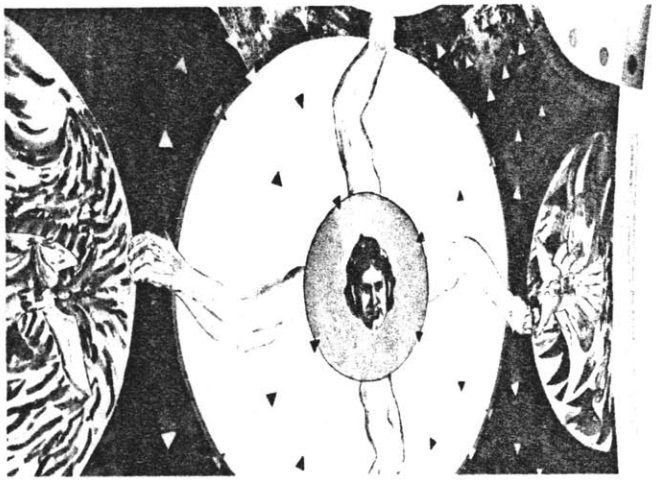


Main building entry from parking lot. Information is tucked away and obscured by doorway.

related how many visitors walk right by without realizing it's there.

For that matter, the entire information system within City Hall was judged to be inadequate. Building directories are often out-of-date and result in confusion because their 'two flights up' instruction is interpreted by many to mean 'second floor.' There is also an image problem (amongst others) with being located in a place called 'basement.' Bulletin boards throughout the building were judged to be "much too cluttered and messy," with "many of the notices out-of-date and irrelevant to employees and citizens alike." Many felt this to be the result of the lack of a coherent framework or central responsibility for presenting such public information.

Fire and emergency access was a mystery to most participants. Very few knew of the egress stairs in the south wing of the building. From the third floor, secondary access is quite simply non-existent. The possibility of a serious catastrophy because of inadequate and ill-marked emergency access was a major concern to employees. Many also felt the large amounts of stored paper in the vaults and throughout work areas to be a substantial fire hazard, especially since the building has no sprinkler system and hand-held fire extinguishers are not readily visible. Vaults were also disliked because of the functional inefficiencies and spatial waste involved in bulk storage of records.



Typical mural inside of City Hall.

The quality of light and the dark brown tiles in the rest of the hallways were judged to be "too dark and depressing." Everyone agreed with the observation that "entering the building on a sunny day requires an adjustment of your eyes." One participant joked that this "might not be so bad after all, since there is nothing great to see in here anyway."

Murals throughout the building were judged to be "disgusting, in poor taste and irrelevant." The only exception was one on the third floor landing with the rather sarcastic inscription, "I am too old to run." Participants felt these murals only drabbened an already drab environment.

Workspace furnishing were very much disliked. The ubiquitous pedestal desks were described as "useless, old army surplus." Most people felt they provided neither adequate work surfaces nor the kind of storage space most necessary such as vertical file drawers.

Chairs, tables and counters were perceived as a "hodge-podge of old broken down stuff." To add insult to injury, employees of some recently created departments had to scrouge around the building for unused and thus most deletarious of this "stuff" or have their work spaces remain unfurnished.

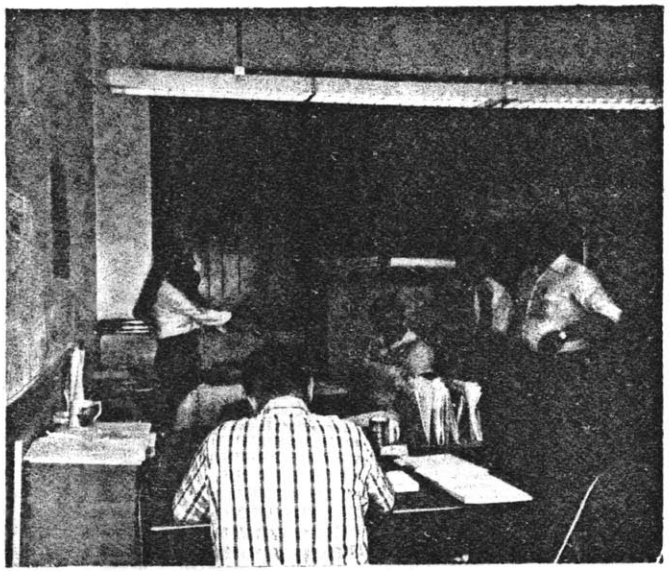
The entire process for planning departmental work space allocation within the City Hall was also judged to be deficient.

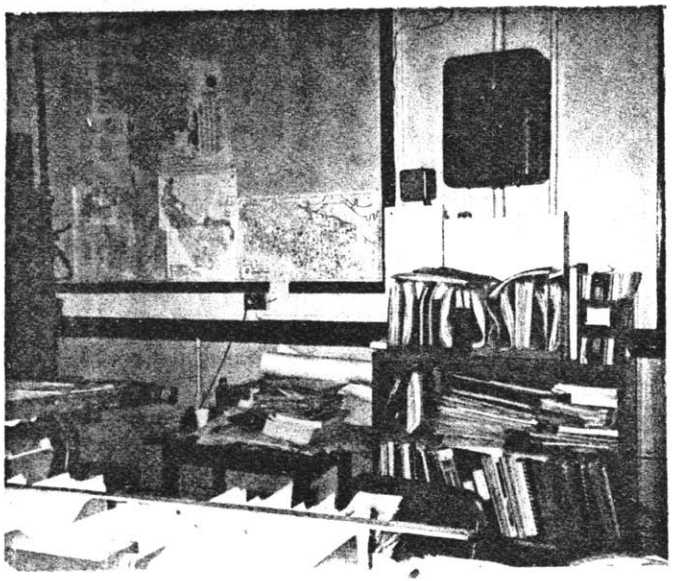
Participants generally felt that "little thought was put into why certain departments are where they are. They were just put there because the space was available and not because this was the best place for them." Such ad hoc allocation was also felt to occur within departments as well, resulting in the juxtaposition of incompatible work activities, creating "inefficient and unpleasant environments in which to work."

Participants thought that improvements in these areas would not only result in a more positive, professional image for the City Hall amongst the general public, but would also help lift employee morale. It was felt they would help stimulate a greater willingness on the part of employees to take care of and keep up their environment. At it is now "most people could not care less because their efforts would be but a drop in the bucket."

One participant reflected on how "maybe we're asking for too much; maybe this is just the Somerville style. I don't really think so though," he concluded. "Wth some work, this place could be made into a city hall which is pleasant to work in for employees and nicer to visit for citizens--a city hall in which the historic qualities are accentuated and of which all residents of Somerville could be proud."

Exercise Four - Departmental Work Areas



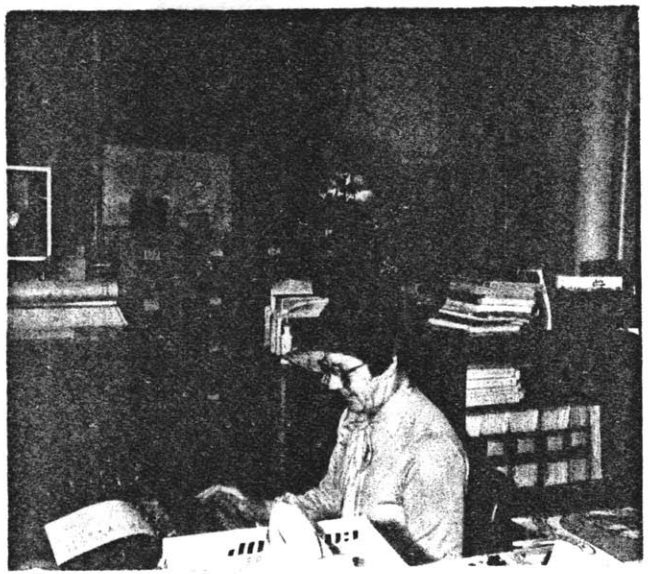


This exercise focused on more detailed activities and environmental deficiencies which occur in the Planning and Community Development department. Pictures which supplement the text were taken by participants as part of the exercise.

Some of these activities such as drafting and layout are particular to this one department. Quite a few others occur in all departments throughout the building. So too, do the attendant problems. Thus, in modified form, the following list of activities and environmental deficiencies in accomodating them can be considered a valid representation for other departments as well.

Paperwork (writing letters, preparing applications)--The current space is not well suited for this activity due to a lack of privacy and high noise levels. This leads to continued interruptions--some intentional "as in the normal course of office routine people are always referring things to you" and others not such as various conversations that occur in the same space. Relevant information is not readily accessible as files which are shared by all often result in material being misplaced. "There is little possibility within this environment to organize one's own space and materials" due to overcrowding and lack of a system or space for storage.





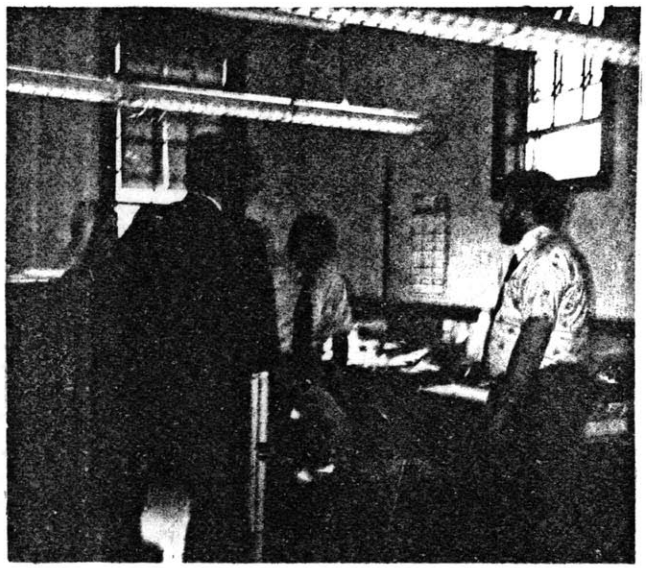
Report Preparation--The above deficiencies are more severe when employees must concentrate on preparing large documents. Lack of large layout work surfaces makes this task even more difficult.

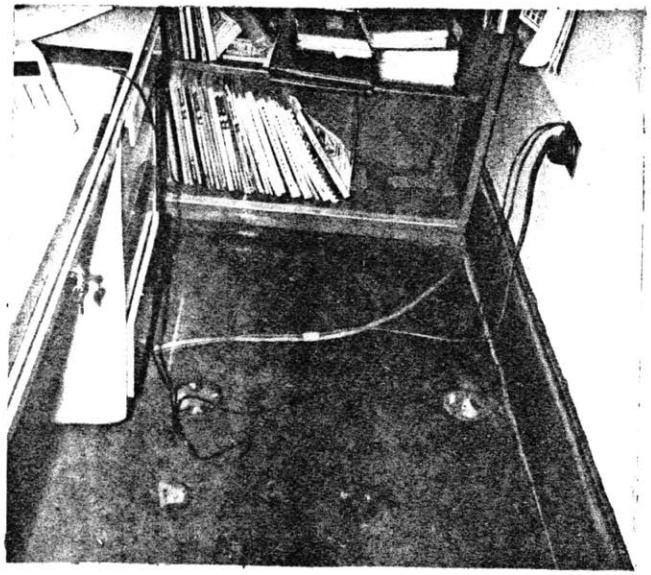
Reading; Research--Again, there is no quiet place, free of interruptions, for these activities. Nor is there a centrally organized library/reference materials space. Thus, various reports and books which "one may not be specifically working on, but wants to be aware of" are scattered haphazardly throughout the office.

Personal Interviews -- Due to overcrowding and lack of privacy, these must occur at one's desk "out in the open," making it extremely difficult to establish any sort of rapport or confidentiality with the client since "everyone in the office can hear what is being said, and see exactly who is saying it."

Telephone Conversations--Again, the noise level "usually makes it difficult to conduct phone conversations--except when it's a personal call. Then it seems like everyone is all ears."

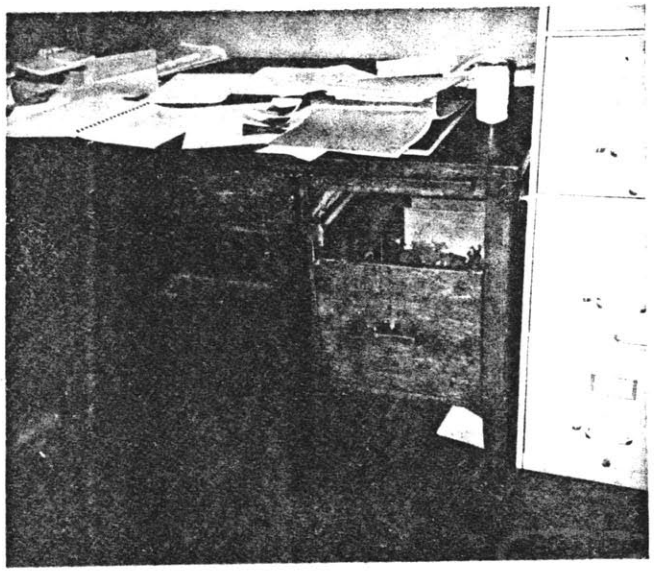
Typing--Typing is in conflict with most other activities due to the fact that it substantially increases noise levels within the department. This conflict is accentuated by overcrowding and spatial juxtaposition of typing stations with other work areas, which has resulted from a history of ad hoc work space allocation.

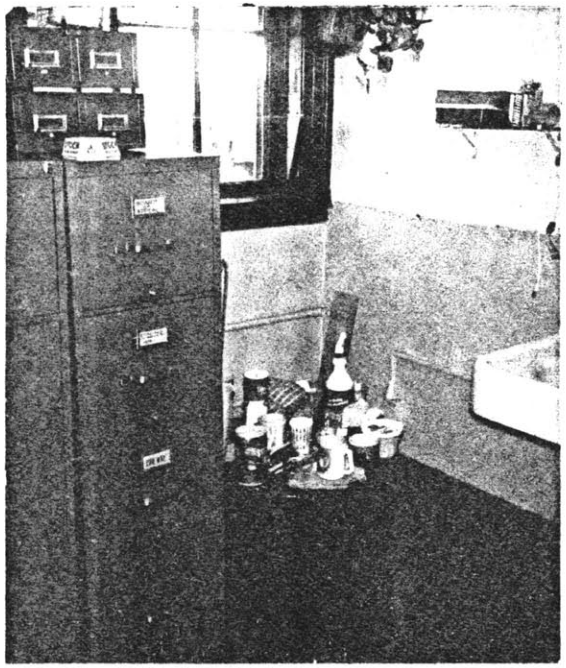




Conferences; Meetings--There is currently no useable space for holding staff conferences or other meetings within the departmental work area. These thus occur at people's desks, in conflict with other activities, or out in the 3rd floor hallway.
Bookkeeping--This activity also occurs in the midst of all the noise and confusion, making it "extremely hard to concentrate on figures."
Eating Lunch, Relaxing, Coffee Breaks--Since there is no place to go within the building for such activities, they often occur at ones desk, where it is "hard to relax under public scrutiny, without feeling guilty while others are working."
Design/Drafting/Layout--These activities must occur in very crowded conditions. There is also little place to store various graphics. Thus "maps are piled up all over the place leading to confusion and inaccessibility."
Reception--Again there is no space at the entry to the department set aside for a reception station, with a seating area for visitors. These people must either wait standing in the hallway or sitting in the midst of departmental work areas.

One participant chose to interpret Exercise 4 differently. Her observations of environmental deficiencies included:
Electrical outlet system in the office is terrible. Only one of the outlets in the middle of the floor works. Thus, wires and extension cords are stretched across the floor creating a serious safety hazard.





Flooring is also dangerous since there are many holes in it. One employee has already hurt herself seriously enough by tripping over a hole that she had to be sent to the hospital.

Desks--This one is only useful on top. The drawer on the right is missing and the bottom drawer cannot hold anything. The top drawer cannot be opened without using excess force.

Food storage out in the open can draw bugs, rodents and presents a health hazard.

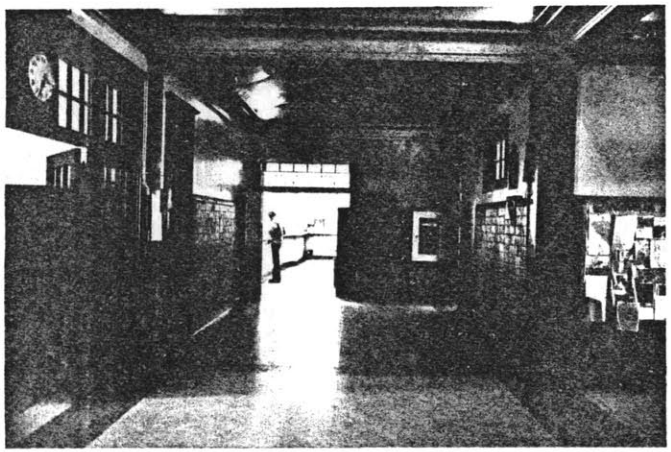
Organizational units are completely lacking resulting inefficiency, misplacement and loss of reference material.

Image created by all these deficiencies is extremely poor. "If I came in here wanting these people to help me renovate my house (through various grant and loan programs), I'd take one look around and say--no way! They can't even keep their own office in good shape."

Recommendations for improving the suitability of their environment to accommodate these, as well as other desired activities and to alleviate the above deficiencies are presented in Chapter 7, Departmental Work Areas.



Point 2 - from first floor entry.



Point 2 - from south wing hallway.

Exercise Four - Public and Shared Spaces

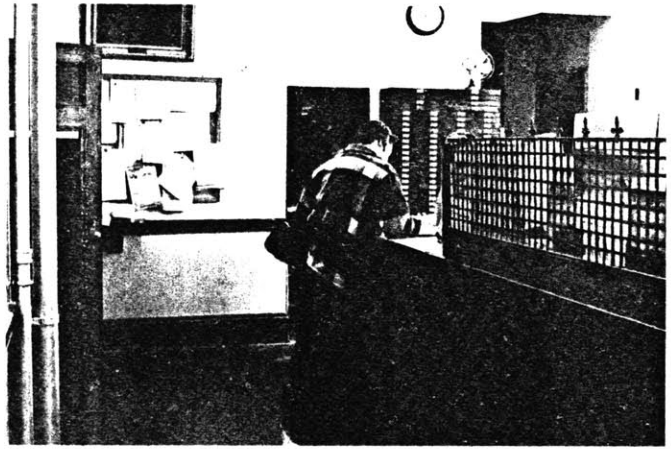
This section summarizes participant responses to questions posed at various points along the city hall 'walk' which people completed prior to the public and shared spaces session 2. Some of the comments are directly transcribed from the worksheets, while others are from the workshop discussion of the exercise.

Point 1: What is the first thing you notice upon entering this town?

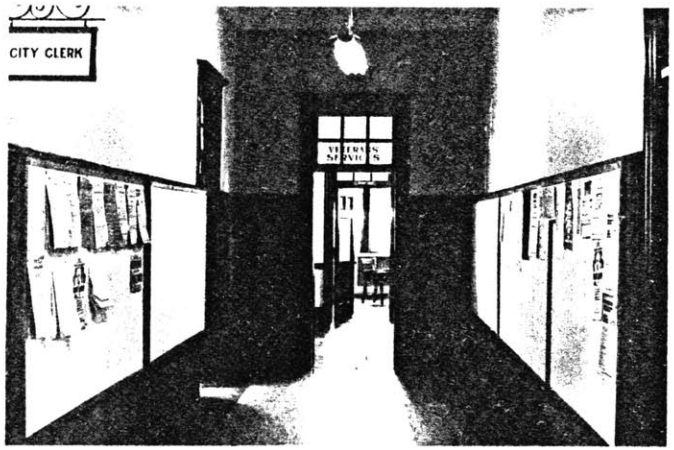
- The shadowy atmosphere; the deep cave-like rooms with small gates; the lack of light.
- Very drab - information is obscured and cannot be readily seen.
- It needs a better 'entrance'.
- Information room is really a telephone office - as far as information goes - forget it - most people walk right by.

Point 2: Are there any differences between the streets that come together here? Which one do you like better, why?

- No! They are unidentified and have too many doors that are closed and unlabeled.
- Vaguely - neither one really impresses me.
- There's no warmth, no beauty, there's just nothing there except a lot of wasted space.



Point 3 - City Clerk's office.



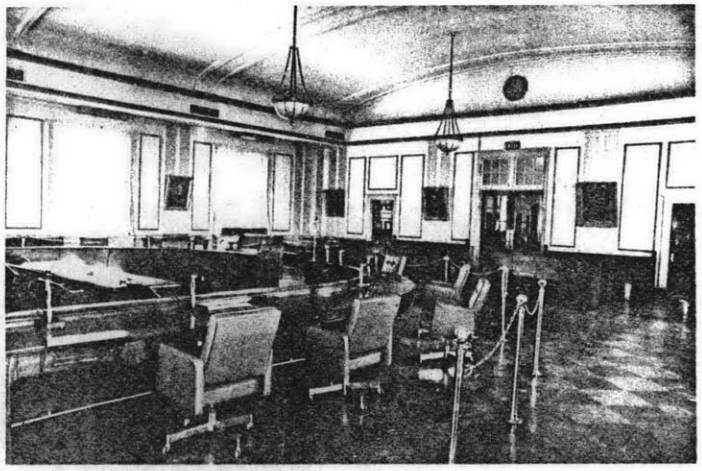
Point 4 - First floor hallway.

Point 3: What do you think about this house? How do you like its entry?

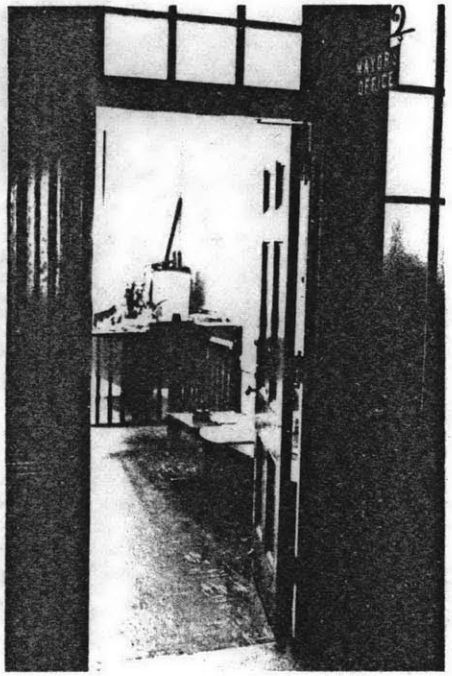
- Once again the entry is narrow and the brighter interior is in stark contrast to the street.
- Too cluttered - more like an institution than an office.
- Single rows of desks behind 'bars' are terrible; too much stuff on the counter.

Point 4: Take a moment to look closely at the walls and doors of these houses. What do you think of them? Do you think the houses need windows or front yards? Do you think the street needs trees or benches?

- I always prefer a broad access with comfortable yards; these houses need yards and benches and shrubbery.
- Veteran's house - clean and bright; a better reception room could be had though with benches and plants; walls are too bare.
- Election commission - colorful, but leaves much to be desired for interior decorating.
- Too many bulletin boards all over the place - they are too cluttered and information is often out of date.



Point 5 - Aldermanic Cahmber.



Point 6 - Entry to Mayor's office.

Point 5: Is this the town's community center? What do you think of it?

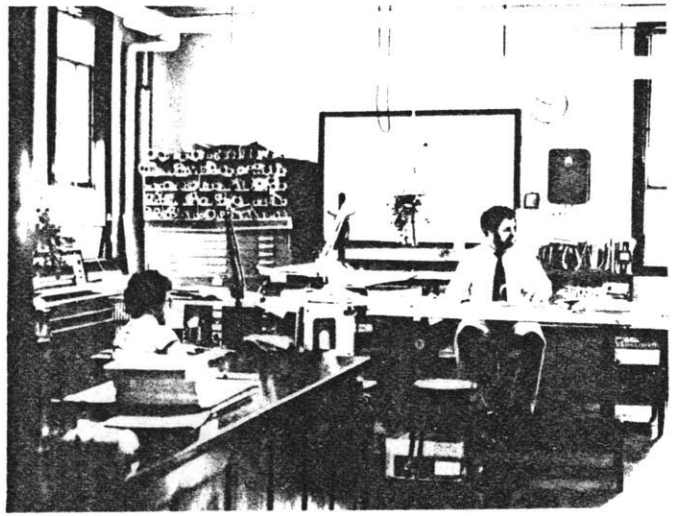
- No way! It looks forlorn like a church for sale or a paved over park.
- Yes - but needs to be completely remodelled.
- Not functional because of the way the benches are set up for the public and the terrible acoustics.
- So much history - not brought out at all.

Point 6: What about this house and entry?

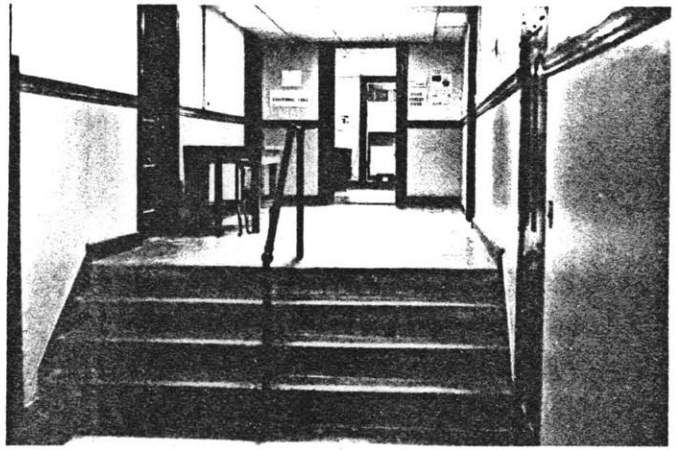
- Once again, you enter a tube to get to a large lighted cave, but this one has side caves and passageways.
- Entry to this house is laid out wrong - should be more of a reception room.
- Most uncomfortable chairs I've ever sat in.
- Looks so secretive - like an entrance to a cave.

Point 7: What do you think of this one?

- Hopeless - start from the beginning.



Point 8 - Planning department.



Point 9 - Basement hallway.

Point 8: Do you know who lives here and what they do? Do you like their house?

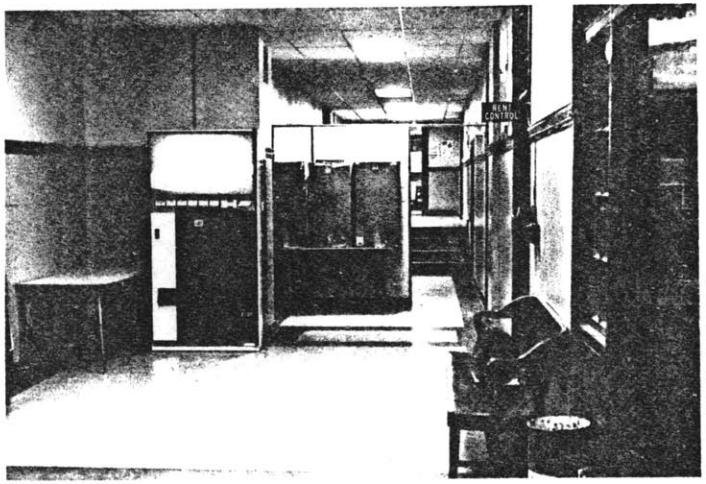
- For the size of the family and the operations it should be rearranged.
- Cluttered, cluttered, cluttered.
- It looks like about 30, 40 years ago - going into some draftsman's office - everything piled up everywhere.
- There's a lot of old junk furniture which should be thrown out and replaced with new items.

Point 9: What about these rooms?

- These look like seedy hotel refurnishings, or a tacky wall panel display department.
- Its like walking through a maze - claustrophobic.
- Whoever laid it out certainly didn't tax their imagination.

Point 10: What do you think of these houses and the street? Do you know who lives here and what they do?

- In the one real cavern of the town, there seems to be more light than above ground.
- Basement is the pits - a real disaster area.
- I didn't even know these offices were in the city hall.



Point 11 - Vending machines in basement.

Point 11: Is this a major intersection? Do you like these streets? Why or why not?

- Not so much an intersection, as it is a shopping center, and a poor one at that.
- Poor substitution for a cafeteria.
- I've seen better restrooms in MBTA stations.
- High school kids hang out here - I get stoned just walking by and I don't even smoke.

The town's crossroads, and a bad one at that, was generally considered to be the central stairway because of the interflow of traffic. The only shared social club was judged to be the Mail room. All participants felt that this town lacked an adequate community center for employees.

Recommendations for changes based on this critique are presented in chap 7, Public and Shared Spaces.

Chapter 7: Workshop Results and Recommendations

This chapter contains various recommendations for the three general areas of concern based on dialogue with participants during the workshop. The material for each of the three is divided into the following sub-sections:

1. Summary of activity program and design recommendations.
2. Images and guidelines which illustrate in more detail the generic qualities of improvement elements. These begin to flesh out the activity program by providing examples of desired 'sense of place(s)' and are based on the pictures cut out and well liked from exercise 3 and the session 1 slide show.
3. Further process recommendations for additional dialogue and decision making towards actual implementation of environmental improvements.

At the conclusion a number of spatial program considerations, six design options at various potential funding levels and an overall process for achieving consensus on an appropriate space program and design scheme for improvement are presented and discussed.

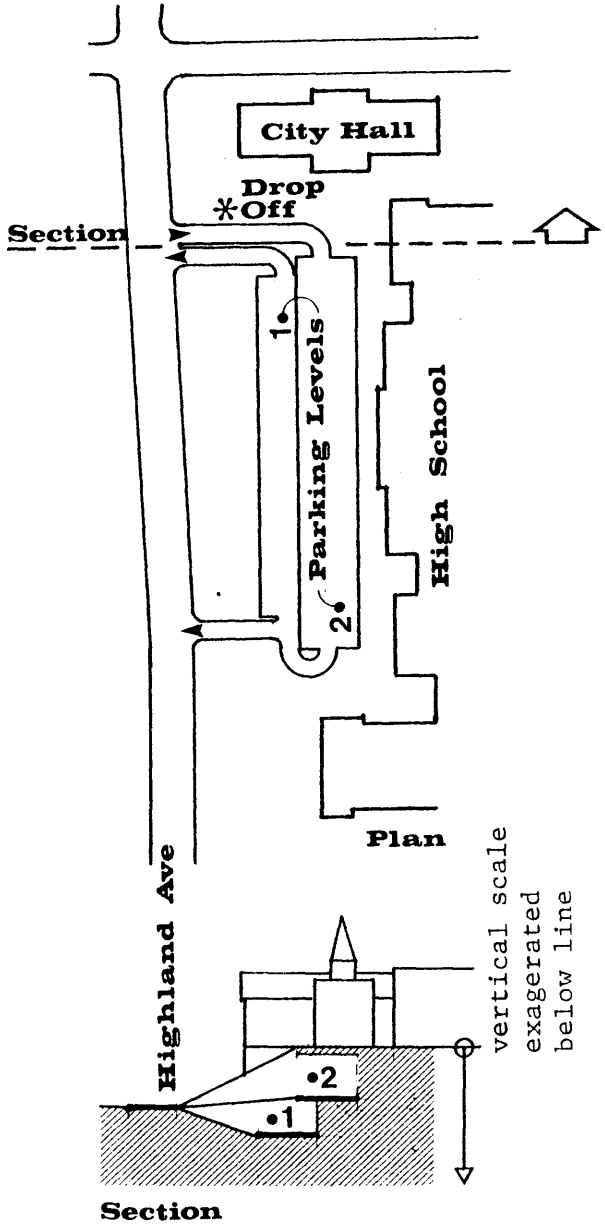
City Hall Site

Site Improvement Recommendations

The city hall site is officially referred to as Central Hill Park. It is a park though in name only, as much of the land has been progressively taken over for the purposes of automobile parking. At one time, there was redoubt on this site commemorating the location of a revolutionary war fortification used by the colonists during the seige of Boston. This historic reference has been completely obliterated by a macadam lot. Such insensitive treatment of a historic site and publically-owned land is especially inappropriate in Somerville, since there is a severe scarcity of recreational open space throughout the city.

One of the characteristics of the parking/grass area disposition in front of City Hall is that it neither serves parking demand adequately, nor provides a very appealing open space for recreation. It is surrounded on all four sides by autos, has no benches, few trees and reminds one of a suburban 'front lawn.' Substitution of this grass area with more at-grade parking will, however, have detrimental effect on the visual quality of the City Hall/high school complex, since it appears that anything short of doubling the present facility will have little impact on the existing parking problem.

Over the course of the workshop sessions, many ideas and im-



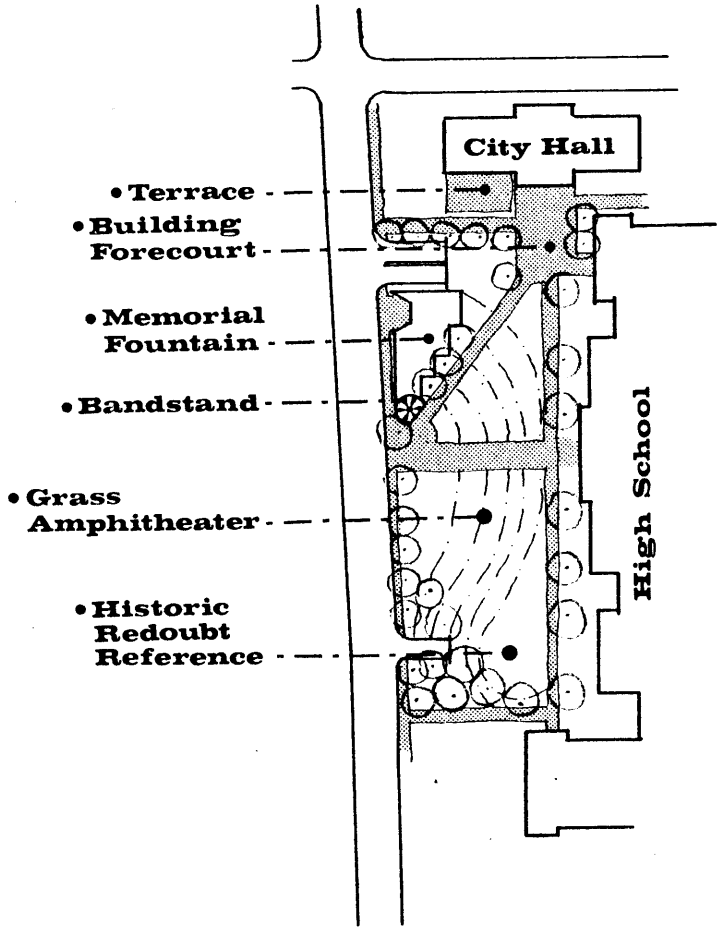
Underground Parking Schematic

ages for enhancing the site were surfaced and discussed. To accomplish these improvements, while at the same time providing additional much needed off-street parking, requires a below-grade, multi-level parking structure.

Such a facility can be located in front of the high school where the ground slopes up from Highland Ave. Two levels of underground parking can easily be accomodated here. This course of action is recommended because:

- It will result in a big enough structure to adequately accommodate parking demand without adversely impacting City Hall's setting.
- It will open up a large piece of publicly-owned land for recreational use.
- It will greatly enhance automobile access to the City Hall. This is especially so during winter months, when existing lot capacity is further reduced by snow as well as the parked cars of residents from surrounding streets. An underground facility will be free of snow problems and will present a greater deterrent to abuse by surronding area residents.

An expanded underground parking facility will significantly improve access by automobile. However, as mentioned in chapter 5, many citizen-users and employees use public transit to get to and from the building. Thus, adequate resolution



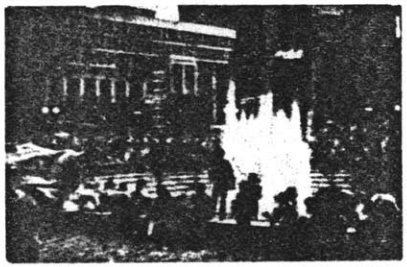
Site Improvements Schematic

of access deficiencies to the city hall requires an overall strategy which includes an improved public transit component for these users.

Improvement elements for this component can include:

- More direct bus route connections in the north-south direction.
- Bus schedule information at the two existing stops on Highland Ave. Decreasing the uncertainty about when the next bus will arrive would greatly improve the transit rider's experience. It would enable one to plan one's schedule more efficiently or relax over a cup of coffee without fear of missing the bus.
- Public information on schedules and routes at the building entries which would advertise the fact that city hall can be accessed by public transportation.
- MBTA Pass Program for employees.

All of these actions would require agreement and co-operation with the MBTA. The first is most costly to implement and may not be possible from the MBTA's perspective. The other three though involve little cost and would substantially enhance the user's experience as well as encourage less energy consumptive access to the city hall.



Boston City Hall Plaza.

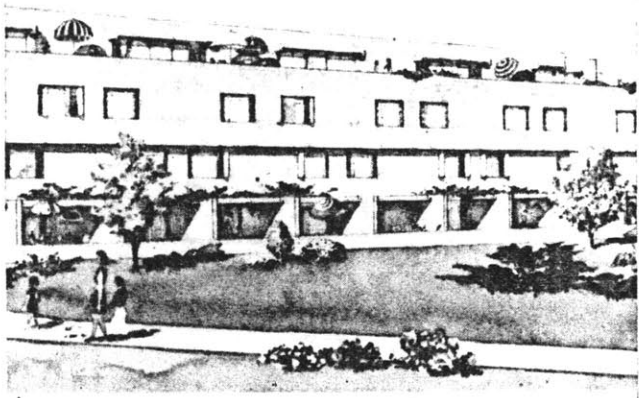
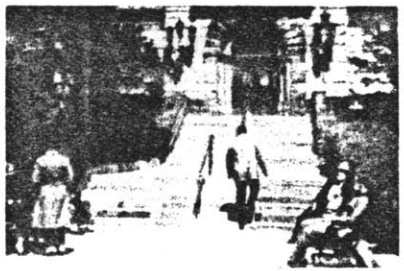


Image from ex. 3 illustrating desired site treatment.



Cambridge City Hall.

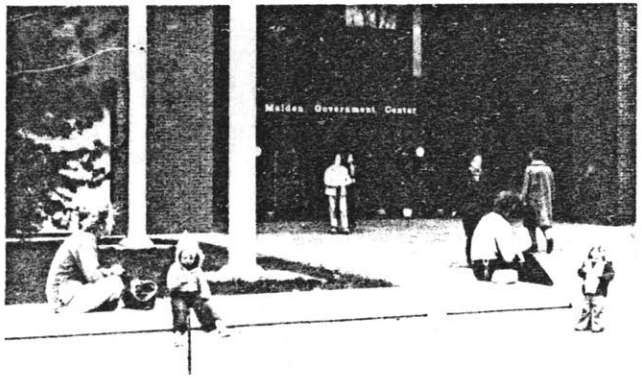
Images and Guidelines

The type and quality of site improvement elements should be guided by the following images, which were either cut out by participants for exercise 3 or most liked from the session 1 slide show.

The Government Center Plaza was considered to be a "marvellous setting for the Boston City Hall." Participants especially liked the open space "right in the middle of the built-up city" fabric and the opportunity it afforded for various activities. Such a plaza, albeit on a smaller scale, with perhaps more grass and tree areas would create a much enhanced setting for the Somerville City Hall.

This image, cut out for exercise 3, illustrates another possible setting which all people agreed would be far better for the city hall than the existing parking concourse. It was felt that such site improvements should be oriented toward passive (sitting, walking, relaxing, etc.) rather than more active recreational activities.

The Cambridge City Hall was "one of (many participant's) favorite buildings." Most liked were the "various textures, arches, ornamentation, change in elevation, seats, landscaping and bushes leading one up to the building entrance." One thing disliked though was its location right on Mass. Ave.--a



Malden City Hall Plaza.

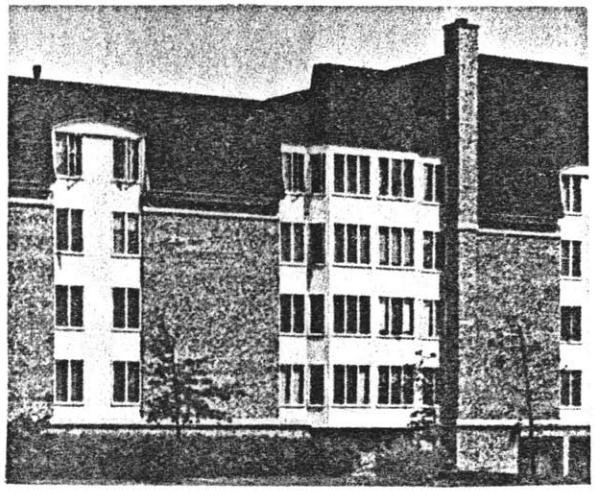
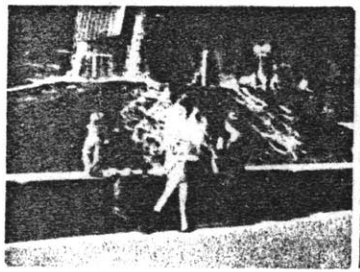


Image from ex. 3 illustrating "appropriate balance between old and new."



Copley Square fountain



Washington D.C. - Streets for People fountain

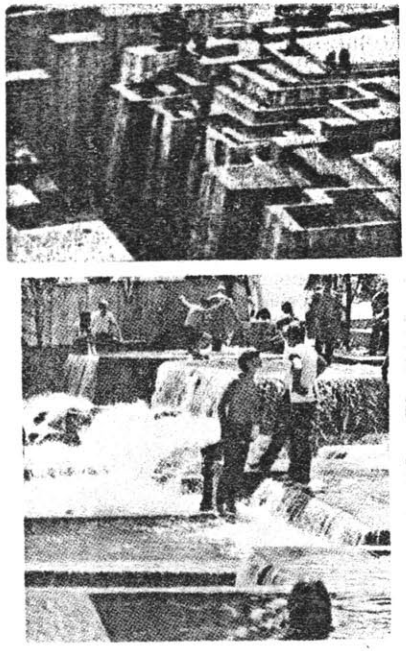
heavily trafficed street--which was felt to adversely impact the grassy open space.

On the other hand, the Malden City Hall plaza was well-liked because of its separation from automobiles. Seating, landscaping and brick paving were also considered as desirable elements in this image. However, participants generally disliked the "massiveness of the actual building."

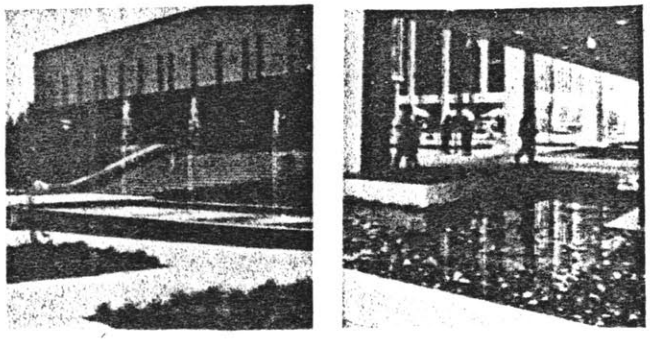
One possibility for reducing overcrowding in the Somerville City Hall involves a building addition. If this course of action is undertaken, it was felt that the addition should have a "quality somewhere between the Cambridge and Malden example."

This image, also cut out for Exercise 3 illustrates what a number of participants thought was an appropriate "mix between the old and new." Another aspect well-liked about it was the water, which was considered an extremely desireable element for an improved City Hall park/plaza. A fountain was especially liked because it would "help mask traffic noise" as well as provide a "wonderful environment for activities, under the cooling and refreshing influence of moving water."

Participants felt that the kind of fountain environment in this image, from the Washington D.C. Streets for People was



Forecourt fountain - Portland, Ore.



Images from ex. 3 illustrating improved building entry.

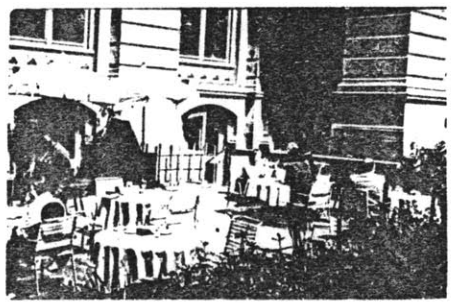
extremely well-suited for passive recreational activities because of the perceived "separation from all the hustle/bustle and noise of the city." The same was true for the fountain in Copley Square, Boston. In both cases, a change in level helps create a very different, and thus more special water environment within the city fabric.

People were also very much intrigued by the participatory possibilities afforded by Lawrence Halprin's Forecourt Fountain. Such a fantasy place, on a smaller scale was judged to be an appropriate element for the site.

Water was also evocative in several images cut out for exercise 3 to illustrate an improved entrance condition for the city hall. Other desired elements for a building entry included a "forecourt or porch with weather protection."

An outdoor sitting/eating patio similar to this image from the Old Boston City Hall was judged "a great idea, especially if it were right off an interior employee lounge." There was, however, some concern that the moveable tables and umbrellas shown in the picture "would not survive in Somerville."

Thus, it was felt that the kind of granite and brick detailing from the Streets for People was much more appropriate for the outdoor patio area. Participants also thought that such



Outside eating area - Old Boston City Hall.



Washington, D.C. - Streets for People



Boston Common.

seating areas would be well used and a "tremendous benefit, both for city hall employees, as well as the elderly and other users in the surrounding residential area."

Further Process Suggestions

Once there is an actual commitment of resources for site improvement, this issue area should also be investigated in detail using a participatory format not unlike that which was used for the two other areas of concern. Exercise 4 - City Hall Site - is proposed as one venue for participant entry into dialogue about the site. It is very similar to exercise 3 - Ideal City Hall which worked very well in the present round of participation.

Prior to this, exercises having to do with image mapping, likes/dislikes, desired activity patterns with respect to outdoor spaces/parks/plazas are also recommended in order to stimulate additional reflection and examination of attitudes and values. The following references contain good examples of such exercises, as well as workshop process formats that can be used for this area of concern:

- Wurman R., et al., Nature of Recreation
- Francis M., Kennedy Library Public Space Workshops

Both are included in this report's bibliography. The 'ideal urban park' exercise in the Kennedy Library Public Space Workshops, should however be adjusted as proposed in Exercise 4--

Exercise 4



City hall site

Look through the magazines you have been provided, this time concentrating on elements you feel are appropriate for an "ideal park/plaza" setting for the city hall. Assume that the parking can be located underground.

You might also want to supplement these pictures with other photos and/or written statements about the kinds of spaces and activities that should be provided for an "ideal" city hall site.

City Hall Site based on the success of this format in stimulating the discussion of 'sense of place.'

The range of images for participants consideration can also be expanded with a slide show of site treatments similar to that which was prepared for Session 1 of the present study.

The actual work sessions can then focus around 1" = 40' scale drawings and site model in much the same fashion as occurred during the Session 2--Departmental Work Areas.

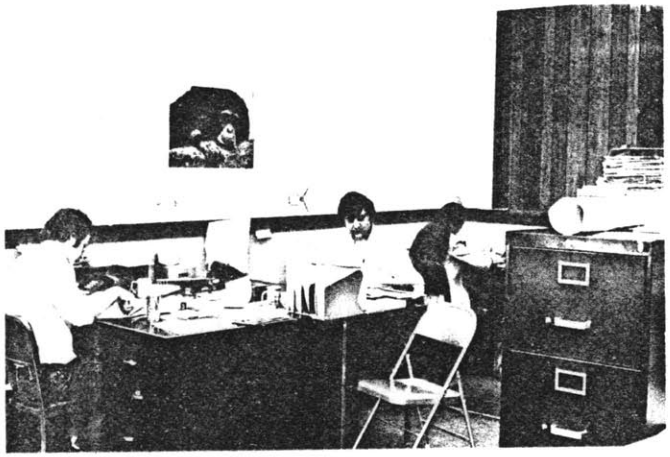
For reasons discussed further in this chapter under Public and Shared Spaces, the group of participants engaged around this area of concern should also be expanded to include people from the fourth user population--citizens of Somerville--in addition to City Hall employees.

Departmental Work Areas

This section summarizes recommendations developed over the course of the workshop/charette for departmental work areas. It includes:

- Specific program and design recommendations for the Planning and Community Development department's work space which was the focus of Workshop Session 2.
- More generic improvement elements, based on dialogue that addressed problems and deficiencies which occur in many other departments as well as Planning. In this section, extensive use is again made of images most liked from exercise 3 and the session 1 slide show.
- Further process suggestions outlining an approach through which members of all other departments can participate in formulating recommendations for their own work areas.

Program and Design Recommendations for the Planning and Community Development Department



Overcrowding in Community Development workspace.



Three work stations accomodated in third floor hallway.

1. Short-Term Third Floor Improvements

Prior to their Session 2 (Departmental Work Space) meeting, the same group of employees from the planning and community development met one other time to discuss immediate, short-term improvements to their work area. The major impetus for this was the immiment hiring of four new people within the department. Since no specific plans were being formulated for accommodating these new workers, the five participants took it upon themselves to come up with a spatial re-organization to do so.

Previously, when a new employee was hired, he or she would simply occupy the first available desk, with no consideration of whether this would result in the juxtaposition of incompatible work activities. A history of such workspace allocation has created numerous conflicts among various activities as described in chapter 6 - Departmental Work Spaces exercise 4.

The department had also outgrown its office space to such a degree that desks were already placed in the 3rd floor hallway to accommodate previous staff expansion. With the present round of new hirings, the only available place for two

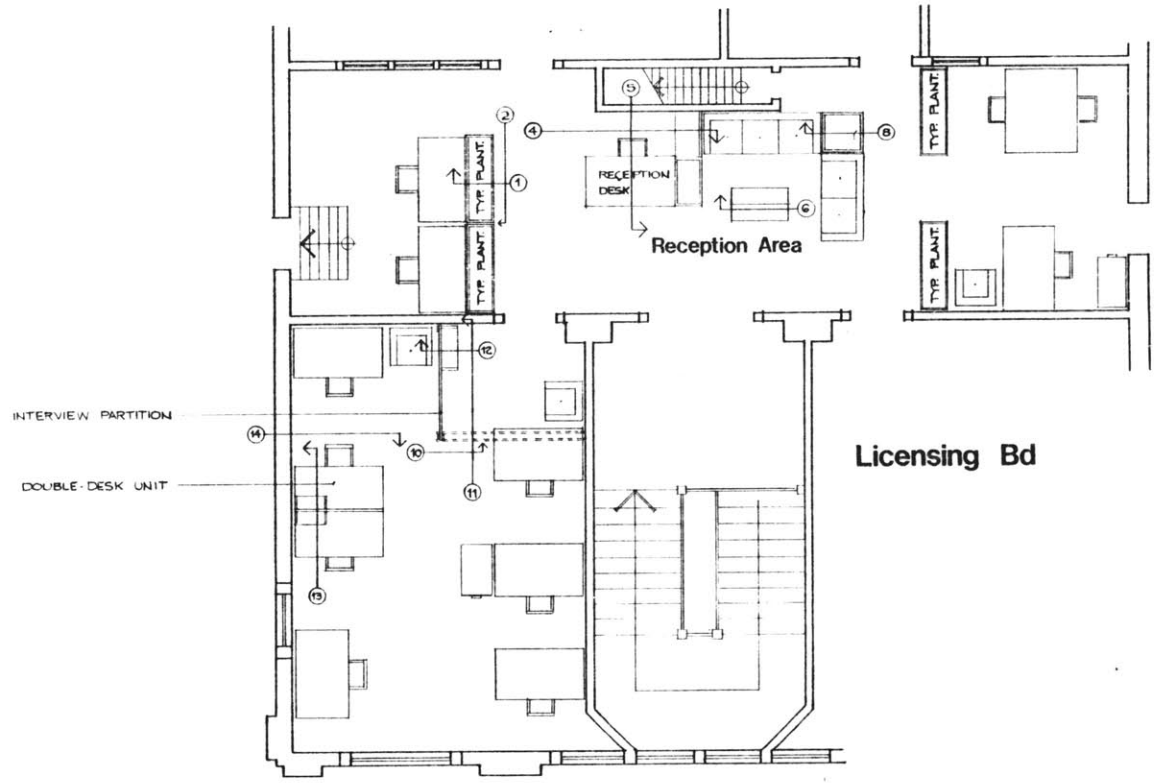


Two new work spaces in departmental meeting room.

typists was the departmental conference room, which eliminated its functioning as a place for meetings. The other two new employees were accomodated within present office areas, further increasing crowding and activity conflicts.

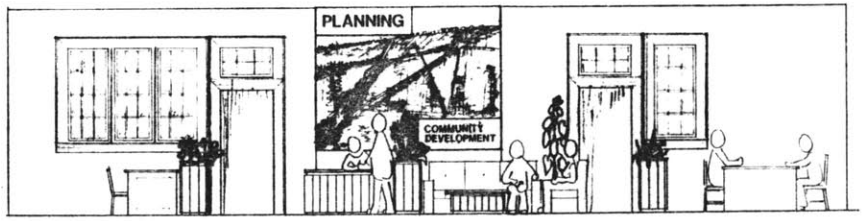
Having realized that unless they came up with a concrete proposal for improvement this status quo would remain, participants decided to organize and present their needs and desires to the department head. This author provided technical assistance during their deliberations. A quick working model was fabricated using a 1/8" = 1' scale existing base plan and movable desk pieces, with which various layouts were tested. Reference was also made to the Session 1 discussion and images participants liked.

At the conclusion of this meeting, people had decided on a system of space dividing planters which would create a reception area and two new work stations within the 3rd floor hallway space and enhance the three others already out there. A 6 1/2' high partition and re-organization of the existing office was also proposed to provide a greater degree of privacy for sensitive citizen interviews. In addition, a citizen information board and large wall graphic were included to help increase public awareness of various departmental programs and create a more professional 'sense of place' for the office.

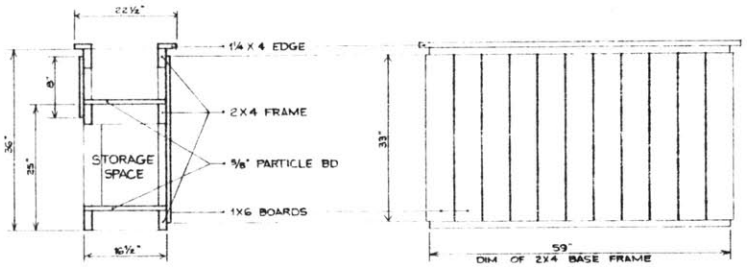


plan

Short Term Improvements Planning & Community Development Dept.



elevation



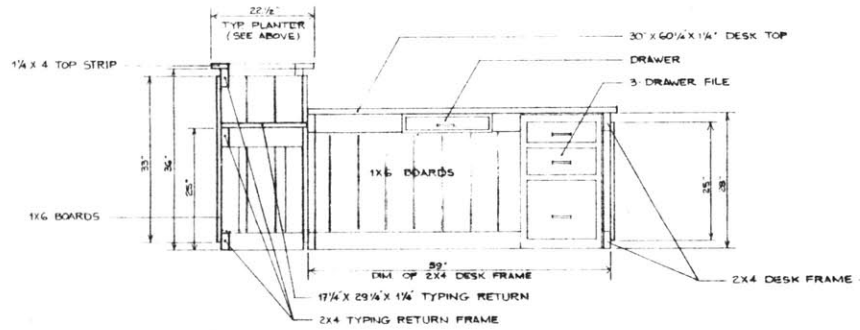
1 SECTION

2 FRONT ELEVATION

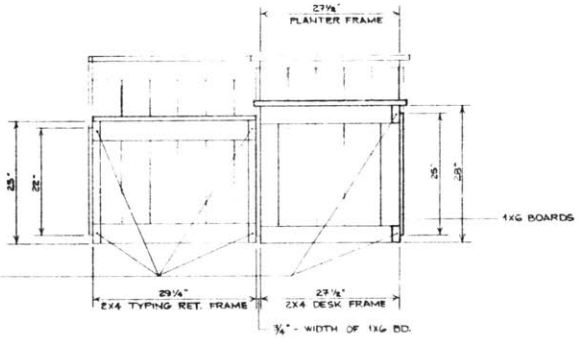


3 SIDE ELEV.

TYPICAL PLANTER

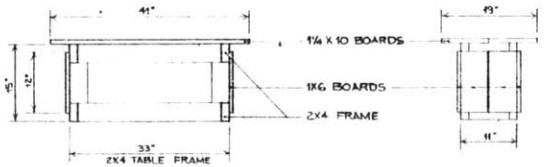


4 SECTION THRU TYPING RETURN



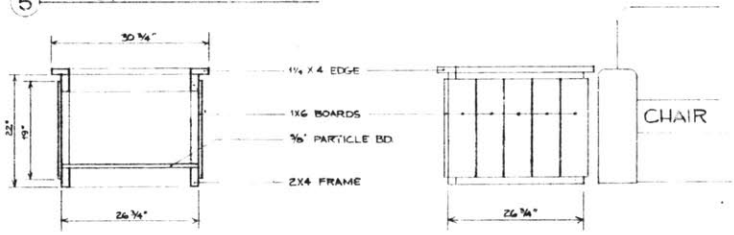
5 SECTION THRU DESK

RECEPTION STATION



6 SECTION

7 ELEVATION

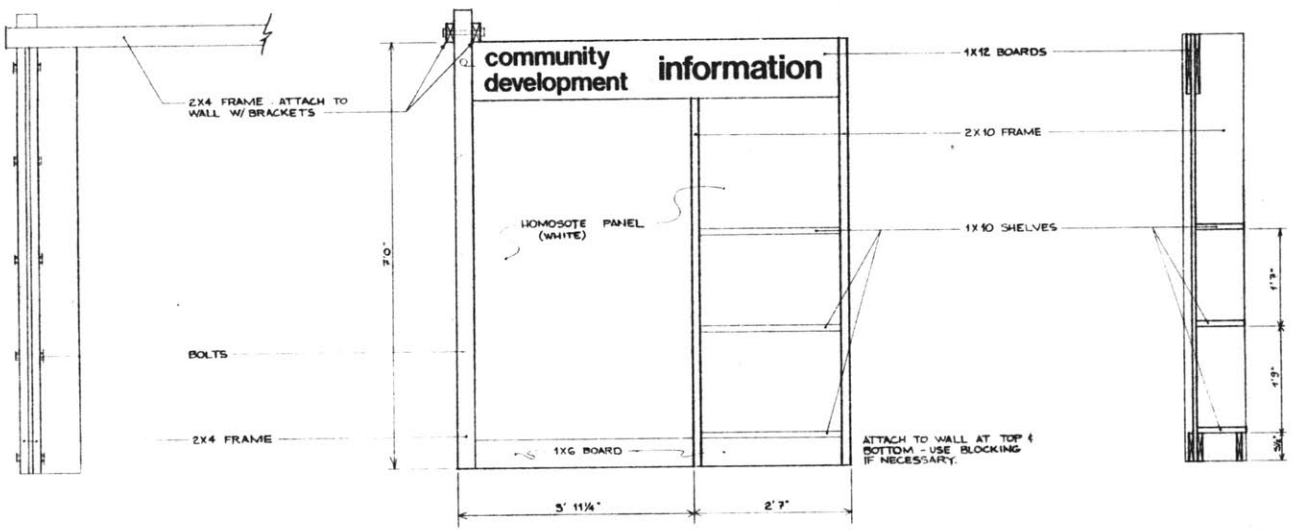


8 SECTION

9 ELEVATION

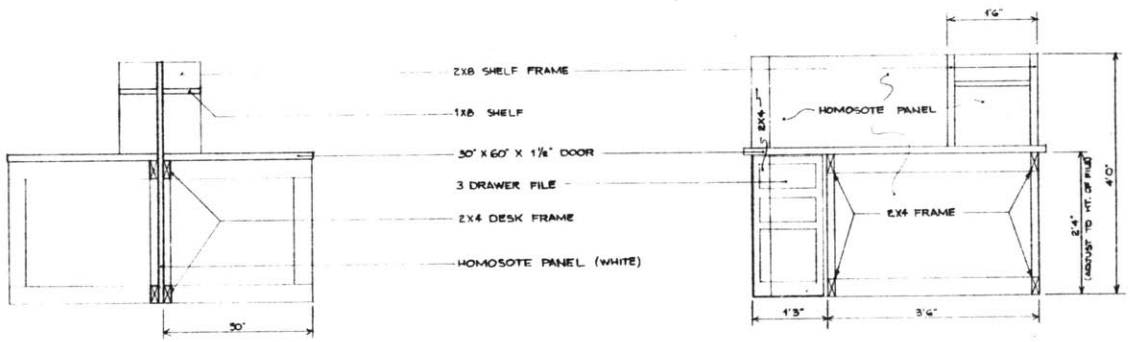
RECEPTION TABLE

RECEPTION PLANTER



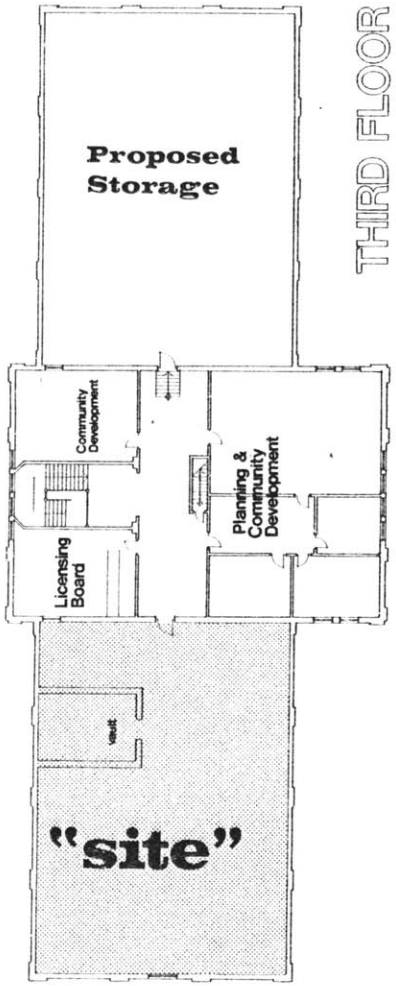
10 SIDE ELEV. 11 FRONT ELEVATION 12 SECTION

INTERVIEW PARTITION



13 SECTION 14 ELEVATION

DOUBLE-DESK UNIT

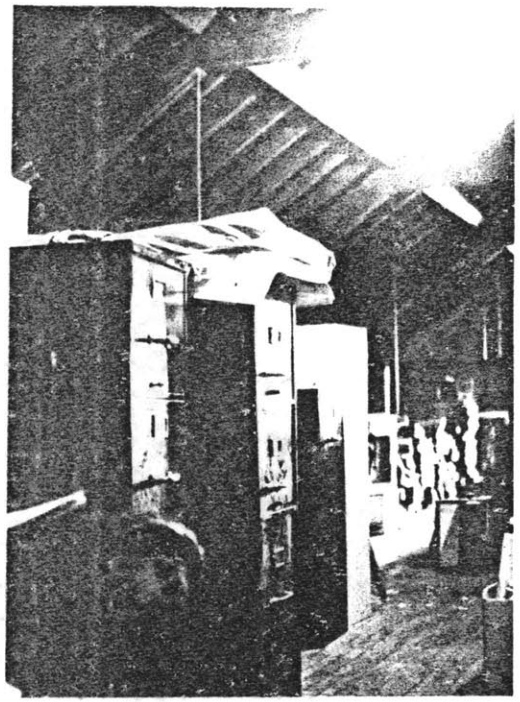


The plan was drawn up and presented by employees to the department head, who developed an innovative, low-cost approach for implementation whereby materials were paid for out of departmental funds, and labor provided by Building department carpenters. Construction is now in progress.

The various planter box, door-top desk and partition elements developed over the course of this project were then used as the basis for the 3rd floor re-use game pieces. The quick implementation of these improvements will enable employees to evaluate the actual architectural forms and propose necessary adjustments prior to the conversion of the larger storage area to offices.

2. Third Floor Workspace Improvements

The following improvement recommendations are the result of dialogue with participants during Session 2--Departmental Work Areas. As with most other departments within the City Hall, participants felt that they needed more space to adequately accommodate the functions of their department. During the first round of interviews, this additional requirement was bracketed at approximately 1/2 again as much space (1000ф) as they currently have. Since employees felt that the existing 3rd floor location was well-suited for their department, the 'site' investigated for potential expansion was the space currently used for storage on the 3rd floor, under the roof of



"Site" photo - participants felt that the space contained between two supporting beams was adequate for 2 - 3 work stations.

the building's south wing. An elevator was, however, perceived as a necessary improvement to enhance elderly access.

This 'site' provides the most immediate opportunity for increasing the amount of departmental workspace within the building. Its current storage function can be moved under the roof of the north wing by adding a minimal flooring over the vault of the aldermanic chamber's ceiling.

The re-organization of the entire third floor which evolved over the course of this meeting would allow one other department with little direct citizen interaction--such as the City Solicitor's office to be comfortably located on this floor. This is strongly recommended to help alleviate overcrowded conditions on lower floors.

Activity spaces which participants felt should be provided within a re-organized Planning and Community Development Department workspace include:

1. Reception area with comfortable chairs for citizen and visitor waiting.
2. Information area which includes displays about various departmental activities; where citizens can pick up handouts or brochures about these programs.
3. Conference room to enable staff meetings to occur without unnecessary distractions.

4. Library/research space where various reports and books can be kept; furnished with a desk and chairs for reading and writing. This space can be accommodated with a loft under the south wing's roof, thus separating it from noise and distractions of other work areas.
5. Small lounge space with a refrigerator, coffee machine and chairs that is separated from departmental work spaces. It is located in a centrally accessible space under the library loft.
6. Small reception area for the director and the assistant director which includes chairs and a table for informal meetings.
7. Drafting, layout, design space that is large enough to accommodate storage files for maps, print machine, 4-5 drafting stations and a large layout table. In addition it should include homosote partitions to enable periodic pin-up and presentations of on-going work.
8. Individual workspaces that are generally larger and more defined as a "place of one's own." Space defining elements for these work stations should be similar to the planter boxes developed during the short-term improvements session. For work stations requiring greater degrees of privacy for client interviews, the space division system can be supplemented with partial height partitions. Full height partitions were only deemed necessary for the conference room and the director's office.

9. An area for a secretarial pool next to the department head's office, where those secretaries not specifically working with an individual or group of staff people can be accommodated. This will allow for more systematic assignment of typing tasks, especially of the large volume which is generated out of the director's office. In order to reduce noise both within this space, as well as those adjacent to it, full height partitions of sound insulating materials and carpetting are required.
10. Carpeting, air-conditioning and sky-lights were also deemed necessary to make the "site" habitable. Restroom facilities were not, however, at least by this group of participants. They felt that improved restrooms on the second floor would be more than adequate for employees and citizen-users of this department.

The model photo illustrates the design option worked out with participants to accommodate these activity spaces during the second workshop session. It is based on extensive discussion regarding how much space, public accessibility, and proximate secretarial support each employee required based on their job tasks. In addition to adequately accomodating present departmental activities, the recommended program and design contains enough slack to enable periodic staff expansion as the result of new programs within this department.

City Solicitor

Typing Area

Elevator

Reception Area

Citizen Information & Waiting

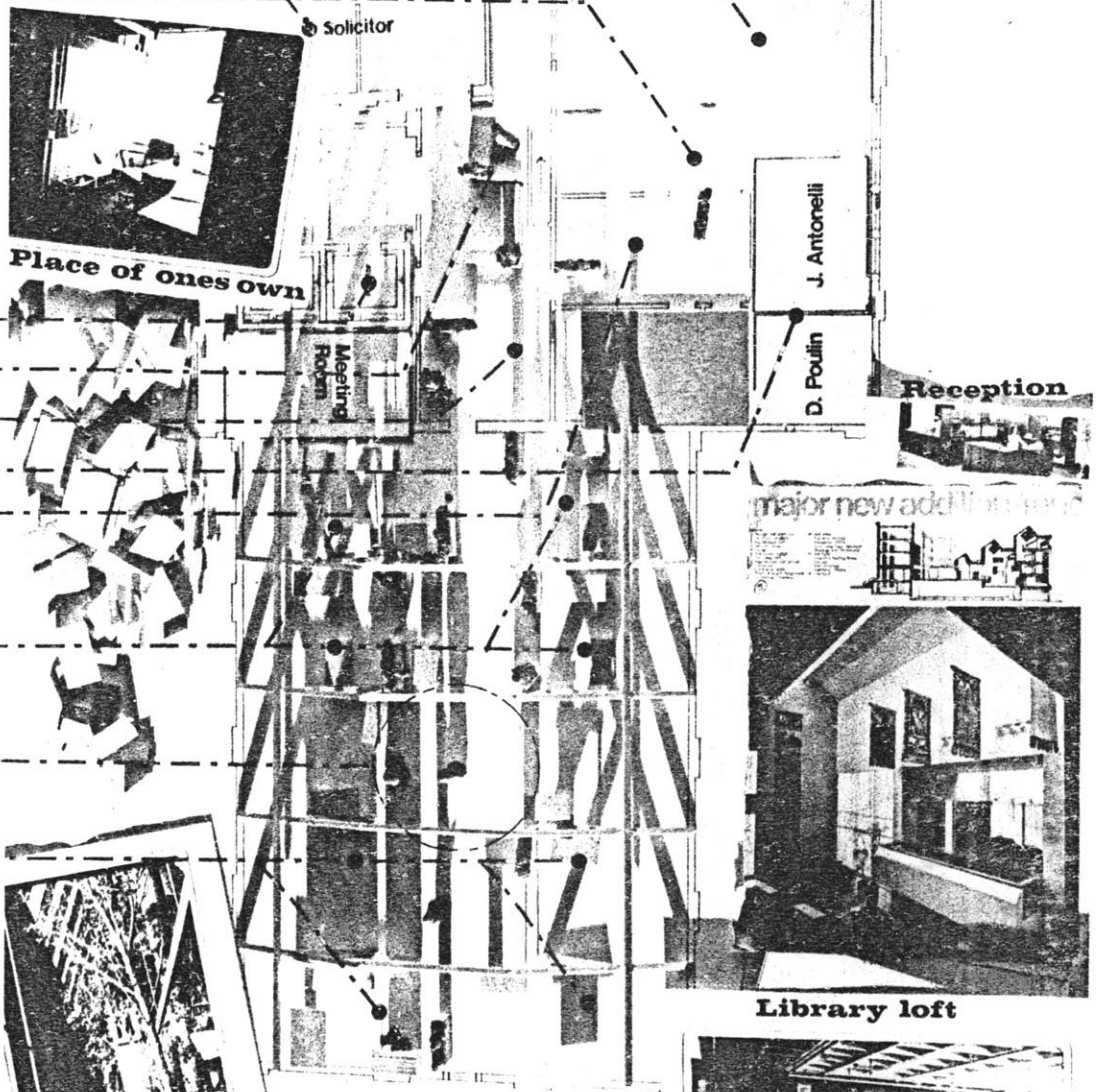
Director's Office

Small Conference Room

Community Development Offices

Small Lounge Area with
Library Loft above

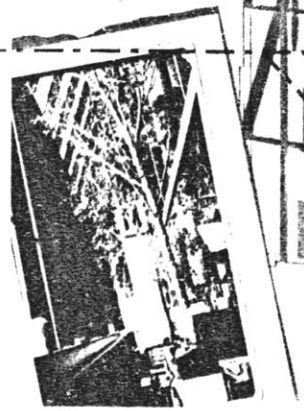
Planning & Urban Design Area

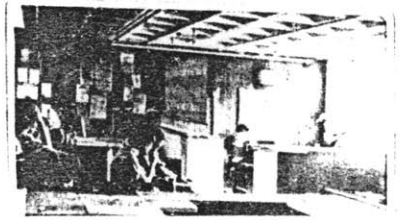


Place of ones own

Reception

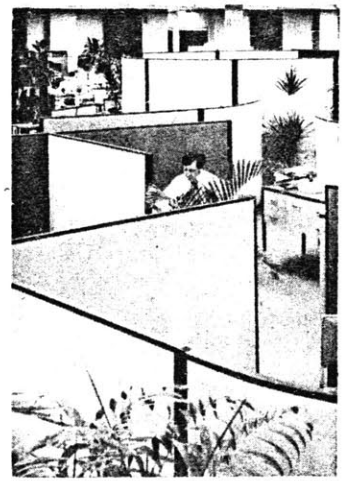
Library loft


Plants


Lounge

3rd floor model





Images of partial height partitions from ex. 3.

• Give each workspace an area of at least 60 square feet. Build walls and windows round each workspace to such an extent that their total area (counting windows at one-half) is 50 to 75 per cent of the full enclosure that would be there if all four walls around the 60 square feet were solid. Let the front of the workspace be open for at least 8 feet in front, always into a larger space. Place the desk so that the person working at it has a view out, either to the front or to the side. If there are other people working nearby, arrange the enclosure so that the person has a sense of connection to two or three others; but never put more than eight workspaces within view or earshot of one another.

• Break institutions into small, spatially identifiable work groups, with less than half a dozen people in each. Arrange these work groups so that each person is in at least partial view of the other members of his own group; and arrange several groups in such a way that they share a common entrance, food, office equipment, drinking fountains, bathrooms.



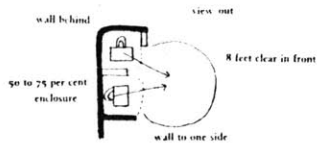




Image from ex. 3 illustrating improved work station.

Images and Guidelines

One of the major concerns for improving departmental work areas amongst participants was the provision of greater degrees of privacy, closure, or a 'place of one's own' for individual work stations. A number of people thus brought in images of partially enclosed work spaces for exercise 3. It was generally felt that such partial space definitions were superior to full height partitions which would "chop office areas up into tiny cubby-holes with doors off a corridor."

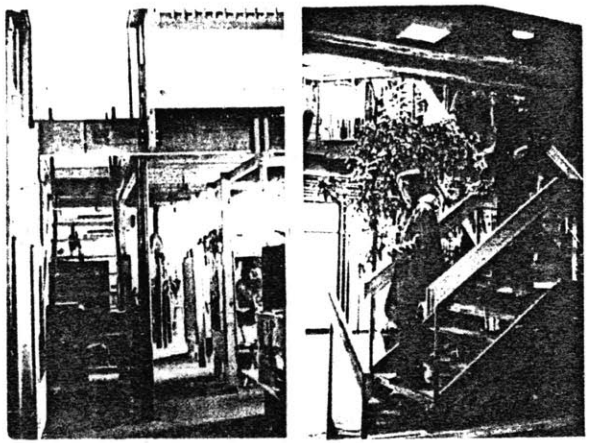
These two 'patterns,' from Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language,[2] which are based on a study of Berkeley City Hall employees, also convey the sense of what Somerville City Hall employees felt were adequate workspace accommodations.

Participants liked the large work surfaces in this image cut out for Exercise 3. Files and bookshelf units located at each individual work station were felt to be much more functional than the existing pedestal desks "which just serve to collect junk." Such elements would also enable a greater degree of individual organization and control.

The 'double-desk' unit (pg. 142) designed with employees during the short-term third floor improvements session shows one possibility for creating individual work stations out of component parts (solid core door, 3-drawer file, homosote, wood).



Clutter, complexity and plants were evocative for participants.



Lofts to increase departmental work areas.

Participants liked the opportunities for personalization afforded by the homosote partition, as well as "shelves on which (one) could arrange plants and pictures." All people agreed that these things "would really lift (one's) morale while working."

Other improvements strongly advocated included air-conditioning and carpeting for all offices. Some people felt that carpeting would also enhance the maintainability of work areas "since dirt would have to be vacuumed up and taken away, instead of just being sloshed around by wet mopping existing floor surfaces."

Participants reacted strongly against images of "neat and tidy desks all in a row," even though these environments had several liked characteristics such as carpeting and cleanliness. On the other hand, the "clutter and complexity" of this image "fascinated and stimulated" a number of participants. Plants were considered especially desirable. They were seen as elements which "can draw and rest (one's) eyes, away from the necessary clutter of work surfaces."

These final two images were well-liked by participants, who felt that crowding in a number of departments could be somewhat alleviated by installing such lofts and access stairways. They were also evocative because of the wood detailing, plants and the perception that the space was broken up, yet open.

Further Process Suggestions

The workshop sessions and resulting recommendations around this area of concern demonstrate that employee input can result in positive contributions toward achieving environmental quality at two scales of intervention:

1. Incremental adjustments to existing work spaces as illustrated by the short-term third floor improvements now under construction.
2. Overall programming and design of departmental work areas as was accomplished during Session 2 for the Planning and Community Development department.

In the first case, employee suggestions and initiative have already resulted in significant improvements and in a scheme for a departmental work area which is responsive to their needs and desires in the second. This argues strongly for the inclusion of further input from employees into the present decision making context.

The creation of immediate opportunities for employee participation in the incremental adjustment of their work areas is highly recommended within all departments. Such opportunities will help address the strong feeling underlying much of the dialogue around this area of concern that an adequate balance be achieved between an enhanced office environment and individual opportunities for control of work spaces.

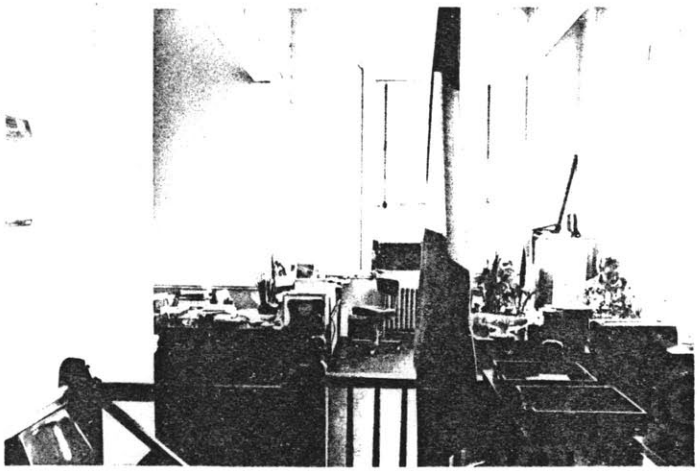
"In non-owned spaces, such as offices, individual territories are often actively discouraged."[1] This decreases the individual's sense of connection to the environment, resulting in the "tuning out of various parts of buildings."[2] The kinds of elements recommended previously for work area improvements can help inhibit this tuning out and enhance a sense of connection by providing places upon which personal imprints can be left.

The physical forms must, however, be supplemented with an organizational framework that allows and encourages individuals and work groups to prepare and help implement changes within their departments. These can include:

- erection of new partitions;
- workspace re-organization;
- painting;
- selection of furnishings and/or bringing in their own if they so desire.

Small scale changes can be accomplished by employees themselves. For others, they may need the assistance of tradespeople from the Building department. Such "provision for group alteration of the environment is necessary for the development of a spirit of community"[3] and therefore environmental quality within the city hall.[4]

In addition, a short-term improvement strategy is especially



Mayor's office - reception, secretarial work area and public waiting all occur in the same space.



Waiting area with "uncomfortable chairs" in Mayor's office.

recommended at present since funding for more extensive changes is currently uncertain. It will enable beneficial changes to occur immediately at low cost in a number of departments.

For instance, in the Mayor's Office, employees felt that the amount of workspace was sufficient per se, but perceived serious functional difficulties with the present spatial organization of activities. People desiring and/or waiting for an appointment do so crowded together in a tiny corridor that is in close proximity to secretarial work areas. Since the receptionist is also in this space, everyone is continually interrupted from his or her work tasks by each new visitor. The space occupied by one of the Mayor's assistants is also seriously deficient. It has no outside exposure or ventilation and is uninhabitable in the summer.

This set of concerns closely parallels those with which Planning Department employees dealt during their short-term improvements sessions. A similar work session with Mayor's Office employees can also result in significant improvement at low cost through a spatial organization which separates secretarial work areas from an expanded waiting and reception area that makes use of currently underutilized hallway space.

Equally necessary, but more extensive improvements to departmental work areas, such as air conditioning and more actual

space require the commitment of greater resources. Outside support from Federal and State agencies for them should be pursued immediately. To this end, potential funding sources are identified in Chapter 9.

Once funding commitments are secured, employees from all departments can participate in formulating suggestions for change in meetings modelled after the two session format of the present workshop.

Public and Shared Spaces

Improvement Elements and Recommendations

The following word/image collages diagrammatically illustrate the kinds of improvements employees felt were needed within the public and shared environment of the City Hall. They are direct outgrowths of the workmaps assembled with participants during the Public and Shared Spaces Session 2.

A number of improvements can be implemented without necessitating major changes within the present building. Quick action on these elements will significantly improve the public and shared environment, as well as help create a constituency for other more extensive, equally necessary changes. The initial phase elements include:

- Reception/Information Station, which is relocated from its present "inaccessible hidden" position to an area adjacent to the recommended elevator/stair core. In addition to a reception/information desk this area should also contain visitor seating, a building directory and a welcome sign. A public phone connection to all departments from this station will greatly facilitate citizens in determining the appropriate office for their trip purpose, without being shuttled about the building. It will be most beneficial for the elderly and handicapped, especially prior to the installation of an elevator.

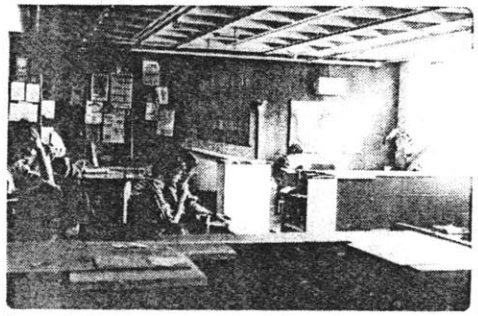
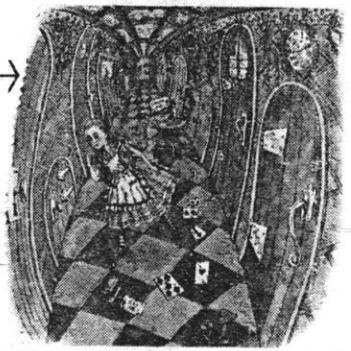


Image for Lounge

THIS IS WHAT THE BLDG IS LIKE NOW → TOO MANY DOORS UNLABELLED; HALLWAYS ARE UNDIFFERENTIATED, VERY CONFUSING

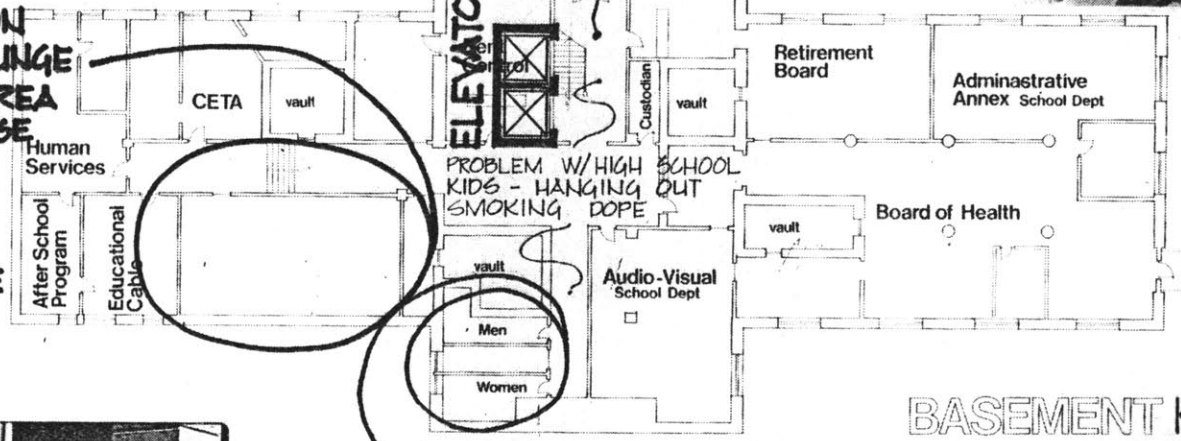


from Ex 3

School St

GARBAGE SHOULD NOT BE STORED HERE

POTENTIAL LOCATION FOR EMPLOYEE LOUNGE
- REMOVED FROM AREA OF HEAVY PUBLIC USE
- ACCESS NOT CONTROLLED BY ANY ONE DEPT
- OUTSIDE TERRACE DIRECTLY OFF THIS SPACE



BASEMENT IS THE PITS!

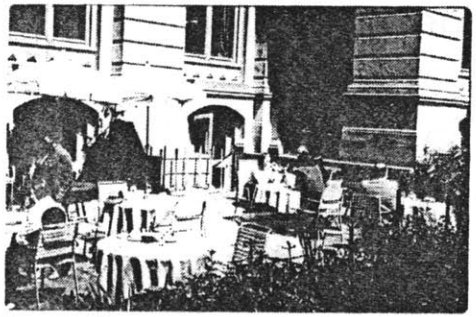
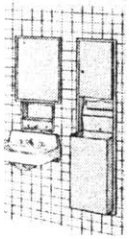
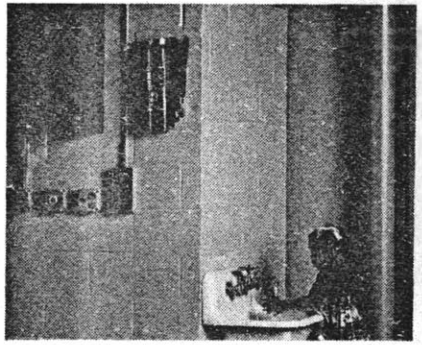


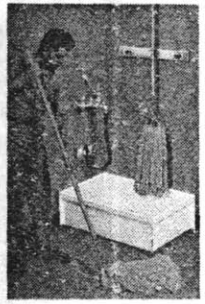
Image for Terrace

"DISGUSTING - I'VE SEEN BETTER IN SUBWAY STATIONS"

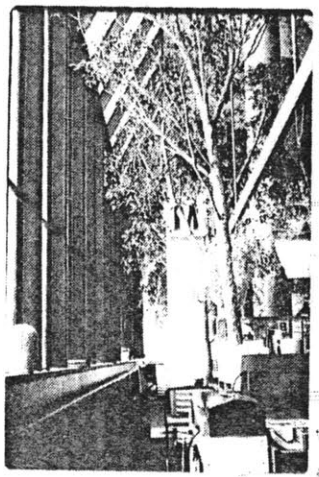
ALL BATHROOMS NEED REPAIR: SHOULD BE TILED WITH BUILT IN FIXTURES; BRIGHT COLORS







Ex 3 images



PLANTS / TREES IN PUBLIC SPACES TO BRIGHTEN THEM UP; GIVE THEM SOME LIFE.

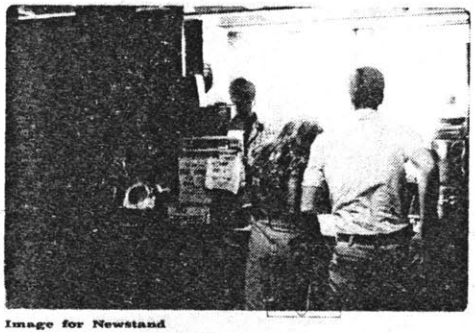
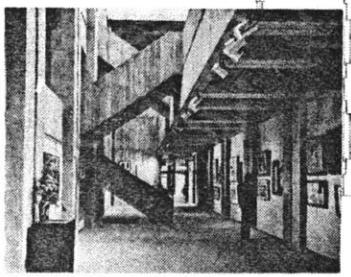


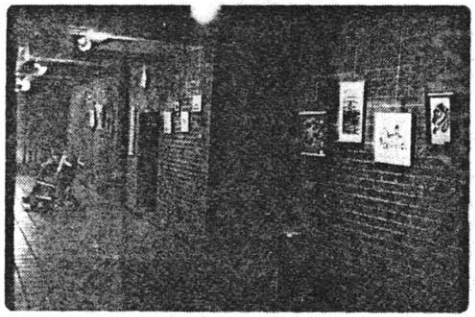
Image for Newstand

THE ACTIVITIES THAT TAKE PLACE IN THIS SPACE ARE TREMENDOUS. SOMETHING SIMILAR ON A SMALLER, SCALE SHOULD BE PROVIDED.

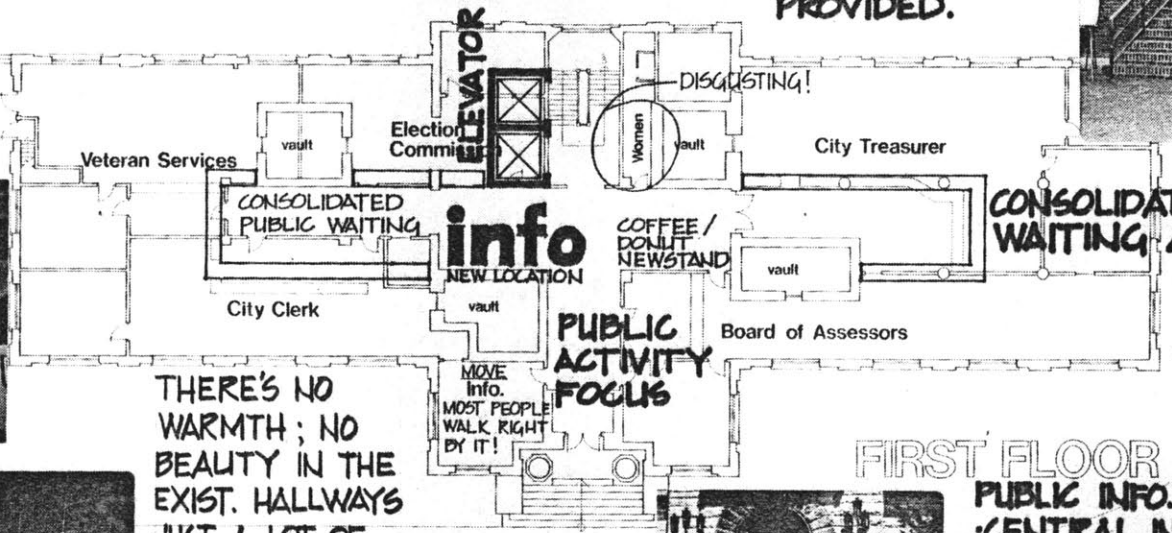




Ex 3 : "light; open" hallway; artwork



Artwork in Boston City Hall; "warm" colors



CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC WAITING AREAS

THERE'S NO WARMTH; NO BEAUTY IN THE EXIST. HALLWAYS JUST A LOT OF WASTED SPACE. THEY CAN BE IMPROVED BY PROVIDING SPACE FOR ART EXHIBITS.

CITY HALL NEEDS A "WELCOMING" ENTRANCE.



Image for Entrance

FIRST FLOOR

PUBLIC INFO. IMPROVEMENT
- CENTRAL INFO/RECEPTION STATION VISIBLE FROM BLDG ENTRY W/SEATING; PHONES TO DEPTS.
- BLDG DIRECTORY/ FLOOR PLANS.
- BETTER MARKED FIRE EGRESS.



Ex 3 image for Information/Reception

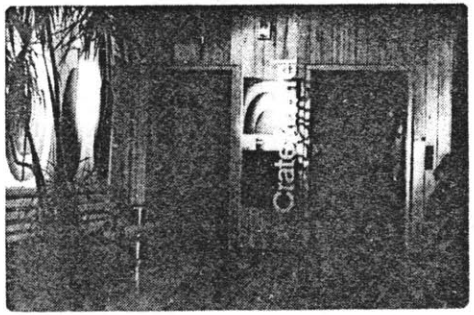
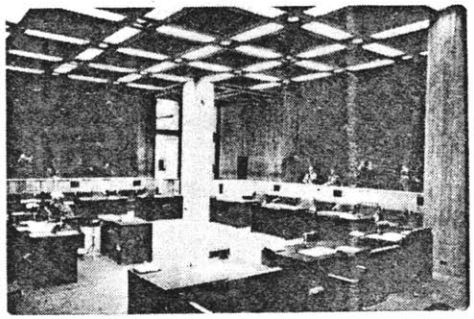


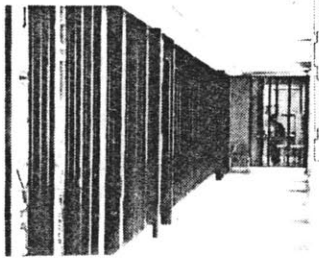
Image for Elevator Core – Bldg Info, Plants, Seating, Egress info, Wood detailing

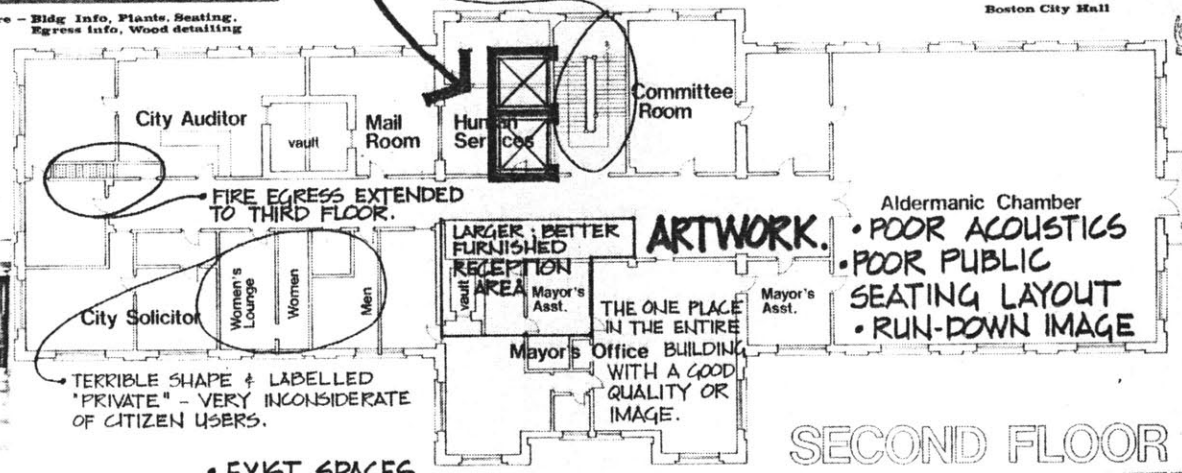
ELEVATOR TO ENHANCE ACCESS - ESPECIALLY FOR ELDERLY & HANDICAPPED

• EXIST STAIRWAY - VERY WORN & DANGEROUS
• SHOULD BE REPLACED



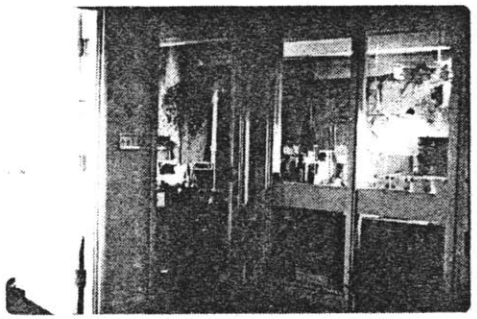
Boston City Hall





SECOND FLOOR

GOOD QUALITIES OF THIS SPACE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN IMPROVED CHAMBERS:
• FOCUS ON ACTIVITY;
• WARM, EARTH TONES;
• WOOD DESKS.



• EXIST. SPACES CREATE IMAGE OF OLD GRAMMER SCHOOL - DOORS OFF A CORRIDOR

• RECEPTION/PUBLIC WAITING AREAS IN ALL DEPTS. NEED IMPROVEMENT

• INTERFACES TO DEPARTMENTAL WORK AREAS SHOULD BE MORE "OPEN". PARTIAL GLAZED PARTITIONS LET YOU KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT.



Ex 3 image for Mayor's Office Reception

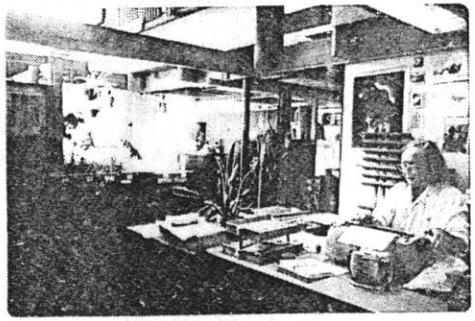


Image for Reception – space broken up ; yet "open"
– wood details
– plants

- Central Information Area, which is directly adjacent to the reception/information station. This area should include boards upon which public notices of meetings, petitions and job openings are displayed.
- Coffee/Donut/Cigarette/Newspaper Stand, which is located on the first floor next to the information area. If possible, it should be operated under contract with the Mass. State Commission for the Blind.
- City Hall Art Galleries, which can be located within public circulation areas. The galleries need not be restricted to 2-dimensional art, as many hallways within the building have enough space to accommodate sculpted 3-dimensional pieces as well.
- Directories/Floor Plans, which are located at each building level within the existing central stair core, adjacent to the recommended elevator location. In order to reduce confusion, the floors should be designated as Level 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Employee Lounge, which is located in the basement level in order to provide access to an outdoor patio, as recommended under City Hall Site. The location is also sufficiently removed from areas of heavy public use, in order that employees feel more comfortable relaxing there "away from public scrutiny." This lounge should contain comfortable seating and an eating area where hot food can be offered on a concession basis. If this is not possible,

then an expanded array of vending machines should be provided.

- Mayor's Office Reception Area, which is furnished with comfortable seating, plants, coffee table and receptionist station. The expanded space indicated on the diagrams will more adequately accommodate visitors as well as separate reception from secretarial functions. Actual detailing of this space can be worked out with employees, using the third floor short-term improvements as a model.

The following improvement elements in this area of concern require a more substantial commitment of resources and more extensive physical changes. They are nonetheless equally essential in achieving desired levels of quality within public and shared spaces of City Hall. These elements include:

- Elevator, which is centrally located within the building in order to minimize the amount of space devoted to interdepartmental and public circulation. Its location, as indicated on the diagrams is also directly visible from both building entries. If it is not possible to install a hydraulic elevator, then a low-speed traction one that is geared from the basement level is recommended to minimize impacts on the roofline of the historic facade. Due to this factor, the elevator location within the central, higher portion of the building is all the more appropriate, since a location under one of the wings would necessitate changes to the shape of the roof to accommodate

mechanical equipment.

- Central Stair Core needs to be replaced in order to accommodate the elevator. In addition, replacement is further justified because of the deleterious condition of existing stair treads.
- Fire-Egress Stairs, which are located at the south end of the building. These stairs should be fire-rated and well-marked as per the state fire code.
- Fire Protection System, such as sprinklers, should be installed throughout the entire building. This is also required by the state code, especially if more extensive building renovations are implemented.
- Ramps, which are located at each building entry to enable handicapped access as per the requirements of the Architectural Barriers Commission.
- Bathrooms throughout the building should be improved with new fixtures, tiles, mirrors and new plumbing as necessary. In addition, the Architectural Barriers Commission requires that at least one rest room facility be accessible to the handicapped. Thus, handicapped fixtures should be installed on either the first floor or basement as per the code.
- Public Activities Focus, which is on the first floor directly adjacent to the building entry. This space can include seating, an area for performance and a community information board which lists various events and services.
- Consolidated Public Waiting Areas, which will reduce the

amount of space devoted to public circulation within the building. Seating, plants and new counters should be provided in order to reverse the "institutional image" of these areas.

- Aldermanic Chamber should be re-organized in order to provide a greater amount and more comfortable public seating. The acoustics problem in this space needs more study.

Prior to taking action on these elements, especially the last three, more dialogue needs to occur and a consensus reached about the appropriate scheme for re-organizing departmental locations. Once this happens, the elements themselves can be incrementally adjusted to fit into a total City Hall improvement scheme.

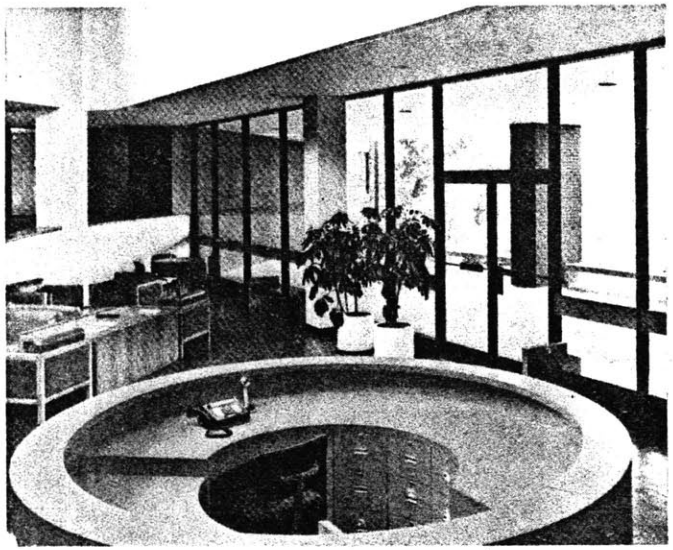


Image from ex. 3 illustrating improved building entry/ information station.

Images and Guidelines

As mentioned in the section on likes/dislikes, the entire entry condition to the City Hall was strongly disliked. This image, cut out for Exercise 3, illustrates what many participants felt would be a much better entrance. Qualities which made it so are "the natural light, highly visible reception area, plants and public seating."



Boston City Hall - public events space at building entry.

One of the things most liked about this image was "the opportunity this space provided for activities (music, mime, etc.) right at the entry to the Boston City Hall." Many felt that

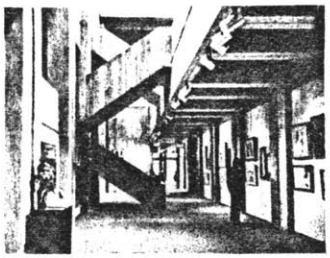
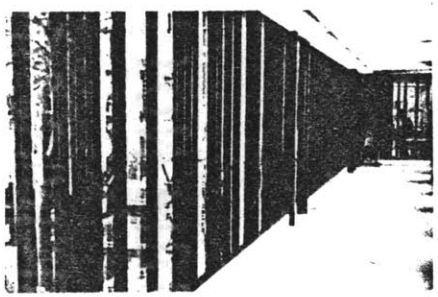
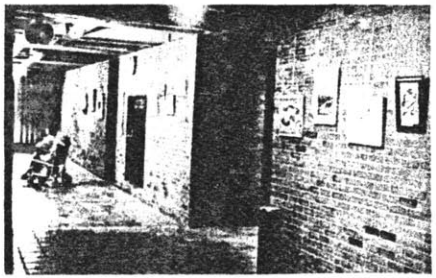


Image from ex. 3 illustrating artwork in hallways.



"Light and open" hallway from Boston City Hall.



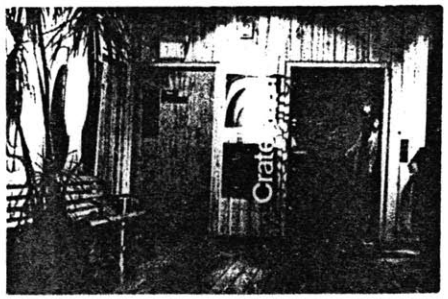
Artwork on display in Boston City Hall.

on a smaller scale, such an activity space was also appropriate for the Somerville City Hall.

Since existing hallways were felt to be drab, dark and to contain little in the way of valuable or interesting information, a number of people cut out various examples of improved hall treatments for Exercise 3. This is one such image that was especially liked because of the artwork on the walls.

This hallway was also much liked by participants because of the "light, openness, and the fact that there was stuff to see on both sides."

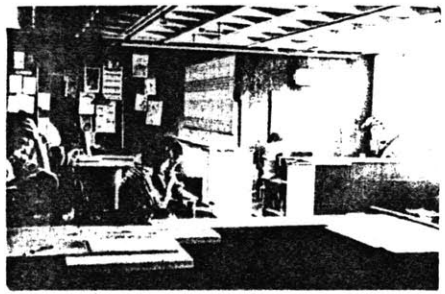
Also liked was the artwork and "warm, red brick colors" in the image. All participants felt that the idea of creating areas within the City Hall for the exhibition of art was a good one, especially since it could be implemented immediately as a first phase improvement without necessitating extensive interior changes. Exhibits could include displays of high school art classes and other local artists which were changed periodically. Historic photos and prints could also be borrowed from the public library for display. City Hall was considered an excellent forum for such displays, which would stimulate interest in both local history as well as current artistic endeavor. In order to insure smooth functioning of these "galleries," someone should be put directly in charge of their operation. This employee can also monitor various other in-



Evocative image for elevator/central circulation core (Fanueil Hall Marketplace)



Boston City Hall Council Chamber.



Evocative image for an employee lounge.

formation boards and areas within the City Hall.

It comes as no surprise that participants liked the elevator in this image and felt it was very much needed in the City Hall. This image was also evocative as a whole environment. People liked the "clearly marked exit stair, plants, public seating and wood detailing." The addition of an information directory/ floor plan would make it an "excellent example of an elevator and stair" core for the Somerville City Hall.

People liked this image because of the "focus of the space on the council's activities, warm earth tones in the carpeting and wood desks." Disliked, however, was the concrete detailing which was judged to be "too cold and massive." It was felt that the Somerville Aldermanic Chamber would be much improved by providing such a focus. Other improvements advocated for this space included better acoustics and more public seating area. Since it may be difficult to substantially improve the existing chamber along these lines, one of the options presented later in this chapter, under Design Options is a building addition which includes a new Aldermanic Chamber.

This image was well-liked for an employee lounge, which people felt was much needed to provide a place to relax on coffee breaks and eat lunch outside of departmental work areas. Participants also thought such a space would "help open up com-



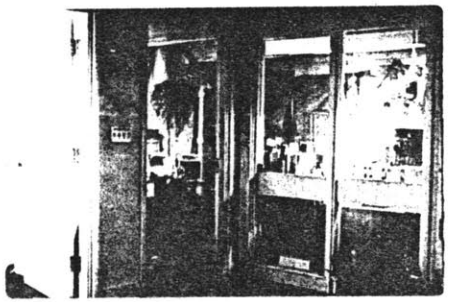
Personal service was much preferred over vending machines.

munication within the City Hall by providing a place for people to meet on an informal basis."

Participants especially liked the personal service provided in this image. All felt that such a facility was an appropriate component for the lounge. Some, however, thought it only so, if run on a concession basis, rather than on the City payroll. Otherwise, these employees would rather see an expanded array of food vending machines within the lounge.

Another idea for a people-run vending concern within the building is a cigarette/newspaper/candy/coffee/donut stand operated by the State Commission for the Blind, as occurs in many other public buildings.

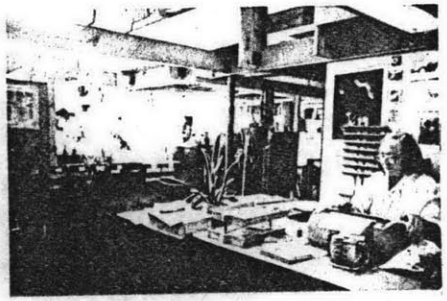
INTERFACES BETWEEN PUBLIC SPACES AND DEPARTMENTAL WORK AREAS



Partially glazed partitions (MIT)

The partially-glazed partitions in this image were well-liked by most participants, who felt that "they just open everything up and are much nicer than the (semi-glazed) ones now in the City Hall corridors." Some people felt they also made for better transitions between the public realm and departmental work areas by letting one "know what to expect on the other side.

Also liked was this image of a reception area because it was



Reception area (MIT)



Image from ex. 3 for Mayor's office reception area.

"broken up, yet open," The wood construction detailing, large work surface and plants were especially evocative.

Participants also cut out various images of improved reception areas for Exercise 3. It was felt that these were especially appropriate for the Mayor's Office which "requires more 'symbolism' than other offices."

For departments requiring counter space, such as the Treasurers, Assessors and City Clerk among others, "larger, cleaner and brighter looking counters" were deemed necessary to reverse the current "drab and institutional image of these offices.

Further Process Suggestions

The larger and more general framework for discussion within this area of concern did not allow for the detailed exploration of space as did the work around the '3rd floor re-use game' (Departmental Work Spaces session 2). Once funding is secured for public space improvements within the building, it is recommended that future rounds of employee partcipation modelled on this 'game' be used to address these elements too.

In addition to being an office workplace for municipal employees and elected officials, City Hall is also a functional

and symbolic focus of local governmental activity for the fourth group of users - citizens of Somerville. Although it was considered premature to solicit the active involvement of this group in the present study, their views, needs and desires should also be taken into account prior to changing the existing environment substantially.

This is especially so within the public and shared spaces of the building. Otherwise, the optimization of City Hall as a workplace can easily result in an environment that is too privatized - in which the citizen user feels like a complete stranger. The present public spaces already suffer from this problem. They are composed exclusively of circulation elements: corridors and stairways. The image reminds one of being inside an old grammar school and clearly signals that there is little for citizens to do but be about their business and then be off. This environment does not invite them to linger and share in the activities of their city hall.

Inclusion of citizen-user input in future decision making will help insure such a condition is not replicated in an improvement scheme for the building. If their input is not solicited in an open way, using a participatory process not unlike the present round of employee workshops, there is also a possibility of negative citizen reaction to any proposals for change. On the other hand, their positive involvement can help create a broadened constituency for environmental quality.

Overall Program and Design Considerations

Spatial Organization of the Building

Employee evaluations of present departmental locations within City Hall are contained within the description of Exercise 2 (likes/dislikes) in chapter 6. The two major factors behind these critiques were undesirable separations from other departments with substantial interaction and inadquate accessibility for departments with large ammounts of citizen visitation.

In order to alleviate the first concern, locations of departments desiring close proximity to expedite work tasks can be clustered. The initial round of interviews and workshop sessions revealed two such highly desired clusters:

- Assessors/Treasury/Auditors--based on a large amount of interoffice interaction and interoffice citizen referral.
- City Clerk/Licensing--based on a similarity in services offered the public (i.e., licenses).

The following clusters were judged to be of relatively lesser importance, but nevertheless desirous:

- Board of Health/Rent Control--because of a large amount of interoffice citizen referral. As of this writing, however, rent control appears to be on the way out in Somerville.

- City Clerk/Veteran's--also based on interoffice citizen referral for various records.
- Mayor's Office/City Solicitor--because of high level of office interaction.

Desired proximities do not necessarily mean that these offices must be directly adjacent to each other. "Some walking is not only good for the body, but also gives people an opportunity for a change in scene, a chance to reflect on some detail of the morning's work or one of the everyday human problems."[5] On the other hand, making the same trip many times is time-consuming, annoying and inefficient.

The only desired departmental cluster which currently is separated by such a 'nuisance distance,' is the Assessors/Treasury. These two offices should be located closer together. Relocation of the Licensing Board adjacent to the City Clerk is also recommended because of citizen nuisance at erroneously ending up on the 3rd floor instead of the Clerk's 1st floor office for certain licenses and vice versa.

The other clusters do not require immediate proximity and can be separated by one floor. Two-story separation is not recommended though, as "by the time departments are separated by two floors, there is virtually no informal contact between them."[6]

Departments can also be organized to facilitate citizen access. Thus, those departments with the greatest number of citizen visitations and those that serve a disproportionately greater number of elderly and handicapped can be located on lower floors and close to building entries. This includes the Assessors, Treasury and City Clerk which should continue to be located on the first floor.

The Veteran's Services, Human Services, Election Commission, Board of Health and Retirement Board also have significant levels of public interaction. Although first floor location would be ideal, these five departments can be located either one floor up or down from the main floor. Veteran's and Retirement Board would however be more appropriately located in the basement since a higher proportion of citizen-visitors to them are either elderly or handicapped.

Citizen access to the various departments can be further enhanced by providing a clear and imageable building organization. This includes the provision of visual connection to the departments from the access points to each floor and a map/floor-plan as well as a reception/information station at the major building entry, as recommended in Public and Share Spaces. This will make the user feel more at home by increasing his or her sense of competance in using the environment, thus helping to mediate the institutional nature of the building.

These two general organizing principles are not mutually exclusive and are only presented separately for clarity. Both principles are reflected in the various options at the end of this section.

Space Needs and Program

All too often programs "simply give quantities of space to be provided (while) the quality of those spaces, the behaviors expected to occur in them and the purposes and attitudes of their users get very little attention, (resulting in environments which) fulfill the approved program, yet unrage the user."[7] On the other hand, the kind of programming which occurred during the departmental work space Session 2 can overcome these difficulties. Its "focus is on clusters of behavior and their appropriate settings and support rather than on customary physical form."[8] In order to concretize an overall space program for the entire building, subsequent process suggestions recommend that the programming of all departmental work areas and the public and shared spaces be modelled after the sucessful Session 2 - Departmental Work Area format.

To better inform this further round of decision making the attendent chart summarizes a first pass at the spatial deficiencies and resources within the present building. 'Spatial needs' are partially based on the first round of employee interviews which identified a 6,000 ㎡ work area

Spatial Needs:

5000 sf	- departmental work areas
1000 sf	- shared meeting rooms
500 sf	- administrative space (Bd of Aldermen)
500 sf	- employee lounge
900 sf	- elevator
300 sf	- bathroom improvements & expansion to accomodate handicapped use
700 sf	- public activities focus at building entry
8900 sf	- space needed

Spatial Resources (within bldg envelop):

2300 sf	- 3rd floor, south wing
1600 sf	- school dept uses
500 sf	- excess circulation space and waiting areas
4400 sf	- space resources within present building envelop

Combined Deficit:

4500 sf	- space deficit
500-1000 sf	- adjustment factor (based on subsequent discussion)
5000-5500 sf	- total space deficit

Summary Space Needs Analysis

and meeting room deficit amongst all departments (see pg. 87- Departmental Space Needs for a breakdown by department). The remainder shows the ammount of space necessary to accomodate various improvements discussed in the Public & Shared Spaces section of this chapter.

The combined space need of 8,700 ㎡ cannot be adequately resolved within the present building envelop. Re-use of the third floor storage area, as recommended under Departmental Work Areas would yield approximately 2,300 ㎡ of office space. Removal of school department functions to another building, which was strongly advocated during the workshop - approx. 1,600 ㎡. An additional 500 ㎡ can be made available by consolidating public waiting areas as proposed in Public & Shared Spaces. Thus, the combined 'excess space' available for office reuse within the present building envelop is about 4,400 ㎡ ,or 4,500 ㎡ short of the ammount of space needed.

The estimate of available 'excess space' is also somewhat deceptive and inflated due to the following factors:

1. The spatial deficit is most severe on the first floor where various functions with a great deal of citizen visitation such as the Treasury, Assessors, City Clerk/Licensing plus one other department should most appropriately be located. Since the 'excess space' is composed predominantly of third floor and basement locations, its reuse will do little to

reduce overcrowded conditions on the first floor.

2. Since the current working group compositions of the City Hall are known, the initial design options at the end of this section are tailored to their needs. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, use patterns and requirements of a building can easily change. Within the City Hall, these changes can result from the creation of new programs, offices and functions--such as the recent centralized mail room or from the restructuring or elimination of others--- such as Rent Control.

   In order to better accommodate such possibilities, the space program should contain a degree of slack or extra space. It is not necessary nor recommended that this space be set aside in 'unused, pristine' conditions as a hedge against unknown, future needs. Rather, approximately 500 ℄ of 'expansion space' should be added to the program and apportioned amongst existing departments. Thus, when and if the need arises, reorganization can occur without resulting in the same sort of overcrowding that presently occurs

   "Today, the hottest issue in office design is office landscaping"[9]--one of the anticipated gains being a greater degree of flexibility to accommodate change. This has,

however, turned out to be illusory as "the logistical aspects of flexibility are inhibited by the pseudo-fixed nature of the partitions."[10]

Furthermore, "no one has been able to demonstrate improvements in morale, efficiency, or work habits"[11] as a result of office landscaping. One study of the effects of a changeover to a landscaped design on 120 office workers found that "privacy was lost and distractions and interruptions seen as having increased."[12] Modular partitions systems are also "less useful than real walls for defining territory and sound insultation ."[13] Thus, neither type of reorganization is recommended for City Hall spaces.

"A clue to an altogether different approach to flexibility comes from the fact that organizations which use converted houses as office space have no difficulty with the problem ... of space that is both well-adapted to specific work arrangements and truly flexible."[14] These old houses contain "many small rooms, a few large ones, and many partially defined spaces, usually interconnected in a variety of ways."[15] Changes can be made in a few minutes by simply opening and closing doors. The key to this approach is to provide choices and the kind of space "which contains the possibilities people need...to encourage them to modify it as they use it,"[16] such as the partially defining space

elements proposed in the Program and Design Recommendations for the Planning and Community Development department.

3. As in most old buildings, a 'highly efficient' organization of work spaces--the hallmark of current office construction--is constrained by the peculiarities of the historic structure. The location of vaults and other structural walls chops the space up, making portions of it ill-suited for office use. This also means that more public circulation space may be required than in newly built structures.

   Some may perceive this as a serious indictment of re-using old buildings. There is, however, nothing absolute or magic about an office that is 'efficient.' Efficiency is a relative concept and depends on the values of those who define it. Since this value-set also includes the feeling that the existing building is of irreplaceable historic value, the space program needs to be adjusted to reflect the fact that the building will never be as 'efficient' as current construction.

   Values are also diverse and what is seen as a problem from one point of view is perceived as an opportunity from another. This is surely the case with anamolous historic structures which can be used with great benefit in creat-

ing evocative spaces. Witness the Fanueil Hall Markets, re-use of old waterfront warehouses for new apartments in Boston and numerous conversions of historic buildings to offices throughout the State.[17] On the whole, these buildings are more imaginative than their 'newer' shopping center, apartment and office building counterparts. They also provide a dynamic sense of history which is sadly lacking from much of our cityscape.

Such can be the case with the Somerville City Hall, if the final program is not straight-jacketed by too much concern with 'efficiency.' This is not to say that all considerations of efficient organization should be dispensed with. Rather, a more appropriate balance needs to be defined in the case of this particular building.

At the conclusion of the Departmental Work Space Session 2, participants were asked what things from the activity program they would scarifice if the actual space at their disposal were reduced by 25%. This question was posed in order to identify those elements participants felt were of highest priority for them. Their reaction was that they really needed all the various improvements discussed, and that they didn't feel they were asking for 'too much.'

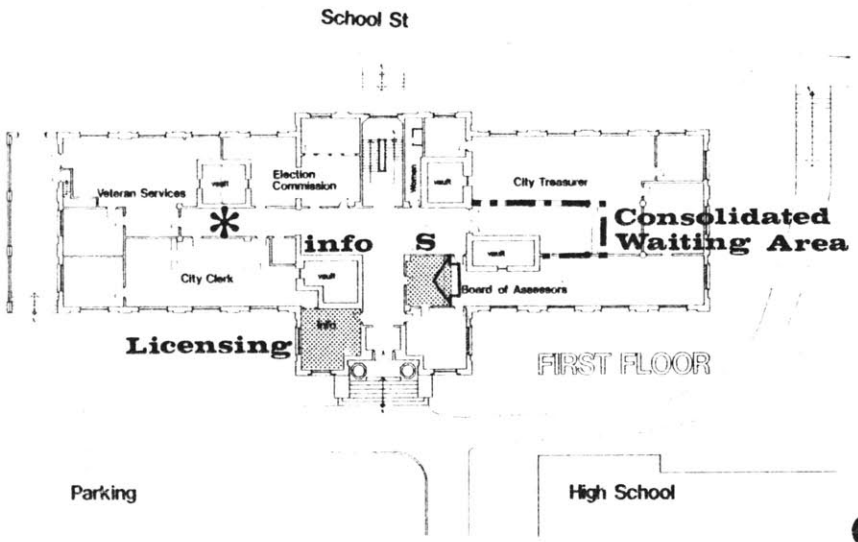
Such reflection and dialogue with employees about what is

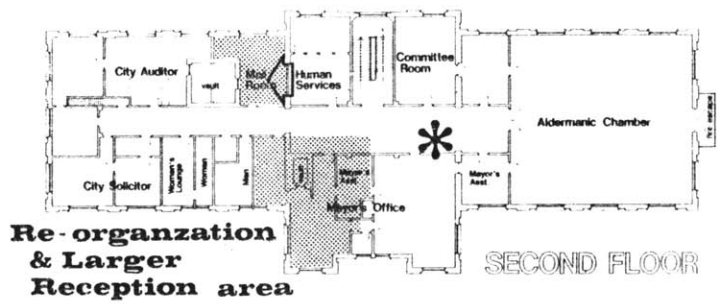
needed to adequately accommodate their department's functions, around the specific, anamolous building spaces they may occupy is the key to defining a workable balance between the historic nature and present day requirements of the building. These employees are Somerville residents and taxpayers and their needs and desires are also tempered by the fact that they do not want to see an extravegent squandering of public monies. They are, however, in the best position to add valuable input on this question of how much space is enough.

Thus, the 4,500 ₥ spatial deficit identified earlier should be increased by approximately 500 - 1,000 ₥ to reflect these three factors just discussed. The need for a building addition is clearly evident from these figures.

Design Options and Summary Process Suggestions

The following design options illustrate a number of overall building improvement schemes at various funding levels. Option 1 is least costly and option 6 most expensive. Implementation of option 4,5,6 and perhaps even 3 is more than likely outside the realm of available local resources. However, the Summary Space Needs Analysis (pg. 171) indicates that anything short of option 4 will have little impact on the severe space deficit within the existing building. Thus, the need to vigorously pursue outside federal and state support is clearly evident.



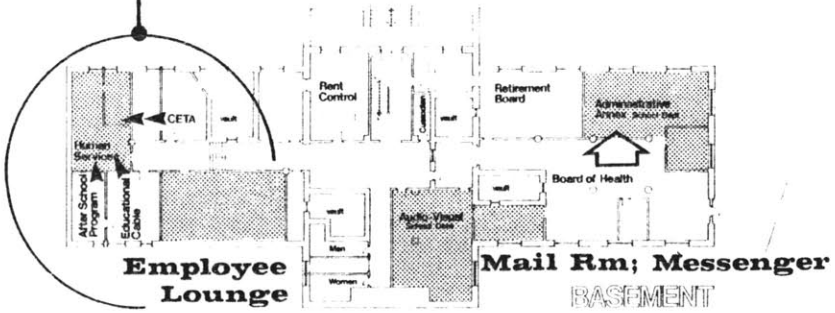


Option 1A

Assumes school dept functions move out; no major construction

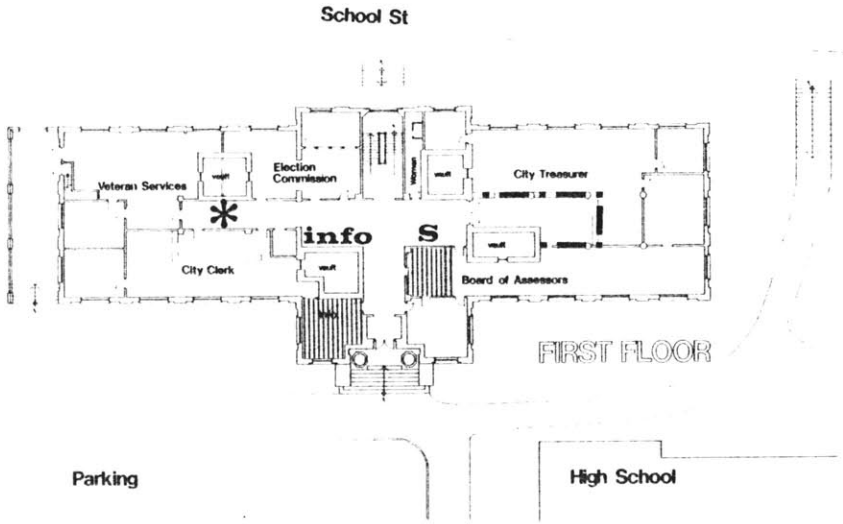
- Information, Licensing, Mail Rm/Messenger - new locations as indicated.
- Human Services - expansion into exist mail room to reunite departmental functions.
- Assessors - reuse of exist waiting space for dept work areas by consolidating public waiting area with that of Treasurers.
- Board of Health - expansion into exist school department space as indicated
- Mayor's Office - reorganization of secretarial work area and larger reception space.
- Employee Lounge - as indicated if storage of voting machines moved outside of city hall.
- After School, Educational Cable, CETA - re-use exist Human Services space in basement.
- Artwork in spaces indicated.
- Coffee/Donut/Cigarette/Newstand located as shown.

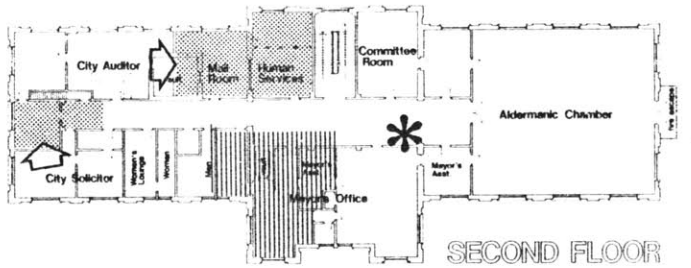
- Alternative (if voting machines must remain stored in the basement):
- Employee Lounge - in After School and Educational Cable Space.
- After School and Educational Cable - to space vacated by Human Services in basement and Licencing on third floor



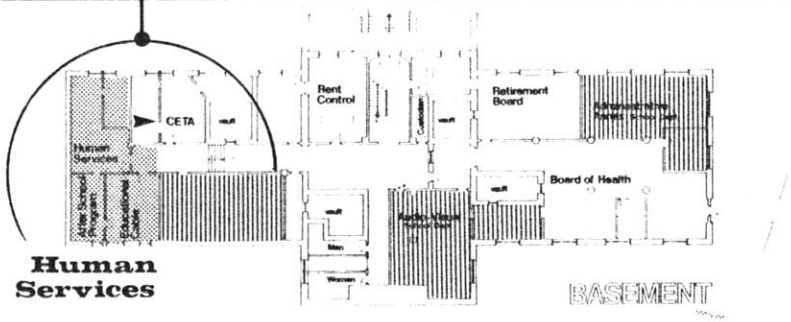
S - Coffee donut newstand

*** Artwork**





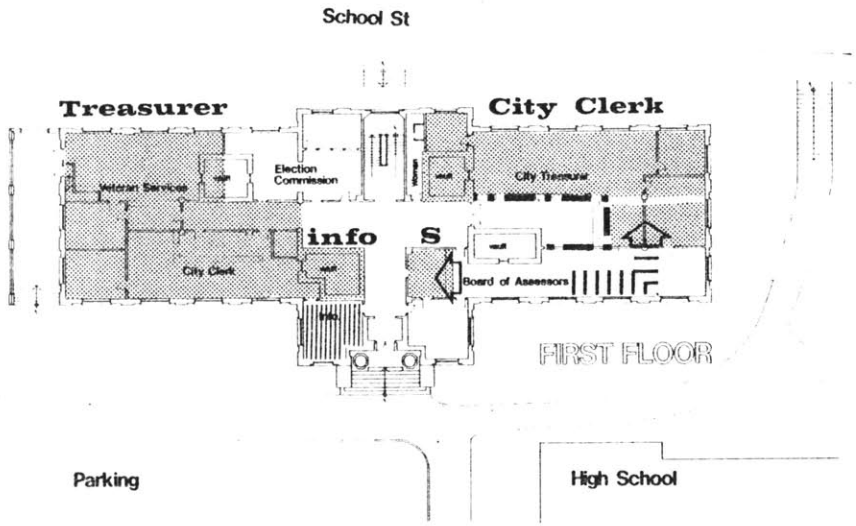
- Alternative (if voting machine storage remains; and if two of three - After School, Educational Cable, CETA - move out of building and third relocated to third floor):
- Employee Lounge - in exist After School and Educational Cable spaces.
- Human Services - expansion from basement location into exist CETA space.



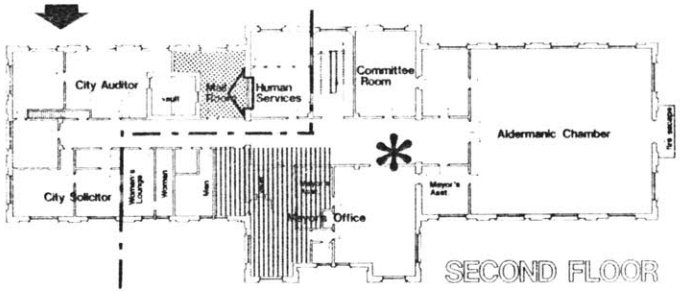
Option 1B

If at least one of three (After School, Educational Cable, CETA) also moves out of building and another relocated to third floor

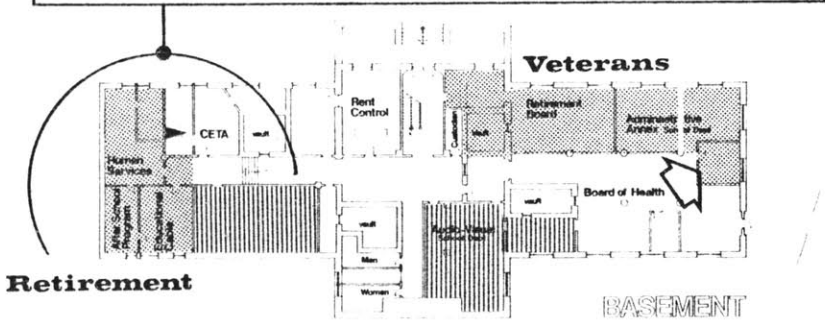
- Option 1A changes as indicated ▭, plus:
- Human Services - new location in basement.
- Auditor - expansion into exist mail room and Human Services on second floor.
- Solicitor - expansion into portion of exist Auditor space and 2nd floor hallway as shown.



- Alternative (if Rent Control dismantled):
- Human Services - to exist Rent Control space.
- This portion of 2nd floor as in Option 1B.



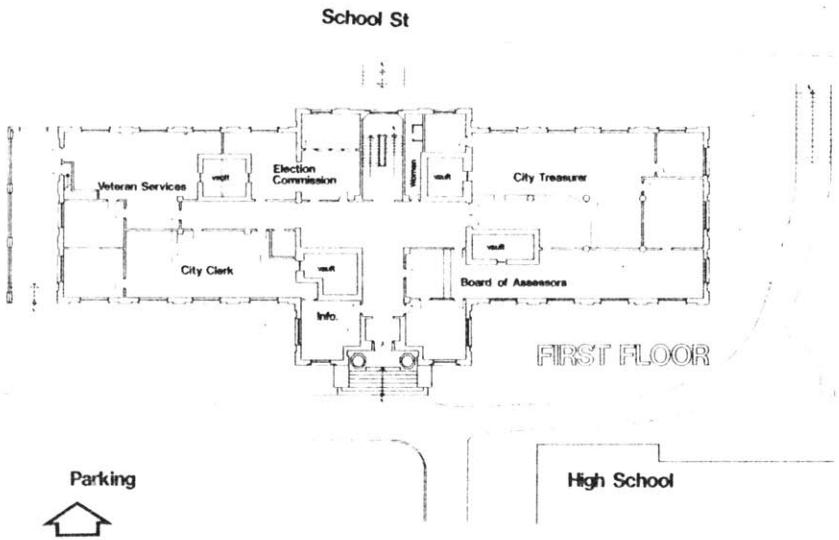
- Alternative (if voting machine storage remains; and if all three - After School, Educational Cable, CETA relocate):
- Employee Lounge - in space occupied by After School and Educational Cable
- Retirement - in spaces occupied by CETA and Human Services in basement.



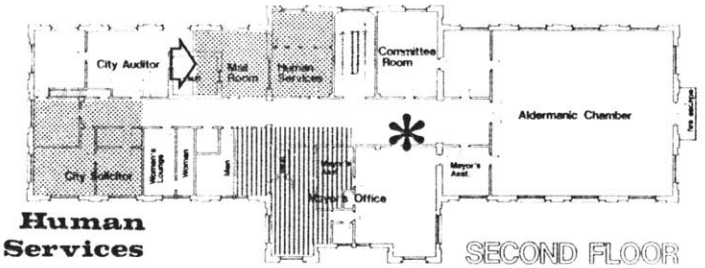
Option 2

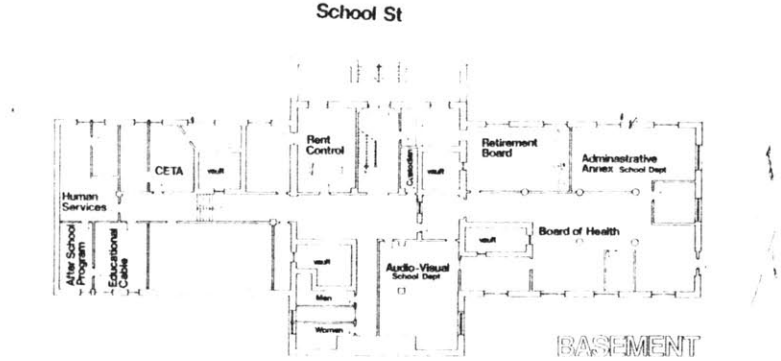
Assumes school dept functions; and two of three (After School, Educational Cable, CETA) relocate outside of building or to third floor. No major reconstruction.

- Option 1A changes as indicated ▥, plus:
- Retirement, Veterans, Treasurer and City Clerk - new locations as shown. (enables closer connection between Treasurer and Auditor with direct access by fire stairs in south wing).
- Board of Assessors - epansion as shown; consolidation of Assessors and Clerk's public waiting area.
- Board of Health - expansion as shown.
- Human Services - expansion into exist mail room.



Option 1A or 2



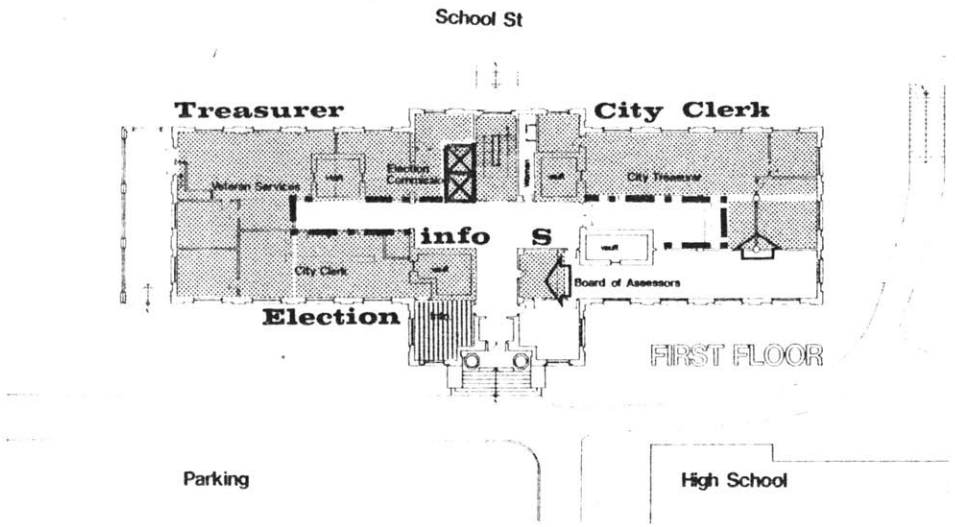


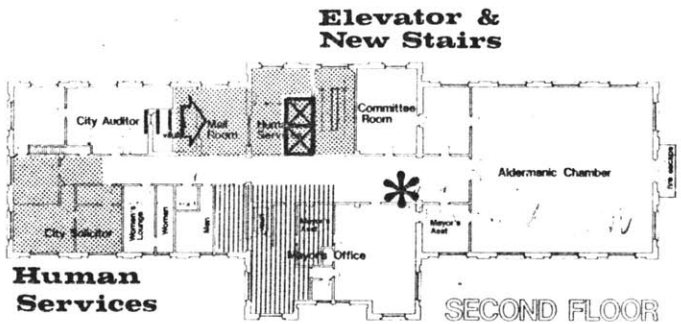
Option 3

Assumes school dept functions removed and the re-use of third floor storage space recommended under Dept Work Areas - chap 7.

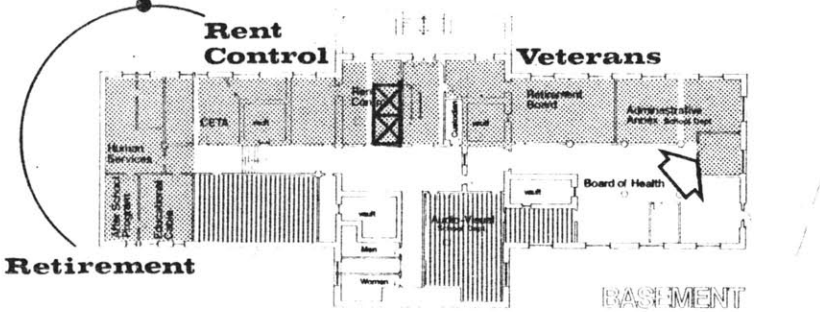
- Option 1A or option 2 changes in basement and on first floor, plus:

- Solicitor - new location on third floor as indicated in Dept Work Area recommendations.
- Human Services - new location as shown.
- Auditor - expansion into space vacated by mail room and Human Services on second floor.





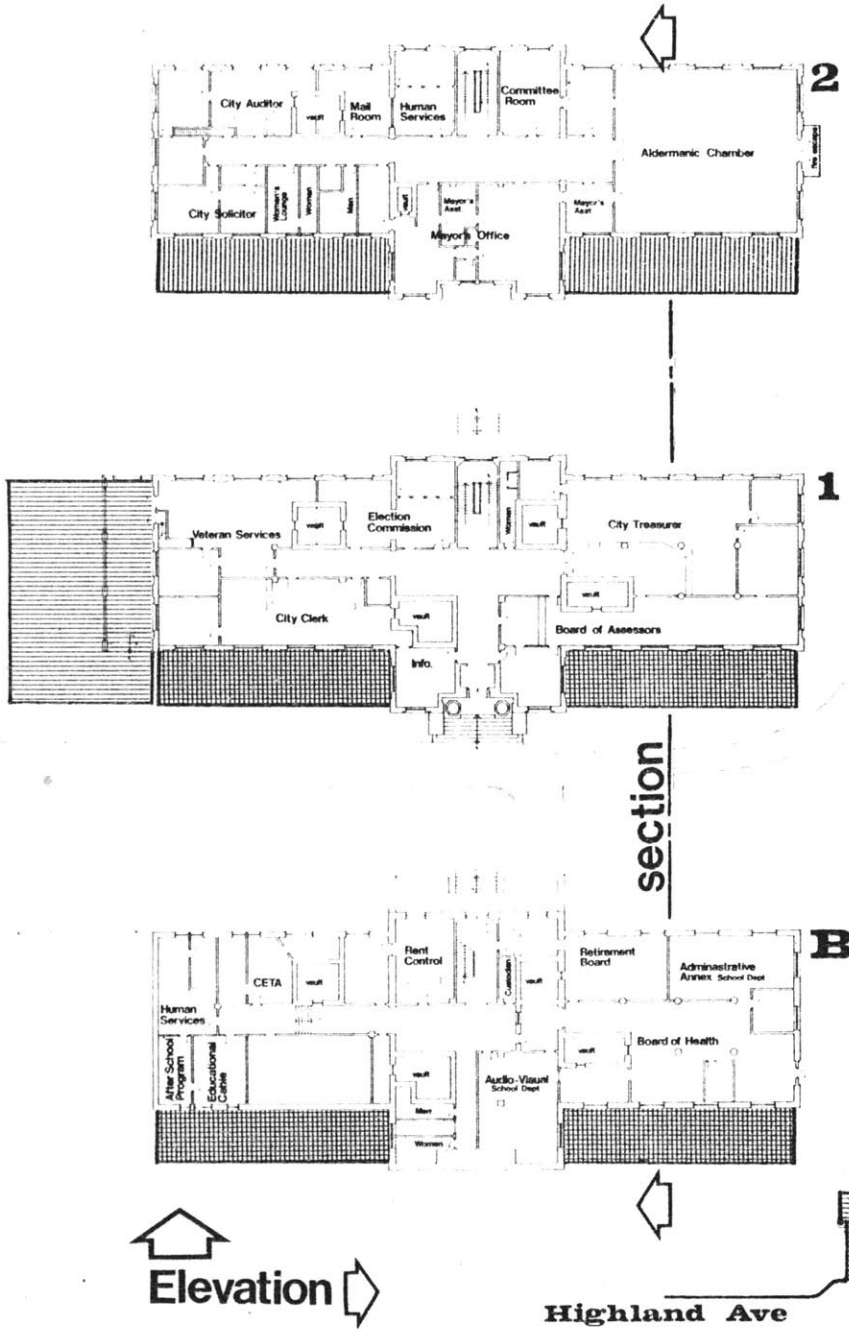
This option requires the reconstruction of this portion of the basement to match floor levels and remove exist vault if possible. Present physical layout makes the accomodation of two departments as shown very difficult.



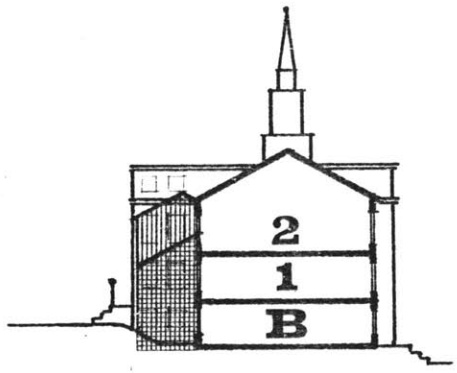
Option 4

Assumes option 3 asumptions plus installation of an elevator and stairway replacement as also recommended in Dept Work Areas, chap 7.

- Option 1A changes as indicated ▥, plus:
- Treasurer, Election Commission, City Clerk, Human Services, Veterans, Retirement, Rent Control - new locations as shown.
- Assessors & Auditor - expansion as shown.
- After School, Educational Cable, CETA - relocated outside of building or in reconstructed 3rd floor space.



Options 5 and 6 involve the following building additions. Both adequately address the present 5,000 - 5,500 ㎡ total space deficit previously discussed. (see pg 171)



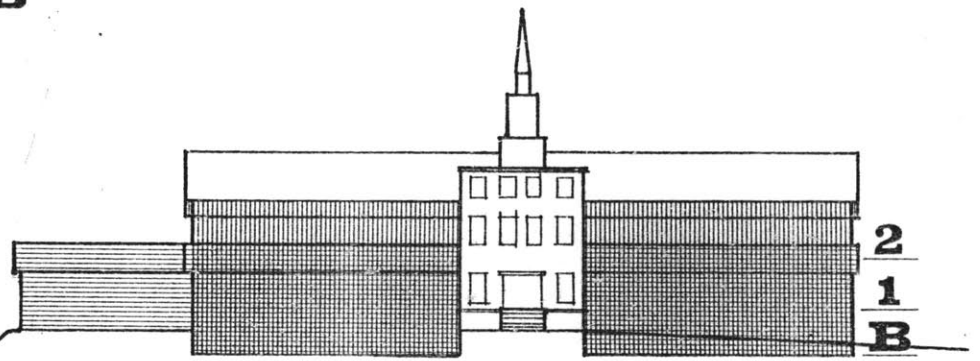
section

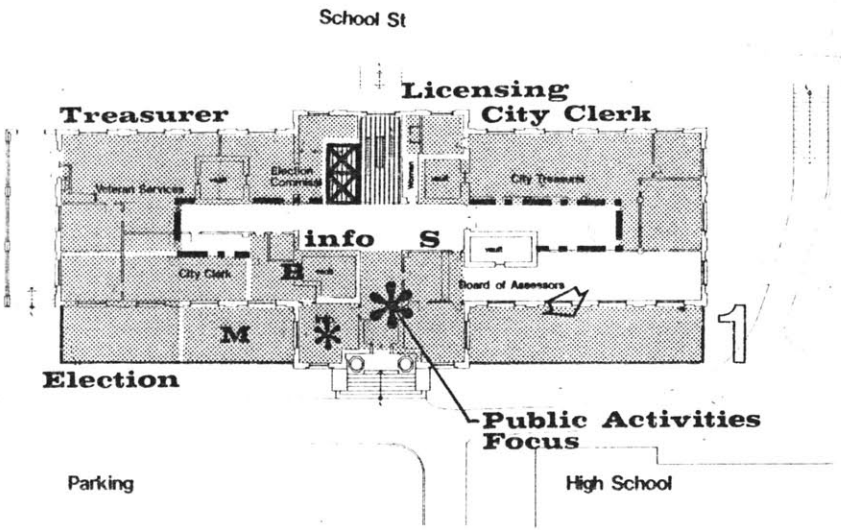
Option 5

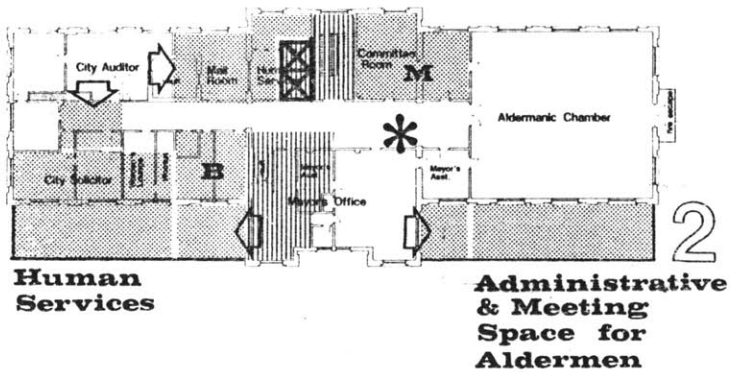
- Three story add-on to the east facade of both wings at the basement, first & second floors.
- Approx. 5,500 ㎡ additional space.

Option 6

- Two story add-on to the ıe east facade of both wings at the basement & first floor. Approx. 3,000 ㎡ .
- New Aldermanic Chamber added to south wing. Re-use of exist chambers for dept work space. Approx. 3,000 ㎡ .
- Approx. 6,000 ㎡ additional space.



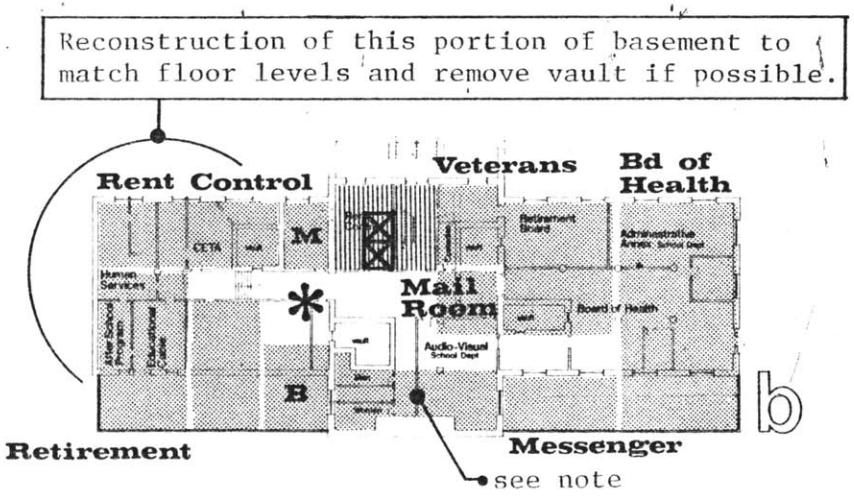




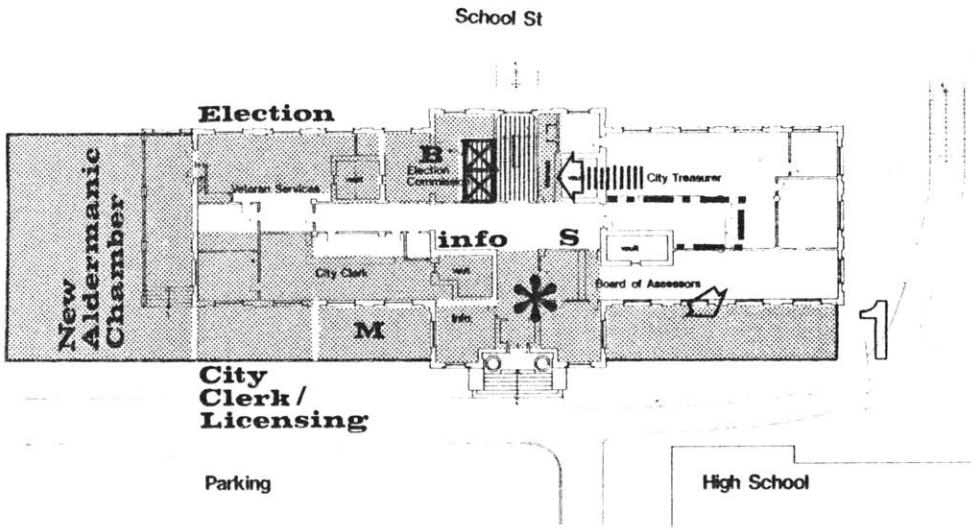
Option 5

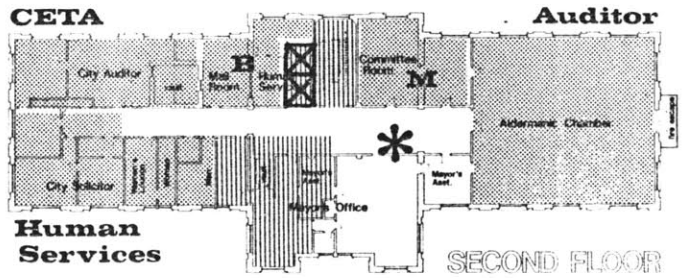
Assumes approx. 5000 ⊕ bldg addition; reuse of 3rd floor storage space; installation of an elevator.

- Mayor's Office - reorganization ▥ and expansion as indicated.
- Auditors - expansion into exist mail room, Human Services and hallway space as shown.
- Assessors - expansion into addition as shown.
- Solicitors - 3rd floor location as recommended in Dept Work Areas, chap 7.
- New locations for all other departments as indicated.
- New bathrooms on each floor which also conform to Architectural Barriers Commission regulations.
- New shared meeting/hearing rooms as shown on each floor.
- New public activities focus at bldg entry .
- note: Space reused by two of three (After School, Educational Cable, CETA) with third relocated to third floor.



M - shared meeting/hearing rm
B - improved bathrm





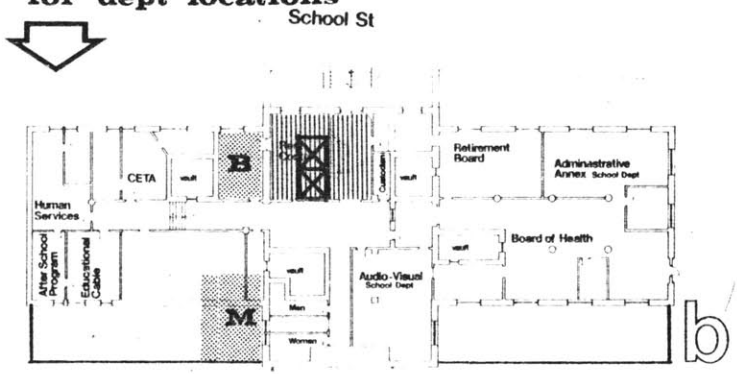
Option 6

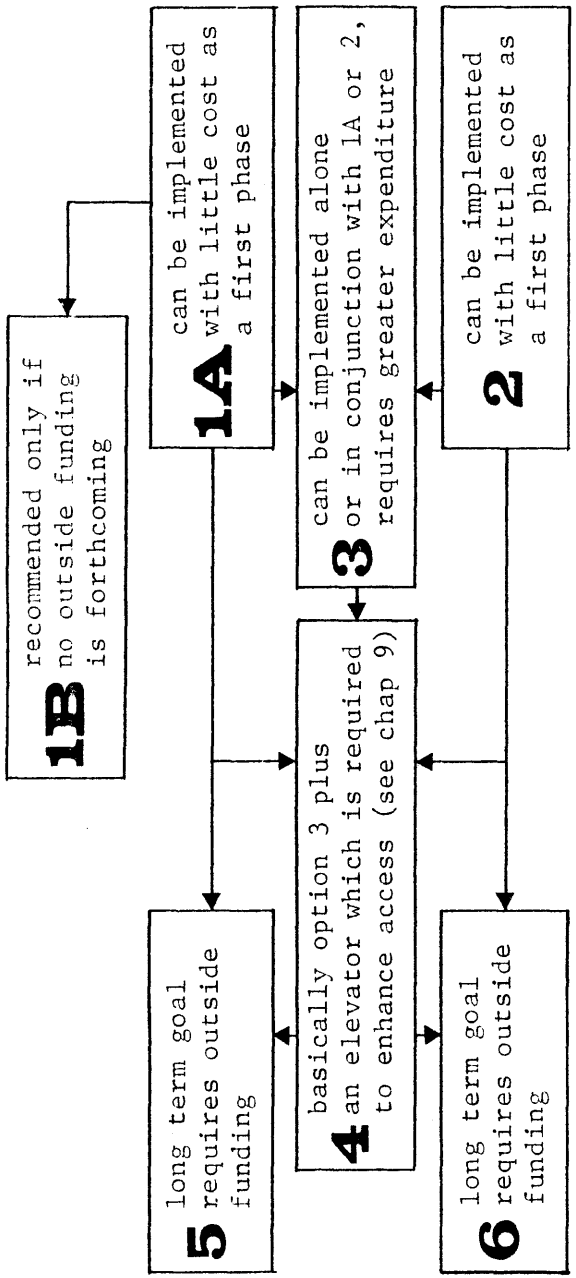
Assumes approx. 3000 ㎡ bldg addition to east side, a new Aldermanic Chambers addition on south side, re-use of 3rd floor storage space, and installation of an elevator.

- Option 5 locations for departments in basement, plus:

- Mayor's Office - reorganization and expanded reception area as indicated ▭ .
- City Treasurer, Assessors - expansion as shown.
- Solicitors - 3rd floor location as recommended in Dept Work Areas, chap 7.
- New Aldermanic Chambers as shown.
- New locations for all other departments as indicated.
- New bathrooms on each floor.
- New shared meeting/hearing room on each floor as shown.
- New public activities focus at building entry.

see Option 5
for dept locations



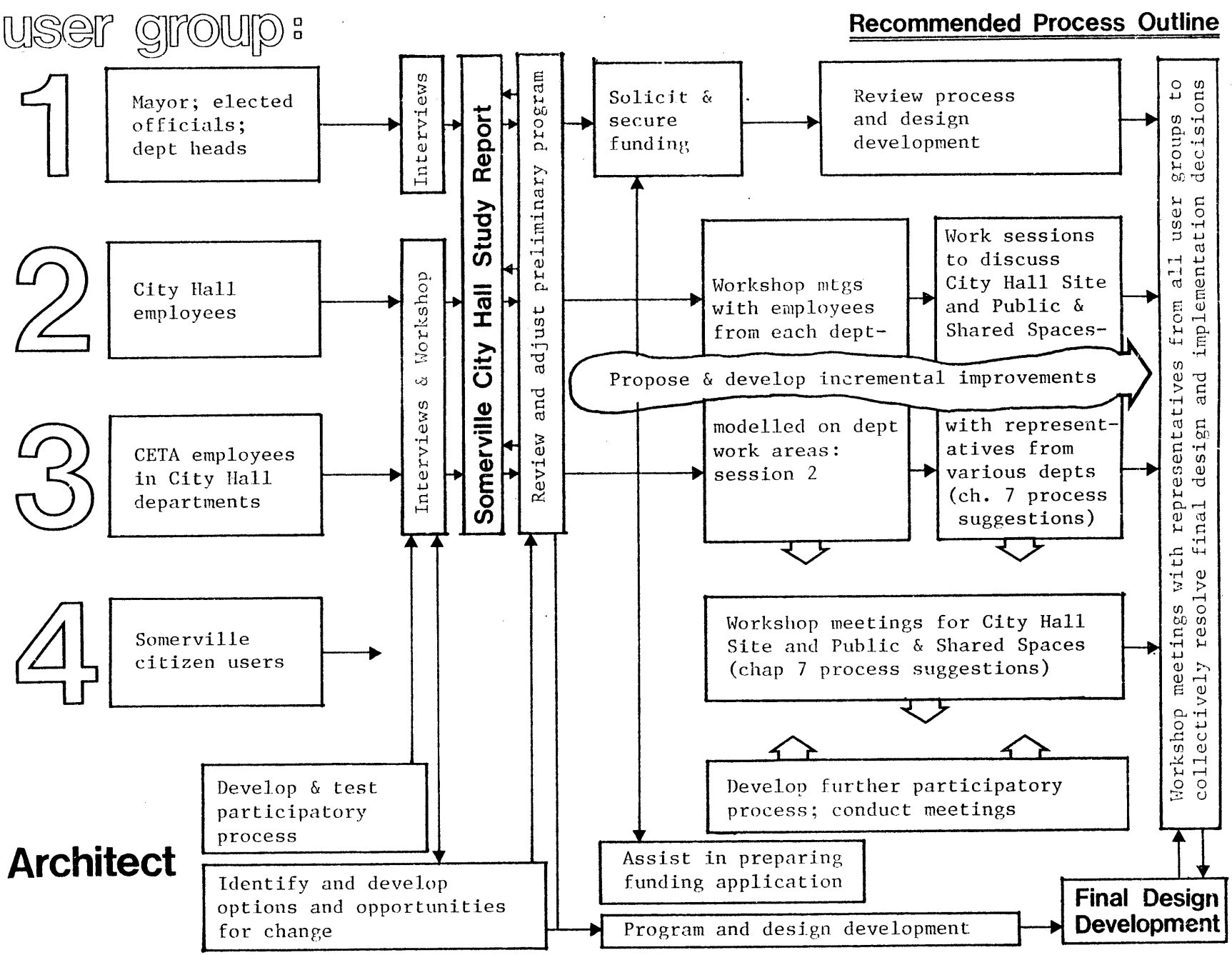


Phasing of Improvements

Concurrently, a process of dialogue leading to consensus on an appropriate space program and design scheme should be initiated amongst users from the first three groups identified in chap 3. It is towards the end of informing this discussion that the present study in general and the Departmental Space Needs (pg. 87) and Design Options in particular are presented. Neither ought to be considered the final word on these matters. Rather, they need to be reviewed and adjusted within an open forum of discussion. Participants in the present study are in an excellent position to act as the nucleus of such a review group.

Given the severe spatial scarcity within the existing building, option 5, 6 or a modified form thereof is recommended as a long term goal for the city hall. This can however involve a lengthy time period before funding is secured and construction undertaken. For this reason options 1A and 2, which can be implemented with substantially lesser expenditure are included. They can be thought of as a first phase of environmental improvement. Thus, if the user review results in a consensus that option 5 is desireable in the long run, immediate improvement in this direction can be achieved by implementing option 1A. Alternatively, if option 6 turns out the most desireable, then option 2 can be a first phase. Option 1B is only recommended as a final stage if it is completely impossible to secure outside funding support for the project.

Once a consensus on program and design is reached, design development can commence. As recommended under Further Process Suggestions (under each area of concern in this chapter) design development should include the active participation and input of all four user groups. The funding application needs to set aside specific funds for this activity. Such a continuing process will no doubt benefit federal and state applications by demonstrating a commitment to involving users in making decisions about their environment. An overall process for this involvement is outlined in the following chart, which intgrates the various process suggestions into a framework for moving towards a quality environment for the City Hall and all its users.


user group:
Recommended Process Outline
1
Mayor; elected officials; dept heads
2
City Hall employees
3
CETA employees in City Hall departments
4
Somerville citizen users
Interviews
Interviews & Workshop
Somerville City Hall Study Report
Review and adjust preliminary program
Solicit & secure funding
Review process and design development
Workshop mtgs with employees from each dept-
Work sessions to discuss City Hall Site and Public & Shared Spaces-
Propose & develop incremental improvements
modelled on dept work areas: session 2
with represent-atives from various depts (ch. 7 process suggestions)
Workshop meetings for City Hall Site and Public & Shared Spaces (chap 7 process suggestions)
Develop further participatory process; conduct meetings
Workshop meetings with representatives from all user groups to collectively resolve final design and implementation decisions
Develop & test participatory process
Identify and develop options and opportunities for change
Assist in preparing funding application
Program and design development
Final Design Development
Architect

Chapter 8: Process Evaluation

This chapter evaluates the participatory process developed and utilized over the course of the present study. Included are observations made by the author and members of the workshop staff, participant reactions during and after the work sessions and their responses to a post-workshop evaluation questionaire.

Participant Evaluation of Workshop

Much of the material presented and discussed in this chapter is based on participant responses to an evaluation questionnaire which people were asked to complete after the summary/celebration. The following questions were included:

1. Why did you decide to participate in the workshop?
2. What sorts of things do you feel you personally got out of it?
3. How beneficial do you feel the workshop process and results will be in changing the existing environment?
4. What would make it more beneficial?
5. What things did you like most about the workshop? What things least? Why?
6. Do you feel any important issues were not adequately addressed during the workshop sessions? If so, what are they?
7. What do you think of the four exercises you were asked to complete?
8. Which ones did you like best? Which ones least? Why?
9. Do you feel you personally gained anything from doing them?
10. How helpful were they in the discussion of various issues?
11. Once all the material is compiled and summarized, what do you feel should be done with it?

Measuring Sucess of the Process

One way to measure the success of a participatory design process is to evaluate its impact on resultant physical form. Since a great many of employee - suggested improvements are however, dependent on outside funding yet to be secured, such an evaluation is not completely possible at present, except in the case of the short-term third floor improvements. Participants and other employee reactions to these are positive. In addition, most people feel that they are a direct result of the workshop and employee initiative. Thus, in this instance the workshop process appears to have been successful.

Much more extensive changes can be expected to occur in the near future, since a number of decision makers have expressed a growing desire to persue federal funding for building improvement. Although participants agreed that their recommendations would substantially enhance this environment, many felt their work would have little influence on the actual outcome of these changes. A common perception was that when improvements are in fact made, decision making will revert solely to the mayor and his various staff and department heads.

Some participants did feel that the process will have an impact "if individuals are able to change those conditions over which they have control." Towards this end the workshops were

seen as an "inspiration for self-help," and the third floor short term improvements as an excellent example of the beneficial results of employee input.

To build upon this initial sucess, partcipants also expressed a willingness to present and lobby for the more extensive changes they felt were necessary. At the summary party it was decided that their presentations of the work would be used as a model in expressing employee needs and suggestions to the current decision makers. It thus appears that through the workshops, participants have become better prepared and more committed to taking an active role in the shaping of their environment.

Establishing such a committed constituency is the key towards having an eventual impact on future changes. User participation in this case occurred right at the start of the decision-making process. Thus, employee involvement and suggestions were relatively unconstrained by changes already programmed to occur. However, the time lag between the workshops and actual implementation of changes can easily have a deleterious effect on this newly organized user constituency.

So far, current decision makers have not been aliented by employee input and resultant third floor improvements. Thus, a firmer foundation has been created for additional dialogue and eventual inclusion of employees as full-fledged participants

in the decision making structure. This is probably the most which could have been achieved through the present round of participation.

The workshop can also be evaluated in terms of the opportunities it provided for basic human development and growth. Evaluation of sucess in this dimension is more clear cut, since all participants reported that they had had an enjoyable time and "learned many new things about the environment and their relation to it."

Education, Communication, Identification of Resourses

In chapter 1 three components - education, communication, and the identification of human resources - were described as effecting the sucess of a participatory process. In order to more fully evaluate the present process, the following discusses the degree to which it contained and furthered these three aspects of participation.

As mentioned earlier, the workshops appear to have been successful in establishing and carefully nurturing the growth of a constituency for environmental quality. The process helped identify and catalyze the human resources necessary for implementing short-term third floor improvements. And it has set the stage for further growth of this constituency by establish-

ing a framework for presenting and lobbying for employee needs and recommendations.

All participants agreed that the process had been educational and had increased their level of awareness of the City Hall, as well as other environments. When asked what they personally got out of the workshop, one person specifically replied that "it made me much more conscious of my own environment and how it affects me." Others responded that it helped them "learn what City Hall is like and what it could be like," and led to an understanding "of employee's adaptations to existing conditions."

The four exercises especially were seen as a helpful educational device. Through them participants "discovered areas and things that (they) didn't even know about in the existing building." One person relatded that he "found them very helpful in enabling (him) to think about and see (his) working environment more clearly." Even though some participants had difficulty with the exercises (especially the first one), all felt they were "enjoyable and helpful."

When asked what things they liked most about the workshop, participants responded that they "enjoyed getting together with other staff members" and the "sharing of ideas--for a change!" One person related that the sessions helped him gain

"an understanding of other peoples' problems" and another was much "surprised that most employees felt the same way about the environment." Thus, it appears that the workshops process successfully opened up channels of communication about environmental issues amongst employees.

In order to better determine whether genuine dialogue was indeed furthered, people were asked whether any important issues were not addressed during the meetings. The only two mentioned were more concern with City Hall as a whole and fire exits. The workshops did, therefore, provide an adequate framework for participants to articulate and dialogue about issues which were of most concern to them.

The four exercises were again perceived as the key to enabling this dialogue. Many people had never "done anything like this before" and found the exercises "extremely helpful in providing a basis for discussion" and "getting conversation going."

On the whole then, the workshops have apparently furthered all three aspects which successful participatory processes have in common. Through the recommended framework for additional participation in Chapter 7, the stage has also been carefully prepared for further participation and inclusion of employee input into actual design decisions. Whether this will in fact happen remains to be seen.

Detailed Workshop Evaluation

The remaining portion of this chapter concentrates on an evaluation of the specific exercises and process dynamics of each workshop session. Its main intent is to indicate possible adjustments for future rounds of participation.

The major components of the technique developed to enable participants to articulate subjective interpretations of existing problems and desired changes within the City Hall environment, were the exercises which participants were asked to complete prior to the work sessions. Subsequent comparison, compilation and discussion of them was seen as a way of sharpening and focusing employee evaluations and prescriptions for the environment. Starting each aspect of the workshop discussion from user-generated material was intended to help legitimize subjective input, as well as controlling the degree of bias introduced by professional judgement.

In order to better illustrate the value of the exercises in stimulating creative user input, their results are presented in Chapters 6 and 7 separately from those of the first round of interviews which are discussed in Chapter 5. Juxtaposition of these chapters shows that the exercises enabled participants to articulate their concerns in a much more evocative manner and discuss them in more detail than was possible during the interviews.

Session One

The prescribed order for completion of the first three exercises provided progressively more information and thus professional bias for user input. For the unstructured image mapping of Exercise 1, people were given a blank sheet of paper on which to record their subjective perception of the environment. Exercise 2 was composed of building floor plans. And Exercise 3 involved the participants in evaluating preselected images of the environment.

Exercise One:

A few people had not completed this exercise prior to the meeting, due to the fact that they "couldn't draw." Apparently this task was perceived as much too onerous, even though all were assured at the time it was handed out that they need not worry about making lines straight or putting everything in the right place. They were also told that the purpose of the exercise was precisely to see where they thought things were, rather than seeing if they could replicate an exact plan.

Nevertheless, there was still confusion as to what was being asked for. This confusion, along with the difficulty of imaging an environment of multiple levels, as well as a perceived lack of apptitude for graphic representation combined to make a number of people feel somewhat uneasy about the whole exer-

cise. Although a few did quickly sketch out their plans while the meeting was getting organized, this task was not pushed.

Given the enormity of the task, it may have been helpful to make the instructions more explicit, such as: Draw a plan of the floor you work on from memory. Try to draw the other floors also. This might have provided a better starting point for a discussion of "memorable places" and areas within the City Hall that people knew little about. Discussion would also have been facilitated had there been more maps to compare at each session. With a greater number of maps certain patterns may have begun to emerge.

Another suggestion that emerges is to ask people to list all the memorable places in the City Hall. This author, however, feels that there is a value in having participants struggle with the task of drawing a 'personal map.' It helps familiarize participants with graphic representations of a piece of environment and begins to connect subjective perceptions to the more objective representations with which people were asked to deal in Exercise 2 and in the second session. Because lay-people in general are not experienced in dealing with building plans, such an evolutionary education is essential lest they be completely overpowered by professionally prepared material and analysis.

Some comments of those participants who drew extensive maps

tend to substantiate this position. One related how he was not really aware that he knew "all those nooks and crooks in the City Hall, until (he) started putting them down on paper." For this participant it was a learning tool that helped him to specify those places he didn't know about and had thus left off the map. For another it was "just a doodle, that was fun to do." Other people who drew only their office, department or desk, upon reflection felt that these maps did in large part represent the xetent of their "personal territory."

Exercise 2:

The second exercise worked quite well. Even though some participants were uncertain as to what criteria they were to use for liking or disliking the City Hall spaces, the exercise had enough structure to make compilation and comparison meaningful. During the discussion period, the various criteria used by individuals were then brought into focus. An example of this was when one person had circled the entire Mayor's Office and then proceeded to explain the reason for this being that it was the only office that had a "nice paint job, carpeting and a historical character or flavor." Another participant then commented that that was true, but suggested that he didn't like the secretarial and reception area due to the overcrowding that occurred there. In this person's evaluation the overcrowding severely impinged on the overall environmental quality of this portion of the office. The format of discussing

areas one by one thus helped sharpen individual and group perceptions of why various spaces were liked and others disliked.

Exercise 3:

This exercise had certain drawbacks. Some people complained that there was little in the magazines which they really liked. This commentary on the state of professional practice as mirrored in the leading journals was quite telling. Participants nevertheless brought in a number of images and were able during the discussion period to begin articulating the reasons they liked or disliked certain 'concrete' forms, rather than 'nebulous' ideas about form.

The format for this exercise seems to have worked much better than one which asks people to bring in their own images.[1] Lay people just do not have much access to images of forms in periodicals such as Time, Newsweek, etc.

A further refinement of this technique may have been to give each participant a preselected set of images that shows a variety of ways to articulate and design spaces and ask them to evaluate which are negative and which positive. This was the notion behind the slide show, which was compiled to help broaden the set of images participants could work with.

However, this author feels that a nice balance was established between material that participants had to take charge of themselves and that which was pre-selected by the professional. To a certain degree, the magazines were also preselected, but in this case participants were much less constrained in having to react to all the images and could in fact select only the most evocative ones. One participant did not bring in any images because after having looked through the magazine he decided that the stuff he was looking for was not there. The exercise of looking through the magazine, however, helped him to begin articulating the kind of environment he in fact desired.

Session Two: Departmental Work Areas

The major focus of this session was the fomulation of an activity program and physical re-organization of spaces to better accommodate these activities for the Planning and Community Development department. Exercise 4 was seen as a way of preparing participants for this task by sensitizing them to the kinds of activities that presently occurred within their work space. It was felt that such reflection would better equip participants to discuss what other activities should be provided for within their work area. People were also asked in this exercise to evaluate the adequacy of the present space in accomodating existing activities. This was seen as setting

the stage for discussing the kind of environment exisiting as well as proposed activities required.

Exercise 4 worked very well form all standpoints. People had little difficulty in specifying existing activities and spatial deficiencies. Provision of polaroid cameras to record their observations also increased participant's level of interest, as well as sharpening their perceptions.

One person chose to 'stage' a number of typical activities with co-workers in order to represent them photographically. This required a certain amount of previsualization which increased his "awareness of how the existing space inevitably created conflicts and confusion."

Another employee interpreted the exercise differently. She chose to document the various problems and deficiencies which she perceived within the environment. This did not, however, unfocus, but rather enriched the discussion, as during her presentation the group began connecting these deficiencies to their impact on activity patterns.

The use of participant-taken images proved extremely effective in this case, as it has in a number of other participatory processes. It required them to make conscious choices about what to represent as well as understand the evocative quality they

wanted to convey. Participants also reported that playing with the simple cameras was a great deal of fun.

Because of this element of choice and the option of staging activities, it can be assumed that the images taken represent what people felt to be the most pressing concerns. One of the problems that came out of this exercise was the complete lack of "personal territory or sapce--a place of one's own." A couple participants ingeniously documented its physical manifestations by taking photos of cluttered work surfaces and disorganized filing systems. During the discussion, participants concluded that this lack of control over one's personal work space had deleterious effects on work patterns, as much time was wasted searching for misplaced or mis-filed materials and in countless interruptions to concentration on work tasks. When the discussion shifted to desired, new activity spaces, the participants were then well-prepared to articulate the kind and amount of personal work space they needed.

The model and game were extremely helpful in stimulating participant input. The various pieces allowed them to quickly manipulate this formal representation in order to test out and specify the 'sense of place' they wanted to achieve. The 'image pieces,' with which participants were already familiar were also helpful in this regard.

Work around this model was initially restricted to the manipu-

lation of desks, planter and partition elements on a 2-dimensional floor plan. By looking through the 'image pieces,' employees then decided that a library/study loft might also be a nice addition to this spcae. During the site visit, this was further evaluated and received favorable response.

The 'game' also included the possibility of cutting up balsa wood stock in order to fabricate new elements. However, by the time the first re-organization using pre-made pieces was built, participant's energies had peaked and it was difficult to go through another pass. This was due in large part to the level of detailed thought that was invested in this organization. Over the course of building and adjusting this shceme, they thought and tried to specify the kind of work environment they felt was appropriate for each employee of the department, given their particular work tasks. Thus, instead of pushing another round of re-organization the first scheme was photographed, the model was left in the planning office and participants encouraged to play with it further. This did not, however, occur, as there was not enough structure outside the workshop meeting to stimulate further intensive exploration. Participants also felt that the scheme they had developed was a sound overall organization, requiring but small adjustments.

One thing that leaving the model within the work environment did do was stimulate interest on the part of employees who

were not involved in the workshop. Because it was there, workshop participants had an opportunity to express their ideas to others. Subsequently, a number of other employees approached their author with ideas of their own. Thus, this process and product worked well towards building up a constituency for environmental quality.

Session Two: Public and Shared Spaces

This session focused on formulating suggestions for improving public and shared spaces throughout the building. Due to an extreme lack in diversity of such spaces within the present environment, it was felt that analogizing the City Hall to a 'town' would enhance individual's creative contributions. It would allow them to dream and be less constrained by the existing spatial organizations. Exercise 4--Public and Shared Spaces attempted to set up such a frame of reference.

A number of participants, however, had great difficulty in trying to imagine that the building was a 'town.' One related how he had spent a number of hours trying and had still "come up with a blank," even after going on the 'walk' several times. These repeated attempts were, however, perceived as valuable since he had "discovered new things each time." He also "began to see the place in a totally different light form the way (he) was accustomed to seeing it," which was basically

the intent of the exercise. The most overpowering observation was "how drab the whole place was" - something which he had "tuned out over the day to day use of the building."

Other participants took the task right in stride and eloquently described the deficiencies of their 'town.' Some of these descriptions of "cave-like rooms and tunnels" are startling both in terms of their evocative quality, as well as their similarity among a number of participants.

Although the notion of analogy was explained individually to participants at the time they received this exercise, it may have been helpful to reinforce this with a lead in and some examples right at the end of Session 1. As it was, because some were able to get into the analogy and others weren't, the Session 2 discussions vacillated between observations of the 'town' and those of the building. In this regard, the slide show was tremendously helpful in focusing and tying observations from these two frames of reference to the specific spaces and activities being discussed. The slides also stimulated further discussion, as people began noticing and commenting on various aspects of the environment they had overlooked on their individual 'walks.'

After completing the discussion of this exercise, participants turned their attention to the workmaps and started specifying

the most appropriate locations for various shared facilities within the building. Reference to Exercise 3 'image pieces' was once again extremely helpful when they started talking about the kind of environmental quality the activity spaces should possess. Participants were, however, much more constrained in manipulating the two-dimensional graphic representation of space than those who worked around the model during the Depaertmental Work Spaces session 2. Much of the writing and marking on the workmaps was in fact done by the author.

Based on the sucess of the third floor re-use 'game', this area of concern could have benefitted from a third session around three dimensional models of locations for the various improvement elements. Such exploration is recommended in the Process Suggestions for Public and Shared Spaces - chapter 7.

Chapter 9: Summary / Conclusion

This chapter contains various summary observations and a number of suggestions for moving towards actual implementation of improvements to the city hall environment.

The following table contains a summary and priority ranking of the various improvements developed with participants over the course of this study. It is based on a portion of the post-workshop evaluation questionaire in which people were asked to rate the relative importance of all the elements identified and discussed during the work sessions. This does not necessarily mean that only the first 5 or 10 elements should be implemented and the remainder forgotten. For most employees felt that all the improvements were necessary in order to achieve a truly enhanced city hall environment. Rather the summary is presented to indicate which elements deserve most pressing attention from this user group's perspective in the event that improvements need to be phased in over time.

One of the keys to actually improving the existing condition is to establish a congruence between the first user group's (Mayor, other elected officials and appointed department heads) political frame of reference and the scope of much needed changes. This dictates a funding strategy that relies on outside federal and state support in order that Somerville taxpayers not be further burdened. Given the enormity of existing issues and problems identified in this present study, such a strategy merits active pursual by city officials.

Composite Ranking of Improvement Elements

Extremely Important

1. More actual workspace
2. More privacy for individual workspaces
3. Elevator
4. Better heating/cooling
5. Upgraded bathrooms
6. New flooring or carpeting
7. Improved fire egress
8. Better lighting
9. Better acoustics
10. More parking
11. New stairway
12. Enhanced reception waiting areas
13. Partitions in work areas
14. Microfilm storage
15. Improved public information
16. Underground parking
17. Employee lounge/outside terrace area
18. Planters/plants
19. City hall park/plaza
20. Coffee/donut stand
21. Fountain
22. More food machines
23. Art exhibits

Somewhat

Over the course of our work sessions we have discussed a number of potential improvements to the existing city hall environment. Please indicate your assessment of the importance of the following:

Extremely Important — Somewhat Important — Not Too Important

Dept work areas

___More actual workspace.....
___More privacy for individual workspaces...
___Meeting rooms.....
___Microfilm storage.....
___Better lighting.....
___Better heating/cooling.....
___Better acoustics.....
___New flooring or carpeting.....
___Planters/plants.....
___Partitions.....

Public/Shared spaces

___Employee lounge/outside terrace area.....
___Coffee/donut stand.....
___More food machines.....
___Upgraded bathrooms.....
___Elevator.....
___New stairway.....
___Improved fire egress.....
___Art exhibits.....
___Improved public information.....
___Enhanced reception waiting areas.....

Site

___More parking.....
___Underground parking.....
___Fountain.....
___City hall park/plaza.....

Any Others?

Try to rate the relative importance or priority of these improvements from 1 to 24 (1 being most important; and 24 being least). Write these ratings in the spaces to the left of each improvement.
This is a bit like comparing apples and oranges, but try it anyway. The intent is to just get a sense of how you percieve their relative importance.

Priority Ranking Questionaire

There are two additional reasons for immediate action. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandates that any existing building recieving federal support for improvement be made accessible to the handicapped by June 1980. This leaves adequate time for compliance and implementation of this study's recommendations only if funding is solicited immediately.
City hall is also in serious violation of the fire code. This needs to be remedied expeditiously as it presents a continual potential for tragedy.

The actual funding strategy can involve a creative tapping and combination of a number of sources. Historic preservation grants are available at the state and federal level.[1] The current effort aimed at including the building on the Historic Register should be pressed vigorously as this designation will set the stage for grant application.

Federal EDA grants are also available for the improvement of public facilities. Provisions of the new Labor Intensive Public Works bill target these monies to areas of high unemployment, for which Somerville qualifies. The city of Chelsea is currently seeking such support for enhancing its city hall. Their intent is to use discretionary monies from the Community Development Block Grant program to contract for preliminary design and preparation of a Public Works funding application. A similar course of action is recommended for Somerville.

There is also substantial interest at the federal level in the development and implementation of alternative energy sources. Given the heating and cooling problems within the city hall, it would make for an excellent demonstration site for state-of-the-art solar energy utilization in existing buildings. This is even more so due to the public nature and use of the building which can be capitalized upon to inform all visitors of the potential benefits of alternative energy through immaginative displays as well as actual experience.

This presents a significant opportunity for public information and should be represented in such terms in the grant application. Funds to improve elderly and handicapped access can also be applied for in a similar dual purpose manner - to enhance the specific city hall environment as well as inform people about the possibilities for such improvements within existing buildings. This sort of experiential information program is significantly more effective than brochures, etc. and could help single out the Somerville City Hall for an innovative and beneficial expenditure of federal monies.

It is highly recommended that the city pursue a package approach which includes as many of the above mentioned sources as possible. This would enable the resolution of a number of inter-related problems which currently plague the city hall.

As recommended in chapter 7, the lower eschelon employees should also be actively involved in any future decision making for improvements. They have inhabited the environment over a much longer period of time than the first group of users and are thus well aware of existing problems. While many department heads are in and out of their offices continually on city business, these employees spend eight hours per day in the City Hall, interacting directly with citizen-users. They have come forward with numerous suggestions for ameliorating the deficiencies with which they deal day after day. This accumulated expertise is much too valuable a resource to overlook in the programming and design of improvements.

One of the strong points for using the material in this present study as the basis of grant applications is its documentation of the participatory process utilized to arrive at various recommendations. Such a history of participation, a concrete commitment to improvement as demonstrated by the third floor changes, and a commitment to further inclusion of user input will no doubt carry weight at the federal level where there is interest in making government and the environment more accessible to the user.

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Chapter 8

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