

A BEAUTY ESTABLISHMENT

by
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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T

The architect-author gratefully acknowledges her indebtedness to the following for their kindness in allowing her to study their establishments, and for their explanations thereof:

Monsieur Emile, of Emile Incorporated, New York
Monsieur Paul, of Laurent Inc., Hairdressers, New York
Mrs. McDonald, of Daggett & Ramsdell Salon, R.C.A. Bldg., N.Y.
Miss Harris, of Bonwit Teller & Co., Fifth Avenue, N.Y.
Miss A. Deschamps, of Dorothy Gray Salon, Fifth Avenue, N. Y.
Miss Delafield, of Hudnuts, Fifth Avenue, N. Y.
Miss Hunter, of the Boston Elizabeth Arden shop and the staff of the New York Elizabeth Arden salon
Madame Rubinstien of the New York Helena Rubinstien establishment, and Miss Andre and staff of the Boston Helena Rubinstien shop.
Miss Blake, of Kathleen Mary Quinlan Salon, Fifth Avenue, N.Y.
Mr. Constantine Kay, of C. Crawford Hollidge, Boston
Antoine de Paris Salon, and the Silhouette Shop, both of Saks' Fifth Avenue, N. Y.
William Filene & Sons Individuality Shop, Boston
Jordan Marsh Co., Boston
Coleman's, Boston

Mr. Harold Sterner (M.I.T. 1917) of New York was of especial assistance in discussing my problem as he had just completed the new Fifth Avenue building for Helena Rubinstien.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

As mentioned in the program, at present there is no salon in Boston which gives complete Beauty service as one finds in quite a few establishments in Manhattan. In the interviews in New York I was told that such a place would be successful here as all the New York shops had Boston patrons asking for such an establishment to be opened here. The patrons said they preferred to go to one shop for everything, than to trip around from one to another. Confirming these New York salons were several heads of the beauty departments in Boston stores. Mr. Constantine Kay of C. Crawford Hollidge said that their new department is good so far as it goes, but that it does not go far enough. Facials and hair treatment, and manicures are only a portion of the real job, and people are continually asking for other treatments, such as body massage and exercise. Coleman's opened their new body division with light treatment, massage, and a combination mechanical horse and bicycle, within a week, and have been swamped with women wanting appointments. Rubinstien is adding an exercise room and a one-tub hydro-therapy room to her present premises as a compromise between the need and lack of space. Helena Rubinstien's present lease has a short while to run. She intends to buy land and build her own establishment, which will naturally increase her present facilities, as she did in New York. "Rubinstein is going after the laurels she once had as the first great lady of the salon. A year or so before the crash she sold out to Wall street for several millions; just after the panic she is said to have bought back the controlling

interest at a price far beneath value." Her shop in New York is definitely a step towards regaining her prestige. It is extremely attractive, simple modern in excellent taste, with no "flossy" decorations that will mislead the client to believe that she is being made a sucker of for her money. It has atmosphere, but one that considers that the patrons are smart people who know how to spend their money wisely.

Because it would be a successful enterprise for any good firm, and because Rubinstein's accommodations are inadequate here, it has been deemed appropriate to consider that my proposed establishment will be for Helena Rubinstein.

GENERAL PROGRAM

As no large beauty shop to care for women from tip to toes exists in Boston -- and as many clients from Boston have asked New York concerns of such nature to open large salons here which would care completely for them -- I have felt justified in designing the beauty establishment for Boston instead of New York as I first intended. New York has a number of the all-inclusive type; Boston has none. Many Bostonians travel extensively so can have their treatments in full elsewhere, and be content with a manicure, facial and shampoo here. Others must go to one shop for such, to others for permanent waves, and to still others for massage or sun treatments.

A site on Newbury has been selected for the building which is to be designed to reflect its character.

The requirements within the buildings are: a shop to sell cosmetics, make-up requisites, perfumes, lingerie, furbelows, and accessories; display; consultation rooms; appointment desk; treatment rooms for hair and scalp; a hair goods room where transformations are stored, matched and fitted; drying rooms; a storage room for permanent wave machines and extra dryers when not in use; a laboratory or "kitchen" for compounding hair solutions, shampoos, etc.; a workroom where the maids clean and sterilize the soiled instruments which will be reused; facial rooms, a facial kitchen and supply room; a "body department" which will include infra-red ray treatment and massage, towel rooms, showers, a violet ray or alpine light room, a doctor's office, a weighing

and measuring room, a small photography studio and dark room; a hydrotherapeutic section with several types of baths; a small gymnasium, a roof arranged for outdoor exercises whenever the weather permits (such as badminton, fencing); and a "health bar" where wholesome foods are dispensed.

Administrative offices, wholesale offices, and wholesale buyers' rooms are to be included, as well as the ordinary services, such as employees' rooms, toilets, etc.

Drawings submitted shall be typical floor plans, a section, and two elevations, all at one-eighth inch scale.

SELECTION OF THE SITE

In selecting a site for the beauty establishment the following factors were considered:

1. Area having stores of similar character
2. Advantages of traffic
3. Transportation convenience
4. Particular requirements within building affecting location
5. Orientation
6. Building restrictions
7. Special influence on type and extent of trade
8. Probable future of area

In seeking a site a consideration was the location in a district of similar character because stores of similar character attract a uniform type of trade. Thus it was felt that one on Newbury street would be particularly good as Newbury is known as the street of smart shops catering to the well-to-do people of Boston and vicinity. Its lack of trolley and subway are in its favor, for the street, being a one-way thoroughfare, gives more room for not only the limousine trade, but also for the small car owner who wishes to park her car an hour while she undergoes a metamorphosis. On this side of the Common her difficulty of finding a parking place is much less than in the more congested district of Tremont street or beyond. The proximity of the subway and surface cars on Boylston street are convenient, yet not encroachingly noisy.

Number Six Newbury street was selected as the site from among half a dozen old buildings for rent or sale. Number Six, as mentioned before, is convenient to public transportation, and also close to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Most of the buildings of this block are new.

There are several shops specializing in particular phases of the beauty business in the immediate neighborhood, but none gives complete service as in my proposed establishment. In New York all the leading salons are within several blocks of one another on Fifth Avenue. A corner lot was rejected because the increased cost of the lot would not bring an increased revenue, as it would to a drug or cigar store. Its trade is more restricted.

This location was chosen because on one side (the west) an 80' building exists, while on the other are several lower buildings. The lowness of these latter and the church on the corner of Arlington and Boylston streets allows a view of Boylston street from our upper floors. To the rear are four-story buildings, quite recent so that there will be no change in height of these adjacent buildings to affect this one. Naturally Number Four Newbury, which is old will be torn down, ^{eventually} and a new taller structure will replace it, but it would be foolish not to take advantage of its lower height while one may.

The orientation of the building will be facing north and slightly west. This means no sun on the face of the building except in late afternoon. Most of the rooms and activities do not require light, let alone sunshine, so this is not important as it would be in a dwelling. The necessity of air-conditioning in such a building means that prevailing winds are not considered either.

PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS

The principal consideration in designing a smart beauty establishment is never to overscale anything or any part of it. A beauty shop is similar to a night club. The minute it seems large it loses its smartness and exclusiveness. It must have an intimate character, a feeling of selectiveness. Woolworth's and Kresge's now have beauty parlors, where permanents may be had at ten cents a curl, with mass production a desirability -- but an exclusive salon sells atmosphere, sophisticated luxury, a "capitalistic" atmosphere where the customers feel that they are getting something better than the average, away from the hoi poloi.

This characteristic of intimacy or "coziness" which is a prime or positive characteristic must be combined with one usually thought of ~~in~~ as an opposite characteristic, sanitation. Wherever people have treatments where there is body contact with equipment, there must be no possibility that the equipment is not sterilized or even appear not so. There must be no danger of infection. In this respect a beauty salon is similar to a hospital. In both places treatments are given, and people come in contact with objects used by previous occupants and touched by staff. However, in a hospital a person enters sick, a condition that makes sanitary cleanliness of paramount importance and attractiveness of the surroundings is of minor importance. In a beauty establishment the "cozy" or intimate attractive atmosphere is foremost consideration (after the practical, efficient working of the plan) but the two must both be present.

AN ANALYSIS OF PLAN ELEMENTS

It is difficult to say whether one studies the site in relation to the plan elements, or the plan elements in relation to the site. It seems to be a question of which is first, as with the chicken and the egg. There is no doubt, though, that they are inter-related. Since we considered the site first, it is now necessary to study the plan elements. Grouping them roughly into four principal elements (1. shop, 2. wholesale and administration, 3. treatment and exercise, 4. relaxation-- auditorium and restaurant,) they are simplified in the mind of the author.

Circulation

Circulation ties all the elements together. It is the blood stream of the structure body. If it is poor, the entire building suffers, activity lessens, and if the condition is acute, the body dies of that horrible disease known as "Bankruptcy." If it is good, the store body becomes vigorous, reaping a golden harvest from its activities. People are attracted to healthy, functioning establishments, as they are to vital individuals. And circulation is more important than the average layman realizes. Fine reception rooms, luxurious treatment booths, seem to be the impressive thing, but they are only the rosy cheeks and glossy hair, which may or may not, be indicative of the health of the person. It is the ease with which one can go from here to there, both for clients and staff, that is the important thing in planning. One must be able to reach the desired rooms without hunting, and find everything conveniently, workably placed for use. The shop on the first floor, elevators, and corridors are

circulatory elements.

Shop

This is an essential in such an establishment. The area is close to the desired one-twelfth of the total area of the building. It is on the first floor to avoid overloading the elevators and to be convenient for the women who wish to purchase merely a lipstick or a flask of perfume. If the shop were upstairs it would place a load on the elevators and stairs out of all proportion to the expense of the upkeep and the purchases made.

Displays of cosmetics, perfumes, and accessories are placed close to entrance and elevator to "catch" the people passing to the upper floors. The displays are small to give a "precious" quality to the objects. Lighting is placed to fall on the articles and not into patrons' eyes.

The lingerie and furbelow salesroom is visible as client walks to the elevator and will be drawn past the elevator to the garments.

The appointment desk is placed to control the elevator and to oversee the shop.

A make-up consultation room is for the patron not wishing to go to the facial department. Strong illumination with both day and night light necessary.

Service Area on First Floor

As the entire floor is not needed for salesroom, the rear area is left for service, allowing direct communication by stairs from the wholesale department on the second floor and the stockroom in the basement. It also provides a freight elevator to alley, and room for loading.

Wholesale and Offices (Second Floor)

For the general office of the wholesale department an open floor plan is desired, with acoustic tile and ceiling to absorb the noise of the office machines. In New York 20% of the total building area is required for the wholesale department but here from 10% to 15% is sufficient. The three private offices in the front of the building are placed there for light, and because the people who use them do not have to have close connection with the general office. Instead they either control the salon, or take charge of the wholesale buyers.

The display rooms for the wholesale trade are important as one hundred and twenty-two different products are exhibited, not counting the various shades, as in powders, rouges, and lipsticks, which usually have eight or nine variations, and the cases which come in half a dozen different hues. Also there are various combination of lotions, creams, astringents, and make-up requisites especially packaged for gifts, from a small box to an elaborate de luxe travel bag of French leather filled with preparations to last a month or more(\$60.). A good portion of the Rubinstein annual income is derived from the wholesale trade.

In order to handle two buyers at once the displays are divided into a small and a large show room, the former being used for the tinier articles, such as perfume. There is a small office between the display salons for discussion of products and sales methods.

The inquisitiveness of some buyers, the fact that they are mostly men, and the high class patronage of the salon, makes it

necessary to have a separate entrance. The second elevators thus required can be utilized to carry patrons to the roof from the exercise floor, and for employees.

Treatment and Exercise Group

This group is composed of treatment rooms for hair, face, hands, feet, and body, and two exercise rooms and a small gym inside the building, and a sports roof.

Exercise Group (Third Floor)

Light^{is} desired in exercise rooms and gym for psychological effect -- health and all that. The cooling system is not used on this floor as on others because of danger of catching colds. The gym does not have a high ceiling as space from two floors would exceed the income. The room is large enough for fencing, rhythmicth dancing classes of five to eight people, and is equipped with horizontal bars for stretching exercises, pulleys, and matts.

Two individual exercise rooms have large mirrors on the wall so that the woman may see her faults, and observe her progress. They are equipped with horizontal bars, pulleys, a mechanical horse and bicycle, matts, and a phonograph.

A column is omitted in the gym to gain free area. The load of the above floors is carried by a large girder. At first the gym was placed on the top floor in order to avoid such construction, but it was flet that ~~xxxx~~ it was more advantageous to place the restaurant there, so the gym floor was drppped to a lower height^x. The elevator off the stairs may be used in going and coming from the roof to avoid the "dressed" customers going to the restaurant during the lunch hours.

A small room is equipped to photograph the silhouette of each patron front and side view. The result is printed on graph paper so that the gains may be more easily seen. This is known as a "shadograph". A small dark room is provided for developing and printing these simple pictures.

The "Body" Treatments (Fourth Floor)

No light necessary for baths, light or massage treatments.

Light required for doctor's office. Each patron given a thorough examination before allowed treatments. Especially examined for heart trouble and pregnancy. The latter is one of the things all such institutions fear as the strenuousness of exercise and treatment may be harmful to the prospective mother, and has resulted in more than one law suit for damages. No woman is accepted who is not in average condition. The doctor also controls the sun ray (violet ray) treatments.

The violet-ray, or alpine light as it is also called, is a healing light when used carefully; dangerous when in unskilled hands. It is equivalent to sunshine, and is excellent for colds and acne, and in acquiring a suntan. Though it might be given from a lamp, it is preferable to construct a special room for it so that the treatment will last more than one or ten minutes, according to the progress of patient. The violet-ray tubing encircles the room in a cove, the rays reflecting on the aluminium ceiling and walls. A cork floor is used on the floor. Three benches with rims contain white sand give one the effect of lying on the beach when taking a treatment. Dark glass must be worn while undergoing a dose of sunshine.

The infra-ray light is really only heat and gains its result by wetting the patron and increasing her circulation. The equipment looks like the top of a covered wagon which, in tent-like fashion, covers all but the face of the customer, and she is slowly "baked". This application of heat is not only restful and slenderizing, but is used by doctors and hospitals for sprains, rheumatism, and stiff or sore muscles.

The hydrotherapeutic division has two individual rooms for the numerous baths, such as foam and milk baths. Since hydrotherapeutics are used as nerve-quieting treatments in insane asylums, it is easy to see that women who have a continuous social round of activities, or a fatigued business woman, would enjoy them and feel much more fit for having had them. The tubs will be on 8" bases so attendant may work easier. Colonic irrigation is likewise given here, and Each tub has a shower.

There is a steam room and shower; also two seven-valve showers controlled on the outside by the attendant. These latter will be used by the customers but regulated by the attendant.

Resting rooms are provided so that hydrotherapy and massage clients may nap a half or whole hour after treatment.

Hair Treatment (Fifth Floor)

My plan of the hair floor is different from the ordinary ones because of the drying booths. In the cheaper beauty shops the patrons are placed in a group for drying and often manifold dryers are used. In the expensive salons the customer stays in the booth till she is dry.

This means an hour or so when the space is occupied but not adding to the revenue of the shop. Madame Rubinstein has solved it by having individual drying booths, which give privacy but do not take up so much room as the treatment rooms. Thus the eight rooms do a business of two to three times what they formerly did. Portable manicure tables may be rolled around on both this and the facial floor if a person wishes her nails done while she has a permanent or finger wave, or her hair is drying.

Facial Treatment (Sixth Floor)

The facial rooms could use the most light to the best advantage of any of the treatment group, so was placed on the next to top floor to use the light obtained from the lowness of the next building. I should say that the actual facial does not require any light at all and that **after** the cleansing and toning the patron is left in darkness for fifteen or thirty minutes to relax while a lotion soothes the skin. For this reason the facial room is often an interior room completely closed off from others for quietness. It is in the make-up that follows the treatment that some find it desirable to have daylight, though the day and night electric lighting around the mirror provide excellent lighting and prevent that "cosmetic or floured look" that comes from powdering in dim light. It was suggested that half the rooms have daylight. By placing the facial department on the sixth floor, all rooms may have outside light till a new structure is erected next door.

There are two consulting rooms equipped with a large magnifying machine called a skin detector that reveals shamelessly the condition of the skin, so that the proper course of correction may be prescribed.

The facial rooms require the largest area of any of the treatment rooms because they are equipped with Brobdingnagian over-stuffed easy chairs, and footstools. The slip-covered chair has a reclining back. Because of the number of rooms desired (10-12) and the width of the lot (28') the arrangement of the room places the lavatory on a partition instead of the bearing wall. This is the only efficient placing of the fixture so is justifiable, and there is plenty of precedent, too. The turn-over here is not so great as on the hair floor, but the average treatment more expensive so that the revenue is about the same.

One of the rooms is equipped for pedicuring and manicuring.

Service includes towel supply rooms, a "kitchen" with a refrigerator for ice, and extra supplies. The service area is next to the elevators on all floors as it uses the dumbwaiter for emergency supplies, because it is centrally located and convenient from the whole floor, and because it leaves the outside walls to be used for lighting the more important rooms.

Not only the service areas are centrally located, but the elevators, the smoke stack, the air conditioning ducts ^{are also} so that the ventilation coincides with the physical circulation.

Eight-inch ducts are placed in the corridor and feed into the rooms above the doors. The vents are 1' from the ceiling. The doors are cut off at the bottom for return, and one return 8 square feet is figured for each floor, this return being placed in the linen room. Toilets and kitchen do not have returns to the basement but vents to the outdoors.

Relaxation Group (Seventh Floor)

The auditorium is for educating the public to use their cosmetics, and preparations. Groups of club women will be invited to a fashion show featuring their correct make-ups and tea gowns, or possibly combined with a the smart clothes from a nearby shop. It is also for meeting of their sales representatives in New England, to have lectures and demonstration.

The dining room and bar are placed here for sunshine and view. The menu will be not only for the dieting parson but for the normal one. Because many people exercise to reduce and then eat more than than they have lost, it is an excellent idea to have a restaurant on the premises so that the temptation will be reduced.

Play Area (Roof)

The roof play area has a cage over it to prevent balls going over the side of the building. It has a door and fire escape at the rear so no one could be trapped here. It is to be used for rope-skipping, fencing, golf practice, ping pong, and badminton.

The front of the roof may be used for deck chairs to relax in after exercise or treatment. Though this is the north end of the building there is plenty of sunshine all over the whole roof as the building restrictions do not allow any building over 80' high.

Fire Escape

The fire escape at the rear of the building is 30" plus 30" in width, and access to it is usually through a treatment or dressing room, so that a sign must be placed above the corridor door which is to have glass panels which may be broken in case of a fire. This is in compliance with the Boston building code. The plans have been

inspected and approved by the Boston building department.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

There is a lack of printed material on this subject though quite a number of such buildings are scattered throughout our country, Consequently my research was done mostly in the shops I have mentioned in my acknowledgment, whose heads not only showed me the entire building, including the service areas, but explained the functions of everything, criticized their own equipment and arrangement of space, compared it with their competitors, and sent me on to another which had desirable features that they did not have. To a few I made repeated visits to verify an impression or to take a measurement.

Below is a list which may be of some help to the next student who attempts such a problem.

Check list for new construction and modernization of stores
Architectural Record Dec. 1934

The Retail Shop -- An Opportunity for Architect and Merchant
American Architect Nov. 1933

Illustrations and notes on Beauty Salons and Display rooms:

American Architect April 1935, July 34, November 33

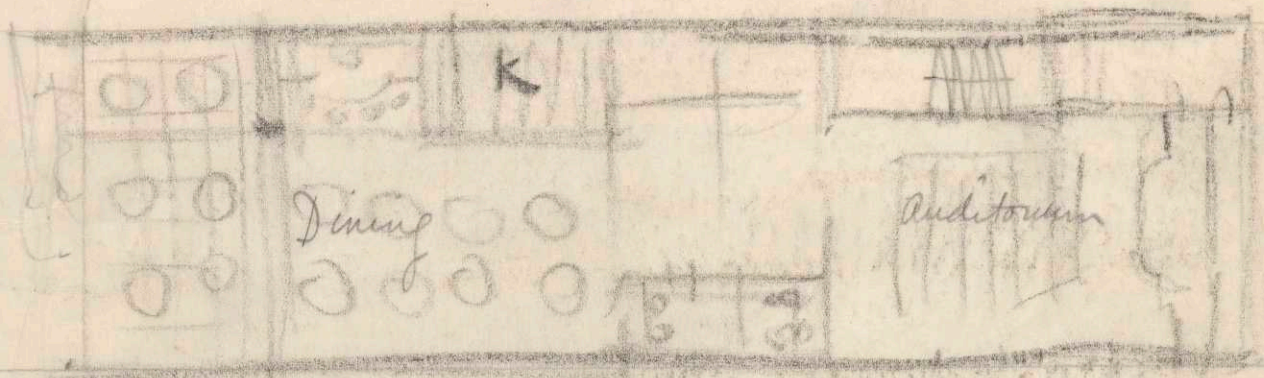
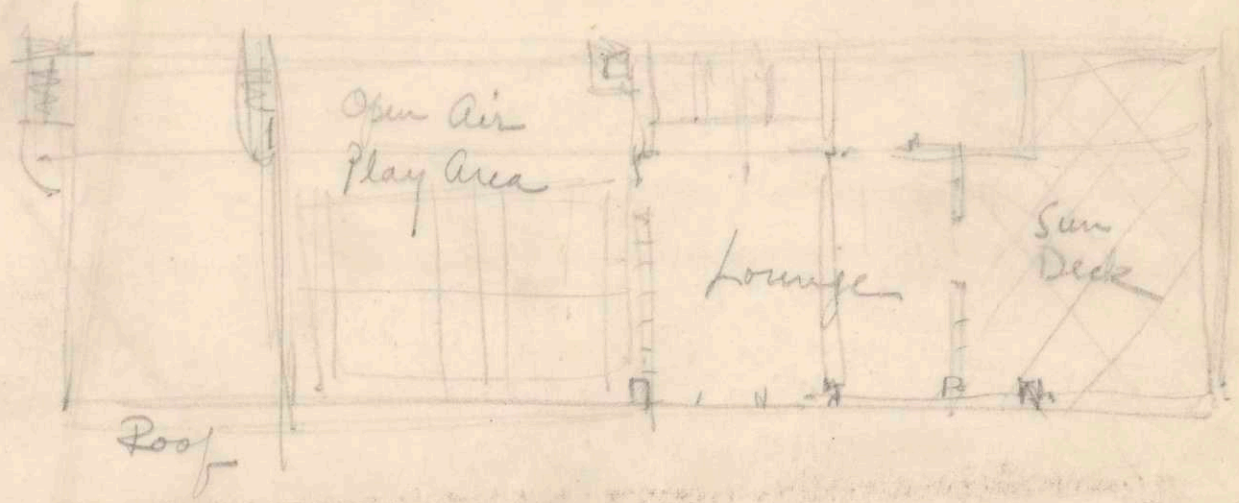
American Magazine of Art 1934

Architecture September 1935

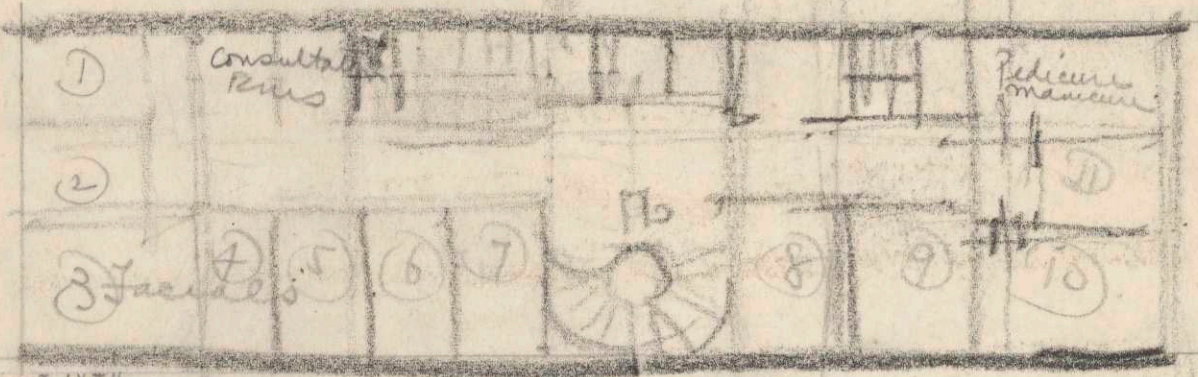
Architectural Forum April 1931, October 1932, March 1934
November 1934

Moderne Bauformen April 1932

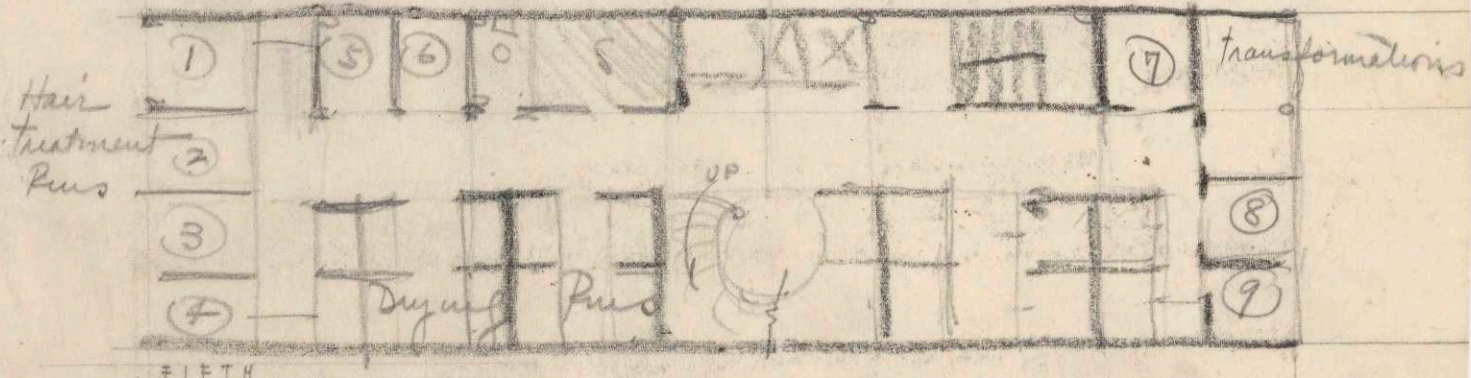
Architectural Review June 1933



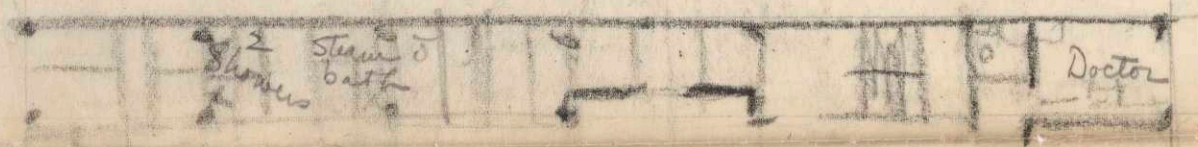
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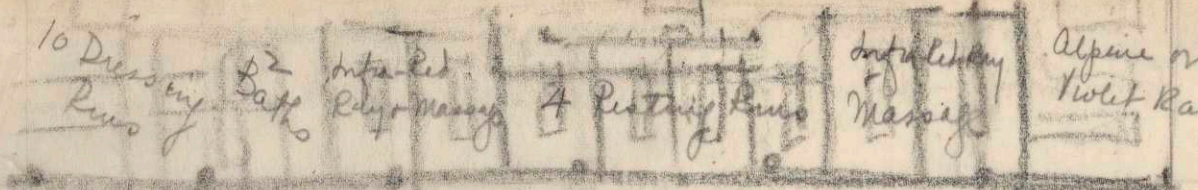
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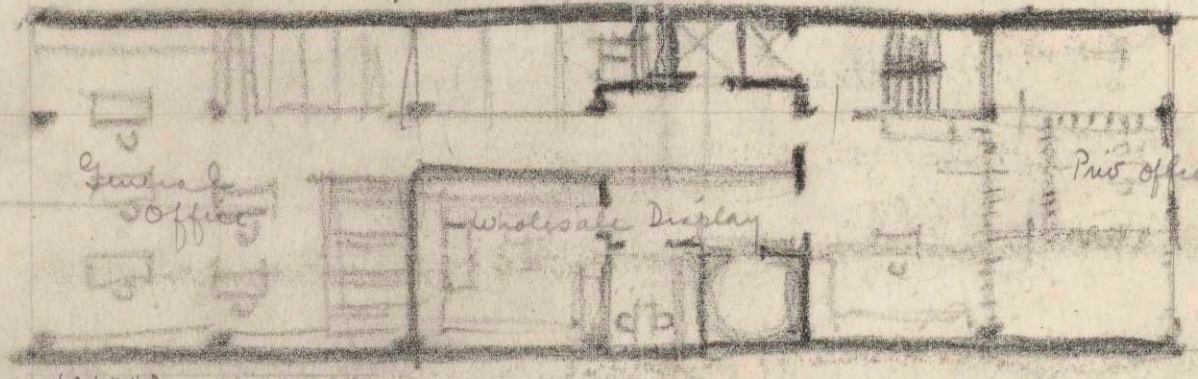
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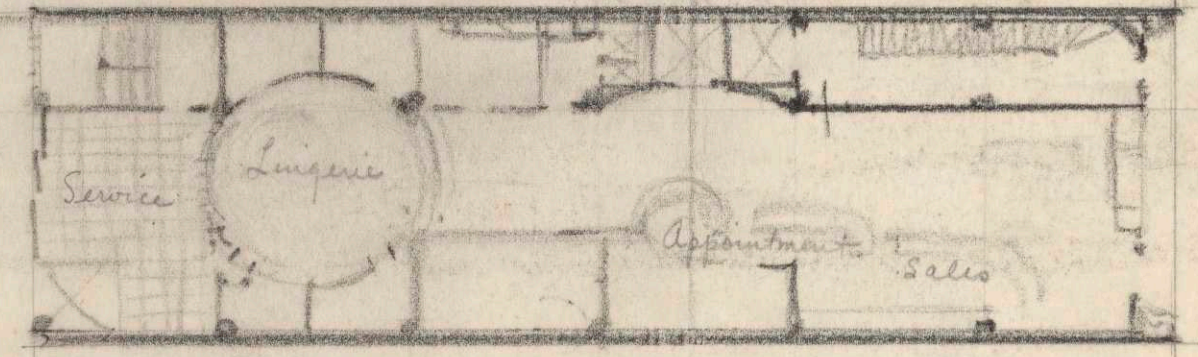
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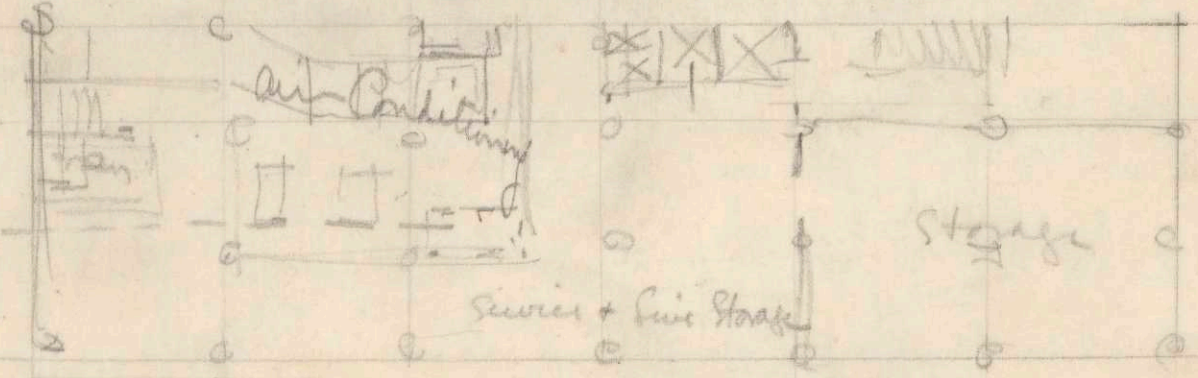
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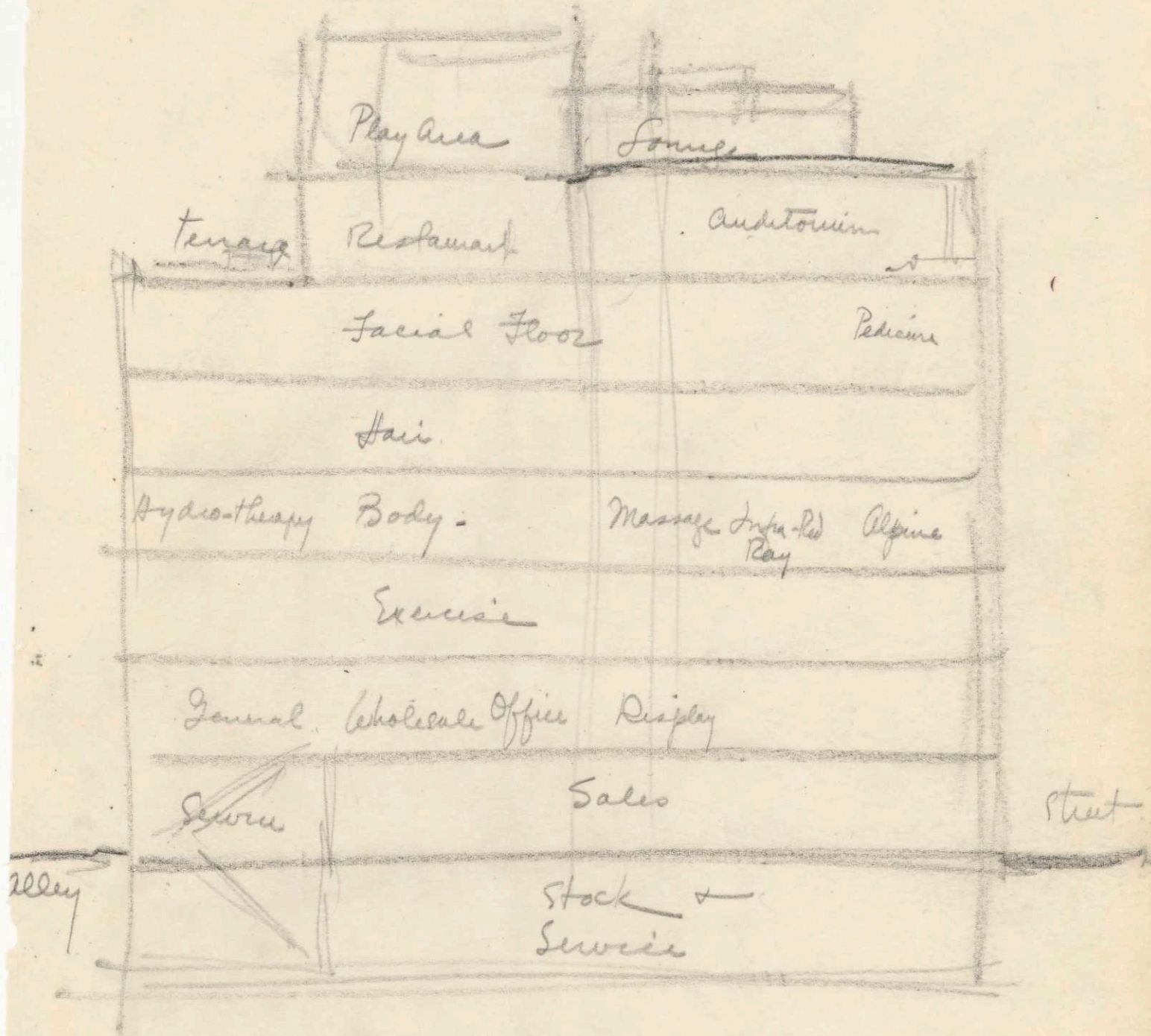
SECOND



FIRST



BASEMENT



Diagrammatic Section