

FENTON HALL ENTRIES AND SKYLIGHT HISTORIC ASSESSMENT



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
CAMPUS PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

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All photographs in this report were taken in 2009, unless otherwise noted.

SUMMARY

Main Entry (East):

Since it was built in 1906, Fenton Hall has undergone numerous changes including significant revisions to the entry facade and stair. The current entry reflects the 1936 Lawrence Holford and Allyn design. Since this time only minor changes to the entry's interior and exterior have been made including changes to interior and exterior lighting, floor finishes, and the stair balustrade and nosing. It is assumed that a number of small, unnoted changes have been made to accommodate new electrical, fire suppression, ventilation, and plumbing systems.



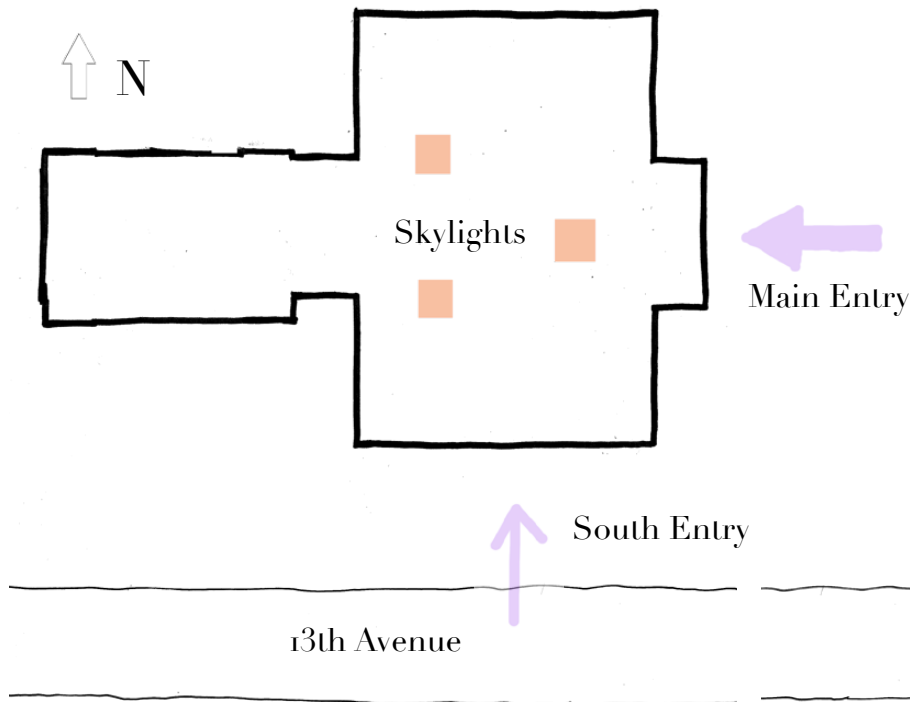
Current Entry.



Existing Lobby Primary Stair.



Existing Entry, Secondary Stairwell
Leading to Second Floor.



Fenton Hall, Areas of Study

South Entry:

The south entry originally was designed as a secondary, ground level entry. The door had little prominence and provided entry into a corridor with access to the document room, storage, staff room, and smaller classrooms. Over the years the function of the floors changed; the ground-floor entry was shifted to the east to accommodate a redesign for a larger classroom along with three smaller classrooms, while the upper floors were divided into what is now primarily office space. 13th Avenue was redeveloped in 1989. This redevelopment resulted in improvements to the grounds surrounding the south entry, including the addition of a set of stairs. Overall, these changes have increased the prominence of the south entrance approach.

Skylights:

A skylight centered on the eastern roof slope was part of the original building. This skylight opening has remained over the years. Two skylights on the western roof, not currently existing on the building, appear in a number of drawings. However, there is little evidence about their origins; they were not part of the original design or the 1914 Law School remodel, but appear to be existing in 1937 drawings. In 1975 these skylights were covered and then in 1993 they were removed. The second floor, which once had a relatively open plan, currently is divided into a number of office spaces, which may have played a role in the removal of the skylights.



South Entry, Current Conditions

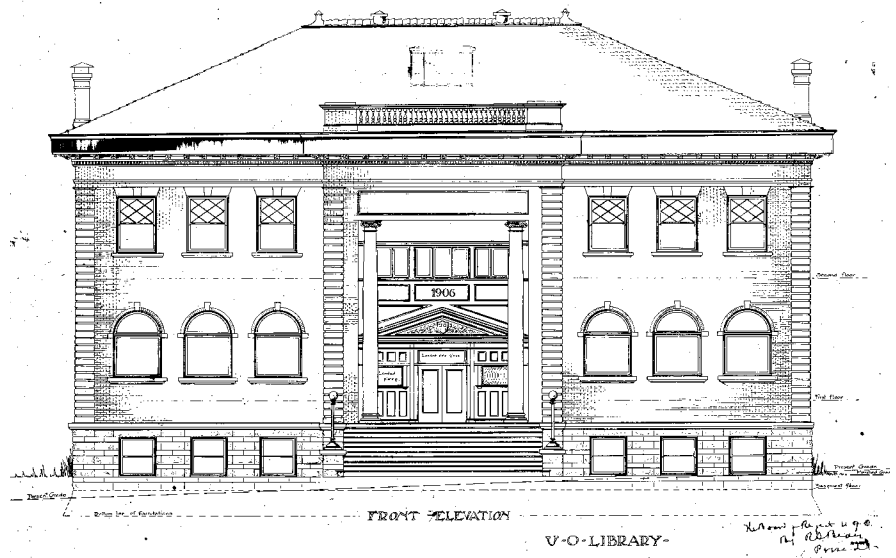


Source: Division of Special Collections & University Archives. University of Oregon, circa 1906.

Other:

Some other distinctive aspects of the original interior design still exist today. A fireplace is a prominent element in the current math lounge (room 219). The lounge also bears the original molding and cove ceiling.

All existing windows are original, except as noted in this report. The diamond-paned double-hung windows and operable arched windows are particularly notable.



Source: "UO Library" Y. D. Hensill. 1905

Some of the original trim, transom windows, doors and slate chalkboards still adorn the interior offices and classrooms. Rooms 117 and 321 are both good examples of the perseverance of these early interior details. Of note are interior globe light fixtures that appear to be original and are stored in the service tunnel entry.



Source: Division of Special Collections & University Archives. University of Oregon, circa 1906.

HISTORY

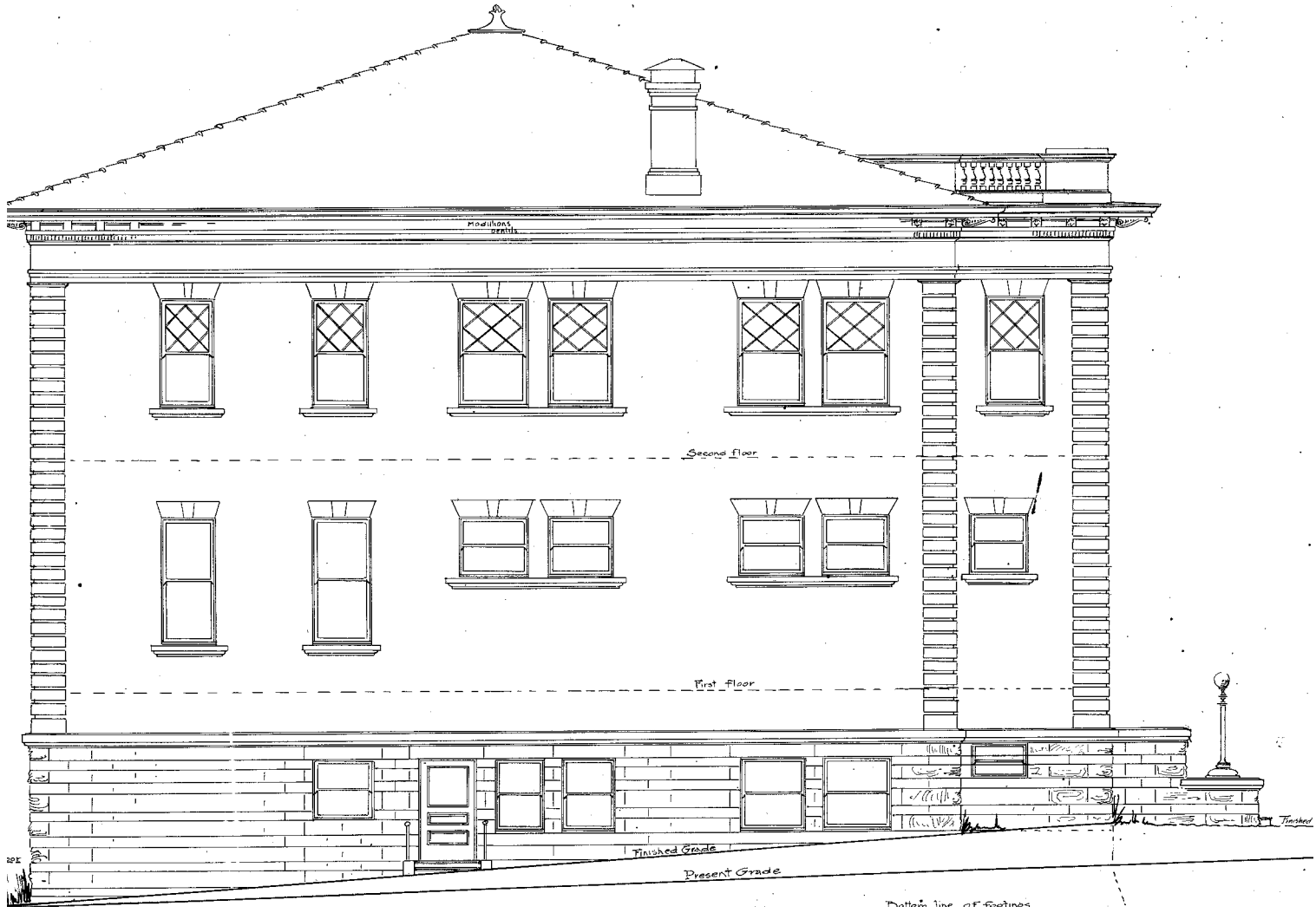
1905:

Originally designed in 1905 by Eugene architect Y.D. Hensill, Fenton Hall was constructed to house the University of Oregon Library. Fenton Hall remains the only example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style on campus.

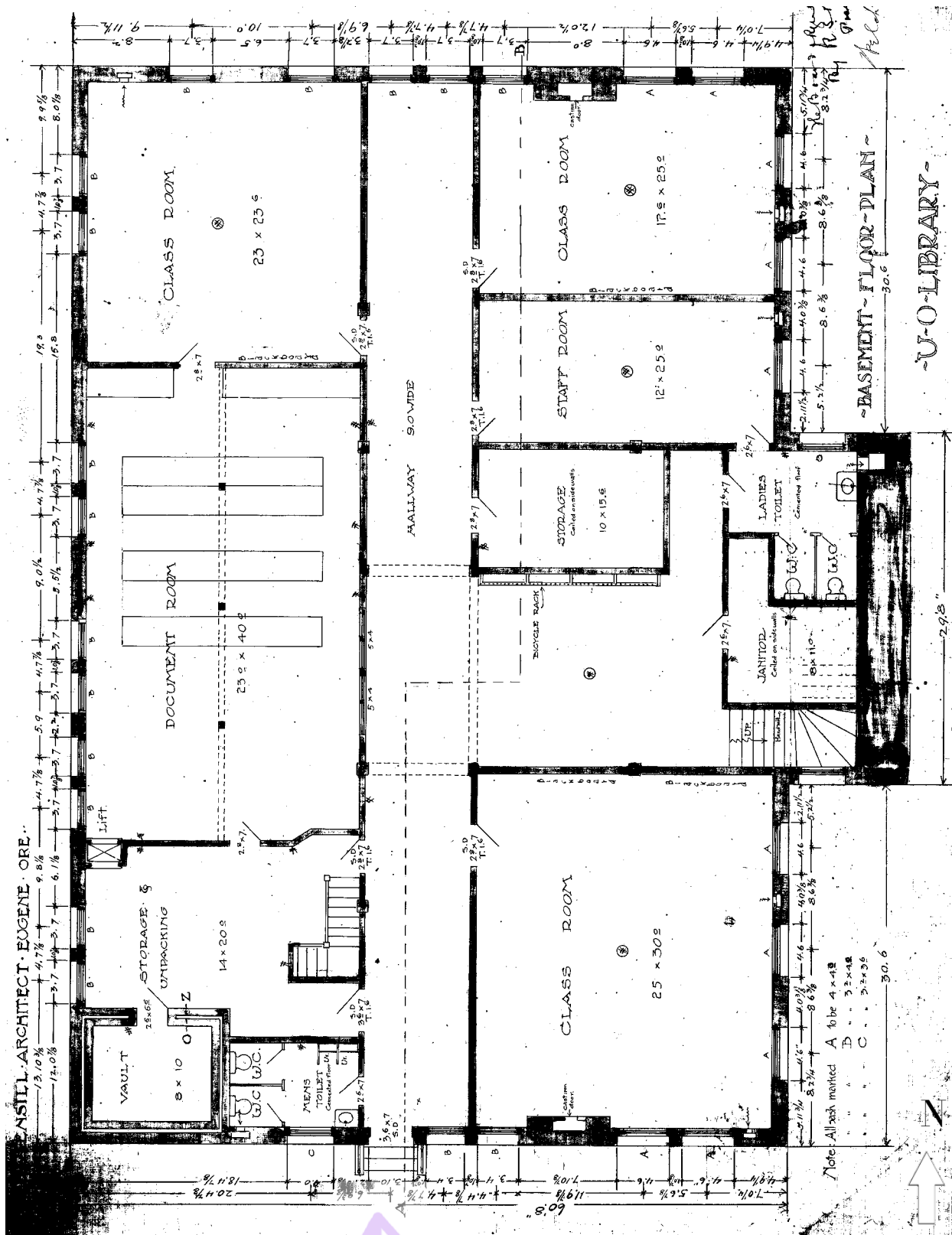
The initial entry had a series of eleven steps terminating at a tiled portico. Upon entry to the main vestibule one proceeded forward, up a set of five stairs to an exhibition hall. Two secondary stairways lay immediately to the left. Down a flight of stairs one could access the basement and a series of classrooms, or up a flight one could access the exhibition hall. Exterior light poles at the base of the stair depicted in these original drawings never were installed.

On the southern face of Fenton was a secondary, basement-level entry. This entry opened into a corridor which provided access to lecture rooms on that floor.

The 1905 section and front elevation reveal a skylight centered on the eastern slope of the roof. The western elevation and roof plan were unable to be located. This information would be valuable as two skylights on the west side are shown in later drawings.

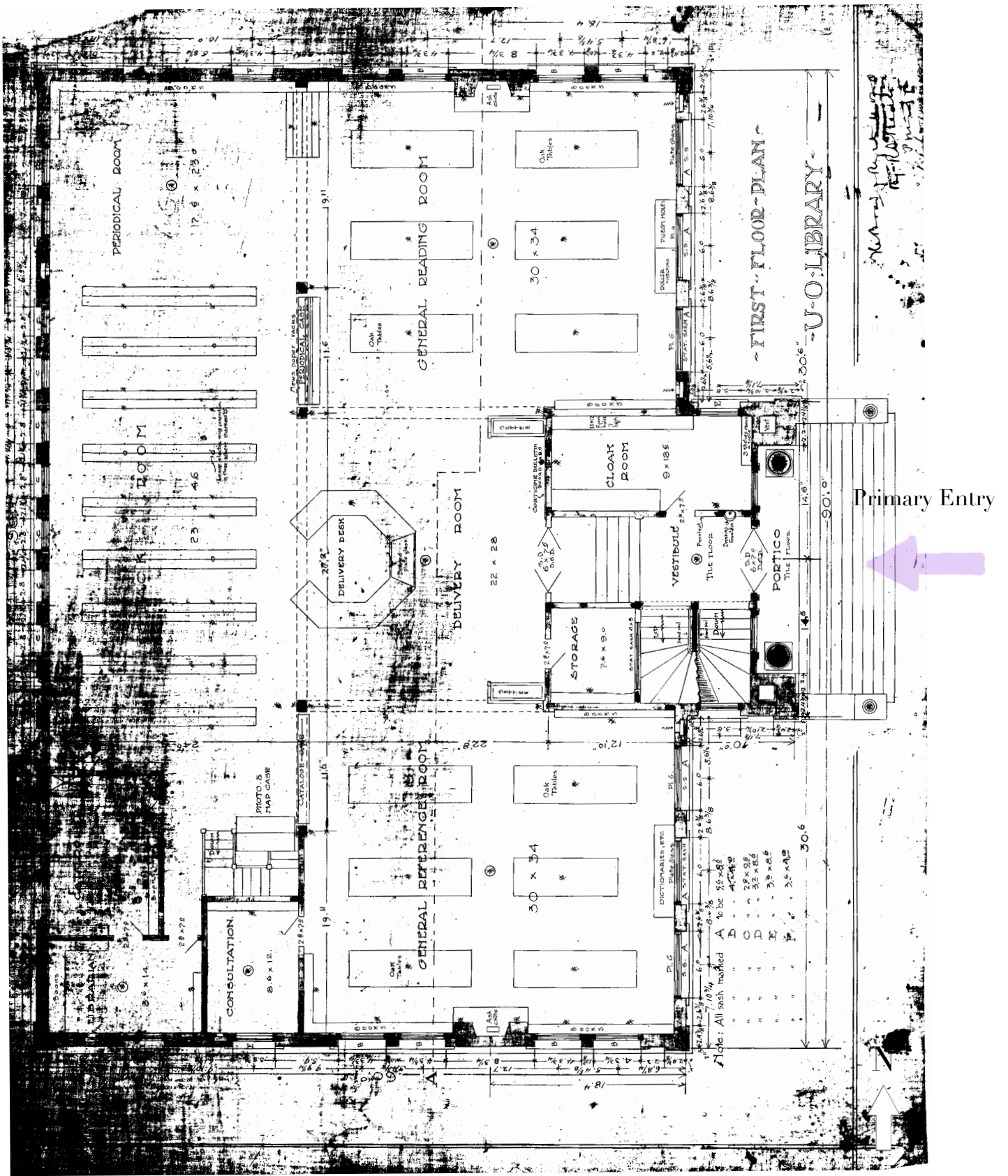


South Entry, original 1905 drawings by architect Y. D. Hensill. Source: "U of O Library." Y. D. Hensill. Eugene, OR, 1905. Side Elevation.

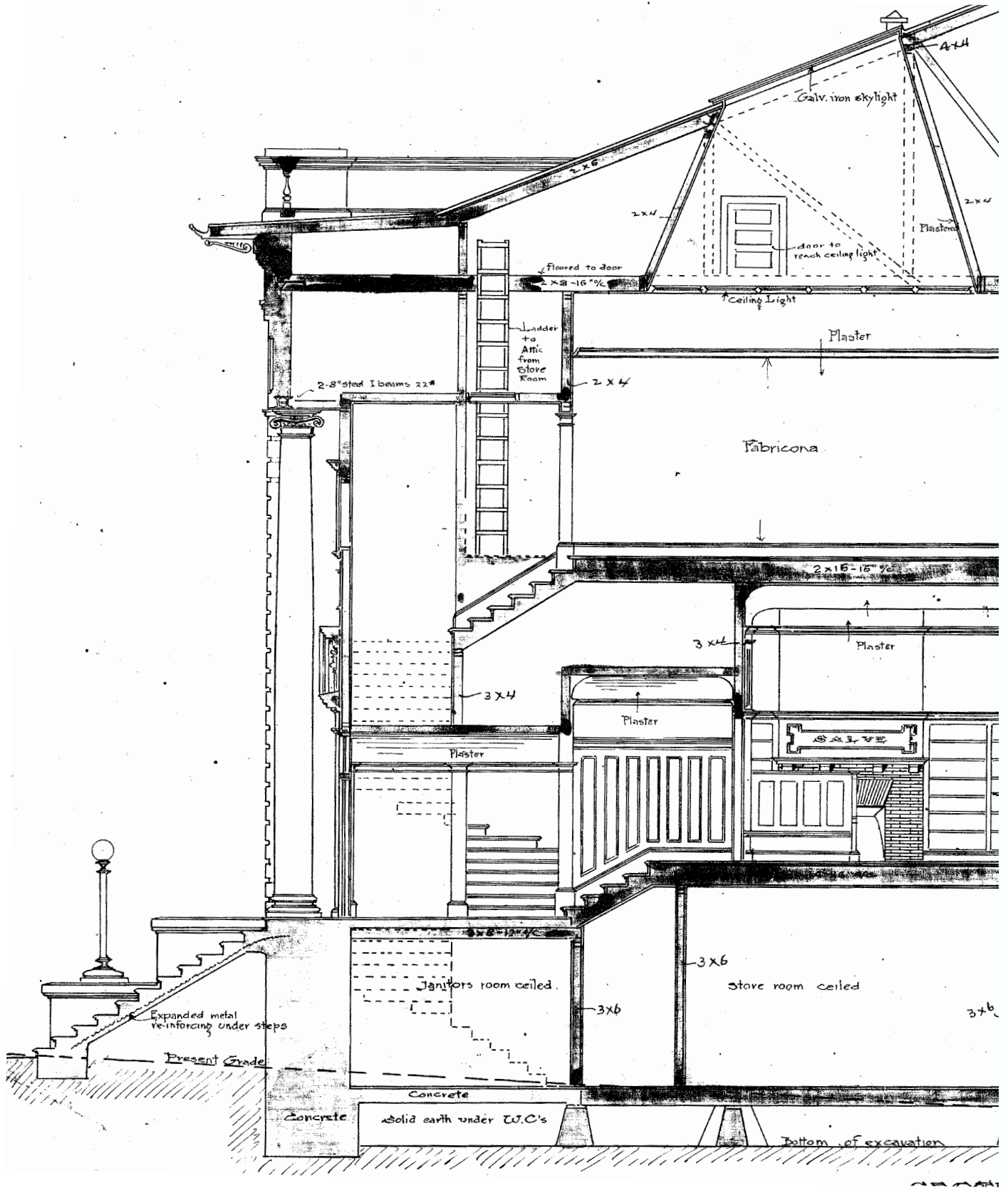


South Entry

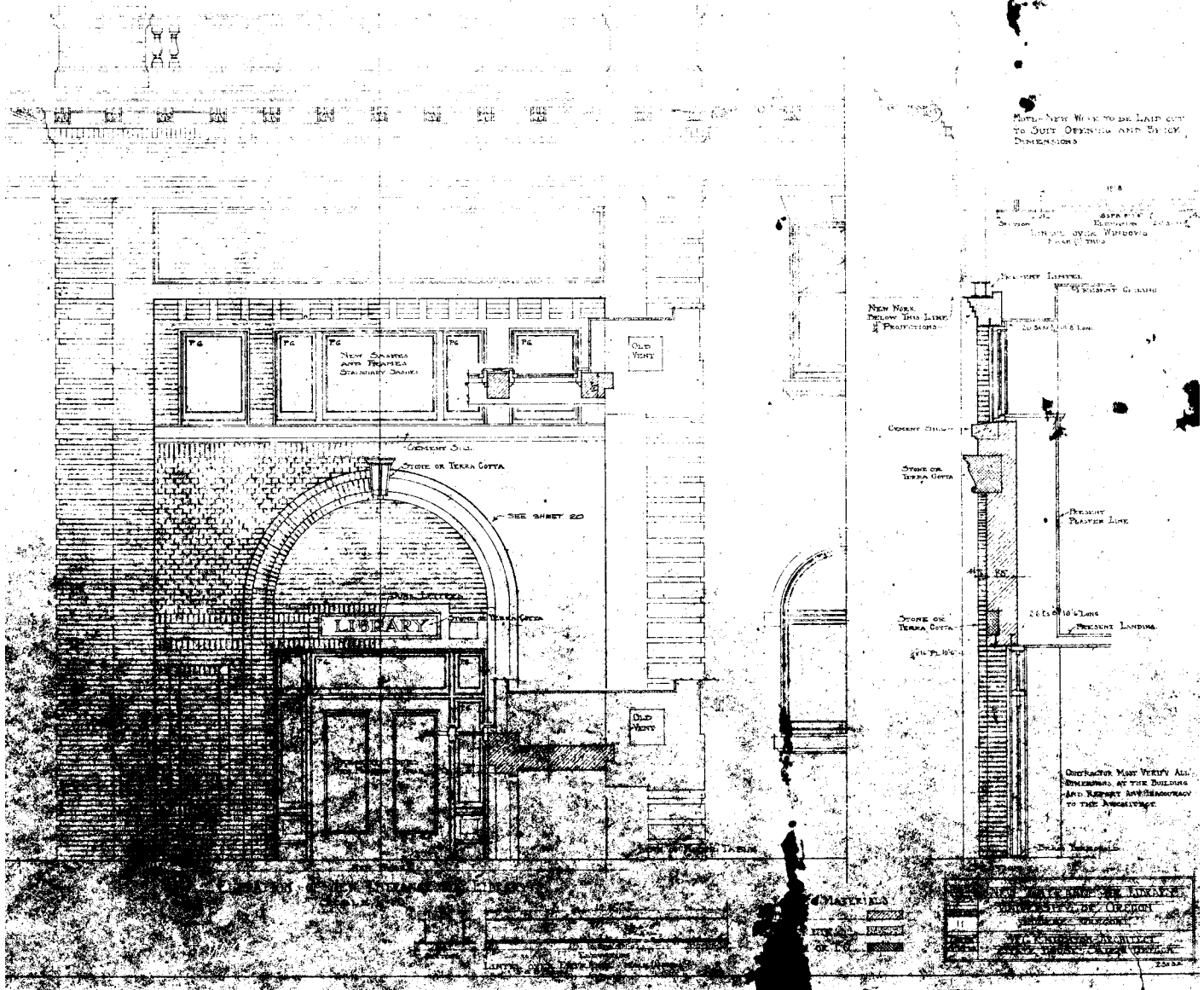
Basement Floor Plan, original 1905 drawings by architect Y. D. Hensill. Source: "UO Library." Y. D. Hensill. Eugene, OR, 1905.



First Floor Plan, original 1905 drawings by architect Y. D. Hensill. Source: "U of O Library." Y. D. Hensill. Eugene, OR, 1905.



Original 1905 drawings by architect Y. D. Hensill. Source: "UO Library." Y. D. Hensill. Eugene, OR, 1905. Section.



Original 1914 drawing of the Primary Entry (East Facade) by architect W. C. Knighton.
 Source: "New Entrance for the Library." W. C. Knighton. Salem, Oregon, 1914. Sheet II.

1914:

In 1914 expansion of the library became necessary due to a dramatic increase in the size of the library's collection. A five-story addition on the west side entitled "Stackroom for the Library" was designed by architect W. C. Knighton of Salem. The Stack structure is quite unique in that levels one, three, and five were designed to match the floor levels of the existing building.

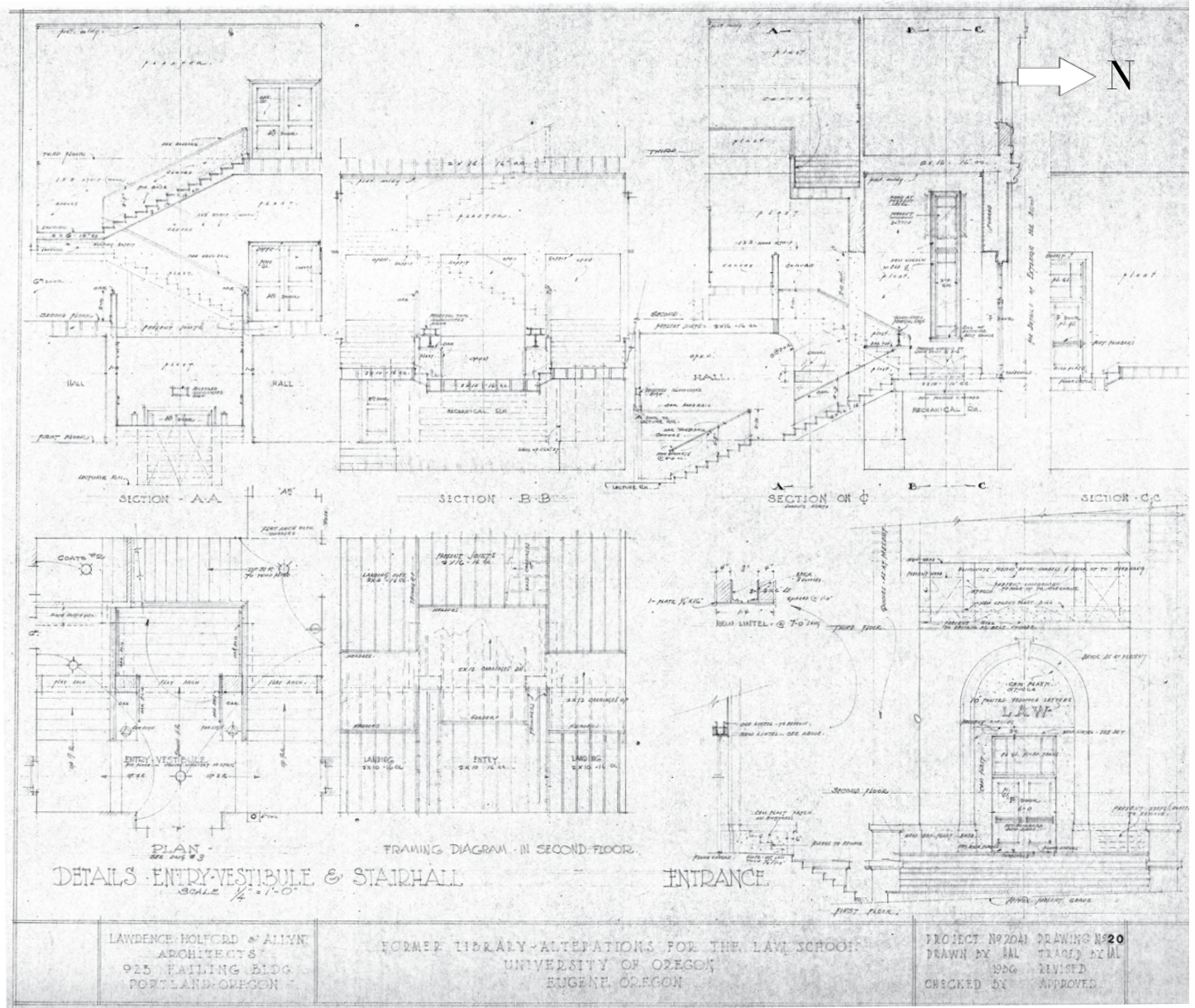
Along with the addition, significant changes were made to the exterior facade of the primary entry. Much of the wood was replaced by a brick, arched entry.



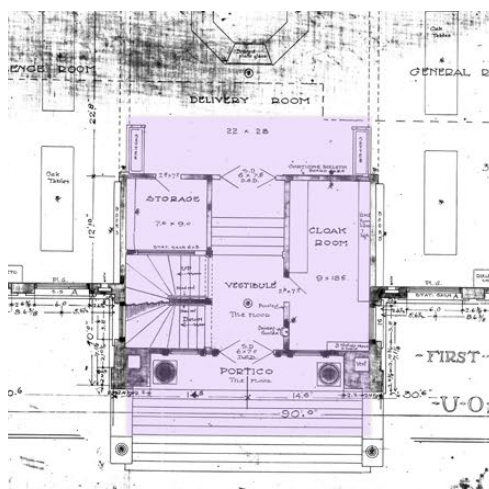
Fenton Entry. 1916. Depicts Knighton facade alterations from 1914. Later, in 1936, the upper five steps were removed.



Archives Room, depicting original interior finishes no longer present. Source: Division of Special Collections & University Archives. University of Oregon, 1923.



Original 1936 drawing by architects Lawrence, Holford & Allyn. Source: "Former Library Alterations for the Law School." Lawrence, Holford & Allyn. Portland, Oregon, 1936. Sheet 20.



Affected Area of Change, shown on 1906 plan.

1936:

The Library was converted into the Law School in 1936. Lawrence, Holford and Allyn of Portland designed the alterations, "Former Library - Alterations for the Law School." At this point significant changes were made to the entry, resulting in the current Fenton Hall layout.

Regarding the exterior, five steps were removed from the entry. Building-mounted light fixtures were installed and the wall was refinished with cement plaster and cement plaster stucco. In addition, two window openings were changed significantly.

While the overall width of the entry remained the same, the interior lobby and staircase were enlarged and the sequence was completely reconfigured. Upon entry to the main vestibule, a wide primary stair originally led up to an exhibition hall. This was changed to a large flight of stairs proceeding straight down nine steps to a landing, then down another set of seven stairs to the main lecture hall. The width of the primary staircase was increased significantly and originated closer to the entry door. This set of stairs was flanked with two pedestal-type lights. The coved ceiling above the original primary stair was removed to accommodate the stair realignment. However, a new coved ceiling was installed above the new flight down to the main hall.

The original secondary staircase beginning at the north side of the main entry was narrow and confined to the most anterior portion of the entry. A cloak room constricted the south side of the 1906 entry. To reach the upper levels in the 1936 plan, one could proceed left or right (eliminating the cloak room), up two steps to landings which flanked the entry vestibule. Small clerestory windows at each landing facing north and south were replaced with full-length windows. While the window length was greatly affected by this change, the width was only minimally affected. A handrail of oak was installed and canvas wainscoting and plaster walls were applied using a horizontal 1x3-inch wood band to separate these two materials. All stairs and flooring were covered with fir.

Overall, these changes increased the width and decreased the depth of the entry vestibule. The only structural elements that were kept were the second floor joists (see framing diagram and sections above). A wide flat arch was placed midway through the entry lobby to frame the new system. The removal of the exterior stairs lowered the ceiling in the basement under these entry stairs. This space was converted from a janitor room to a maintenance room. No overall floor plan exists for these alterations, so it is assumed that uses adjacent to the entry were not changed unless otherwise specified.

This year marks the first reference to the western skylights in the drawing record. Drawings by Holford and Allyn appear to indicate that skylights were existing in 1936. (Source: Holford and Allyn. "Alterations for the Law School." Sheet 4.)

1937:

Drawings that were part of the Holford and Allyn "Alterations for the Law School" include a change in location of the south entry. The entry was moved to the east to accommodate a larger classroom on the west. All windows opening into this new classroom were filled, leaving the two eastern-most windows remaining. (Source: Holford and Allyn. "Alterations for the Law School." Sheet 2.)

1953:

In 1953 structural engineers Cooper and Rose of Portland designed "Alterations to Law School Library at the University of Oregon." No significant changes were made to the primary or secondary entries at this time.

1964:

In 1964 the University of Oregon Physical Plant designed a seating plan for room 103, "Seating Plan Room 103 Fenton."

1968:

In 1968 Unthank, Seder and Poticha designed "Alterations for Facilities Accessibility." These alterations included the addition of a wheelchair elevator to serve the first and second floors. This was placed in the primary entry on the left secondary stairwell. This elevator no longer exists.



Division of Special Collections and University Archives. University of Oregon, pre-1971.



Division of Special Collections and University Archives. University of Oregon, 1971.

1975:

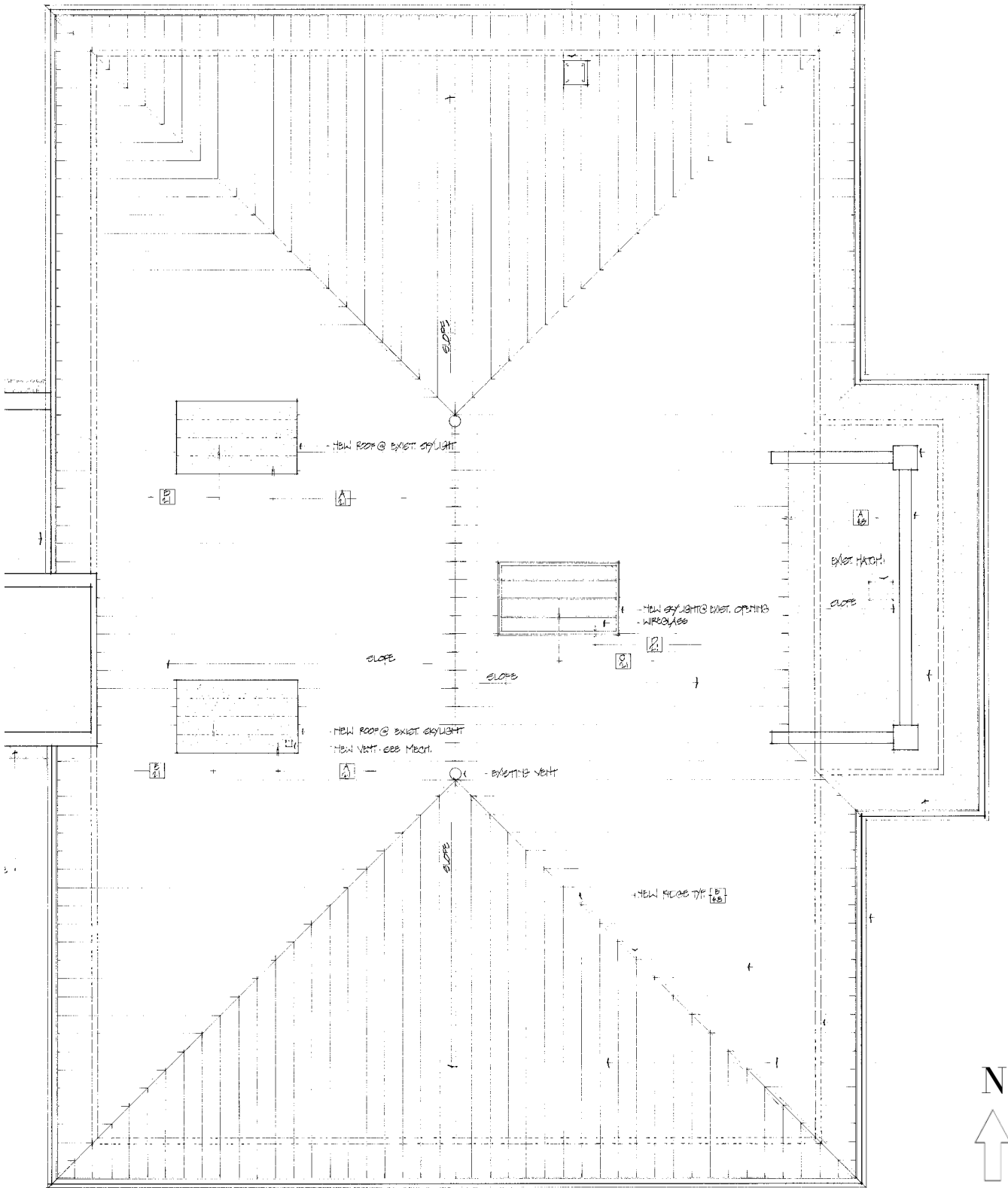
“Fenton Hall Rehabilitation” was designed in 1975 by Balzhiser, Longwood, Smith, Paul and Anderson Architects and Planners. This design enlarged a classroom on the ground floor while creating a large number of spatial divisions on the first and second floors. These divisions formed a series of smaller classrooms and office spaces, most of which remain in place. This reorganization made the ground floor primarily public, student-use space, and the upper floors private space.

As part of this work, minor changes were made to the main entry of Fenton Hall. The existing wood balustrade was replaced and made to match the previously existing one. Existing interior fixtures were kept, but the Fixture Schedule (Sheet E.1) provides insight as to what these existing fixtures were at this time. Two types are noted: porcelain and glass globe spheres.

At this time the threshold was replaced on the south entry.

According to the As-Built drawings (see sheet 6) two skylights on the east were covered with roofing, as indicated by the notation “new roof at existing skylight.” While this is the first mention of these skylights in the drawing record, this drawing indicated that they were preexisting. The glass in the west skylight was replaced and wireglass installed.

EXISTING ROOF REPAIR



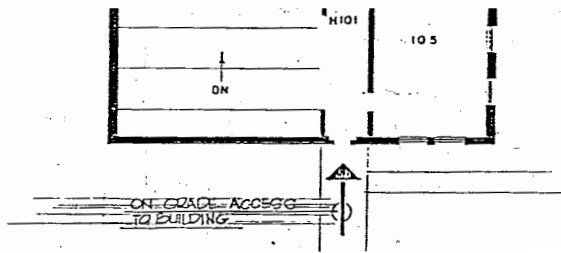
1975 drawing by Balzhiser, Longwood, Smith, Paul and Anderson Architects. Source: "Fenton Hall Rehabilitation." Sheet 6.

1978:

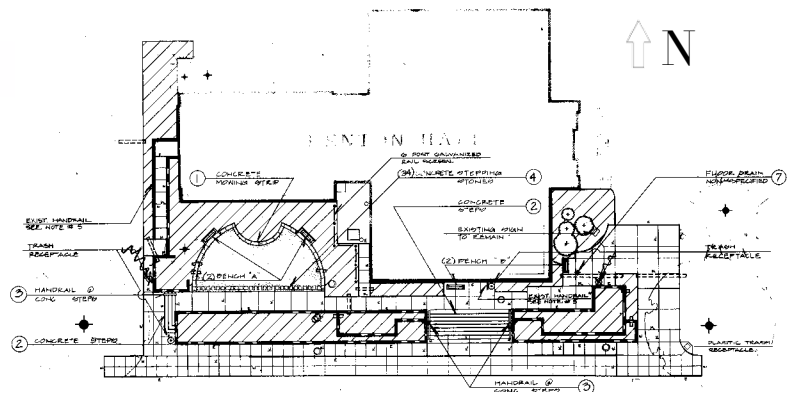
In 1978 Clarence Vos Plumbing, Inc., Fire Sprinkler Division, designed and installed fire sprinklers in Fenton. No significant changes were made to the entries.

1989:

In 1989 improvements designed by Cameron and McCarthy were made along the entire span of 13th Avenue, in "13th Redevelopment Plan." These improvements included a landscape plan, irrigation plan, and a grading and drainage plan. While no significant changes were made to the primary east entry, the landscaping associated with Fenton Hall south entrance was dramatically modified. Overall, these modifications increased the significance of the south entry. This is consistent with the fact that most public spaces are at ground level. Nine concrete steps were placed, eliminating the existing accessible route from 13th Avenue. The south entry was surrounded by planters, and two split-faced block wall planter boxes flank the new staircase. These improvements were continuous with a courtyard developed beside the archive addition to the west. These improvements describe the currently existing conditions at the south entry.



South Entry. Source: "Alterations for Facilities Accessibility." Unthank, Seder, Poticha, 1968. Sheet 1.



Site Plan. Source: "13th Avenue Improvemnets." Cameron and McCarthy, 1989. Sheet 3.

1993:

In 1993 a standing seam metal roof replaced the existing roof. The reroofing design was completed by Soderstrom Architects. Some minor changes were made to the front, exterior facade. New gutters and downspouts were placed and the building thoroughly cleaned. According to the roof plan the two skylights on the east side were removed; these are the same skylights that were covered with roofing in 1975. The western skylight remained. (Source: "Soderstrom Architects, 1993. Sheet A1.01.)

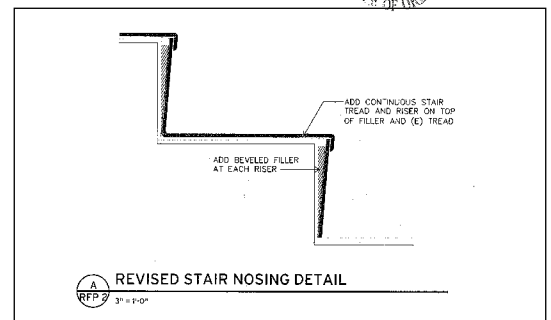
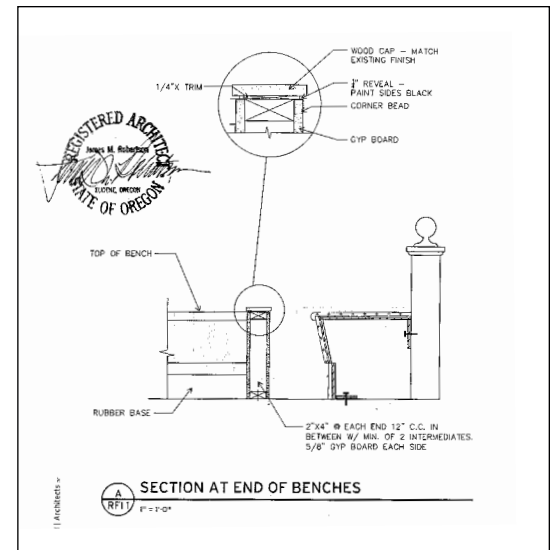
2006:

In 2006 Robertson and Sherwood Architects, along with Pelletier interior architects, made fire code improvements and changes to the lighting and power, as well as interior changes. The existing nosing on the internal entry stairs was removed and replaced with a single nosing and tread as a single piece (see detail). At this time new pendant light fixtures (see photo on page 1) replaced standard fluorescent fixtures on the entry's interior.

2007:

Campus Standard light poles were finally installed in the location depicted in the original 1905 drawings. These poles flank the main entry. The current building-mounted fixtures lack globes.

While ground-floor uses have changed over time, the south entry corridor has remained the same.



Original drawing from Robertson and Sherwood Architects. Source: "Fenton Hall Improvements." Robertson and Sherwood Architects, 2006. A3.2 pg 2, RFP 2.

Note: All drawings are available through Design Services in Facilities Services, University of Oregon.