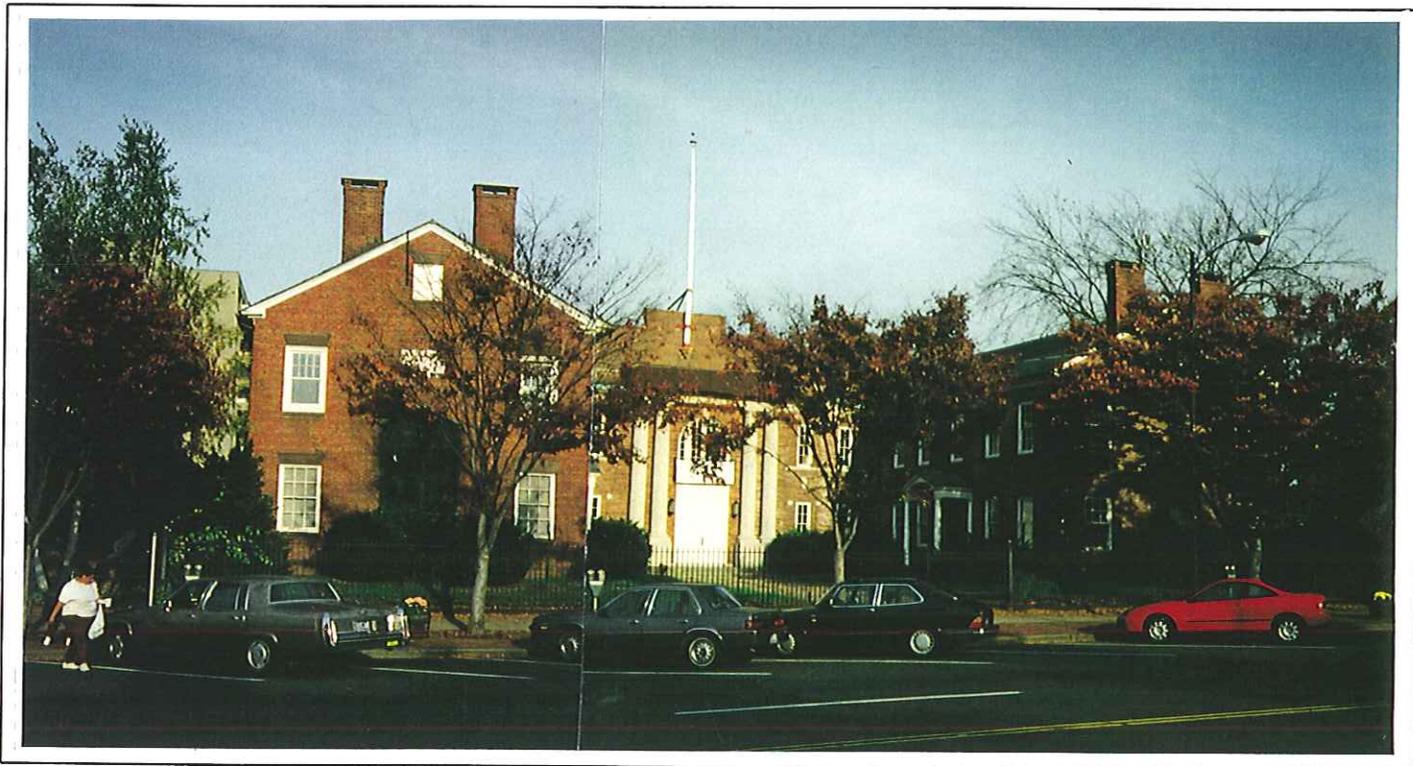


Community Development Block Grant
City of Middletown
Application Form - 1996 Entitlement



THE ARMORY COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTER
Middletown, Connecticut

an adaptive rehabilitation of the former
CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
Community Development Block Grant Program
Application Form
1996 Entitlement

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1. **Proposed Project Title:** The Armory Community Cultural Center, Inc.
2. **Applicant Name:** The Armory Community Cultural Center, Inc.
Applicant address: 100 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457
Contact Person (Name & Title): Gerard Weitzman- project developer
Contact Person Telephone Number: 203-347-7880

3. **Brief Description of Proposed Project:**

This is a public/private sector effort to preserve and rehabilitate the former Connecticut National Guard Armory on Main Street Middletown into a community cultural center. The mission of the Armory Project is cultural and economic community development and historic preservation. In preserving the armory, the Project is committed to retaining as much of the original construction and detail of the historic components as possible, and seeing that it is properly maintained. In adapting the Armory for use as a community center, The Project is committed to creating a facility which will fulfill the space, scheduling and location needs of as many local community service and cultural groups as possible. The Board is determined to see that this project has a far-reaching, positive and long-term effect on the quality of life available to all within the greater Middletown area.

4. **Community Development Block Grant Program Request:** \$250,000
5. **Using the list on Attachment #1 please indicate which activity and/or subactivity most appropriately describes the proposed project?**

Activity Name & Code Number	Rehabilitation (general) 14
Subactivity Name & Code Number	Historic Preservation (non-residential) 16B

5a. **Other possibilities:**

Public facilities & Improvements: Youth Centers 03D
Public facilities & Improvements: Neighborhood Facilities 03E
CDBG Nonprofit Organization Capacity Building: 19C

6. **What pressing community need(s) will the proposed project address?**
Explain the problem(s) to be addressed; the magnitude of the problem(s)
and how the proposed project will affect the problem(s):

General comments: The City of Middletown is the region's hub. The Armory, which is situated in both an Enterprise Zone and the South Green Historic Downtown District (a registered National Historic District) is falling into greater disrepair with each passing winter. Please see the **attached statement of existing conditions**.

As a historic building, it is part of the architectural heritage of everyone in the community. Such monuments help us define who we are as a community. Looking after this heritage is one component of looking after the community. Because it is situated in an Enterprise Zone and a Historic District, the Armory should be considered prime property for a restoration/reuse project. Its successful rehabilitation and reuse will result in a positive, growth-oriented, draw for Middletown residents as well as residents from neighboring communities.

community needs addressed by this project: This project simultaneously addresses- directly and indirectly- a number of pressing community needs.

- Middletown needs a facility that will bring people to the downtown area after 5:00 and on the weekends. Having productive activity at all hours of the day and night is central to successful Economic Development. Currently, there is no such facility in Middletown or in any of the neighboring communities.

As Middletown's demographic make-up continues to diversify, it becomes increasingly desirable to have a "community center" - a centrally-located place where large groups of people (children and/or adults) can gather for meetings, group activities, classes, workshops, performances, etc.

There are over 75 active culture/arts groups in Middletown. There are also a number of active veteran's groups. All of these civic organizations reach out to provide activities, programs, support and education for people from every sector of our population- from children to seniors; families; physically and educationally challenged citizens; the homeless and/or unemployed citizens, etc. All of these groups and programs will derive great benefit from the advent of a large, reliable, secure and centrally-located space in which to either carry out their current activities and programs, and/or expand them appreciably.

The facilities which will be provided by the Armory Project will be centrally-located and offer spaces of various sizes with various amenities. The utilization of these facilities, according to a planned schedule and for low or no cost, would greatly enhance the value of the services area groups provide. Numerous organizations (i.e. Wesleyan's Community Services, Middletown Garden Club, the Heart Association, Middletown Dept. Parks & Recreation, Turtle Theater, The Council of Veterans) throughout the area have already made clear their intention to make frequent and regular use of the Armory once the building is rehabilitated.

- The building is situated in Census Tract 5416 in which 73% of the residents fall within the low and moderate income guidelines. It is also situated in an enterprise zone. Unfortunately, the building is unusable in its current state and continues to decline with each passing day of abandonment. As long as this situation persists, the potential value of the building and its strategic location fails to be fulfilled.

That this virtually abandoned building is situated in such an important location is inconsistent with the building's role as a major contribution to Middletown's South Green Historic District and placement on the National Register of Historic Places. This paradoxical situation has had, and continues to have a brutal impact on civic-pride and the neighborhood's perception of its own worth and potential. The South Green district is adjacent and contiguous to a large, depressed low-moderate income residential area. (The area referred to here is the east main/main street extension neighborhood, commonly known as South Farms).

- One of the most important issues which Middletown is struggling with is jobs loss/jobs creation. The Armory project will create construction jobs (in an easily accessed location) while the building is under construction as well as once it is an operating facility. Rehabilitation of this building will improve the physical character of the Enterprise Zone of which it's a part by reducing property abandonment and increasing employment and training opportunities placement for resident of the Zone and the surrounding community.

One derelict building such as the Armory in its current condition can degrade an entire neighborhood. Conversely, the same neighborhood's self-perception can be greatly strengthened and renewed by rehabilitating one building.

7. **State the specific goal(s) and Objective(s) of the proposed project:**
Please refer to the "Phasing Breakdown" and "Plans" attachments below.

As stated above in item number 3. of this proposal, the mission of the Armory Project is cultural and economic community development and historic preservation. In preserving the armory, the Project is committed to retaining as much of the original construction and detail of the historic components as possible, and seeing that it is properly maintained.

In adapting the Armory for use as a community center, the Project is committed to creating a facility which will fulfill the space, scheduling and location needs of as many local community service and cultural groups as possible. The Board is determined to see that this project has a far-reaching, positive and long-term effect on the quality of life available to all within the greater Middletown area.

8. **Identify specific activities to be undertaken or services to be provided.**
Describe what will be done, by whom, how, where and when (*Please Note: Start date cannot be before October 1, 1996*).

The key to the success of the Armory Community Cultural Center would be a revenue generating approach to the facility. The property would be developed into a mix of spaces some of which could be leased commercially and some could be leased according to ability to pay to local arts and cultural on either an annual or day to day basis.

The development strategy is to first develop the drill shed into a flexible multi-purpose function hall, which would serve a wide range of events including local arts performances, film series, weddings, banquets, collectors and antique fairs, ballroom and square dancing, concerts and local business, community and charitable functions. This events facility would be a significant source of revenue and the primary focus of the first phase of development.

Following the next phase of rehabilitation, the lower level of the drill shed could also provide some revenue from leasable studio space combined with leasable storage areas. However, large areas of this level would be dedicated to supporting the events hall with a catering kitchen, and toilet rooms large enough to serve the hall.

The two houses facing Main Street were deemed the most appropriate for commercial leasing, given their presence on the street and their suitability for small office and retail operations. These spaces will be renovated when appropriate tenants are identified. One possible tenant is a cafe or pub on the ground floor of either the north or south house. The cafe/pub could open onto the courtyard facing Main Street and could draw activity into the Center as well as serve the audiences with light foods and beverages before and after performances.

The phased development strategy has two primary aims: 1) to open the Armory to the community as quickly as possible with the smallest possible initial rehabilitation costs; 2) to provide the Armory Community Cultural Center with operating income as quickly as possible.

Put another way, the plans for rehabilitation include:

- converting the large drill shed into a flexible performance and events hall with catering kitchen;
- creating flexible spaces for youth and senior programs, workshops and studios, shared office spaces for a variety of community arts, cultural and service organizations;

- creating meeting space and a permanent memorial to the areas veterans;
- creating a cafe or coffee house which might open out into the front courtyard, as well as leasable spaces for arts-related businesses, such as advertising agencies and graphic designers .

For more details, please refer to the "Phasing Breakdown" and "Plans" attachments below.

9. **Describe the target group(s), e.g. teenage mothers, the unemployed, the homeless, persons with disabilities, etc. Indicate the percentage of beneficiaries expected to be of various ethnic groups and/or races, ages, and of female-headed households. Describe how you will recruit proposed project beneficiaries.**

The aim of this project is to provide a centrally located, suitable facility to groups and organizations which operate in order to provide services for the benefit of the target groups listed above. The Board is aware of many organizations seeking facilities to carry out their services and programs.

Over the past decade, numerous studies and reports have documented the need for space in Middletown to serve the many arts and cultural organizations which thrive in the community. These reports provided the basis for an update of community needs. Tai Soo Kim Partners, the Board appointed architects for the Armory Project, held meetings with area arts and community groups, municipal agencies and officials, and Veterans' groups over the past year. A partial list includes the following: The Middletown Commission on the Arts & Culture, Wesleyan's Community Services, the Council of Veterans, Middletown Parks & Recreation Dept., the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust, the Superintendent of Schools, Turtle Theatre, North End Arts Rising, the Heart Association, and the United Way. The dialogue that has been established between these groups, the Architects and the Project Board have been fully and enthusiastically incorporated into the project plans.

10. **Indicate which one of the following accomplishment categories best applies to the proposed project and indicate the number of accomplishments anticipated: People, Youth, Elderly, Households (General), Large Households, Small Households, Elderly Households, Businesses, Organizations, Housing Units, Public Facilities, Feet of Public Utilities:**

Type of Accomplishments	Number of Accomplishments
Public Facilities	One

11. **Which one of the following CDBG Program national Objectives will the proposed project address?**

Slums/Blight Spot Benefit

12. **Indicate location(s)/service boundaries type:**

Address: 70 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Census Tract & Block Group: 5416

Service Boundaries: This project will ultimately have a regional impact.

Other: This building is located in an Enterprise Zone and contributes to a National Historic District.

13. **Will Public Housing Authority dollars be used for the proposed project?** No.

14. **Will other funds be used for the proposed project?** Yes.

If yes, how much? A \$50,000 matching grant has been promised by Wesleyan University. The Middletown state legislative delegation has requested a \$500,000 grant from the state appropriation committee. Prior CDBG awards totalling \$240,000 will be utilized. The balance of funds required will be raised from Private/Corporate donors.

15. **Will the proposed project advance permanent affordable housing for low/mod households?** Yes, as members of the community, they can take part in any activities which are appropriate for them at the community center.

16. **Will the proposed project serve high risk youths?** Yes, as members of the community, they can take part in any activities which are appropriate for them at the community center.
17. **Will the proposed project help the homeless?** Yes, as members of the community, they can take part in any activities which are appropriate for them at the community center.
18. **What fees will be charged for the proposed project?** The schedule of fees will be flexible, and with input from program sponsors, will be based on ability to pay. Fees will be monitored by the Board of Directors to assure the community the appropriate level of access.
19. **Identify the measure(s) by which you will determine the success of the proposed project toward meeting goals. Describe how the proposed project will be managed in terms of oversight, service delivery, staff, documentation and finances.**

First and foremost, the project will be considered successful if it is able to rehabilitate the Armory and reopen it as a community cultural center, as opposed to:

- > Letting the building continue to deteriorate and eventually be demolished in the interest of public safety, or;
- > Developing the building as a private, commercial site.

Beyond these, the Armory Project's success will be determined by several things including, but not limited to:

- The positive impact on the neighborhood that will be achieved by rehabilitating and re-opening the building for public use.
- The number of variety of organizations which find the facility suitable for their activities.
- The jobs created during construction and in perpetuity once the building is operating.

The key contact is Gerard Weitzman, Project Developer and Board Member. The project as a whole is overseen by the 11 member Executive Board. The board is comprised of individuals who have amply demonstrated their sensitivity to, and understanding of, the important social and humanitarian issues facing Middletown and the surrounding area. All of these Board members maintain regular contact with municipal officials, the directors of area human services providers, and those involved in community cultural activities.

When the project reaches a point where it actually begins to provide service to the public, an administrator (director) will be hired to oversee all of the activities which take place at the Community Center. Service to the user organizations will be delivered by the director, Board members and any future staff of the Armory Community Center. Service to the community will be delivered both by the staff/Board members of the Armory project and by members of those service organizations which avail themselves of the Armory facilities.

Currently, the Armory Project Board is responsible for all documentation of activities related to the project. The project is already well-covered in the local press. The members of the Project Board responsible for fiscal management of the Armory Project. Guilmartin and Di Piero is the accounting firm for the Armory Project. When the Armory Project becomes an operating entity, annual reports will be made available at the city hall and will be made available to the general public on request.

20. Administrative Salaries: N/A

21. Other Program Costs: Construction/Rehabilitation Costs

	Construction Cost	A/E Fees	Total
Phase IA	1,280,000.	128,000.	1,408,000.
Phase IB	1,025,000.	102,000.	1,127,000.
Phase II	378,000.	38,000.	416,000.
Totals	2,683,000.	268,000.	2,951,000.

Total Program Costs - Phases IA, IB, II:

\$2,951,100.

Total CDBG Request:

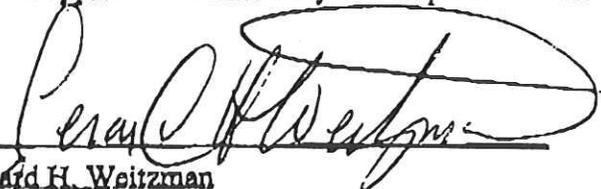
\$250,000

22. **Employer I.D. Number:** 1416-787 **IRS Tax Exempt Number:** ~~06-064-6959~~

23. **Did you attach a copy of your agency's most recent audit?** NO

If not, explain: The Armory Project is not an operating entity. All funds raised to date, and requested in this application are for the adaptive/reuse rehabilitation of the building only.

24. I, the authorized representative of the applicant, certify that the information presented in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge and that, if funded, the applicant will comply with all applicable Community Development Block Grant Program requirements.

Signed: 

By: Gerard H. Weitzman

Title: Project Developer, Board Member

Date: May 8, 1996

Assessment of Existing Conditions

In its current condition, the buildings are in danger of continuing and serious deterioration. Preliminary surveys of the buildings were done in several key areas: building envelope, structural engineering and hazardous materials. With respect to mechanical and electrical systems, it was clear that most systems would need replacement and that further information would not be available until the building program was completed. Preliminary recommendations and costs will be included in the architect's final report to the Armory Board.

Building Envelope: A visual survey of the building envelope found that the conditions of the masonry are deteriorating and will require repointing. Nearly all four corners of the north and south wings are exhibiting serious masonry failure. The existing or remaining grout is very soft, indicating that extensive repointing of the complex will be required to prevent future water infiltration and subsequent structural damage. The majority of the windows will need replacement. The gutters and leaders are undersized for the roof area and need improvement, along with drainage at the foundation.

Structure: The most significant finding of the preliminary structural review was that the drill shed floor is rated for an 80 pound/square foot loading. A 100 pound/per square foot load rating is required for an assembly hall, one of the intended uses of the building. In order to meet the requirement, one strategy is to add wood joists to the existing floor joists.

Hazardous Materials: A survey and tests for the presence of asbestos and lead found no evidence of asbestos and some of evidence of lead, which will need to be abated. In the lower level of the drill shed, in the area previously used as a motor pool by the Guard, the soil floor was found to contain low levels of petroleum based substances. The levels are so low that they are not considered harmful and are by Department of Environmental Protection standards, not required to be remediated.

Phase IA: It was agreed that the work of Phase IA should be as modest as possible and would include creating a central lobby and ticket office, an office for the Armory Project and public bathrooms on the lower level, and the following work on the drill shed:

- a. window replacement
- b. roof insulation
- c. refinishing the floor
- d. backstage dressing rooms
- e. a caterer's staging area
- f. an elevator
- g. stairs for egress
- h. sprinkler system
- i. heating, ventilation and air conditioning
- j. house lighting system

This phase would result in a 800 performance seating capacity and a 250 to 300 banquet seating capacity within the drill shed structure. Plans reflecting a range of seating and staging configurations from traditional proscenium, to thrust and arena are included. Also planned is a means of dividing the space into smaller areas for smaller groups.

Phase IB: This phase would follow as quickly as funding allows in order to gain optimum use of the events hall and would include the following:

- a. lighting and sound systems
- b. a stage
- c. a catwalk for lighting & sound systems access over performance areas
- d. full prep kitchen on the lower level
- e. approx 5,000 s.f. of leasable space on the lower level for arts, cultural and civic groups
- f. stabilizing the exterior of the two historic houses

Given the importance of food service in a multi-function hall, several meetings have taken place to determine the appropriate size, general layout and equipment needs for a kitchen and serving area.

Phase II: The work of this phase would be determined by the needs of the tenants and would be done at the time of leasing commitments.

FUNCTION KEY

- 1. Leasing Space
- 2. Arts Commission
- 3. Veterans Room
- 4. Rehearsal Spaces
- 5. Workshop
- 6. Costume Shop
- 7. Kitchen

S.F.

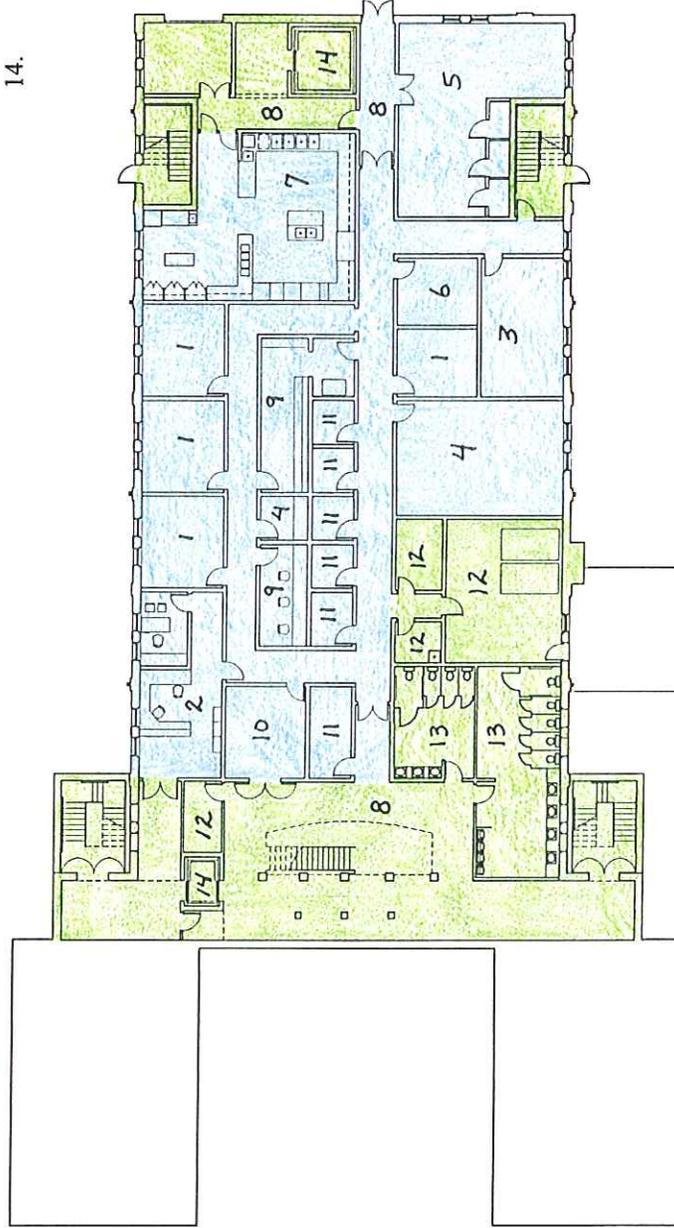
- 766
- 434
- 306
- 560
- 760
- 1,545
- 891

FUNCTION KEY

- 8. Gallery/Corridor/Lobby
- 9. Common Office
- 10. Computer Room
- 11. Conference
- 12. Storage
- 13. Mechanical
- 14. Toilets
- 14. Elevators

S.F.

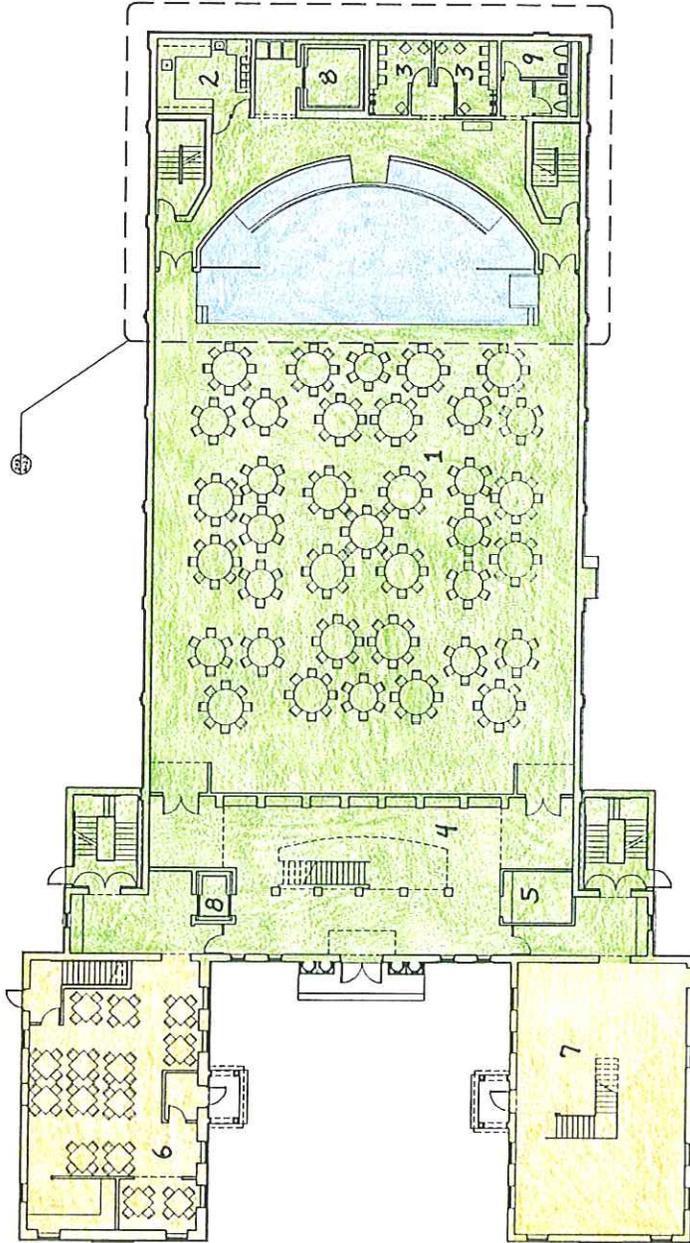
- 2,750
- 472
- 272
- 444



PHASING KEY

- Phase IA
- Phase IB
- Phase II

Lower Floor Plan (Preliminary)
 Armory Community Cultural Center
 Middletown, Connecticut

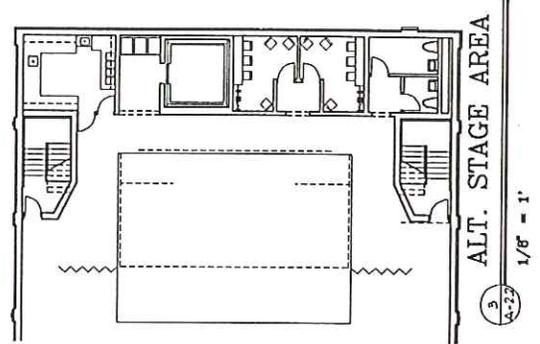
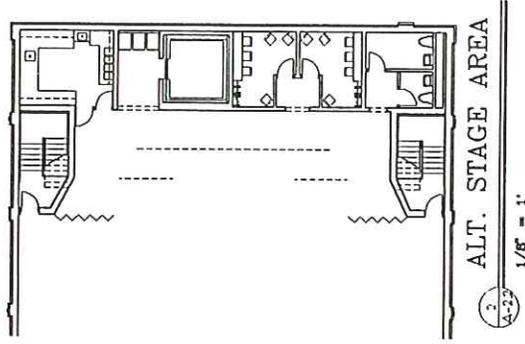


PHASING KEY

- Phase IA
- Phase IB
- Phase II

FUNCTION KEY

1.	Events Hall/Stage	S.F.	6,990
2.	Catering Set-Up		200
3.	Dressing Rooms		230
4.	Gallery/Corridor/Lobby		2,400
5.	Ticket/Information Booth		100
6.	Concession		1,296
7.	Leasing Space		1,296
8.	Elevators		
9.	Toilets		
10.	Mechanical		

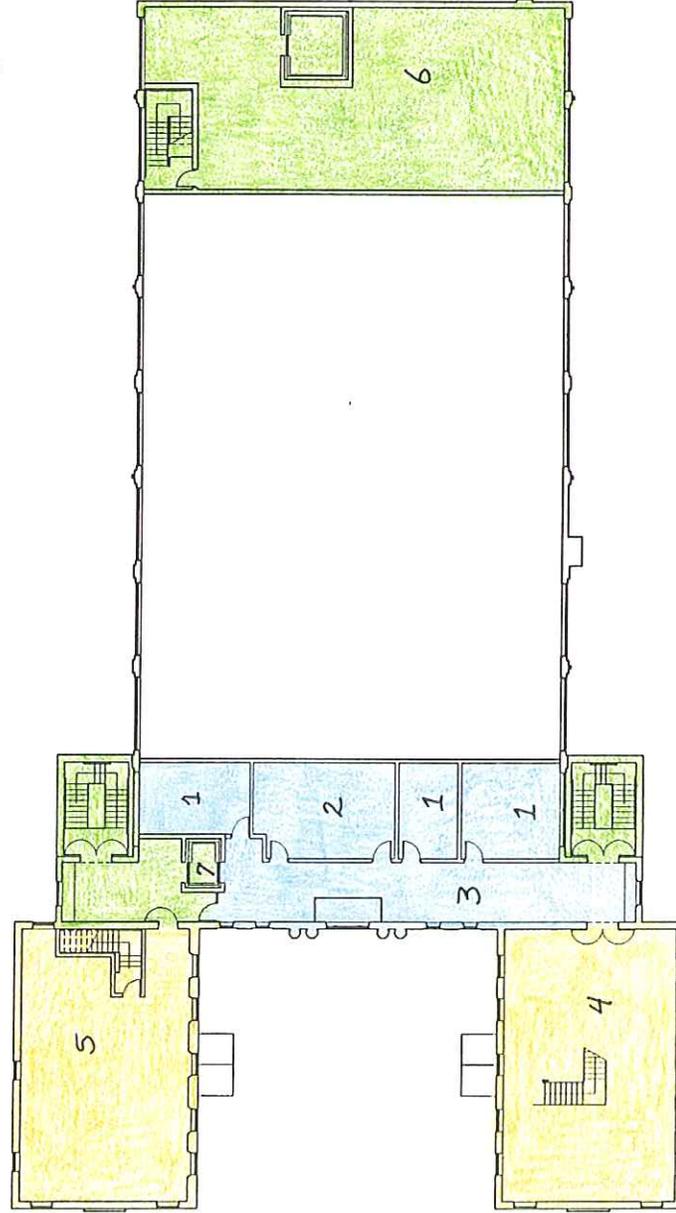


First Floor Plan (Preliminary)
 Armory Community Cultural Center
 Middletown, Connecticut

FUNCTION KEY

S.F.

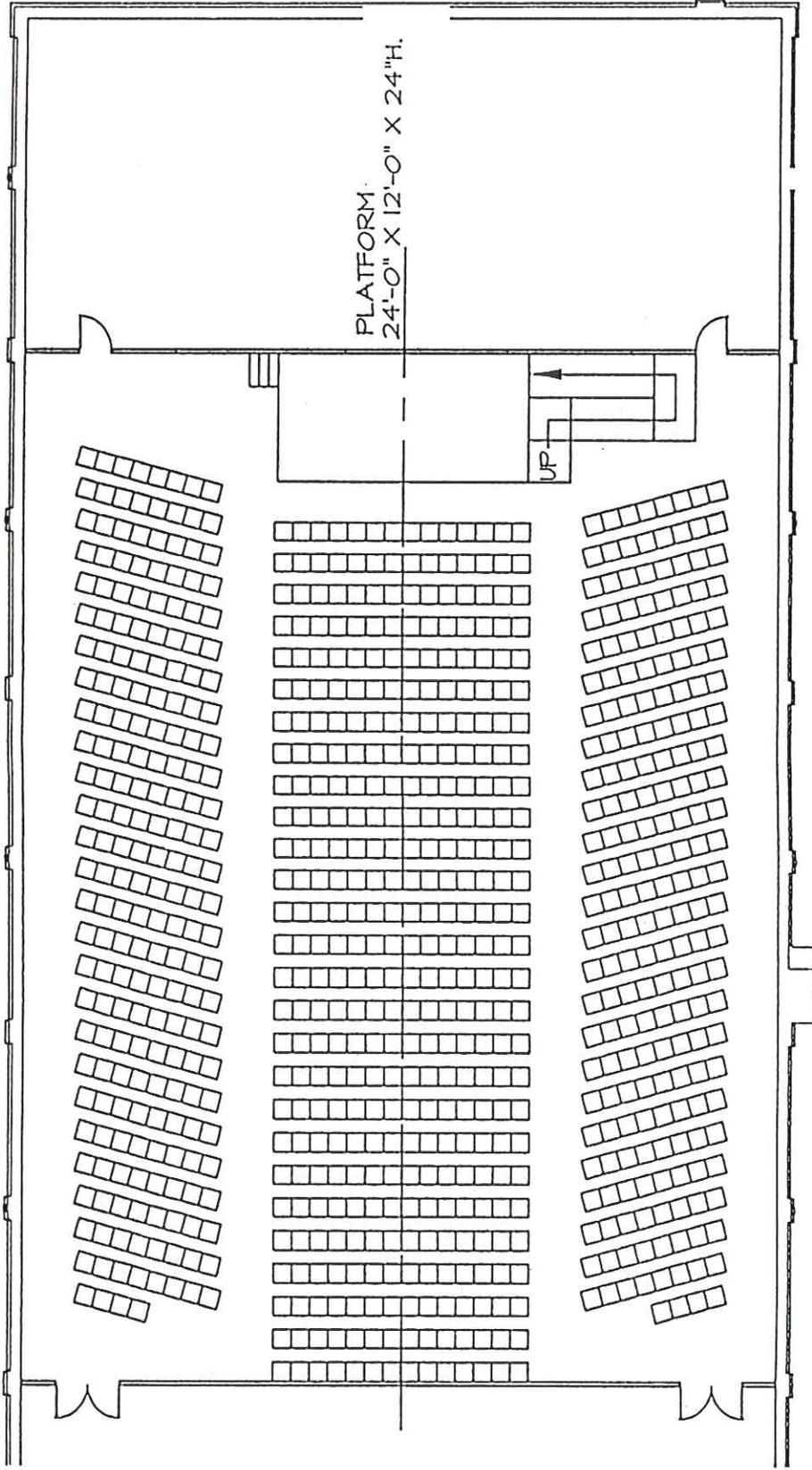
1.	Armory Board	638
2.	Management Office	416
3.	Control Booth	985
4.	Gallery/Corridor/Lobby	1,296
5.	Leasing Space	
6.	Performance	1,296
7.	Researchal Space	
	Mechanical	
	Elevator	



PHASING KEY

 Phase IA
 Phase IB
 Phase II

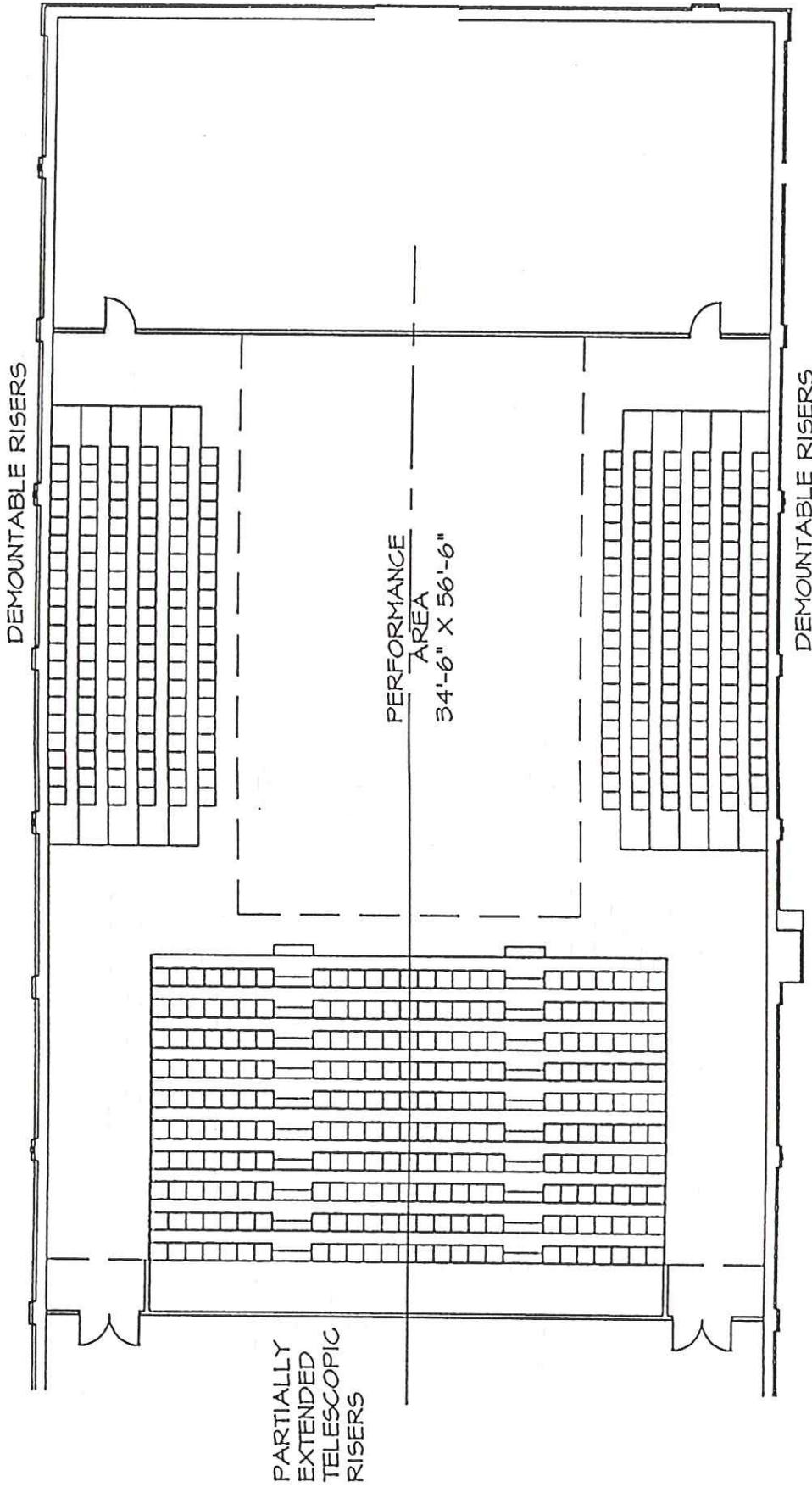
Second Floor Plan (Preliminary)
 Armory Community Cultural Center
 Middletown, Connecticut



A: FLAT FLOOR - 800± SEATS

Possible Functions:

- Community Meetings
- Film Series
- Lectures
- Auctions

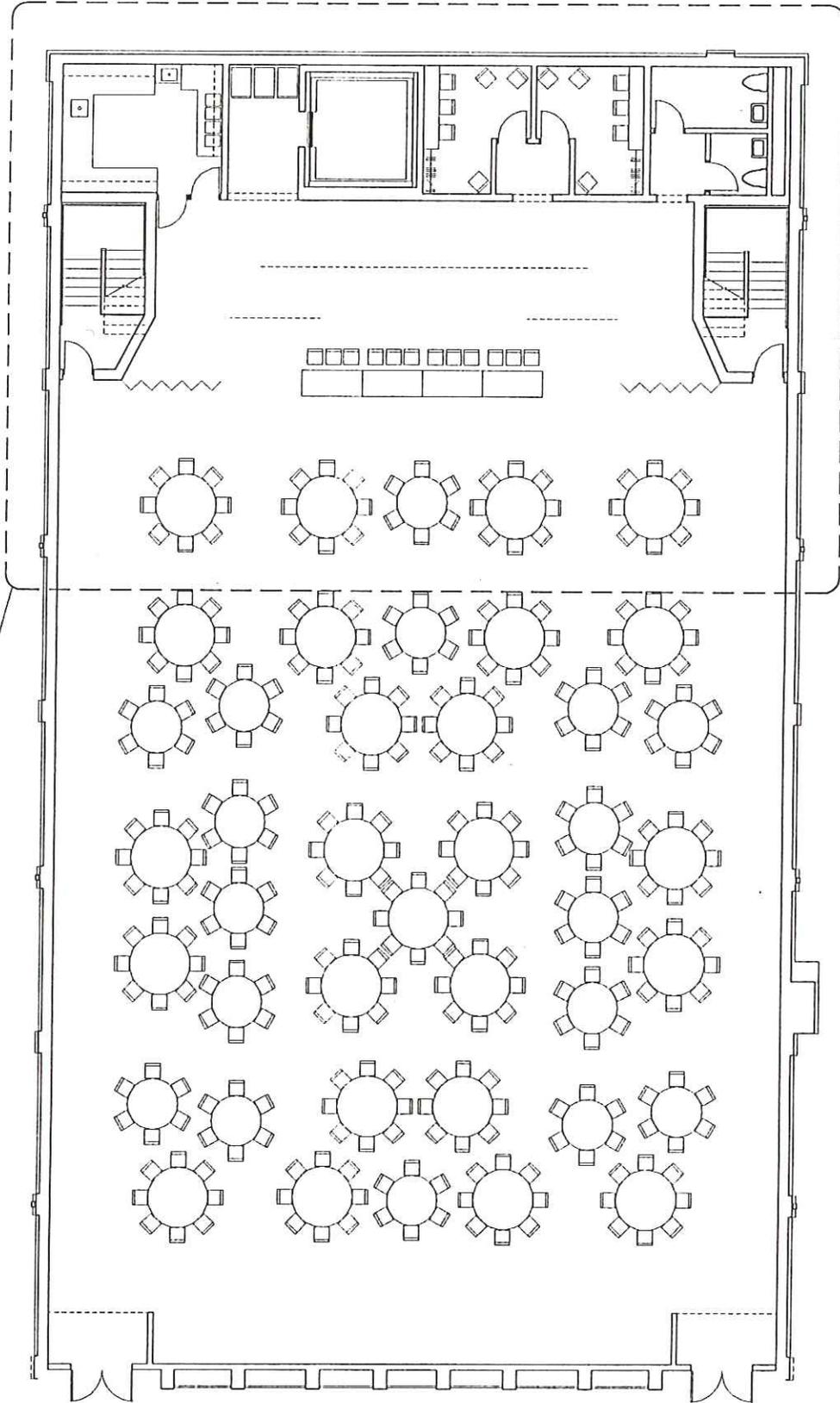


D: TELESCOPIC/DEMOUNTABLE THRUST - 500± SEATS

Possible Functions:

- Theatrical Performances
- Dance
- Concerts
- Seminars

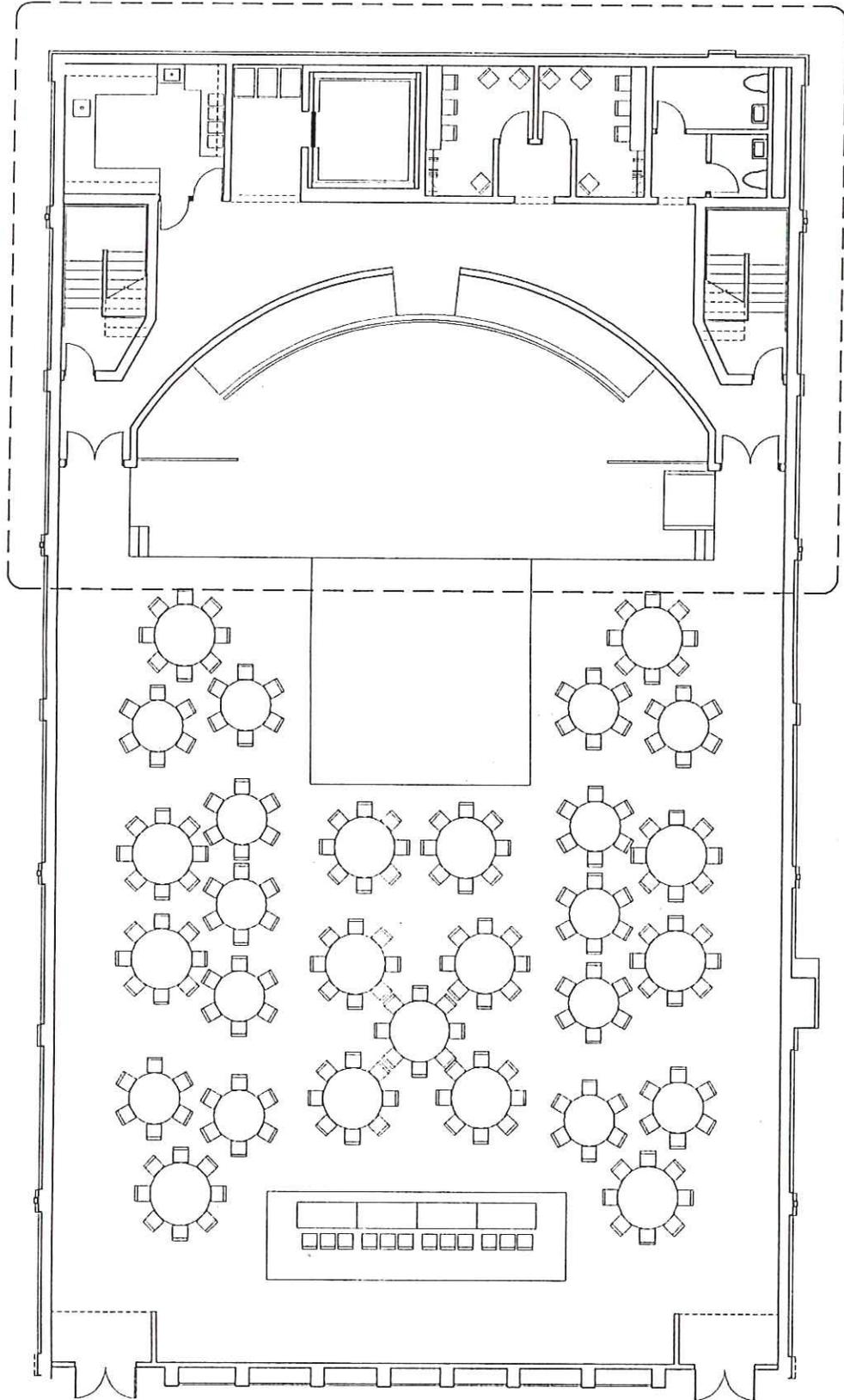
213
A-23



Alternate Banquet - 314 Seats
Armory Community Cultural Center
Middletown, Connecticut

Possible Functions:

- Weddings
- Fund-raising Events
- Business Dinners
- Charitable/Organizational Dinners

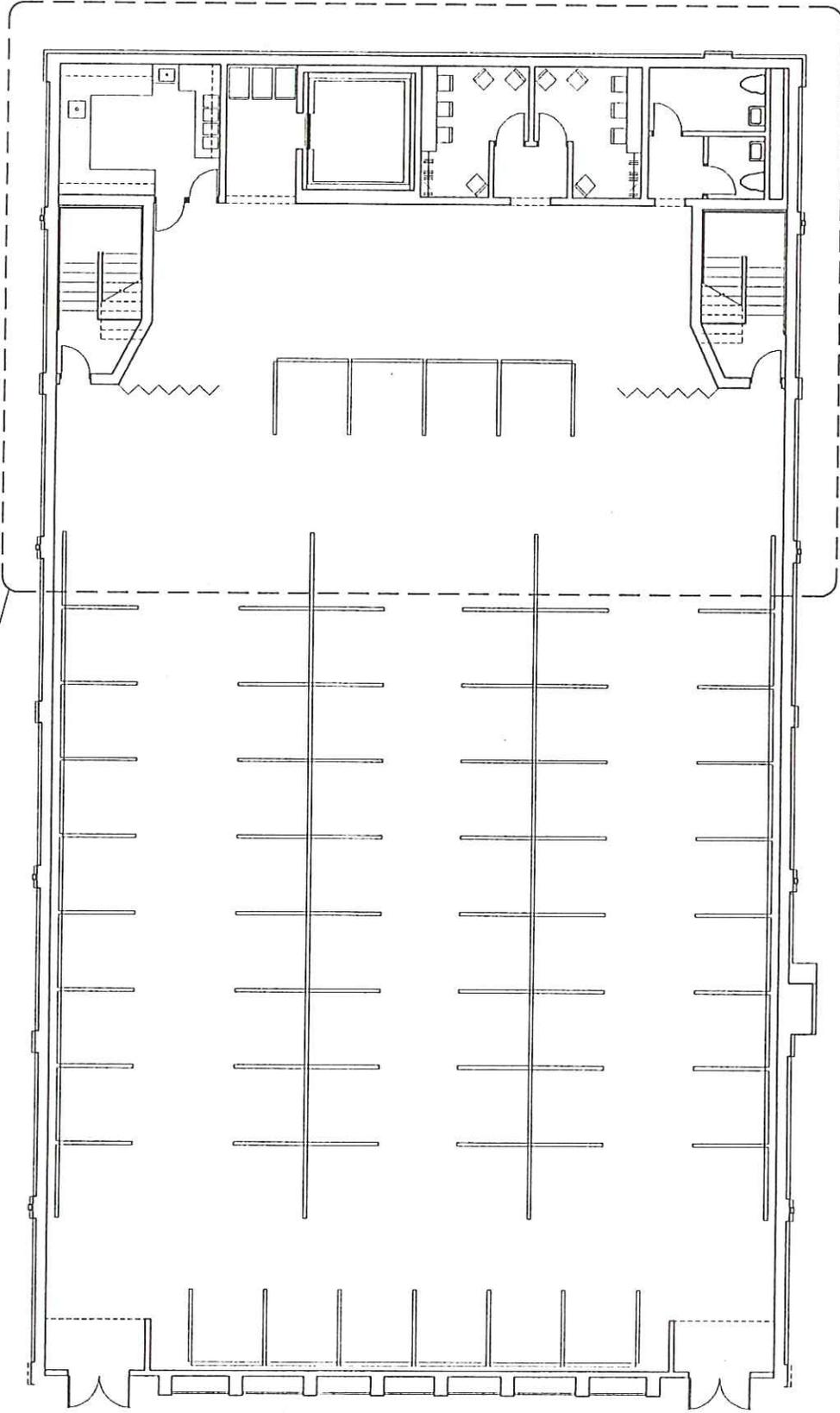


Alternate Banquet/Stage Area - 216 Seats
 Armory Community Cultural Center
 Middletown, Connecticut

Possible Functions:

- Weddings
- Fund-raising Events
- Business/Organization Dinners

26
-11



Exhibition Area - 64 Booths (Preliminary)
Armory Community Cultural Center
Middletown, Connecticut

Exhibits and Fairs:

- Crafts
- Antiques
- Collectibles