

A FUNERAL HOME

FOR

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

BY

HENRY M. ARNOLD

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate
Committee for the Degree of Master of Science

in

Architecture

Approved:

Head of Department

Dean of Engineering

Chairman, Graduate Committee

Virginia Polytechnic Institute

1947

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Before presenting this thesis I should like to acknowledge, with a deep sense of gratitude, the loyal and overwhelming help which has been given me in preparing this work.

I feel greatly indebted to

for his constant professional advice and criticism have contributed immensely to the success of this thesis. To the funeral directors of the neighboring cities that I have visited, I feel grateful for valuable privileges granted freely in connection with inspections of these specialized establishments, as well as for precious time spent by them in relating the philosophy of funeral home planning.

I acknowledge more than professional advice from the professors of my own Department: to Professor G. Thayer Richards, Design Critic, my sincere appreciation for the guidance and success of this thesis; to Professor C. H. Cowgill, for the administrative elements; to Professor J. F. Poulton, Structural Design Critic; and to Professor B. Y. Kinzey, Mechanical Equipment Critic. To the other members of the faculty, I am truly grateful for their advice and helpful suggestions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Part I History and Human Nature	
Introduction	2
General	2
Historical Influences that Affect Our Funerals of Today	3
Customs of Other Lands	4
The Funeral Ceremonies of the Various Religions	7
Human Nature	10
Part II General Discussion of Funeral Homes and Services Offered Today	
Funeral Homes of Today	12
Men Who Operate Them	12
Business Opportunities	12
Service Rendered by Funeral Directors	13
Conclusion	15
Part III Assumptions and Location	
Assumptions	16
Reasons for Choosing Richmond, Virginia As A Site	16
The Site Chosen	16
Part IV The Program	
Outline of Program	18
Outline of Requirements	18

Part IV (continued)	Page
General Discussion	20
Character	20
Administrative Elements	22
Circularatory Elements	23
Slumber Rooms	24
Chapel	25
Display Rooms	29
Preparation Rooms	31
Storage	31
Garage Facilities	32
Sleeping Area for the Night Crew	33
Flower Garden	33
Parking Facilities	33
Mechanical Equipment	34
Construction	35
Part V Model Displaying Exterior In Three Dimensions	
Part VI Presentation of the Drawings	
Conclusion	53
Bibliography	54

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
View of Main Elevation from the Southeast	37
View of Main Elevation from the Northeast	39
View of North Wing and Garage from the Northwest	38
View of Chapel and North Wing from the Southeast	40
View of Main Elevation from Eye Level	41
Site Relation Plan	42
Perspective from Cowardin Avenue	43
Plot Plan	44
East Elevation	45
West Elevation	46
Basement Plan	52
First Floor Plan	47
Second Floor Plan	48
South Elevation	49
South Elevation of West Wing	49
North Elevation of West Wing	50
North Elevation of Chapel	50
Perspective View of Vestibule and Lounge	51
Perspective View of Typical Slumber Room	51
Section Through Chapel	52
Section Through Main Wing	52
Section Through West Wing	52
Section Showing Typical Construction	51

PART I

HISTORY AND HUMAN NATURE

INTRODUCTION

While driving through our cities, the writer became interested in the various funeral homes he passed, and curious as to what took place within the walls of the large converted homes constantly being altered to meet the requirements of a growing business. As time passed, this interest became broadened by attending various funerals. Upon occasion the author has tried to find information in the Architectural publications concerning funeral homes and their operation, but to no avail. It is for these reasons that the subject, "A Funeral Home For Richmond, Virginia", was selected, as well as because this subject affords a golden opportunity to make a contribution which will be of value to the Department as well as to the author.

General

New attention is being given to the matter of funeral rites. It is long overdue. There has been a growing dissatisfaction with customary usages for the burial of the dead. Some feel that these usages are so bad they should be abandoned altogether. Others are dissatisfied, but have no clear idea as to why or as to just what might better the situation. The fact is that there are such deep rooted feelings involved and such important religious and social values to be maintained that any process which is intended to simplify the problem only adds to its complexities.

In trying to understand these complexities, the writer has made a comprehensive study of the funeral rites and customs of various countries and religions, as well as the history of funeral services of our own United States. Through a study of these facts one can find the principles upon which our present day customs have evolved.

Historical Influences That Affect Our Funerals of Today

In the United States, ancient funeral customs and traditions have been modified by commercial enterprise. In the first days of our coming to this country the dead were buried by their friends and relatives. The old wedge-shaped coffin used was made by one of the friends or relatives.

But as time went on the average person became more self-centered, and lacked sufficient time to permit him to spend long hours helping a friend through such a period. At this point in history, the trade or profession of undertaking began to develop. When a person died, the undertaker was called in. He brought with him two sticks, with one of which he measured the width of the deceased and with the other the length. From these he made a hasty casket of wood, the material at hand, and rushed the funeral to an early end because of the lack of embalming facilities. As time went on, the undertaker began to make and keep on hand caskets of various shapes and sizes. He also began finishing the outside of the coffins more carefully. Later, linings were used in the form of black crepe. Soon the funeral directors were so busy they had to have manufacturers to make the caskets for them. This marked

the beginning of a new industry. From this point forward everyone knows how the funeral business has grown. New materials were introduced, and, as the old saying goes, "a coffin to fit every pocketbook". Elaborate embalming procedures were introduced which led to prolongation of the length of the burial period. This was good for relatives and friends who could come and see the deceased once more before the final laying away.

All of these procedures are a great improvement over the old harsh funerals. But from the standpoints of expense, anxiety and mourning, is the present day funeral what we actually want? By studying funeral customs of other countries some of these questions may be answered.

Customs of Other Lands

In most European Countries, public ownership and operation of the mortuary industry (to prevent the exploitation of the poor and middle classes by commercial undertakers) is established. Some cities provide only partial service and that often in competition with private undertakers. There the smaller funerals are nearly all handled by the state, also the extra large funerals.

In Switzerland the Cantons have established since 1890 free burial service, supported in part by the state. All persons holding certificates of citizenship are eligible. Services are exceedingly simple and are uniform for all. State-owned cemeteries are used for interment. Individuals may select a better funeral, but the difference in price must be paid by the family of the deceased. In any case the municipal hearse must be used.

In Frankfort, Germany, funeral management has been regulated since 1828. In 1900, private enterprise mushroomed up. The city tried to eliminate this private competition, and the result was a war between the two. In the end, restrictions were tightened and private enterprise was outlawed.

In Madrid, Spain, the undertaking business was at one time a monopoly, established through the use of a concessionaire system. A single firm was granted a concession to care for the dead. But in 1922 this plan was abolished, and free enterprise was resumed.

In the English speaking countries, commercial undertaking establishments are still in complete control of funeral practices and prices.

In christian China the friends and relatives of the deceased still perform the task of fabricating a casket and burying the body.

European countries do not practice embalming as we do in the U. S. A. French funeral practice is probably typical of that of the European countries, so by analyzing a French funeral in detail we can get a picture of European customs. In France, a country comparable to the United States in culture and education, the funeral directors are all government workers. Each is given a franchise in a certain city and is paid a salary and commission. The funeral home consists of an office in the central part of town. The funeral arrangements are made here. On the outskirts of town is located the funeral director's home, and behind this is a barn where horses and horse-drawn hearses are kept. Here also

is lumber for the caskets. They are built and finished in the little barn. Most of the caskets are the same shape and size. They are hexagonal in shape and are of the sarcophagus or old mummy case type.

When the undertaker is called, he either goes to the home of the deceased or sends one of his men. He looks the body over and decides what size casket shall be used. Later that day two men, driving a horse drawn wagon (of the "Express-Company" type,) deliver a casket to the home. They then trim the inside of the casket with sheeting and lay the body in it. If the family wishes to put clothes on the body, they may do so; if not, it is placed in the casket with only the clothes it had on when death occurred. The lid of the casket is then put on and screwed down. That is the last anyone ever sees of the body. A black drape is hung on the door of the house where the dead person lived.

On the funeral day, the casket is carried with long sticks under it by four pallbearers, employed by the funeral director. The casket is placed on a horse drawn hearse.

A French funeral procession is really quite a sight to behold. Everyone except the driver walks. Attached to the hearse are long black streamers to which the family hold while walking to the church and cemetery, a distance which is usually at least a mile. The friends walk in columns of twos behind the family.

At the cemetery, as the coffin is being lowered into the ground, a government official places an official stamp on it. There is none of the artificial grass, etc. seen at an American funeral. The only flowers are those covering the casket.

In conclusion it should be said that the French are very sincere and respectful.

So far the author has not mentioned the religious ceremonies which always accompany the burial of the dead. This aspect alone could fill volumes; however, enough will be related to give an appreciation of the existing situation.

The Funeral Ceremonies of The Various Religions

The Hindus have changed their ritual but little through the centuries. When a person dies, the corpse is perfumed, adorned with flowers, and burned. After many ceremonies have been performed, the bones are deposited in a casket and buried. Later the casket is dug up and thrown into the Ganges. A second series of obsequies commences after the period of mourning has expired, and this is followed by commemorative rites. Until recently the voluntary immolation of the widow, on the funeral pyre of her husband, was the most remarkable part of the ceremony.

Of all the religions, the Mohammedan has the best outlook on death: "Make haste to bury the dead, that, if he have done well, he may go forthwith into blessedness; if evil into hell fire." This is in obedience to the command of the prophet. No signs of excessive grief, no tears nor lamentations are allowed, as it is the duty of a good Mussulman to acquiesce without a murmur to the will of God. The body is buried with the face toward Mecca. Although monuments are forbidden by the state, they are erected constantly in modern times.

In the christian section of China even now the people are still superstitious about the dead. When the lid is about to be

placed on the coffin, most of the bystanders retreat a few feet or even to the next room, for a person's health is believed to be endangered by allowing his shadow to be enclosed in a coffin. Also when the coffin is about to be lowered into the grave, most of the spectators recoil to a little distance lest their shadows fall into the grave and harm shall overcome them. The family stand on the side away from the sun. The coffin bearers attach their shadows firmly to their persons by tying a strip of cloth tightly around their waists.

Burma is a still better example of superstition and ignorance. When a funeral passes on the street, mothers tie their children to the beds lest their souls leave with the dead person. Everyone attending a funeral carries a bamboo split lengthwise in one hand and a stick in the other hand. Each mourner believes that the split bamboo contains his own soul. While the earth is being shoved in, the mourners keep their split bamboos hidden. They fear lest their souls escape into the open grave. Each mourner, as he leaves the grave, beats on his bamboo with his stick, in order to beg his soul to return within him.

"In the Roman Catholic Church the body is washed immediately after death, a crucifix is placed in the hands, and a vessel of holy-water at the feet with which the visitants sprinkle it. The Ritual prescribes that the corpse be borne in procession from the house in which it lies to the church, attended by the parish priest with acolytes and servitors all in cassock and surplice, and one of them bearing the processional cross in the van. Before the procession moves the priest first sprinkles the coffin with holy-water

and recites the De profundis and the Miserere while the procession is in movement. Taken into the church, the coffin is laid on trustles in the middle of the nave, the feet to the east of the sanctuary, if the deceased was a layman, the head to the sanctuary if he was a priest; lighted candles surround the coffin. Then follows the Office for the Dead, and after that the Mass for the Dead. After the Mass the priest, attended by the acolytes, pronounces the Absolution and certain prayers, meanwhile sprinkling the coffin with holy-water and fumigating it with frankincense. The procession is now re-formed and the body borne to the place of burial. There the Benedictus is sung or recited followed by an Anlyshon, Ego sum resurrectio et vita (I am the resurrection and the life); the corpse is again sprinkled, a final prayer is pronounced, and the body is laid in the grave or tomb.⁽¹⁾

In the Greek church there are separate and distinct services for laymen, monks, and priests. The officiant holds a short service at the house of the deceased, the procession goes next to the church for a regular prayer, and finally to the grave. The priest takes a shovel and sprinkles dust crosswise on the body, and just before the grave is closed, he casts wax or ashes from his censor upon the coffin.

The rites of the Jews can be studied by means of various passages of the scriptures. In biblical times, the next of kin closed the eyes of the deceased. The corpse was then washed and laid for a time in spices, anointed with oil and swathed in

(1) The Encyclopedia America

linen bandages. It was then placed in a sepulchre with a huge stone rolled to the door. The Jews still do not believe in embalming, and their funeral rites have changed very little.

The English church followed very closely by the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, uses the order for the burial of the dead as stated in the Book of Common Prayer. The essence of this order, as well as funeral rites of most of the other protestant denominations, consist of the following: The first section of the service is recited either at the home of the deceased, or at a church. It consists of Anthem, Psalms and a Lesson. The second section, usually called the Committal, is recited at the grave, where dust is scattered on the casket as it is lowered.

Human Nature

A group of ministers of the various religions in Boston gathered together for the purpose of discussing the funeral rites in this country. Their conclusion was, "It is our general opinion that the [disposal of the dead should be accomplished in a manner as quiet, as simple and as dignified as possible, without unnecessary lacerations of the grief of those involved and without a crushing burden of financial expenses.]⁽²⁾" They even went one step further by writing what they called "Decent Christian Burial", which is a very lengthy and complicated article meeting all the requirements of the various religions. As a result this group of men were practically disowned by their congregations and city.

(2) The Christian Century

Public opinion and the general education of the people over a long period of time are required to make the slow changes necessary to initiate any new, simpler ceremony which may offer less grief and expense to those involved. It is with these points in mind that the writer has initiated his design.

PART II

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF FUNERAL
HOMES AND SERVICE OFFERED TODAY

Funeral Homes of Today

While visiting numerous funeral homes, the writer was constantly aware that most of the elements involved were cold, dark, and gloomy instead of being restful and pleasant. There are reasons for this, however. Due to the conditions of the skin of some of the deceased, they can best be displayed in artificial light. This fact, together with the association of death with darkness and mystification, leads to the use of rooms with drawn curtains or no windows at all.

Strong solutions are used in embalming, and since the funeral homes of many of our leading morticians are simply converted houses altered to serve as a unit, the fumes are often prevalent throughout the entire mortuary.

Men Who Operate Them

For years the undertaker was known as a man who wore a dark suit, a black derby hat and carried a heavy walking cane. He was only seen in society at funerals and only entered the home when called upon to serve in his particular capacity.

Today the mortician is a professional man, well known and liked in his community. All the fears and superstitions of the past are gone. He is doing a job talked about and criticized by millions but desired by few.

Business Opportunities

In almost all fields of endeavor the professional man can, if he has proper backing and something new and good to offer, create a market for his product. The funeral director's problem is

entirely different. As more and more morticians enter into the business, funerals become fewer and fewer per director. This is due to the death rate not increasing, but decreasing through medical science and better living conditions. The average cost of overhead for a funeral in 1900 was thirty dollars. Today it is one hundred eighty-six dollars per funeral.⁽³⁾ Since the funeral director cannot control the death rate, the only chance he has of increasing his business is by offering more service, pleasing his clients, and having his services preferred in the future.

Services Rendered By Funeral Directors

When the writer first chose the subject, "A Funeral Home For Richmond, Virginia", it was his conception that a three hundred fifty dollar funeral consisted of a fifty dollar casket and three hundred dollars profit for the mortician, but upon further study it was found that a closer margin of profit exists. It is worth while to list a few reasons for the above.

1. All personal contacts with the individual client must be initiated and sustained throughout the active period by a licensed mortician in person. Very little can be delegated to low-paid employees.
2. Answering the first call by going to the home or hospital, receiving the body, assuring the family of its welfare, and discussing the problem.

(3) Progressive Service Conference, Manual of Methods

3. Making arrangements for the funeral with the family at a later date.
4. Driving the family to the funeral home to select the funeral.
5. Preparing notices for the newspapers.
6. Making arrangements with the clergy.
7. Arranging with the cemetary for opening the grave and often selecting a lot.
8. Arranging for obtaining and registering the death certificate.
9. Sending telegrams and making long distance calls.
10. Care of the deceased, consideration of details of dress and appearance, and embalming.
11. If funeral is not at the funeral home, removal of the deceased to either home or chapel.
12. Transporting paraphernalia to the home. This includes chairs, flower stands, fans, loud-speaker, and equipment for services.
13. Arranging flowers, making several calls daily to rearrange and care for flowers.
14. Arranging for pallbearers and their transportation.
15. Arranging for cars of friends.
16. Arranging transportation for clergy.
17. Attending the door on funeral day.
18. Arranging for music.
19. Preparing plot in cemetary for funeral.
20. Erecting tent over grave for funeral.

21. Providing a special coach for the family and pallbearers.
22. Providing engraved acknowledgement cards.
23. Providing and recording for the family a register of all callers.
24. Rendering all such extra services as seem necessary or are requested whether falling in the regular line of duty or not.
25. Over and above these is the overhead of salaries, building costs and maintenance, plus the regular debits of any business

Conclusion

With the foregoing discussions in mind, the author set out to design a funeral home along modern lines, incorporating new ideas for greater efficiency, and simplifying the problem of customs as much as can be done in this first period of transformation.

PART III

ASSUMPTIONS AND LOCATION

Assumptions

For the purpose of this thesis, it is assumed that the writer has been approached by a funeral director in the city of Richmond, Virginia and requested to build a funeral home. The lot is to be chosen and design initiated by the author. The present mortuary, located in South Richmond, has been altered many times and is now inadequate to serve efficiently and economically. The new funeral home will be built in the same district, serving the same patrons and will accommodate five to six funerals a day.

Reasons For Choosing Richmond, Virginia As A Site

The design of a funeral home for Richmond, Virginia was the final choice because:

1. The writer is familiar with the city and its people.
2. The proposed new unit is the size required by this district and is approximately the ideal size for minimum overhead per funeral and maximum economy to the relations of the deceased.
3. The choice of a lot is more understandable since Richmond is the author's home.
4. The city is close enough at hand to make possible several trips of inspection.

The Site Chosen

The site chosen for the funeral home is the block bounded by Cowardin Avenue and 19th Street, Wall Street and Perry Street,

PART IV

THE PROGRAM

with the exception of a plot 48' by 150' in the northeast corner of the block, bounded by Cowardin Avenue on the 48' side and Perry Street on the 150' side.

This plot was chosen because it is in a central location of the district served, and also because it is centrally located with regard to the cemeteries.

Cowardin Avenue, being a main artery through South Richmond, is six lanes wide. This traffic need not be interrupted when a funeral procession is lining up. The second lane can be used for lining up the loaded cars and the third lane can be used for passing traffic. Also there will be no need for disturbing the cars parked along the curbs.

This particular section is one of the best light business zones in South Richmond. The blocks to the west, north and east of the plot are occupied by homes. The blocks to the south has a gas station on the corner and a church within the block. On the remainder of the block are homes.

It is assumed that the property on which this thesis is designed was purchased before the Robert E. Lee Bridge was built, and was obtained very reasonably. But since the bridge has been constructed, it is ideal for a funeral home.

A study of the site relation map and the plot plan will make most of these points clear.

Outline of Program

As a result of visits to the many funeral homes in the vicinity and discussions of the problems involved, and on the basis of the foregoing material, an outline of the program requirements for the thesis has been formulated by the author. Each element will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

Outline of Requirements:

I Administrative Elements

1. Private office for the executive.
2. Private office to be used by four morticians while dealing with clients.
3. Control room to house one secretary, four desks for morticians, control board and circulation.

II Circulatory Elements

1. Entrance vestibule
2. Lobby
3. Stairways and elevators
4. Halls

III Slumber Rooms

IV Chapel

1. Entrance
2. Vestibule
3. Vaults
4. Nave
5. Family Room
6. Music room and organ

IV (continued)

7. Clergy room
8. Garage for flowers

V Display Rooms

1. Area for metal caskets and cloth caskets
2. Area for childrens' caskets
3. Area for odd sized caskets
4. Area for storage of caskets purchased by the lay-away plan
5. Clothing display area

VI Preparation Rooms

1. Two preparation rooms

VII Storage Space for the Following Items:

1. Fifty caskets and vaults
2. Burial equipment
3. Life saving equipment

VIII Garage Housing the Following:

1. Three hearses
2. Two grave trucks
3. Two flower trucks
4. Two ambulances
5. Locker room for employees

IX Sleeping Area for Night Crew

X Flower Garden

XI Parking Facilities

XII Mechanical Equipment

1. Heating and cooling
2. Electric power

XIII Construction

General Discussion

The fundamental requirement of a funeral home is the provision of comfortable, home-like surroundings for the family and friends of the deceased. However, no architectural design or planning can be solved satisfactorily without giving serious consideration to the functional requirements of the plan elements. The proper relationship of the administrative elements to other elements in the project could well determine the success or failure of any plan.

Simplicity of plan has been the thought throughout the project; the underlying idea has been to lay out an establishment where service can be held constantly at a maximum without putting undue strain upon the mortician or his limited personnel, or upon the patrons who frequent the funeral home. Every essential to the service of the patron has been placed within easy reach of the funeral director's office so that he can be in touch with and control of all activities at all times.

Character

Heretofore, the character of a funeral home has not been defined as it has in other typical building types. This is particularly true as regards the modern motif. The author has chosen his particular masses for definite reasons which should be related here. It was the intent of the designer to design a funeral home with a chapel.

The chapel is to be so located that it will create a center of interest and entice clients to use the establishment. If in addition, the family of a deceased person can be persuaded to

leave the body in the funeral home and conduct the funerals from this point, a great deal of work can be eliminated, such as, carrying the body to the home, having continually to visit the home, discussing the problem, carrying flowers, chairs, loud-speaker equipment, and on the funeral day sending out a crew to conduct the funeral, etc. The character of the chapel is treated so as to look like a chapel, but not to suggest any particular type of religion or even be recognized as a religious building. The chapel may thus be used as a non-sectarian auditorium.

The main funeral home is expressed in mass to tell the story of the interior. The grouping of windows on the first floor tells the story of the administrative area as well as the entrance vestibule and lounge facilities. The solid mass above expresses the location of the various display areas.

The reason for the shape of the various elements is understandable when one studies the plot plan and realizes that the north-east lot in the block could never be obtained for this project at a reasonable investment. It was the intention of the designer to tie around this property and to place those units which need no light or prominence along this property line. The plantings and the blank wall tend to minimize the importance of this area.

When persons are stricken with grief, they are subject to mental strain, nervousness and unrest. A formal southern garden for the patrons to gaze upon has been created here by turning the chapel fifteen degrees on axis. Such a restful and light atmosphere tends to relax the nerves and soothe the mind of mourning.

difficulties. This garden is in full view from the slumber rooms as well as from the chapel. A high fence separates the hustle and bustle of the parking lot from the quietness and serenity of the garden.

Administrative Elements

1. The private office of the senior funeral director is so placed that it is accessible not only to the control room, preparation rooms, garage, etc., but also to the main lounge for conferences with patrons. This lounge is accessible to the vestibule and elevators to the display rooms. It is believed that from this control point the maximum amount of supervision can be administered with the minimum amount of effort.
2. Adjacent to the private office is a semi-private office to be used by the other four morticians for discussing business with the clients. This unit has all advantages mentioned in #1.
3. To the rear of these offices, and connected with the exterior terrace by a private entrance, is the control room. This section is the heart of the funeral home and acts in the same capacity as headquarters in the army. Along the west wall of this room is a large blackboard from which all employees receive their daily instructions. Here will be such information as: Mrs. Jones is in the pink slumber room, her funeral will be in the chapel at 2 P.M., body and flowers will be removed to the chapel by Smith at 1:45 P.M. Mr. Adams will drive the hearse, etc.

Also in this area will be four desks for morticians and equipment for one secretary or bookkeeper. This room is connected by halls to all parts of the building.

4. At the front of the senior director's office and adjacent to the public lounge is the reception room. In this room an employee is stationed who acts in the dual capacities of receptionist and secretary to the senior mortician. Also in this area is a desk at which one of the morticians may act as a receptionist when not busy.

Circulatory Elements

1. The entrance vestibule to the main funeral home is connected with the downstairs lounge and reception area on one side and (by the stairs and elevators) to the second floor on the other side. Straight ahead is the main hall leading to the downstairs slumber rooms. The vestibule is entirely glass on the entrance side and is very decorative in appearance as viewed from the lounge side, thus producing a light and dressy atmosphere.
2. The downstairs lounge is small, but the designer feels it is adequate, due to the fact that when the slumber rooms are not all filled, two rooms will be used for one set-up, one for a layout room and the other for a lounge or private sitting room. The lounge is in direct contact with the reception room, as the wall between the two is open down to counter level. Because of this and the vestibule on the other side, the lounge will appear quite large.

The upstairs lounge will serve the five slumber rooms on that floor in the same capacity as the downstairs lounge does. This area is opened on one side by means of a picture window which will afford a nice view of the front lawn and shrubbery. This factor alone will make the difference between a cold and gloomy feeling and a feeling of openness and release.

3. The elevator for the clientele opens to the downstairs vestibule and connects this with the second floor lounge. The stairway winds around the elevator and is well lighted by three round windows which are expressed in the design both on the exterior and interior.
4. The main halls are wide and will serve a dual purpose. They will be used as a circulatory element, and as a place for chairs that are needed for lounging purposes during the busy seasons.

The downstairs hall connects the main funeral home with the chapel. At this point are located the ladies' and men's toilets. They serve the chapel and also the visitors in the main funeral home from this position.

The upstairs hall is connected with the layout rooms on one side and the display rooms on the other.

There are private halls on both floors that lead to the garage and preparation rooms respectively.

Slumber Rooms

For the sake of throwing artificial lights on the body of deceased persons to create a natural look, slumber rooms have

always been closed and dark, thus creating a sad, cold, dreary atmosphere. After discussing this problem with Mr. P. D. Oakey, (the funeral director of Blacksburg, Virginia) this designer felt that it was preferable to prepare the body of a deceased person in the daylight, have the slumber rooms open on a formal garden, and control the appearance of the body with venetian blinds and cove lighting. The slumber rooms will be painted pink, peach, etc., and will reflect color into the faces of the deceased. The cove lighting will burn at all times.

The above simple changes in design as compared to current practice will lift the funeral parlor from the atmosphere of a tomb to a place preferred to the home for a lay-out room. Funerals can be conducted in a lighter atmosphere with less emotion, mental stress and expense to everyone involved.

There are five slumber rooms on each floor of this plan, and they are connected in such a way that from one to five can be used for one set-up, depending upon the size of the funeral and the number of set-ups needed at that time.

Chapel

1. It is a known fact that most people die during extremely bad weather. Consequently, the day for the funeral can not be chosen. It is with this fact in mind that the exterior entrance of the chapel is designed. The long, low canopy extending out over the drive affords protection from the weather at all times, be it a hot summer sun or cold rain. The hearse is situated at this canopy as

shown on the plot plan, and the funeral director standing at the foot of the two steps is a cordial invitation to the friends of the deceased to disembark under cover and enter at this point. Also at this location the funeral director can give directions to all visiting drivers as to the procedure to be followed in parking and returning to this point for reloading to go to the cemetery.

2. The main vestibule doors leading from the outside are entirely of glass, with glass above and to each side of the doors. This is designed with the idea of bringing the outdoors indoors. Then too the large expansive glass windows in the south end of the vestibule will produce a feeling of openness and restfulness during the congested period while the crowds wait to embark for the cemetery. The hinged portion between the vestibule and the nave can be opened in case of an overflow of people in the nave.
3. The two vaults inserted in the base of the tower and facing the vestibule are placed in such a prominent and dignified location to serve as rental vaults for the clients that desire them. The arrangement is made for the temporary keeping of the body while the family can build a mausoleum.
4. The nave of the chapel has been designed contrary to the precedent of most funeral homes. Most chapels in funeral homes, by their dim lighting and small windows,

create a depressing and gloomy atmosphere. To the author this is very disappointing and shows a definite backwardness on the part of the funeral director. With modern lighting equipment and modern mortician's techniques this trend should definitely be reversed.

The designer has created a pattern of windows, the openings of which run from the ceiling to the floor, thus giving again the idea of openness and spacious restfulness. Through the north west windows, the visiting friends and relatives can view the formal garden, and in many cases of emotion and extreme distress they can look out and compose themselves by thinking of different things, such as might be suggested to the human mind by this restful view.

The chapel is treated as plainly as possible, with a modern approach, as regards the benches, pulpit, and music room grill. The designer has tried not to suggest any form of religious motif or create any religious feeling whatsoever. Special equipment can be moved in to produce the proper set-up for various denominations. It must be noted that in all funerals the body or coffin is always the center of attraction and the center-aisle type of chapel is the most expressive design for focusing attention on this fact. The chapel proper will accommodate two hundred eighty eight persons, the overflow vestibule and family room will increase this to three hundred eight persons.

5. The family room is located to the side of the pulpit and in an alcove created for this purpose. By placing the family here and affording them privacy and freedom of movement, the extreme cases of grief and confusion can be attended with a minimum amount of interruption. A toilet has been so placed as to afford ideal facilities for attention in extreme cases.
A family entrance has been installed for use in fair weather to hasten the clearance of the chapel and to lessen the humility of the grief stricken family who would otherwise be forced to walk up the center aisle.
6. The music room is centered on the chapel's front wall with a simple grill through which the sound is permitted to pass. The organ has been recessed in a niche to enable the organist to work in a dual capacity. He can work in the funeral home and not have to dress to play for the funerals.
7. The clergy room is only large enough for a desk and chair. It has two entrances, one from the outside and one leading into the chapel. It is a place, however, where the clergyman can compose and ready himself for the service.
8. When the service has ended and the people turn to leave the chapel, it is time for the flower crew to remove the flowers from the chapel and place them in the truck. This phase of a funeral has to be accomplished in haste since the flowers have to be taken to the grave and arranged correctly before the funeral procession arrives.

It is for this reason that the garage for the flower trucks is placed in the rear and connected with the chapel. It is desired to perform this loading under cover; therefore, the location of the garage for housing the trucks is deemed logical for a double purpose.

Display Rooms

Where are we going when we go into the display rooms? Where should the display rooms be? Perhaps a better word for display room is sales room. As to location it should be easily accessible. The reasons for locating the display areas on the second floor are two fold. First, the approach to the display rooms serves as an advertisement of the slumber rooms, since the client must pass by them. Secondly, because the storage is downstairs and the displays are upstairs, labor of hauling storage up and down is saved.

1. In visiting various display rooms, the designer noted the individual arrangement of each. There were as many different displays as there were display rooms. Using this information as a basis for the design the author created a long open area with movable partitions, so that various sized rooms could be made to fit various displays from time to time. The lighting, a very important feature of the sales room, has been placed in coves along the longitudinal walls. The ceiling has been arched to permit this indirect lighting to function better.

The display area is divided into two parts, one for metal caskets and the other for cloth caskets. The floors are

carpeted to create a quiet, relaxing feeling so the client can concentrate on the choice of a funeral.

2. Childrens' caskets are placed in a separate display area because of the color, size and shape of the tiny elements. This is also done because of the harsh feeling it gives a client to see a large casket placed in contrast with the smaller lighter colored element. The walls of this room can be delicately painted to create a youthful atmosphere.
3. Odd sized caskets are few in a funeral home. If these units are placed with the regular sizes, the tendency is for the client to pick a casket which does not come in the size required. This only leads to confusion. When this type of unit is required, the funeral director can explain the situation to the client and direct him to the room containing the odd size caskets.
4. Before giving the location of the lay away area and the reason it was chosen, the author would like to relate the features of this plan. By means of this plan, a person may choose his own casket and funeral, and the casket is placed in the lay away area until it is needed. This seems foolish and idiotic at first, but let us take a practical example. Suppose you are a man of average means carrying a large sum of insurance and your wife will be dependent on this sum for her livelihood after your death. Your wife is the type who would desire an

elaborate funeral for you, thus spending the precious sum that is needed for her existence. By choosing your own funeral in a reasonable bracket and paying for it, you will have already solved the problem.

The lay away area has been placed adjacent to and in the rear of the cloth casket area. This room is visited rarely and therefore it has a remote location.

5. If clothing were displayed in all the areas that would require its use, there would be numerous clothing display rooms. It is for this reason that an area has been set aside for clothing alone. This room has to be passed in going to any of the display areas and is just a stop on the way to the area desired.

Preparation Rooms

The preparation rooms are ideally located. The body arrives by ambulance in the garage below and is placed on the elevator and transferred to the second floor hall adjacent to the preparation rooms.

This area is well lighted, modernly equipped as stated on the drawings, and is sufficiently large to execute the work involved. The floor is tile with a six foot tile wainscot.

Storage

The location of the storage element can affect the overhead of a funeral home more than any other unit. The author has placed this room on the first floor of the west wing for the following reasons:

1. Easy accessibility to the garage where the merchandise is brought in.
2. The equipment needed at the grave can be loaded and unloaded in the shortest possible time and distance.
3. A casket can be taken from storage and placed on the elevator without difficulty.
4. Equipment doesn't have to be carted up and down between floors.
5. The floor can be placed on the ground, thus saving structural material, etc.

Garage Facilities

Everyone has at one time or another visited a parking lot in a big city. When you returned for your car, the attendant had to shift two or three cars to obtain yours. The same situation applies to a garage. It is desirable to have the unit only one car deep. This lay out is usually impossible because of the space required; however, in this project it is applied ideally due to the adjacent lot and the method of tying around this area.

The windows in the doors and the windows along the east wall will afford a well lighted area within the garage.

In the north end of the garage is placed the locker rooms for the employees. This room can be reached through the garage and from the outside as well.

Adjacent to the locker room are toilet facilities for the employees.

Sleeping Area

A sleeping area for the night crew is provided on the second floor adjacent to the rear elevator. Funeral directors, like doctors, are subject to twenty-four hour call. In a unit of this size the night duty can be divided between the five morticians, with each spending every fifth night in the funeral home.

Flower Garden

In the rushed money-making world in which we live today, there is but little space set aside for flower gardens and scenic serenity. However, it was the main intention of the author to design this entire program around such a restful area. The size, shape, and relation of this plot to the buildings surrounding it are ideal according to the rules of the old masters in garden planning. The tallest building could easily fall within the lot. The shape is irregular and entertaining. The paths are located and shaped so as to create a feeling of depth to the garden from the chapel windows, as well as from the windows of the slumber rooms. It is believed by the author that the precious amount of land used for the above purpose is well worth the sacrifice.

Parking Facilities

Having been to a funeral in a big crowded city, everyone can appreciate the large area set aside for parking of an entire funeral within the private boundaries of this funeral home. The driveways are amply wide to permit parking of the family cars to the south of the chapel. The funeral director, by standing at the chapel's south

entrance, can direct the drivers to the rear of the funeral lot. The lot can be marked off to form lines of cars with enough space in between rows of cars to permit one car to be moved without moving another car. At this spacing the lot will accommodate approximately eighty cars. On any day that a large funeral is expected an attendant can be placed in the rear to space the automobiles closer together, thus doubling the capacity of the area.

The horseshoe shape drive in the front of the main funeral home is wide enough to park one file of cars and permit circulation at the same time. This is felt by the author to be sufficient parking space for the friends visiting the funeral home proper.

Mechanical Equipment

1. The small but efficient basement has been centrally located between the areas served. The two types of heating systems located here will be a little more expensive than a single type, but the advantages they have to offer will offset this extra cost. The system used consists of a dual "piping"; heat through pipes; humidity and heat in the winter with cooling in the summer through ducts. Pipes and radiators are in rooms where odors are likely to occur, such as the preparation rooms, toilets, garage and storage. This prevents ducts from picking up and rebroadcasting odors throughout the entire funeral home. Only ducts are supplying the chapel, slumber rooms, display rooms, offices and lounges.

Odors have always been associated with funeral homes, but it is believed that with this heating system they can be controlled completely.

Exhaust fans are placed in the ceiling of the preparation rooms to exhale the fumes as they are produced.

2. The main leaders of electric power are connected with the main panel board located in the small storage room adjacent to the basement stairs on the first floor. From this panel all wires emanate either down to the basement or up through the storage room directly above the room, and wires will fan out in the area between the floors and the hung metal-lath ceiling.

Construction

The construction throughout complies with the requirements of the Underwriter's Code for a four hour fire.

The structural frame is reinforced concrete in the chapel as well as in the main funeral home.

The wall construction is of the cavity wall type. The exterior is adorned with four inches of salmon colored face bricks. Next is a two inch air space, then four inches of structural clay tile. The tile is sprayed with emulsified asphalt before the plaster is applied.

All floors, except in the storage area, preparation rooms, display rooms, garage and toilets are covered with a composition finish. The floors of the preparation rooms and the toilets are finished in tile. The garage and storage areas have a troweled

concrete finish. All display rooms are carpeted.

The roof is a twenty year bonded five ply composition roof.

PART V

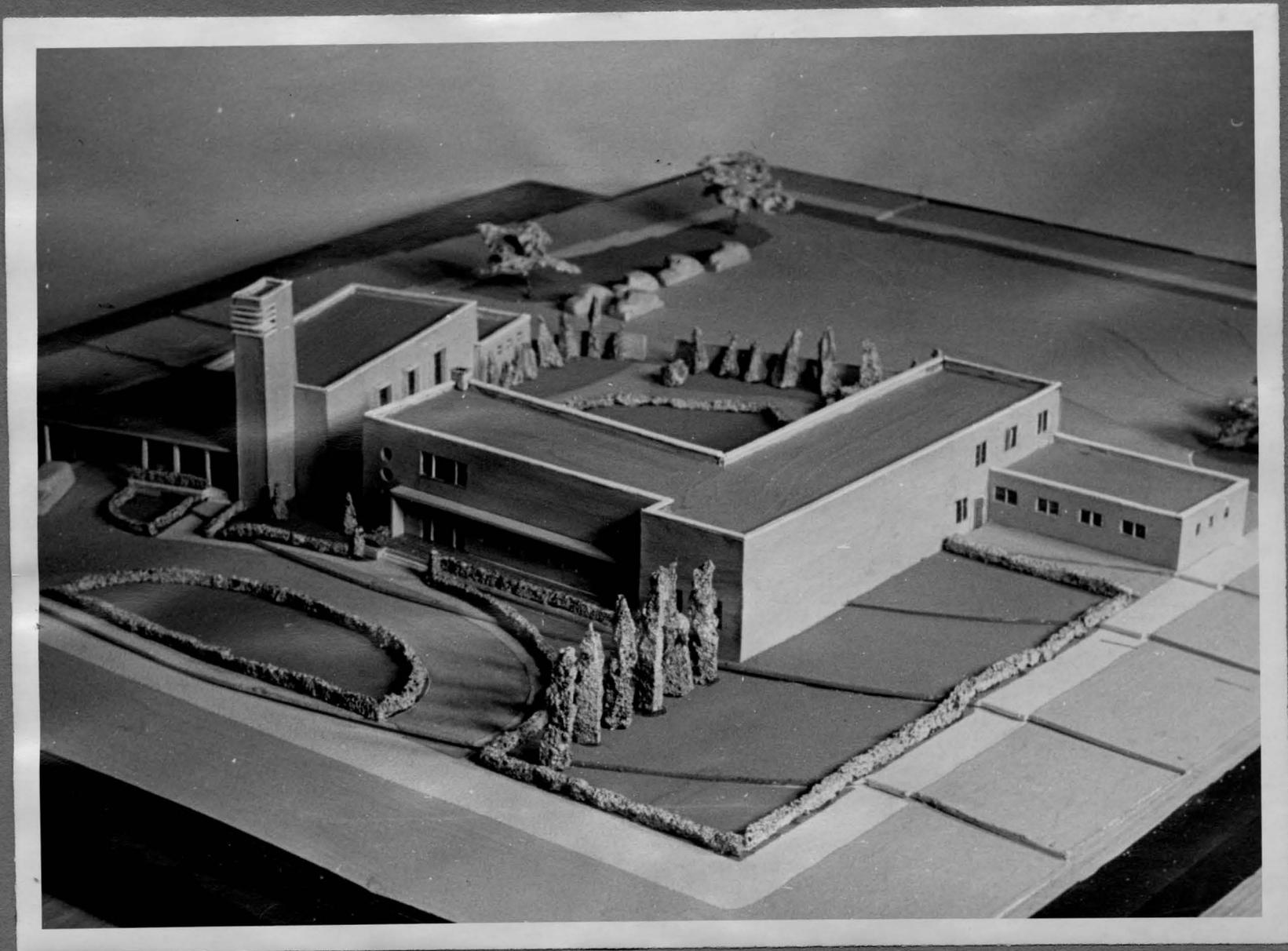
MODEL DISPLAYING EXTERIOR
IN THREE DIMENSIONS



View of Main Elevation from the Southeast



View of North Wing and Garage from the Northwest



View of Main Elevation from the Northeast



View of Chapel and North Wing from the Southeast



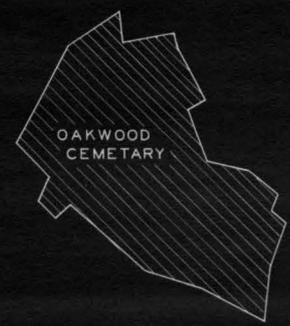
View of Main Elevation from Eye Level

PART VI

PRESENTATION OF THE DRAWINGS



A FUNERAL HOME
FOR
RICHMOND VIRGINIA



JAMES RIVER
THE S I S
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE



IN
ARCHITECTURE

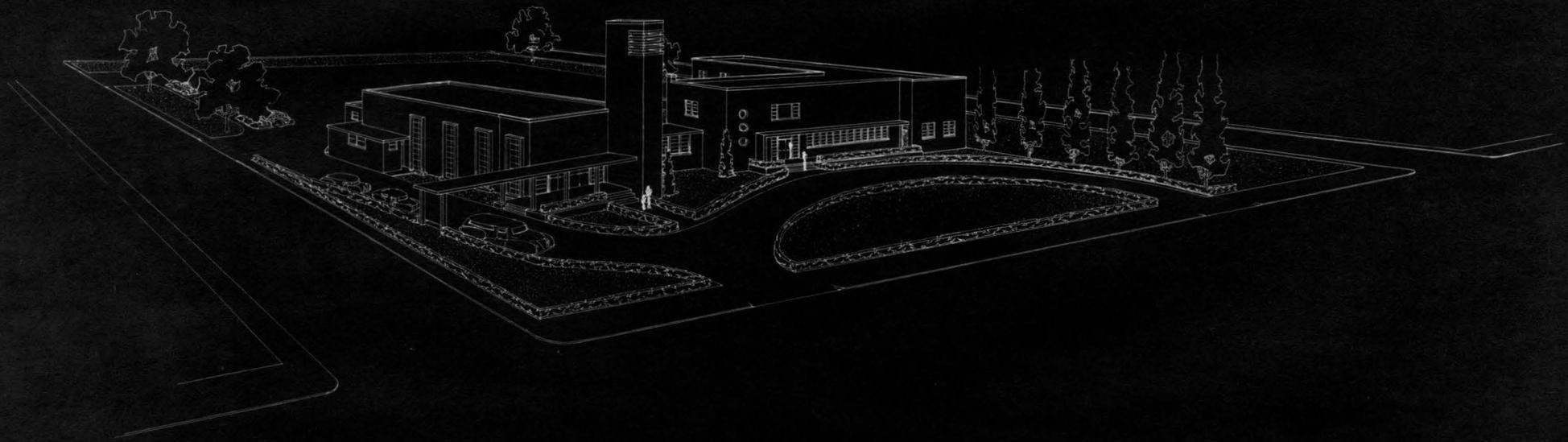
VIRGINIA



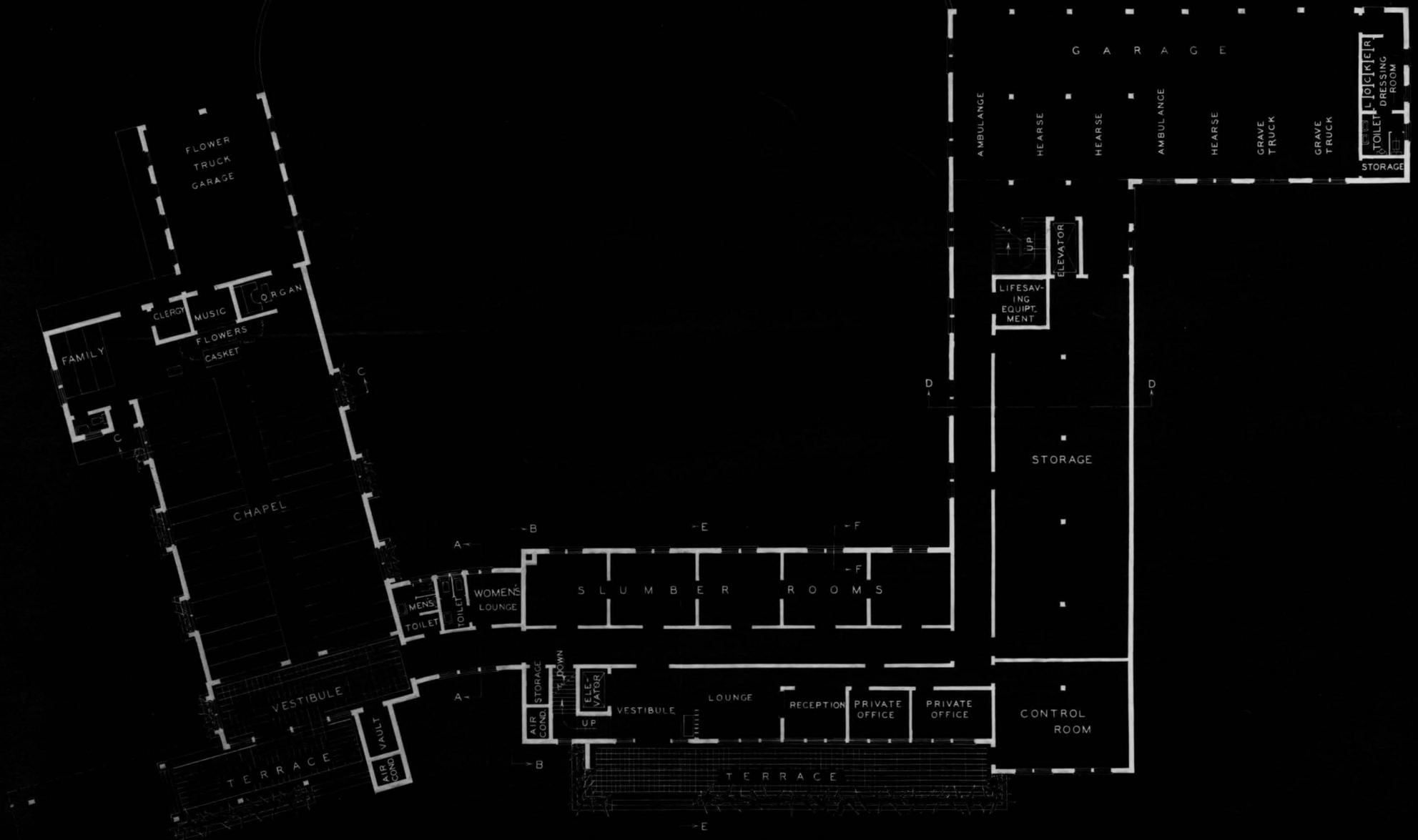
POLYTECHNIC

INSTITUTE

SITE RELATION TO TRAFFIC
LANES AND CEMETARIES

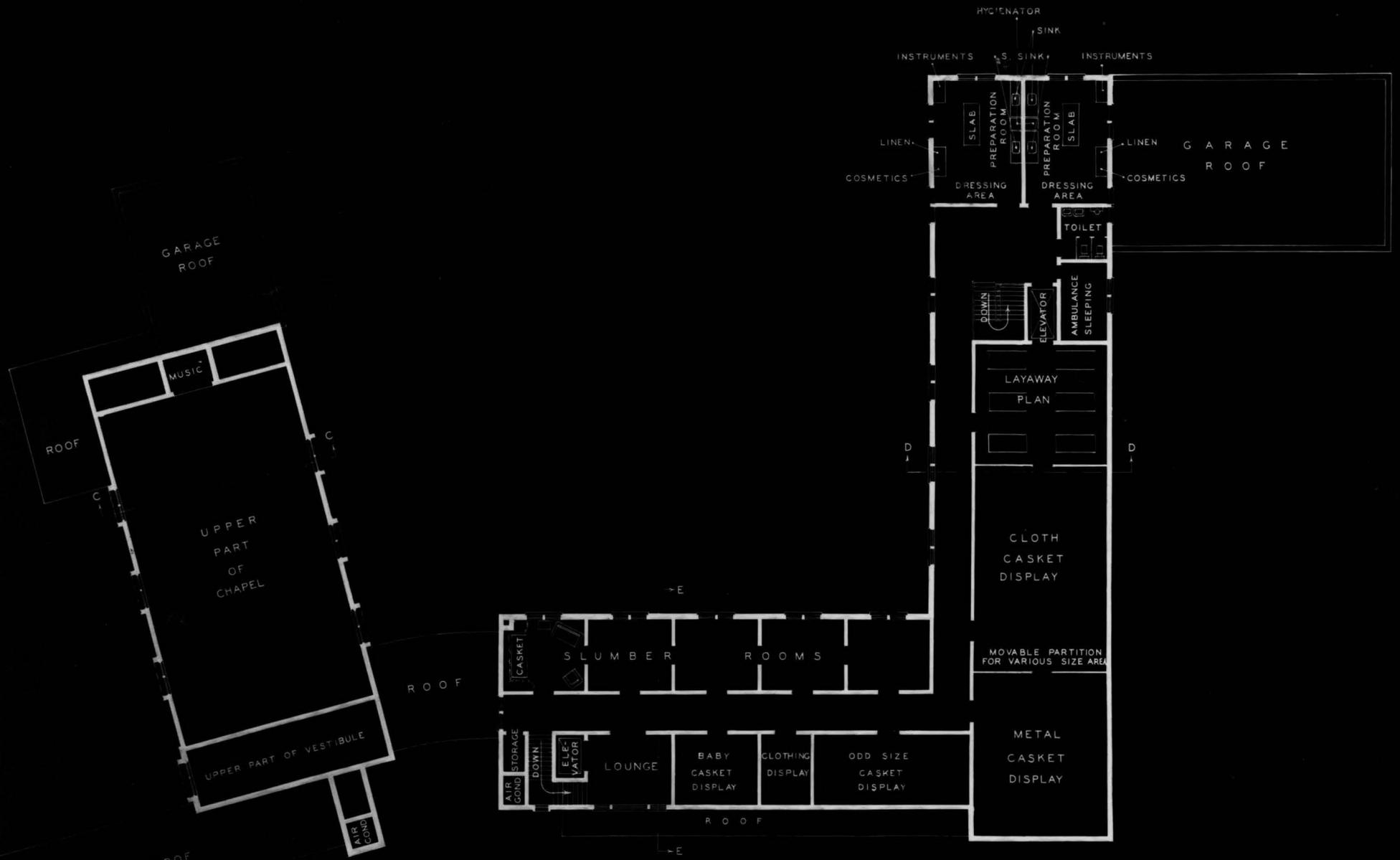


PERSPECTIVE FROM COWARDIN AVE.



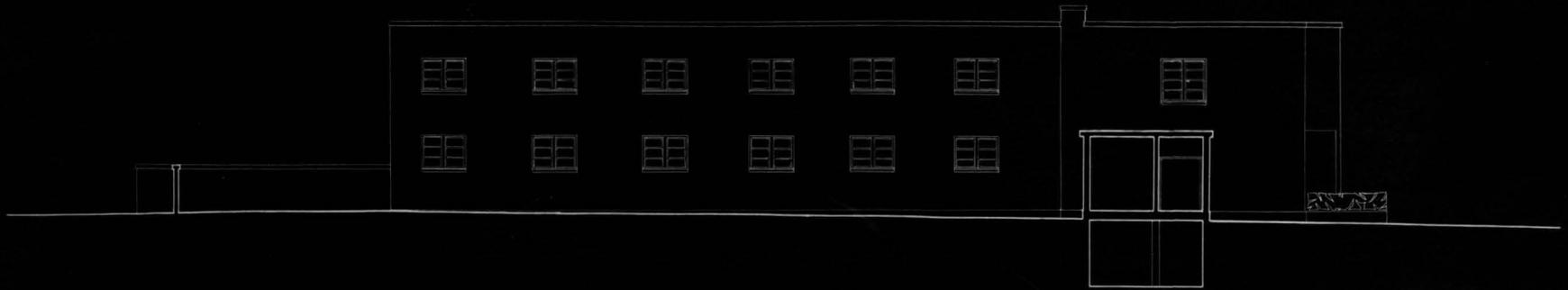
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



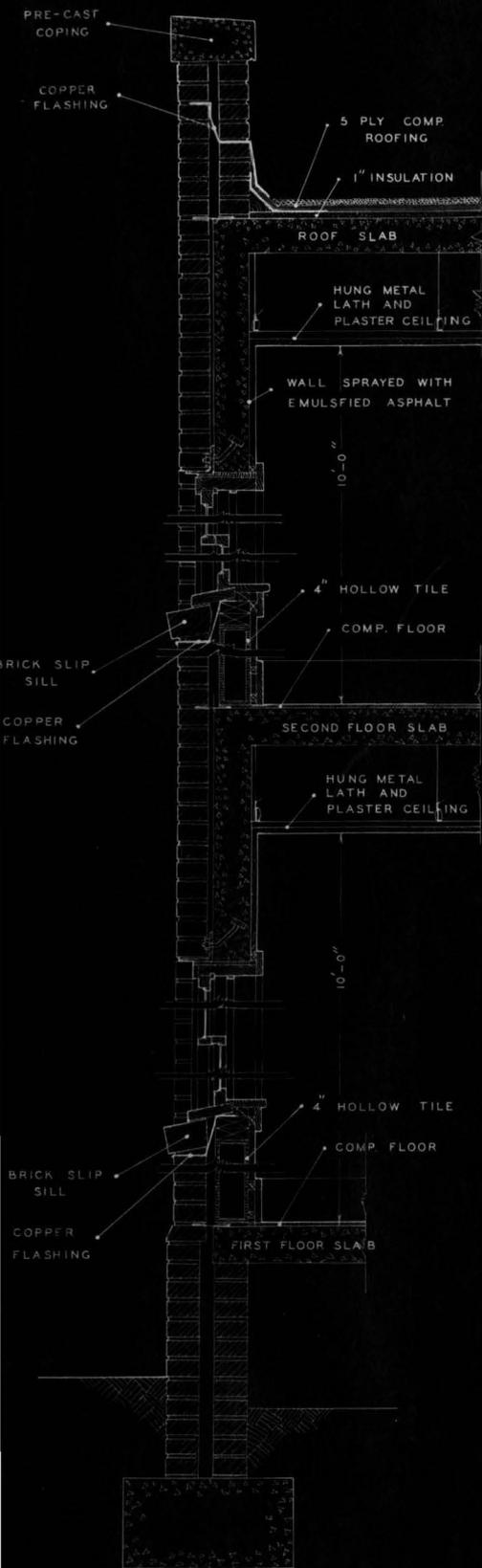
SECTION B-B SHOWING SOUTH ELEVATION OF WEST WING

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



SOUTH ELEVATION FACING WALL STREET

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



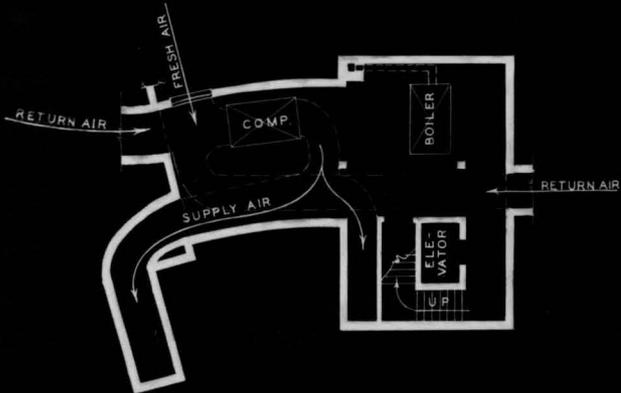
PERSPECTIVE SHOWING
TYPICAL SLUMBER
ROOM



PERSPECTIVE VIEW
OF VESTIBULE AND LOUNGE

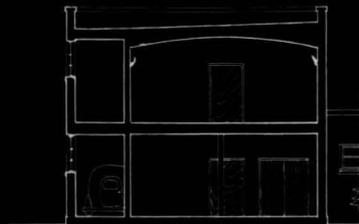
SECTION F-F SHOWING
TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION

SCALE 1/2" = 1'-0"



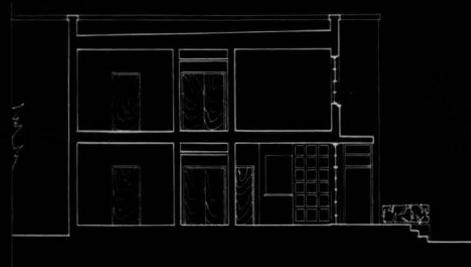
BASEMENT PLAN

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



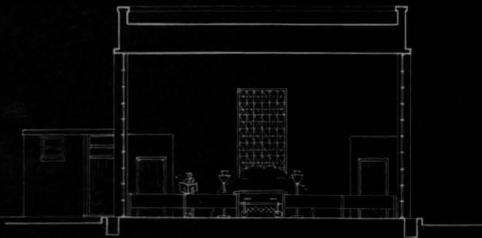
SECTION D-D THROUGH WEST WING

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



SECTION E-E THROUGH MAIN WING

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



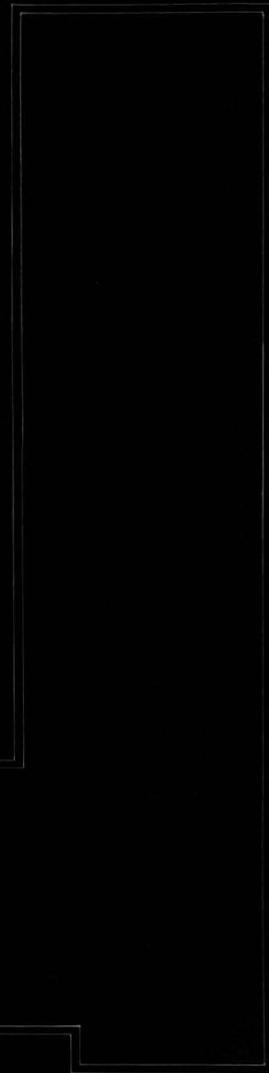
SECTION C-C SHOWING INTERIOR OF CHAPEL

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



SECOND FLOOR ROOF PLAN

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



CONCLUSION

The use of the modern approach to this architectural problem seems to satisfy the difficult requirements of funeral home planning very well. The openness of the entire plan, with its well lighted areas and its formal garden which provides views from all windows, presents a light and restful atmosphere never before obtained (to my knowledge) in a mortuary building group.

The exterior character is definitely something new for this type of business. The masses have been so arranged as to create a pleasing rhythm and composition, yet the arrangement is dignified enough to serve an establishment of this nature.

The author feels that the philosophy expressed in this thesis is a step in the right direction, to minimize the customs, rites and ceremonies of funerals, as well as to reduce the mounting grief and expense involved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bible

The Golden Bough J. G. Frazer

The Encyclopedia America

The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences

French Funerals and Customs Charles Levett

Time-Saver Standards

Architectural Graphic Standards Ramsey & Sleeper

Color Dynamics and Color Therapy Pittsburg Plate Glass Co.

Progressive Service Conference Manual of Methods

Funeral Rights and Customs of Various Countries and Religions

H. M. Arnold

PERIODICALS

American Funeral Director

Christian Century

De Ce Co.

The Architectural Forum

The Architectural Record

Pencil Points

Casket and Sunnyside