

A COMMUNITY CENTER FOR FAIRLINGTON, VIRGINIA

by

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"I am deeply convinced today that the building of community centers is of even greater importance than housing itself, for these units represent a cultural breeding ground which enables the individual to attain his full stature within the community."

-----Walter Gropius.

PART I-----INTRODUCTION

The rapid concentration of population in and near our Nation's Capital in the past decade has created unprecedented problems in housing and community development. Building became unchecked in individual homes and apartment developments. One of these developments is a 3,439 dwelling unit project called Fairlington, located in the southeast corner of Arlington County five miles southeast of downtown Washington.

Fairlington is a "nigh-dwelling" settlement according to the definition given by John A. Kinneman. "Nigh-Dwellers are persons living in close spatial proximity but between whom great social distance (in terms of neighborliness) exists. The nigh-dweller is anonymous and his relations to those who live near him are highly impersonal."<sup>1</sup> In its physical limits, Fairlington is a neighborhood. It is inhabited by people 85 percent of whom work for the same employer--the Federal Government. They pay rent to the same landlord--a corporation, live in the same style dwellings, shop at the same center, and send their children to the same school.

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1. John A. Kinneman. The Community in American Society. F. S. Crofts & Co., New York, 1947.

Since Fairlington is a "nigh-dwelling" settlement in its social and civic aspects, well planned, new and clean but yet somehow pulseless and impersonal, it is the first objective of this thesis to propose and design a community center for this development so that it may become a neighborhood in social and civic terms as well as in its physical framework. The residents of Fairlington must have a chance to know their neighbors. It is an unhealthy condition where people live in the same building and do not know each other on social and friendly terms. "If I do not love my neighbor whom I have seen, how can I love mankind whom I have not seen?"<sup>2</sup>

Fairlington is a planned community. It has its own shopping center, its own elementary school, and five churches of the major denominations. The one great neglect of thought in its planning was the absence of any sort of "heart" for the community. An elaborate and spacious administration and headquarters building was provided for the management, but the more human element was forgotten. Consequently, Fairlington has existed for nine years as a heartless shelter for people, denying these same people a chance to become neighbors instead of nigh-dwellers; a chance to become active citizens instead of self-interested residents.

To emphasise again, the first objective of this thesis is to

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2. Arthur Morgan, transposition of an ancient text.

help Fairlington surmount the problems of the encroaching instability and resulting apathy of modern urban living; that is, "Urban mediocrity without revolt... traffic snarls without action; private preoccupation and lazy contentment without compelling loyalties or great civic dreams."<sup>3</sup>

Because Fairlington's residents do not own their homes, the land, and streets of the community, there is an absence of the feeling of possessive ownership. This lack of personal ownership nurtures a feeling of unresponsiveness toward the community. The only concern is whether the individual's apartment is painted regularly, whether his immediate lawn is mowed and trimmed, or whether heat and hot water are always available. There exists a deficiency of pride in the community. With no material ties into the physical structure of the community, the average renter is prone to leave all community management in the hands of Fairlington's headquarter personnel with the statement, "why bother, I don't own anything here." This is a very unhealthy attitude to assume. The renter is denying himself the right to participate in the very "grass-roots" of democracy--that of playing a personal part in the self-government of his own community.

Therefore the second objective of this thesis is to give the people of Fairlington a part of the community which they can call their own; a part which is not under the direct authority of the owners. The proposed community center will be the means whereby the people may feel that they have a part ownership in the community; something that will give to all a common interest.

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3. Luther Gulick. National Municipal Review, Vol. 36, January, 1947.

C. BACKGROUND AND RELATED IDEAS ON COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY CENTERS

To understand fully the role of the community center in any community, it is necessary that the history of each be explored simultaneously. Much of the values of the center's functions would be overlooked if each, the communal living groups and the communal nuclei, were studied separately. Since community centers have always been an inter-related part of their communities, their use as such has developed, stagnated, or progressed parallel with the historical trends of communities down through the centuries.

Communities are not new. In fact, they are as old as civilization. To determine whether or not they will survive in the future, they must be examined in the light of their past and present. It must be determined if they are falling into decay, or if they will survive with the modern rapid advance toward metropolitan urbanism.

In the beginning the community was simple. Relationships were direct and intimate. Kinship was the basis; self preservation and subsistence, its necessity. Not only were relationships direct, it was functional in that each member had his assignment for which he was responsible for carrying out. This was the pattern of primitive living many millenniums ago. As the families expanded by intermarriage, they developed compound-family communities. The families grew into clans, the clans into tribes, and the tribes into confederations. Society became more complex.

The writer could spend much time tracing developments of various

kinds of communities in primitive, medieval, and modern times, but a common pattern becomes evident in that certain tendencies appear again and again--grouping for protection, self help, and cooperative endeavors, holding of power by those intrenched because of age, sex, or prestige, and resistance to change that almost defeats any hope of progress.

Yet there has been progress.

When people started living in spatial groups, when they first established a collective religion, and when they first noticed problems of community habitations, they created community centers. Perhaps in the beginning, they were not called that, but the purpose which they served was the same. The first community center may have been a ceremonial area devoted to tribal council, religious practices, or entertainment. However, all the basic problems of community living were solved there as they are today in our modern community centers. Later the tribes built and ordained special huts or skin tents for community activities; buildings that took on special significance to the tribes, buildings that became a symbol of unity among the individuals.

While people remained nomadic in their mode of living, little change or progress was made in their type of communities and their community centers. But as agriculture and a more stable form of community living emerged, settlements became permanent. Communal life assumed a social aspect. Communities constructed great civic centers and architecture developed. Temples were designed with courts for civic functions, plays, dances, festivals, and political activities. The classical Grecian

democracy of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates' time, often considered the first and finest example of political democracy, was practiced by every free male adult. Built especially to facilitate the practices of this democracy was the Agora of Athens. Here were made the political decisions that directed the historic empire. Percival and Paul Goodman write "...a system of direct democracy in which man participated personally, not through representatives in vast legislative bodies and mass juries ..."<sup>4</sup> The Roman forum was like the Greek Agora in the use it served as a public focus and concourse for the purpose of personal participation in civic problems.

With the coming of the dark ages, there developed a system of classes or castes; nobles and peasants, and the need for community centers declined. Community functioning was dictated by the local rulers and there were no community activities as we know them today.<sup>5</sup> Thus little was heard or known of community centers until the 14th century, at which

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4. Percival and Paul Goodman. Communitas. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1947.

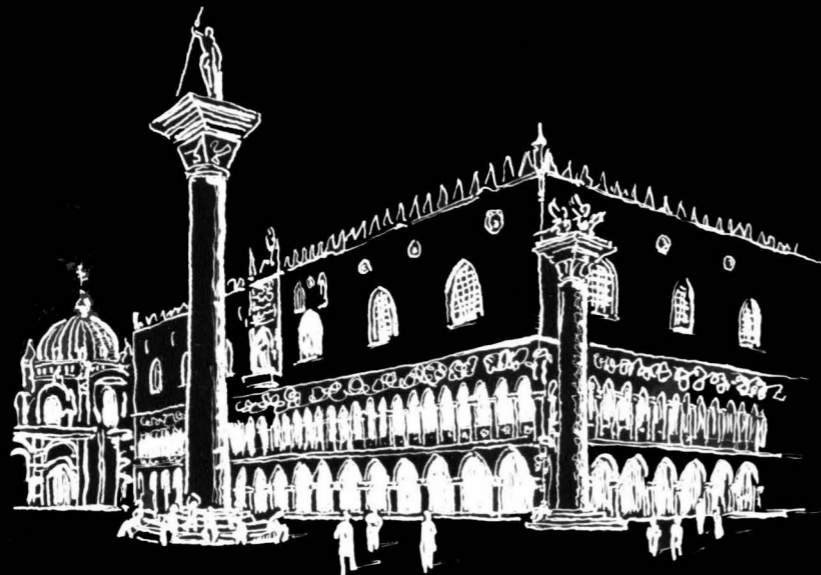
5. A modern counterpart to the dictatorial communities of the feudal period of European history is the American mining town, particularly in Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky. "There surrounds most mining towns," says Edwin E. White, "a depressing dullness... There is little social life, almost no opportunity for wholesome recreation. The company owns the streets, the houses, the stores, the school building, and the land on which the church stands, if there is one. There is no town government, for the company runs everything. And in time of trouble, the county officials may be expected in nearly every instance to act as if they were employees of the company." (Edwin E. White. Highlander Heritage: The Southern Mountains and the Nation. Friendship Press, 1947.)



time better provisions were established for them. The townhalls, cathedral squares, and the market places of those days, such as Piazza San Marco of Venice and Piazza dei Signori in Florence, were community centers. At that time the most common use of these places was business, but with the passing of time and increase in population, these facilities undertook to provide a social outlet for the people of the community. Then the town squares began to be used for civic purposes. Many great rebellions and revolutions had their start with the organization of the masses in these town squares. Political rallies were often held in the old town halls and squares. Kings and emperors, Bishops and Popes addressed their subjects in these places.

In modern times however, our civilization is becoming almost wholly mechanized. We have evolved what may be termed an "industrial culture." With increased mobility, our cities have grown to huge proportions, and because of the feeling of instability caused by this phenomenal growth, the inhabitants of these cities have lost their personal association with democratic government. Only the small communal groups now foster individual desire for participation in self government which is the basic tenet of democracy. So, if democracy, as a form of government is to survive in the future, then the community or neighborhood as a unit of living must also survive.

Most of us live in communities not of our creation. They are products of the past. We cannot change all that has been. But, we live in the present and look toward the future. We must know the past to



*Piazza San Marco, Venice*



*A busy square*

**OLD and NEW—**

LEFT ABOVE, THE PIAZZA SAN MARCO SERVED THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING ENJOYABLE WALKING WHILE OBSERVING BEAUTY, MEETING FRIENDS, OR THE MASS RALLYING OF CITIZENS TO LEARN AND SOLVE PROBLEMS OF COMMUNITY HABITATION.

THE "BUSY SQUARE" IS ONE VISIONED BY CAMILO SITTE. THIS SQUARE IS NOT THE CENTER OF MOTOR OR PREDESTRIAN TRAFFIC BUT JUST A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SPEND THEIR TIME, COMING INTO IT TO REMAIN, LEAVING IT TO GO TO WORK OR HOME, RATHER THAN PASSING THROUGH IT.

understand the present, and we must understand both past and present, if we are to give direction to the future of our communities.

All too evidently it is seen that the great metropolitan cities are breeding objectionable and harmful citizens. Organization becomes only a symbol, losing its personal appeal to the mass. The individual cannot participate in and become a part of the whole, it is too big. So his interests turn within himself, and his only pursuit becomes private preoccupation.

Because a few wise men were conscious of the glaring and objectionable faults of the seething and impersonal cities, with their resultant loss of human scale, they sought ways to remedy the ills of the metropolis. They organized a movement at the beginning of the present century which was referred to as the "Community Center Movement." This movement had as its goal, the establishment of a community center in all neighborhoods and communities. James Dahir writes:

Those who sought, after the turn of the century, to organize community centers for the meeting of local residents in common neighborhood institutions in most instances found there were no real communities to locate the centers in. Largely from this discovery came the drive for the planned residential neighborhood (both urban and suburban) where the physical frame of the area, its streets, open spaces, community centers, shopping districts would all be placed in such relation to the houses and to each other that they might significantly aid in the creation of a cooperative community life.<sup>6</sup>

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6. James Dahir. The Neighborhood Unit Plan, for Russel Sage Foundation. E. L. Hildreth and Co., Brattleboro, Vermont, 1947.

The community center movement gained importance and power after a decade of struggle. In 1911, the movement was sufficiently developed to have a national convention, which was addressed by Woodrow Wilson. It was through the influence of this movement that the neighborhood unit formula was pushed forward as a solution to the urban fault of "pursuit of private preoccupation, lazy contentment without compelling civil loyalties, or great civic dreams."<sup>7</sup>

The movement did not confine itself to slum areas alone, but aimed at organizing the normal neighborhoods' public and private activities in recreation, general culture, and education. One of the first promotions the movement undertook was the use of public schools as centers for community activities.

In 1929, the association reviewed its progress and found itself far short of many of its goals. It then sought the reason why the goals were not reached, and found as a primary reason again, the absence of "communities." Cities had continued to grow uncontrolled by speculative building on their peripheries—an extension of the system by which the obsoleted mother city had reached its toppling mass. Another reason why the community center movement was failing in its goals was the apathy of the cities' citizens. They still hadn't been educated above their deficiency in civic and locality pride. All too frequently they refused responsibility for community organization and betterment. And there were

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7. Luther Gulick. National Municipal Review, Vol. 36, January, 1947.

the political, financial, and religious obstacles to the community development. Too often planners ran into these oppositions when efforts were made to organize areas into neighborhoods.

Finally, in the mid-thirties, the efforts of the community center movement began to have effect. The neighborhood unit idea was becoming accepted by planners and social workers as a means to overcome the obstacles of organizing public and private activities in recreation, culture, and education. Our leading planners, architects, and social workers began devoting much effort in trying to convince the people of the wisdom of community or neighborhood planning against the uncontrolled, crowded, and inefficient cities as we know them today. The world's great contemporary architects, Wright, Le Corbusier, Sitte, and Percival Goodman--to name a few--have given much of their own time and skills developing and proposing schemes or solutions that would eliminate cities as they are today. These architects proposed solutions that would house people in "human perspective groups" which would in turn make up the composite city much as countries, townships, or parishes compose the states and the states make the Union.

When war struck this country in 1941, there immediately began an appalling migration of six million workers toward the great industrial and governmental cities. This necessitated a tremendous expansion of home building to house these people. Many of these home developments were meant to be temporary, for the duration of the war only, but many were built for permanent residences. Since the cities were already overflowing,

fortunately many of these new developments were built on new land. Unfortunately, too many were built without any community planning--"most houses on the least land" being the criterion of expediency. And now the country is burdened with these housing developments, developments already obsolete and on their way to becoming slums. For the few that were planned well, we are thankful, but the others are a blight; hindering, not helping our problem of creating desirable neighborhoods for the people. Again, it will have to be the community centers that will hold these blighted areas together, lead the people to good citizenship, and bring forth remedial action that will lift the stagnating communities out of their plight.

Just how does the community center serve the modern community or neighborhood to make good citizens, and better the community? A study of the observation of Lewis Mumford on Sunnyside, a neighborhood development across the East River from Manhattan will give us a good insight as to how a community center can serve a modern neighborhood.

Almost overnight dyed-in-the-wool New Yorkers, who had once made it a point of honor not knowing their neighbors on the same floor of their flat, became active collaborators in all sorts of communal projects. They planned lectures and poetry readings in the special community rooms, they founded a nursery school, they supervised the common greens in each block, they exchanged experiences in the art of gardening with their neighbors--and, above all, they became neighbors and found a satisfaction in their existence that only the poor, in the great metropolis, otherwise knew....On the basis of their past behavior in an ill-planned and depersonalized environment, you cannot judge what people are capable of becoming, in a relatively short time, when more social opportunities and incentives are present.

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8. Lewis Mumford. Human Problems of Dispersal, in Town and Country Planning, Vol. 14, 1946.



All of this was brought about because the planners of Sunnyside wisely included a community center in the plans of the neighborhood!

The value of a modern community center serving a communal neighborhood may be clarified by examining its functions. The National Committee on Housing states: "...the community center should serve as (1) a meeting place for group political, civic, and social function; (2) it should provide a place for those activities, social, recreational, and quasi public which cannot take place in the home and which are necessary adjuncts to a full and cultural life."<sup>9</sup>

But what of the more abstract functions of an organized community? These can best be expressed graphically by a comparison of traits between an aggregate of people living in a defined area and a community of people organized by a well programed and progressive civic and social center.

THE AGGREGATE GROUP

1. Indifference of population to group and community relationships.
2. A minimum of communication between people, with few visits. No group meetings.
3. Low morale. No pride in past achievements or much loyalty to the community.
4. No leadership and no group basis for development of leadership.
5. No social services or agencies.
6. Social groups other than families nonexistent.
7. No political awareness or activity on local scale.

THE ORGANIZED COMMUNITY

1. General alertness of individuals to community interests and readiness to take advantage of opportunities for family or civic betterment.
2. Ample communication, visits between individuals and families. Full awareness of local happenings; libraries available and fully used.
3. High morale; pride in past community achievements. Sense of civic responsibility, loyalty to community.

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9. National Committee on Housing, Inc. Your Stake in Community Planning. New York, 1944.

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|--|--|
| <p>8. Little organized recreation. Few or no community facilities for the use of leisure time.</p> | <p>4. Intelligent, creative leadership; well supported by both young and old.</p> <p>5. Complete and adequate social services.</p> <p>6. Continual awareness of political responsibility.</p> <p>7. Numerous evidences of varied and creative living including parties, games, and social celebrations. Adequate recreational facilities available, such as parks, community center, swimming pools, etc.</p> <p>8. Social stability, with minimum of juvenile delinquency, crime, etc.</p> <p>9. Greater esthetic expression. Clean homes, streets, and roads; landscaping and architecture in generally good taste.<sup>10</sup></p> |
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As can be seen by this comparative list, the great difference between the unorganized and organized community is leadership. It is through the development of leaders that a community center returns its biggest dividends. "Intelligent, creative leadership, rotated, diffused, and well supported, including both young and old people--here lies the crux of community organization."<sup>11</sup> Without this leadership, no community could ever know its potentialities, or the accomplishment of its potentialities. Therefore the birth of a civic and community center and group leaders usually evolve together. One creating and aiding the other through growing pains into maturity.

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10. Wayland J. Hayes. The Small Community Looks Ahead. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1947.

11. Ibid.



But the function of a community center is not all civic.

Social activities within a neighborhood go far in cementing loyalty in and pride for the community. The center might be termed the community living room. For a section of a city, town, or a community may be well planned, new, clean and yet be somehow lifeless and repine. For friendliness based upon human association and memories is clearly, sometimes cruelly, missing. It is the purpose of the community center to get away from the urban way of life; life based on anonymity. If the anonymous man can find a place in the life of the neighborhood, if he is called by his christian or nick name; and if his abilities are recognized, he will become a citizen instead of a tenant or tax payer. He will become a member of the family, seeking friendships and association with others. He no longer will be content to exist as another anonymous person without responsibilities toward his newly acquired friends or the community.

In reviewing the many texts on community centers, the writer was impressed by the importance placed on such centers by the planners of new neighborhoods, towns, and cities being rebuilt over all of Europe and England to replace those destroyed during the last war. Without exception, every new plan gives prominent thought and consideration to the community center. The planners of these new communal groups well know that to inspire the tenants, owners, or residents to active participation as community citizens, direction must be given the abilities, desire for companionship, and civic interest of the inhabitants. Hence the community center.

There can no longer be any denying the importance of a formal community building in the community. We have enough experience behind us to prove the centers' value to the community, and that to neglect its place in the social and physical community is but creating again the un-human, anonymous way of life that we so much want to escape in the present mechanized civilization.

Fairlington, covering 322 acres of rolling country is located in Arlington County, Virginia. It is bordered on the east by the city of Alexandria and on the south by Fairfax County. It straddles the new Shirely Memorial Highway. Five miles northeast by the Shirely Highway is downtown Washington, while the southwest direction leads to U. S. Route 1 and Richmond, Virginia.

This development was started in 1941, and the first occupants were admitted in the fall of 1943. Financed and constructed by the governmental agencies, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Defense Housing Corporation, the development was built to ease the growing housing shortage in and around Washington, D. C. due to the war and the great migration of government and service personnel flooding Washington's already inadequate housing capacity.

The government continued to operate the development until 1947, at which time it was sold to a private corporation. Since 1947, the development has been managed on the same principal as was used by the government. Due to the nature of the buildings, it was considered impracticable to buy the community by co-operative financing as first tried when notice of sale was released by the government.

Fairlington is a garden-type community of 3,439 apartments. When built in 1943, it was the biggest of its type in the country. The major half, South Fairlington, with 1,736 units, has three arterial streets

on its periphery roughly forming a triangle. The remaining 1,703 apartments of North Fairlington form a rectangular area on the north side of the Shirely Memorial Highway.

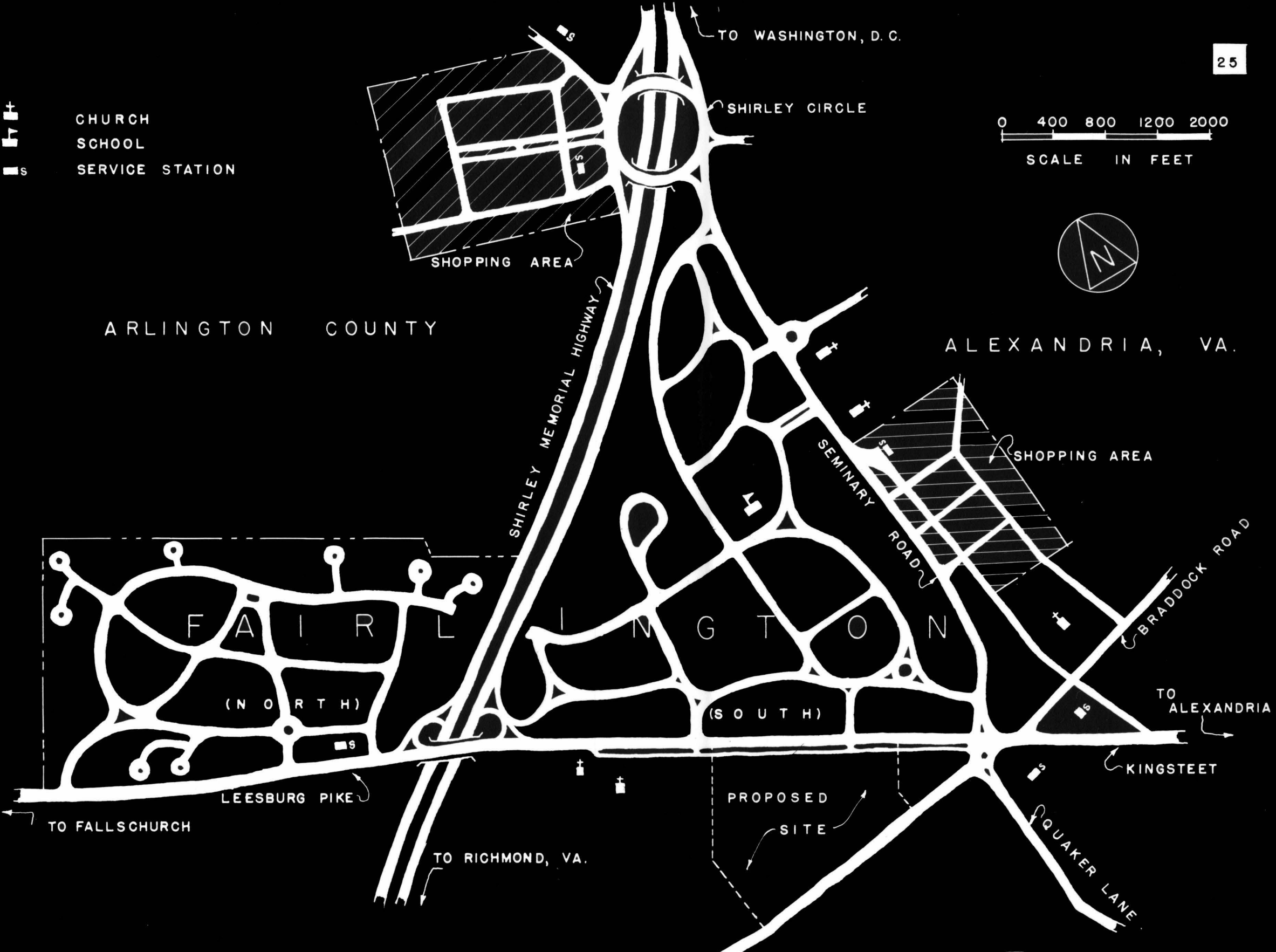
The community consists of 579 separate row-type buildings containing the 3,439 apartments. As can be seen on the map of Fairlington and surrounding areas on the next page, there are no through streets cutting across the community. The traffic on the community streets therefore, are residents, visitors, and caterers only. Also on the map can be seen Fairlington's shopping center, churches, and elementary school.

In its planning, Fairlington was provided with adequate recreational areas. It has facilities for tennis, baseball, softball, and football. And too, there are the play grounds of the elementary school with its swings, slides, jungle gyms, and see-saws. Each group of courts is arranged around a play area for children. These play areas are all on the inside ring of courts away from any street. Therefore, in its physical aspect, Fairlington is a complete, well planned, quiet, and pleasant community.

There are approximately 15,000 inhabitants living in Fairlington's apartments. During the war years and immediately after, the population was classed as transient. The average term of residence was about three years. This was accounted for by the large number of service officers, who, after serving their term of duty in Washington, would move on to other assignments elsewhere. During this period of transient occupancy, it was impossible to attempt any sort of community organization. No one could

 CHURCH  
 SCHOOL  
 SERVICE STATION

0 400 800 1200 2000  
 SCALE IN FEET



ARLINGTON COUNTY

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

FAIRLINGTON

(NORTH)

(SOUTH)

TO FALLS CHURCH

TO RICHMOND, VA.

PROPOSED SITE

TO ALEXANDRIA

FAIRFAX COUNTY

EPISCOPAL HIGH SCHOOL

PLAN OF FAIRLINGTON & RELATED AREAS

plan on staying long enough to justify any attempts toward developing community activities and organization.

Thus Fairlington, between 1943 and 1947, could be considered as a "Reppel Deppel"--to use the G. I. terminology for a personnel replacement depot.

But in 1947, when the Fairmac Corporation bought Fairlington from the government, it at once started the policy of admitting permanent renters only to replace the transients as they moved out. So by 1949, Fairlington was a more normal community. Resident selection did not confine itself to permanent renters alone, but had the long visioned goal of compatibility among inhabitants. Renters were selected entirely from professional, managerial, or white collar classes. This was not done with any thought of discrimination, but rather by realizing that class distinctions do exist, and that it was a better policy not to create conditions leading to such discrimination. Consequently, Fairlington does not have a definable minority or unpreferred group.

However, there is a healthy mixture in the development's population in that they come from all parts of the United States, of many nationalities, and professing varied religious faiths and political preferences giving a healthy diversity of interest and background. After all, homogeneity breeds stagnation.

By selection, and also by rental charged, Fairlington's residents are composed of financially able people who pay rents ranging from \$65.00 to \$166.00. Also of interest is the fact that for 3,439 dwelling units,

there are nearly 4,500 automobiles in the development!

Further division can and should be made among the inhabitants. Of the 15,000 inhabitants, approximately 7,000 are between the ages of one and twenty years. Of these 7,000 children and adolescents, about three-quarters are children between the ages of one and fifteen; the remaining being high school students. The rest of the 8,000, further divided, show about 500 as single adults--all ages between twenty and above; the remaining being married couples and parents. Of the couples, 75 percent are between the ages of twenty and forty and the other 25 percent are forty years of age or over.

TABLE I

POPULATION OF FAIRLINGTON BY AGE GROUPS*		
No.	Classification by Age	Number
1.	1 to 20 years (juveniles)	
	Elementary school and below	5,250
	High School and above	1,750
		7,000
2.	20 and above (single adults)	
	20 to 40 years old	300
	40 and above	200
		500
3.	20 to 40 (married)	5,624
4.	40 and above (married)	<u>1,876</u>
	Total	15,000

\* All figures given above are estimates furnished by the Manager of Fairlington. No actual figures of population structure are kept by the owners.

The figures on the previous page show a healthy balance among the younger age groups, 40 years old or below. Any communal group led and directed by its elders must rely upon the energies of the younger people for accomplishment.

So a study of Fairlington and its people cannot but impress upon one the desirability and necessity of a community center for this community. There is a defined physical communal frame; a population with an excess of abilities, able to carry responsibilities, willing to become better and active citizens, wanting fellowship, and desiring constructive use of their leisure time.



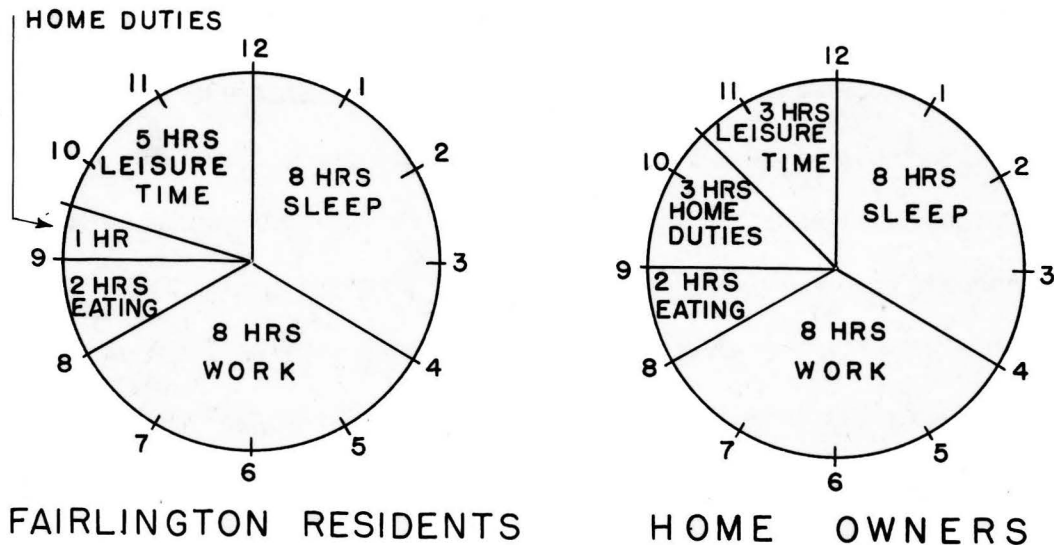
PART II-----DESIGN

In all types of community welfare organizations, there are two primary prerequisites for their successful operation: 1. a sincere need for such an organization, and, 2. people who have free time and are willing to devote all or part of this time toward administration of the organization.

In the program development of the proposed community center for Fairlington, which follows this general discussion, the definite need for a community center and the activities housed will be discussed by parts in a logical order of observation. But first, a study must be made of the potential leisure time of Fairlington's population and the willingness of these people to utilize their leisure time in whole or part as unpaid administration personnel in the organization.

The potential leisure time of Fairlington's residents is high when compared with other urban people. There are reasons why this statement is true. First, since Fairlingtonians are 100 percent renters, and thus have no responsibilities toward maintenance and upkeep of their homes, lawns, or walks, and since they have central heating and hot water, both furnished from central plants, they have no time consuming duties with these chores. Not being allowed flower or vegetable gardens, furnished automatic laundry washing and drying machines, garbage collected and removed by the management, nearby to two shopping centers, all these factors and many others together tend to contribute more leisure time to the people of Fairlington than is enjoyed by most urban dwellers as a group.

Below are two charts\* which compare the daily leisure time of Fairlingtonians to that of "home owning" urban dwellers.



The "home owning" dweller must spend considerable time yearly to the upkeep of his buildings and grounds, tending furnace, removing trash and garbage, plus many more of the home duties that go with ownership. These duties materially decrease the free time of the individual.

The next point that must be determined is whether or not Fairlingtonians would be willing to contribute or utilize any portion of their leisure time in helping to organize a community center council, carry the burden of financing and building, and then assure the continued active, useful, and progressive functioning of the center. Whether or not Fairlingtonians would obligate themselves in this manner for community betterment would depend entirely on whether or not leaders were forthcoming

\* The above charts are based on daily average over a years time.

to enlighten the people on the advantages of a community center. The people must have leaders who would organize their potentials and abilities, and direct their energies along the right path toward completion of the initial phase of achieving the community building.

Because Fairlington's adult population is wholly from the professional, managerial, or white collar classes, including many former and present military leaders, professional leaders and organizers, and others trained in civil leadership, there is no doubt that first quality leaders with ability, willingness to serve, and a determination to succeed, would step forth and unite the community on the accomplishments of building and utilizing its own community center.

It is upon a firm belief in the hypothesis just stated, "that leaders in the community will arise from anonymity and unite the community . . .," that this writer became convinced that a community center for Fairlington was needed, was feasible, and if started, would succeed, and therefore chose the design of such a center as his thesis.

To construct a design program for a community center, a designer must have a thorough insight into the nature of communities in general; a knowledge of their structure and function, an understanding of their citizens and resulting folkways, plus a reasonably accurate prediction of their future trends. Then the designer must compare this knowledge of all the problems of communities in general with the particular problems of the community for which he is designing the center. For--communities are like persons, no two are identical, and the designer must know every aspect of a community before he can design a community center that will most nearly fulfill the requirements of that particular community.

In Part I of this thesis, the writer has endeavored within the scope of this work, to familiarize the reader with the history of communities in general, the importance of community centers to these communities, and a physical and social description of Fairlington, the "particular community." With this information at hand, it is possible to go into a complete breakdown of Fairlington's communal elements, compare these elements with those of all communities, and from these comparisons formulate a program that will serve Fairlington's needs most fully.

Following is the preamble to a constitution written by Henry E. Jackson, upon the request of a group of people who wished to organize themselves into a community, a community in the midst of Washington, D. C.

We, the people of the Wilson Normal Community of the City of Washington, D. C., in order to secure the advantages of organized self-help, to make public opinion more enlightened and effective, to promote the education of adults and youths for citizenship in a democracy, to organize the use of the public school as a community capitol, to foster a neighborhood spirit through which the community may become a more efficient social unit, to prevent needless waste through the duplication of social activities, to engage in co-operative enterprise for our moral and material welfare, and to create a social order more in harmony with the conscience and intelligence of the nation, do ordain and establish this constitution.<sup>12</sup>

One could hardly find a better guide to help in the development of a program for a community than this preamble. In it has been condensed the very essence of the purpose and requirements of any center serving a definite communal group. Even a partial fulfillment of the goals set forth in this preamble could not but help make a better community, better neighbors, and better citizens; not only to the neighborhood but to the nation as a whole.

By examination of the quoted preamble, three major divisions of the function of a center come to light. They are:

- A. Civic and Educational Functions.
- B. Social and Cultural Activities.
- C. Recreation.

By breaking each of the three divisions into their component parts, comparing each part to Fairlington's need, a logical order for

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12. Henry E. Jackson. A Community Center. For Department of Interior, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1918.

program development will present itself.

A. Civic and Educational

It is the writer's conviction that this first of the three major divisions of a center's function is the most important. The activities carried out under this section are the only ones that definitely require group participation for achievement. Recreation, social and cultural outlets may be found through the individual's own initiative, but it is impossible for the individual to accomplish any worth while deeds in civic or educational fields without the aid of collective action.

In order to visualize the activities classed under "Civic and Educational" they have been listed below under their functional heading. From this list, a study of Fairlington's need in each case can be made.

A. Civic and Educational:

1. Civic:

- a. Political--at all levels.
- b. Community Lyceums.
- c. Community Charity and Welfare Organizations.

2. Education:

- a. Adult Education.
- b. Youth Education.

Political: The first responsibility of a good citizen in a democratic nation is personal participation in his government at all levels. No community can afford to omit any effort on its part to present to the

citizens every accomodation that will invite active participation in politics.

Fairlington, being a part of Arlington County, Virginia, faces an unusual problem in the matter of local government and politics. Being one of Arlington's several major housing developments, it is constantly having to fight the County Board of Supervisors for its fair share of tax returns in the form of better utilities, road maintenance, and school facilities. Too often in the past, Fairlingtonians have lost many such conflicts with the county government over such measures. The reason for these losses was primarily because the citizens were unable to organize in time to present a solid front with their demands for just treatment. If they could have had a place where a large part of the voting adults could have met, had already been united on their views, they could then have accomplished much more with their demands.

Therefore, one of the first requirements for Fairlington's purposed Community Center, is an assembly room large enough to seat a representative portion of the communities' adults.

Lyceums: This same assembly room, with stage, would also be used as a lyceum, where community forums or lectures, would be held whenever necessary to consider, debate, and solve, any problems concerning their welfare, or whenever a lecturer was present, either voluntary or by invitation.

And along with the forums and lectures, the assembly hall



should be accessible for rallies or meetings of the political parties and any other political organization, such as the "League of Women Voters" or "Junior Adult Voters' Organization"--both groups active in Fairlington. In other words, the assembly hall would be for the use of any group which has as its objective, greater personal interest and participation in government by the individual.

Charity and Welfare: In every community, there exists many organizations for community welfare such as the "Community Chest," the "Red Cross," "Community Trust Council," and other charitable organizations which have as their goal the help of the less fortunate people by expert guidance or material assistance. The effectiveness of these groups depends not so much upon the zeal of their leaders as upon the philanthropic generosities of the more fortunate.

While Fairlington's people are of a high income level, they have not contributed their limitable quota toward welfare aid. If space could be provided for the headquarters of welfare organizations so that activities could be centralized instead of being spread out through many homes, more could be done to help Fairlington realize its responsibilities.

Considering the number of such organizations, including the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, the Kiwanis, and others, who devote part, or all, of their energies toward charitable causes, there should be at least two separate rooms for these groups to minimize conflicts in use.

Adult Education: It is known to all that though the body reaches its maturity early in the life span, the mind's capacity for learning never ceases, but continues to absorb new knowledge throughout its life. Thus, it is foolish to think that because adults may have finished or quit their pursuit of formal education, they should then let their possession of knowledge remain static and stagnate.

Fairlington, by the nature of its people and their professional standing in society, has little need for the provision of formal education for its adults. Those few who, by one reason or another, were unable to finish a desired level of education in a normal sequence, and now wish to further their pursuit of education may do so at any one of the many night schools conducted by the three universities in nearby Washington. Further, these people are financially able to afford any such studies. So, it can be seen that Fairlington's only need in the field of adult education is possibly the formation of discussion groups or symposia by persons having similar problems or interests. These symposia or discussions could be scheduled in any of the two rooms designated previously for charitable organizations, or in the assembly hall itself.

Fairlington does not have a library of its own nor is there one nearby. Therefore, it is necessary that space be provided for a branch library that would be affiliated with one of the many public libraries in Washington, D. C.

Youth Education: As for youth, all formal education is provided

by the public school system maintained by the county and state. Though at present very crowded, Arlington is doing much to relieve the congestion in its schools. Fairlington is very fortunate in having its own elementary school building, a building which at present is adequate for its needs. So, the proposed community center will not undertake any effort toward formal education of its youths, but should maintain a portion of its library for them; a portion separated from the adult section and stocked with books of interest to children and adolescents. It would help to create in the youth a desire to seek books and develop a taste for good reading. Therefore, the combined library would require a rotating stock of about a thousand volumes.

#### B. Social and Cultural:

As mentioned several times in Part I of this thesis, anonymity is one of the penalties of urban living. Any community wishing to be a neighborhood in the true sense of the word, must have social intercourse among its residents. This does not imply visits between individuals or families, though that is desirable, but group participation in social gatherings, such as parties, dances, non-commercial movies, and other forms of entertainments. The primary purpose this serves, besides individual enjoyment, is a chance for an individual to know the people of his community as a unit, whereby he can find his place in the unit.

Below is a breakdown of the activities to be considered under "Social and Cultural."

## B. Social and Cultural:

## 1. Social:

- All Ages... a. Dancing  
 b. Movies  
 c. Parties  
 d. Other Entertainment, Local or Hired Talent.  
 e. Youth Center

- Youths Only... (1) Dancing  
 (2) Snack Bar and Fountain  
 (3) Youth Clubs

- Adults Only... f. Card Clubs  
 g. Other Adult Social Clubs

## 2. Cultural:

- All Ages... a. Music  
 (1) Orchestras & Bands  
 (2) Glee Club, Choir, & Chorus

- All Ages... b. Drama  
 (1) Plays  
 (2) Pageants  
 (3) Dramatic Club

- All Ages... c. Arts  
 (1) Appreciation Courses  
 (2) Exhibits, Local or Other Sources of Work  
 (3) Painting and Sculpturing

Social: As stated in Section D, Part I of this thesis, Fairlington's population has a high degree of homogeneity. All they need to become a close knit "family" is a chance to get together and meet their nigh-dwellers. For this purpose, area should be designated for dances, parties, movies, stage shows, plus smaller areas for bridge clubs, and

other social clubs. For small dances, private or semiprivate, a separate room should be provided. The large public dances, stage shows, and other entertainment requiring a large area, could be held in the assembly hall or gymnasium (which will be discussed later.) As for the social clubs, they could use the two small rooms designated for civic organizations and charitable or social and welfare clubs. However, to partly relieve the loads on these two rooms, and to have separate rooms for noisy activities, two additional club rooms should be provided.

Delinquent youth is one of the greater problems facing today's authorities. One basic reason for this is the loosening of home ties. Because of this there is the growing tendency of youths to seek entertainment outside of the home and away from parental interference. Wilbur Hallenbeck says, "The increase of delinquency among young people in the teen ages has become one of the greatest concerns in American cities....Many activities have been developed to do something about it. In spite of all these, however, delinquency continues. Failures have come, for the most part, because the character of urbanization and its effect upon the lives of children and young people have not been recognized. Urbanization has done several things to modify very radically the circumstances in which children live."

"When the industrial age took work and earning a living out of homes, it did two things: it began the breakdown of the family unit with all its members as a cooperative group, in which each person had his or her responsibility to the work in hand and to each other as partners in

this work; and it separated the basic economic provision for the welfare of the family and its members from the direct participation of the members of the family.... Home came to be a place where shelter, food, and clothes were furnished in a more or less pleasant and satisfactory way, but a place which was run by adults who laid down the rules, set the specifications, and made certain demands."<sup>13</sup>

There can be no denying that modern urban living is forcing the teen ager to become a more independent individual. After all, as young men they are drafted into the armed services before reaching 20; often, they partially earn their livelihood after 18; and consequently, claim they should have a say so in governing their lives. They rebel against the adult made world.

Only by realizing the nature of today's youth can a center be planned which they will use, and which will be useful to them. "Young people are breaking away from the type of program that comes all tied up in a neat little bundle, the planning of which is dominated by adults."<sup>14</sup>

"They want to be responsible, to plan and carry out on their own. They will take their communities as partners, but not as Santa Clauses. The young people want adult help, but not adult domination.

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13. Wilbur C. Hallenbeck. American Urban Communities. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1951.

14. Louise D. Yuill. Teen Centers and the Adult Community. Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 32, Sept.-Oct., 1947.

They want the cooperation of their communities, not their paternalism."<sup>15</sup>

To overcome these faults of urbanization and to help Fairlington's youth to maintain social equilibrium, it is justifiable to devote an area in the purposed community center to the young people (ages 15 to 22) only. This area would be thought of as a community youth club. Its purpose would be to stimulate a desire in the youths to use the community center for social and entertainment purposes instead of frequenting road houses, beer taverns, and other such undesirable places. It would provide a wholesome and clean place for the youths to get together--away from parental domination as they wish, but still under the supervision of young middle-age adults who have the talent for supervising young people.

This club should appear semi-isolated from the main body of the center. It would provide dancing (with juke box), a soda fountain and snack bar, booths and tables, places for card games, ping-pong, and other entertainment features enjoyed by teen agers. The adults of the community could take turns supervising this club, or hire a full-time supervisor.

In Fairlington, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, and several athletic clubs are active units under vigorous and expert adult leadership. However, one great handicap of these clubs is the absence of a home for their activities. Consequently, the organizations are unable to fulfill their ultimate possibilities. Therefore the purposed center should provide two meeting rooms, one for girls and one for boys,

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15. Wilbur C. Hallenbeck. "Op. cit."

for these clubs. Rooms which the young people could decorate themselves and in which they could store their accumulation of trophies and curiosities.

Cultural: For the cultural side of the program, most of the requirements would be filled by the assembly hall, where dramatics, musicals, and light concerts could be held. The organizations promoting cultural events would use one of the four meeting or club rooms required previously for civic and social activities. Glee clubs, choirs, choruses, bands, and orchestras would use the two "noisy" club rooms mentioned before. The only additional facility required for cultural purposes is an art room--a place where local artists could paint and sculpture and also exhibit their work.

C. Recreational:

In this modern age, with its multitude of machines and labor saving devices, the need for all forms of recreation is paramount. To maintain health the body must be active. To relieve the tension created by our accelerated pace of living, some means must be readily accessible for physical and mental exercise and relaxation. Because of these needs for mental and physical play, no community center would be complete unless it provided facilities for such activities.

Recreation can be divided into two groups; active and passive.

Listed, they are:



C. Recreation:

1. Active:

a. Outdoors

- (1) Baseball, football, etc., (Field Games)
- (2) Volley Ball, tennis, etc., (Court Games)
- (3) Archery, green bowling, golf putting, etc.

b. Indoors

- (1) Basketball.
- (2) Swimming (Indoor Pool)
- (3) Shuffle board, ping-pong, and billiards.
- (4) Bowling
- (5) Pistol or small caliber rifle shooting.

2. Passive: (Games mostly for older adults)

- a. Cards--bridge, canasta, etc.
- b. Board games--checkers and chess.

Outdoor: Fairlington's needs in the form of outdoor active recreation is small. Fortunately, Fairlington now has three groups of tennis courts, a ball field, and also the elementary school's playground with its outdoor "jungle gyms" for the young children. Nearby the community is a golf course, and another just across the Potomac River, five miles away. However, there is no gymnasium within walking distance of the community. The nearest one is in the high school on the other side of Arlington County. Therefore, a large gym, big enough for two junior and one regulation size basketball court should be provided together with dressing rooms, showers, lockers, bleacher area, and small ticket or control office. This gymnasium would be used frequently for large community dances, parties, and community rallies of any nature.

In all of Arlington County there isn't a public outdoor swimming pool. The nearest place for outdoor swimming is the greatly polluted Potomac River. The public swimming pools in Washington are always crowded and too far away for smaller children to reach without older companions going with them. In order to provide outdoor recreation for youths, particularly during the summer months of no schooling, it is thought necessary to provide an outdoor swimming pool, located near the gym so that its locker and dressing rooms can be used.

Other forms of outdoor recreations that should be included are: badminton courts, bowling greens for the older adults, volley ball courts, and an outdoor dancing terrace.

Indoor: Of the indoor sports, active and passive, there should be: bowling, basketball, billiards, small caliber rifle and pistol range, ping-pong, and shuffle board. These areas will be determined by the regulation size of the courts, alleys, etc. However, for bowling, there should be a minimum of six alleys. If less than six, the alleys will always be overcrowded and people will soon quit using them because of excessive waiting time. Also, it requires at least six alleys to be economically self supporting.

Passive: The passive recreational games are primarily those that require mental exercise only. They consist of card games and board games such as checkers and chess. Since these games are usually played

by older people, people who like a quiet and peaceful atmosphere, a semi-secluded area should be provided for them.

Hobbies and Crafts: There is another set of activities that are neither recreational nor cultural, but a part of both. They are the activities that come through hobbies and handicrafts. These two activities are a very important part of most peoples' lives. They are the means, usually, of creating something with the hands, a very basic desire in nearly all individuals. In these days of specialization, very few professional people have a chance to satisfy their desire of using their hands for creative work.

Since the apartments of Fairlington are too small to permit work shops, with lathes, jig-saws, and other similar equipment, it is considered important to include hobbies and handicraft shops in the program requirements for this center. The machinery and equipment used for crafts like woodworking, cabinet making, model building, etc., are expensive. It is much more rational that the community purchase these machines and equipment on a co-operative basis for the use of all.

To house properly all the activities of handicrafts and hobbies, there should be three rooms; one for "light" crafts like leather working, model building, and women's domestic crafts, and two for the "heavy" crafts; wood working, cabinet making, and others requiring heavy machinery.

Also there should be included a well equipped photographic dark room for the camera enthusiasts.

Other Program Requirements: Nothing will run itself unless running down hill! If the community center, after being built is to keep functioning, it must have a director whose job it will be to direct and operate the center. He would co-ordinate all activities, see that necessary committees are organized, and maintain a stimulating interest in the people of the community for their center. The director would have a full-time job requiring a permanent office and full-time secretary.

Along with all areas or spaces required for the activities of (1) Civil and Education, (2) Social and Cultural, and (3) Recreation, including hobbies and crafts, are the supplementary requirements for mechanical equipment, storage, toilets, lobbies, lounges or corridors, cloak rooms, equipment rooms, kitchens and janitors' space. These additional requirements will be listed in the itemized program and their location and size will be determined by their use or facilities served.

C.

THE PROGRAM

By inspection of Section B, Part II, The Development of a Program, the following program of requirements for the proposed center have been listed.

The areas used for the various units in this program were determined by recommendations given in the Architectural Record, Volume 90, Number 3, September, 1941, and Planning the Neighborhood, published by the American Public Health Association.

GROUP I-----CIVIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL

1. One Assembly Hall	5,600 s.f.	
a. Stage	700 s.f.	
b. Two Dressing Rooms	100 s.f. ea.	
c. Storage Room(s)	200 s.f.	
d. Two Toilets	75 s.f. ea.	
	Total Area.....	6,675 s.f.
2. Cloak and Check Room		280 s.f.
3. Lobby and Foyer		1,000 s.f.
4. Lounge		1,000 s.f.
5. Dancing and Social Room (for private or small dances, dancing lessons, band or orchestra practicing)		1,500 s.f.
6. Four Meeting Rooms		
a. Two "Quiet" Rooms	400 s.f. ea.	
b. Two "Noisy" Rooms	400 s.f. ea.	
	Total area.....	1,600 s.f.

GROUP I-----CIVIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL (Cont.)

## 7. Library

- |              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| a. Adult Use | 700 s.f. |
| b. Youth Use | 500 s.f. |

Total Area.....1,200 s.f.

GROUP II-----HOBBIES, ARTS, AND HANDICRAFTS

1. Art Studio	550 s.f.
---------------	----------

2. Three Craft Rooms	
----------------------	--

- |                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| a. One Light Craft Room  | 400 s.f.     |
| b. Two Heavy Craft Rooms | 400 s.f. ea. |

Total Area.....1,200 s.f.

3. Photographic Darkroom	400 s.f.
--------------------------	----------

4. Storage Room	200 s.f.
-----------------	----------

5. Two Toilets	
----------------	--

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| a. Women | 150 s.f. |
| b. Men   | 150 s.f. |

Total Area.....300 s.f.

GROUP III-----YOUTH CENTER

1. Social Room	750 s.f.
----------------	----------

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| a. Fountain and Snack Bar                          | 750 s.f.   |
| b. Dancing Floor                                   | 1,200 s.f. |
| c. Light Recreation<br>(ping-pong, cards,<br>etc.) | 300 s.f.   |

Total Area.....2,250 s.f.

GROUP III-----YOUTH CENTER (Cont.)

## 2. Two Meeting Rooms

- |                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| a. Boys' Club Room  | 400 s.f. |
| b. Girls' Club Room | 400 s.f. |

Total Area..... 800 s.f.

## 3. Two Toilets

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| a. Boys  | 150 s.f. |
| b. Girls | 175 s.f. |

Total Area..... 325 s.f.

## 4. Storage Room

100 s.f.

GROUP IV-----ADMINISTRATION

## 1. Director's Office

- |                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| a. Private Office     | 200 s.f. |
| b. Secretary's Office | 300 s.f. |
| c. Toilet             | 30 s.f.  |
| d. Storage Closet     | 40 s.f.  |

Total Area..... 570 s.f.

GROUP V-----INDOOR RECREATION

## 1. Gymnasium

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| a. Court, bleacher area, etc.                                  | 9,000 s.f. |
| b. Two Dressing Rooms with<br>showers, lockers, and<br>toilets | 3,000 s.f. |
| c. Maintenance Room  | 200 s.f.   |
| d. First Aid Room  | 100 s.f.   |
| e. Control Office  | 100 s.f.   |

Total Area.....12,400 s.f.

GROUP V-----INDOOR RECREATION (Cont.)

2. Billiard Room	2,000 s.f.
3. Bowling Alleys	5,200 s.f.
4. Rifle and Pistol Range	4,100 s.f.
5. Shuffle board, Ping-Pong and other Light Sports	1,500 s.f.
6. Indoor Swimming Pool	8,500 s.f.
7. Mechanical Equipment Room for the Indoor Pool	800 s.f.
	<hr/>
TOTAL AREA OF PROPOSED CENTER	54,450 s.f.

GROUP VI-----OUTDOOR SPORTS

The courts, fields, or ranges required for the outdoor sports will be shown in detail on the site plan in the section of illustrations.



It is impossible to select an ideal site for the proposed community center for Fairlington; a site that is in or near the center of the development; within one mile of the furthestmost dwelling in the community; or else, reached by riding not more than 20 minutes on public conveyance.

Since such a site does not exist within the boundaries of Fairlington, a site had to be chosen outside the community. After an inspection of all areas surrounding the development a site was selected. Actually, there was no choice in the selection since the one used is the only available undeveloped area within 10 miles of the community.

The site chosen is an old farm that has recently been zoned for commercial use. It is relatively flat and covered with pines and a variety of hard wood trees. There is just enough slope to the land to provide good drainage but not present topographical problems which would influence design. The site is bounded on two sides by major traffic streets, and on the third side by a church lot roughly forming a triangle. Sewer lines and water mains have already been laid along the streets, and are ready for use.

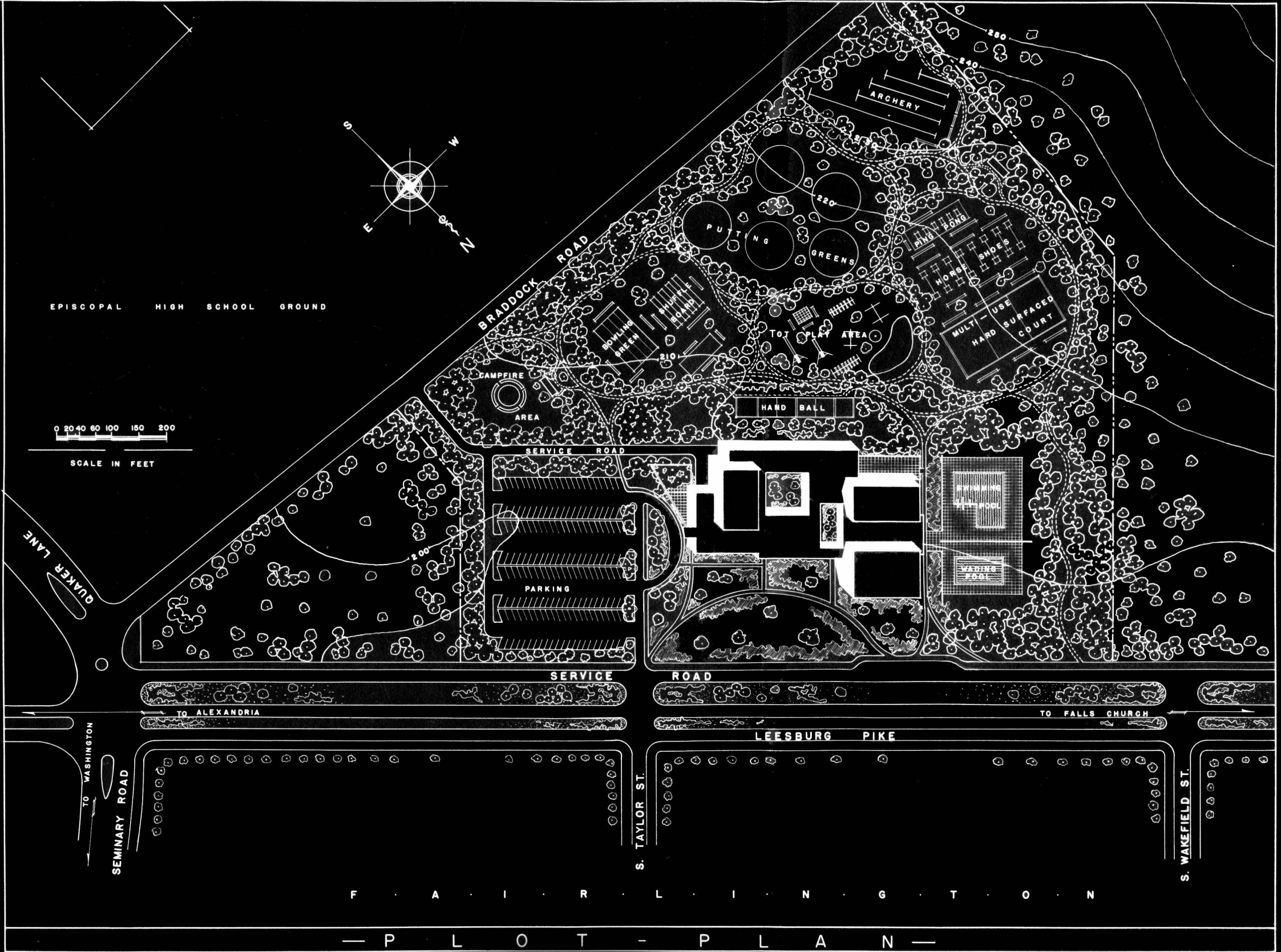
The site is within the desired limits of walking for a greater portion of the development's people, and within 15 minutes bus ride by the residents living on the outer extreme of the community. The only problem presented is that a four-lane heavy traffic street must be crossed

to reach the center. There is no way to overcome this problem, but on all other points, the site chosen is very desirable and provides all the prerequisites required by a community center for Fairlington.

1. Map of Arlington County, Virginia
2. Plot Plan
3. Ground Floor Plan
4. Basement Floor Plan of Recreation Unit
5. Upper Levels of Assembly Hall, Gym, and Indoor Pool
6. Elevations of the Community Center
7. Elevations of the Community Center
8. Architectural Sections of the Community Center
9. Detail Section of Gymnasium Wall
10. Birdseye View of the Community Center
11. Perspective of Main Entrance
12. Interior Views of the Lounge and Indoor Pool



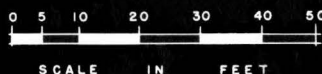
FAIRLINGTON AND ITS LOCATION IN ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

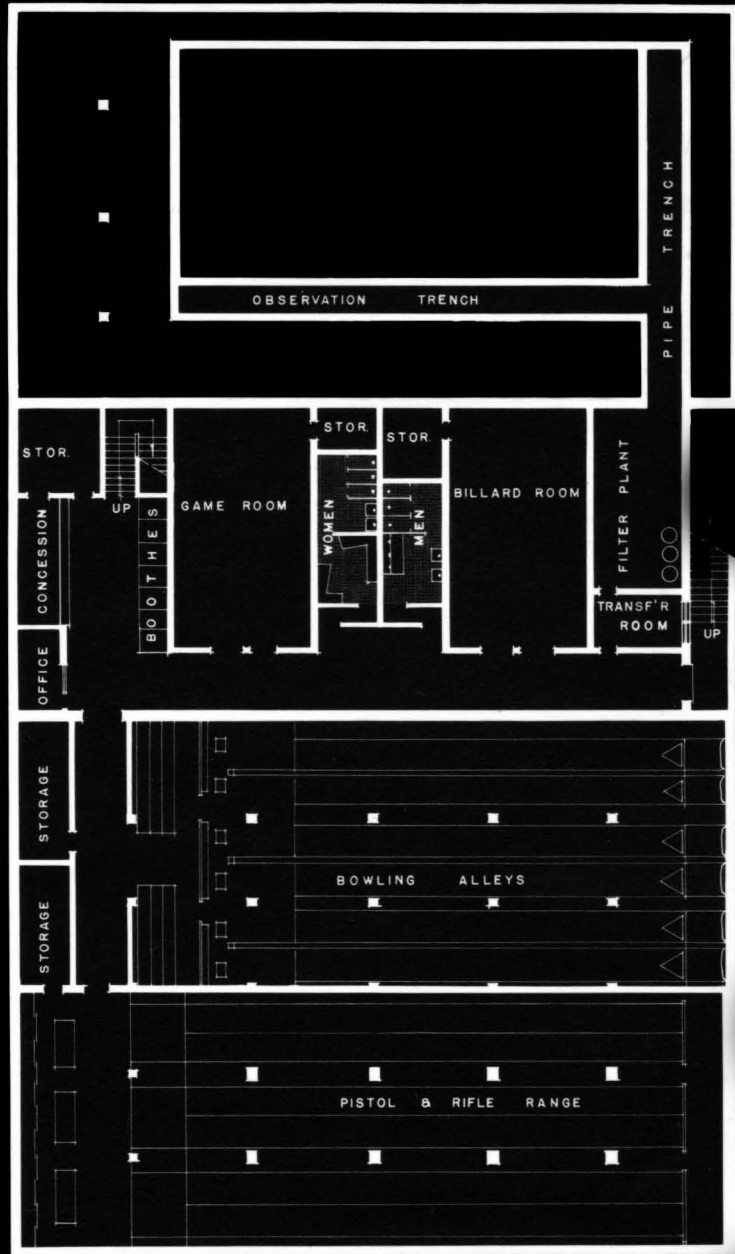






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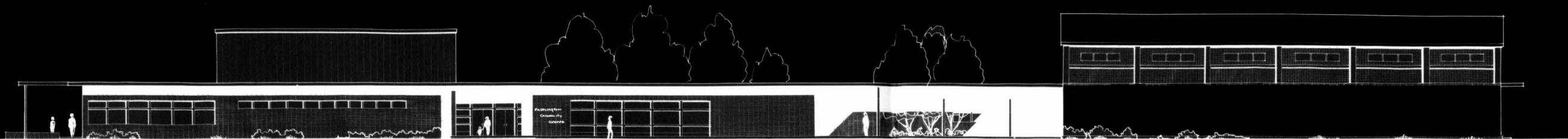


PLAN OF BASEMENT UNDER RECREATION UNIT

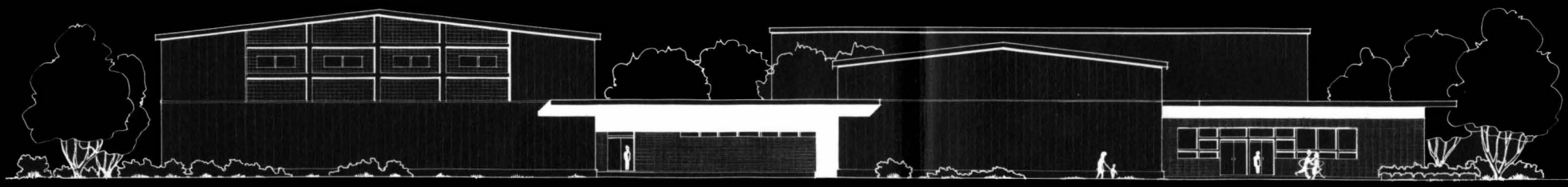






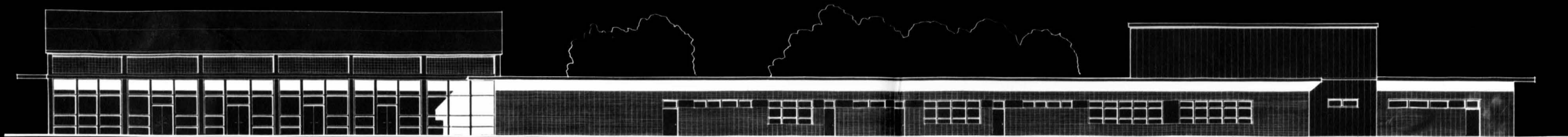


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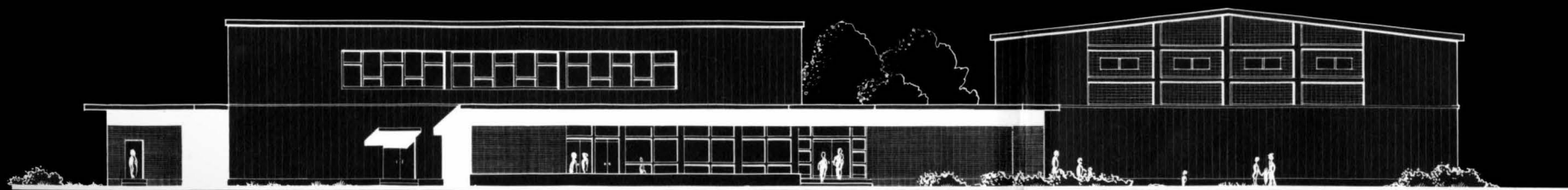


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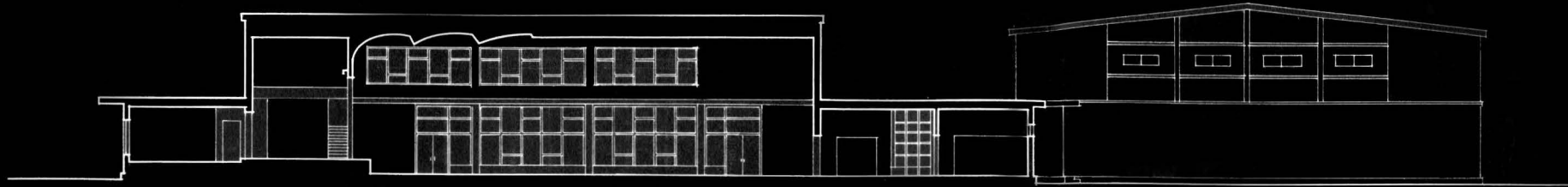


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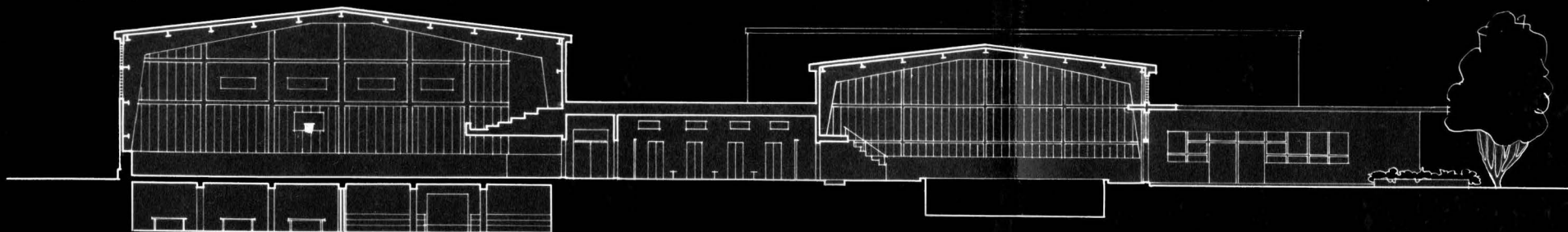


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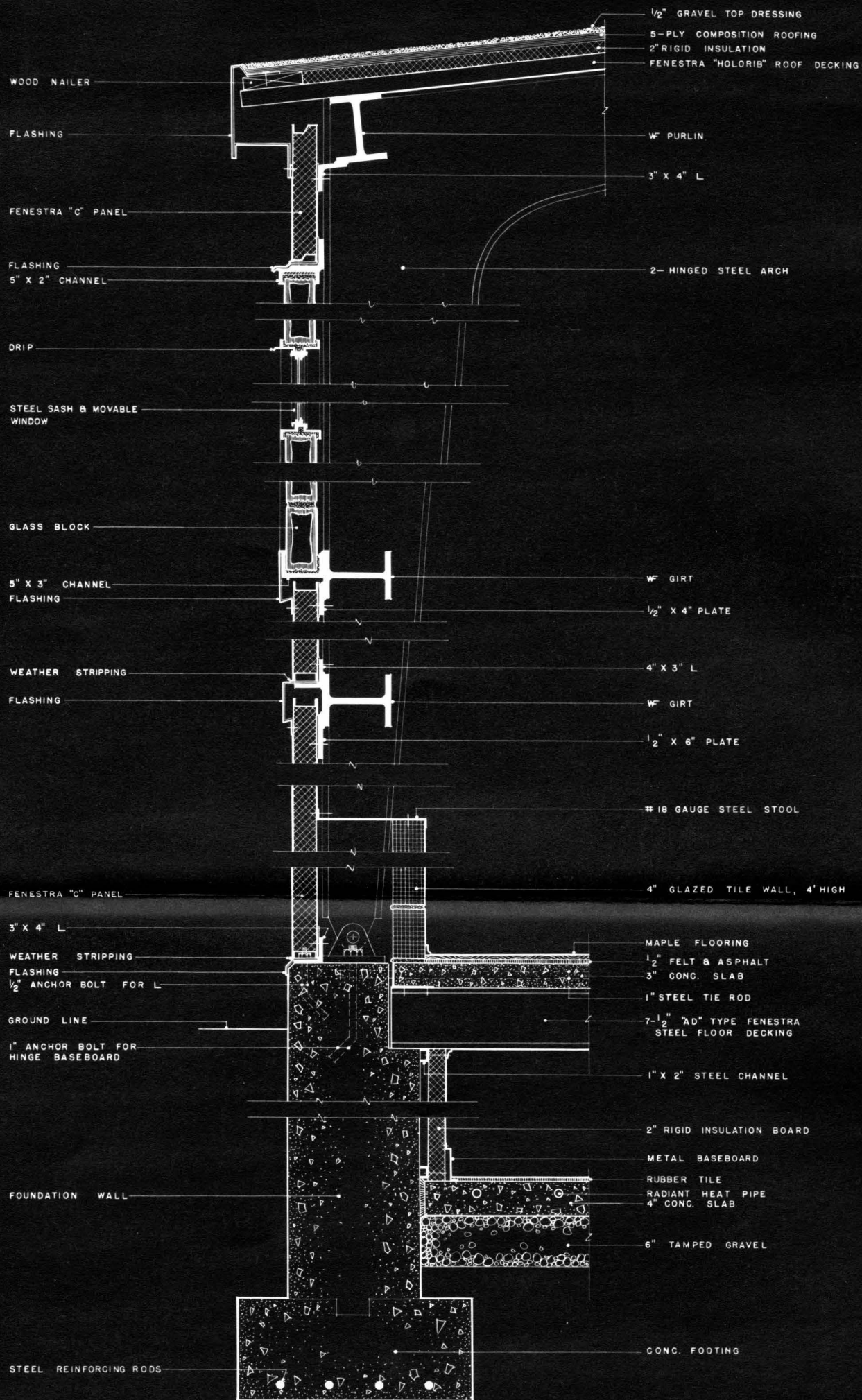


SECTION A-A

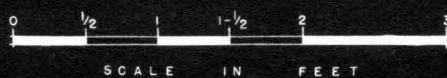


SECTION A-A

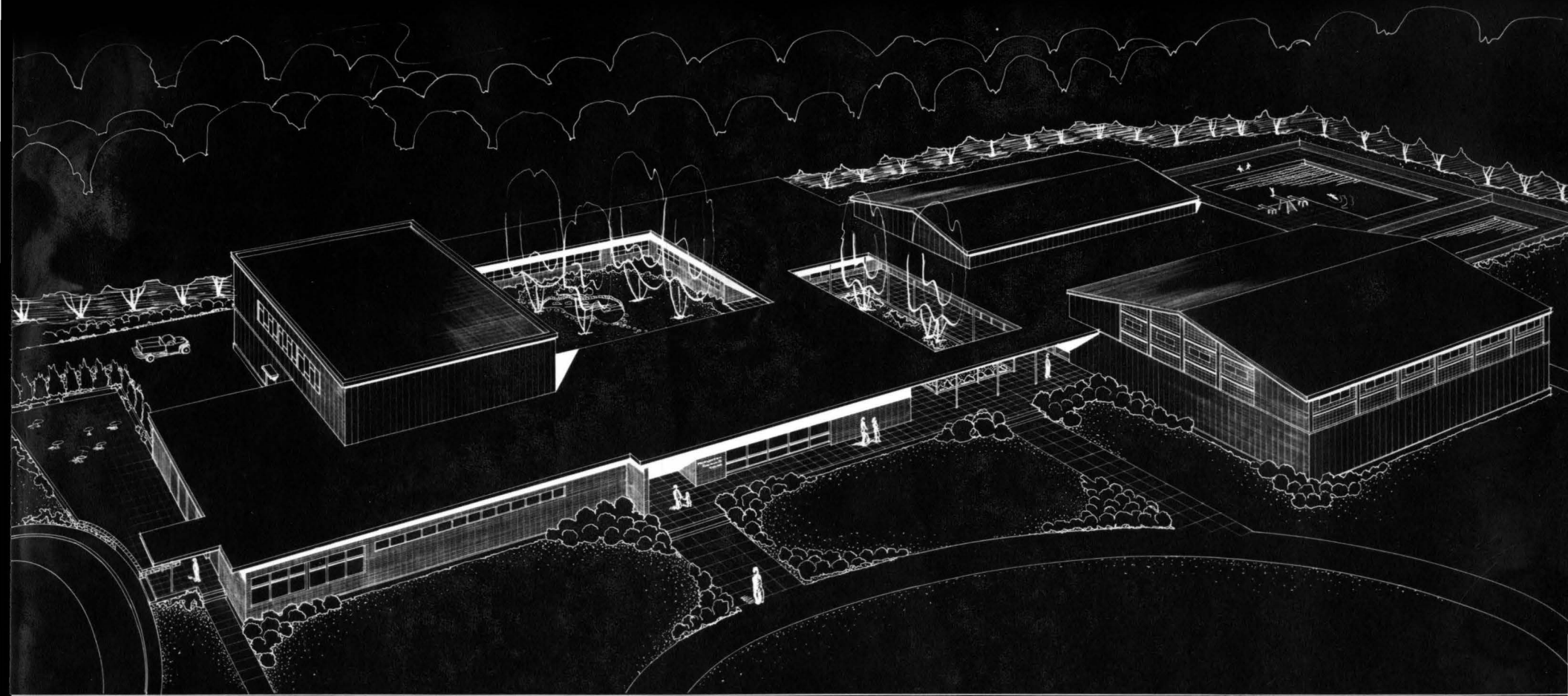




SECTION THROUGH GYMNASIUM WALL







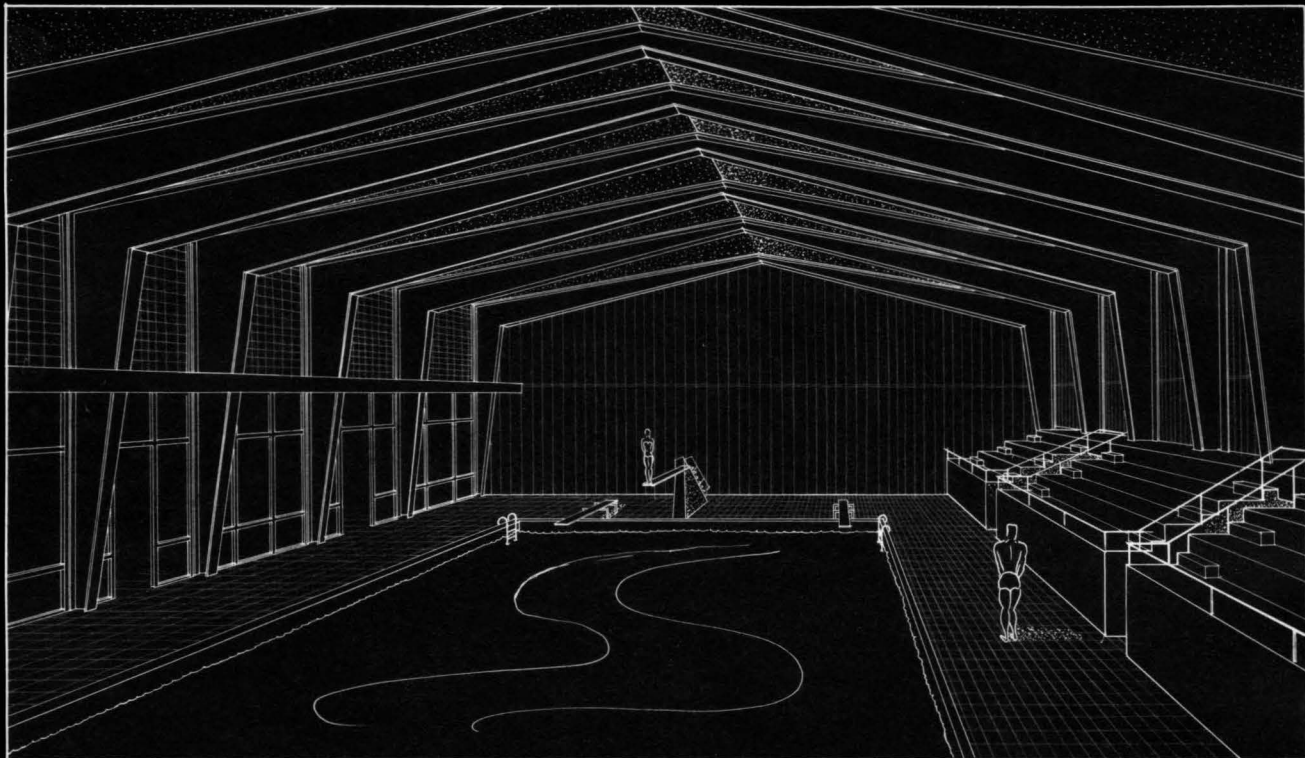
A COMMUNITY CENTER FOR FAIRLINGTON, VIRGINIA

BIRDSEYE PERSPECTIVE LOOKING WEST



FAIRLINGTON  
COMMUNITY  
CENTER

VIEW OF MAIN ENTRANCE



INTERIOR OF INDOOR POOL



INTERIOR OF LOUNGE

F. CONSIDERATION OF STRUCTURES AND MATERIALS

Public buildings, and particularly community buildings, are subject to intensive year around use and the resultant wear and tear. Since community buildings do not operate on a profit-making basis, it is mandatory that they be constructed of rugged, durable and easy to maintain materials. And too, being a community financed project, the second factor governing choice of structures and materials in the building is economy. In no instance can expensive materials be used unless their high first cost lessens the final cost by reducing construction time or reducing upkeep and maintenance.

1. Framing:

The framing system throughout the building is steel. This choice is made in the face of the present steel shortage because of the savings it gives over concrete framing. This is particularly true in the assembly hall, gymnasium, and indoor swimming pool because these three units do not require fireproofing of their framing system, so steel can be used without the added expense of erecting the forms required to fireproof a steel structure.

a. Assembly Hall: The framing of the assembly hall consists of steel columns spaced 22 feet o.c. supporting flat trusses spanning the 64 foot width. The roof planking of this unit is supported by junior beam purlins running from truss to truss.



b. Gymnasium: Because of the height of ceiling required in the gymnasium, and the desire to eliminate excessive area devoted to trusses required to span such widths, two-hinged steel arches were selected for the framing system. These arches do not require fireproofing since the gym ceiling does not exceed the 45 foot height limit set by State codes. These arches are spaced 18 feet o.c. The roof decking is supported on I-beam purlins welded to the top flanges of the arches. The tie-rods necessary to prevent spreading of the bases of the arches under load are imbedded in the concrete floor slab.

c. Indoor Swimming Pool Building: The pool building will also use two-hinged arches for its framing system. Roof construction will be identical to the gymnasium. However, because it is impossible to use steel tie-rods to prevent spreading of these arches, lateral thrust will be absorbed by large reinforced concrete sturrips around the foundation wall and footings of the pool building.

d. The One Story Level: The framing of the one story level consists of steel columns and beams supporting roof joists of junior beams with the exception of the social and dancing room which will use long span open web roof joists spaced 25 inches o.c.

## 2. Walls:

a. Exterior Walls: All exterior walls of the assembly hall, gymnasium, and the indoor swimming pool consist of prefabricated 3 inch

steel panels. These panels are made of No. 18 gauge sheet steel filled with boro-silicate fiber glass insulation. This type of dry wall construction was selected because of low initial cost and great amount of time saved in erection. The panel units are 16 inches wide and vary in length from 6 to 14 feet. These panels have a very low coefficient of heat transmission. In tests, they have proven equal to 14 to 16 inch masonry walls! Also, the panels have a high coefficient of sound insulation. These panels permit considerable savings over the conventional masonry curtain or panel walls when working above the first floor level. And too, the panels are 100 percent salvable if future remodeling or expansion is required.

In the assembly hall, the exterior panel wall is backed on the inside with 2 inch non-combustible fiber panel to give a paint surface which also acts as a sound absorbing surface.

The exterior walls of the one story level will be 12 inch cavity walls faced with brick and backed with 6 inch cinder block.

b. Interior Walls: All interior walls and partitions will be 4 inch cinder block with the exception of toilets, locker rooms and showers. The toilet, locker and shower room walls will be 4 inch glazed tile from floor to ceiling. The gym and pool will have interior protective walls of 4 inch glazed tile. These walls are 4 feet high and serve primarily to provide a barrier between players or swimmers and the heavy structural members used in the gym and pool.

### 3. Floors:

The floors of the assembly hall, the one story levels, and the basement under the gym, will be 4 inch concrete slabs poured on 6 inches of tamped gravel. The slabs will be surfaced with mastic and rubber tile. The floor surface in the shower rooms will be troweled concrete and sloped 1/8 inch per foot to give positive drainage. The gymnasium floor will be 3 inch concrete slab on 7 1/2 inch "AD" type Fenestra steel decking. This floor must have a resilient playing surface, therefore, it will consist of a maple tongue and grooved surface laid on 1/2 inch of felt bedded in mastic cement.

### 4. Roofs:

All roofs will be constructed of "Holorib" Fenestra roof decking supporting 2 inches of rigid insulation and a top dressing of 20 year bonded 5 ply composition roofing.

### 5. Miscellaneous:

All windows will be standard steel frames of stock sizes, except where glass blocks are indicated. Wherever large expanses of glass are used, such as on the south side of the indoor pool, intermediate structural steel members will be used to provide wind bracing.

In all cases of heating, plumbing, and lighting, the codes of Alexandria, Virginia will govern installation.

I. Heating and Ventilation:

Hot water will be used throughout the building for heating purposes. The hot water will be supplied by an existing central heating plant in South Fairlington approximately 100 yards north of the proposed site for the community center. This heating plant is large enough to provide the extra heating load placed on it by the center. The hot water will be supplied to the center from the heating plant through insulated pipes laid underground.

Heating in the basement under the gym, and the one story levels will consist of radiant hot water coils in the floor slab. However, where large expanses of windows are used, the radiant heat will be supplemented by fin-type convectors just below the windows.

The assembly hall, gymnasium, and indoor swimming pool will be heated by ceiling suspended unit heaters which will also provide air circulation in the summer months. All unit heaters will be thermostatically controlled.

Ventilation in all elements of the building will be by natural means with the exception of the dressing and locker rooms in the recreational unit. These rooms will have mechanical exhaust ventilation to remove unpleasant odors and to prevent mustiness and mildew.

## 2. Lighting:

The lights in the natatorium must be vapor proof, accessible, and serviceable. They should provide diffused indirect light of a constant intensity throughout the natatorium.

The gymnasium must combine direct and indirect lighting. The direct lights will be suspended from the ceiling and be caged for protection. The indirect lighting fixtures will be placed behind the flanges of the structural steel arches. A minimum of 30 foot-candles must be furnished at the floor level.

The assembly hall will have indirect lighting in the seating area and a recessed cove with spot lights in the ceiling for stage use.

All other rooms will use semi-direct lighting fixtures.

## 3. Pool Filter Plant:

The pool filter plant will have five filters, two water heaters, sterilizers, motors and pumps, hair catchers, and chemical feeders. These will be of such capacity as to handle the demands of both the indoor and outdoor pools. Two extra filters will be installed so that two of the five will be in reserve for cleaning and refilling on a rotation basis.

PART III-----SUMMARY

Several schemes for the design of the proposed community center were considered before a final selection was made. Factors affecting the design were:

1. Separation of noisy areas from quiet areas.
2. Semi-isolation of the youth center.
3. Grouping of recreational activities so that common facilities could be used.
4. Permitting multi-stage construction of the center as funds are raised.

In the civic and cultural wing, the assembly hall, by its size, becomes the central mass. The club rooms, dancing room, library, and handicraft rooms are added as wings around this central unit.

The club rooms are divided so that two are on one side with the social and dancing room making a noisy area while the library, lounge, and two remaining club rooms form a quiet area on the other side of the wing.

To the rear of the assembly hall is attached the wing housing the handicraft rooms, photographic darkroom, and the art studio. This wing is designed so that two craftrooms open onto the stage which permits convenience in making stage props and settings for any type of stage production.

Off at the end of the craft wings, and forming a connective element with the recreational unit is the youth center. This center is set back from the main front of the buildings to give it a feeling of

seclusion, a feature necessary to create in the youths a feeling that they have a part of the community center that is their own.

The primary factor governing the design of the recreational unit was orientation. The pool is oriented so that the open side is exposed to the south for maximum sunlight. On the other hand, the gym requires northern light so that players will not be bothered with direct sunlight in their eyes. Therefore the recreational unit has the pool building on the south with southern exposure and the gym on the north with northern light furnishing the bulk of the natural lighting.

It then follows logically that the locker and dressing rooms, shower rooms, and toilets be placed between the pool and gym for use of both.

To continue the grouping of noisy recreational activities, bowling alleys, billiards, and the rifle range are placed in the basement under the gymnasium.

The recreational unit is placed at the western end of the center so that it creates a space barrier between its noise making activities and the quiet side of the civic and cultural unit. Another reason why the recreation group is placed at the western end of the community center group is to allow maximum use of the locker and dressing rooms, showers, and toilets to the public using the outdoor recreation facilities. This arrangement allows the single set of dressing rooms, lockers, showers, and toilets to serve all four of the different recreational areas; the gym, indoor pool, outdoor pool, and the playground.



The last major factor governing the development of the scheme used was the desire to permit multi-stage construction. Since the community center will be financed by the residents of Fairlington, and since the proposed scheme would cost several hundred thousand dollars, it is unlikely that the entire center would be built at once, but by stages as funds are raised. For this reason the writer felt it necessary to design a scheme permitting several stages of construction and at the same time, permit an esthetical feeling of wholeness to each stage as it is completed rather than have the center appear unfinished until the last unit is constructed. As the scheme now stands, the center could be built by stages in the following order:

1. Assembly hall, lobby, lounge, library, club rooms, toilet and cloak rooms, and the social and dancing room.
2. Craft rooms, darkroom, and art studio. (The youth center could be added optionally at this stage, or added later as an independent stage.)
3. The recreational unit consisting of the gymnasium, with its basement, dressing and shower rooms, and the indoor pool.

An analysis of the various units in the center will show that flexibility was a primary influence controlling the design of the units.

#### Assembly Hall

A sloping floor was not used in the assembly hall. To have done so would have prohibited the use of the assembly hall for community parties, dances, etc. Admittedly, a sloping floor is much more desirable for a seated audience, but it is impractical for a community

to finance both an auditorium and a large social hall. Experts in the field of community buildings also state that planners of community buildings should avoid plans using a gymnasium for parties and dances if possible. The reason for this is so that the gym will always be accessible to those wishing to use it for athletic purposes.

Club Rooms:

The club rooms are placed in groups of two with folding door partitions between. This is done so that they may be used singularly or together. Also, the club rooms are placed so that they furnish auxiliary lounge space whenever concerts, plays, parties or dances are being held in the assembly hall.

Social and Dancing Room:

The social and dancing room is placed to the side of the assembly hall so that it may act as a refreshment area during community social activities in the assembly hall. It is divided from the assembly hall by folding doors that can be closed when the room is used for small dances or parties of a semi-private nature. The community kitchen is placed next to this room so that it can serve both the assembly hall and the social room.

Craft Rooms:

The two craft rooms designated for heavy crafts are divided by folding doors for more flexible use when combined projects may demand such arrangements.

Youth Center:

The youth center is designed so as to group the three areas; dancing floor, game room, and refreshment bar under one open area. This was done to create a sense of openness. Only the two club rooms are separated and this was done for privacy during meetings.

Indoor Swimming Pool:

The indoor swimming pool is the only place where traffic flow is restricted. The bleachers of the natatorium are designed so that people in street shoes, going into these bleachers, can not get down onto the pool floor and track in street dirt. The swimmers can enter the pool only by going through the dressing room, and must wade through a disinfectant foot bath before reaching the pool floor.

Gymnasium:

The gymnasium has no bleachers on the playing floor. This floor is kept clear for players only. The bleachers are on a balcony running along the south side of the gym and will seat about 500 spectators.

Recreational Unit Control:

There is a control office just inside the central element of the recreational unit that permits observation of people going into the gym, the basement, and the spectator area of both the gym and the natatorium. Also, this control office will have the keys to the lockers in the dressing rooms, and persons wishing to use the lockers must first get a key from

the supervisor in the office.

Outdoor Swimming Pool:

The outdoor swimming pool is just to the west of the recreational unit. The pool was placed in this nearby position so that a separate filter plant would not be needed and also to give the swimmers close access to the dressing rooms in the recreational unit.

The outdoor pool is surrounded with wide sunbathing areas and nearby to shade trees for the use of those who wish to relax between swims.

Outdoor Recreation Area:

The outdoor recreation area is placed in the rear of the building among the trees growing on the site. This area is laid out in a series of courts ringed by tree shaded walks. This layout is used for a dual purpose. First, it separates the different types of outdoor recreation into very active, mildly active, and least active courts. Second, this layout permits winding walkways among the trees and thus serves as a community park. There are outdoor benches placed frequently along the walks for strollers who wish to observe the playing but not participate themselves.

Service:

The service road comes off Braddock Road (see site plan) and leads to a service court at the rear of the assembly hall. The service

road goes on behind the craftrooms, serving them, and ending at the youth center's storage room door.

After reviewing the completed thesis, and in some instances reconsidering part of it, the author arrived at definite conclusions concerning the design of the community center for Fairlington, Virginia.

One point of concern after reviewing the thesis was the amount of space devoted to adult education and cultural pursuits. The space devoted to these activities is ample by the standards recommended by the National Recreation Association, and the American Health Association. However, the recommendations of these two associations are based on an average community where there is a social range from laborers up through professional and wealthy people. Fairlingtonians, consisting only of the professional, or white collar, strata of society would have a much higher percentage of adults seeking to broaden their knowledge and culture by informal means, so that their requirement of space used for this purpose would be considerable more than has been provided in the center.

In summation though, the author feels that the community center as designed would be an important asset to the community of Fairlington. The center would go a long way in uplifting community pride and morale, and furnish means of upgrading physical and mental fitness of all the community people.

The cultural, recreational, and entertainment value the center would give to the youths of the community are priceless investments in the future of tomorrow's citizens.

The center would be self supporting on small charges made for use of such facilities as swimming pools, bowling alleys, rifle ranges, concessions, etc., and would not be a burden on the taxpayers. The center in all ways would be a sound investment.

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