

No. 1 OLD PARLIAMENT LANE

State of Art



Owner:
National Arts Council

Architect:
CPG Consultants Pte Ltd

Engineer:
CPG Consultants Pte Ltd

Contractor:
Wee Hur Construction Pte Ltd

Gazetted a National Monument in 1992, the Old Parliament House is a historical landmark with a rich heritage and the seat of Government since the colonial days. Built in 1826, it is of typical 19th century British colonial architecture. It served many uses and was the Parliament of Singapore until 1999 when the new Parliament Complex was completed. Today, it has been restored and transformed into a delightful multi-disciplinary arts and heritage centre.

Back to the 50s

This elegant striking building by prominent architect G. D. Coleman, is Singapore's oldest building. It has borne witness to the many historical defining moments that has shaped Singapore over the past century and more.

Originally built as a home for John Arygle Maxwell, he never lived there but rented it to the Straits Settlement government in 1827 as a court house. Over the years, it has also served as storehouse, government offices and Parliament House.

The buildings had undergone a series of extensions and renovations over these years. A decision was taken by the architects to restore the building to the late 1950s layout. This was considered the most historically significant period when the building was used as the Legislative Assembly and the Parliament House.

Prior to restoration, research to ascertain the original design of the monument, structural and foundation investigations and a thermographic survey to establish the presence of rising dampness were carried out. On the whole, the monument



Restored frontage facing Hill Street

was in a good condition except for water penetration and rising damp. Some sections of the timber roof trusses were also termite-infested.

Uncovering the Gem

During restoration, the 3R principle and the "Top-Down" approach were observed. Incompatible additions and partition walls were removed. Termite infested timber roof trusses were repaired and replaced where necessary. Façade ornamentation and detailing obscured and damaged by layers of paint were stripped, cleaned and repaired or replicated. Deteriorated windows and doors were replaced with new ones constructed following details found in the archival drawings.

Interesting discoveries like the prison grilles at the first storey and the embedded granite staircase at the Annex leading to the river promenade were kept as links to the past.

Thoughtful Adaptations

The Parliament Chamber, with its original furnishings and fittings, was fully retained and restored as the concert chamber hall. New technology for lighting and acoustics were skillfully incorporated so that the hall could serve its new function effectively. The high volume space of the former library was kept and put to good use as the Blackbox Theatre with a control room sensitively added. Two floors at the tower were removed to reinstate the double-volume space over the central atrium, which acted as a focal point for the main building.

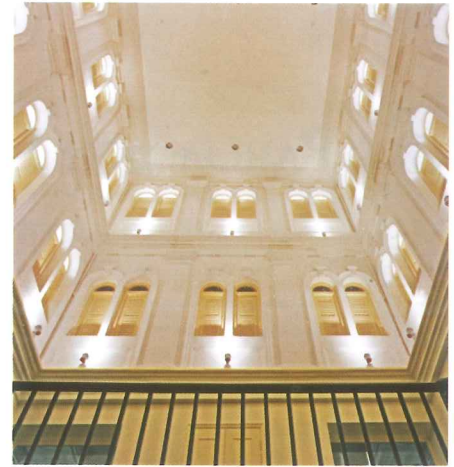
The result is a historical landmark sensitively restored and thoughtfully transformed into an arts house steeped in heritage value, but with modern edge under one roof.



Twin Corinthian columns flanking Palladium fenestration



Elegant barrel vault ceiling at function room



Architectural elements revealed at the tower, the focal point of the main building



Former Parliament Chamber now adapted to a concert chamber



Visual art gallery



Interior of Annexe Block kept



Original second storey staircase



State of art - monument restored to its former splendour

A NATIONAL MONUMENT

Built in 1826 and gazetted as a National Monument in 1992 by the Preservation of Monuments Board, Old Parliament House is the oldest government building and one of the its most important landmarks in Singapore. Strategically positioned in the city, it last functioned as Parliament House of Singapore until the new Parliament Complex was completed in 1999.

HISTORY

Old Parliament House comprised the Main Building and the Annex. The Main Building was built as a private mansion for Scottish merchant, John Arygle Maxwell in 1826. The architect was George Drumgolde Coleman and it was executed in the typical layout of the 19th century British Colonial Architecture. Its layout was formal and symmetrical with generous porticos in the form of "pavilion temple front". The Palladian façade is of classical architectural openings and Corinthian columns. The classical design of door and window openings formed a rhythm on the façade.

The private mansion was completed in 1827 but John Arygle Maxwell never lived there. Instead he rented it to the Straits Settlements government who turned it into the first Court House. In 1829, Maxwell sold it to 2 merchants. In 1841, Resident Councillor, Thomas Church bought it through a public auction. It was later transferred to Governor Boham & East India Company as Court House in 1842 and it remained as the Court House until 1865.

In 1875, the Main Building became the Supreme Court. Colonial Engineer, Major J F A McNair made alterations to the building which include scale of window and changes in the roof form of the tower.

From 1901 to 1909, it further underwent major extensions to the Palladian. These included double arch windows, change in roof forms - tower with parapet and pitch roof, reconstruction of 2 courtrooms, the curve walls were demolished, a 3rd level was added at the elevation facing the elephant and with a clock and balustrade was added in lieu of roof parapet. The Supreme Court occupied the building until 1939. The building became semi-derelict functioning as a Government storehouse.

In 1912, a new Annex was built as a Civil District Court to cater to the needs of additional functions of the Supreme Court.

After World War 11, it became the Department of Social Welfare. It became the New Legislative Assembly in 1954 and extensive renovations were carried out to restore the building to its pre-1901 facade incorporating modern features for contemporary needs. PWD Architect, THH Hancock restored the building with large single arch window openings and the balustrade at the roof became solid wall parapet. In 7 Jul 1954, Sir John Fearn Nicoll, Governor & Commander-in-Chief declared the building as the Assembly House.

In 1959, PAP was sworn into office with 9 cabinet Ministers including Mr Lee Kuan Yew. In 1965, it was renamed as Parliament House when Singapore became independent

and in 1966, the Public Works Department did some upgrading and renovation to the buildings. Throughout the years from 1988 to 1990, the Parliament Chamber was enlarged to accommodate more seats. There was also major upgrading of M&E services included the provision of air conditioning to the buildings. While the Annex functioned mainly as the recreation facilities, the Main Building functioned as the Parliament House until the New Parliament Complex adjacent to the buildings was completed in Aug 1999.

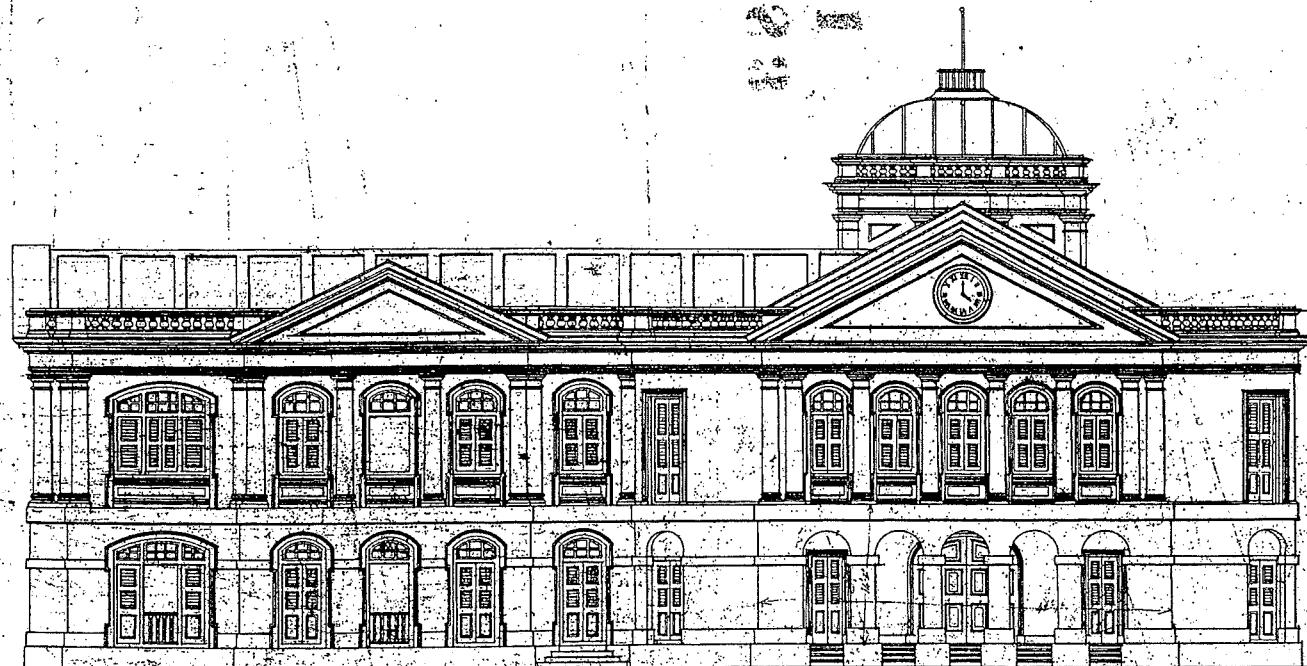
As a National Monument, Old Parliament House reflects a rich heritage that tracks its role as the seat of Government since the colonial days. The development of Old Parliament House from a private mansion to an important public monument, highlight the changes in architectural form and function of the building over the years. It is representative of the life and struggles of Singaporeans in Singapore history and the road towards independence.

DRAWING N^o 4

NO 7

SUPREME COURT SINGAPORE

SHOWING IMPROVEMENT



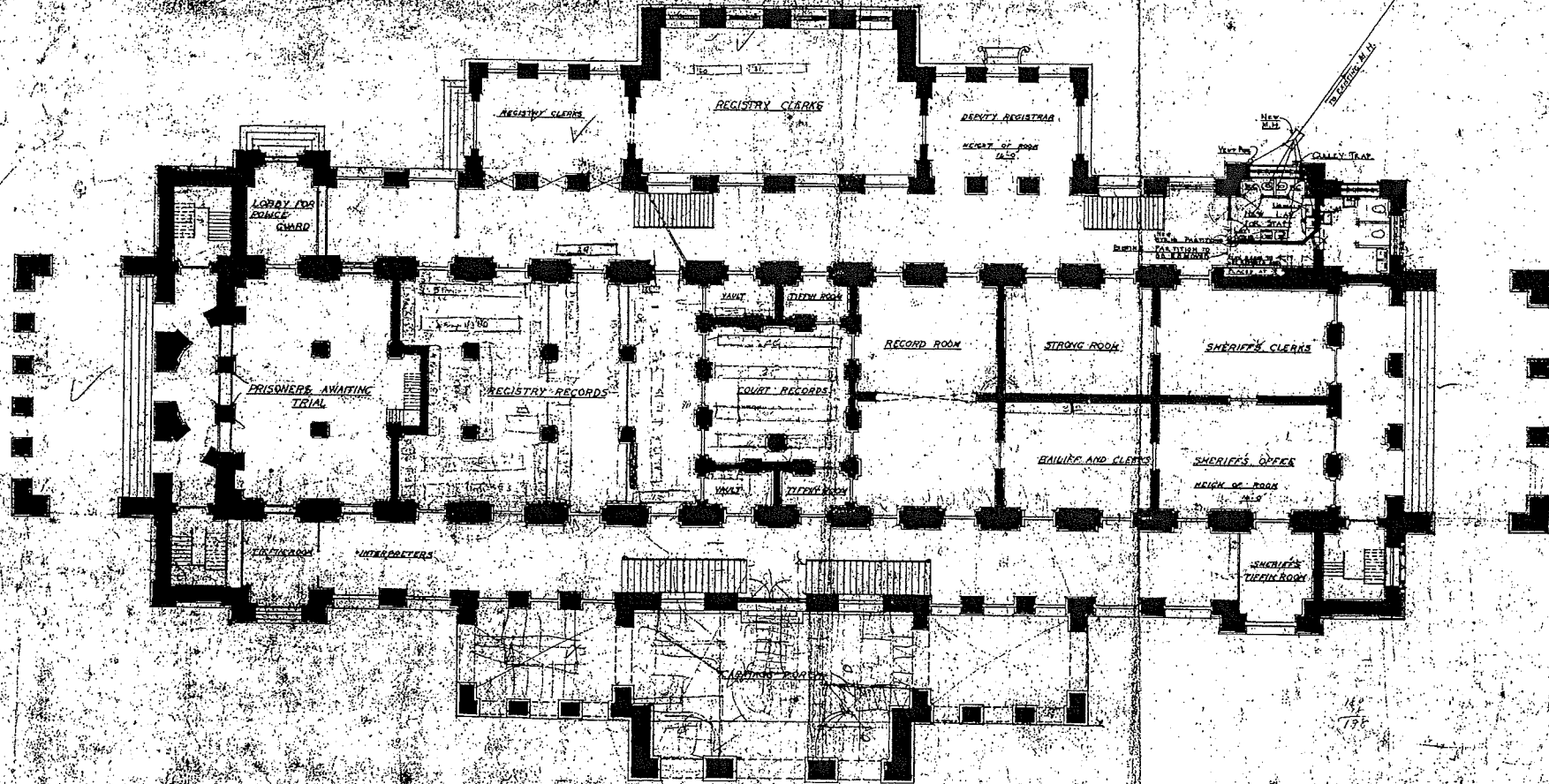
Philip W. L. & Coys.
Drawing Room,
17, SEB, 1908



FRONT ELEVATION

SUPREME COURT - SINGAPORE

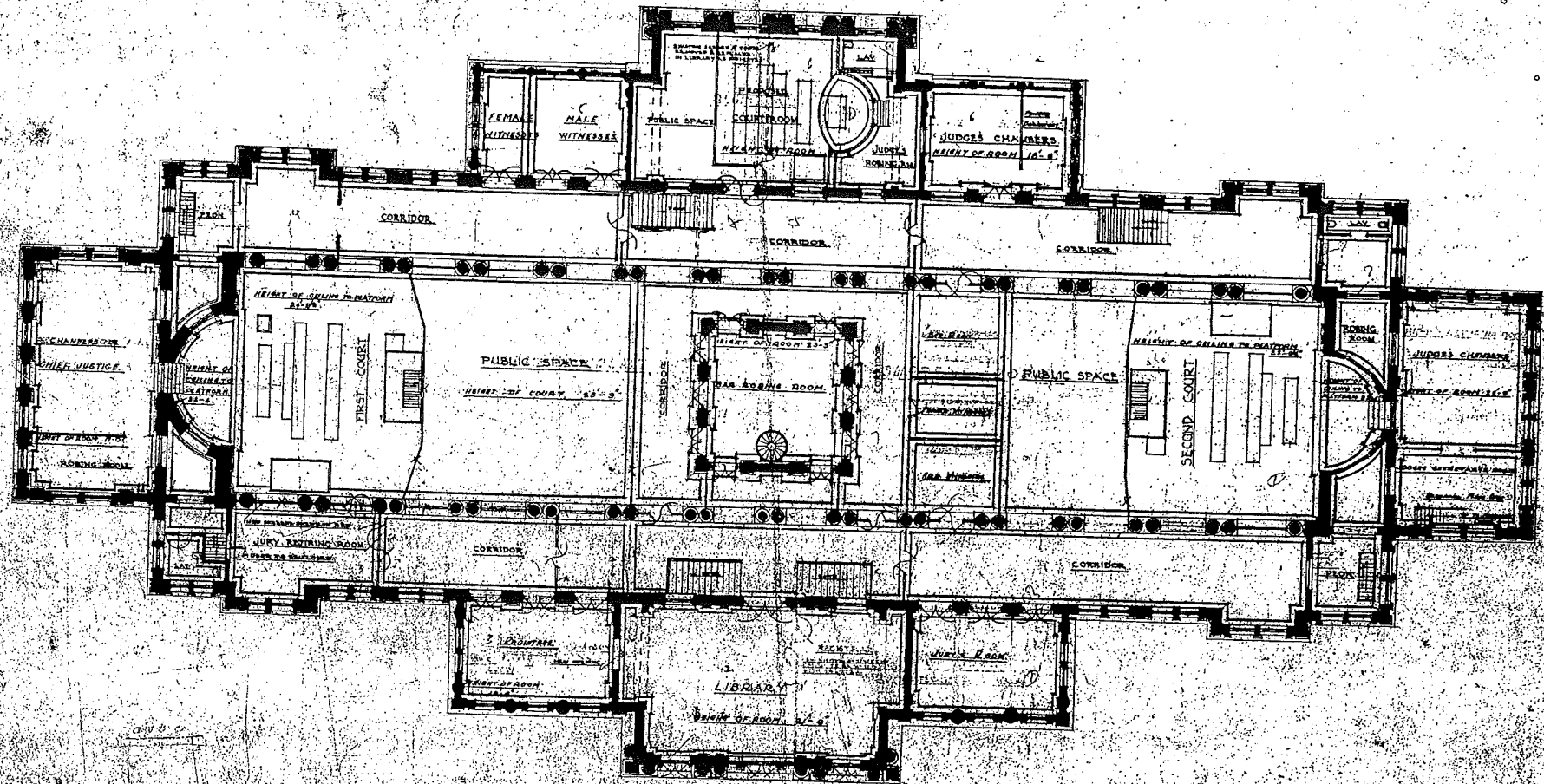
SCALE 8 FEET TO AN INCH



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

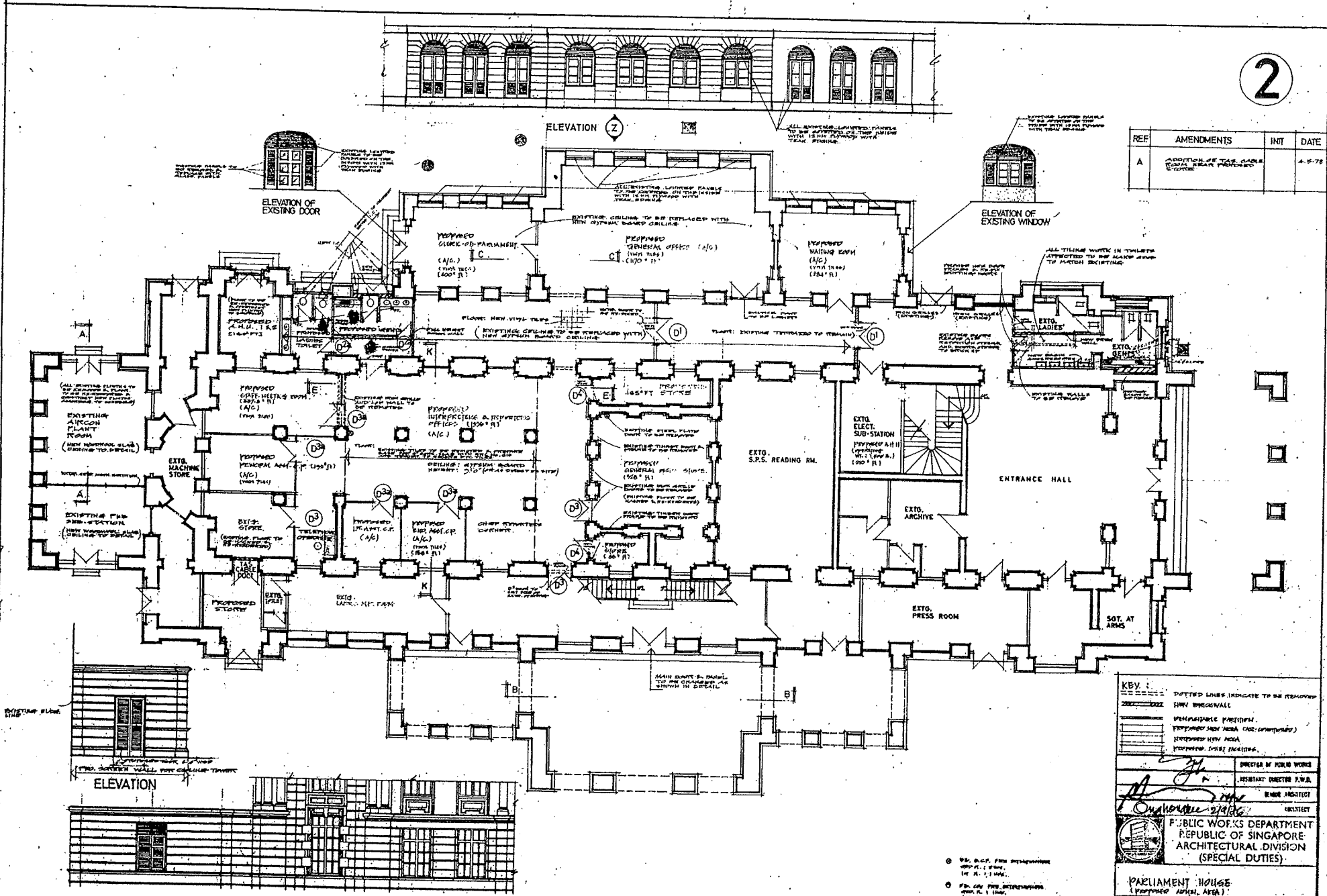
SUPREME COURT — SINGAPORE

SCALE — 8 FEET TO AN INCH



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

REF	AMENDMENTS	INT	DATE
A	ADDITION OF THE LADIES TOILET NEAR MACHINE STORE		4.5.78



KEY

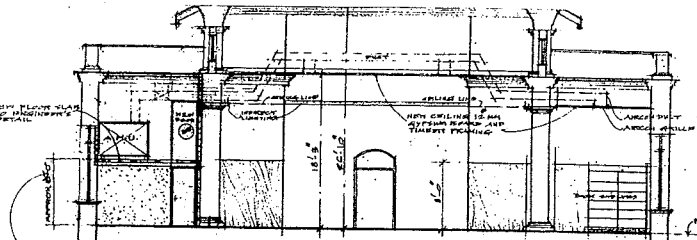
- DOTTED LINES INDICATE TO BE REMOVED
- NEW BRICK WALL
- REINFORCED CONCRETE PARTITION
- PROPOSED NEW ACIA (CIR. CONCRETE)
- PROPOSED NEW ACIA
- PROPOSED NEW BRICK WALL

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR P.W.D.
 SENIOR ARCHITECT
 ARCHITECT

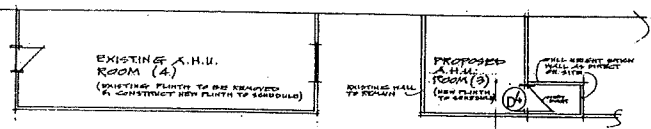
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
 REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
 ARCHITECTURAL DIVISION
 (SPECIAL DUTIES)

PARLIAMENT HOUSE
 (PROPOSED A.P.M. AREA)

* SEE DRAWING FOR DIMENSIONS
 (SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0")
 (SEE P. 1, 2, 3, 4)
 * SEE FOR DIMENSIONS
 (SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0")
 (SEE P. 1, 2, 3, 4)

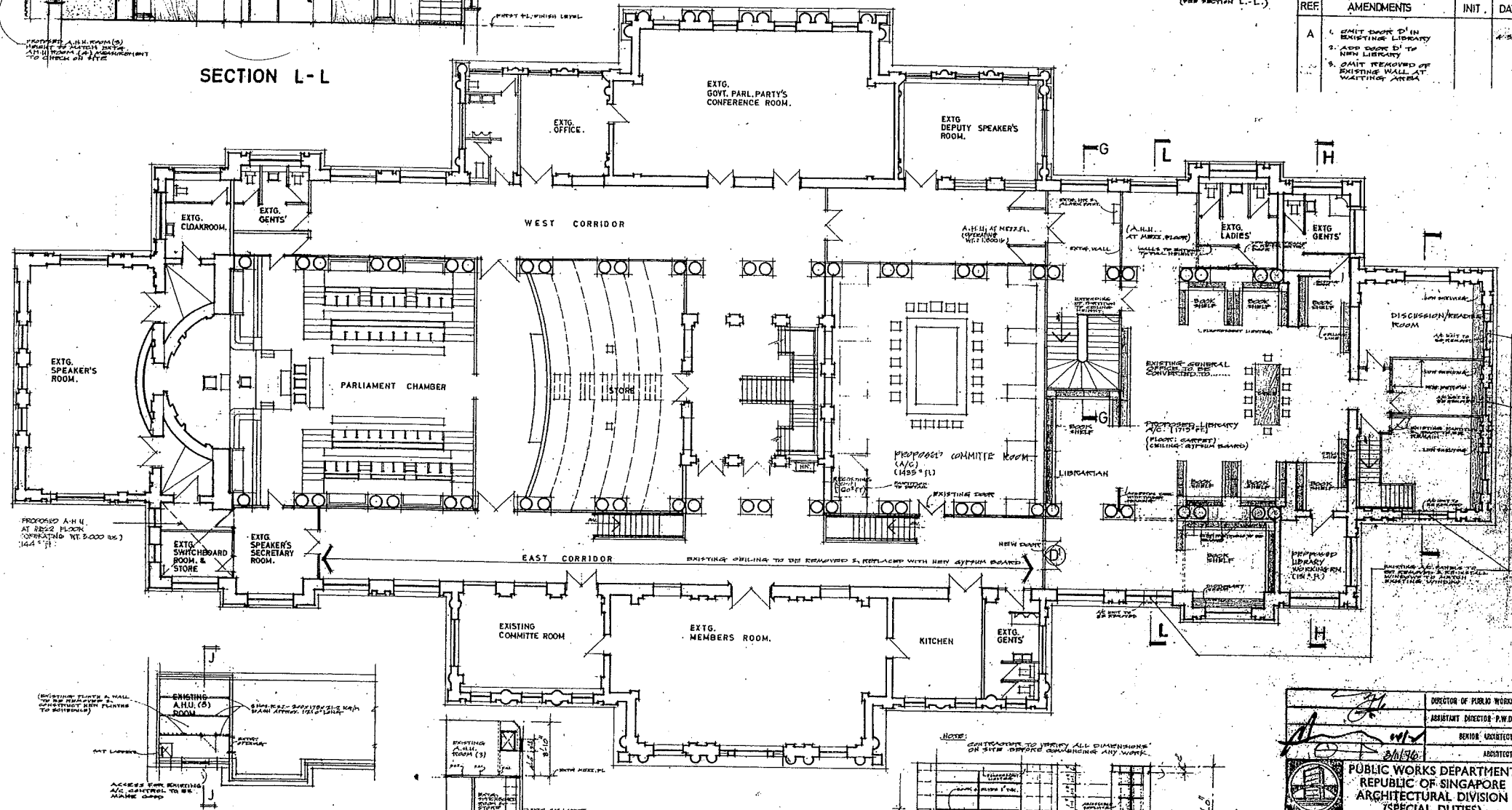


SECTION L-L



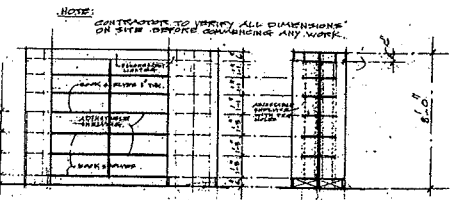
PLAN OF A.H.U. ROOMS AT MEZZ. FLOOR

REF	AMENDMENTS	INIT	DATE
A	1. OMIT DOOR 'D' IN EXISTING LIBRARY 2. ADD DOOR 'E' TO NEW LIBRARY 3. OMIT REMOVED OF EXISTING WALL AT WAITING AREA		4-24-78



PLAN OF EXISTING A.H.U. ROOM AT MEZZ. FLOOR

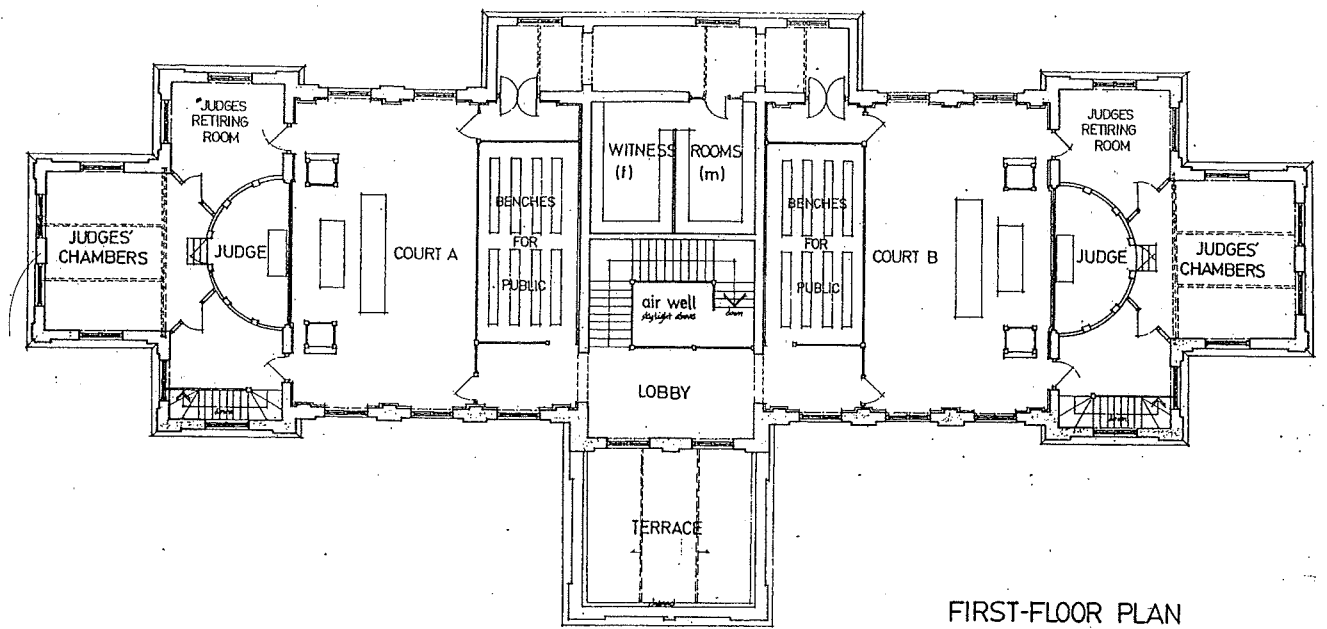
SECTION J-J
EXTG. A.H.U. ROOM (3)
AT MEZZ. FLOOR



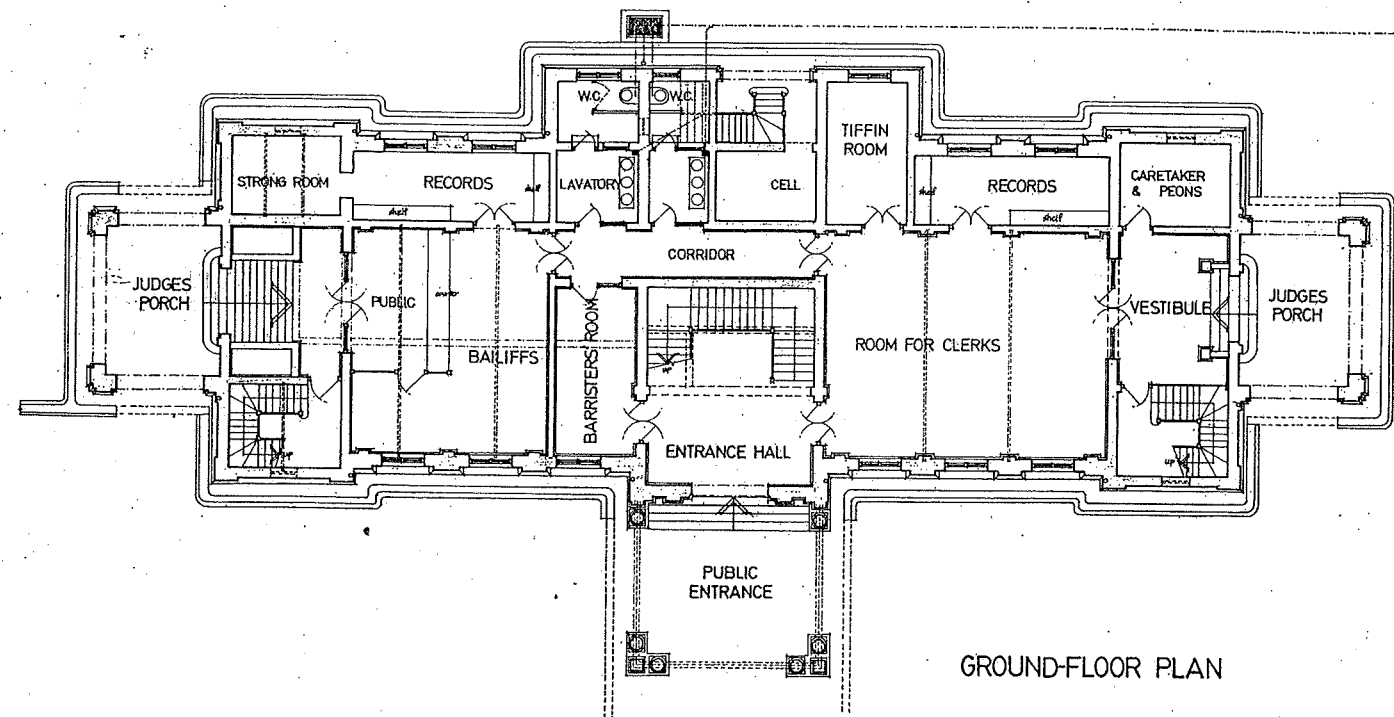
ELEVATION OF BOOK SHELF (PROPOSED LIBRARY) READ 1/4"=1'-0"
SECTION OF BOOK SHELF (TO MATCH EXISTING) READ 1/4"=1'-0"

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR P.W.D.
 SENIOR ARCHITECT
 ARCHITECT
 PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
 REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
 ARCHITECTURAL DIVISION
 (SPECIAL DUTIES)
 PARLIAMENT HOUSE
 (PROPOSED LIBRARY ROOM)
 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 DRAWN BY: [Signature] - MEMBER JUNIOR MEMBER
 CHECKED BY: [Signature] - SENIOR MEMBER
 DATE: 2/1/78
 P.W.D. 970/PW/16/3A

1/4 Dollars / month



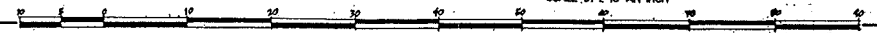
FIRST-FLOOR PLAN

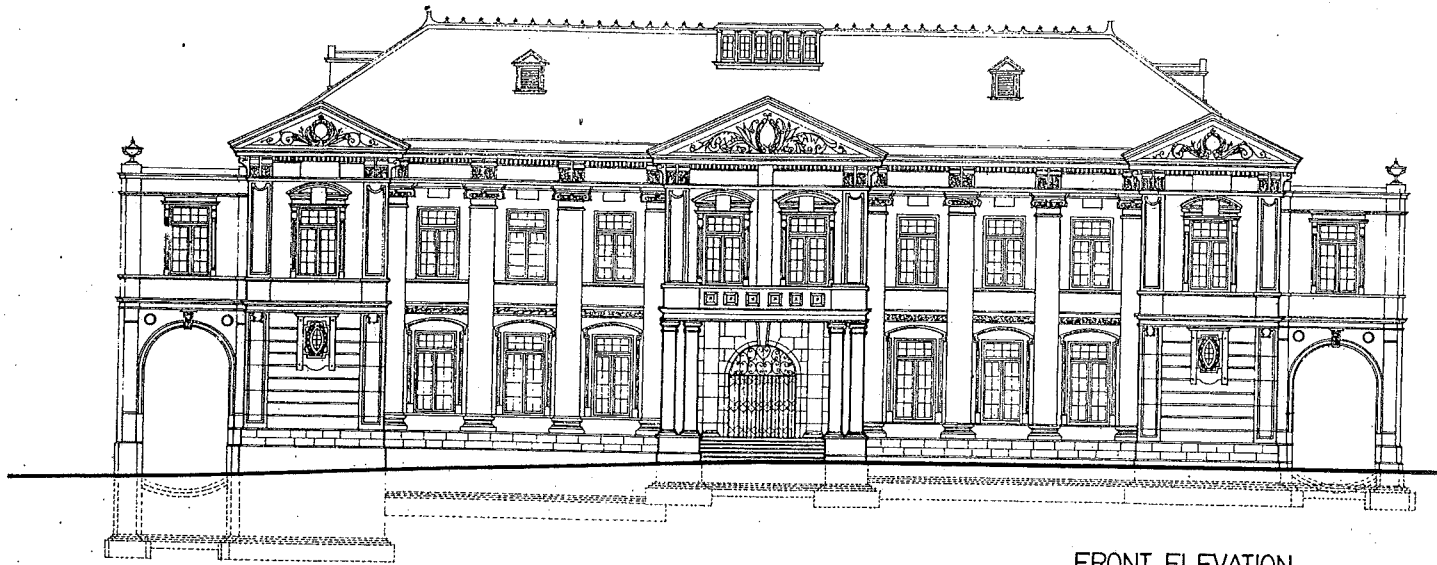


GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

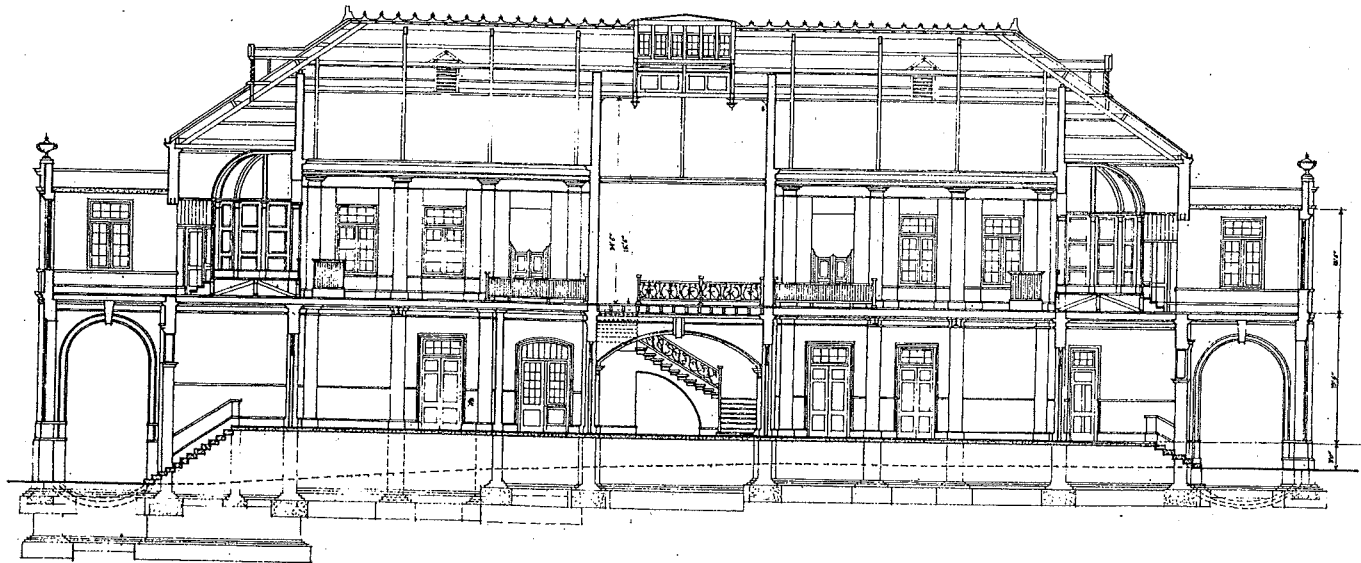
TRACED FROM ORIGINAL
**PROPOSED
 NEW DISTRICT COURT,
 SINGAPORE**
 COLONIAL ESTIMATE 1912
 ITEM NO. 2 . PAGE 95.

SCALE 8 FT TO AN INCH





FRONT ELEVATION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION E.F.

TRACED FROM ORIGINAL
PROPOSED
NEW DISTRICT COURT,
SINGAPORE
COLONIAL ESTIMATE: 1912
ITEM NO. 2 PAGE 95

