

THE BEAUX STRATAGEM

A SCENIC DESIGN

A CREATIVE PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THEATRE ARTS  
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

BY

ALLEN R. PARTRIDGE

SAN MARCOS, TX.

MARCH 1989

## CONTENTS

List of Illustrations.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter I      Analysis and Summary.....	4
Chapter II     The Design Process.....	8
Chapter III    The Technical Process.....	46
Chapter IV     Evaluations.....	64
Bibliography.....	68

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1 The Music Party.....	2
2 Tapestries.....	9
3 The Study of Galileo in Florence.....	10
4 Plan of Rake.....	12
5 Sketch 1, Ramp.....	13
6 Sketch 2, Drapery.....	13
7 Sketch 3, Columns.....	14
8 Sketch 4, Molding Detail.....	14
9 Sketch 5, Floor.....	15
10 Sketch 6, Composition.....	16
11 Sketch 7, Color Composition.....	17
12 Map of Coaching Roads.....	<b>19</b>
13 The Old George, Tower Hill.....	20
14 The Bull, Aldersgate.....	21
15 The Crown at Chiddingfold, Surrey.....	21
16 The White Lion at Ponder's End, Middlesex.....	22
17 The Wapping Landlady.....	22
18 The Inn Yard During A Fire.....	23
19 The Country Alehouse.....	24
20 Burton Agnes Estate, The Long Gallery.....	25
21 Corsham Court, Wilshire.....	25
22 Great Chamber at Longford Castle, Wilshire.....	26
23 Stone Staircase at Wolfenton Manor, Dorset.....	27
24 Drawing Room.....	28

Figure	Page
25 Wooten Lodge, Staffordshire.....	30
26 Sketch 8, Ladders.....	31
27 Sketch 9, Stairs.....	32
28 Sketch 10, Arch Detail.....	33
29 Sketch 11, Period.....	34
30 Sketch 12, Fantasy.....	35
31 Relativity.....	36
32 Carcere With A Circular Tower.....	37
33 Carcere, With Numerous Wood Galleries and a Drawbridge...	38
34 Sketch 13, Adaptation.....	39
35 Plate 1, Groundplan.....	40
36 Sketch 14, Model Drawing.....	41
37 Sketch 15, Stilts.....	43
38 Finished Model.....	44
39 Plate 1b, Groundplan.....	47
40 Plate 2, Side Section on CL.....	48
41 Plate 3, Typical Stair Plan/Oblique.....	49
42 Plate 4, Plan/Elevation Unit A.....	50
43 Plate 5, Plan/Elevation Unit P.....	51
44 Plate 6, Plan/Elevation Unit B.....	52
45 Plate 7, Plan/Elevation Unit E.....	53
46 Plate 8, Plan/Elevation Unit H.....	54
47 Plate 9, Plan/Elevation Arched Stair.....	55
48 Plate 10, Elevation of 12' Level.....	56
49 Plate 11, Elevation Units I and Q.....	57
50 Production.....	63

## INTRODUCTION

Imagine the simple, quiet elegance of a Watteau countryside exploding into chaos and confusion. This amusing allusion is a fitting dramatic metaphor for George Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem.

Several months ago I agreed to design and supervise the execution of scenery for a production of The Beaux' Stratagem to be produced on the main stage of the Speech and Drama Center at Southwest Texas State University, as a non-thesis creative project. I committed to design the scenery in mid-May of 1988 for its production October eighteenth through the twenty-third.

Dennis Maganza directed the production and Bill Peeler served as the Technical Director. Kelly Draper designed the costumes and Billy Bolin designed the properties. Scott Roberts designed the lighting and Norma Garza was the Master Carpenter.

Daniel Hannon has served as the chair of the committee to review my work. Dennis Maganza, of the theatre department, and Carol Greer, of the art department have also served on this committee.

Like the Watteau painting shown in fig. 1, the project began with a simple quiet elegance. Weekly conferences, long days of peaceful research in the library, and melancholy afternoons of painting and drawing explorations filled the early days of the process. Then suddenly, and without warning



Fig. 1. The Music Party, Antoine Watteau, c. 1716

the tranquility exploded into chaos. The resulting havoc still leaves me half stunned and bewildered and half alive and renewed by the ideas and realizations spawned by the experience.

This report details and illustrates my adventure in design. It includes a brief summary and analysis of the play, a record and detailed explanation of the application of research, a summary and explanation of the production concepts, my evaluation of the production and the process, and evaluations from my collaborators.

CHAPTER ONE  
ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY

In *The Beaux' Stratagem*, George Farquhar cleverly blends the story of two enterprising young gentlemen abusing the naive country folk, with a satire of misplaced moralities within the social classes of England's early eighteenth century. On the surface, Farquhar's play tells the story of Archer and Aimwell, two men looking for love and money.

On a deeper level, however, *The Beaux' Stratagem* is the sternest kind of social satire. It deals a sharp blow to a society which confuses social acceptability with morality.

In order to appear noble to prospective victims Aimwell has taken the title of his brother, a lord, while Archer poses as his servant. As the play begins, the two travellers arrive at the inn of the scheming Bonniface. His beautiful daughter Cherry catches Archer's eye as Bonniface pries Aimwell for information. Aimwell, however, is the one who makes discoveries. Bonniface tells him about the wealthy squire Sullen and his family, who live in the nearby manor. Sullen is a drunken old fool. He is interested exclusively in smoking his pipe and in drinking ale. These vices are the chief aggravations of Sullen's mischevicious wife Mistress Sullen. In an attempt to win Sullen's attention and courtesy she has been soliciting the affections of Count

Bellair, a French prisoner of war. Soon, however, Archer makes a more serious plea for her favors.

Squire Sullen's sister, Dorinda, is the young and naive confidant of Mistress Sullen, and Aimwell's targetted prey.

Although all of this lust and intrigue seems to be predominant, it is only a veil over a serious concern with human values which Farquhar has imbedded into the fabric of the play. It draws sharply into focus through it's heavy satiric tone Farquhar's image of the society in which he lived. Both Archer and Aimwell were born as gentlemen, and educated. Unfortunately, their lack of money has thrown them into a sort of social limbo. Their only sin is the order of their birth. They are both younger brothers. Not only these, but all of Farquhar's characters bitterly attack the sociological laws and loopholes which create these casualties of Restoration society.

As if to echo this presentation of separate social worlds, all of the play's scenes take place either in the country home of Squire Sullen, or at the inn. This, combined with the need to preserve the natural flow of Farquhar's comedy constitutes the most significant scenic problem in the play. The bawdy world of the sle-slinging inn is a far cry from the staunch and reserved world of the country house.

The rapid succession of scenes from one locale to the

other, and worse still, from room to room in each, make painfully obvious the disaster that scene shifting pauses would cause. Farquhar's play already seems stilted and slow, the last thing it needs is to be broken up even further. The scenery should, therefore, be permanent and suggest limited locale, be permanent and suggest only mood, or be mobile and not inhibit or arrest the action of the play.

Farquhar's play begs for a functional setting.

The need for uninterrupted action, and the multiplicity of locations combine with the almost surreal themes of social commentary to create an often charming, sometimes bitter, but always witty Restoration comedy.

The starkly separate worlds of the inn and the manor and the preservation of the comedy's natural flow are not the only problems to be faced by this production. Farquhar has deliberately created structural flaws, as well. When Aimwell suddenly changes his ways, and discloses his devious intent to Dorinda, it simply is not motivated. There is little to warn us that his attitude is moving anywhere. In fact, with all of the focus that Farquhar has given Archer, the audience is looking to him for such a reversal, but none occurs.

The entrance of, and accompanying resolution by Mistress

Sullen's brother is a blatant Deus Ex Machine. This sudden cure for everything is hard to swallow, but not inconsistent with the laws of probability which Farquhar has established for the play. The magic solution of every tangling element in the plot's complication becomes a delightfully cynical climax to the sharply satiric commentary. In this way Farquhar has taken what might have been considered a structural flaw and turned it into an integral and crucial part of the play's satire.

This analysis allowed me to understand deeply the purpose of the play as Farquhar might have seen it. The satire tone is a sort of social beating. It is a punishment Farquhar administers with laughter as his thin disguise to avoid retribution. It also indicated the nature and style of scenery which might be most affective in adapting Farquhar's message into something meaningful to a modern audience. Understanding the story and its structure provided a strong foothold for the scenic design.

CHAPTER TWO  
THE DESIGN PROCESS

The earliest stages of collaboration with the director began only a week after design assignments for the 1988-1989 academic year had been arranged. At this point Maganza disclosed both an interest in a permanent setting and described his image of the bawdy, earthy nature of the inn. As I began to share my fears about interruption of the flow of action in the play, Maganza became increasingly helpful. Eventually we decided that the more playing spaces I could provide, the better the odds would be of avoiding interruptions in the flow of action.

After discussing the play with the director, several design problems and their potential solutions began to appear. The director's basic concept was simple. He wanted to depict a peaceful, elevated world with a latent potential for chaotic explosions of lust, greed, and desire for power. To this prerequisite he added a request for a single permanent setting capable of representing the interiors and exteriors of all rooms within each of the play's two locales.

This directly coincided with my own opinion that the play should have a highly utilitarian setting, and that the scenery should assist, not arrest the flow of action. It did not, however, help me with the problem of combining the enormously separate worlds of the inn and the manor.

Structural analysis of the play had revealed that four basic areas, perhaps even three, could fulfill the scenic needs of the play. I began to explore methods of combining the three basic areas of the University Theatre stage with hanging and draping scenery and a floor design as the predominant elements of the design (fig. 2-3).



Fig. 2. Tapestries (Color Treasury of Rugs and Tapestries p.48.)



Fig 3. The Study of Galileo in Florence. (Color treasury of Rugs and Tapestries, p.41.)

The early work consisted of a raked stage surface as shown in figure 4. Hanging scenery or draped tapestries were to be flown in and out to suggest changes in the environment (fig. 5-9). This approach was abandoned when a sight line study of the theatre revealed how limited the use of the theatre's side stages must be.

The director did not encourage the idea of hanging scenery for subtle transitions. He preferred a multi-level, non-raked single setting. Maganza decided to adopt what he described as a reality of multiple focus within simultaneous staging. This concept allowed scenes representing separate locales and composed of different characters to be performed in exactly the same space at precisely the same time. It soon became evident that, because of this technique, several characters would need to be on stage at the same time without necessarily drawing focus. At one point Maganza described this world as a place where characters could come and go from all directions at once.

These alterations quickly set my mind spinning in new directions. Explorations became much more active and spontaneous. The fantasy world we had been searching for was beginning to unveil itself (fig. 10, 11). These explorations of random line and shape sent the design tumbling into the world of fantasy for which we had been searching. As shown in figure 11, my explora-

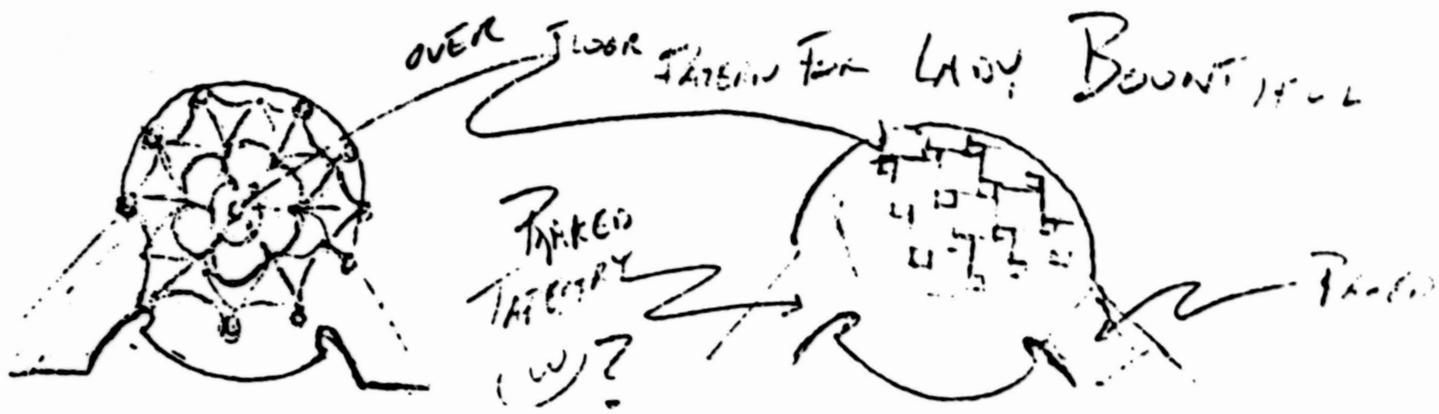


Fig. 4. Plan of rake.

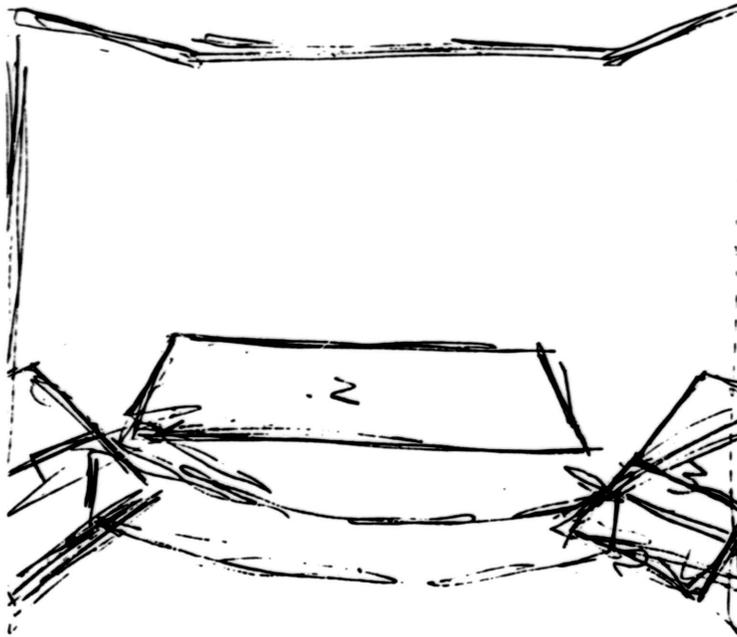


Fig. 5. Sketch 1, Ramps. (The theatre with three separate raked surfaces was the basis of the early work.)

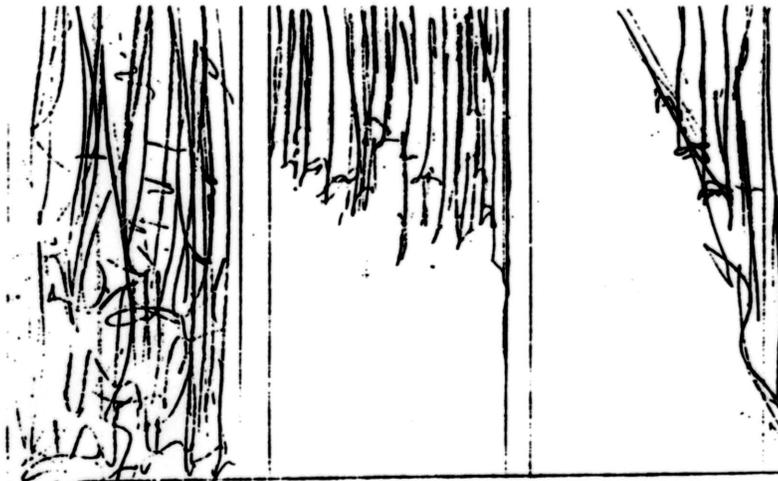


Fig. 6. Sketch 2, Drapery. (Study of hanging gauze.)



Fig. 7. Sketch 3, Columns. (Composition study with drapery and columns.)

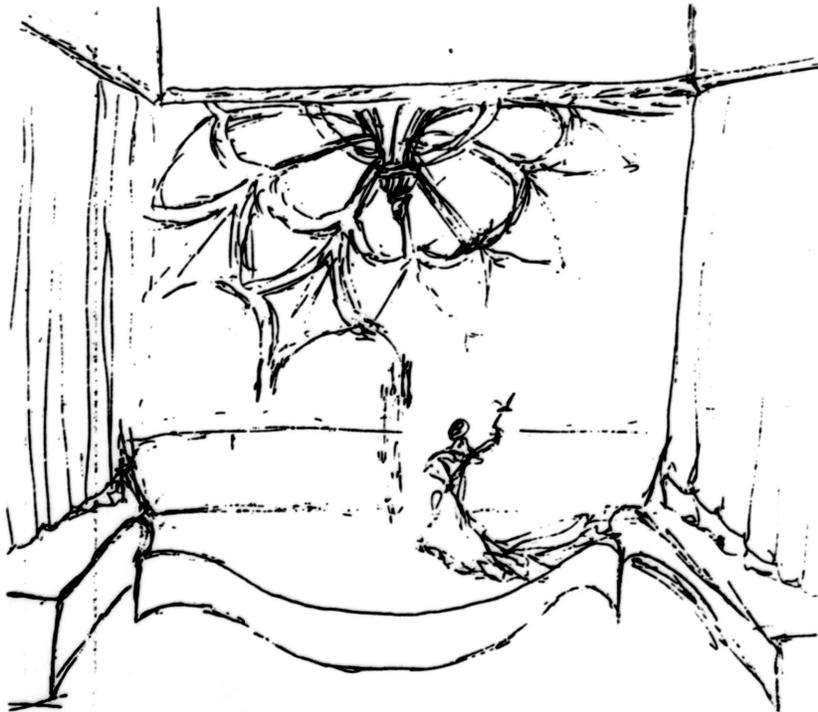


Fig. 8. Sketch 4, Molding Detail. (Study of large Unit to be flown.)

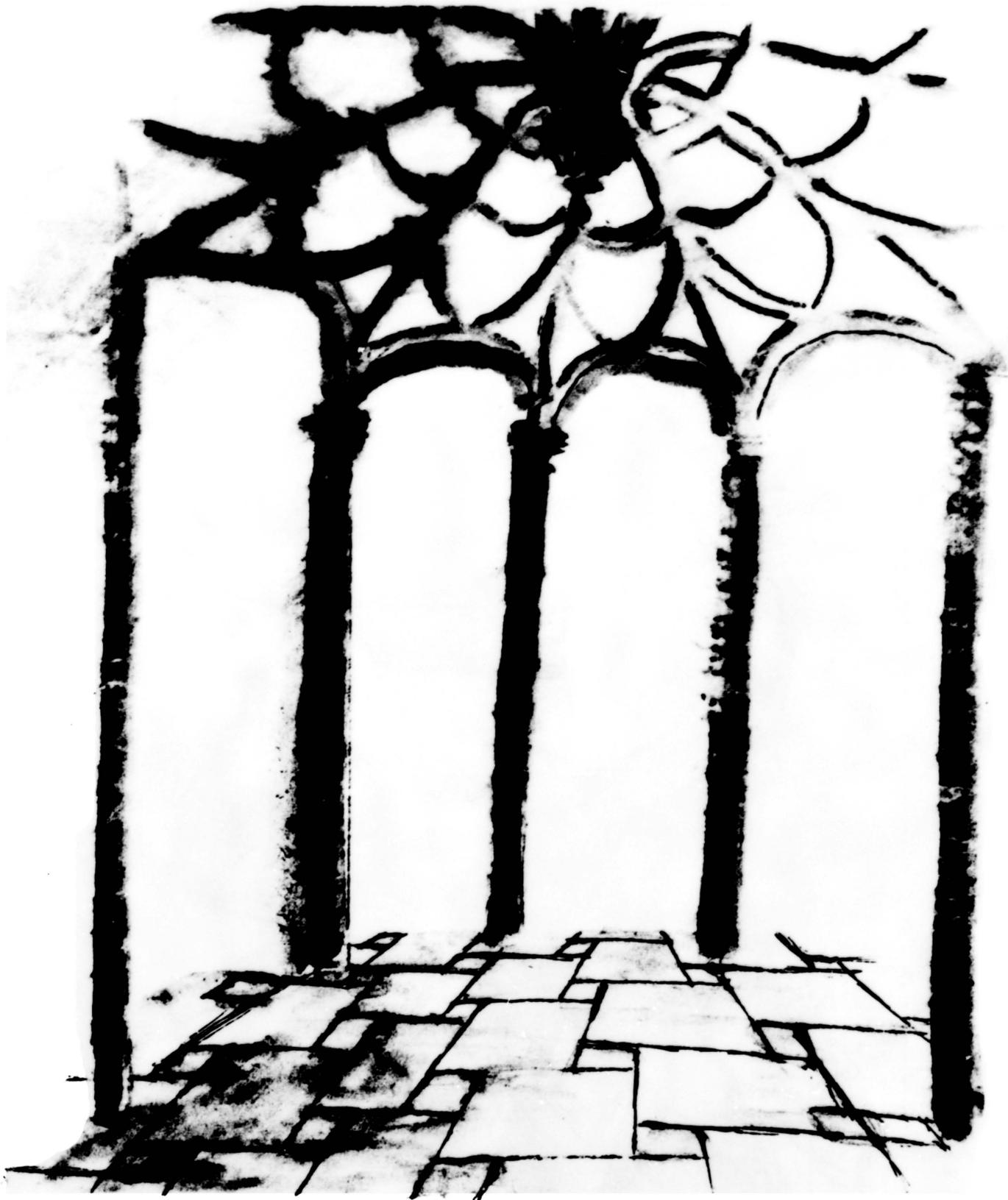


Fig. 9. Sketch 5, Floor. (Study of the Raked stage floor and hanging unit with columns.)

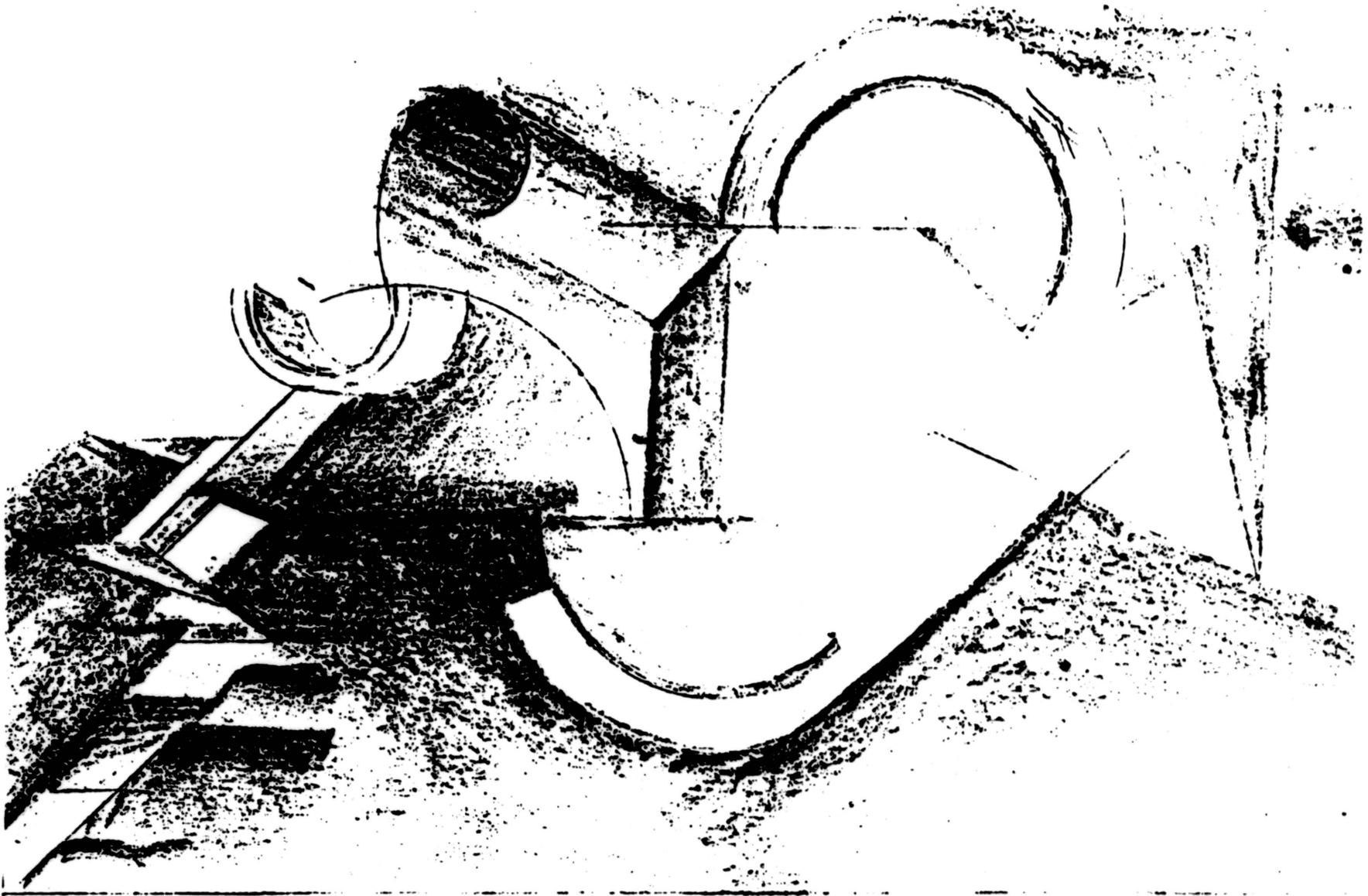


Fig. 10. Sketch 6, Composition. (Potential manipulation of space.)

tions were no longer grounded in the logical universe with which we normally deal. I was beginning to look for something much more exciting than I could have found in reality. We were no longer searching for a mere setting, but for a fantastic new world with more dimension than our own. We hoped to find a place where illusion was cleanly integrated with reality.



Fig. 11. Sketch 7, Color Composition. (Study of potential use of the space.)

In this place, physical dimensions, scale, and perspective all should be greater than we are accustomed to seeing. We were hunting for a world where actors exit and enter without coming or going. We were searching for a world of magic and intrigue which never stopped spinning and was always on the verge of collapse.

Research for the play took on a new significance as a result of the production concept we were evolving. The bulk of the research to this point had been about inns and country houses as they were in 1707. I still felt it important to gain a visual awareness and a feeling for these places and the people who inhabited them. However, I now knew that would be only the beginning of my research.

The dialogue reveals that both the inn and the country house were in Litchfield, Staffordshire county, England. Litchfield was a stop on a coaching route from London. It was about two hundred miles Northwest of London (fig. 12). The name of the inn is not given, but there were four in Litchfield at this time. They were the Four Crosses, the George, the King's Head, and the Swan.<sup>1</sup> Little is known about these. There is, however, an

---

1

A.E. Richardson, *The Old Inns of England*. (New York: Benjamin Blom Inc., 1972), 111, 296.

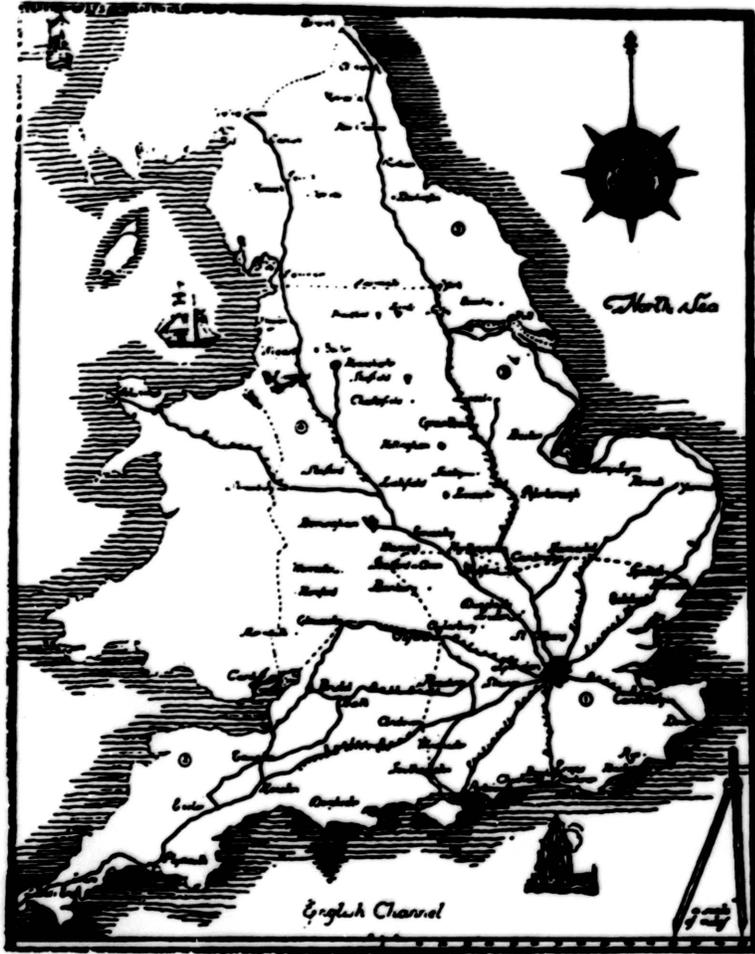


Fig. 12. Map of Coaching Roads.

abundance of information about English inns and alehouses of the time. Several drawings, paintings and photographs helped me to understand both the architectural features and the interior decor (fig. 13-16). They were also useful in understanding the decorum of the visitors (fig. 17-19).

The country houses of the time were a great deal more elegant than the inns (fig. 20-23). There was a distinctive focus on moldings, and a very formal air to almost all elements of decor (fig. 24). The exteriors held an elegant, but colder feeling (fig. 25).



Fig. 13. The Old George, Tower Hill. (Artist unknown, from *The English Inn Past and Present*.)



Fig. 14. The Bull, Aldersgate. (T.H. Shepard.)



Fig. 15. The Crown at Chiddingfold, Surry. (From Burke's The English Inn.)



Fig. 16. The White Lion at Ponders End, Middlesex. (Rowlandson.)



Fig. 17. The Wapping Landlady. (Artist unknown, from Clarke's The English Alehouse.)



Fig. 18. The Inn Yard During A fire. (Rowlandson and Malton.)



Fig. 19. The Country Alehouse. (Robert Robinson.)



Fig. 20. Burton Agnes Estate, The Long Gallery. (From Girourd's Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House.)



Fig. 21. Corsham Court, Wilshire. (From Girourd's Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House.)



Fig. 22. Great Chamber at Longford Castle, Wilshire. (From Girourd's Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House.)



Fig. 23. Stone Staircase at Wolfenton Manor, Dorset. (From Girourd's Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House.)

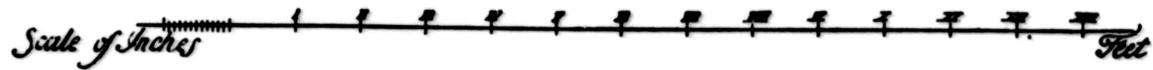
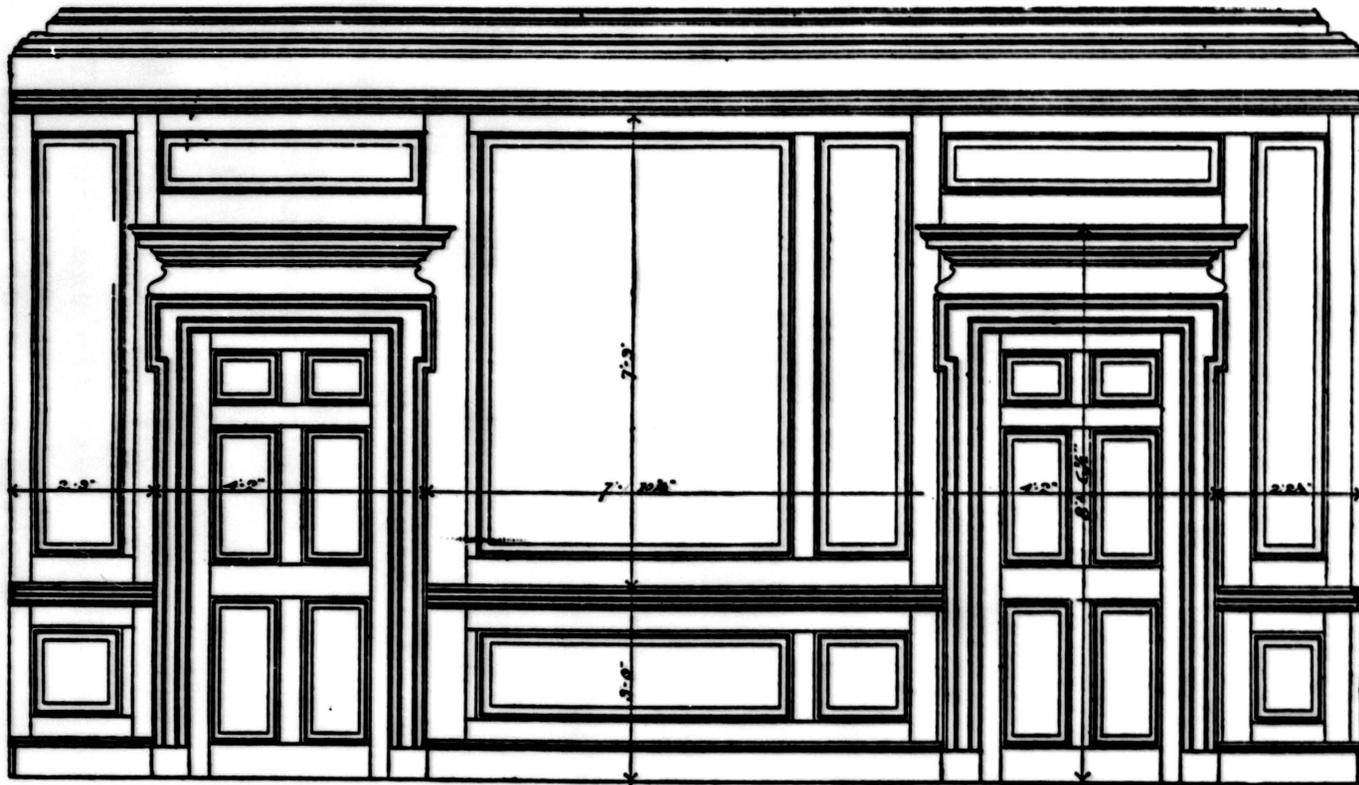


Fig. 24. Drawing Room. (#26 Hatton Garden, City of London. Drawing by J.M.W. Hadley.)

Because even the most limited application of the research created very strong impressions, it was clear that I would need to alter features in the design to avoid indicating a specific historical time and place. Those specifics could provide roots for the world of fantasy, but they should not be too obvious in the final design.

With the evolving production concept, another kind of research became useful. Two artist's explorations into an illogical universe helped me to focus my attention upon this fantasy world. Several drawings by Giovanni Piranisi and *Relativity* by M. C. Escher became the primary sources from which to develop the basic composition and form of the design. These sources seemed to contain a link with the greater sense of depth and perspective necessary to grant our fantasy world the added dimension we were looking for.

Several rough sketches, (fig. 26-30) show clearly the process of exploration based on Escher's woodcut, (fig. 31) and the drawings of Piranisi (fig. 32, 33). The rough sketches trace the development and integration of the works of Piranisi and Escher with my own. This process climaxes in figure 30 when historical elements are integrated into the design.

The study which most resembles the Escher woodcut includes a rough groundplan, (fig. 34) which has many similarities to the

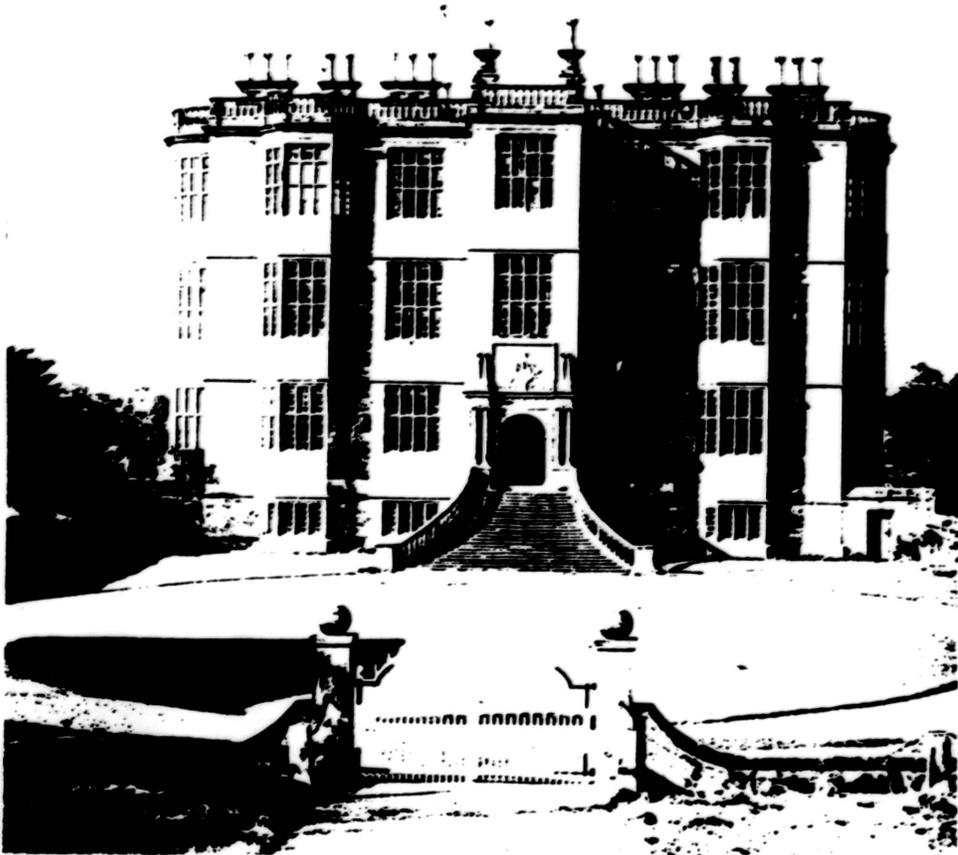


Fig. 25. Wooten Lodge, Staffordshire. (From Girourd's Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House.)

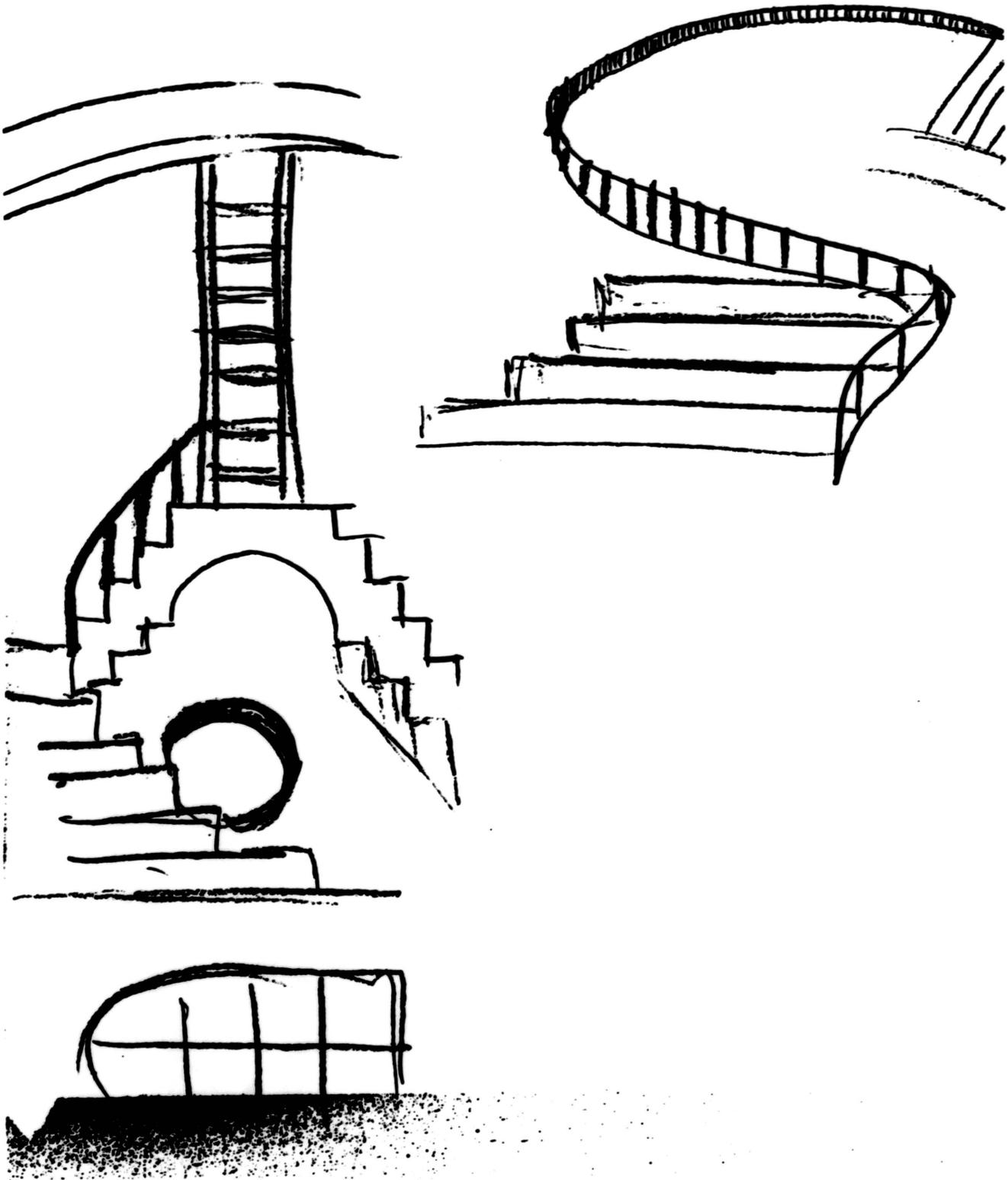


Fig. 26. Sketch 8, Ladders. (Simple study which integrates the basic style and composition ideas presented in the Escher and Piranesi drawings.)



Fig. 27. Sketch 9, Stairs. (Study which explores the integration of the two artist's styles further.)

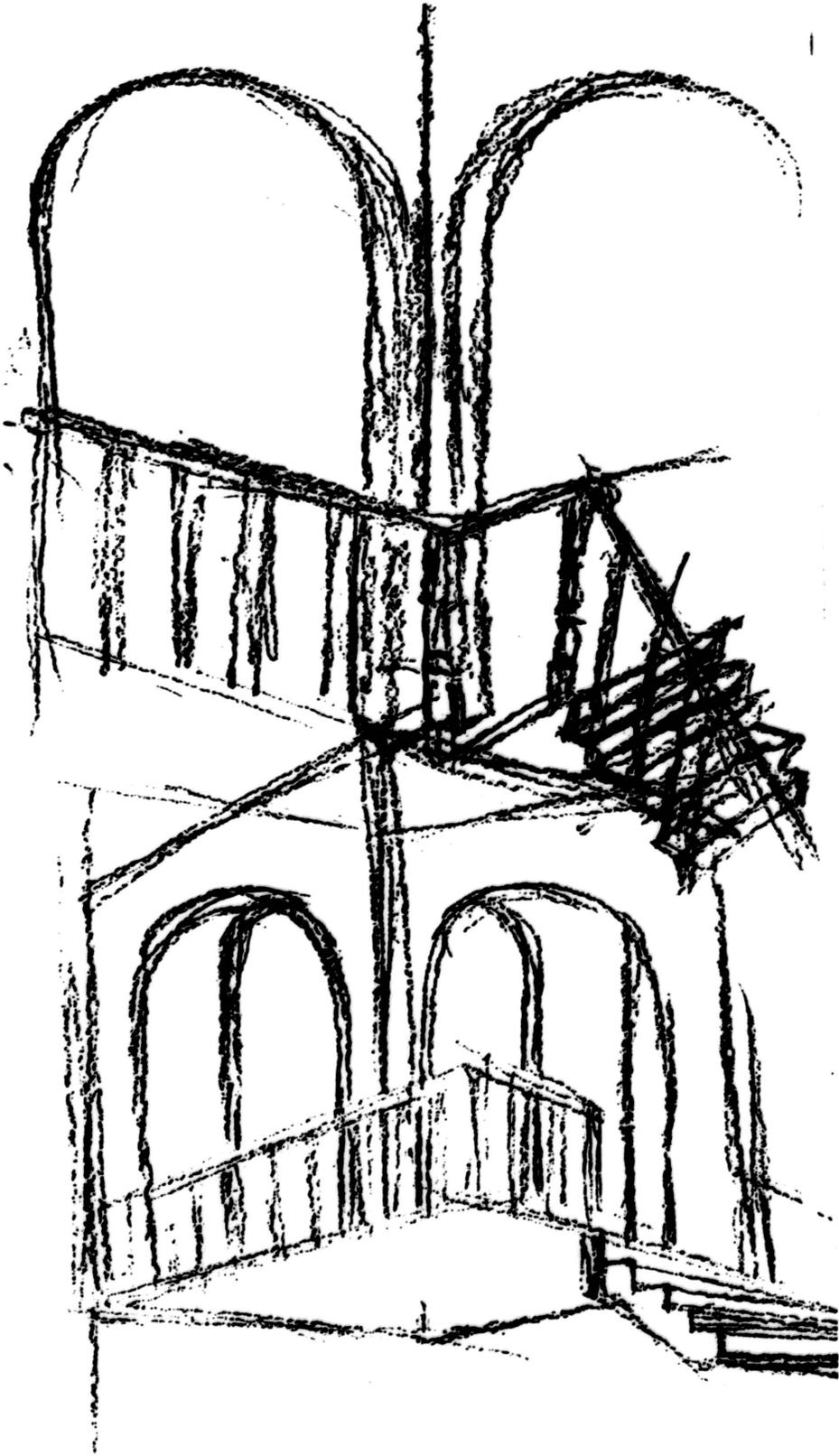


Fig. 28. Sketch 10, Arch Detail. (Study which begins to focus on a central idea.)

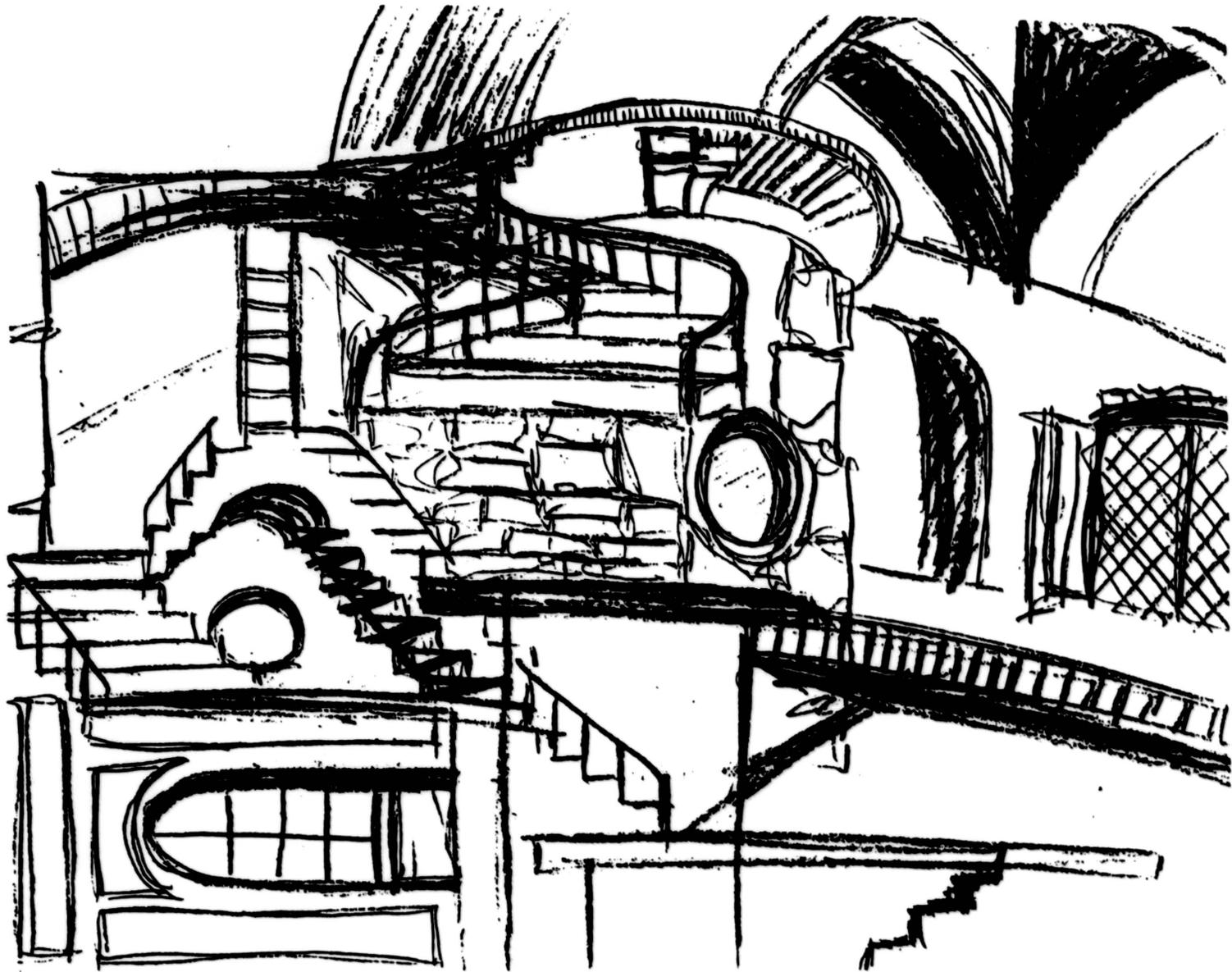
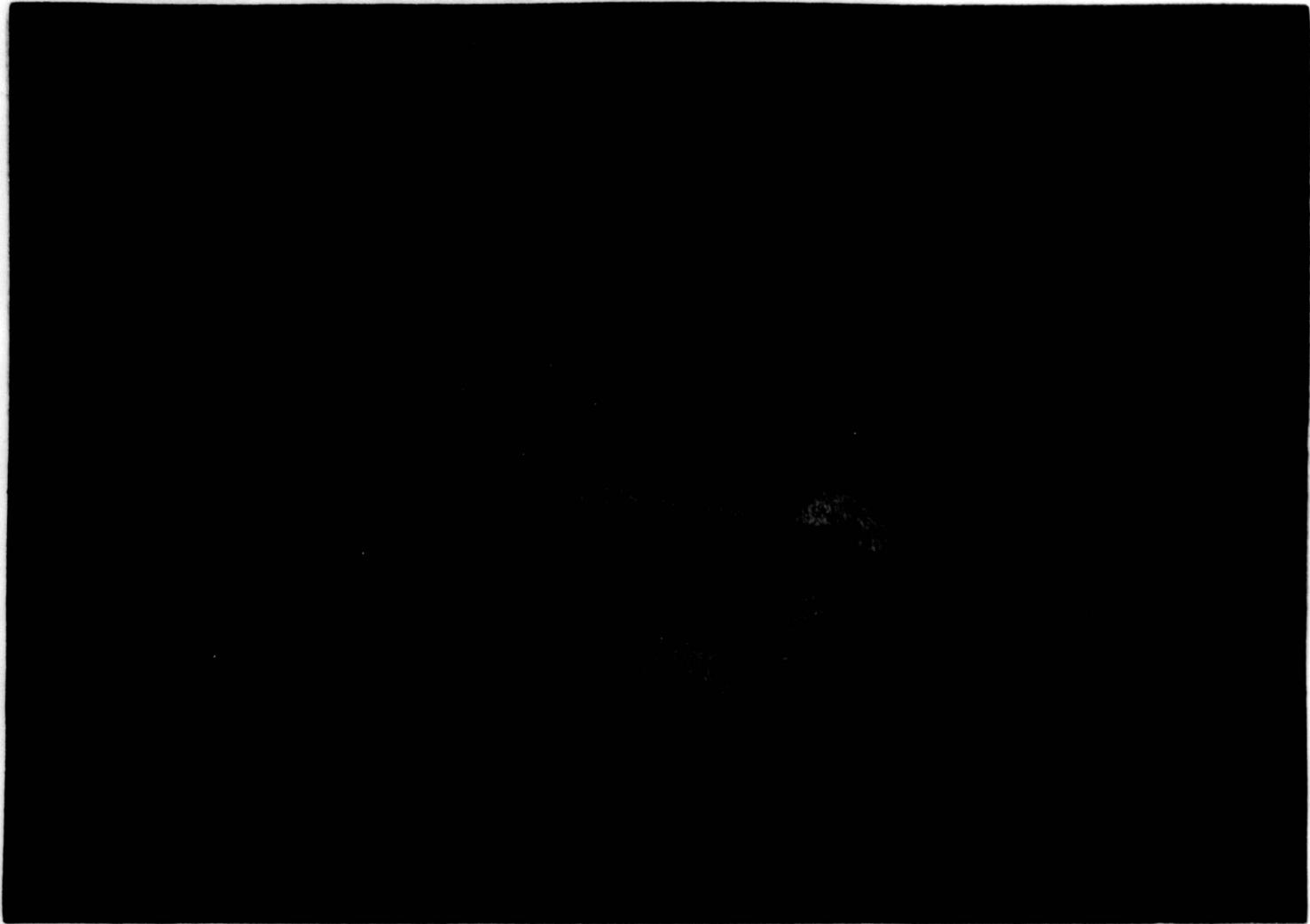


Fig. 29. Sketch 11, Period. (Study which introduces architectural features typical of the period into the free form sketching.)



**Fig. 30. Sketch 12, Fantasy. (A color Study Which attempts to capture the fantasy and mysticism within this architectural realm.)**



Fig. 31. Relativity. (M.C. Escher.)



Fig. 32. Carcere, With A Circular Tower. (Giovanni Battiste Piranesi.)



Fig. 33. Carcere, With Numerous Wooden Galleries and a Drawbridge. (Giovanni Battiste Piranesi.)

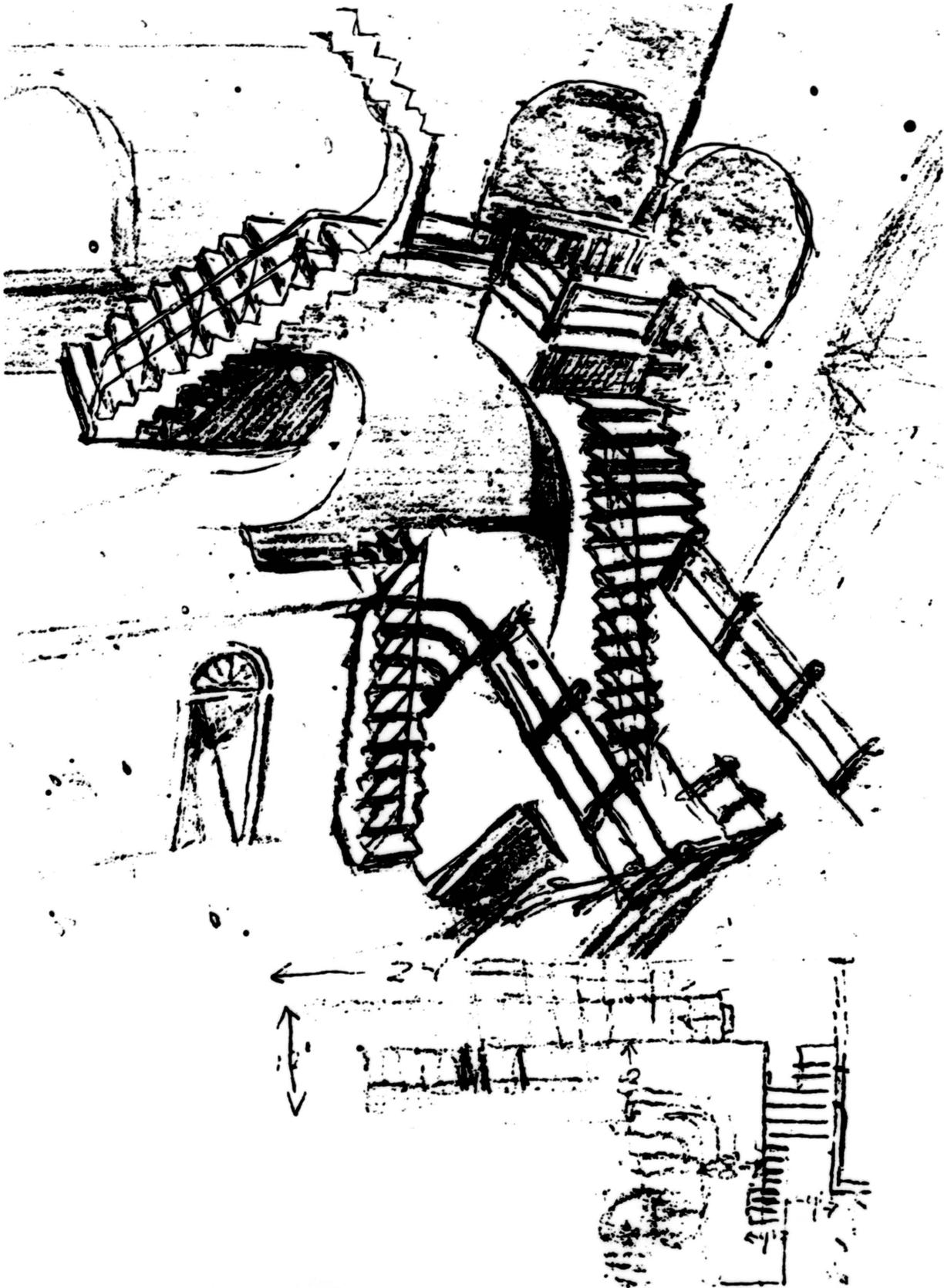


Fig. 34. Sketch 13, Adaptation. (Sketch and groundplan which were loosely adapted from Escher's Relativity.)

groundplan of the finished design (fig. 35). Part of the rough groundplan was developed into a model and then into a sketch (fig. 36). The sketch and the model were very useful. They demonstrated clearly the excess mass which was beginning to develop.

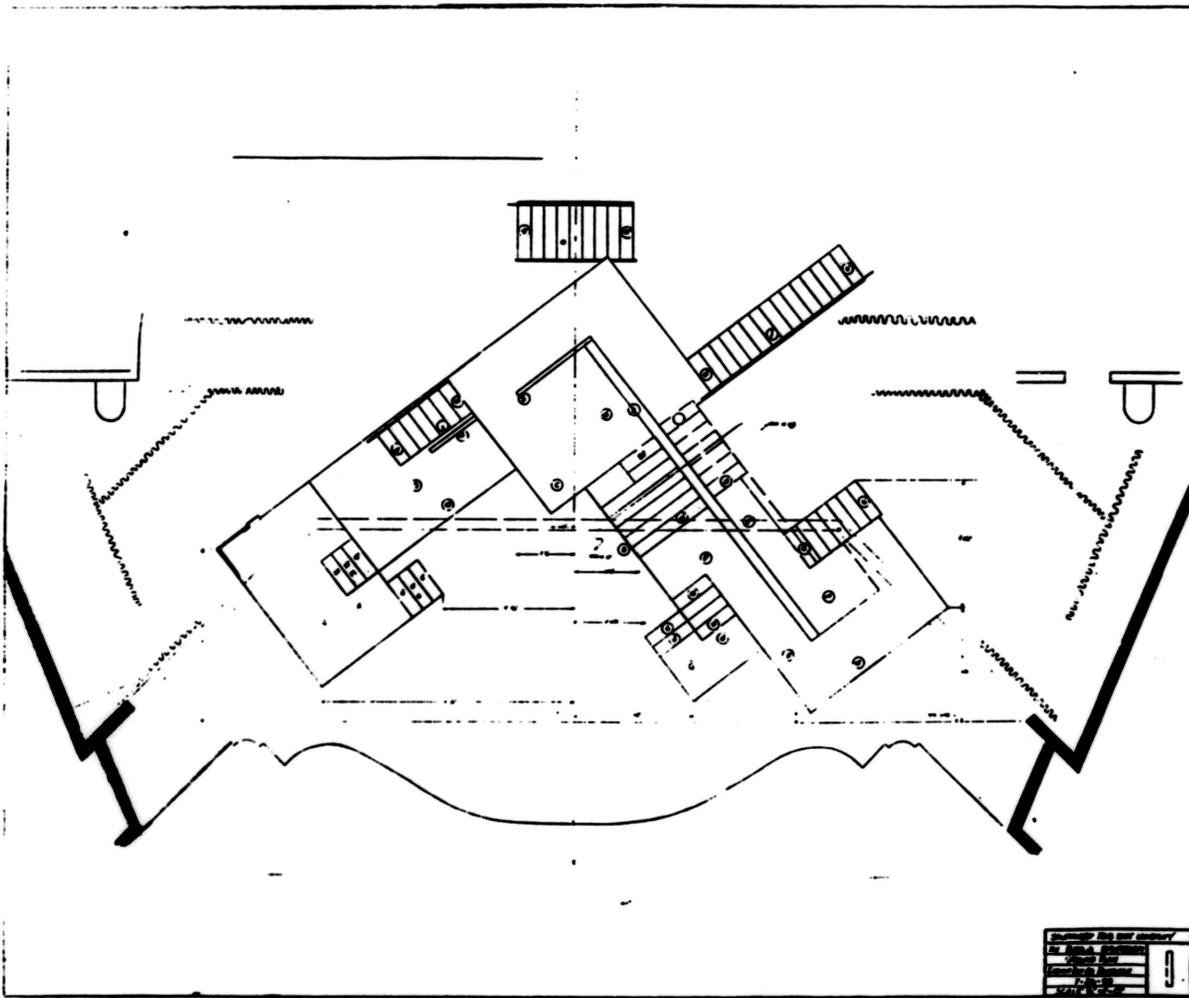


Fig. 35. Plate 1, Groundplan.

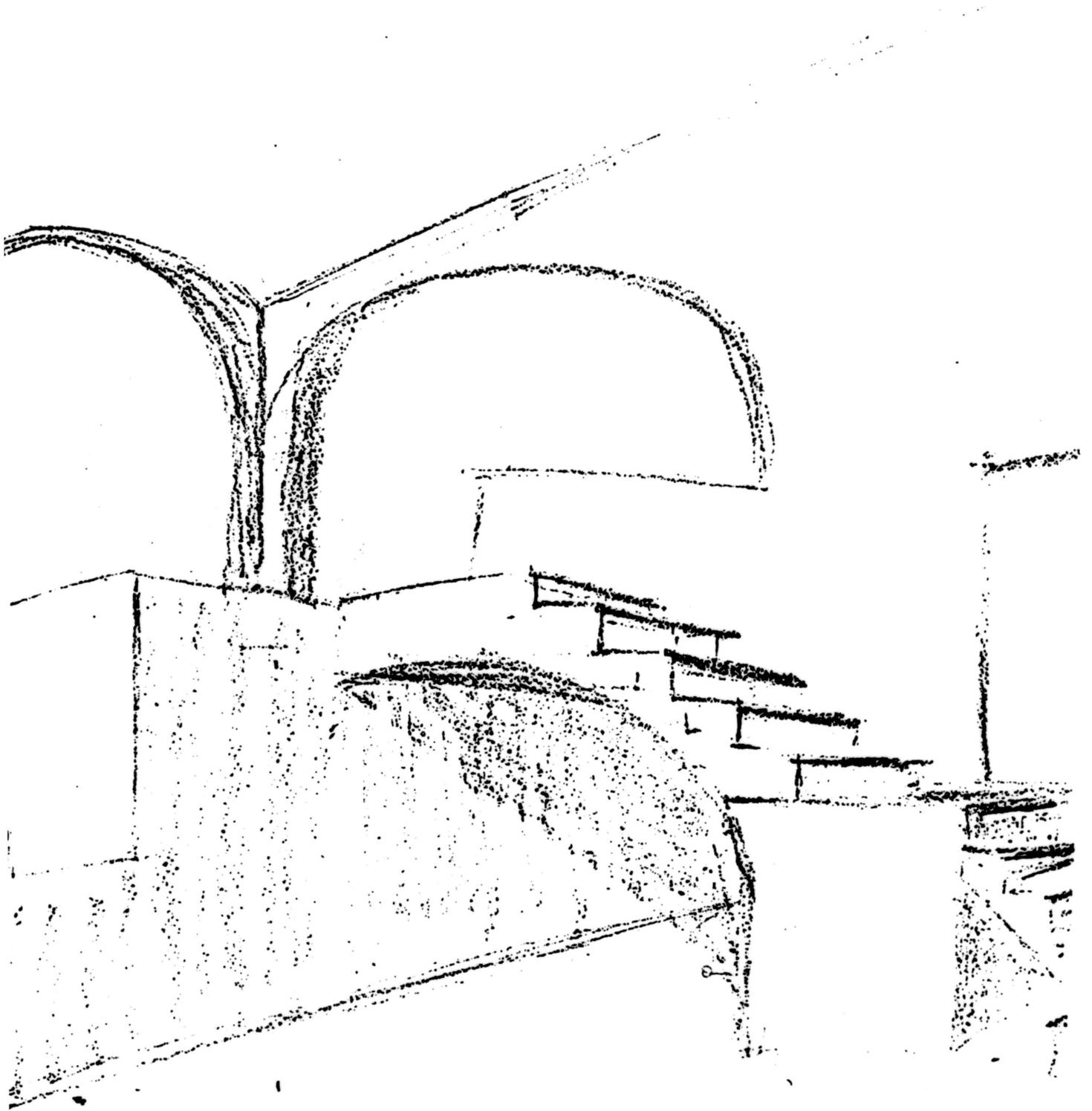


Fig. 36. Sketch 14, Model Drawing.

Maganza and I both wanted this world to remain light and elegant, not become bulky and cumbersome. The scenic units were also beginning to create pictures which featured a stark undesirable split between positive and negative space. The solutions to these problems were attained by combining them. The answer to each was to remove the facings from the structures. In doing so, I could grant an illusion of interplay between positive and negative space, and an illusion of relative weightlessness. As a bonus, this alteration solved the problem of actors coming and going from all directions at once. The removal of platform facings made accesses almost unlimited.

To my delight, the finished design was waiting patiently behind those facings. That final design was explored first in rendering form as shown in figure 37. The model of the final design shown in figure 38 was then developed based upon the rendering.

All of the levels and stair placements provided visual balance and structural support. The stairs were positioned to promote a circular blocking pattern (see groundplan, fig. 35). I hoped to create a sort of centrifugal force which would be capable of assisting, rather than inhibiting the flow of action in the play.

In the end the goals of the design were all met by these solutions. They gave the setting a lyric sense of elegance,

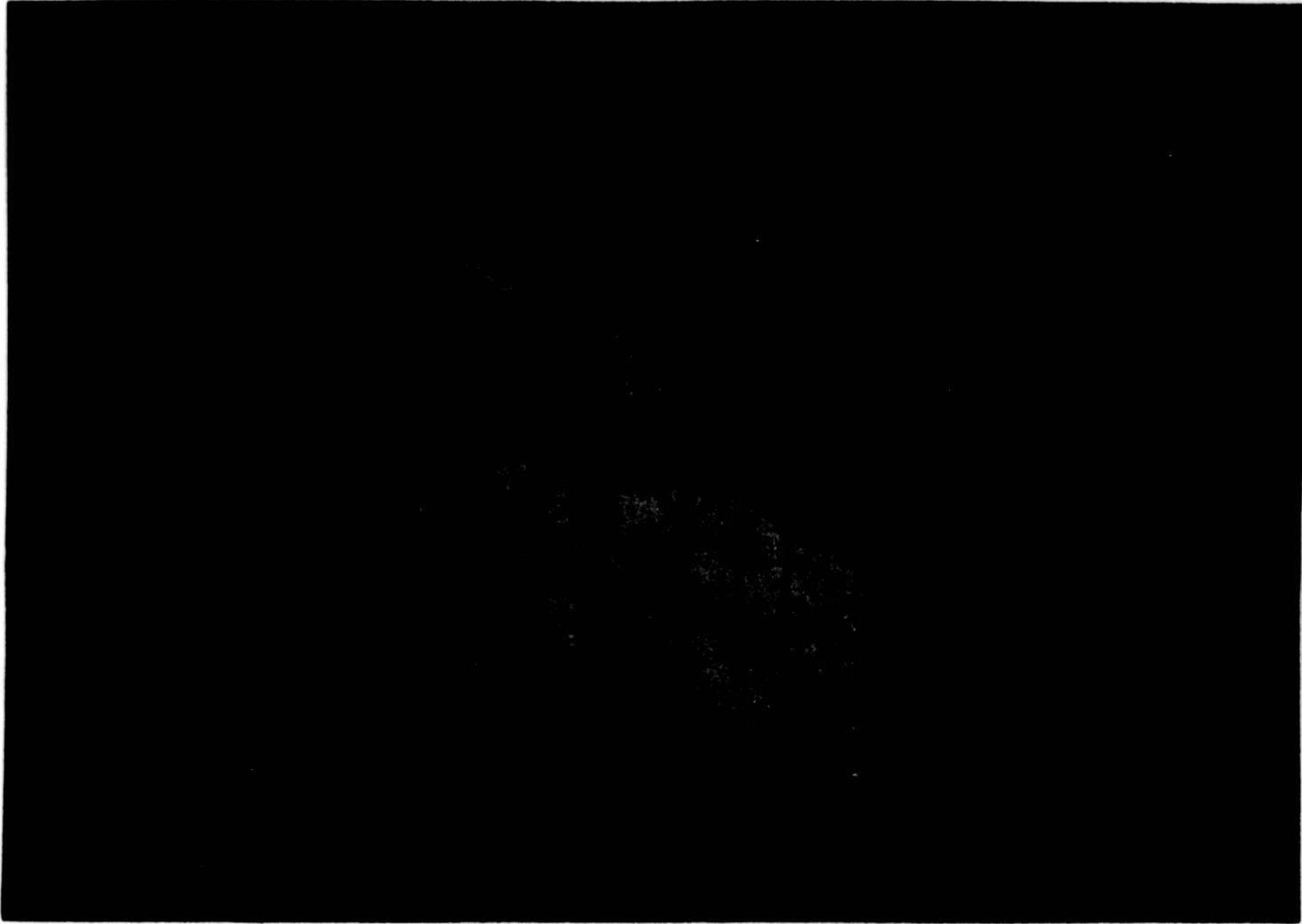


Fig. 37. Sketch 15, Stilts. (The finished model was based upon discoveries made through this exploration.)



Fig. 38. Finished Model.

integrated positive and negative space, and required no scene shifting. The actors were free to crawl or walk among the structural supports, and were therefore, able to enter from almost everywhere at once. The placement of platforms and stairs contributed to a sort of slingshot effect which helped to keep the action flowing.

All of these factors combined with the fantastical air of the basic silhouette to create a design which could successfully compliment the play.

CHAPTER THREE  
THE TECHNICAL PROCESS

Once the design had been developed and approved by all concerned, the formidable tasks of preparing designer's plans and supervising the execution of the scenery remained.

The groundplan was the first of these drawings to be prepared (fig. 39). The plan and all of the elevations which followed, were taken directly from the model (fig. 40-49). Because nearly all of the support for the scenery was exposed, there were few technical drawings required beyond the designer's drawings.

A copy of the section shown in figure 40 was given to the lighting designer. This drawing was also important in verifying the feasibility of the main wall. In order to be possible, the wall needed to pass beneath the procenium arch. Although this had been checked on the model, the section insured the accuracy of the model. The section was also useful in determining the best heights for masking.

Figure 41 features a cabinet oblique drawing of a typical stair unit. This drawing was used to demonstrate the dimensions of the stairs.

The lattice wall and window are the focus of figure 42. Based on the model, this drawing gave the information necessary to build the unit and the platform which it was intended to sit

upon. The wall was removed from the platform, however. Technical Director Bill Peeler suggested that it would be more stable if it were not connected to the set.

Figures 43-47 demonstrate the basic plan, elevation technique used to illustrate the support and brace positions, the platform breakdowns, and stair placements on each of the levels.

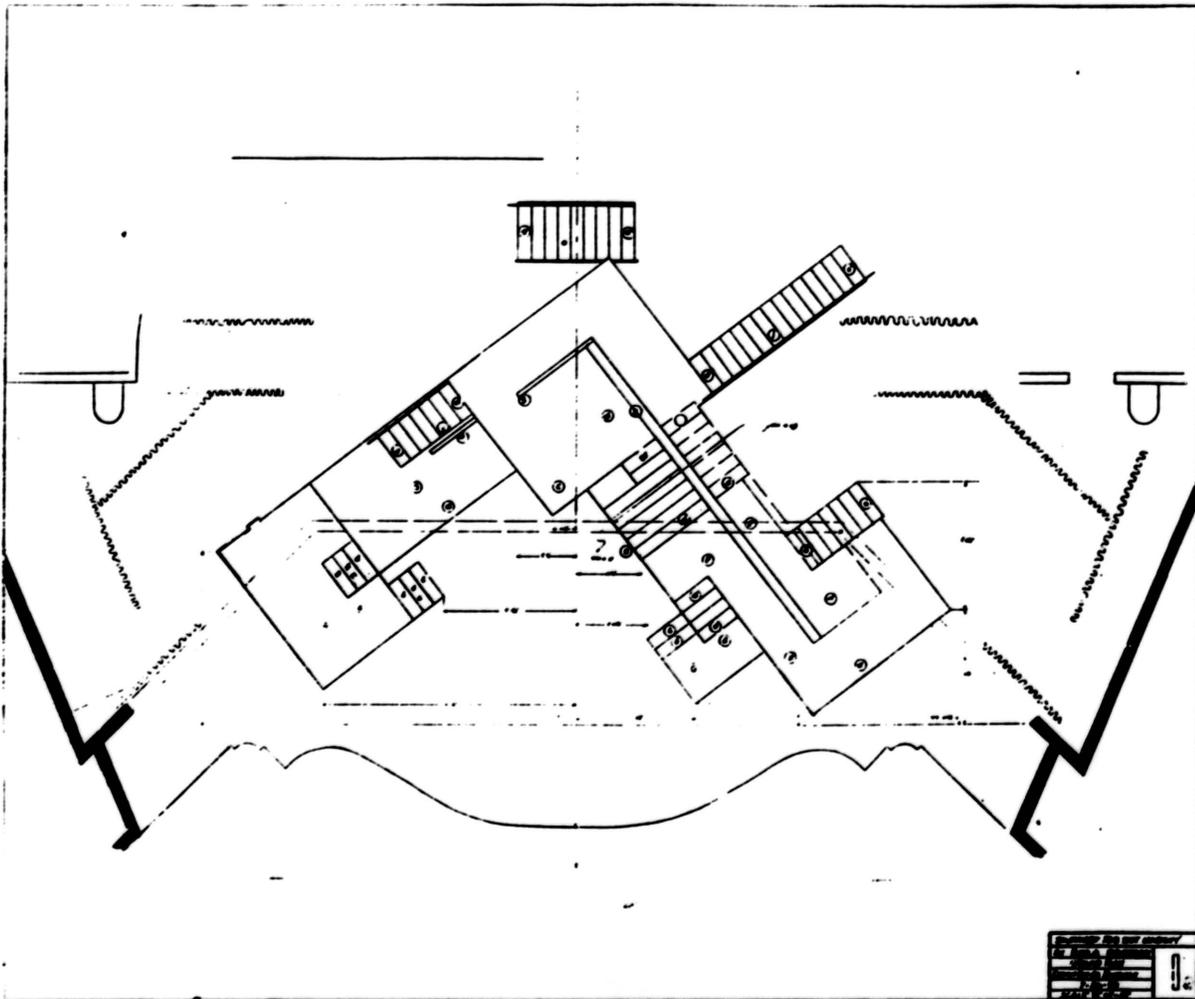


Fig. 39. Plate 1b, The Groundplan.

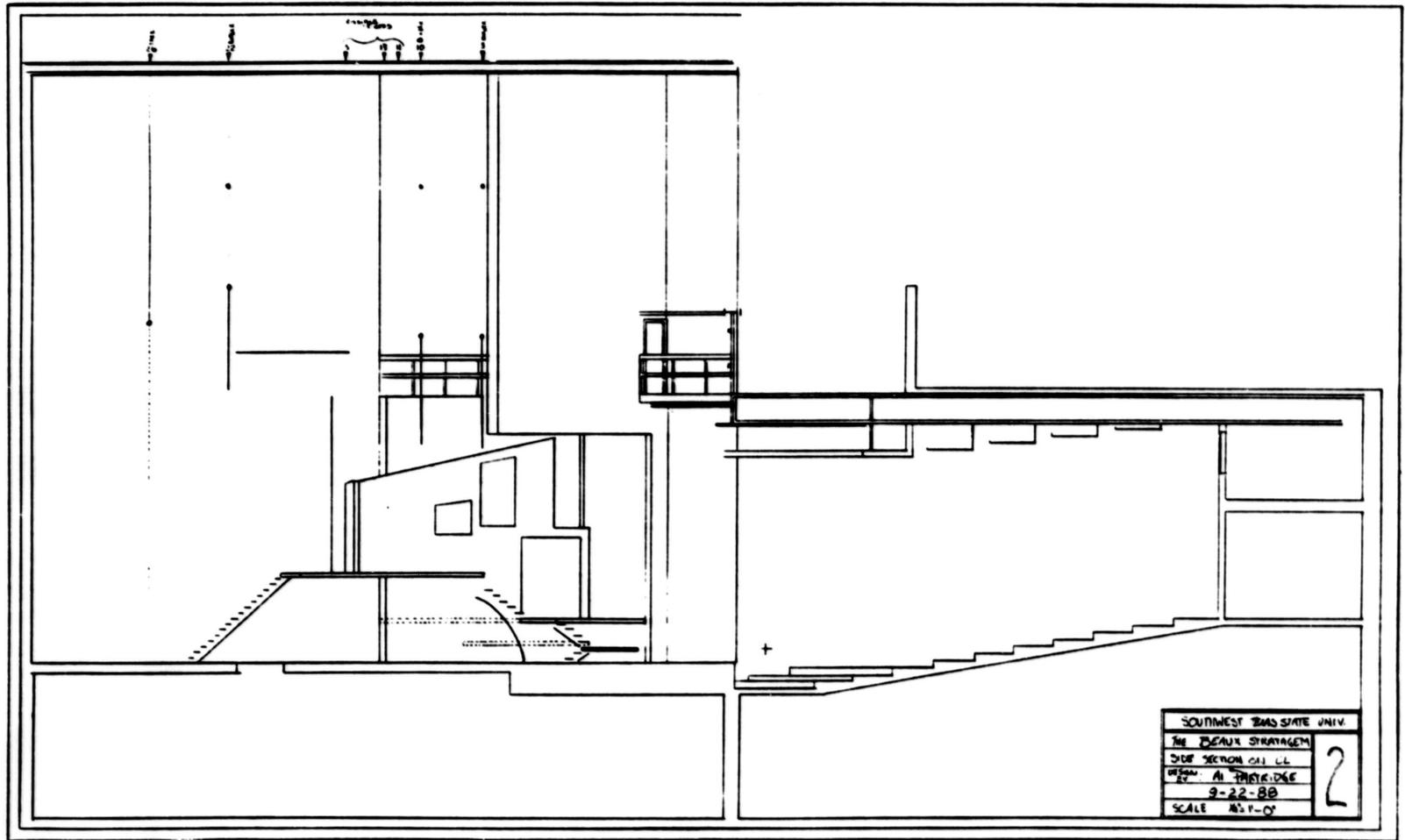


Fig. 40. Plate 2, Side Section on CL.

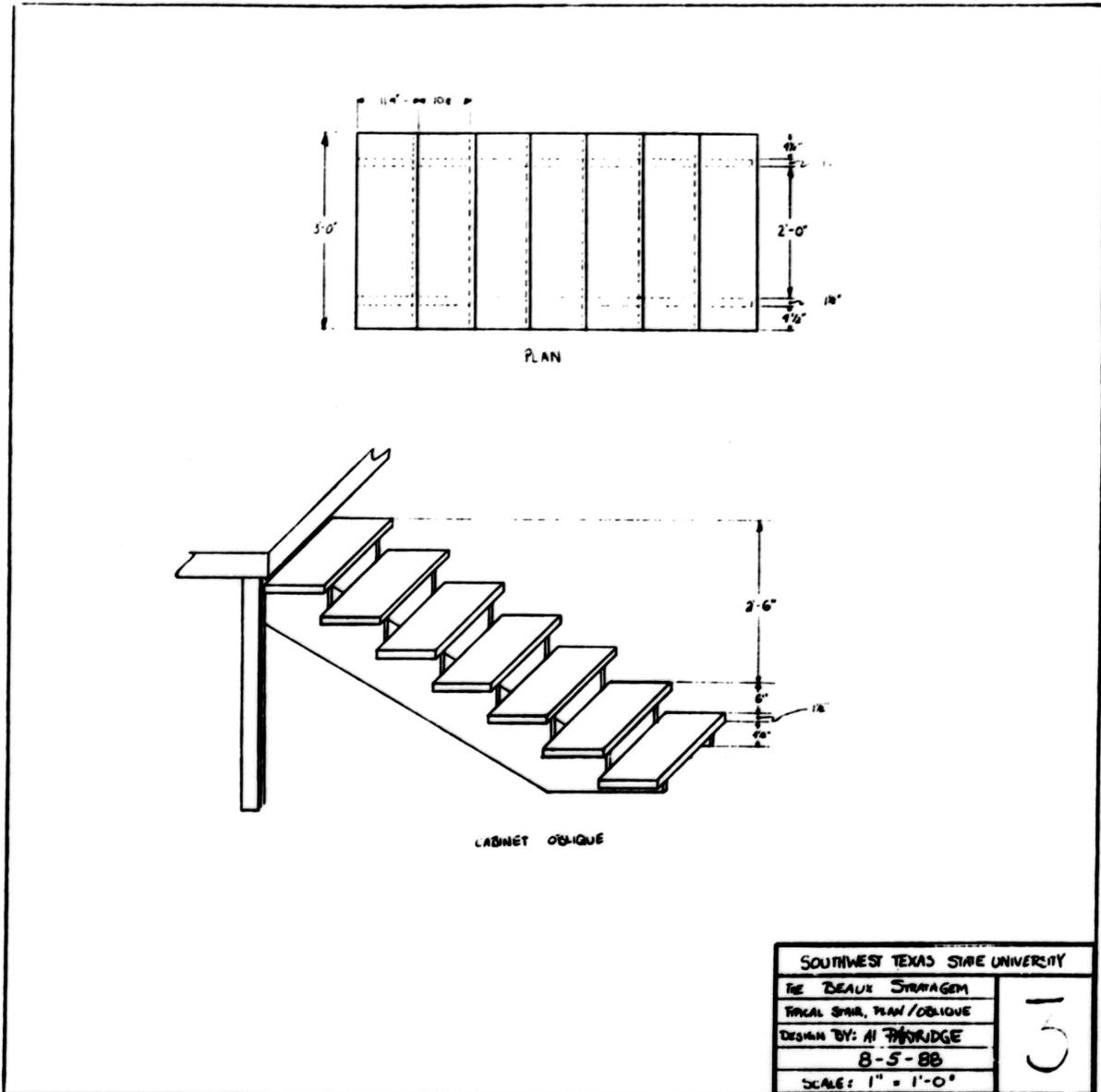


Fig. 41. Plate 3, Typical Stair, Plan/Oblique.

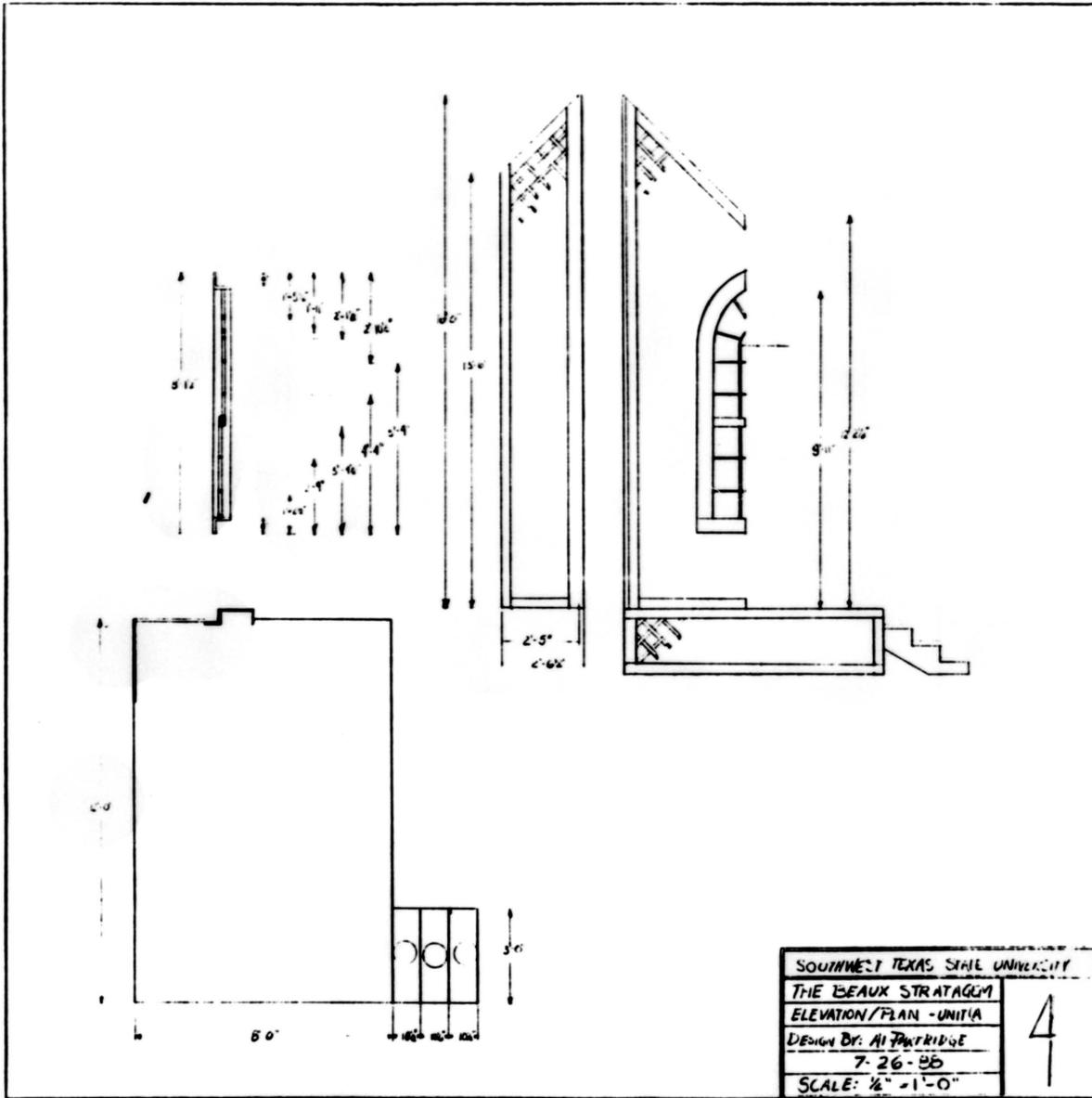


Fig. 42. Plate 4, Elevation/Plan Unit A.

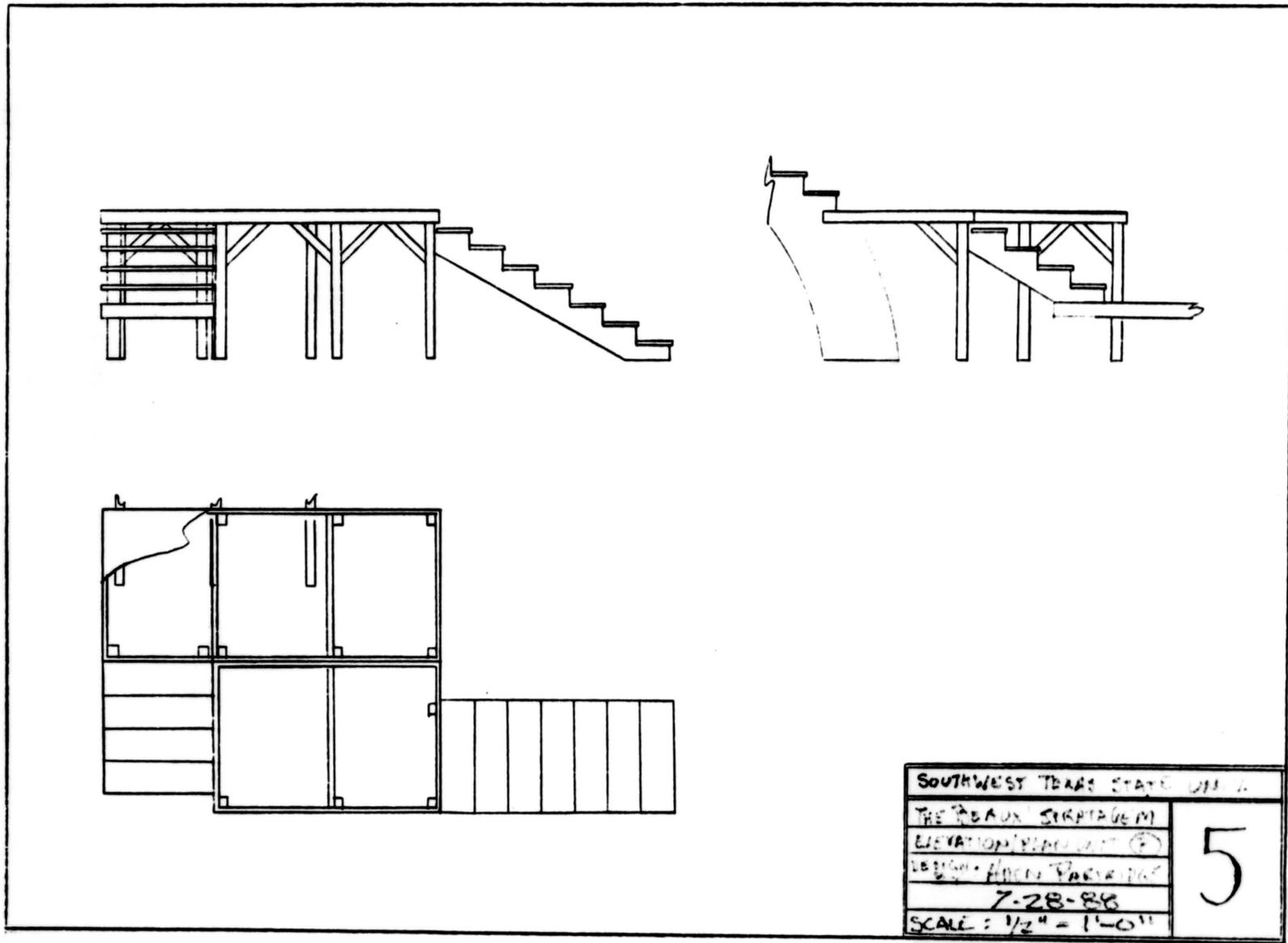


Fig. 43. Plate 5, Plan/Elevation Unit P.

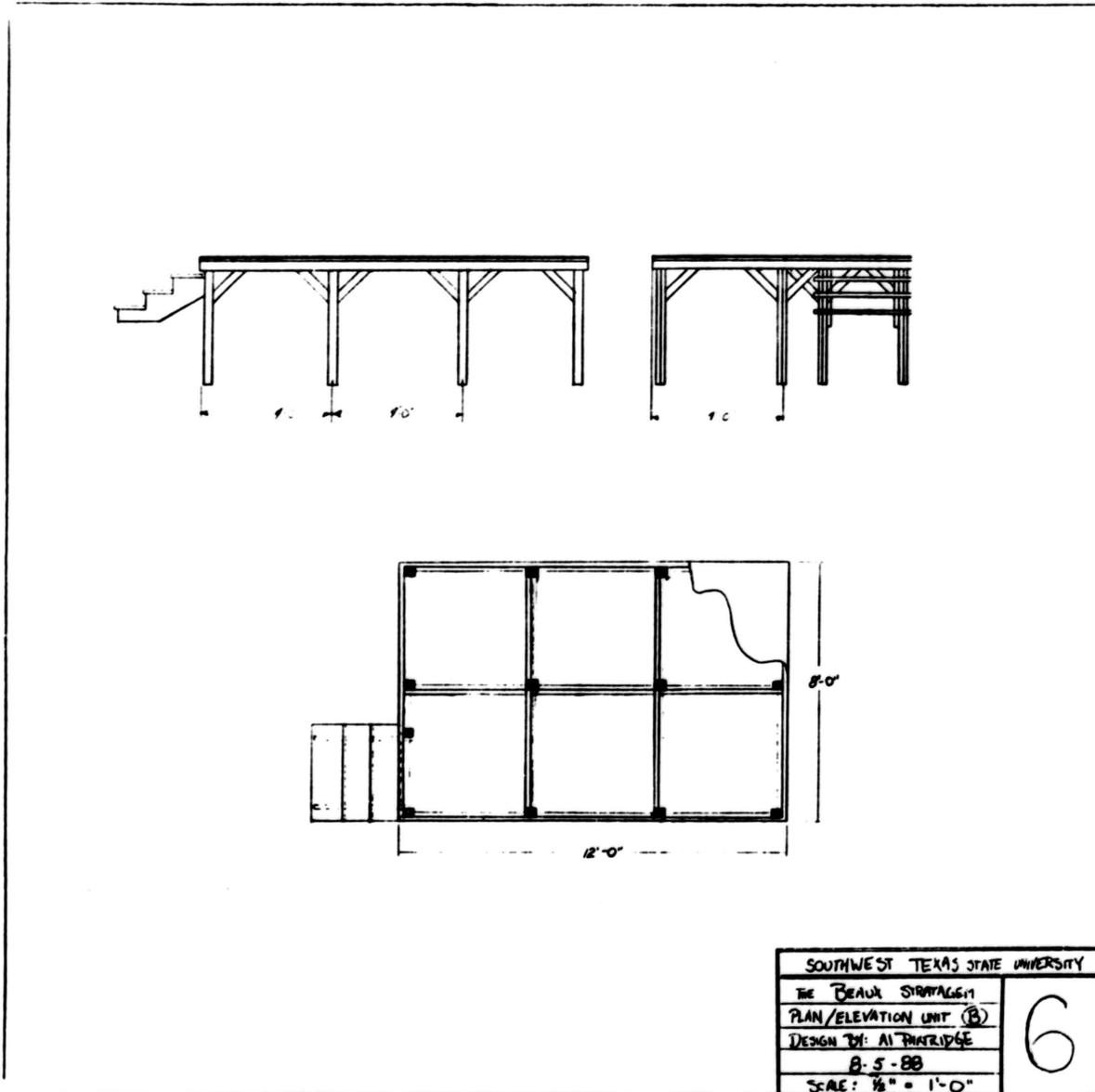


Fig. 44. Plate 6, Plan/Elevation Unit B.

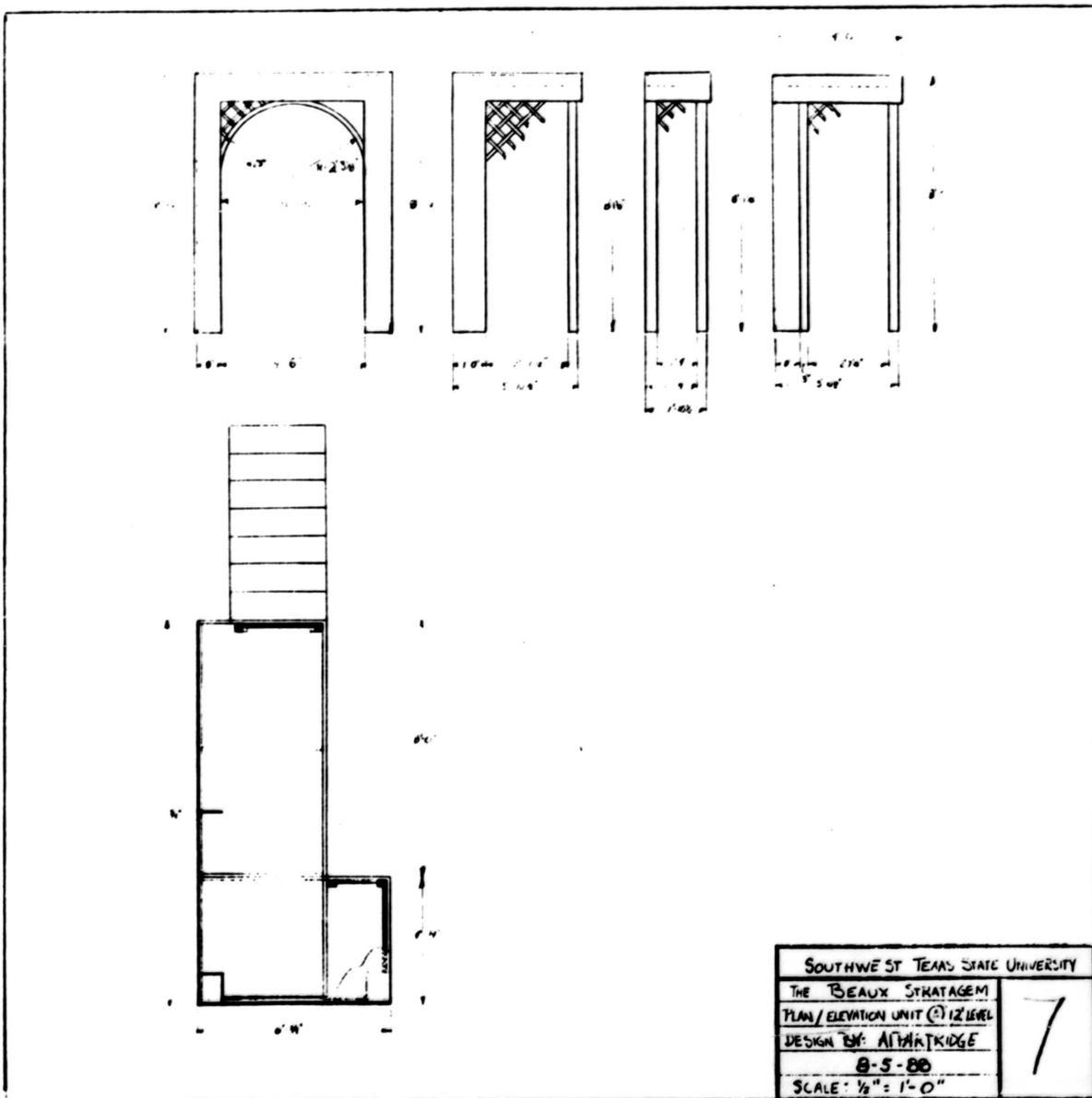


Fig. 45. Plate 7, Plan/Elevation Unit E.

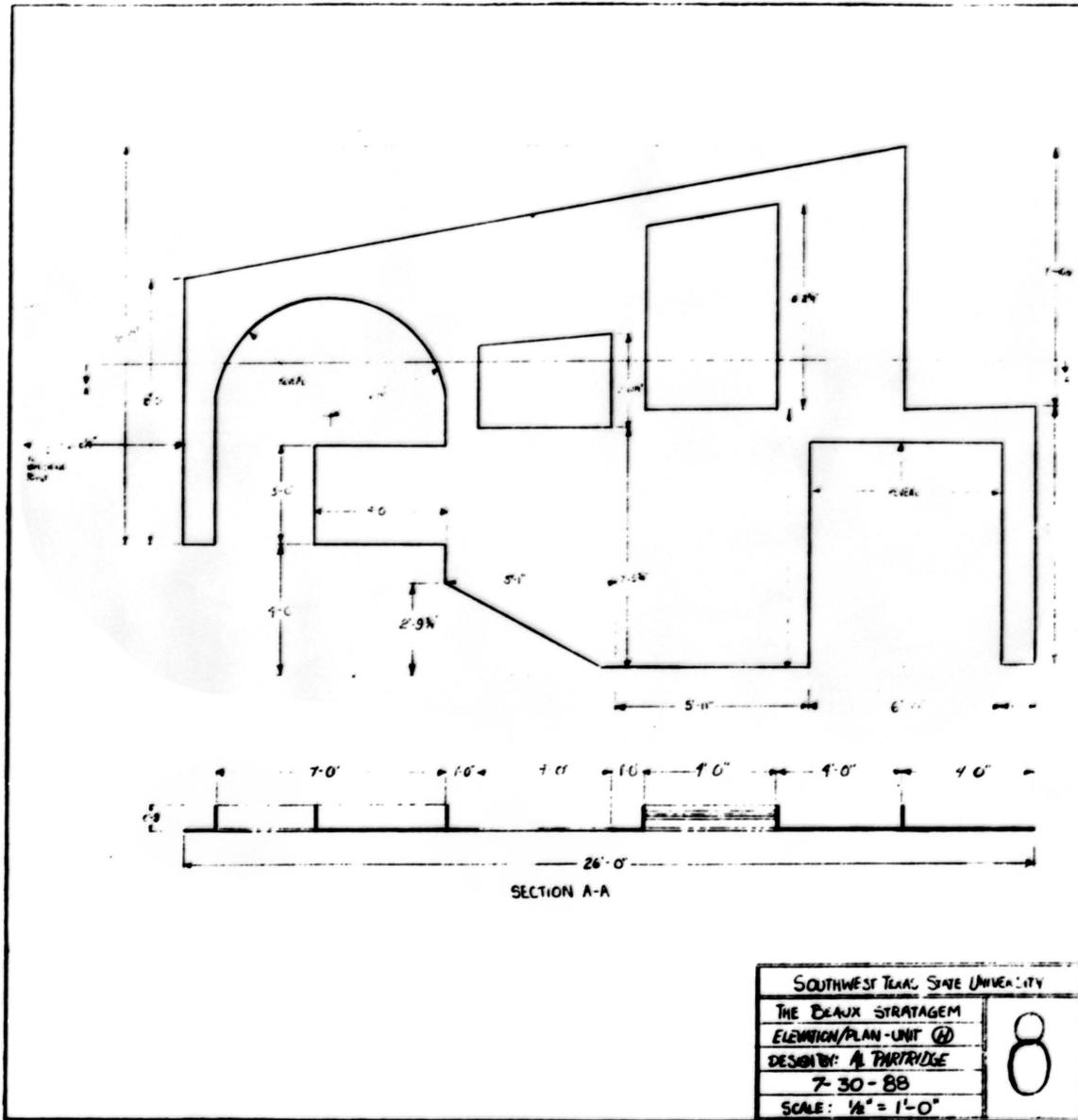


Fig. 46. Plate 8, Plan/Elevation Unit H.

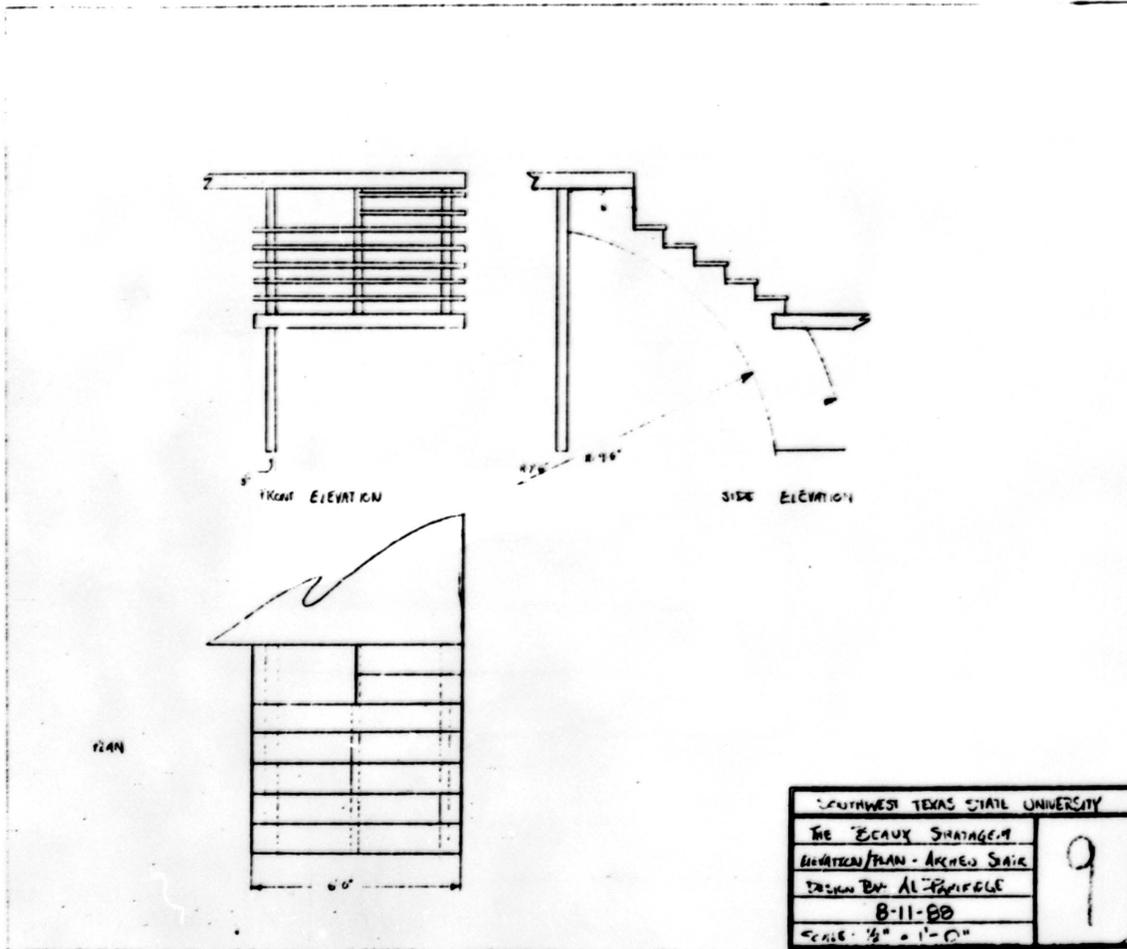


Fig. 47. Plate 9, Plan/Elevation Arched Stair.

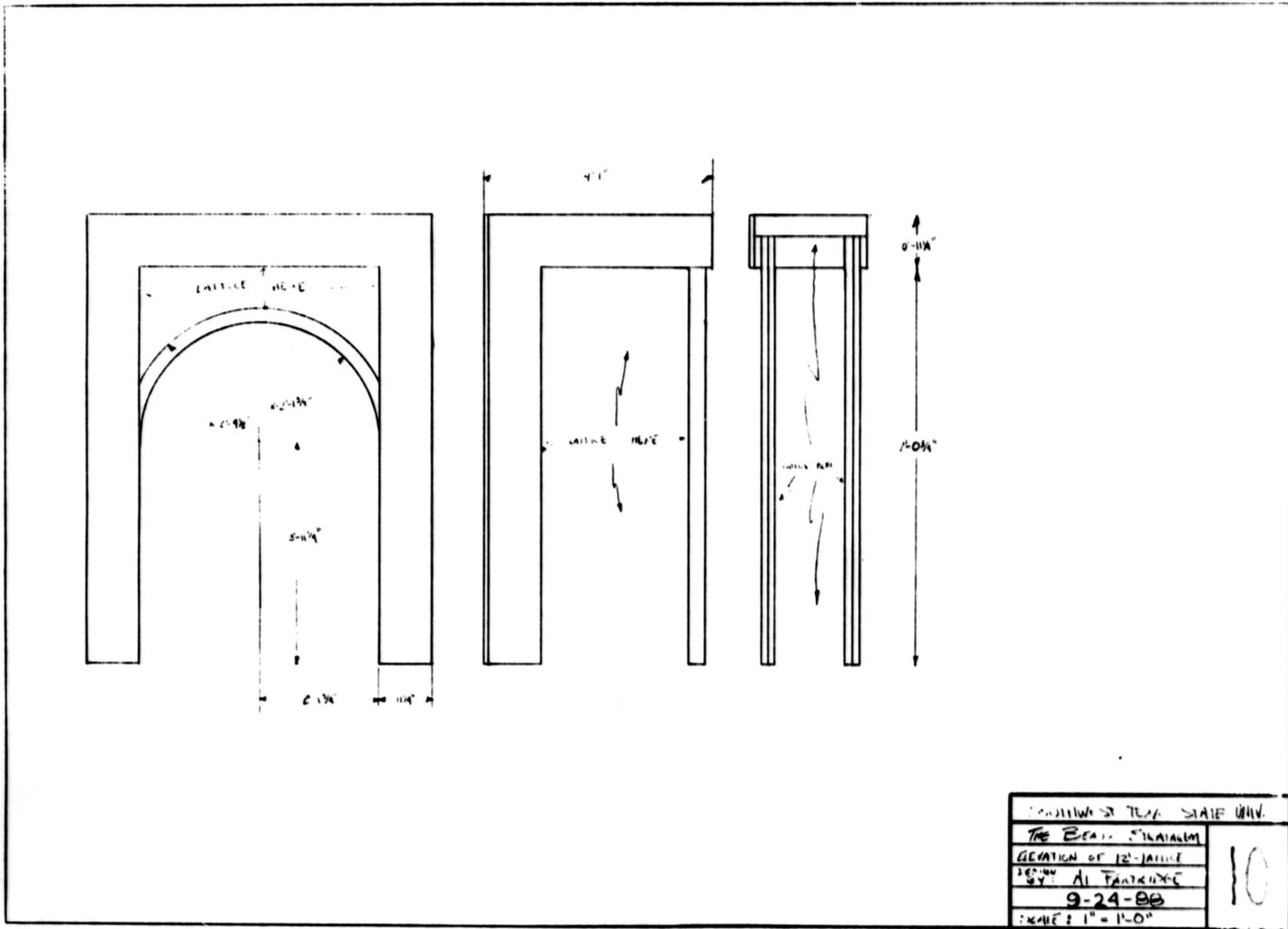


Fig. 48. Plate 10, Elevation of 12' Lattice.

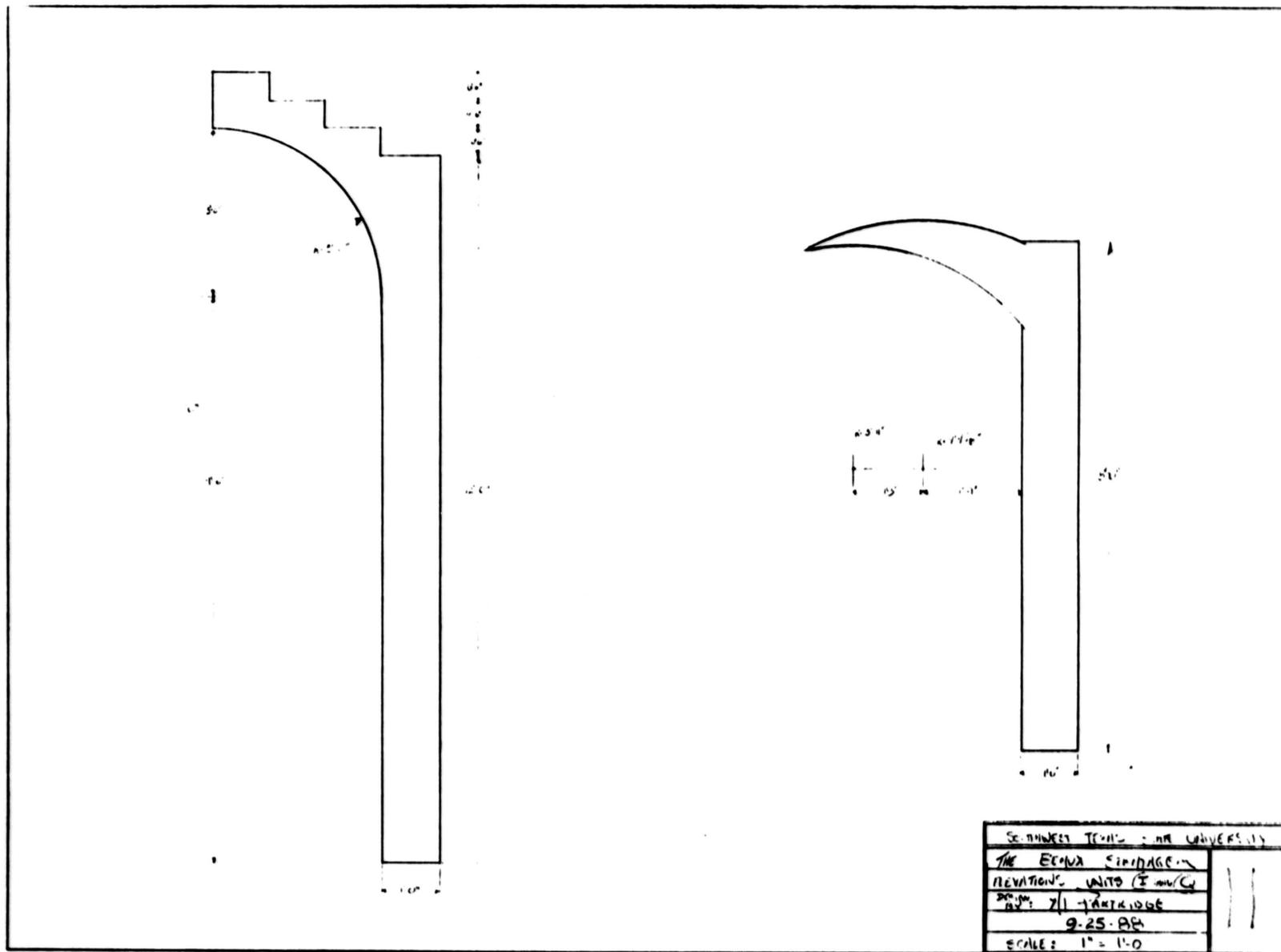


Fig. 49. Plate 11, Elevations Units I&Q.

Figures 48 and 49 give detailed elevation information to assist the construction of the arches.

Since the designer's drawings were completed, my chief remaining responsibility lay in supervising the execution of the scenery. This included developing painting techniques, and providing the technical director with lists of the basic materials required to complete the scenery. I provided Technical Director Bill Peeler with lists of platform requirements, estimates of plywood needs, paint estimates **and** color requests, muslin estimates, linear lumber requests, and a netting and Phlex Glue estimate. Peeler handled all pricing and purchasing, and made all of the estimates for linear lumber required to build the main wall. Peeler also made the estimates for the lumber required for platform supports. He was responsible for structural analysis and made every possible attempt to assure strength without damaging the appearance of the design. In addition to his formal duties Peeler provided both late night man-power, and a keen instinct for problem solving to the production. Several scenic elements needed this sort of problem solving in order to guarantee the safety of lengthy unsupported spans. Upon first analysis of the design, Peeler requested that an additional diagonal brace be attached to the twelve foot platform to give it support from off stage left. This was done by bolting a steel brace to the side of the twelve foot platform which stabilized the unit.

Once painted black, the brace was barely visible. Peeler also supervised the stair construction closely. Because the stairs were basically unsupported from beneath, he worked to assure the strength of the carriages.

Norma Garza was the master carpenter for the project. Garza was skilled in carpentry and had no trouble reading the drawings and pinpointing where labor would be spent. Although she was new to the position, she quickly found her niche and became an irreplaceable addition to the production team. Her responsibility was to supervise and coordinate the ongoing construction.

Kelly Draper designed costumes for the show. Draper and I worked together at every stage of the project. We hoped to achieve a distinct unification of scenery, costumes, and lighting. Draper and I developed the initial color schemes. We also decided to integrate the stripes in the costumes with furniture and hand properties. The color choices were then tested by lighting designer Scott Roberts and Maganza. Roberts used small tungsten lamps to light the model and all of the fabric swatches. Roberts, Maganza, Draper and I observed the effects of the various gels used in combination with the lights to determine the final gel choices. Roberts also assisted me with the decision to use white scenic netting rather than black, to create the tree illusion.

Properties designer, Billy Bolin also worked very closely with me. All of his choices were subject to approval by Maganza and me.

The scenic construction process was, at least initially, very unpleasant. The design was not very complex, but little shop assistance was given to the project until more than two weeks into the construction process. During the early weeks construction was handled by Garza, Peeler and me. Several unrelated projects were under construction in the University Theatre shop simultaneously. This factor severely limited the available work force during the early days of construction. It was during these first few weeks that we attached supports, braced the platforms and built the many stair units. During the following week we began construction of the two walls and the various arches and rails. By October 8, all major construction was complete and painting began.

The painting techniques were varied. Perhaps the most unusual of these was the painting of the tree onto scenic netting. To achieve the tree effect, latex paint was mixed with Phlex-Glue and poured onto scenic netting which had been stretched over plastic. An Ivory soap bottle was used to pour the mixture into the shapes defined by a charcoal drawing still visible beneath the clear plastic tarp. The glue was allowed to dry, and

then the completed tree was peeled away from the plastic. The effect was very successful. Lighting designer Scott Roberts managed to limit front light and encourage back-light enough that the netting was invisible. The tangled and dangling bits of Phlex-Glue which had not bonded completely to the netting cooperated with gravity to bring an unexpected aire of realism to the artificial tree.

Many of the painting techniques for the production attempted to apply two dimensional illusionist methods to the three dimensional forms. The washes from purple to white on many of the reveals are a good example of this. The wash was achieved by blending the purple and the white paints together while both were wet. It faded gradually from one color to the other, therefore the white paint was applied to one end and the purple to the other. Gradually their intensity decreased as they worked toward the center.

Initially the entire set was base painted white. The floor colors were then sprayed on with a garden sprayer. The floor was also painted with cool colors contrasting warm colors. Because the floor was sprayed with water while these colors were being applied, a charged wash of feathering occured. The stage was then divided into two-foot squares and the checked floor pattern was painted on in black.

The House Right sides of the set's vertical pieces were painted with cool colors and the House Left sides were painted with warm colors.

Most of the legs of the platforms were painted with a three-color-wet-scumble. Because the set was painted in contrasting colors on opposite axis, the scumble was orange, red and yellow on one plane and blue, green and yellow on the other. The legs were then texture painted with a sponge to create a highlight and shadow, and to help blend the scumble together.

These were the basic methods used to paint the scenery. They combined with the methods of construction outlined earlier to bring the design from its conceptual form to that of the realized production, shown in figure 50.



Fig. 50. Production.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### EVALUATIONS

My primary goal in preparing the design for *The Beaux Stratagem* was to create an environment which assisted the flow of action within the production. I provided an unintrusive space from which the actors could tell the story.

Maganza's concept was to create a mystical world with greater dimension than our own. An illogical universe where performers could come and go without entering or exiting. He wanted this place to be quiet, simple and elegant, but to maintain an ever pressing potential for chaotic explosions of lust, greed, and ambition for power.

I met Maganza's requirements and held firmly to his concept through this design. In addition I fulfilled my own goal of assisting the flow of action in the play through the relative placements of platforms and stairs in the design.

In this way, the design was essentially successful. The only significant unsolved problem was the stark visual jump from the black masking to the white cyclorama. I simply should not have surrendered to pressure from my collaborators to cut the silhouette foilage which was originally designed to hang down around the entire set. It was an important element of the scenery even though its function was not immediately apparent. If I had pursued possible avenues for constructing this scenery sooner, I would have discovered that the construction technique was neither

time consuming nor expensive. The elimination of the foliage was not necessary.

I also regret a decision I made during the conversion of the design from rendering to model form. In the rendering, some of the railings are sideways. There was a certain kind of charm to the confused railings which added to the kinetic sense of chaos in the piece.

In the end, the design respected the director's concept, fulfilled my goals, and provided a useful mechanism for telling the story. Aside from the few choices mentioned above, I was very pleased with the project.

Evaluative Comments Concerning  
Al Partridge's Scenic Design for the SWT  
Production of The Beaux' Stratagem.

On entering into production meetings the spring prior to the fall opening of the production I really knew very little about Al Partridge as a designer. This proved to be quite understandable because this production would be his first design opportunity. Despite this inexperience in the development and actual execution of a design, Al's behaviour and ultimate product showed exceptional ability, creativity, and dedication. I look back upon the production process for The Beaux' Stratagem and feel pleased about its aspects as an educational vehicle for Al's initial work.

I have only praise for Al's pre-production work. He was tireless in his research and pursued all design options with equal intensity. He accepted imaginative and practical suggestions with pleasure and ultimately showed a flare for mixing the practical with the unconventional. As with most young designers he fell into the trap of mass and magnitude, but to his credit he was capable of making major modifications to improve the ultimate design without compromising his personal conceptualization. In the end, I believe Al achieved his conceptual goal, an environment which was at once specific spaces, yet were capable of becoming general spaces. The design reflected an unconventional Georgian world where up is down, in is out and all is a collective absurdity.

In terms of the execution of the design, let it suffice to say that the scale model came into being as a full scale scenic environment. Some modifications occurred as we adjusted from the model to the reality, but these adjustments would prove to be improvements in the overall visual effects. I believe the experience proved to stimulate improvement in Al's painting, texturing, etc. After the project was completed I believe Al had a clear understanding of his technical strengths and abilities as well as areas that were lacking and in need of improvement. As a director I was pleased with the final product as it remained consistent from model to finished product in its structure and aesthetic effect.

My singular disappointment in the overall project which I share in as well as Al, was the unnecessary mixture of overly complicated painting techniques. The result of two dimensional techniques on three dimensional objects only confused the overall impression and would be best described as one experiment too many. We should have allowed the set to stand as it was without distorting a distortion.

The production process for The Beaux Stratagem was for me a learning experience with the final product reflecting the concepts of all those who collaborated on the production. Al's work on this production could in no way be considered the normal product of a first

effort, but displayed creativity and ability and complimented the work of the other members of this creative collaboration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis M. Maganza". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Dennis M. Maganza

## Bibliography

- Amery, Colin. Period Houses and their Details. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1974.
- Atkinson, T.D. Local Style in English Architecture. London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1947.
- Burke, John. The English Inn. New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers Inc., 1981.
- Clark, Peter. The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830. New York: Longman Inc., 1983.
- Cordon, Art. The M.C. Escher Adress Book. Corte Madera, California: Pomegranate Calendars and Books, 1986.
- Farquhar, George. The Complete Works. New York: Gardian Press, 1967.
- Ferrero, Mercedes Viale. Color Treasury of Rugs and Tapestries. Novara, Italy: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1969.
- Girourd, Mark. Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Myers, Bernard. Goya. Verona, Italy: Officine Graffiche Arnolde Mondadori, 1968.
- Piranesi, Giovanni Battiste. Piranesi. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1973.
- Richardson, A.E. and H.D. Eberlein. The English Inn Past and Present. New York: Benjamin Bloom Inc., 1968.
- Richardson A.E. The Old Inns of England. New York: Benjamin Bloom Inc., 1972.
- Schneider, Pierre. The World of Watteau: 1684-1721. New York: Time Inc., 1967.
- Yarwood, Doreen. The Architecture of England: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1963.