

Structural Condition Assessment

For

**Center Theatre
Franklin, Louisiana**

Prepared for

**City of Franklin
Franklin Historic District**

Prepared by:



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Acknowledgement

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And

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National Park Service
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

1. INTRODUCTION

A visual inspection of the Center Theatre in Franklin, Louisiana, was performed. This inspection was conducted to provide a structural condition assessment of the hotel for the owner, the City of Franklin, Louisiana. This report provides the details of the inspection and the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the visit.

- 1.1. PURPOSE – The purpose of this structural condition assessment is to meet the requirements of a grant agreement between the City of Franklin, Louisiana and the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation(State of Louisiana).

The long term goals are to develop a preservation plan for occupancy and use of the building to best utilize the space within the uses of the surrounding vicinity. Also included in the Purpose for this investigation is the Historic nature of the structure. Due to the historical significance of the building and it's location within the City of Franklin, an assessment of the condition of the building is required to properly determine the ability to restore, rehabilitate, and/or adapt the structure for reuse.

- 1.2. SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION AND ASSESSMENT – The scope of this investigation included a cursory and preliminary assessment of the structure. The scope of work was to provide visual observations of the structural systems present and their current condition. Conditions at the time of the investigation were documented with the use of digital photography.

No testing of the structural materials present was performed at this time.

This investigation does not cover issues related to either electrical or mechanical systems in the building. These systems will require further review by qualified personnel at such time as the building may be put back into service.

This assessment should also not be used as a full review of building code or life safety code compliance. These issues cannot be fully addressed until a specific plan for renewed occupancy of the building is prepared.

2. DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURE

- 2.1. GENERAL – The Center Theater is a brick masonry structure located on Main Street in Franklin, Louisiana. The building formerly housed a theater. Documents from the Franklin Historic District indicate that this building was constructed around 1930.

The building is approximately 34' wide by 127' long. The front façade of the building is finished with stucco. It has wood French doors for the main entry point. Exposed steel beams support the upper sections of the front façade. Two large window openings at the front of the building have been bricked in.

The right hand side of the building is an open alley way averaging approximately 4' in width. The building has a couple of secondary doors opening into this alley way. The left side of the building abuts the adjacent building. The rear of the building faces Teche Drive and the Bayou Teche. The rear has several openings that appear to have facilitated deliveries to the building. These openings have been boarded up.

- 2.2. HISTORY – As noted above, the building was constructed around 1930. It appears that the structure has had a few renovations, primarily to the front entry.

3. COLLECTED DATA

- 3.1. AVAILABLE DRAWINGS - No original building plans were available for use. Measurements taken at the site were used to create general building sketches, included as Appendix A to this report.

- 3.2. PHOTOGRAPHS – Digital photography was used to document existing conditions. A sample of these photographs are displayed in Appendix B to this report.

4. DISCUSSION OF SITE VISITS

- 4.1. OVERVIEW – The investigation of this building was performed by me and Mr. Paul Allain. The observations discussed below were documented with the use of digital photography. Some of the photographs taken during this site visit are shown in Appendix B-Photographs. The site was also visited by the survey field crew to document the measurements for the building sketches.

4.2. OBSERVATIONS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.2.1. General, Exterior – In general, the building is currently in a state of advancing deterioration. The roof has partially collapsed at the rear of the building, which is allowing rain and humidity to invade the interior spaces. Birds and other wildlife can also access the interior spaces through the open roof.

The brick masonry walls appear to be in good shape. Most of the masonry that could be examined in this investigation appeared to be intact with solid mortar joints. No significant deterioration of the masonry was observed. However, there was a significant crack in the rear masonry wall above the upper level window.

The front façade of the building is finished with stucco and appears to be in good condition. Two openings on the front of the building have been boarded up. The exposed steel beam supporting the upper section of the façade wall is exhibiting significant corrosion from the weather. Also, the wood French doors at the front

entry are exhibiting deterioration from the weather and are sticking and hard to open.

- 4.2.2. General, Interior – The interior of the building is in an advanced stage of deterioration. The wood balcony structure has deteriorated due to water intrusion and general exposure to weather. The balcony also has a perimeter framing of steel beams that are also exhibiting severe corrosion from the water intrusion. The stairs leading up to the balcony and the floor structure appears to be unsafe to occupy.

The central projection room at the front of the building is constructed of concrete masonry units (cmu) and poured in place concrete slab. The steel pan supporting the concrete is rusting due to water intrusion.

- 4.2.3. Roof – A large portion of the roof at the rear of the building has collapsed, allowing rain to enter the building. Also, the remaining roof is significantly deteriorated and has several large openings. The structure of the roof is constructed with wood members. It was originally a single slope roof draining rain toward the rear of the building. Several steel trusses have been installed at the rear of the building with no secondary structure or finish.

- 4.2.4. Site/Infrastructure – The building occupies most of the site, with the front façade situated directly at the edge of the sidewalk at Main Street. The rear face of the building sits approximately 111 feet from Teche Drive. The site slopes generally towards the rear, shedding the site runoff toward the Bayou Teche. However, with the openings in the roof, all of the rain fall entering the building is being trapped inside the structure. Vegetation is growing along the interior rear wall of the building.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon this inspection, there are several recommendations to be made to stabilize and re-use this structure. The recommendations can be broken down into short term recommendations that are needed to stabilize the structure to prevent any further severe deterioration and long term recommendations that will be needed to utilize the structure for future occupancies.

5.1. SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1.1. Roof Structure – Providing a roof to cover the building is essential to stopping the severe deterioration occurring in the structure. First, a roof structure will stop the intrusion of water into the building. This water intrusion is providing a mechanism for the on-going deterioration of wood, metal, and masonry building components.

The roof structure also provides lateral support for the walls against wind forces. With most of the roof either completely destroyed or severely deteriorated, the walls have little to no lateral resisting support. A new structure would provide for this, especially for the left side wall. This wall has the largest wind exposure and also has the largest risk for the adjacent building. The right side wall is somewhat shielded from wind loads due to the building across the alley.

Continuing with steel trusses similar to those already installed at the rear of the building will provide for the structural lateral support. However, that type of structure will shed rain water toward each side. Provisions will be required to channel the rain water toward the rear of the building.

5.1.2. Interior – The interior of the building should be cleared of vegetation and structural debris. The vegetation should be cleared to prevent any further damage to the masonry walls. The wood structural components of the balcony and remaining roof structures are a safety concern due to their advanced deterioration.

5.1.3. Steel Components – Exposed steel components, such as the exterior beam at the front entry, should be cleaned of significant rust and coated to prevent further oxidation.

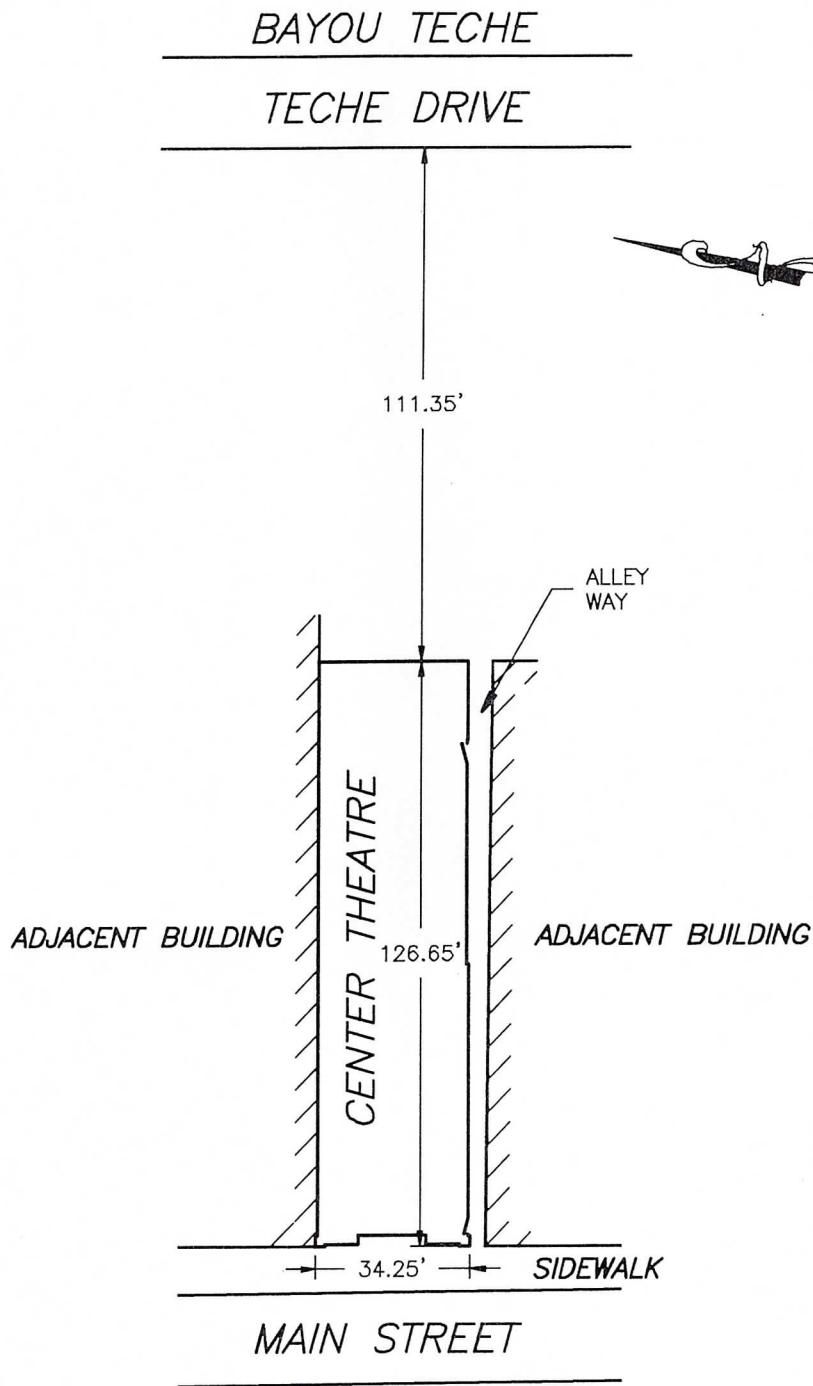
5.2. LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1. Additional investigation of the rear wall should be done to address the masonry wall cracking. The investigation should focus on possible settlement issues and other possible causes for the cracking. After fixing the root problem(s) for the wall cracking, the cracks should be sealed with cement mortar and/or flexible sealants will prevent additional water intrusion into the masonry wall.

5.2.2. Determination of long-term occupancy will need to be studied to determine exit requirements, etc. The floor of the building slopes toward the rear of the building. This will need to be addressed for any future occupancy.

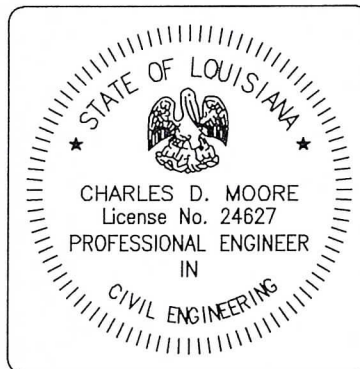
5.2.3. All of the building openings will require new windows and/or doors to provide for useable components for the building use.

APPENDIX A - DRAWINGS



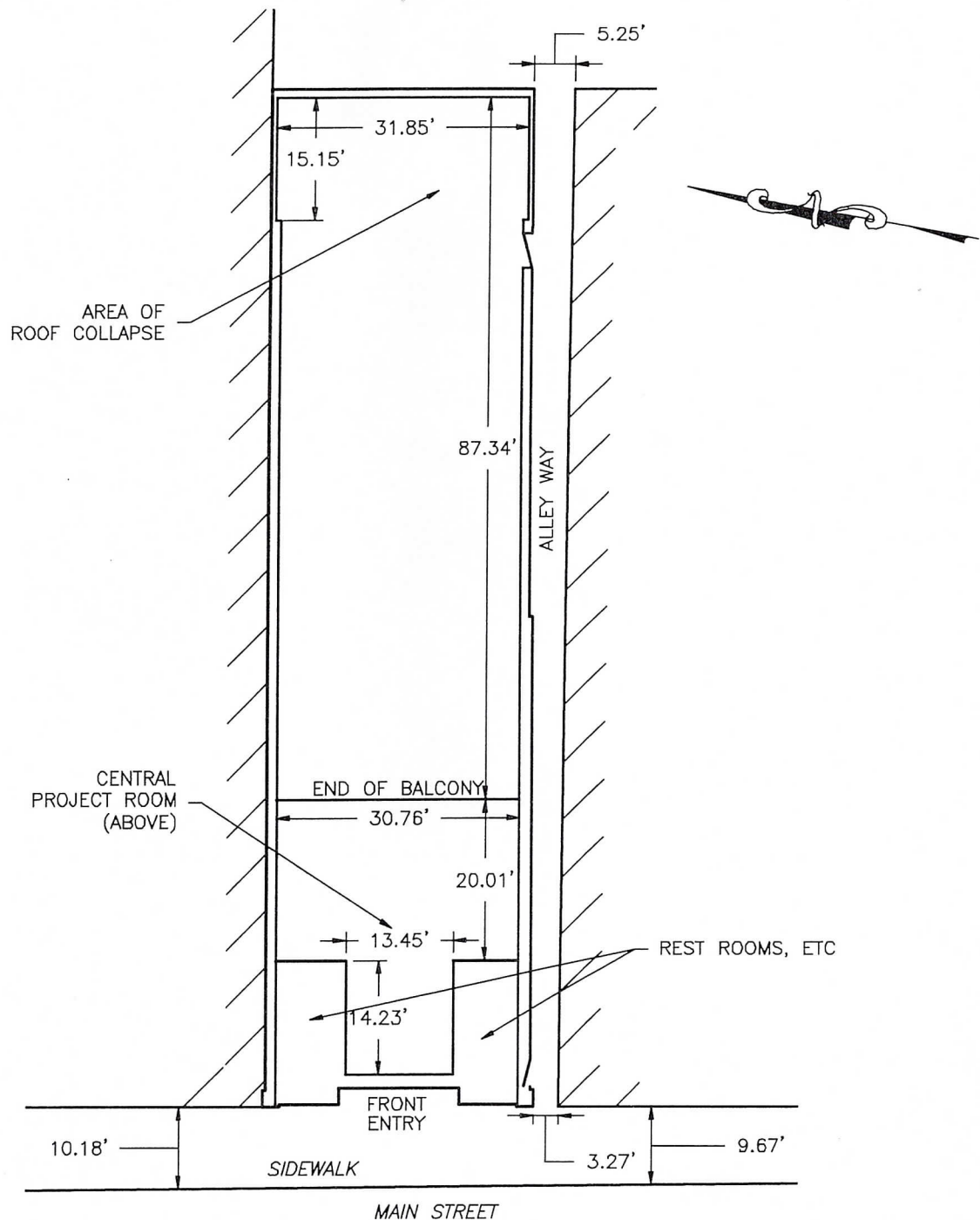
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 PROJECT DATE: JUNE 2009
 SHEET NUMBER: 1 OF 4
 SCALE: 1" = 40'
 DESIGNED BY: CDM
 DRAWN BY: CDM
 CHECKED BY: _____

REVISIONS		
DATE	INITIALS	MARK



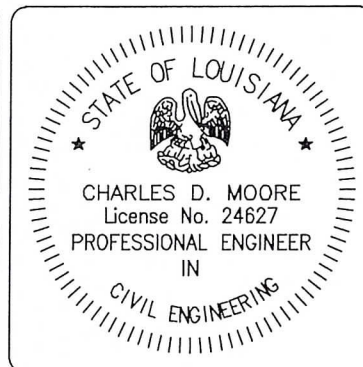
Freyer, Moore and Associates, Inc.
Civil Engineering & Land Surveying
 1833 EAST MAIN STREET
 NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA 70560
 PHONE: (337) 365-9636
 FAX: (337) 367-8131

TITLE: **Structural Condition
 Assessment – Center Theatre**
 Site Plan
 OWNER: City of Franklin
 LOCATION: St. Mary Parish, Louisiana



PROJECT NUMBER: _____
 PROJECT DATE: JUNE 2009
 SHEET NUMBER: 2 OF 4
 SCALE: 1" = 20'
 DESIGNED BY: CDM
 DRAWN BY: CDM
 CHECKED BY: _____

REVISIONS		
DATE	INITIALS	MARK



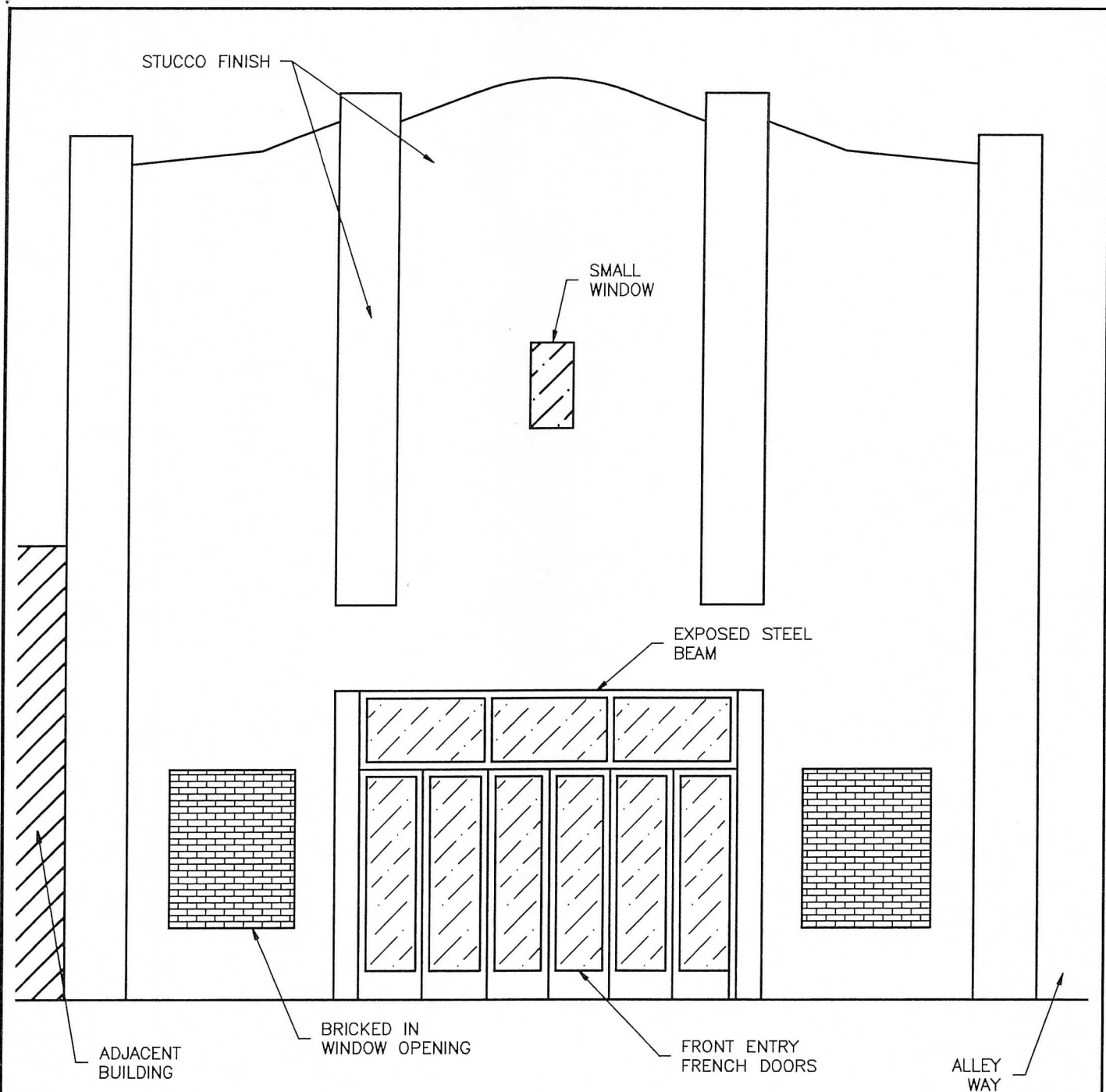
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TITLE: **Structural Condition Assessment – Center Theatre**
 Building Layout Plan

OWNER: **City of Franklin**

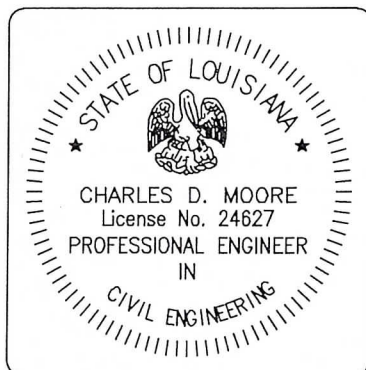
LOCATION: **St. Mary Parish, Louisiana**

DWG. NO. ###



PROJECT NUMBER: _____
 PROJECT DATE: JUNE 2009
 SHEET NUMBER: 3 OF 4
 SCALE: 1" = 5'
 DESIGNED BY: CDM
 DRAWN BY: CDM
 CHECKED BY: _____

REVISIONS		
DATE	INITIALS	MARK



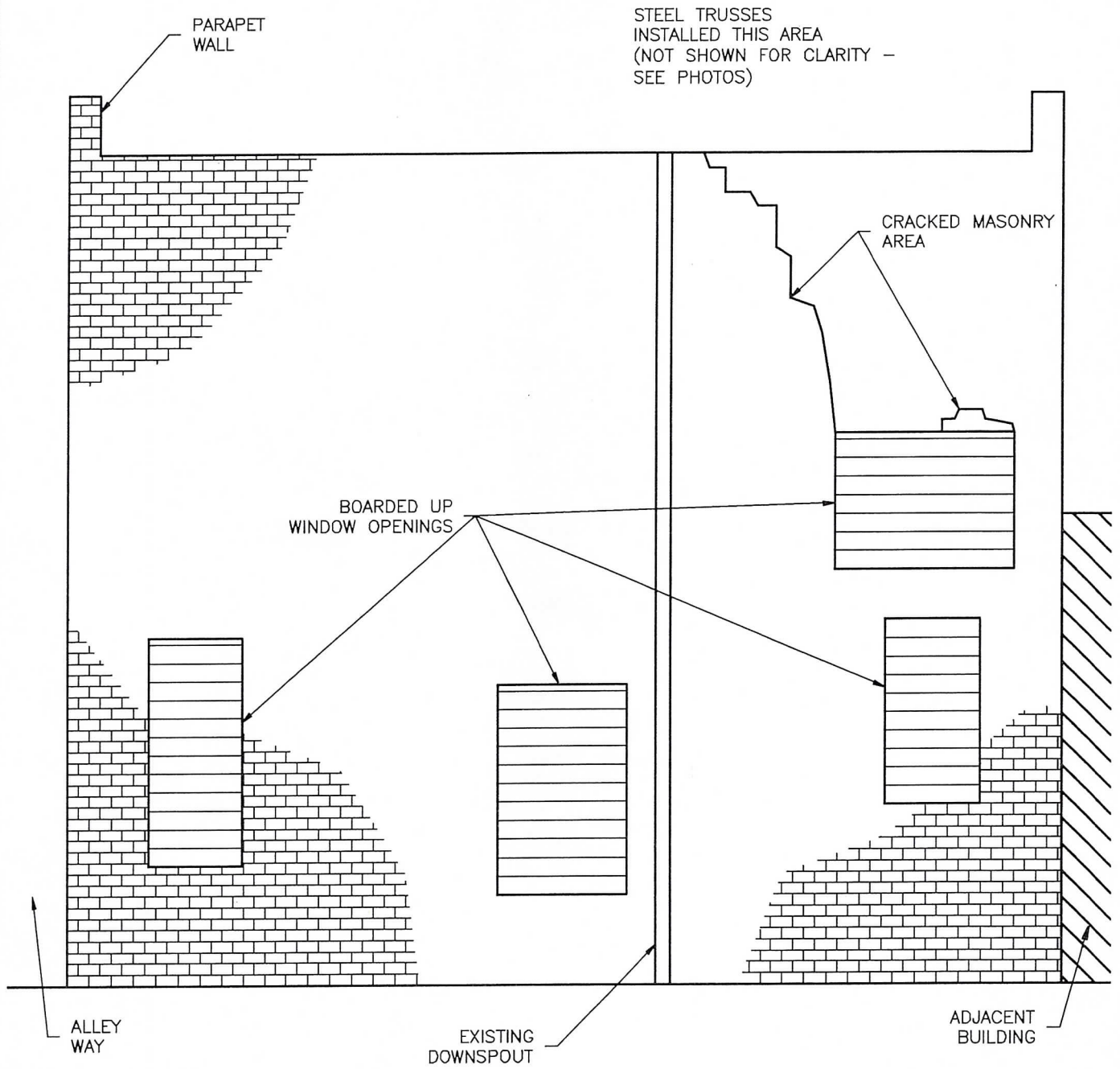
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TITLE: **Structural Condition
 Assessment – Center Theatre**
 Front Elevation

OWNER: **City of Franklin**

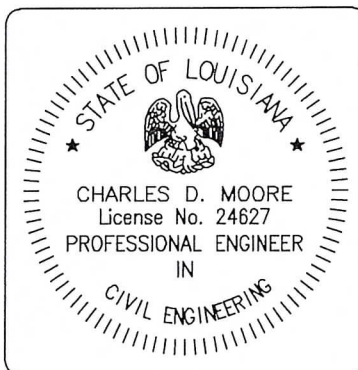
LOCATION: **St. Mary Parish, Louisiana**

DWG. NO. ###



PROJECT NUMBER: _____
 PROJECT DATE: JUNE 2009
 SHEET NUMBER: 4 OF 4
 SCALE: 1" = 5'
 DESIGNED BY: CDM
 DRAWN BY: CDM
 CHECKED BY: _____

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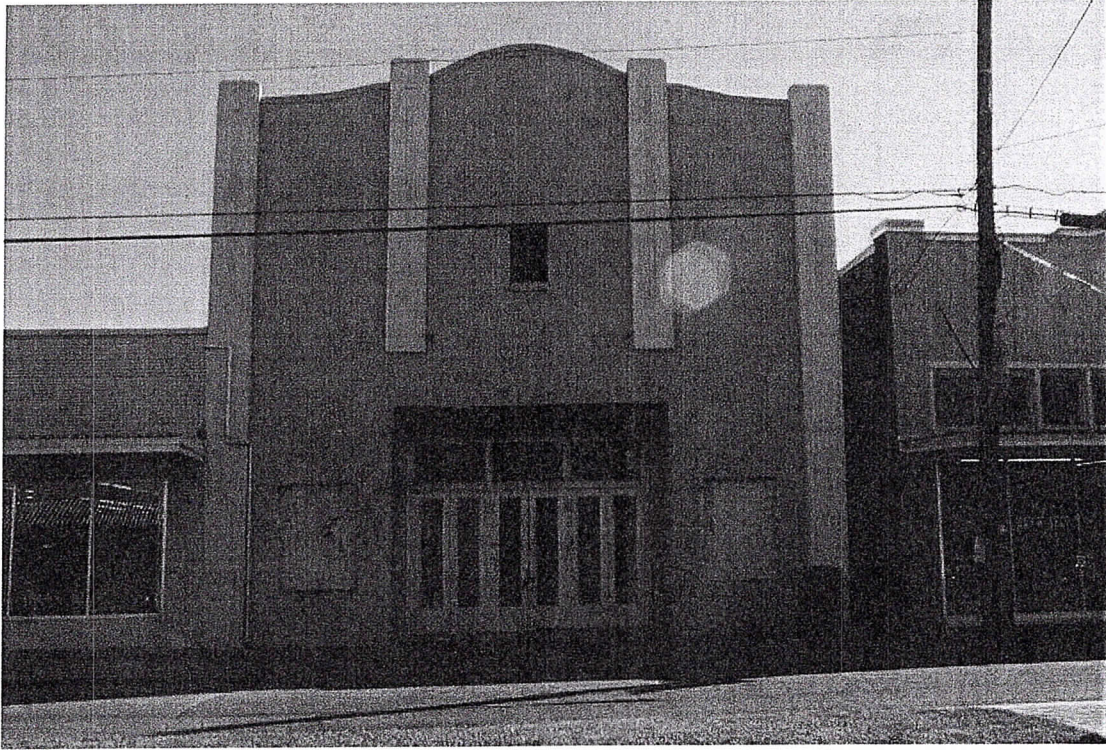
TITLE: **Structural Condition
Assessment – Center Theatre
Rear Elevation**

OWNER: **City of Franklin**

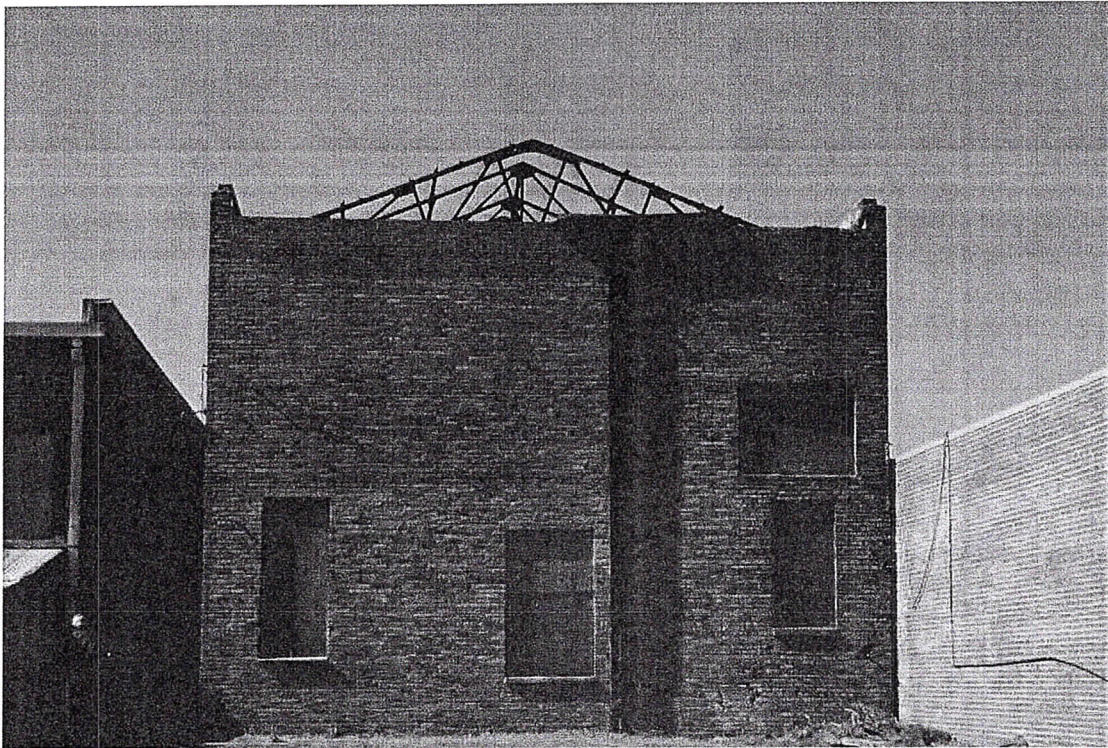
LOCATION: **St. Mary Parish, Louisiana**

DWG. NO. ###

APPENDIX B – PHOTOGRAPHS



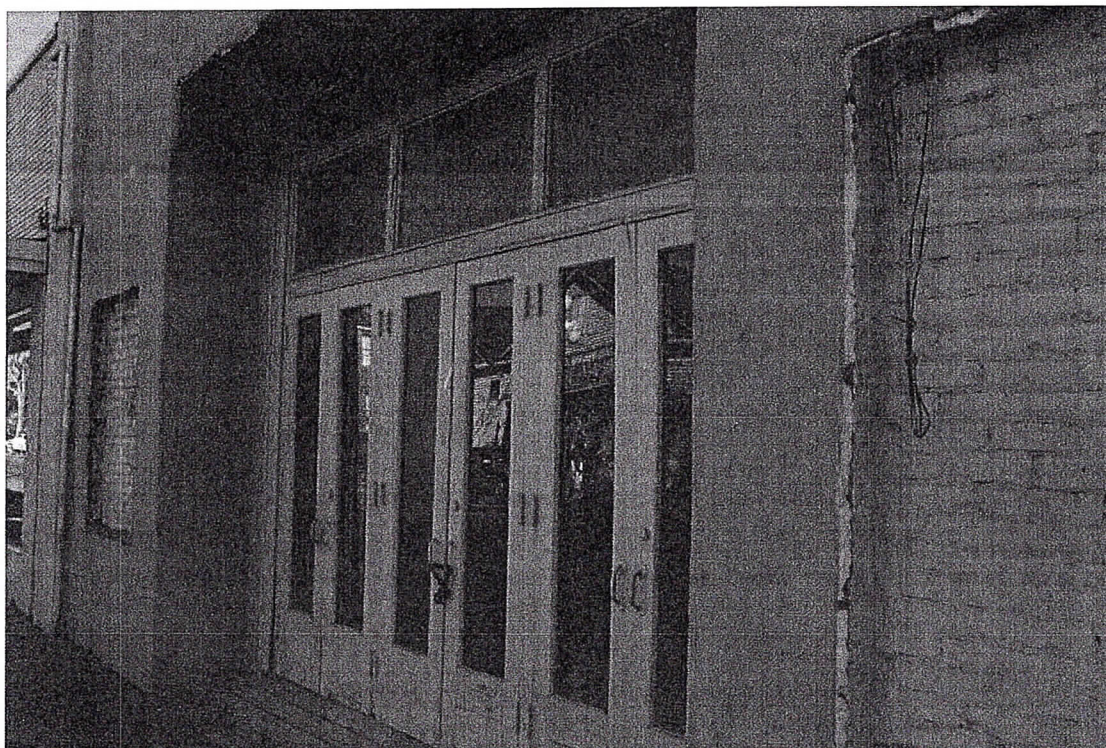
Front View (from Main Street)



Rear View of building (from Teche Drive)



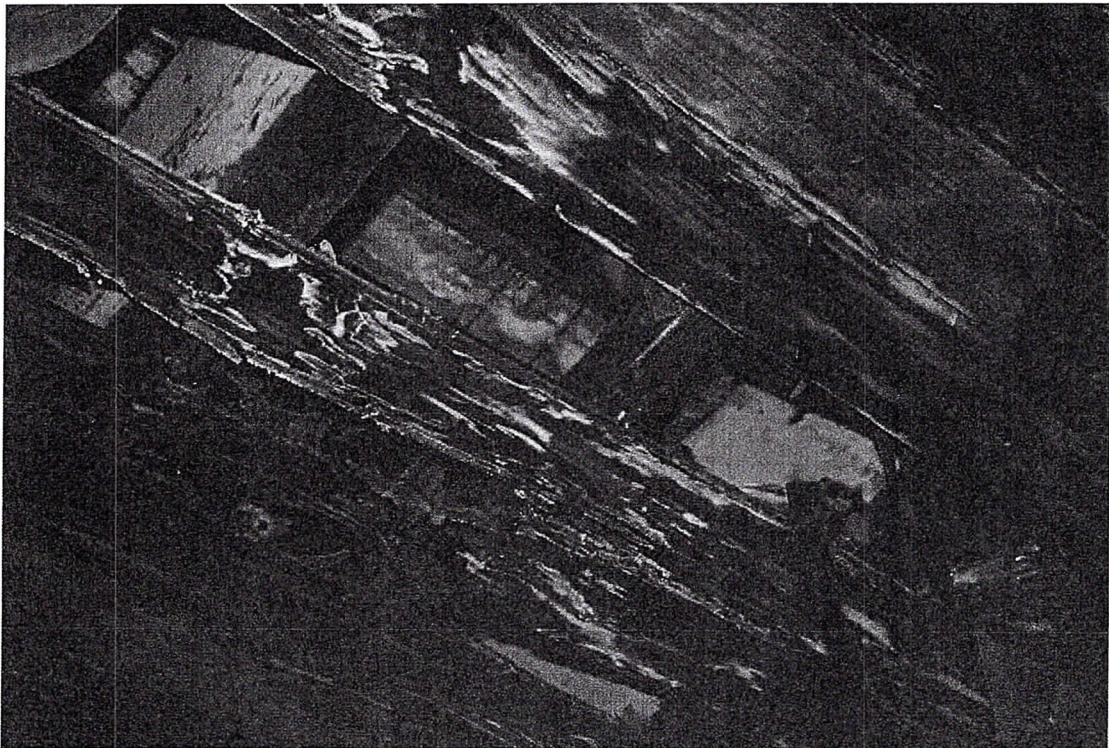
Steel Beam corrosion



Front Entry



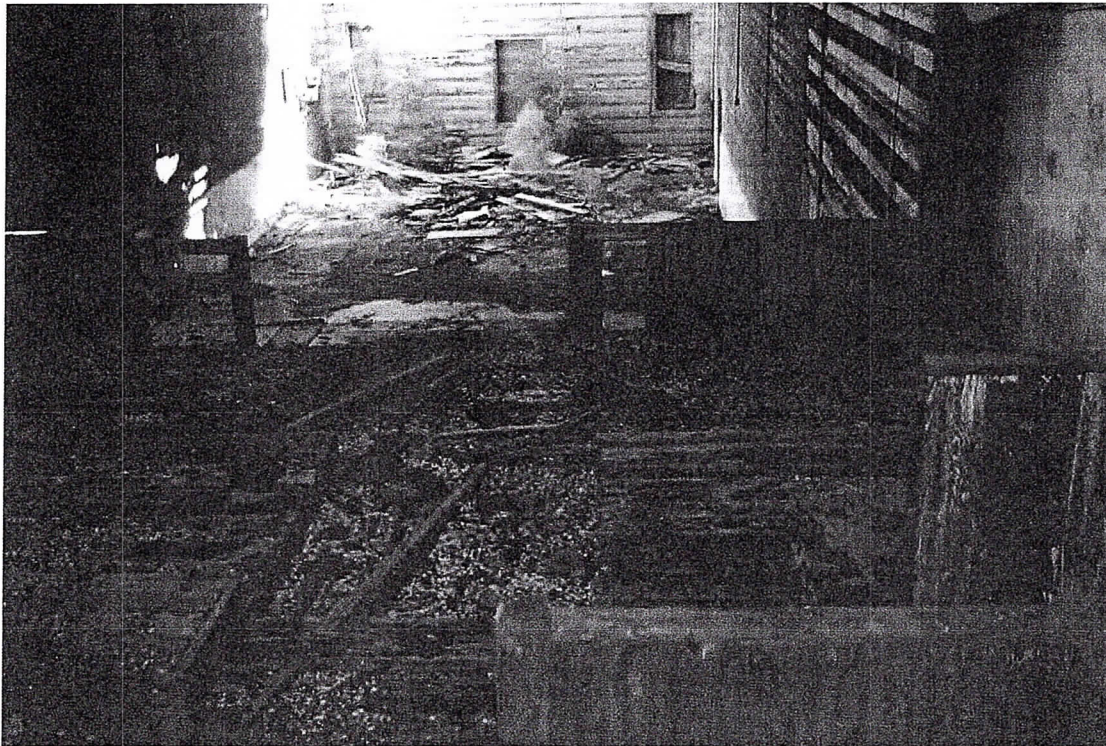
Masonry Wall in Alley Way (note differing bricks and evidence of openings bricked in)



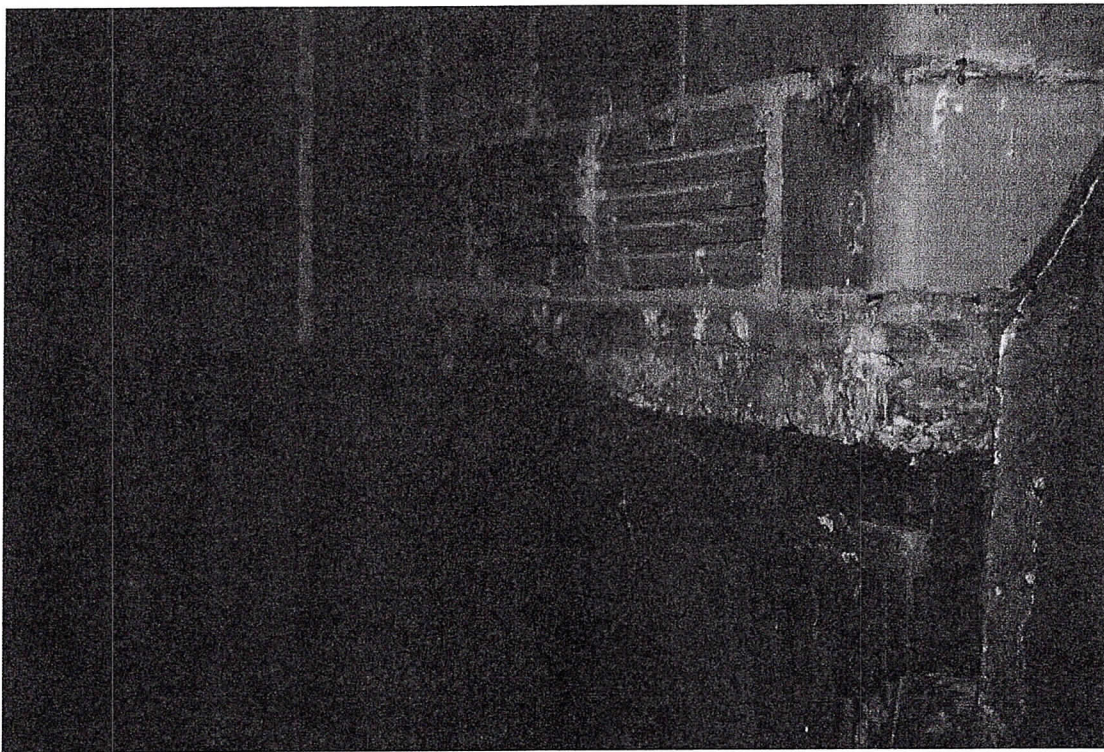
Ceiling area below balcony – water damage



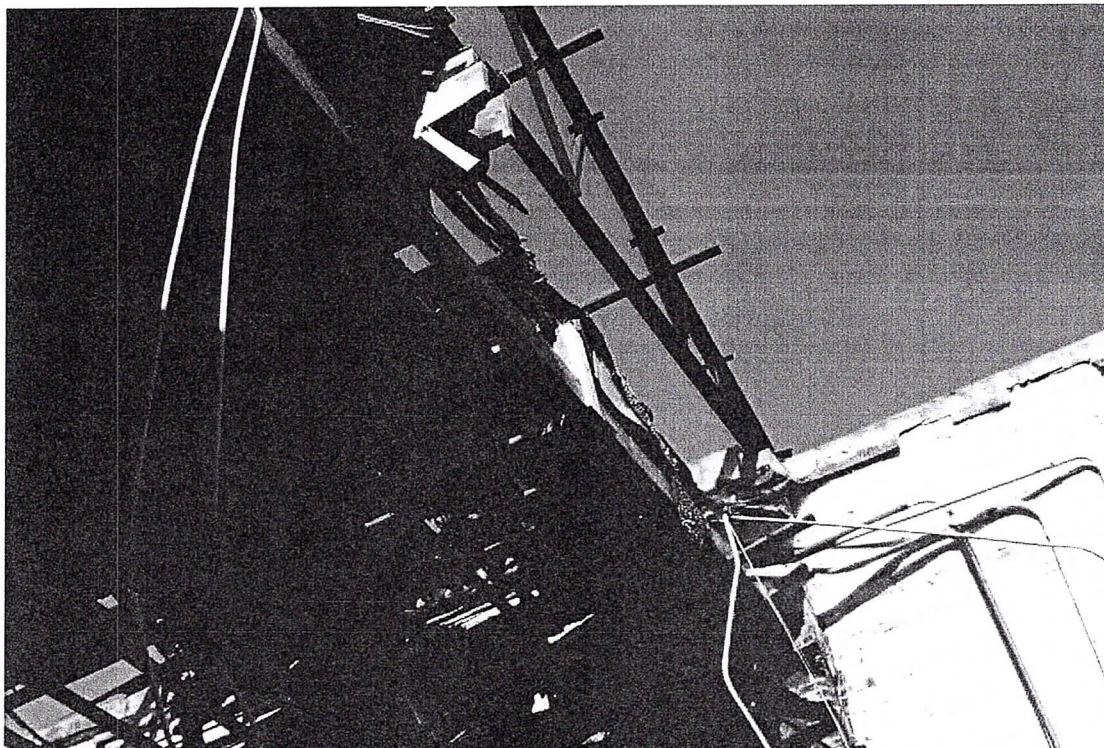
Upstairs Balcony area – note sunlight at rear building and over balcony (roof collapse)



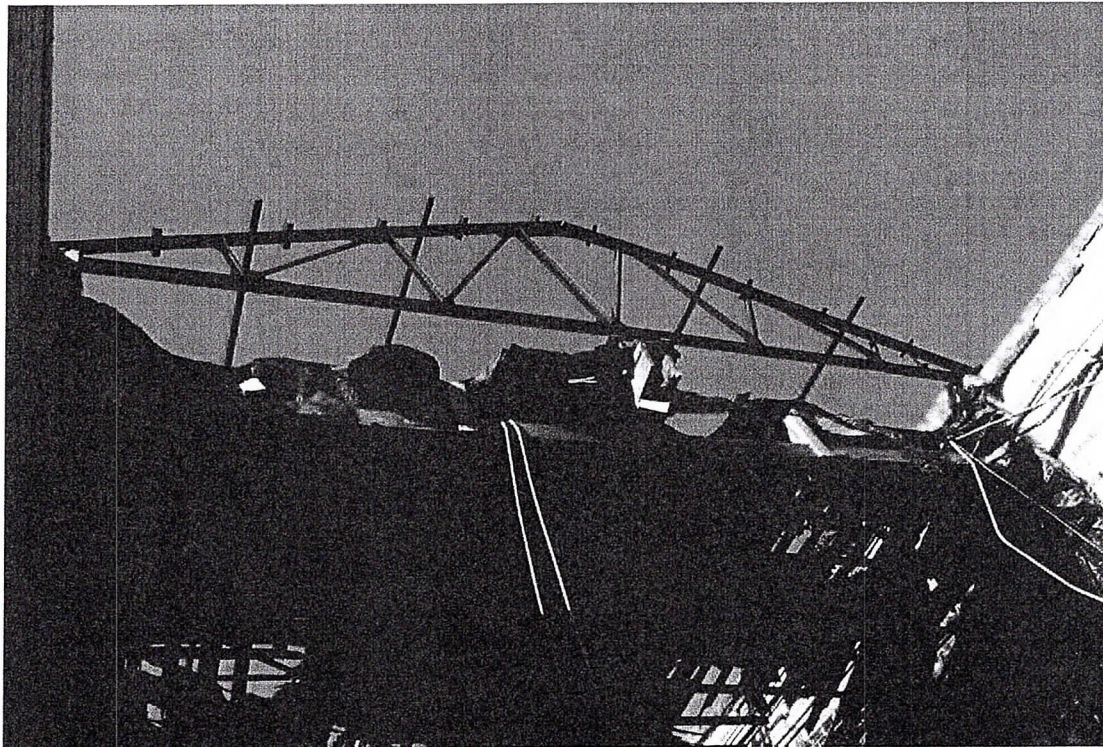
View from balcony



Central projection room



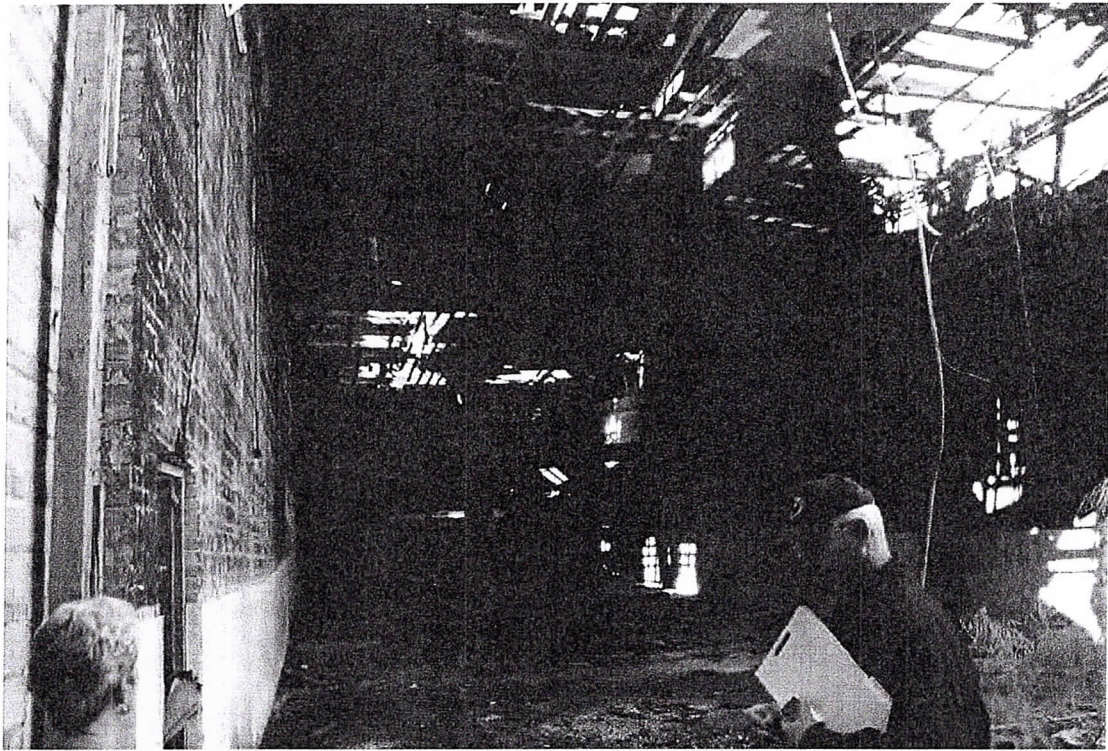
Roof collapse area (note steel truss installed above)



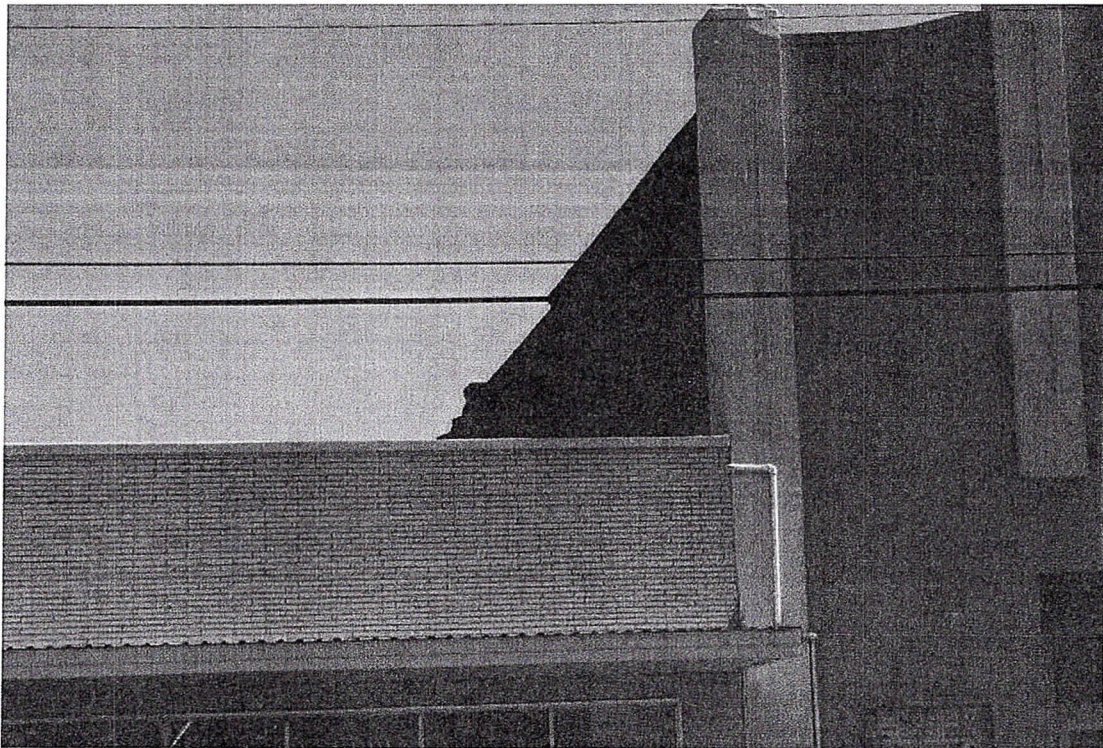
Steel truss installed at top of side walls



Mechanical equipment hanging from roof structure



Overall view of interior from rear facing balcony area



Exposed exterior wall above adjacent building