

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

001071

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

ON

THE ROSTRUM

Antietam National Battlefield Site

National Park Service, Eastern Office, Design and
Construction, Division of Architecture

Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

HJG-E

October 29, 1966

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Chief Architect, EODC

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Architectural Data
Section, The Rostrum, Antietam

Enclosed for your review and distribution are three copies of the
subject report which was recommended for approval by Chief Bell
this date. A copy has been retained by this office.

ROBERT E. SMITH

Robert E. Smith

Enclosure

cc:

Assistant Director, Design and Construction
Superintendent, Antietam

Archib Fraumeni, Harpers Ferry w/c of report

Chief Architect, EODC

Historic Structures w/c of report ✓

SREvins:mgt

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART I
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ON
THE ROSTRUM
Antietam National Battlefield Site

Prepared by
Archie W. Franzen
Architect
October 1965

for

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Division of Architecture

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THE ROSTRUM

Antietam National Battlefield Site

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

Superintendent

Date _____

Robert G. Hall
Chief, EODC

Date 10-29-65 —

Regional Director, Northeast Region

Date _____

APPROVED

Director

Date _____

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SKETCHES	
3 sheets	

I. GENERAL

The Rostrum covered by this report is located in the National Military Cemetery area within the Antietam National Battlefield Site at Sharpsburg, Maryland. This structure was constructed in 1879 as a speaker's and dignitary's platform and is used during the annual Memorial Day services and on occasional other ceremonies.¹

The standard plan, as prepared by the Quartermaster General's Office in November of 1878, was used in its construction.² Some minor deviations from the plan occurred either while the Rostrum was being built or subsequently and these changes will be described later.

¹ Lagemann, Robert L., "Historic Structures Report, Part I, for The Rostrum", dated June 1964.

² A copy of the plan is appended to the report cited in Footnote No. 1.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE FABRIC

The platform stands five feet above the surrounding grounds and was built, in accordance with the plan, employing exterior brick paneled walls capped with four inch thick by twenty-two inches wide cut coping stones. The platform surface measures 37'-6" by 22'-6" with the longitudinal axis running on a nominal east and west line. The interior of the platform is filled with earth and the surface space inside the twenty-two inch wide perimeter of cut stone coping has been paved with concrete, allowing open surface space around the interior pillars and along portions of the outer coping for flower and vine beds.

Cut stone steps at the east and west ends, placed south of the longitudinal axis, provide access to the platform. The steps are five feet ten inches wide with a bottom tread seven feet three inches wide and each run is seven risers in height. They have wrought iron railings on each side.

A foundation of rubble stone, the top of which lies at grade, supports the structure.

Twelve brick pillars, seventeen and a half inches square and twelve feet high, support a lattice ceiling made up of girders, beams and wood strips that in turn carry and guide several varieties of vines that grow up the sides of the pillars.

The brick pillars have wood trim applied at their tops to simulate a cap. The third brick course below the wood cap

projects an inch past the face of the pillar. The base of the pillars is five brick courses high with the lowest three courses stepped out to project two inches beyond the pillar faces and the two courses next above projecting one inch beyond the pillar faces.

There are three rows of pillars running parallel to the east-west axis. Each row is spaced ten feet apart and has four pillars spaced (10'-15'-10') apart. Across the tops of each of these rows of pillars are a pair of girders, each five inches by eleven and five eighths inches in cross section. Each pair of girders are held twelve and three quarters of an inch apart (center to center) by means of wood blocking occurring over each pillar and are fastened as a unit with iron bolts. They are anchored to the pillars with a vertical iron bolt set in the center of each pillar. Each end of the girders overhang the edge of the end pillars approximately thirty inches and have been contoured in profile to the design illustrated in the appended sketch. Twenty-four wood beams, five and three quarters of an inch by two and five eighths of an inch in cross section rest on and run in a transverse direction to the girders, and are spaced approximately twenty inches apart. Each of their ends overhang the outside edge of the girders twenty-seven inches and have also been contoured in profile. Across their tops are nailed lattice boards three and three quarters of an inch by three quarters of an inch in section that are spaced seven and a half inches apart. These have been laid flat.

III. LATER CHANGES

The railing, called for on the original plan, was to have been wrought iron bar stock measuring two and a half inches by a half inch in section with half inch ballusters. The present railing for the steps measures one and three eighths inches by a half inch in section with three quarters of an inch round ballusters let into the stone treads in a leaded hole.

The plan also indicated a newel post at the foot of the steps, larger in thickness than the ballusters, but not sized on the plan, having a ball cap finial. The present newels are composed of four three quarter inch ballusters placed such that the railing is bent into a horizontal circular shape over their tops. The railing along the edge of the platform between the outer pillars is made up of a pipe section one and seven eighths inches in diameter let into the pillar surface at each end and supported by a vertical pipe section one inch in diameter let into the stone coping in a leaded hole. A short diagonal brace, made up of a five eighths of an inch rod, is secured halfway up the one inch railing support. Its other end is let into a leaded hole in the coping stone.

This platform railing is a definite departure from the railing indicated on the plan and may be a later replacement to provide more substantial protection.

Inasmuch as the structure is eighty-six years old it is highly improbable that the original latticework ceiling could have survived this length of time subject to severe weather conditions and the strictureal forces of growing vines. In any event the wooden members that now exist are of modern standard cross sections and the contoured end profiles of the heavier timbers are of a twentieth century design found in work executed in the 1920's and 1930's.

The existing platform floor is concrete and is relatively new. The drawing does not indicate what the original floor paving may have been. It is doubtful that they would have used wood, but it may have been stone flagging or brick. The concrete is in good condition and has a float finish.

IV. CONDITION OF THE STRUCTURE

The brick walls of the platform have been patch pointed at different times. This was necessitated by water seeping down through the planter spaces in the platform and into the brick joints from behind. Vines have crept into some of the joints and have dislodged a number of brick. It appears that a few of the original brick have been replaced when they deteriorated or broke because of plant growth or freezing.

Some of the present timbers of the arbor treillage appear to have checked and rotted, but because of the heavy paint coats it is hard to determine to what extent.

The pillars above the platform level have been painted red, probably to give them a cleaner appearance. The platform walls are unpainted.

V. WORK TO BE DONE

The brick joints of the platform walls and the pillars should be raked and repointed. Loose brick should be reset and any missing brick replaced. The brick are approximately two and a quarter inches by four and an eighth inches by eight and five eighths of an inch in size and have been laid with a three eighths inch mortar joint. The second course below the stone coping is a shaped brick and an illustration of its cross section is appended. The joints between the coping stones should be caulked.

Some of the stone step treads are slightly out of alignment and should be trued up so no open joints remain.

Because water can seep through the planter beds of the platform and also to prevent the growth of roots down through the structure, it is recommended that copper or lead coated copper boxes be built into the beds. These should be deep enough to provide enough soil for healthy plant growth.

The present railing around the platform is in serviceable condition and, while not original, could continue to serve its purpose. Should it become necessary at some future date to renew it, it should be replaced with components shown on the original drawing. The stair railings with some minor repairs, notably the replacement of several missing ballusters, can be retained once they have been cleaned down and repainted.

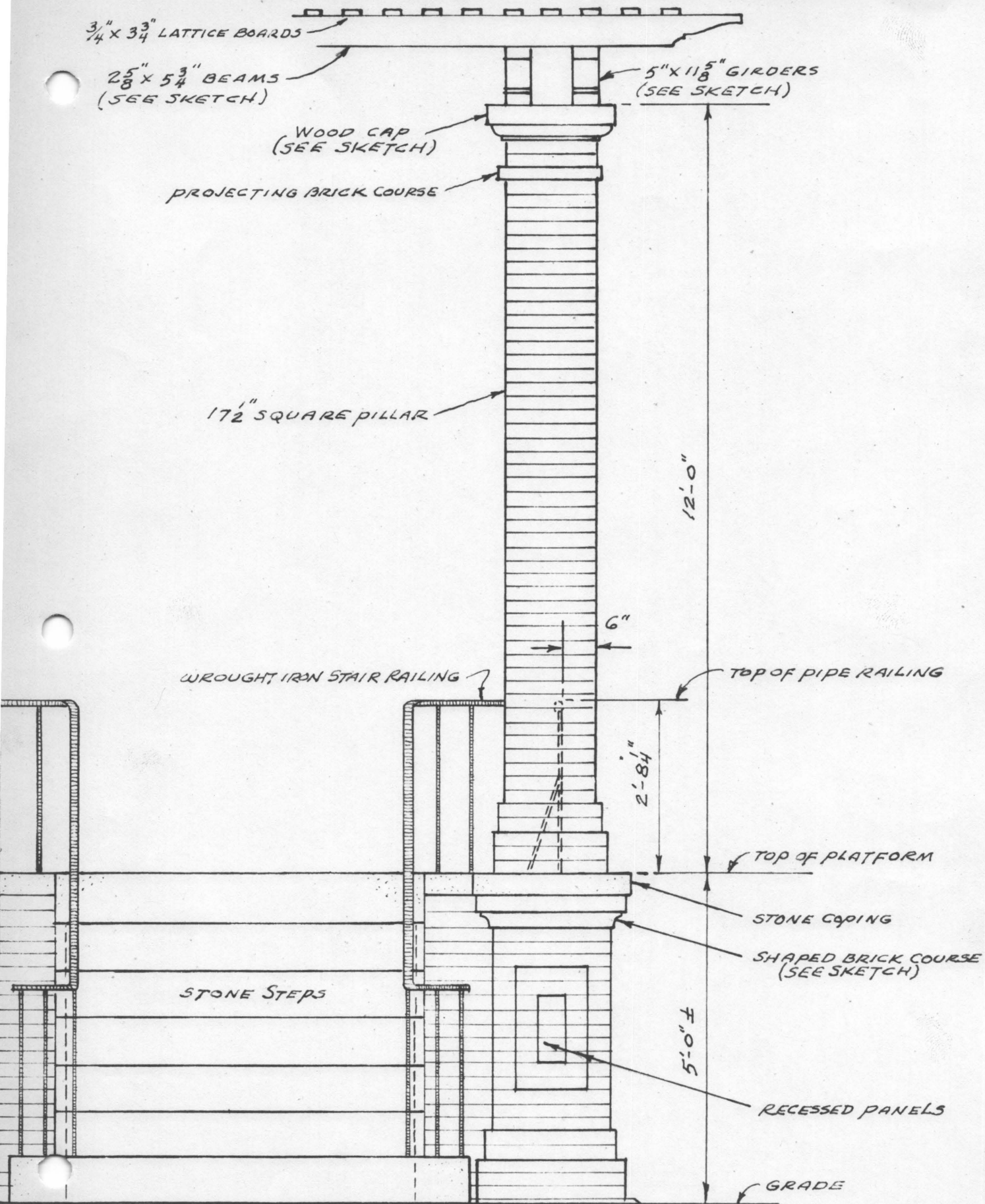
Whether the treillage overhead should be repaired or replaced is questionable. It is presently covered with well established vines which would have to be cut and removed in order to replace the existing members.

Should the timbering and boards be replaced they should be sized to match the sizes called for on the original drawing. It would be advisable to provide a shallow peaked wash on the girders and beams so moisture could not lay on top of them and, their ends should be cut to a Victorian styled profile. The lower edges of the girders should be chamfered as indicated on the original drawing.

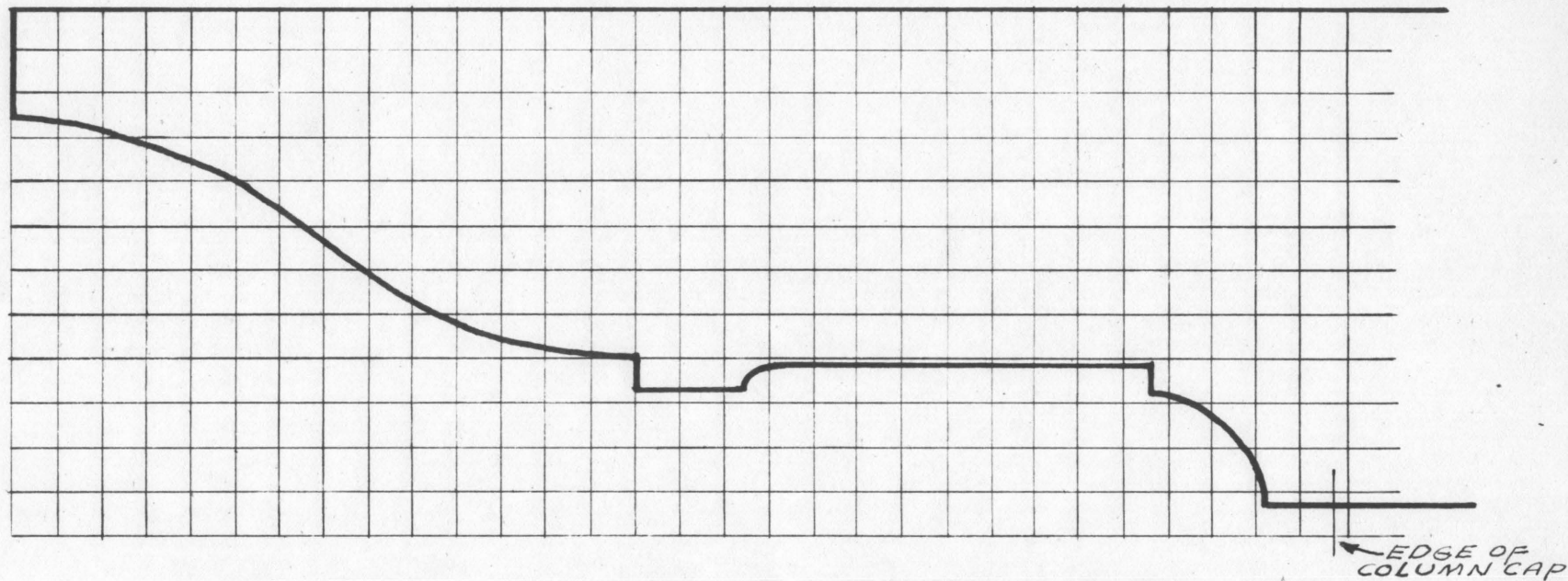
Those members that require replacement will have to be divested of the vines that now encircle them.

It is impractical to paint the wood again once vine growth has taken place as the vines and tendrils cling tightly to the members. For this reason a long lasting and weather resistant paint should be chosen similar to the modern epoxy paints.

Should the entire treillage be replaced, a horticultural study should be made to obtain the best planting effect and to minimize maintenance costs in the upkeep of the structure.

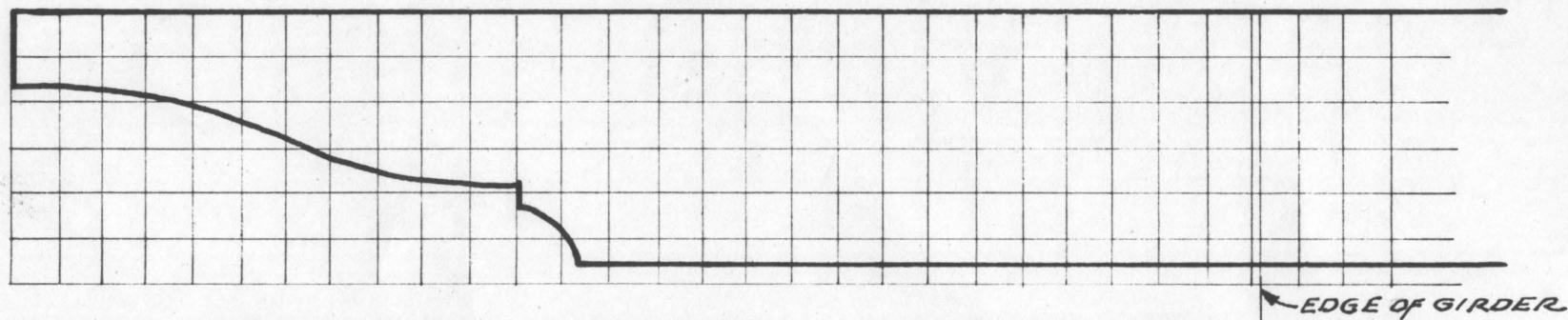


PARTIAL ELEVATION OF ROSTRUM
 SCALE $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 1'-0"



PROFILE OF EXISTING TREILLAGE GIRDER ENDS

6 THUS

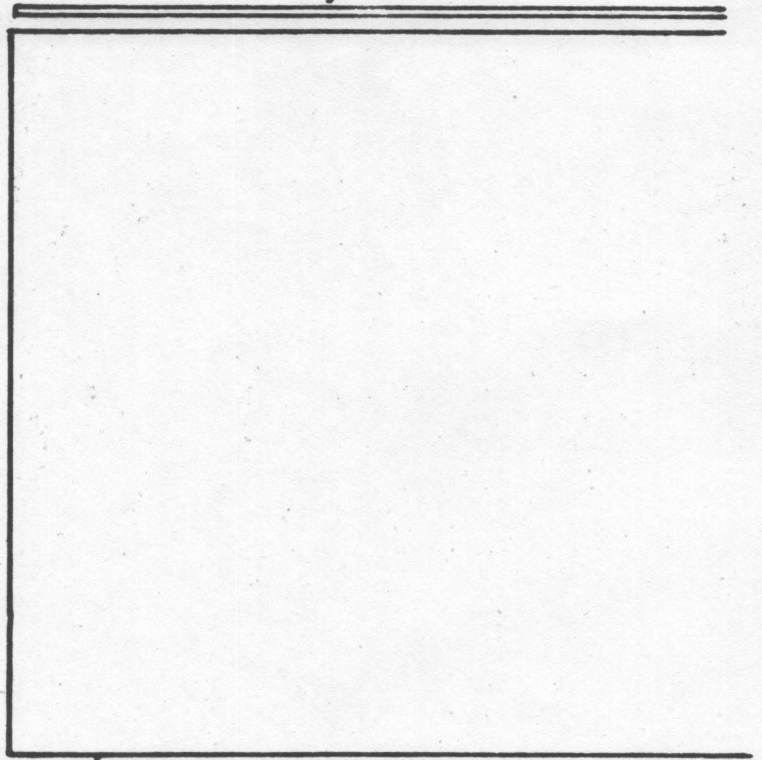


PROFILE OF EXISTING TREILLAGE BEAM ENDS

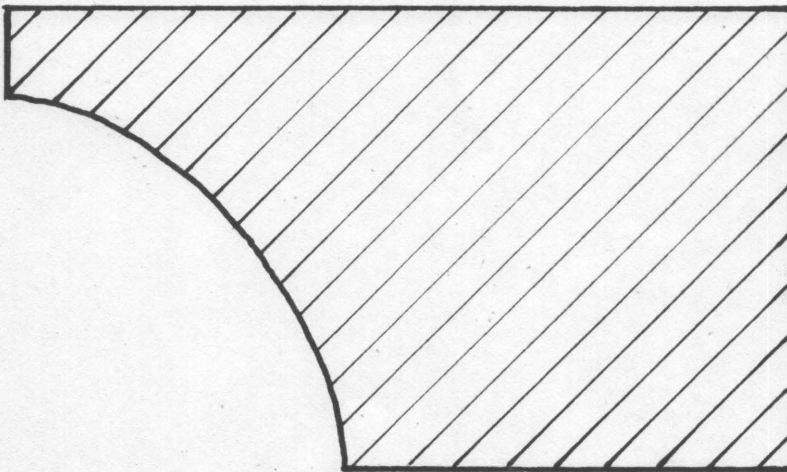
SCALE 3" = 1'-0"

24 THUS

FLASHING 7



FULL SIZE WOOD
PILLAR CAP MOULDING



BRICK 2



F.S. SECTION OF SHAPED BRICK

SECOND COURSE FROM TOP OF PLATFORM WALLS