

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAR 21 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration FormNATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Spori, Jacob, Buildingother names/site number N/A / 004746

2. Location

street & number 100 East 2nd SouthN/A not for publicationcity, town RexburgN/A vicinitystate Idaho code ID county Madison code 065 zip code 83440

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

☒ private☐ public-local☐ public-State☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☒ building(s)☐ district☐ site☐ structure☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

 buildings sites structures objects10 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

David L. Crowder

Signature of certifying official

10 Feb 1989

Date

Idaho State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain:) _____Bruce J. Noble, Jr.4/20/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000329Date Listed: 4/20/89Jacob Spori Building
Property NameMadison
CountyIdaho
StateNA

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Bruce J. Noble, Jr.
Signature of the Keeper4/20/89
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Because the Jacob Spori Building has religious significance, criterion exception A applies even though it was not checked on the nomination form. The significance statement clearly justified the religious exception. These issues were discussed over the telephone with Kathleen Watt on 4/20/89.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/School/Academy
Education/College/Junior College
Religion/Church School/Religious
Academy or School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/Junior College
Religion/Church School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival
Richardsonian Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls stone
roof wood
other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Jacob Spori Administration Building is a three storied, hip roofed, stone academic building situated in the center of the 250 acre campus of Ricks College. It is surrounded by flat lawns and formal walkways lined with tall trees. Constructed between 1900 and 1903, it was the first building on the permanent site of this educational institution founded in 1888 by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Although interior spaces have been modified somewhat over the years, the building's original teaching and administrative functions have been retained and it continues to be an important focus of academic life at the college.

The massive rectangular structure is constructed of grey rhyolite stone quarried three miles from the building site. The foundation consists of a fifty-one inch thick rock wall following the perimeter of the 125 by 67 foot building. Two major bearing foundations, thirty inches thick, cut across the rectangle about twenty feet from each end. The two walls originally contained air ducts for the furnaces that heated the building. Between these major foundation walls are rock piers measuring thirty-six by twenty-five inches which carry the wooden floor joists of the first story.

The external walls of the structure are laid with blocks of rock-faced coursed ashlar. From a thickness of fifty-one inches at the foundation, the walls narrow to thirty-two inches at the first floor windows, twenty-eight inches at the second floor windows, and twenty-four inches at the third floor windows. Strong horizontal divisions are created by bold string courses of lighter coloured sandstone that circle the building. Wide rough-faced bands run along the level of the window lintels, while narrower smooth-faced bands are at the sill level. These bands enclose irregularly spaced groups of narrow, square-headed windows on the principle facade.

The dominant horizontal articulation on the north elevation is interrupted by the vertical thrust of a projecting central block flanked by two bays of slightly lesser projection. Traditionally the main entrance, most of the building's formal enrichments are concentrated in this area. A short flight of steps leads up to a recessed ground floor entry. A pair of double glass doors and narrow side windows are framed by two detached smooth stone columns supporting a simple entablature with dentil mouldings along a

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projecting cornice. A narrow stone balustrade and four slender columns enclose a second story recessed porch. The third story is highlighted by a pair of round-headed window openings with shallow hood mouldings and a centrally placed decorative console. A checkered stone panel below the windows, two fluted pilaster strip mouldings with enriched corbels, and a wooden pedimented gable with bracketed cornice complete the decorative elements in the central block.

A gently sloping hipped roof with a wooden truss structural system is penetrated on all sides of the building by shallow hipped dormers. The original wooden roof shingles were replaced in 1945 when portions of the interior were remodelled. All of the original wooden window frames were also replaced with aluminum frames during further alterations in 1968. At that time a simple single story stone vestibule and entry were constructed on the south elevation to accommodate increased traffic on this side of the building and to protect the original doors from the strong winds blowing from the south. The materials used in this modern addition are compatible with those in the main portion of the building.

The interior of the Jacob Spori Building was designed originally to accommodate a variety of activities. The ground floor, dominated by a centrally located open staircase rising to the second story, contained six large classrooms and two small offices. Additional classrooms, offices and a library on the second floor encircled the open stairwell. The upper floor was reached by two narrow staircases situated at the east and west ends of the building. These provided access to a large auditorium in the middle of the third story. Four classrooms, one in each corner, completed the plan.

The first major interior alterations occurred in 1945 when the first floor staircase was removed to provide enlarged administrative spaces. At the same time a lecture theater replaced two of the classrooms. The remaining classrooms on this floor also were converted to offices as the college began to grow and other academic buildings were built. Two new concrete stairways were inserted at each end of the building. In the second story, additional office facilities were created by extending the floor over the former stairwell. In 1956, a new auditorium building was completed on the campus and the large third floor space in the Spori Building was used as a library.

In 1968, the first floor lecture theater was removed to create space for the new vestibule and foyer. After completion of the school's new library building, the third floor library room was converted into more offices. Today some of the classrooms on the upper floor have been retained. However, the remaining interior spaces of the Jacob Spori Building have been gracefully adapted to serve the more varied and complex functions required of a growing, modern academic institution.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Religion

Period of Significance

1903-1939

Significant Dates

1903

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Charles William Speiermann

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Jacob Spori Administration Building is significant historically because of its associations with the Mormon colonization of Southeastern Idaho in the late nineteenth century. It was the first building constructed at Ricks College, an academic institution established by the church in 1888. It is also the oldest surviving structure on the campus. No other institution of higher education in the state of Idaho has an extant academic building as old as this.

Rexburg was founded in 1883 by William B. Preston and Thomas E. Ricks as part of a colonizing effort in the Upper Snake River Valley by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Although a public school was opened in the town, the church leaders were anxious to educate their children at an LDS-sponsored school. As a result, the Bannock Stake Academy was established in 1888 with Jacob Spori, a well-educated Swiss emigrant, appointed the first principal. In its early years the new academy was beset by financial difficulties, but a large influx of new Mormon settlers into the area ensured its continued existence and steady growth.

The school was renamed the Fremont Stake Academy in 1899 when rapid growth of the new colonies in the Snake River Valley resulted in a division of the stake, the local church administrative unit. In 1902 an academy district was established encompassing several surrounding stakes, at which time the name was changed again to Ricks Academy, in honor of its founder, Thomas Ricks. Church officials had recognized the need for a permanent home for the school as early as 1890. However, the building project was only authorized in 1899 when the students numbered nearly two hundred. A ten acre city block was donated for the site of the new structure and plans were prepared by a local architect, Charles William Speiermann.

The architect's original drawing of 1899 shows a finely detailed building with a rusticated ground floor, arched openings, and a centrally placed square tower with pyramidal roof flanked by two front-facing gables. This

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differs considerably from the building as it was actually completed in 1903. Like other aspects of Mormon life, the construction of the Jacob Spori Building was a communal effort. The project was substantially funded by contributions from church members and much of the construction was undertaken by volunteer labour. Presumably, many of the initial design modifications were the result of financial constraints and the limitations of untrained workmen.

The building was formally dedicated on November 12, 1906. Hyrum Manwaring, later a president of the college, said, "It was a glorious day when the school moved into this fine new building, and a new spirit was kindled on this occasion."* The building was not only a landmark seen for miles around the town of Rexburg, but also for many years it functioned as the center of cultural life for this predominantly Mormon community.

In 1915, two announcements were made that attested to the continuing growth of the academy. One was the decision to add a fifth year to the institution's curriculum, thus allowing students to complete the first year of college there. In addition, authorization was given to erect a second building on the campus. This was the gymnasium, begun in 1917 and constructed of local stone to complement the Spori Building. At the opening of the new gymnasium in 1918, the school's principal announced that the academy would henceforth be called Ricks College.

Subsequent decades brought a variety of changes to the college. In 1928, the junior and senior high school students were phased out and for a short time between the late 1940's until 1956 Ricks College was a four-year institution. It is currently a junior college. Attendance grew and then subsided as a result of the Depression and World War II. During one period of low enrollment there was even talk of closing the college or of moving it to Idaho Falls. By the early 1960's, however, the school's position in Rexburg was secure and a massive building program was undertaken, adding a new library, science building, residence halls, an auditorium and stadium to the campus.

In June 1976, the newly completed Teton Dam near Rexburg breached, pouring millions of gallons of water into the town and destroying many properties. Ricks College, conveniently situated on a rise at the edge of town, escaped serious damage and became a center for the rescue and cleanup operations during the disaster. Shortly thereafter, in 1977, a fire destroyed the old gymnasium. The Jacob Spori Administration Building remains the only surviving structure representing the early history of the college. It also stands as an enduring legacy of the settlement and growth of this significant southeastern Idaho Mormon community.

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* Hyrum Manwaring. "History Of Hyrum Manwaring", unpublished, undated manuscript in the Archives of Ricks College. Quoted in Paul W. Jensen. "An Architectural Documentary of the Jacob Spori Administration Building", Report #67, The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Crowder, David L. Rexburg, Idaho: The First One Hundred Years, 1883-1983. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1983.

The Fremont Journal, Special Edition, 1900, p.10-12.

Jensen, Paul W. "An Architectural Documentary of the Jacob Spori Administration Building", Report #67, The Idaho State Historical Society, 1970.

The Rexburg Journal, December 1915, p.9.

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State historic preservation office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Specify repository:

Idaho State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approx. .25 acres

UTM References

A 12 437160 4852070
Zone Easting Northing

C

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes the 125 x 67 foot building and a surrounding strip of land 25 feet wide comprising the central portion of Block 3, Parker Addition, City of Rexburg, T6N, R40E, S30.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary is based on the exact dimensions of the building and that portion of the block with which it has been associated historically.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen Watt, State Architectural Historian

organization Idaho State Historical Society

date 8 February 1989

street & number 210 Main St.

telephone (208) 334-3861

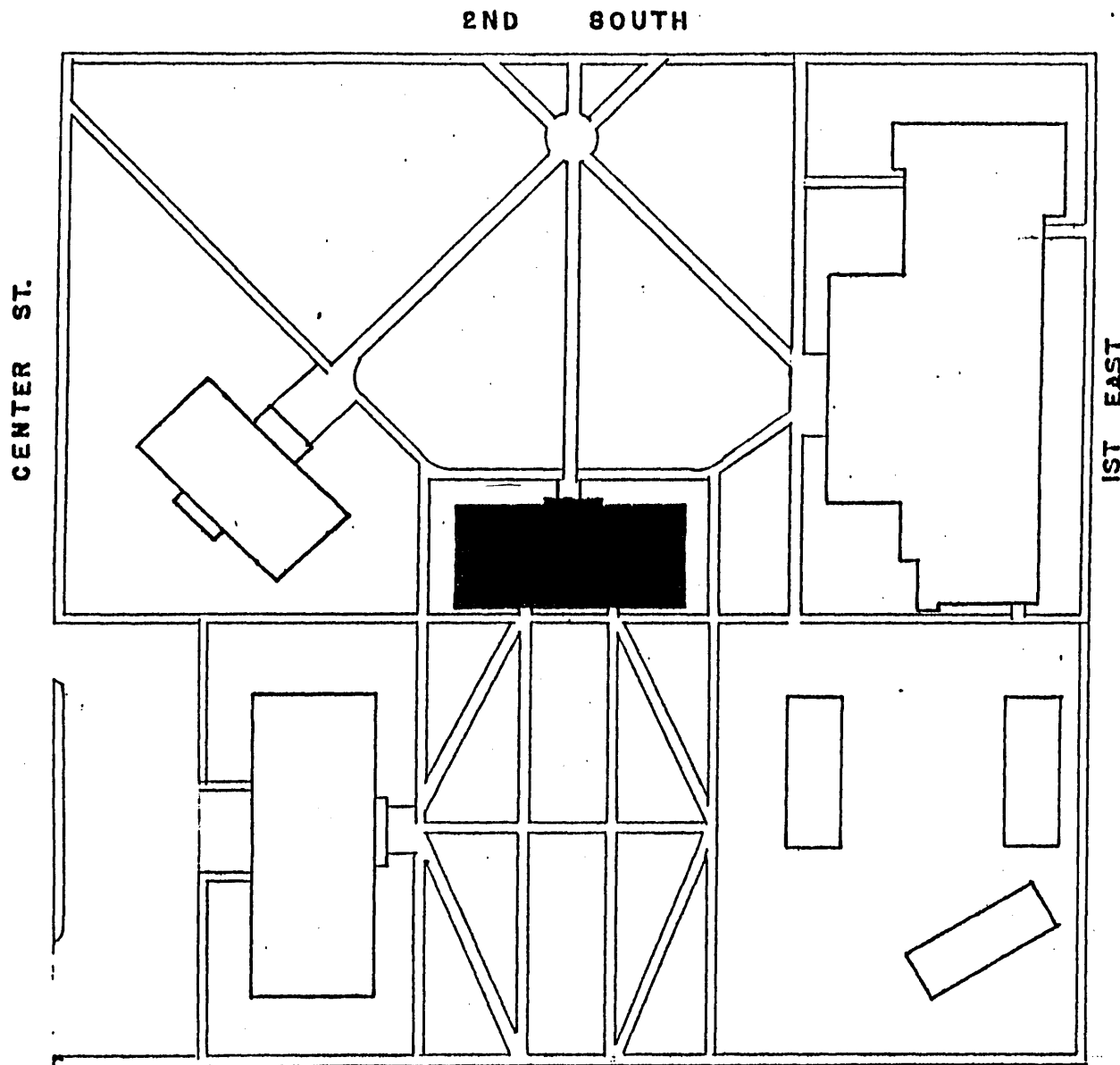
city or town Boise

state Idaho

zip code 83702



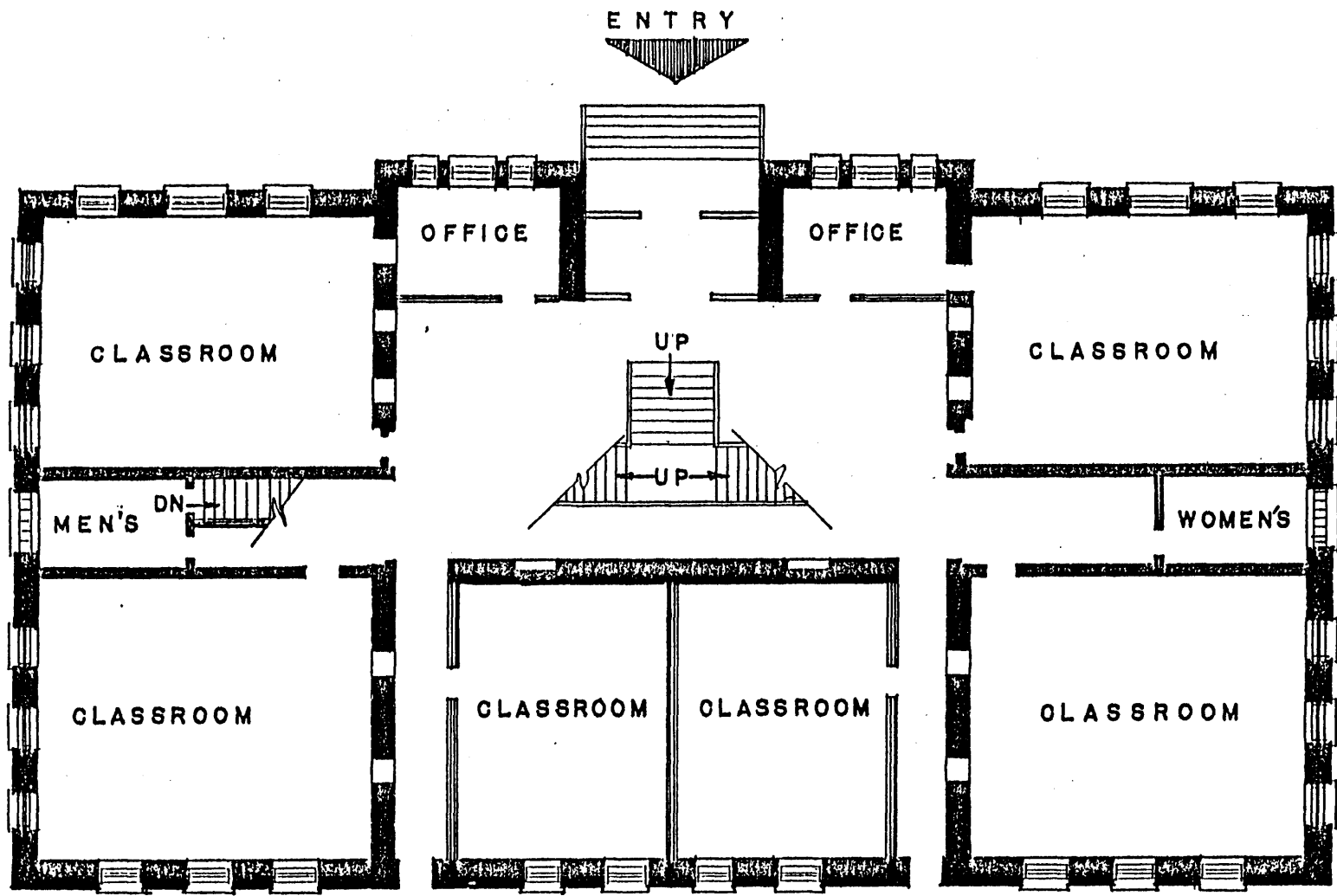
SITE:
TOWNSHIP 6 NORTH
RANGE 40 EAST
BOSIE MERIDIAN
CITY OF REXBURG
PARKER ADDITION
BLOCK 3
LOTS 3,4,5,6,



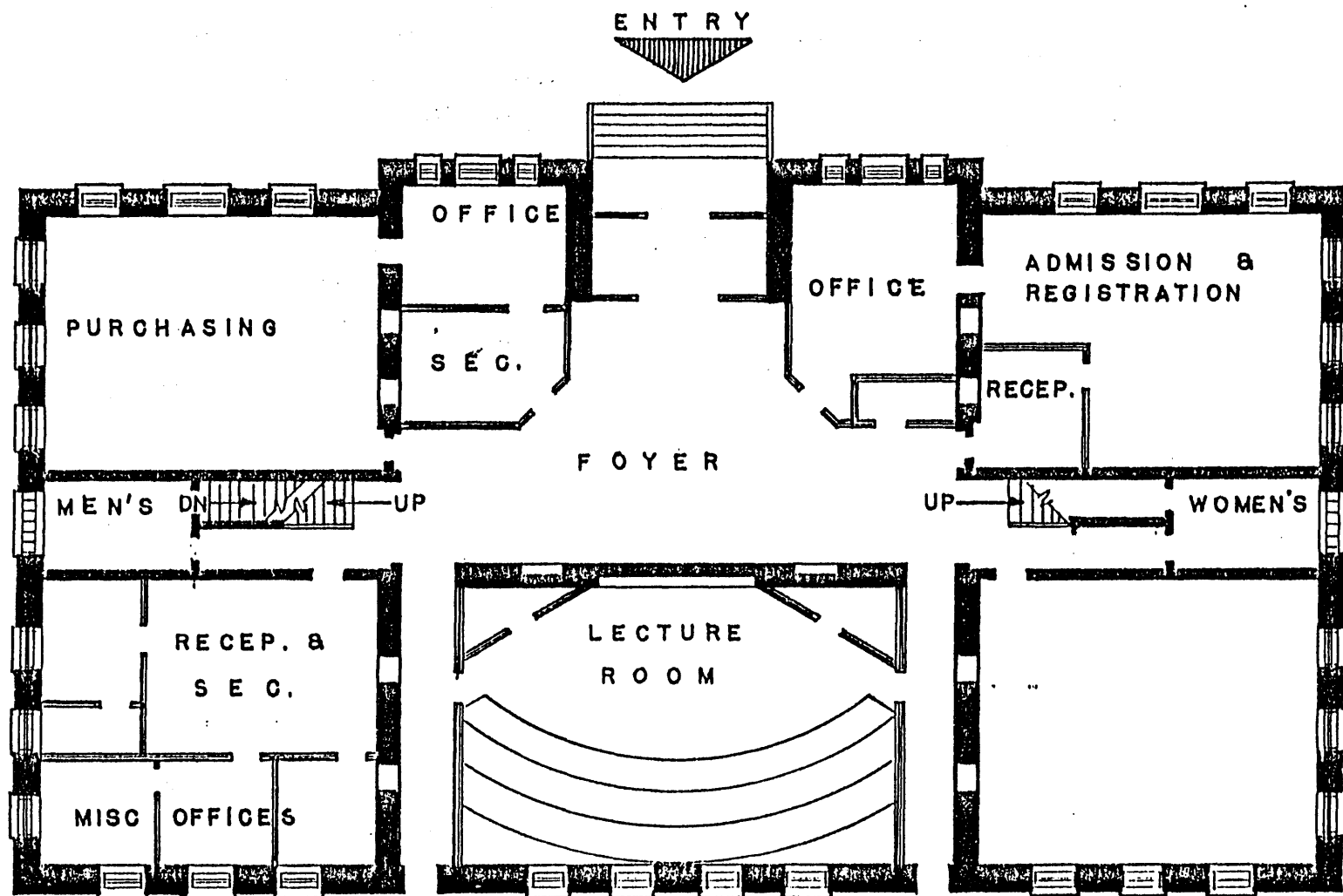
The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho

SITE PLAN

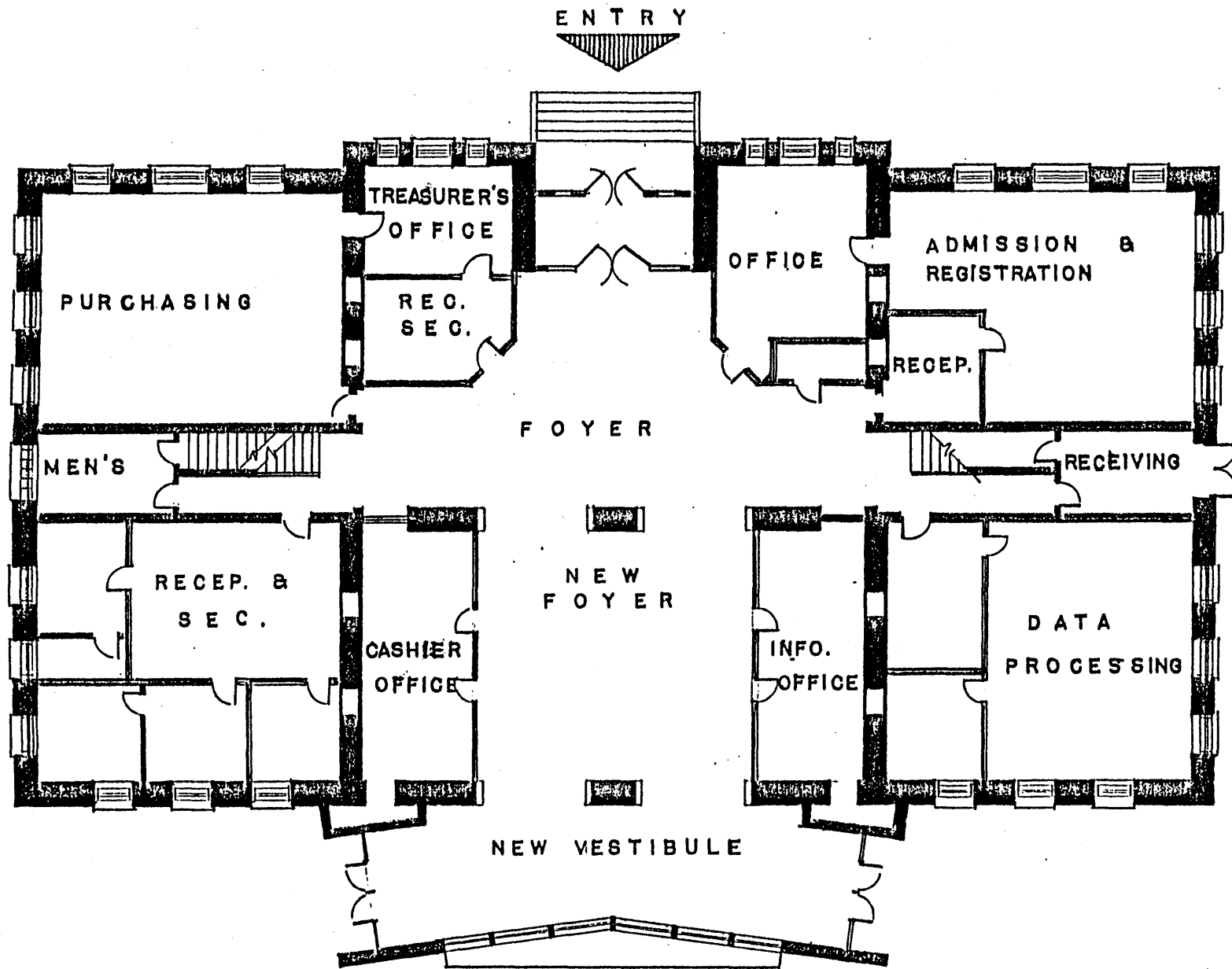
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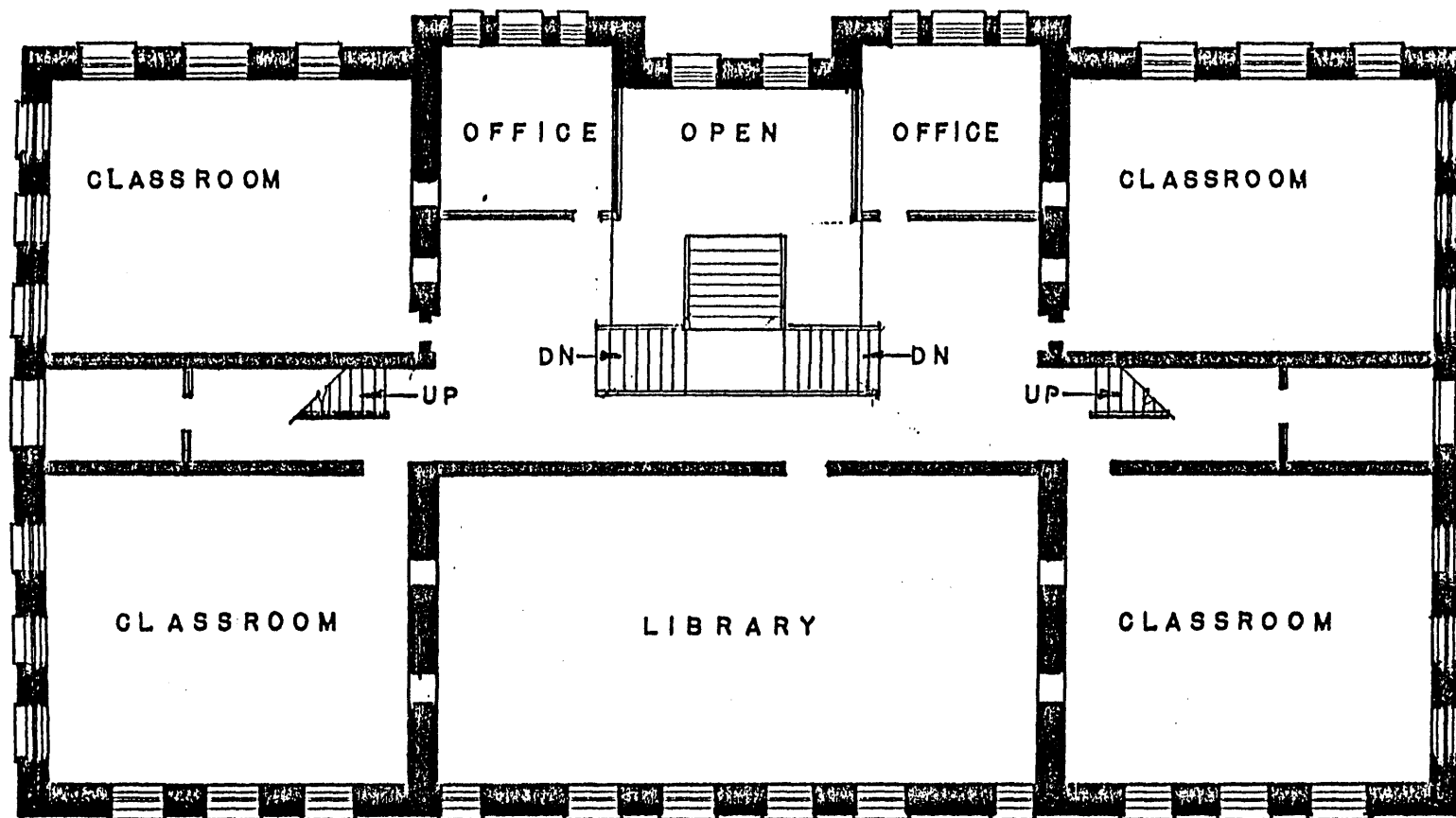
The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho
FIRST FLOOR PLAN (ORIGINAL)
S C A L E 1/16" = 1' - 0"



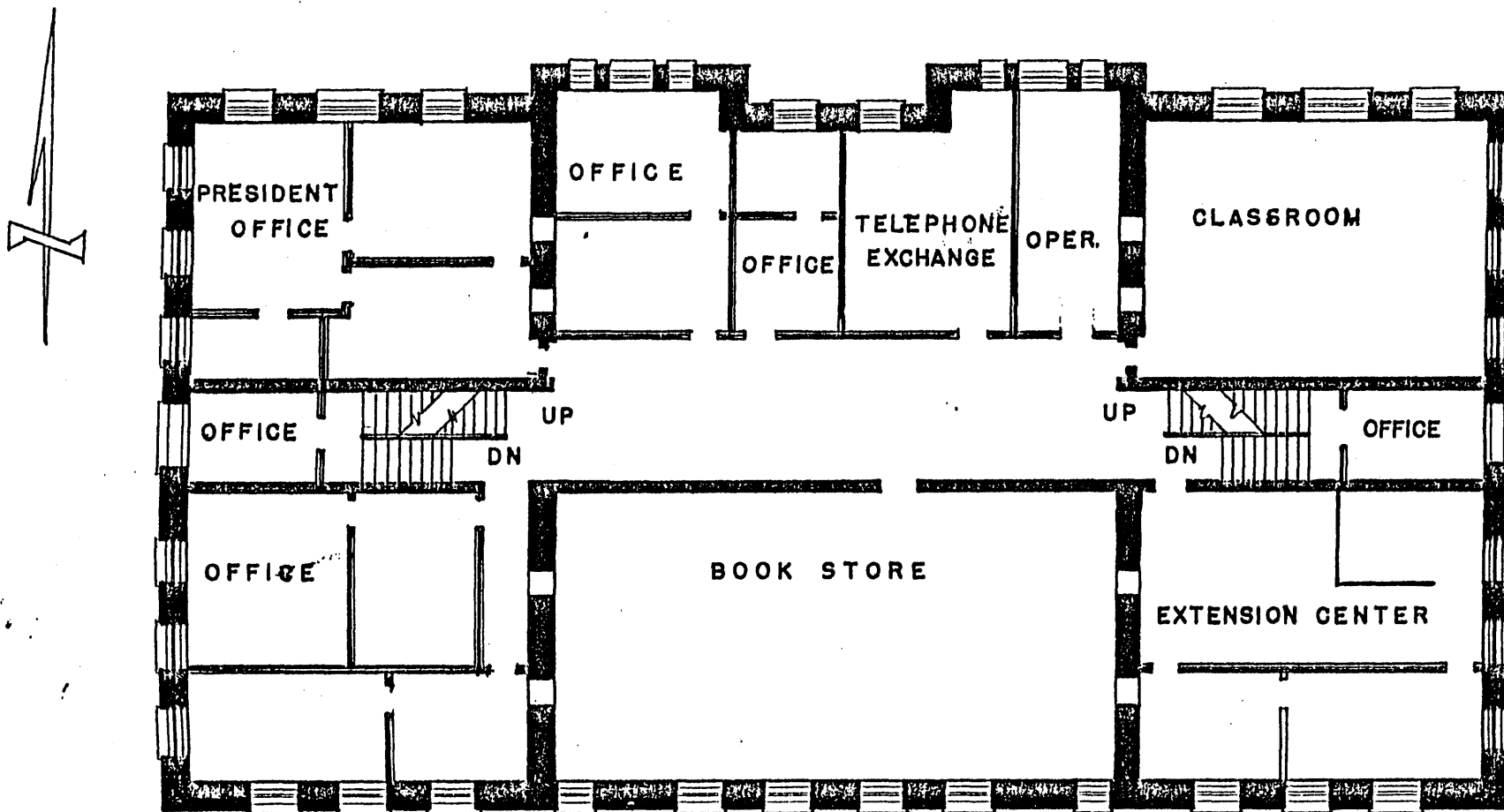
The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho
FIRST FLOOR PLAN (1945-1968)
S C A L E 1/16" = 1' - 0"



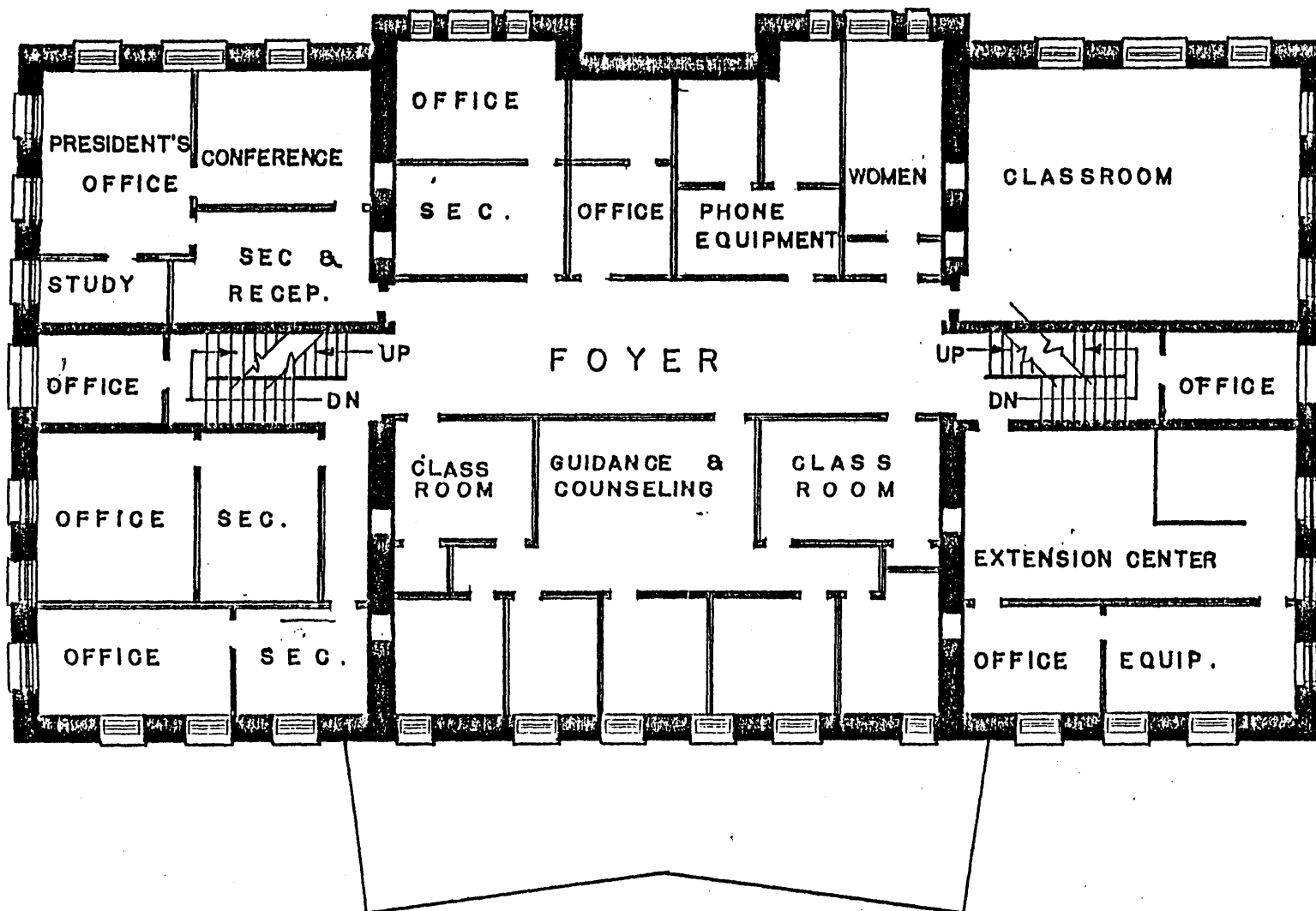
The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho
FIRST FLOOR PLAN (1968)
S O A L E 1/16" = 1'-0"



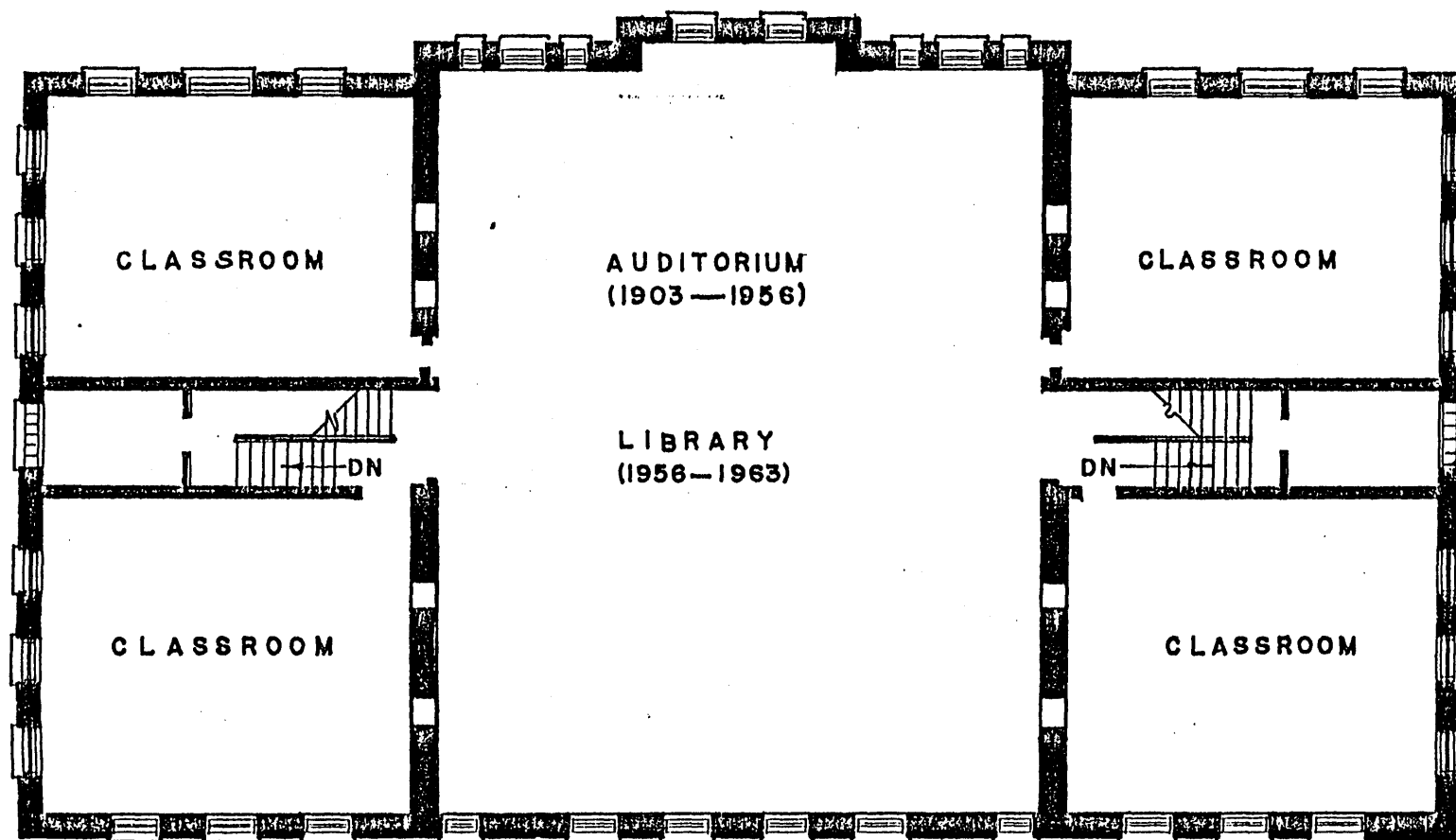
The Jacob spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho.
SECOND FLOOR (ORIGINAL)
S C A L E 1/16" = 1' - 0"



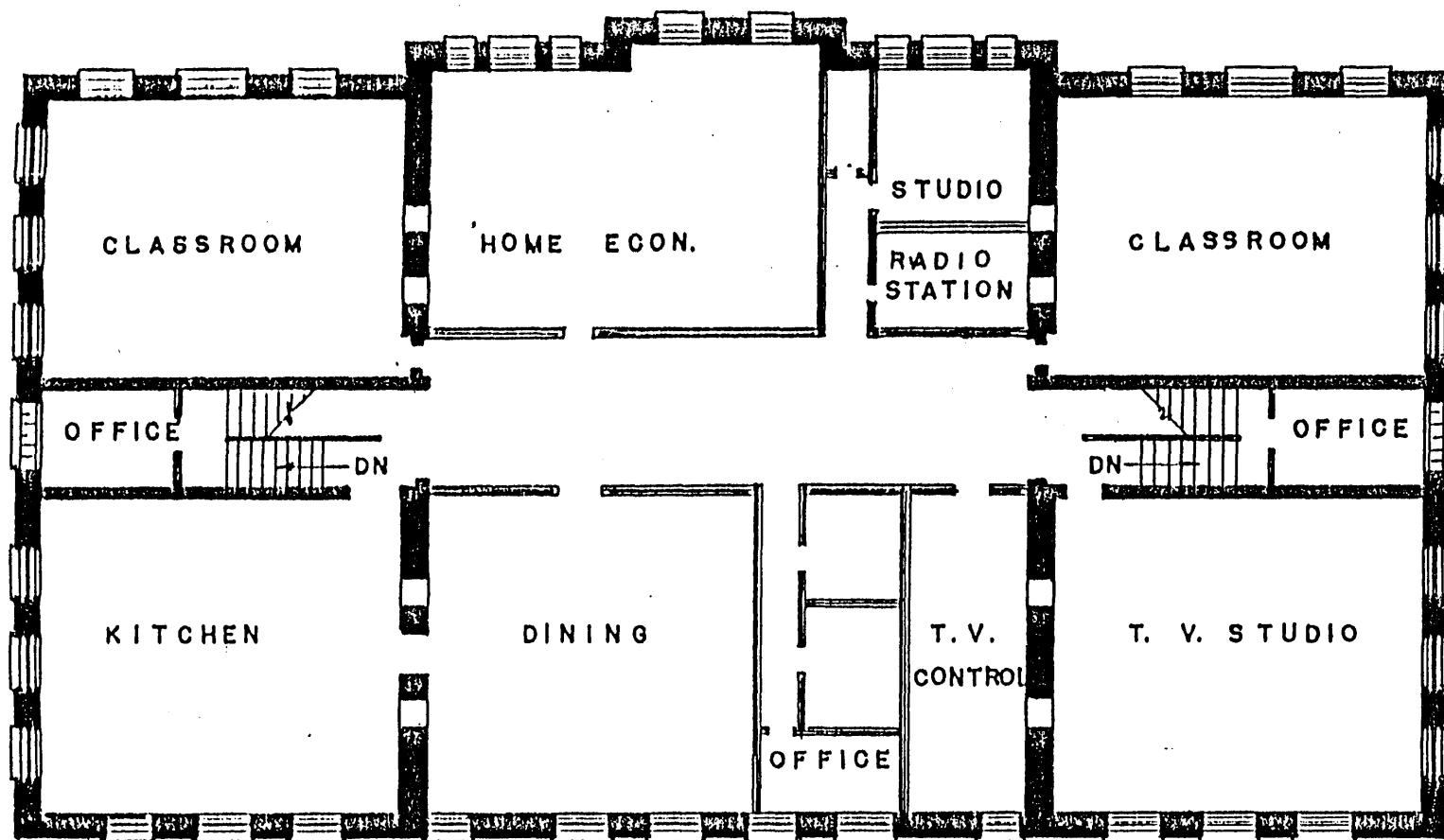
The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho
SECOND FLOOR (1963-1966)
 SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"



The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho
SECOND FLOOR (1968)
SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"



The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho
THIRD FLOOR (ORIGINAL)
SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"



The Jacob Spori Building, Rexburg, Idaho
THIRD FLOOR (PRESENT)
 S C A L E 1/16" = 1'-0"



Jacob Spori Building

Rexburg, Idaho

MADISON County

David L. Crowder, photographer

Sept. 1988

Negative located at Ricks College

View looking south.