

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS **ASSEMBLY HALL** 1963

The University of Illinois Assembly Hall – unique in concept, design and function – has attracted international attention since its construction began. We may now mark the large contributions which this impressive facility will make to the intellectual, cultural and recreational aspects of campus life.

As a meeting place, convention hall, exhibit gallery, and center for music, theatrical and athletic events, the Assembly Hall opens a wide, new range of activities and programs for student participation on a scale heretofore impossible because of space limitations. The enlargement of the student body at Champaign-Urbana, now over 24,000, and growing, makes the availability of such programs an educational necessity, a vital part of student experience.

The Assembly Hall reflects, also, the effort of the University to increase resources for capital improvements. Revenue bonds which were issued to construct the Assembly Hall will be repaid from student fees and from income from building operations. At a time when state tax funds are not available to meet all of the University's needs, the revenue bond plan accelerates the availability of some important facilities which could be procured in no other way.

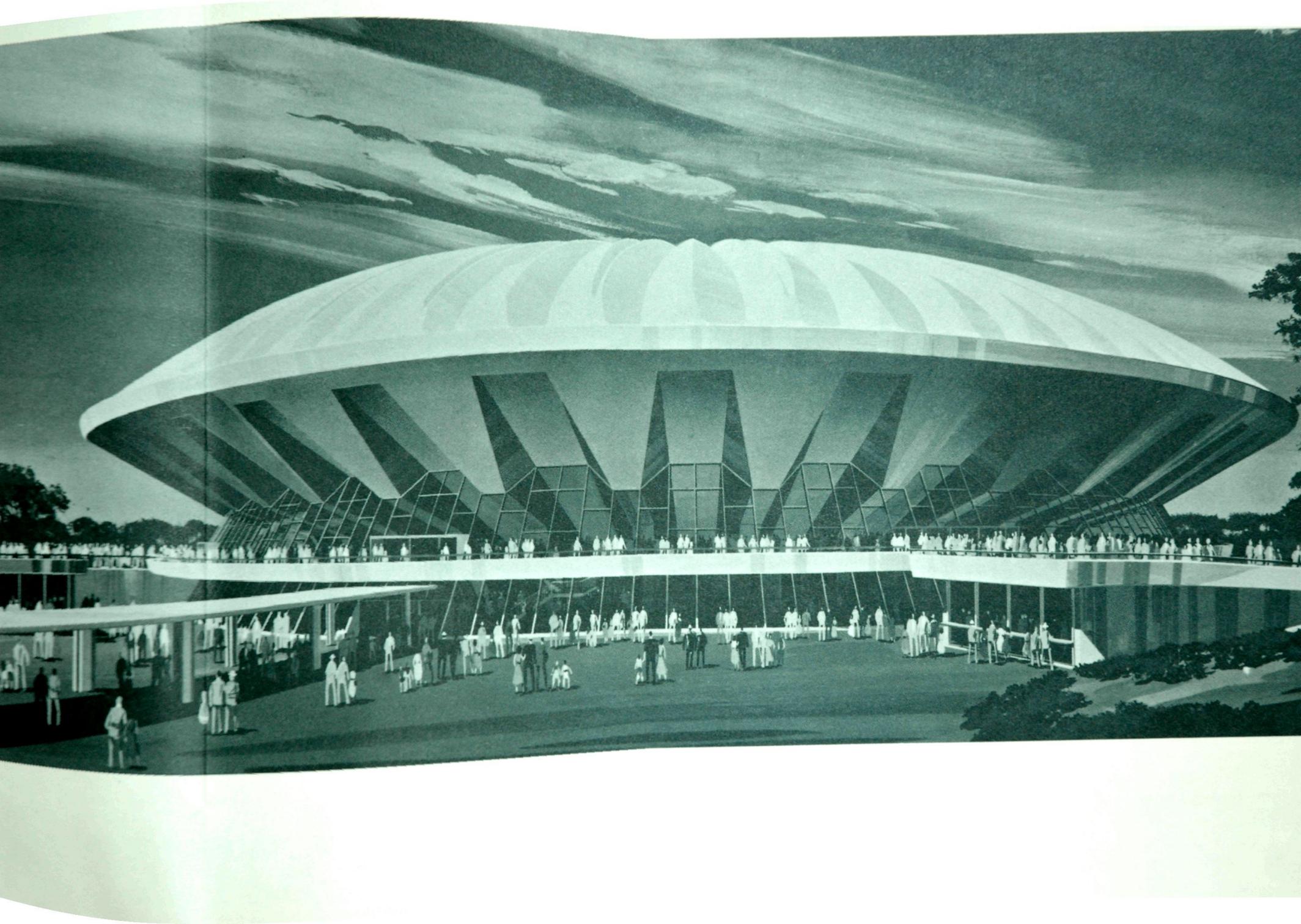
During this opening season, the Assembly Hall brings to fulfillment the efforts of many men to construct here one of the most significant buildings in the nation. In architectural expression, its design, engineering, and construction by many talents have been pooled to achieve an expression of the spirit and enterprise of the contemporary university.

No one yet can predict the limits of the usefulness of this building. The results will transcend our greatest expectations. Thus, we look at this Hall with pride in a great achievement which will serve thousands of students and citizens of Illinois for generations to come.

David D. Henry

David D. Henry, President







ARCHITECTS for the Assembly Hall are Harrison & Abramovitz, New York, one of the nation's most outstanding firms. Previously, the firm has designed the United Nations buildings, Time-Life building, RCA Music Hall, and the Philharmonic Hall. The latter is part of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, for which Harrison & Abramovitz are the supervising architects. The firm also is doing the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. The American Telephone and Telegraph Company building at the 1964 New York World's Fair is being done by this firm. It also has designed numerous buildings at Harvard and Brandeis Universities as well as a new theater at Dartmouth. Mr. Abramovitz is a graduate of the University of Illinois.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS are the Urbana firm of Felmley-Dickerson Company, the builder of many structures on the University campus, including the new addition to the Illini Union. The late Mr. Felmley was an Illini athlete and alumnus. Mr. Ray Dickerson is president of the firm. Mr. Richard Foley, vice-president and project chief, is an Illini alumnus and former basketball star. Among dozens of other firms participating as subcontractors are the Potter Electric Service, Inc., and the R. H. Bishop Company, heating and ventilating.

CONSULTANTS for the Assembly Hall include some of the greatest names in modern engineering. Ammann & Whitney, the structural engineers, are famed not only for their general work and structures but particularly for their engineering of suspension bridges—a field with application here because of the post-tension wire on the Assembly Hall. Syska & Hennessy, Inc., the mechanical and electrical engineers, are experts in their own field. Lighting by Feder has advised on the general and theater lighting; the firm is best known for its work with Broadway shows. Among its recent lighting hits have been "My Fair Lady" and "Camelot." The acoustical consultants are Bolt, Beranek & Newman, Inc., whose name is synonymous with basic development of acoustical engineering. Among the several other consultants was Dr. Ralph Peck, University of Illinois expert in subsoil drainage conditions.

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There are nearly 16,000 seats, including 142 wheel chair positions. This capacity can be augmented through addition of chairs on the central floor, or it may be reduced to 4,200 seats in the theater quadrant at the west. Individual, numbered fiberglass chairs are used throughout; those in the theater quadrant also have upholstery and arm rests. Special attention is given to space and comfort. The seats were designed especially for this building.

Large as the Assembly Hall's great arena seems from the top row, its efficient circular design makes the seating closer and viewing better than in any other building of comparable capacity. Placement of the central floor about 30 feet below ground level means that entrances bring the public into the Hall at points about half way up in the seat bowl, so it is an easy walk to and from seats; the highest row is only 22 rows from the entrance, rather than the 48 it would have been by standard design.

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steel wire around the edge of the Assembly Hall dome. The 2,467 laps of wire were placed under great tension—up to 130,000 pounds a square inch. This pressure slowly squeezed the concrete, compacted it, so that the dome diameter now is 2 inches less than when originally poured. The slope of the dome rose 2.5 inches. The force of the wire caused the building to move and lift itself into being as an integral structure. Left behind and beneath it was some 600,000 board feet of scaffolding, which then was removed.

Circling the Assembly Hall under the cantilevered seat bowl is the quarter-mile Upper Concourse. At one side of it is the concrete, at the other a glass wall, dramatically angled to contribute toward the total cuback design feature of the building's profile. Six spacious ramps bring visitors to the Upper Concourse. Twenty-four bridges span the way from the Concourse into the arena. Between them are 24 borrow-light shafts to bring natural lighting to the Lower Concourse. At this lower level are meeting rooms, ticket facilities, offices, mechanical rooms, first aid station, dark room and wirephoto center, and press room.

At the central floor level is the Service Area, where there are storage spaces, theatrical backstage facilities, locker rooms and dressing rooms, communications center, television interview room, and maintenance headquarters. Operation of the Assembly Hall will see it transformed often among its basic functions as auditorium, arena, theater and exhibition hall. In some of these changovers it will follow the procedures established at other multi-purpose halls. In others it will be perfecting new principles of operation. In all instances it will be proving itself a versatile and outstanding departure among the nation's buildings for mass assembly.

As an auditorium, the Assembly Hall will utilize its full circle of nearly 16,000 seats and more than

1,500 additional portable chairs on the central floor. Thus it will have maximum capacity for events that will attract huge crowds and yet require only a moderate-sized speaker's platform. This arrangement might be used for Presidential campaigns, for University Commencement or similar outstanding events, for convention sessions with To switch the Assembly Hall into another setup, a tractor will take out the chairs in trailer-loaded, demountable stage. Erected on the central floor, this stage can be 46 by 96 feet, or in a wide variety of 8 by 8 foot modules. It can be used as theater draperies, or with addition of theater stage.

Eighty-five feet over the central floor is the unique theater grid. When the building is used as a theater, the grid will support the full array of theatrical draperies—huge masking draperies at the front and sides for the full height, a traveler or opening curtain at the front, sets of borders and legs on stage and a backdrop. These will be brought forth in trailers and raised into position by power winches on the grid. Also on the grid can be theatrical scenery and settings. Operation of the draperies and grid will be from an electronic console at the side of the stage. The technician will set a dial for the distance and direction he wants a given set to move. Then, on cue, he can flip a switch that will start that movement. The system is accurate to within an inch. The full stage will accommodate road companies of Broadway musicals or dramas, large opera companies, ballets, symphony orchestras—any type of event that might appear on a stage any place. For programs of serious music, the Assembly Hall will have available an acoustical shell that will provide a sound-reflecting surface for

a similar surface that will jut from the proscenium arch out over the first rows of seats like a giant modern canopy.

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For exhibit purposes, the central floor, as well as the Upper Concourse, can be filled with individual tables or booths for display purposes. This will be the case for the Junior Academy of Science in May, for example.

Large Seating Capacity . . . The Assembly Hall's fixed seating plus the special spaces for paraplegics give it a total basic seating capacity that exceeds nearly all other multi-purpose buildings in the nation, more fixed seats than at Madison Square Garden, the Los Angeles Sports Arena, or Pittsburgh Public Auditorium.

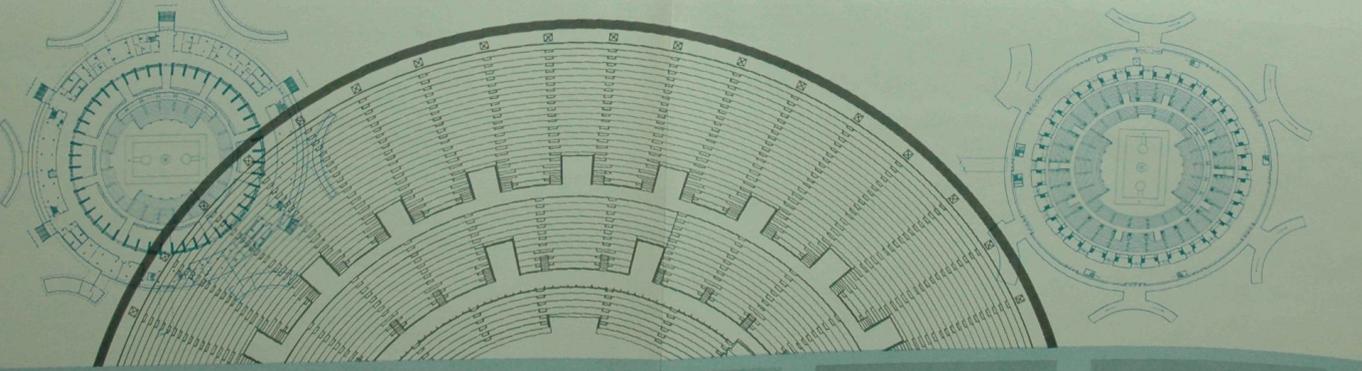
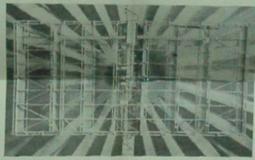
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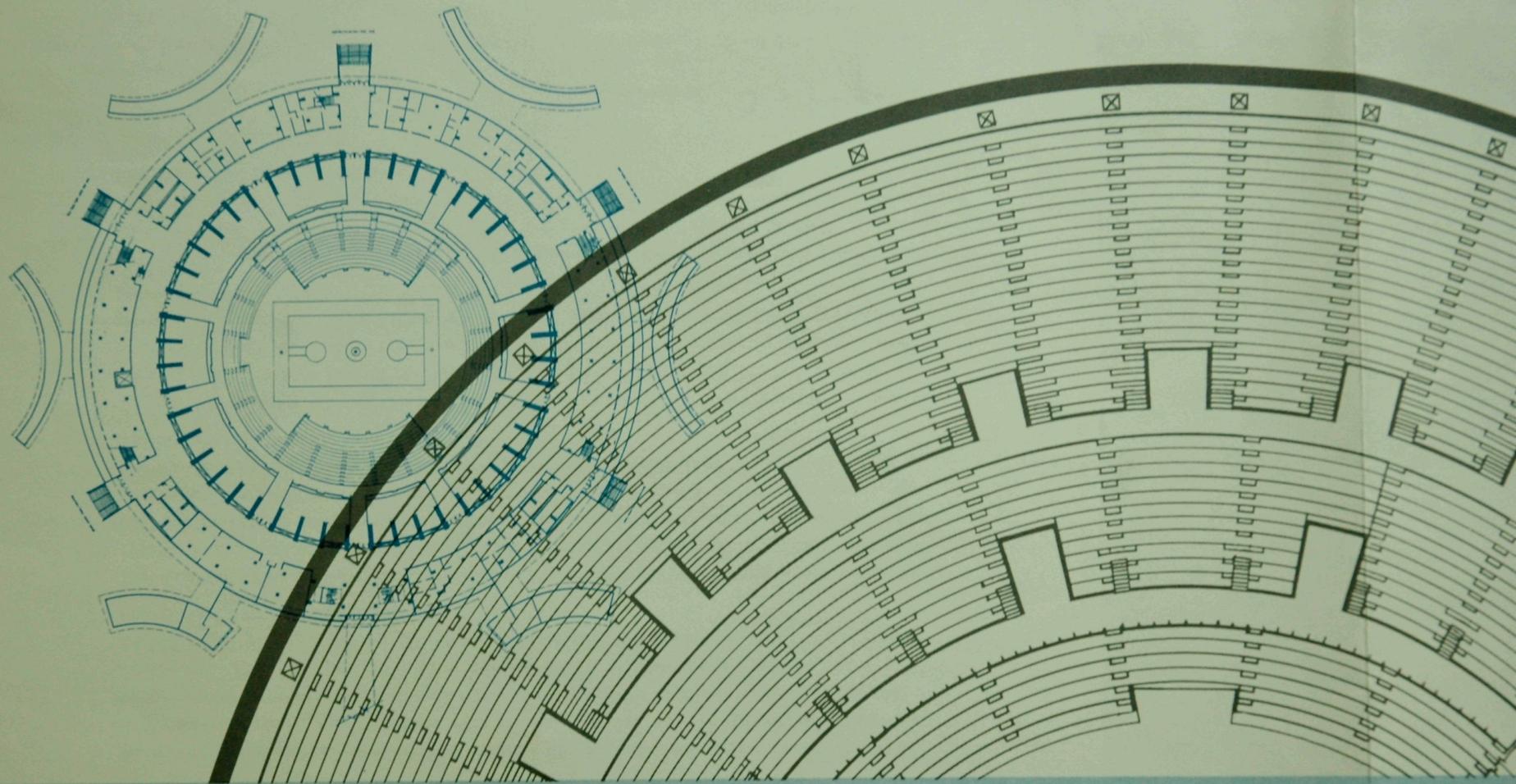
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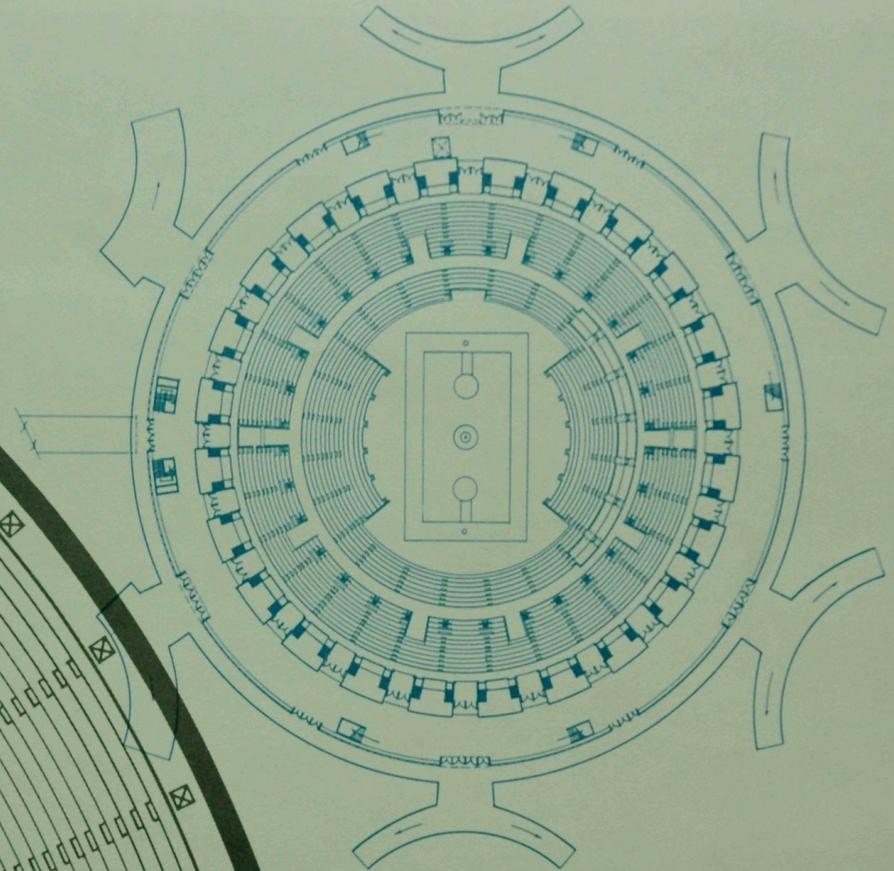
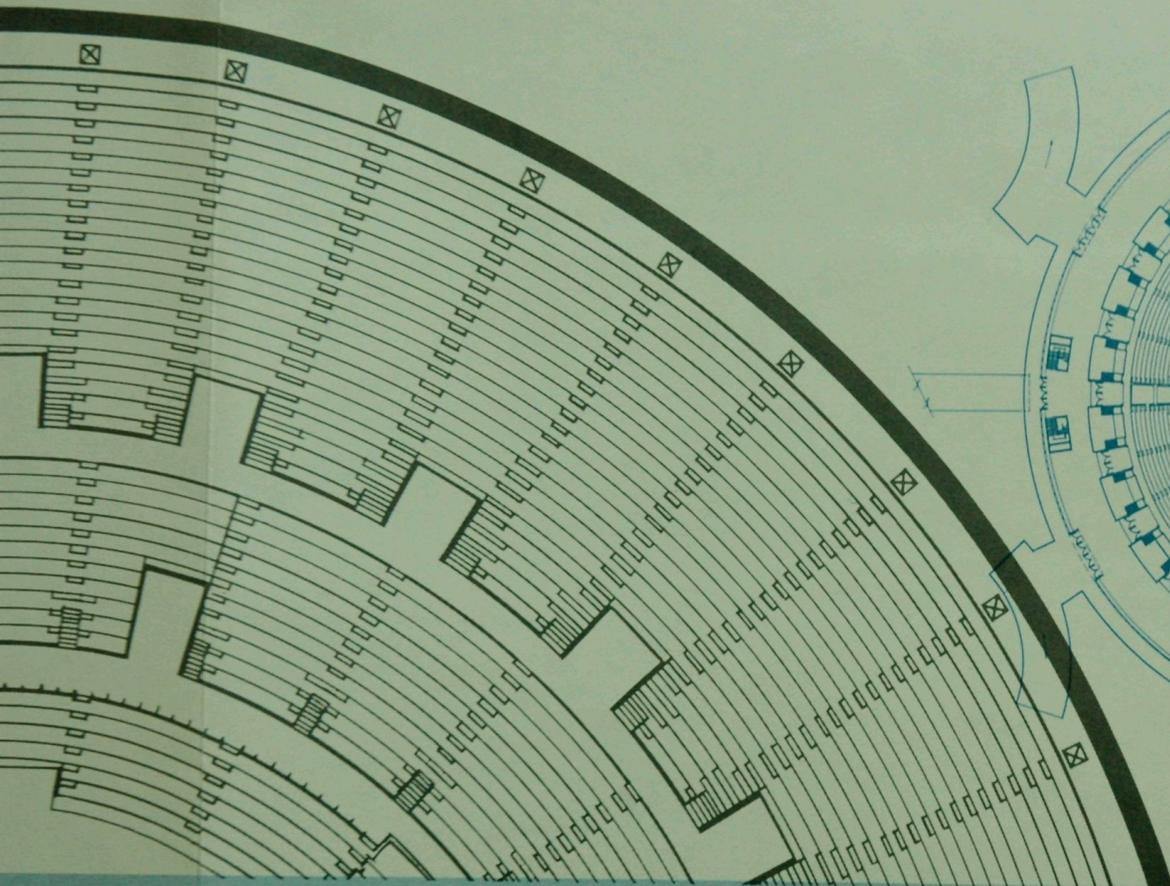
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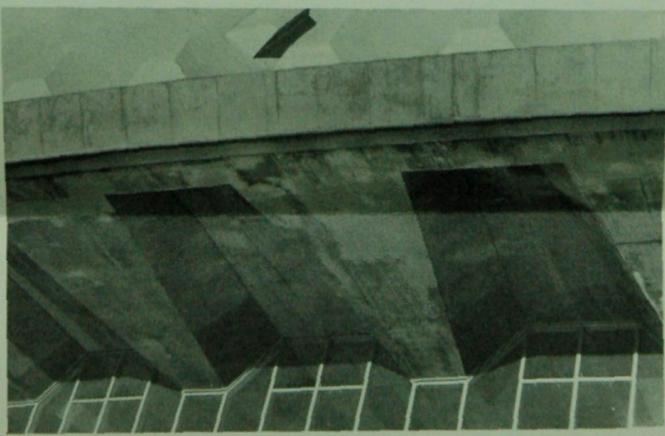
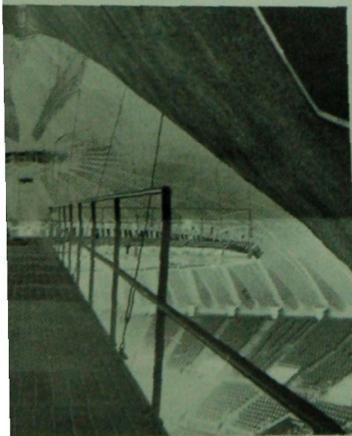
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To switch the Assembly Hall into another setup, a tractor will take out the chairs in trailer-loads of 120 each and then return with the elements of the demountable stage. Erected on the central floor, this stage can be 48 by 96 feet, or in a wide variety of 8 by 8 foot modules. It can be used as an uncomplicated platform or, with addition of theater draperies, it can be a well-equipped theater stage.

Eighty-five feet over the central floor is the unique theater grid. When the building is used as a theater, the grid will support the full array of theatrical draperies — huge masking draperies at the front and sides for the full height, a traveler or opening curtain at the front, sets of borders and legs on stage and a backdrop. These will be brought forth in trailers and raised into position by power winches on the grid. Also on the grid can be theatrical scenery and settings.

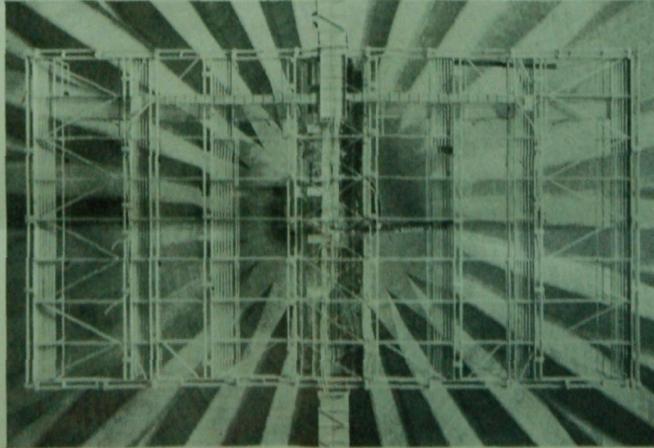
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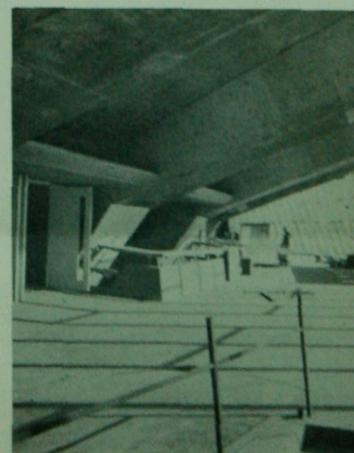
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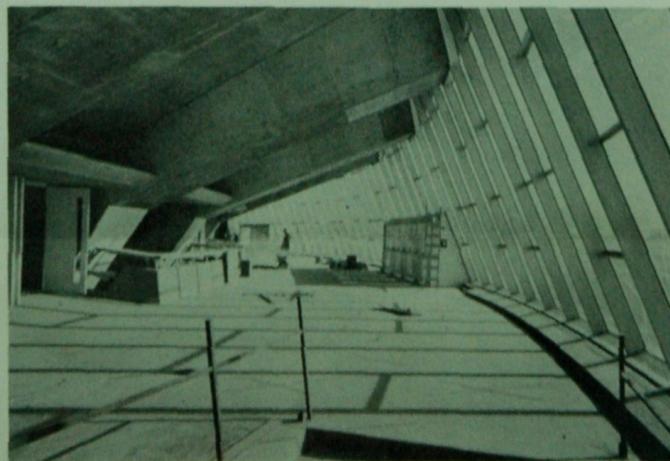
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Post-Tensioning Lift . . . Application of 2,467 laps of highest quality steel wire around the edge beam of the Assembly Hall was completed by a tractor device which previously had been used to apply similar wire to missile launching silos. The tension of the wire squeezed the concrete inward 2 inches, reducing its diameter. This procedure also caused the apogee of the dome to rise more than 2 inches. The combined results of the tension wire caused the building to lift itself up from its scaffolding and become an integral structure standing on its own.



CONVOCATION AND DEDICATION PROGRAM

Assembly Hall Dedication

THEODORE PETERSON, *Presiding*
Executive Chairman of the Committee on the Dedication of
the Assembly Hall and Dean of the College of Journalism and
Communications

PROCESSIONAL

Homage March.....*Richard Wagner*

THE UNIVERSITY CONCERT BAND
MARK H. HINDSLEY
Director of University of Illinois Bands
GUY M. DUKER, *Conducting*
Assistant to the Director of University of Illinois Bands

INVOCATION

The Reverend JAMES R. HINE
Pastor of the McKinley Memorial United Presbyterian Church
and Director of McKinley Foundation, Champaign

DEDICATION

HOWARD W. CLEMENT
President of the Board of Trustees
OTTO KERNER
Governor of the State of Illinois
DAVID DODDS HENRY
President of the University

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

A Walt Whitman Overture.....*Norman Lloyd*

THE UNIVERSITY CONCERT BAND

Honors Day Convocation

DAVID DODDS HENRY, *Presiding*
President of the University

RECOGNITION OF HONOR STUDENTS

LYLE H. LANIER
Executive Vice-President and Provost
JOHN BARDEEN
Professor of Electrical Engineering and of Physics, and Member of
the Center for Advanced Study

HONORS DAY ADDRESS

CARL SANDBURG
American Poet and Lincoln Biographer

BENEDICTION

The Reverend Doctor HINE

RECESSIONAL

University, Grand March.....*Edwin Franko Goldman*

THE UNIVERSITY CONCERT BAND

The audience is requested to remain seated until the academic procession has left
the Assembly Hall.