NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Margarett Root Brown College
Other name/site number: Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: Rice University, 6100 Main Street
City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☐ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: EDUCATION/college-dormitory, DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions: EDUCATION/college-dormitory, DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MODERN/International Style

Principal Exterior Materials: BRICK, CONCRETE, GLASS, METAL/steel

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets x-x)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: Criteria A and C *(both at the local level of significance)*

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: EDUCATION and ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance: 1965

Significant Dates: 1963, 1994, 2002, 2017

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): N/A

Architect/Builder: Albert E. Sheppard

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets x-x)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet x-x)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
___ 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:
_X_ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, Austin)
____ Other state agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
_X_ University (Rice University, Houston)
____ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 2.2 Acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

1.	29.721617	-95.395414
2.	29.720897	-95.394219
3.	29.720842	-95.394272
4.	29.720719	-95.394314
5.	29.720958	-95.396239
6.	29.721147	-95.396197
7.	29.721097	-95.395806
8.	29.721439	-95.395744
9.	29.721414	-95.395517

Verbal Boundary Description: The property is located within the campus of Rice University at 6100 Main Street, Tracts 3 & 4, ABST 309 J Gamble Subdivision. The nominated parcel is located on a curved drive just inside Entry 27 off Sunset Blvd. in the northeast corner of the campus. The nominated property is bounded by Sunset Boulevard and the 2002 Brown College addition to the north, entrance #1 to the east, North Servery Road to the south, and a small residential quadrangle to the west.

Boundary Justification: The boundary consists of the entire residential college site developed in 1965, including the Brown College residential hall, Brown Commons dining hall (now Morton L. Rich Health and Wellness Center), Brown House (magister's house), and the surrounding grounds including a historic surface parking lot.

11. Form Prepared By

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Date: June 30, 2025

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets x-x)

Additional items (see continuation sheets x-x)

Photographs (see continuation sheets x-x)

Photographs

Margarett Root Brown College
(including hyphen and Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center, formerly Brown Commons dining hall)
Houston, Harris County, Texas
Photographed by Amanda Coleman, Steph McDougal, Anna Mod, March-December 2024
All photos reflect the appearance of the building at the time of the nomination's submission to NPS.

Photo 1: Primary (east) elevation with courtyard walls. View west

Photo 2: Brown College Primary (east elevation) entrance with courtyard walls View west

Photo 3:Brown College East elevation with courtyard wall View west

Photo 4: Brown College Oblique view, west and south elevations. View northeast

Photo 5: Brown College West elevation View east

Photo 6: Oblique view, west and north elevations. View southeast

Photo 7: Brown College North elevation with columnar breezeway connection and 2002 addition. View east

Photo 8: Brown College North elevation and upper breezeway View south

Photo 9: Brown College North elevation and lower columnar breezeway View southeast

Photo 10: Brown College Columnar breezeway between north elevation and 2002 addition View west

Photo 11: South elevation, former hyphen, and corner of Student Health and Wellness Center View east

Photo 12: Oblique view. Brown College, hyphen, and Student Health and Wellness Center. View southeast

Photo 13: Oblique view. West and south elevations of Brown College and the Student Health and Wellness Center View northeast

Photo 14: Oblique view. East elevation of Brown College and south and east elevations of Student Health and Wellness Center. View southwest

Photo 15: Oblique view. Student Health Center south and east elevations, with stairwell entrance to subterranean maintenance tunnel. View southwest

Photo 16: Student Health and Wellness Center, south elevation (foreground) and south and west elevations of Brown College (background). View north

Photo 17: East elevation, covered walkway to main entrance, and courtyard. View northwest

Photo 18: Ground-floor exterior column details with mosaic tile. View east

Photo 19: East entrance foyer and common area. View southeast.

Photo 20: First-floor breakroom. View north

Photo 21: First-floor common area. View west.

Photo 22: First-floor lounge. View northwest

Photo 23: Basement connection to Student Health and Wellness Center. View south

Photo 24: Typical elevator lobby, fourth floor. View northwest

Photo 25: Typical common area with exit to columnar breezeway, fourth floor. View northwest

Photo 26: Typical breezeway connection to 2002 addition, fourth floor. View northwest

Photo 27: Typical dormitory room, eighth floor. View west

Photo 28: Typical study vestibule, eighth floor. View east

Photo 29: South elevation entrance. View north

Photo 30: Brown House Rear/south elevation View north

Photo 31: Brown House. East elevation. View west

Photo 32: Brown House. West elevation (garage in foreground). View east.

Narrative Description

Completed in 1965, Margaret Root Brown College is a high-rise residential college on the Rice University campus in Houston, designed by local architect Albert E. Sheppard in the Modern style. The building consists of an eight-story dormitory tower and an attached one-story rectangular wing, both of steel-frame construction with concrete foundations, brick veneer walls, and flat roofs. The tower's upper floors cantilever over the ground level and feature horizontal bands of metal-framed windows divided by concrete fins. Other key features include brick herringbone spandrels, tiled support columns, window walls on the first floor, a broad entrance canopy, and a brick-walled courtyard. A glass hyphen (extant but closed on the interior to prevent passage) connects the tower's south side to Brown Commons, the one-story wing, which repeats the tower's materials and details. Designed for up to 200 students, the layout remains largely intact, with a central core for circulation and shared bathrooms and seven floors of dorm rooms. Lower levels were recently reconfigured (2017) with updated materials. Sheppard's vertical design preserved the open character of that part of Rice's campus. The nominated boundary includes the residential college building, magister's house, and one contributing site with the original parking lot, sidewalks, lawn, brick privacy wall, and mature trees. Brown College retains integrity to demonstrate its historical and architectural significance.

Location

Rice University is centrally located within Houston, Harris County, approximately 3.5 miles southwest of downtown, with Hermann Park and the Texas Medical Center immediately west and north of the campus (Map 2). The campus is bounded by Main Street to the east, University Boulevard to the south, Chaucer Drive to the west, and Rice/Sunset Boulevard to the north (Map 5). Margaret Root Brown College (hereafter Brown College) is one of four colleges in a residential cluster at the northeastern part of the campus (Map 6). When completed in 1965, Brown College's physical plant consisted only of the nominated building and Magister's House (hereafter Brown House). Today, a large 2002 addition (the new Brown Commons) extends from an open-air hyphen from the nominated residential tower's north elevation. (Map 4).

West of the nominated building is a quadrangle (space enclosed by buildings) in the shape of a right trapezoid (Figure 14). The 2002 four-story Brown College Commons, designed by Michael Graves, forms the northern angled boundary of the quadrangle. Connected via a four-story breezeway to Brown Commons, the Mary Gibbs Jones College Commons and its hardscaped plaza (2002) anchor the western side of the quad (Map 4). Brown House, a two-story brick residential building to the south, has no physical connection to the aforementioned buildings/additions. Although the formal entrance to Brown College is on the east elevation, facing Main Street, campus pedestrians typically use the west residential quadrangle entrance.

The high-rise residential tower has an east-west orientation. A one-story enclosed steel and glass hyphen on the south elevation connects the tower to the original one-story Brown College Commons (now the Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center). The tower, hyphen, and Commons/Health Center building are collectively nominated as a single internally connected resource. Brown House is located to the west of the Commons/Health Center and is nominated as a separate contributing resource. The site, containing a surface parking lot, is also nominated as a separate contributing resource.

Site (Contributing)

The site on which Brown College complex (residence hall with attached Commons/Health Center, and Brown House) rests is roughly shaped like an upside-down letter "T". The boundary includes the following original resources and features:

Name/Description	Resource Type	Features
Brown College (residence hall) and Brown Commons (now Health Center)	Building	Main walkway with canopy Courtyard wall with gate Paved walkways and patios Ornamental trees and shrubs Grassy lawn
Brown House	Building	Attached carport (now enclosed garage) Brick walls on front façade Wood fence (3 sides) Patio and terrace Grassy lawn
Brown College site	Site	Parking lot Paved walkways Lighting fixtures Grassy lawn

The boundary for this nomination does not include the addition to the residence hall built in 2002. It also does not include the "quad" created by the construction of the addition and a freestanding building, also constructed in 2002, since the lawn stretching from Brown College around the two Jones College (North and South) residential colleges was not originally an enclosed quadrangle, due to the orientation of the three buildings.

Throughout the site, all walkways, patios, and similar paved areas are constructed of concrete with a pebble-dashed pea-gravel surface, of the same type found throughout the Rice University campus. Where grass is present, it tends to be patchy, due to shady locations and/or pedestrian foot traffic. The grounds surrounding the residential tower, Commons/Health Center, and Brown House are landscaped with mature trees, grass, and concrete paving as described above. Planting beds around both buildings contain monoculture ground covers, modest ornamental perennials, or shrubs (Photo 17).

Brown College

The east elevation of the residential hall, north elevation of the Commons/Health Center, and a historic brick wall together enclose an entry courtyard on the east side of this site. The brick wall runs north from the Health Center to a point parallel with the northeast corner of the dorm; the wall then turns west toward that corner before terminating at a metal gate, which connects to a relatively new brick wall around the 2002 Brown College addition. This leaves an open passage within the wall, past the northeast corner of the residential tower. The historic brick wall is laid in Flemish bond, with decorative courses of alternating full and half shiner bricks at courses 4, 8, and 16 (counted from grade). Upper courses, laid with empty spaces where the header bricks otherwise would be, create a perforated screen effect. The wall is capped by a rowlock course.

A covered walkway leads from the ground floor of the residence hall past the historic brick wall and an double ornamental metal gate that faces Main Street (Photo 2). Two brick pillars on either side of the gate are set slightly back from the brick wall, which returns to meet the pillars. The pillars are also laid in Flemish bond with shiner courses in the same configuration as the brick wall, but the bond pattern continues in that fashion unabated above the top of the wall, for a total of 36 courses (Photo 3). The thin, flat, concrete canopy over the walkway between the pillars and the college is supported on slender cruciform-shaped metal columns and extends beyond the gate to create a covered entry there. Lights and electrical conduit are mounted along the underside of the canopy, providing power for the actuating mechanisms in the gate.

The space between the pillars, canopy, and walkway is filled entirely by ornamental double pedestrian gates surrounded by matching ornamental metal panels featuring flat screens set in wide frames. The metal panels are designed with flat vertical oval shapes, bisected in both the horizontal and vertical directions; truncated ovals above these, which terminate into the upper frames; and crook-and-cross cut-outs directly below the junctions of full oval shapes on all three levels. The middle band is slightly taller than the other two, and the extra space below the croziers is filled with narrowly spaced horizontal strips of metal. The upper band adds small cross elements to the tops of the truncated ovals. The middle and lower bands in this system are backed with heavy wire mesh for security; the top band is open. All metal in this gate system appears to be black powder-coated steel of relatively recent fabrication; its design is similar but not identical to the original, per historic drawings.

Walkways and paving covers much of the courtyard area, creating seating areas with chairs and tables which retain their original 1965 configuration. The courtyard is planted with ornamental trees and shrubs, with a few small (possibly sago) palms. Bedding areas between walkways are planted with groundcovers. Patchy grass is present elsewhere inside the courtyard.

Brown House

Brown House features a brick wall in running bond, continuous with the front elevation, that extends for about 20 feet to either side of the front façade. This connects to a wood privacy fence with painted horizontal slats that encloses the rest of the yard. Wooden gates, matching the fence, provide entry from the quad.

Other Site Features

The remainder of this site includes exterior walkways that connect these buildings to the network of sidewalks throughout campus, and a parking lot that originally served both Brown and Jones Colleges but now is designated parking for all “North Campus Residents” including Brown Jones, McMurtry, Martel, and Duncan Colleges.

Brown College Residential Tower

The Modern-style residential tower is oriented north-south and faces east. It rises eight stories over a single-level basement. The building’s primary materials are brick, concrete, aluminum and glass (Photo 1). Like its neighbor, Mary Gibbs Jones Residential College, on which Brown College’s design was based, this building is defined by bands of windows on the long elevations and blank brick on the narrower walls. The fenestrated elevations feature units of two side-by-side aluminum windows glazed with gray reflective glass over each herringbone brick spandrel, flanked by continuous pre-cast concrete fins that extend from the bottom of the cantilevered second floor to the roof. Entryways are sheltered by thin concrete canopies supported by cruciform columns.

The residential tower is comprised of three contiguous articulated vertical masses. The central mass, which contains the service core, is topped by a mechanical penthouse that projects above the primary roof plane. The two flanking masses contain dormitory rooms and interior corridors. The resulting plan is a stout “H” or “sandwich cookie” shape. Stairwells at the ends of the central mass/service core are illuminated by a vertical ribbon of alternating gray glass and spandrel glass panels. The service core also contains restrooms and elevators. A single roof coveres all three masses and is flat with a low parapet. The south elevation of the tower connects to the Commons/Health Center wing via an enclosed steel and glass hyphen, which now has been closed to prevent passage from the residential hall to the health center.

East (Front) Elevation

The east elevation is one of the long sides of the building. The ground floor is recessed below cantilevered upper floors and features prominent floor-to-ceiling aluminum-framed windows surrounded by red brick in a Flemish bond pattern with thick mortar joints (Photos 1-3). The seven upper floors rooms each feature a continuous pattern of paired aluminum casement windows (28 across each elevation on each floor) between vertical fins of precast concrete. Each set of two windows is set between a single-lite transom above and a red-brick spandrel in a herringbone pattern below (Figure 2). The tower's brick veneer repeats the Flemish bond with intermediate coursing found on the brick wall surrounding the courtyard. The cornice is a Modern interpretation of the Classical triglyph-and-metope composition: above each concrete fin, a triglyph is composed of a vertical stack of single bricks, with eight stretchers between single shiners at the top and bottom. The triglyphs continue and terminate the vertical emphasis of the concrete fins; metopes between the triglyphs are brick in a herringbone pattern that matches the spandrels below each window. The parapet is capped with cast stone.

South Elevation

The south elevation of the residential tower features fields of blank brick on the south-facing wall planes. Where the center mass is inset, the short walls facing into that space feature window units with transoms and spandrels matching those found on the east and west elevations. The south wall of the central mass is blank with the exception of a vertical ribbon of alternating gray glass and spandrel glass which illuminates the stairwell immediately within (Photo 13). The ground floor features two mosaic-clad round columns without capitals to the left (west) of the one-story steel and glass hyphen between the tower and one-story wing. (Photo 11-12).

West Elevation

The west elevation is similar to the east elevation. A central recessed pair of aluminum-and-glass entry doors is reached via a central paved walkway (Photos 4-6).

North Elevation

The ground floor on the north elevation matches the south elevation's brick exterior and two mosaic clad columns, with a pair of aluminum and glass egress doors between the columns (Photos 7 and 19). A four-story breezeway (constructed in 2002) consists of a stack of half-cylinders clad in blue glazed brick and set very shallowly into the recessed portion of this elevation. The half-cylinders connects Floors 2-4 to the adjacent 2002 addition via covered concrete walkways with metal railings (Photos 8-10). The windows facing into the inset portion of this elevation remain intact, and the enclosure created by the half-cylinders on floors 2-4 creates a lightwell (Photo 8).

Interior

The interior of Brown College has maintained its function and feeling, due to its continued use as a residence hall. The service core is located in the inset central mass of the building and contains stairwells on the outside, a bank of elevators in the middle, and restrooms, as well as a vestibule on the north end. Today, the vestibule contains furniture to facilitate studying and meetings. The east and west sections of the building contain dormitory rooms along the perimeter, lined with interior hallways. Each floor contains 12 double rooms, one single room, and one suite (consisting of a double room with ensuite bathroom). In total, Brown College contains 112 dorm rooms.

The ground floor contains public spaces and an apartment for the resident advisor (RA) (Photos 20-23). The apartment contains living room, dining room, kitchen spaces, as well as two bedrooms and two full bathrooms. Originally, the east side of the ground floor contained four "date/study rooms" and the RA apartment, while the west side was entirely

devoted to two large lounges, one on either side of the central entry corridor and open to that hallway. The southernmost of these lounges also opened to the vestibule that leads to the Commons/Health Center (Figure 8 and Photos 22). The only change on the first floor is the combination of the four original study/date rooms in the southwest corner to create a single breakroom space; study vestibules remain on the second through eighth floors (Photo 29).

The residential second through eighth floors are unchanged except for the restrooms, which were originally designated for women only but now have been subdivided into separate men's and women's spaces. This alteration did not change the original room layout plan or circulation patterns (Figure 13). Stairways, elevators, major corridors, and common spaces remain in their original locations throughout the building (Photos 25-26).

The basement still includes the original storage, laundry, and study spaces, although they now serve different functions. Although most interior finishes throughout Brown College have been updated over time, ca. 1960s half-walls continue to divide some common spaces on the first floor. These walls are clad in exposed red brick laid in a Flemish bond and are complete with historic concrete baseboards. Flooring, walls, ceilings, and trim finishes on the first floor were updated in the 2000s. The second through eighth floor finishes also largely date to the 2000s and include exposed concrete floors, rubber baseboards, drywall walls, and dropped acoustic-tile ceilings (Photos 25-26 and 28).

Brown College Commons

The Commons/Health Center connects to the residential tower via a hyphen with glazed walls. The Commons/Health Center is a simple brick rectangle with a flat roof; original building materials include mosaic tile transom panels above each window and herringbone brick spandrel panels below. Entryways are sheltered by thin canopies supported by cruciform columns to the sidewalk or tie rods extending back to the building.

Exterior

Brown College Commons, now the Morton L. Rich Health Center, is a one-story, flat-roofed, steel-reinforced concrete-frame building with a brick veneer; it sits on a concrete grade beam (Photo 16). The primary elevation faces south onto North Servery Road. The brick cladding repeats the Flemish bond pattern with intermediate coursing, as found on the entry wall and residential tower. The Commons/Health Center is connected to the tower via an enclosed one-story steel and glass hyphen on the north (rear) elevation, now closed (Figure 15). In 2017, when Brown College was renovated, the hyphen was converted into a computer room for Brown College, and the ground-floor connection was walled off (Figure 18). The Commons was also connected to Brown College via a tunnel in the basement (Photo 23), which is extant and today functions as a maintainence shaft between the residential hall and health center (Figure 19).

North elevation

The north (rear) elevation forms the southern boundary of the interior entry courtyard for the tower. This elevation features three window units; in each, a single plate-glass window rests above a pair of small, operable, side-by-side horizontal rectangular lites; a mosaic tile transom fills the space above the window to the top of the wall; and a brick herringbone spandrel below the window completes the composition. One of these window units is located on the east side of this elevation; to the west, a former double entry door was sensitively converted to a paired window in this same design when the building became the health clinic. The flat concrete entry canopy above the converted window remains; it is supported by the same steel cruciform columns found on the east elevation and on the residential tower's entry canopy and covered walkway. The brick wall enclosing the courtyard terminates into this elevation; to the east of that wall (outside the courtyard), an areaway with concrete cheekwalls and steps leads to the basement below the Commons/Health Center. Wide raised planting beds filled with boxwood shrubs span from the areaway to the

courtyard wall and wrap the northeast corner of the building, terminating in the concrete ramp on the east elevation (Photo 15).

East elevation

The east elevation has a single metal egress door beneath a flat metal canopy connected to the wall with cables. A small concrete ramp with a metal handrail is wide enough to serve as a loading drive. A narrow raised planting bed (now empty) continues along the east elevation from the concrete ramp just short of the southeast corner of the building (Photos 14-15).

South elevation

The south façade has nine bays composed in an asymmetrical A-B-C-B-B-B-B-B-A pattern with Flemish bond brick coursing in the A bays; the western end run of brick is considerably shorter than the eastern one (Photo 16). The second (B) bay has a floor-to-ceiling window composition similar to that the windows on the north elevation. The entry is in in the third (C) bay. Three steps lead to a low porch covered with a flat concrete canopy supported by two steel cruciform columns. The two entry doors are aluminum framed with a single lite in each door; these are flanked by single-lite sidelights. Above the canopy, a large transom is infilled with mosaic tile. Five more of these (B) window unit bays are located to the east of the entry door.

West elevation

The west elevation faces the residential quad and continues the Flemish bond brickwork found elsewhere. Ten windows on this elevation are quite narrow but otherwise feature the same ground-to-roof composition as those found on the south elevation (Photo 13). This elevation is also asymmetrical, with the brick wall north of the bank of windows being shorter than the wall plane to the south of the windows.

Interior

The Brown Commons originally contained a large open dining hall with a semi-enclosed kitchen, dishwashing room, storage room, and staircase to the basement on the south end. A private dining/conference room, a library/meeting room, kitchenette, and another staircase to the basement were located on the north end of the building. Those north spaces were separated from the dining hall by a corridor, with two egress doors: one to the west quad and the other to the Brown courtyard. Walls were clad in plaster or Formica walnut woodgrain paneling. Sometime before 2003, the north meeting rooms were combined into a single space, and and the kitchen was more fully enclosed with double doors on either side of the service counter.

The basement was largely open space, with the exception of a mechanical room near the center of the east wall and small rooms in the southeast corner for the use of employees: a staff dining room, dressing room, two restrooms, and two storage rooms. Sometime prior to 2003, the basement was further subdivided into large and small rooms of various shapes and sizes.

In 2003, Ray + Hollington Architects oversaw the conversion of the Commons building from a dining hall to a student health and wellness center. The connection to the hyphen leading to the residential tower was closed at that time. The tunnel connection in the basement was retained (and remains extant, now as a maintenance shaft). The basement plan was largely unchanged. On the ground floor, existing interior walls were demolished and the window and door on the north elevation were closed off on the interior, although the exterior window and door units in that location remain in their original configuration.

The new floor plan created 15 primary rooms within this building. The former meeting room space on the north end was divided into offices for the medical director and assistant director, two consultation rooms, and an educational resources center. The former corridor space adjacent to the hyphen was turned into a multipurpose room, and the remainder of that corridor repurposed as the lobby. A pair of single restrooms and a reception/waiting room are located to the north of the lobby. A new corridor circulates around a central nurses' station, three single restrooms, and a custodian's room, all along the spine of the building. Around the perimeter, three medical offices and a workroom line one wall, with a triage/immunization room, four examination rooms, and a storage room on the opposite elevation. The south end of the building contains service spaces: electrical, telephone, and computer equipment rooms, and sterilizing/laundry facilities. HVAC systems were updated in the Health Center in 2011 by James Ray Architects and the Collaborative Engineering Group; otherwise, the interior remains the same.

Brown House

Brown House was designed by Albert E. Shepperd at the same time as the residential college and Commons dining hall. It is located to the west of the Commons, across the street from the President's House. Brown House is a two-story red-brick masonry building in the International Style, with an irregular plan, surrounded on three sides by a high brick wall and wood fence. The original carport on the west side of the building has been enclosed to create a two-car garage with modern metal roll-up door. Both the house and the garage have flat roofs lined with modern sheet-metal gutters and downspouts.

Front (south) elevation

The main entry door is located in the center of the front façade and is inset beneath a flat plane of brick laid entirely in running bond (Photo 29). A singular window centered above the door retains its historic metal casement windows with three horizontal panes stacked vertically in each of two side-hinged sashes. Brick planters flank the front steps, which are executed in matching brick. The running bond brick extends seamlessly on the first floor into masonry walls that enclose portions of the yard. A metal gate provides access to the small side yard next to the carport. Two other wall planes are south-facing: to the left of the front door, a 19'-wide wall is set back nearly nine feet behind the front façade; to the right of the front door, a 3.5'-wide wall is set back 16.5'. Two windows, similar to the one over the front door, are symmetrically placed in the wider of the two secondary south walls.

East elevation

This elevation is divided equally between the mass of the primary front façade and the secondary mass set back on the right side. The primary mass contains two second-story casement windows, each with four horizontal lites on each side, centered above a french door. A rectangular brick chimney with cap bisects the secondary wall.

West elevation

The west elevation features a two vertical ribbons of square windows in the mass of the primary front façade and a horizontal ribbon of paired windows in the secondary mass.

North elevation

This elevation is symmetrical, with six casement windows on the second floor; one casement window on the first floor is aligned directly under the outer second-floor window. On the first floor, two sliding glass doors provide access to the yard. These are sheltered with a flat canopy supported by the same slender steel cruciform columns used for the Brown residential tower. A terrace, patio, and play yard are on this side of the house.

Interior

The first floor contains a kitchen with breakfast area, a combination living room/dining room, and a first-floor study that opens to the side yard. A laundry room and half bath are off the foyer. The breakfast area and dining room both open to a patio and play yard. The living room opens to a terrace. The second floor contains a master suite, plus three additional bedrooms and a second full bathroom.

Integrity

Location: Brown College has not been moved from its original site at Rice University.

Design: The maintenance of the building's original form, despite alterations and the maintenance of its exterior materials and interior layout, contribute to its integrity of design. The former Brown Commons, now the Morton L. Rich Health and Wellness Center, serves a different function, but the exterior of the building has not been altered. Additionally, even though the aboveground historic hyphen is no longer used to connect the two buildings, the exterior of the hyphen has not been changed and the two buildings are still connected at the basement level. In 2002, Rice University constructed a new 4-story commons building for Brown College that connects at the corner of the nominated building's north elevation via a four-story circular breezeway of red and blue brick (Photo 27). From the primary (east) elevation, however, Brown College still reads as a standalone building (Photo 1). The nature and location of the breezeway connection at the tower's rear corner and angled siting of the 2002 building significantly lessen the impacts to integrity of design and setting. Brown House retains excellent integrity, including its original metal casement windows.

Setting: The green space and spatial setting of Brown College, including its landscaped courtyard, has been maintained by Rice University. The courtyard retains paving, some ornamental plantings, and enclosing brick wall as designed in 1965. Similarly, Brown House retains its original setting. The surface parking lot on the Brown College site retains its original configuration and has not been expanded.

Materials: Brown College and Brown House have maintained all of their major exterior materials, with one exception: the wood privacy fence now enclosing the Brown House yard has been updated. The service life of a well-maintained wooden privacy fence is 15-20 years in Houston's humid climate.

Workmanship: Mid-century architecture typically utilized machine-made, standardized materials meant to give a unified, cohesive aesthetic; Brown College and Brown House conform to this practice.

Feeling: Brown College's exterior materials, form, and design, taken together, continue to convey a mid-century residential college building in the Modern/International Style. Together with Brown House, Brown College continues to convey the residential college system instituted by Rice University in the 1950s.

Association: Rice University remains a four-year liberal arts university, and Brown College continues to function as a residential college.

Statement of Significance

Opened in 1965, Rice University's Margarett Root Brown College (named for its benefactor) is a residential college originally built to house the influx of women pursuing higher education in the 1950s-1960s. Mary Gibbs Jones College, the university's first on-campus housing for women, opened in 1957, and by the mid-1960s, the enrollment of women far exceeded the capacity of that residence hall. Built in response to that issue, Brown College also represents a building typology known as the *university residential tower* or *high-rise dormitory*. A trend of building high-rise residence halls first began in universities outside Texas in the 1950s and 1960s, in response to the spike in college enrollment after World War II and subsequent shortages in student housing. High-rise designs allowed universities to conserve land by building vertically, a departure from traditional residence hall plans. Brown College was the first high-rise dormitory in Houston. Its design in a triple-massed "stout H" plan mitigated noise issues, a frequent problem in later high-rise residence halls. While co-educational today, at its opening Brown College enabled more women to live on campus and access the educational resources and social activities available to their male counterparts. Contemporary additions to Jones College affected its integrity to such a degree that it is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Margarett Root Brown College is now the only building that can convey the history of women's education at Rice University. It is significant under Criterion A in the area of Education and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, both at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1965.

A Note on Terminology: Although the word *dormitory* has been used to describe on-campus living quarters for college and university students, most institutions of higher education use the term *residence hall*, acknowledging the many non-sleeping living spaces and activities that are contained within these buildings. This nomination follows that convention to describe pre-1957 buildings at Rice University and such buildings elsewhere. References to buildings constructed after 1957, when Rice established its first *residential colleges*, use that term except where it is necessary to differentiate between the residence tower and the dining hall.

Development of Rice University

William Marsh Rice (1816-1900) filed a charter with the State of Texas on May 19, 1891, to establish the William M. Rice Institute for Advancement of Literature, Science, and Art. The charter established that instruction would be provided free of charge and was intended specifically for the white population of Texas and particularly for white residents within the city of Houston. Following Rice's death in 1900, his bequest funded the official establishment of Rice Institute in Houston. American mathematician Edgar Odell Lovett (1871-1957) was appointed to be the Institute's first president; he completed several years of research into then-current pedagogical practices and theories before the school officially opened.[1] In September 1912, Rice Institute welcomed its first students with three buildings on campus: the Mechanical Laboratory and Power House (NRHP 2020), Lovett Hall, and one men's residence hall ("Old Dorm," aka South Hall).[2]

Lovett worked with architect Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) to create a distinctive architectural style for Rice Institute. Cram specialized in Gothic ecclesiastical architecture and Collegiate Gothic university architecture. He was the consulting architect at Princeton University from 1907-1929, designing that school's campus master plan, and concurrently led the school of architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from 1914-1921.[3] At Rice, Cram formulated the school's General Plan, which informed architectural decisions for future buildings and included grouping buildings by their function and academic discipline.[4] Important buildings marked the center of the General Plan, and other buildings—grouped by use—were organized in long thin lines to create symmetry and

[1] "A Brief History of Rice University," Rice University, https://www.rice.edu/about#block-aboutbriefhistory.
[2] "Rice Now One of Most Outstanding Universities in the Nation," *Baytown Sun*, May 9, 1963, 3.
[3] "Ralph Adams Cram," Cultural Landscape Foundation (website), https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/ralph-adams-cram.
[4] Stephen Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University, an Architectural Tour* (Princeton Architectural Press: New York, 2001), 21.

alignment. Altogether, the General Plan was intended to create a self-contained campus with landscaping that coordinated with this symmetry and rhythm.[5]

Between the 1930s and early 1940s, plans for additional growth on the Rice campus were stalled by the Great Depression and World War II. Following the end of the war, during the mid-20th century, Rice gradually grew in both physical presence and enrollment. Lovett continued to serve as president until the late 1940s. During the 1940s, architect John Staub, a partner in the firm Staub & Rather, began designing many of the buildings on campus. Staub had been a student of architect Ralph Cram at MIT and continued the architectural style of his professor with his designs for the original Wiess Hall and Fondren Library.[6]

Beginning in the 1950s, Rice moved away from its previous practice of having a single supervising architect lead the campus design. Rice Stadium (1950) was designed by architects Hermon Lloyd & W. B. Morgan with Milton McGinty, all former students. An additional men's residence, Weiss Hall (aka North Hall), was designed by Staub & Rather and completed in 1950.[7] In 1957, Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson designed additions to the North, South, East, and West Halls on what is now known as South Campus; the resulting expanded men's residence halls (with attached "commons" dining halls) were renamed Baker College, Will Rice College, Hanszen College and Wiess College.[8]

Once those renovations were completed, the university established a residential college system, based on the British system at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, as adapted by American Ivy League universities in the 1920.[9] Residential colleges (sometimes called *houses*) usually include establishing a cohort of students who live, dine, and study together under the supervision of an adult faculty member (known as a dean, master, head, or magister) throughout their undergraduate careers. Residential colleges were intended to create intellectual and social connections between residents, and the buildings, including dining halls and meeting rooms for various activities, were sometimes designed as closed quadrangles to further emphasize the insular nature of those student communities.[10] At Rice, in addition to the residence hall and dining hall, each residential college has an separate Magister's House, where a tenured faculty member lives with their family and serves as an advisor and supportive resource for students in the college.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Rice University also commissioned a new landscaping plan, designed by Texas A. & M. University landscape architecture professor Robert F. White, with Fred Klatt and George S. Porcher. That plan recommended abandoning the core principle of Cram's General Plan, which concentrated important buildings in one area of campus, and instead advocated for siting new buildings wherever they could be easily accessible.[11] The landscaping plan also included replacing some of the campus' internal roadways with aggregate-surfaced sidewalks surrounded by meticulous plantings and more trees. The placement of trees also deviated from Cram; White arranged new trees in order to spread out their growth without patterns or rows of aligned canopies, instead creating open spaces rather than linear configurations.[12] In 1962, when the university celebrated its 50th anniversary, enrollment totaled 2,000 students and the campus was comprised of 29 buildings.

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[5] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 8.
[6] "Construction at Rice: The First 100 Years," Facilities and Capital Planning, Rice University, https://facilities.rice.edu/construction/the-first-100-years.
7 "Dedication of Wiess Hall At Rice Planned," *Houston Chronicle*, March 9, 1950.
[8] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 15.
[9] Bruce Webber, "The Residential Collage," *New York Times*, July 29, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/education/edlife/cornellweber3.html. (Note that "Collage" is spelled correctly here.)
[10] Carla Yanni, *Living on Campus*: *An Architectural History of the American Dormitory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 144-146.
[11] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 14.
[12] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 16.

In 1960, Rice Institute changed its name to William Marsh Rice University. Shortly thereafter, the school welcomed a new president, Dr. Kenneth S. Pitzer, previously a physical and theoretical chemist at the University of California, Berkeley.[13] Between 1961 and 1966, Pitzer initiated a five-year expansion plan to increase the school's enrollment, curriculum, and built environment. Before accepting the presidency, Pitzer said he would not begin the job unless the campus was desegregated. In late 1961, the student senate also fought for desgregation, but it was not until 1963 that the university's board of governors began a campaign to change Rice's charter to eliminate racial clauses and allow it to charge tuition.[14] As a result of those changes, Rice University admitted its first Black students: graduate student Raymond Johnson (in 1963) and undergraduate students Jacqueline McCauley and Charles Freeman III (in 1965).[15] Campus housing was not segregated, with Jacqueline McCauley assigned to Jones College and Charles Freeman III assigned to Wiess College.The following year, Theodore M. Henderson was assigned to Will Rice College and Linda Faye Williams was assigned to Jones College. Henderson and Williams were the first Black undergraduate man and woman to graduate from Rice University.[16] Although the university was theoretically integrated, very few Black students were admitted, due to a lack of applications. In an effort to attract more Black students, in 1969 English professor Alan Grob led a recruitment effort, heading a committee that would bear his name.[17] Progress was slow at first, with only two Black undergraduate students matriculating in 1967 and another in 1969, but enrollment steadily increased to 59 Black undergraduate and graduate students by 1972.[18]

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the university added three new residential colleges, including the eight-story Margarett Root Brown College for women, on North Campus, designed by Albert Sheppard, in 1965; the six-story Edgar Odell Lovett College, by WMCA, in 1967; and the 14-story Sid Richardson College, designed by Neuhaus & Taylor, in 1971 (the latter both for men and on South Campus).[19] The university also continued to construct non-residential buildings throughout this period.

In the mid-1980s, the architect Cesar Pelli was commissioned by the University's board of trustees to create a new campus "Master Plan for Growth." With the British architecture firm Stirling & Wilford, Pelli worked to incorporate newly designed buildings within Rice's original General Plan by identifying a shared architectural language among its buildings that new designs could respect. The architects also encouraged the rehabilitation of Rice's older structures.[20]

By the early 2000s, Rice University's enrollment had reached 4,300 students, and the school possessed an endowment of $2.8 billion.[21] In need of a new campus master plan, the university commissioned architectural firm Michael Graves and Associates to design a new plan for the next 50 years. The firm drew inspiration from Cram's General Plan by continuing the vision of the overall campus as "a series of landscaped outdoor rooms," with academic buildings located centrally and existing and new residential colleges creating quadrangles.[22] The firm anticipated future growth by building Martel College and expanding Brown College and Jones College. Around this time, the university also

[13] "Rice Now One of Most Outstanding Universities in the Nation."
[14] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 17.
[15] "A Brief History of Rice University."
[16] "Rice University Task Force on Slavery, Segregation, and Racial Injustice," September 2023, 123-124.
[17] Lynwood Abram, "Alan Grob, award-winning Rice educator," *Houston Chronicle*, September 30, 2007, https://www.chron.com/news/houston-deaths/article/Alan-Grob-award-winning-Rice-educator-1620421.php; Tom Mulvany, "Rice Curricula, Activities Move to More Involvement," *Houston Chronicle*, May 18, 1969.
[18] Samantha Ketterer, "Rice task force finds ugly history of racist attitudes persisted for decades at the university," *Houston Chronicle,* October 13, 2023. "Rice University Task Force on Slavery, Segregation, and Racial Injustice," 156.
[19] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 17.
[20] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 18-19.
[21] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 21.
[22] "Rice University – Campus Master Plan," Project, Michael Graves and Associates, https://michaelgraves.com/project/rice-university-campus-master-plan/.

announced the discontinuation of separate kitchen facilities for each of the residential colleges. Historically, each college was equipped with a small kitchen with a few staff members and a dining hall. As a result, these small kitchens with limited staff could not keep up to the demands of students, who complained that there was not enough quality food. By combining the facilities and staff of two or more colleges, each servery could produce more food of higher quality. The North Servery and South Servery were the first serveries built during this time. Two more serveries would open in 2009 and 2010 with the construction of West Servery and the Abe and Annie Seibel Servery respectively.[23]

Between 2004-2024, the university continued to expand, both locally and internationally. Seven new buildings were added during this time and the university fostered research relationships globally. The 2022-2023 school year welcomed more than 8,000 enrolled students representing more than 60 countries, and 54 percent of the 2026 graduating class identified as a minority.[24]

Women's Education and Housing at Rice

Rice constructed its first residential college for women as part of the 1950s building campaign. Female students had been admitted to Rice University from its founding, but prior to the opening of Mary Gibbs Jones College, young women were expected to live either at home, with families associated with the university, at boarding houses, or in the off-campus Banks Street Apartment complex. Before 1957, the University restricted women students' access to campus and required them to vacate the grounds by 5:00 p.m. Women students also were subject to a strict dress code, which remained in place after women were able to live on campus. As a result, women students were not fully integrated into campus life before Jones College opened in 1957.[25]

In 1954, Rice University president William Houston created the Committee on Student Housing to decide whether a residential college system would be feasible and, if so, to begin planning for that system.[26] The committee investigated the residential college systems in use at other universities, including Yale and CalTech, as models as they designed a system that would be suitable for Rice University campus and cultural needs.[27] The residential college system randomly places students in a residence hall for their entire undergraduate career; students become part of a community by living together and strengthening social bonds through social events presented by the residential colleges, and they can more easily access resources for academic enrichment.[28]

Female student housing was not immediately considered when the Committee was initially established, due to the need to select a suitable location for women on the Rice campus. At that time, female students were organized socially into literary societies, which functioned like sororities, and as a result, the residential college system was considered unnecessary for young women. Additionally, some Committee members argued that having a single college dormitory for women would negate inter-college competition and would unnecessarily restrict the number of women students.[29]

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[23] Garrett Pirretti, "Servin' up serveries," *the Rice Thresher*, October 8, 2024, https://www.ricethresher.org/article/2024/10/servin-up-serveries#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWhen%20I%20first%20joined%20Housing,2009%20and%202010%2C%20respectively.%E2%80%9D; "Rice's Food (R)evolution," *Rice Magazine* (Summer 2017), https://magazine.rice.edu/summer-2017/rices-food-revolution#:~:text=The%20town%20halls%20were%20ultimately,the%20equipment%2C%E2%80%9D%20Elkhouri%20said.

[24] "A Brief History of Rice University."

[25] Rice University, "Gender/Sex," *Between Decisions*, https://digitalprojects.rice.edu/wrc/between-decisions/exhibits/show/between-decisions/gender-sex; Fox, *Rice University: The Campus Guide*, 158.

[26] Rice University Centennial Celebration Committee, *The History of Student Life At Rice University: A Series of Papers*, (Houston, Texas: Rice University), 1990, 91.

[27] Rice University, "College System Creation." *Between Decisions*, https://digitalprojects.rice.edu/wrc/between-decisions/exhibits/show/between-decisions/gender-sex/college-system.

[28] "Dormitories for Women Big News of Rice Home-Coming," *Houston Chronicle*, October 26, 1954, 30.

[29] Rice University Centennial Celebration Committee, *The History of Student Life At Rice University: A Series of Papers*, 91.

While building a women's residential college was not the Committee's priority, the female members (students Catherine Hill and Martha Harris and staff members Sarah Lane and Clara Kotch) advocated for women's housing on campus.[30]

In 1955, the Houston Endowment, a philanthropic trust fund for charitable and educational purposes, donated $1 million for the construction of Mary Gibbs Jones College, named for one of the Endowment's founders. The Houston Endowment was founded by philanthropists Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones in September 1937.[31] According to George R. Brown, chairman of the Rice University board of trustees, the University had been "trying to obtain the money for the women's college since the school was founded." Houston Endowment's donation made it possible to build a residential college for women.[32]

Jones College, the first women's residential college at Rice University, was constructed on North Campus in 1955-1957, just west of the future site of Brown College. Jones College was designed by architects Lloyd & Morgan, in a Modern style with a nod to Venetian and Medieval historic influences and materials (brick, columns, and mosaic tile) that reference the university's established architectural language.[33] Jones College consisted of two four-story dormitory buildings (Jones North and Jones South), parallel to but slightly offset from one another and connected by a one-story dining hall called Jones Central. The four residential colleges for men could house 220 residents each; Jones College had a total capacity of 210 students.[34]

The construction of Mary Gibbs Jones College provided on-campus housing for women at Rice University for the first time. The college was designed to be the "finest college dormitory arrangement in the United States," according to architect Hermon Lloyd.[35] Once Jones College opened its doors to women students and the residential college system was in place, the literary societies began to decline.[36] In 2001-2002, the one-story "Jones Central" dining hall was demolished and replaced by a four-story building, Jones Commons, which combines a dining hall on the first floor with additional residential space on Floors 2-4. Due to the scale and massing of Jones Commons, and its disruption of the space between Jones North and Jones South and overall setting of the residential college as a whole, Mary Gibbs Jones College was determined by the National Park Service to be ineligible for individual listing on the National Register in 2025.

Today, approximately 8,500 students are enrolled at Rice University and the student population is 55% male and 45% female.[37] About 70% of undergraduate students live in on-campus housing, and all of the 11 current residential colleges are sex- and gender-neutral.[38]

Margarett Root Brown College

Higher education for women was first offered in the United States in the 1830s, but the presence of women on most coeducational college and university campuses was more tolerated than encouraged before World War II. Women

[30] Rice University, "College System Creation," *Between Decisions*; Rice University Centennial Celebration Committee, Michael Raphael, Patricia Summerlin Martin, and Colin Delany, *The History of Student Life At Rice University: A Series of Papers*, 91.
[31] "Our History," About, Houston Endowment, https://www.houstonendowment.org/about/history/.
[32] Rice University, "College System Creation.".
[33] Charlotte Millis, "Comfort, Beauty Teamed in New Dormitory Decor," *Houston Chronicle*, September 15, 1957, 97.
[34] "Rice Now One of Most Outstanding Universities in the Nation."
[35] "Jesse Jones Gives Rice $1,000,000," *Houston Chronicle*, November 17, 1955, 1.
[36] Rice University, "Gender/Sex," *Between Decisions*.
[37] "Student Demographics," Rice University website, https://oie.rice.edu/IR-reporting/student-enrollment.
[38] "Residential Colleges," Rice University website, https://ga.rice.edu/undergraduate-students/student-services-organizations/life/.

often were not allowed access to all parts of campus but were instead restricted to women-only spaces. Women's residences were expected to be "domestic" and "homey," prevent unchaperoned visitors, and enable strict monitoring.[39] The number of women attending college, which had continued to grow throughout the first half of the 20th century, jumped by more than 50% from 1958 to 1963.[40] By the 1970s, larger residence halls began to be designed to accommodate both men and women in the same building, although still separated by floor or wing.[41]

By the 1960s, Rice University's women's enrollment had outgrown Jones College's capacity. In the 1963-1964 school year, 82 female students had to be housed at the nearby Texas Woman's University (TWU) Houston campus dormitory to make way for the incoming freshman who did not live in Houston.[42] Rice University considered living quarters for women to be among its "most critical shortages."[43] At one point, the number of Rice students living at TWU became a problem for that school, so another women's college on the Rice campus was desperately needed. [44] In August 1963, Rice University president Pitzer announced that George and Alice Brown had made a $1 million gift from the Brown Foundation to fund construction of a new women's residential college, in memory of their sister-in-law, Margarett Root Brown. The new building was intended to double the university's capacity to house women on campus and eliminate the need for off-campus housing.[45]

Albert E. Sheppard, the chief architect of the family's construction company, Brown & Root, was commissioned to design the building. Sheppard was both inspired by and respectful of Rice's existing architectural language, but he did not mimic the historic architectural styles of the original campus. [46] Instead, direct inspiration for the building's design can be found in neighboring Mary Gibbs Jones College (1955-1957), and together the two residential colleges' shared design elements created a visual continuity in the northeastern section of campus.[47] Sheppard's nods to Jones College included placing Brown College's eight-story tower on a cantilevered base, primarily comprised of glazing supported by cylindrical columns with ceramic tile exteriors, and designing the seven upper levels of Brown College with evenly spaced fenestration separated by thin columnar supports/mullions and concrete canopies. The buildings were differentiated by material choices: on Jones College, the mullions are aluminum, while on Brown College they are made of concrete; and Brown College employs basket-weave red brick spandrels, in contrast to the Georgia Etowah pink marble spandrel panels on Jones College.[48]

Sheppard also introduced new design concepts to the Rice University campus. At its completion, the eight-story Brown College was the tallest building on campus, although the tallest structure was still the smokestack for the Power House, which was designed to look like a bell tower and known as The Campanile.[49] Sheppard's decision to build such a tall residential hall reportedly reflected a desire to minimize the building's footprint and "conserve the park-like character

[39] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 10, 116.
[40] Judith H. Torche, "The Development of American Higher Education for Women," *Educational Horizons* 44, no. 1 (1965): 22, http://www.jstor,org/stable/42925615.
[41] Yanni, *Living on Campus,* 167-171.
[42] Betty MacNabb, "26 Co-Eds at Rice To Find Life Just a Trifle Unsettling," *Houston Post*, September 8, 1964, 30; "History and Traditions," Brown College, Rice University, https://www.browncollege.org/history. The main campus of Texas Woman's University is in Denton, Texas, just west of Dallas.
[43] "Rice Given $1 Million."
[44] Letter exchange between James W. Bagby and President Pitzer (April 1964), UA 077, Mary Gibbs Jones College Records, Rice University Archives, Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas.
[45] "Rice Given $1 Million."
[46] "Rice Plans High-Rise Dormitory," *Austin American,* October 13, 1963, 60.
[47] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 160.
[48] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 160.
[49] Christopher Dow, "Touch the Sky," *Rice University Magazine* 4 (2010): 38-39, https://issuu.com/riceuniversity/docs/rice_magazine_4/38.

of the university grounds."[50] By building vertically, Sheppard was able to preserve not only more land for the growing university, but also the green spaces that the General Plan desired for all of the residential colleges.[51] Additionally, Brown College's masonry construction was a deliberate design choice to keep with the primarily masonry built environment already established on campus,

In designing Brown College, it was important to conform to Rice's existing architectural themes, but the residential tower needed to also be modern and attractive to prospective students. The building incorporated contemporary features by designing Brown College in a "stout H" or "sandwich cookie" shape, with elevators and service facilities located within its central mass; placing all of the dormitory rooms within the outer masses was intended to reduce noise pollution within the building. The tower also included communal and recreational spaces.[52] The basement originally contained laundry facilities and a "luggage room" for storing off-season clothing.[53] The Brown College Commons, constructed at the same time and internally connected to the residence tower, served as a dining hall for Brown residents, who could easily access that dining space without having to walk outdoors. The one-story Commons building employed the same materials as the tower, including windows, basket-weave red-brick spandrels, and masonry exterior.

History professor F. E. Vandiver was appointed the first magister of Brown College in 1964.[54] The residential college opened the following year, and 168 women resided at Brown College during 1965-1966.[55] Mrs. C. M. Morrow was the college's first "housemother" (a live-in chaperone and residence manager).[56]

The majority of residential colleges on Rice University's campus became co-ed in 1971, but Brown College remained a women-only building until 1987.[57] Brown was originally designed with one large communal bathroom, containing four toilet stalls and four shower stalls, on each residential floor. After the building began housing women and men in 1987, the bathrooms were designated single-sex on alternating floors. Students soon tired of having to go to other floors to use the restroom and began holding secret ballots on each floor to determine whether that floor's restroom would be unisex; if any one person voted no, the restroom would remain single-sex. In every ballot, the students voted unanimously for unisex bathrooms. That informal arrangement continued for seven years before university officials, responding to parental concerns, outlawed unisex restrooms.[58] In 1994, the restrooms were remodeled to create separate men's and women's facilities on each floor. An additional Residential Associate (RA) apartment was created on the eighth floor by combining a suite and a single room.[59]

An addition to Brown College and a new standalone (but associated) building were constructed in 2002, as part of a new plan for the North Campus by PGAL Architects and Michael Graves Associates. The construction of the new Martel College residential building and additions to Brown and Jones Colleges in the North Campus area were designed to enhance students' sense of community within the residential portion of campus by arranging the buildings, their common spaces, and covered passageways around interconnected outdoor quadrangles. The quads are

[50] "Rice Plans High-Rise Dormitory."
[51] "General Plan of Rice Institute" (April 24, 1912), Drawer 9, Item 21, Rice University architectural drawings, oversize manuscript material, maps and photographs collection, Rice University Archives, Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas.
[52] "New Building at Rice to be Eight Stories," *Baytown Sun*, October 11, 1963, 5.
[53] Sara Meredith, "Dorm Life on the Rise," *Houston Post,* September 17, 1965, 19.
[54] "F. E. Vandiver Brown College First Master," *Houston Chronicle*, August 23, 1964, 28.
[55] Patricia Shelton, "High Rise Dorm at Rice Furnished Artistically: Dedication is Sunday," *Houston Chronicle*, October 1, 1965, 28.
[56] Meredith, "Dorm Life on the Rise."
[57] "History and Traditions," Brown College, Rice University.
[58] "Unisex Bathrooms at Rice University Protested," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 18, 1993, 26.
[59] "History and Traditions," Brown College, Rice University.

comfortably scaled for recreational activities and continue the pattern of buildings and open space established in the 1910 Cram General Plan for the campus. The new buildings on the North Campus relate to the scale, materials, and patterns of the original campus without replicating the specific archiectural style.[60]

Margarett Root Brown and the Brown Foundation

Texas native Margarett Root Brown (1895-1963) attended Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, from 1912-1915, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in art and literature. Margarett was born with a respiratory condition that limited her from certain activities. While attending Southwestern University, Margarett was noted for her illustrations in the university's yearbook and was active in the art department. Upon graduating, Margarett moved to Belton, Texas, to become a teacher.[61] While teaching there, Margarett met and married businessman Herman Brown of Belton in 1917. She was prominent in the communities where she lived, participating in various activities and literary groups.

Herman Brown founded a road-paving and construction business that he operated out of Austin, Texas, until the late 1940s.[62] Brown formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, Dan Root, in 1919 when Root invested $20,000 into the company. Eventually, the business evolved into what would become the international construction firm of Brown & Root.

The Brown family moved to the affluent River Oaks neighborhood in Houston in 1947.[63] Margarett became a philanthropist and supporter of education and the arts. Prior to her death, she served on the boards of directors of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts and Houston Foundation for Ballet and was an active supporter of the Houston Symphony Orchestra.[64] Margarett and Herman Brown, along with their business partners George (Herman's brother) and Alice Brown, jointly established the nonprofit Brown Foundation in 1951, pooling funds from the construction firm and other profitable ventures in the oil industry. Today, the Brown Foundation focuses on funding public arts, education, and medical efforts across the United States, particularly within Texas.[65] Herman Brown was the president of Brown & Root, Inc., at the time of his death in late 1962, leaving an estate worth an estimated $75-100 million.[66] Margarett Root Brown died only a few months later on January 25, 1963.[67] Upon her death, their estate was bequeathed to the Brown Foundation.[68] After funding the construction of the women's residential college at Rice University named for Margarett, in honor of her contributions to the Houston community, the Brown Foundation continued to support Rice University. Margarett's sister-in-law, Alice Brown, who actively participated in furnishing and decorating the Brown College interiors when the residential tower was constructed, continued to financially support Brown College through the Brown Foundation until her death in 1984.[69]

[60] Tom Rowe and Kathy Dy, "Rice University – Martel, Brown & Jones Colleges, Houston, Texas," Michael Graves Firm, https://michaelgraves.com/project/rice-university-martel-brown-jones-colleges/.
[61] Fran Dressman, "Brown, Margarett Root," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, May 21, 2019, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/brown-margarett-root.
[62] Dressman, "Brown, Margarett Root."
[63] Dressman, "Brown, Margarett Root."
[64] "$1 Million Gift Buys Rice Dorm," *Houston Chronicle*, August 4 1963, 1.
[65] Katherine B. Dobelman, "Brown Foundation," *Handbook of Texas Online,* Texas State Historical Association, August 11, 2016, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/brown-foundation.
[66] "Rice Given $1 Million," *San Angelo Standard Times*, August 4, 1963, 9. "$1 Million Gift Buys Rice Dorm."
[67] "Rice Given $1 Million."
[68] Dobelman, "Brown Foundation."
[69] "History and Traditions," Brown College, Rice University.

High-Rise Residence Halls

The designs of college and university residence halls in the United States have evolved over three centuries, reflecting changing societal values, student expectations, and administrative aspirations for the campuses on which they are located. The most common plan for dormitories is the double-loaded corridor, with rooms generally organized along a long central hallway.[70] The massing of a residence hall often was configured in one of the following typologies:[71]

- Rectangular block: A single rectangle-shaped building or several rectangular buildings in a row
- Three-sided quadrangle: A U-shaped (usually street-facing) building
- Open quadrangle: Four buildings arranged in a rectangular configuration with space between
- Closed quadrangle: A single square or rectangled-shaped building that completely surrounds a courtyard

A fifth massing option, high-rise dormitories debuted in the 1950s but only enjoyed a few decades of popularity before colleges and universities reverted to the lower-rise quadrangle approachin the mid-1970s. However, by the 1990s, when universities began to outsource student housing (along with other traditional university functions), privately owned and/or operated apartment buildings once again introduced high-rise living for students—this time, more successfully.

Early "Skyscraper Residence Halls" (1950-1970)

Following World War II, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the GI Bill, enabled eligible veterans to receive financial assistance for housing, unemployment insurance, and education as they returned to civilian life. (Due to laws that permitted discrimination on the basis of race and gender, the bill primarily benefited white men). The GI Bill increased enrollment in universities, colleges, and trade schools, to the point that institutions of higher education across the country struggled to accommodate students in both residential and classroom space. The modern high-rise dormitory developed as an economical and efficient way to meet this increased demand for on-campus housing.[72]

University administrators in the United States formed the Association for College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO) in 1949. That year, a meeting of that organization featured James W. Hammond with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), an architecture and engineering firm that had garnered a reputation for designing innovative high-rise commercial buildings. Hammond pitched the ability of architects (undoubtedly like his own firm) to address the shortage in student housing created by the G. I. Bill. At an ACUHO workshop the following year, John Merrill, a partner at SOM, further explained the cost efficiencies of tall buildings, noting that they were less expensive to build, even with the added cost of elevators, because a foundation, utilities, and basement were required irregardless of how many stories were added above.[73] In addition, by that time, a building's height could be unlimited, thanks to the technological advances in construction that previously had been utilized primarily for commercial buildings. Through these ongoing conversations between the ACUHO and SOM, the *skyscraper residence hall* (or *high-rise dormitory*) was born.[74]

The first high-rise residential hall, Terry Hall, opened in 1953 on the University of Washington campus in Seattle. Designed in the Modern International Style, it was followed in 1957 by Lander Hall. (In 2014, both buildings were torn down and rebuilt).[75] The River Dormitories (Campbell, Frelinghuysen, and Hardenbergh Halls) at Rutgers

[70] Yanni, *Living on Campus,* 3-4, 9-12.
[71] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 9-12, 16-22.
[72] Yanni, *Living on Campus,* 206.
[73] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 154.
[74] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 153.
[75] "Timeline," Housing & Food Services, University of Washington, https://hfs.uw.edu/About/Timeline.

University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, were constructed during the same period and completed in 1956. At Rutgers, architects attempted to replicate the residential college approach multiple times within a single high-rise, with each "house," including an apartment for a supervising adult, on a separate floor. [76]

Despite architects' apparent enthusiasm for this new design challenge, high-rise residence halls did not become prevalent right away. In fact, few universities were able to fund new housing, even with the relatively lower cost of high-rise options, until the passage of the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963. That legislation allowed the federal government to authorize grants or loans to colleges and universities to construct academic facilities, especially institutions that "urgently needed substantial expansion of the insititution's student enrollment capacity."[77] While the funding did not extend to housing, its application to other parts of the campus allowed colleges and universities to expand their facilities, increase enrollment, and redirect other funds to accommodate the resulting need for more housing.[78]

Transition from High-Rise Dormitories (1970s-1980s)

By the mid-1970s, the construction of student housing had caught up with enrollment, and additional large residential halls were no longer needed. Although their budget-friendly cost and limited land use were still attractive, high-rises posed unique challenges, particularly for student safety. The ability to evacuate the structure in the case of fire was particularly challenging, and several fires—started on purpose or caused by electrical appliances—had resulted in students being trapped or forced to jump from the windows. High-rise fires in the 1960s and 1970s took place at the Ohio State University (resulting in two fatalities), Providence College, Northern Illinois University, and the University of Oklahoma.[79] Parents also raised safety concerns, including the danger of students falling from high floors, particularly after several deaths during the 1970s.[80] Safety standards were still being developed for high-rise residential buildings during that decade.[81]

Beyond these safety issues, both students and administrators increasingly complained about the features of Modern architecture that had seemed progressive and exciting in the 1950s. The "rigid, repetitive" nature of these buildings was thought to hinder the student individuality that had become more important as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s. Where communal living had been valued in the past, students began to advocate for privacy and a less noisy environment.[82] In Texas, housing directors claimed that high-rises were "impersonal and invite destruction" and that "a girl must feel that her dorm is more than a place to sleep."[83] Students were tired of small, often overcrowded living spaces, as well as the strict rules applied to residents, calling high-rise rooms "impersonal, institutional, and boxlike.[84] Low to mid-rise dormitories once again became popular among colleges and universities; architectural styles varied.

[76] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 155-160.
[77] Higher Education Facilities Act, 20 U.S.C. 753 (1963).
[78] Thomas Carlson-Reddig, "High Stakes Decisions: Debating the Future of Aging High-Rise Residence Halls," Little Online, November 8, 2023, https://www.littleonline.com/insights/high-stakes-decisions-debating-the-future-of-aging-high-rise-residence-halls/.
[79] "Dorm Fire Kills Coed, Hurts 14," *San Antonio Evening News*, May 22, 1968, 24; "10-death dorm fire of year ago heightened concerns for safety," *Houston Chronicle*, December 10, 1978, 216; "Dormitory Fire Routs Students," *Dallas Morning News*, May 4, 1968, 16; "Fires set by arsonists injure 27 at University of Oklahoma," *Houston Post*, November 19, 1971, 16.
[80] "Police Tracing Final Steps of Doomed Coed," *San Antonio Express*, October 5, 1974, 3; "Houston woman, 19, dies in Austin hospital," *Houston Chronicle*, December 26, 1977, 75.
[81] Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (Oxford University Press, 1977), 116-117.
[82] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 210-211.
[83] Connie Lunnen, "Coeds Keep Own Hours In Dorms," *Houston Chronicle*, June 17, 1971, 85.
[84] Joan A. Lewis and William E. Sedlacek, "A Comparison of University Residence Halls," Counseling Center, University of Maryland, 2, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED082640.pdf; Beverly Elam, "The Sorority Question: To Pledge Or Not To Pledge," *San Antonio Express*, August 31, 1972, 22.

Some universities continued to apply a Modern architectural style to low-rise dormitories, while other institutions returned to more traditional styles such as Greek Revival and Collegiate Gothic, or simple designs. Importantly, these newer buildings offered plenty of amenities to attract students.[85] Off-campus apartments, which often had the benefit of fewer rules, as well as more space and amenities and a less monotonous appearance, became increasingly appealing to students.[86]

Today, a wide variety of new dormitory designs persist, with Postmodern designs ranging from Ultramodern to contemporary styles that embrace earlier architectural styles.[87] However, across the United States, many private developers are offering off-campus student apartments, which enable students to live near campus while enjoying more freedom and privacy. Sometimes, these apartments take the form of high-rises, especially near universities in cities where existing development does not permit buildings with sprawling footprints. These are sometimes referred to as *dormitowers*.[88]

Architectural Analysis

Early Residence Halls at Rice University

Cram's 1910 General Plan for Rice Institute utilized the open quadrangle concept for the Residential Group Axis. Designed to be a self-contained academic enclave, Rice was ahead of its time in planning for open quadrangles at a time when closed quadrangles were popular at other universities. The Residential Group Axis would contain the first four men's residence halls, as well as a gymnasium and stadium. Cram designed the East, South, and West Halls between 1912-1916, with the intention of creating enough space between the buildings for activities and to allow them to eventually become residential colleges. Cram opted for long, thin buildings, taking advantage of breezes from the southeast that could provide comfort in Houston's swampy climate.[89] Dining facilities were contained in the Institute Commons (1912), connected to East Hall. Cram's landscaping plan created the effect of open quadrangles and defined boundaries for each residential hall. The fourth men's dormitory opened in 1949 and designed to have two open quadrangles. Eventually, in the 1950s, an addition to East Hall (Baker College) was constructed and created a separated lawn space for the residential college. These same separated green spaces were created when new buildings for West Hall (Hanszen College) and South Hall (Will Rice College) were constructed.[90] The updated low, rectangular residential college strucures were consistent with earlier residential buildings; their horizontal massing was a popular design for dormitories at the time.

High-Rise Residence Halls at Rice University

High-rise residential halls were not considered until the 1950s after the idea was first pitched in 1949 during an Association for College and University Housing Officers meeting. Only in the 1960s did high-rise dormitories become increasingly popular. While the vertical massing of Brown College was new for Rice University in 1963, its

[85] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 216-219.
[86] Lewis, "College Living," 60.
[87] Robert Campbell, "Lessons from Cincinnati," *The Boston Globe*, November 18, 2007, https://archive.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2007/11/18/lessons_from_cincinnati/.
[88] Gray Bekurs, "Outsourcing Student Housing in American Community Colleges: Problems and Prospects," *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 31 no. 8 (2007): 626-627. https://doi/org/10.1080/10668920701428402; Thomas Laidley, "The Privatization of College Housing: Poverty, Affordability, and the U.S. Public University," *Housing Policy Debate* 24, no. 4 (2014): 754, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10511482.2013.875053; Richard Simpson, "Talking Tall: Dormitowers, Tall Student Housing as a Re-emerging Trend," *CTBUH Journal* 57, no. 4 (2010): 49, https://global.ctbuh.org/resources/papers/57-Journal2010_IssueIV_Dormitowers.pdf.
[89] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 132-134.
[90] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 135-139.

construction did not disrupt the campus setting, thanks to the use of sympathetic materials. The building was not limited to eight floors for financial reasons, but rather to be sensitive to the overall scale of the campus. Brown College was deliberately placed on the edge of campus, so while still a high-rise, it did not disrupt the campus historic low-rise buildings.[91] Brown College's design was related to the older buildings on campus but executed in a modern architectural style. In designing Brown College, architect Albert E. Sheppard purposely drew inspiration from the first women's dormitory Jones College to create this new residential tower. The alumnium mullions, pink marble, and mosaic columns featured on both buildings separated the two women's dormitories from the men's dormitories and marked an era in modern design on campus.[92] The men's dormitories, at the time, did not have these same colored indicators. Although Brown College represented a new type of residence for Rice and other universities in Texas, its purposeful exterior design and massing reflected the needs and flow of the university. Brown College's H-shape also responded to concerns, noted with double-loaded corridor designs, about noise pollution and the lack of windows.

Brown College was not the only tall residential hall constructed on the Rice campus. The administration was increasingly concerned in the late 1960s that housing would be insufficient for the expected influx of students.[93] Edgar Odell Lovett College (1968) and Sid W. Richardson College (1971, rebuilt in 2021) were also relatively tall buildings, constructed on the edge of the campus just as Brown College was.[94] Although not a high-rise, Lovett College's large massing conflicted with the campus setting that included mostly low-rise buildings, so it was also placed on the edge of campus. While these buildings were Modern in design, Brown and Richardson Colleges did not stray far from the campus's established architectural style. In more recent decades, the residential colleges built or expanded at Rice University have not utilized vertical massing as Brown and Richardson Colleges did. Low-or mid-rise residential halls are more visually compatible with the campus landscape than residential towers.

High-Rise Residence Halls in Houston

As the first high-rise dormitory in Houston, Brown College's design reflected both the increasing presence of women students on campus and the on-campus housing shortage that plagued colleges and universities across the state during the 1960s. During the 1965-1966 school year, approximately 30,000 students were enrolled across the seven institutions of higher education in Houston: Rice University, University of Houston, Texas Southern University, University of St. Thomas, Houston Baptist College (now known as Houston Christian University), South Texas College, and Scared Heart Dominican College (which closed ten years later for financial reasons).[95] Some Houston colleges and universities were challenged to cope with increasing enrollment and limited land area. High-rise buildings were considered inefficient for classroom use, due to the regular, frequent, and sizable flow of student traffic, so the decision to build upward was limited to residential functions.

While high-rise living was the trend across the country, not all Houston universities could justify building a residential tower. Financing a dormitory proved to be an issue among some universities, and newer universities did not have the enrollment numbers to warrant building high-rises. High-rise campus living was announced by several other Houston universities, but not all of these plans came to fruition. For example, Texas Southern University (TSU), then a primarily commuter campus, announced plans for a $3 million residential tower project in 1966 that was never built.[96] The University of St. Thomas also had reported plans for an 11-story dormitory, but as a smaller school and also a

[91] Generally, a high-rise is considered at least eight stories.
[92] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 160.
[93] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 147.
[94] Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University*, 143.
[95] Perez, "On Houston Campuses Millions Spent on New Construction," 18; Antoinette Boykin, "History of Dominican College: A Legacy of Education," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, January 26, 2017, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/brown-margarett-root.
[96] Texas Southern University, "ACT Student Opinion Survey: 1996-2009," The Office of Institutional Research, 2009, https://www.tsu.edu/about/administration/institutional-effectiveness/pdf/surveys/student-opinion-survey/sto2009.pdf.

largely commuter campus, those plans were similarly scrapped.[97] Instead, Philip Johnson, who had designed the original University of St. Thomas campus master plan, and Houston architect Howard Barrelstone opted for a large low-rise dormitory; Guinan Residence Hall was constructed in 1970 and rebuilt in the early 2000s. [98]

The University of Houston planned twin residential towers, Moody Towers, capable of housing a total of 1,200 students.[99] Despite the announcement, actual construction of the dormitories would be contigent on raising enough funds.[100] The University of Houston was fortunate to receive enough individual gifts to build Moody Towers, which were designed by architects Pitts Phelps & White and finished in late 1969. Both residential towers are still in use and continue to serve as housing for university students.[101]

Houston universities also funded high-rise dormitories through grants. In 1968, Texas Woman's University (TWU) had plans to build two 11-story dormitories and applied for funding through the Department of Housing and Urban Development.[102] The only other dormitory at TWU at the time, March Culmore Residence Hall, was overcrowded, but ultimately, the university only needed to build one tower.[103] Both dormitories at TWU were severely damaged during Tropical Storm Allison in 2001 and were later demolished.[104] Today, the TWU Houston campus is limited to one 10-story building (the TWU Institute of Health Sciences) with no student housing.[105]

By 1975, Houston had 12 graduate and undergraduate institutions. Of these, only six offered on-campus housing at that time: Rice University (eight dormitories), University of Houston (six dormitories), Texas Southern University (four dormitories), University of St. Thomas (11 small houses and one residence hall), Houston Christian University (three dormitories and three apartments for upper-class women and married students), and Texas Woman's University Health Science Center at Houston (two dormitories).[106] Currently, Rice University and the University of Houston are the only Houston institutions that still have on-campus residential towers. Rice returned to low to mid-rise dormitory designs for their newer residential colleges, such as Martel, Duncan, and McMurtry Colleges, all built in the early 2000s.[107] The University of Houston largely followed suit, except for one apartment-style building for upperclassmen and graduate students. Built in 2009, University Lofts is a ten-story complex that houses nearly 1000 students.[108]

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[97] "Houston's College Building Boom," *Houston Chronicle*, March 10, 1968, 112; Maurice Bobb, "St. Thomas begins transformation to 'residential' campus," *Houston Chronicle*, September 12, 2002, https://www.chron.com/neighborhood/heights-news/article/st-thomas-begins-transformation-to-residential-2121114.php.

[98] "Work To Start Soon On St. Thomas Dormitory," *Houston Post*, September 21, 1967, 28; "St. Thomas builds for future," *Houston Post*, July 26, 1970, 130.

[99] Donnie Moore, "Dorm Rising: Variety of Buildings Planned by Colleges," *Houston Post*, July 5, 1966, 14.

[100] "UH Dorm Plans Approved," *Houston Post*, March 16, 1965, 2.

[101] "UH Sees Marked Progress," *Houston Post*, March 9, 1969, 149.

[102] "$1.2 Million Set For TWU Dorm By Federal Grant," *Houston Chronicle*, June 29, 1968, 7.

[103] Charlie Evans, "TWU Plans Twin 11-Story Dorms," *Houston Chronicle*, September 21, 1969, 50; "TWU ordered to spend $20 million to fix flaws," *Houston Chronicle*, July 7, 1999, 22.

[104] Alice Adams, "Local conference examines nurses' role during disaster," *Houston Chronicle*, November 4, 2001, 159-161.

[105] Laurie Johnson, "Texas Woman's University Opens New Houston Campus," *Houston Public Media*, November 9, 2006, https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2006/11/09/4016/texas-womans-university-opens-new-houston-campus/.

[106] "Construction at Rice: The First 100 Years;" Jamie Thornton, "The history of UH Housing," *Cooglife,* April 27, 2023, https://cooglife.com/2023/04/the-history-of-uh-housing/; "New Dorms and Student Union at TSU Dedicated," *Houston Post*, October 18, 1954, 6; "New Dorm Opens at TSU Today," *Houston Post*, September 24, 1959, 66; "Student reaction varies," *Houston Chronicle*, June 18, 1967, 147; Susie Greene, "St. Thomas U. 13 Years Old, Growing Fast," *Houston Chronicle*, January 29, 1961, 125; "Major building program underway at St. Thomas," *Houston Post*, February 8, 1970, 145; Moore, "Dorms Rising;" Donnie Moore, "9 Houston Colleges Get Ready for 40,000 Students," *Houston Post*, September 4, 1966, 52.

[107] "Construction at Rice: The First 100 Years."

[108] "University of Houston, University Lofts," Portfolio, Kirksey Architecture, https://www.kirksey.com/portfolio/projects/university-of-houston,-university-lofts.

High-Rise Residence Halls in Texas

The first high-rise residence hall in Texas, the 1957 eight-story Goodall-Wooten dormitory for men (no longer extant), was built just barely off-campus and faced the University of Texas at Austin campus across Guadalupe Street. Erected by Ella N. Wooten, she wanted to build a dormitory in honor of her late husband who served as a physician and civic leader in Austin. He was heavily involved in the university, so she wanted to honor his interests by funding the construction of a dormitory to serve its students.[109] Although a mixed-use development, with businesses on the ground floor, and not on the University of Texas campus, the high-rise dormitory still served the students of the university.[110] The building was vacated in 2018 after being sold to American Campus Communities and was demolished in 2023.[111]

By the mid-1960s, several other Texas universities announced or began construction of high-rise residence halls. Texas Woman's University (TWU) in Denton and the Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) in Nacogdoches also constructed high-rise dormitories in the mid-to-late 1960s. At TWU, Nelda C. Stark Hall, a 21-story residential tower, was dedicated in 1967 and Guinn Hall, a 24-story residential tower, was completed in 1969.[112] Newspaper articles at the time recognized the concrete International Style building as a notable example of the university's growth.[113] SFASU's Gladys E. Steen Hall for women opened in September 1969.[114] According to the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, the multimillion-dollar, 10-story twin-tower structure in East Texas was briefly the tallest building between Shreveport, Louisiana, and Houston. It was designed to house more than 700 female students.[115] In 1966, Texas State College (now Texas State University) in San Marcos began contruction of two dormitories, one of which was a high-rise for male students. That residential tower, known as Jackson Hall, opened in 1967 and is still extant.[116]

In 1967, Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University) in Lubbock opened three high-rise residential halls (Weymouth, Chitwood, and Coleman Halls, all extant) within the Wiggins Complex at the southern edge of campus.[117] Angelo State College (now Angelo State University) in San Angelo also opened twin high-rise dormitories: Concho Hall for men in 1968 and University Hall for women in 1969. These buildings each housed nearly 500 students.[118] University Hall was demolished in 2009, and the site is now a sand volleyball court. Concho Hall was demolished in 2024; the site reportedly will be turned into a research facility.[119]

In Austin, the Dobie Center, a 29-story residential tower for both women and men, opened on the University of Texas campus in 1971. The building was, at that time, privately owned and used as mixed-use residential housing with a first-floor shopping mall.[120] The Dobie Center is extant and has since been acquired by the university.

High-Rise Residence Halls Elsewhere in the United States

[109] "Memorial To Dr. Wooten Is Faith Symbol," *The Austin American*, September 2, 1956, 4.
[110] "Partnership Announced For Construction Firm," *The Austin American*, March 24, 1957, 13.
[111] Corey Smith, "'Hi, How Are You' mural lives on despite building's demolition," *KUTX*, April 17, 2023, https://kutx.org/words-on-music/kut-news/hi-how-are-you-mural-lives-on-despite-buildings-demolition/.
[112] "When In Denton," *Houston Chronicle*, June 13, 1971, 204.
[113] "Texas Woman's University," *Houston Chronicle*, June 28, 1970, 195.
[114] Henry Holcomb, "Starts listed for colleges, universities," *Houston Post*, August 24, 1969.
[115] "New Dormitory at SFA Named for Mrs. Steen," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, March 3, 1966.
[116] "SWT Adds New Dorms," *San Antonio Express*, October 1, 1966, 62.
[117] Ben Blanton, "Campus Life–On the Up," *Houston Post*, August 27, 1967, 16.
[118] Helen Callaway, "Young Angelo State Aims For Top Academic Quality," *Dallas Morning News*, May 18, 1968, 12.
[119] Tom Nurre, "Concho Hall Demolition Underway," *Angelo State University News*, April 3, 2024, https://www.angelo.edu/live/news/19339-concho-hall-demolition-underway.
[120] Kathy Lewis, "College Living: There's a Sauna Downstairs," *Houston Post*, August 15, 1971, 60-62.

Some high-rise dormitories constructed at universities throughout the United States during the same period include:[121]

- Fiterman Hall (1959) – Borough of Manhattan Community College in New York, New York[122]
- Sawyer Hall (1964) – University of Cincinnati, Ohio (no longer extant)[123]
- Sunvilla Tower (1964) – Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri[124]
- Drackett Tower (1965) – Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio[125]
- Livingston Tower (1965) – State University of New York in Albany, New York[126]
- Litchfield Towers (1966) – University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania[127]
- Lincoln and Morrill Towers (1966) – Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio[128]
- Manzanita Hall (1967) – Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona[129]
- Turner Hall (1968) – University of Northern Colorado West Campus in Greeley, Colorado[130]
- Eigenmann Hall (1968) – Indiana University Bloomington in Bloomington, Indiana[131]
- Lawrenson Hall (1973) – University of Northern Colorado West Campus in Greeley, Colorado[132]

Conclusion

Margarett Root Brown College was built to house the influx of women pursuing higher education at Rice University in the 1950s-1960s. Mary Gibbs Jones College, the university's first on-campus housing for women, opened in 1957, and by the mid-1960s, the enrollment of women far exceeded the capacity of that residence hall. Brown College enabled more women to live on campus and access the educational resources and social activities available to their male counterparts. Brown College remained a women's dorm well into the 1980s, after all other residential colleges on Rice's campus had become co-educational. Because the National Park Service has determined that Jones College no longer retains sufficient integrity to qualify for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Margarett Root Brown College is now the only building that can convey the history of women's education at Rice University.

In addition, Brown College continues to convey the history of the short-lived 1960s high-rise residential hall trend. Following World War II, returning service members and women increasingly sought educational opportunities at

[121] Simpson, "Talking Tall;" John Ferrara, *The Dormitories of the Expanded Campus: An Architectural History of Slippery Rock University*, Slippery Rock University Archives, https://sru.libguides.com/buildingshistory/dorms;.
[122] "Fiterman Hall, City University of New York, BMCC," Projects, PEI Cobb Freed & Partners, https://www.pcf-p.com/projects/fiterman-hall-city-university-of-new-york-bmcc/; During the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York City, part of the World Trade Center collapsed onto Fiterman Hall. The Borough of Manhattan Community College tried to salvage the building, but it was eventually demolished and rebuilt in 2012.
[123] Rachel Richardson, "A High-Rise for High Demand," *UC Magazine*, August 10, 2017, https://magazine.uc.edu/editors_picks/recent_features/fallhousing17.html.
[124] "Sunvilla Tower," Campus Map, Missouri State University, last modified November 10, 2021, https://map.missouristate.edu/location.aspx?id=61.
[125] "Drackett Tower," University Libraries, Ohio State University, http://hdl.handle.net/1811/24212.
[126] "Livingston Tower," Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, https://www.skyscrapercenter.com/albany/livingston-tower/12357.
[127] "University of Pittsburgh Litchfield Towers," Projects, DRS Architects, https://www.drsarchitects.com/projects/litchfield-dorm-towers/.
[128] Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 178-183.
[129] Eric Jensen, "Manzanita Hall 2.0: Rebirth of an icon," *ASU News*, September 6, 2013, https://news.asu.edu/content/manzanita-hall-20-rebirth-icon.
[130] "Housing Options," Living on Campus: Residence Halls, University of Northern Colorado, https://www.unco.edu/living-on-campus/housing/residence-halls.aspx.
[131] "History of IU Housing," IU Housing, Indiana University, https://housing.indiana.edu/about/history/index.html.
[132] "Housing Options," University of Northern Colorado.

colleges and universities, creating a shortage of on-campus housing during the 1950s that was eased during the 1960s by the construction of high-rise residential halls. Margarett Root Brown College for women was the first on-campus high-rise residential hall—on Rice's campus and in Houston. Although this building typology had fallen out of favor on university campuses by the mid-1970s, the resurgence of student high-rise apartment living today demonstrates the efficiencies of the tower design. Margarett Root Brown College is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, both at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1965, when the building was completed.

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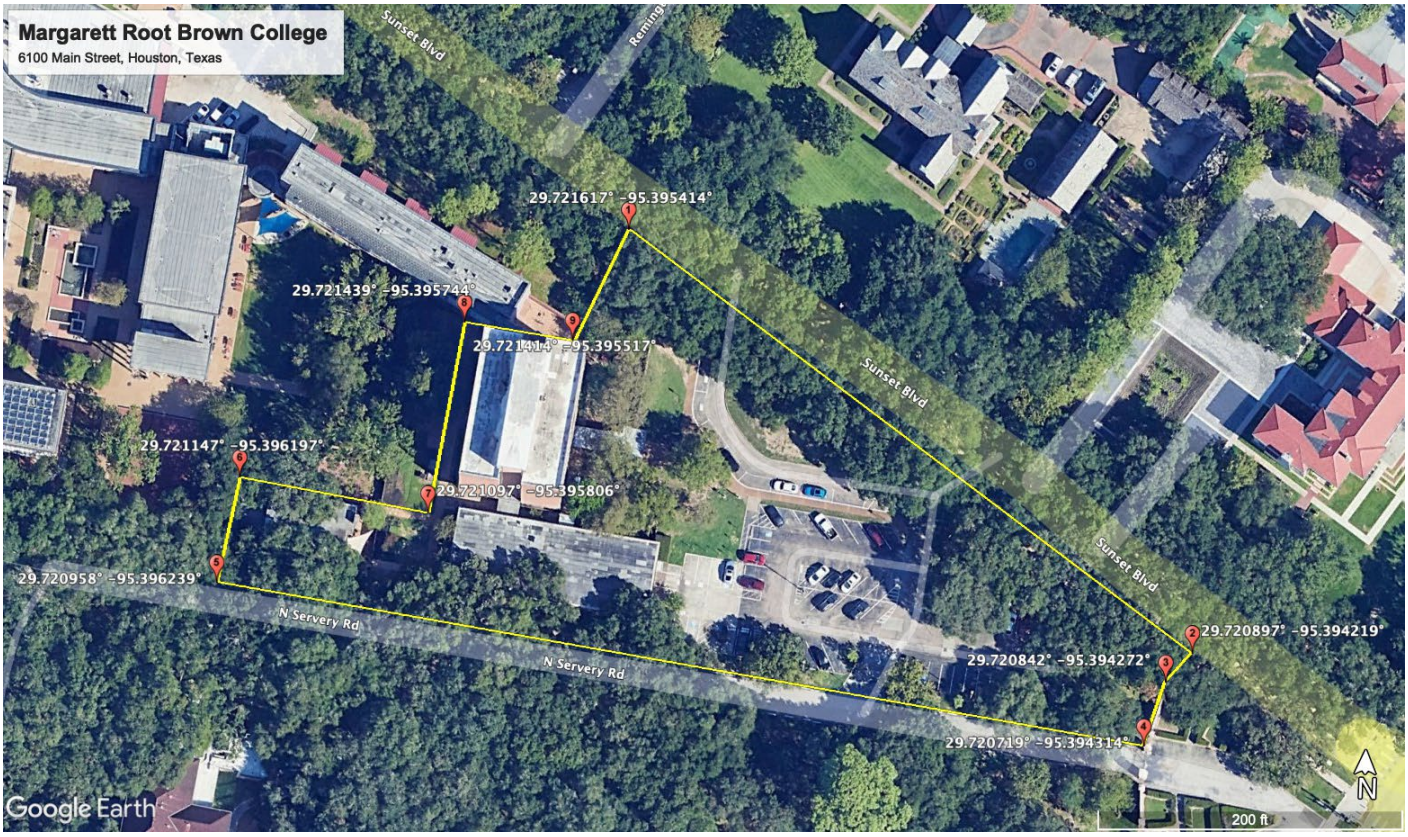
Section 10 – Geographical Data

Margarett Root Brown College, 6100 Main Street, Houston, Harris County, Texas (Google Earth, 2025)



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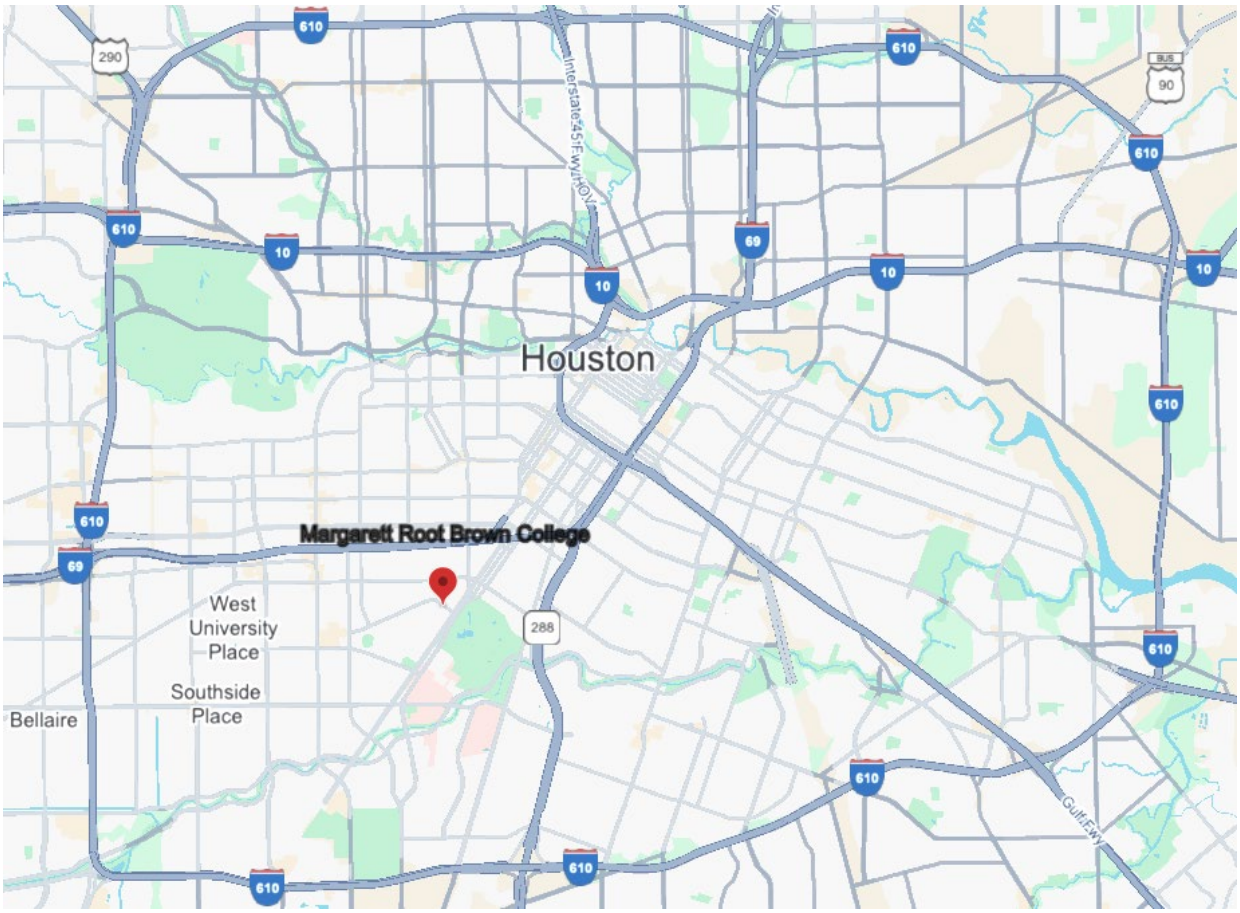
2	29.720897	-95.394219
3	29.720842	-95.394272
4	29.720719	-95.394314
5	29.720958	-95.396239
6	29.721147	-95.396197
7	29.721097	-95.395806
8	29.721439	-95.395744
9	29.721414	-95.395517

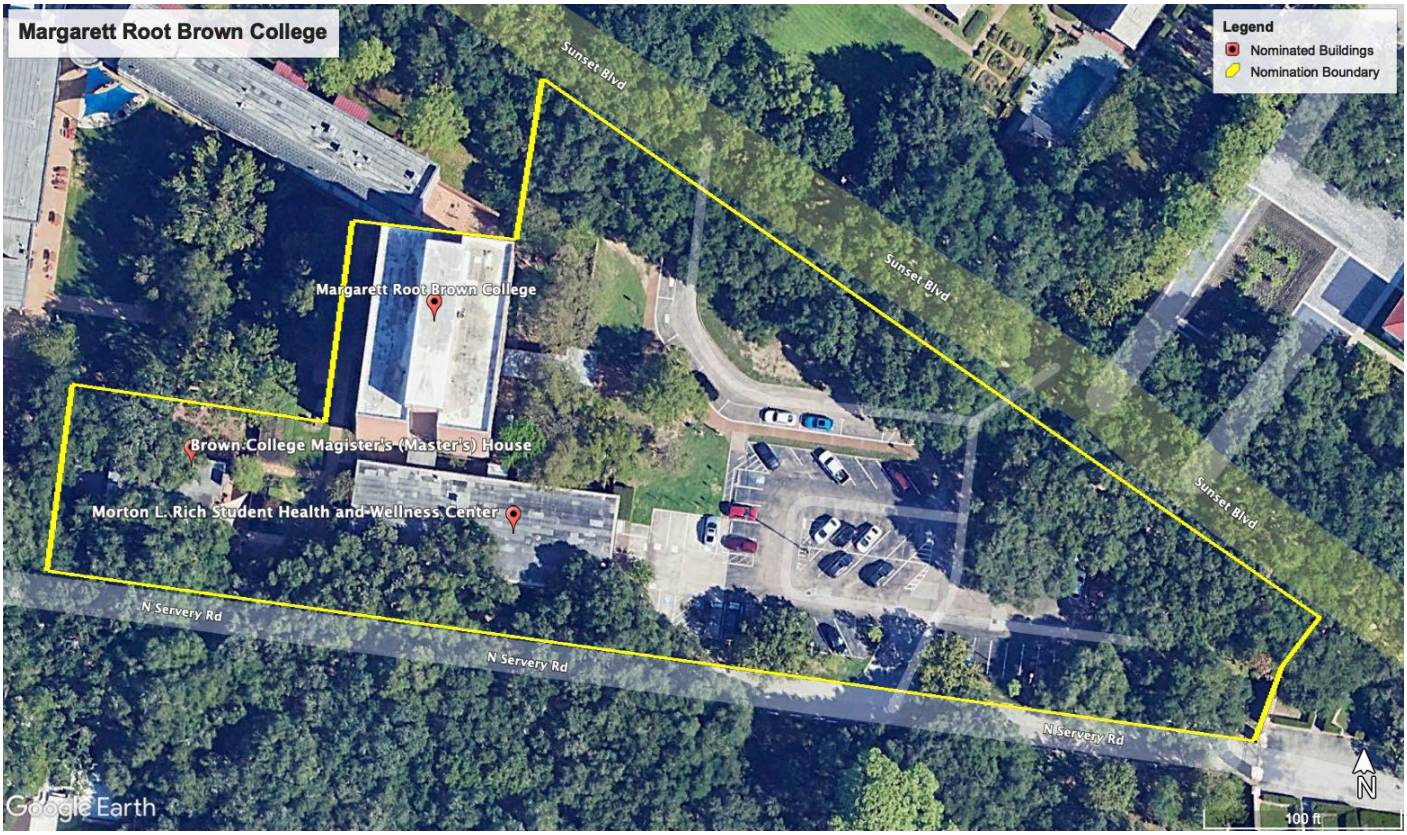
Maps

Map 1. Harris County Map

Map 2. Location of Margarett Root Brown College within Houston, Texas (Google Earth, May 2025)

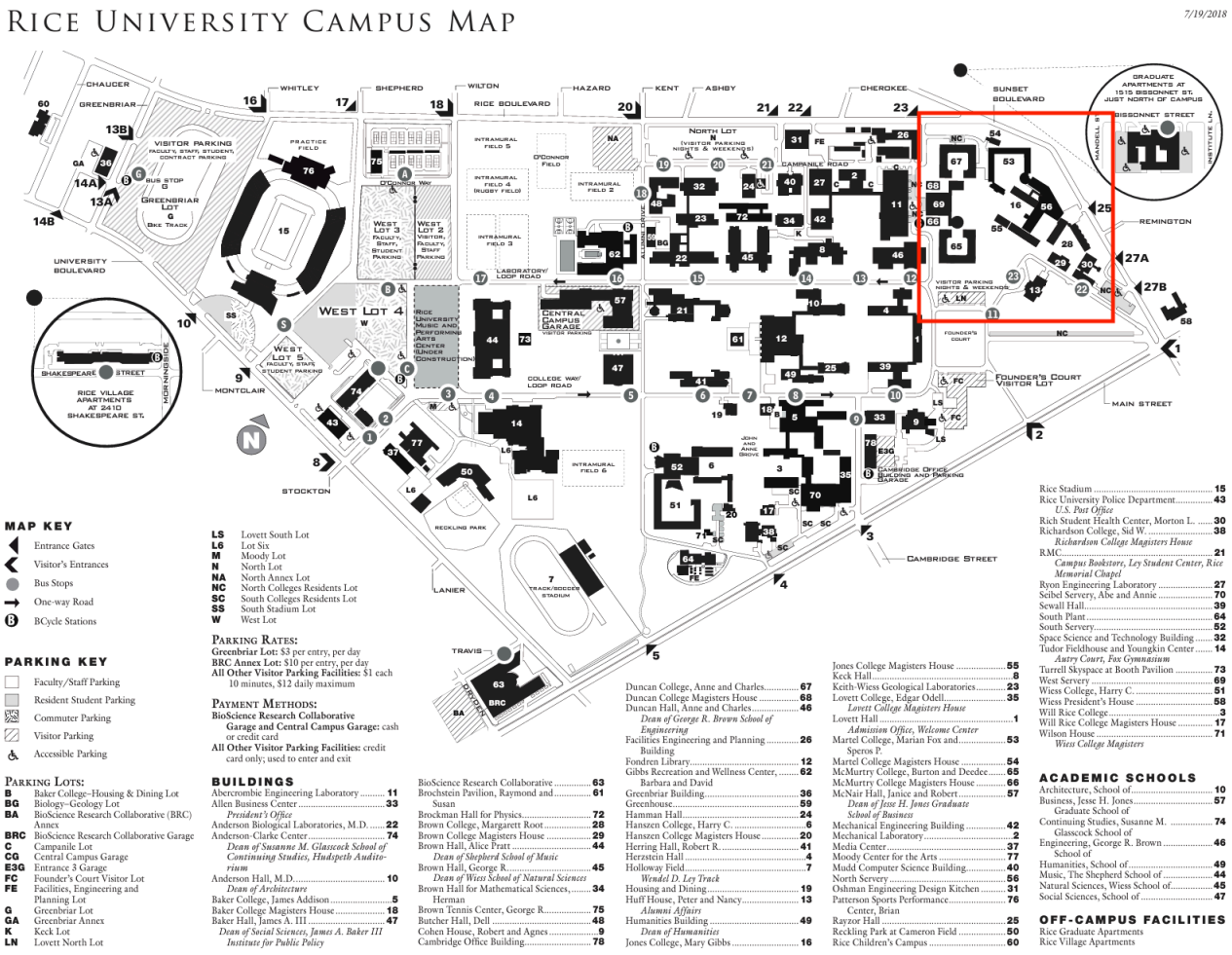


Map 3. Nomination Boundary (Google Earth, June 2025)



Map 4. The 1965 Brown College, Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center, and Magister's House (yellow) are two contributing buildings and the 2002 Brown College addition (pink), which is not part of the nomination boundary (Image annotated by author, June 2025)

Map 5. Rice University campus map, with the northeast section of campus indicated in a red box (Rice University, annotated by author, August 2024)



Map 6. Rice University northeast campus map, with Brown College indicated by the number 30 (Rice University, annotated by author, August 2024)

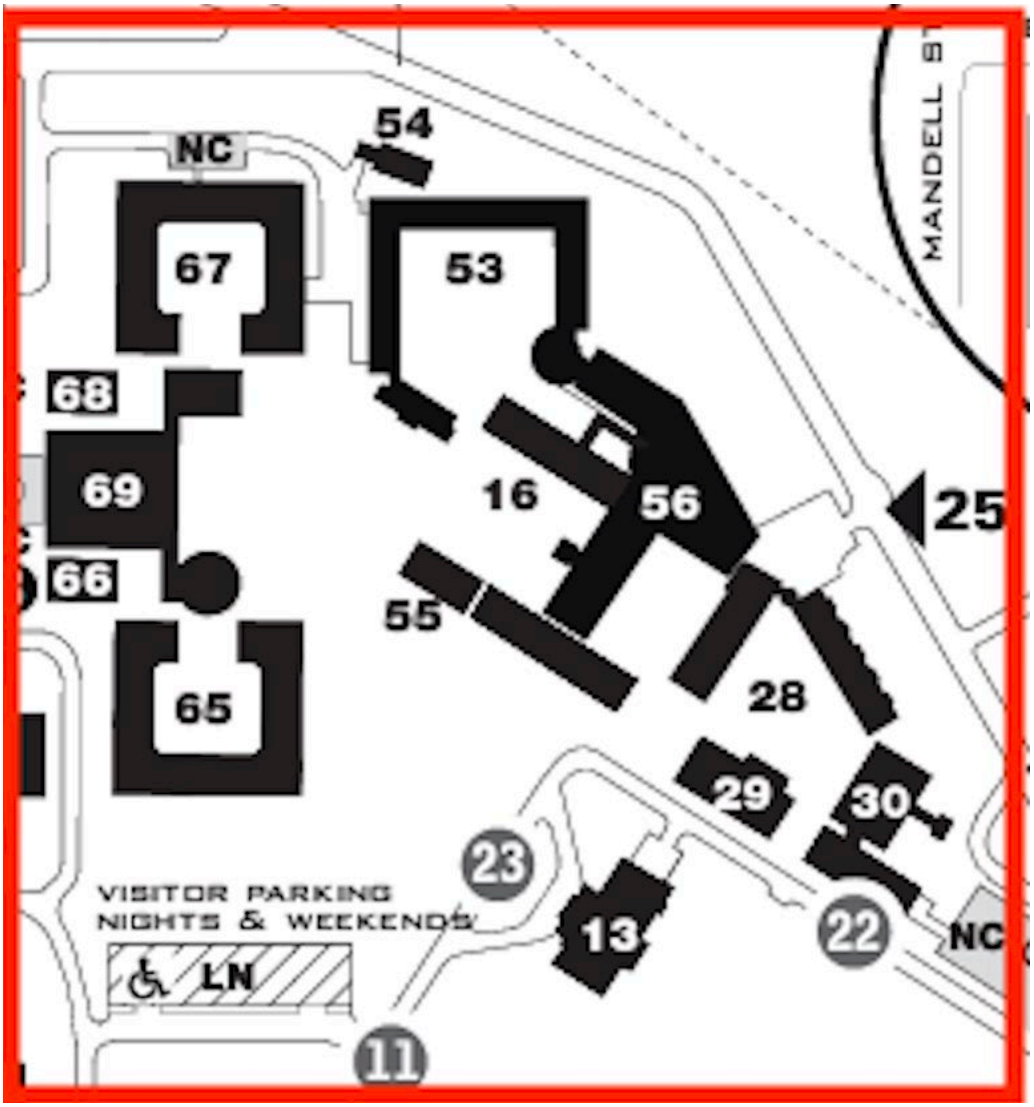


Figure 1. Exterior of Brown College, 1965 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

Figure 2. Brown College windows, 1965 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

Figure 3. Brown College, 1965 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

Figure 4. Brown College interior common space, undated but before 1981 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

Figure 5. Brown College interior lounge space, undated but before 1981 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

Figure 6: Students dancing at Brown College's Fantasy Island Party, 1985 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

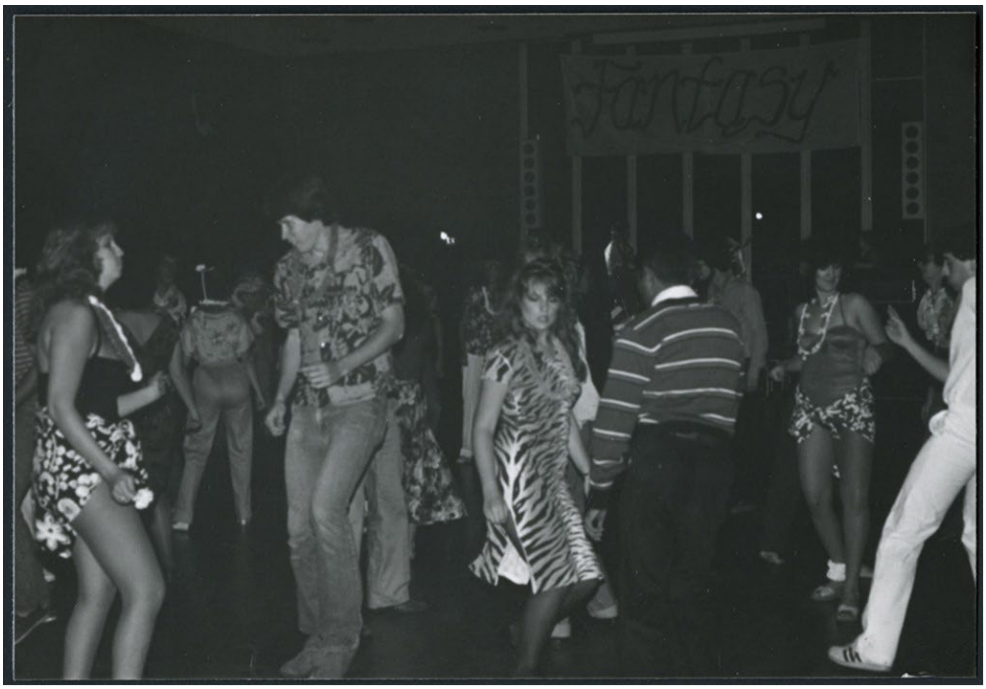


Figure 7. "Brown Women's College To Be Dedicated by Rice" (Houston Chronicle, September 30, 1965)

Brown Women's College To Be Dedicated by Rice

Rice University's second women's residential college, the new Margarett Root Brown College, will be dedicated at 3 p.m. Sunday.

The 200-girl college facility was financed by a $1 million gift from the Brown Foundation, Inc., in memory of Mrs. Margarett Root Brown, wife of the late Herman Brown, president of Brown & Root, Inc. She died in January, 1963.

The ceremonies Sunday will include acceptance of the eight-story building by President Kenneth S. Pitzer for Rice University and by Miss Martha Kirkpatrick, president of Brown College, for the residents of the college.

Mr. and Mrs. George R. Brown head the guest list. Presiding over the ceremonies will be Dr. Frank E. Vandiver, master of Brown College, and Harris Masterson Jr., professor of history.

Figure 8. Brown College first-floor plan, 1964 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

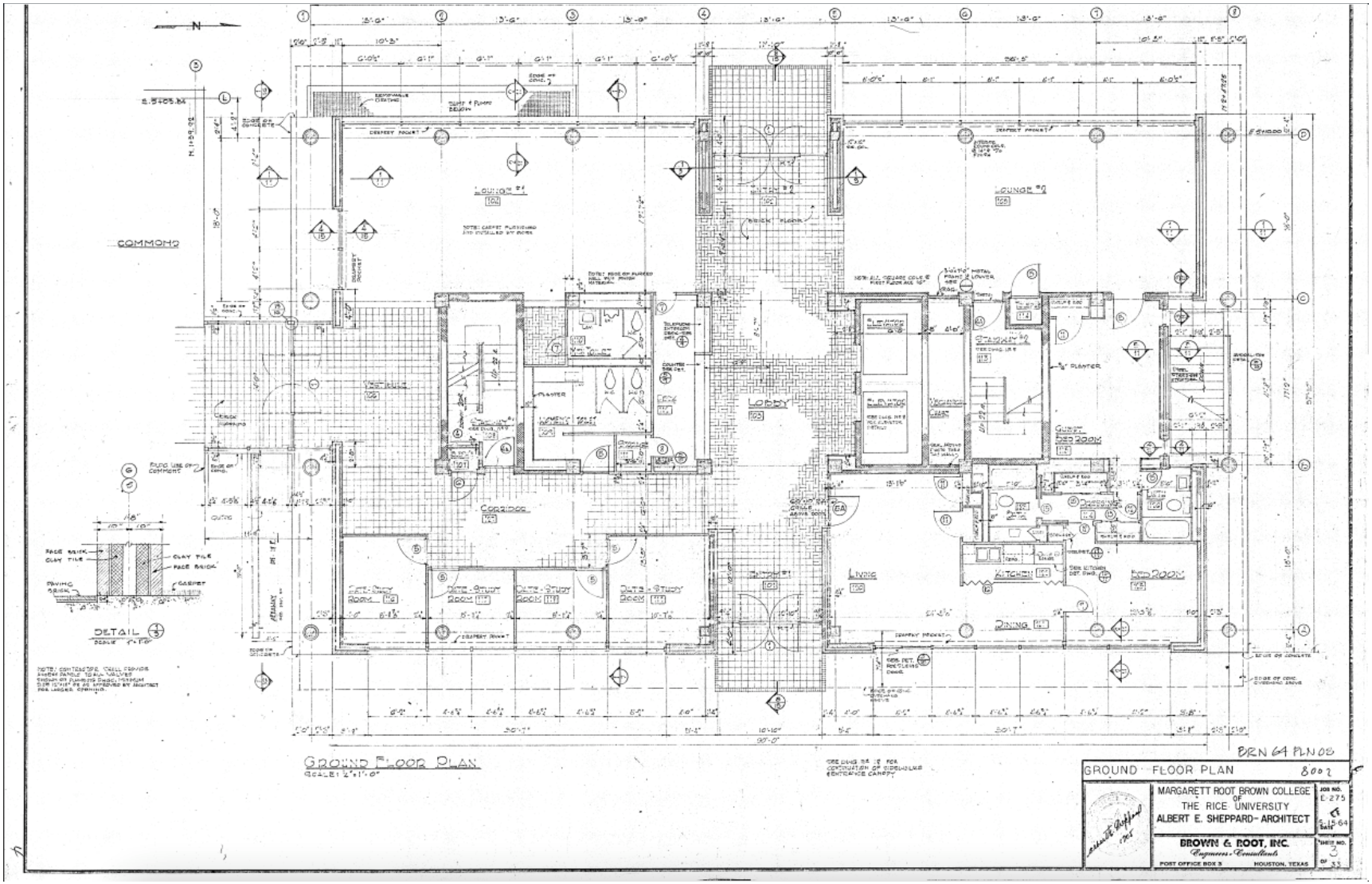


Figure 9. Excerpt, Brown College basement floor plan, 1964 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

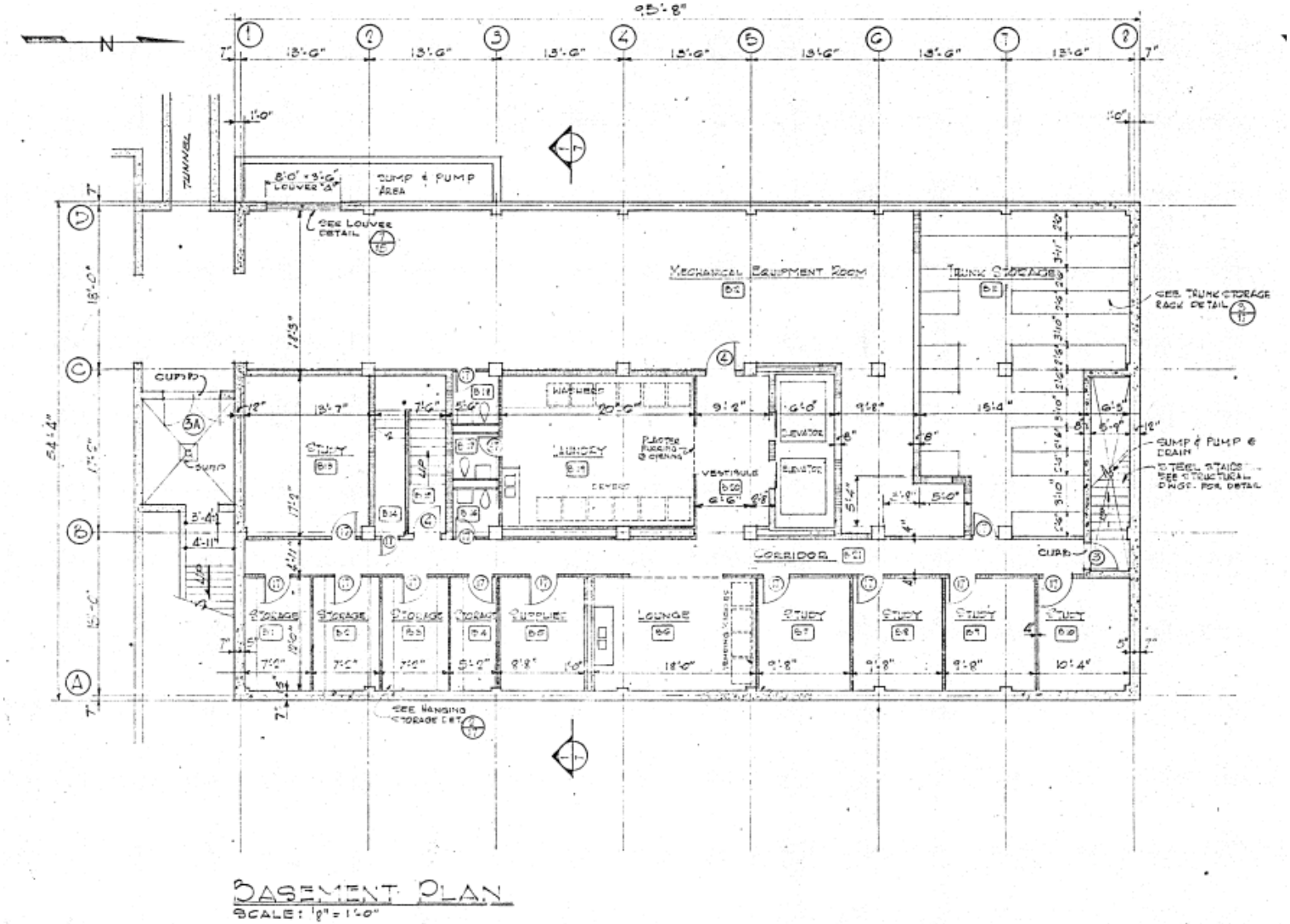


Figure 10. Brown College typical floor plan, 1964 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

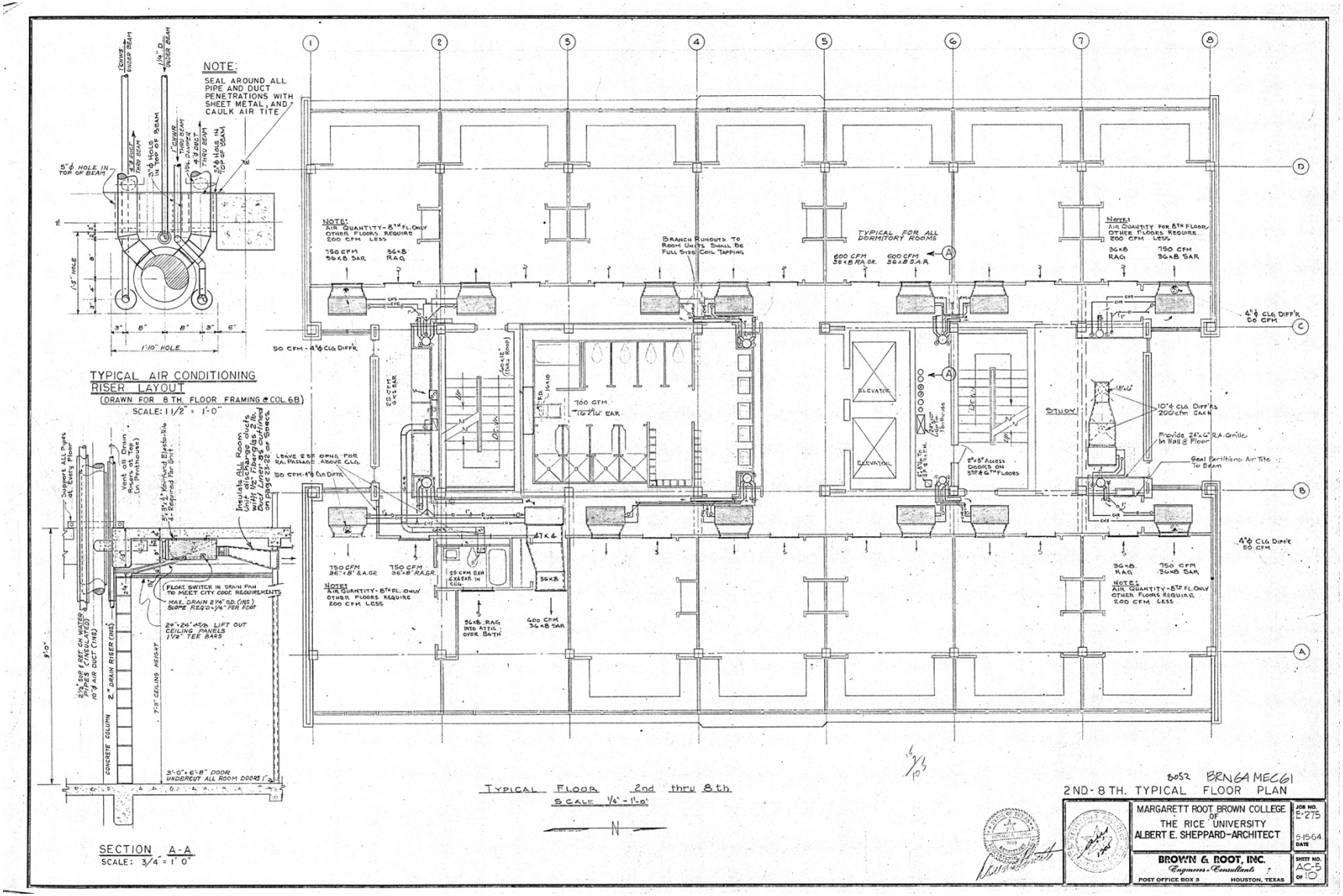


Figure 11. Brown College Magister's House ground floor plan, 1965 (Rice University, Facilities and Capital Planning)

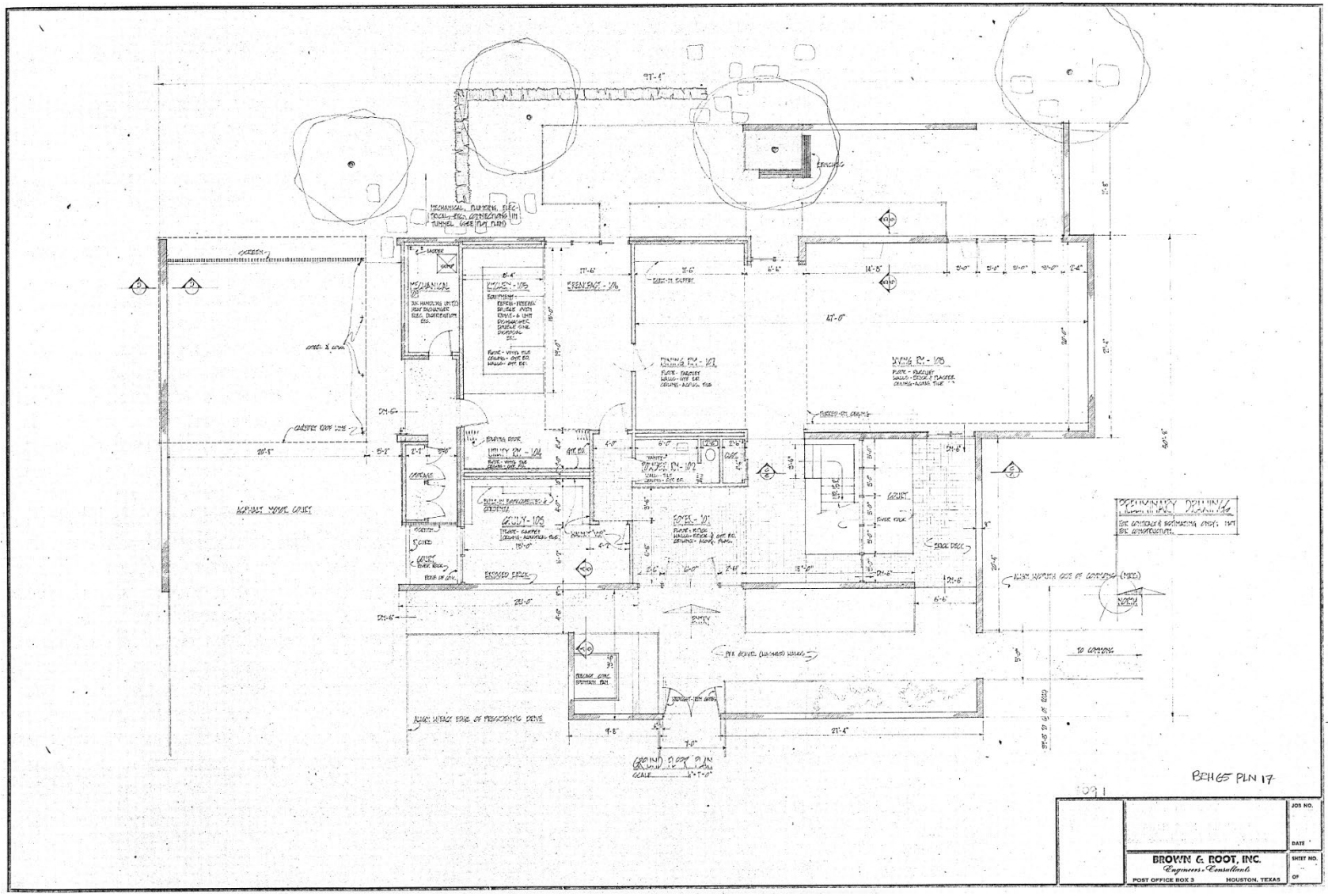


Figure 12. Brown College Magister's House second floor plan, 1965 (Rice University, Facilities and Capital Planning)

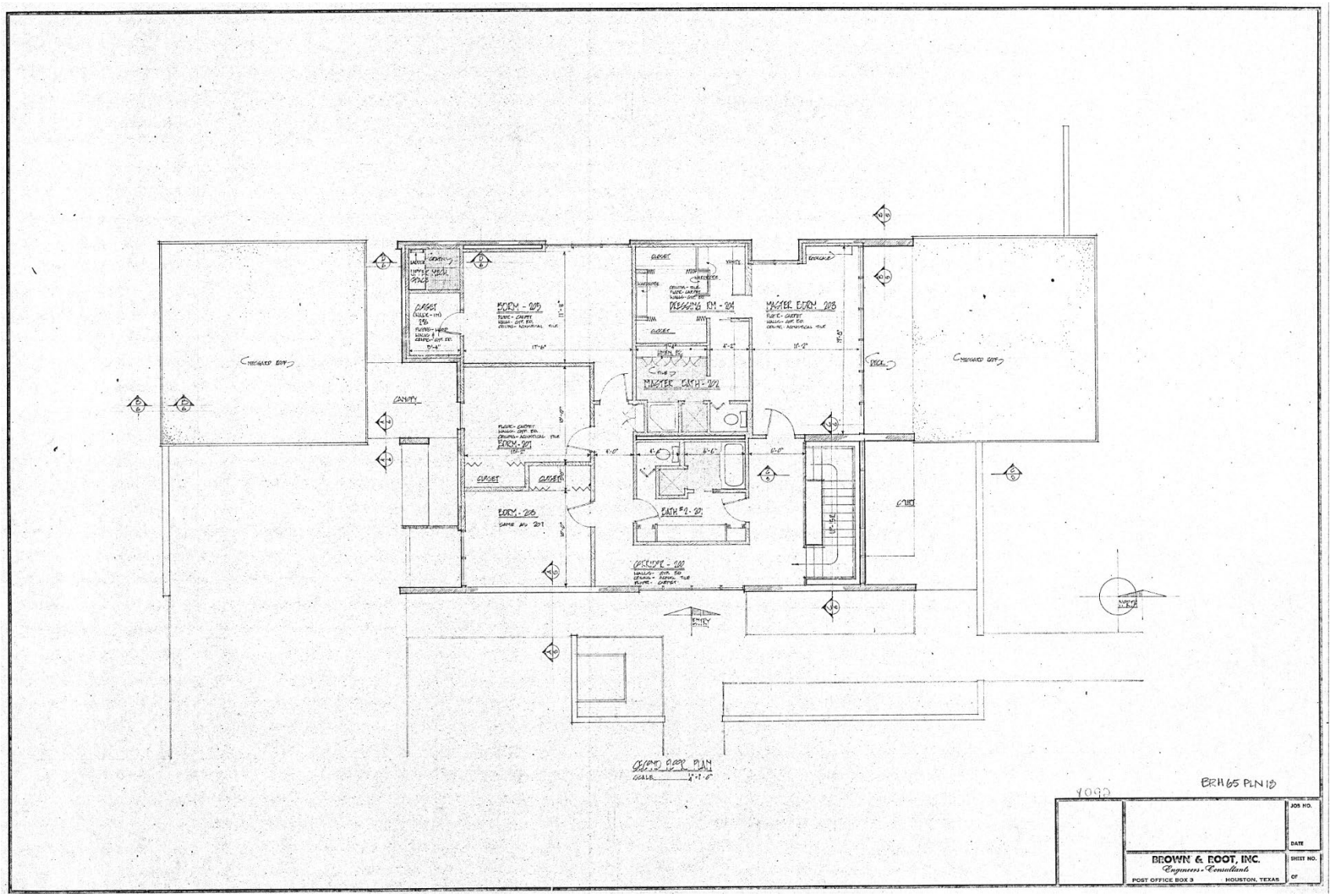


Figure 13. Brown College Study of Space Utilization, 1965 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

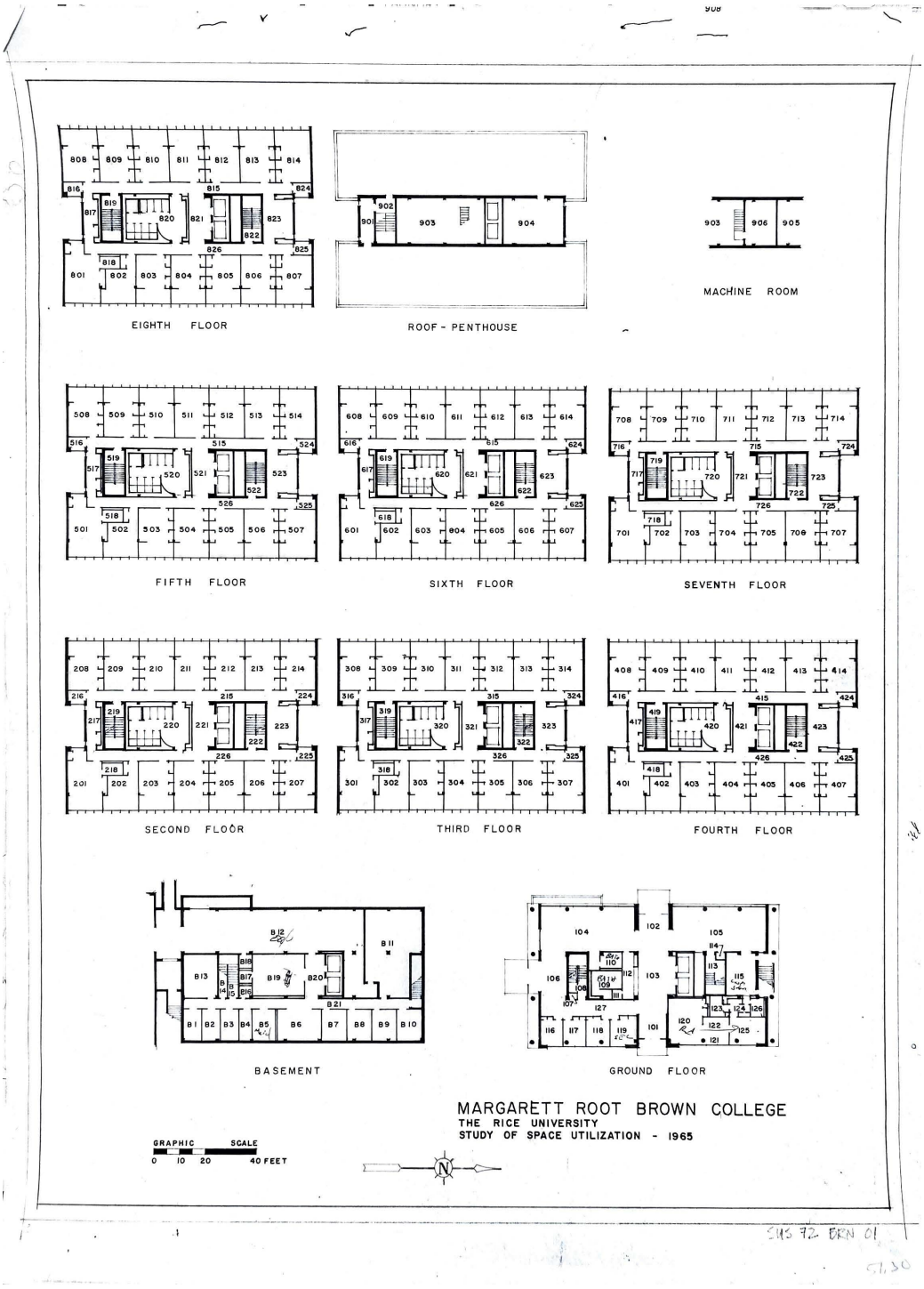


Figure 14. Michael Graves & Associates North Campus Master Plan, 1999 (Rice University, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives)

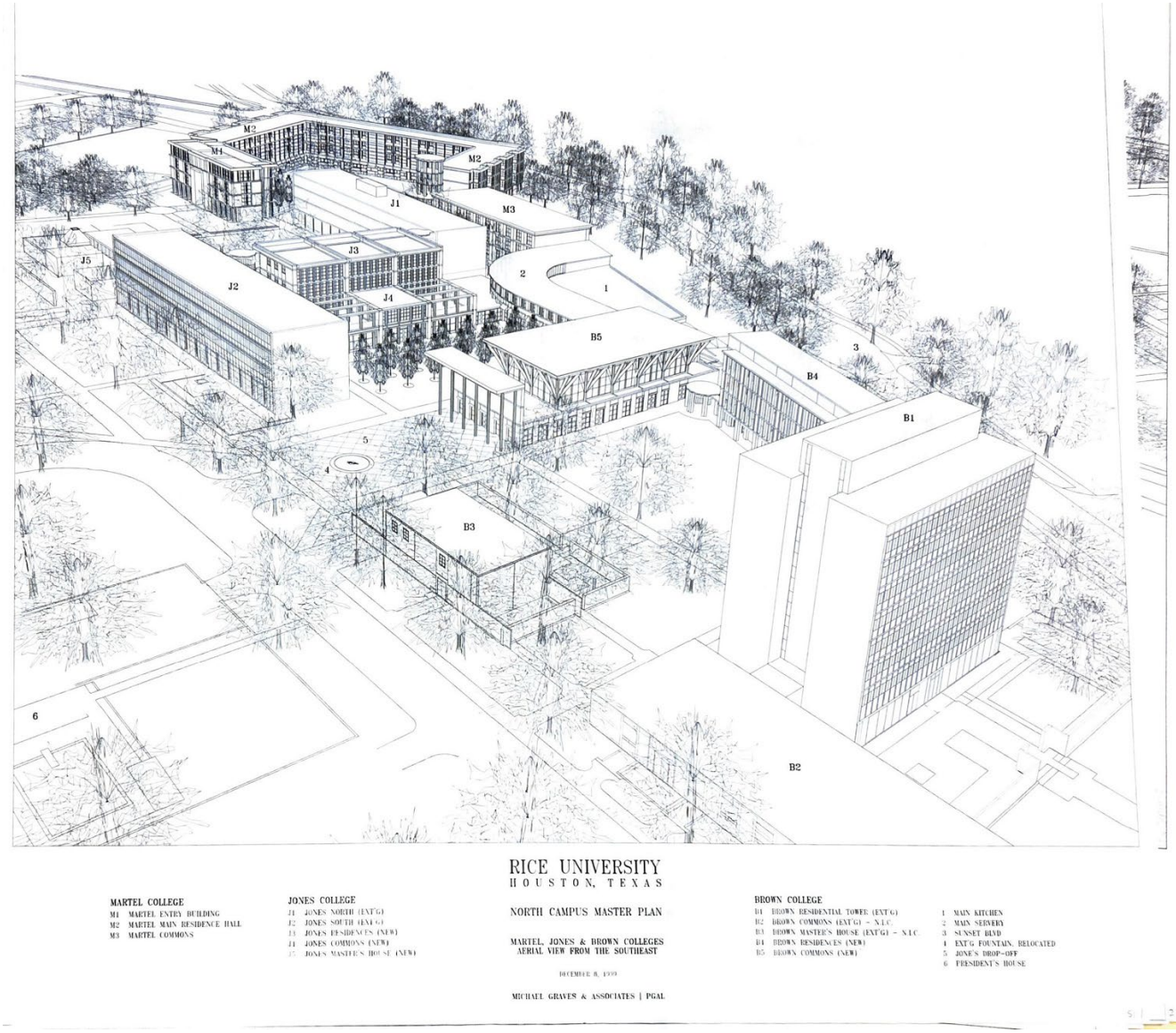


Figure 15. Excerpt, Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center ground floor plan, 2003 (Rice University, Facilities and Capital Planning)

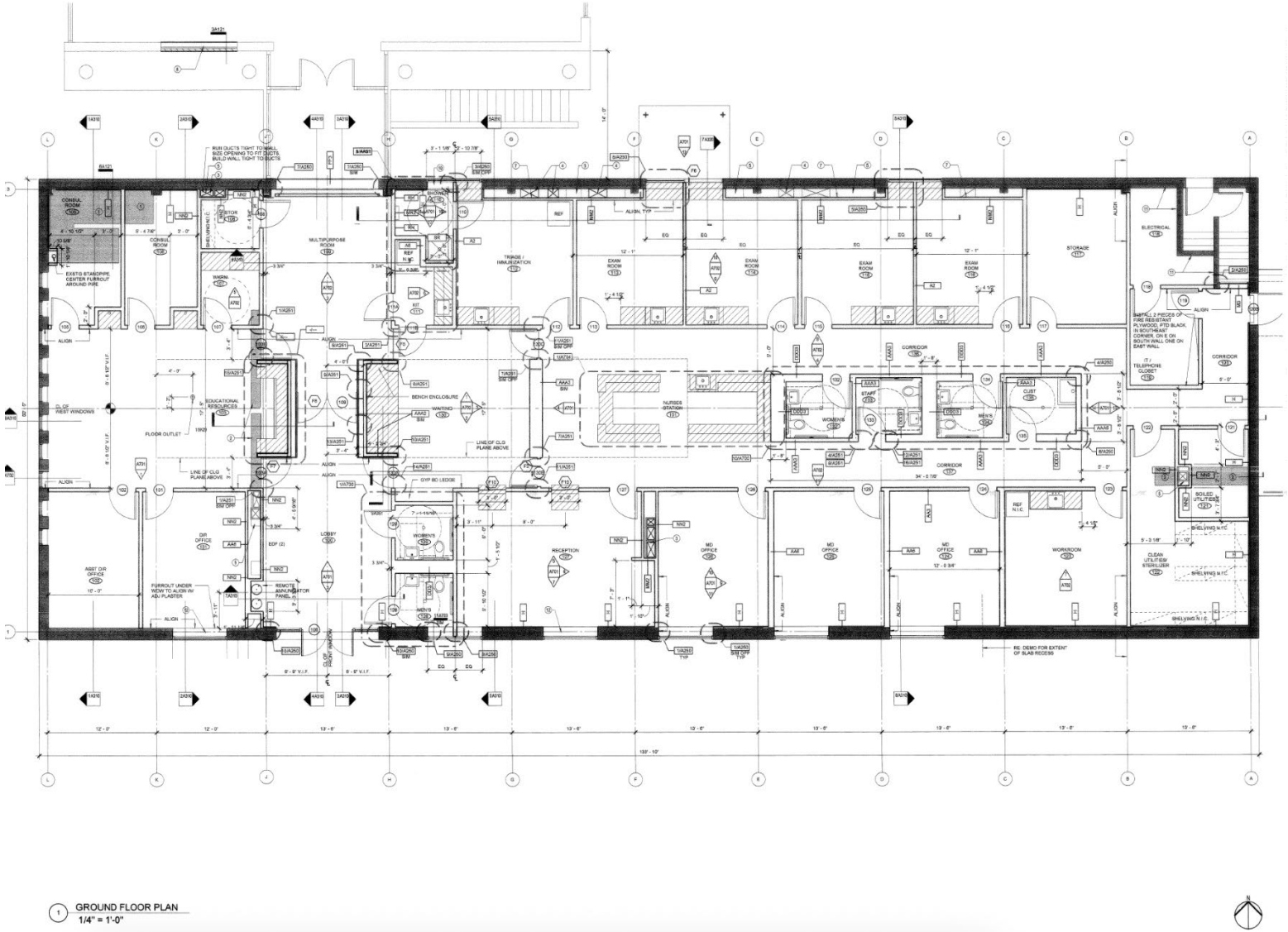


Figure 16. Excerpt, Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center basement floor plan, 2003 (Rice University, Facilities and Capital Planning)

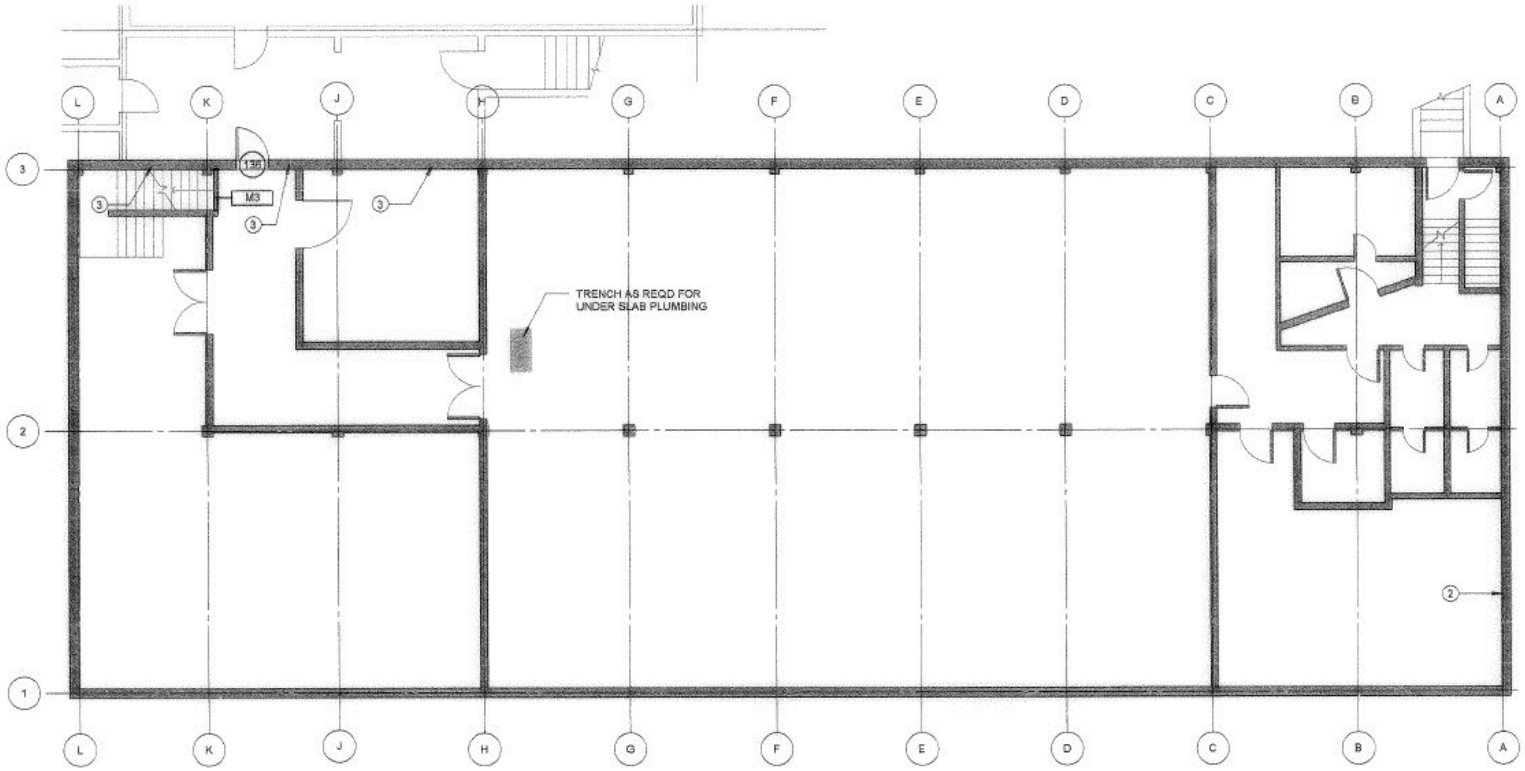


Figure 17. Excerpt, Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center renovation of mental health clinic portion of the ground floor, 2011 (Rice University, Facilities and Capital Planning)

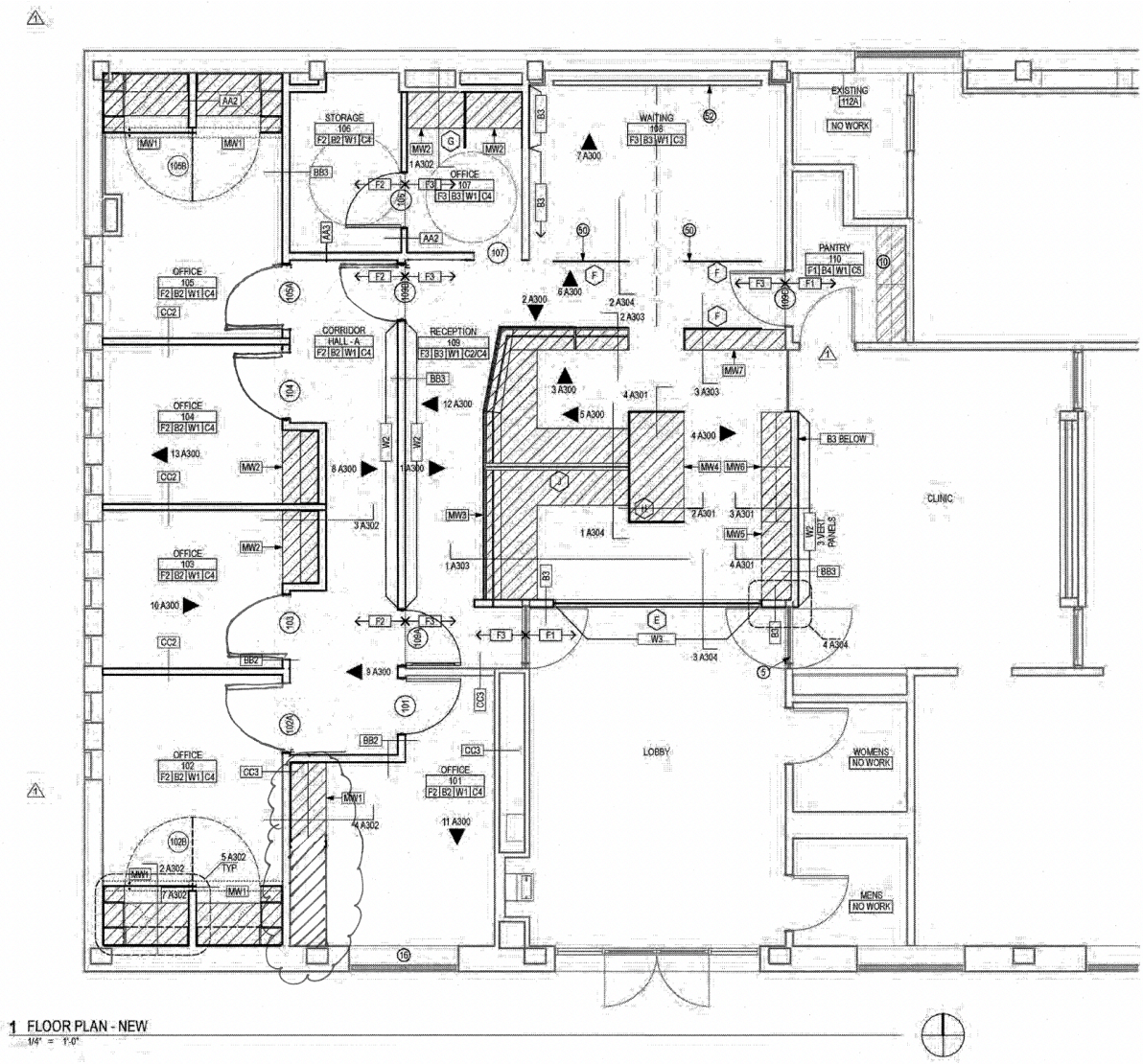


Figure 18. Excerpt, Brown College first-floor renovation plans, 2017 (Rice University, Facilities and Capital Planning)

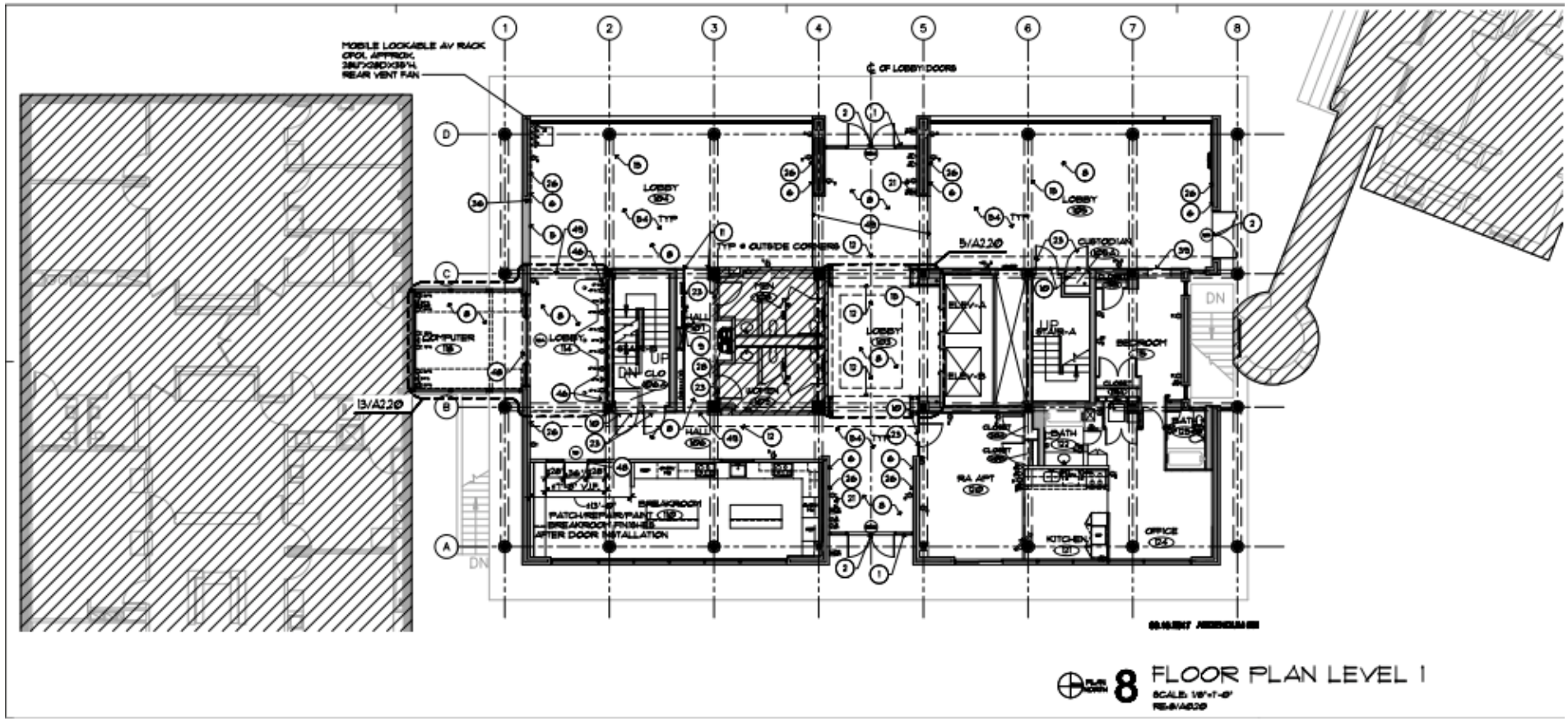


Figure 19. Excerpt, Brown College basement renovation plans, 2017 (Rice University, Facilities and Capital Planning)

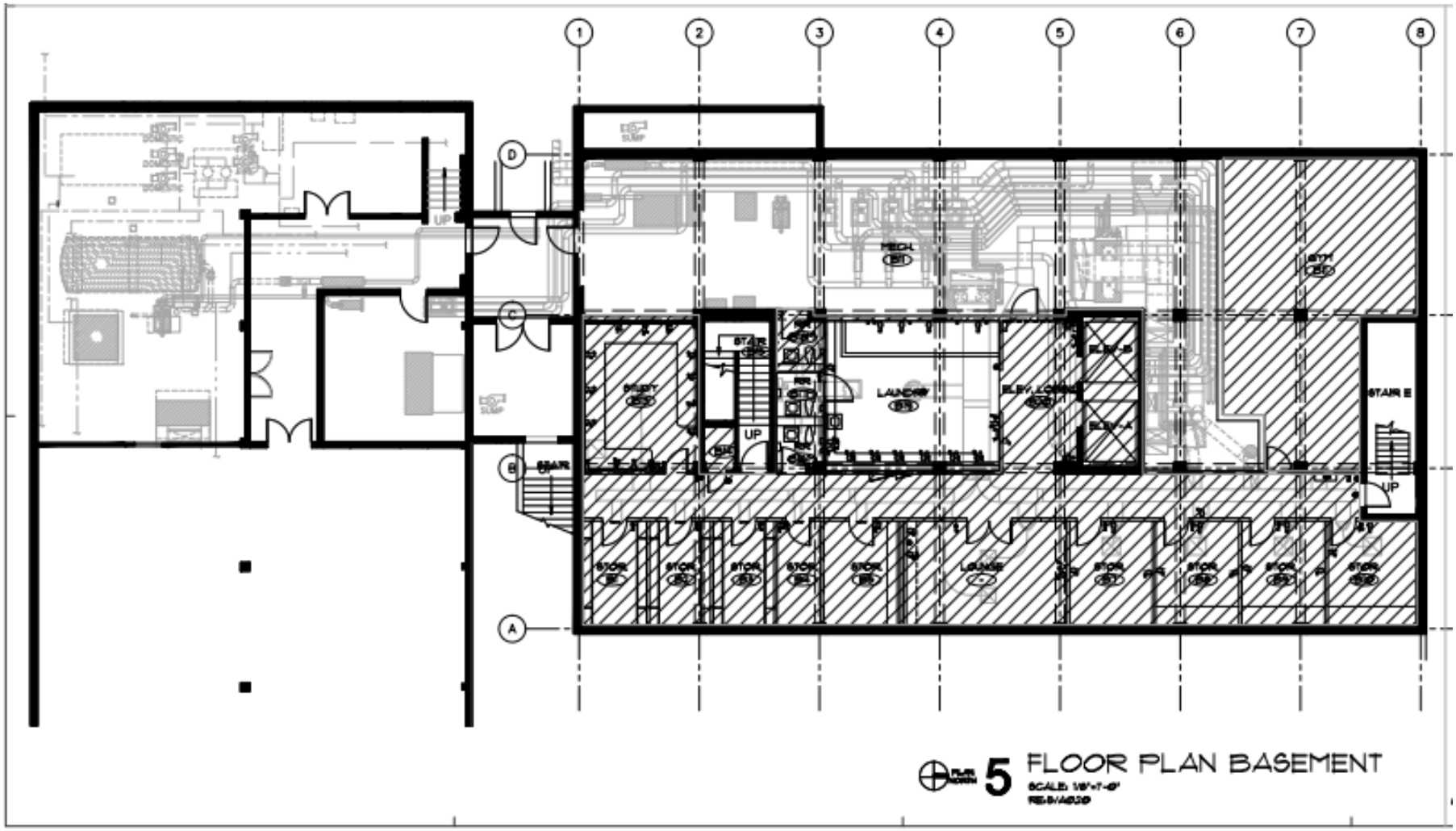


Figure 20. Goodall-Wooten Dormitory, 1957 (Dewey G. Mears, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History)

Figure 21. Goodall-Wooten Dormitory, 2018 (Gabriel C. Perez, "Goodall Wooten Residents Pack Up As Dorm Prepares To Close," *KUT News*, May 9, 2018, https://www.kut.org/austin/2018-05-09/goodall-wooten-residents-pack-up-as-dorm-prepares-to-close.)

Photographs

Margarett Root Brown College
(including hyphen, Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center, formerly Brown Commons dining hall, and Brown College Magister's House)
Houston, Harris County, Texas
Photographed by Amanda Coleman, Steph McDougal, Anna Mod, March 2024-May 2025
All photos reflect the appearance of the building at the time of the nomination's submission to NPS.

Photo 1. Brown College, primary (east) elevation with courtyard walls, view west

Photo 2. Brown College, primary (east elevation) entrance with courtyard walls, view west

Photo 3. Brown College, east elevation with courtyard wall, view west

Photo 4. Oblique view: Brown College, west and south elevations, view northeast

Photo 5. Brown College, west elevation, view east

Photo 6. Oblique view: Brown College, west and north elevations, view southeast

Photo 7. Brown College, north elevation with columnar breezeway connection and 2002 addition, view east

Photo 8. Brown College, north elevation and upper breezeway, view south

Photo 9. Brown College, north elevation and lower columnar breezeway, view southeast

Photo 10. Brown College, columnar breezeway between north elevation and 2002 addition, view west

Photo 11. Brown College, south elevation, former hyphen, and corner of Morton L. Rich Student Health and Wellness Center (former Brown Commons), view east

Photo 12. Oblique view: Brown College, hyphen, and Student Health and Wellness Center, view southeast

Photo 13. Oblique view: west and south elevations of Brown College and the Student Health and Wellness Center, view northeast

Photo 14. Oblique view: east elevation of Brown College and south and east elevations of Student Health and Wellness Center, view southwest

Photo 15. Oblique view: Student Health Center south and east elevations, with stairwell entrance to subterranean maintenance tunnel that connects to Brown College, view southwest

Photo 16. South elevation of Student Health and Wellness Center (foreground) and south and west elevations of Brown College (background), view north

Photo 17. Brown College, east elevation, covered walkway to main entrance, and courtyard, view northwest

Photo 18. Brown College, ground-floor exterior column details with mosaic tiles, view east

Photo 19. Brown College, east entrance foyer and common area, view southeast

Photo 20. Brown College, first-floor breakroom, view north

Photo 21. Brown College, first-floor common area, view west

Photo 22. Brown College, first-floor lounge, view northwest

Photo 23. Brown College, basement connection to Student Health and Wellness Center; view south

Photo 24. Brown College, typical elevator lobby, fourth floor, view northwest

Photo 25. Brown College, typical common area with exit to columnar breezeway, fourth floor, view northwest

Photo 26. Brown College, typical breezeway connection to 2002 addition, fourth floor, view northwest

Photo 27. Brown College, typical dormitory room, eighth floor, view west

Photo 28. Brown College, typical study vestibule, eighth floor, view east

Photo 29. Brown House, south elevation entrance, view north

Photo 30. Brown House, rear/north elevation with rear entrance gate, view south

Photo 31. Brown House, west elevation, view east

Photo 32. Brown House, east elevation (garage in foreground), view west

— end —