

## **University Hall**

*1960-1965*

Architects: Baskervill and Son with Anderson, Beckwith and Haible



### **Preservation Priority**

IMPORTANT

### **Landscape**

North Grounds

### **Significance**

University Hall is representative of the expanding athletics program at the University of Virginia. Owing partly to the University's membership in the newly formed Atlantic Coast Conference, the sports program had outgrown Memorial Gymnasium by the mid-twentieth century. The need for a site large enough to accommodate a new sports facility spurred the development and growth of the North Grounds. University Hall is an intriguing example of American Expressionism, evocative of works by Eero Saarinen a decade earlier. The dome was designed by Lawrence Anderson, dean of the Architecture

school at MIT. Anderson's solution was innovative, utilizing tension cables at its base. It was also aesthetically notable for its clear and vigorous expression of an underlying structural idea, and also for its allusion to Jeffersonian forms elsewhere on the grounds. The latter association is reinforced by the contrast between the walls, built of red brick, and the adjoining structural/ornamental elements, all rendered in white.

## **Integrity**

INTACT. University Hall remains intact throughout its interior and exterior.

## **Character Defining Features**

### Exterior

- Form and massing
- Membrane roof system
- Fenestration
- Extruded aluminum door and window systems
- Concrete steps and walkways

### Interior

- Plan and volume
- Concrete sidewalls
- Metal and flush wood veneer doors
- Terrazzo floors
- Basketball court floor

## **Critical Concerns**

- Forensic structural analysis should be performed on the building
- The building should be inspected for hazardous materials, specifically asbestos in the acoustical materials

## **History**

A burgeoning interest in and enthusiasm for intercollegiate athletics at the mid-twentieth century underpinned the construction of University Hall. The University's controversial entry into the Atlantic Coast Conference in 1953 compelled officials to provide suitable facilities as a basis for recruiting student athletes and as a venue for the spectacle of competition. Memorial Gym was incapable of meeting these new requirements, and so was replaced by University Hall.

At the time of its completion, University Hall was the largest enclosed structure at the University. It contains a basketball arena, locker rooms, and offices for coaches and other support personnel. University Hall represents the first major expansion into the area

known today as North Grounds. The size, siting, and overt modernism of the building set the tone for the University's development of the North Grounds in the 1990s. The designers did not look to historical precedent but instead cited utility as their inspiration, claiming economy and acoustics determined the form. To the south, the "Cage" provides enclosed practice facilities for outdoor sports.

The University of Virginia has outgrown University Hall and is currently building the John Paul Jones Arena to serve as a new basketball arena.

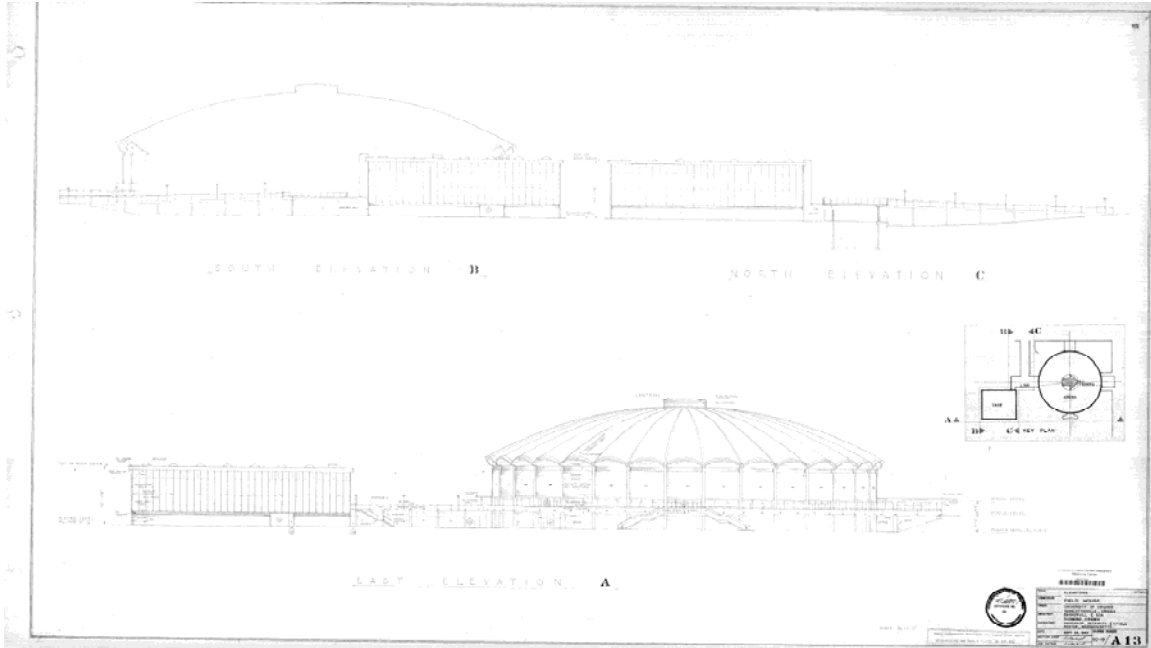
### **Chronology**

- 1960-1965      University Hall and the Cage constructed.
- 1970            Onesty Hall added to University Hall.
- 1998            Corroded support cables reinforced and additional supports added to the dome.

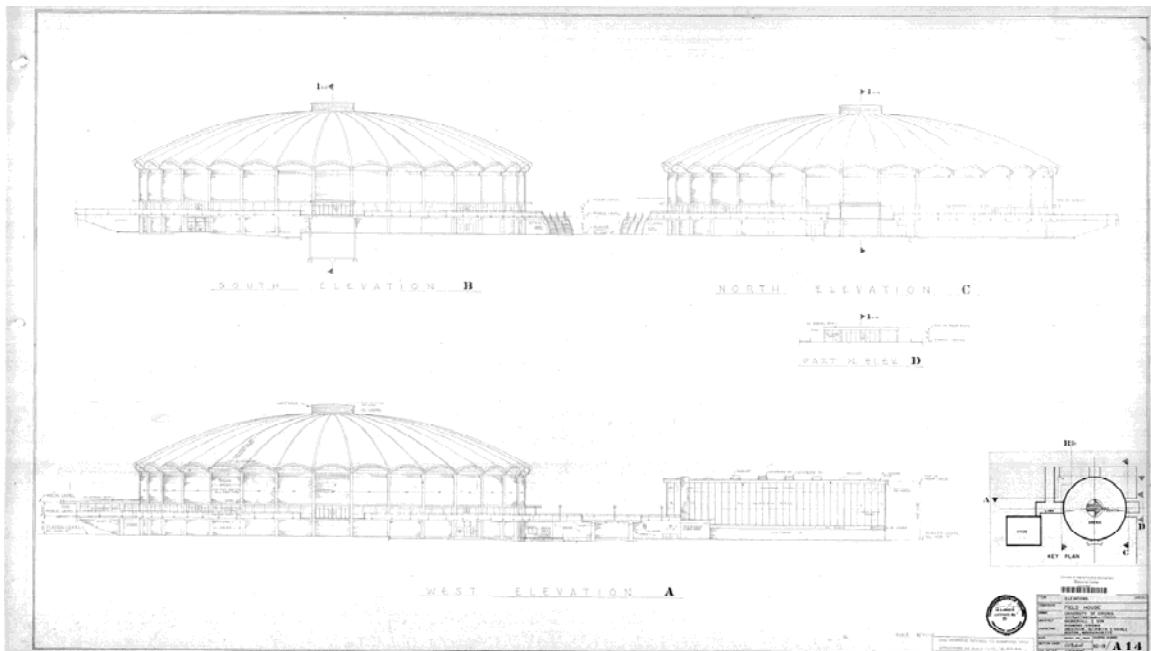
### **Recommended Studies**

Building Assessment Study

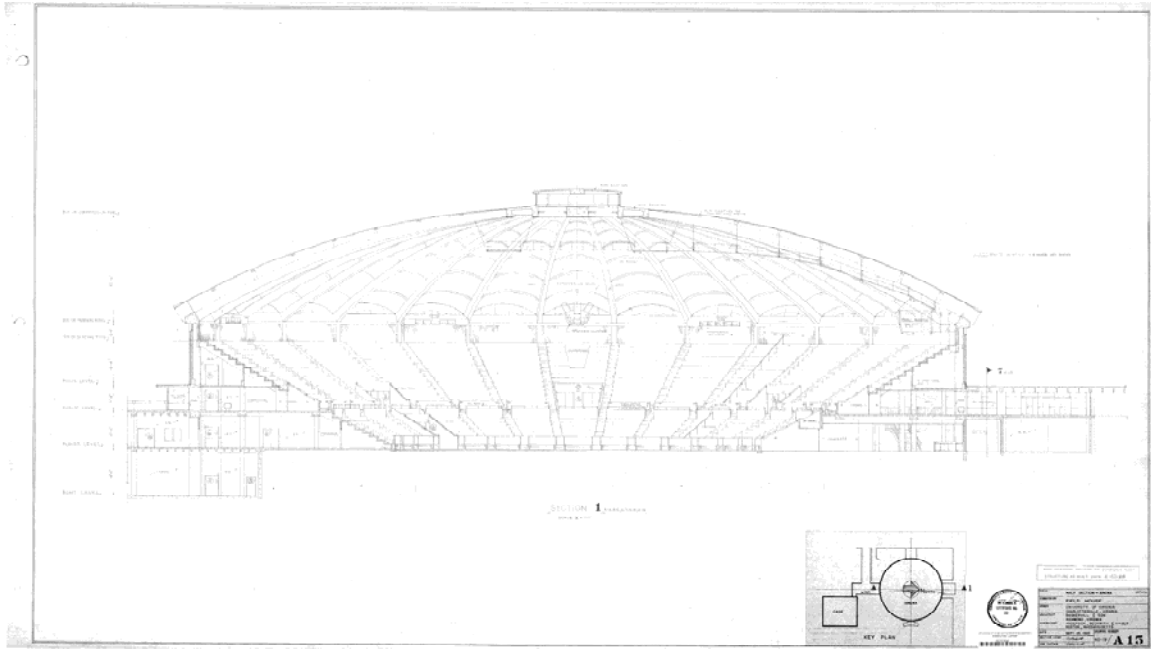
## Significant Photographs and Drawings



*University Hall. South, north and east elevations. As built drawings dated June 20, 1966. Baskervill and Son. University of Virginia Facilities Management Resource Center.*



*University Hall. South, north and west elevations. As built drawings dated June 20, 1966. Baskervill and Son. University of Virginia Facilities Management Resource Center.*



*University Hall. Half section of arena. As built drawings dated June 20, 1966. Baskervill and Son. University of Virginia Facilities Management Resource Center.*