

DAN KNODL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 24TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Bill 895

Public Testimony

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

March 11, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Testin and members of the committee for holding this hearing on Assembly Bill 895.

AB 895 would create a grant program at the Building Commission for non-state projects related to indoor, athletic or aquatic athletic facilities. The total amount of bonding available under the bill is \$5 million. Any eligible project is required to have matching funds raised from other sources and the total award for a specific project is capped at \$1 million.

As many of you know a proposal similar to this was included in the budget passed by the legislature, but Governor Evers vetoed out the authority to operate this program for non-state projects.

There are projects across the state that could qualify for this grant program. These facilities often provide a significant economic impact to the surrounding communities. In the 24th Assembly District we have one of these facilities. The Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center is located in Brown Deer and is one of only two Olympic size indoor pools in the state.

Currently, the legislation is supported by the following groups:

- Association for WI Tourism Attractions
- Greater Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau
- League of WI Municipalities
- VJS Construction Services
- WI Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Wisconsin Swimming, Inc.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.



PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

DATE: March 11, 2020
RE: **Testimony on Assembly Bill 895**
TO: The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Senator Patrick Testin

I would like to thank my fellow members of the committee for accepting my testimony on Assembly Bill 895.

This bill is something of a second chance for a few proposals. The first component would create a grant program at the Building Commission for construction or improvement of athletic or aquatic athletic facilities. Each grant awarded can be no more than \$1 million and requires a 50 percent match. A similar proposal to this was included in the budget passed by the legislature but was vetoed by Governor Evers.

The amendment that is attached to the bill authorizes \$3 million in bonding under the State Building Commission to provide a grant to the Incurage Community Foundation in Wisconsin Rapids for the construction of an economic development and community hub. This may sound familiar as it was part of the budget. However, due to a drafting error, the “public interest” component was left out. This legislation will correct that and allow Incurage to access the funding that has already been allocated for them.

Thank you again for listening to my testimony, and I hope that you will join me in supporting this bill.



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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March 10, 2020

TO: Senator Patrick Testin
Room 131 South, State Capitol

FROM: Dave Loppnow, Assistant Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 895

At your request, I am providing a summary of Assembly Bill 895 and the amendments that have been adopted to the bill, as well as a discussion of the fiscal effect of the bill and the amendments.

Background

The 2019-21 budget as passed by the Legislature authorized \$25 million of general fund supported bonding for grants for local projects. The budget bill specified that \$3 million of this bonding would be allocated to assist in the remodeling of the former Daily Tribune building in the City of Wisconsin Rapids into an economic and community hub. As vetoed by the Governor, the \$25 million of bonding is authorized for construction projects having a public purpose, but the \$3 million earmark for the Daily Tribune building was retained in 2019 Act 9 (the 2019-21 budget act). Since that time, it is reported that because Act 9 does not make a finding of public purpose relating to the Daily Tribune building, bond counsel does not believe that this bonding can be issued for that purpose.

Summary of Assembly Bill 895

AB 895 would authorize \$5 million of general fund supported general obligation bonding for construction of or improvements to indoor, athletic or aquatic athletic facilities. The bill would create a new bonding appropriation for this purpose as well as a GPR sum sufficient debt service appropriation to make principal and interest payments on these bonds. The bill would make a legislative finding of public interest and public policy to assist in constructing such facilities.

Under AB 895, the \$5 million of bonding would be used for grants and each grant could not exceed \$1 million. Before considering each grant application, the Building Commission would be required to determine that the organization carrying out the project has secured additional funding

for the project from nonstate revenue sources equal to at least 50% of the total cost of the project. If the Building Commission awards a grant and if for any reason the facility is not used as part of an indoor, athletic or aquatic athletic facility, the state would retain an ownership interest in the facility equal to the amount of the state's grant. AB 895 would require the Department of Administration (DOA) to review and approve plans for the project, but would prohibit DOA from supervising any services or work or let any contract for the project.

AB 895 would modify the 2019-21 building program that was enumerated in 2019 Act 9 to include this \$5 million project.

Assembly Amendment 1

AA 1 would modify the type of project that could receive funding under the bill to exclude athletic facilities whose primary purpose is to improve health and fitness through weight training or the use of cardiovascular equipment or both.

Assembly Amendment 2

AA 2 would modify the statutes governing \$25 million of bonding for construction projects having a public purpose that was authorized in 2019 Act 9 to specify that \$3 million of that bonding could be used to assist the Incentive Community Foundation, Inc., in redeveloping the former Daily Tribune building in the City of Wisconsin Rapids into an economic and community hub. Before approving this funding, the Building Commission would be required to determine that the Incentive Community Foundation has secured additional funding for the project from nonstate revenue sources at least equal to the state's grant. AA 2 would make a legislative finding of public interest and public policy to assist in redeveloping the former Daily Tribune building into an economic and community hub.

Fiscal Effect

AB 895 would authorize \$5 million of general fund supported bonding to fund grants to support indoor, athletic or aquatic athletic facilities. AA 1 would not have a fiscal effect since it restricts the types of projects that could be funded under the bill. AA 2 would not have a fiscal effect, because it would allocate \$3 million of \$25 million of bonding already authorized under 2019 Act 9, to fund a grant to support redeveloping the former Daily Tribune building in the City of Wisconsin Rapids into an economic and community hub.

I hope that this information is helpful. Please contact me if you have any questions.

DL/lb



I am submitting testimony today as Chair of the Wisconsin Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus and as Executive Director of the Janesville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. Destinations Wisconsin represents 36 Destination Marketing organizations throughout the state of Wisconsin, and we have signed on in support of this bill.

Tourism is economic development. In 2018 tourism spending in Wisconsin totaled 13 billion and created just under 200,000 full and part time jobs. The tournaments and events that comprise sports tourism in our state are a huge driver of that economic impact. Like any other industry, sports tourism requires infrastructure. AB895 creates much needed funds for development of that infrastructure. There are currently mechanisms in place for funding traditional convention centers, but none for the development of our sports tourism infrastructure.

These developments can be crucial for communities like Janesville that are recovering from a loss of manufacturing jobs and infrastructure. A mid-size sports center in Janesville could bring in 200 new events and tournaments with 120,000 attendees and participants, 100 new jobs and nearly \$10 million in spending for our community.

Thank you for your support of this crucial funding.

Christine Rebout

Christine L. Rebout

Chair, Destinations Wisconsin

Executive Director,
Janesville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.



Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center



Organizational Overview:

The Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center (WSAC) is Wisconsin's most storied competitive swimming and diving facility. WSAC dates back to the mid-1970s, when the Wisconsin competitive swimming community recognized the need for a world class competition pool and presented the idea to the Walter Schroeder Foundation. The foundation approved a \$4.5 million grant to build the state's first indoor 50-meter pool with platform diving facilities – which was at the time the largest single donation to a YMCA in the world.

Because of the pool's depth and engineering, the WSAC quickly earned a reputation in the world swimming community as a "fast pool." World and American records have been set at the facility, and the Schroeder Swim & Dive Team has sent more than 30 athletes to the US Olympic Trials over the years.

But in 2007-08, after years of deferred maintenance had accumulated, the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee revealed plans to demolish the facility. The swimming and diving community rallied to save the pool, raising \$2.2 million in a matter of months. The YMCA sold the pool to WSAC, Ltd., a newly formed 501c3 nonprofit organization with the mission to preserve the WSAC for Future Generations, and \$700,000 was spent on urgently needed capital repairs and took over day-to-day operations.

For the past 41 years, the Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center has served thousands of Wisconsin children and adults with a wide variety of swimming and diving lessons and competitive programs. Thousands of swimmers and divers have gone on to compete at the collegiate level.

But Olympic medals and college scholarships are not what ultimately drives the organization. Competitive swimming and diving is the vehicle for character development. By emphasizing skills like listening, strong character, resilience, and embracing change, the Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center is preparing Wisconsin youth for success in college and beyond.

The **mission** of the programs at Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center is **to promote excellence and prepare youth for college and success in life.**





Community Asset:

The Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center is one of two indoor Olympic-sized or 50-meter pools in the state. The UW is currently constructing a new similar facility.

- The WSAC hosts over 25 major competitions annually. VISIT Milwaukee estimates that \$6,000,000 is attributable from these competitions to the local economy each year.
- 25% of the competitive swims done in the state of Wisconsin are performed at the WSAC each year.
- WSAC is a pillar of the competitive aquatic community. Leadership and cooperative programming at the local, state and national levels is provided by the WSAC and its staff.
- UW-Milwaukee, Northwestern University and UW-Madison use the WSAC to train their student-athletes because they do not have 10 Meter Platforms at their schools.
- This weekend the WIAC Conference Championship is again being held at the WSAC. UW university's '60s and '70s vintage pools are not good enough for our state university student-athletes to compete with other NCAA DIII schools for NCAA Championship qualifying times.

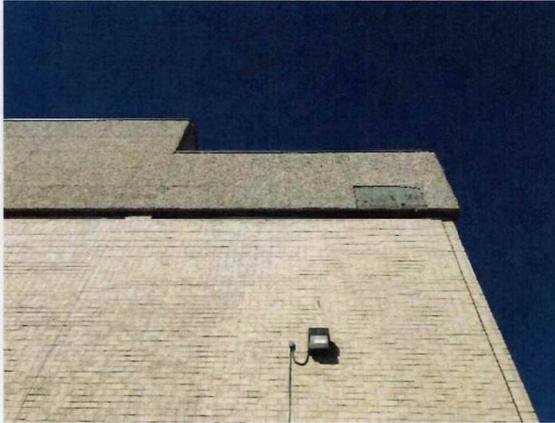
Remaining Relevant:

The Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center is a stand alone non-profit. Since its separation from the YMCA of Metro Milwaukee in 2008, the WSAC must cover all of its annual \$1.5M expense through programming, major events and fundraising. There are very few examples of major indoor aquatic centers in the USA that are stand alone facilities. Most are supported by universities or municipalities. The short story is that not enough revenue can be made to cover capital expense to keep the WSAC open and relevant as it ages.

The Need:

The Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center is in the midst of a \$1.3 million fundraising campaign. Since August of 2019, \$260,000 has been raised, primarily from families that participate in WSAC programs. The major areas that are needed to keep the WSAAC relevant are:

- **Emergency repairs to the WSAC exterior wall:** Repairs commenced in August 2019 and finished in December. Cost: \$292,000.



- **Replace the roof of the WSAC** - The roof of the WSAC is now 40 years old. The cost for replacement is \$250,000
- **Update kitchen / Food Service Area** - the kitchen / food service area - is in need of new refrigeration, stainless countertops & sinks and updated storage shelving. The cost of updates is \$185,000.
- **Locker Room Renovations** - both the men's and women's locker rooms, bathrooms and showers need updates to flooring, lockers, and plumbing. The cost of both is \$300,000.
- **Facility Lighting** - ballasts for 8 light fixtures and potentially the lights themselves need attention \$20,000
- **Paint** - the WSAC has not been painted in more than 25 years - \$18,000

Programs:

Schroeder YMCA Swim Team: The WSAC's centerpiece program and the springboard for all of the organization's efforts, is USA Swimming certified programs that provide instruction and training to 400 children and youth, aged 5 to 18 years of age annually. 9 full-time and 14 part-time professional coaches ensure a low coach-to-swimmer ratio. WSAC coaches are well connected to collegiate swimming programs across the country and actively work with each athlete to help them find the right schools to continue their swimming careers.

Schroeder YMCA Dive Team: The Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center has the only ten-meter diving platform in the Illinois-Wisconsin region, and college teams from UW Milwaukee, UW Madison, Northwestern University train here. WSAC runs a 50-member competitive diving team that has sent athletes to the Olympic trials and NCAA diving programs. Like the swim team, the diving program prepares youth for college and beyond by developing confidence and resilience.

Schroeder Masters Swim Team – 91 swimmers aged 22 to 80 years compete in area masters-level competitions and prove that swimming does not end after college.



Partners:

Augustine Preparatory Academy: “Aug Prep” is a newer K4-12 school located in Milwaukee’s south side that serves over 1,350 students in the Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grades. 91% of the students are Hispanic and 93% qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program. In 2017 the WSAC staff assisted in the design and construction of the school’s aquatic center, a state-of-the-art competition and teaching pool. WSAC has continued its partnership by providing learn to swim & water safety instruction to all students. The pool is also used by the Little Lions swim team – a novice swim team that will eventually be a feeder program to the main Schroeder YMCA swim team.

Bruce Guadalupe Middle School: 60 students from this middle school received WSAC water safety instruction in 2019, using the Aug Prep pool. This partnership is expected to grow in the coming years.

City of Milwaukee Recreation Department – Piranhas and Tidal Wave Swim Teams: WSAC has partnered with the Milwaukee Rec Department for 20 years to provide additional training and competition opportunities for Milwaukee youth, who train with the regular WSAC team two days per week. Costs are heavily underwritten by WSAC.

Nicolet Recreation Department: WSAC administers and staffs the Nicolet Rec League swim team, the Nicolet Knights. While the competition level is not as rigorous, numerous Nicolet kids have gone on to join the WSAC team.

Marquette High School Swim Team, Milwaukee Underwater Hockey League: Both teams use the WSAC facilities to train during their respective seasons.

For more information about the Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center, please contact Dave Anderson, Director of Competitive Programs, at 414-364-0275 or danderson@wsacltd.org.

To: The Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Re: AB 895,

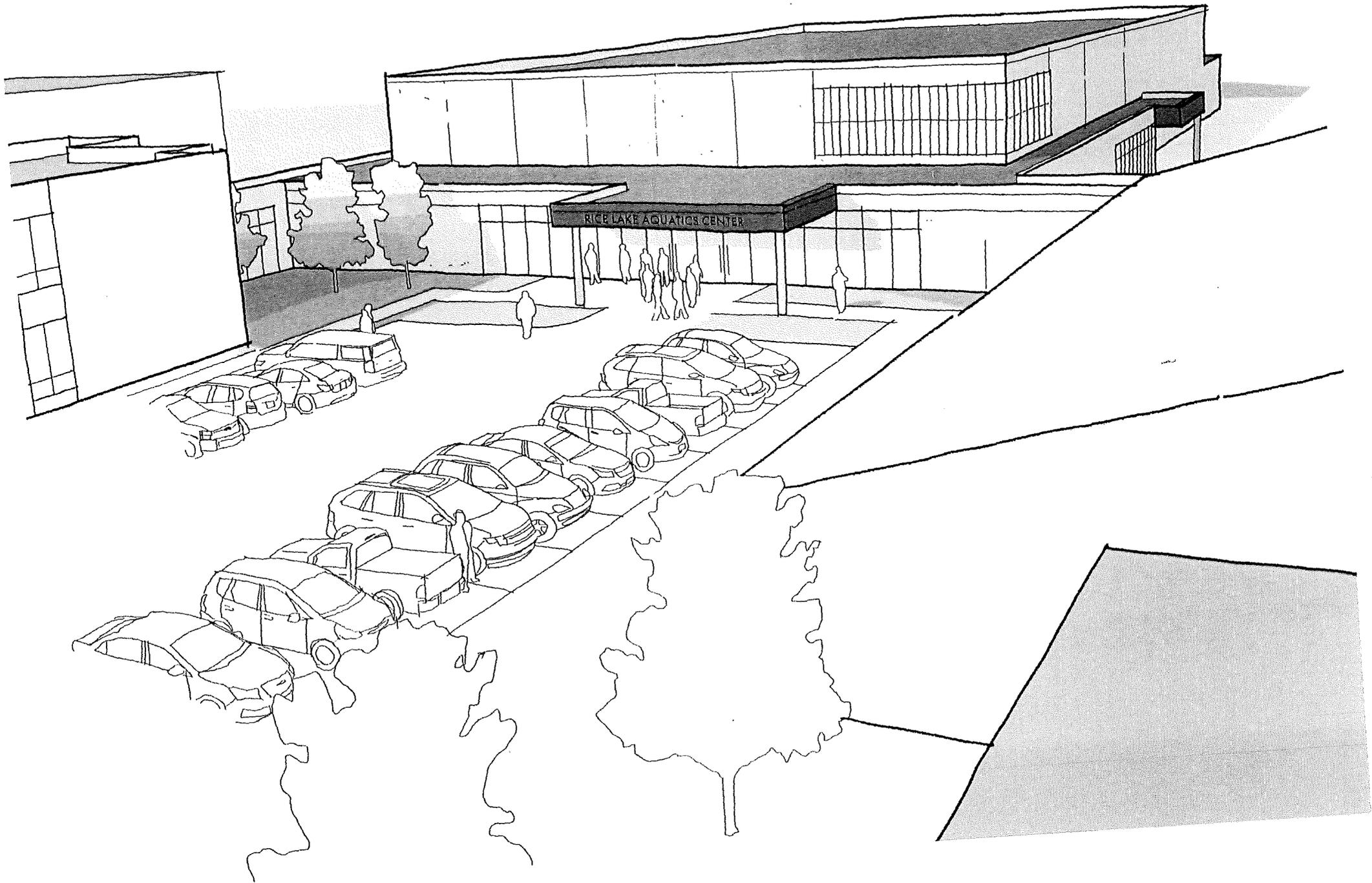
I, Patrick Blackaller, represent a community group who has formed a non-profit to develop a community center in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Our current effort to construct a community center is the fifth time our community has attempted such a project in the last 25 years. Each time the community attempted to complete a project it fell short due to financial constraints. Our current effort began in 2018, after the City of Rice Lake voted to give a dilapidated pool to the school district; however, the district could not accept it because it could not afford to repair the facility. The current pool facility is 43 years old. The pool plumbing in the mechanical room is literally being held together by caulk and compression strapping, and some of our air handling equipment is clamped together to keep it operational. Additionally, the maintenance staff has been making parts to keep equipment operational, because parts are no longer available.

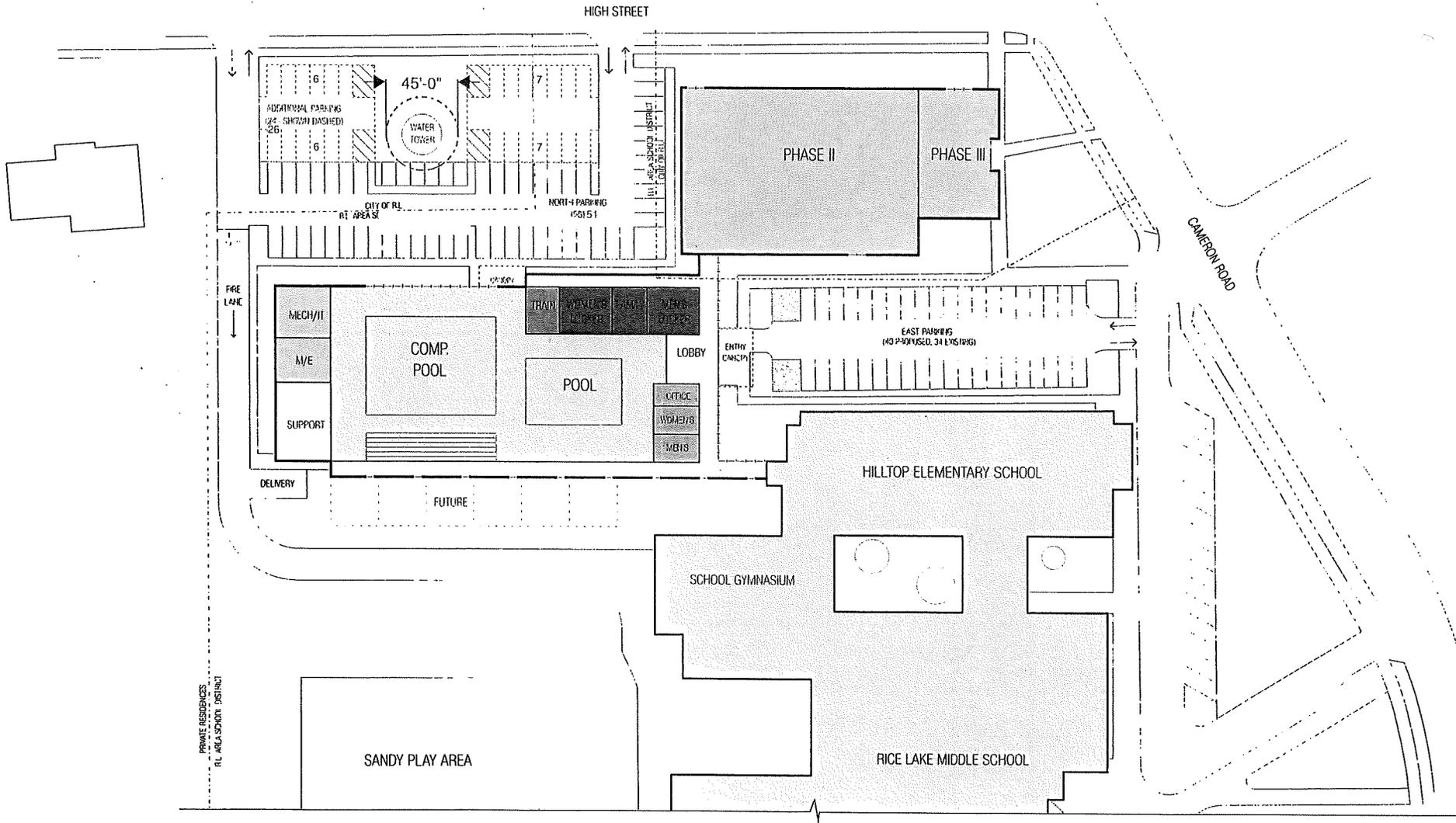
The community, knowing that they may lose their only indoor community facility, had petitioned the city to seek a solution. Ultimately, neither the city nor the school district was able to resolve the problem due to financial constraints. On February 11, 2020, the community group proposed a plan to the city for a community center, developed by an architect. The proposed development would replace the old pool with a new pool facility and renovate the existing pool building into a gymnasium with a walking track. The proposal gained city support to invest \$2,000,000 to renovate the existing pool facility into a community gym. The committee is now raising funds to construct a new pool facility. The Rice Lake community is not a wealthy. Over 40% of Rice Lake School District students are on free and reduced lunch, so it is a significant task for a community like Rice Lake to raise the funds to complete such a project. The pool portion of our project is projected to cost \$10,000,000 complete. We have financial projections from a pool consultant that indicates our community can support the operating costs of a new facility through lease revenues from local medical providers, the school district, and facility entrance fees. These same projections indicate that the revenues can also support debt payments for a \$6.5 million in debt issuance. Therefore, the community group must raise \$3.5 million dollars to complete this project. Our group has already brought in over \$1.3 million, and we believe we can raise between \$2 and \$2.5 million in total. This leaves our project about \$1.0 to \$1.5 million short of the goal of completing a community center.

This project would both replace a pool that is in dire need of replacement and create a much-needed community center for the Rice Lake region. The community simply does not have indoor facilities readily available to the community during the winter months. We understand that Rice Lake would not have a guarantee to any funds from this grant, but we do hope to have an opportunity to apply. The only way that can occur is if the senate approves this grant program. We ask that you please support this grant program and encourage other senators to do so also.

Thank You

Patrick Blackaller
W545 County Rd D
Birchwood, WI 54817



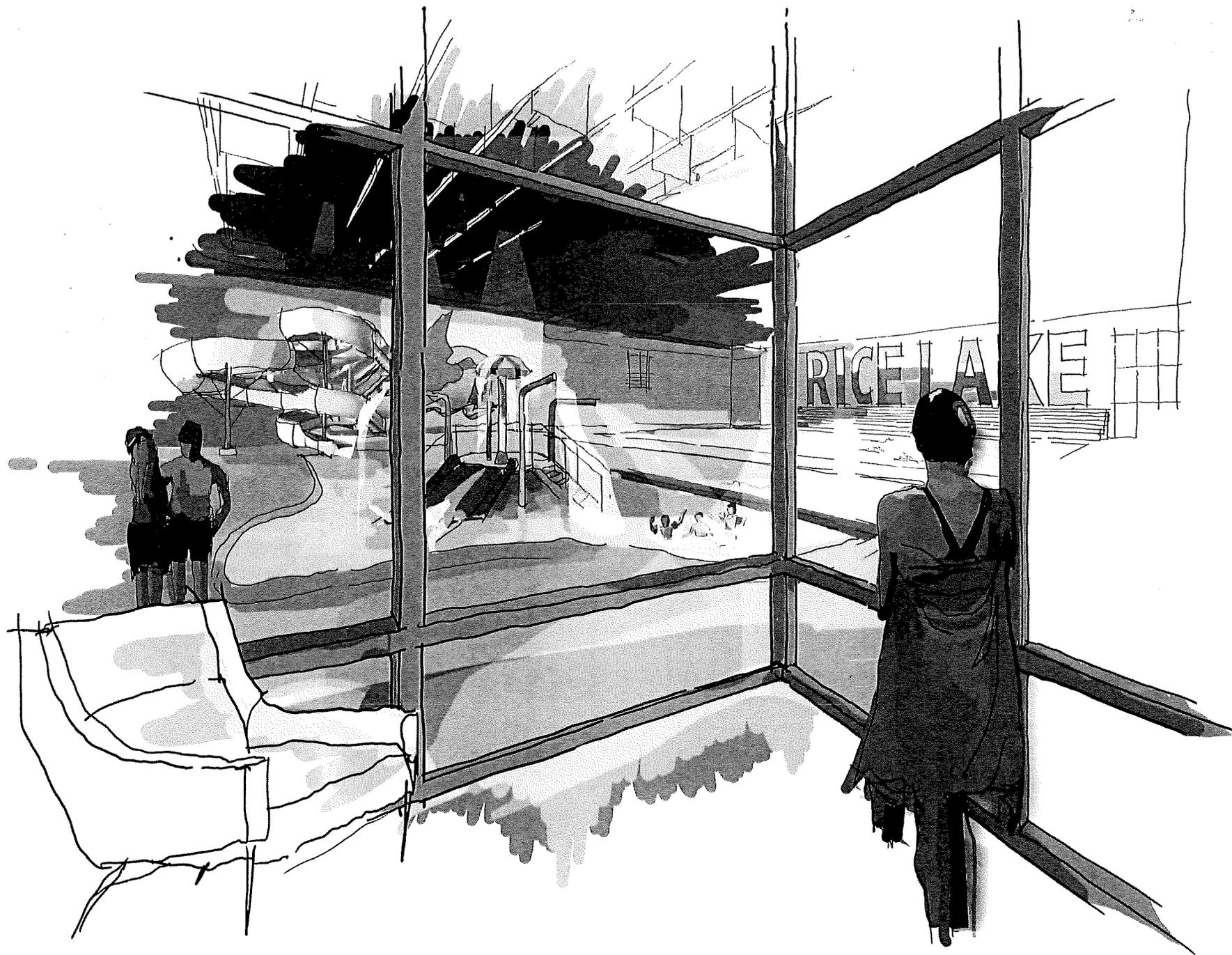


RICE LAKE AQUATICS CENTER - OPTION 9

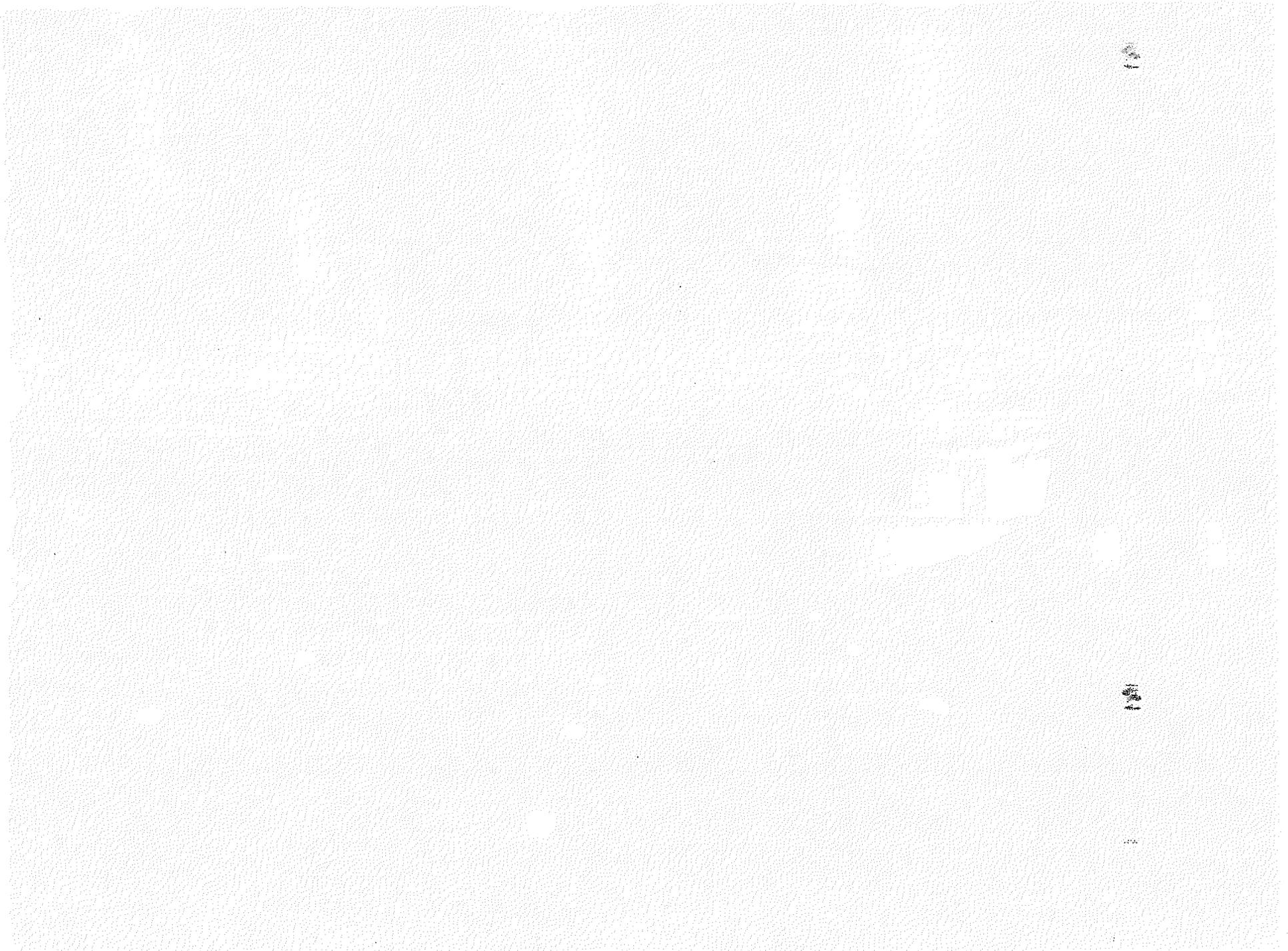
June 19, 2018 | © 2018 JLG ARCHITECTS

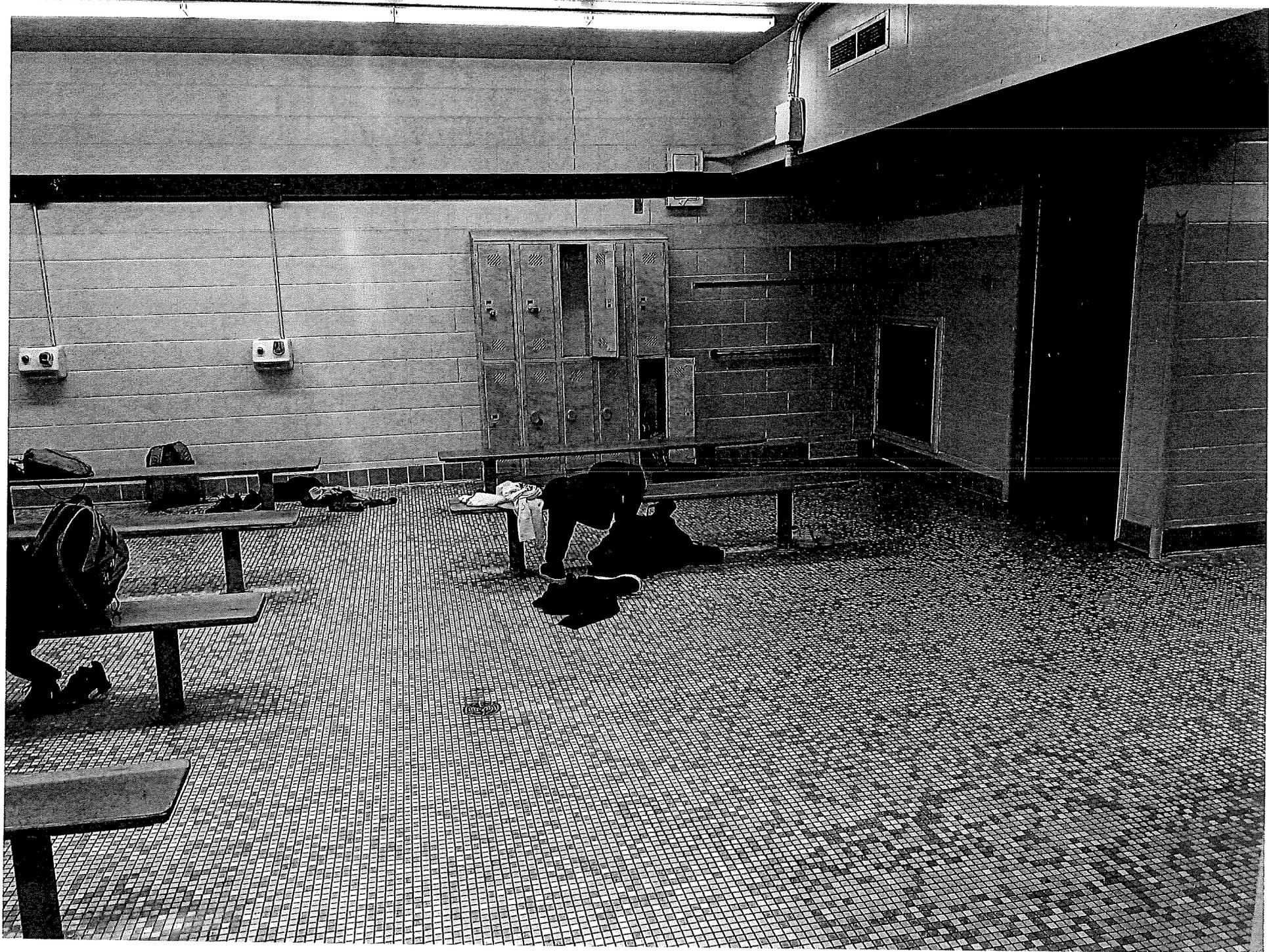


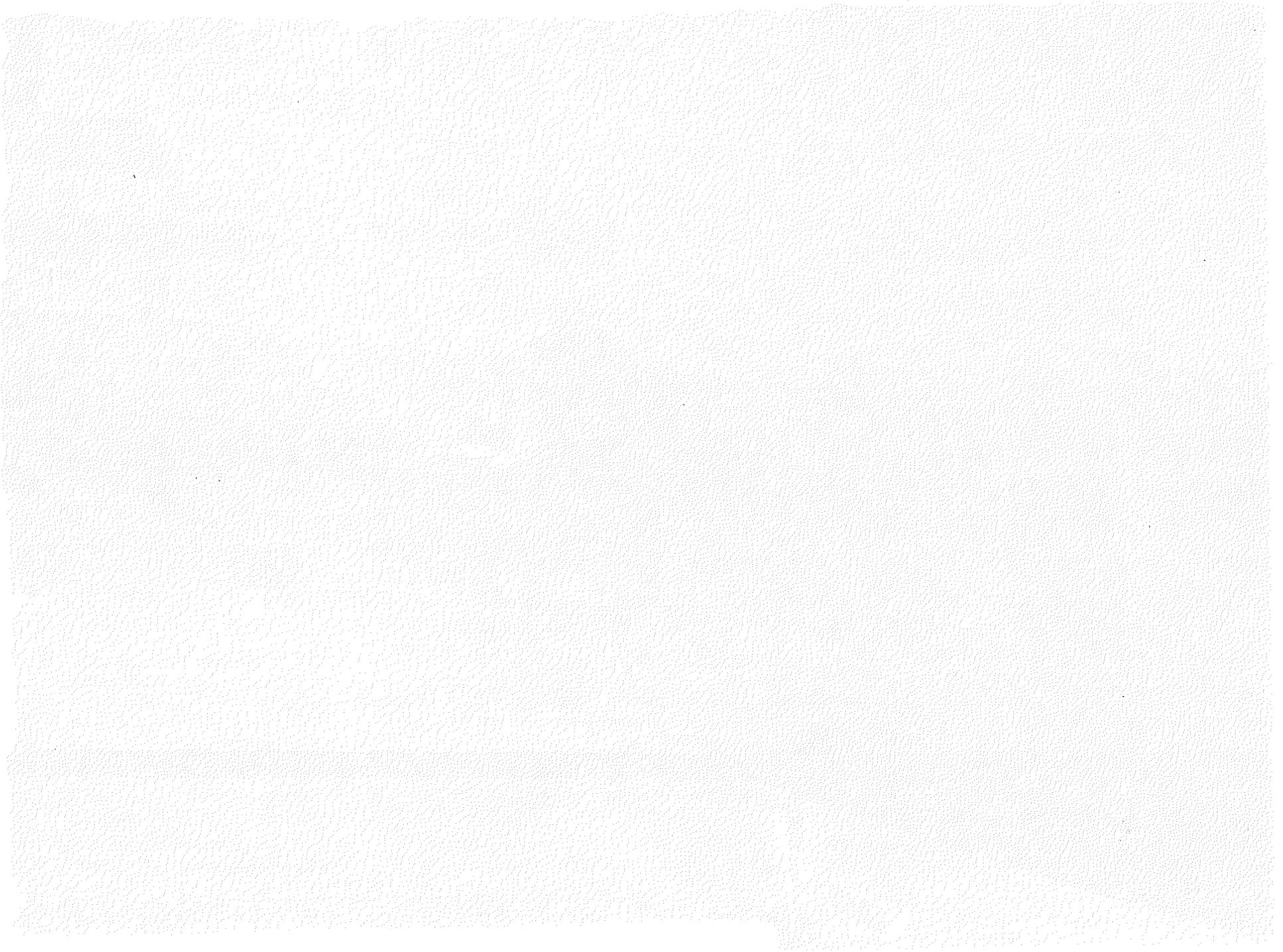
DESIGN FOR LIFE

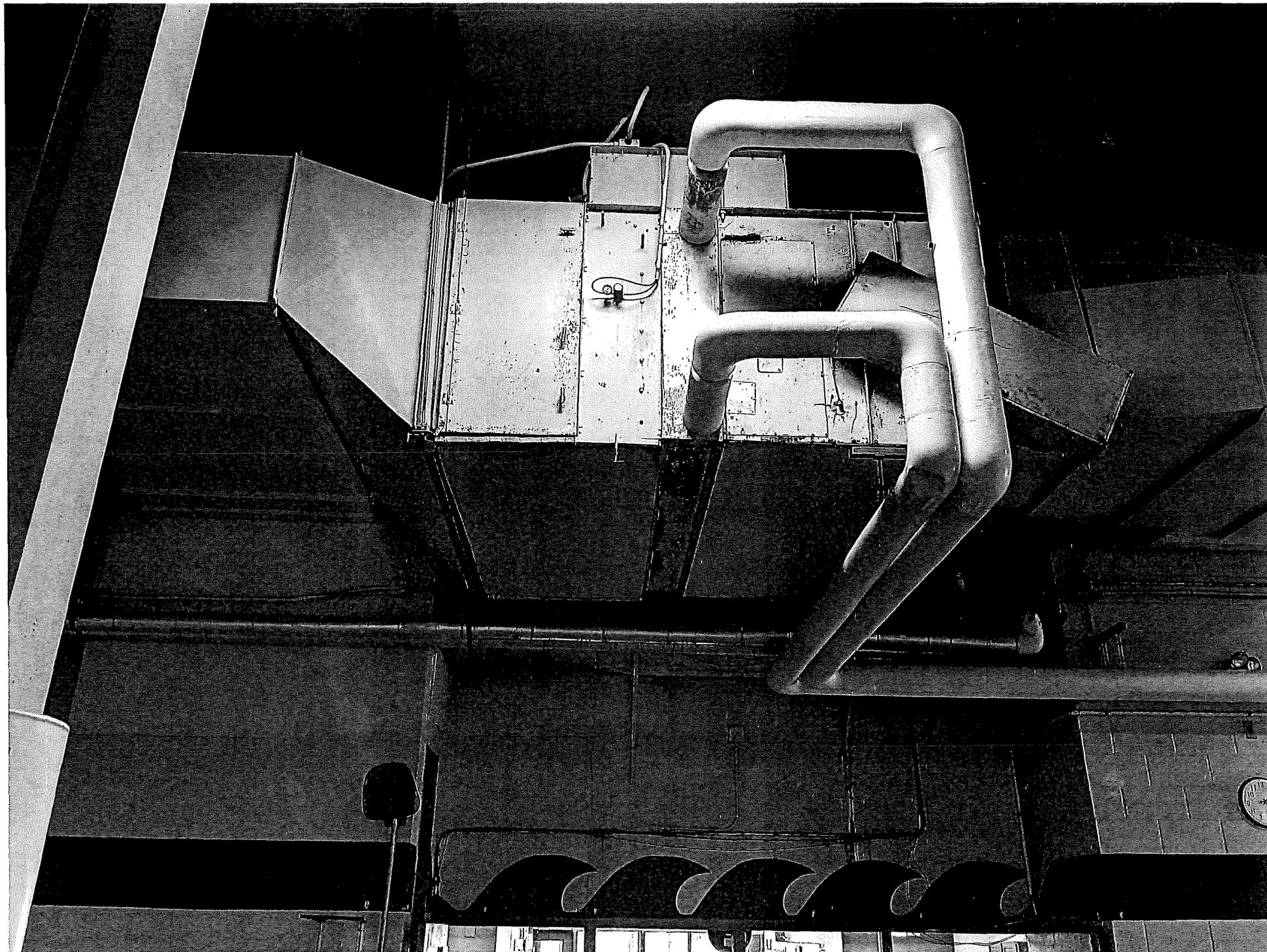


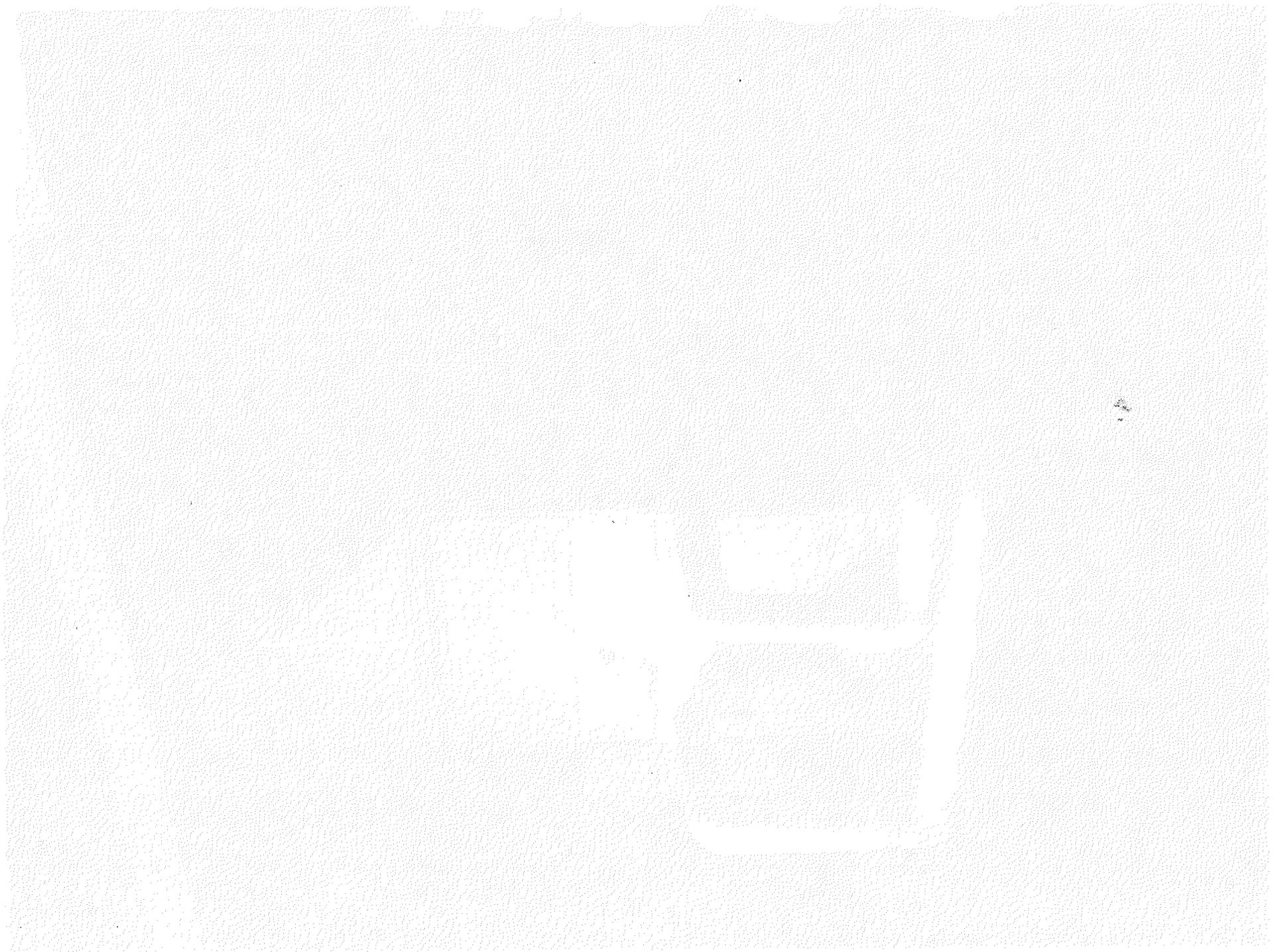


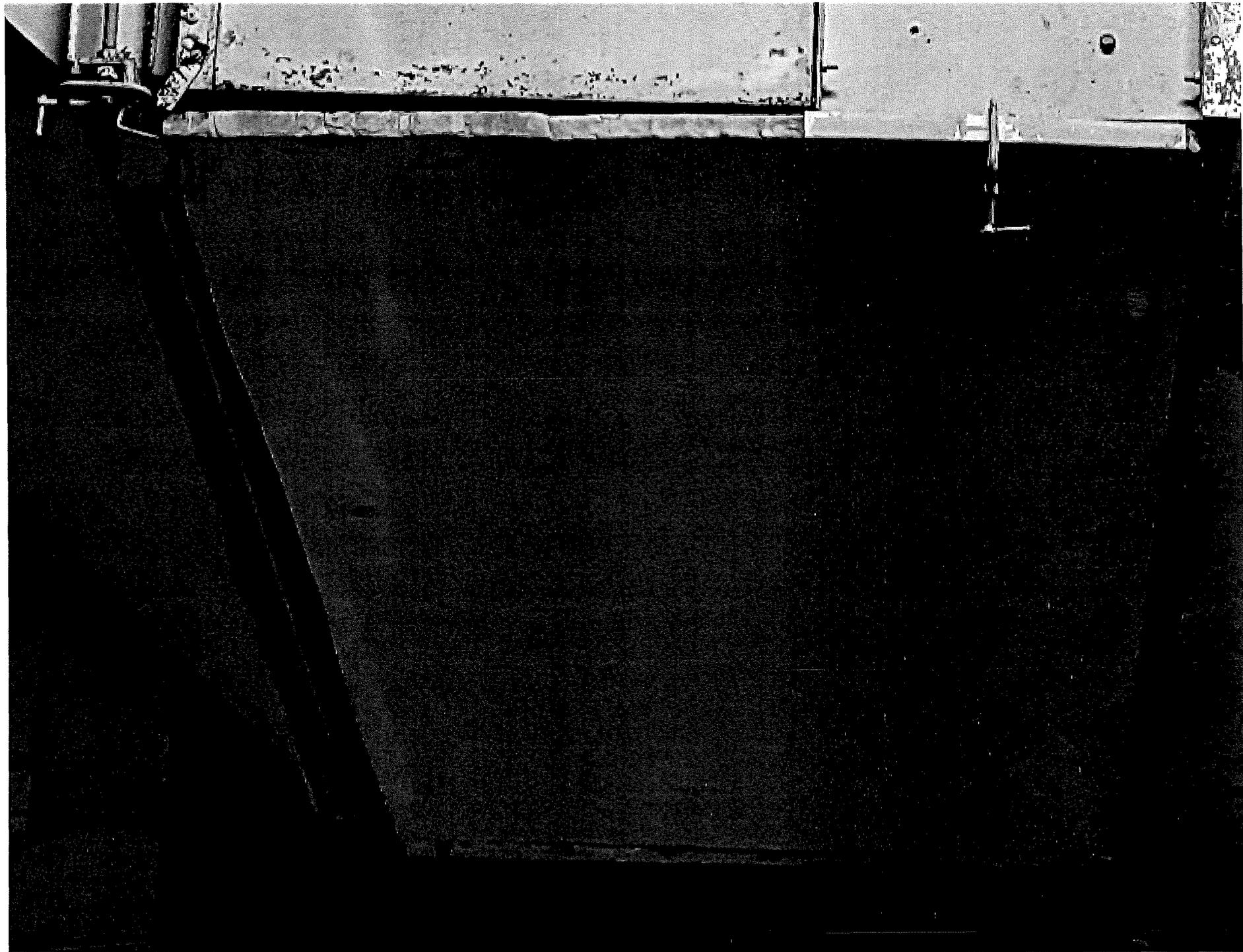


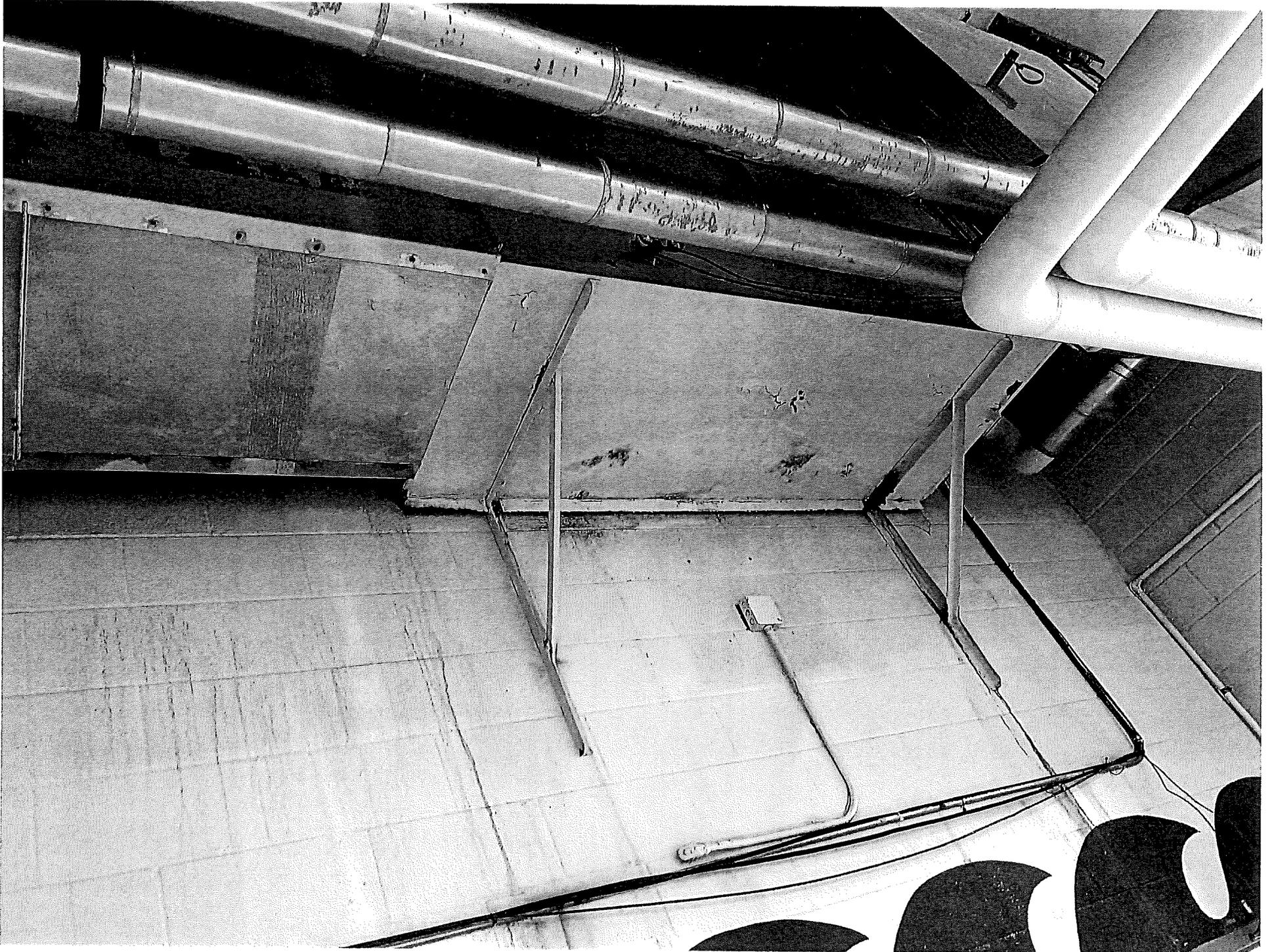




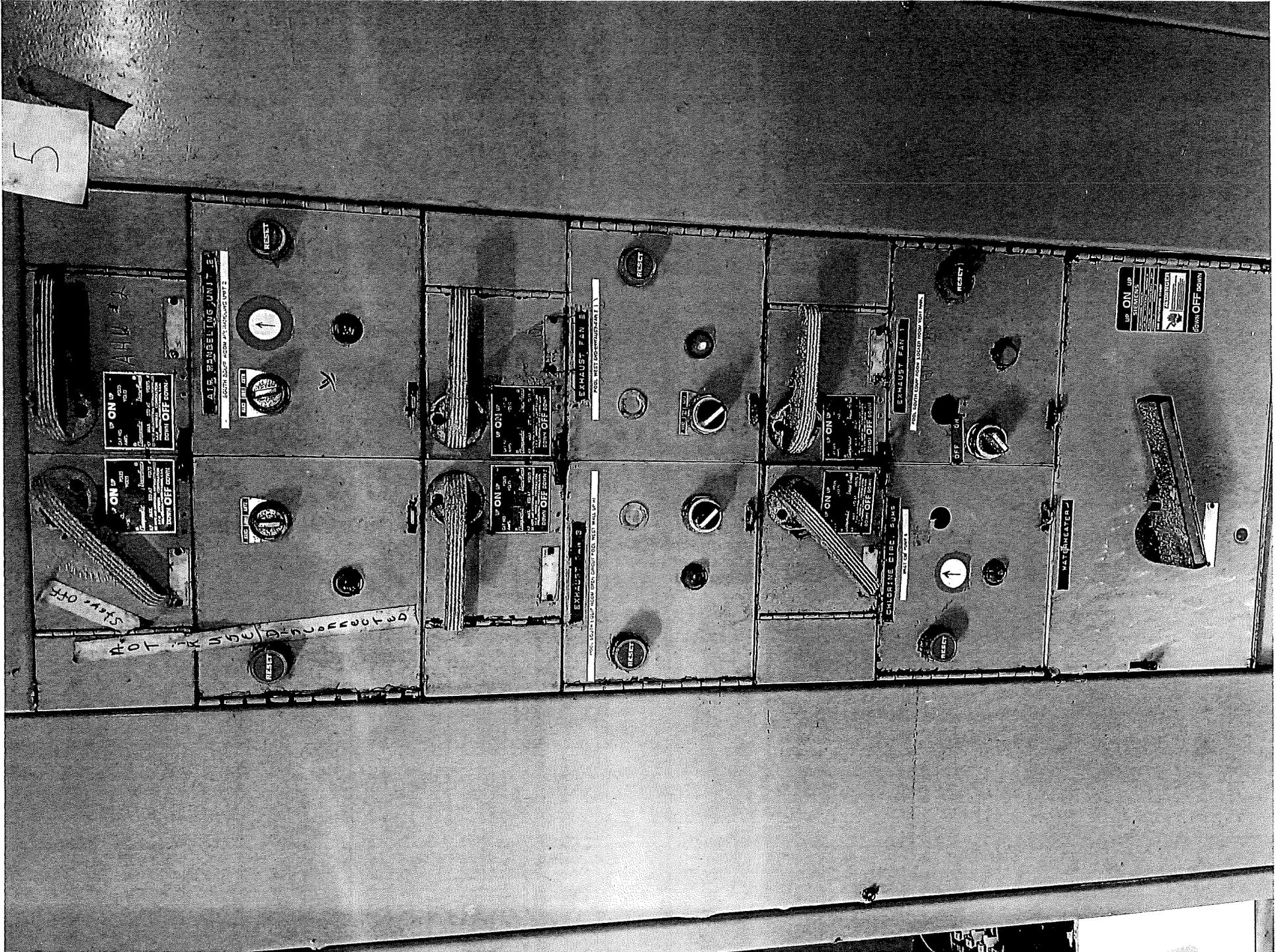


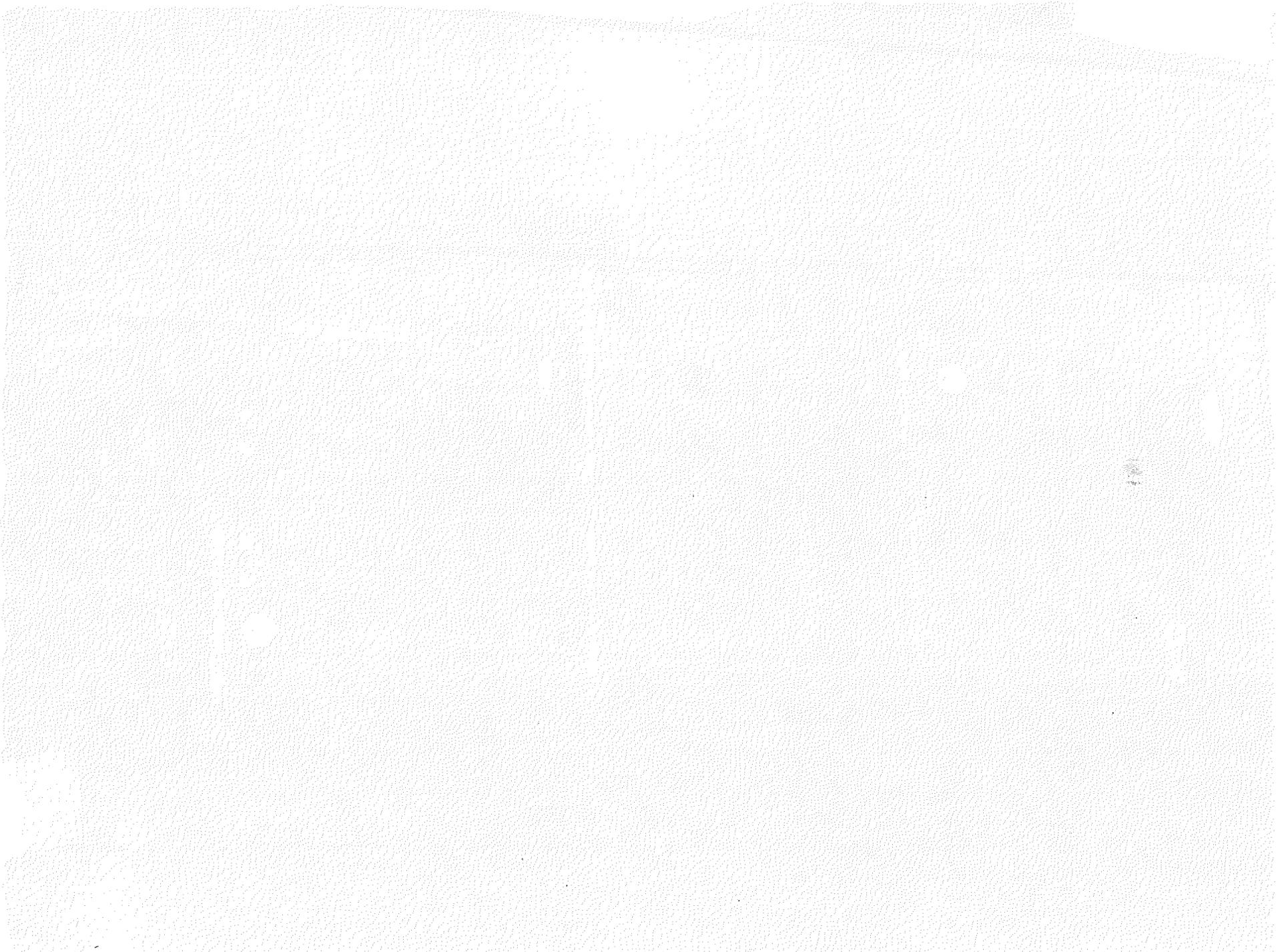


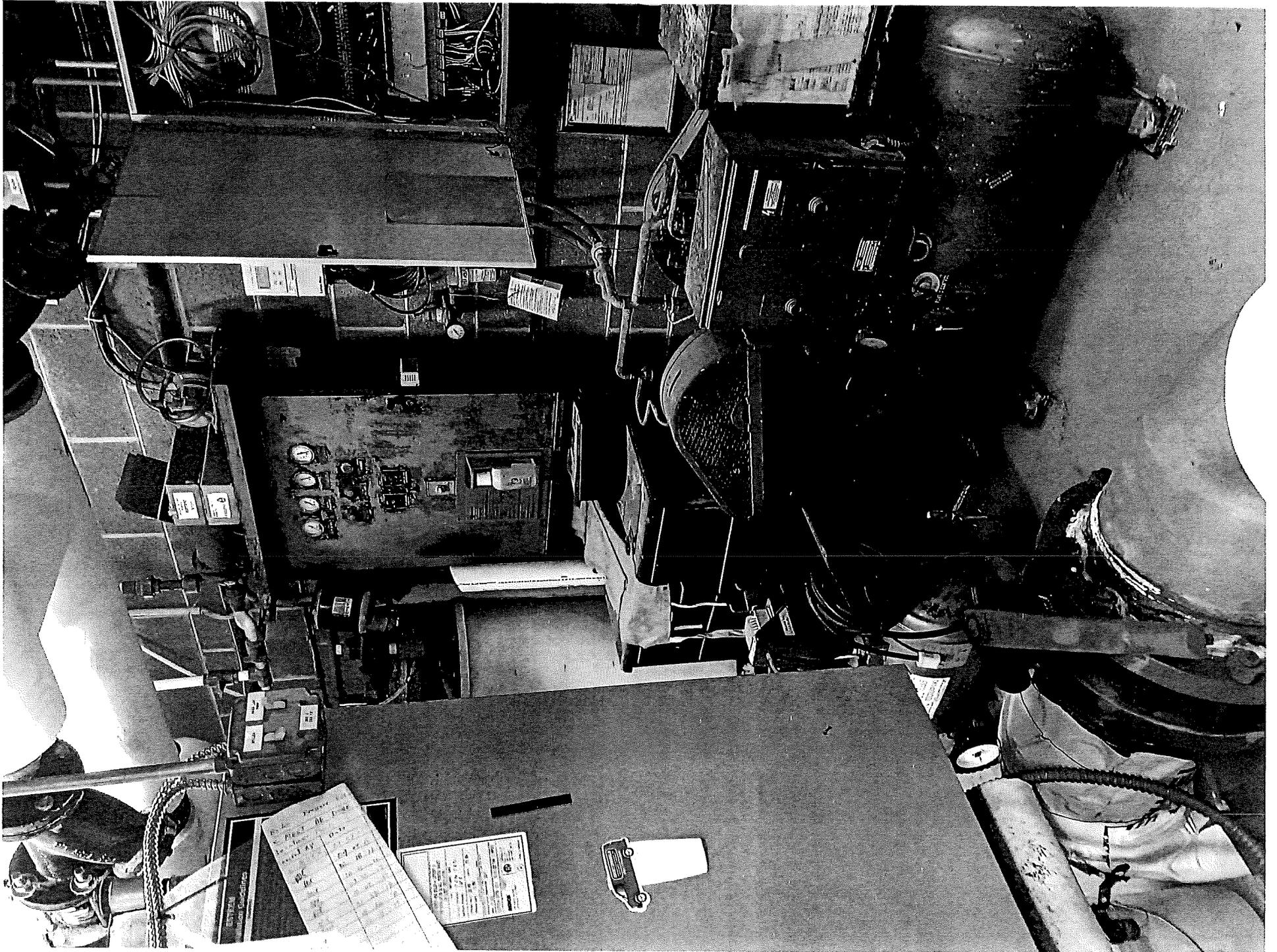








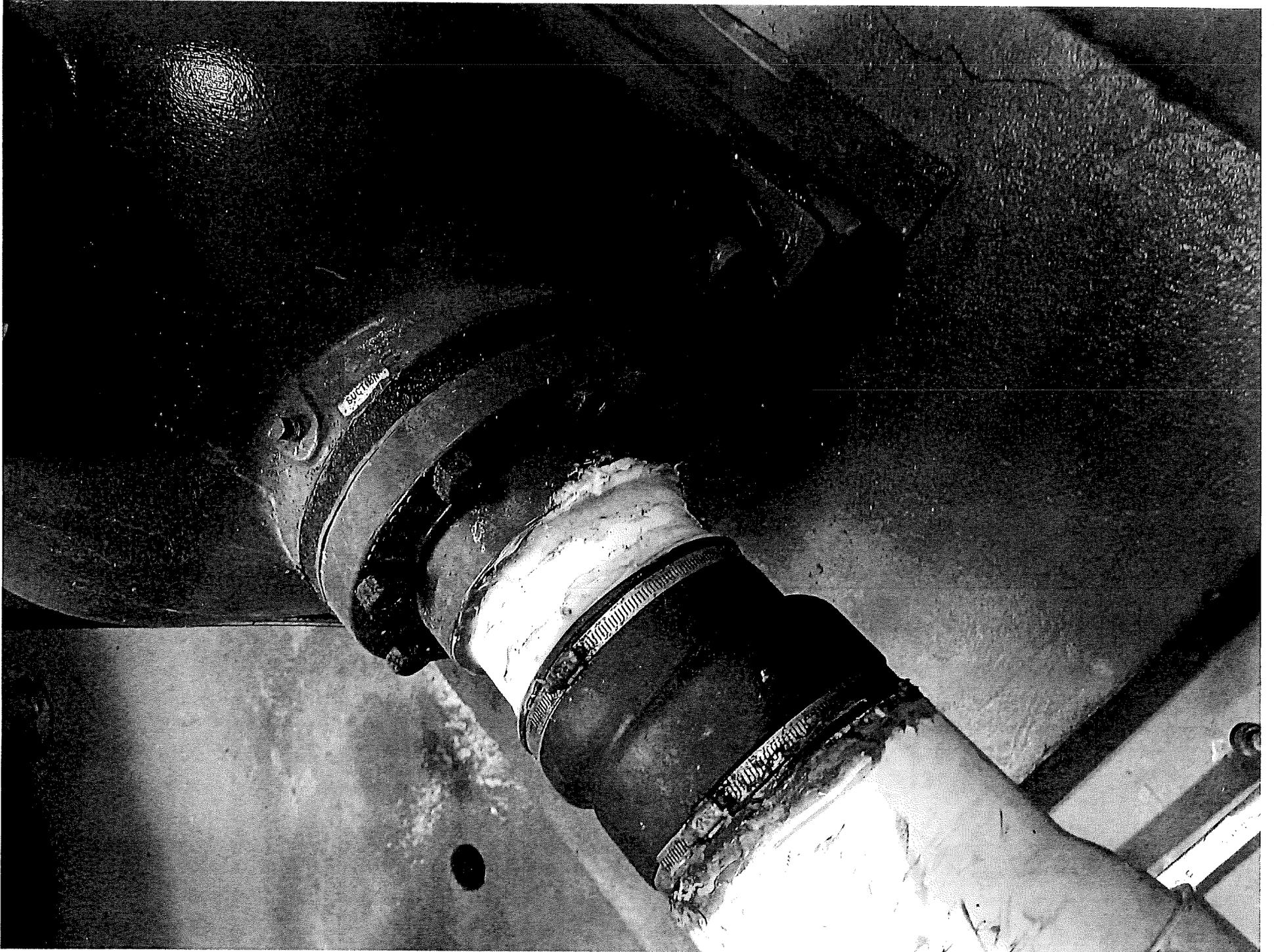






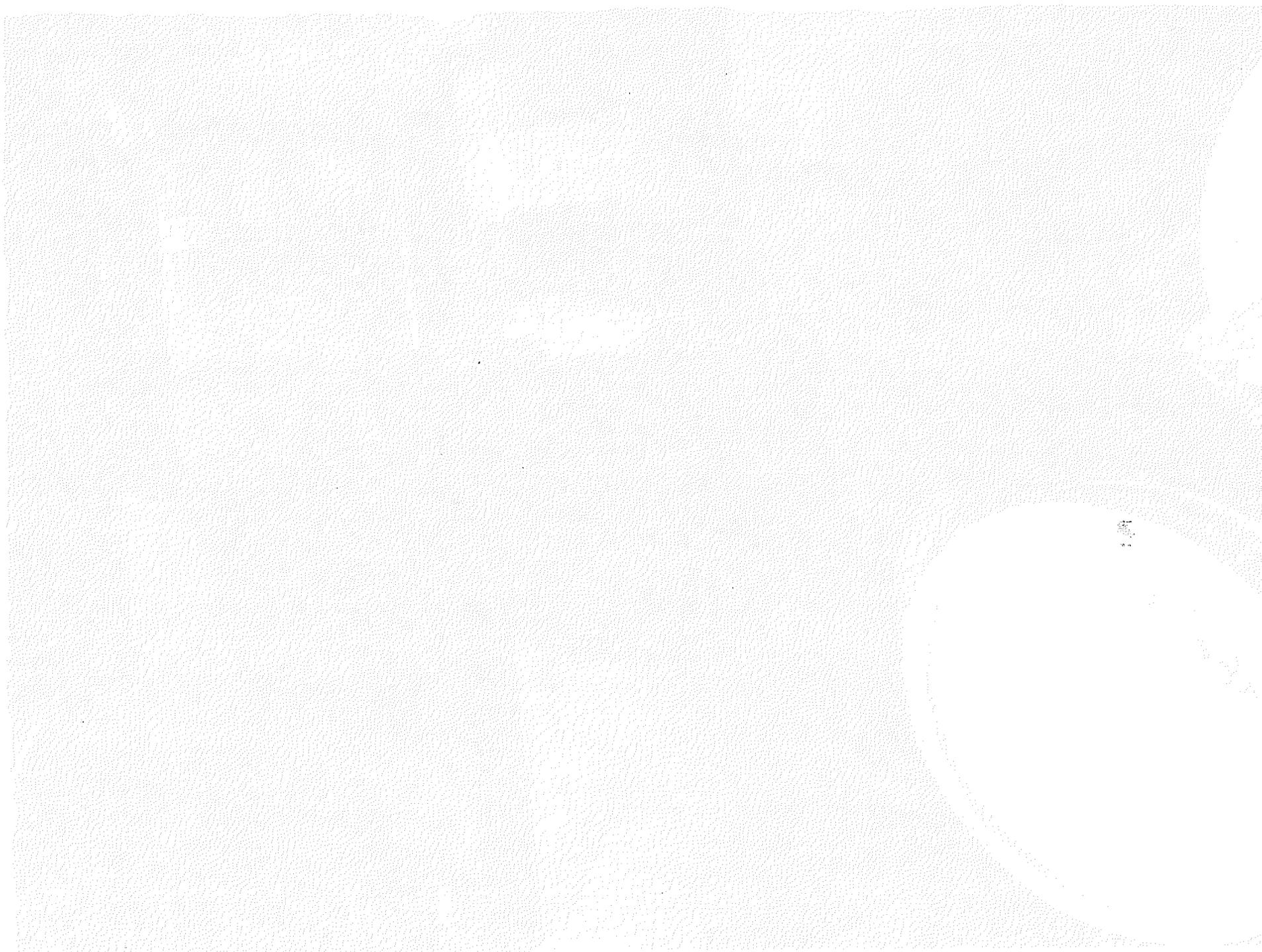


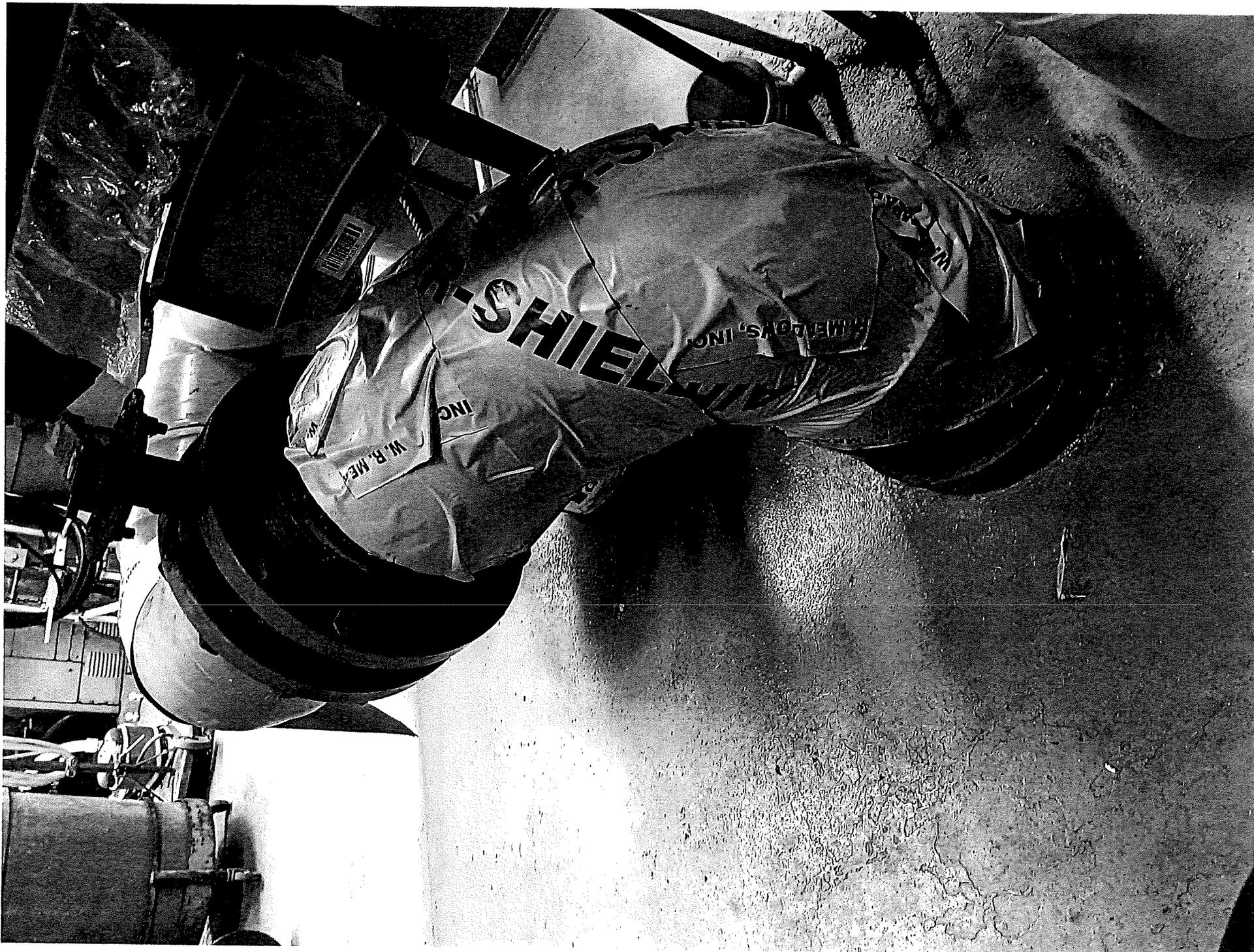




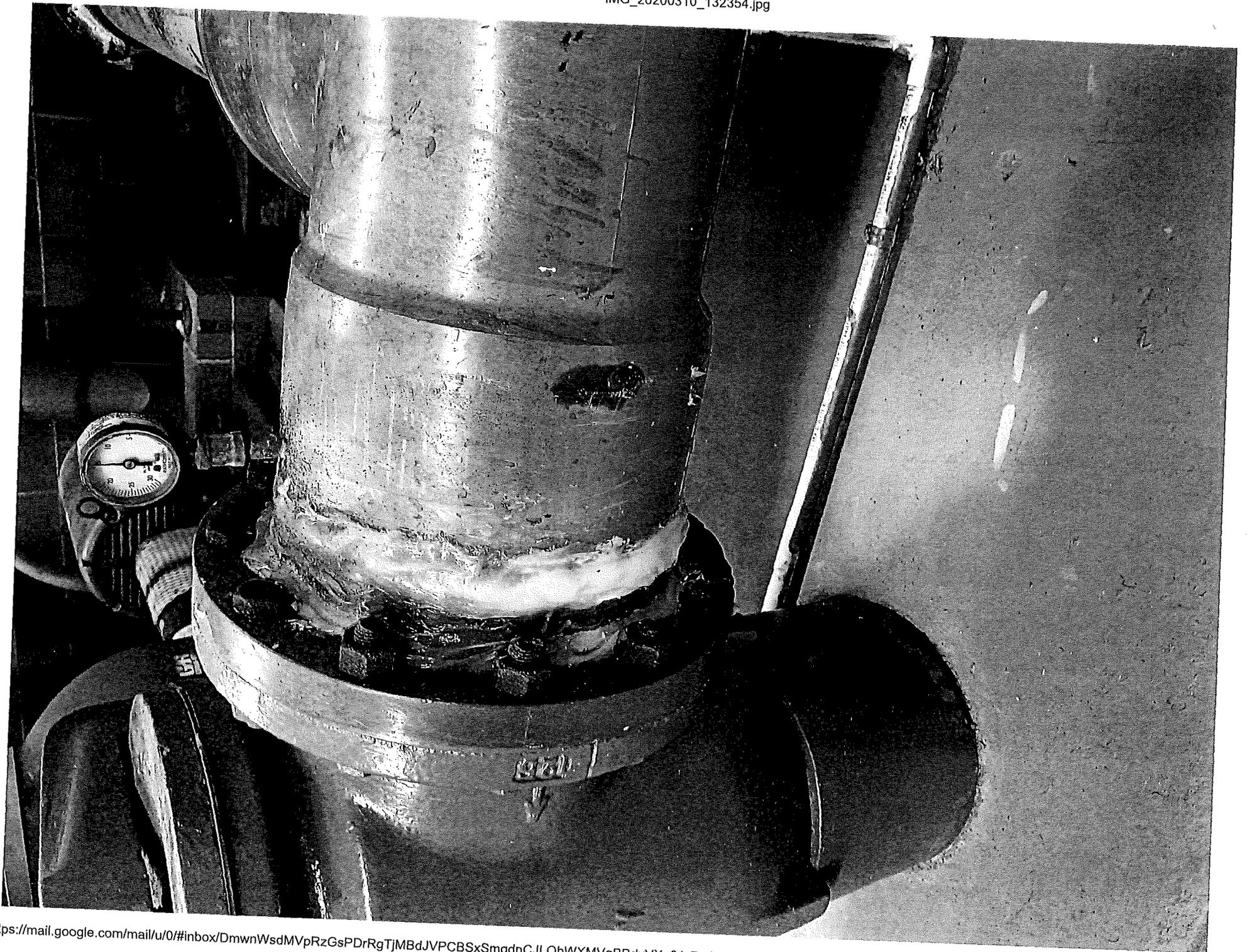
















To: Members, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
From: Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association (WPRA)
Date: March 11, 2020
RE: Comments for Information Only Assembly Bill 895

WPRA submits these comments for information only regarding Assembly Bill 895, relating to construction of or improvements to indoor, athletic or aquatic athletic facilities, granting bonding authority, and making an appropriation.

WPRA is a membership association that represents over 1,200 individuals delivering a broad spectrum of services in Wisconsin. Our members include Park, Recreation and Therapeutic Recreation professionals in local, county, state, school district, private and agency settings. WPRA also represents public Park and Recreation Boards and Commissions, students, commercial firms and Emeritus (retired) members.

In concept, WPRA supports funding for projects that promote athletic and aquatic activities in our communities. Across the state currently there are local projects occurring or in development that fit into this category. However, WPRA urges the committee to consider allowing outdoor aquatic and athletic facilities projects to also be eligible for the grant program. The bill as currently only limited to indoor projects.

Most municipal agencies have outdoor pools and athletic facilities. Establishing a grant program just for indoor projects eliminates a large portion of potential projects without consideration of the community or economic development benefits for these projects. If a community can obtain the 50 percent nonstate revenue match for the construction or improvement of an outdoor aquatic or athletic facility, they should also be able to apply for this grant.

Given the time left in the legislative session, we understand that a potential change to the bill could jeopardize its advancement. However, WPRA believes this legislation should be amended to provide an opportunity for both types of the projects to apply.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.