

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of August 5, 2008

SUBJECT: African American Cultural and Historical Museum PUD Zoning District and PUD Site Plan (1528 Pontiac Trail) File Nos. PUDS08-001

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the African American Cultural and Historical Museum PUD (Planned Unit Development) Zoning District and Supplemental Regulations, and PUD Site Plan, subject to approval of necessary variances by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the African American Cultural and Historical Museum PUD zoning district and supplemental regulations be **approved** because the uses, physical characteristics, design features and amenities proposed provide a beneficial effect for the City and are consistent with elements of the adopted Master Plan, as discussed below.

Staff recommends that the African American Cultural and Historical Museum PUD site plan be **approved** because it would comply with the PUD zoning district development program and supplemental regulations; would not cause a public or private nuisance; and would not have a detrimental effect on the public health, safety or welfare.

LOCATION

This site is located on Pontiac Trail just south of John A. Woods Drive (Northeast Area, Traver Creek Watershed).

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The proposed use of the property is for a museum highlighting the African American culture and history in Washtenaw County. The structure is the historic Polhemus house built in 1848 and moved from original location at 411 East Washington Street to its current location in 2006. The house will undergo extensive renovation on its interior and exterior and will maintain its historical residential appearance. The museum will contain meeting space and historical archives along with a small, 100-square foot, gift shop for sale of merchandise directly related to the museum and its function. A small addition will be constructed on the rear of the building to accommodate a stairwell and elevator. The existing structure is 2,923 square feet and will be expanded to 3,301 square feet after the addition is completed.

Parking will be limited to three on-site parking spaces. This area is smaller than the 1,200-square foot minimum area required for a parking lot, as such the parking area is not considered a parking lot and a conflicting land use buffer is not required. Parking will be accommodated through the use of public streets and a formal agreement recorded with the Bethel AME Church

located around the corner on John A. Woods Drive. Busses and cars will be encouraged to park in the church parking lot. There will be six bicycle parking spaces provided.

The museum will be open to the public during limited hours and will host school groups approximately twice a week during the day. The petitioner has provided the following estimation of usage times by various groups:

Research and organizational activities:

2 office workers/archivists, 8 hours/day, 5 days/week.
 1 or 2 researchers, average 2 hours/day, 2 or 3 days/week.

Museum Visitation:

1 or 2 guides, 10 - 4 Saturday; +/- 10 visitors for average 30 - 45 minutes.
 30 students with 3 adults, twice/week for average 60 minutes.

Board Meeting:

10 - 12 members, once a month for average of 2 hours.

Committee/Project Meetings:

3 - 5 members twice a month for average of 2 hours.

The public benefits (required standards for PUD approval) associated with this PUD proposal include: (1) innovative land use and design, layout and type of structure which furthers the stated design goals and characteristics of adopted land use plans and policies; (2) re-using an existing site and building that contributes to the desired character of an established neighborhood; and (3) establishment of a historical and cultural resource for the City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County.

SURROUNDING LAND USE

	LAND USE	ZONING
NORTH	Residential	R1C (Single-family Dwelling District)
EAST	Residential	R1C
SOUTH	Residential	R1C
WEST	Residential	R1C

COMPARISON CHART – ZONING DISTRICTS

		EXISTING ZONING STANDARDS	PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS
Zoning		R1C	PUD
Gross Lot Area		16,400 sq ft	16,400 sq ft
Minimum Usable Open Space		None	50%
Setbacks	Front	25 Feet Minimum	26 feet 6 inches
	Side – North	5 Feet Minimum	19 feet 6 inches
	Side – South	5 Feet Minimum	21 feet
	Rear	30 Feet Minimum	42 feet 6 inches
Height		30 Feet Maximum	30 Feet Maximum
Parking – Automobiles		1 Space (Based on residential use)	3 Spaces
Parking – Bicycles		None (Based on residential use)	6 spaces - Class C

HISTORY

The existing structure on the property was moved in November of 2006 from its previous location at 411-413 E. Washington Street. This historic home was built in 1848 for Albert and Leah Polhemus. A proposed mixed-use retail development necessitated the removal of the house from its former location in downtown Ann Arbor to its current location. The property was vacant prior to the house relocation.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

This site is located in the Northeast Area Planning Area. The Northeast Area Plan (NEAP) identifies this site for single and two-family uses. While the proposed use is not directly consistent with proposed residential land uses, the scale and design of the site is consistent with surrounding land use and the building will maintain the exterior appearance of a single-family home. The proposed use meets many of the other goals of the NEAP, such as supporting the viability of existing neighborhoods, protecting the integrity of existing historic neighborhoods, providing extensive landscape buffering between residential uses and non-residential uses, and use of on-site rain gardens for creative storm water management.

PUD STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL

The City Planning Commission may recommend approval, and City Council may approve, the proposed PUD zoning district based on the following standards, per Section 5:80(6) of the Zoning Ordinance (**standards in bold**, *petitioner comments in italics*) (please also refer to the Petition for Establishment of PUD Zoning District submitted by the petitioner, which is attached):

- 1. List, describe and explain the objectives, purposes and beneficial effect(s) proposed to be achieved by the PUD zoning district. Refer to 5:80(6)(a).**

The proposed use for the property is to become the permanent home of the African American Cultural & Historical Museum of Washtenaw County (AACHM). This is an organization that has been in existence in the community since 1993. They have been operating out of the David R. Byrd Center located at 3261 Lohr Road, but are in need of a permanent home to house their archives, provide space for special exhibits, group meetings and lectures and offer a place of archival research for individual scholars. The AACHM Mission Statement:

"The African American Cultural and Historical Museum promotes an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the "Black Experience" specifically through its acquisitions, exhibitions, educational programs, symposia, publications, and related activities, the Museum disseminates knowledge of the African ancestral heritage; and the history, social life, and aesthetic expressions of the diverse communities of the diaspora."

The proposed museum would be a cultural and historic resource for Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County as well as the immediate neighborhood. The Northside neighborhood has a historic connection to the African American Community in Ann Arbor. There were many homes in the neighborhood that were a stop on the Underground Railroad. In particular, the Guy Beckley House located at 1709 Pontiac Trail was a stop on the Underground Railroad. Reverend Guy Beckley lived at the home and published a national antislavery newspaper entitled "Signal of Liberty" from 1841-1847. This home is listed on the National Underground Railroad, Network of Freedom, a program run by the National Park Service.

The existing structure on the property was moved in November of 2006 from its previous location at 411-413 E. Washington. This historic home was built in 1848 for Albert and Leah Polhemus. A

proposed mixed-use retail development necessitated the removal of the house from its former location in downtown Ann Arbor to the residential area of Pontiac Trail. The property was vacant prior to the house relocation. This project seeks to restore the building and the property to its historic and residential character. To this effect, the project meets the requirements of 5:80(6)(a)(vii):

“The use and reuse of existing sites and buildings which contributes to the desired character and form of an established neighborhood.”

The museum would be a unique cultural asset for the neighborhood and community. The establishment of a museum at this site would meet the requirements of 5:80(6)(a)(i):

“Innovation in land use and variety in design, layout and type of structure which furthers the stated design goals and physical character of adopted land use plans and policies”

- 2. Explain why the beneficial effect cannot be achieved under any other zoning designation. If applicable, explain how the beneficial effect exceeds the requirements of any existing standard, regulation or ordinance. Refer to 5:80(6)(b).**

The proposed museum is a unique use and does not fit into any other specified zoning classification. The building will house the AACHM offices, which would be permitted under the O – Office designation, but this will be accessory to the main use of the building, which would be the museum use. In order to permit the museum use in the surrounding residential neighborhood, a PUD zoning classification approval is required.

- 3. Explain why the use or uses proposed will not have a detrimental effect on public utilities or surrounding properties. Refer to 5:80(6)(c).**

The proposed Museum use will ultimately house two full-time employees and volunteers that would work for limited hours during the week and for special events on weekends and evenings. It is anticipated that the museum would host school and community groups of approximately 30 people, two times per week during the weekday when a majority of the neighbors would be away at work. Due to the limited operational hours and the residential nature of the structure, the proposed use would not require additional public utilities beyond those required for a residential use.

- 4. Explain how the proposed PUD objectives, purposes, beneficial effects, and land uses conform to the adopted Master Plan and policies of the City. If the proposal does not conform to the City’s adopted plan and policies, provide detailed, compelling justification. Refer to 5:80(6)(d).**

The city’s “Northeast Area – Future Land Use Map 24” indicates this parcel planned for Single and Two Family Residential land use. Although the museum use is not consistent with the adopted Future Land Use Map designation, the project meets certain goals that are laid out in the Northeast Area plan.

Goal A: To ensure that development projects are designed and constructed in a way that preserves or enhances the integrity of natural systems.

Objective 1: Encourage developers to use innovative design techniques to help protect or enhance natural systems.

The re-use of the existing structure for the museum use eliminates the need for new development for this type of project, thus protecting the city’s natural systems.

Goal D: To support the continued viability, health and safety of Northeast Area residential neighborhoods.

Objective 1: Encourage new development and redevelopment within established residential areas to complement the design elements of the neighborhood, including size and height.

The establishment of the museum will provide a cultural asset to the neighborhood and provide an identity to the area. The redevelopment of the existing structure will be consistent with the surrounding residential character of the neighborhood.

Objective 2: Protect the integrity of historic neighborhoods.

The Greek Revival structure on the site was relocated from its previous location at 411-413 E. Washington Street in Downtown Ann Arbor. The Albert Polhemus House was listed as an Individual Historic Property at its previous location. The original house was built in 1848 for Albert and Leah Polhemus and their family of six. The house was occupied by Reverend Maltby Gelston Jr. in 1861. Reverend Gelston and his brother, Mills B. Gelston were "supply" ministers for small churches in Lower Michigan. Maltby's son, Joseph Mills Gelston, was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor from 1888 to 1909. Although not on its original site, the structure has historic significance to the City of Ann Arbor and this project aims to restore the structure as a symbol of the historic nature of the neighborhood and the Museums goals.

The museum directly addresses several goals as stated in Chapter 9 – Historic Preservation of the "Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County" as adopted by the Washtenaw County Board of Governors September 22, 2004.

Objective 2: Provide effective programs, tools and techniques for the protection of our unique historic resources.

Recommendation 2.6: Underground Railroad Registration. Facilitate the registration and protection of Underground Railroad resources in Washtenaw County.

Recommendation 2.7: Michigan Freedom Trail Register. Support local efforts to nominate Underground Railroad resources to the Michigan Freedom Trail Register.

Recommendation 2.8: Freedom Trail Network. Work with the Michigan Freedom Trail Registry and the African American Cultural and Heritage Museum to strengthen the County's ability to protect these historic resources.

As stated in the Comprehensive Plan, there are 36 documented sites related to the Underground Railroad in Washtenaw County. Only Gordon Hall is protected under local ordinance, and the Guy Beckley House is the only one listed as a site on the Network to Freedom Program. The establishment of the Museum will foster research on the remaining 34 sites, enrich the knowledge about this local history, and encourage these sites to be listed on the Network to Freedom Program meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County.

- 5. If increased densities are requested in order for the PUD to provide affordable housing for lower income households, describe the type of housing, number of units, and how the affordability and availability of the units will be assured. Refer to 5:80(6)(e).**

Not Applicable.

- 6. Describe how vehicular and pedestrian circulation will be provided and how the proposal will encourage and support alternate methods of transportation. Refer to 5:80(6)(g).**

The proposed site design includes a residential sized driveway and paved patio surface at the east end of the building that can accommodate three parking spaces and a back-up turn-around space. There will be two entrances to the building. The primary visitor entrance will be from the street side, with a walkway from the sidewalk to the front entrance. Barrier Free access will be available from the

east/patio side of the building. Group visits to the museum via private bus will be by Pontiac Trail with short term stopping for drop-offs and pick-ups. The bus would then be able to park curbside on adjacent streets, John A. Woods Drive or Indianola Avenue. It is estimated that group visits would last approximately one hour. Individual visitors and researchers will also park on adjacent side streets. Pontiac Trail has recently been redesigned to accommodate a bike lane, so there is easy bicycle access to the Museum. The site also has easy access from other parts of the city by public bus. It is located directly along Route 1 of the AATA Bus Line. In general, the modest level of daily activity at the museum can be readily accommodated by the City's current transportation system.

7. Explain any disturbance of existing natural features or historical features of the site and why this disturbance is necessary. Refer to 5:80(6)(h).

The site was a vacant residential lot prior to the Polhemus house's relocation to it. Perimeter trees (invasive species except for two) remain and are typical of "hedge rows" in older residential neighborhoods. The site was left in a disturbed/unstable condition by the previous owner. There are no significant natural features on the property.

A very significant historic building has been placed on the property, and will become a notable feature of the neighborhood and the larger Washtenaw County community.

8. List any modifications of the City Code that are requested; provide justification for each modification. Refer to 5:80(2).

8a. Use Regulations ~ *Given that the relocated historic building is a residential structure, area, height and placement regulations are consistent with current zoning. The use of the former house as a museum requires PUD rezoning.*

8b. Off-Street Parking ~ *The modest level of activity anticipated along with the size of the site and its surrounding residential neighborhood character suggest an off-street parking program of three spaces for staff and researchers. Visitors and others who drive to the site would be able to park on adjacent streets.*

8c. Landscape Requirements ~ *Landscape screening/buffering of the parking patio's three spaces, in a paved area totaling 1,158.4 square feet, is required as adjacent properties are residential. The modification requested is changing the required buffer strip width of 15 feet. The parking patio's buffer strip width as proposed is 6 feet on the east, 10 feet on the south and 18 feet on the north. A 6-foot high buffer fence is provided along with trees in excess of the requirement, i.e., 1:12' vs 1:20'.*

SERVICE AREA COMMENTS PENDING OR UNRESOLVED

Systems Planning - No footing drain disconnections are required for this project. The petitioner requires three variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals for re-use of the existing curb cut. The petition is scheduled for the August 27, 2008 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

Planning and Development – Planning staff supports the establishment of this unique and creative land use honoring regional history. Staff has expressed concerns regarding buses and excessive parking on neighborhood side streets. The petitioner is currently working on an agreement with the Bethel AME church just around the corner from the subject property on John A. Woods Drive. The petitioner has indicated the church has agreed to the use of the parking lot during the week and the requested letter is forthcoming. The use of this off-site parking arrangement is referenced in the attached Supplemental Regulations.

Prepared by Matt Kowalski
Reviewed by Jeff Kahan and Mark Lloyd
jsj/7/29/08



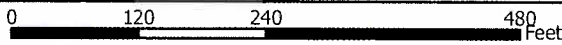
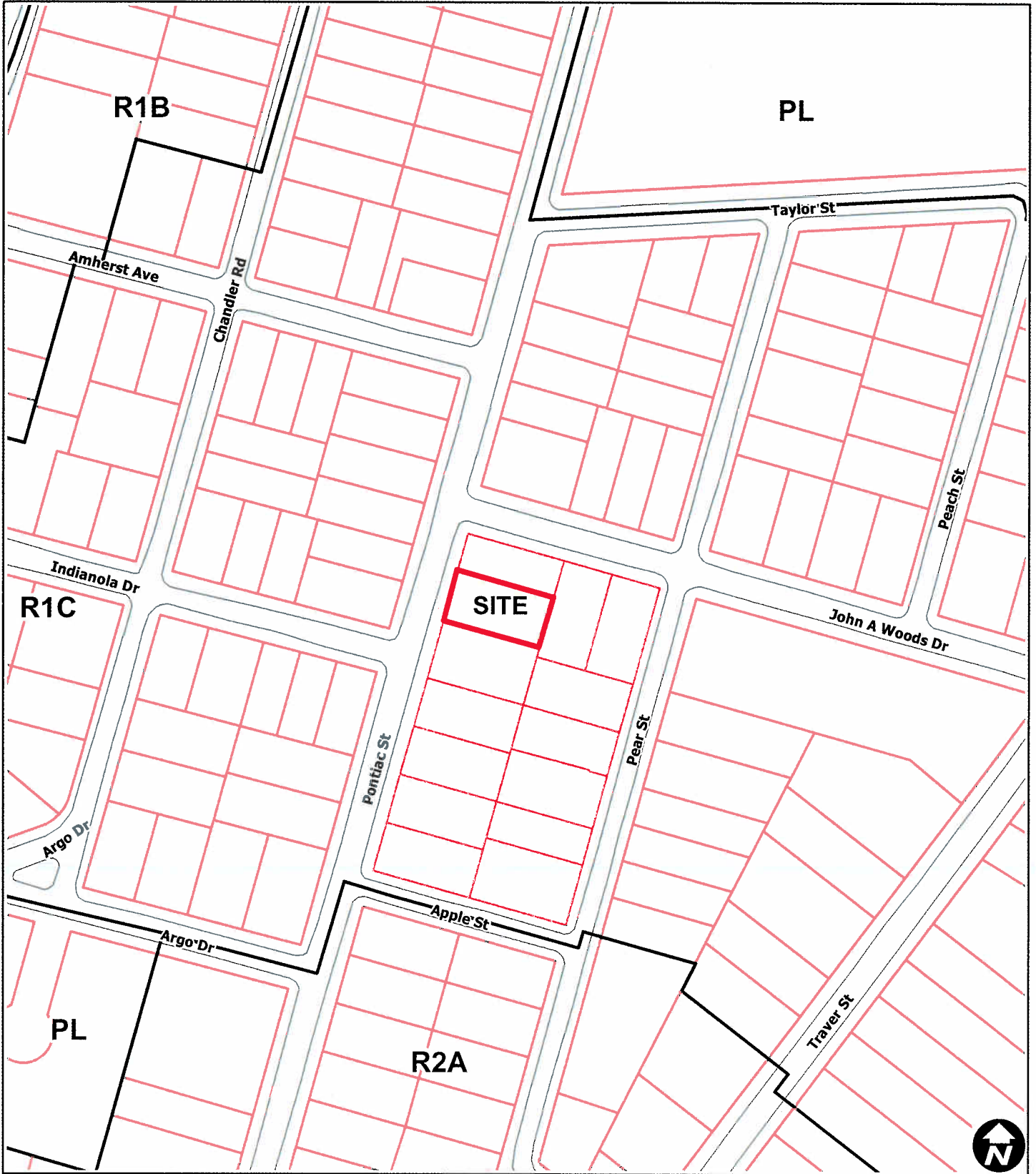
Attachments: Zoning and Parcel Map
Aerial Photo
7/29/08 Draft Supplemental Regulations
PUD Site Plan
PUD Landscape Plan
Floor Plans
Elevations

c: Owner: African American Cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County
c/o The David Byrd Center
3261 Lohr Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Petitioner: Mitchell and Mouat Architects
113 South Fourth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Systems Planning
City Attorney
File No. PUDS08-001

1528 Pontiac Trail -Parcel and Zoning Map-



Map Legend	
	City Boundary
	Railroads



Maps available online:
<http://gisweb.ewashtenaw.org/website/mapwashtenaw/>

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1528 Pontiac Trail -Aerial Map-



0 120 240 480 Feet

Map Legend

- City Boundary
- Railroads



Maps available online:
<http://gisweb.ewashtenaw.org/website/mapwashtenaw/>

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**African American Museum (1528 Pontiac Trail)
Supplemental Regulations**

Section 1: Purpose

It is the purpose of the City Council in adopting these regulations to provide for the establishment of a museum to be developed in harmonious integration with the surrounding neighborhood. These regulations seek to promote development that provides a cultural asset to the City in such a way that it is innovative and efficient, advances the City's land use plans and policies, and contributes to the character of an established neighborhood.

Section 2: Applicability.

The provisions of these regulations shall apply to the property described as follows:

North 52 feet of Lot 6 and the south 16 feet of Lot 7, Block 2, Patridge's Addition to the City of Ann Arbor Subdivision, Liber 60 of Plats, Page 317, Washtenaw County Records, City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan.

Further, the provisions of these regulations shall be adopted and incorporated into the African American Museum (1528 Pontiac Trail) Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district. These regulations, however, are intended to supplement only those provisions in the City Codes that may be modified as a part of a PUD and shall not be construed to replace or modify other provisions or regulations in the City Codes.

Section 3: Findings

During the public hearings on this PUD, the Planning Commission and City Council determined that:

- (A) It is desirable to develop the property described above for the establishment of the African American Museum of Cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County (AACHM).
- (B) The surrounding neighborhood contains several historic sights that were a part of the Underground Railroad system. The Beckley residence, a block north at 1709 Pontiac Trail, is on the National Underground Railroad Network of Freedom, a program run by the National Park Service. The neighborhood has historic ties to the African American community in Ann Arbor.
- (C) It is in the best interest of the surrounding properties and the City of Ann Arbor that the relocated structure on the site be preserved on the lot described above. Restoration of the building and site will have a beneficial effect on, and will not adversely impact, the surrounding properties or the City, in terms of public health, safety or welfare.
- (D) Limitations placed on the project are as described herein and in the PUD Development Program.
- (E) The establishment of this PUD zoning district provides for the adaptive reuse of the existing historic structure on the site as a museum.

- (F) The parcel described above meets the standards for approval as a PUD, and the regulations contained herein do not constitute the granting of special privilege or deprivation of property rights.

Section 4: PUD Regulations

- (A) Permitted principal uses of the development shall be:

Museum: African American Museum of Cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County (AACHM)

The building will contain research and administrative offices, exhibit space, archives and a conference/meeting room. A gift shop limited to 100 square feet or less and selling only merchandise directly related to African American heritage and/or the museum.

A parking area with three spaces shall be permitted on site. Additional parking will be off site on appropriate adjacent City streets, and by arrangement at Bethel A.M.E. Church one block away.

- (B) Permitted accessory uses shall be:

Temporary outdoor tents or structures for special events and a museum store for sale of merchandise related to the AACHM.

- (C) Setbacks:

Front: 25 feet minimum (26 feet, 6 inches proposed)
Rear: 30 feet minimum (42 feet, 6 inches proposed)
Side 5 feet minimum (19 feet, 6 inches on the north; 21 feet on the south)

- (D) Height:

Maximum height for all structures on the site: 30 feet

- (E) Lot Size:

Minimum lot size: 7,200 square feet (existing site is 8,976 square feet)

- (F) Floor Area Ratio and Open Space Requirements:

Floor area ratio, including the basement, is 44 percent; the site is 50 percent open space/lawn and gardens, not including walks, patios and the driveway.

- (G) Parking:

Three parking spaces are provided on site. Additional parking will be allowed with permission at the adjacent Bethel A.M.E. Church located at 900 John A Woods Drive. Buses will not be left idling on adjacent neighborhood streets. All visitors and buses will be encouraged to park in the church parking lot as permitted in the formal agreement. Parking for visitors is also permitted on several adjacent City streets.

- (H) Landscaping, Screening and Buffers:

A conflicting land use buffer between the parking area and the abutting residential properties shall consist of:

1. A landscaped buffer strip of variable width, between 6 and 18 feet, depending on location.
2. A fence forming a continuous opaque screen at least 4 feet high.
3. Canopy and evergreen trees in excess of the requirement: 1:12 proposed versus 1:20 required.

(I) Site Access

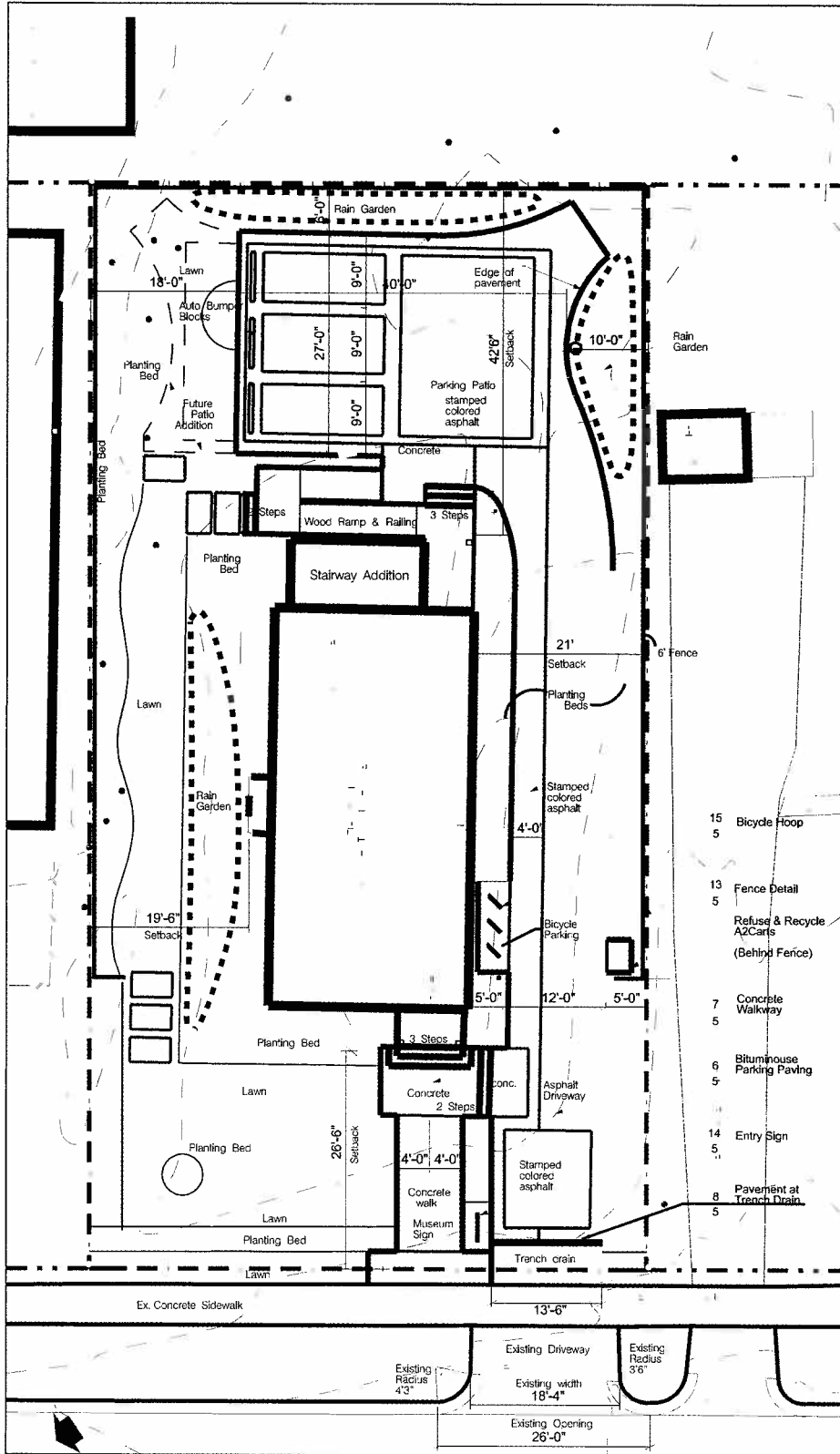
Vehicle and bicycle access will be from Pontiac Trail via a residential width driveway; pedestrian access will be provided to both the east and west sides of the building.

(J) Architectural Design:

All exterior lighting devices will be in keeping with the historic character of the structure and shall be adequately shielded and screened so that no light will glare directly onto any public right-of-way or property principally used for residential purposes. Lighting devices shall be arranged and kept at a level so that the amount of light projected onto property principally used for residential purposes does not exceed 0.1 foot candle.

Prepared by Jeffrey Kahan
JK/lf

Proposed Site Layout



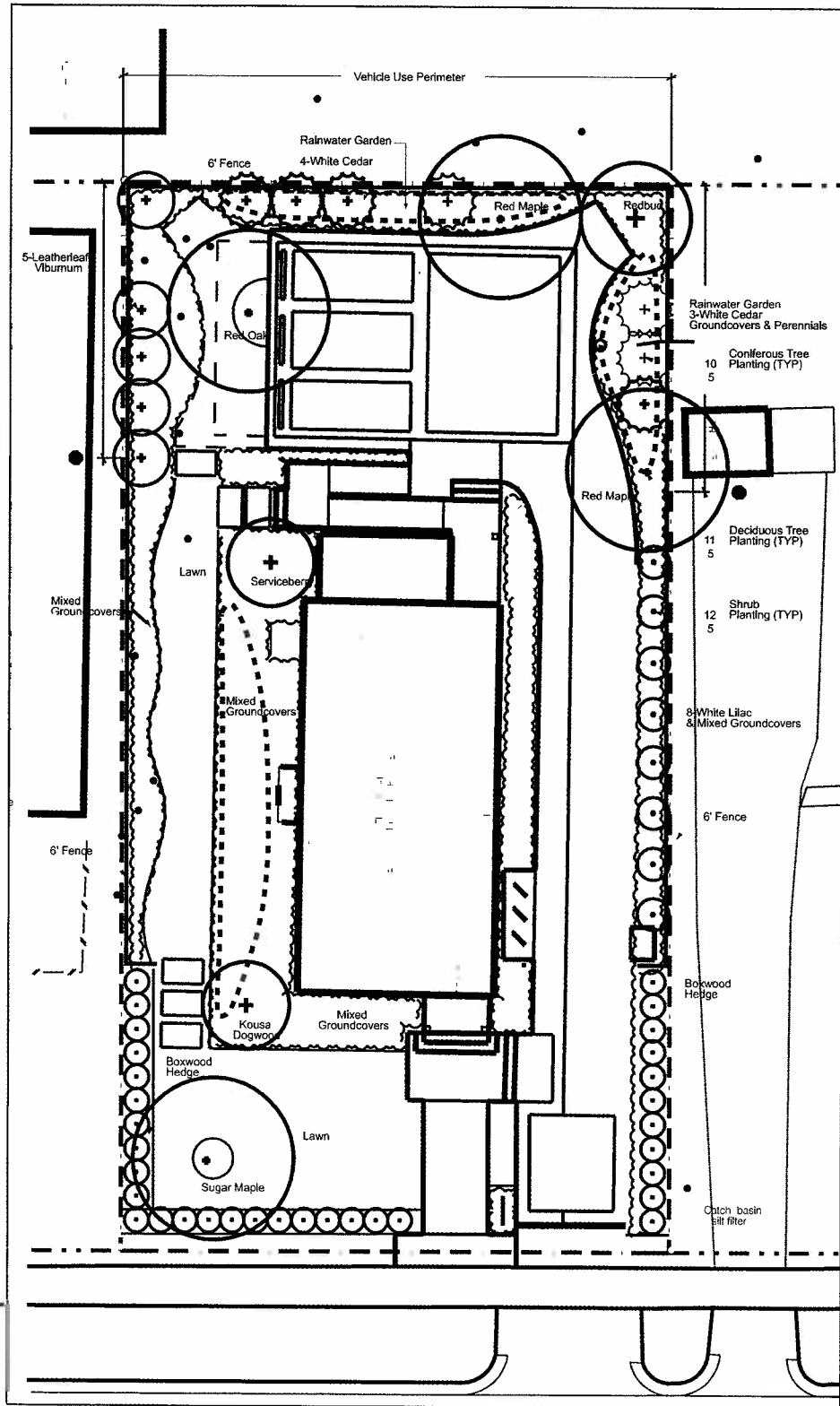
- 15 Bicycle Hoop
- 5
- 13 Fence Detail
- 5
- Refuse & Recycle
- A2Cars
- (Behind Fence)
- 7 Concrete Walkway
- 5
- 6 Bituminous Parking Paving
- 5
- 14 Entry Sign
- 5
- 8 Pavement at Trench Drain
- 5



Pollack Design Associates
 220 South Main Street
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North
 Scale 1" = 20'

Proposed Planting Plan



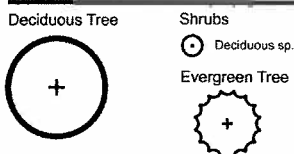
PDA

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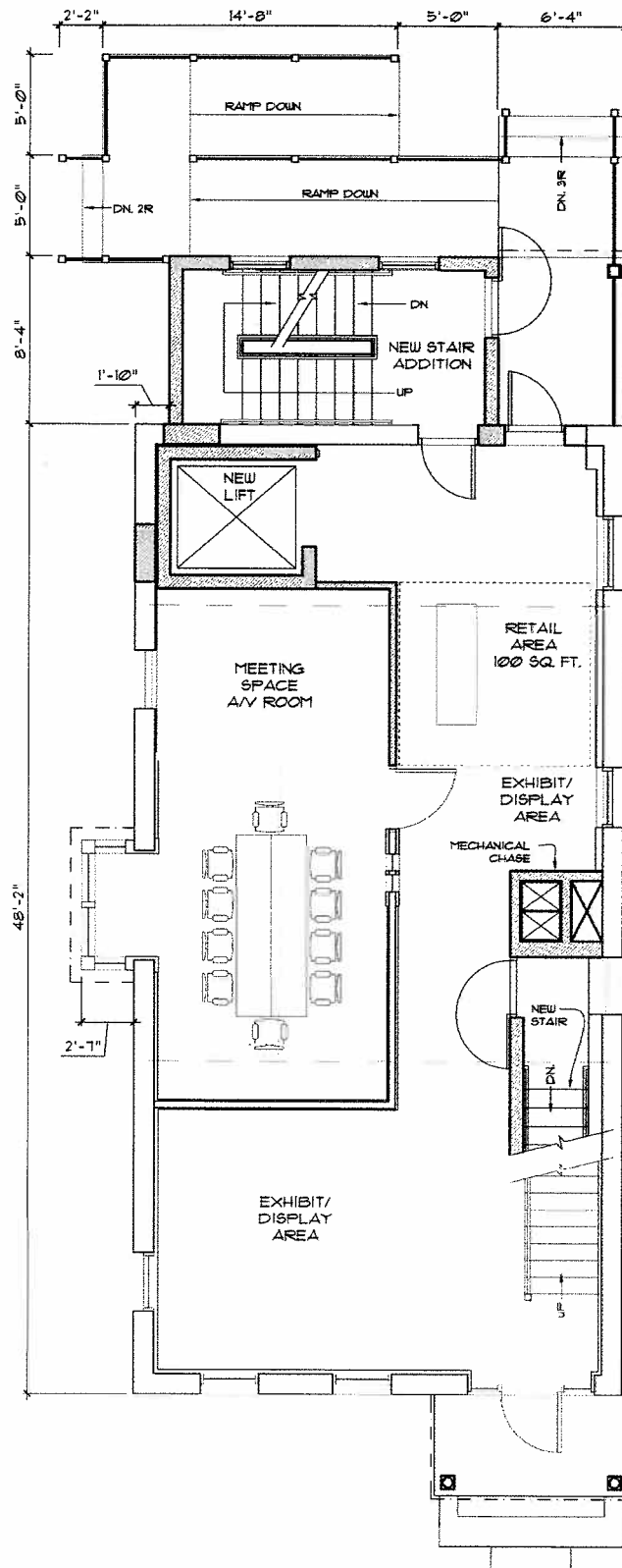


North
 Scale 1" = 20'

Planting Legend



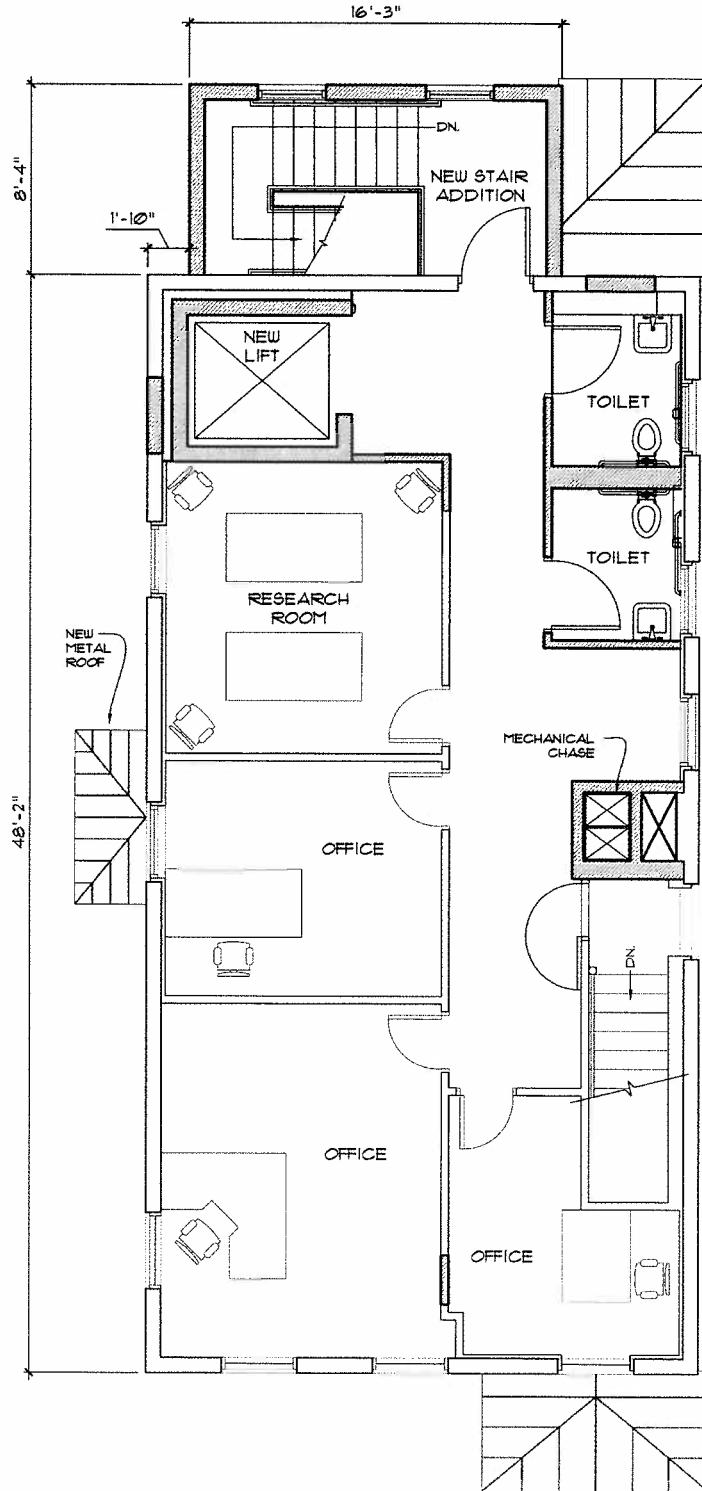
Schematic First Floor Plan



North
Not to Scale

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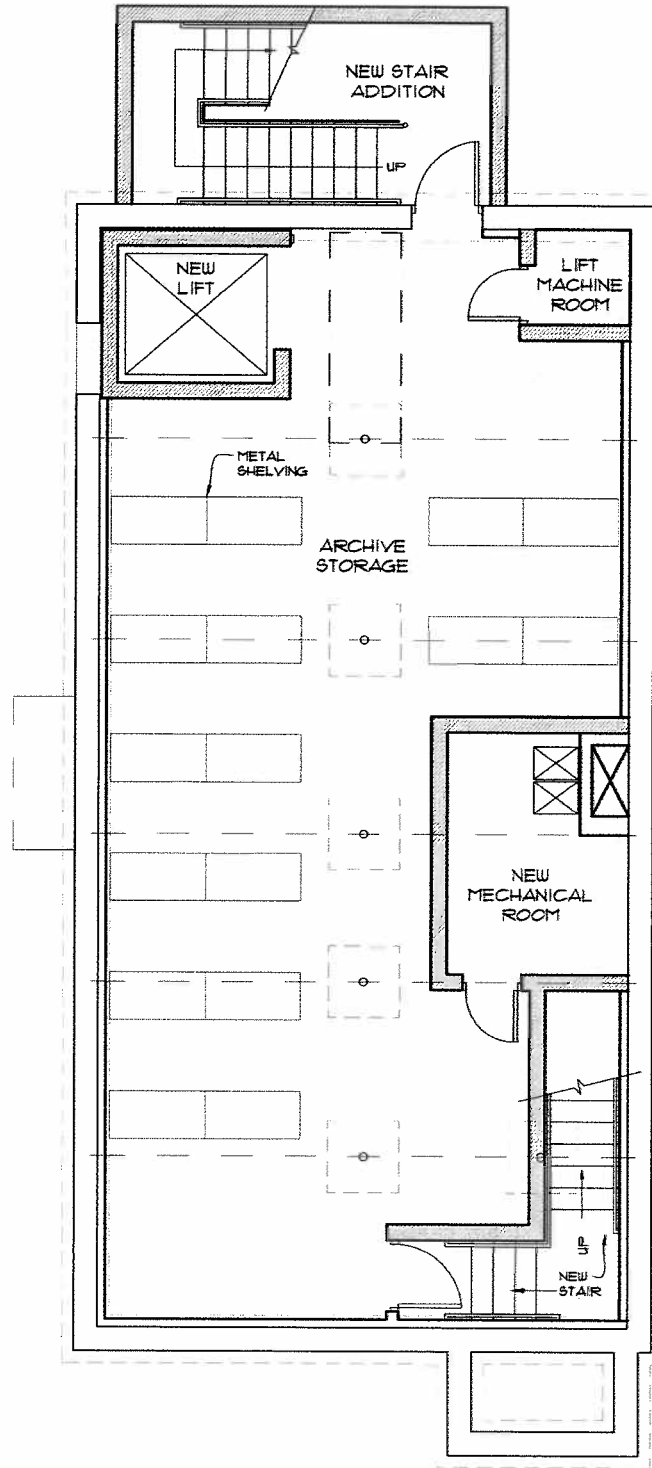
Schematic Second Floor Plan



North
Not to Scale

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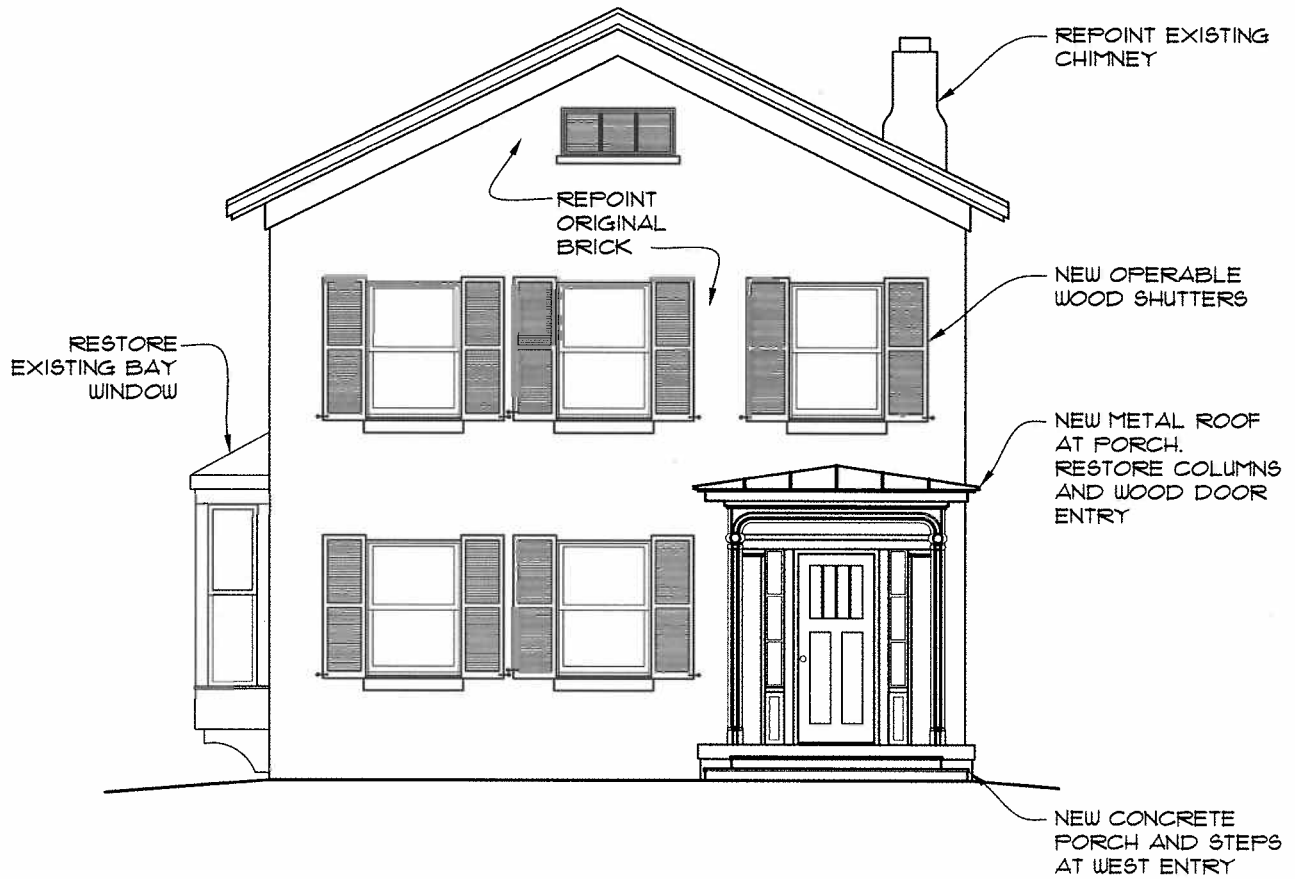
Schematic Basement Floor Plan



North
Not to Scale

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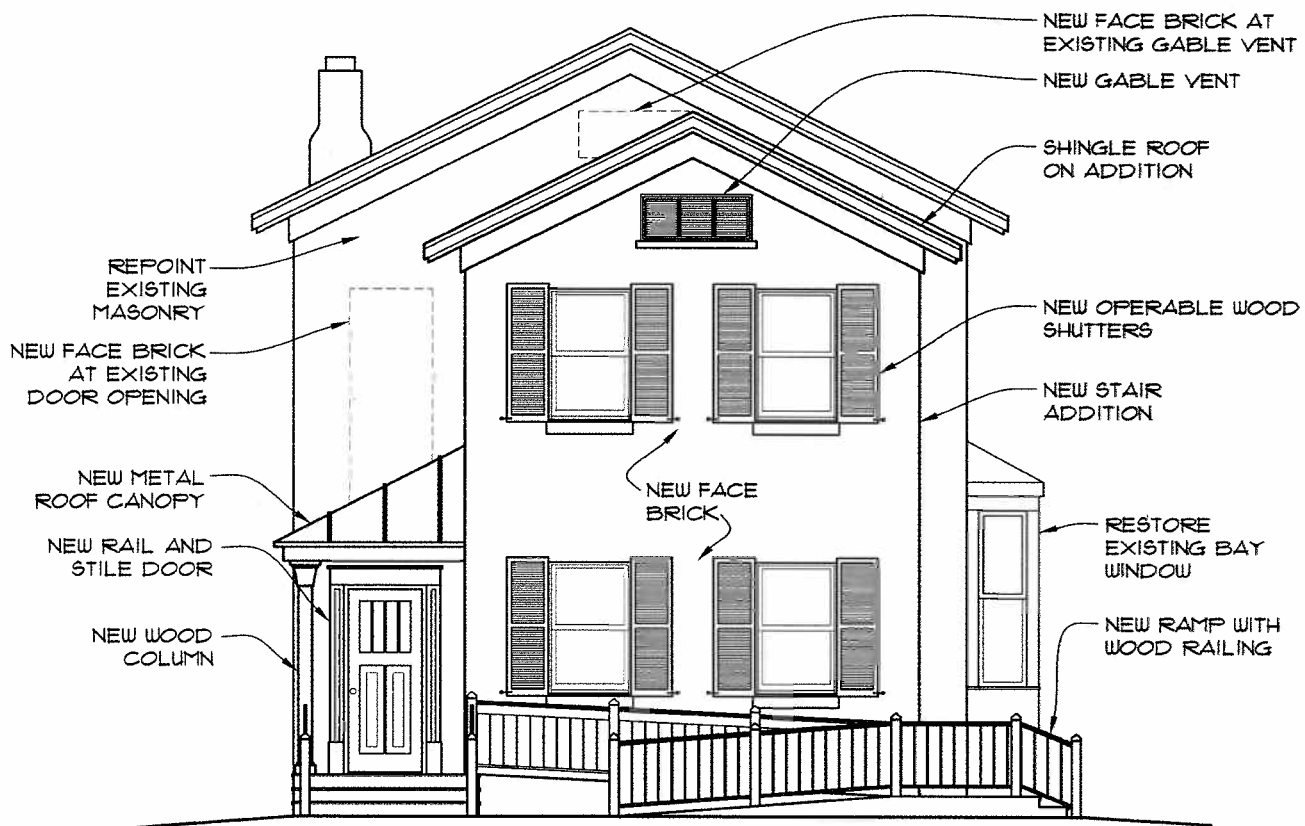
West Building Elevation



Not to Scale

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East Building Elevation



Not to Scale

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