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September 26, 2022

Via E-mail

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: October 4, 2022 Financial Hardship Meeting
156 W. School House Lane (the "Property")

Dear Dr. Farnham:

We represent The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf ("PSD"), the owner of the Property. As you know, we are scheduled to appear before the Historical Commission's Committee on Financial Hardship on October 4, 2022. In advance of that meeting, we have enclosed additional exhibits that we will present at the meeting. A list of the additional exhibits can be found below.

- Exhibit A – An excerpt from the Master Plan illustrating the uses currently housed on PSD's campus. As you can see, there is ample office and administrative spaces on campus and PSD does not need additional office or administrative spaces.
- Exhibit B – An aerial showing the campus and current parking configuration.
- Exhibit C – The floor plans of 156 W. School House Lane. The building comprises approximately 6,900 square feet on the three above-grade floors. This does not include the basement or attic spaces, which are considered to be unusable due to egress and other code restrictions. It should be noted that there are no spaces within the existing building that are of proper size or configuration to accommodate the space program needed by PSD.
- Exhibit D – Information on best practices on designing Deaf Spaces.
- Exhibit E – An excerpt from the Master Plan illustrating the proposed building and its planned programming. As currently planned, the proposed building will comprise just over 12,500 square feet.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
September 26, 2022
Page 2

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

/s/ Matthew N. McClure

Matthew N. McClure

MNM/mpg

Enclosures

cc: Leonard F. Reuter, Esquire – Counsel, Philadelphia Historical Commission
Peter L. Bailey, Head of School – The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf
Margaret W. Steele, Board Chair – The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

Nevil
Classrooms
9@ - 500 sf
Art Classroom ~ 1,400 sf
Office - 1 ~ 350 sf
Storage 1 ~ 100 sf

CCPS
Offices - 9@ ~300 sf
Storage ~ 2,000 sf

Head's House
Reception ~ 140 sf
Conference ~ 190 sf
Conference ~ 235 sf
Exec Assist ~ 105 sf
Head's Office ~ 90 sf
Supplies ~ 40 sf
Storage ~ 300 sf
Offices 1 @ ~ 190 sf
1 @ ~ 150 sf
Head's Residence ~ 240 sf

Gymnasium
Gym ~ 11,580 sf
Weight Room ~ 780 sf
Locker Rooms ~ 1,500 sf
Trainer's Room ~ 6000 sf
Coach's Office ~ 135 sf
AD's Office ~ 240 sf
Storage ~ 1,400 sf



Chapel
Gathering Space
1@ - 1,650 sf (~90 people)
Classrooms
1@ - 1,180 sf
1@ - 600 sf
1@ - 500 sf
Vestibules - 5@~90 sf
Storage 3@~50 sf

Chapel Annex
Classrooms
1@ - ~825 sf
1@ - ~890 sf
Offices - 4@ ~175 sf
Storage 3@~40 sf

Main
Science Classroom
1@ - ~875 sf
Classrooms
5@ - ~900 sf
Classrooms
3@ - ~500 sf
Culinary Arts ~335 sf
Offices - 7@ ~175 sf
- 3@ ~ 185sf
Student Services ~640 sf
Conference @ 550 sf
Teacher Break ~ 270sf
Social / Psych 2@ 160 sf
Dining ~1,575 sf
Gathering ~1,400 sf
Kitchen ~ 520 sf
Tech / IT / Studio ~1,300 sf

Connector
Main Library
1@ - ~1,530 sf
Research Library
1@ - ~410 sf
Classroom 1@ ~ 430 sf
Offices - 4@ ~175 sf
Small Group Space ~540 sf

Early Childhood Center
Classrooms
8@ - ~825 sf
Offices - 4@ ~175 sf
Group Space 1@~1,200 sf

TOTAL PARKING:
117 SPACES
(EXCLUDING ECC)



11 parking

39 parking

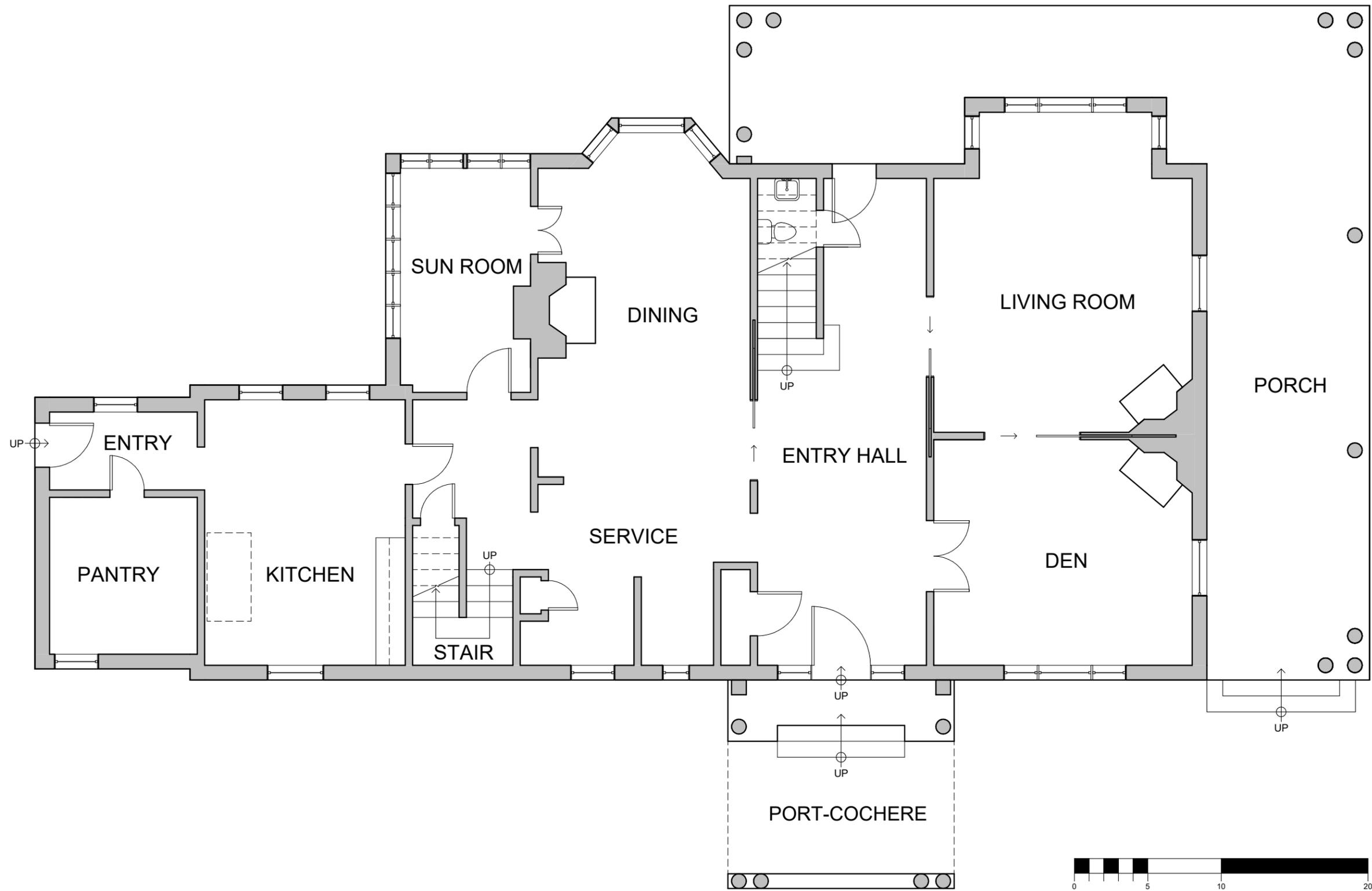
8 parking

22 parking

19 parking

18 parking

20 parking



156 WEST SCHOOL HOUSE LANE
 PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
 FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc.
 225 Oakland Road, Studio 205
 South Windsor, CT 06074
 www.DRAarchitects.com
 tel: 860-644-8300

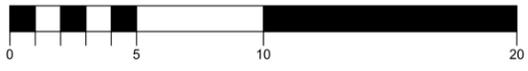
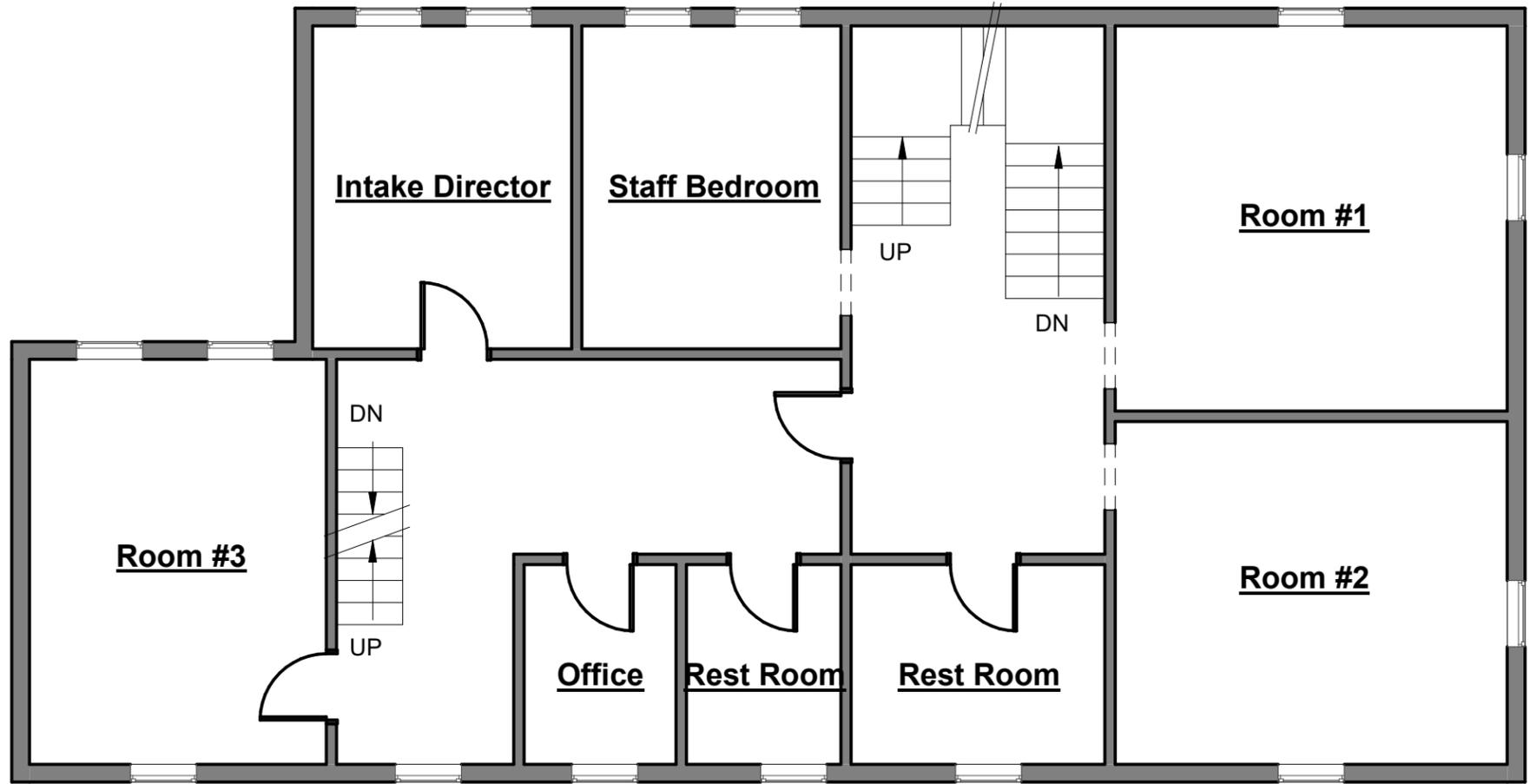
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 Date: 9/20/2022

SKA-1





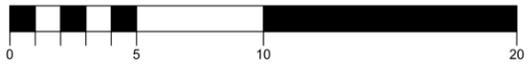
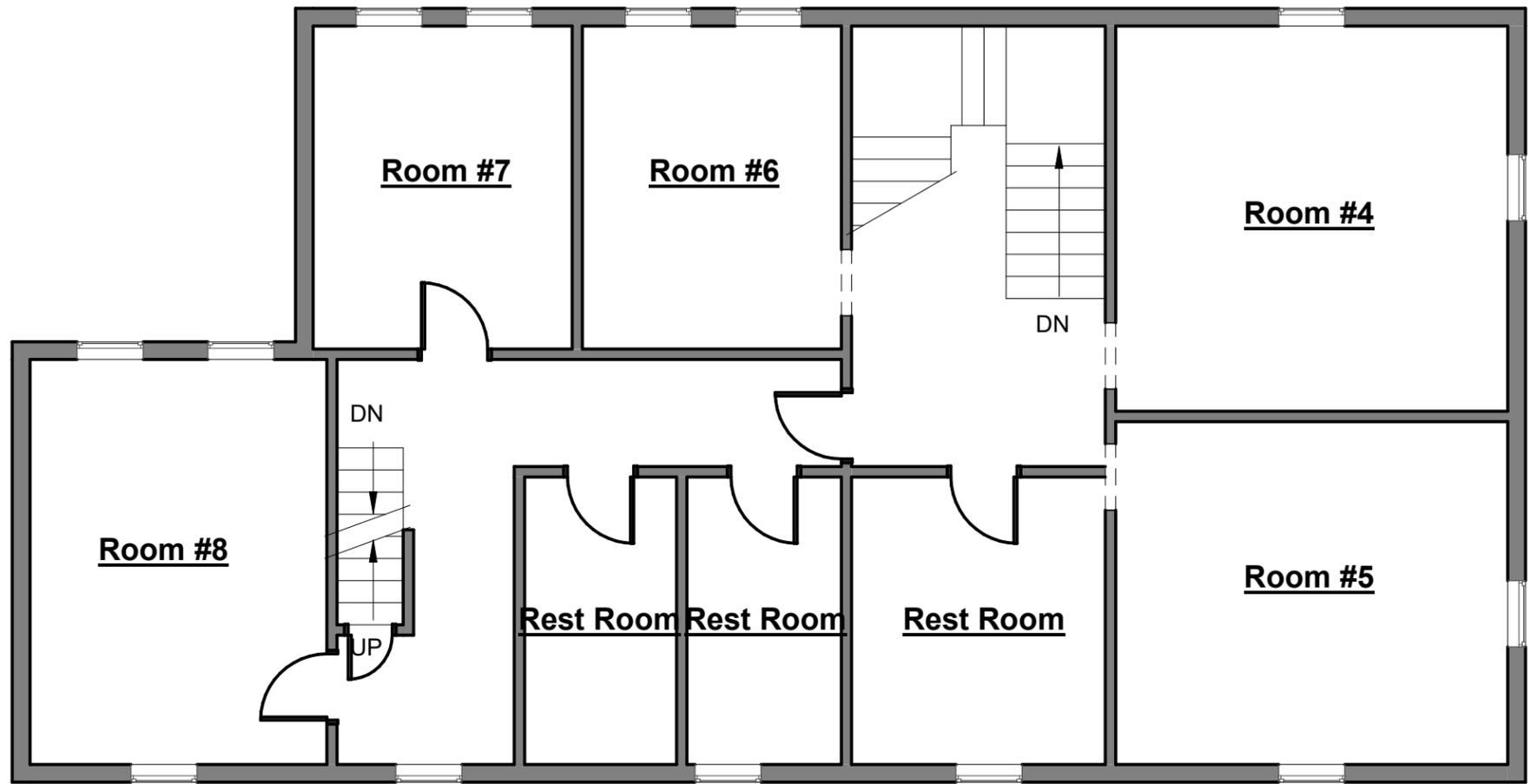
156 WEST SCHOOL HOUSE LANE
PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

DRA Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc.
 225 Oakland Road, Studio 205
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 www.DRAarchitects.com
 tel: 860-644-8300

Ref. Sheet
 N/A

SKA-2

Scale: N.T.S.
 Drawn By: DRA
 Job No.: 22113.00
 Date: 9/20/2022



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 South Windsor, CT 06074
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 tel: 860-644-8300

Ref. Sheet

N/A

SKA-3

156 WEST SCHOOL HOUSE LANE
 PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

THIRD FLOOR PLAN

Scale: N.T.S.
 Drawn By: DRA
 Job No.: 22113.00
 Date: 9/20/2022

Deaf people inhabit a rich sensory world where vision and touch are a primary means of spatial awareness and orientation. Many use sign language, a visual-kinetic mode of communication and maintain a strong cultural identity built around these sensibilities and shared life experiences. Our built environment, largely constructed by and for hearing individuals, presents a variety of surprising challenges to which deaf people have responded with a particular way of altering their surroundings to fit their unique ways-of-being. This approach is often referred to as DeafSpace.

When deaf people congregate the group customarily works together to rearrange furnishings into a “conversation circle” to allow clear sightlines so everyone can participate in the visual conversation. Gatherings often begin with participants adjusting window shades, lighting and seating to optimize conditions for visual communication that minimize eyestrain. Deaf homeowners often cut new openings in walls, place mirrors and lights in strategic locations to extend their sensory awareness and maintain visual connection between family members.

These practical acts of making a DeafSpace are long-held cultural traditions that, while never-before formally recognized, are the basic elements of an architectural expression unique to deaf experiences. The study of DeafSpace offers valuable insights about the interrelationship between the senses, the ways we construct the built environment and cultural identity from which society at large has much to learn.

DeafSpace focuses on three principles: sensory reach, language, and cultural experience.

Sensory [reach] speaks to the body and the feelings related to the body.

Language talks about how language is used in a particular space and how it really is reflective of the design of the space.

Cultural experience is the interaction with the built environment and the meaning [embodied by architecture]. For example, if you’re in a classroom, you situate the seats so that they’re in a semicircle...that allows for visual communication and for classroom purposes, it's more culturally conducive”

DeafSpace design comes down to a way of being and how that way of being may be done different from that of the general hearing population.

Automatic sliding doors, wide hallways, and an open atrium enable people to sign to each other while walking.

Diffused natural light reduces glare and eye strain.

Strategic placement of noisy AC units and special attention to acoustics minimizes echoes that interfere with cochlear implants and hearing aids.

A long, sloping walkway, reducing the hazard of tripping on stairs. The walkway may double as an auditorium with clear sightlines.

Furniture that is easy to move so students can form circles to communicate.

High-top counters offer an easy spot to set down an object, freeing up the hands for signing.

Communal kitchens have most appliances on an island so students can communicate while keeping an eye on the stove.

Matte interpretive materials in high contrast colors and diffused lighting to reduce glare.

A table-top digital display of information in the center of the room is accessible to all visitors, including those in wheelchairs.

Glass corners so walkers can see each other before they reach an intersection.

Value the need to see one another, but there is need to have private space available to maintain psychological well-being.

It's important to note that DeafSpace is different from universal design, a movement dedicated to making spaces accessible for all. Universal is about trying to create a standardized environments for people with all sorts of different abilities or disabilities. DeafSpace reverses that idea and is about particularity. It's really good thoughtful design that influences process and engagement as much as it is about particular ideas or standards.”

As conversation groups grow in numbers the space between individuals increases to allow visual connection for all parties. This basic dimension of the space between people impacts the basic layout of furnishings and building spaces (Gallaudet University, Deaf Space).

When communicating in Sign Language, more space is needed between speaking partners to obtain a good visual of the conversation. The space should be between 3 feet and 10 feet for the conversation to be clear to each of the individuals. The space and proximity principle influences the design of a building because it means that areas need to be wide instead of narrow. For example, hallways need to be wide enough so that people can walk side-by-side when having a visual conversation.

Spatial orientation and the awareness of activities within our surroundings are essential to maintaining a sense of well-being. Deaf people “read” the activities in their surroundings that may not be immediately apparent to many hearing people through an acute sensitivity of visual and tactile cues such as the movement of shadows, vibrations, or even the reading of subtle shifts in the expression/position of others around them (Gallaudet University, Deaf Space).

Deaf individuals have an acute situational and environmental awareness, with wide peripheral vision and increased sensitivity to movements around them. Deaf people are uncomfortable when their backs are to others and/or activities, because they are somewhat "blinded" to what is going on behind them. Therefore, in accordance with DeafSpace principles, it is best if the Deaf person has greater than 180-degree vision. In classrooms, for example, a circular seating arrangement is better than the atypical layout of rows of seats. Likewise, in a work environment, cubicles or offices should be designed so that the Deaf individual faces outward from his/her desk.

While walking together in conversation signers will tend to maintain a wide distance for clear visual communication. The signers will also shift their gaze between the conversation and their surroundings scanning for hazards and maintaining proper direction (Gallaudet University, DeafSpace).

When on the move, people need to observe possible barriers or obstacles ahead of them as they walk, jog, drive, or bike. In the case of Deaf individuals, conversing while walking requires that they take turns keeping an eye on what is in front of them in case there is an obstacle. For example,

telephone poles on sidewalks can be harmful obstacles, especially considering how narrow the sidewalks are in most cities.

Conversational signers would warn their partners if they are about to walk into an obstacle. In accordance with the concept of DeafSpace, it would be necessary to ensure that obstacles or barriers are moved away from general walking paths. For example, hallways should be free of objects or steps, unless in stairways.

Poor lighting conditions such as glare, shadow patterns, back lighting interrupt visual communication and are major contributors to the causes of eye fatigue that can lead to a loss of concentration and even physical exhaustion. Proper electric lighting and architectural elements used to control daylight can be configured to provide a soft, diffused light 'attuned to deaf eyes.' Color can be used to contrast skin tone to highlight sign language and facilitate visual wayfinding (Gallaudet University, DeafSpace).

Color has a strong effect on everyone's vision. Considering that members of the Deaf community may experience more eyestrain than others, as their language is visual rather than verbal, it has been suggested that soft green and blue tones are the best choices as background colors. The reason is that soft green and blue tones match everyone's skin color, which will cause less eyestrain for Deaf people while conversing in Sign Language.

Light is also an important factor for the Deaf community because when the lighting is poor or too bright it may cause eyestrain or headaches. Soft, diffused lighting, similar to when the glare of the sun is blocked out, with toned down brightness. Natural, diffused lighting is better than bright, fluorescent light bulbs, for example.

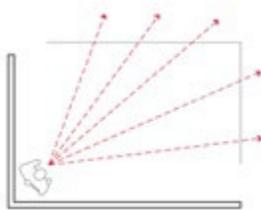
Deaf individuals experience many different kinds and degrees of hearing levels. Many use assistive devices such as hearing aids or cochlear implants to enhance sound. No matter the level of hearing, many deaf people do sense sound in a way that can be a major distraction, especially for individuals with assistive hearing devices.

Reverberation caused by sound waves reflected by hard building surfaces can be especially distracting, even painful, for individuals using assistive devices. Spaces should be designed to reduce reverberation and other sources of background noise (Gallaudet University, Deaf Space).

Acoustics take into consideration the fact that Deaf individuals may have some type of hearing assistance device or have sensitivity to vibrations in buildings. It is important for buildings to be structurally designed to offset vibrations. For example, old houses are infamous for their creaking noises, which produce vibrations that disturb Deaf individuals. Reverberation needs to be reduced in buildings, along with muting of background noises, to minimize interference with hearing devices and other sensitivity to sounds/vibrations.

DEAFSPACE CONCEPTS

sensory reach



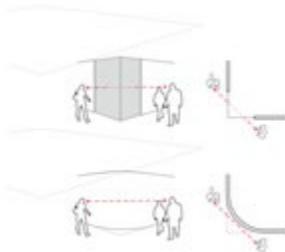
Spatial orientation and the awareness of activities within our surroundings are essential to maintaining a sense of well-being. Deaf people “read” the activities in their surroundings that may not be immediately apparent to many hearing people through an acute sensitivity of visual and tactile cues such as the movement of shadows, vibrations, or even the reading of subtle shifts in the expression/position of others around them. Many aspects of the built environment can be designed to facilitate spatial awareness “in 360 degrees” and facilitate orientation and wayfinding.

space and proximity



In order to maintain clear visual communication, individuals stand at a distance where they can see facial expression and full dimension of the signer's "signing space". This space between two signers tends to be greater than that of a spoken conversation. As conversation groups grow in numbers the space between individuals increases to allow visual connection for all parties. This basic dimension of the space between people impacts the basic layout of furnishings and building spaces.

mobility and proximity



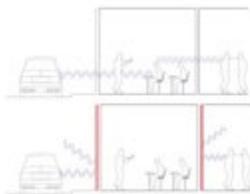
While walking together in conversation signers will tend to maintain a wide distance for clear visual communication. The signers will also shift their gaze between the conversation and their surroundings scanning for hazards and maintaining proper direction. If one senses the slightest hazard they alert their companion, adjust, and continue without interruption. The proper design of circulation and gathering spaces enable signers to move through space uninterrupted.

light and color



Poor lighting conditions such as glare, shadow patterns, backlighting interrupt visual communication and are major contributors to the causes of eye fatigue that can lead to a loss of concentration and even physical exhaustion. Proper Electric lighting and architectural elements used to control daylight can be configured to provide a soft, diffused light “attuned to deaf eyes”. Color can be used to contrast skin tone to highlight sign language and facilitate visual wayfinding.

acoustics



Deaf individuals experience many different kinds and degrees of hearing levels. Many use assistive devices such as hearing aids or cochlear implants to enhance sound. No matter the level of hearing, many deaf people do sense sound in a way that can be a major distraction, especially for individuals with assistive hearing devices. Reverberation caused by sound waves reflected by hard building surfaces can be especially distracting, even painful, for individuals using assistive devices. Spaces should be designed to reduce reverberation and other sources of background noise.

Proper Classroom Considerations: Students with hearing loss require a modified classroom, which should incorporate well-designed acoustics (for maximum sound production), little distractive noise, and proper lighting for visuals. Each student should have a clear view of all visuals as well as the instructor.

Use of an Interpreter: Many classrooms with deaf students who sign incorporate an interpreter for easier translation of material. Deaf students, who have grown up with sign language, should have sign language included in their daily educational life.

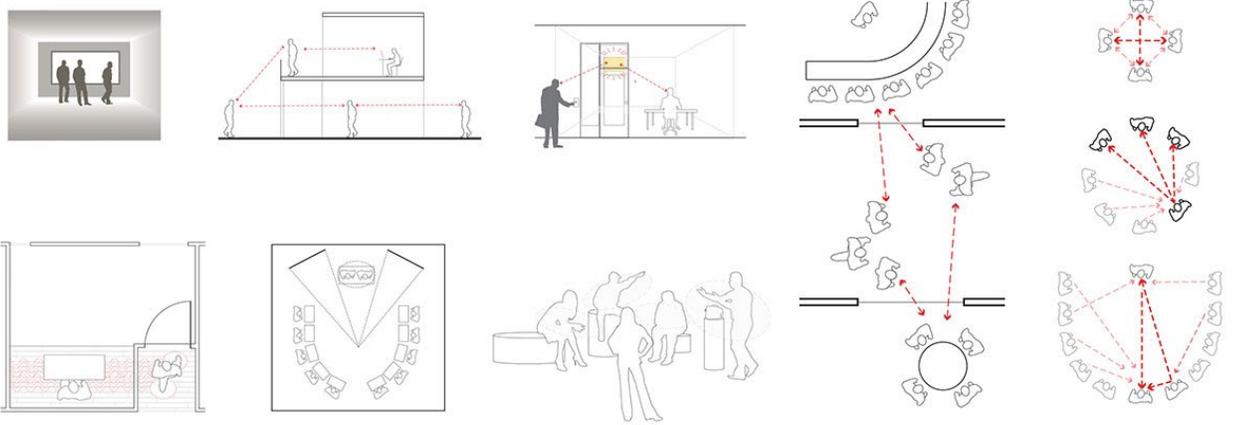
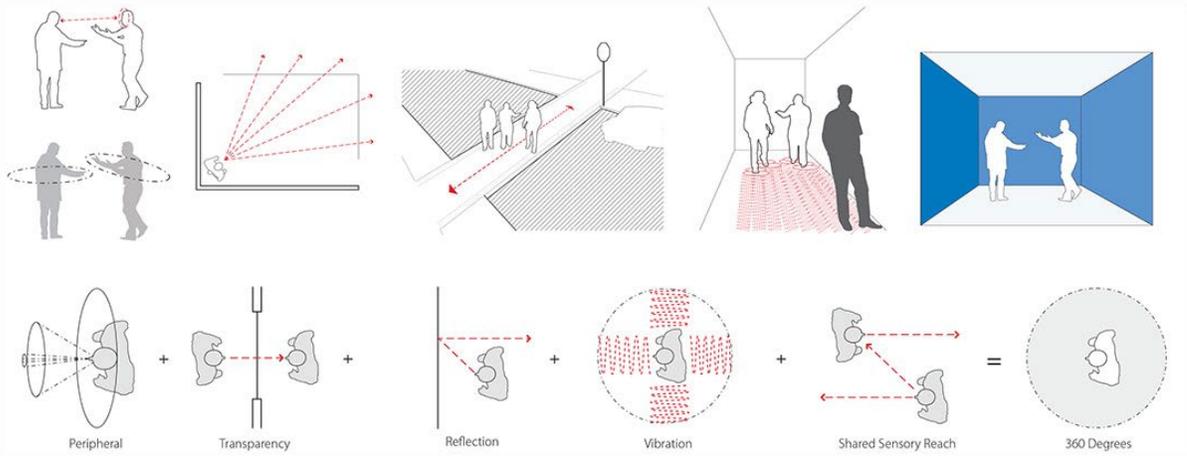
Assistive Technical Capabilities: Years of research and development have provided educators with wonderful tools for maximizing auditory abilities for those students with some degree of hearing including:

- FM Systems which can project sound from an instructor's microphone

- C-Print which is a speech-to-text computer system

- A speech synthesizer which converts a typed word into speech format

- Personal amplification systems



Images
 © Dangermond Keane Architecture

TOTAL PARKING:
134 SPACES
(EXCLUDING ECC)



130'-0"

Greene St

Greene St

W School House Ln

Greene St

Greene St

W School House Ln

W Coulter St

BUS DROP OFF

BUS PARKING
13 high spaces

BUS PARKING

Wayne Ave