

ADDRESS: 1601 S 13TH ST

Proposal: Convert church to apartments; remove stained-glass windows; alter openings; install doors, windows, window wells, roofing, and dormers

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Annex Investments II

Applicant: Ian Toner, Toner Architects

History: 1892; St. John's Baptist Church; Samuel Hall Day and Charles E. Oelschlager, architects

Individual Designation: 6/12/2020

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This in-concept application proposes to convert the former St. John's Baptist Church in South Philadelphia to residential use. The church, which is currently vacant, was designed in 1892 as the Church of the Reconciliation, and the attached chapel and school building was designed in 1899, both in the Romanesque Revival architectural style. The application proposes to renovate the building and insert additional floor levels inside to convert it to use as a 26-unit apartment building. It proposes to install a series of new "doghouse shaped" dormers clad with fiber cement siding along both sides of the steeply pitched main church roof and to replace all the existing stained-glass windows with aluminum framed clear glass windows. It further proposes to infill several existing doors and convert them to windows, replace the entry doors, insert window wells at existing basement window locations and enlarge the associated windows, install several new windows and skylights, and replace the current slate roof with new asphalt shingles with a rectangular slate-like appearance.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Install new roof dormers
- Replace all existing windows
- Replace doors
- Alter openings
- Install window wells
- Replace roofing

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary or pictorial evidence.*
 - While some of the existing windows are later replacements, many are original stained glass. Details for the proposed windows are not clear but could be appropriate if they accurately approximate the visual qualities of the historic windows. The new windows could potentially satisfy Standard 6.
 - The existing doors are likely not original, but the proposed replacement doors appear too contemporary in design and do not match the historic character of the originals. The new doors do not satisfy Standard 6.

- The existing rectangular gray slate roofing has reached the end of its useful life and the proposed replacement with a slate-like asphalt shingle satisfies Standard 6.
- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed new dormers are too large, too numerous, and are not compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the property. They do not satisfy Standard 9 but potentially could if they were redesigned to be less intrusive.
 - The proposed alteration of some existing door openings to windows and installation of basement level window wells will satisfy Standard 9 if the new windows approximate the visual qualities of the historic windows.
- *Roofs Guideline | Recommended: Designing rooftop additions, elevator or stair towers, decks or terraces, dormers, or skylights when required by a new or continuing use so that they are inconspicuous and minimally visible on the site and from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining historic features.*
 - The proposed new dormers are too large, too numerous, and conspicuous. They do not satisfy the Roofs Guideline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval in-concept, provided the new windows and doors accurately reflect the historic character and proportions of the originals, and the proposed new dormers are redesigned to be smaller, less numerous, and better blend with the existing historic roof structure, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9, and the Roofs Guideline.

IMAGES:

Figure 1: 1910, G. W. Bromley Atlas. Property outlined in red.

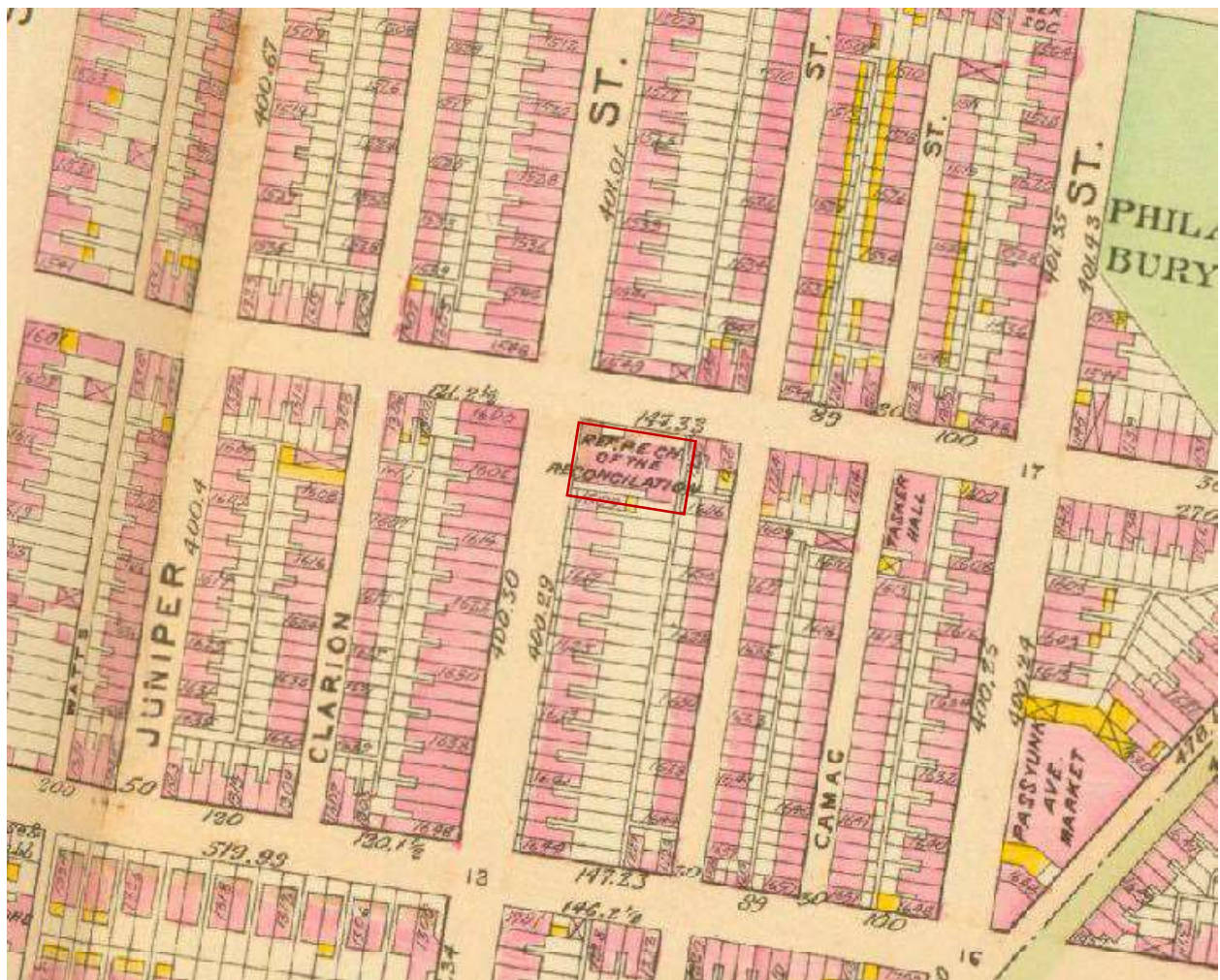


Figure 2: View of front façade of 1601 S 13th St from S 13th St:

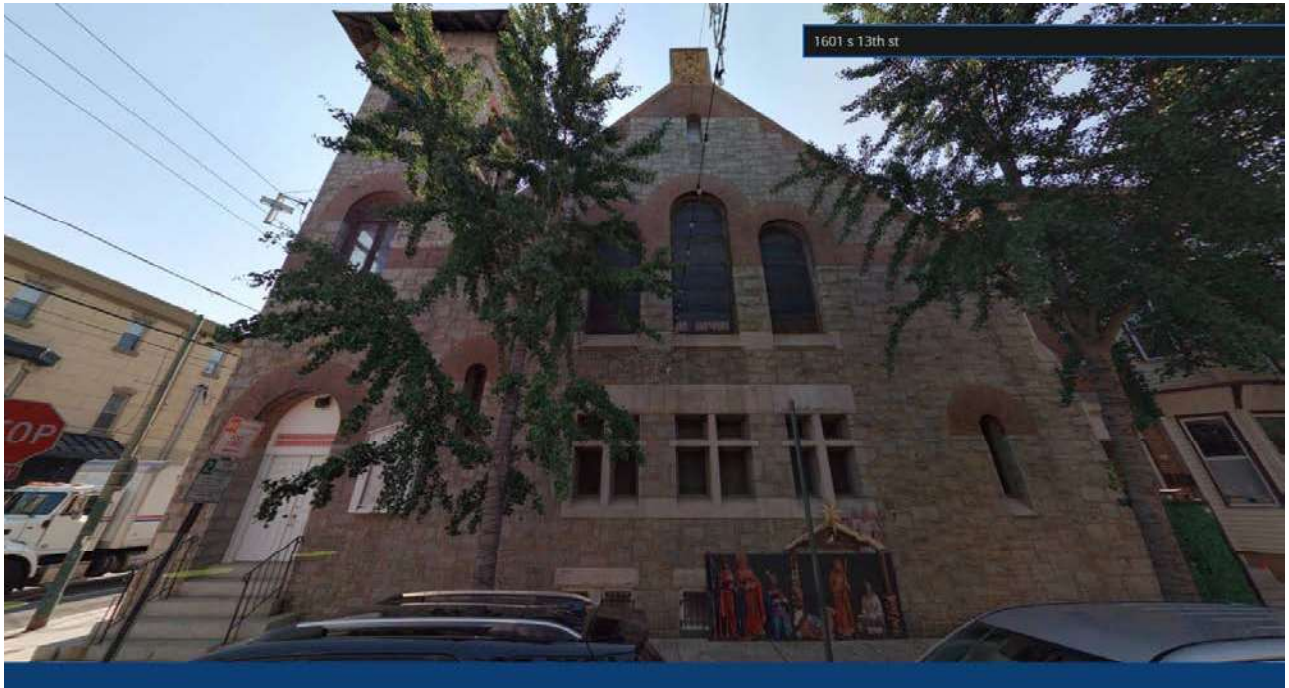


Figure 3: View of side façade of 1601 S 13th St from Tasker St:

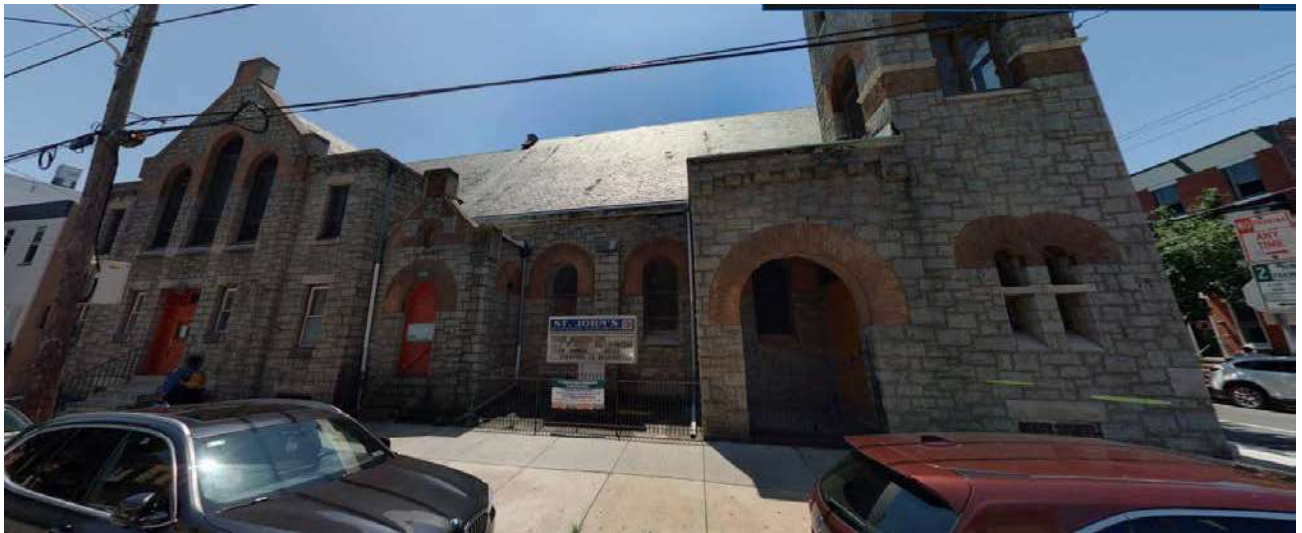


Figure 4: View of 1601 S 13th St from the intersection of S 13th St and Tasker St:

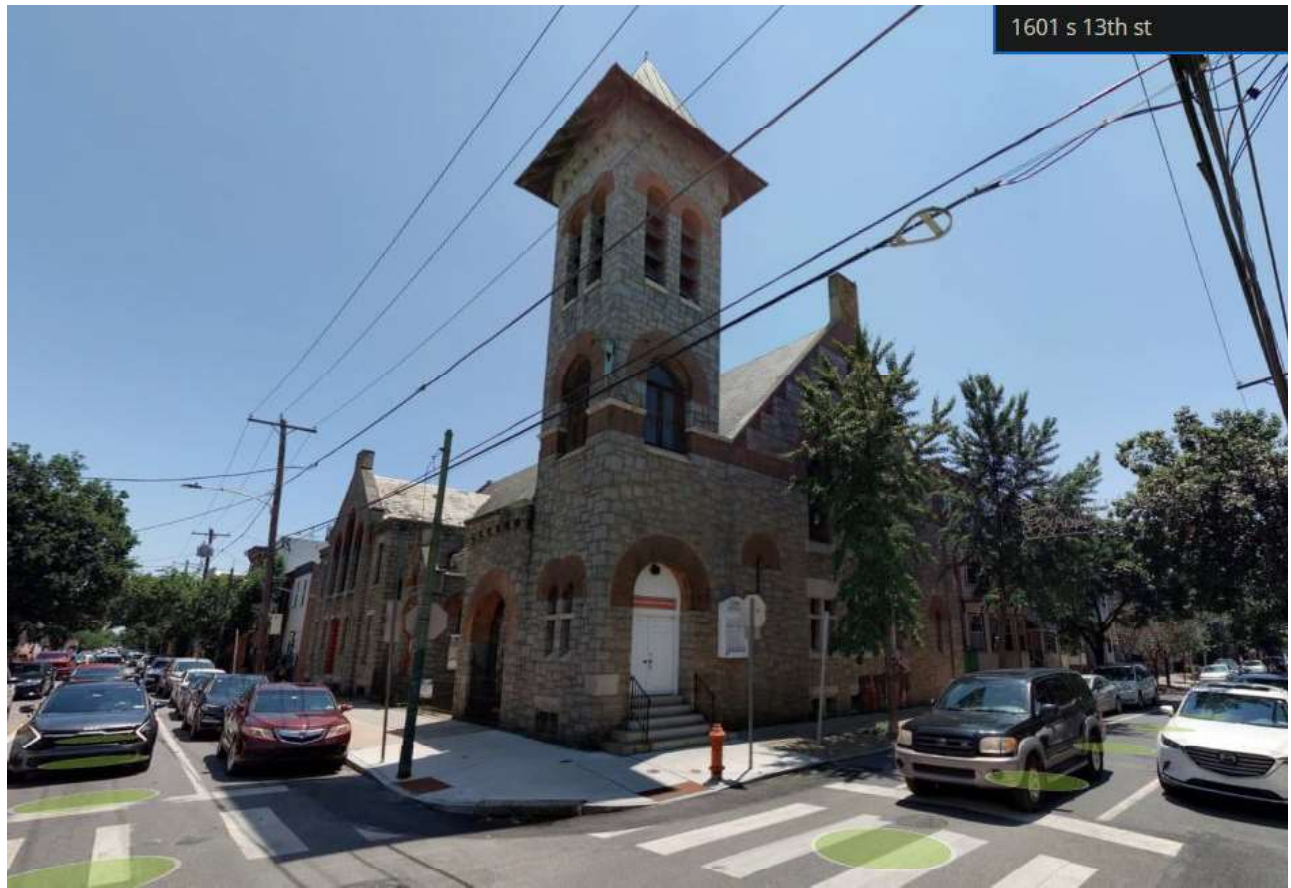
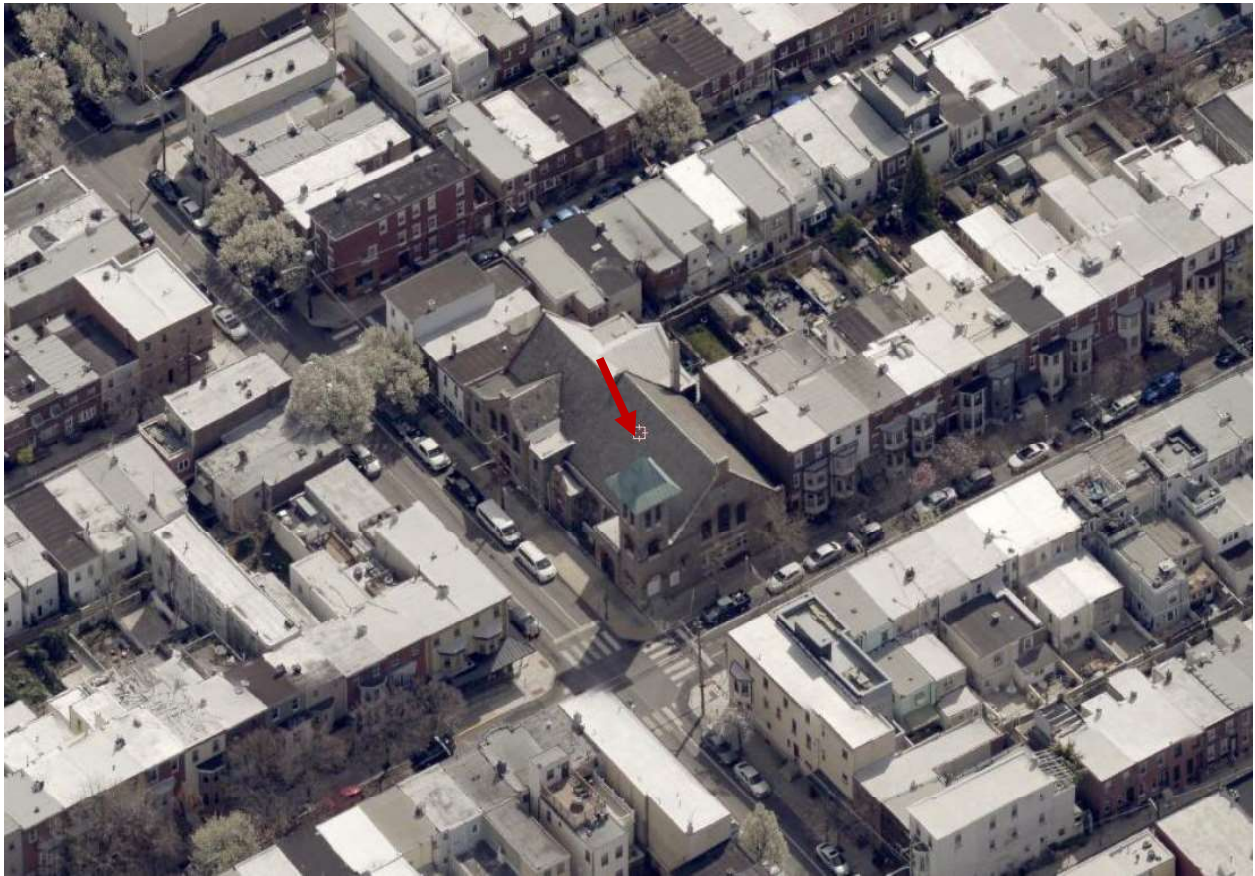
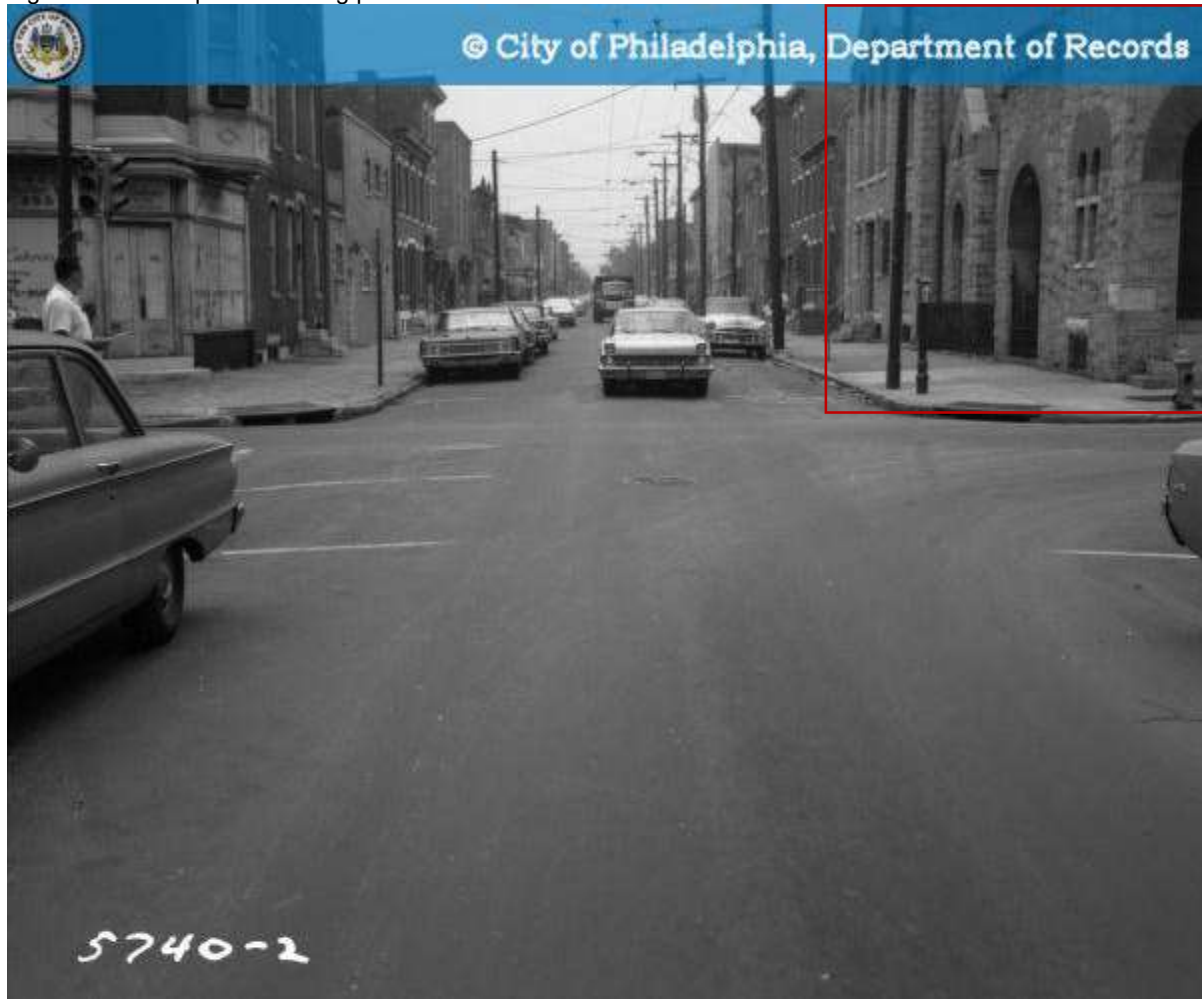


Figure 5: Aerial view of 1601 S 13th St, looking southeast:



1601 S 13th St
Philadelphia Historical Commission
December 2025

Figure 6: Historic photo showing portion of Tasker Street facade of church in 1967:





Ian M Toner AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C

Principal

Sara N Shonk Pochedly AIA, NCARB, NCIDQ, LEED AP BD+C

Principal

02 December 2025

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia PA, 19102

RE: Historical Review – 1601 S 13th Street – St. Johns

Members of the Committee and Commission

Please find enclosed our application for In-Concept approval of our project at 1601 S. 13th Street. I am submitting on behalf of the property owner, Annex Investments II.

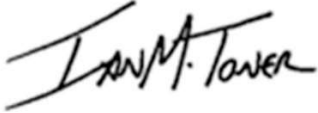
The project involves:

- The interior renovation of the existing church complex for use as a 26-unit apartment building.
- The insertion of a second-floor loft, a third floor and mezzanine within the existing church building.
- The infill of a second floor and insertion of a third floor within the rear portion of the building.
- The addition of new doghouse shaped roofed dormers to the roof of the existing church building to provide windows and natural light into the 3rd floor units. We are proposing to clad the walls of these dormers with lap-fiber cement siding.
- The replacement of all windows as noted on elevations. The stained glass within these openings will be removed. All windows shall be aluminum and shall be fixed or double hung operation. PHC to approve design and selections.
- Two new window locations on south side of church building, not visible from street.
- Infill of existing door openings with new windows. Locations shown on plans.
- Replacement of entry doors. PHC to approve design and selections.
- Replace existing asphalt shingle roofing with new GAF Slateline asphalt shingle roofing, color to be coordinated with PHC staff.
- New window wells at existing basement window locations. The sill of the window will be cut to enlarge window into the wells.
- Bilco door opening at basement to be infilled and a new window is to be installed.

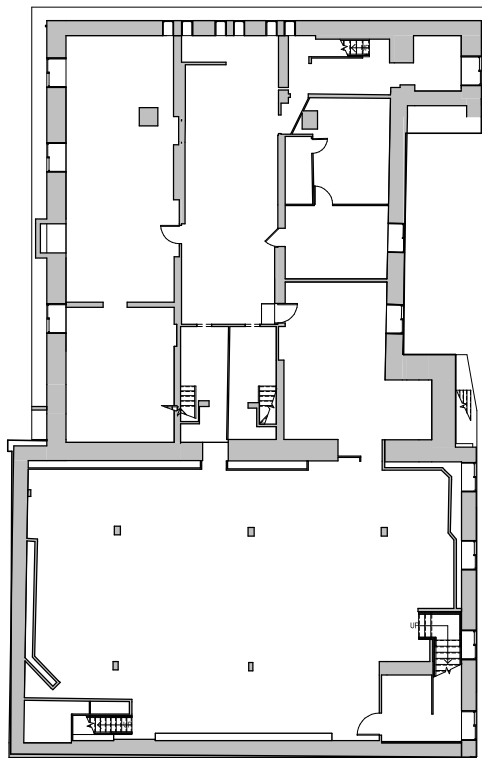
(Continued on next page)

Thank you for taking the time to review our application. Please contact me at 215.800.1968 if you need more information or need to discuss the project further.

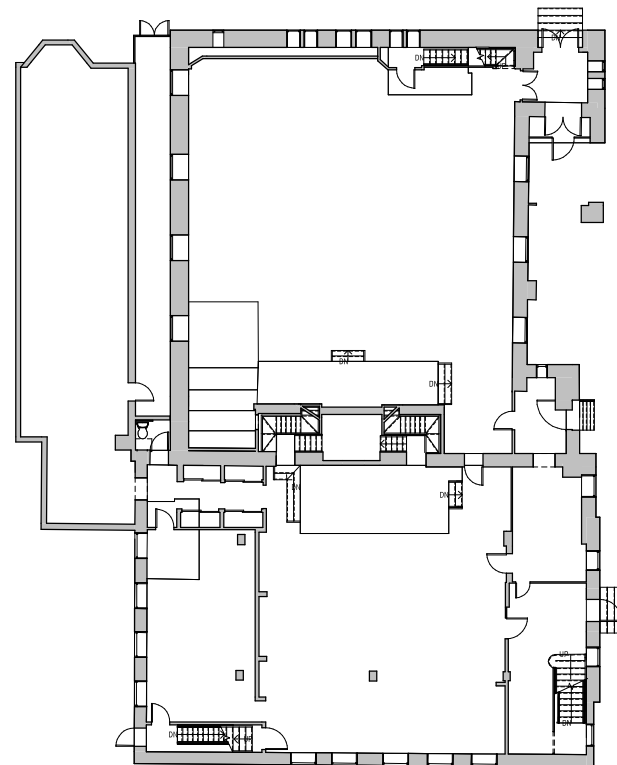
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ian M. Toner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ian" and last name "Toner" clearly legible, and "M." as a middle initial.

Ian Toner
Principal
Toner Architects

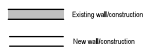


① Existing Basement
1/8" = 1'-0"



② Existing First Floor
1/8" = 1'-0"

Wall Legend



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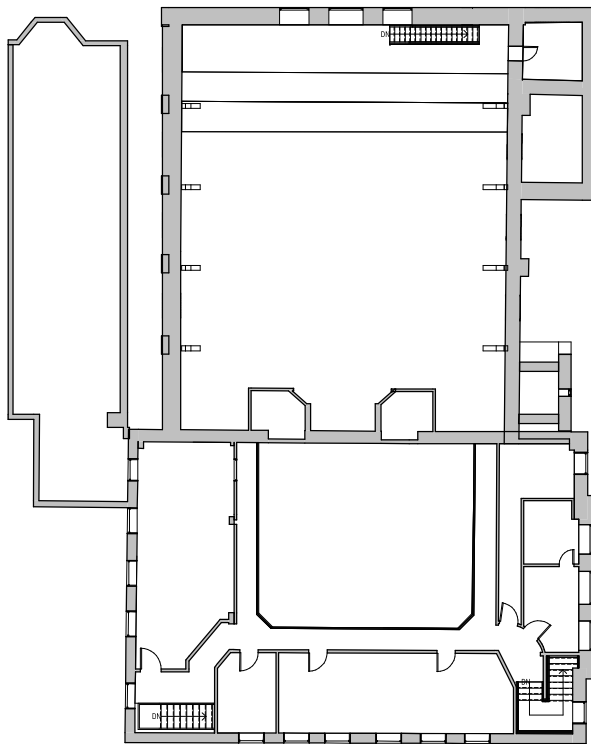
Church to Rental Apartment Conversion



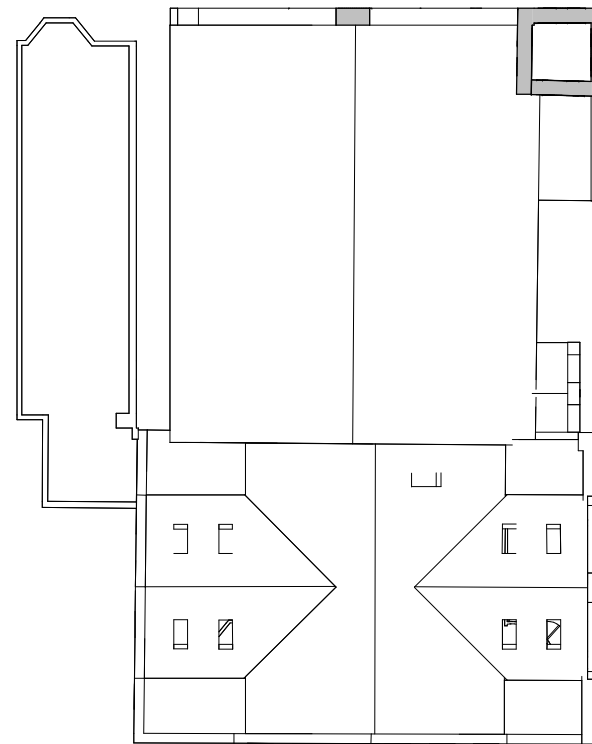
EXISTING FLOOR PLANS

Date 02 DECEMBER 2020
HISTORIC SUBMISSION

Scale As indicated
Project number 25077

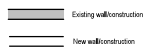


② Existing Second Floor
1/8" = 1'-0"



③ Existing Third Floor
1/8" = 1'-0"

Wall Legend



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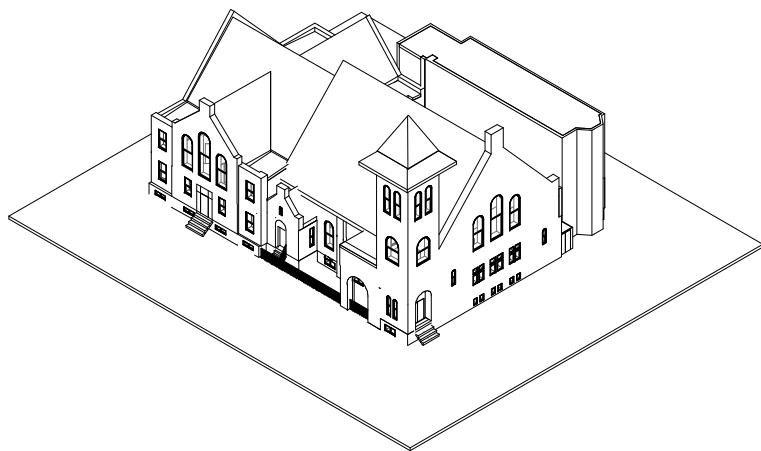
EXISTING FLOOR PLANS

Date 02 DECEMBER 2025
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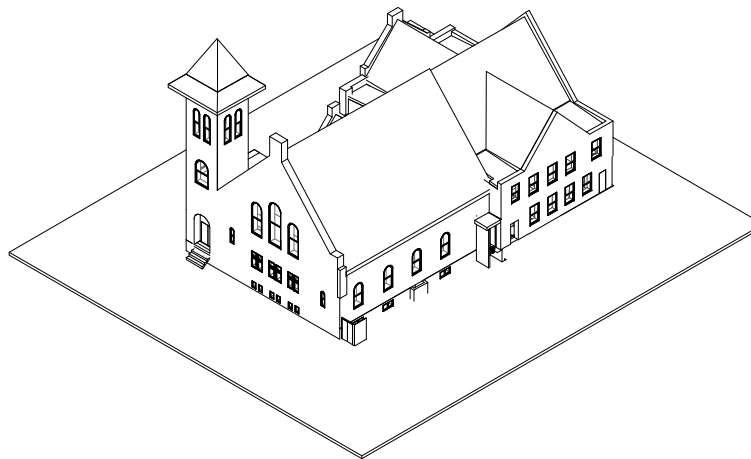
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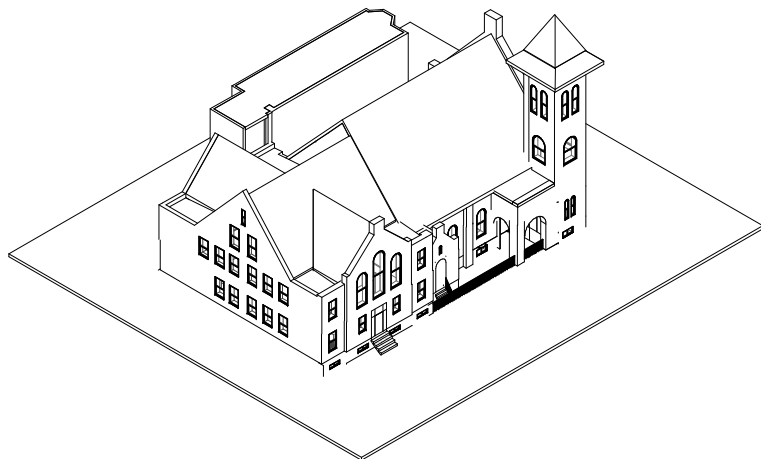
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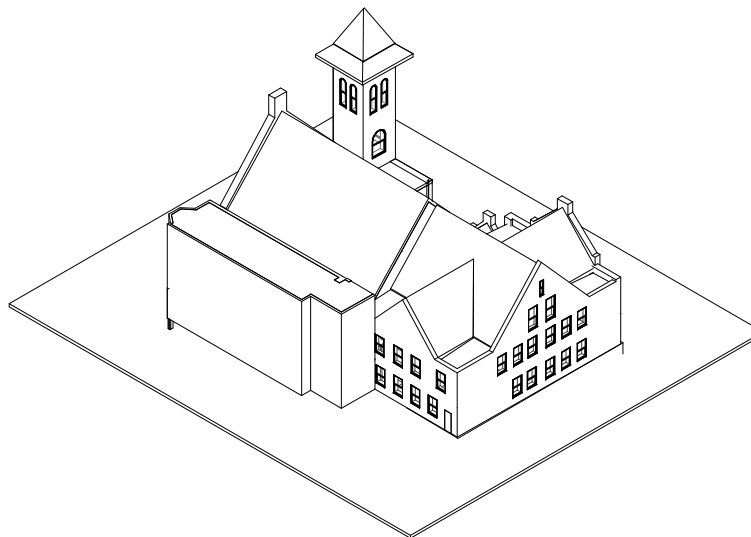
1 3D View



2 3D View



3 3D View



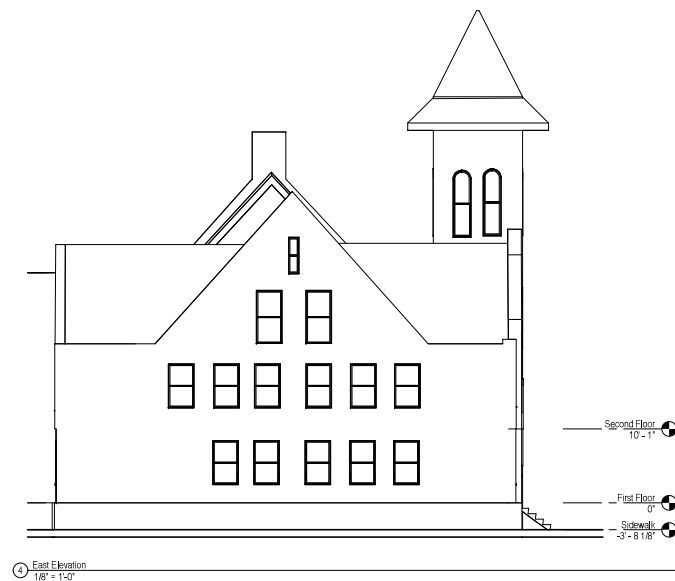
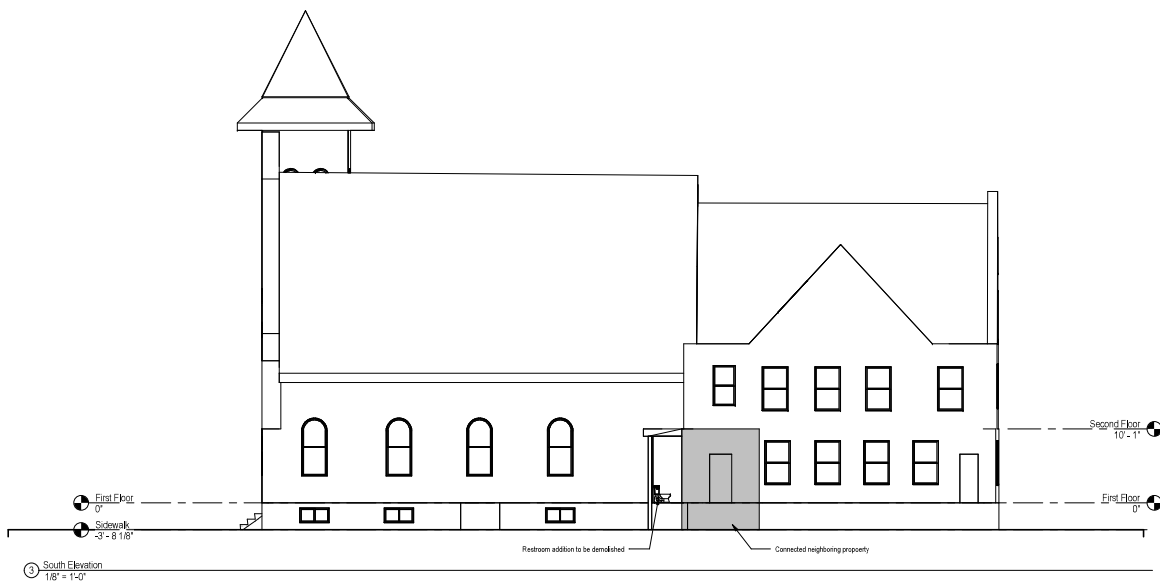
4 3D View



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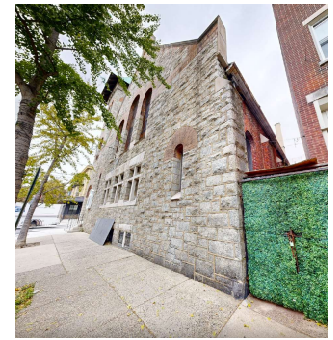
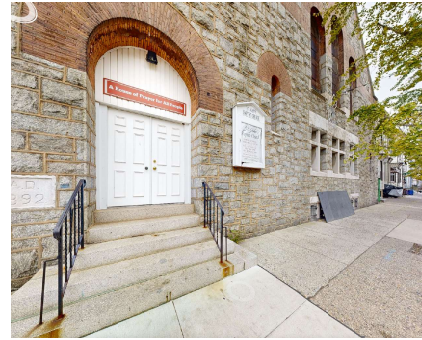
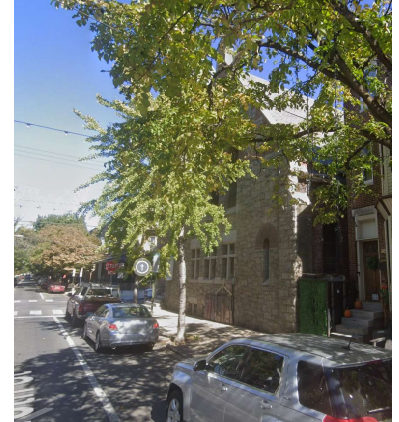
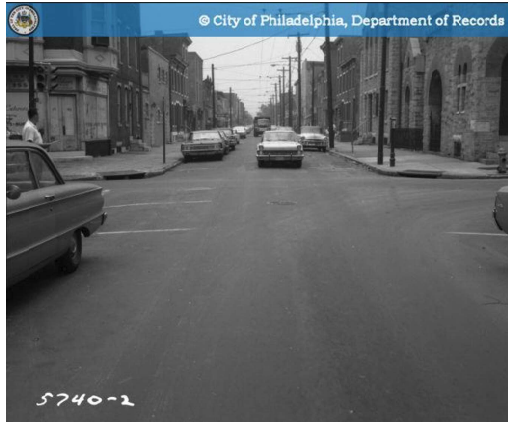
Church to Rental Apartment Conversion



EXISTING BUILDING ELEVATIONS

Date 02 DECEMBER 2025
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Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"
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EXISTING AND HISTORIC PHOTOS

Date 02 DECEMBER 2020
HISTORIC SUBMISSION

Scale
Project number 25077

1. 26 Total Units
2. Proposed unit square footages are listed on the plans.
3. **ANSI Type A Units - 1 accessible unit required when the building has 20+ units.**



Existing wall construction

New wall construction

Church to Rental Apartment Conversion

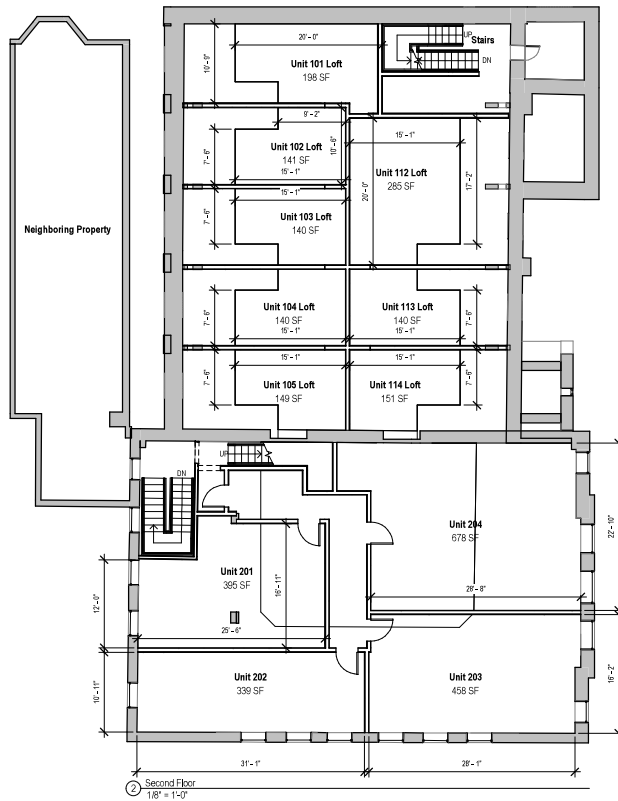


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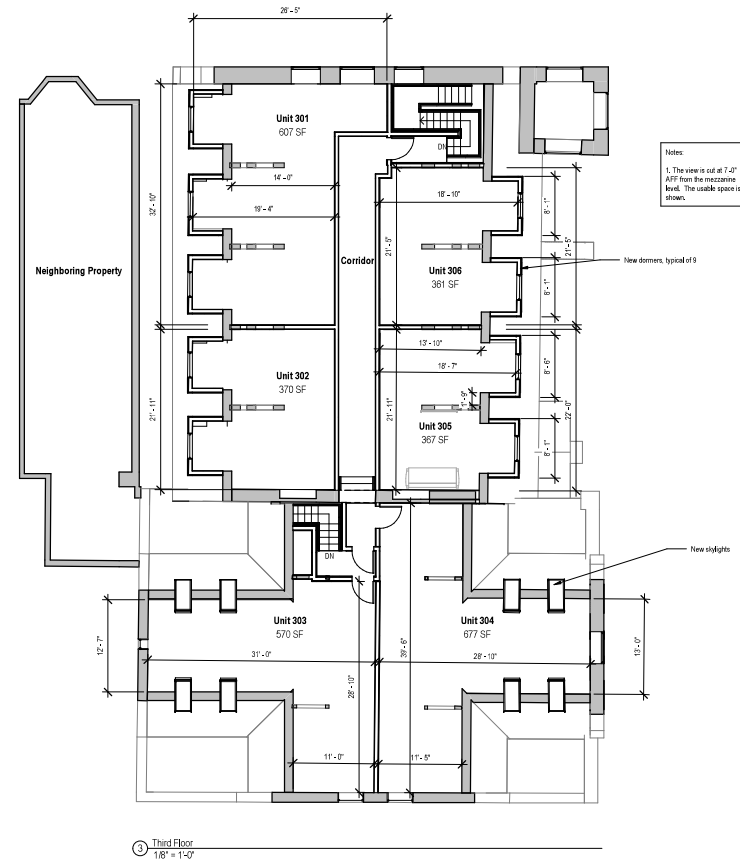
NOTES

- 26 Total Units
- Proposed unit square footages are based on the plans.
- ANSI Type A Units - 1 accessible unit required when the building has 20+ units.



Wall Legend

- Existing wall/construction
- New wall/construction



Notes:
1. The view is cut at 7'-0\"/>

If it is not
1\"/>

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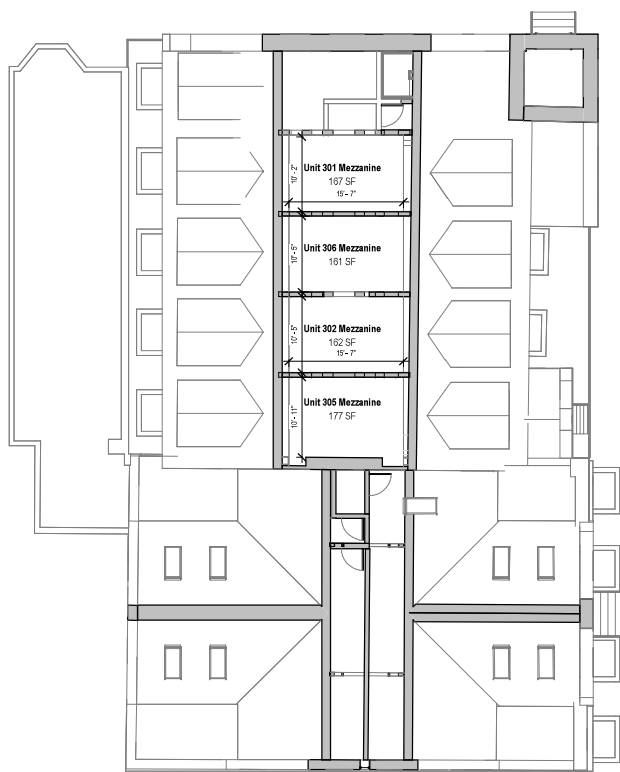


PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

Date: 02 DECEMBER 2025
HISTORIC SUBMISSION

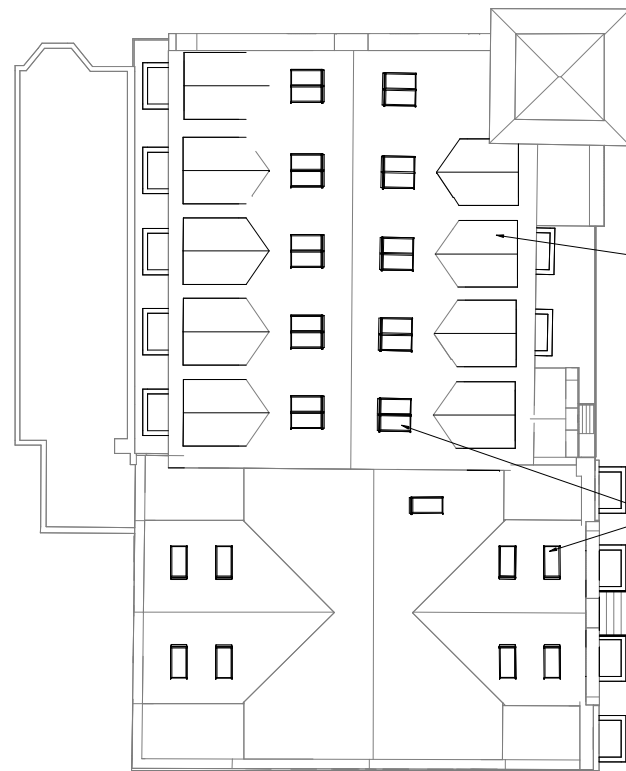
Scale: As indicated
Project number: 25077

- NOTES
- 26 Total Units
 - Proposed unit square footages are based on the plans.
 - ANSI Type A Units - 1 accessible unit required when the building has 20+ units.



Note:
1. The view is cut at 7'-0" AHP from the mezzanine level. The usable space is shown.

④ Third Floor Mezzanine
1/8" = 1'-0"



New dormers, typical of 8

New skylights

⑤ Roof
1/8" = 1'-0"

Wall Legend	
	Existing wall/construction
	New wall/construction

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PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

Date 23 November 2025
HISTORIC SUBMISSION

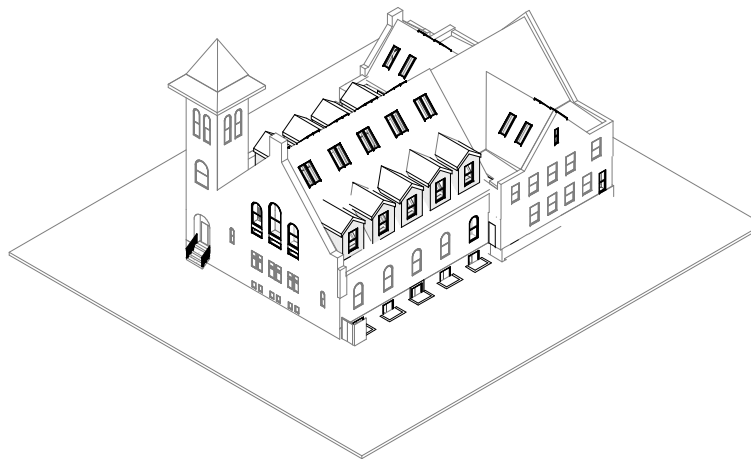
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Project number 25077

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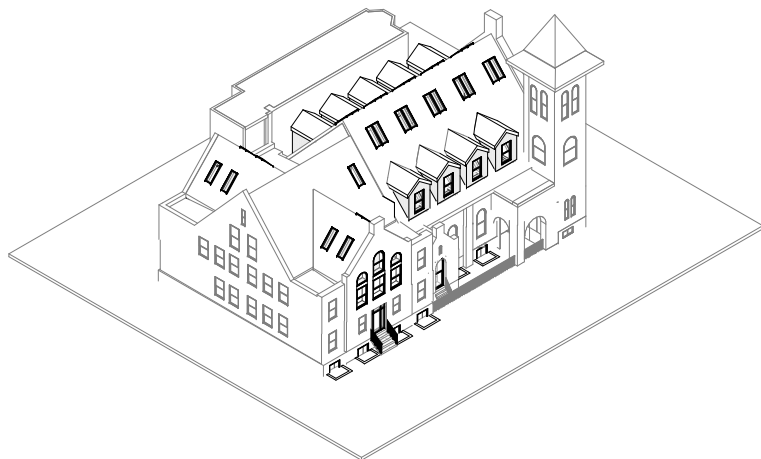
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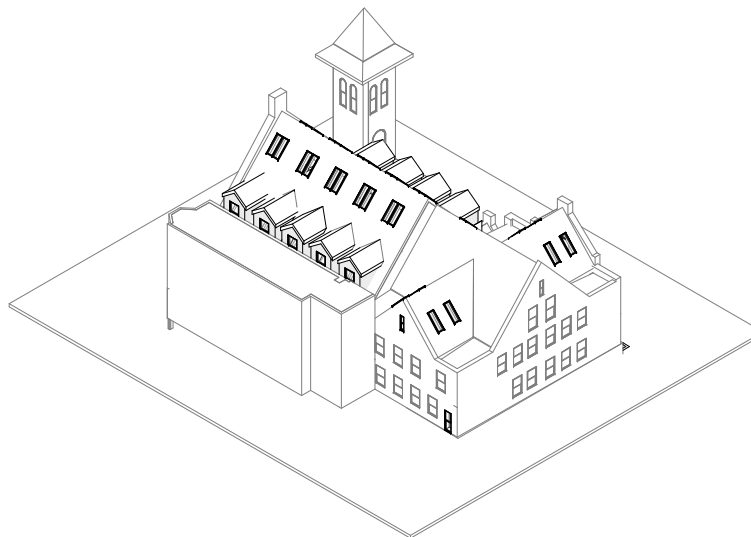
1 3D View



2 3D View



3 3D View



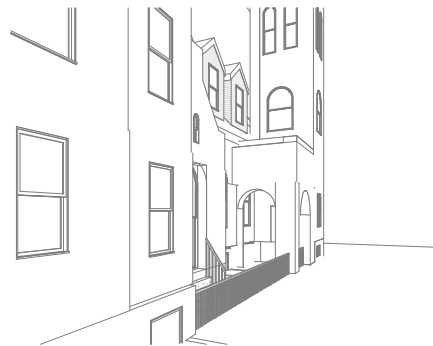
4 3D View



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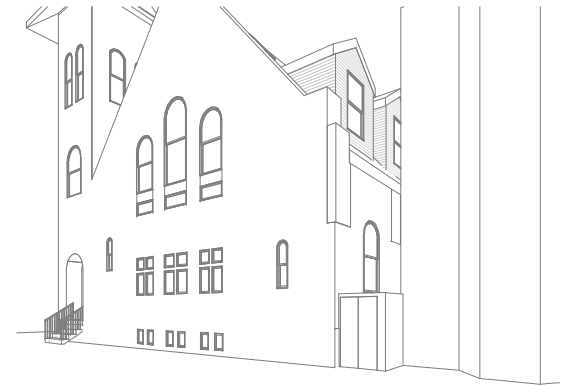




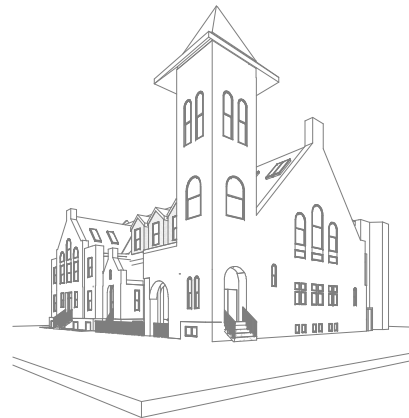
① Sidewalk Views



② Sidewalk Views



③ Sidewalk Views



④ Sidewalk Views



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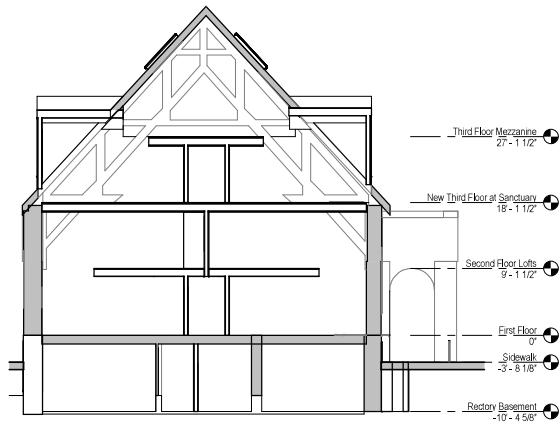
PROPOSED SIDEWALK VIEWS

Date 02 DECEMBER 2025
HISTORIC SUBMISSION

Scale
Project number 25077



① Longitudinal Section
1/8" = 1'-0"



② Section at Sanctuary
1/8" = 1'-0"



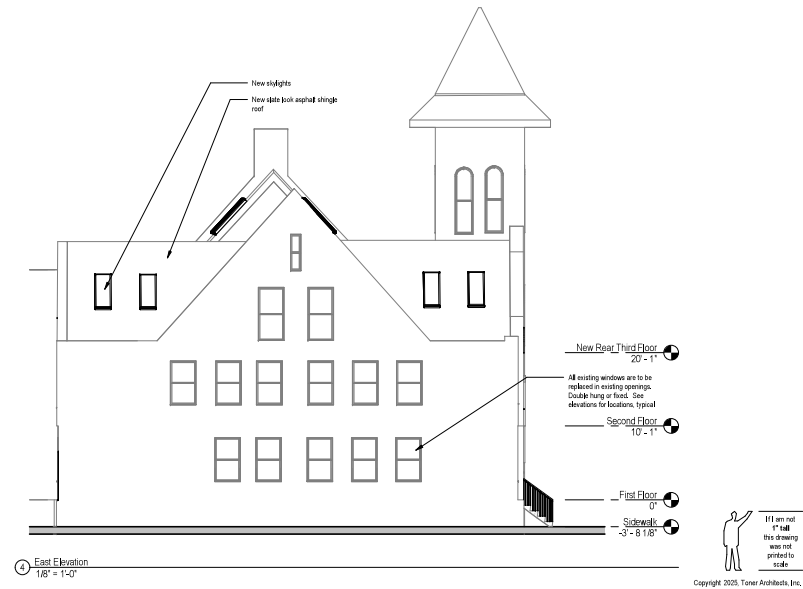
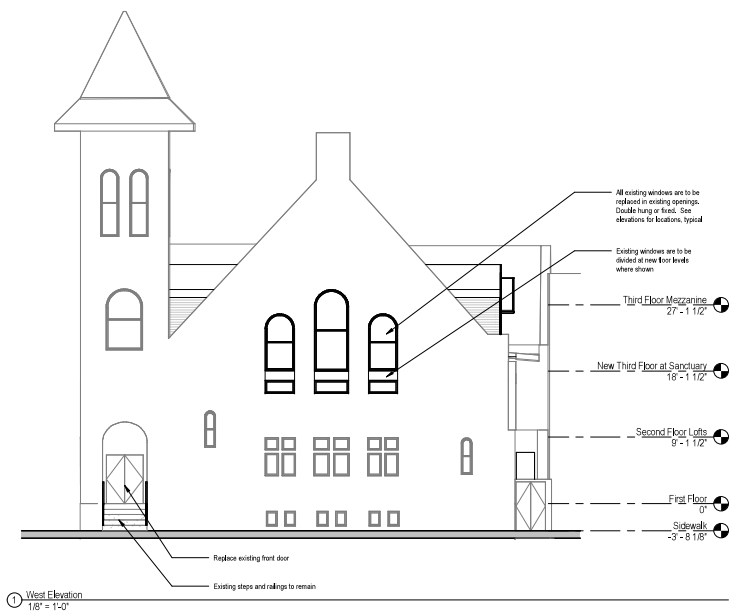
③ Section at Rectory
1/8" = 1'-0"



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PROPOSED BUILDING ELEVATIONS		
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HISTORIC SUBMISSION		Project number 25077