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Philadelphia Historical Commission  
1515 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

January 9, 2026

Overbrook School for the Blind  
6333 Malvern Ave, Philadelphia PA 19151  
Campus Experience Improvements & New Dining Hall

Dear Members of the Commission,

Attached please find documents outlining the proposed campus improvements at Overbrook School for the Blind (OSB). Since its founding in 1832, **the School's mission has been to provide** opportunities for children who were blind or visually impaired. Over the years, the student population has grown to include many with complex medical conditions, who utilize wheelchairs and mobility devices, ventilators, and are often accompanied by full-time nurses and caretakers, in addition to blindness and visual impairments. In the late 1990's **there was** one student who used a wheelchair, now approximately half the population are mobility device users and rising.

Considering the evolving student body population, as well as its general educational philosophy, OSB has a strong focus on creating a safer and more accessible campus for students with varying disabilities. On a typical day, 75 buses and vans pick up and drop off students. Due to students' varying physical conditions each drop off can take between 10 and 15 minutes, with the limited amount of space in the loading/unloading area, the whole process can take up to **two hours, cutting significantly into the students' instructional time**. Vehicular access to the current bus loading and unloading area is through the rear service drive, off Wynnewood Avenue, and is located between the kitchen, loading dock, and garage. As a result, students must contend with the sights, sounds, and smells of the dumpsters, trash compactors, fleet vehicles, and fueling stations as the first part of their daily experience.

One of the goals of this project is to provide the students with a dignified, streamlined, and accessible pickup and drop off experience that both increases the number of vehicles that can be loaded or unloaded at once, while creating a more supportive environment for those experiences. An additional goal of the project is to maintain or extend covered or enclosed paths to the greatest extent possible between the bus loop and the various buildings on campus, due to the significant challenges faced by students with mobility issues traversing uncovered exterior paths in inclement weather. The last aspect of the project is to create a new dining hall and safe harbor area for students in the event of emergency. The new dining hall

and connector will allow students to get out of the weather and indoors quickly while being a safe and secure gathering area when needed. To accomplish these goals on the tight urban site, and with an eye toward respecting the historic character of the campus, we have prepared the attached plan for campus improvements.

To provide a sufficiently large and appropriately sited bus loop, this project proposes the full demolition of 2 existing structures: Wynnewood Hall (Constructed 1960) and the Garage (built 1960). Partial demolition of the Food Services Building (Built 1975) is also proposed. Programmatically, the functions of the Food Services Building will be taken up in a new proposed Dining Hall, which will also connect the existing Lions Hall building (Built 1954) with the School's Main Building (Built 1899). To accomplish this new work, the Project includes modifications to portions of the facades of these buildings, to facilitate connection to the new Dining Hall building. Other portions of the project include the construction of a new Guard House near the Northeast vehicular gate to better control traffic flow into the campus and widening of the East pedestrian gate into a vehicular gate to complete the bus loop and improve traffic flow. In response to comments from the Architectural Committee, we studied the possibility of narrowing this new gate to **establish a hierarchy with the existing vehicular gate. The proposed 18' width** of the new vehicular gate was determined to be the minimum consistent with vehicular safety and visibility. Therefore, in order to establish the requested hierarchy, the finials on the piers of the existing gate will be restored, while the new gate will have piers but no finials. We have also revised the design of the new Guard House to address comments from the architectural committee. Interior renovations to Lions Hall are also planned, to provide a home for other **elements of the School's educational mission.**

The proposed Dining Hall will provide a link between the Main Building and Lions Hall, as well as a welcoming and supportive environment for dining. The new building will include 2 elevators, for improved accessibility. One will be within the new Dining Hall Building. The other will be enclosed in a stair tower which was added to the Main Building significantly after its original construction. In 1997, the Historical Commission approved the addition of an elevator tower to the West side of the Main Building. In a style matching that elevator tower, we propose extending the height of the stair tower's **walls with stucco-clad CMU walls** featuring inset window patterns, and providing a new metal standing seam roof, matching the shape of the Main Building roofs.

In all aspects of this project, we have made every effort to honor the historic context of the Overbrook School for the Blind campus while improving both the quality and quantity of the **students' educational time**, particularly in the areas of transportation, dining and therapies. Each aspect of the project has been designed with therapy in mind, so that students can continue to improve their activities of daily living even while outside the classroom. We appreciate the input of the Architectural Committee and the Historical Commission in this regard and look forward to a productive conversation that will result in a successful project on all fronts.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe P. Horan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a trailing flourish at the end.

Joseph P. Horan RA, NCARB, LEED AP



# KIMMEL ARCHITECTURE

## Philadelphia

### Historical Commission

01.09.2026



**OVERBROOK**  
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND



**KIMMEL**  
ARCHITECTURE



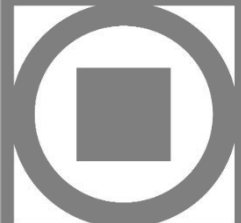
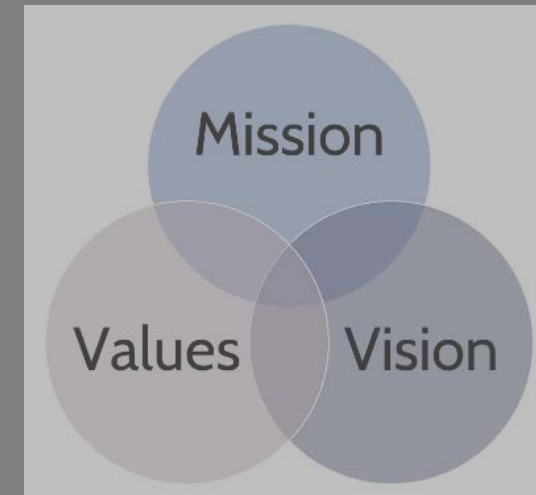


*“Transform the dining experience into a welcoming, safe, and inclusive space that prioritizes dignity, comfort, and accessibility. The new Dining Hall will not just be a place to eat, but a place that values the students that will dine there by shedding its institutional feel in favor of a flexible environment that is emotionally and socially supportive where students can connect with their peers, build friendships, and feel a sense of community in a bright, sound controlled and inclusive environment.”*

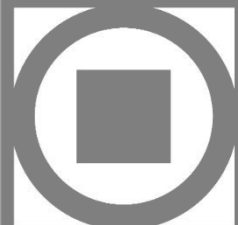
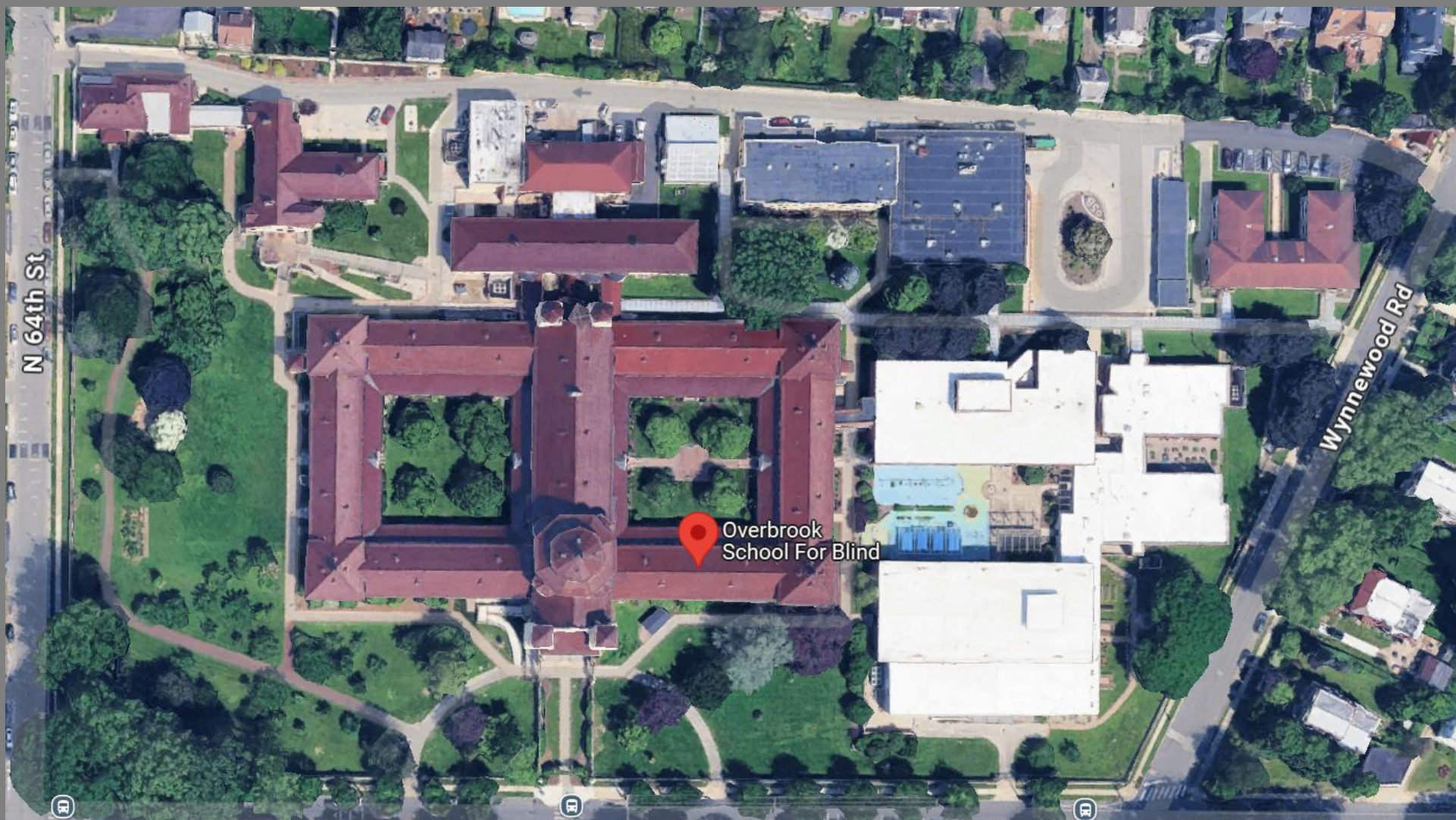
*“The driveway and site changes will improve the pickup and drop off experience of all students, especially students with mobility issues. We will create an elegant accessible entrance rather than a door by the loading dock and dumpsters, while also covering, substantially enlarging, and improving the accessible bus loading areas to reduce the time students spend waiting for transportation and allow more time to be spent on instruction.”*

## ***Core Values:***

1. Independence
2. Flexibility
3. Dignity
4. Inclusion
5. Innovation
6. Fiscal Responsibility



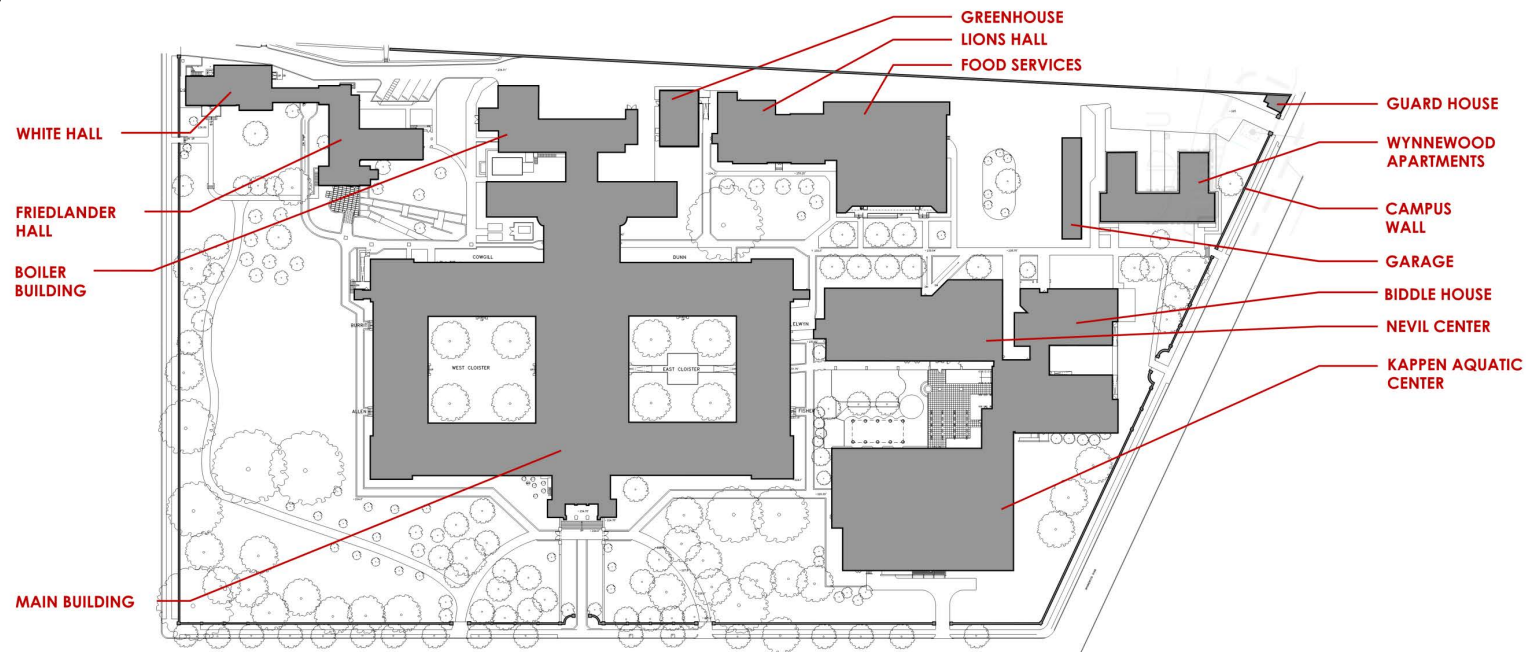
THE MISSION



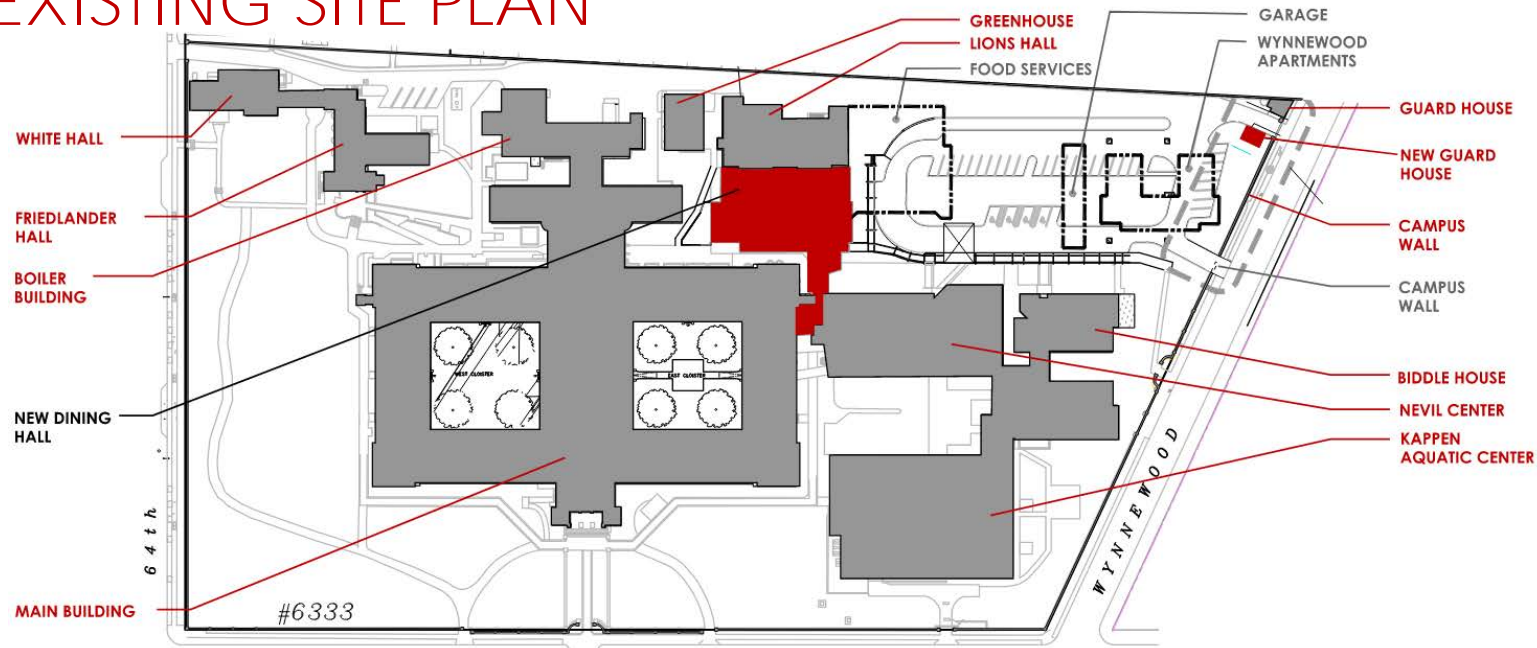
EXISTING SITE







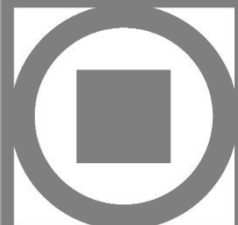
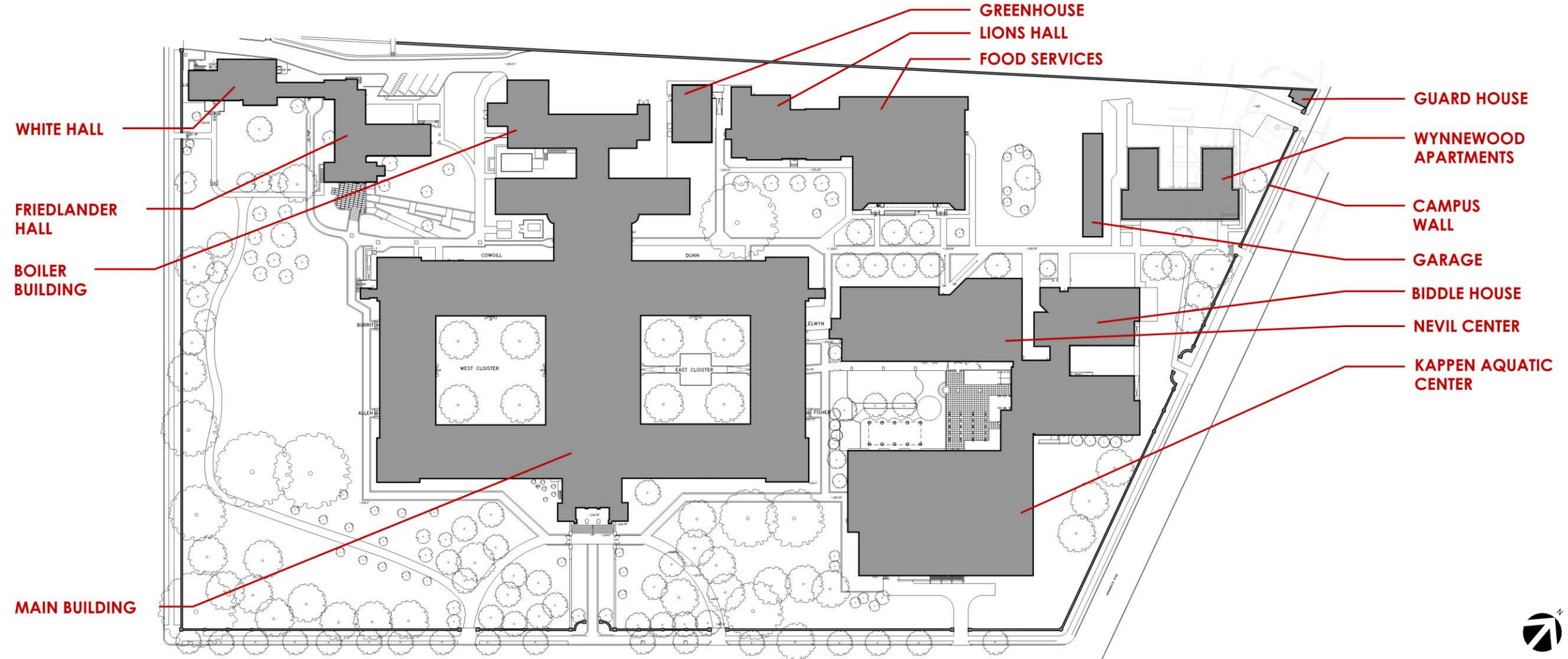
## EXISTING SITE PLAN



## PROPOSED SITE PLAN

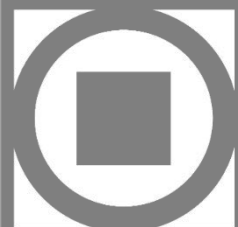
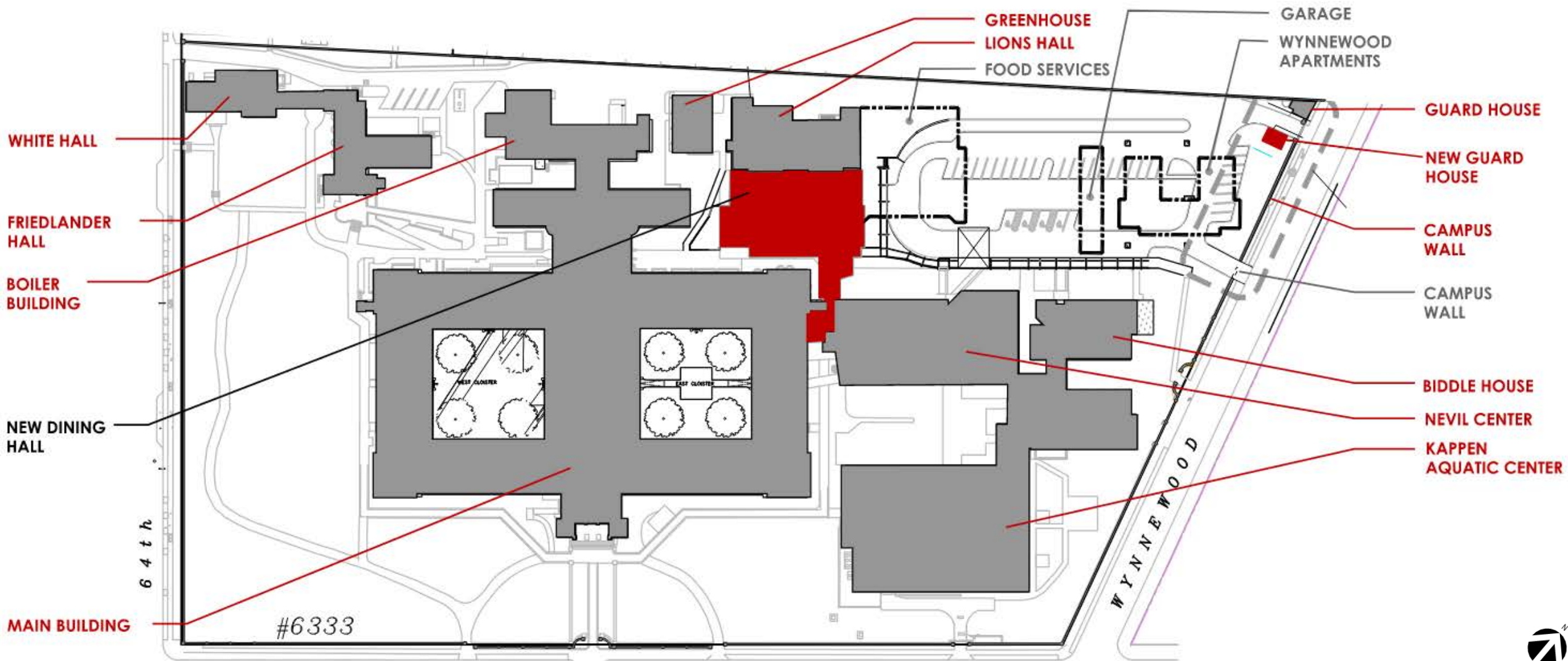






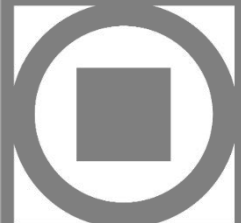
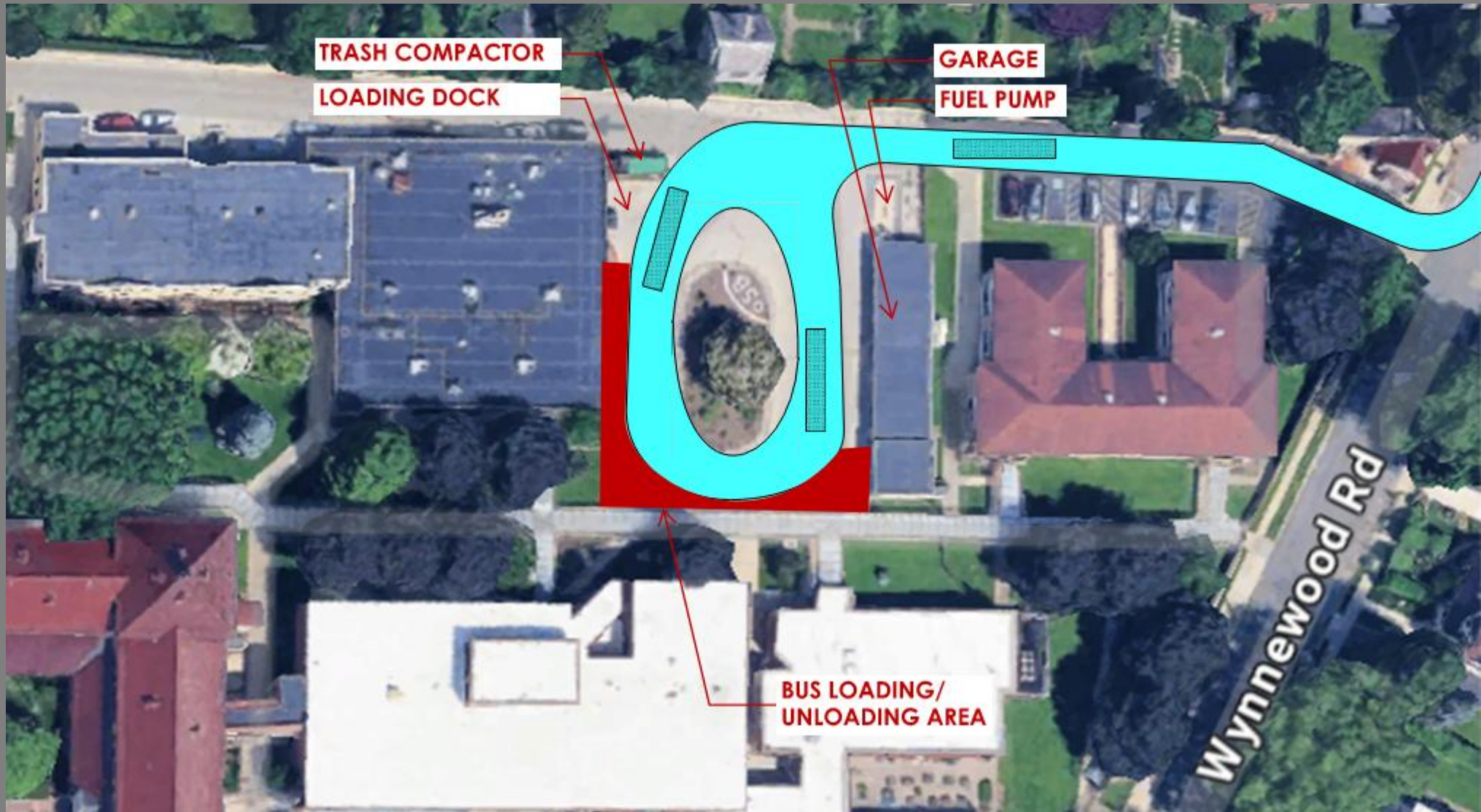
EXISTING SITE PLAN





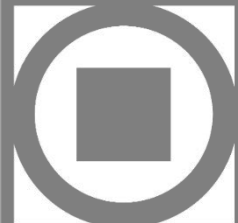
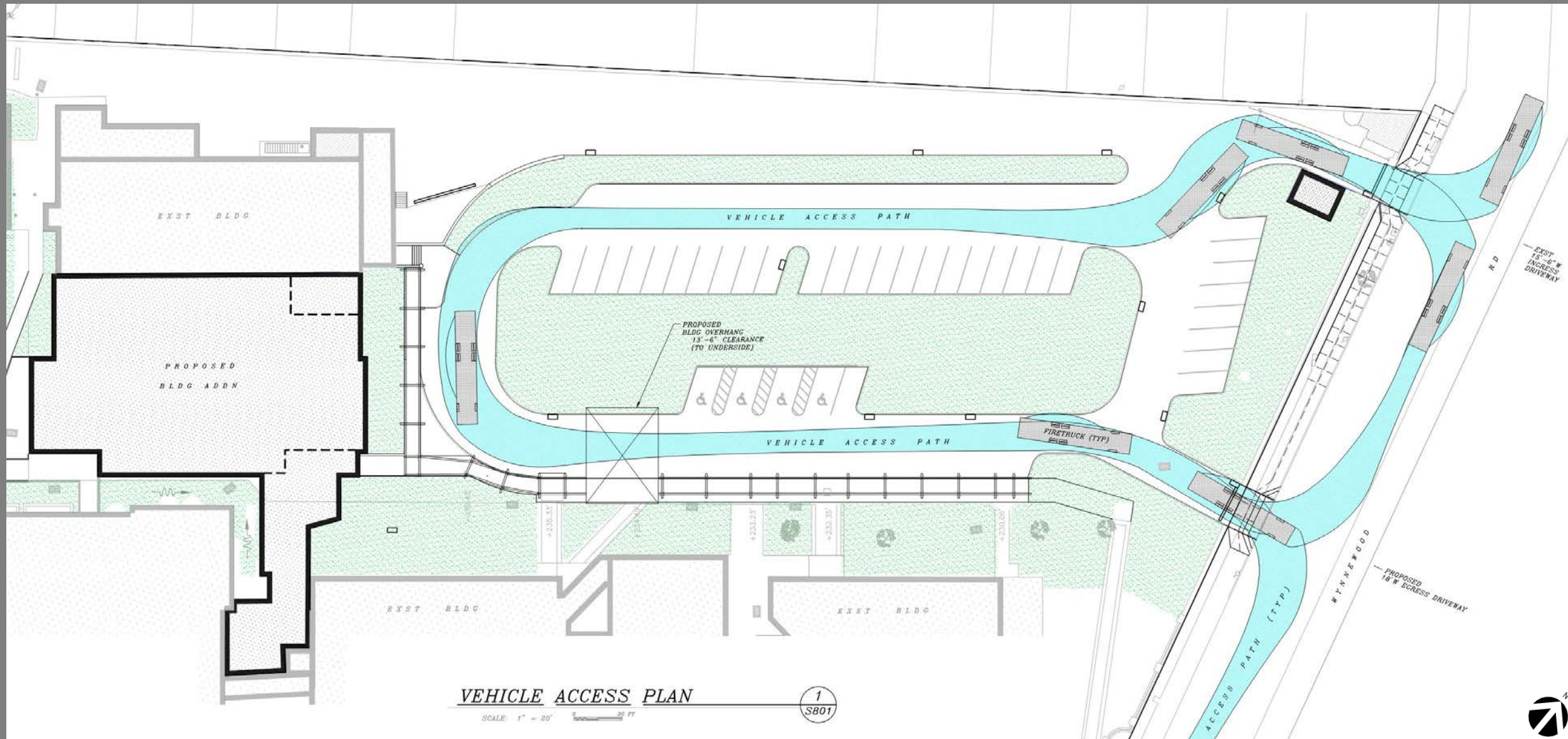
## PROPOSED SITE PLAN





CURRENT BUS LOOP





PROPOSED BUS LOOP



# Wynnewood Apartments Built 1960

12,520 SF

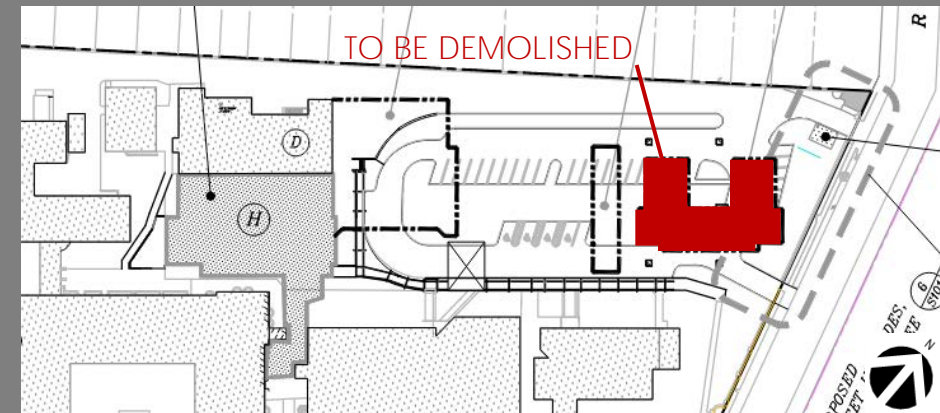
# Two Stories with Basement CMU Walls with Brick Facade



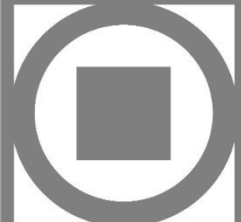
## North and East Facades



## North Facade



## PROPOSED COMPLETE DEMOLITION





Garage

Built 1960

2,100 SF

1 Story Slab  
on Grade

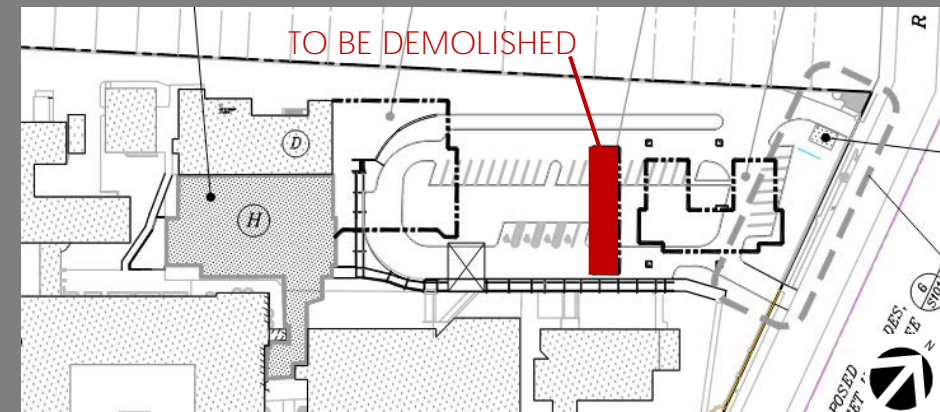


East and North Facades



North and West Facades

PROPOSED COMPLETE DEMOLITION





Food Services  
Building

Built 1975

13,962 SF

1 Story Steel  
Frame and  
CMU Walls with  
Brick Facade



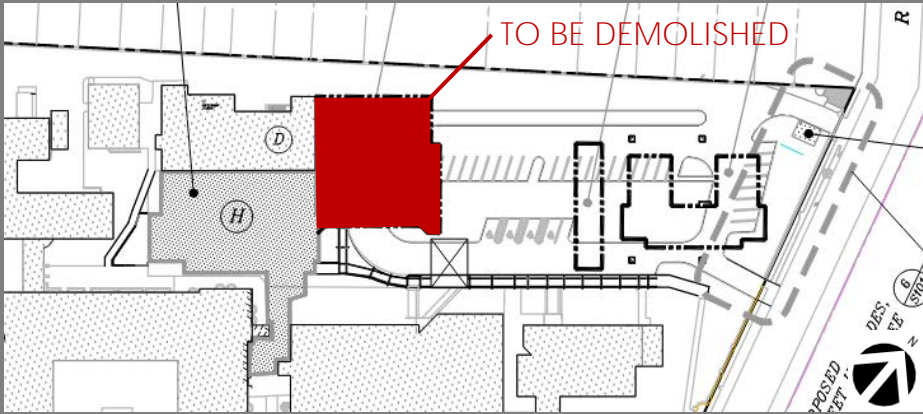
Garage, Bus Drop-Off Area, and East Facade



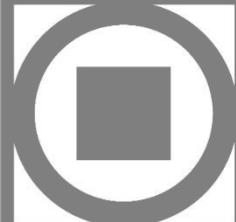
East Facade, Loading Dock and Trash Compactor



North Facade and Trash Compactor



PROPOSED PARTIAL DEMOLITION





Lions Hall

Built 1954

22,500 SF

Stucco on  
Masonry  
and Frame  
with Flat  
Roof



South Facade



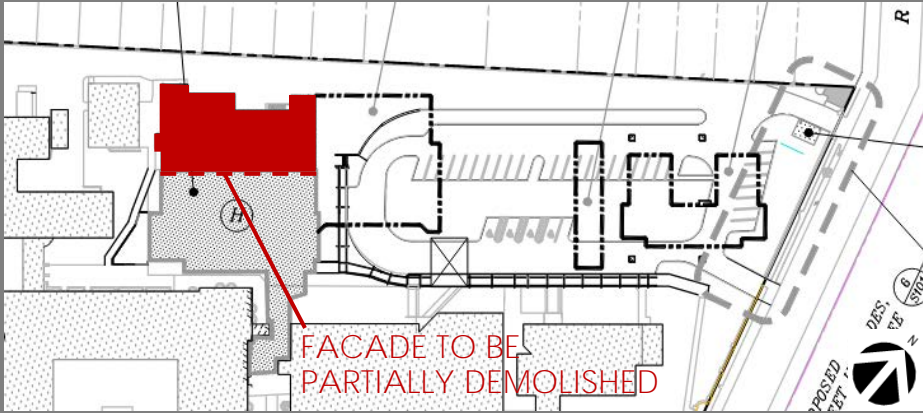
Northwest Corner



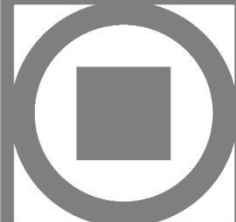
South Facade



Southwest Corner



PROPOSED RENOVATION/PARTIAL FACADE DEMOLITION





Main Building  
Built 1899  
169,514 SF  
Stone with Stucco,  
Wood Frame  
Roof with Glazed  
Clay Tile  
Shingles



East Facade



East Facade



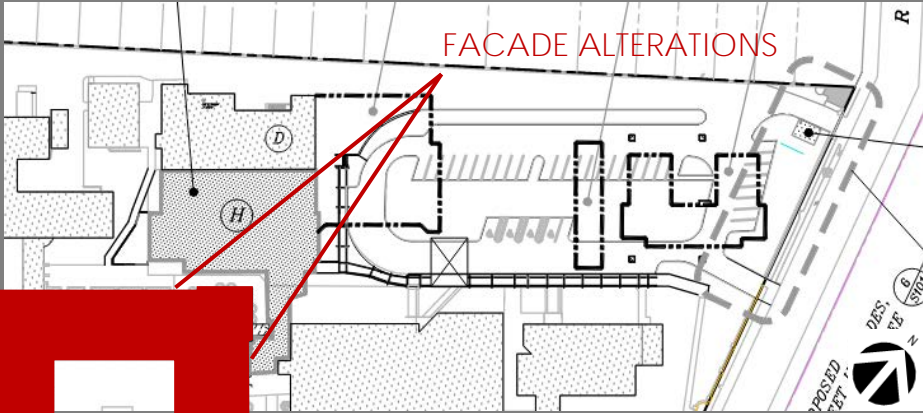
Northeast Corner



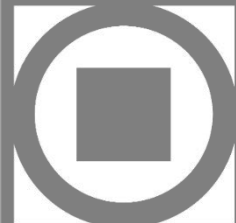
North Facade



East Facade Looking North



PROPOSED CONNECTION TO NEW BLDG





Stair  
Addition

Built: Post-  
1958

154 SF

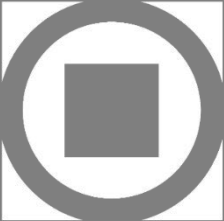
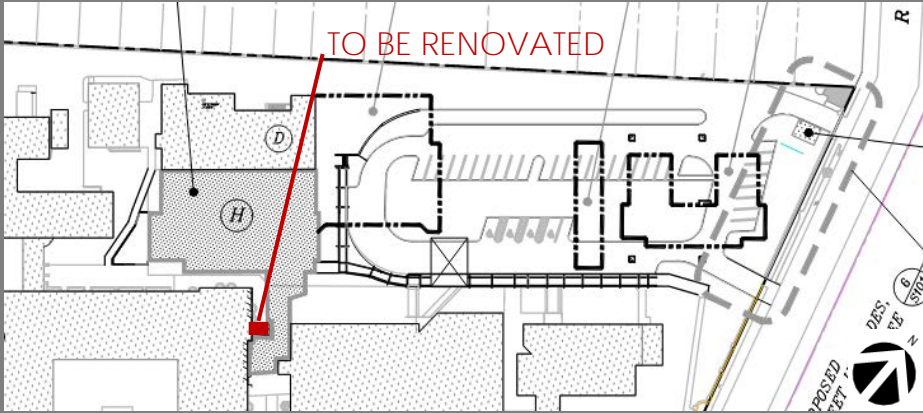
CMU with  
Stucco,  
Metal Roof



South Facade



North Facade



PROPOSED RENOVATION



Campus  
Wall

Built 1899

3,700  
Linear Feet

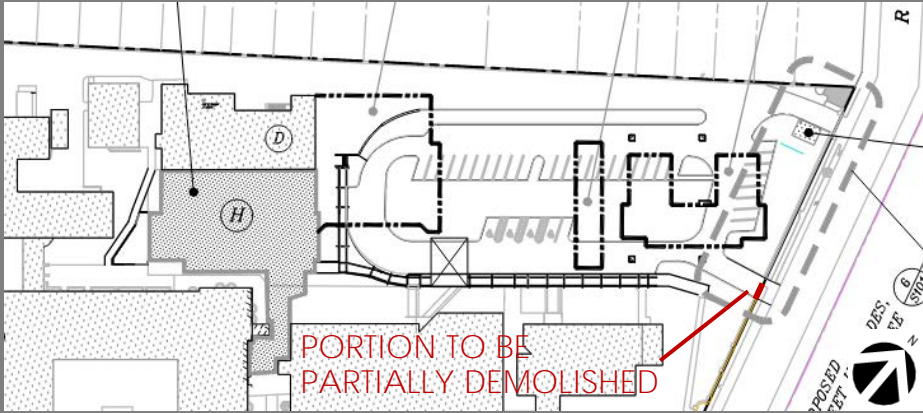
Masonry,  
Stucco,  
Wrought  
Iron and  
Stone Caps  
and Finials



East Pedestrian Gate

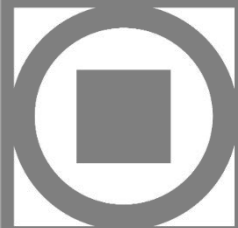
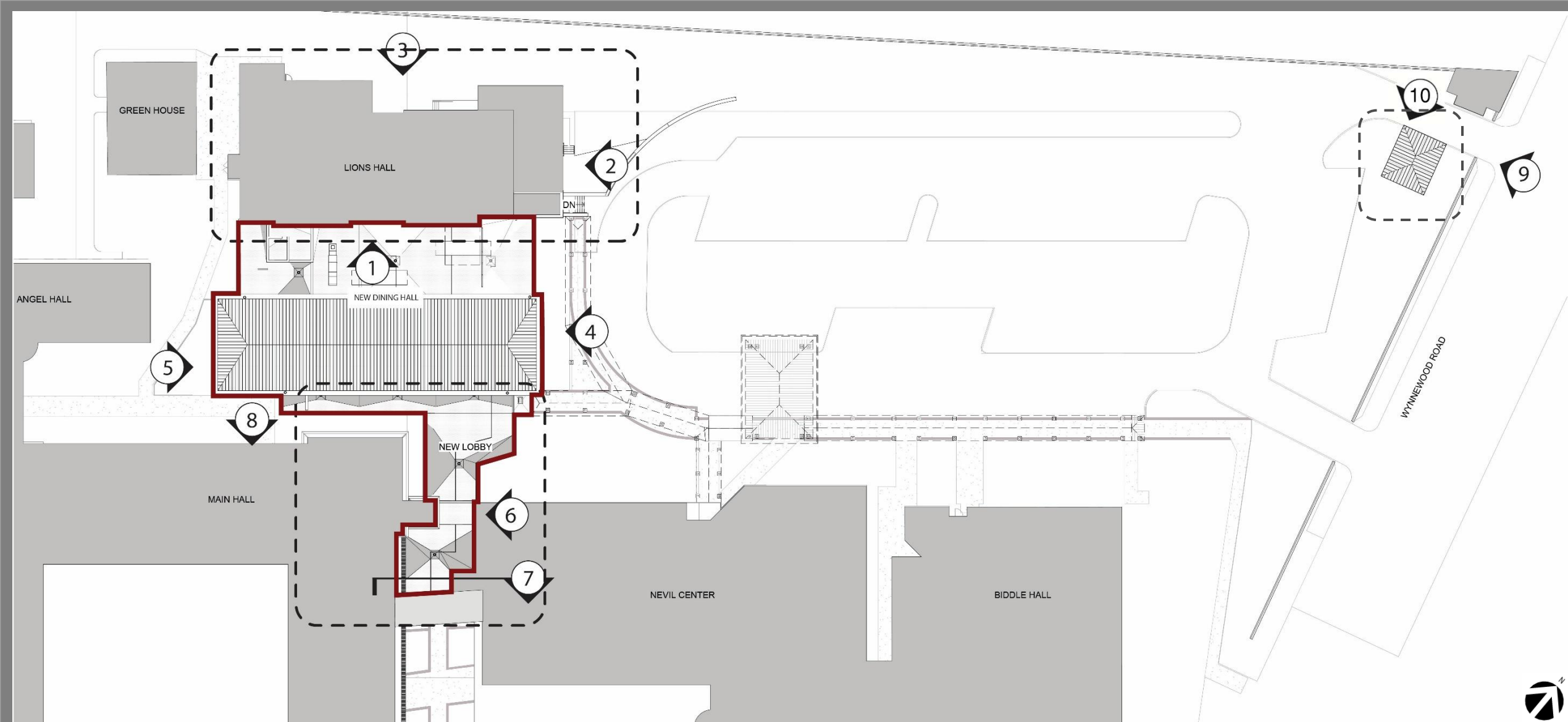


Northeast Vehicular Gate

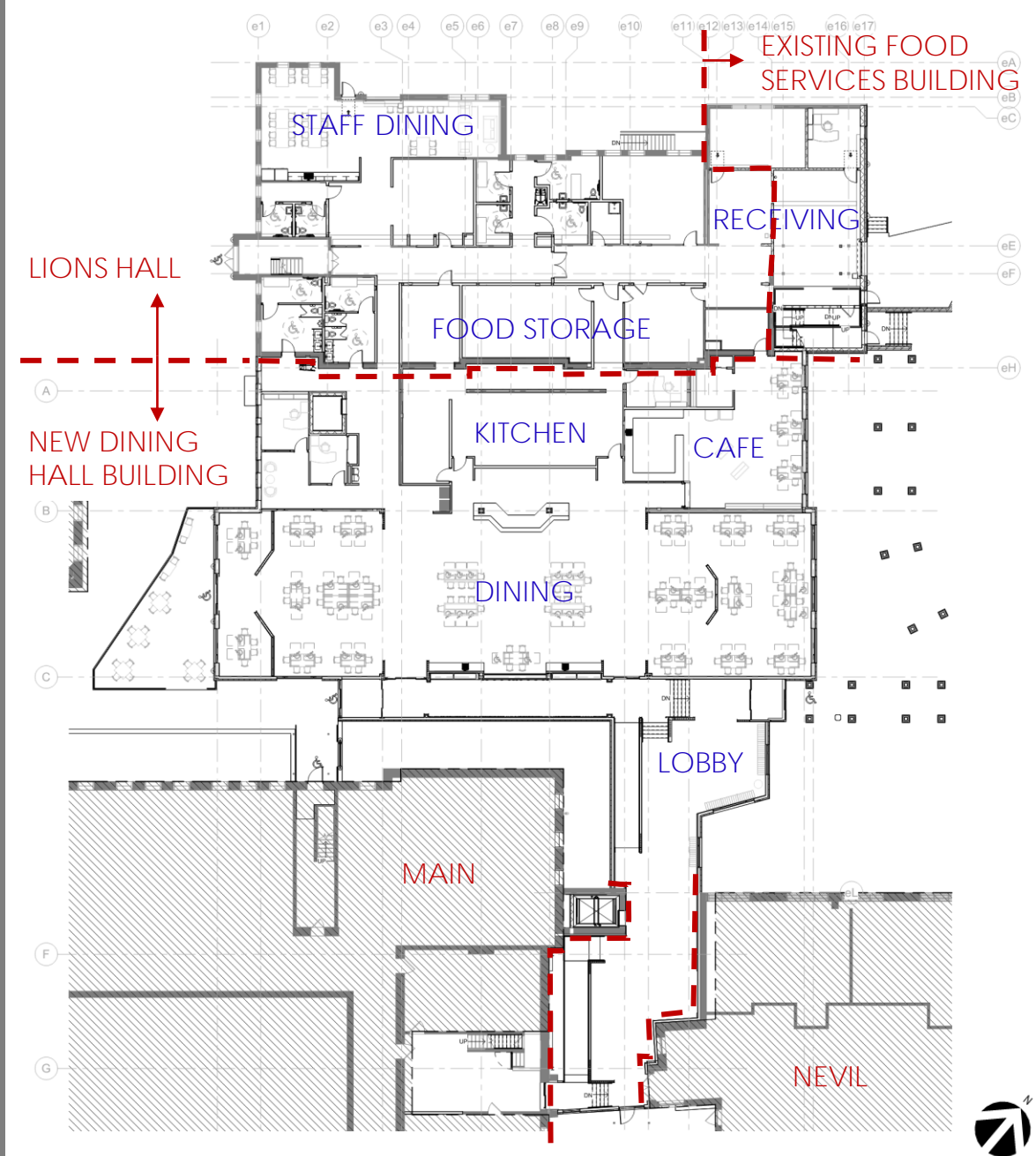


PROPOSED PARTIAL DEMOLITION



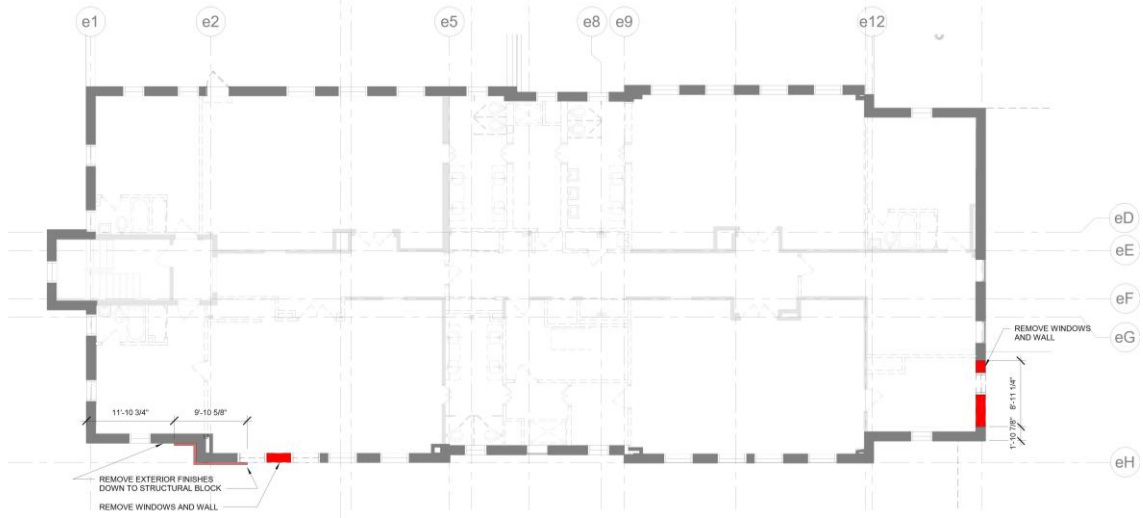


# PLAN/ELEVATION KEY PLAN

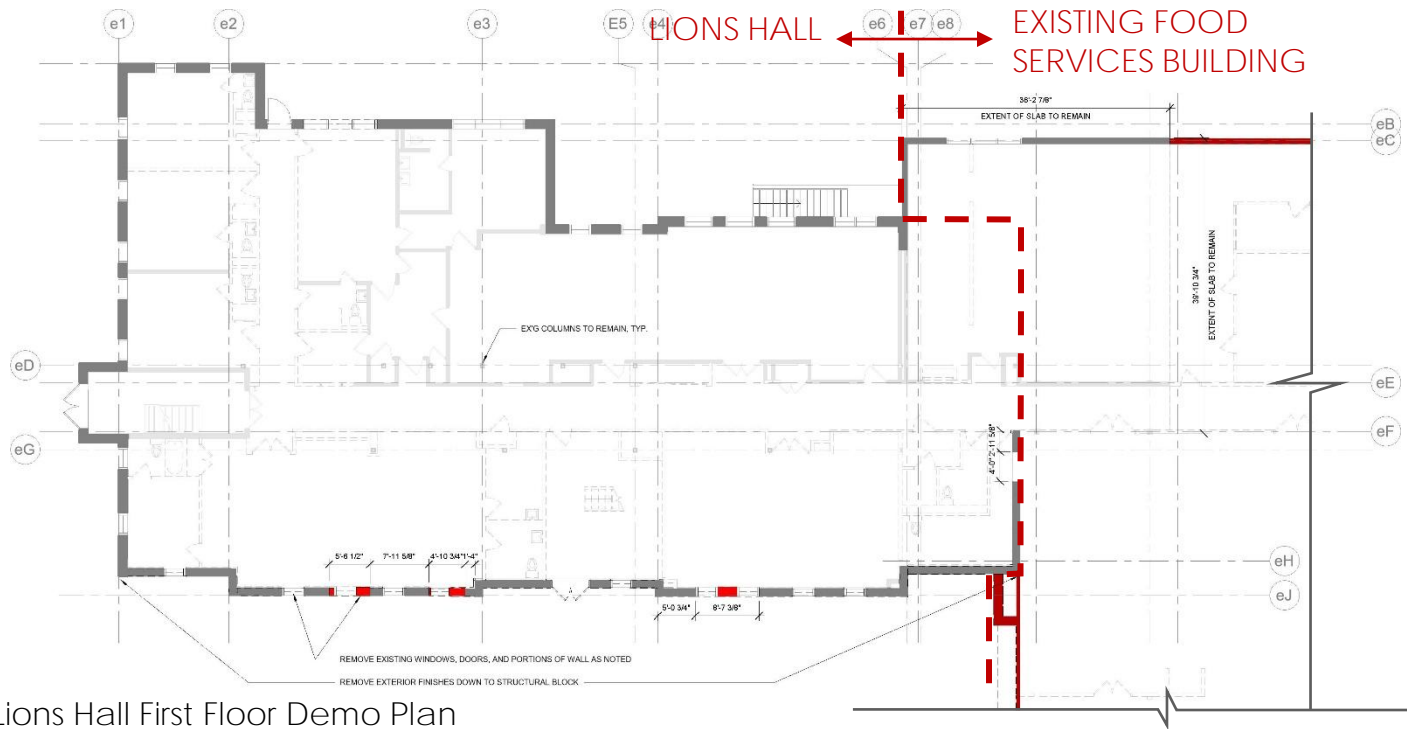


OVERALL PLAN

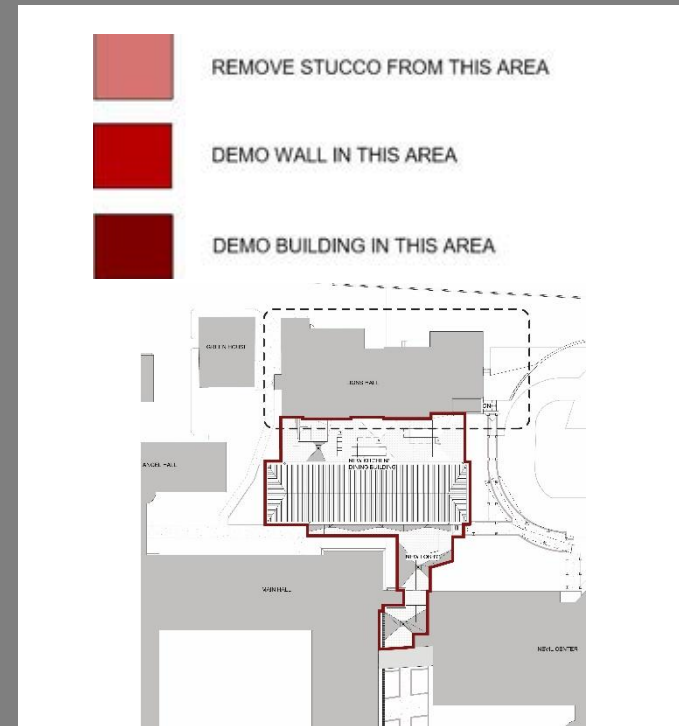




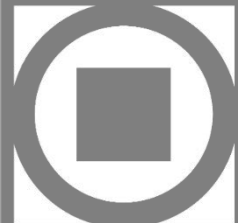
Lions Hall Second Floor Demo Plan



Lions Hall First Floor Demo Plan

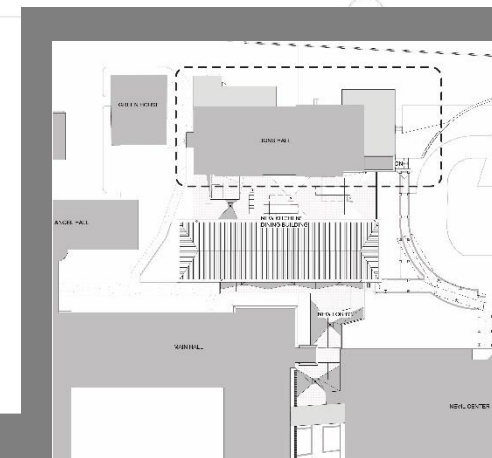


# LIONS HALL / FOOD SERVICES BUILDING DEMO PLANS





Lions Hall First Floor Plan

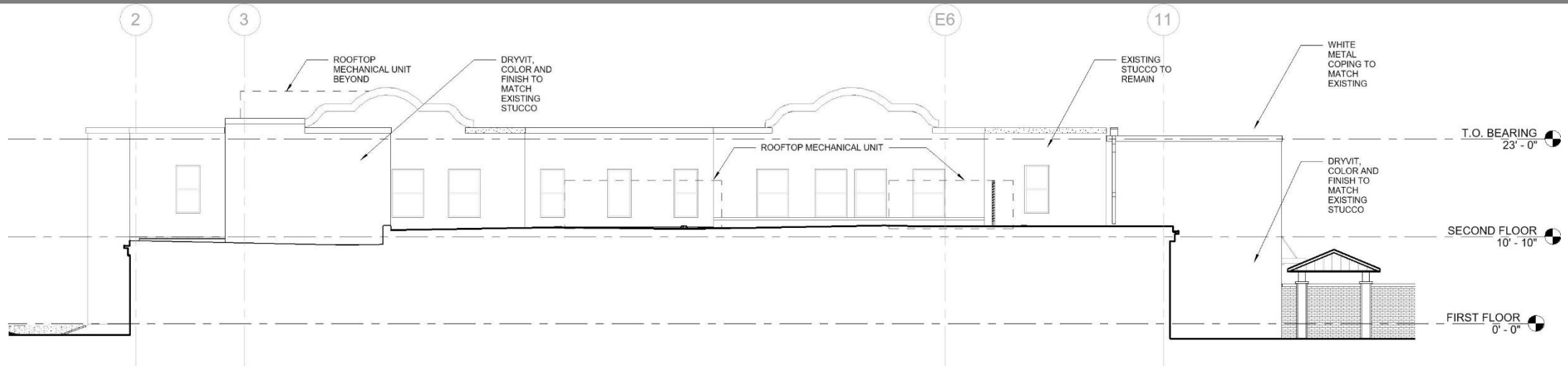


# LIONS HALL NEW CONSTRUCTION PLAN

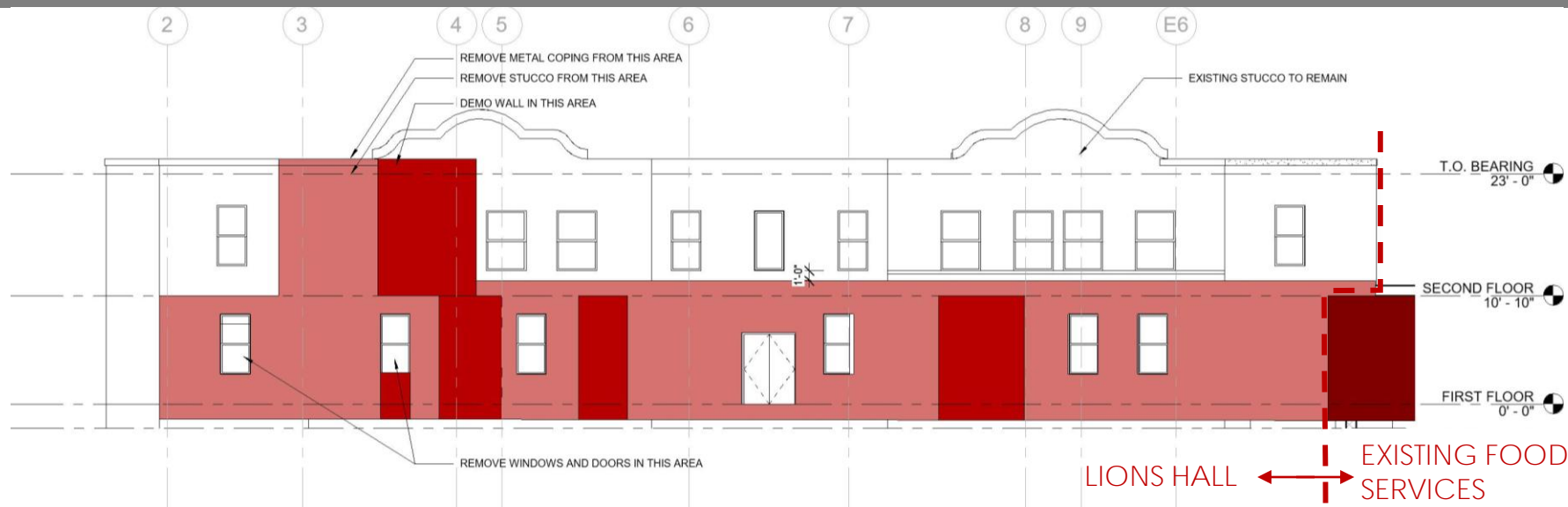




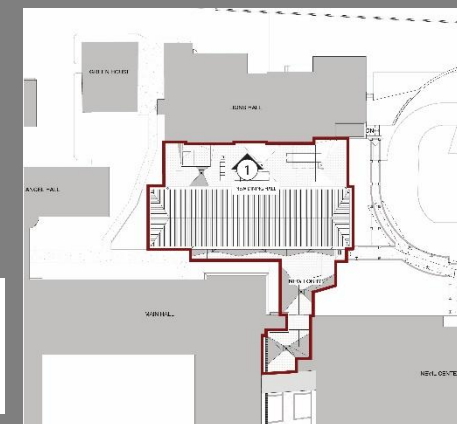
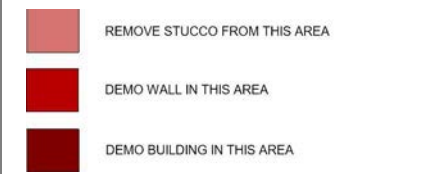




Lions Hall South Proposed Elevation



Lions Hall South Demo Elevation

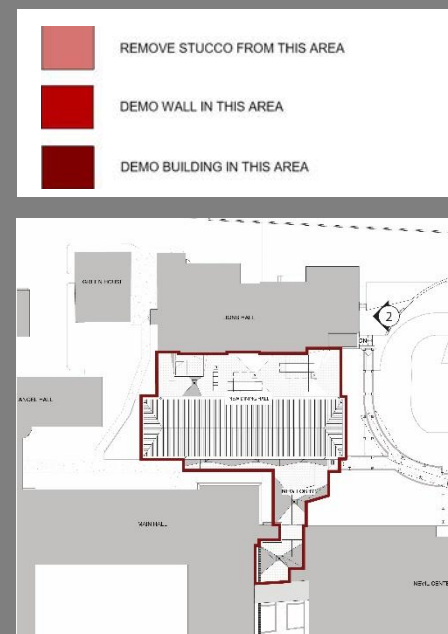
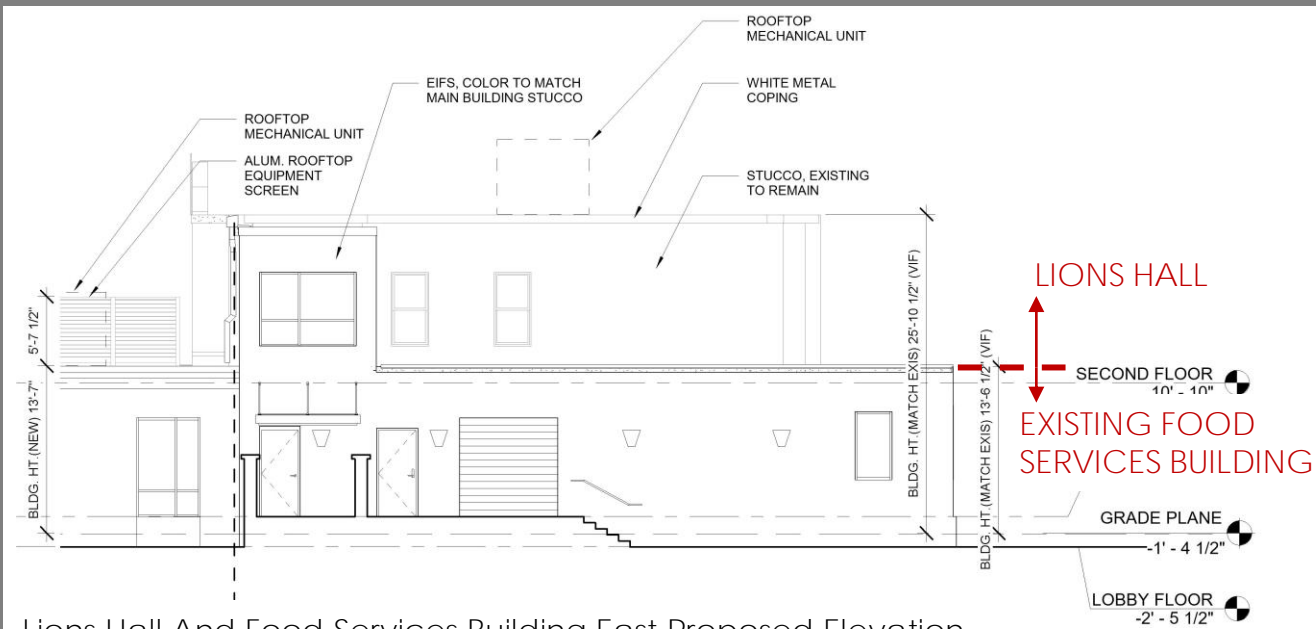


LIONS HALL ↔ EXISTING FOOD SERVICES BUILDING

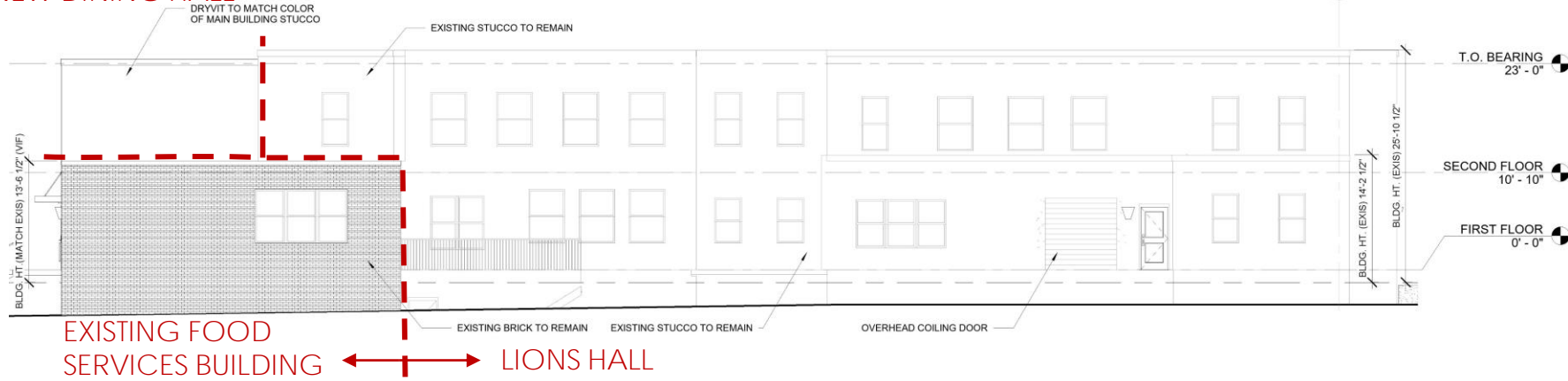
# 1: LIONS HALL SOUTH FACADE



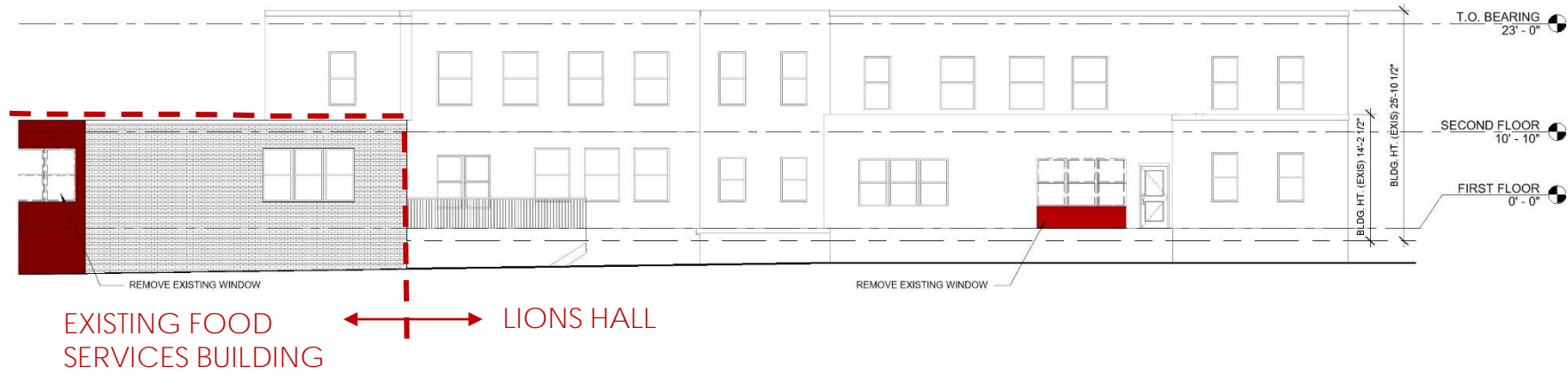




## NEW DINING HALL

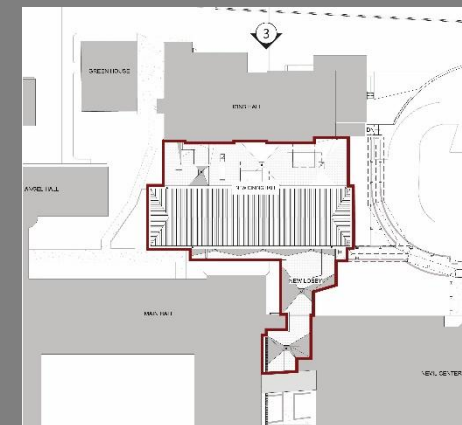


Lions Hall and Existing Food Services Building North Proposed Elevation



Lions Hall and Existing Food Services Building North Demo Elevation

- REMOVE STUCCO FROM THIS AREA
- DEMO WALL IN THIS AREA
- DEMO BUILDING IN THIS AREA

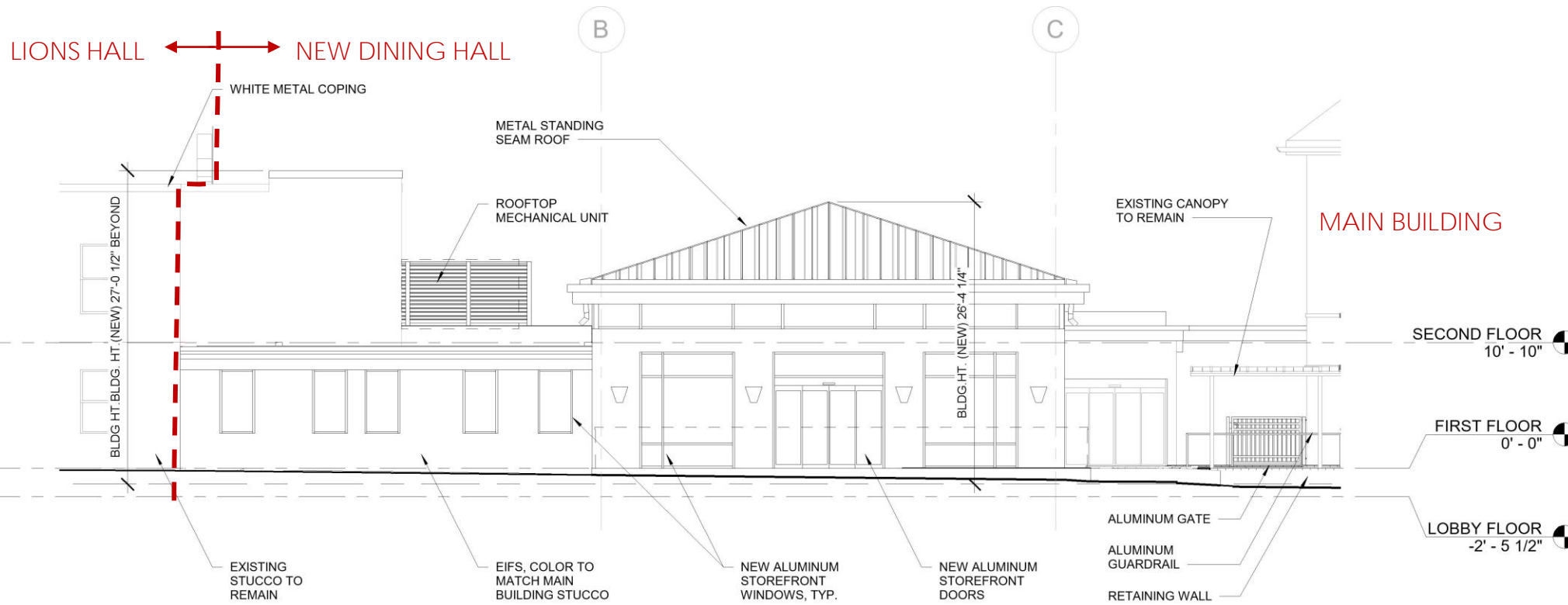


## 3: LIONS HALL AND FOOD SERVICES BUILDING NORTH FACADE

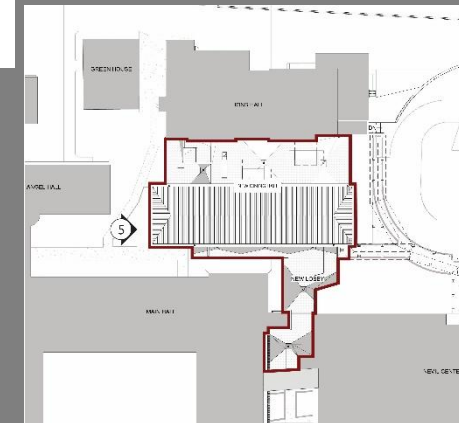








New Dining Hall West Proposed Facade



## 5: NEW DINING HALL WEST FACADE



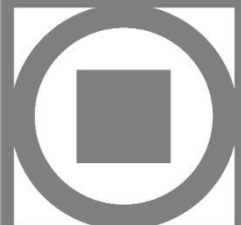




Existing Food Services Building, West Facade



Proposed New Dining Hall, West Facade



BEFORE AND AFTER: VIEW FROM BUS LOOP



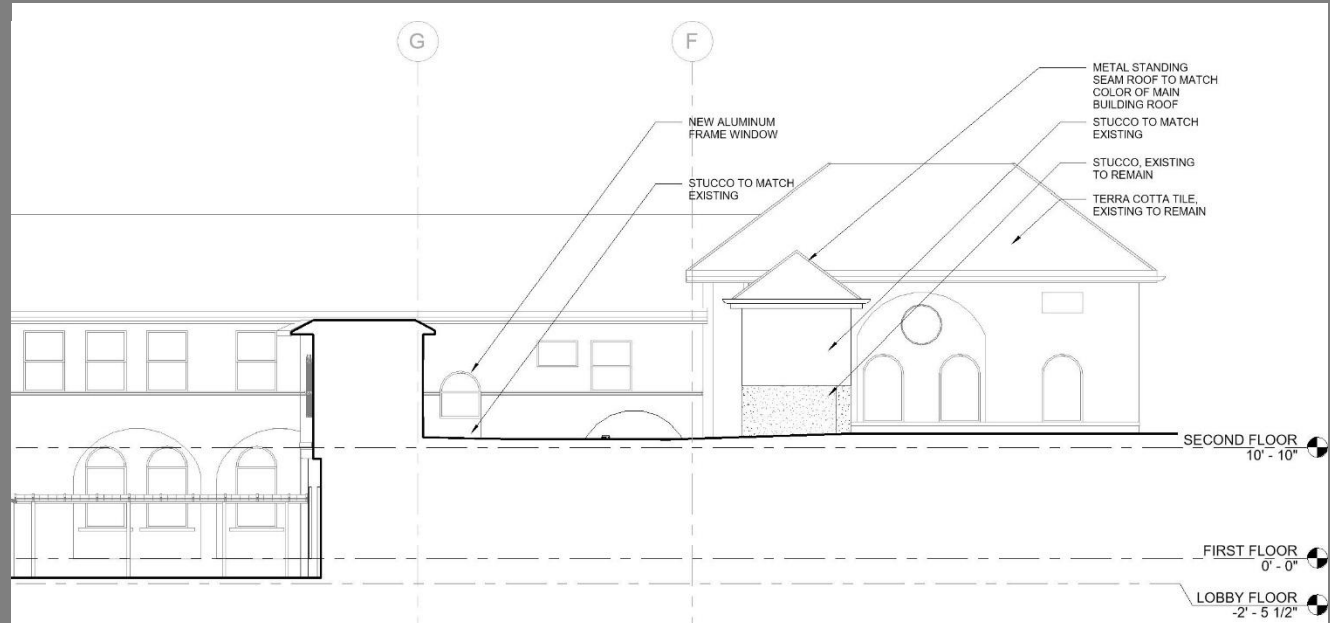




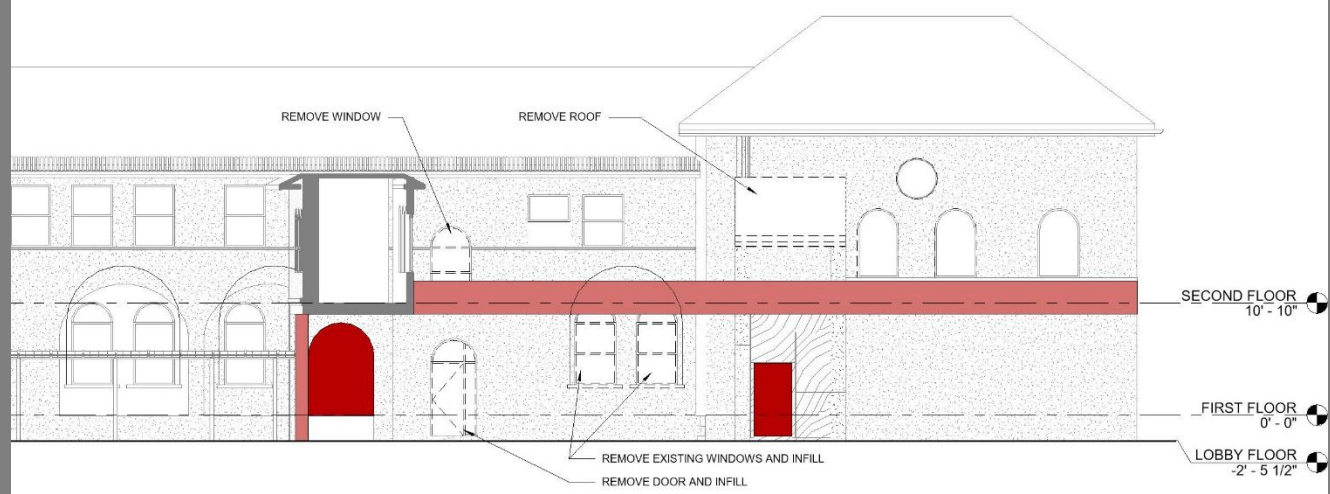
Existing Elevator (W Side)



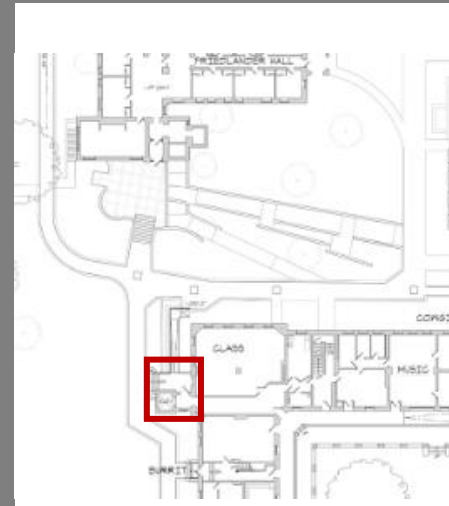
Current Stair (E Side)



Main Building Proposed East Elevation

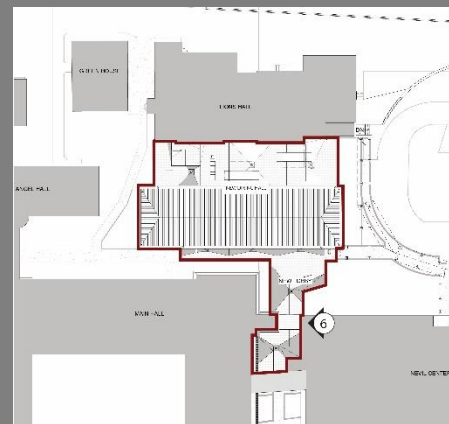


Main Building Demo East Elevation



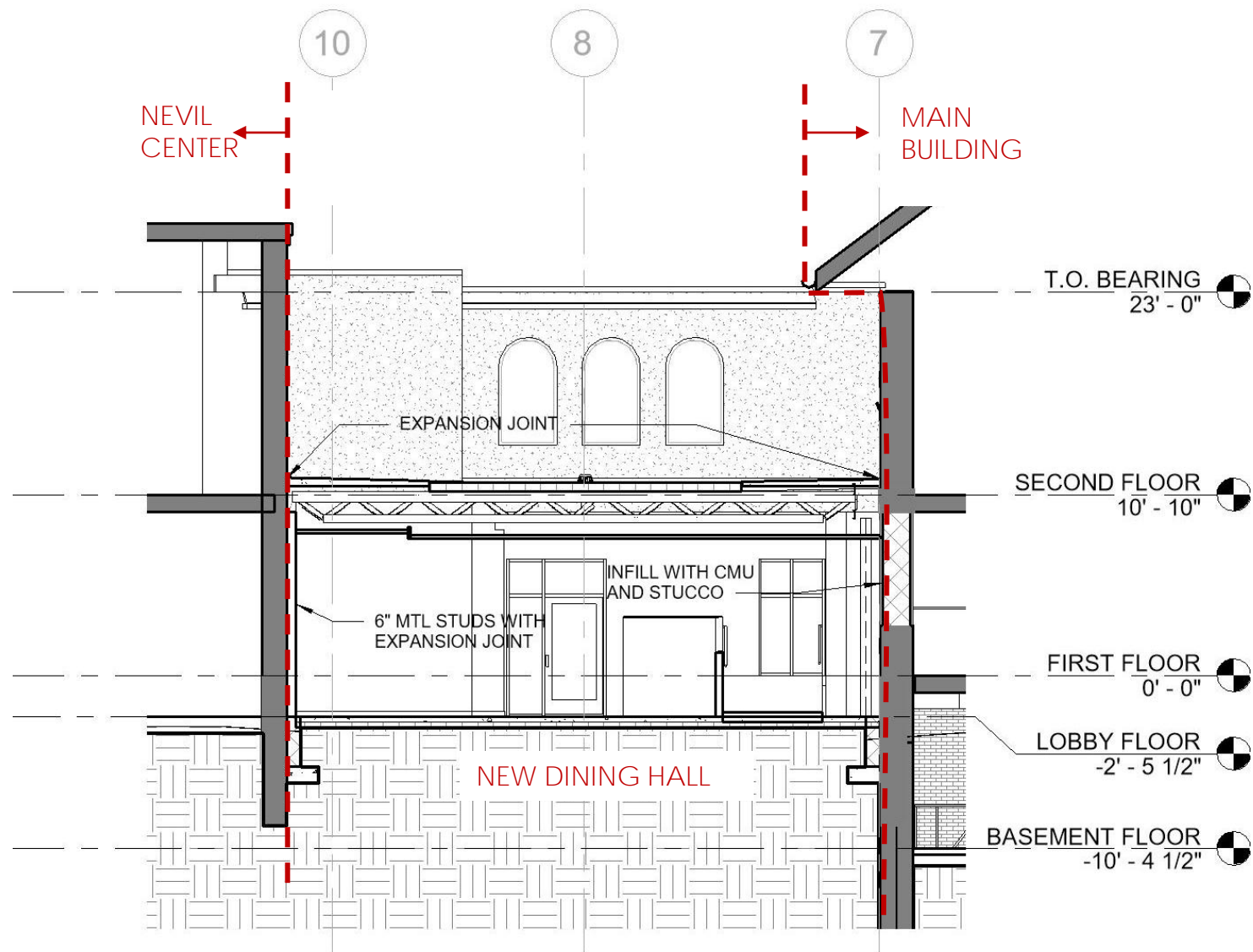
Existing Precedent Elevator Location (W Side)

- REMOVE STUCCO FROM THIS AREA
- DEMO WALL IN THIS AREA
- DEMO BUILDING IN THIS AREA

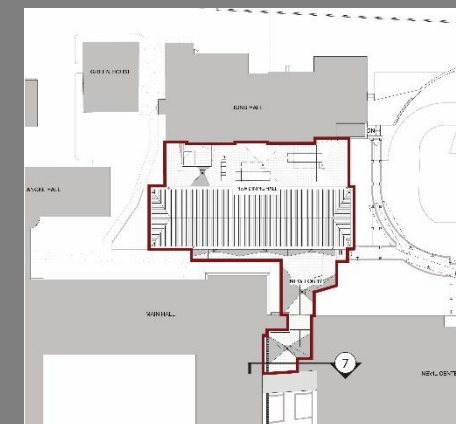


## 6: MAIN BUILDING EAST FACADE





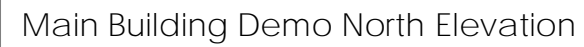
Proposed Section of Portion of New Dining Hall Between Nevil Center and Main Building



## 7: MAIN BUILDING/NEW DINING HALL SECTION





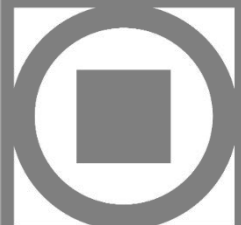




Main Building, Northeast Corner



New Dining Hall, Main Entrance



BEFORE AND AFTER: MAIN BUILDING

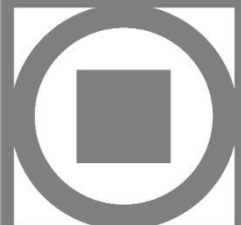




Main Building with Nevil Bridge

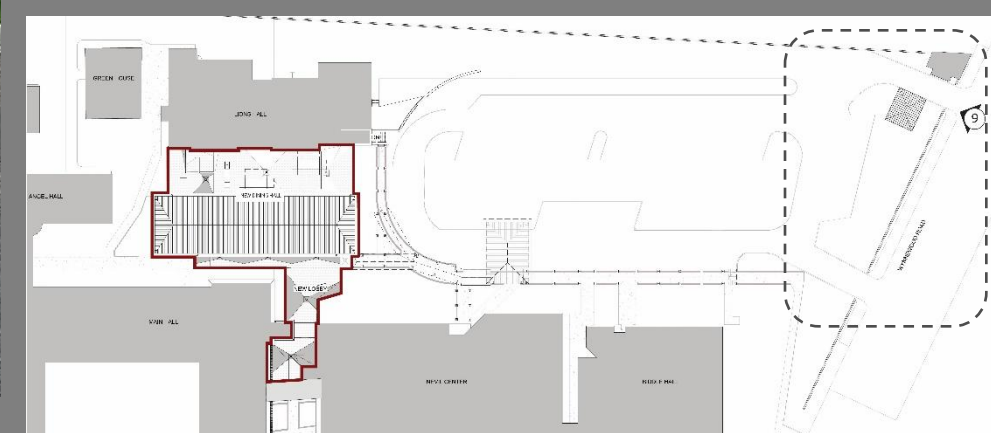


Main Building with Nevil Bridge

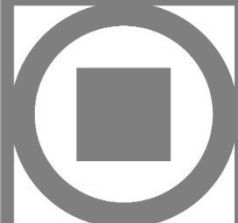


BEFORE AND AFTER: MAIN BUILDING AT BRIDGE





9: CAMPUS WALL



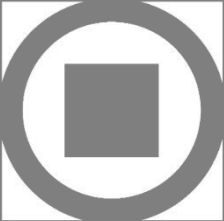




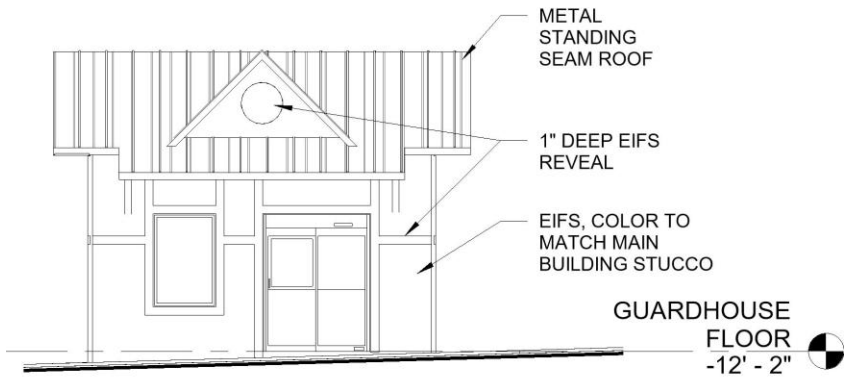
Existing 6' wide pedestrian gate



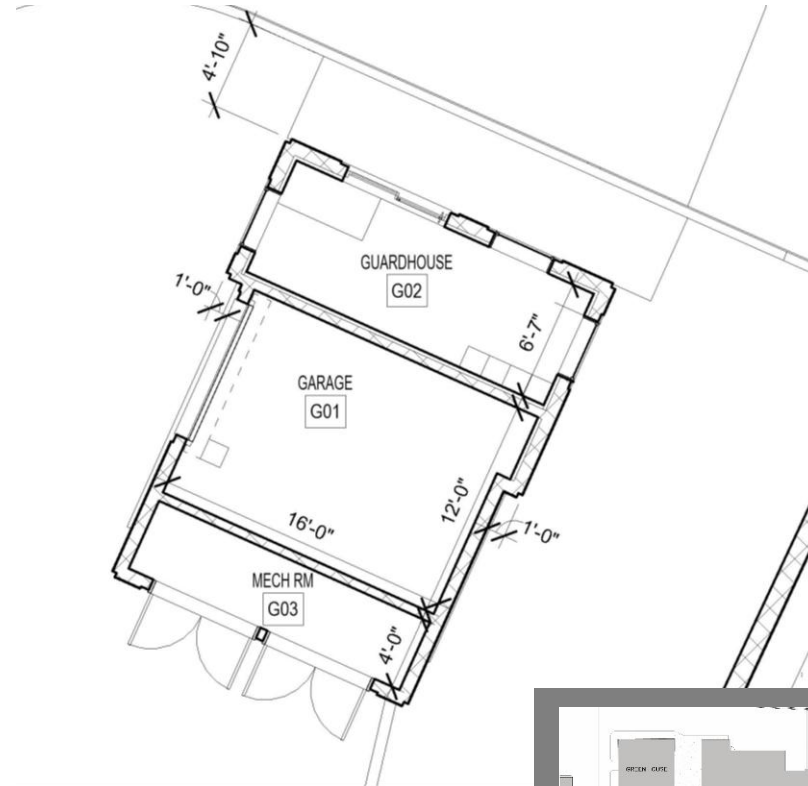
Proposed 18' wide vehicular gate



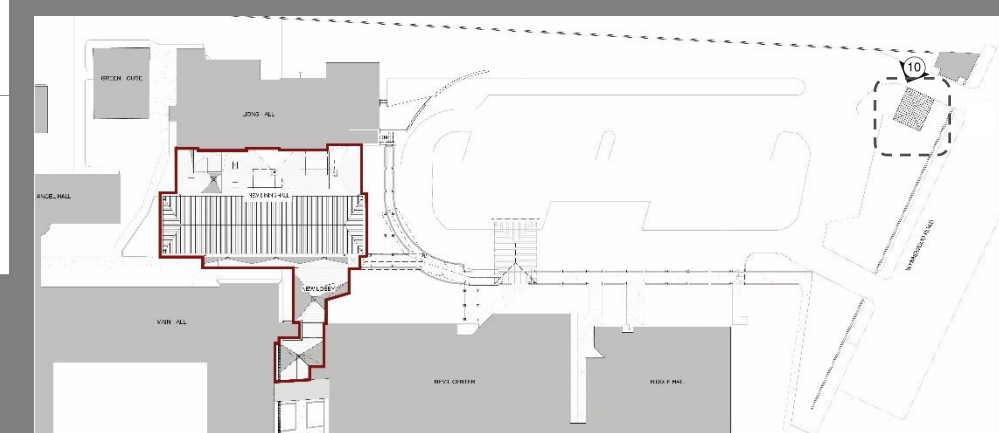
BEFORE AND AFTER: WEST PEDESTRIAN GATE



Proposed New Guard House East Elevation



Proposed New Guard House Plan



# 10: NEW GUARD HOUSE PLAN AND ELEVATION



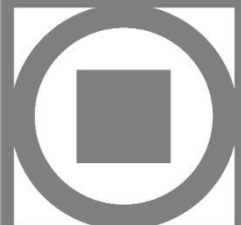




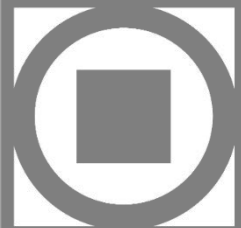
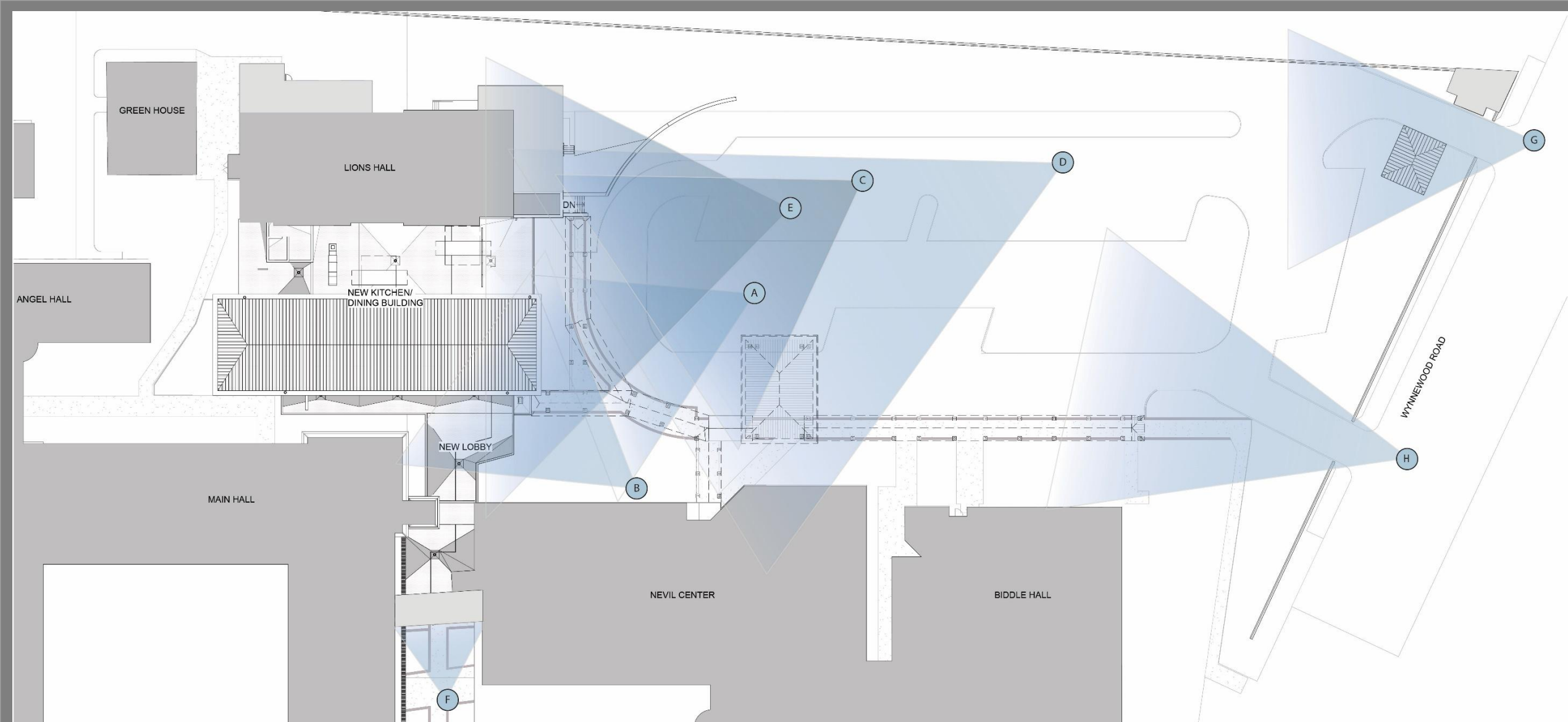
Existing 15'6" wide vehicular gate



Restored 15'3" wide vehicular gate with proposed new Guard House



BEFORE AND AFTER: NORTHWEST VEHICULAR ENTRANCE



RENDERING KEY PLAN





# RENDERINGS







B



























EXISTING  
STUCCO AT  
NEVIL BRIDGE



EXISTING  
STUCCO AT  
MAIN BUILDING



EXISTING  
STUCCO AT  
LIONS HALL

EIFS TEXTURE TO CONTRAST  
WITH EXISTING BUILDING  
TEXTURES  
(SANDBLAST)



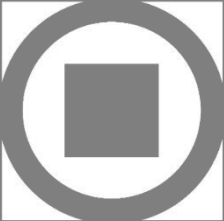
EIFS STANDARD OR  
CUSTOM COLOR TO  
MATCH MAIN BUILDING  
COLOR



811  
Maple Walnut

TYPICAL EXTERIOR INSULATION AND FINISH SYSTEM:

- SYNTHETIC STUCCO FINISH
- 2" EPS INSULATION BOARD (R-7.5 MIN.)
- 5/8" FIBERGLASS MAT GYPSUM SHEATHING
- 10" COLD FORMED METAL FRAMING
- FIBERGLASS BATT INSULATION (R-13 MIN.) SECURE TO PREVENT SAG
- 5/8" TYPE X GWB



EXISTING ROOF OF MAIN HALL

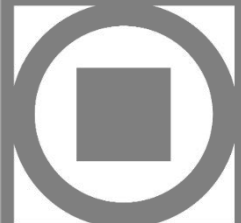


Terra Cotta Roof Tiles

PROPOSED ROOF FOR NEW BUILDING



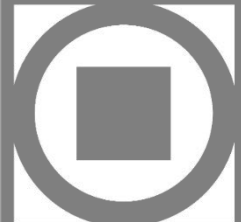
Tuff-Rib Metal Panels  
Terra Cotta Red  
Best Buy Metals



EXTERIOR MATERIALS



# THANK YOU!



**KIMMEL**  
ARCHITECTURE

