

Preliminary Consultation
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7400 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda	Meeting Date:	6/27/2018
Resource:	Master Plan Site #35/014-005A Bethesda Post Office	Report Date:	6/20/2018
Applicant:	7400 Wisconsin LLC	Public Notice:	6/13/2018
Review:	Preliminary Consultation	Tax Credit:	No
Case Number:	N/A	Staff:	Michael Kyne
PROPOSAL:	Retroactive site wall alterations and other site alterations		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the applicants make any revisions based on the HPC's recommendations and return for a HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Individually Designated Master Plan Site (35/014-005A)
STYLE: Classical Revival
DATE: Circa 1938

Excerpt from *Places from the Past*:

The Bethesda Post Office is one of three county post offices built under the Works Progress Administration. The program sought to create buildings that fit in with a community's architecture. The Bethesda Post Office is built of native Stoneyhurst stone found on other structures in the Bethesda Commercial District. The Classical Revival building, featuring a hipped roof, distinctive cupola and segmentally-arched windows, was designed by Karl O. Sonnemann (1900-1967). Sonnemann was architect for the Federal Works Agency and its successor, the General Services Administration, from 1925 until his retirement in 1964. The builders were the Sofarelli Brothers of Jamaica, New York. An interior mural by Robert Gates depicts rural Montgomery County. The WPA commissioned Gates to paint murals for several of its projects in this era. Gates became one of Washington's most respected and influential artists.



7400 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda (Subject Property Circled in Red)

BACKGROUND:

The applicants previously appeared before the Commission with a proposal for a rear addition and other alterations. The proposal was heard as a preliminary consultation at the December 3, 2014 HPC meeting, and the HAWP application was approved at the January 14, 2015 HPC meeting. The applicants appeared before the Commission again at the February 21, 2018 HPC meeting with a retroactive HAWP application for revisions to their January 14, 2015 approval. The applicants chose to continue their case at the February 21, 2018 meeting and the HPC did not reach a formal decision. The applicants returned to the Commission again at the May 9, 2018 HPC meeting for a preliminary consultation with a retroactive proposal for a concrete site wall and horizontal slat fence/gate at the rear of the historic building, conversion of the rear parking lot to a garden plaza, and the construction of a chain link fence with artificial plant screening on the roof of the previously approved rear addition.

The applicants returned to the Commission at the May 9, 2018 HPC meeting for a preliminary consultation with a retroactive proposal for a 6' tall concrete site wall and horizontal slat fence/gate at the rear of the historic building, conversion of the rear parking lot to a garden plaza, and the construction of an 8' tall chain link fence with artificial plant screening on the roof of the previously approved rear addition.

Staff recommended the following at the May 9, 2018 preliminary consultation:

- The height of the concrete site wall and horizontal slat fence/gate be further reduced to be no higher than 4' on top of the existing 4' tall concrete retaining wall. An additional 2' of semi-transparent screening (i.e., cable or metal rail fencing) on top of the concrete site wall would be

appropriate for a total height of 6' (with a total perceived height of approximately 10'), keeping the total height of the enclosure below the rear window sills.

- Staff supported the proposed conversion of the rear parking lot to garden plaza.
- Staff supported the proposed rooftop fence with artificial plant screening.

Several Commissioners agreed with staff's recommendations, but the majority found that the height of the concrete site wall and horizontal slat fence/gate should be further reduced, or that the applicants should adhere to the original approval for a transparent cable railing and planters at the perimeter of the rear parking lot. The majority also recommended that additional screening be added to the outside of the 8' tall chain link fence with artificial plant screening on the roof of the previously approved rear addition, or that the applicants adhere to the original approval for a wood slate fence with planters at the perimeter on the roof of the previously approved rear addition.

CURRENT PROPOSAL:

- Retroactive construction of a concrete site wall at the rear and Montgomery Lane side of the existing rear parking lot.
- Retroactive construction of a horizontal slat fence/gate, connecting the rear left corner of the historic building to the concrete site wall.
- Retroactive conversion of the rear parking lot to a garden plaza.

Retroactive construction of a chain link fence with artificial plant screening on the roof of the previously approved rear addition.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:

In accordance with Section 1.5 of the *Historic Preservation Commission Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures (Regulation No. 27-97) (Regulations)*, the Commission in developing its decision when reviewing a Historic Area Work Permit Application for an undertaking at an Individual Master Plan Historic Site uses section 24A-8 of the Montgomery County Code ("Chapter 24A"), the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. [Note: where guidance in an applicable master plan is inconsistent with the *Standards*, the master plan guidance shall take precedence (§ 1.5(b) of the *Regulations*).] The pertinent information in these documents, incorporated in their entirety by reference herein, is outlined below.

Sec. 24A-8. Same-Criteria for issuance.

(b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:

- (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
- (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or

- (3) The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located; or
 - (4) The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
 - (5) The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; [emphasis added] or
 - (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.
- (c) It is not the intent of this chapter to limit new construction, alteration or repairs to any 1 period or architectural style.

Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” Standards 2, 5, and 6 most directly apply to the application before the commission:

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
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.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

STAFF DISCUSSION:

The applicants have returned with a revised proposal, responding to the previous recommendations. Specifically, the applicants are proposing to adhere to staff's recommendations from the May 9, 2018 preliminary consultation, with the following specifications:

- Retroactive construction of a 4' tall concrete site wall at the rear and Montgomery Lane side of the existing rear parking lot (reducing the wall from its current height of 7'-6"), with optional additional 2' of semi-transparent barrier (cable rail or glass/acrylic) on top, for a total wall height of 6'.
- Retroactive construction of a 4' tall horizontal slat fence/gate, connecting the rear left corner of the historic building to the concrete site wall (reducing the fence from its current height of 7'-6").
- Retroactive construction of a garden plaza, including hardscape alterations at the rear of the historic building in the former parking lot location.
- Retroactive construction of an 8' tall chain link fence with artificial plant screening on the roof of

the previously approved rear addition, with the addition of exterior green mesh screening on the north elevation of the fence.

While staff acknowledges that the majority of Commissioners did not support staff's recommendations at the May 9, 2018 preliminary consultation, staff fully supports the applicants' proposal, finding that it successfully mitigates the impact of the concrete site wall and slat fence/gate on the historic building. Reducing the height of the existing concrete site wall and slat fence/gate from 7'-6" to 4' will allow the windows and other character-defining features on the rear elevation of the historic building to be experienced from most vantage points on Montgomery Lane. As proposed, staff finds that the concrete site wall and slat fence/gate will not alter or remove character-defining features of the subject property, in accordance with *Standards #2 and #9*. Because the proposed concrete site wall and slat fence/gate will not directly impact the historic building, staff finds that they can be removed in the future without impairing the integrity of the historic building, in accordance with *Standard #10*.

Staff supports the proposal to install exterior green mesh screening on the north elevation of the rooftop fence on the previously approved rear addition; however, staff recommends that the mesh be added to all four elevations of the fence to ensure compatibility.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Staff recommends that the Commission support the construction of a 4' tall concrete site wall and horizontal slat fence/gate, with an optional 2' of additional screening (cable rail or glass/acrylic) on top.
- Staff recommends that the Commission support the conversion of the rear parking lot to a garden plaza.
- Staff recommends that the Commission support the construction of an 8' tall chain link fence with artificial plant screening on the roof of the previously approved rear addition, with the condition that exterior green mesh screening be added to all elevations.
- Staff recommends that the applicants make any revisions based on the HPC's recommendations and return for a HAWP application, with all final specifications and drawings included.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

DPS - #3

APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: bdetwiler@cobroventures.com Contact Person: Brian Detwiler
 Daytime Phone No.: 240-481-7640
 Tax Account No.: 00490661
 Name of Property Owner: 7400 Wisconsin LLC Daytime Phone No.: 202-333-0880
 Address: 7101 Bethesda Wisconsin 20814
Street Number City State Zip Code
 Contractor: Scott-Long Construction Phone No.: 703-802-7500
 Contractor Registration No.: _____
 Agent for Owner: Cobro Ventures, Inc. Daytime Phone No.: 240-481-7640

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PERMITS

House Number: 7400 Street: Wisconsin
 Town/City: Bethesda Nearest Cross Street: Montgomery Ln
 Lot: _____ Block: P13 Subdivision: 0023 Edgemoor
 Liber: _____ Folio: _____ Parcel: N458

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE: CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:
 Construct Extend Alter/Revitalize A/C Slab Room Addition Porch Deck Shed
 Move Install Whack/Ram Solar Fireplace Woodburning Stove Single Family
 Revision Repair Reversible Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) Other: _____

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 6 million

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # 707863 (alter) 708131 (add)

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 WSSC 02 Septic 03 Other: _____
 2B. Type of water supply: 01 WSSC 02 Well 03 Other: _____

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

3A. Height _____ feet _____ inches Height and location varies.
See attachments for details.
 3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
 On party line/property line Entirely on land of owner On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

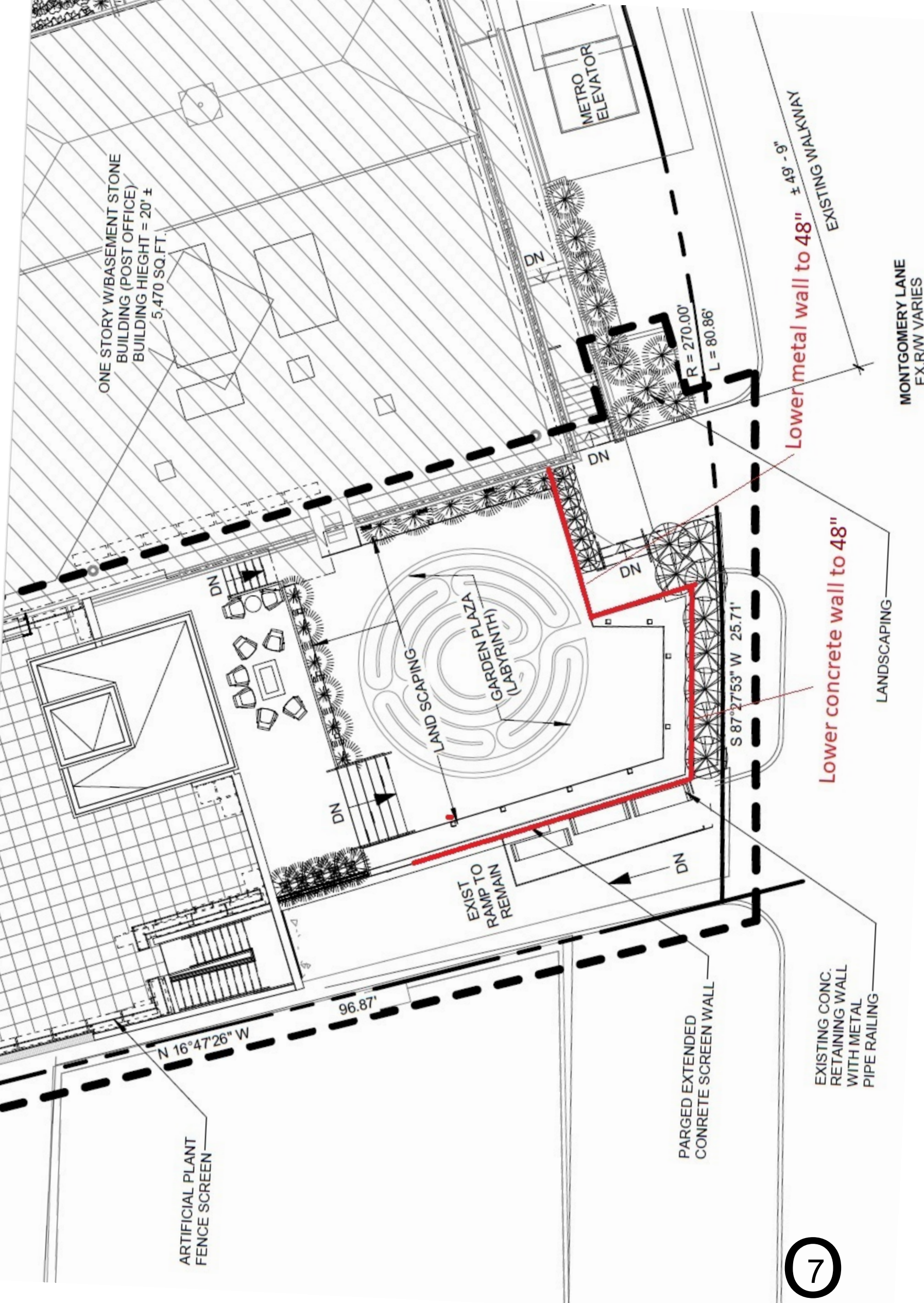
Brian Detwiler January 22, 2018
Signature of owner or authorized agent Date

Approved: _____ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission
 Disapproved: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Application/Permit No.: _____ Date Filed: _____ Date Issued: _____

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

825810





ONE STORY W/BASEMENT STONE BUILDING (POST OFFICE)
BUILDING HIEGHT = 20' ±
5,470 SQ. FT.

METRO ELEVATOR

LANDSCAPING
GARDEN PLAZA (LABYRINTH)

EXISTING MONTGOMERY LANE
± 64'-6"

MONTGOMERY LANE
EX R/W VARIES

Lower metal wall to 48"

Lower concrete wall to 48"

LANDSCAPING

EXIST RAMP TO REMAIN

S 87°27'53" W 25.71'

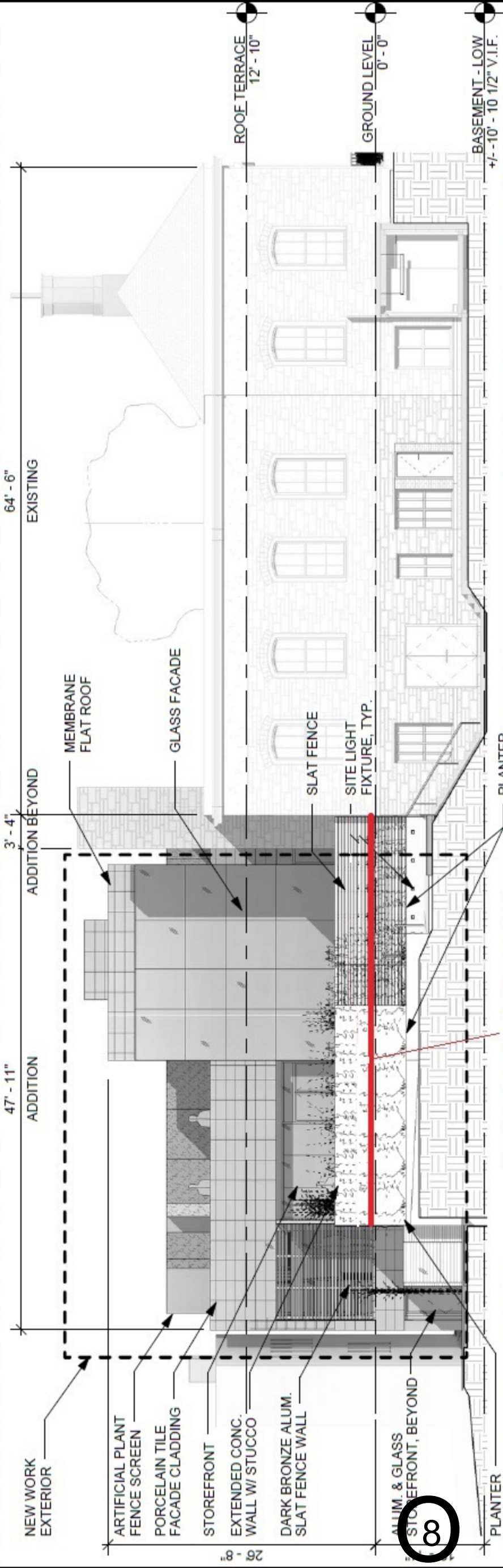
EXISTING CONC. RETAINING WALL WITH METAL PIPE RAILING

PARGED EXTENDED CONCRETE SCREEN WALL

N 16°47'26" W

ARTIFICIAL PLANT FENCE SCREEN

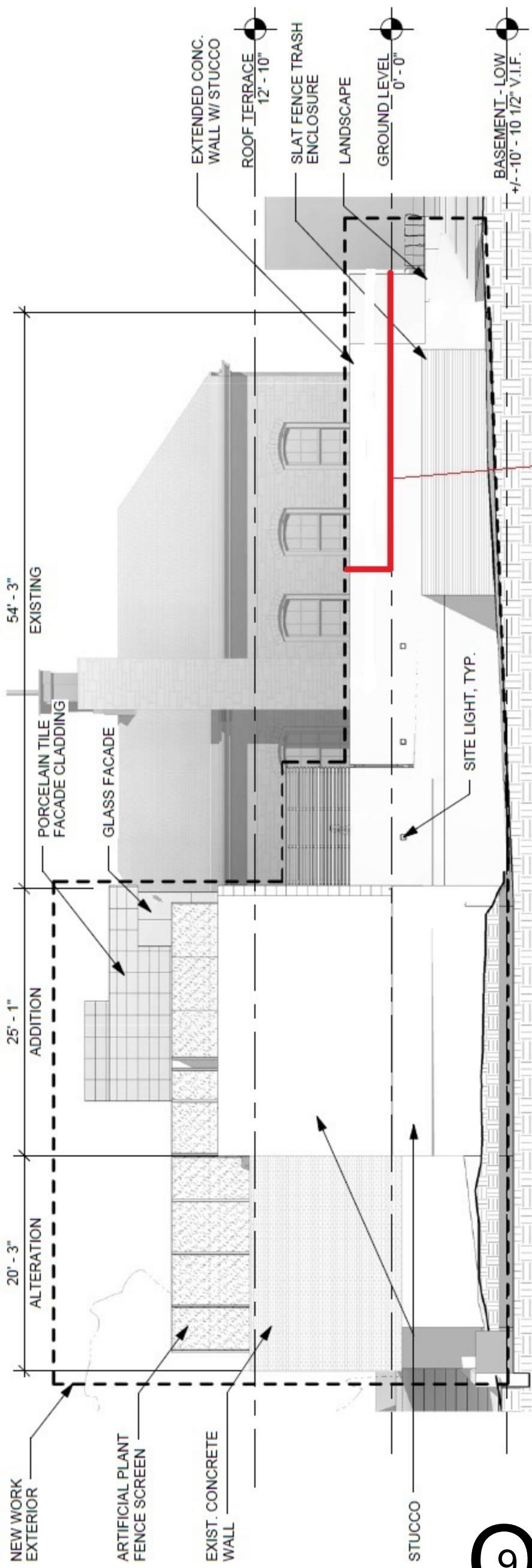
96.87'



Reduce to 48" above slab with option to add 2' of transparent barrier (cable rail or glass / acrylic)

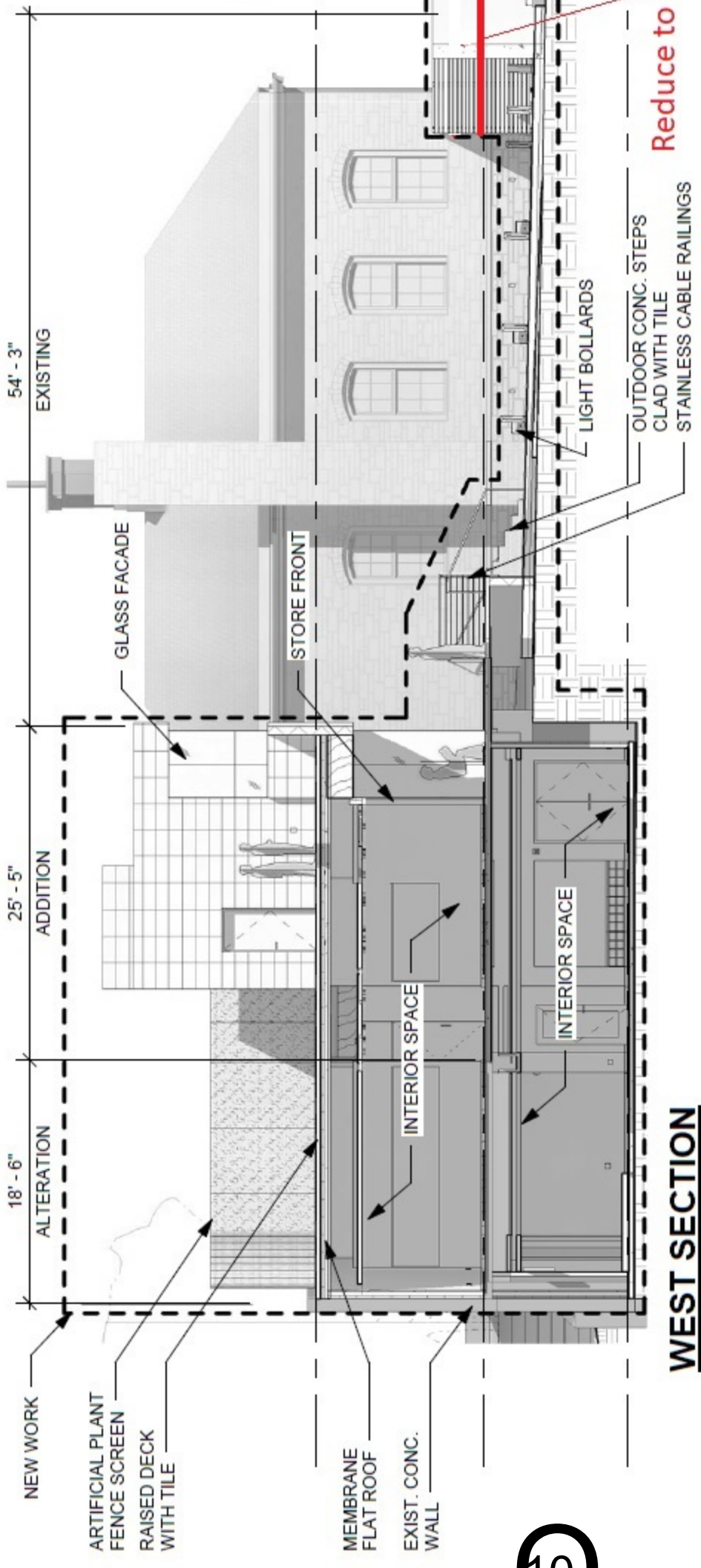
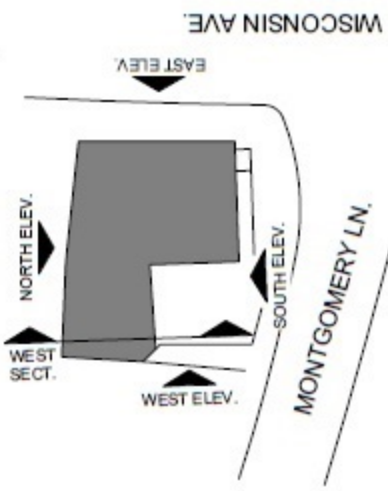
SOUTH ELEVATION





Lower to 48" above slab
with option to add 2' of transparent barrier (cable rail or glass / acrylic)

WEST ELEVATION



Home - 600 Series 89%

Open Mesh Fence Windscreen



600 SERIES 89% Commercial Open

As low as: **\$1.99/pif** (\$2.49)

All pricing by color & size

Brand: FenceScreen®

A vented, Open Mesh windscreen pattern allows air to pass easily through this high quality privacy fence screen. Perfect for windy areas where high airflow is a requirement.

- 5 Year Warranty & 8-10 Year Expected Life
- 89% Privacy Blockage With Maximum Airflow
- Available in Any Custom Size
- Knitted Polypropylene Open Mesh with No Fillers
- Black Binding & Brass Grommets every 24"

In Stock 48 hour turnaround *

Available colors:



CONFIGURE SCREEN

OR

Let one of our sales experts put together a custom quote just for you.

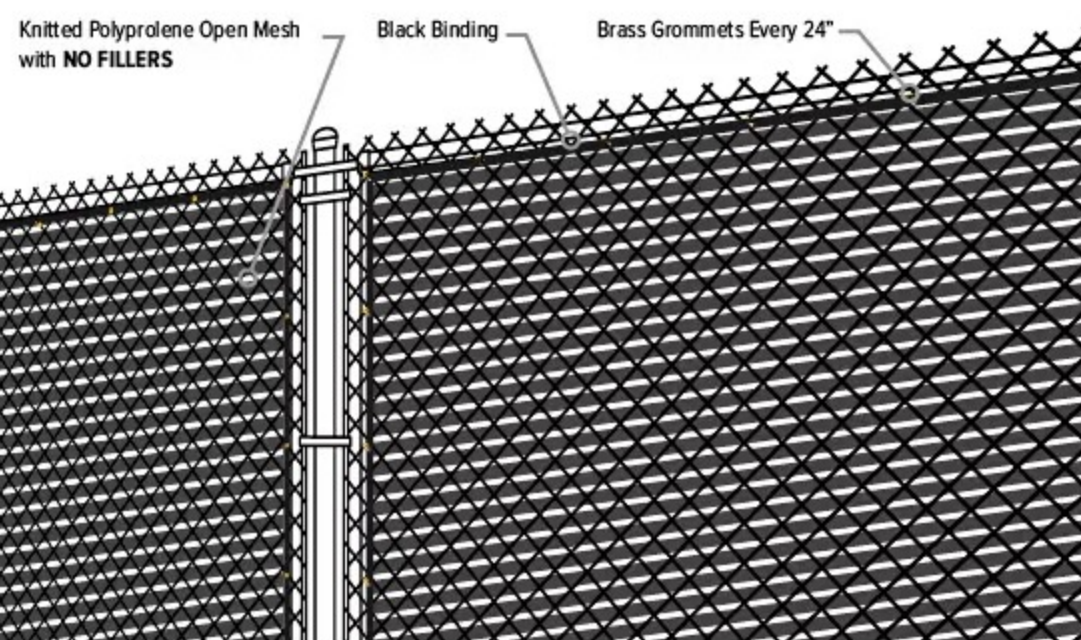
1-888-313-6313

600 Series - Open Mesh Poly - Install and Product



[Details](#) | [Material Specs](#) | [Related Products](#) | [Warranty](#) | [Printed Fence Screen](#)

KNITTED POLYPROPYLENE OPEN MESH - MAXIMUM AIR FLOW WINDSCREEN



PERFORMANCE & QUALITY

Excellent combination of Privacy and Airflow amongst the Professional Series

- Knitted Polypropylene Open Mesh Material
- Popular choice for Sports Fields
- Reinforced Black Binding for secure fitting
- Brass Grommets Every 24-in. & on Corners

ORDER NOW

GET A FREE ESTIMATE

ANY CUSTOM SIZE
Customizing your fence screen to the exact size you need is no sweat. For custom heights not listed, please call 888.313.6313 for an estimate.

PRIVACY & AIRFLOW
Utilizing a Leno-Stitch pattern, the 600 Series provides the best air flow and slight privacy amongst the Professional series.

UV PROTECTED MATERIAL
Manufactured from Knitted Polypropylene Open Mesh, that's durable to withstand high wind areas providing less stress on your fence.

MAXIMUM AIRFLOW & WITH MODERATE PRIVACY

A Premium Commercial Product with a great combination of privacy and air flow

Our Commercial Open windscreen allows air to easily pass through this high quality privacy fence screen. Constructed of Leno-Stitch material, it's a popular choice for tennis courts and other commercial fence projects.

ORDER NOW

GET A FREE ESTIMATE



600 Series Knitted Polypropylene Open Mesh windscreen pattern allows air to pass through this high quality privacy fence screen. Constructed of Leno-Stitch material, it is a popular choice for tennis courts and other commercial fence projects. This material puts the least amount of strain on your fence, making it ideal for taller fences and high wind areas, while still providing reasonable privacy. All orders are finished with quality binding and brass grommets.

- Knitted Polypropylene Open Mesh material using a Leno-Stitch pattern
- Ideal for Tall Fences and durable for high wind locations, providing less pressure to your fence projects
- Finishing Options: Half-moon vents, Wind Windows, & Reinforced Center Binding
- 2" Polypropylene Webbing for Edge Reinforcement
- Brass Grommets at every 24" - All edges & corners

FenceScreen.com offers easy to order on-line purchasing which allows you to choose your color, height and length and installation accessories. All standard fence screens are cut 4" less than the actual fence height to ensure a proper, clean, and wrinkle-free fit.

Example: A 6ft tall fence = 5'-8" actual height for privacy fence screen material.

We also offer various and custom size options which allow you to choose your exact height and length. Any heights and lengths available upon request, please contact our customer service department at 888.313.6313.

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4'





