

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	7400 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	8/15/2018
<b>Resource:</b>	<b>Master Plan Site #35/014-005A</b> Bethesda Post Office	<b>Report Date:</b>	8/8/2018
<b>Applicant:</b>	7400 Wisconsin LLC	<b>Public Notice:</b>	8/1/2018
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	No
<b>Case Number:</b>	35/14-005A-18A	<b>Staff:</b>	Michael Kyne
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Retroactive site wall alterations and other site alterations		

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the HPC **approve** the 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 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. The Commission 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 Commission 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.

The applicants returned to the Commission at the June 27, 2018 HPC meeting with a retroactive proposal for a 4' tall concrete site wall and horizontal slat fence/gate with optional 2' of additional screening on top 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, with the addition of exterior green mesh screening on the north elevation of the

fence. While several Commissioners supported the applicants' proposal, the majority found that the proposed 4' tall concrete site wall and horizontal slat/fence gate should be constructed without additional screening on top. The Commission supported the construction of the rooftop fence but found that additional green mesh screening should be added to all elevations.

**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 Commission's previous concerns. Specifically, the applicants are proposing the following:

- 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").
- 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 all elevations of the fence.

Staff fully supports the applicants' proposal, finding that the applicants have responded to the Commission's previous concerns regarding the concrete site wall, horizontal slat fence/gate, and rooftop fencing. The proposal 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*.

After full and fair consideration of the applicant's submission staff finds the proposal as being consistent with the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-(b) 1 and 2, having found the proposal is consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #2, #9, and #10 outlined above.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the resource and the purposes of Chapter 24A;

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present the **3 permit sets of drawings, if applicable to Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staff for review and stamping** prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the Commission as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will contact the staff person assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or michael.kyne@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.



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/Renovate  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.

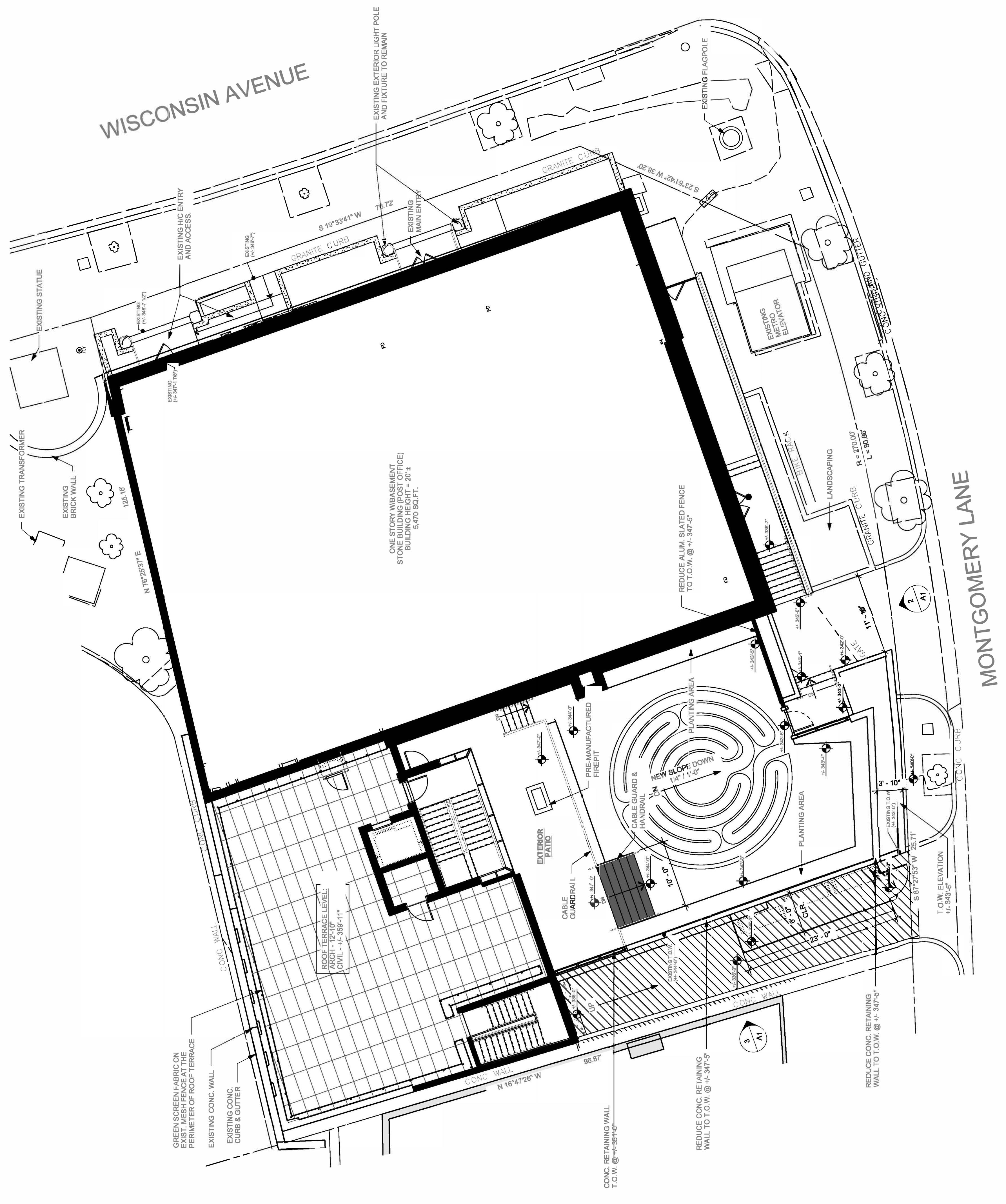
Brian Detwiler January 22, 2018  
Signature of owner or authorized agent Date

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

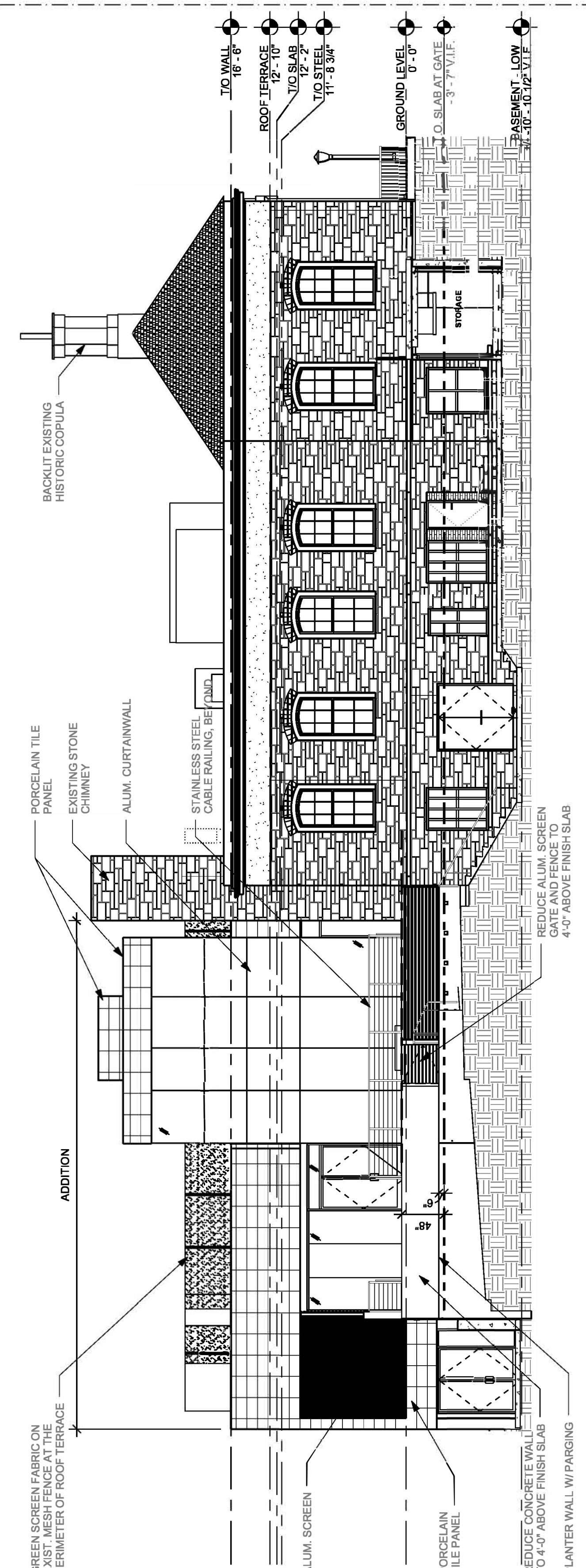
**SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS**

825810

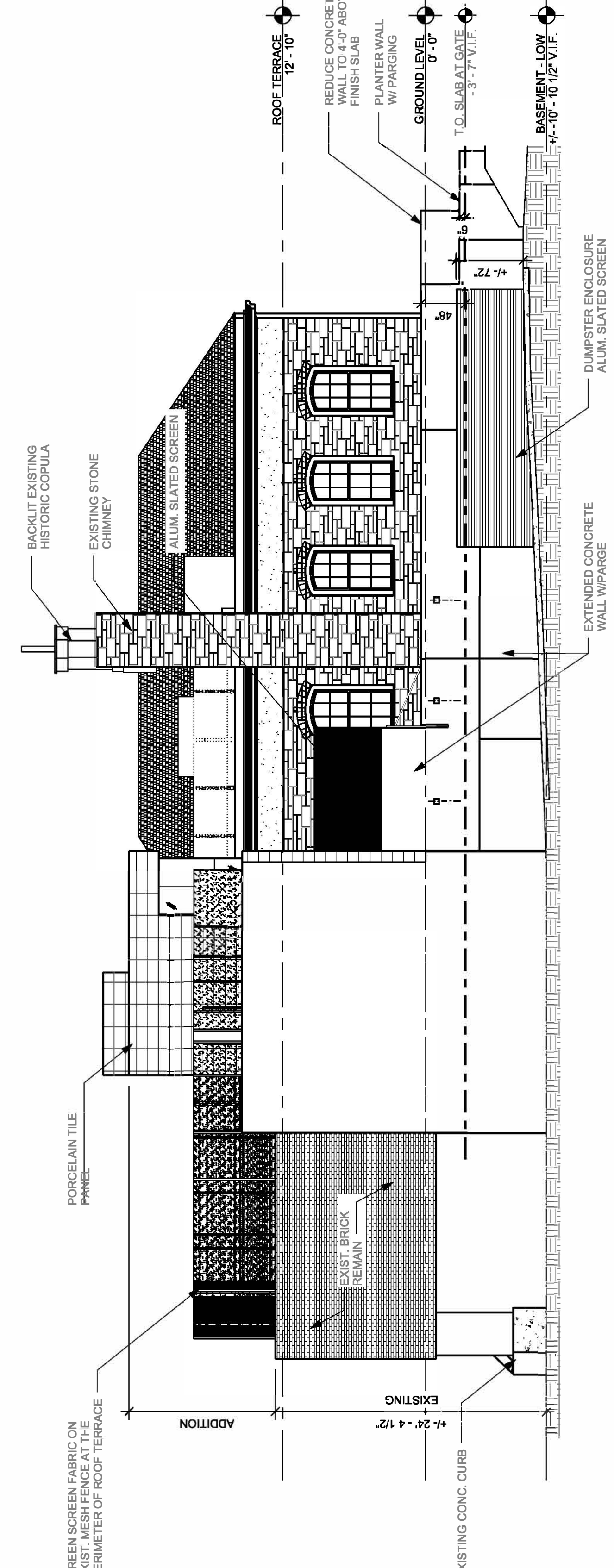
60



**1** ARCHITECTURAL SITE PLAN  
1/8" = 1'-0"



**2** OVERALL - SOUTH ELEVATION  
1/8" = 1'-0"



**3** OVERALL - WEST ELEVATION  
1/8" = 1'-0"

Truebody Fitness  
7400 Wisconsin Ave.  
Bethesda MD.

7-31-18



top of wall

top of terrace

trash enclosure

metal slatted fencing



Home - 600 Series 89%

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Available colors:



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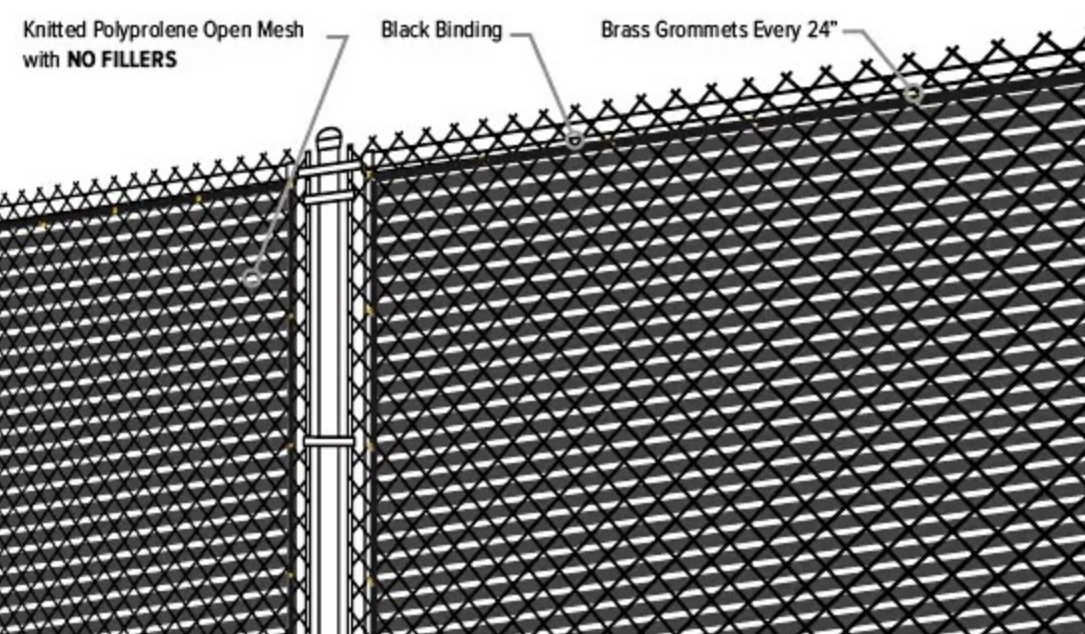
**1-888-313-6313**

600 Series - Open Mesh Poly - Install and Product



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

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Excellent combination of Privacy and Airflow amongst the Professional Series

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- Brass Grommets Every 24-in. & on Corners

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**PRIVACY & AIRFLOW**  
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**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.

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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.

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