

Preliminary Consultation
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	707 New York Avenue, Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	1/7/2026
Resource:	Non-Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	12/31/2025
Applicant:	Mark Hishmeh, Ace Construction LLC (Ben Norkin, Architect)	Public Notice:	12/24/2025
Review:	Preliminary Consultation	Tax Credit:	No
Permit No.:	1143852	Staff:	Laura DiPasquale
Proposal:	Lot subdivision, demolition of existing house and garage, tree removal, and construction of two single-family houses on subdivided parcels		

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the applicant make any revisions recommended by the HPC and return for a second preliminary consultation.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Non-Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Colonial Revival
DATE: 1920s-30s



Figure 1: Location of the subject property (outlined in blue with a yellow star) within the Takoma Park Historic District (outlined and hatched in red).



Figure 2: Front elevation of the existing Non-Contributing house at 707 New York Avenue, with the Outstanding resource on the adjacent parcel at 703 Takoma Avenue visible on the far right (December 2025, Historic Preservation Division).



Figure 3: Front and partial side elevation of the existing Non-Contributing house at 707 New York Avenue, with the Outstanding resource on the adjacent parcel at 703 Takoma Avenue visible on the far right (December 2025, Historic Preservation Division).

PROPOSAL

The applicants propose to subdivide the existing parcel into two lots (the front lot being approximately 8,000 sq.ft. and the rear lot being approximately 12,725 sq.ft.), demolish the existing Non-Contributing house and garage, and to construct two single-family houses on the subdivided lots, accessed by a shared 20-foot wide driveway. Three large canopy trees are proposed for removal to accommodate the new construction.

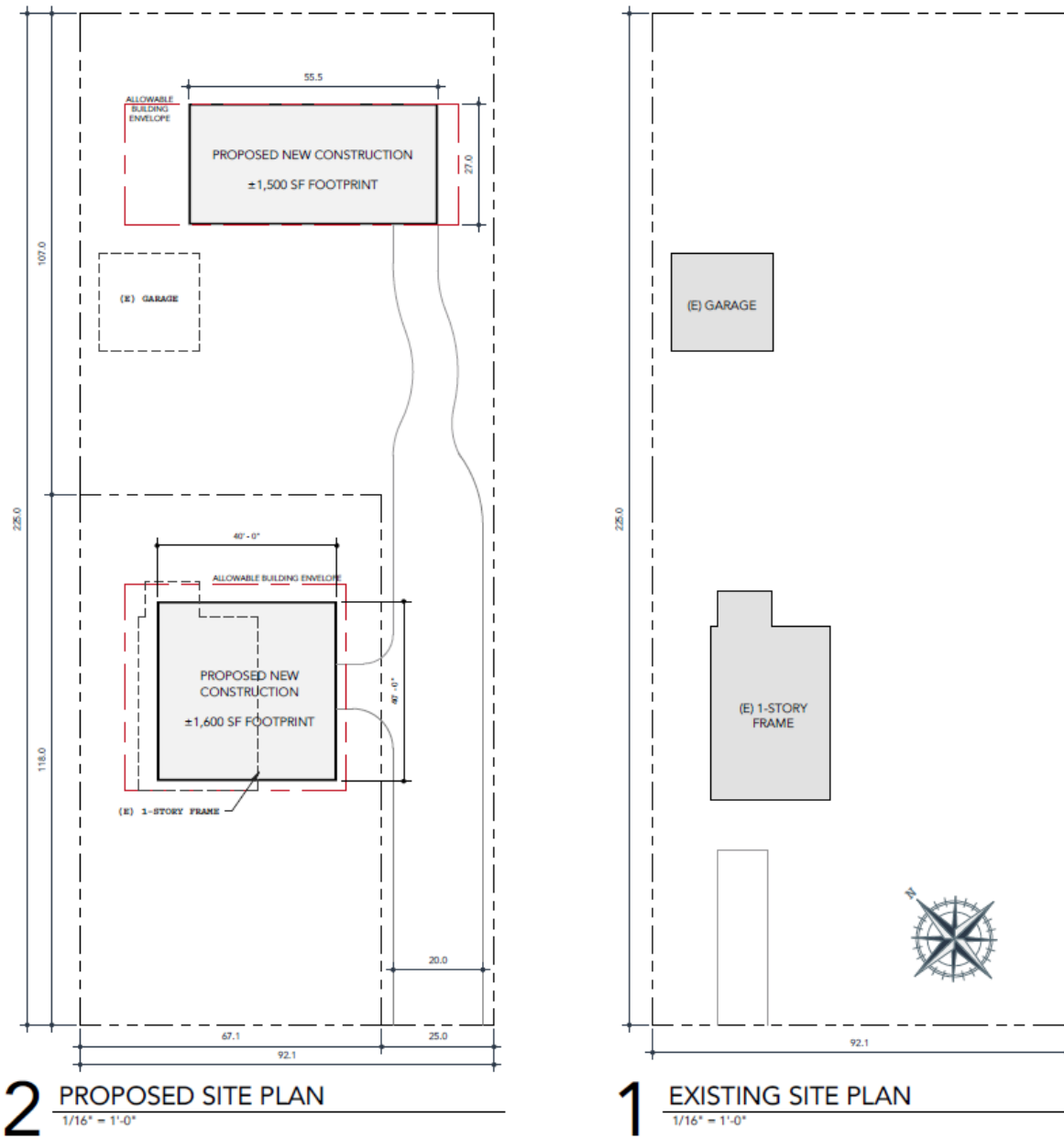


Figure 4: Existing and proposed conceptual site plan.

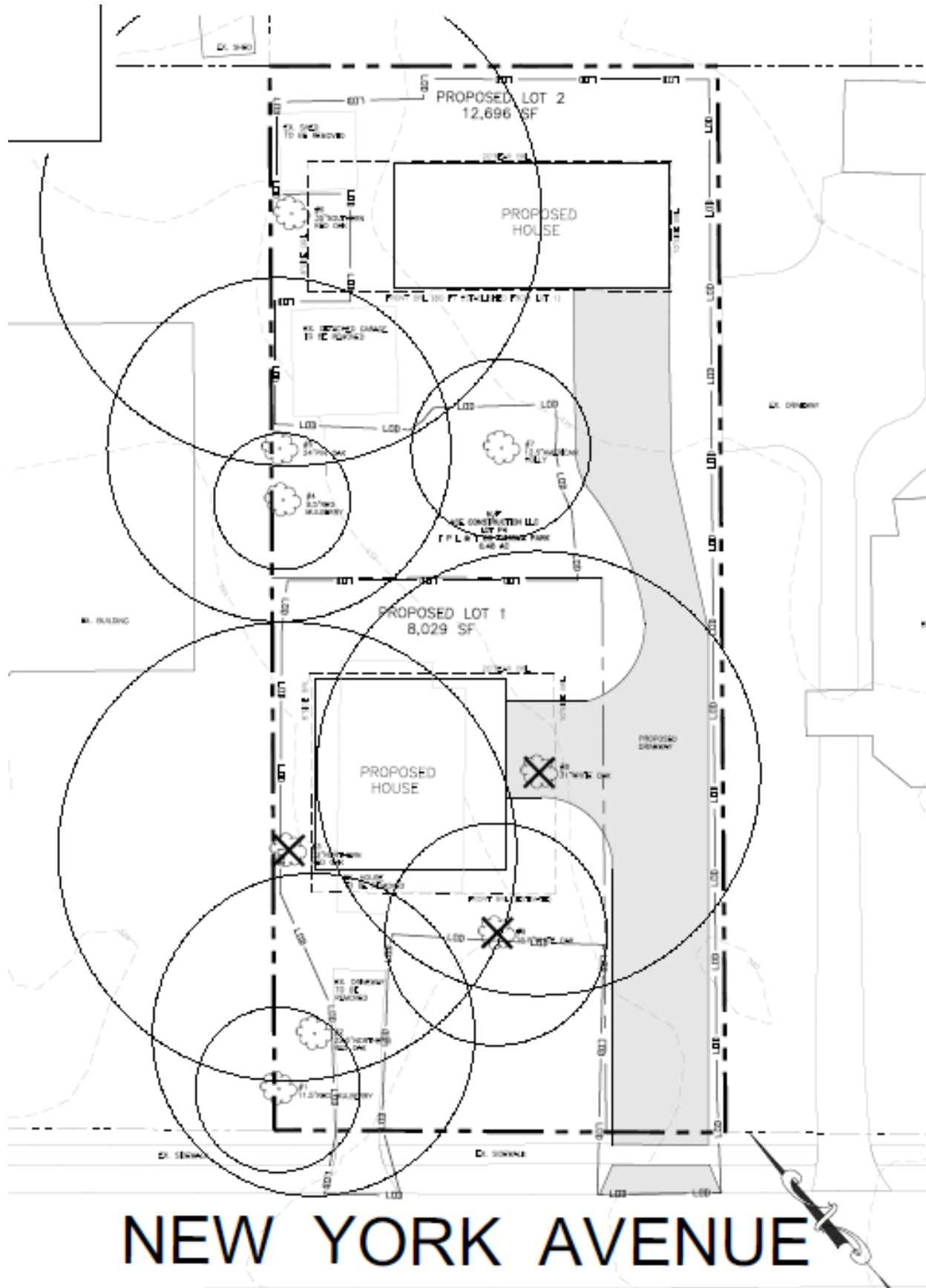


Figure 5: Proposed site plan and tree survey. Trees with black Xs are proposed for removal.



Figure 6: View of the subject property from New York Avenue. Red arrows point to the three trees proposed for removal (December 2025, Historic Preservation Division).

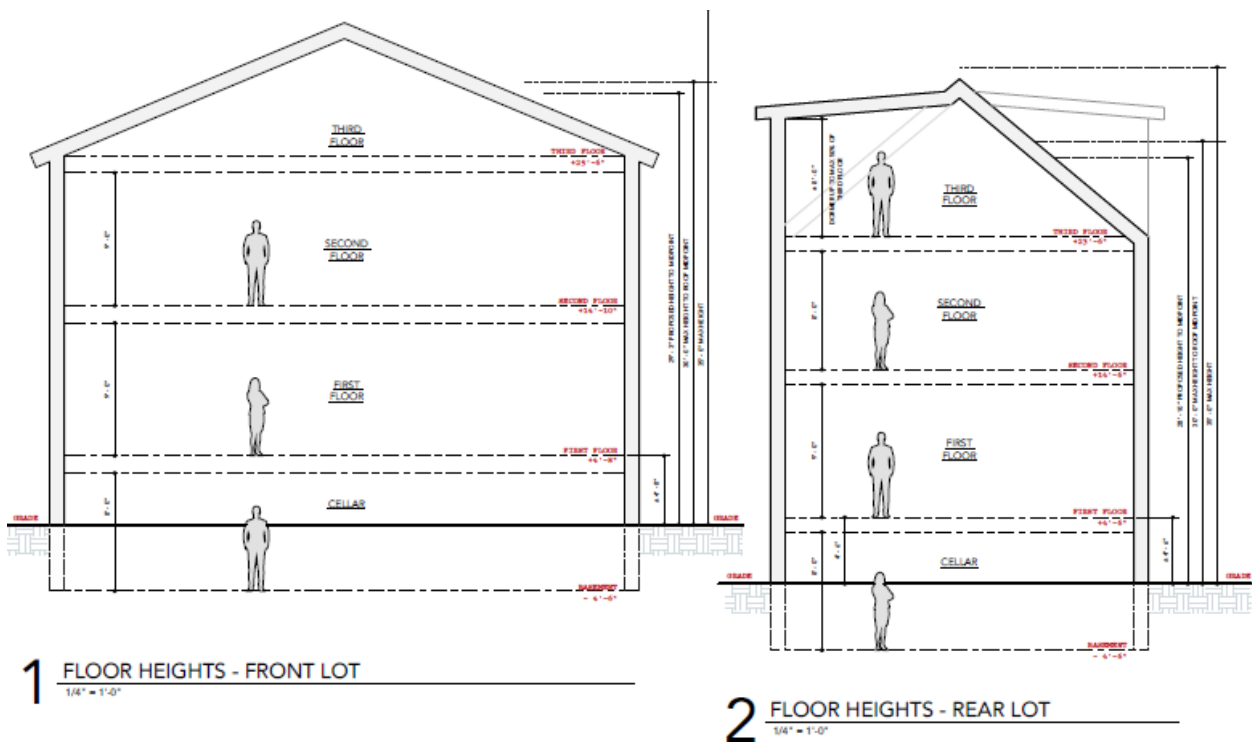


Figure 7: Proposed building floor heights.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

The Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consult several documents when reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District. These documents include the historic preservation review guidelines in the approved and adopted amendment for the *Takoma Park Historic District (Guidelines)*, *Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A)*, and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these four documents is outlined below.

Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines

There are two broad planning and design concepts which apply to all categories. These are:

- The design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are all visible from the public right-of-way, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation (it is expected that the majority of new additions will be reviewed for their impact on the overall district), and
- The importance of assuring that additions and other changes to existing structures act to reinforce and continue existing streetscape, landscape, and building patterns rather than to impair the character of the historic district.

Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources are either buildings that are of little or no architectural and historical significance to the historic district or are newer buildings that have been constructed outside of the district's primary periods of historical importance. These types of resources should receive the most lenient level of design review. Most alterations and additions to Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should be approved as a matter of course. The only exceptions would be major additions and alterations to the scale and massing of Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources which will affect the surrounding streetscape and/or landscape and could impair the character of the district as a whole.

Demolition of Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should be permitted. However, any new building constructed in the place of a demolished building should be reviewed under the guidelines for new construction that follow.

New Construction

The goal of new construction within both residential and commercial historic districts is to be sympathetic to the traditional street and building patterns in that district, while allowing for creative new building designs. In addition to the approach of recalling earlier architectural styles in new buildings, it is appropriate for new structures to reflect and represent the period in which they are built. It is not the intention of these guidelines to inhibit or exclude creative design solutions that may be developed for new buildings in the Takoma Park district. Unique designs which may not adhere strictly to traditional neighborhood practices, but which are sensitive to and compatible with the fabric of the community should be supported.

Residential Areas

In Takoma Park, there are a number of elements which define the streetscape and building patterns. New construction should consider some of these elements, such as:

- rhythm of houses along the street, including patterns of height , massing, side and front setbacks , and roof pitch
- patterns of open space/landscaping and building coverage, including ample front and back yards, spacing between houses, preservation of important mature trees, etc.
- principal building facades oriented to the street

- covered porches on the front or main facades
- patterns of openings in facades, especially doors and windows, which provide a sense of residential scale and rhythm along the street
- building and roofing materials
- high degree of building craftsmanship, as expressed in detailing and use of materials
- use of decorative stone retaining walls (where required by topographic changes) and occasionally fences to define a sidewalk line and separate yards from street
- orientation of driveways and parking areas to the rear and sides of buildings
- use of outbuildings (e.g. detached garages)
- extensive landscaping, including mature trees and flowering plants (e.g. azaleas)

Public Improvements

Although much of Takoma Park's architectural and historical significance is derived directly from the built environment, there are overall community features which contribute greatly-and are in fact integral-to the historic ambiance of this "garden suburb." These features should be recognized and preserved as pan of the setting for this historic district.

Primary among these features is the existence of significant areas of open space. Park areas throughout the district are extremely important to the setting and character of Takoma Park. Some of the more prominent areas of open space include the park at Albany and Takoma Avenues, the small islands at Piney Branch and Philadelphia and at Maple and Philadelphia, and the Thomas/Siegler House land.

Existing parks and areas of open space in Takoma Park should be preserved. In addition, review of subdivision proposals in the district should be sensitive to historic development patterns and to preserving areas of open space. Existing patterns of building coverage and ample front and back yards that are characteristic of Takoma Park all contribute to the overall environmental setting of the historic district. These features should serve as guides in reviewing subdivisions and in planning new development within the district.

Another feature which is closely related to the sense of open space in the district is the existence of a large number of mature trees and extensive landscaping throughout the community. All public improvements in Takoma Parle should strive to create the minimal disturbance possible to these types of natural features. In addition, review of subdivision proposals in the district should emphasize the retention of mature trees and landscaping.

Montgomery County Code, Chapter 24A-8

- (a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with, or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement, or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.
- (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 ensure 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.

- (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; 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.
- (d) In the case of an application for work on an historic resource located within an historic district, the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district.

Secretary of the 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.” The applicable *Standards* are as follows:

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 will 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

Staff finds that the demolition of the existing Non-Contributing house and garage should be permitted under the *Guidelines* and Chapter 24A-8(d), which states that the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district. Per the *Guidelines*, subdivision and subsequent new construction in Takoma Park should be sensitive to the historic development patterns, existing patterns of building coverage and landscaping, sense of open space, presence of large mature trees, and ample front and rear yards.

Staff finds that the proposed flag lot subdivision and construction of two new houses with associated paving and tree removal run counter to these *Guidelines*, Chapter 24A-8(d), and *Standards 2, 9, and 10*. Staff finds that the creation of a second lot in the rear yard of the existing house violates the historic building patterns of the district, as it eliminates the possibility of large rear yards for both properties and disrupts the sense of open space in the district. As evidenced by the Figure-Ground rendering submitted by the applicant (*Figure 7*), the proposed rear building footprint is out of scale with rear outbuildings in the district and would be highly visible from the public right-of-way. At the proposed two-and-a-half to three-stories in height (or 35 ft max height), the rear building would also be extremely out of scale in terms of height with outbuildings in the district, which tend to be limited to one-and-a-half stories in height. Staff also finds that the use of a 20-foot-wide driveway is likewise incongruous with the character of the district. Where driveways exist in the district, they are significantly narrower, typically around 10 feet in width.

Staff further finds that the proposal is incompatible with the *Guidelines* as it calls for the removal of three large, mature trees on the property. Staff notes that two large canopy trees were found to be dead or hazardous in fall 2025 and have already been removed from the property, and that the additional removal will result in significant loss of tree canopy in the district.

Staff supports the demolition of the existing buildings and finds that the general setback and square footage of the proposed front house is appropriate, as would be a house with a deeper footprint, provided mature trees are protected, the driveway is reduced to a maximum of 10-feet in width, and the ultimate design of the house is compatible with the district. Staff would also support the demolition of the existing garage and construction of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) smaller than the proposed rear new construction house, and of a scale in keeping with historic outbuildings in the district. Staff finds that the subject property is located immediately next door to and behind Outstanding resources at 703 New York Avenue and 704 Philadelphia Avenue, respectively, and that the massing of the proposed rear house would seriously impair the character of the surrounding historic resources and district overall.



Figure 8: Proposed Figure-Ground graphic approximating the proposed building footprints for the new construction at 707 New York Avenue and the setbacks and footprints of the existing neighboring buildings. The red outline shows the boundary of the Takoma Park Historic District, which extends to the southeast. Staff notes that this graphic is not scaled.

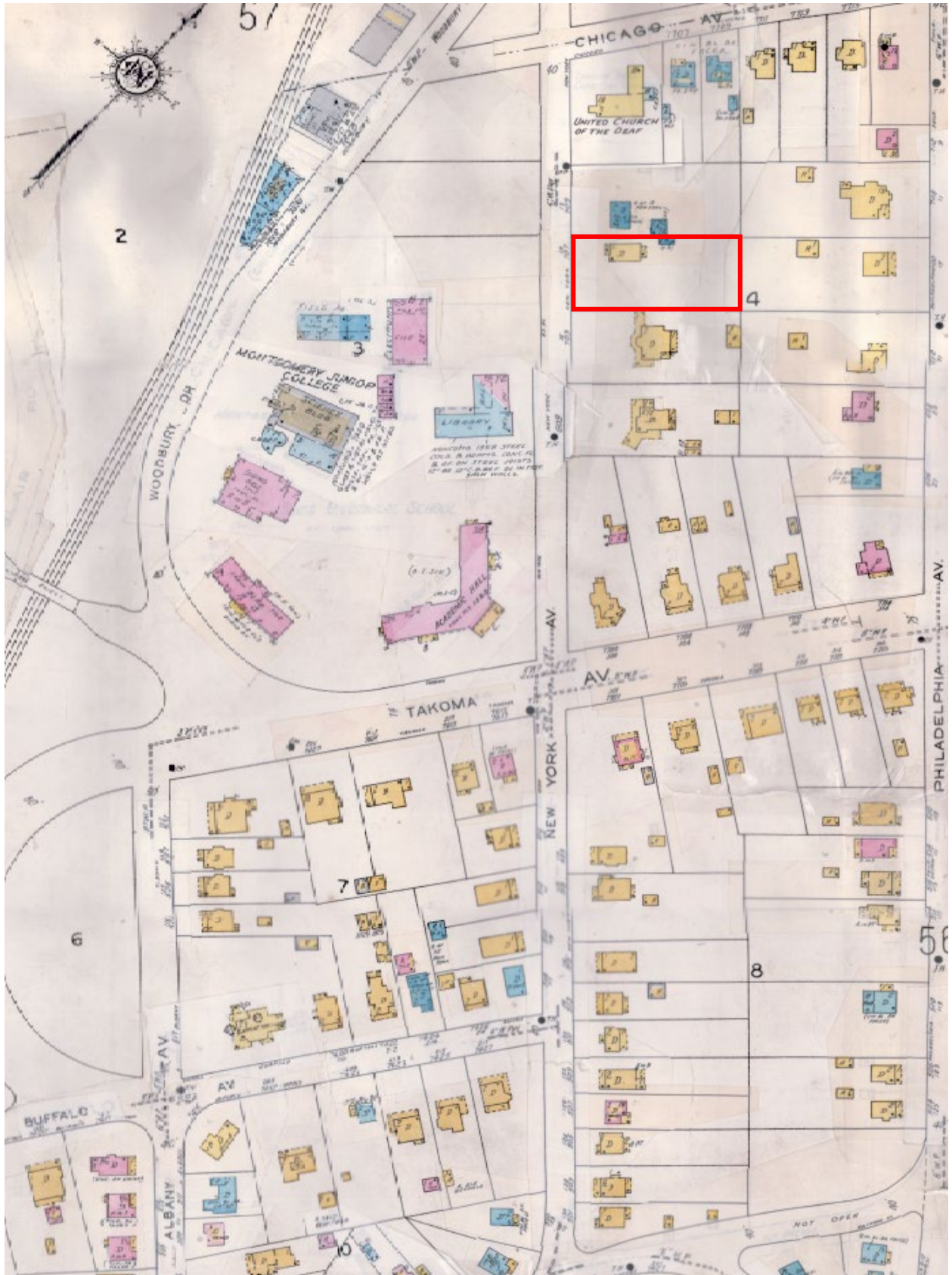


Figure 9: 1927-63 Sanborn map showing the historic property lines and building footprints of 707 New York Avenue and neighboring blocks. 707 New York Avenue is outlined in red.



Figure 10: Photograph of the subject property with red arrows pointing to the trees proposed for removal. Two additional trees were removed from the property in fall 2025.

Staff notes that, while the proposal may meet Zoning requirements, additional reviews including those conducted by the City of Takoma Park, fire and rescue, stormwater management, and forest conservation, would all be required prior to issuance of a building permit.

Counter to Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), staff finds that the proposal will substantially alter the exterior features of the historic site, resulting in an aberrant lot configuration, removal of large mature trees, and significant paving for the proposed 20-foot wide driveway.

Counter to Chapter 24A-8(b)(2), staff finds that the construction of two houses back to front on the existing parcel, the removal of mature trees, and the extensive paving required for the 20-foot-wide driveway are not compatible with the historic district.

Counter to Chapter 24A-8(b)(3), the proposal would not enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the resource with a historic district in a manner that is compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located.

Counter to Chapter 24A-8(b)(4), the proposal is not necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied.

Counter to Chapter 24A-8(b)(5), the applicants have not demonstrated that the proposal is necessary in order that the owner not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship.

Counter to Chapter 24A-8(b)(6), staff finds that, in balancing the interests of the public in preserving the resource located within a historic district, the general public welfare is not better served by granting the permit.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the applicant make any revisions based upon the HPC's comments and return for a second preliminary consultation.

Staff Requested HPC Feedback

- The appropriateness of subdividing the current lot;
- The appropriateness of the shape and size of the proposed lots;
- The appropriateness of the location, scale and general massing of the proposed buildings;
- The appropriateness of the proposed curb cut and shared driveway;
- The appropriateness of the removal of three large mature trees;
- Any other comments.

Staff-recommended materials to be submitted for a second preliminary consultation, if the HPC is supportive of the proposed subdivision and new construction concept:

- Massing diagrams that include existing/proposed topography and are shown from street level.
- Setback measurements from the street and from the neighboring buildings in the district.
- An updated tree survey identifying all trees greater than 6" d.b.h. on the properties that will be impacted by the proposed construction.

Description of Property: Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

The property is a 20,725 sf lot in Takoma Park. There is an out of period and non-contributing house and garage on the property. The property is generally flat, with an approximately 2% slope from the street to the rear of the property.

The adjacent property to the North is not in the historic district and has Montgomery Community College campus buildings.

The adjacent property to the South (703 New York Ave) is an Outstanding Resource to the Takoma Historic District. That property includes a c. 1890 Queen Anne style home currently being operated as the Etta Mae Inn.

There are nine urban forest trees on the existing property.

Description of Work Proposed: Please give an overview of the work to be undertaken:

The lot is to be subdivided into two lots. The first being approximately 8,000 sf fronting along New York Ave. The second would be an approximately 12,725sf flag lot to the rear of the existing lot.

The existing garage would be demolished as part of the lot subdivision. The existing non-contributing house would be prior to construction of a new home on the proposed front lot, though that demolition may not be a condition of the lot subdivision at this time.

There will be separate HAWPs filed for the actual design and construction of the proposed new single family homes and site work required, such as for the shared driveway and stormwater management.

Three of the urban forest trees will likely be removed due to future site work to be completed after the approval of the lot subdivision. The remaining six urban forest trees will be protected.

The tree impact assessment application has not been filed with the City of Takoma Park as of the filing of this HAWP, but will be completed prior to the planned HPC Preliminary Consult on January 7, 2026.

Work Item 1: _____

Description of Current Condition:
Existing single 20,725 sf lot

Proposed Work:
Create two lots of approximately 8,000 sf and 12,725sf

Work Item 2: _____

Description of Current Condition:

Proposed Work:

Work Item 3: _____

Description of Current Condition:

Proposed Work:

ZONING INFORMATION	
ADDRESS:	707 NEW YORK AVE TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912
ZONE:	R-60
SUBDIVISION:	0025
BLOCK:	69
LOT:	P4
TAX ID:	01062383
EXISTING LOT OCCUPANCY: ± 7.7% (1,606 FT ²)	
PROPOSED SITE OCCUPANCY: ± 15.0% (3,100 FT ²)	

PLEASE SEE L-1.1 FOR DETAILED SITE INFORMATION

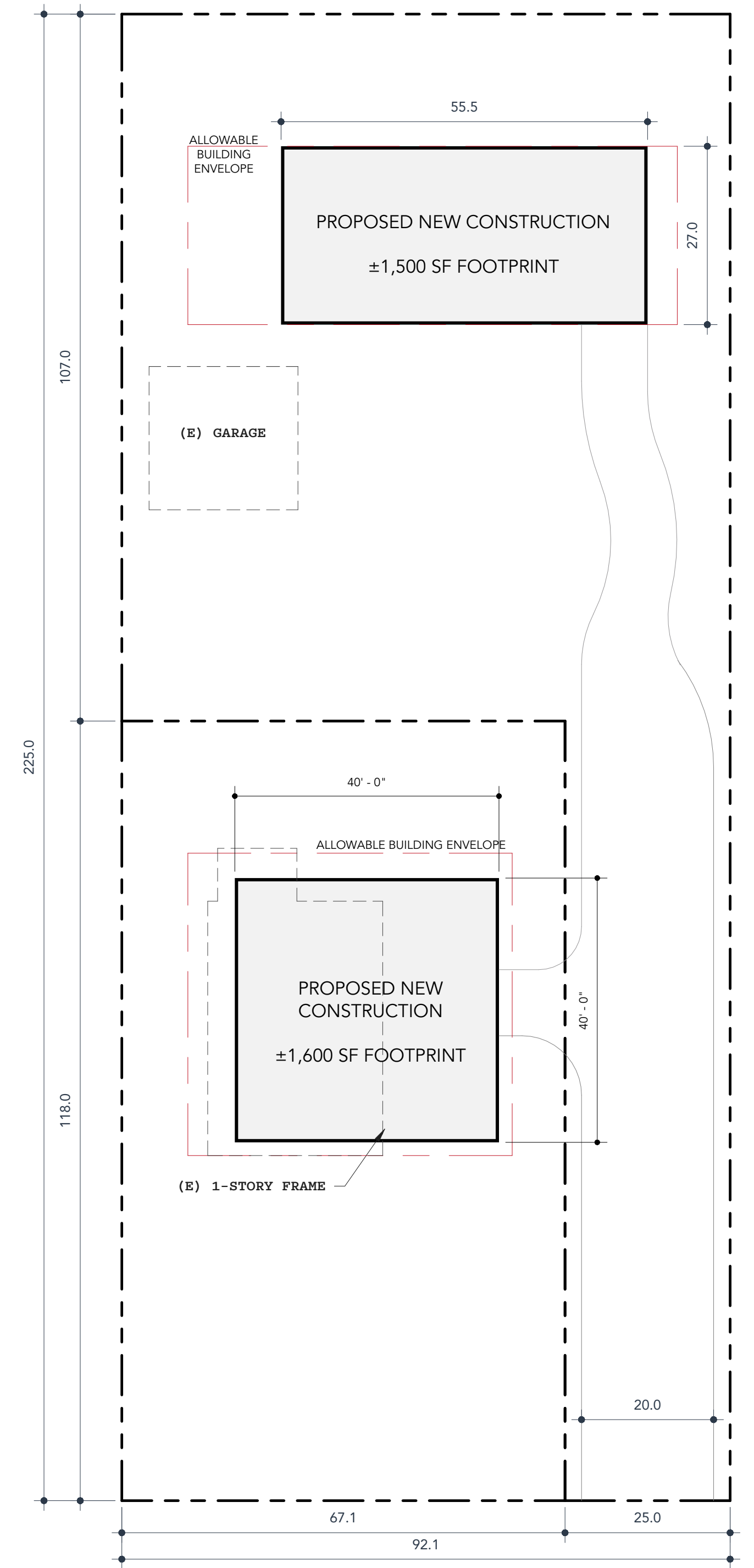
BEN NORKIN
- ARCHITECTURE -

7204 TRECOTT AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912 202-578-7094

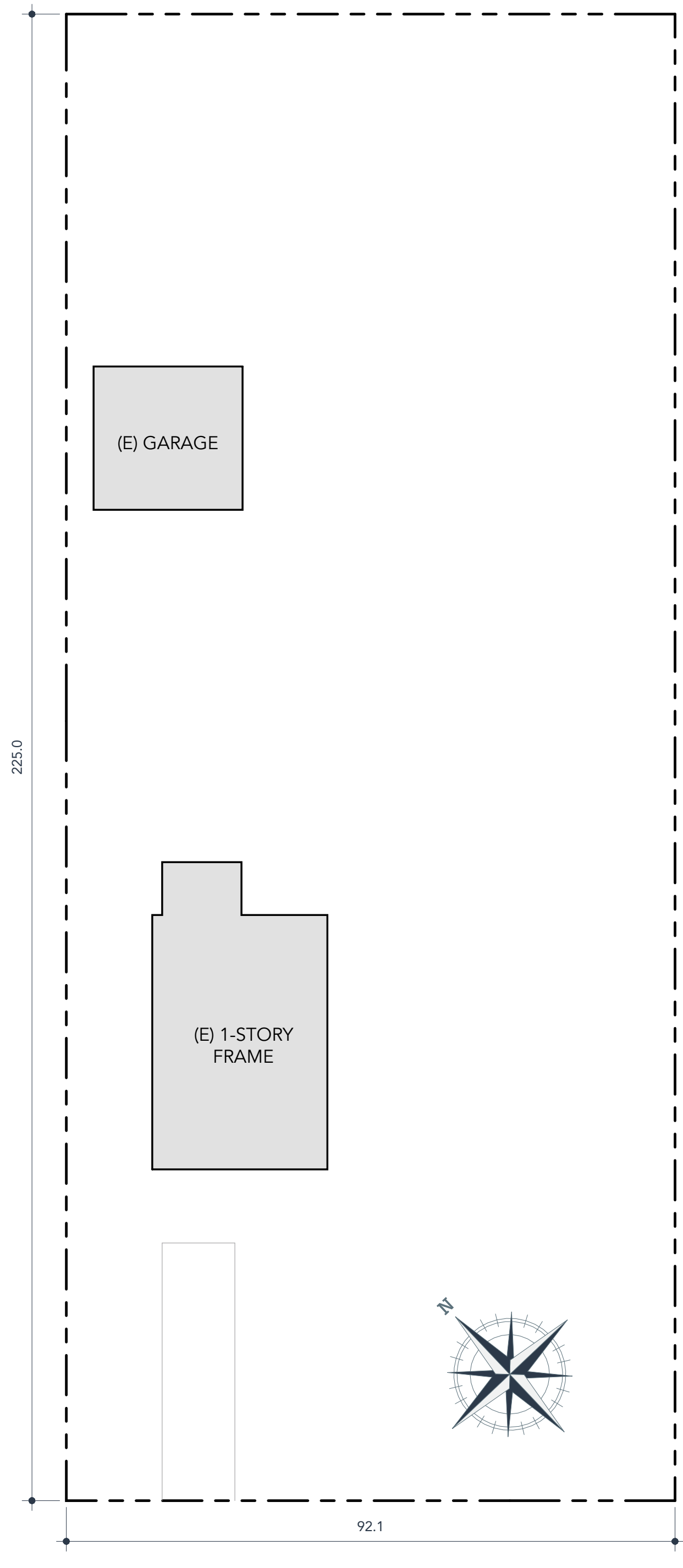
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PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION



2 PROPOSED SITE PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"



1 EXISTING SITE PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"

A NEW DESIGN FOR:

ACE CONSTRUCTION

707 NEW YORK AVE - TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

REVISION LOG		
REV #	DATE	DESCRIPTION

STATUS: PRE-DESIGN

DPS PERMIT NUMBER: 1143852

BNA PROJECT NUMBER: 25014

SHEET NAME: EXISTING/PROPOSED SITE PLAN

SHEET NO.: HPC 0

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

FILE PATH: F:_BNA_F\Revit Locals\25014_707 New York Ave Concept_Massing_ben4GEXP.rvt
PLOT DATE: 12/17/2025 5:07:06 PM

BEN NORKIN
- ARCHITECTURE -

7204 TRESSCOTT AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912 202 - 578 - 7094

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PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

A NEW DESIGN FOR:
ACE CONSTRUCTION

707 NEW YORK AVE - TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

REVISION LOG

REV #	DATE	DESCRIPTION

STATUS: PRE-DESIGN

DPS PERMIT NUMBER: 1143852

BNA PROJECT NUMBER: 25014

SHEET NAME
**EXISTING
FIGURE-GROUND**

SHEET NO.
HPC 1

SCALE: 1" = 60'-0"



MAP INFORMATION

MAP SIZE: 1,650 FT X 1,245 FT
MAP AREA: 471 ACRES



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- ARCHITECTURE -

7204 TRECOTT AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912 202 - 578 - 7094

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PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

A NEW DESIGN FOR:
ACE CONSTRUCTION
707 NEW YORK AVE - TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

REVISION LOG

REV #	DATE	DESCRIPTION

STATUS: PRE-DESIGN

DPS PERMIT NUMBER: 1143852

BNA PROJECT NUMBER: 25014

SHEET NAME
**PROPOSED
FIGURE-GROUND**

SHEET NO.
HPC 2

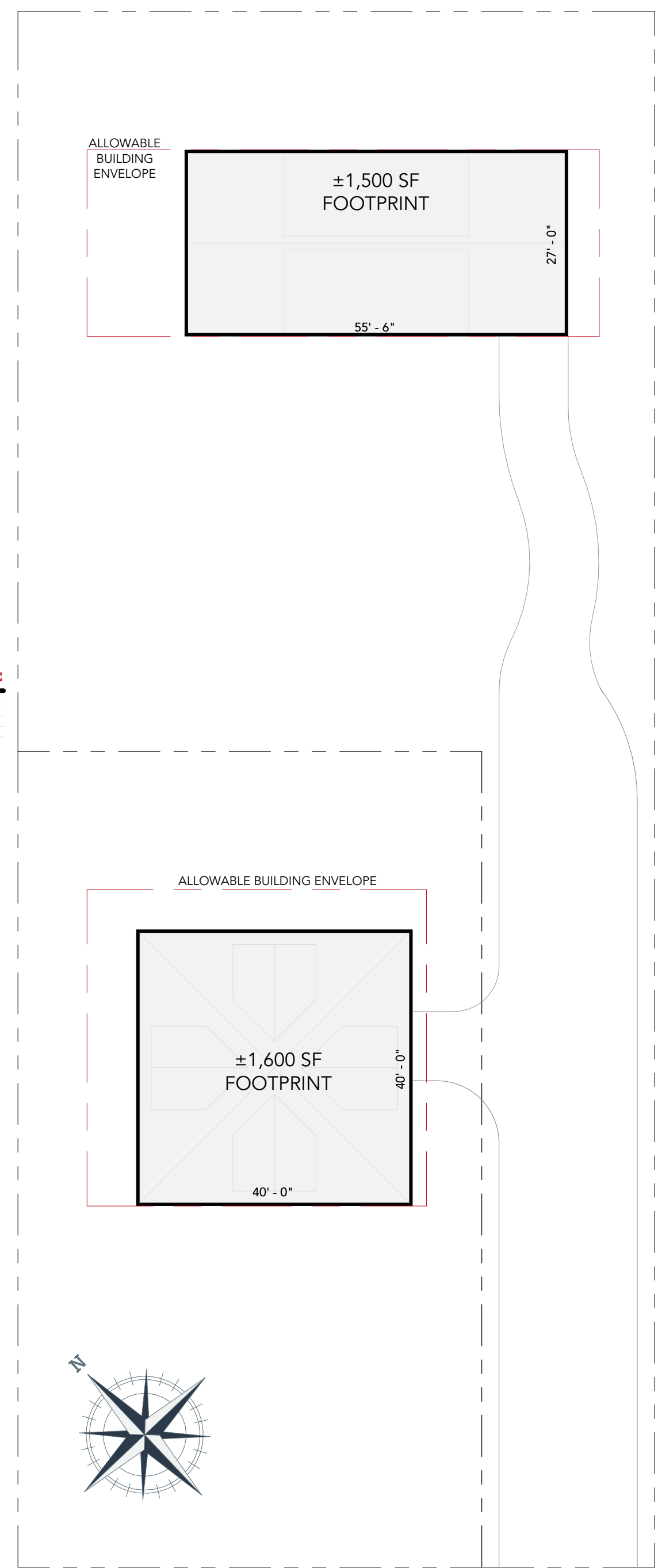
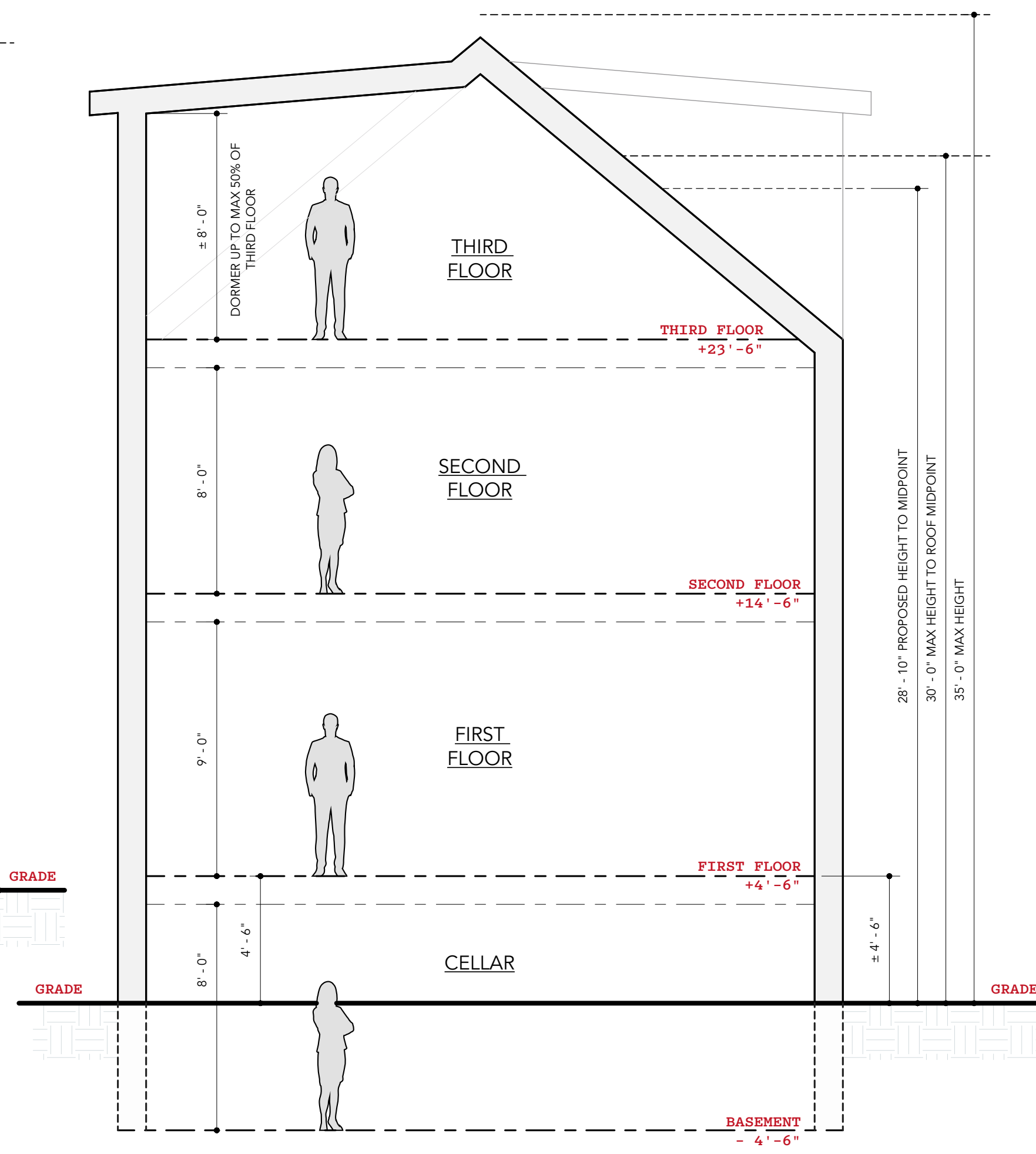
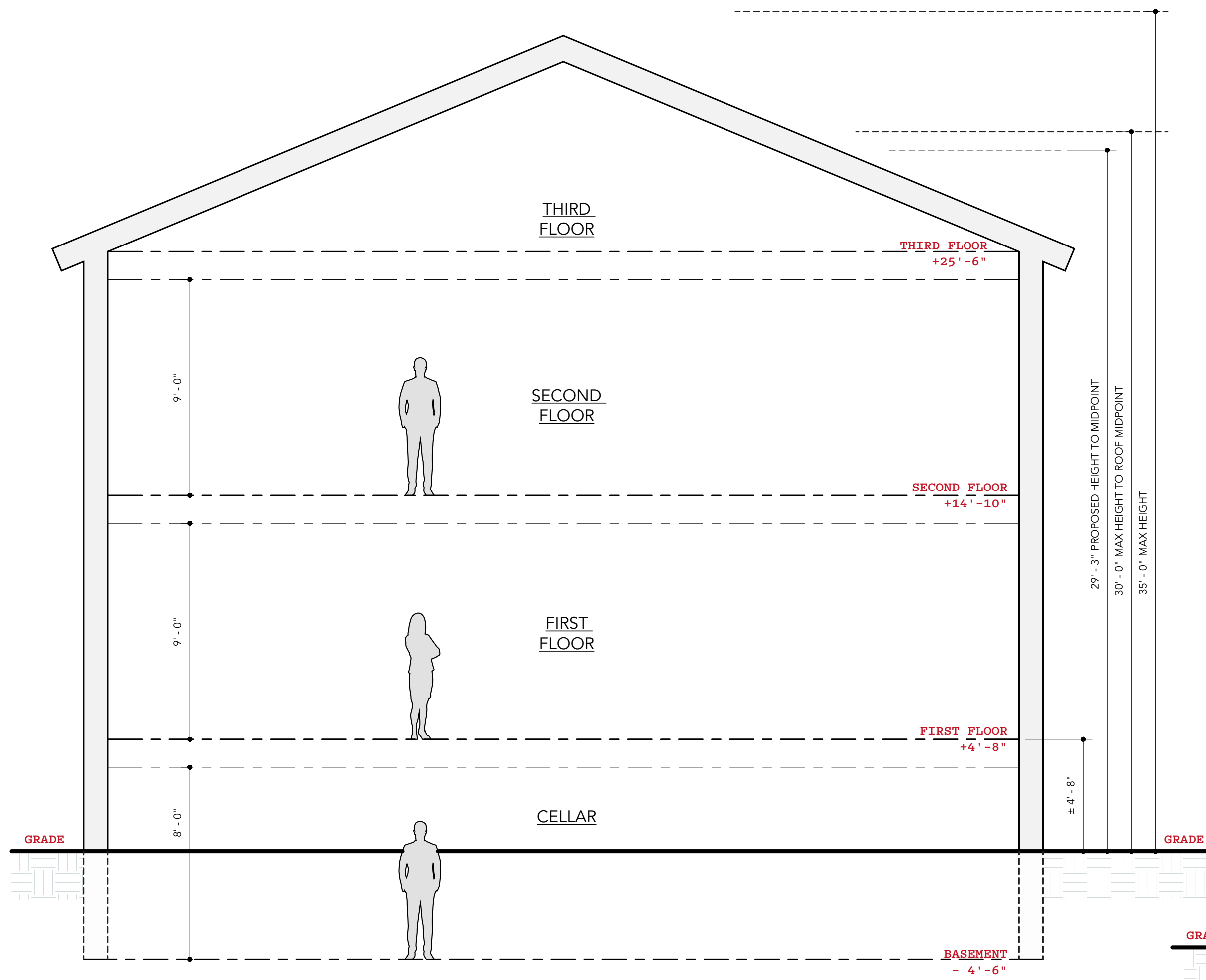
SCALE: 1" = 60'-0"



MAP INFORMATION

MAP SIZE: 1,650 FT X 1,245 FT
MAP AREA: 471 ACRES





1 FLOOR HEIGHTS - FRONT LOT
1/4" = 1'-0"

2 FLOOR HEIGHTS - REAR LOT
1/4" = 1'-0"

0 CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"

BUILDING AREA FRONT LOT	
PROPOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA	
CELLAR	NOT INCLUDED
FIRST FLOOR	1,600 FT ²
SECOND FLOOR	1,600 FT ²
THIRD FLOOR	±400 FT ²
TOTAL	3,600 FT²

BUILDING AREA REAR LOT	
PROPOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA	
CELLAR	NOT INCLUDED
FIRST FLOOR	1,500 FT ²
SECOND FLOOR	1,500 FT ²
THIRD FLOOR	750 FT ²
TOTAL	3,750 FT²

A NEW DESIGN FOR:

ACE CONSTRUCTION

707 NEW YORK AVE - TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

REVISION LOG

REV #	DATE	DESCRIPTION

STATUS: **PRE-DESIGN**

DPS PERMIT NUMBER: **1143852**

BNA PROJECT NUMBER: **25014**

SHEET NAME: **FLOOR HEIGHT CONCEPT**

SHEET NO.:

HPC 3

SCALE: **As indicated**

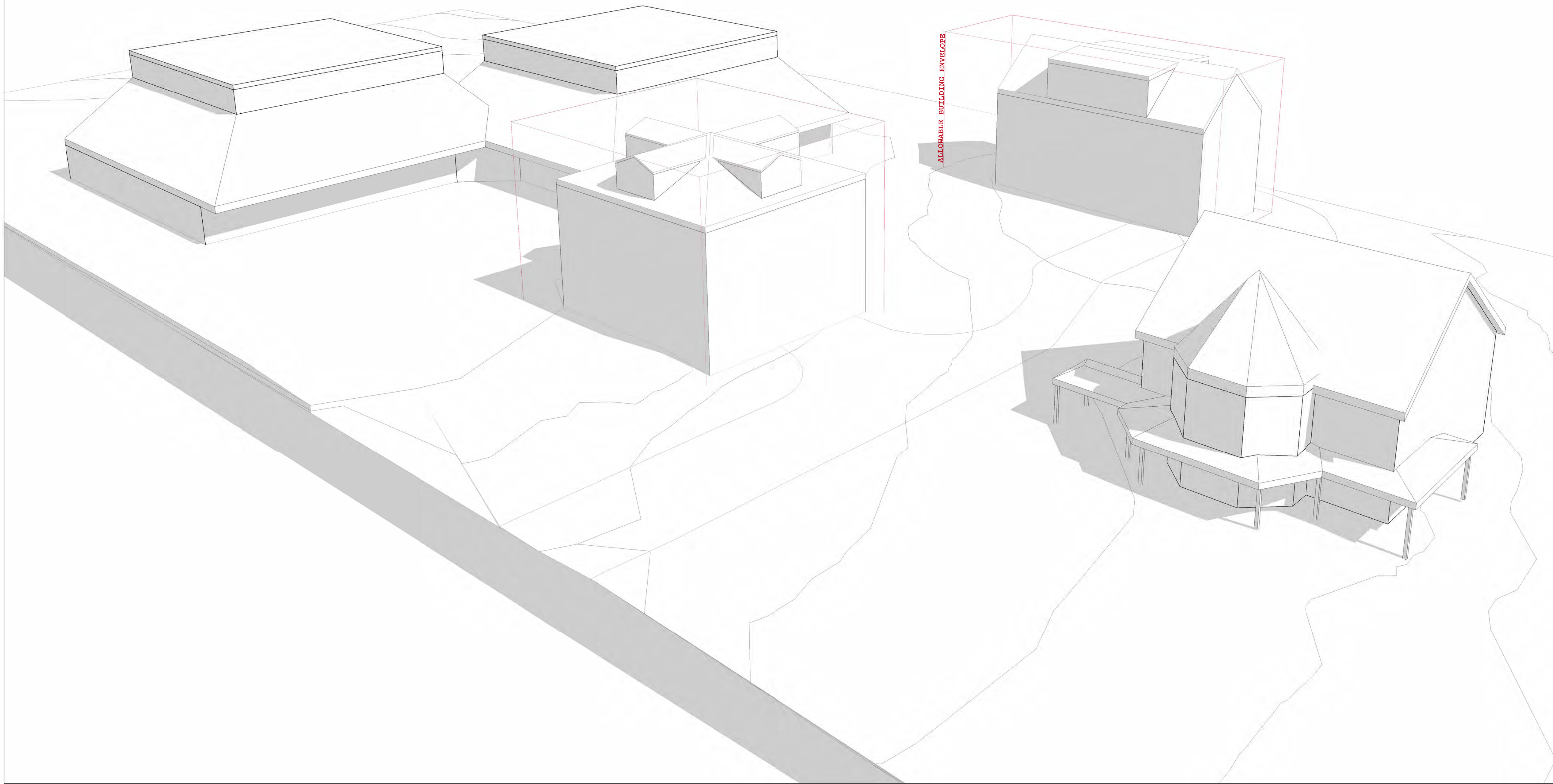
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PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION



A NEW DESIGN FOR:

ACE CONSTRUCTION

707 NEW YORK AVE - TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

REVISION LOG

REV #	DATE	DESCRIPTION

STATUS: **PRE-DESIGN**

DPS PERMIT NUMBER: **1143852**

BNA PROJECT NUMBER: **25014**

SHEET NAME

ENVELOPE MASSING

SHEET NO.

HPC 4

SCALE













107

2EC2960

















MATHEMA

NO PARKING
OR STANDING
ANYTIME

HISTORIC
DISTRICT



MATHEMATICS

CHARLENE E. HUNLEY
STUDENT SERVICES CENTER

NO PARKING
OR STANDING
ANY TIME

HISTORIC
DISTRICT

FBC

Handicap parking sign