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Ms. Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
National Life Building – 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

April 25, 2018

Re: Historic Preservation Report for
McIndoes Academy, Academy Lane, McIndoe Falls (Barnet), VT
Feasibility Study for Renovation & Adaptive Re-use Project

Dear Ms. Trieschmann:

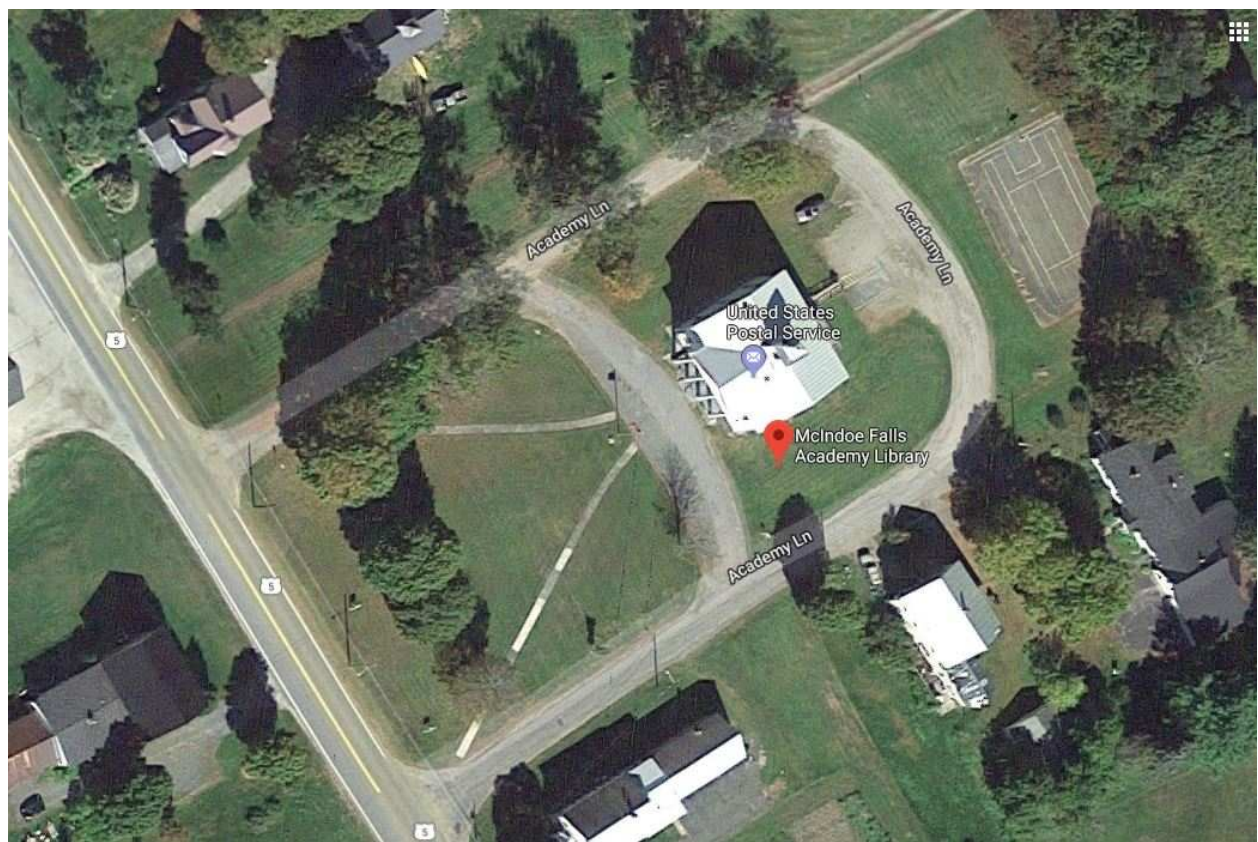
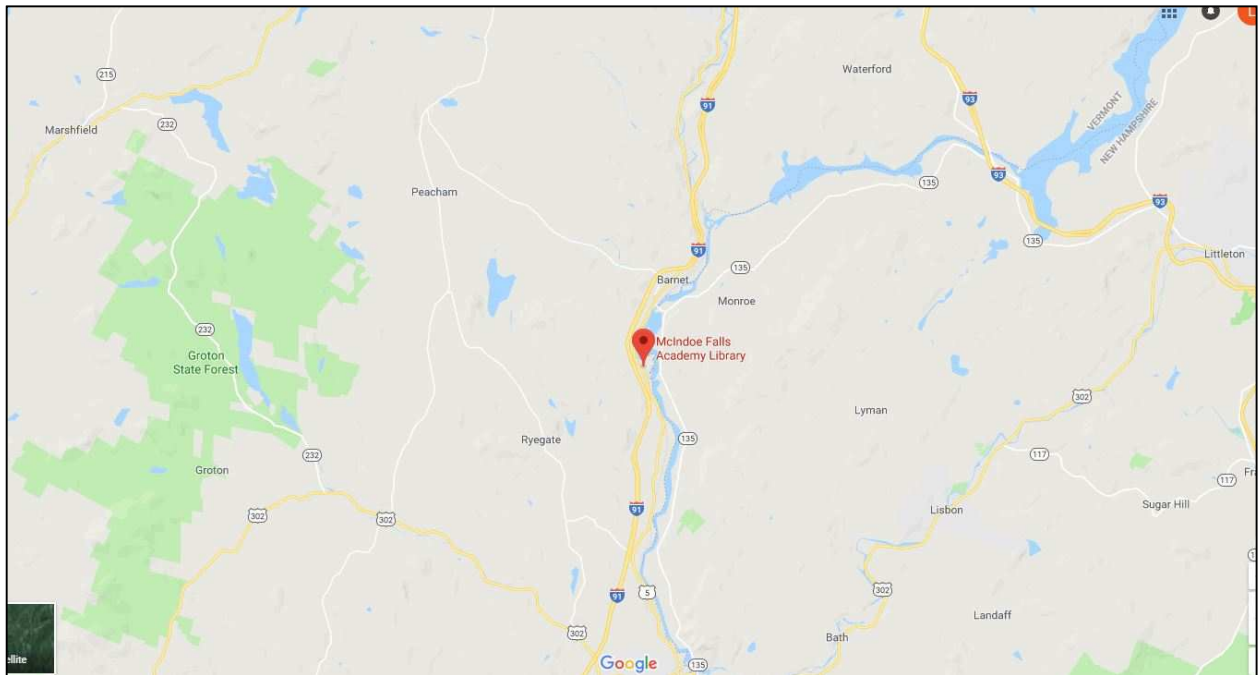
As the historic preservation consultant hired by the Town of Barnet and its architect, Arnold & Scangas Architects, I have conducted an historic preservation review for the above referenced undertaking, applying the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and have prepared this Historic Preservation Report. The review has been conducted in order to identify the project's potential impacts to historic buildings and structures, historic districts, historic landscapes and settings and to known or potential archaeological resources. This letter report has been prepared to provide additional information about the historic status of the McIndoes Academy Building at 37-62 Academy Lane, off U.S. Route 5 in McIndoe Falls/Barnet, Vermont, and to determine the effect, if any, of the project on historic resources within the project's "Area of Potential Effect" (APE) in anticipation of Municipal Planning Grant funding from the Vermont Community Development Program and potentially other state or federal sources to be identified in the future.

The municipal planning grant is funding a feasibility study for adapting the McIndoes Academy into the new Barnet Town Clerk Office as well as continuing some of the building's present uses including as a U.S. Post Office.

Historic Background and Significance

McIndoes Academy on Academy Lane off US Route 5 in Barnet was built in 1853 and is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places (since 1975). It is significant architecturally and historically, as the nomination states: "*The structure is representative of the vernacular application of the Greek Revival mode to secondary school architecture and serves as the visual focus of the village of McIndoe Falls village.*" Forty-three years later, the building continues to retain a very high degree of architectural integrity, especially on the exterior. It is located at the back of the large green fronting US. Route 5 in the hamlet of McIndoe Falls.

McIndoes Academy – Historic Preservation Letter, April 25, 2018



Top: Google map indicating the McIndoes Academy in the region;

Bottom: Google satellite image of the building and site

Architectural Description

According to the nomination: *“The two story, clapboarded structure , executed in Greek Revival style, is rectangular in plan (45' x 56'), sets on a foundation of rough-cut stone blocks and is capped by a gable roof sheathed with standing seam metal sheathing.*

The most prominent feature of the Academy is the full two story projecting entrance portico which frames the two central bays of the front (west) elevation. The portico's pediment, embellished with alternating single and paired scrolled brackets, is supported by fluted, tapered wood Doric columns. Pilasters separate the center bays from the two side bays. A double door pedimented entrance with sidelights is located at the ground level in the center of the elevation. A large rectangular window with 12/12 double hung sash, capped by a pedimented hood molding, is set in each side bay at the ground floor and in all bays at the second story level.”

Another prominent feature is the central two tiered belfry. The square base has flush board siding and a rectangular louvered opening on each elevation. It is crowned by a bracketed cornice. The top tier is much smaller and also square with clapboard siding and bellcast roof. The historic view below shows what appears to be a railing around the top of the bottom tier that is no longer extant. The belfry appears to be in very good condition from the ground and looks fairly recently restored.

The 4 by 3-bay building retains strong historic integrity on the exterior though there have been alterations as the building was adapted to new uses, codes and standards. The front doors were replaced with the present doors in the early to mid-20th century.



Historic view (n.d., courtesy Barnet Historical Society)

Another change is the roof which, as noted above, now has standing seam roofing and no longer has the southern (right) of the two symmetrical ridge chimneys seen in the historical view at left. The current north chimney is in fact just down from the ridge on the front slope. The remnant of the southern chimney is a brick chimney mass of only a few feet in height in the attic just under the roof but now supported in the air by some stout beams.

A possible change may be the 19th or early 20th century re-siding of the front façade with clapboards – the undated historic view above appears to show flush board siding on the front only – typical of many monumental Greek Revival public buildings. An historic class photo identified as taken in 1916 shows a close up of the front façade which was clapboarded as it is today.

The rear (east) elevation has undergone the most alteration by the addition of an early 20th century metal fire escape from the second floor – through a door that appears to have been added between the center two window bays. The wooden door has 5 stacked panels, typical of c. 1900 – 1920 doors. The open tread metal stair leads down to the north with one landing that crosses a first floor window. A rear, off-center new ground floor entrance doorway has been added in the late 20th century along with a large wooden ramp and gable canopy over an entrance deck. The door is metal with a small off center window. Neither doorway on the rear façade has the peaked lintel trim of the windows but rather plain board trim.

The 12/12 light window sash appears to be original and intact in varying degrees of condition from poor to good. Modern exterior triple track storm windows protect all the windows.

On the interior, the first floor has been altered in the 20th century to serve the various current uses of a post office and adjunct town library. The entrance lobby walls are covered in modern vertical “panel” pressed wood sheets and the ceiling has been dropped with a gridded panel system. The doors to the two original stair cases are modern flush wood doors. Three small powder rooms have been created off the lobby. The library and post office are entered through modern doors off the lobby. The library is a large space with posts that was likely originally more than one room. It has the same paneling and dropped ceiling of the lobby. Off the library is a front room that is used as a children’s section. One of the small restrooms has been carved out of what appears to have been an original room. It has a full height, tin ceiling. The post office is primarily accessed through the rear entrance. The public lobby has a modern, gridded dropped ceiling (though higher than in the other spaces) and modern wall finishes with original (though possibly re-located) slate blackboards. The main post office work room was not accessible but is likely modern in character. Another small front room that seems likely an original room is entered off the post office lobby through an original four-panel door. This room has been altered to be smaller by the two small restrooms off the lobby that were carved out of this space. It has a break room type kitchen.

The second floor is much more intact than the first floor architecturally. The stair landing has two open railings for the two, not symmetrical, stairs and original paneled doors into the main hall and to an attic staircase. The northern stair has at winder section at the bottom and the southern one has winder sections at both the bottom and the top. The main room, occupying most of the second floor space, is a large auditorium with a very high tin ceiling with coved cornice. There are two posts of dimensional lumber along the center line and a flat floor stage area continuous with the main room floor at the northern end set off by a simple proscenium archway. The modern posts have been determined to be non-loadbearing and may have been installed to bolster the roof trusses for snow load or may have served as wooden posts for added room dividers. There is evidence in the paint and floor that sections of the room were altered by dividers no longer extant. The stage area has different flooring than the main room though the floor level is now continuous. Two doors flank the stage area in the proscenium wall. The eastern one leads directly to the stage space and the western one leads to a vestibule outside the northwest corner room. The stage area has windows on the rear and east walls. There is a small closet on the west end of the stage area.

There are two front (west) corner rooms - north and south of the centered stair hall - which are entered from the main room. They appear fairly intact architecturally. The southern room is used

for the McIndoes Academy Museum and has a door directly from the main room. The northern front room is entered by a vestibule, as noted above, to the left of the stage. The main room, stage area, and the two front rooms all have a low wainscoting of horizontal, wide flush boards. The main room and museum room have narrow board wood floors and tin ceilings while there are plaster or sheet rock flat ceilings in the stage area and northwest room. The stage area floor is plywood or masonite and the northwest room has painted wider board flooring. The main room has pebbled tin sheeting covering all the walls above the wainscoting. There is an older cast iron radiator in the northwest room. The attic is unfinished and accessed by a ladder-like stair off the second floor stair landing. The basement has two finished rooms and a former restroom and then larger unfinished areas. The basement rooms are unused and in deteriorated condition.

Existing Conditions

The building retains strong historic integrity on the exterior and on the second floor interior with an original double stair. The first floor has been heavily renovated and the rear elevation has had alterations for fire code and ADA compliance.

Project Goals

The McIndoe Academy Association is the owner of the building. This project is a feasibility study commissioned by the Town of Barnet to explore the possibility of the town acquiring the building for adaptive reuse of the first floor to serve as a town clerk office. In the proposed program, the present U.S. Post Office would remain in place as is. The second floor would be largely preserved intact and continue to serve as a meeting space, McIndoes Academy Museum and to maintain some library presence in the northwest room. The ADA accessibility and fire code compliance, such as appropriate fire egress, need to be updated and would be addressed. The town clerk function includes a vault and additional restrooms are needed.

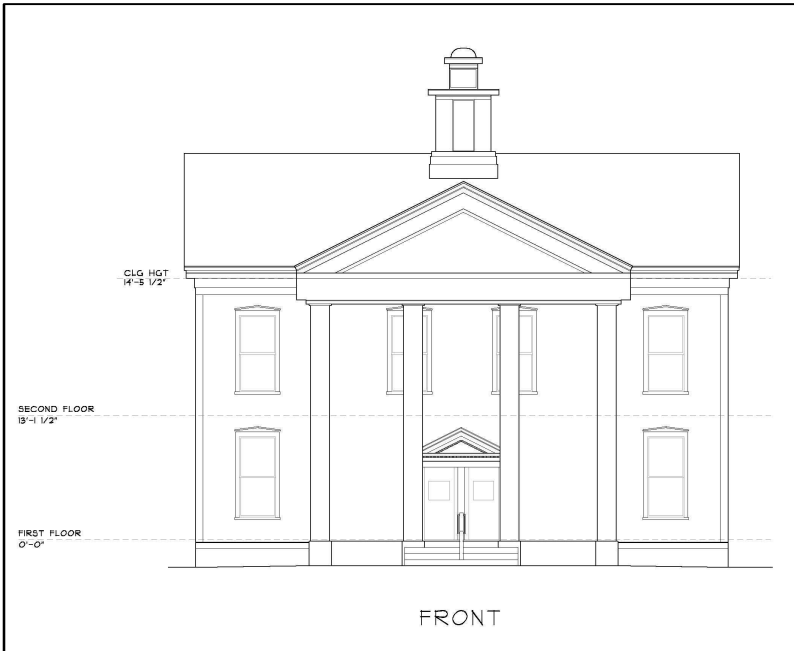
Proposed Project

The proposed project will construct a compatible, two-story rear addition to achieve the program goals while preserving the existing historic character of the main building. The new addition will be narrower and slightly lower than the main building and set off of the main block by a hyphen connection that attaches to the center two bays while leaving the outer two bays untouched. The addition will provide a vault, restrooms, elevator and fire stair as well as a new history room on the second floor. A new rear ramp will be built onto the new rear (east) elevation of the addition. The current rear ramp and metal fire escape will be removed and except for the two center rear window bays, the exterior of the historic main block will be preserved - repaired, and painted where needed. The historic windows will be refurbished and new storm windows applied.

On the first floor, two of the present three restrooms will be removed from the main block and the northwest first floor room will be restored to its original dimensions. Previously altered first floor spaces will be re-configured to provide offices and a front to back hallway without impacting any windows. The front stair hall floor plan will be essentially unchanged though the modern finishes may be removed. The present post office will not be altered. Elsewhere, the dropped ceilings will be removed and full height restored. One rear window will be removed for the vault and one infilled.

On the second floor the southwest museum room will remain unchanged. The main room will also remain intact as a large meeting space but a centered door will be located on the east wall

and two windows will be infilled. In addition, the original roof trusses that support the large open span will be repaired and the modern posts removed. The northwest room will expand a bit into the adjacent small vestibule and capture the space of the stage area closet as well. The appearance of the original vestibule door from the main room will be unchanged. The stage area will only change in that the closet wall will extend forward and be solid.



Top: Existing front façade (west) elevation (Arnold & Scangas Arch.)



Above, clockwise from upper left: (1) McIndoes Academy and green, looking east from U.S. Route 5; (2) Route 5 and green, looking west from Academy building; (3) U.S. Route 5 with Academy green, looking north; (4) U.S. Route 5, looking south from in front of Academy green



Top left: (5) McIndoes Academy front (west) & north elevations, looking east; Top right (6) Academy south & east (rear) elevations, looking west



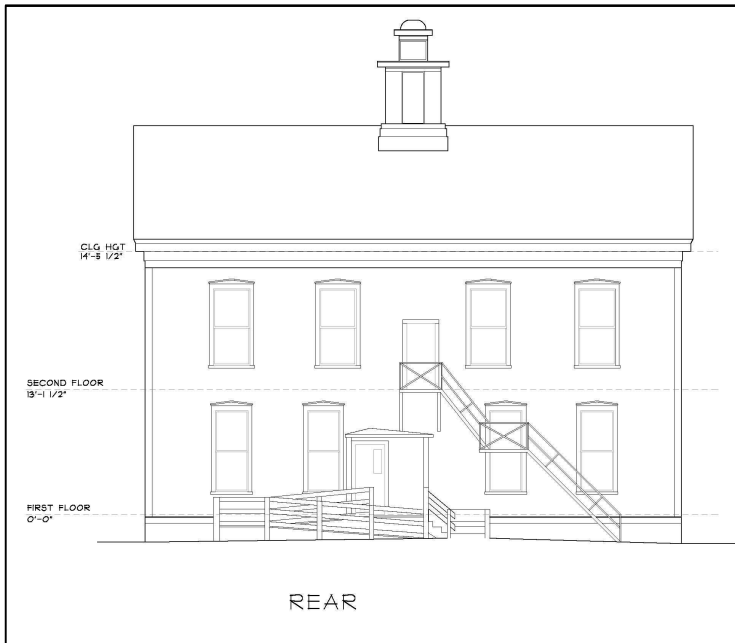
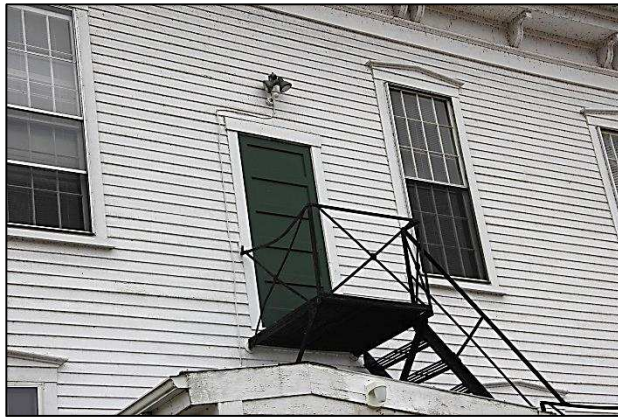
Left: (7) Academy south & rear elevations, looking northwest; Right: (8) North elevation, looking south



Two rows above (clockwise from upper left): (9) Detail of front pediment; (10) detail of front entry and doors; (11) Detail of cupola/belfry and gable raking cornice; (12) Detail of northern chimney on standing seam roof



Left: (13) detail of portico ceiling and front elevation; Right: (14) detail of portico porch and column



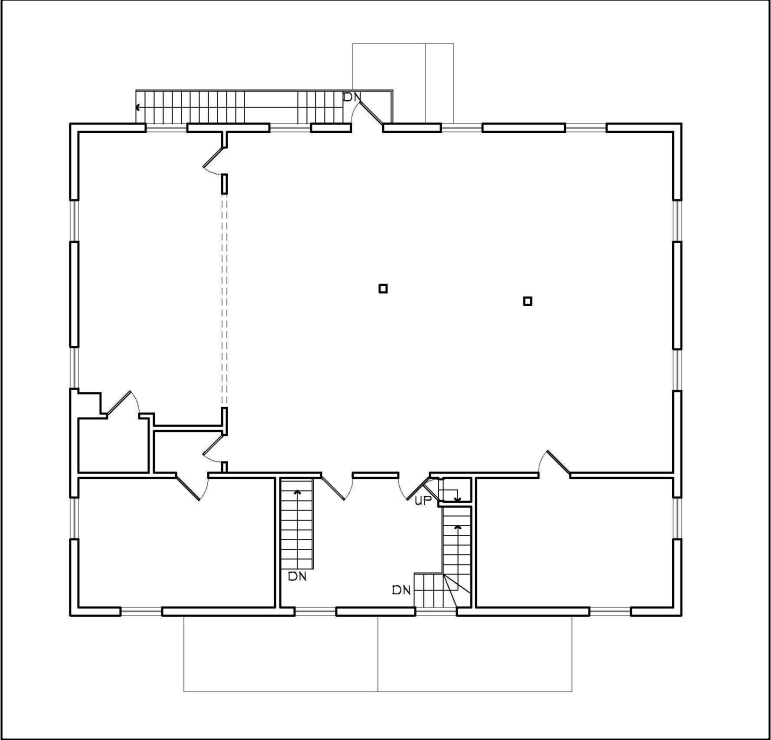
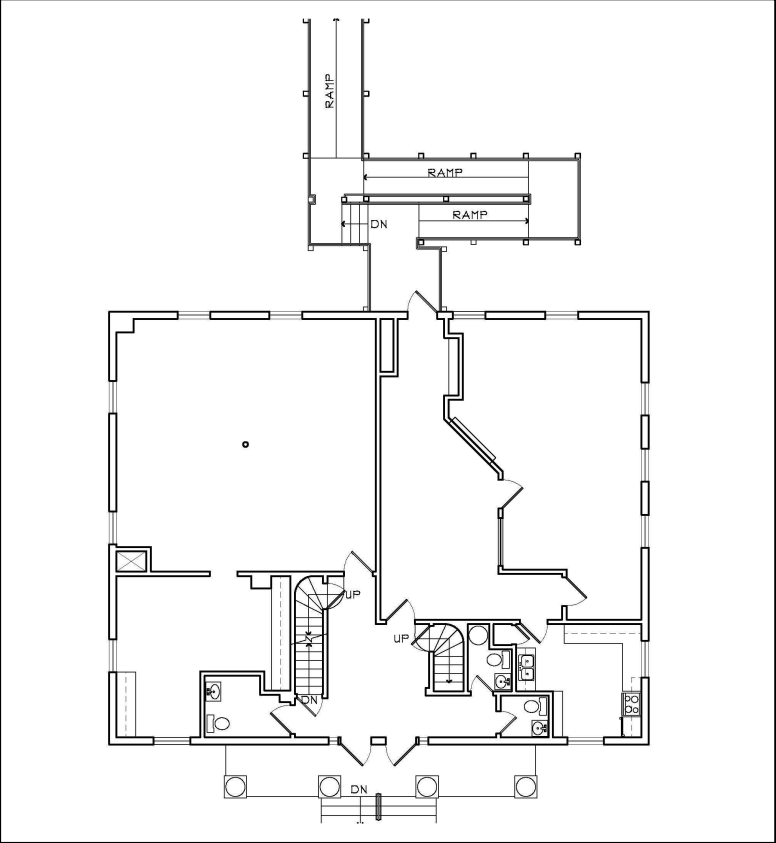
Left: (15) Detail of first and second floor windows; Upper right: (16) Detail of rear second floor fire stair; Lower right: Existing rear (east) elevation (Arnold & Scangas Arch.)



Existing south elevation



**Existing north elevation
(Both: Arnold & Scangas Arch)**



Top: Existing 1st floor plans; Bottom: Existing 2nd floor plans. North is to the left. (Arnold & Scangas Arch.)



FIRST FLOOR VIEWS

Top left: (17) Entry lobby, looking west at paired front doors;

Top right: (18) Entry lobby, looking south to added bathrooms



Center left: (193) Entry lobby, looking northeast at door to added bathroom on left, door to basement, and door to one of the two stairs on right with step; Center right: (20) Entry lobby looking southeast with (l. to r. door to library, door to post office in rear, and door to one of the two stairs with step



Bottom left: (21) Library, looking west towards front lobby door on far left and door to children's room on right; Bottom right: (22) Library, looking east

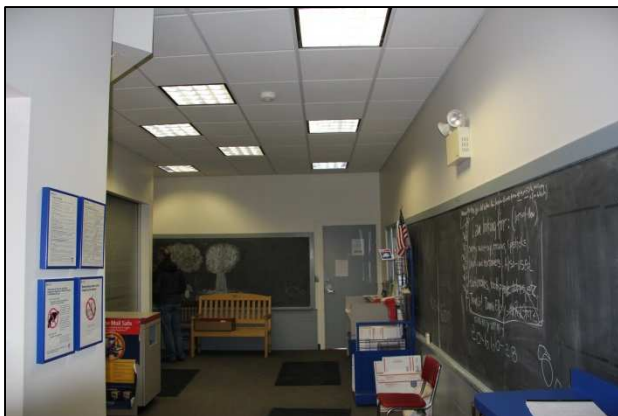
FIRST FLOOR VIEWS



Top left: (23) Children's room, looking west from library; Top right: (24) Children's room, looking northwest



Center left: (25) Children's room, looking west; Center middle: (26) Children's room, looking east towards door to library; Center right: (27) Children's room, looking southeast at vertical chase



Bottom left: (28) Post office lobby, looking west from rear entrance door; Bottom middle: (29) Post office lobby, looking south at hall to break room; Bottom right: (30) Break room, looking southwest from post office lobby

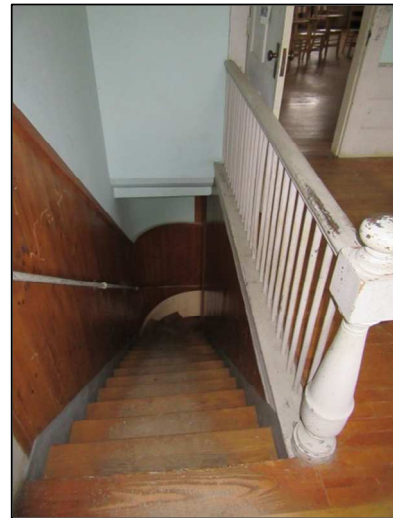
NOTE: WORK SPACE OF POST OFFICE WAS NOT ACCESSIBLE AND IS NOT IN PROJECT.

FIRST FLOOR VIEWS



Top left: (31) Break room, looking northeast towards post office lobby; Top middle: (32) Break room, detail 4-panel door; Top right: (33) Break room, detail window trim

STAIRS



Center left: (34) northern stair winder at bottom; Center middle: (35) North stair detail; Center right: (36) north stair, looking east from second floor landing



Bottom left: (37) Second floor landing, looking northwest; Bottom right: (38) Second floor landing, looking southeast

STAIRS



Top left: (39) Second floor landing, looking northeast at north stair railing; Top right: (40) Second floor landing, looking south at south stair and winder at top



Center left: (41) Second floor landing, looking northeast towards main room; Center middle: (42) Second floor landing, looking southeast at doors to main room and attic; Center right: (43) Attic step stairs to second floor landing



Bottom left: (44) Basement, stair to first floor front lobby

SECOND FLOOR



Top left: (45) Main room, looking north at stage; Top right: (46) Main room, looking northeast at stage area;



Center left: (47) Main room, looking south; Center right: (48) Main room, looking west at door to history room



Bottom left: (49) Main room, looking northwest with stage area and doors to landing and northwest room; Bottom right: (50) Main room, looking at south wall and windows



Top Left: (51) McIndoes Academy Museum room, looking southwest; Top right: (52) Museum room looking north



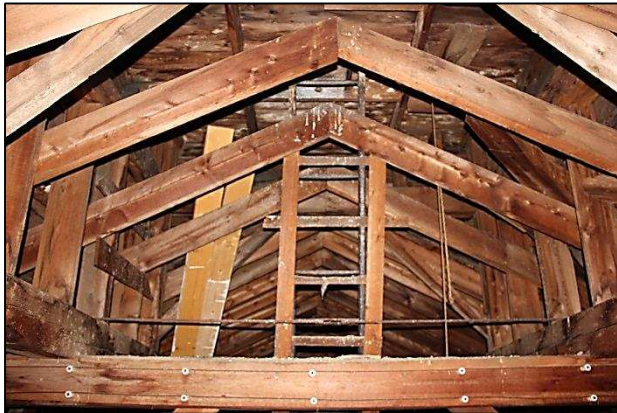
Center left: (53) Northwest room, looking east at outer vestibule;

Center right: (54) northwest room, looking west;

Bottom left: (55) Northwest room, looking west at window and radiator



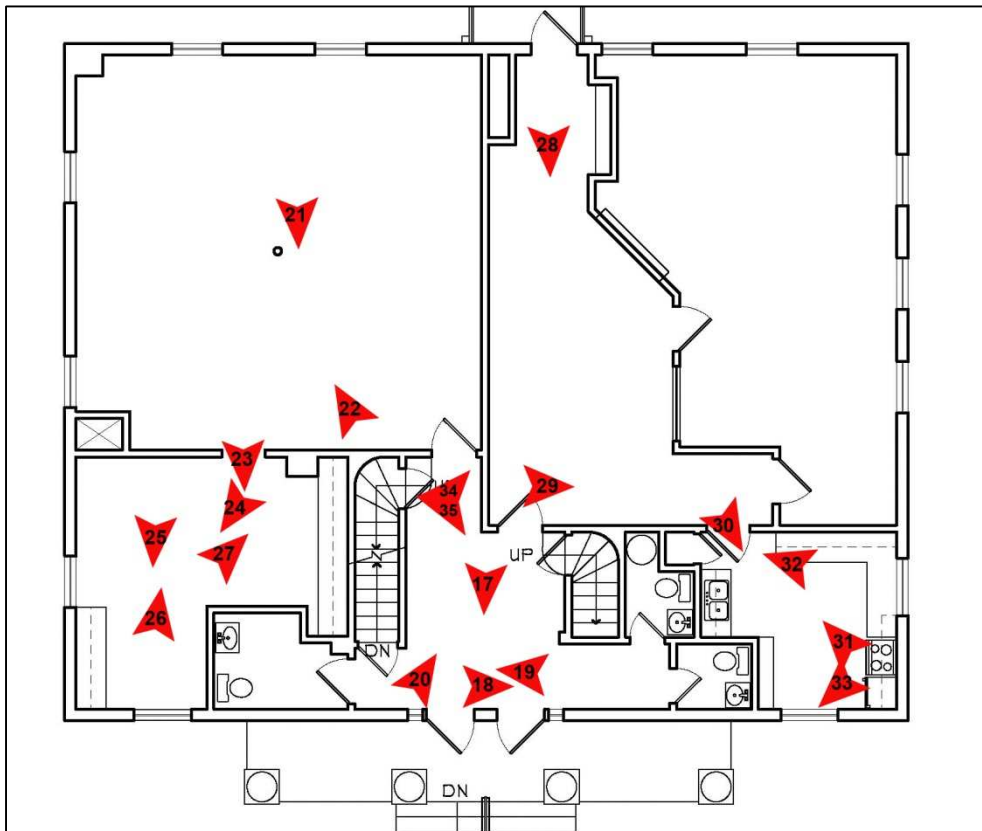
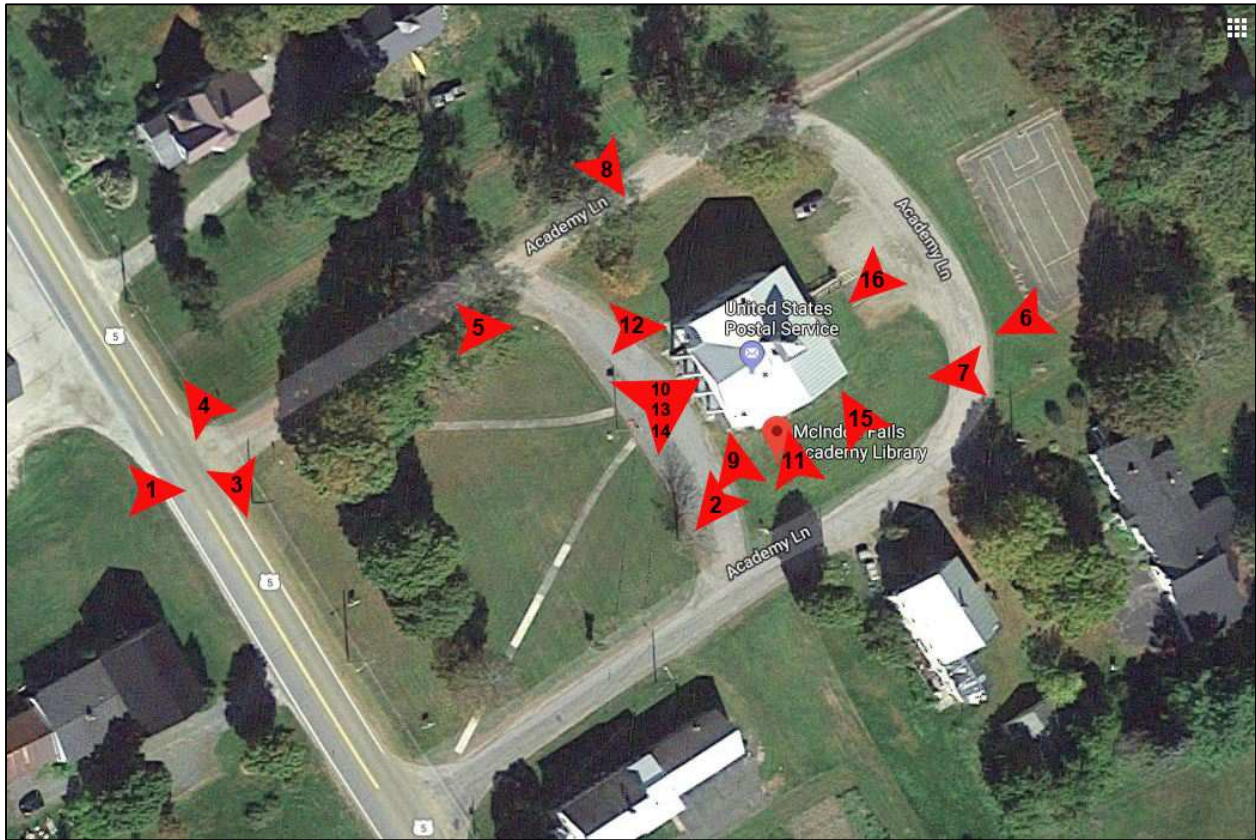
Top Left: (56) door to vestibule outside northwest room, looking north from main room; Top right: (57) Attic framing;



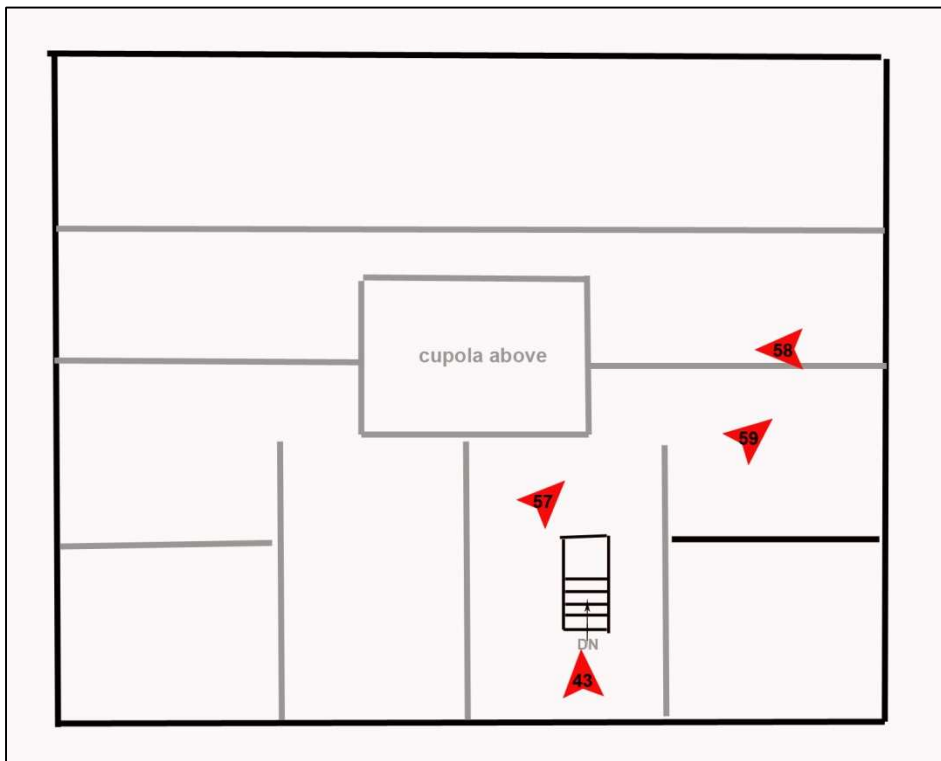
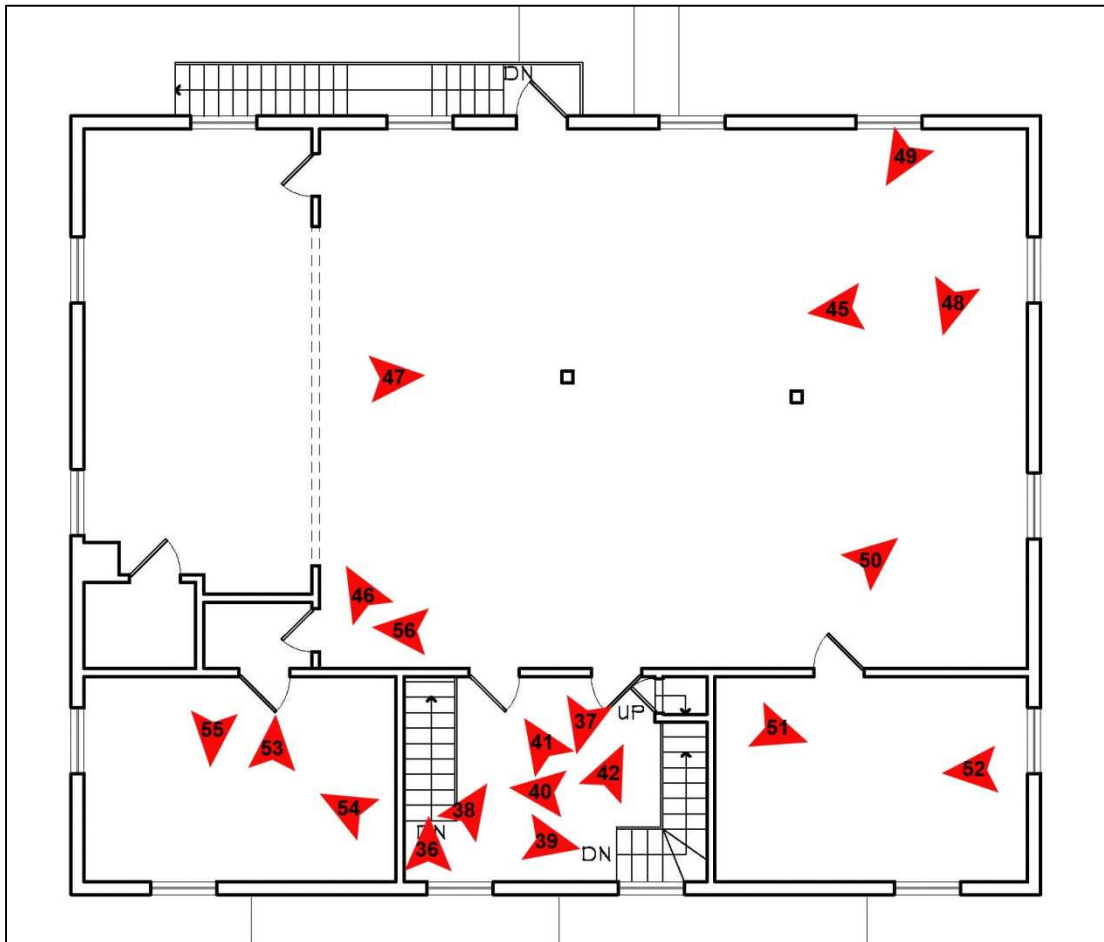
Center left: (58) Attic roof framing with ladder to belfry; Center right: (59) Attic detail of chimney remnant supported on beams (south end)



Bottom left: (60) One finished basement room with board walls; Bottom right: (61) Rest of unfinished basement, typical

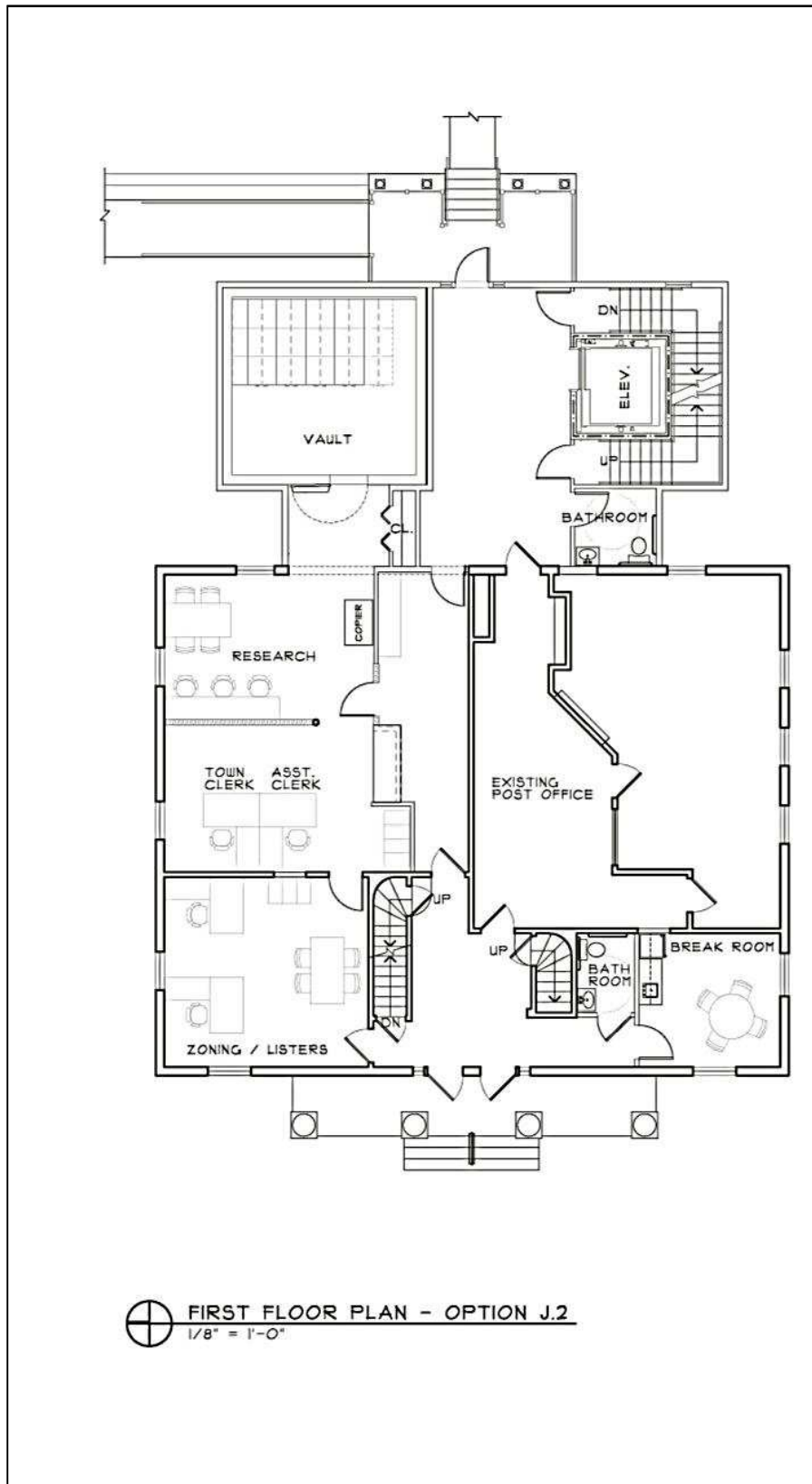


Top:
Site plan photo key;
Bottom: First floor
plan photo key

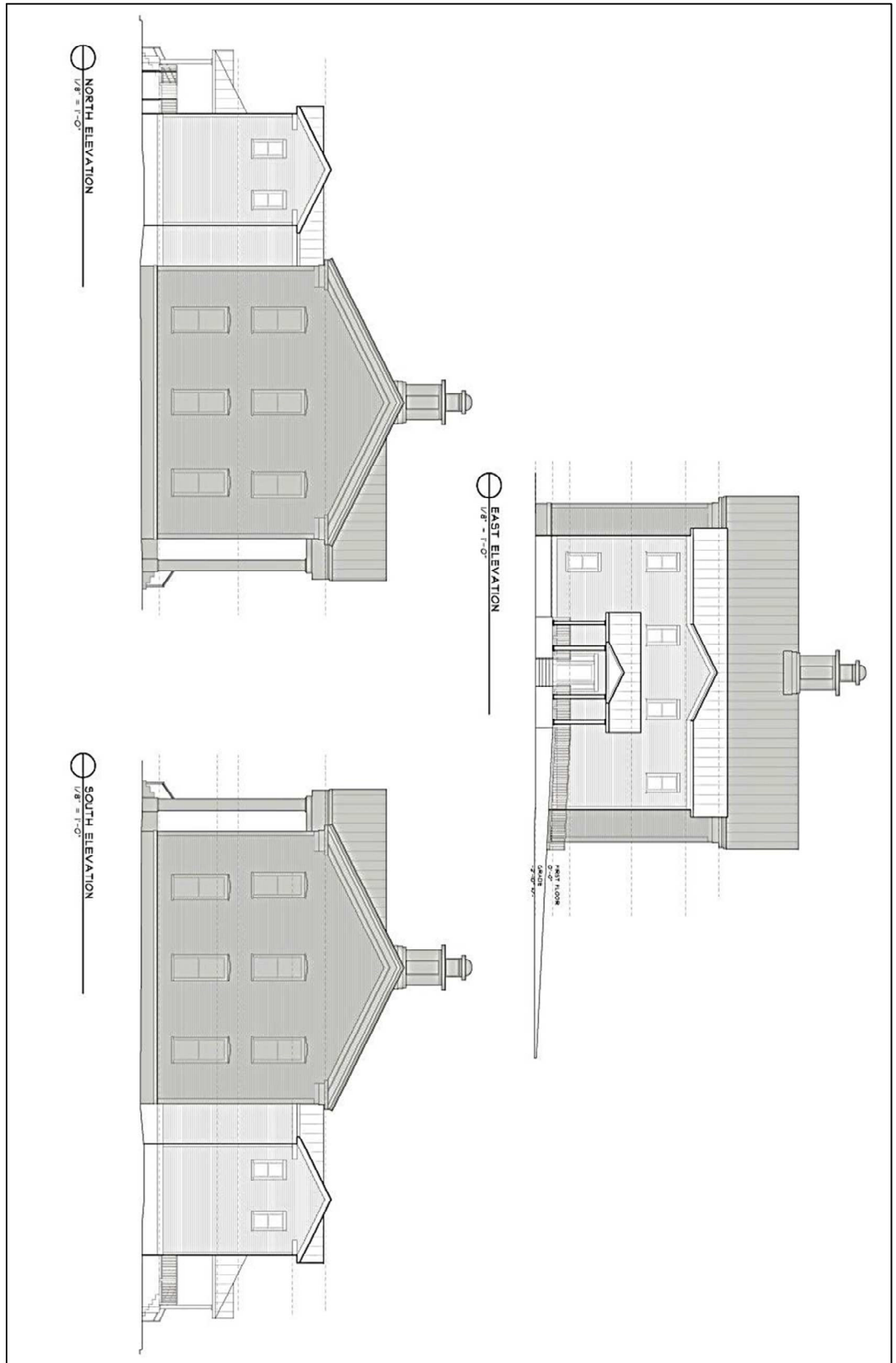


Top: Second floor plan photo key;

Bottom: Attic plan (NTS) photo key



**Proposed First floor plans
(Arnold & Scangas Arch.)**



Proposed elevations (Arnold & Scangas Arch.)

Conclusion

This proposed project does a good job of providing additional program space and code compliance through a sensitive new addition, well located to the rear, while preserving and restoring the historic character of the main block. The attachment of the rear addition through a narrower hyphen allows two of the four window bays on the rear elevation to be preserved. Loss of the two center bays of windows seems a very reasonable trade-off for the level of preservation achieved. **I believe the proposed project meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and will have no adverse effect on this historic building.**

Post-review

If for any reason, the project plans change and there are unexpected effects after final concurrence, then Section 106 consultation will recommence to ensure these new effects are resolved in compliance with the regulations prior to construction commencing (or continuing if already under way). Consulting parties will make reasonable efforts to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects to the property. This process will be treated as Post-Review Discovery (§800.13) in order to resolve any potential adverse effects pursuant to §800.6 and will result in the completion of the Section 106 consultation for these changes.

The potential Vermont Community Development Program grantee is aware that work cannot commence until final Section 106 concurrence is provided by Vermont Division Historic Preservation. Without this document, the grantee runs the risk of foreclosing the Vermont Community Development Program’s (functioning as Agency Official) ability to complete environmental review prior to construction commencing pursuant to §800.9(b).

Thank you.
Sincerely,



Lyssa Papazian

c: Ms. Rebecca Arnold, Principal
Arnold & Scangas Architects
The Loft at One Federal
1 Federal Street, Suite 201/PO Box 135
St. Albans, VT 05478