

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE #2008-0235

BAR Meeting
July 8, 2009

ISSUE: Alterations and Signage

APPLICANT: City of Alexandria (Patrice McAuliffe, Agent)

LOCATION: 134 North Royal Street (Gadsby's Tavern)

ZONE: CD / Commercial Downtown Zone

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff is recommending approval of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. That the final design and historic accuracy of the text applied to the stone band are to be reviewed and approved by the City Archaeology and BAR Staff;
2. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged;
3. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds;
4. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
5. The statements in archaeology conditions above shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period. In the case for a certificate or permit for a project that requires a development special use permit or site plan under section 11-400 of the zoning ordinance, the period of validity shall be coincident with the validity of the development special use permit or site plan as determined pursuant to section 11-418 of the ordinance.

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****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



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7/8/2009



UPDATE:

On May 6, 2009 the BAR deferred the case in order for the applicant to restudy the design. The discussion by the Board regarding the project's design was divided. Some members were in favor of the design as proposed and others were encouraging the applicant to explore removing the glass panel railing from the design and to retain the more traditional metal railing. The applicant has revised the project using a more simplistic approach, including a metal railing, while still reconfiguring the steps.

BACKGROUND:

Prior to the BAR's first public hearing, the ice well's design was presented to the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission (HARPC) at their November 12, 2008, and the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) on December 16, 2008.

The BAR began its review of this Certificate of Appropriateness proposal at its December 17, 2008 public hearing. The applicant and their design team provided the Board with a robust presentation which included the existing deteriorating conditions of the ice well, the historic context of the resource, and the proposed new interpretive program for the site. The applicant discussed that the two main objectives of the new design was to create a controlled environment that would prevent further deterioration of the ice well's historic fabric and develop an interactive interpretive program for the Gadsby's Tavern visitors which highlights the historic ice well while not impacting the historic fabric of the ice well or the tavern. The BAR heard testimony from the applicant, their design team, and citizens during the public hearing. After discussion, the case was deferred by the Board, with the recommendation that the applicant explore the possibility of different design alternatives or modification of the requested design. The Board recommended that the applicant work with the Staff, discuss the project further with members of the historic preservation community and other citizens, and suggested the applicant meet with the individual board members.

After successful meetings with the applicant, the Board recommended a worksession to present a modified plan for additional informal commentary.

Prior to the February 4, 2009 worksession, the applicant was invited to the February 2, 2009 Historic Alexandria Foundation's Board Meeting to deliver a presentation of the proposed design and guide a walking tour of the site.

A public worksession was held on February 4, 2009 after the Board's regularly scheduled hearing. The revised design received positive feedback from the majority of the Board members. The suggested changes and directives expressed to the applicant were to revisit material selections for the handrails and work on public outreach to local preservation and civic groups.

After the February worksession, the applicant continued their outreach efforts with the local preservation and non-profit groups. These outreach efforts included:

- Chamber of Commerce, event at Gadsby's to promote museum (2/5/09)
- American Association of Museums President, Ford Bell meeting (2/10/09)
- American Legion Post #24 (met with Legion contact Warden Foley, (2/12/09)

- Old Town Civic Association, (Lance Mallamo made announcement of the public open house to be held on 2/17/09 & 2/17/09 and handed out 100 fliers at the 2/11/09 membership meeting. Invited to participate in the March 11, 2009 meeting to talk about Gadsby's and OHA preservation program.)
- Cameron and Royal Street neighbors, distributed open house flyer (2/13/09)
- Cameron Street merchants, distributed open house flyer (2/13/09)
- Project promoted on OHA homepage (beginning 2/13/09 through present)
- Included in **This Week in Historic Alexandria** online resource, (week of 2/16/09)
- E-news blast to 1800 citizens on 2/12/09 about the public meeting of 2/17/09
- HAF Board private tour and discussion of plans (2/17/09 at 5:00pm.)
- Public Meeting, held at Gadsby's Tavern Museum (2/17/09)
- Antiques in Alexandria, Catalog ad promoting museum and ice well (3/5/09)
- Front page and subsequent **Alexandria Gazette** article detailing the project plan (3/5/09)
- Included in **This Week in Historic Alexandria** online resource, (week of 3/9/09)
- Alexandria Historic Society Board, presentation (3/10/09)
- E-news to 1800 citizens 2/24/09 to promote the public meeting of 3/12/09
- Public Meeting, held at Gadsby's Tavern Museum (3/12/09)
- ACVA Board Meeting, presentation (3/16/09)
- **Alexandria News** article, www.alexandrianews.org (3/29/09)
- Emails to HAF and/or OTCA to request meeting to discuss renovation plans with special ice well committee (3/16/09, 3/18/09, 4/16/09, 4/28/09)
- Society outreach, Tavern Dog Contest/Ice well fund raiser, Market Square display and four public announcements about Ice Well project (4/25/09)

Applicant was scheduled for the April 1, 2009 BAR public hearing and requested deferral to the May 6, 2009 hearing to continue public outreach efforts. At the May 6, 2009, the Board deferred the item to allow the applicant to restudy other design approaches, after listening to the comments from the Board and members of the public.

After developing a new design for the July 8, 2009 public hearing, the applicant provided the following outreach efforts:

- design has gone out on the OHA list serve
- working to have an article by Carla Branch in the online Alexandria newspaper
- design has been posted on the Planning and Zoning and OHA website
- GTMS promotion at June 8th event, June 14th event, and emails
- display signage at the museum
- information in the regular museum tour
- GTMS board member meetings with members of the community.

I. ISSUES:

The applicant is requesting approval for improvements to the sidewalk and viewing areas of the historic ice well at the Gadsby's Tavern Museum located at 134 North Royal Street. The program proposes to reduce the depth of the viewing area to about 42 inch below the current sidewalk, and install new curvilinear steps, with a more gradual slope. These evening lit steps are designed in an amphitheatre configuration to serve as standing and sitting areas for museum patrons.

Current Design:

The current design has been further refined as follows:



- The glass panels being used as interpretive elements/guard rails at the sidewalk level have been deleted from the design. The current metal railing at the sidewalk level is being replaced with a railing of similar design and material.
- The amphitheatre steps descending into the viewing area will remain as originally submitted (design and material: bluestone/brick), however, iron or similar material will be utilized for the new handrail installation. A similar material will be selected to complement this iron railing at the sidewalk level.
- The redesign for the Tradesman's Entrance has been deleted from the proposal.
- New interpretive signage is to be installed at the sidewalk level to be consistent with the recommendations outlined in the City's Wayfinding Program. The stone "signage" band will be installed flush with the existing brick sidewalk and arranged in a circular pattern outlining

the footprint of the ice well below. Additionally, a new glass “paver” denoting the center of the ice well will replace the existing pavers. The applicant would continue to request conceptual approval for the text to be displayed on the stone “signage” bands, with the final design and historic accuracy of the text to be reviewed and approved by the City Archaeology and Historic Preservation Planning Staff.

Elements of the design which have not been altered since the previous proposal:

Ice Well Viewing Windows

Frameless, operable, lockable clear, low iron glass with an anti-reflective coating will be installed in the ice well’s viewing windows to promote the visibility of the resource and reduce glare. One of the glass panels will be fixed.

Limits of Disturbance - Archaeology

The proposed design will have very minimal impacts to undisturbed earth. The applicant has provided a drawing indicating the Limits of New Disturbance for the project (see figure 5.) The shaded area in the drawing indicates where the applicant proposes to cut into earth that has not already been previously impacted. As shown, these areas are very minimal, and will be monitored by City Archaeology Staff.

Lighting

The site will be lit utilizing low level LED lights. The lighting levels will not exceed Staff recommended 0.5 footcandles at curb edge. A substantial reduction from the original design in December 2008, which had illumination levels reaching 1.1 footcandles at curb edge and well over 10 footcandles over the ice well opening.

The lighting proposed for inside the ice well will greatly enhance the visitor experience by highlighting the unique features identified by the museum curators as well as creating an overall illumination program for the resource. The interior lighting has been designed to be slightly brighter than its surroundings, as it is the focal point of the exhibit.

The exterior lighting proposed for the ice well will also improve the patron’s daytime and evening visibility of the historic resource and complement and not compete with the existing lighting on the street.

The subject lighting design also proposes new, marker lights on the top of each stair on the new staircase to present pedestrians with a visual identification marker at the sidewalk level.

Stormwater

The current two (2) area drains connect to piping that enters the building and connects to a sump pump that ties into existing storm water piping (to be verified). The proposed design ties a new trench drain and the two (2) area drains into this same piping. The amount of impervious area and associated volume of water remains the same.

Revised Design (May 2009):



The design was revised by replacing the existing metal guard rails with separate, externally lit, glass exhibit panels fabricated in a transparent safety glass mounted in a semi-circular shape at the sidewalk level. A metal channel support system was developed to support these individual glass panels.

The revision also proposed altering the material specification for the metal handrail from stainless steel to bronze with a dull finish and the vertical supports for the handrails to be manufactured of a dark grey finish stainless steel with texture.

The stone work for the steps and paving below the sidewalk level was changed to a bluestone.

Original Design (December 2008):



The existing metal guard rails were to be replaced with two, angled, internally lit, solid plate glass exhibit panels mounted to each other in a semi-circular shape at the sidewalk level. The panels were to be fabricated in a frosted safety glass with a metal support rib to display the proposed museum graphics.

The original handrail hardware was to be manufactured of a smooth, satin finish stainless steel. The vertical stainless steel surfaces would have been blast finished with a medium-toned, coarse aluminum oxide surface.

The steps and paving below the sidewalk level would have been constructed with medium, brownish-grey granite.

II. HISTORY/SITE DESCRIPTION:

History:

The ice well was probably constructed for tavern use in 1792 by John Wise, who consolidated several properties and enlarged or replaced the existing structures on the lot. The property was leased to John Gadsby from 1796 until 1808, during which time the City Tavern and Hotel became well-known for its generous hospitality.

A City Council vote in 1974, provided Gadsby's Tavern resources to design and install the existing exhibit and preservation program for the ice well.

Site Description:

The historic tavern is located on an 11,106 square foot lot and "L" shaped in form with a central private courtyard. Eight foot wide sidewalks run along the property frontage. To preserve the tavern's associated ice well, the sidewalk is extended to 17.5 foot wide at the intersection of Cameron and North Royal Street. The resource is currently accessed by a set of brick stairs enveloped by a metal wrought iron railing. There are currently no identifying markers for the resource or interpretive signage at the site.

III. ANALYSIS:

The project complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

The applicant has returned to the Board with a submittal which they feel addresses the main concern expressed by the citizens and the individual Board members who voiced opposition to the project at the previous public hearing – the glass railings/interpretive panels.

Staff believes the original submittal was less visually obtrusive to the streetscape, being glass is inherently transparent. The current design retains some of the details from the 1974 preservation effort - the vertical metal balustrade. The *Design Guidelines* encourage railings which are "appropriate to the historic style of the structure" and that "are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic districts." The material and design of the proposed replacement metal railing is similar to those on the Tavern building and other buildings throughout the historic district, and thus consistent with these specifications outlined in the *Guidelines*.

The proposed stone steps conform to the *Design Guidelines* as the design and materials are "appropriate and compatible with the historic architecture of the building" and "will not hide obscure or cause removal of historic architectural details." Finally, the bluestone steps are "sympathetic to [other] building materials found within the historic district."

The mission of the ice well project includes an interpretive component in addition to the rehabilitation of this unique Alexandria artifact. It is the Board's mission under its *Ordinance* to "protect historical and cultural resources thus promoting tourism," and "educate residents and visitors about the City's cultural and historic heritage." The only current option for interpretative signage above-ground is a stone band installed flush with the sidewalk delineating the footprint of

the ice well. Although minimal in its surface area, this interpretive signage is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* as it is “as simple as possible,” and “does not detract from the architectural characteristics of [the] historic structure.”

The applicant only proposes to excavate a very small area which has not been previously impacted. The remaining project will be undertaken on the existing site’s footprint. As shown in the recommended conditions, the City Archaeology staff proposes to monitor all phases of the project to ensure the project maintains conformance to the strict Limits of Disturbance (LOD) and footprint.

All the proposed alterations are within the existing footprint of the site, as such, the pedestrian circulation pattern through and around the site will remain unaffected by this proposal.

It is the Staff’s opinion the current submittal, as conditioned, will not adversely impact the historic integrity of the resource. The museum will be able to interpret the resource without negatively impacting the character-defining features of it or the surrounding historic resources and with the rehabilitation program, the structure will be protected for future generations.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application with the following conditions:

1. That the final design and historic accuracy of the text applied to the stone band be reviewed and approved by the City Archaeology and BAR Staff;
2. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged;
3. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds;
4. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
5. The statements in archaeology conditions above shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Code Administration:

- F1. The applicant shall obtain a sign permit for the proposed sign and/ or wall lettering.
- F1. An intermediate rail may be required for the stairway.
- C1. Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C2. Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C3. Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C4. The new handrails must comply with USBC for a minimum/maximum height of 30 to 34 inches. The ends must extend 12" beyond the top and bottom risers. The handgrip position must not be more than 2-1/4" in cross-sectional dimension, or the shape must provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handgrip portion must have a smooth surface with no sharp corners. The space between the wall and handrail must not be less than 1-1/2".
- C5. Handrails must comply with USBC 1009.10.
- C6. The accessible ramp must comply with the requirements of USBC 1010.1. The front approach to the exterior door (which is on the pull side) must comply with the landing requirements of USBC 1010.6. Handrails must comply with USBC 1010.8
- C7. Ventilation requirements must comply with the requirements of International Mechanical Code.
- C8. The applicant shall show compliance with Dimensional uniformity in the stairway (USBC1009.3.2).

Office of Historic Alexandria:

R1. Approve.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology Finding

1. The ice well was probably constructed for tavern use in 1792 by John Wise, who consolidated several properties and enlarged or replaced the existing structures on the lot. The property was leased to John Gadsby from 1796 until 1808, during which time the City Tavern and Hotel became well-known for its generous hospitality. The vast majority of the ground disturbance for the current construction project is located within previously disturbed areas. Nevertheless, to insure that important information about this significant Alexandria landmark is not lost as a result of construction, the following conditions are recommended:

Archaeology Recommendations

*1. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection/monitoring schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.

*2. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

*3. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

4. The statements in archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk "*" shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

VI. IMAGES:



Figure 1: Existing View of Site

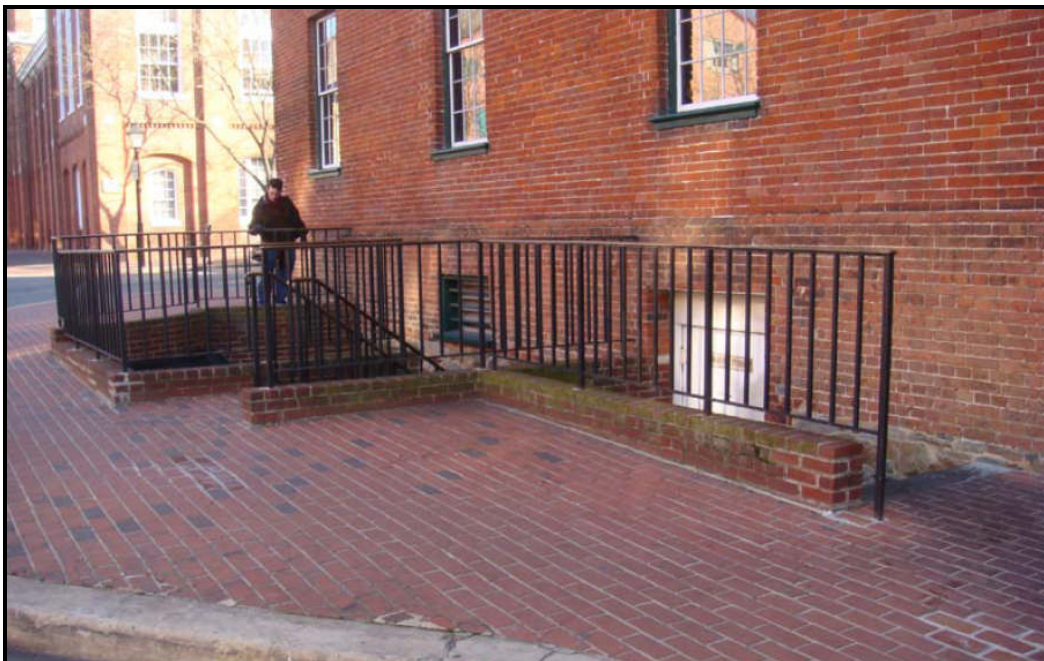


Figure 2: Existing View of Site



Figure 3: Interior of Ice Well



Figure 4: Existing Evening View

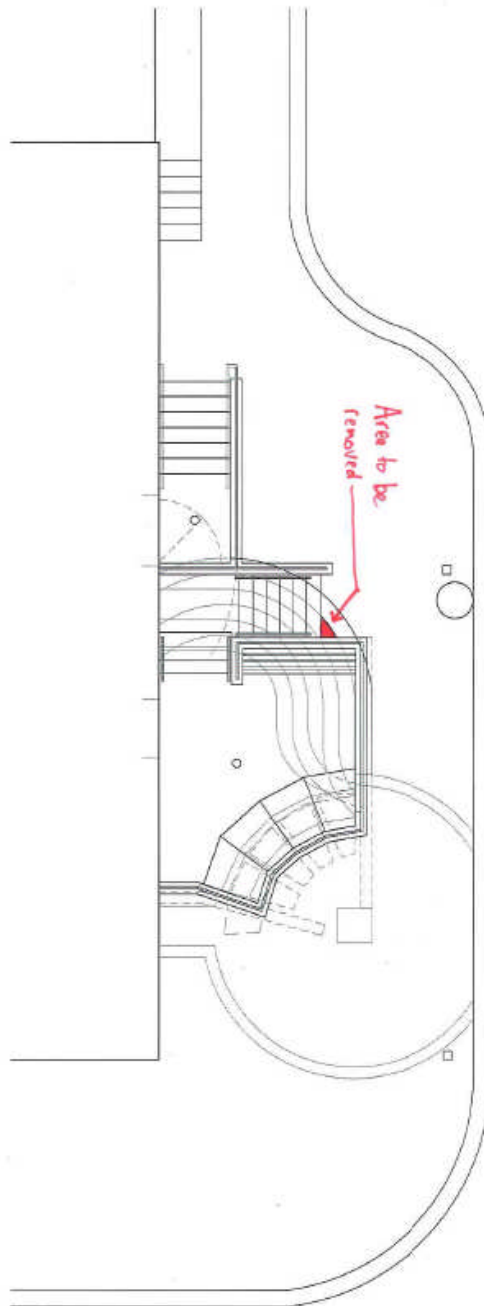
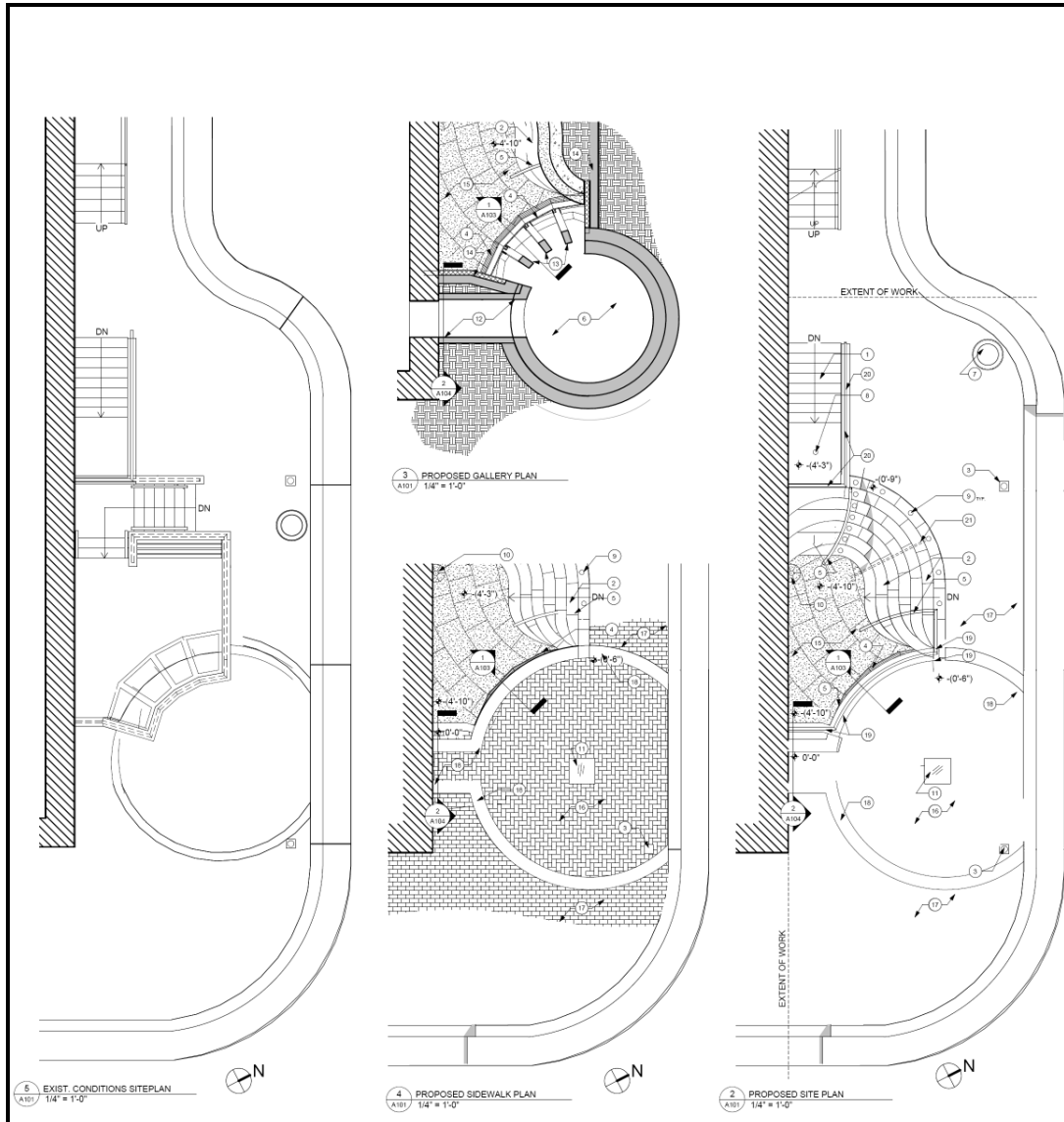


Figure 5: Archaeology Limits of Disturbance



KEYNOTES	
1	EXIST. SLATE & BRICK STAIRS TO REMAIN
2	STONE STAIRS
3	EXIST. STREET LAMP TO REMAIN.
4	TRENCH DRAIN.
5	BRASS/BRONZE HANDRAIL.
6	ICE WELL.
7	EXIST. TRASH CAN TO REMAIN
8	EXIST. AREA DRAIN TO REMAIN
9	FLUSH FLOOR MOUNTED SITE LIGHTING PER LIGHTING PLAN (12).
10	AREA DRAIN.
11	GLASS PAVING - ANTI-SUP SURFACE.
12	EXIST. WELL ACCESS BELOW GRADE.
13	EXIST. CONC. RISBS
14	EXIST. CONC. RETAINING WALL TO REMAIN
15	STONE PAVING.
16	NEW HERRINGBONE BRICK PAVEMENT PER SIDEWALK PLAN 4/A101
17	EXIST. BRICK PAVING TO REMAIN.
18	12" WIDE STONE BAND.
19	NEW METAL GUARDRAIL TO MATCH EXISTING.
20	EXISTING METAL GUARDRAIL & MASONRY CURB TO REMAIN.
21	HANDRAIL - ONLY IF REQUIRED BY CODE.

Figure 6: Site Plans

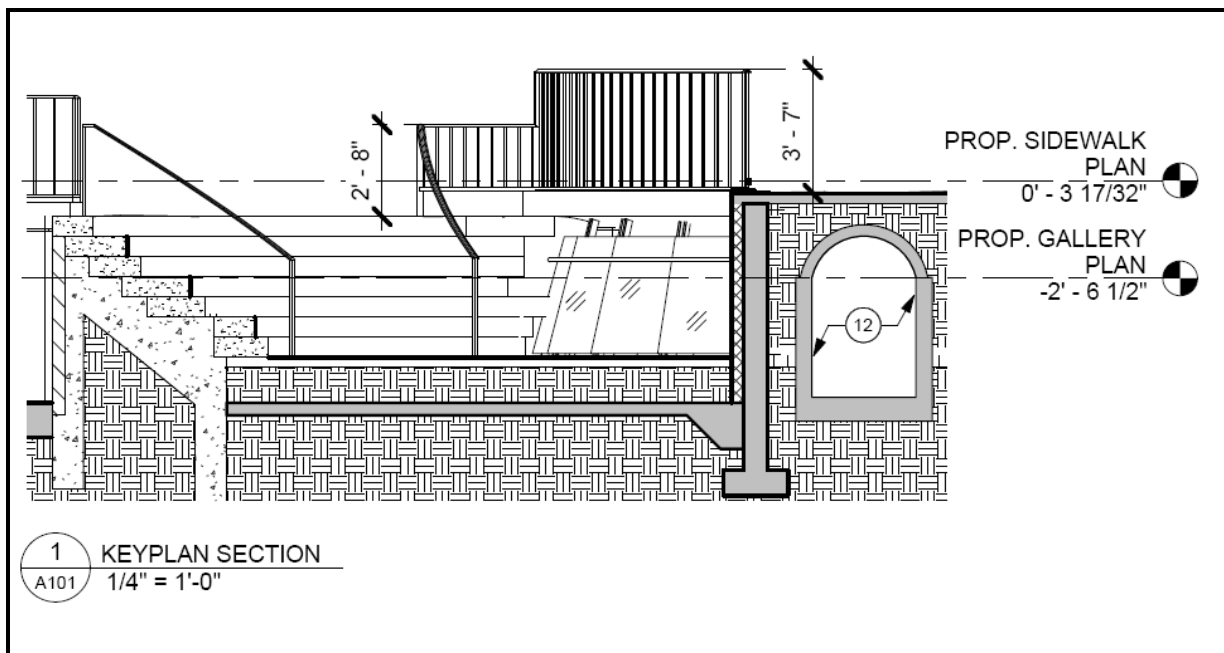


Figure 7: Section

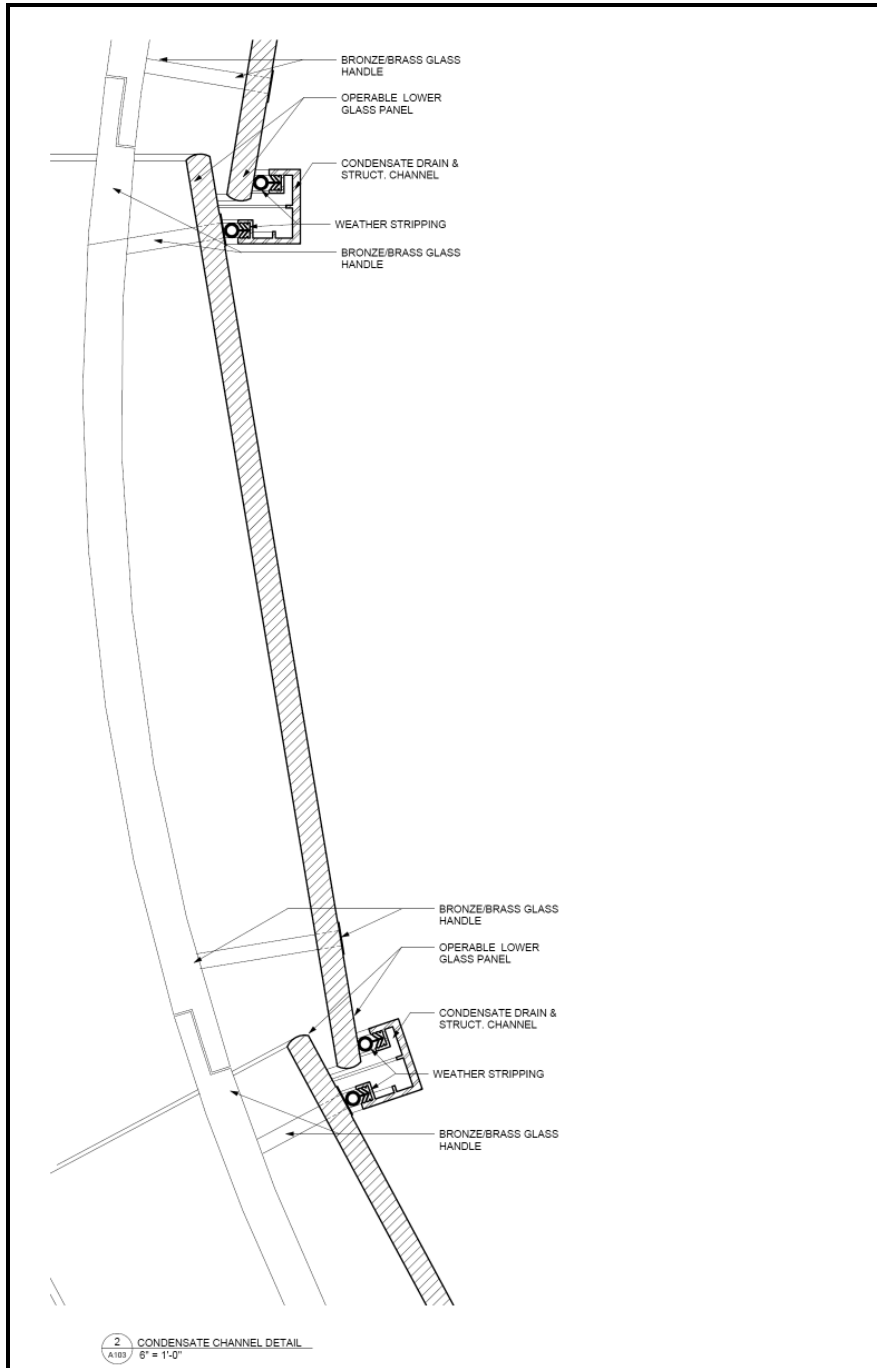


Figure 9: Glass Detail

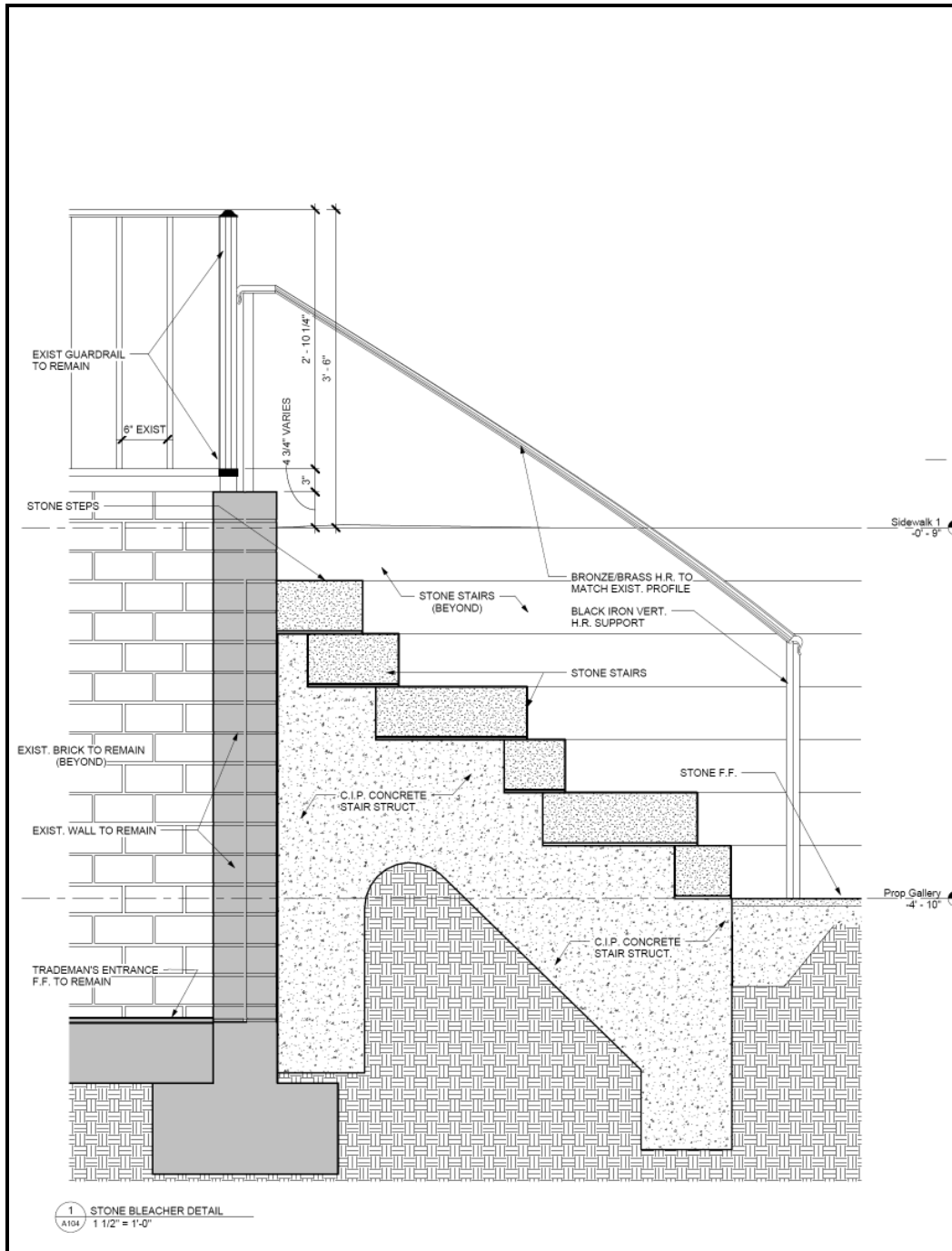


Figure 10: Staircase Detail

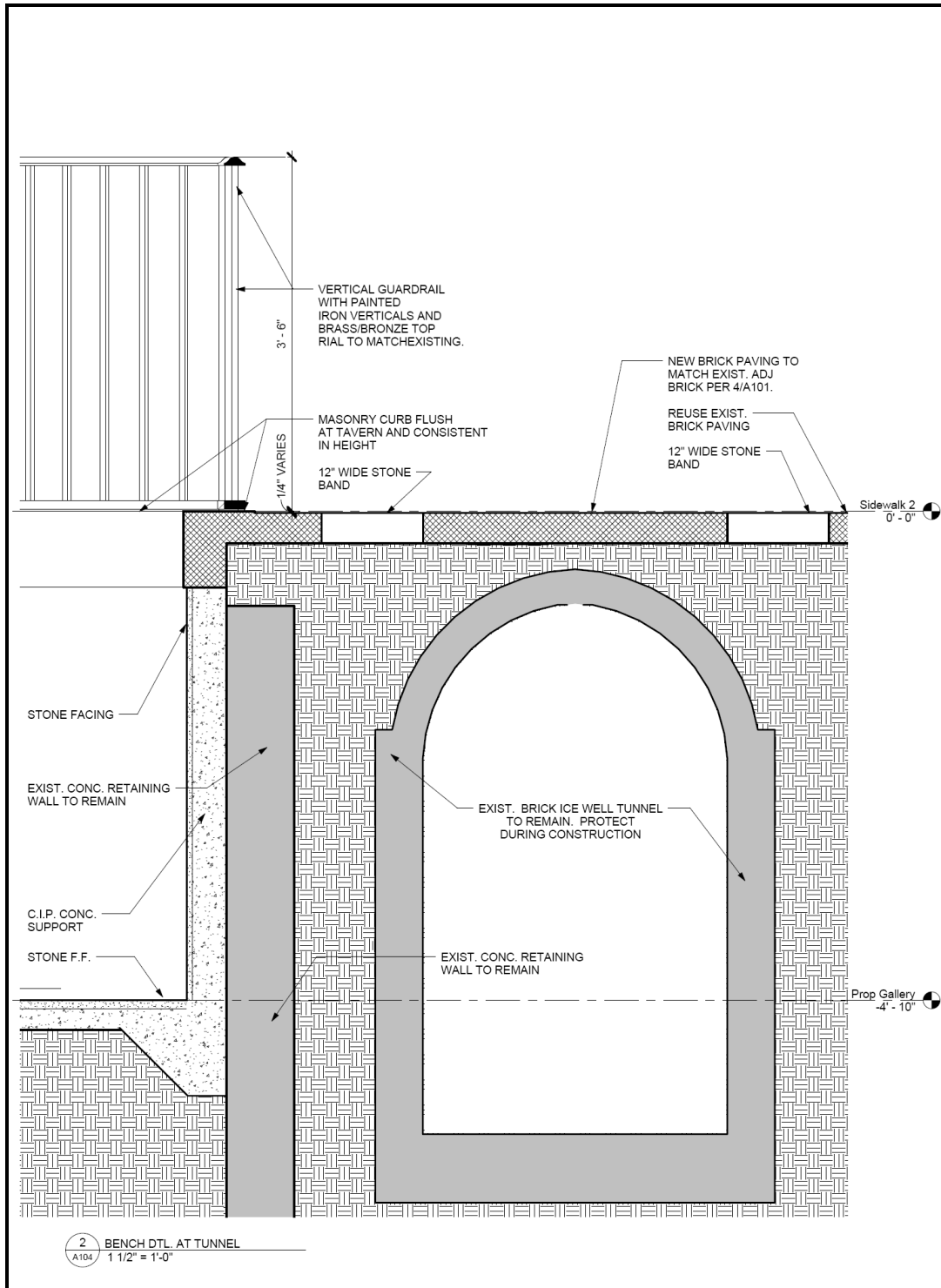


Figure 11: Well Cross Section



Figure 12: Existing Condition



Figure 13: Proposed June Scheme



Figure 14: Existing Condition



Figure 15: Proposed June Scheme