

Docket Item # 1
BAR CASE #2010-0218

BAR Meeting
September 1, 2010

ISSUE: Alterations and Waiver of Vision Clearance

APPLICANT: Lisa Collis (Gregg Bleam, Agent)

LOCATION: 505 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application and the Waiver of Vision Clearance, as submitted.

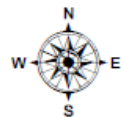
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****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, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2010-0218

09/01/2010



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Vision Clearance for the installation of a free-standing garden wall supporting a raised bronze sculpture in the north courtyard at 505 South Lee Street.

The garden wall is constructed of a concrete form with its street elevation faced with brick and the interior, garden elevation detailed with bronze sculptural panels (see plans pages 8 & 9). The panels will be lit by (5) five ground level, 8 Watt, LED luminaries positioned in front of the bronze façade of the sculptural wall 2'-6" O.C. (see attached photometric plan page 10). The overall height is 6 feet 4 inches. The width is 13 feet.

The proposed structure will be located at the rear of an existing heavily landscaped formal garden, inside the 7 foot high perimeter wall and parallel to Wilkes Street. Due to the varying street/courtyard grade differentials, the structure will extend approximately 2'4" above the existing brick wall. However, during leaf season it will barely be visible from either South Lee or Wilkes Streets due to the extremely dense deciduous and evergreen foliage. It will have a footing within the ground; however it will be detached from any other building or structure on the subject property, and may be disassembled and removed in the future, if desired.

II. HISTORY:

The original structure appears to have been constructed c 1802, as the tax records for the property show a frame house on the site. An advertisement for sale of the property in 1812 indicates it was a "good two-story framed dwelling house." The house is significant historically for its association with the Hunter family whose shipyard operated on the Potomac between Wilkes and Wolfe Streets, and for its association with the Burke family (Ethelyn Cox, Historic Alexandria, p95). The house was "modernized" in the late 19th century by the addition of a mansard roof.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company did not map this area until 1902; examination of these maps indicates that the house and flounder outbuilding were present on the site at that time. The house is identified as three-stories (Mansard-roof addition). The house and outbuilding remained unchanged up to the 1957 update of the Sanborn maps; the garage located off Wilkes Street, and the existing one-story porch on the north wall of the historic residence post-date this map.

Alterations and additions to this building were made by two of the original restoration architects for Colonial Williamsburg, Milton Grigg and Walter Macomber. Grigg designed alterations to the house including the entryway at the north side in 1964; Macomber designed the garage in 1969.

Previous Approvals:

7/15/1998 (BAR Case #98-0086)	Pergola installation on south side of the lot
9/2/1998 (BAR #98-107)	Alterations to Porch
10/1/1997 (BAR Case #97-0180)	Third floor addition - south side
5/2/1990 (BAR#90-68)	Two-story addition - south side

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed garden wall sculpture complies with Zoning Ordinance requirements if the BAR grants the Waiver of the Vision Clearance.

The Design Guidelines state that “garden walls within the district were generally constructed of masonry and provide visual barriers. New walls should be sympathetic to the existing built environment and appropriate in materials, design and scale. Furthermore, the walls of brick are generally appropriate throughout the historic districts.”

The Board commonly reviews and approves requests for garden structures such items as fences, walls, arbors, and trellises within the historic districts. This garden wall sculpture is unique for the Board as generally garden art is smaller in scale and does not require footings. This proposed sculpture resembles garden art which is found more commonly in formal modern landscaped gardens.

In Staff’s opinion, the garden sculpture, while somewhat modern in context, meets the requirements of the Design Guidelines. The sculptural wall will be completely free-standing within the boundaries of the existing brick walls and not affixed to any existing historic resources on the subject property. However, due to the differences in grade, 2’4” of the sculptural wall will rise above the height of the existing brick wall. Although significant existing foliage will block the view of the new sculptural wall, the Board has made it a policy not take into consideration foliage when making their decision on a proposal. As such, the rear face of the wall will be fabricated of brick to complement the existing perimeter wall and the surrounding streetscape.

The design plan also includes a lighting component. As the attached photometric plan illustrates, the owners and their design team have carefully chosen a lighting program which highlights only the sculpture so to not generate any light spillage into the surrounding neighbor’s property. Per the photometric analysis, a light value of one (1) footcandle¹ was measured seven (7’) feet away from the light source at grade and fifteen (15’) feet above the light source into existing foliage. The lights will only be operational when the owners are enjoying the garden. Staff believes that this design is appropriate and compatible with the surrounding streetscape and also enables the

¹ **1 candle** will produce **1 lumen per sq foot**, at a centre distance of **1 foot**. This is a **foot candle**.

owner to individualize their property without negatively impacting the existing house's historic fabric.

Waiver of Vision Clearance

Staff has no objection to the Waiver of Vision Clearance, per Section 7-800 of the Zoning Ordinance, and notes that the sightlines already blocked by the existing brick wall will not be altered with the proposal. Additionally, the sculptural wall will be setback from the existing brick perimeter wall and due to existing landscaping will be minimally visible, if at all visible from the public right-of-way.

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of the sculptural wall and a Waiver of the Vision Clearance.

STAFF:

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning and Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration:

No Comments Received.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES):

No Comments Received.

V. IMAGES

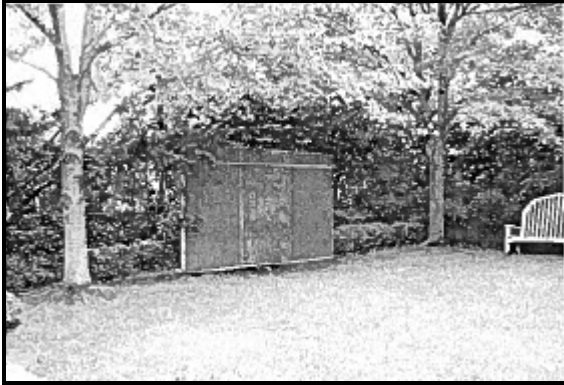


Figure 1. View from Inside Courtyard

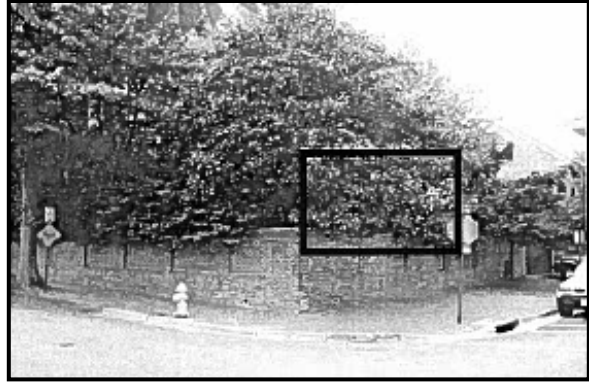


Figure 2. View at Corner of Wilkes and South Lee

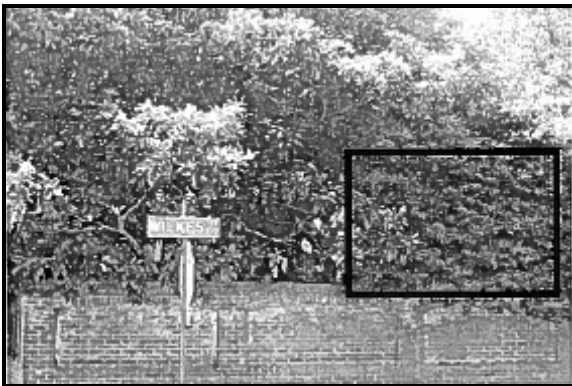


Figure 3. View from Wilkes Street



Figure 4. View from Wikes Street Gate Entrance

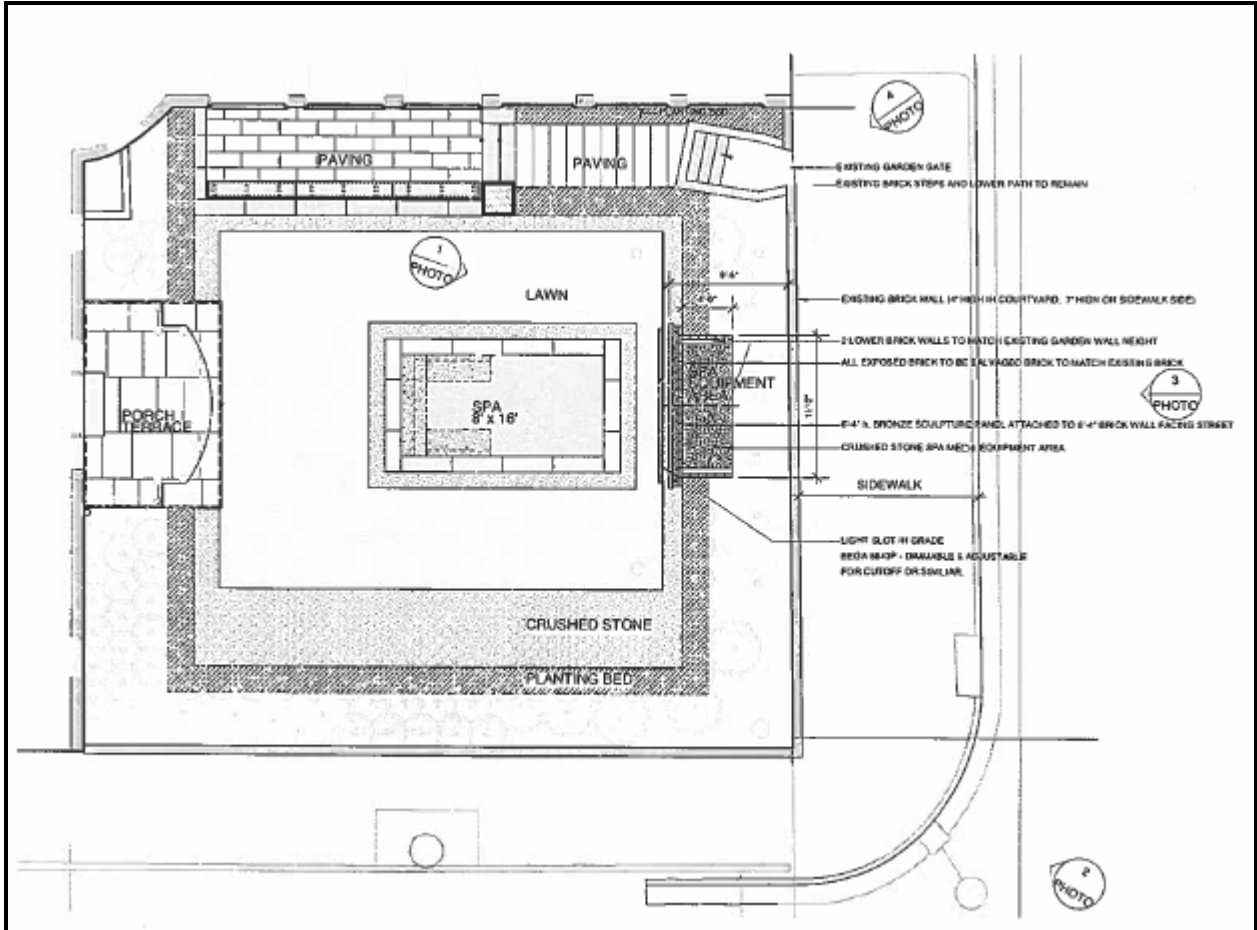


Figure 5. Site Plan

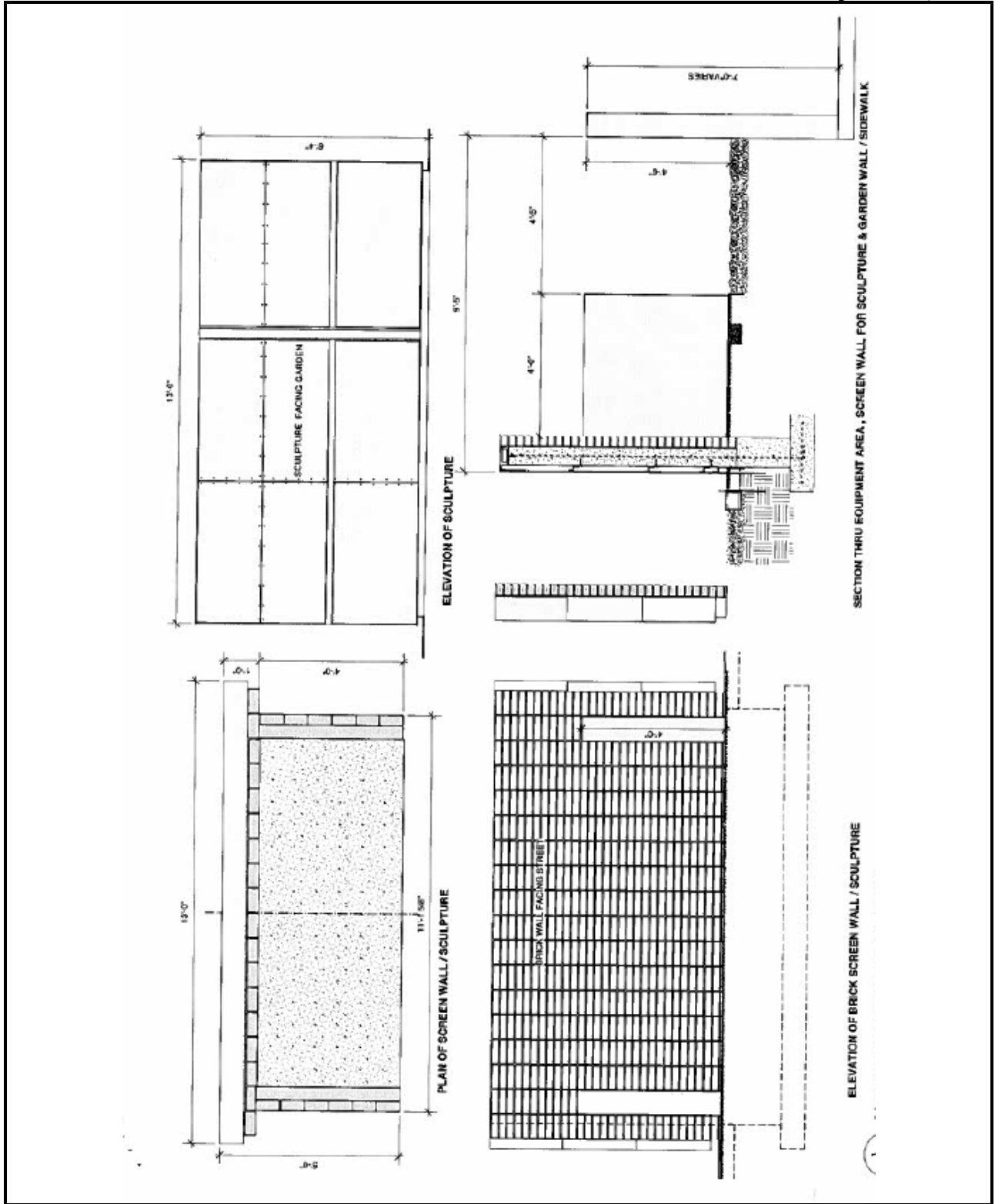
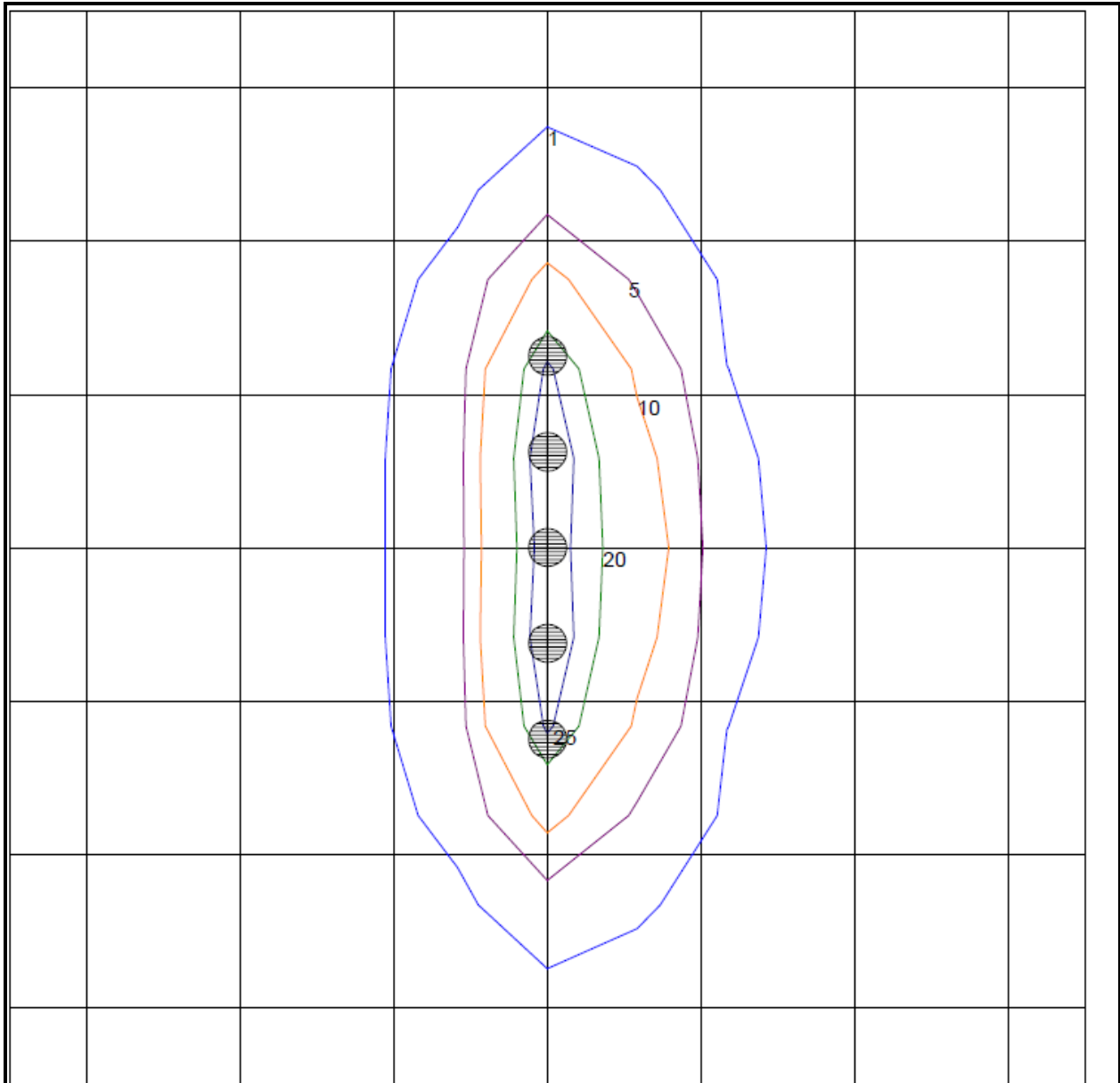


Figure 6. Elevation Plans



B-K LIGHTING, INC. REVISED: 02/02/10
NS-LED-e23-MFL-13; AR-LED-TR-e23-MFL-13-C;
AR-LED-RM-e23-MFL-13-C; DS-LED-e23-MFL-13;
RM-LED-e23-MFL-13-C; SN-LED-e23-MFL-13-C;
ST-LED-e23-MFL-13-C; SF-LED-e23-MFL-13-C;
TF-LED-e23-MFL-13-C; WS-LED-e23-MFL-13;
AW-LED-e23-MFL-13;
SW-LED-e23-MFL-13; VS-LED-e23-MFL-13;

Horizontal Footcandles
Scale: 1 Inch = 4 Ft.
Light Loss Factor = 1.00
Total Lumens Per Luminaire = -3 (3) Lamps
Mounting Height = 6.50 Ft
Maximum Calculated Value = 30.21 Fc
Arrangement: Specify_Location(s)

Figure 7. Photometric Illustration

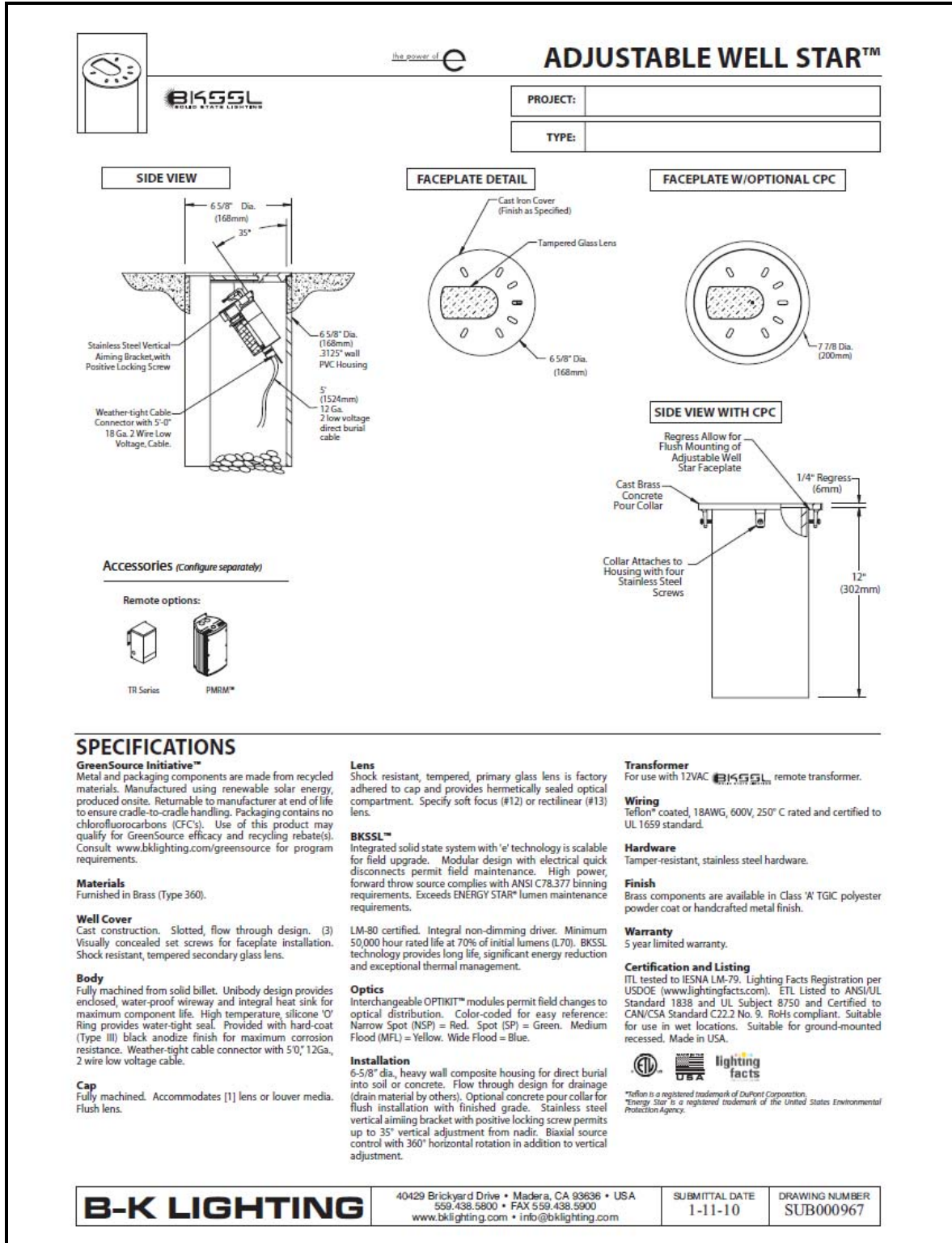


Figure 8. Proposed light fixture