



## CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Zoning Board of Adjustment  
 BOA Agenda Item #2  
 April 7, 2016  
 BZZ-7598

### LAND USE APPLICATION SUMMARY

*Property Location:* 3548 Bryant Avenue South  
*Project Name:* Watercourse Counseling Center  
*Prepared By:* Janelle Widmeier, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-3156  
*Applicant:* Watercourse Counseling Center  
*Project Contact:* Glen Olsen  
*Request:* To expand a counseling center.  
*Required Applications:*

<b>Variance</b>	To reduce the minimum interior side yard requirement adjacent to the north lot line from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a walkway and from 5 feet to 3 feet to allow a refuse storage area.
<b>Variance</b>	To reduce the minimum interior side yard requirement adjacent to the south lot line from 7 feet to 0 feet to allow a building addition including a canopy and landing and from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a plaza with bicycle parking.
<b>Variance</b>	To reduce the minimum rear yard requirement adjacent to the west lot line from 7 feet to 0 feet to allow a building addition.
<b>Variance</b>	To reduce the minimum parking requirement from 4 spaces to 0 spaces.

### SITE DATA

<b>Existing Zoning</b>	CI Neighborhood Commercial District
<b>Lot Area</b>	3,779 square feet
<b>Ward(s)</b>	10
<b>Neighborhood(s)</b>	CARAG
<b>Designated Future Land Use</b>	Mixed Use
<b>Land Use Features</b>	Community Corridor (Bryant Avenue South) and Commercial Node (Bryant Avenue and 36 <sup>th</sup> Street West)
<b>Small Area Plan(s)</b>	Not applicable

<b>Date Application Deemed Complete</b>	March 14, 2016	<b>Date Extension Letter Sent</b>	Not applicable
<b>End of 60-Day Decision Period</b>	May 13, 2016	<b>End of 120-Day Decision Period</b>	Not applicable

## BACKGROUND

**SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE.** The existing two-story building located on the subject property was originally constructed as a single-family dwelling. A garage is also located at the southwest corner of the property. It is accessed from Bryant Avenue because the site does not have alley access. The property was rezoned in 1977 to allow for nonresidential use of the property. Watercourse Counseling Center has occupied the property since 2000.

**SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD.** There is a mix of uses in the immediate area, including low- to high-density residential and commercial uses. Commercial uses are located on all four corners of the Bryant Avenue/36<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. A 3-story, multiple family dwelling is located on the adjacent property to the north. A mixed use building is located on the adjacent property to the south. Like the subject property, the original structure was built for a dwelling. This property was also rezoned to allow for nonresidential use. Storefront additions were added to the sides of the dwelling adjacent to Bryant Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Street. A dwelling is the legal occupancy of the part of the structure adjacent to the subject site. However, records indicate that the dwelling has not been occupied in a while. The adjacent property to the west has split zoning. The part of the property adjacent to the subject site is zoned R2B. The split zoned property is under the same ownership as the adjacent corner property. The detached garage is used for nonresidential purposes.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION.** The applicant is proposing to construct a one-story, 928 square foot addition at the southwest corner of the property. The existing garage would be demolished to allow for the construction of the addition. A new main entrance that is accessible would be included. The existing entrance in a front porch would be removed. The proposal involves various other site improvements, including landscaping.

The applicant is requesting several yard variances to allow unpermitted obstructions in required yards. Permitted obstructions in side and rear yards for nonresidential uses are limited to fences and retaining walls retaining natural grade. With the adjacent residential uses and residential zoning, yard requirements apply to each side of the property.

- *North side:* A minimum 5 foot wide interior side yard is required for obstructions other than the building. The applicant is requesting reductions to the yard requirement to 0 feet to allow a three foot wide walkway and to 3 feet to allow a refuse storage area and enclosure.
- *South side:* A minimum 7 foot wide interior side yard is required for the building addition because the overall height of the building is two stories. The proposed setback is 0 feet for the addition. The canopy and landing for the new front entrance would be setback 4 feet from the side lot line. A minimum 5 foot wide interior side yard is required for other obstructions. The applicant is requesting reductions to the yard requirement to 0 feet for a plaza area that includes bicycle parking.
- *West side:* A minimum 7 foot wide rear yard is required for the building addition because the overall height of the building is two stories. The proposed setback is 0 feet for the addition.

The minimum parking requirement for a counseling center is one space for every 500 square feet of gross floor area in excess of 4,000 square feet, but not less than four spaces. With the removal of the garage, no parking would remain on-site. The applicant is requesting a variance to reduce the minimum requirement.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS.** As of writing this report, no correspondence from the neighborhood group was received. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Board of Adjustment for consideration.

## ANALYSIS

### VARIANCE

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard requirement adjacent to the north lot line from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a walkway and from 5 feet to 3 feet to allow a refuse storage area, based on the following findings:

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance due to circumstances unique to the property. The small size of the property in addition to yard requirements that apply to all four sides of the property limits options where access to the rear of the property and a refuse storage area can be located. On the north side of the property, the existing building is set back less than 5 feet from the north lot line. With the construction of the addition, egress from the rear of the building would not be possible without crossing an adjacent property. Placement of the refuse storage area also presents challenges. Relocating the refuse storage area to the south side of or to the front of the building would result in higher visibility from the public street and main entrance. Although these alternate options are not desirable, CPED staff is concerned about adverse impacts of the proposed location at the northeast corner of the building. Even though the proposed storage area would be screened as required by the zoning code, it would be visible from the street and from the dwelling units on the three levels of the adjacent building. The adjacent dwellings have windows that face the side lot line. With only 11 feet separating the adjacent building from the storage area, odors are of concern as well. A location behind the adjacent dwelling is preferred to lessen the impact of these issues.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

In general, yard controls are established to provide for the orderly development and use of land and to minimize conflicts among land uses by regulating the dimension and use of yards in order to provide adequate light, air, open space and separation of uses. The applicant has indicated that there is already a pathway that exists on the north side of the building. The proposed walkway would continue to allow egress from the rear of the property. The high visibility of the refuse storage area/enclosure from the street and adjacent dwellings and the potential for odor issues with the close proximity, staff is concerned about the proposed location. Provided the refuse storage area and enclosure is located in the rear of the property behind the adjacent building to the north, both requests would be reasonable and consistent with the intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

With the adoption of the staff recommendation, the granting of the variance would not affect the character of the area or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and would not be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the public or those utilizing the property. The proposed walkway would continue to allow egress from the rear of the property. The high visibility of the proposed refuse storage area/enclosure from the street and adjacent dwellings and the potential for odor issues with the close proximity to those dwellings, staff is concerned about the proposed location. To lessen the impact of these issues, staff is recommending that the refuse storage area and enclosure be located in the rear of the property behind the adjacent building to the north.

## VARIANCE

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard requirement adjacent to the south lot line from 7 feet to 0 feet to allow a building addition including a canopy and landing and from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a plaza with bicycle parking., based on the following findings:

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance due to circumstances unique to the property. The small size of the property in addition to yard requirements that apply to all four sides of the property limits options where the building could be expanded. Although a dwelling is a legally recognized use on the adjacent property, a rental license has not been obtained since 2012 indicating a vacancy. If no dwelling were located on the adjacent property, no setback would be required because it is commercially zoned. Only 5 feet of the addition, the canopy and the landing would be located adjacent to the residential part of the adjacent structure. The plaza would be located in front of the residential part of the adjacent structure. Regardless of where a residential use is located, the requirement applies to the full length of the property.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

In general, yard controls are established to provide for the orderly development and use of land and to minimize conflicts among land uses by regulating the dimension and use of yards in order to provide adequate light, air, open space and separation of uses. The proposed building addition would be only 928 square feet in area and one-story in height. The adjacent property to the south is commercially zoned and currently only occupied by nonresidential uses. Locating the addition to the rear of the property allows the residential character of the existing building to be retained, with one exception. Because a new entrance is proposed as part of the addition, the existing entrance on the front porch would be removed. This is the traditional location for an entrance and removal of the front door would be an adverse effect on traditional urban design. Although it would not need to be used as a primary entrance, staff is recommending that the existing entrance be retained. The small plaza is proposed to emphasize the location of the new entrance; however, additional separation between the bicycle parking and the adjacent property could be provided by locating the bicycle parking on the north side of the plaza. Therefore staff is only recommending approval of a 2.5 foot side yard reduction to allow the plaza. The proposal would have minimal impacts on the adjacent properties access to light, air and open space. With the adoption of the staff recommendation, the request is reasonable and consistent with the intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

With the adoption of the staff recommendation, the granting of the variance would not affect the character of the area or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. The proposed building addition would be only 928 square feet in area and one-story in height. The adjacent property to the south is commercially zoned and currently only occupied by nonresidential uses. Locating the addition to the rear of the property allows the residential character of the existing building to be retained, with one exception. Because a new entrance is proposed as part of the addition, the existing entrance on the front porch would be removed. This is the traditional location for an entrance and removal of the front door would be an adverse effect on traditional urban design. Although it would not need to be used as a primary entrance, staff is recommending that the existing entrance be retained. The small plaza is proposed to emphasize the location of the new entrance; however, additional separation between the bicycle parking and the adjacent property could be provided by locating the bicycle parking on the north side of the plaza. Therefore staff is only recommending approval of a 2.5 foot side yard reduction to allow the plaza. The proposal would have minimal impacts on the adjacent properties access to light, air and open space. The design of the addition would be compatible with the existing structure. Lap siding is proposed to match the existing lap siding. If granted, the proposed variance would not be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the public or those utilizing the property provided the proposed addition is constructed to current building codes.

## VARIANCE

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to reduce the minimum rear yard requirement adjacent to the west lot line from 7 feet to 0 feet to allow a building addition, based on the following findings:

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance due to circumstances unique to the property. The small size of the property in addition to yard requirements that apply to all four sides of the property limits options where the building could be expanded. The adjacent property to the west has split zoning and is residentially zoned adjacent to the subject property. However, the property is used for nonresidential purposes.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

In general, yard controls are established to provide for the orderly development and use of land and to minimize conflicts among land uses by regulating the dimension and use of yards in order to provide adequate light, air, open space and separation of uses. The proposed addition would be located next to a detached garage used for nonresidential purposes. The proposal would have no impacts on the adjacent properties access to light, air and open space. The request is reasonable and consistent with the intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

The granting of the variance would not affect the character of the area or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. The proposed addition would be located next to a detached garage used for nonresidential purposes. The proposal would have no impacts on the adjacent properties access to light, air and open space. The design of the addition would be compatible with the existing structure. Lap siding is proposed to match the existing lap siding. If granted, the proposed variance would not be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the public or those utilizing the property provided the proposed addition are constructed to current building codes.

## VARIANCE

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to reduce the minimum parking requirement from 4 spaces to 0 spaces based on the following findings:

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

The minimum parking requirement for the proposed use is 4 spaces. Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance due to circumstances unique to the property. Because of its small size, the area of the site not occupied by the existing building cannot accommodate any parking spaces that would comply with the minimum size, drive aisle, maneuvering and yard requirements. Any proposal for on-site parking would require additional variances.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

The purpose of parking regulations is to provide for the parking needs of uses and structures and to enhance the compatibility between parking areas and their surroundings, and to regulate the number, design, maintenance, use and location of off-street parking and loading spaces and the driveways and aisles that provide access and maneuvering space. The regulations promote flexibility and recognize that excessive off-street parking conflicts with the city's policies related to transportation, land use, urban design, and sustainability. The applicant has indicated that the parking demand for this use is very low. Off-street parking demand is further reduced because Bryant Avenue has frequent transit service. Four on-site bicycle spaces are also proposed. The existing driveway would be closed once the addition is constructed. This would result in one more on-street parking space. The request is reasonable.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

The applicant has indicated that the parking demand for this use is very low. Off-street parking demand is further reduced because Bryant Avenue has frequent transit service. Four on-site bicycle spaces are also proposed. The existing driveway would be closed once the addition is constructed. This would result in one more on-street parking space. Additional landscaping improvements would be completed to reduce impervious surface and improve area adjacent to the street making it more pedestrian friendly. With these improvements, granting of the variance should not increase congestion in the area

or effect surrounding properties. It would also not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Zoning Board of Adjustment adopt staff findings for the applications by Watercourse Counseling Center for the property located at 3548 Bryant Avenue South:

### **A. Variance to reduce the minimum north side yard requirement.**

Recommended motion: **Approve** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard requirement adjacent to the north lot line from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a walkway and a refuse storage area and enclosure, subject to the following conditions:

1. The refuse storage area and enclosure shall be located behind the adjacent dwelling to the north.
2. Approval of the final site, elevation and floor plans by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.
3. All site improvements shall be completed by April 7, 2018, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

### **B. Variance to reduce the minimum south side yard requirement.**

Recommended motion: **Approve** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard requirement adjacent to the south lot line from 7 feet to 0 feet to allow a building addition including a canopy and landing and from 5 feet to 2.5 feet to allow a plaza with bicycle parking, subject to the following conditions:

1. The existing front door shall be retained in its current location, but may have restricted access.
2. Approval of the final site, elevation and floor plans by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.
3. All site improvements shall be completed by April 7, 2018, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

### **C. Variance to reduce the minimum west rear yard requirement.**

Recommended motion: **Approve** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum rear yard requirement adjacent to the west lot line from 7 feet to 0 feet to allow a building addition, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the final site, elevation and floor plans by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.
2. All site improvements shall be completed by April 7, 2018, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

### **D. Variance to reduce the minimum parking requirement.**

Recommended motion: **Approve** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum parking requirement from 4 spaces to 0 spaces, subject to the following conditions:

1. At least 4 bicycle parking spaces shall be provided that comply with the standards of section 541.280 of the zoning code.
2. Approval of the final site, elevation and floor plans by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.

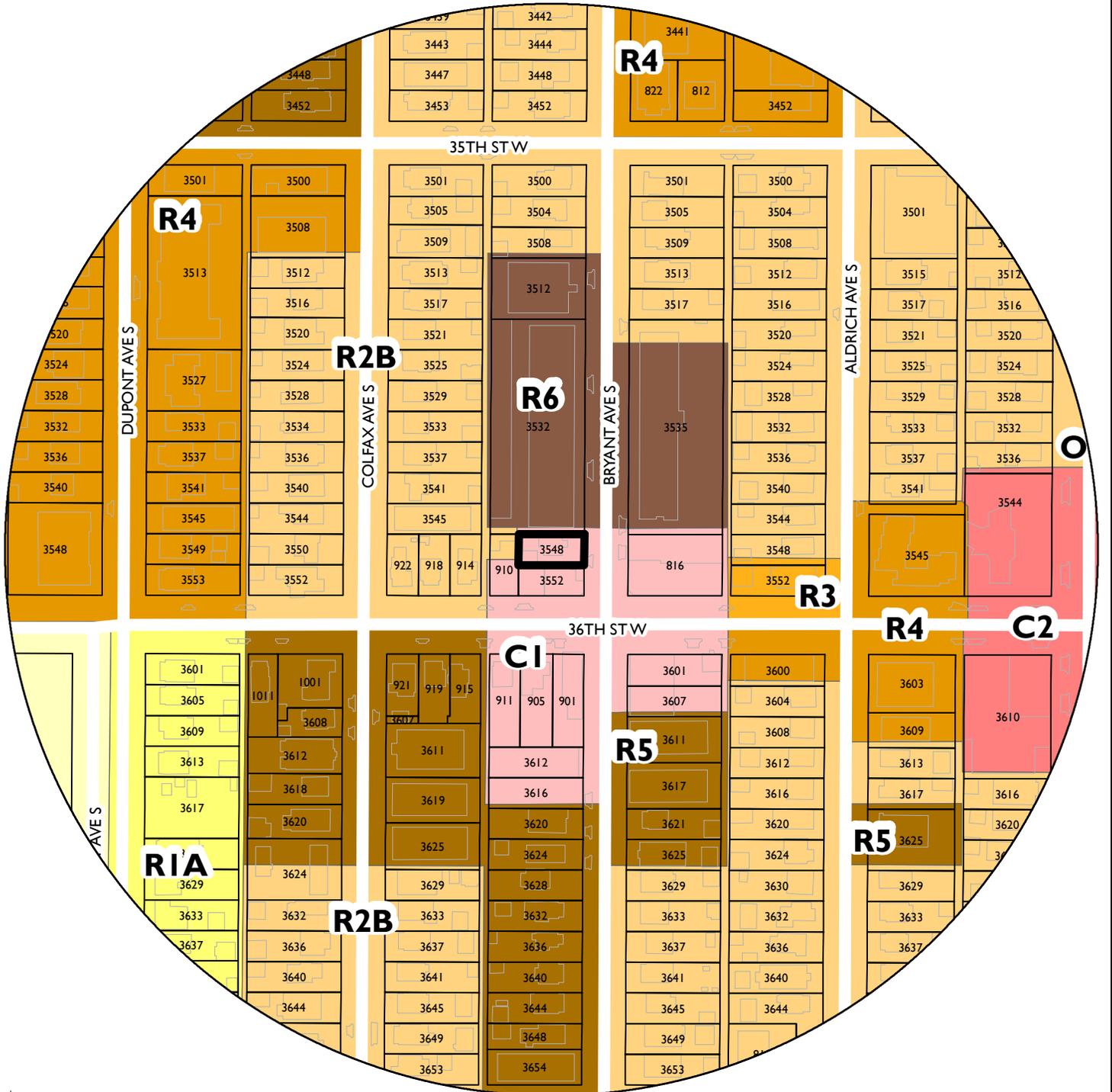
3. All site improvements shall be completed by April 7, 2018, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Written description and findings submitted by applicant
2. Zoning map
3. Survey
4. Site plan
5. Site plan showing yard requirements
6. Floor and building elevation plans
7. Photos

NAME OF APPLICANT

WARD



PROPERTY ADDRESS  
**3548 Bryant Avenue South**

FILE NUMBER  
**BZZ-7598**



**Statement of Proposed Use and Description of Project**  
Watercourse Counseling Center  
3548 Bryant Avenue South

**Project Purpose**

To increase program capacity for this community mental health organization through capital improvements to the existing building at 3548 Bryant Avenue South.

**Proposal Summary**

Watercourse Counseling Center is a 501(c)(3) organization established in 1999 to address community mental health needs. We offer mental health services at our clinics in South and North Minneapolis, at nine school-based clinics in Minneapolis Public Schools, and through other locations in the community.

Watercourse Counseling Center mission is to strengthen our community by supporting people in the journey toward emotional wellbeing. We strive to improve community wellness by creating equitable access to mental health services, bringing services into the community, building partnerships to address community issues impacted by mental health, and mentoring mental health professionals and others through community outreach and collaboration.

Since 2000, we have housed clinical services and our administrative functions at the location on Bryant Avenue. At the time, the building was adequately sized for our programs and staff, but we have since grown and need to add additional space. After exploring other options, our board determined the cost to renovate our existing location to be much lower than the options to sell and purchase or rent at a new location. Renovation will allow us to add 930 sq. ft. of accessible space (our current main floor is only 660 sq. ft. and not fully accessible). Further, the new space will free up our second floor for offices, greatly improving efficiency for administrative staff. Watercourse seeks two variances to accommodate the proposed addition.

The existing garage on the property will be removed and replaced with an expanded one-story office addition. The existing concrete slab in front of the addition will be removed and replaced with an accessible walk, rain garden and plantings fronting a new main entrance to the building. One variance that will be required is to permit the new building to abut the neighboring property to the West and South without setbacks. This is a continuation of the existing use and will allow the elimination of a fire safety code issue between our property and the neighboring storage building that is on the lot line abutting the WCC property. Requested setback variances will also include bike parking and part of an entry plaza to encroach on the South side yard setback and the replacement of the existing North side sidewalk and new trash enclosure to encroach on the required setback to the North. The other variance that will be required is a variance to waive the requirement for four off street parking spaces.

When completed, the property will have as much green space as before, the same setbacks as exist now, and the addition that will replace the old garage will have a green roof instead of shingles. The yard space is currently being used by the Southwest Seniors Center for a gardening program, which will continue.

Watercourse Counseling Center  
3548 Bryant Avenue South  
Variance Statement, Property Line Setbacks

#### Rear (West) Property Line

The Watercourse Counseling Center plans call for the one story addition to their existing building to abut the west property line without a setback. This is consistent with the property's C-1 zoning and a variance would not normally be required but for the neighboring property's split zoning with the South half, fronting on 36<sup>th</sup> Street, zoned commercial and the North half, located between the applicant's property and the alley, zoned residential. This situation creates the requirement for a variance. The buildings on both sides of this property line abut one another without separation or a fire wall. We propose to remove our existing outbuilding replacing it with a new one-story office addition to our main building. The result will be a continuation of an existing condition with one notable exception, that being that the two buildings on that property line will henceforth have a code compliant fire wall.

#### Side (South) Property Line

The property South of the WCC property is zoned C-1 as is the subject property and no setback would be required by the City but for the condition on the neighboring property where there is an existing building, now vacant and uninhabitable as a dwelling, which was built as a house and has in the past been occupied as such. Code requires, therefore that we observe a 7 foot setback even though the neighboring property does not. The alternative is to obtain a setback variance. Less than five feet of the proposed new building overlaps the neighboring building so light and ventilation would not be affected and the new building will have a code compliant fire wall along that line so fire safety is not a consideration either. WCC also proposes to have its' bicycle parking and a small portion of its proposed entry plaza in this side yard setback area. The goal is to have this bike parking and plaza near the front of the property.

#### Side (North) Property Line

There is a large apartment building to the North of the property. WCC's proposal is to replace the existing sidewalk located along that property line with a new walk. This walk provides access to an existing ingress/egress door at the side of the counseling center building and also provides the only access to the back yard not crossing neighboring property or going through the WCC building. Without this walk there would be no paved access to the side door and no access to the back yard for the Southwest Seniors gardening project. WCC has been advised that to replace this walk will require a variance. Also requested is a variance to place a trash enclosure as shown on the plans partially in this setback area. The only other place for this trash enclosure would be along side the entry walk to the new main entrance to the building. WCC would prefer not to locate this enclosure there as it would block views of the entry whereas in the proposed location to the North of the existing building it would not be in plain view from

the street nor from the neighboring building as it is several feet lower than the yard to the North and back from the front of that building. WCC is an office use and while it generates some recyclable paper there is very little trash so odor is not an issue. If this location is an issue WCC would relocate the trash enclosure away from any setback area on its final plans.

- (1) It would be difficult, impractical and unfair to require code compliance with the setback requirement in this situation because the neighboring property does not comply either and a noncompliant condition would continue. Also, to not allow a variance would force a decrease in the size of WCC's building addition rendering it infeasible or it would force the elimination of green space, which would be against the best interests of WCC, the public and force the elimination of the Southwest Senior Center gardening project. The neighboring property is partially vacant, and not in compliance with setback zoning codes. That property is likely to be redeveloped in the near future making WCC's compliance based on existing conditions unfair and not in the best interest of the public.
- (2) The property owner proposes to continue to use the property in a reasonable manner and operate as a community service provider adding accessible facilities to better serve their clients and staff. They are now and will continue to operate in a manner consistent with the ordinance and plan.
- (3) The proposed variance will not in any way change the character of the locality except to enhance it, make it more attractive and more functional. There will be no detrimental effects whatsoever affecting the general public or the neighboring property.

Watercourse Counseling Center  
3548 Bryant Avenue South  
Variance Statement  
Off Street Parking Requirement

The proposed WCC building and addition will have about 2300 square feet of space and therefore have a code mandated minimum required number of four off street parking spaces. WCC requests a variance to eliminate this requirement. Bryant Avenue is a bus line with stops on the corner of 36<sup>th</sup> St and Bryant. Some staff and clients use the bus reducing the need for dedicated parking. In addition, some staff bicycle to work and bike parking facilities will be provided to further reduce parking needs. WCC's parking demand is very small, in the daytime and intermittent. Two large apartment buildings, one next door to the North and one across the street create demand during the night but less on weekdays. These two uses for street parking are not in conflict. There has been no shortage of parking during WCC's hours of operation and this addition will not change that. By eliminating the existing driveway one additional street parking space will be created which we will be requesting the City post as reserved for handicapped. By eliminating the driveway WCC will be able to create additional green space and provide a plaza entrance with outdoor space for the community to enjoy.

- (1) It would not be practical to provide off street parking on this site as the only possible place for such would be in the front yard green space which would be ugly, eliminate green space and force a reduction of street parking in order to provide for access. The property is landlocked by neighbors on the other three sides.
- (2) The owner's proposed use of the property will not change and that use is consistent with the ordinance and plan.
- (3) The only changes to the character of the locality will be to improve it and this variance will not be detrimental to the general public or neighbors in any way.

## Landscaping Plans for 3548 Bryant Avenue South

Our property at 3548 Bryant has been used as a senior gardening project in cooperation with the Southwest Senior Center which is located just down the street from our office. A group of 5-8 active seniors has used our yard to grow edible food which is distributed in the summer to seniors at the center. Since our building expansion will reduce the amount of space available in the backyard for senior gardening, we will add space in front of the building to enhance the senior garden, to create a more welcoming entrance to the building, and to improve the view amenities in the neighborhood.

There are various types of landscaping areas defined on the landscape plan submitted with this application:

The courtyard in the back of the building will be maintained by our senior gardeners with seasonal vegetables, herbs and flowers in raised planting beds to create better gardening access. They have utilized planting structures for this garden to grow tomatoes, green beans, rhubarb, raspberries, cucumbers, carrots, and collard greens mixed with annuals and herbs.

On the north side of the building, the planting area between the walkway and house will be planted with ferns and hosta with open spaces for shade tolerant annuals.

The rain garden on the south side of the entrance area will be planted with a mix of native plants including joe pye weed, blue flag iris, native coneflowers, and sedges.

The larger planted area on the east foundation wall will be planted with three native shrubs near the foundation with the remainder of the beds planted with native grasses and flowers providing structure to the garden with space left open for the senior gardeners to plant annuals and vegetables. The garden bed on the east side of the property by the side walk will also utilize the same mix of perennials with space for additional annuals and vegetables.

The existing tree in front of the property will be saved and a fruit tree will be added along the north edge of the front lawn with a smaller fruiting tree or shrub added on the west end of the rain garden near the main entrance.

We are working with our senior gardeners and with a landscaping group to finalize the layout for the garden as we determine the balance between perennials, flowering annuals and edible plants.

The elimination of the driveway creates an opportunity to develop an entrance plaza with landscaping and open space for the enjoyment for staff, clients and the community.

## Widmeier, Janelle A.

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**From:** Glen Olsen <golseon@me.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 21, 2016 9:14 PM  
**To:** Widmeier, Janelle A.  
**Cc:** Martha Olsen  
**Subject:** Re: 3548 Bryant variances

Janelle, Thanks for your feedback relating to concerns expressed by the planning staff. We have considered these same questions and would like to outline the reasons why we prefer our proposed locations.

Two of the primary objectives of the design of this addition were to create a new accessible entrance to the building and to enhance the site by creating more visible landscaping to improve the appearance of our property in the neighborhood and add more functional gardening spaces that create a usable courtyard in front of the building for community use and maximize the amount of space that our senior gardeners have for their garden project. The two areas of concern you identified impact very directly on those objectives.

The area along the south wall of the existing Watercourse building has the best sunlight, is the best suited location for gardening activity and will be very visible and attractive for people coming to the building. The only alternative to our preferred locations for bike parking and recycling would be to move them to that area and would require that we pave over much of that prime growing space. The attractiveness and interest of the entry walk would be significantly diminished. That location is also more visible from the neighboring property than our proposed location for the bike rack and having to move both the recycling enclosure and the bike rack there would create a much less appealing view from the property to our south. The locations chosen for the bikes and recycling on our current plan are both on the north side of existing structures, are not highly visible from either our property or the neighboring properties and do not diminish the value of the green space that we will be installing to enhance the appearance of the property.

The proposed location of the bike rack shown on the plans is adjacent to the area the the property owners to our south keep their garbage and recycling containers. The proposed location for our recycling enclosure would be screened by the retaining wall located on the property to the north of us and would not be highly visible from the street or from that property. We would also consider additional plantings to allow the enclosure to blend in with the overall landscape design.

The storm door to the porch that is the existing entrance cannot be made accessible and to leave it in place would create confusion as to where the main building entrance is for visitors and clients. Plans for that porch are to make it into a children's therapy room to function together with an adjoining family counseling room. To have an exterior door in that children's room is a security issue. Should the use of the building change in the future it would be a very simple matter to put a door back in that spot.

Hopefully your report can include our response to your expressed concerns. Glen

On Mar 18, 2016, at 4:17 PM, Widmeier, Janelle A. <[Janelle.Widmeier@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Janelle.Widmeier@minneapolismn.gov)> wrote:

Hi Glen,

The feedback from the rest of the Planning staff was mostly supportive of the requested 3548 Bryant variances. However, there were some concerns. Alternative options that comply with the yard

requirements should be pursued instead of the proposed location of the bicycle parking and refuse storage area that are in close proximity to the adjacent residential uses. The other main concern was the removal of the existing front entrance, which is much more visible than the proposed entrance. Retaining the entrance is preferred for any future potential reuse of the building. Staff understood that the new entrance would become the principal entrance regardless of whether or not that entrance remained.

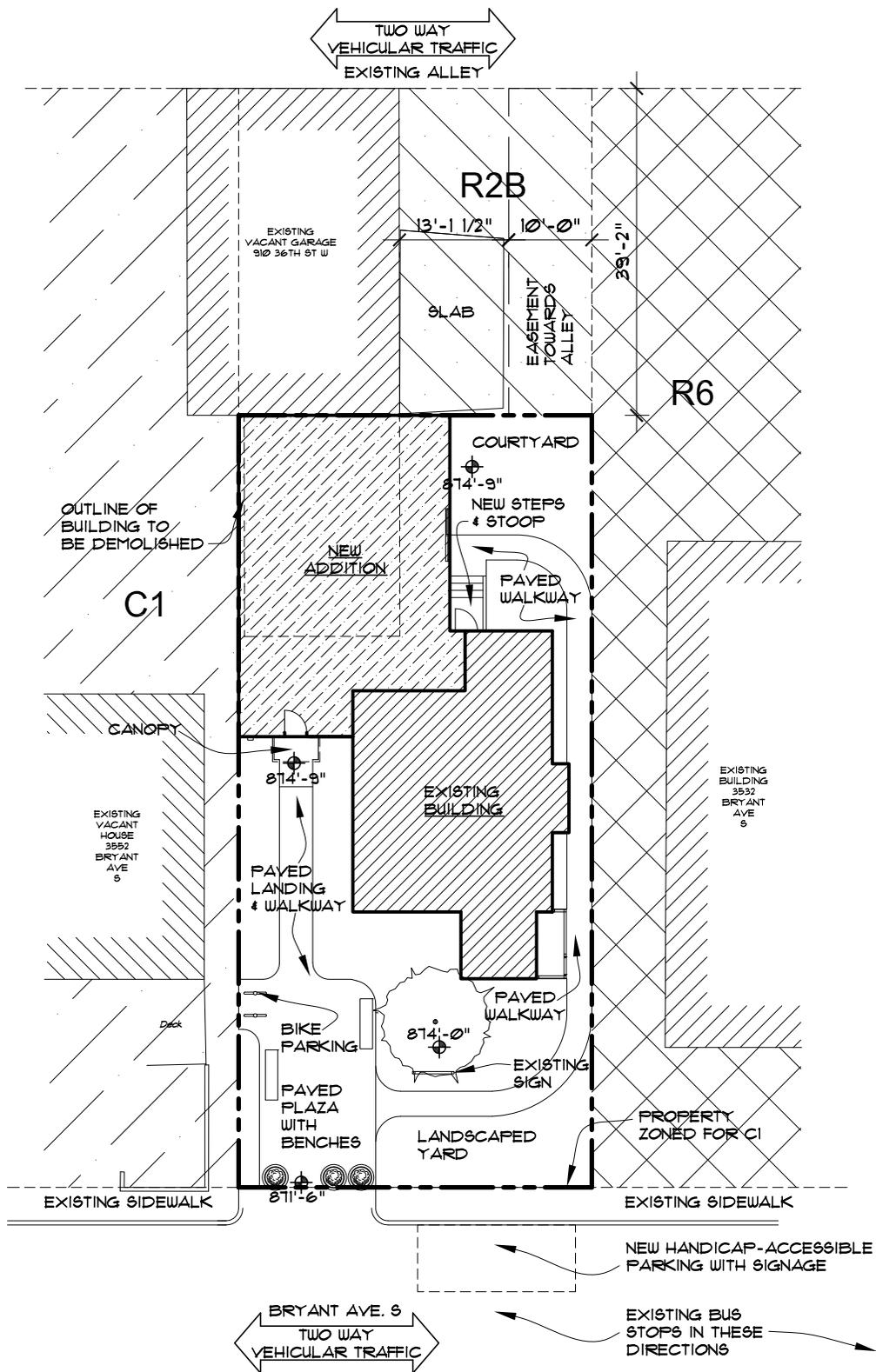
The final staff report/recommendation won't be available for a while, but I wanted to give you a heads-up that these concerns will be included in the report.

---

**Janelle Widmeier**  
*Senior City Planner*

**City of Minneapolis – Community Planning and Economic Development**  
250 4<sup>th</sup> Street South – Room 300  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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[janelle.widmeier@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:janelle.widmeier@minneapolismn.gov)  
[www.minneapolismn.gov/cped](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped)



## LOCATION PLAN

SCALE 1"=20'-0"

## IMPERVIOUS AREAS

EXISTING BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED	510 SQFT
EXISTING PAVED SURFACES REMOVED	1,050 SQFT
EXISTING BUILDING TO REMAIN	804 SQFT
PROPOSED ADDITION	928 SQFT
PROPOSED PAVED SURFACES	854 SQFT
PROPOSED GREEN ROOF AREA	504 SQFT

## WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER

March 2016

\* US 31.00.15

\* SW/KK/BE

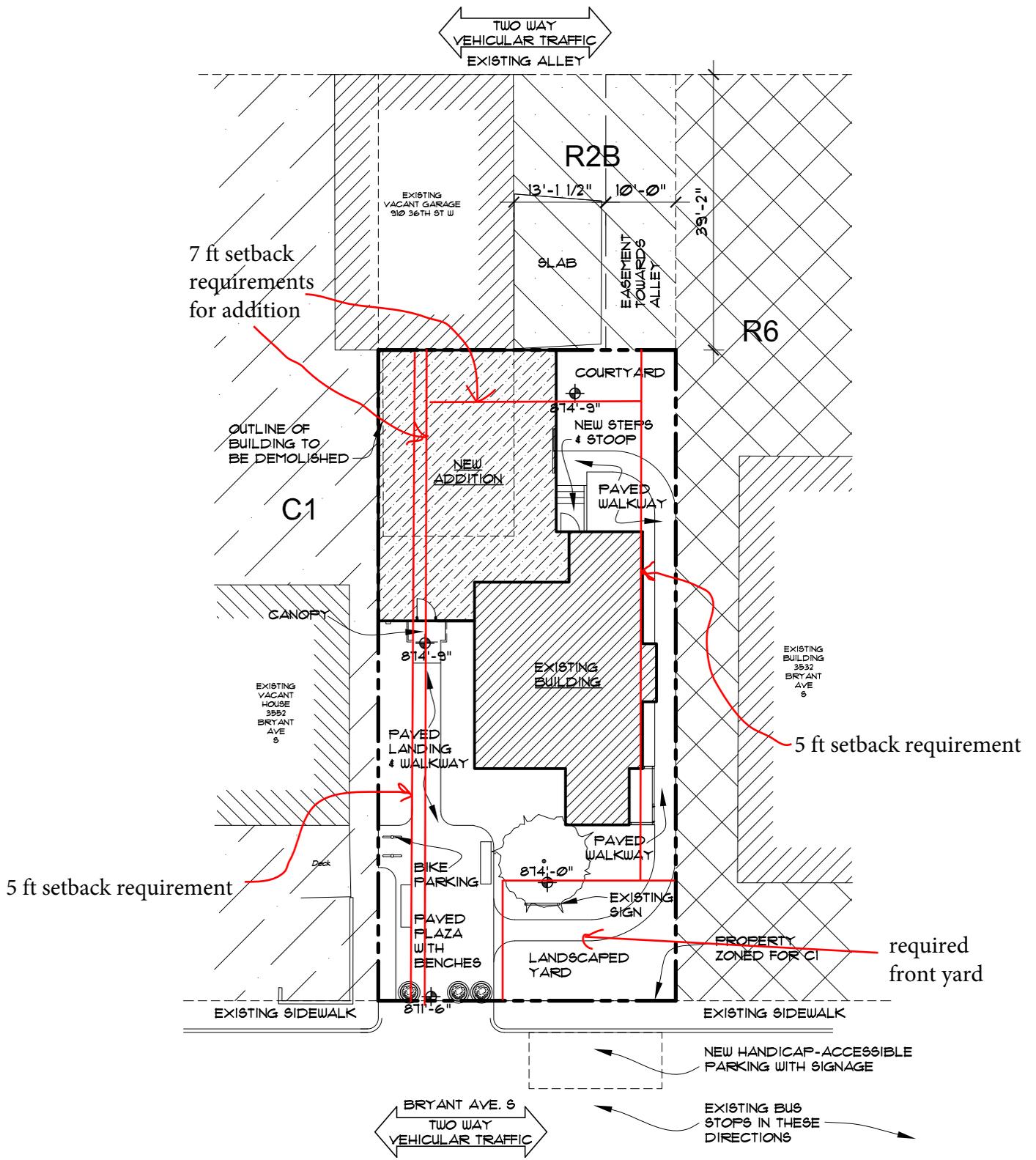


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**LOCATION PLAN**  
SCALE 1"=20'-0"

### IMPERVIOUS AREAS

EXISTING BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED	510 SQFT
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### WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER

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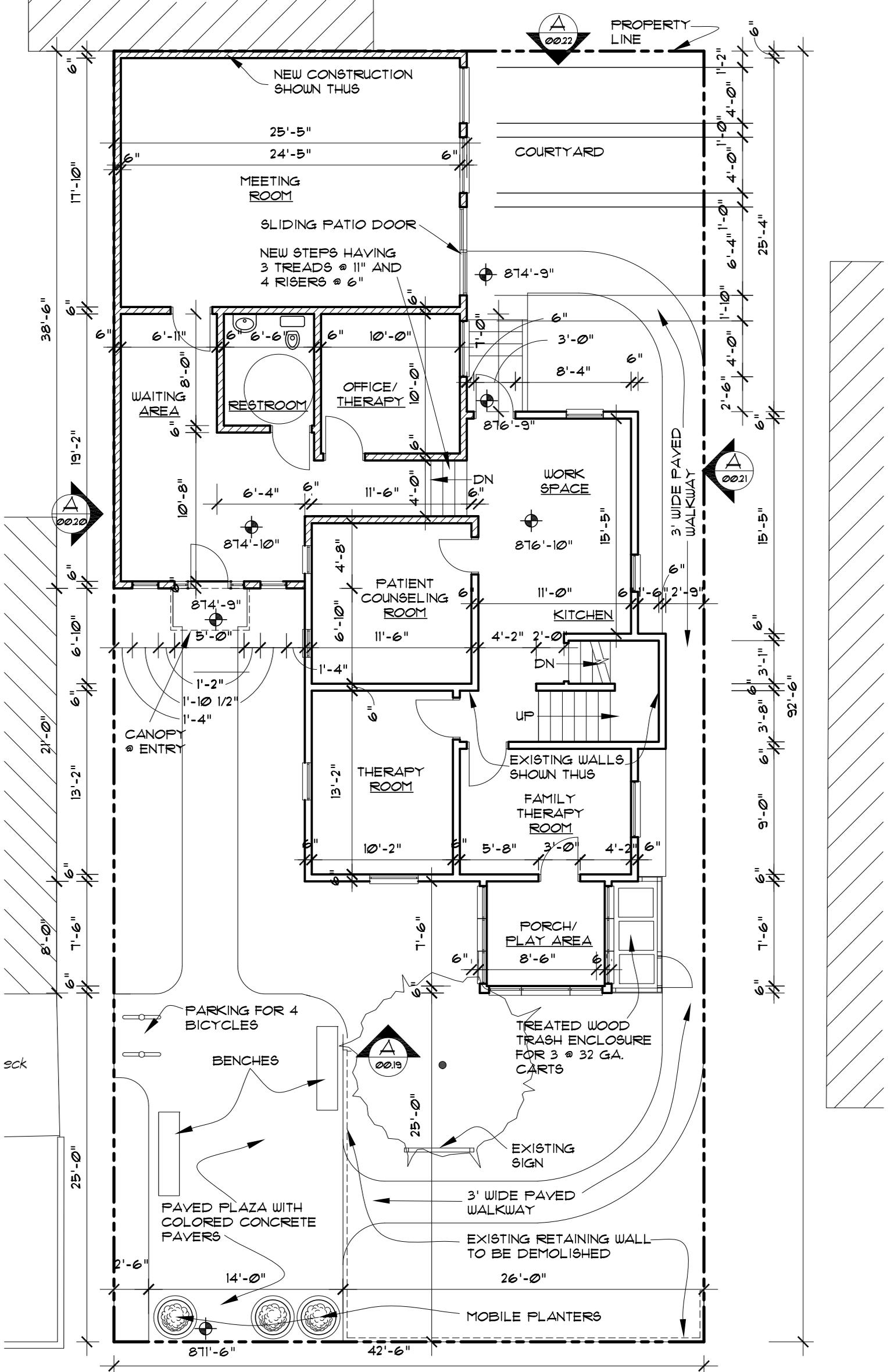
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**SITE PLAN &  
FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

**WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER**

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\* US 31.00.16

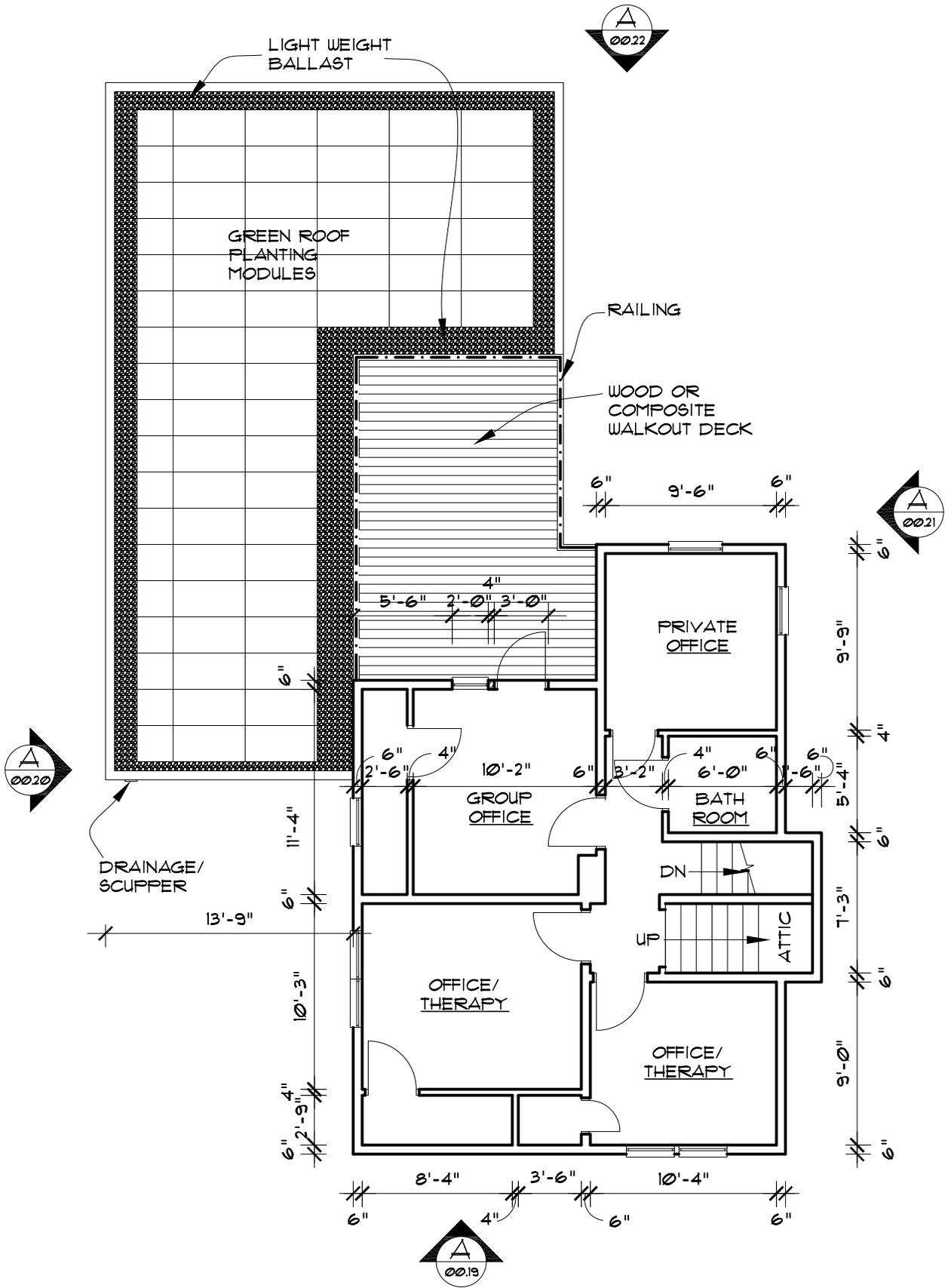
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**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

**WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER**

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\* US 31.00.17

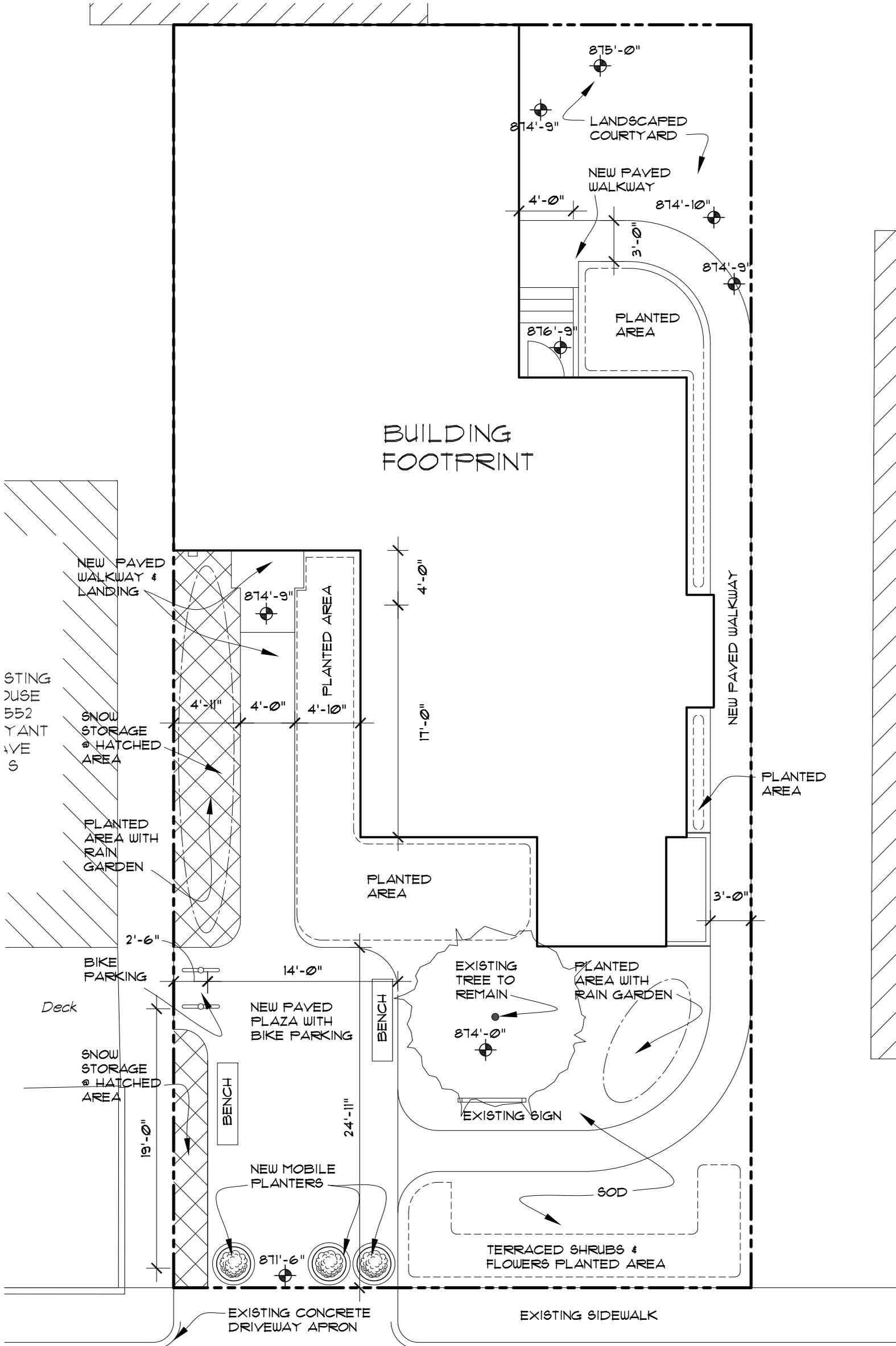
\* SW/KK/BE



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**LANDSCAPE PLAN**  
SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

**WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER**  
March 2016 \* US 31.00.18 \* SW/KK/BE

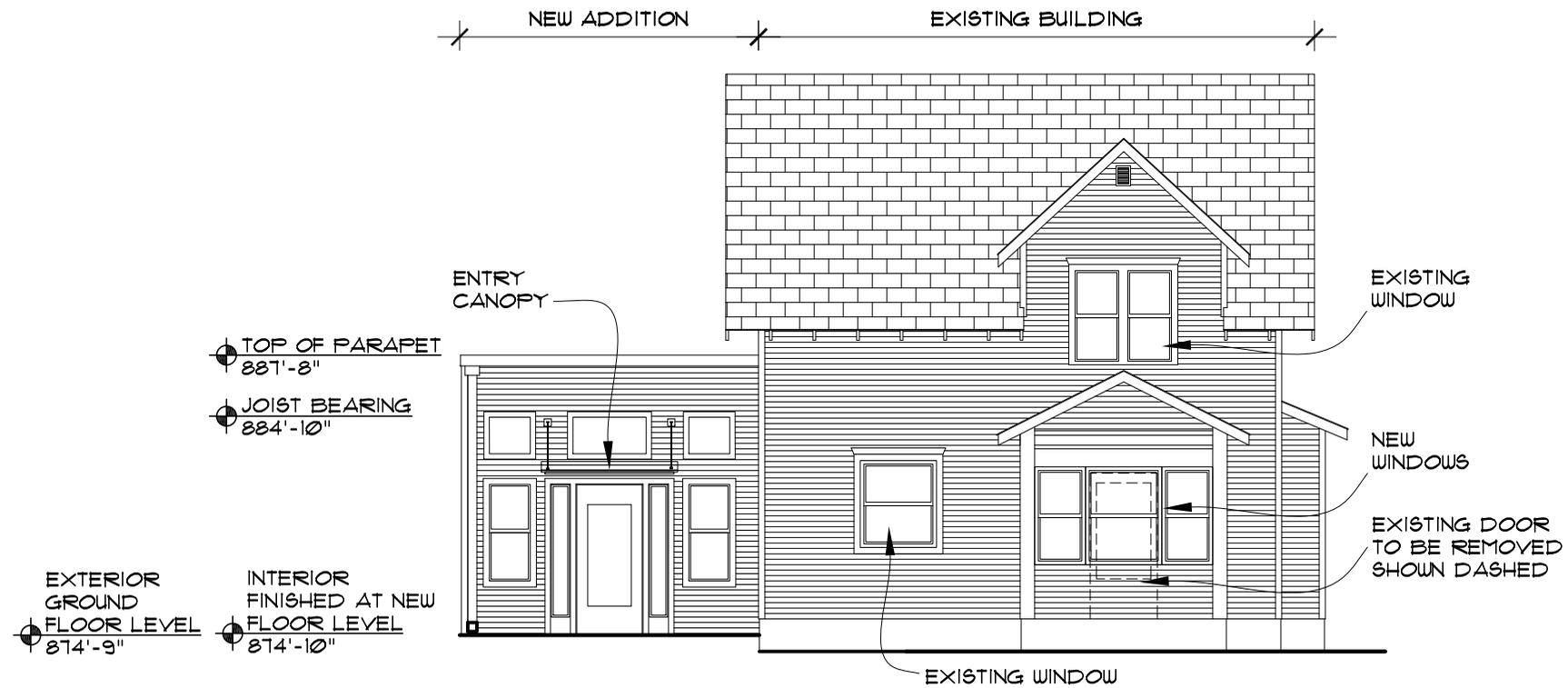


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**A/00.19 - ELEVATION**

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

**WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER**

March 2016

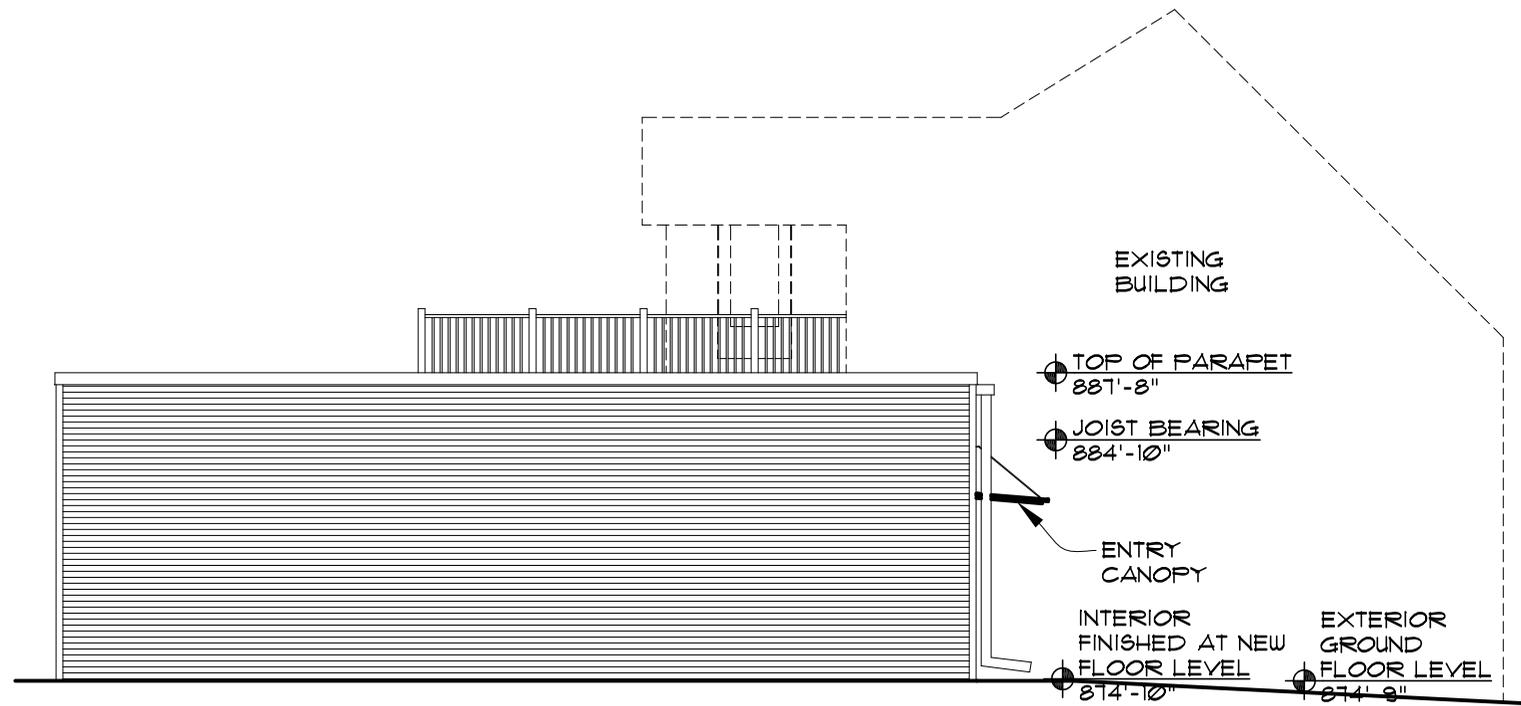
\* US 31.00.19

\* SW/KK/BE



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**A/00.20 - ELEVATION**  
SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

**WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER**

March 2016

\* US 31.00.20

\* SW/KK/BE

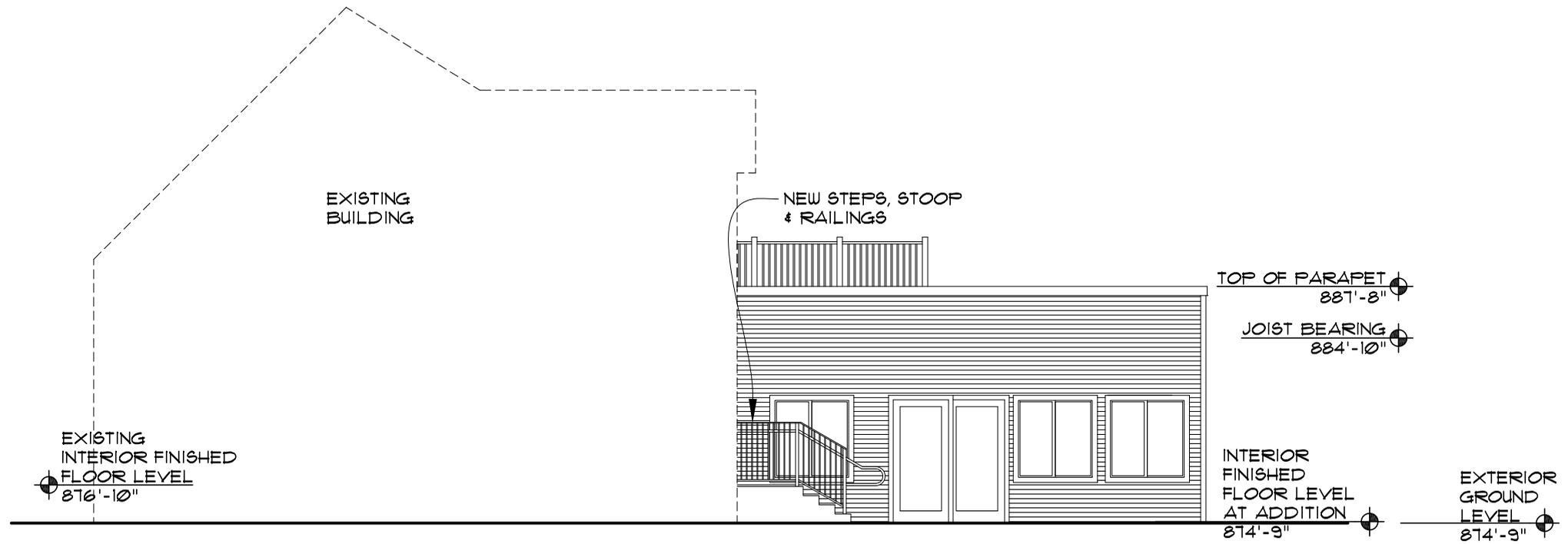


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**A/00.21 - ELEVATION**

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

**WATERCOURSE COUNSELING CENTER**

March 2016

\* US 31.00.21

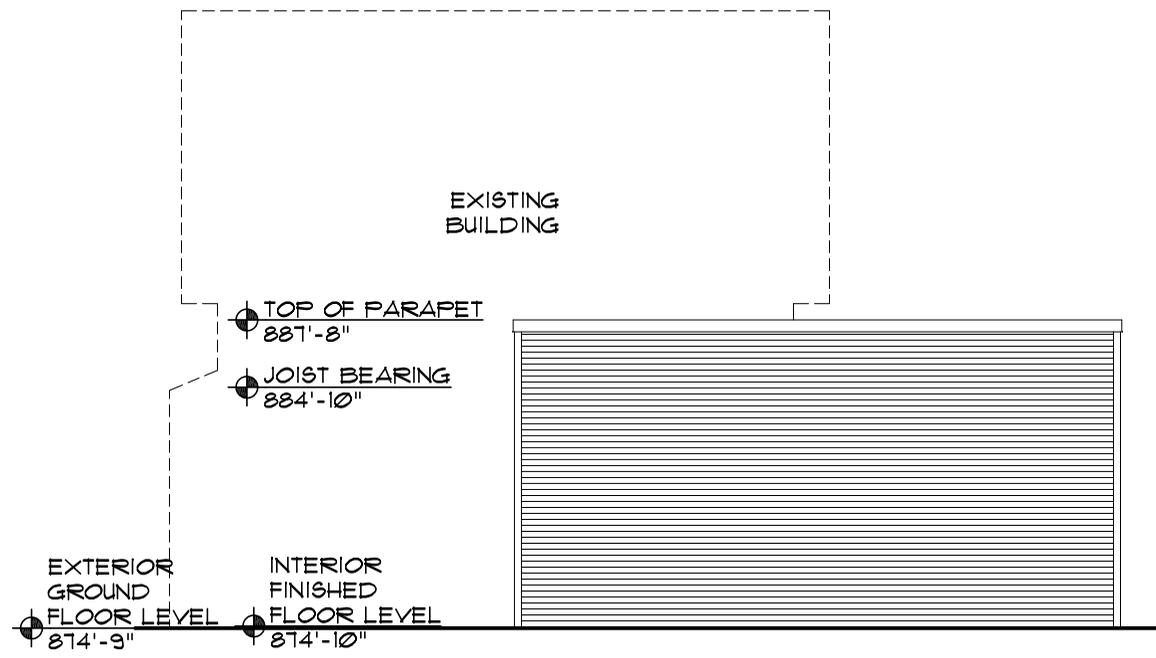
\* SW/KK/BE



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**A/00.22 - ELEVATION**  
 SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

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