

Williams-Dawe House



Community Meeting

SWSG, PC

June 18, 2025

Discussion Topics

History

Phases of
Construction

Original Materials
and Finishes

Preservation,
Restoration, or
Rehabilitation

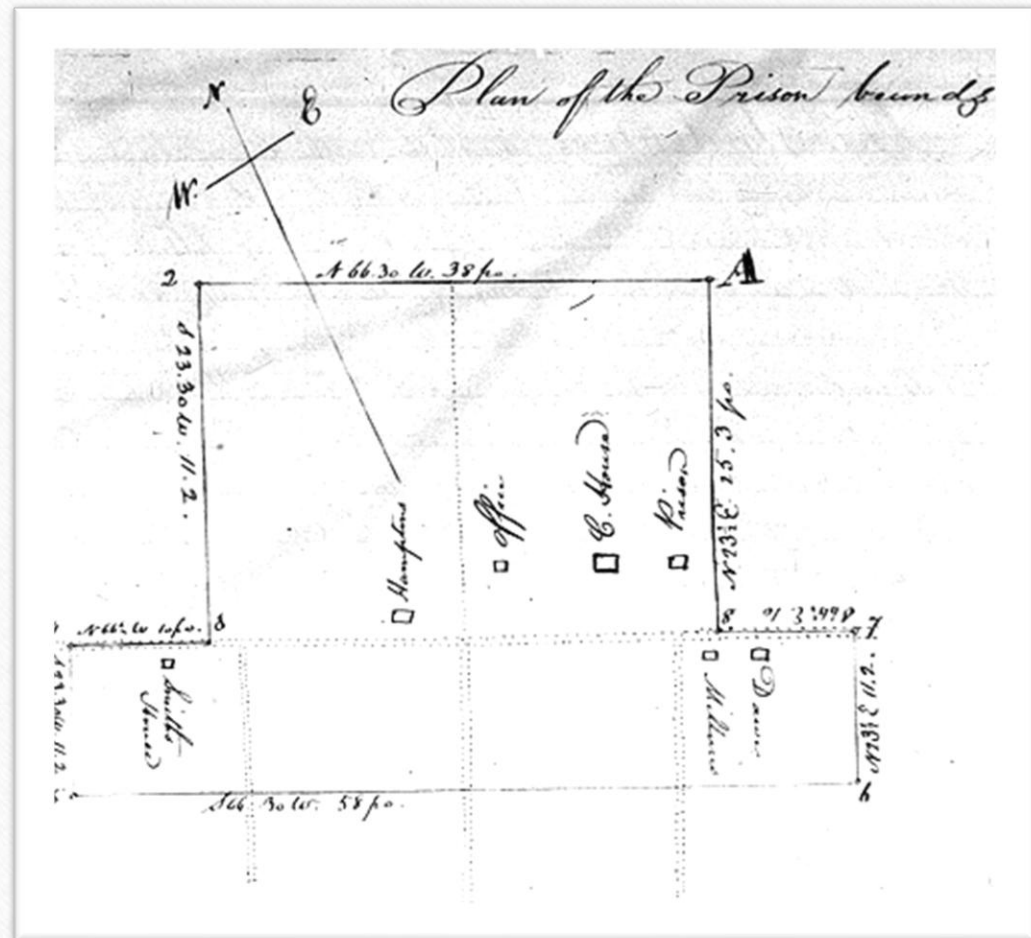
Site
Layout/Restroom
Options

Structural Issues



History

- Building constructed as a tavern for Philip D. Dawe, clerk of the court
- Tavern operated by his widowed sister, Jane Williams
- Dawe, his wife Patsey, Jane Williams, and her son Robert lived at the tavern.
- Enslaved servants likely worked here.



Construction Phases

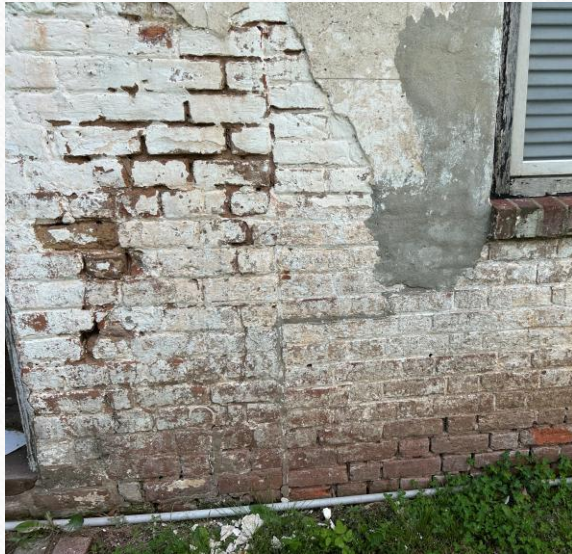
- Tavern was constructed in two main phases.
- Eastern side constructed ca. 1823
 - Front has common bond
 - Random rubble foundation
- Western addition constructed ca. 1827
 - Front has Flemish bond
 - Dressed, coursed stone foundation
- Two different builders

Philip D. Dawe's Tax Assessments in Brentsville, 1824-1827

Year	Building Value	Rental Value	Comment in Ledger
1824	\$ 1,500	\$ 200	
1825	\$ 1,500	\$ 200	
1826	\$ 1,800	\$ 200	New buildings added
1827	\$ 2,800	\$ 200	Buildings added



Construction Clues



Joint



Common Bond



Flemish Bond

Hypothesis

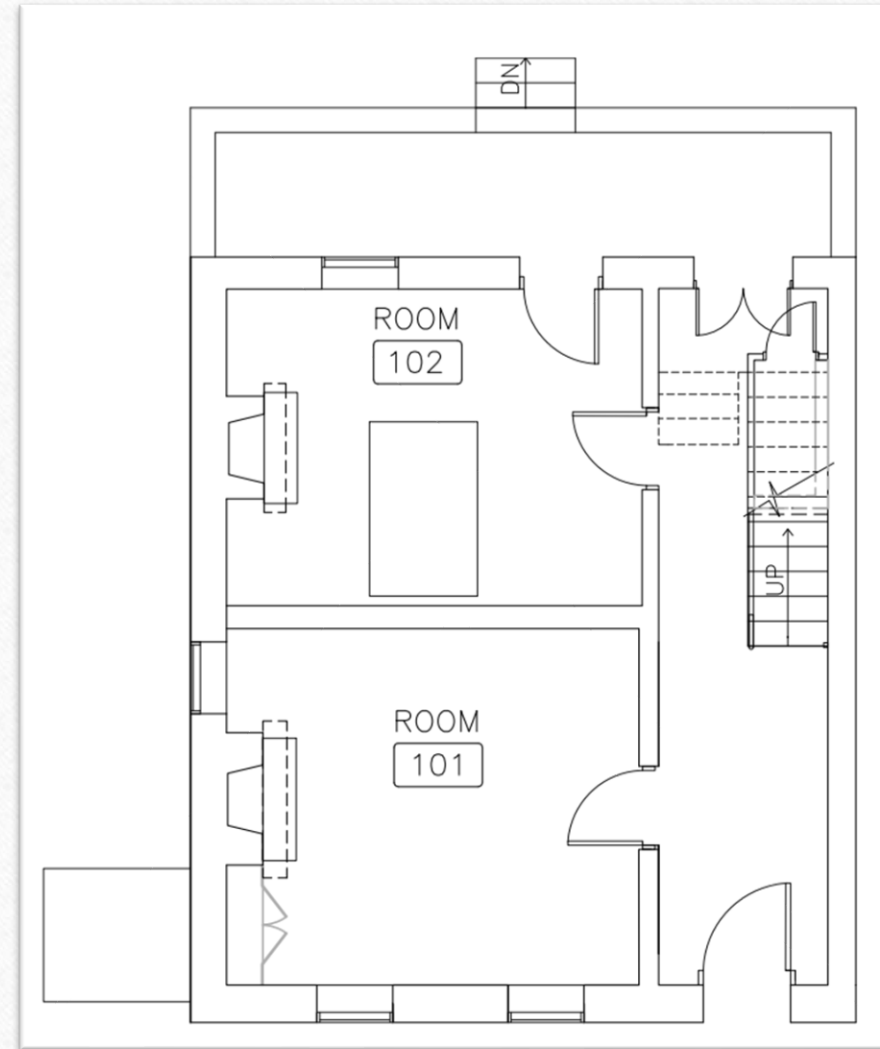
- That the list of tavern items inventoried was divided into downstairs items and upstairs items.
- Parlor:
 - Settee
 - 1 armed chair
- Dining Room:
 - Large dining table
 - 5 Windsor chairs
- Bar
 - Large dining table
- Owner's Bedchamber
 - Bed & bedstead
- Upstairs Bedchambers
 - Two tester beds
 - Four regular bedsteads

Philip D. Dawe Estate - Tavern Items Inventoried

5 Windsor chairs and 1 armed chair
2 large dining tables
18 small pictures
1 Map of N & S American & 1 Map of Virginia
1 Settee
1 Bed & Bedstead
This row had a subtotal for previous assessed values
1 Teaster bedstead & bed
1 Iron Chest
3 Fenders
1 Bed, bedstead, counterpane, & boulder
1 Bed blanket & boulder
1 Bed, bedstead (Teaster) & boulder
1 Bed, bedstead & boulder
1 Bed, bedstead & boulder & old bedstead
2 small fenders
5 hogs

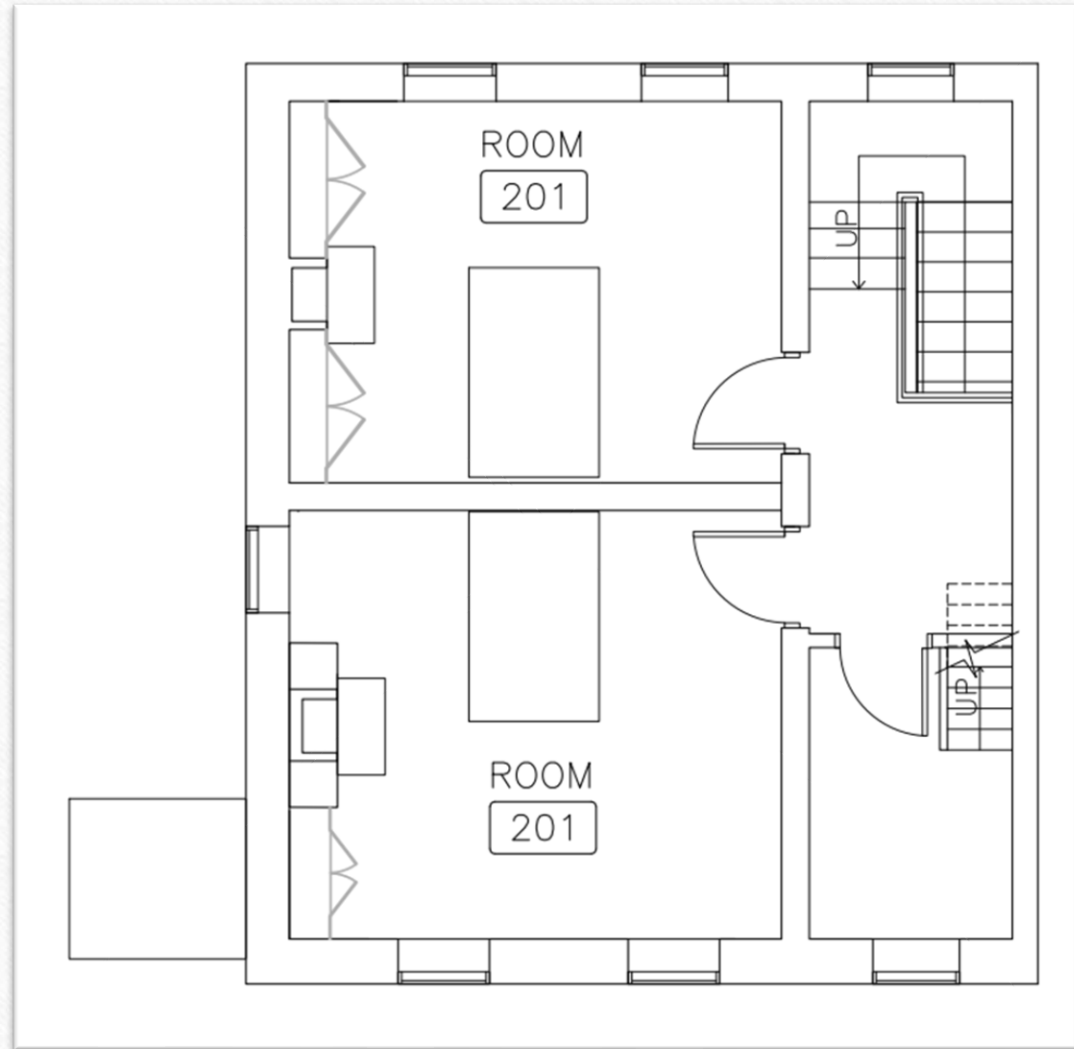
First Floor Ca. 1823 Hypothesis

- First-floor owner's bedchamber. Private access from exterior.
- One public room



Second Floor Ca. 1823

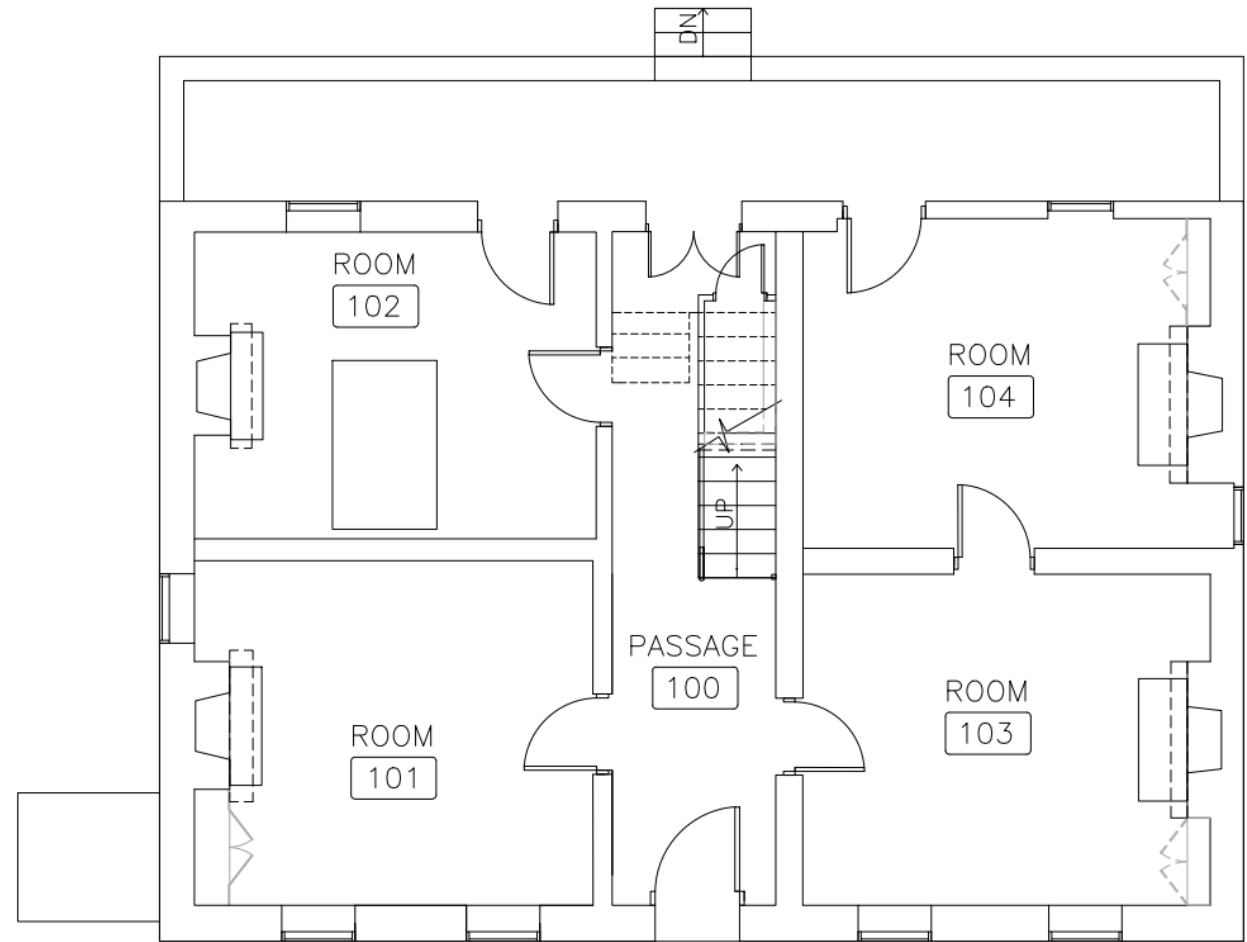
- Two bedchambers, one for tavern guests
- Insufficient room



First Floor Ca 1827

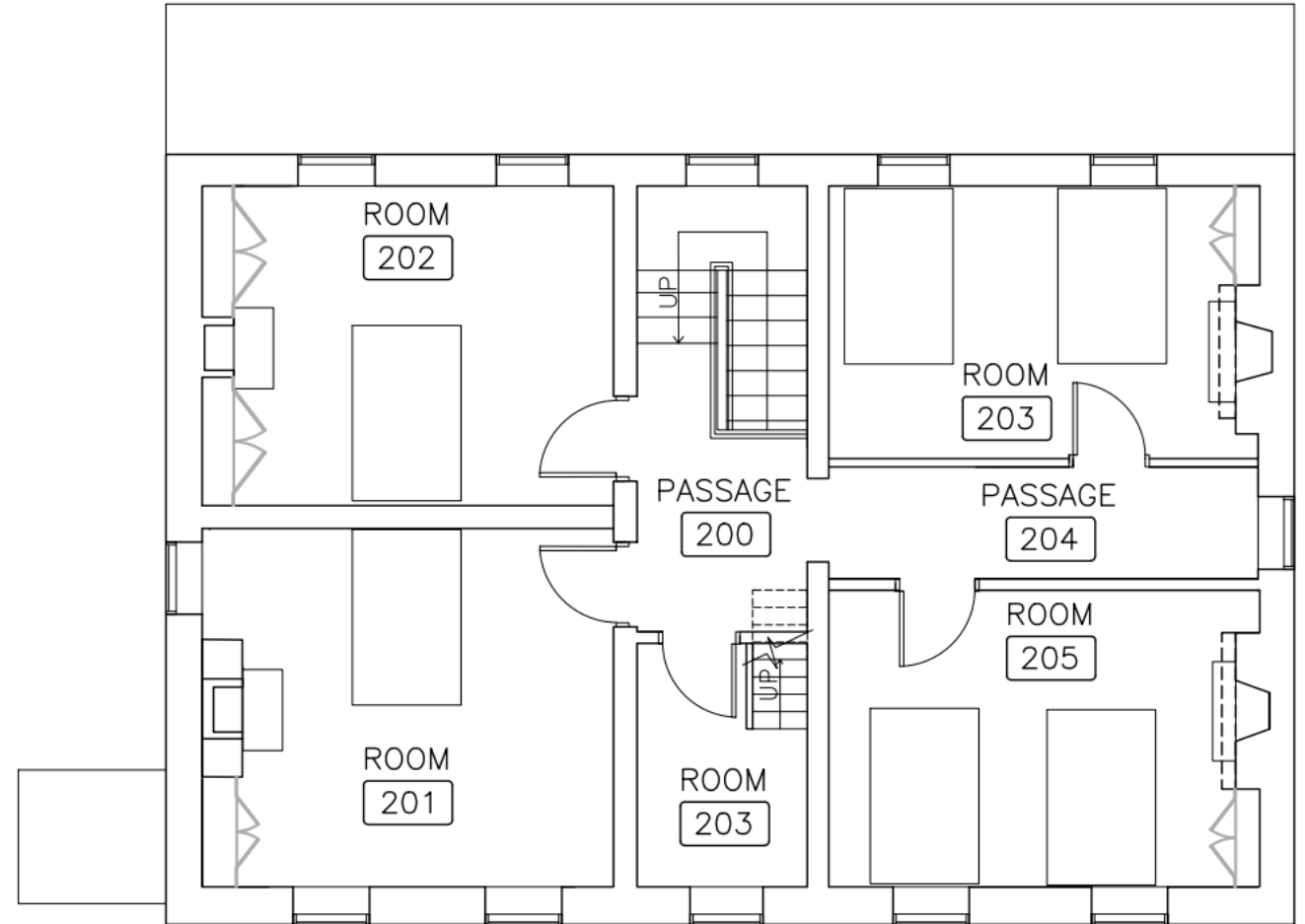
Original room uses unknown. Possibly:

- Parlor
- Owner's Bedchamber
- Dining Room
- Bar



Second Floor ca. 1827

- Four bedchambers
 - Two family bedchambers
 - Two guest bedchambers
- Possible servants room



Tavern Rental

After Philip Dawe's death, his widow rejected the will and went to court to obtain her dower right of 1/3rd of the estate.

This kept the tavern under the management of the administrator for decades.

The administrator rented the tavern to others.

**Antebellum-Period Tavern/ Boarding House Keepers
Williams-Dawe House**

Proprietor	Dates	Comment
James Fewell	03 Jun 1833 to 02 Mar 1834	Obtained ordinary license ³⁹
Robert Williams	03 Mar 1834 to 01 Feb 1835	Fewell's license transferred to him ⁴⁰
William Knight	02 Feb 1835 to 02 Jul 1837	Williams's license transferred to him ⁴¹
Unknown	1838-1843	Period of economic depression
John Williams	Unknown	Fewell advertised that he took over house from Williams.
Thomas T. Fewell	Fall 1854 to 01 Jan 1856	Operated a hotel with omnibus service to train depot. ⁴²
William C. Steel	03 Apr 1856 to 03 Apr 1857	Rented ⁴³
Milton Fitzhugh	12 Apr 1857 – 12 Apr 1858	Two of John Williams's sons boarded ⁴⁴
Ann G. Fitzhugh	28 Sep 1858 – ca 06 Jul 1859	Two of John Williams's sons boarded ⁴⁵
Charles T. Iardella	07 Jul 1859 – 1860	Rented ⁴⁶

NOTICE.—The subscriber having taken the house in Brentsville, formerly occupied by John Williams, will open it as a *HOTEL*, on the 20th instant, and respectfully solicits the patronage of his friends and the public. He will run an OMNIBUS twice a day to Bristoe Station, in connection with the cars, and pledges himself to use every exertion in his power to give satisfaction.
T. T. FEWELL, Agent.
Brentsville, oct 7—eo10t

Civil War Period

- Mrs. Mary Holland operated a hotel here.
- She had a hired servant.
- A doctor boarded with her.
- Lieutenant Hopkins, with Freedmen's bureau entered her kitchen and carried a Black child she was caring for away
- "All the officers that had been camped here have always boarded with me."
- "On one of your retreats, your sick was left behind. I took charge of some twenty until they were sent for."

Brentsville Seminary

- Founded 1879
- Taught by Ezra Bauder
- In 1880 three scholars boarded with Bauder
- School year 1887/9
 - Tuition \$30/year
 - Library with 300 books
 - Coeducational
 - 18 students: half male, half female



Brentsville Female Seminary,
E. BAUDER, A. M., Principal,
Assisted by Mrs. Bauder and Daughter.
An agreeable Home School, two miles from
Bristoe Station, Va. Midland R. R. Daily stage.
Established in 1879. Farm 50 acres. Full Col-
legiate Course. Terms moderate. Refer to Bishop
Whittle, of Va., and Bishop Peterkin, of W. Va.
Address PRINCIPAL, Brentsville, Prince Wil-
liam county, Va. dec24--od6w

Brentsville Seminary

May have opened up walls for bifold doors

May have added kitchen addition.



Original Materials – Mantlepieces

Ca. 1823

Ca. 1827



Original Materials

Stairway components

Chair rail in passage and one section Rm 204

Most interior doors

Door trim

Some cupboards

Flooring

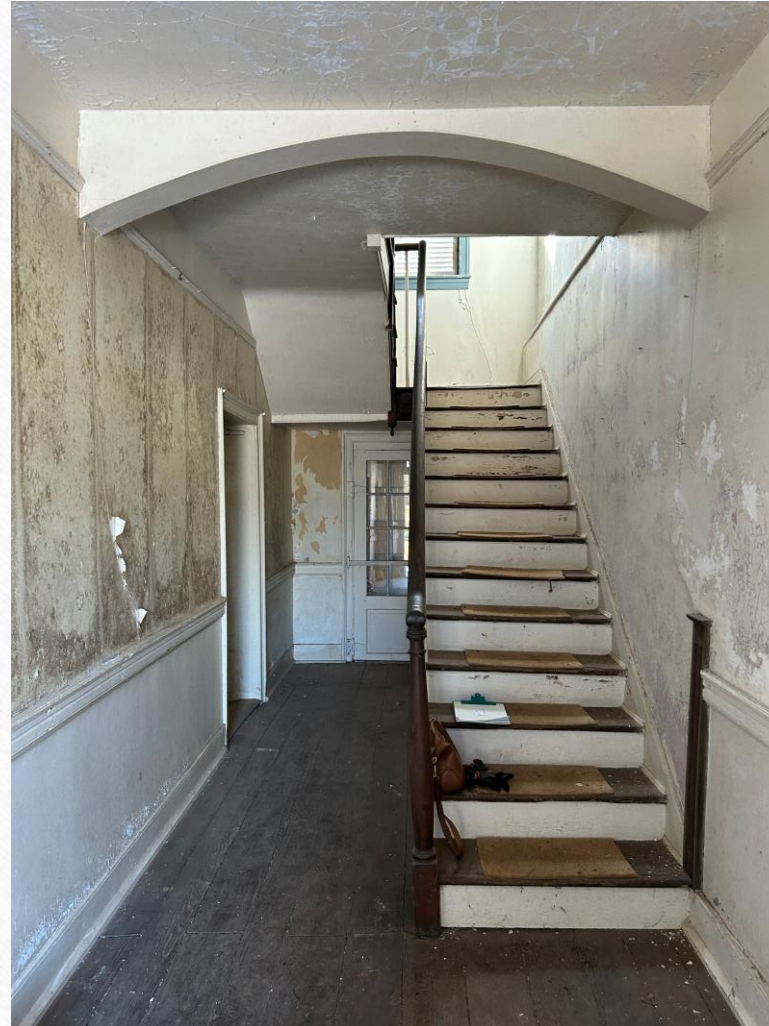
Mantlepieces

Rear door trim

Wood framing (joists, rafters)

Most brickwork

Stone foundations



Not Original

All window sash and trim

Most plaster walls

All plaster ceilings

Colonial Revival Bookcases

Arch in main passage

Utility Chases

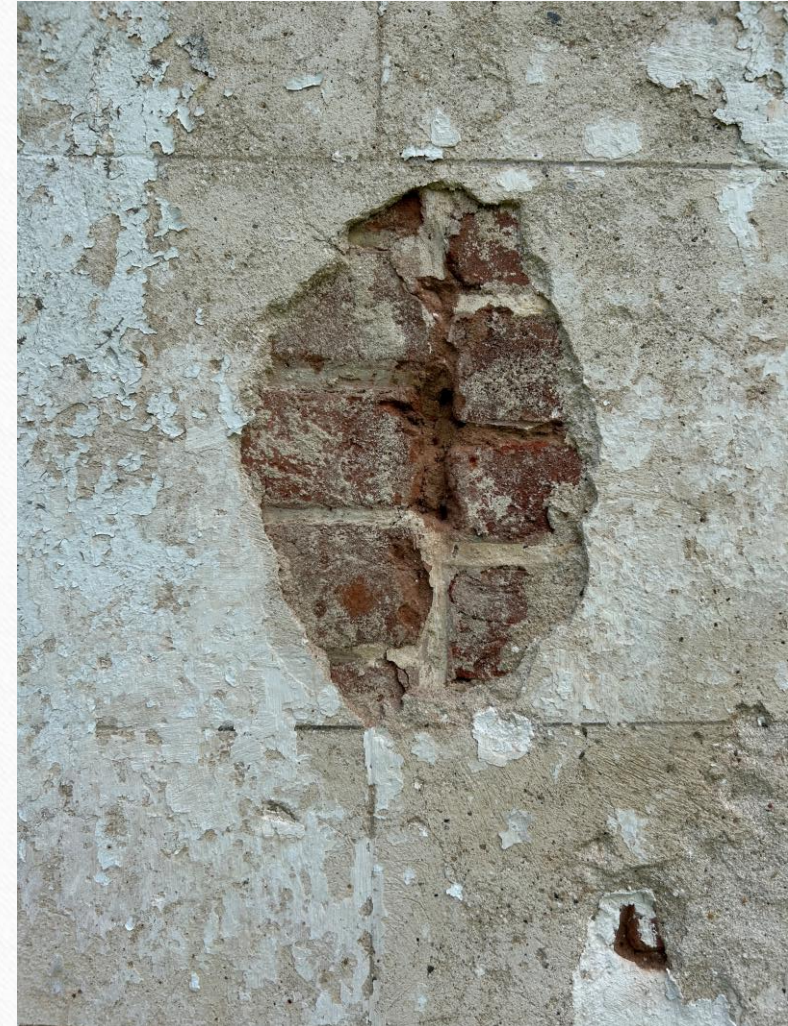
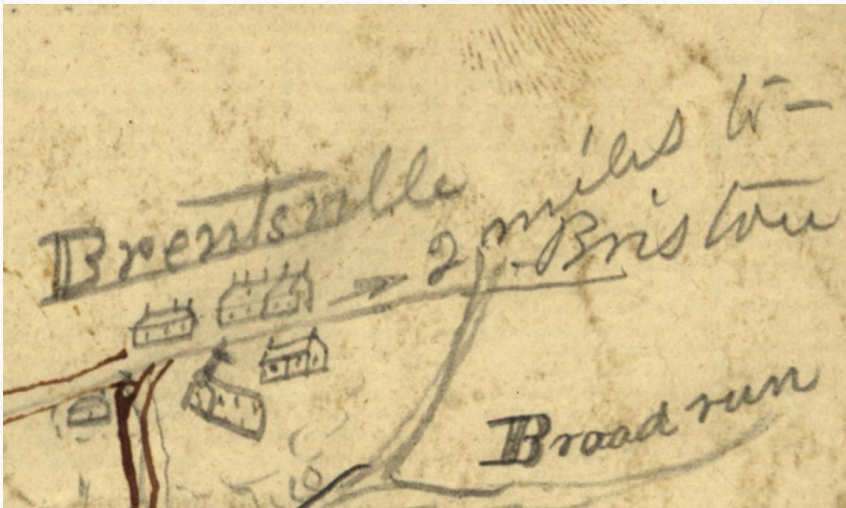
Storage casework

Exterior Parge



Parge Likely Not Original

- Painted mortar below lime/sand parge



Cellar Fireplace / Second Floor Fireplace

- Clues
 - Only two flues
 - Bedroom firebox infilled
 - Second floor bedroom hearth



Structural Issues

Removal of large portions of load-bearing walls

South wall foundation deterioration

Masonry bulge due to ductwork installation

Roof support

Floors are 65 psf of live load.

Required live loads:

Historic house tours: 100 psf

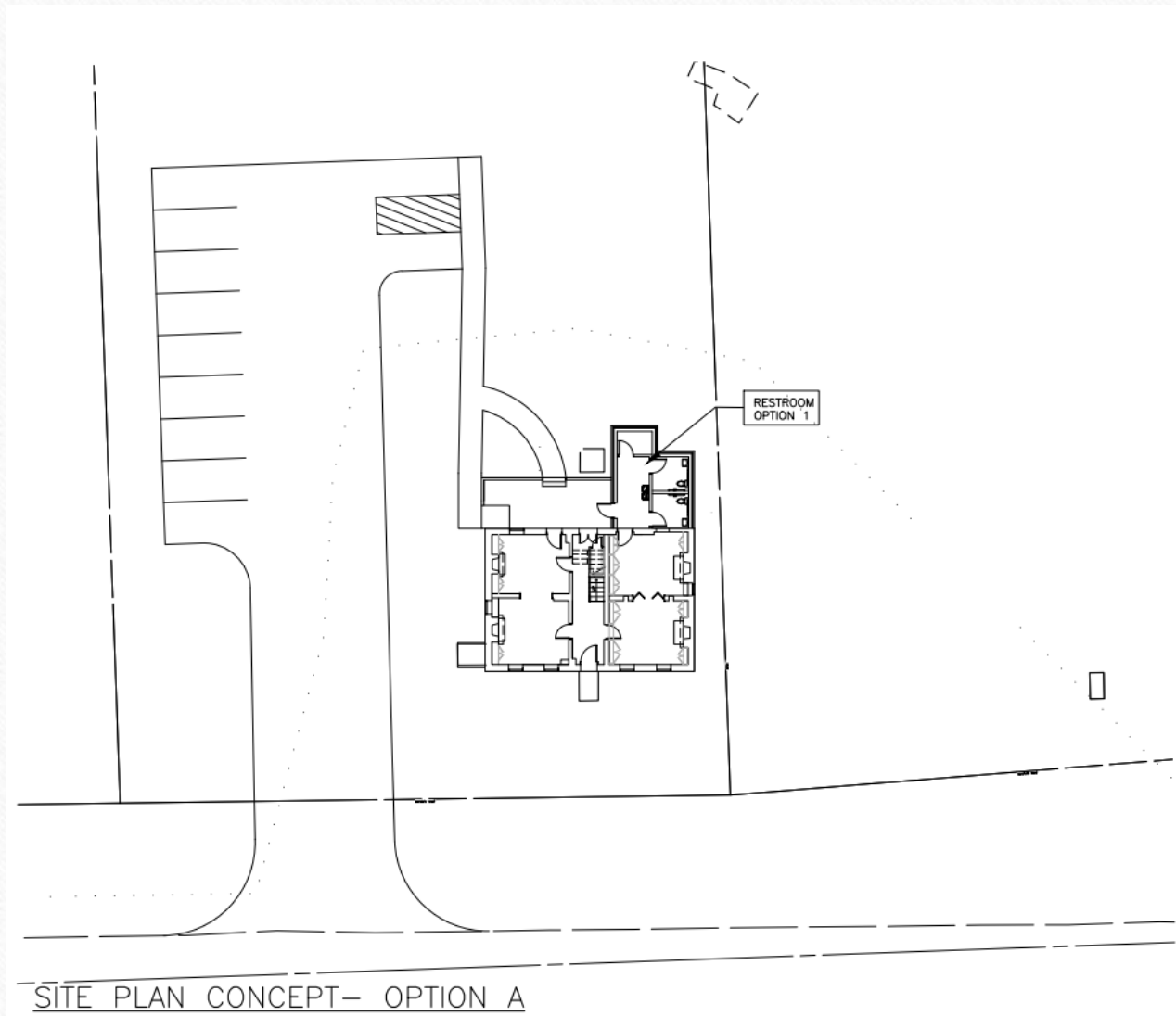
Museum: 100 psf

Offices: 50 psf, 80 psf for corridors, 100 psf for lobbies and storage rooms

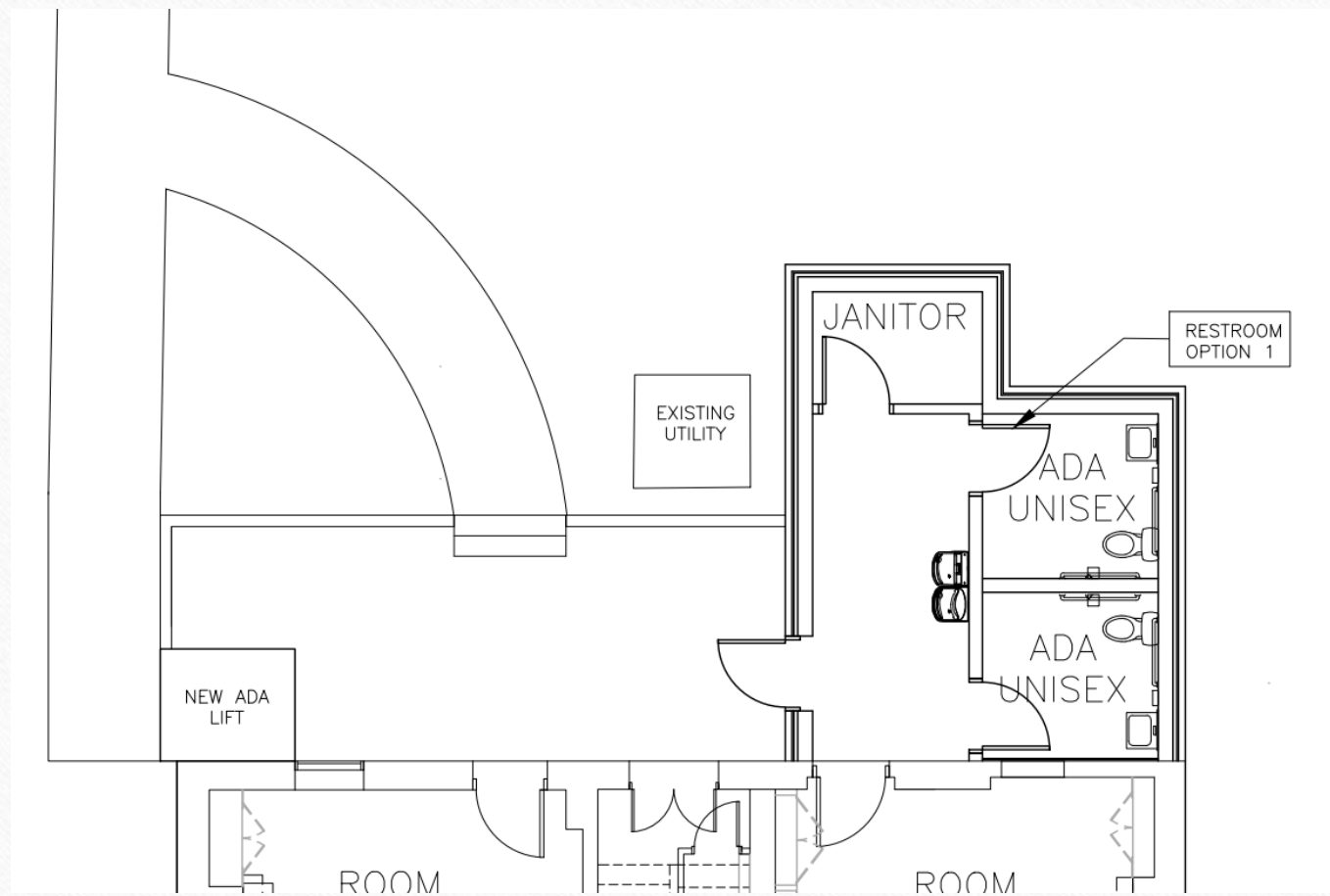


Site Plan Concept A

- Access to restroom from interior and exterior
- Location of restroom similar to 1940s addition
- Elevation from parking requires lift

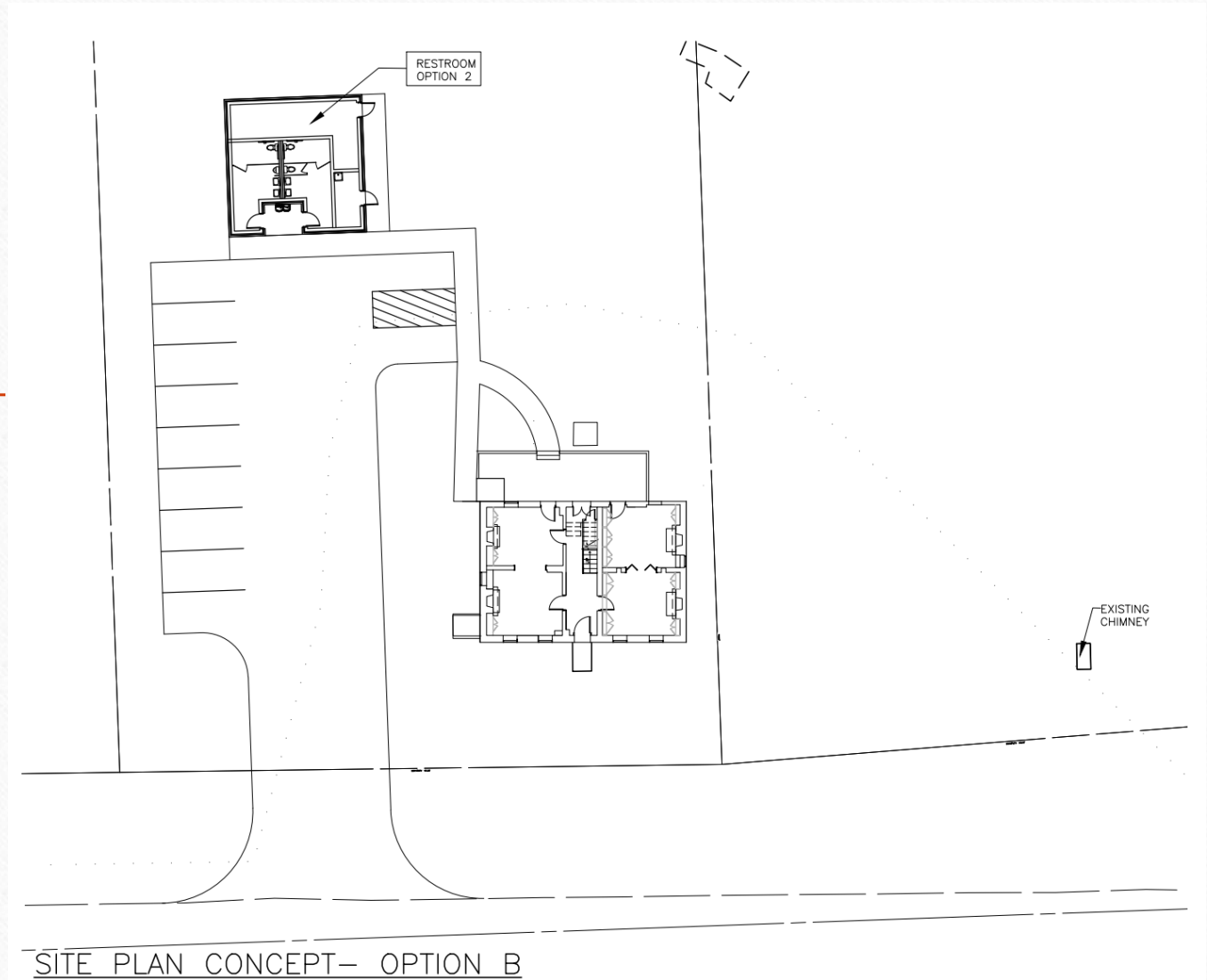


Restroom Option 1

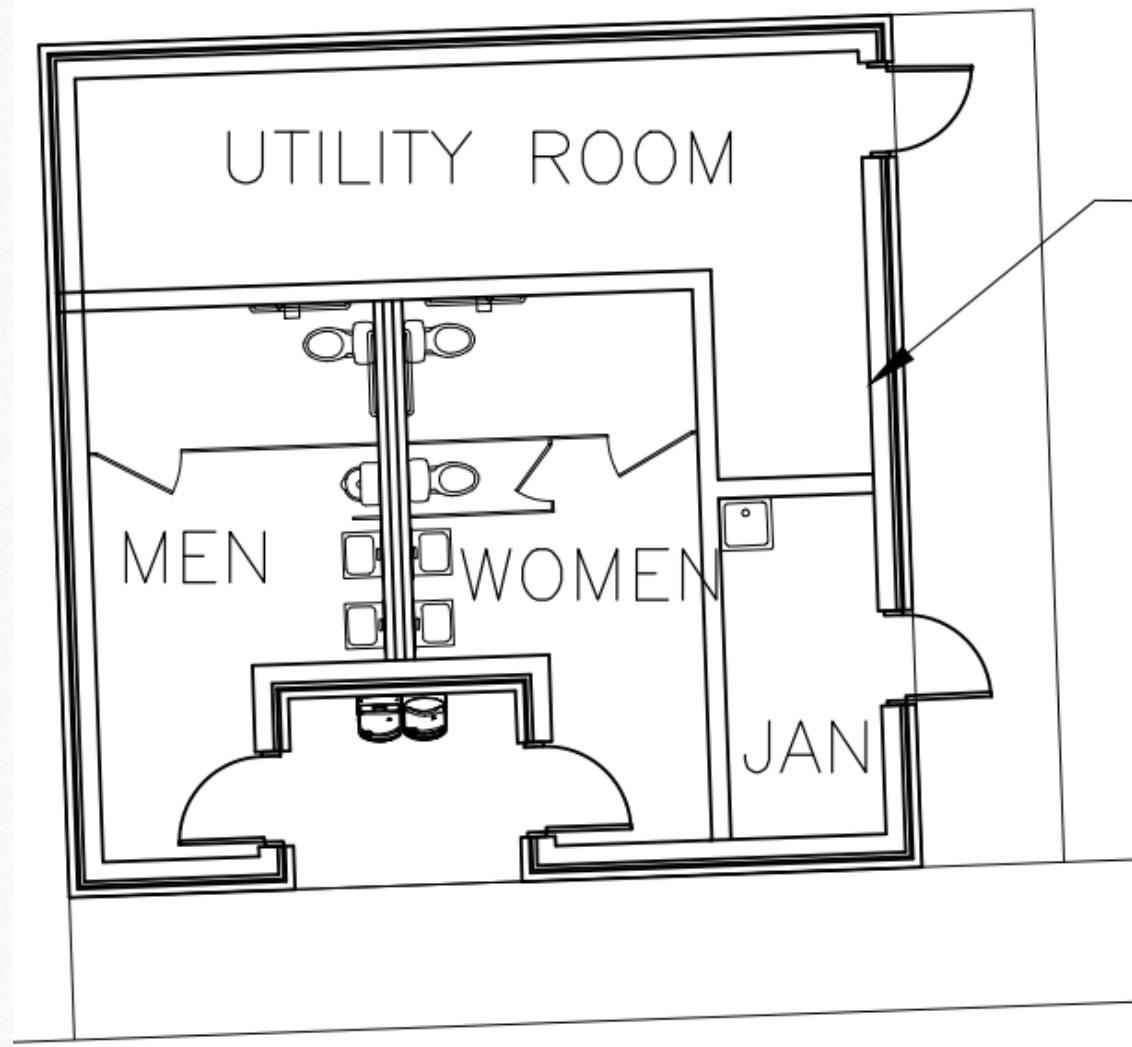


Site Plan Concept B

- Restroom separate from historic house
- Space available to enlarge restroom
- Elevation from parking requires lift

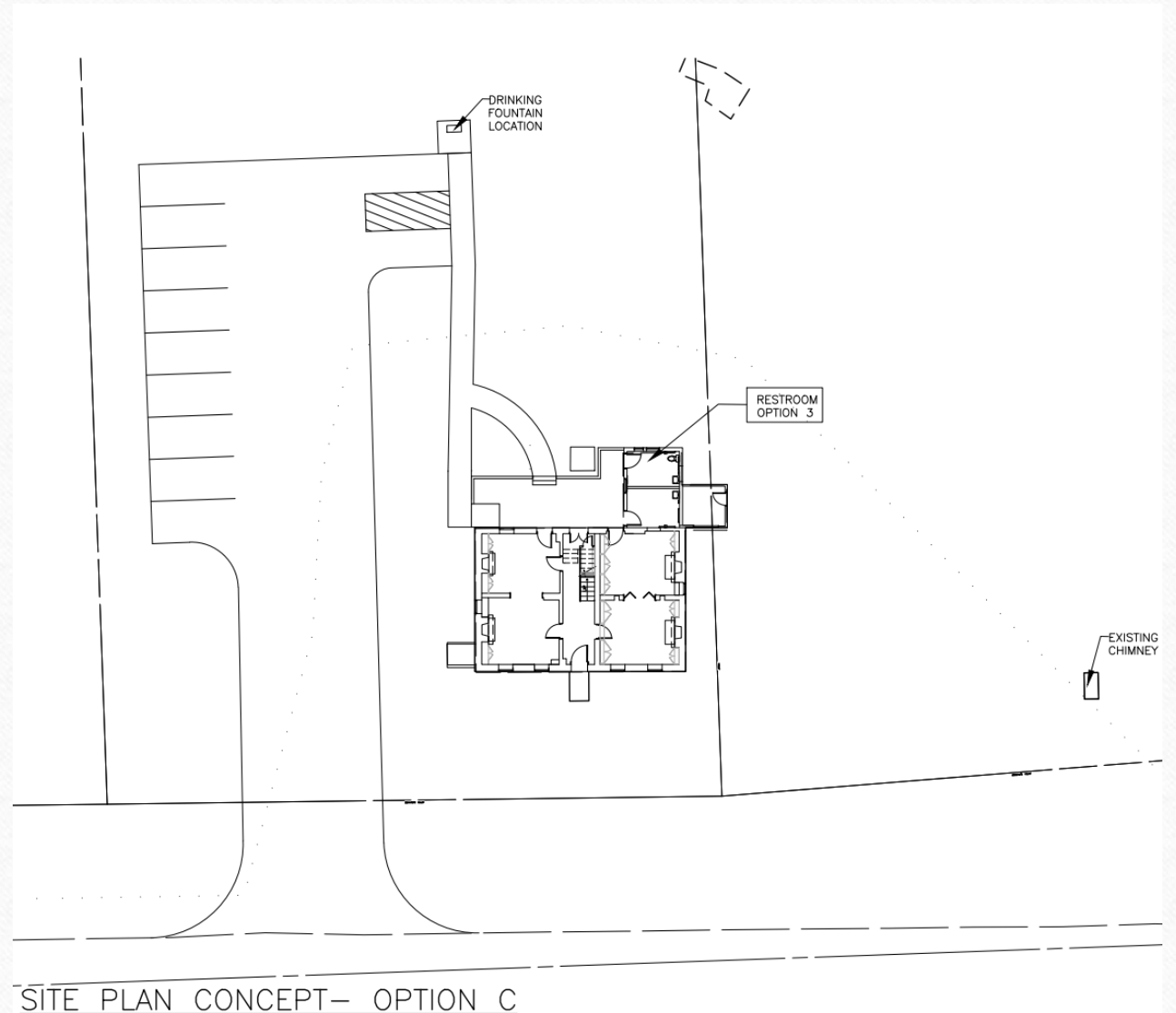


Restroom Option 2

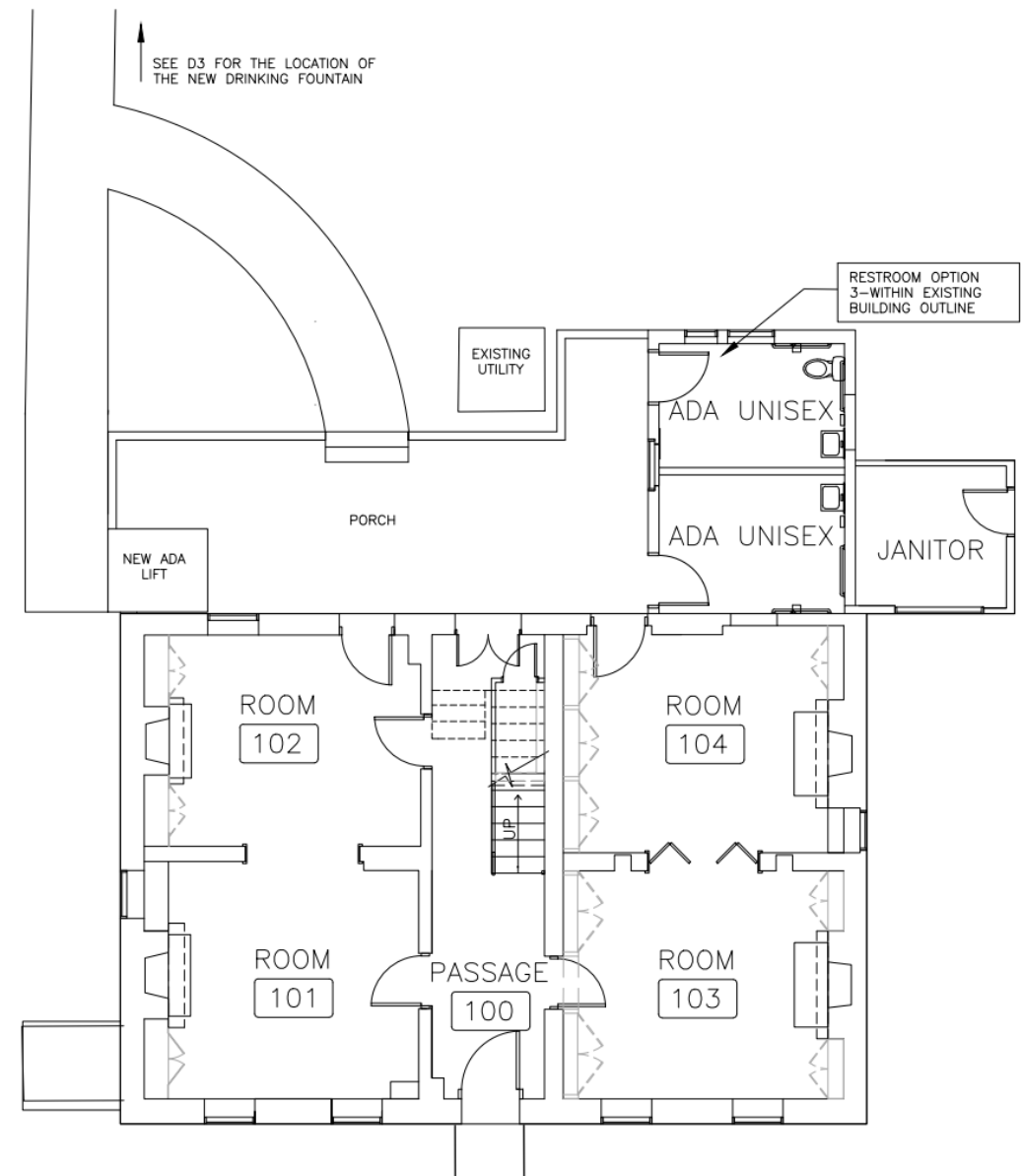


Site Plan Concept C

- Restroom uses existing 1940s building footprint
- No direct access from interior of building
- Janitor's closet uses old laundry room footprint
- Elevation from parking requires lift



Restroom Option 3



Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration

- Preservation: Places high premium on retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. Reflects a building's continuum over time through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations made.
- Rehabilitation: (Adaptive Re-use) Emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but there is more latitude for replacement due to there being more deterioration.
- Restoration: Focuses on retention of materials from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting removal of materials from other periods.
- Impact on upstairs kitchen and bath, stucco, door finishes

Periods of Historical Significance

1823 – 1867 Tavern and Hotel

1879 – 1888 Boarding School



Code Implications

901.3 Special occupancy exceptions.

When a *building* in Group R-3 is also used for Group A, B, or M purposes such as museum tours, exhibits, and other public assembly activities, or for museums less than 3,000 square feet (279 m²), the code official may determine that the occupancy is Group B when life safety conditions can be demonstrated in accordance with Section 901.2. Adequate means of egress in such *buildings*, which may include a means of maintaining doors in an open position to permit egress, a limit on *building* occupancy to an occupant load permitted by the means of egress capacity, a limit on occupancy of certain areas or floors, or supervision by a person knowledgeable in the emergency exiting procedures, shall be provided.

The existing historical building has an added addition that was added to it in 1941 which is not original to the time when the historical building was built in 1821. That addition will be demolished which reduces the building square footage to 2,764 SF, which qualifies the building to be considered under section 901.3 of VEBC. The new use group will be B business use group. The following table illustrates changes in the code requirements for changing the occupancy from R-3 to B use group.

Code Implications Business Occupancy

Summary of Required Code Changes for B-Occupancy (2,764 SF)

- Upgrade restrooms and provide plumbing fixtures to serve at least 19 occupants (2 separate)
- Ensure corridors meet 36"-44" width and travel distance $\leq 200'$
- Provide exit signage and emergency lighting
- Confirm accessibility (entrance route, restroom, signage)
- The code official shall be authorized to accept existing floors and approve operational controls that limit the live load on any such floor.
- Seek code official acceptance for the interior finishes to remain as is for the historical building.
- Seek code official acceptance for exemption from the energy code for the historical building

Code Implications

Assembly Occupancy

Summary of Required Code Changes for A-3-Occupancy (3,372 SF)

- Provide restrooms and plumbing fixtures to serve at least 57 occupants of each gender on site.
- Add a second means of egress on the second floor.
- Significant structural changes to accommodate the high occupant load. The code official shall be authorized to accept existing floors and approve operational controls that limit the live load on any such floor.
- Ensure corridors 44" width and travel distance $\leq 200'$
- Provide exit signage and emergency lighting
- Confirm accessibility (entrance route, restroom, signage)
- Seek code official acceptance for the interior finishes to remain as is for the historical building.
- Seek code official acceptance for exemption from the energy code for the historical building
- See code official acceptance for the existing stair size, configurations, fire rating requirements and railings.