

**CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT
HHR.2.20**

DATE: December 1, 2020
TO: Planning Commission acting as the **Historic Landmarks Commission**
FROM: Jennifer Dimsho, AICP, Associate Planner

APPLICANT: Lower Columbia Engineering, LLC c/o Brett Kahr
OWNER: The Olde School Company, LLC

ZONING: Riverfront District, RD, Plaza Subdistrict
LOCATION: 251 St. Helens Street (John Gumm School); 4N1W-3BB-12600
PROPOSAL: Install a new ADA ramp at the front façade and remove an existing wheelchair lift on the side facade

SITE INFORMATION

Site Description: The Olde School, known as the John Gumm School after a major benefactor, is deemed a “Secondary Significant” structure in the St. Helens Downtown Historic District from the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1919 in the “Georgian Revival” style. A description of architectural features and history of the structure are included in the following excerpt from the district’s nomination form from 1984:

“The John Gumm School is a two story 'L' shaped structure with a five-bay symmetrical front. The building has stucco siding and eight-over-eight double-hung wood sash windows which are generally in groupings of four. The central bay is a pedimented pavilion, supported by two pairs of large Tuscan columns. The bays flanking the central pavilion have groupings of four double-hung windows at the first and second stories and the end bays have fixed sash windows high in the second story wall. The east and west sides of the building are three bays wide. The central bay has a doorway with top and side lights at the first story and irregular fenestration at the second story. The central bay is flanked with identical bays which have four double-hung sash windows at the first and second story level. The fenestration on the rear of the building is irregular.

Except for the modification to some windows on the rear facade; the building appears to be entirely intact. In 1902, the first John Gumm School, a two-story wood frame structure with a stone foundation, was built on the site of the present John Gumm School. It was destroyed in a fire which broke out during the night of September 16, 1918. The origin of the fire was a mystery although many believed it had been started by an arsonist. After much delay and public discussion, the school directors called a special meeting to the legal voters of District No. 2 on December 7. They proposed to construct a building of tile and fire resisting material on the site of the old building.”

According to the 1999-2000 John Gumm School Yearbook (the school’s final yearbook) which was uploaded to the Columbia County History Museum’s website, the school served grades 1-12

from 1919 to 1926, grades 1-8 until 1958, and grades K-6 until December 1999. In December 1999, the building was declared unsafe and closed immediately. Since then, according to building permit records, the first floor and basement have received occupancy for various office, storage, and commercial activities. The 2nd floor is unfinished with no use established.

Proposal: Columbia County is proposing to relocate a portion of their administrative facilities in the Olde School. In order to do so, they need to install a new ADA ramp to allow more people with mobility issues to access their services without requiring the operation of the existing ADA wheelchair lift on the side of the building. They are also proposing removal of this wheelchair lift. The Olde School is listed as a designated landmark on the City's locally designated landmark list, which is why exterior modifications triggered this public hearing and review.

There is a separate attachment with current and historic photos of the two facades which are proposed to be altered with this proposed.

PUBLIC HEARING & NOTICE

Hearing dates are as follows:

December 8, 2020 before the Planning Commission

Notice of this proposal was sent to surrounding property owners within 300 feet of the subject property on November 11, 2020 via first class mail. Notice was sent to agencies by mail or e-mail on the same date. Notice was published in the The Chronicle on November 25, 2020.

AGENCY REFERRALS & COMMENTS

As of the date of this staff report, no relevant agency comments have been received.

APPLICABLE CRITERIA, ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

SHMC 17.36.040(3) CRITERIA FOR ALTERATION

In order to approve an application for the alteration of a designated landmark or historic resource of statewide significance, the commission must find that the proposal meets the following standards:

- (a) The purpose of the historic overlay district as set forth in [SHMC 17.36.005](#).
- (b) The provisions of the comprehensive plan.
- (c) A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- (d) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal or relocation of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- (e) A property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.
- (f) Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

(g) Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

(h) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible (including environmental considerations), materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

(i) Chemical and physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.

(j) Archeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

(k) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible in appearance with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

(l) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Discussion: (a) The purpose of this Chapter is noted under Section 17.36.005. As it relates to this proposal, the purpose of this chapter is to accomplish the protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of improvements that represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history. This review is intended to safeguard the city's historic heritage as embodied in the district and its resources.

(b) The Comprehensive Plan includes a policy as follows: "subject proposed remodeling of the City's historic resources to design review to encourage preservation of the structure's historical assets." This is the review of an alteration to a City historic resource. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan includes a policy to, "encourage adaptive reuse of historic resources." The County is hoping to repurpose the former school as administrative offices.

(c) The building's use as a school has ceased since 1999. Office uses have been approved through previous building permits since 2000. Arguably, the most distinctive features of the Olde School are the columns, windows, and "pedimented pavilion" (the roof line along the recessed entry). None of these features are proposed to be altered with the installation of the new ADA ramp or the removal of the wheelchair elevator. This use change shall require minimal change to distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

(d) See (c) above for the most prominent features of the building. There is no removal of distinct materials or alteration of features that characterize the building proposed.

(e) The new ADA ramp has been styled based on the exterior stair walls located on the east and west facades. As seen on the original rendering of the school from 1919, these capped walls are not original. However, they have been part of the building for over 70 years. The guard wall and cap will be consistent with this structure and not pulling features or elements from other historic properties.

(f) There have not been any alterations to the school since construction which have formerly acquired historic significance in their own right.

(g) For the new ADA ramp, the new concrete wall cap is proposed to match the existing stair wall caps on east and west façade. The ramp wall itself is proposed to be a concrete wall with painted plaster to match the existing color of the base of the building. There is a section of the column's base that will be removed to accommodate the accessible route entry, which will not be visible from the street view of the building. The exposed surfaces are proposed to be finished to match adjoining surfaces.

The proposed pipe handrailing is proposed match the 1 1/2" diameter pipe handrails on the front and side facade. There is also a section of handrail near the wheelchair elevator that is to be removed that is painted bright yellow. **Does the Commission think that all new handrail and this yellow-colored handrail should be re-painted to match the existing handrailing on the front and side facades, even though it is not original?**

Lastly, there is a section of curbing that delineates the landscaping in front of the building which is proposed to be removed to accommodate the ramp's location. A new section of 4" curb will be installed at the entry of the ADA ramp. This new concrete curb and concrete ramp itself will be a substantial color contrast to the existing older concrete walkway and stairway, but this is difficult to avoid.

(h) There are no deteriorated historic features which are being removed or replaced.

(i) For the portion of the column base that is to be removed, the physical treatment and construction technique used should not damage the remaining historic features. Newly exposed surfaces should be finished to match existing adjoining surfaces.

(j) This is not relevant to this proposal.

(k) Staff feels this new work will be differentiated from the old just by the nature of refinishing and matching paint colors. As proposed, the project will retain the symmetry of the front façade by maintaining a consistent color scheme. All other historic materials, features, and spatial relationships (See section c) will be retained.

(l) If this ramp were removed, the use of the space was previously a landscaped planter. Removal of the new concrete walls, ramps, and curbing would be no small feat, but once removed, it would be fairly easy to return this area back to its former use as landscaping. From the street, it would not be clear that a portion of the column's base had been removed to accommodate an ADA ramp.

Finding: These criteria appear to be met as presented by the applicant given a few conditions.

SHMC 17.36.040(4)

(4) Prior to alteration, current photographs and/or drawings of all elevations shall be provided to the city for its public records. Photographs and drawings shall be archival quality; proof of such shall be provided with the photographs and/or drawings.

Finding: Current photos have been included in the digital record for this HRR. In addition, since many class photos were taken on the front steps of the front façade, there are countless photos of the entry to the school.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

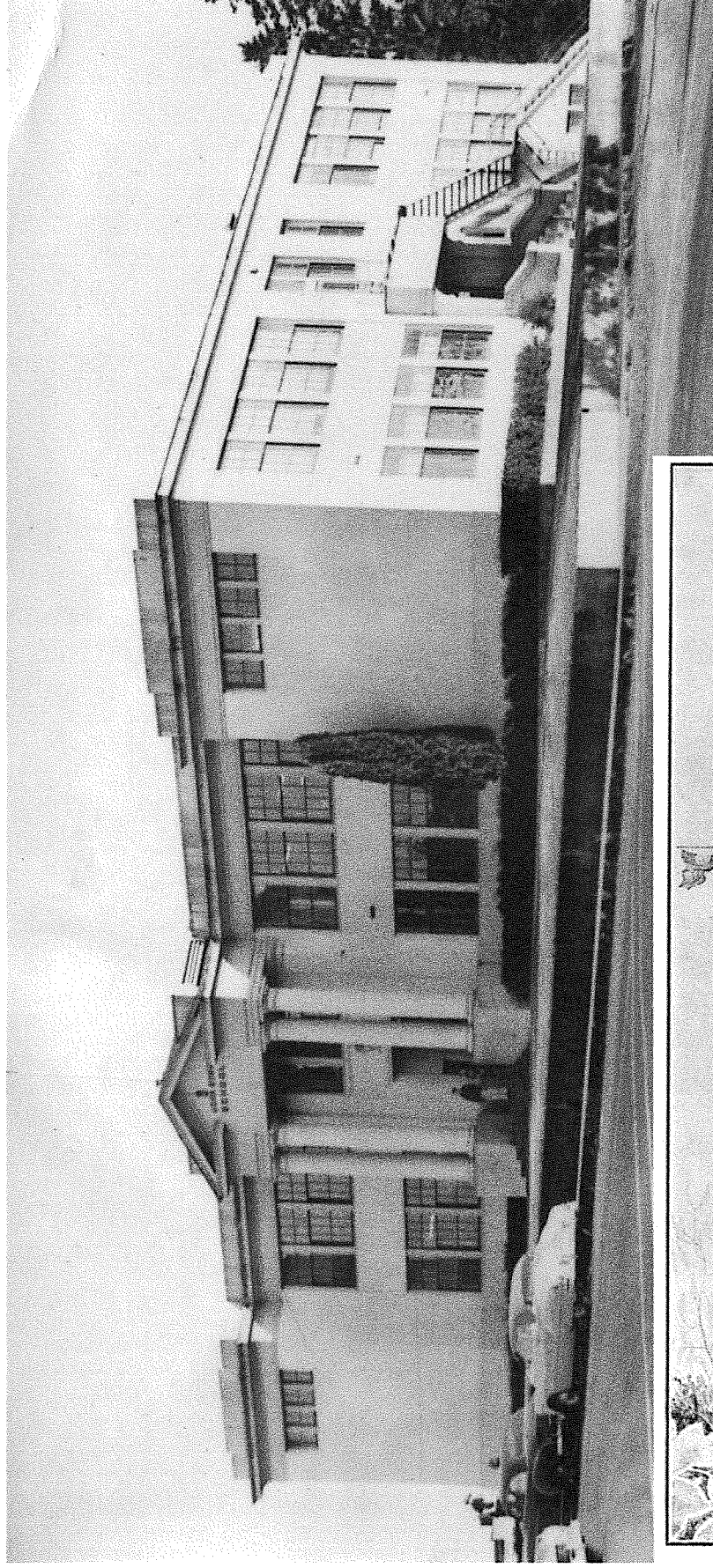
Based upon the facts and findings herein, the City Planning Administrator recommends approval of this **Historic Resource Review with the following conditions:**

1. As included in the submitted with this HRR, the physical treatment/construction technique used to remove a portion of the column's base shall not damage the remaining historic base. Newly exposed surfaces shall be finished to match existing adjoining surfaces.
2. As included in the submitted plans with this HRR, all new plaster finishes shall match the existing building wall.
3. <<If the Commission agrees>> All new pipe handrail and the yellow painted handrail near the ADA wheelchair elevator, shall be painted to match the existing handrails located in the front and side facades.

Please note, this is a *land use* approval and other permits (e.g. building and electric permits) may be required *in addition* to this Historic Resource Review.

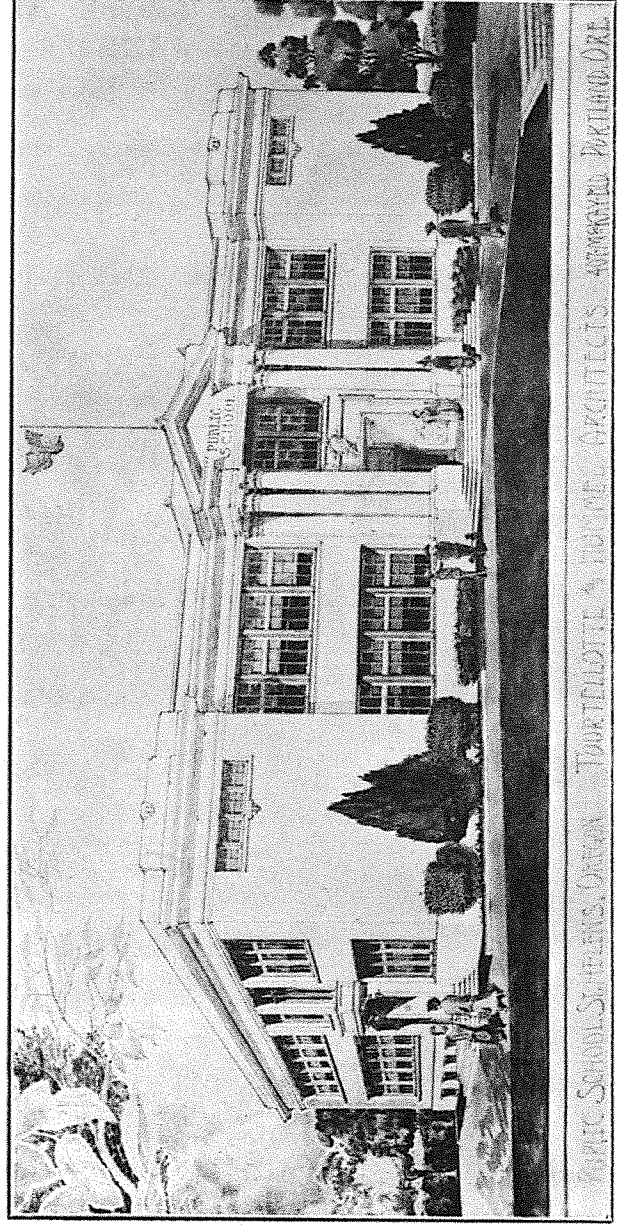
Attachments: *Current and Historic Photos (5), Applicant Narrative (3), Applicant's Plans (5)*

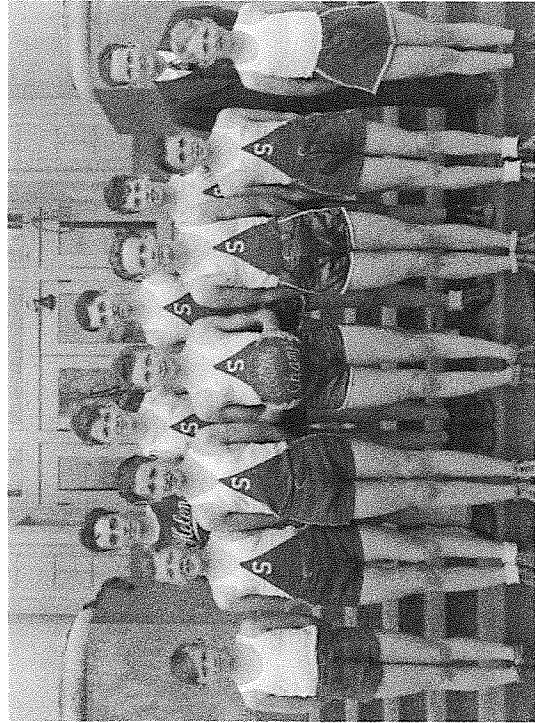
HRR.2.20 Historic Photos (Courtesy CCMA)



Top: Side and front façade (no date)

Bottom: Tourtellotte & Hummel
Architecture Firm's rendering prior
to construction in 1919

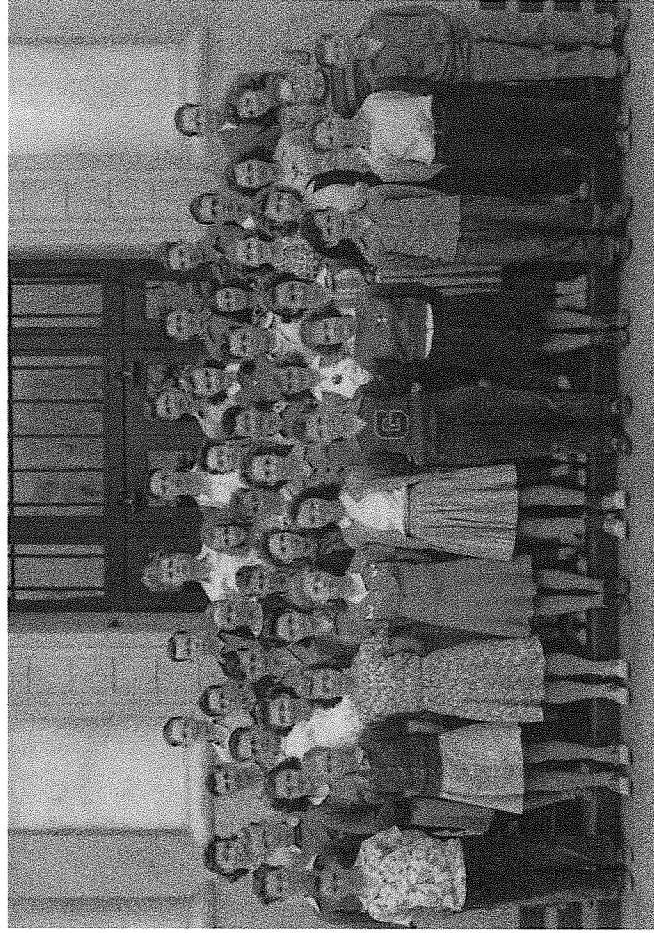




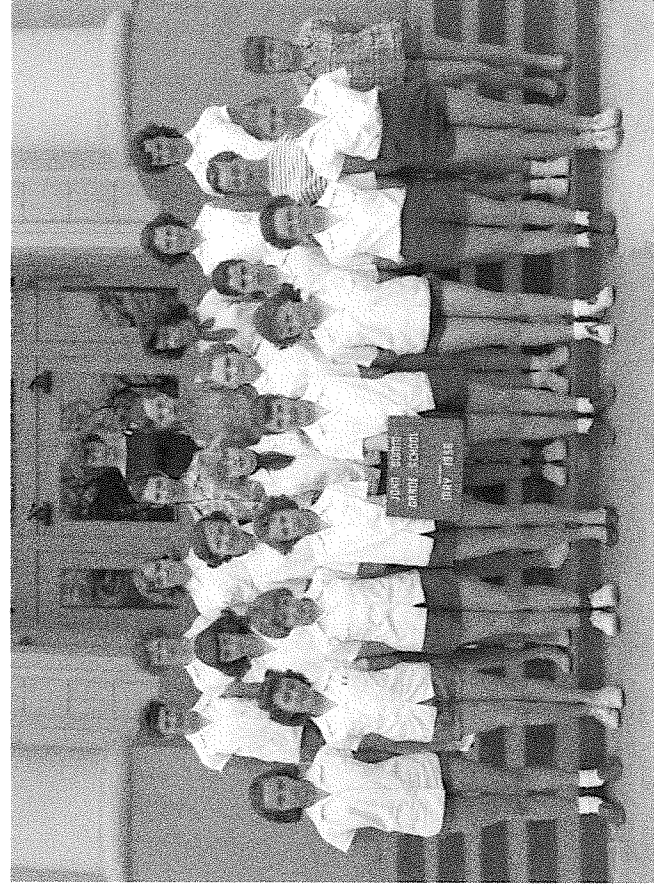
Top left: Basketball County Champs 1938



Top right: Class of 1921



Bottom left: Late 30's Class



Bottom right: 1956

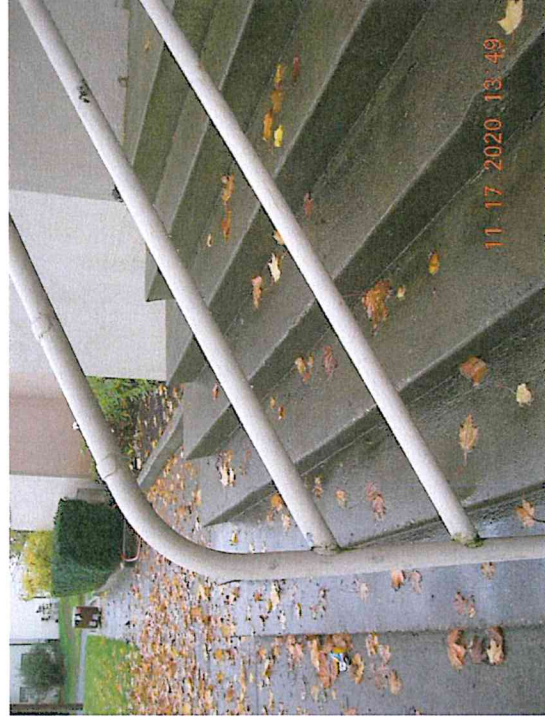
Current Photos – Accessible Route



Current Photos – Ramp Area



Current Photos - Existing Wheelchair Elevator & Railings





November 17, 2020
LCE Project No. 3067

Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
St Helens Planning Department
265 Strand Street
St Helens, OR 97051

RE: Columbia County Olde School – Historic Resource Review

Introduction

Columbia County will be locating a portion of their administrative facilities in the Olde School building located at 251 St Helens Street in historic downtown St Helens. As part of the rehabilitation of the building, the County is proposing the addition of a new ADA compliant access ramp to better serve county staff and the public. This ramp will be a replacement to the current wheelchair lift located on the west exterior stairs of the existing building. The new ramp will allow more people with limited mobility to access the building without requiring operation of the existing wheelchair lift by county staff.

Responses to criteria for alteration:

Lower Columbia Engineering believes this project is appropriate for approval based on the criteria for alteration as found in the City of St Helens Municipal Code section 17.36.040 as follows:

- (a) The purpose of the historic overlay district as set forth in SHMC 17.36.005.

While the proposed use of the Olde School building by the county satisfies much of the criteria of section 17.36.005, the most significant portion is to “(8) Promote the use of historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure, energy conservation, housing, and public welfare of the city.”

While this speaks to the use of the Olde School building by the County in a more general sense, the consolidation of county services between the Courthouse, Annex and Olde School building promotes the use of the historic districts while providing an overall boost to the public welfare through easier access to county services. The proposed ramp will help to facilitate access for less mobile residents to the county services that will be provided within the Olde School building.

- (b) The provisions of the comprehensive plan.

Based on the provisions for historic buildings in the Riverfront District, the proposed ramp will be of similar materials and colors as the primary building. Architectural features of the ramp are styled after the exterior stair walls on the west and east ends of the building. While these capped walls are not original, they have been a characteristic of the building for approximately 75 years. The pipe railings that are used at the stairs were an addition during the upgrades after the purchase of the school in 2002. The use of pipe railings for the

intermediate portion of the ramp run will help to reduce the visual weight of the ramp upon the symmetry of the front façade while matching the character of the other stair railings.

- (c) A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and special relationships.

While historically the Olde School building was a school, it was granted a change of occupancy to allow for business occupancies as well as for assembly uses of the auditorium areas. The uses proposed by the county will not vary from these uses nor change the characteristics of the building beyond the ramp and related work proposed as part of this review.

- (d) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal or relocation of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided.

The primary characteristics of the building, except for color, have not changed significantly over the last 100 years. The visual symmetry of the front and sides of the buildings will be maintained as much as possible while improving accessibility to the building. Additionally, the removal of the stainless-steel wheelchair lift will restore some of the original character of the west building entrance.

- (e) A property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.

No work is proposed that would alter the primary historic elements of the building. The building maintains its classic Georgian Revival style using symmetrical bays and windows as well as the Tuscan columns that flank the elevated building entry. The proposed ramp is intended to blend with the existing building as opposed to being a feature of the building.

- (f) Changes to the property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

As noted previously, the building has not gone through any major design modifications over the past 100 years. The most significant alteration to the exterior of the building was the addition of the steel fire escapes at both ends of the building. While these fire escapes have not necessarily acquired their own “historic significance”, no change is currently proposed with the addition of the ramp.

- (g) Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

No changes to any distinctive materials, finishes or construction techniques are proposed. The changes to the monolithic column base to accommodate the new ramp, as proposed, are intended to have little impact on the visual weight of the entry while greatly improving accessibility.

- (h) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and



where possible (including environmental considerations), materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

No deteriorated historic features are proposed to be changed as part of the ramp installation.

- (i) Chemical and physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.

No chemical or physical treatments are proposed that will alter or damage the existing finishes as part of the scope of the ramp installation.

- (j) Archeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

No archeological resources are known to exist in the area of work. If an archeological resource is discovered during the course of work, appropriate parties will be notified, and mitigation measures will be put in place.

- (k) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible in appearance with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

The proposed ramp will be of similar finish materials as the existing building and designed in such a way as to blend with the much larger mass of the building without detracting from the symmetry of the building façade.

- (l) New additions and adjacent or related construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

While removal of the ramp in the future would be a significant amount of demolition, it could be done. The most significant piece would be replacement of the removed portion of the monolithic base. However, repairing the base and finishing it to match the existing would not be particularly difficult for someone with the appropriate level of skill with concrete, masonry, or plastering.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to review this application and your assistance throughout this process. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you again,

Brett Kahr
Lower Columbia Engineering

NEW ACCESSIBLE ENTRY RAMP

COLUMBIA COUNTY OLDE SCHOOL

ST. HELENS, OR

CODE SUMMARY

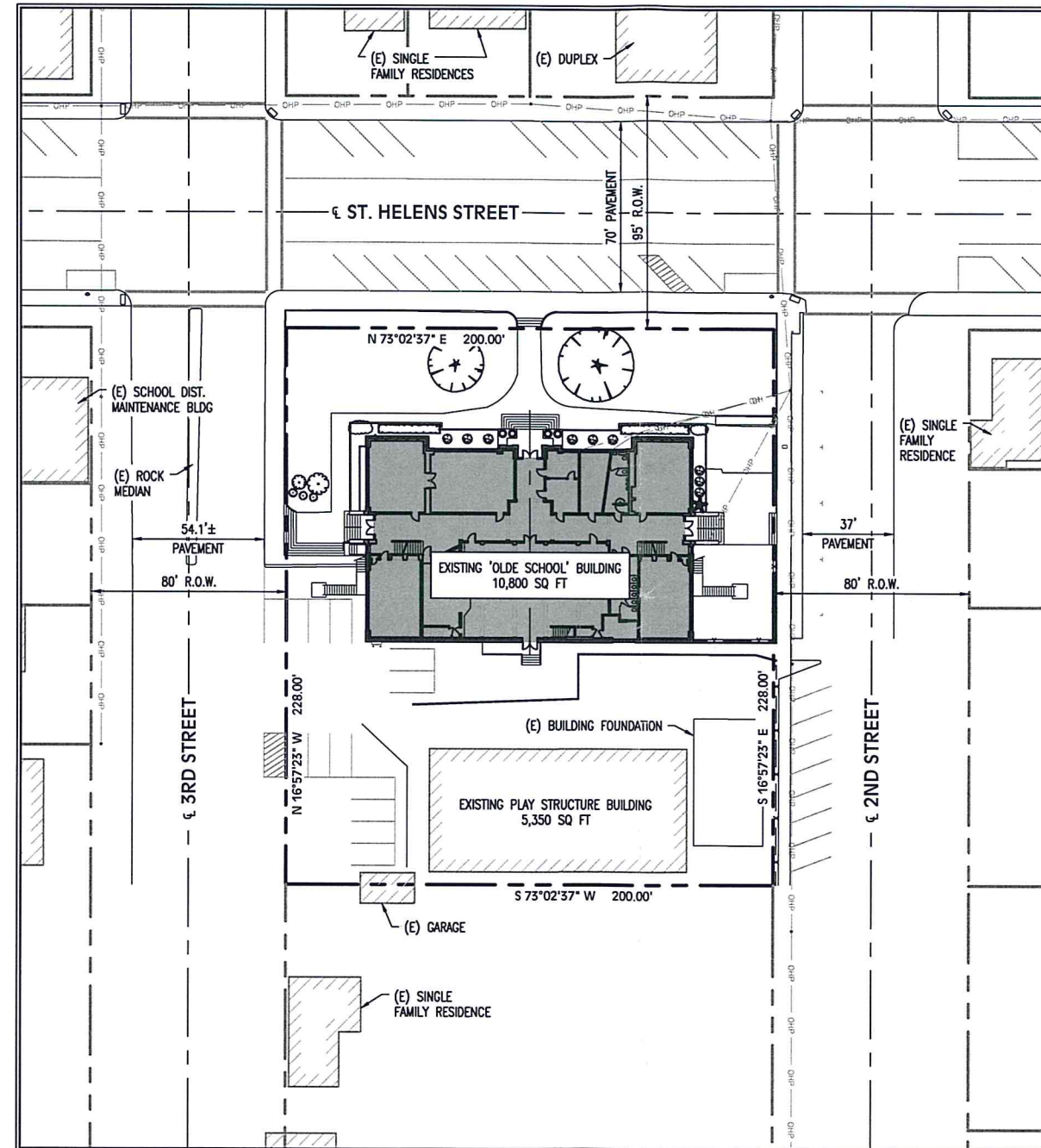
GENERAL INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME: NEW ACCESSIBLE RAMP FOR THE COLUMBIA COUNTY OLDE SCHOOL
SCOPE OF WORK: CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ICC A117.1-2017 COMPLIANT ACCESS RAMP AT THE PRIMARY ENTRANCE TO THE EXISTING OLDE SCHOOL BUILDING AND REMOVAL OF THE EXISTING LIFT AT THE WEST END OF THE BUILDING. REPLACEMENT OF THE BUILDING'S PRIMARY ENTRANCE DOORS WITH NEW DOORS TO MATCH EXISTING IS ALSO PROPOSED.

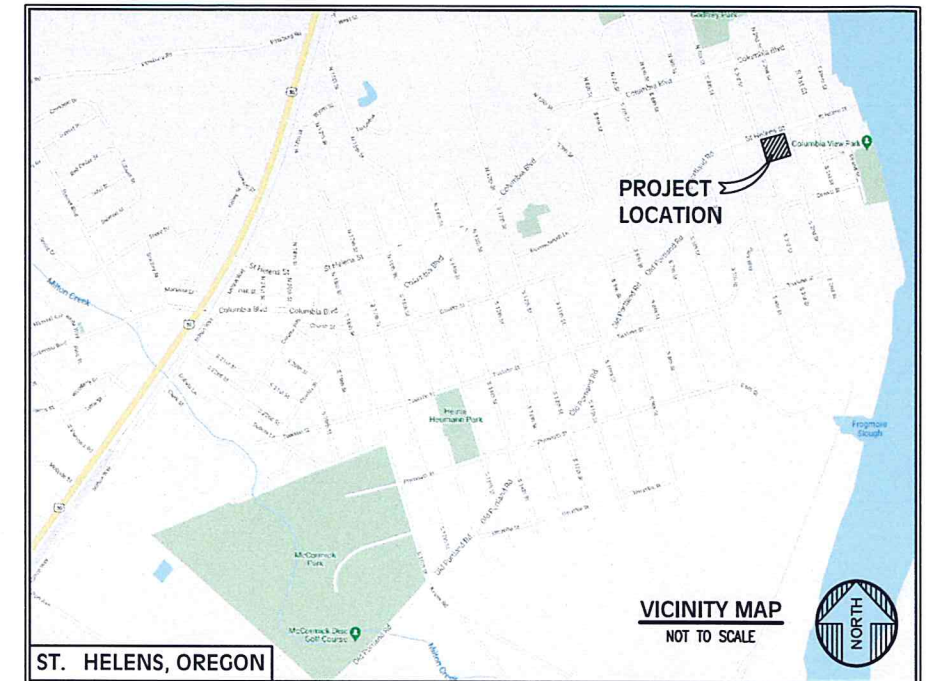
ADDRESS: 251 ST. HELENS STREET, ST. HELENS, OREGON 97051
LATITUDE/LONGITUDE: 45° 51' 48" N, 122° 48' 00" W
JURISDICTION: CITY OF ST. HELENS
ZONE: RIVERFRONT DISTRICT (RD) W/ HISTORIC RESOURCE OVERLAY
TAX LOT NUMBER: 12600
MAP TAX LOT NUMBER: 4103-BB-12600
LOT SIZE: 45,600 SQ FT (1.05 ACRES)

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TYPE, HEIGHT AND AREA:

BUILDING CODE EDITION: 2019 OREGON STRUCTURAL SPECIALTY CODE (OSSC)
OCCUPANCY GROUP: (B) BUSINESS & (A-3) COMMUNITY HALL
TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION: TYPE V-B SPRINKLERED
ALLOWABLE BLDG HEIGHT: 60 FEET PER TABLE 504.3 > 47 FEET ACTUAL



PLOT PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 30'



PROJECT TEAM

OWNER (CURRENT)

THE OLDE SCHOOL LLC
55051 FULLERTON ROAD, WARREN, OR 97053
CONTACT: RAY PUTNAM
PHONE: (503) 936-0139
ray@elevatormaintco.com

OWNER (PENDING)

COLUMBIA COUNTY FACILITIES
COLUMBIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX
230 STRAND STREET, ST. HELENS, OREGON 97051
CONTACT: CASEY GARRETT
PHONE: (503) 396-1944
casey.garrett@columbiacountyor.gov

PROJECT MANAGER

LOWER COLUMBIA ENGINEERING, LLC
58640 McNULTY WAY, ST. HELENS, OREGON 97051
PHONE: (503) 366-0399
CONTACT: BRETT KAHR
brett@lowercolumbiaengr.com

CIVIL ENGINEER

LOWER COLUMBIA ENGINEERING, LLC
58640 McNULTY WAY, ST. HELENS, OREGON 97051
PHONE: (503) 366-0399
CONTACT: ANDREW NEIMI, P.E.
andrew@lowercolumbiaengr.com

ARCHITECT

LOWER COLUMBIA ENGINEERING
58640 McNULTY WAY, ST. HELENS, OREGON, 97051
CONTACT: CARL BEAN
PHONE: (503) 366-0399
carl@lowercolumbiaengr.com

DRAWING INDEX

SHEET	DESCRIPTION
G-1	PLOT PLAN, VICINITY MAP, DRAWING INDEX, & NOTES
C-1	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
A-1	ENTRY RAMP PLAN AND ELEVATION
A-2	EXISTING BUILDING PHOTOS
A-3	RAMP SECTIONS & DETAILS

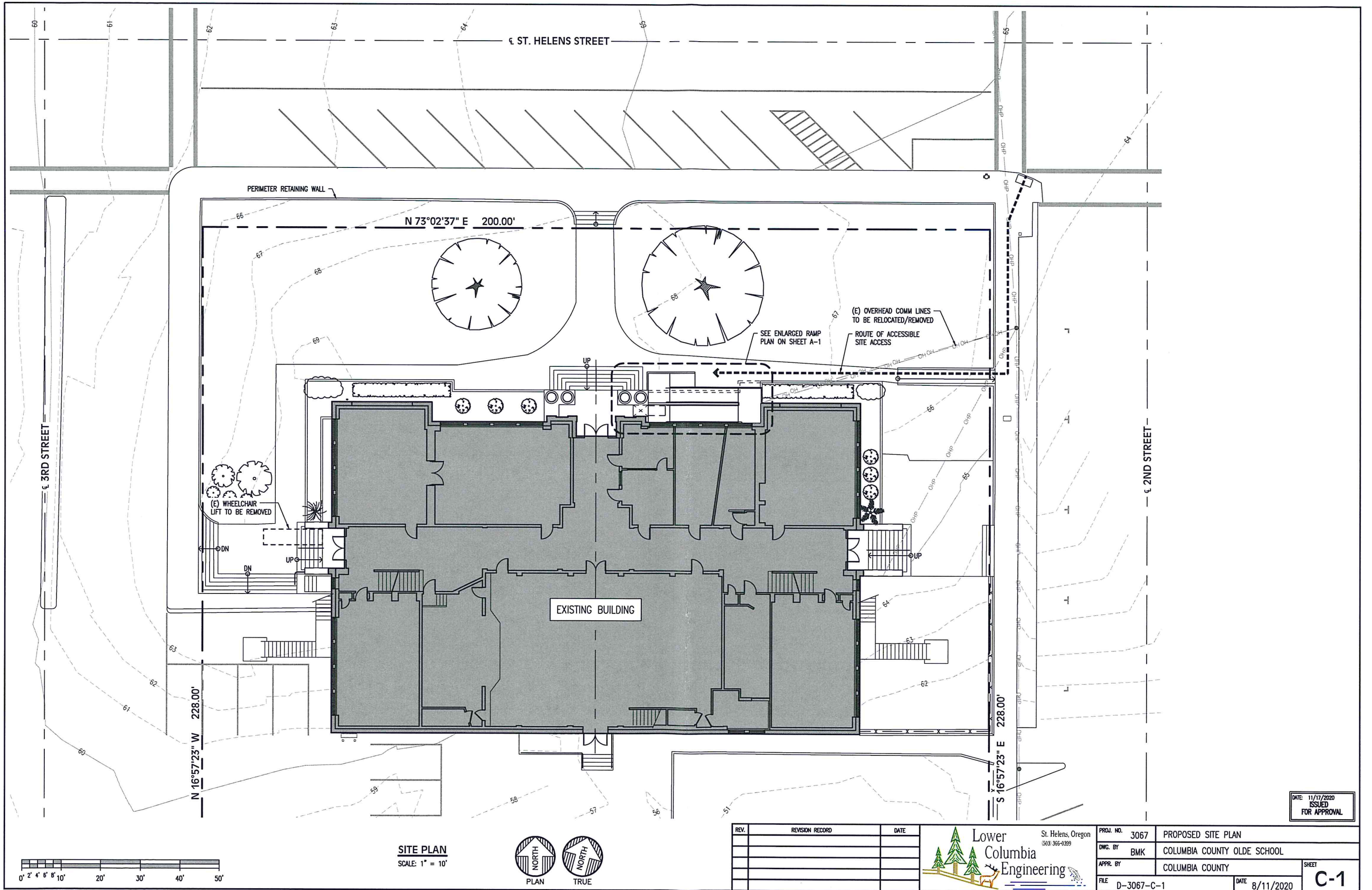
DATE: 11/17/2020
ISSUED
FOR APPROVAL

REV.	REVISION RECORD	DATE



PROJ. NO.	3067	PLOT PLAN, VICINITY MAP, DRAWING INDEX, & NOTES
DWG. BY	BMK	COLUMBIA COUNTY OLDE SCHOOL
APPR. BY	COLUMBIA COUNTY	SHEET
FILE	D-3067-G-1	DATE 11/05/2020

G-1





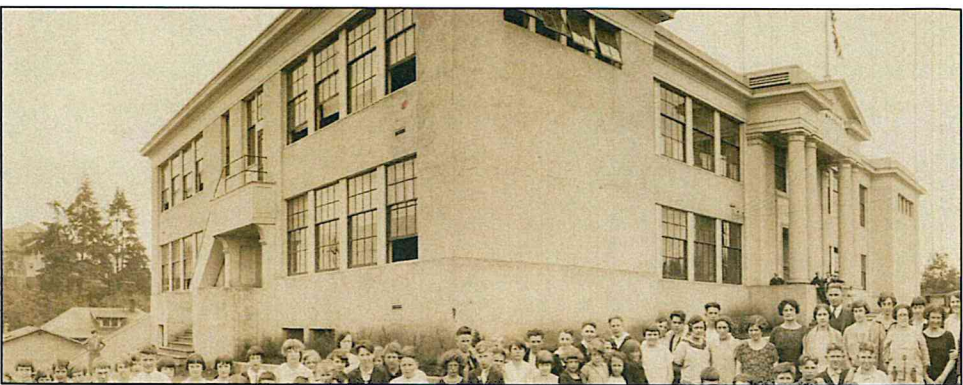
OLDE SCHOOL BUILDING - EXISTING EAST ELEVATION



OLDE SCHOOL BUILDING - EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION



OLDE SCHOOL BUILDING - EXISTING WEST ELEVATION



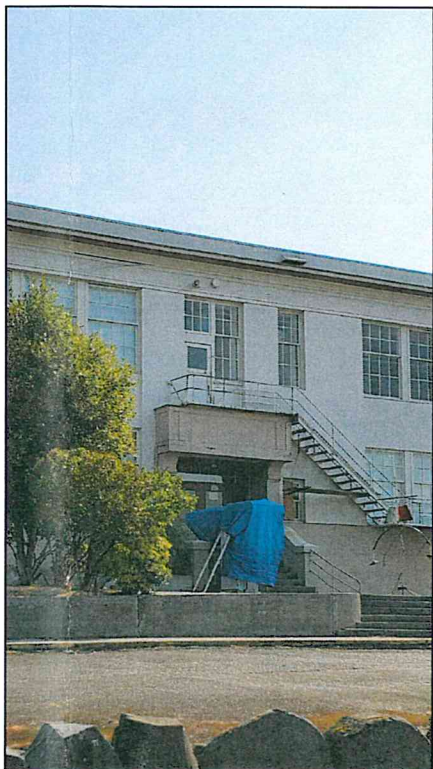
OLDE SCHOOL BUILDING - VIEW FACING SOUTHWEST
CIRCA 1924



OLDE SCHOOL BUILDING - VIEW FACING SOUTHEAST
CIRCA 1950



VIEW OF PROPOSED RAMP AREA



WHEELCHAIR LIFT TO BE REMOVED



OLDE SCHOOL BUILDING - VIEW FACING SOUTH
CIRCA 2008

DATE: 11/17/2020
ISSUED
FOR APPROVAL

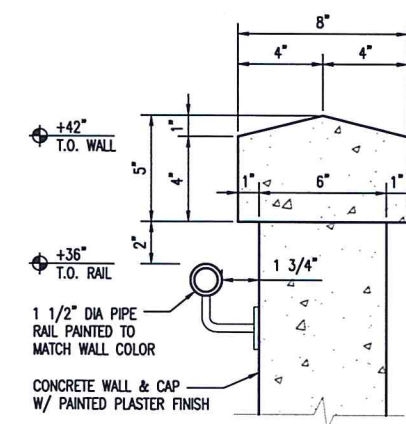
REV.	REVISION RECORD	DATE

Lower
Columbia
Engineering

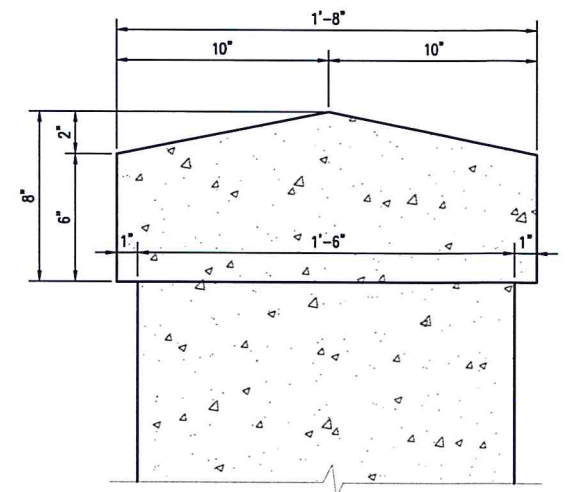
St. Helens, Oregon
(503) 366-0399

PROJ. NO.	3067	EXISTING BUILDING PHOTOS
DWG. BY	BMK	COLUMBIA COUNTY OLDE SCHOOL
APPR. BY		COLUMBIA COUNTY
FILE	D-3067-A-2	DATE 8/11/2020

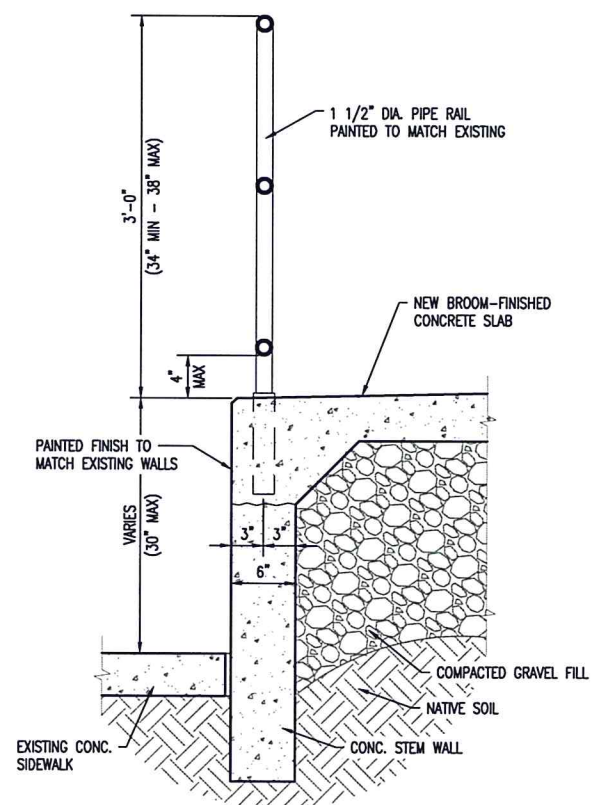
SHEET
A-2



EXISTING STAIR WALL SECTION



ACCESSIBLE RAMP SECTION
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



PIPE HANDRAIL SECTION
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

REV.	REVISION RECORD	DATE



PROJ. NO.	3067	RAMP SECTIONS & DETAILS	
DWG. BY	BMK	COLUMBIA COUNTY OLDE SCHOOL	
APPR. BY		COLUMBIA COUNTY	SHEET
FILE	D-3067-A-3	DATE	8/11/2020

A-3

DATE: 11/17/2020
ISSUED
FOR APPROVAL