

Certificate of Appropriateness
BAR #HST25-0055
144 Chancellor Street, Tax Parcel 090109000
The Corner ADC District
Owner: Delta Zeta National Housing Corp.
Applicant: Kevin Blair
Project: Demolition of contributing structure

Mr. Blair,

The CoA for the above referenced project was denied by the City of Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review on January 22, 2025. The following action was taken:

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, I move to find the proposed demolition of 144 Chancellor Street does not satisfy the BAR's criteria and its guidelines and is not compatible with this property and other properties in [The Corner] ADC District. For the simple reason of the cultural significance of the historic building and the street on which it is located, the BAR denies the application as submitted.

Seconded by Ms. Lewis. [In the subsequent discussion the BAR members referred to the staff report and comments. See meeting minutes and video recording of the meeting at 039:45.]

Motion: Mr. Timmerman **Second:** Ms. Lewis **Abstention:** Mr. Bailey **Vote:** 6-0

For specifics of the discussion, the meeting video is on-line at:
https://youtu.be/JON9A_6p7R4

Per City Code Chapter 34, Division 5.2.7.E (*Action After Decision*), following the denial of a CoA request, the applicant may appeal the decision to City council by filing a written notice of appeal within ten working days of the date of the decision, February 5, 2025. The appeal shall "set forth, in writing, the grounds for an appeal, including the procedure(s) or standard(s) alleged to have been violated or misapplied by the BAR, and any additional information, factors or opinions they deems (sic.) relevant to the [appeal]. The applicant, or their agent, and any aggrieved person, will be given an opportunity to be heard by the City Council on the appeal." The fee to submit an appeal of a BAR decision is \$125. (Copy of Div. 5.2.7. is attached to this e-mail.)

If you have any additional questions, feel free to reach out to me or contact Jeff Werner (wernerjb@charlottesville.gov).

Sincerely,
Kate



Kate Richardson
Historic Preservation & Design Planner II
Neighborhood Development Services
City of Charlottesville
434.970.3515 | richardsonka@charlottesville.gov

**City of Charlottesville
Board of Architectural Review
Staff Report
January 22, 2025**



Certificate of Appropriateness Application

BAR #HST25-0055

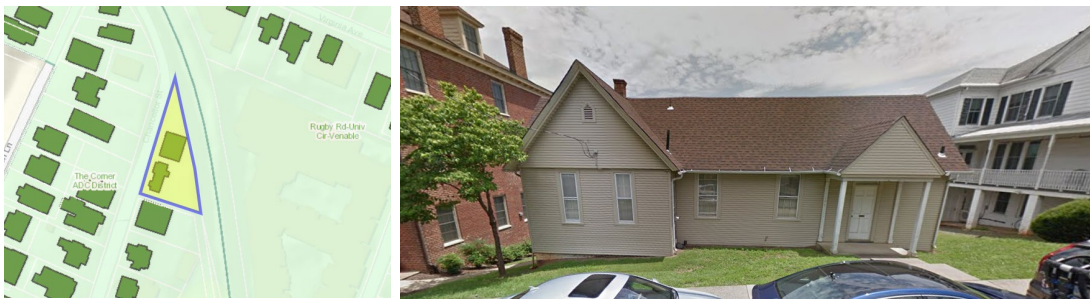
144 Chancellor Street, Tax Parcel 090109000

The Corner ADC District

Owner: Delta Zeta National Housing Corp.

Applicant: Kevin Blair / Blair Company

Project: Demolition of contributing structure



Background

Year Built: c1905

District: The Corner ADC District

Status: Contributing

Originally constructed as a schoolhouse (likely between 1905 and 1917, operated as *Howison's Schoolhouse*, also *Little Red Schoolhouse*), it was reportedly vacant by 1920, after which it served as a residential rental. It was acquired in 1979 by the adjacent sorority, its current owner, and most recently used for storage. The City's survey reports the structure was renovated/remodeled in the 1977, 1978, and 1986. The extent of those alterations is not noted.

[Follow link to view the historic survey.](#)

Prior BAR Actions

July 16, 2013 – CoA for demolition denied 7-0 ([follow link to view](#)). Appealed to City Council on October 21, 2013, where the BAR's decision was unanimously upheld (5-0).

Application

- Submittal: Initial Structural Condition Assessment of 144 Chancellor Street, Dunbar letter to owner dated October 28, 2024. Also, site plan and applicant's sketch of foundation profile.

Request CoA to demolish the existing, approx. 20-ft x 56-ft, single-story, wood-framed structure.

Discussion and Recommendations

As expressed to staff by the applicant, the structure does not meet the owner's space needs, and they do not want to incur the expenses necessary to stabilize and maintain the structure. The applicant provided a report by a licensed engineer stating the primary structural concern relates to the observed downhill shift [leaning] and potential failure of the masonry piers and walls supporting the framed-structure. No value is assigned to the proposed repairs; however, the report suggests the cost would be "a significant fraction of the complete replacement of the building."

See staff's notes (below) under *Criteria for Review and Decision per City Code* and *ADC District Design Guidelines for Considering Demolitions*. In summary of the comments, staff suggests the review criteria and the design guidelines recommend against approving this request. That is, the BAR should deny the requested CoA for the demolition of the structure at 144 Chancellor Street.

Should the BAR approve the CoA, staff recommends a condition requiring documentation of the building prior to demolition. (Proposed condition in the draft motion for approval.)

Should the BAR deny the CoA, the applicant may appeal to Council and seek further remedy per City Code Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7.E.

Suggested Motions

Approval: Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, I move to find that the proposed demolition of 144 Chancellor Street satisfies the BAR's criteria and guidelines and is compatible with this property and other properties in the Downtown ADC District, and that the BAR approves the application *as* application with the following condition:

- Prior to approval of a demolition permit, the structure will be documented thoroughly with photographs and measured drawings according to the Historic American Building Standards, with the documentation submitted for the BAR archives.

Denial: Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, I move to find that the proposed demolition of 144 Chancellor Street does not satisfy or the BAR's criteria and guidelines and is not compatible with this property and other properties in the Downtown ADC District, and for the following reasons the BAR denies the application as submitted: ...

Criteria, Standards, and Guidelines

Note re: BAR authority: Per Code, the BAR is charged only with the authority to approve or deny a design review CoA, following an evaluation applying the criteria under Code Sec. 34-5.2.7. Major Historic Review. The BAR does not evaluate a proposed use. Additionally, per Code Sec. 34-5.2.7.E.2., the issuance of a CoA "cannot, in and of itself, authorize any construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, demolition, or other improvements or activities requiring a building permit. Where a building permit is required, no activity authorized by a

[CoA] is lawful unless conducted in accordance with the required building permit and all applicable building code requirements.”

Review Criteria Generally

Per Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7. C.2:

- a. In considering a particular application the BAR will approve the application unless it finds:
 - i. That the proposal does not meet specific standards set forth within this Section or applicable provisions of the City’s design guidelines; and
 - ii. The proposal is incompatible with the historic, cultural or architectural character of the district in which the property is located or the IPP that is the subject of the application.
- b. The BAR will approve, approve with conditions, or deny applications for Certificates of Appropriateness in accordance with the provisions of this Section.
- c. The BAR, or City Council on appeal, may require conditions of approval as are necessary or desirable to ensure that any new construction or addition is compatible with the scale and character of the Architecture Design Control District, Individually Protected Property, or Historic Conservation District. Prior to attaching conditions to an approval, due consideration will be given to the cost of compliance with the proposed conditions as well as the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Conditions may require a reduction in height or massing, consistent with the City’s design guidelines and subject to the following limitations: [not germane]
- d. Demolition: The BAR, or City Council on appeal, may make such requirements for, and conditions of approval as are necessary or desirable to protect the safety of adjacent buildings, structures, or properties, and of any persons thereon; and, in case of a partial removal, encapsulation or demolition:
 - i. To protect the structural integrity of the portions of a building or structure which are to remain following the activity that is the subject of a building permit; or
 - ii. To protect historic or architecturally significant features on the portions of a building or structure which are to remain following the activity that is the subject of a building permit.

Criteria for Review and Decision per City Code

Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7. D.1.b.

Review is limited to following factors in determining whether or not to permit the moving, removing, encapsulation or demolition, in whole or in part, of a contributing structure or IPP:

- i. The historic, architectural, or cultural significance, if any, of the specific structure or property, including, without limitation:
 - a) The age of the structure or property;
 - o Staff Note: The building was built c1905.
 - b) Whether it has been designated a National Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register;
 - o Staff Note: The building (VDHR #104-133-28) is a contributing structure in the VLR/NRHP-listed *Rugby Road-University Corner Historic District** (VDHR #104-133). www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-0133/

From the NRHP listing:

144 Chancellor St. (*The Annex*): Built as a school or dwelling; now a sorority house. Victorian Vernacular. Ca. 1900-07. Frame with weatherboarding; 1 story; gable roof with cross-gable; asymmetrical 5-bay front with projecting 2-bay end unit; 1-story, 1-bay distyle porch. Now an annex of neighboring Delta Zeta sorority house, this long low frame building served as a public school in 1907.

* The area within the *Rugby Road-University Corner Historic District* includes the City-designated *The Corner ADC District*, the City-designated *Rugby Road-University Circle-Venable Neighborhood ADC District*, and a portion of University Grounds west of Madison Lane and north of University Avenue.

- c) Whether, and to what extent, the building or structure is associated with an historic person, architect or master craftsman, or with an historic event;
 - Staff Note: There are no known associations.
 - d) Whether the building or structure, or any of its features, represent an infrequent or the first or last remaining example within the City of a particular architectural style or feature;
 - Staff Note: The former school building represents an unusual building type in The Corner ADC District.
 - e) Whether the building or structure is of such old or distinctive design, texture, or material that it could not be reproduced, or could be reproduced only with great difficulty; and
 - Staff Note: 144 Chancellor Street could be reproduced.
 - f) The degree to which distinguishing characteristics, qualities, features, or materials remain;
 - Staff Note: The simple design of the schoolhouse has been retained. The footprint and openings appear original. The building has been remodeled, including the addition of siding, and reconstruction of the entrance porch, in the same size as the original, which appears to have been added between 1913 and 1920.
- ii. Whether, and to what extent, a contributing structure is linked, historically or aesthetically, to other buildings or structures within an existing applicable District, or is one of a group of properties within such a district whose concentration or continuity possesses greater significance than many of its component buildings and structures.
- Staff Note: 144 Chancellor Street is linked historically and aesthetically to other residential and formerly residential buildings along Chancellor Street and Elliewood Avenue. This resource offers an example of a small vernacular building built as a school. This connection greatly adds to the significance of the structure.

- iii. The overall condition and structural integrity of the building or structure, as indicated by studies prepared by a qualified professional engineer and provided by the applicant, or other information provided to the BAR;
 - Staff Note: The applicant has submitted a structural report prepared by Dunbar, dated February 9, 2010, see attached. Also available is similar documentation submitted for the 2013 demolition request. (See link in *Prior BAR Reviews*.)
- iv. Whether, and to what extent, the applicant proposes means, methods or plans for moving, removing, or demolishing the structure or property that preserves portions, features, or materials that are significant to the property's historic, architectural, or cultural value; and
 - Staff Note: The applicant intends to raze the building, entirely.
- v. Any applicable provisions of the City's design guidelines.
 - Staff Note: See below, under *ADC District Design Guidelines for Considering Demolitions*.

ADC District Design Guidelines for Considering Demolitions

Link to guidelines: [Chapter 7 Demolition and Moving](#)

A. Introduction

Historic buildings are irreplaceable community assets; and once they are gone, they are gone forever. With each successive demolition or removal, the integrity of a historic district is further eroded. Therefore, the demolition or moving of any contributing building in a historic district should be considered carefully.

Charlottesville's Zoning Ordinance contains provisions that require the property owner to obtain approval prior to demolishing a contributing property in a historic district or an Individually Protected Property (IPP).

The following review criteria should be used for IPP's and (contributing) buildings that are proposed for demolition or relocation.

Plans to demolish or remove a protected property must be approved by the BAR or, on appeal, by the City Council after consultation with the BAR. Upon receipt of an application for demolition or removal of a structure, the BAR has 45 days to either approve or deny the request. If the request is denied and the owner appeals to the City Council, the Council can either approve or deny the request. If Council denies the request, the owner may appeal to the City Circuit Court.

In addition to the right to appeal to City Council or the Circuit Court, there is a process that enables the owner to demolish the building or structure if certain conditions have been met. After the owner has appealed to City Council and has been denied, the owner may choose to make a bona fide offer to sell the building or structure and land.

The property must be offered at a price reasonably related to the fair market value of the structure and land and must be made to the city or to any person or firm or agency that gives

reasonable assurance that it is willing to preserve and restore the property. City Council must first confirm that the offering price is reasonably related to the fair market value.

The time during which the offer to sell must remain open varies according to the price, as set out in the State Code and the Zoning Ordinance.

If such a bona fide offer to sell is not accepted within the designated time period, the owner may renew the demolition request to City Council and will be entitled [to a CoA that permits demolition].

B. Demolition of Historic Structures

Review Criteria for Demolition

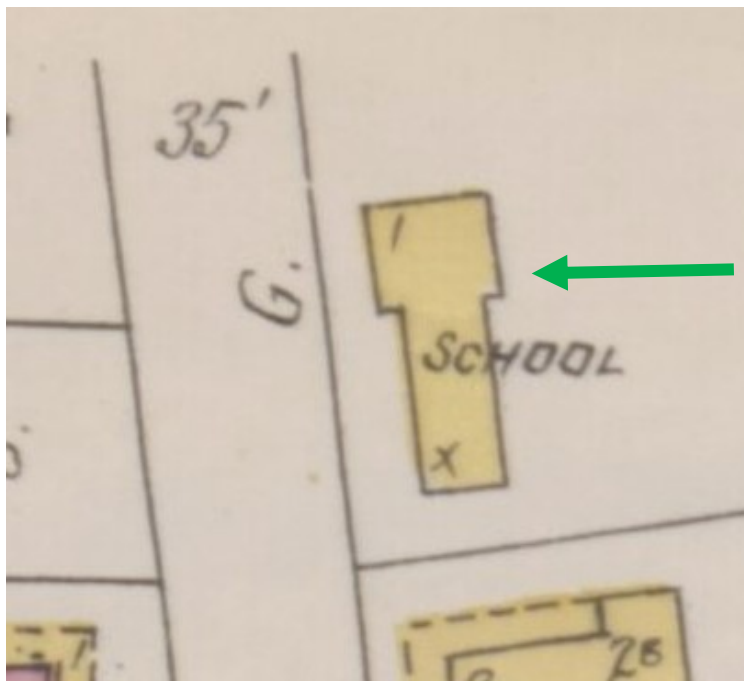
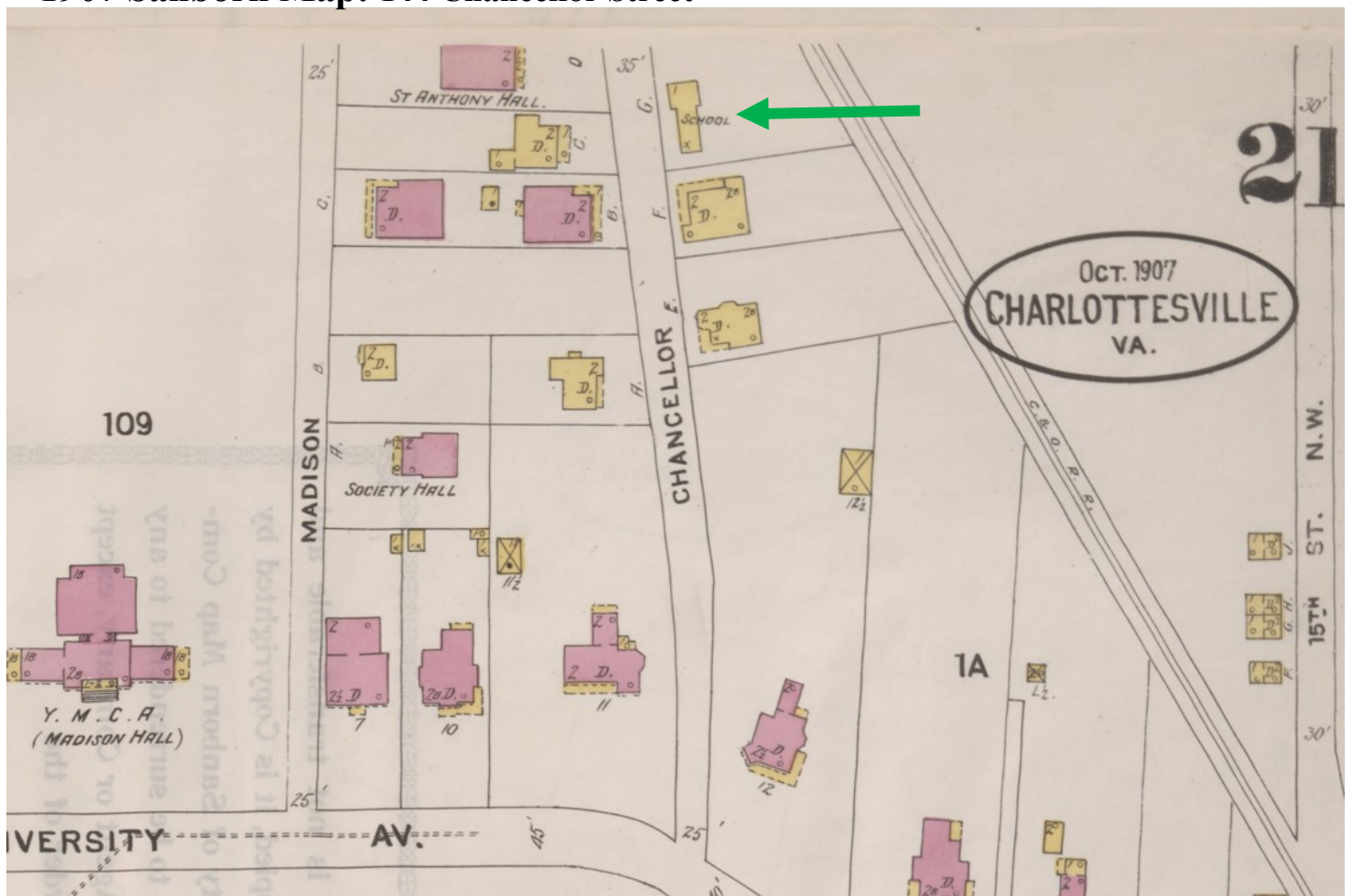
- 1) The standards established by the City Code, Section 34-278 [now Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7. D.1.b.]
 - Staff Note: See above under *Criteria for Review and Decision per City Code*.
- 2) The public necessity of the proposed demolition.
 - Staff Note: There is no public necessity.
- 3) The public purpose or interest in land or buildings to be protected.
 - Staff Note: Per City Code, the establishment of historic districts and through the designation of individually significant properties is intended to *preserve and protect buildings, structures and properties which serve as important visible reminders of the historic, cultural, and architectural or archaeological heritage of the City, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or this nation.* (Chapter 34, Sec. 2.9.2.A.)
- 4) The existing character of the setting of the structure or area and its surroundings.
 - Staff Note: Initially developed as a residential area associated with UVa faculty and staff, the historic buildings along Chancellor Street are now primarily occupied by sororities and fraternities.
- 5) Whether or not a relocation of the structure would be a practical and preferable alternative to demolition.
 - Staff Note: Staff cannot comment on the practicability of moving this structure. This is a unique structure within its context—a schoolhouse likely associated with the children of University faculty and staff; however, relocation would be preferable to demolition.
- 6) Whether or not the proposed demolition would affect adversely or positively other historic buildings or the character of the historic district.
 - Staff Note: This is large ADC District; however, even the incremental loss of historic resources erodes the character of the district. That is, this is a district; its historic character is the sum of its parts.
- 7) Whether or not there has been a professional economic and structural feasibility study for rehabilitating or reusing the structure and whether or not its findings support the proposed demolition.

- Staff Note: The October 28, 2024 report from Dunbar recommends repairs are necessary to the supporting masonry piers and walls.

Guidelines for Demolition

- 1) Demolish a historic structure only after all preferable alternatives have been exhausted.
- 2) Document the building thoroughly through photographs and, for especially significant buildings, measured drawings according to Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Standards. This information should be retained by the City of Charlottesville Department of Neighborhood Development Services and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
- 3) If the site is to remain vacant for any length of time, maintain the empty lot in a manner consistent with other open spaces in the districts.

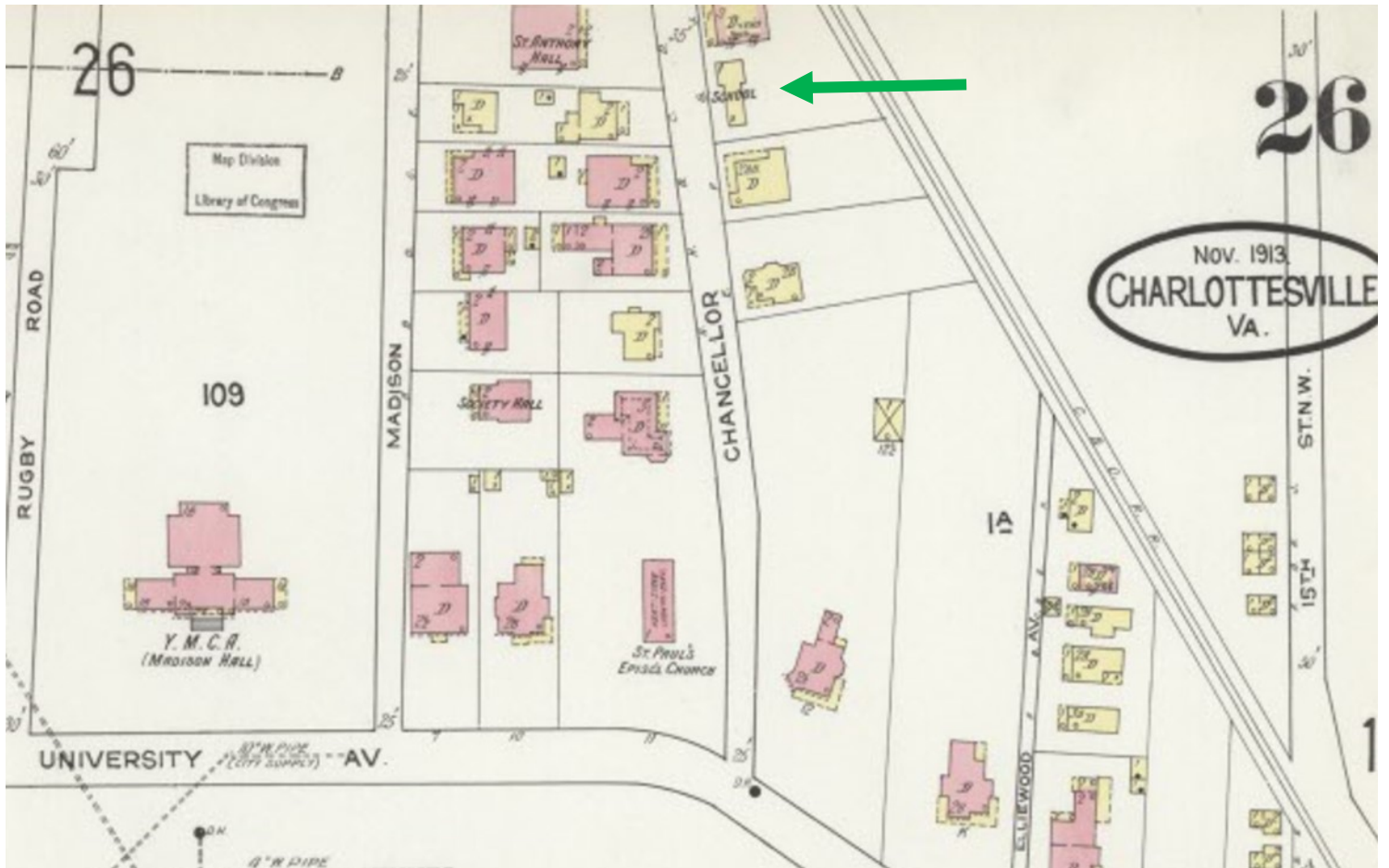
1907 Sanborn Map: 144 Chancellor Street



144 Chancellor Street

School, single-story, wood-framed,
shingle roof

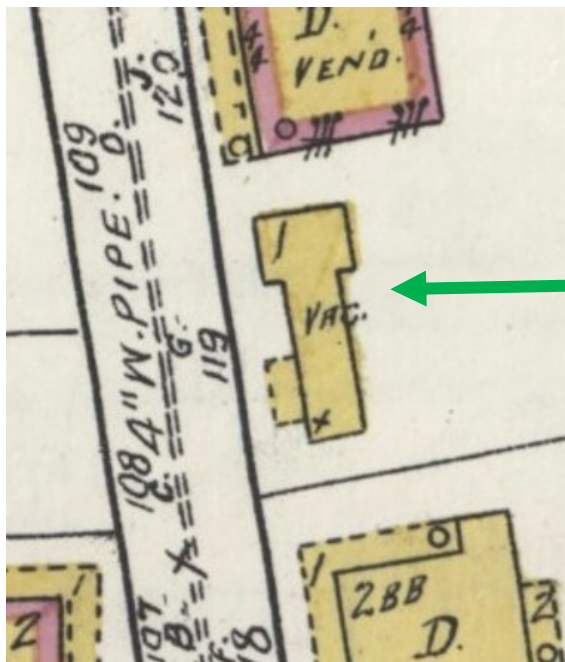
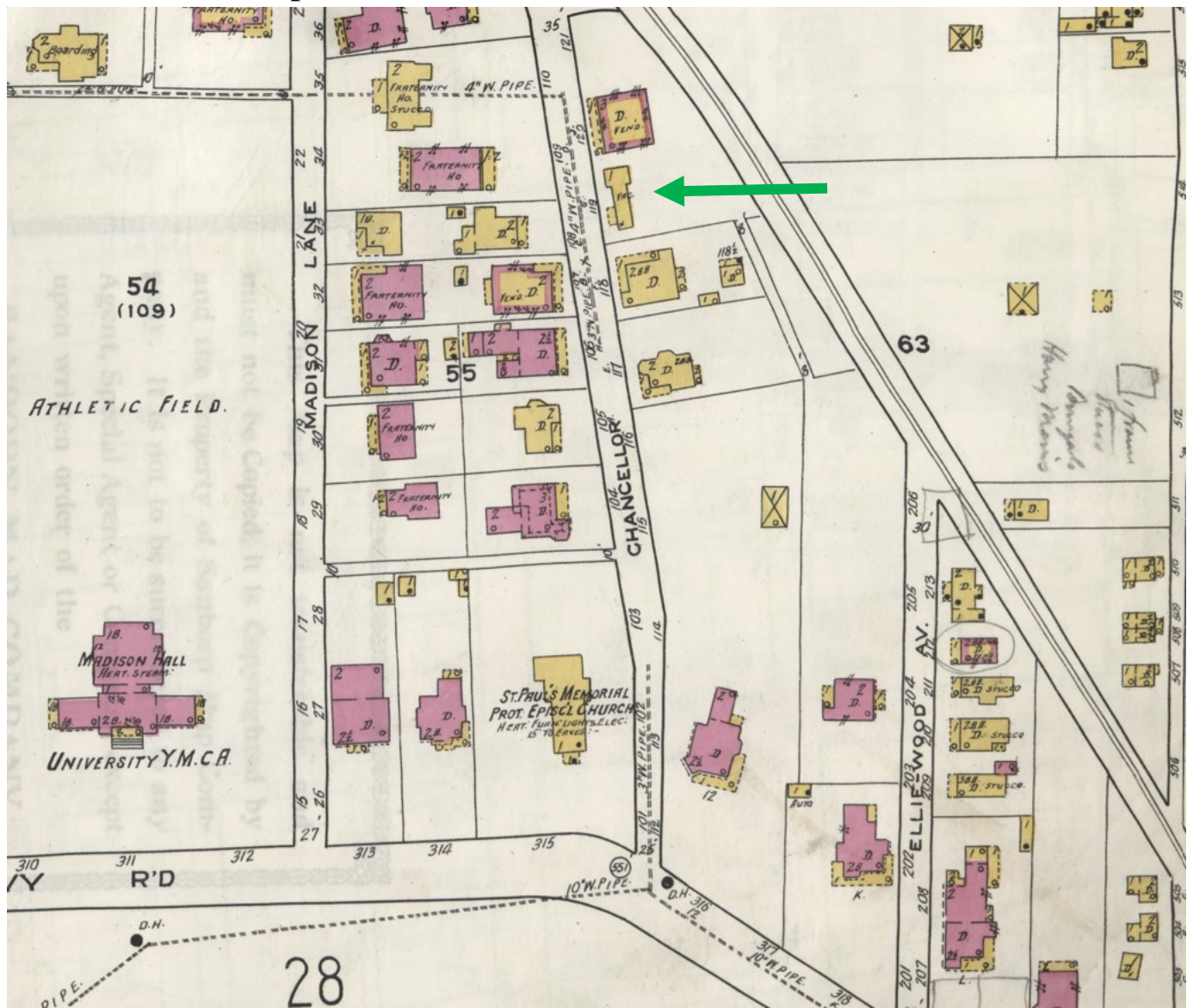
1913 Sanborn Map: 144 Chancellor Street



144 Chancellor Street

School, single-story, wood-framed,
shingle roof

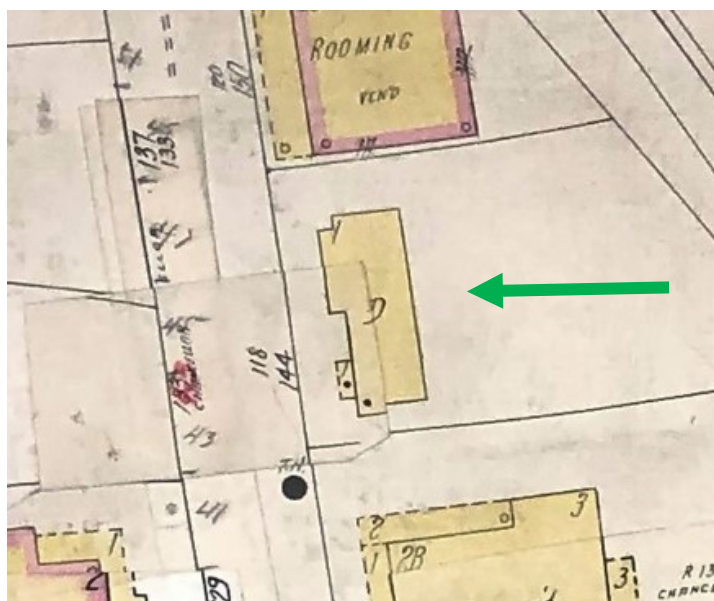
1920 Sanborn Map: 144 Chancellor Street



144 Chancellor Street

Vacant, single-story, wood-framed, shingle roof

c1960s Sanborn Map: 144 Chancellor Street



144 Chancellor Street

Dwelling, single-story, wood-framed,
composition roof

12/5/2024



110 Third Street N.E.
Charlottesville, VA 22902

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dunbarstructural.com

October 28, 2024

Tammy Hubbard (PROPERTYMANAGEMENT@DELTAZETA.ORG)
Property Manager
Delta Zeta
202 East Church St
Oxford, OH 45056

KEVIN BLAIR
blairco2008@yahoo.com

RE: 144 Chancellor St.
Initial Structural Condition Assessment
Dunbar Project 2410-72

Dear Tammy,

As requested, we recently visited the 144 Chancellor St to review the condition of the structure with the understanding the building is intended to be repurposed for light storage. Following is a summary of our initial observations and recommendations.

Observations

The existing building is a one-story house built around 1900 with the exterior dimensions of approximately 20ft x 56ft. The structure consists of a wood frame construction being supported by a solid brick retaining wall along the west side and brick piers around the remaining perimeter with interior piers supporting the floor as well.





The interior of the building shows signs of multiple roof leaks with plaster ceilings having come loose and fallen on the ground. It was indicated that the roof has repaired recently with a new asphalt shingles installed.

The ground floor wood flooring and joists appear to be in fair condition. No signs of major rot or other damage. The floor joists consist of actual 2x10's at 16" oc. Typical span for the joists is approximately 9 ft.

The front porch consists of a 10ft x6ft concrete slab on grade supporting the porches roof. At the building it is apparent that the concrete slab on grade has settled approximately 1 to 2" in elevation. This is apparent in the post imprints in the concrete indicating the posts and door sill use to be in close contact with the concrete slab.

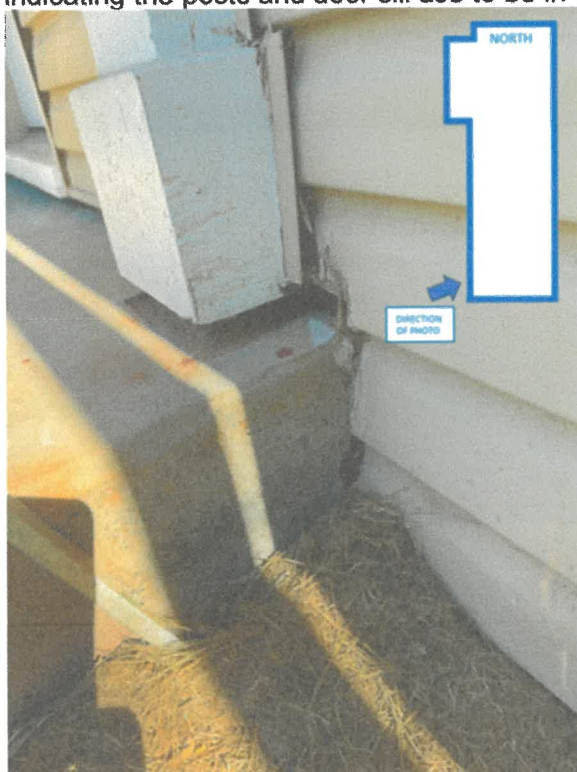


Photo 1: Imprints of the post in concrete indicate the slabs original position.



Photo 2: Imprints of the post in concrete indicate the slabs original position.

The foundation along the west side of the building consists of a solid brick masonry retaining wall of multi wythe thickness 4 to 5 ft tall within the crawl space. The earth slopes down to the wall from the road which is approximately 15ft from the building at an elevation of 2'-6" above ground floor. The wall is bowed out approximately 3 to 5". It also appears that the top of the wall has shifted laterally. There are numerous horizontal cracks at mid elevation along the wall. Several of the internal brick piers supporting the ground floor are out of vertical by up to 2". The ground within the crawl space appears to be damper than normal considering we have not had any precipitation in the past few weeks.

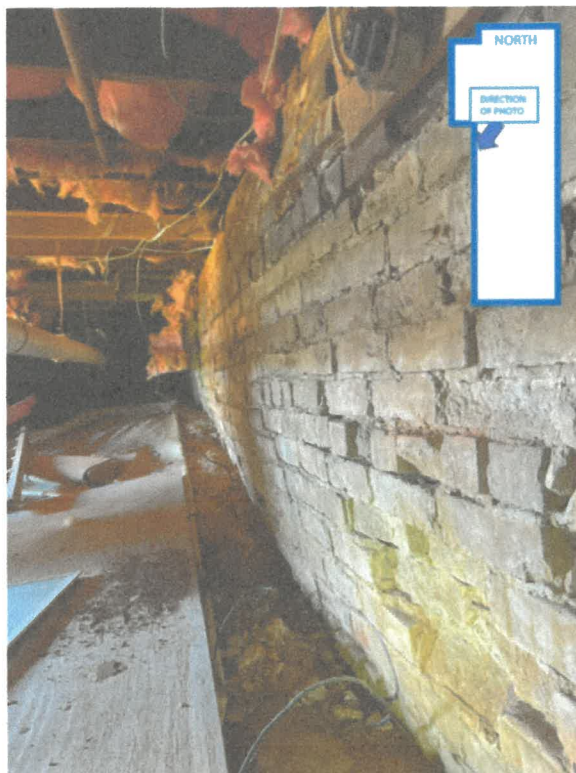


Photo 3: West side retaining wall with significant bow.

Along the perimeter of the building, the brick piers appear to be leaning towards downslope (easterly direction) as well. This reinforces the sense that the building has shifted laterally down slope potentially a couple of inches.



Photo 4/5: Perimeter piers with gaps between CMU infill and piers being larger at top.



Photo 6: Perimeter piers with gaps between CMU infill and piers being larger at top.



There is CMU infill along the south, north and east side in between the perimeter brick piers. These walls do not appear to be connected to the piers or the ground floor as evidence that these walls can move laterally simply by pushing them and that there are noticeable gaps in the piers and the CMU infill. Note these gaps tend to be wider at the top of the wall further indicating the piers have shifted down slope.

Recommendations

We have several structural concerns with the existing building.

- The west side brick retaining wall appears to be failing.
- The CMU walls do not appear to be connected at the top and are unstable in the out of plane direction of the wall.
- The slope of the ground is permitting water to build up and infiltrate the west side of the building.

Lateral earth pressure along the west side is displacing the building and causing cracking and failure of the brick retaining wall. This is compounded by water runoff pressing against the wall as well. The presence of horizontal cracks along the mortar as well as the bow in the wall indicates the brick wall is failing in flexure. This bow may be the result of why the slab on grade at the porch has dropped 1 to 2" relative to the ground floor. Indications that all of the brick piers have shifted at the top towards the east (downslope) also indicates that the entire building has shifted downslope as well.

If a repair project were to be undertaken, we would generally recommend the following as structural repairs:

- Excavate and remove the existing backfill along the west side of the building.
- Repair or replace the existing brick retaining wall. This would consist of 35ft of wall.
- Install a foundation subdrain that outlets to daylight or suitable drain. Install a waterproofing system against the below grade walls. Replace backfill along the west wall with an open graded stone such as VDOT No. 57.
- Connect the perimeter CMU infill to the brick masonry piers. This could be accomplished with a 2x ledger board and adhesive anchors.
- Connect the building perimeter sill plate to the CMU infill walls.
- Generally performed repairs to the damaged and cracked masonry. This work would involve extensive repointing.

The above repair work would be extensive with the repair costs making up a significant fraction of a complete replacement of the building.

In consideration of the floor joists, we consider the joists to be capable of supporting light storage provided the supporting masonry walls and piers are repaired.

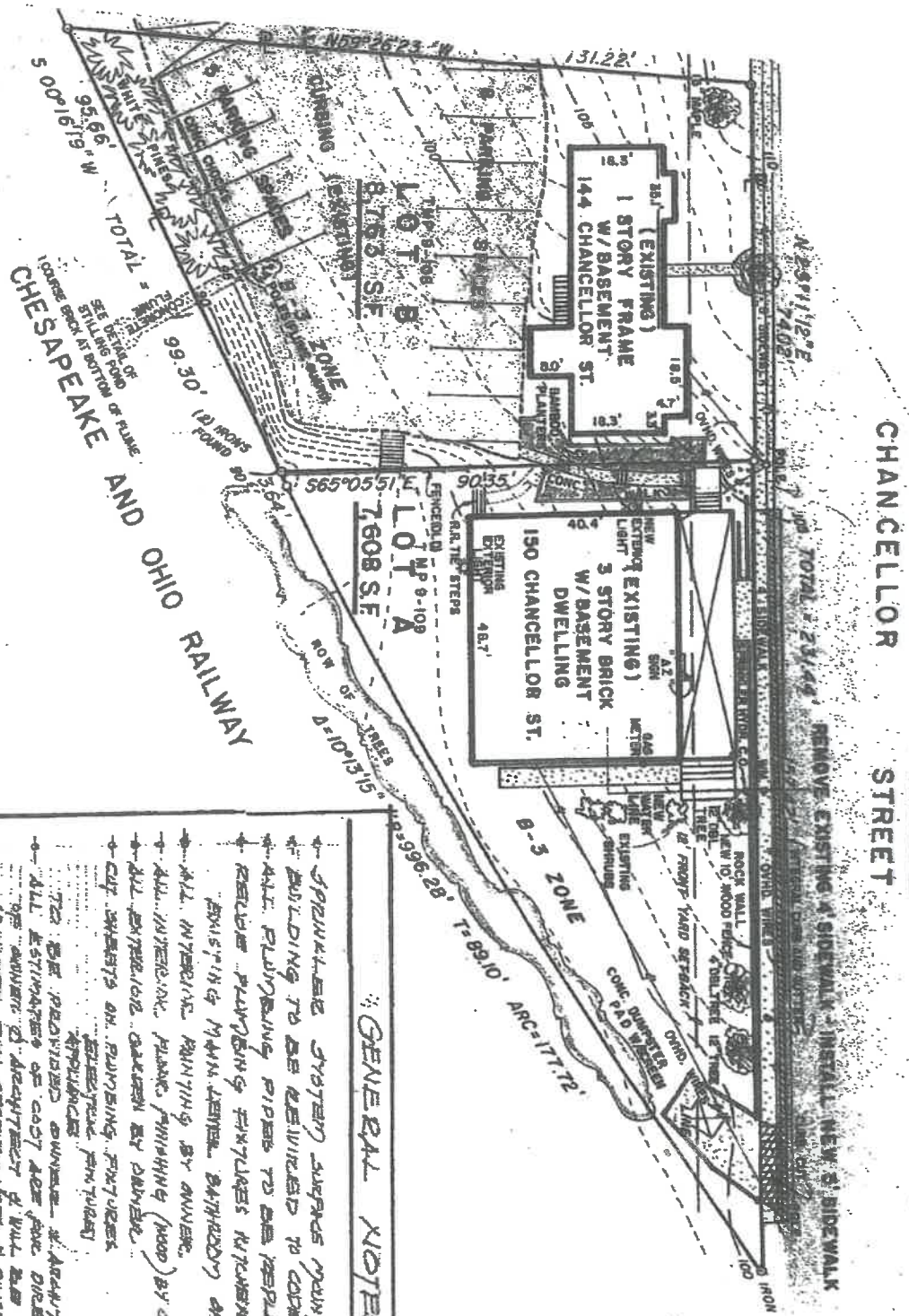


The above is a general summary of observations and recommendations. If requested, we can provide specific repair details. We appreciate the opportunity to assist. Please contact me if you have any comments or questions, or if we can assist further.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. P. Krumpen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert P. Krumpen, PE



DELTA ZETA SORORITY

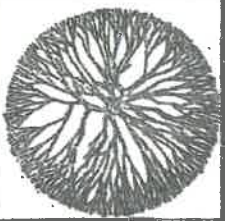
150 CHANCELLOR STREET

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

SCALE 1" = 20'

MARCH 7, 1979

CONTOUR INTERVAL 1'



SITE PLAN
GENERAL NOTES

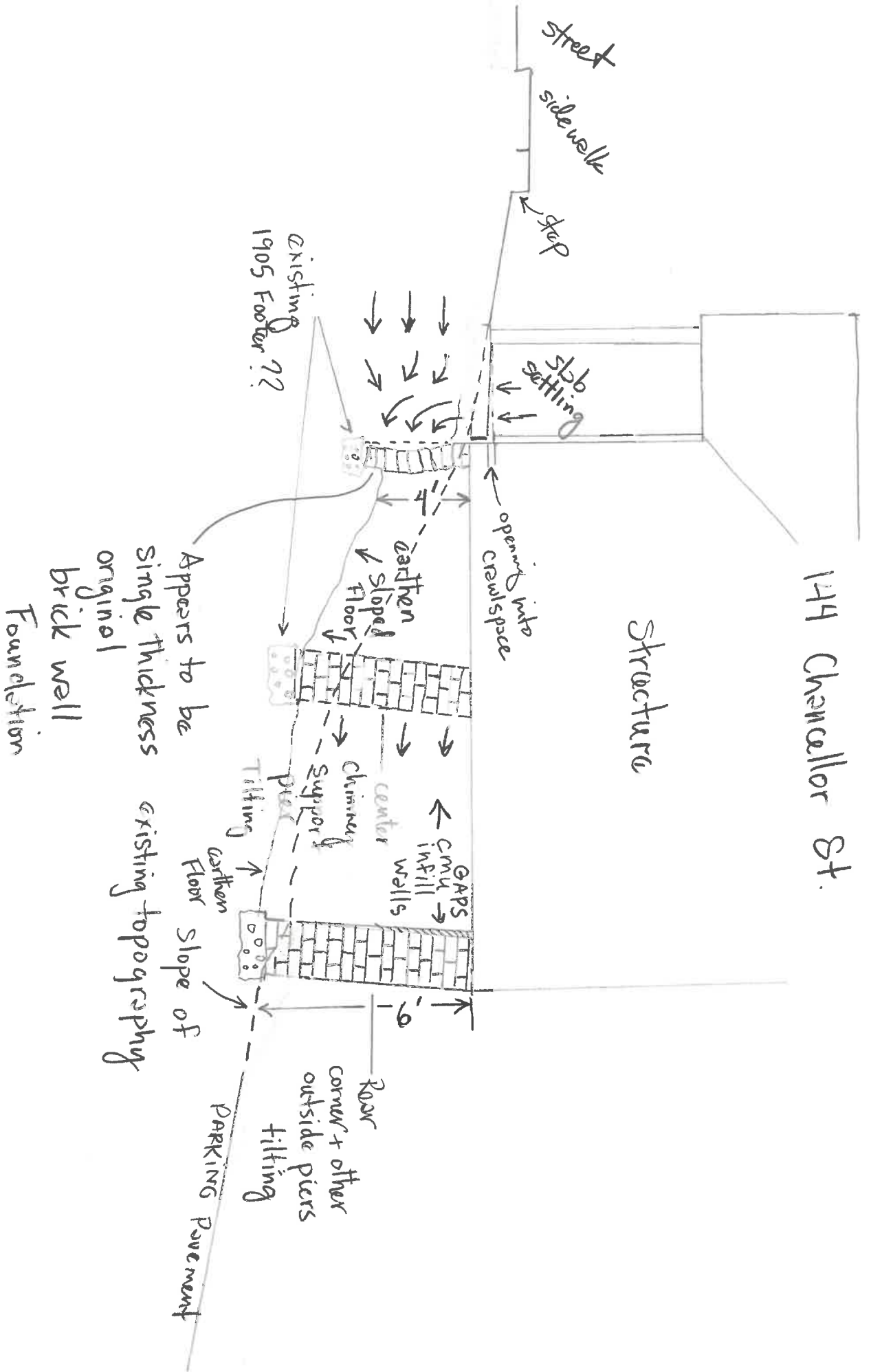
DATE: 6-15-79	CHECKED: [Signature]	APPROVED: [Signature]
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DELTA ZETA

GRIGG, WOOD, BROWNE
EICHMAN & DALGLIESH
ARCHITECTS-AIA CHARLOTTESVILLE VIRGINIA

144 Chancellor St.

Structure



R.S. Blair 12/24