

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

May 18, 2005

To: Toronto Preservation Board
Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Policy & Research, City Planning Division

Subject: 1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West (Palais Royale Ballroom) – Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property
Parkdale-High Park - Ward 14

Purpose:

This report recommends that alterations to the designated heritage property be approved.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the alterations to the heritage property at 1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West, substantially shown in the plans and drawings (Conservation Strategy) prepared by Goldsmith & Company Ltd. Architects dated April 11, 2005 on file with the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, be approved, subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) prior to issuance of any building permits, including permits for excavation, shoring and demolition, the applicant (tenant) will, to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services:
 - (a) retain a qualified heritage architect to prepare a Conservation Plan, detailing interventions and conservation work to the heritage building, providing exterior and interior architectural details and building materials, and to monitor the implementation of the Conservation Plan;
 - (b) submit a detailed photo-record (pre-demolition) of the interior finishes as documentation of the restoration process;

- (c) provide a letter of credit in an amount and form satisfactory to the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division to implement the Conservation Plan;
 - (d) provide a cohesive program for signage and exterior lighting;
 - (ii) the tenant will submit a detailed Landscape Plan with an arborist report to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services in conjunction with the Director, Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division, prior to undertaking any landscaping work on the site; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The subject property is located on the south side of Lake Shore Boulevard West, as shown in Attachment No. 1. The property, as shown in Attachment No. 2, was designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by City Council on August 13, 1984 (By-law No. 563-84). One of the two remaining buildings from the original Sunnyside Amusement Park complex, it is an important cultural landmark in the evolution of the Toronto waterfront.

The building was designed by Chapman, Oxley & Bishop and opened in 1922 as Walter Dean's Boat Factory and quickly became one of Sunnyside's cultural landmarks. In 1932 ownership changed and the facility took on the name Palais Royale. It became one of Toronto's most popular ballrooms during the big band era of the 1930's and 1940's. The spring-based dance floor, the stucco and clapboard exterior with its hipped roof entry pavilion and flanking symmetrical wings, are identified heritage features included in the designation By-law. The dance floor was later found not to be a "spring" floor. Substantial renovations were carried out in 1932, 1939-40, 1949-50 and the late 1960s. As a result, much of the building's early architectural character has been obscured.

The Palais Royale has operated, for approximately the past three decades, under a lease between the City and Palais Royale Ballroom Ltd. During this period, the ownership of the actual Palais Royale building was under dispute. On January 15, 2000, the lease with Palais Royale Ballroom Ltd. expired and the City of Toronto obtained clear title to the building.

In December 1999, in anticipation of the expiry of the lease with Palais Royale Ballroom Ltd., the City issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the lease of the site. The proposal from Shoreline Entertainment was reviewed by a panel of staff from the Parks and Recreation Division, and from Heritage Preservation Services. Staff had subsequent meetings with Shoreline Entertainment to explore the details of their proposal and discuss the qualifications of the company and their consultants. The RFP was awarded to Shoreline Entertainment.

On December 29, 1999, a minor fire broke out on the west side of the Palais Royale. City staff visited the building to inspect the damage. The fire damage was relatively minor and only a small portion of the structure was affected.

Comments:

(a) The proposal

The City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division has agreed to an assignment of the 20 year lease previously held by Shoreline Entertainment to the Pegasus Group. The Pegasus Group proposes to operate the Palais Royale, for the remaining period of the 20-year lease (16 years.) The company plans to build on the Palais Royale's long history as a venue for ballroom dancing, marketing its availability for this activity on a year round basis. In addition, the Pegasus Group wishes to use the facility as a site for activities such as weddings, banquets, seasonal dances/parties, corporate events, performing arts and live music. They are also committed to making the Palais Royale available for community use including fund raising events and community events.

The tenant is proposing to restore and rehabilitate the designated building at 1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West. The proposal involves the restoration or replacement in kind of features and finishes; reinstating some elements; construction of a new enlarged deck structure with wood balcony projection detailed to match the original no longer in place; new stairs at either end of the deck structure, finished in stucco to match the original; construction of a wheelchair ramp and stairs to doors at the northeast corner; and reconfiguration of the existing addition at the southwest corner to include a loading dock, reconfigured entrance and new stairs. The pitched roof is in reasonable condition and all damaged areas in the roof will be repaired. Wherever possible, the doors and windows will be restored to the original detail in pattern, profile and material. The main entrance doors on the north elevation will remain functional.

A number of additions were made to the Palais over the years. The proposal includes the removal of the internal stair cores, the reduction of the balcony to its original cantilevered position and the removal of the internal office space in order to reinstate the internal symmetry. The kitchen extension and former caretaker's residence will remain to provide additional space for the new use.

The tenant is aware that the HVAC systems should be as unobtrusive as possible. The units will be mounted on the rooftop and the clerestory will be preserved.

The initial interior design approach is a subtle art deco interpretation; however, this is subject to further study by the interior designer. Surviving elements from the 1920's such as the fireplace, the original wood structure of the barrel vault and the wood panelling will be preserved and restored. The structural timber will be treated where necessary to retain its integrity. The washrooms, with the exception of barrier free, will still be in the basement. The dance floor, which was found not to be a "spring" floor as designated, is proposed to be replaced.

The exterior of the building has been altered since its construction. The strategy is to maintain this appearance and to repair the fabric in accordance with stated heritage principles, while making interventions where necessary to provide access, light and ventilation for the new use.

(b) Heritage Evaluation

Heritage Preservation Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff has been working with the tenant.

Staff does not object to the proposed adaptive reuse of this heritage building, subject to the conditions described in this report which will ensure that interventions to the heritage property are done in a sensitive manner and that the heritage building will be permanently protected.

The most significant intervention is the removal of the dance floor, but it was discovered that it was not a real “spring” floor and must be replaced due to its advanced state of deterioration. A wood dance floor is an important element of the building; further discussions are required with the applicant on this element of the interior.

In summary, staff believes that the alterations are acceptable given the change in use and the substantial retention and restoration of heritage fabric. Since the proposed use will have some visual impacts on the heritage building, exterior and interior architectural details of the development must be resolved prior to issuance of any building permits, including permits for excavation, demolition and shoring. A detailed photo-record (pre-demolition) of the interior finishes as a documentation of the restoration process, a cohesive program for signage and exterior lighting will also be required prior to the issuance of any building permit.

A detailed Landscape Plan, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services and Director, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, will be required prior to undertaking any landscaping work.

As the development involves interventions in the heritage building, a Conservation Plan, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services will be required prior to the issuance of any building permit. The Conservation Plan will provide detailed drawings and specifications designed to mitigate the impact of interventions to the heritage building, in accordance with generally accepted conservation principles. The Plan must also address the long-term conservation and maintenance requirements of the building and be substantially in accordance with the plans contained in Attachment No. 3. To ensure fulfilment of the conservation plan and protection of the heritage building during construction, financial security in the form of a letter of credit will be required from the tenant, satisfactory to the Chief Planner and Executive Director.

Conclusions:

The heritage building at 1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West known as Palais Royale Ballroom is proposed to be restored and rehabilitated by the tenant. This development will require alterations to and have impacts on the heritage building. Staff considers such alterations to be acceptable subject to the recommendations outlined in this report and further consultation on the

replacement of the dance floor. It is appropriate at this time to approve alterations consistent with the plans and drawings prepared by Goldsmith Borgal Company Ltd. Architects.

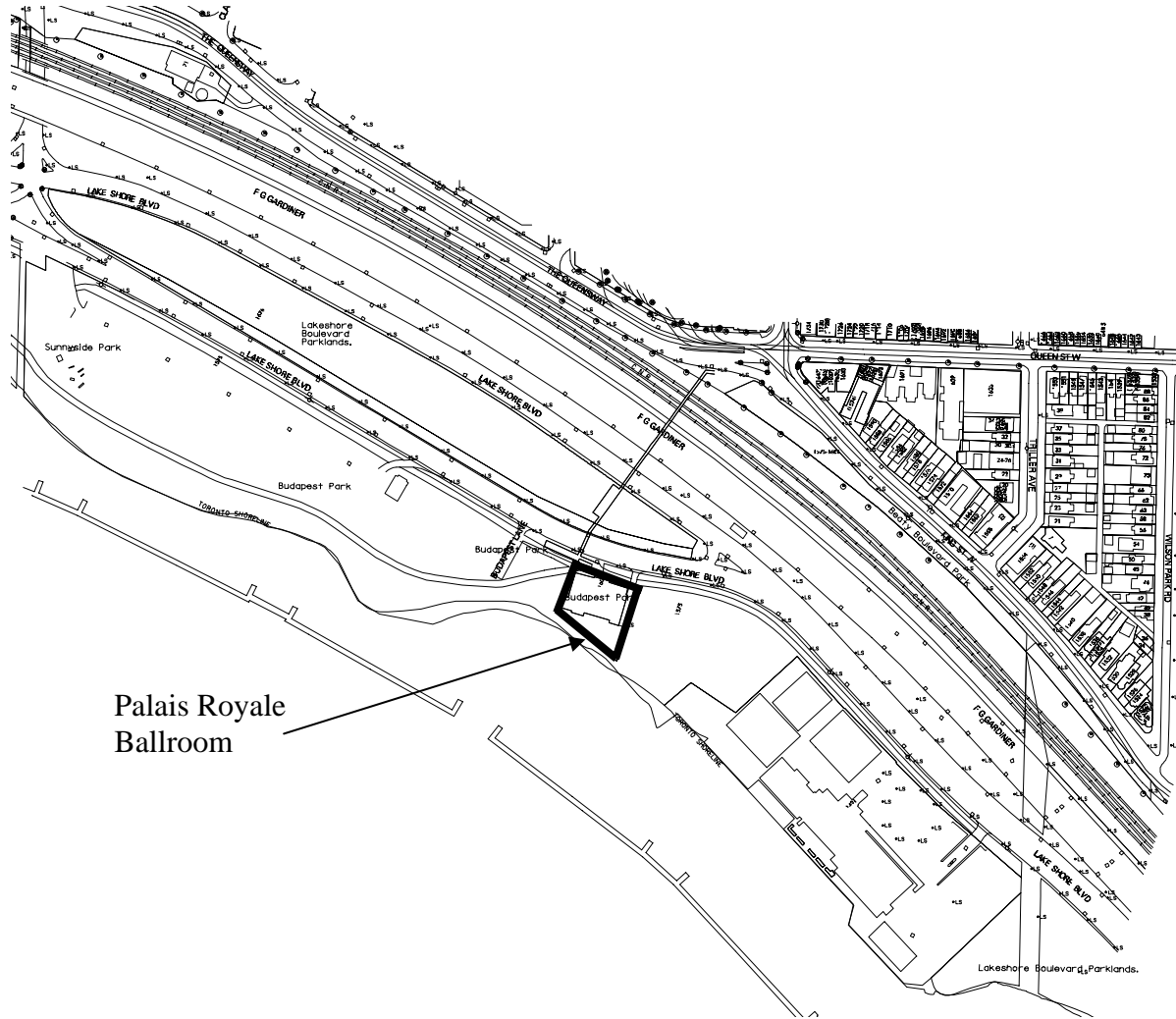
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Director, Policy & Research

List of Attachments:

Attachment No. 1	Location Map (1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West)
Attachment No. 2A	Photographs (1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West)
Attachment No. 2B	Photographs (1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West)
Attachment No. 2C	Photographs (1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West)
Attachment No. 3A	Existing Condition (1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West)
Attachment No. 3B	Existing Condition (1601 Lake Shore Boulevard West)
Attachment No. 4A	Applicant's Prop. – First Floor (1601 Lake Shore Blvd. West)
Attachment No. 4B	Applicant's Prop. – Basement & Roof Plan (1601 Lake Shore Blvd. West)
Attachment No. 4C	Applicant's Prop. – Proposed Elevations (1601 Lake Shore Blvd. West)
Attachment No. 4D	Applicant's Prop. – Proposed Elevations (1601 Lake Shore Blvd. West)



Palais Royale
Ballroom



1920's photo – Dean's Sunnyside Pleasure Boat, looking south east



1947 photo, looking south west



1920's photo – Dean's Sunnyside Pleasure Boat – South elevation



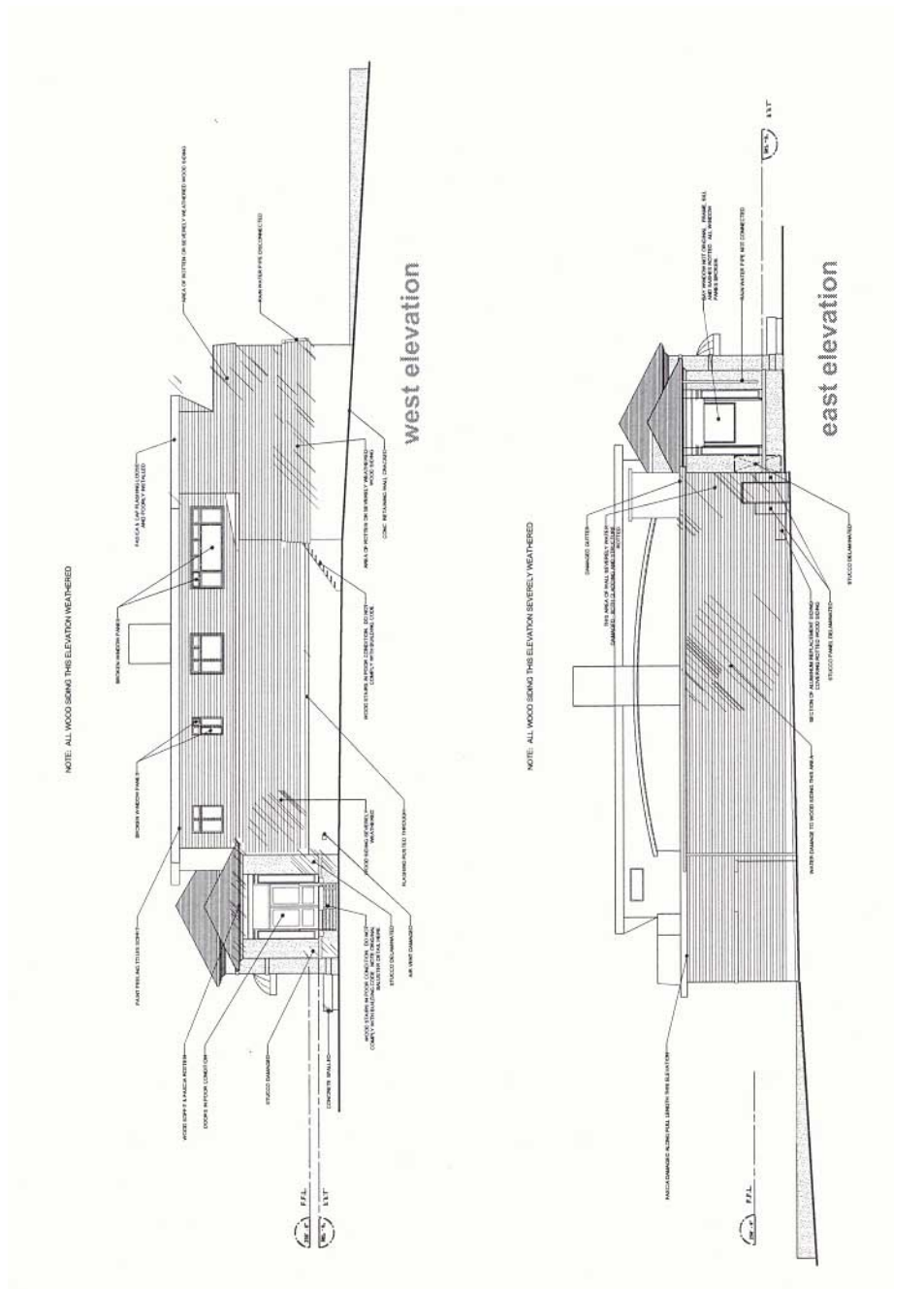
North (Front) elevation



South elevation



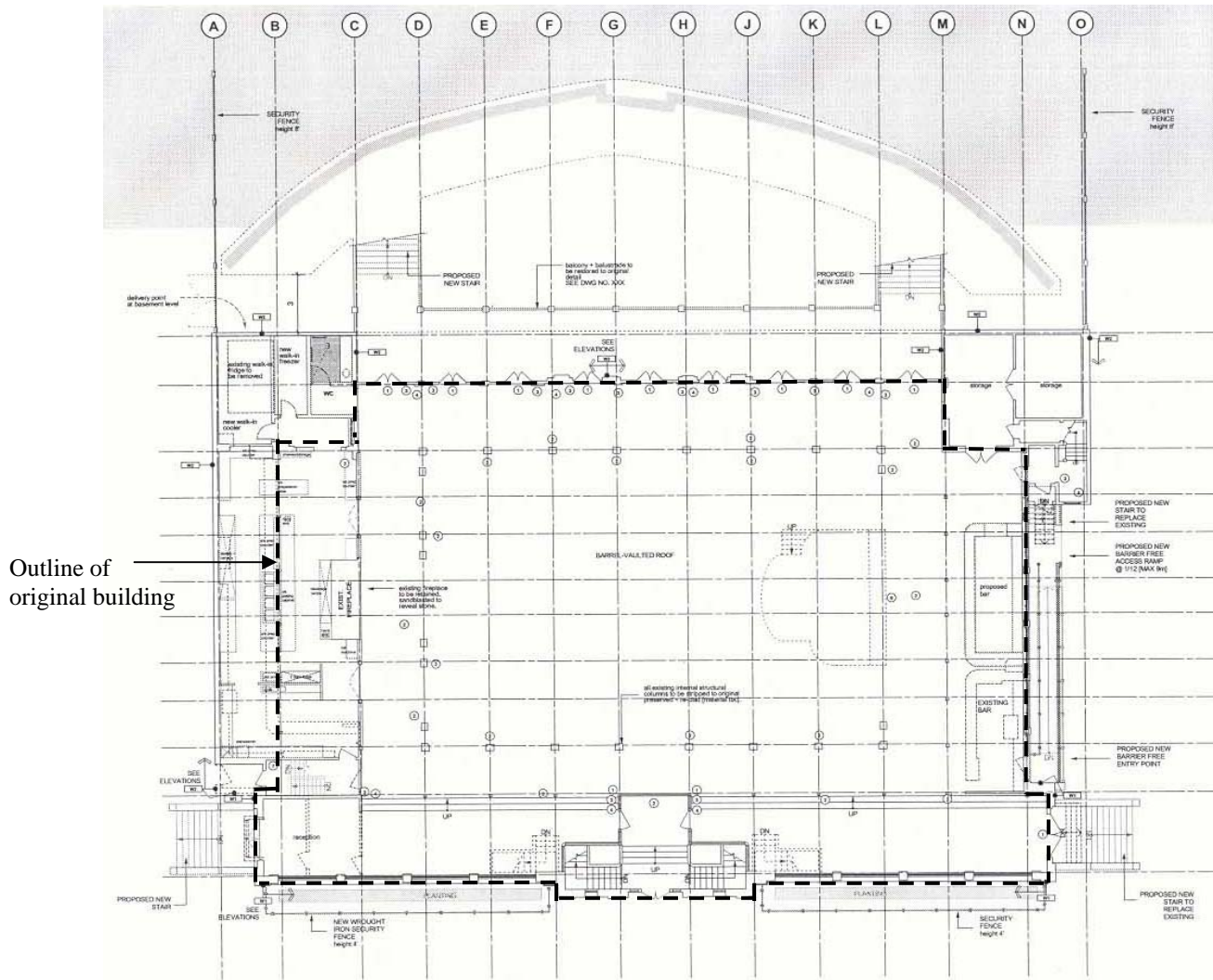
Interior – First Floor Plan



Condition Survey (West and East Elevations)

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL – FIRST FLOOR:
1601 LAKE SHORE BLVD. WEST

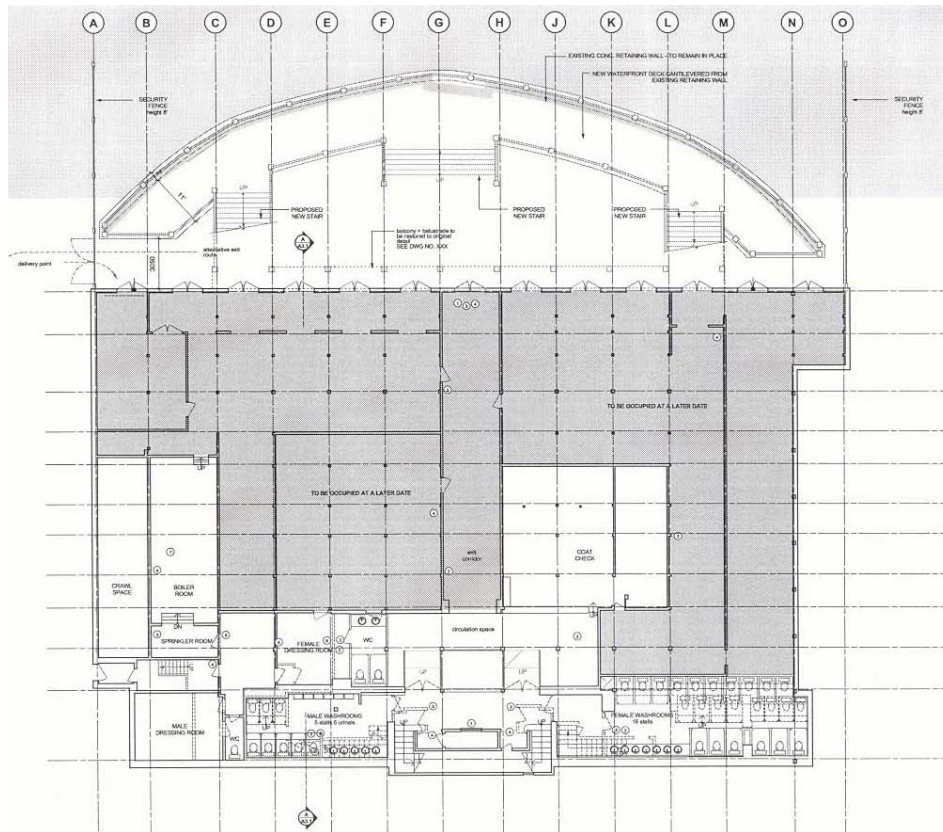
ATTACHMENT NO. 4A



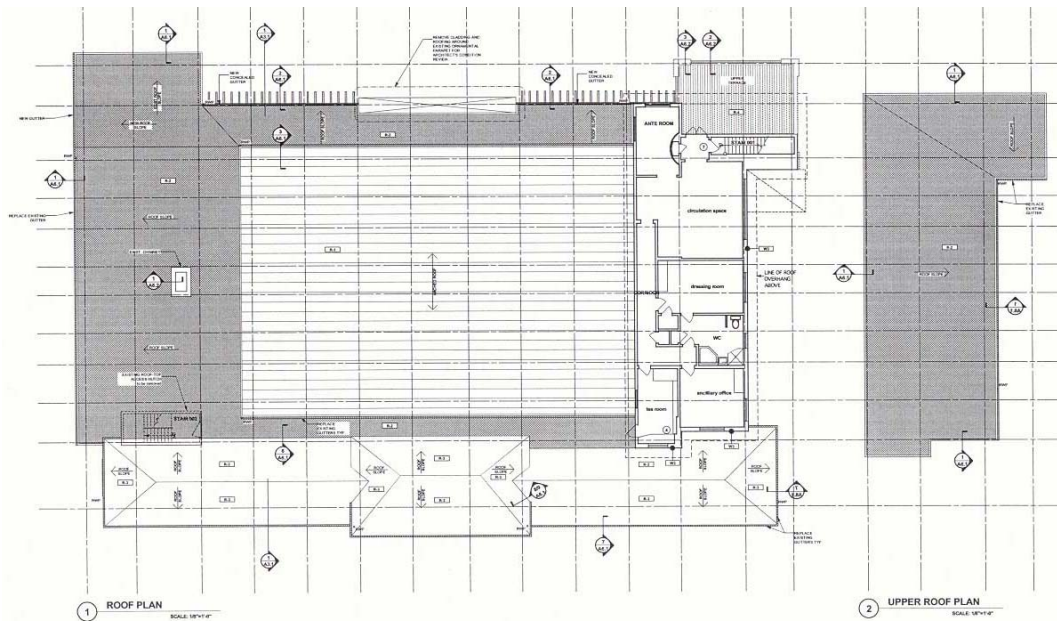
Proposed First Floor Plan

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL – BASEMENT & ROOF PLAN:
 1601 LAKE SHORE BLVD. WEST

ATTACHMENT NO. 4B



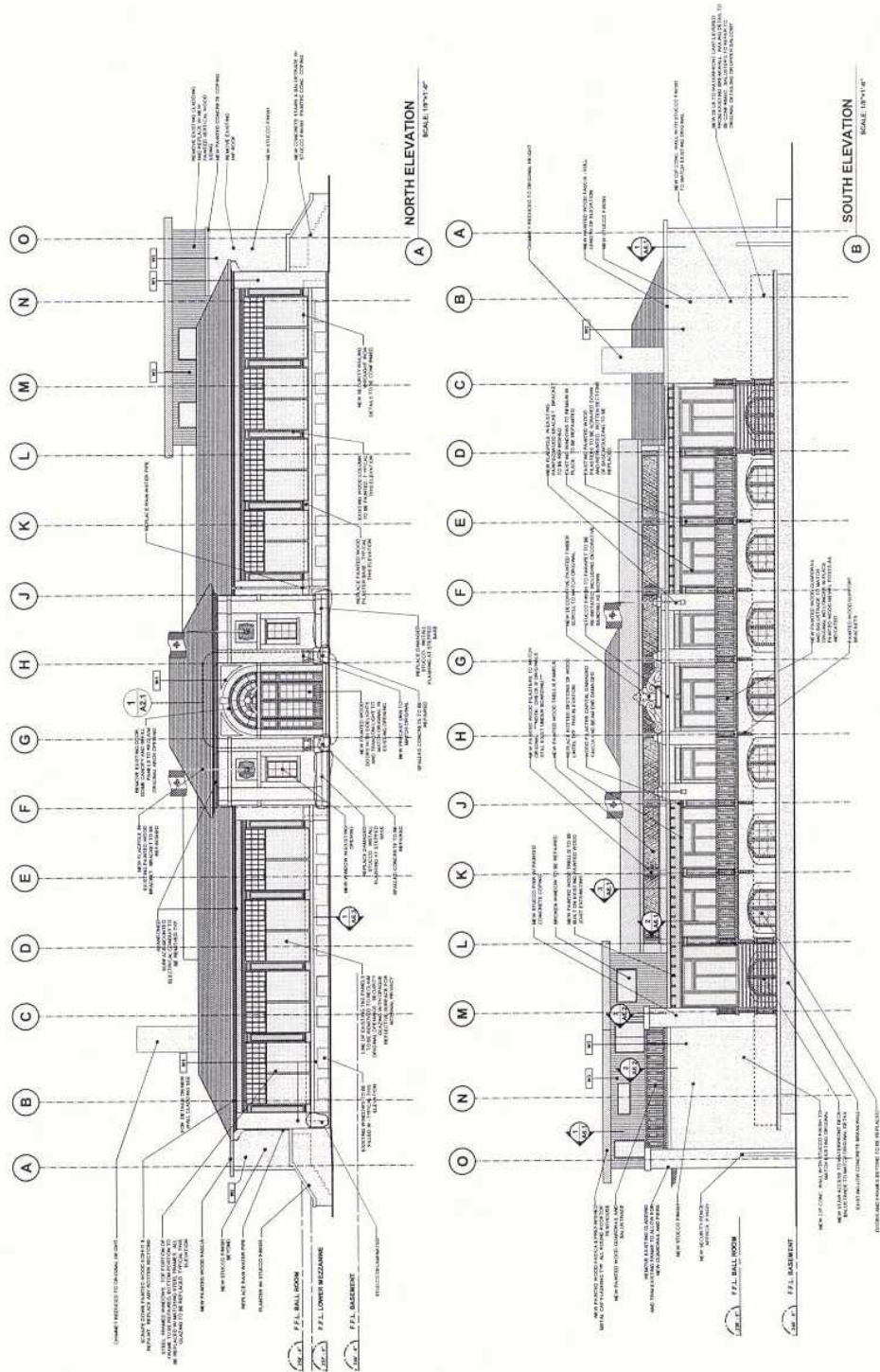
Proposed Basement Plan



Proposed Roof Plan

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL – PROPOSED ELEVATIONS:
1601 LAKE SHORE BLVD. WEST

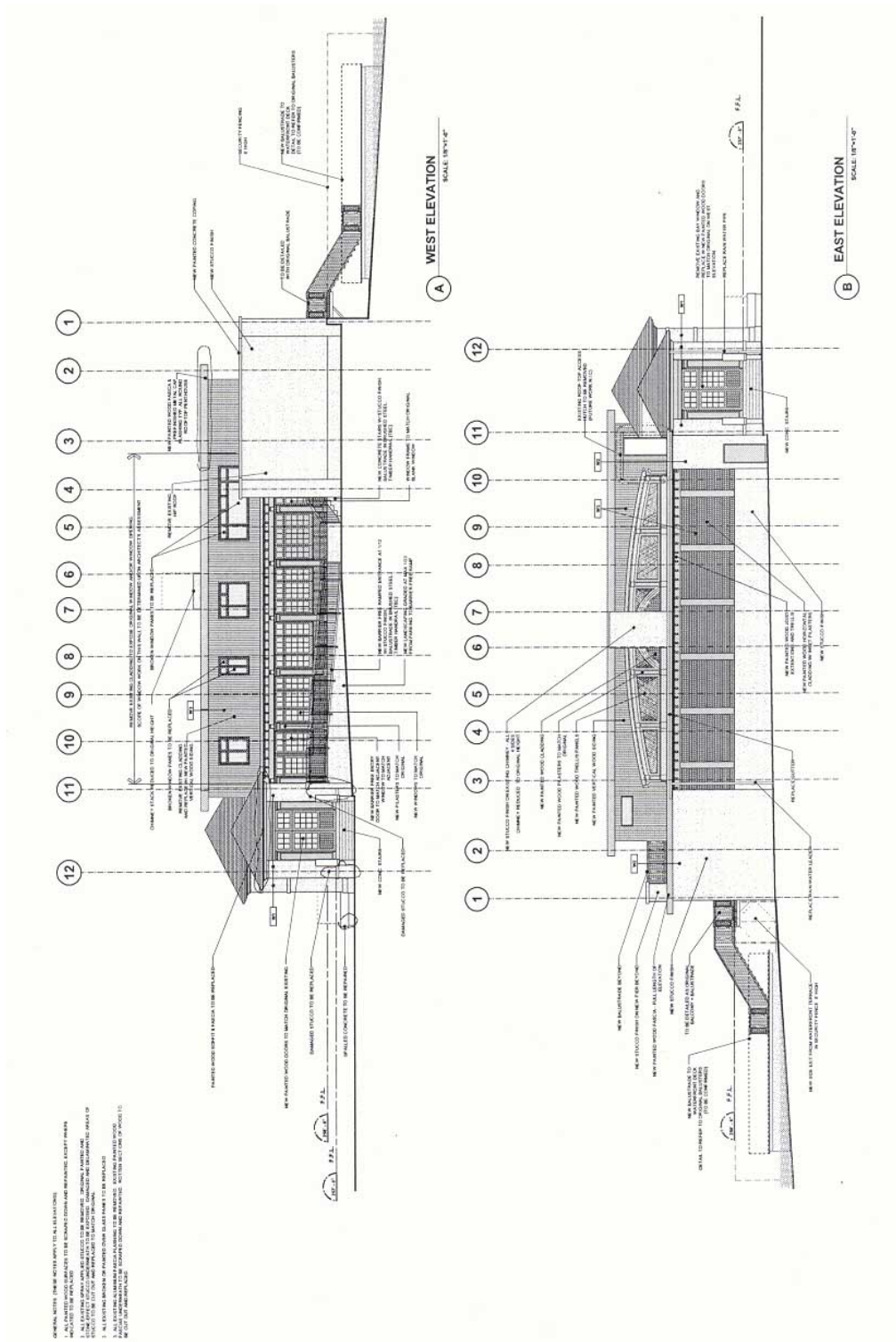
ATTACHMENT NO. 4C



Proposed Elevations

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL – PROPOSED ELEVATIONS:
1601 LAKE SHORE BLVD. WEST

ATTACHMENT NO. 4D



Proposed Elevations