

MEETING DATE: April 1, 2014

AGENDA ITEM: Recommendation to the City Council to Adopt a Comprehensive Plan (CP P-2013176) to Allow the Conversion of the Existing Armory Building into The Wende Museum and to Allow the Continued Use of the Am Vets Post 2 Facility Located at 10808 Culver Boulevard and 10858 Culver Boulevard, Respectively.

ATTACHMENTS

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

THE WENDE MUSEUM at the ARMORY
CULVER CITY, CA

March 10th, 2014

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PROJECT SUMMARY & CONTEXT

Project Summary

The Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War Inc. (“the Museum”) will activate an underused civic space by creating a new museum center, complementing and adding value to existing art and cultural resources locally and regionally as well as integrating varied opportunities for education, interpretation, enrichment and exploration to a broad constituency. The Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War at the Armory site on Culver Boulevard will raise the visibility of the Museum and give the institution, for the first time, a truly public face in order to realize its untapped potential.

The Museum will occupy the existing one-story, 12,596 square foot Armory building located at 10808 Culver Boulevard. Proposed improvements to the building include a 477 square foot addition for a new receiving area and the internal addition of 950 square feet of mezzanine area to be used as storage. The project will also involve improvements to the building’s exterior, including the use of smooth stucco and sandblasted concrete as part of the building’s new façade, and brushed stainless steel fasciae around the building. The project will replace an existing surface parking and storage area located between the Armory building and the AmVets building with a sculptural garden, highlighted by new landscaping, decorative pavers and artifact displays.

Project Context

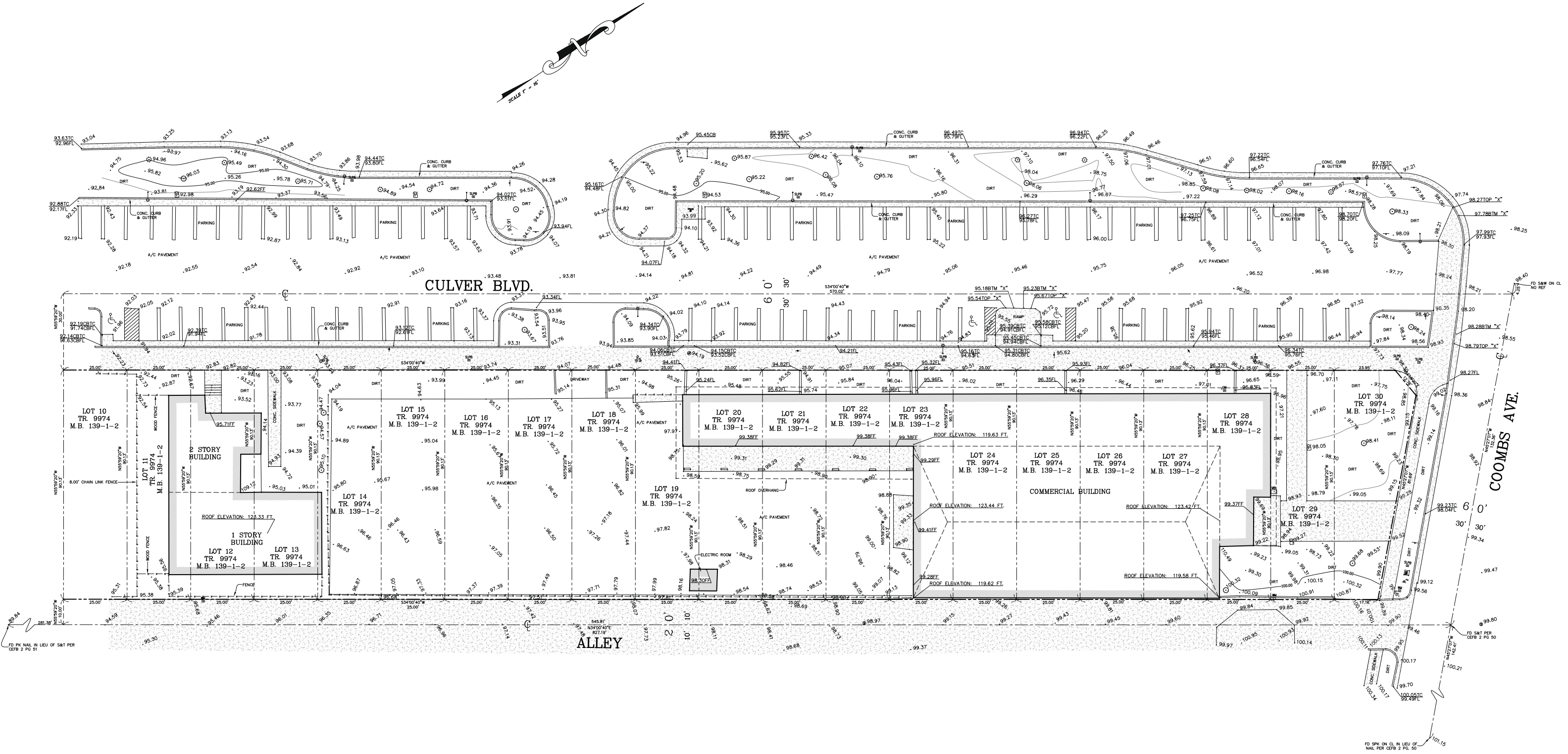
The site will anchor a mile-long stretch of arts venues along Culver Boulevard, including several dozen permanent public art installations, live music venues (The Jazz Bakery), theaters (The Actors’ Gang, Kirk Douglas Theatre) and museums (The Wende Museum, Culver City Historical Society and Mayme A. Clayton Library & Museum). It will connect the downtown arts district with the 405 Freeway, the city’s Westside artery, creating a “cultural corridor.” The Museum will repurpose a derelict facility and the surrounding open land by establishing a vibrant destination that will foster excitement, wonder, fun and discovery for visitors and become a landmark for Culver City’s ongoing cultural development. The Museum plans to provide an eco-friendly restoration of the building and its surrounding property as demonstration of adaptive re-use that will greatly enhance the community. Ultimately, the Museum will connect the experience of the Cold War to contemporary life. A museum dedicated to the Cold War period, housed in an armory built in 1950 adjacent to a park dedicated to American veterans, will make a significant statement.

Over the past ten years, the Wende has grown significantly in scale and intensity of activity. Benefitting from a helpful team of international advisors and supporters, the Museum has developed strategic partnerships with regional, federal, global organizations and universities from London, Berlin, Leipzig, and Los Angeles. The Museum internship program ranks among the best in the region. By combining academic research and applied skills we are training a new generation of young leaders and museum professionals in the humanities. The Museum will reach out to Culver City High School and students through three regular events annually. Monthly open house events for neighbors and the larger Culver City population will engage the community in diverse topics, making a little known chapter of recent history comes alive.

This new headquarters will provide an ADA compliant center for programs, opportunities for growth and will enable the Museum to separate offices and research workspaces, collections receiving and processing, and artifact storage. The two story gym will increase exhibition space threefold, improving the display for temporary and permanent exhibitions and public programming, thereby further fulfilling the Museum’s mission. Storage conditions will be improved by segregating and establishing microclimates for different collection formats and by transitioning the collection into a combination of visitor-accessible open storage and efficient compact storage. In addition, controlled lighting and increased security will follow best practices in the museum world for its irreplaceable collection.

The new site will enlarge and diversify The Wende Museum’s audience, leveraging progress and attracting new funding. Earned income potential will be enhanced. The Wende Museum will be able to serve its audiences better by providing more effective access for scholars, students, journalists, artists, authors, filmmakers, the general public and partner organizations. The creation of a new museum community will be a testament to the strength of the arts and culture in Culver City.

EXISTING SITE SURVEY



EXISTING ARMORY BUILDING

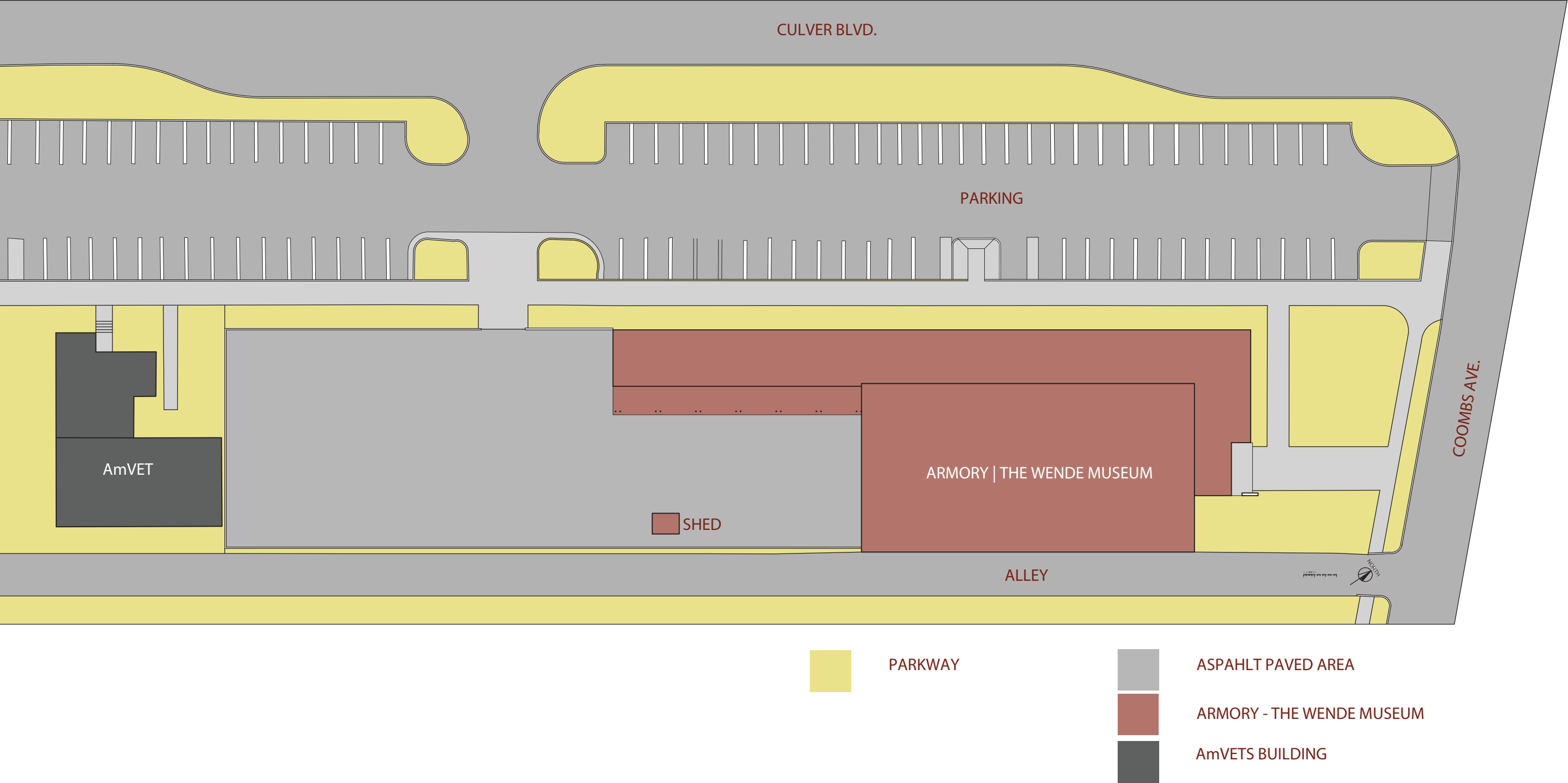


EXISTING ARMORY BUILDING



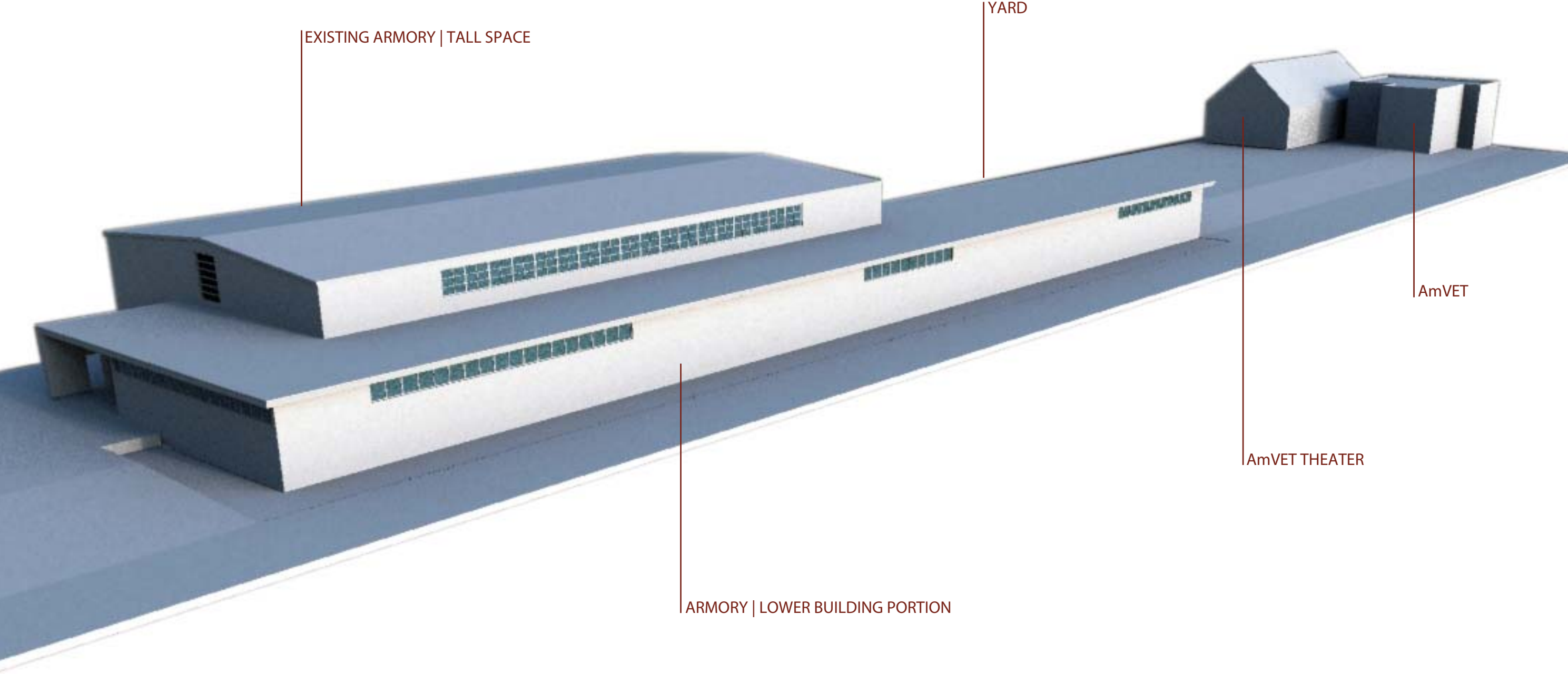


KEY PLAN - EXISTING



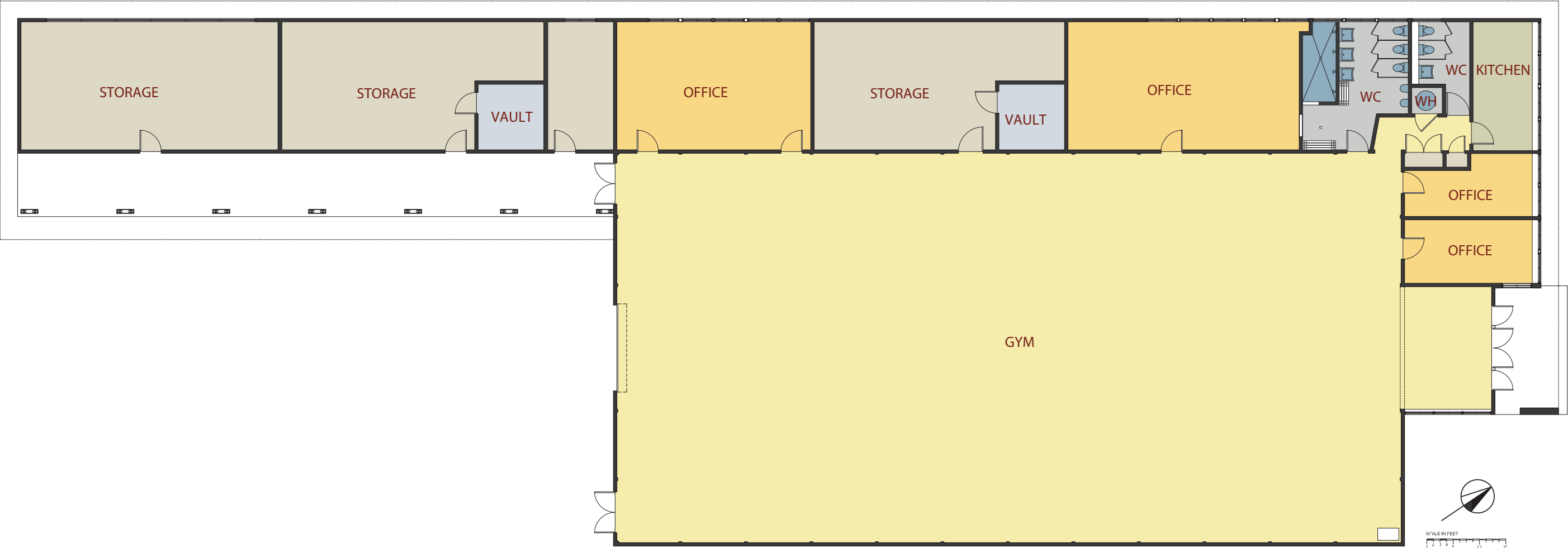


EXISTING BUILDINGS



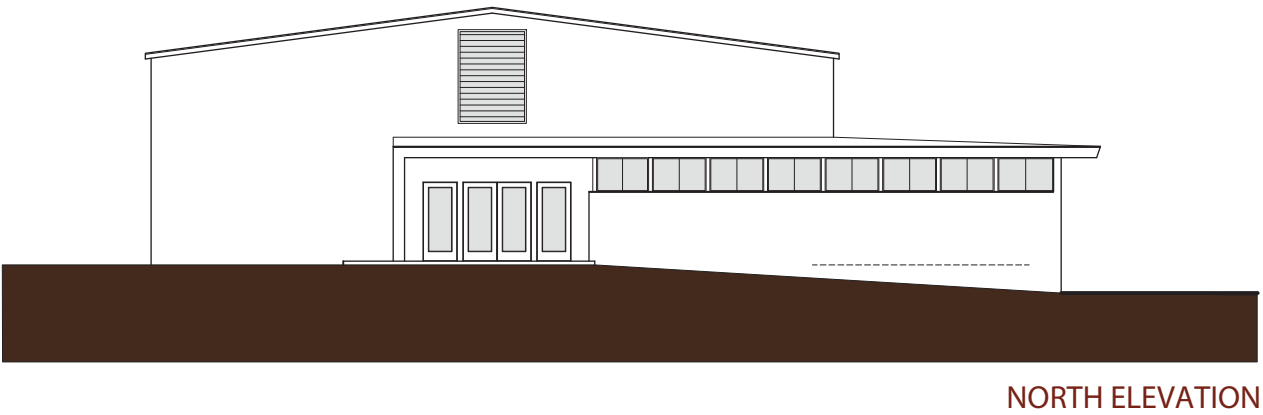
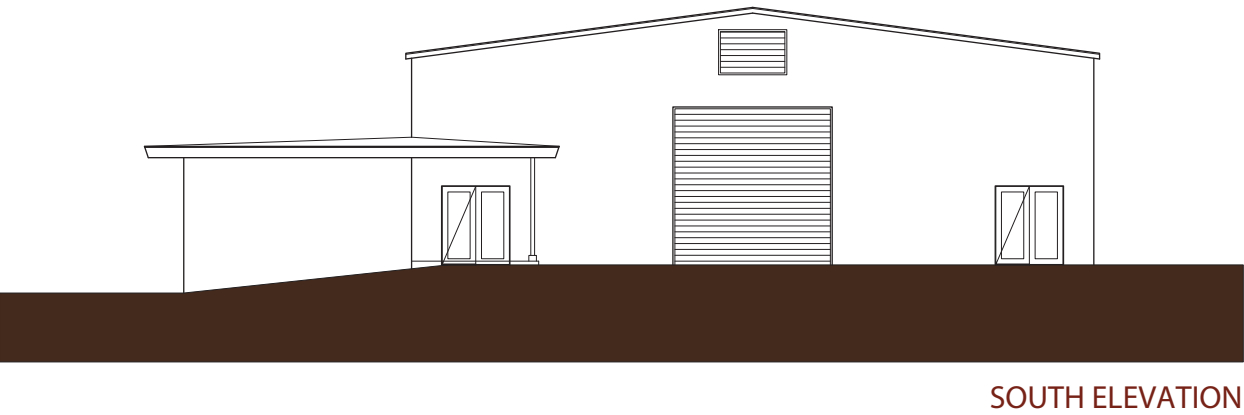
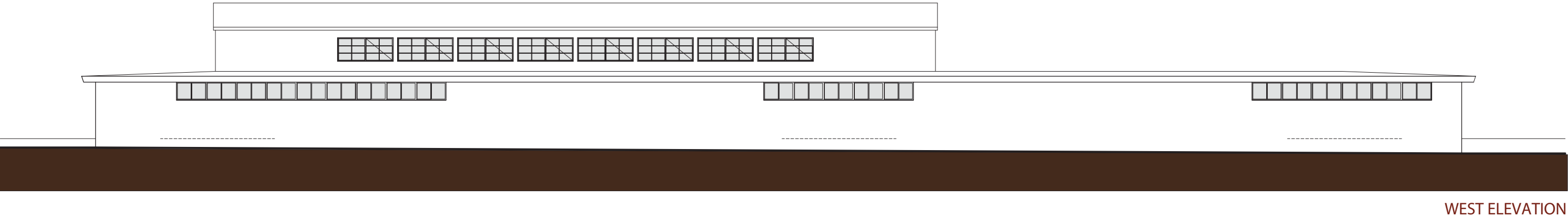
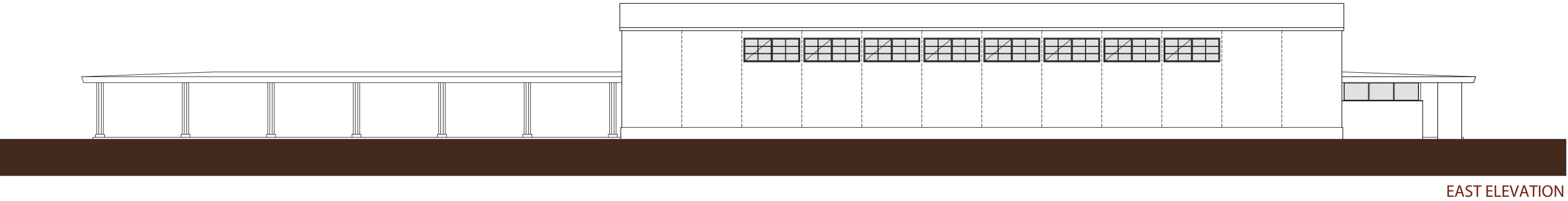


EXISTING FLOOR PLAN





EXISTING EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS





PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

RENOVATION OF EXISTING 12,596 SQ.FT. SINGLE STORY ARMORY BUILDING WITH 477 SQ.FT. ADDITION. INCLUDING A REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF SHARED PARKING.

SITE INFORMATION:

THE LAND REFERRED IS SITUATED IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, AND IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: LOT 1-30 OF TRACT NO. 9974 AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 139 PAGES 1-2 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

LOTS LEASED BY THE WENDE MUSEUM:

LOT:	14	TRACT:	9974
LOT	15	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	16	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	17	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	18	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	14	TRACT:	9974
LOT	15	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	16	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	17	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	18	TRACT:	9974
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LOT:	17	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	24	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	25	TRACT:	9974
LOT	26	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	27	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	28	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	29	TRACT:	9974
LOT:	30	TRACT:	9974

AREA CALCULATIONS:

LOT AREA (LOT 14-30):	38,305 SQ.FT.
LOT COVERAGE EXISTING:	12,596 SQ.FT.
LOT COVERAGE PROPOSED:	32 %
AREA EXISTING BUILDING:	12,596 SQ.FT.
AREA PROPOSED ADDITION:	477 SQ.FT.
AREA PROPOSED STORAGE MEZZ.:	950 SQ.FT.
	<u>14,023 SQ.FT.</u>



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Land Use

General Plan

The General Plan Land Use designation of the project site is Open Space. The Open Space designation is established to protect Culver City’s open space resources that include public or private land. It is designed and intended to preserve existing and encourage future parks, open space, and recreation opportunities.

Zoning

Zoning for the subject property, presently occupied by the Armory, is Commercial Neighborhood (CN). The project will include a Zone Change from Commercial Neighborhood to Open Space (OS), in order to bring the property into conformance with the City’s General Plan land use designation. Pursuant to Section 17.250.030 of the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC), development and use of property within the Open Space Zoning District requires the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that the modification to the Armory building use is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood through desirable design characteristics and programming of the Museum. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a set of regulations, requirements, and procedures that preclude any degradation in safety, security, and quality of life for residential properties adjacent to the property.

Development Standards

Parking Provided

Parking for employees and museum visitors will be provided in two parking areas, one existing and one proposed as part of the site reuse. A total of 17 parking spaces will be required for the Museum use. Seven parking spaces will be provided to the rear of the property, accessible off of the alley, in a parallel parking formation. These seven spaces will be provided for Museum employees only. Ten parking spaces in the existing shared parking lot located in front of the building, off of Culver Boulevard, will be available for use by visitors to the Museum. Presently, there are 305 parking identified by a Parking Utilization Study prepared for the Wende Museum Project by Civic Enterprise Associates, LLC, spaces in off-street lots shared by all park uses, including the AmVets Post II building, the Scout House, the Teen Center, Swimming Pool; and 100 on-street parking spaces located on Overland Avenue, Barman Avenue and Coombs Avenue.

Permitted Uses

General Provisions

Allowed Uses and Permit Requirements

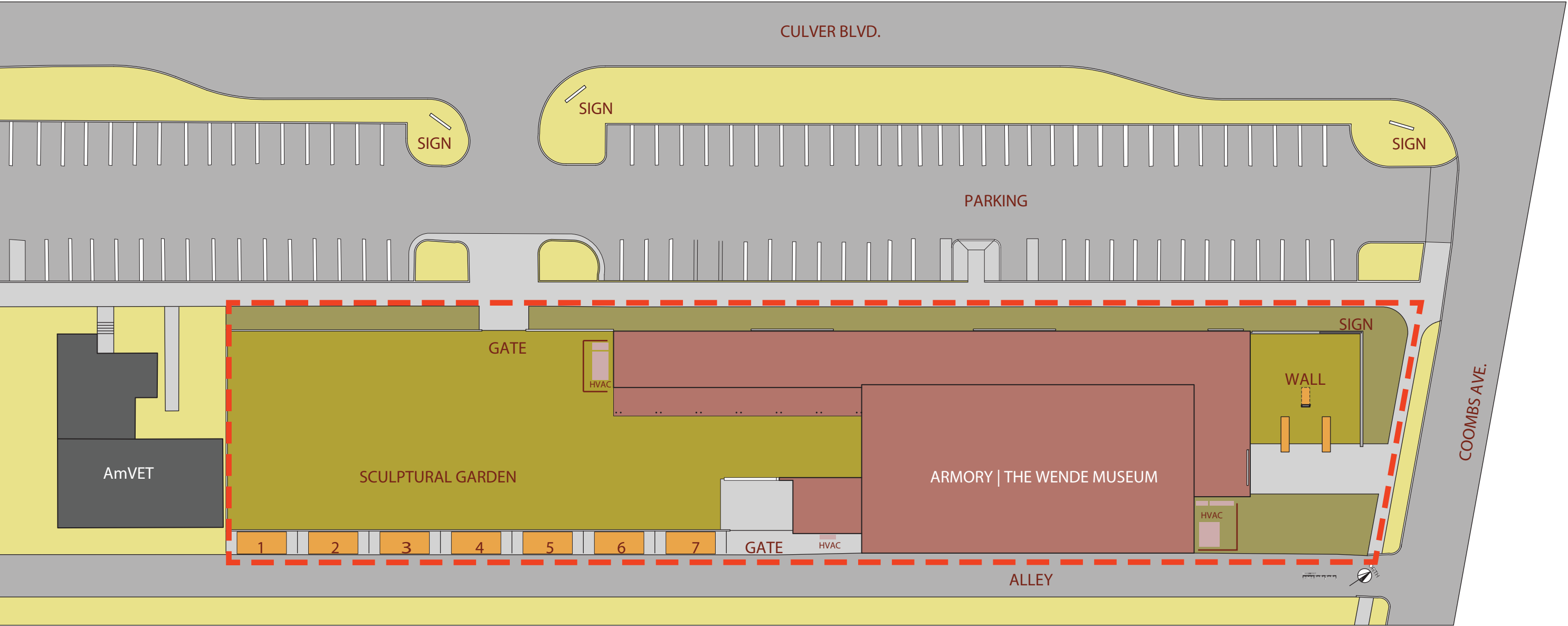
The Comprehensive Plan allows for the use of the Wende Museum property as a museum and cultural institution facility. Ancillary uses commonly associated with these uses including retail gift shops or small cafes may also be permitted, subject to CCMC requirements for ancillary uses. The Director may require additional parking or specific operating conditions to reduce potential impacts on park resources as part of any approval for ancillary uses on-site.

Allowed Special Events and Temporary Events

As a cultural institution, it is anticipated that special events related to the Museum operations may occur from time-to-time. These events are considered part of the operation of the Museum and are permitted. Events that are not a part of the normal operation of the Museum, including private parties and banquets, may be limited to a total of 12 events annually with a Special Event Permit, pursuant to Section 17.520 of the CCMC.

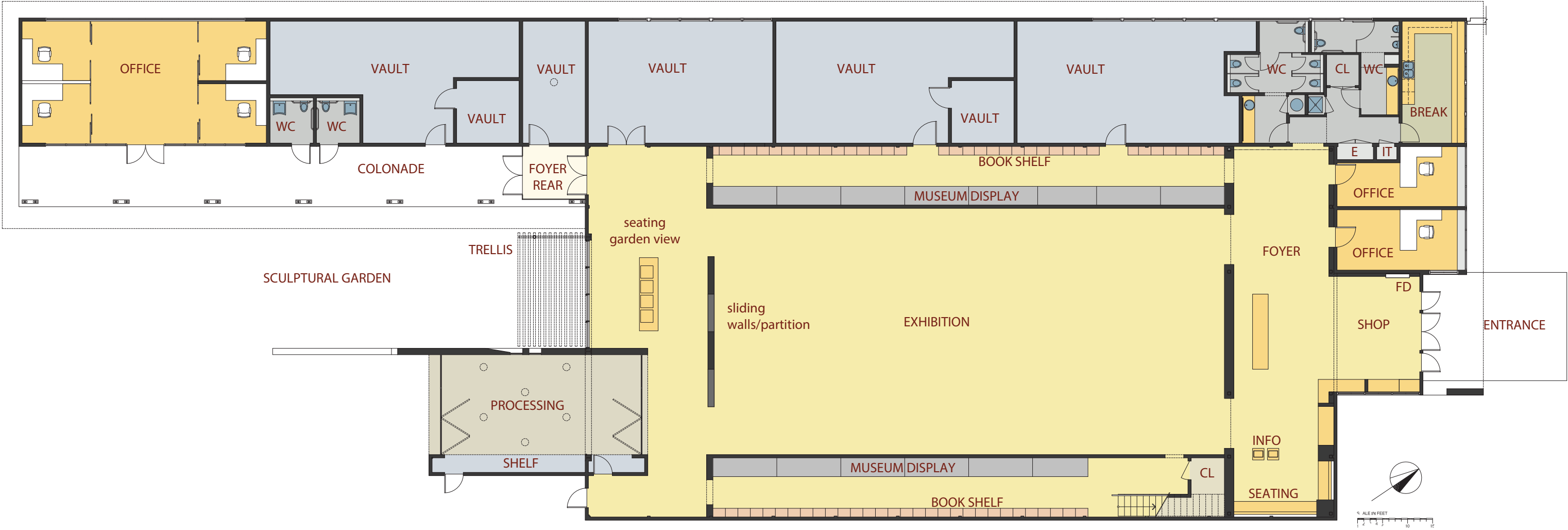


KEY PLAN - PROPOSED



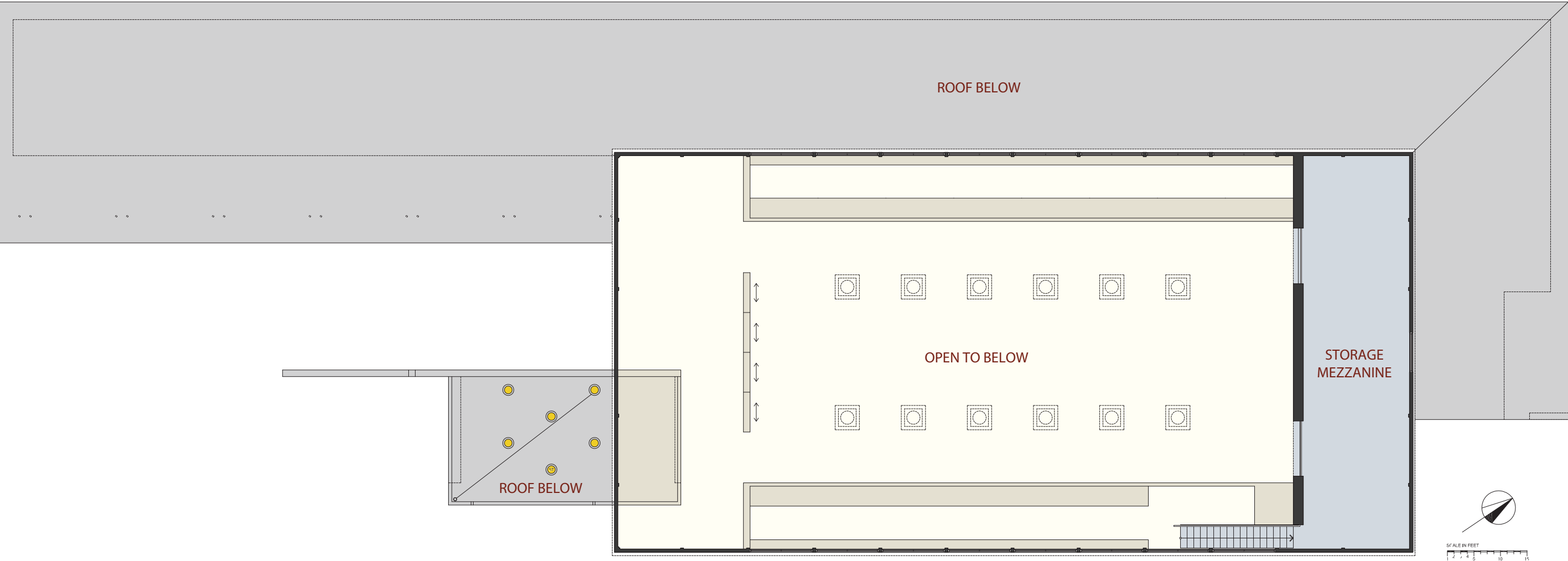
- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | PARKWAY LANDSCAPING | | THE WENDE MUSEUM STAFF PARKING |
| | LANDSCAPING | | ARMORY - THE WENDE MUSEUM |
| | THE WENDE MUSEUM SCULPTURAL GARDEN | | AmVETS BUILDING |

PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN



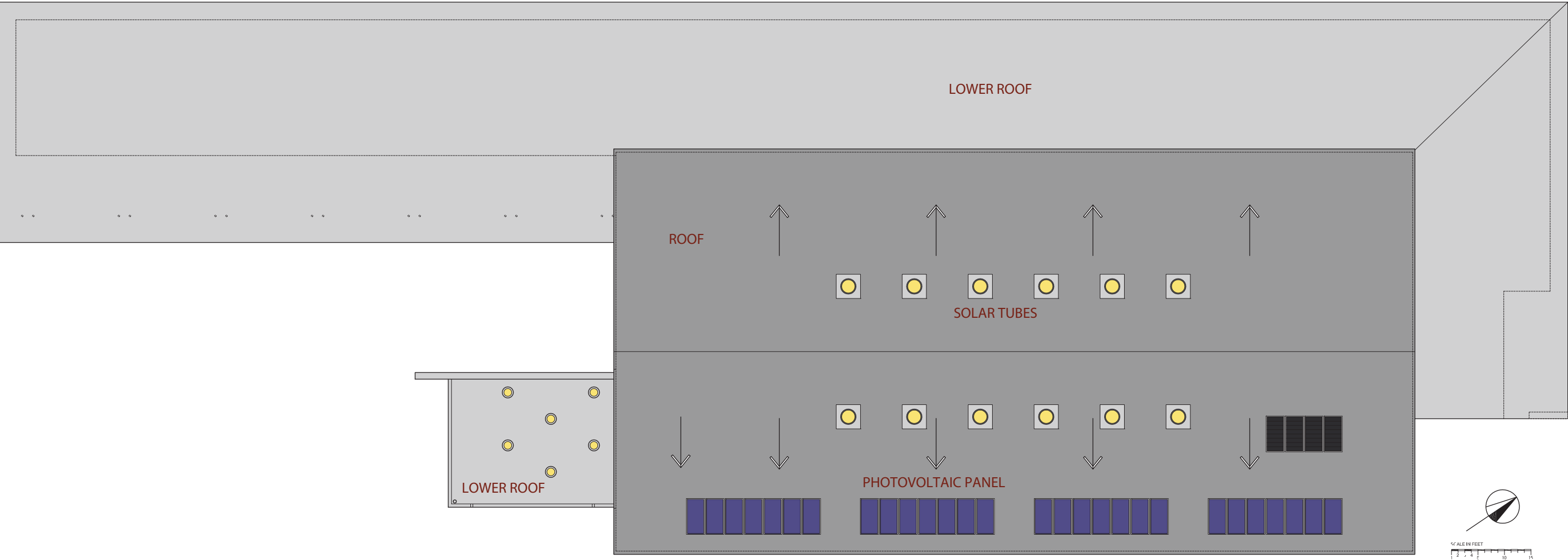


PROPOSED STORAGE MEZZANINE



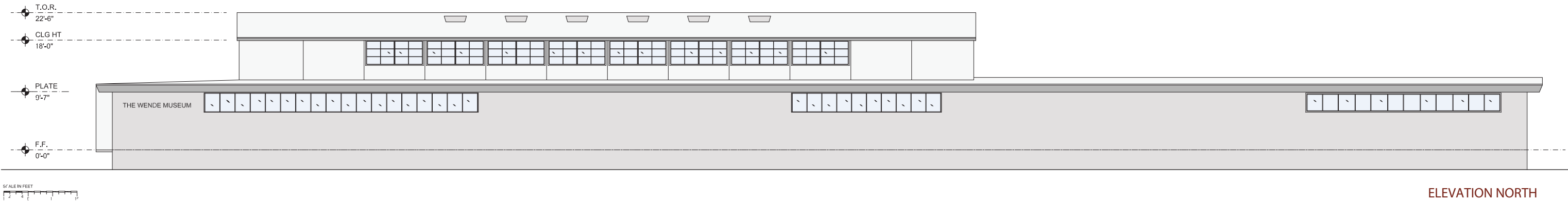
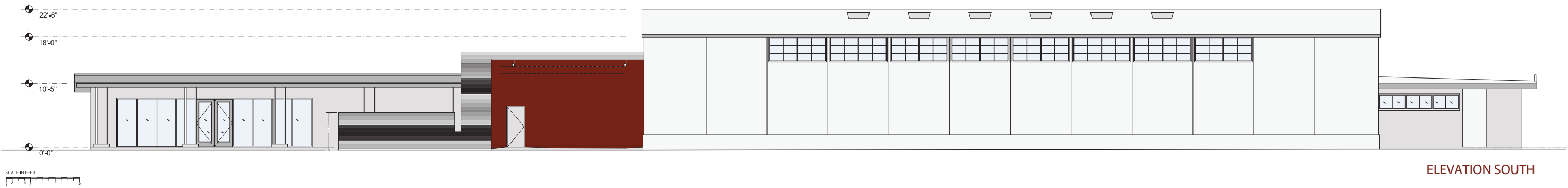


PROPOSED ROOF PLAN





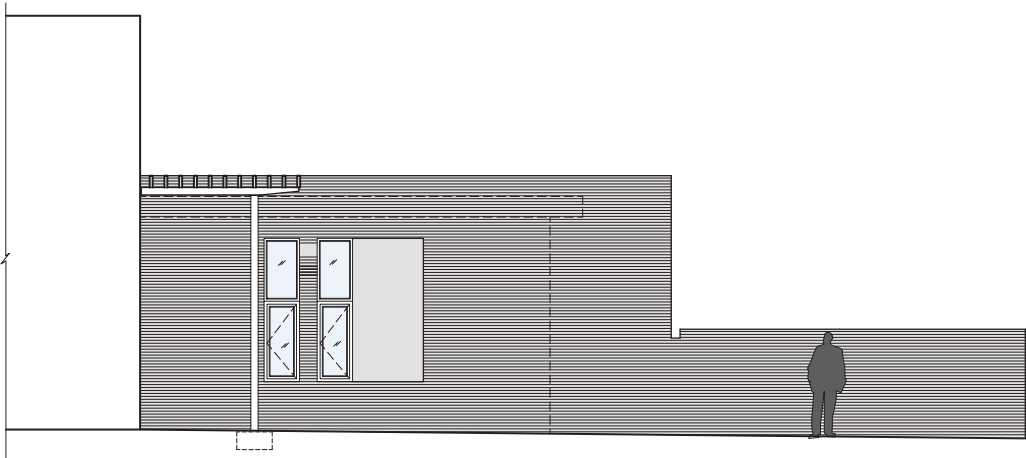
PROPOSED ELEVATION



- EXISTING EXPOSED CONCRETE | SANDBLASTED, SEALED WITH ANTI-GRAFFITI COATING
- WHITE EXTERIOR PAINT, FLAT
- STAINLESS STEEL (BRUSHED)
- SMOOTH TROWEL STUCCO, TO MATCH THE WENDE MUSEUM LOGO COLOR
- GLAZING



PROPOSED ELEVATION



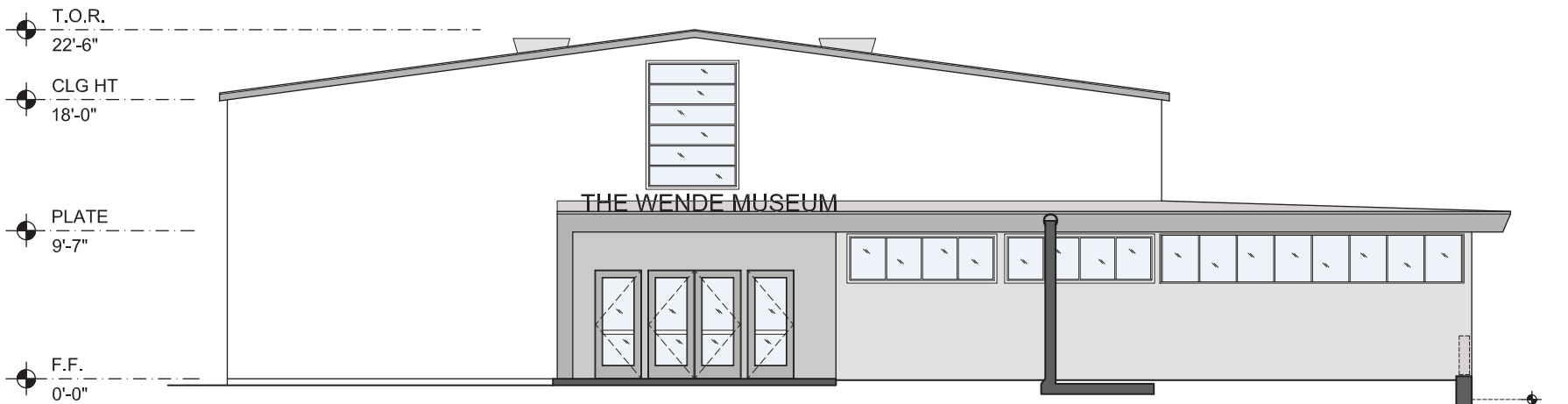
PROCESSING AREA - ELEVATION NORTH



ELEVATION WEST



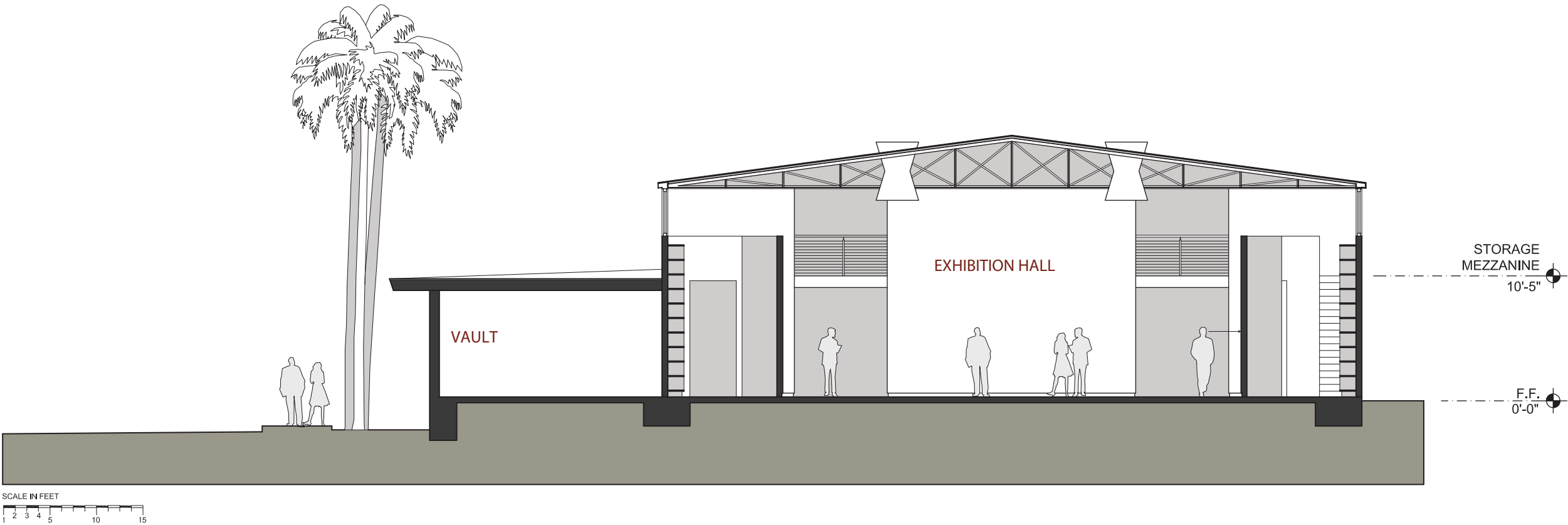
- EXISTING EXPOSED CONCRETE | SANDBLASTED, SEALED WITH ANTI-GRAFFITI COATING
- WHITE EXTERIOR PAINT, FLAT
- STAINLESS STEEL (BRUSHED)
- SMOOTH TROWEL STUCCO, TO MATCH THE WENDE MUSEUM LOGO COLOR
- GLAZING



ELEVATION EAST



PROPOSED SECTION





PROPOSED EXTERIOR

PERSPECTIVE



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

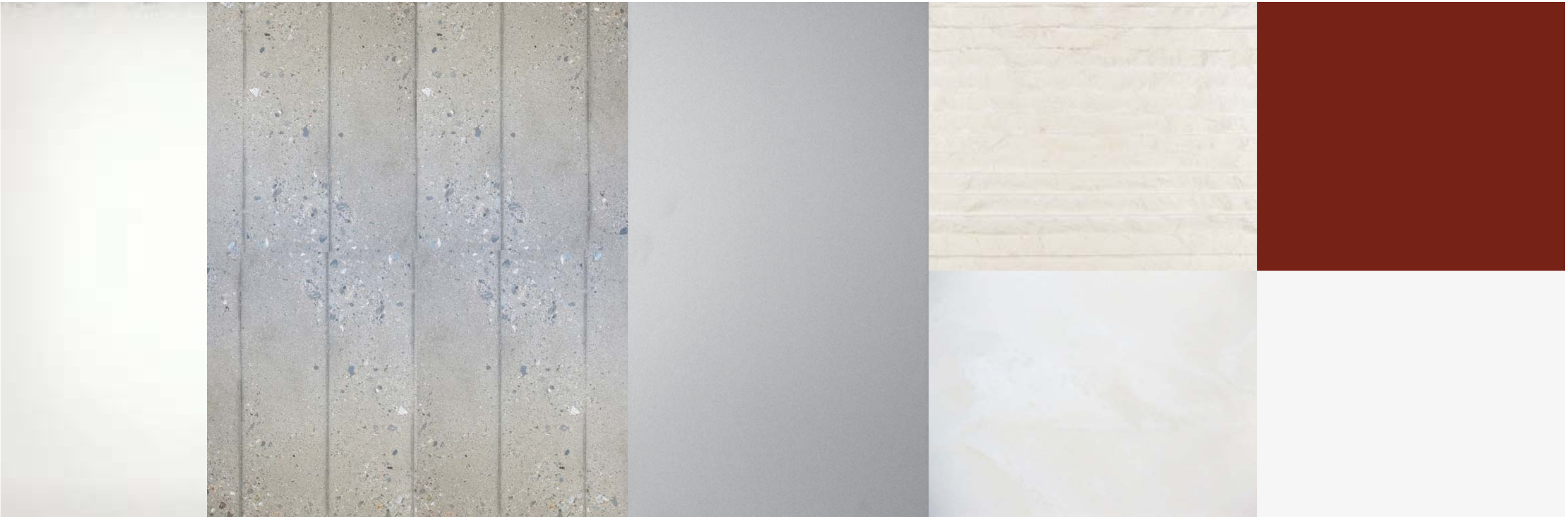


PROCESSING AREA





PROPOSED MATERIAL



FROSTED GLASS

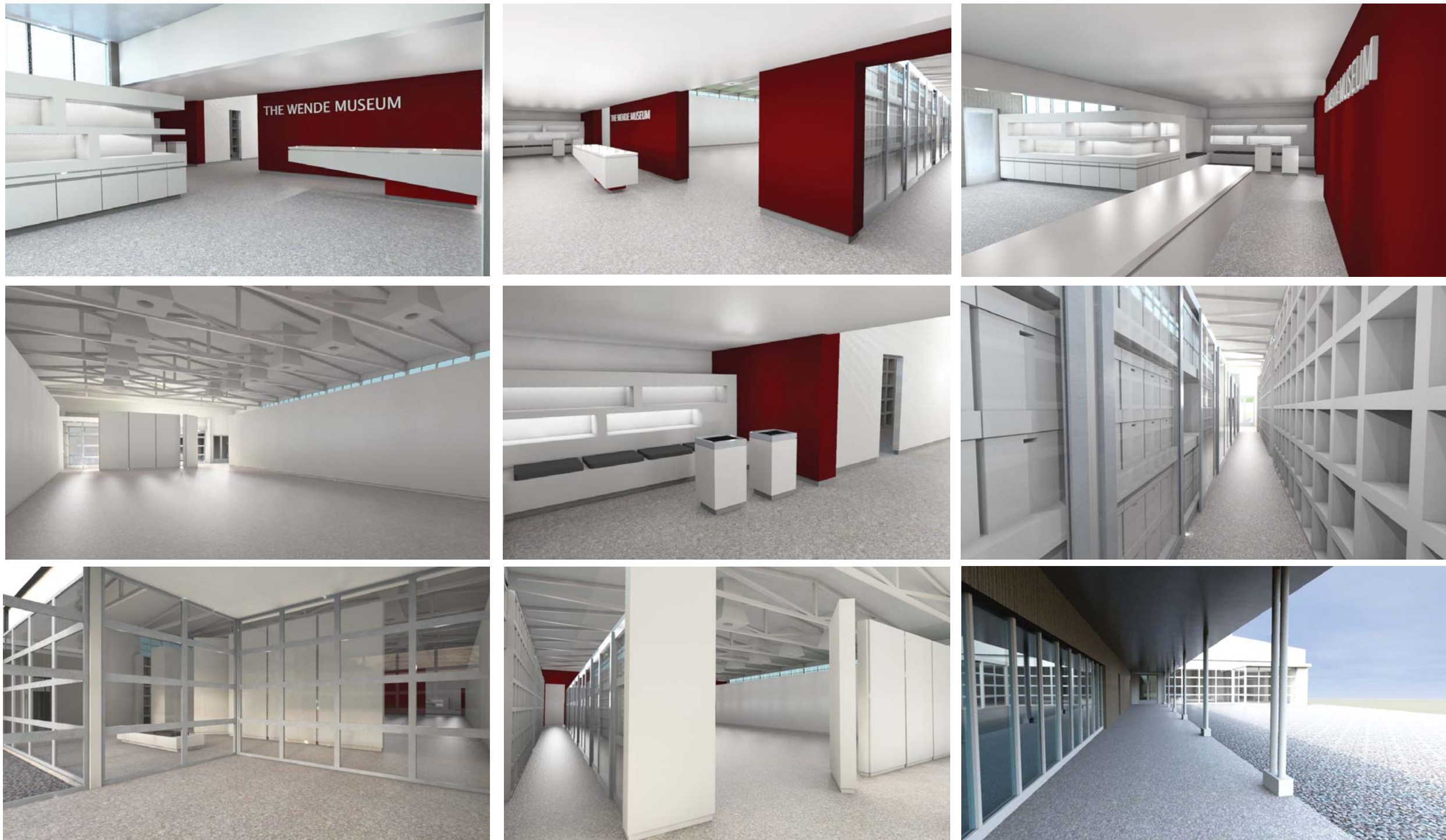
CONCRETE "SANDBLASTED"
CLEAR SEALER, ANTI GRAFITTI COATING

STAINLESS STEEL - BRUSHED FINSH
FOR ROOF EAVES

STUCCO SMOOTH TROWEL FINISH
AT NEW RECEIVING AREA,
NATURAL ACCENT STONE, CHISELED FINISH

COLOR:
ACCENT PAINT, WENDE MUSEUM LOGO RED
WHITE PAINT: NESTING DOVE ECC-36-2, BEHR

PROPOSED INTERIOR



PROPOSED DISPLAY SHELF



SECTION AXONOMETRIC

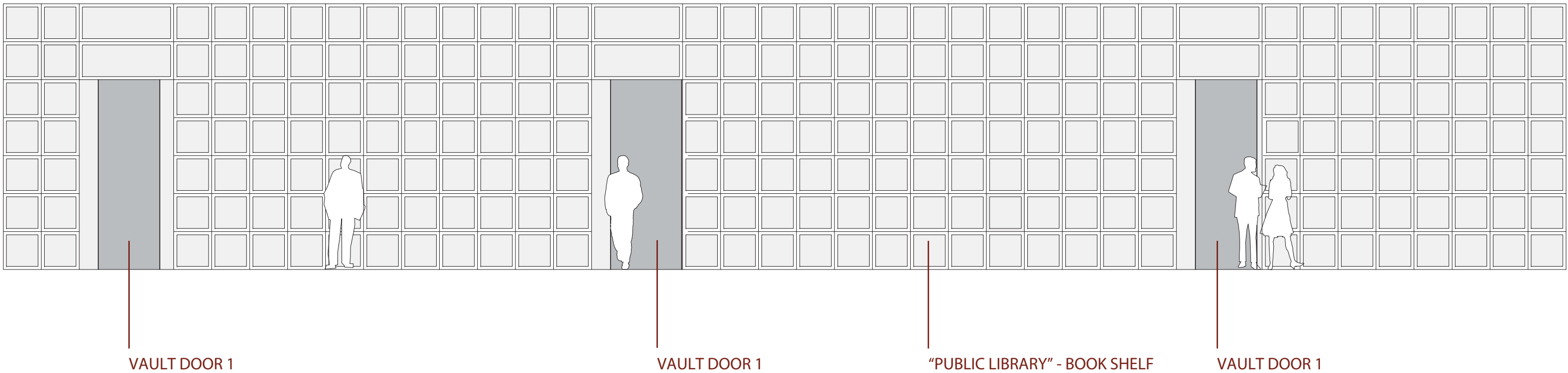
INTERIOR ELEVATION



SHELF - BULK RACK



PROPOSED BOOK SHELF

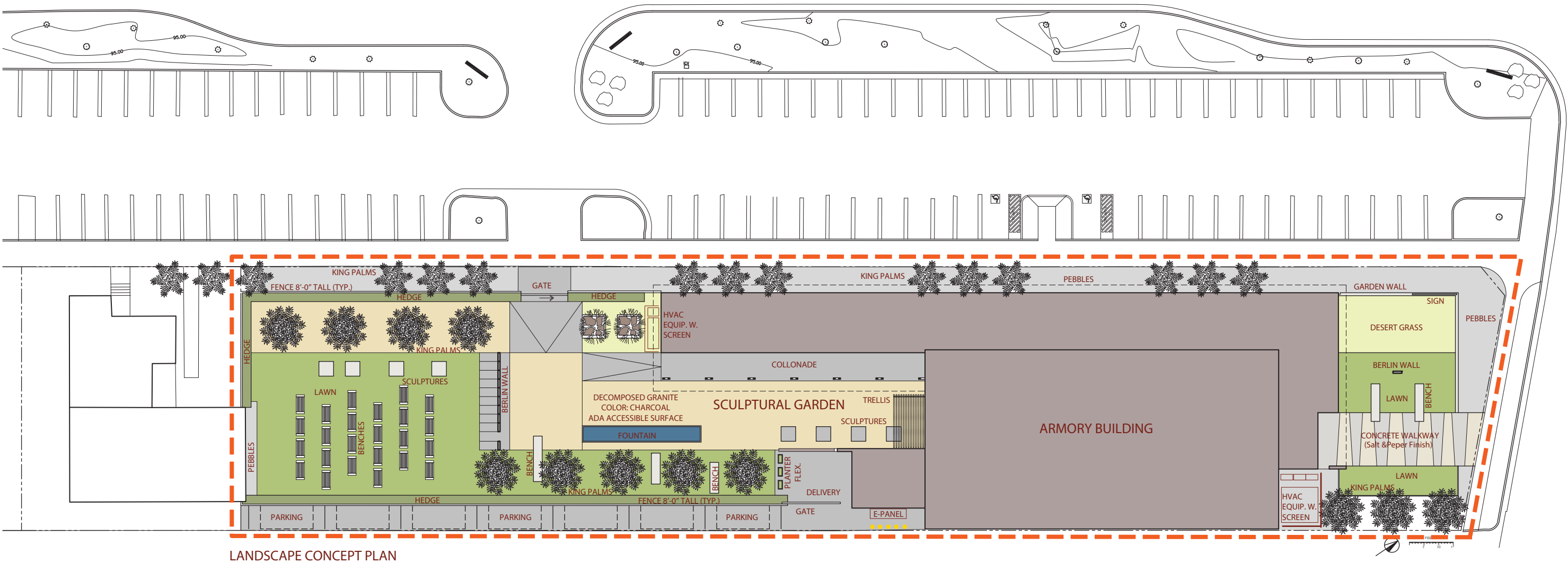




PROPOSED LANDSCAPE

Landscaping

The landscaping plan for the Museum will include the replacement of the existing paved area located between the Armory building and the AmVets building with a new central sculptural courtyard. The courtyard will include new hardscape pathways around new landscape planter areas. In addition, seating areas will be provided throughout the courtyard. The Museum will also introduce additional landscaping along the perimeter of the building, including new trees, hedges and native plant species.





PROPOSED LANDSCAPE



ENTRANCE WITH BERLIN WALL AND BENCHES



LANDSCAPE ENTRANCE AREA

PROPOSED LANDSCAPE

BERLIN WALL ELEMENTS



SCULPTURAL GARDEN WITH FOUNTAIN



PROPOSED LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The Wende Museum garden will be a place of beauty, repose, and contemplation, but also a place for thinking about and confronting the complexities and tensions inherent in the collection itself, and in where it is displayed versus where it comes from. East v. West, Communism v. Capitalism, Europe v. Southern California, Open v. Closed, Controlled/Constrained v. Free/Unconstrained, Art v. Propaganda. Everywhere I want the tension and intimate connection between Eastern Europe and California to be fore grounded. Los Angeles was the US capital of the Cold War, where most of the aerospace industry was based. The military-industrial complex, with its tight linkages between the armed forces, research universities, and corporations, found a perfect fit in the open, sunny, individualistic lifestyle of Southern California. The iconography of Southern California modernity, exemplified by the horizontal concrete building, and the skyline of palm trees, will be made explicit, against a series of motifs of rigorous, controlled, European garden forms. The basic principle is the ordering of space with classical European hedges, to create closed rooms, hidden spaces, as well as sightlines that lead the eye all the way from inside the building entrance to the back of the property, but placing barriers in front of one's gaze and passage. The hedges will be of varying heights, so that the garden will be a play of long sightlines/axes and barriers, as in a maze. A visitor will have to walk through it, discovering the places where openings allow her to proceed, discovering new spaces and objects as she goes. The objects will be displayed in a classical sculpture garden format, on raised plinths, isolated, against hedges. The Berlin Wall pieces will act as walls as well, blocking the way, but equally as art objects, that can be walked around. Playing against the hedge principle will be subtropical vegetation, such as specimen palms, dragon trees, aloes, and cactus, which will be "displayed" just like the objects, against hedges or walls. They, like the Cold War itself, especially the weaponry and the control structures like the Wall, will be at once beautiful, big, and menacing, and so, sublime. Just outside the main glass doors will be a courtyard space, relatively open, with a rectangular, raised pool. This space can be used to events, seating, etc. There is an 8-foot parking lane all along the alley, which will also be sufficient for truck deliveries, so no angled wall intruding into the courtyard space will be required. At the center of the garden will be a hedged space filled with olive trees and a circular, raised pool.

The ground surface will be a mix of hard and soft, with pavers in a sea of low meadow grass. This is a space of contemplation, symbolizing the coming together and resolution of reunification and the end of the Cold War's decades of confrontation and conflict. Beyond it, the maze/hedged rooms will be large, both to allow maximum flexibility in displaying different objects, also to allow space for any future building. The visitor will proceed, at their own pace and following their own path, around the garden, perhaps in a circular way, arriving back at the courtyard. There will be a vehicular entrance on the west side. The western frontage will have a steel fence of rectangular pickets with no top rail, like the fence on the 6th street side of LACMA. Coupled with hedges of varying heights, passerby and drivers will be able to see partial views of pieces of the Berlin Wall, and statues, lit at night. The building wall along the parking lot will be lined with plantings of palm trees and spiky plants such as agaves and cactus. This model is a concept only. The trees and plants are typical. The plinths are represented as boxes, where sculptures and objects can be displayed



STENOCEREUS



EUPHORBIA INGENS



DAGAVE TEQUILANA



ALOE ARBORESCENS



QUEEN PALM



ALOE MARLOTHII



AGAVE AMERICANA



MISCANTHUSP.



KING PALM



BUTIA CAPITATA



DRACAENA DRACO



OLIVE TREE



SIGNAGE

Signs

The Comprehensive Plan identifies locations for on-site signage, including monument signs, wall signs, and temporary signs that will be utilized during special events or to promote the display of new collections at the Museum.

The proposed site plan includes three monument signs located around the project site which will provide visibility to vehicle and pedestrian traffic on Culver Boulevard and Coombs Avenue. One sign will be located at the entrance to the parking lot at Culver Boulevard driveway; a second sign will be located at the corner of Coombs Avenue and Culver Boulevard; and a third located at the northeast corner of the property, near the Coombs Avenue driveway.

Two permanent wall signs will be provided on the building, including a sign over the Museum’s pedestrian entry facing Coombs Avenue and the second wall sign facing the parking lot at the northeast corner of the building.

Two temporary sign areas have been designated on the building’s north-facing wall. The sign areas will total 200 square feet each, measuring 6 feet, 8 inches tall by 30 feet wide. The temporary sign areas will be dedicated for wall mounted, non-changeable copy signs made of vinyl or a similar material used for temporary sign construction. The area shall be used for advertising of events or collections at the museum and shall not be limited in number of days per year.

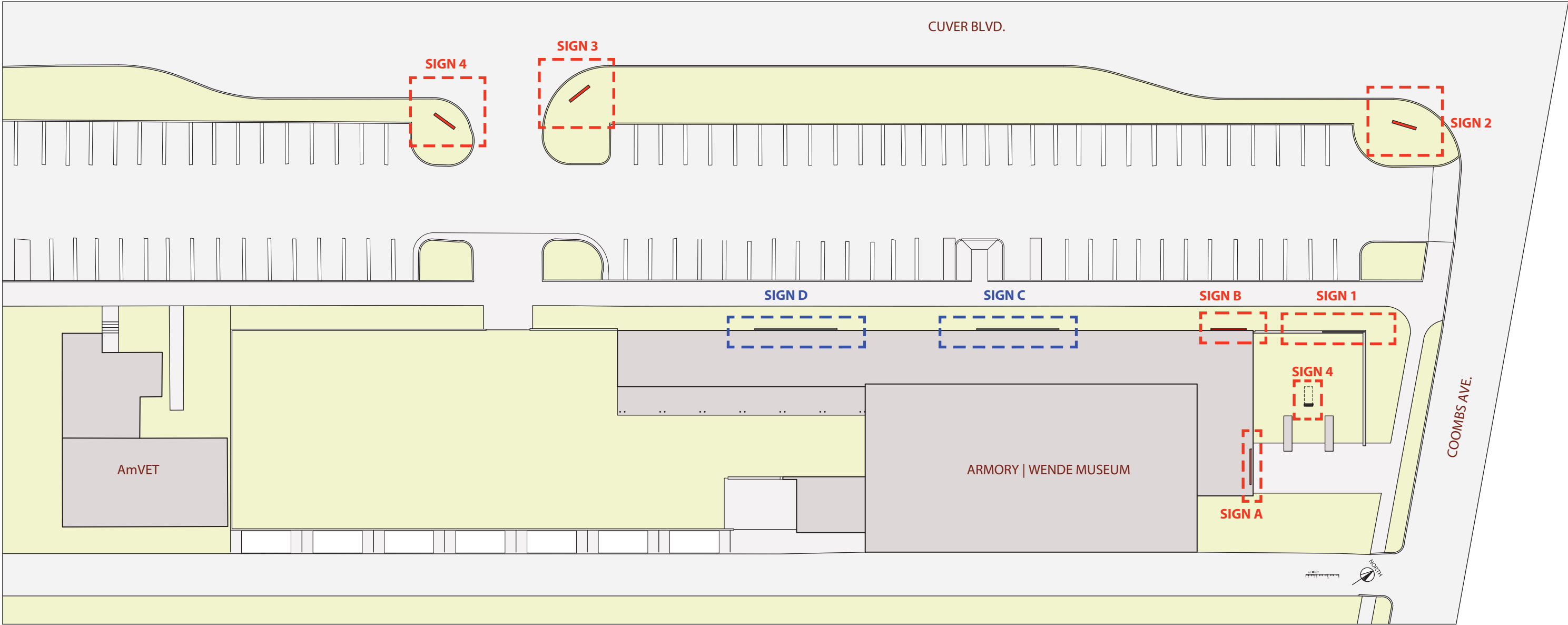
Sign Review

All new signs shall require a sign permit processed through the Planning Division.

The Director shall have the authority to conduct a conformance review for temporary signage installed as part of an event or collection display at the museum prior to manufacture and installation of the temporary sign(s).

All proposed permanent signs shall comply with the approved Comprehensive Plan, in terms of location, size, and design and shall require approval of a sign permit processed through the Planning Division. The sign section of the Comprehensive Plan shall be amended to reflect any changes to the sign area, design or location on the subject property.

PROPOSED SIGNAGE



SIGNAGE KEY PLAN

- PERMANENT SIGNAGE
(FREE STANDING & ATTACHED TO BUILDING)
- TEMPORARY SIGNAGE
FOR SPECIAL EVENTS/EXHIBITIONS

PROPOSED SIGNAGE



LOCATION SIGN #2



LOCATION SIGN #3



LOCATION SIGN #1



LOCATION SIGN A



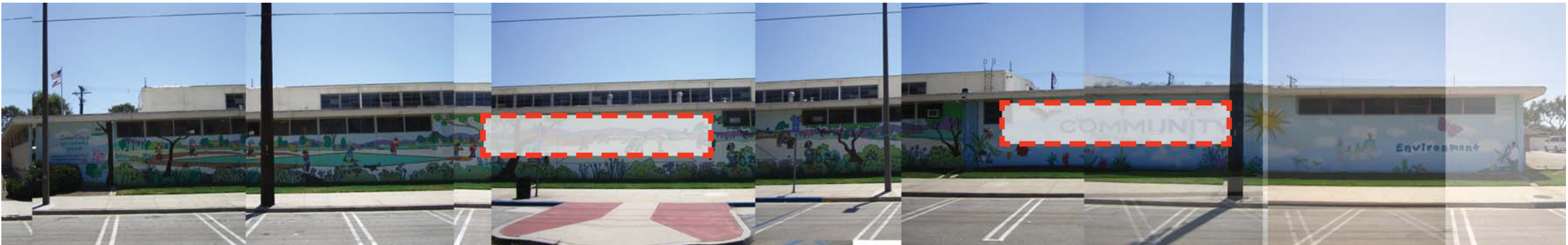
LOCATION SIGN B



BERLIN WALL AT ENTRANCE



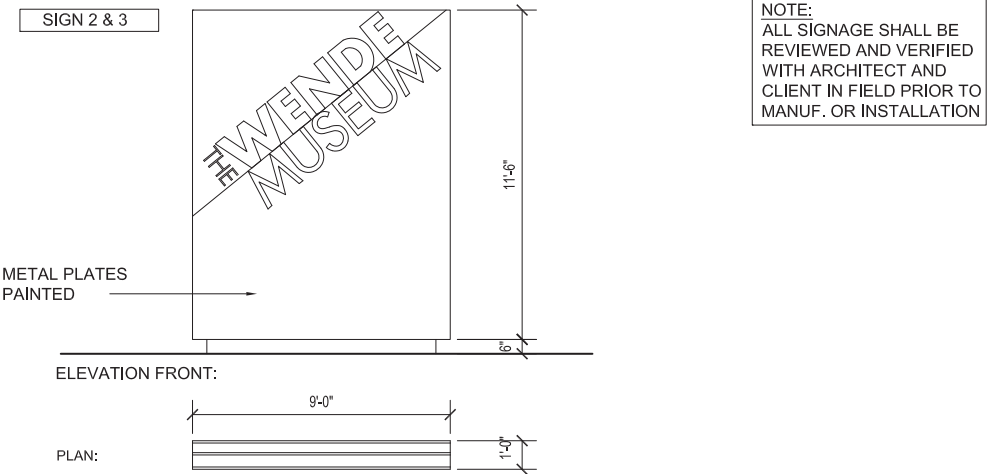
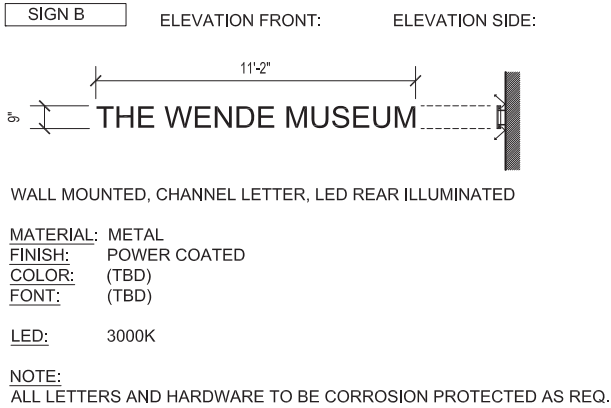
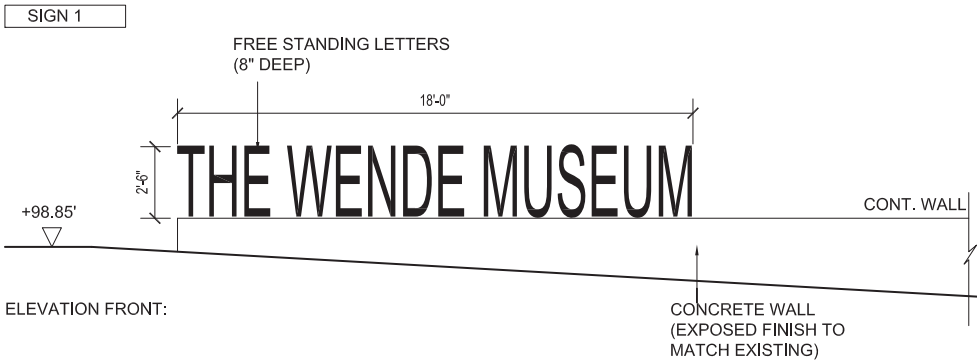
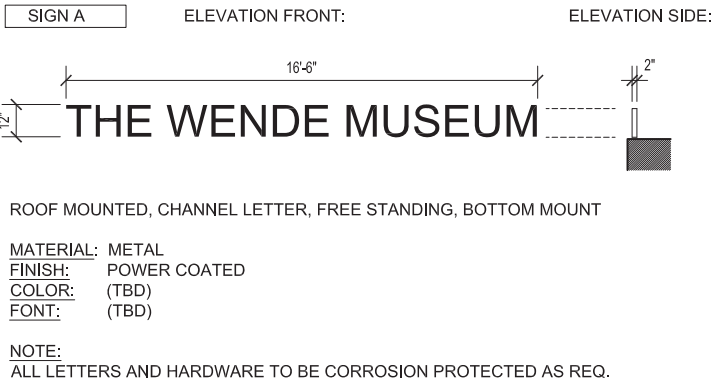
BERLIN WALL IN SCULPTURAL GARDEN



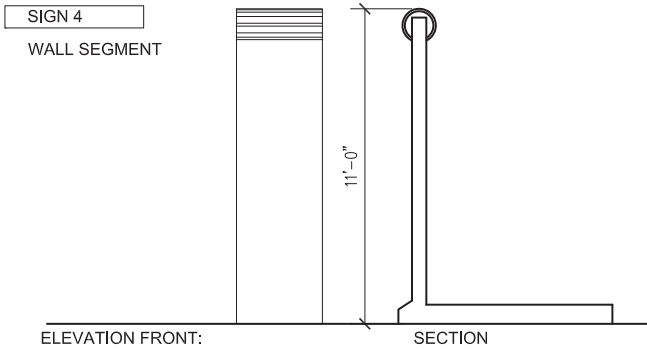
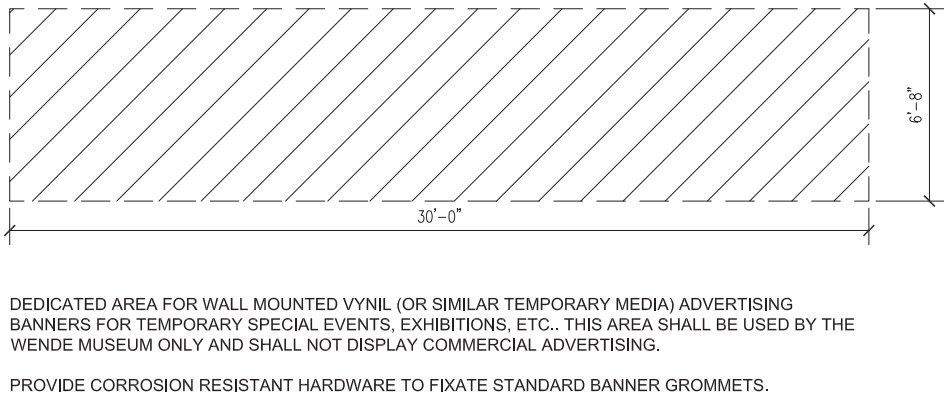
LOCATION SIGN C

LOCATION SIGN A

PROPOSED SIGNAGE



SIGN C & D: TEMPORARY DISPLAY FOR SPECIAL EVENTS



PROPOSED SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES



- Building energy performance modeling – The project will exceed the Title 24 requirements by 10%.
- Participation in the “Savings By Design” Program.
- Reuse of the existing building envelope.
- Insulation of all existing and new exterior walls, roof insulation of all existing and new roof areas.
- Replacing of all windows and doors with energy efficient units.
- Photovoltaic System installed on roof
- Low flow toilet, waterless urinals and low flow faucets.
- High efficient LED lighting.
- Occupancy controlled lighting.
- Photo sensor controlled lighting.
- Maximized use of daylight:
 - Solar tubes in exhibition space, receiving area and restrooms.
 - Lights shelf installed at windows
- Exterior shading trellis on west façade.
- Draught resistant & native landscaping.
- Removing of solid surfaces and replacing them with permeable surface treatment.
- Bike parking spaces.
- California Cold Roof.
- Energy Star appliances.



HISTORIC AMERICAN VETERANS POST II

Project Summary

For over sixty years, historic AmVets Post II, located at 10858 Culver Boulevard, has served American veterans and the citizens of California. Chartered at the end of WWII, AmVets Post II was formed by a group of dedicated veterans who despite facing adversity, insisted on creating a network of support and bold advocacy for veterans, young and old, who had served in all branches of the military and in all eras.

Headquartered in the historic AmVets Post II building in Culver City since the mid-1960s, AmVets Post II took over the administration of the landmark structure in the following years. Since that time, the membership has shouldered the cost of maintaining the unique building and property by contributing thousands of volunteer man-hours and dollars to the effort.

In addition to our work outside of the post, AmVets Post II sponsors numerous events at the Culver City building. Along with hosting veterans from the nearby West LA VAMC at the annual Christmas Party, Post II Officers Installation Dinner and Super Bowl Sunday party, the membership hosts numerous events large and small -- including its monthly meetings on the third Saturday of each month.

Uses

Allowed Uses and Permit Requirements

The Comprehensive Plan allows for the use of the AmVets Post II property as an events center and cultural institution facility. Ancillary uses related to the operation of the facility, including offices, meeting rooms and a small kitchen facility for on-site catering are also permitted, subject to CCMC requirements for ancillary uses. The Director may require additional parking or specific operating conditions to reduce potential impacts on park resources and adjacent residential uses as part of any approval for ancillary uses on-site.

Allowed Special Events and Temporary Events

As a cultural institution serving local veterans, it is anticipated that special events related to the AmVets Post II operations will occur as a regular component of the facility's service. These events are considered part of the operation of the facility and are permitted. Events that are not a part of the normal operation of the AmVets facility may be limited to a total of 12 events annually with a Special Event Permit, pursuant to Section 17.520 of the CCMC.

Land Use

General Plan

The General Plan Land Use designation of the project site is Open Space. The Open Space designation is established to protect Culver City's open space resources that include public or private land. It is designed and intended to preserve existing and encourage future parks, open space, and recreation opportunities.

Zoning

Zoning for the subject property, presently occupied by the AmVets Post II building, is Commercial Neighborhood (CN). The project will include a Zone Change from Commercial Neighborhood to Open Space (OS), in order to bring the property into conformance with the City's General Plan land use designation. Pursuant to Section 17.250.030 of the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC), development and use of property within the Open Space Zoning District requires the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan ensures that the operation of the AmVets facility is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and the adjacent uses through management of on-site events and activities. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a set of regulations, requirements, and procedures that preclude any degradation in safety, security, and quality of life for residential properties adjacent to the property.

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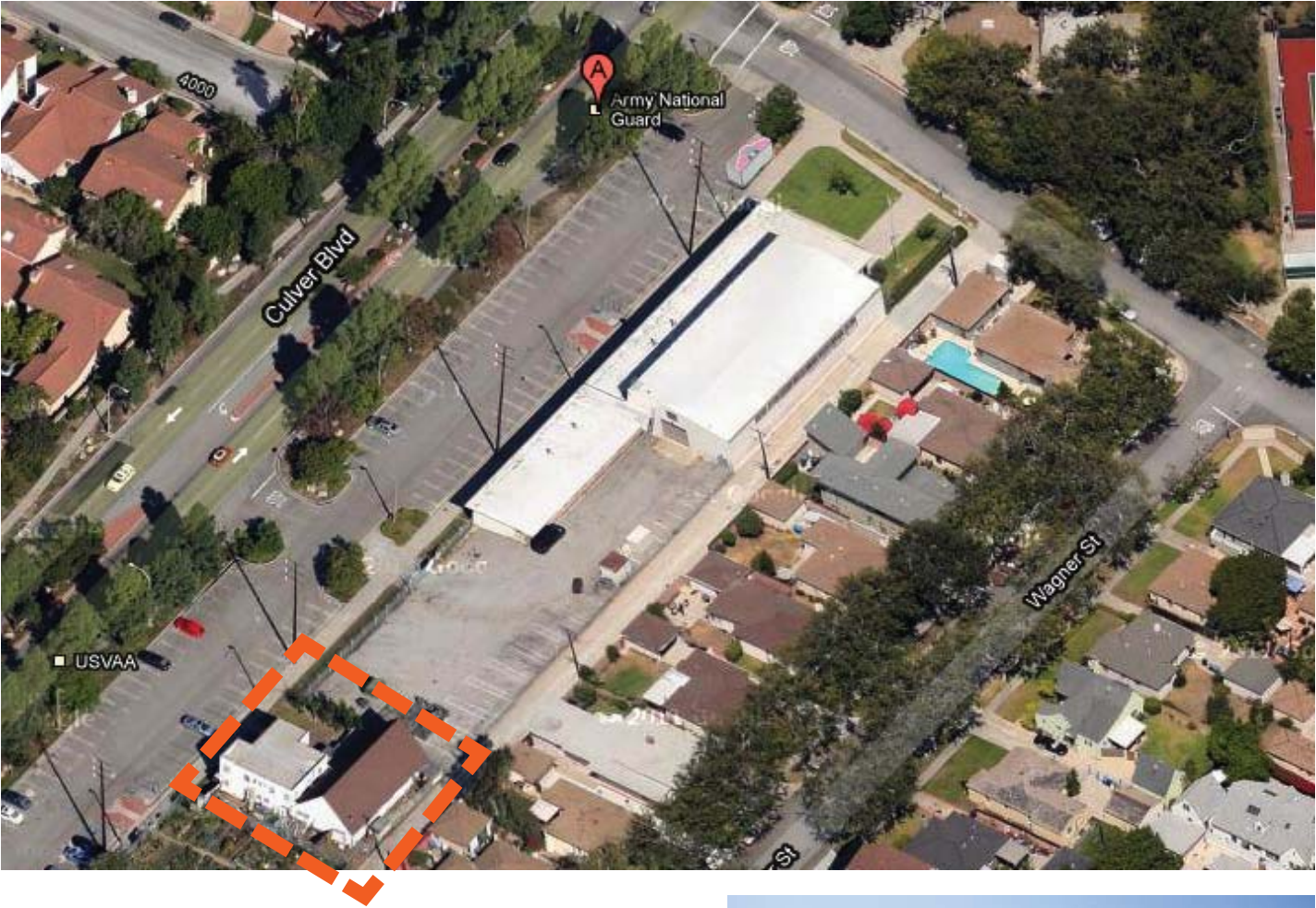
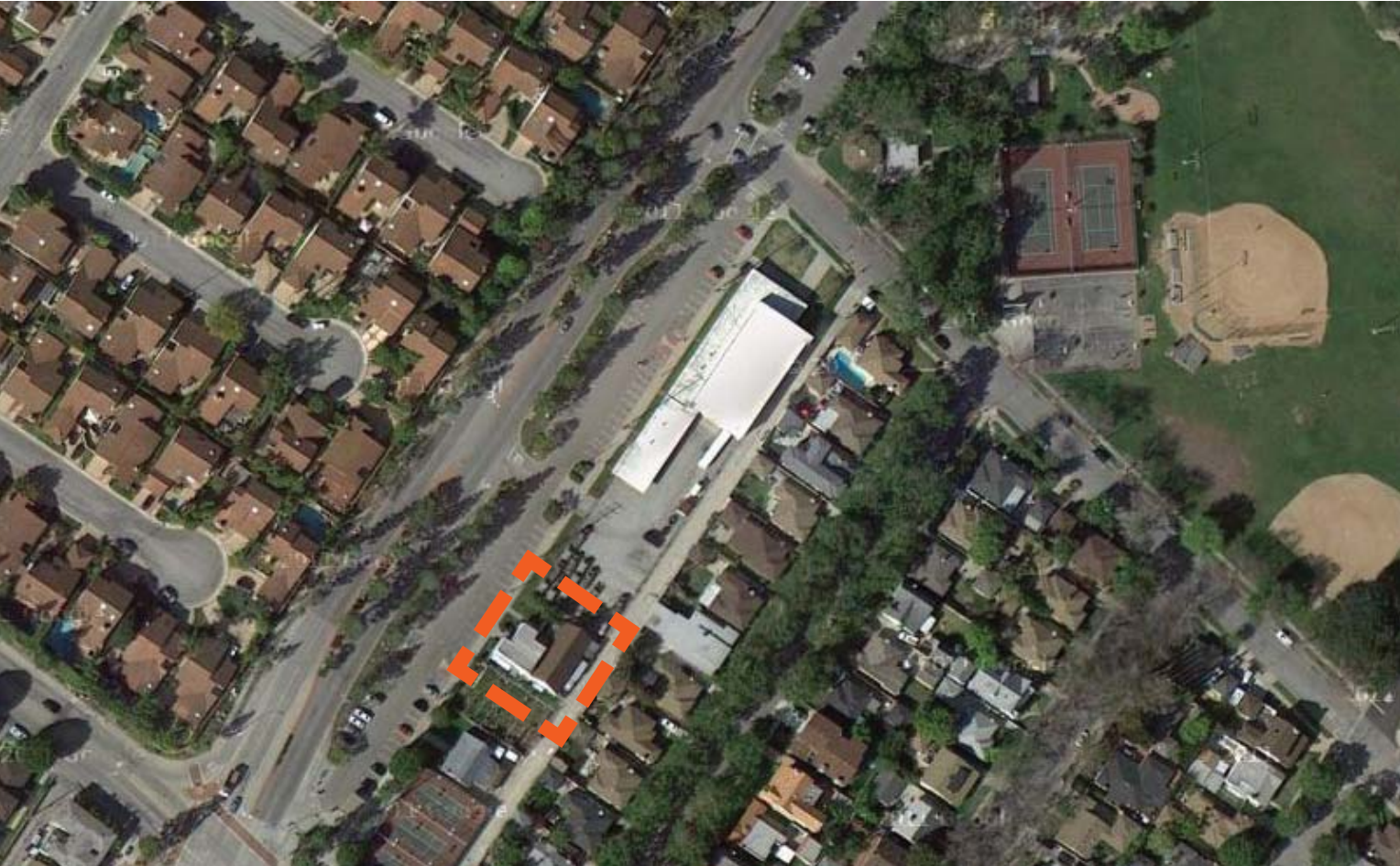
Signs

Sign Review

All new signs shall require a sign permit processed through the Planning Division. Temporary signs shall be allowed subject to the standards identified in Section 17.330 of the CCMC.

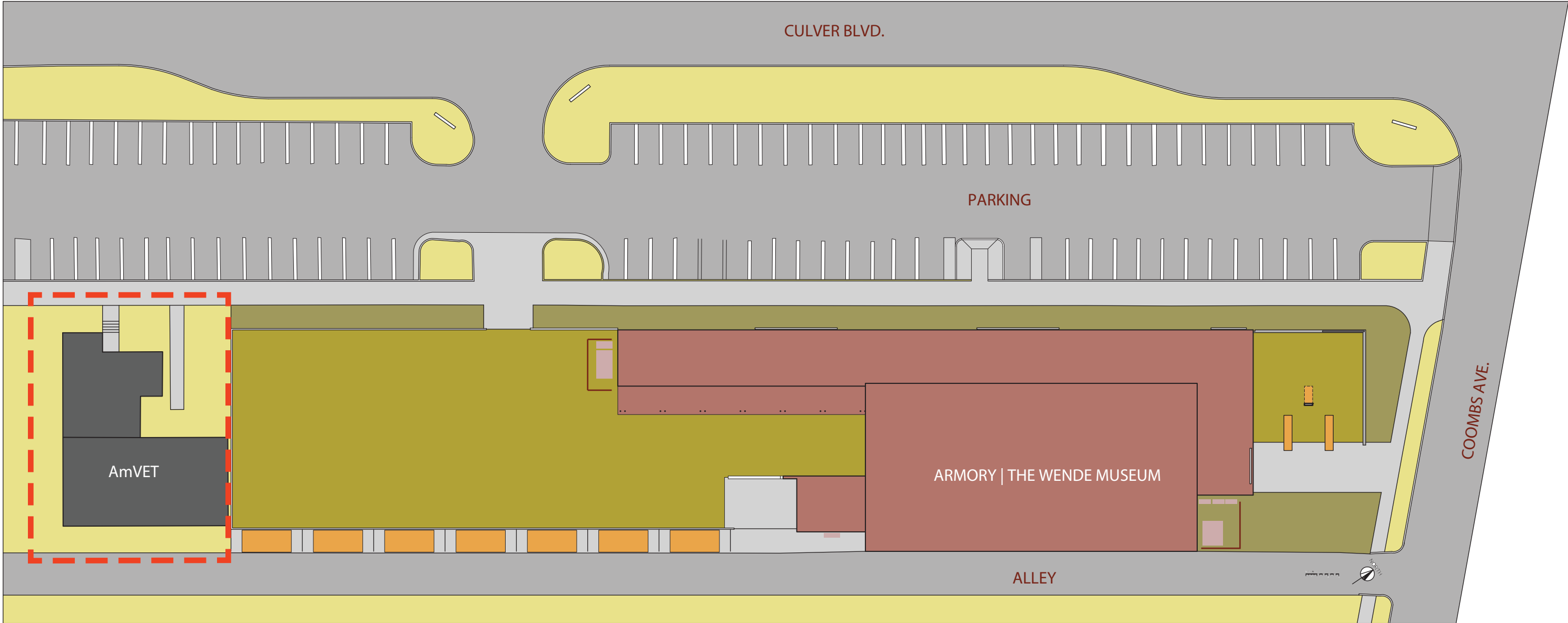


EXISTING AmVET BUILDING





AmVET SITE PLAN



ADMINISTRATION

Relationship to Other Regulations

This Comprehensive Plan provides policies, standards and regulations guiding the development and use of the subject property. Specific topics not otherwise addressed or provided in this Comprehensive Plan shall be governed by the Culver City Municipal Code. No provision of this Comprehensive Plan is intended to repeal, abrogate, annul, impair, or interfere with any existing ordinance, resolutions, or policy except: a) as specifically repealed by the adoptions of this Comprehensive Plan; or b) where this Comprehensive Plan’s provisions are more precise or restrictive than the existing Municipal Code. Where provisions of this Comprehensive Plan impose more restrictive regulations than required by any other ordinance, resolution or policy, the provisions of this Comprehensive Plan shall govern.

Amendments

Modifications to the Comprehensive Plan shall be pursuant to the Culver City Zoning Code, Section 17.560.025 – Comprehensive Plan Modifications, Major and Minor or as amended.

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Meeting Date: February 26, 2014		Item Number: PH-1	
AGENDA ITEM: Zoning Code Map Amendment (ZCMA P-2014018) to rezone the project site from the Commercial Neighborhood (CN) zone to the Open Space (OS) zone, in conformance with the General Plan Land Use designation; and a Comprehensive Plan (CP P-2013176) to allow the conversion of the existing Armory building into the Wende Museum, and to allow the continued use of the Am Vets Post 2 facility located at 10808 Culver Boulevard and 10858 Culver Boulevard, respectively.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Joshua Williams, Associate Planner		Phone Number: (310) 253-5706	
Public Hearing: ☒		Action Item: ☐ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: On February 6, 2014, a notice was mailed to all the property owners and occupants within a 500 foot radius of the site and emailed to the Master Notification List. The notice was also published in the Culver City News on February 6, 2014.			
Planning Approval: Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager		Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> That the Planning Commission: 1. Adopt Resolution No.'s 2014-P002 (Wende Museum); 2014-P003 (Am Vets Facility); and 2014-P004 (Zoning Code Map Amendment) Recommending Approval to the City Council of Zoning Code Map Amendment, ZCMA P-2014018, and Comprehensive Plan, CP P-2013176, (Attachment Nos. 1A, 1B, and 1C). <u>PROCEDURES:</u> 1. Chair calls on staff for a staff report and Commission poses questions to staff as desired. 2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public. 3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented. 4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.			

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BACKGROUND:

Request

The proposed request is to change the zoning on the project site from Commercial Neighborhood (CN) to Open Space (OS) through a Zoning Code Map Amendment (ZCMA); and a Comprehensive Plan (CP) for the adaptive reuse of the former National Guard Armory building, located at 10808 Culver Boulevard, for use by The Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War. The Comprehensive Plan will also allow for the continued use of the Historic American Veterans Post 2 (“Am Vets”) building at 10858 Culver Boulevard as a meeting and event facility for veterans. The project site is located on the south side of Culver Boulevard, west of Veterans Park, stretching the length of Culver Boulevard between Coombs Avenue and Elenda Street (See Attachment No. 2 – Project Location Map).

Existing Conditions

The project site comprising approximately 1.55 acres is presently occupied by several structures and uses including the National Guard Armory Building and the Am Vets facility. The surrounding area is characterized by single family residential uses to the south, behind the property, separated by an alley; single family residential use in the Studio Estates development to the north, across Culver Boulevard; and park and recreational uses associated with Veterans Park, located to the east. Abutting the site to the north is a large parking area which provides shared parking for all uses on the site, including the park facilities to the east.

The project site is located within the Commercial Neighborhood (CN) Zone. The General Plan land use designation is Open Space.

Project Description

The project involves several components, including the rezoning of the site to be in conformance with the City’s General Plan and the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for the Wende Museum project and the Am Vets facility.

The rezoning of the site will change the zoning on the 1.55 acre parcel from Commercial Neighborhood (CN) to Open Space (OS), which will be consistent with the Open Space General Plan designation for the property. Pursuant to 17.250.030 A of the Zoning Code, the purpose of the OS Zone designation is to:

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“Regulate, protect, and preserve publicly accessible land that is well suited for active recreation, amusement, relaxation, and/or scenic viewing”; and

“To ensure that development of new parks or other open space, as well as major modifications to existing resources, are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods through the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan showing proper orientation, desirable design characteristics and programming, and compatibility of uses.”

The Comprehensive Plan is consistent with these goals as it provides for the repurposing of the former Armory as a museum serving the public, and the on-going use of a public facility serving veterans of wars.

More specifically, the Armory will house the Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War, which is currently located at 5741 Buckingham Parkway in Culver City; and the adjacent Am Vets Post 2 facility, which will be established as a permitted use for veteran social gatherings and offices.

The Plan will establish guidelines for operation of the facilities so as to limit impacts on adjacent neighboring residences and park facilities. As proposed, the museum will be open to the public Thursday to Saturday, 10 AM to 6 PM, and Sundays, between 11 AM and 6 PM. Museum staff will be at the museum during the normal work week conducting research, and maintaining and cataloguing the collection. The Am Vets Center will operate from Monday to Saturday, 8AM to 11 PM, and Sundays, 8 AM to 9 PM.

Wende Museum and Am Vets

The project will involve the adaptive reuse of the 12,596 square foot Armory building to house the museum’s large collection of Cold War era memorabilia and artifacts. The museum will seek to connect the experience of the Cold War to contemporary life through creation of a facility that provides better access for scholars, students, journalists, partner organizations and the general public. Interior improvements include the overhaul of existing space, which is presently divided into space for offices, storage, and a gym. Interior improvements will include the creation of a new exhibition space, temperature controlled storage vaults, and offices for staff. Approximately 1,427 square feet of new floor area will be created for mezzanine storage areas inside the building and a new delivery and processing area to the rear of the building. Exterior improvements to the building include the use of smooth stucco and sandblasted concrete as part of the building’s new façade, and brushed stainless steel fasciae around the building.

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To the west of the museum, a previously a paved surface parking area will be redesigned as a new sculpture garden that will utilize both hardscape and softscape elements. The sculpture garden will house large segments of the Berlin Wall, which will be on permanent display at the facility. The garden will primarily be a quiet area for reflection, but can also serve as a location for outdoor lectures.

In addition to the Wende Museum, the Comprehensive Plan document includes a section specific to the historic American Veterans Post 2 ("Am Vets") facility. The Comprehensive Plan for Am Vets will allow for the continued use of the facility for meetings, events, and offices related to veterans affairs. The Am Vets facility has operated on the site since the mid-1960s; however the Comprehensive Plan will make it a conforming use to ensure that the facility operates with consideration of surrounding residential uses now and in the future. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to formalize the use of the building on the site, including limiting special events to those related to Am Vets operations. Events that are not related to serving veterans such as rental of the facility to outside vendors would require a special event permit and may be limited to 12 events per year, subject to administrative review.

Visitor parking for the Wende Museum and the Am Vets facility will be provided in the shared parking area in front of the project site. The museum will provide seven dedicated spaces for employees located to the rear of the project, accessible off the adjacent alley.

ANALYSIS:

A Comprehensive Plan is required for the Project pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.250.030, Open Space (OS) District Requirements. The proposed Zoning Code Map Amendment will re-zone the project site from Commercial Neighborhood (CN) to Open Space (OS) (see Attachment No. 1, Exhibit A), in conformance with the General Plan's Open Space Land Use designation. The proposed Comprehensive Plan includes the development standards and allowed land uses for the Wende Museum and Am Vets facility. The intent of a Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that development of new parks or other open space, as well as major modifications to existing resources, is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods through the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan showing proper orientation, desirable design characteristics and programming, and compatibility of uses. The Comprehensive Plan also establishes a set of regulations, requirements, and procedures that preclude any degradation in safety, security, and quality of life for residential properties adjacent to any OS Zoned parcels. A hearing by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission is also required pursuant to Section 17.250.030 B 5 and D 1.

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Comprehensive Plan – The Wende Museum

The Wende Museum project has been designed to conform to all applicable Zoning Code provisions of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan document (see Attachment No. 3) includes all the relevant land use and development standards for the Project including parking, signage and permitted uses; as well as the site plan, floor plans, building elevations and renderings, building materials and colors, landscaping, infrastructure, and sustainability provisions.

1. Development Standards: The project consists of the adaptive reuse of the existing Armory building into the Wende Museum. The project will also result in the addition of approximately 1,427 square feet of floor area, including a 477 square foot addition for a new receiving area on the southwest exterior of the building; and 950 square feet of new mezzanine floor area, located in the building's interior. No changes are proposed to the building's height, setbacks or massing.

- a. **Parking.** A Parking Utilization Study prepared for the Wende Museum Project by Civic Enterprise Associates, LLC (see Attachment No. 4), identified that 17 parking spaces will be required for the Wende Museum use, including seven (7) dedicated spaces located on the project site and 10 spaces located within the shared parking lot abutting the project site to the north. The Study looked at existing parking spaces in surrounding parking lots at Veterans Memorial Building and Veterans Park which are currently shared by all park uses, including the Am Vets building, the Scout House, the Teen Center, Swimming Pool, and parking for City employees. The Study identified 305 parking spaces in off-street lots and 100 on-street parking spaces located on Overland Avenue, Barman Avenue and Coombs Avenue. During the study period, parking usage at the lot adjacent to the Armory/Wende project site, a minimum of 18 vacant parking spaces during the busiest hour were available. During the museum's proposed hours of operation on Saturday and Sunday, there were more than 50 vacant parking spaces in the parking area over a 9 hour period. In all lots the study identified that there were 122 vacant parking spaces among all lots, which is more than sufficient to accommodate parking demand for Wende Museum patrons. The study concluded that even during peak occupancy periods, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate demand from all existing sources including the Am Vets facility, and there is sufficient underutilized parking capacity to accommodate additional demand from Wende Museum patrons.

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- b. **Signs.** The Comprehensive Plan identifies permitted sign areas on the building façade and around the property's perimeter. Stand-alone monument signs for the museum will be located at the entry to the parking lot on Culver Boulevard and at the southwest corner of Culver Boulevard and Coombs Avenue. The monument signs will be approximately 11 feet 6 inches in height and 9 feet wide. A third monument sign comprised of free standing letters spelling out "The Wende Museum" will be located on the project site, near the primary entrance to the museum building. Two permanent wall signs will be affixed to the exterior of the building, one facing the parking lot and one located above the primary entry to the museum.

In addition to the permanent signs, the project will include dedicated space for two temporary signs. The temporary sign locations will be on the north facing wall of the museum facing the parking lot and Culver Boulevard. The temporary wall signs are designated for use as advertisement of exhibitions, collections and events at the museum. The signs' content will change in concert with the opening and closing of exhibits, or as needed for special events related to the operation of the museum.

- 2. General Land Use Provisions:** The Comprehensive Plan identifies "museum" and "cultural institution facility" as permitted uses at the project site. Ancillary or "accessory uses" such as a small café or gift shop that are subservient to the primary museum use are also permitted subject to Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) limitations, which may require additional parking if the size of the accessory use exceeds more than 20 percent of the gross floor area of the primary use.

- a. **Special Events and Temporary Events:** It is anticipated that the museum will have special events related to the ongoing operation of the facility, including but not limited to exhibition openings, fundraisers, and lectures. These events are not limited in terms of the number of events held annually, and may be held without requirement of a special event permit. Events that are not part of the museums normal operation, including but not limited to private parties, weddings, and banquets shall require a special event permit from the City. These special events may be limited to a total of 12 events annually, pursuant to Section 17.520 of the CCMC.

- 3. Architectural Design:** While the general shape and structural elements of the existing Armory building will remain, the Applicant is proposing changes to the exterior appearance of the building through the use of new

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materials and paint. The building's exterior remodel will incorporate exposed concrete, smooth trowel stucco at the new receiving area, and brushed stainless steel elements. The exterior will be highlighted with white paint and red accents, evoking the Wende Museum logo colors. Additional materials will include natural accent stone around the property. Windows around the facility are proposed to be composed of frosted glass.

- 4. Public Art:** The Wende Museum is proposing to install several panels of the original Berlin Wall onto the project site, including in areas viewable by the public during all hours. Several panels are proposed to be erected within the new Sculptural Garden as centerpieces surrounded by the new landscaping and hardscape elements. The project will also place two wall panels on the exterior of the Museum walls – one at the entry to the parking lot off of Culver Boulevard, across from the Wende Museum monument sign. A second panel will be placed near the building's primary entrance off of Coombs Avenue in a small landscaped area.

Traffic and Circulation

A traffic analysis for the project, dated January 30, 2013, and prepared by The Rifkin Transportation Planning Group was reviewed and accepted by the City's Traffic Engineer (see Attachment No. 5). The traffic analysis indicated that the relatively small amount of traffic generated by the project would not result in any significant impacts on surrounding arterial or residential streets. The analysis determined that the museum's relocation to the Armory Building will generate 10,000 annual visitors to the new museum site, versus 1,000 annual visitors at its current location at 5741 Buckingham Parkway. Using the most conservative estimates for trip generation, the analysis determined that the use would generate 7 vehicle trips in the AM and PM peak hours and 15 vehicle trips per hour on weekends. The number of trips generated would be significantly below the 50 vehicle trips per hour required by the City to necessitate a detailed traffic study.

Access to the parking lot abutting the project site will be provided through three driveways, two off of Culver Boulevard and one off of Coombs Avenue. The driveway off of Culver Boulevard closest to Elenda Street is a one way entrance only access point. The second driveway off of Culver Boulevard is a two way (egress and ingress) driveway, which is accessible via a dedicated right turn pocket off of Culver Boulevard for vehicles travelling east and a dedicated left turn pocket for vehicles travelling west. The Coombs Avenue driveway also allows for ingress and egress to the site. To the rear of the property is a 20 foot wide alley, parallel to Culver Boulevard and connecting

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Elenda Street and Coombs Avenue. The alley will provide access to the site for delivery vehicles and to the employee parking area.

Community Outreach

Beginning in 2010 and continuing through 2013, the Wende Museum has made outreach to residents, City Council, City Commissions and various community groups about the proposed adaptive re-use of the Armory Building. In February 2012, the museum distributed information cards to neighbors in the Veterans Park neighborhood to solicit feedback on the proposed plans and architectural renderings. A “Wine & Cheese” event was held at the current Wende Museum location later that February to obtain feedback from neighbors. In July of 2012, Museum staff conducted a door-to-door meet and greet with neighbors living on Wagner Avenue (the street to the south of the project site). In August 2013, a mailing was sent to neighbors in the Veterans Park neighborhood that included information about the museum proposal. The letter also provided a hotline to answer neighbor questions and concerns. The Museum maintains open house hours at its current location to answer questions from neighbors of the project site.

As part of the City’s notification for the Planning Commission hearing, one comment was received. A resident requested information about the potential preservation of the mural on the north facing wall of the Armory. Planning Staff spoke with the Cultural Affairs department about the requirements for preservation of the mural. Per Christine Byers of Cultural Affairs, the mural is not a part of the City’s Art in Public Places. It was created as part of a Sony Pictures employee community project. As part of the building’s façade improvements, the Wende Museum will be photo-documenting the remnants of the 1990s mural so that it will be permanently recorded and will be made available on the web site and with the Culver City Historical Society.

Comprehensive Plan – The Historic American Veterans Post 2

The Historic American Veterans Post 2 (“Am Vets”) facility has operated on the subject site since the mid-1960s, serving veterans and their families and hosting events for veterans groups around the region. The Comprehensive Plan document (see Attachment No. 3) identifies the Am Vets facility as a permitted use on the subject property and establishes guidelines for the continued use of the facility for events.

- 1. General Land Use Provisions:** The Comprehensive Plan identifies the “events center” and “cultural institution facility” as permitted uses at the project site. Ancillary or “accessory uses” related to the operation of the Am Vets facility, including offices, meeting rooms and a small kitchen facility for on-site catering are also permitted subject to Culver City

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Municipal Code (CCMC) limitations, which may require additional parking if the size of the accessory use exceeds more than 20 percent of the gross floor area of the primary use.

- a. **Special Events and Temporary Events:** As a cultural institution serving local veterans, the Am Vets facility regularly host events for veterans in the community and the region including an annual Christmas Party, an annual Super Bowl Party, and Officers Installation Dinner. These types of events are considered part of the operation of the facility and are permitted without the requirement to attain a special event permit. Events that are not part of the facility's normal operation, including but not limited to private parties, weddings, and banquets shall require a special event permit from the City. These special events may be limited to a total of 12 events annually, pursuant to Section 17.520 of the CCMC.

CONCLUSION:

The Wende Museum is an important cultural facility that at this new location will allow its significant resources to be more readily available to the public and further enhance the City's identity as a destination for cultural and arts facilities and resources. Staff has worked closely with the applicant on the development of the Comprehensive Plan document in order to ensure that the use will be compatible with surrounding residential uses and will complement existing cultural and recreational resources in the vicinity. The Project will repurpose an obsolete building for public use and will not create impacts related to parking or traffic pursuant to the Project's traffic and circulation analysis.

- a. The parking study concluded that even during peak occupancy periods, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate demand from all existing sources including the Am Vets facility, and there is sufficient underutilized parking capacity to accommodate additional demand from Wende Museum patrons.
- b. The traffic analysis determined that vehicle trips during AM and PM peak hours will be significantly less than the threshold required by the City to necessitate a full traffic study. The project will not result in significant impacts to the surrounding street system.

Further, the adjacent Am Vets property will become a legal conforming use under the Comprehensive Plan, compatible with the Wende Museum and other uses in the Open Space zone.

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Based on the analysis contained herein staff believes the findings for a Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Map Amendment can be made as outlined in proposed Resolution Nos. 2014-P002; 2014-P003; and 2014-P004 (Attachment Nos. 1A, 1B, and 1C) and recommends project approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to Section 21166 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15162 and 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the proposed Zoning Code Map Amendment (ZCMA) requested as part of the Comprehensive Plan is within the scope of the Culver City General Plan Update Program EIR approved on September 24, 1996 (PEIR 1) and the Culver City Redevelopment Plan Amendment and Merger Program Subsequent EIR approved on November 16, 1998 (PEIR 2). The circumstances under which the PEIR 1, and PEIR 2 were prepared have not significantly changed and no new significant information has been found that would impact either the PEIR 1, and PEIR 2; therefore, no new environmental analysis is required at this time related to rezoning of the property. Further, upon initial review of the proposed project, staff has determined that there are no potentially significant impacts on the environment and pursuant to Section 15301, Class 31; Existing Facilities of the CEQA guidelines, the proposed Comprehensive Plan portion of the project is Categorically Exempt as it will result in negligible expansion of use.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

The following alternative actions may be considered by the Planning Commission:

1. Approve the application with the recommended conditions of approval if the application is deemed to meet the required findings.
2. Approve the application with additional or different conditions of approval, if deemed necessary to meet the required findings and mitigate any new project impacts identified at the meeting.
3. Disapprove the application if it does not meet the required findings.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1.
 - A. Draft Resolution No. 2014-P0002 (Wende Museum) and Exhibit A, Conditions of Approval.
 - B. Draft Resolution No. 2014-P003 (Am Vets Facility)
 - C. Draft Resolution No. 2014-P004 (Zoning Map Change) and Exhibit A – Zone Change Map
2. Project Location Map
3. Comprehensive Plan Document dated February 5, 2014
4. Parking Utilization Study prepared for the Wende Museum Project by Civic Enterprise Associates, LLC dated March 15, 2013.
5. Wende Museum - Initial Traffic Analysis for the project, prepared by The Rifkin Transportation Planning Group, dated January 30, 2013.