

# Harvard Hillel Rosovsky Hall Renovation

## Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

PREPARED FOR  
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PREPARED BY  
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SUBMITTED MARCH ,

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## *Introduction*

### **Existing Building**

Rosovsky Hall is located at the corner of Mount Auburn and Plympton Streets and falls within the boundaries of the Harvard Square Neighborhood Conservation District.

Rosovsky Hall is the home of Harvard Hillel, the center for Jewish Life at Harvard University. It was designed by architect Moshe Safdie and was completed in 1994. The building is clad in brick and precast concrete and capped with three (3) barrel vaulted roofs clad in lead-coated copper. The building is two stories above grade with a basement and a mechanical penthouse (enclosed in a central barrel vault on the roof). The building program today includes offices, meeting rooms, a dining hall, a small commercial kitchen, three worship spaces and a large central exterior courtyard. The Lower Level was designed for a tenant and has a separate entrance off the south Parking Court. The building's main entrance is located on Mount Auburn Street.

### **Design proposal**

Harvard Hillel has endeavored on this major renovation with several goals and priorities to help the institution better support and engage the student population and the broader community that they serve. As part of the early concept design, we have developed the following guiding principles to frame the renovation design.

- A Hub for Jewish Life
- Welcoming and Safe
- Intimate and vibrant
- Flexible and adaptable
- Sustainable and connected to nature
- Preserved and evolved
- Expand and improved dining experience

In addition, Rosovsky Hall has aging building systems that are at the end of their life, inefficient and difficult to maintain. Major water infiltration events have been an issue in recent years. The renovation project will also include full building system upgrades and significant site work to manage storm water and improve the resiliency of the facility. The scope of work that specifically impacts the exterior envelope includes:

- Modification to the main entrance to improve security and circulation.
- Enclosure of a central courtyard to support all-season gatherings.
- Removal of the exterior tenant access stair and conversion of the former tenant suite to new worship and student focused lounge spaces.
- New roof access stair and mechanical units to better support the building's enhanced and sustainable mechanical systems.
- Envelope restoration and upgrades to improve the building's thermal performance and appearance.

The proposed alterations are described in greater detail below.

Note that this project is pursuing a zoning variance from the Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA) for a setback relief and increased FAR. The BZA requires CHC approval prior to commencing the zoning variance process. This project is currently in the Design Development phase and will be seeking a Building permit in December 2023. We are asking the CHC for a Certificate of Appropriateness on our design at this time with the understanding that some elements may require staff level review when more details are available in the Construction Documents stage.

These items may include:

- Security / Fire Alarm and other appurtenances on the building façade
- Donor related building signage

- Rooftop Mechanical equipment and screening size and location
- Landscape materials and site lighting

### *Summary of Proposed Alterations*

Proposed alterations fall into the following categories:

1. Envelope Restoration/ Upgrades:

- a. Masonry Façades: Typical: cleaning of efflorescence and environmental staining at brick and precast banding; selective repointing; crack repair. *(Visible from Public Ways)*
- b. Barrel Vaulted Roofs: Replacement of lead-coated copper finish with more stable zinc tin finish. Existing profiles to be maintained to the greatest extent possible. *(Visible from Public Ways)*
- c. Punched Window Units: Replacement of all windows with higher performing, triple-glazed units. Configuration of windows to match existing. Details not yet available. *(Visible from Public Ways)*
- d. System Glazing: Replacement of all curtain wall with higher performing, triple-glazed system. Proposal includes some modifications to the finishes and configuration. Details not yet available. *(Visible from Public Ways)*
- e. Barrel Vault Skylights: Replacement of aluminum skylights with higher performing units. Configuration to match existing to the greatest extent possible. Improvement to flashing may impact profiles. *(Not visible from Public Ways)*
- f. New Skylights: Skylights will be included in the new courtyard and the entry. These will be circular and are an important symbolic and functional element of the design. See further description in the following section. *(Visible from Public Ways)*

2. Envelope Modifications

a. North facade

i. New glass Entry Pavilion addition.

1. At the ground floor, the expanded footprint provides a welcoming entry experience plus space for enhanced security. The current entry configuration is very limited and does not provide for ample space for security. In the current configuration, visitors can proceed downstairs without passing the security desk, for example. The proposed entry design allows for a generous security desk to accommodate two staff members. The width of the entry gallery can accommodate additional security features if needed for events, such as metal detectors. It is also generous enough to allow for larger numbers of people to flow into and out of the building more efficiently during an event.
2. At the second level, a circular skylight over the Solarium lounge acts as a symbolic “Ner Tamid” or *eternal light* for the institution. This is an important symbolic element for the building and the community. A traditional worship space will have one Ner Tamid. Providing one for the building signals a shared Jewish identity among the minyanim using the

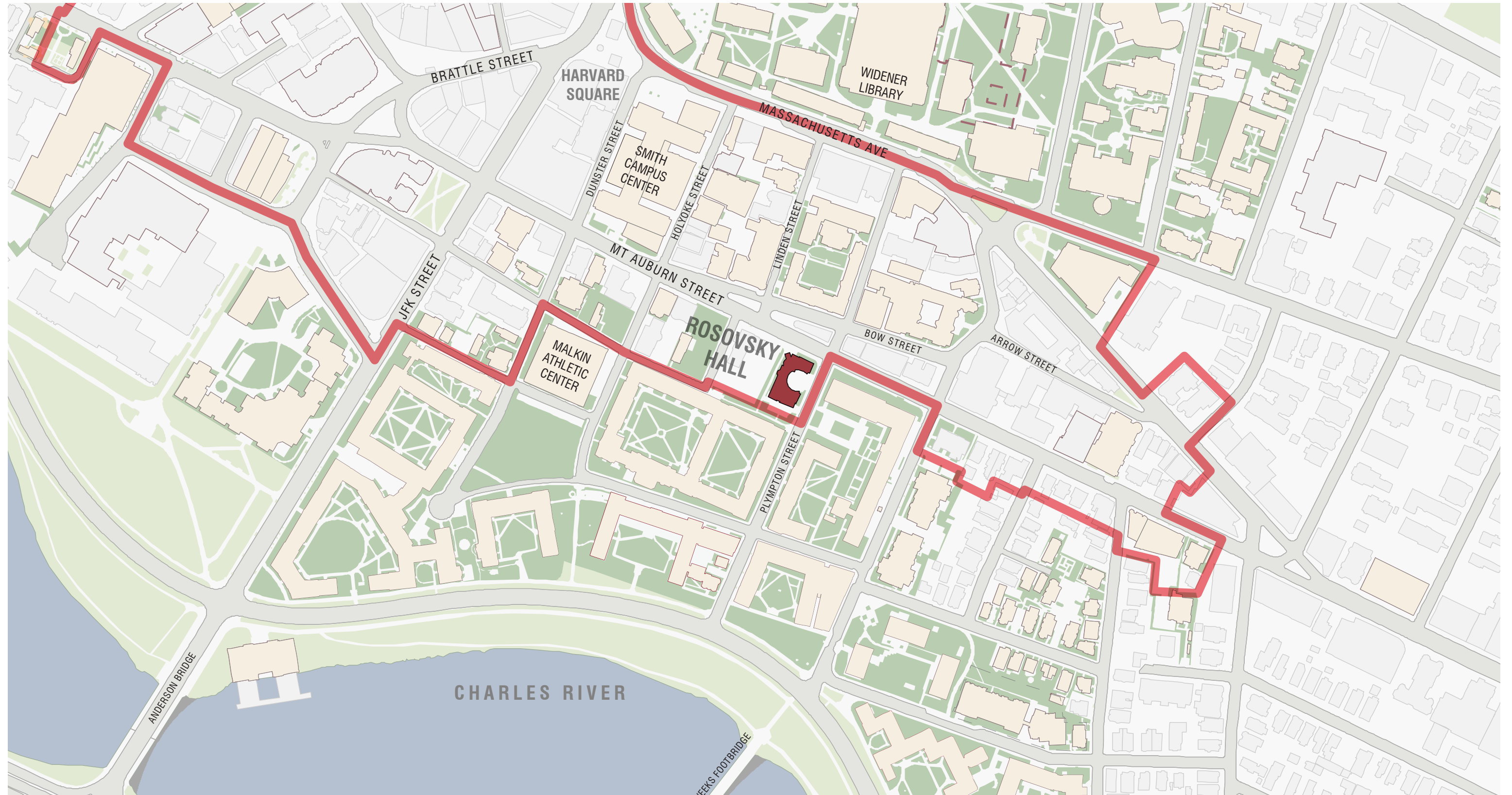
- building for worship. More broadly this element signals the Jewish identity to the community. This is a reinterpretation of the glass Ner Tamid element that exists today on top of the entry tower.
3. The curved entry addition is flanked by cast stone panel walls that reference the existing datum and materials of the original building. Refer to renderings on pages 11 & 12. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
    - ii. New punched window openings at office suite provide increased daylighting to occupants to support a change in the program at that location. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
    - iii. Extended raised landing and raised egress door for flood resiliency. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
    - iv. Raised window well walls for flood resiliency. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
- b. East façade
- i. New glass and steel courtyard enclosure provides Hillel with an all-season worship and event space to support their growing program. A new precast terrace wall includes a raised glass barrier for building / user security. Exterior vertical metal “fins” provide thermal and solar glare relief for occupants and align with existing building datum. A skylight above the heart space provides daylighting deep into the interior space. Refer to renderings and details on page 13. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
  - ii. Glazed infill at former tenant stair opening. The ground floor dining room expands into the former tenant stair the lower level, which is no longer required. An uninterrupted glass panel nods to the former entrance opening. A new masonry base that aligns with the existing precast datum will provide infiltration resistance. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
  - iii. Raised window well walls for flood resiliency. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
- c. South façade
- i. Glazed infill at former tenant stair opening. At the south façade, the window wall with profiled precast surrounds on the second floor will be replicated on the ground floor. A new masonry base that aligns with the existing precast datum will provide infiltration resistance. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
  - ii. New roof access stair hatch and mechanical equipment will be partially visible from the public way. The stair will replace a ladder-accessed roof hatch. A new mechanical partition (that matches the existing louvers on at the mechanical vault) will be installed to screen the largest equipment visually and acoustically. (*Partially Visible from Public Ways*)
- d. West façade
- i. New curved glass Entry Pavilion addition (See description above).
  - ii. New roof access stair hatch and mechanical screen. (See description above).
  - iii. Egress and dumbwaiter door sills raised (to align with site grading) for flood resiliency. (*Not Visible from Public Ways*)
  - iv. New Mechanical louvers will be installed at former window locations on the second level. (*Not Visible from Public Ways*)

3. Site Changes

- a. Waste/Recycling Enclosures: Along the west edge of the site, remove a section of the fence to expand the existing masonry trash enclosure. New wood doors to match existing will be provided. Enlarged enclosure will include space for 4 additional recycling/compost bins (*Minimally Visible from Public Ways*)
- b. Grade changes: Modified grading around the site will provide positive drainage to reduce storm water infiltration.
  - i. A new sloped transition from the Mount Auburn sidewalk to the new granite entry landing will omit need for an accessible ramp/railings. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
- c. Fence at west property line: The existing 8'-0" wood stockade fence and masonry piers will be replaced. A new concrete curb will be installed at the base of the wood fence to accommodate new site grading. The wood fence will match existing height and design. The masonry piers between the existing wood stockade fence will be rebuilt to match the existing. Existing lighting at the masonry piers will be replaced.
- d. Site Piers and steel fence along Plympton: Reconstruction of damaged masonry site piers. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
- e. Site piers and steel fence along Mount Auburn: Site piers will be relocated to respond to the new punched window locations. The balance of the piers will be rebuilt in kind. The brick is damaged. The existing fence panels will be cleaned and repainted or replaced in kind. (*Visible from Public Ways*)
- f. Parking Court: Existing asphalt parking court will be replaced with brick paving with granite inlay strips. This area requires repaving to accommodate the storm water detention tank. The paving will be more compatible with the original design. It has since been replaced with asphalt. The court may be used for outdoor events, such as the celebration of Sukkot.

# Neighborhood Plan

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation

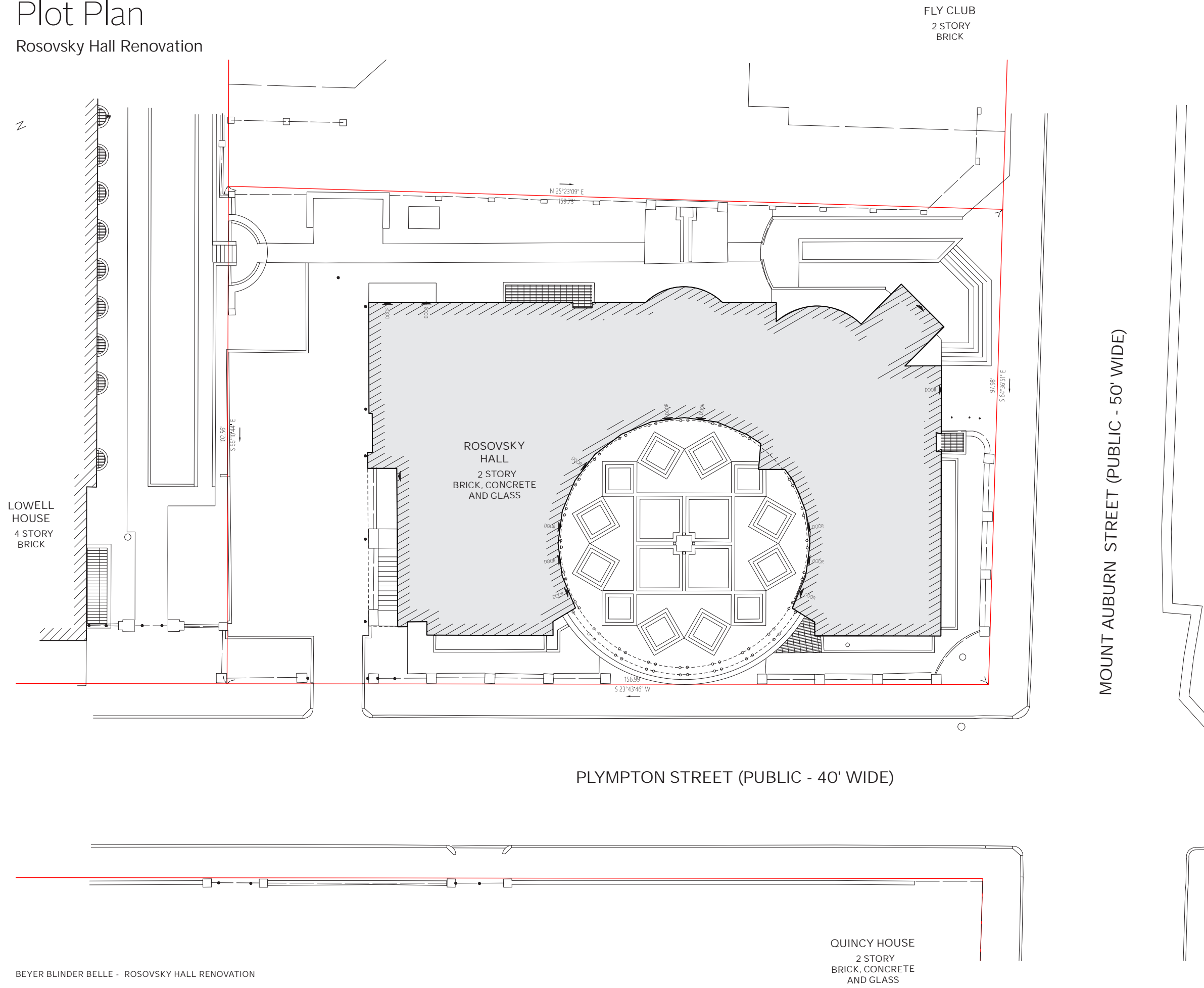


— HARVARD SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT



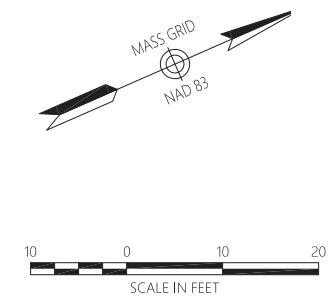
# Plot Plan

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



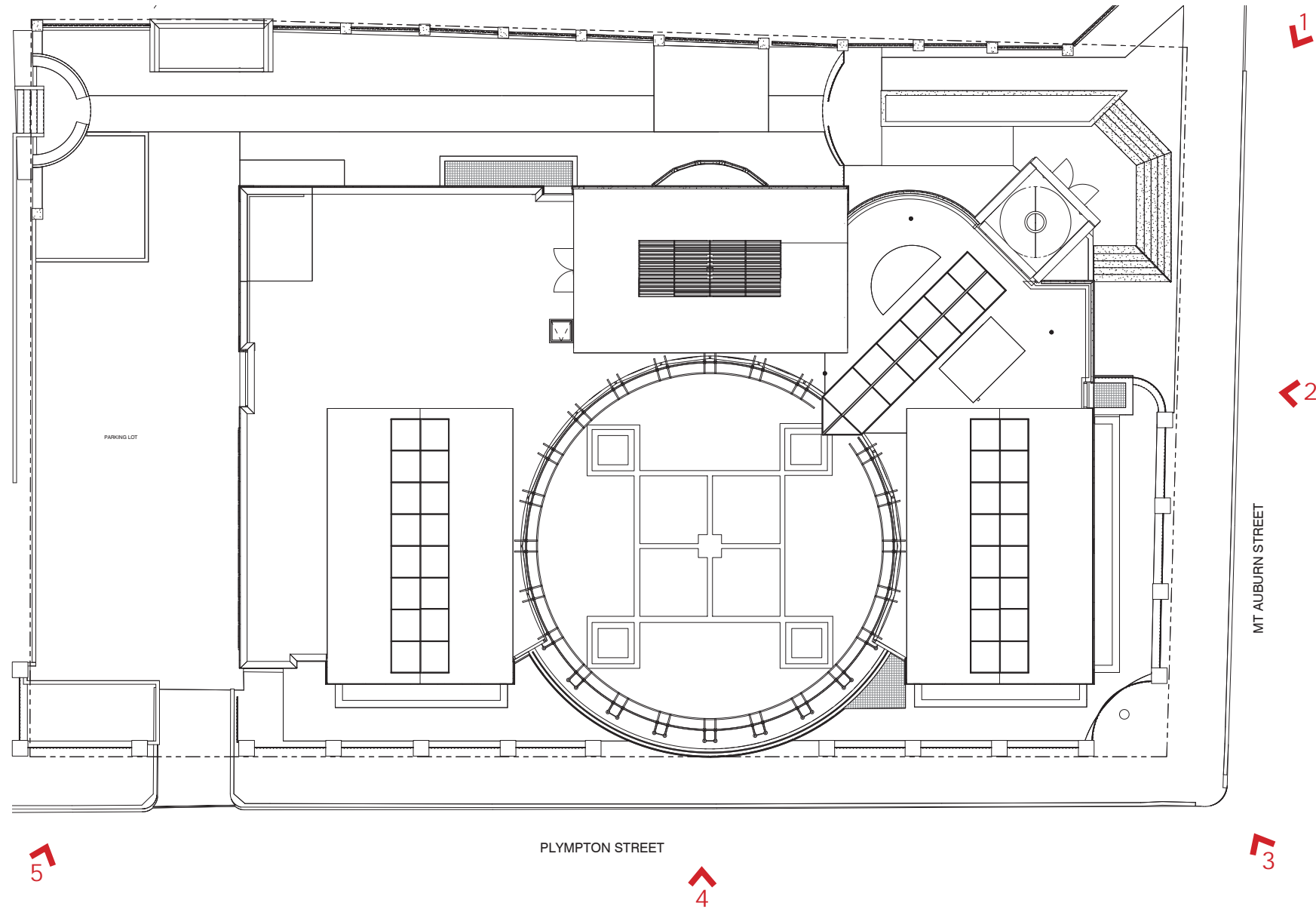
Rosovsky Hall is located at the corner of Mount Auburn and Plympton Streets and falls within the boundaries of the Harvard Square Neighborhood Conservation District.

The building is shown in light gray. Relevant property lines from the civil survey are indicated in red. The President and Fellows of Harvard College own the abutting property to the south at 10 Holyoke Place (Lowell House). The abutting lot to the west is affiliated with the Fly Club at 2 Holyoke Place and is owned by a private LLC.



# Existing Views

Rosovsky Hall Renovation



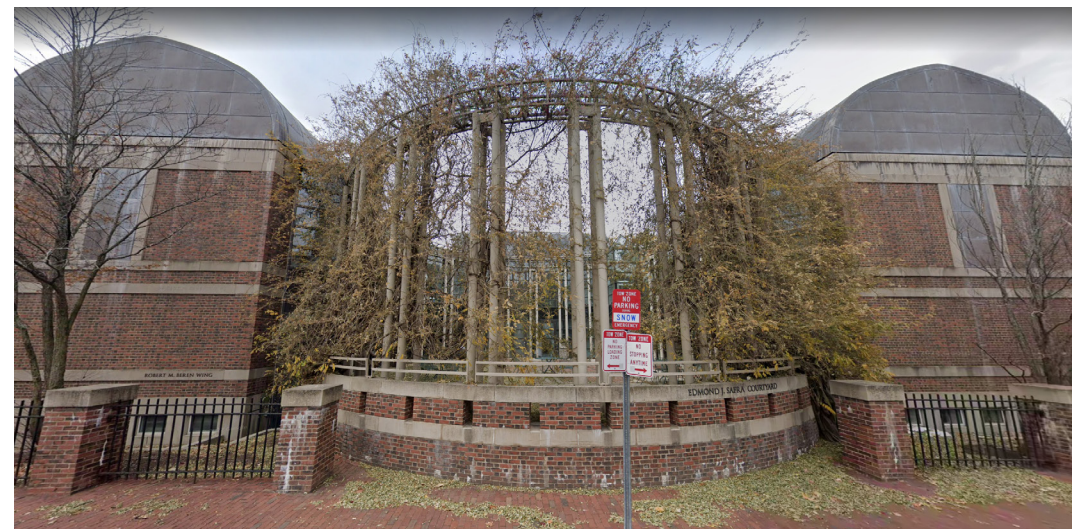
NORTH WEST CORNER FROM MOUNT AUBURN STREET



NORTH FACADE FROM MOUNT AUBURN STREET



SOUTH EAST CORNER FROM PLYMPTON STREET  
BEYER BLINDER BELLE - ROSOVSKY HALL RENOVATION



EAST FACADE FROM PLYMPTON STREET



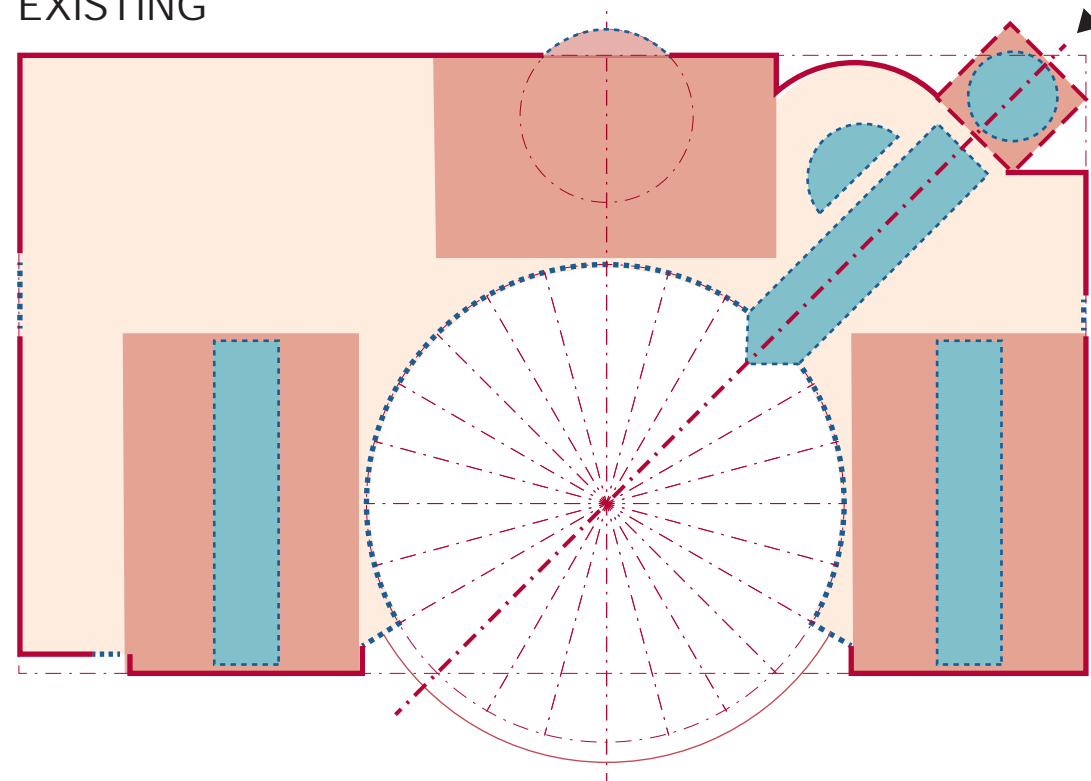
NORTH EAST CORNER FROM MOUNT AUBURN AND PLYMPTON STREETS



# Geometry Diagram

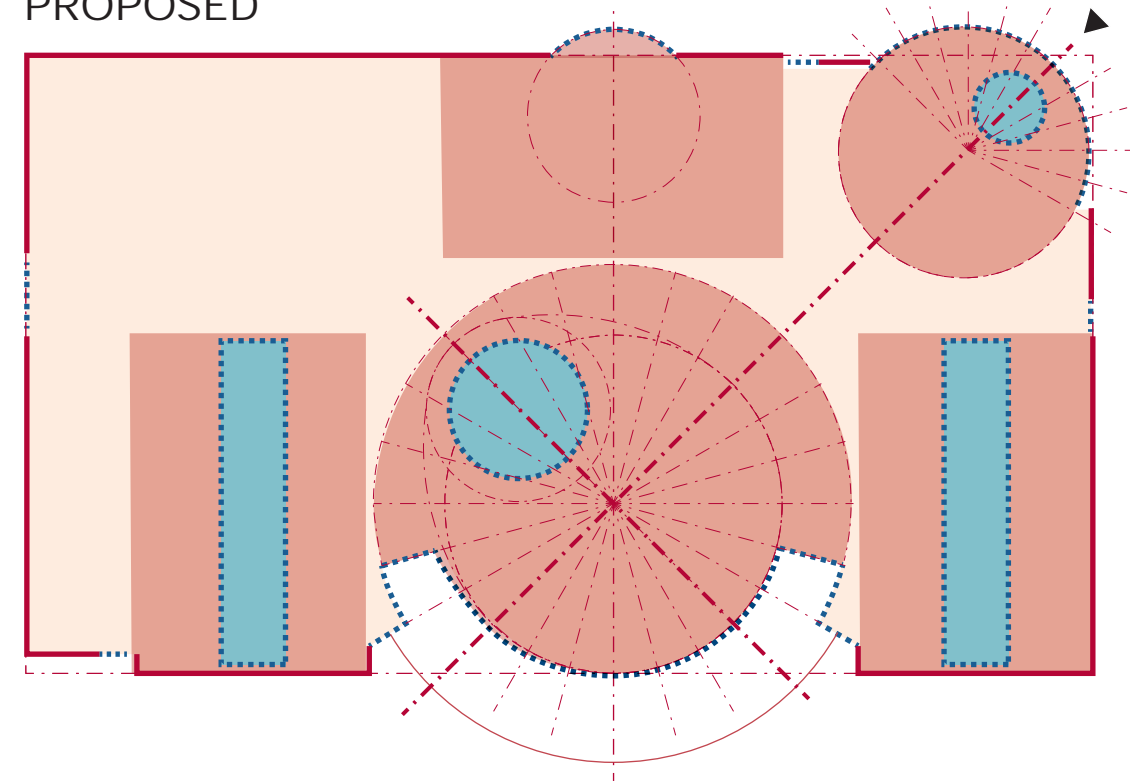
Rosovsky Hall Renovation

## EXISTING



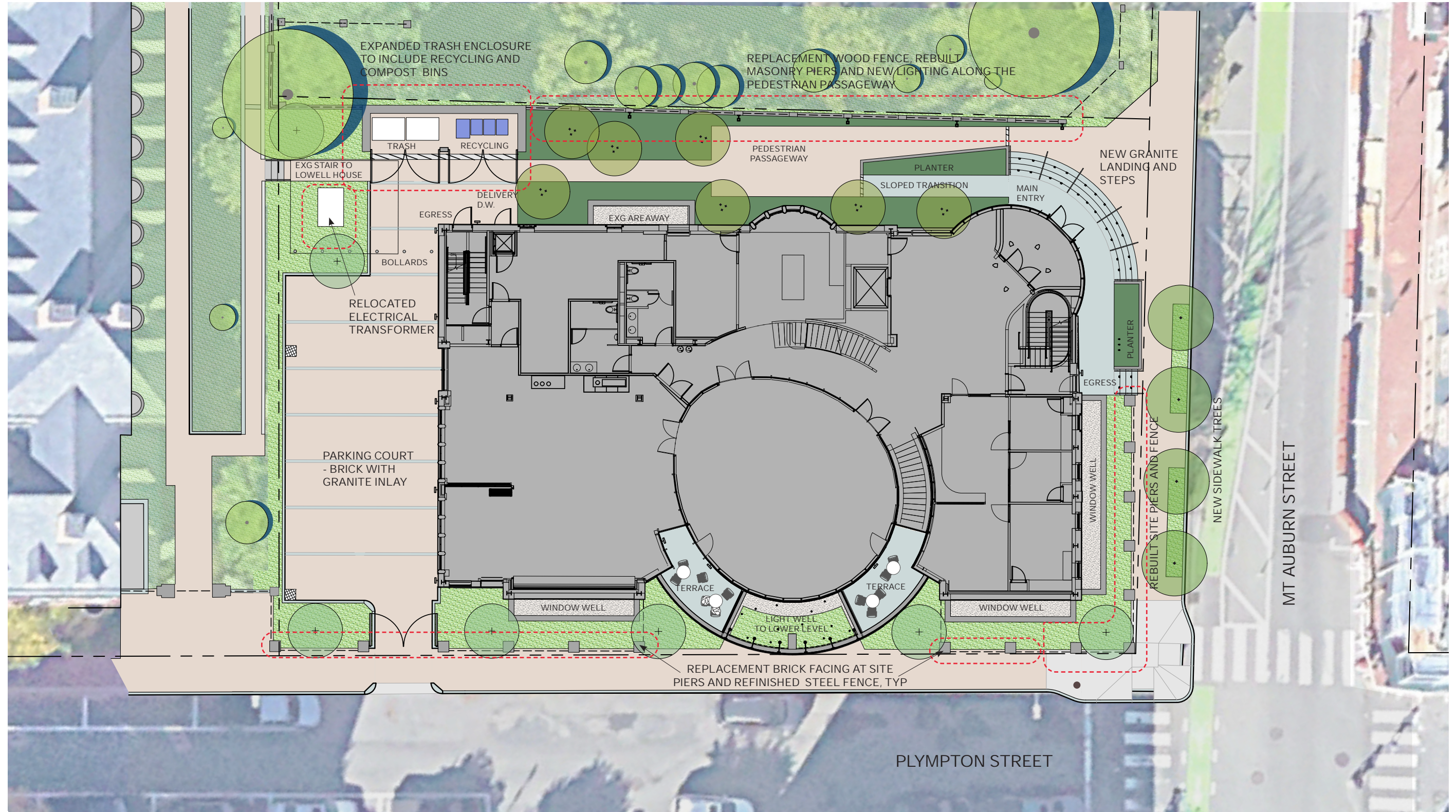
The original design for Rosovsky Hall has a strong geometric rigor, with three barrel vaulted volumes surrounding a circular courtyard. Our proposed design employs that same rigor in the two new additions at the entry and the courtyard. The courtyard is derived from the same centerpoint and axis. The entry pavilion also uses the language of the circle.

## PROPOSED



# Proposed Site Plan

Rosovsky Hall Renovation



REED HILDERBRAND  
BEYERBLINDER BELLE



# Proposal Rendering

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



NORTH FACADE FROM MOUNT AUBURN STREET - EXISTING

At the north facade, BBB proposes to recast the building's existing corner entrance with a new and welcoming glass pavilion. The gently rounded metal and glass addition is flanked by a cast stone panel wall that references the existing datum and materials of the original building. Inset vertical curtainwall panels act as 'gaskets' to help distinguish between the original and new building volumes. New sidewalk trees and granite planters provide shade and color along the streetscape.



NORTH FACADE ON MOUNT AUBURN STREET - PROPOSED

# Proposal Rendering

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



NORTH WEST ENTRY CORNER FROM MOUNT AUBURN STREET - EXISTING

The new entry pavilion strives to be a prominent yet welcoming presence on busy Mt Auburn street. Its rounded glass facade opens up views deep into the building's interior 'Heart Space'. In the evenings, the two-story addition will read as a symbolic *Ner Tamid* - or eternal light- for the community.



ENTRY PAVILION ON MOUNT AUBURN STREET - PROPOSED

# Proposal Rendering

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



VIEW OF COURTYARD FROM PLYMPTON STREET - EXISTING

The proposed glass and steel courtyard enclosure provides Hillel with an all- season worship and event space to support their growing program. A new cast stone terrace wall includes a raised glass barrier for building and user security. Exterior vertical metal “ns” provide thermal and solar glare relief for occupants and align with existing building datum.



COURTYARD ADDITION ON PLYMPTON STREET - PROPOSED

# Materials - Existing and Proposed

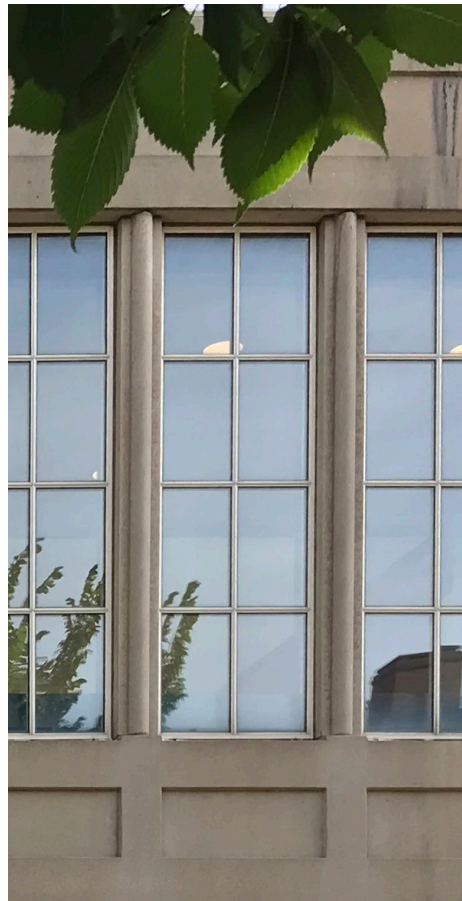
## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



LEAD COATED COPPER

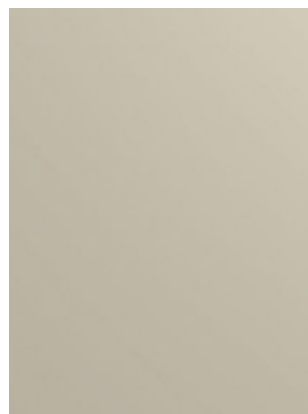


FLEMISH BOND BRICK



PRECAST CONCRETE

### EXISTING PALETTE



PAINTED METAL



GLAZING



CAST STONE

### PROPOSED PALETTE AT ADDITIONS



ENTRY PAVILION (CAST STONE PANEL WALL, METAL AND GLASS CURTAINWALL)

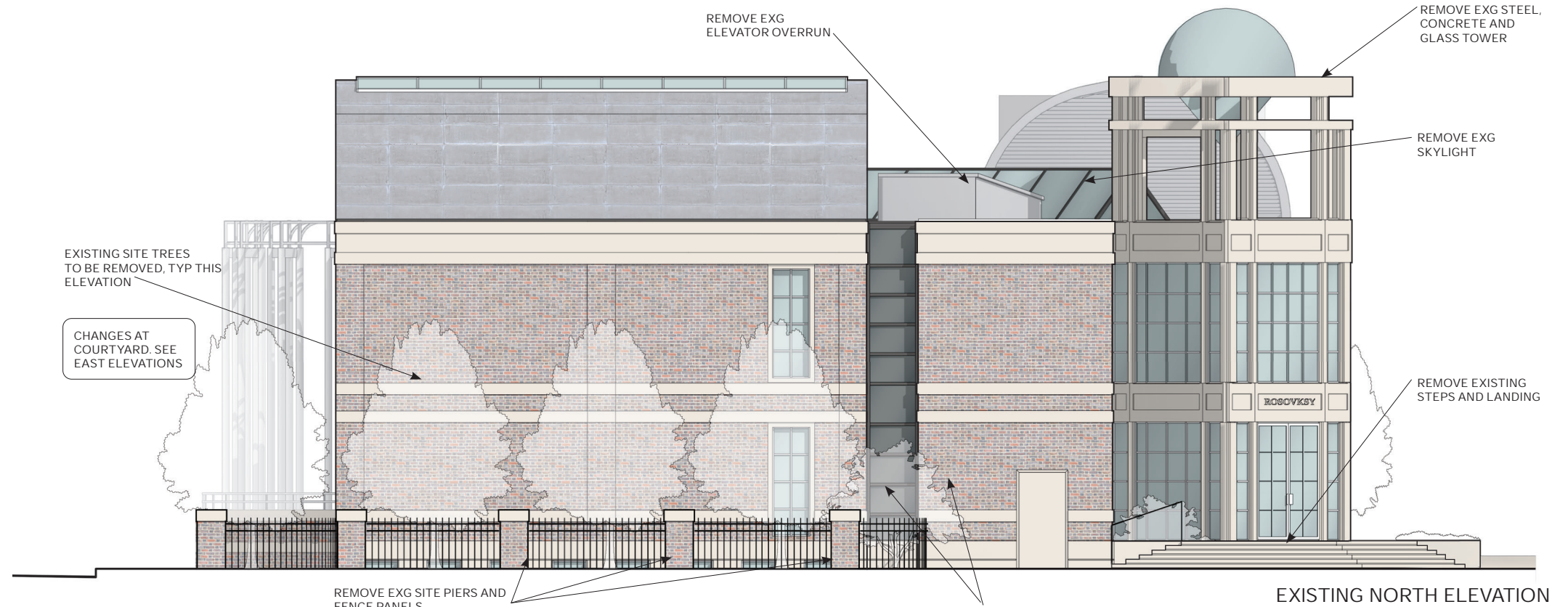
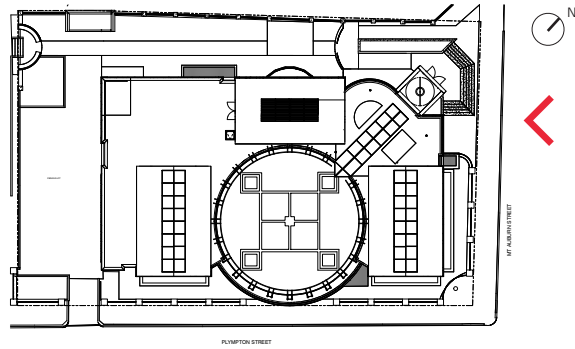


COURTYARD ENCLOSURE (CAST STONE SITE WALL, METAL AND GLASS CURTAINWALL, PAINTED METAL VERTICAL SUN SHADES)

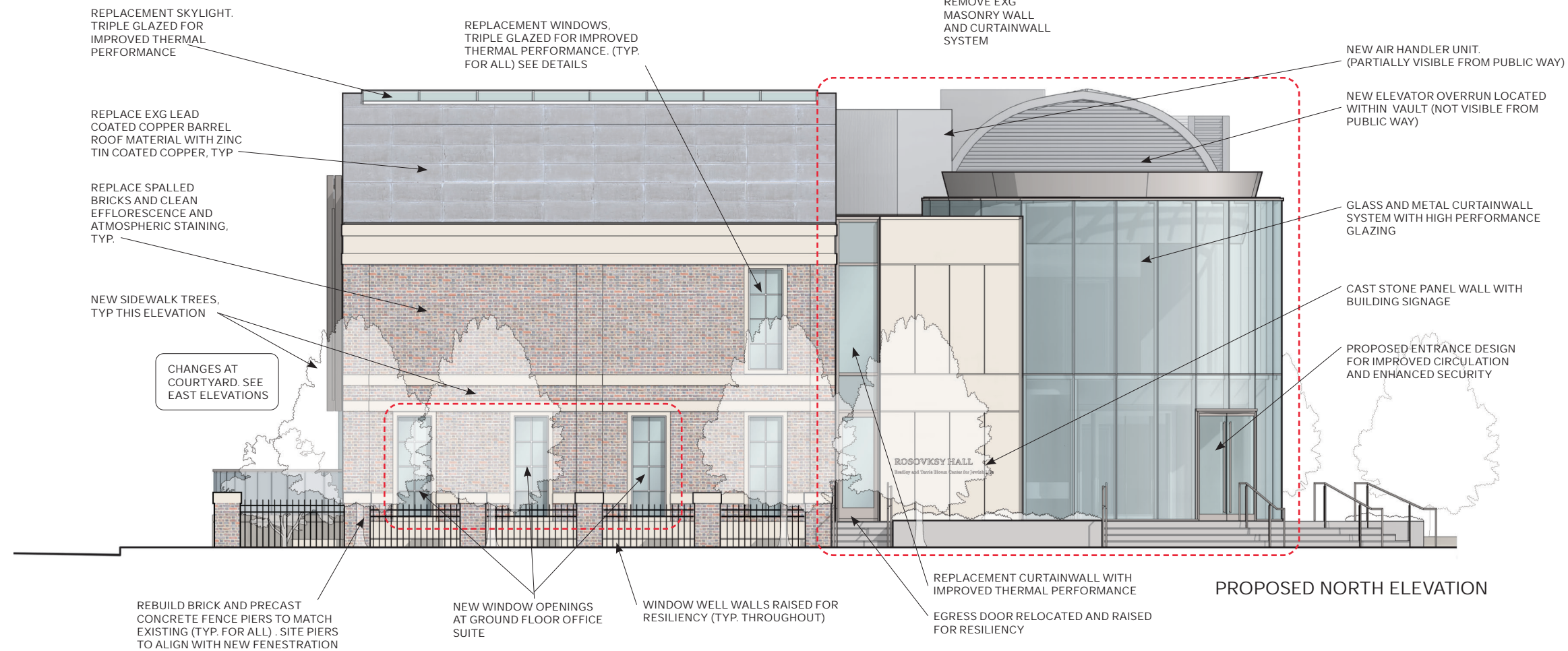
The materials of existing building consist of brick, painted metal windows and curtainwall, a lead coated copper roofscape, and warm precast concrete accents that nod to limestone. These original materials were chosen to resonate with the surrounding architecture of the neighborhood. The materials at the proposed Entry Pavilion and Courtyard enclosure aim to harmonize with the existing building palette.

# North Elevations - Existing & Proposed

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



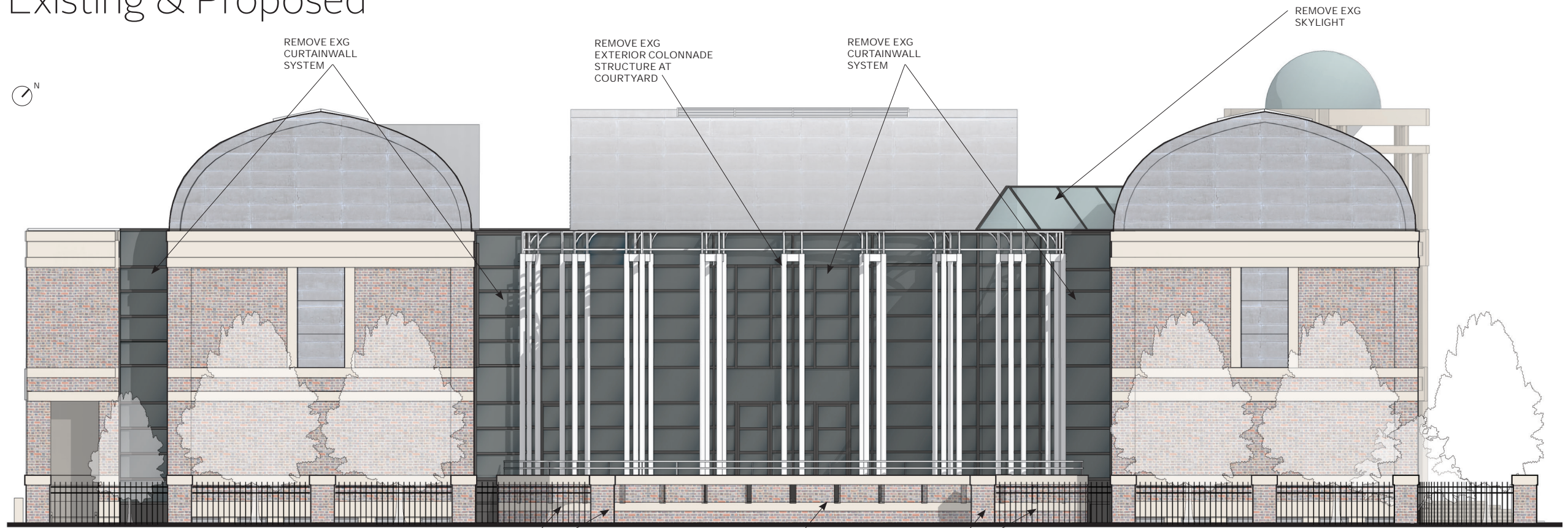
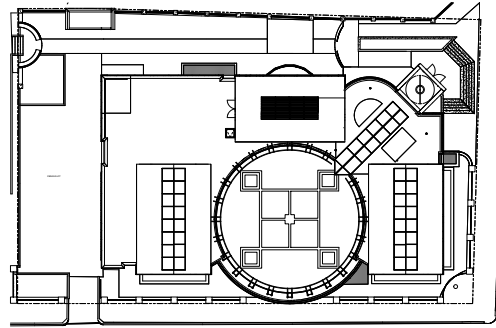
EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION



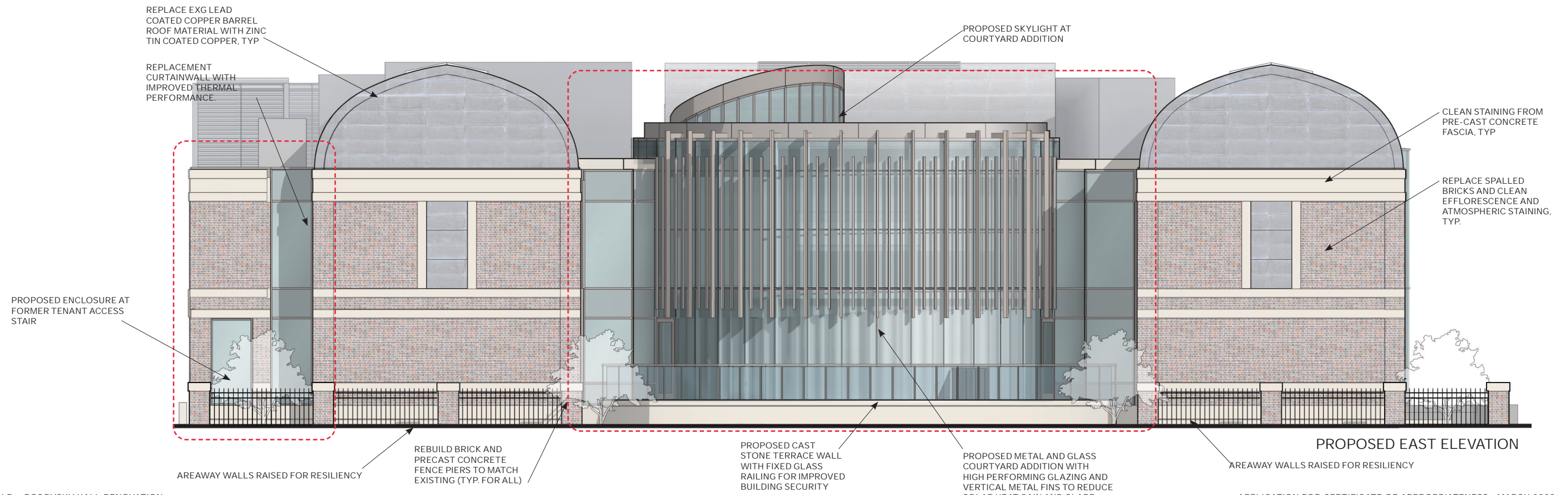
PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

# East Elevations - Existing & Proposed

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



EXISTING EAST ELEVATION

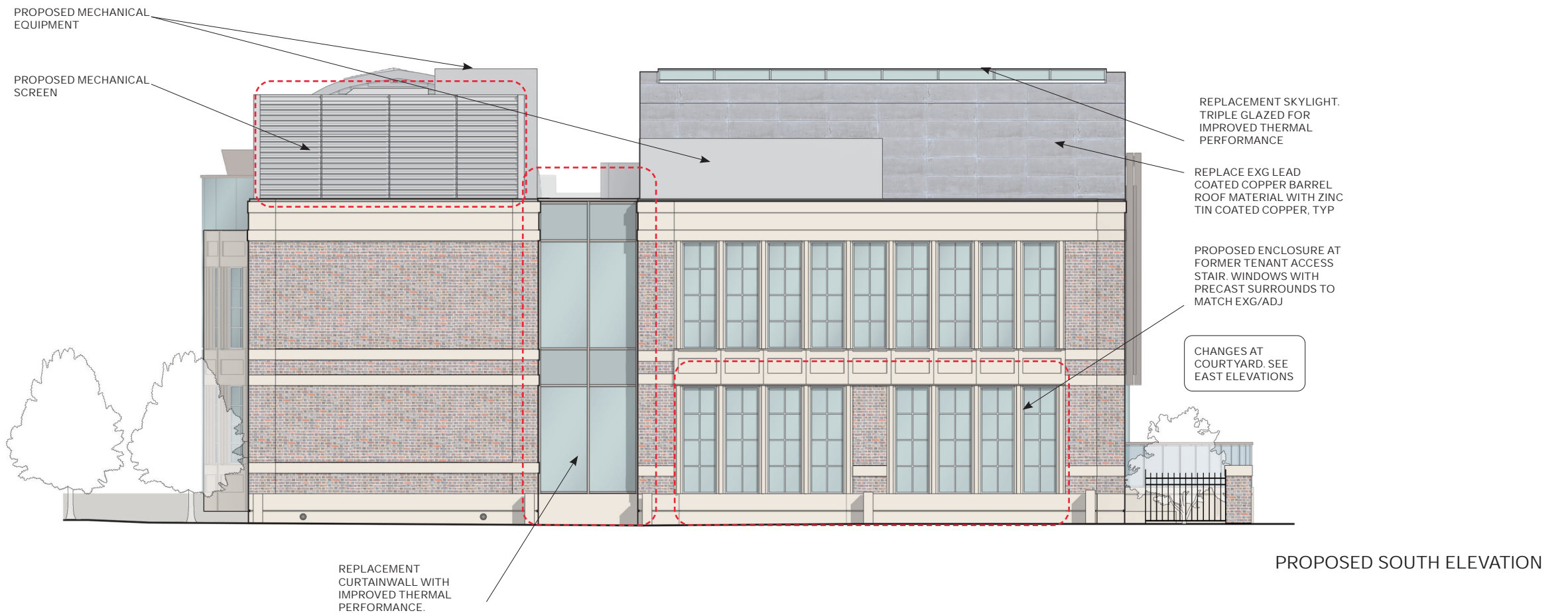
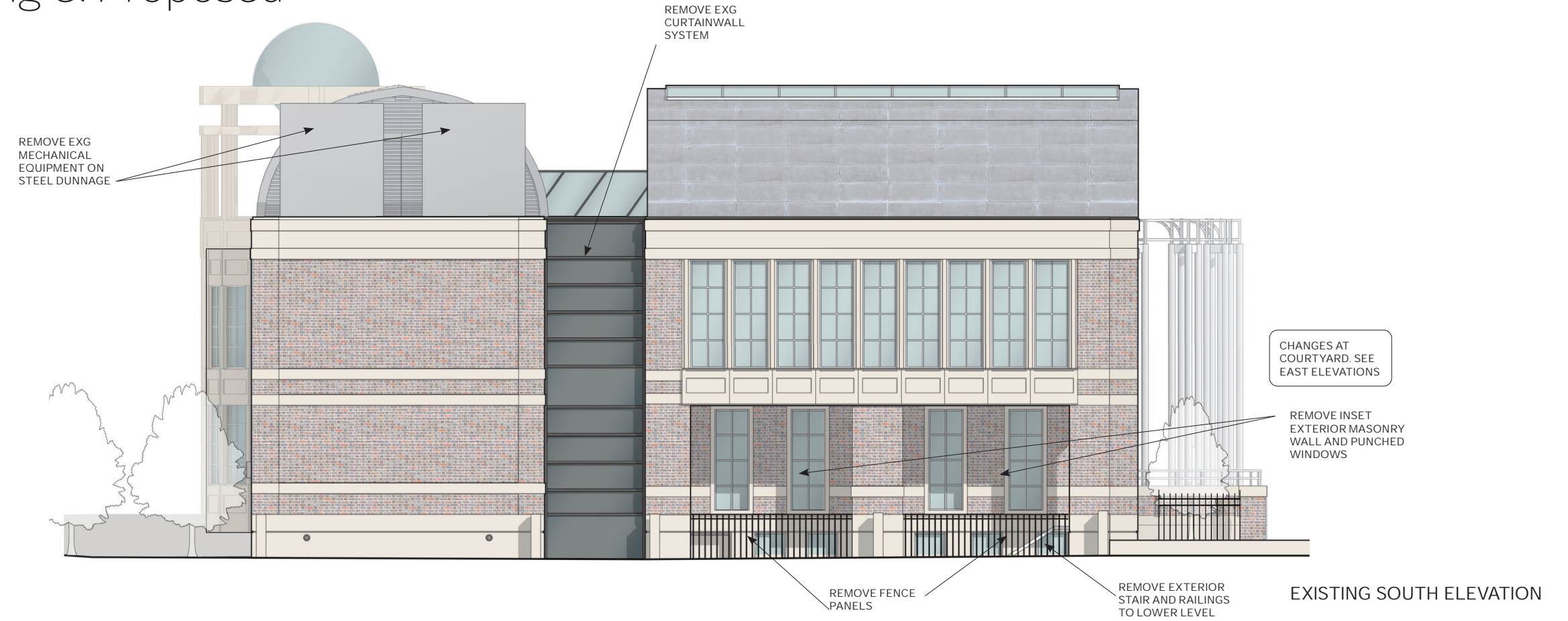
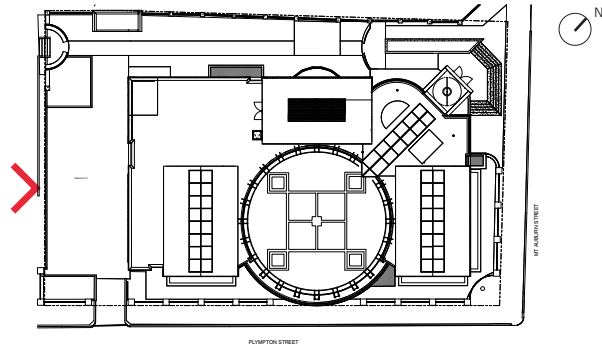


PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION



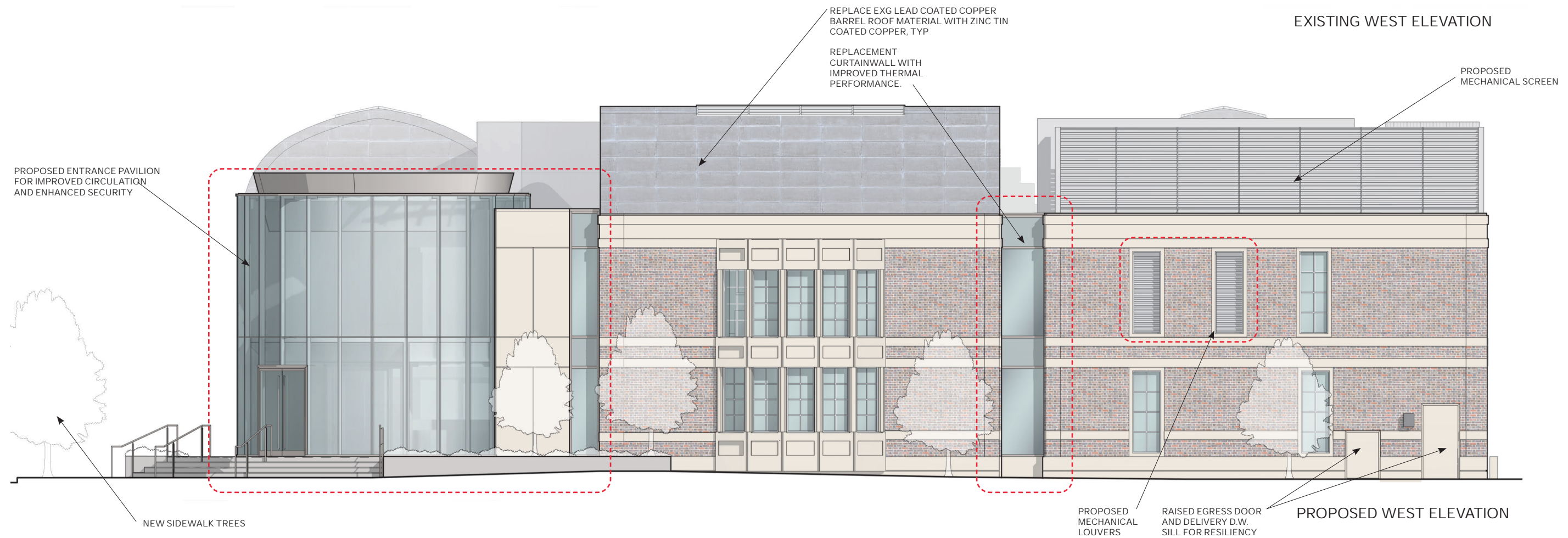
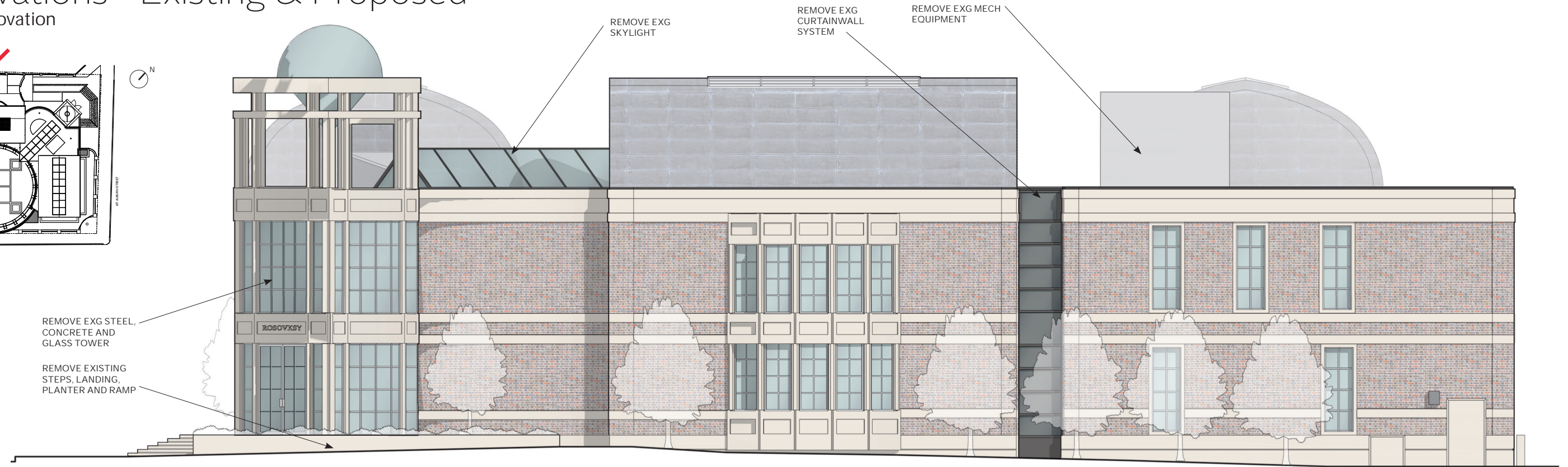
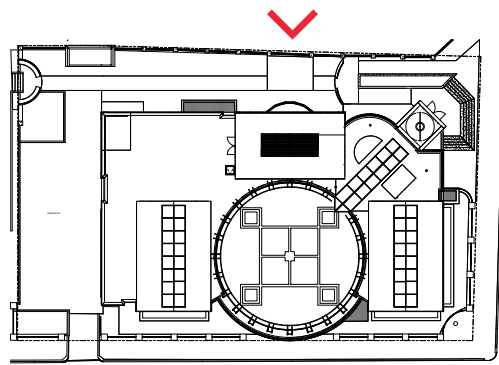
# South Elevations - Existing & Proposed

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



# West Elevations - Existing & Proposed

## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

# Exterior Glazing Systems - Existing and Proposed Types

Rosovsky Hall Renovation

## EXISTING CURTAIN WALL TYPE



TYPICAL THROUGHOUT BUILDING

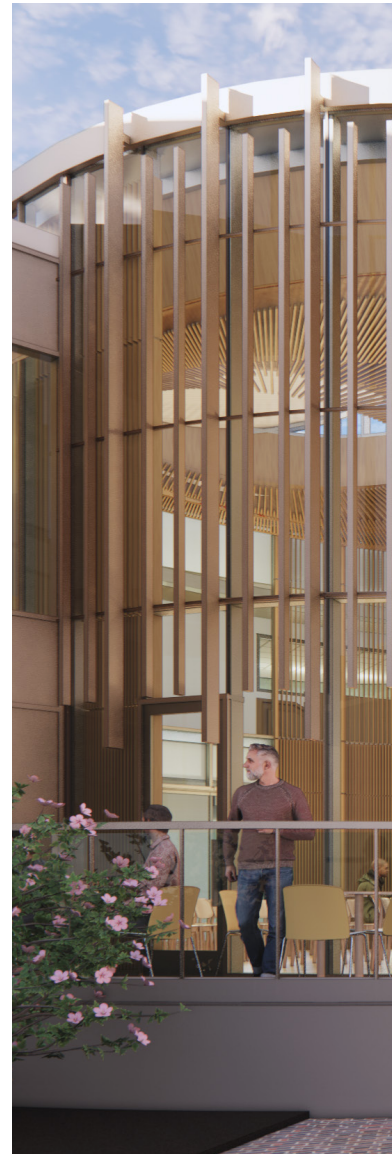
The existing curtain wall at Hillel consists of an aluminum IGUs system with dark tinted glass panels. It encircles the existing courtyard and occurs as "gaskets" between masonry volumes. Its black, horizontal mullions align with the horizontal precast banding that encircles the building. It has an open spandrel coping at the roof level and the sill extends to the ground level.

## PROPOSED CURTAIN WALL TYPES



COURTYARD ENCLOSURE AND "GASKET" LOCATIONS - TYPE 1

The proposed design will include two metal curtainwall types - Type 1 and Type 2. The first type is a high performance IGUs system with tinted glass panels. It occurs at the courtyard enclosure and at the "gasket" locations between masonry volumes. Its horizontal mullions will align with the major horizontal banding that encircle the building but its gesture will be more vertical than the existing curtain wall and will provide uninterrupted, oversized glazed openings that span from floor to ceiling. At the courtyard enclosure, the system will include metal vertical sun shading to reduce solar gain and glare within the building.

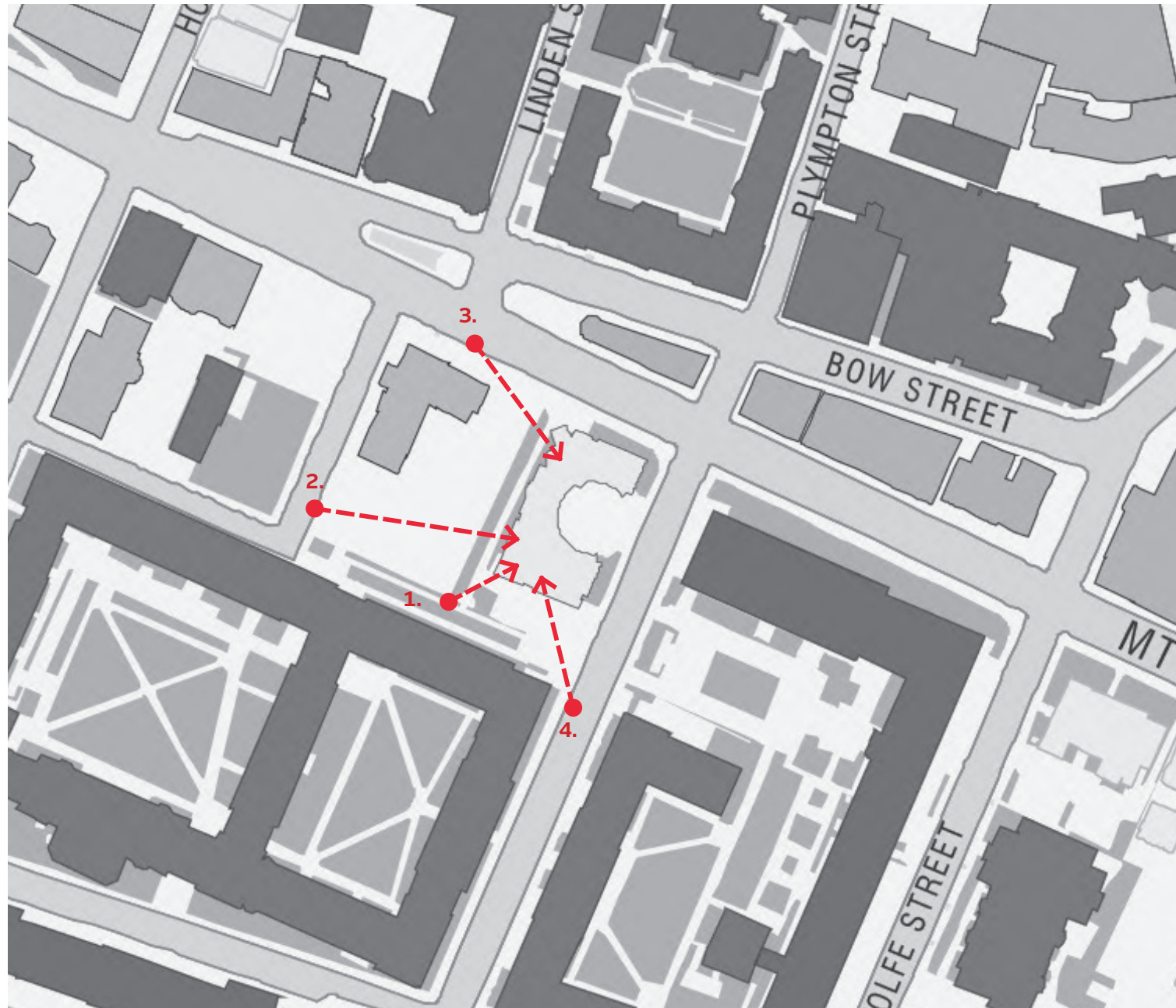


ENTRY PAVILION - TYPE 2

The rounded entry pavilion will consist of high performance IGUs with silicone joints. The tinted vertical glazing panels will extend from floor to floor and the horizontals will align with the major datum on the building. Custom interior mullion caps will conceal the structural framing for a highly integrated appearance.

# Rooftop Mechanical Visibility

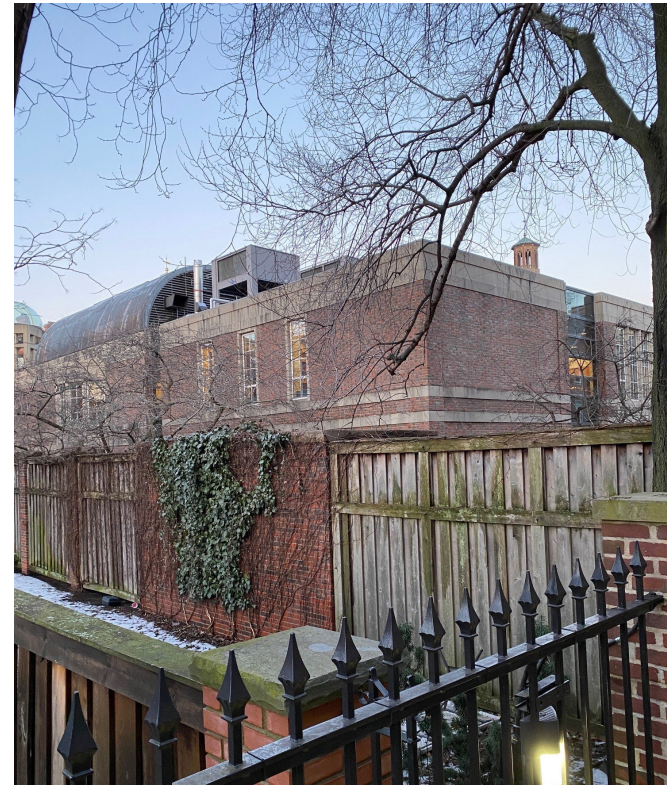
## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



### NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The original design called for all mechanical equipment to be housed in the central barrel vault. Over the years, however, this proved untenable and two AHU units on steel dunnage and a KX exhaust unit were added outside the vault on the south west corner of the roof.

In the proposed scheme, the new units will be distributed throughout the building and on the roof. The central barrel vault will house two AHUs and the relocated elevator overrun. All exterior units located on the roof will be curb-mounted to minimize their height. A small unit will be located behind the new entry pavilion and locally serve an adjacent worship space. Views of this unit from the sidewalk along Mt Auburn will be minimal (or non-existent). A mechanical screen on the south west corner of the roof will conceal the largest equipment. A new roof access stair will be added to replace the current roof hatch with ladder access.



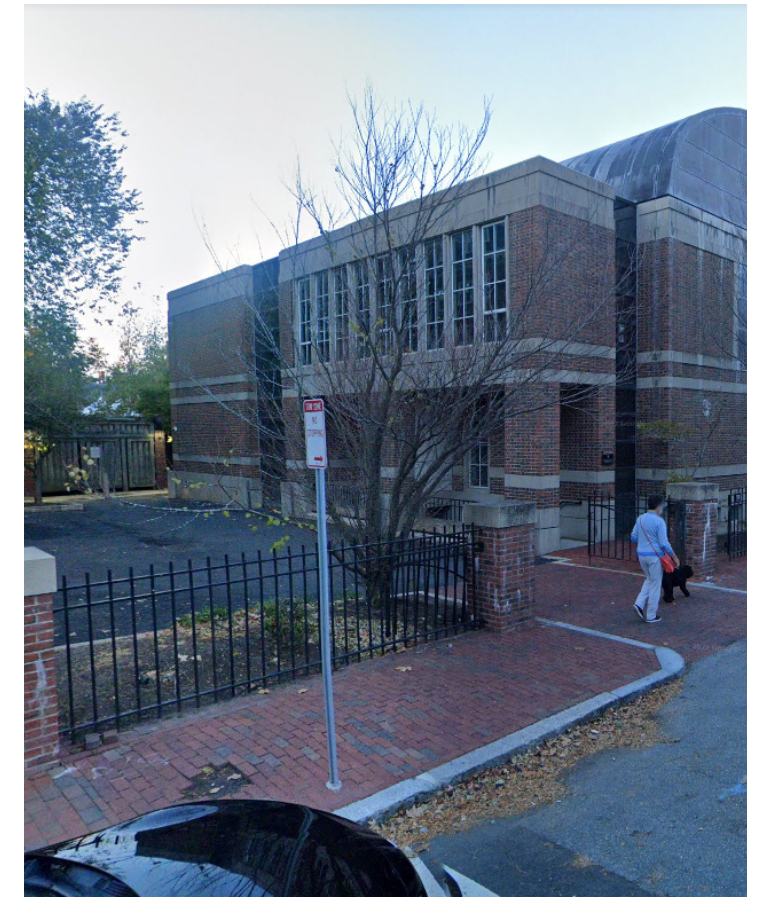
1. EXISTING VIEW FROM LOWELL HOUSE WALKWAY (MECH SCREEN WILL BE VISIBLE)



2. EXISTING VIEW FROM HOLYOKE PLACE (MECH SCREEN WILL BE VISIBLE)



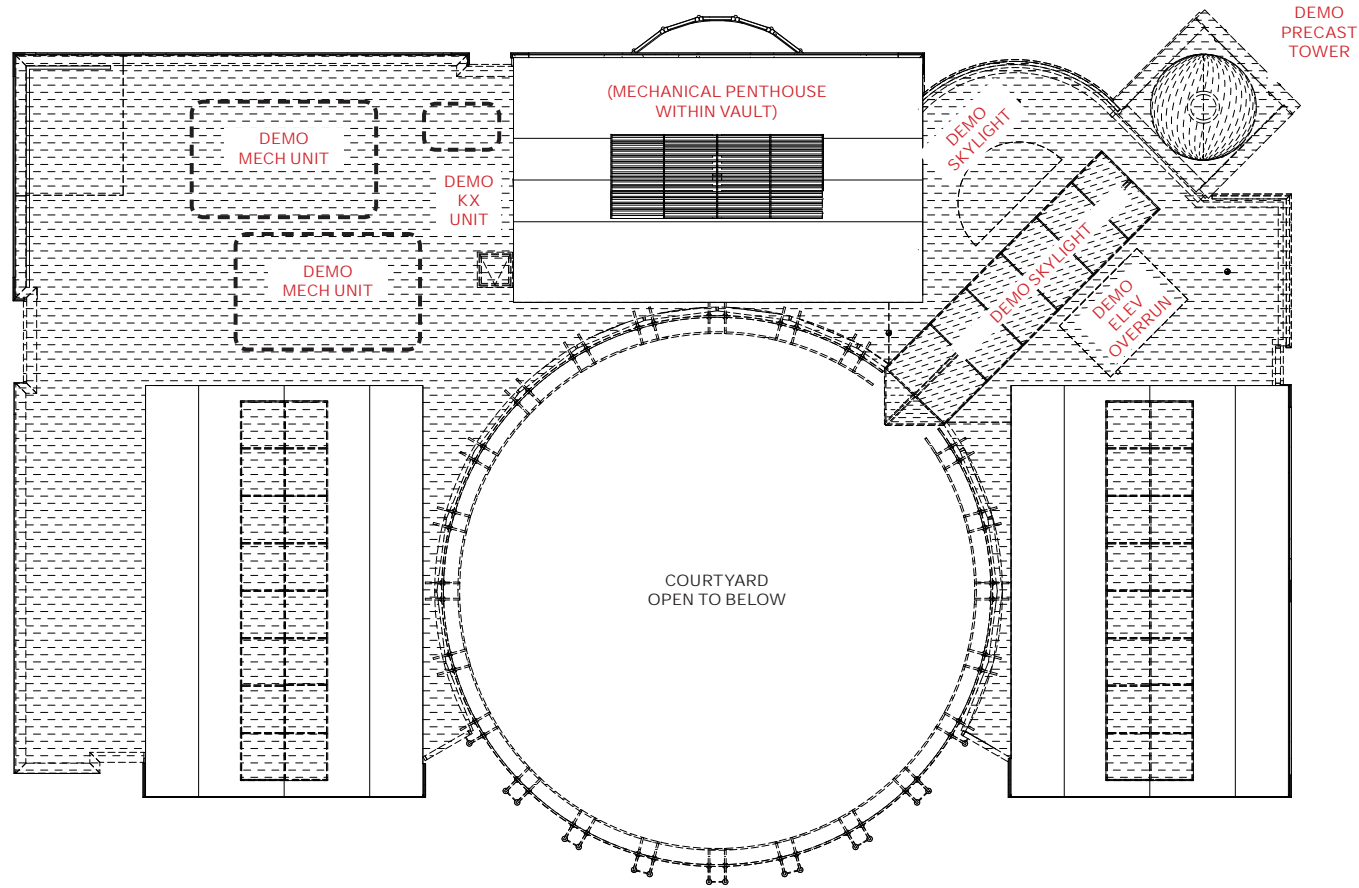
3. EXISTING ENTRY VIEW AT MT AUBURN STREET (MECH EQUIPMENT MAY BE MINIMALLY VISIBLE)



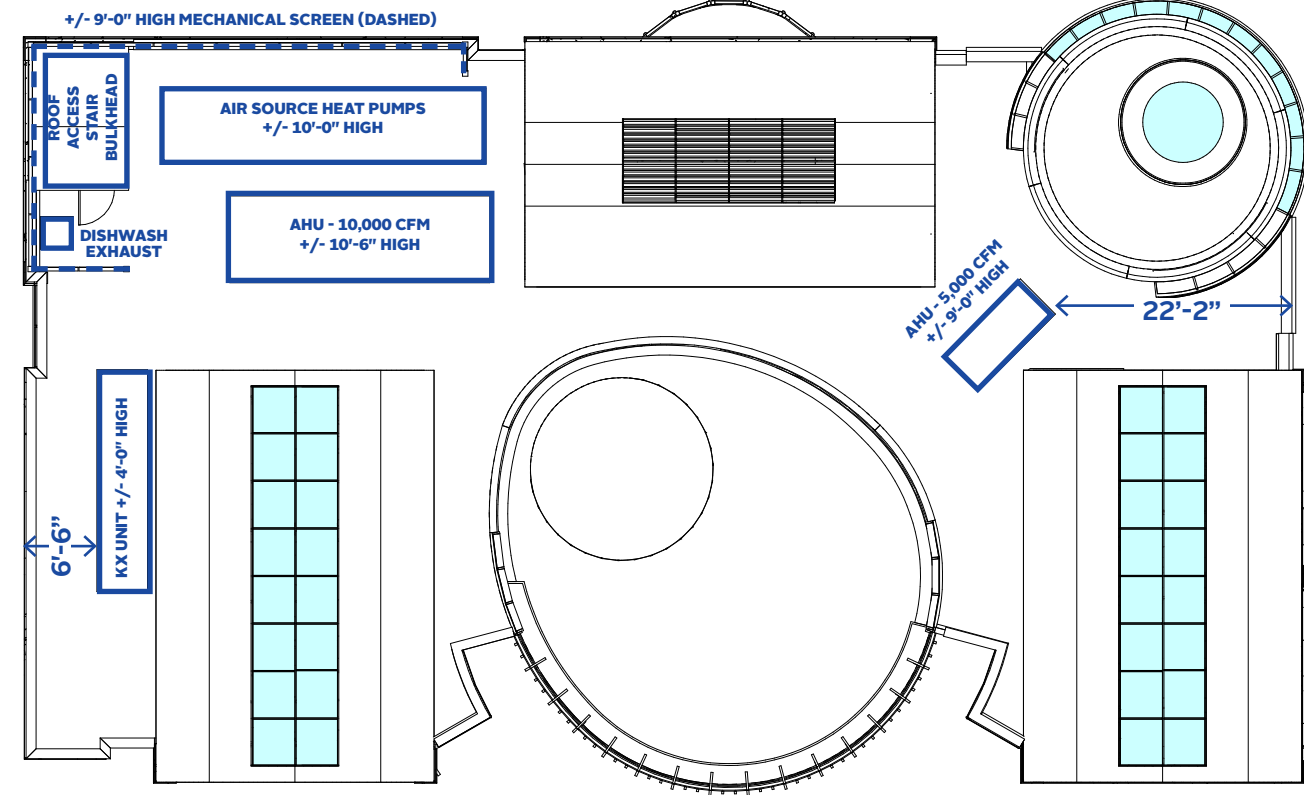
4. EXISTING VIEW FROM PLYMPTON STREET (MECH SCREEN WILL BE VISIBLE)

# Rooftop Mechanical Equipment

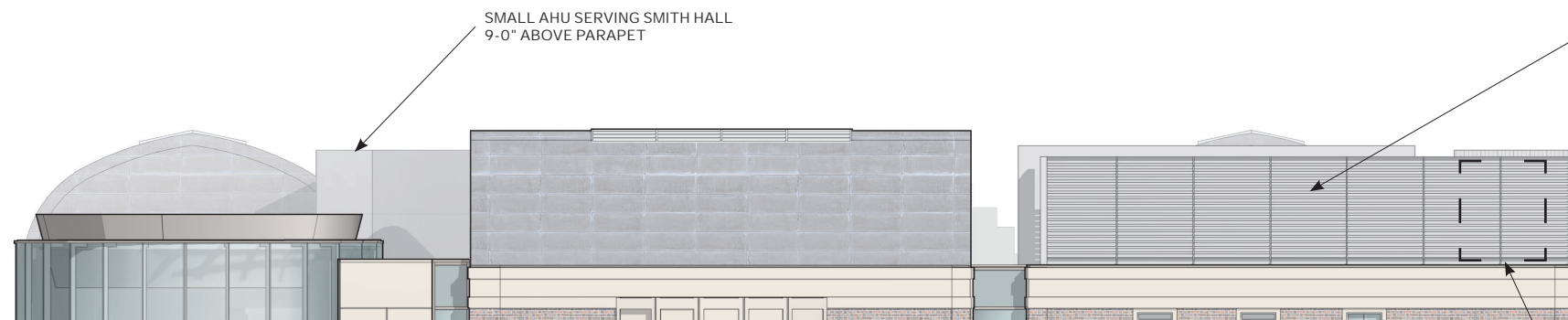
## Rosovsky Hall Renovation



**EXISTING/DEMO ROOF PLAN**

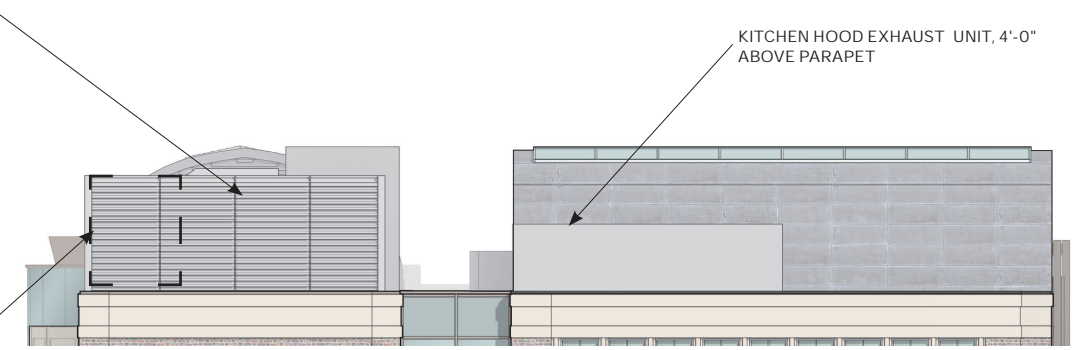


**PROPOSED ROOF PLAN**, ADDITIONS INDICATED IN BLUE  
NEW/REPLACEMENT SKYLIGHT



**PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION - ROOF LEVEL**

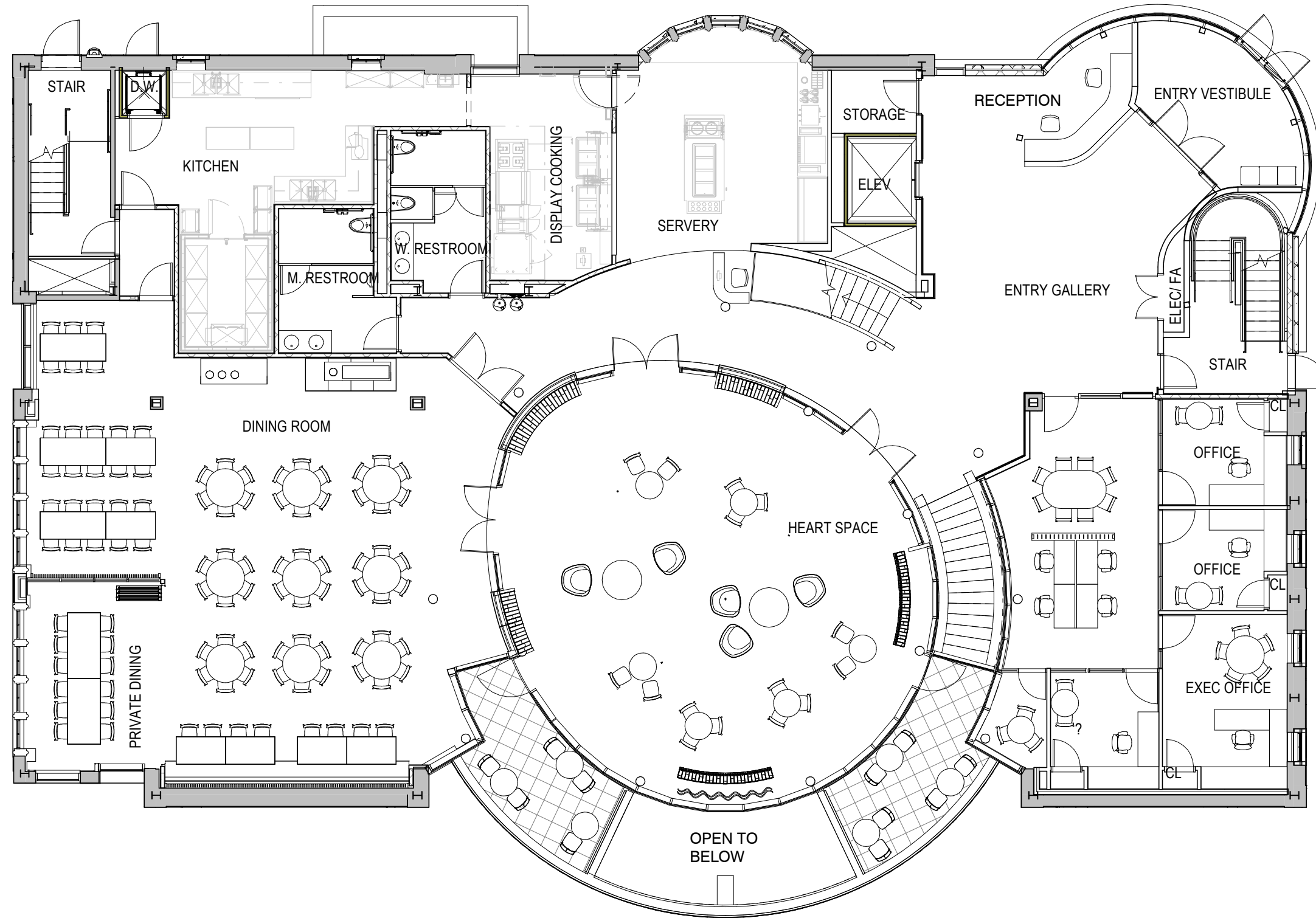
MECHANICAL SCREEN - 9'-0" ABOVE PARAPET.  
SCREEN TO BE C/S VERT-A-CADE 405 VISION BARRIER OR SIM. INTENT IS FOR LOUVERS TO MATCH EXISTING LOUVERS AT THE MECHANICAL PENTHOUSE



**PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION - ROOF LEVEL**

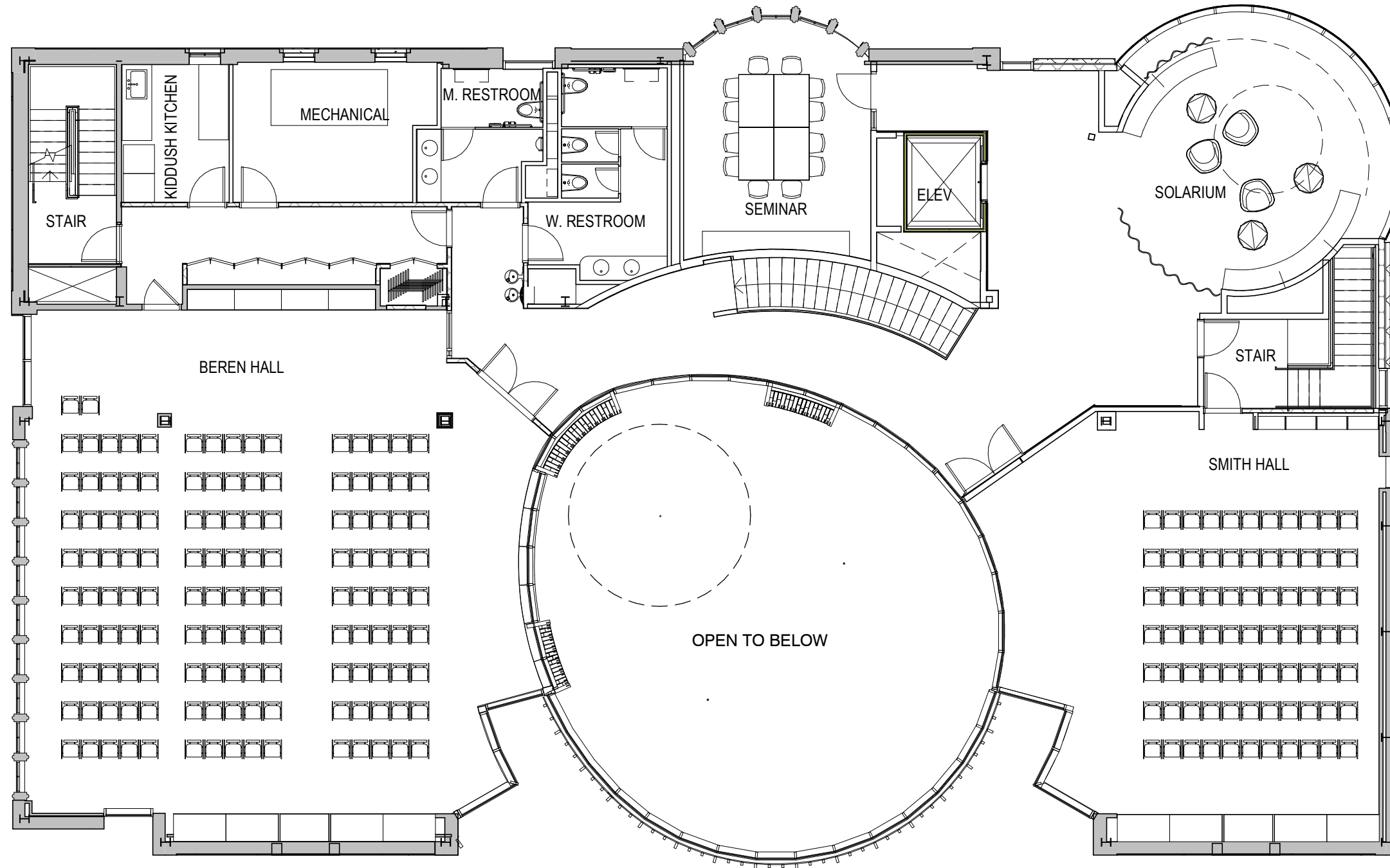
# Floor Plan - Ground Floor

Rosovsky Hall Renovation



# Floor Plan - Second Floor

Rosovsky Hall Renovation



# Floor Plan - Lower Level

Rosovsky Hall Renovation

