



RIVER

A R C H I T E C T S

# Our Background



**Juhee: Bridgemarket Project under Hugh Hardy**



**James: Trained under James Gainfort, AIA**



# River Architects Net Positive Studio Renovation

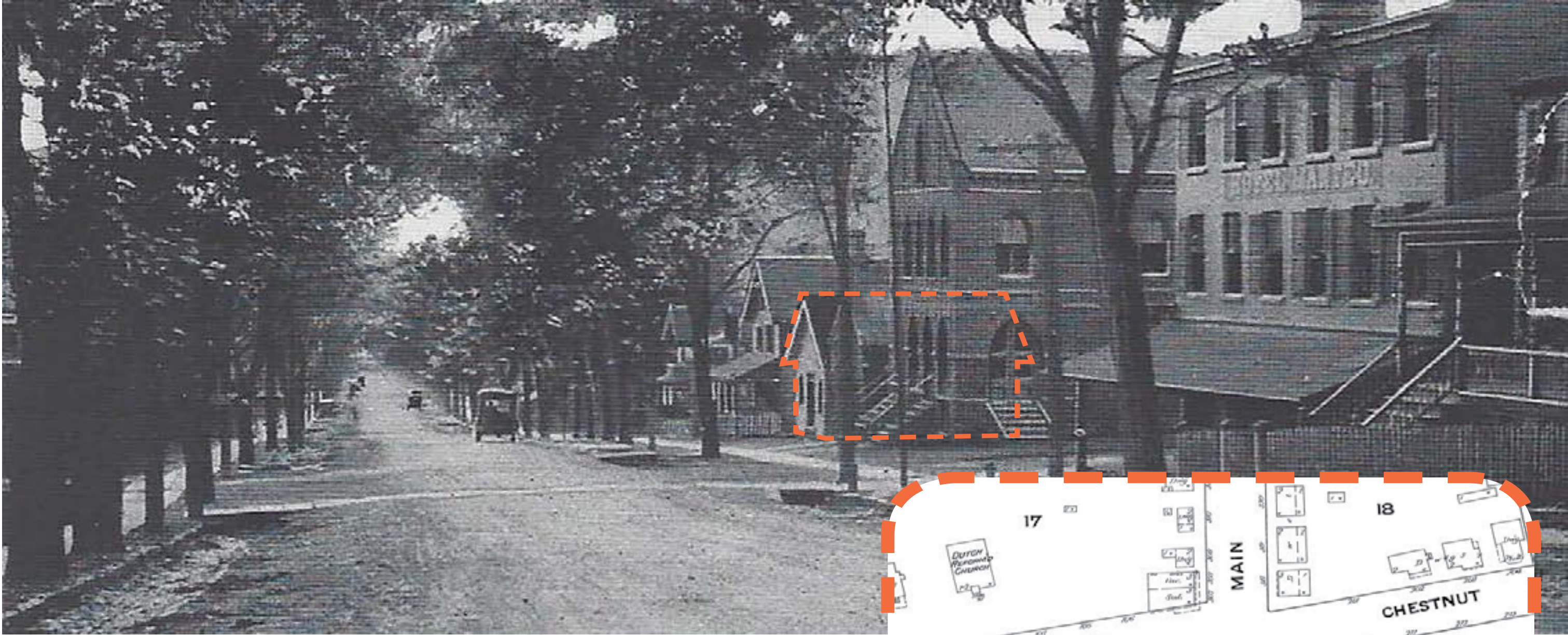
Cold Spring's First Phius Certified Commercial Building











**HISTORIC PHOTO OF MAIN STREET**

- The original construction date is unknown, however it is shown on sanborn maps as early as 1887



--- = AIR BARRIER  
--- = WRB

THERMALLY BROKEN LIGHT  
WELLS IN PLACE OF EXISTING  
ATTIC VENTS

NEW - TOP OF ROOF  
24' - 9 5/16"

EXISTING FRAMING

NEW INSULATED EXTERIOR  
CAVITY

HIGH PERFORMANCE  
SIMULATED DOUBLE HUNG  
WINDOWS

NEW - BOTTOM OF ROOF  
14' - 9 1/8"

STONEMWORK TO MATCH  
HISTORIC ORIGINAL

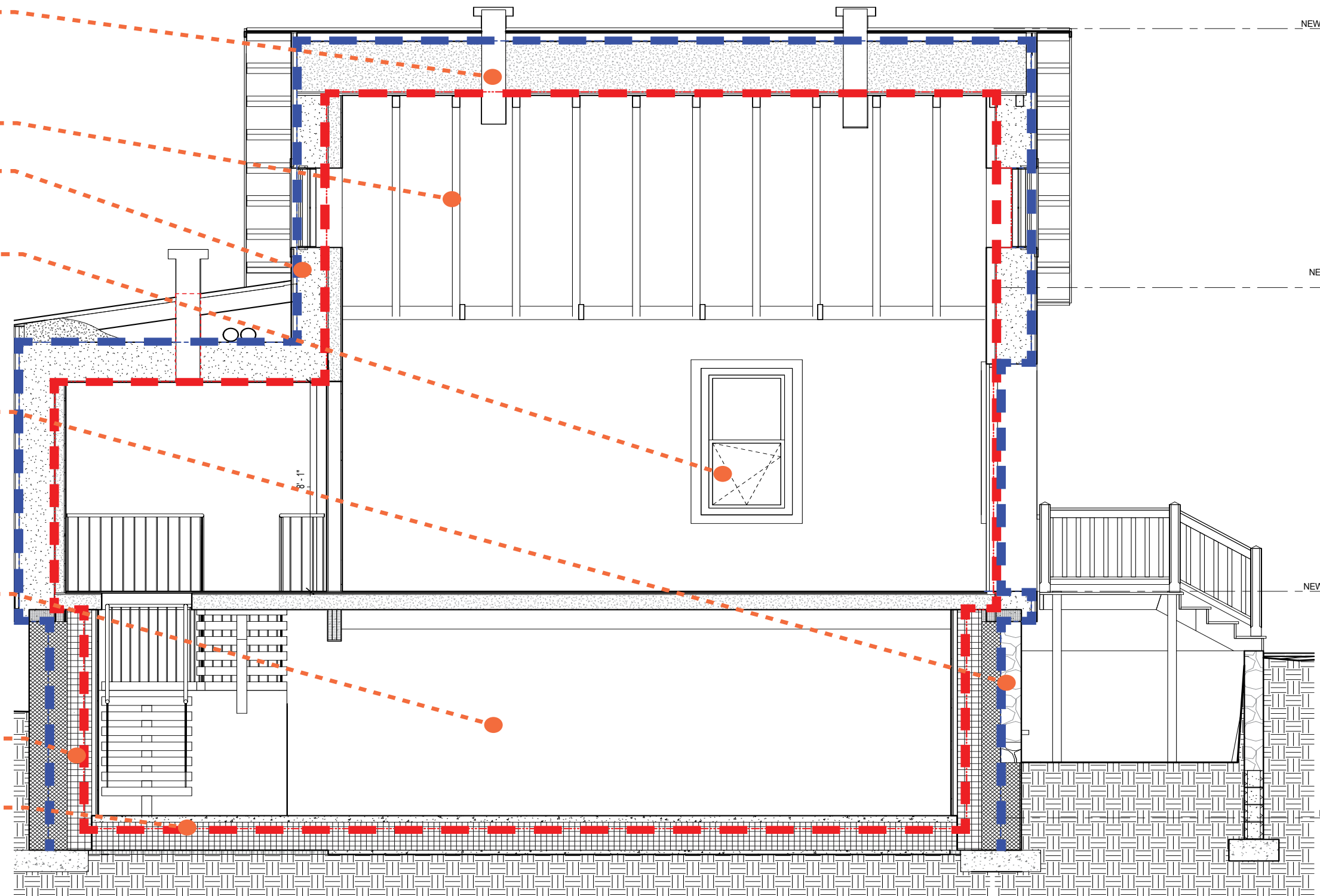
BUILDING RAISED FOR  
HABITABLE BASEMENT

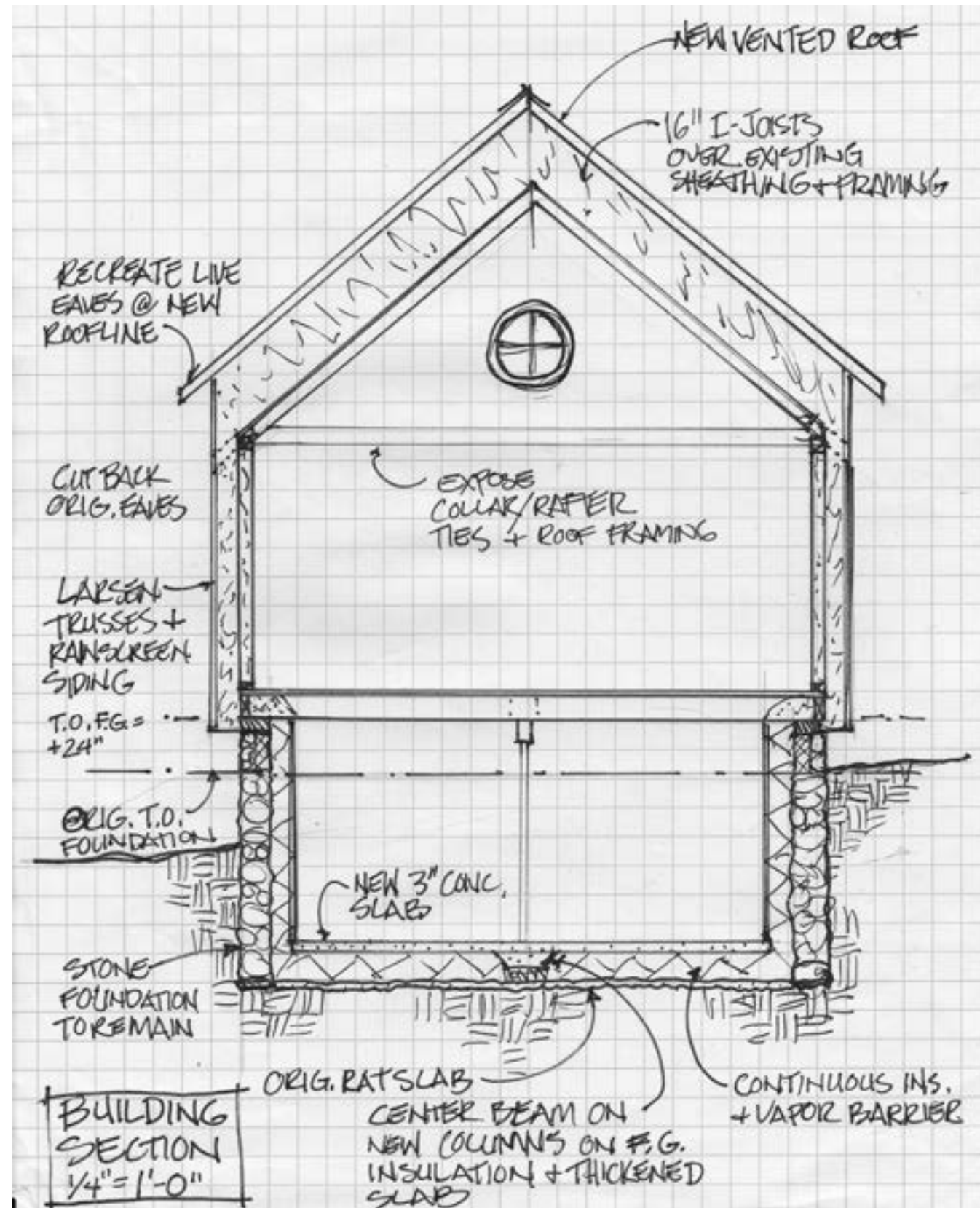
NEW - FIRST FLOOR  
3' - 0 1/8"

RECYCLED EPS INSIDE  
FOUNDATION WALL

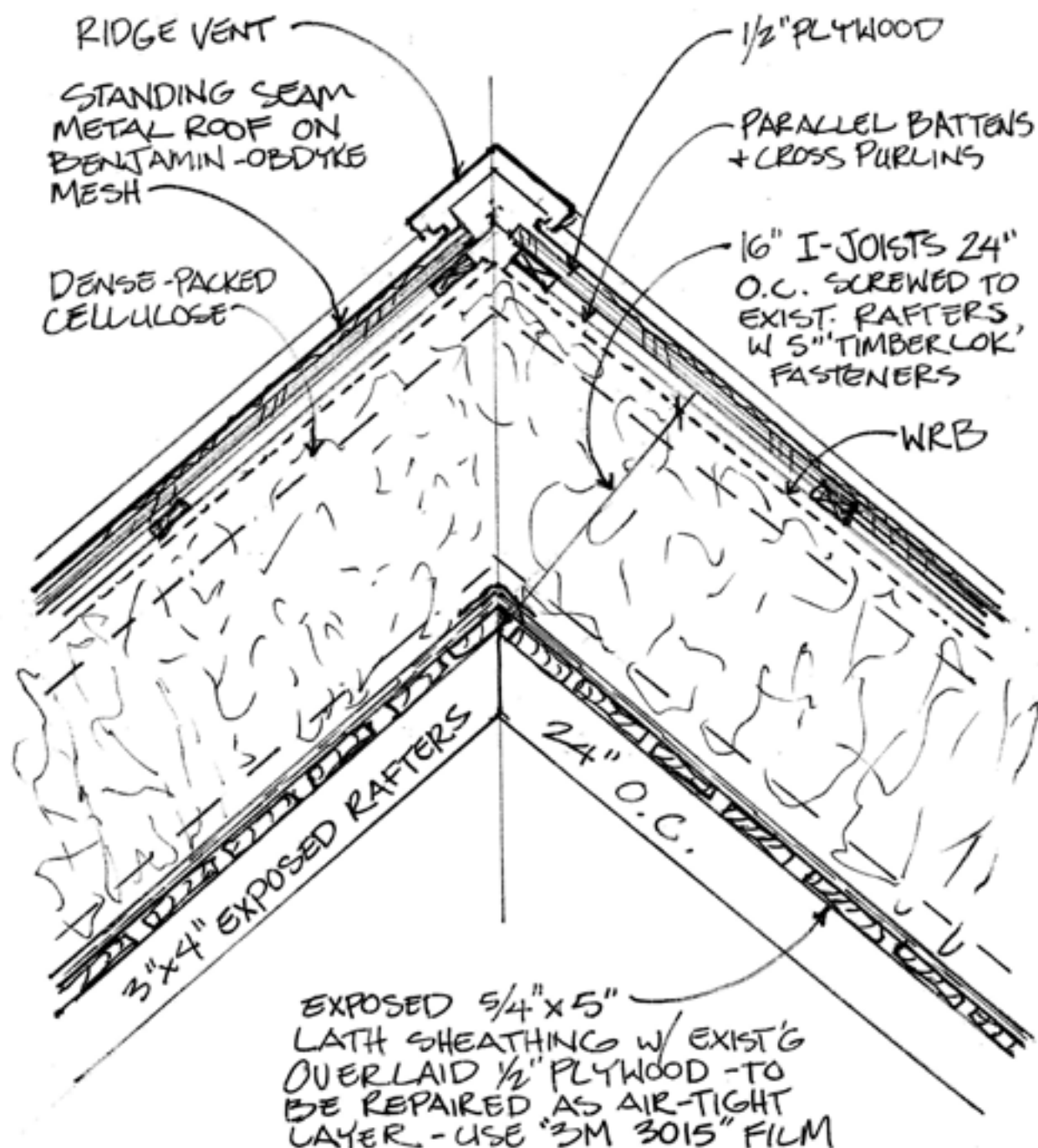
CONTINUOUS AIR BARRIER  
BELOW SLAB

NEW - T.O. SLAB  
-5' - 9"

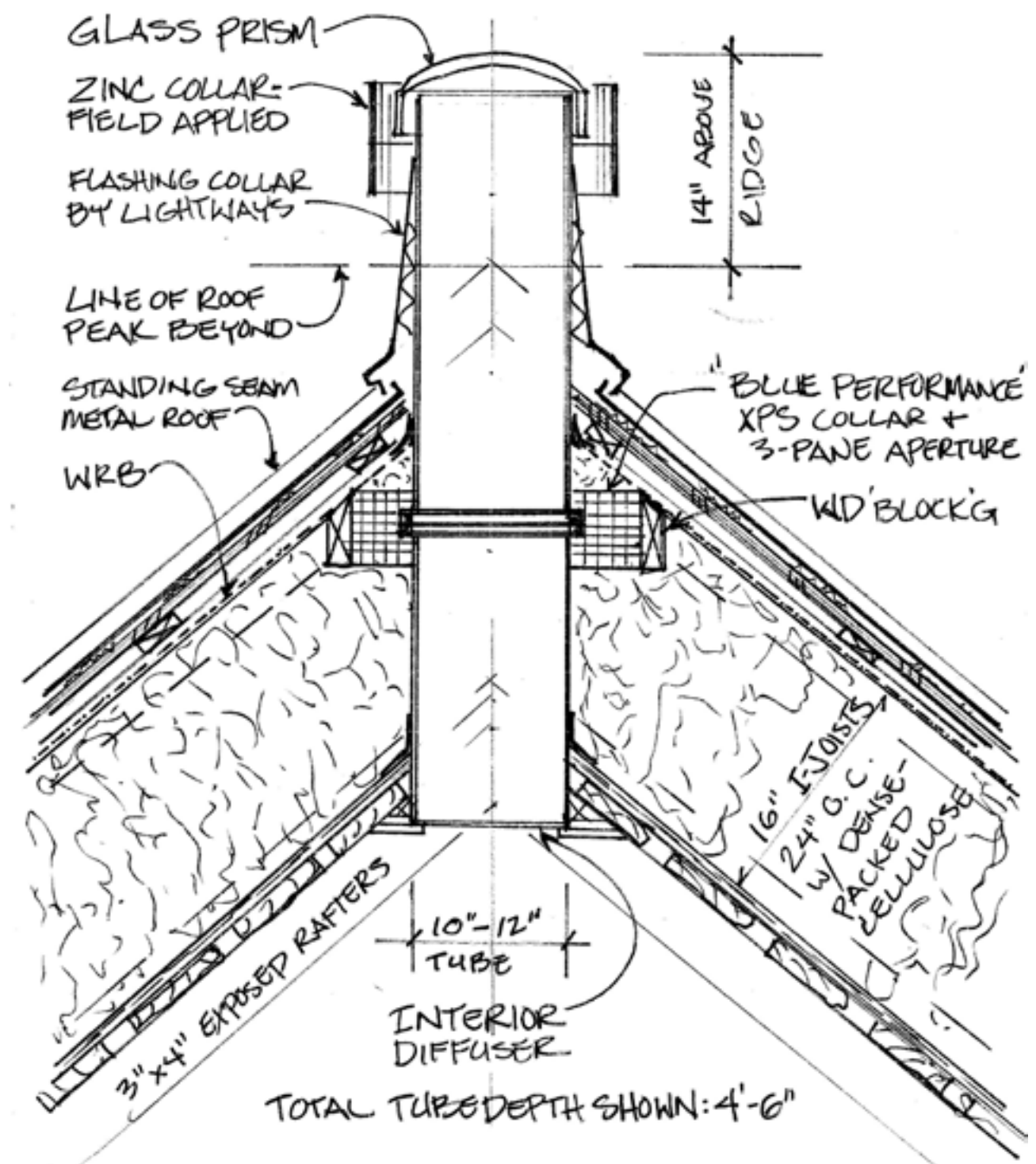






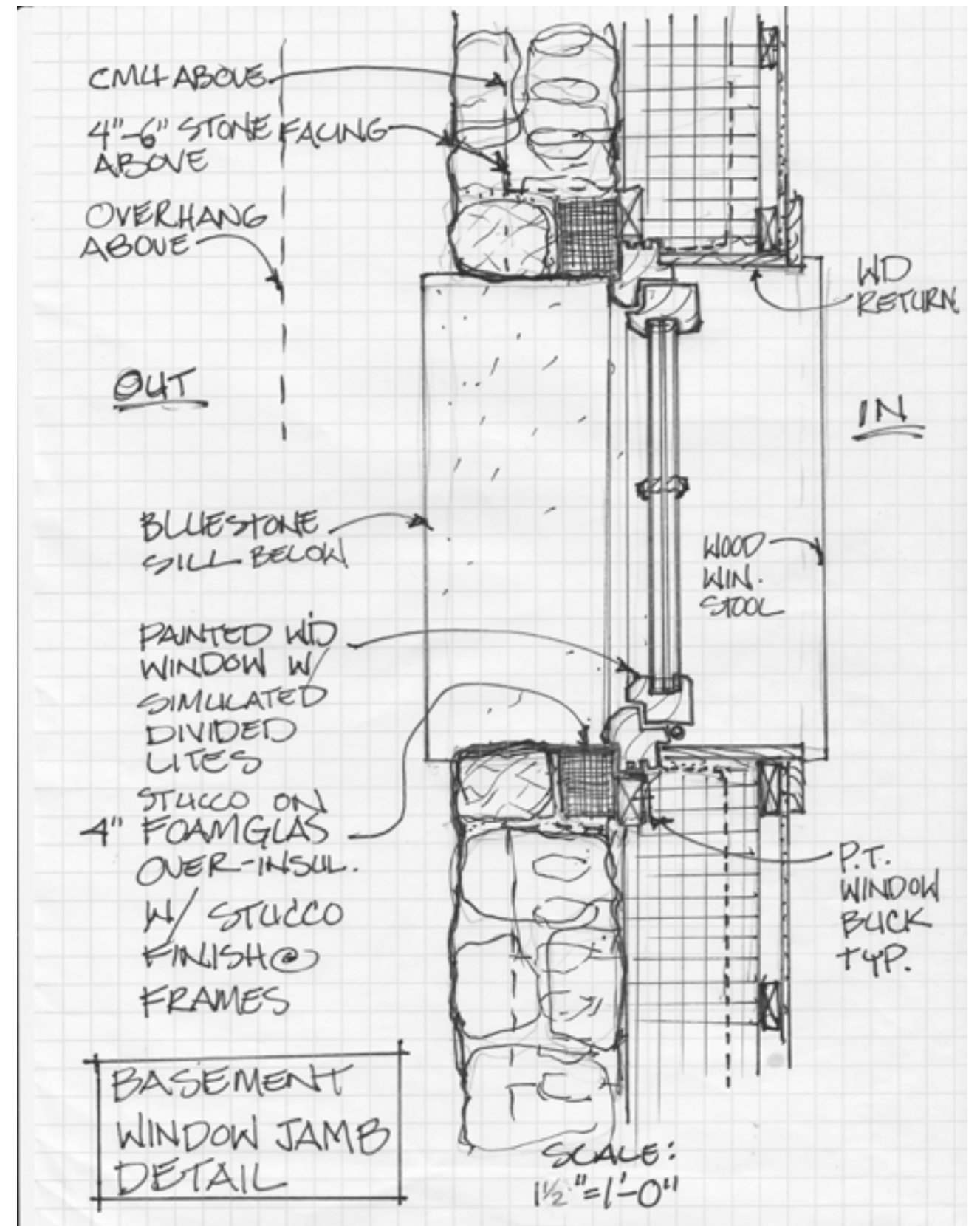
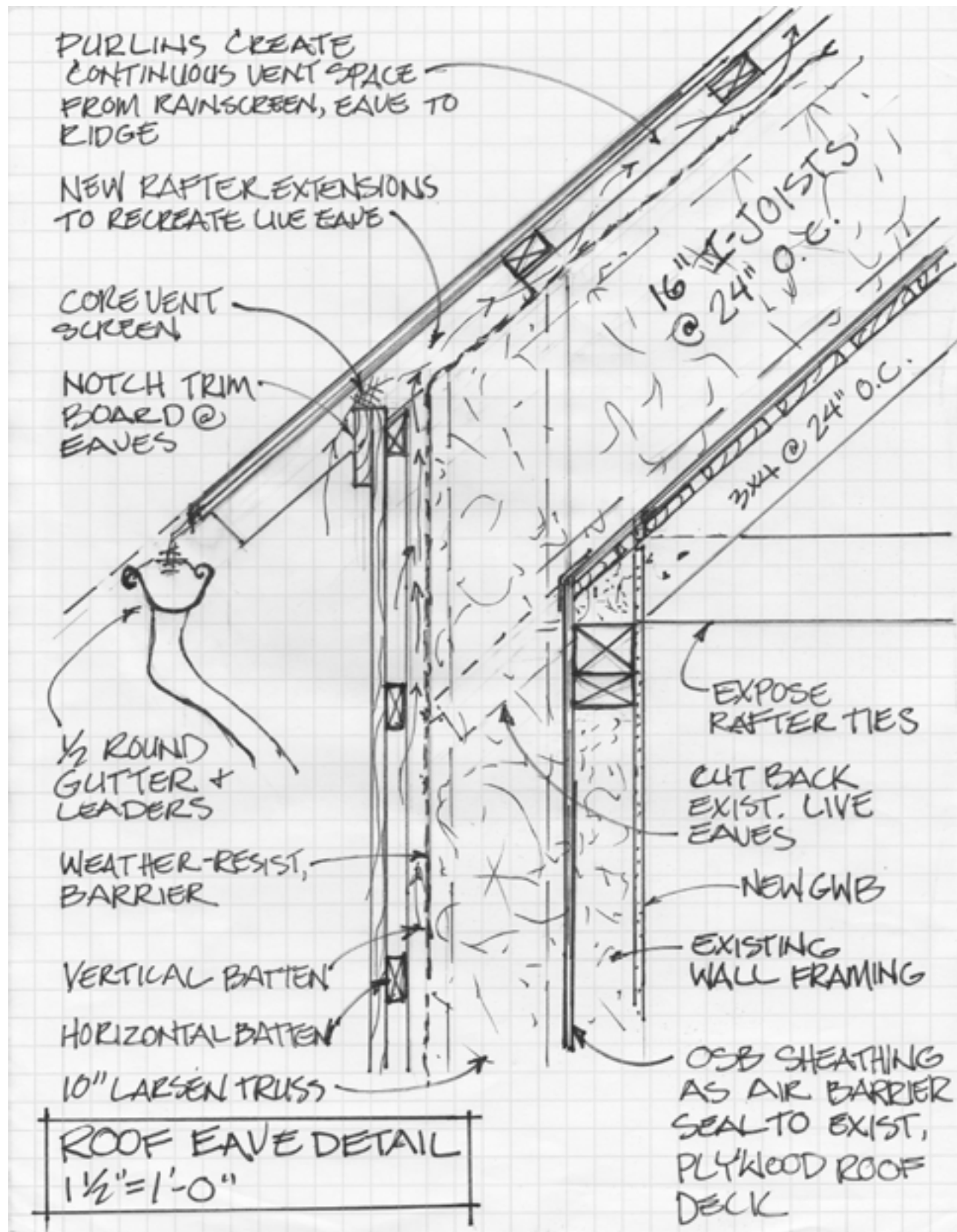


ROOF RIDGE DETAIL  
1/2" = 1'-0"

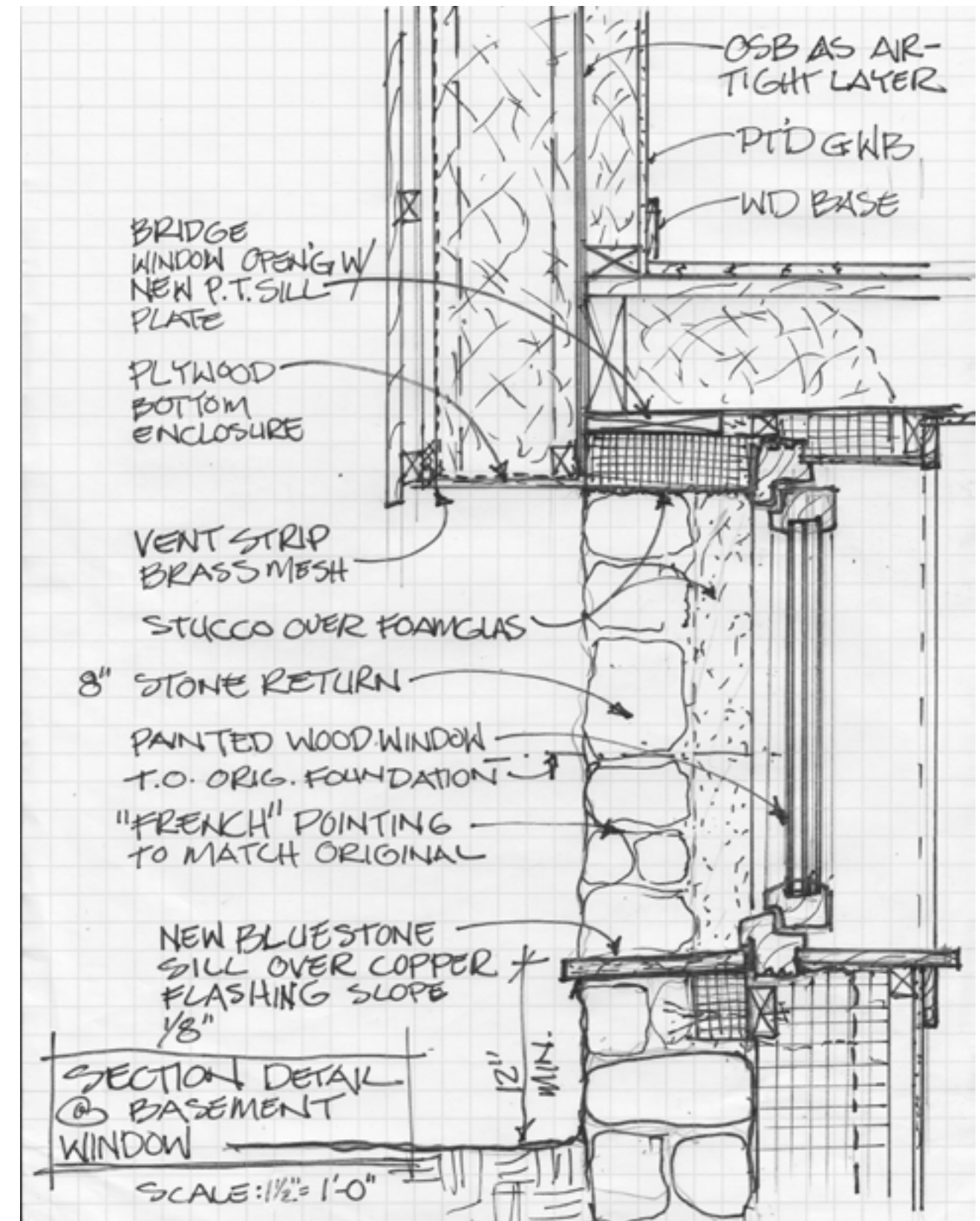
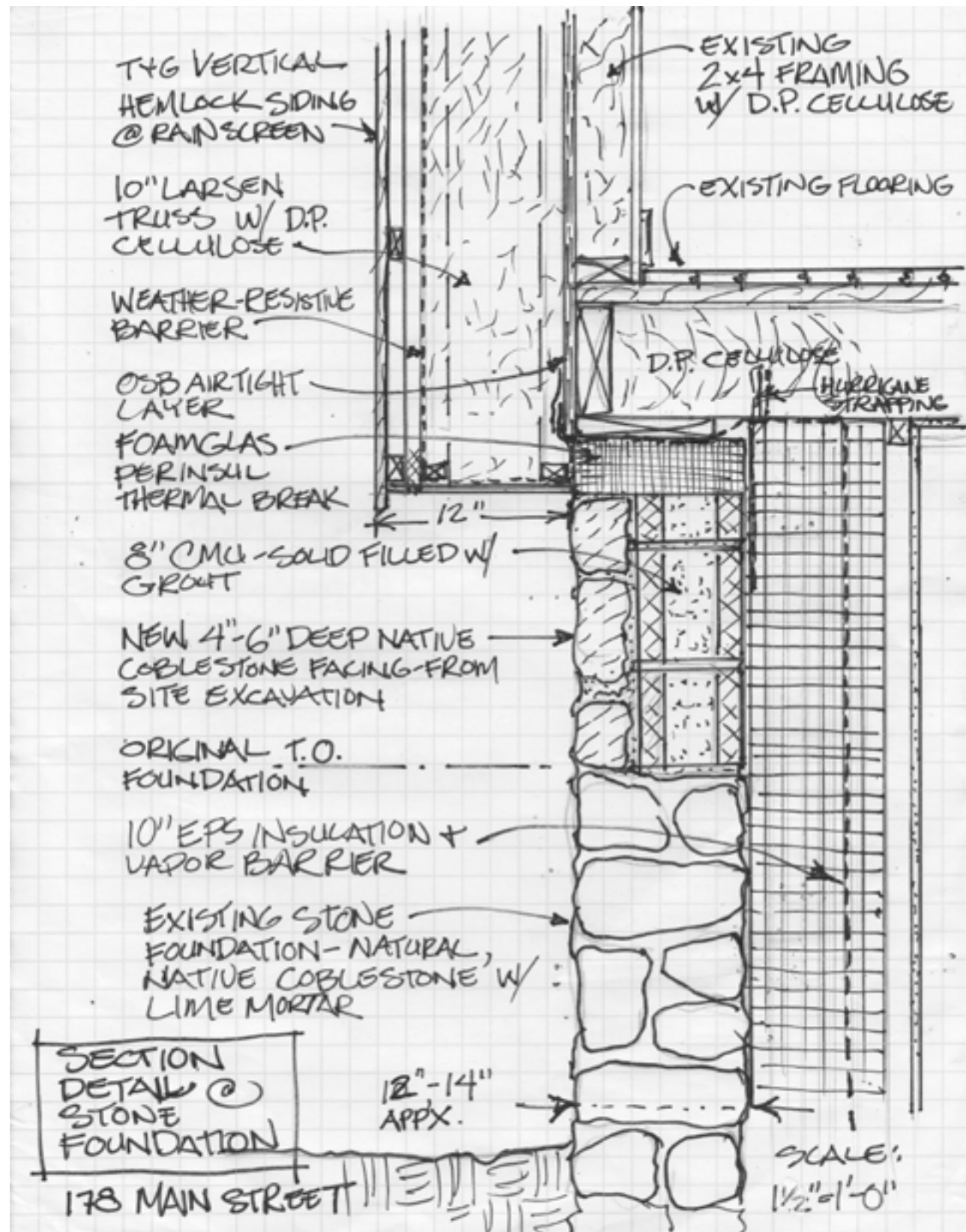


LIGHT TUBE DETAIL  
@ ROOF PEAK 1/2" = 1'-0"

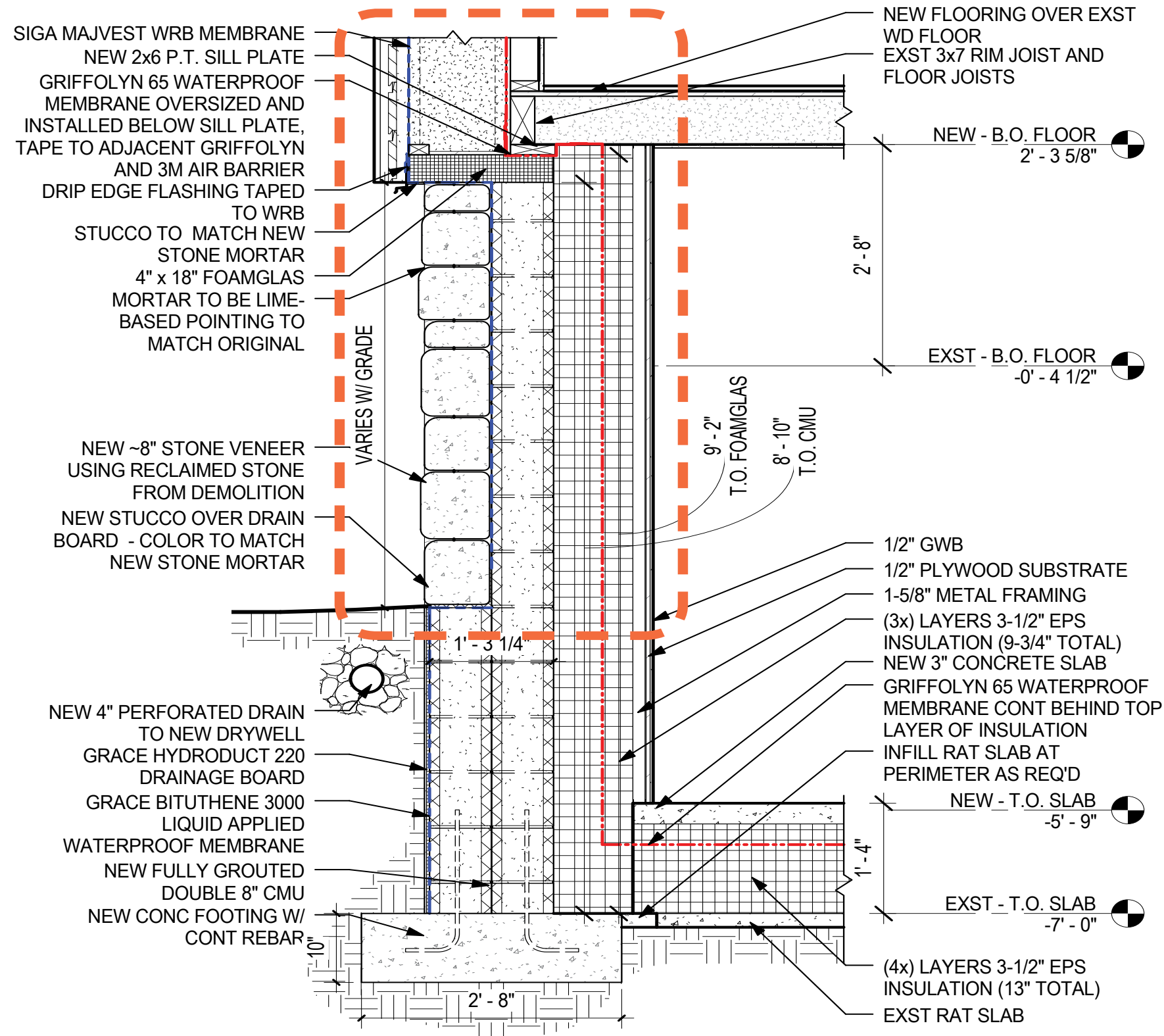




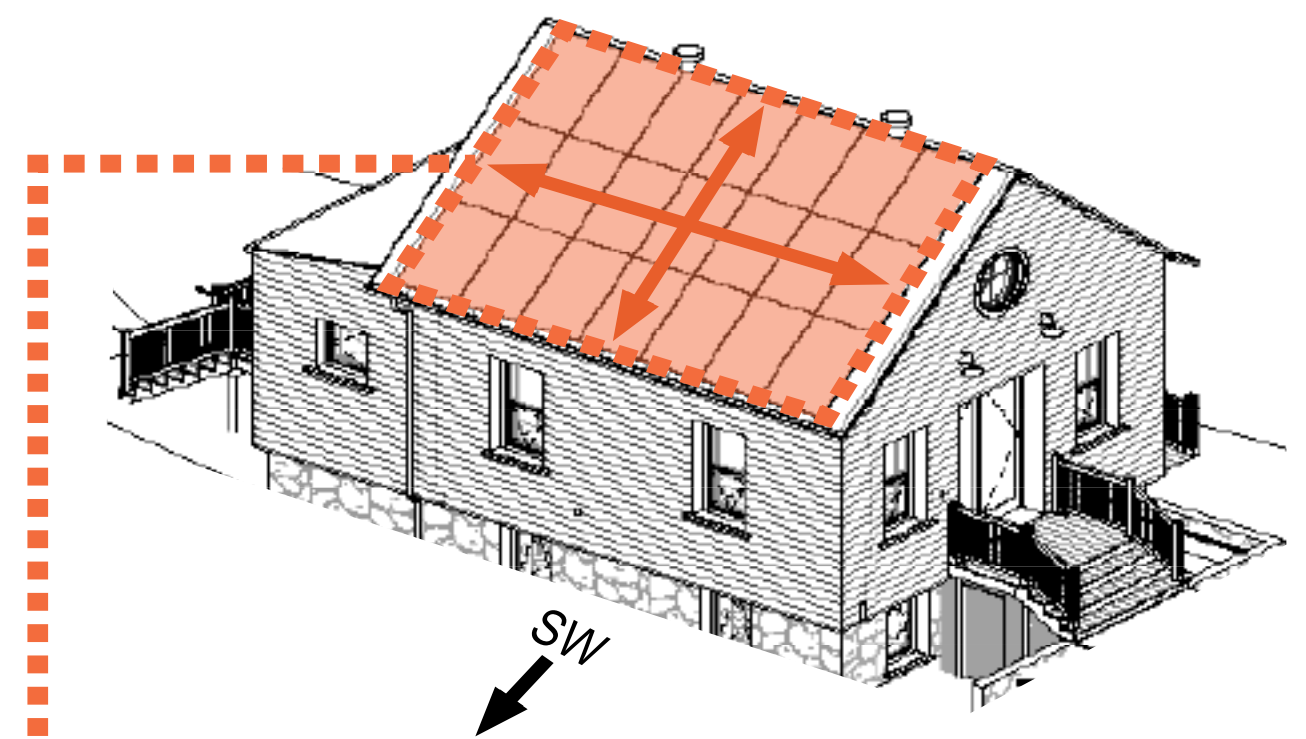
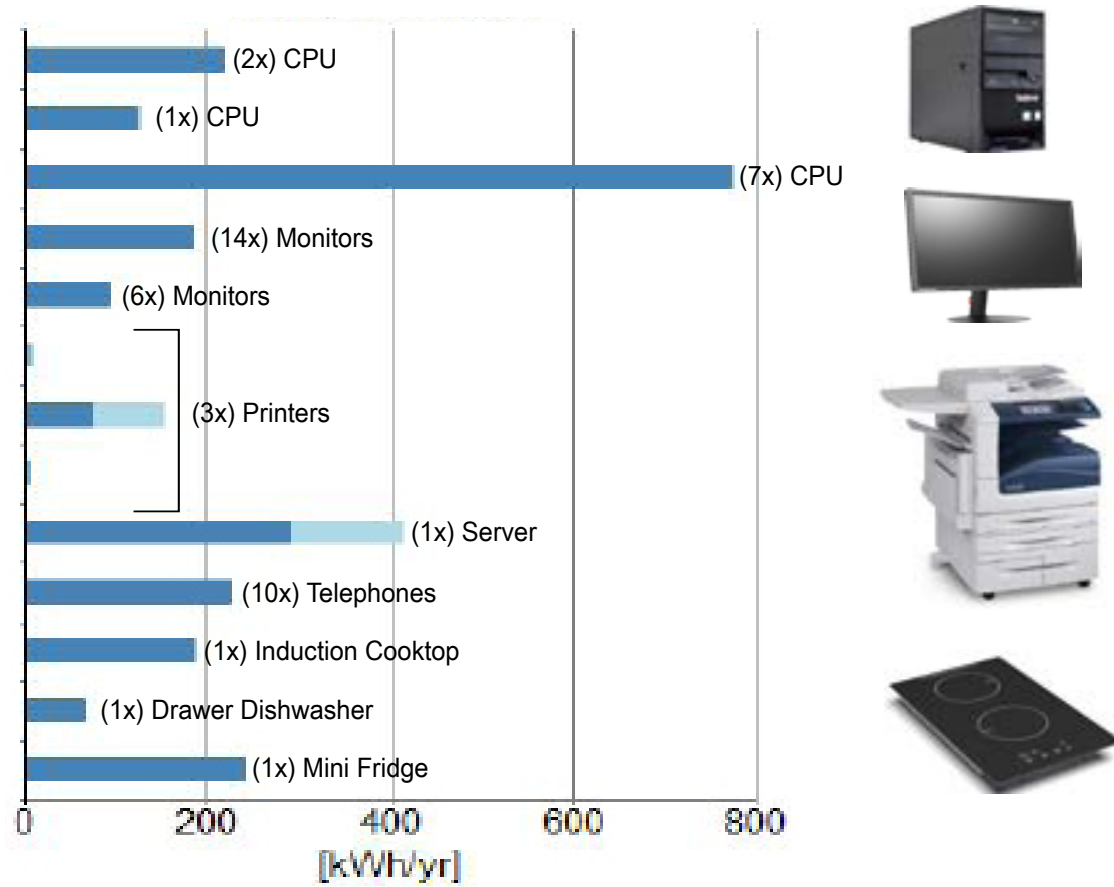




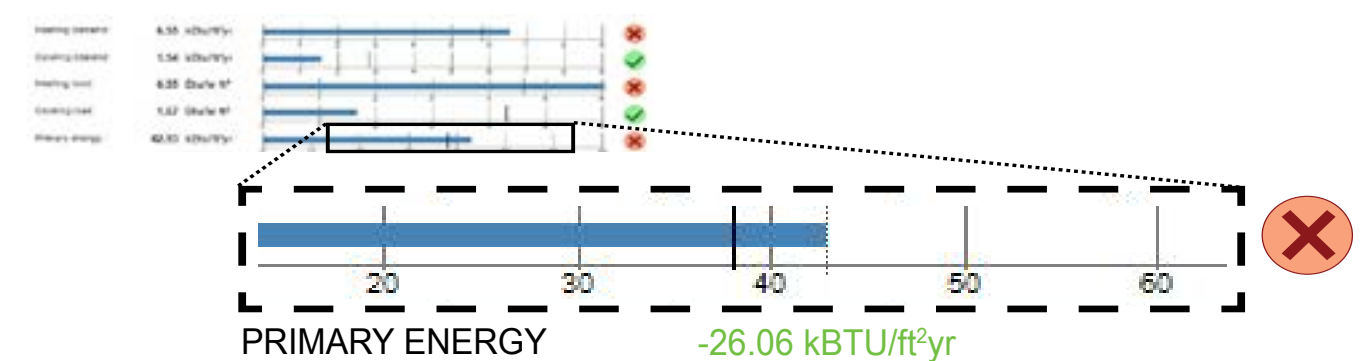
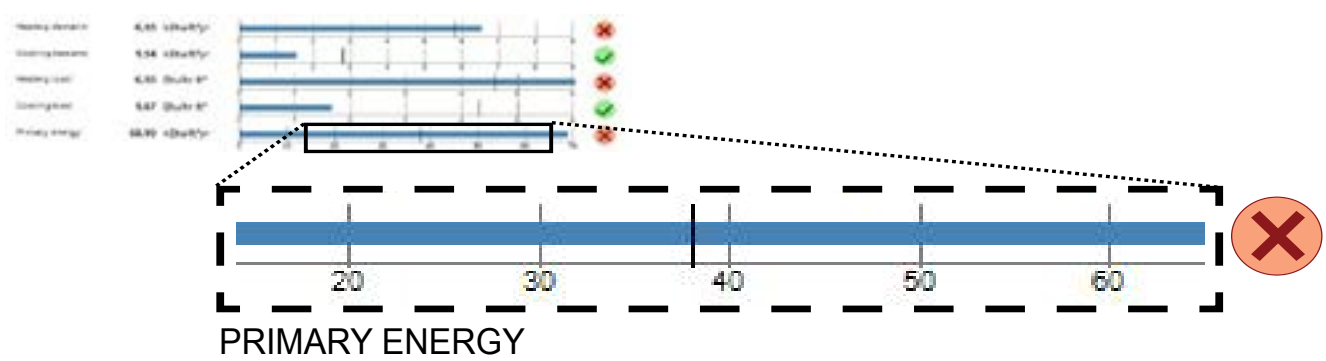




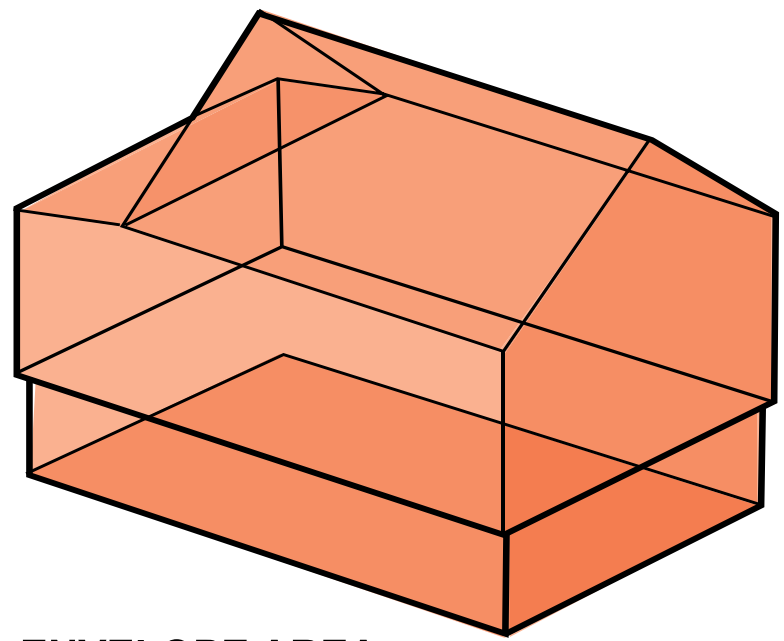
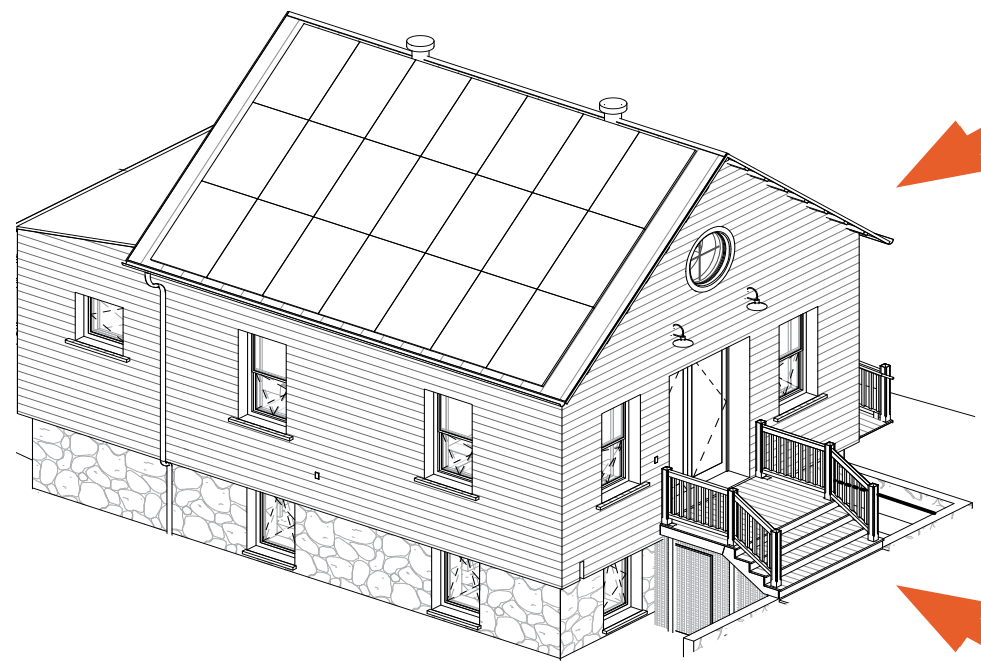




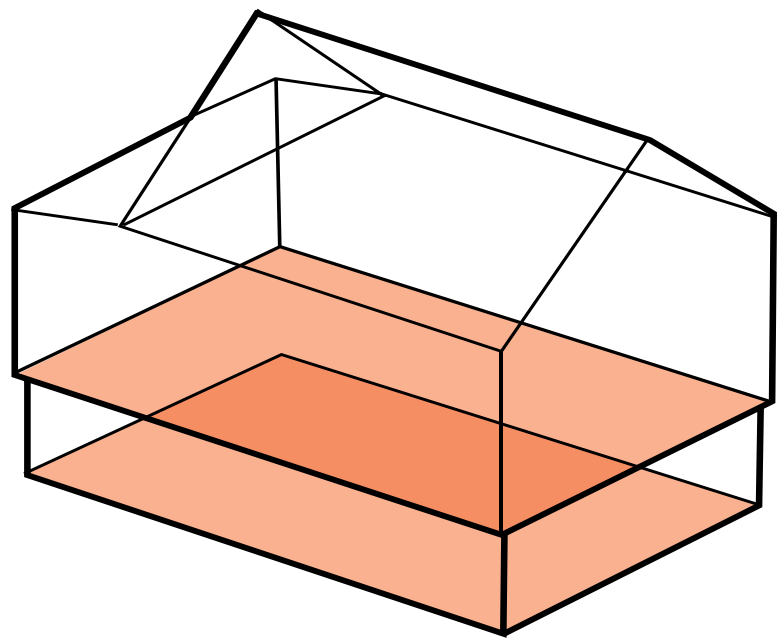
7,107 kWh/a Array  
.373 onsite utilization







**ENVELOPE AREA**  
- proportional to *transmission heat loss*



**iCFA (WALKABLE FLOOR AREA)**  
- proportional to *space conditioning* targets

**iCFA ÷ ENVELOPE AREA**

- Indirect way of putting pressure on material efficiency through compact forms and attached units during design

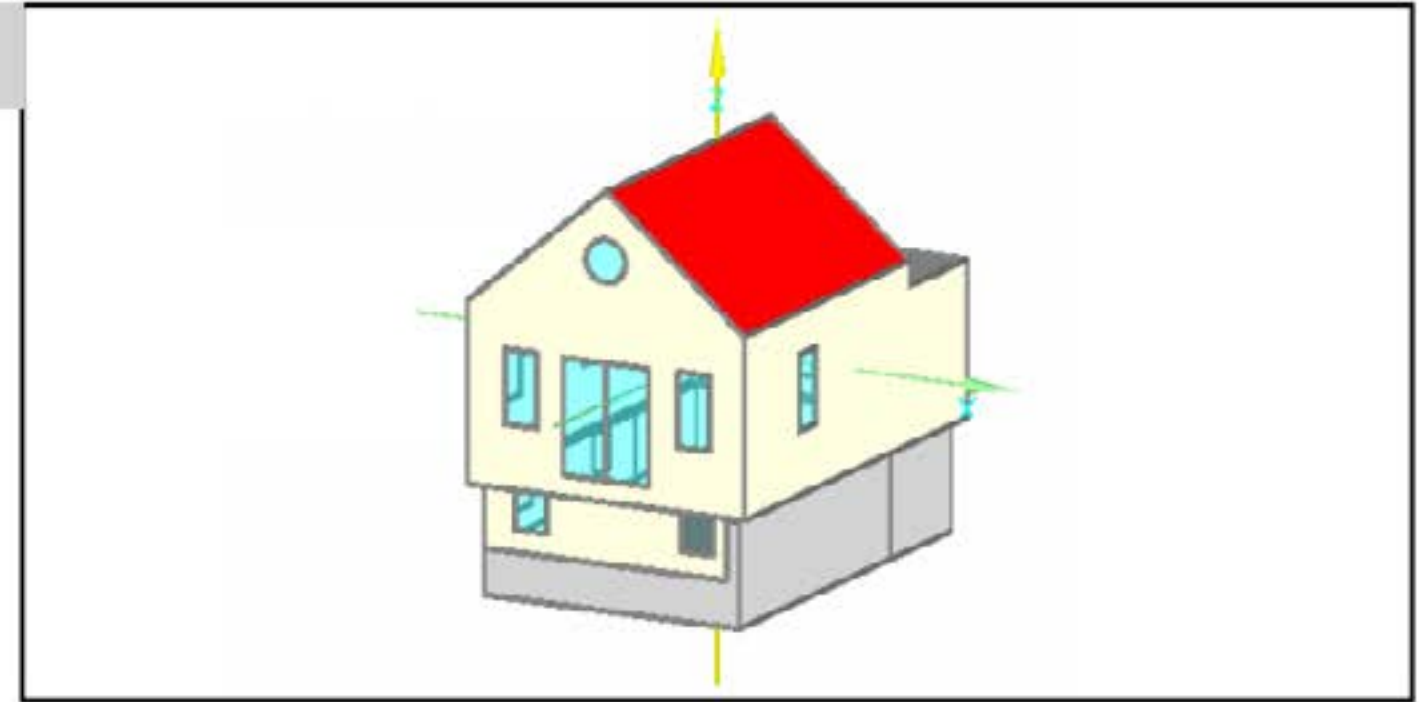


***But, what about existing building retrofits that already have a set envelope?***



## BUILDING INFORMATION

Category:	<b>Non-residential</b>
Status:	<b>In planning</b>
Building type:	<b>Retrofit</b>
Year of construction:	
Units:	<b>1</b>
Number of occupants:	<b>10 (Design)</b>



### Boundary conditions

Climate:	<b>POUGHKEEPSIE DUTCHESS CO AP NY</b>
Internal heat gains:	<b>1.3 Btu/hr ft<sup>2</sup></b>
Interior temperature:	<b>68 °F</b>
Overheat temperature:	<b>77 °F</b>

### Building geometry

Enclosed volume:	<b>17,416.2 ft<sup>3</sup></b>
Net-volume:	<b>11,693.8 ft<sup>3</sup></b>
Total area envelope:	<b>4,107.3 ft<sup>2</sup></b>
AV ratio:	<b>0.2 1/ft</b>
Floor area:	<b>1,096.7 ft<sup>2</sup></b>

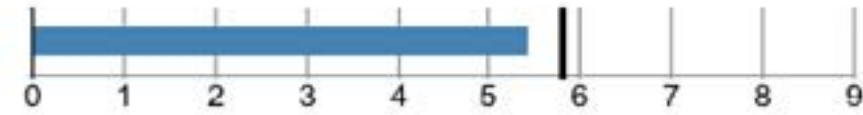


## PASSIVEHOUSE REQUIREMENTS

Certificate criteria: PHIUS+ 2015 Standard

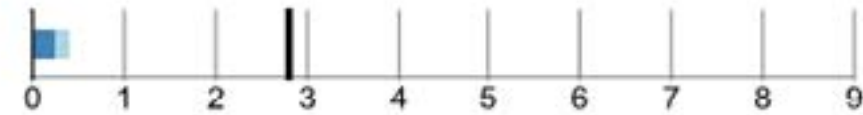
### Heating demand

specific: 5.39 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup>yr  
target: 5.8 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup>yr  
total: 5,914.28 kBtu/yr



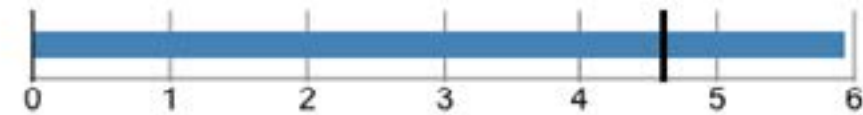
### Cooling demand

sensible: 0.24 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup>yr  
latent: 0.12 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup>yr  
specific: 0.36 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup>yr  
target: 2.8 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup>yr  
total: 398.71 kBtu/yr



### Heating load

specific: 5.93 Btu/hr ft<sup>2</sup>  
target: 4.6 Btu/hr ft<sup>2</sup>  
total: 6,503.74 Btu/hr

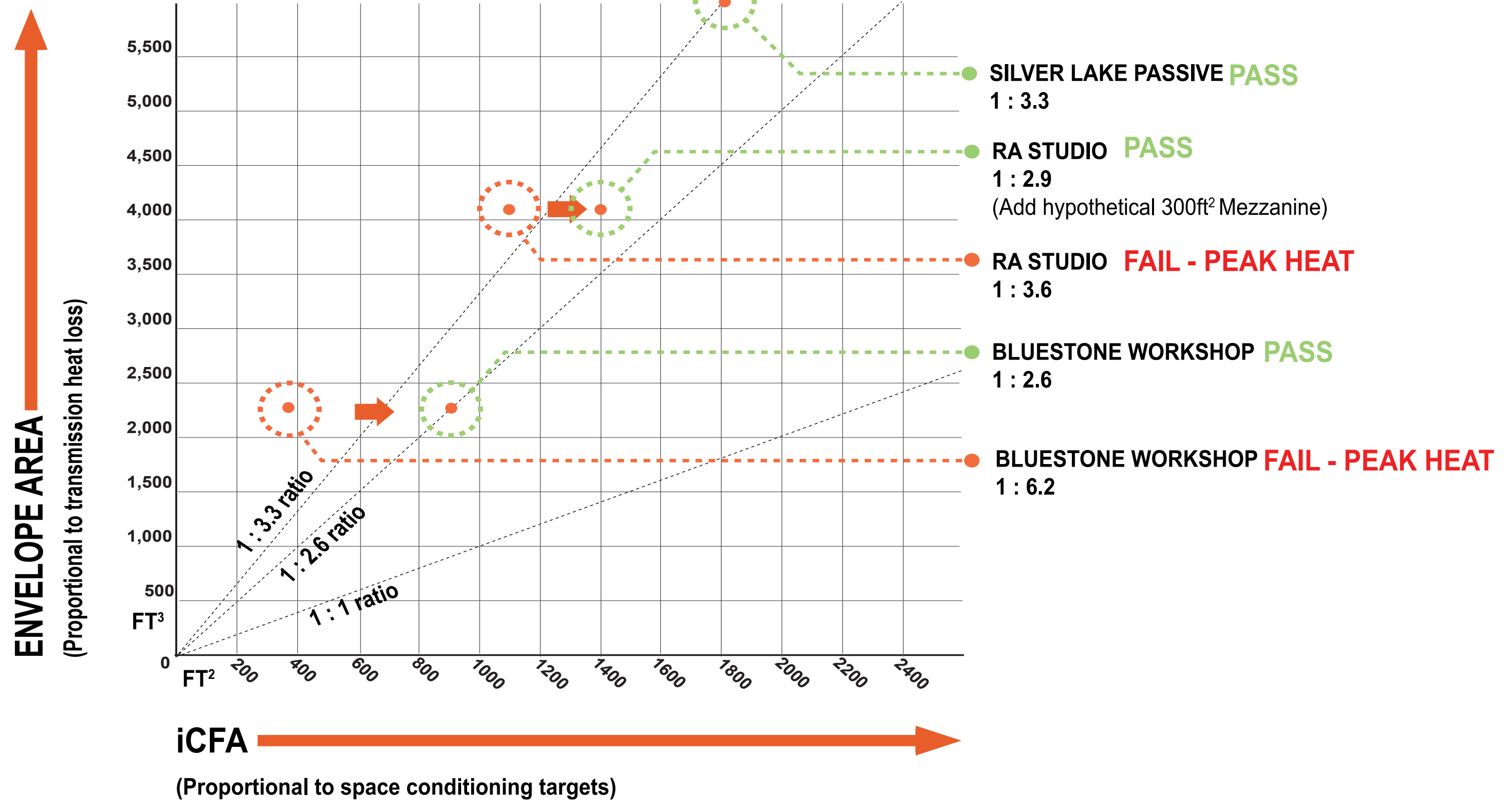


### Cooling load

specific: 0.67 Btu/hr ft<sup>2</sup>  
target: 4.3 Btu/hr ft<sup>2</sup>  
total: 737.33 Btu/hr





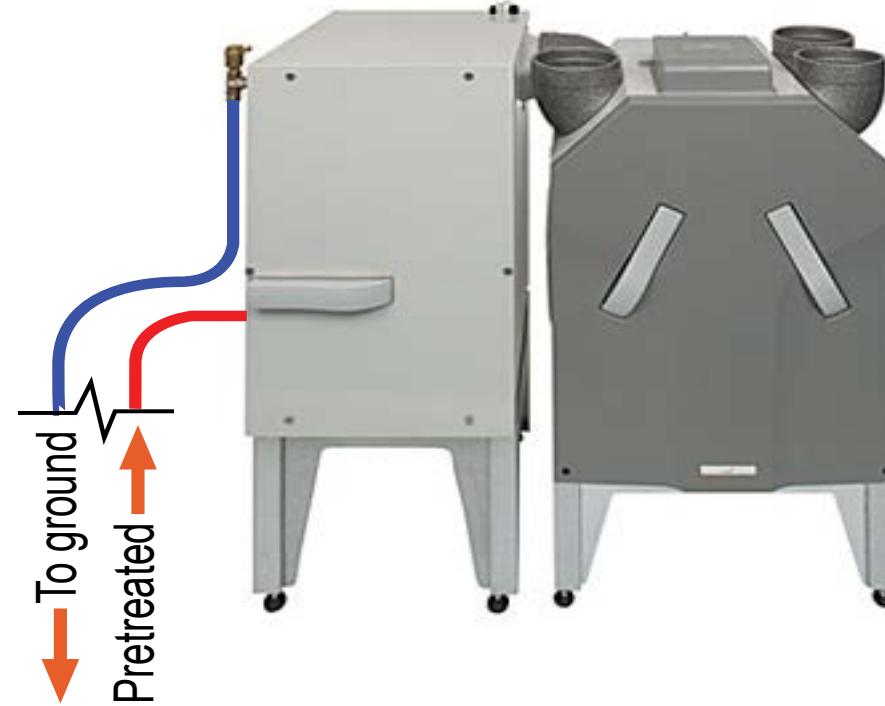






**CA200 ERV @ 100 cfm** (125 max cfm) ❌

ERV efficiency: 80% (derated 12%)  
Electrical efficiency: .63 W/cfm



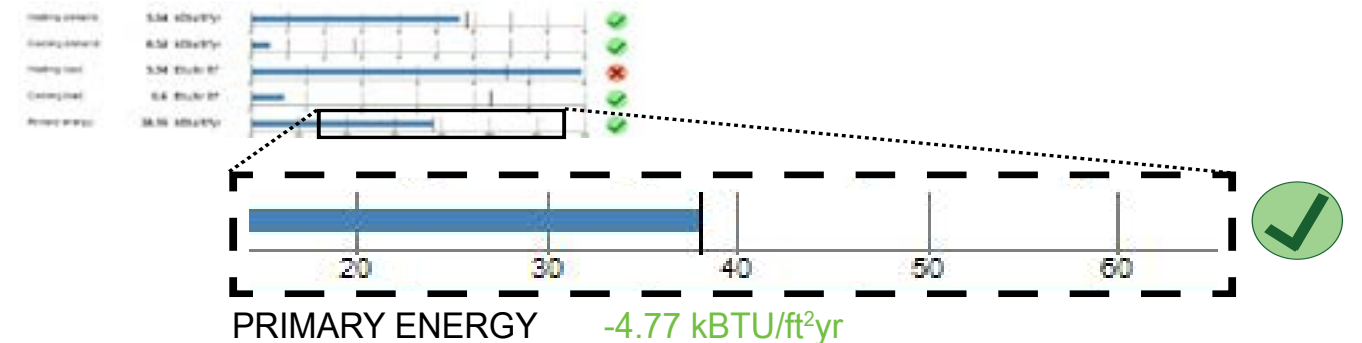
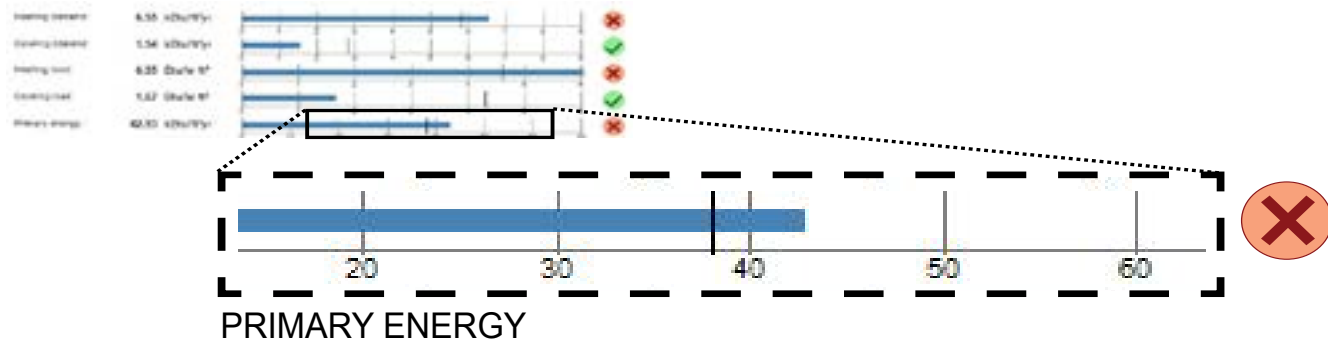
**CA350 HRV @ 100 cfm** (215 max cfm) ✅

HRV efficiency: 89%  
Electrical efficiency: .32 W/cfm

+

**ComfoFond Geothermal heat exchanger**

Efficiency: 60%















### EXCAVATION FINDINGS

- While the existing foundation seemed to be in good condition from inside, excavation for a new rear foundation wall revealed that was not the case.























Reclaimed insulation from  
Green Insulation Group



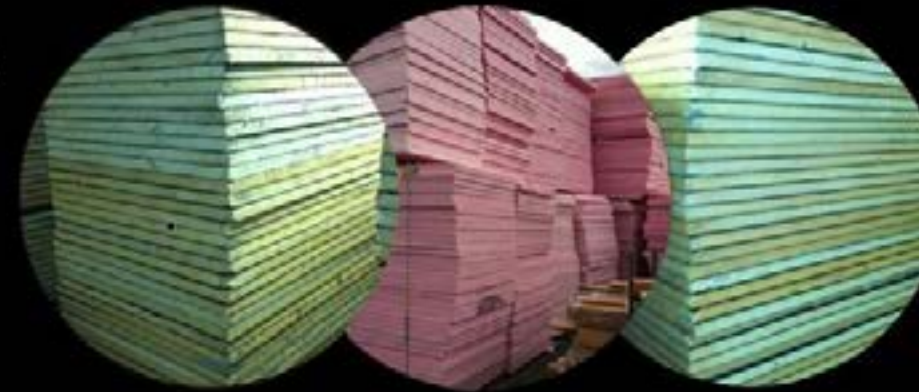






Supplies reclaimed, recycled,  
and surplus rigid  
insulation of all types

Monthly Special



Green Insulation Group supplies reclaimed, recycled,  
and surplus rigid insulation of all types

- Pallet or truckload quantities
- Save between 50-75% compared to new material
- Environmentally responsible and qualifies for LEED credits
- Typically the functionality and insulating capabilities of our product is consistent with new material
- Our inventory is very diverse, please contact us for your specific needs
- Surplus, Reclaimed, Recycled, and Once Used product available

## Why Us

- › Diverse inventory
- › Save 50-75% compared to new
- › Pallet or truckload quantities
- › Environmentally responsible

Polyisocyanurate

ISO

ISO panels provide the highest thermal

Extruded Polystyrene

XPS

Also known as 'blue-board', XPS consists

Expanded Polystyrene

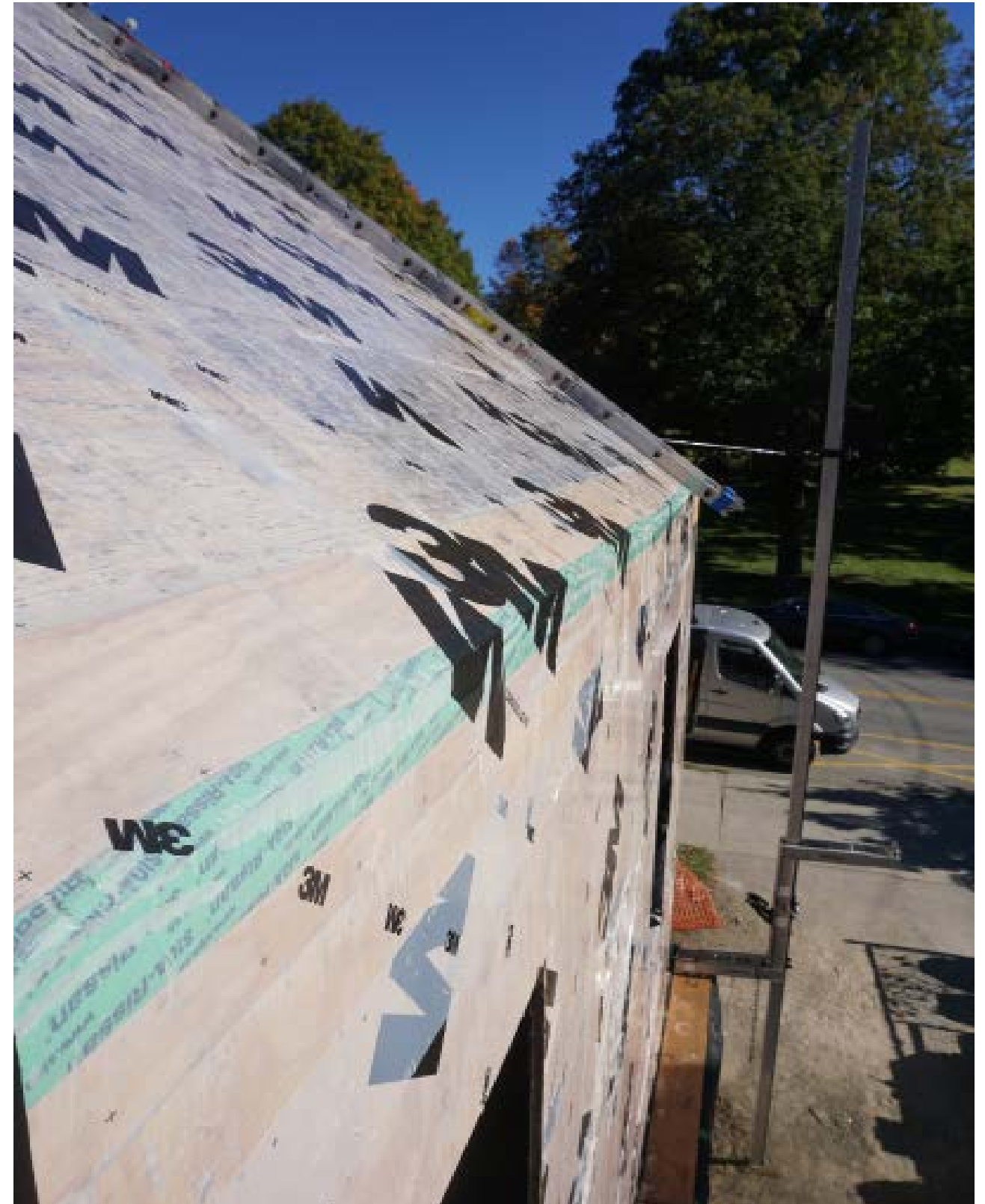
EPS

Also known as 'bead-board', EPS has the















Rater Notes (thermal bridges present and/or mitigation strategies)

4		Building Air Tightness Testing			
4.1	Preliminary whole building blower door test (optional)				
		Building Envelope Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	3776		
		not ph volume	Project Net Volume (ft <sup>3</sup> )	17057	
			CFM50 test result - depressurization	70	
			CFM50/Shell	0.0185	
			ACH50 - depressurization	0.25	
			CFM50 test result - pressurization	68	
			CFM50/Shell	0.0180	
			ACH50 - pressurization	0.24	
			Average CFM50	69	
			Average CFM50/Shell area	0.018	
			Average ACH50	0.24	
	4.2	Final whole building blower door test			
		Building Envelope Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	3776		
		resnet volume?	Project Net Volume (ft <sup>3</sup> )	17057	
			CFM50 test result - depressurization	52	
			CFM50/Shell	0.0138	
			ACH50 - depressurization	0.18	
			CFM50 test result - pressurization	62	
			CFM50/Shell	0.0164	
			ACH50 - pressurization	0.22	
			Average CFM50	57	
		Average CFM50/Shell area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	0.015	PASS	
		Average ACH50	0.20	PHIUS+	

















Photo by Nicholas Doyle



# Lessons Learned

1. Never assume anything.
2. Small building penalty (PHIUS+ 2015) added difficulty.
3. It's easy to draw the red and blue lines on paper but hard to execute in the field.
4. We used HRV to pass the energy model but it is not ideal for our climate zone. We need better humidity control.
5. Heating and cooling loads seem to be inaccurate in WUFI model.
6. Avoid hanging outdoor minisplit unit under the roof eaves to mitigate winter drips and freezing of the equipment.
7. The external shades definitely help.
8. We wish we could've avoided making holes in the weather barrier to insulate the building with blown-in cellulose.

**Key Question:** Would anyone else put this much effort in converting a small historic building into a Net Zero office? (On the other hand, being committed made the execution easier.)

**Note:** While we did not have any problems with reclaimed EPS insulation, we want to inform that reclaimed EPS may not be suitable for all slab conditions. It's hard to control what compression strength you'll get. And, it's not suitable for point loads.



# The Bank Lofts

Carbon Neutral Retrofit Mix-Use Building in Richfield Springs, New York



[NYSERDA CNCED & Buildings of Excellence Early Design Partner Program](#)













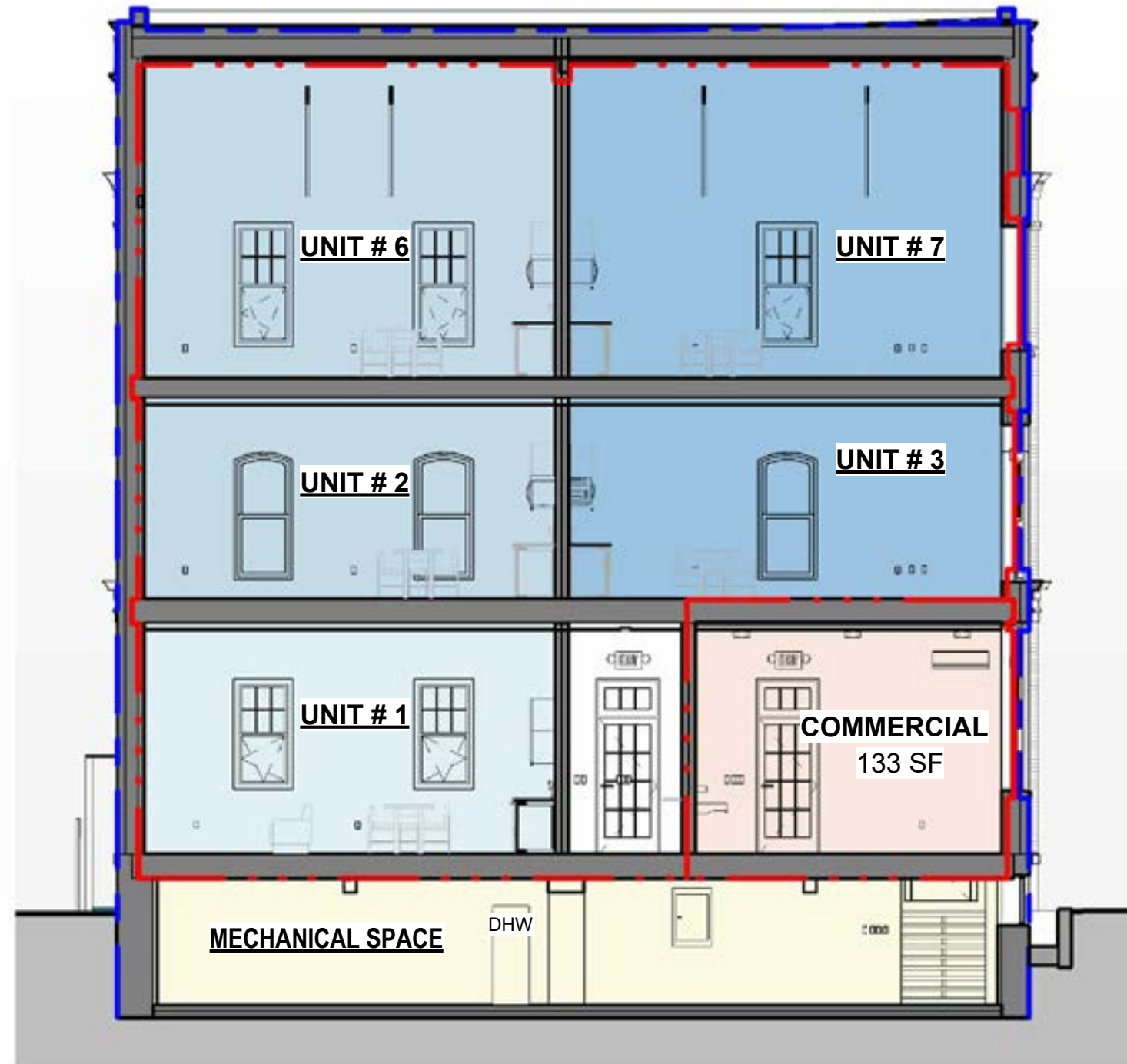






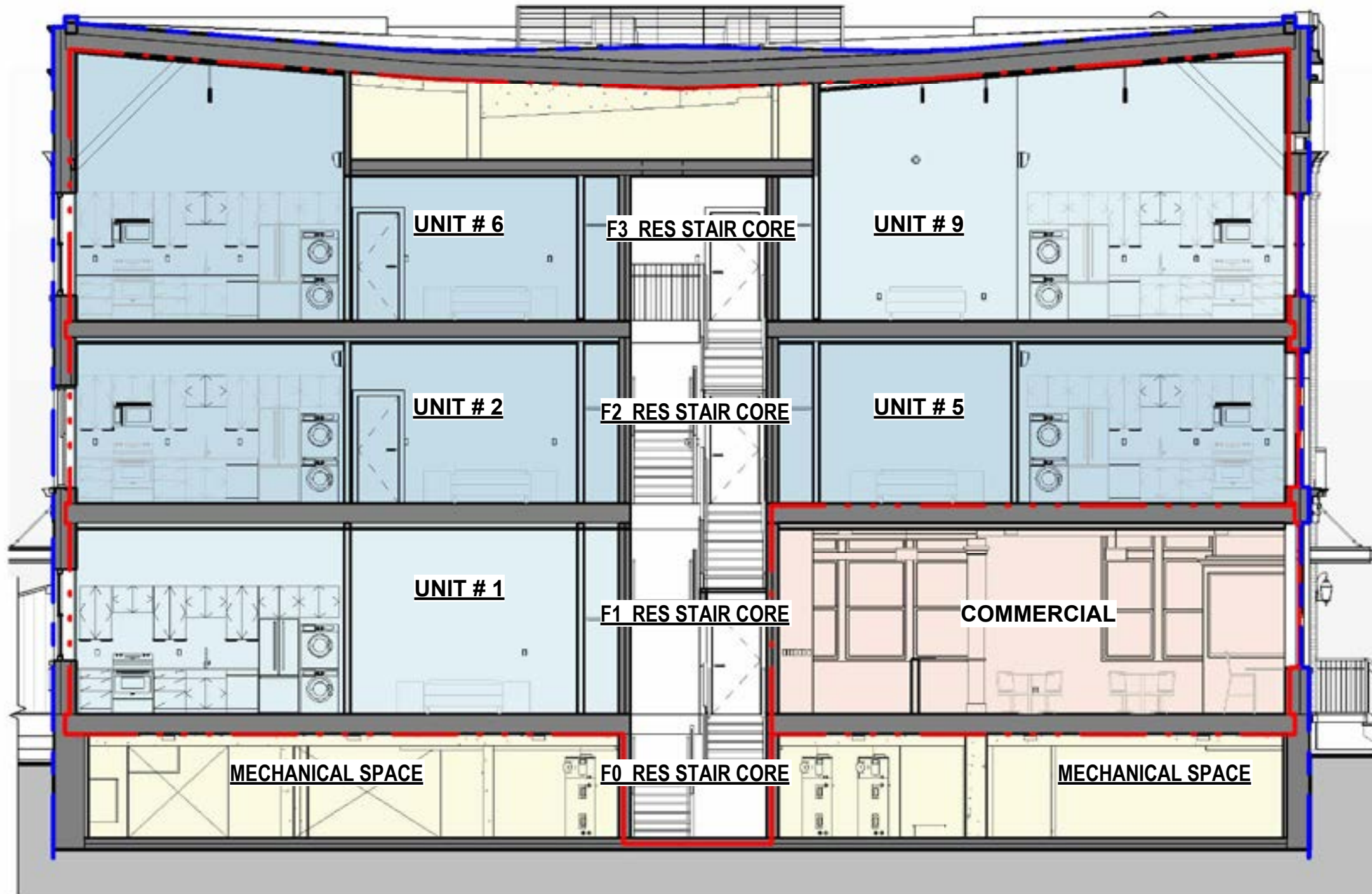






--- AIR BARRIER  
--- WRB

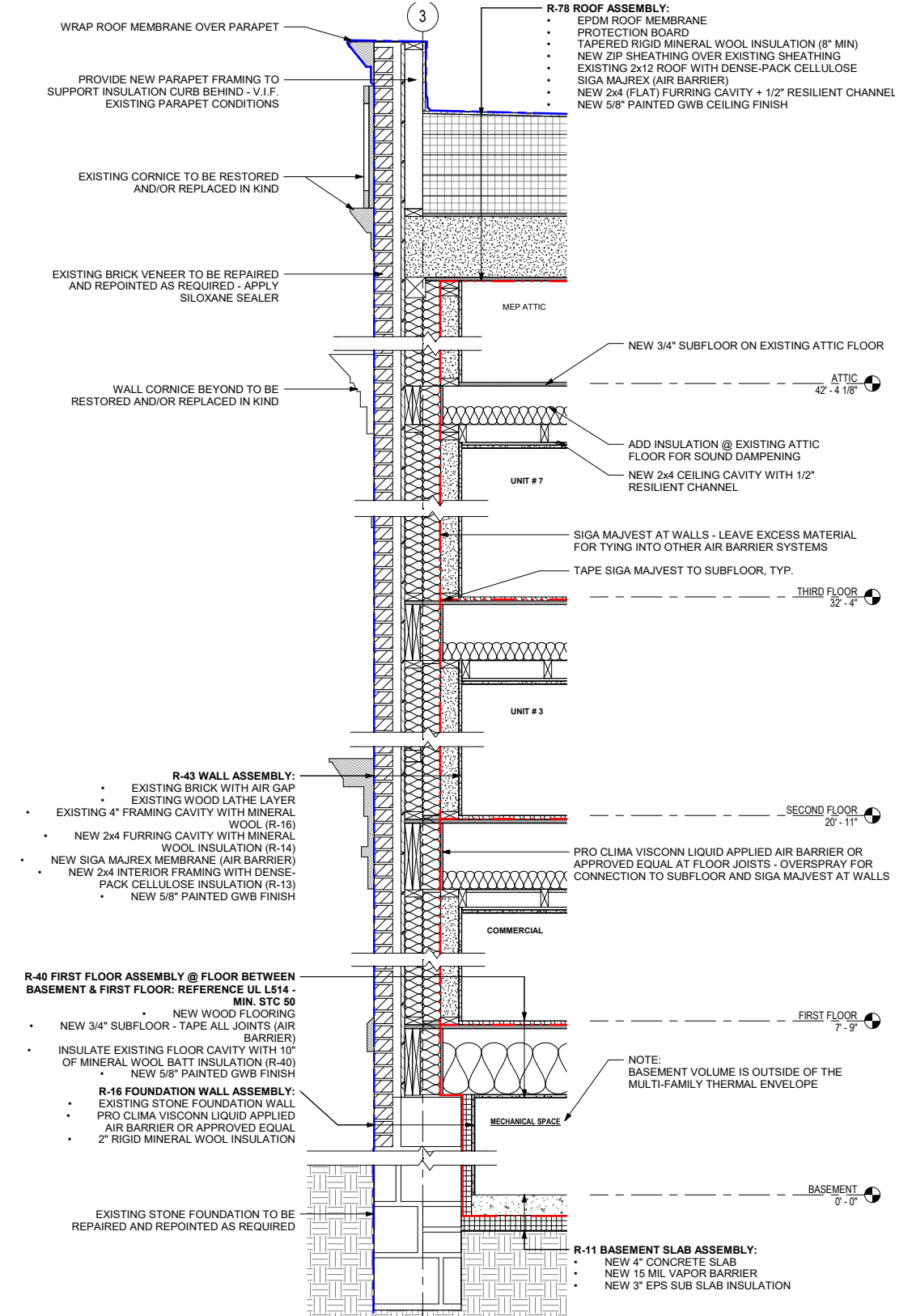
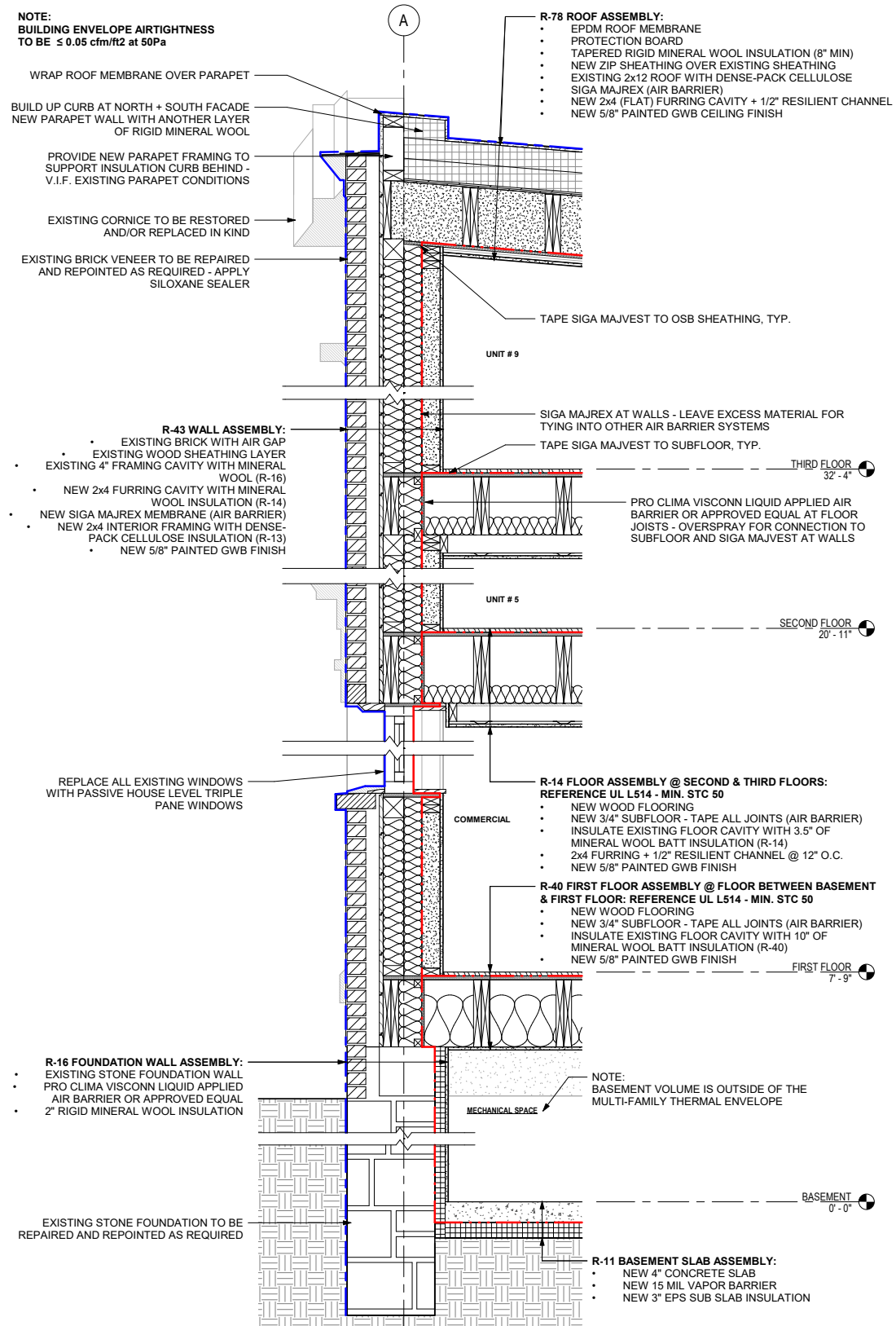




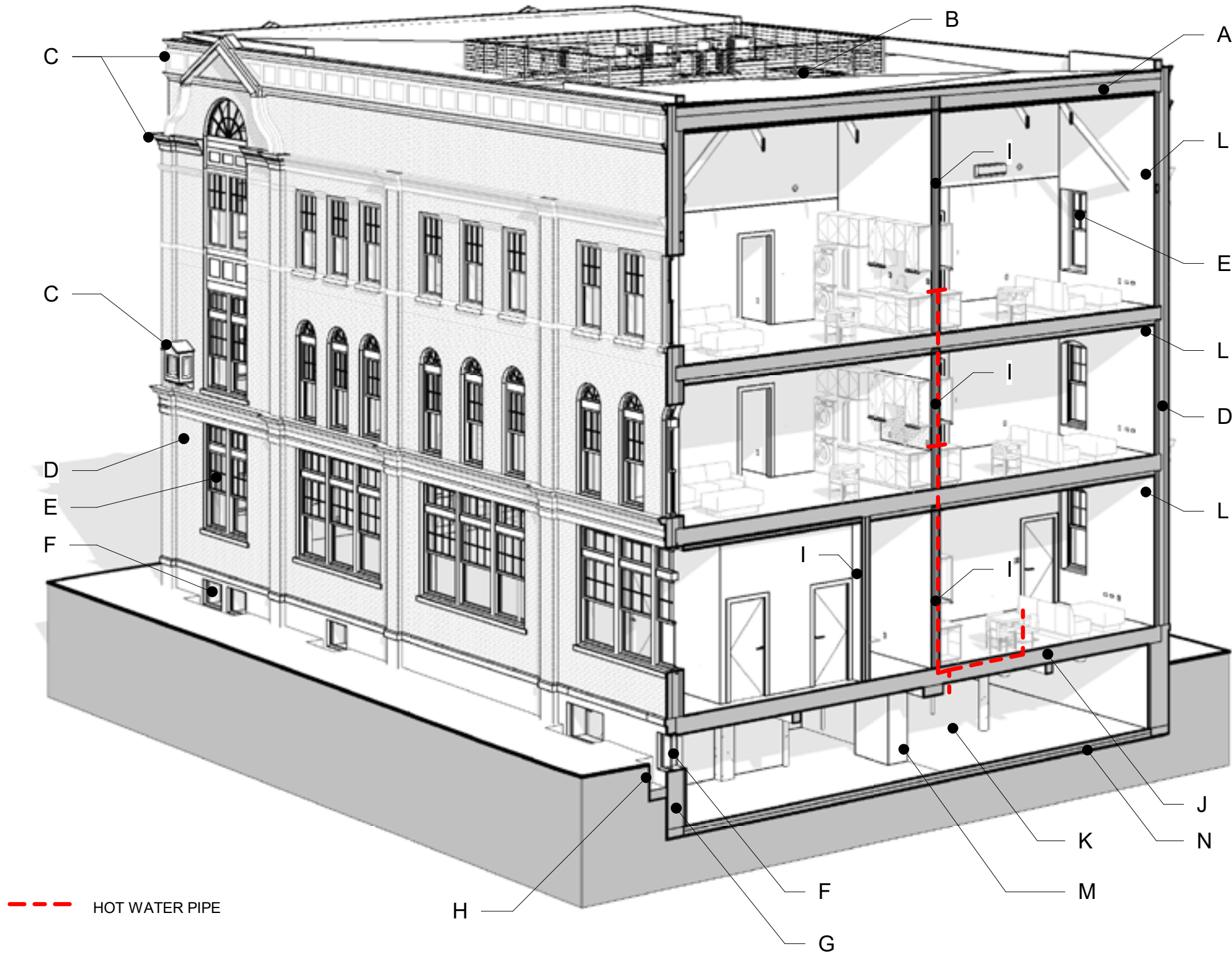
— · · · — AIR BARRIER  
- - - - WRB



**NOTE:**  
BUILDING ENVELOPE AIRTIGHTNESS  
TO BE  $\leq 0.05$  cfm/ft<sup>2</sup> at 50Pa



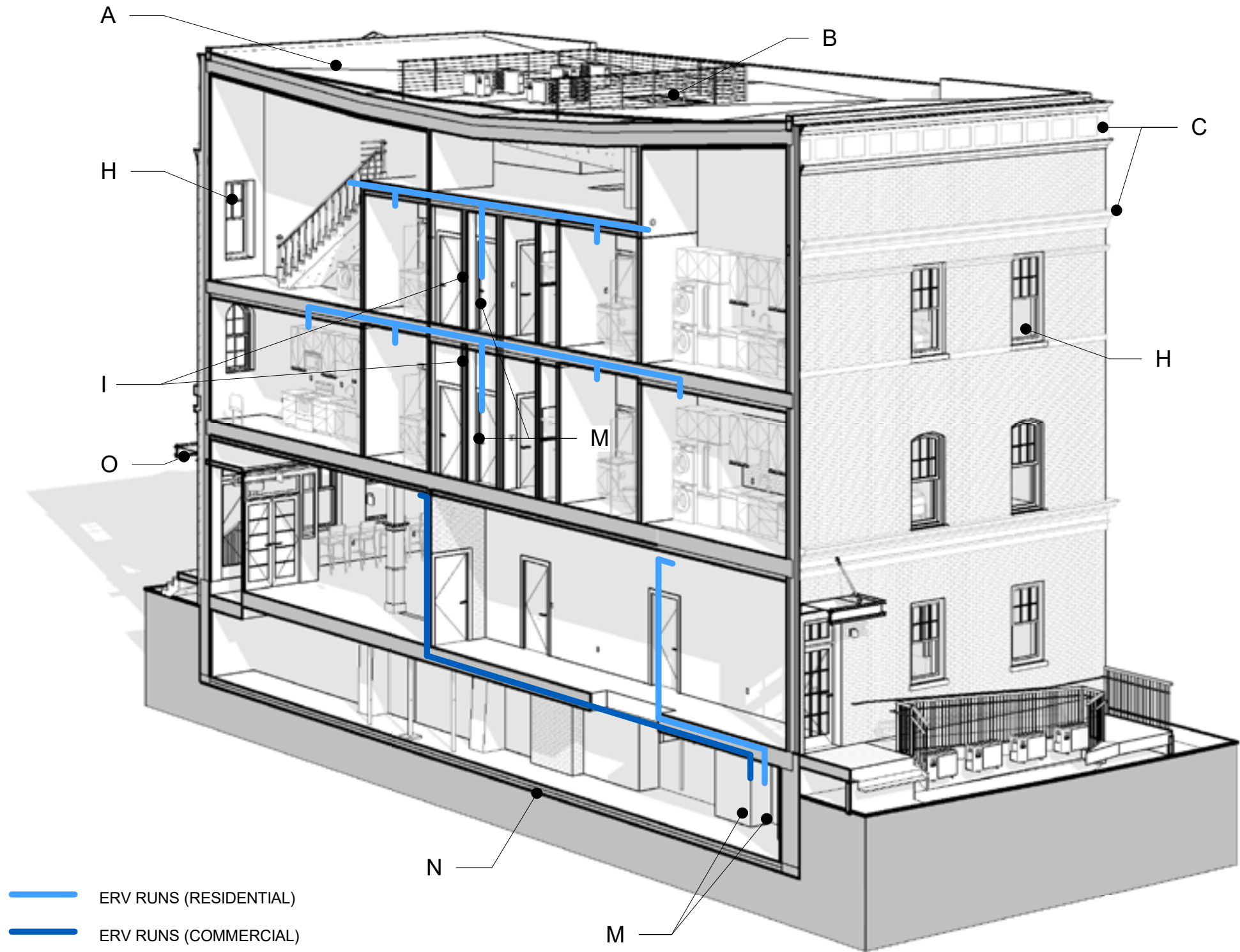




- A. R-80 SUPER-INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT ROOF
- B. INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT ROOF ACCESS HATCH
- C. RESTORE & REPLICATE HISTORIC BUILDING ELEMENTS
- D. R-43 SUPER-INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT WALLS
- E. ENERGY EFFICIENT TRIPLE PANE WINDOWS
- F. ENERGY EFFICIENT BASEMENT WINDOWS
- G. R-16 INSULATED BASEMENT WALLS
- H. WINDOW WELLS TO AVOID WATER DAMAGE TO BASEMENT WINDOWS
- I. INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT INTERIOR DOUBLE 2X4 WALLS BETWEEN ZONES & UNITS
- J. INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT INTERIOR FLOORS
- K. HEAT PUMP OR HYBRID HOT WATER HEATERS. EFFICIENT PLUMBING DESIGN WITH BACK TO BACK FIXTURE ALIGNMENT WHEN FEASIBLE.
- L. DUCTLESS MINISPLIT FOR HEATING & COOLING (1/ UNIT)
- M. ENERGY RECOVERY VENTILATION UNITS FOR CLEAN IN DOOR AIR QUALITY, ERV UNITS ARE PLACED NEAR SPACES THEY SERVE FOR SHORTER DUCT RUNS.
- N. R-16 INSULATED BASEMENT SLAB
- O. ENTRY CANOPY TO REDUCE HEAT-GAIN THROUGH GLASS DOOR
- P. OUTDOOR SEATING AREA WITH GREENERY & BIKE STORAGE
- Q. ADA RAMP ACCESS FOR BOTH COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL ENTRIES
- R. PARKING INCLUDING ADA SPACES WITH 4 ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATIONS
- S. CANOPY WITH SOLAR PV TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY FOR BUILDING, AND PROVIDE SHADE FOR PARKING SPACE

--- HOT WATER PIPE





- A. R-80 SUPER-INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT ROOF
- B. INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT ROOF ACCESS HATCH
- C. RESTORE & REPLICATE HISTORIC BUILDING ELEMENTS
- D. R-43 SUPER-INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT WALLS
- E. ENERGY EFFICIENT TRIPLE PANE WINDOWS
- F. ENERGY EFFICIENT BASEMENT WINDOWS
- G. R-16 INSULATED BASEMENT WALLS
- H. WINDOW WELLS TO AVOID WATER DAMAGE TO BASEMENT WINDOWS
- I. INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT INTERIOR DOUBLE 2X4 WALLS BETWEEN ZONES & UNITS
- J. INSULATED & AIR-TIGHT INTERIOR FLOORS
- K. HEAT PUMP OR HYBRID HOT WATER HEATERS. EFFICIENT PLUMBING DESIGN WITH BACK TO BACK FIXTURE ALIGNMENT WHEN FEASIBLE.
- L. DUCTLESS MINISPLIT FOR HEATING & COOLING (1/ UNIT)
- M. ENERGY RECOVERY VENTILATION UNITS FOR CLEAN INDOOR AIR QUALITY, ERV UNITS ARE PLACED NEAR SPACES THEY SERVE FOR SHORTER DUCT RUNS.
- N. R-16 INSULATED BASEMENT SLAB
- O. ENTRY CANOPY TO REDUCE HEAT-GAIN THROUGH GLASS DOOR
- P. OUTDOOR SEATING AREA WITH GREENERY & BIKE STORAGE
- Q. ADA RAMP ACCESS FOR BOTH COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL ENTRIES
- R. PARKING INCLUDING ADA SPACES WITH 4 ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATIONS
- S. CANOPY WITH SOLAR PV TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY FOR BUILDING, AND PROVIDE SHADE FOR PARKING SPACE



# Foresights Applied

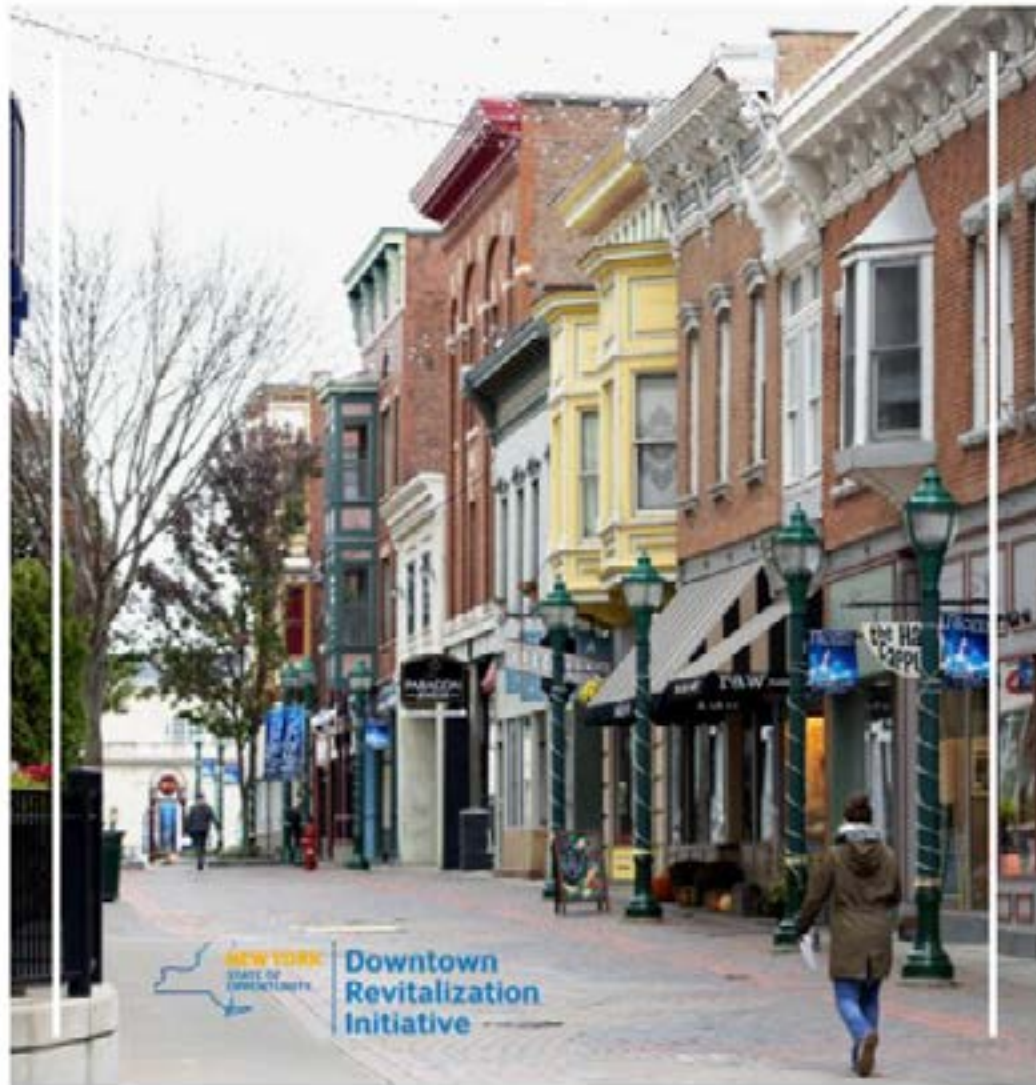
1. Digital scan: Using 3D scan instead of traditional survey.
2. Evaluate the type of masonry structure & brick reinforcement strategies
3. Energy model and determine mechanical systems early on to help inform the overall design. (Challenges with large area of existing, west-facing windows were mitigated.)
4. For historic building retrofits, get preservation requirements early on to avoid design changes in later stages (Historic stair relocation during CD phase)
5. Careful consideration of air-sealing strategies at framing transitions
6. Consider keeping the basement outside of the thermal envelope because old foundations are a challenge to air seal.



# DRI Round 5 Project Examples

DRI · Downtown Revitalization Initiative

**Downtown Revitalization  
Initiative Guidebook** · July 2021



River Architects to Consult 16 Winning Cities of DRI Round 5 Program Towards Decarbonizing Their Key Projects (Round 6 winning cities to be added soon.)

<https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative>



# DRI Round 5 Winning Cities





































# Foreseeable Challenges

1. Tough to achieve the basic continuous insulation and air barriers. How to mitigate potential condensation areas that are hard to reach?
2. Excavating around the perimeter of the building may not be feasible - i.e. city-owned sidewalk and infrastructure AND there is functioning basement
3. Cannot excavate below existing basement or slab-on-grade *and* we have limited ceiling height.
4. How to address historic building with exposed masonry structure that is a significant thermal bridge?
5. How to address the man-made criteria of various agencies that impede on energy improvement of a historic building?
6. What to do when you are “stuck” between historic exterior *and* interior?
7. Working with the occupants-in-place during the envelope and HVAC improvement
8. How to calculate the impact of thermal mass in energy consumption of buildings?
9. Limitations on clearances for adequate insulation - i.e. height difference between existing roof deck and stair door threshold
10. Working around various types of existing roof parapets
11. Mounting PV on existing roof structure, etc.



# Thank you!

**Juhee Lee-Hartford | AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, CPHC  
Founding & Managing Principal, CEO**

**James Hartford | AIA, LEED AP, CPHC  
Principal**

MWBE, DBE, & SBE Certified Business  
Passive House | Net Zero | Living Buildings | LEED

178 Main Street  
Cold Spring, NY 10516

845.265.2254  
[info@riverarchitects.com](mailto:info@riverarchitects.com)  
[www.riverarchitects.com](http://www.riverarchitects.com)