

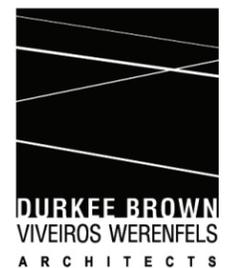
Odd Fellows Hall

63-65 Warren Avenue, East Providence, RI
Historic Structure Assessment



June 2014

Ms. Jeanne M. Boyle, Executive Director
East Providence Waterfront Commission
East Providence City Hall
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North elevation

I. Introduction

Durkee, Brown, Vivieros and Werenfels Architects (DBVW), prepared this historic structure assessment of the Odd Fellows Hall, 63-65 Warren Avenue, East Providence, Rhode Island, to assist the City of East Providence in determining the condition of the existing building and re-use possibilities. Odd Fellows Hall was constructed in 1889 in the shingle style of architecture by the Providence based architecture firm of Gould and Angell. The building originally functioned as a mixed-use building for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization. The organization historically leased the first floor for commercial purposes and accommodated social functions on the upper floors. Odd Fellows Hall is located in the Watchemoket neighborhood of East Providence, adjacent to Interstate 95, a major highway connecting Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The building is one of the last examples of Victorian public architecture in the Watchemoket neighborhood to have escaped demolition during the construction of the highway. (NRHPF, 1976) Odd Fellows Hall was purchased in 2009 by the City of East Providence. The building is in a general state of disrepair and significant rehabilitation is necessary if any portion of the building is to be reused. Odd Fellows Hall is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and requires a treatment plan consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

II. Methodology

For the purposes of this historic structures assessment, DBVW Architects was tasked with evaluating the condition of the building and identifying recommendations for the first five major tasks that should be undertaken to preserve and restore the building. Preliminary budget estimates were developed to accompany the five tasks. An additional goal of this report was to identify the major functional constraints of the property for re-using the building and site. DBVW Architects completed a site visit with Existing Conditions Surveys, a 3D laser scanning documentation company, on January 21, 2014 to become familiar with the property. This report was prepared by Cecelia Hallahan, Architect and Martha Werenfels, Architect.

III. Existing Conditions Assessment



North and east elevations



North and west elevations



South and west elevations



East elevation looking north

Odd Fellows Hall is an 8,300 square foot, two and one half story structure occupying a small (1/10 of one acre) corner lot at the intersection of Warren and Burgess Avenues. Over half of the site is taken up by the building footprint and very little remains for site development except a narrow east side alley and a small paved parking area to the south of the building.

A. Roof, Gutters and Downspouts

Description:

Odd Fellow's Hall features a tall hipped roof punctuated by dormers. In keeping with the shingle style, it would have originally been covered in wood shingles. Today, the existing roof is comprised of asphalt shingles over wood decking. A single original chimney remains at the south side of the building. At the perimeter of the roof, a wood eave supported on brackets contains a built-in wood gutter. Non-original aluminum rain leaders extend from the gutter to an underground collection system.

Condition Assessment:

The existing asphalt shingle roof is in very poor condition with shingles missing in some locations. It is evident that the missing shingles have allowed water to penetrate the building envelope and have caused the wood roof deck to deteriorate. The deterioration of the roof deck is so extensive that holes have opened into the attic space. The water that has entered through these holes has caused deterioration and failure of interior wood floor framing systems.

The chimney at the south elevation exhibits signs of previous repointing campaigns at the top portion. There is visible erosion of mortar joints at the base of the chimney as well as missing bricks. The base flashing surrounding the chimney is in poor condition and shows many signs of sealant repairs.

The wood built-in gutter system appears to be in very poor condition with severe deterioration of the adjacent wood soffits and trim elements. Rubber roofing membrane appears to have been added to line and/or cover over the gutters in an attempt to maintain the drainage system. The rubber roofing is improperly installed and does not appear to be effective. Plant growth has also been permitted to overtake the soffit and gutter at the northwest corner of the building, thus exacerbating the deterioration of wood elements.



Non-original asphalt shingle roof. View looking south at dormers of east elevation.



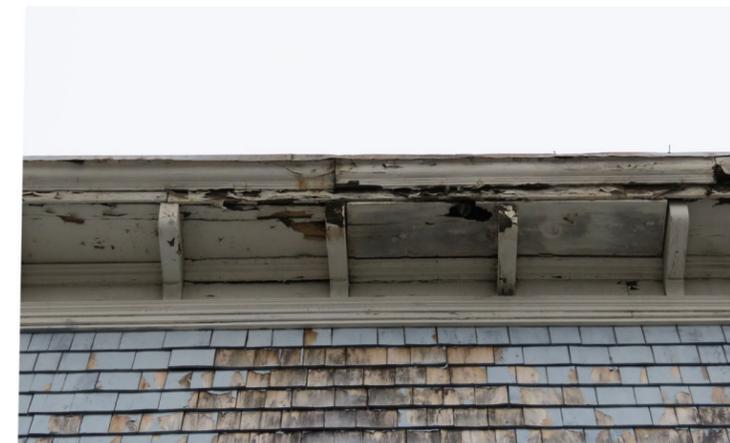
Missing asphalt shingles have left roof deck exposed. View looking south at north elevation.



Original chimney at south elevation. View looking north.



Deteriorated soffit at built-in gutter at west elevation. View looking east.



Deteriorated wood at soffit of built-in gutter at south elevation. View looking north.



Rubber roofing membrane and plant growth at gutter of northeast building corner.

B. Exterior Walls and Wood Trim

Description:

The wood framed walls of Odd Fellows Hall extend two and a half stories above an exposed brick base. They are finished in cedar shingles that appear original to the building. Both the shingles and the brick foundation walls have been painted. Decorative wood trim outlines the roof edge, storefront, underside of projecting window bays and the south building corners.

Condition Assessment:

The exposed brick foundation wall is in poor condition and exhibits cracks as well as open mortar joints. The paint coating is failing. The grade surrounding the foundation varies in height and is very high and close to wood elements at the southeast corner.

The painted wood shingles are in extremely poor condition and are beyond their life expectancy. The shingles are warped, cupped, split and, in some cases, missing. There is one area in particular on the east elevation where the deformation of the shingle coursing indicates a potentially troublesome concealed wall framing and foundation condition.

The wood trim on the exterior of the building is severely deteriorated due to lack of maintenance and water damage.

C. Windows and Doors



High grade at south elevation. View looking northwest.



Deteriorated mortar joints and peeling paint at brick foundation wall. View looking at west elevation at southwest corner.



Deformed, warped and missing wood shingles at east elevation. View looking west.



Deteriorated shingles at east elevation. View looking south.



Deteriorated shingles and sheathing at west elevation. View looking east.



Deteriorated corner board trim at storefront. View looking at northwest corner of building.

Description:

The existing windows are mostly original and are comprised of a variety of types. The commercially used first floor features wood storefronts at the north and west sides of the building. The office spaces at the second and third floors contain medium sized single and double hung wood windows. The social hall at the second floor has large two-story projecting bays of windows featuring lower, flat-headed windows and upper, arched-top windows separated by wood spandrel panels.

The center window on the second floor of the north elevation is crowned by a carved, semi-circular wood medallion inscribed with the date of the building.

There are two non-original projecting windows at the first floor on the south elevation that detract from the historic character of the building. These are both boarded over on the exterior.

There are eight doors around the building perimeter, six of which appear to be in original locations, while two represent later modifications. The six original doors include three in the main storefront across the north elevation, one in the west elevation storefront, and two rear doors in the south elevation. Two non-original door openings exist in the east elevation in modified window openings for access to an exterior-mounted fire escape. All of the original doors are wood.

C. Windows and Doors (continued)



Original storefront at first floor (boarded over) with office space above. View of north elevation looking south.



Original storefront boarded over at north end of west elevation. View looking east.



Side elevation storefront and two story windows at second floor social hall. View of south and west elevations looking northeast. Note non-original projecting windows at south elevation.



Original two-over-one wood window at second floor. View of north elevation looking south.



Original two-over-two wood window at second floor. View of north elevation looking south. Note decorative window hood.

Condition Assessment:

The wood storefront has been boarded over, but appears to be in fair condition as viewed from the inside.

Individual wood windows are in fair to poor condition and do not offer much thermal protection as they are single-glazed. Some windows are covered by aluminum storm windows, but the storm windows are in very poor condition where they exist. Many window sills are in poor condition.

The social hall windows arranged in a double-height pattern with spandrel panels between the second and third floors are in very poor condition with much deteriorated wood and broken glass.

The projecting windows boarded over at the south elevation are not original to the building and detract from the historic character of the building. They are also in poor condition.

The only original exterior door remaining appears to be the center door of the north elevation, leading to the second floor stair. This door is in fair condition, with plywood covering the glass lights. All of the other doors have been replaced, removed or boarded over.



Detail view of two-story windows at second floor social hall. View of west elevation looking east.



Original center door at storefront leading to stair to second floor. View at north elevation looking south.



Typical deteriorated sill at two-story window. View of west elevation looking east.



Secondary storefront entry at southwest corner of building. View of west elevation looking east.



Original egress door at south elevation boarded over. View looking north.



Original egress door at south elevation boarded over. View looking north.

D. Basement

Description:

There is an unfinished basement extending under the entirety of the building, which is divided into two areas. The main space is at the northern side of the building and accounts for seventy five percent of the basement area. It is separated from a smaller southern area by a solid brick wall. The basement appears to have functioned primarily as a storage and utility space.

Access to the basement is gained by a small stair in the northern portion of the building originating in the first floor commercial space. This stair appears to be original to the building. Access to the smaller southern area is via a hole that is crudely knocked into the brick wall separating the two areas.

The ceilings of the basement are a combination of exposed framing and plaster. The head height is approximately 6'-10" under the floor joists. The perimeter foundation walls are both rubble stone and brick. Rubble stone makes up the lower portion of the foundation walls and there is a brick transition where they are exposed above grade on the exterior. The floors throughout the basement are of concrete.

Evenly spaced brick piers divide the basement into quarters, providing structural support for major wood beams in the north-south direction. Floor joists with wood bridging span east to west across the beams to the perimeter foundation walls.

Utilities existing in the basement include electrical panels, meters, a hot water heater, an oil tank and a boiler.

There are no significant character defining features in the basement.

Condition Assessment:

There is evidence of moisture penetrating the perimeter stone foundation walls.

The concrete floor slab is in poor condition.

The brick piers that support first floor framing members appear to be sound.

The wood framing of the first floor is in fair condition.

The finished plaster ceiling at the south side of the building is in poor condition and is collapsing. In this area, the first floor framing is concealed, so its condition could not be evaluated.

The building systems and utilities throughout the basement are beyond their life expectancies and exhibit corrosion. The heating system is currently not functioning and is most likely inoperable at this time.



View of main basement area looking southeast.



View of secondary basement area looking south.



View of main basement area and first floor framing looking south.



View of main basement area looking west. Note rubble stone foundation wall with brick above.

E. First Floor

Description:

The commercially used first floor is raised 18" to 30" above the sidewalk at Warren Avenue and is organized into two halves (east and west). There is a storefront entrance into each side of the building on the north elevation and a central door leading to the stairs to the second floor social hall. A secondary storefront entrance exists at the southwest corner of the first floor.

Major interior renovations appear to have been carried out on the first floor as commercial tenants changed over time. Original historic finishes and features have been covered, removed or modified by modern materials. It is difficult to discern the structural system, but there appear to be some columns in the east half of the building that correspond to pier locations in the basement. Any existing columns at the center of the building or in the west half are concealed by later finishes.

Generally, the ceilings of the first floor are comprised of a non-original suspended ceiling tile over the original plaster. The perimeter walls are modern gypsum wall board over the original plaster finish on wood studs. The majority of the interior walls are non-original and are arranged to suit the previous tenant. The last use of the building appears to have been an interior design company that covered over nearly every wall surface. The floors have non-original tile and carpeting over the original wood decking.

Very few character defining or original features remain at the first floor. The only visible original building components remaining are the wood storefront, the interior window casings and some isolated beaded board near the center stair. In general, the first floor spaces have lost their historical integrity through numerous alternations over the years.

Condition Assessment:

The original plaster ceilings have been severely damaged by water and later alterations.

Plaster walls have been severely damaged throughout the floor by water and later alterations.

The original beaded board adjacent to the central stair is in fair condition.

Interior wood trim at the storefront and at original windows is in fair condition.

There are no original interior wood doors remaining.

The condition of the original wood floor could not be determined due to overlay by modern tile and carpeting.

The condition of the original framing and structure supporting the second floor could not be determined due to the significant coverage of original materials by later finishes.

F. Second Floor



View of west side of first floor looking north.



View looking east from west side of first floor. Some trace evidence of beaded board remains adjacent to central stair.



View of non-original finishes at east wall of first floor (east side of first floor).



Detail view of multiple ceiling layers and water damage at east side of first floor.



View of non-original finishes surrounding an original window at west wall of first floor.



View of non-original interior finishes at east side of first floor.

Description:

The second floor is located 13'-7" above the first floor and differs greatly in arrangement as the primary use of this level was for social functions. Members would have accessed the second floor via a single L-shaped stair originating in the center of the north facade and arrived in a small lobby outside of the main social hall. The main social hall is the primary feature of the second floor and accounts for seventy five percent of the floor area. Other rooms on this floor include two small office spaces and two small single occupant restrooms. A second original stair located in the southeast corner of the building provides direct egress to the outside from the social hall space.

Generally, the ceilings of the second floor are of original plaster. The perimeter and interior walls are a combination of original plaster and wood wainscoting. The floors feature original wood decking, wood finish flooring and non-original carpeting.

The main character defining features of this floor exist in the social hall. The social hall is a double-height space with a vaulted ceiling featuring a decorative center medallion and perimeter wood grillwork. Where water damage has resulted in the removal of later layers of paint on the ceiling, there is evidence of original decorative stenciling.

The social hall is arranged without any fixed seating, but the directionality is southerly towards a center stage located under an elliptical proscenium arch. There is an original safe with decorative doors set into one of the side walls of the stage. Two-story window bays exist on the east and west sides of the room providing significant natural daylighting for the space. The original ceiling medallion, ceiling design, wall safe, light fixtures, wood wainscoting, windows and doors all appear to be original and contribute to the historic significance of the space.

The original materials remaining in the secondary rooms on the second floor, such as plaster, wood wainscoting, windows and doors are most significant in the lobby space and less so in the office and restroom areas.



Original interior finishes at second floor social hall. View looking west.



Original ceiling medallion remaining at social hall.



Original interior finishes at second floor social hall. View looking north.



Original wall stenciling remaining at social hall.



Original interior finishes at second floor social hall. View looking south.



Original interior finishes at second floor social hall. View looking east.



Original wall safe remaining at social hall.

Condition Assessment:

The original plaster ceilings have been severely damaged throughout the second floor by water.

Plaster walls vary in condition. They are in fair to poor condition in the social hall but exhibit severe water damage in office and lobby areas.

Original wood wainscoting varies in condition from very poor in the stair hall to good in the social hall.

The stairs between the first and second floors are in fair condition and do not appear to meet current building and life safety codes.

The original interior doors vary in condition from very poor and water damaged to good. There is extensive paint failure at much of the woodwork due to the fact that there has been extensive moisture infiltration and the building is not heated.

The wood floors vary in condition from very poor (and structurally unsound) in office areas to good in the social hall.

The condition of the original framing and structure surrounding the second floor could not be determined because it is concealed behind wall and ceiling finishes.

G. Third Floor



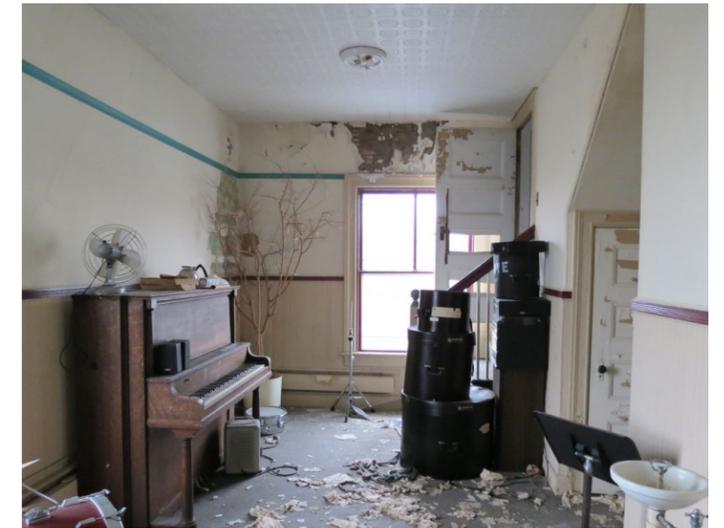
Original door at second floor office damaged by water.



Original wood door at second floor on good condition.



Original plaster and wainscot finishes at stair to second floor. View looking north.



Original plaster and wainscot finishes at second floor lobby. View looking north.



Original plaster and wainscot finishes at second floor office space. View looking west.



Original interior finishes at second floor office space. View looking north.

Description:

Only the northern twenty five percent of the building has a third floor level as the double height of the second floor social hall extends into most of the third floor. To reach the small office spaces of the third floor, there is an L-shaped stair in the northeast corner of the second floor lobby. The two third floor offices are accessed directly off either side of the stair landing.

Generally, the ceilings of the third floor are of original plaster. The perimeter and interior walls are a combination of original plaster and wood wainscoting. The floors feature original wood flooring. Unique original features of this floor include the light fixtures and wood columns.

Condition Assessment:

The original plaster ceilings have been severely damaged by water infiltration and are in extremely poor condition.

The original plaster walls are in fair condition but also demonstrate some signs of water damage and infiltration.

The wood flooring and framing has been severely compromised by water infiltration and has failed in a large area, creating a very unsafe condition.

The original wood interior doors are in fair condition.

The stair between the second and third floor is in fair condition, but does not appear to meet building and life safety codes.

H. Attic

Description:

The attic is accessible via a short stair from the third floor. The attic is largely empty and does not contain much in the way of equipment or insulation. The wood roof framing is exposed and there are some catwalk areas for walking over floor joists.

Condition Assessment:

The floor framing members appear to be in fair condition.

The roof decking shows signs of significant water damage and previous repairs. There are sections of roof decking that are not sound and daylight is visible where the roof covering has blown away.

IV. Prioritized Recommendations for Repair and Budget Costs



Original plaster and wainscot at stair between second and third floors. View looking north.



Damaged interior finishes at third floor office space. View looking west.



Damaged interior finishes at third floor office space. View looking east.



Detail view of damaged flooring at third floor office space.



View of attic space looking northwest.

Most rehabilitation projects begin with an approach that addresses the building needs from the roof downward and from the exterior inward. This is to ensure that the exterior enclosure of the building is watertight prior to investing funds on the building interior. This approach should be taken at Odd Fellows Hall with two exceptions. Due to the fact that water has been infiltrating the building interior, there are severely deteriorated areas of interior floor framing at the second and third floors. This has created an unsafe condition. The first floor area is covered by multiple layers of interior finishes, making it very difficult to evaluate the structural integrity of the building at this level. Therefore, in the prioritized list of recommendations below, two of the five major tasks that should be undertaken include interior work.

Task One: Roof

Remove the existing asphalt shingled roof and all deteriorated roof decking. Infill roof decking as required and install new plywood roof sheathing over the entire roof. Install new laminated asphalt shingles. As part of this task, the wood gutters should be restored and all flashings and rain leaders should be replaced.

Budget Cost: \$177,000*

Task Two: Siding Replacement and Trim Restoration

Remove the existing cedar shingle siding and replace with new cedar shingle siding to match the existing. As part of this task, exterior wood trim should be replaced and restored.

Budget Cost: \$170,000*

Task Three: Windows

Restore the existing wood windows and add low-profile storm panels. (Restoration of the wood storefront is not included under this task.)

Budget Cost: \$46,000*

Task Four: Selective Removals at the Building Interior

Remove all debris at entire building interior. Remove interior finishes at the first floor back the original wood framing members to better understand the condition of the building structure.

Budget Cost: \$41,000*

Task Five: Temporary Interior Framing Repairs

At the second and third floors, reframe and replace floor and ceiling members where they have been compromised by water infiltration. This temporary repair is intended to create a safe condition until a full structural evaluation can be undertaken and until a new use for the building has been determined.

Budget Cost: \$11,000*

*Hazardous materials abatement costs have not been included in these figures. Abatement should precede any work inside of the building.

Please note that there are numerous additional recommendations that can be made for this building that will have significant cost implications. The additional recommendations are very much dependent upon the type of reuse that will occur, as many of these improvements are driven by code requirements. Any future building reuse shall include the following additional repairs:

- Complete new plumbing, electrical, heating, cooling, fire protection and fire alarm systems.
- Thermal insulation installation at perimeter walls and attic.
- Exterior door and storefront restoration.
- Stair and egress upgrades.
- New interior finishes at the entire first floor.
- Restoration of interior finishes at the second floor.
- New interior finishes at the third floor.
- New restrooms.
- Site improvements.

V. Building Reuse Constraints and Options

There are several reuse scenarios that the City may wish to consider and each has its own set of code implications. The most challenging aspects of reusing this historic building involve the height of the first floor above the street level and the location of the large assembly space on the second floor. In any reuse scenario, ADA compliant accessibility to the building must be resolved. Since the first floor varies from 18" to 30" above the street level, the installation of an accessibility ramp along the north or west elevations will be a challenge and could have a significant impact on the architecture. To minimize the length of an accessibility ramp or sloped walkway, it would ideally be located where the distance from the first floor to grade is the least, which occurs along the east side of the building in the alley space. The alley is quite narrow, with another building directly to the east.

If the building were to be reused for a cultural center or museum space and the intention is to use the second floor space for public events, accessibility will need to be provided to the second floor. This means that the installation of an elevator will be required.

Life safety codes will also have to be addressed with any reuse scenario. From an egress perspective, the size and location of the social hall on the second floor is a challenge. Based upon initial calculations, if the social hall is used as an assembly space, it could have an occupant load of 348 people (based on 1,743 square feet and no fixed seating). With an occupant load exceeding 50 people, two means of egress will be required directly from the assembly space. If there is an assembly use, sprinklers will also be required throughout the building. If the occupancy on the second floor is limited to fewer than 50 people, or even fewer than 10 people, then accessibility and egress requirements change. If the occupancy of the second floor is limited to 10 occupants, then live/work artist space or mixed use retail/office may be a viable option if equal accommodation for accessibility can be provided on the first floor.

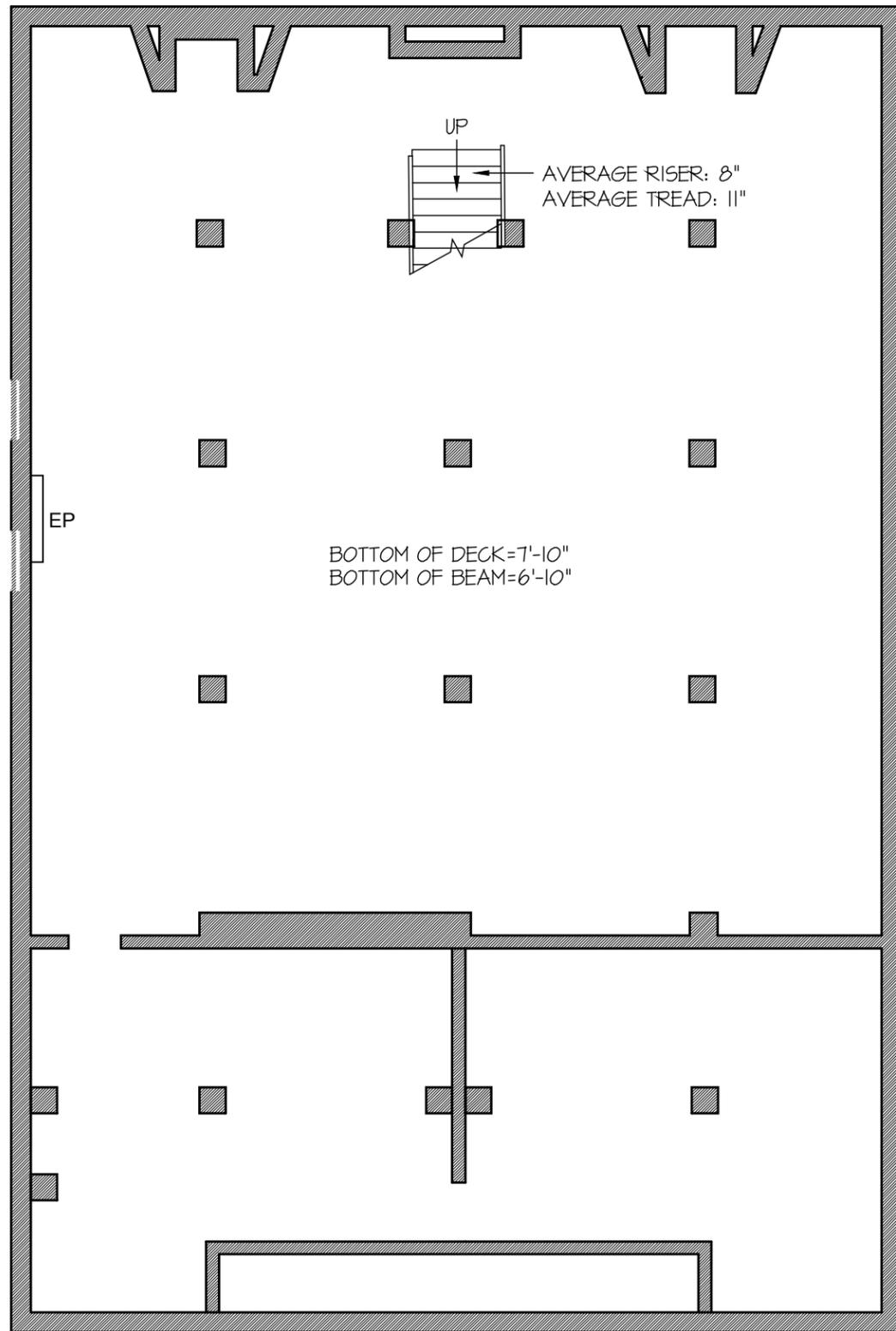
VI. Recommended Next Steps (not necessarily in order)

1. The City of East Providence should have a hazardous materials assessment conducted and an abatement plan developed.
2. The City should engage a contractor to remove all debris from the building and site and to remove non-original finishes from the first floor.
3. Once the building has been cleaned out and demolition of non-original finishes has been completed, the City should engage a structural engineer to evaluate and analyze the entire framing system and foundation.
4. The City should investigate possible reuse scenarios for the building taking into account market analyses, input from stakeholders, and programmatic studies by an Architect. Once a viable use has been determined, a code and zoning analysis can be performed.
5. The City should have an engineered site survey completed.
6. The City should have a hydrant flow test performed at the nearest hydrant.
7. Once a building use has been determined, a team consisting of an Architect and Structural, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing and Fire Protection Engineers should be engaged to develop conceptual plans, conduct a thorough code analysis based on the proposed use, and develop professional cost estimates.

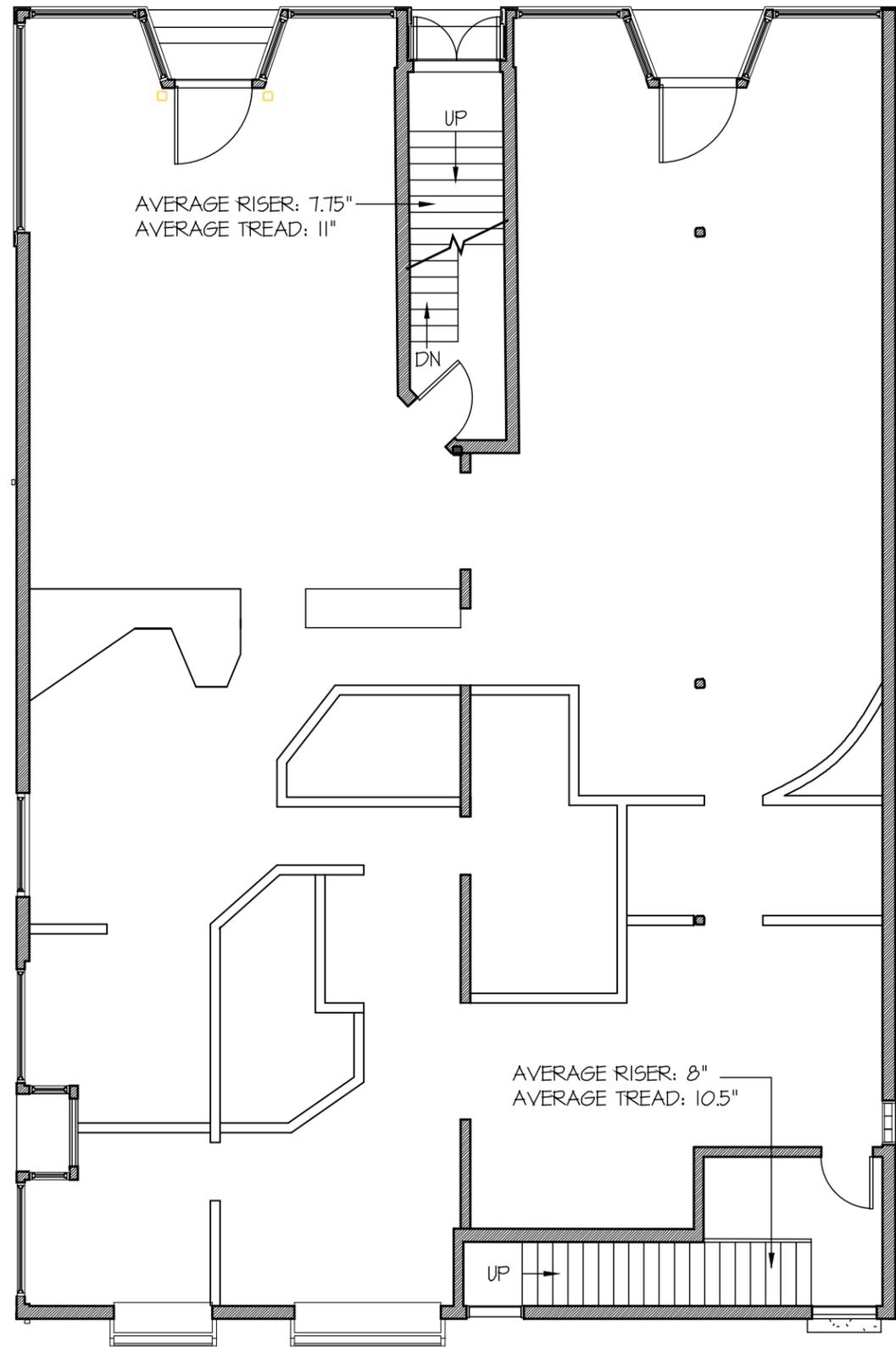
VII. References

National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
1976

"Historic Resources of East Providence, Rhode Island: Partial Inventory, Historic and Architectural Resources". National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Washington, D.C.:US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.



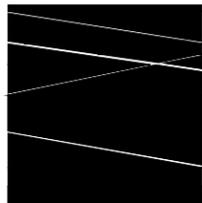
Existing Basement Plan



Existing First Floor Plan

Odd Fellows Hall

East Providence, RI



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ARCHITECTS**

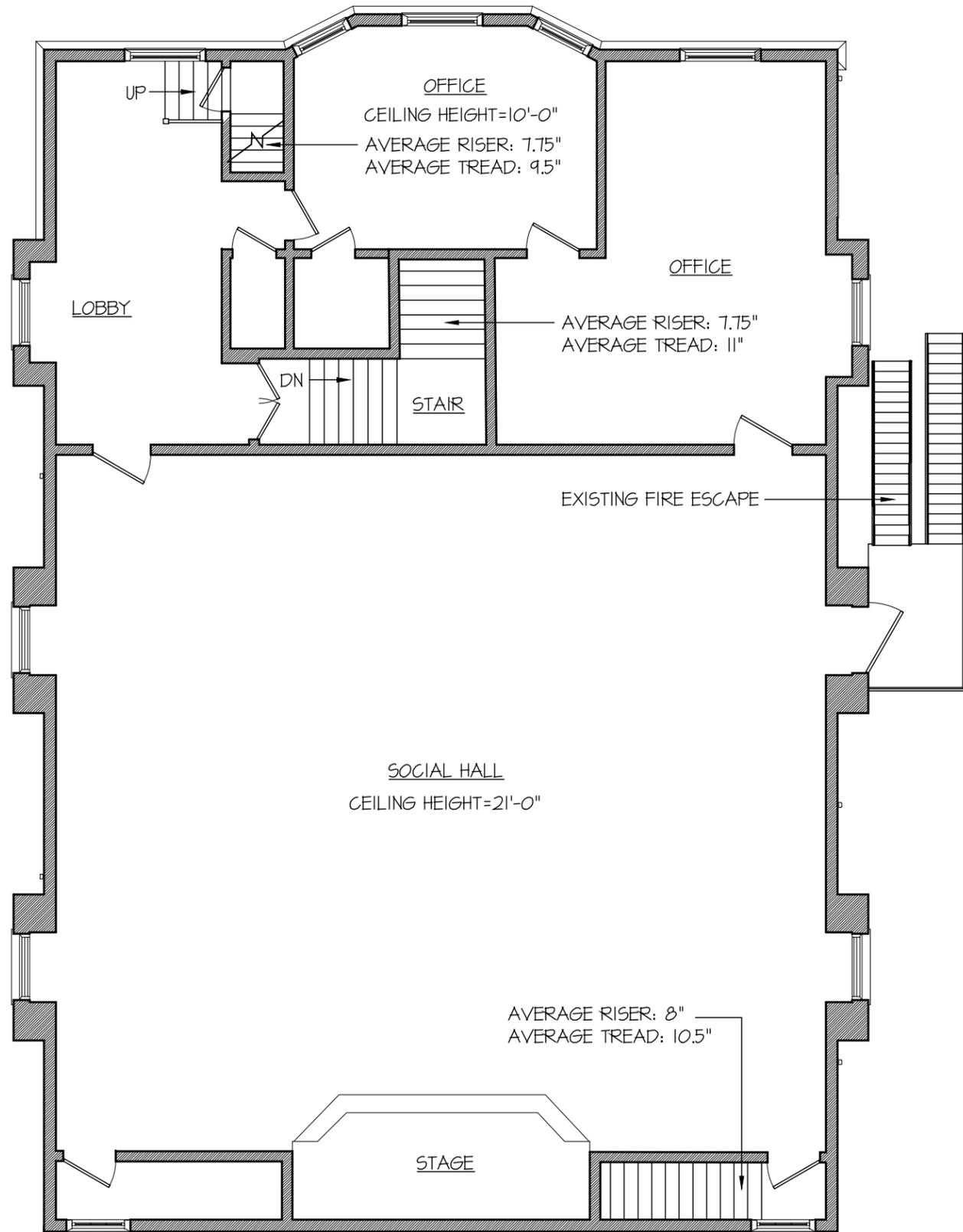
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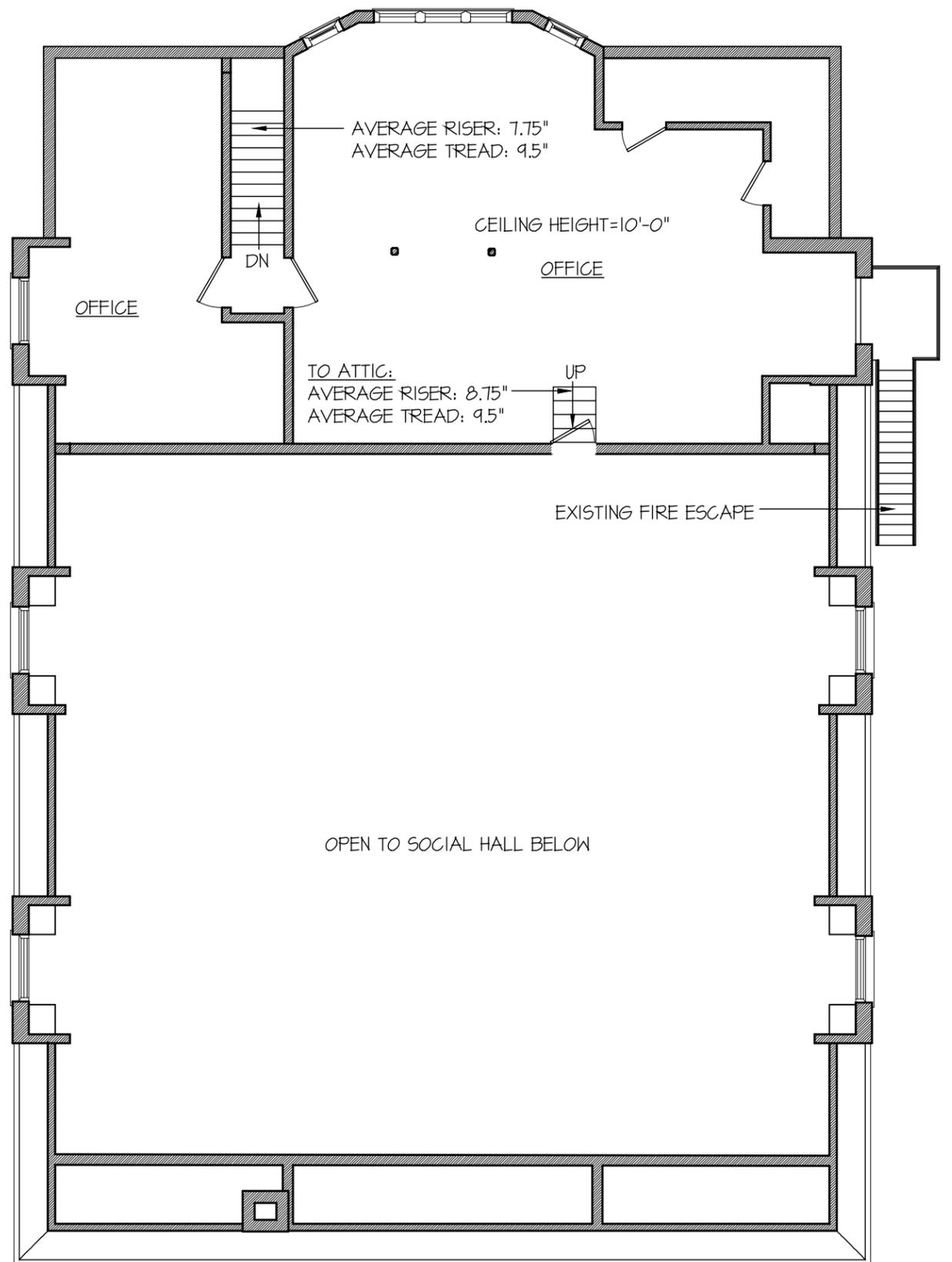
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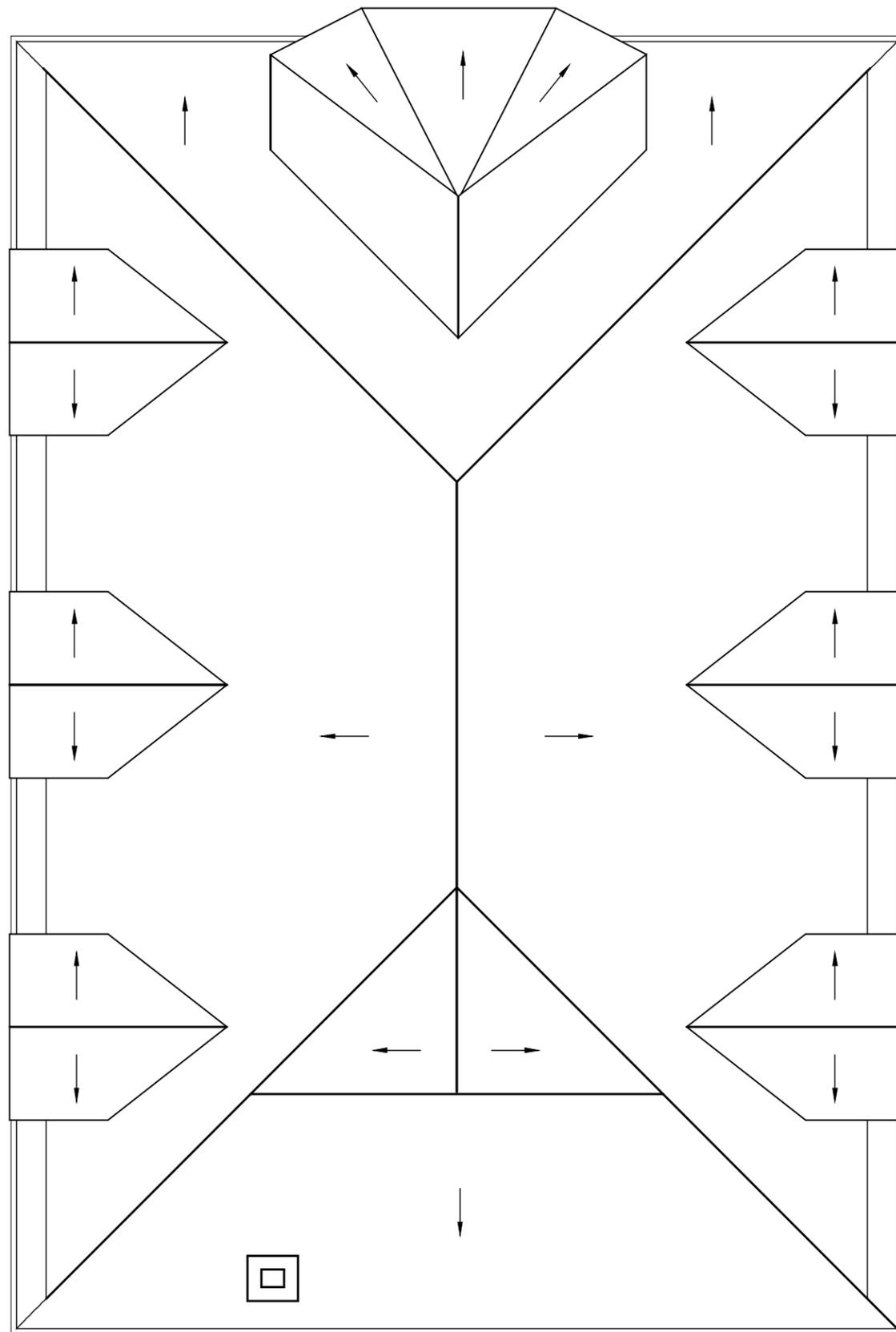


Existing Second Floor Plan



Existing Third Floor Plan

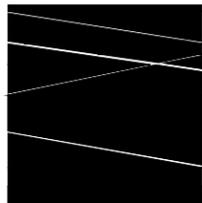




Existing Roof Plan

Odd Fellows Hall

East Providence, RI



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Attic Level
35'-6-3/4"

Third Floor
24'-7-3/4"

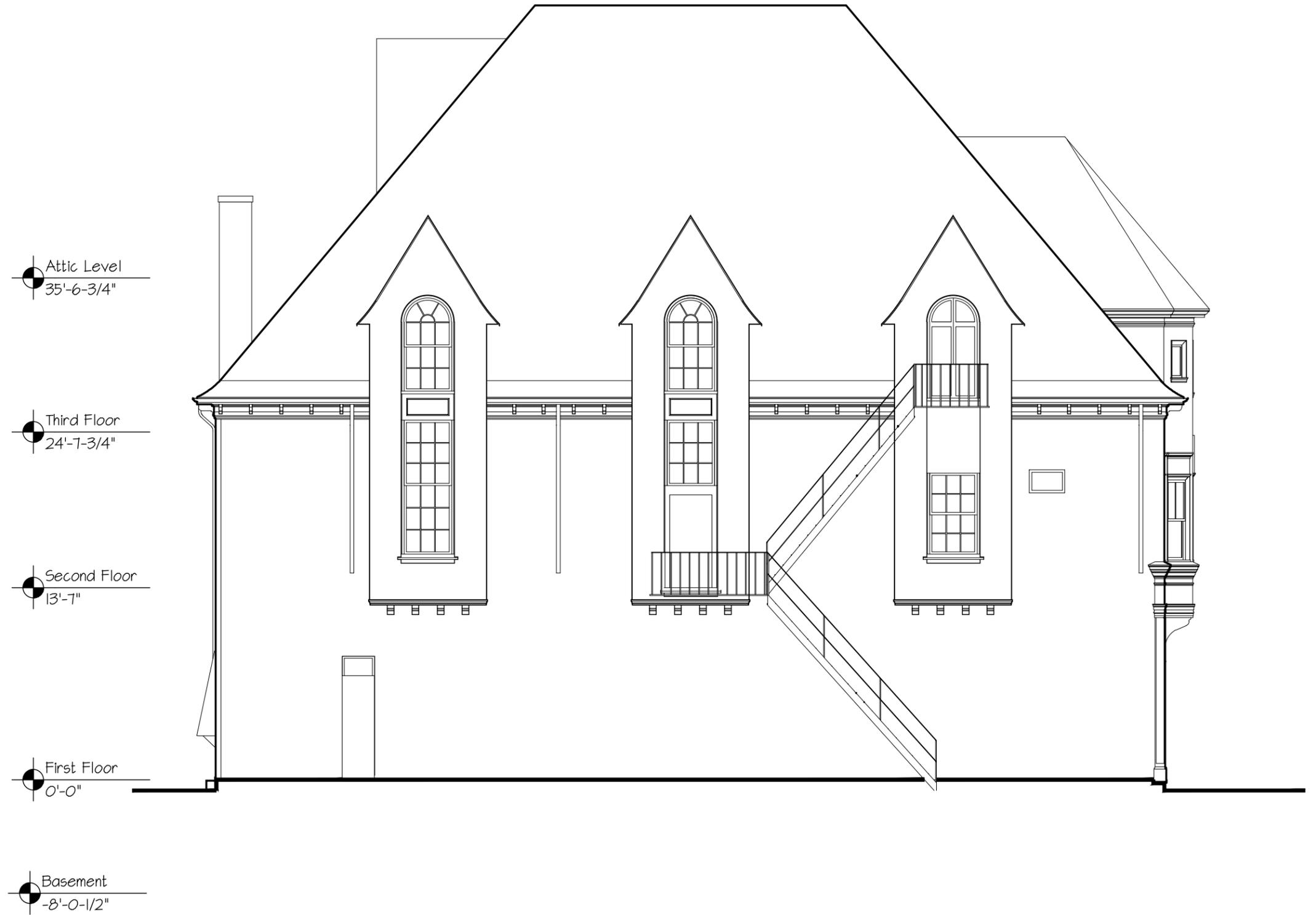
Second Floor
13'-7"

First Floor
0'-0"

Basement
-8'-0-1/2"

Odd Fellows Hall : Existing North Elevation

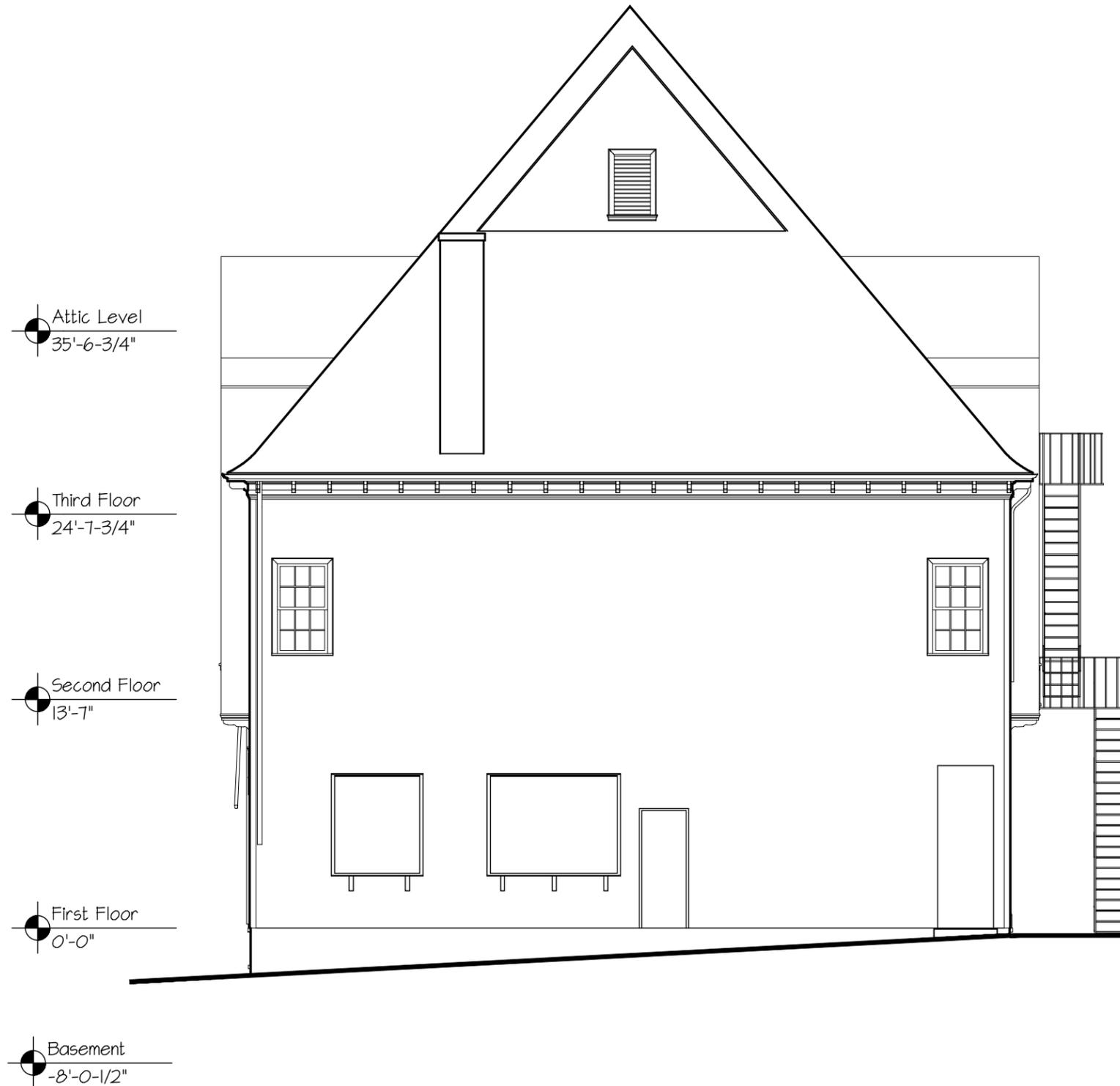
East Providence, RI



Odd Fellows Hall: Existing East Elevation

East Providence, RI

1/8" = 1'-0"
DATE 03.25.14



Odd Fellows Hall: Existing South Elevation

East Providence, RI



Odd Fellows Hall: Existing West Elevation

East Providence, RI

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