



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 305, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
PHONE: 315-785-7741 – FAX: 315-782-9014

TO: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director
PRIMARY REVIEWER: Geoffrey T. Urda
SUBJECT: Sketch Plan Approval – 1248 Washington Street
DATE: March 28, 2024
Request: Sketch Plan Approval to reconstruct and reconfigure the interior parking lot circulation at **1248 Washington Street**, Parcel Number 14-13-101.001
Applicant: Michael B. Lasell, P.E., of MBL Engineering
Proposed Use: Restaurant
Property Owners: DRZ, Inc.

Submitted:	
Project Description: Yes	Area Map: Yes
Site Plan: Yes	Site Topography Map: Yes

SEQRA: Type 2

Jefferson County 239-m Review: No

Zoning Information:	
District: Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maximum Lot Coverage: 90 percent (on corner)
Setback Requirements: Min: 0' Max: 10' or Avg. of Adjacent	Buffer Zones Required: Yes

Project Overview: The applicant proposes to sawcut and remove approximately 4,200 SF of existing pavement and reconstruct the parking lot at the existing Jreck’s Subs restaurant at 1248 Washington Street, to include restriping new parking spaces and implementing a new internal traffic pattern. The applicant proposes a full depth pavement repair for approximately 1,950 SF of the removed pavement, primarily in the front and on the south (Barben Avenue) side of the building. The applicant proposes to install new concrete as a replacement for the remainder of the removed pavement, primarily in the rear and north (Dunkin) side of the building.

In addition, the applicant proposes to stripe 15 parking spaces; eight (including one ADA-accessible space) in adjacent to the front building façade, four along the south side building face and three parallel spaces at the eastern edge of the property, approximately four feet back from the Washington Street sidewalk. The applicant also proposes to hatch a five-foot wide pedestrian path directly from the front door to the Washington Street sidewalk.

Existing Conditions: The subject parcel (14-13-101.001) is a 0.22-acre corner lot that fronts Washington Street and Barben Avenue. The existing Jreck's Subs restaurant building is situated at the rear of the parcel, set back approximately 61 feet from the Washington Street sidewalk. The remainder of the parcel is almost entirely existing pavement.

The subject parcel is bounded on the north and west by the adjacent Dunkin' parcel. The Dunkin' restaurant building, including a drive-thru, and the majority of the Dunkin' parking lot is located on the section north of Jreck's. An approximately 6,800 SF lawn area, with three coniferous trees and one deciduous tree, which is on Dunkin' property, wraps around the Jreck's building to the west and north. Behind that, a drive aisle wraps around the back of the lawn, providing secondary access to the Dunkin' parcel from Barben Avenue.

A Kinney Drugs pharmacy building and parking lot are across Barben Avenue to the south from the subject parcel and the Warren E. Fargo Educational Campus, which is the home of Wiley Intermediate School, Case Middle School and Watertown High School, is across Washington Street to the east.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation: There are three vehicular access points to the subject parcel. The first is via an access easement across the Dunkin' parcel to the north. This access point is from a curb cut on Washington Avenue that also serves as egress for the Dunkin' drive thru. This access point would feed a proposed two-way internal drive aisle running north to south. The second access point would be from Barben Avenue to and is the opposite (south) terminus of the above-mentioned drive aisle. The third and final access point is in the form of the four parking spaces adjacent to the south façade of the building, which vehicles would access directly from Barben Avenue.

There are existing sidewalks adjacent to the subject parcel on both Washington Street and Barben Avenue. The proposed hatched pedestrian path would provide pedestrian access from the Washington Street sidewalk. The applicant also proposes to install a four-foot-wide internal sidewalk that would run the entire span of the front of the building and connect to the proposed concrete area north of the building.

Presently, there is no existing curb on the south edge of the parcel. Instead, there is a continuous paved margin that runs for several hundred feet along the north side of Barben Avenue. The applicant proposes an approximately 14' x 19' hatched area that would separate the southern drive aisle entrance from the four spaces directly accessed from Barben Avenue. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission require the applicant to install a new curbed island in lieu of the proposed hatching, which would better delineate the proposed access points from one another.

In addition, there is a vehicular conflict point on the footprint of the access easement across the front of the Dunkin' parcel. Motorists using the curb cut from Washington Street and crossing the front of the Dunkin' parcel as a means of entering the Jreck's internal drive aisle come into conflict with cars exiting the Dunkin' drive-thru and attempting to use the same curb cut as a means of egress from Dunkin.'

A potential solution to mitigate this conflict point would be to install an internal sign on Dunkin' property on the southwest corner of the existing foundation, approximately 35 feet east of the drive-thru window that reads either "Yield to Incoming Traffic" or "Incoming Traffic Has Right of Way."

During the Sketch Plan Conference with Staff, the applicant indicated a willingness to approach Dunkin' ownership about installing such a sign. The Applicant shall be prepared to discuss this issue, including the status of outreach to Dunkin, at the Planning Commission meeting.

Zoning: The existing restaurant use is an allowed use by Special Use Permit (SUP) in the Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) Zoning District. However, since the restaurant use existed prior to the adoption of the current Zoning Ordinance, there is no need to obtain an SUP just to maintain the existing use.

Section 310-36 of the Zoning Ordinance allows a maximum of 16 surface parking spaces on a parcel in the Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) District. The proposed realignment would produce 15 spaces, which would conform to the requirement.

The NMU District requires a minimum 10-foot rear building setback from a primary structure. The subject property received an Area Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2002 that reduced the required rear setback to 4 feet (from what was then a 25-foot requirement in the Neighborhood Business District) to allow to construct a 6' x 12' building addition for a walk-in cooler. The applicant obtained a Zoning Compliance Certificate (ZCC) in August 2023 to construct a replacement for this addition. The proposed addition would still only protrude 12 feet off the primary rear façade, just as the previous addition did. Therefore, the rear setback would remain at four feet, and in full compliance with Area Variance #408

The NMU District allows a maximum of 25 linear feet (LF) of unbuilt frontage. The existing building is approximately 47 feet wide. The subject parcel has 100 LF of frontage on Washington Street. Therefore, there is 53 LF of unbuilt frontage. However, this condition enjoys legal nonconforming ("grandfathered") status, and neither the proposed parking lot reconfiguration, nor the rear addition for which the applicant has already obtained a ZCC, would worsen this nonconformity in any way.

Finally, the NMU District requires a maximum setback of 10 feet or the average on the block. The existing building is set back approximately 60 feet from the front property line. However, this setback conforms with the requirement, as the other two buildings on the block are respectively set back approximately 75 feet (Dunkin Donuts) and 45 feet (North Country Hearth and Home). The Jreck's building therefore meets the "average" requirement of the NMU District.

Landscaping: The applicant proposes a pair of one-foot-wide stone planters against the front façade of the building, on either side of the main entrance door. However, aside from these planters, the applicant does not propose any other new interior or perimeter parking lot landscaping.

While Section 310-83 of the Zoning Ordinance contains additional requirements for both internal and external parking lot landscaping, it also contains a special provision for existing sites that states:

"When an existing site is undergoing any external alteration or expansion of the site or building, the objective of these standards is to bring the existing site into compliance with the standards of this section in relation to the extent of expansion or change on a site."

Given that the pavement condition existed prior to the adoption of the current Zoning Ordinance, it would be impractical as part of a Sketch Plan Approval for repaving and restriping existing parking area to require the level of landscaping additions needed to achieve *full* conformity. However, the applicant should strongly consider planting grass in the four-foot-wide buffer between the Washington Street sidewalk and three proposed interior parallel parking spaces, instead of the proposed hatched paint, to provide a more meaningful buffer and establish some landscaping on the site.

Engineering: In addition, the applicant proposes one nine-foot-wide ADA accessible parking space adjacent to a five-foot-wide access aisle. While Federal ADA standards only require a site to provide one ADA space if there are 25 or fewer total spaces in the lot, this space must be van accessible. Published Department of Justice (DOJ) guidance offers two methods for making an ADA space van accessible.

Option #1 is to provide a 132-inch (11-foot) wide parking space adjacent to a 60-inch (five-foot) access aisle. Option #2 is to provide a 96-inch (eight-foot) wide parking space adjacent to a 96-inch (eight-foot) wide access aisle. The applicant must reconfigure the single-proposed ADA space to be van accessible by implementing one of the DOJ's two options for creating a van accessible space. The applicant may choose their preferred option.

In addition, the access aisle must lead to ADA accessible curb ramp that provides access to the store entrance. The C-102 drawing appears to depict a continuous curb along the entire front of the building.

Finally, the City Engineering Department will require using a multidirectional breakaway post for the proposed Stop sign at the northern end of the interior drive aisle.

Comprehensive Plan: The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan recommends the future land use character area of this intersection as Urban Mixed Use/Downtown Transition. The plan describes this future land use character area as follows:

"The Urban Mixed-Use areas are historic areas generally located between the Central Business District (CBD) and residential neighborhoods where land use transitions from intense urban business to lesser intense residential and compatible non-residential uses. These transitional areas begin to have obvious changes in building types, architectural styles, lot sizes, and pedestrian activity. Buildings are generally lower in height and parking may be onsite, preferably behind or at the side of the building to avoid a suburban look. Buildings are designed to be visually appealing with shorter setbacks to address the sidewalk and help reinforce a positive pedestrian experience."

The existing orientation of the Jreck's Subs building on the site is at the back of the parcel with surface parking in the front, producing the suburban look that the Comprehensive Plan seeks to avoid. However, this is an existing condition that dates to the building's construction in 1983.

The proposed sidewalk connections discussed in the "Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation" section below will encourage walking as a means of accessing the convenience store and will help reinforce a positive pedestrian experience, as the Comprehensive Plan recommends.

This proposal is in harmony with the Comprehensive Plan.

Lighting: The applicant did not submit a photometric plan. There are three wall-mounted light packs on the front façade of the existing building.

SEQR: The proposed building addition is considered a Type 2 Action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and requires no further environmental review.

Permits: The applicant must obtain a General City Permit for any work within the Right-of-Way (ROW).

Sketch Plan Approval (review and recommendation): The City’s newly adopted Zoning Ordinance contains a provision in Section 310-106: Site Plan Review Submission Procedures that enables the Planning Commission to grant Site Plan Approval based on a Sketch Plan, and without the full requirements of Site Plan Approval. Specifically, Section 310-106 (B)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance states:

“After staff review, upon referral to the Planning Commission, the Commission may determine that the information provided is sufficient to grant approval and may waive further Site Plan review and approve the Sketch Plan as agreed to by the applicant and the Planning and Community Development Department if the Commission determines that such approval is in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare.”

Following Planning Staff’s review of the proposed two-story building addition, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission grant approval based on the Sketch Plan.

This recommendation represents the Planning and Community Development Department’s agreement to the submitted Sketch Plan contingent on the Summary Items contained in this memorandum. It does not necessarily represent the final position of the Planning Commission, which must reach its own determination pursuant to the quoted Zoning clause above.

Summary: The following should be included in the motion to recommend approval:

1. The applicant shall install a new curbed island in the area that separates the southern drive aisle entrance from the four parking spaces directly accessed from Barben Avenue, in lieu of the hatching depicted on the C-102 drawing, to better delineate the access points from one another.
2. The applicant shall address the vehicular conflict point that exists on Dunkin’ property at the northern entrance to the site and be prepared to discuss the status of outreach to Dunkin’ ownership regarding the potential to install internal traffic control signage to alleviate the conflict.
3. The applicant should strongly consider planting grass in the four-foot wide buffer between the Washington Street sidewalk and three proposed interior parallel parking spaces, instead of the proposed hatched paint.
4. The applicant must reconfigure the single ADA accessible parking space on the site to meet the United States Department of Justice’s standards for a van accessible space.
5. The applicant must provide an ADA accessible curb ramp providing access from the hatched ADA access aisle to the front entrance to the building.
6. The applicant shall install a multidirectional breakaway post for the proposed Stop sign at the northern end of the interior drive aisle.
7. The applicant must obtain a General City Permit prior to construction for all work within the City Right-of-Way (ROW).

cc: Thomas Compo, City Engineer
Meredith Griffin, Civil Engineer II
Michael B. Lasell, P.E., MBL Engineering, PLLC, 16510 Balch Place, Mannsville, NY 13661



Above: A satellite view of the subject parcel and its surrounding lands.

Site Photos



Above: A view of the front of the existing lawn area on the Dunkin' parcel.

Below: A view of the four parking spaces accessed directly from Barben Avenue.





Above: A view of the existing entrance from Barben Avenue, including the area where Staff recommends installing new curb to better delineate the separate entrances in lieu of the proposed hatching.
Below: A view of the south (Barben Avenue) frontage, looking due west with the paved margin continuing into the distance.

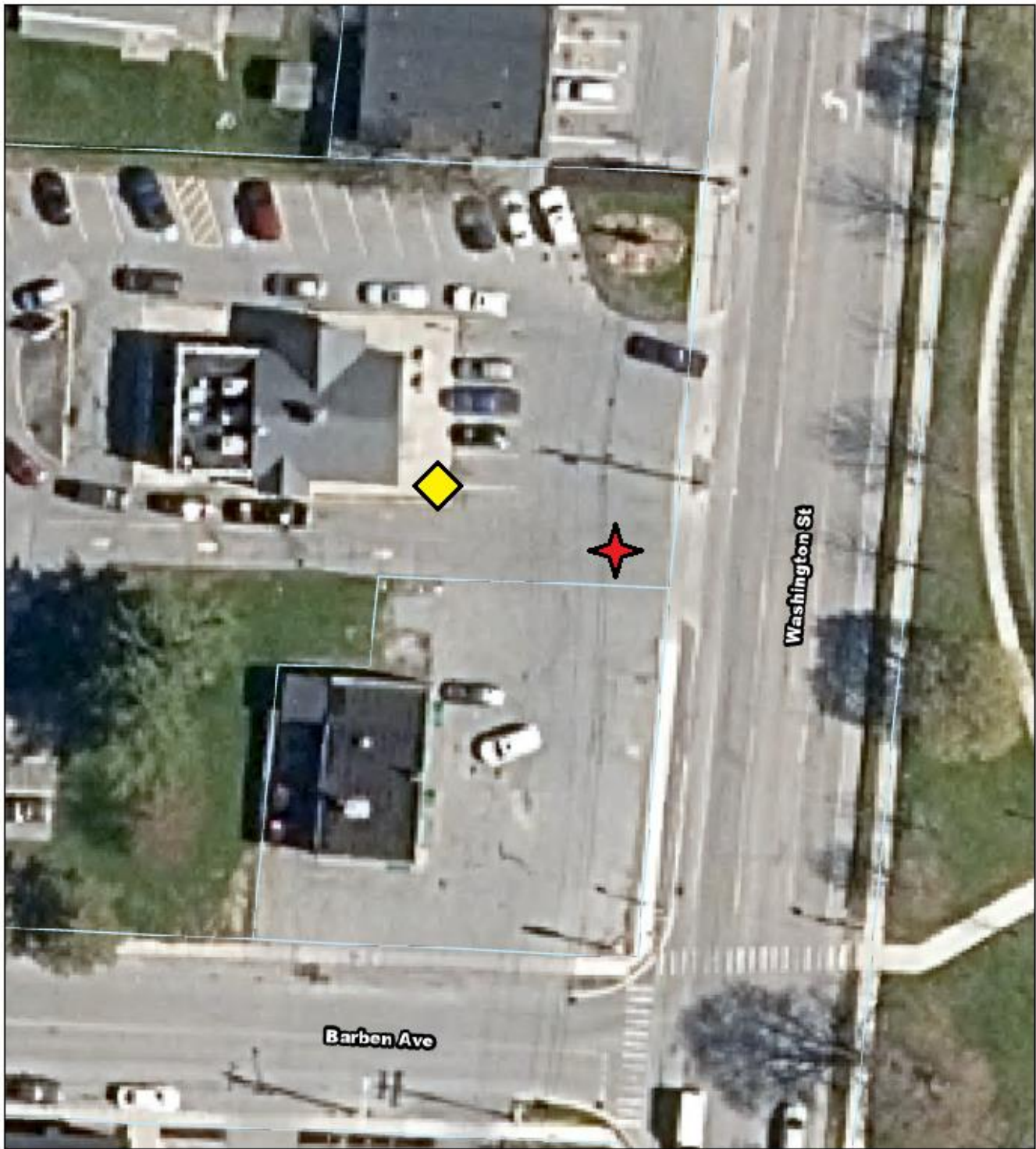










Above: A view of the east (Washington Street) frontage, looking due north with the Dunkin' parcel in the background.

Below: A view of the curb cut from Washington Street, where there is an access easement across Dunkin' property and a conflict point for vehicles entering Jreck's and exiting the Dunkin' drive-thru window.

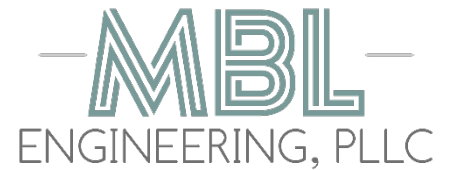




Legend		Location of proposed internal traffic control sign exiting the Dunkin' drive-thru window		0 0 0 mi
 Black River		Potential conflict point		
 City Boundary				Author: Web
 Parcels				Date: 3/28/2024
ROADS				Title:

Above: A map depicting where Staff recommends an internal sign on the adjacent Dunkin’ parcel that would control vehicles exiting the drive-thru and help mitigate the conflict with inbound traffic.

March 19, 2024



City of Watertown Planning Board Commission
City Hall
245 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Re: Jrecks Subs – Sketch Plan Submission
1248 Washington Street – City of Watertown
Tax ID – 14-13-101.001

Dear Planning Commission,

A complete submission package for the above referenced site has been prepared and uploaded onto the City's online portal. The project is intended to improve the current parking lot for the existing Jrecks Subs restaurant. The improvements include a new concrete sidewalk at building, new curbing along edge of building, new pavement approximately 18-feet from building and striping to define parking areas and improve traffic flow. No stormwater drainage or utilities are being changed

The following attachments are included in the submission package.

Attachment 1 – Sketch Plan Site Drawing Package

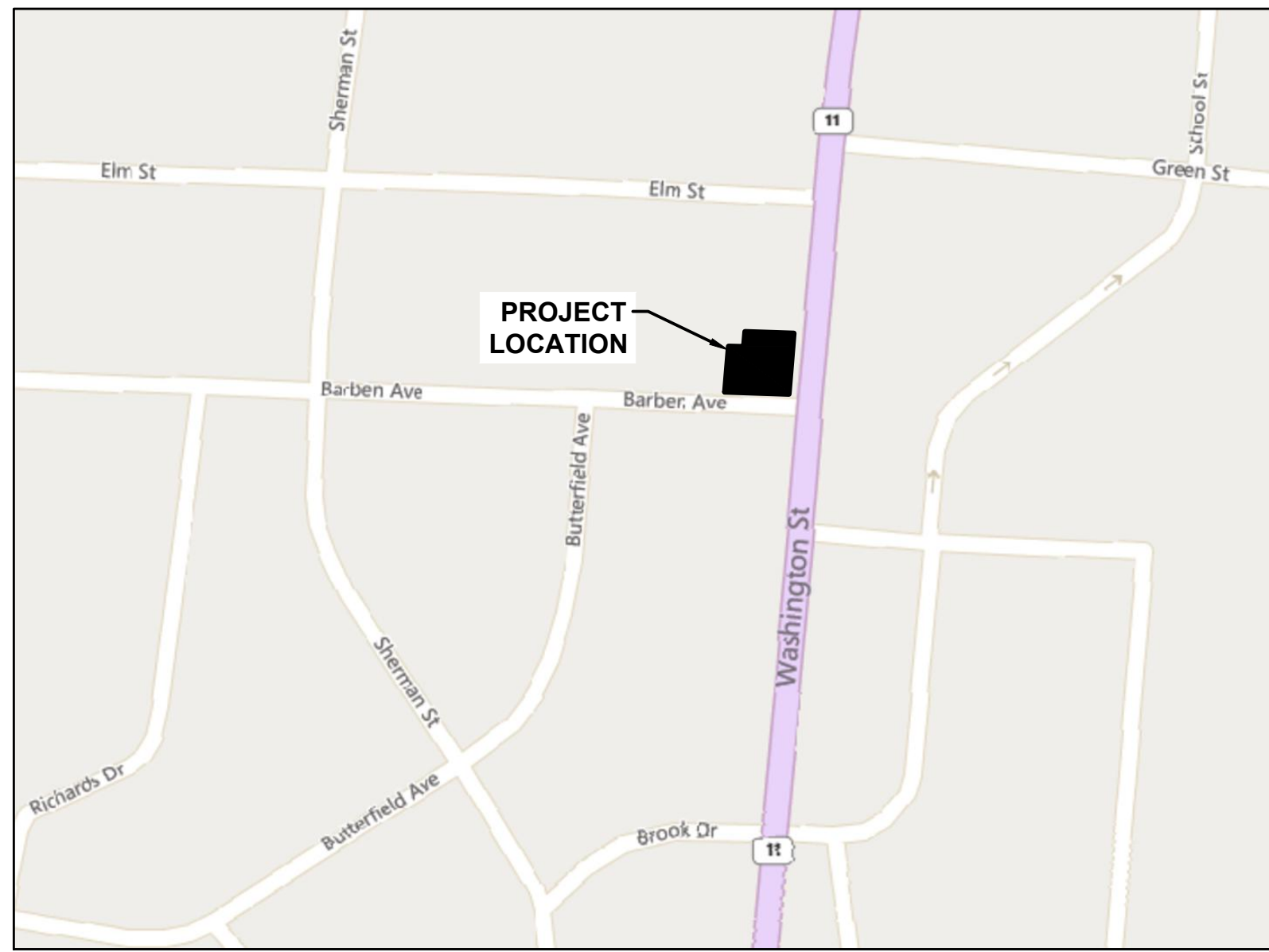
Please let me know if I need to provide you with anything else or if you have any questions, please give me a call at 315.486.0501.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael B. Lasell".

Michael B. Lasell, P.E., LEED AP
MBL Engineering, PLLC

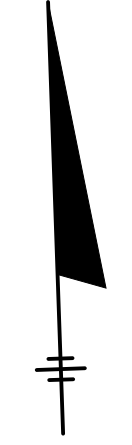
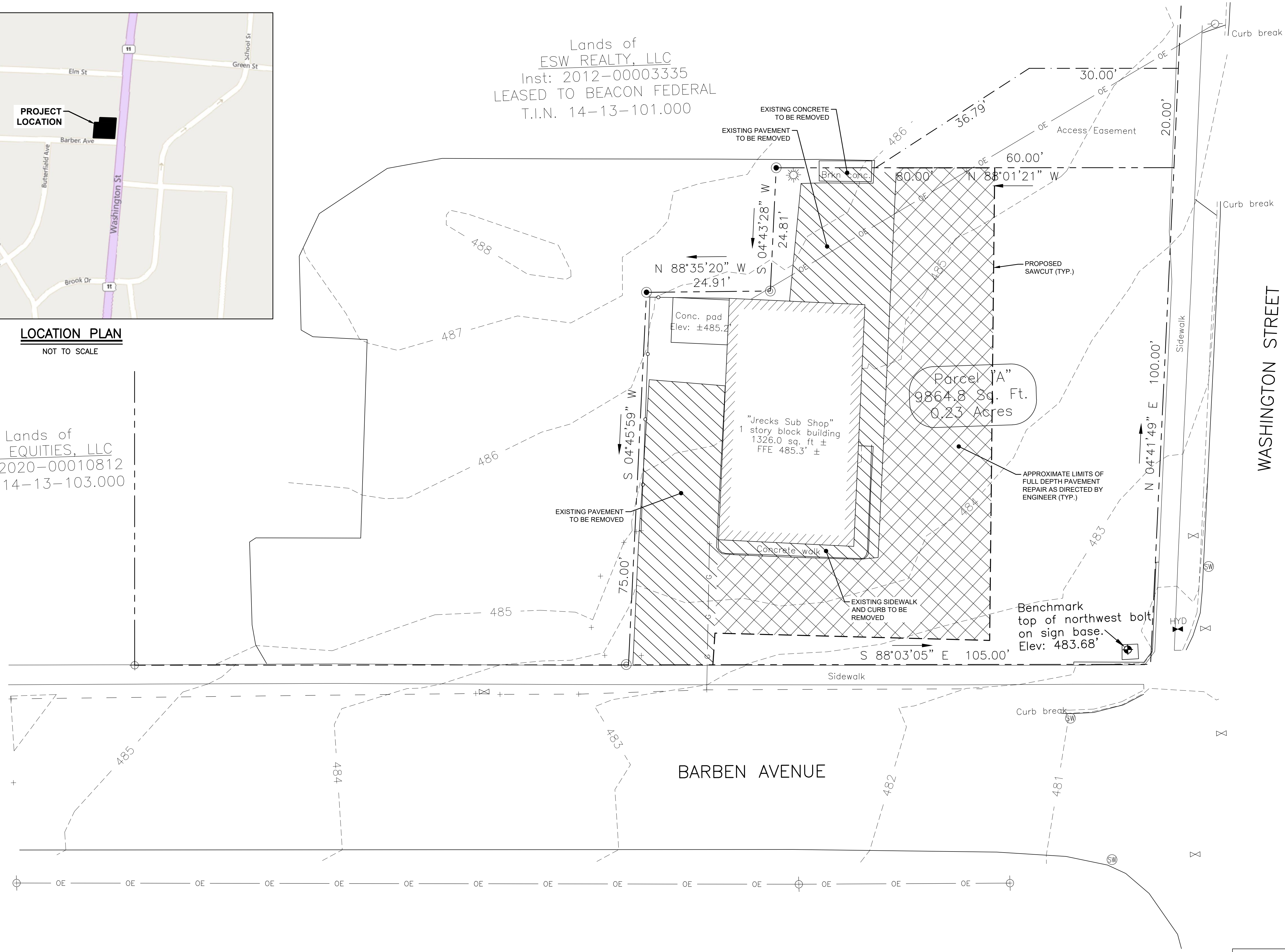
CC:
Spencer Carisle – Owner
Tim Reddick – Contractor – Contech Building Systems



LOCATION PLAN
NOT TO SCALE

Lands of
NNY EQUITIES, LLC
Inst: 2020-00010812
T.I.N. 14-13-103.000

Lands of
ESW REALTY, LLC
Inst: 2012-00003335
LEASED TO BEACON FEDERAL
T.I.N. 14-13-101.000



NO.	DATE	ISSUED FOR SKETCH PLAN	DRAWING RELEASE
A	3/19/24		

SITE DEMOLITION PLAN



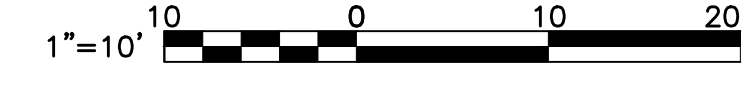
JRECK SUBS
1248 WASHINGTON STREET
CITY OF WATERTOWN
JEFFERSON COUNTY

PROJECT #
23-306

DATE:
MARCH 2024

SHEET #
C-101

PLAN
SCALE: 1"=10'



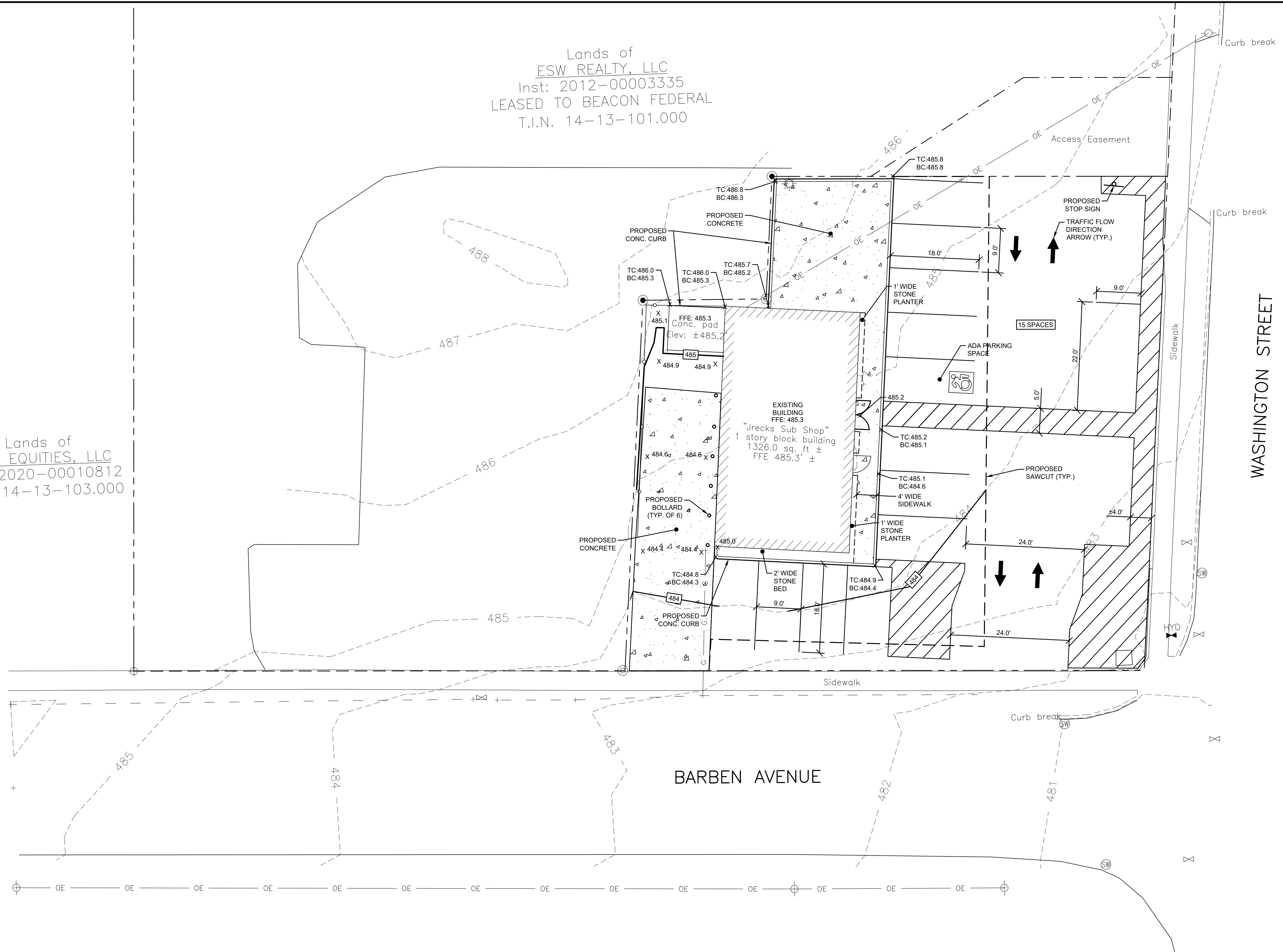
THIS DRAWING WAS PREPARED AT THE SCALE INDICATED IN THE TITLE BLOCK. INACCURACIES IN THE STATED SCALE MAY BE INTRODUCED WHEN DRAWINGS ARE REPRODUCED BY ANY MEANS. USE THE GRAPHIC SCALE BAR IN THE TITLE BLOCK TO DETERMINE THE ACTUAL SCALE OF THIS DRAWING.

IT IS A VIOLATION OF LAW FOR ANY PERSON, UNLESS ACTING UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A LICENSED ENGINEER, TO ALTER THIS DOCUMENT.

PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION
DATE: 03/18/2024

Lands of
ESW REALTY, LLC
Inst: 2012-00003335
LEASED TO BEACON FEDERAL
T.I.N. 14-13-101.000

Lands of
NNY EQUITIES, LLC
Inst: 2020-00010812
T.I.N. 14-13-103.000



PLAN
SCALE: 1"=10'



THIS DRAWING WAS PREPARED AT THE SCALE INDICATED IN THE TITLE BLOCK. INACCURACIES IN THE STATED SCALE MAY BE INTRODUCED WHEN DRAWINGS ARE REPRODUCED BY ANY MEANS. USE THE GRAPHIC SCALE BAR IN THE TITLE BLOCK TO DETERMINE THE ACTUAL SCALE OF THIS DRAWING.

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PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION
DATE: 03/18/2024

SITE & GRADING
PLAN



JRECK SUBS
1248 WASHINGTON STREET
CITY OF WATERTOWN
JEFFERSON COUNTY

PROJECT #
23-306

DATE:
MARCH 2024

SHEET #
C-102

NO.	DATE	ISSUED FOR	DRAWING RELEASE
A	3/19/24	ISSUED FOR SKETCH PLAN	