



City of New Bedford

Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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PATRICK J. SULLIVAN
DIRECTOR

STAFF REPORT-Amended

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

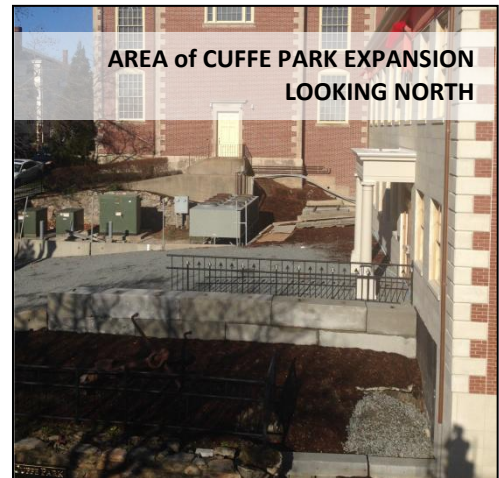
Initial Meeting: May 1, 2017

Supplemental Comments: August 7, 2017

Case #2017.08: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
18 Johnny Cake Hill
NE Corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill

**Applicant/
Owner:** Old Dartmouth Historical Society/
New Bedford Whaling Museum
18 Johnny Cake Hill
New Bedford, MA 02740

**Applicant's
Agent:** Civitects Architecture
66 Troy Street
Fall River, MA 02720



Overview:

This is a request continued from the Historical Commission's May 1, 2017 meeting to review the proposal seeking to elevate the grade level of the current Captain Paul Cuffe Park, located at the north east corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill, so as to integrate the site into a larger planned plaza located in front of the Whaling Museum's Wattles Jacobs Education Center (WJEC). The new level surface would be attained through the use of retaining walls at the edges of the sidewalks at the northeast corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill.

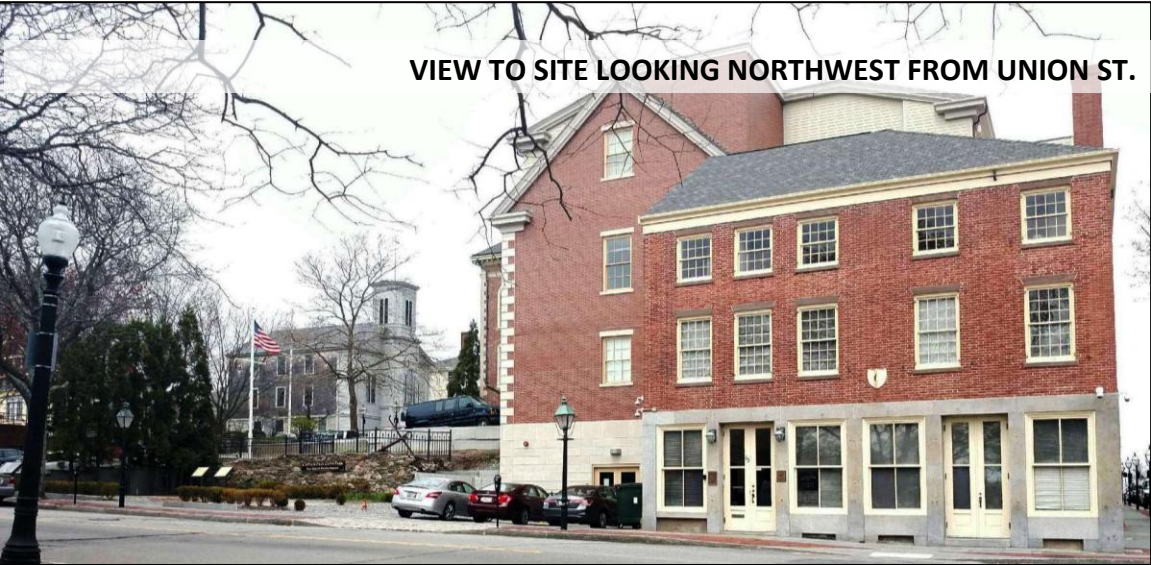
Existing Conditions:

The location of the current Captain Paul Cuffe Park was once occupied by buildings prior to a 1977 gas explosion which leveled those structures. Cuffe Park was formally developed and dedicated in 2011. The WJEC opened in 2015 with an unfinished landscape on Johnny Cake Hill. The Whaling Museum intended to design and create an open public/private space in front of the WJEC which would connect to the Seaman's Bethel/Mariner's Home and generate activity on the southern section of Johnny Cake Hill.



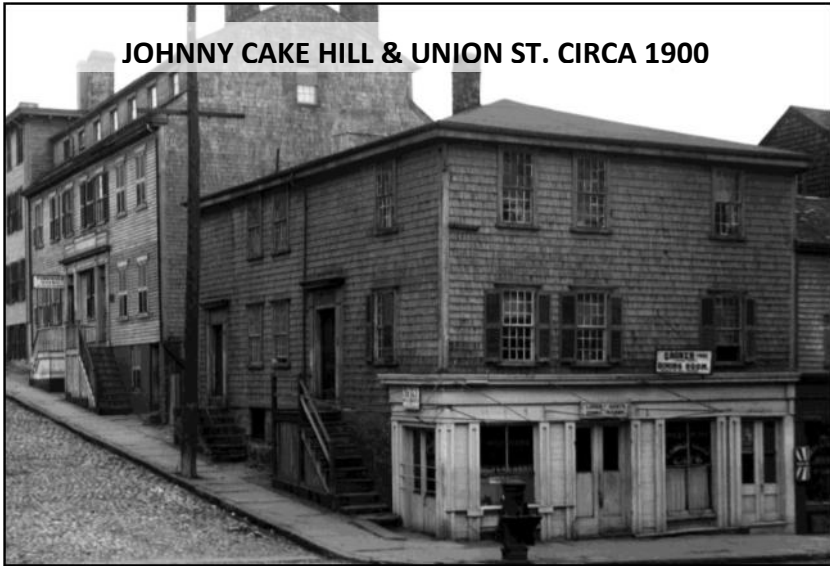


VIEW TO SITE LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM UNION ST.

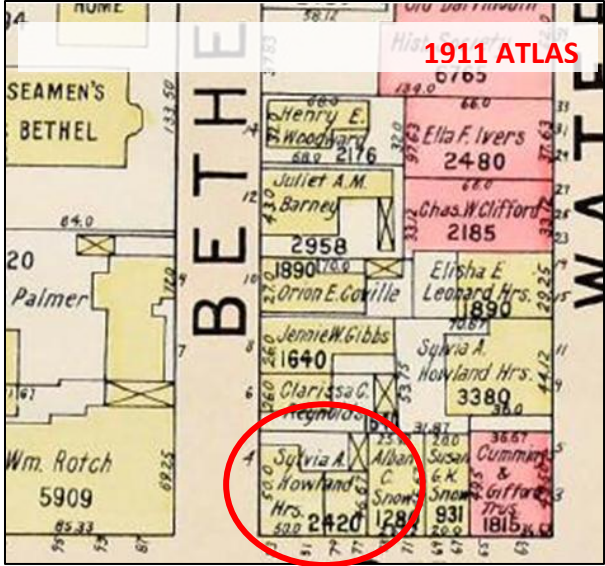


VIEW TO SITE LOOKING NORTHWEST FROM UNION ST.

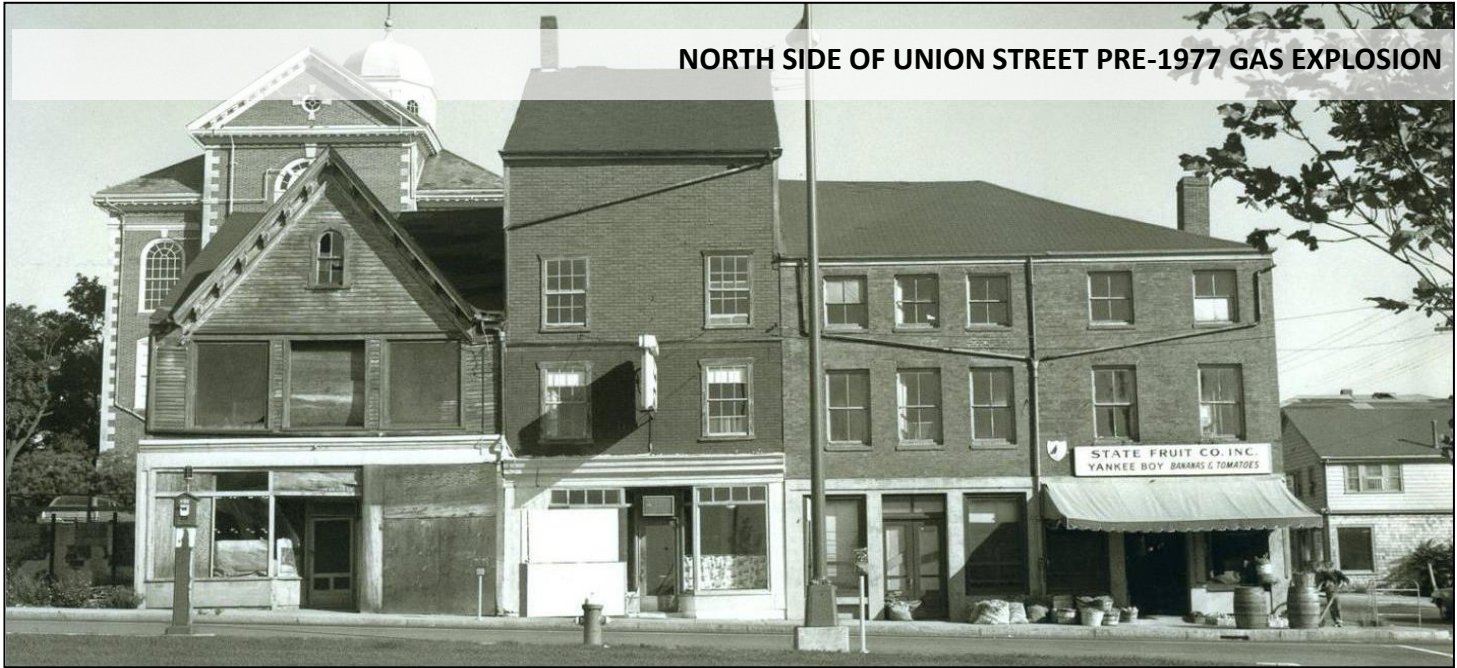
Historical Context:



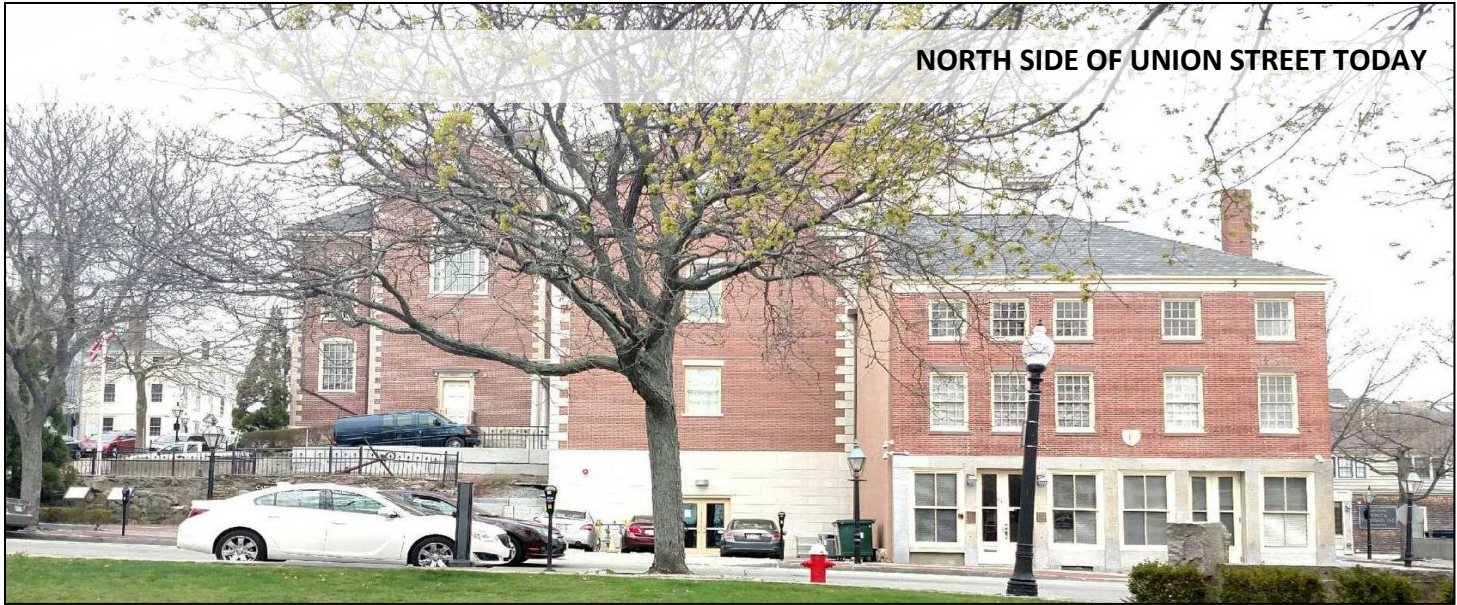
JOHNNY CAKE HILL & UNION ST. CIRCA 1900



1911 ATLAS



NORTH SIDE OF UNION STREET PRE-1977 GAS EXPLOSION



NORTH SIDE OF UNION STREET TODAY

Proposal:

The proposed elevation and expansion of Cuffe Park would require the use of retaining walls which would create a new street-front along Union Street, and to a lesser degree, on Johnny Cake Hill.

The resulting leveled surface would provide an expansive open space for both private and public programming and would provide for opportunity to interpret the themes of the park through plaques, panels and sculpture.

The landscape and hardscapes of the project as currently proposed includes pavers and fencing. The project addresses the entrance to the Wattles Jacob Education Center with the addition of a new landing, stairs, handicap access ramp and railings.



AERIAL OF EXISTING LOT LOCATIONS

New Submission Materials:

The applicant has submitted a new plan layout and new elevations for consideration. The changes between the May 1, 2017 and August 7, 2017 plans are as follows:

Plan: The proposed pergola has been removed. The existing rubble wall along the north section of the site will be extended eastward with the addition of a planting bed. The interpretive panels have been relocated to the south section of the site and have increased from four to six.

West Elevation (Johnny Cake Hill): A retaining wall at the northern section of the site, which would have screened the transformers, has been removed and replaced with a step-down railing.

South Elevation (Union Street): The center “storefront” cornice, which also served as a knee wall, has been removed and replaced with black metal railing.

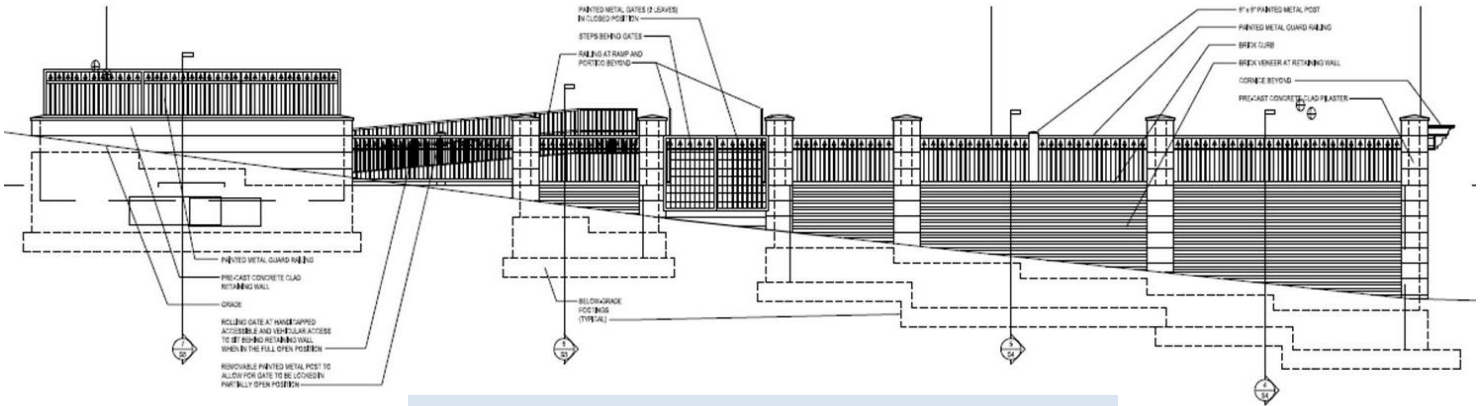
East Elevation (Loading Dock): The retaining wall has been reduced in height due to the use of the black metal railing at the top. Three small equipment storage openings have been reduced from three to one. The wall face appears to have changed from a scored pre cast concrete to a flat, painted pre cast concrete.

At the May 1st meeting there was discussed a proposal to switch the use of pre-cast concrete to ground face concrete masonry units (CMU) for use in the wall piers. That material change has been retracted, with the continued use of pre-cast concrete and brick veneer as the wall face materials.



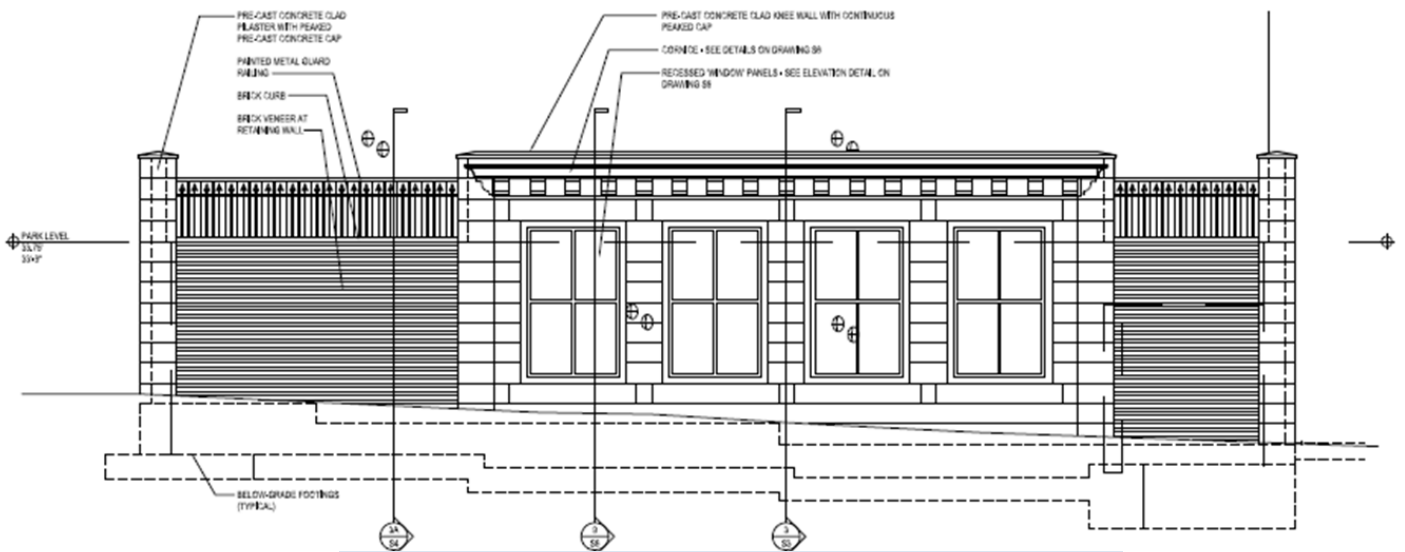
RETAINING WALLS

A. West Elevation (Johnny Cake Hill): The form of the proposed facade consists of a pre-cast concrete wall, pre-cast concrete piers, and brick veneer walls with a black metal ‘harpoon’ railing above. The design calls for two gated entrances on the Johnny Cake hill side: a rolling gate to accommodate universal access and a primary entry consisting of a double gate with stairs. The height of the wall varies to accommodate topography; however the corner of the wall at Union and Johnny Cake Hill is approximately ten feet (10’) in height. The pier cap and fence provides an additional 4’-6” . See Drawings A1 and A3 for detail.



WEST ELEVATION (JOHNNY CAKE HILL)

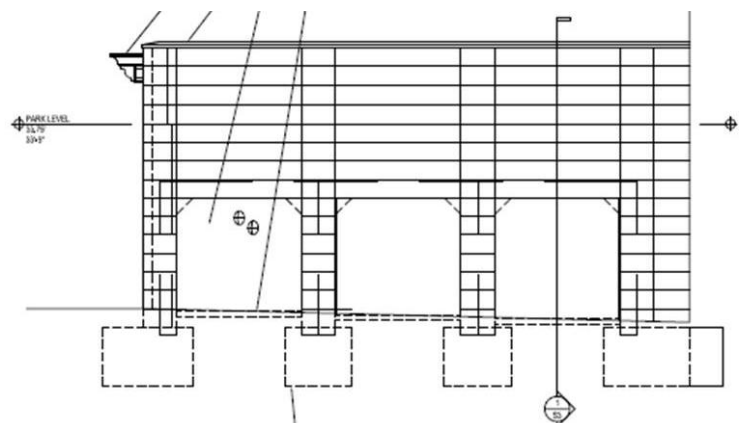
B. South Elevation (Union Street): The form of the facade is currently designed as a pre-cast concrete wall with pre-cast concrete piers and brick veneer walls with a black metal ‘harpoon’ railing above. The pre-cast concrete wall in its design, scale, massing and use of window fenestration, references the storefront of the abutting Sundial Building. This “storefront” portion of the wall utilizes an extended Fypon bracketed cornice and perforated metal window panels. The height of the wall varies due to topography, ranging from approximately ten feet (10’) in height at the corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill to approximately thirteen feet (13’) in height at its easternmost corner. The pier cap and fence provides an additional 4’-6” in overall height. The center (Section3) of the “storefront” façade measures approximately 15’-6” in height. See Drawings A1, A3 and S6 for detail.



SOUTH ELEVATION (UNION STREET)



C. East Elevation (Loading Dock): The form of the facade consists of a pre-cast concrete wall with three openings which are approximately 8’ wide, 8’ high and 8’ deep. The purpose of these “bunkers” is to store the dumpster and various pieces of outdoor equipment. No details have been provided thus far as to how these openings would be gated or enclosed. See Drawings A1, A3 and S2 for detail.



EAST ELEVATION (LOADING DOCK)

Applicability of Review:

Though the proposed project is not a building, it is a “structure”, which according to M.G.L. c. 40C definition, means a combination of materials other than a building, including a sign, fence, wall, terrace, walk or driveway. The Commission would review the structure as new construction.

Statement of Applicable Guidelines:

The Bedford Landing District Design Guidelines state the following relative to this proposal:

NEW CONSTRUCTION

When considering a new structure within the District the designer shall study the appearance and character of the entire neighborhood and pay particular attention to immediate abutters. The District has a unique character based on its history and development patterns. These characteristics express themselves in the scale, setback, roof form and materials and detail of its historic buildings. A new building should be designed so that it shares and is compatible with these qualities. New construction should be in harmony with the old and at the same time be distinguishable from the old so that the evolution of the District can be interpreted correctly.

- **SCALE:** Scale refers to the size of a building in relation to surrounding buildings as well as the relationship of the building to its site.

- **MASSING:** The mass of a building can be described as the boxlike forms that fit together to create the overall building shape and footprint. Massing is the three-dimensional form of a structure. The massing of a new building in the District should relate closely to the structures in close proximity.
- **SETBACKS:** The front setback is the distance between a building's façade and a public right-of-way. A new building should follow the precedents established by neighboring structures.
- **MATERIALS:** The selection of materials and textures for a new building should be compatible with and complement the surrounding buildings.
- **ALIGNMENTS AND RHYTHMS:** A new building should relate to its immediate neighbors. The historic building pattern of the district creates a sense of rhythm that was achieved by groupings of buildings with aligning cornices, ridges and or bases. Building widths are similar and where a building is wider than its neighbors, the façade is typically articulated in such a way as to break it down into proportional sections. New buildings should follow these development patterns.
- **ROOF FORM:** An important component of the District's visual appeal is its particular mix of historic roof shapes. The most common roof shape is a side or front gable found both on modest residences and prominent civic and commercial buildings. The second roof type is a simple flat roof found on most commercial blocks. Flat roofs are typically trimmed with a decorative cornice or parapet.
- **FENESTRATION:** Window selection and patterning in new buildings should be compatible with neighboring structures. Windows do not necessarily need to be vertically proportioned or have ornamental casings, but the overall effect of the façade composition shall reference historical window opening to wall ratios. Historic buildings in the District typically have a large ratio of window opening to solid wall. New construction should reflect these relationships in some fashion.

The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation state the the following relative to this proposal:

- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Staff Recommendation:

Though there is no Secretary of Interior "Standard for Compatible Infill," there are principles of new construction within local historic districts that should be considered. **New construction should respect, and not detract from, the integrity of the District. The design should respond to the aesthetic rhythm of the District and adjacent buildings, while being differentiated yet compatible.**

The design and form of the retaining walls takes into consideration the scale, massing, materials and character of the property, and in addition, the Union Street façade takes its cues from the adjacent Sundial Building. The siting of the retaining walls continues the historic building setbacks of Union Street and the use of windows maintains the established rhythm for the street. The "storefront" wall on Union Street aligns itself with the height of the adjacent Sundial Building storefront, and the scale and design of the widows further establishes this connection.

Overall, the project compliments and supports the District. The continued interpretation of Captain Paul Cuffe and New Bedford's African American history is a significant contribution to the District and beyond. The use as a green space supports the viability of not only the Whaling Museum, but also the adjacent Bethel and Mariner's Home. Furthermore, the infill of this site realizes the objectives of the city's Downtown Action Plan related to urban density and activating underutilized sites.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) holds a Preservation Restriction on the land and buildings of the Whaling Museum and would therefore review and comment on this project. A recent preliminary review of the Cuffe Park expansion by MHC was solely related to the potential requirement of an archaeological survey. That review determined that the new park will expand on existing fill and bedrock outcrops, therefore being a location not likely to contain significant archaeological resources. MHC has conditioned the requirement that the applicant submit scaled existing and proposed conditions project plans for the project to MHC for review and comment.

In light of this MHC restriction and **staff's recommendation as presented in the inset**, the NBHC may wish to consider applying that policy to this project. In this way, neither the applicant nor the NBHC is burdened by repeated hearings should MHC make changes to the project design.

For Board Member Consideration:

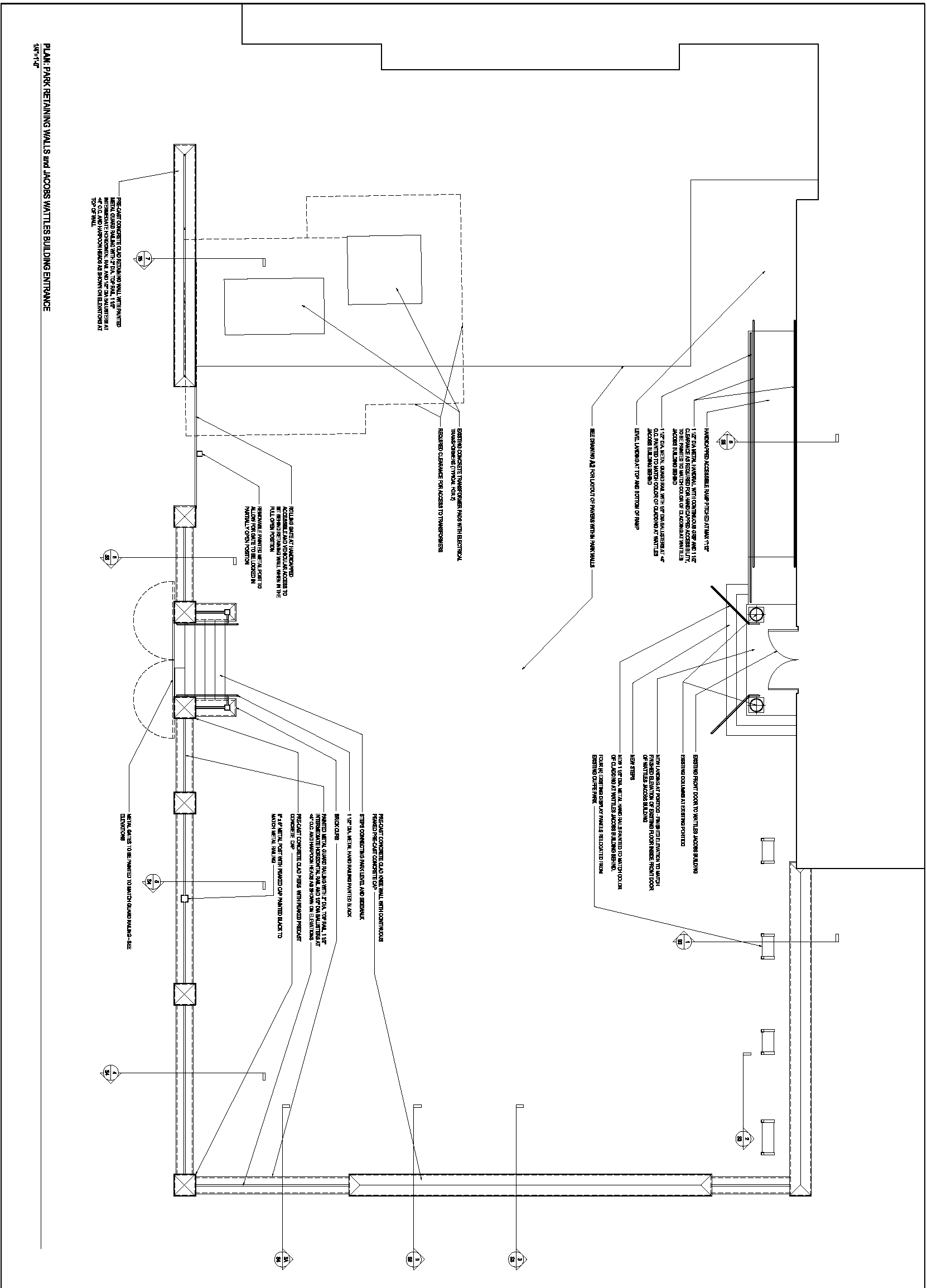
The proposed change from the May 1, 2017 submission to August 7, 2017, is primarily related to the reduction in the use of pre-cast concrete, replaced with railing. This change is a response to achieve cost saving measures in the overall project.

Members may want to call attention to the fact that the elimination of the pre-cast concrete wall at the northern section of the site along Johnny Cake Hill will allow the existing transformers to remain visible from the public way, as screening is challenged by site conditions and utility regulations.

The relocation of the interpretive panels will make the rear of the panels and posts visible from Union Street. Softening of this hardscape with landscaping materials is recommended. The east loading dock, which is an area for small equipment storage, has a revised façade material which requires clarification from the architect. Material specifications related to the rubble stone wall, wall facades, window screens, fencing, and landscaping pavers are also required.

RECOMMENDATION FOR NBHC CONSIDERATION RELATED TO ALL PROPERTIES WITH MHC PRESERVAION RESTRICTIONS.
Staff, in consultation with the Historical Commission Chair, strongly recommends the adoption of a NBHC policy in which a property that has a MHC restriction defer to MHC's review and comments prior to rendering a NBHC decision or Certificate, and apply that policy to this project.

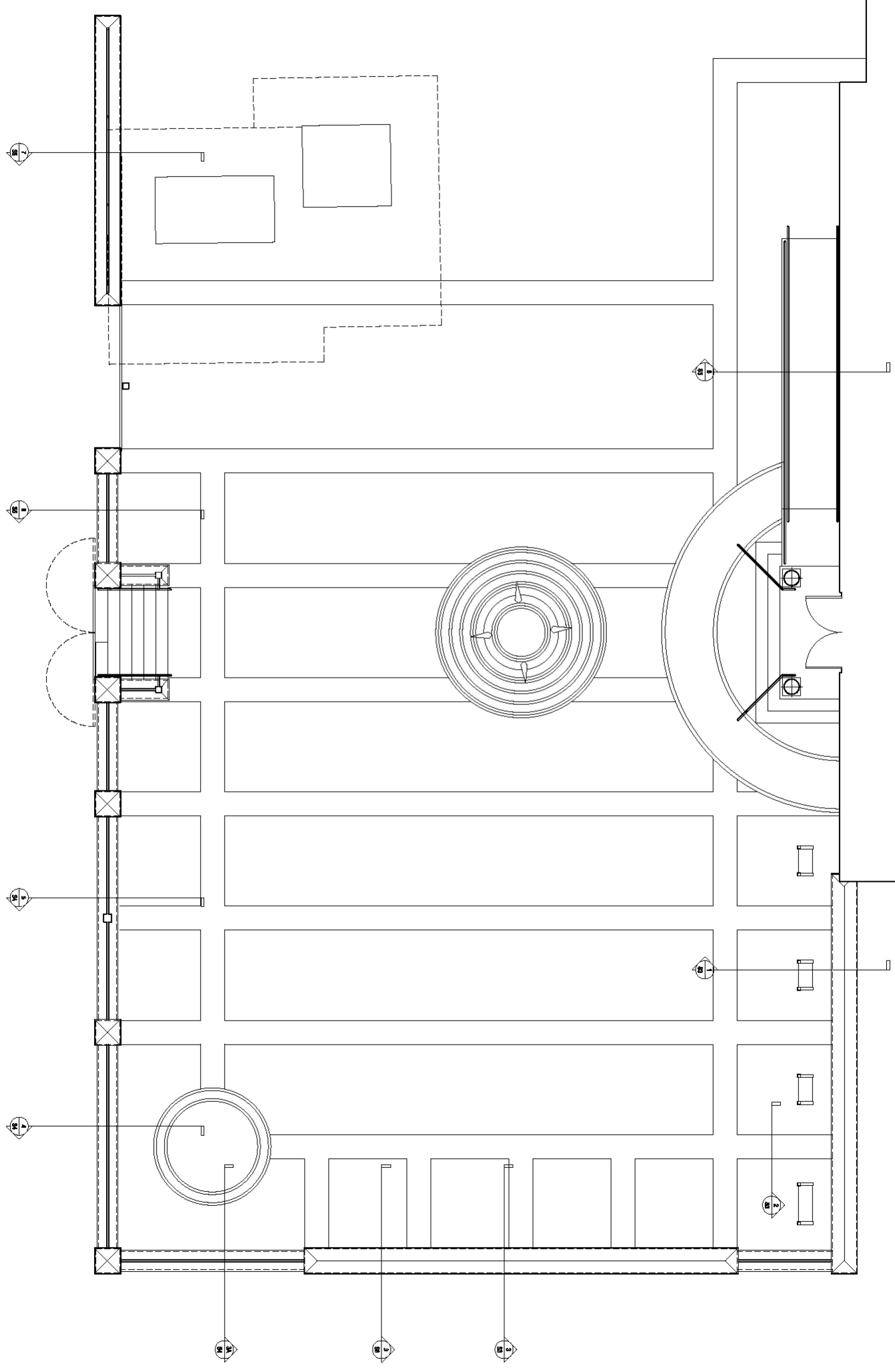




PLAN: PARK RETAINING WALLS and JACOBS WAITLESS BUILDING ENTRANCE
1/4"=1'-0"

A1	<p>PLAN: PARK LEVEL</p> <p>PROJECT NO.: 18118 SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0" DATE: 3 APRIL 2017 REVISIONS:</p>	<p>CAPTAIN PAUL CLIFFE PARK NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740</p>	<p>NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION</p>	<p>CIVITECTS ARCHITECTURE PLANNING + LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION</p> <p>65 TROY STREET, FALL RIVER, MA 02720 T. 774.357.8993 F. 774.888.5167</p>	<p>PROGRESS PRINT</p>

PLAN: PARK PAVEN LAYOUT
1/4"=1'-0"



A2

PLAN: PAVING LAYOUT
PROJECT NO.: 18118
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 3 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:

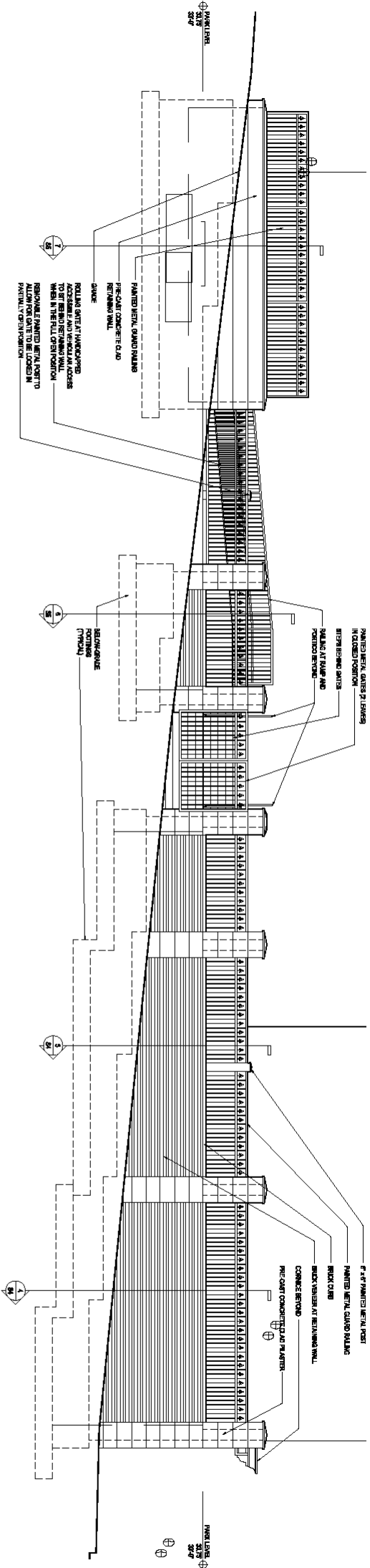


**CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE PARK
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM**
UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740

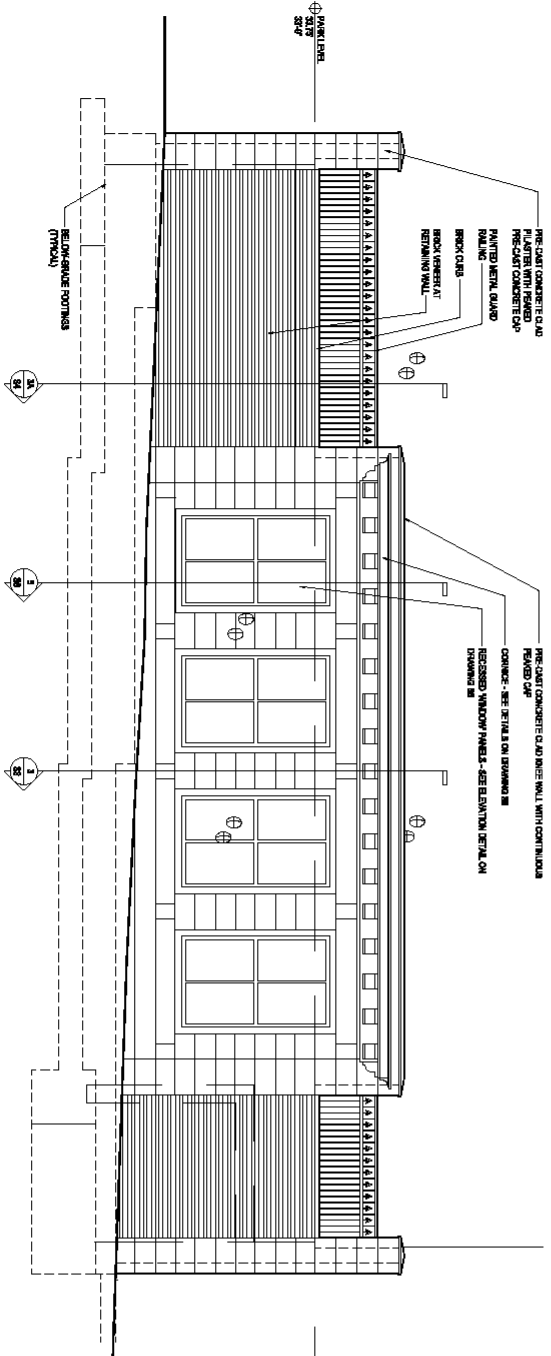
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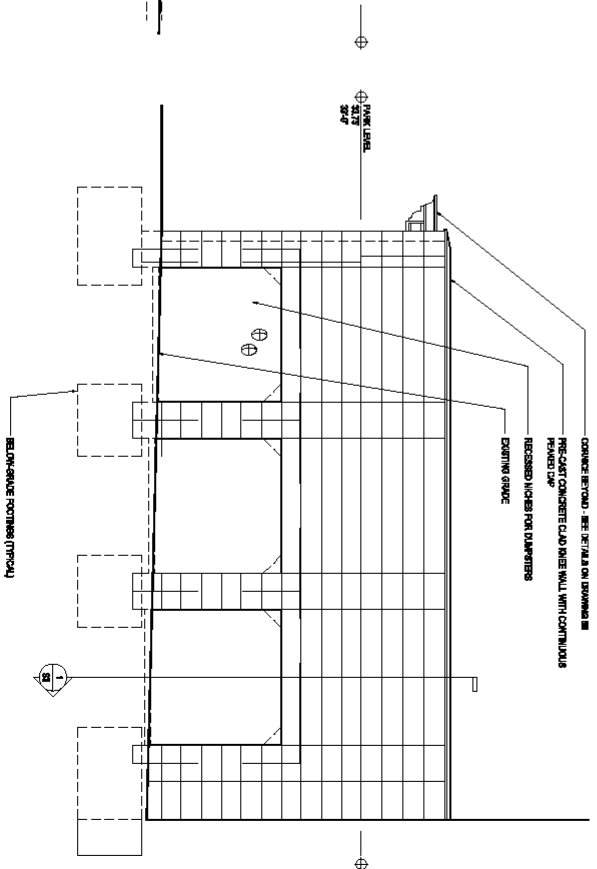
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ELEVATION: WEST - JOHNNY CAKE HILL
1/4"=1'-0"



ELEVATION: SOUTH - UNION STREET
1/4"=1'-0"



ELEVATION: EAST - LOADING DOCK
1/4"=1'-0"

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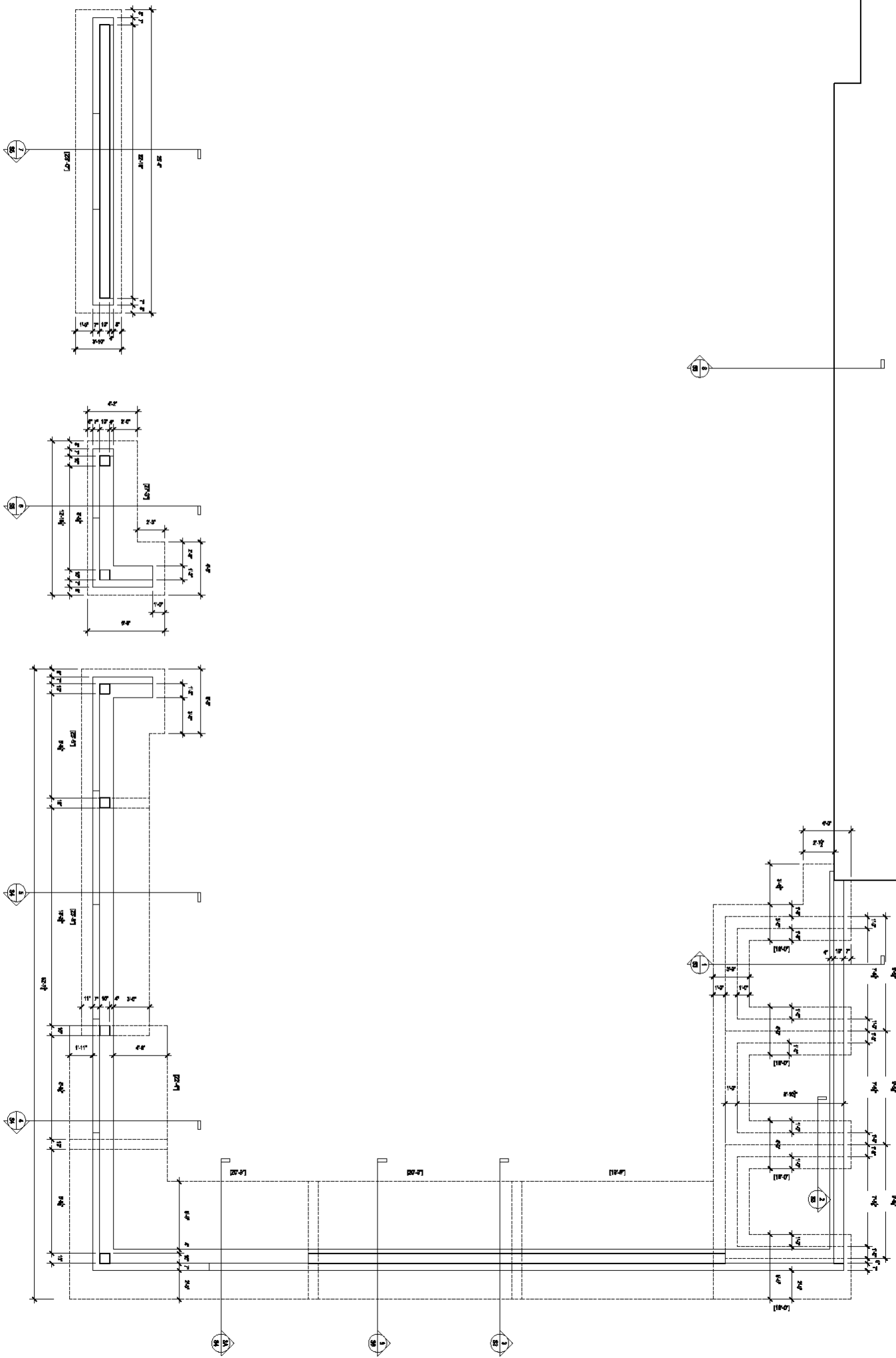
CAPTAIN PALL CLIFFE PARK
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM
UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740

ELEVATIONS: SOUTH, EAST and WEST

PROJECT NO.: 18118
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 3 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:

A3

ELEVATION: SOUTH - UNION STREET
1/4"=1'-0"



S1

RETAINING WALL PLAN

PROJECT NO.: 18118
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 3 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:



CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE PARK
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

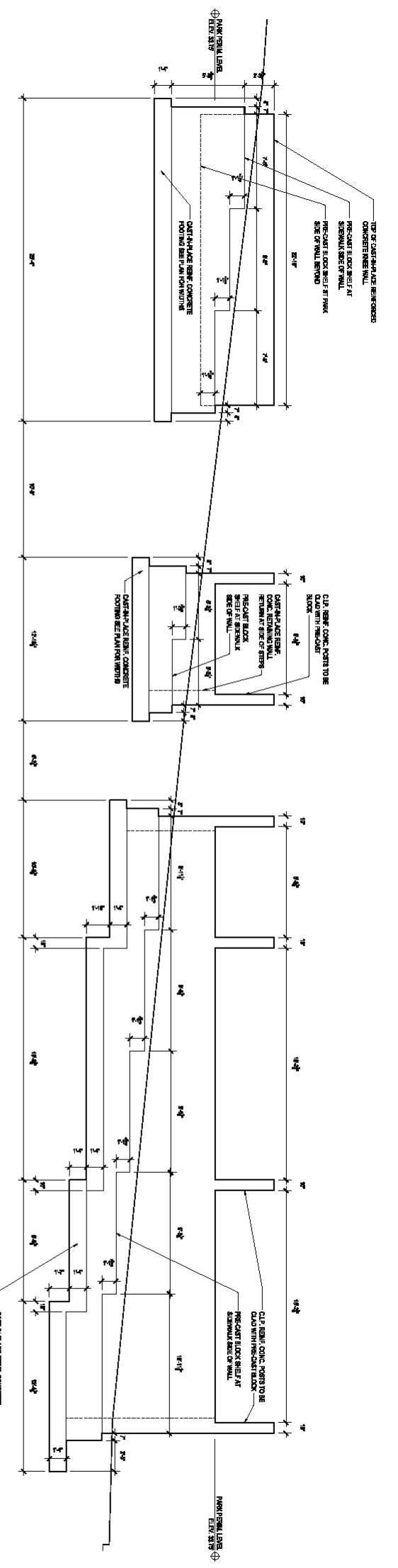
UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL
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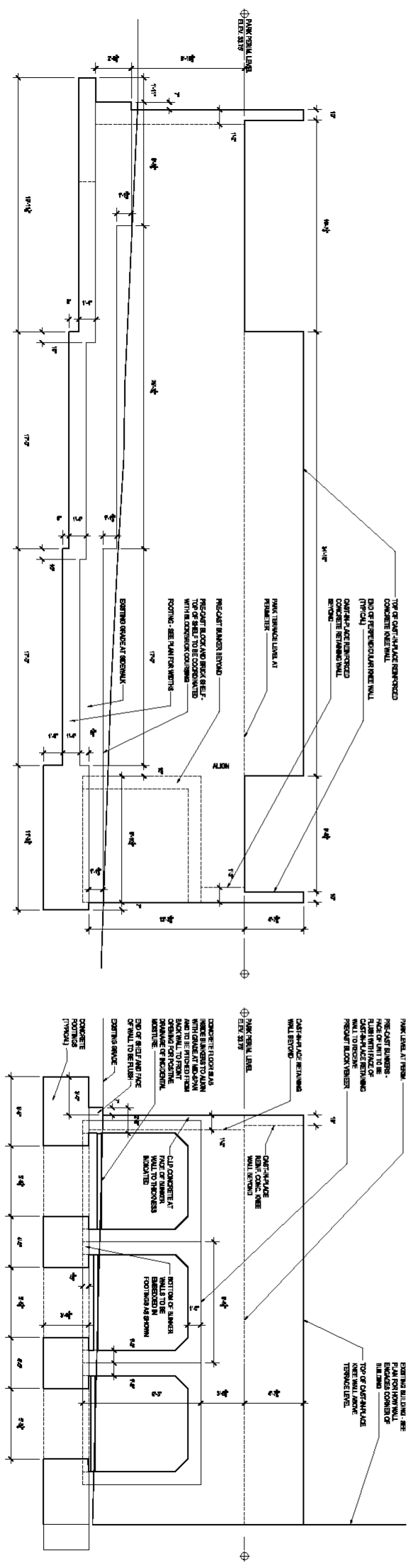
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ELEVATION: WEST - JOHNNY CAKE HILL
1/4"=1'-0"



ELEVATION: EAST - LOADING DOCK
1/4"=1'-0"

S2

RETAIN'G WALL ELEV'S: SOUTH, EAST and WEST

PROJECT NO.: 18116
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 8 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:

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NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM
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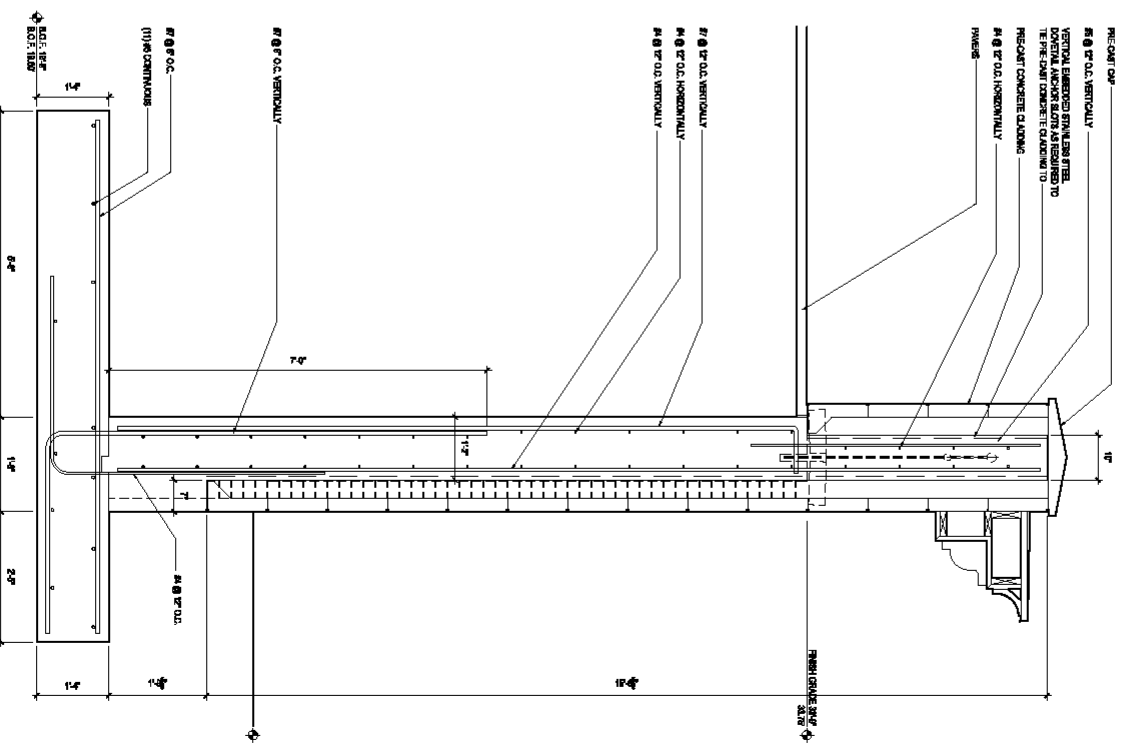
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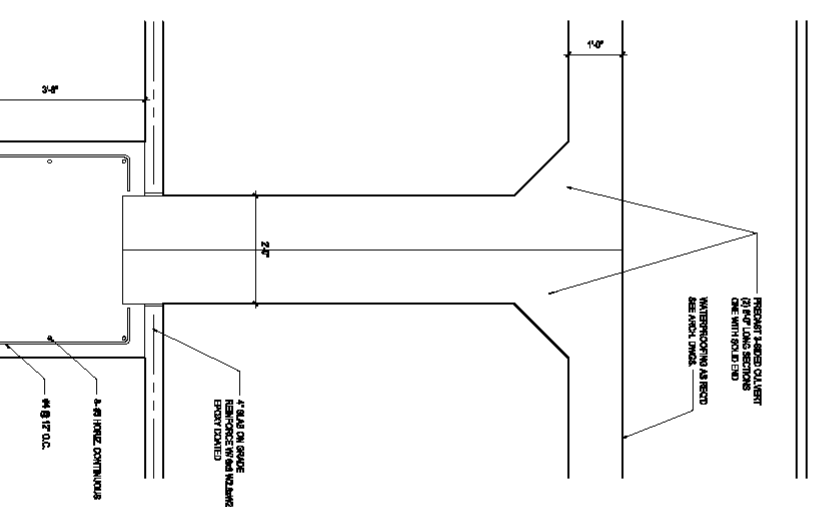
CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE PARK
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM
UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740

DEATILS
PROJECT NO.: 18118
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 3 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:

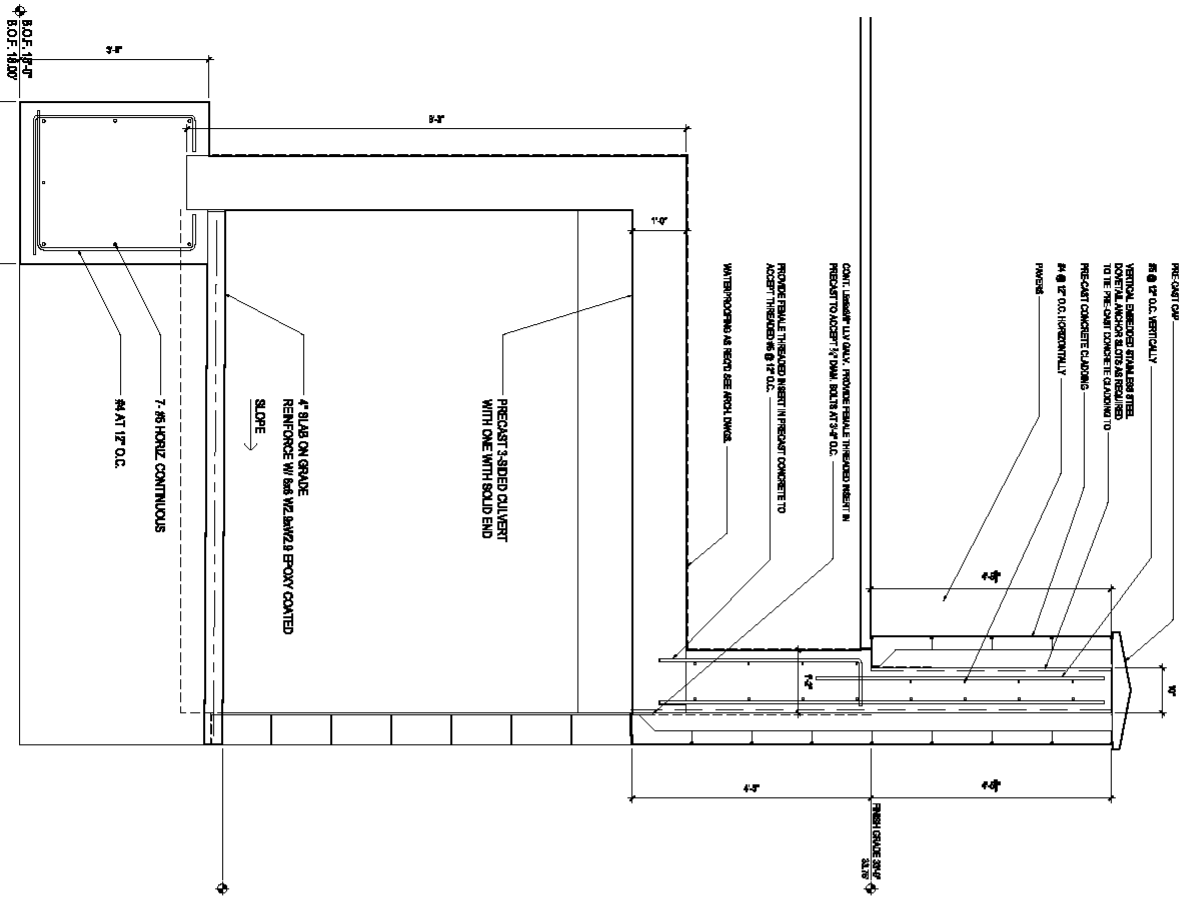
S3



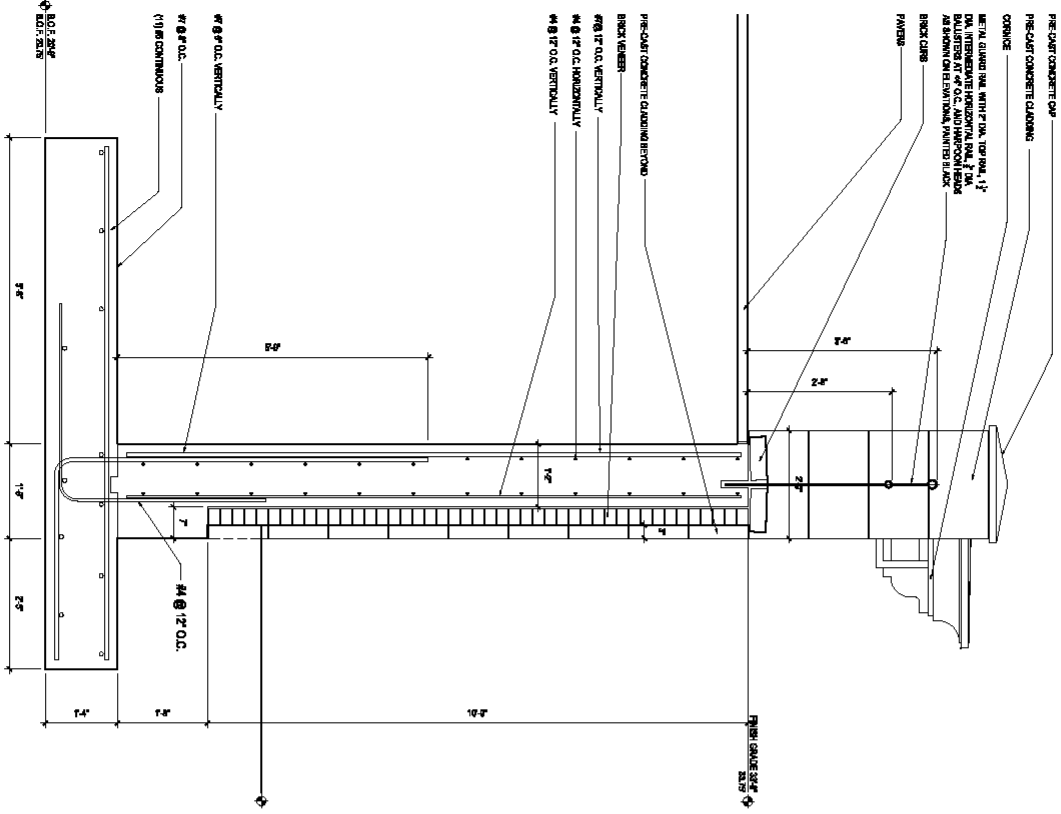
3 SECTION DETAIL - RETAINING WALL WITH MASONRY KNEEWALL
3/4"=1'-0"



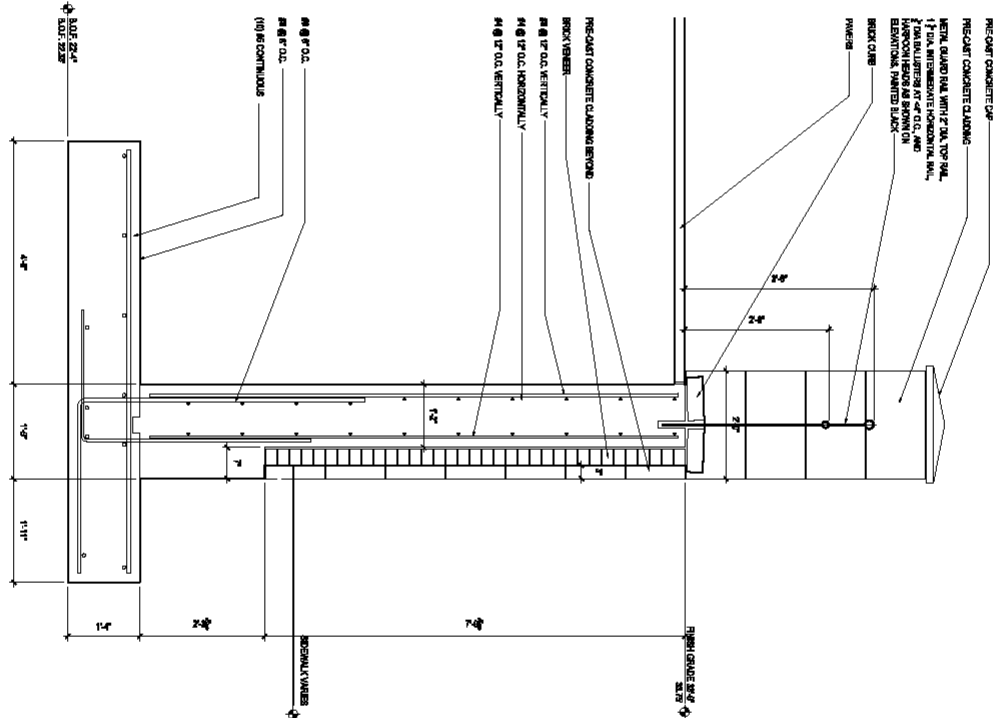
2 SECT. DETAIL - PRE-CAST BUNKER WALL BELOW PARK TERRACE
3/4"=1'-0"



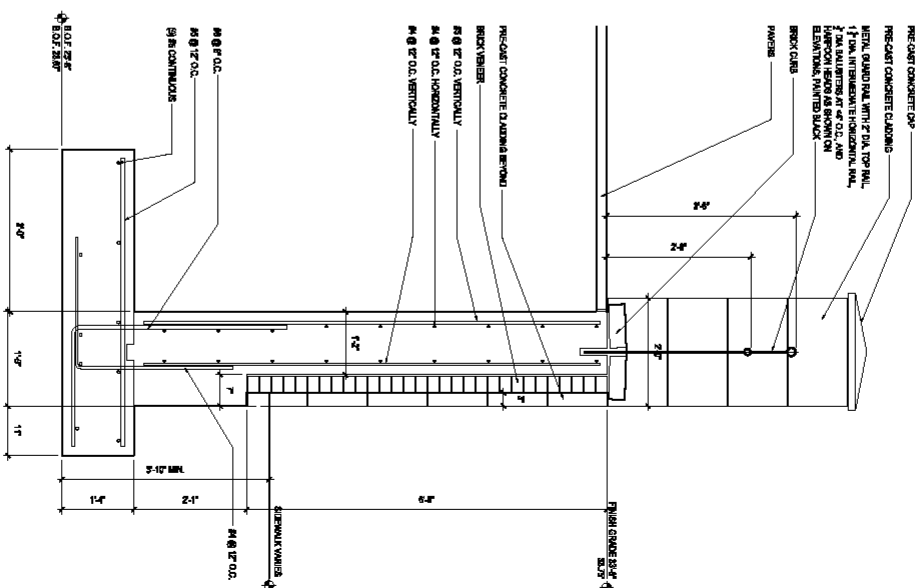
1 SECTION DETAIL - RETAINING WALL WITH MASONRY KNEEWALL ABOVE PRE-CAST BUNKERS
3/4"=1'-0"



A SECTION DETAIL: RETAINING WALL WITH METAL GUARDRAIL
3/4"=1'-0"



B SECTION DETAIL: RETAINING WALL WITH METAL GUARDRAIL
3/4"=1'-0"



C SECTION DETAIL: RETAINING WALL WITH METAL GUARDRAIL
3/4"=1'-0"

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DETAILS
PROJECT NO.: 18118
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 3 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:

S4

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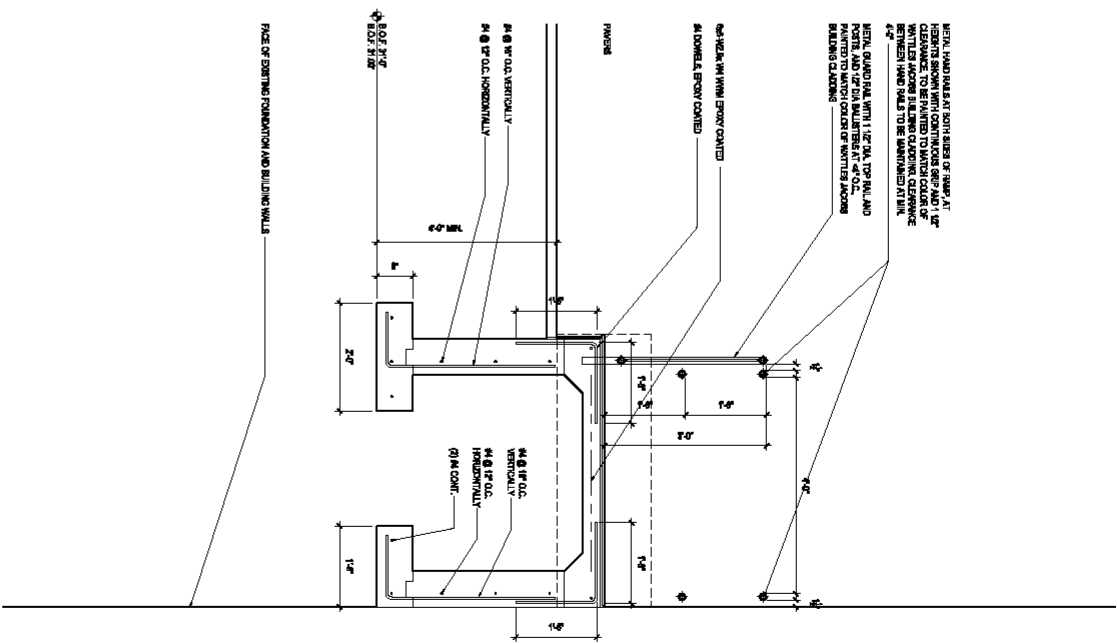
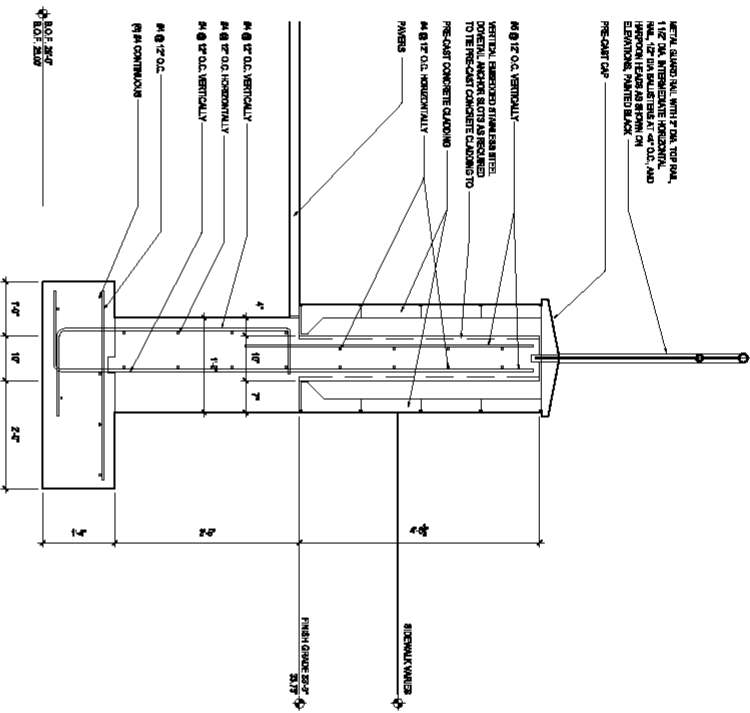
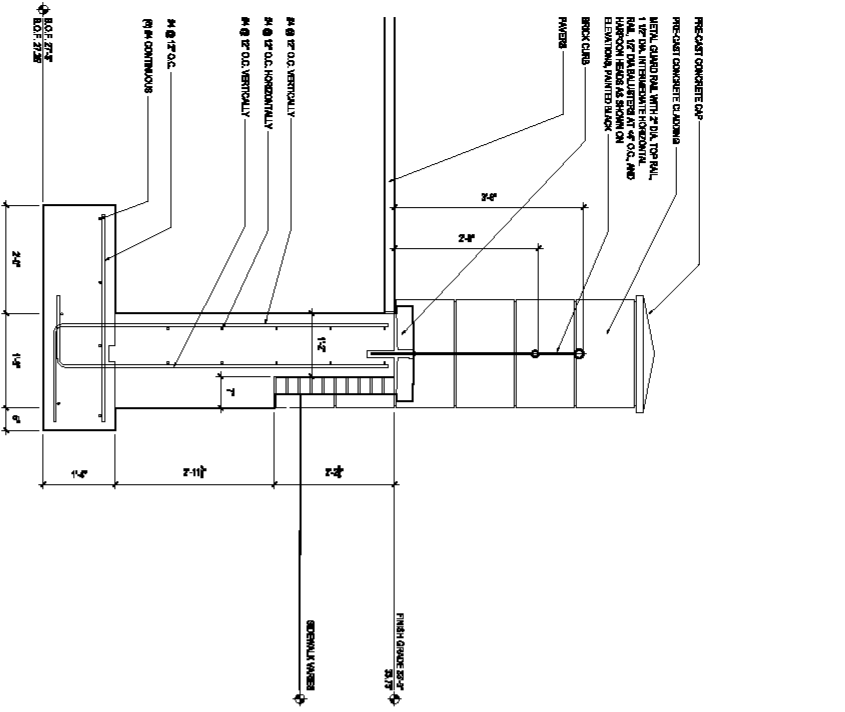
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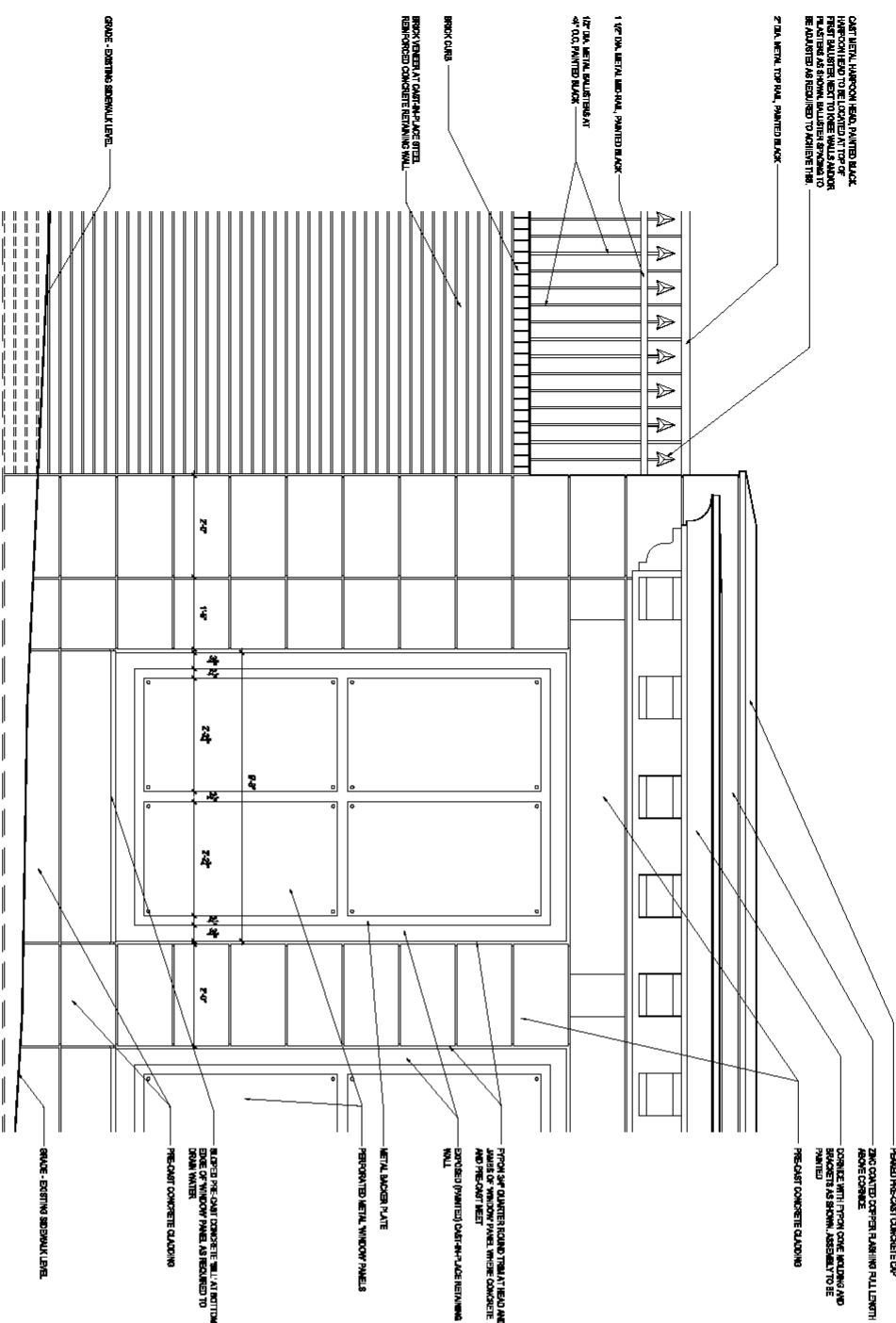
CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE PARK
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM
UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740

DETAILS
PROJECT NO: 16116
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 3 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:

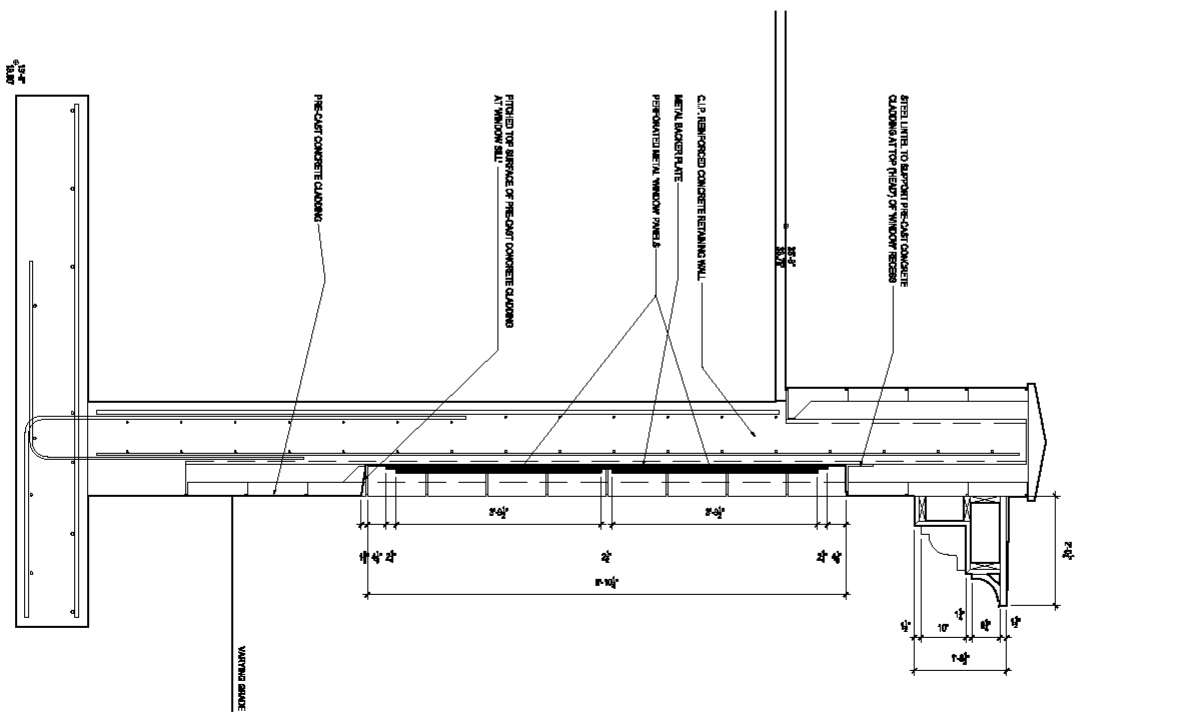


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10 ELEVATION DETAIL - RETAINING WALL WITH BRICK CLADDING AND METAL GUARD RAIL, and with PRECAST CONCRETE CLADDING, KNEE WALL, CORNICE, and WINDOW PANELS
3/4"=1'-0"



9 SECTION DETAIL - RETAINING WALL WITH DISPLAY PANEL, WINDOW - SEE ALSO 9/55
3/4"=1'-0"

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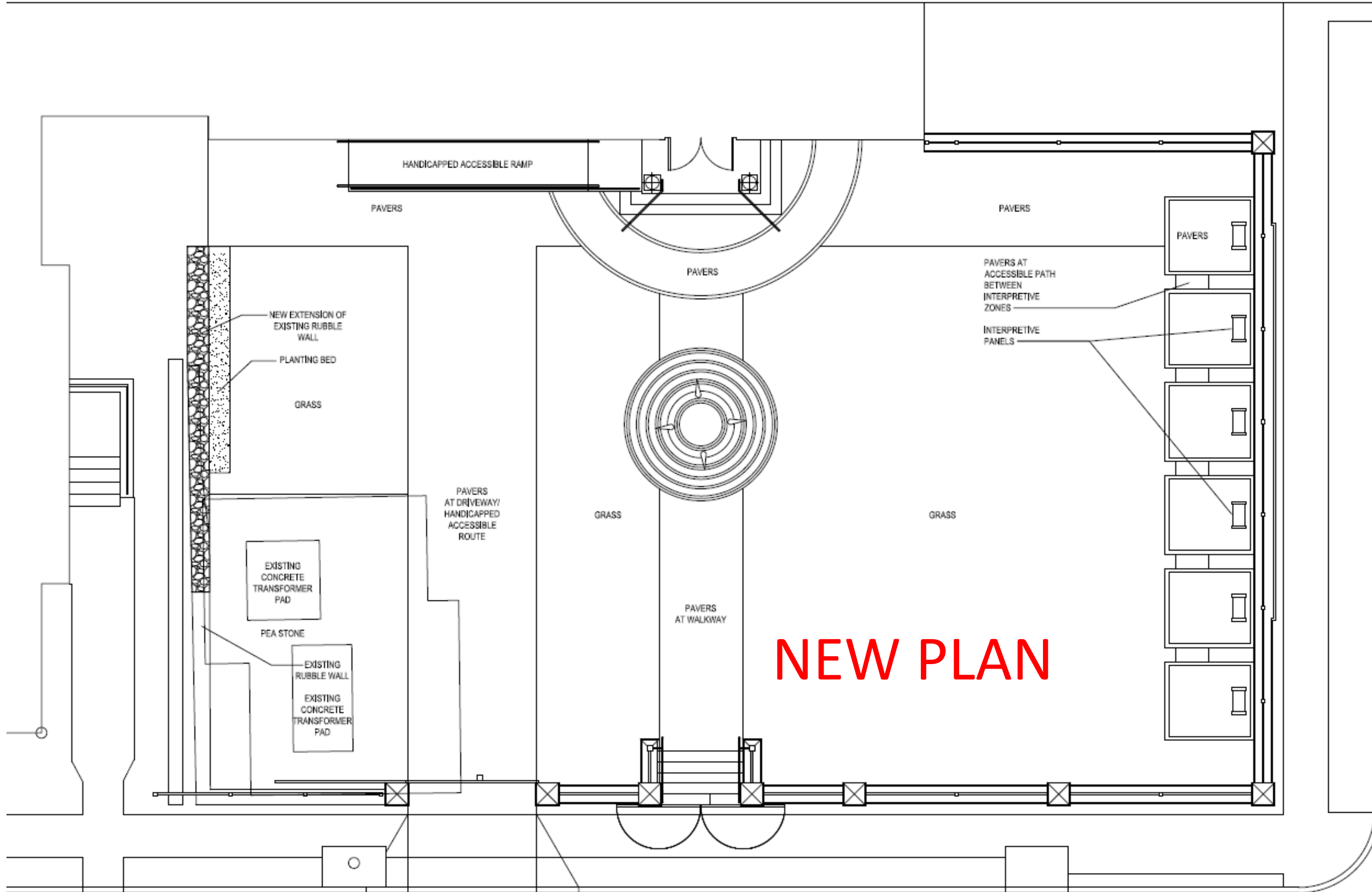
CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE PARK
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DETAILS
PROJECT NO.: 18118
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 3 APRIL 2017
REVISIONS:

S6



NEW SCHEMATIC



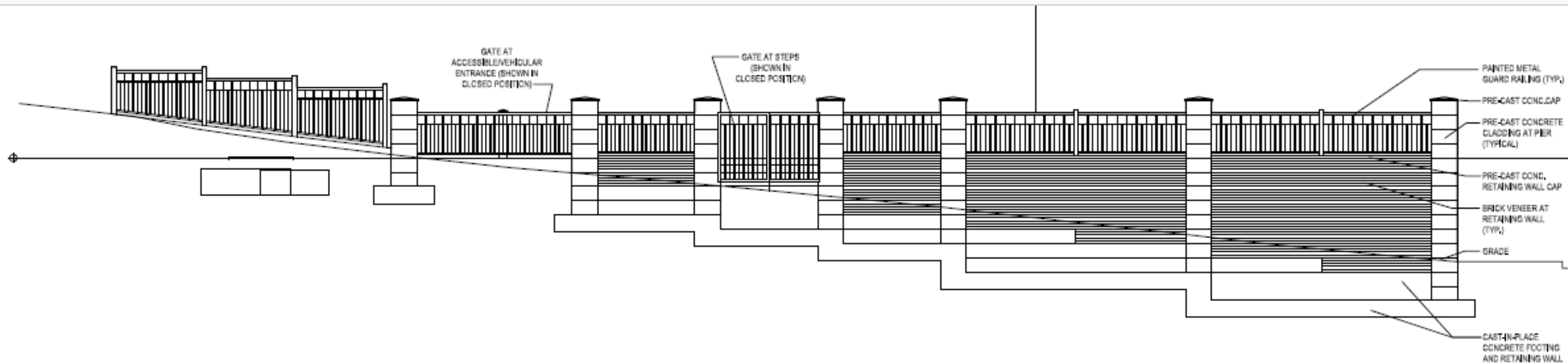
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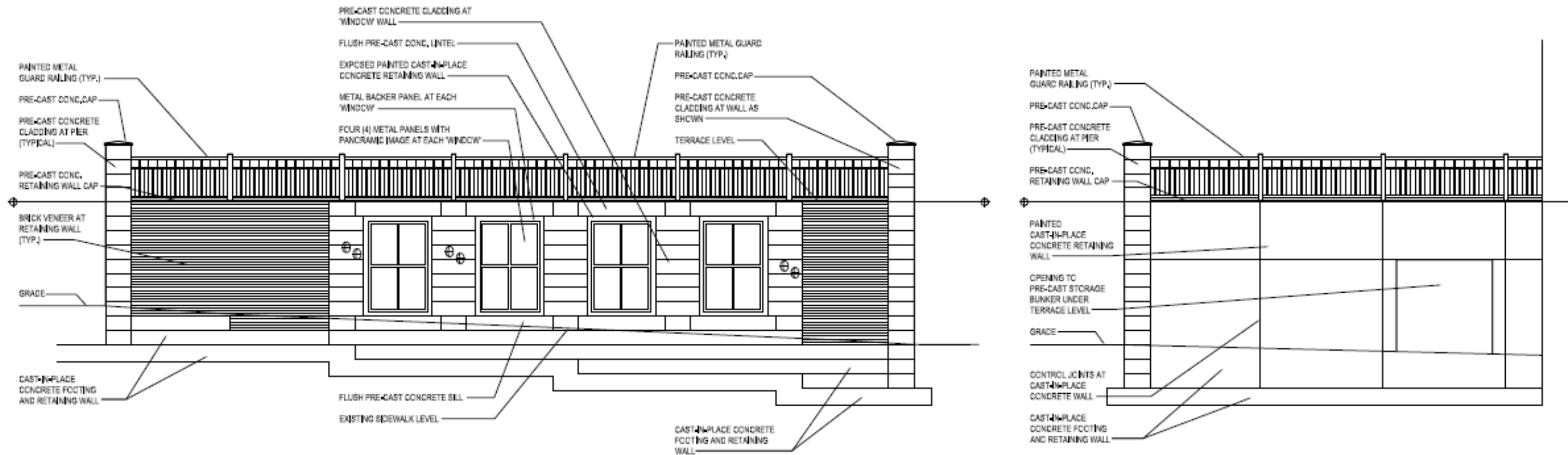
CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE PARK
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM
UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740

PLAN: PAVING LAYOUT
PROJECT NO: 18116
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"
DATE: 8 JULY 2017
REVISIONS



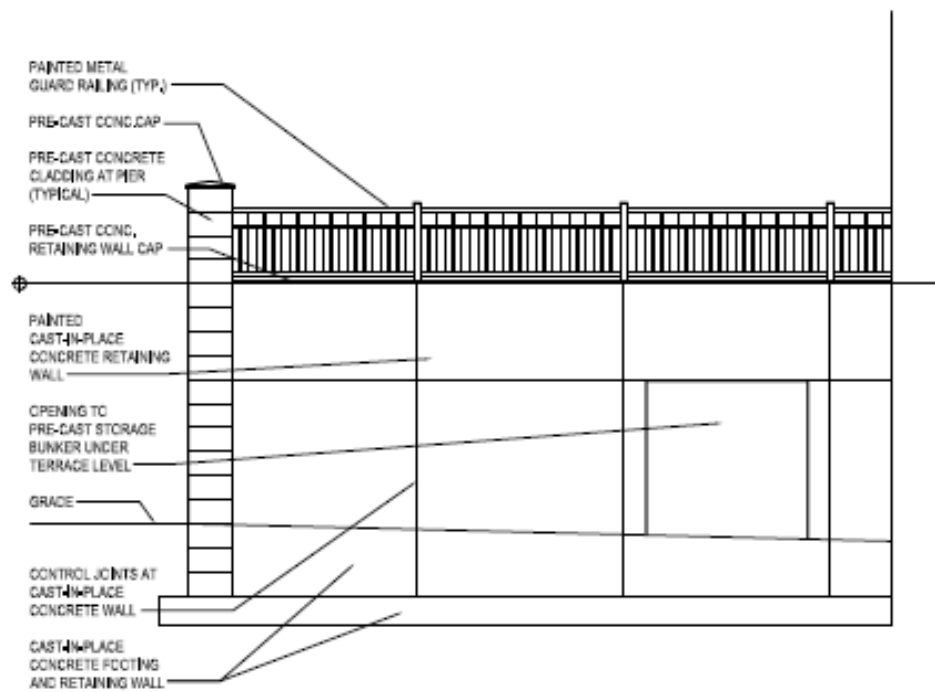
NEW PLAN

ELEVATION: WEST - JOHNNY CAKE HILL
1/4"=1'-0"



ELEVATION: SOUTH - UNION STREET
1/4"=1'-0"

ELEVATION: EAST - LOADING DOCK
1/4"=1'-0"



CIVITECTS
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NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION

CAPTAIN PAUL COFFE PARK
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM
UNION STREET and JOHNNY CAKE HILL
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02746

ELEVATIONS: SOUTH, EAST and WEST
PROJECT NO: 18116
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"
DATE: 6 JULY 2017
REVISIONS:

A2