



**CITY OF DOVER, DELAWARE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING  
Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 3:30 PM**

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*City Hall Council Chambers, 15 Lockerman Plaza, Dover, Delaware*

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**AGENDA**

**IN-PERSON and VIRTUAL MEETING NOTICE**

The Historic District Commission Meeting for Thursday, May 15, 2025 will be held as an In-Person Meeting at the City Council Chambers. The public is welcome to attend in person. The Meeting will also be provided as a Virtual Meeting using Webex, an audio/video conferencing system as an electronic means of communication. See the participation information below to join by phone or computer.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INFORMATION  
City of Dover Historic District Commission Meeting of May 15, 2025**

Join by Phone: Dial 1-650-479-3208  
Access code: 253 568 95749  
Password from Phones: 36837432

Join Online: <https://bit.ly/HDCMeeting05152025>  
Webinar Password: DoverHDC  
Webinar Address: 2535 689 5749

If you are new to Webex, get the app now at <https://www.webex.com/> to be ready when the meeting starts. For problems accessing the meeting, please call the Planning Office at (302) 736-7196.

**WELCOME**

**ROLL CALL**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Adoption of Minutes of February 20, 2025

**COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS**

**Summary of Activity**

- [2.](#) Summary of Applications for 2024 and 2025
- [3.](#) Summary of Architectural Review Certificates for 2025

**Department of Planning & Inspections Updates**

**NEW APPLICATIONS**

- [4.](#) HI-25-03 Biggs Museum Expansion: Select Removals at 15 and 21 The Green – Public Hearing and Review of the Architectural Review Certification for the selective removal of portions of the buildings located at 15 and 21 The Green as associated with future renovation and expansion of the Biggs Museum of American Art. The proposal includes the selective dismantling of a fire escape at 15 The Green and selective demolition of the rear two-story addition, basement and associated fire escape at 21 The Green. The properties total 0.2 acres+/- and are both zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone) and subject to the SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone) and the H (Historic District Zone). The subject properties are located on the northeastern side of The Green, south of East North Street and east of South State Street. The owner of record is the Sewell C Biggs Trust dba Biggs Museum of American Art. Property Addresses: 15 and 21 The Green. Tax Parcels: ED05-077.09-05-19.00-000 and ED05-077.09-05-18.00-000. Council District 4.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Review of Permits Referred to Commission**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Certified Local Government (CLG) Program**

**Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan**

**ADJOURN**

**Posted:** May 8, 2025

THE AGENDA ITEMS AS LISTED MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED IN SEQUENCE. PURSUANT TO 29 DEL. C. §10004(e)(2), THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OR THE DELETION OF ITEMS, INCLUDING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS, WHICH ARISE AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING

**CITY OF DOVER**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 3:30 PM as an In-Person Meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers (anchor location) and virtually using the videoconferencing system Webex. With Chairman Czerwinski presiding, the other members present were Ms. Horsey, Mrs. Richardson, and Mrs. Mason. (There is currently one member not appointed.)

Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mrs. Duca, and Mrs. Savage-Purnell.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Mrs. Mason moved for approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, and the vote was unanimously carried 4-0.*

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING OF DECEMBER 19, 2024**

*Ms. Horsey moved for approval of the Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2024, with any necessary corrections, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, and approved 4-0.*

**COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS**

**Summary of Applications 2024**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that a Summary of the Applications from the calendar year 2024 were included in your packet. In that year, you reviewed a total of 9 applications. The summary chart gives when you took action and then kind of the current status of a number of those items. The Mobility Center Parking Garage project was heard by the Planning Commission in January and was granted conditional approval including Site Plan and Architectural Review Certification. The Legislative Hall Building Addition project, likewise, has been through Planning Commission and is working through their Final Plan approval processes at this point. And then if you have not been in the area of the Kent County Family Courthouse project this week, they have started to set the concrete panels with the Parking Garage, hence the very large crane that is now gracing part of Downtown Dover.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions. There were none.

**Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2024-2025**

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is where we track all Permit activity in the Historic District area. For 2024, there were a total of 32 Permits in the Historic District. A good number of them were related to signage with roofs coming in second for the year. This also includes Building Permits for exterior work, which are subject to Architectural Review Certification. There were some interior work permits, but those are not subject to that process.

Additionally, there were other permits for fencing and Administration Permits, a temporary sign, and a Demolition activity. Of those permits (total of 32), most of them were eligible for Staff Review with three of them involving the Historic District Commission.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that we also included the Summary of the Architecture Review Certification with the permit activity for the month of January here in 2025. There were two Permits that were issued in the Historic District. One of them was related to the property at 21 North American Avenue, which you saw the referral of that permit in October or November. The Demolition Permit for 148 S. Bradford Street was issued in January. The demolition of that particular building has progressed.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Mrs. Richardson asked if a Demolition Permit was submitted for 150 S. Bradford Street. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied, I am not sure yet because the current tenant in that building is obviously having to relocate and I don't think the relocation spot is quite ready yet. We see a lot of permits, so I'm not sure if there was one submitted. It has not been issued yet.

#### Department of Planning & Inspections Updates

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that we have not added any additional Staff to fill our vacancies at this point in the Planning Office. We do have Consultant Services for planning activities from the Rossi Group. They are assisting with a number of planning review processes related to plans and permitting for us at the present time.

#### **NEW APPLICATION**

HI-25-01 The Old Post at 55 Loockerman Plaza - Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification for redevelopment of the Old Dover Post Office property consisting of 1.267 acres for a mixed-use project known as The Old Post. The project involves the demolition of the rear warehouse portion of the existing building and adaptive re-use of the front 4,560 SF portion of the building for commercial retail and business space. A three-story 31,500 SF building addition is proposed for thirty-six (36) residential apartment units and with parking and other site improvements. The property is zone C-2 (Central Commercial Zone), subject to the SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone), and subject to the H (Historic District Zone). The property is located on the north side of Loockerman Plaza and adjacent to Innovation Way. The owner of record is the City of Dover and equitable owner is Old Post, LLC. Property Address: 55 Loockerman Plaza. Tax Parcel: ED-05-077.05-04-53.00-000. Council District 4.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is the project known as the Old Post at 55 Lockerman Plaza. This is the location of the former Dover Post Office. The building is there at the intersection of Loockerman Plaza and Innovation Way. Innovation Way is on the east side of the building and on the plan shown here it is the street that would be at the top of the page.

This property at 55 Loockerman Plaza is just over 1.2 acres in size, and it currently has the vacant building that served as the former Dover Post Office before their relocation to a new facility on Bank Lane a few years ago. With this project, they are proposing a project to renovate and then add on to this existing building to create a mixed-use, commercial building that also includes multi-family housing in the form of apartments. The property is zoned C-2 which is our Central Commercial Zone. The property also falls within the Source Water Protection Overlay Zone. However, there are exemptions for properties in the Downtown related to that zoning district. Today the Historic District Commission will be considering the Architectural Review Certification and a recommendation on that. This application is also subject to a Site Plan application that will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. And as such the Planning Commission will have the final action on the Architectural Review Certification ultimately.

The Post Office Building was constructed in the 1960s here for this version of the post office building, as it's been several different places here in these few blocks. Most recently that function relocated. The property and building is owned by the City of Dover and the City of Dover issued a RFP (Request for Proposal). The applicants before you were the successful person or entity that will be purchasing the property from the City and redeveloping it. The existing building has a very classical pedimented front entry that you can see from Loockerman Plaza and then extends continuously to the north with a kind of a warehouse section of the building which was previously the kind of back of house mail processing facility. With their project proposal, it does involve a partial demolition and that would be a demolition of the rear warehouse portion of the building. This proposed demolition would keep the front portion of the building intact and then reutilize that space, which is a two-story area for the commercial side of things. Where the building is demolished is where the new building addition would be constructed and that is a three-story addition, to consist of a series of apartment units on the interior. With the project, they are also making improvements for the parking. The portions of the parking lot/loading area that exists today will continue and then additional parking expanded along the west side of the property. There are sidewalks along the frontages and other sidewalk connections that will be improved with the project. This plan sheet here shows tree planting and landscaping. This was an extra sheet that we provided to the Historic District Commission members with a hard copy on their desks today. From the Historic District Commission standpoint, you are looking at the review of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. So, there are portions of Chapter 3, which deal with the maintenance, repair, preservation and restoration of existing historic buildings, and then also Chapter 4 where new construction additions, demolition, and relocation are described. With demolition, there are a series of criteria to consider and they in fact with this application are showing us what would be demolished and then also what would be put back in place. With the Report, the Planning Staff beginning on page seven have issued a number of comments and recommendations. We are recommending conditional approval of the Architectural Review Certification, finding the building to be of a compatible design with the nearby buildings. It does include the preservation of the key frontage piece of the building on Loockerman Plaza fitting in with the context of the area. Certainly, the new addition takes clues from the surrounding architecture as well since it is proposed to be in brick.

**Representative:** Mr. Mike Glick, Lighthouse Construction

Mr. Glick stated that he was also a member of the development team for the proposed redevelopment of the Old Post. With me today is Lauren Townsend, Design and Development Manager with Lighthouse Construction.

**Presentation**

Dawn has done a nice job explaining our vision of the project before you today, so I will be brief. We are proposing a renovation and addition of the former Post Office site located at 55 Loockerman Plaza into a mixed-use, commercial retail, and multi-family facility before you and referred to as the Old Post. For over 50 years, 55 Loockerman Plaza was a hub and an institution within Dover's community. Many of us have memories of how this building played an important role in our lives. Over the past year, I've heard many stories about their first jobs, grabbing a hot dog from the local street vendor as a kid, or for me taking my daughters there to get their very first passport many years ago. Given this connection with the community, we have chosen to keep the primary structure of along Loockerman to help hopefully celebrate the next fifty years. The rear of the structure where we refer to as the warehouse and the loading docks is proposed to be demolished to provide additional parking adjacent to the existing Library parking and constructing a new three-story multi-family building (addition) of 36 apartments. This image here is of the existing with the additional frontage and access to the streets. You can see the apartment structure that we are proposing to the rear. Reviewing the Downtown Dover historic structures, we look to respect and reflect the historical architecture rather than replicate it with the renovation and addition to the Old Post. We look at the aesthetic nature of brick and glass and the use of limestone along the base of the structures and entrances. We have provided the next two slides which are the view of the intersection from Loockerman and Innovation Way to show you both before and after. Then a view at the entry to the Library, where you can see both before and after with minimal impact to the Loockerman Plaza frontage. The proposed design retains much of the existing facade while introducing modern elements for improved pedestrian connection to the Loockerman streetscape. We preserve the existing columns in the portico structure but increased the fenestration of the ground level to improve the pedestrian engagement with the retail and outdoor seating component of the structure. The new construction portion of the building houses the multi-family residential area of the mixed-use development. The addition is set back to allow increased density while maintaining the light and open feel of Loockerman Plaza. The design of the apartments aims to compliment the institutional fabric of the Capital Square context of East Loockerman while bringing in pedestrian scale design elements of the West Loockerman corridor. The exterior material palette reflects the surrounding architecture consisting of red brick in a brick bond pattern, a limestone style EFIS, and painted accents and trims. We utilize architectural details, typically of buildings Downtown such as piers, cornices, and banding to create articulation on the façade while proposing a series of Juliet balconies for each apartment, to allow the residents to engage with the streetscape while utilizing the rhythmic use of brick and glass commonly seen throughout the Downtown historic structures. The cornice of the proposed structure is a three-tiered brick detail shown on the next slide to provide relief without competing with the detailed dental moulding of the existing former Post Office. The west side (the Library elevation) of the proposed structure is a continuation of the rhythmic of Juliet balconies, glass and brick, and limestone flanked by the existing structure remain. The north or rear of the building facing the parking lot is adorned with brick and limestone. We

received the Planning Staff's comments regarding additional details along the rear of the structure. While it acknowledges the rear of the building, we will work with the City Planning Staff and study other similar structures in Dover to ensure we complement the area. With that, we would like to thank the Planning Staff for their review of the project and acknowledge their comments. We remain committed to working with the Staff in each of those comments to ensure a positive outcome for the project. I'll be happy to answer any questions regarding the project.

Mrs. Melson-Williams noted that the applicant submitted a follow-up letter dated February 18, 2025 where they went through the series of Staff Comments and Recommendations and reacted to those. So, in some cases it provided some additional information. Mr. Glick noted specifically the question that we had about the upper cornice of the building addition with a graphic that's shown on the screen here and then also within that letter. That letter was provided to you and was also available on your desk this afternoon. Chairman Czerwinski asked if everyone had seen the letter showing the cornice and the other answers to the notes.

Chair Czerwinski asked if there were any other questions.

Ms. Horsey mentioned that she's sat on a lot of these Commissions and seen submissions. It's nice to see that you took the forethought to print out the questions and recommendations from Staff and answer them. It was good to read them.

I think it was yesterday or this morning when they came electronically, but to have it now in print form is really nice.

Mr. Glick replied you are welcome. Staff do a great job reviewing so we wanted to answer their questions. Ms. Horsey, thank you for that.

Ms. Horsey had a question on the overall height of the new addition. It's two feet taller than the original building. Is there a reason it needs to be taller than the original?

Mr. Glick replied in accommodating the three stories of apartments, we require an additional two feet. We didn't feel it was not substantial. At the same time, the rooftop will have mechanical units on it. So, we wanted to ensure that the parapet height was of such a height that it would have screening so you can't see it. As you can see from the elevations and renderings, you cannot see any of the rooftop equipment, which was also important for us.

Ms. Horsey mentioned well that it was her next question to follow up, but you answered it. So, actually the very top couple of feet are a parapet to disguise on top of the building. Mr. Glick replied yes ma'am.

Ms. Horsey questioned the front on either end of the main entrance, there's what is proposed to be a glass kind of enclosure for a large opening. Mr. Glick replied that it is correct, yes.

Ms. Horsey asked how would that work? Because the way that it's presented, it looks like there's just two big black holes. Mr. Glick replied we would propose using if you're familiar with a Nano-wall system or others as a folding glass door; so it works. What we're proposing is essentially working from those existing windows. So, everything from the existing windows and

between them would be removed and it is a large series of folding glass doors. When closed it would look like a series of doors, and when opened it would just be a large open space that would then connect the interior to the exterior. Our ultimate goal is for a restaurant tenant that would have both interior and outdoor seating, and this is in preparation for that.

Ms. Horsey asked if most of the time they would be closed, is that right? Mr. Glick replied that at this time of year they would be. Ms. Horsey said well, I know, but just trying to get an idea. Mr. Glick replied yeah, typically we see these in restaurants with garage doors, but this is from an architectural perspective, a better application for the frontage along Lookerman.

Typically, in these applications from April to November depending on our shoulder seasons the doors can be open. The nice part is they can be open in the afternoons, closed in the mornings and evenings, and depending on the weather, so try to utilize that outdoor environment as much as possible. Ms. Horsey said thank you.

Mrs. Richardson mentioned that she noticed that the first floor of the addition has a limestone façade whereas everything above it has a brick façade. Is there a reason for the limestone versus the brick? Mr. Glick replied given the height of the structure and the residential nature of it, we wanted to try to reduce the feeling of the overall height of the structure. We felt that if we blended the first floor of limestone finish and then brick above, otherwise it would have been a big brick box. So, we tried to break up that facade and compliment the area.

Mrs. Mason asked about the tenants in the building. I know that these are all going to be apartments and not condominiums and strictly for renters. I didn't know what sort of research had been going on. Would you have a certain tenant with special opportunities for apartments that are very affordable? I know you are doing most of the construction, but I don't know what sort of studies have been done on how this will work as a rental building.

Mr. Glick replied we have had a market study done on demand here in Dover to ensure that obviously if we build it, we want to make sure we fill it. It is a market rate apartment; so it is at market rate. Certainly, as things progress and the conversations that we have had, it is market rate apartments.

Mrs. Mason said I think it's a great location and I am glad that you're doing it. I think it should be very successful. Mr. Glick said thank you.

Chairman Czerwinski said that he really did not have any questions about the architectural details. He appreciates Staff notes because they are very detailed and very thoughtful. I do appreciate the sensitivity of how this building was constructed and designed. The rehab of these buildings is always the toughest bit of any design element for an architectural structure. You have to be able to keep that part. The rear part is complimentary, and it sets back. As far as height is concerned, I am not really concerned about the height because I think the overall height of this building is probably the same as the peak of the library or very close.

If you look at massing, they are going to be pretty much equivalent to each other from the eye. I do appreciate the thought that was put into this building. I think the open front is awesome because I think they introduced the European aspect to the façade. And of course, those windows

close. So, when those windows are closed, it's going to look just like the rest of the building as far as the massing or the windows design. So, I do appreciate it.

Chair Czerwinski asked if there were any other questions.

Chair Czerwinski said thank you very much. I appreciate it. Thank you. Do you have anybody else that wants to speak on behalf of the company? Mr. Glick said no.

*The public hearing is open.*

Mr. Todd Stonesifer stated that he resides at 115 North State Street. I am currently the Board Chair for the Downtown Dover Partnership, and I am here to represent the Downtown Dover Partnership. While you may not believe this, the Downtown Dover Partnership absolutely has a mission of retaining the history as much as we can. I know we had some discussions that may seem to the contrary in this room. We are here fully in support of the Lighthouse team and their designs. The activity that they are going to create, we believe will activate the Downtown area and will provide people living, working, and playing Downtown, which will have an effect on retaining the history in The Green, in our other Downtown, and Loockerman Street corridor. The more people we put here, the better chance we have of creating activity where the neighborhood in itself will create improvements to their existing buildings and improve on bringing buildings back to life. We are fully in support. We love the idea of activating the outside. We love the fact that they have retained the overall identity of the building. We think that it is a great addition to the efforts to restore Downtown. I can answer questions.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone else that would wish to speak. If not, then we will move online.

The public hearing was closed seeing no one wishing to speak in the room or virtually.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone else with questions or concerns. There was none.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there was no written correspondence.

Chairman Czerwinski stated that I think it is a straightforward design, and I really liked the Staff notes. There was a lot more sensitivity in the Staff notes in catching a lot of the details that we would be asking about. Like the cornice detail, because we have had that in the past where some of these buildings were quite brutalistic and lacking external details. We've had issues with that in the past. I really appreciate the Staff notes identifying the lack of a cornice and lack of some details of the building.

*Ms. Horsey moved for approval of the Architectural Review Certification for Application HI-25-01 The Old Post at 55 Loockerman Plaza as presented including the elements of Staff notes, review comments and recommendation found in the Report. It was seconded by Mrs. Richardson and approved 4-0.*

**NEW BUSINESS****Review of Permits Referred to Commission**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that there were no Permits to specifically bring to the Commission today.

**OLD BUSINESS****Certified Local Government (CLG) Program**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that she had nothing new to report.

**Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that with the City's Downtown Development District we are working on an implementation aspect of that. The City's Downtown Development District program received a five-year renewal. The Renewal Application was considered late last summer and as part of that, we are moving through an Ordinance to make some changes to the boundaries of the Downtown Development District. Since it was first established, the amount of area you can have in such a district has expanded. With our Renewal Application, we took full advantage of that and now we're doing the catch up of how that needs to be augmented in our Code. Certainly, in an upcoming meeting, once that's adopted, we'll bring you information just so you can see what those boundaries are. This project that you just reviewed is in the Downtown Development District. So, that gives them some opportunities to pursue some City Incentives, and then also there are State Rebates as part of the State level aspects of the Downtown Development District program.

We can certainly report to you with a little more information just as a learning experience for you on that in the future.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if anyone had any questions.

Chairman Czerwinski asked about the *Design Standards and Guidelines* Addendum. He understands that we had monetary issues and the issues of trying to appropriate the funds for Grants and be able to do that kind of legwork. Is there any possibility we can employ an intern from the University of Delaware or Delaware State University that could possibly do that as a project? I do not know if that is something that has been done in the past. It might be an opportunity for an undergraduate or a graduate student to do a short addendum that we could use as a tool. You know, they could do the research and maybe present that to us. It's just an idea that might take some of the legwork or hard work away from trying to get a contractor and money and that sort of thing and have an intern do it instead.

Mrs. Melson-Williams said I mean it is certainly something that Staff could take under advisement, but at the present time I would say we are trading water and given the current staffing levels in our office, at least for this foreseeable future. Our proposed budget for FY'26, which would start in July, did retain at least at the present time in the draft that we submitted. Some money should there be a Grant opportunity to continue that to match.

But at this present time, it's not necessarily a priority that we are pursuing given our staffing levels in general.

Mrs. Richardson asked if they could retain the drawings. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that you may retain those drawings. I know I had to collect some things in the past because they were governmental buildings. So, you are welcome to retain these.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there were any questions or comments before we adjourn?

*Mrs. Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting seeing no other items of business, seconded by Mrs. Mason, and unanimously carried 4-0 of the members present.*

Meeting adjourned at 4:13 PM

Sincerely,

Maretta Savage-Purnell  
Secretary

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-24-01	Referral of Fence Permit #23-1868 at 146 S. State Street	146 S. State Street	Fence Permit	Permit #23-1868 referred to HDC by City Planner for consultation on Architectural Review Certification; 1/28/2024 HDC deferred action on ArchRevCert seeking additional information on its materials, location, and another nearby fence. 2/15/2024 HDC granted ArchRevCert subject to conditions.	Permit Application received 12/13/2023 and Referred to the HDC for consultation. The Fence is subject to Code Enforcement Case #23-3983 for installation without a Permit. It is a vinyl fence that is six foot in height. HDC granted ArchRevCert subject to conditions: Fence #2 must be wood and 4 feet in height. Fence #1 due to location can remain at vinyl at 6 feet. Permit issued in April 2024. Part of Fence removed.
HI-24-02	Building Demolition at 148 S. Bradford Street	148 S. Bradford Street	Review for Architectural Certification for Demolition	Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 5/16/2024. Action to deny ArchRevCert.	Request to demolish existing building (currently used as offices). HDC denied ArchRevCert for demolition. Applicant filed an Appeal to the Planning Commission; Appeal considered by Planning Commission on 6/17/2024. Planning Commission granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow Demolition of Building. Demolition Permit #24-1835 issued; demolition underway.
HI-24-03	Building Demolition at 150 S. Bradford Street	150 S. Bradford Street	Review for Architectural Certification for Demolition	Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HCD on 5/16/2024. Action to deny ArchRevCert.	Request to demolish existing building (currently used as offices). HDC denied ArchRevCert for demolition. Applicant filed an Appeal to the Planning Commission, Appeal considered by Planning Commission on 6/17/2024. Planning Commission granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow Demolition of Building.

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-24-04	Legislative Hall Parking Garage at 425 East Avenue	425 East Avenue, corner of East Avenue/ E. Water Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard South	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 5/16/2024. Recommended approval of ArchRevCert for project.	Site Development Plan review for new Parking Garage Structure and associated site improvements. Recommendation on ArchRevCert will be forwarded to Planning Commission for future consideration during Site Plan review process. Application filed with Board of Adjustment for variances related to floodplain requirements; BOA considered on 6/20/2024 and granted approval of two variances (V-24-01). Site Plan Application (S-24-14) filed and granted conditional approval and ArchRevCert by Planning Commission on 9/16/2024. Applicant working to finalize Site Plan documents.
HI-24-05	Building Demolition at 120 S. Governors Avenue	120 S. Governors Avenue	Review for Architectural Certification for Demolition	Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 6/20/2024. Granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow Demolition of building.	Request to demolish existing commercial building (was Acme grocery store then recent tenants of auto parts store and a Child Day Care Center). Demolition Permit issued and demolition activities underway in Fall 2024. Demolition of building completed.
HI-24-06	Delaware Supreme Court Building Addition and Renovations	55 The Green	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Action on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 9/19/2024. Granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow building addition.	Review of ArchRevCert for one story Building Addition. Project is subject to an Administrative Site Plan process; Administrative Site Plan filed and currently under review.

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-24-07	Legislative Hall Building Addition	411 Legislative Avenue	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 10/17/2024. Recommended approval of ArchRevCert for project.	Site Development Plan review for Building Addition and Plaza Area and associated site improvements. Recommendation on ArchRevCert will be forwarded to Planning Commission for future consideration during Site Plan review process. Site Plan Application filed and granted conditional approval with ArchRevCert by Planning Commission on November 18, 2024.
HI-24-08	Referral of Building Permit #24-1399 at 21 N. American Avenue	21 N American Avenue (and previously 19 N American Avenue)	Building Permit	Permit #24-1399 referred to HDC by City Planner for consultation on Architectural Review Certification; Scheduled for HDC Review on 10/17/2024. Recommended Approval of ArchRevCert subject to conditions.	Permit Application received 9/25/2024 and Referred to the HDC for consultation. Project for demolition of rear addition, rebuild of rear addition, renovation to first rear addition, remove asbestos siding and reclad with vinyl siding, and porch renovations. HDC per conditions of ArchRevCert allowed demolition of rear addition and reconstruction, recladding with vinyl siding, and minor change to rear window placements. Permit issued subject to conditions.
HI-24-09	Dover Mobility Center (Parking) Garage	133 S Governors Avenue, 139 S Governors Avenue, 145 S Governors Avenue, 136 S Bradford St, 148 S Bradford St, 150 S Bradford St	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 12/19/2024 and recommended ArchRevCert subject to conditions.	Site Development Plan review for Dover Mobility Center (multi-purpose Parking Garage) and associated site improvements. Recommendation on ArchRevCert will be forwarded to Planning Commission for future consideration during Site Plan review process. Site Plan Application (S-25-01) filed and Planning Commission granted conditional approval in January 2025.

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-25-01	The Old Post at 55 Loockerman Plaza	55 Loockerman Plaza (Old Dover Post Office)	Site Plan for development of mixed-use with apartments	Review for Architectural Review Certification of Site Plan; Public Hearing and Review by HDC on 2/20/2025. Recommended approval of ArchRevCert for project.	Site Plan reviewed by Historic District Commission for Recommendation. Site Plan Application (S-25-07) filed and granted conditional approval and ArchRevCert by Planning Commission on 3/17/2025. Applicant to be working to finalize Site Plan documents.
HI-25-02	Mixed Use Building at 120 S Governors Avenue	120 S Governors Avenue	Site Plan for development of mixed use building	Application filed in March 2025 but on hold by the Applicant for continued design work.	Review of Project on hold.
HI-25-03	Biggs Museum Expansion: Selected Removals at 15 and 21 The Green	15 The Green and 21 The Green	Review for Architectural Certification for Select Removal/Demolition of Rear Additions	Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HCD scheduled on 5/15/2025.	Request to remove/demolish portions of the rear additions at the buildings as associated with future project for the Biggs Museum of American Art expansion.

Summary of Permit Applications with Architectural Review Certification  
2025- Updated Thru 4-30-2025

Item 3.

DATE	PERMIT #	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION ON ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW CERTIFICATE	NOTES
1/17/2025	24-1399	21 N American Avenue	Building Permit - Interior & Exterior Renovations	Staff Approval as per HDC Action on ArchRevCert HI-24-08.	Demolition of rear addition and its rebuild, exterior finish renovations to allow vinyl siding, renovations to front porch. Permit was referred to the Historic District Commission for review.
1/13/2025	24-1835	148 S Bradford Street	Demolition Permit	Staff Approval as per PC Final Action regarding ArchRevCert (appeal of HDC denial of ArchRev Cert) HI-24-02.	Demolition of existing one-and-half story building for future redevelopment of site. HDC denied request on 5/16/2024 and Appeal to Planning Commission granted approval 6/17/2024. Demolition underway.
2/5/2025	25-132	45 The Green, Sykes Building	Building Permit - Interior Renovations	No ArchRevCert Required	Interior Renovations to subfloor in the office buildings.
2/18/2025	25-136	107 S State Street	Sign Permit	Staff Approval	Post Panel sign.
2/20/2025	25-148	151 Kings Hwy SW, Woodburn	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Roof replacement project with synthetic slate material and associated flashing and gutter systems.
3/11/2025	25-209	307 S State St	Sign Permit	Staff Approval	installation of Projecting Sign for office
3/19/2025	25-277	12 Kings Hwy SE, Building at Elizabeth W. Murphy School	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of EPDM roof system (flat roof) with the same following repairs.
3/10/2025	25-284	201 W Loockerman St	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of flat roof on commercial building.
3/10/2025	25-286	30 S American Ave	Roof Permit	No Planning Staff Review.	Removal and replacement of shingle roof.
4/7/2025	24-1152	26 S State Street, Apartment Building	Window Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of windows of various sizes & formats on all elevations, repair and repaint of trimwork areas and shutters.

Summary of Permit Applications with Architectural Review Certification  
 2025- Updated Thru 4-30-2025

Item 3.

DATE	PERMIT #	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION ON ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW CERTIFICATE	NOTES
4/2/2025	25-395	214 S State Street	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Roof Replacement on main block of building with metal roofing system.
4/15/2025	25-408	150 S. Bradford St	Demolition Permit	Staff Approval as per PC Final Action regarding ArchRevCert (appeal of HDC denial of ArchRev Cert) HI-24-03.	Demolition of existing two story building for future redevelopment of site. HDC denied request on 5/16/2024 and Appeal to Planning Commission granted approval 6/17/2024. Demolition underway.



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW STAFF REPORT  
Before Dover Historic District Commission  
May 15, 2025

- Application: Biggs Museum Expansion: Select Removals at 15 and 21 The Green, HI-25-03
- Owner: Sewell C. Biggs Trust
- Location: Northeast part of The Green, south of East North Street in Dover, DE
- Addresses: 15 The Green and 21 The Green
- Tax Parcels: ED05-077.09-05-19.00-000 and ED05-077.09-05-18.00-000
- Size: 0.11 Acre± and 0.09 Acre ±
- Present Uses: Office
- Proposed Use: Office
- Present Zoning: IO (Institutional and Office Zone)  
H (Historic District Zone)  
SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone – Tier 3 Excellent Recharge Area)
- For Consideration: Architectural Review Certification:

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Historic Commission will conduct a Public Hearing and will act on a request for the Architectural Review Certification for the selective removal of portions of the buildings located at 15 and 21 The Green as associated with future renovation and expansion of the Biggs Museum of American Art. The proposal includes the selective dismantling of a fire escape at 15 The Green and selective removal of the rear two-story addition, basement and associated fire escape at 21 The Green. The properties total 0.2 acres±, are both zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone), subject to the SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone), and the H (Historic District Zone). The subject properties are located on the northeastern side of The Green, south of East North Street and east of South State Street. The owner of record is the Sewell C Biggs Trust dba Biggs Museum of American Art. Property Addresses: 15 and 21 The Green. Tax Parcels: ED05-077.09-05-19.00-000 and ED05-077.09-05-18.00-000. Council District 4.

The following application for selected removals at 15 The Green and 21 The Green is submitted to the Historic District Commission regarding the issuance of the Architectural Review Certificate for a Demolition project. Applications for certain types of construction activity within the Historic District Zone (H) are reviewed by the Historic District Commission for Architectural Review Certification as part of the application review process. The Application is for review under the provisions of *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 10 Section 3.23. See below:

*3.23 Architectural review certification by the historic district commission.*

- (A) The historic district commission shall issue architectural review certificates for the construction or demolition of single-family and two-family homes, and nonresidential structures or additions involving a gross floor area of 3,000 square feet or less, after review of the proposed construction and after a determination that the construction is in general accordance with the standards set forth in subsection 3.25 below.
- (B) All applications to the historic district commission for architectural review certification shall be subject to the procedures set forth in subsection 3.26.
- (C) All decisions of the historic district commission pursuant to this subsection shall be formalized in a written notice of decision. When the commission grants a conditional approval under this subsection, all conditions of approval shall be set forth in writing in the notice of decision. In the event of a denial, the notice of decision shall state the reasons for denial and shall identify all elements of the application found to be contrary to the provisions or intent of this subsection.
- (D) An applicant may appeal the decision of the historic district commission to the planning commission, and such appeal shall be considered as an architectural review certification application to the planning commission and shall meet all of the requirements set forth in subsection 3.24 and subsection 3.26.

The Historic District Commission will act on an Architectural Review Certificate regarding the request for Selected Removals at 15 and 21 The Green.

Surrounding Land Uses

The location of the subject property is the northeast corner of The Green. As previously noted, the parcel is zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone) and within the Historic District (H) Zone. Properties immediately adjacent to the subject project location are zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone). Residential Properties owned and occupied by Ridgely House and Gardens LLC are adjacent to the west. Properties to the east are occupied by the Biggs Museum of American Art. Properties to the north are occupied by the State of Delaware. The surrounding properties are also within the H (Historic Zone).

Previous Applications

The existing structures were constructed in 1859. 15 The Green served as a private residence, and 21 The Green served as an office. The buildings were sold in 1876, after which 15 The Green became a boarding house for ±5 years. James Satterfield purchased 21 The Green in 1921 and completed extensive renovations. In 1947, the State of Delaware purchased 21 The Green and used it as overflow offices for the Board of Agriculture. In 1963, the State of Delaware purchased 15 The Green for use as offices by the State Banking Commissioner and the Office of the Attorney General. Shortly after the purchase, the secondary door on the front façade was converted into a

window. The buildings have served as offices for various agencies. Building Permit #12-26 was completed in 2012. It included the exterior restoration of both 15 and 21 The Green. Another Building Permit #15-643 was completed in 2015 and consisted of further exterior restorations for 15 The Green.

## II. HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

### Review of Historic Maps

The Green was an original part of the Town/City of Dover and has existed more or less in its current form for over 300 years. According to the A.D. Byles Map, the structures were present in 1859. The applicant's submission includes a more detailed history of development with other maps.

### Property Information

The subject property is located within H (Historic District Zone) as established by the City of Dover. Four contexts contribute to the historic character of Dover including the Green Historic Context, the Victorian Historic Context, the Loockerman Historic Context, and the Capitol Square Historic Context. This property is located within the Green Historic Context. The area found in the Green Historic Context was originally laid out in 1722 as a market square. The earliest buildings on the Green date to 1728. The *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone* describe this context as “varied in character. It includes the best-preserved historic context in the City, the Dover Green, as well as more modest residential and commercial structures that contribute to the character of the context of the Dover Green National Register District.”

The building located at 15 The Green was constructed in 1859. As described in the National Register of Historic Places Nomination and the Applicant Narrative, 15 The Green is a three-story Italianate-style building facing the Dover Green. The building functioned as a residence and an office, with a separate entrance for each. The building features a low-hipped roof above a bracketed cornice. The building has a five-bay façade symmetrically arranged. The façade features pressed brick laid in a running bond with fine mortar joints, and the front entrance consists of a paneled double door with an etched glass transom set in a Greek Revival surround. The building façade rests on a marble watertable and is served by a set of marble steps. The interior retains its original floor plan and has most of its original detailing, including two marble mantelpieces, plaster cornices, molded window and door surrounds, baseboard, paneled doors, and staircases.

The building located at 21 The Green was constructed in 1859 concurrently with the building at 15 The Green. It is a three-story brick office building. The rear addition and basement at 21 The Green were added between 1877 and 1885, and the structure was renovated again in 1921. The 1921 renovations included remodeling the lower third of the front façade into a three-bay configuration, adding a balustrade along the roofline, and altering/expanding the rear addition further.

### National Register of Historic Places

The structures are contributing buildings to the Dover Green Historic District as listed in the National Register of Historic Places ct. The following is the inventory listing for each from the 1984 nomination.

15 The Green – Kirk Building – 1858; brick, 3-story, 5-bay office building in the Italianate style. The building has a frame 2-story rear wing. The façade of the main block is of pressed brick and is laid in stretcher bond. There is a decorative stone water table, narrow 4/1 and 4/4 sash windows have stone sills and lintels. The double leaf centered door is framed by simple stone pilasters and a cornice with carved acanthus leaf design. The transom light is glazed with etched glass. There is a bracketed cornice under the deep eave. (c)

21 The Green – Robert A. Short Memorial Building – 1850's; brick running bond. 3-story, 3-bay. This flat roof Italianate building has a molded cornice, stone window lintels and a bracketed gable frontispiece. (c)

### III. PROJECT PROPOSAL

The application proposes the selected removal (demolition) of the rear addition, its basement and associated fire escape at 21 The Green, and the dismantling (demolition) of the fire escape at 15 The Green. This is the initial step in a larger plan to connect the newly acquired buildings 15 and 21 The Green into the Biggs Museum of American Art, opening additional gallery space and allowing for greater use of the outside space. The project proposes the preservation of the original structures (main blocks) and the façades of both buildings. The rear addition (wing) of 15 The Green is to remain. Further, the project proposes the preservation of the original footprint of 21 The Green before the 1877 and 1921 additions/renovations.

The proposed removals will dismantle the rear additions and elements added in later years to the rear of 15 and 21 The Green. These selected removals will allow the Biggs Museum to expand in a future.

The Applicant's submission includes an architectural narrative with a site overview, contextual analysis, existing conditions photography, historic analysis, and timeline of development. The elements of the project are as follows:

1. Existing Structure: No changes to the front facades are proposed for this project. The proposed selective removal is taking place in the rear of the properties. The existing fire escape at 15 The Green will be removed, and the two-story rear addition and related basement and fire escape at 21 The Green will be removed. Once complete, there will be some openings remaining in the rear facades of the structure to be filled, renovated, or restored at a later date as part of the future project. These select removals would not occur until part of the phasing for the future museum expansion project.
2. Sidewalks: The proposal does not affect sidewalk connectivity throughout The Green or along East North Street. Access to the cut-through between East North Street and The Green between the Biggs Museum and 21 The Green may be temporarily impeded during demolition.

See the attached Architectural Narrative document and associated graphics and drawings for detailed information on the proposed selected removals.

#### IV. ZONING REVIEW

These two properties are located in the H (Historic District Zone) and subject to the provisions of the *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 3 §21 and referenced sections. *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 10 §3.2 outlines the review process for Architectural Review Certification and related building height, bulk, and setback standards. Both properties are subject to the SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone). The buildings are currently used as offices by the Biggs Museum of American Art.

The subject project area is zoned IO (Institutional and Office). The IO zone allows for “Business, professional or government office, banks, research, design and development laboratories, public and institutional uses including hospitals, medical clinics, libraries, police stations, courthouses, transit centers, schools, colleges, universities, places of public assembly, philanthropic and charitable institutions, parks, playgrounds, public indoor recreation centers, athletic fields” as principal uses. The subject properties have frontage on one street, The Green. The IO zone requires a front yard of 10 feet, side yards of 10 feet and a rear yard of 15 feet. No changes are proposed that would impact the existing setbacks or building height. Future renovation and expansion plans would address these provisions of the *Zoning Ordinance*.

#### V. Review of DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The subject property is located in the H (Historic District Zone) within The Green Context. The Green Context is described on pages 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5 of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. This *Design Standards and Guidelines* describe this context as “varied in character. It includes the best-preserved historic context in the City, the Dover Green, as well as more modest residential and commercial structures that contribute to the character of the context of the Dover Green National Register District.” Location within the Dover Historic District Zone requires proposals for demolition, new construction, building additions, and certain renovation or rehabilitation activities to existing buildings to receive an Architectural Review Certificate.

As stated in the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*, an Architectural Review Certificate will be granted “if it is found that the architectural style, general design, height, bulk and setbacks, arrangement location and materials affecting the exterior appearance are generally in harmony with neighboring structures and complementary to the traditional architectural standards of the historic district.” In accordance with Article 10 §3.23, the Historic District Commission may approve the Architectural Review Certification if it determines that the project complies with the architectural review standards.

This proposal must be reviewed for conformity with the design criteria guidelines found in Chapter 3: Maintenance, Repair, Preservation and Restoration of Existing Historic Buildings and Chapter 4: New Construction, Additions, Demolition and Relocation. Information on the review considerations is given below.

#### Maintenance, Repair, Preservation and Restoration of Existing Historic Buildings

The *Design Standards and Guidelines* for New Construction (Chapter 3: pages 3-1 through 3-27) provide the design criteria and development guidelines. The preservation of the historic character

of the District is largely a function of the preservation of the existing historic building fabric. Paneled doors have been used during every period of Dover architecture and in every building type found in the four historic contexts.

### Demolition

The proposal for the selected removals of the rear addition and fire escapes on these buildings must be reviewed for conformity with the design criteria guidelines found in Chapter 4: New Construction, Additions, Demolition and Relocation.

The *Design Standards and Guidelines* gives guidance to the Historic District Commission by listing specific criteria to be evaluated when considering applications for the demolition of buildings (or portions of buildings) in the historic district (Chapter 4: pages 4-10 to 4-12). These guidelines are summarized below (see *Design Standards and Guidelines* for the complete text); an excerpt of Chapter 4 is attached.

1. Determine the financial implications of maintaining a property versus demolition.
2. Regardless of economic issues the relative significance of the individual buildings slated for demolition should be evaluated.
3. In development related applications the City should review the schematic plans for the new structures to weigh the virtues of the new structure versus what exists.
4. Determine the extent of adequate recordation of a property the applicant would be required to complete if demolition were approved.
5. Lots left vacant by demolition should be treated in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic context.

The section on demolition (P 4-10 through 4-12) establishes the considerations for the demolition of historic buildings. It is noted that this application proposes to retain the historic buildings and demolish rear additions that were not part of the original structures.

### VI. STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are Staff comments and recommendations for this application regarding project activities and Architectural Review Certification.

- 1) The *Design Standards and Guidelines* outline specific criteria to be evaluated in considering demolition applications (Chapter 4). The following are Staff's consideration of the criteria for Partial Demolition (Select removals of portions of the buildings).
  - a) In this instance, the economic maintenance evaluation of the property individually is not the issue for the applicant, but rather the need for the land to as part of a future larger project plan to expand the Biggs Museum of American Art and provide additional usable outdoor space.

- b) The Architectural Narrative document describes the structures as they have been through changes over the years. 15 The Green has changed from single family home to office use. 21 The Green was expanded between 1877 and 1885 with a frame, shed roofed addition and then further expanded in 1921, including remodeling of the lower third of the front façade into a three-bay configuration adding a balustrade along the roofline, and significantly altering and expanding the rear addition. Even with the changes the general integrity of the front façade of the buildings remain. The significance and integrity of each building is discussed in the narrative.
  - c) Included in the Architectural Narrative are some preliminary layouts for the proposed expansion of the Biggs Museum of American Art; however, the expansion project will be subject to other reviews.
  - d) We have been provided with clear plans for the selected removals and can verify it does not affect the portions of the property mentioned in the National Register of Historic Places nomination.
  - e) The buildings will remain and these select removal activities will not commence until the start of the expansion project as the renovations of the north elevations would have to be designed.
- 2) Staff recommends approval of the Architectural Review Certificate for the Biggs Museum Expansion: Select Removals at 15 and 21 The Green finding that the demolition will not significantly impact the historic character of The Green area of the Historic District. The intent of the project aligns with the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. The proposed demolition will restore 15 and 21 The Green closer to their original historic form and help open the way for expansion of the Biggs Museum. The area for the select removals is generally not visible from The Green thus maintaining the streetscape views and the building facades.
  - 3) The submitted Architectural Narrative outlines the extensive research, building documentation, and conditions assessments, and the master planning process with its engagement activities. The Applicant has made significant effort to clearly document all existing portions of the properties at 15 The Green and 21 The Green in photography and narrative. It is noted that a Historical Research Report was also prepared.
    - a) Staff recommends submission of the Historical Research Report on 15 and 21 The Green to the Delaware Division of Historic and Cultural Affairs (Delaware State Historic Preservation Office) for their records as part of the Delaware Cultural Resource Survey.
  - 4) Applicants should be prepared to provide a preservation strategy for the main parts of 15 and 21 The Green with the submittal of the Building Permits for demolition activities to ensure that the existing historic structures will be protected during the demolition process.
  - 5) If major changes and revisions to the design, materials, or site layout occur in the finalization of the plan and/or construction drawings contact the Department of Planning and Inspections. These changes may require resubmittal for review by the Historic District Commission.

- 6) The applicant shall be aware that Building Permits are required to proceed with any demolition activities on the project site. The permit applications must comply with the approvals and conditions granted through the Architectural Review Certification.
- 7) For the select demolition activities and building construction, the requirements of the building code or fire code must be complied with. Consult with the Building Inspection Staff and Fire Marshal regarding these requirements. The resolution of these items can impact the site design in some cases.
- 8) Any future construction of new buildings or expansion of the Biggs Museum will be subject to a separate application for Architectural Review Certification and must go through the Site Development Plan process.

Historic District Commission Action Required

The Historic District Commission shall consider the proposal and take action in regard to the Architectural Review Certification for 15 The Green and 21 The Green. The action should reflect consideration of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*.

Attachments:

- 1) Architectural Narrative document
- 2) Excerpt on Demolition from the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the Historic District Zone*



Forms Of Additions

The following are additional guidelines for additions to existing construction:

- New front porches should not be added to a historic building without precedent for a porch.
- It is inappropriate to enclose front porches.
- Handicapped access ramps should not be located on the primary facades of historic buildings, unless they can be located and designed to be unobtrusive. Regardless of where they are located, the sloped run of the ramp should be screened such that the slope of the ramp does not detract from the horizontal elements of the building to which it is attached. A new ramp should be constructed in a manner that does not require the removal of historic fabric, and does not damage the existing building. The ramp should be constructed in a manner such that its future removal will not damage existing historic fabric.
- Roof-top additions should not be constructed. These would disturb the

proportions of the building and the historic form of the roof.

- The addition of dormer windows and skylights is not recommended, but may be acceptable if kept to the rear of the building, not visible to the street.
- The design of the addition should make clear what is new and what is original. This may be done in a variety of ways, including simplifying of details, changing materials, slightly altering proportions, or even slightly varying paint color.
- Decks are inappropriate on front or side facades. When decks are constructed on rear facades, they should be screened from the street with landscape materials.
- The architectural style of an addition should not be older than the style of the existing building.

## Demolition

The pressure to demolish buildings within any historic district is a regrettable fact of life. Either through catastrophic damage or through years of neglect, there are and will continue to be situations when a building is deemed beyond repair and "not worth" preserving. As the Dover Historic District continues to attract new residents and businesses, there will be pressure to "make way" for the "progress" that new construction is believed by some to represent.

Whereas issues of design guidelines for preservation and new construction are driven by architectural and aesthetic considerations, demolition, especially of repairable structures,

is more frequently an economic issue. Indeed, the only other legitimate reason for consideration of demolition is if the building poses a threat to public safety. In considering applications for demolition, especially those based on economic or development considerations, the City must weigh issues beyond matters of architectural appropriateness, for demolition of an historic building in an Historic District is rarely if ever appropriate. Rather, the City must be convinced that all possible means of saving the building have been exhausted.

It should be noted that the City of Dover is trying to prevent unnecessary demolition by giving the Historic District Commission the authority to determine when "Demolition by Neglect" is occurring. "Demolition by Neglect" is defined as "improper maintenance or lack of maintenance of a building, structure or object which results in substantial and widespread deterioration of the building, structure or object which threatens the likelihood of preservation and which presents a threat to the public safety, health and welfare of the immediate community." Once the Historic District Commission determines that a property is in a state of Demolition by Neglect, it can direct the building inspector to take actions under the City's Dangerous Building Code or Housing Code to order repairs. It is the responsibility of all citizens to look for and report instances of Demolition by Neglect to the City of Dover Historic District Commission.

The following criteria should be evaluated in considering applications for the demolition of historic buildings within the Dover Historic District:

- To determine the financial implications of maintaining a property versus demolishing it, the City may ask an

applicant to submit documentation pertaining to differential costs, structural soundness, suitability for rehabilitation, estimated market value of the property as is and after renovation for continued use, economic feasibility of rehabilitation, purchase price, income, and cash flow information (relating to the property only) and any other information considered necessary.

- Regardless of economic issues, the relative significance of the building slated for demolition should be evaluated. If the building is not considered a contributing structure in the District, then its demolition may not be objectionable. If a building is significant, then even a finding of economic hardship may not be sufficient to allow demolition. Some buildings, such as the Richardson mansion, the Parke-Ridgely House, the Rose Cottage, etc., are so significant that extraordinary measures should be made to delay or prevent their demolition. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings is always preferable to demolition and new construction.
- In development-related applications, the City should review schematic plans for the new structure, in order to help weigh the virtues of the new versus what exists.
- Further, in order to provide some slight mitigation of the effects of unavoidable demolition of historic structures within the Dover Historic District, owners should be required to provide adequate recordation of a property. The extent of such recordation would depend on the

significance of the property. At the least, archival photographs should be produced for every historic building that is lost to demolition within the District. When the demolition of an extremely significant building is unavoidable, measured drawings should be produced that comply with the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

- Lots left vacant by demolition should be treated in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic context. In the residential and commercial contexts, a 5' high opaque barrier should be constructed at the building line, either a fence or plant materials or both. Parking should not be permitted on vacant lots. Community gardens or parks should be encouraged.

### **Relocation of Existing Buildings**

Moving historic buildings out of, into or within the Historic District should be discouraged. The removal of historic buildings from the District has the same effect as demolition on the historic character of the District. Moving historic buildings within the District confuses the actual history of the District. Moving historic buildings into the District falsifies the existing historic record by adding a building that does not belong to either time or place. Relocating a building, however, is always preferable to its demolition.



THE BIGGS MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART EXPANSION

**CITY OF DOVER  
HISTORIC COMMISSION  
REVIEW MATERIALS**

SELECTIVE REMOVALS AT 15 & 21 THE GREEN

**SMITHGROUP**

April 11, 2025

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# 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Founded in 1993, the Biggs Museum of American Art (The Biggs), is located in Dover, the capital of the State of Delaware. The Museum facilities are housed in a building that is leased by The Biggs from the State of Delaware as part of a partnership. The existing Museum building includes a 19th century government building (the Old County Building) and the 1993 expansion. The building was originally shared by the Museum and the State whose Visitor's Center occupied the first floor. However, in 2011, the State and Visitor's Center moved out and the building was partially renovated for the Museum to utilize the entire space.

## Historic Status

In 2022 The Biggs acquired two historic buildings adjacent to the existing Museum, as part of the ongoing partnership with the State of Delaware, 15 and 21 The Green (also known as the Kirk and Short Buildings, respectively). A summary of their historic status is as follows:

- 15 and 21 The Green are contributing buildings of the Dover Green National Register Historic District (1977 nomination, 1985 update).
- 15 and 21 The Green are located within the City of Dover Historic District Zone are subject to a city design review process known as The Architectural Review Certification.
- 15 and 21 The Green contribute to the spatial organization of the Dover Green cultural landscape, as evaluated by the National Park Service.
- These structures are within view of the interior of the Green and can be seen from the other historic structures facing the Green. These views are also contributing features of the historic landscape.

## Master Plan

As a first step to planning for a renovation and expansion of The Biggs that would incorporate 15 and 21 The Green into the Museum to create a holistic facility, The Biggs hired SmithGroup to provide a Master Plan in 2022. The resulting document provided a conditions assessment of all three buildings, highlighted building systems deficiencies, and made recommendations to address them. Significant deficiencies were identified with 15 and 21 The Green related to accessibility, fire safety and egress, in addition to continuous floor plate and other museum operational challenges.

## Historic Preservation Analysis

The Master Plan also included a Preservation Plan that provided guidelines outlining remaining historic fabric and recommendations for how it should be saved, restored, and celebrated. The Preservation Plan is holistic and considered all three historic structures with a focus on 15 and 21 The Green and the opportunities for modern interventions that could support the integration of the three buildings into a more unified facility. Additional analysis was provided through a Historic Research Report (see 7.0 Supporting Documents) that identified the following: while 15 The Green has a high level of integrity regarding overall design and remaining historic fabric, 21 The Green does not. This lack of integrity is due to many changes and modifications made over time to the structure, specifically to the rear portion of the building. This analysis informed the expansion and connection concept.

## Recommendation for Selective Removal

In order to achieve the identified best solution that supports expanded community use and addresses code and accessibility issues inherent in 15 and 21 The Green buildings, SmithGroup recommends the selective removal of the two-story plus basement rear portion of 21 The Green. As has been identified in the SmithGroup Historic Preservation Analysis, this addition does not contribute to

the significance of 21 The Green under Criterion A or C and does not have architectural significance on its own right due to the many alterations that have been made to the structure. The addition also lacks integrity due to its many modifications over time to windows, cladding, roofing, overall configuration, and the interior. It is recommended to selectively remove the existing masonry basement and two-story wood framed structure along with the attached metal fire escape and associated rear vestibule. The resulting exposed north façade of the remaining portion of 21 The Green will require further analysis during design to mitigate the remaining existing openings. However, it is expected that the four existing windows at the fourth floor will be preserved.

This report focuses on only the selective removal work and the application for the new work will follow at a later time. Selective removal will not occur until the new work (renovation and expansion) is ready to go into construction. Details of this recommendation will be outlined in more detail in this report.

## Community Benefits

By selectively removing the rear addition of 21 The Green building, it allows for an opportunity to consider incorporating spaces such as the community pavilion and outdoor green. These amenity spaces provide the desired overarching themes heard throughout the stakeholder and community engagement workshops. There is a stronger connection of The Biggs to The Green with the outdoor green area and an accessible route that connects the existing Biggs Museum with 15 and 21 The Green buildings. Potential additional square footage afforded by the recommended selective removal also allows for more gallery space to display a larger permanent collection and the ability to meet more stringent temporary traveling exhibit requirements. Lastly, the recommended removal allows for the maximization of daylight and views to provide unified, inviting spaces for the community-at-large to gather, learn, and be inspired by both the Biggs museum building and the art.

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## 2.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

In June 2022, SmithGroup was hired by The Biggs Museum of American Art (The Biggs) to prepare a Master Plan for their facility located at 406 Federal Street in Dover, Delaware, as well as the adjacent 15 and 21 The Green (Kirk and Short Buildings, respectively) that were recently acquired by The Biggs.

The resulting Architecture/Facilities Master Plan assessed the existing facilities and explored opportunities for expansion of The Biggs that would incorporate 15 and 21 The Green. Both structures are contributing structures to the Dover Green Historic District and the City of Dover Historic District Zone. The Dover Green is the site of the original Delaware State House (1791); is surrounded by historic homes dating to the early 1700s; and is the location of the Golden Fleece Tavern, the site of the first ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787.

The current Biggs Museum facility is located on the Legislative Mall of the State's Capital, with its entrance facing Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard N. The total gross square footage of the existing Biggs building is approximately 22,460 sq. ft. With the addition of 15 and 21 The Green Buildings, which together total 6,300 sq. ft., the square footage grows to close to 30,000 sq. ft.

The project consisted of a Facilities Master Plan, a Program Plan, and a Historic Preservation Plan that incorporated ideas for a sensitive renovation of 15 and 21 The Green, new construction of a connecting structure and/or other additions, adaptive reuse, renovation of select existing areas at The Biggs, and potential roadway/parking redesign. The project required an overall sensitivity to the historic nature of The Dover Green structures and the site, while designing creative solutions to modern public accommodations and today's diverse cultural patronage.

The project goals were to accomplish the following:

- Integrate the newly acquired 15 and 21 The Green buildings into an expanded museum.
- Evaluate the existing building conditions.
- Mitigate major existing conditions challenges through restoration and rehabilitation.
- Evaluate and offer updated building systems.
- Provide a future focused vision for a modern visual arts museum.
- Involve current and future visitors in the process.
- Enhance this home for art in and of Delaware.



**Figure 2.0**  
The Biggs Museum Site

## 2.1 SITE CONTEXT AND SURROUNDING

The existing Biggs Museum of American Art building is located on the Legislative Mall of the State's Capital of Dover. Its entrance faces east onto Federal Street with Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard N aligning with its entrance. Its address is 406 Federal Street, Dover, DE 19901.

15 and 21 The Green are sited adjacent to the southwest corner of the existing Museum building. These buildings are connected to each other and are set apart from the Museum building by approximately twenty-five feet. The primary entrances of 15 and 21 The Green face the Dover Green. They back up on a parking lot shared by the Biggs.

The Dover Green is the site of the original Delaware State House (1791); is surrounded by historic homes dating to 1700s; and is the location of the Golden Fleece Tavern, the site of the first ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787. The Dover Green is considered to be one of the most historic locations in the nation.

The Biggs and its newly acquired buildings contribute to the cultural attractions of the Green and the First State Heritage Park.

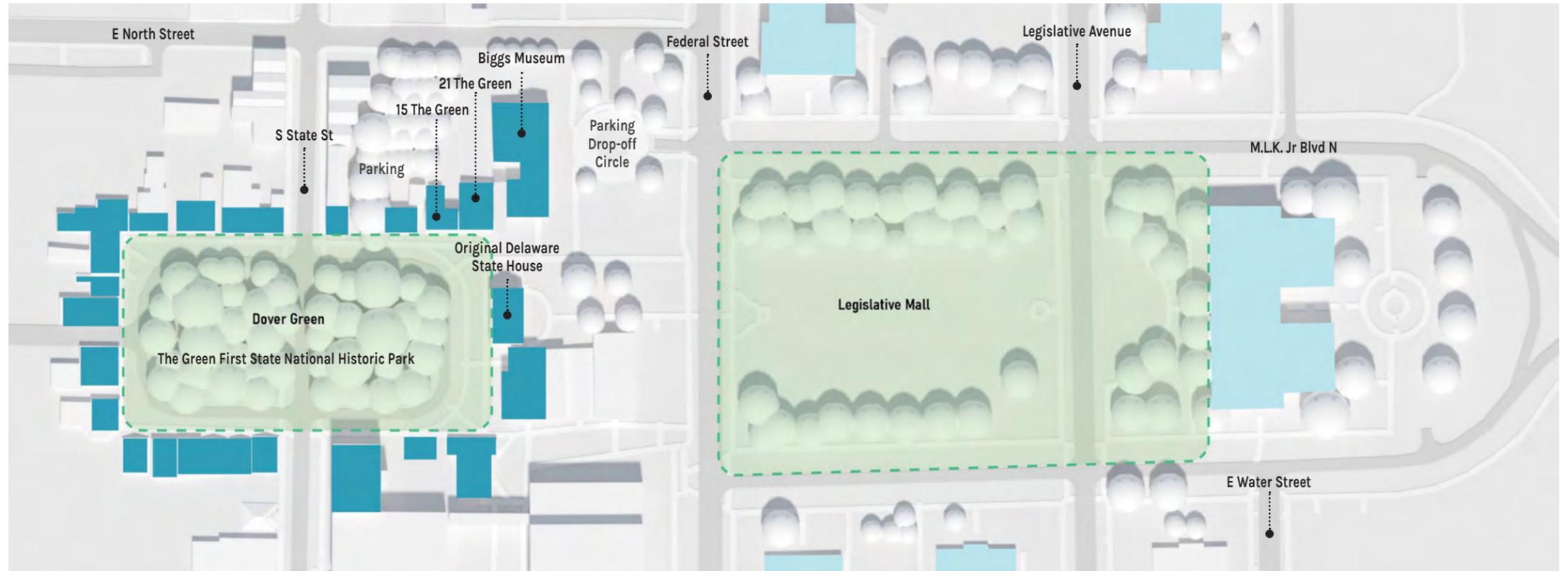


Figure 2.1  
Dover Site Plan



## 2.2 BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

As part of the Master Planning efforts, SmithGroup digitally scanned The Biggs Museum Building as well as 15 and 21 The Green. These scans resulted in highly accurate point clouds that were used to translate into detailed two-dimensional electronic drawings of existing conditions that included floor plans, elevations, and sections. This building documentation served as the starting point for the Historic Preservation Analysis and design planning. The following graphic (Figure 2.2) represents the byproduct of this field survey work.

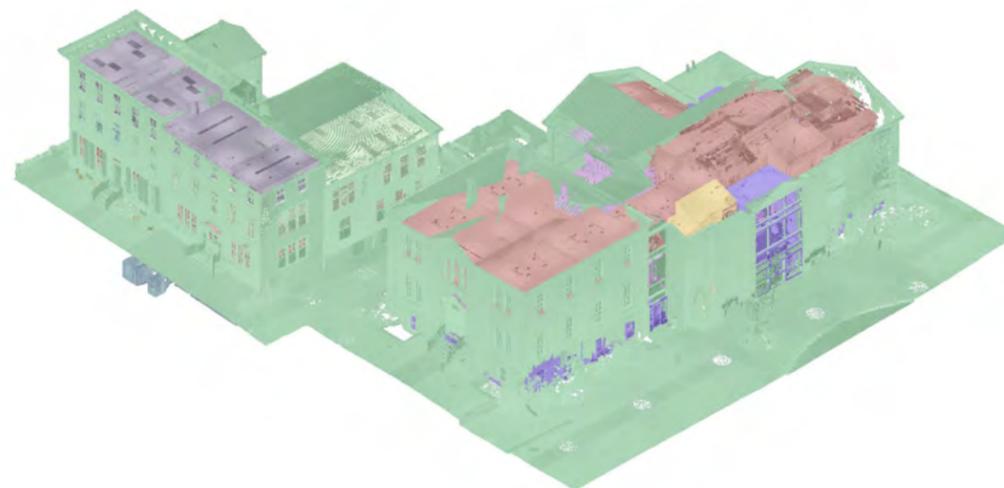


Figure 2.2  
Digital Scans

### 2.3 EXISTING CONDITION PHOTOGRAPHS

The following represent existing condition photographs of the exterior of The Biggs as well 15 and 21 The Green.



Figure 2.3.1  
Existing View of The Biggs Museum Front Façade



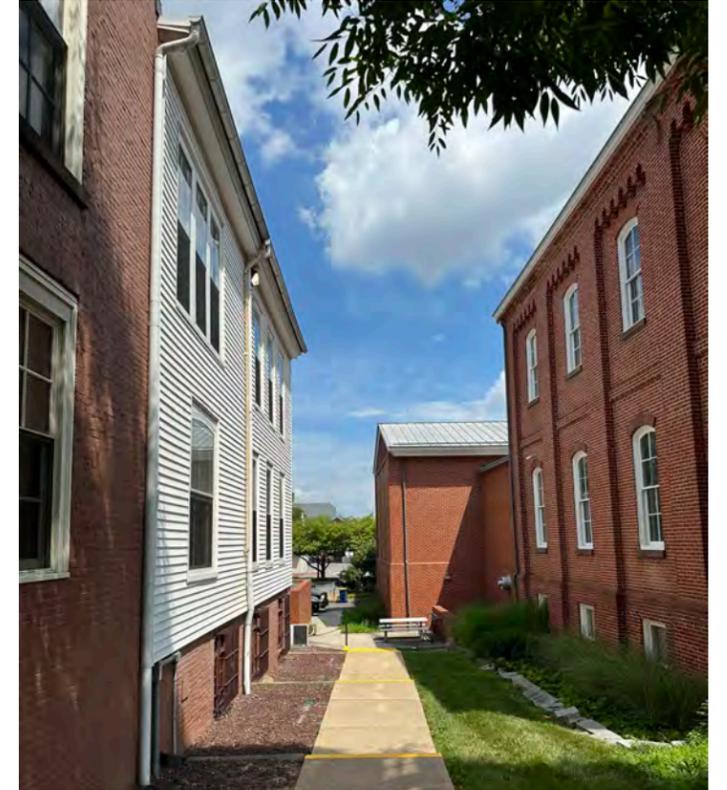
Figure 2.3.2  
Existing View of The Biggs Museum - Old County Building Portion of the Building



**Figure 2.3.3**  
Existing View of 15 and 21 The Green Front Façade



**Figure 2.3.4**  
Existing View of 21 The Green East Elevation with Referenced Rear Addition Recommended for Removal



**Figure 2.3.5**  
Existing View of the Gap Between 21 The Green and the Old County Building



Figure 2.3.6  
Existing View of 21 The Green North Elevation



Figure 2.3.7  
Existing View of 21 The Green Northwest View



Figure 2.3.8  
Existing View of 15 The Green North Elevation

## 2.4 CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

As part of the Master Plan efforts the multi-disciplined SmithGroup team assessed all systems of the existing museum building as well as 15 and 21 The Green. The following are highlights of deficiencies identified by the SmithGroup team and recommendations based on the conditions assessment survey observations for 15 and 21 The Green. This list emphasizes the significant need to update these buildings to meet fire code, egress, and accessibility requirements and to replace aged building systems:

### 15 And 21 The Green

- **No Accessibility** - The existing buildings have no accessible path to circulate up to and within the buildings.
- **Plaster Failure** - Continued moisture issues have plagued the basements causing significant plaster damage.
- **Masonry Issues** - The same issues that have caused basement plaster damage have also caused significant deterioration of the brick masonry walls.
- **Non-Compliant Egress** - The existing interior and exterior stairs do not meet egress code requirements for tread and riser dimensions, as well as handrails, guardrails, and egress widths.
- **Fire Escape** - The exterior fire escapes, in addition to them not being code compliant for a means of egress, are showing significant signs of deterioration.
- **Outdated Bathrooms** - The bathrooms are outdated and require replacement to meet current standards and codes.
- **Boiler Aged Out** - The gas fired hot water boiler, installed in 2003, is past its useful life and requires replacement.
- **Air Conditioning Systems Aged Out** - The air conditioning systems date to 2003 and are past their useful life and require replacement.
- **Lighting Systems** - The existing lighting systems are outdated and require replacement. There are currently no lighting controls.
- **Fire Alarm Systems Deficient** - The existing fire alarm systems are not code compliant and require replacement.
- **Fire Protection Systems** - The buildings do not currently have sprinkler systems.
- **Improper Fire Separation** - The rear addition to 21 The Green is of a different construction system and would require fire separation from the front portion of the building if maintained.

## 2.5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

SmithGroup believes that Stakeholder Engagement is an integral part of the early design process so that we can gain a deeper understanding of the client's and the community's desires. As part of The Biggs Master Plan efforts, SmithGroup conducted listening sessions with leadership, program heads, staff, and volunteers. In addition, we sought feedback from community members both familiar and unfamiliar with the Museum and its campus. The design team hosted eight workshops in schools, community centers, The Biggs, and virtually to glean community information that would inform conceptual design.

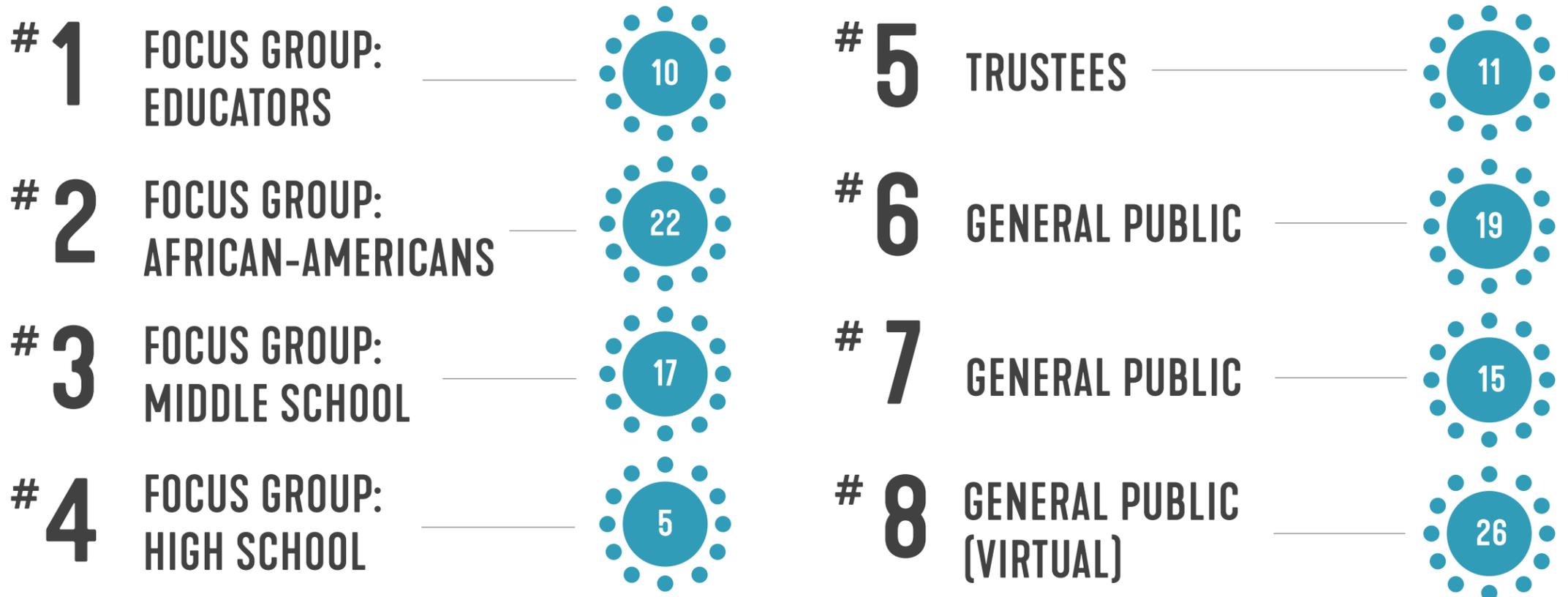
The takeaways from the stakeholder engagement exercises with the community were:

- **Greenery** - The renovated/expanded Museum should have a connection to greenery - both visually and physically.
- **Meditative Moments** - The design should include meditative moments in a garden/landscape setting.
- **Accessibility** - The buildings, when combined, should be more universally accessible.
- **Community Space** - The renovation/expansion should include community gathering space that can be used beyond the operational hours of the Museum.
- **Distinctive Architecture** - A Museum architecture that acknowledges its historic setting yet looks to the future, is distinct from the neighboring state buildings, is integrated with nature, and better connects to its surroundings.



Figure 2.5  
Images from various Stakeholder Engagement Sessions Activity





### WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The Engagement Team, which included the design team and the Biggs Community Engagement Task Force, organized the workshops into five Focus Groups and three General Groups. Targeting our efforts in this way ensured that we would ultimately hear from a diverse set of voices and engage as many people as possible. This meant acknowledging and seeking participation from people of different ages, races, genders, abilities, and professions within Dover and beyond. Each group was assigned a Champion who was charged with contacting community leaders and/or potential participants directly in order to garner participation and supplement the formal invitation.

The overarching themes of the stakeholder engagement workshops were heard across many of the groups, in particular the need for a community gathering space and an outdoor space that is connected to the museum. These main takeaways would benefit the community-at-large and were incorporated into the preliminary design.

*“The Museum is dedicated to using every available opportunity to become a more inclusive organization, committed to a more diverse staff, board and volunteer roster; to embracing new voices and new histories; and widening the lens in presenting exhibitions, programs and research.”*

- Excerpt from the FY 2022 - FY 2025 Biggs Museum Strategic Plan

## 3.0 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ANALYSIS

A preservation plan is an essential tool by which to make educated decisions on how best to steward historic resources. SmithGroup reviewed a range of historic documentation regarding the Old County Building (now part of The Biggs) as well as 15 and 21 The Green to understand how the buildings have evolved over time. The team reviewed available drawings, historic photographs, maps, and other resources to be able to understand the changes that occurred to these resources and their historic fabric. A developmental timeline was produced based on this research to inform the preservation analysis, followed by a charting out of preservation zones prioritized by highest to lowest areas of historic significance.

### 3.1 DEVELOPMENTAL TIMELINE

- 1837 Initial Land Purchase** - Kent County surveyor and fruit farmer Henry Todd purchased the land that 15 and 21 The Green Buildings would eventually be built on from Martin W. Bates in January of that year.
- 1858 Kent County Building Constructed** - What is known today as the Old County Building was constructed and originally was designed to be adjacent to the Old State House and face The Dover Green. It was built to provide County office space.
- 1859 Todd House (now 15 The Green) Constructed** - Henry Todd constructed a three-story Italianate-style building facing The Dover Green. The building functioned as a residence and as an office, with a separate front entrance for each. Capped by a low hipped roof above a bracketed cornice, the building has a five-bay façade symmetrically arranged. The pressed brick of the facade is laid in a running bond with fine mortar joints. The front entrance consists of a paneled double door with an etched glass transom set in a Greek Revival surround. The building façade rests upon a marble water table and is served by a set of marble steps. The interior retains its original floor plan and has most its original detailing, including two marble mantelpieces, plaster cornices, molded window and door surrounds, baseboard, paneled doors, and staircases.



Figure 3.1.1  
Dover Aerial drawing (1885)



Figure 3.1.2  
15 and 21 The Green Buildings (1890s) with Multiple Entrance Doors to Both Buildings

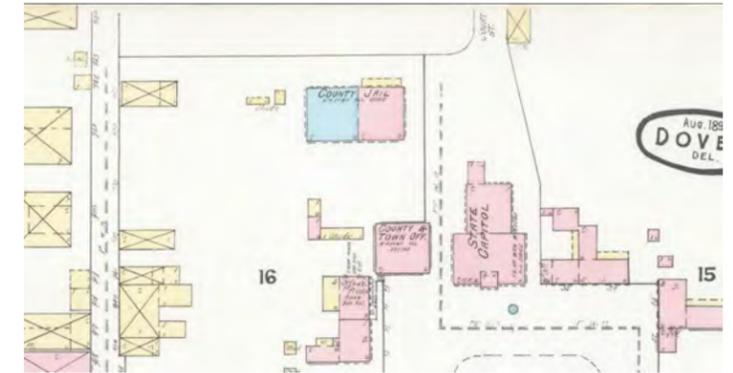


Figure 3.1.3  
Sanborn Insurance Map Dated 1891 Showing the Original Location of the Old County Building and the Initial Addition to 21 The Green Constructed ca. 1877-85



Figure 3.1.4  
Kent County Building (1923) Prior to its Relocation

**1859 21 The Green** – Concurrent with the construction of his house, Todd built a three-story, brick office building to the east. The cost to build this structure and the Todd House was \$12,000. A late 1890s photograph of the buildings shows their original door and window configurations.

**1860 The Delawarean Found a Home** – The Delawarean, a newspaper founded by James Kirk, moved to 21 The Green Building shortly after its construction. It was not only a newspaper published in Dover, but also published the laws and session of the Delaware legislature. In 1868, two other businesses located in the building were a real estate business and an attorney office.

**1876 15 and 21 The Green Building Sale** - Henry Todd had to sell both buildings to the Farmers' Bank of Delaware to settle his financial debt. After the sale, 15 The Green becomes a boarding house for a period of about five years.

**Ca. 1877-1885** Around 1877-85, a frame addition with a shed roof was added to the rear façade of 21 The Green.

**1921 Expansion and Renovations of 21 The Green**  
James M. Satterfield purchased 21 The Green and carried out extensive renovations, including remodeling the lower third of the front façade into a three-bay configuration, adding a balustrade along the roofline, significantly altering and expanding the rear addition. A 1929 Sanborn map shows the footprint of the expanded rear addition.

**1933 Old County Building Relocation** – The Kent County building was moved from its location on the east side of The Green, rotated 90 degrees, and shifted

north and slightly east to be adjacent to and have the same entry orientation as 15 and 21 The Green Buildings.

**1947 State of Delaware Bought 21 The Green and Renovates** - After a renovation of the first floor and basement, the building was used as overflow offices for the State Board of Agriculture, which had its main office next door in the Old County Building.

**1961 City of Dover Historic District** - The City of Dover Historic District zone was established during this year. Projects applying for building permits within this zone have been subject to the Architectural Review Certification process.

**1963 State of Delaware Bought 15 The Green** - The building was used as offices by the State Banking Commissioner and the Office of the Attorney General. Not long after the purchase, the secondary door in the east bay of the front façade was converted into a window.

**1977 Dover Green Historic District** – On May 5, 1997, the Dover Green Historic District was listed in the National Register for Historic Places. 15 and 21 The Green Buildings as well as the Old County Building were listed as contributing resources to the historic district.

**1988 15 The Green Building Gets New Occupant** - The Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (now the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office) moved into 15 The Green Building.



**Figure 3.1.5**  
Old County Building Relocation (1932)



**Figure 3.1.6**  
Old County Building Relocation (1932)



**Figure 3.1.7**  
15 and 21 The Green with Old County Building to the Right Prior to Relocation



**Figure 3.1.8**  
Aerial of Dover Green (1931) Prior to Relocation of Old County Building

**1991 Creation of Delaware State Visitor’s Center & The Sewell C. Biggs Museum** – The architecture firm of Homsey Architects, Inc. was hired to create a museum and Delaware state visitor center by adding a new structure to the existing Old County Building. Gredell & Paul served as the structural engineers, with EA Mueller served as Mechanical/ Electrical/Plumbing engineers.

The first floor of the building was to be dedicated to the State Visitor’s Center and included a generous reception desk area and gift shop, a gallery, a loading dock, bathrooms, staff offices, and a presentation room. The second and part of the third floor were dedicated to displaying the Sewell C. Biggs collection of American art. The remainder of the third floor as well as the basement were dedicated to mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems.

The exterior of the addition to the Old County Building was clad in brick to match the historic building with the exception of the entry that had an aluminum and glass curtain wall at the east façade. To make the addition feasible, a portion of the north side of the Old County Building was removed. Additionally, several new openings in masonry walls of the old structure were cut to accommodate gallery flow.

**2010 The Biggs Museum of American Art Renovation** – In 2010 the State relocated their Visitor’s Center to a new facility thus allowing The Biggs Museum to take over the first floor of the building. The renovation to accommodate this change was led by Homsey Architects, Inc with Paragon Engineering

providing Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing engineering and Baker Ingram & Associates providing structural engineering.

Changes that were made to the 1991 design for The Biggs Museum were as follows:

**First Floor**

- Creation of new lobby at east entry
- Creation of accessible entrance with power assist door to the south of the east vestibule
- Former State Visitor’s Center Reception converted to the “Grand Gallery.”
- Loading dock reduced and remaining space converted to “Changing Exhibition Gallery”
- Bathrooms renovated.
- Ceilings reconfigured with new lighting.
- Kitchenette added in staff office area.
- Coat closet converted to gift store.
- Folding glass doors added to separate “Grand Gallery” from lobby.

**Second Floor**

- Northeast gallery space converted to art storage.
- Existing track lighting replaced.

**Third Floor**

- Existing track lighting replaced.

**Exterior**

- New curtain wall added to create entry vestibule.
- New exterior signage added.



**Figure 3.19**  
15 The Green Doorway (1972)



**Figure 3.110**  
Old State House with Old County Building to the Left (1976)



**Figure 3.111**  
15 and 21 The Green South Façade (1976)

**2011 15 and 21 The Green Assessments** – Bernardon Haber Holloway Architects were hired through the Historic and Cultural Affairs Asset Management Program to assess both 15 and 21 The Green Buildings. All aspects of the buildings were reviewed including the interior, exterior envelope, MEP systems, and the site.

**2014 Drainage Renovation** – The Becker Morgan Group was hired to address drainage issues at the accessible entry on the east side, the basement entry on the west side of the building, and the window well on the south side of the building. Select new gutters and downspouts were part of the project.

**2016 Entry Sculpture Installed** – Bernardon Haber Holloway Architects led efforts to install the Erica Loustau Tree and Bird Sculpture at the east entrance. DEDC LLC provided electrical engineering services and Baker, Ingram & Associates served as the structural engineer.

**2019 Space Study** – With the anticipation that The Biggs Museum might acquire the adjacent 15 and 21 The Green Buildings, Bernardon provide a preliminary Space Study to test fit how the spaces might be configured.

**2021 Steam Generator Replacement** – The Biggs Museum hired DEDC Engineers to provide cost estimates for the replacement of the existing steam generator in The Biggs Museum building.

**2021 Strategic Plan** – The Biggs Strategic Planning Task Force developed a Strategic Plan with the assistance of the consultant Maureen Robinson that would set the state for FY 2022 – FY 2025.

This plan was accompanied by an Addendum that spelled out strategic goals and strategies to accomplish them.

**2022 Boiler Replacement Planned** – DEDC was hired to provide a design for the replacement of the existing boiler in The Biggs Museum building.

**2022 Master Plan Begins** – The Biggs Museum hires SmithGroup to provide a comprehensive Master Plan for the existing Biggs Museum building and the adjacent 15 and 21 The Green Buildings.



Figure 3.1.12  
Old County Building South Façade (1986)



Figure 3.1.13  
Old County Building Southwest View (1998)



Figure 3.1.14  
Delaware State House Southwest View

### 3.2 DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY DIAGRAMS

The following massing diagrams are meant to summarize in graphic form the five major building changes to The Biggs and 15 and 21 The Green from the 1860's to the present, concluding with the preliminary ideas to support the museum expansion/renovation.



Figure 3.2.1  
1859 Original 15 and 21 The Green Construction

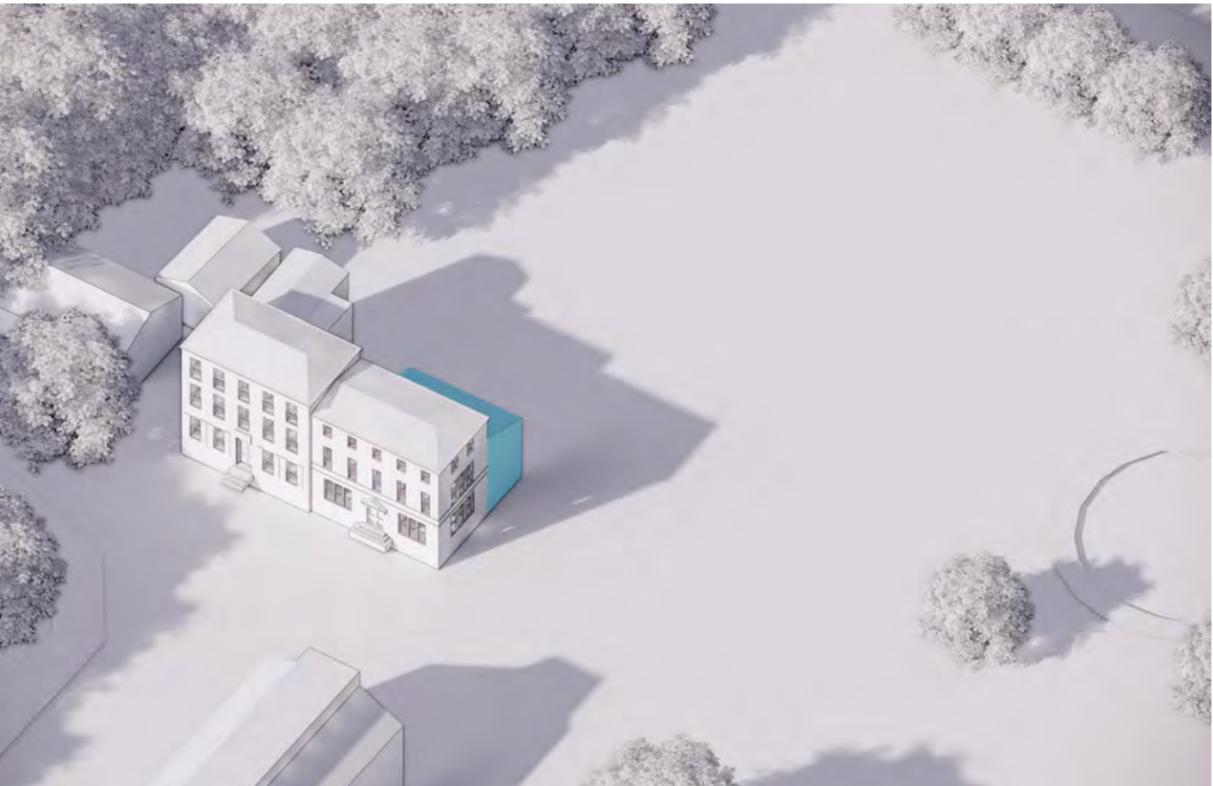
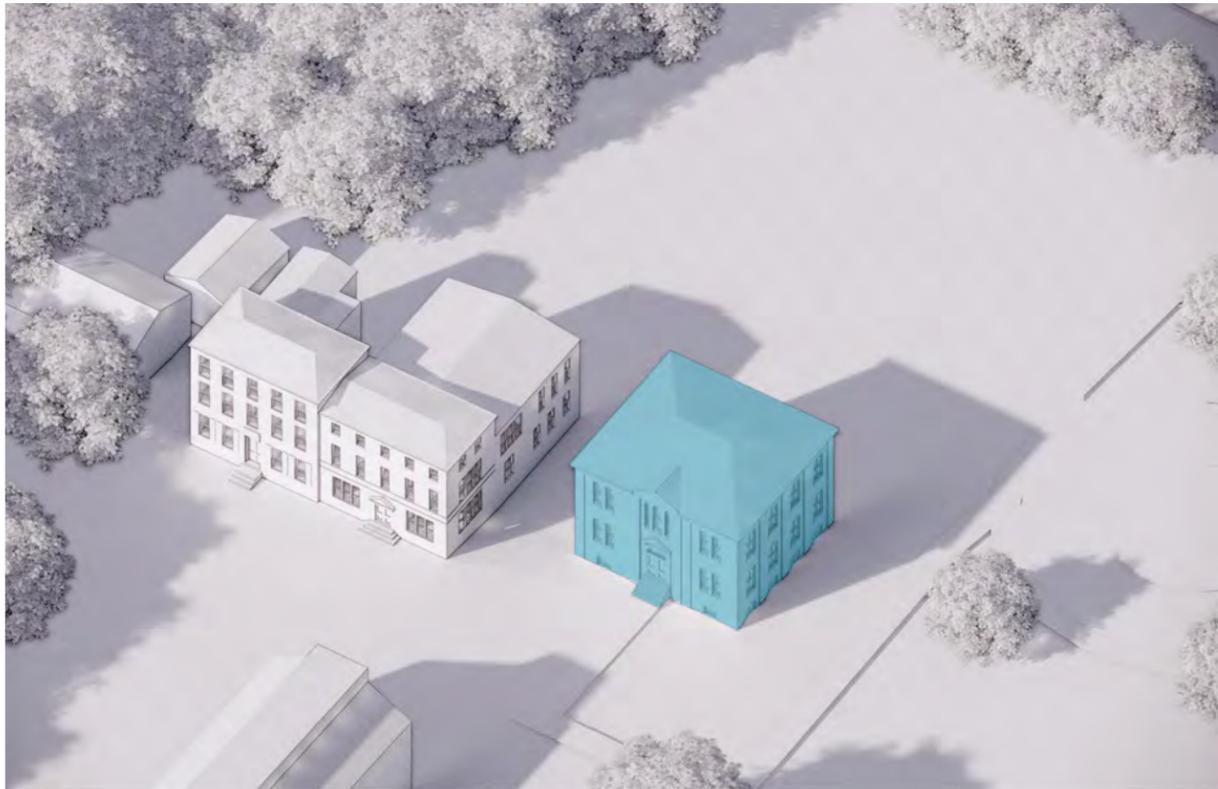


Figure 3.2.2  
Ca. 1877 - 1885 Wood-Framed Addition with Shed Roof Added to the Rear Façade of 21 The Green



**Figure 3.2.3**  
 Ca. 1921 Significant Alteration and Expansion of Rear Addition to 21 The Green, Modification to the 1877 Addition



**Figure 3.2.4**  
 1933 Old County Building Relocated



**Figure 3.2.5**  
 1990s Addition to the Old County Building to Create the State Visitor Center and Biggs Museum

### 3.3 HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Dover Green Historic District contains most of the inhabited part of 18th century Dover. Reflecting Dover's continuing role as the county seat and the state capital, the District contains a related group of public buildings open squares, churches, commercial buildings, office buildings, and residences from all periods of the past 250 years. The Old County Building (now part of The Biggs) and 15 and 21 The Green contribute to that history. The Dover Green Historic District was acknowledged for its contribution to state and national history by being listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The identified areas of significance for this nomination were: archeology, architecture, commerce, community planning, industry, landscape architecture, and politics/government. It is eligible under Criterion A for its association and central role that it played as the location of Delaware's state capitol, Kent County's courthouse and the original settlement area and central market of the city of Dover. It is also eligible under Criterion C for its significant collection of 18th, 19th, and 20th century buildings that trace the range of building traditions from Georgian through Italianate to Neo-Georgian/Colonial Revival.

The Old County Building as well as 15 and 21 The Green were included in this listing as contributing historic resources to the Dover Green Historic District.

Directly adjacent to the Dover Green Historic District is the Victorian Dover Historic District.



Figure 3.3.1  
Aerial of Dover (1932)



### 3.4 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ZONES

Historic Preservation Zones establish the framework for the operation, maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings by dividing the building into logical areas consistent with their use, original design, public access, and integrity. The concept of zoning is consistent with the technique of original architectural programming, design, and construction, where for example, primary façades often have richer detailing and materials than secondary ones. Interior spaces also are traditionally zoned into public and private circulation spaces. Areas of public access, ceremony, or authority often receive richer detailing and finer materials than the more common spaces.

The Historic Preservation Zones of The Biggs as well as 15 and 21 The Green seek to identify the differences between more and less significant interior and exterior building area and features, and assigns a rating or level to each zone.

The following levels and zones have been applied to these buildings for planning the future phased restoration work and are reflected in the plan and elevation diagrams that follow.

**Level 1 - Preservation Zone** - Areas in plan and elevation that exhibit unique or distinctive qualities, original materials, or elements, represent examples of craftsmanship, have work associated with an architect or building, are associated with a person or event. Level 1 areas can be distinguished by concentration of details or richness of finish.

Example - Spaces or areas of the buildings that represent the highest degree of detailing and finish. On the exterior Level 1 includes the primary building façades that are most visible to the public.

**Level 2 - Preservation Zone** - Areas exhibiting distinguishing qualities or original materials and or features; or representing examples of skilled craftsmanship, but that are less significant than Level 1.

Example - Areas less rich in materials and detailing than the large public spaces rated in Level 1. On the exterior Level 2 includes side elevations or elevations less subject to public view.

**Level 3 - Rehabilitation Zone** - Areas that are modest in nature, void of highly significant character defining features, materials, or conditions, but which may be original and maintained at an acceptable level.

Example - Secondary and tertiary spaces that are out of public view. On the exterior Level 3 includes elevations that are rarely seen or are service entrances.

**Level 4 - Adaptive Reuse Zone** - Areas not subject to the above three categories whose modification would not represent loss of character, code violation or intrusion to an otherwise historically significant structure.

Example - Generally undistinguished repetitive areas such as areas that have had significant modern interventions that have stripped the area of original features and caused a loss of integrity such as the rear portion of 21 The Green.

- Legend**
- Level 1 - Preservation Zone
  - Level 2 - Preservation Zone
  - Level 3 - Rehabilitation Zone
  - Level 4 - Adaptive Reuse/Free Zone

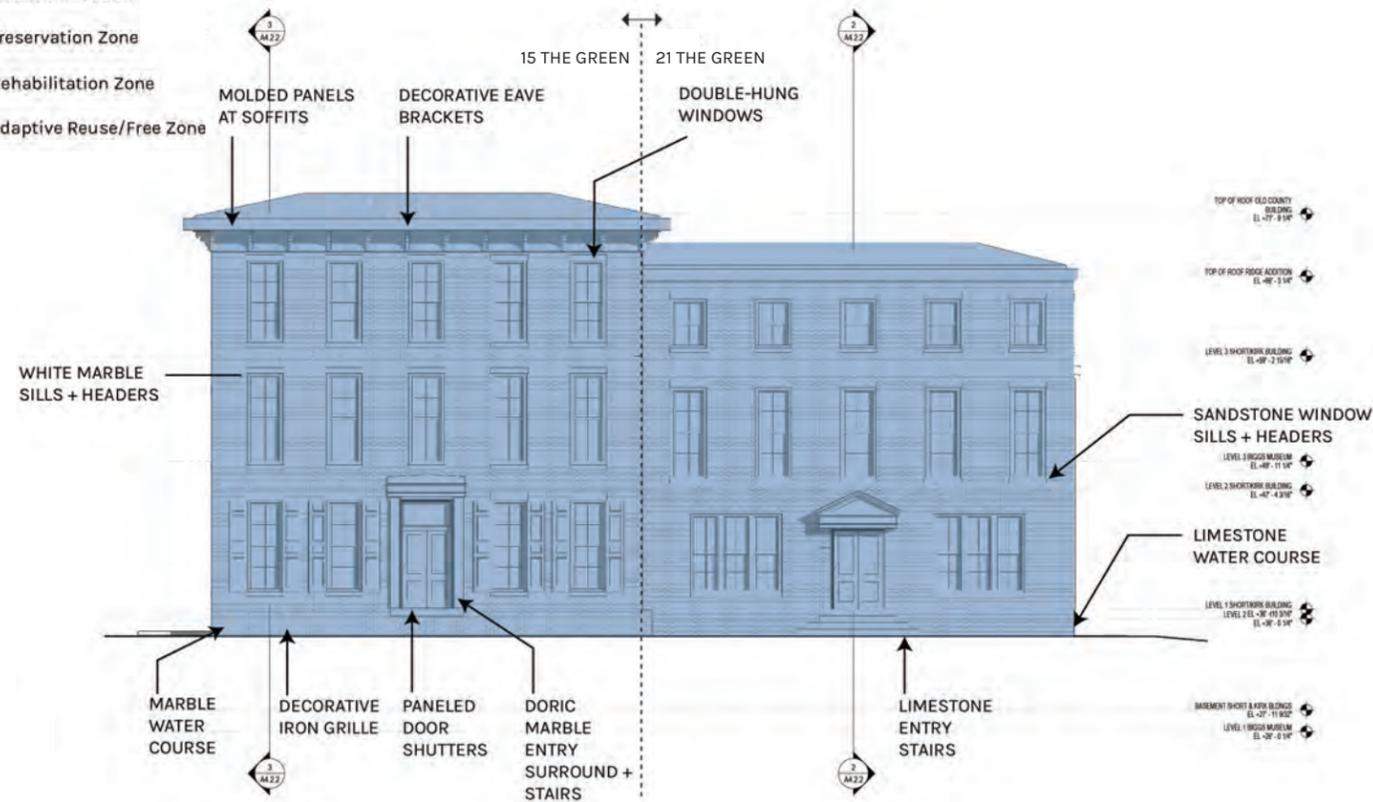
- CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES**
- KIRK BUILDING (15 THE GREEN)**
- WINDOW + DOOR CASING
  - PANELED DOORS
  - STEM RAILING NEWEL POSTS
  - BASE MOLDINGS
  - HISTORIC PANELED DOORS + HARDWARE
  - WOOD DOOR SURROUNDS
  - BLACK AND WHITE MARBLE FIREPLACES
  - DECORATIVE PLASTER MOLDING
  - VESTIBULE OF ETCHED GLASS TRANSOM
- COUNTY COURTHOUSE**
- CAST IRON STAIR OF DECORATIVE RAILING
  - VESTIBULE



Figure 3.4.1 The Biggs Level 2/ 15 and 21 The Green Level 1 Floor Plan

Legend

- Level 1 - Preservation Zone
- Level 2 - Preservation Zone
- Level 3 - Rehabilitation Zone
- Level 4 - Adaptive Reuse/Free Zone



South Elevation



North Elevation



21 The Green - East Elevation



21 The Green - West Elevation



15 The Green - East Elevation

15 The Green - West Elevation

Figure 3.4.2  
15 and 21 The Green Elevations

In conclusion, per the historic preservation zone analysis the interior of 21 The Green and the rear portion of the building lack original fabric and integrity and have been identified as Adaptive Reuse zones. However, south portion of 21 The Green (facing the Green) and most of 15 The Green actually maintain quite a bit of integrity and historic fabric and have been identified as either Level 1 or 2 preservation zones where much of the fabric will be protected and maintained.

### 3.5 ADDITIONAL HISTORIC RESEARCH DESIGN

While the Master Plan provided a Developmental Timeline and a Historic Preservation zoning analysis (previously described) to help guide the Preliminary Design, SmithGroup did recommend that a historic research firm be engaged to further analyze the construction history and integrity of 15 and 21 The Green to better support design decisions. Robinson & Associates provided a Historical Research Report that summarized that historic status of 15 and 21 The Green, traced the history of the construction of the structures, and evaluated their significance and integrity.

#### 3.5.1 SIGNIFICANCE

**15 The Green** - The report documented that 15 The Green contributes to the significance of the Dover Green Historic District under National Register Criterion A for its contribution to the nineteenth century development of the Dover Green and under Criterion C as a notable example of an Italianate-style building that enhances the collection of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century buildings framing the Green and representing a range of American architectural styles.

**21 The Green** - The report documented that 21 The Green also contributes under Criterion A and C due to its association with the mid-nineteenth-century development

of the Dover Green and for its Italianate-style design. However, the rear addition represents a combination of late nineteenth century elements with construction dating to circa 1921 so it does not contribute to the historical significance associated with the original main block nor is it reflective of the Colonial Revival style that the updated 1985 National Register nomination was modified to include. It was also determined that the addition does not embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or possess high artistic value to qualify as significant in its own right.

#### 3.5.2 INTEGRITY

**15 The Green** - An analysis of 15 The Green determined that it retains a high level of integrity to the historic period (mid-nineteenth century) with which its significance is associated. The building retains its essential physical features, and material alterations have been relatively minor.

**21 The Green** - Per the historic analysis, 21 The Green retains a low level of integrity to the historic period which its significance is associated. Few elements of the design of 21 The Green reflect its original construction. A major renovation ca. 1921 altered the front façade. A two-story addition dating to 1877-85 was significantly altered and expanded in the 1920's and much of the materials that originally defined the character of 21 The Green have been lost. The rear addition windows have been replaced, and siding encapsulated. The interior has been completely remodeled within the last 50 years. Due to the considerable exterior and interior changes that have been carried out to 21 The Green, the building does not express the aesthetic or historic sense of its original construction as an 1859 Italianate-style office building.

# 4.0 PRELIMINARY DESIGN

## 4.1 PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Following the existing conditions assessment of the existing buildings and the input from the Stakeholder Engagement session, SmithGroup provided a range of preliminary design ideas for The Biggs to consider. These ideas considered additions to The Biggs building as well as 15 and 21 The Green that would connect them to create a more unified and functional museum. These alternatives looked at leaving 15 and 21 The Green as is as well as removing the rear portion of 21 The Green to allow for improved connectivity and more generous community space.

After many design discussions and iterations that evaluated pros and cons as to functionality, community amenities, and impact on historic fabric, SmithGroup presented two preliminary schemes. Both emphasized the renovation of 15 and 21 The Green and include the selective removal of the back portion of 21 The Green that has already been established as having been significantly modified over time.



Figure 4.1.1  
Axonometric View of Existing Buildings

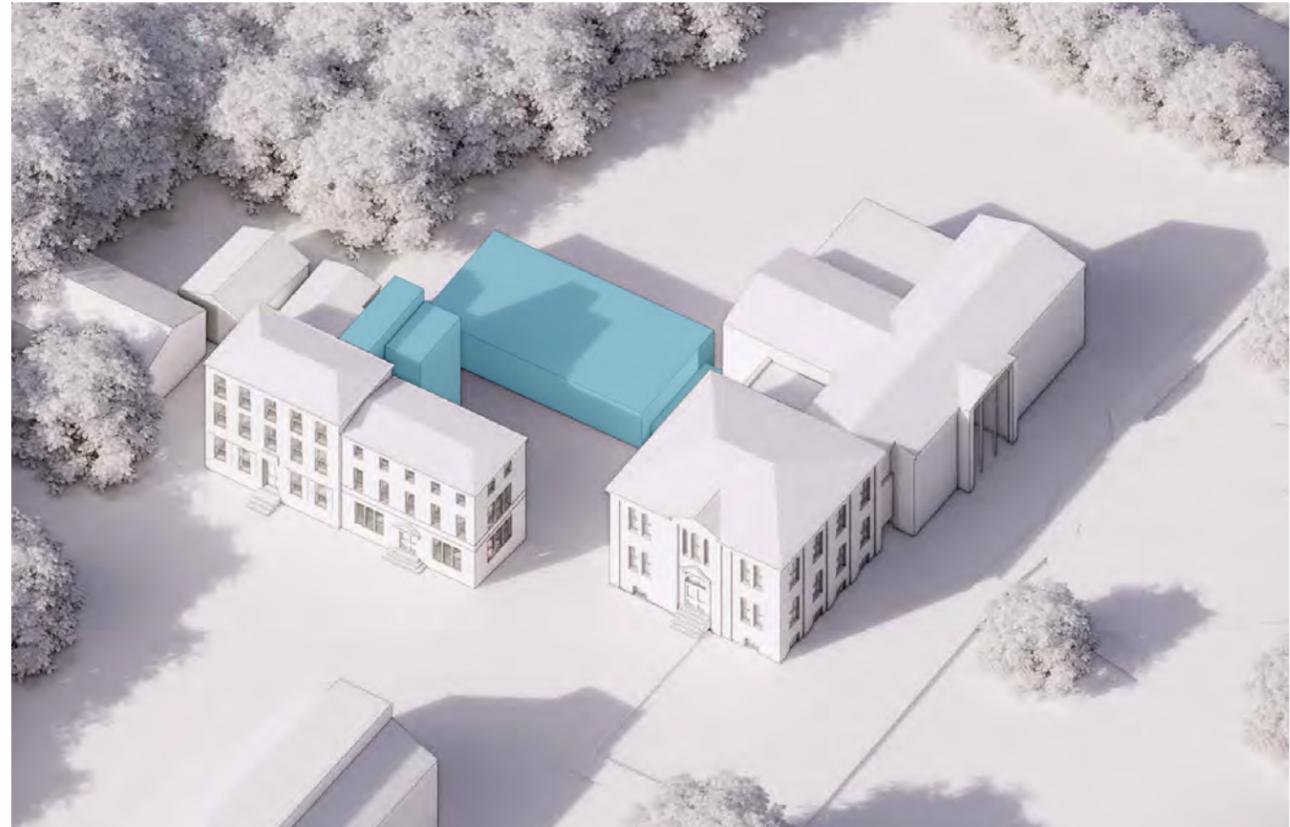


Figure 4.1.2  
Axonometric View of Potential Areas of Expansion Allowed by Removal of Rear Portion of 21 The Green

### 4.2 CONCEPT DESIGN IMPACT ON EXISTING BUILDINGS

The following site plan, elevations, and views are meant to clarify what the existing conditions of The Biggs and 15 and 21 The Green are and what the extent of recommended selective removal at 21 The Green would be. The recommended removal would include the upper floors and basement of the rear portion of 21 The Green along with its fire escape and entrance vestibule to allow for future installation of a community pavilion, new code compliant vertical circulation that supports egress and accessibility, and a courtyard that helps to tie all facilities together in a holistic manner.

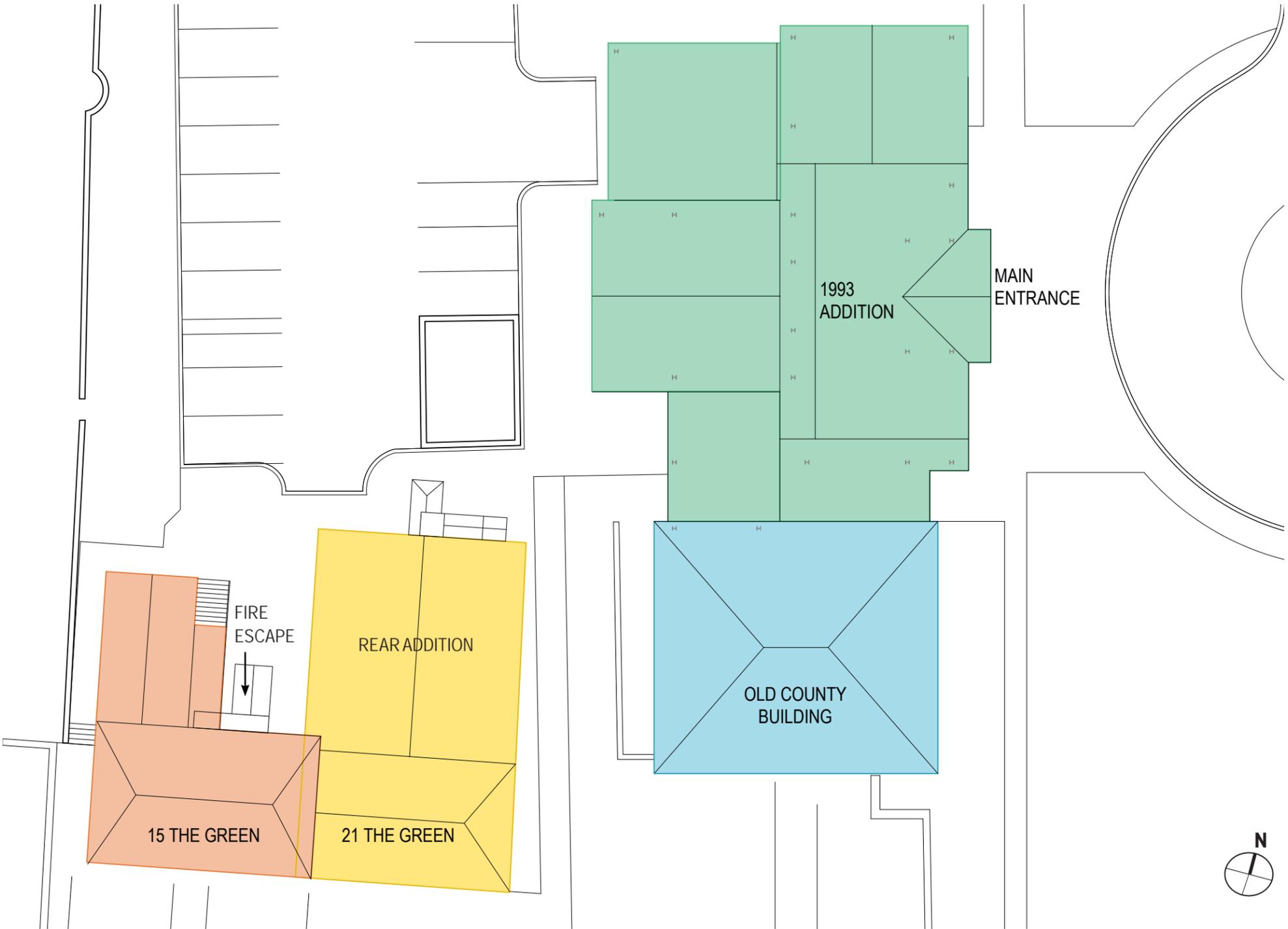


Figure 4.2.1  
BMAA Site Plan - Existing

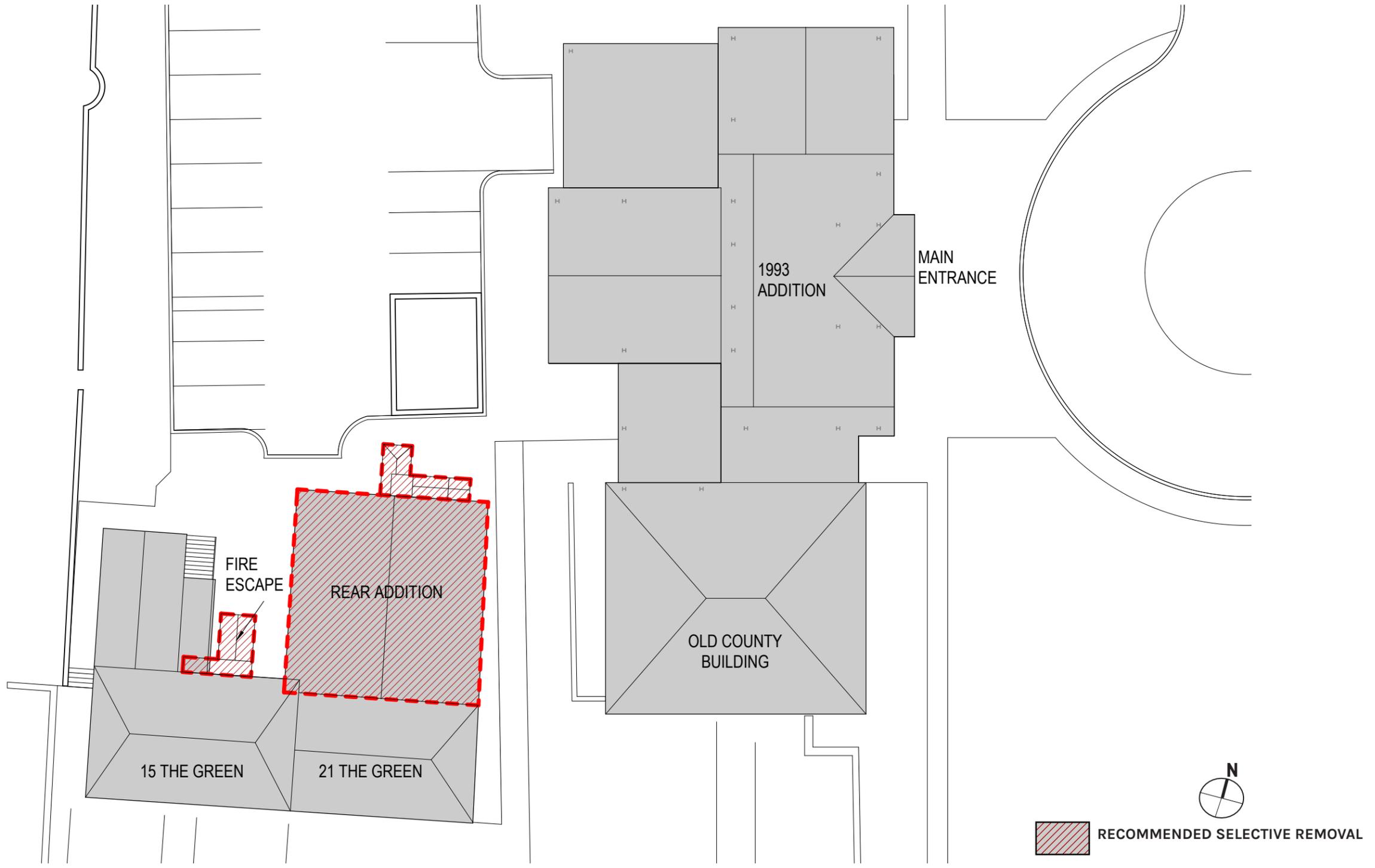


Figure 4.2.2  
BMAA - Site Plan Selective Removal



Figure 4.2.4  
15 and 21 The Green Front Elevation - Existing Showing That the Rear Addition is Not Visible from The Green



Figure 4.2.5  
15 and 21 The Green Rear Elevation - Existing



Figure 4.2.6  
15 and 21 The Green Rear Elevation - Selective Removal



Figure 4.2.7  
15 and 21 The Green Front Elevation - Areas Impacted by Selective Removal



Figure 4.2.8 Existing Southwest View of 15 and 21 The Green and the Old County Building (with Red Outline Demoting Proposed Selective Removal)



Figure 4.2.9 Existing South View of 15 and 21 The Green (Showing No Impact from The Green of Proposed Selective Removal)



Figure 4.2.10  
Existing View from Northern Edge of Existing Parking Lot (Red Outline Denoting Proposed Selective Removal)

# 5.0 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

- THE BIGGS MUSEUM OF ART- HISTORICAL RESEARCH REPORT - 15 AND 21 THE GREEN

# Design a Better Future

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