

COBBS HILL VILLAGE REPORT ON PHYSICAL CONDITIONS:

December 8, 2016 and updated to April 23, 2018

By Richard Rosen, AIA, Architect.

Description:

Six buildings each approx. 170' x 30', each with five studios @ 420 sq. ft, and five one bedroom apartments @ 600 sq. ft. (DHCR measurements to exterior of exterior walls). . At center of one building a laundry w/ 2 @ front load washers and dryers, and at each building a central mechanical room, and a single water meter room and management parts storage room.

Exterior walls: Exterior is brick, interior is 8" concrete masonry units. Condition fine.

Interior walls and partitions: 4" concrete masonry units, or metal lath and plaster on wood studs

Concrete Slab on grade, with carpet and Vinyl Composition tile.

Ceiling is a masonry plank system

Roof is frame, with approx 4/12 pitch, architectural style asphalt shingles now 30+ years old.

6' soffit overhang front over 6' sidewalk creates continuous front porch. 2' 6" soffit at rear.

Aluminum gutters and downspouts.

Windows are replacement anodized aluminum, insulated glass, appear to have thermal break.

Sills are slate .

Doors are 1 3/4 solid core wood, in steel frames. Storm doors with missing glass panels frequent.

8" granite step at each entry to level sidewalk.

Heat: gas fired 85% efficiency replacement boiler (2004) with outdoor reset controls(2014+/-), in a separate plant at center of each building.

Domestic hot water: For each 10 unit building, pair of 50 gallon gas fired tanks.

Hydronic heating pipes are copper, valves are ball valve..

Kitchen Appliances: 20" oven/range, 24" two door refrigerator

Kitchen cabinets: Most units have original stained or painted wood base and wall cabs, laminate countertops..

Bathrooms: CI shower/tub , CI wall hung lavatory, 3.5 gal. toilet. Medicine cabinet. Tile at tub and floor.

Electric Distribution: A wall outlet on every wall, and one switched outlet per room. Kitchen has two GFI appliance duplex outlets. Some tenants installed ceiling fans. 50 Amp breaker panel/unit

2 trash dumpsters on site requiring long outdoor walk for tenants

60 parking spaces, 8 HCP accessible..

Elements the project lacks:

- Insulation: Presumed no perimeter wall insulation, unknown slab perimeter insulation, updated attic insulation (snow retention suggests high level of attic insulation)
- There are no exhaust fans for kitchen or bathroom (none require by code as windows are operable) but desirable to remove moisture. No dishwashers or disposals.
- No air conditioning. Some tenants have installed their own window units. 60 amp/unit is sufficient. (note there is front to rear through ventilation in all units)
- Some tenants have installed their own microwaves under cabinet above range.
- There are no common rooms other than laundry.
- Lack of accessibility for mobility impaired using wheel-chair. See below.

Condition: Four units at random and one mechanical and laundry were examined.

- Maintenance appears to have been good. Some occasional evidence of surface mildew on exterior tub/shower tile grout, and one cold corner at ceiling, and at floor at entry when no stormdoor.
- site drainage appears to be fully functional after a heavy rain. Aluminum gutters and downspouts fully operational.
- Drains and water pressure, fixtures, appear to be excellent. One exception was reported during observation: history of vents to roof becoming clogged causing sewer gas, which were reported to me to have been promptly cleaned out.
- Hot water hydronic heat with fin tube radiation and six 85% efficiency 400,000 btu boilers. However on a 50 degree day we observed many open windows, indicating that system cannot be throttled down properly in mild weather. Recently installed outdoor reset controls may need further adjustment.. Older thermostatic valves at radiators don't work, and manual valves are preferred with properly functioning outdoor re-set control.
- Electric service with 50 amps/unit reported sufficient,
- Occupancy: Some tenants appear to be "hoarders" and have not successfully accommodated their needs in limited floor space. Most apartments demonstrate ingenious solutions to fitting all of needs in tight quarters. *When examining units, it is important to see a fair selection!*

Code compliance:

This is a NYS DHCR supervised project. Existing Building Code (EBC.) Last City C of O: November 2017, with no conditions or findings. HCR inspection noted only roof shingles nearing end of life.

We noted no deficiencies with respect to the Existing Building Code. .

- The EBC requires that when capital improvements or renovations are made, 20% of the cost should be for improvements to accessibility. Many seniors living independently have mobility impairments requiring use of cane or walker. These can be accommodated. It is proposed that a percentage of the Studio type units be modified to permit wheelchair accessibility.
- Please see renovation scope of work and estimates appended to this study.

Livability: Tenants report satisfactory sound separation between units, (all units are

Separated by a Concrete Masonry Unit wall.) Painted smooth concrete masonry unit walls were considered satisfactory by tenants interviewed. (This was a common finish in mid-century modern" institutions and government sponsored housing).

Energy efficiency:

Because of the absence of perimeter wall insulation, and perhaps perimeter slab insulation, compliance with the Energy Code of NYS for new construction cannot be obtained. The Existing Building Code (EBC) does not require such compliance. The "return on investment, or "payback period" to provide insulation on perimeter walls will not indicate that it would be prudent to make these investments. Attic insulation is presumed to meet current standards by observation of very slow snow melt). . Window air infiltration and heat conduction do not vary significantly from current standards. (Management has neglected to replace storm panels in storm doors, which can be simply remedied!

The writer does not have access to actual expenses. However, tenants report, and architect observed, gross overheating in all but the very coldest weather. This indicates poor heating controls, which can be remedied at modest cost. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that lack of perimeter insulation is not a critical factor, but replacement of radiator control valves is.

Upgrading perimeter wall insulation for information only, not recommended but is provided here for information purposes only. Not included in renovation cost totals which appear below.

*(Total perimeter wall: 25,000 sq ft @ \$100 x 2500 lineal feet, which includes removal and reattachment of cabinets, radiation, outlets, switches, to install R-10 rigid insulation and gypsum board interior (except at bath tubs) \$450,000 estimated cost is **Not included** in the total below.)*

Heating System: The “Lochnivar” brand hydronic boilers were first made in 1991, installed in 2004. These are rated at 85% efficient. Note that the newest and highest efficiency boilers on the market are only 8-10% more efficient. Therefore, replacement is not recommended. All piping is copper, and ball valves do not require replacement. As noted above, the recently installed outdoor reset controls should provide greater comfort and save operating costs. To eliminate the currently tenant objection to overheating in mild weather, individual thermostatic valves, which the tenants reported to be inoperable, could be replaced to avoid overheating leading to tenants opening windows in cool weather conditions.

Ventilation:

It is recommended that bathrooms and kitchens have an exhaust fan, so that moisture can be controlled without having to open windows to drafts in cold weather. .

Polling reported by the Tenants Association indicated that the amenities lacking in these units were of less importance than maintaining the existing rents: \$327/mo. for studio, \$508/mo. for one bedroom, utilities included. Tenants, as indicated in poll conducted by the Tenants Association, wish to remain in their present units, and have little interest in any upgrades. Comments noted included: single person doesn't need a dishwasher. Air Conditioning is desired by some, and not by others, and the windows and electricity permit their installation by us at modest cost, should tenant desire. Every unit has though ventilation. Exhaust systems are important. Sink disposers are desirable because of long walk to dumpsters. Close by garbage toters could alleviate this deficiency.

Notwithstanding the lack of tenant interest in newer amenities, the accessibility concerns enumerated above should be addressed, considering the vulnerability of the elderly population, who with increasing age, will become increasingly frail and should be able to “age in place.” As has been noted, there is no code requirement for this.

Studio Cottage Apartment: Renovations for accessibility

(See Renovation Plan of 420 sq. ft. typical studio cottage unit at Cobbs Hill Village)

*numbered dimensions that fail to meet accessibility standards for new construction per ANSI.

- *1 2' 7" opening is 1" less than requirement
- *2 2'6" door opening to bathroom is 6" less than requirement, however by relocating the electric panel 6" this can comply with 36" requirement
- *3 Front approach to toilet is 2' 9" whereas 4' 0" is new construction standard
- *4 Side approach to toilet is 36" whereas 42" is new construction standard

Scope of Accessibility Renovation work: for eight units (13% of total units)

- a. Raise sidewalk flush to entry door, and taper to existing at 1:20 slope.
- b. Install precast conc. beam in bearing wall to permit 5' 0" closet door opening.
- c. Move toilet 36"
- d. Relocate shelves to opposite wall to permit new lavatory
- e. Remove lavatory, and provide accessible lavatory, medicine cabinet, mirror in new location.
- f. Widen toilet room door to 30" Alternate to 36" with electric panel moved 6"
- g. Replace 5' 0" kitchen cabinet unit with 34" h, open below sink.

Estimated cost \$12,000 x 8 units = **\$96,000**

Scope of Renovation work for all 60 units:

Interior

- a. Install kitchen and bath exhaust fans
- b. Provide storm panels in storm doors as needed.
- c. Replace all radiator valves for manual operation. (possible and preferable with recently installed outdoor reset control for hydronic heating.)
- D. Replace 28" x 60" tub/showers with 30" x 60" wheel-in accessible showers.

Estimated interior renovation costs for 60 units: **\$280,000**

Exterior:

D. Re-roof 450 squares with 35 year architectural shingles

: \$60,000-**\$120,000** (without or with tear-off)

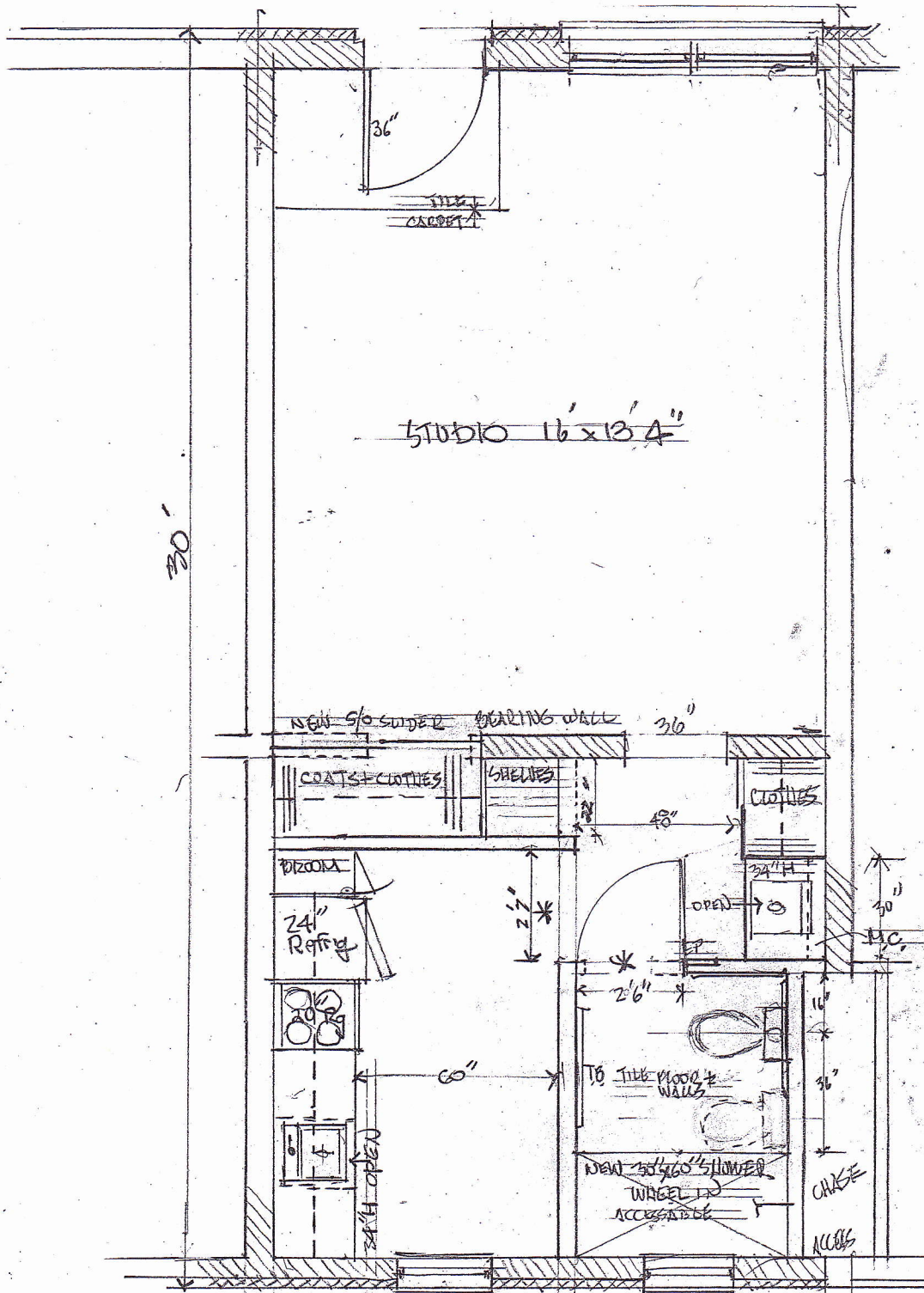
E Construct six trash toter enclosures, including sidewalk modifications **\$60,000**

(Note: customary appliance and carpet replacement and maintenance not included)

Total of renovation costs: \$556,000 plus 20% OH and Contingency: \$667,000

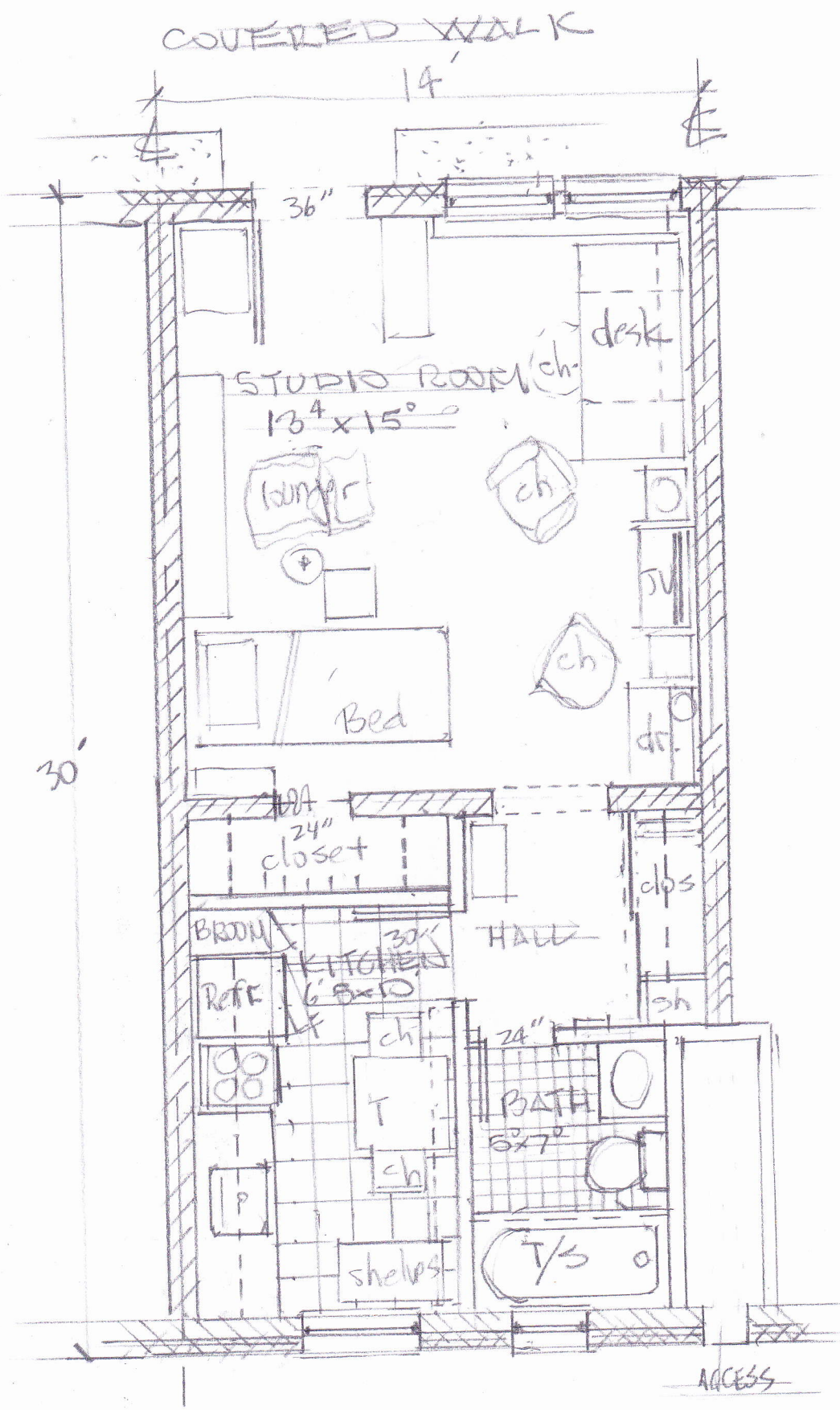
Optional: A modest community building, single story, approximately 80' x 60' can easily be accommodated on the available vacant land at the northwest (entry) corner of the site. Deputy Commissioner Lenny Skrill indicated to me that a M-L Rehab program could include this element, to provide amenities commonly found in new projects.

New 4,400 sq ft community building @ 300/sq. Ft. = \$1,320,000 + site work \$140,000



420 SQ. FT. STUDIO - ALTERATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY
 * EXCEPTIONS: 2'6" BATH DOOR OR MOVE ELECT PANEL 6"
 2'7" KITCHEN OPENING - 2'8" REQUIRED (1" LESS)

1/8" = 1'0"



COBB'S HILL VILLAGE

1960 420 sq. FT. 1/4" = 1' 0"

STUDIO COTTAGE

Commentary on Community:

These comments are partially based on the writings of Jane Jacobs (Death and Life of Great American Cities) and Dr. Atul Gawande (Being Mortal).

- Individual units accessible at grade with parking adjacent are preferred to multi-family living requiring corridors, common stairs and elevators. All space is defensible space. *(Note: Unsupervised common areas can present dangers of crime and undetected accident for this vulnerable population. Security in an elevator apartment house will be by a camera only, and these area in most cases not manned, and so do not protect residents before a criminal act is committed.)*

Police records indicate nearly total absence of crime here over past decades.

- The woodland location in a public park assures quiet and tranquility.
- Many tenants utilize the covered sidewalk space in front of their unit as their outdoor socialization space, with a window on their world, and with the ability to provide “eyes on the street” ensuring safety for they and their vulnerable neighbors. (The alternative proposed in the elevator apartment house, with upper floors having private balconies, which does not address loneliness, a common problem for the elderly, which reduces health and well being). One half of the present cottage units face onto green space, and one half face onto a 15’ tree lawn, separating head-in parking. This allows easy snow removal for tenants with parked cars. (Snow removal by management cannot include removal of snow at cars parked overnight.)

Conclusions:

1. Retention of residents in the present facilities with the present low rents will result in a high degree of resident satisfaction, and will play an important role in Affordable Housing Preservation, a stated goal of the NYS housing agencies. No alternative offered provides for as many units affordable to the poor on a permanent basis. Moderate improvements, discussed above, will enable this community to best serve the elderly, whose lifespan is rapidly increasing, and therefore will present new physical challenges. These are addressed above.

- Moderate rehab estimated above at under \$1,000,000 is only 7% of the projected cost of 60 unit building replacement (DHCR average unit cost of \$225,000 x 60 units= \$13,500,000) will assure long term viability of the project if combined with building component renewal customarily funded through a replacement reserve fund. This will assure stability to the 2041 reversion clause in the deed, and optionally beyond.

2. Compatibility with the surrounding public park is beyond the scope of this report, but it is obvious to note that single story units of natural exterior colors within a site with mature trees and shrubs present the least visual impact, when compared to the materials customarily utilized in NYS HCR supervised new affordable multi-story construction. (fiber cement panels, siding or shingles and veneer simulated brick or stone). Several mature trees over 100 years of age with spreads of over 50’ would be removed or require major pruning in the new-build proposal, reducing their chance of survival.

3. The present management has provided high quality maintenance, and servicing the residents needs with weekly transportation to shopping, which overcomes what is perhaps the single most significant deficiency of this site: distance to bus transportation. This is one Mitchell-Lama project that has an excellent history and offers decades of continued high acceptance by its tenants, and strong support for its continuation in it's present form by both surrounding neighborhood associations, and other associations throughout the city. Unlike the great majority of subsidized and

affordable housing in Rochester, the average income of the neighborhoods surrounding Cobbs Hill Village are substantially greater than those of Cobbs Hill Village residents.

- It should be noted that the owners have at no point in the past decade requested financial relief through the budgetary review process required for rent increases, indicating that they have not found a need for additional funds for operation of the community. That indicates stable conditions, with rents covering costs.
- Rochester Management has announced their intention to replace the existing project with a new one. Their project operates satisfactorily and offers sixty units which are affordable to persons with very low income. The replacement unit rents (30%, 50%, 60% and 80% of AMI), projected by the applicant area have an average double those existing (30% and 50% of AMI). While technically "affordable" by City and State standards are classified as "middle income." In the City of Rochester, with a "real" AMI about 60% that of the County and SMSA, monthly rent of \$1,150 plus estimated \$120 utility costs, projected by RMI for 18 of the proposed 104 units, is in point of fact, "market rate."
- Consideration of changes to Cobbs Hill Village should be considered in the context of the goals of the City and the residents, sustainable construction, impact on old growth trees just feet from foundations, and the conservation of scarce state financial resources for affordable housing.

Note that this report is based on examination of a limited number of units, as noted in the text, and that some items are noted as presumptions, as access may not have been available. Since the construction appears to be uniform throughout, I believe this to be an accurate assessment of conditions.

Respectfully submitted,

/rr/

Richard Rosen, **

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Rochester, NY 14607.

December 8, 2016 and subsequent editing based on new information becoming available) Revisions though April, 2018

Attachments: Furnishing plan of an existing studio apartment.

Studio apartment accessibility renovation plan (see scope and costs , page 3)

** Mr. Rosen's qualifications:

Architect for projects in New York State which include over 1,000 multi family and 600 senior living and licensed Assisted Living units during past ten years.

B Arch: Carnegie Mellon University

M Urban Design: Harvard University



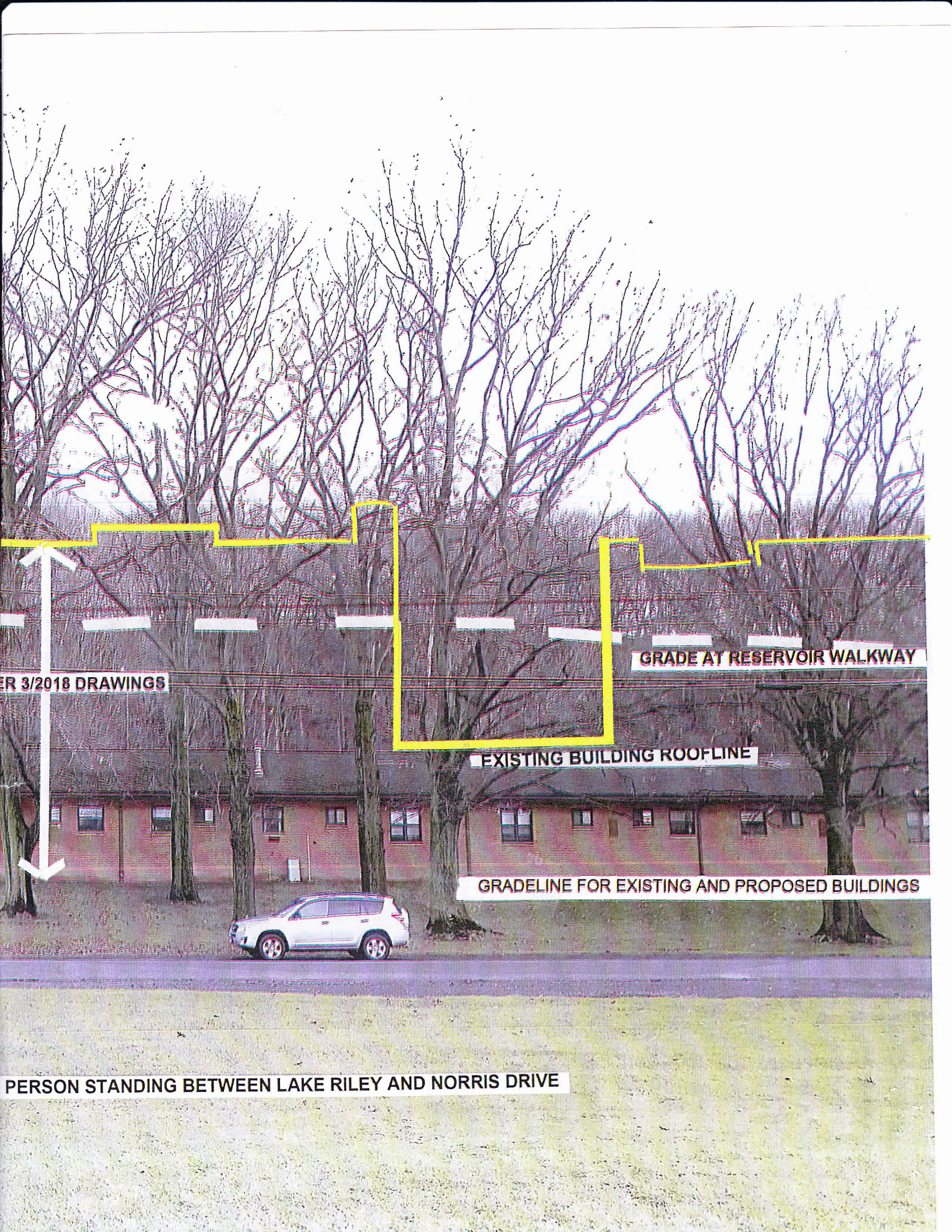
ROOFLINE OF PROPOSED BUILDINGS

GROUND AT TOP OF RESERVOIR PERIMETER

40' F

COMPARISON OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED BUILDINGS INTERFERENCE WITH VIEW OF THE CORBS HILL

VIEW FO



APRIL 3/2018 DRAWINGS

GRADE AT RESERVOIR WALKWAY

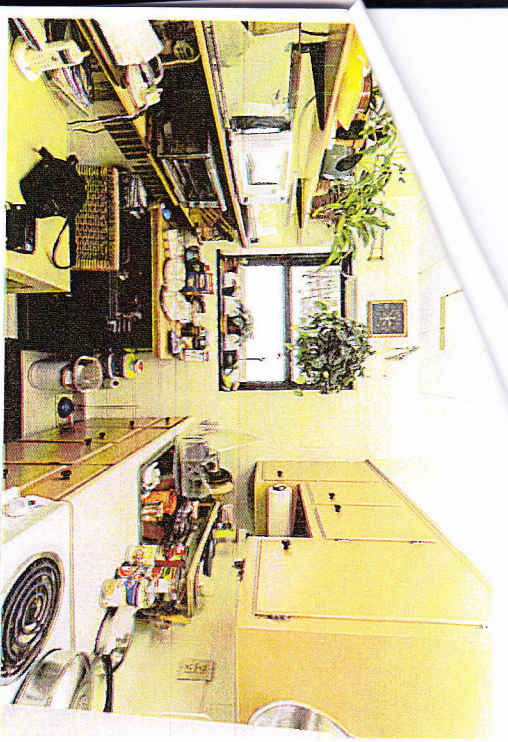
EXISTING BUILDING ROOFLINE

GRADELINE FOR EXISTING AND PROPOSED BUILDINGS

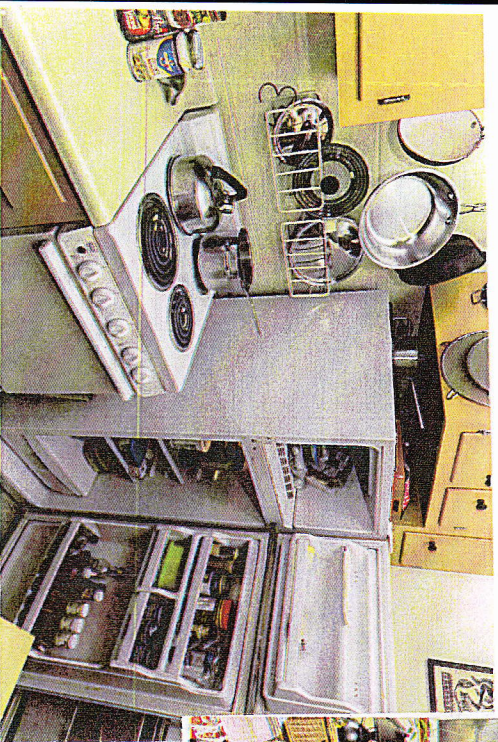
PERSON STANDING BETWEEN LAKE RILEY AND NORRIS DRIVE

Who says my Cobbs Hill Village apartment is too small? I'll show you around my Studio, and then my friend Lee will show you his one bedroom apartment.





I like to cook, and this bright kitchen has plenty workspace because I put in shelves for appliances and plants. The table seats two.

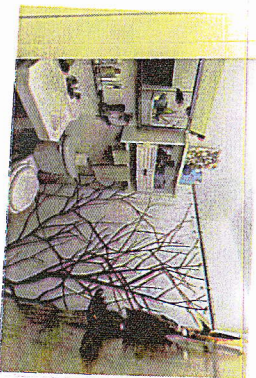


The two door refrigerator is plenty large enough, and I can roast a medium size turkey.

Here's my desk, where I surround myself with plants at the bright large window.



This is my Studio apartment. It's spacious enough for me to have the family over to visit. The bed is off in the right corner.



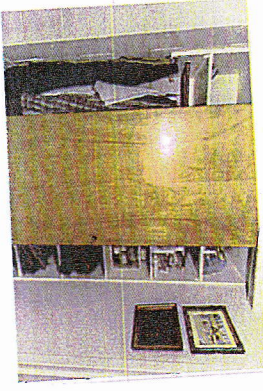
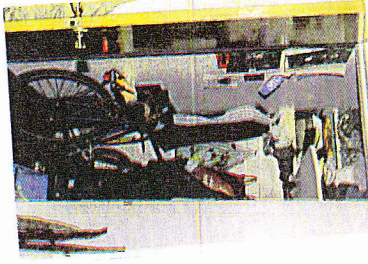
Plenty space in the bathroom, and I have grab bars to keep me safe in the shower or tub.





There is plenty of wall space for artwork and cabinets to organize all my stuff.

The storage closet (left below) is large enough for me to store my bike. The hall closet (right below) is for outdoor clothes has ample linen shelves.



My name is Lee and I'd like to show you around my spacious one-bedroom apartment. It's a modern layout, with kitchen partially open to the living/dining room.

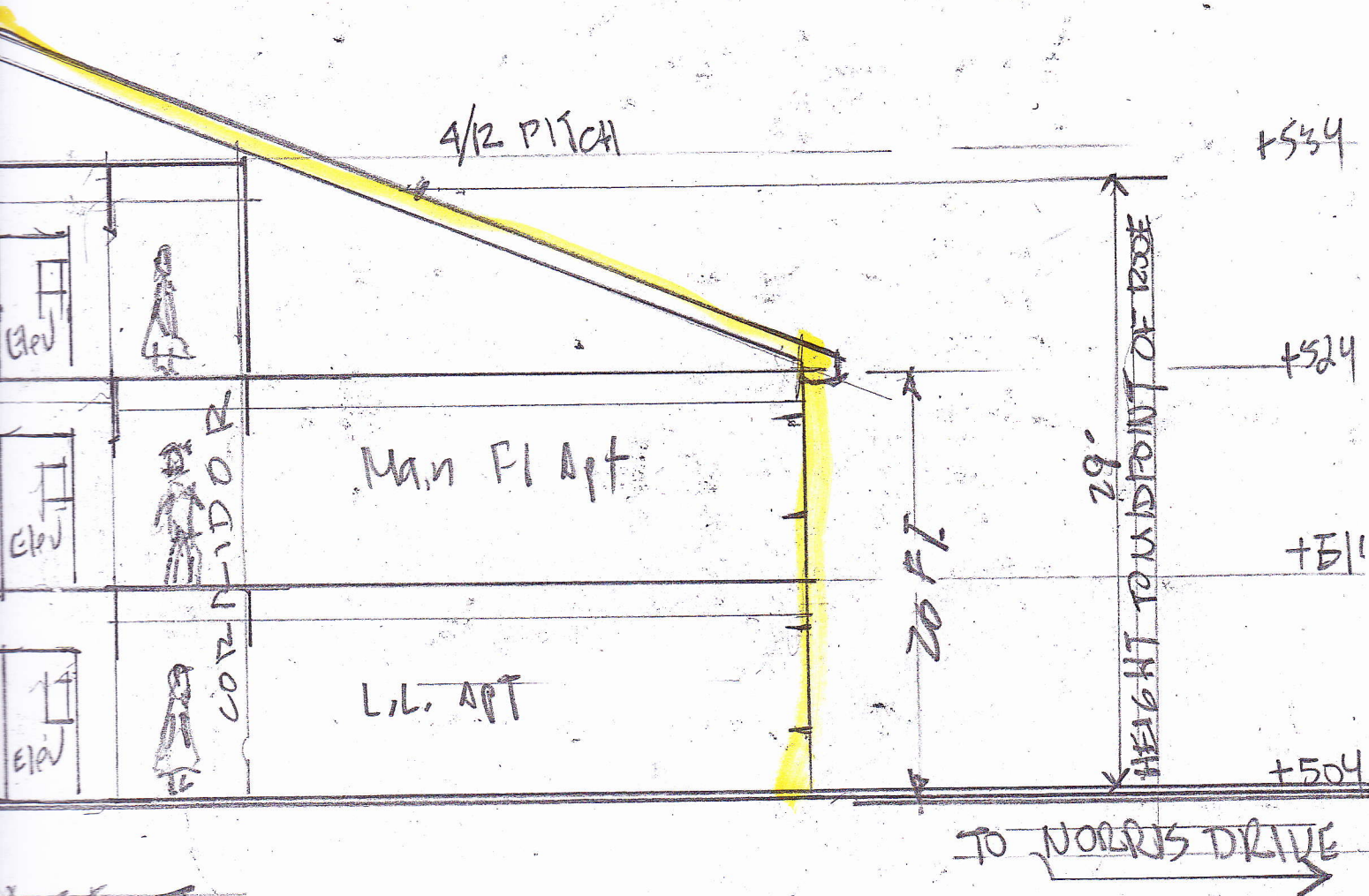
Here's my bedroom, which measures 13' x 13'. It's adequate for bed, two dressers, chair, and also has a large closet.



I do a lot of work on my computer, and this 7' long desk holds everything I need.

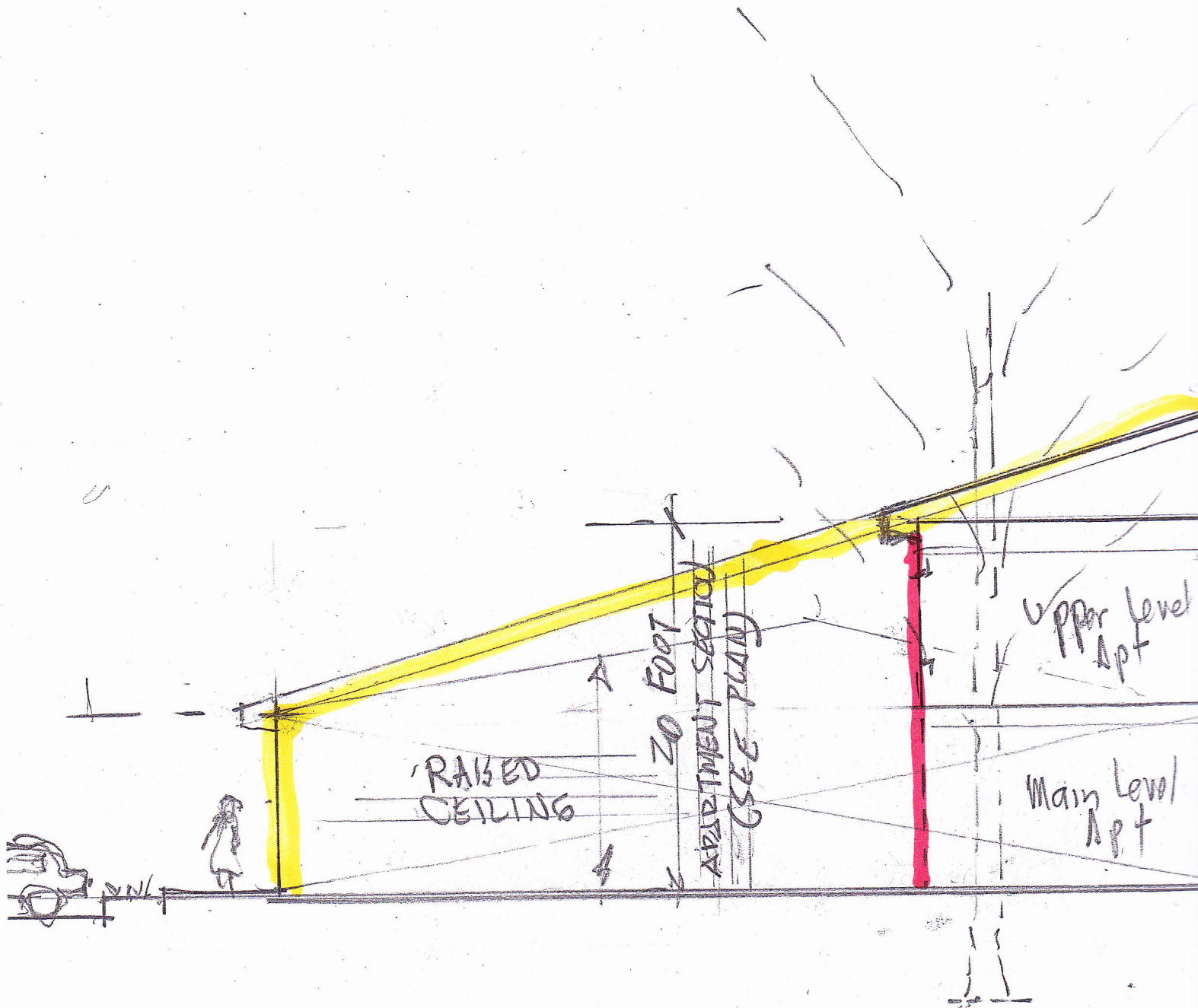
The bathroom has a large medicine cabinet and generous solid-surface counter/sink.





ASE II
 UTILITY SPACE





CODDS HILL VILLAGE -
ACCESSIBLE APARTMENTS & COM