



CITY OF JOHNSTOWN
 Code Enforcement Office
 PO Box 160, 244 North Perry Street
 Johnstown, New York 12095
 (518) 736-4076

- OFFICE USE ONLY -	
Approved: ____/____/____	Receipt # _____
Permit #: _____, 20____	Fee Paid: _____
Signature: _____	

ADDRESS

BUILDING / DEMOLITION PERMIT APPLICATION

Applicant shall notify this Office of any changes in the information contained in the application during the period for which the permit is in effect. **A permit will be issued when: a) application has been determined to be complete, b) fee has been paid and 3) when proposed work is determined to conform to the requirements of the Uniform Code.** The authority conferred by such a permit may be limited by conditions.

Permit may be suspended or revoked if it's determined that work is not proceeding in conformance with the Uniform Code, with any conditions attached to such permit, or if there has been misrepresentation or falsification of a material fact in connection with the application for permit.

Demolition Permit will expire **six (6) months** from date of issuance / Building permit will expire **one (1) year** from the date of issuance or upon issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (other than a temporary Certificate of Occupancy), whichever comes first. Permit may, upon written request, be renewed for successive one-year periods provided that a) permit has not been revoked or suspended at the time the application for renewal has been made; b) relevant information in the application is up to date; and c) renewal fee is paid (half cost of original permit).

TYPE

Additional terms of permit can be found on Schedule of Permit Fees.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Johnstown Public Library Name / Company		518-762-8317 Phone:	
Erica Wing Contact Person		ewing@mvlis.info Email	
38 S. Market St. Address		State NY	Zip 12095

PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION, IF DIFFERENT THAN APPLICANT

Name	Phone
Address	State Zip

SUBCONTRACTOR INFORMATION (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Not Applicable at this time Name of Company	Phone
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PROJECT INFORMATION

38 S. Market St. Location		Renewal Application: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Estimated Cost of Project: \$1,000,000	Work will begin: <u>TBD</u> / ____ / ____	for a period of ____ day(s) ____ week(s)

DEMOLITION GENERAL COMMENTS

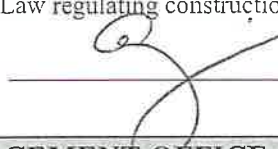
Environmental Survey – <u>Not Applicable</u>
Asbestos Abatement w/ Way Bill – <u>Not Applicable</u>
Where is Debris going? – <u>To be determined</u>

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT w/ DETAILS. IF NEEDED, ATTACH DRAWING OF PLOT PLAN / CONSTRUCTION PLAN.

The project entails the renovation of the landscape surrounding the library building to create a "Learning Landscape" as an extension of the program space available to the library. The Plan calls for a reduction of off street parking from 21 to 11 spaces, construction of a pavilion and activity zone to the east of the building, construction of a quiet seating zone to the west of the building. The west side plan includes a limestone veneer retaining wall. A segmental retaining wall will be set along the northern edge of the east side of the lot to gain additional space for the activity area. Decorative accent lighting will be set around the two primary elevations of the building to accentuate the architecture. In direct accent lighting will also be placed within the landscape and area light poles will be provided at the parking lot. A canopy will be built over the Clinton St. entrance door. New plants and trees will be provided throughout the plan.

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that I have read and examined this application and known the same to be true and correct. All provisions of Laws and Ordinances covering this type of work will be completed whether or not specified herein. Granting of a permit does not presume to give authority to violate or cancel the provisions of any other State or Local Law regulating construction or the performance of construction.


 Date: 5/28/24

PERMIT APPROVAL - CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICE (CEO) USE ONLY

BUILDING

- General alterations / renovations - \$35.00
- Fence - \$25.00
- Swimming pool - \$35.00
- Garage - \$50.00
- Shed / Carport / Deck - \$35.00
- Siding / Roofing / Windows - \$35.00
- Mobile home sitting - \$75.00
- Signs / Awnings / Canopies - \$35.00

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING & EXCAVATION

- 1 & 2 family under 1500 sq. ft. - \$200.00
- Each add't. 1000 sq. ft. or part thereof - \$100.00
- Multiple dwelling each 1000 sq. ft. - \$200.00
- Manufactured home installation - \$125.00
- Add't. units or sleeping room - \$50.00
- Additions; each 1000 sq. ft. - \$125.00
- Multiple dwelling; each 1000 sq. ft. \$200.00

NON RESIDENTIAL BUILDING & EXCAVATION

- Roofing - \$75.00
- New Construction 1st 1000 sq. ft. - \$200.00
- Each add't. 1000 sq. ft. or part thereof - \$125.00
- General construction- additions- alterations-renovations \$150
- Alterations / Renovations to building system - \$250.00
(electrical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, plumbing or any combination)

ALTERATIONS & RENOVATIONS

- 1 & 2 family - \$100.00
- Multiple dwelling - \$200.00

INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL SITE REVIEW

- 1 - 5 lots - \$100.00
- 6 or more lots - \$100.00
- Plus, for each add't. - \$25.00

S.E.O.R. REQUIREMENTS

- Lead Agency Coordination - \$50.00
- Long Form EAF & Determination of Significance - \$100.00
- Draft EIS Review - \$150.00
- Final EIS Review - \$200.00

MISCELLANEOUS

- Certificate of Occupancy - \$75.00
- Bank letter - \$35.00
- Operating Permit - \$35.00

DEMOLITION - \$75.00

Permit Issued? YES NO Fee charged: _____

 Planning Board: Approved Not Required
 Zoning Variance: Approved Not Required

Code Permit #: _____ Tax Map #: _____

Insurance provided? Yes No

CEO Signature: _____ Date: ___/___/___

INSPECTIONS:

Date: ___/___/___ Type: _____	Approved: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	CEO Initials: _____
Date: ___/___/___ Type: _____	Approved: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	CEO Initials: _____
Date: ___/___/___ Type: _____	Approved: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	CEO Initials: _____
Date: ___/___/___ Type: _____	Approved: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	CEO Initials: _____

C.T. MALE ASSOCIATES

Engineering, Surveying, Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Geology, D.P.C.

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June 13, 2024

City of Johnstown
Planning Board
Mr. Peter Smith, Board Chair
33-41 East Main St.
Johnstown, NY 12095

Dear Mr. Smith,

Attached to this letter is a Planning Board Site Plan Review Application for a project being planned at the Johnstown Public Library. Within the context of our design process and consultations with the Code Enforcement Office we have determined the project is significantly constrained by the Zoning Ordinance and that we will need to submit for a site plan review and possibly an appeal to the ZBA. This submission is intended to review the concept of the project. I am providing this summary narrative description to offer to explanation and clarity concerning the design intent as a supplement to the drawings to further understanding and constructive dialogue.

Project History

The project stems from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that radically shifted the operational framework for the library. For a time, the only activities the library could host had to be conducted outside. From this came the realization that the library grounds were not designed to facilitate outdoor activity. To make use of the site, staff would erect a small pop-up tent on the parking lot for a little shade and provide a table and chairs for arts and crafts activities. This adaptation to site utilization allowed the library to continue to fulfil its mission during a very difficult time.

Additionally, the library had previously transitioned to being a School District Library, meaning the school district boundaries are now the library service area and the school district collects the tax levy to support the library budget. No longer affiliated with the City of Johnstown, who previously owned the land, the library no longer enjoys the work and support of the Johnstown Department of Public Works to provide maintenance, lawn care, and general landscape stewardship. The manicured landscape planted in 1995 and the years following the completion of the addition has become overgrown and has become a challenge for the library to manage through staff, volunteers and budget. So, they are looking for a shift in landscaping philosophy that will reduce overall maintenance demands while maintaining a beautiful and functional contributing civic facility in the city. They recognize the need for maintenance will continue, but creating landscaping that can be managed through a service contract with a vendor for seasonal mowing, leaf pick up and more occasional maintenance of trees offers a better operational platform for budget and general maintenance than currently exists.

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Project Scope

The essence of the project entails the renovation of the library grounds into a "Learning Landscape". To achieve this objective, the library intends to energize the spaces around the building with outdoor activity areas. The best way to envision this transformation is by dividing the site into three zones. Zone 1 is to the west of the building along Market St. Zone 2 is immediately to the east of and adjacent to the building taking up roughly half the space of the parking lot. Zone 3 is the farthest eastern portion of the lot and contains the balance of the parking area.

Zone 1 will be developed into a quiet zone with passive seating for reading and table games. This area will be elevated above the Market Street sidewalk at the same elevation as the bottom of the original steps to the front entrance. A limestone veneer retaining wall will separate the sidewalk from the elevated seating area. Skateboard resistant seating will be installed. A path will connect the front steps to the Clinton St sidewalk to maintain the path of egress from the front doors which will remain a limited use exit access from the building. Ground mounted LED accent lighting will be added to provide lighting onto the building at night at the Market St and Clinton St facades. The area from the southwest corner of the building up to the Clinton St entrance will be landscaped with meadow plantings that will also become the buffer planting between the Market St sidewalk and the retaining wall.

Zone 2 will be developed as an active play and learning area for young pre-school aged children and their families. This zone will feature a canopy over the Clinton St entrance to provide a degree of weather protection at the door. The canopy will extend to the property boundary line running parallel to Clinton St. Zone 2 will also feature a pavilion of similar structural and aesthetic qualities to create a shaded and protected space for outdoor craft activities. The pavilion would also double as a small performance stage. From the level of the pavilion slab, a grassed lawn will slope upward to provide seating for performance and educational presentations. A paved walkway will wind through this zone connecting three play areas where kids can run, jump, play music and be active. The sidewalk will curve around the pavilion and loop up to the play areas and back around to connect to the parking lot. Accent lighting will be provided within the landscaped trees and plantings to provide a safe environment at night without significant glare. A segmental retaining wall will be installed on the north edge of the lot to capture more land area for use than the existing brambled slope allows now. Lastly, the mechanical condensing units on the Clinton St. side will be relocated to the northeast corner away from the street.

Zone 3 will feature a smaller off-street parking lot containing 11 total spaces that includes 1 accessible space with a proper access aisle. The aisle will connect to the Zone 2 sidewalk so visitors will have safer access to the site and entrance without navigating the mouth of the lot entrance. The lot will have adequate lighting from a combination of a pole mounted light and several bollards. The lighting will be shielded to direct lighting onto the lot surface and away

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from neighboring properties. The retaining wall along the north edge of Zone 2 will be extended along the north edge of Zone 3. Limited landscaping will be provided in Zone 3 to maximize the space available for parking. By extension the parking lot access lane and curb cut will also be relocated to align with the primary drive aisle in the lot.

Project Impacts

The most notable impact will be in Zone 2 with the elimination of paved parking. This will be balanced by a net positive impact with the development of added program space for the library to continue to grow its literacy program. Newer landscaping elements will also be provided to increase greenspace around the building thus softening the environment on the east and west sides of the building. Accent lighting will make the building more visible at night and allow the architecture to be more prominent as a civic building.

Zoning Analysis

The site is zoned Public Use and sits within the Central Business District boundary. As such the density standards are as follows:

Density Standard	Min. Lot Size	Min. Front Setback	Min. Side Setback	Min. Rear Setback	Max. Lot Develop.	Max. Bldg. Hght.	Creek Buffer Setback
Public Use (Req'd)	2 Acres (87,120 sf)	30' (100%)	20'	30'	50%	50'	25'
Existing	.44 Ac (19,263 sf)	22'-5" to edge of steps (74.7%)	4'-0"N/ 4'-9"S/ 0' N rtng wall	143'-4"	29.4% (5,674 sf)	<50'	NA
Proposed	No Change	3'-11" to rtng wall (13.1%) (-61.6%)	0' to N extended rtng wall/ 0' to S at canopy	98'-10"	32.5% (6,255 sf) +3.1%	No Change	No Change

Three key proposed elements impact the density standards, and one impacts the allowable use standards.

- 1) Installation of a Retaining Wall in the Front Yard: This is proposed to achieve two objectives. The first being to create a cloistered, intimate sitting area on level ground that is accessible. The second being to create a visual disconnection from Market St. to the original monumental entrance. The retaining wall will allow for the creation of an elevated plinth that establishes a visual separation from the Market St. sidewalk to the

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entrance doors. This will break the physical connection to Market St and route all pedestrian traffic to Clinton St, including those that need to use the doors as an emergency exit. The retaining wall will act as a pedestal upon which the library will be situated. This will maintain the monumentality of the Beaux Arts architecture of the library while creating the level surface for the seating area.

- 2) Installation of a Retaining Wall along the North Property Line: This feature is proposed to allow the library to capture sloped land too steep to use and currently covered by brambles. The slope has become a catchment for garbage and trash that blows in from neighboring properties that is not easily accessed for cleanup. Elevating the grade along that edge of the property, with the provision of a fence will make the space available for programming and easier to maintain.
- 3) Installation of a Pavilion and Canopy: The Pavilion is proposed to enhance the functionality of the learning landscape and by offering an open, covered space for outdoor activities and small performances and presentations. It is intended to be as much a sculptural element of the landscape as it is a functional piece. The pavilion roof would add 400 SF to the developed area. The Canopy is proposed to offer a degree of protection from the elements at the door and to enhance the prominence of the doors as the primary entrance. The lack of a canopy over the door has created issues with snow and ice buildup at the doors creating slipping hazards and the use of heavy amounts of snow melt that are negatively affecting the concrete apron in front of the doors. The canopy will add 181 SF to the developed area.
- 4) Installation of Accessory Structures: The overall designated use of the property will not change. However, the canopy and pavilion represent the introduction of accessory structures to the site. Per the zoning ordinance Schedule A Allowable Land Use, accessory structures are not allowed in a Public Space zone. However, the programmatic premise of the learning landscape is to extend the library's function to the exterior environment. The sculptural quality of the structures will enhance the aesthetic experience of the space.

In our research we come to understand that the city may have amended its city code to allow property previously owned by the city to convert its zoning district designation from Public Use to the common zoning district designation surrounding the site in order to facilitate development activities within the city. At this time, it appears this is anecdotal evidence as we were unable to find a reference to such a code amendment on the city website. If this premise is properly established and true, then it is plausible that we may consider the conversion of this site from Public Use to CB-3 (Central Business District). Under CB-3 the zoning density standards are determined as follows.

<i>Density Standard</i>	<i>Min. Lot Size</i>	<i>Min. Front Setback</i>	<i>Min. Side Setback</i>	<i>Min. Rear Setback</i>	<i>Max. Lot Develop.</i>	<i>Max. Bldg. Hght.</i>	<i>Creek Buffer Setback</i>
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CB-3 (Req'd)	--	0'	0'	20'	--	50'	25'
<i>Existing</i>	.44 Ac (19,263 sf)	22'-5" to edge of steps (+2240%)	4'-0"N/ 4'-9"S/ 0' N rtng wall	143'-4"	29.4% (5,674 sf)	<50'	NA
<i>Proposed</i>	No Change	3'-11" to rtng wall (1310%) (-61.6%)	0' to N extended rtng wall/ 0' to S at canopy	98'-10"	32.5% (6,255 sf) +3.1%	No Change	No Change

Project Justification

It is the library's assessment that the existing landscape does little to enhance the function and beauty of the library. The parking lot is marginally useful but does not provide compliant accessible parking and the accessible route from the accessible parking to the front door forces the person into the drive lane of the parking lot. The parking lot also offers little in the way of multi-purpose functionality as it was designed and built to meet the minimum standards to the greatest extent possible within the limited footprint of the site.

The site itself, as a Public Use designation, is a non-conforming site as its spatial boundaries were set prior to the establishment of the current ordinance. So even if nothing is done, it will not conform to the minimum standards of the ordinance. And as such, it will continue to offer little value to its civic role in the community. Effectively the rules established to promote orderly development of the community would ensure the library cannot use its land to its fullest and best potential for the benefit of the community.

In considering any project, the Planning Board must consider the broader impact of the project on the effectiveness of the ordinance and the impact on the community in the following ways.

Does the project create a self-imposed hardship?

Yes, this is a self-imposed hardship. However, that hardship is derived from the confluence of a strong programmatic spectrum of services that is drawing in users from outside the region and the non-conforming status of the site relative to its assigned density standards. The library has a fiduciary responsibility to maintain a financially stable program that serves the community around it according to its mission. The library serves on the front lines of literacy education, especially for pre-school age children and is a conduit for information access for those that do

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not have private access to all forms of media. To keep itself healthy and viable it must find ways to expand and promote its utilization.

What other alternative solutions were considered?

The available solutions squarely within the parameters of the zoning ordinance amounts to changing the plantings around the building. And while that is technically feasible, such a modest change would do little to improve the site as a civic institution and allow it to expand its programs in a sustainable manner. Another option would be to vacate the site and relocate to another site through the fit-up or construction of a different property. However, this option would be cost prohibitive for the library and would remove a key contributing property from the Central Business District.

How does the proposed project support the City's Vision as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan?

The comprehensive plan adopted in 2008 establishes 6 goals in support of its vision statement. The library's proposal supports those goals as follows:

- Preserve the City of Johnstown's small town quality of life featuring safe residential neighborhoods and a cooperative community spirit.
 - The library is a long standing community asset used by all ages of children and adults.
 - It still resides in the original 1902 Carnegie sponsored building.
 - It sits on the edge of the Central Business District and within walking distance of several residential neighborhoods.
 - The plan offers the opportunity to enhance its programming with exterior space in a park like setting.
- Identify, promote and strengthen the City's Central Business District to ensure it retains its stature as the center of activity in the City of Johnstown.
 - The project is within the Central Business District boundary and would be a draw to downtown from within and outside the community.
- Develop a new Center City Park as the centerpiece of a comprehensive system of parks, open spaces and trails to meet the community's diverse recreational needs and protect its natural beauty and resources.
 - The project would create a pocket park and would soften and green the landscape of the neighborhood.
 - The learning landscape will provide a garden like setting for low impact activities for kids and passive, meditative activities for adults.
- Protect, preserve and promote the City's rich history and heritage.
 - The library has been operating out of the existing facility for the last 122 years.

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- The building is a Carnegie sponsored library structure designed in the Beaux Arts style incorporating neo-classical and mannerist stylistic features in the architecture. The project will add exterior LED lighting to accentuate the architecture that is currently invisible at night.
- Promote a variety of affordable housing choices to meet the different needs that currently exist and future needs as the community's population ages.
 - While not providing housing, its enhanced outdoor space will be an asset to local residents and be a quality-of-life justification for the promotion of new housing development.
- Diversify and strengthen the City's economy by attracting new, clean businesses to the city and providing a healthy business climate to encourage existing businesses to grow and expand.
 - While not providing a new business, its enhanced outdoor space will be an asset to local business' and be a quality of life justification for the promotion of new business and industrial development.

Project Execution Plan

The project is planned to be executed in 2 phases in order to better leverage grant funding for the project offered through the MVLS. Phase 1 will include all the development of Zone 1 to the west side along Market St. and will begin construction in the spring of 2025. Phase 2 will include all of Zones 2 and 3 as well as the landscaping along the south edge of the building and the exterior lighting and mechanical equipment relocation and will be executed beginning in late 2025 or spring of 2026.

We are requesting to proceed with site plan review of Phase 1 only at this time as it is the smaller amount of work and represents the least impact on zoning standards. We would like to discuss the merits of Phase 2 over a longer period to properly determine its zoning compliance position and to make refinements deemed reasonable and appropriate.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss the project in more detail with you in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,



David A. D'Amore
Managing Architect