

PROPOSAL:

Sinclair Hille Architects, on behalf of Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach, requests a certificate of appropriateness for work at 2121 N. 27th Street, the former Northeast Branch Library.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Lincoln built a branch library at 27th & Orchard Street in 1908, assisted by a \$10,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie. George Berlinghof designed the Neo-classical Revival style structure of brick and limestone. The Northeast Branch Library operated until 1982.



A decade later, the building was moved a mile north to 27th and Center Streets.



View from south, 1992

Until 2008 the former library was the office of Neighborhoods, Inc. (now “NeighborWorks Lincoln”), an agency that promotes homeownership and community revitalization.



Ca. 2000

When Matt Talbot Kitchen was seeking a new home in 2009, NeighborWorks, the City of Lincoln, and Matt Talbot agency agreed to a coordinated plan to transfer ownership of the former library to Matt Talbot and relocate NeighborWorks back into the Hawley/Malone neighborhood. As part of that plan, the City requested landmark designation for the property and Matt Talbot proposed a major addition to the building for office space and dining facilities. Upon review, the Preservation Commission recommended approval of the designation and the thoughtfully designed addition and site landscaping.



Expansion plan, 2009



View from SE of MTKO addition to NE Carnegie Library



View from west of Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach, main entrance

While the addition has a much larger footprint than the original building, it is carefully designed and located and the site is landscaped so as to allow the former library to dominate the principal views from 27th Street, while MTKO has a handsome and dignified entrance and overall appearance for clients, volunteers and staff approaching the building from the south and west.

Program expansions of the agency have created a need for additional office and meeting space. Sinclair Hille Architects, the designers of the original 2009 addition, have designed an addition infilling a portion of the recess to the south (right) of the main, west entrance to the current facility (opposite the former library's principal façade towards N. 27th Street). I reviewed the design in the architects' office but do not yet have images on hand to share in this report. Images of the proposal will be available for the Commission at the January 19th meeting.

The landmark’s preservation guidelines state that “New Construction...shall be compatible with the design of the existing building and shall be as unobtrusive as possible.” Based on my review, I can share that materials and detailing of the addition would closely follow the design of the 2009 construction. The proposed addition appears to me to have no impact on the historic former library and to blend very unobtrusively with the existing MTKO structure.

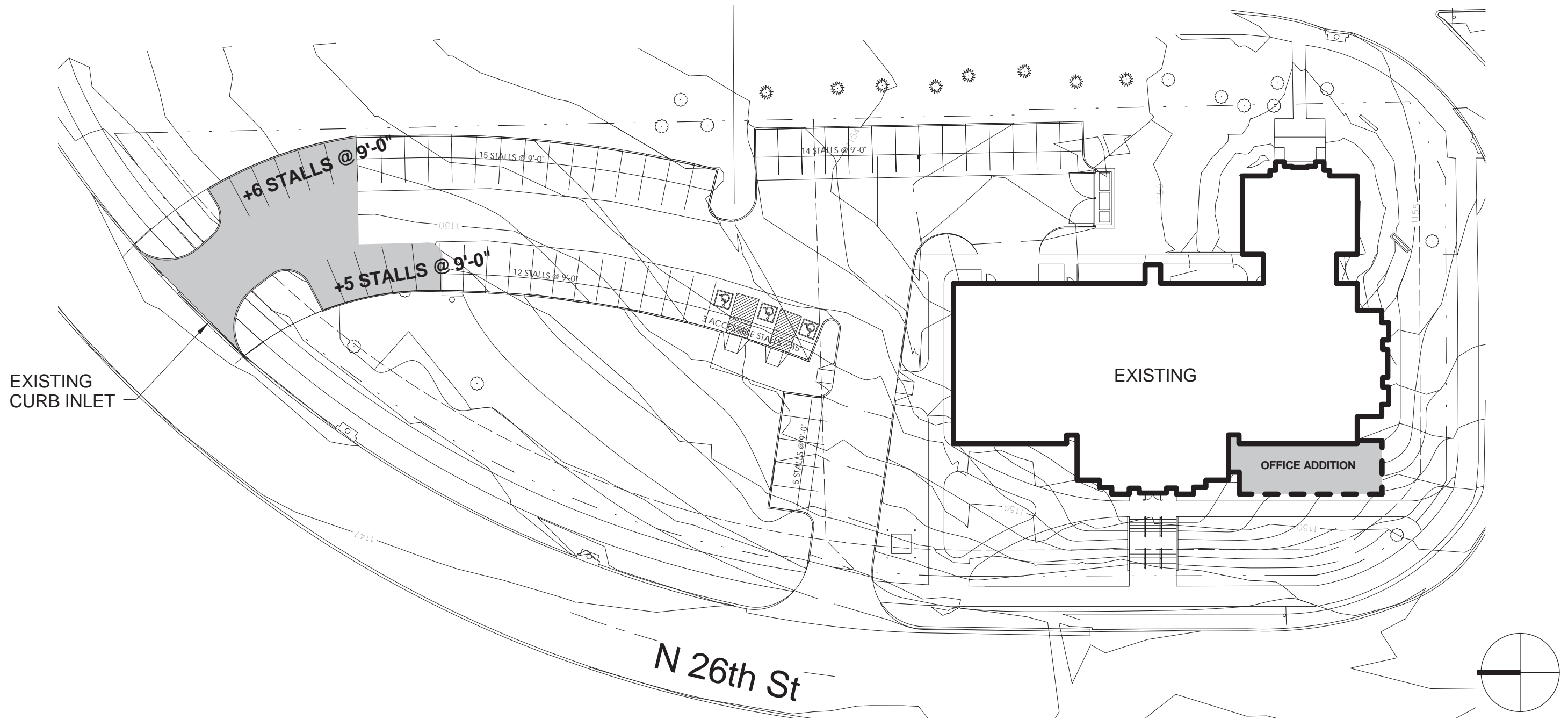


Recommended finding:

The proposed addition meets the Landmark’s preservation guidelines’ call for compatibility and unobtrusiveness, in materials, design, and location.

Recommended action:

Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.







ENTRY PERSPECTIVE

