

William Grose Center Landmarks Preservation

Revised 18 June 2024



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William Grose Center Landmarks Preservation



figure 1: Historic photo showing apparatus bay doors, lightning bolt window, and typical windows.

Fire Station 6: Existing Conditions, Proposals, and Request for Guidance

The William Grose Center, originally City of Seattle's Fire Station 6, was built in 1931-32 and designated a City Landmark on June 28, 2005. The City of Seattle transferred the building to the Africatown Community Land Trust in 2022, and it is currently operated as a community and youth center.

The building was renovated in 1986, windows were replaced in 1999, and the roof was replaced in 2001. While these interventions were made prior to the Landmark designation, the Architects made sensitive decisions that were respectful of the character of the original construction. Those design choices included:

- Preserving the distinctive appearance of the **concrete parapets**.
- Mimicking the multi-pane appearance of the original **steel-sash windows**.
- Reproducing the original wooden **apparatus bay doors** with steel replicas.
- Preserving the distinctive '**lightning bolt**' window above the apparatus bay doors.

The Landmarks designation of 2005 states that:

"The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:

- *The exterior of the building*
- *The site"*

The renovation work planned for 2024 offers us the opportunity to continue making decisions that respect the important features of this building. These decisions may be contrary to the requirements of the 2018 Seattle Energy Code, so we are requesting guidance from the Landmarks Board.

Concrete Parapets: Fire Station 6 (FS6) was designed by architect George Stewart, and is one of Seattle's only remaining Art Deco / Moderne fire stations. The primary distinctive feature is the pattern of strong geometric reveals cast into the smooth structural concrete walls and parapets. These reveals extend to the top of the parapets to create either a chevron detail or a zig-zag profile which is clearly visible against the sky. (See photo page 6)

Windows: The original single-pane steel-sash windows were replaced with modern aluminum windows in 1999. Steel sash windows feature multiple lites divided by narrow muntins. This technology cannot support contemporary insulated glazing units; new aluminum windows with thermal breaks must have thicker frames. The renovation architects chose to mimic the narrow muntins by etching a similar pattern onto float glass, alternating clear and translucent areas to suit the need for privacy of the firefighters occupying the building. Some of the original windows in the handball court were high above the floor, and the 1931 design included an elaborate and complicated mechanism for opening these windows from floor level. This mechanism was not preserved, and the high windows were changed from operable to fixed. (See comparison of 1931, 1999, and proposed new windows, page 15.)

Apparatus Bay Doors: Prior to 1986 the original wooden apparatus bay doors had been replaced with sectional overhead garage doors. The 1986 architect chose to reproduce the original doors with steel facsimiles including multi-pane glazing. The original steel strap hinges were replaced with continuous piano hinges, but otherwise the new doors are a convincing copy of the 1931 originals. (See photo page 18.)

Lightning Bolt Transom: The distinctive Art Deco zig-zag transom windows above the apparatus bay feature a "lightning bolt" exterior grille. The original steel sash with single-pane glazing remains, and the original steel decorative grille was replaced in 1986 with one made from anodized aluminum. (See photo page 19.)

Energy Code Compliance: SDCI's review of the current permit application has identified three conditions that require compliance with the Seattle Energy Code (SEC). In each of these, existing conditions make compliance difficult:

1. Vertical Fenestration (Windows in Handball Court)
2. Exterior Swinging Doors (Apparatus Bay Doors)
3. Vertical Fenestration ("Lightning Bolt" Transom Windows)

Accessibility: A concrete ramp was added to the west side of the building during Phase 1 of the renovation, but this ramp was built incorrectly. In Phase 2 we will demolish the ramp and replace it with a shallower concrete walkway, which will provide an accessible route of egress from the lower floor to the public right-of-way. We are proposing to provide a steel handrail along the length of the walk and the perimeter of the upper landing. In keeping with the building's origin as a fire station this handrail will be painted gloss red to match other existing metal items.

Power door operators are required to provide accessibility at two exterior doors. These will require blue ADA door buttons at the exterior of the building adjacent to the doors.

Parking

Seattle Zoning Code Section SMC 23.45.536.D.1 requires that parking shall be screened from direct street view. We request Landmarks Board support to leave the existing concrete apron unchanged to preserve the relationship of the building to its site.

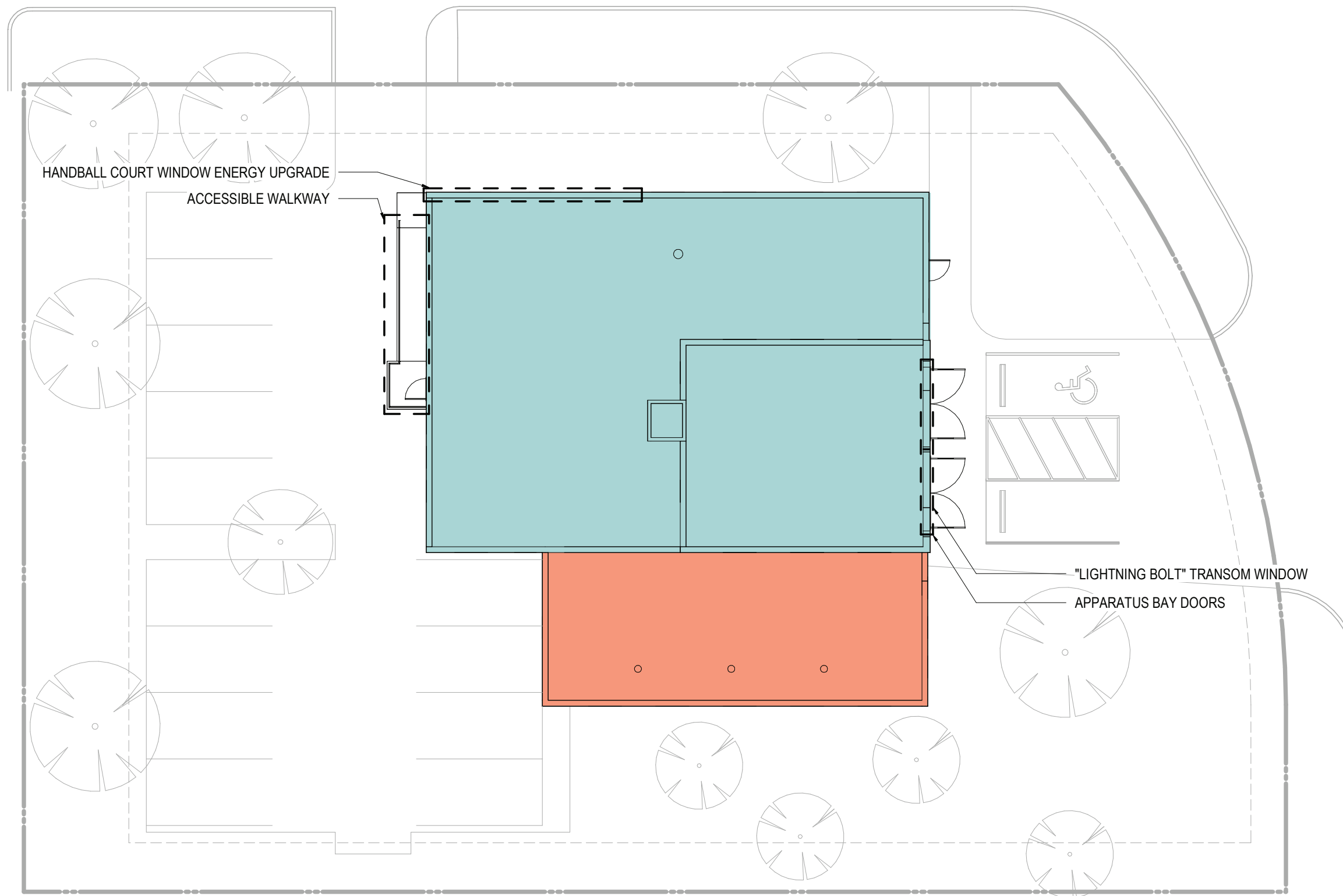
Rooftop Mechanical Equipment: Equipment installed in 1986 will be replaced. The new equipment will not change the visibility of mechanical equipment from across the street (See diagram page 26).

Scope of Work

Project Site Plan

YESLER WAY

23RD AVENUE



HANDBALL COURT WINDOW ENERGY UPGRADE

ACCESSIBLE WALKWAY

"LIGHTNING BOLT" TRANSOM WINDOW

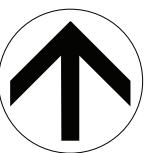
APPARATUS BAY DOORS

figure 2:

ORIGINAL 1931 BUILDING

1986 ADDITION

ROOF INSULATION UPGRADE - ALL AREAS



Apparatus Bay Doors

Current Condition



figure 52:
Current condition of apparatus bay doors, 1986 replica of original

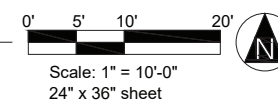
Parking

landscape plan



LEGEND	
	Property Line
	Existing Concrete Paving
	Crushed Rock Path
	Raised Planters
	Existing Trees

Planting Plan



Parking

proposed visibility of landmark with and without screening

Seattle Municipal Code 23.45.536.D.1

D. Screening of parking

1. Parking shall be screened from direct street view by:
 - a. The street-facing facade of a structure;
 - b. Garage doors;
 - c. A fence or wall; or
 - d. Landscaped areas, including bioretention facilities or landscaped berms.



figure 59:
View from 23rd Ave. without proposed screening



figure 60:
View from 23rd Ave. with proposed screening

Parking

feasibility of parking spot



figure 61:
View from 23rd Ave. with proposed screening

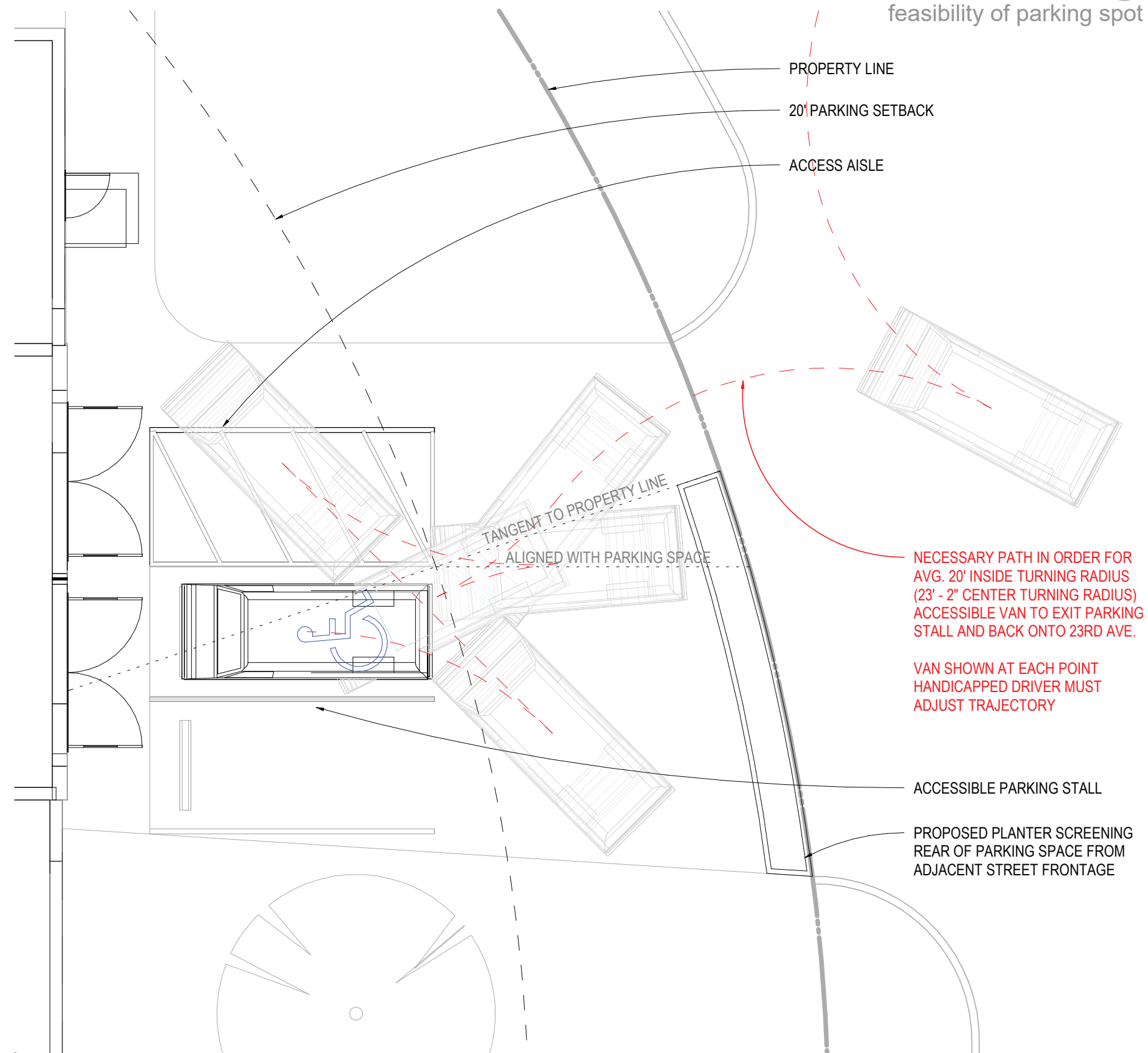


figure 62:
Y-turn required to exit accessible parking