



WISCONSIN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

VILAS COMMUNICATIONS HALL ACCESSIBILITY RENOVATION

DFD PROJECT NO. 23D1V

MARCH 28, 2024



PROJECT PURPOSE

The intent of this pre-design phase study for Vilas Communications Hall is two-fold; to improve reliability of the building's passenger elevators, and to improve user accessibility to and from the building.

Located at the corner of University Avenue and North Park Street, Vilas Communications Hall holds a prominent location on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The facility houses academic departments including the UW-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communications, the Department of Communications Arts, and the Department of Theatre and Drama. Department of Theatre and Drama supporting facilities include Mitchell Theatre, a thrust theatre and Hemsley Theatre, a black box theatre.

Additionally, the building provides a home for Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin, Wisconsin's state-wide network of public television stations.

Construction for Vilas Communications Hall began in 1969 and was completed for classroom instruction in the Spring semester, 1972. The building is best described as designed in the late-modern Brutalist architectural style. The Wisconsin State Historical Society (WHS) has classified the building as "potentially historic" requiring architectural review by the WHS prior to allowing exterior design modifications.

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW AND PROPOSED DESIGN

The final proposed design follows a 5-foot by 5-foot planning module consistent with the historic design. In order to accommodate a code-conforming ramp and a new stair, the design does not replicate all concrete modules. An important technical concern is excavation for the proposed concrete stair and ramp, which will require frost walls below. After studying original design documents on the way the concrete modules were constructed, it was determined excavation for new frost walls will undercut the existing concrete modules making them structurally unstable and unsafe during new construction.

We propose removal of all concrete modules and replacement with new concrete modules that replicate existing module heights and concrete finishes.

Vilas's current bike stall count is 35, 12 of these on the north side the stair up to the Level 4 Plaza, the remainder 23 at a mid level. Existing street-level bicycle parking is to be re-installed at the street level in the North Court, with an additional 12 matching stall types added to the space west of the existing stairs.

CAMPUS MAP, EAST CAMPUS NEIGHBORHOOD

EXISTING CONDITIONS AERIAL PHOTO

UW-Madison 2017 Aerial Map



SITE CIRCULATION & CONTEXT



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOS



SITE

STORMWATER

Stormwater modifications required by the new pavement and courtyard design will leave necessary stormwater management strategies largely unchanged. In response to user group complaints about existing drain clogage and maintenance issues, trench drain locations will be shifted north further from the building to accomodate the new accessible entrance at the lowest level of the court.

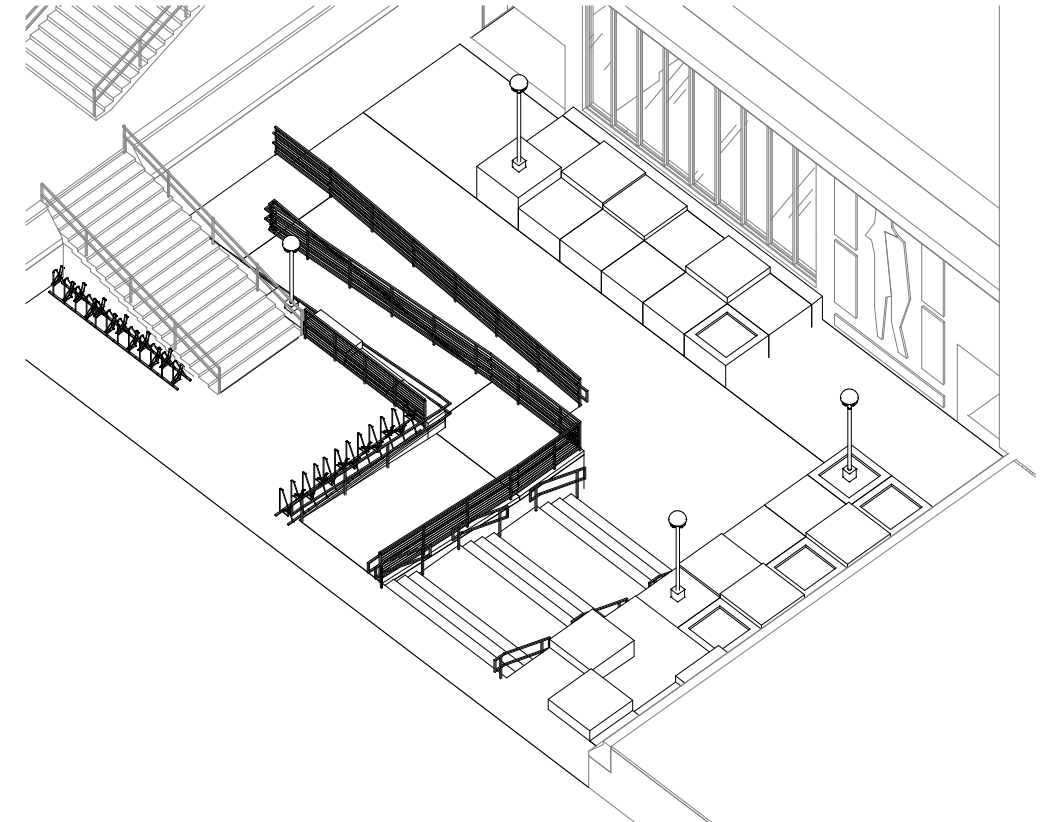
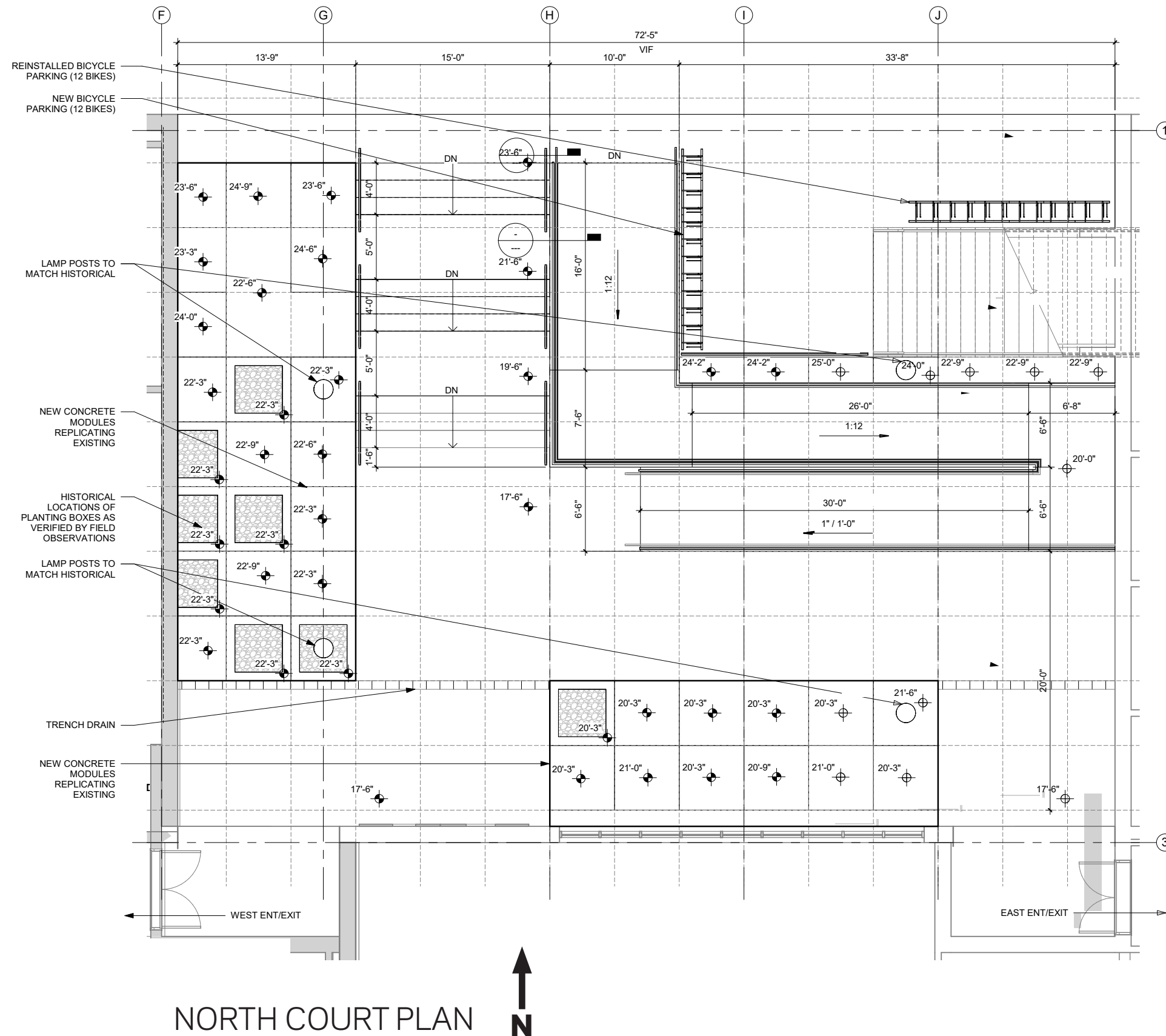
UTILITIES

New power will need to be routed to added lamp post lighting within the courtyard. Further investigation will determine depth and location of existing on-site utilities.

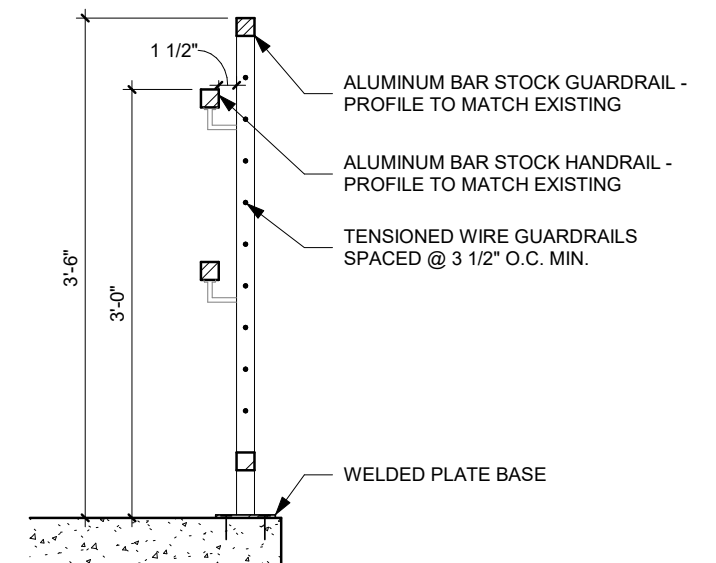
LANDSCAPING STRATEGIES

All remaining plant matter is to be removed, and all modules containing planter boxes are to be replaced in a manner consistent with the existing construction. Reconstructed planter boxes are to be re-planted with hardy plantings suitable to the urban context of the site and the minimal accessible sunlight. Species include Russian Arborvitae, Hicks Yew, and Little Joe Viburnum.

NORTH COURT PLANS



NORTH COURT PERSPECTIVE



GUARDRAIL DETAIL

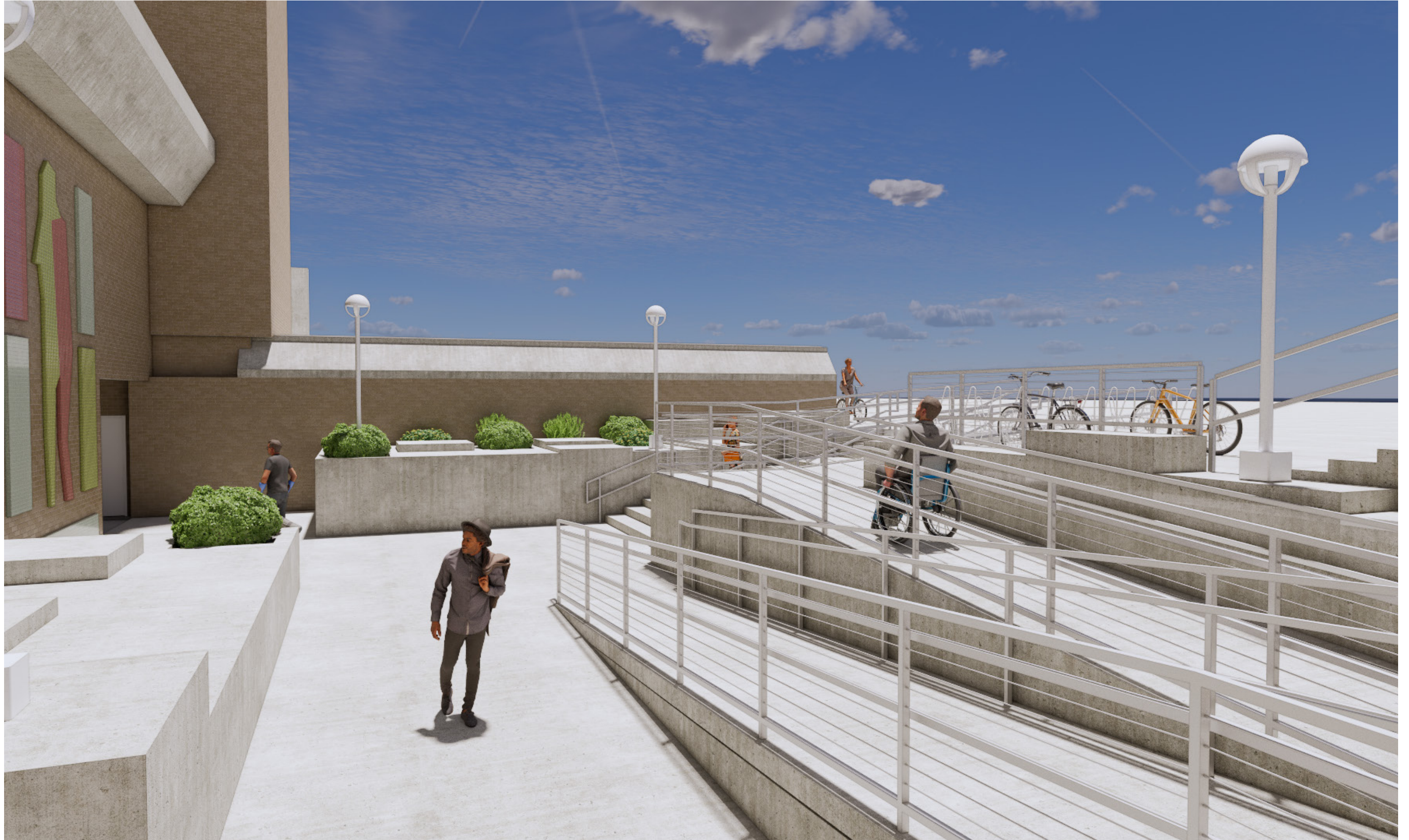
NORTH COURT RENDERINGS



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