

Tricky Foods LLC
Established May 2020
Business Plan, Volume 1
Updated 2023

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Hi! My name is Therese, owner of Tricky Foods. Below you will find more info on myself, my story, and my business.

Executive Summary

Tricky Foods [est. May 2020], is an artistic food business specializing in charcuterie and cheese styling. As social media and “instagramable” experiences have taken off, everyone wants to eat with their eyes (and phone) first. The Tricky Foods experience starts with a breathtaking presentation– some say “it looks too good to eat”. Subsequently, the good looks are paired with a mix of local, artisan, and delicious products. We take pride in our first impression AND our follow through. Where there is Tricky Foods, there is a reason to gather, have fun, and most importantly, make memories to last a lifetime– and that starts with the food ;)



Personal Story:

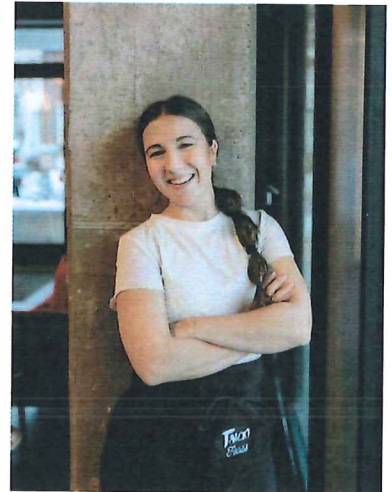
I moved to Madison in 2018 after graduating from UW Whitewater with a degree in Information Technology. I began working at Epic Systems as a project manager, and quickly realized it wasn't the job for me. Two years later, I quit in order to “get my life back”. I was lovingly greeted by the pandemic in the final week of my corporate job. With most jobs at a hiring freeze, I started waitressing at Bishops Bay Country Club in Middleton to gain a new stream of income and network with the members. Simultaneously, I decided to start a business highlighting my greatest lifelong passion...food! Instead of following the traditional chef route, I decided to start a colorful and creative food styling business, featuring charcuterie and cheese. Thus, the birth of Tricky Foods!



Therese (2007)



Therese (2009)



The Start:

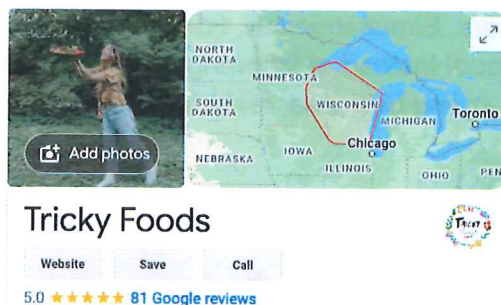
On May 1, 2020, I walked into the bank and asked to open a business account with a \$3,000 personal contribution. By June 1, 2020, I had sold my first charcuterie board via Instagram. Three years later, we've sold thousands, all through the power of social media. Our following has grown as quickly as our customer base has. As the market has changed, we have updated our product offerings to stay current, which I will describe in the sections below.



(The Tricky Foods IG page- where everything started)

Marketing:

We market completely through social media, with organic (unpaid) posts. A substantial number of our customers are repeat; therefore, customer service is a huge focus for us. We aim to go above and beyond for clients' special requests, which makes us stand out from our competitors. The fruits of our dedication to customer service can be seen in our overwhelmingly positive Google reviews pictured below^w



Tricky Foods Products and Services:

Charcuterie cups/boxes/platters: We currently work out of STACK Community Kitchen in Stoughton and sell our products Thursday through Saturday via our website (www.NotSoTrickyFoods.com). In addition, we run specials and themed boards during the peak holiday times. We would like to increase production to Tuesday through Saturday once we have a more permanent kitchen home (131 E Lakeside St!)

Charcuterie



Charcuterie cups (1 dozen minimum)
\$120.00



The Party
\$120.00



The Hangout
\$85.00



The 'Finnee, Ill share' Box
\$50.00



The 'I Luv U' Box
\$30.00

Grazing tables: We've done tables for small groups all the way up to 350 guests. These are spread from 6- 25 feet long filled with wooden and marble props, delicious food, and greenery. Our top clients and occasions are corporate events, birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries. Some of our clients include PUMA, Spectrum, Emmi Roth Cheese, and more!

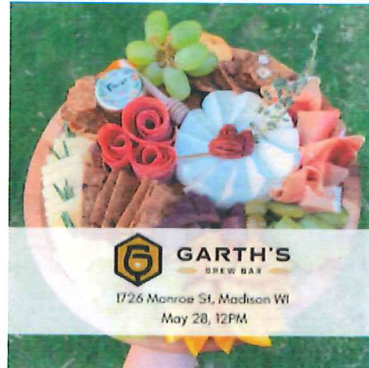


(Event with United Way of Dane County)



(Event with Emmi Roth Cheese company)

Charcuterie workshops: We often partner with local wineries to host classes (private or public) and teach attendees how to create their own gorgeous spread. We supply all the ingredients, the utensils, direction, and fun! We would like to utilize our future customer space/ kitchen / future wine license to properly host guests at our permanent location.



Charcuterie Workshop @ Garth's
Brew Bar (Saturday, May 28 @
12:00pm)
from \$35.00

The Future For Tricky Foods

The goal is to start with one location at 131 E Lakeside St, where we will implement scalable production practices and continue to grow our vibrant team. Ultimately my goal will be to open 4 additional locations spanning from Madison to Milwaukee in the next 5-10 years. I'd like to become as well known as Edible Arrangements, but be as loved and cherished by the community as Culvers and Kwik Trip.

In the new space, we will continue to do our standard business practices as we've done the past (explained above). We will also be adding additional offerings/ revenue streams in the new space.

- 1) Selling wine by the glass and bottle (Class C Wine License needed) during our hours of 11AM-8PM, Tuesday through Saturday.
- 2) Opening up our space for small group rental (up to 49 is our capacity)
- 3) Kitchen production and storage (ie no longer renting shared space)
- 4) Meeting and tasting space for larger scale / wedding clients
- 5) A small retail space
- 6) The first flagship location of Tricky Foods (long term goal is to franchise)

Supporting Local Along The Way:

- **Miggy's Bakes-** . I do savory, she does sweet and we cross over with clients on a weekly basis. We both have similar stories, paths, share employees, are at the same events, etc.
- **Blue Violet Jam and Jellies** - Their jam in every speciality box.
- **Gentle Breeze Honey-** Their honey in every order
- **Potters crackers-** In every box
- **Wisconsin Cheese-** This is a no brainer.. In every box ;)
- **Grape Water and Wine-** We have a cheese and wine box subscription program together.
- **Wine and Design-** People can add a cheese/ charcuterie box to any class when checking out online.
- **Bauer Boards-** Father daughter duo that makes custom wooden boards for our grazing tables .
- **Macarons by Sim-** Woman owned macaron maker in Sun prairie, used for specialty boards.
- **Julie Vornholt-** Small business friend and muralist for the future new space!

Strategic Partnerships:

Our largest strategic partner is Miggy's Bakes. The owner, Shelby, shares a similar "startup" story as my own. Her products- cookies, cakes, brownies, etc- also fill the gap in my customer needs. While I supply the savory, she supplies the sweets. This is a popular add on for grazing tables and charcuterie boxes. Re-selling her items is not only a source of revenue for Tricky Foods, but a way to continue lifting up local, woman owned businesses.

To strengthen our partnership (and friendship), we've even started our own business podcast called "*Screw It, Let's Do This*" - A podcast to motivate, inspire, and get you to say *screw it, I'm doing it* when it comes to your dreams. This will continue to bring brand awareness and connection to the community.



Target Customer:

B2C- Women aged 35-55 who are at the center of their friend groups. They love hosting social gatherings, bringing people together, and “wowing” their guests. They are in a high leadership role within their workplace OR community involvement.

B2B-Businesses looking to treat their employees/ team or impress their clients. This could mean a huge appetizer spread, a fun workshop for team bonding, or a charcuterie box for everyone to enjoy during a virtual happy hour. Typically, it’s a woman in a leadership position that gets the ball rolling on this.

Crossover- Many of our B2C “idea customers” are exposed to our services in a casual/ non business setting and then bring it back to their workplaces, and vice versa.

Our largest customer base is corporate clients. We are a one stop shop for gifting, holiday parties, and team building activities. Amongst our thousands of customers, here are a few that we’re exceptionally proud to have worked with:



Competition:

Tricky Foods is the first ONLY charcuterie and cheese styling business to specialize in to-go snack boxes, charcuterie workshops and grazing tables. There have been a handful of other businesses that have entered the market within the Madison area. Most of them have closed

down due to the barrier to entry (commercial kitchen space, licenses/ certifications, and the prominent holiday and weekend peak work time)

There are a few long standing cheese shops in Madison that have begun to offer boxes to go/ workshops as well as a few catering companies that offer “grazing tables”. Since this is just one of their many offerings vs this being our speciality, we can provide a more consistent, beautiful, concise process/follow through than our competitors. In a nutshell, we do it best since it’s the only thing we do! We don’t aim to be *everything* to *everyone*.

Giving Back:

Tricky Foods is not only here to bring people together over fun food, but to uplift and provide joy in the Madison community. We were able to donate over \$2,000 in 2022 (via a mix of cash and products) to those in the community striving to do the same [screenshot below].

Contact	Fundraiser/Cause	Con
Kelsey Kjome	First Tee (Vitense Goffland Fundraiser)	\$75.
Mayte	Madison Public Library Foudnation (Ex Libris)	\$75.
Hannah Reynold	Pi Beta Phi (Panhellic Philanthropy Auction)	\$75.
Taylor Pasell	Salvation Army	\$75.
Natalie	Orchard Nursery School	\$75.
Alyssa Fritze	St. Boniface Catholic School	\$50
Kelsey Kjome	First Tee	\$60
Teresa Ryan	Wi Ukraine Inc	\$60
Feist Vocational	Autlism Awareness	\$60
DAIS	Domestic Abuse	100
Sparkle of Hope	Sparkle of Hope	\$60
Coalition for Children, Youth & Families		\$60
Dena Hineline	Kids/ womans homeless shelter	\$60
Hannah Reynold	Leukemia & Lymphoma Society	\$60
Alley Ballmer	pediatric mental health and/or disabilities	\$60
MARISSA YOUNG	Ex Libris (library)	\$60
Carly Dassow	Jingle Paws	\$60
	Girl Scouts of Wisconsin – Badgerland	\$60
Nikki Luczak	Paws for Preventatives, a heartworm awareness	\$60
Meghan Johns	Goodman Center	300
Kirstie Skul	Habitat for Humanity Young Professionals	\$60
Tara Swalve	Friends of UW Health	180

We have a special volunteer relationship with two non-profits:

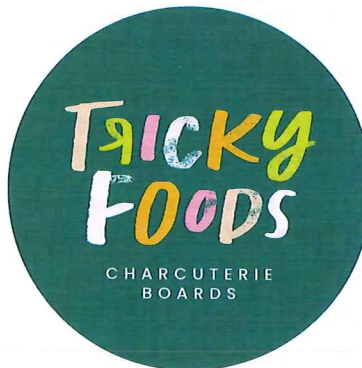
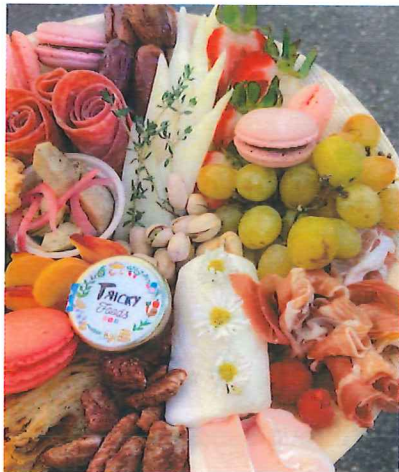
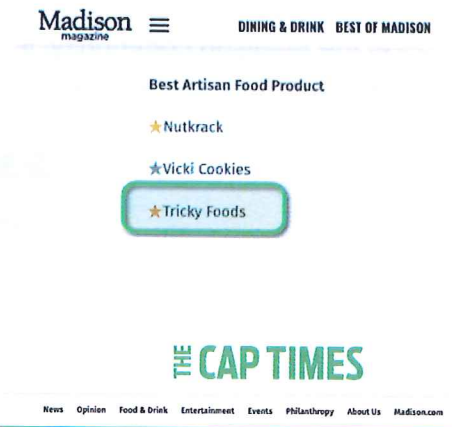
- *CEO’s of Tomorrow*-a program to empower and inspire youth through social and environmental entrepreneurship
- *Turning Point*-vocational services to job seekers with disabilities.

The Tricky Team

The Tricky Team is now myself and 4 part time employees, all with a passion for entrepreneurship and food. The ideal future employees will be a mix of part time working moms and college students who work 2-3 days a week. The team will primarily function as kitchen production and prep. Eventually, there will be one “lead” team member who keeps inventory, purchasing, and client emails on a day to day basis. This will be my first full time employee. The team environment will be rooted in positivity, passion, and teamwork. In partnering with Turning

Point Vocational Services [located in Madison], the goal is to employ one student from their program, in effort to lift up those with special needs.

Photos/ Community Recognition:



From burnout to snack boards

Merkel graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in 2018 and moved to the Madison area for what she thought was a dream job at Epic. The position paid well. She liked the work culture. But it didn't take long for the negatives to outweigh the positives.

"I got totally burnt out. I definitely lost myself," Merkel said. "I was never cooking for myself anymore. I ate every meal at work. I was making pretty good money, but I'd never been so down before."



Founder of Tricky Foods Therese Merkel rolls salad roses as the maker is charcuterie board at her home.
JOSHUA HANCOCK

She gave two months' notice and worked her final day at Epic in April 2020, just after COVID shutdowns began. Suddenly, she had a lot of time on her hands.

Charcuterie boards experienced a boost in popularity during the pandemic, as homebound people looked for ways to

News 3 Now / Channel 3000
October 3 at 6:00 PM

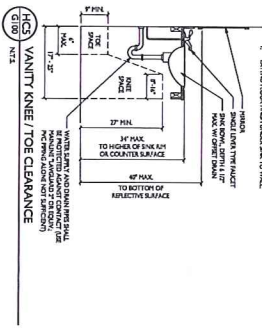
Four years ago, Therese Merkel started her 'Tricky Foods' Instagram page. Today, Merkel has nearly 6,000 followers on Instagram, her own business, and dozens of weekly customers.



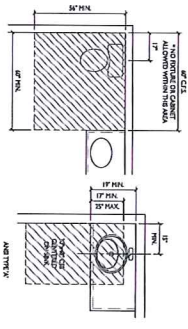
CHANNEL3000.COM
Meet the Madison twenty-somethings who quit their



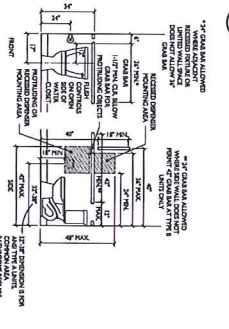
1. ENTRY ROOM HOOKS END TO WALL



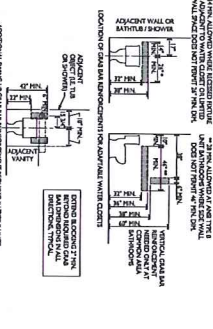
HCS VANITY KNEE / TOE CLEARANCE
 NTS



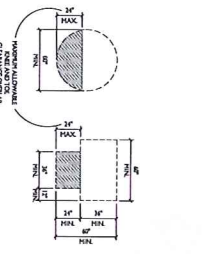
HCS COMMON AREA BATHROOM BATHROOM FIXTURE CLEARANCES
 NTS



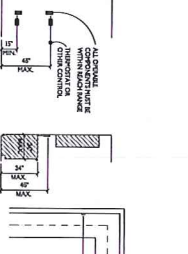
HCB BATHROOM FIXTURE GRAB BARS AND CONTROLS
 NTS



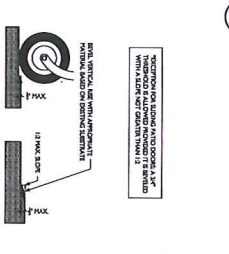
HCB GAB BAR BLOCKING
 NTS



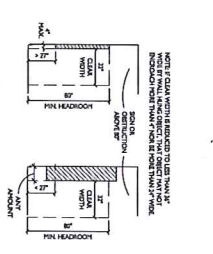
HCH TURNING SPACE CLEARANCES
 NTS



HCH SWITCHES, OUTLETS, THERMOSTATS
 NTS



HCB CHANGES IN LEVEL ALONG ACCESSIBLE ROUTE
 NTS



HCB PROJECTING OBJECTS
 NTS

GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY NOTES

1. THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY THAT ALL CONSTRUCTION WITH OR WITHOUT PERMITS SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL APPLICABLE CODES AND REGULATIONS AND THE ADA REVISION ACT SECTION 119.101 THROUGH 119.108.
2. ALL TERRAZZO SHALL BE 1/4\"/>

1. ACCESSIBLE ENTRY SHALL CONNECT ALL SPACES AND ELEMENTS.
2. DOORS SHALL BE 28\"/>

1. ACCESSIBLE ROUTES SHALL BE 36\"/>

PROJECT TITLE
 TRICKY FOODS at
 THE POST

PROJECT NUMBER
 121 E LAKESIDE ST.
 MADISON, WI

SHEET TITLE
 Accessibility
 Requirements

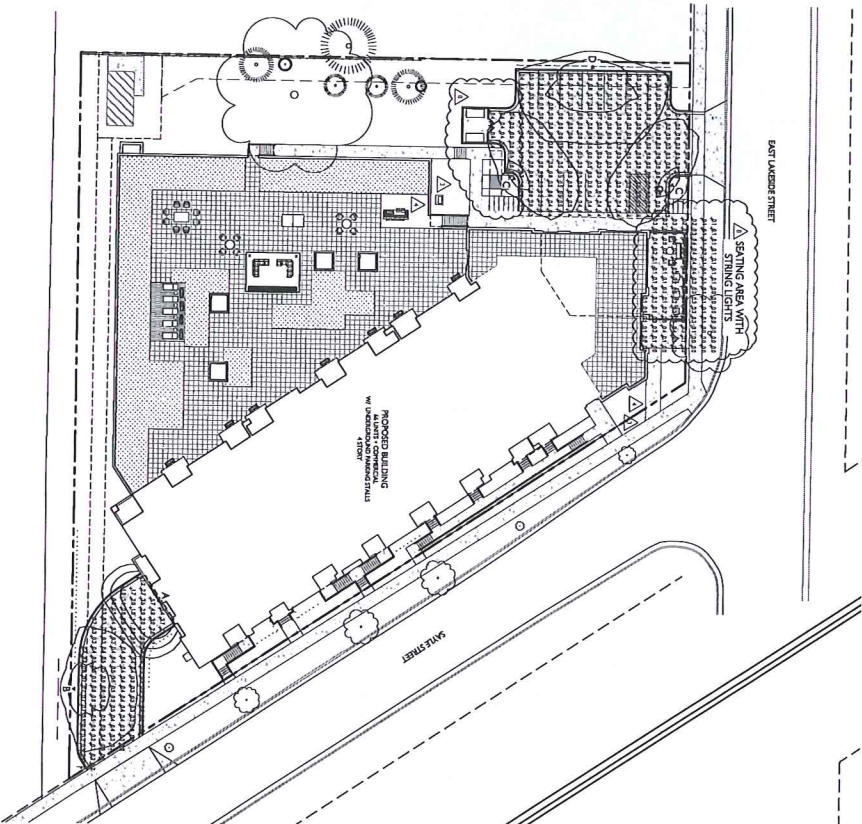
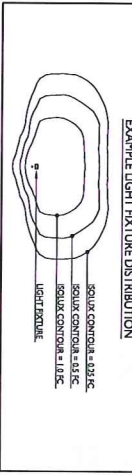
SHEET NUMBER
 G100

PROJECT NUMBER
 1977

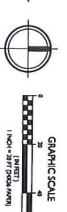
DATE
 6/20/24

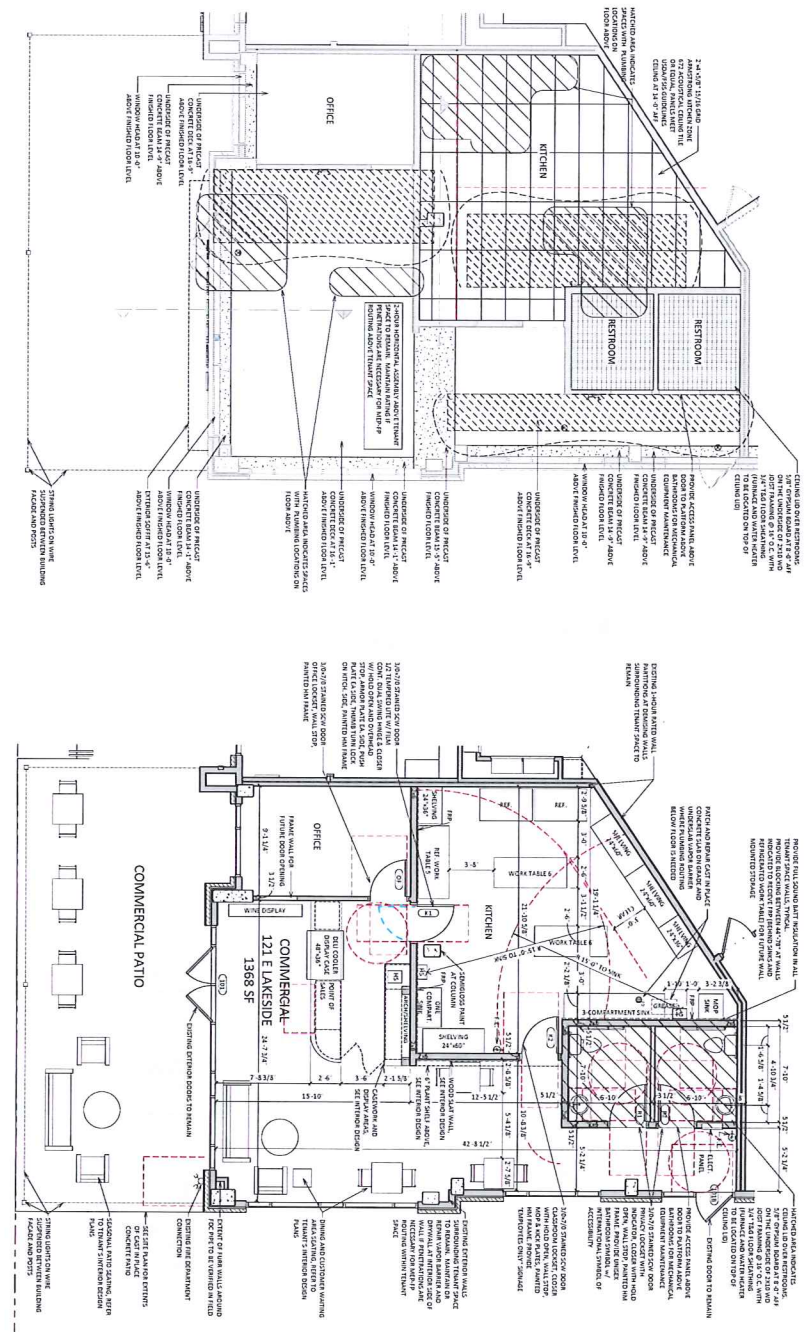
LIGHT LEVEL STATISTICS						
DESCRIPTION	SYMBOL	AVG.	MAX.	MIN.	MAX./MIN.	AVG./MIN.
Parking Lot and Drive Aisle Lighting	+	63.6	63.6	63.6	2.01	1.21
Parking Garage Entry Lighting	+	68.6	57.6	63.6	2.51	4.61

LUMINAIRE SCHEDULE						
SYMBOL	LABEL	QTY.	MANUF.	CATALOG	DESCRIPTION	FEET
+	A	1	LITRONA	WORLD LED H 30K	WORLD LED VIALANCE 1600W, 3000K CCT, 0.8 TEMPERATURE, 120-277 VOLT	160' LED H 30K MOUNTING BUILDING
+	B	1	LITRONA	DOSSWHY LED 10C 230	DOSSWHY LED WITH (1) TYPE 3TH OPTIC 300K AT 2500K WITH HOUSIE AS SHOWN	DOSSWHY LED, 10C 230 MOUNTING CONC. BASE
+	C	2	LITRONA	DOSSWHY LED 10C 230	DOSSWHY LED WITH (1) TYPE 3TH OPTIC 300K AT 2500K	DOSSWHY LED, 10C 230 MOUNTING CONC. BASE
+	D	1	LITRONA	DOSSWHY LED 10C 230	DOSSWHY LED WITH (1) TYPE 3TH OPTIC 300K AT 2500K WITH HOUSIE AS SHOWN	DOSSWHY LED, 10C 230 MOUNTING CONC. BASE



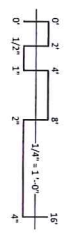
C-1.2
SITE LIGHTING PLAN





REFLECTED CEILING PLAN
 1/8" = 1'-0"

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 1/8" = 1'-0"



- GENERAL NOTES:**
1. REFER TO OWNER'S ARCHITECTURAL PLAN AND CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS FOR ALL DIMENSIONS AND FINISHES. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO FACE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
 2. REFER TO ARCHITECT'S NOTES FOR ALL DIMENSIONS AND FINISHES.
 3. REFER TO ARCHITECT'S NOTES FOR ALL DIMENSIONS AND FINISHES.
 4. DIMENSIONS ARE TO FACE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
 5. ALL CONCRETE SHALL BE 3000 PSI STRENGTH CONCRETE WITH 4% CHLORINE FREE AIR ENTRAINMENT.
 6. ALL CONCRETE SHALL BE CAST IN PLACE AND CURED PROPERLY.
 7. ALL CONCRETE SHALL BE CAST IN PLACE AND CURED PROPERLY.
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 15. ALL CONCRETE SHALL BE CAST IN PLACE AND CURED PROPERLY.
- WALL SECTION NOTES:**
1. ALL WALLS IN CONTACT WITH CONCRETE SHALL BE 12" THICK.
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