



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: July 11, 2019

PROJECT White House Grounds, Tennis Pavilion White House Grounds 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8077
	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.31(38.00)44938
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of final site and building plans
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	PROPOSED ACTION Approve final site and building plans
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted final plans to replace a small building that currently houses a restroom and a storage space on the White House grounds southwest of the White House. This new structure, to be called the tennis pavilion, is the first of a two-phase project. The second phase includes the replacement of the existing NPS maintenance building referred to as the "pony shed", which will happen at a future date. The Commission reviewed and approved the preliminary design in June 6, 2019. NPS has concluded its National Environmental Policy Act review and submitted a categorical exclusion. The final design has not changed from what was proposed at the preliminary design level.

This project will not only update the older restroom facility, it will also provide a unifying element for the tennis court, the Children's Garden and the Kitchen Garden. The Children's Garden, which is west of the tennis courts, was introduced into the White House grounds by Lady Bird Johnson in 1968 as a secluded play area for presidential grandchildren. Footprints and handprints of previous Presidents' children and grandchildren are embedded in the garden's paved pathway. This garden also includes a small pond with coy fish and a tree suitable for climbing. Also nearby is the Kitchen Garden, which was started by Michelle Obama several years ago. This 2,800 square foot vegetable garden south of the tennis court provides locally grown vegetables for the White House. The proposed tennis pavilion will be a quiet respite in the middle of these three uses and will provide locker rooms and a sitting area, unifying this part of the White House grounds.

The NPS notes that the proposed tennis pavilion will be approximately 1,200 square feet in area and approximately 18 feet in height. The building, which is heavily influenced by the White House architecture, will be clad in limestone and have a copper roof. This new structure will be located west of the existing tennis/basketball court. The existing Children's Garden will also be shifted slightly westward to accommodate the new building and access.

KEY INFORMATION

- The existing restroom facility is attached to the rear of the NPS maintenance building, which itself is in need of modernization since it is a repurposed building first installed as a temporary structure during the Truman reconstruction of the White House in the late 1940s. The main north-south axial vista between the White House and the South Lawn will remain unchanged by this project.
- This is a two phased project with the new tennis pavilion occurring in the first phase and the NPS maintenance building occurring in the second phase.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the final site and building plans for the new tennis pavilion on the White House grounds, as it will improve the existing restroom facility, provide a connection between the Children's Garden and the tennis court, and will not impact any historic resources or prominent vistas.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Approval of site and building plans for Phase 2 (Winter 2019)

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Staff reviewed the preliminary site and building plans for a replacement restroom and locker room facility on the White House grounds adjacent to the existing tennis/basketball court. The replacement facility will be located in a secluded part of the southwestern White House grounds, is 1,200 feet in area and slightly under 18 feet in height. It will serve as unifying element for the tennis court and the Children's Garden. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **approve the preliminary site and building plans for the new tennis pavilion on the White House grounds, as it will improve the existing restroom facility, provide a connection between the Children's Garden and the tennis court, and will not impact any historic resources or prominent vistas.**

Analysis

The NPS submittal includes images of the existing restroom facility which consists of a one-person restroom and a small, upright cabinet used for storing sports equipment. The existing restroom facility is attached to the rear of the existing maintenance building, which itself is in need of modernization since it is a repurposed building first installed as a temporary structure during the Truman reconstruction of the White House in the late 1940s.

This existing restroom and maintenance building is on the southwestern part of the White House grounds and located next to and under groups of mature trees which help to enhance the secluded and private nature of this area. The proposed tennis pavilion will be located on the west side of the existing tennis court and only impact a few smaller trees. NPS states it will use the design of the White House as inspiration and incorporate architectural elements such as a colonnade, large floor-to-ceiling windows and fanlight windows in the facades. The building dimensions are 49 feet 4 inches in length, 24 feet in width, and 17 feet 8 inches in height. The existing maintenance building will remain in place. Staff finds that the proposed design is consistent with the existing White House architectural elements as it includes a similar colonnade, fenestration and the same exterior cladding material, limestone. In addition, the height and massing of the new pavilion is much lower than the surrounding trees and other existing buildings which will enable this building to maintain its seclusion and continue its role as a respite for White House residents and visitors.

Phase 2 includes demolishing the old maintenance building and realigning a new maintenance building on axis with the new tennis pavilion. It would also include a small maintenance yard. Originally, the Children's Garden was to be part of Phase 2, however it will need to be shifted slightly westward to accommodate the pathways and new Tennis Pavilion.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The proposed tennis pavilion is consistent with the relevant policies in the Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

National Historic Preservation Act

Pursuant to the Section 107 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the White House and its grounds are exempt from Section 106 consultation and the requirements of NHPA.

National Environmental Policy Act

NPS has a responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for this project and has submitted a categorical exclusion pertaining to "construction of minor structures, including small improved parking lots, in previously disturbed or developed areas." The Commission has

its own NEPA responsibility and staff identified categorical exclusion § 601.2 (a)(6) under the Commission's NEPA regulations for the "...approval of federal and district government agency proposals for new construction, building expansion, or improvements to existing facilities,..." when all of the four conditions apply. Staff finds that this project meets all four conditions.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on May 15, 2019 meeting and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the DC State Historic Preservation Office (via email); the Department of Housing and Community Development; the General Services Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the project at a concept level on May 16, 2019 and provided several comments regarding future landscaping changes and the location of the Maintenance Building in anticipation of Phase 2. The final review and approval for the project occurred at its June 20, 2019 meeting and was on the consent agenda.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Carlton Hart
07/01/2019

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

White House Grounds - Tennis Pavilion

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington DC

Approval of Final Site and Building Plans

United States Department of the Interior

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: July 11, 2019

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant Request: Approval of Final Site and Building Plans

Session: Consent Calendar

NCPC Review Officer: Hart

NCPC File Number: 8077

Project Summary:

The National Park Service has submitted plans to replace a building that currently houses restrooms and a storage space on the White House Grounds just southwest of the White House itself. This new structure, to be called the Tennis Pavilion, will not only update the older restroom facilities it will also provide a connection between the tennis courts and the Children's Garden which is west of the tennis courts currently. The Children's Garden was introduced into the White House Grounds by Lady Bird Johnson in 1969 and is a secluded area that has many president's grandchildren handprints. There is also the Kitchen Garden, started by Michelle Obama several years ago, which is located nearby.

The NPS notes that the proposed Tennis Pavilion will be approximately 1200 square feet in area and approximately 18 feet in height. This new structure will be located west of the existing tennis/basketball court.

Site Location



Location Map

Site Location on White House Grounds



White House Grounds Diagram

NPS Maintenance Building: _____

Currently in place on the lower South Grounds is a building utilized by the National Park Service in their role as maintainers of the ornamental landscape.

A

The Children's Garden: _____

Created by Lady Bird Johnson in 1969, it houses a secluded and singular garden area featuring the handprints of presidential grandchildren.

B

Tennis/Basketball Court & Outbuilding: _____

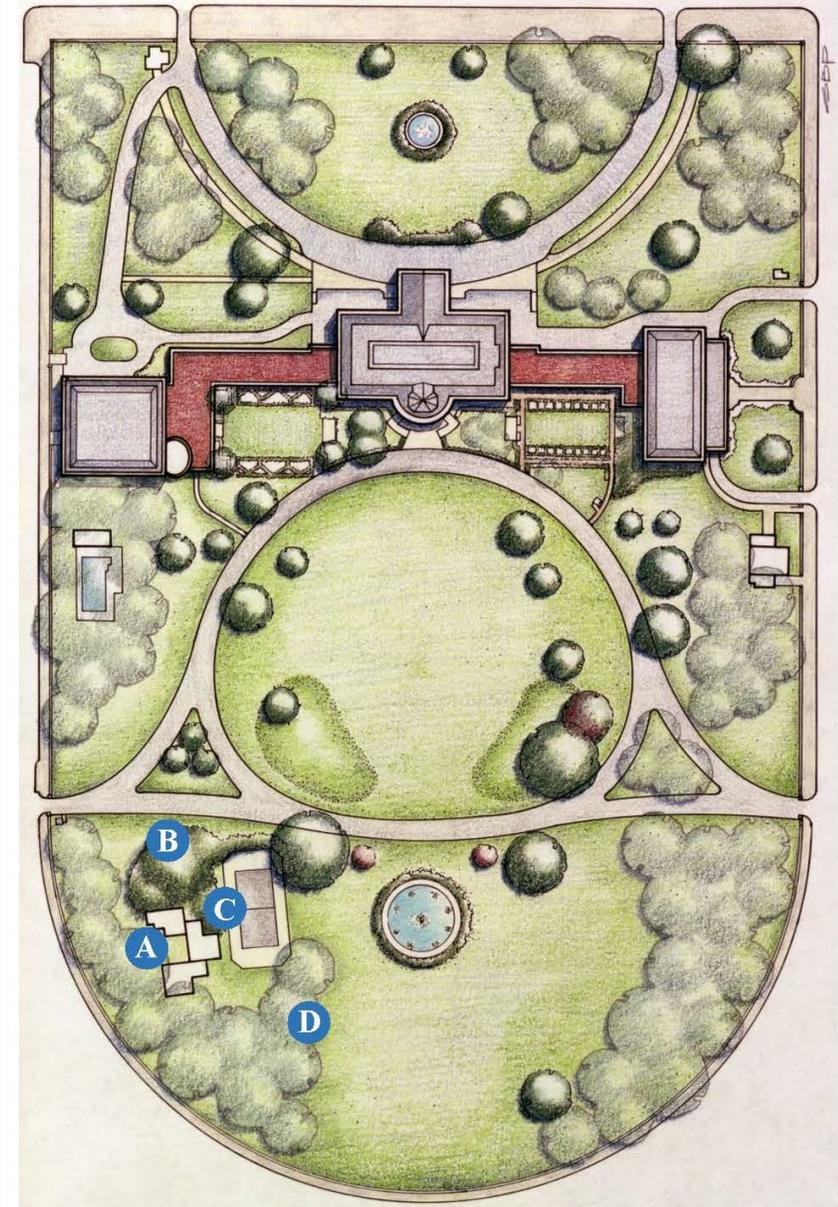
Since the early twentieth century, the White House tennis and basketball court has traditionally offered a place of recreation and activity within the busy framework of the lives of first families. Adjacent to the court stand a restroom/storage outbuilding.

C

The Kitchen Garden: _____

The Kitchen Garden was installed by Michelle Obama to signify the importance of healthy eating and showcase the best of America's horticultural heritage. The tradition continues today with the encouragement of First Lady Melania Trump.

D



Existing Landscape Components – Maintenance

NPS Maintenance Building

Currently in place on the lower South Grounds is a building utilized by the National Park Service in their role as maintainers of the ornamental landscape.



Existing Landscape Components – Children’s Garden



The Children’s Garden:

Created by Lady Bird Johnson in 1969, it houses a secluded and singular garden area featuring the handprints of presidential grandchildren.



Existing Landscape Components – Kitchen Garden

The Kitchen Garden:

The Kitchen Garden was installed by Michelle Obama to signify the importance of healthy eating and showcase the best of America's horticultural heritage. The tradition continues today with the encouragement of First Lady Melania Trump.



Existing Landscape Components - Outbuilding



Tennis/Basketball Court & Outbuilding

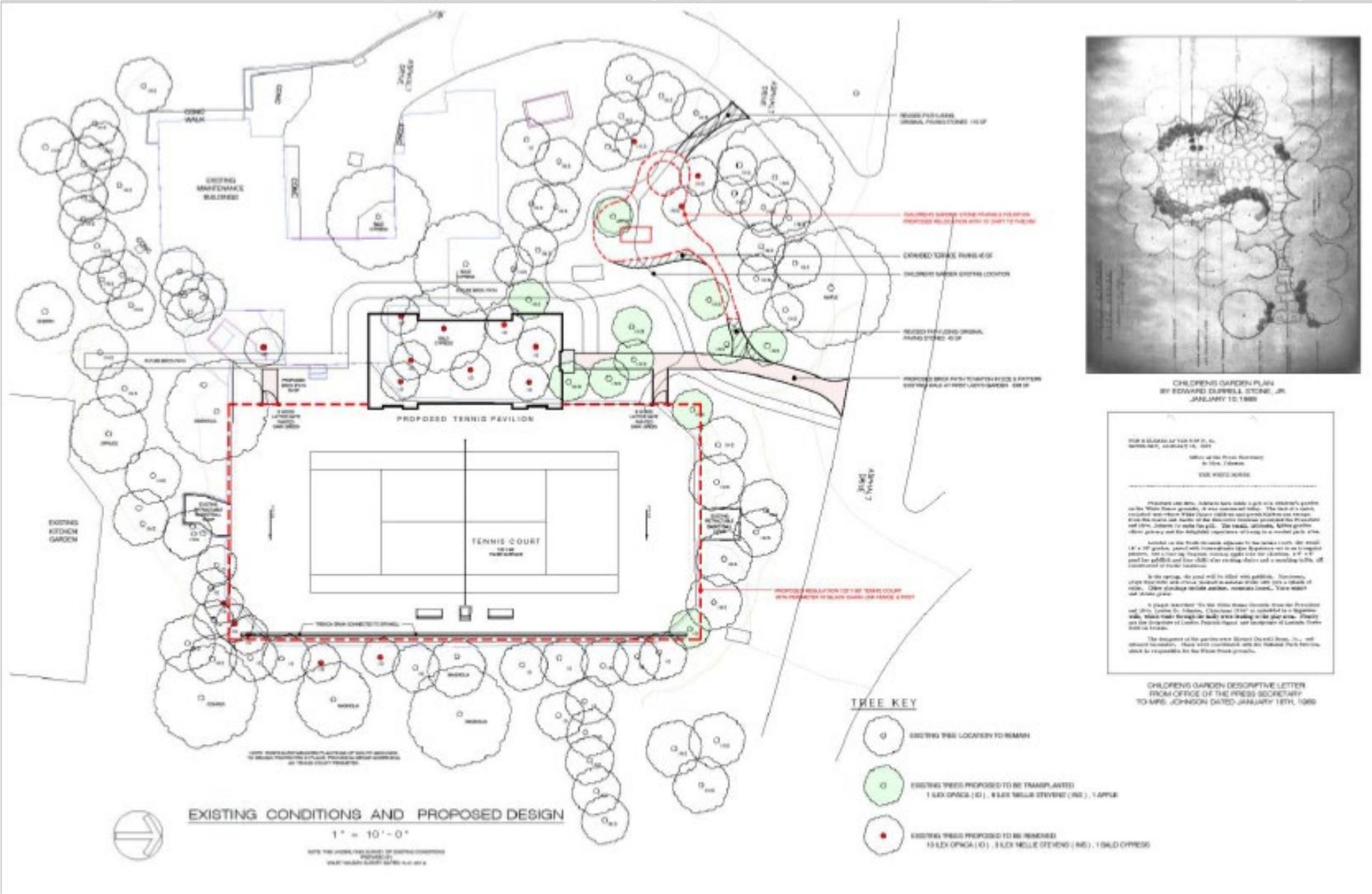
(Additional photography of the court and outbuilding)



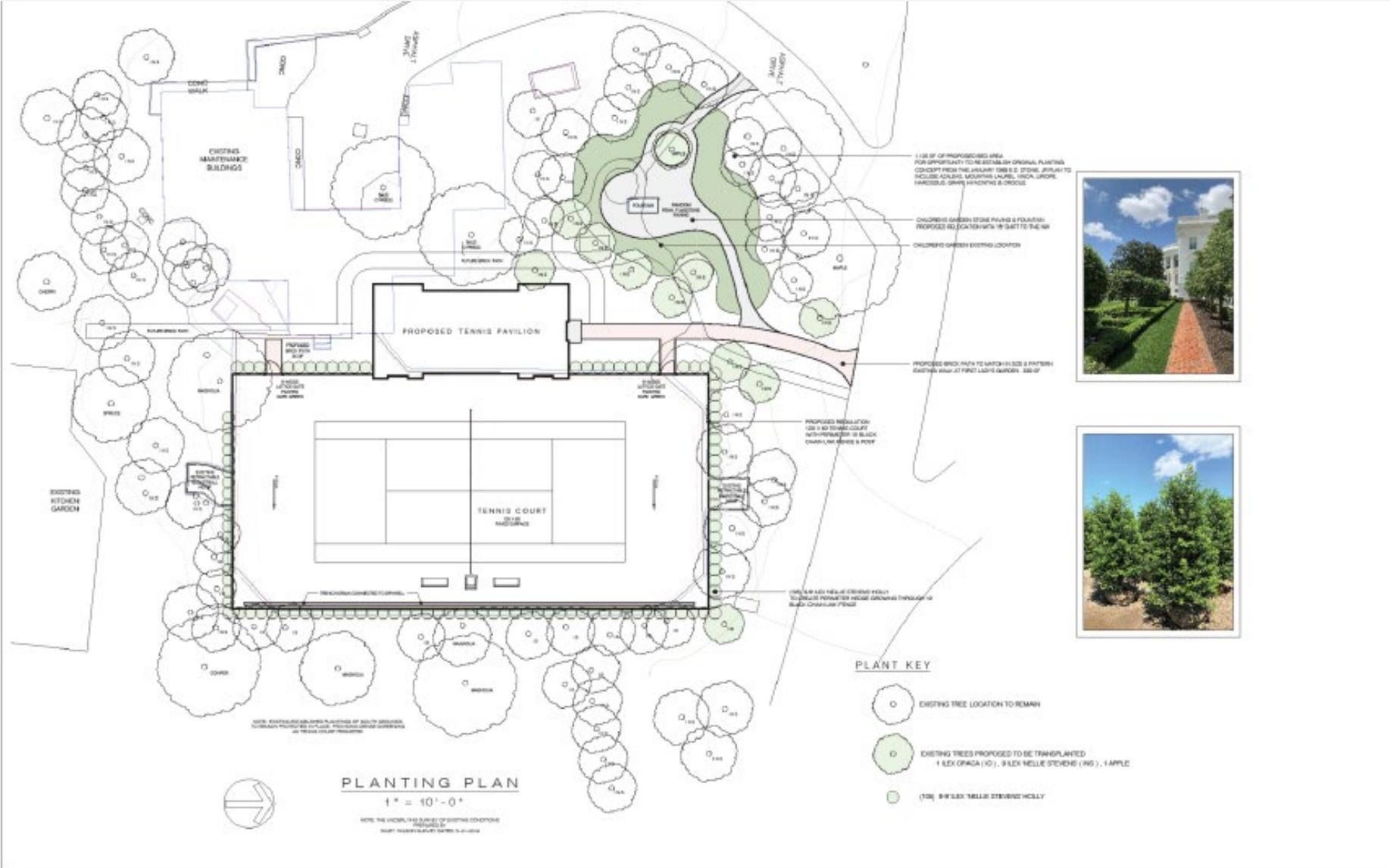
Existing Conditions



Existing Site Conditions with Proposed Changes Overlay

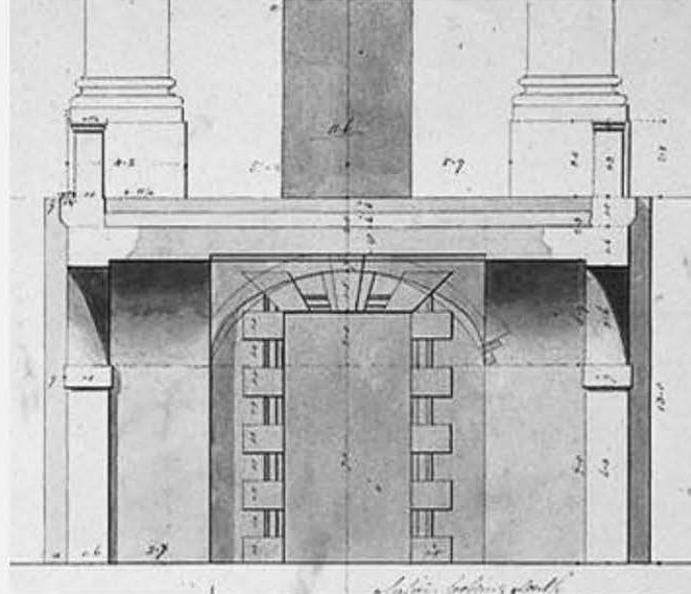


Proposed Final Site Plan



Design Inspiration

The proposal to construct two new structures on the South Grounds is based on the necessity to modernize and elevate the current buildings. The proposed designs are specifically informed by the existing architecture of the White House, including the East and West Colonnades, fan windows, columns, stonework, and cornices. Architectural inspiration is drawn from the symbolic images of the White House that are so recognizable to the American public.

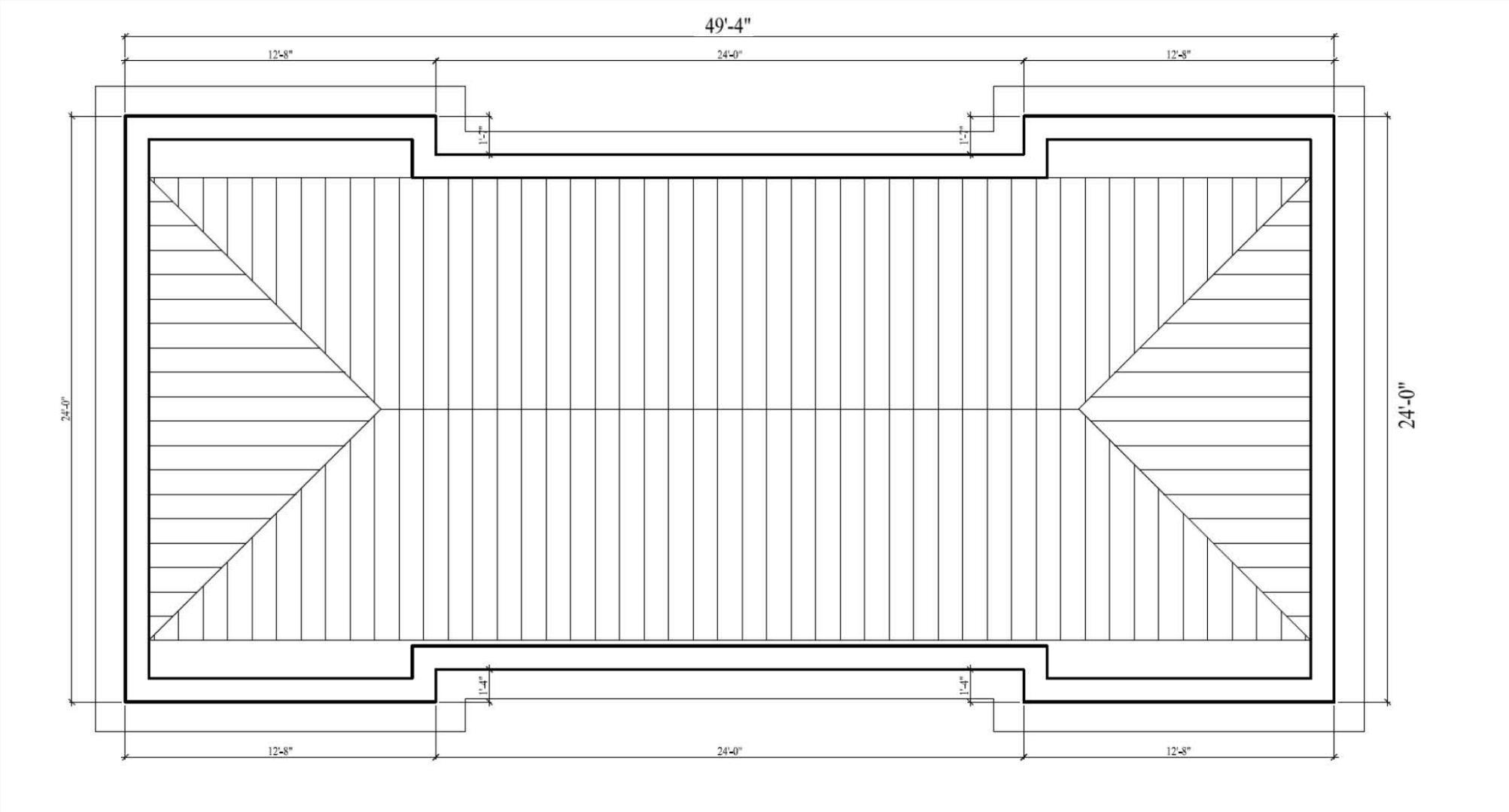


Design Proposal – Tennis Pavilion Rendering

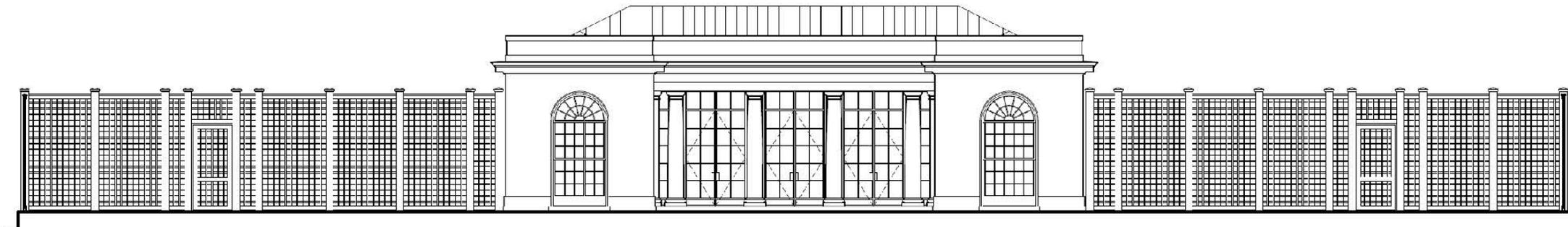


The Tennis Pavilion would function as both a place of leisure and a gathering area linking the independent garden areas (Kitchen Garden and Children's Garden) on the South Grounds. It would provide the connecting framework for a larger, more integrated landscape.

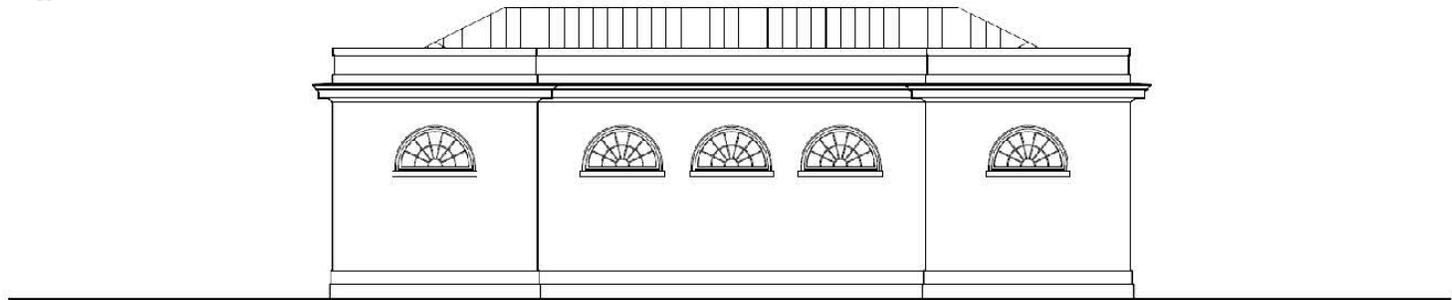
Tennis Pavilion – Roof Plan



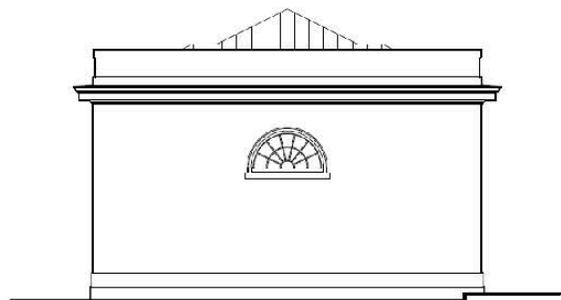
Design Proposal – Tennis Pavilion Elevations



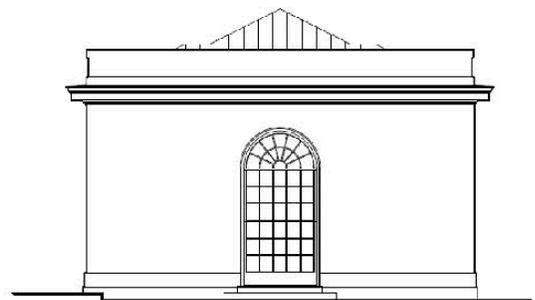
East Elevation



West Elevation



3 South Elevation

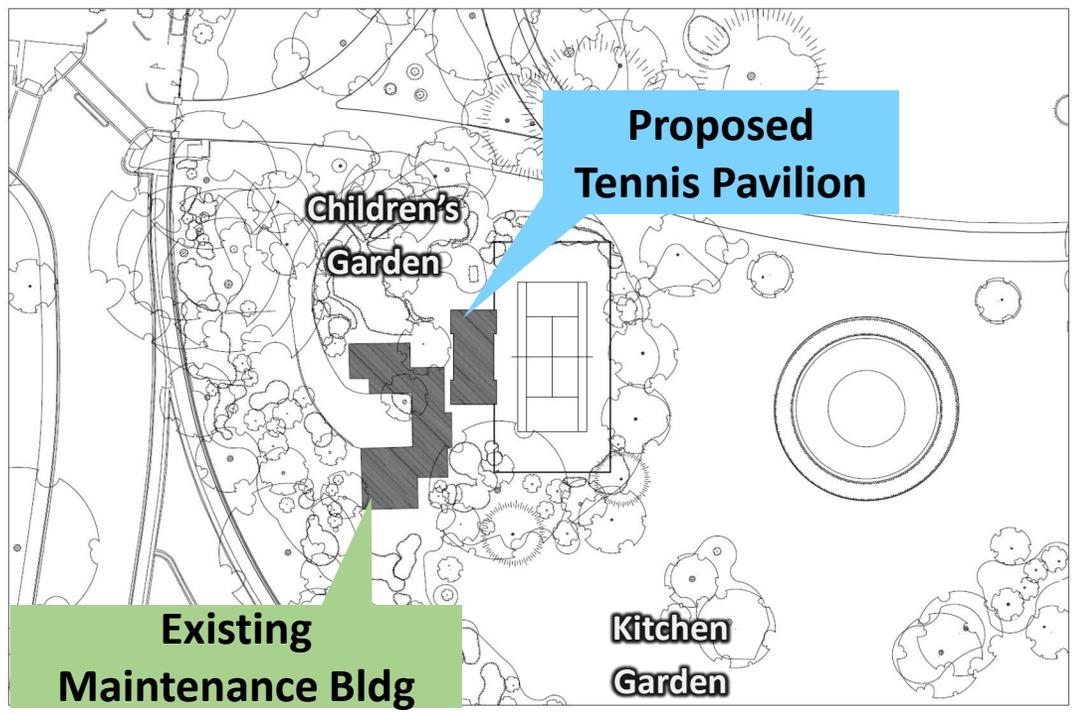


4 North Elevation

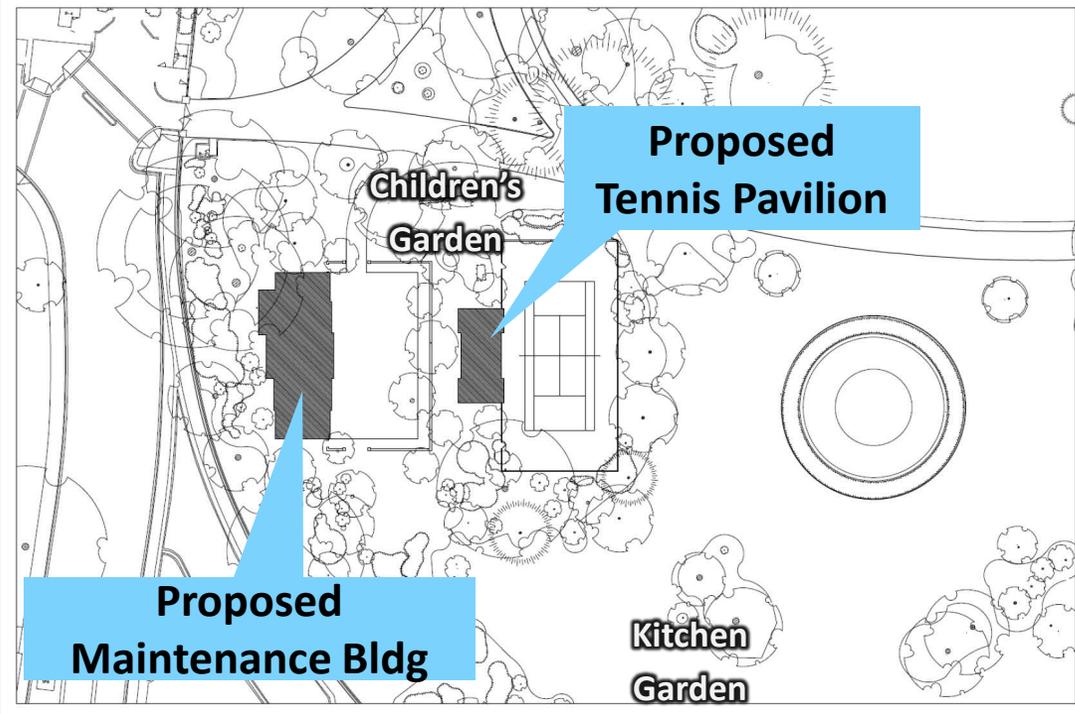
Tennis Pavilion – Elevation Detail



Design Proposal – 2 Phases



Phase 1



Phase 2

Phase 2 – Maintenance Building

The restructured maintenance building will offer a more professional and aesthetically pleasing facility from which the National Park Service can discharge their duties.



