



May 14, 2015

Mr Steve Owen, City Manager Mr Patrick J. Coffield, County Administrator
City of Staunton County of Augusta
P. O. Box 58 P. O. Box 590

Staunton, Virginia 24402-0058 Verona, Virginia 24482-0590

Dear Steve and Pat:

In accordance with Frazier Associates' current purchase order with the City of Staunton, our firm was asked to review the 2012 Augusta County Courthouse Feasibility Study that we did for Augusta County to determine what, if any, changes might be made to the 2012 design to improve the operation, safety and performance of the building. We were asked to focus on accessibility, security, parking (handicap), and any recent code or ordinance updates or amendments. In addition, the issue of restrooms was raised as well.

Code Updates & Engineering - Since the feasibility study was completed, the state building code has been revised. There are not any revisions to the Virginia Rehabilitation Code that significantly affect the proposed design for the building. The major update to the code concerning plumbing and mechanical equipment has to do with energy conservation. This issue will be important when specific equipment is specified in further development of specifications if the project moves forward. One item that does affect plumbing design concerns water heater locations. Before the code revision, the equipment could be located 100' from the fixture. That has been reduced to 50' unless a recirculating pump is provided. The National Electric Code has not been revised.

The Virginia Rehabilitation Code states that if a historic building will maintain its historic designation upon completion of the work, then the work is not considered a substantial improvement. As a result, the existing building does not have to comply with the flood hazard area requirements in the building code. A corner of the proposed northwest addition to the building may fall in the flood way along Augusta Street. If the project moves forward in the future, the next step of developing a design would include having a topographic survey of the property undertaken. With that additional information, a final determination of the flood way boundaries can be more accurately calculated and any modification to the design, if needed, can be made. The current flood maps do not show any site details of the courthouse and floor levels and elevation

points are not known in relation to the maps. Provisions for flood zone requirements may need to be incorporated in the design of the exterior stairs at the new addition and the handicapped ramp. This issue does not appear to require a significant change in the overall design of the addition.

Security – We have revisited the proposed design of the courthouse to improve the separation of the three occupancy classes in the building: public, staff and inmates. This improvement in score was made with the following refinements (see attached set of 3 floor plans):

1. Restricting how the east elevator can be used to the basement level.
2. Providing a door in the west corridor into the staff workspace. This provides a restricted area for staff to all spaces on the first and second floors except the conference room.
3. A wall at the north end of the east corridor to limit access to the elevator to only inmates.
4. Clearly defined that the entrance on the northeast is only for judges' use. The elevator will be keyed so that if the judge is using the car, the doors for the inmate side will not operate.
5. The inmate holding area was expanded to incorporate the adjacent restroom. A new staff restroom was provided.
6. The Judge's Chamber in the northeast corner of the second floor had an area noted as "potential private corridor" on the previous plans. The design was changed to create a private corridor to provide secure access from the elevator to the entire judges' wing of offices and to the courtrooms.

Also in future design phases, a careful evaluation and proposed locations of new security locks on doors would aid in restricting movement for each of the occupancy classes.

As the City and County are aware, the courthouse consultant that we used in our 2012 study, Fentress Inc. has their own internal rating system for assessing a wide variety of elements in courthouse design. We recently had Fentress rate this newly revised plan, and it received an overall score of 92 with the security rating 96 out of 100.

Accessibility – The current design of the rehabilitated courthouse provides for handicapped accessibility into and throughout the building. The proposed elevator (on the west side) will provide accessibility to each of the floors. Accessible new hardware and signage will be provided in the original design. All new restrooms will be accessible. The accessibility code permits wheelchair spaces to be located adjacent to raised jury boxes and witness stands; therefore, we did not propose renovations to the jury box or witness stand. The only change that may be needed is modify the judges' benches to make them accessible. If the judge is handicapped, access to the raised judge's platform and historic bench can be accommodated in the large courtroom with either a ramp or a wheelchair lift. In the small courtroom, a ramp in the corridor outside the courtroom can be constructed to provide the accessible route to the bench area.

Handicap Parking - There is an existing handicap parking space behind the building on Barristers Row Alley. An existing reserved space for inmate transfer and loading can be reassigned for handicap parking since the design provides an enclosed sally port for inmate transfer. Also currently there is a public space in the alley in front of the current handicap space that could also be converted to handicap use if desired. These reassigned spaces would provide three handicap spaces directly behind the courthouse and exceed local ordinance requirements.

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Restrooms – The building code determines the number of toilet room fixtures required based on the number of occupants in the spaces and the intended use of those spaces. We re-evaluated the numbers and verified there are an adequate number of fixtures to comply with the code on each floor. In addition, the code allows for travel to the adjacent floors to satisfy the number of required fixtures. The revised design actually reduces the fixture count on the second floor to provide two additional attorney/client meeting rooms adjacent to the waiting rooms. The number of meeting rooms was increased to two in order to better meet the state court guidelines.

Construction costs for the courthouse were updated in the fall of 2014 by the cost estimating firm, as requested by Augusta County officials. To respond to market conditions that are constantly changing, the estimate should be periodically updated. It will also need to be revisited at each stage of the development of construction documents if the project moves forward.

We hope that this additional information will assist the County and the City as they continue to discussion the future of the historic Augusta County Courthouse. Please let us know if there are any further issues you would like us to explore.

Sincerely yours,



William T. Frazier, AICP
Principal

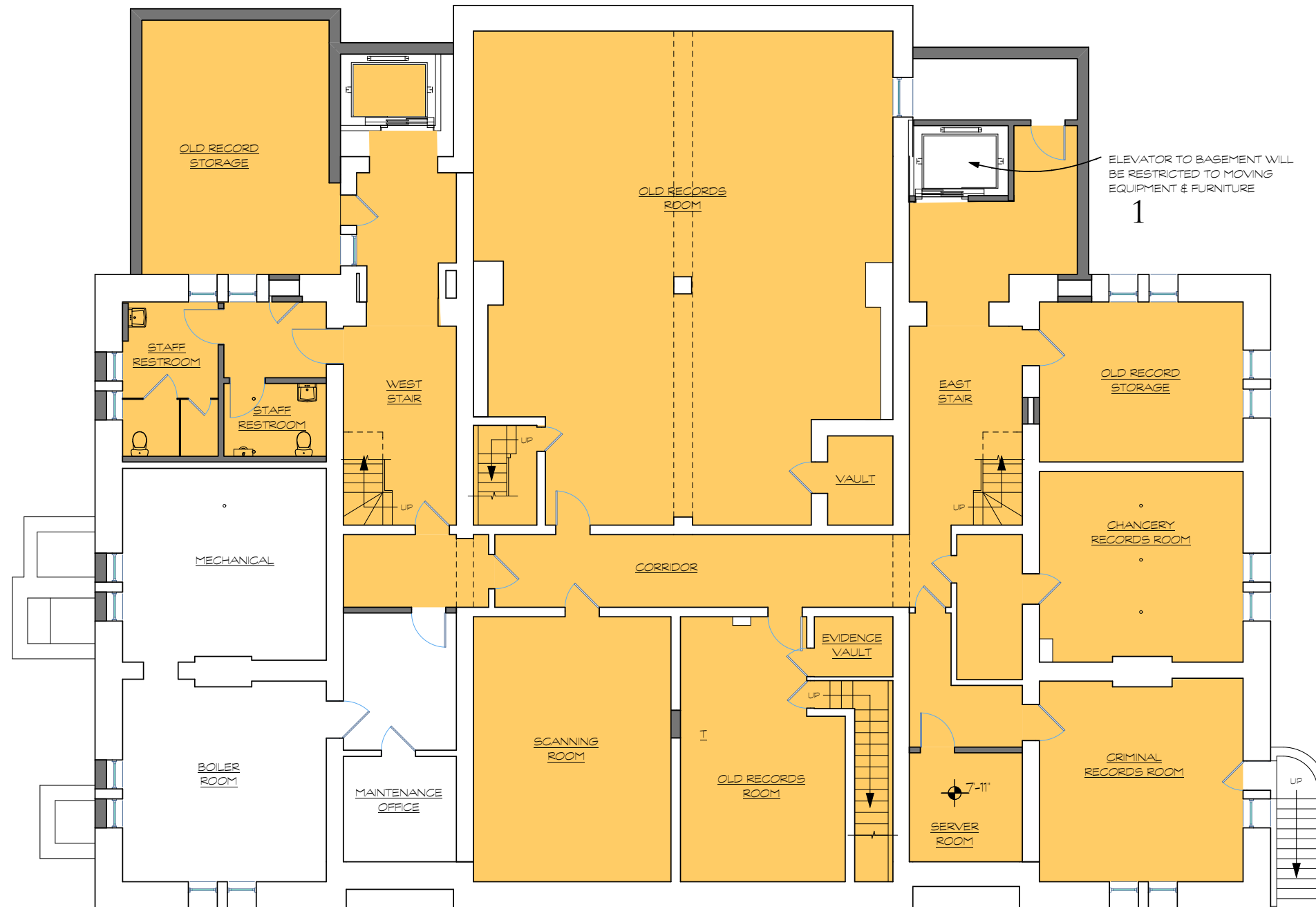


Thomas Clayton, AIA, LEED AP
Senior Architect & Project Manager

Enclosures

Augusta County Facility Scores

Rating Criteria	Existing Facility Scores	Option 1 Facility Scores	Option 2 Facility Scores	Option 3 Facility Scores	Option 4 Facility Scores	2015 Frazier Option Facility Scores	2015 Frazier Option Facility Scores - revised 05.08.2015
Overall	57.7	70.2	74.4	90.4	100	87	92
Space Functionality	87.4	82.2	83.4	96.0	100	89	89
Space Standards	68.4	85.2	87.1	98.7	100	89	95
Security	18.8	23.5	36.6	73.2	100	80	96
Building Condition	58.9	83.5	86.1	92.4	100	87	88
Court Technology	45.7	100	100	100	100	100	100



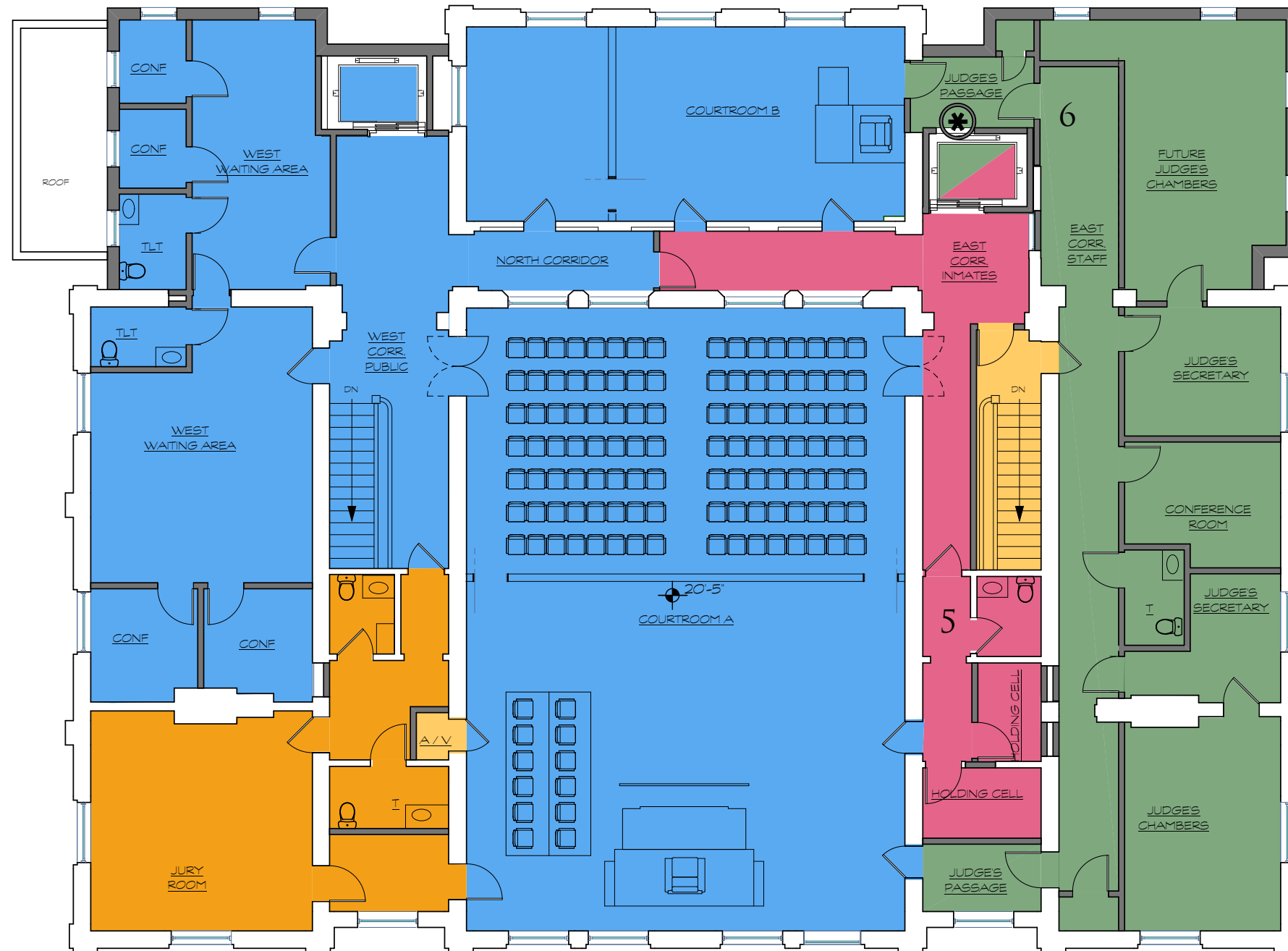
- PUBLIC SPACES
- JUDGE & JUDGES' STAFF SPACES
- STAFF SPACES
- JURY SPACES
- INMATE SPACES
- * JUDGES' ACCESS ONLY
- 1-6 REFER TO REVISIONS NOTED IN LETTER DATED 3/14/2015

B BASEMENT
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



1 FIRST FLOOR
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

- PUBLIC SPACES
- JUDGE & JUDGES' STAFF SPACES
- STAFF SPACES
- JURY SPACES
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2
 SECOND FLOOR
 SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"