

**File No. 260481**  
**1120 S. Barclay St.**  
**Port of Milwaukee DIZ Overlay – Deviation from Use List**  
**August 5, 2026**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this application is to request an extension of a previously approved interim deviation request relating to an assembly hall use for a portion of 1120 South Barclay, granted by the City Plan Commission on 9/30/2024 (File No. 240533). This site is zoned Industrial Office (102) and within the Port of Milwaukee Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) overlay and Harbor

District's Water and Use Plan (WaLUP) boundary. The DIZ and 102 zoning regulates allowable uses on the site.

Previously, a deviation from the DIZ use list was approved for this site by the City Plan Commission in 2019 to allow an assembly hall as an accessory use to a light manufacturing company. That company subsequently ceased production at the 1120 S. Barclay location in March 2022, moved the retail operations off-site and to online only sales shortly thereafter and went out of business in the in the Spring of 2023. The assembly hall use continued to operate as the principle use and the assembly hall and one tenant was currently operating out of this location. Subsequently, a twenty four (24) month temporary deviation was granted from September of 2024 through 9/30/26.

The owner is now applying for a deviation to serve as a longer-term approval for the assembly hall's now that 87% of the non-assembly spaces within building is occupied and plans have been put in place as to how the building will continue to operate moving forward, with the goal of aligning with the WaLUP's vision.

See below for background and history of the site, improvements that have been made to the development since the 2024 approval, anticipated future improvements, information regarding current usage of the building including non-assembly tenants, the assembly hall plan of operation, floor plans, and deviation-specific rationale and responses to the four deviation criteria.

**Timeline and History of Property**

Foamation, Inc., owned by Ralph Bruno, a manufacturer of novelty foam products, was the prior tenant of the 1120 S Barclay building and operated from 2016 to 2022 and closed in 2023. In 2019, Foamation had severe financial challenges due to underestimating the start-up time to transition production from their prior location and the cost of build-out and carrying costs. After a financial analysis, a proposal was made to supplement the manufacturing revenue by starting on-site tours and creating space to offer larger-scale events. In May of 2019 Mei-Lyn Nelson joined Ralph Bruno as an equal partner in Foamation and as owner of the 1120 S Barclay Street building. Architectural, renovation, and business plans were developed to request an assembly hall zoning to accommodate groups greater than 49 to solidify the business which was approved in 2019.

The Factory on Barclay opened in May 2022 hosting its first event. Post COVID, the Cheesehead Factory closed due to financial difficulties that lingered before the event space addition and after COVID due to market conditions as well as increased expenses and in late 2022 the production area closed, and in 2023 the inventory was liquidated.

*The Factory on Barclay*, continues to operate in the designated event area.

## **POST 2024 IMPROVEMENTS**

Since the CPC interim deviation approval was granted in September of 2024 the following improvements were made:

### **Exhibit D-1**

- 1) Created additional Event guest space, gathering areas and seating on first floor (B-1 Pink). Space previously used (Area 1 and 2 Orange ) in non-event space 1st floor. Installation of flooring, lighting and addition of furnishings.
- 2) Created and furnished office space for Areas 1 and 2 - 1st floor (Orange) - converted to non-event space. Refinished flooring and painted.

### **Exhibit D-2**

- 3) Created bridal suite/make-up area on Mezzanine on 2nd floor Area 9 (PINK). Space previously used (Area 8) Orange. Added framing with moveable barn doors for adaptable area to have area for salon services that converts to lounge space. Added new flooring and furnishings.
- 4) Installed LVT flooring and painted in 2nd floor offices (Areas 3,4,5,6) Orange

### **1132 S Barclay Warehouse building**

- 5) Updates to 1132 S Barclay St- Nunya Studios
  - a) Built wall to separate artist space and Factory on Barclay space warehouse.
  - b) Installed (2) Commercial furnaces
  - c) Installed 20 LED ceiling fixtures
  - d) Upgraded Electrical to accommodate artists' needs
  - e) Installed new overhead garage door and opener

While these improvements were pertinent to the 1132 Barclay building, the investment into these upgrades allowed Nunya Studio tenants the ability to create their artist spaces to set a solid foundation and commitment to a partnership between the Artist community and the owner of the 1120 Barclay building.

The Nunya 1120 and 1132 leases are each 3 year leases both at rental rates substantially below market rates.

Investment for these updates was \$110,000 Planned renovation for 2026 - 2027

Extensive remodeling of fencing and gates to south entryway. Concrete work, railings and mechanical gates targeted for Fall of 2026 to Spring 2027 to better identify the south entryway.

The design and completion of murals or other art installations.

The budget for these updates is \$50,000-\$75,000.

### **Current Usage**

1120 South Barclay is a two-story building with a long industrial past. It is 15,920 square feet. The industrial tenant (full history below) that previously occupied the space from 2016- 2022 and was sold in 2023. The existing event venue, The Factory on Barclay has and will continue to hold events in the space. A proposed new use of 1120 S Barclay as part of the previous deviation approval was to provide eight office spaces within the building that would be filled with non-assembly hall uses that are consistent with the 102 zoning, DIZ overlay, and goals of the WaLUP.

- Of the 8 non-assembly spaces, currently, 7 are occupied and 1 remains vacant. We are actively marketing these space to artists, engineers, architects and other general business uses We are in the process of removing fixtures in the space and marketing it as a large office or studio. The Nunya group (who occupies the 1132 S Barclay building and 2 offices in the 1120 S Barclay building) has expressed interest in the space (see below).
- Tim Priebe, the principal of Nunya occupies two of office spaces and the leader of the "creatives" will help advance the uses of this building and the warehouse located at 1132 S Barclay into a visions and arts innovation him in this district. Tim is a Product Design and Multidisciplinary Artist and Studio Manager and will be managing the studio of seven artists who opened the Nunya Art and Design at the 1132 Barclay building. It is the hope this model will continue to support both businesses that need small offices in this area of the city while also advancing the innovation corridor for arts and entertainment on the southern end of the Barclay Corridor. By working with established art businesses, we hope to create a sustainable model quickly that will be in place for years to come. Tim Priebe and Nunya have a 3 year lease effective 11/1/24 and intend to continue to occupy both spaces.
- The additional tenants are general office tenants that are consistent with the /02 zoning, DIZ overlay, and goals of the WaLUP. This will meet the criteria of the overlay.

Assuming one tenant per office, there will be 8 jobs/businesses. Tenants are expected to activate the building Monday through Friday during business hours 365 days per year. Presently, the event space has two full-time employees and 14 part-time employees on staff.

In addition, we hope to utilize the event space for more public events cross-pollinating the two buildings' tenants and networks when not privately rented. Possible options for shared events are:

Doors Open Milwaukee

Gallery night with the resident artists in conjunction with the 3rd Ward Gallery Night

Makers events such as Destash, Cream City Creatives, Spooky Book Fair and others which would include local artists and vendors selling their creations Feed Your Soul. Fundraiser supporting

Milwaukee Food Pantry with art being sold for charity with a gala featuring DJ's and art performance

For the non-assembly spaces within the building, the types of businesses that are targeted include acceptable uses for 102 and/or the DIZ overlay, whichever is applicable: Architects, Artist Studios, Engineers, Interior Designers, Graphic Artists, Real Estate, Insurance Services, Investment Services, and Legal Services. Preference will be given to those in or supporting the creative class to grow this ecosystem. We have used the network of artists from Tim as well as other Engineering | Architectural firms that want a Milwaukee presence but don't need a large space.

The site's aesthetics will be improved by having businesses active again during business hours, bringing foot traffic and activity to the location. We are also planning murals at the 1132 S Barclay building and art installations to create a greater sense of place for this section of the street. Significant aesthetic improvements have been made to both the interior and exterior over the last seven years.

### **ASSEMBLY HALL PLAN OF OPERATION**

The Factory on Barclay 1120 S Barclay St Milwaukee WI 53204

Owner : Mei-Lyn Nelson

Type of business: Event venue

Capacity: Up to 400 people

Hours of Operation: Events are booked and scheduled as requested. Typical hours are:

Sunday - Thursday : 10am - 11:00pm

Friday and Saturday: 10am - 1 :00 am

### **Detailed description of operation:**

The Factory hosts corporate events, non-profit functions, weddings and other events with rentals of 75-350 guests. The average event entails approximately 150 guests. There are typically 25-40 events per year.

Adjacent Land use:

- Land use North is a vacant building and parking lot (1100 S Barclay)
- Land to the south is a warehouse and parking lot (1132 S Barclay) owned by Factory on Barclay owner and currently occupied by NunyaArt & Design and The Factory on Barclay.
- Further south is Cermak grocery store.
- Land to the west is a vacant commercial and industrial building.
- Land to the east is a bike/walking path and railroad tracks

Number of employees (16) - 2 full-time and 14 part- time (increased from 12 part-time employees at the time of the previous deviation request)

Area operations will serve: Individuals and business looking to host events. Guests come from southern Wisconsin as well as northern to central Illinois.

Deliveries are received at the northern end of the building at a large overhead door at an interior loading dock. Deliveries are 2-3 per week (a decrease from 5-6 per week at the time of the previous deviation request).

Guests enter at the south end of the building at the main door at via an ADA ramp.

### **Parking plan**

#### **Loading Zone**

A Loading Zone permit is in place at 1120 S Barclay St. property to allow for better traffic flow for guest drop/ off pick up and ride-share services. Ride-share and shuttle services provide a great deal of the flow of guests into and out of the events. The loading zone is 30 feet and is situated at the front of the building.

#### **Off-street parking**

Off street parking is available at the following locations :

- 1) 1132 S Barclay St. Lot - 26 parking spots (Exhibit E-2)
- 2) 1132 S Barclay St - Warehouse - 16 parking spots (Exhibit E-2)
- 3) 10 spots at lot adjacent to 1120 S. Barclay building (Exhibit E-1) Parking lot agreement to be re-signed in late Fall after lot is cleared from prior tenant. There will be an additional 12-14 spots available that will be created by the owner of the building early spring 2027.
- 4) There are 2 parking lots that are available for rent that would provide additional parking operated through Secure Parking USA that manages parking at both locations:
  - a) Cermak Fresh Market - 1236 S Barclay St. 10-20 spots on days and evenings of events and
  - b) 1010 S. 1st St. - 20-25 spots
- 5) For larger events we have an agreement with V Marchese located at 317 E. National for up to 125 cars to be parked and accessed via valet or shuttles. Valet services to lot provided by Keehn's Parking LLC. Shuttle services may also be used to access lot from our building. There are a number of local shuttle services that guests have used such as Milwaukee Food Tours, GOGO Shuttle and MKE City tours.

The current tenant located at 1132 S Barclay street, Nunya Studios, has agreed to work off-site during The Factory on Barclay event days to allow for full access to the parking for the spaces available at the 1132 S Barclay building as well as street parking.

The parking arrangements will be coordinated by The Factory on Barclay staff so that there is proper communication with the owners of each of the respective locations. Parking tags and signage would be used to identify the appropriate spots.

**Loading Plan:**

Queueing for pick-up and drop-off for ride share services, including taxis, Uber, and Lyft is managed by staff at the end of the event. Park benches are provided at the front of the building that are located at the loading zone area.

Vendors utilize the existing loading dock along Barclay Street. Those who remain on site during events park:

- Inside the building in the loading dock (large trucks)
- Other vendors park on the street

**Garbage:** The Factory has garbage service through John's Disposal with the dumpsters located at the south end the parking lot at 1132 S Barclay.

**Alcohol Policy:** The Factory on Barclay has a Class B Tavern Liquor and the licensee abides by all the regulations and requirements necessary to hold a Class B Tavern licensure.

**Building Floor Plans**

**KEY COLORS OF EXHIBIT D-1 and D-2**

**ORANGE** - TENANT ONLY

**YELLOW**- SHARED SPACE

**PINK** - EVENT SPACE

Building Floor Plan (Uses within the space) - see attached floor plans

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor (Exhibit D-1)**

- (1) Office 1 (Nelson Financial Group; meeting room) **ORANGE**
- (2) Office 2 (Nelson Financial Group; meeting room) **ORANGE**
- (A) Foyer/kitchenette and gathering space. This area is accessed by the ADA ramp at the south of the building. **YELLOW**
- (B) Event space AREA B and 8-1 **PINK**. (B-1)
- (C) Bar. AREA B - **PINK**
- (D) Catering Kitchen. AREA B - **PINK**

- (E) Loading dock. **YELLOW**

The first floor has two single-stall bathrooms and (2) 3-stall bathrooms. One single-stall is tenant only, included with rental of Office 2.

## **2nd floor (Exhibit D-2)**

- (3) Nunya Studios, **ORANGE**
- (4) Nunya Studios, **ORANGE**
- (5), (6) Nelson Engineering LLC. **ORANGE**
- (7) Nelson Financial Group. **ORANGE**
- (8) Tenant offices for rent /ancillary area for storage
- (F) Business center available for tenants **ORANGE**
- (G) Conference room/presentation room **ORANGE**

## **Current Tenants of Non-Assembly Spaces:**

1. Nelson Financial Group Inc. (5 year lease) 1st floor :
  - a. Areas 1 and 2 - Meeting rooms Offices and meeting areas and 1 bathroom
  - b. 2nd floor : Area 7 (Orange) - Private office
2. Nunya Studios LLC (1 yr.of lease remaining with renewal of 3 years expected)
  - a. 2nd floor-Areas 3 and 4 (Orange)
3. Nelson Engineering LLC (3 yr lease)
  - a. 2nd floor - Areas 5 and 6 (Orange)
  - b. Common Area Conference and Presentation Room - #7 (Orange)

## **Vacant Non-Assembly Space:**

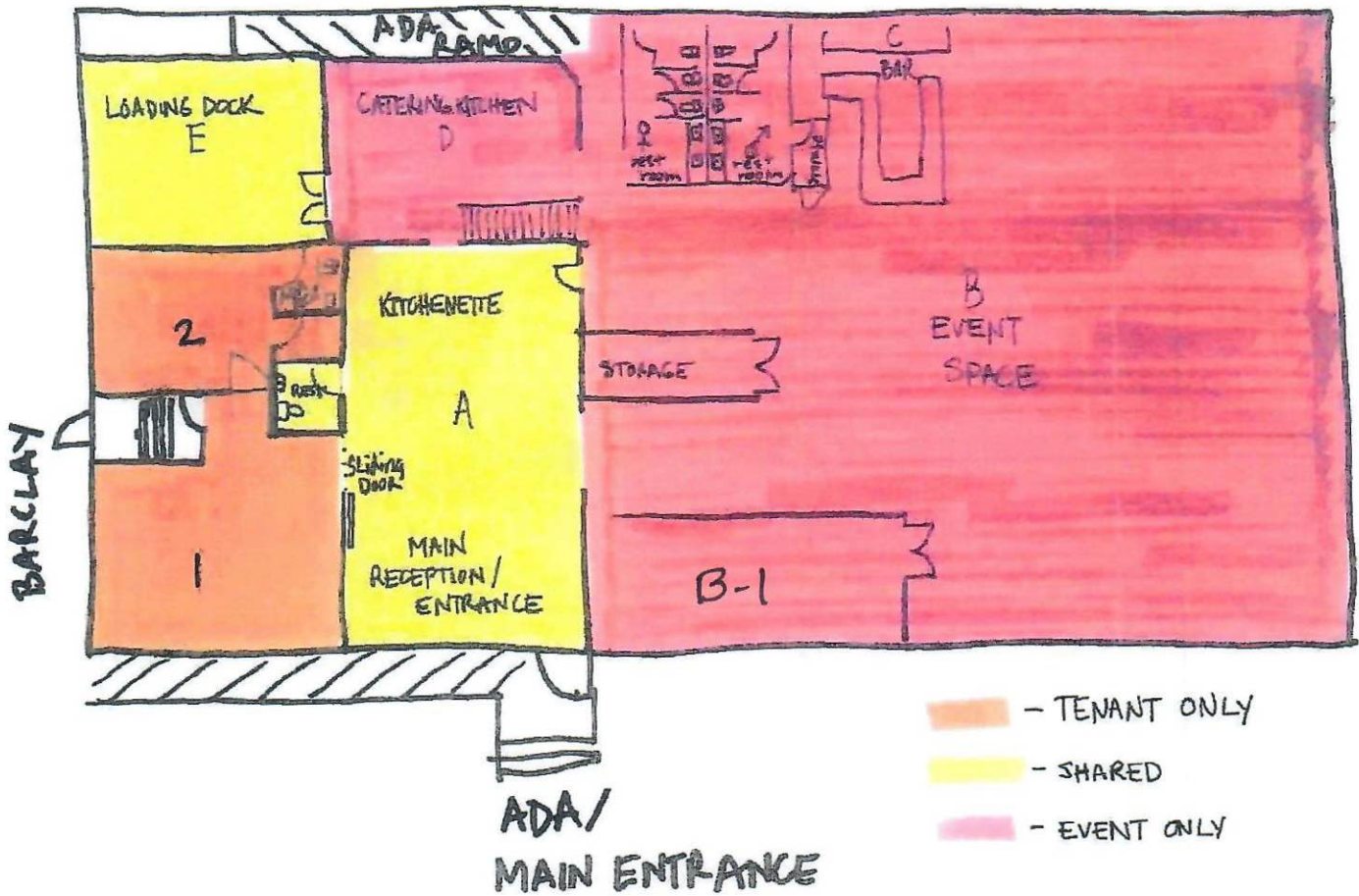
Soliciting tenants for Area 8 Orange Prospects

Artists, Architectural or Engineering firm Engineering firm, Other General Office Use

EXHIBIT 0-1

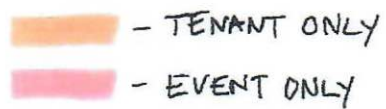
1120 S BARCLAY

1st floor





1120 S. BARCLAY  
2nd floor



## **PURPOSE OF DEVIATION REQUEST**

### **Deviation Request**

A longer term approval of a deviation from the DIZ overlay use list to allow the assembly hall to continue to operate as a principal use within a portion of the building while work continues to fill the one remaining space in the non-assembly areas of the building. See the end of this document for responses to the 4 deviation criteria.

Rationale: The WaLUP is focused on encouraging a mix of uses throughout the district, while focusing on retaining manufacturing uses and providing a home for modern manufacturing firms that provide opportunities for the public to view manufacturing processes. This parcel is located within the South 1st Street sub-district within the larger plan area.

A deviation is required because the primary use will no longer be industrial or manufacturing. The intent is to move the uses within the building back towards an emphasis on makers and creatives and general office use. Office spaces have been created on the first and second floors that comply with the permitted uses within the zoning to complement the current event space The Factory on Barclay. The office tenants are expected to have more full-time employees than the event business. The physical layout creates office spaces, shared spaces, and event spaces.

A collection of businesses versus a single light manufacturer has the potential to be a more sustainable long-term solution to supporting this balance. It opens up a broader scope of products and services to be created and more opportunities for community enjoyment.

This deviation to allow an assembly hall (event) space within a portion of the building is consistent with the Harbor District Water and Land Use comprehensive plan because we are advancing a "makers corridor" where entrepreneurs and artists are driving innovation in their respective fields. The corridor will also provide a venue for their products to be sold on-site through display in the event space and organized events.

WaLUP relevant sections of the First Street Corridor Sub-district:

- Barclay Street between National Avenue and Scott Street will serve as an employment and innovation corridor.
- With the exception of the Freshwater Plaza development between Greenfield Avenue and Scott Street, maintain Barclay Street from National Avenue to Lapham Boulevard as a light industrial and "maker" corridor, providing employment and innovation opportunities with flexible building forms that can adapt to a variety of businesses. Housing should be discouraged, except in a live/work arrangement, to preserve the employment and innovation focus of the corridor. Retail should also be discouraged, unless as part of a make and sell arrangement or other use complementary to the light industrial "maker corridor."

### **Goals and benefits of proposed deviation request**

The makers corridor proposed by the Harbor District seeks to activate Barclay during traditional business hours but also on evenings and weekends. The current operating plan for the events venue is to hold

weddings, corporate events, and private parties primarily on weekends from June to November. The eight small businesses leasing the office space will be active during regular business hours Monday - Friday. There will also be additional events for the public throughout the year. The applicant is committed to finding and maintaining non-event tenants to fill the non-event spaces within the building with uses that align with the WaLUP, 102 zoning, and DIZ overlay in perpetuity, as the goal is to not have a standalone event space solely occupy this building.

While this deviation request stands alone, it is in synergy with a broader plan for both 1120 and 1132 S Barclay:

- Studio manager, tenants of 1132, additional tenants of 1130 will bring a talented pool of artists and design professionals together to create and sell their work on-site consistent with the goals of the WaLUP
- Create art-forward events that will activate the two addresses in collaboration during weeknights and between November and June, such as artist presentations and fairs, fundraising events, makers market events, as well as other community events
- Creation of murals and sculptures for the 1132 building, brightening artistically the 1132 S Barclay East and North sides of the building
- Create an artist community that could be a destination point for local residents as well as visitors
- Moreover, the light manufacturers, artist/design studios, office tenants, and the event space will be a synergistic group of businesses that will provide their owners with the connections necessary for a successful enterprise. The large gathering space will offer a venue for artists with the ability to showcase their services and products as well as a place for the public to enjoy the space and connect with the local vendors via art shows or fundraisers to give back to the community. Collaboration on utilizing the event space has been ongoing.

### **Deviation Timeline**

A long-term deviation for the assembly hall use is being requested for sixty months (60) to one hundred twenty (120) months. Tenants will continue to be maintained and pursued in a way that conforms with the DIZ and WaLUP.

### **SUMMARY- DEVIATION CRITERIA**

1. **The purpose of the overlay zone will be met** - The light manufacturers, artist/design studios, general office use and event space will be a synergistic group of businesses that will produce a consistently high level of jobs. The large gathering space will offer a venue for artists with the ability to showcase their services and products as well as a place for the public to enjoy the space and connect with the local vendors via art shows or fund raisers to give back to the community. Organizations/community events that have expressed interest in collaborating on utilizing the space are Feed Your Soul, Milwaukee Food Pantry , Susan G. Kamen, Milwaukee Christian Center, UEDA and Easter Seals. Other maker oriented events include Destash, Cream

City Creatives and Doors Open.

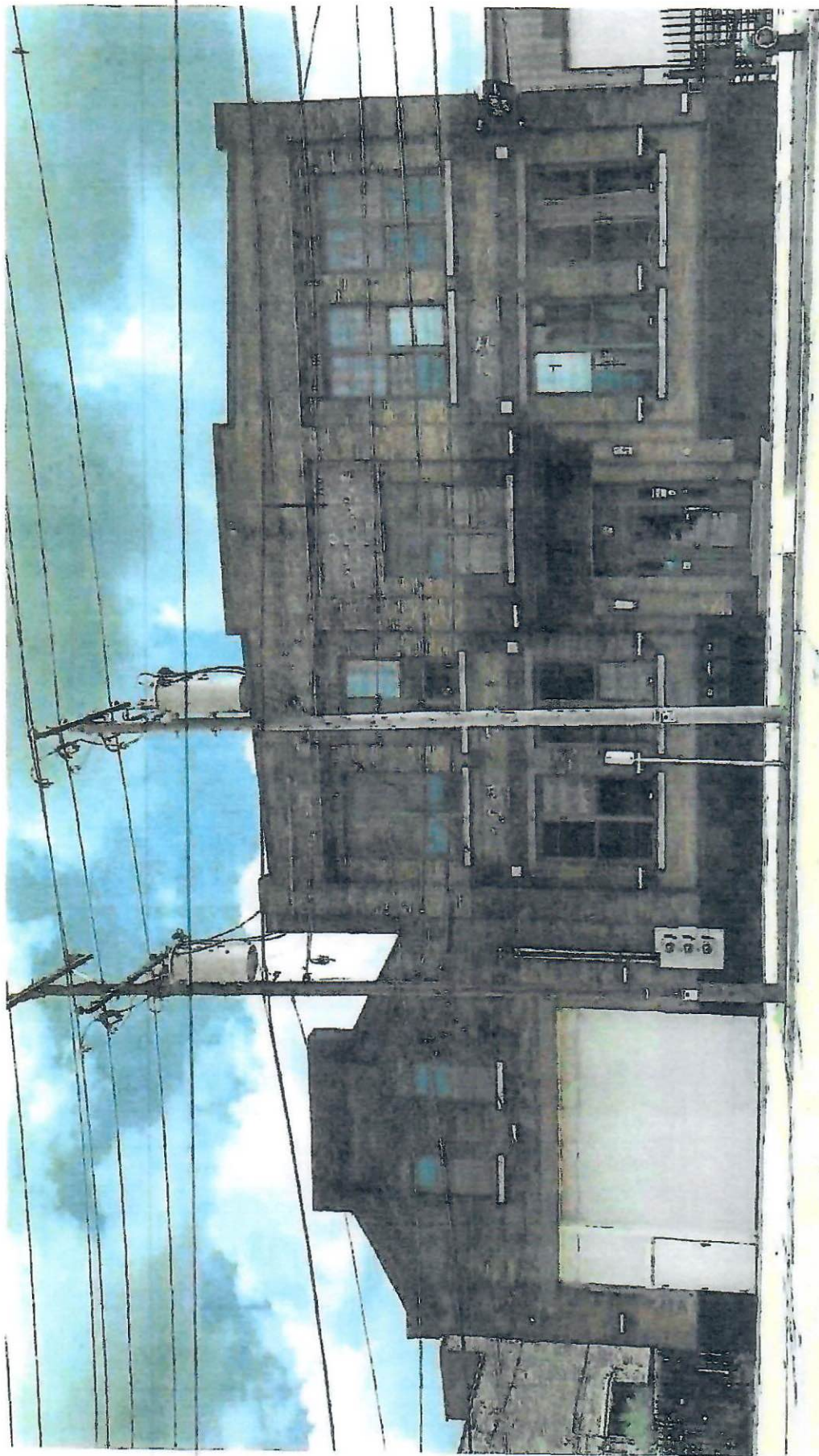
2. **The deviation improves the aesthetics of the site:** The improvements to the interior and exterior of the building and grounds have enhanced the property and stabilized the long-term ownership by adapting the property to a modern post-COVID business model that will energize a portion of Barclay Street that is still for the most part blighted. All improvements that have been made have been done with utmost respect of the original building. The creation and installation of artist murals and various art sculptures and streetscapes will provide further modernization and beautification of the buildings.
3. **If applicable, the deviation addresses one or more unique site factors that make application of the standard impractical.** The intent of the deviation request is to put back into place the emphasis on a light manufacturing and makers mark businesses that were previously in place with the prior business. Due to COVID the connecting businesses were forced to disengage and the intent is to put that relationship back in place. This new collection of businesses have the potential to offer a much more sustainable long term solution since to is not based on a single light manufacturing type of business but a wide range of businesses and artists. This opens up a broader scope of products and art to be created and more opportunities for community enjoyment. Allowance of the deviation will allow not only the maintenance of a viable business but provide potential for further enhancement of adjacent vacant properties.
4. **The deviation is consistent with the comprehensive plan** - There is no housing planned for this facility. The proposed deviation is an ancillary use to the job creating artist studios, light manufacturing and general office use is consistent with the comprehensive plan. The space will provide space for artists and designers a venue to promote their goods and services as well as a customer base to sell products to for scheduled events. The intent of the owner of the property is to operate in concert with the WALUP. Quotes from the WaLUP:
  - a. "This site is located within the Water and Land Use Plan, which contemplated and supported this type of non-industrial use tied to a manufacturer. The plan state as follows:
  - b. "With the exception of the Freshwater Plaza development between Greenfield Avenue and Scott Street, maintain Barclay Street from National Avenue to Lapham Boulevard as a light industrial and" maker" corridor, providing employment and innovation opportunities with flexible building forms that can adapt to a variety of businesses. Housing should be discouraged , except as a live-work arrangement, to preserve the employment and innovation focus of the corridor. Retail should also be discouraged, unless as part of a make/sell arrangement or other use complementary to the light industrial "maker corridor"."







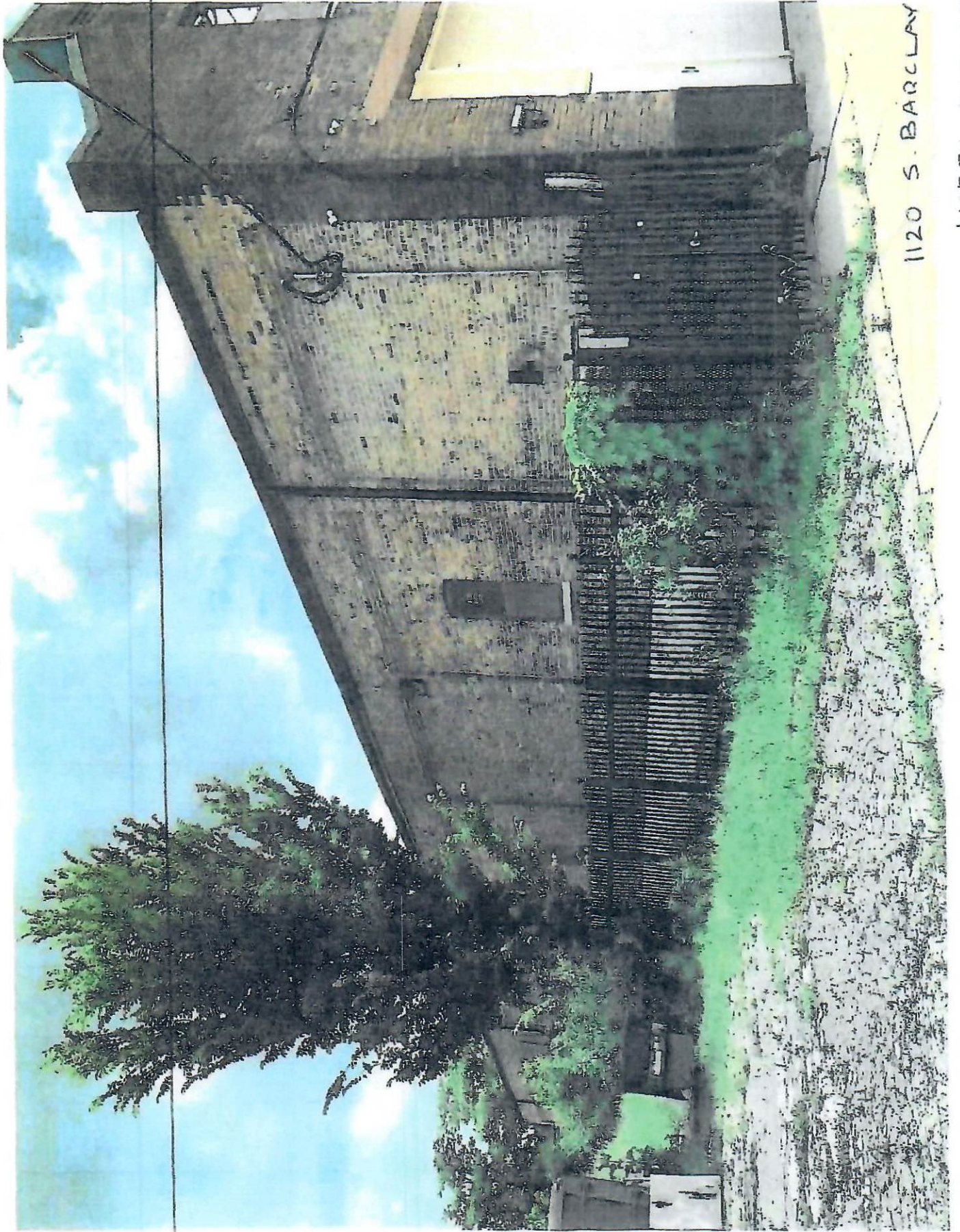
EXHIBIT C-1



1120 S BARCLAY ST  
WEST ELEVATION  
- FRONT OF BUILDING -



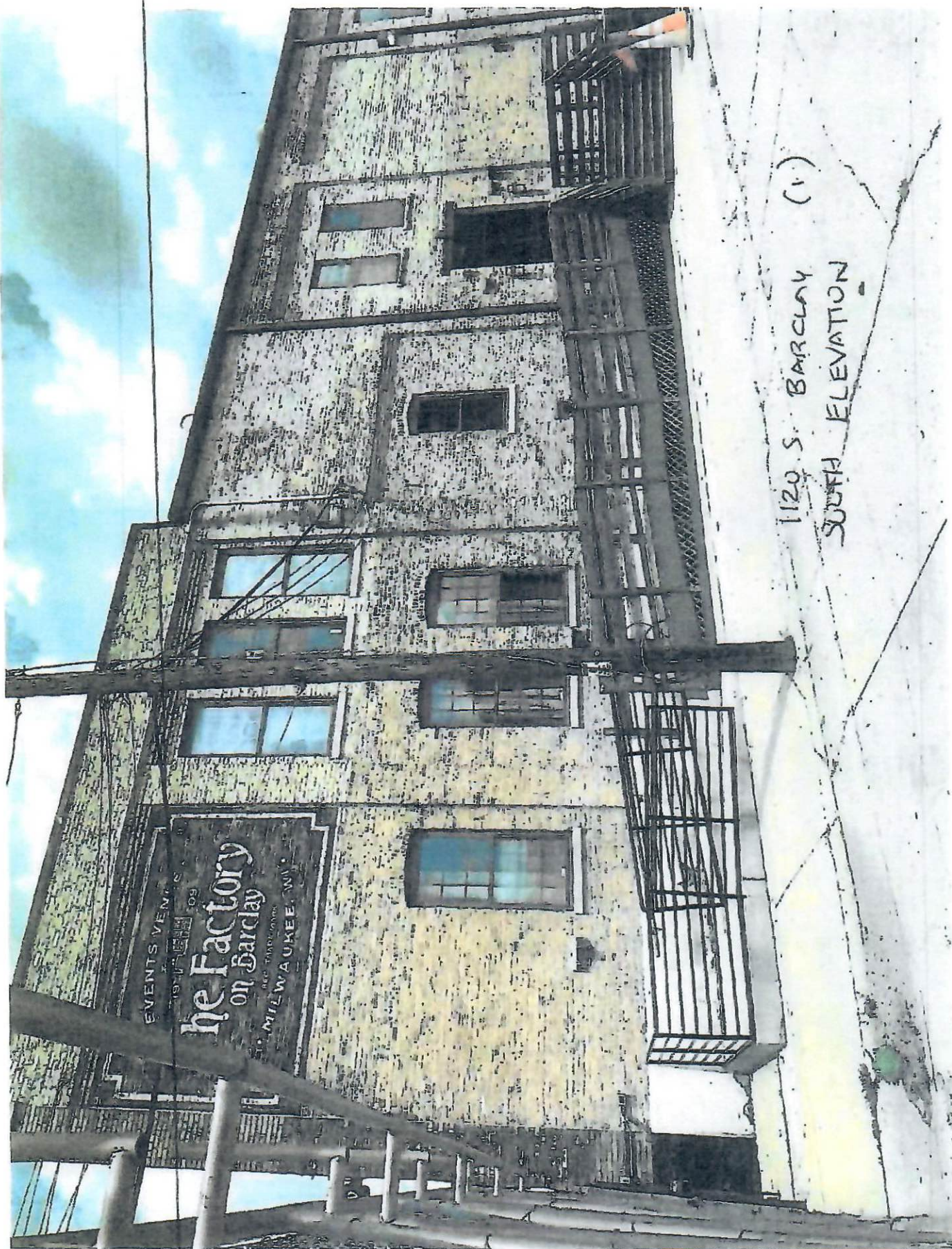
EXHIBIT C-2



1120 S. BARCLAY

NORTH ELEVATION

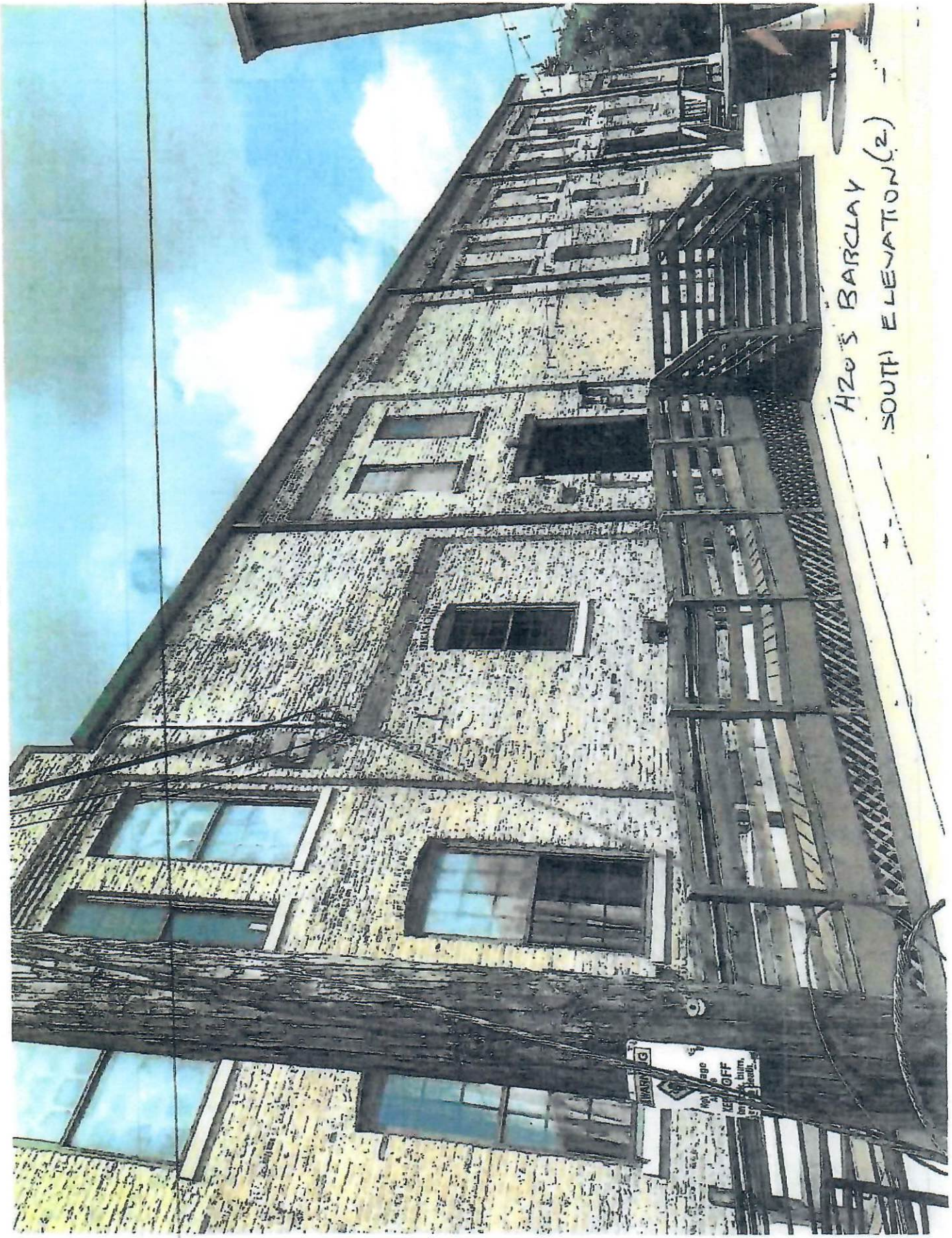




1120 S. BARCLAY (1)  
SOUTH ELEVATION



EXHIBIT C-4



H20'S BARCLAY  
SOUTH ELEVATION (2)

WARN G  
No large  
ICE OFF  
for ice, burn,  
or other debris



EXHIBIT C.5

1120 S. BARCLAY

EAST ELEVATION

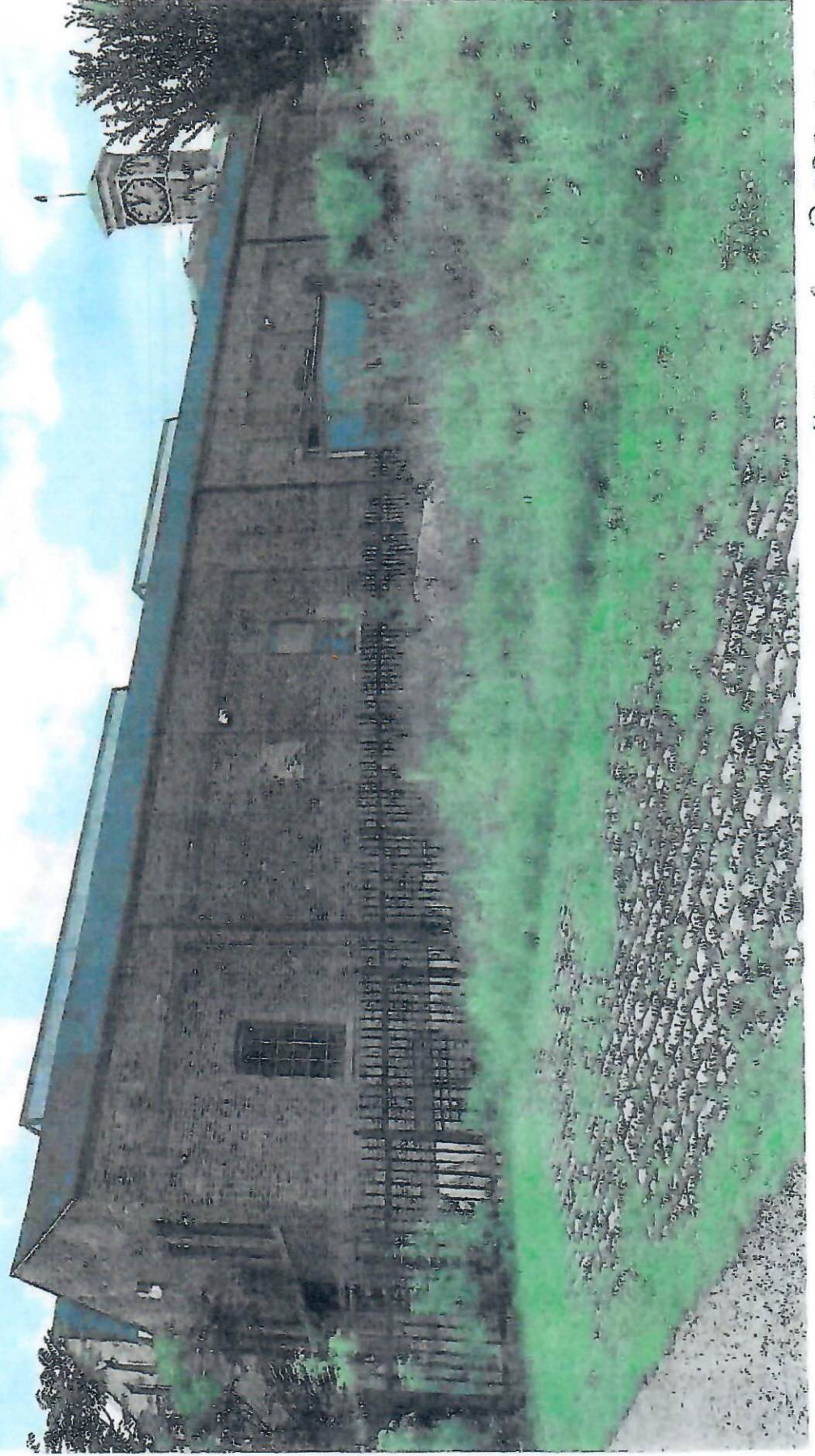




EXHIBIT. C-6

1120 S BARCLAY

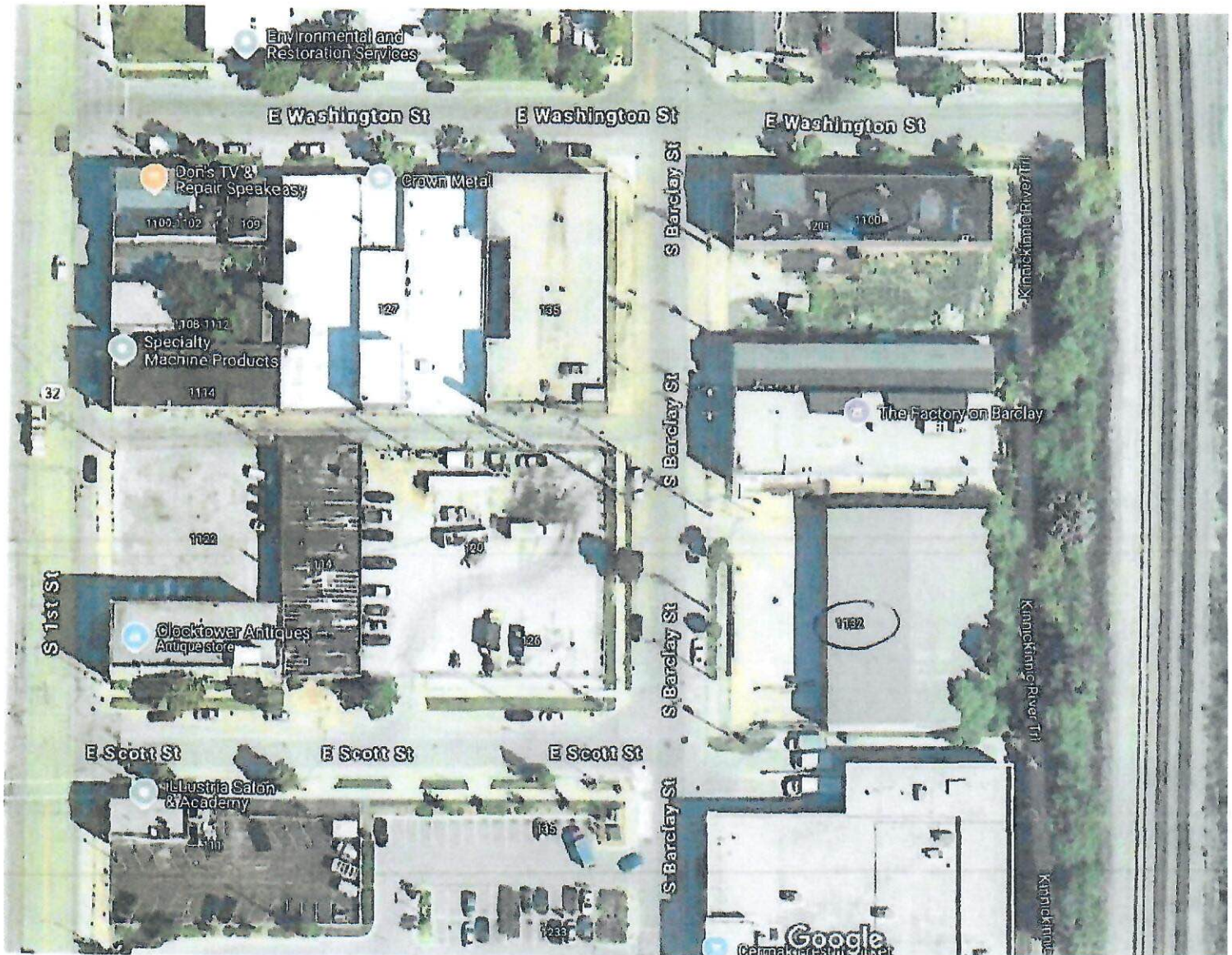
~~NORTH ELEVATION~~



1120 S BARCLAY

NORTH ELEVATION





1100 S BARCLAY



EXHIBIT E-2  
 1132 S. BARCLAY

NUNYA STUDIOS

FACTORY PARKING

FACTORY  
 PARKING

NUNYA  
 STUDIOS  
 SPACE

UP TO 16 SPACES

OVERHEAD

OFFICES

OVERHEAD

DOORS

6  
 # LOADING  
 DOCK NOT  
 ACTUALLY  
 USED  
 UP TO 6  
 ADDITIONAL  
 SPOTS  
 COULD BE  
 USED

PARKING LOT

16  
 WAREHOUSE

TOTAL

26 PARKING  
 SPOTS

20 PARKING  
 SPOTS

IN LOT

PARKING  
 SPOTS

Total: 42