

# CHURCH STEEPLE HEIGHT

## ORDINANCE 2025-06

CODE TEXT AMENDMENT



# CURRENT CODE

- 16.13.100 Maximum Height Provisions For All Buildings
  - The height of any building shall not exceed 35 feet. The total height shall be measured as the vertical distance from the natural grade, as defined in this Title, to the highest point of a roof. To allow for unusual conditions or appurtenances the following exceptions apply:
    - C. Church spires, bell towers, finials, and like architectural features as well as flag poles, may extend above the specified maximum height limit by up to 50 percent of the height limit (52 feet 6 inches for a 35-foot building), but shall not contain any habitable spaces above the maximum height.

# APPLICANT'S EXPLANATION

- The current height limit for steeples is 52'-6", which restricts the ability to construct appropriately scaled steeples. Allowing taller steeples on churches situated on large lots with adequate building setbacks will maintain compatibility with surrounding properties and will not negatively impact adjacent property owners.





# PROPOSED CODE

- F. Church steeples may extend up to 70 feet from natural grade to apex if all the following requirements are satisfied. If the following requirements are not satisfied, the maximum steeple height is 52' 6".
1. The church building is located on a lot that is a minimum of 3 acres.
  2. The building setbacks for a steeple from the front property line(s) or projected right(s)-of-way, whichever is greater, are at least the minimum required by the zone.
  3. The steeple setbacks for a steeple from the rear and side property lines are 100 feet minimum.
  4. The steeple shall not contain any habitable spaces above the building maximum height limit.
  5. The portions of the steeple above the building maximum height limit shall not exceed 12 feet in width or depth.
  6. A maximum of one steeple is allowed on the building or property.

# PROPOSED CODE

7. The maximum building-to-steeple height ratio is 1:1.5.
8. No lighting of a steeple. A steeple shall not be lit from the ground or from other fixtures on the church or any other building. Steeples shall not have light fixtures installed on or in the steeple.
9. Church steeples shall be designed and constructed to exhibit clear tapering from the base (lowest point of the steeple where it meets the main structure of the church or, for a detached steeple, from natural grade) to the apex (top of the steeple). The gradual tapering effect must be visually perceptible from public rights-of-way and surrounding properties. The average width of the top third of the steeple spire shall be less than half the width of the steeple base.

# PROPOSED CODE

2. Steeples shall be set back from the front property line(s) or projected right(s)-of-way, whichever is greater, the minimum distance required by the zone. The height of the steeple may increase by one foot (with a beginning maximum steeple height of 52' 6") for each additional foot the steeple is set back into the property, to a maximum of 70' (e.g., a 35' church height at a minimum 30' setback is allowed a steeple height of 52' 6", a 35' church height at a 47' 6" setback (where the minimum zone setback is 30') is allowed a steeple height of 70', a 35' church height at a minimum 50' setback is allowed a steeple height of 52' 6", a 35' church height at a minimum 67' 6" setback (where the minimum zone setback is 50') is allowed a steeple height of 70'). Maximum steeple height is also subject to item 7.













## PROPOSED CODE: 16.13.390

Churches shall have one parking space per three (3) seating spaces in the main assembly room. *No parking shall be located between the front setback and the church. If the church is located on a corner lot or parcel, only one frontage will be restricted in this manner. The City Council, upon an applicant's request, may approve a parking plan different than listed in this section based on specific circumstances of the site and building orientation or specific use of a proposal.*

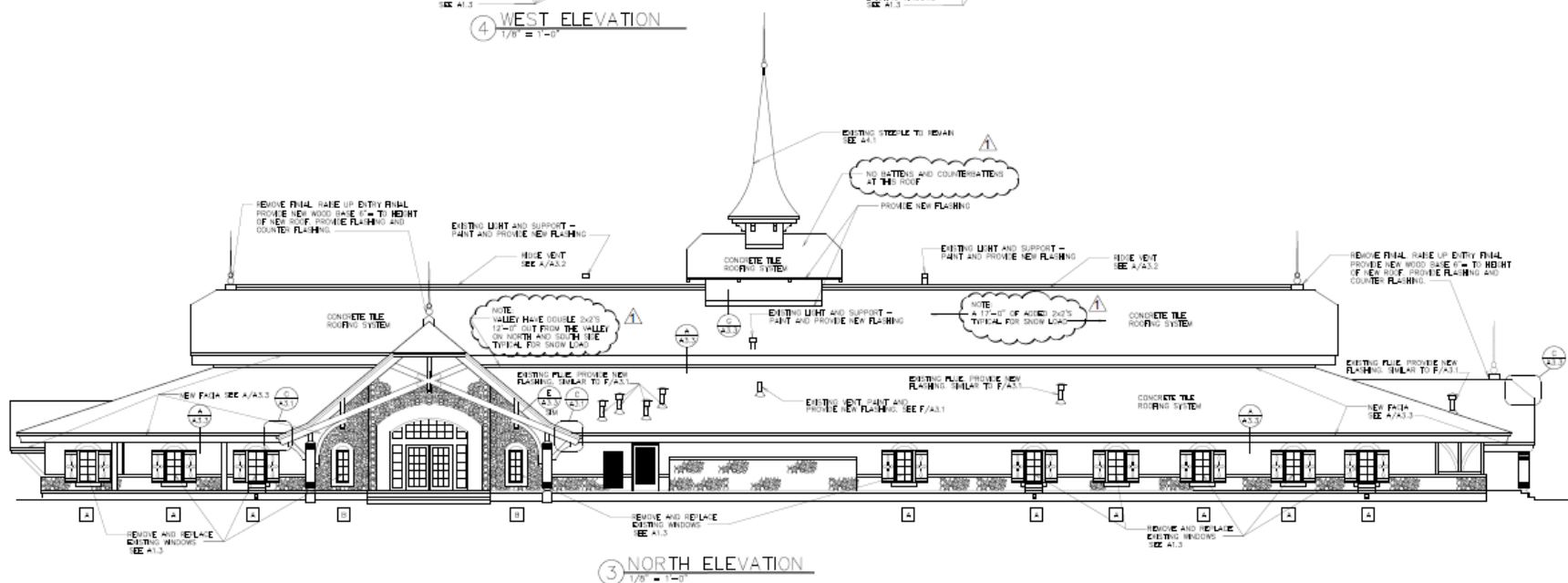
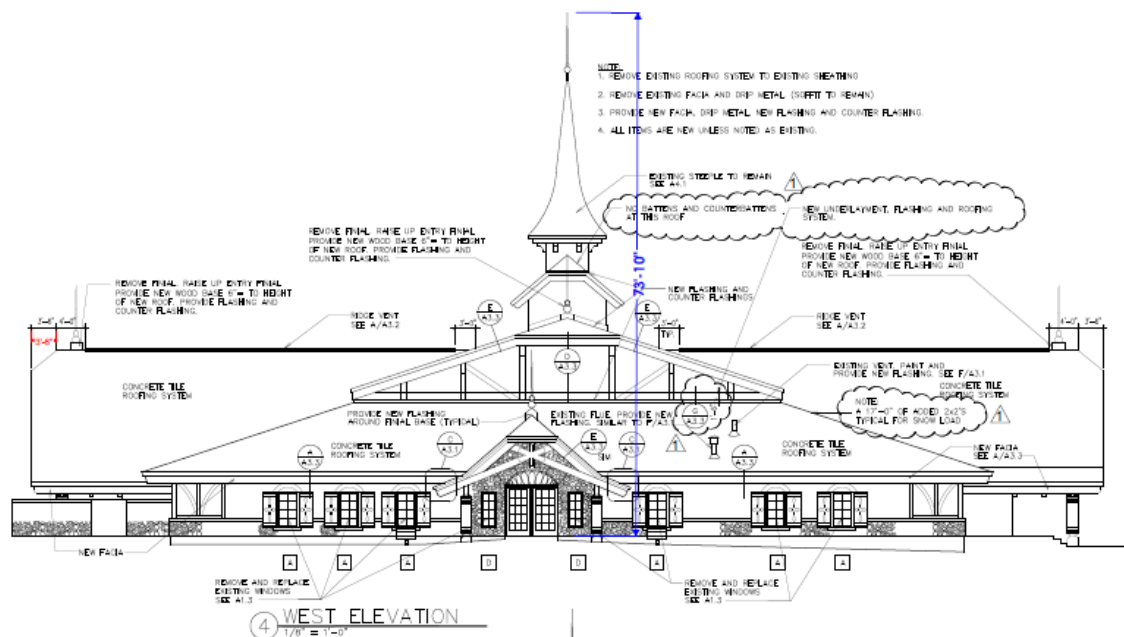


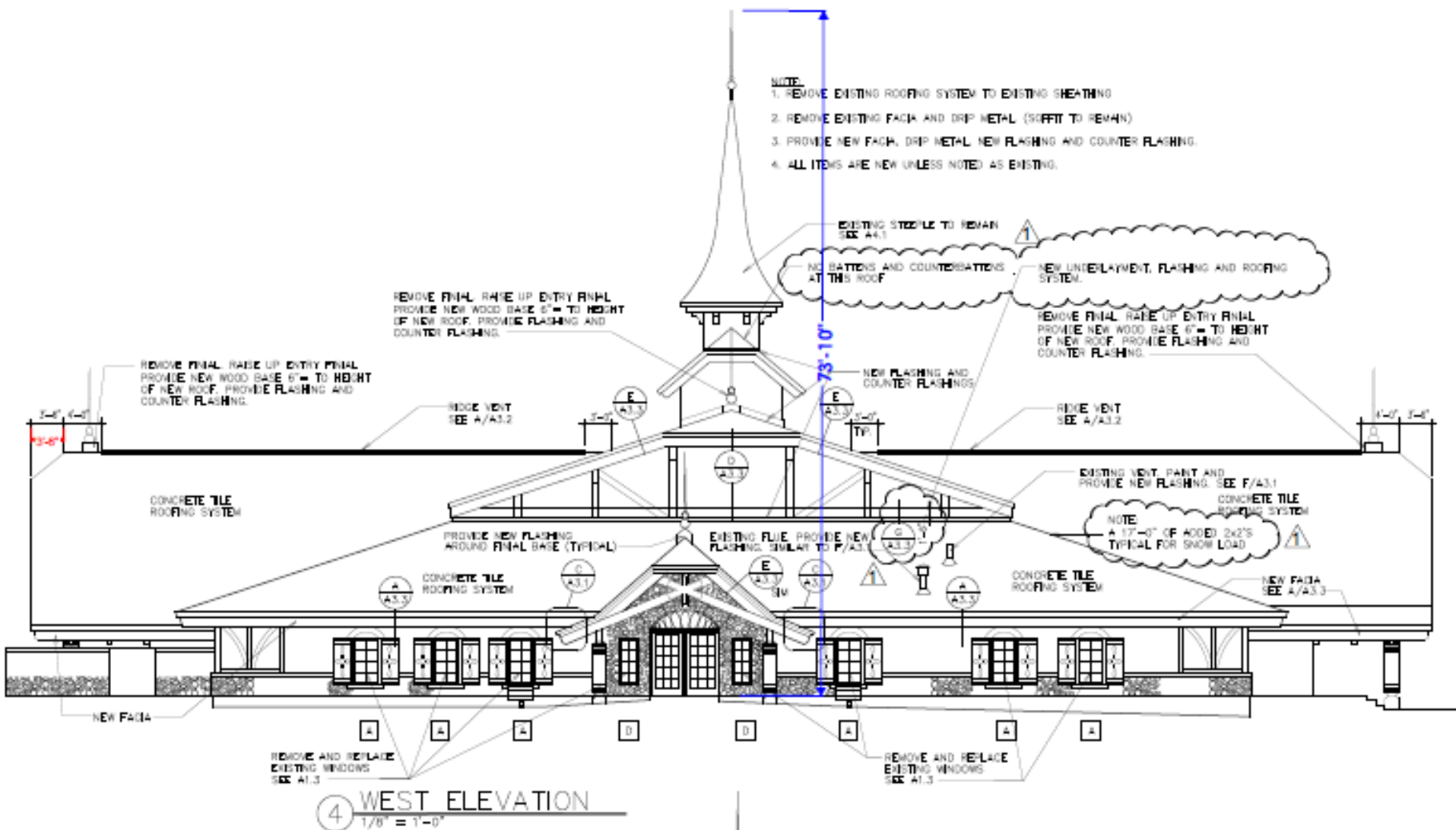
# CHURCH HEIGHT HISTORY

- Historically, church structure and steeple height was based on the setback. The greater the setback, the higher a church or steeple could reach. There was no distinction between church and steeple height meaning a church could have a limit of 200' and the steeple would have the same limit of 200'.
- On June 28, 2023, the code was amended that limited church height to 35' and limited steeple height to 52' 6". The basis of the discussion was limiting the height of the structure. Potentially, the steeple height limit was an unintended consequence that created church and steeple proportions that are traditionally and architecturally not standard.

# EXISTING STEEPLE HEIGHTS

- 165 North Center 73' 10"
- 1102 South Center 64' 11"
- 250 East and 200 South 58' 5"
- Average 65' 3"









Google Earth

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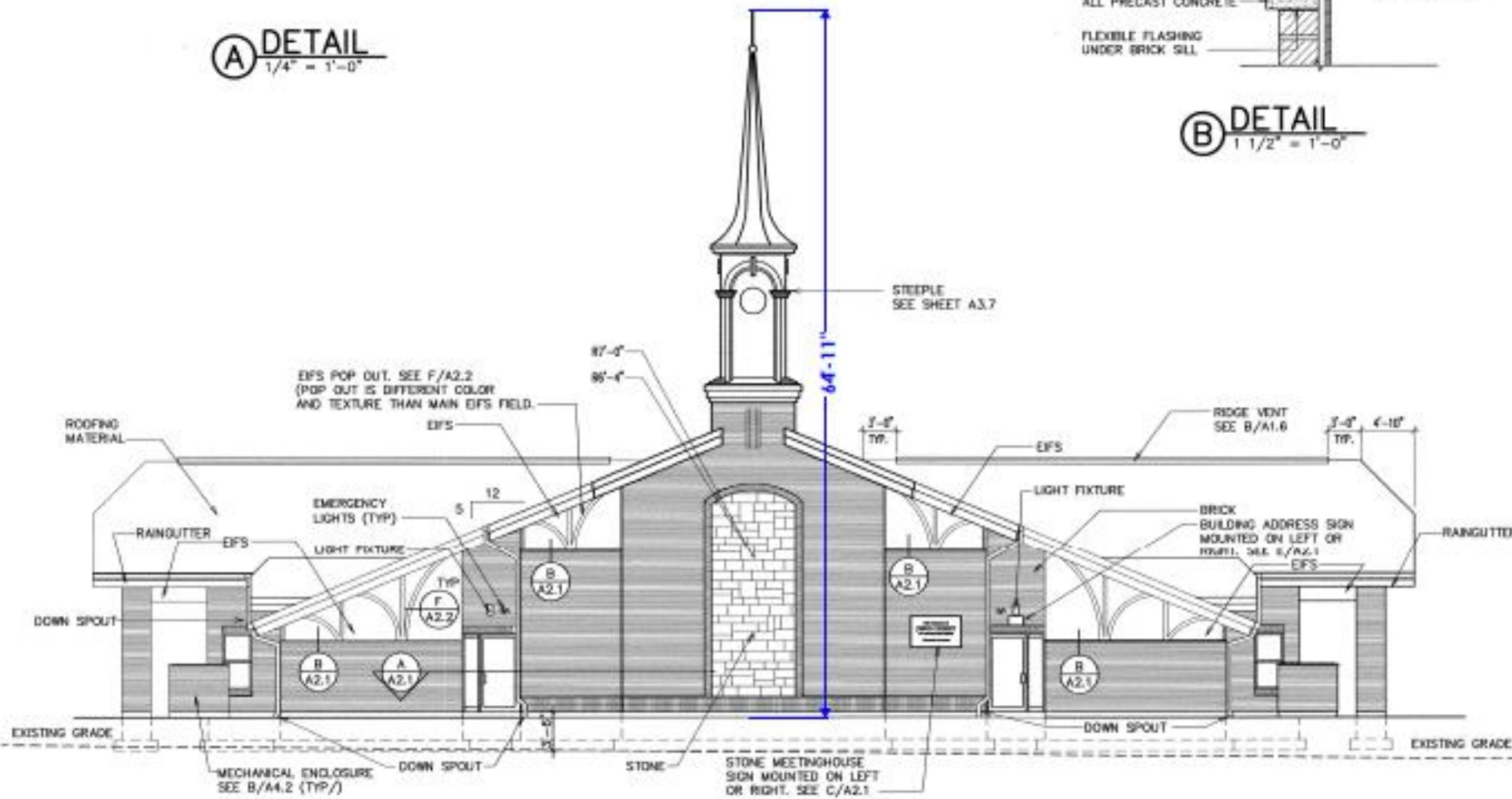
- Distance to church 130'
- Distance to steeple 250'





**(A) DETAIL**  
1/4" = 1'-0"

**(B) DETAIL**  
1 1/2" = 1'-0"



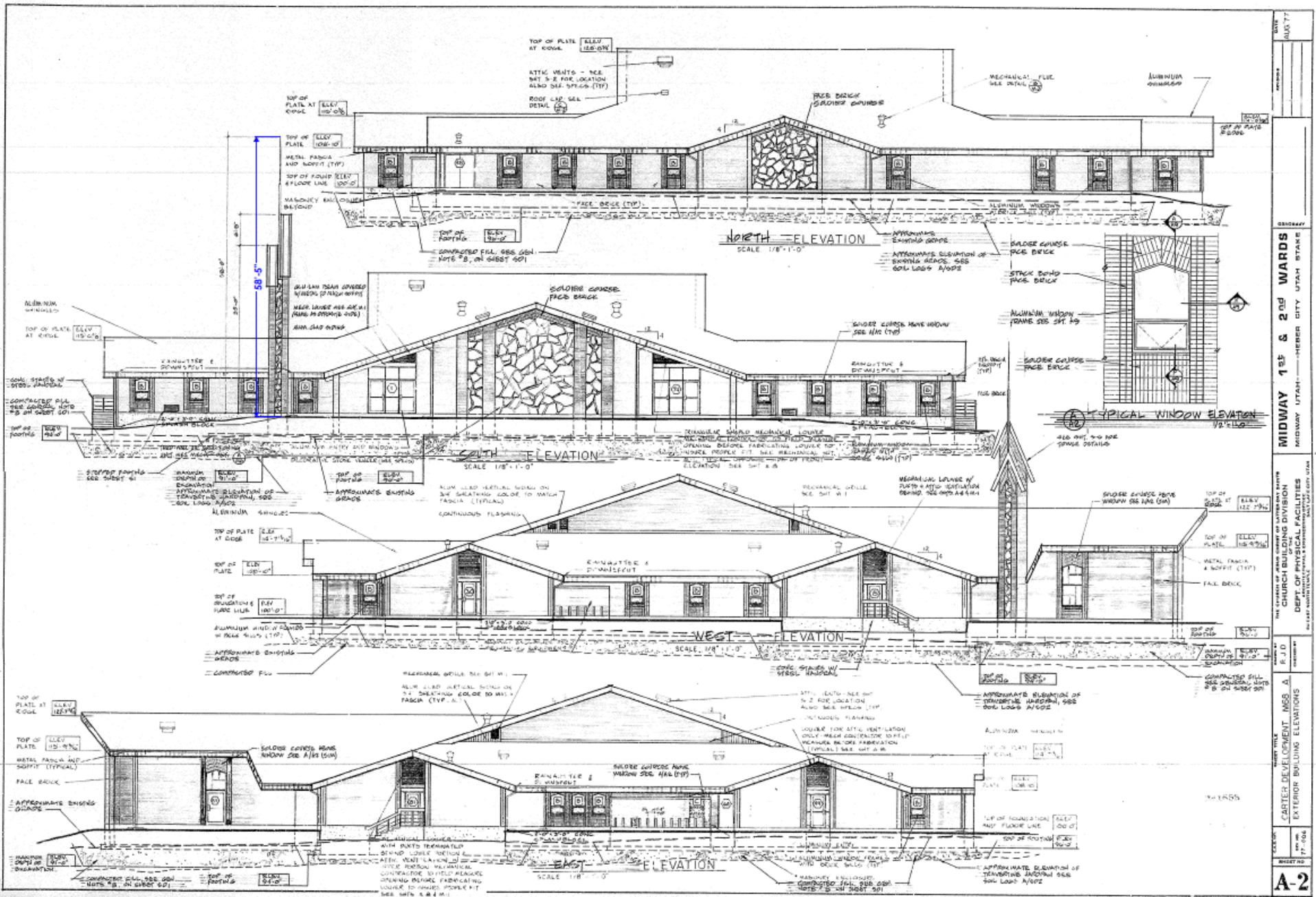


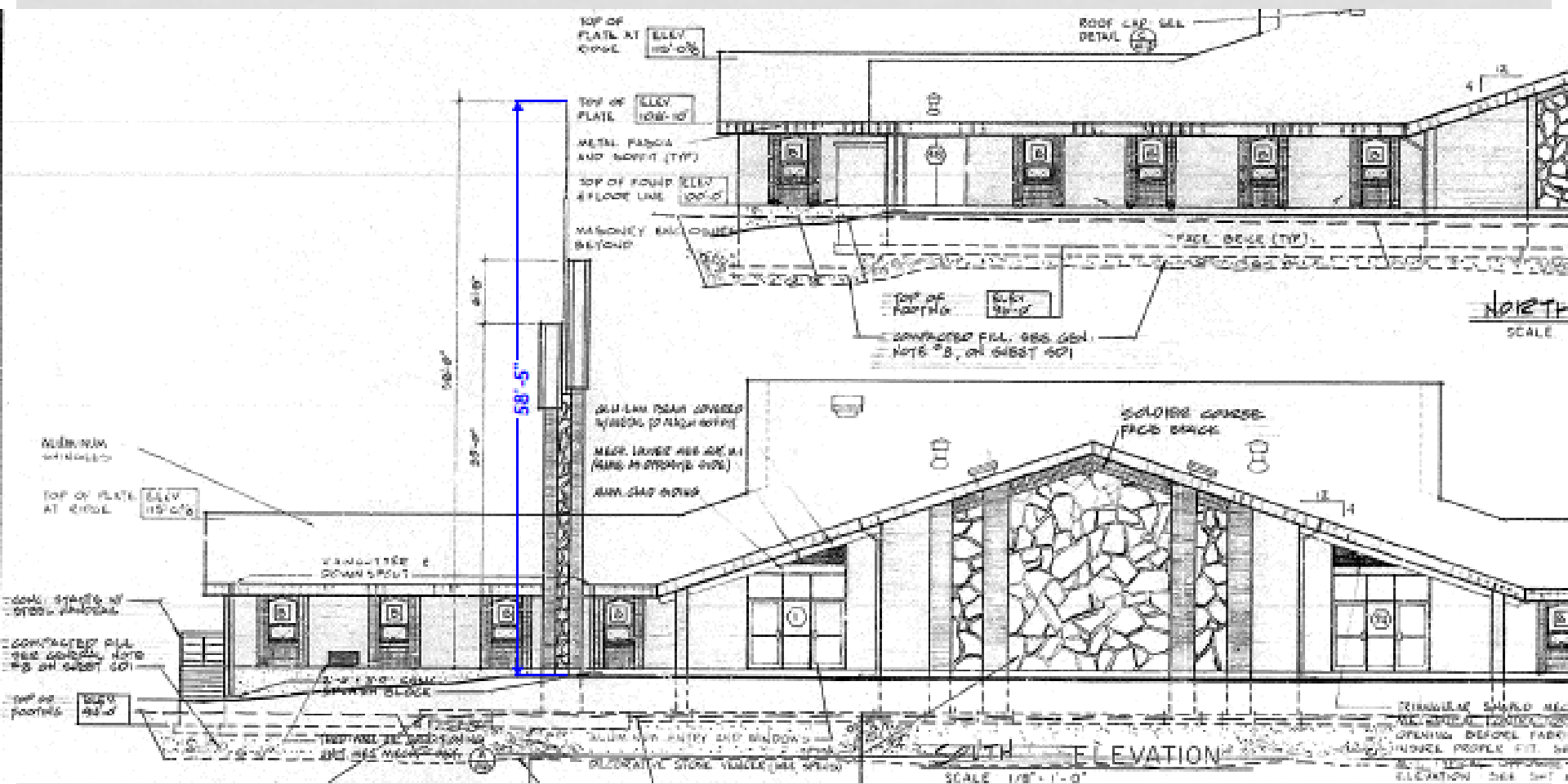
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- Distance to church 145'
- Distance to steeple 200'











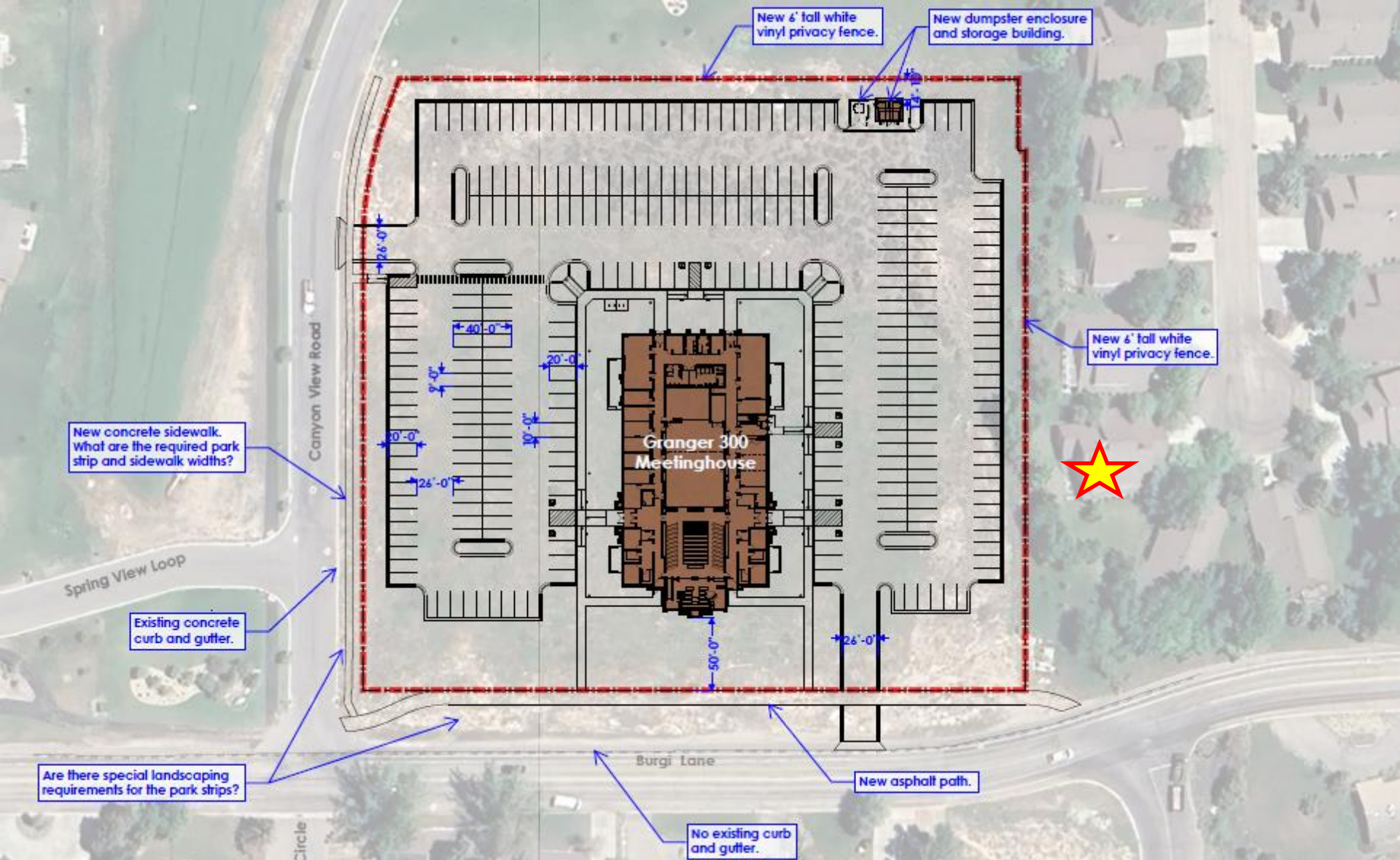
- Distance to church 95'
- Distance to steeple 230'



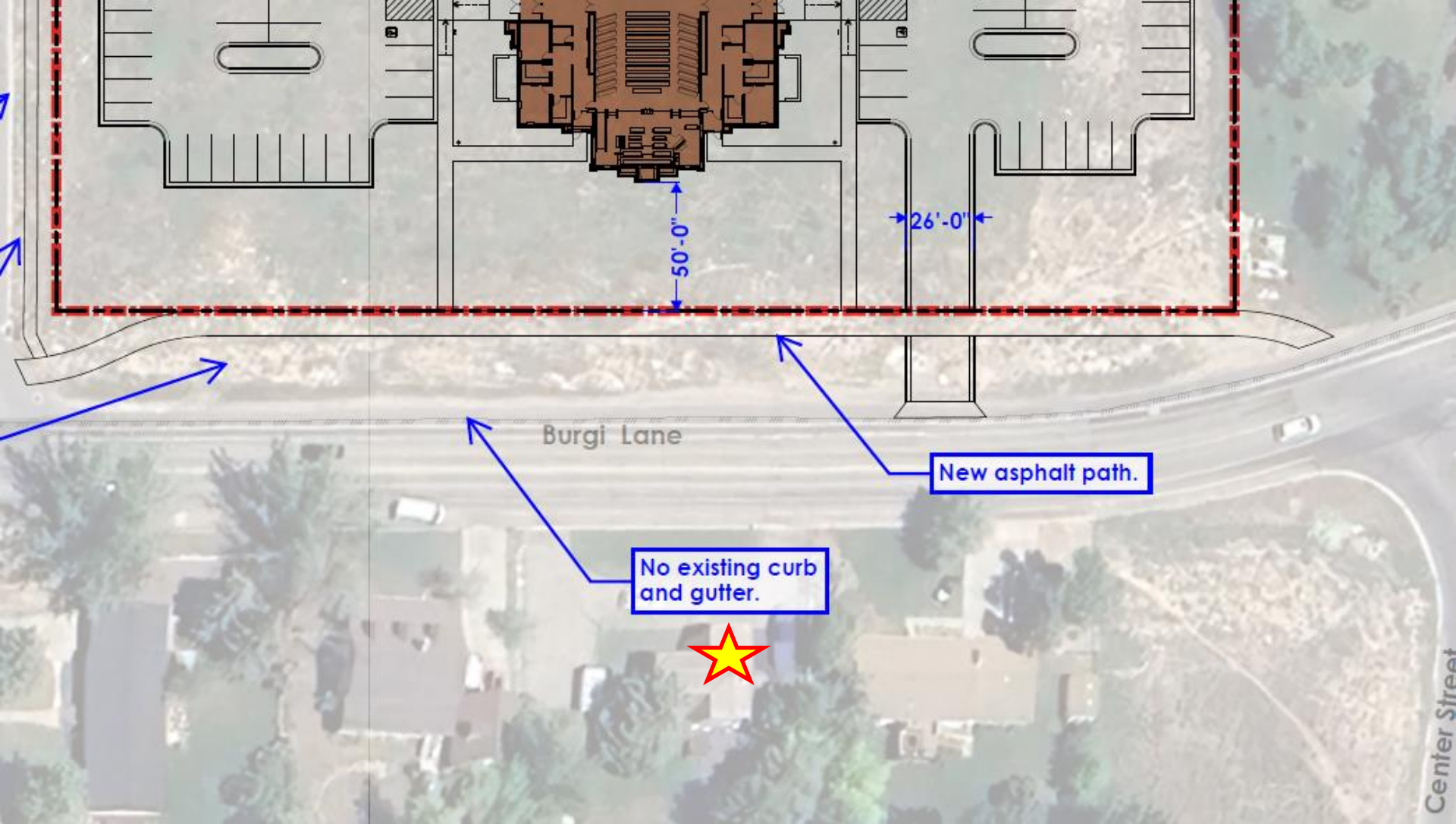


- Distance to church 350'
- Distance to steeple 400'





- Distance to church 100'
- Distance to steeple 105'
- Distance to nearest Valais dwelling 280'



- Distance to nearest dwelling south of Burgi 170'

# POSSIBLE FINDINGS

- The proposed amendment will allow some steeples to reach a height of 70' measured from natural grade.
- The proposal could impact view corridors for surrounding neighbors.
- Required setbacks would ensure that steeples are not located near surrounding neighbors which minimizes visual impact.
- Proposed regulations will ensure that the number of steeples and the dimensions of steeples will be as traditionally constructed.
- Lighting of steeples would be strictly prohibited.
- Parking would not be allowed in front of a church for at least one frontage.