

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning

October 21, 2004

MEMORANDUM—MANDATORY REFERRAL

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

Khalid Afzal, Team Leader *KA*
Georgia Avenue Planning Team

FROM: Frederick Vernon Boyd, Community Planner (301/495-4654) *FVB*
Georgia Avenue Planning Team

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral 04505-MCPS-1: Kennedy High School Stadium Light Pole/Telecommunications Antenna Replacement Project; 1901 Randolph Road, Wheaton; Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

PROJECT SUMMARY

Montgomery County Public Schools proposes, in cooperation with Omnipoint Communications CAP Operations LLC, to replace one existing stadium light pole at John F. Kennedy High School with a replacement light pole that would hold stadium lights as well as telecommunications antennas belonging to Omnipoint's parent, T-Mobile Wireless. The existing 60-foot pole would be replaced by a 130-foot pole.

THE SITE

John F. Kennedy High School is located at the corner of Randolph Road and Middlevale Lane, about eight-tenths of a mile east of Georgia Avenue. Its site totals about 29 acres. The Layhill South community lies west of the campus and the Tivoli community is to the north and east. Across Randolph Road from the campus is the Winding Orchard neighborhood. The attached vicinity map shows the campus and its neighborhood.

Kennedy's stadium is located on the northwest side of its campus, behind the main school buildings and along Middlevale Lane. Four light towers currently illuminate the playing field; two are on the east side of the stadium, where bleacher seating is located, and two are on the west side, immediately adjacent to a stand of mature trees and shrubs that separates this portion of Middlevale Lane from the campus. The prevailing topography in the immediate area of the stadium makes the light towers visible to neighboring homes. The towers nearest Middlevale Lane are located at about 400 feet above sea level; Middlevale Lane itself is at an elevation of about 360 feet. The towers are also visible from the rear of homes at the end of Hutchinson Way, in the Layhill Gardens community. The towers are located at an elevation about equal to that of these homes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Kennedy's four stadium lights are each about 60 feet tall. MCPS proposes to remove one of the light poles and replace it with a 130-foot pole. The lights would be replaced at the 60-foot level. At the top of the pole, T-Mobile would install six antennas, each about six feet long. T-Mobile would install electronic equipment related to the antennas on a concrete platform adjacent to the replaced tower. The equipment would be inside an area protected by a chain link fence. The area devoted to the electronic equipment totals about 600 square feet. Attachments 2, 3 and 4 show the location of the tower on the campus, an elevation of the proposed tower and details of the associated equipment.

T-Mobile's submission to the Montgomery County Tower Coordinator indicates that the Tower Committee asked the firm to evaluate an alternate site in the central part of the campus and asked the firm to consider less visible and shorter poles. Balloon tests done by T-Mobile for the Committee persuaded committee members that a centrally located tower at the alternative site, even at heights shorter than that proposed, would remain visible to neighboring residents. In addition, the alternative site presented fewer co-location opportunities. T-Mobile also told the Committee that a shorter tower at the proposed location would not meet the company's coverage objectives, which are to improve coverage along Layhill Road to the north and enhance the efficiency of the overall system by spreading demand among antennas.

The proposed tower would be unmanned. Direct vehicular access to the site is not necessary.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan

The 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton* had as its objective the provision of "public school facilities needed to sustain high quality educational programs at reasonable cost." The Plan recommended reliance on the Master Plan for Educational Facilities, the Capital Improvements Program and the Annual Growth Policy as guides for developing public schools in the planning area.

Development Standards for the Zone

Development standards in the R-90 Zone require that structures taller than 15 feet proportionally increase minimum setbacks in side and rear yards. For the proposed tower, the minimum setback is 120 feet from rear and side lot lines. The proposed antenna tower is about 170 feet from the western side lot line, and 180 feet from the rear lot line. The tower meets the development standards for the R-90 Zone.

Environment

Forest Conservation—This project has an approved Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation. It qualifies for an exemption to the Forest Conservation Law because it is a modification of an existing developed property. No forest will be cleared as part of the project, and it does not require subdivision.

Stormwater Management—The project can be accommodated by the existing stormwater management systems.

Transportation

T-Mobile has submitted a traffic statement for the project, which states that the proposed monopole will be unmanned, and that the company expects to make no more than two maintenance visits each month. The Transportation Planning Unit has reviewed the statement, and concurs that the proposed monopole will have no peak hour traffic impacts.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Local residents had an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed monopole project at a community meeting organized by Kennedy High School's Parent-Teacher-Student Association in June 2004. Representatives of MCPS and T-Mobile attended the session. The PTSA indicated its support for the project. The Montgomery County Telecommunications Transmission Facilities Coordinating Group also discussed the proposal, and recommended its approval in July 2004. Local civic associations received written notice of this Mandatory Referral Public Hearing.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project meets applicable environmental standards and guidelines. It has no peak hour traffic impacts and meets applicable guidelines for adequate public facilities. It meets the development standards for the applicable zone and is consistent with the relevant Master Plan. The telecommunications tower will be more visible than the stadium light pole it is replacing, but T-Mobile has evaluated other locations on Kennedy's campus and considered shorter towers. Its argument that a telecommunications tower will be visible at alternate locations, combined with the lessened opportunity for co-location at the alternative site, persuades staff that the proposed location is appropriate. The Department recommends approval of this mandatory referral.

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Attachments

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Plan
3. Monopole Elevation
4. Details of the Tower and Equipment

KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL VICINITY



Map compiled on October 20, 2004 at 2:25 PM | Site located on base sheet no - 217NW02 | Date of Orthophotos - April 2004 | Orthophoto Images Licensed from VARGIS LLC.

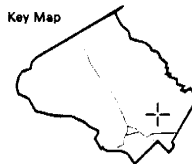
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Key Map

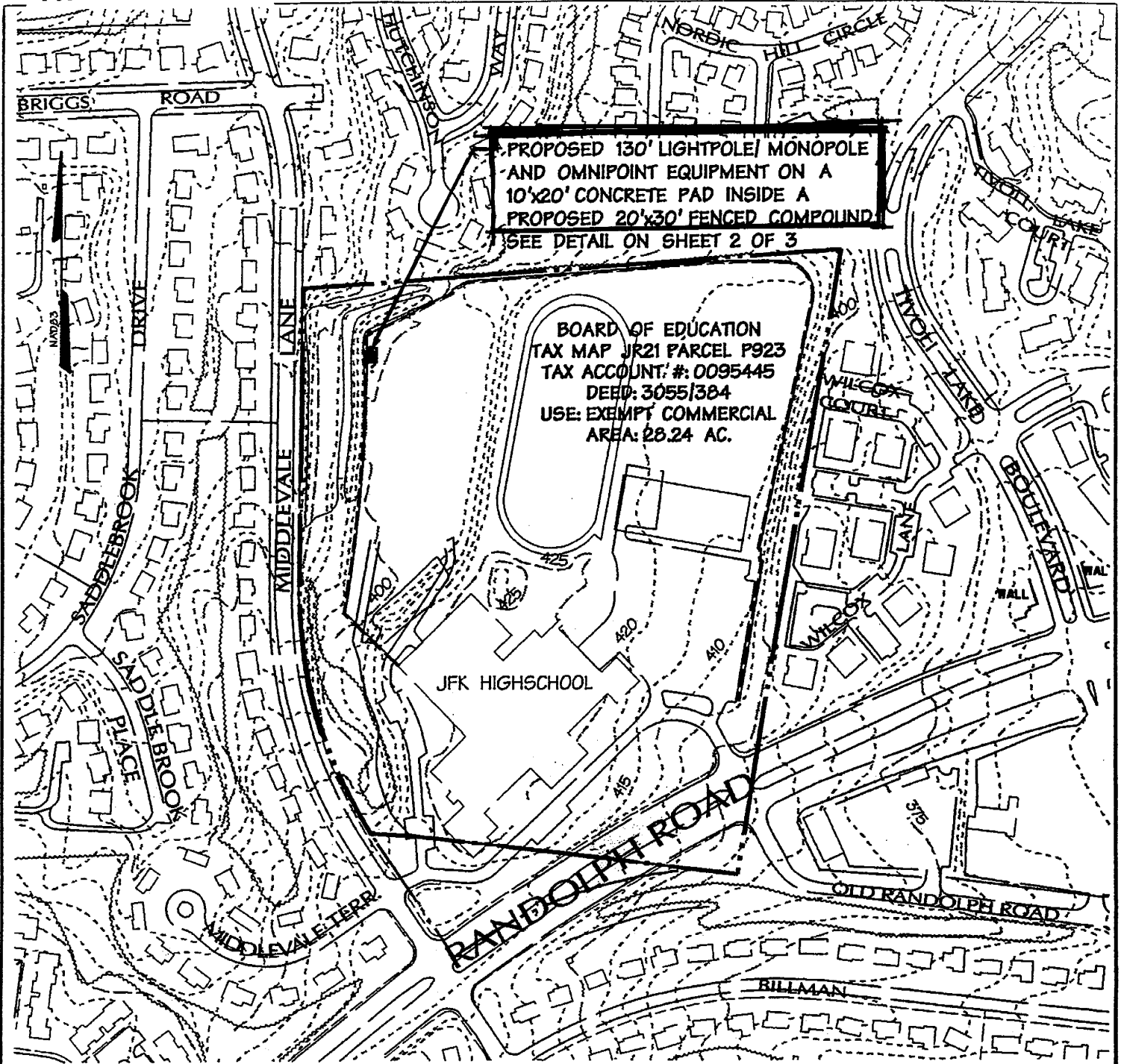


Research & Technology Center



1 inch = 400 feet
1:4800

ATTACHMENT 2



SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1"=300'

NOTE:

THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON, IS TAKEN FROM MONTGOMERY COUNTY GIS. THIS PLAN IS NOT THE RESULT OF A DMW BOUNDARY OR TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY. TO BE USED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY.



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Landscape Architects,
Golf Course Architects,
Engineers, Surveyors &
Environmental Professionals*

SITE NO. WAN 290A

**JOHN F. KENNEDY
HIGHSCHOOL**

1901 RANDOLPH ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20902

TAX MAP JR21 PARCEL P923

ELECTION DISTRICT 13 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

DATE REVISION / ISSUE BY

5-24-04 REVISED HEIGHT FOR RELOCATED LIGHTS MDM

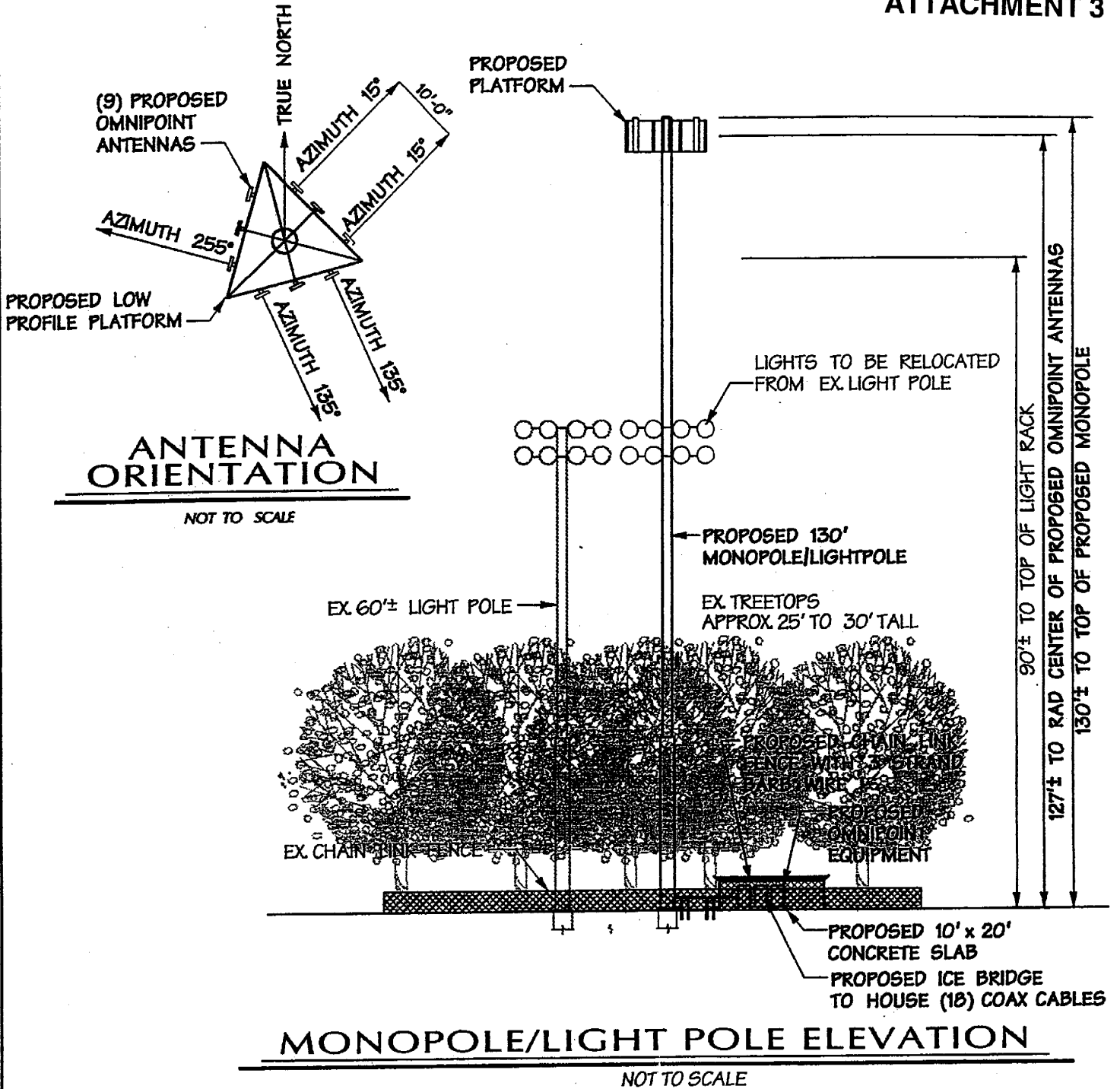
OMNIPPOINT
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(240) 264-8600 FAX: (240) 264-8610

DRAWING TITLE:
LEASE EXHIBIT

SCALE: AS SHOWN DRAWN BY: KO

PROJECT #: 04007.MD CHECKED BY: MDM

SHEET 1 OF 3 DATE: 05/20/04



NOTE:

THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON IS ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

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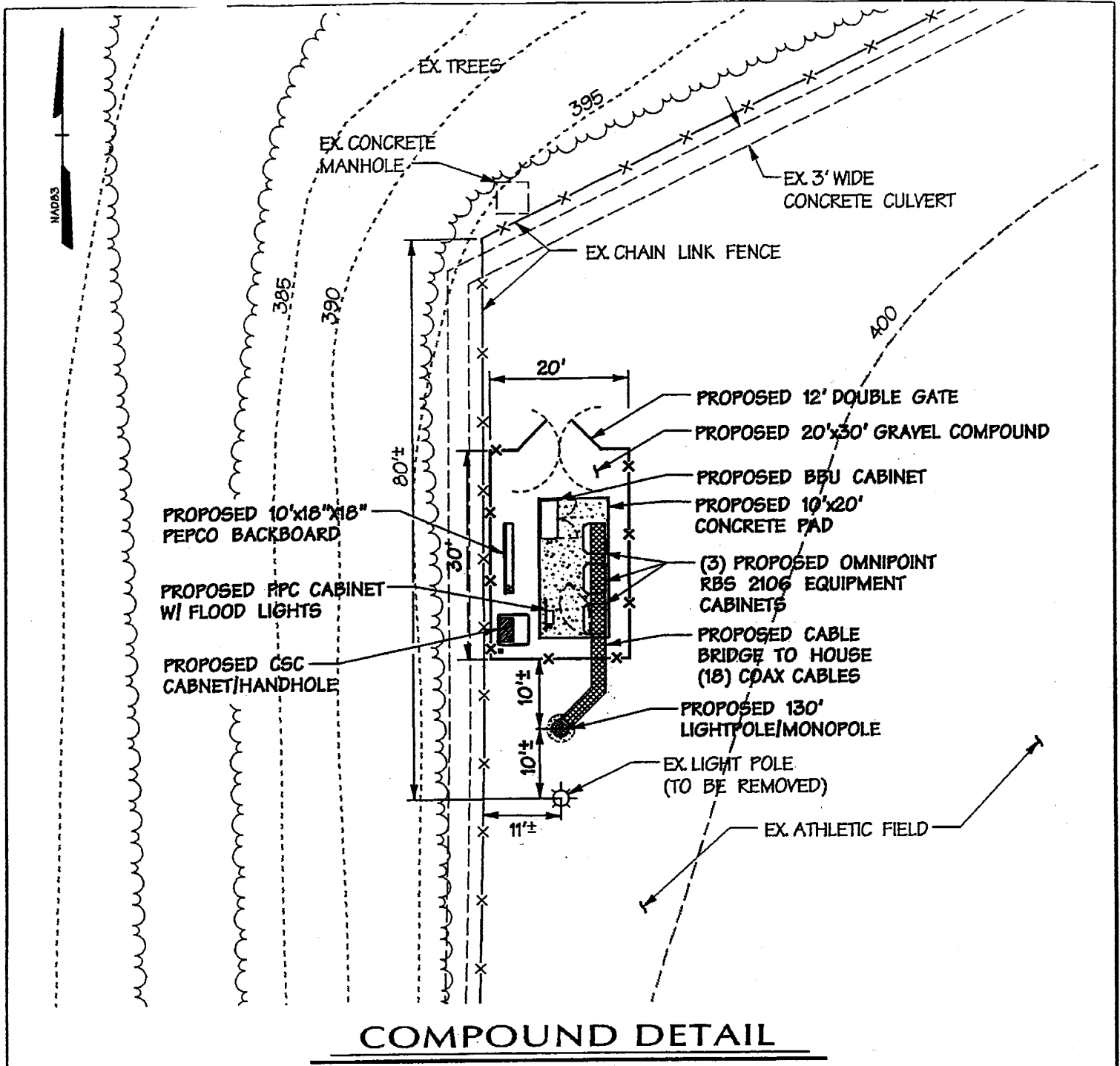
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ATTACHMENT 4



COMPOUND DETAIL

SCALE: 1" = 1'

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