

The Cornerstone Project

**TRANSFORMING FAMILY HISTORY &
EXPANDING A NATIONAL TREASURE**

August 11, 2021



American Ancestors

by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Introductions:

D. Brenton Simons, President & CEO - NEHGS

Ryan J. Woods, Executive Vice President & COO - NEHGS

Bruce Bernier, Vice President & CFO - NEHGS

Matt Ottinger, Director of Facilities - NEHGS

Douglas Kelleher, Principal - Epsilon Associates

Jon Traficonte, Principal - Schwartz/Silver Architects

Kerri Frick, Associate - Schwartz/Silver Architects

Ethan Levin, Designer - Schwartz/Silver Architects

Meeting Purpose

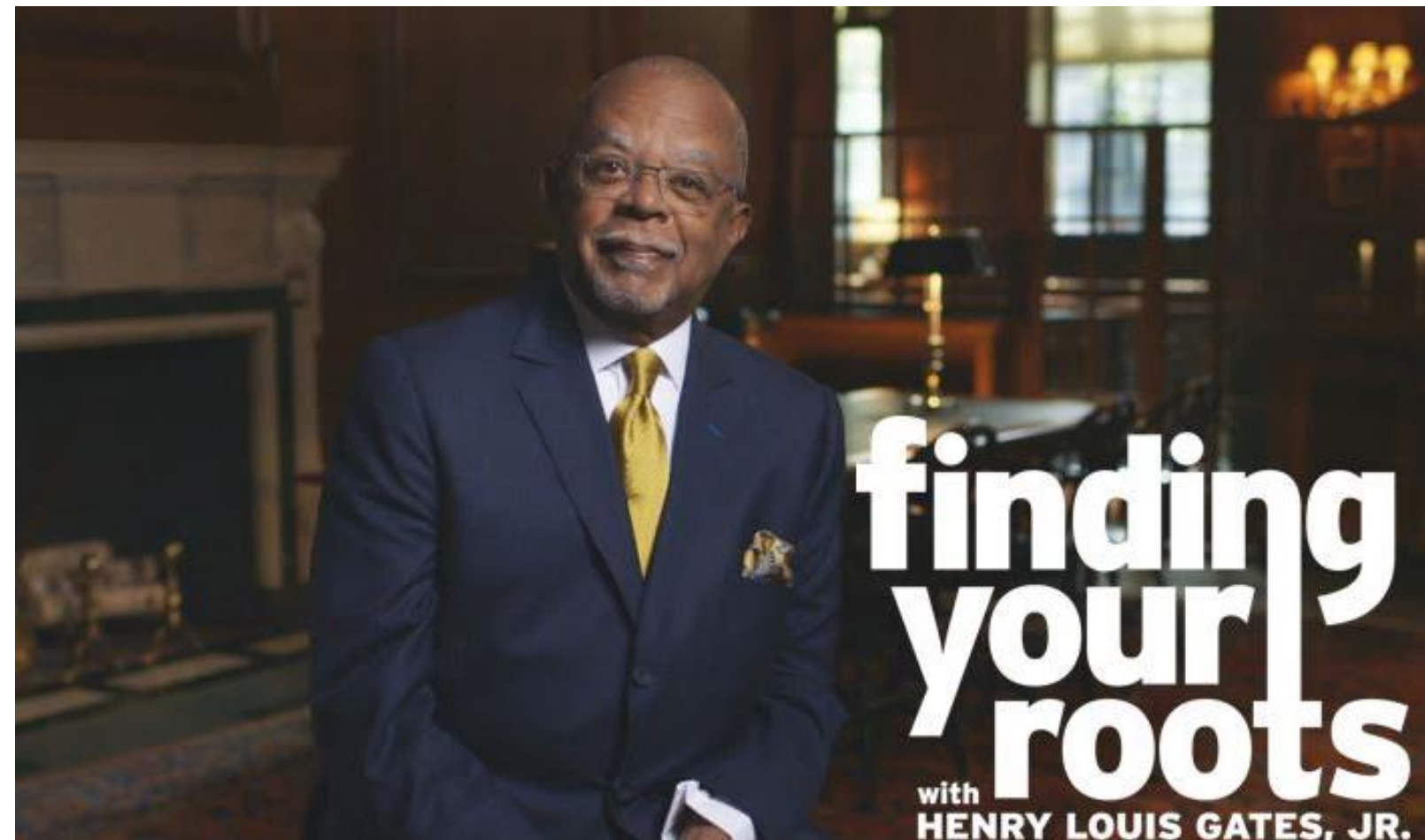
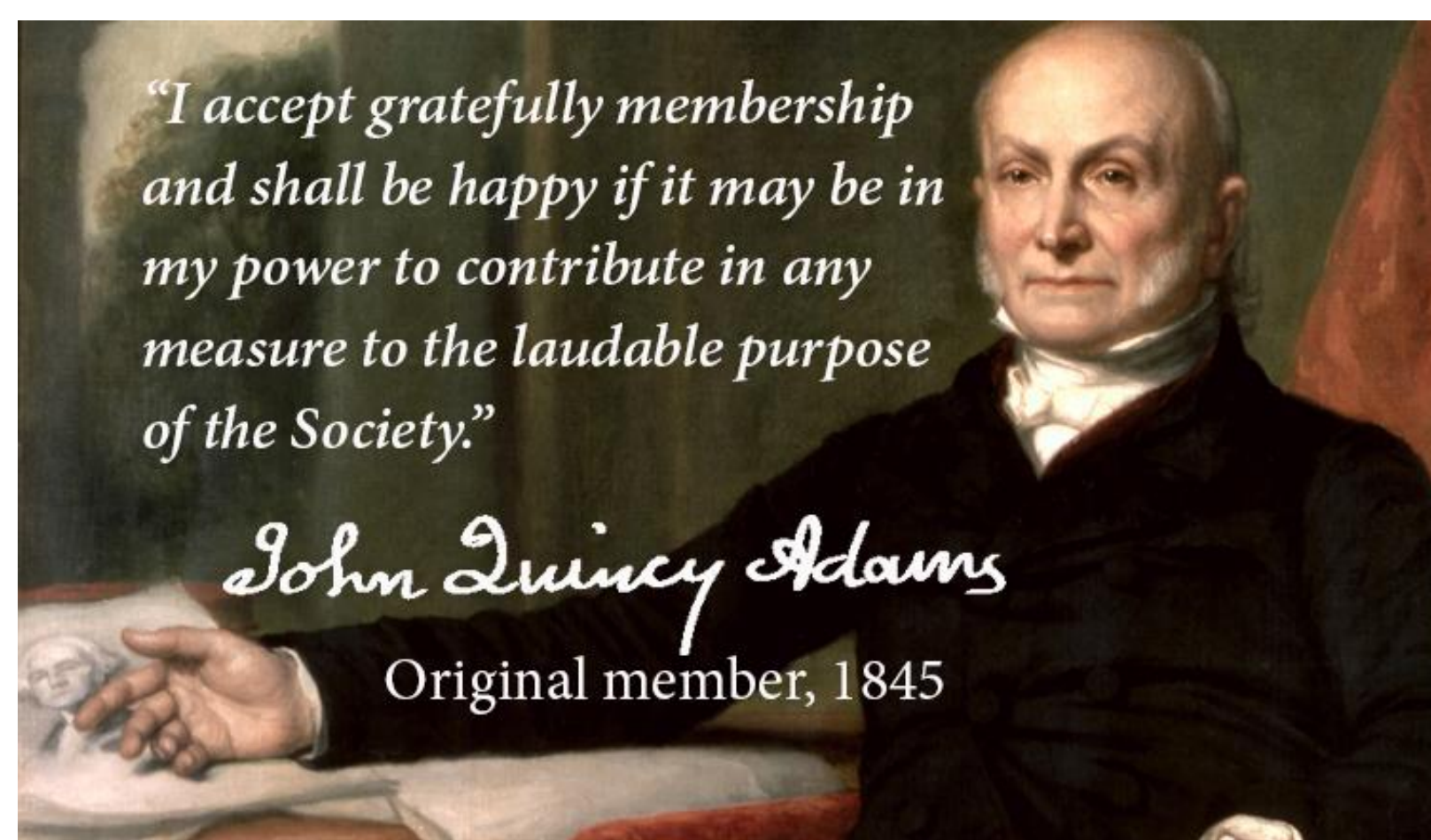
- Introduce NEHGS/American Ancestors and the “Cornerstone Project”
- Continue a dialogue of collaboration
- Look towards a positive outcome for the neighborhood, institution, and community
 - Reconstruction of 97 Newbury Street with historically-minded perspective
 - Increased educational opportunities



About NEHGS/ American Ancestors

To advance the study of family history in America and beyond, we educate, inspire, and connect people through our scholarship, collections, and expertise.

- World's founding institution for the study of family history (1845)
- 175+ years supporting nonprofit historical research, preservation, and publishing
- Largest Massachusetts-based history organization; we serve a broad and diverse audience of 355,000+ members and users
- Anchor location of PBS' *Finding Your Roots* with Henry Louis Gates



About NEHGS/ American Ancestors

Headquartered on Newbury Street in the Back Bay since 1964.

- 1,300+ current members in the neighborhood
- 90+ professional staff
- More than 1 billion searchable records; largest repository of original family history research materials in the country
- Growing institution with national and international audience; industry leader



Cornerstone Project

– Overview

- We aim to create exceptional interactive in-person experiences for people of all ages and all backgrounds to explore their identities and provide a greater understanding of one's family history, heritage, and culture
- We purchased the adjacent building at 97 Newbury Street to help meet these educational and programming aims; we recently took possession of the building finding it had been neglected beyond the first floor:
 - Lack of fire rating and life safety code compliance
 - Façades in disrepair
 - Roof structurally compromised
 - Majority of interior in ruinous condition
 - Significant HAZMAT remediation needed (asbestos found in flooring materials, roofing materials, and plaster walls throughout the building; lead paint throughout)
- Major Renovation of 97 Newbury Street



Cornerstone Project - Guiding Principles

Preservation:

- We strive to create an expanded headquarters that is sensitive to the history of Back Bay, the historical precedents of 97 Newbury Street, and promotes our mission as a national center for history and preservation

Education:

- Maximize educational space for programming to engaged diverse multi-generational audiences

Safety:

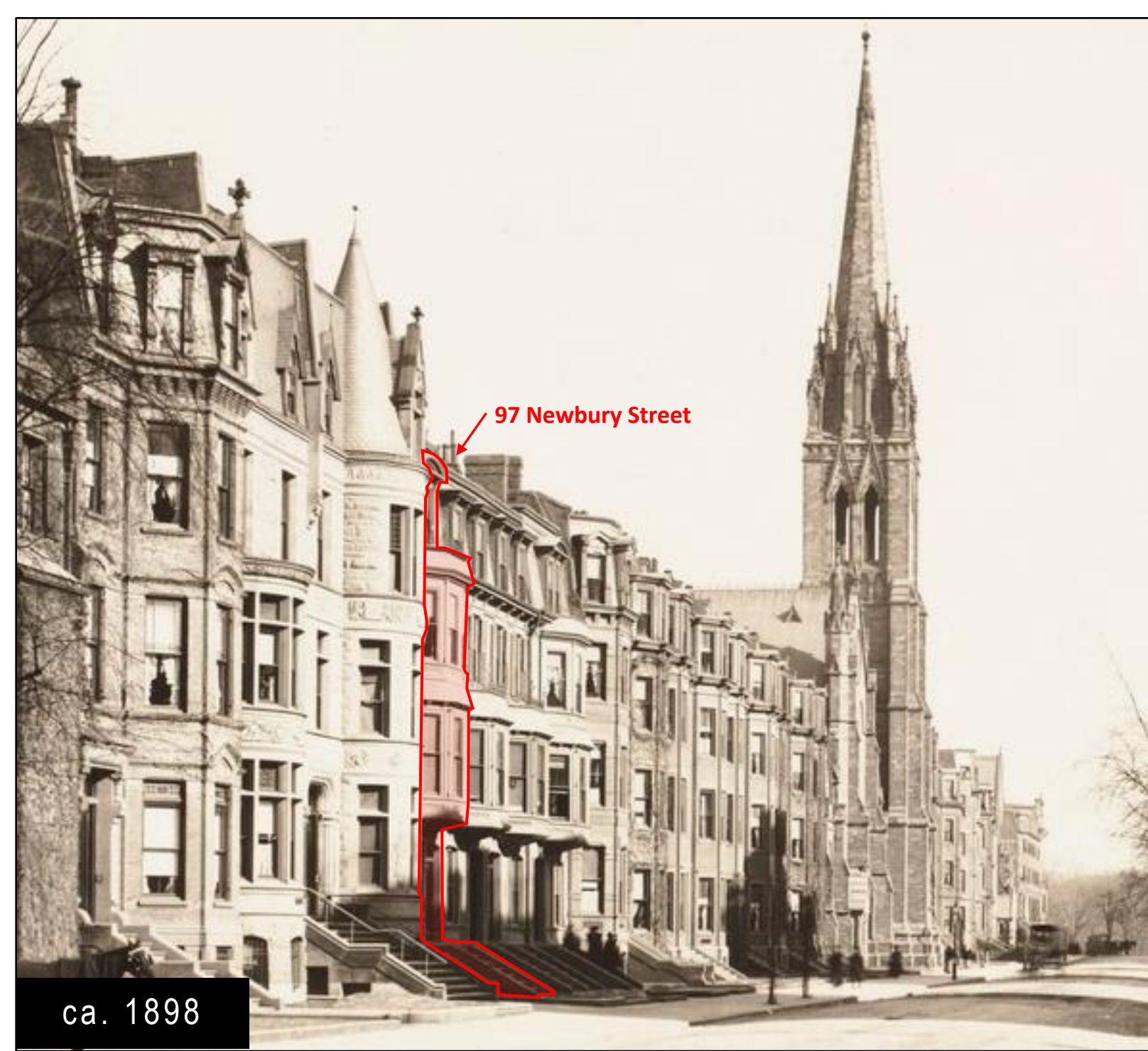
- This project will enable both NEHGS buildings to have fire suppression for the protection of the institution, neighbors, neighborhood, and visitors



Cornerstone Project - Project Highlights

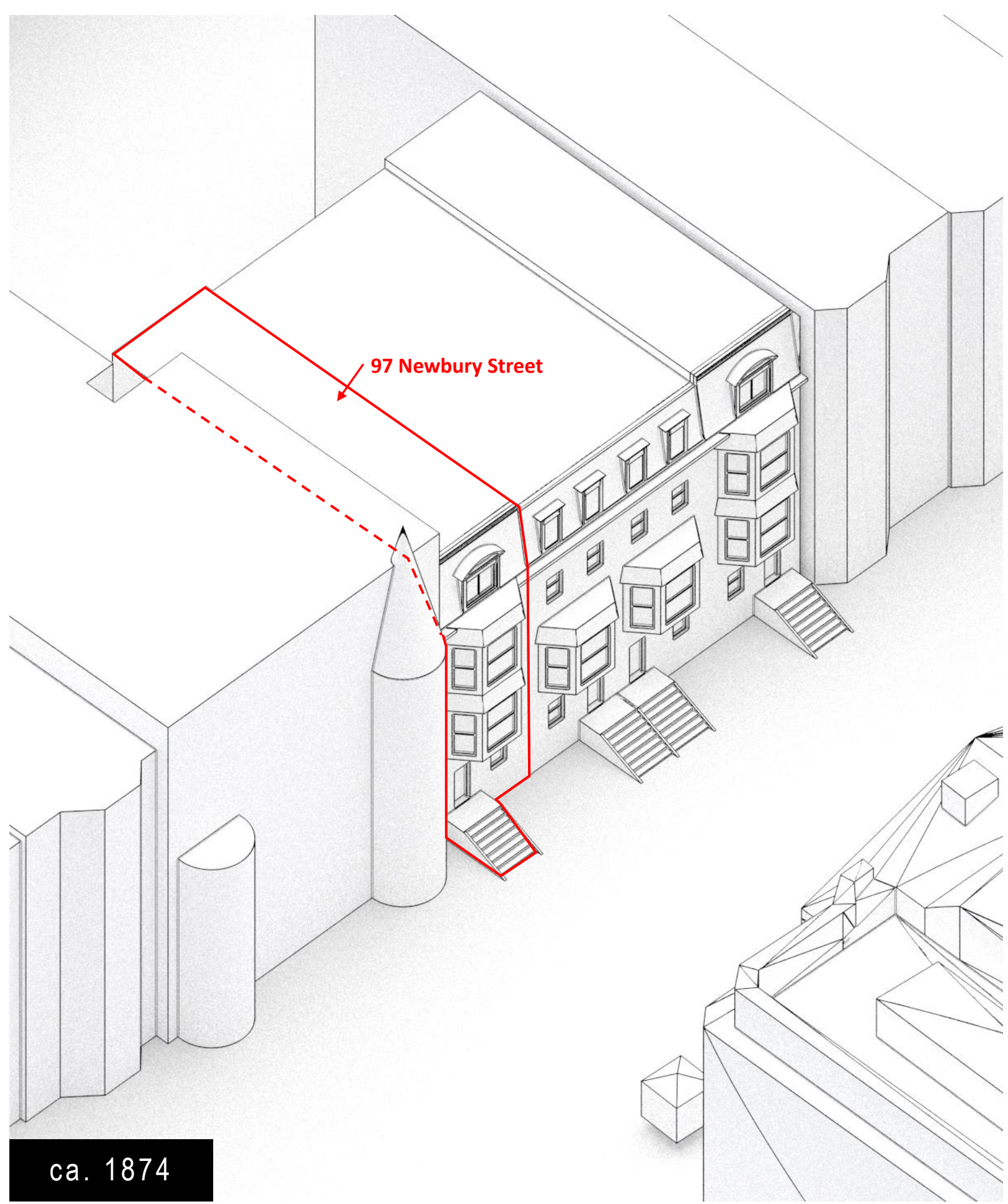
- Visitor Center and Shop
- Discovery Center
 - American History
 - DNA
 - Ethnic Diversity
 - Immigration
 - Women's History
- Youth and Adult Learning Centers
- Lecture Hall
- Scholarly Publishing Center
- Update Fire Protection, Accessibility, and Mechanical Systems





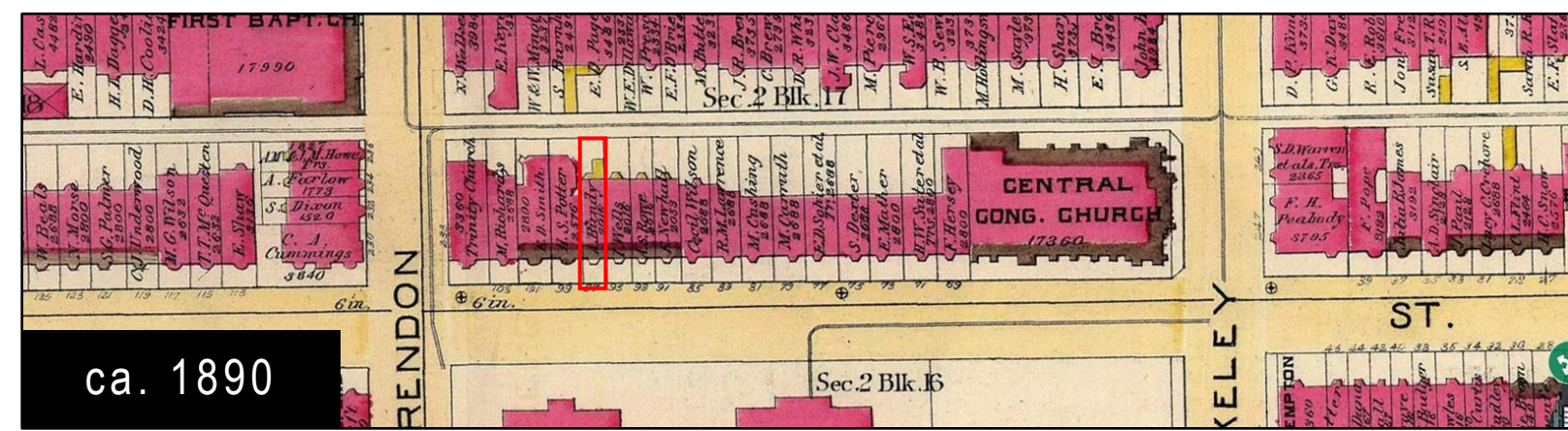
97 Newbury Street

ca. 1898



97 Newbury Street

ca. 1874



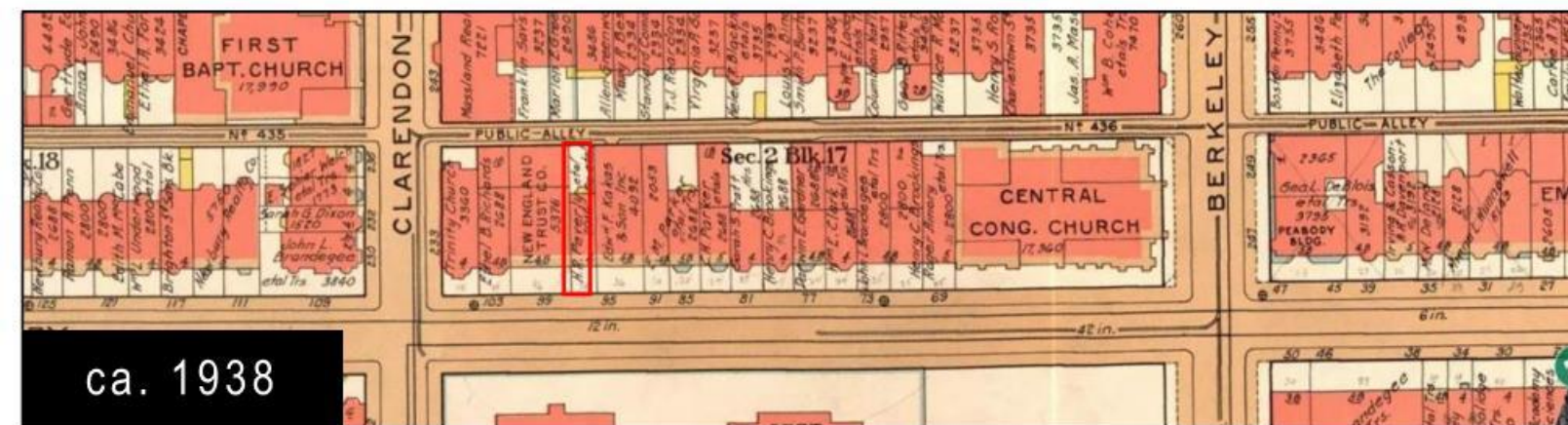
ca. 1890



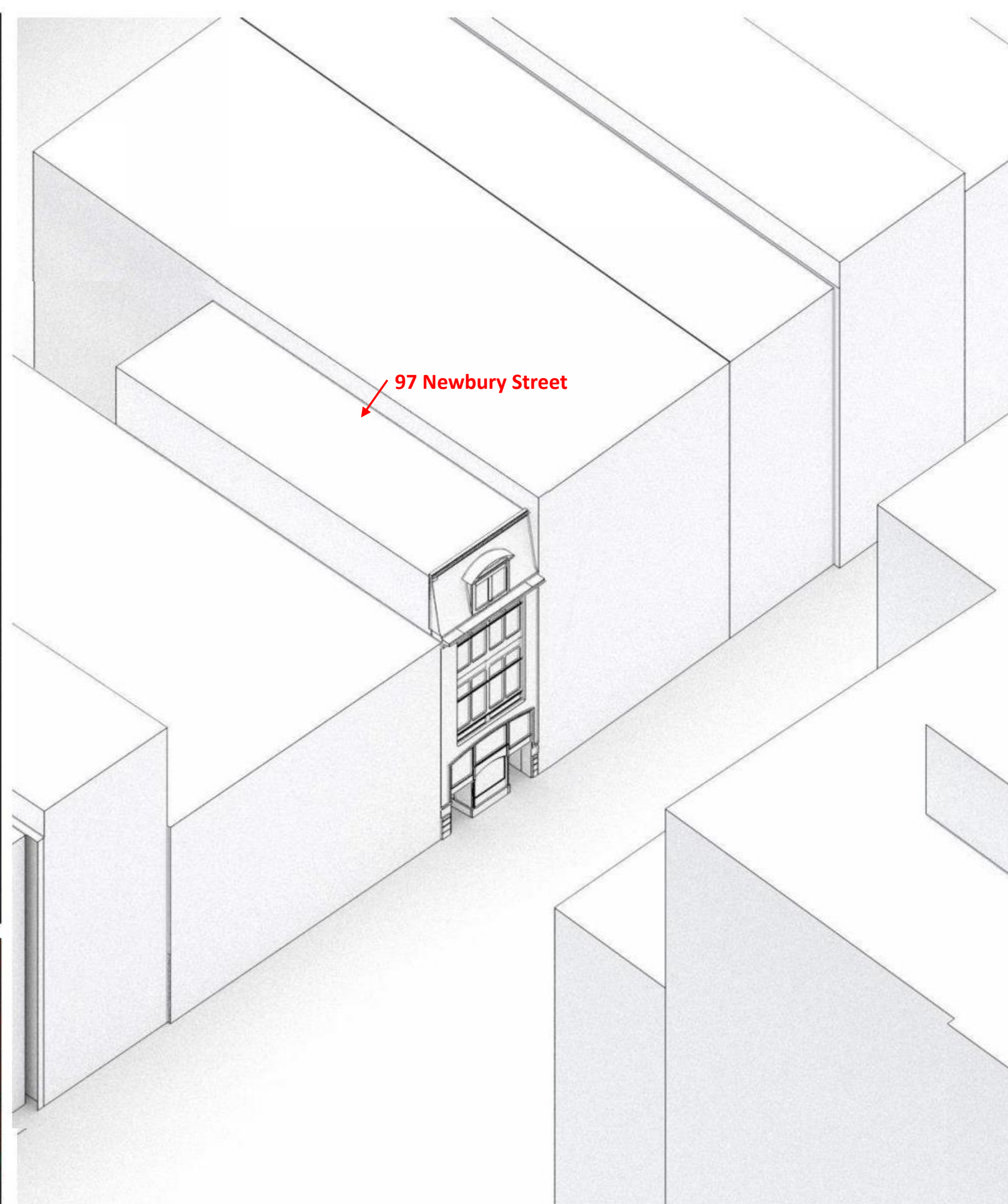
ca. 1928



ca. 1942



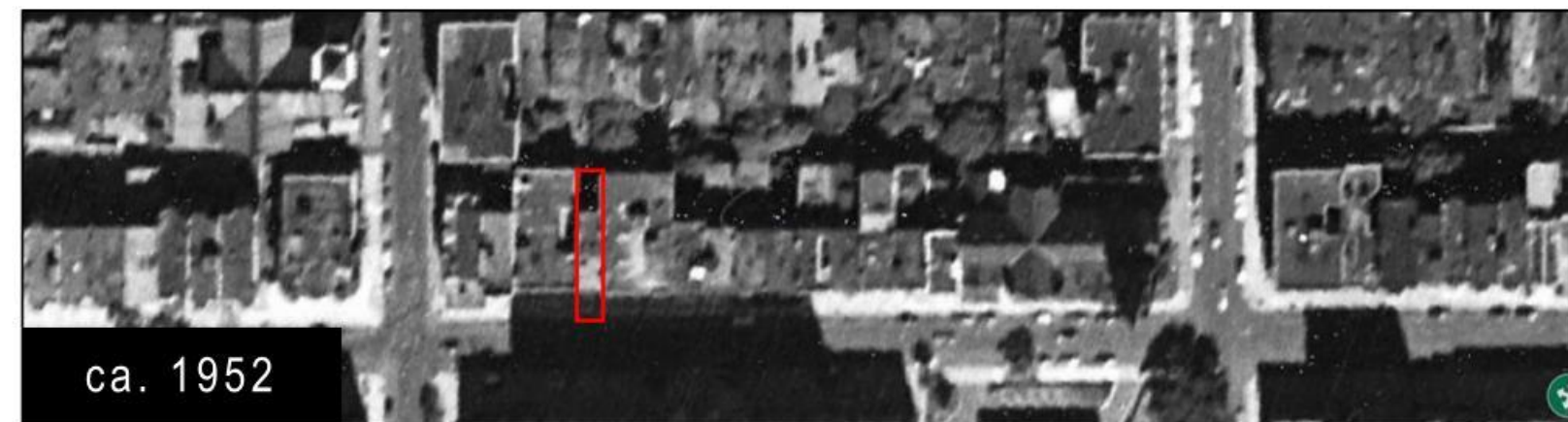
ca. 1938



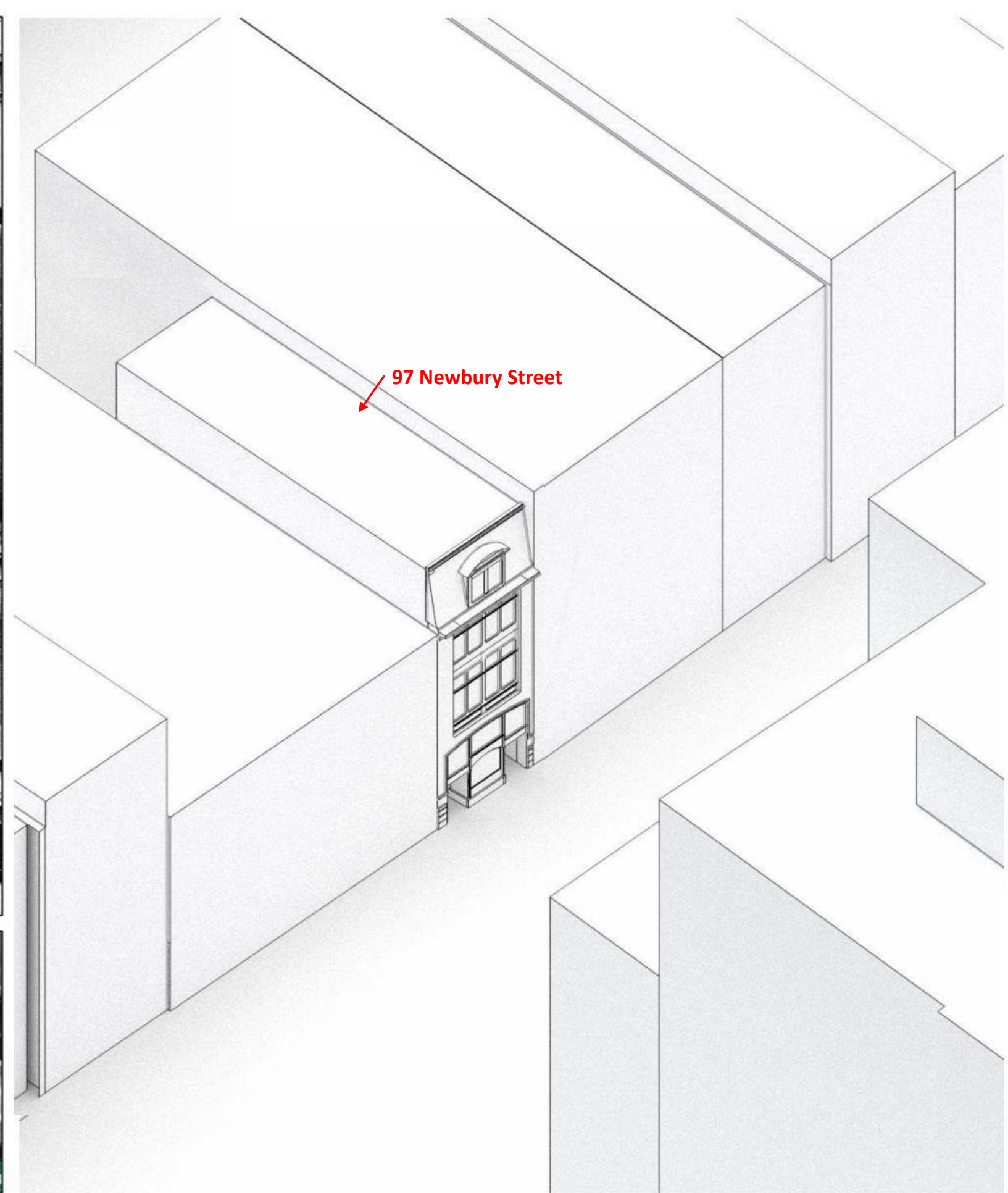
97 Newbury Street



ca. 1960



ca. 1952



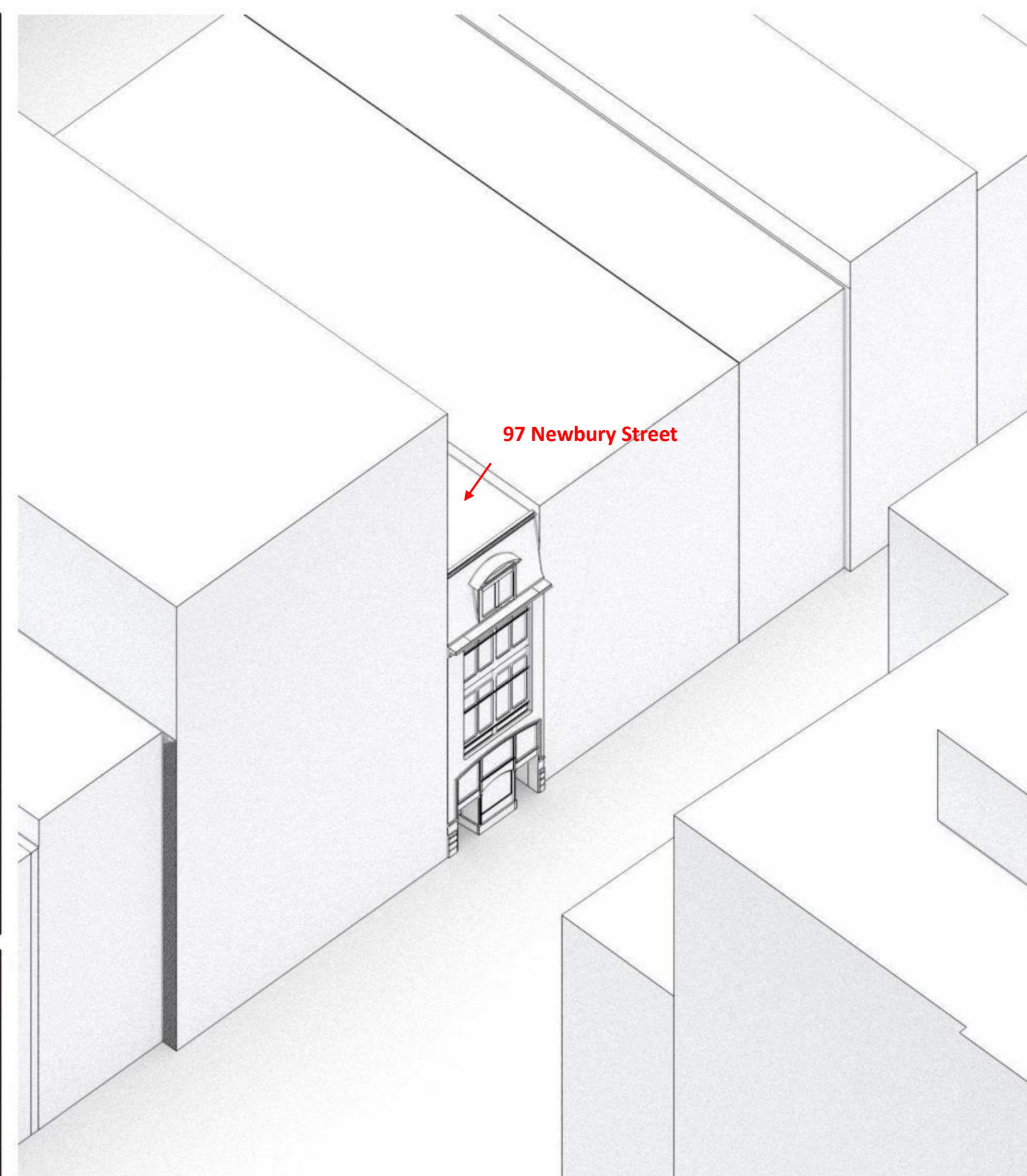
97 Newbury Street



ca. 1980



ca. 1983



ca. 1963/1964 Brick addition constructed on top of 99-101 Newbury St.



American Ancestors
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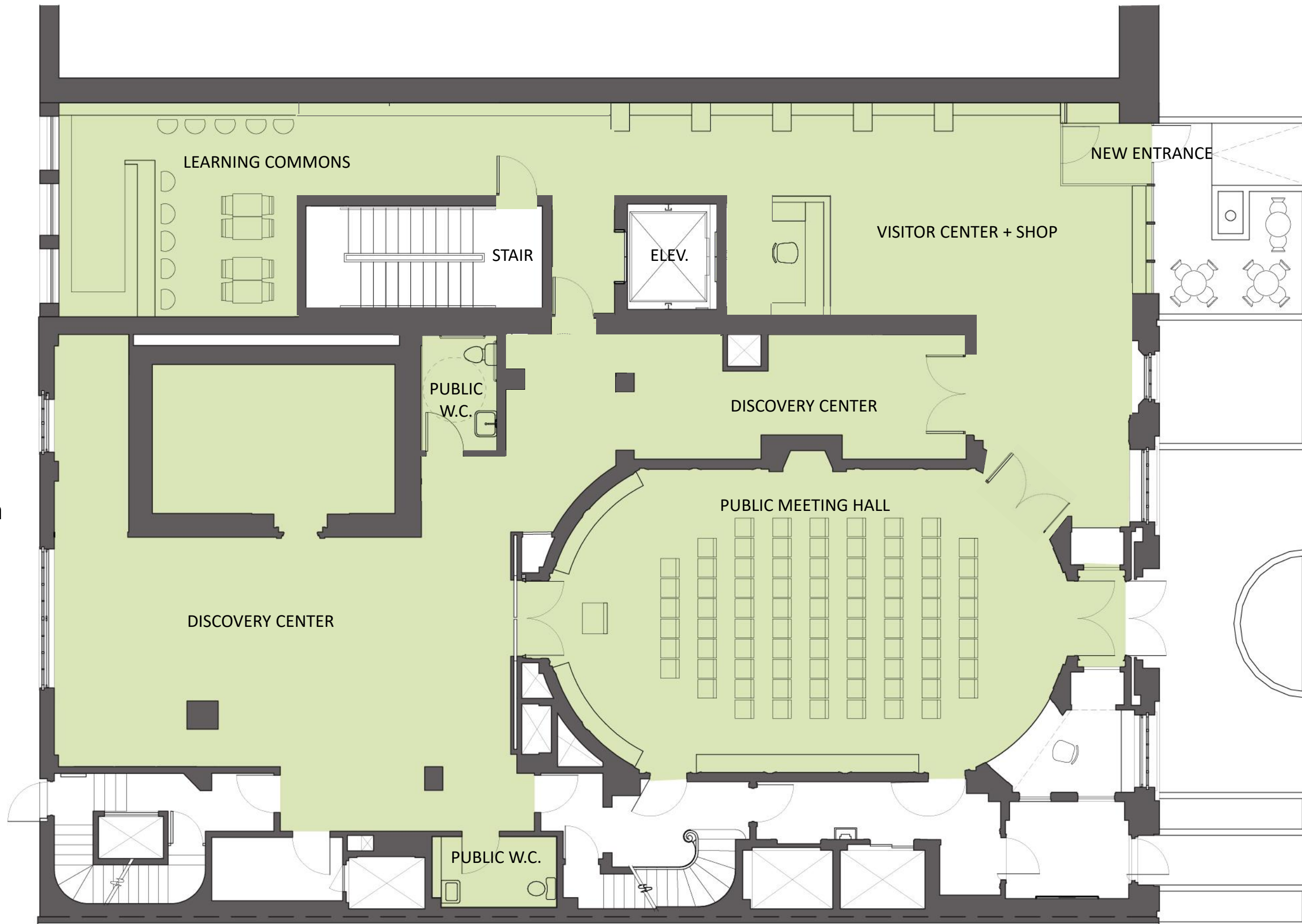
schwartzsilver




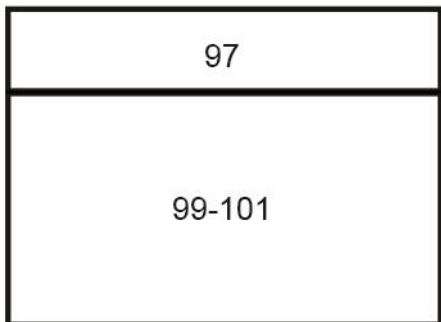
Elements of the original façade that presently exist

Concept Design

- Increase Public Space
- Increase Education Programs
- Provide Accessible Elevator
- Provide New Egress Stair
- Provide New Sprinkler System



 PUBLIC/COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

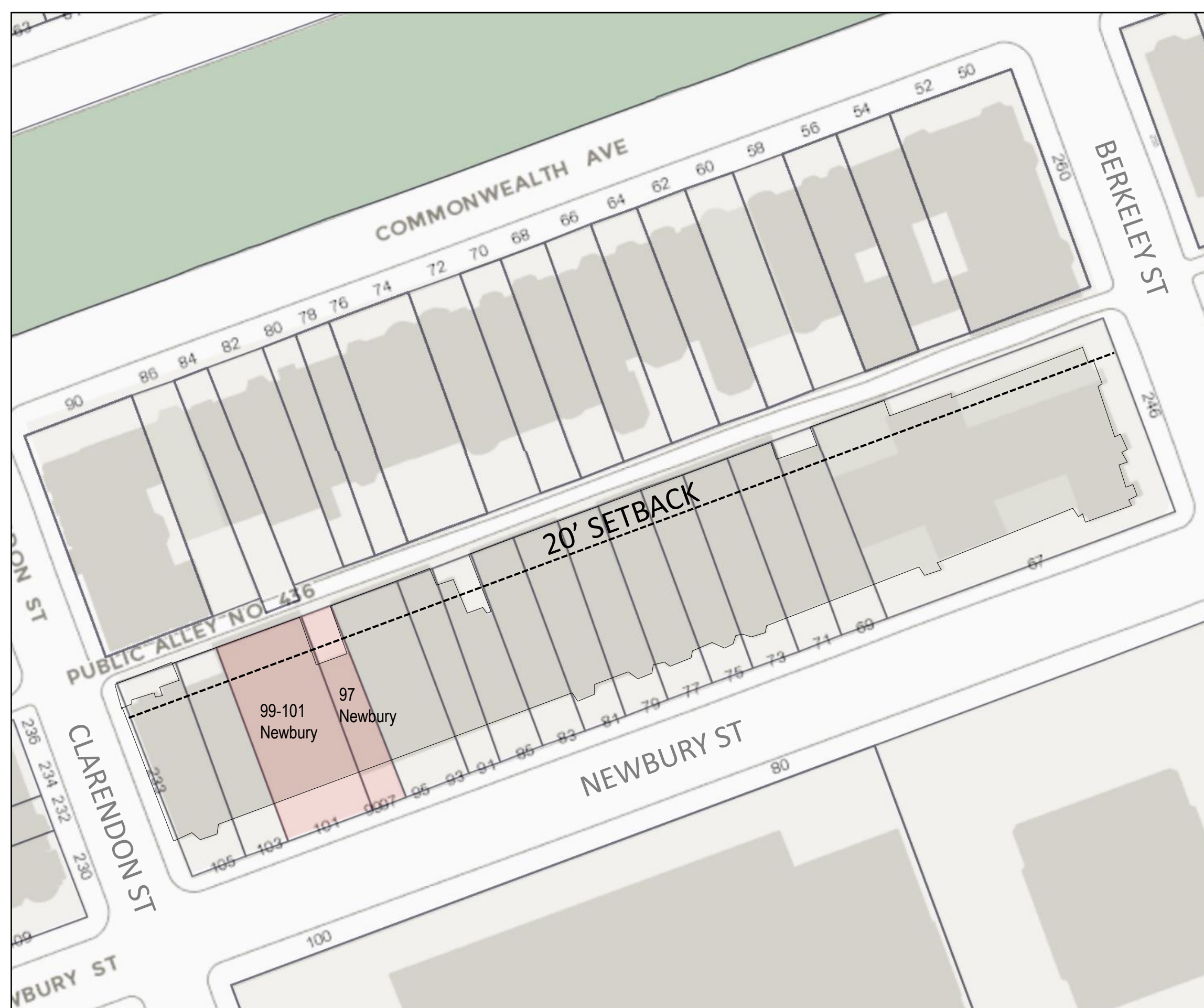


NEWBURY STREET



Zoning Variances

- Increase to the FAR
- Rear Yard Setback



Zoning Variances

FAR

-99-101 = 30,403 SF FAR=5.7 existing condition

-97 = 6,693 SF FAR=3.3 as proposed

Combined 97-101= 37,096 SF FAR=5.0

97 is over FAR 3.0 by 645 SF as proposed

Rear Yard Setback

- Propose lower levels extend to Public Alley to align with adjacent structures
- Upper floors are set back to meet requirement

Building Height

-Building above max 65'-0" allowed by zoning is by definition shaft and unoccupiable space (mechanical penthouse).

99-101 Building

Proposed 97 Building

Existing 97 Building
(dashed in)

20' SETBACK PER ZONING

ELEV. 93'-0 1/2"
T.O. 99-101. STAIR ROOF

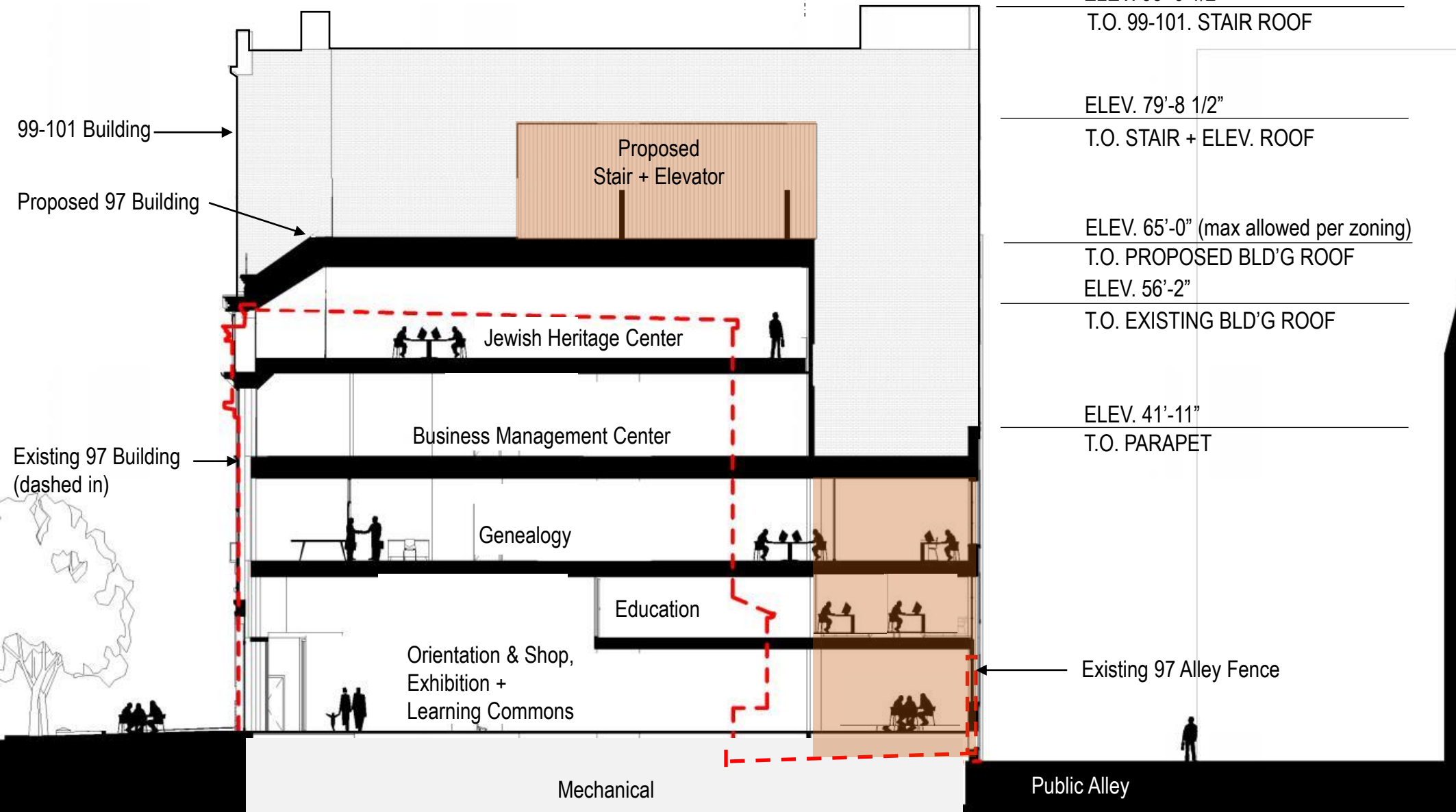
ELEV. 79'-8 1/2"
T.O. STAIR + ELEV. ROOF

ELEV. 65'-0" (max allowed per zoning)
T.O. PROPOSED BLD'G ROOF

ELEV. 56'-2"
T.O. EXISTING BLD'G ROOF

ELEV. 41'-11"
T.O. PARAPET

Existing 97 Alley Fence



Newbury Street

Mechanical

Public Alley



A

B

A

B

A

Newbury Elevation

Existing



99-101 Newbury St

97 Newbury St



97 Newbury Street Facade Option Floors aligned with 99-101:

In each proposal, we are aligning the floors with 99-101 Newbury and proposing building an addition set back from the mansard roof along with a stair and elevator tower for both 99-101 Newbury and 97 Newbury. In this proposal, the mansard roof is raised to align with the street-wall line height.

The proposed elevation reinforces the A-B-A-B-A-B building rhythm of this section of Newbury Street.



A

B

A

B

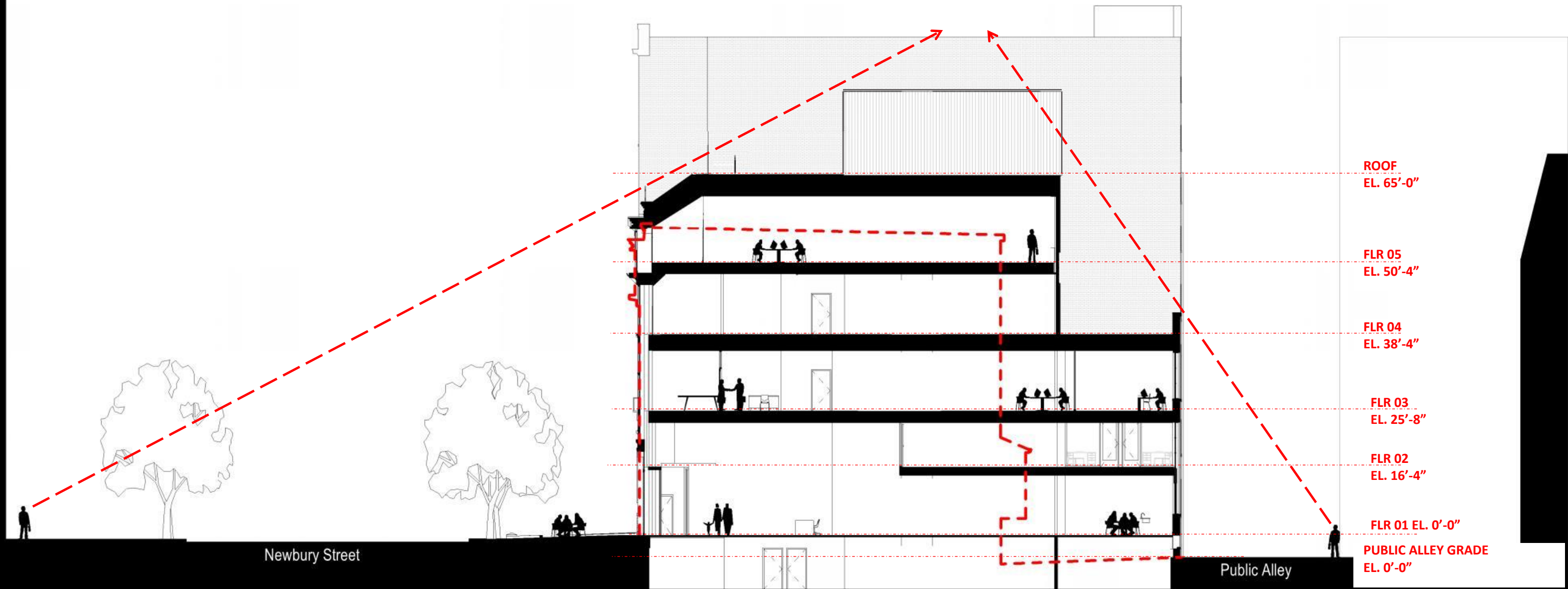
A

97 Newbury Street Facade Option Floors aligned with 99-101:

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In this option, windows are more appropriately located relative to the new floor levels.







This proposed design retains the existing mansard roof and dormer in its current location. The flat arch is reinterpreted in limestone and used as a signage band. Finally, the upper floor windows are replaced with metal windows set within limestone frames to match the materials on the adjacent buildings.

The proposed elevation reinforces the A-B-A-B-A-B building rhythm of this section of Newbury Street.



A

B

A

B

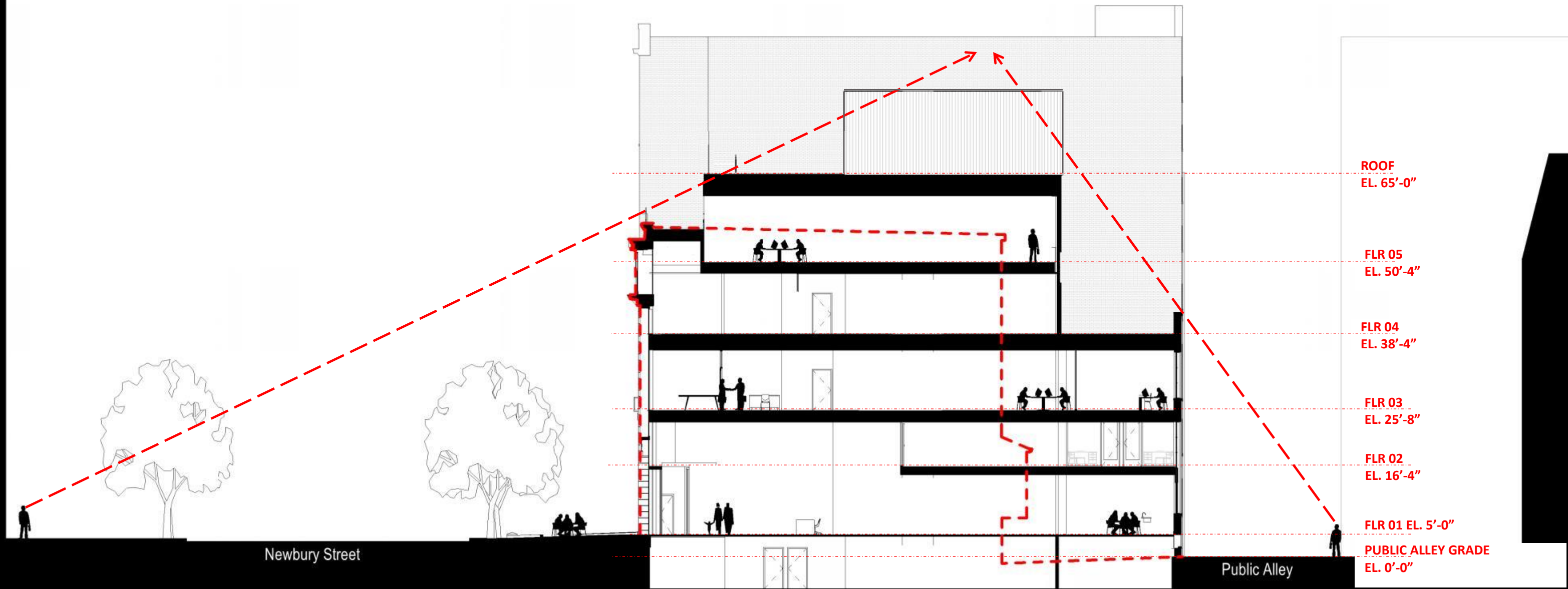
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In this option, the dormer window is not aligned with the new floor level.





Newbury Street

Public Alley

ROOF
EL. 65'-0"

FLR 05
EL. 50'-4"

FLR 04
EL. 38'-4"

FLR 03
EL. 25'-8"

FLR 02
EL. 16'-4"

FLR 01 EL. 5'-0"

PUBLIC ALLEY GRADE
EL. 0'-0"









97 Newbury Street Public Alley

In each proposal, we are building back to the property line at the lower levels, while maintaining the original set back at floors 4 and 5. We are providing a private roof terrace at level 4.

We proposing it is constructed of red brick and black painted windows to match the character of the surrounding buildings.

Upper levels are not visible from the Public Alley. The topmost part of the stair and elevator core are visible from certain locations in the Public Alley.



Public Alley View Proposed



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Public Alley View Existing
View from alley level



Public Alley View Proposed
View from alley level