

Town of Orleans Community Preservation Act Application 2026

The Centers for Culture and History in Orleans (CHO) request \$245,000 to construct a Boat House for the **preservation of the CG36500 vessel** which is wholly owned by the CHO and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Submitted by The Centers for Culture and History in Orleans a.k.a. The Orleans Historical Society.

I. SECTION B - DETAILED NARRATIVE

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As previously stated, this project design and site are unchanged from those presented to the CPC in the 2025 cycle, including building modifications requested by the Orleans Historical Commission. The CHO will ensure that CPA funds will be used in support of the preservation of the CG36500 Motor Lifeboat and only for that purpose.

The CG36500 motor lifeboat brings thousands of visitors to our town annually, and it has become increasingly apparent that it is important to keep the boat here in Orleans. Known for “the greatest small-boat rescue in Coast Guard history” due to its 1952 rescue of 32 SS *Pendleton* crew members, the 77-year-old wooden vessel needs a building to protect it permanently. It is not practical for it to stay in the water much longer due to its age, rising costs, fewer experienced crew volunteers available and increasingly severe weather.

Extensive maintenance and preservation efforts by the CHO over the past 42 years have greatly extended the boat’s life on the water. But now, seams between its aging hull planks leak water when under way—even in relatively calm seas — affecting operation and resulting in increased bilge pumping. This is an indication that major hull repairs will be needed if the boat does not come out of the water soon.

The CHO plans to build the CG36500’s new “home” in three years at an estimated cost of \$3 million for the structure and landscaping. Most of the funding will come from Federal and State grants (due to the boat’s listing on the National Register of Historic Places), along with donations from private foundations and individuals. Only 10 percent of funding is being requested from the Community Preservation Fund. The building site is directly behind the Hurd Chapel, on land to be leased from the town next to the CHO’s existing campus.

B. PROJECT GOALS

First and foremost, the CHO is building a permanent structure to preserve and protect the CG36500 in Orleans for generations to come. Second, this building will make the boat and its story accessible to the public year-round. Both long-term preservation and accessibility/education are Federal requirements for a National Register listing.

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Our third goal is to provide context by exhibiting the nearly 400-year history of lifesaving in Orleans and the Outer Cape, perhaps beginning with the Sparrow-Hawk rescue in 1626 on today's Nauset Beach. Doing so will honor the finest traditions of the U.S. Coast Guard and its predecessor organizations—the project's fourth goal. Fifth, by building a world-class “destination” facility, we will create revenue streams for the town by attracting more visitor spending, and for the CHO via admission fees.

C. LAND LEASE

Currently the CHO and Town of Orleans have a 99-year lease for town-owned property at 139 Main Street on which part of the Hurd Chapel sits. The term of this lease was authorized by an act of the **One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts** (House bill No. 3664) in 2016, which we understand town counsel has deemed still to be valid and in effect (as has our attorney).

The CHO is asking the Select Board for a change in this lease to include the additional square footage necessary for the CG36500 building. If ultimately approved by the select board, town voters must authorize the change in the May 2025 Town Meeting.

Approval may come with certain contingencies, such as the CHO securing a zoning variance for the School Road setback, a change of land use from residential to museum, and the CHO securing the necessary funding to complete the building project. If these or other contingencies are not met, construction will not begin and any grants awarded would be returned to the funding sources.

D. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND PUBLIC BENEFITS

With over 6,000 items in its collection, the CHO is one of Orleans' largest and most trusted repositories of cultural artifacts, historic photographs and archival records. Most of the collection is preserved in the Hurd Chapel, and many are displayed in the 1834 Meetinghouse at any given time. Both the Meetinghouse and the CG36500 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We strive to broaden awareness and access to Orleans' history and heritage through the study and exhibition of our collection in an environment that is pleasant, inspiring and accessible to all.

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The **VISION** of the CHO is to bring history and culture to life, thus inspiring a shared sense of community and pride in the rich heritage of Orleans. Our **MISSION** is to provide community gathering places for sharing the history and culture of the area through education, events, exhibitions and programs that tell stories of its heritage and preservation for the enjoyment and discovery of residents and visitors. Essential to this public dissemination of our shared culture and history is the preservation of the buildings, the CG36500 and all the artifacts, documents and images in our collection.

According to the Community Preservation Project Application, Guidelines for Project Submission, eligible projects must address one or more of the uses outlined in the Community Preservation Act. We are applying under the Historic Preservation category as our project includes the preservation, accessibility and restoration of the CG36500, a requirement of National Register status. In addition, this project satisfies requirements per the following:

As stated by the Community Preservation Coalition, November 2002, in the Potential Uses of CPA Funds, funds may be used for preservation of items that “*are significant in the history, architecture, and culture of the town.*”

The Orleans Comprehensive Plan (OCP), Section 12.2, Historic Preservation and Community- **Character, Goals & Policies** outlines the Goals as: “*To preserve the important historic and cultural features of the Cape landscape and built environment that are critical components of Orleans' heritage and economy*” (Page 12-1). “*To ensure that future development and redevelopment respects the traditions and character of our historic village centers and outlying rural areas so as to protect the visual character of Orleans consistent with the Cape Cod Commission's Design Manual "Designing the Future to Honor the Past" (Technical Bulletin 96-001) (page 12-2).* The project we are proposing incorporates these goals. In addition, the OCP identifies the Orleans Historical Society as a resource in Section 12.4.2 under Existing Levels of Protection. (Page 12.11)

Orleans is valued for its small-town nature, coastal location and historic significance. The Meetinghouse site embodies this tradition. It is time to focus critical preservation efforts on a significant artifact in our collection -- the CG36500. Locating the CG36500 building as an addition to the Hurd Chapel on our current site will create

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a more attractive destination for residents and visitors alike, consolidating programs and events in a cohesive, historic part of town. Together, the CHO buildings will enable full use of our capabilities to the benefit the community and maximize enjoyment for all.

II. ACTION PLAN, FINANCIAL DATA AND TIMELINE

A. AMOUNT REQUESTED

The CHO's request for \$245,000 in this grant application is to support the construction of an approximately 1,880 square-foot addition to the CHO's Hurd Chapel, which has been deemed "historically significant" by the Orleans Historical Commission. This request for funds, along with the \$55,000 grant awarded to the CHO in the 2024 grant cycle will be no more than 10% of the total cost of the structure and devoted completely to the preservation of the CG36500 lifeboat in line with expectations set by the Town of Orleans.

Generally, the building would be traditionally wood framed with some engineered lumber beams at major load points. There would be a steel frame for the big boat house door, but perhaps no other steel. When the blueprints are developed (ideally with some contractor pricing input) various alternatives for material upgrades could be suggested to make the interior feel a bit more 'boat house'. The goal would be to value-engineer the building while developing the plans as opposed to having to revert back after they are done.

Based on this description and updated architect drawings, initial cost estimates have been provided by a recognized and respected building contractor, Cape Associates, via our architect Thad Siemasko of SV Design, Inc. Details are as follows:

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Includes: 2,960 square feet of added space; wheelchair lift, folding glass wall, new entry, cupola

Excludes: renovations to existing building, landscaping, hardscaping, soft costs, exhibits, boat mounts

Division	Description	Concept budget
1	General Items	\$ 198,000
2	Demolition & Sitework	\$ 157,000
3	Concrete	\$ 146,000
4	Masonry	\$ 40,000
5	Steel	\$ 40,000
6	Rough Carpentry	\$ 327,000
6	Finish Carpentry & Millwork	\$ 263,000
7	Thermal & Moisture (roofing, siding, insulation)	\$ 118,000
8	Windows, exterior doors, glazing	\$ 229,000
9	Finishes	\$ 244,000
11	Appliances	
14	Elevator	\$ 125,000
15	Fire Protection	\$ 73,000
15	Plumbing	\$ 30,000
15	HVAC	\$ 140,000
16	Electric and Alarm	\$ 175,000
20	Contingency	\$ 250,000
Total:		\$ 2,555,000

Add to this about \$400,000 in final landscape and hardscape work, boat mounts, etc. Museum exhibit build-out is a separate cost not supported by CPC dollars.

B. TIMELINE FOR CG36500 BOAT HOUSE PROJECT

- Continue grant applications
- Town approvals for site by 5/25
- Begin fundraising by 7/25
- Finalize plans, town reviews by 6/26
- Begin construction by 9/26
- Project completion by 9/27

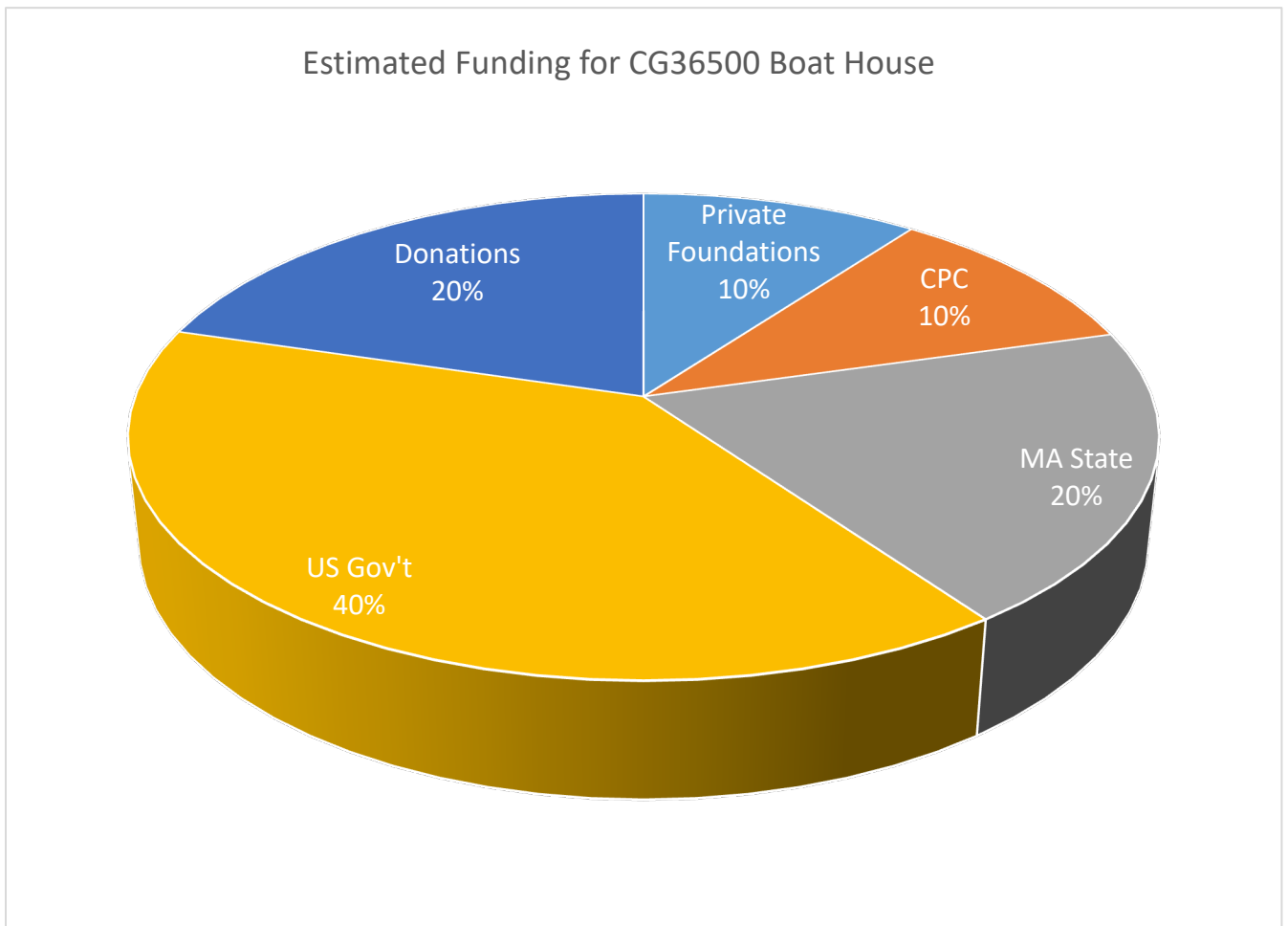
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C. ESTIMATED FUNDING SOURCES FOR TOTAL PROJECT

Given the iconic and historic appeal of the CG36500, it is anticipated that several funding sources would be interested in supporting the project. We have had some preliminary discussions and have done considerable research regarding these funding sources and believe the following rough outline is realistic.



*The US Government includes funding from the US Department of Agriculture and the Dept of Interior's Saving America's Treasures Gant Program.

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D. DETAILS OF CG36500 BOAT HOUSE PROJECT

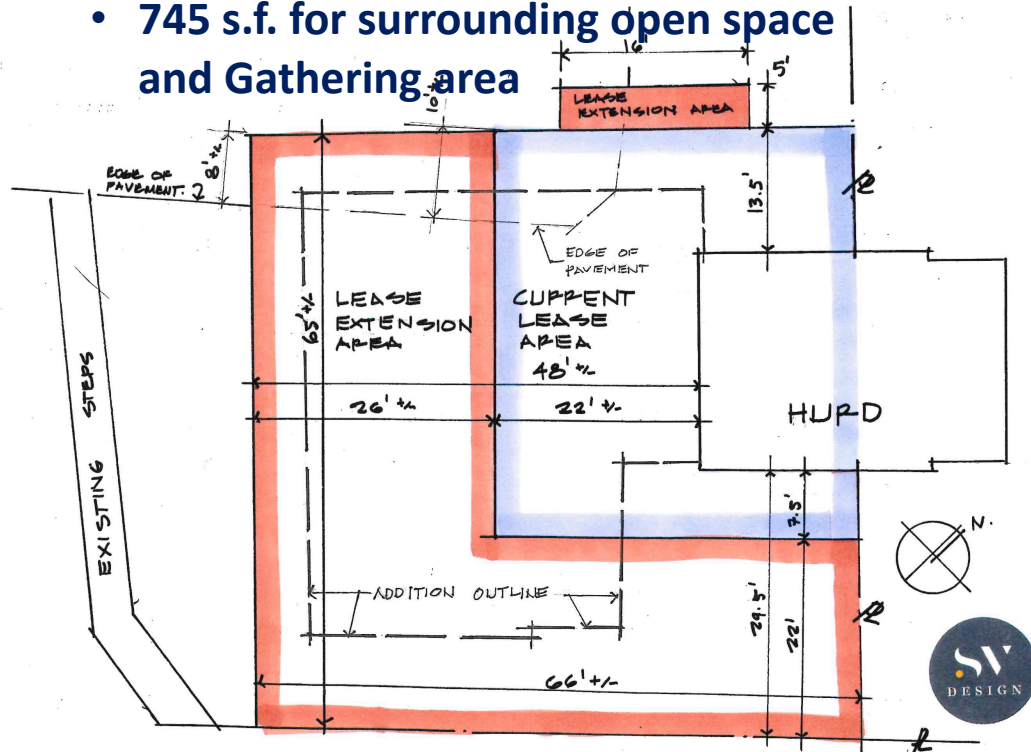
- PROPOSED SITE
- BOAT HOUSE DESIGN

PROPOSED SITE

The proposed site for the CHO boat house is directly behind the Hurd Chapel between the existing parking lot and School Road. This site would add 2,625 s.f. (about 3% of the 90,000+ s.f. 139 Main Street parcel) to the land currently leased by the CHO from the Town of Orleans. Discussions regarding the necessary land for the building and setbacks began in 2023 and are contingent upon resolution of the Snow Library state grant application. The lease change ultimately requires voter approval at the May 2025 Town Meeting.

Lease change to add 2,625 s.f.

- Includes 1,880 s.f. building footprint
- 745 s.f. for surrounding open space and Gathering area



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BOAT HOUSE DESIGN

The CG36500 building as proposed is almost a square structural addition to the back of the Hurd Chapel. A connector attached to the rear of the Hurd has a glass exterior that visually separates the boat house from the Chapel. It contains a main entrance on the parking lot side, a reception area and museum store, plus a wheelchair lift on the School Road side of the structure. The main part of the addition houses the boat and museum space (the museum is not funded by CPA dollars).

The exterior of this structure will be naturally weathered cedar shingles with traditional-style windows, typical of other historical buildings on the CHO campus and throughout town. Large glass door(s) (suggesting boat house doors) on the School Road end will allow views of the back-lit boat from outside. The roofline, cedar shingle patterns and watchtower on the School Road end are reminiscent of the old Lifesaving Service “Red House” station that stood on Nauset Beach from the 1870s to 1930s. Between the front of the building and School Road will be a small mini-park, recommended by Town leadership, with trees/shrubs and some seating to serve as a gathering space for visitors or others using the building.

Inside, after they are greeted, visitors will see displays about the history of lifesaving providing context for the boat that is visible over a balcony rail that follows the shape of the hull below. Descending stairs to a platform at deck level, they can peer into the boat’s interior as a huge mural of the side of the *Pendleton* with a Jacob’s ladder towers over them on the wall. Going down another short flight of steps, visitors find themselves at the waterline next to the boat where much of the rescue history and artifacts will be displayed. Another short flight of steps takes people to the keel level of the boat where they can see the rudder, propeller, one-ton bronze keel and the Monel plating that protected the hull during icebreaking missions.

This design meets the primary requests made by town staff and others, specifically:

- 1. Minimize traffic, parking on School Road** (main entrance is from the parking lot)
- 2. Keep building footprint small** (part of footprint already on leased land)
- 3. Stay to Hurd side of existing town path/stairs** (enabled by connection to Hurd)
- 4. Have boat visible from exterior, especially at night** (large glass doors)
- 5. Retain old-growth trees wherever possible, replace others** (big cottonwoods unaffected, new trees part of plan)
- 6. Have green space in front of building** (seating, shrubs)

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In addition, several design changes requested by the Orleans Historical Commission in December 2023, have been incorporated for scale and visual continuity with the Hurd:

- A. Change the two windows in the southeast corner of the building from a “storefront” design (basically floor-to ceiling) to two smaller sash windows more in keeping with those in the Hurd.
- B. Change the exterior color of the building from red stain to a natural, weathered wood-shingle color.
- C. Make the main entrance from the parking lot rectangular instead of round in keeping with the more traditional design of the Hurd.

The latest architectural drawings of the boat house (updated from those included last year’s CPC application) are shown on the following pages.

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Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Parking Lot Elevation (Front Entrance)



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Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – School Road Elevation



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Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – River Road Elevation

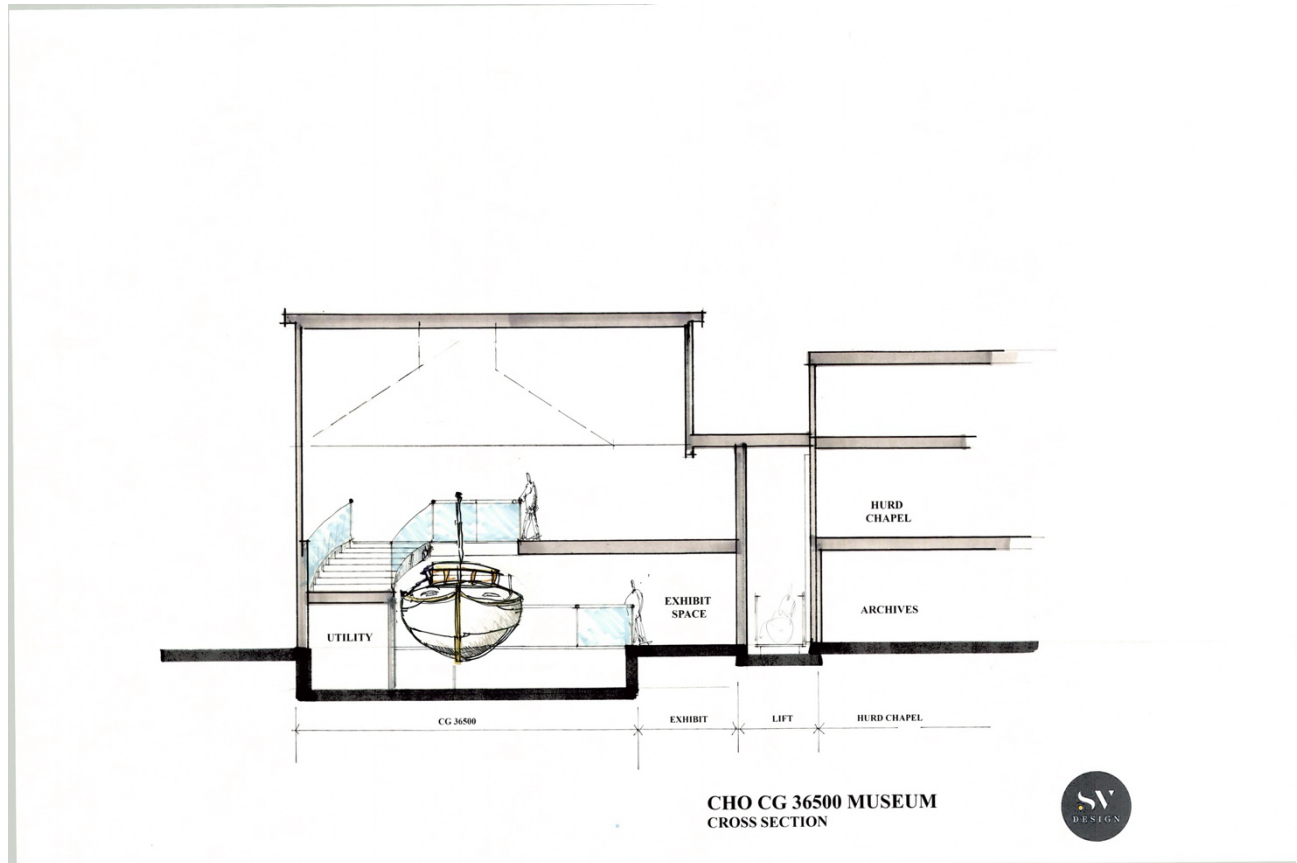


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Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Cross-Section

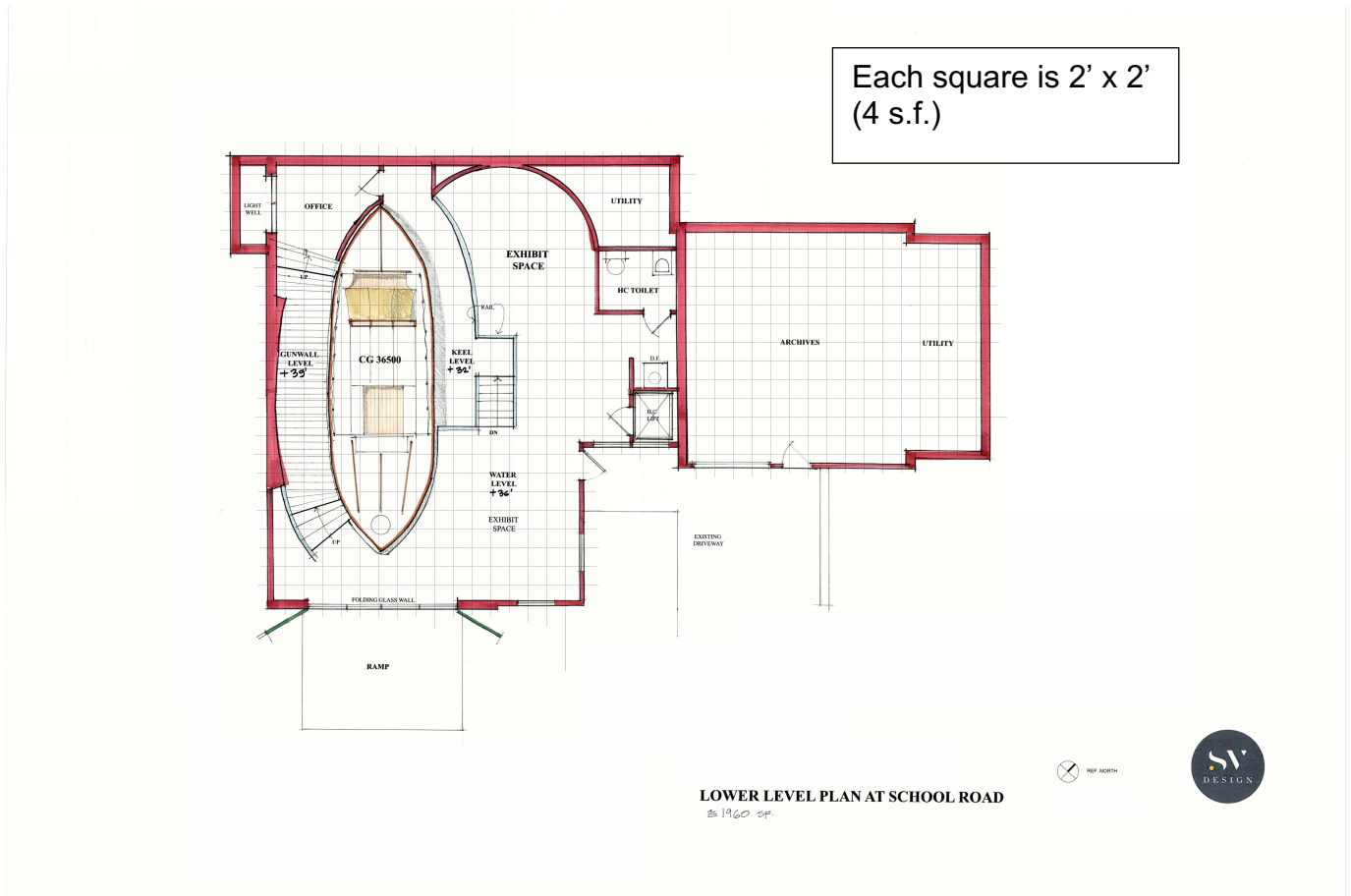


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Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Lower Level Plan at School Road

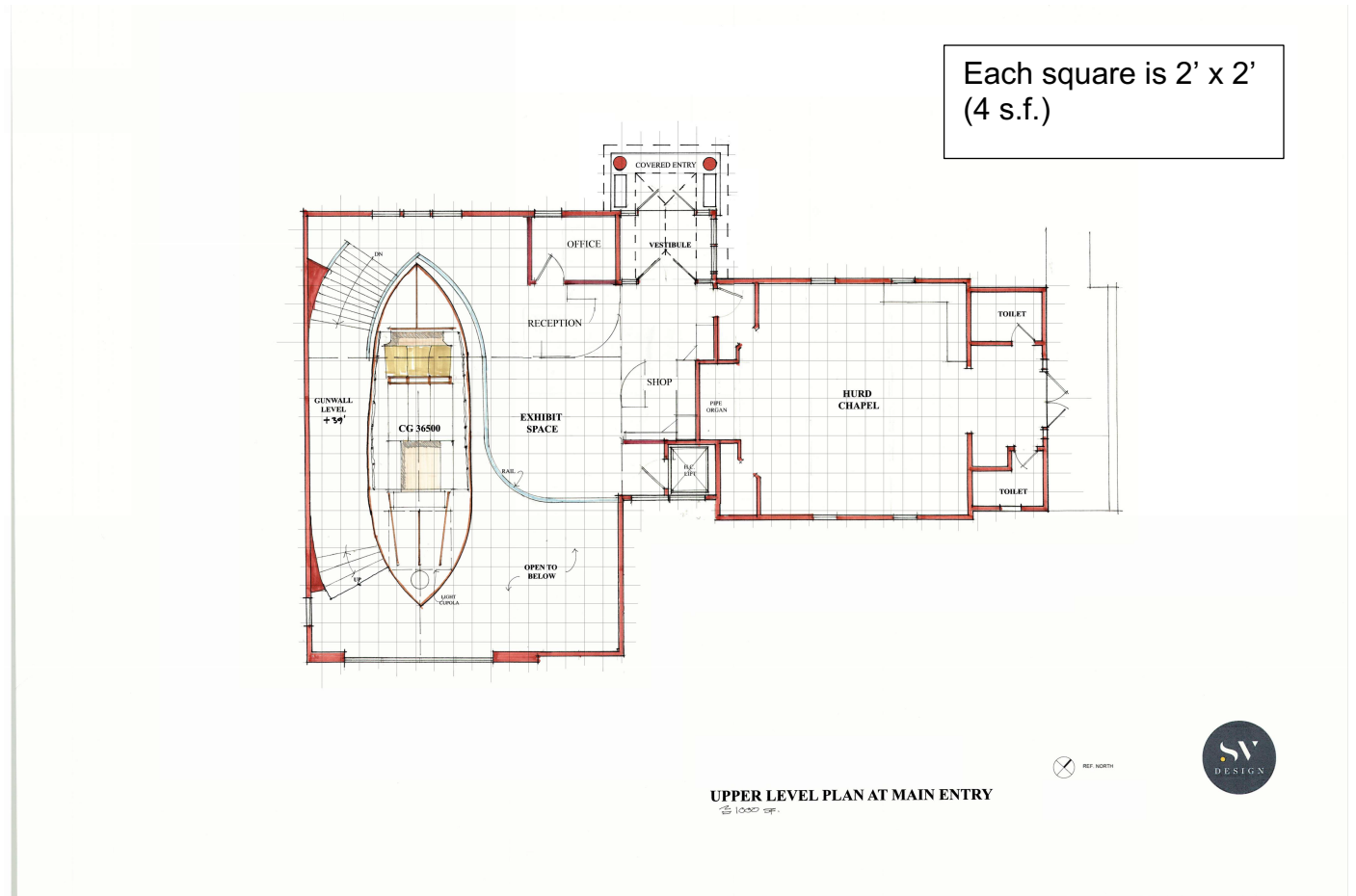


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Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Upper Level Plan at Main Entry



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H2 Studios – Museum Interior Design Concept

