

Build a Parking Garage at South Avenue & Edgemoor Site

A parking garage between South Avenue and Edgemoor Lane, behind the Law School, would serve current and future needs for the university. Cornell University's physical plant is continually evolving in order to support its education mission. Cornell's comprehensive transportation plan and programs are regularly assessed and revised to keep pace with new developments on the campus. As new construction and renovation projects are undertaken, Cornell reinvests in circulation and safety improvements, as well as replacement parking lost to building construction. The goal is to keep campus facilities and activities functioning efficiently by maintaining the current ratio of central campus parking spaces to the university population. Some surface lots in the central campus area have been identified as possible building sites. Other surface parking lots need to be reduced or eliminated because they conflict with safe pedestrian circulation and loading areas. Maintaining a balance between building density and green space appropriate to a central campus setting precludes many opportunities for construction of new surface lots. One solution is to replace lost parking spaces by building parking garages. Because parking garages have greater capacity than surface lots, more green space is preserved.

Up to 600 surface parking spaces are projected to be lost over the next decade on the central campus. The proposed garage location is capable of serving this high demand. A garage behind the Law School has the added advantage of providing parking for evening performances in Willard Straight Hall, Barnes Hall, and the Schwartz Performing Arts Center. The garage also will be available for evening and weekend visitors to the Collegetown area. Increased evening and weekend parking will also serve the users of the Law Library and the spiritual centers in Anabel Taylor Hall. Neighbors of the parking garage site, including Greek houses, small living units, and the Center for Jewish Living with its kosher dining hall will also be beneficiaries of this parking facility.

Students who currently reside and park on west campus are not commuters and therefore move their vehicles infrequently. If the parking garage were used to accommodate west campus residents, a large portion of the garage would be used for extended storage of vehicles, reducing the space available for daytime central campus parkers and evening and weekend parkers.

After considering what types of parking would allow the best use of this location, it was determined that this location will best serve the parking needs of the central campus, performance spaces, and nighttime Collegetown activities.

Increase the Capacity of the South Avenue and Edgemoor Parking Garage to Accommodate Displaced Parkers From Both Central Campus and West Campus

A feasibility study was conducted to explore the potential size and configuration of the proposed parking garage behind the Law School. Initially, the university had hoped to build a garage with an approximate capacity of between 500 – 600 vehicles to meet anticipated demand resulting from gradual elimination of parking spaces on the central campus. Because the garage will displace about 100 parking spaces currently on the site, the net gain would be between 400 – 500 vehicles. After careful consideration of aesthetics, historic resources, site access and other factors, the feasibility study showed that a parking garage accommodating approximately 500 – 600 vehicles would have unacceptable impacts to existing adjacent buildings on the site, including several structures with historic significance. The smaller garage recommended in the feasibility study mitigates these impacts.

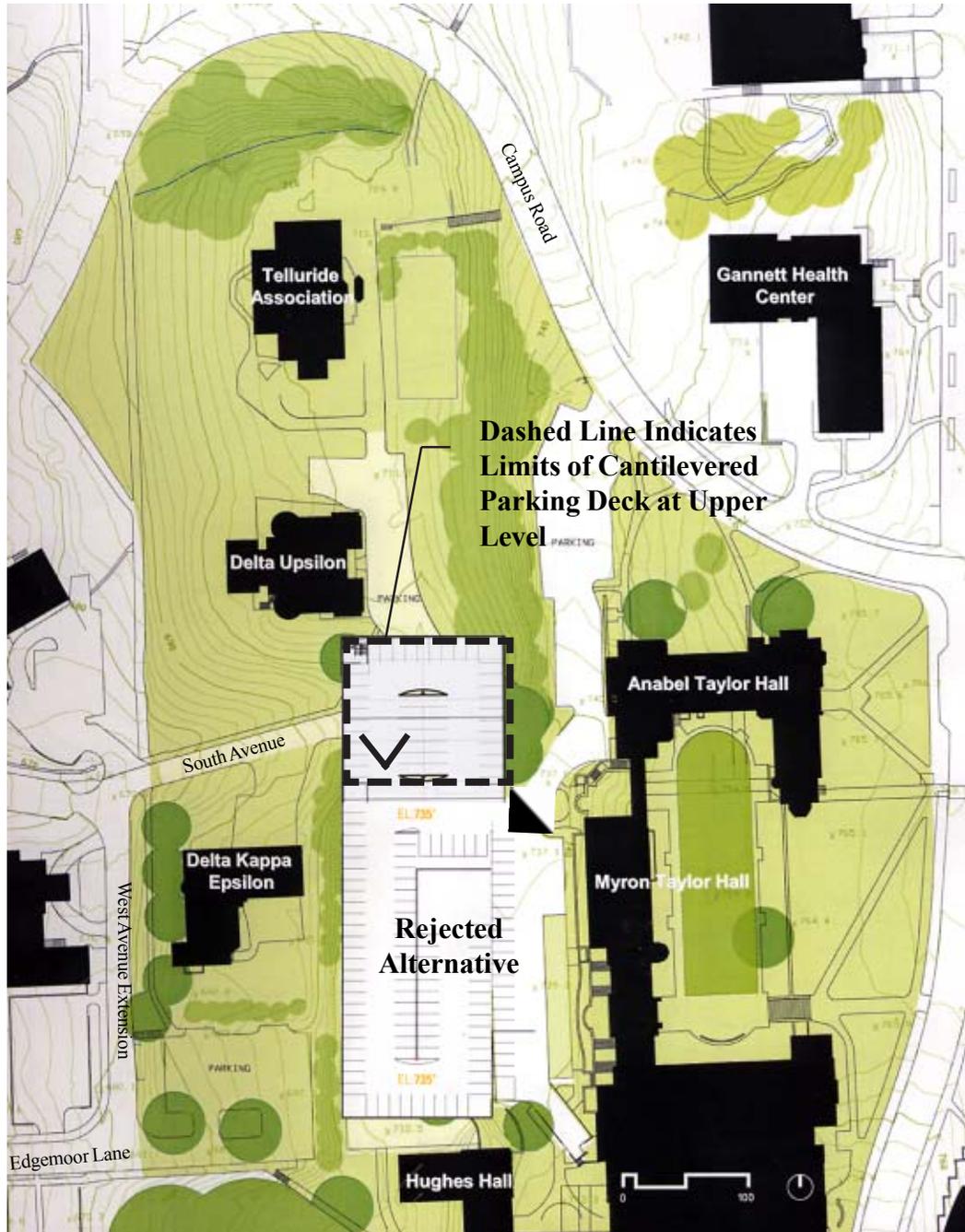
The feasibility study included an exploration of five different schemes. The two basic schemes are illustrated in Figure 4.2.B (Adden.) and Figure 4.2.C (Adden.). The three other schemes are variations of them and are not included here. The scheme shown in Figure 4.2.B includes an upper deck that extends north over existing driveways in order to achieve a capacity near 500 cars. The structure extends north to within 25 feet of Delta Upsilon, within 35 feet of Delta Kappa Epsilon (DKE) to the west, and within 25 feet of Hughes Hall to the south. Placing a structure of this mass in such a close proximity of these structures, one of which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (DKE), was deemed unacceptable. An alternative scheme is illustrated on Figure 4.2.C (Adden.). This scheme provides a 500 car capacity garage but was deemed unacceptable because the large size of the footprint would impact an area even more extensive than that impacted by Alternative 1. Site clearing of the vegetated bank would be more extensive, and the configuration could create a circulation “by-pass” from Campus Road to Edgemoor Lane that would be undesirable to the Edgemoor Lane neighborhood.

In order to mitigate the impacts of the Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 schemes, a smaller structure is proposed (400 car capacity netting 300 spaces). The scheme is a downsized version of Alternative 1, Figure 4.2.B (Adden.). The garage is shortened approximately 80 feet by eliminating that portion of the garage that extends north over the existing driveways. The west façade of the garage is notched to create more distance between it and DKE, and the south end of the garage is moved further north to create more space between Hughes Hall and the garage. The structure has also been lowered below grade to bedrock so that the top of the west façade will be approximately 11 feet lower than the ridgeline of DKE. The proposed 400 car capacity scheme is illustrated in Figure 4.2.D (Adden.).

In conclusion, a larger size garage was studied and determined to have unacceptable impacts on adjacent structures. A smaller garage (approximately 400 car capacity) can mitigate these impacts while still meeting the university’s program.

Utilize Garage for West Campus Residents by Relocating 200 Central Campus Parkers

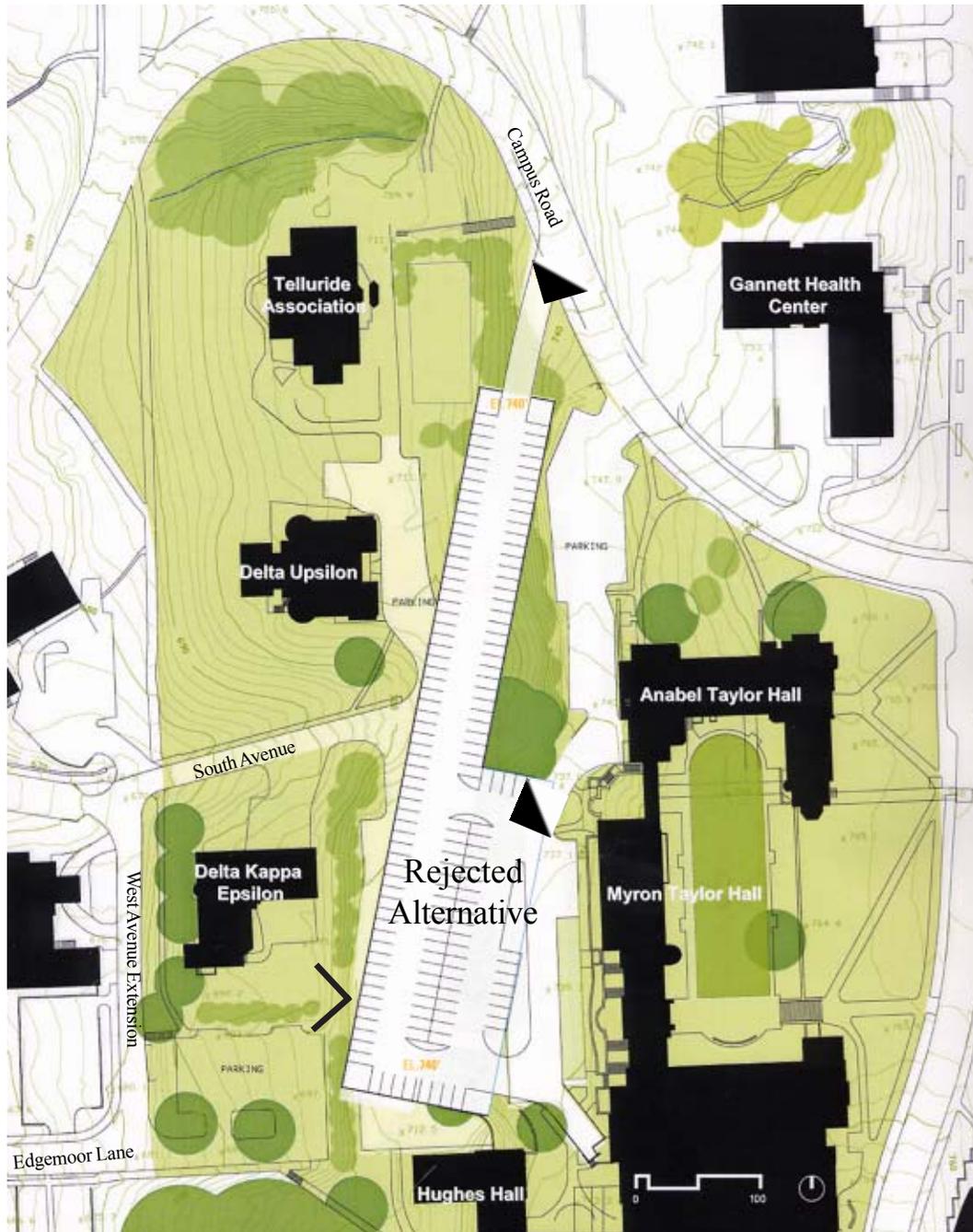
As described above, it is projected that some parking lots on the center of campus will become building sites in the future. This will displace central campus parkers to points further from the center of campus. Central campus parking is in high demand. It is not practical to move parking for the west campus community, located at the periphery of the campus, to a location closer to central campus when demand is already high on the central campus. In addition, it is anticipated that the majority of the proposed University Avenue parkers will be west campus residents, not commuters. If the parking garage were used to accommodate west campus residents, a large portion of the garage would be used for extended storage of vehicles, reducing the ability to serve multiple user groups, including daytime commuters and evening and weekend users.



Desman Associates



**Figure 4.2.B (Adden.):
Rejected Plan of 500 Car Garage -- Alt. 1**



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- ▲ Entrance at Upper Level
- ▼ Entrance at Lower Level

↑ N
 Not to Scale



**Figure 4.2.C (Adden.):
 Rejected Plan of 500 Car Garage -- Alt. 2**



Desman Associates

- ▼ Entrance at Upper Level
- ∨ Entrance at Lower Level

←
N
Not to Scale



Figure 4.2.D (Adden.):
Plan of Proposed Garage (400 cars) -- Alt. 3

Parking on Noyes Community Center Site

Use of the Noyes Community Center site for parking was considered. Both a parking garage and a surface parking lot on the site were investigated.

Surface Parking. Use of the void in the hillside created by the existing lower level and loading dock area of Noyes Community Center was studied. The building footprint of Noyes Center does not reflect space available at the lower level since the above grade portion of Noyes Center is substantially larger than the area excavated below the building. The area available for a parking facility within the existing void measures approximately 140 feet deep from the Stewart Avenue right of way eastward and approximately 90 feet wide. This void could accommodate a surface lot of between 20 and 25 spaces, depending on its configuration. If this void were expanded to a width of approximately 120 feet, approximately 35 spaces could be accommodated. An alternative would be to fill in the void and create a surface parking lot at the ground floor elevation of Noyes Community Center. Available space could accommodate a maximum of approximately 65 spaces in a surface lot. However, this would leave almost no room for vegetative screening, and it would be difficult to accommodate the steeply sloping site and the 15 – 20 foot difference in elevation between the site and Stewart Avenue. From a visual standpoint, a surface parking lot on the site would intrude on the axial view from McGraw Tower at the top of Libe Slope and detract from the aesthetic quality of a vista known to be important to the community.

Parking Garage. Construction of a parking garage capable of accommodating up to 195 cars has also been investigated. Due to the size of the area available for a parking structure, a three-level structure would be necessary. The visual impacts of a parking structure in this location would be substantial. The parking garage would be visible from Libe Slope and McGraw Tower, just as Noyes Community Center currently is. Four of the five new houses on west campus would view the garage, and it would be highly visible to neighbors on the west side of Stewart Avenue. The high visibility of the Noyes Community Center site from all directions, combined with the limited space, offers little opportunity to screen or mitigate visual impacts. The effect would be to re-create the visual and physical barrier that currently exists between west campus, Stewart Avenue and neighborhoods to the west, and which the proposed West Campus Residential Initiative site plan attempts to eliminate. Two configurations for a three level garage in this location are shown in *Figure 4.2.E (Adden.) Rejected Plan of Parking Garage at Noyes Center Site: Alt. 1* and *Figure 4.2.F (Adden.) Rejected Plan of Parking Garage at Noyes Center Site: Alt. 2*. The visible mass along Stewart Avenue is shown in *Figure 4.2.G (Adden.) View of Stewart Avenue Elevation of Parking Garage at Noyes Center Site*.

Bedrock near the surface and the existing site topography make depressing the garage underground impractical. Bedrock is approximately 5 – 10 feet below the surface. Placing an underground parking facility on the site would require substantial excavation of earth and bedrock. Even if the garage were depressed below grade, into bedrock, the steeply sloping nature of the site means that the west façade of the structure would be exposed to Stewart Avenue and the community. The cost of accommodating 195 cars on this site would be at least five times higher than the cost of accommodating the same number of cars one block away at the proposed University Avenue surface lot.

Consideration of the Noyes Community Center site for parking is also not feasible from a scheduling standpoint. The Noyes Community Center currently houses the dining facility for west campus. This function must continue at Noyes Community Center until at least three of the new Houses are complete with operational dining facilities that will replace those in Noyes. For this

reason the Noyes Community Center cannot be demolished until later in the construction sequence. Thus, this site would fail to meet parking needs for contractors, students, or staff between spring 2003 and fall 2010.

In conclusion, the limited available space, visual impacts, bedrock, cost, and phasing/schedule limitations combine to make the Noyes Community Center site unfeasible for meeting the WCRI parking requirements.



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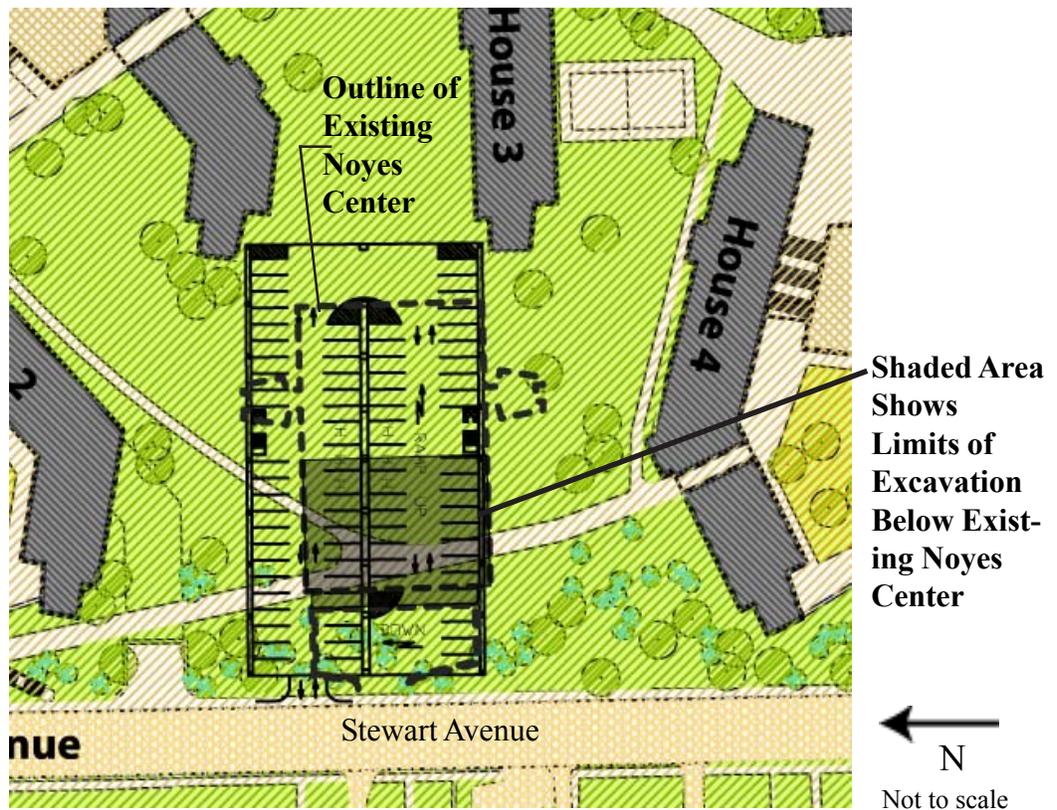
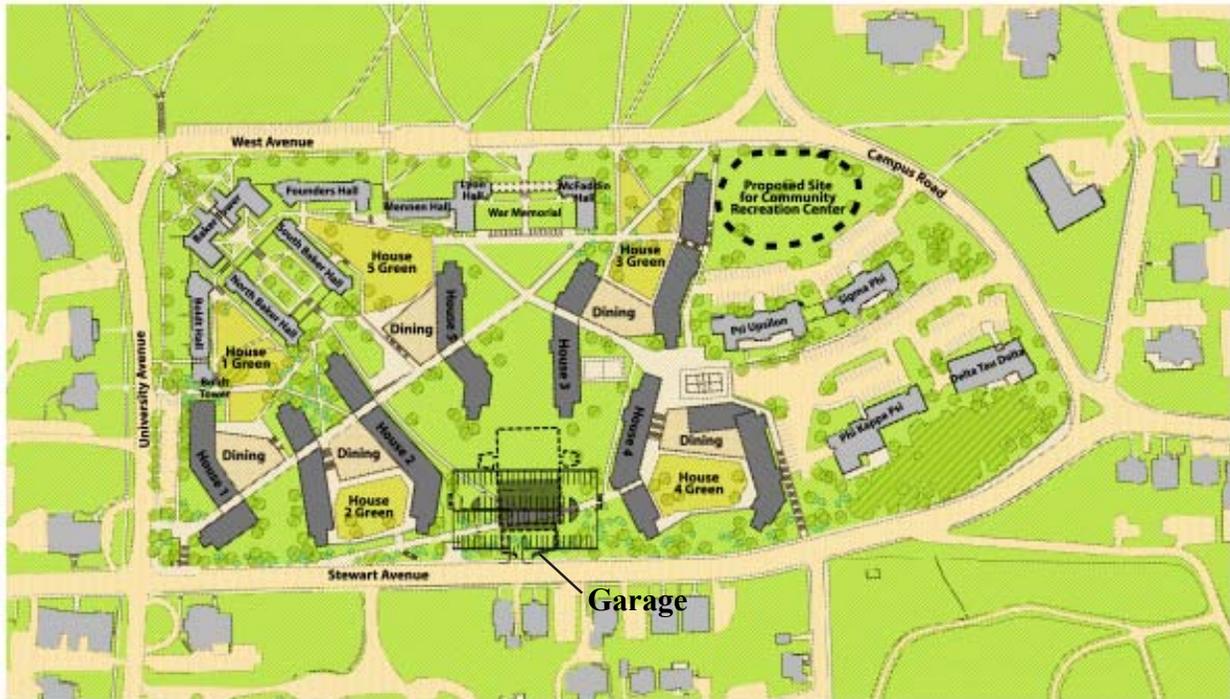


Figure 4.2.E(Adden.):
Rejected Plan of Parking Garage at Noyes Center Site -- Alt. 1



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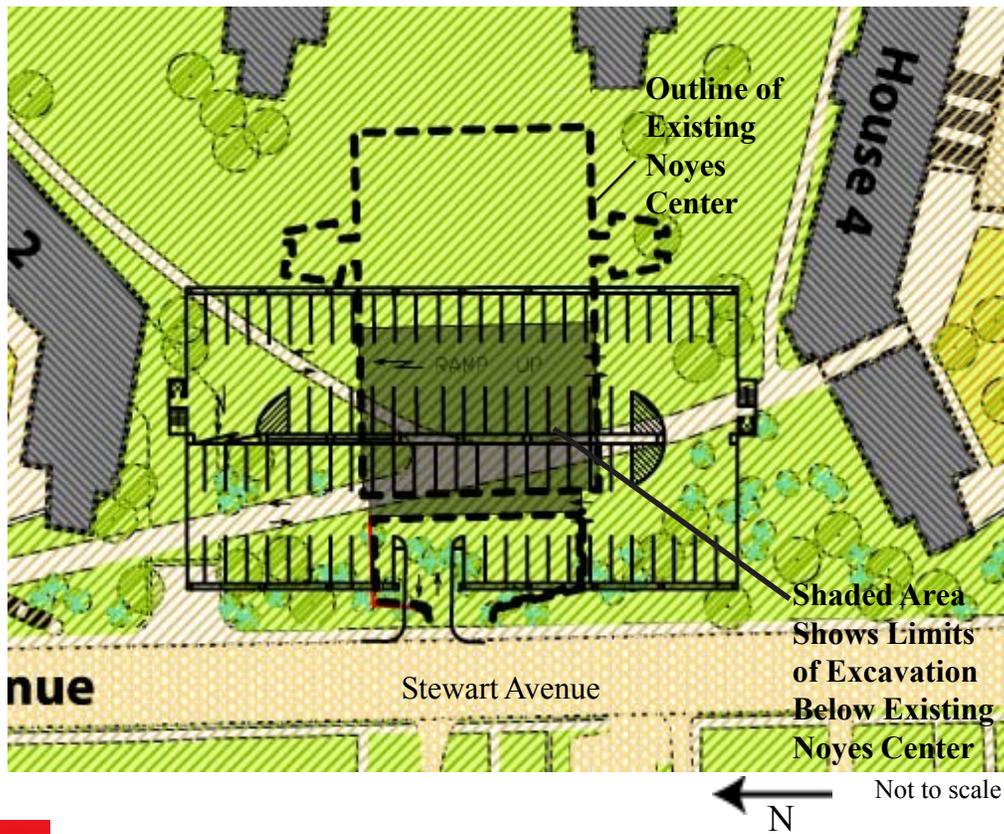


Figure 4.2.F (Adden.):
Rejected Plan of Parking Garage at Noyes Center Site -- Alt. 2

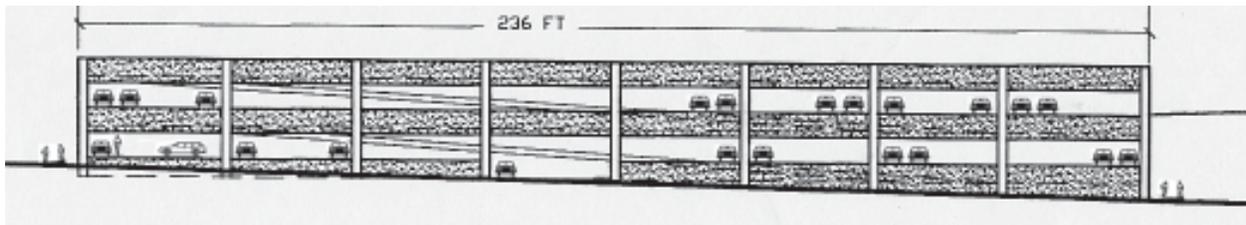


Figure 4.2.G (Adden.):
View of Stewart Avenue Elevation of Parking Garage at Noyes Center Site



660
Stewart

Von
Cramm

University Avenue

Existing View



Cars parked
on upper
terrace

Cars parked on
lower terrace

Landscape
island

Figure 2.3.F:

View From University Avenue, Looking East

Proposed View