
Proposal for the

**Acquisition of West Warren
Community Center**

To House:

Public Safety Answering Point

Police Station

West Warren Library

Senior Center Annex

Community Activity/Youth Activity Center

Submitted to:

Town of Warren Board of Selectman

Submitted by:

Community Center Restoration Committee:

Wednesday, July 3rd, 2002

Board of Selectmen, Town of Warren
48 High Street
Warren, MA 01083

July 3rd, 2002

Dear Board Members,

We are pleased to present our interest in the acquisition of the West Warren Community Center by the Town of Warren for the purpose of restoring the building to function as housing for all or some of the following: Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP); Warren Police Department; West Warren Library; Senior Center Annex; and Community Activity/Youth Activity Center. The Community Center Restoration Committee (CCRC) would welcome additional ideas for use of this building.

Our goal is to not only recommend the purchase of this building, but to follow through with its restoration to a full functioning facility and to have a self-sustaining building that houses activities and organizations that give back to the community.

The attached document is a visionary outline for the proposed use of the West Warren Community Center. The CCRC has completed preliminary research into the building's purchase, restoration and use. We are confident of taking this research to the next level: Planning the conceptual framework and conducting the feasibility study.

Next Steps:

1. **Review this proposed vision as a whole.**
If necessary, each section can be considered independently.
2. **We are ready to begin a feasibility study.**
It is best that the feasibility study include all sections of this document in order to determine each section's viability and contribution to the whole. Eliminating any element will reduce our greater understanding. Keeping each proposed element in tact will result in a more comprehensive study, offering a full range of analysis that will ultimately provide the town with both flexibility and the data to make well-informed decisions.
3. **We would like the Board of Selectmen to formally recognize our committee** so that we can continue with our research.

The Attached Document

This document is intended to be a framework for the proposed purchase and use of the West Warren Community Center and therefore should not be considered complete. We are committed to fully researching the viability of this purchase for the town, and ultimately, making it a success through the offices that will sustain it. We are prepared to meet with you to begin formulating responses to the project initiatives. We are confident that the feasibility study will provide a foundation and structure to this program that will ensure that this proposed purchase and implementation is beneficial to your constituents, our fellow townspeople. If we can provide any additional information, please call Rick Hamelin at 413-436-7444.

Sincerely,

Community Center Restoration Committee

Warren Residents

Garine Arakelian

Rita Culliton, West Warren Library

Armond Dimo, Director, Warren Senior Center

James Dolan, Warren Fire Chief

Marlene Downing

Joyce Eichacker

Rich Eichacker

Rick Hamelin

Janice McClelland

Consultants to the Community Center Restoration Committee

Warren Residents

Jim Cuddy

Robert Dougan, Board of Directors, West Warren Library

Sheila Frances Ketti – Board of Directors, West Warren Library

Non-Warren Residents

Bonnie Allen –West Brookfield

Margaret Garfield –Ware

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Section A – Executive Overview

The Vision

The CCRC is interested in restoring the Community Center to its intended purpose, while housing additional services currently needed by the Town of Warren. We see this building as housing for community resources and services that bring various groups and community members together, under one roof.

What the Community Gains

Community Building: This building is large enough to host several activities simultaneously. It is a place to socialize and come together as a community – unlike anything we currently have in town.

PSAP: A state police run dispatch center could free much coveted funding, offer employment opportunities, and open up funding avenues for the town.

Police Station: The current Police Department Building Project is in need of more creative options.

Improved West Warren Library: The current library is located in a leased building that is not only in great need of repair; it is also up for sale. The Community would gain an enlarged library with handicap access.

Annex for Senior Center: The use of this building would immediately benefit seniors, and would satisfy future program and growth needs.

Community Activity/Youth Activity Center: This building offers space for dances, performance, in-line/roller skating, karate and other activities. Furthermore, it can be a meeting place for planning activities and socializing.

For our youth, the center would be a place to meet and socialize, be with friends and make new acquaintances. Our goal is to help our youth work to create a center for themselves, to empower and give them confidence in themselves and in the community.

Performance Area and Auditorium: These facilities can be used not only by seniors for line dancing and large space events, but can be used by the community at large for cultural events, civic meetings, dances, voting, town meetings, and more. This is possibly a revenue generating facility.

Bowling and Billiards: These facilities can be used by the Senior Center, the Community Activity/Youth Activity Center (CAYAC), and could possibly generate revenue by being available for rent.

The Building

John Czapla currently owns the West Warren Community Center, located at 2245 Main Street, West Warren. The Mr. John Czapla is interested in selling his building to the Town of Warren and is pleased to support the continuation of the buildings original purpose. We have received a letter of intent from Mr. Czapla, expressing his willingness to hold this building for purchase by the Town of Warren for the purpose of this proposed project.

The building is currently assessed at **\$125,000**. It houses approximately 18,000 square feet, a 4-lane bowling alley, pool tables, a performance area, the old library as well as additional rooms. Floor and site plans attached.

Section B – Public Safety Answering Point

Current Dispatch

The present Communication Center has been in operation since 1987. It is a 24/7 operation. Operations are for Police, Fire/EMS, and Highway. It also serves as a liaison point for all above stated agencies to disseminate information relative to that Department with the public. It serves in the same fashion as the State PSAP units, but only for the Town of Warren proper. Currently, four full time, and three part time civilians are employed. A yearly appropriation of \$116,866, which covers all payroll, training, and supplies, approaches \$150,000 when benefits are included. The dispatch is located in the Town Hall, off Main Street, Warren. It is controlled by the Fire & Police Chiefs. Each Department is responsible for their equipment, (purchase, repairs, etc.)

Problems we have encountered since the inception are:

- ♦ Major turnover of personnel, which requires constant training of new dispatchers, which in turn requires more money. This leads to having "novice" dispatchers working at prime shifts
- ♦ All personnel, scheduling, and tardiness issues take the Police & Fire Chiefs away from primary duties to address dispatch concerns

About PSAP

PSAP or E-911 is a State police run regional dispatch service that handles police, fire and ambulance requests received in a given region. It also handles most cellular emergency calls. Massachusetts is currently considering another PSAP site.

In addition to handling 9-1-1 emergency calls, PSAP is responsible for facilitating radio communications between the Massachusetts State Police cruisers from the PSAP Location. The dispatchers provide officers with critical information from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles, the Criminal History Systems Board, the National Crime Information Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and any other police department in the United States and its territories via the CJIS terminal computer (Criminal Justice Information System). This system can be queried to check for outstanding warrants, stolen vehicles, and missing persons. Dispatchers also have the ability to communicate with other police departments over the radio in the event of an inter-city emergency or mutual aid situation.

Benefits to the Community

- ♦ Increased employment opportunities
- ♦ Possible consolidation of present system into state controlled dispatch Center – thus releasing town from current fiscal responsibility for dispatch
- ♦ Possible funding avenue by hosting a State PSAP in Warren
- ♦ Possibly eliminate the need to purchase or replace base equipment for police and fire departments

Section C – Warren Police Department

About the Warren Police Department

The Warren Police Department is currently located in Town Hall – a facility that lacks full functionality for the department, emphasized by the lack of holding cells and handicap accessibility.

Presently, the Warren Police Department is endeavoring to build a new prefabricated facility. The Town of Warren voted against appropriating additional funds to the project. The available funds for the project are not sufficient to build a revised version of the proposed structure, and thus, the project is currently stalled.

Benefits to Moving the Warren Police Station to the Community Center

- ♦ The current Plan is deteriorating and in need of an alternate site
- ♦ Utilization of current building funds possible
- ♦ This location:
 - Ø Is capable of handling all the requirements within the original blueprint (including weight lifting room)
 - Ø Already houses fire protection (sprinkler system), thus reduces cost of insurance
 - Ø This is a brick building
 - Ø Could offer increased square footage to the department
 - Ø Could serve as a regional lockup – renting cells space for additional revenue
 - § Could house up to 4, possibly more lockups
 - Ø Offers training space for Police personnel
- ♦ This location could promote mentoring programs between police and youth (sports, billiards, weight lifting, and more)
- ♦ Simply by shared locale, the police can serve as role models to Warren youth
- ♦ This move would free Town Hall to be used for other purposes

Section D – West Warren Library

About The West Warren Library

The West Warren Library services the community of West Warren. It is an active library for its size, hosting 6,137 visits by children and 4,894 by adults throughout the year. Circulation: 7013 by children, and 5810 by adults.

It is presently located in a small, leased building that lacks handicap accessibility and an acceptable public restroom. The space available is inadequate; the aisles are narrow, and shelf space limited. Furthermore, the interior is in dire need of repair. The poor condition of this building could lend itself to safety issues. The building is currently for sale, with no proposed alternate site. The annual rent is \$3,000.

Programs run by the West Warren Public Library include, but are not limited to: Science, Entertainment, Health and Safety programs, Food-share, Story Hour, and Summer Reading.

Benefits of Moving the West Warren Library to the Community Center

There is an immediate need for a more modern and accessible library and no viable option exists. Benefits to this move:

- ♦ Handicap accessibility
- ♦ A safe library
- ♦ A better looking library
- ♦ Public restrooms
- ♦ Additional square footage that would allow for:
 - Ø Larger, handicap accessible aisles
 - Ø More shelf space
 - Ø Space for computers
 - Ø Exhibition and Gallery space
 - Ø Performance Space
 - Ø More services for the public
- ♦ Current rent appropriation can be used toward needed improvements

Section D – Senior Center Annex

About The Senior Center

The Warren Senior Center is located at 2252 Main Street, West Warren, directly across from the Community Center. The Senior Center currently serves seniors from Warren and adjacent communities. Daily attendance is approximately 40+ seniors per day, 200-300 per week. Lunch is served daily. Current Programs offered by the Senior Center include: Pitch, Cribbage, Bingo, crafts, trips, entertainment, line dancing, Tai-Chi, and guest speakers. Nurse visits, fuel assistance and other service programs are also offered to the seniors. The senior center has been successful with the intergenerational projects it has recently offered, including after school craft classes and flower planting to spruce up Veterans Park in West Warren.

The Senior Center functions well for “seated activities” such as card games and crafts but encounters space restrictions when offering physical activities, such as line dancing and Tai chi. Heavy tables and many chairs need to be moved for these activities, and the available space for quiet pursuits during this time is greatly reduced. Any additional recreational item of interest to the seniors, such as a billiard or ping-pong table would impede the current floor plan. More importantly, the service programs offered to assist seniors rely on the schedules of visiting administrators and nurses, to name a few. Their schedules often overlap with each other as well as with senior center activities, therefore additional space for the service visitors is creatively, if not uncomfortably obtained and senior activities have to be rescheduled or canceled.

Approximately 800 people in town are over 62, comprising 16% of the population of Warren. Over the next few years, we can minimally expect an additional 6% (315) of our community to move to senior status. The largest population of Seniors in Warren are between the ages of 66 and 74. The majority of the seniors that attend the senior center are over 70. We can therefore anticipate expanded participation at the senior center where space will become a critical issue.

Benefits of Hosting an Senior Center Annex

- ♦ The Senior Center can:
 - Ø Accommodate anticipated growth without expanding current facility
 - Ø Offer activities that cannot be easily accommodated by its current space (ie: line dancing, tai-chi)
 - Ø Utilize the bowling alley and pool table facilities
 - Ø Organize and host more than one activity simultaneously without space conflicts
- ♦ Integration of Senior with other community members would benefit all
- ♦ Intergeneration activities could naturally expand within the shared community space, and these activities could benefit from not only the additional space, but the additional functionality of the facility (bowling, billiards, performance area)

Section E – Community Activity/Youth Activity Center

Community Activity Center and Civic Meeting Place:

Presently, Warren does not have a common meeting area that is available to the community at large and civic organizations (Al-Anon, Girl/Boy Scouts, etc). This facility, as we envision it, will house many activities, and yet still has the capacity to share space. The Senior and Youth activities will not occupy the building 24/7, therefore, we see that there are many possibilities to timeshare the facility.

Benefits of Hosting a Community Activity Center and Civic Meeting Place in Town

- ♦ West Warren Voting, currently held in the Senior Center, can be restored back to this building
- ♦ Available space may encourage more community activity
- ♦ Pool tables, bowling alleys and performance area can be rented to parties and organizations to help generate revenue
- ♦ Open space can be rented out for various activities:
 - § Martial Arts § Weight Watchers
 - § Yoga § Al-Anon
 - § Art Classes § Many others
 - § Music Instruction
 - § Roller/in-line skating (sports currently not allowed in the Town of Warren)

Youth Activity Center

The Youth Center will be made available to the residents of Warren and interested communities. We want our youth to grow, become members of our society, and continue to be part of our community during and after college years. A youth activity center is a new beginning to something positive. It offers our youth a place to go, keeping them off the street, and therefore diverting them from mischief.

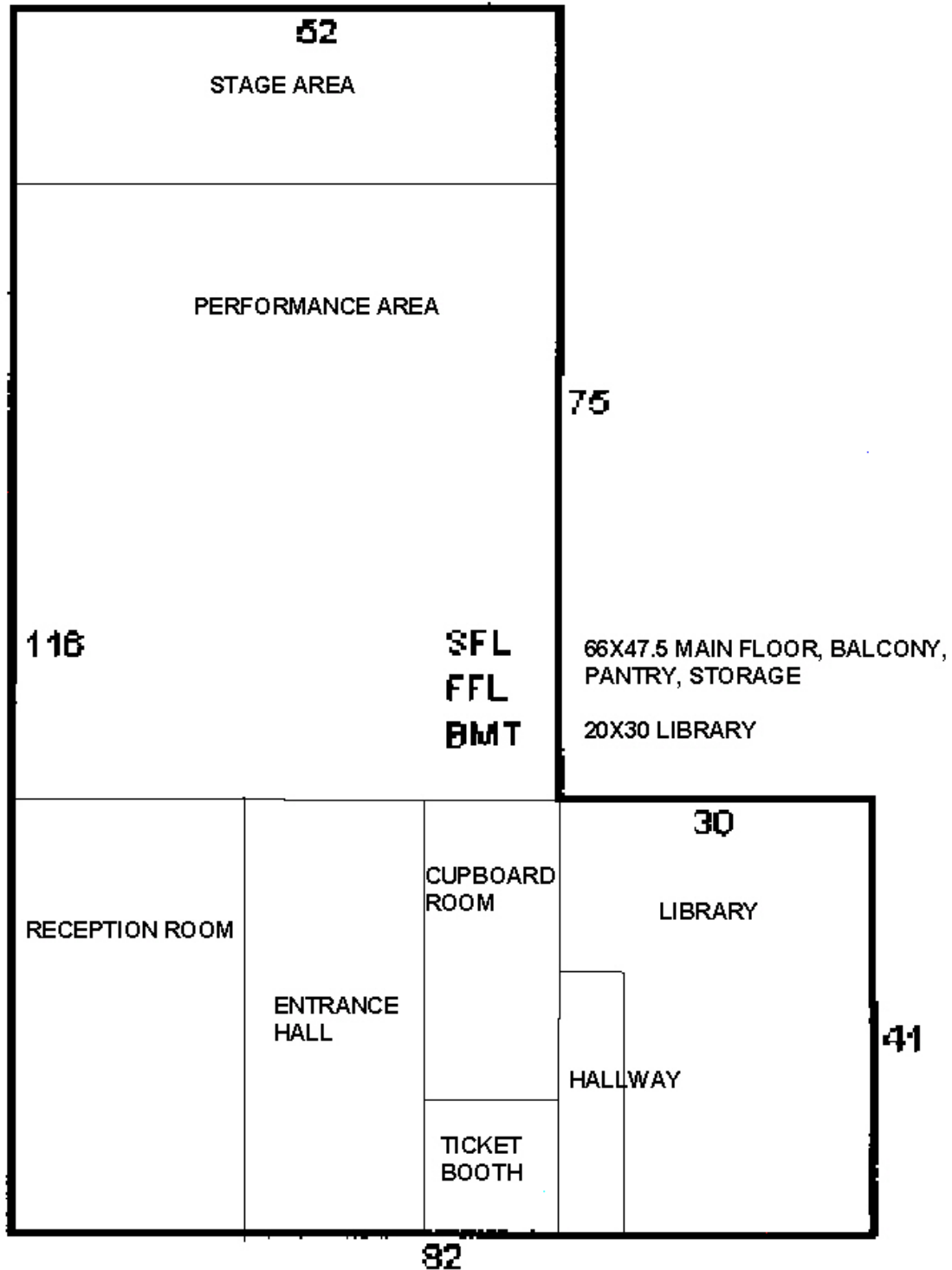
Proposed Programs: We foresee that the youth center programs will be geared to promote self sufficiency and community service through self directed programs and activities that give back to the community via fund raising, the arts, and more – possibly presiding under the Parks and Recreation Department.

Benefits of Hosting a Youth Activity Center in Town

- ♦ Offers our youth a site to socialize and establish a sense of place and commitment to the community
- ♦ Youth can have a safe, drug free location to meet while exercising their independence
- ♦ Improve opportunity for youth across the board
 - Ø Youth can be challenged with responsibility and therefore have the opportunity to prove to themselves that they can make a difference
 - § Self worth and self reliance enhanced
 - Ø Youth can work at the center for extra credit
 - Ø Work at the center, and for the community via the center, can enhance resumes
- ♦ Integration of youth with other community members would benefit all

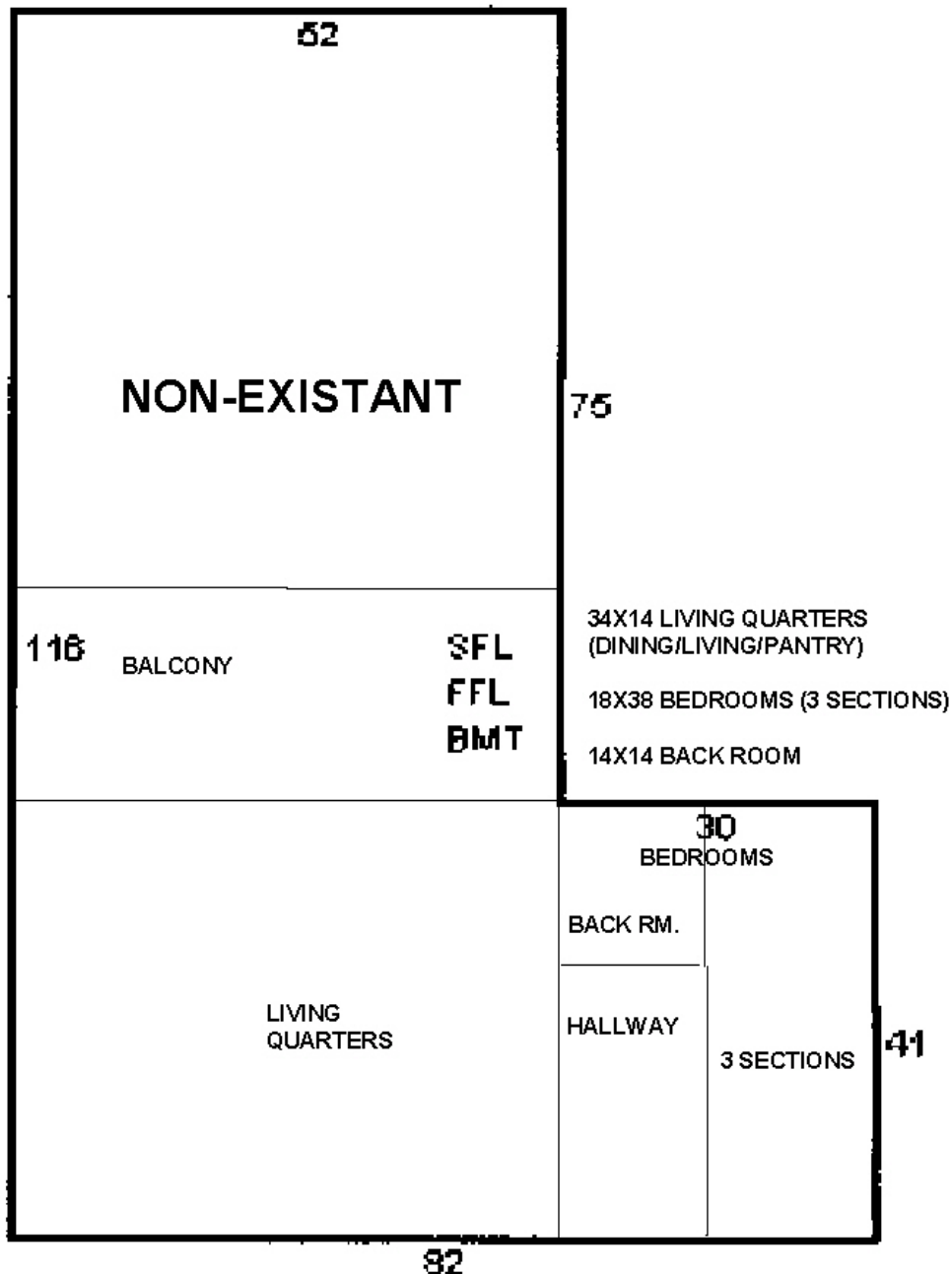
Attachment 1 – Floor Plan for First Floor

FIRST FLOOR

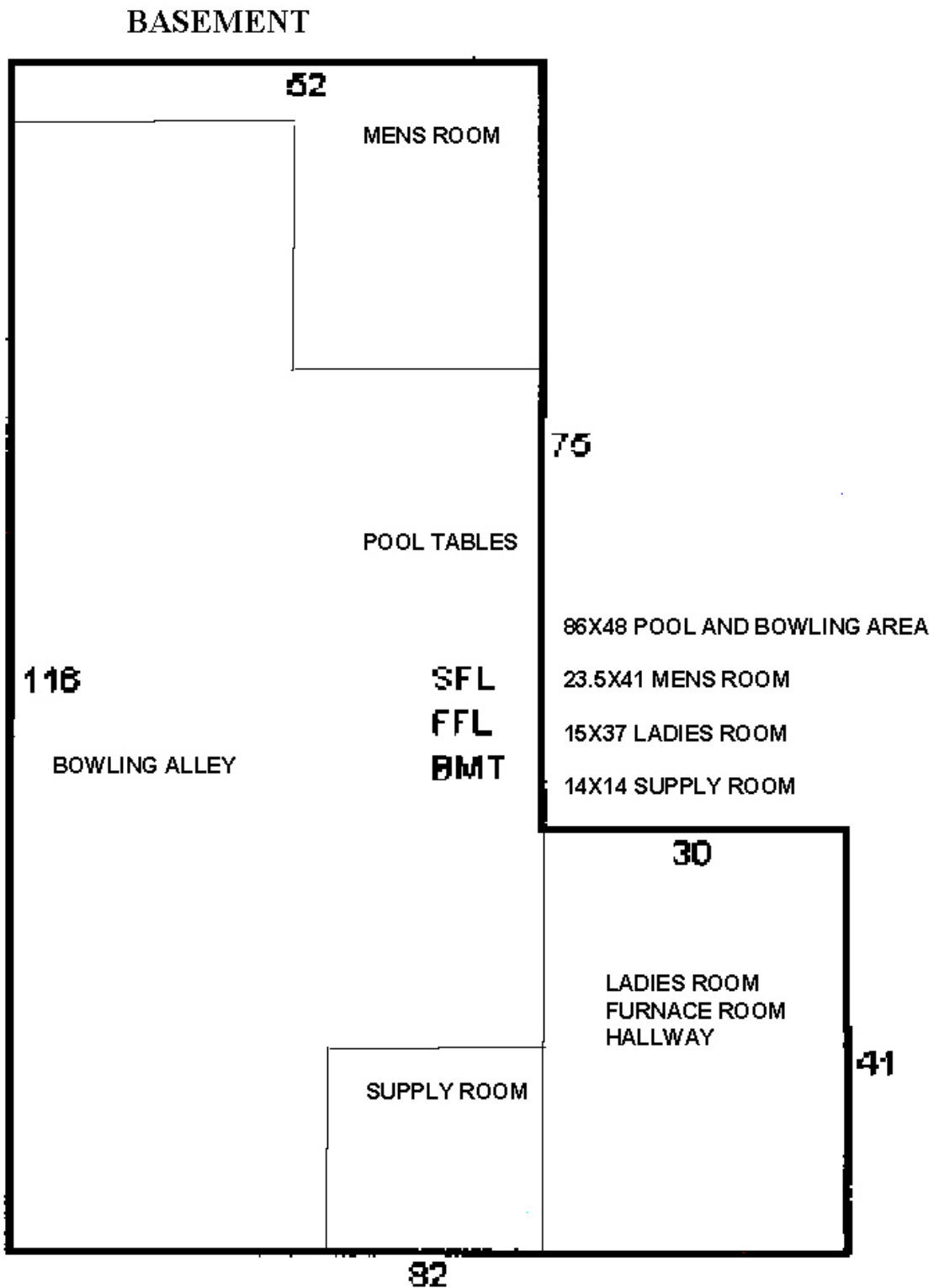


Attachment 2 – Floor Plan for Second Floor

SECOND FLOOR



Attachment 3 – Floor Plan for Basement



Attachment 4 – Site Plan

