



**Special Meeting Board of Adjustment / Appeals  
April 9, 2026 Agenda  
Civic Center 2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT  
Commission Chambers, Civic Center  
3:00 PM**

The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.gov/AgendaCenter>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on government access channel City-190, cable channel 190; or online at <https://www.greatfallsmt.gov/344/Live-Meetings>.

Public participation is welcome in the following ways:

- Attend in person.
- Provide public comments in writing by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting: Mail to Planning & Community Development, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403, or via email to: [jnygard@greatfallsmt.gov](mailto:jnygard@greatfallsmt.gov). Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name of the commenter and either an address or whether the commenter is a city resident. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the Board Members and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item and before final vote on the matter; and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.

**OPEN MEETING**

1. Call to Order - 3:00 PM
2. Role all - Board Introductions

**Pete Fontana - Chair**

**Christian Stone - Vice Chair**

**Antoinette Collins**

**Joe McMillen**

**Aspen Northerner**

3. Recognition of Staff
4. Approval of Meeting Minutes - January 7, 2026

**CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS**

**BOARD ACTIONS REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING**

5. Variance request to allow reduced side yard setbacks for the construction of a single-family residence located at 711 4th Avenue Southwest.

**BOARD ACTIONS NOT REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Public Comment on any matter and that is within the jurisdiction of the Board of Adjustment/Appeals. Please keep your remarks to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Speak into the microphone, and state your name and address for the record.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*(Please exit the chambers as quickly as possible. Chamber doors will be closed 5 minutes after adjournment of the meeting.)*

*Assistive listening devices are available for the hard of hearing, please arrive a few minutes early for set up, or contact the City Clerk's Office in advance at 455-8451. Wi-Fi is available during the meetings for viewing of the online meeting documents.*

*Board of Adjustment/Appeals meetings are televised on cable channel 190 and streamed live at <https://greatfallsmt.gov/>. Meetings are re-aired on cable channel 190 the following Friday morning at 10 a.m.*

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
OF THE  
**GREAT FALLS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT/APPEALS**  
January 7, 2026

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Christian Stone called the meeting to order at 3:11 P.M. in the Commission Chambers at the Civic Center.

**ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE**

Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals members present:

Christian Stone, Vice Chair via Phone  
Antoinette Collins  
Joe McMillen

Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals members absent:

Pete Fontana, Chair  
Aspen Northerner

Planning Staff members present:

Lonnie Hill, Deputy Director of Planning & Community Development  
Jamie Nygard, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Others present:

None

Mr. Hill affirmed a quorum of the Board was present.

**MINUTES**

Vice Chair Stone asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes as stated for November 13, 2025. Mr. McMillan moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Collins. All in favor, the minutes were approved 3-0.

**CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**BOARD ACTIONS NOT REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING**

**Election of Officers 2026**

Mr. Hill stated that the bylaws of the Board of Adjustment/Appeals require that the election of the Officers take place at the January meeting each year.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

MOTION: That the Board of Adjustment/Appeals elect Christian Stone as the Chair for 2026.

MADE BY: Mr. McMillen

SECOND BY: Ms. Collins

VOTE: Motion Passed 3-0

MOTION: That the Board of Adjustment/Appeals elect Antionette Collins as the Vice Chair for 2026.

MADE BY: Mr. McMillen

SECOND BY: Ms. Stone

VOTE: Motion Passed 3-0

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Hill mentioned that new code changes, prompted by State law updates, will affect the Board of Adjustment/Appeals and could potentially lead to the Board's dissolution.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Vice Chair Stone adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.



Date: April 9, 2026

**CITY OF GREAT FALLS  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AGENDA REPORT**

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- Item:** Variance request to allow reduced side yard setbacks for the construction of a single-family residence located at 711 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest.
- Applicant:** Zach Backes, Nine Blessings LLC, Owner
- Presented By:** Lonnie Hill, Deputy Director, Planning and Community Development
- Action Requested:** Consideration of reduced side yard setbacks
- 

**Public Hearing:**

1. Chairperson conducts public hearing, pursuant to OCCGF 1.2.050 and Title 17, Chapter 6.
2. Chairperson closes public hearing and asks the will of the Board.

**Suggested Motion:**

1. Board Member moves:
    - I. “I move that the Board of Adjustment, based on the Findings for the Basis of Decision (approve/deny) the variance request for minimum side yard setbacks of five (5) feet for the property addressed as 711 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest.”
  2. Chairperson calls for a second, discussion, and calls for the vote.
- 

**Background:** The owners of 711 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest has requested a variance for reduced side yard setbacks for the construction of a single-family residence. Within the Narrative, the applicants state that this request arises from the desire to utilize an existing foundation that encroaches within the current side yard setbacks of six (6) feet for the R-3 Single-family High Density zoning district.

The subject property, legally described as Lot 10, Block 558, Sixth Addition to Great Falls, is 6,250 square feet in area. The property previously had a sub-grade home upon it. The home has been demolished, and the applicant proposes to reuse the existing foundation for the construction of a single-family home. A Location and Zoning Map of the property is provided as an attachment to this report. Single-family homes surround the property in all directions.

**Variance Request:** The applicant requests a variance to the minimum side yard setbacks for a principal building. The applicant has specifically requested reducing the minimum side yard setbacks along the west and east property lines, as shown on the *Site Plan*, which is provided as an attachment to this report. The variance request would allow the applicant to complete the construction of a single-family residence.

**Findings for the Basis of Decision:** The basis for decision for a variance request is listed in §17.16.32.040 of the OCCGF Land Development Code. The decision of the Board of Adjustment shall consider the three Basis of Decision criteria. Staff provides the following Basis of Decision for consideration by the Board:

**1. The variance is not contrary to the public interest.**

The decision to grant a side yard setback variance for the residence is based on the finding that such a variance is not contrary to the public interest. The determination for this request considers several factors: 1. The variance will not adversely affect the character of the neighborhood, which will remain residential. 2. The request will not compromise public health, safety, or welfare, as the construction will adhere to all other relevant building codes and safety regulations. 3. The variance will not negatively impact neighboring properties. As a result, staff has determined that granting the variance is not contrary to the public interest.

**2. A literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship, owing to conditions unique to the property.**

Enforcing a literal interpretation of the zoning code would prevent the applicant from building the single-story residence upon the existing foundation. Staff has determined that the existing footprint of the foundation encroaching within the setbacks presents an unnecessary hardship. Granting the variance would allow the applicant to proceed with the project as proposed, without undermining the intent of the zoning code.

**3. The spirit of this Title would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the variance.**

The decision to grant a side yard setback variance for the proposed residence is not in conflict with the spirit of the Land Development Code. The subject property is within the R-3 zoning district, which is intended to promote orderly development upon smaller lots. By allowing the variance, the property owner can construct the residence upon the existing foundation, without disrupting the overall character of the neighborhood or the R-2 zoning district. Additionally, substantial justice is served as the variance allows the applicant to continue their project, ensuring they are not burdened by the rigid application of the code.

**Permit Requirements:** Should the requested variance be granted, the applicant will proceed with submitting a complete building permit application to the City of Great Falls Building Department. The permit submittal will include all required documentation, including a geotechnical soils analysis, to demonstrate compliance with applicable codes and standards for the proposed development, including foundation design.

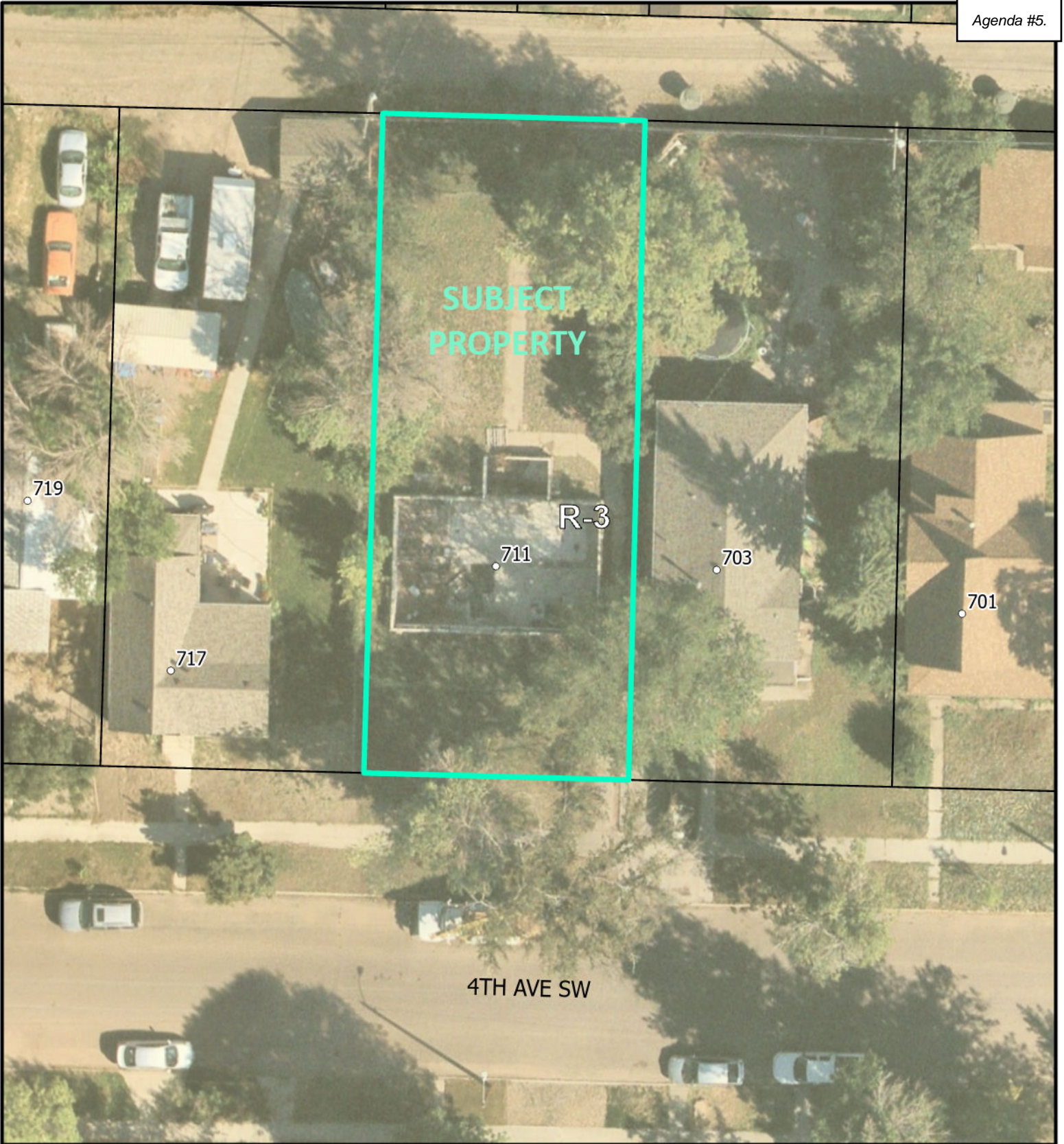
**Staff Recommendation:** Based on the findings for the Basis of Decision, staff recommends approval of the variance request.

**Alternative:** The Board of Adjustment could choose to deny the variance request if the Board determines the request does not meet each of the basis of decision criteria. For such action, the Board must provide alternative Basis of Decision findings to support the denial.

**Attachments:**

- Location and Zoning Map
- Narrative
- Site Plan





SUBJECT  
PROPERTY

R-3

719

717

711

703

701

4TH AVE SW

# Location and Zoning Map

Parcels



711 4th Ave SW



CITY OF GREAT FALLS  
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT.  
P.O. BOX 5021, GREAT FALLS, MT, 59403-5021  
406.455.8430 • WWW.GREATFALLSMT.NET

# VARIANCE APPLICATION

**Variance Fee: \$2,500**

Mfg Home on Existing Foundation

711 4th Ave SW, GREAT FALLS MT 59404

**Name of Project (if applicable):**

**Project Address:**

NINE BLESSINGS LLC

**Applicant/Owner Name:**

2120 S Reserve St, #541, Missoula, MT 59801

**Mailing Address:**

720-702-9887

admins@ixblessings.com

**Phone:**

**Email:**

Zach Backes

**Representative Name:**

406-313-8775

zach@ixblessings.com

**Phone:**

**Email:**

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

LOT 10, BLOCK 558,

**Lot/Block/Subdivision:**

SIXTH ADDITION TO GREAT FALLS TOWNSITE, CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA

**Section/Township/Range:**

## ZONING AND LAND USE (TO BE COMPLETED BY STAFF):

**Existing Zoning:**

**Existing/Proposed Land Use:**

## VARIANCE REQUEST:

The existing foundation encroaches in the setback on 2 sides of the property by 1 foot or less.

We request a variance to allow us to use this existing foundation and place a new construction manufactured home on it.

I (We), the undersigned, understand that the filing fee accompanying this application is not refundable. I (We) further understand that the fee pays for the cost of processing, and the fee does not constitute a payment for approval of the application. I (We) further understand that public hearing notice requirements and associated costs for land development projects are my (our) responsibility. I (We) further understand that other fees may be applicable per City Ordinances. I (We) also attest that the above information is true and correct to the best of my

*Nine Blessings LLC*

01/27/2026

**Applicant/Owner's Signature:**

**Date:**

*Zach Backes*

01/27/2026

**Representative's Signature:**

**Date:**



# Variance Application Checklist

All applicants are required to complete and submit the Variance Application, \$2,500 fee, checklist, and required material per the checklist for the proposed development. This fee is non-refundable whether the request is approved or not. No processing will be performed until this fee has been paid. The applicant will also be responsible for the costs associated with publishing the legal ad.. Per the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF) Title 17 - Land Development Code, applicants requesting a variance is required to have a pre-submittal meeting with City Staff.

**APPLICANT SHALL SUBMIT ALL INFORMATION THAT IS MARKED REQUIRED BY STAFF FOR A COMPLETE SUBMITTAL**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE REQUESTED IF APPLICABLE**

Variance Application Requirements		Req.	App.	Staff
<b>Variance Description</b>	Please attach a narrative that addresses the following criteria in detail and provides a full explanation of the project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The variance is not contrary to the public interest</li> <li>▪ A literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship, owing to conditions unique to the property.</li> <li>▪ The spirit of this Title would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the variance</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Site Plan Requirements</b>	Site Plan shall include all applicable items per Title 17 - Appendix A : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Title Block containing project name, developer and landowner name, north arrow, graphic scale, property boundaries, and acreage of subject property</li> <li>▪ Land Use/Development Standards tables with applicable information</li> <li>▪ Existing buildings and site amenities as applicable including; contours, wetlands, existing vegetation, water resources, floodplains</li> <li>▪ All proposed buildings and site features including, access drives, pedestrian facilities, parking, landscaping, and lighting per Title 17 requirements</li> <li>▪ All proposed utilities and stormwater facilities</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Processing the Application

**Determination of completeness.** Within ten (10) days of submittal, the Planning and Community Development shall determine if the application is complete. If the application is deemed incomplete, it shall be returned to the applicant and the applicant has six (6) months to resubmit the application or forfeit the application fee. Planning Staff shall take no further steps to process the application until the deficiencies are remedied.

**Notice.** Prior to the Board of Adjustment hearing, staff shall provide for public notice, property owner notification, and agency notification. A legal ad is published in the newspaper and property owners within 150’ of the subject variance are notified by mail of the request and the date and time of the hearing.

**Public hearing.** Allowing for proper notice, the Board of Adjustment shall hold a public hearing to review the application. Citizens or neighbors may address any comments, questions or concerns at the hearing or send written material to the Planning & Community Development Department.

**Decision.** Within thirty (30) days of the determination of completeness, the Board of Adjustment shall approve the variance request, approve it with conditions, or deny it. Such decision shall be in writing and shall include the findings in support of its decision and if approved, any conditions as may be imposed.

**Applicant notification.** Within five (5) days following the decision, the director shall mail the applicant the original (signed) copy of the decision and retain a copy for the public record.

## Appealing a Board of Adjustment Decision

Under Montana State Law, you have the option of appealing any ruling made by the Board of Adjustment. The applicant an/or aggrieved person may appeal a final decision, made by the Board of Adjustment, by filing an appeal with a court of competent jurisdiction within 30 days of the final decision. (See: 76-2-327(1), MCA)

This property at 711 4th Ave SW had a home on it in which a demo permit was pulled in 2021, according to the Building Division. We acquired this property in late 2021 with the plan to place a new manufactured home on the existing foundation. We discussed the plan with the city and can make use of the existing foundation with some repairs to meet current code and the home manufacturer requirements.

What we were not aware of until after we purchased the land and completed the survey is that the existing foundation encroaches into the setback by 1 foot on one side and 8 inches on the other. City code 17.64.030 allows this type of encroachment to be "grandfathered" in so long as the new build is completed within 24 months.

Our plan is to place a brand new 2 bedroom 2 bathroom manufactured home on that foundation, bringing some much needed housing to Great Falls and specifically that area. The cost for us to demolish the existing foundation and build a new one, however, would cost around \$60-\$70k, which makes the project financially unviable. Our only feasible option with this land is to utilize what is currently there and place a new home on it.



CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 1481  
GREAT FALLS, MT 59403  
(406) 727-3687

## MANUFACTURED HOUSING PLAN

**OWNER:** Nine Blessings  
**DATE:** Dec. 15, 2025  
**LOCATION:** 711- 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW  
Great Falls, MT

### HOME SPECIFICATIONS:

**Make & Model:** Fleetwood Homes - Multi Section  
**Length:** 40'  
**Width:** 26'  
**Height:** 7-1/2  
**Roof Slope:** 3:12  
**Weight:** 31,200 lbs. (15.6) Tons

### DESCRIPTION

A 26 ft. by 40 ft. cast-in-place concrete basement foundation already exists (see drawing). The basement foundation wall is 8 inches wide and 80 inches high. A 6 inch wide by 10 inch high concrete stem wall, has been added on the top of the existing basement wall. The 10 inch high concrete wall has to be completely removed, leaving the top of the basement wall clean of any concrete debris. An 8 feet wide, by 13 feet long, addition has been added on the north end of the basement foundation. The addition was apparently used as an outside stairway for access to the basement, and to the main floor level of the home.

There are two openings on all four sides of the basement foundation walls. The openings were prior windows for the basement. The openings are each about 3 feet wide and about 20 inches deep.

There are three 5-1/2 inch diameter and one 3-1/2 diameter steel pipes in the middle of the basement, previously used for support columns for a prior wood load bearing main floor beam. The wood beam has been removed. The steel posts set on a 12 inch wide concrete footing. I recommend the four steel posts be removed.

The chassis for the manufactured home consists of four longitudinal steel I-beams with a depth of 10-1/4 inches, and a flange width of 3-1/2 inches. The beams are spaced approximately 3 feet from each exterior side with a 7 feet spacing to the interior beam. The interior beams are about 5-1/2 feet apart.

### Chassis Support

It is planned that four steel I-Beams (W8x21) will be added across the width of the home, and terminate on top of the existing concrete foundation wall. The beams will be spaced on approximate 8 ft centers (see drawing). High strength adjustable steel jack posts will be placed under each beam at the mid-span of the basement. The steel posts must be extend from the footing, to the bottom of the cross beam (approx. 81 inches), and have a minimum load capacity of 10,000 pounds each.

The cross beams will each be 25 ft. x 6 inches long, and centered so each end of the beam will set on the top of foundation wall 6-1/2 inches. A 2x 6-1/2 in. pressure treated wood sill plate with a foam seal under the plate will be anchored into the top of foundation wall. A 2 x 8-1/2 inch long pressure treated rim joist will set on the outer edge of the foundation wall secured to the bottom sill plate (see drawing). A 6 inch wide, 3/8 inches thick steel angle plate, 4 inches by 6 inches, with the long side anchored to the side of the concrete foundation wall. Once the cross beams are set on top of the foundation, the angle iron brace will be welded to the bottom of the cross beams. Additionally, each cross beam will be welded to the bottom of the two outside chassis beams. The welded beams will provide the required anchorage per the **HUD 7584** requirements to prevent slipping and tipping.

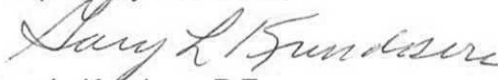
The foundation conforms in general, to **Type E5 in the September 1996 HUD 7584 Permanent Foundations Guide for Manufactured Housing**. A **Type E5** foundation includes a reinforced concrete foundation wall, with transverse steel cross beams. The **Type E5** foundation is suitable for high wind, seismic, and frost zones.

### SUMMARY

The manufactured home planned for this location meets the requirements of the **September 1996 HUD 7584 Handbook** and the design parameters for a manufactured home **Type E5** permanent foundation.

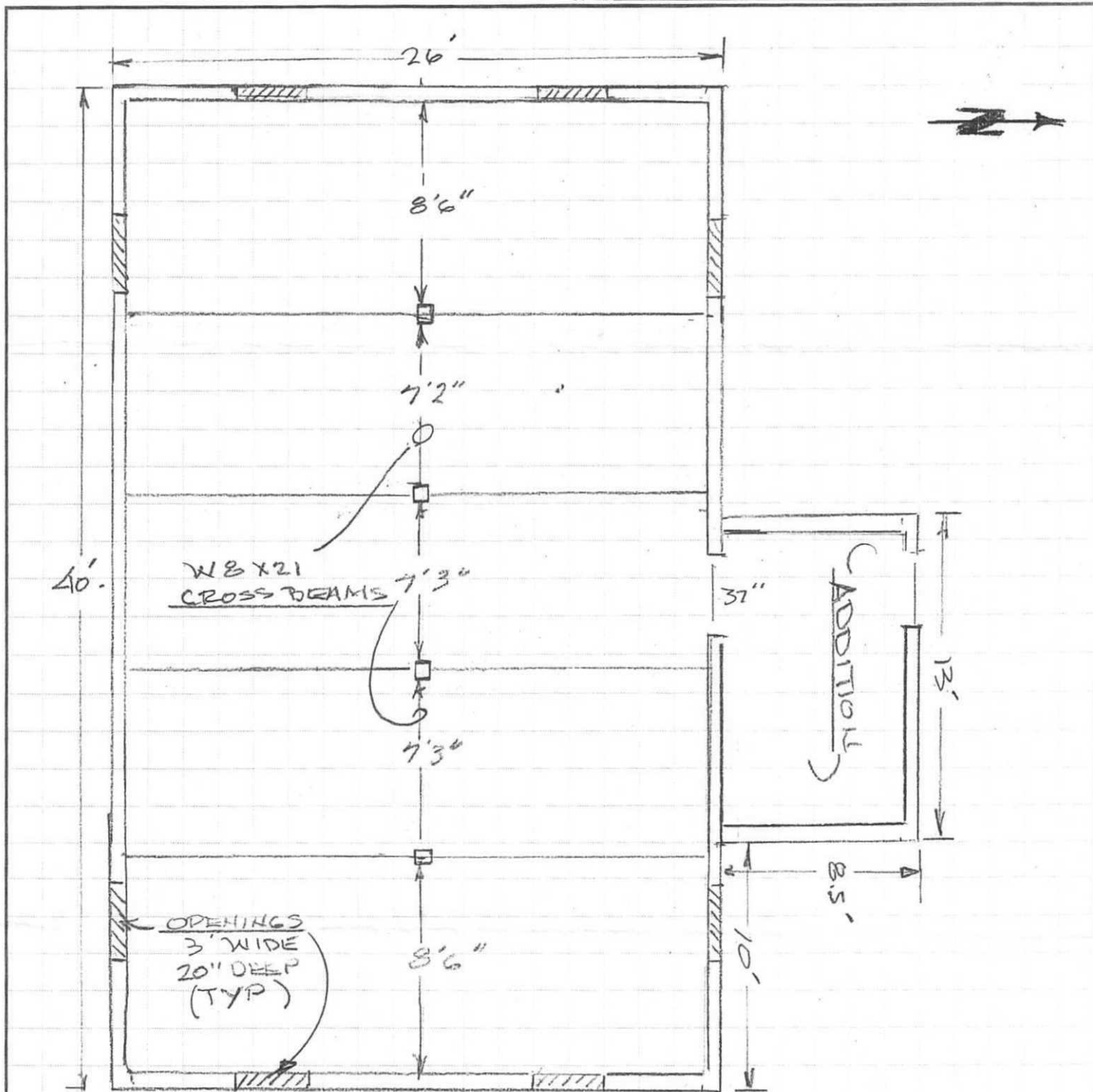
The home is new.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gary L. Knudson, P.E.  
Montana Professional Engineer No. 3192E





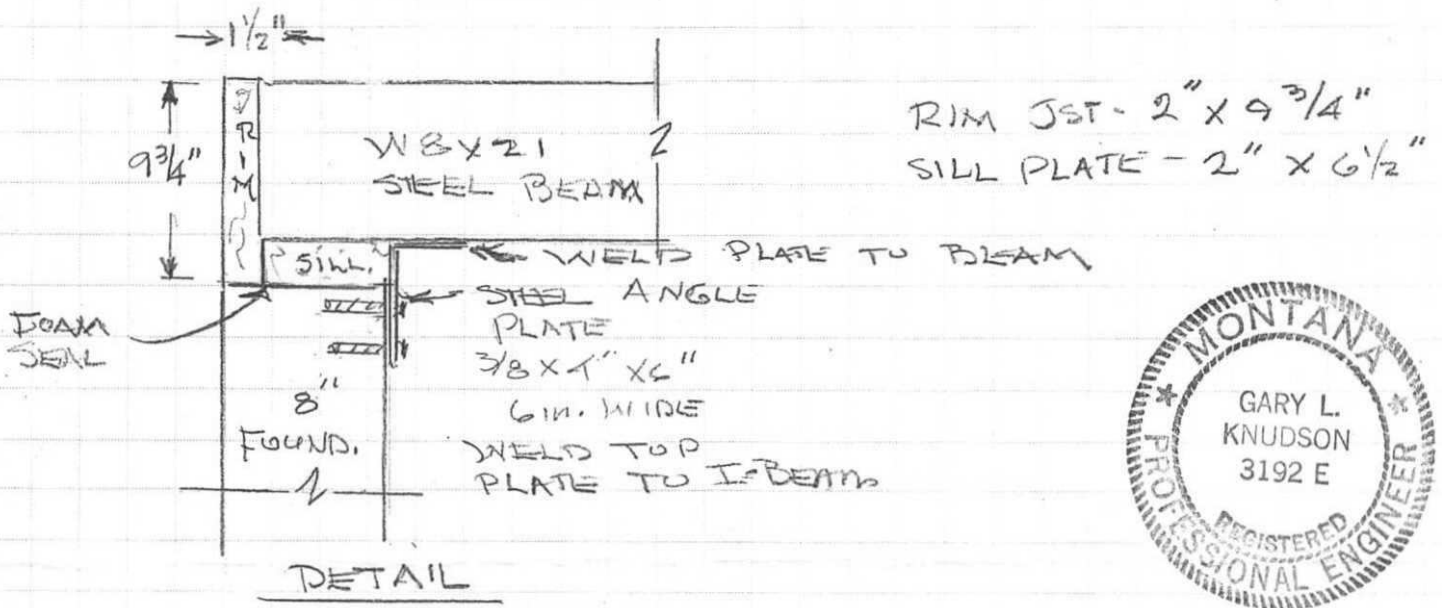
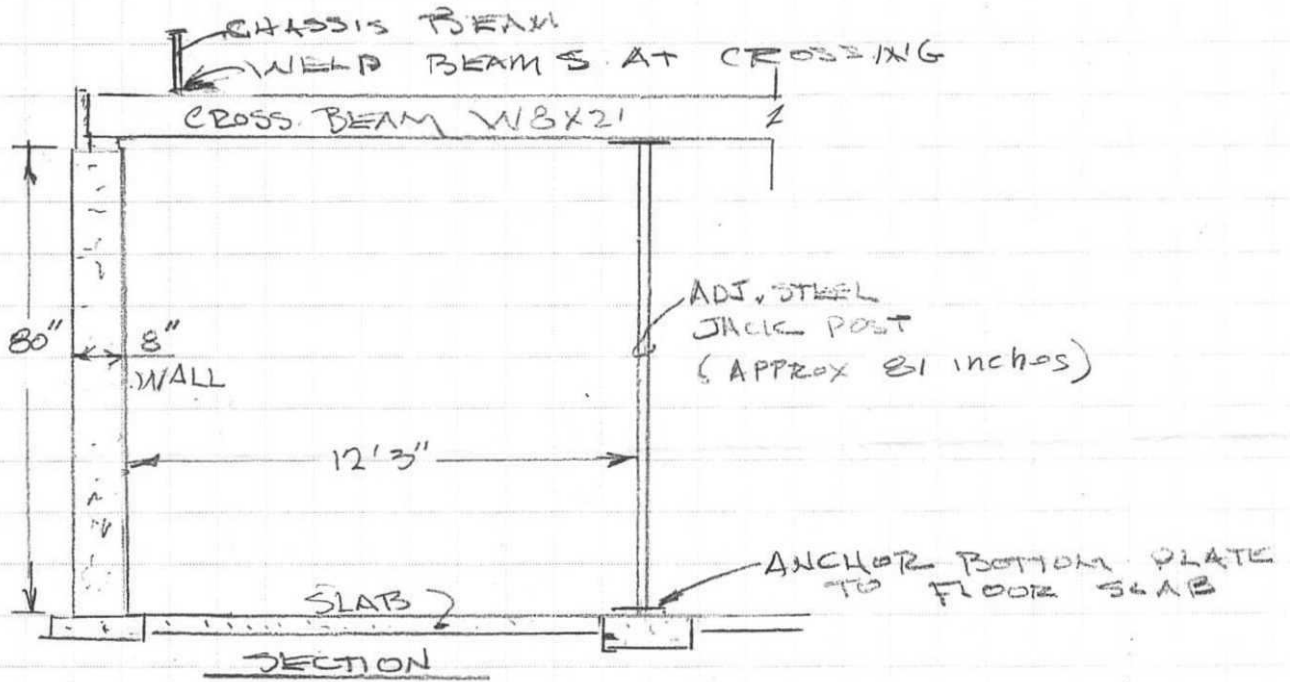
BSMNT PLAN

CROSS BEAMS - 4-W8x21 25 1/2' EACH

MARRIAGE WALL - ON CROSS BEAMS

WOOD TIMBERS - 6in x 8in x 12 inches  
ADD 2x8 WOOD BLOCKS ON TOP  
w/ HARDWOOD SHIMS

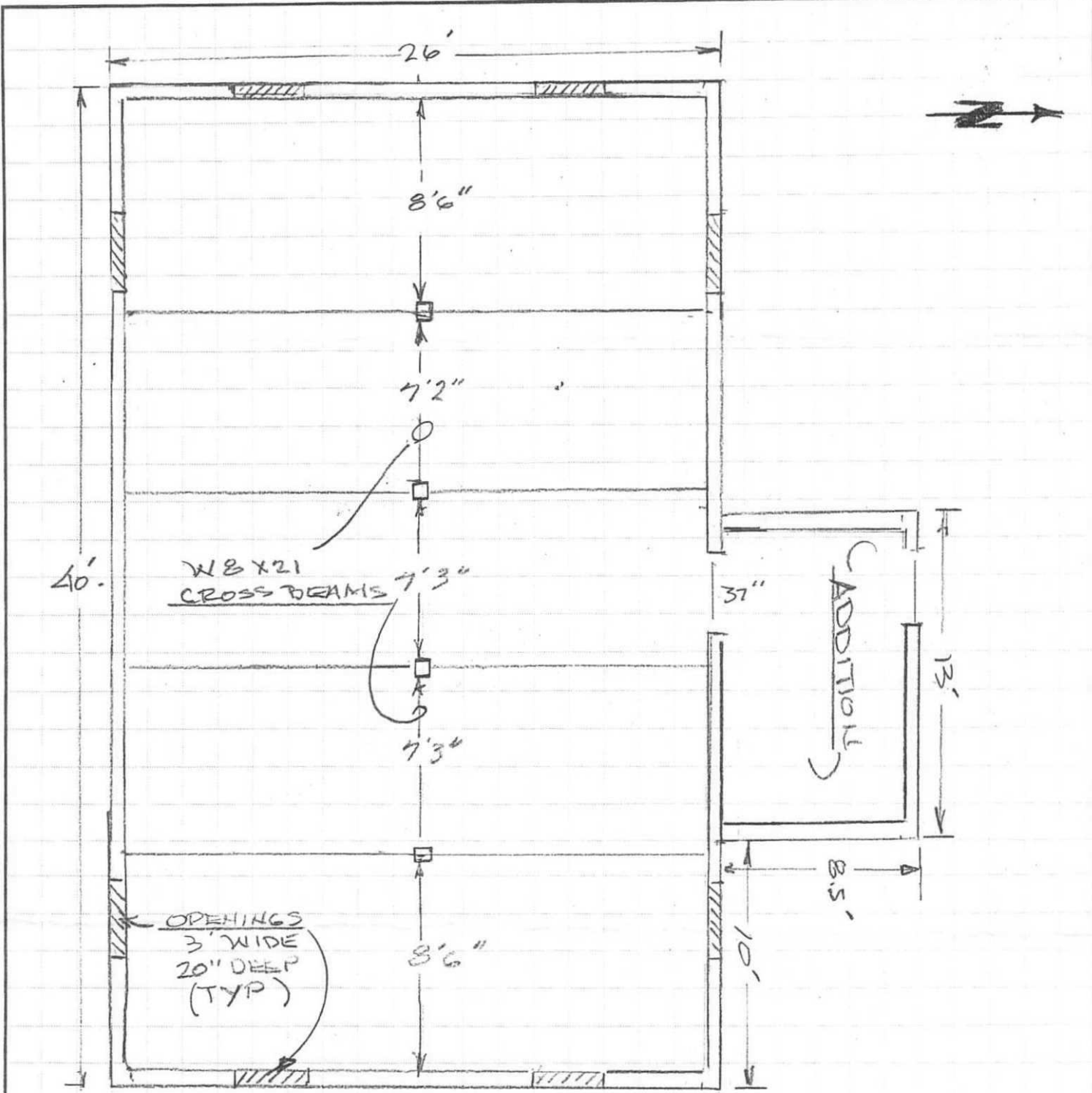




NOTES:

- o MUD SILL TO FOUNDATION ANCHOR BOLTS -  
 $\frac{1}{2}$ "  $\phi$  STEEL ANCHORS EMBEDDED INTO  
 CONC. FOUNDATION WALL 7" MIN, EVERY 4 FEET.  
 BOLT HEADS RECESSED INTO SILL PLATE
- o STEEL PLATES -  $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 4" x 6" - 6" WIDE  
 ANCHORED INTO FOUNDATION WALL -  
 WITH  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ " CONC. ANCHOR WEDGE BOLTS  
 4 BOLTS PER PLATE



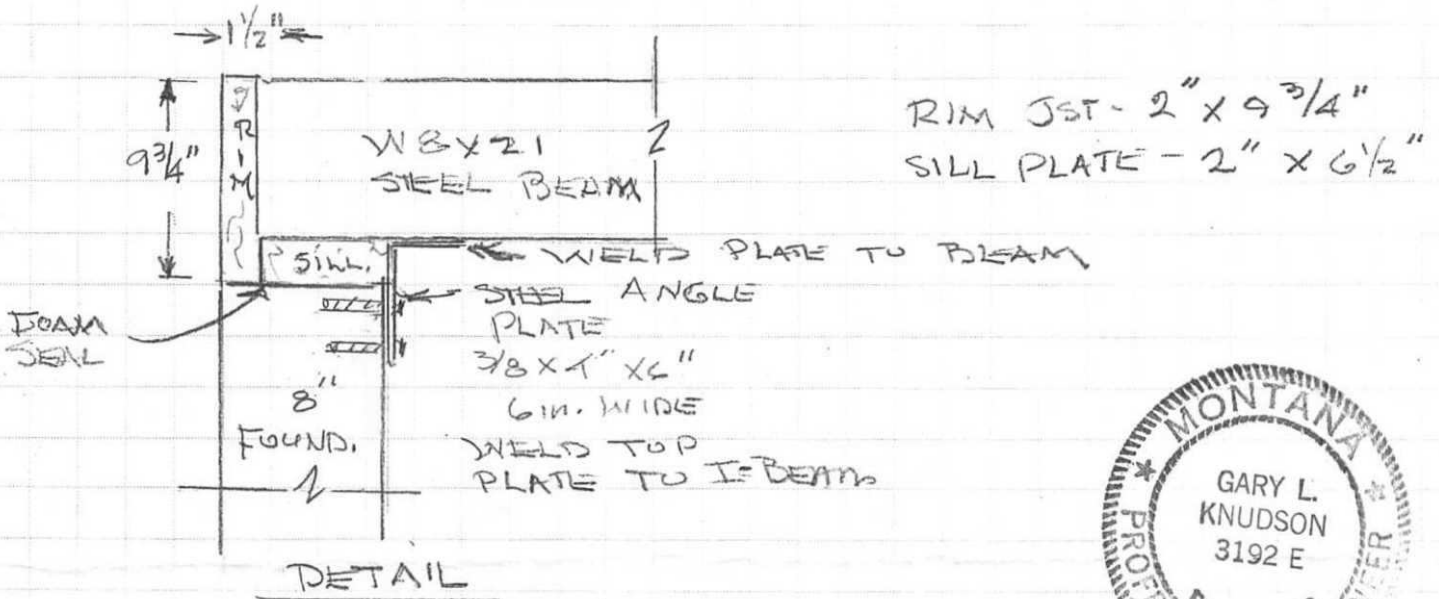
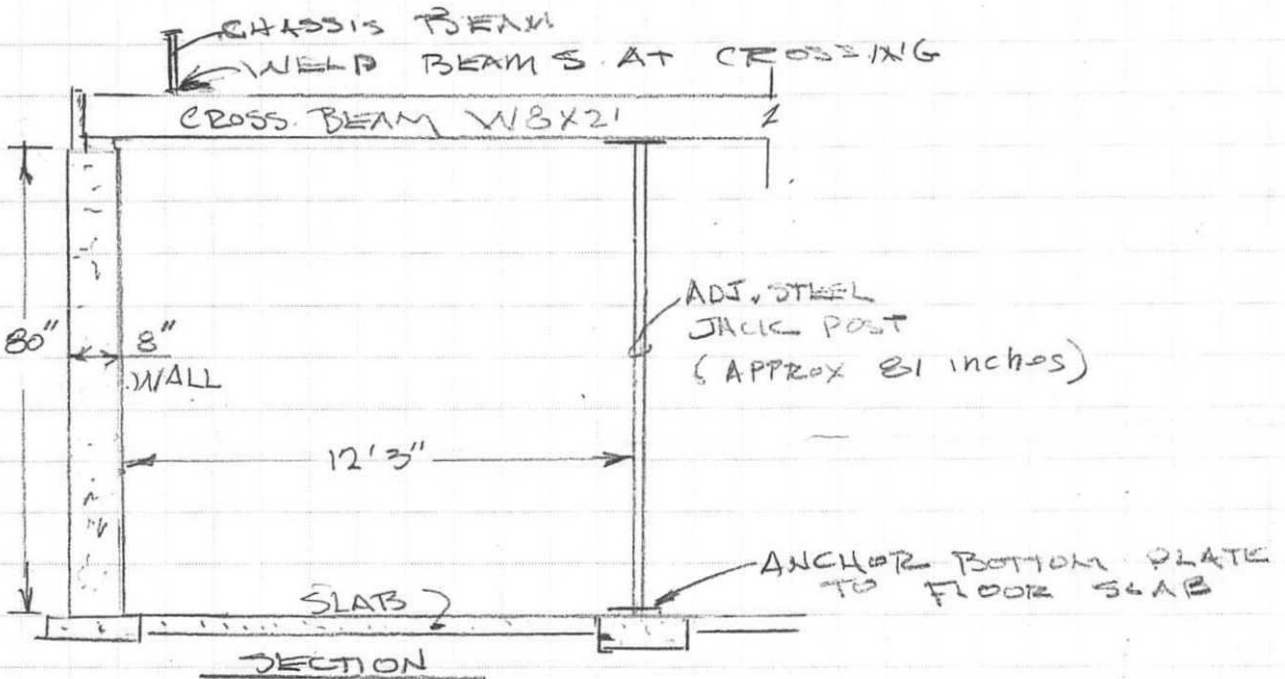


BSMNT PLAN

CROSS BEAMS - 4-WB X 21 25 1/2' EACH

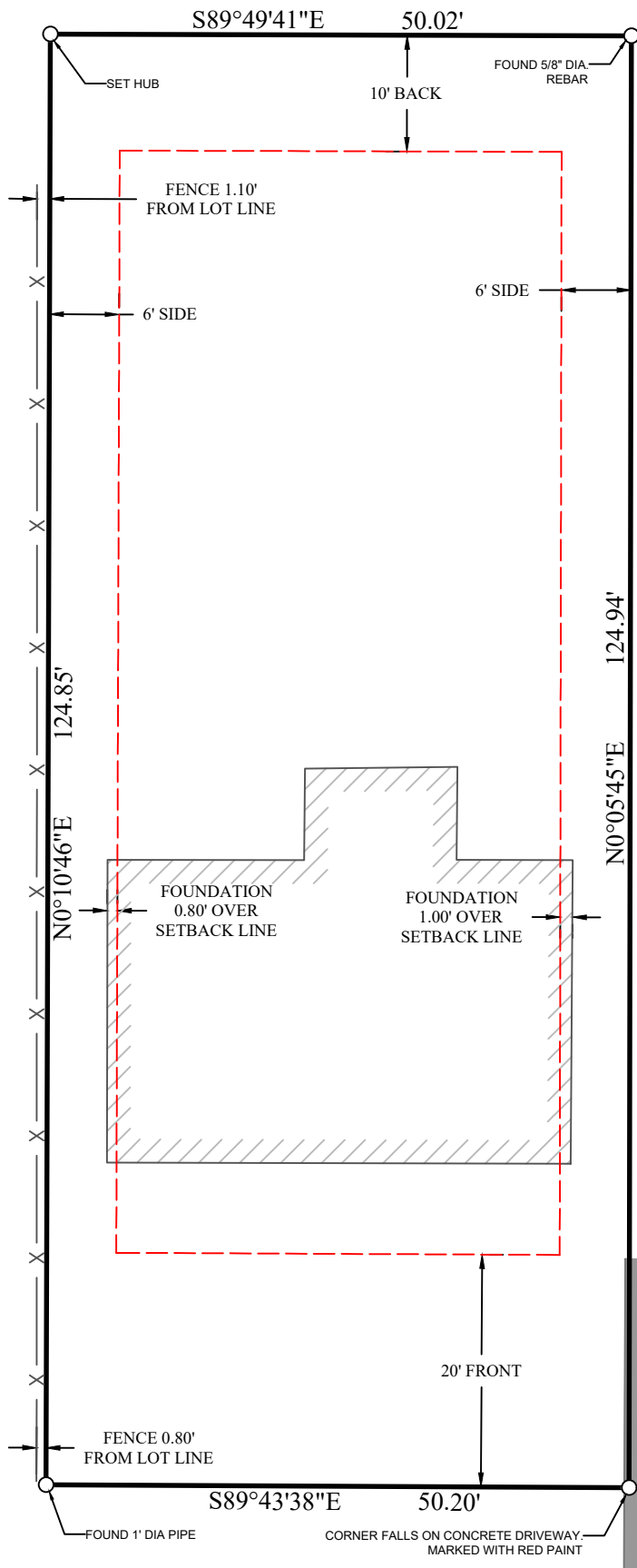
MARRIAGE WALL - ON CROSS BEAMS  
WOOD TIMBERS 6in. x 8in. x 12 inches LONG  
ADD 2in x 2in wood blocks ON TOP w/ HARDWOOD STIMS





NOTES:

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ANCHORED INTO FOUNDATION WALL -  
WITH  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $3\frac{3}{4}$ " CONC. ANCHOR WEDGE BOLTS  
4 BOLTS PER PLATE



- SURVEY NOTES:**
1. IT IS NOT PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY TO SHOW ALL EASEMENTS OF RECORD.
  2. THIS IS NOT AN ALTA/NSPS SURVEY
  3. THIS IS NOT A CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY
  4. RETRACEMENT SURVEY IS COMPLETED BY MONTANA LICENSED SURVEYOR, TAMER AVCI, LICENSE NO: 60171 L.S.



**LEGEND**

	BOUNDARY LINE
	SETBACK LINE
	FENCE
	EXISTING FOUNDATION

**ATLAS LAND SURVEYS**  
 www.atlaslandsurveys.com  
 406-868-4865  
 PO BOX 2796, Great Falls, MT, 59403

**BOUNDARY LINE RETRACEMENT**  
 711 4TH AVENUE SOUTHWEST, GREAT FALLS, MT  
 LOT 10, BLOCK 558  
 GREAT FALLS 6TH ADDITION

PROJECT	2025-81
DATE	12/29/2025

**FIGURE #** 17