

This is the current West Garden. The numbers refer to altitude, in feet. The Assembly Room floor (and the new Elevator Foyer floor) are at about 103.

The garden rises 14 feet to the north and west, reaching 117 in the NW corner. The Meeting Room and Quaker House Living Room are at 114, about 11 feet (19 steps) above the Assembly Room level.

From the Assembly Room, you have to go up three steps to get to the door that takes you out into a concrete trench, from which another set of stairs takes you up onto the mulch-covered bottom of a hillside that covers the entire 8,000 sq. ft. garden space.

None of it is wheelchair-accessible, and much of it is of little practical use and rarely visited.

The slope of the present play area is gradual enough to allow a wheelchair to ascend, if not for the mulch and if there were any way for a wheelchair to reach that space.

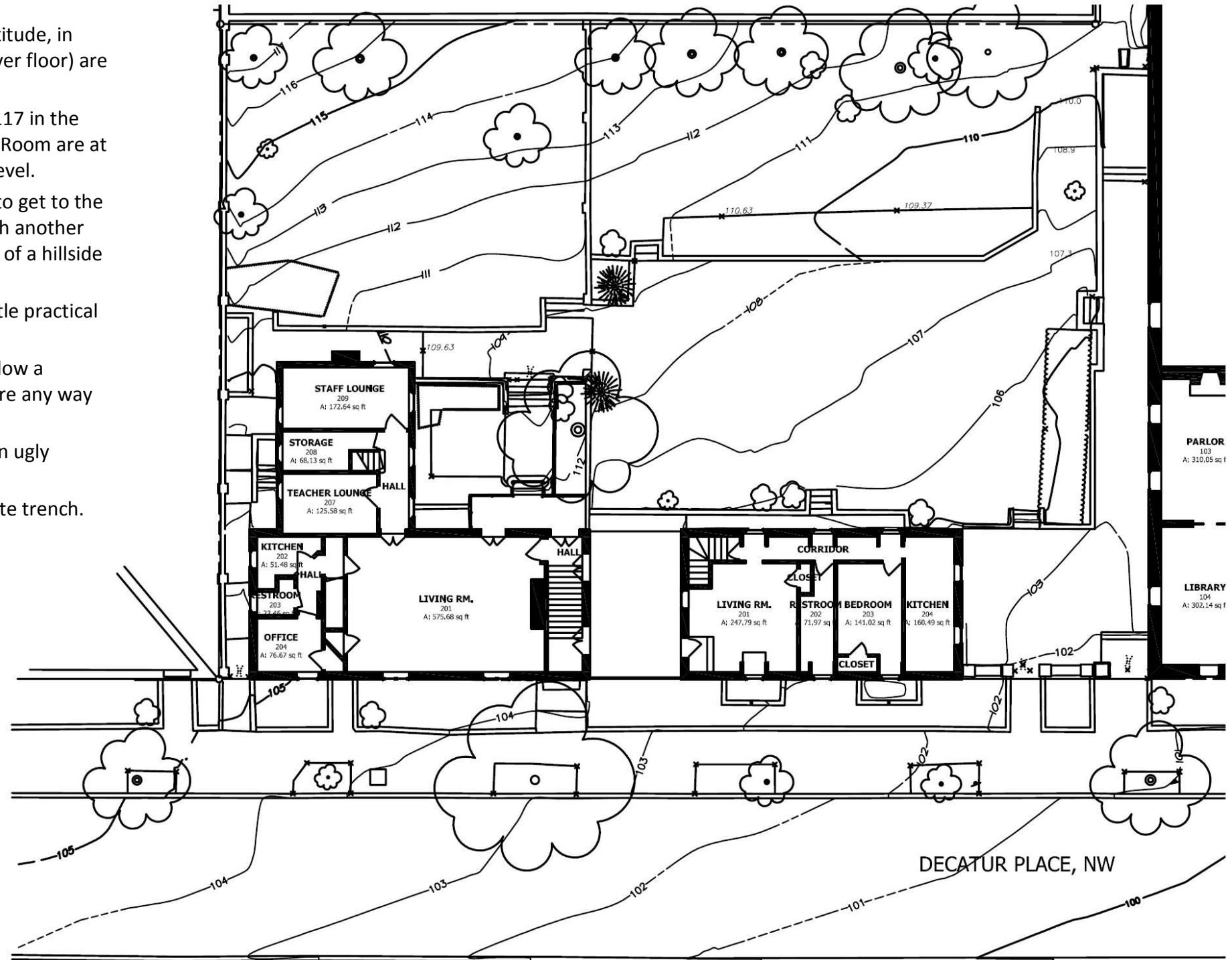
The kitchen windows and door are set off, and down, in an ugly concrete trench about eight feet deep at the rear.

The Carriage House door is also at the bottom of a concrete trench.

To the north of Quaker House, two short flights of stairs take you down into a little valley, containing a sidewalk that is rarely used. This serves to cut the opposing hillside off from any useful purpose. The hillside is too steep for playground equipment, seating, an event tent, or other function. That hillside rises to the same level as the Quaker House Living Room and the Meeting Room, but there is no connection to that space.

The north-south wall that marks off the Quaker House yard rises more than 17 feet above the Assembly Room level and divides the hillside to no particular purpose.

The new Elevator Foyer will block access for construction equipment, so if we are ever to make major changes to this area, now is the time.



This is the plan that CITF and the architects have settled on as a “minimum” garden plan. It meets the basic criteria of lowering and leveling the east end of the garden so that Friends (including those in wheelchairs) can walk or roll out of the Assembly Room doors and onto a wheelchair accessible gathering space, and from there into the rear Foyer door or Carriage House door. The gathering space is partly bluestone pavers and partly grass.

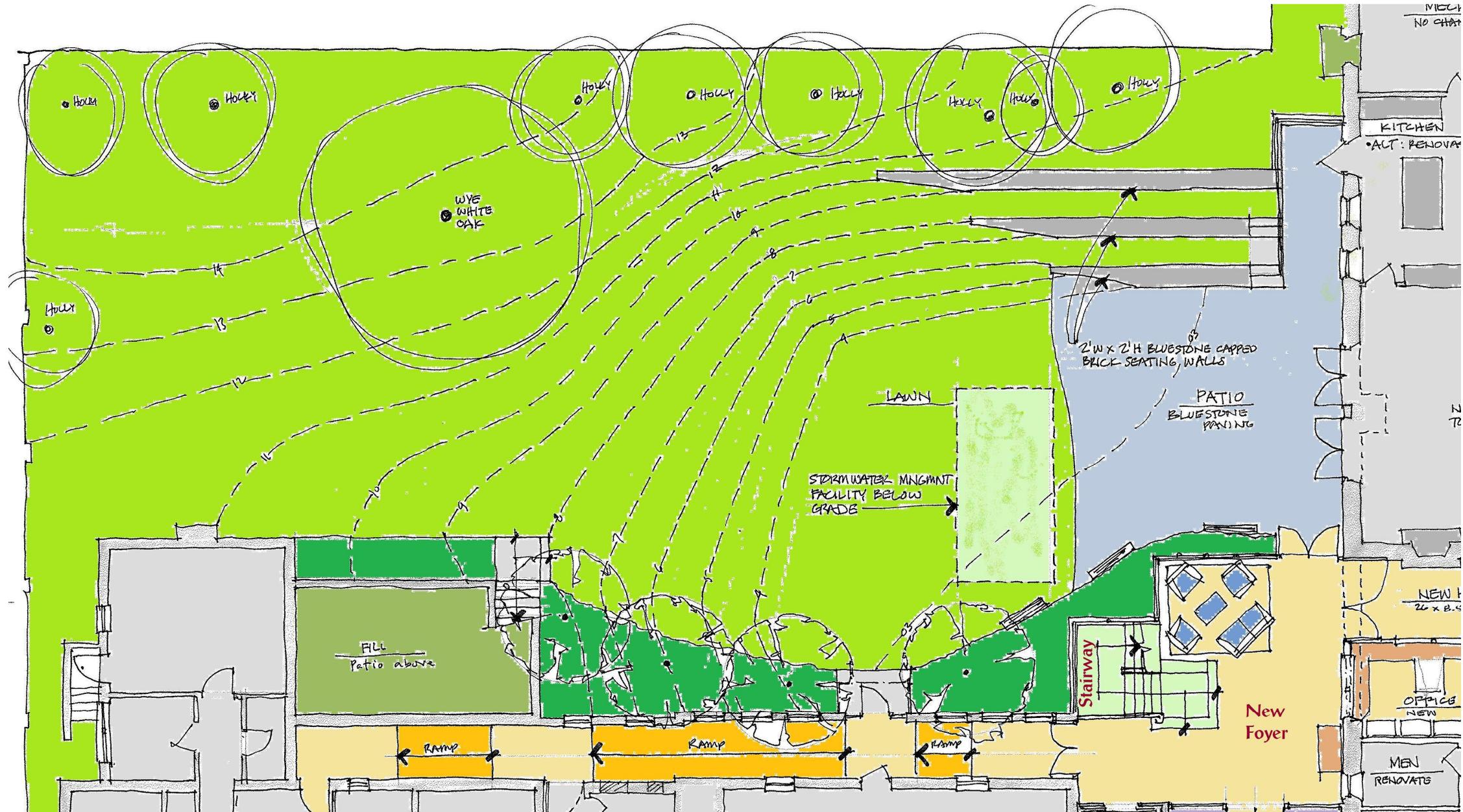
In order to create a lowered level gathering space at the Assembly Room level, the remaining hillside must be made steeper, or terraced with retaining walls.

In this minimum plan, short seating/retaining walls to the north of the patio step up the hillside, while the bulk of the space is one big hill, which serves to visually unify the space, but does not have much practical use.

The existing Assembly Room door and windows would be replaced by two large French doors at patio level, integrating the Assembly Room with the patio space.

A new patio, north of Quaker House Living Room is at the same level as the Living Room, so that it also will be wheelchair accessible.

From the patio, steps descend about six feet to the hillside.



This alternate and more expensive garden plan uses larger and longer retaining walls to create a much larger gathering area outside the Assembly Room doors, and to separate that space from the higher space north of Quaker House.

The lower gathering area rises at about a 5% grade:   
(perhaps a little steep for an event tent)

The kitchen alcove is widened, making it less trench-like. North of the lower gathering space is a curved seating wall, backed by a tall, straight retaining wall. Both walls rise to the west, with the taller wall being about 8 feet higher than the gathering area at each point.

At the west end of the gathering area, steps flank a series of seating walls, leading up to a Quaker House gathering area, created by partially filling in the present valley between Quaker House and the hill behind.

Two steps lead down from the new QH patio to the QH gathering area, so it's not perfectly accessible.

This design still devotes a moderate amount of space to maintaining a unifying gradation between the lower and upper spaces, but does create useful gathering and play areas in about 50% of the total space.



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This garden version uses curved retaining walls to provide an intermediate terraced area, separating two large gathering areas, both of which are level and wheelchair accessible providing even more level gathering space

The Assembly Room, kitchen, Foyer and Carriage House doors open onto the Assembly Room gathering area.

The Quaker House Living Room doors open onto the Quaker House gathering area, which is at the same level as the Meeting Room, 11 feet above the lower area.

The two areas are united only by steps leading up from the lower area. However the new connecting corridor would allow Friends to walk (or roll) out of the Meeting Room, turn left through the Foyer, down the corridor and directly out onto the new QH lawn, which provides a unifying connection of another kind.

From the upper terrace, the upper dividing wall would be only a few inches high.

Viewed from the Assembly Room area, the lower dividing wall would be about six feet high, and the upper wall would rise about 3½ feet above and well behind the lower wall. Trees and other plantings could perhaps make the terracing more decorative than divisive.

Wrought iron fencing would be needed along parts of the retaining walls to provide for child safety.

This design and the previous design offer the possibility of an accessible path along the north side from the QH gathering to the north Meeting Room door.



Identical to the previous plan, except that it provides a more direct route between the lower and upper doors.



Like the previous version, except the stairs take less space from the patio and the upper terrace grading is kinder to the existing white oak.

