

Freedom Motors USA

Cleveland Heights, OH

Conditional Use Permit Narrative and Standards for Conditional Use

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Business Description

Freedom Motors designs, manufactures and sells wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). The business was founded more than 25 years ago and has its headquarters and factory located in Battle Creek, Michigan. The company has designed and manufactured innovative conversions which integrate into OEM vehicles such as the Dodge Caravan, Toyota Sienna and Kia Soul to provide ramp systems and controls that allow people in wheelchairs and their caregivers to enter and operate the vehicles. This provides these disabled customers the freedom and independence to lead more normal lives.



Freedom Motors USA, Inc. is 100% owned by Sieto van Dillen as a Michigan Corporation which was established in 1997. Today the company has more than 100 employees and is considered one of the top manufacturers in the WAV manufacturing industry.

Project Summary

Freedom Motors currently utilizes dealers and a direct sales channel to sell products. Recently the company has developed a growth plan to open retail sales and service locations in major metropolitan areas. It is working to open its first store in Cleveland Heights where it has signed a three (3) year lease with GMG Cleveland, LLC for the facility at 2888 Mayfield Road. The facility has been used for automotive sales and service for more than 50 years and was previously granted a Conditional Use Permit under Proj. 15-10: Motorcars, Inc., d.b.a. Motorcars Mobility.

Freedom Motors is applying with the City of Cleveland Heights Planning Commission to use the facility for the same use; selling and servicing WAVs. It is currently applying for an automotive dealership license and other registrations with the State of Ohio.

Description of Proposed Conditional Use

Freedom Motors plans to operate a retail sales and service facility to provide WAVs for people with disabilities and their families. The use will include an indoor showroom that houses three WAVs for display to customers, a service center to perform repairs on the conversion (ramp system and equipment installed on the vehicle), and administrative functions for a retail operation including title and financing services for customers. The facility will provide parking for customer and employees, along with parking for storage of approximately thirty (30) WAVs to provide an adequate selection for customer purchases.

Freedom Motors plans to provide an attractive facility that matches the previous tenant use and will maintain the property building, parking lot and landscaping to meet acceptable local standards. The Freedom Motors facility will be a destination for customers with disabilities therefore the company does not rely on automotive marketing tactics to solicit drive by customer traffic. Since our product is a specialty product, there are relatively few customers visiting the facility at any one time thereby eliminating significant traffic burdens in the area.

Freedom Motors will serve the general metropolitan Cleveland area and plans to participate in local organizations and activities that involve people with disabilities who use our products. The single largest source of customers is referrals followed by relationships with medical and rehabilitation organizations such as the Veterans Administration, State of Ohio Vocal Rehabilitation, and local hospitals.

The sales process involves significant evaluation of customer needs such as use of the WAV as a driver or passenger, size of wheelchair, number of people riding in the vehicle and special equipment to operate the WAV such as hand controls and securement systems. It often involves a prescription from a doctor as the conversion is considered medical equipment. All Freedom Motors products are designed and manufactured to the highest safety standards in the industry.

Freedom Motors service operation exclusively repairs adaptive equipment and the conversion installed on the WAV chassis. It does not do regular maintenance such as oil changes and brake repair, so there are no hazardous materials stored on site. All service is conducted in the shop area so there should be no significant noise within the local community.

Standards for Conditional Use

- a) The conditional use will be in general accord with the purpose, intent and basic planning objectives of the Zoning Code. This use is consistent with the C-3 General Commercial zoning and the site's more than ½ century as an auto use. This use is well-suited to an arterial carrying 19,000 vehicles daily.
- b) The establishment, maintenance and operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare. The proposed change from one auto sales use to another should not impact the public health or welfare. The provision of WAVs to people with disabilities and their families in the community is a beneficial service.
- c) The conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and that such use will not essentially change the character of the same area. The essential character of the neighborhood will not be substantially altered by substituting one auto use for another.
- d) The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood. The use is similar to the auto uses that have been at this site since it was developed more than 60 years ago.
- e) The establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district. No changes to the site layout are proposed and this use should not impede other development.
- f) Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided. No site changes are proposed and should not impact utilities, drainage, etc.
- g) Adequate measures will be taken to provide ingress and egress designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets. The proposed mobility business should cause no traffic congestion as the market for these WAVs is much smaller than a traditional automotive retailer.
- h) The establishment of the conditional use will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community by creating excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities such as police, fire and schools. Property tax and income tax from this parcel would help the delivery of governmental services. Trash pick-up by the City's Service Department would not be needed and no exceptional demands for governmental services are anticipated.
- i) There is minimal potential for future hardship on the conditional use that could result from the proposed use being surrounded by uses permitted by right that are incompatible. No hardships are anticipated with the project.
- j) The conditional use shall address the sustainability guidelines of Section 1165.06.
- k) The conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located as well as the specific supplemental conditions set forth in Chapter 1153.

Supplemental Standards for Conditional Use

Automobile Sales, New or New and Used, and Auto Rental.

Freedom Motors manufacturers WAVs and this location at 2888 Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights, OH will engage in the sale and service of such vehicles. This includes:

- a) Sale of new and used WAVs.
- b) Service and repair of the adaptive equipment in the vehicles.
- c) Installing minor aftermarket products specifically related to handicap use such as hand controls and securement systems.
- d) Financing and other related activities normally included in the sale of a vehicle.
- e) There will be no junk, inoperative or unlicensed vehicles stored on the property for more than forty-eight (48) hours.
- f) This is the reestablishment of an existing auto use and all wiring is in place.
- g) Signage that will comply with all governmental requirements.

Operating Hours

Freedom Motors will be open for business as follows:

Monday – Friday 9:00am to 6:00pm along with after hour appointments to meet customer needs.

Saturday – Sunday by appointment.

The location will be closed on major holidays.

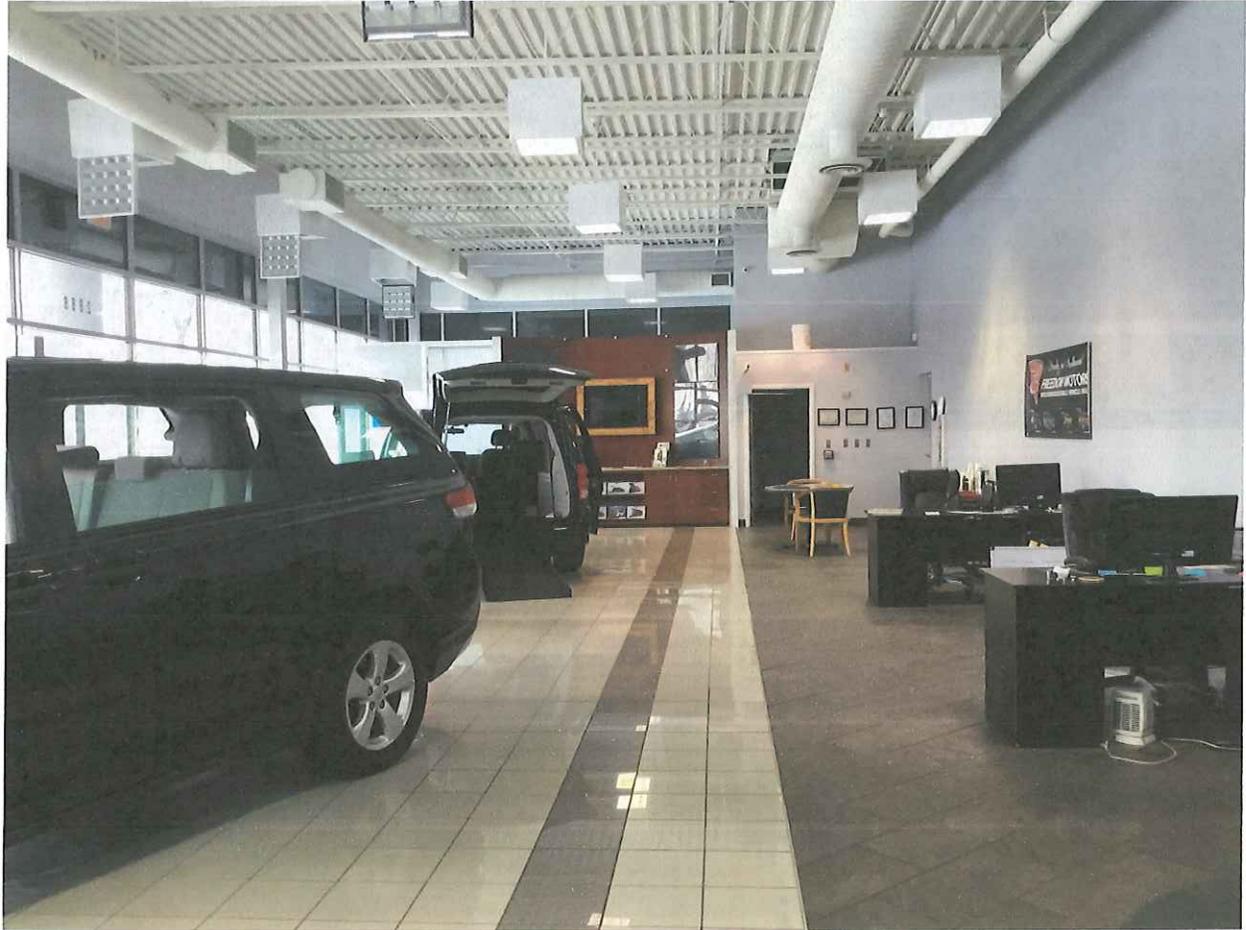
Key Personnel

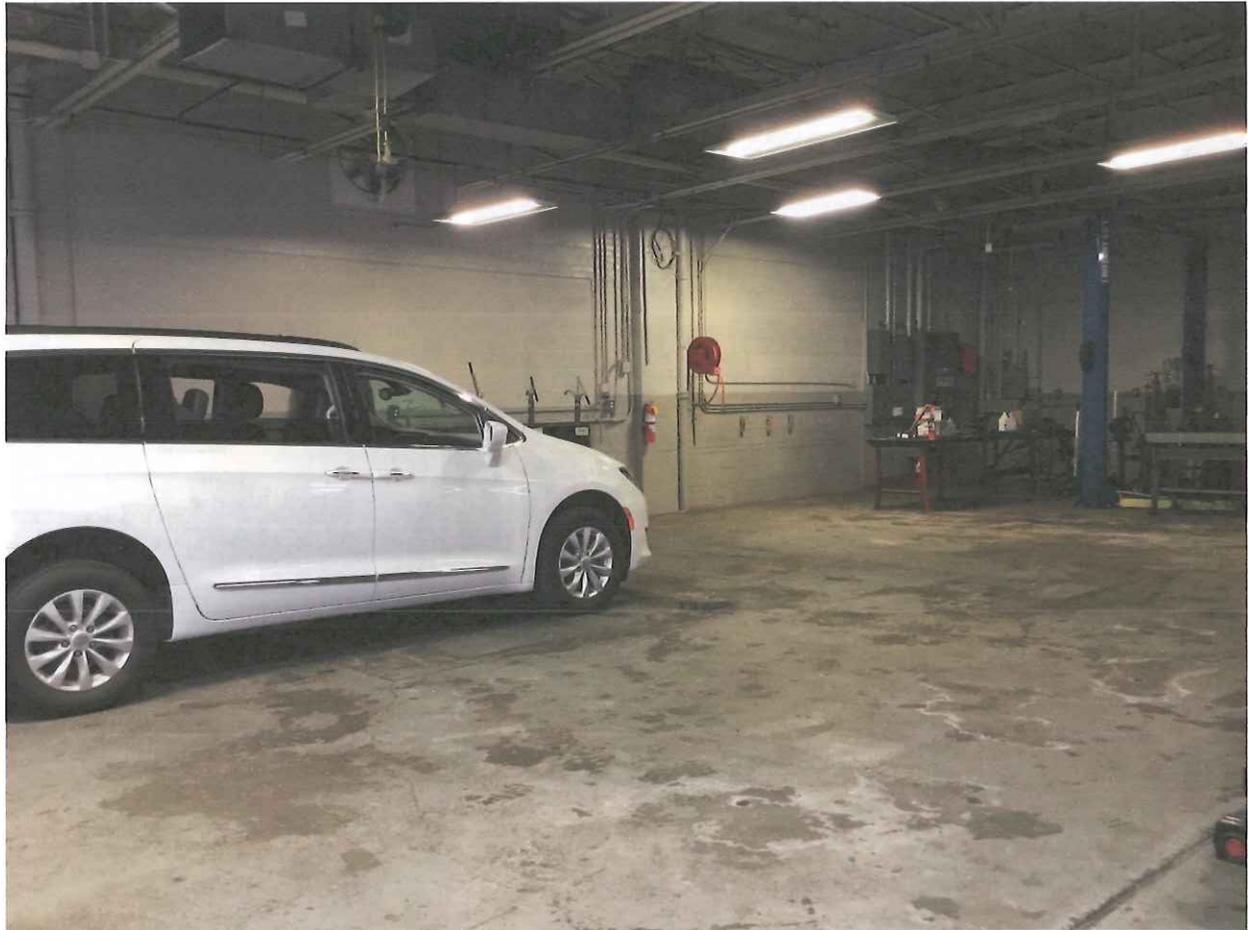
The Cleveland Heights store will plan to employ the following:

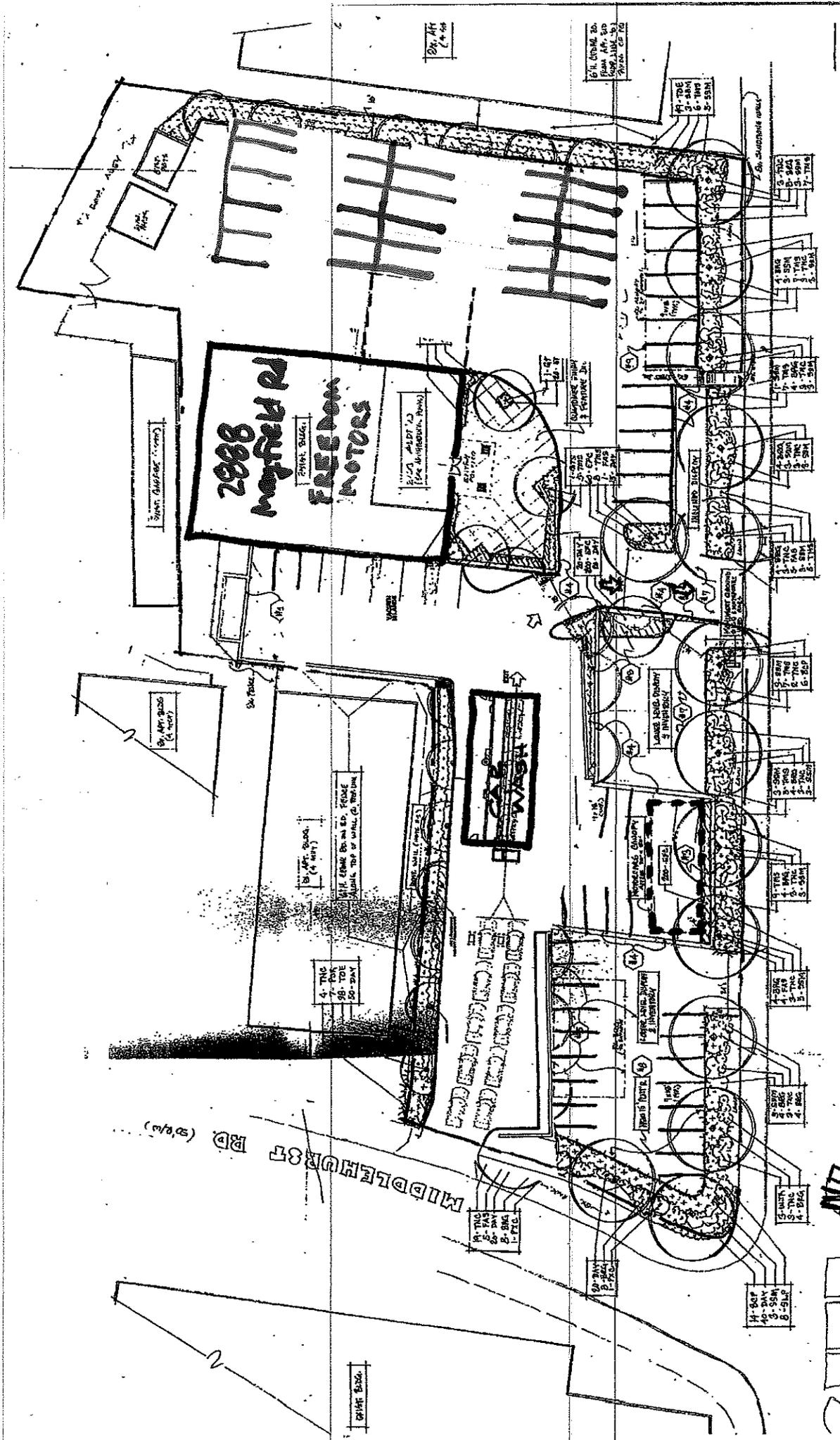
- General Manager
- Mobility Consultants (2)
- Service Technicians (2)
- Office Coordinator











MAYFIELD RD.

MT

1/2" DRAIN ALLEY 2'x4"

2888
MAYFIELD RD.
FREEDOM
MOTORS

WASH

MIDDLEBORO RD. (SR 138)

DR. AIR (7'x4')

6" H. CONCRETE ED. FROM AIR ED. (8'x4'x4'x4') (3'x4'x4')

1" TIE 2'-8 1/2" 3'-8 1/2" 4'-8 1/2"

3" TIE 3'-8 1/2" 4'-8 1/2" 5'-8 1/2"

4" TIE 4'-8 1/2" 5'-8 1/2" 6'-8 1/2"

5" TIE 5'-8 1/2" 6'-8 1/2" 7'-8 1/2"

6" TIE 6'-8 1/2" 7'-8 1/2" 8'-8 1/2"

7" TIE 7'-8 1/2" 8'-8 1/2" 9'-8 1/2"

8" TIE 8'-8 1/2" 9'-8 1/2" 10'-8 1/2"

9" TIE 9'-8 1/2" 10'-8 1/2" 11'-8 1/2"

10" TIE 10'-8 1/2" 11'-8 1/2" 12'-8 1/2"

11" TIE 11'-8 1/2" 12'-8 1/2" 13'-8 1/2"

12" TIE 12'-8 1/2" 13'-8 1/2" 14'-8 1/2"

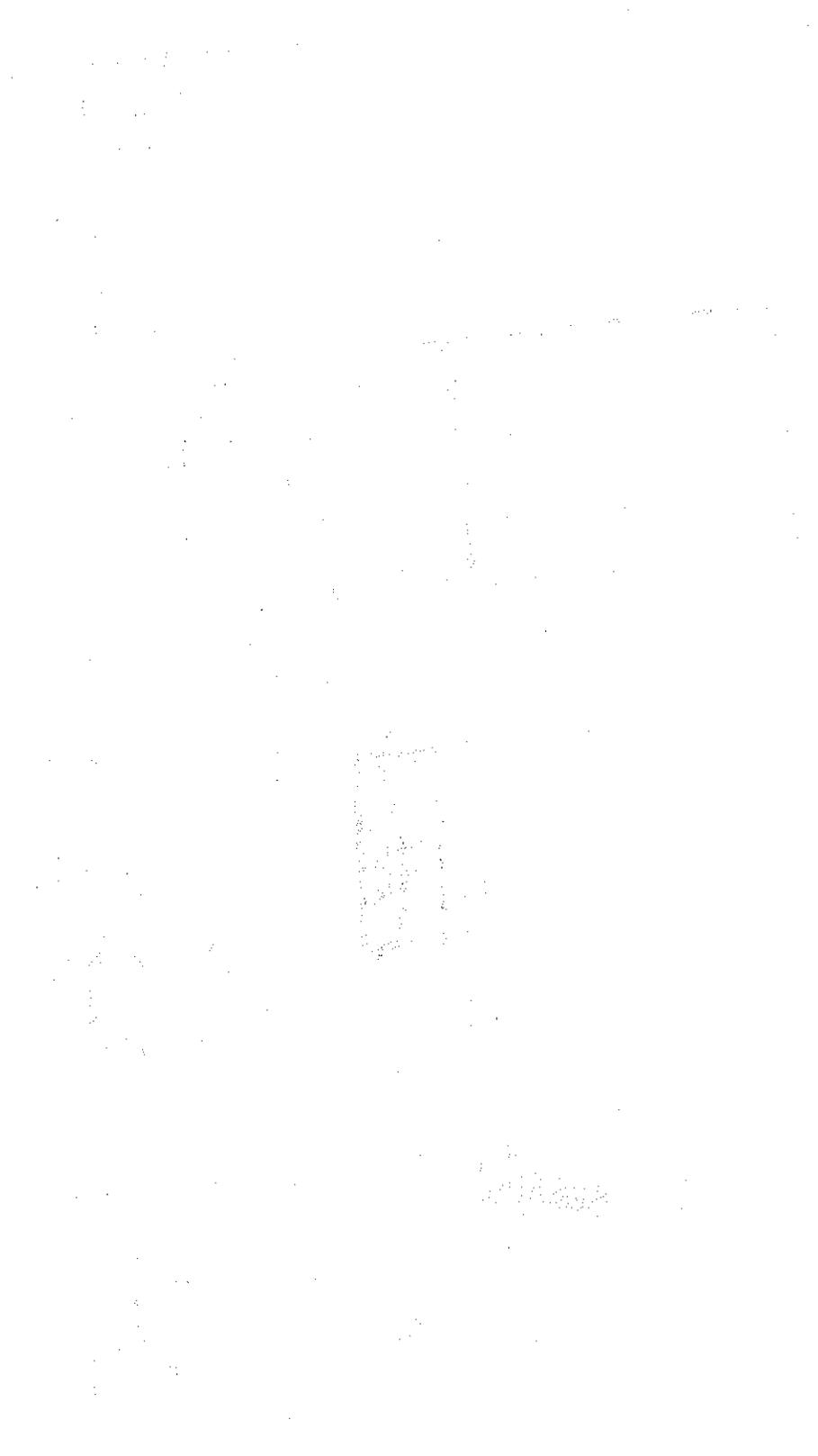
13" TIE 13'-8 1/2" 14'-8 1/2" 15'-8 1/2"

14" TIE 14'-8 1/2" 15'-8 1/2" 16'-8 1/2"

15" TIE 15'-8 1/2" 16'-8 1/2" 17'-8 1/2"

CONCRETE

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