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September 10, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Ms. Laura Shipman
Staff Liaison
Downtown Bethesda Design Advisory Panel
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: St. Elmo Apartments
Sketch Plan Amendment No. 32015004A

Dear Ms. Shipman:

We are pleased to have the opportunity to re-appear before the Downtown Bethesda Design Advisory Panel ("DAP") to discuss the St. Elmo Apartments Project. As you are aware, the above-referenced Sketch Plan Amendment was considered by the DAP at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 4, 2018 and was well received. The Sketch Plan Amendment currently is scheduled to be reviewed by the Montgomery County Planning Board on October 11, 2018. At Staff's suggestion, the Applicant is appearing before the DAP again, prior to the Planning Board hearing, to discuss two elements of the Project's design: (1) the Promenade façade, and (2) the building setback along Fairmont Avenue. We are submitting materials dealing with these two aspects of the Project for the DAP's review.

Promenade Façade

As reflected in Staff's memo, the building façade facing the promenade was the primary focus of the DAP's comments during the April 4th meeting. Specifically, a few of the DAP members expressed some concern with the bulkiness of the balconies and cantilevered projections along the promenade façade, specifically as they relate to the pedestrian experience. This concern also was expressed by Planning Director Gwenn Wright at the DAP meeting.

In response to the comments raised at the prior meeting, the Applicant made a number of revisions to this façade to "lighten" its appearance. The Applicant presented several design alternatives to Planning Director Gwen Wright, Chief, Senior Urban Designer Paul Mortensen, Leslye Howerton and Park and Planning Staff. As a result of this meeting, the Applicant eliminated the projecting balconies on Level 3 that were inboard of the two enclosed projections. Furthermore, the Applicant refined the balcony design to alternate solid parapets with open metal railings every other floor, on the remaining inboard balconies, to reduce any apparent mass of the cantilevers within the promenade. The Applicant believes these changes appropriately address the DAP's previously expressed concerns. The Planning Director and Park and Planning Staff present at the meeting all support this revised design to address the comments reflected above.

Fairmont Avenue Ground Plane

At the recent Development Review Committee meeting, Park and Planning Staff raised a question regarding the building's setback along Fairmont Avenue. This was not previously raised by the DAP or Staff in its prior review. Fairmont Avenue is classified in the Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines as a Downtown Mixed-Use Street. Buildings along Downtown Mixed-Use Streets are recommended to be located approximately 15-20 feet from the street curb. At that time, the Applicant proposed to provide a minimum of 14'-8" setback along Fairmont Avenue, to continue the building line established by the adjacent four-story building to the left of the Property. The Applicant has since discovered that the 14'-8" measurement is actually from face of curb to a 4" projecting water table, and that the building line is set back 15'-0". Staff's comment prompted us to take another look at this setback and it was through this review that we discovered that we do provide a 15 foot setback from the street curb on Fairmont Avenue, in strict conformance with the Design Guidelines. A 20 foot setback would have a dramatic negative impact on both the streetscape and the viability of the building – one the Applicant cannot accommodate. Furthermore, consistent with architectural and urban design principals, this 15 foot setback will align the main face of the subject structure with the main face of 4933 Fairmont, rather than its 4" projecting water table. Having said that, we believe providing the 15 foot setback eliminates the issue raised by Staff regarding the setback along Fairmont Avenue and conformance with the Design Guidelines.

Given the proximity of the proposed building to the adjacent 4-story building, the Applicant believes it is more important to match the building line established by the 4-story building, as opposed to the Bainbridge building which is separated by a 30'+ Promenade. Nonetheless, the subject building does setback further at grade, at the corner adjacent to the Promenade, to appropriately tie into the Promenade and provide a gesture to the Bainbridge. The

Applicant believes the building, as proposed, will result in an improved design for the pedestrian realm.

Given the existing development along Fairmont Avenue, a truly continuous building line is unlikely to exist in the foreseeable future. For example, the Bainbridge has a 10'-6" long concrete wall at grade, approximately 9'-8" tall at its southeast corner that projects into the streetscape, due to a discontinuous sidewalk grade condition of 8" to 9". The concrete wall is closer than 9' to the curb. Additionally, the Bainbridge building cantilevers approximately 4'-6" over the streetscape, starting at the second floor (only approximately 12 feet above grade). Furthermore, as one approaches Old Georgetown Road, the streetscape varies between 9'-6" and 14'-8", given the presence of the Fairmont Avenue Building and its associated garage, which are unlikely to be redeveloped anytime in the near future. For all of these reasons, we believe a 15 foot setback along Fairmont Avenue (that conforms to the Design Guidelines), as opposed to up to 20 feet, continues to best accomplish the goal of creating a continuous building line and results in an improved design for the pedestrian realm. We respectfully request the DAP reconfirm its acceptance of this condition along Fairmont Avenue.

We look forward to having the opportunity to share our revised plans and continue our discussion of the Project with the DAP on September 26th.

Very truly yours,

LERCH EARLY & BREWER, CHTD.



Steven A. Robins


Elizabeth C. Rogers

cc: Mr. Robert Kronenberg
Mr. Mark Pfefferle
Mr. Elza Hisel-McCoy
Ms. Grace Bogdan
Mr. Edward Lenkin
Ms. Nancy Bassing
David Schwarz/Craig Williams

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Submission Form

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	St. Elmo Apartments
File Number(s)	12015020A and 32015004A
Project Address	4931 and 4925 Fairmont Avenue and 4920, 4922, 4924, 4926, 4928 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland

Plan Type

Concept Plan ☐

Sketch Plan ☒

Site Plan ☐

APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact	Steve Cook	301-916-4100	scook@vika.com
Architect	Craig Williams, David M. Schwarz Architects, 202-862-0777, craig.williams@dmsas.com		
Landscape Architect	Becky May, Rhodeside-Harwell, 703-683-7447, beckym@rhodeside-harwell.com		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

	Zone	Proposed Height	Proposed Density
Project Data	CR 5.0, C-5.0, R-5.0, H-225'	225'	12.9 FAR
Proposed Land Uses	Multi-family residential, office, and retail		
Brief Project Description and Design Concept <i>(If the project was previously presented to the Design Advisory Panel, describe how the latest design incorporates the Panel's comments)</i>	See attached cover letter.		



Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Requested and Brief Justification	See attached cover letter.
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DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Schedule a Design Advisory Panel review date with the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.
Laura Shipman, Design Advisory Panel Liaison, laura.shipman@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4558
2. A minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled Design Advisory Panel meeting, provide the completed Submission Form and supplemental drawings for review in PDF format to the Design Advisory Panel Liaison via email.
3. Supplemental drawings should include the following at Site Plan and as many as available at Concept and Sketch Plan:
 - Property Location (aerial photo or line drawing)
 - Illustrative Site Plan
 - 3D Massing Models
 - Typical Floor Plans
 - Sections
 - Elevations
 - Perspective Views
 - Precedent Images





ST. ELMO APARTMENTS

2ND DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL PRESENTATION
SEPTEMBER 26, 2018



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THE LENKIN COMPANY



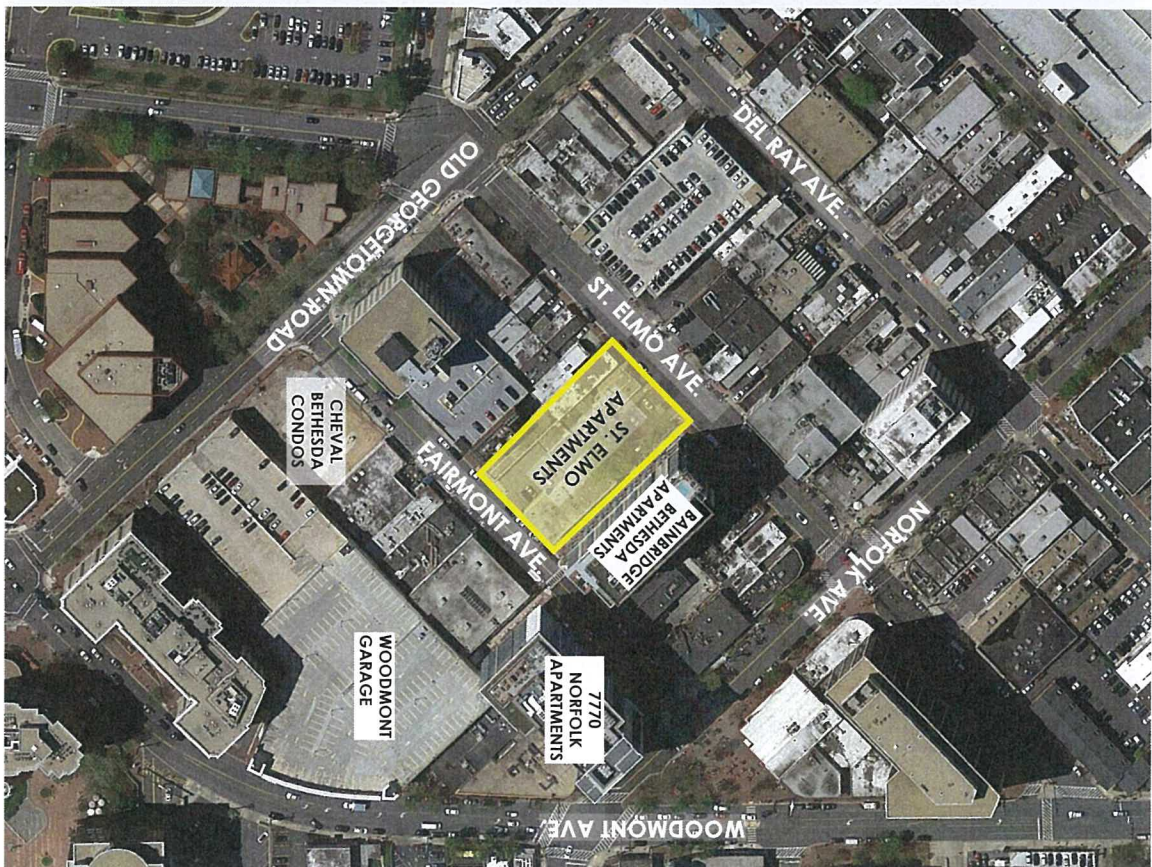
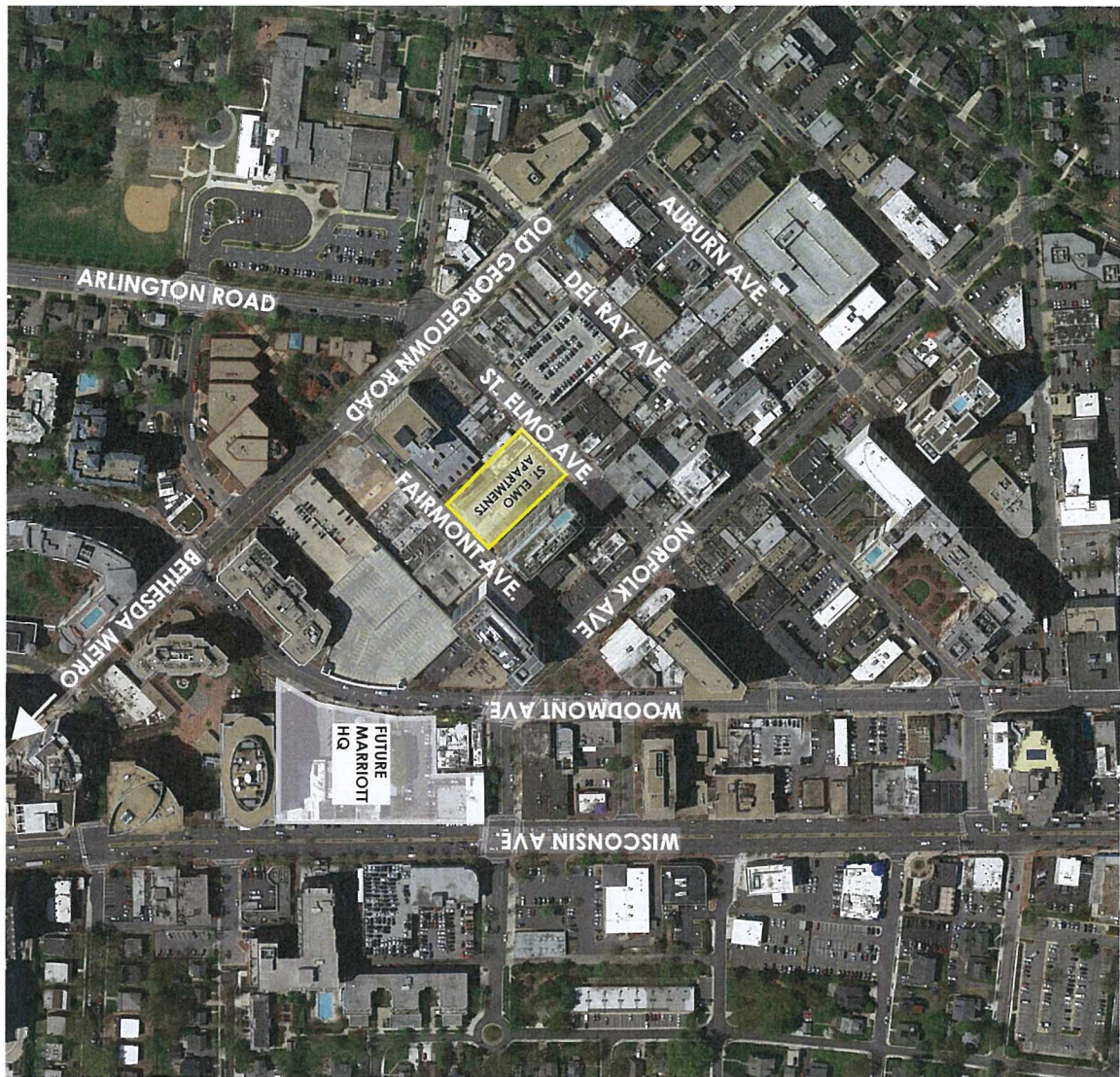
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SITE VICINITY MAP

ST. ELMO APARTMENTS





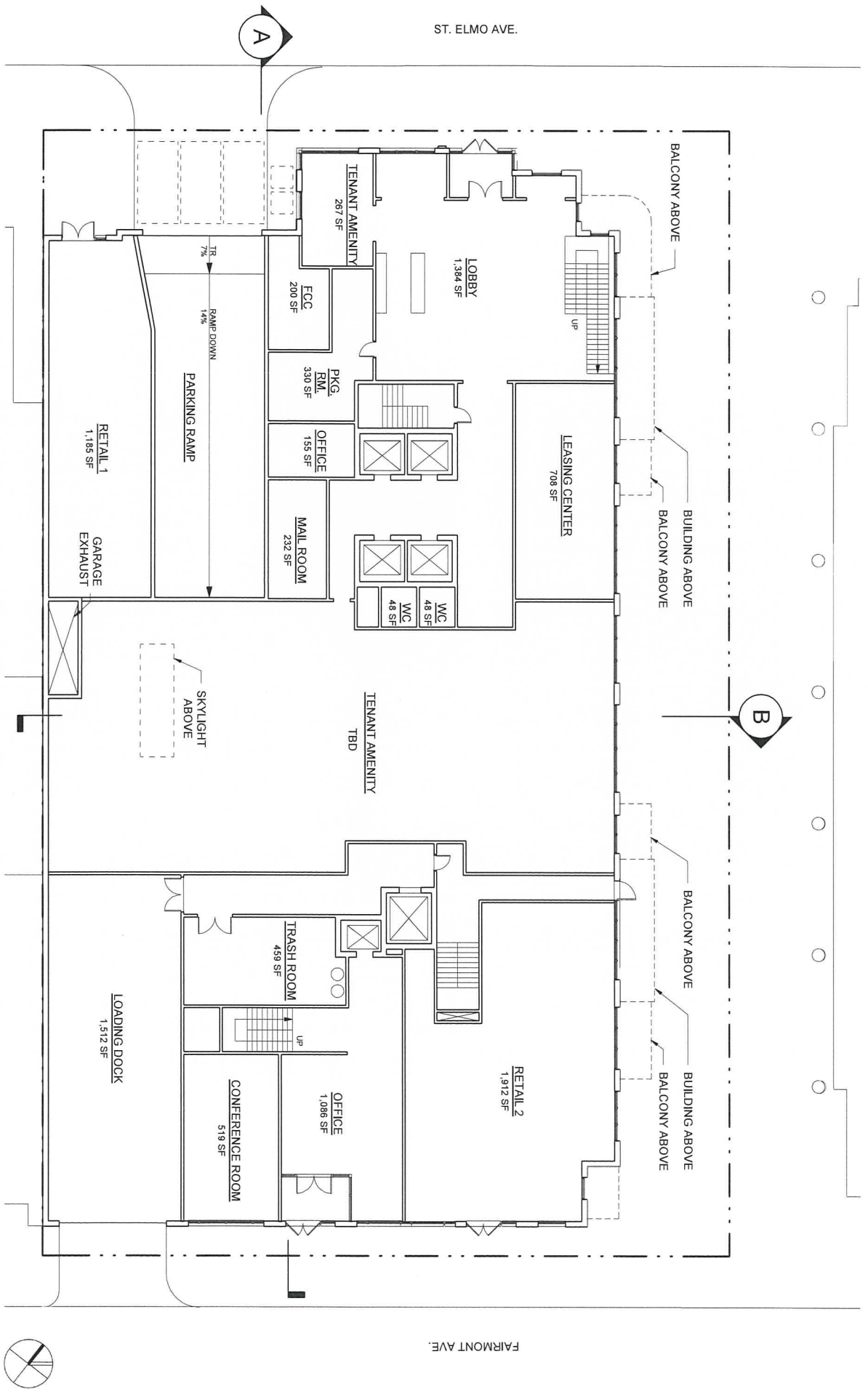
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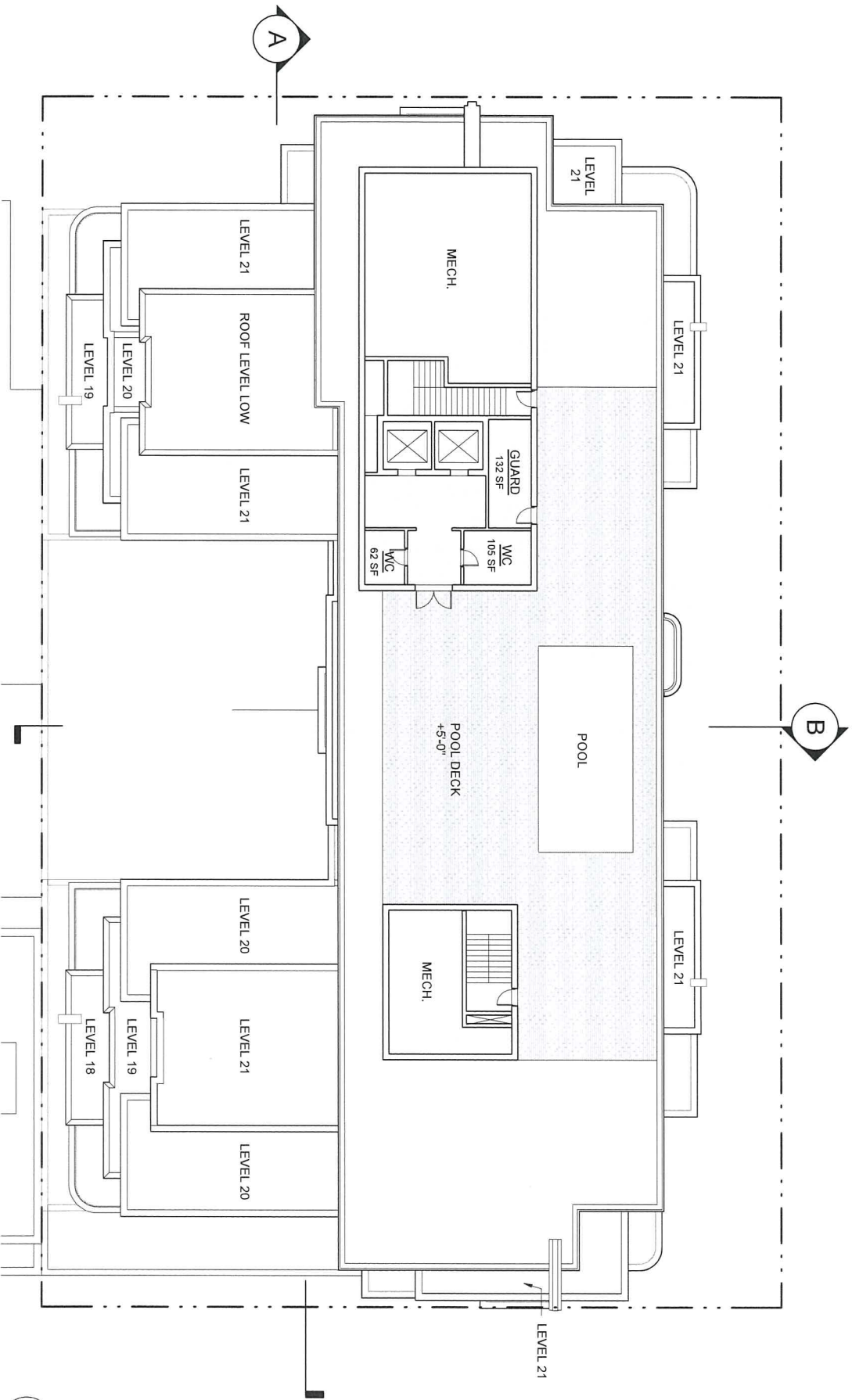
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LEVEL 1 PLAN

ST. ELMO APARTMENTS







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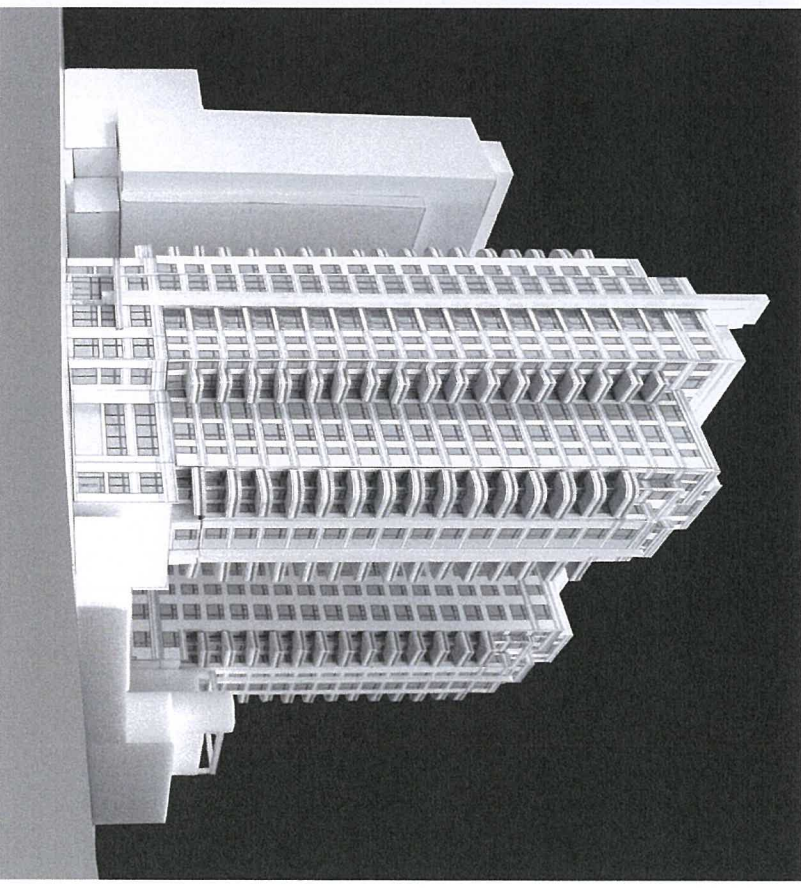
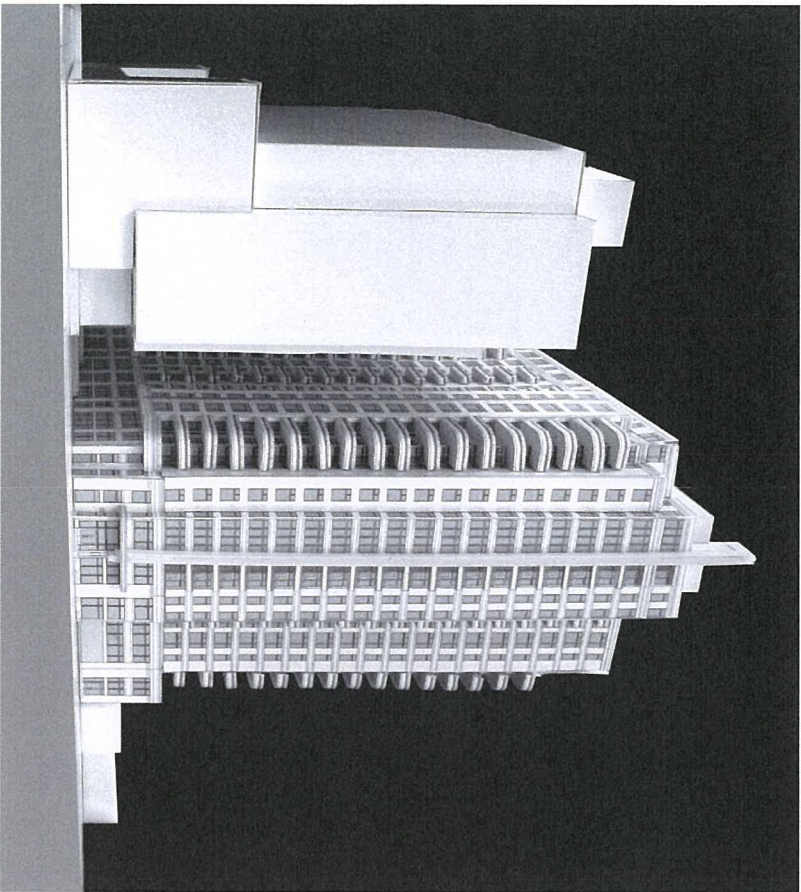


ROOF PLAN

ST. ELMO APARTMENTS

2nd DAP Presentation

09/26/2018



ST. ELMO AVE. VIEWS



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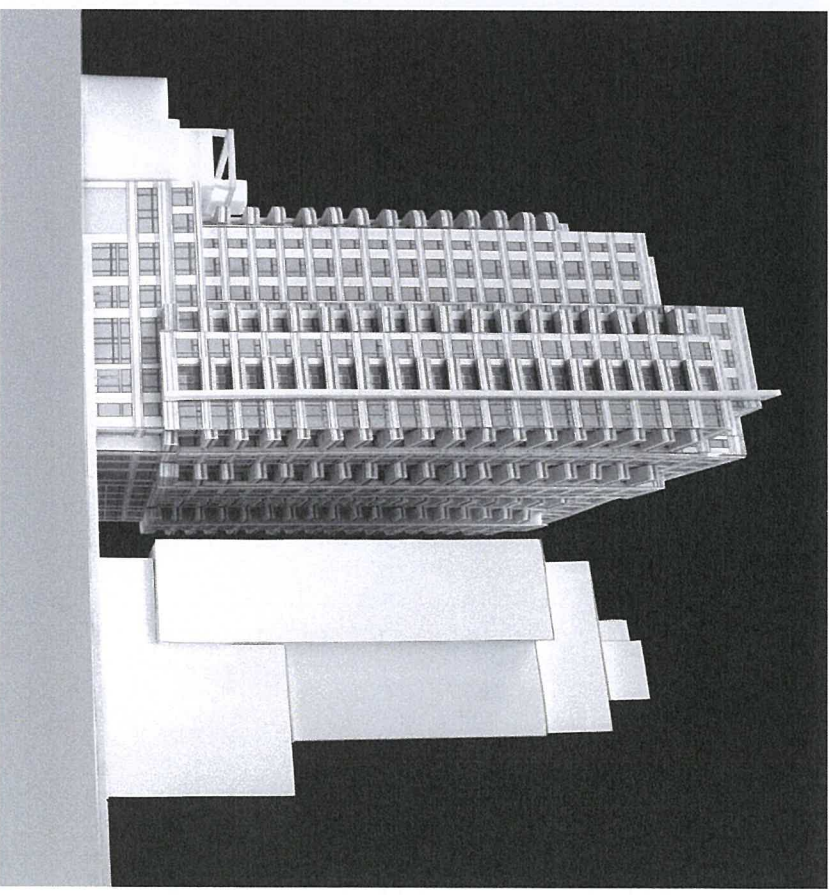
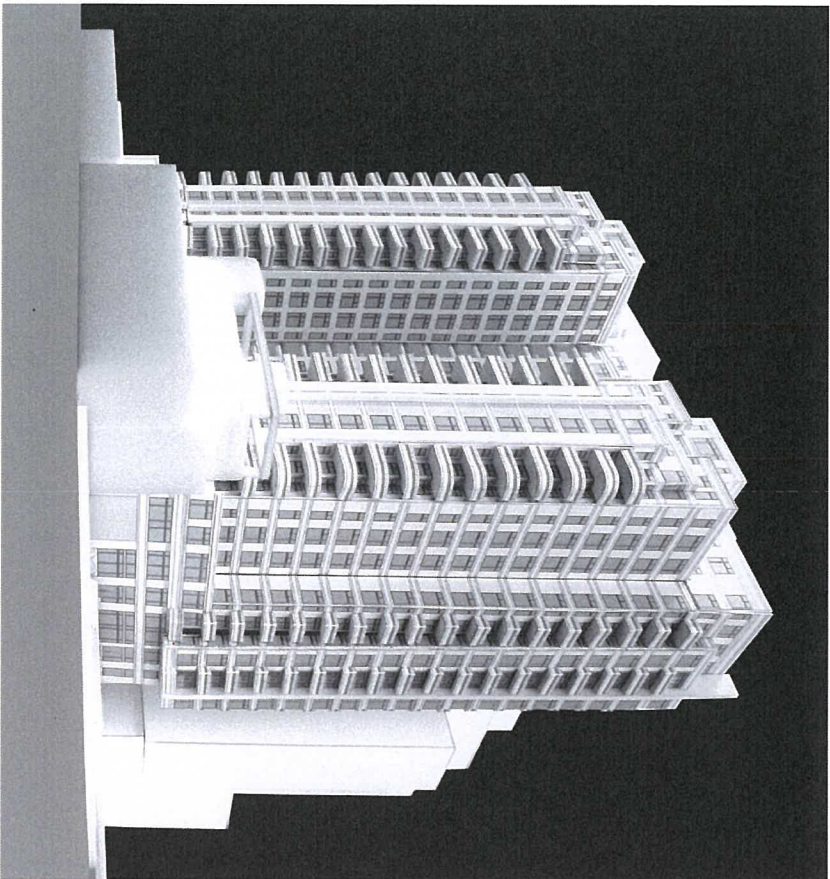


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MODEL VIEWS

ST. ELMO APARTMENTS

2nd DAP Presentation
09/26/2018



FAIRMONT AVE. VIEWS



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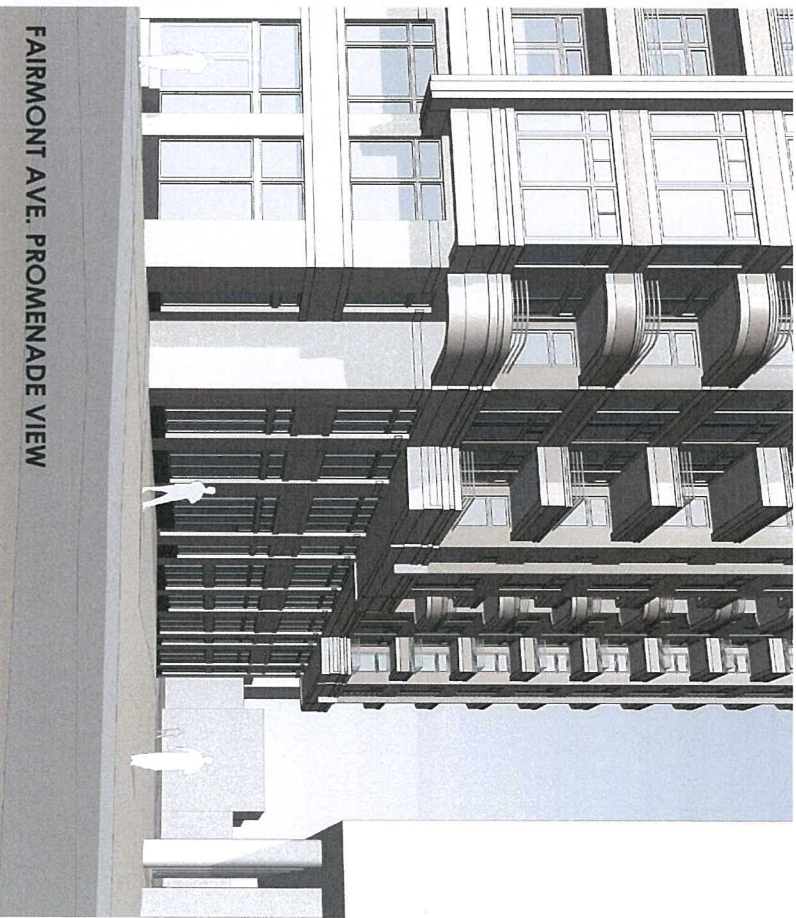
MODEL VIEWS

ST. ELMO APARTMENTS

2nd DAP Presentation
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ST. ELMO AVE. PROMENADE VIEW



FAIRMONT AVE. PROMENADE VIEW



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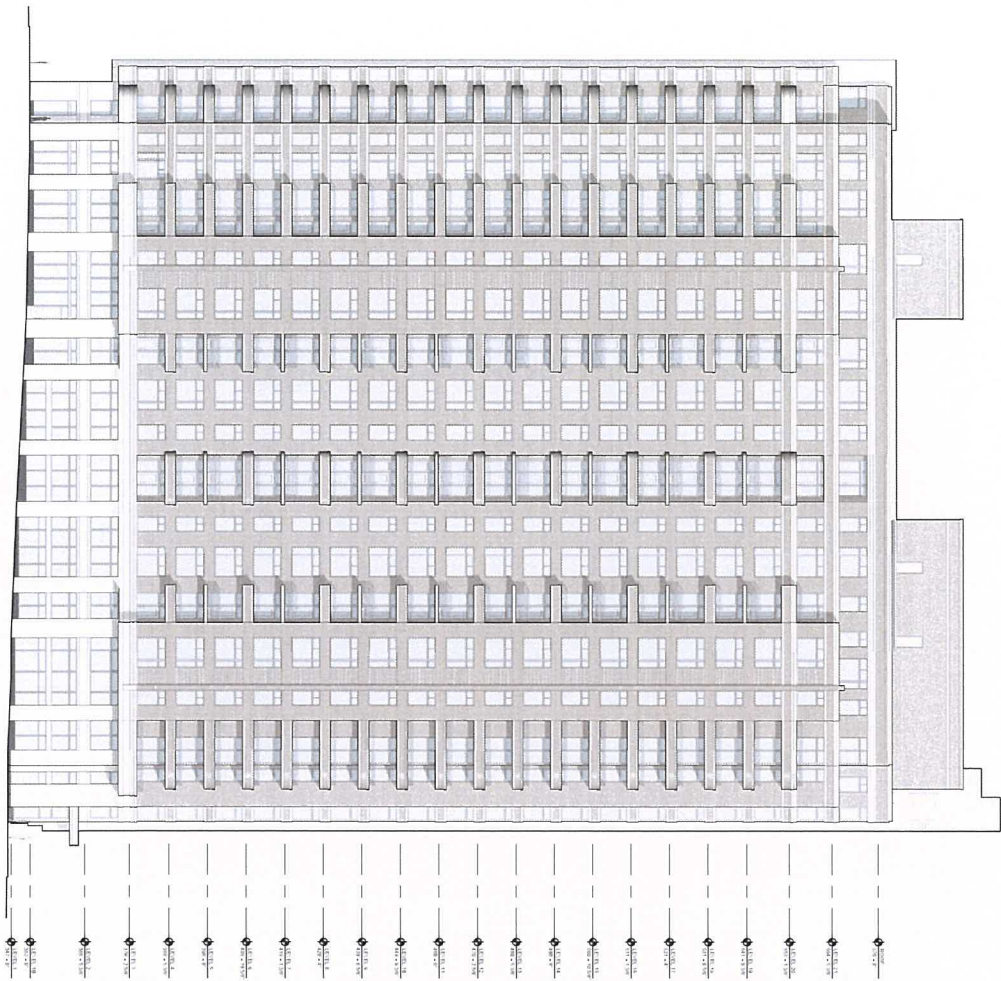


PROMENADE VIEWS

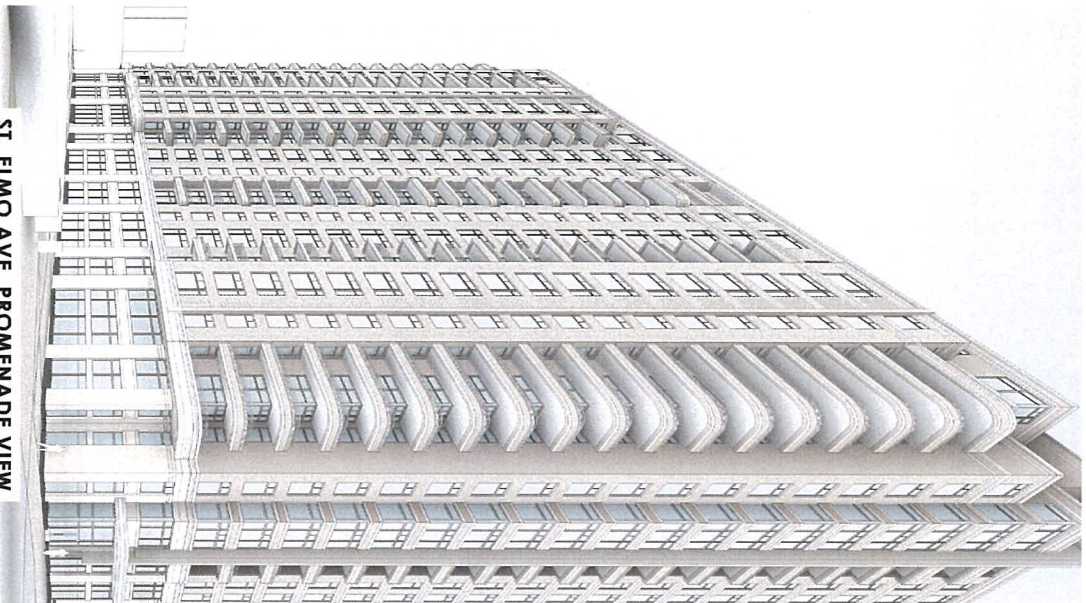
ST. ELMO APARTMENTS

2nd DAP Presentation
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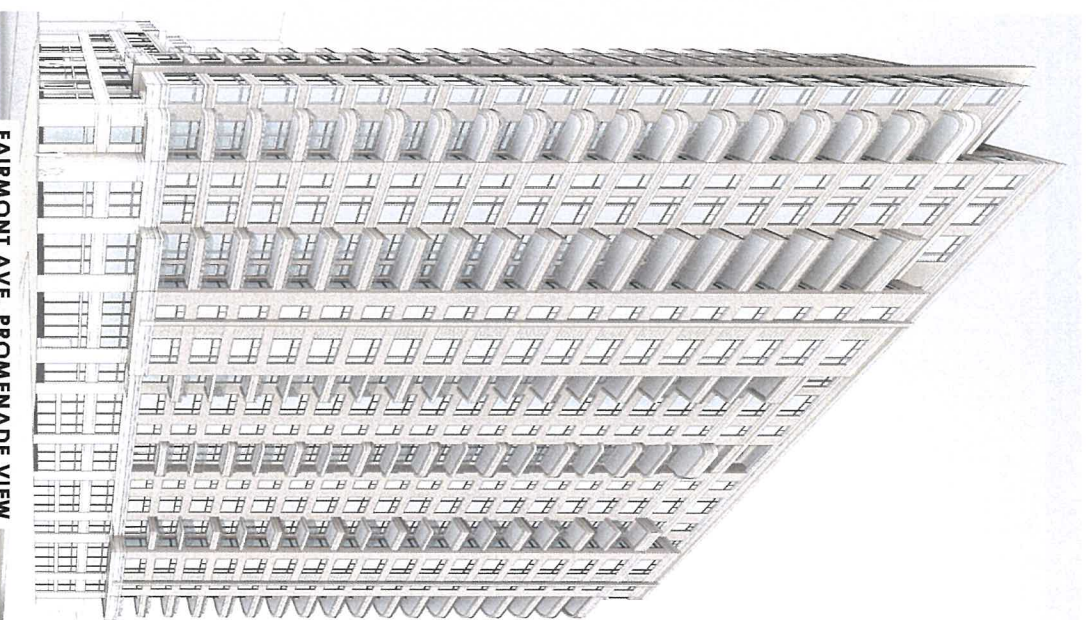
ALTERNATING METAL RAIL BALCONIES ON SLAB



ALTERNATING METAL RAIL BALCONIES ON SLAB



ST. ELMO AVE. PROMENADE VIEW



FAIRMONT AVE. PROMENADE VIEW



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REVISED PROMENADE FACADE

ST. ELMO APARTMENTS

2nd DAP Presentation
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DMSAS
WASHINGTON, DC**

ST. ELMO AVE. PROMENADE VIEW



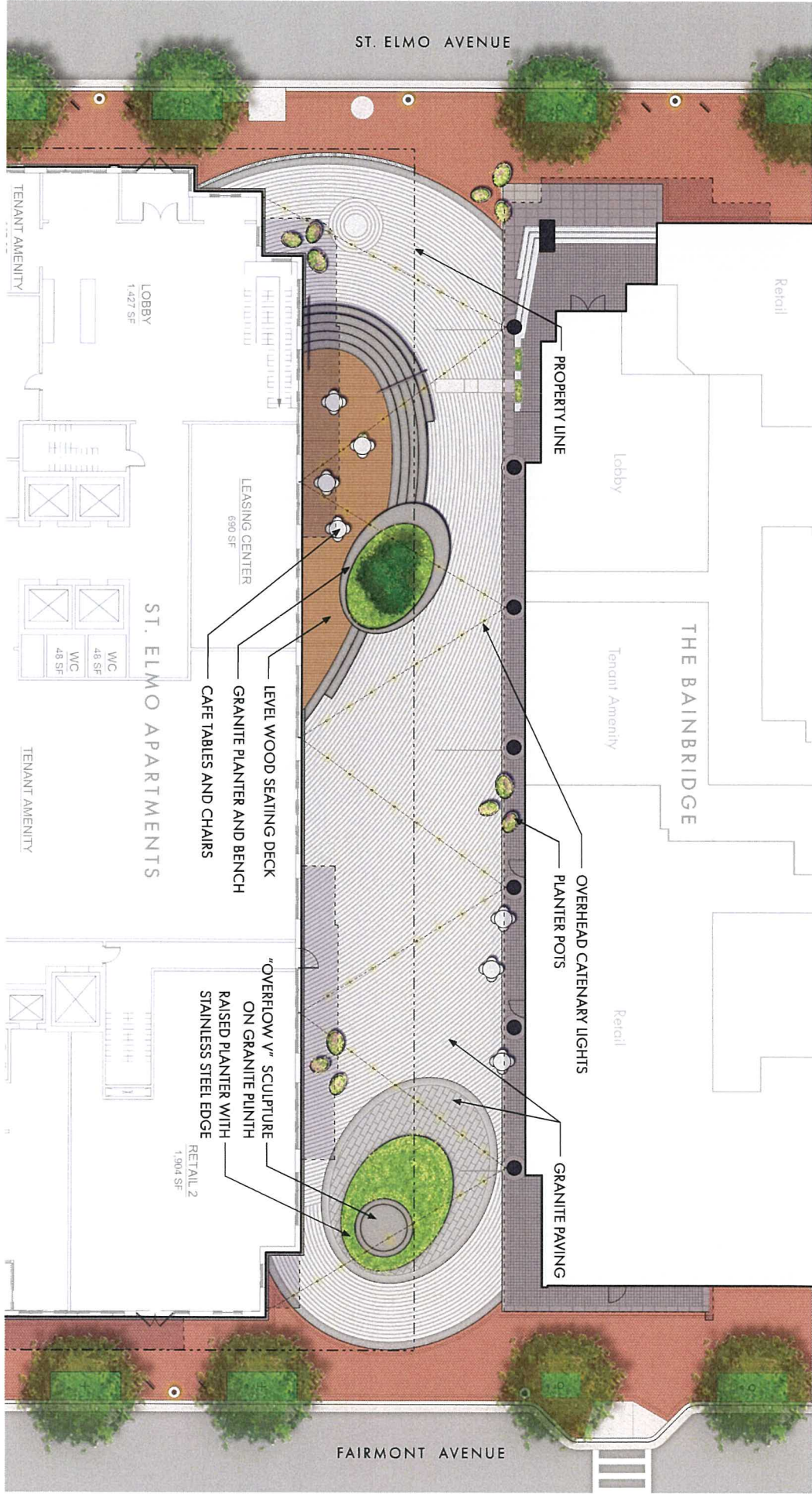
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REVISED PROMENADE FACADE

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2nd DAP Presentation
09/26/2018

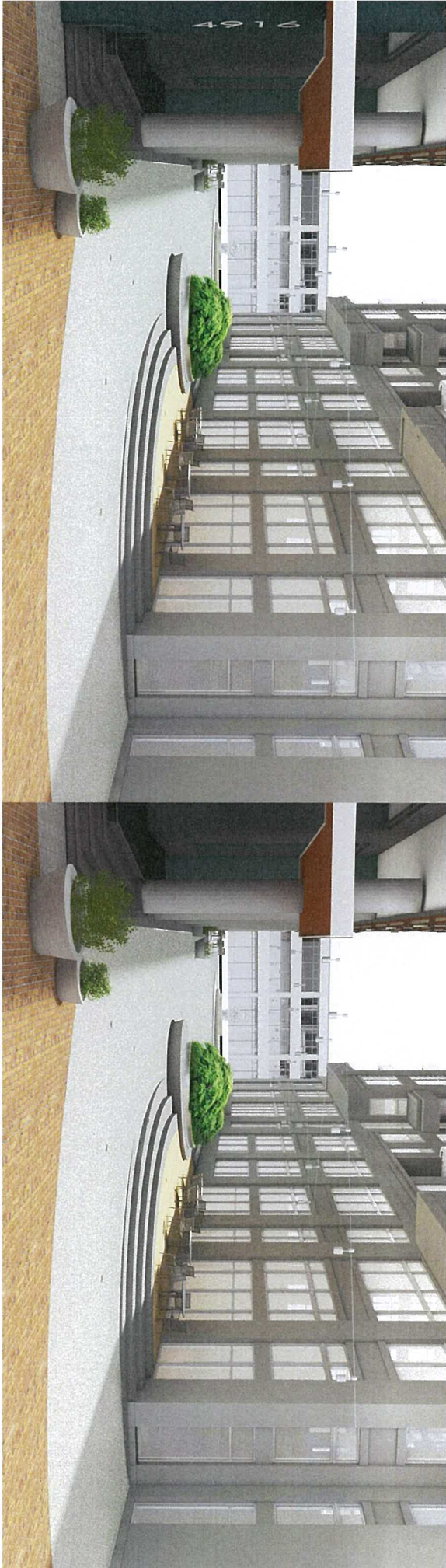
PROMENADE SITE PLAN



ST. ELMO APARTMENTS
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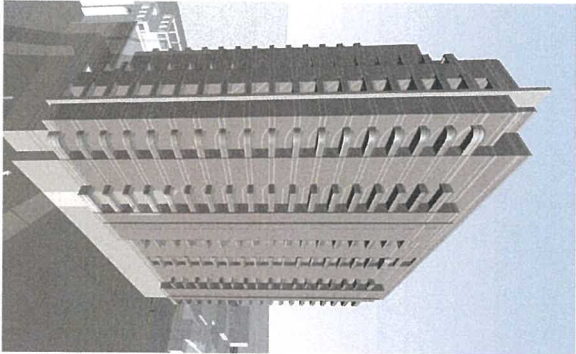
PUBLIC SPACE: PROMENADE - BASE DESIGN

PUBLIC SPACE: REVISED PROMENADE

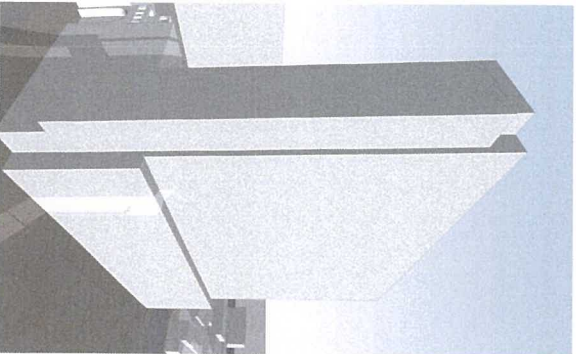


PROMENADE VIEWS

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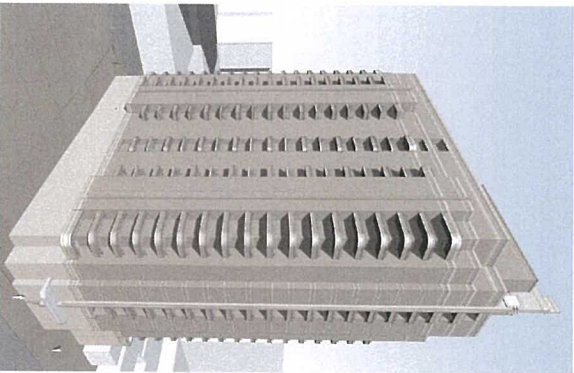


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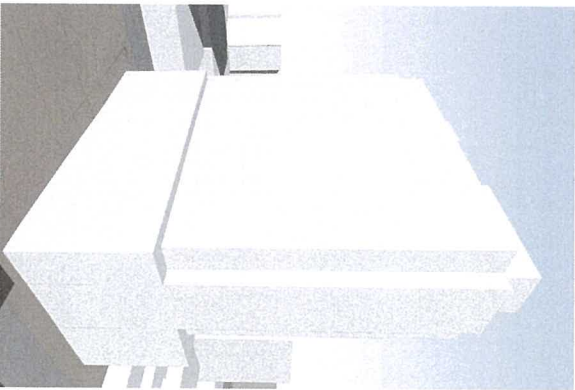


-LOWER MASS SETBACK 15FT
FROM PROPERTY LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 22 1/2 FT
FROM PROPERTY LINE

DMSAS CURRENT DESIGN



STRICT CONFORMANCE



-LOWER MASS SETBACK 15FT
FROM PROPERTY LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 22 1/2 FT
FROM PROPERTY LINE



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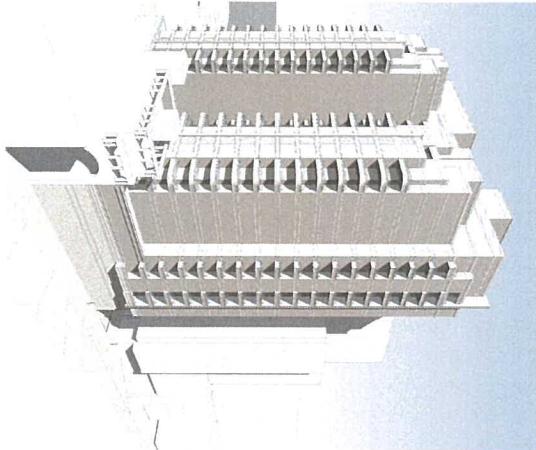
STRICT CONFORMANCE COMPARISON

St. Elmo Apartments

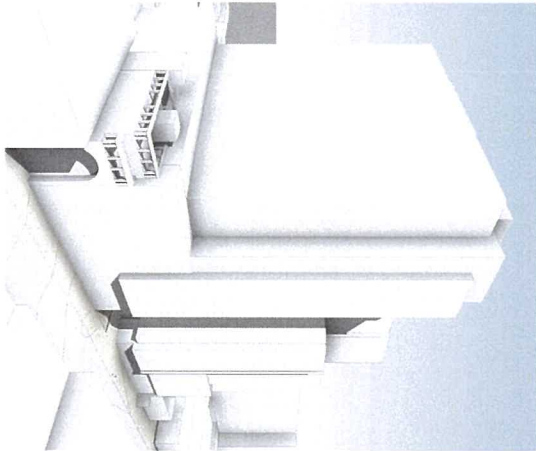
2nd DAP Presentation
09/26/2018

FAIRMONT AVE INTERPRETATION 1

DMSAS CURRENT DESIGN

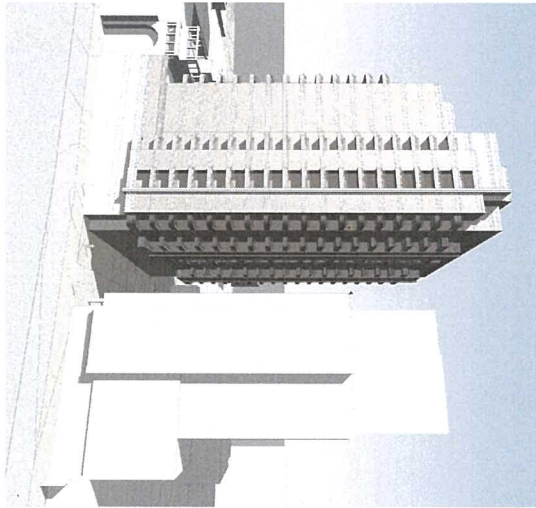


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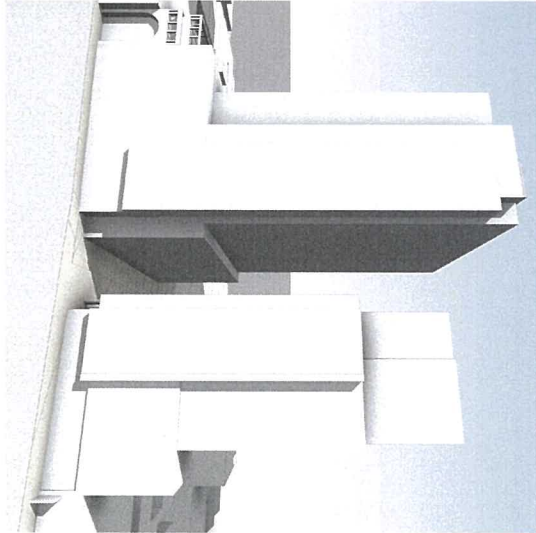


- LOWER MASS SETBACK 15FT FROM CURB LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 25FT FROM CURB LINE

DMSAS CURRENT DESIGN



STRICT CONFORMANCE

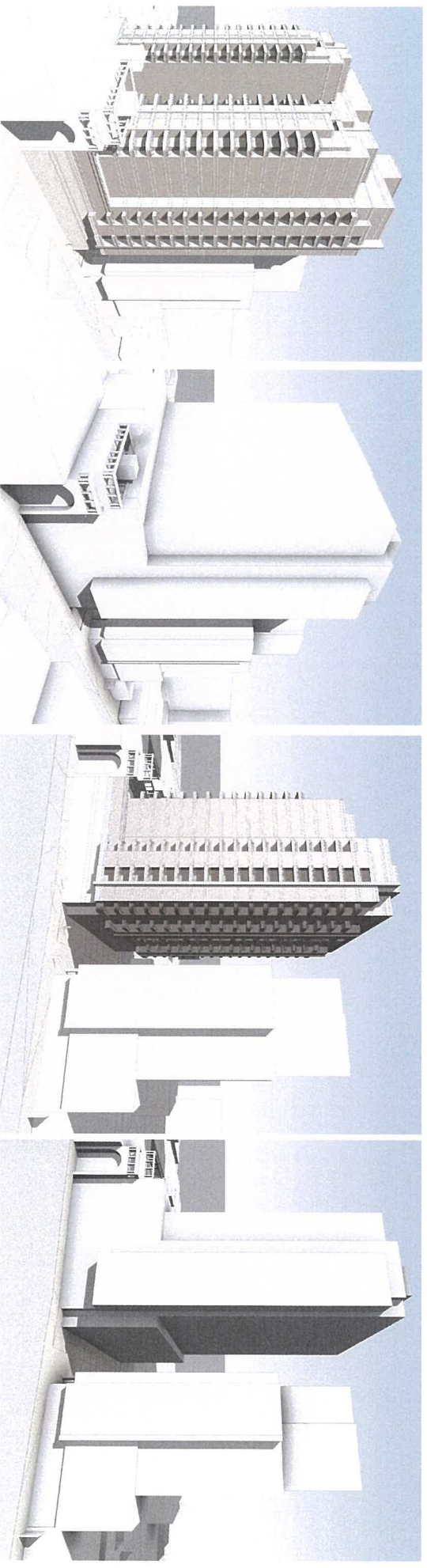


- LOWER MASS SETBACK 15FT FROM CURB LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 25FT FROM CURB LINE

STRICT CONFORMANCE COMPARISON

St. Elmo Apartments

FAIRMONT AVE INTERPRETATION 2



DMSAS CURRENT DESIGN

STRICT CONFORMANCE

DMSAS CURRENT DESIGN

STRICT CONFORMANCE

-LOWER MASS SETBACK 20FT
FROM CURB LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 30FT
FROM CURB LINE

-LOWER MASS SETBACK 20FT
FROM CURB LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 30FT
FROM CURB LINE



DAVID M. SCHWARZ ARCHITECTS

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STRICT CONFORMANCE COMPARISON

St. Elmo Apartments

2nd DAP Presentation
09/26/2018