

# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

## Submission Form (Revised March 2020)

### PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	4725 Cheltenham Drive
File Number(s)	320200060; 8202200XX
Project Address	4725 Cheltenham Drive

Plan Type    ☐ Concept Plan    ☐ Sketch Plan    ☒ Site Plan    ☐ Consultation w/o Plan

### APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact	Steven A. Robins	301-657-0747	sarobins@lercheearly.com
Architect	Eric Colbert & Associates; Attn: Steve Dickens; sdickens@eca-pc.com; 202-557-8222		
Landscape Architect	Soltesz; Attn: Daniel Park; dpark@solteszco.com; 301-948-2750		

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

	Zone	Proposed Height	Proposed Density (SF/FAR)	Requested BOZ Density (SF/FAR)	MPDU %
Project Data	CR-3.0, C-2.0, R-2.75, H-90'	90'	80,000	31,559 sf/1.96 FAR	15%
Proposed Land Uses	Multi-family residential and Live-Work units				

### DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL SUBMISSION PROCESS & REQUIREMENTS

1. Schedule a Design Advisory Panel review date with the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.
2. At least two weeks prior to the scheduled Panel meeting, provide via email to the Design Advisory Panel Liaison the completed Submission Form and required drawings in PDF format. Incomplete applications will be returned for revision. **Applications deemed incomplete by the Liaison may result in the loss of the scheduled meeting date if not returned complete within the above time frame.**
3. Concept Plan and Sketch Plan applications must include the following, at a minimum:
  - Property location plan showing three-block context radius
  - Illustrative site plan showing two-block context radius
  - Perspective images of all building faces from a 3-D model that show the proposal in the built context, as well as with nearby buildings approved by the Planning Board. (Bring the 3-D model to the Panel review.)
  - 3-D building massing diagrams illustrating:
    - both strict conformance with the design guidelines and the proposed design, indicating where the proposal does not conform and how the alternative treatments meet the intent of the guidelines
    - the maximum standard method of development density on site
    - the maximum mapped density on site
  - Precedent images showing scale, architectural character, materiality, etc. (Concept & Sketch Plans only).

Except as noted, Site Plan applications must include all of the above, as well as, at a minimum:

- Floor plans for parking level(s), ground floor, typical floor, roof, and unique conditions
- Building/site sections showing full adjacent street sections with opposite building face
- Elevations for each façade
- Key perspective views expressing character of the building elevations and streetscape.



## DESIGN GUIDELINES CONFORMANCE

The primary goal of the DAP is to provide advice and recommendations that will heighten design excellence and improve the quality of architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture in Downtown Bethesda. Simple compliance with the numerical standards in the Design Guidelines does not in itself achieve Design Excellence.

STREET TYPE(S): Neighborhood Local Street

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Sidewalk Zone			
Planting/Furnishing Zone	5-8 feet	7 feet	No.
Pedestrian Thorough Zone	6-10 feet	9 feet	No.
Frontage Zone	0-4 feet	5.5 feet	No.
Building Placement			
Build-to Line (from street curb)	12-15 feet	16 feet	Existing streetscape.
Building Form			
Base Height	2 - 4 stories	2-3 feet	No.
Step-Back	15-20 feet*	6-10 feet	Yes.

\*Design Guidelines provide for alternative treatments.

DOES THE PROJECT INCLUDE A THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTION OR TRAIL?

☐ Yes ☒ No

- If yes, please provide sectional diagrams demonstrating conformance with Section 2.1.9 of the Guidelines

DOES THE PROJECT INCLUDE A SECTOR-PLAN RECOMMENDED PARK OR OPEN SPACE?

☐ Yes ☒ No

- If yes, please provide diagrams demonstrating conformance with Section 2.2 of the Guidelines

## BUILDING FORM

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Tower			
Separation Distance	45-60'	Face-on-line	Yes.
Step-Back	Per Street Type	6-10 feet	Yes
Bulk Reduction Methods	More discrete step-backs, unique geometry, modulated and articulated facades, undulations, and/or variations in building materials and colors.		

IS THE PROJECT LOCATED IN A DISTRICT IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 3 OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

☐ Yes ☒ No

- If yes, please provide diagrams demonstrating conformance with the District-Specific Guidelines

EXCEPTIONAL DESIGN POINTS REQUESTED (MIN: 10, MAX: 30): 23

- 10 Points: Generally consistent with the Design Guidelines and meets four of the CR Guideline Criteria
- 20 Points: Superlative design that in a uniquely compelling way meets the Design Guidelines or overcomes a significant site or similar constraint; a top example of design within Montgomery County
- 30 Points: Singular design that exemplifies the highest intent of the Design Guidelines and may be considered a top example of design within the Mid-Atlantic region



**4725 Cheltenham Drive  
DAP Submission  
Site Plan  
Project Description**

**I. Introduction**

Community Three (the “Applicant”) is submitting this application to receive input from the Design Advisory Panel (“DAP”) on the Site Plan for the property located at 4725 Cheltenham Drive (the “Property”). Community Three is the owner of the Property and has taken over the Project, which was previously being pursued by Bozzuto Development Company (the “Prior Applicant”).

The DAP has reviewed the proposed redevelopment of the Property on two prior occasions – once on February 26, 2020, as a preliminary consultation, and again on May 27, 2020, in connection with Sketch Plan Application No. 320200060. The Applicant now is seeking Site Plan approval for the project.

**II. Project Narrative**

**a. General Information**

The Property is located along Cheltenham Drive, just east of its intersection with Wisconsin Avenue, and is currently improved with a single-story automotive detailing shop and associated surface parking. The Property has a net lot area of 10,659 square feet and is zoned CR-3.0, C-2.0, R-2.75, H-90’ and located within the Bethesda Overlay Zone. Consistent with the goals and recommendations of the *2017 Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Plan* (the “Downtown Plan”), the Applicant is proposing to redevelop the existing commercial use with a mid-rise, predominantly residential development (the “Project”). Specifically, the Project will contain up to approximately 80,000 square feet of density, including 110 apartment units (of which 8 units will be Live/Work units), and an overall height of 90 feet. The Project will include a minimum of 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (“MPDUs”).

The building’s design responds to the Property’s transitional location on the edge of the Central Business District (“CBD”). The proposed predominantly residential use will be more compatible with the confronting Cheltenham Drive Urban Park than the existing commercial use, and will provide a more appropriate transition to the residential homes located just outside the CBD boundary. Additionally, the proposed development will greatly improve the pedestrian connection between the nearby residential neighborhoods and the CBD. Although the building only has approximately 100 feet of street frontage, the design provides several elements to engage pedestrians and gracefully make the transition from the CBD to the single-family residential neighborhood of West Chevy Chase Heights. In addition to the building design, the streetscape experience will be enhanced through the elimination of the existing curb cut located

along Cheltenham Drive. Vehicular service access for the Project will be accommodated off the alleyway located along the eastern edge of the Property. Furthermore, consistent with the Downtown Plan's designation of Cheltenham Drive as a Canopy Corridor, the proposed street design also will incorporate additional tree plantings, within amended tree panels, to increase the tree canopy along Cheltenham Drive.

## **b. Design Overview**

The building massing has been designed to respond to the recommendations of the *2017 Approved Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines* (the "Design Guidelines"). Given the proposed building height (*i.e.* 90 feet) and site area (*i.e.* 10,659 square feet), the Project takes advantage of the alternative compliance afforded to small sites and buildings with lower heights in order to achieve a viable development appropriate for the site. Cheltenham Drive is classified as a Neighborhood Local Street in the Design Guidelines. As illustrated in the design documents, the Project's design complies with those guidelines by either meeting the specific numerical requirements or utilizing permitted alternative treatments.

The building has been designed to establish a continuous street edge and incorporates ample transparency and articulation at the ground plane along Cheltenham Drive, to further define and actively engage the street. Specifically, the building will be setback approximately 16 feet from the curb, consistent with the existing streetscape conditions and recommended building placement for Neighborhood Local Streets (*i.e.* 12-15 feet). Consistent with Sketch Plan, the Cheltenham façade is comprised of multiple masses and variant façade treatments to break down the scale and provide architectural dynamism. The Project will employ several alternative "menu" options including a series of more discrete step-backs, unique geometry, modulated and articulated facades, undulations, and/or variations in building materials and colors. Specifically, the tower's unique "folding" façade creates varying setback between 6 and 10 feet and greatly reduces the perceived mass viewed from different perspectives.

The building base has two portions: a two-story portion at the east side and a three-story portion at the west side (in conformance with the two to four story base height recommended for Neighborhood Local Streets). Both feature the same materials palette, charcoal brick, glass, and wood, but the west portion emphasizes transparency/glass whereas the east emphasizes screening, via highly articulated to create a screen of corbelled masonry frames with woodgrain columns and planters. Plantings at the top (where upper floors set back) create a friendly green "hat" something akin to the fringe of trees one often sees over the roof of single-family houses.

This building base, together with the subtle geometry of the tower, contributes to create a dynamic massing. The upper floors are similarly divided into east and west wings, following the angles of the Sketch Plan, but with a void space added at the inflection point of the planes (a stack of inset balconies) to emphasize the difference. The primary materials at the upper floor are metal panels and glass, with vertical woodgrain panels (similar to the columns in the base



below). Windows are not forced into matching modules and even spacing (as is common), but vary to reflect the rooms behind them. Typically, groups of three or four windows are used for living rooms, two windows for bedrooms, and one for a kitchen. Extensions of the metal panels across the front of the balconies are alternated, which, along with the somewhat random placement of the woodgrain panels, introduces movement to the façades.

Reflective of the differing characters of the different façades (which draw from different contexts), the roofline experience varies. At the south/Cheltenham façade, the two angled wings with the void between create a dynamism that extends to the roofline. At the west façade, the stair tower projecting upward, plus a hint of the penthouse beyond, provides interest, as does the stair tower on the north façade. The east façade, in keeping with its calmer character, provides a clean straight roofline; the penthouse is set back at the east side such that it will only appear (in glimpses between the trees) in more distant views.

The Project will provide streetscape improvements consistent with the Design Guidelines. Specifically, the proposed streetscape includes a six (6) foot planting/furnishing zone and nine (9) foot pedestrian through zone, consistent with the recommendations for a Neighborhood Local Street (*i.e.* 5-8' planting zone and 6-10' pedestrian through zone). To provide sufficient room/soil volume for the canopy trees, while also meeting the desired light pole spacing, the light poles have been placed within the planting beds in the "planting/furnishing zone" (as opposed to within hardscape). As proposed, the streetscape/landscape improvements will contribute to the overall Canopy Corridor recommended along Cheltenham Drive.

The Project also will significantly enhance the existing alleyway. Currently, the alleyway functions as a "back of house" space. The Project proposes to dress-up and engage the alleyway. Along the alley, the Project provides patios for five adjacent units, as well as Juliet balconies for second-story units, which will provided "eyes on the street" and direct human engagement to help to enliven this frontage. (Note that due to site slopes, the patios will be between 1'-6" and 3' above the alley; this plane shift plus low walls provides just enough sense of division to foster optimal interaction.) There is a landscaped area at the south end of the patios, and one expects that some of the tenants will have plants on their patios, bringing green to the west side of the alley, to complement the adjacent local Park. Additionally, the Project proposes to provide specialty paving at the entrance to the alleyway to improve the pedestrian experience and provide traffic calming at this access point.

The Design Guidelines recommend tower separations but also recognize that party walls may be appropriate for buildings below 120 feet or with limited property size/width/depth. Here, the Property is bordered to the west and north by a much larger site (approximately 51,176 square feet) that is currently improved with a CVS and large surface parking lot, to the east by a service alley, and to the south by Cheltenham Drive. As discussed above, the Property size is extremely constrained and the Project is only proposing a maximum building height of 90 feet.

Additionally, based on the adjacent site's size, shape, and configuration along Wisconsin Avenue, it is probable that it will eventually be improved with a development that would be built fairly close to the western Property boundary, possibly even face-on-line. For all of these reasons, the Applicant is proposing a party wall along most of the western Property boundary, but with a small area pulled back to allow some windows and a stack of balconies at the southwest (Cheltenham) corner. These, along with the geometric mural proposed for the lower three floors and the expression of the stair tower, will provide visual interest until such time as the adjacent site redevelops. The northern façade will be setback approximately 14 feet from the Property boundary, which will allow for 45% percent of glazing along this façade (Building Code restriction). Although this façade is not particularly visible, even currently (except from the CVS parking lot), it has been designed as a composed façade, with the same high-quality material palette as the other, more visible, facades.

### **c. Responses to DAP Comments**

At the time of Sketch Plan, the Prior Applicant made several modifications to the Project design and building massing, in response to the specific feedback received from the DAP, including:

- Refined the massing articulation to include balconies. The balconies result in the creation of varying vertical planes that add visual interest and further break down the perceived mass of the building.
- Defined a façade language to help reduce the perceived bulk.
- Designed the streetscape to include specialty paving at the main building entry along Cheltenham Drive, to highlight the Project's entrance lobby. The specialty paving also is proposed to extend into the streetscape and a portion of the alleyway to the east of the Property, to improve the pedestrian experience and provide traffic calming at this vehicular entrance.
- Advanced the programmatic design for the rooftop to include a generous portion of green roof, while also allowing for comfortably size communal and private lounging areas, oriented south and east to take advantage of sunlight and views.

The Applicant has made additional revisions to address the DAP's feedback on the Sketch Plan application:

- *Relationship of building to park – submit section analysis to determine the nature/treatment/functionality of alley;*

The east façade looks to the adjacent Cheltenham Drive Urban Park and single-family residential neighborhood beyond. The Applicant is submitting a section that visually demonstrates the relationship between the building, alley and Park. The Applicant has designed the building to engage with, but not physically connect to, the confronting Park (e.g. through windows, balconies, and patios). As the section demonstrates, a physical connection would

present functional challenges, given the grade change, and also safety concerns, based on the Park's use primarily by young children.

The alley is engaged through patios at the first floor apartments (raised a little above the alley, based on site grading) and Juliet balconies at the second floor. The underside of the third floor cantilever is light-colored warm wood, as are undersides of the upper floor balconies. The façade of the upper floors, which will be visible through the trees from the Park and beyond, is symmetrical in design, with the metal panels as the primary material. This provides a calmer face to the neighborhood (relative to the dynamic south and west façades). Five of the seven vertical modules have balconies, providing a more intimate connection between the tenants of the building and the residents of the neighborhood.

- *Articulation of massing at entry with regard to future development of property to west; and*

To help mark the entrance, the Sketch Plan massing provided for a three-story podium at the west side of the street frontage (in contrast with the two-story podium at the eastern side). The Applicant has articulated the massing of the three-story podium as deep-set glass walls with a deep "eggcrate" grid of brick dividers and centered woodgrain columns at the second and third floors. The underside of this grid element, with light-colored warm wood finish, provides cover for the entrance doors as well as a place for a line of downlights which will provide a bright glow at night. The articulation turns the corner to the west façade, enhancing visibility from Wisconsin Avenue and lending a sense of welcome. Once the CVS site is redeveloped, the deep shadow-line of the brick grid and columns will continue to provide visual interest, intuitively drawing people to the entrance. The west return wall of the two-story portion of the podium directly faces pedestrians and motorists coming from Wisconsin Avenue: signage for the building is proposed for this location. The entrance itself has a high level of transparency to the sidewalk.

- *Treatment of western façade to be more three-dimensional and potential to extend northwest corner units to increase light and air.*

The Applicant has paid particular attention to the western facing façade (despite that this façade will most likely be largely obscured from view if and when the adjacent CVS Pharmacy site is redeveloped). Regardless, for the interim period, the design acknowledges that a primary view of the building will be from Wisconsin Avenue. Accordingly, although most of this façade is face-on-line (and thus cannot have windows, per the Building Code), it receives careful and considerable design treatment. At the lower three floors (corresponding with the 3-story portion of the base facing Cheltenham Drive), a geometric mural will add visual entrance to this façade, enlivening the pedestrian and motorist experience from Wisconsin Avenue. At upper floors, the Cheltenham façade turns the corner, displaying a distinctive grouping of metal and woodgrain panels and tall, narrow windows. The stair tower is expressed in the roofline.

During the Sketch Plan review, it was suggested that the Applicant consider potentially extending the floorplate at the northwest corner. The Applicant extended the first floor, which has resulted in the creation of roof decks and associated landscaping for the second floor units above. However, the units at the second through ninth floors have not been extended. This was a strategic design decision, as the Applicant has worked to carefully balance the building's design as an interim condition and the potential future condition if, and when, the CVS redevelops. The Applicant believes that the proposed setback at the second through ninth floors will actually result in more light for these units, given that the Building Code does not permit window openings in face-on-line walls. Furthermore, the Applicant believes extending these units would have other undesirable consequences. Given the building code restrictions, extending the northwest units would expand the width of the windowless wall facing Wisconsin Avenue and also cause that blank wall to wrap the corner on the northern façade. Furthermore, this extension would result in reduced privacy for future residents – the window for the extended corner units would need to face east (into the rear setback area), creating an interior corner where units look into one another. For all of these reasons, the northwest corner was not extended except at the first floor.

These modifications are reflected in the Project and Architectural Narratives, as well as the updated drawing submitted concurrently with this statement.

### **III. Bethesda Downtown Plan and Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines**

The Project furthers many of the goals of the Downtown Plan and the Design Guidelines, including:

#### **1. Downtown Plan**

- Providing expanded affordability for housing through the inclusion of a minimum of 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units.
- Taking advantage of existing and planned transit by redeveloping the existing one-story automotive repair shop and surface parking with a midrise residential building that is more appropriately suited for the Property, given its transit-oriented location within 0.3 miles of the Metro Station and various bus routes.
- The Project will provide predominately “Junior 1-bedroom” units, which fills a niche between studio and true 1-bedroom apartments. In addition, there are some standard 1- and 2-bedroom units to facilitate the availability of new housing, in a range of types and rents, within walking distance of the Metro.
- Importantly, the Project's design and the Property's location presents an opportunity to improve the transition from the CBD's more intensive uses and the residential properties that are located just outside the CBD boundary to the east, as well as Cheltenham Drive Urban Park, immediately to the east of the site. The proposed use (predominantly residential) will be more compatible with the

adjacent single-family residential properties than the current automotive detailing shop and surface parking lots.

- The proposed design shifts vehicular access to the alley, eliminating the existing vehicular access to the Property off of Cheltenham Drive, to promote a more pedestrian oriented streetscape experience. The Project will provide significant streetscape improvements per the requirements for “Neighborhood Local Streets.”

## **2. Design Guidelines**

- *Tower Step-Backs*
  - In the Sketch Plan review, the upper portion of the Cheltenham Drive façade (floors 4-9 at the western side and floors 3-9 at the eastern side) was set back as two angled planes. (This relates directly to several of the techniques indicates in the *Guidelines* to reduce bulk: it uses unique geometry, modulates and articulates facades, and limits the apparent face.) This has been maintained in the current design, with a stack of balconies added at the inflection point of the planes which separates them via a “void” space and reduces the sense of bulk. The amount of setback varies, as shown on the current plans (and matching the Sketch Plan), with about three feet at the inflection point, five feet at the southwest corner, and ten feet at the southeast corner.
  - The Sketch Plan approved design included a five foot setback of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors at the east/alley side, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor cantilevered back out to the property line. The design maintains this feature, although much of the upper floor cantilever area has been changed from interior floor space to balconies to provide additional engagement with the confronting local Park. (Although it may seem counterintuitive to cantilever out as a means of reducing bulk, multiple versions of it are shown in the illustrative examples in the *Guidelines*.)
- *Base/Podium*
  - The Sketch Plan approved design included a 2-story portion of podium at the eastern side of the Cheltenham Drive frontage, and a 3-story portion at the western side (marking the building’s entrance). This has been maintained in the current design, with the architectural character significantly more developed. The 3-story portion is approximately 33’ tall, and the 2-story portion is approximately 24’ tall. (In both cases, this is taken from the abutting sidewalk at the center of the respective frontages; “approximately” is used because the sidewalk is sloping and final grades may vary by a few inches.)

#### **IV. Exceptional Design Narrative**

The Project seeks 23 Public Benefit Points for Exceptional Design. As previously stated, the Project's design is in compliance with the intents and prescriptions of the Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines. The Project meets all of the criteria established by the Zoning Ordinance and the Commercial/Residential and Employment Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines for Exceptional Design. Each are addressed below:

##### **1. Providing innovative solutions in response to the immediate context.**

One of the primary goals of the Sketch Plan process was to find a massing for the building that successfully addressed the various contexts and covered both the present and expected future conditions on and around the Property. The current, proposed design represents a straight-line development of the carefully-crafted series of volumes that were ultimately approved in the Sketch Plan. It has no substantial deviations from the forms, setbacks, and dimensions of the Sketch Plan, but has advanced and evolved the building façade and design.

The Cheltenham Drive façade has the most articulation, with two volumes at the base (three stories at the entrance and two stories at the east side, closer to the local Park and single-family residential neighborhood), and an angle splitting the top floors into two faceted volumes. The building step backs are planted, providing a green “hat” to the base volumes. The three-story entrance volume features transparency, connecting the lobby and entrance to the sidewalk and street, whereas the two-story portion of the base presents a detailed masonry and wood articulation that screens views while providing significant visual interest. The upper floors are mostly of metal panels and glass, but with woodgrain panels (echoes of those at the base below) inserted in a semi-random pattern. The groups of windows are different sizes, reflecting the rooms beyond (*e.g.* three or four windows in a group is a living room, two windows is a bedroom, one is a kitchen) and lending a more organic, residential character to the composition.

The west side, facing toward Wisconsin Avenue (notwithstanding that it probably will be obscured by a future redevelopment of the CVS site) is broken down into multiple parts to provide visual engagement: the three-story mural gives ground-level interest, while the wrapping front façade, expressed stair tower, and relatively small blank wall towards the rear form a varied composition for longer views. The materials — mostly brick, with metal panels at the wrapping area — are the same high quality finish materials used on the main facades, not concrete block or EIFS (as one might expect for a side party wall).

The eastern façade, facing Cheltenham Drive Urban Park, presents a calmer façade than the dynamic, angled south façade on Cheltenham Drive. It is basically symmetrical, featuring numerous balconies that will provide a direct sense of human occupancy and connection. At the alley, there are patios for five adjacent units, as well as Juliet balconies for second floor units — the patios are raised a little higher than the alley, creating an optimal balance of privacy/division and openness/engagement. At the south end of the patios is a landscape area, which, along with

potted plants that some tenants will have on their patios, extends the Park's greenery across the alley.

The north façade, although not particularly visible in the current context and likely to be mostly obscured by future developments, is nevertheless a composed façade using the same palette of high-quality materials (brick and metal panels) as the other facades. The metal and glass of the east façade's upper floors wrap to about half of the north façade; the brick of the east façade base and west façade upper floors wraps to the other half of the north façade. A second stair tower is expressed, which, with an adjacent stack of recessed balconies, creates a compositional break between the two material expressions. Second-floor roof decks with planters will bring greenery to the northwest corner. Additionally, the west façade's mural extends across the one-story face-on-line portion of the north façade.

## 2. Creating a sense of place and serves as a landmark.

Currently, the block of Cheltenham Drive immediately east of Wisconsin Avenue presents a gap in the urban, pedestrian context, fitting with neither the high-density development within the CBD nor the established single-family residence neighborhood farther beyond. This project remedies its portion of the problem, and sets the stage for complete remedy when the CVS site is redeveloped. As a mid-rise residential building, it serves as a transition between the high-rise commercial and mixed-use development within the CBD and the single-family residential located just outside the CBD boundary. The scale of its parts similarly fall between the large-scale architectural moves of the high-rises and the small-scale details of the houses. It also frames Cheltenham Drive Urban Park in an appropriate way, providing a friendly residential presence that helps activate the Park and screens views of taller commercial buildings beyond.

## 3. Enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original manner.

Currently, with the automotive detailing center, approximately one-third of the Property's 100 feet of street frontage along Cheltenham Drive is occupied by a wide curb cut/driveway. The Project eliminates this curb cut and creates a continuous building façade, which engages the entire frontage, resulting in significant enhancements to the public realm. Furthermore, the design provides numerous elements to engage pedestrians and gracefully make the transition from the CBD to the single-family residential neighborhood beyond. For Cheltenham Drive, designated as a "Neighborhood Local Street," it is a question of *engaging* pedestrians more so than *activating* the streetscape, although there are proposed benches and perhaps two café-style tables which will provide modest activation. Similarly, the eastern façade has many elements to engage the alley and adjacent Park.

Most pedestrians are expected to come from Wisconsin Avenue, so the building's front façade turns the corner, increasing the visibility of the entrance and lending a sense of welcome. Undersides of balconies will be finished with light colored warm wood so that not only do they not create dark shadow areas, they actually give a sense of adding light. (The architects used a

bold yellow version of this in their West Half project, in the District across from the main gate of the National's Stadium, to great success.) The mural at the west side will wrap to the Cheltenham side, enlivening the otherwise blank walls at the necessary (but urbanistically unfortunate) Fire Command Center. The main entrance and lobby have strong visual connection to the street via glass walls and ample transparency. Toward the eastern portion of the building side (closer to the single-family residential neighborhood), as the sidewalk drops, the transparency shifts to a screen of highly-articulated masonry with columns and built-in planters that have warm woodgrain finishes. Many of these elements are distinctive, with no precise precedents elsewhere in Bethesda or the Metro area.

As previously noted, on the eastern façade (facing the alley), there will be patios of five units as well as Juliet balconies above at the second floor. Because of site grades, the patios are a little higher than the alley: this treatment, plus low walls with open metal guardrails on top, provide an optimal balance between privacy/separation and openness/engagement. The upper floors of the eastern façade, visible through the trees, will enhance the public realm of the Park by providing numerous balconies – the direct, but somewhat distant, connection between people in the Park and those on their balconies increases security and provides a particular form of activation.

4. Introducing materials, forms or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way.

This is a “boutique” building, and its materials, colors, and forms express that term quite directly, with unique elements on the exterior suggesting the specialness of the apartments (and live/work units) within, and vice-versa. The expression of the two-story portion of the base, an articulation of corbelled brick frames infilled with planters and woodgrain columns, is a unique expression of the primary exterior materials of the project. At the upper levels, the uniqueness of the angled massing is reinforced by the introduction of woodgrain panels to the mostly-metal panel walls, as well as the subtle “zipper” created by offset solid portions of the balcony guardrails at the outside corners. Even the fenestration pattern of the Cheltenham façade is unusual in that the window groups are varied (not forced into a single repeated module) and drawn from the rooms inside (larger window groups for living rooms; medium for bedrooms; even one kitchen window which is a single window wide). This is how single-family houses typically express windows and rooms; it lends a slightly organic character to the façade. Plants are integral to the building design, providing a direct connection to the greenery of the adjacent Park.

5. Unique solution to challenging infill site.

The Property, at only 10,659 square feet, is quite constrained, and the basically square proportion is problematic for typical apartment development, particularly with the future CVS site redevelopment closing in on two sides. But, by employing an innovative “Junior 1-



bedroom” model for the majority of the units, the design optimizes use of the limited space. This model has been used, to great success, by the architects in several projects in D.C. It provides, for both affordable and market-rate tenants, a big-living but small-square-footage apartment positioned between true studios and true one-bedroom units. These apartments fill a niche applicable to many of the junior-level employees of the corporate and commercial buildings in Bethesda, as well as college students (perhaps associated with N.I.H., for example) and retirees. The design also includes traditional one- and two-bedroom units to provide for a broader tenant base. A solid majority of the units have private outdoor space, in the form of balconies, patios, or roof decks; and a common roof deck at the penthouse level provides for the rest.

In the D.C. projects which have this junior 1-bedroom model, it has been found that parking demand is very low – this user group walks and uses transit at a much higher level than almost any other. They also patronize local cafes, bars, and restaurants at an elevated level, and do almost all their quotidian shopping by foot or bicycle. In short, the future tenants can be expected to enhance Bethesda’s urban character, use the adjacent Park, and generally create activity in the area.

6. Integrating low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building.

The existing automotive detailing shop and parking lot have no known stormwater management facilities. The Project will result in significant improvements to the treatment of stormwater management on-site by providing substantial areas of green roof and other stormwater control measures. An approximately 8-inch green roof, along with some deeper planters for bushes and even small trees, will be spread across the various roofs. These reduce impervious cover and more closely mimic natural hydrology.

With regards to other impacts, the Project is being designed to meet the requirements (and ultimately attain certification for) for LEED-Silver under the LEED for New Construction standards, version 4 (the current version). This involves a wide range of measures to limit energy and water use, promote healthy living (such as interior air quality and active lifestyles), select materials with limited impact on the earth, and engage in construction practices that reduce landfill waste and increase positive outcomes.

## **V. Conclusion**

The Applicant is extremely excited to be able to move forward with this project, in this part of Downtown Bethesda. The Applicant and its development team have studied the Design Guidelines and the Sector Plan, and believe the Project substantially responds to the goals and recommendations of both documents. We look forward to appearing before the DAP to receive feedback on the design, and continuing the process toward the ultimate redevelopment of this Property.

# 4725 Cheltenham Drive | Bethesda, Maryland

DAP SUBMISSION  
09.08.2021

**Owner / Developer:**

Community Three  
650 F ST, NW | STE 690  
Washington, DC 20004

**Architect:**

Eric Colbert & Associates  
717 5th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001

**Civil / Landscape:**

Soltesz  
2 Research Place, Suite 100  
Rockville, MD 20850



FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY





THIS SHEET IS REPEATED FROM THE 5.27.2020 SKETCH PLAN SET BY WDG ARCHITECTURE

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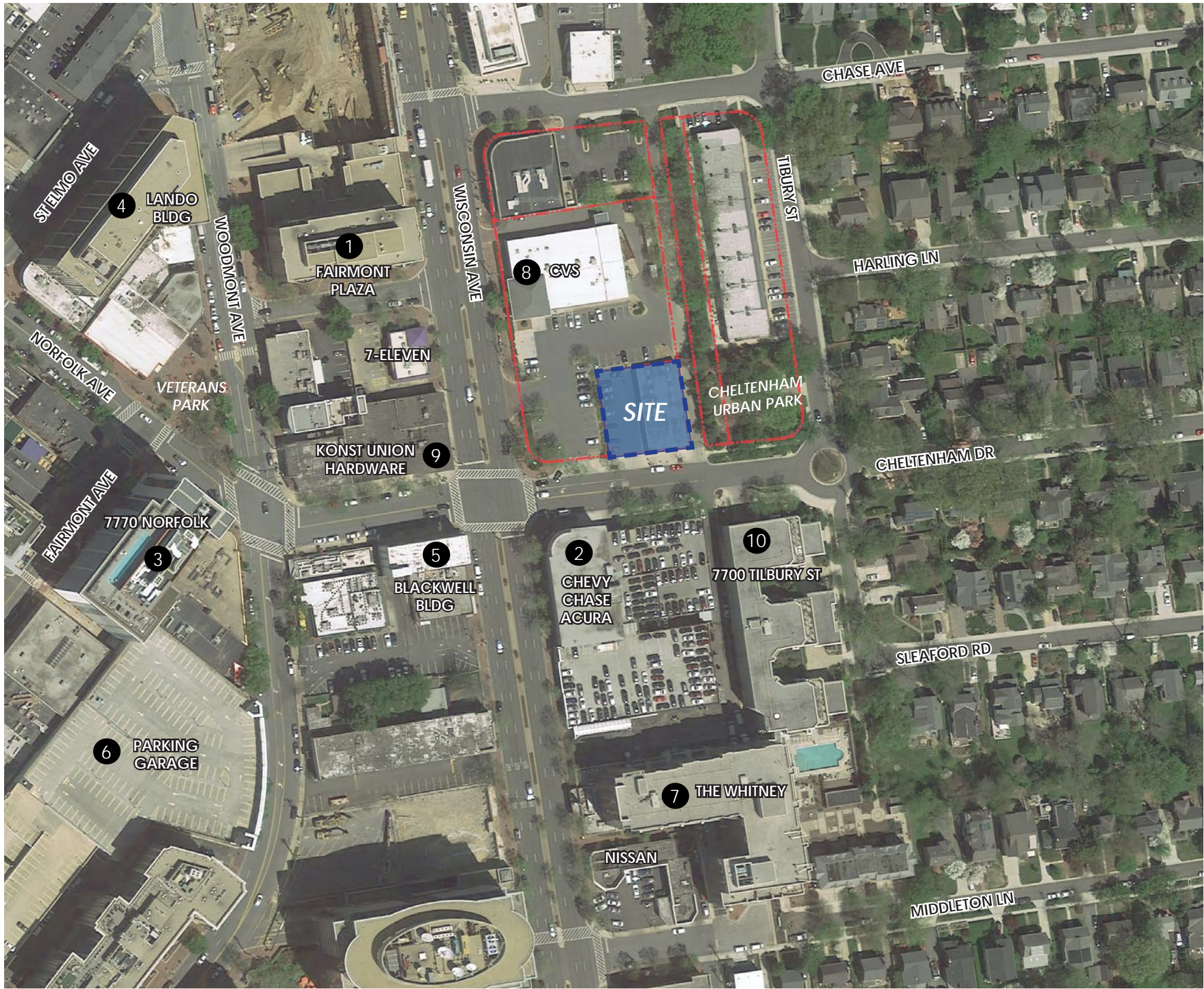
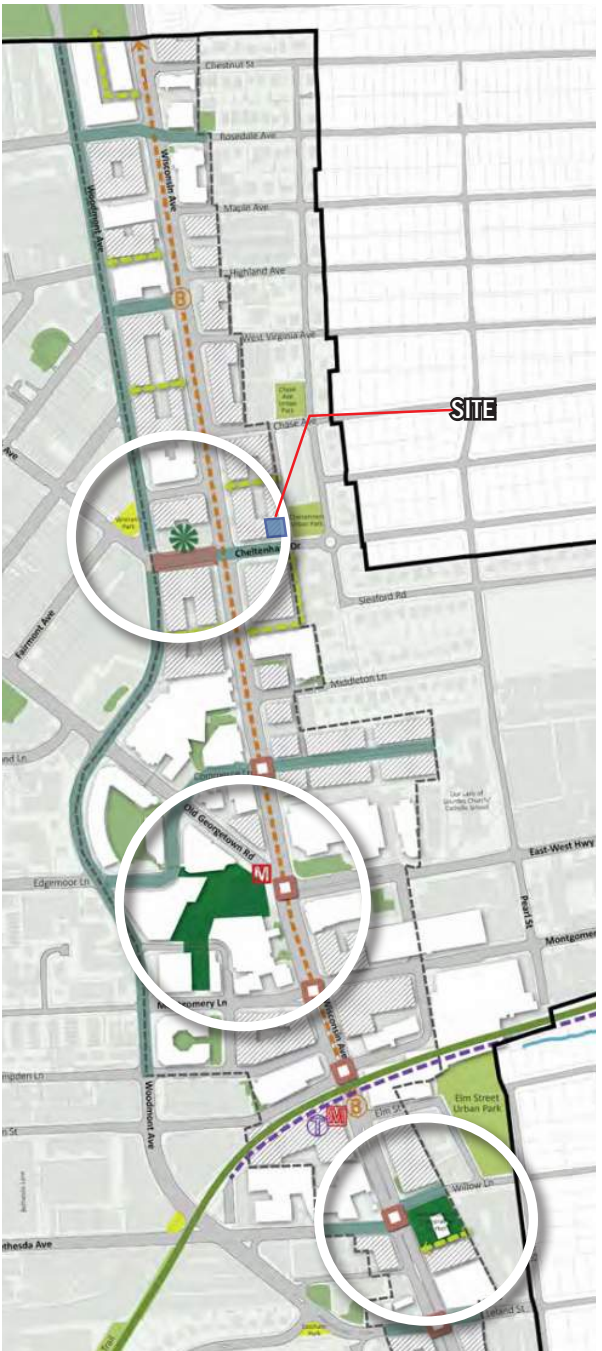


Figure 3.01: Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Key Sites



- Sector Plan Boundary
- District Boundary
- M-NCPPC Park
- County DOT Owned Public Space
- Privately Owned Public Use Space
- Trail
- Metro Station
- Metro Station
- Proposed Metro Station Entrance
- Proposed Purple Line
- Proposed BRT
- Recommended Bike Priority Street + Canopy Corridor
- Recommended Public Connection
- Recommended New Street
- Recommended/Enhanced Open Space
- Potential Open Space (Location TBD)
- Illustrative Potential Development

SITE LOCATION PLAN 3

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7704 TIBURY ST



CHELTENHAM DR-LOOKING EAST



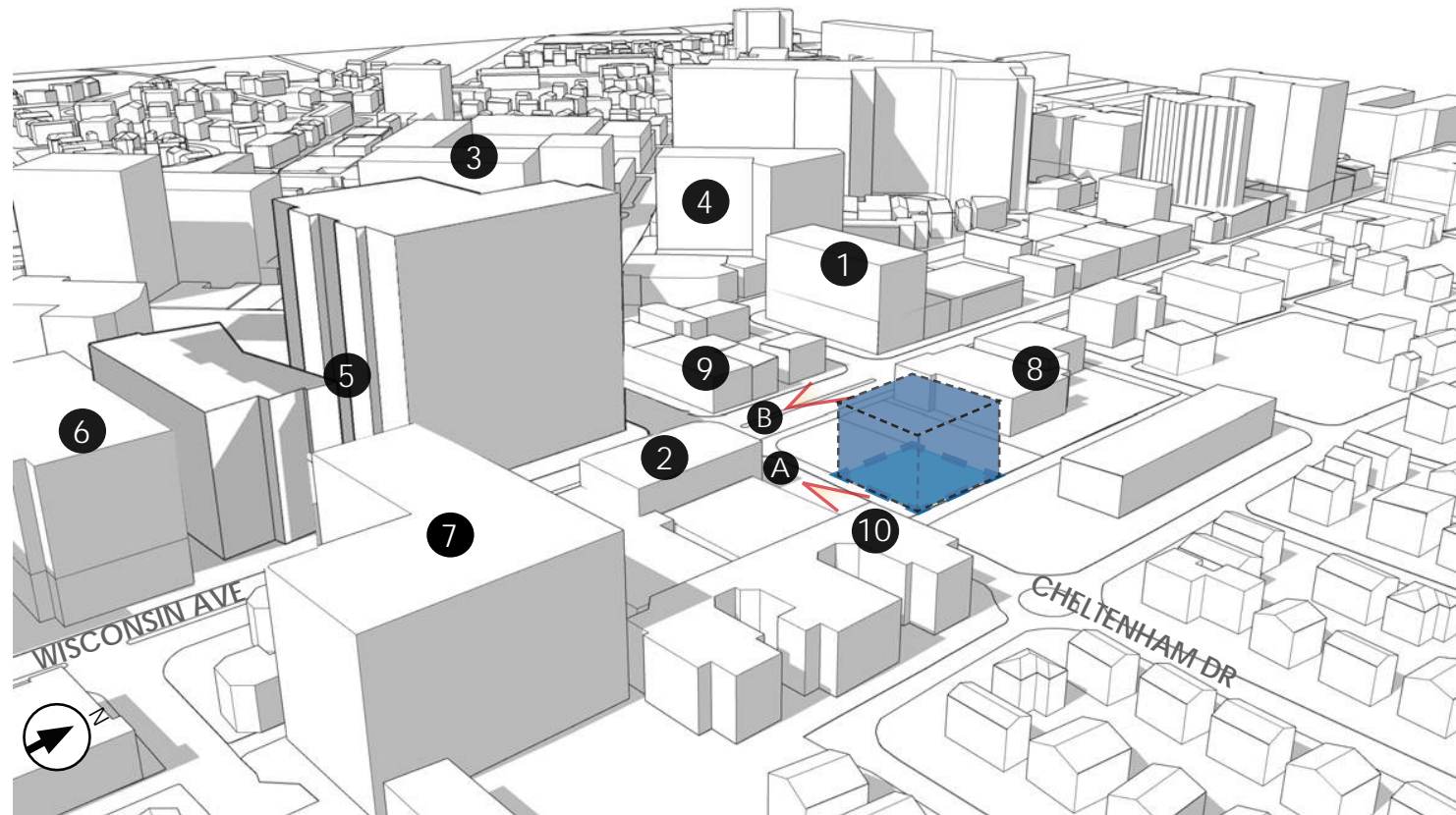
WISCONSIN AVE-LOOKING NORTH



480 FAIRMONT AVE



7810 WISCONSIN AVE



7725 WISCONSIN AVE - CHEVY CHASE ACURA



7809 WISCONSIN AVE - CVS PHARMACY



4908 FAIRMONT AVE



7707 WISCONSIN AVE



7730 WOODMONT AVE - PARKING GARAGE



7750 WISCONSIN AVE

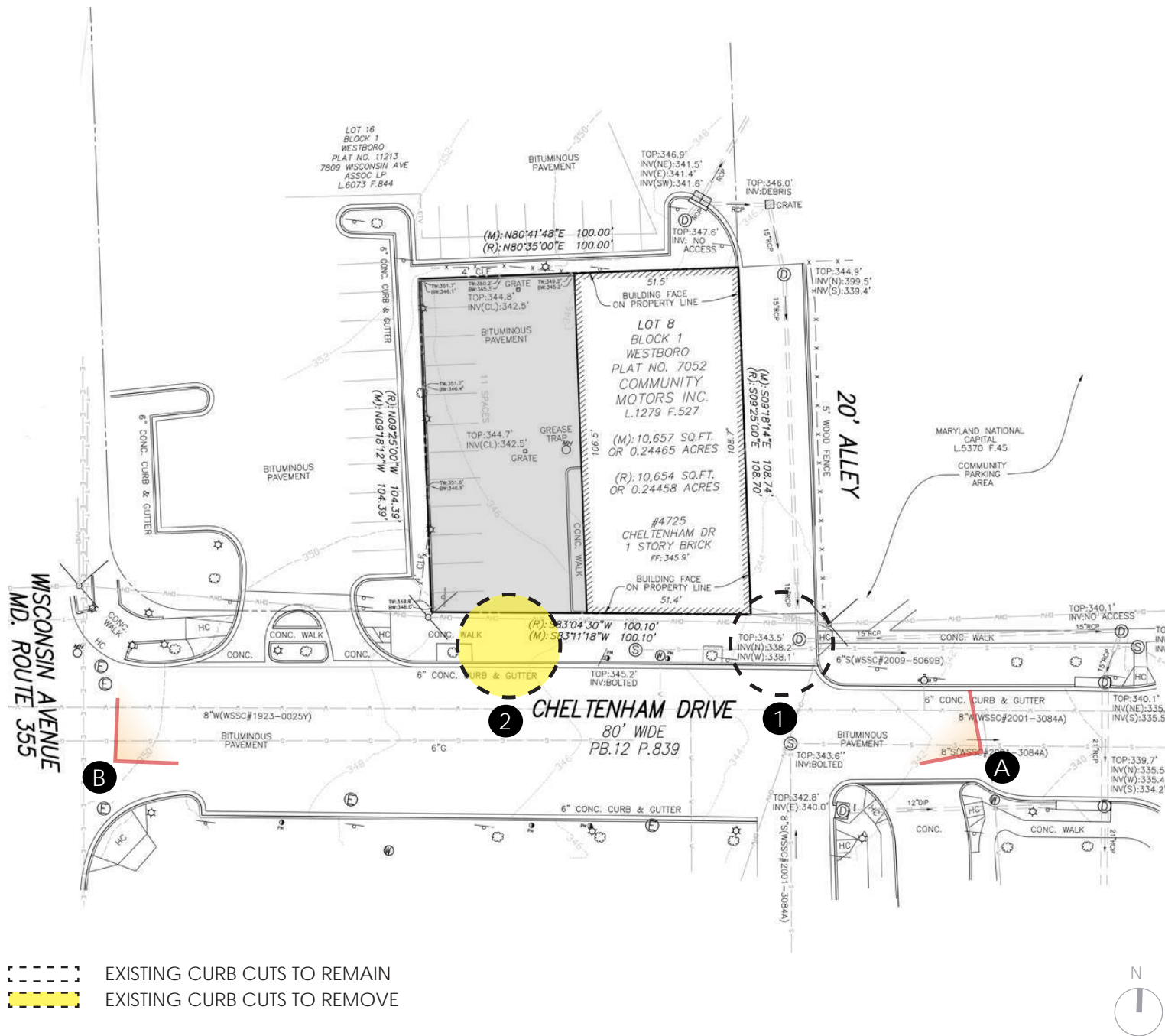


7910 WOODMONT AVE

THIS SHEET IS REPEATED FROM THE 5.27.2020 SKETCH PLAN SET BY WDG ARCHITECTURE

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LOOKING WEST FROM CHELTENHAM DRIVE



LOOKING EAST FROM WISCONSIN AVE



LOOKING TOWARDS ALLEY FROM CHELTENHAM DRIVE



LOOKING TOWARDS CURRENT PARKING LOT FROM CHELTENHAM DRIVE

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS 5

THIS SHEET IS REPEATED FROM THE 5.27.2020 SKETCH PLAN SET BY WDG ARCHITECTURE

**ECA** ERIC COLBERT & ASSOCIATES  
717 5TH STREET NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20001

**4725 CHELTENHAM DRIVE**  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

**SITE LOCATION PLAN | 04 |**

SEPT 7, 2021  
Sept 8, 2021



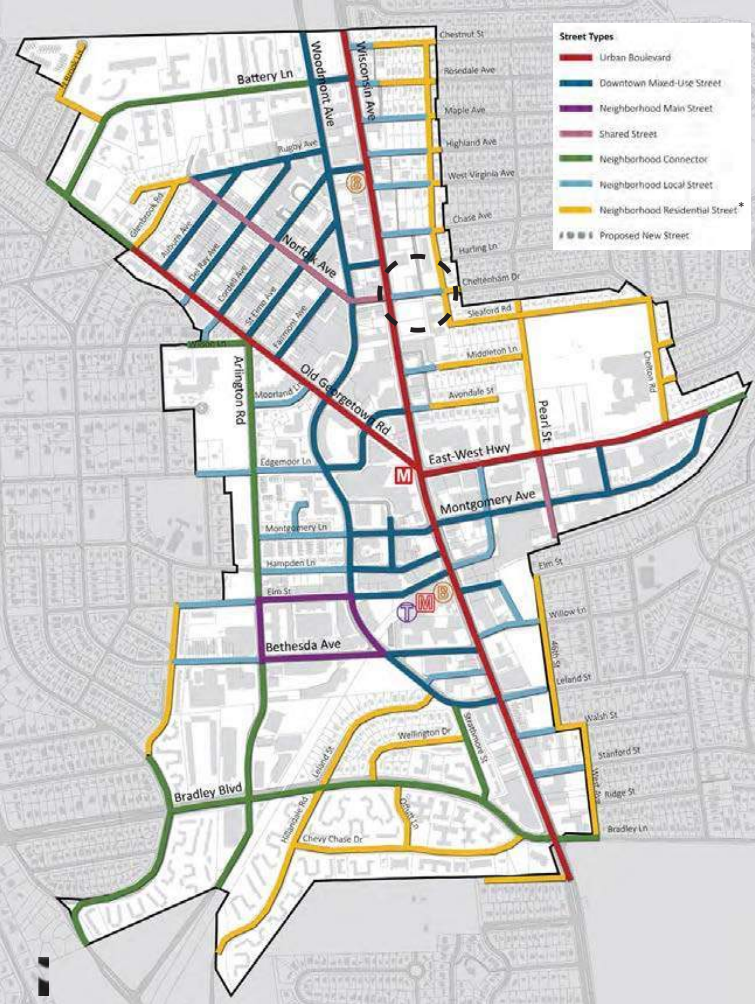
2.1.7 Neighborhood Local Street

Neighborhood Local Streets are typically narrow side streets that accommodate shared bike uses, access to residential parking, on-street parking and low traffic volumes with very slow auto speeds. Sidewalks along these streets are often narrower than on other types because of the constrained street width.

**Intent:** Building and sidewalk designs along Neighborhood Local Streets should provide efficient and comfortable access from the urban core to neighborhoods of low-scale buildings and detached homes. Because local streets provide a transition from the downtown core to surrounding neighborhood streets, the height of building frontages should reflect this change in scale.



Figure 2.01: Street Types



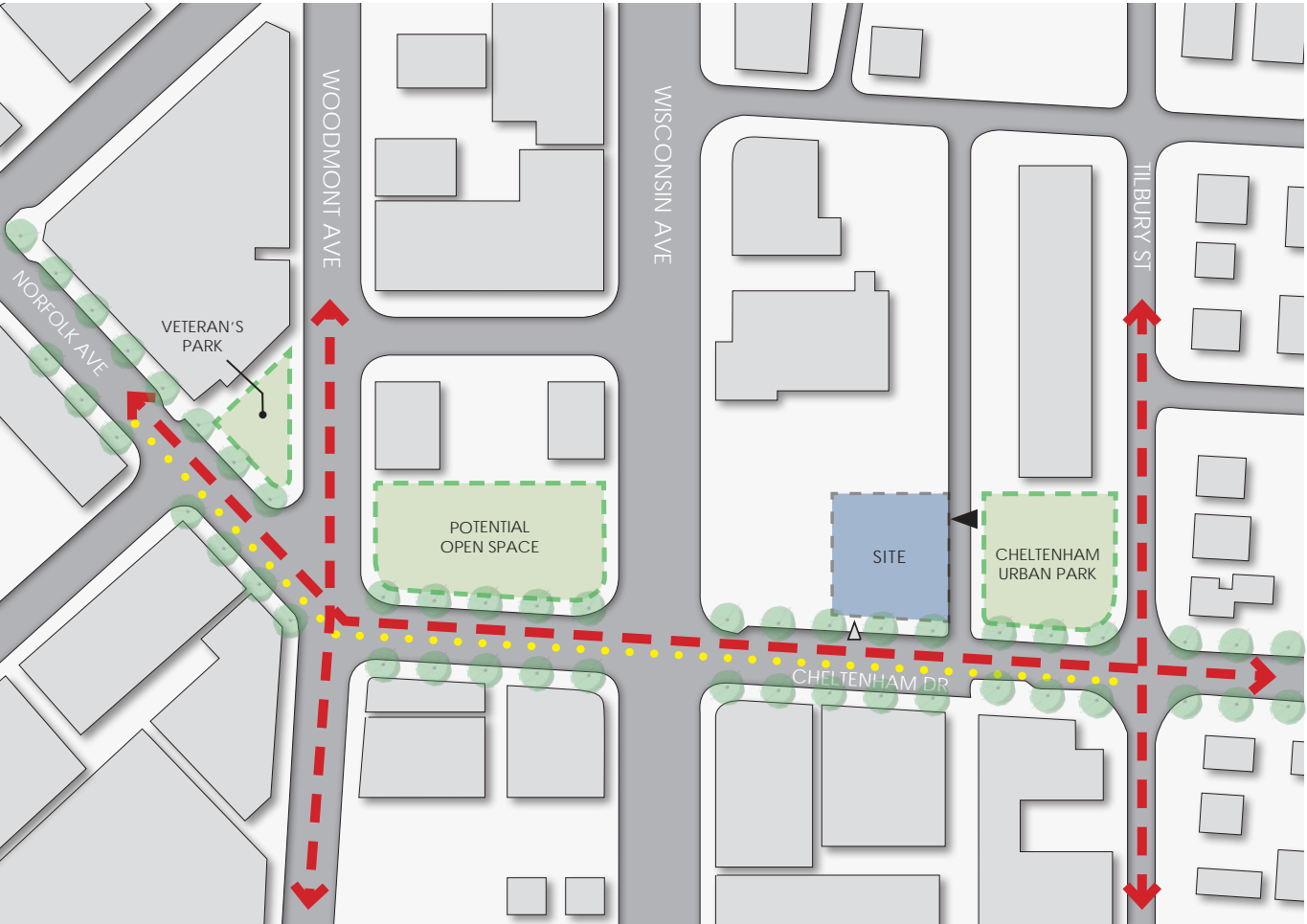
\* Several properties in the Sector Plan area that front on Neighborhood Residential Streets are designated for greenways. See Section 3.4 Eastern Greenway Districts for additional guidelines.

BETHESDA DOWNTOWN PLAN DESIGN GUIDELINES | JULY 2017

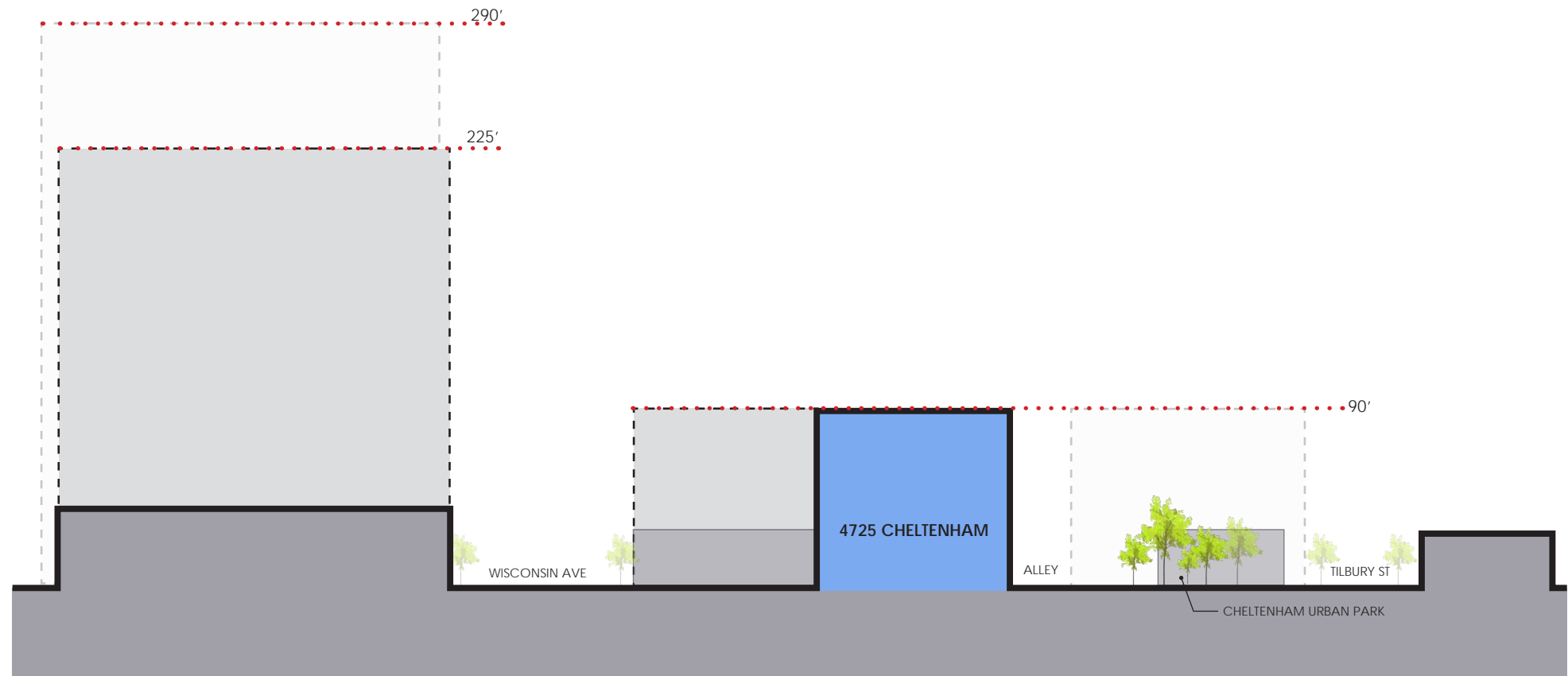
Table 2.06: Neighborhood Local Street

<b>Sidewalk Zones</b>	
A.	Planting/Furnishing Zone: 5 - 8 ft.
B.	Pedestrian Through Zone: 6 - 10 ft.
C.	Frontage Zone: 0 - 4 ft.
<b>Building Placement</b>	
D.	Build-to Line: 12 - 15 ft. from street curb
<b>Building Form</b>	
E.	Base Height: 2 - 4 stories (25 - 50 ft.)*
F.	Step-back: 15 - 20 ft.*

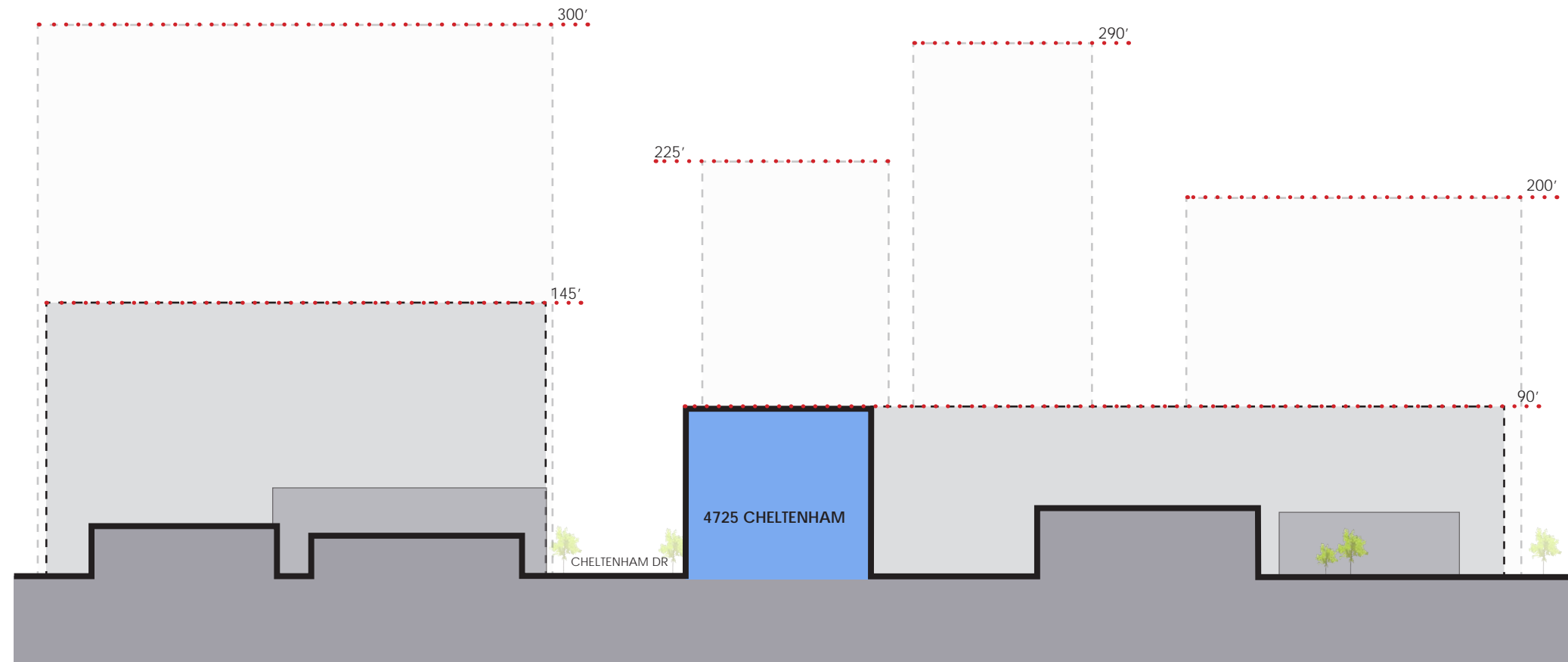
\* Properties on a Neighborhood Local Street confronting a Residential Detached or Residential Townhouse zone should see the Montgomery County Code Chapter 59 Section 4.1.8 Compatibility Requirements for base height and upper floor step-backs.



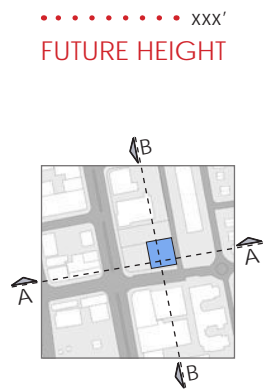
- RECOMMENDED CANOPY CORRIDOR
- RECOMMENDED BIKE LANE
- PARKING / LOADING ENTRANCES
- BLDG ENTRANCES



SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B





2.4.8 Tower: “Menu” of Methods to Reduce Bulk

Intent: Downtown Bethesda is an important location in Montgomery County for increased building heights to accommodate future growth. However, collectively, buildings at taller heights can be an imposing presence on the public realm by casting large shadows, limiting sky views and creating an uncomfortable scale for pedestrians.

**B. Use Unique Geometry**

Varied geometry adds visual interest and helps to reduce the perceived bulk of a building’s upper floors. Angled and curved facades allow a building to be viewed dynamically from different vantage points. They can enhance privacy between towers in close proximity by directing views away from nearby windows.



There are several ways to reduce the actual bulk of a building’s upper floors or to creatively reduce the perceived bulk of the building. Below is a menu of design techniques that can be used to sculpt building towers and achieve a varied skyline responsive to human scale. Every project is not required to apply every method; however, several should be used in combination to best meet the guideline intent.

**D. Modulate and Articulate Facades**

Techniques to break up large facades and reduce perceived building bulk include shifts in massing to allow for upper floor terraces, green roofs and balconies; changes in facade planes; and varied fins, frames and mullions to add depth to glass facades.



**F. Limit Apparent Face**

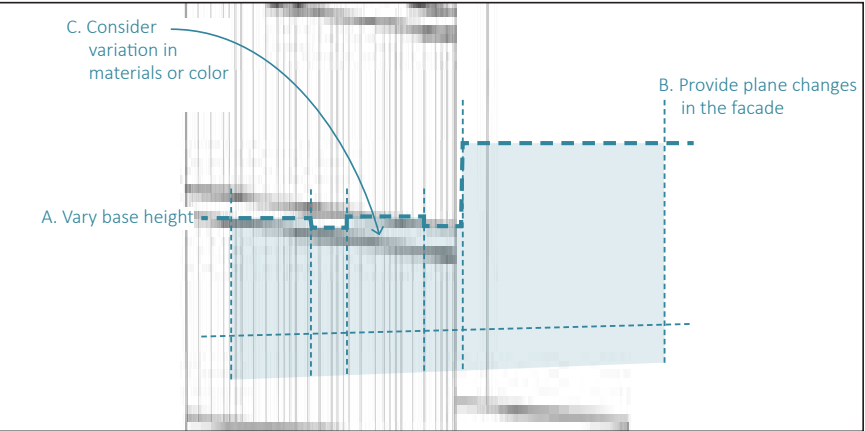
The apparent face is the length of a facade plane that is unbroken by vertical changes in depth. Limiting this length reduces the perceived bulk of a long building facade.

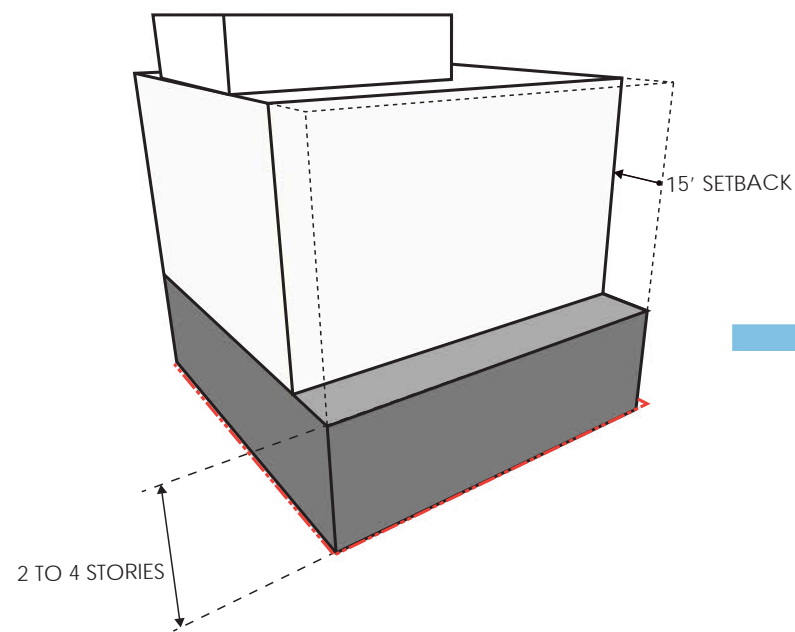


2.4.4 Base: Variation and Articulation

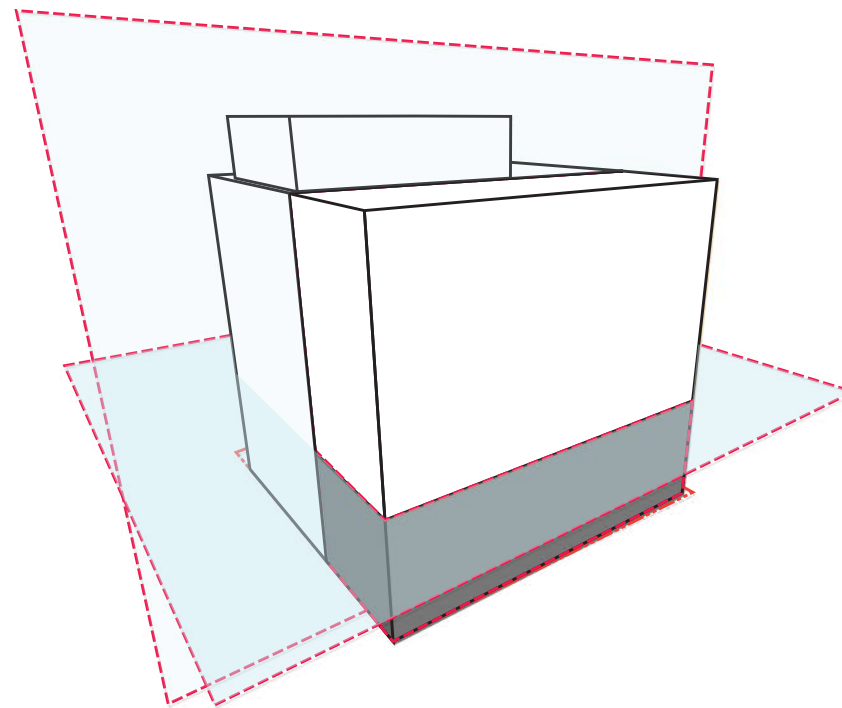
Intent: To ensure that facades are not exceedingly long, uninterrupted and rigidly uniform. These variations break up the mass of large buildings, add visual interest and promote human-scaled lower stories to relate to pedestrians.

- Guidelines:**
- A. Vary base height up to the maximum height designated by the street type. This variation should respond to the street character and typical widths, heights and modulation of existing buildings to create a contextually sensitive building wall along the street.
  - B. Provide plane changes in the facade that create significant vertical and horizontal breaks, and shadow lines on the facade.
  - C. Consider variation in building materials or color to add texture to lower floors most visible to those at pedestrian level.

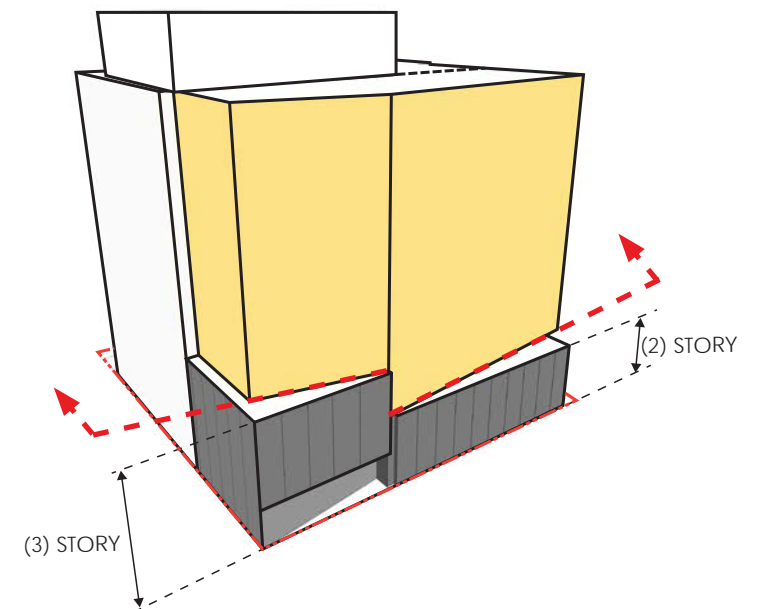




**PRESCRIPTIVE MASSING**

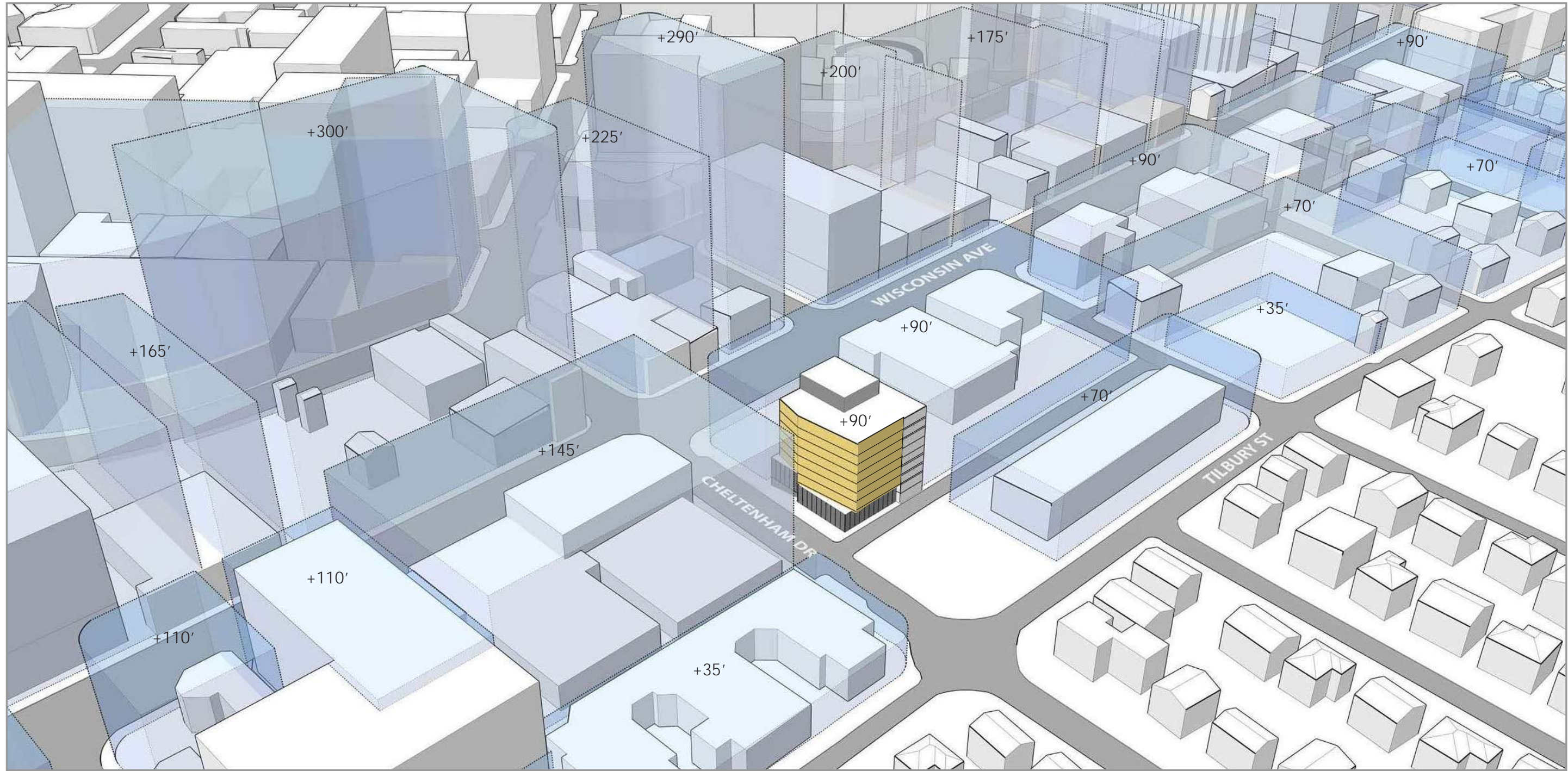


**BREAKING DOWN THE MASSING**  
- TOWER/BASE SEPARATION



**MASSING ARTICULATION**  
- VARYING BASE HEIGHT  
- FOLDING PRIMARY FACADE PLANE

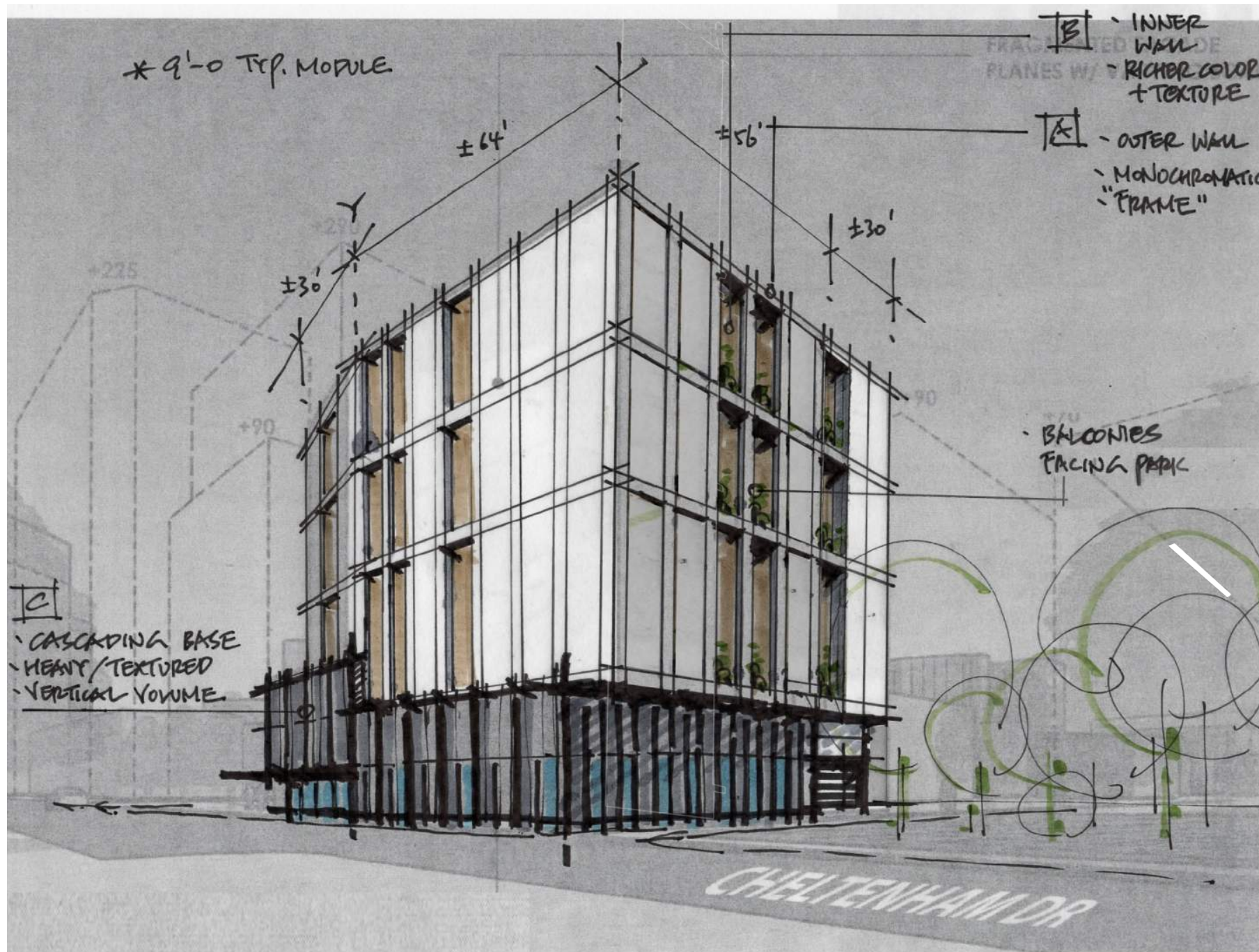




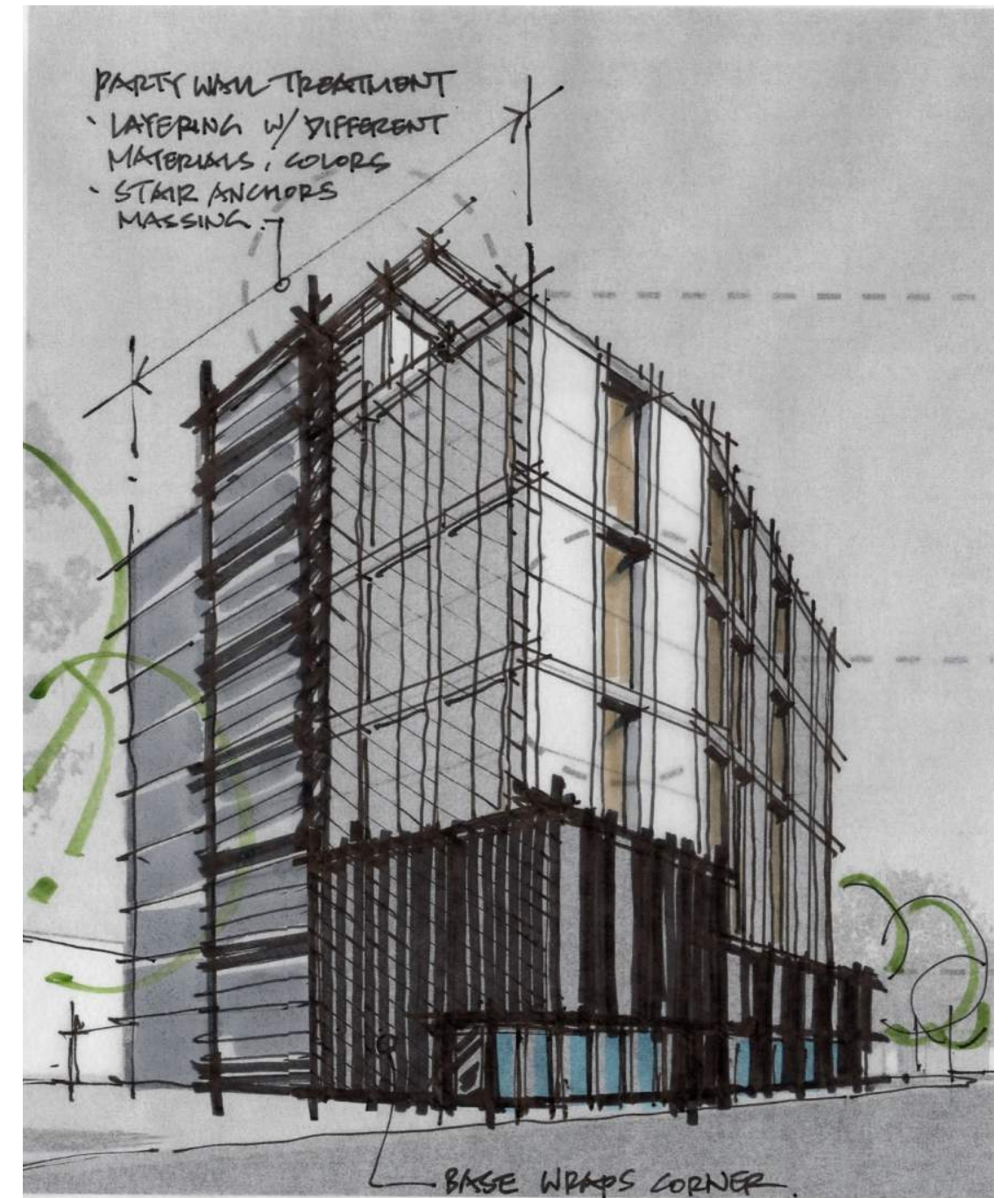
SOUTH-EAST AERIAL

 FUTURE BUILDING HEIGHTS





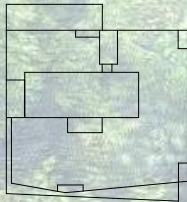
VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST



VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST

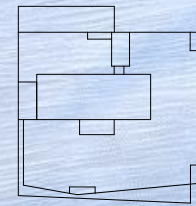


See Roof Terrace Design Plan for elements such as planters with trees, trellises, etc. They are not shown in this rendering. Mechanical equipment within the enclosure atop the penthouse is not shown.



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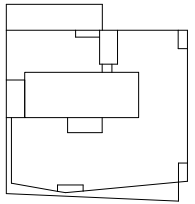








\*Streetscape elements are shown here diagrammatically. See drawings by Soltesz for specific design elements, such as paving patterns, bench design, lamp post selection, and the like.



FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY





\*Streetscape elements are shown here diagrammatically. See drawings by Soltesz for specific design elements, such as paving patterns, bench design, lamp post selection, and the like.





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\*Streetscape elements are shown here diagrammatically. See drawings by Soltesz for specific design elements, such as paving patterns, bench design, lamp post selection, and the like.





CHELTENHAM DR  
URBAN PARK

ALLEY

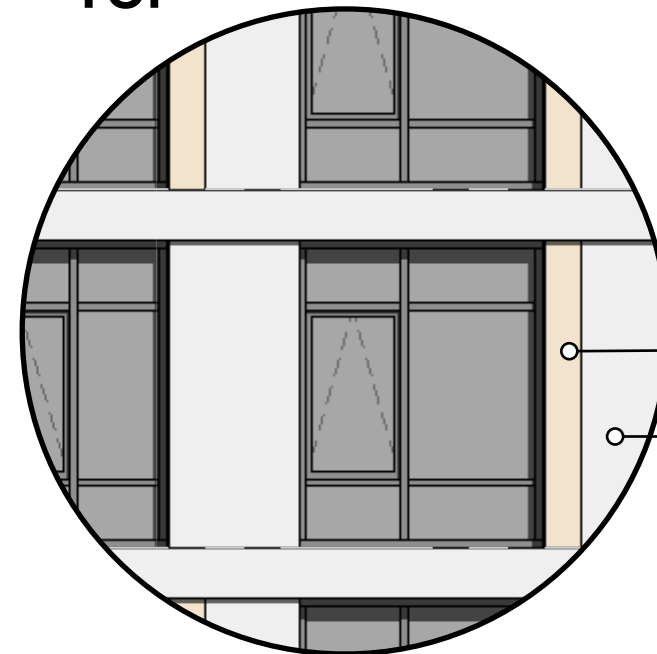
CVS  
PARKING



BRICK 2  
DARK GREY



TOP



WOOD GRAIN  
PANEL  
GREY METAL  
PANEL



BASE



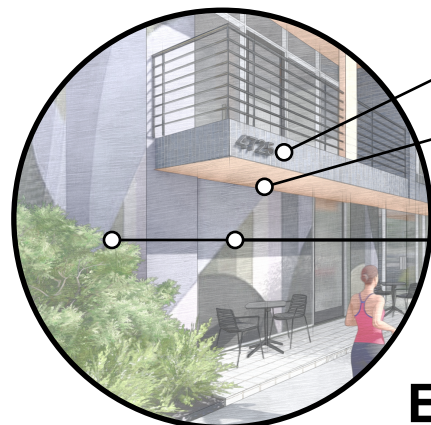
GREEN ROOF

BRICK 1  
CHARCOAL

WOOD GRAIN  
PILASTER  
WOOD GRAIN  
PLANTER

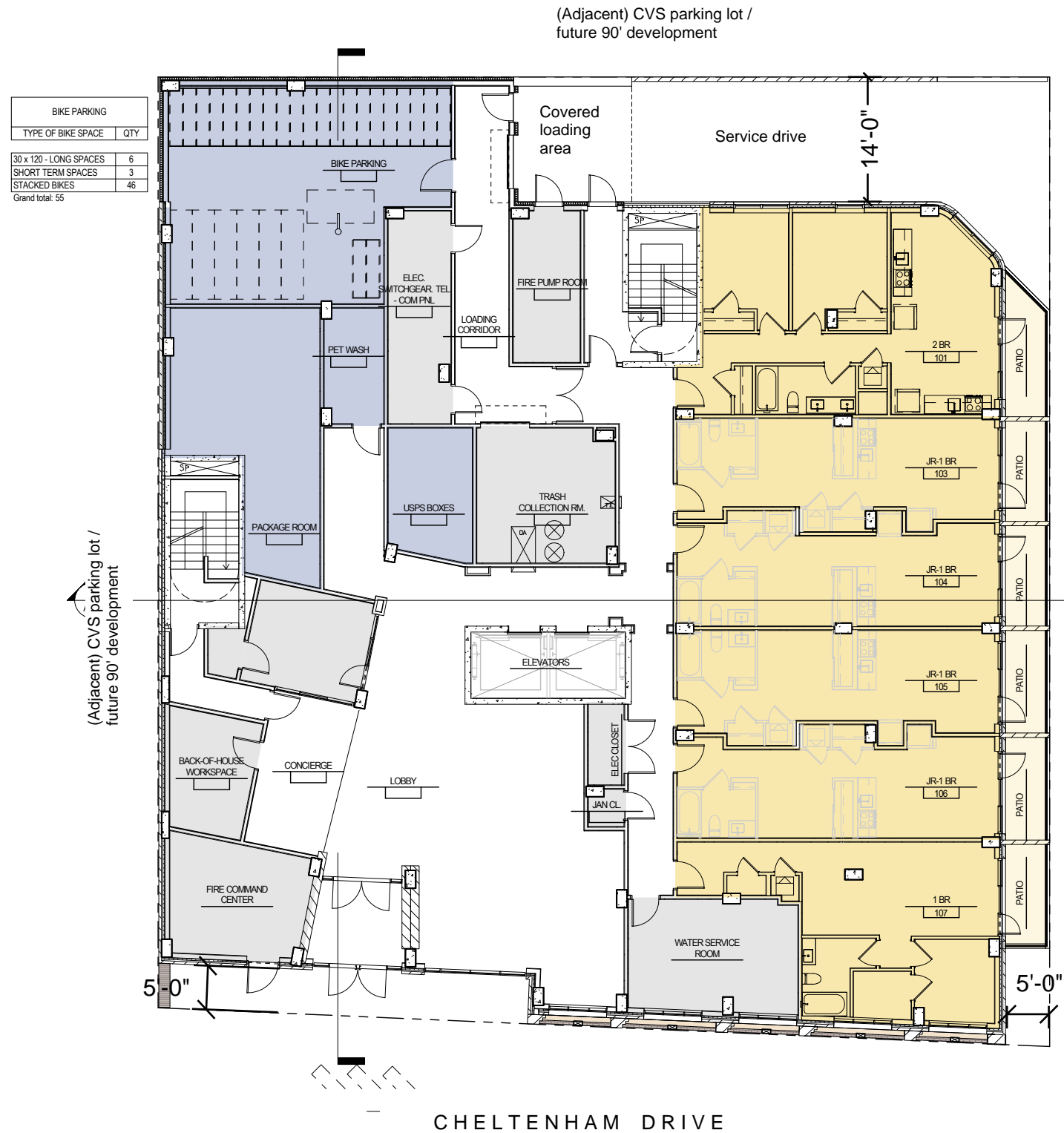


BRICK 1 - CHARCOAL  
WOOD GRAIN UNDERSIDE  
OF \*EVERY BALCONY  
MURAL ON WEST WALL  
WRAPS INTO ENTRANCE

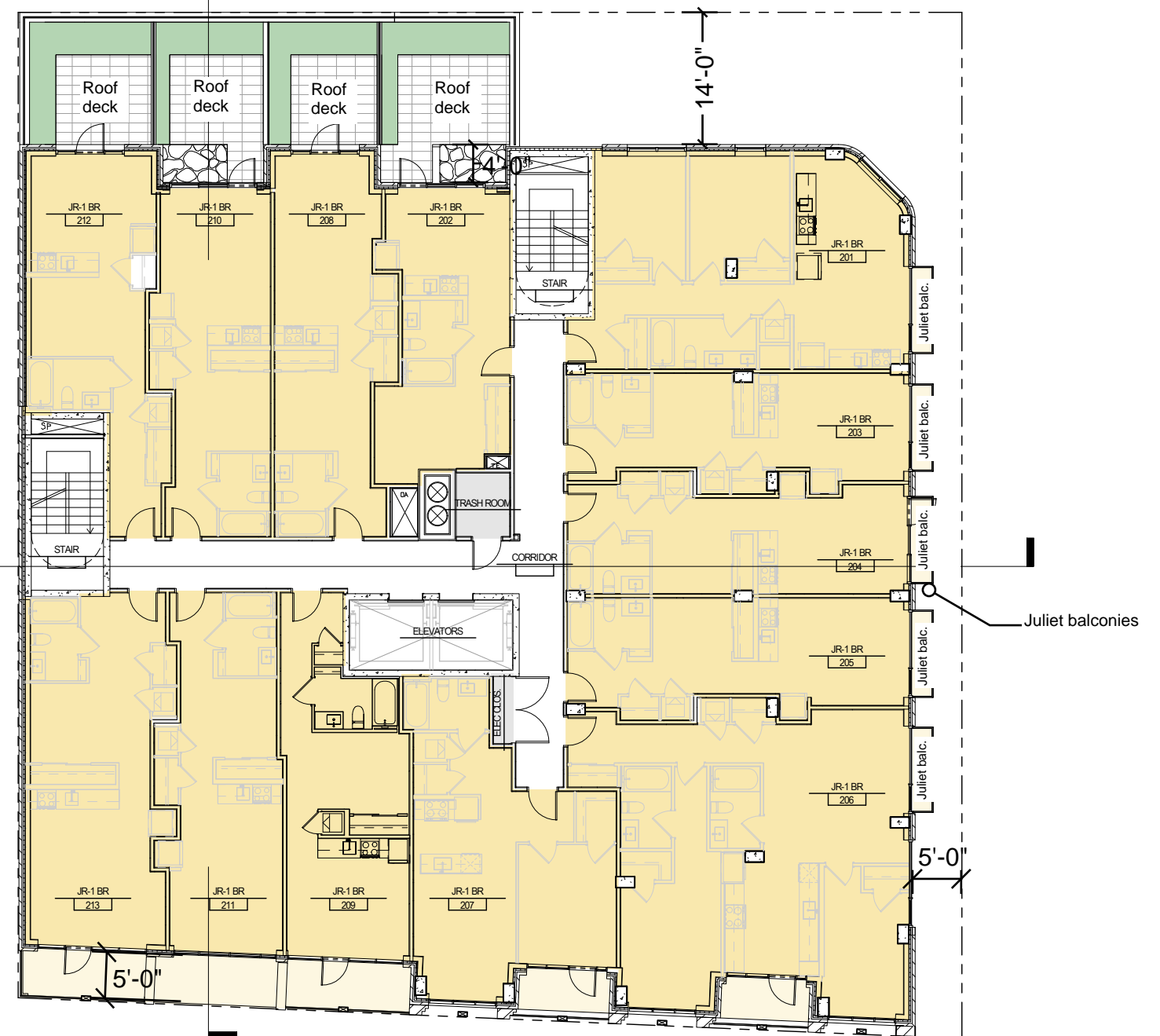


ENTRANCE

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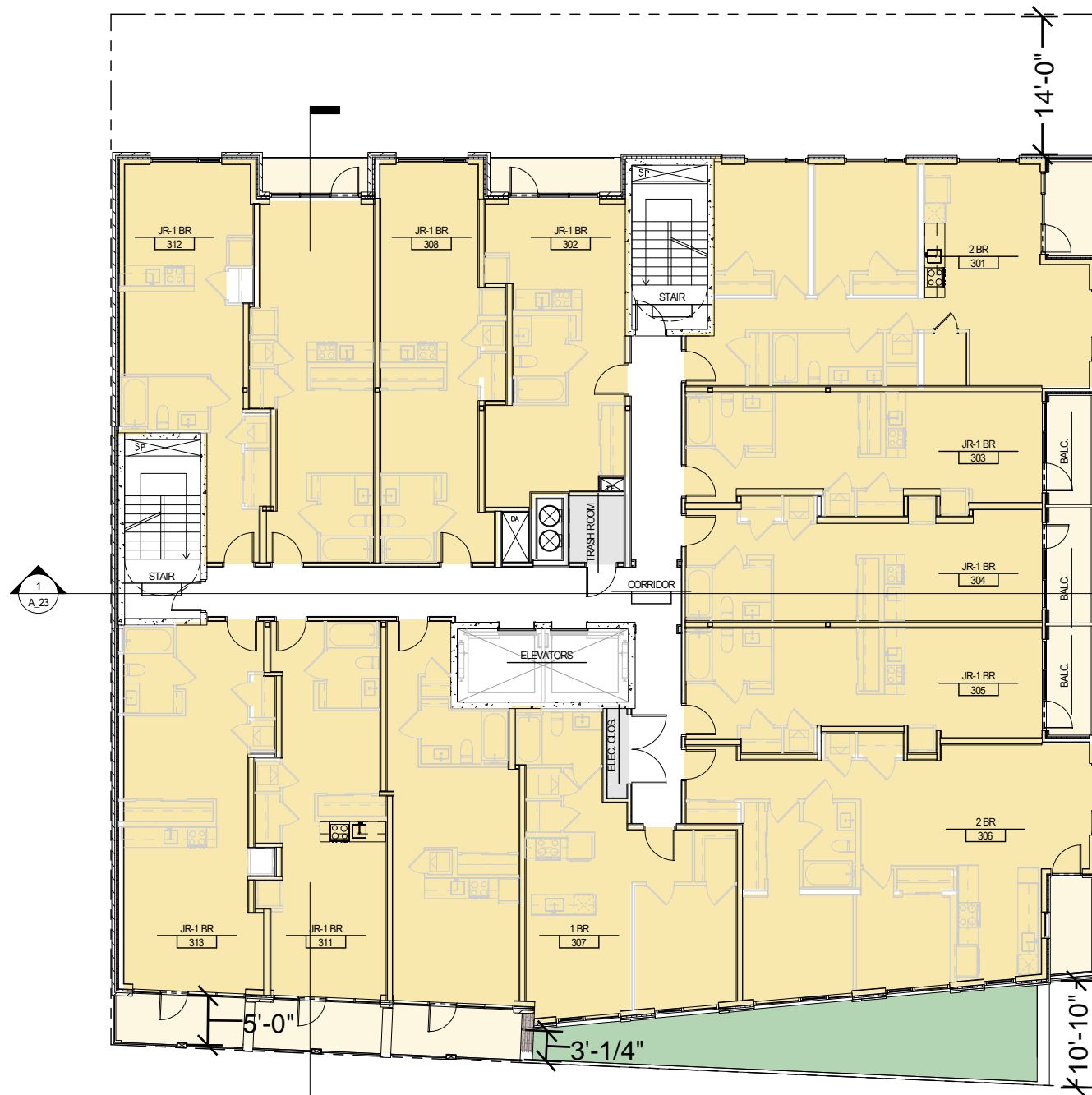


1st FLOOR

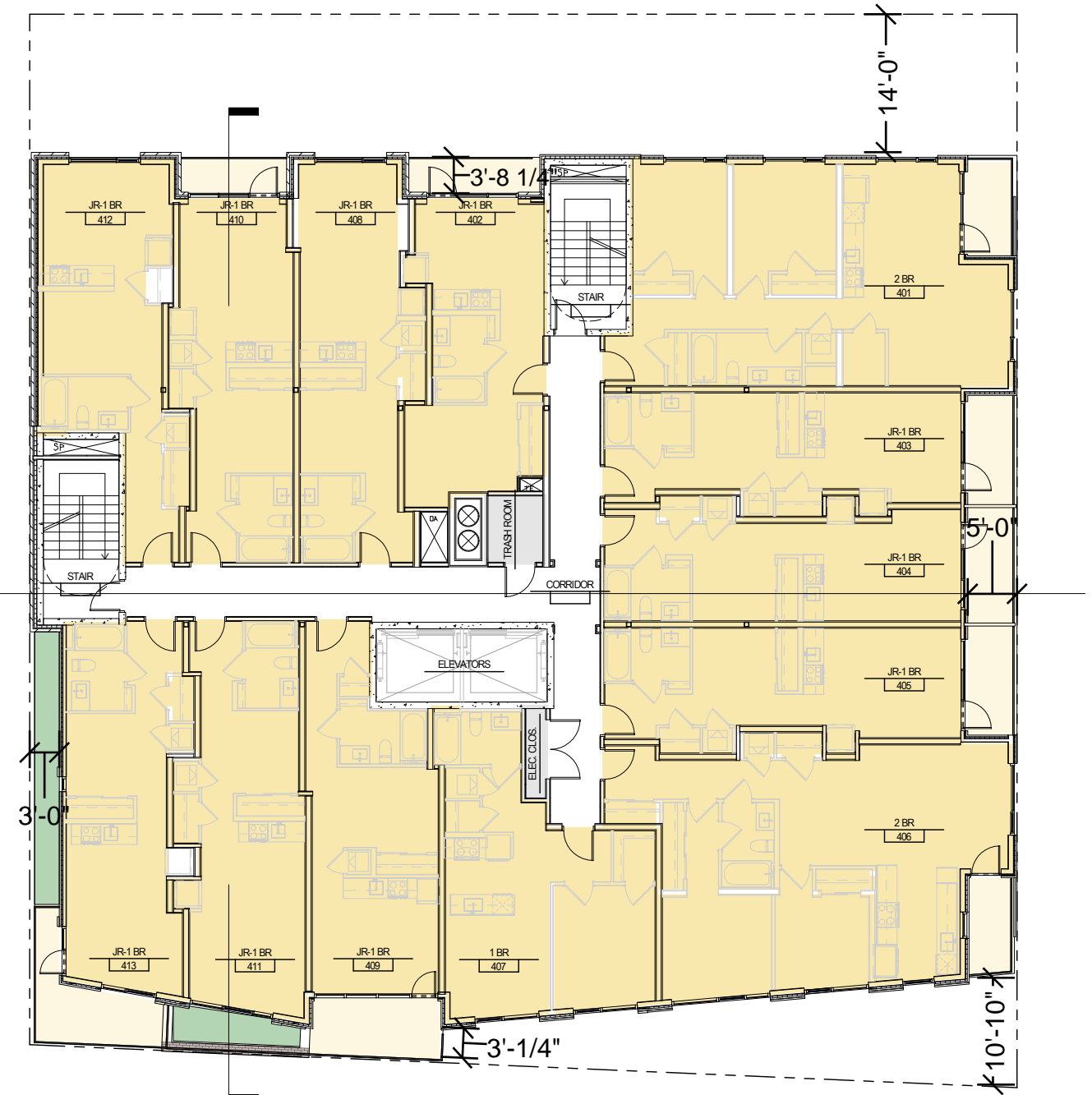


2nd FLOOR

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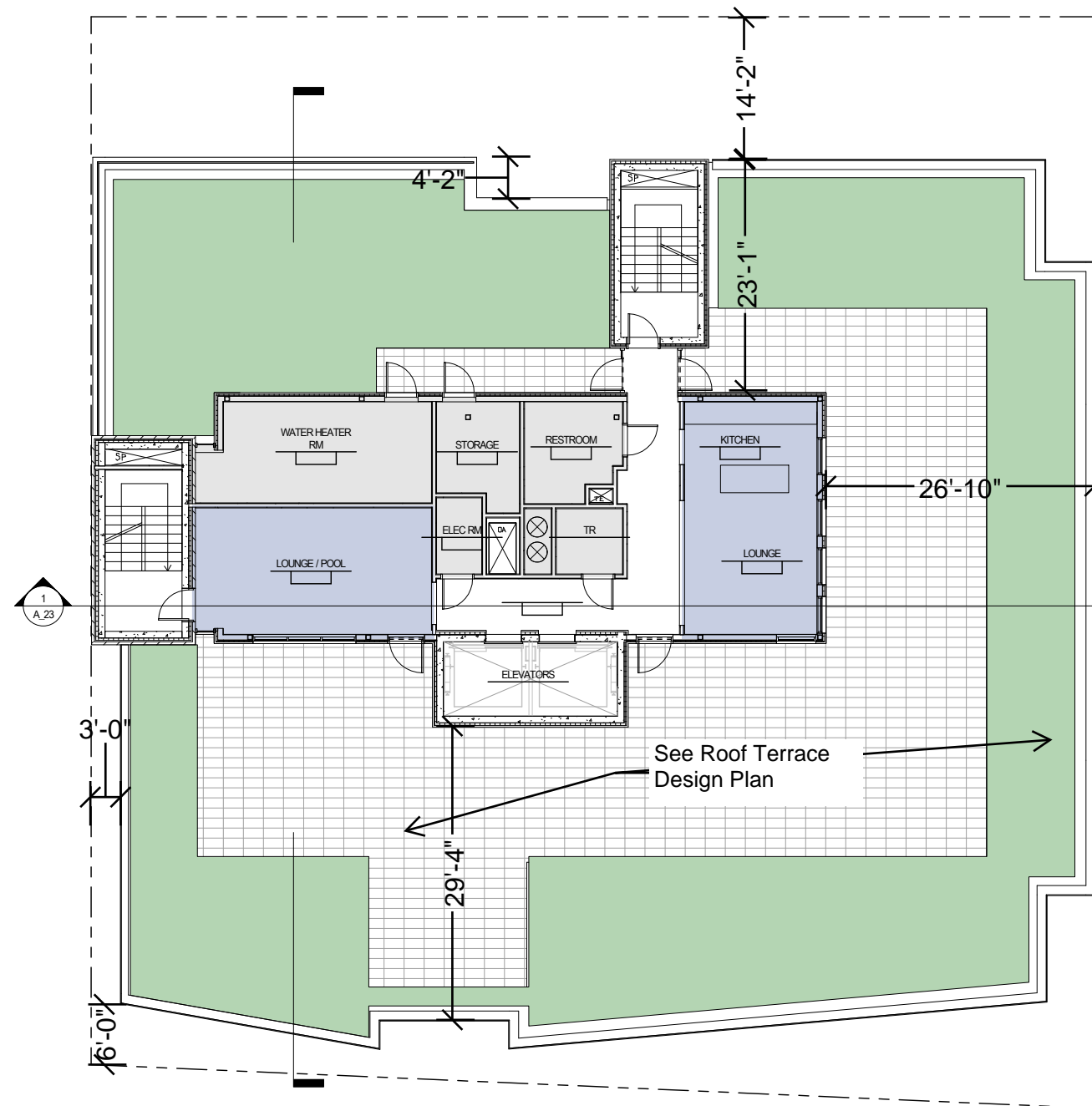


3rd FLOOR

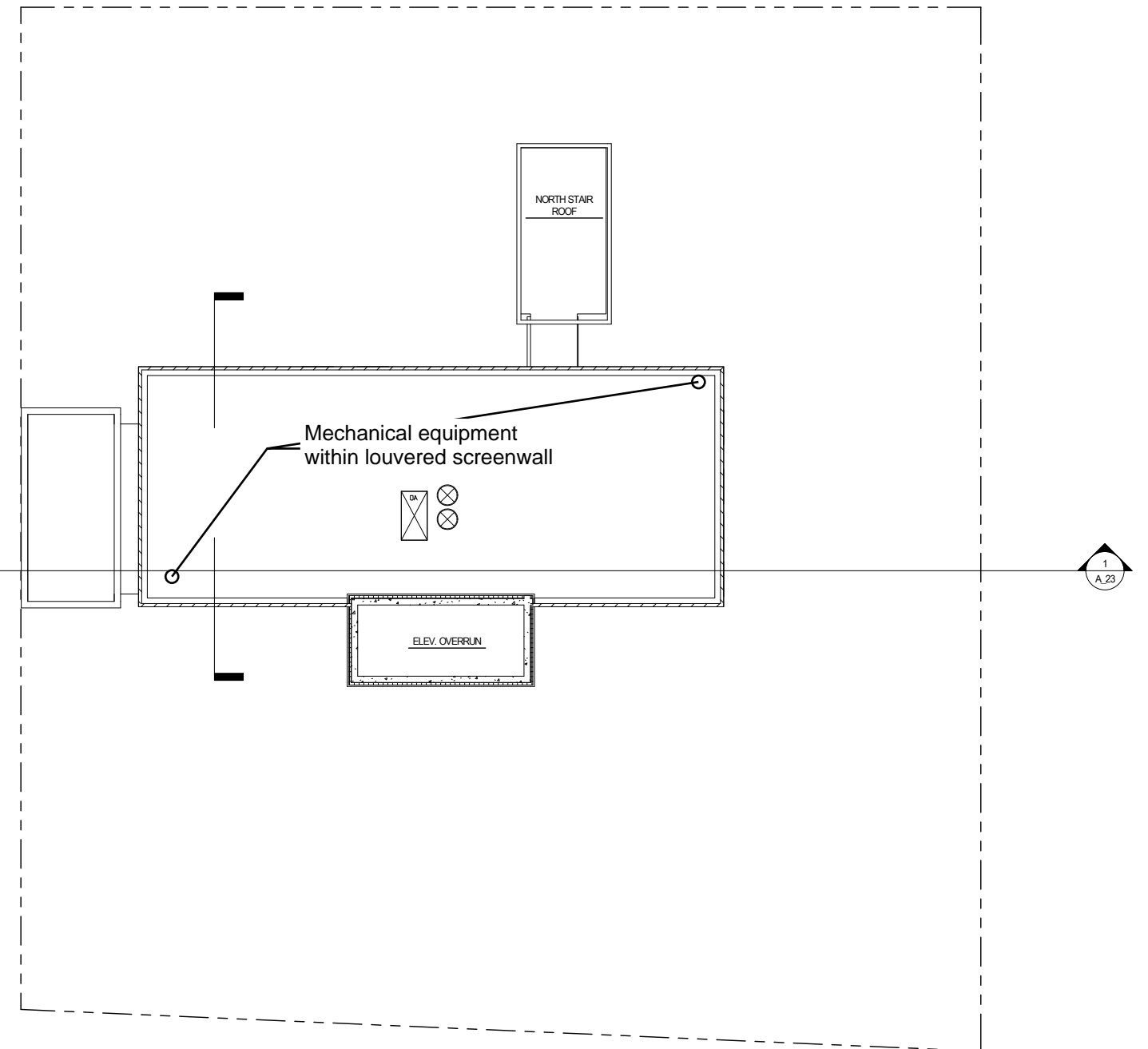


4th - 9th (TYP) FLOOR

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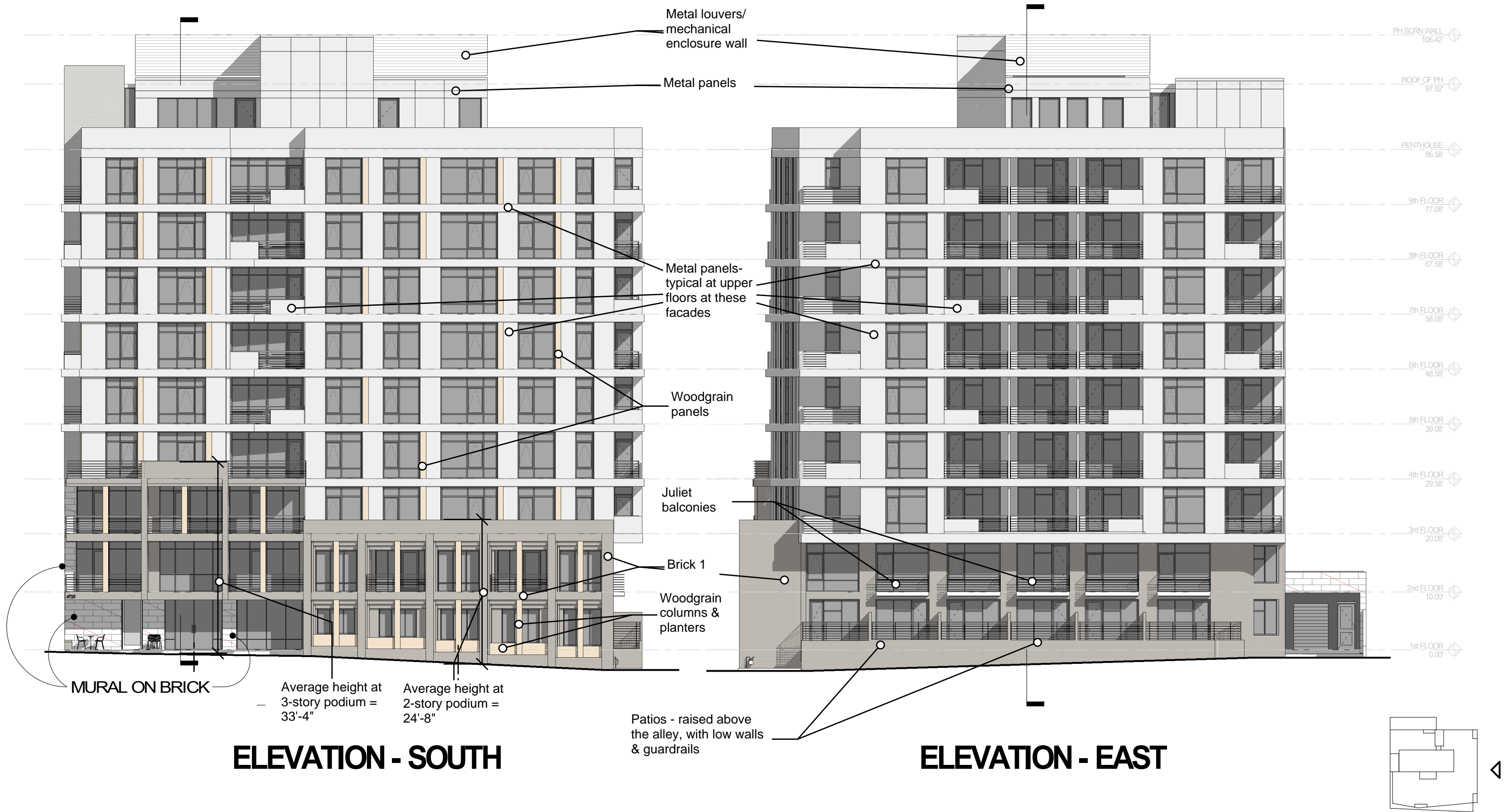
**PENTHOUSE**



**ROOF OF PH**

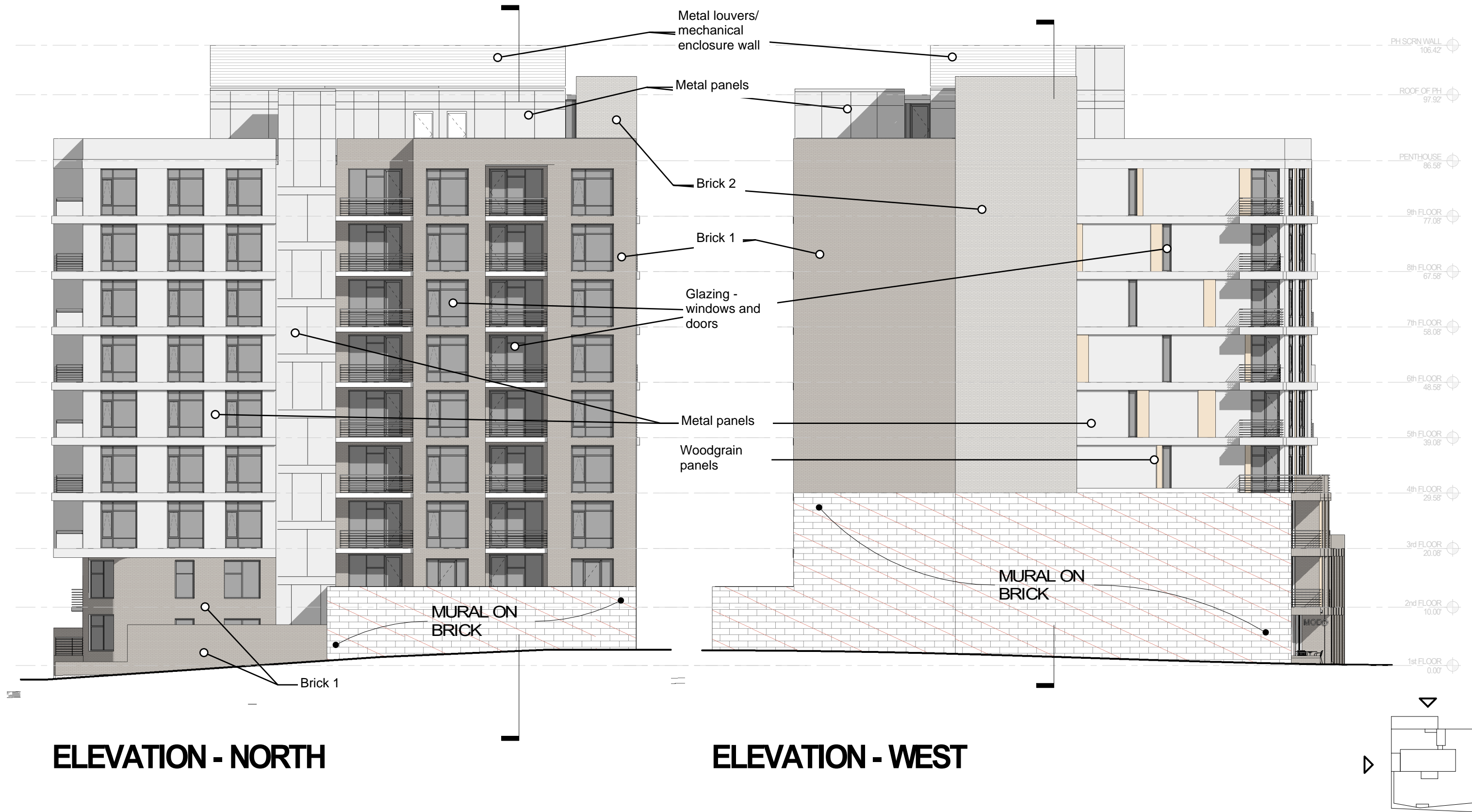
FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY



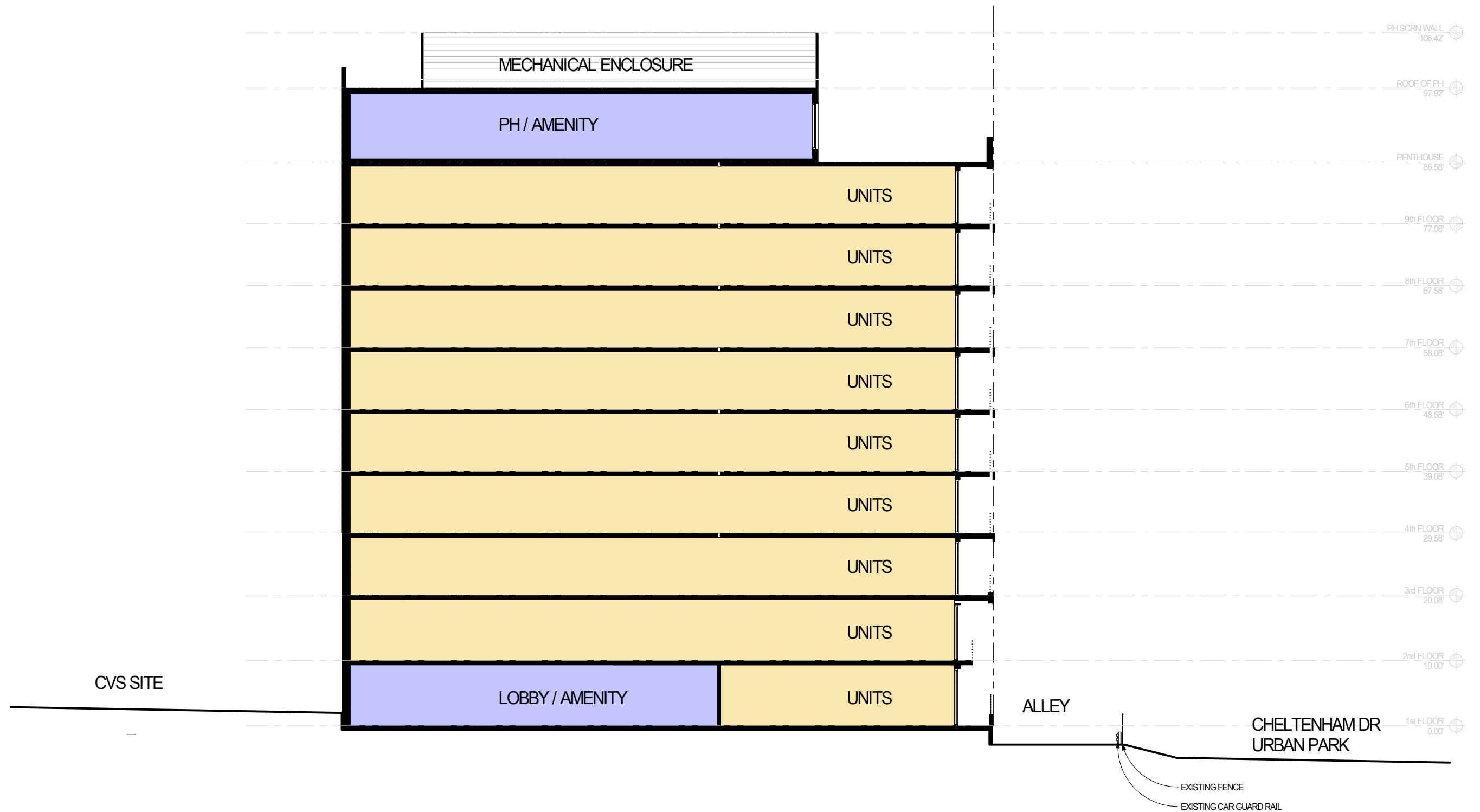


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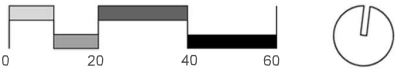


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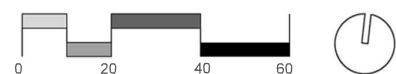
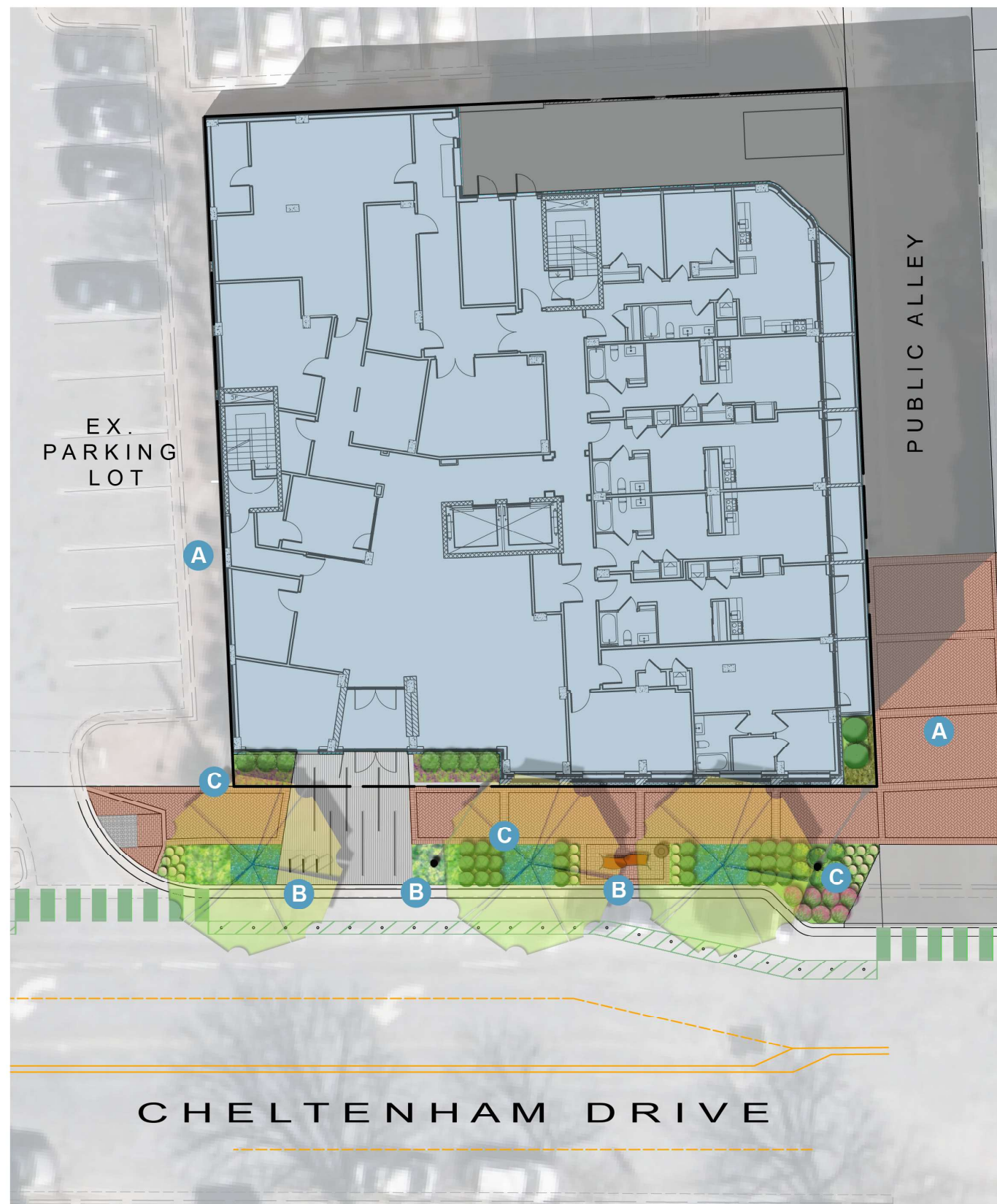
4725 Cheltenham Drive	Permitted / Allowed		Approved by Sketch Plan		Proposed on Site Plan	
Gross Tract Area	N/A		16,147		16,152	
Cheltenham Drive Dedication (Plat 839)	N/A		4,404		4,404	
Public Alley Dedication (Plat 839)	N/A		1,089		1,089	
Net Tract Area	N/A		10.654		10.659	
Density						
CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-90	GFA	FAR	GFA	FAR	GFA	FAR
Commerical (Live/Work)	32,304	2.00	0	0.00	4,351	0.27
Residential	44,418	2.75	44,404	2.75	44,105	2.73
BOZ	N/A	N/A	35,596	2.20	28,168	1.74
Total Proposed GFA	48,456	3.00	80,000	4.95	76,624	4.74



4725 Cheltenham Drive  
Illustrative Site Layout



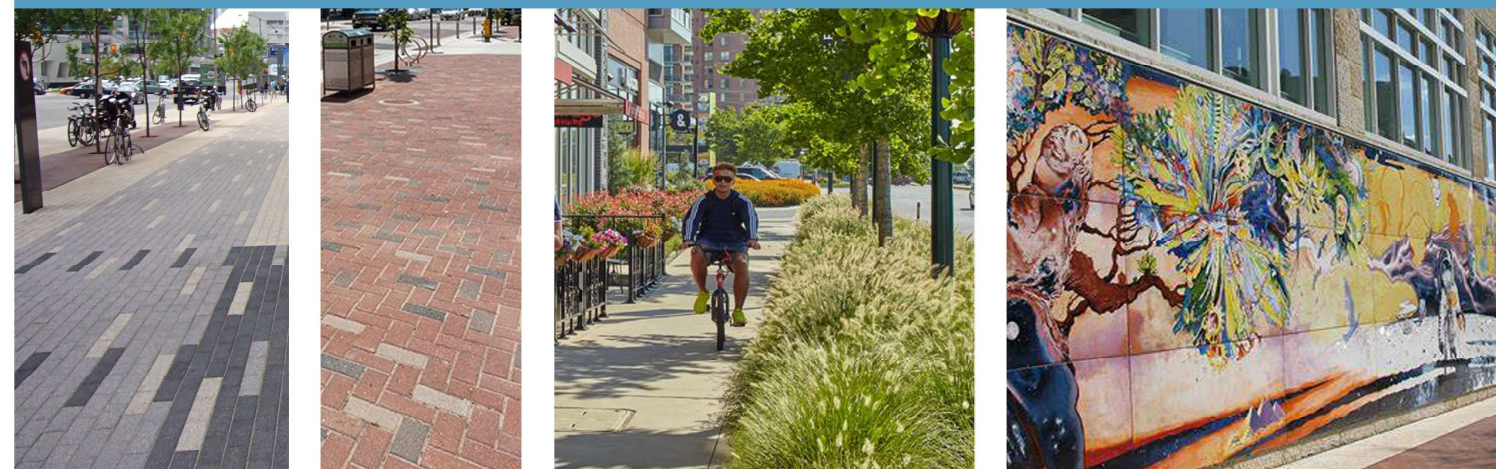




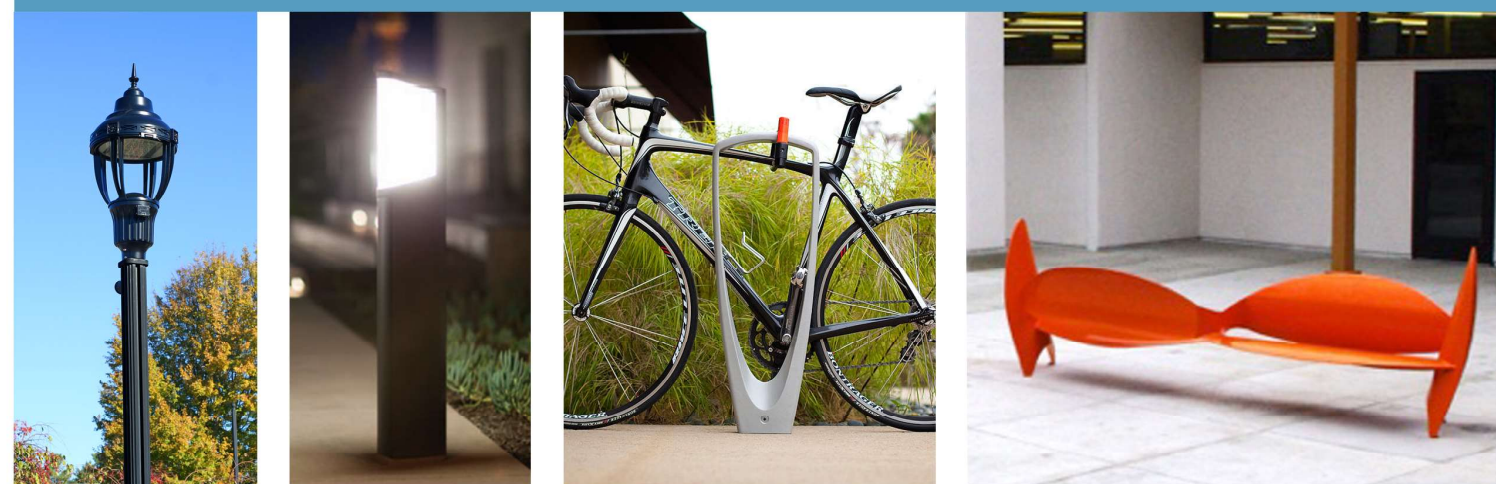
# 4725 Cheltenham Drive Streetscape Plan



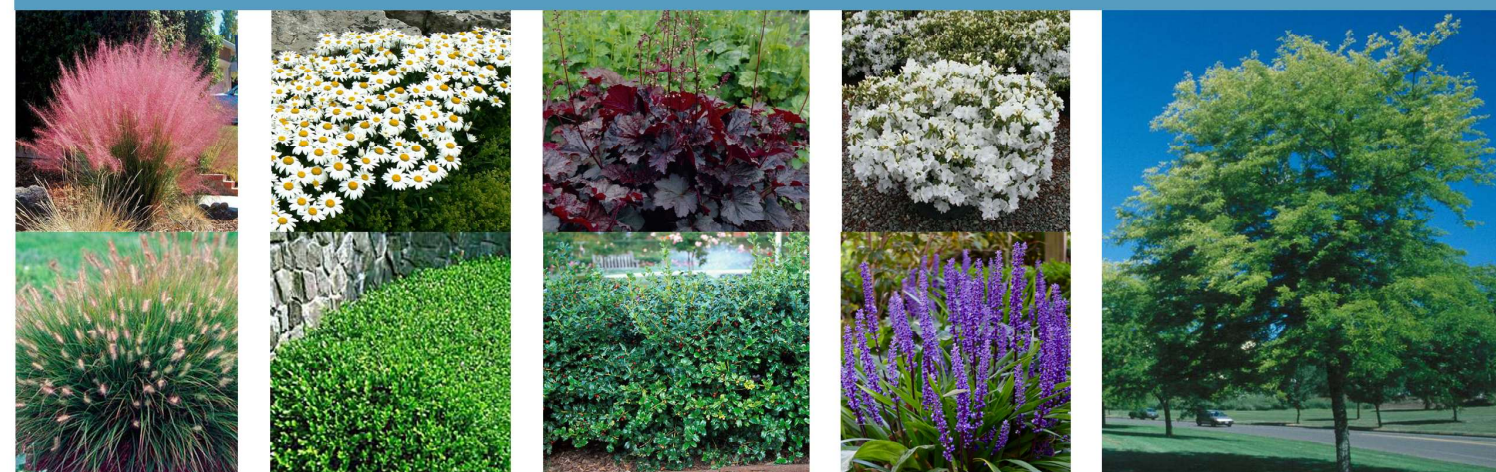
## A | HARDSCAPE MATERIALS



## B | SITE FURNITURE



## C | PLANTING MATERIAL



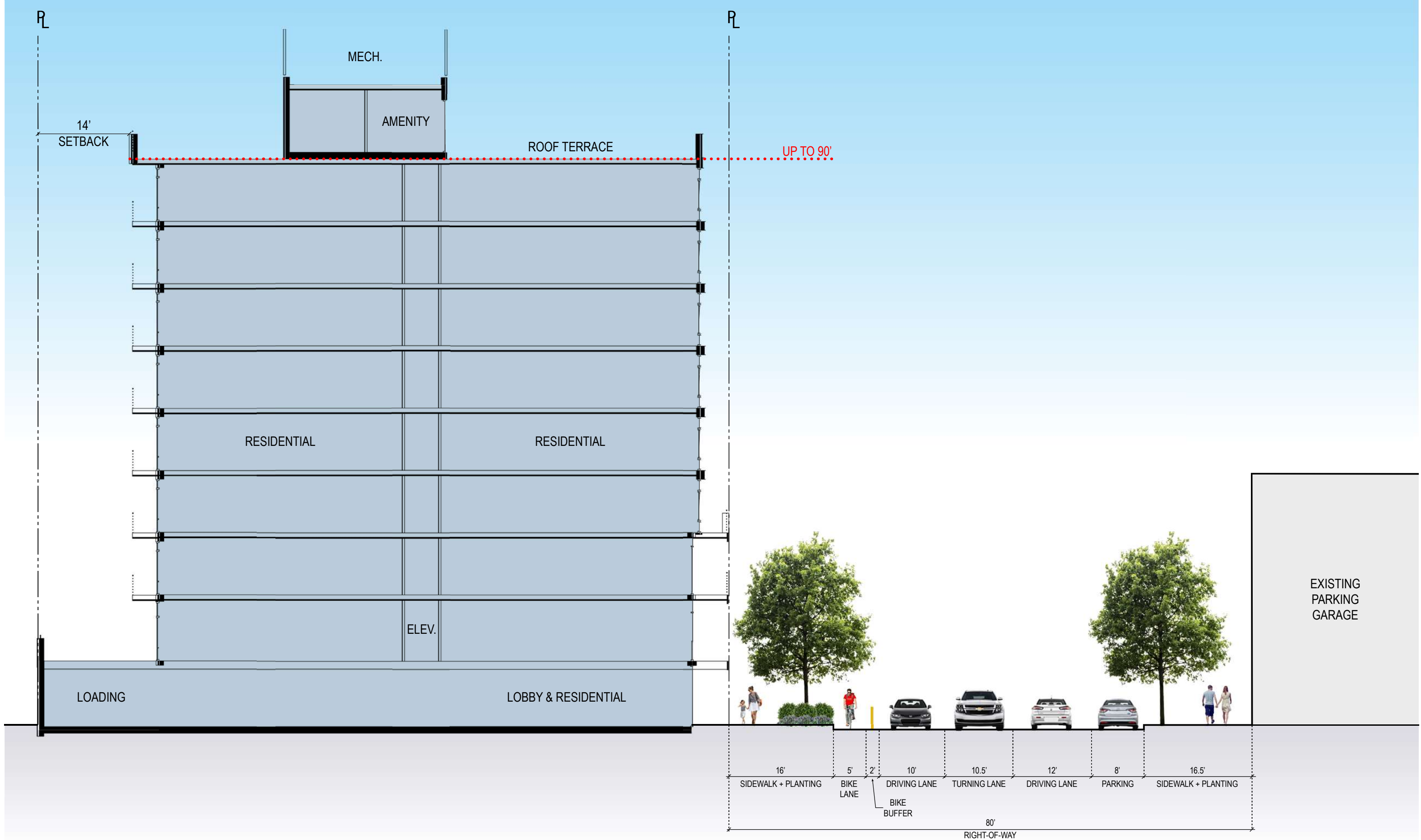
September 8th, 2021



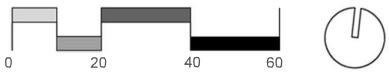
COMMUNITY THREE

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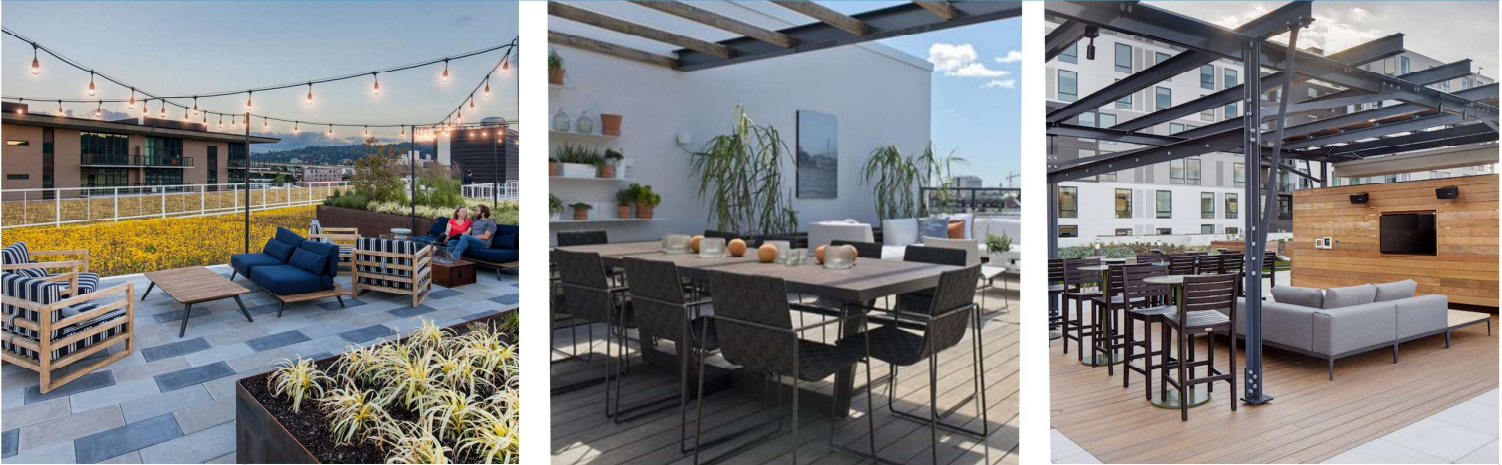




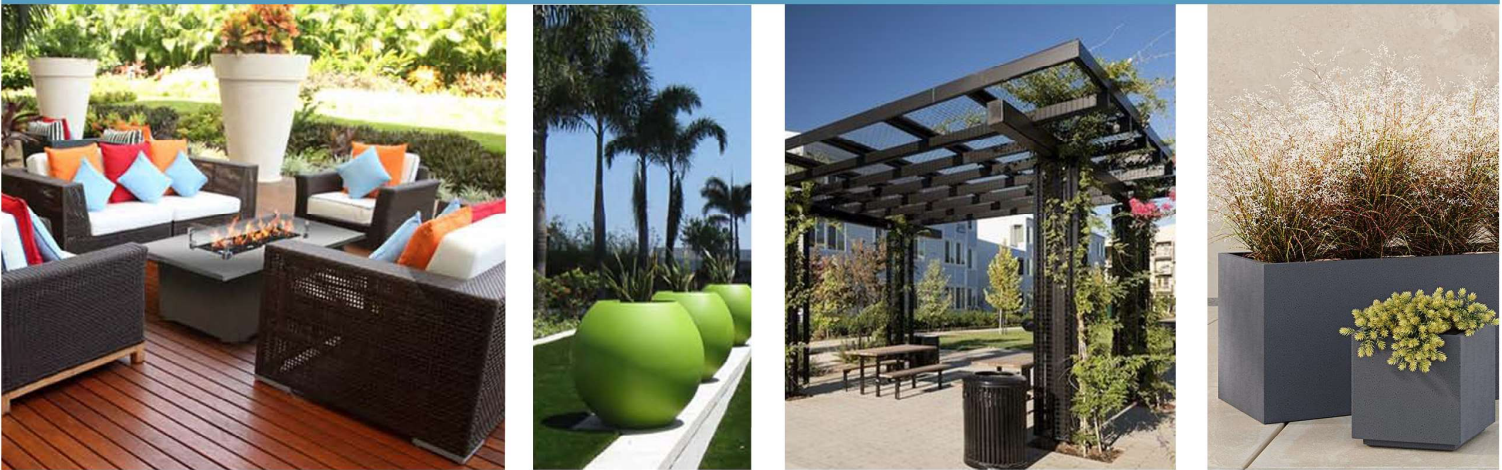


# 4725 Cheltenham Drive Roof Terrace Design Plan

## ROOF TERRACE



## SITE FURNISHINGS



September 8th, 2021  
**COMMUNITY THREE**

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