

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

Submission Form (Revised March 2020)

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	4901 Battery Lane
File Number(s)	
Project Address	4901 Battery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814

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

APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact	Brian Strott, WC Smith Development	202-465-7010	BStrott@wcsmith.com
Architect	SK+I Architecture (Chris Huffer), 240-479-7484, chuffer@skiarch.com		
Landscape Architect	Parker Rodriguez (Trini Rodriguez), 703-548-5010, trodriguez@parkerrodriguez.com		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

	Zone	Proposed Height	Proposed Density (SF/FAR)	Requested BOZ Density (SF/FAR)	MPDU %
Project Data	CR-1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-120'	120'	420,528 sf / 4.55 FAR	281,874 sf / 3.05 FAR	15%
Proposed Land Uses	Multi-family residential units and uses				

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 Connector (Battery Lane)

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Sidewalk Zone			
Planting/Furnishing Zone	6 - 8 ft.	12 ft	
Pedestrian Though Zone	6 - 10 ft.	7 ft	
Frontage Zone	5 - 8 ft. min	6 ft	
Building Placement			
Build-to Line (from street curb)	20 - 25 ft.	25'	
Building Form			
Base Height	3 - 5 stories (35 - 60 ft.)	3 Stories	
Step-Back	15 - 20 ft.	10'	

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'	79'-11" to West, 89'-5" to East	No
Step-Back	Per Street Type	10' @ 3rd Floor and 5' @ 9th	
Bulk Reduction Methods	Multiple Step-Backs, varied heights, modulated and articulated facades, limited apparent face		

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): 10

- 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



4901 Battery Lane DAP Narrative and Project Description
For Sketch Plan Application

I. Introduction

WC Smith Development (“**Applicant**”) and authorized representative of the property owner, Alonzo O. Bliss Properties, a District of Columbia general partnership, submits this DAP Submission for the proposed Sketch Plan for redevelopment of two (2) existing garden-style multi-family residential buildings located on the north side of Battery Lane in the area between Woodmont Avenue and the Bethesda Trolley Trail on the Property generally known by addresses 4901 through 4915 Battery Lane.

The Sketch Plan proposes one (1) new multi-family building on the CR zoned site, containing 399 dwelling units in a 12-story high-rise building, amenity spaces, green areas, and underground parking (the “**Project**”).

II. Property and Neighborhood

The Property is Lots 26, 49, and 50, Block 2, Northwest Park subdivision per Plats 83 and 134. The Property is improved with two multi-family rental garden-style apartment buildings internally facing onto a central surface parking lot. Currently known as Cambridge Square Apartments, the property has been owned by Alonzo O. Bliss entities since 1974 and managed by the WC Smith Company since its acquisition.

The Property is zoned Commercial/Residential CR 1.5 C0.5 R1.5 H 120 within the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The Property contains a gross tract area (including prior dedications) of 2.12 +/- acres.

The Property is located on Battery Lane within the “Battery Lane District” planning sub-area of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, between Woodmont Triangle and the NIH campus. It is located on the north side of Battery Lane adjoining the NIH campus stormwater ponds east of the Bethesda Trolley Trail. The Property is located due north and east of Bethesda Lane Urban Park across Battery Lane. The Property confronts the approved Site C of the Brown Development Sketch Plan No. 320190080.

The site is fairly level, gently sloping approximately seven feet from Battery Lane down to the northern boundary with NIH. Under existing conditions, a central curb cut accesses the central surface parking lot and a second curb cut to the east accesses an additional parking lot in the front yard. The Property is mostly impervious with no stormwater management facilities. Perimeter plantings and lawn exist around each of the buildings with a limited tree canopy in the rear yard from mature trees on the adjacent NIH campus.

The Property is in walking distance of transit between two Metro stops on the Red Line, Medical Center and Bethesda. The Bethesda Circulator passes in front of the Property with a nearby stop to the west on Battery Lane. Bus stops for Ride-On and Metro Bus are located on Battery Lane just to the east on the adjacent property and across Battery Lane from the Property. The Bethesda Trolley Trail lies one lot to the west with pedestrian and bicycle access to the NIH and Woodmont Triangle employment centers and retail service district.

III. **The 4901 Battery Lane Project**

The Project is a traditional massed and articulated residential development designed to deliver quality architectural design, new housing choices, and walkable neighborhood connections that will add to the livability of the Battery Lane District residential neighborhood. The Project proposes up to 420,528 square feet of residential space encompassing up to 399 dwelling units including 15% MPDUs, private amenities including multiple courtyards, internal amenity spaces and a rooftop recreation area, underground parking, and two public pedestrian connections. The building is proposed at a height of 120 feet in twelve stories with a rooftop clubroom. The Project reduces the current number of curb cuts onto Battery Lane from two to one.

The vehicular circulation through the Project includes an internal drop-off /pick-up loop on the east side of the lobby, an enclosed on-site loading and service delivery area, and an entrance into the underground parking garage along a long internal drive. Following the east side of the gently sloping drive is a landscaped public pedestrian path that provides access to the east-west segment of public pedestrian path to be constructed along the border with NIH. The east-west pedestrian connector is intended to eventually connect the Bethesda Trolley Trail to Woodmont Avenue at the Stonehall Condominiums as individual properties in the Battery Lane District redevelop. The two public connections on the Property are designed to improve connectivity through the neighborhood as provided in the Sector Plan.

The Project street frontage focuses on activating Battery Lane with 2-story Amenity and Lobby space, an improved streetscape that separates the pedestrian zone from traffic with a wider sidewalk located between new street trees and the landscaped front plaza entrance to the building. By reducing to only one curb cut on the east side of the Property, pedestrians can comfortably walk along the uninterrupted façade of building lobby activity areas. The building design step-backs at the 3rd Floor level approximately 33' above grade and again at the 10th floor. The height of these Step-Backs help articulate the building, relates the Project's massing to its neighbors to both the East and West, and breaks down the scale of the building on Battery Lane. The transparency and activity of the first 2 levels along Battery Lane occupied by the Residential Lobby and Amenity space together with the smaller scale massing helps create both a vibrant public realm and relate to human scale for people walking along

Battery Lane as prioritized in the Sector Plan and the Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Design Guidelines (“**Design Guidelines**”).

IV. Design Guideline Compliance

The Applicant has designed the Sketch Plan to accomplish several important recommendations in the Sector Plan and Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines that will allow for the delivery of public benefits and amenities to the future residents of the Project and the surrounding community. The Project is designed to deliver the following benefits and amenities:

1) 2.1.9: Public Through Block Connection

Two of the Plan’s recommended through-block pedestrian connections are included in the project. The Project proposes a landscaped public through-block pedestrian connection from Battery Lane to the east-west public connection along the NIH campus boundary of the property, which in the future will connect to segments of public pedestrian connection provided by others as individual properties in the neighborhood redevelop, creating easy connection through to the Woodmont Triangle, and the Bethesda Trolley Trail to Woodmont Avenue.

2) 2.1.10: Canopy Corridor

This Project proposes improvements to the Battery Lane streetscape and the addition of a segment of the planned east-west through block connection that will eventually connect through to the expanded neighborhood green of Battery Lane Urban Park proposed for Site D of the Brown Development Sketch Plan #320190080. Both the streetscape and the through block connection will improve the pedestrian experience, ease and safety to connect the greater Battery District neighborhood to the Bethesda Trolley Trail.

The Project proposes improvements to the streetscape along its 213-foot frontage which will create a wider sidewalk relocated away from the street curb buffered on both sides by trees and urban landscaped front setback to the building face. The sidewalks along the frontage of the Project will be widened from four feet at the curb to a 7-foot wide sidewalk within a 13-foot wide streetscape. The sidewalk will be buffered by a 6-foot street tree lawn along Battery Lane and the 12-foot urban landscaping of the entry plaza in front of the building. The Project proposes a 25 foot building setback from the curb to provide the enhanced public realm and distinguish this neighborhood from the nearby commercial core as recommended in the Sector Plan and Design Guidelines. The Property has access to the existing bike lanes along Battery Lane and the proposed cycle track to be re-built to the south side of Battery Lane per the recently approved Brown Development Preliminary Plan. The proposed public through-block connection from Battery Lane to the east-west connection along the NIH boundary is part of a new network that will improve connectivity through the neighborhood.

3) 2.3.2: Green Cover

The Project is designed to meet the 35% Green Cover requirements with a combination of on grade trees and green cover as well as intensive green roof and trees that are located above structure at the ground level, 10th floor terraces, Penthouse and Mechanical Penthouse Levels. Bio-Retention planters located at various places around the ground floor will be provided to meet all Stormwater Management requirements.

4) 2.3.3: Servicing Access and Parking

The Project proposes combining the 2 existing curb cuts on the site into one curb cut on the East side of the property. This curb cut serves as the access point into the site for both residential loading, garage entry and an internal circular drop-off at the NE corner of the lobby. The location of the garage and loading entries allows them to be hidden from Battery Lane because of their location within the site. Both entries will be integrated into the façade architecture to further integrate them into the Project and provide a better pedestrian experience. The combination of the service drive and Pedestrian Connection allows for continuous screening by tree canopy and other landscaping features between the Project and its neighbors. The entry into the site will be designed as a pedestrian plaza that extends into the site which will clearly delineate the pedestrian zone from the driveway and street. By placing the service drive, loading dock, garage entry and drop-off on the interior of the site allows the project to have a virtually continuous frontage zone in front of the project to enhance the pedestrian experience.

5) 2.4.1 Compatibility

The Project proposes a building that is both traditional and modern in nature by providing traditional scale, massing and materials with a modern design esthetic and building transparency. The building utilizes Step-Backs at the 3rd and 10th Floors along Battery Lane to break down the Scale into a Top, Middle and Base proportion but also uses those Step-Backs to relate to the neighboring buildings which are of similar heights. By creating a relationship between the existing neighboring properties through its massing allows for the Project to seamlessly integrate itself into the neighborhood. The Project will use traditional materials and building articulation that will further break down the scale of the building to enhance the pedestrian experience. The additional 25 foot building setback and increased sidewalk, frontage zone and tree buffer zone widths helps ease the transition between the older blocks and the new.

6) 2.4.2 Base: Building Placement

The Project proposes a 25 foot building setback from the curb to provide the enhanced public realm and distinguish this neighborhood from the nearby commercial

core. This adheres to the 20 to 25-foot recommendation in the Design Guidelines and is consistent with other recently approved buildings along Battery Lane.

7) 2.4.3 Base: Street Activation

The Project proposes placing along the entire Battery Lane frontage a 2-story lobby and amenity space that will increase the visual transparency on the ground and increase the connection with the street. Terraces and balconies will be integrated into areas of the façade created by the buildings Step-Backs and articulation which will further increase connection between the public and private realms.

8) 2.4.6 Tower: Separation Distance

The Project meets or exceeds the recommended Tower Separation from adjoining buildings. As mentioned above the Project will be Setback from the curb 25 feet and have a continuous 3 Story-base anchored by 2-story lobby and amenity spaces along Battery Lane to create and promote a vibrant pedestrian experience. The main “Spine” of the Project is centrally located within the site to allow for proper separation between the Project and its neighbors. This location as well as the Step backs on the North and East elevations help reduce overall mass and allow light and views to adjoining properties. The pedestrian connection that runs along the East and North side of the site is buffered from the building with a drive aisle and the reduced massing of the building in these locations to allow for the building to not overwhelm the pedestrian connection. The additional setbacks on the East and North sides of the Project also create additional areas for integrated terraces and balconies which provide additional visual connection between the pedestrian connection and the building which promotes a safer and more comfortable experience.

9) 2.4.7 Tower: Step-Back

The Project proposes several Step-Backs along its Battery Lane face. The first is located at the 3rd floor level, followed by additional Step-Backs at the 10th and Penthouse levels. The height of these Step-Backs help articulate the building as well as relating its massing to its neighbors to the East and West. Within these Step-Backs private terraces and balconies are proposed to help further articulate the building and create visual interest from the ground.

10) 2.4.9 Tower: Top

The Project’s goal of creating a signature residential tower is highlighted by the proposed “Top” of the building. The Project’s massing which is emphasized by the Step-Backs’ along Battery Lane, allow for the building to taper back towards the center and create a unique Top to the building. The tapering of the massing will reduce the perceived mass of the building and allows for the main façade to interact with the rooftop Penthouse and Mechanical spaces to create a seamless integration between the building’s Battery Lane façade. By integrating these elements, the

Project is able to propose amenity terraces and mechanical screens that create an expressive signature top that harmonizes with rest of the building.

V. Public Benefit Points – Exceptional Design

The Project is seeking a minimum of 10 Public Benefit Points for exceptional design for its context responsive building and site design. The Project earns these points by:

1. Providing innovative solutions in response to the immediate context. The Project responds to context on both a neighborhood and building site scale. The Project addresses the broad variety of adjoining and confronting uses which exist or are approved along the length of Battery Lane, the existing and approved vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle network, and the views and setbacks appropriate for each façade. Step-backs are proposed at two levels on the Battery Lane façade and at various levels on each other façade of the building. Extensive building and tower setbacks are designed for compatibility and livability of residential buildings on adjoining sites. The Project proposes a landscaped public connection from Battery Lane to the planned east-west connection on the east side of the Property and sites it along the internal drive to provide pedestrians with a safe, open, friendly and natural connection reflective of the residential and “garden” nature of the Battery Lane District neighborhood.
2. Creating a sense of place. The Project builds on the goal to transform the Battery Lane District neighborhood into one of the most livable urban edge neighborhoods in the County. The Project proposes a classically articulated quality building surrounded by landscaped and active outdoor spaces, multiple upper level courtyards and terraces, and a roof-top recreational space with views of both the tree-filled NIH campus and the skyline of downtown Bethesda. Residents have access to everything offered to enhance their quality of life in the building they will call “home” as well as easy connections to everything downtown Bethesda and the greater Bethesda Trolley Trail system have to offer.
3. Enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original manner. The Project proposes to add over 200 feet of enhanced streetscape with street trees on Battery Lane to support its transformation into a Canopy Corridor street. The Project supports the goal to move Battery Lane from its “car focus” with expanded streetscape and sidewalks emphasizing pedestrians, street trees and connections to the new buildings and keeping all drop-off, loading, and parking internal to the site keeping Battery Lane free of obstructions.
4. Introducing materials, forms, or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way. The Project’s massing and articulation creates a unique form which specifically addresses the adjacencies on all 4 sides at all levels: at the base, the middle and the top. The 3-story base which relates to the current garden apartment massing of the neighbor on the East, is anchored by a 2-story glassy lobby and amenity

space. The 6-Story middle is created by a Step-Back at the 10th floor allowing the massing and scale of the Project to relate to its neighboring buildings on the west, specifically the adjacent Sunrise Living senior housing project. The articulation, massing and materials transitions around the entirety of the building highlighted by the Step backs on the East and North sides to enhance the two public through-block pedestrian connections. These collective design moves create a relationship and connectivity with the Project to its neighbors and to the public spaces around the site.

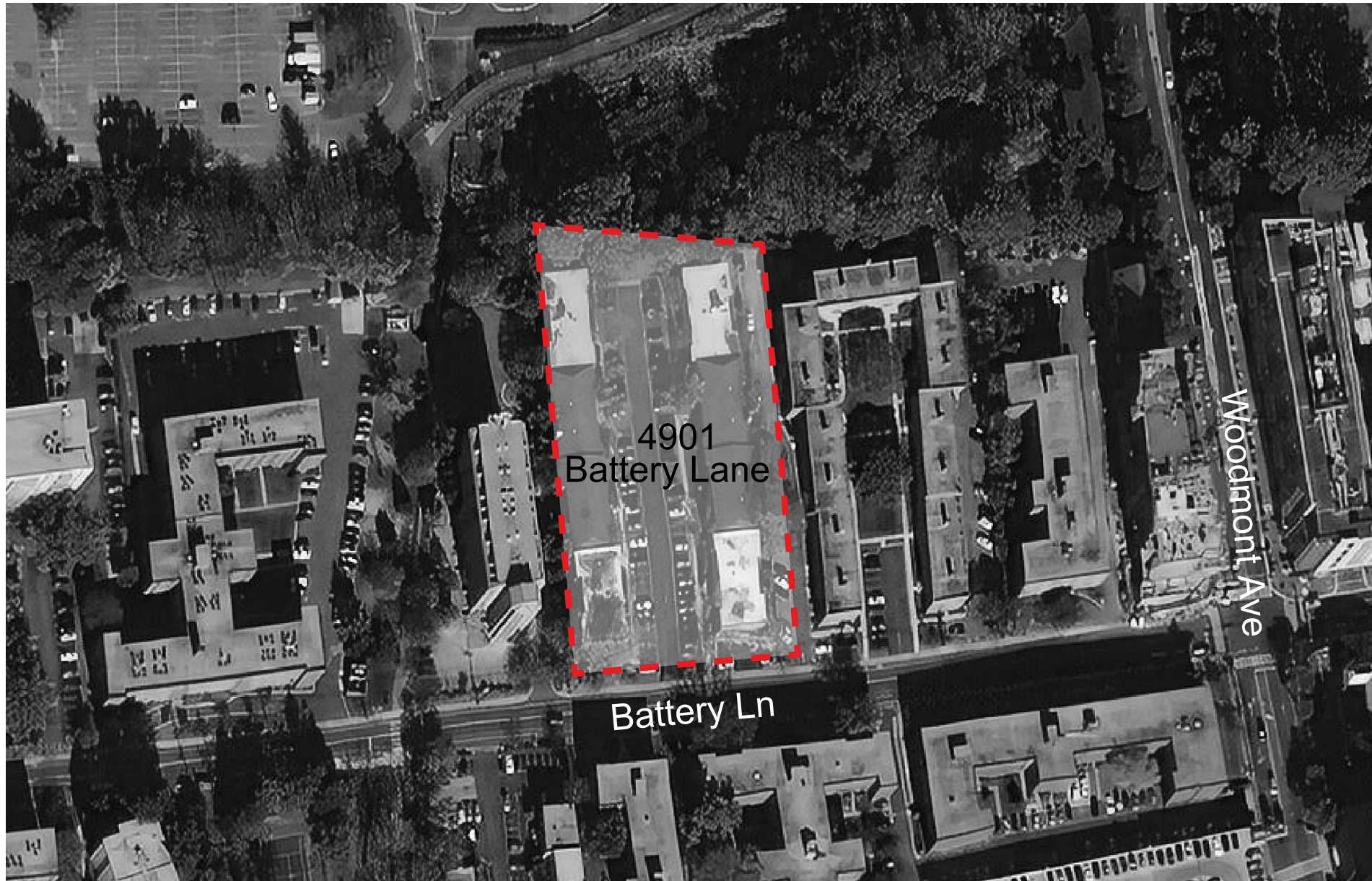
Since the Project will be built more forward to Battery Lane as recommended by the Sector Plan. Therefore, until other sites begin to redevelop, the sides of the building which will be visible on the east and west along Battery Lane. The sides are articulated with the same level of quality and complexity as the front façade.

5. Designing compact infill development so living, working, and shopping environments are more pleasurable and desirable on a site. The Project proposes compact infill development with onsite-amenities and easy walkability to significant employment opportunities, recreation facilities, shopping, and cultural amenities.

VIII. Conclusion.

As demonstrated by this Statement and the DAP submission presentation, the Project complies with the recommendations of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan and a minimum of four of the Design Guidelines. Applicant is requesting a minimum of 10 public benefit points for Exceptional Design and encourages the DAP to consider recommending more points in recognition of how the building has been designed on all facades and at all levels to respond to both the existing and the transforming neighborhood and the pedestrian network in the Battery District.

The Project has been designed to implement the Sector Plan goals and Design Guidelines to fashion a quality mixed income rental housing project that relates to the old and new in the transforming Battery Lane District neighborhood. The Project's sensitive and exception design in architecture and site related urban design will support the Battery District goal of being one of the most beautiful and livable urban-edge residential neighborhoods in Bethesda.



4901 Battery Lane Bethesda, Maryland

Site Location
4901 Battery Lane
Bethesda, MD.

Applicant
WC Smith Development

Record Owner
Alonzo O Bliss Properties

Land Use Counsel
Shulman Rogers

Architect
SK+I Architectural Design Group, LLC

Civil Engineer
VIKA



Sketch Plan - DAP Submission

September 8th, 2021

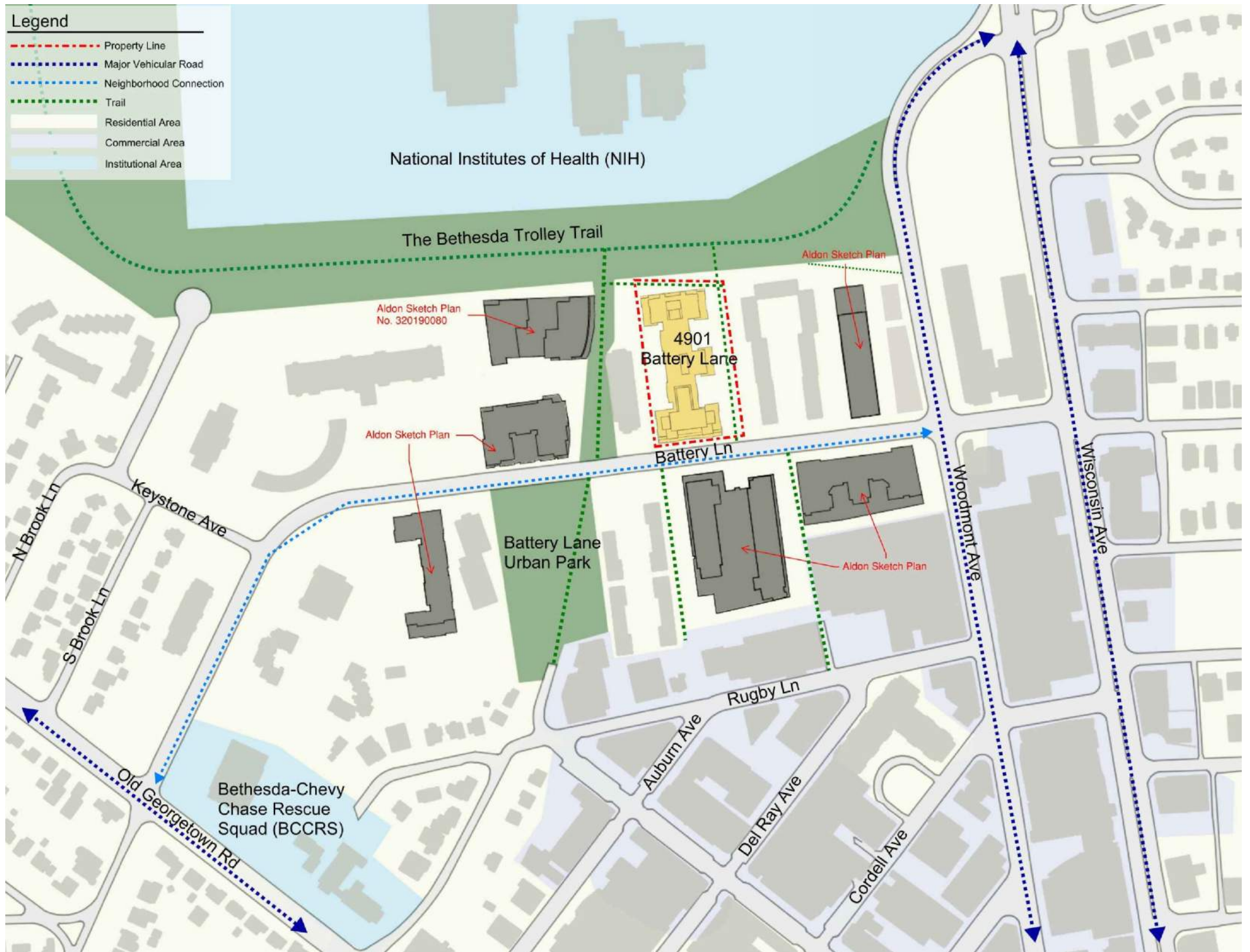
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Battery Lane | Bethesda, MD

Site Context



PRESENTATION FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE



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Corner of Battery Ln and Woodmont Ave



View into Battery Lane Apartments



Sunrise of Bethesda East driveway



Sunrise of Bethesda Front



View into Cambridge Square



Back of Cambridge Square



Looking South into Battery Lane Urban Park



View towards The Glens on Battery Lane



View into Whitehall Condominium

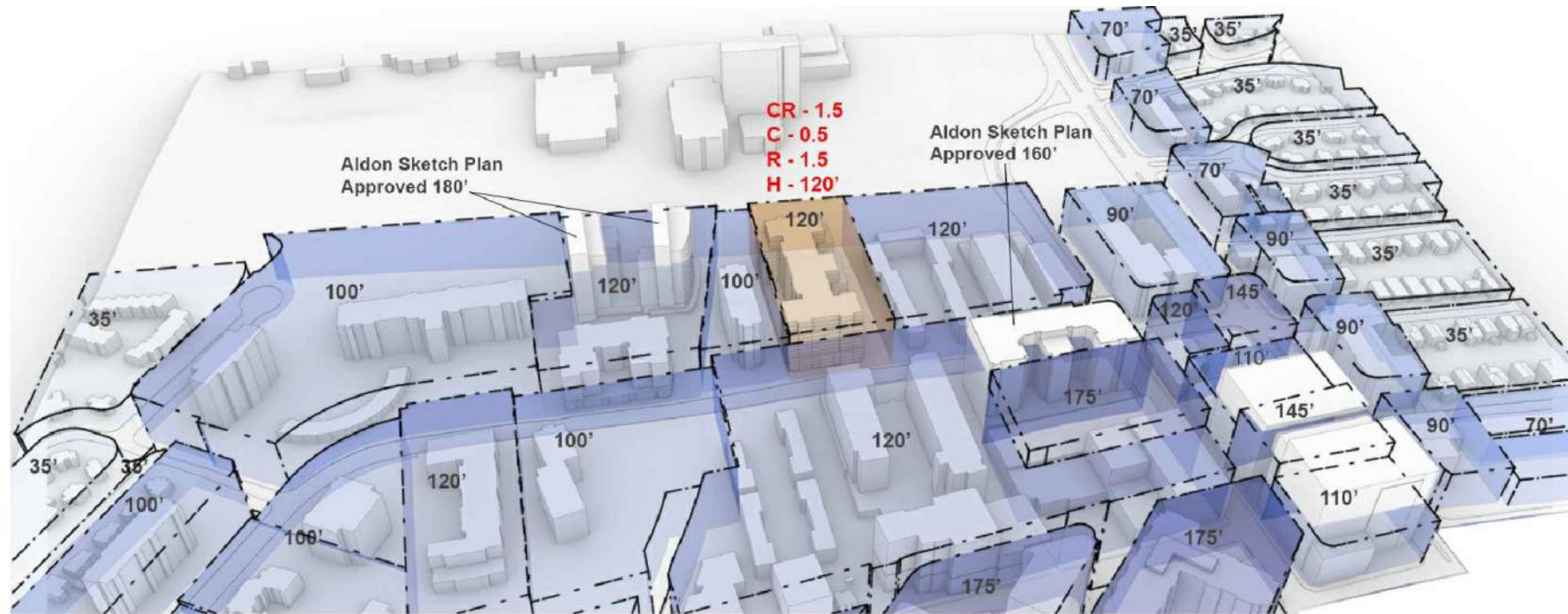
Sketch Plan - DAP Submission

September 8th, 2021

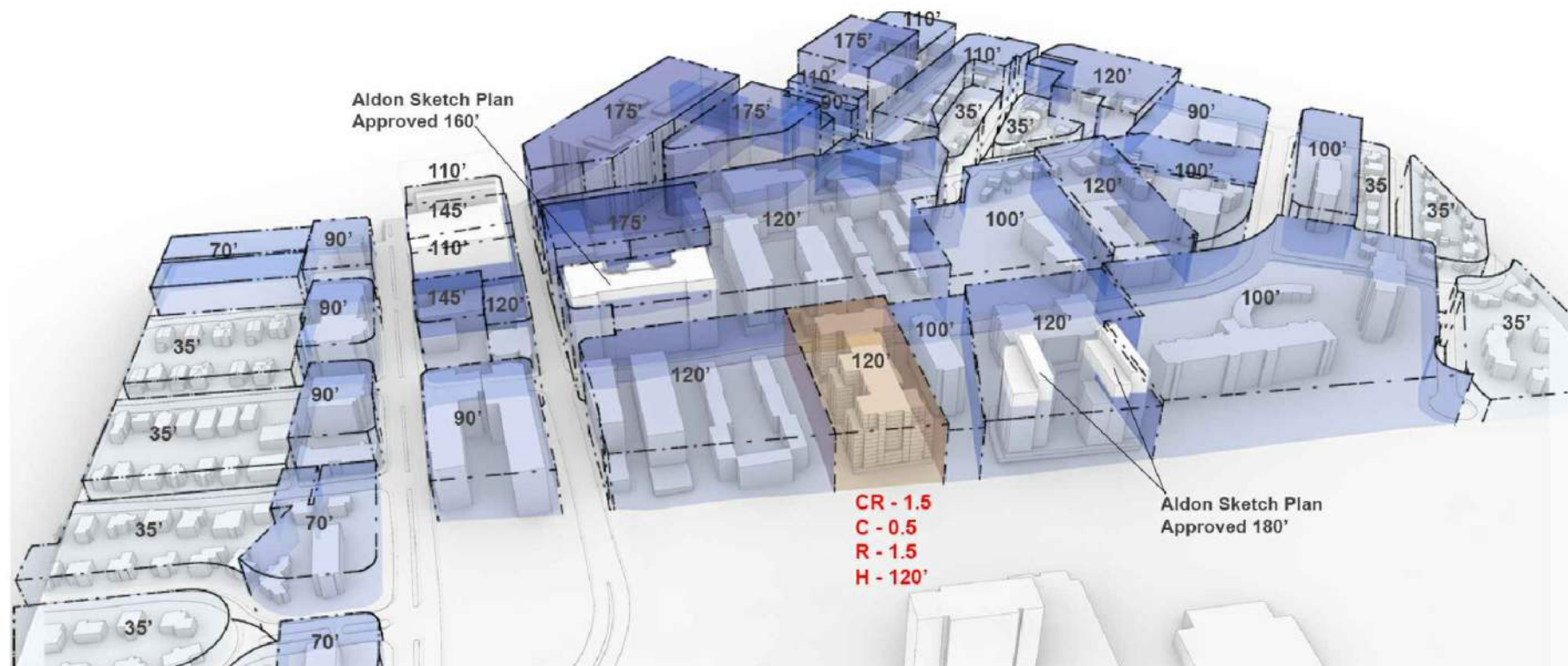
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Battery Lane | Bethesda, MD

Site Photos



Allowable Heights Looking North



Allowable Heights Looking South

Battery Lane | Bethesda, MD

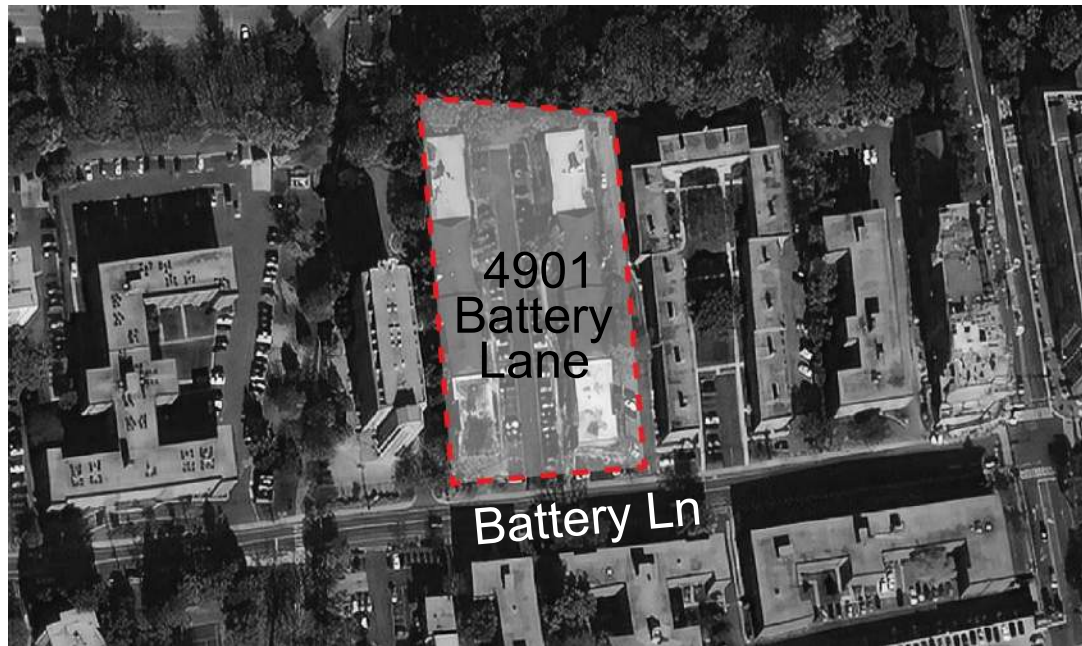
Massing In Context | Maximum Allowable Heights

PRESENTATION FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Sketch Plan - DAP Submission

September 8th, 2021

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Design Goals

- Achieve the design goals of the Bethesda Plan and provide a dynamic, sustainable and inclusive signature address through
 - Compatibility
 - Building Placement
 - Street Activation
 - Base Variation and Articulation
 - Tower Step Backs
 - Tower Top design
- Create a signature residential tower that is scaled, approachable that engages and enhances the pedestrian experience that supports the transformation of the Battery Lane District into a walkable, connected garden district with multi-modal access to area amenities, employment, and services



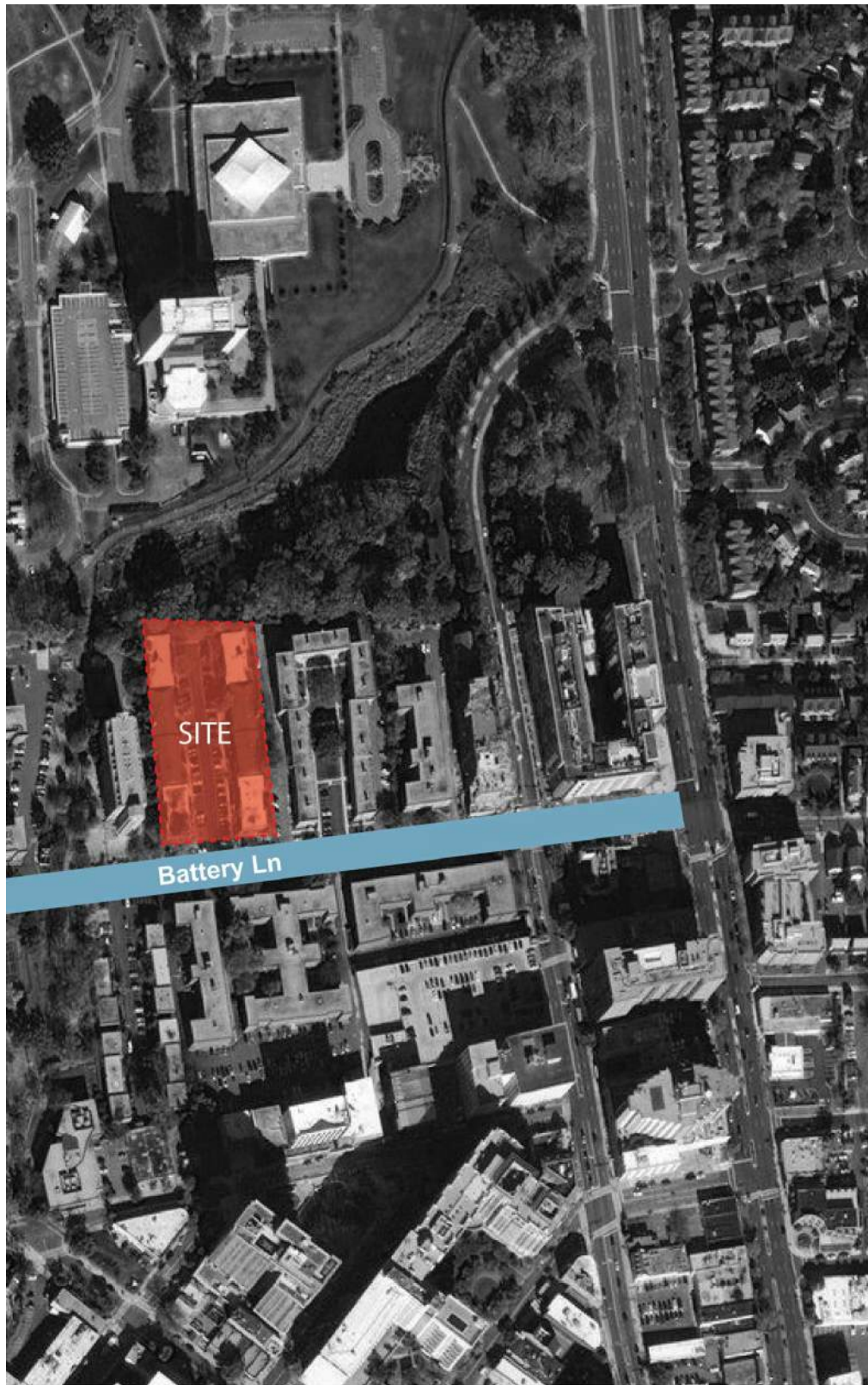
Battery Lane | Bethesda, MD

Design Goals

Sketch Plan - DAP Submission

September 8th, 2021

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Battery Lane (Neighborhood Connector)

2.1.6 Neighborhood Connector

Neighborhood Connectors typically accommodate vehicular through traffic for area residents and are often combined with bike facilities and less pedestrian volume than Downtown Mixed-Use and Main Streets. These streets are predominantly lined by multi-unit residential buildings with a range of building heights and auto-oriented commercial uses requiring frequent driveway curb cuts. Examples of Neighborhood Connectors include Bradley Boulevard, Battery Lane and portions of Arlington Road near the outer boundaries of the Downtown Bethesda Plan area.

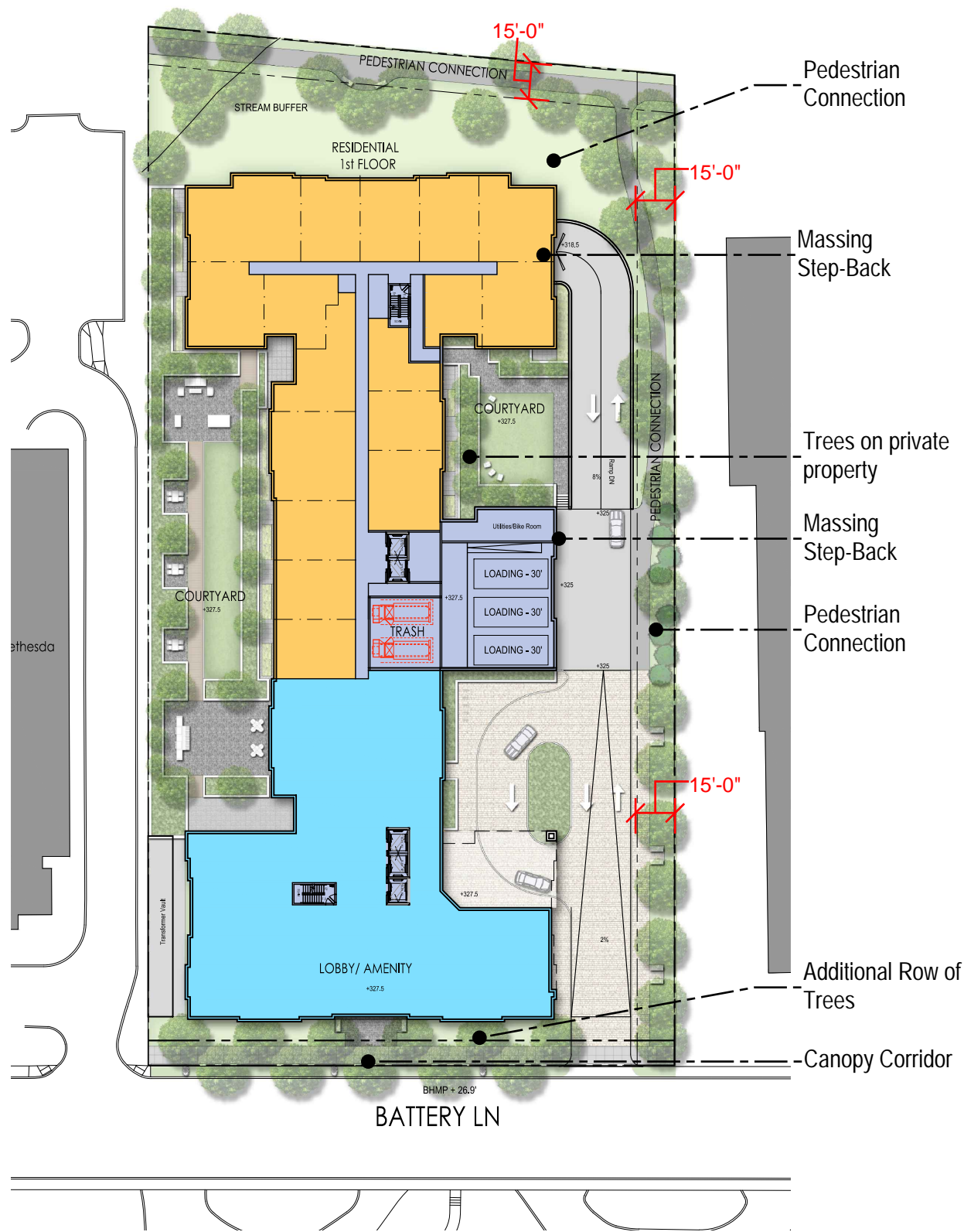
Intent: Building and sidewalk design along Neighborhood Connectors should provide buffering for pedestrians from through traffic, as well as moderate building setbacks to align with the residential neighborhood character. For residential buildings, elements such as ground-floor amenity space and residential entries are encouraged.

Table 2.05: Neighborhood Connector

Sidewalk Zones	
A.	Planting/Furnishing Zone: 6 - 8 ft.
B.	Pedestrian Through Zone: 6 - 10 ft.
C.	Frontage Zone: 5 - 8 ft. min.
Building Placement	
D.	Build-to Line: 20 - 25 ft. from street curb
Building Form	
E.	Base Height: 3 - 5 stories (35 - 60 ft.)
F.	Step-back: 15 - 20 ft.*

Alternative Treatments
* On this street type, buildings under 90 ft. may consider alternative methods to reduce tower bulk other than step-backs. These are outlined in Section 2.4.8 Tower: "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk.





2.1.9 Public Through-Block Connections and Trails

Intent: To improve connectivity for people to walk and bike throughout Downtown Bethesda and create additional outdoor public spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Public Through-block Connections

Public through-block connections are most important within long blocks to provide an efficient pedestrian network to connect to adjacent streets and destinations such as open spaces and transit stations. These connections should be high-quality, open to the sky and wide enough to allow pedestrians and cyclists to pass through comfortably, and others to pause and sit or access building entrances. They should be highlighted through retail that wraps the corner, public art, signage or other design elements, which draw people into the connection from the sidewalk. Landscape can be added to create visual interest, and elements such as paving, lighting, seating, planters or trees should make the connection more inviting. Small-scale, urban recreational uses could also be considered in these spaces.

The aim is to have no more than one through-block connection on a block to not interrupt the continuous building wall. If there are multiple new developments on a block, they are encouraged to have party walls between the base floors to ensure this continuity. If additional gaps are required by building code, consider other uses such as service alleys.

Figure 2.06: Guidelines for Public Through-Block Connections Shared by Pedestrians and Cyclists Only

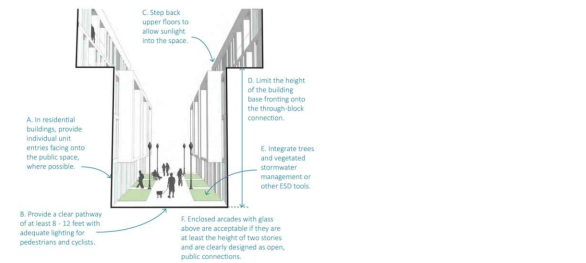


Figure 2.04: Public Through-Block Connections and Trails



* Additional public through-block connections are possible. Exact location and alignment to be determined during the development

2.1.10 Canopy Corridors

Intent: The Canopy Corridor recommendations in the Sector Plan aim to create green corridors that connect parks, trails, stream buffers and the denser forest networks beyond the Bethesda boundaries.

The canopy corridors align with the recommended bike priority streets where continuous streetscape improvements are most likely. Though bicycle and pedestrian facilities are the priority on these streets, tree canopy is also a crucial element to enhance shade, attractiveness and comfort to encourage people to walk and bike throughout the downtown.

Guidelines:

- Prioritize street tree planting along existing and proposed bicycle networks to expand linear green corridors.
- Use appropriate plant species that will thrive in various site conditions and climates. Species should be a combination of native and locally adaptive species lessening water demand while providing biological benefits.
- Provide soil volumes for canopy trees of no less than 600 cubic feet, as recommended in the Sector Plan. This volume may be achieved through amended soil panels, and where possible, utilize street tree panels for greater soil volumes.
- Design buildings to allow streets to receive sufficient sunlight to maintain healthy trees along these corridors.
- Provide the maximum sidewalk width possible to allow for larger canopy, and consider opportunities for double rows of trees.
- Include additional locations for trees on both private and public property, right-of-way and medians wherever possible.



Woodmont Avenue tree canopy with a double row of trees.

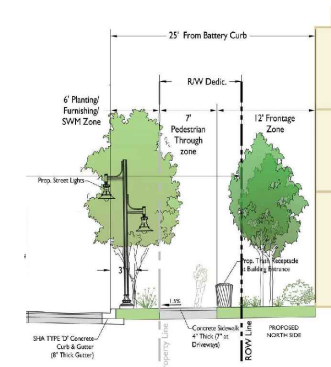
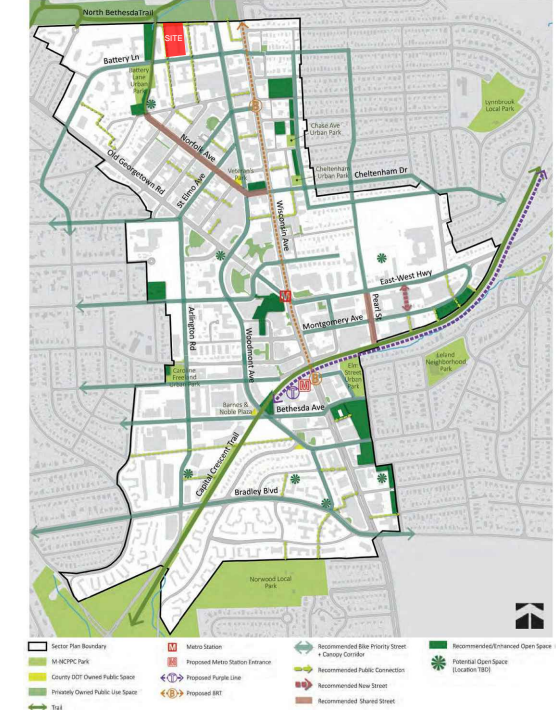
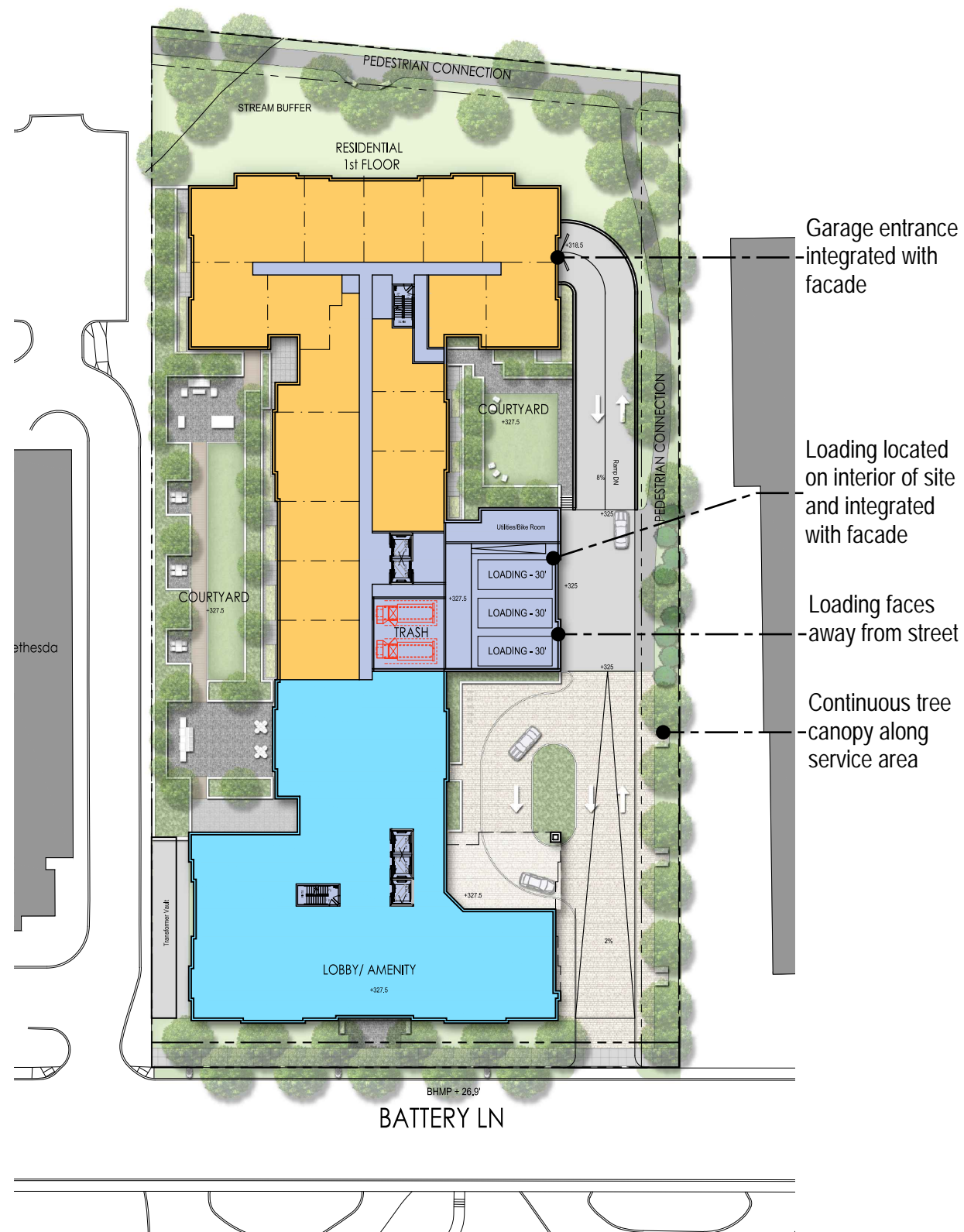


Figure 2.18: Public Space Network





2.3.3 Servicing, Access and Parking

Intent: Loading, servicing and parking should be designed to minimize conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and reduce the visual impacts of vehicle access and parking on the Public Realm. Site design should prioritize the public sidewalk and bikeways over private vehicular crossings.

Guidelines:

- Line the ground floor of structured parking with retail or other uses with transparency to maintain an active building edge. Where active uses are infeasible, avoid exposed parking floors along the street through measures outlined in the Zoning Ordinance *Section 6.2.9.D.1 Structured Parking Requirements*.
- Design exterior of the garage portion of the building to be compatible with the rest of the building facade, in order to enhance the overall architectural quality of the building.
- Provide a continuous, level and clearly delineated Pedestrian Through Zone across driveways to encourage drivers to yield to pedestrians. Consider applying the same materials across these vehicle access points as the sidewalk, such as brick pavers.
- Locate loading and servicing within the interior of a building at the rear whenever possible. Service alleys are also recommended where setbacks are required from the side or rear property lines for building code.
- Avoid placing entries to loading docks, service areas and parking garages on neighborhood residential streets when alternative access is feasible.
- Minimize the width and height of driveways and vehicular entrances. Where possible, combine loading dock and garage access.
- Screen vehicle and servicing access areas and trash storage with landscaping or other vertical elements, and design vehicle access doors to incorporate high-quality materials and finishes that are consistent with the building.
- Vehicle access points should not be located adjacent to a public open space other than through-block connections.
- Coordinate location of access points with adjacent and confronting properties where possible to ensure a comfortable sidewalk environment and limited conflicts.
- Provide loading spaces for pick-up and drop-off where feasible to reduce idling in the travel lane.
- Design structured parking floors to be flexible for future retrofit to other uses where possible.
- Ensure continuous tree canopy along service areas and lay-by areas to the greatest extent feasible.
- While not recommended in Downtown Bethesda, surface parking should be designed according to the following:
 - Locate the parking on the back of the building, with the building fronting the primary streets and sidewalks.
 - For interim lots, design the parking to provide flexibility for temporary events such as pop-up events and public gatherings to maintain an active street edge. See *Section 2.5 Creative Placemaking*.

Servicing Operations:

The dense urban grid presents both challenges and opportunities for loading and trash collection. Without alleys, trucks and other delivery vehicles have to make complex maneuvers on the streets to access the buildings' loading areas where they exist or simply operate from the streets themselves when the buildings they serve don't have off-street loading facilities. When trucks must access buildings from streets, especially high volume corridors, the loading areas create conflicts with pedestrians. When loading

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2.4.6 Tower: Separation Distance

Intent: To allow access to light and air, limit the impact of shadows on the public realm and reduce the extent of large blank walls as new buildings develop at or near the property line.

Guidelines:

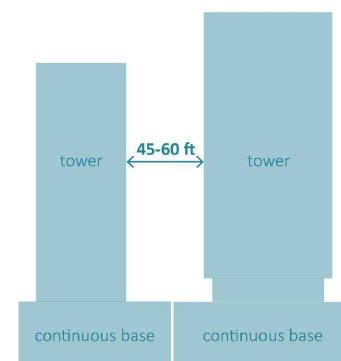
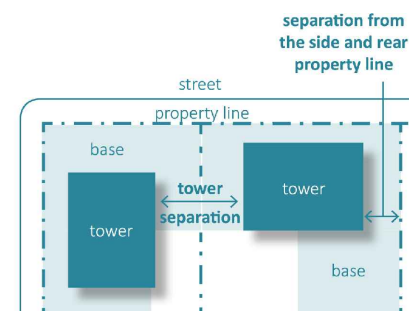
- Separate tower floors at least 45 to 60 feet (22.5 to 30 feet from the side and rear property lines).
- Provide a continuous building base along the lower floors.
- Avoid building towers to the property line creating expansive blank party walls that are imposing on the pedestrian environment.

Alternative Treatments:

Buildings below 120 feet or with limited property size/width/depth may reduce tower separation or consider party walls. If party walls are necessary, mitigate their visual impact with elements such as public art, lighting, texture and/or patterning that provide visual interest and are appropriate to the context and architecture of the building.

Where existing neighboring building towers are built to or close to the property line, new development should aim to achieve the total tower separation where possible. However, at a minimum, the new building tower levels should provide the separation distance indicated in *Guideline 2.4.6 A* from the side and rear property lines, except where building to the lot line could better address an existing blank wall condition.

Varied geometry in a building's upper floors, and facade modulation between buildings can also be used as methods to increase the perception of tower separation and allow access to light and air.

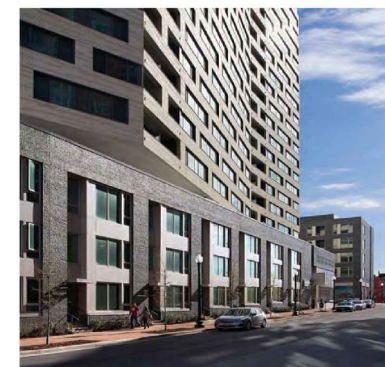


2.4.2 Base: Building Placement

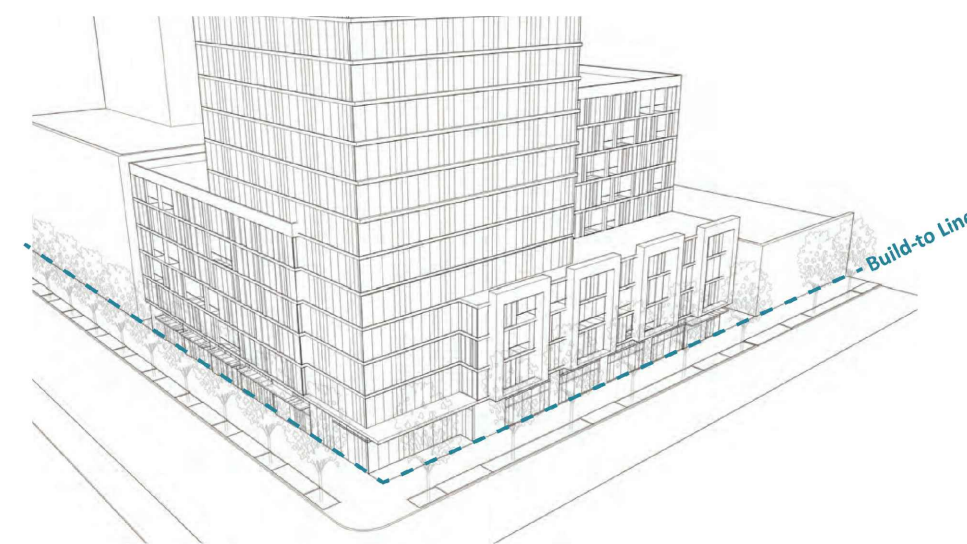
Intent: To create a continuous street wall to frame the sidewalk and create a more comfortable outdoor room for pedestrians to encourage walking throughout the downtown.

Guidelines:

- Place the facade of the building base along the recommended build-to-line to create a continuous street edge.
- Buildings taller than 200 feet that do not step back the upper floors should have a build-to-line of at least 20-30 feet.
- Where existing building lines for adjacent properties are set back more than the recommended build-to-line, buildings may be placed to align with this existing building line as long as it is within 5 feet of the recommended build-to-line.
- Exceptions to the building placement guidelines include through-block connections and open spaces recommended in the sector plan, entrances and articulation for architectural interest.



The building base of Eleven 55 Ripley in Silver Spring creates a continuous edge along the sidewalk at a low-rise scale. Source: Shalom Baranes Associates Architects

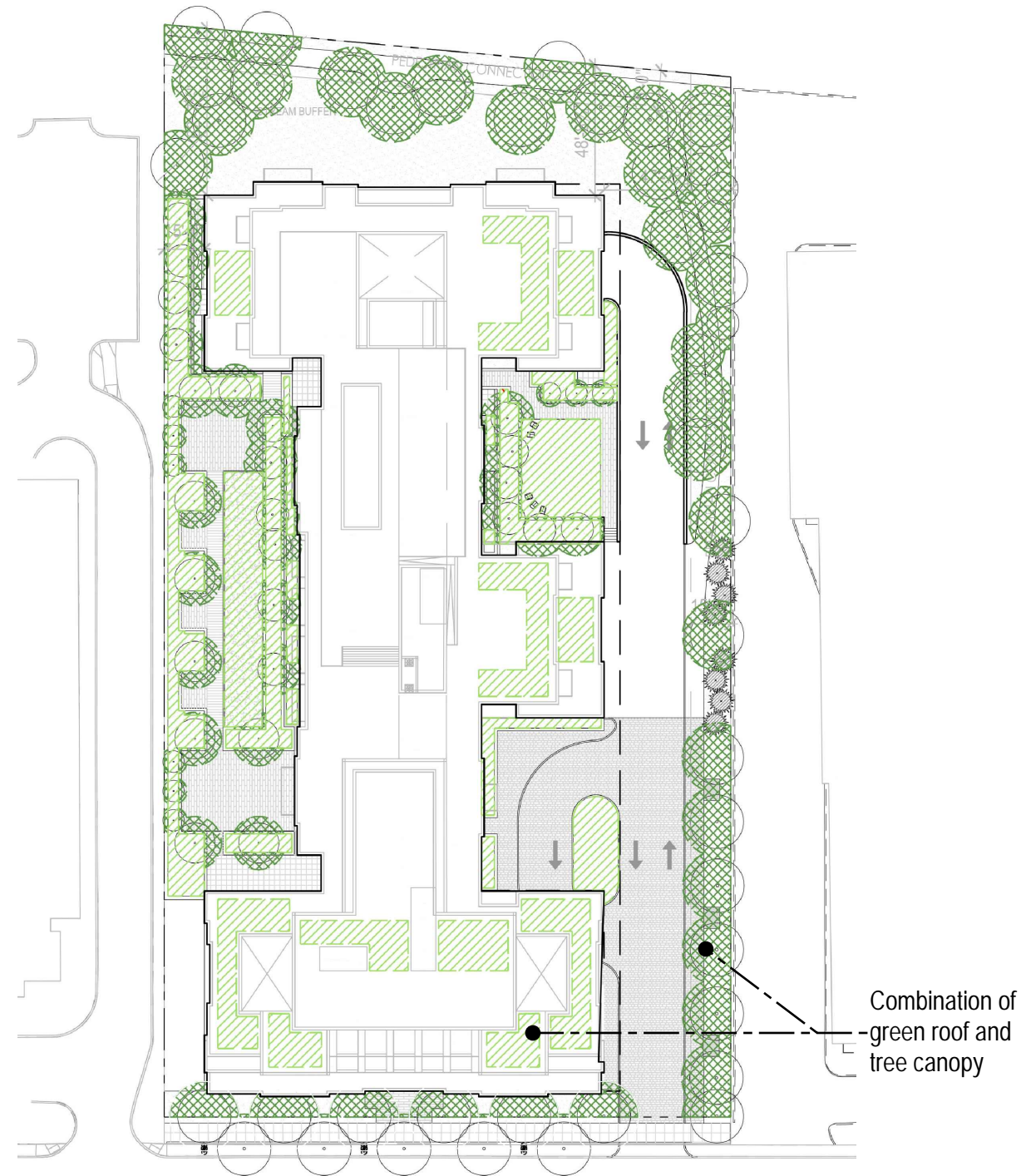




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Design Guidelines - Tower Separation & Building Placement

PRESENTATION FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE



GREEN COVER TABULATION	
	TREE CANOPY (ON GRADE)
	GREEN ROOF (ON STRUCTURE)

2.3.2 Green Cover

Intent: The green cover guidelines are intended to increase overall tree canopy cover, expand green corridors, reduce heat island effect, improve air quality and carbon sequestration capacity and improve ecological biodiversity. See the Sector Plan Section 2.4.1 Urban Green.

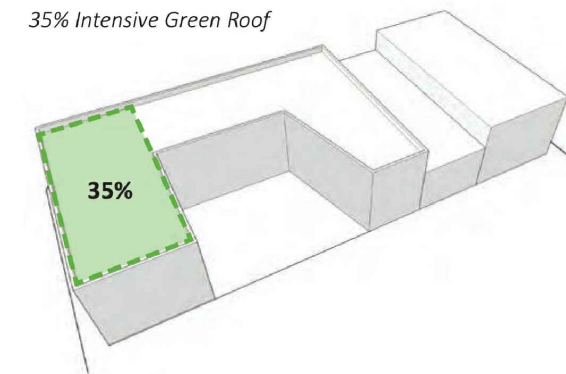
Guidelines:

On private property, provide a minimum of 35 percent* green cover, which may include singularly or a combination of the following:

- A. Intensive green roof (6 inches or deeper) on 35 percent of rooftop.
- B. Tree canopy cover on 35 percent of landscape.
- C. A combination of tree canopy and intensive green roof for a total green cover of 35 percent or greater.

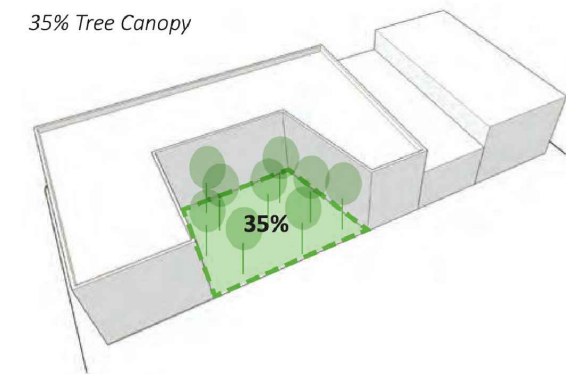
** If on-site energy generation requires the use of the roof or open space, accommodations for these features may alter the 35 percent minimum green cover requirement.*

35% Intensive Green Roof



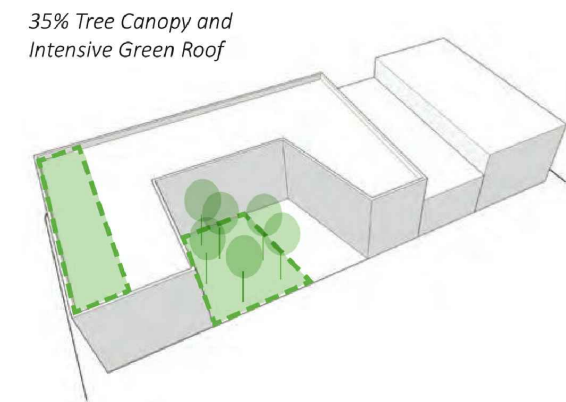
OR

35% Tree Canopy



OR

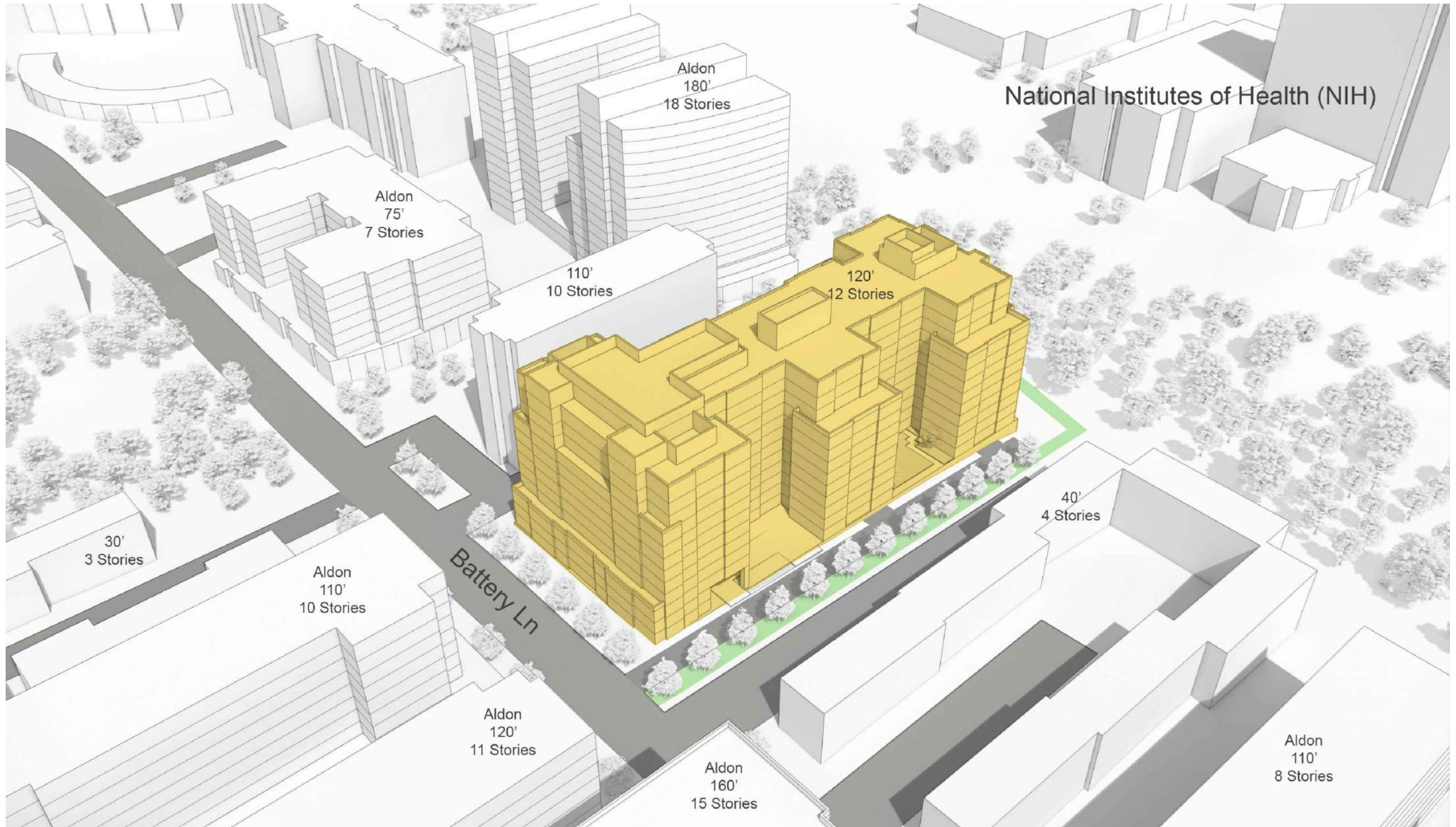
35% Tree Canopy and Intensive Green Roof



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Design Guidelines - Green Cover

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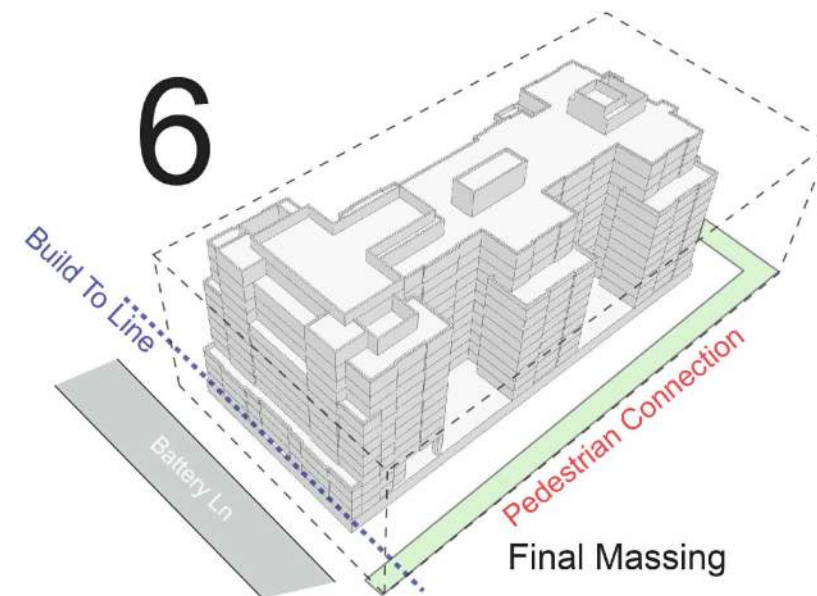
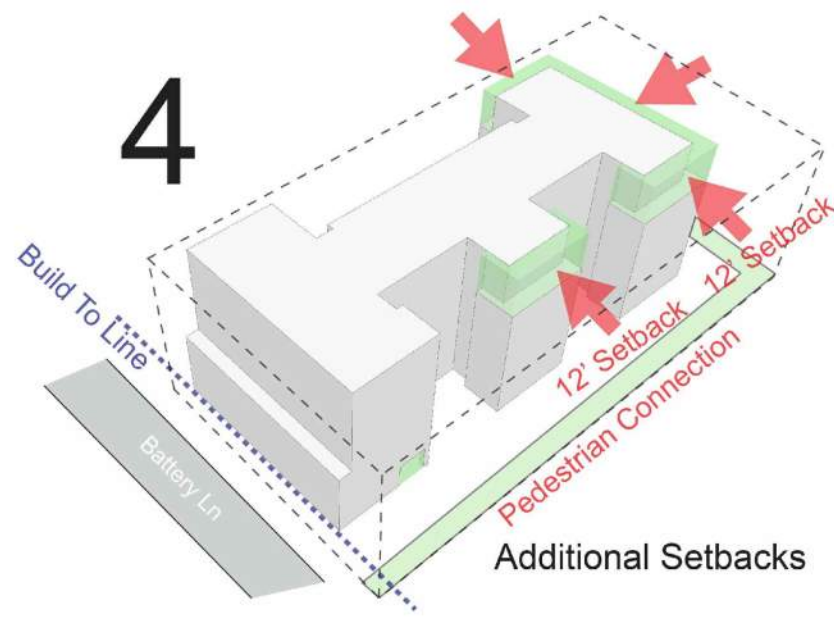
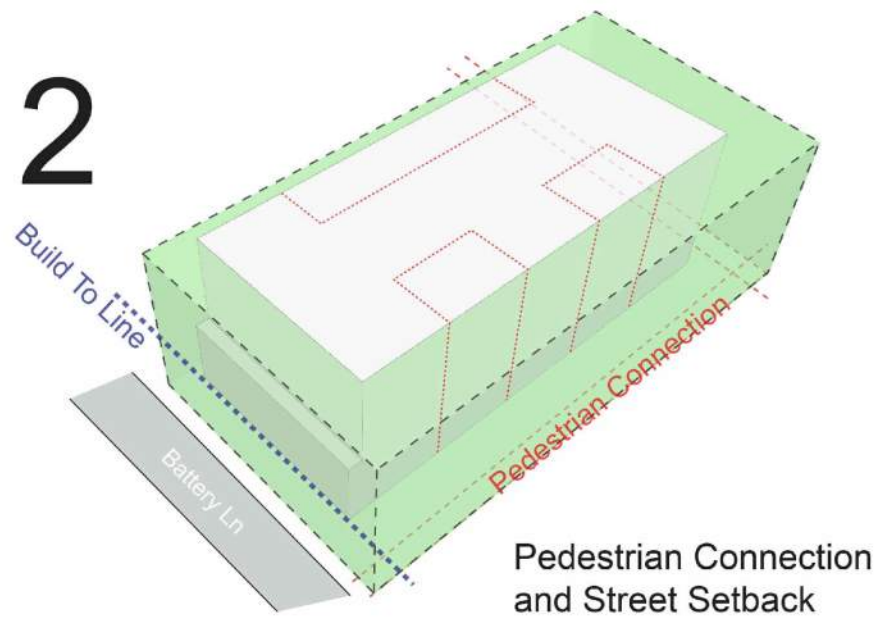
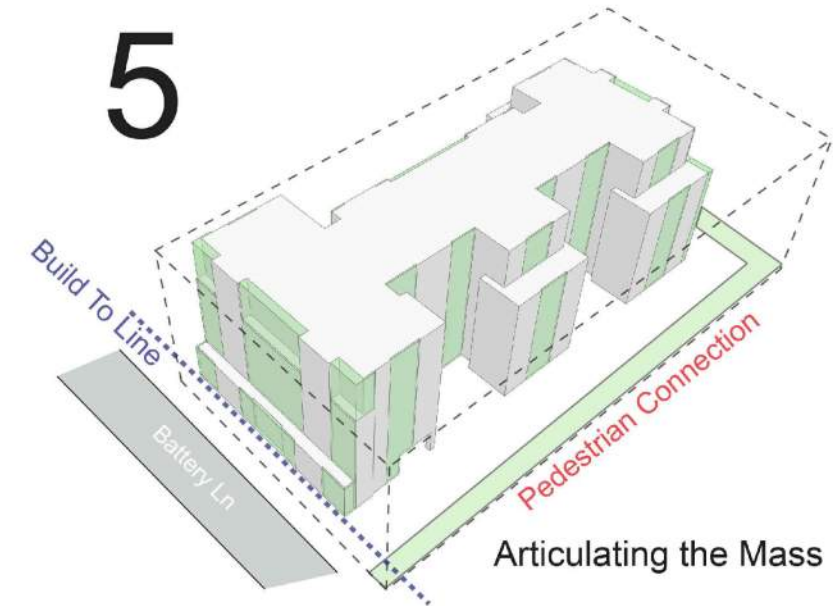
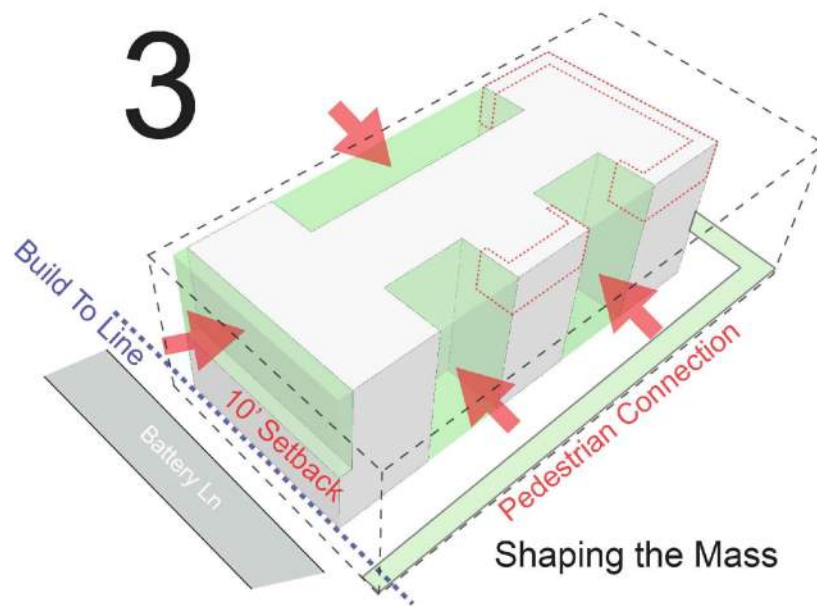
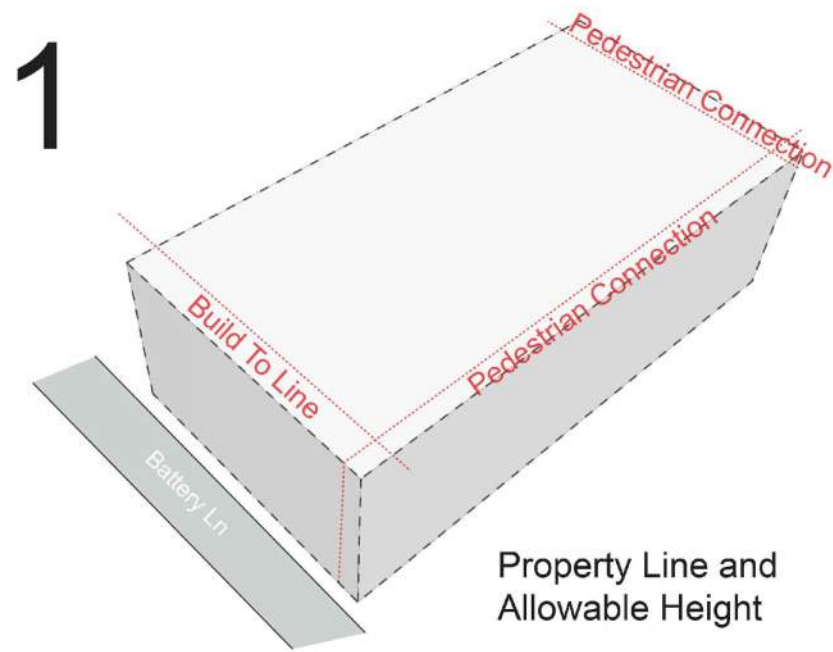
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Massing Concept

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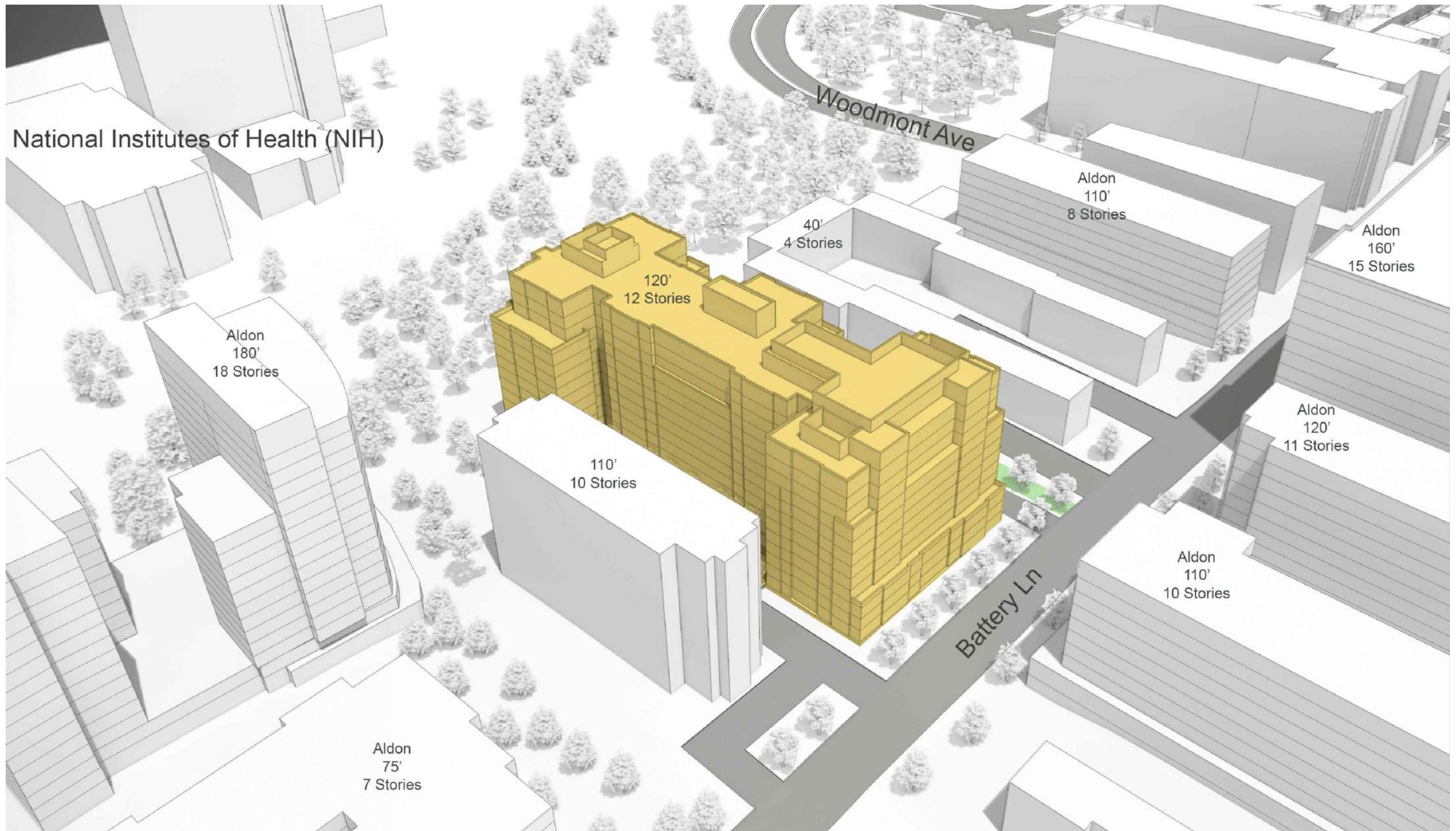
Form Development Diagram

PRESENTATION FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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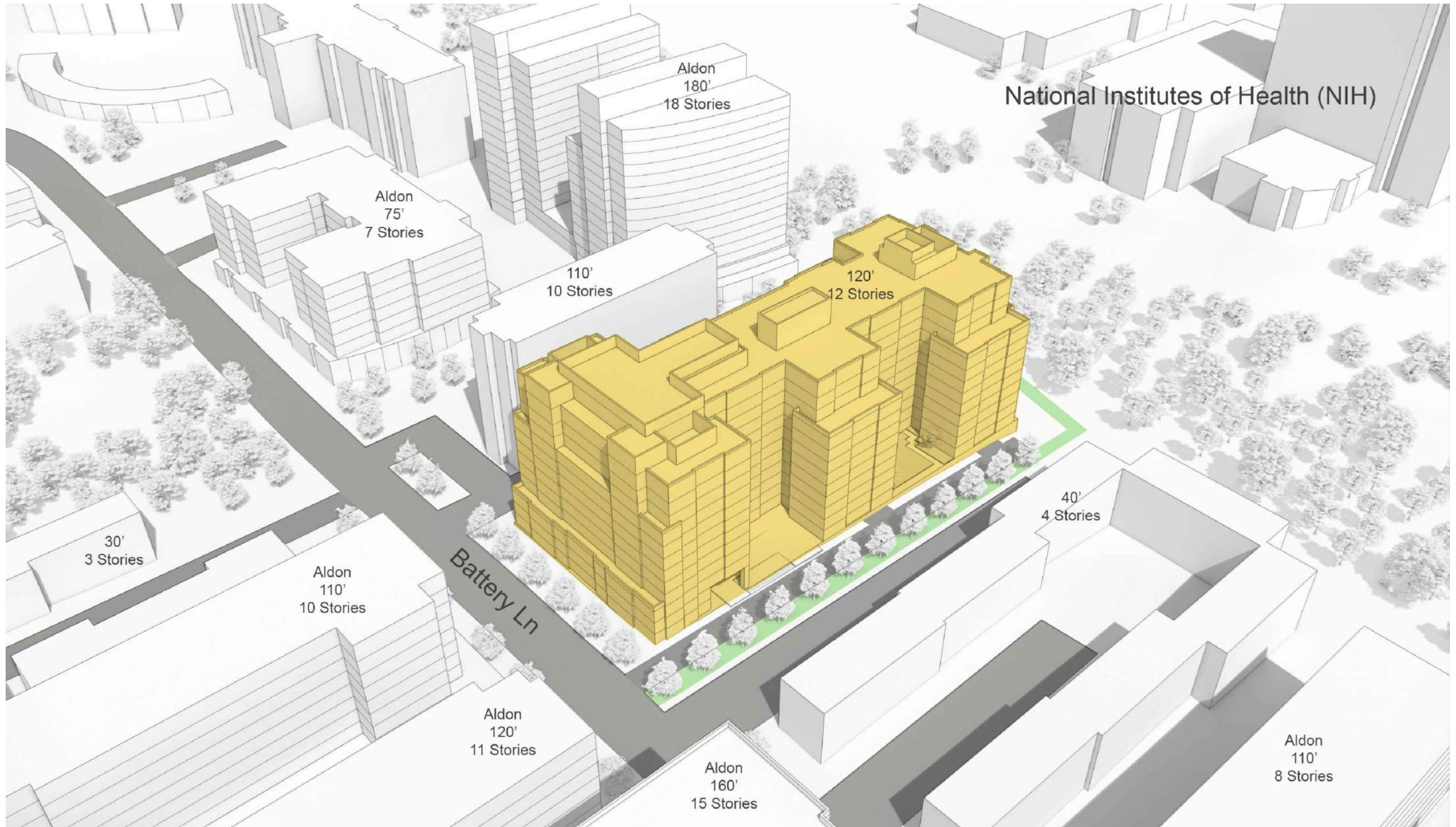
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Massing In Context To Existing Buildings

PRESENTATION FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE



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Massing In Context To Existing Buildings

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Massing In Context To Existing Buildings

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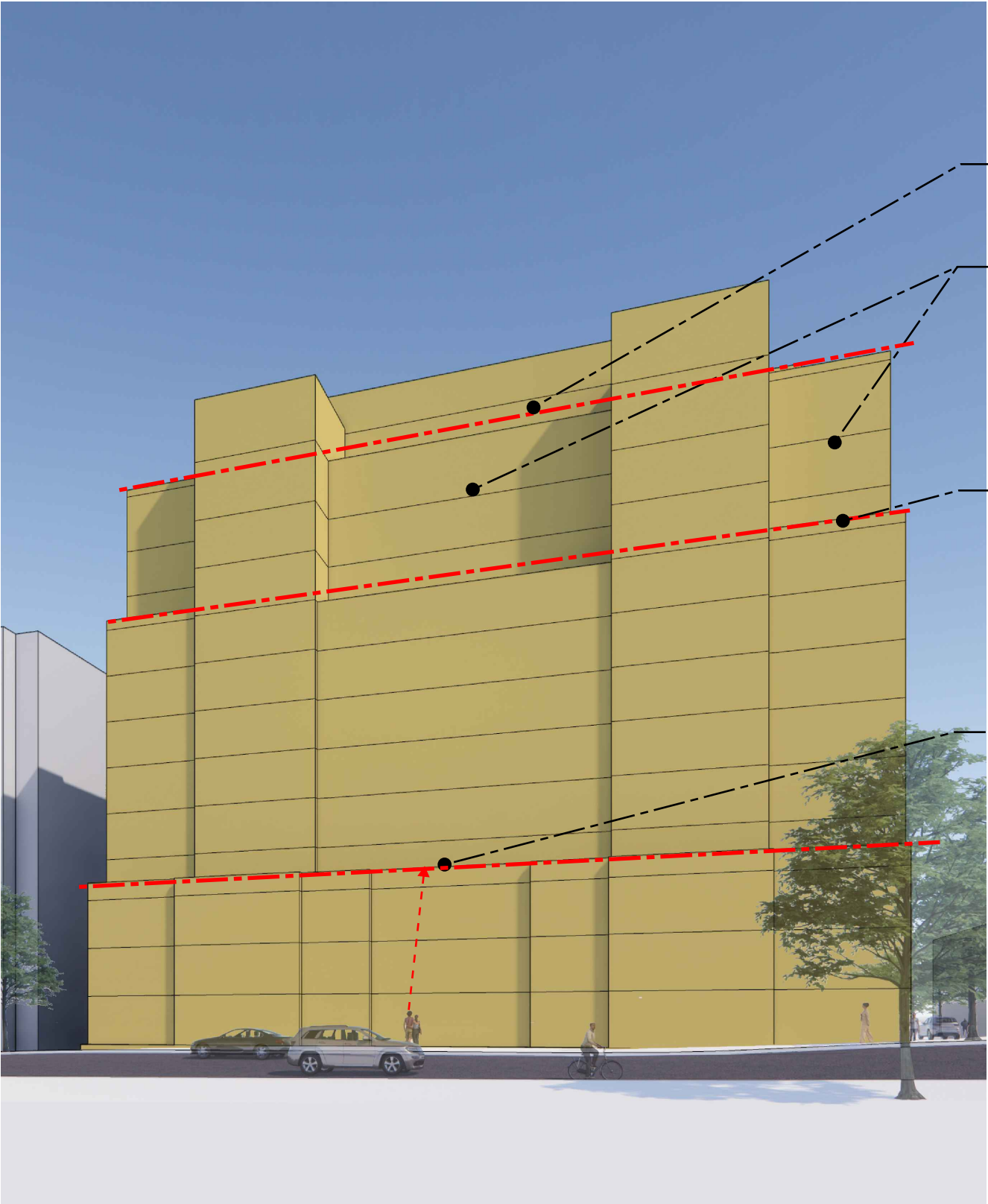
Massing In Context To Existing Buildings

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2.4.7 Tower: Step-Back

Intent: To provide a human-scaled building edge along the street that enhances pedestrian comfort and access to sky views. In districts with mostly low to mid-rise buildings, the step-back enables new tall buildings to better relate to existing context and maintain a similar street character.

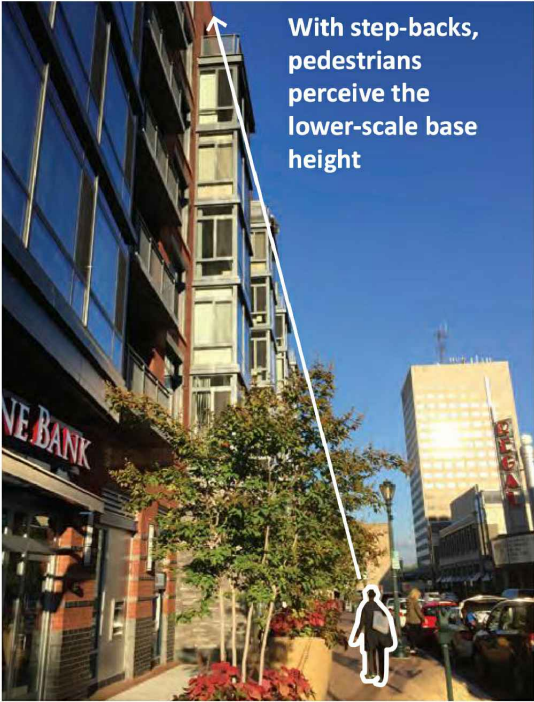
Guidelines:

- A. Retain a tower step-back across the majority of the building frontage. The building's full height may be expressed to the ground on important corners, to mark primary entryways or to balance the massing composition with vertical elements.
- B. Encourage undulating, curved or angled tower step-backs if the average step-back meets the guidelines for the street type. This expressive geometry can increase visual interest on prominent sites near major open spaces and corners.
- C. Allow balconies to encroach in the step-back if they do not significantly add to the perceived bulk and mass of the building's upper floors.

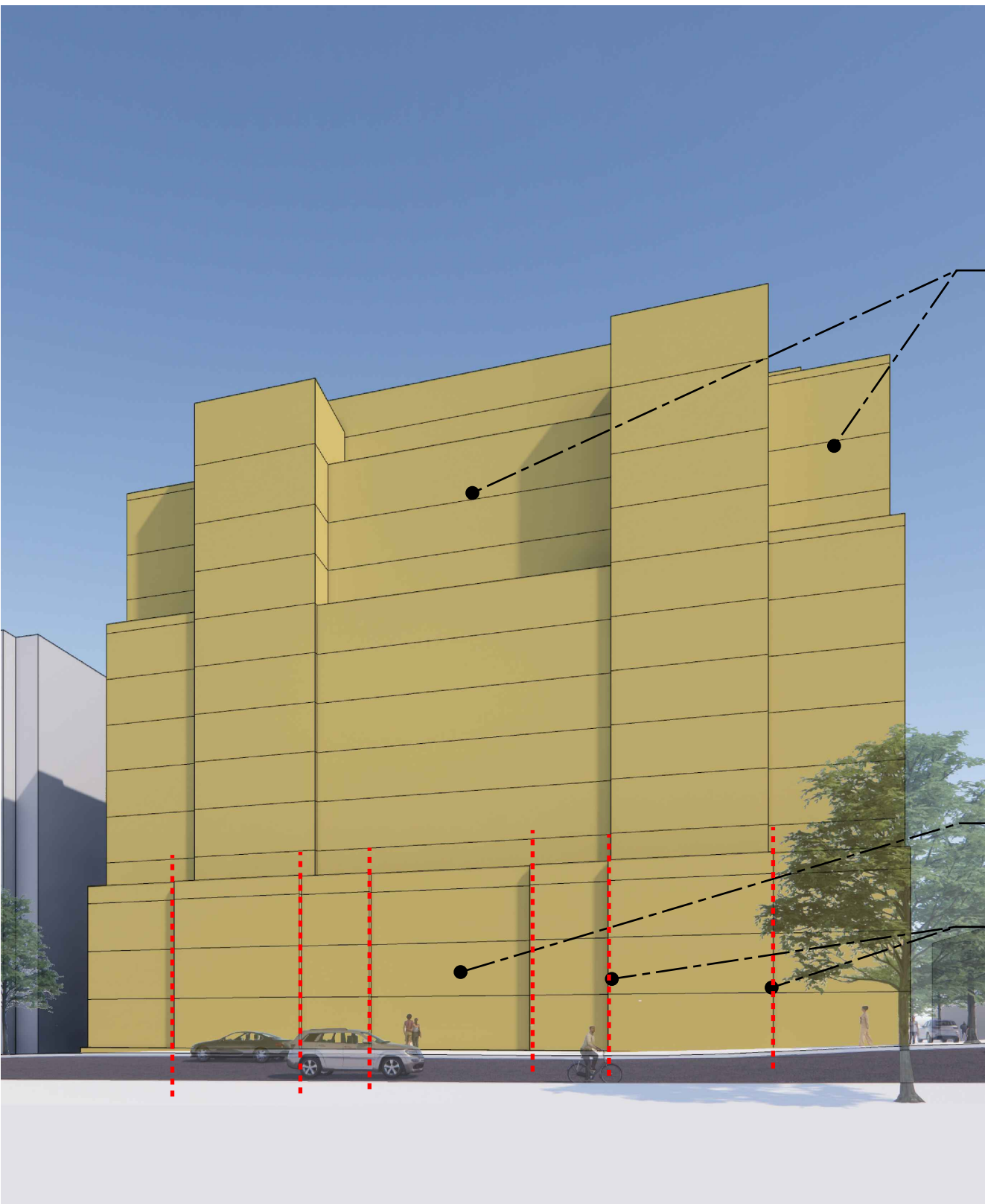
Alternative Treatments:

Though step-backs are one of the preferred methods to reduce tower bulk, especially on small neighborhood street types, alternative methods are outlined in *Section 2.4.8 Tower: "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk*. These alternative methods particularly apply to buildings lower than 90-120 feet as noted in *Section 2.1 Street Types*, or to sites with limited size or property depth from the street.

In cases where a step-back is not provided, another method to relate to the context of adjacent building heights and base conditions is with a change of materials or clear regulating lines.



This residential development in Rockville illustrates the relationship between the pedestrian and the building step-back.
Source: The Upton (above)



Balconies and terraces face street

Transparent 2-Story base

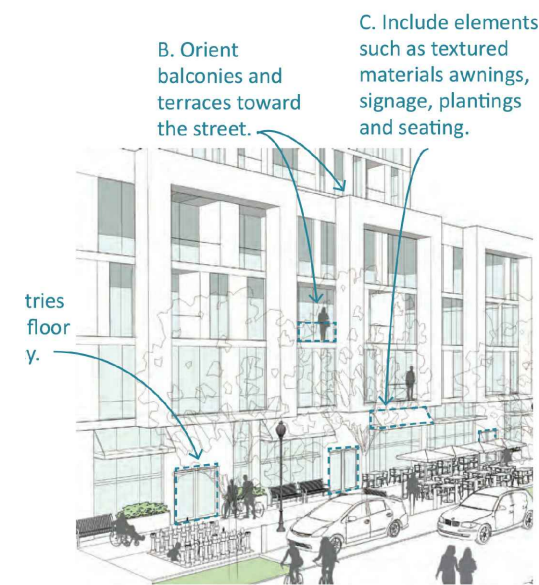
Plane changes in facade

2.4.3 Base: Street Activation

Intent: To encourage pedestrian activity by providing ground-floor and base design elements that engage with the sidewalk environment.

Guidelines:

- A. Provide frequent entries, transparency and operable walls where possible to encourage visual and physical connections between the ground floor and the public sidewalk. Avoid long blank walls along the sidewalk.
- B. Orient private balconies and terraces toward the street to encourage an interface between the private and public realms and to create eyes on the street.
- C. Include elements such as textured materials, awnings, plantings, signage and seating to create a visually engaging and inviting building edge to frame the sidewalk and create stopping points to relax, gather and socialize.
- D. Place particular focus on active ground floor design along the portions of streets identified as the recommended retail nodes in the *Retail Planning Strategy for the Downtown Bethesda Plan*.

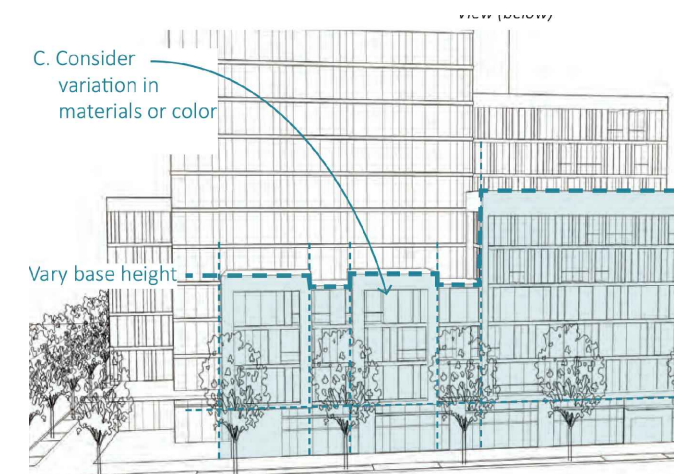


2.4.4 Base: Variation and Articulation

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.
- D. Avoid cantilevering the majority of the building mass over the Frontage Zone, public sidewalk or public open space to prevent interfering with street trees and blocking access to sunlight and sky views for pedestrians.



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Design Guidelines - Base: Street Activation & Variation & Articulation

PRESENTATION FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

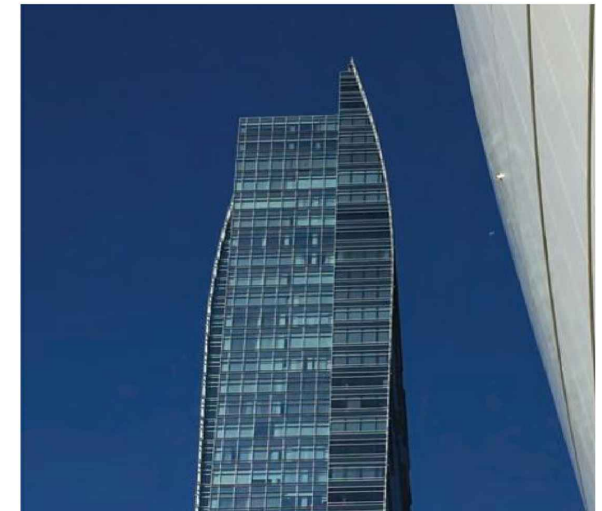


2.4.9 Top: Tower Top

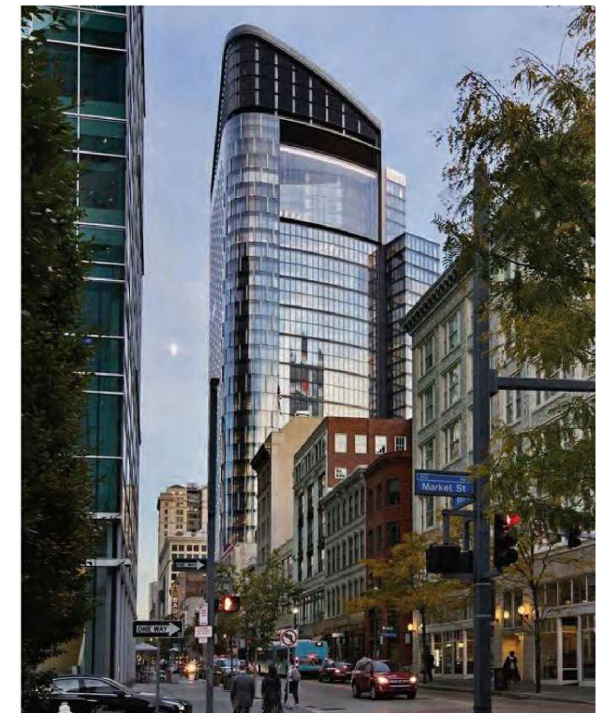
Intent: The building top or cap contributes to the skyline, adding visual interest and shaping the image of Bethesda from afar. Tower tops should be carefully considered on prominent sites, including those with the tallest building heights, locations adjacent to major public open spaces and those that terminate views.

Guidelines:

- A. Encourage unique design of tower tops that can enhance the image of Bethesda as an innovative downtown, welcoming new businesses, residents and visitors.
- B. Taper tower tops where possible to reduce the perceived bulk of tall buildings.
- C. Integrate energy efficiency into the design of tower tops, including solar panels and passive heating and cooling elements.
- D. Consider the views of the rooftop composition from adjacent buildings when designing building tops.
- E. Not all tall buildings should have a sculptural top. However, mechanical penthouses and rooftop amenity spaces should in all cases be designed to harmonize with the overall building composition.
- F. Enclosures for rooftop amenity spaces should either contribute to the creation of expressive tops, or otherwise be set back from the roof line and limited to a portion of the roof area so as to not be perceived from surrounding streets and public spaces.



This curved and tapered top adds a unique element to the skyline.



*The form of the tower top for this Pittsburgh office building is part of the energy efficient solar chimney design.
Source: Gensler*

2.4.1 Compatibility

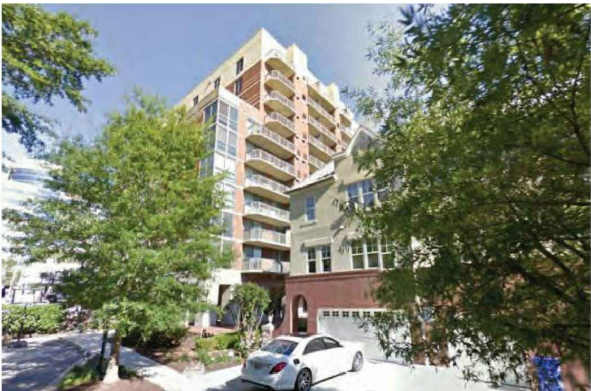
Intent: Most new projects in Bethesda will be infill development, therefore design should respect the existing character and scale of the downtown's diverse districts, neighborhoods and public spaces.

Guidelines:

- A. Maintain the character of small-scale retail streets by creating ground-floor retail with awnings, signage and bays that reflect the dimensions and design of adjacent existing stores. Step back upper floors to continue the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk of a low to mid-rise building edge.
- B. Provide transitions to surrounding neighborhoods by including elements such as:
 - Stepped-down building heights.
 - Individual entries to ground-floor units.
 - Setback transitions to residential properties with front yard setbacks.
 - Increased landscaping in the frontage zone and planting/furnishing zone.
 - Fine-grain building articulation, such as variations in wall planes, colors, materials and textures.
- C. Study the impacts of new development on public open spaces. Limit shadows where possible and provide active ground floors with entrances and windows onto public open spaces, avoiding orienting the backs of buildings to these spaces.



Norfolk Avenue has a unique scale and character that should be reflected in future development.



The Bethesda Theater redevelopment maintains the historic building character along Wisconsin Avenue and transitions to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
Source: Google Street View

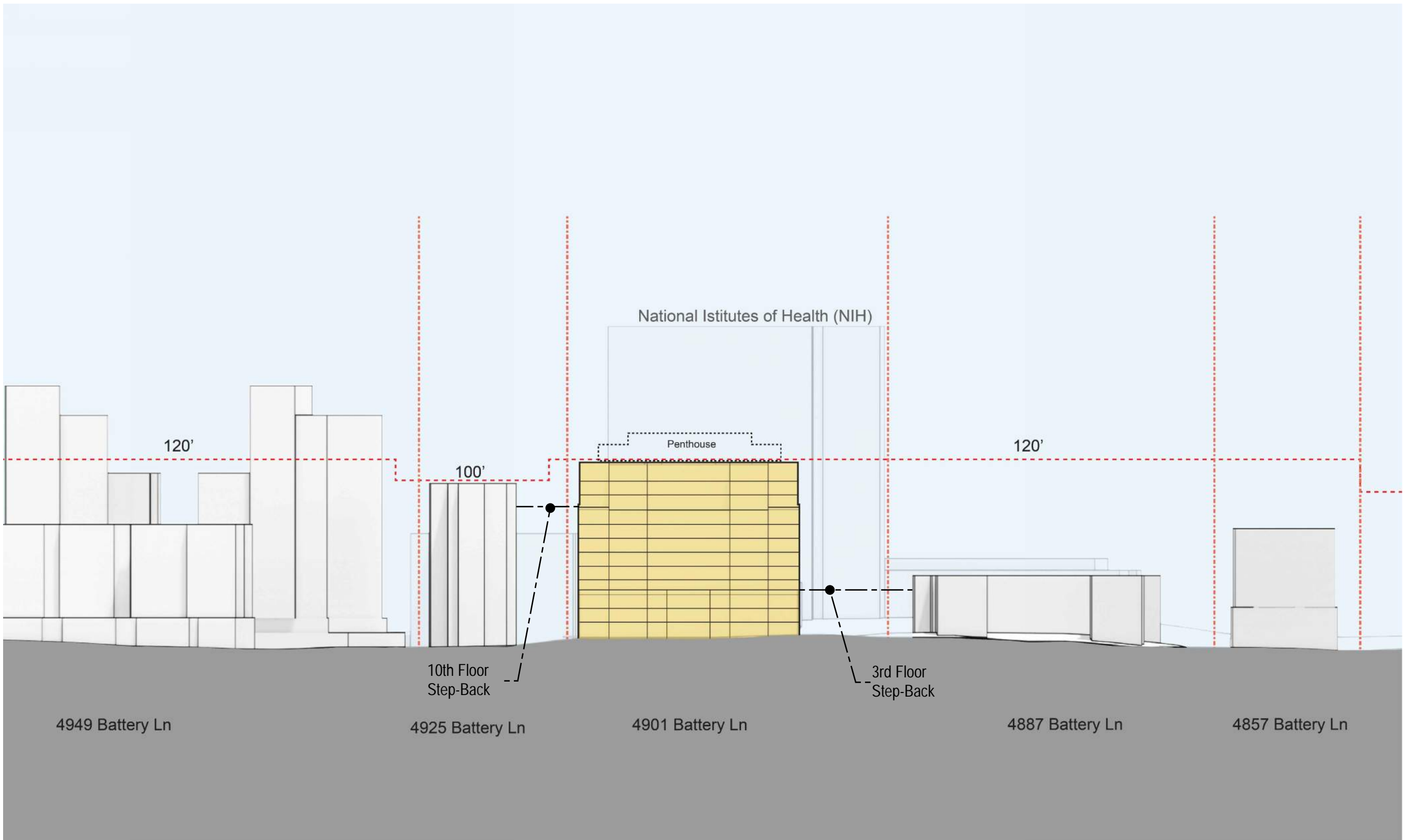


Transitions from Wisconsin Avenue to surrounding neighborhoods require stepping down of buildings to mediate between the high-rise and low-rise scales of the two areas.
Source: The Vine Condos



Stepped-down building heights

Plane changes in facade



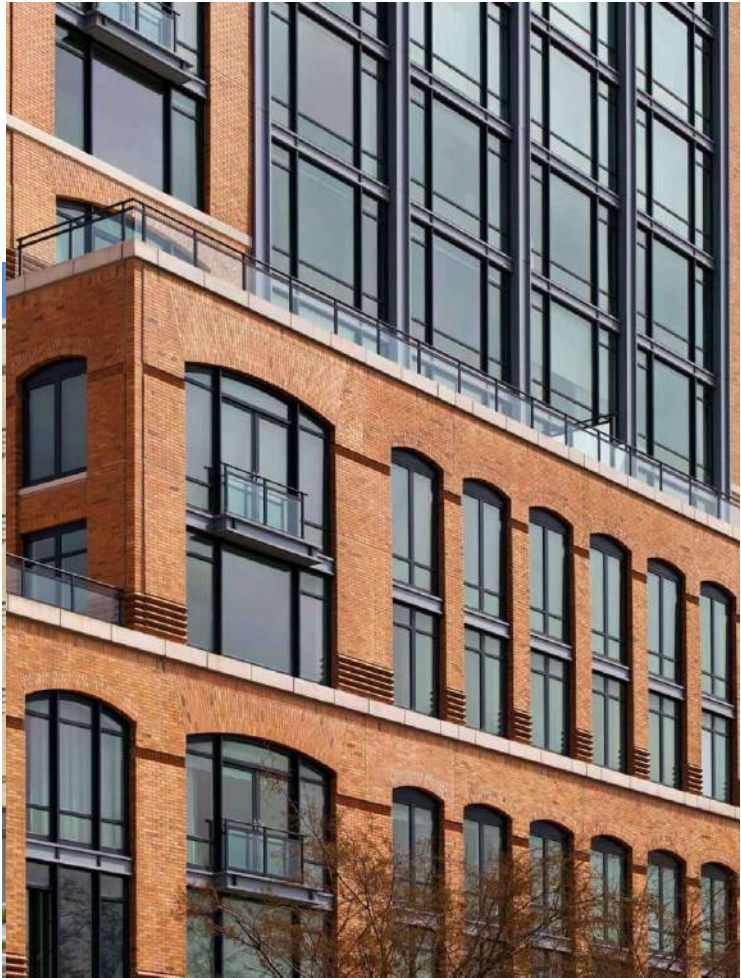
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Design Guidelines ☐ Compatibility ☐ Site Section

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Building Precedents □ Base

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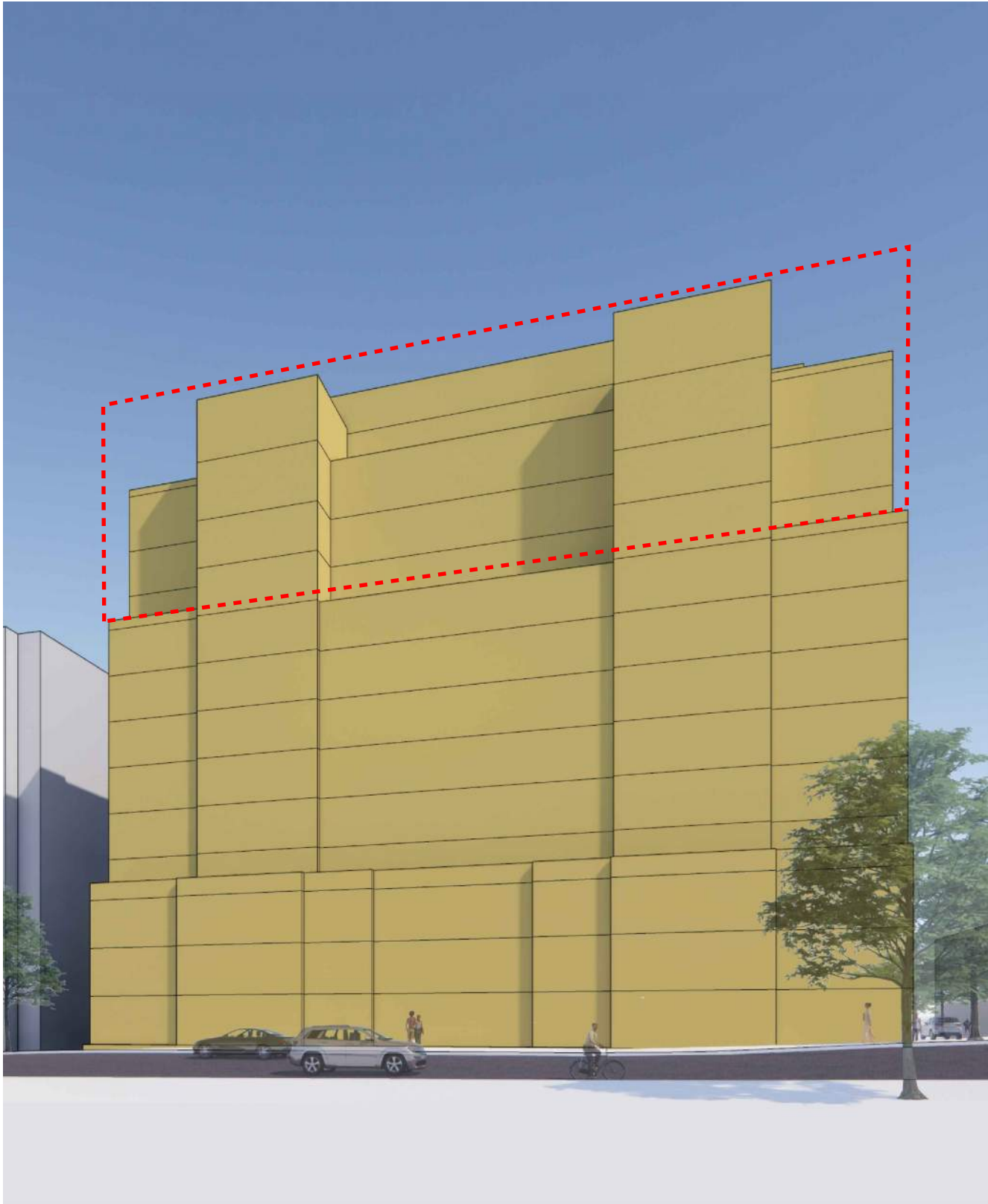
Building Precedents □ Middle

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Building Precedents [Top](#)

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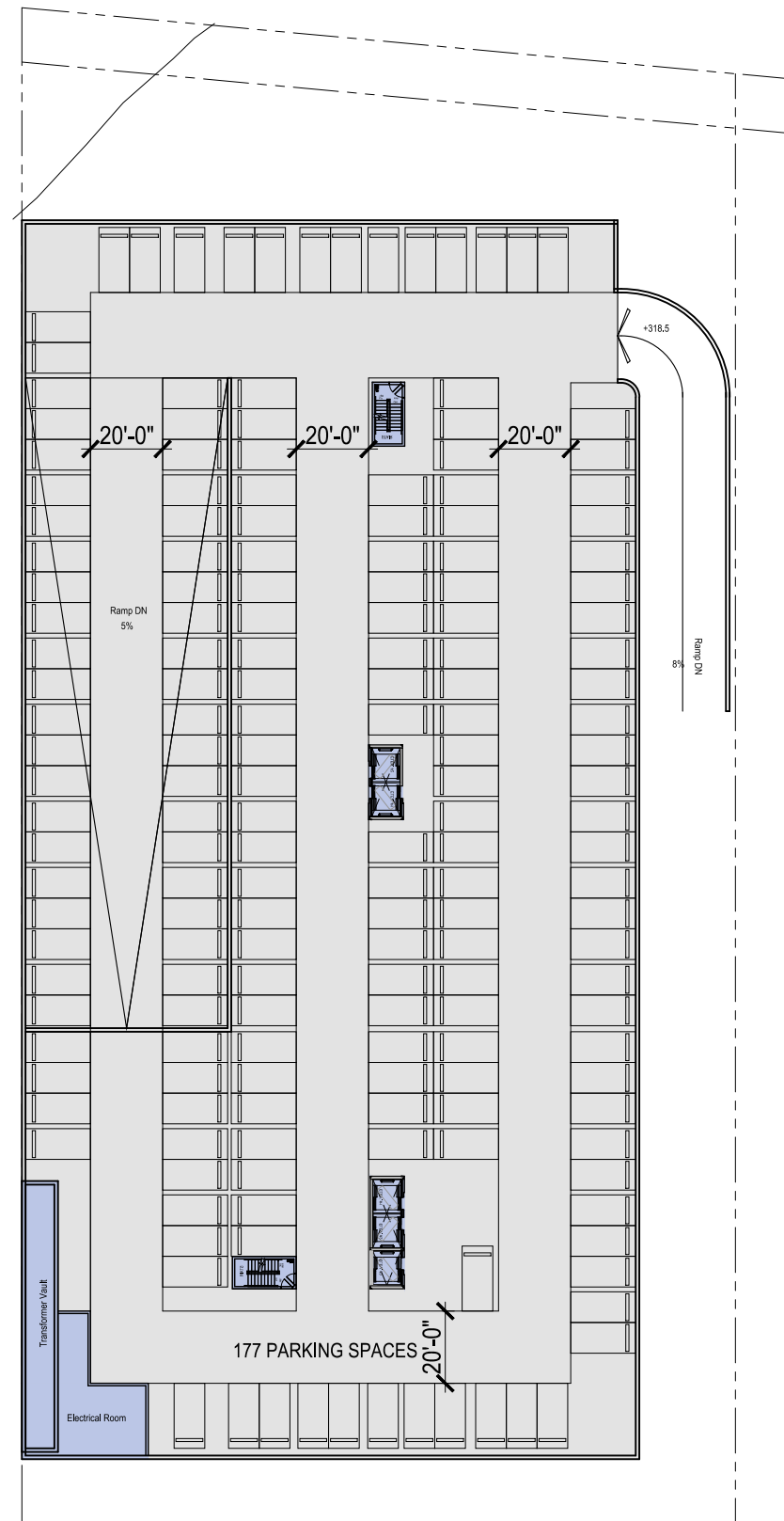
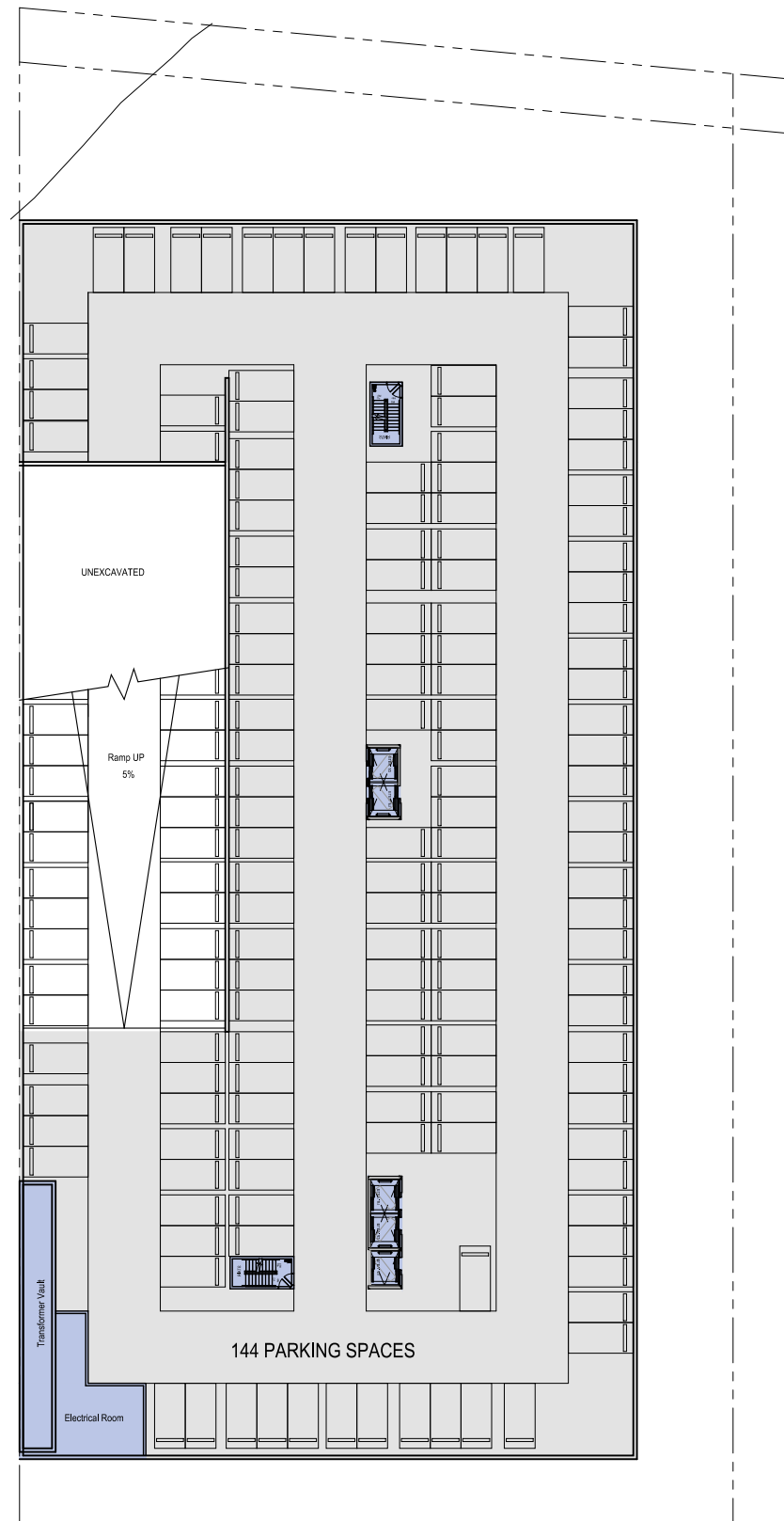
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SK+I
ARCHITECTURE

wcsmith



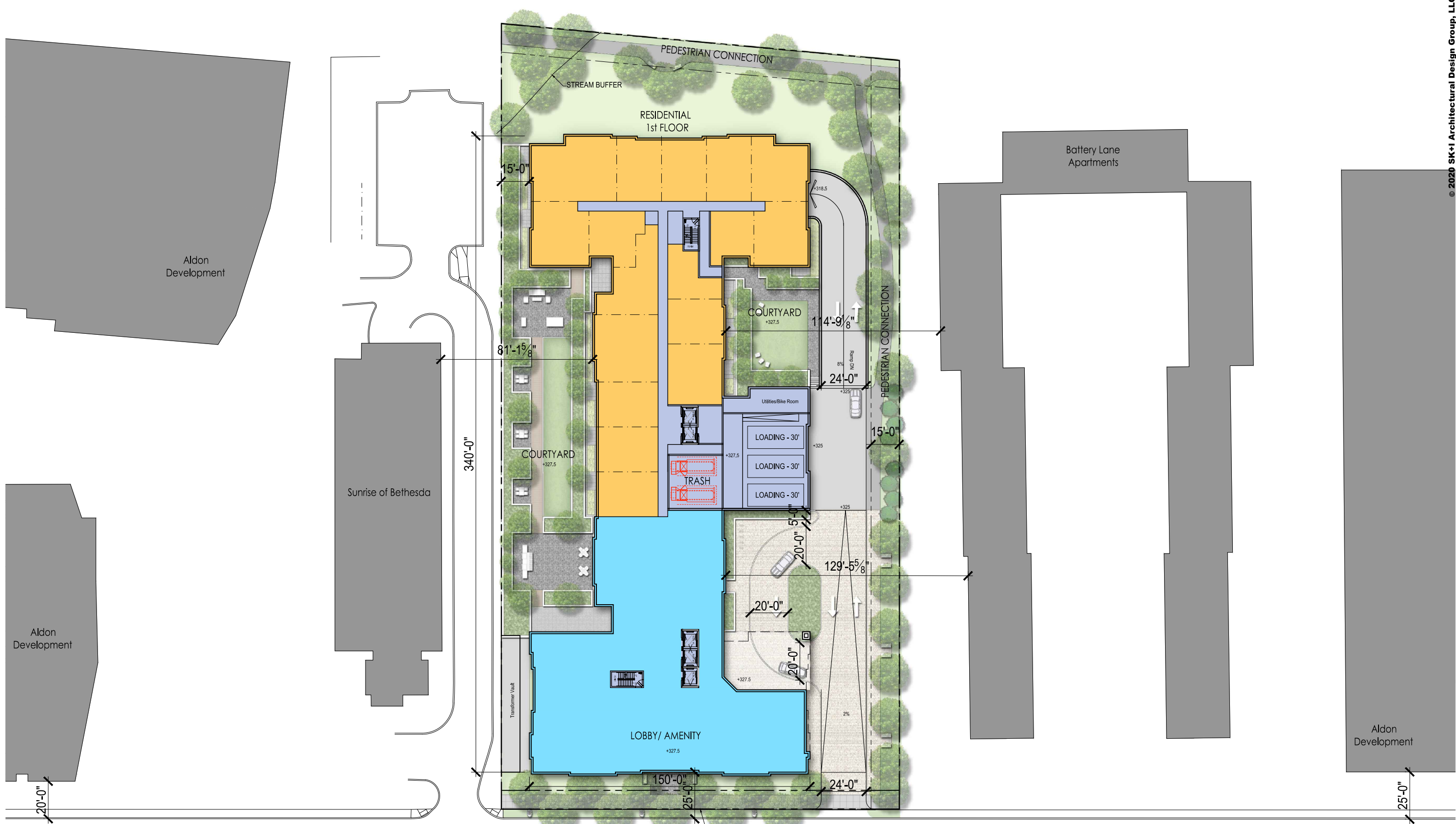
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Garage Floor Plans

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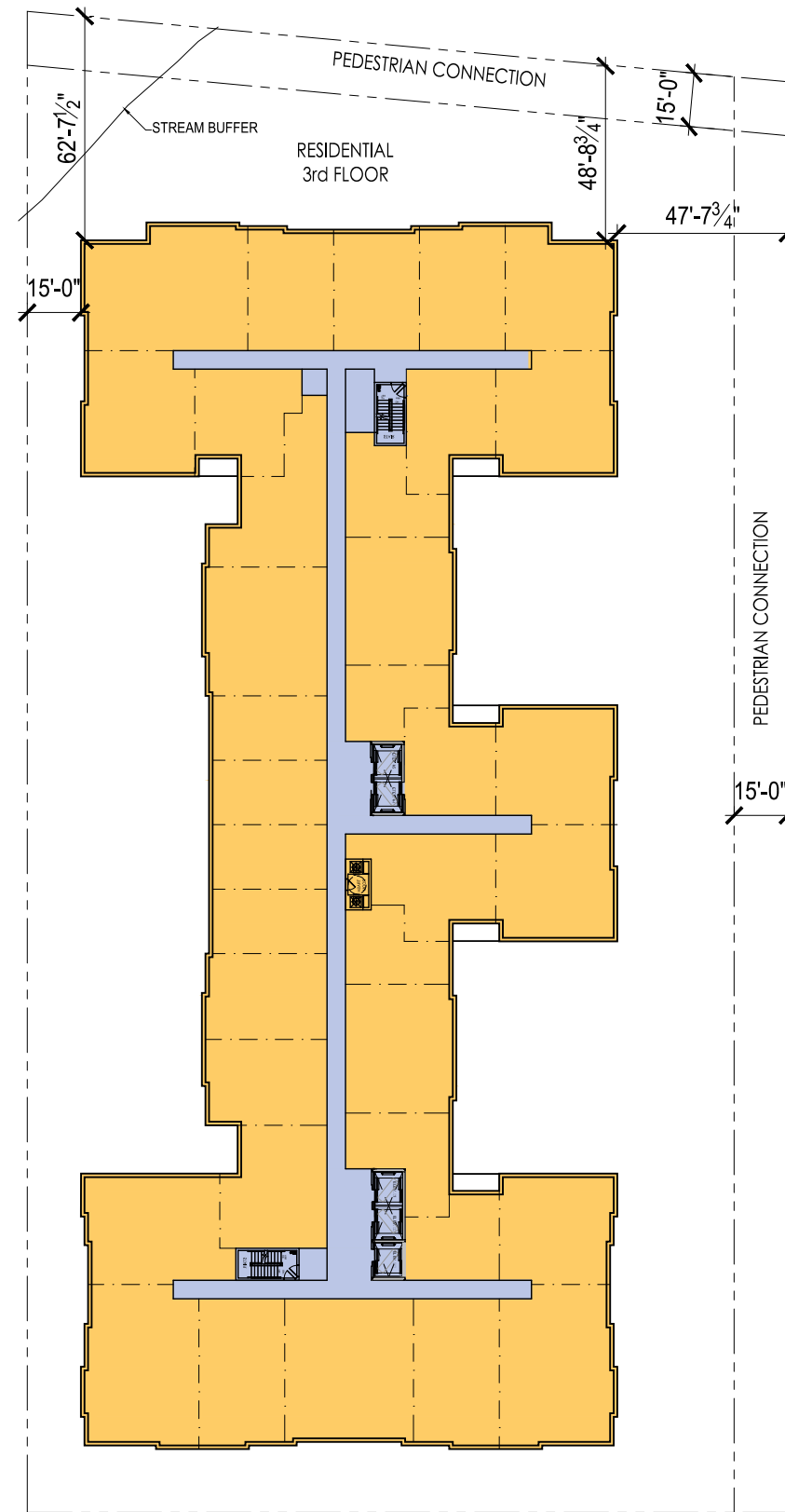
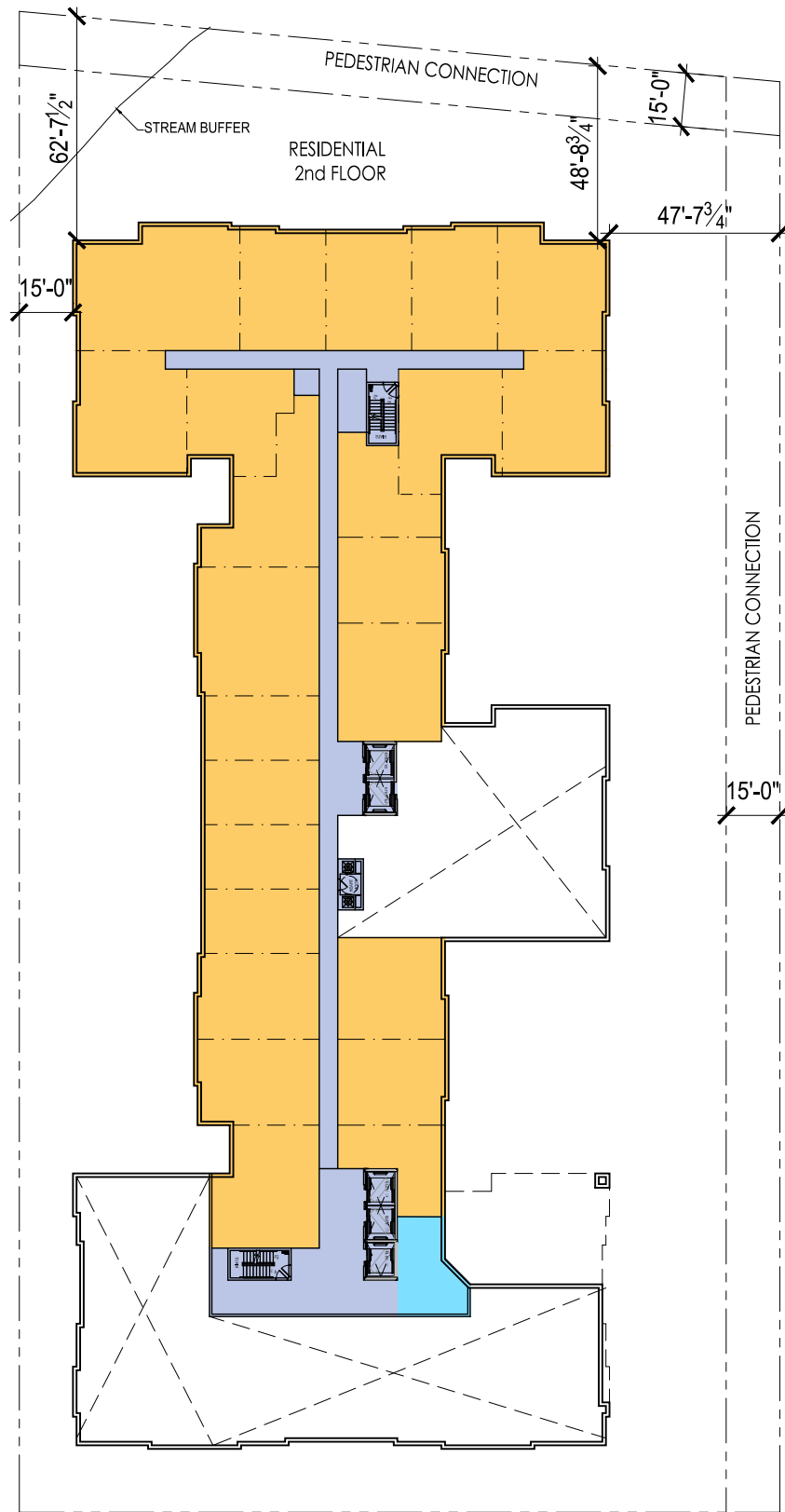
Ground Floor Plan

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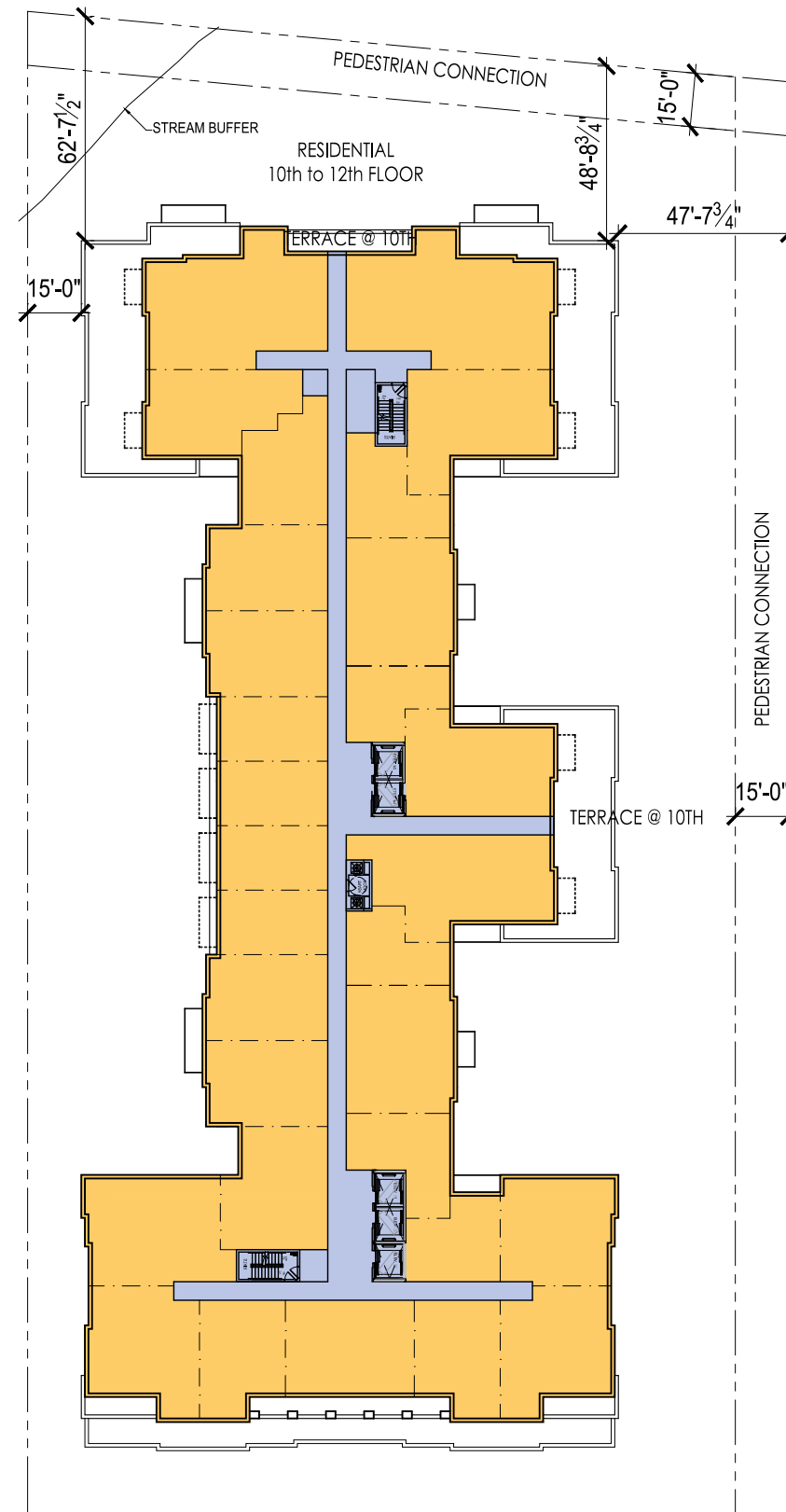
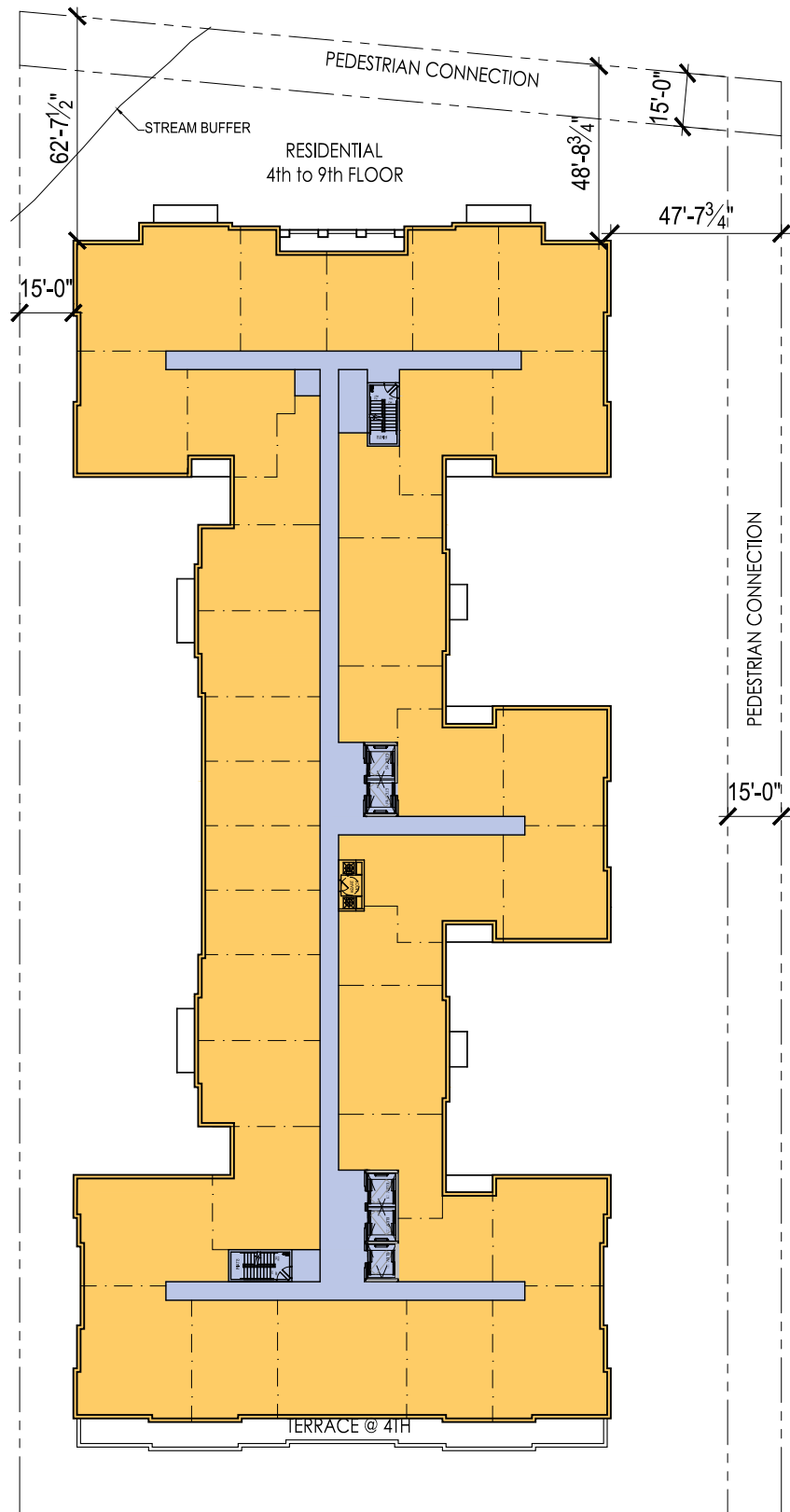
2nd to 3rd Floor Plans

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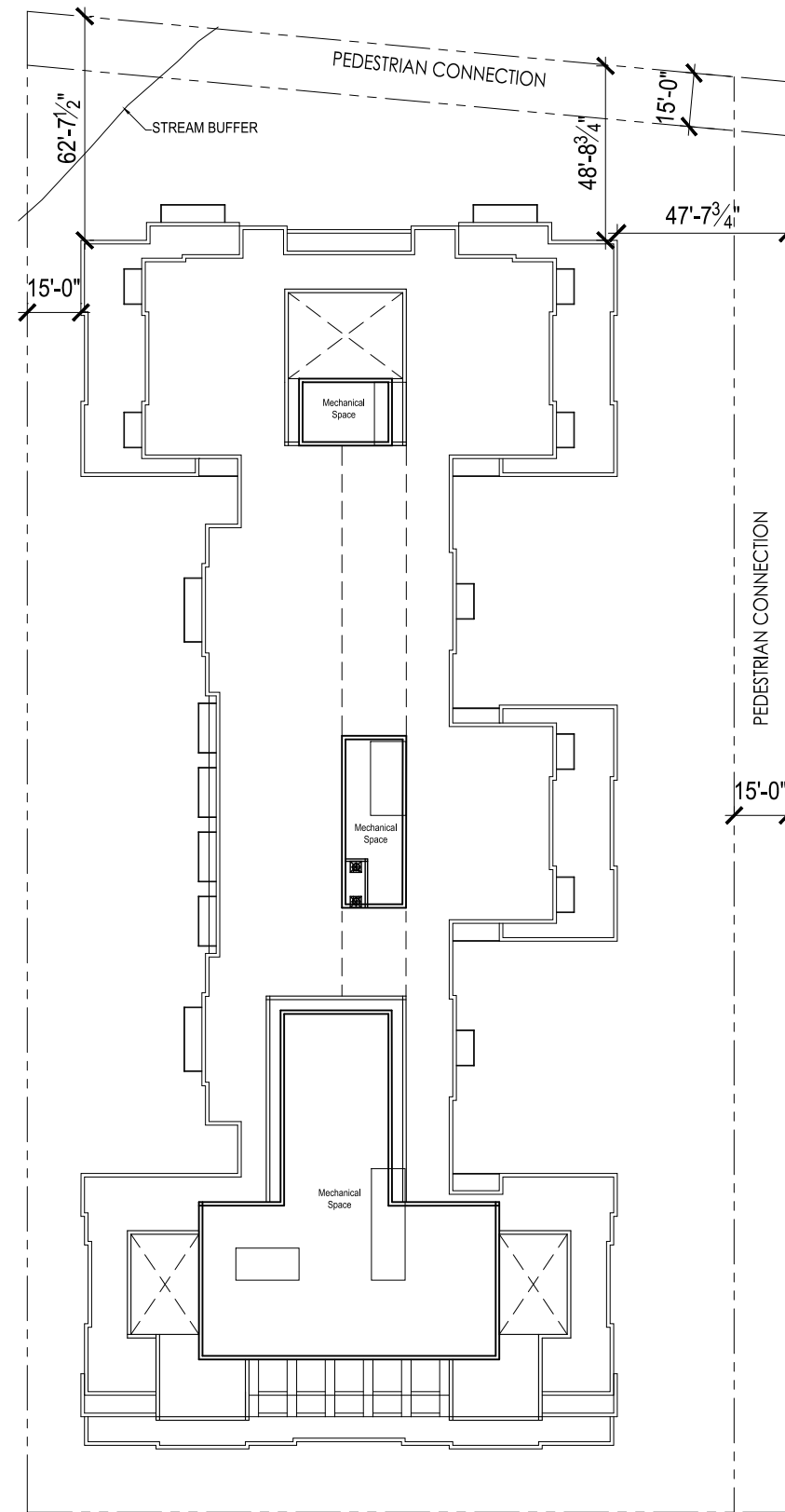
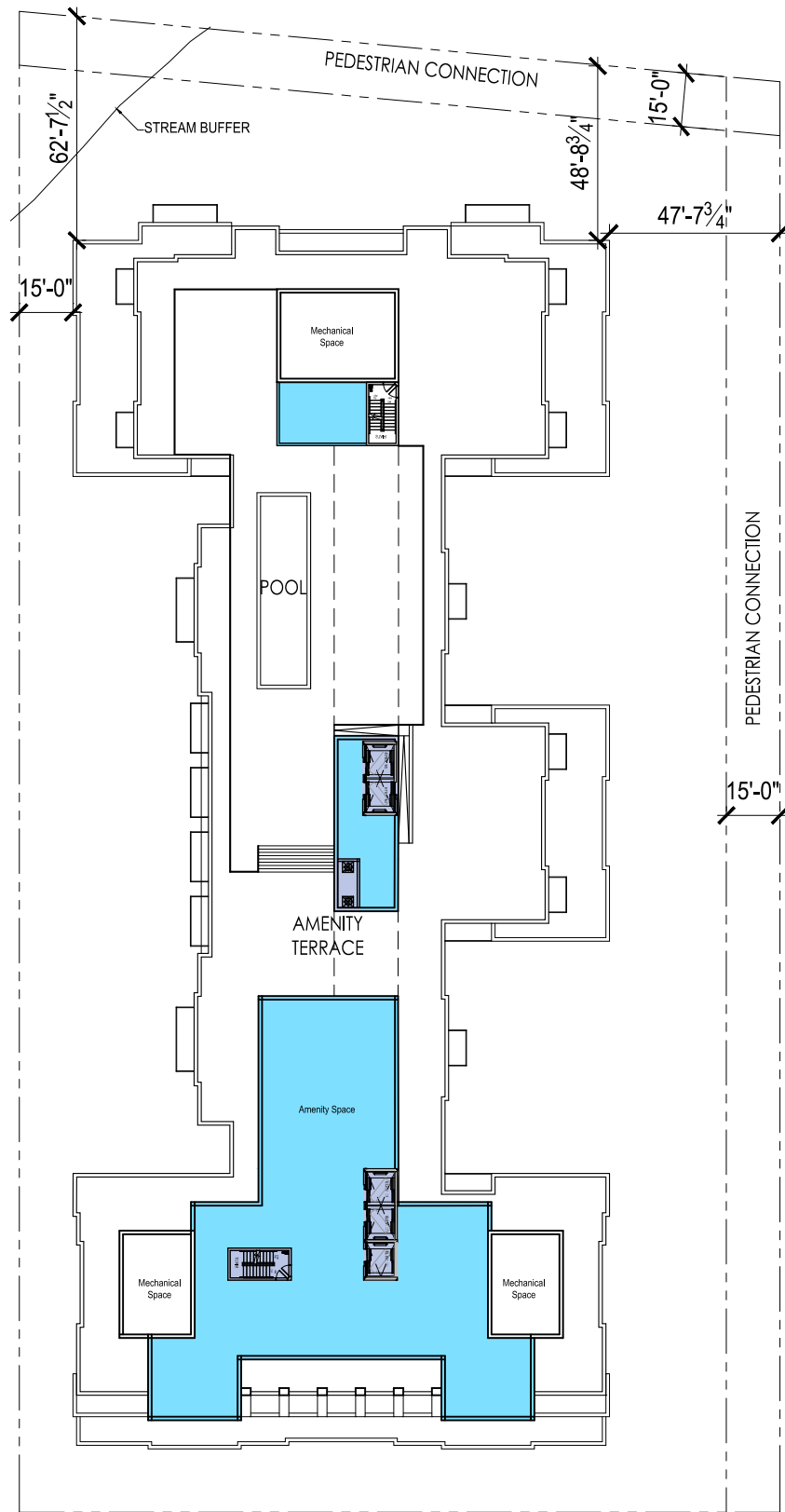
4th to 12th Floor Plans

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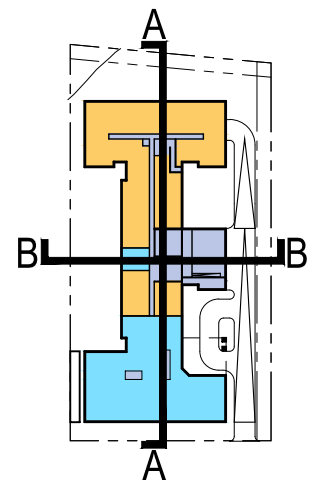
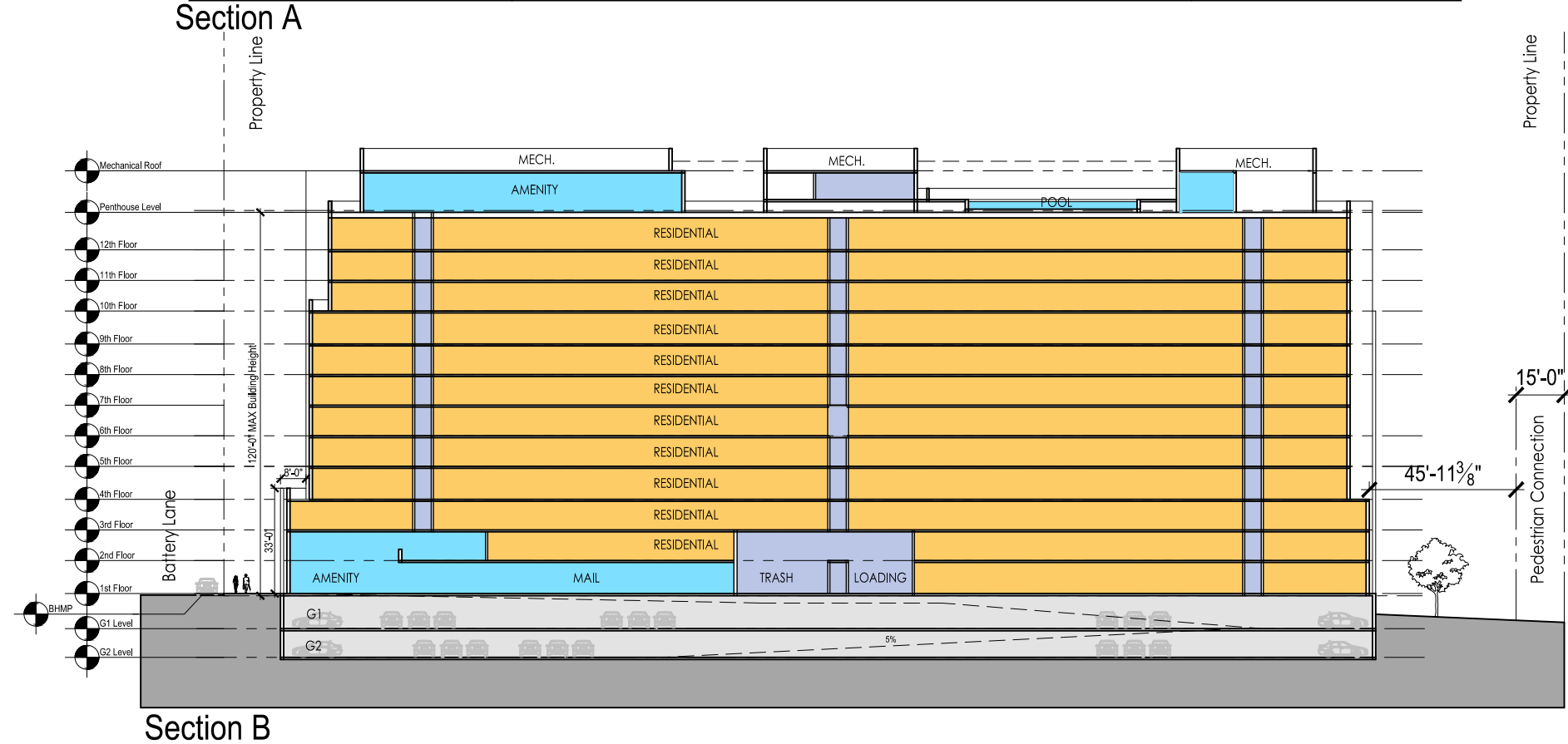
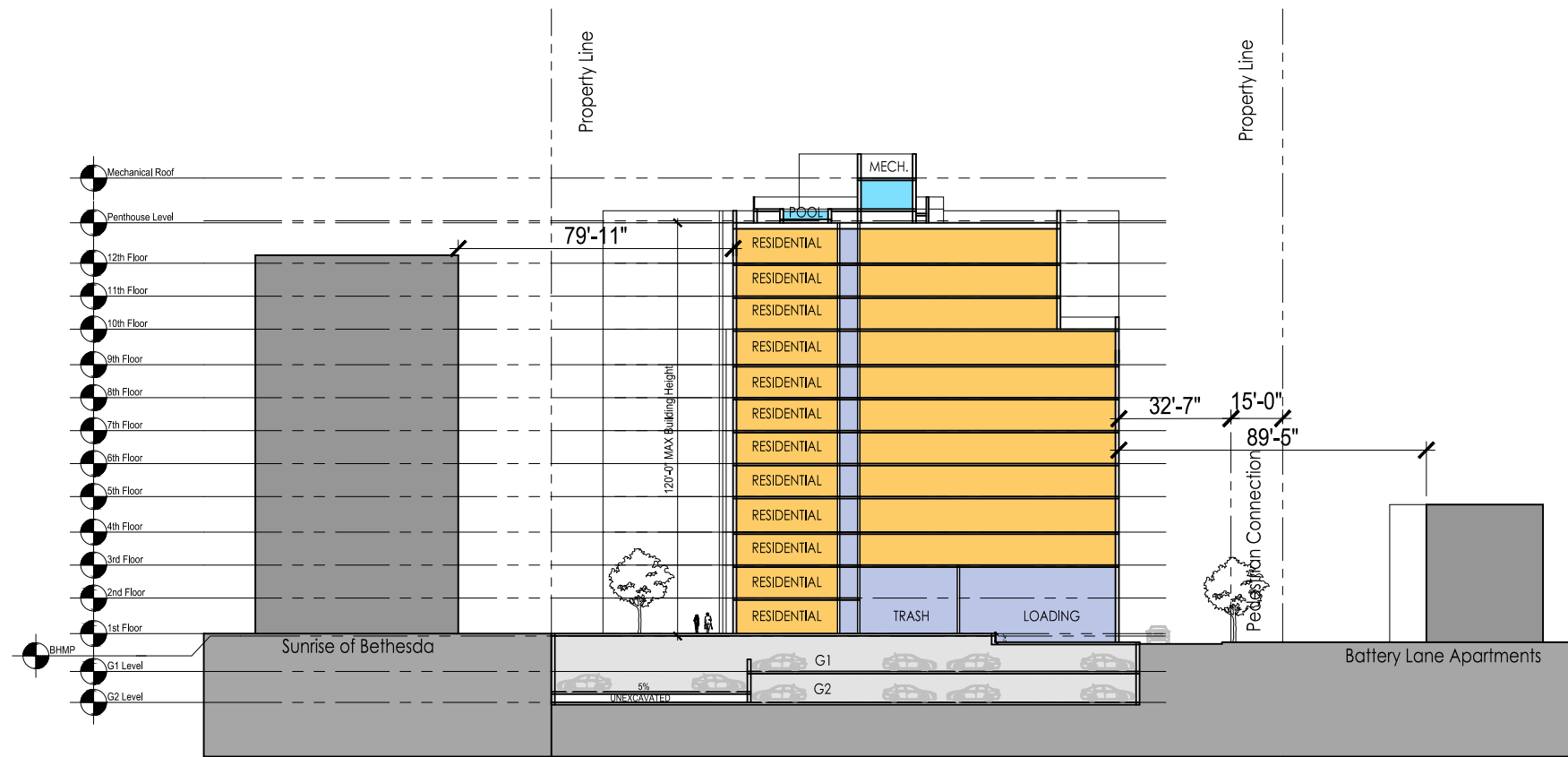
Penthouse □ Mechanical Penthouse □ Floor Plans

PRESENTATION □ FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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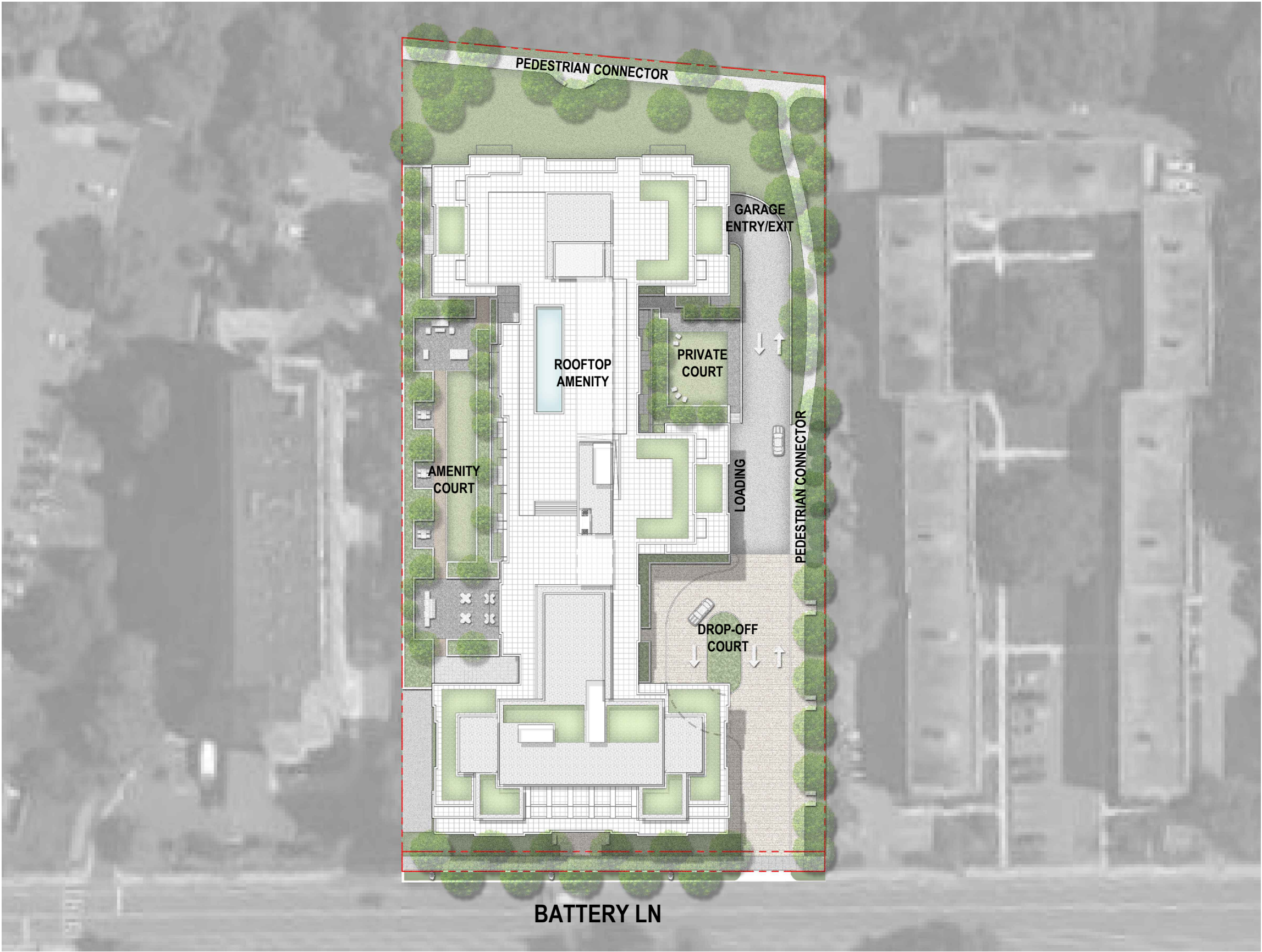
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Landscape Precedents

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