

# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

## Submission Form (Revised March 2020)

### PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	4405 East-West Highway
File Number(s)	32022012A, and Site Plan No. TBD
Project Address	4405, 4419 and 4421 East-West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814 and Parcel P224, PT LTS 6-10 in Block A

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

### APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact	John Camera, Transwestern Development	202-617-2143	John.Camera@transwestern.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-1.5, R-1.5, H-100'	100'	421,500 SF /4.82 FAR	SF / FAR	15%
Proposed Land Uses	Commercial, Multi-Family Residential				

### 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): Urban Boulevard (East-West Highway)

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Sidewalk Zone			
Planting/Furnishing Zone	6-10 ft.	8 ft	
Pedestrian Thorough Zone	10-20 ft.	11 ft.	shared use path
Frontage Zone	0-10 ft.	6 ft. tree panel & 15'	sidewalk
Building Placement			
Build-to Line (from street curb)	25-30 ft.	40 ft.	
Building Form			
Base Height	3-6 stories	2 stories	
Step-Back	10-15 ft.		alt. methods to reduce bulk

### 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'	55'-2" to East	
Step-Back	Per Street Type	10'-5" @ 5th floor and 12' 2" 9th floor on North Side of building	
Bulk Reduction Methods	Unique Geometry, Varying Tower Heights, Modulate and Articulate Facades, Limit 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): 20

- 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



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**STREET TYPE(S):** Neighborhood Residential Street (Pearl Street)

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Sidewalk Zone			
Planting/Furnishing Zone	6-8 feet	6 feet	
Pedestrian Thorough Zone	6-10 feet	7 feet	
Frontage Zone	5-8 feet	12 feet	
Building Placement			
Build-to Line (from street curb)	20-25 feet	25 feet	
Building Form			
Base Height	2-3 stories (25-35 ft.)	2 stories	
Step-Back	15-20 feet		alt. methods to reduce bulk



**4405, 4419 and 4421 East-West Highway Bethesda, Maryland**  
**Design Advisory Panel**  
**Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan**  
**June 14, 2023**

**I. Introduction**

4405 East West Highway Owner, LLC, an affiliate of Transwestern Development Company (the “Applicant”) is submitting this application to receive input from the Design Advisory Panel (“DAP”) on the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan for the properties located at 4405, 4419 and 4421 East-West Highway in Bethesda, Maryland (the “Property”). The Applicant proposes to redevelop the Property with a multi-family residential building with ground floor retail uses (the “Project”).

The Project is notable in that it will be only the second Sketch Plan approved for the Pearl District since the adoption of the *2017 Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Plan* (the “Downtown Plan”) and very likely the first project to be developed in the Pearl Street District.

**II. Property Description**

The inverted “L” shaped Property is located on the north side of East-West Highway at the intersection of East-West Highway and Pearl Street and just west of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, just over 1,000 feet from the Bethesda Metro Station. The Property contains a total of 87,344 square feet of gross tract area and is zoned CR 1.5, C 1.5, R 1.5 H 100 and is subject to the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The Property is currently improved with a five-story 65,060 square foot office building and surface parking at 4405 East-West Highway and two single family homes that have been converted to office use and surface parking at 4419 and 4421 East-West Highway. The entire frontage consists of curb, sidewalk and surface parking with virtually no landscaping.

**III. Proposed Development**

Furthering the goal of the Downtown Plan to increase the number of residential units within walking distance of the Metro Station, the Applicant proposes redeveloping the Property with up to 414,000 square feet of residential use to accommodate up to 420 units, including 15 percent moderately priced dwelling units (“MPDUs”) and approximately 7,500 square feet of ground floor retail. Consistent with the Downtown Plan recommendations, the building will be 100 feet in height (10 floors of residential uses with ground floor retail) along the East-West Highway and Pearl Street façades and 11 stories along the north end of the building. The northern façade and will step down to a height of 51 feet along the southern façade as measured from the adjacent grade and 38 feet as measured from East-West Highway.

The Project is located within the Pearl Street District, identified in the Downtown Plan as an emerging center. The Project promotes a number of the goals and recommendations of the Downtown Plan, with the most notable being the following:



Gateway to Bethesda: The building will likely be the first developed in the Pearl District under the Downtown Plan, and given the Property's prominent location, it will serve as a gateway to Bethesda. The building is designed with its highly visible location in mind, with care and attention paid to all of the eastern elevations.

Transformation of the Streetscape: A prominent component of the Project will be its transformation of the existing Property frontage. The existing "streetscape" section from the back of curb is comprised of a sidewalk with overhead utilities adjacent to the surface parking. The Property frontage contains no green space, except a one-two foot wide strip of grass next to a small portion of the building, one lone tree, and a few bushes. This barren frontage will be replaced with the Bethesda streetscape standards that will include an eight-foot tree lined buffer, a shared use bike path, a second row of trees and a 15-foot-wide sidewalk, thus transforming the suburban auto-centric existing conditions of the Property to a more urbanized, inviting landscaped streetscape. The new streetscape will also promote the connectivity goals of the Downtown Plan by providing a quality pedestrian experience. This is particularly important given the number of students that walk almost every day along the frontage of the Property from B-CC High School just to the east to downtown Bethesda.

Enhance Street Activity: The retail is located along the western portion of the ground floor, extending to Pearl Street, in order to help promote this intended retail corridor. In addition, replacing a dated office building with a residential building will help promote the 24-hour activity desired by the Downtown Plan.

#### **IV. Project Design and Architectural Narrative**

The Project will provide a building of exceptional design to this area of Bethesda that complies with the various recommendations of the Design Guidelines. As described below, the building employs a number of alternative "menu" options from the Design Guidelines to achieve the objectives of the Design Guidelines.

Due to the Project's location, the Pearl Street, East-West Highway and eastern façades will be featured prominently. Although the eastern façade is mid-block, the façade is designed with the intention that this is a main façade that is consistent and integrated with the primary street façades on East-West Highway and Pearl Street and serves as a focal point as you enter Bethesda from the East. The lobby entrance has been located at the center of the East-West Highway façade, emphasizing the symmetrical nature of the base façade that wraps from the east all the way around to Pearl Street. The Project focuses on activating East-West Highway with a two-story residential lobby and amenity space as well as retail. The transparency and activity of the first two levels will help break down the scale of the base but also create a vibrant and energetic pedestrian experience.

The massing and articulation concept creates a simple, unified building concept that breaks down the size of the building using a visual "tower" break between the northern and southern halves of the building and is unified using similar articulation and architectural features throughout the whole design. The primary façades on Pearl Street, East-West Highway and the eastern façade are enhanced using a symmetrical "wave" that wraps the primary elevation of the southern bar. This

wrapping symmetry highlights the equal importance of all three main façades. Within this “wave,” projecting balconies are utilized to further emphasize the movement façade along East-West Highway. Together these elements create a sense of movement which break down the façade to a scale and proportion suitable for the building and creates a façade that doesn’t feel long or imposing. Breaking up the eastern façade is a vertical tower that connects the penthouse down to the ground and helps create a visual break between the southern and northern halves of the building. The tower also serves as a break in the undulating “wave” façade that connect the East-West Highway façade and the eastern façade. Once past the tower break, the “wave” is simplified as it moves north and breaks down into four 5-bay elements that bring an overall proportion to the façade by also serving as a direct visual connection between the main elevation on the street and the rest of the face. On the north the massing breaks down even further by adding two setbacks on the north end that reduces the height of the building to a more appropriate scale adjacent to the High School. Taking advantage of the setbacks on the north end, integrated and projecting balconies are incorporated into the façade to give residents highly coveted outdoor space. These elements will also add another layer of activity to the façade but also create a more dynamic elevation that will enhance the public realm.

## **V. Design Guideline Compliance**

### **1) 2.1.10 Canopy Corridors**

The Project proposes improvements to the East-West Highway streetscape to be in compliance with the future streetscape plans. A new 8-foot green street tree buffer will replace the current street adjacent sidewalk, followed by a 11-foot-wide shared use path that will taper at the east to tie into the existing location of the sidewalks on the neighboring properties. Directly next to the shared use path, a 6-foot wide tree panel buffer will be added to incorporate a 2<sup>nd</sup> row of trees followed by a 15-foot-wide sidewalk directly in front of the building. The Project proposes a 40-foot building setback from the curb, which will provide this future streetscape as well as create an enhanced public realm.

### **2) 2.3.2 Green Cover**

The Project is designed to meet the 35% Green Cover requirements with a combination of tree canopy and intensive green roof that are located above structure at the G1 and first floor levels. Additional green roofs are located on terraces on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floors as well as at the penthouse and mechanical penthouse levels. Bio-Retention planters will be located at various places around the ground floor.

### **3) 2.3.3 Servicing, Access, and Parking**

The Project proposes utilizing one curb cut off of Pearl Street. This curb cut serves as the access point into the site for both the residential loading and garage entry. The location of the garage and loading entries allows them to be hidden from the street as they face north towards the existing parking lot and be integrated into the façade architecture and providing an overall better and safer pedestrian experience. By placing these services on the north side off of Pearl Street it allows for

the project to have a continuous frontage zone along East-West Highway that is line with retail and amenity uses that enhance the pedestrian experience.

#### 4) 2.4.2 Base: Building Placement

The Project proposes a 40-foot building setback from the curb to provide the enhanced and pedestrian friendly streetscape on East-West Highway. This setback provides a larger setback from the street than is recommended in the Design Guidelines but is consistent with the larger vision for the future of East-West Highway. A 25-foot setback is provided on Pearl Street that is also consistent with the further vision of the street as well as the Design Guidelines.

#### 5) 2.4.3 Base: Street Activation

The Project proposes placing along the East-West Highway and Pearl Street frontage a combination of double height retail and amenity uses. These uses will promote the visual transparency of the ground floor and increase the connection with the street. Above the ground floor the building will be visually engaging with a combination of an undulating “wave” façade, interconnected with balconies and terraces that face the street. This will further enhance and integrate the building with the public realm.

#### 6) 2.4.4 Base: Variation and Articulation

The Project proposes multiple ground floor uses as mentioned above that will be articulated through different architectural languages on the façade. This, in addition to plane changes, material variation and the modulation above, will help break up the elevation, add visual interest and enhance the pedestrian experience.

#### 7) 2.4.8 Tower: “Menu” of Methods to Reduce Bulk

The Project proposes to pursue alternative methods to reduce tower bulk in lieu of building step backs on East-West Highway and Pearl Street because the height of the building is under 120 feet. In order to reduce bulk, the Project proposes a mix of unique geometry in combination with a modulating “wave” façade that is integrated with projecting balconies that emphasize the movement and “wave” around the face. This geometry and articulation will help reduce the apparent face of the building and break down the scale of the building. The main penthouse structure is setback from the street and integrated with the overall massing concept of the building and functions as an anchor to hold the “wave” on the front of the building but also create the visual break with the north end of the building. By setting this tower back from the façade it creates the perception of different tower heights and makes the main façade feel less imposing. The massing as viewed from the street will provide a dynamic and dramatic façade that will further promote visual interest and enhance the public realm.

#### 8) 2.4.9 Top: Tower Top

The Project’s massing has been designed to help reduce the perceived length of the north-south façade while also creating a focal point at the southeast corner of the building. This is achieved

by setting the penthouse tower massing away from the street creating a visual break between the street and east elevations and creating an element that helps anchor the corner on Pearl Street. The penthouse tower utilizes the “background” architecture that is integrated throughout the building and focuses on simplicity to emphasize the main “wave” element. This harmonizes with the rest of the design while also integrating the mechanical and amenity penthouse into the architecture. By creating this vertical element at the corner, it creates a very unique and dynamic visual experience that will welcome people approaching Bethesda from the East or the Project from the West.

#### 9) 2.4.11 Bird-Safe Design

The Project proposes a massing and façade concept that will help create a very bird friendly building. The façade articulation through the “wave” coupled with integrated projecting balconies and plane changes create many opportunities for areas to produce varied shadows and help block window reflection. In addition to those architectural features, different façade treatments and colors, use of several different materials and varying window sizes will be utilized throughout the building to enhance the visual aesthetic of the building and will further help reduce reflections and help avoid deadly collisions.

### **VI. Conclusion**

The Applicant is excited to deliver this exceptionally designed building to this gateway location in Bethesda. The Applicant’s design team has paid careful attention to the recommendations of the Sector Plan and the Design Guidelines and the Project furthers the design objectives of these guiding documents. We look forward to presenting the Project to the DAP.

## 4405 East-West Highway

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TRANSWESTERN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY







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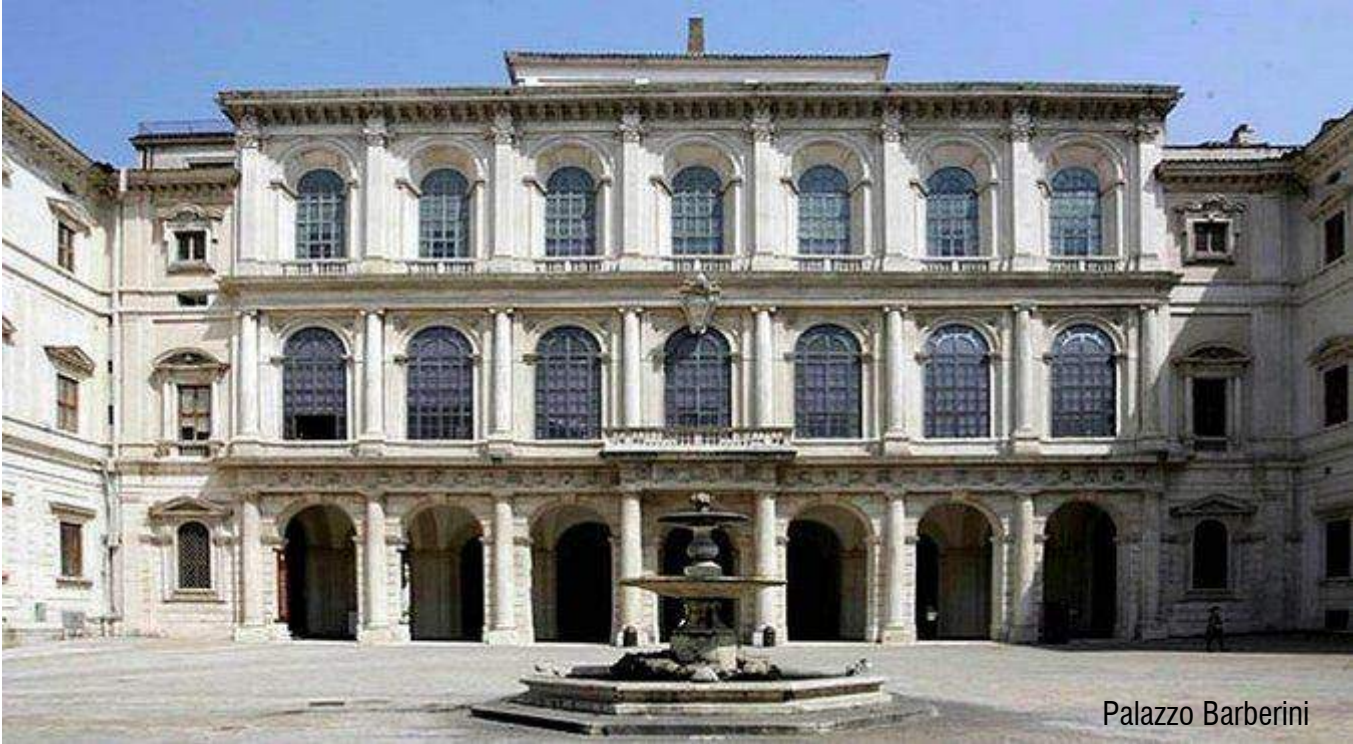




## DAP Recommendations

- Requested the project to return with refinement to the east and west façade.
- Requested further evaluation of the East West Highway façade based on the discussion.
- EW highway sidewalk activation





Palazzo Barberini



Palazzo Farnese

top is distinguished through use of belt courses, window size, balconies

base is distinguished using materials, belt courses, opening size, color and articulation

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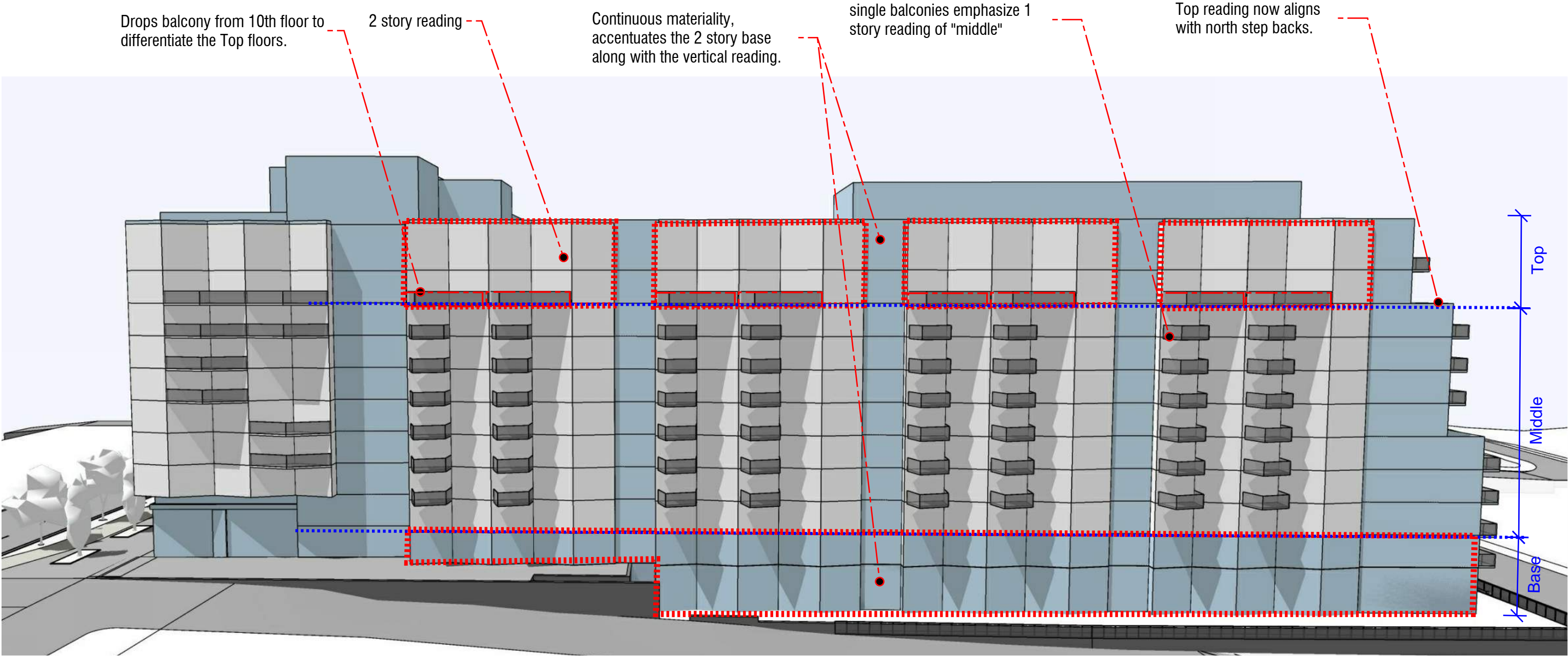


Palazzo Borghese



Piazza della Repubblica





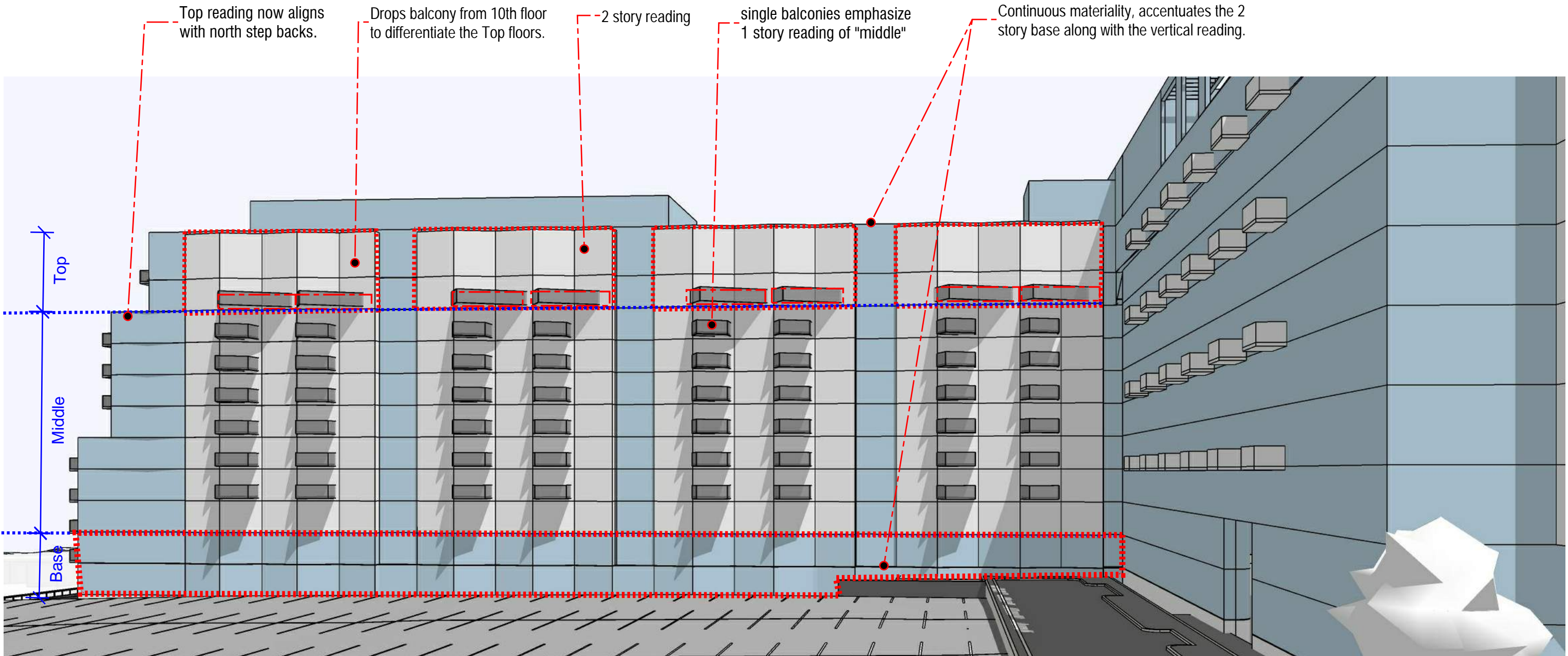
Presented



Proposed







Presented



Proposed





Presented



Proposed





Presented



Proposed









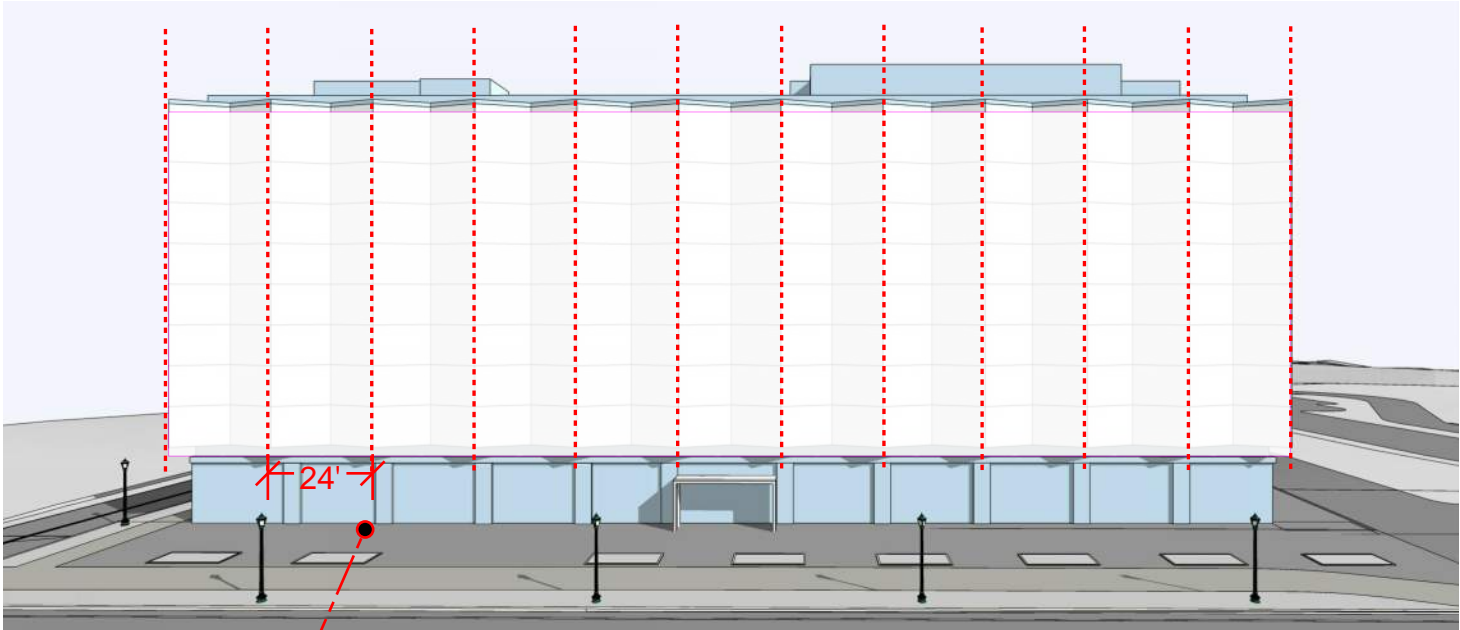








1



24' module created

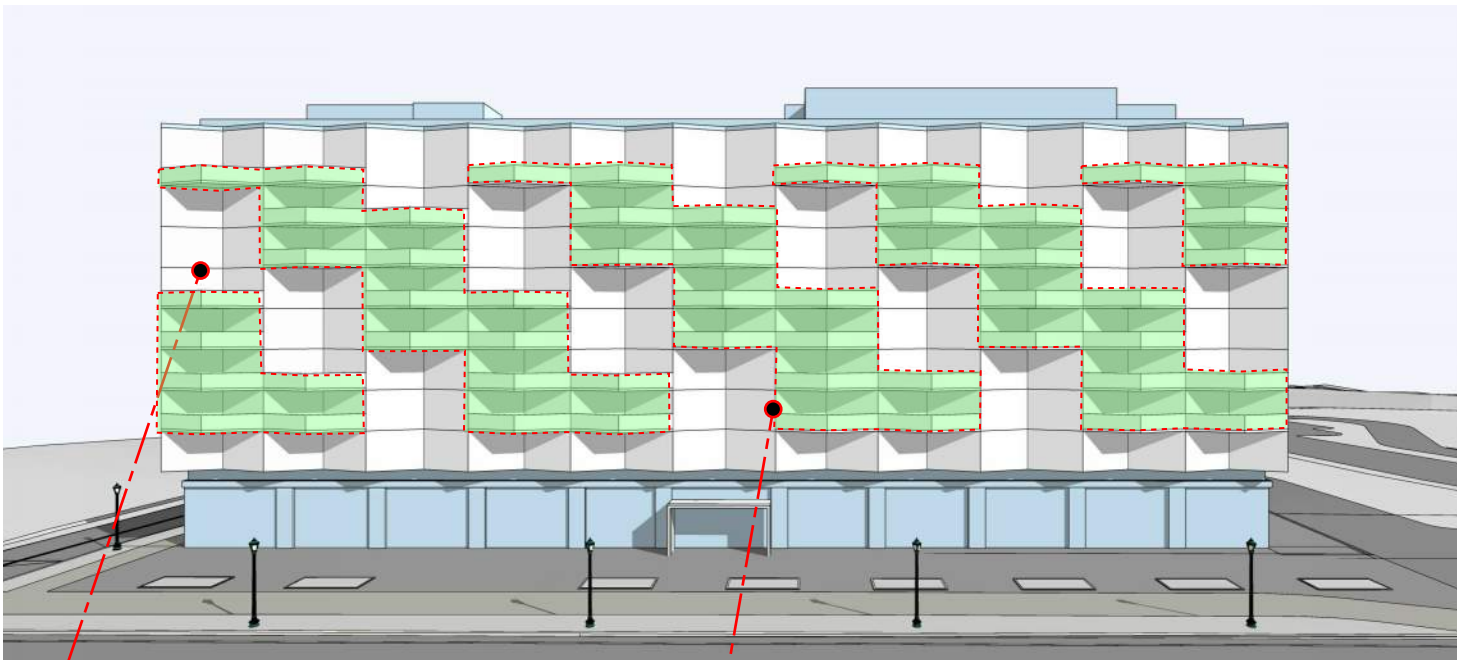
2



An angle is introduced to the 24' module which accentuates the vertical reading.

Unflattering the skin breaks the length of the perception from from both ends of the building.

3



Stepping the balconies across the vertical angled bays along the facade creating an additional layer of texture and movement.

Grouping the balconies creates a composition with fewer elements shortening the perception of its length.

4



Continuous band accentuates the diagonal rhythm of these elements

Alternating the materiality of the balconies group creates an additional textured- rhythm layer within the composition , strengthening the diagonal reading.

Presented



Proposed

Solid panel at balconies had been removed to help emphasize the vertical rhythm of the wave





Presented



Proposed





Presented



Proposed













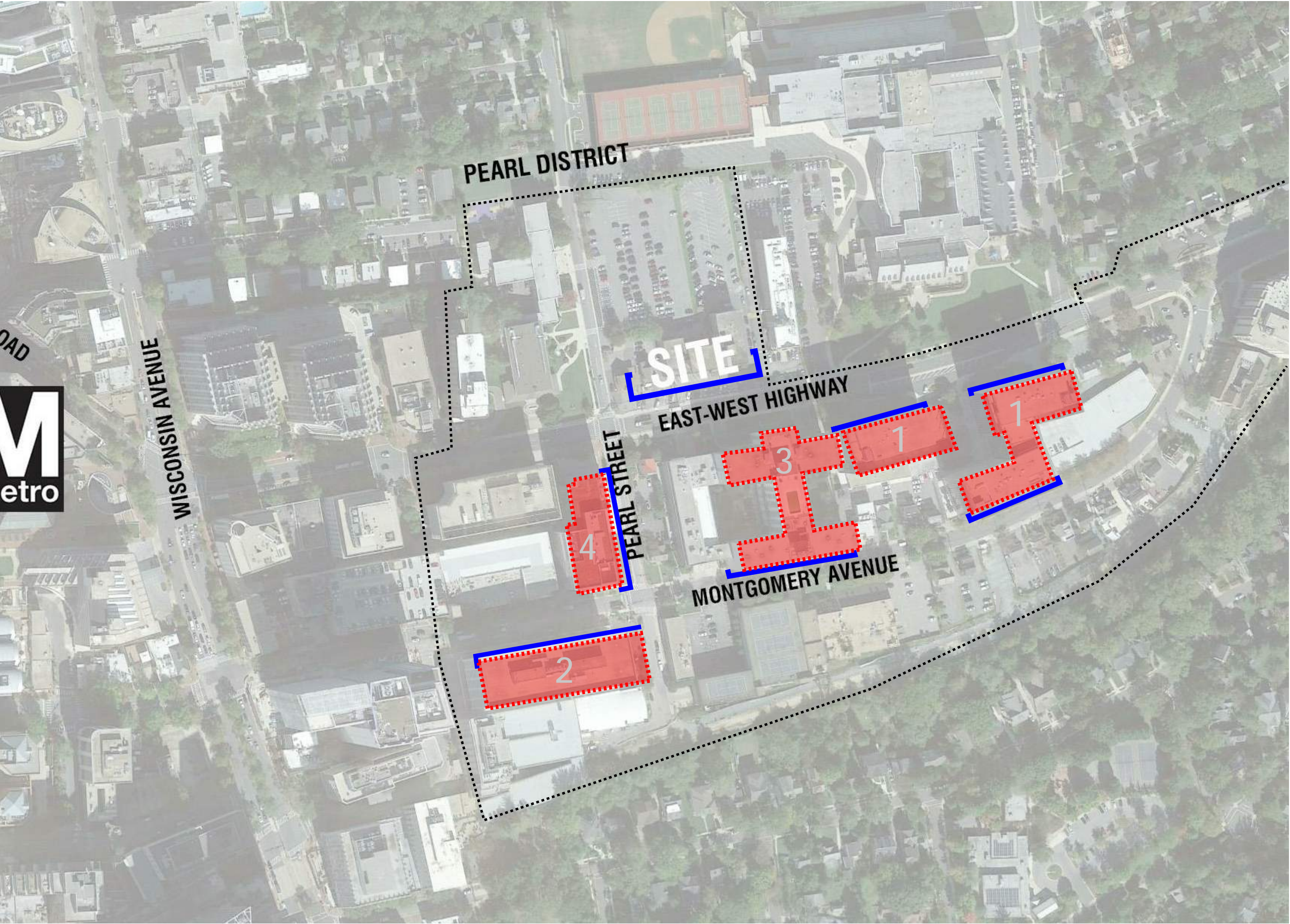


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1. East West Towers LLC



2. Bethesda crossings



3. Topaz House Apartments



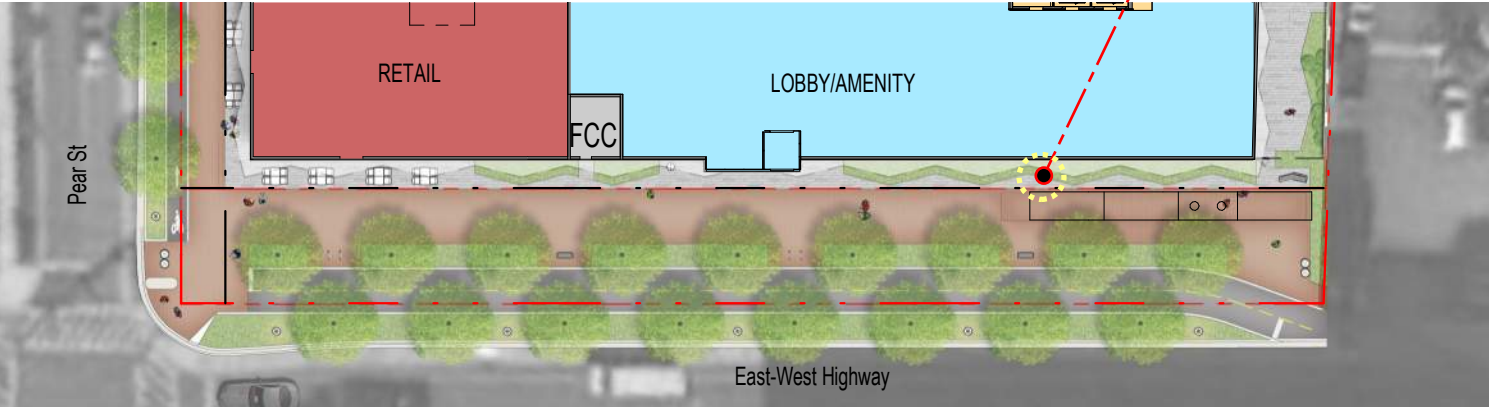
4. 4500 East West







additional green area implementation alternated with different paver color / pattern visually reducing the width of the sidewalk.



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