



## Silver Spring Design Advisory Panel – January 17, 2024 Meeting Notes

Revised January 22, 2024

*This was the second presentation of the Ellsworth Place project to the DAP. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel members comments and thoughts regarding the design of the project. The DAP requested that the project return for a third review during the Sketch Plan process. For all questions and/or comments please contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

### **Project:**

#### **Ellsworth Place**

GBT Realty, with Gresham Smith – architect; VIKA - engineer

### **Attendance:**

#### Design Advisory Panel:

Bill Bonstra (virtual)

David Cronrath

Alice Enz (virtual)

Praj Kasbekar (virtual)

Qiaojue Yu (virtual)

#### Staff:

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director (virtual)

Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, Downcounty Planning

Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Design in the Director's Office

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, Downcounty Planning (virtual)

Atara Margolies, Planner III

#### Applicant Team:

Gus Bauman, Beveridge and Diamond, P.C.

Ian Duke, VIKA

Esra Soytutan, VIKA

Trey Culpepper, GBT Realty (virtual)

Brandon Bell, Gresham Smith (virtual)

Deepa Limaye, Gresham Smith (virtual)

Kristen Heggie, GBT Realty (virtual)

Wendy Welch Souris, GBT Realty (virtual)

## Meeting Notes:

Applicant team presented updated exhibits that addressed the DAP's comments from the November 2023 meeting. The applicant team noted that the DAP had provided helpful comments at the last meeting and that the presentation addressed the comments and presented revised direction for the overall massing of the building.

The presentation focused on the following main points raised by the DAP at the last meeting:

- Bring the residential tower down to the ground along Colesville Road in a significant manner that contributes to the design of the tower and the entire development.
- Simplify the tower massing.
- Move the amenity floor to the first floor above the mall to create a buffer between the roof of the mall and the tower above.
- Address in some way the (odd?) curved cut-out of the mall façade that is at the corner of Colesville Road and Fenton Street.
- Further inform the DAP on the structural constraints of the building site and the historical phases of the mall.

In response, the applicant addressed all the points above in some form. The applicant simplified the massing and added curved balconies at the Colesville Road/Fenton Street corner in response to the existing mall corner design. The façade is brought down to the ground along Colesville Road, and the proposed entrance will have a large canopy that expresses the residential entrance above the mall mass. The applicant presented a split amenity space that creates the buffer floor the DAP mentioned, but also maintained some amenities at the penthouse level to leverage the views.

### **DAP Comments:**

The DAP appreciated the effort the team took to respond to the major comments. The overall mass of the building has improved. The DAP noted that while the team brought some good precedents as requested, they did not seem to take inspiration from those precedents when revising the design.

### *Simplified Massing and Amenity Spaces:*

The DAP noted the simplified massing but noted that while the massing is an “L” shape, the now-curved corners dilute the “L” and the design intent for this move is unclear, given that the original scheme was rectilinear. Curves can be challenging to build and detail well, and they can be expensive. Similar comments were made regarding the curved balconies – tenants do not usually like curved balconies because they do not work well with most furniture and create awkward wasted space. In addition, with no articulation of orthogonal corners, the tower appears monolithic and bulky, and the DAP would like to see a streamlined tower emerging from the existing (monolithic and bulky) base.

The DAP believes the existing corner feature at Colesville and Fenton is unfortunate and awkward in its relationship to the streets and greater pedestrian environment and therefore should not be used as inspiration for the tower design. The tower design at this end is now drawing more attention to an odd

and “unfortunate” condition. Some DAP members recommended exploring a chamfered corner at the tower at this location, but not all agreed.

Overall, the DAP liked splitting the amenity spaces, but recommended that the lower space be a double-height (or taller) space to truly create a break between the roof and the residential tower. There was also a suggestion to push some of the rooftop amenities towards Fenton Street as that street is the main pedestrian spine in the area and if you can even see a bit of rooftop amenities from the street, it helps with activation.

#### Tower Façade to Ground:

In the revised concept, there is a façade screening element that rises above the tower entry space and extends up, slightly over the mall mass that aligns with the tower façade above. However, the DAP feels that it appears as a gesture and not a strong move, and that the scheme is not taking advantage of the opportunity to create a dramatic vertical façade on Colesville Road, one of the main streets in downtown Silver Spring. The DAP noted that a tower in this location should and improve the character of Colesville Road while also providing a beacon to this gateway area in Silver Spring. The applicant was asked to explore extending the screening element created over the tower entry on Colesville Road up further, possibly to the middle of even the top of the tower. The DAP would prefer to see a stronger connection between tower and base by possibly bringing the tower façade to the street frontage line. The applicant explained that there are some structural and tenant-related limitations. The DAP asked the applicant to bring more information about those challenges to the next meeting so that the DAP can fully understand the challenges. The DAP suggested that even if there are challenges, they should be explored to leverage what can be achieved to create a stronger relationship between tower and base. One suggestion was to cantilever from the tower (using the canopy above the first amenity level as a driver) a volume (perhaps out of glass?) that would align with the front of the base below, even if there is a hyphen/gap at the amenity level above the base. This would create a more intentional vertical form that connects base and tower visually.

Another suggestion for the shorter bar of the “L” would be to remove balconies from this location, de-emphasizing the awkward corner of the mall at Colesville Road and Fenton Street, and then stepping this bar back from the middle to the top of the tower, “eroding” the mass on this end and thus focusing on the Colesville Road elevation where the tower comes down to the ground.

#### **Project to return again at Sketch Plan**

The DAP discussed when to see the project again. Everyone agreed that the massing needs more work, particularly for a building that will be so visible in a prominent location. The applicant should return to the DAP during Sketch Plan.

- The DAP requested that the following exhibits be provided at the next submission:
  - Building sections through the proposed entrance along Colesville Road showing tenant spaces and structural columns so that the DAP can understand the issues;
- The DAP also asked to understand other structural limitations that were mentioned during the discussion so that they can be more helpful to the applicant.

**Additional Notes:**

- Attached to these notes are markups that DAP member Bill Bonstra completed during the meeting and passed on to be included with these notes.
- The applicant should go ahead and file for Sketch Plan; the DAP comments do not preclude this next step.
- HP staff recommends that the applicant plan to come to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for preliminary consultation sooner than later.

~~BB MARK-UP OF  
2ND SUBMISSION~~

TO: ATARA MARGOLIES  
PAUL MORTENSON

1/17/2024

→ 20 PAGES TOTAL

e: ATARA.MARGOLIES  
@ MONTGOMERY PLANNING  
- ORG

EXISTING STRUCTURE EXTENDING ABOVE ROOF LEVEL

EXISTING BUILDING BELOW

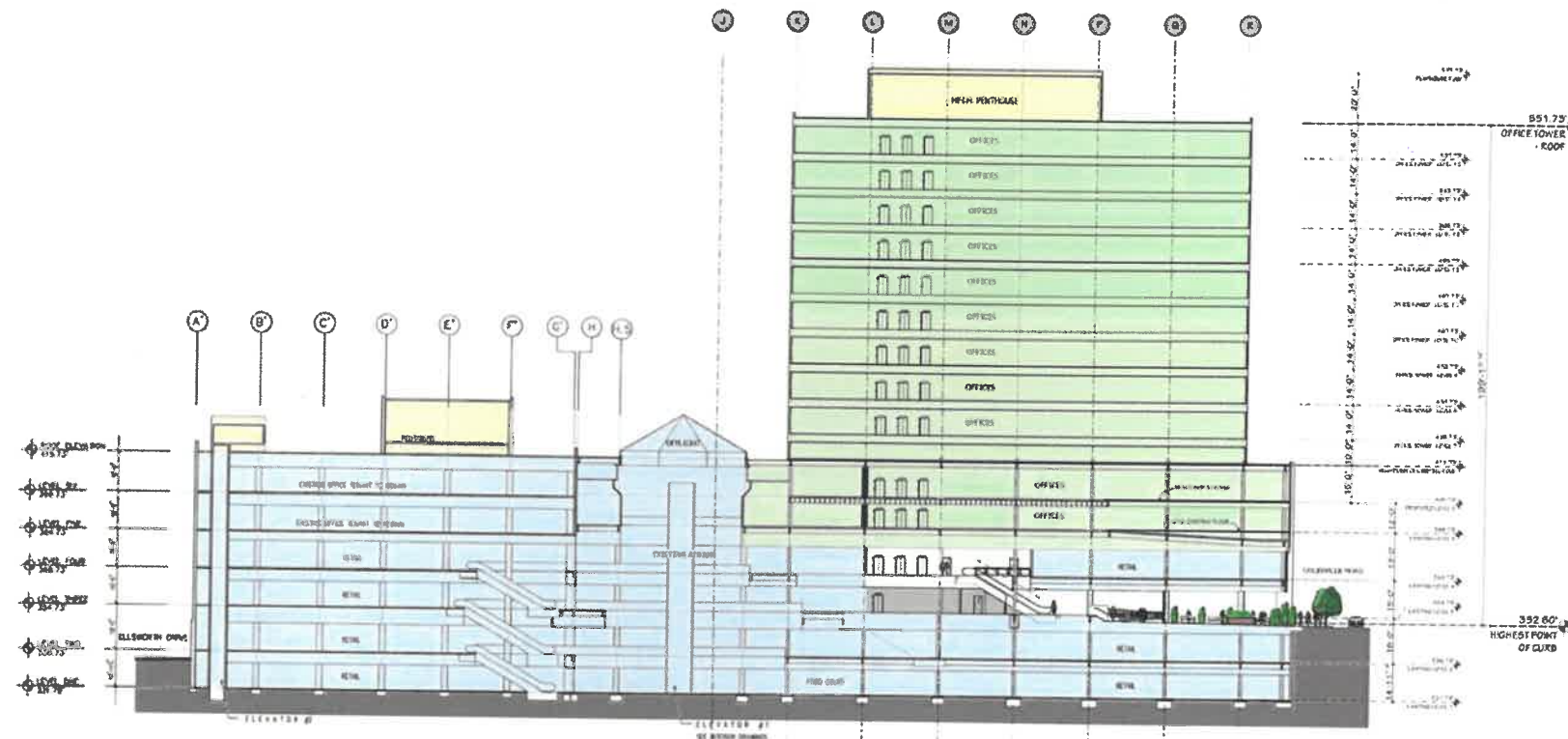
BOUNDARY OF PREVIOUSLY ENTITLED OFFICE TOWER

DC:



# Silver Spring Office Tower Facade Concept Studies

September 18, 2012



NO GESTURE  
NEEDED HERE!



Sketch - Birds-eye

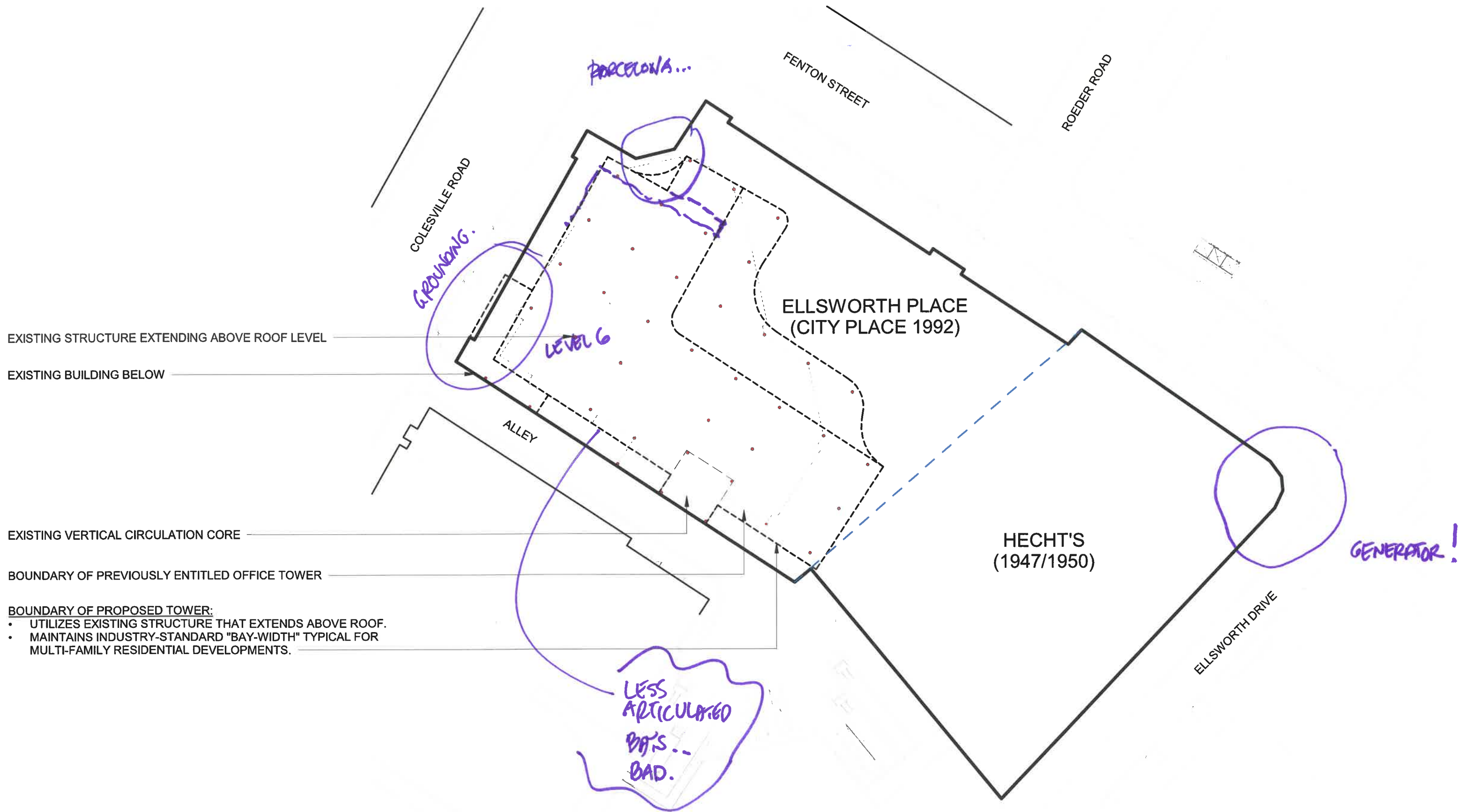


Sketch - Office Entry & Tower



Elevation - Colesville Road

**Note: The images on this page illustrate a massing and facade study from 2012 using the existing site entitlements, and are not representative of the Applicant team's proposed massing and facade concepts for this submission.**



EXISTING STRUCTURE EXTENDING ABOVE ROOF LEVEL

EXISTING BUILDING BELOW

EXISTING VERTICAL CIRCULATION CORE

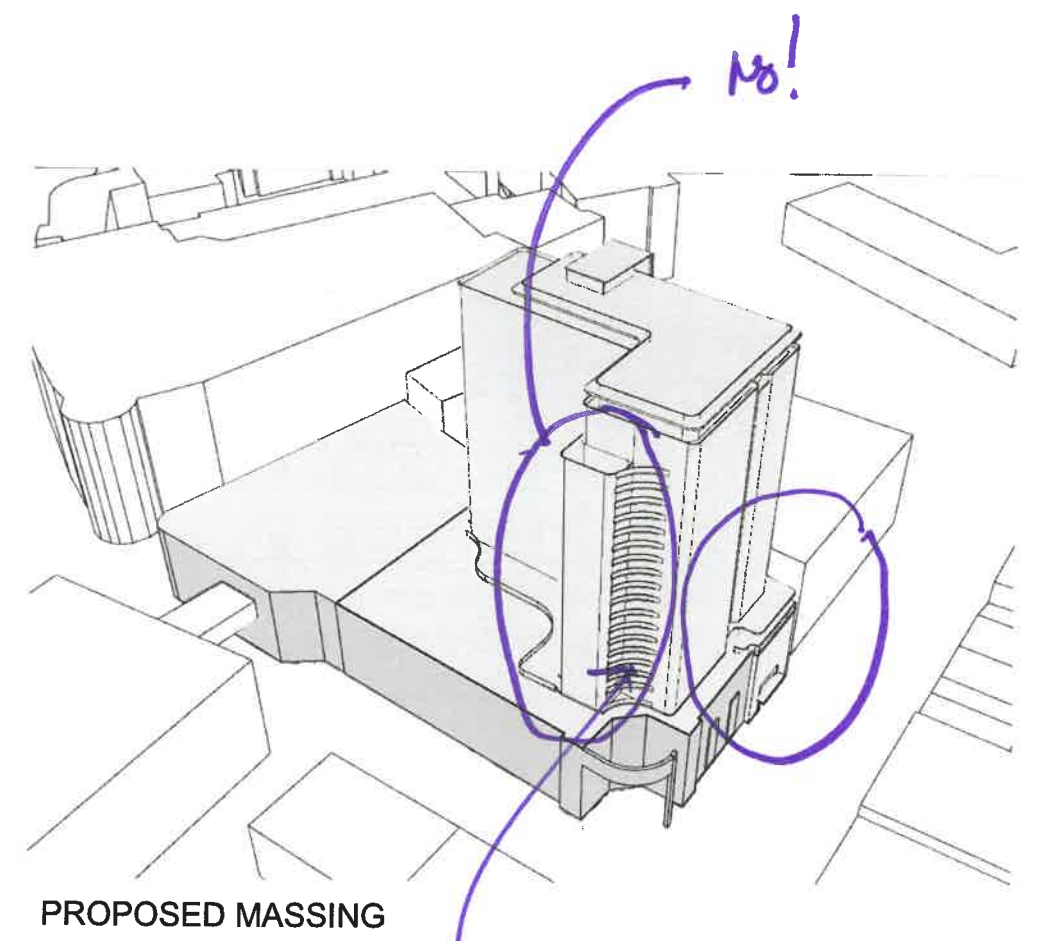
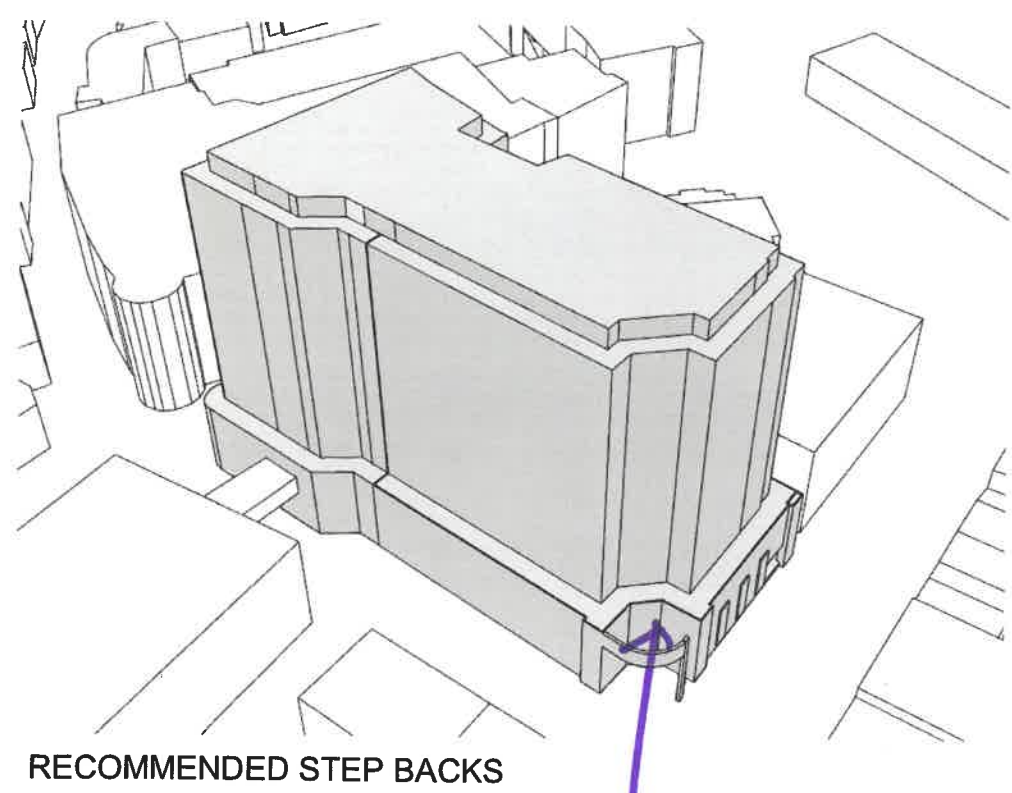
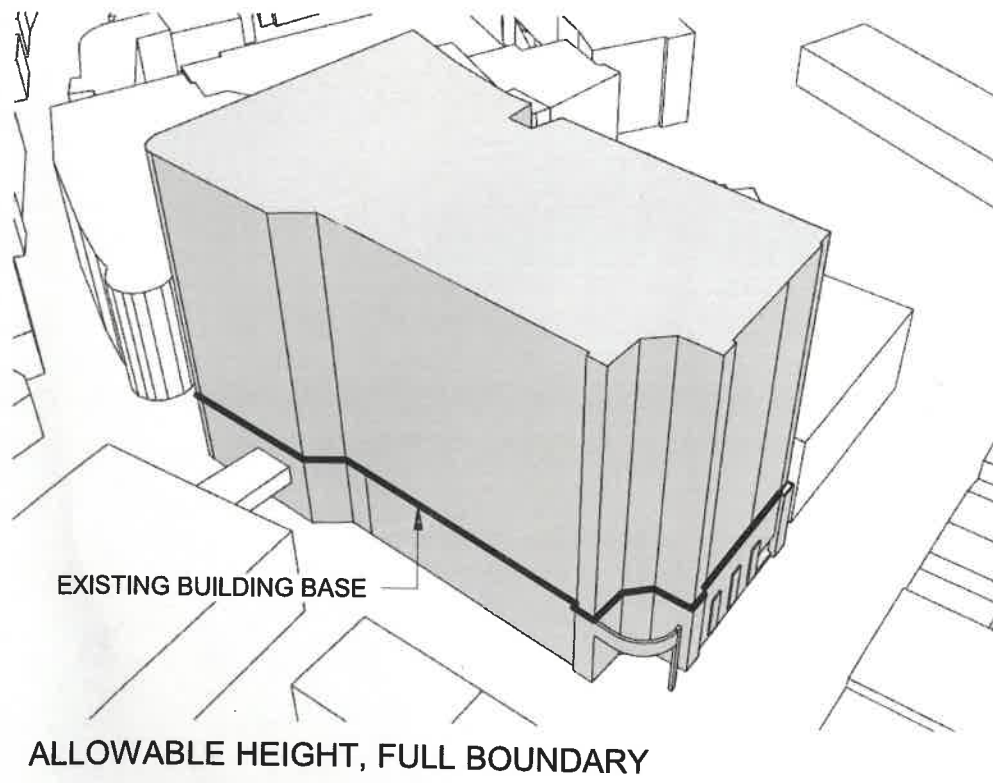
BOUNDARY OF PREVIOUSLY ENTITLED OFFICE TOWER

**BOUNDARY OF PROPOSED TOWER:**

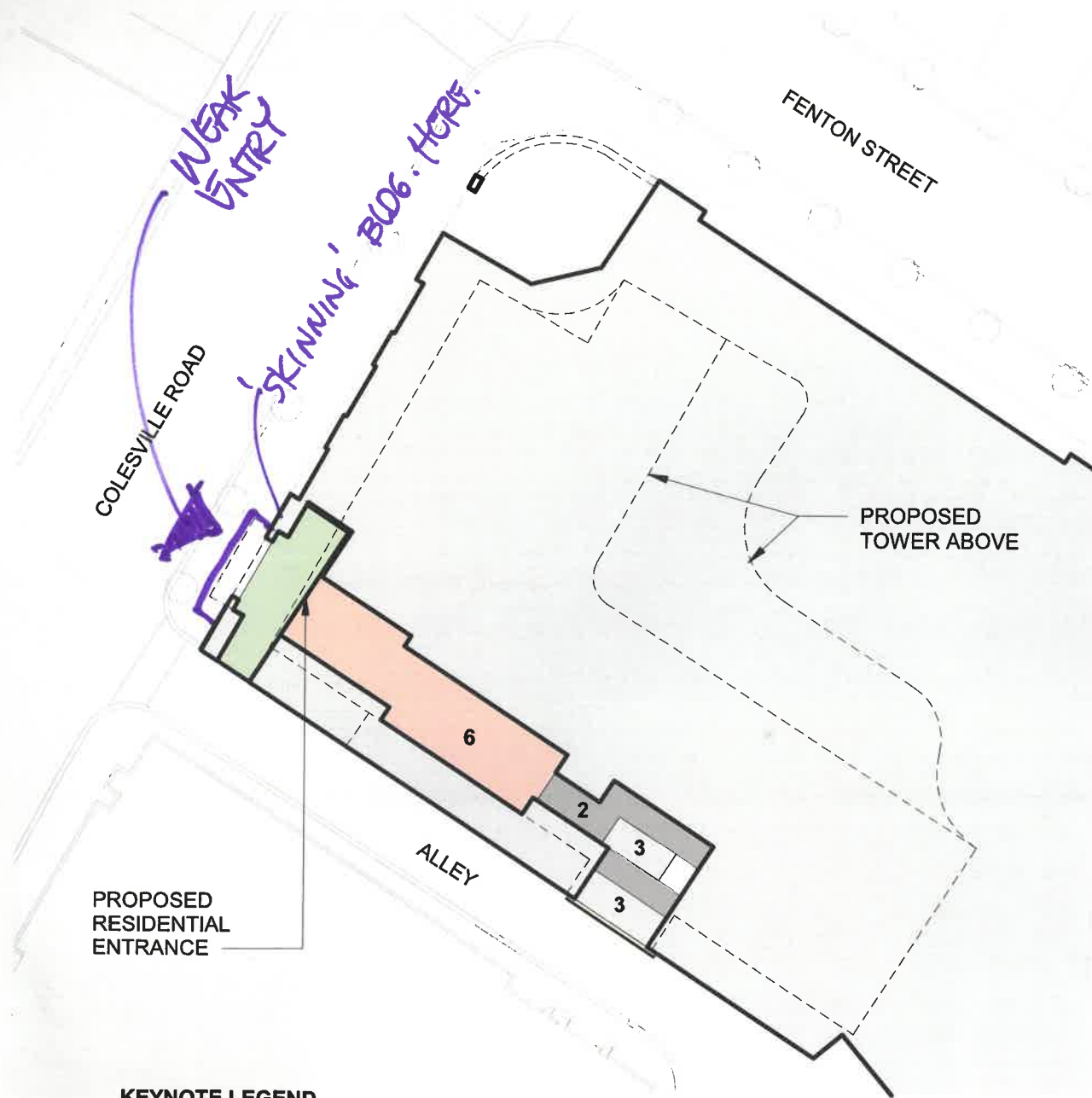
- UTILIZES EXISTING STRUCTURE THAT EXTENDS ABOVE ROOF.
- MAINTAINS INDUSTRY-STANDARD "BAY-WIDTH" TYPICAL FOR MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

ELLSWORTH PLACE  
(CITY PLACE 1992)

HECHT'S  
(1947/1950)





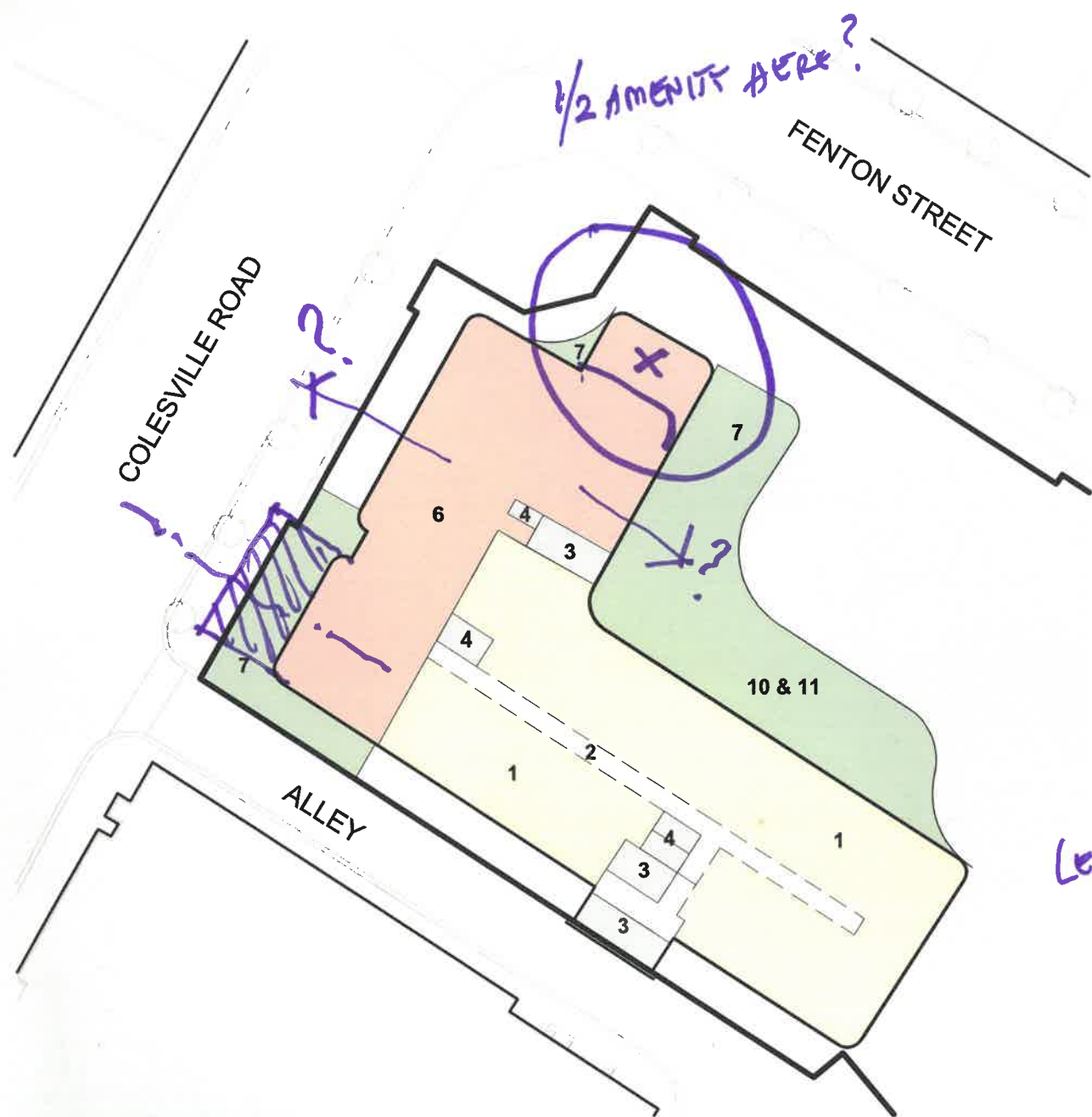


**KEYNOTE LEGEND**

*Note: Not all program elements occur at every level.*

- 1 RESIDENTIAL UNITS
- 2 RESIDENTIAL CORRIDOR
- 3 VERTICAL CIRCULATION
- 4 BACK OF HOUSE / BUILDING SERVICES
- 5 RESIDENTIAL UNIT TERRACES
- 6 INDOOR RESIDENT AMENITY / LOBBY
- 7 OUTDOOR RESIDENT AMENITY
- 8 POOL
- 9 EXISTING ELLSWORTH PLACE DEVELOPMENT (BELOW)
- 10 GREEN ROOF AREA
- 11 RESIDENTIAL BALCONY

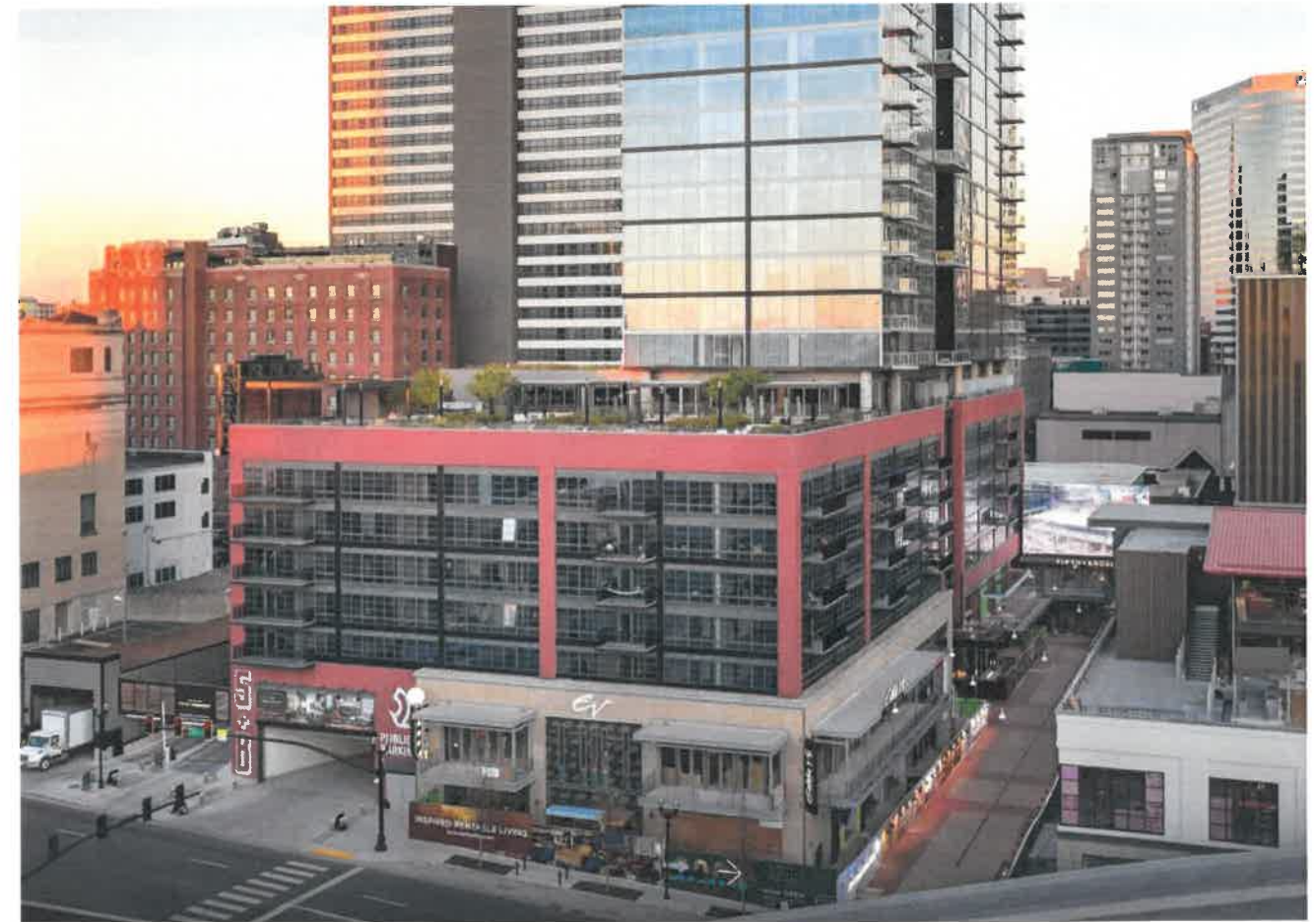


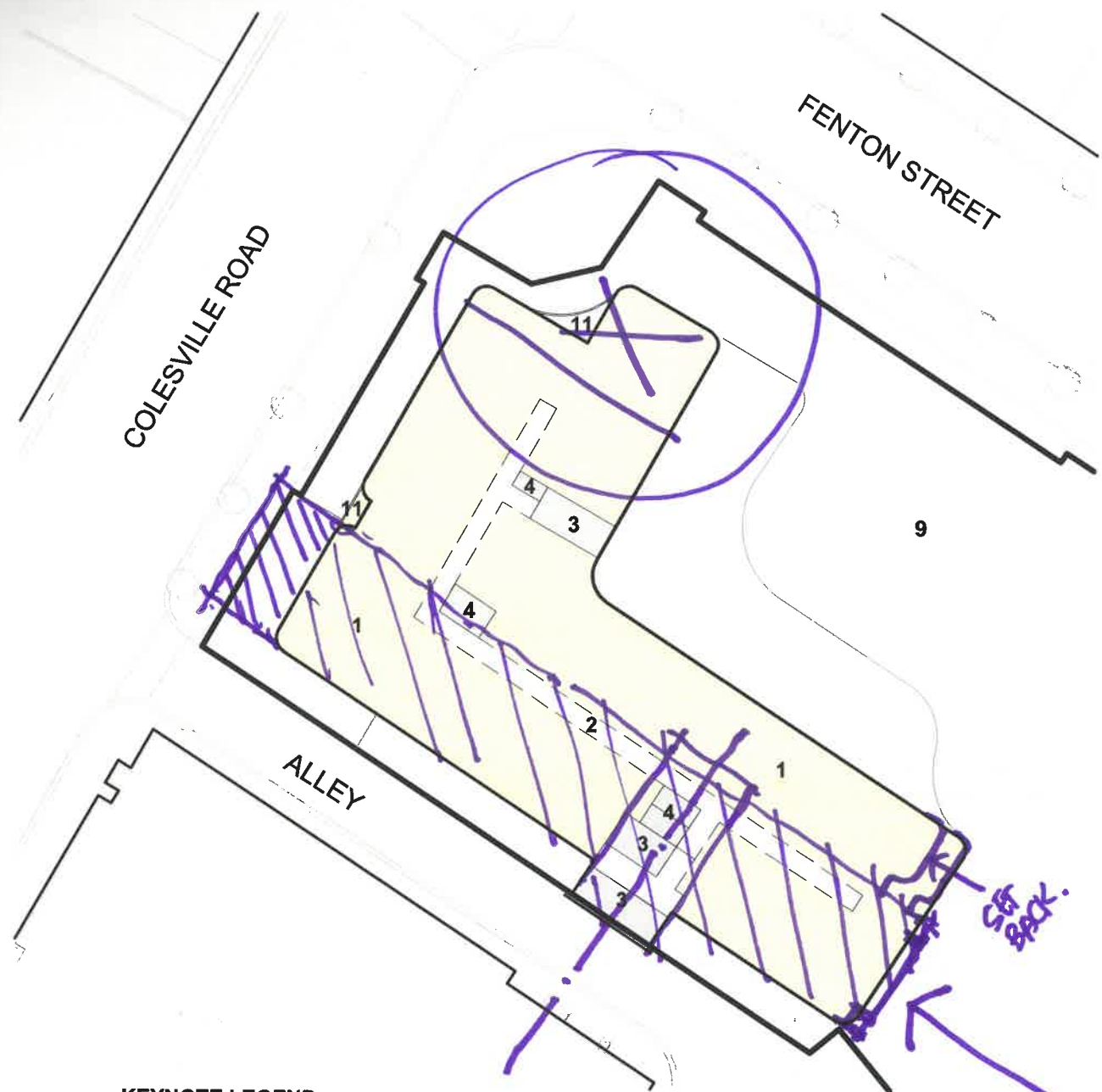


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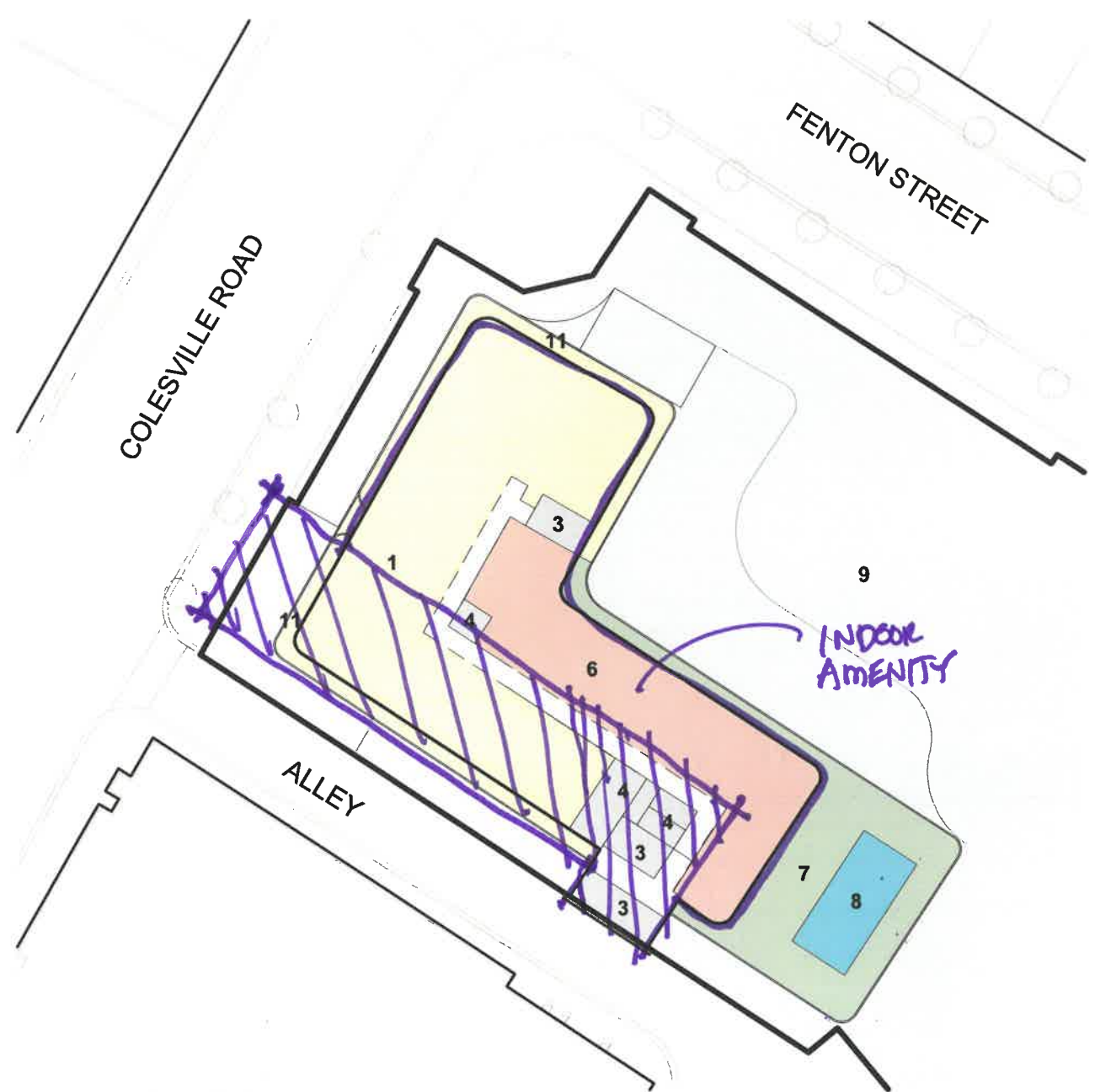


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THIS IS A SPECIAL BUILDING!!! WE DON'T HAVE ONE!

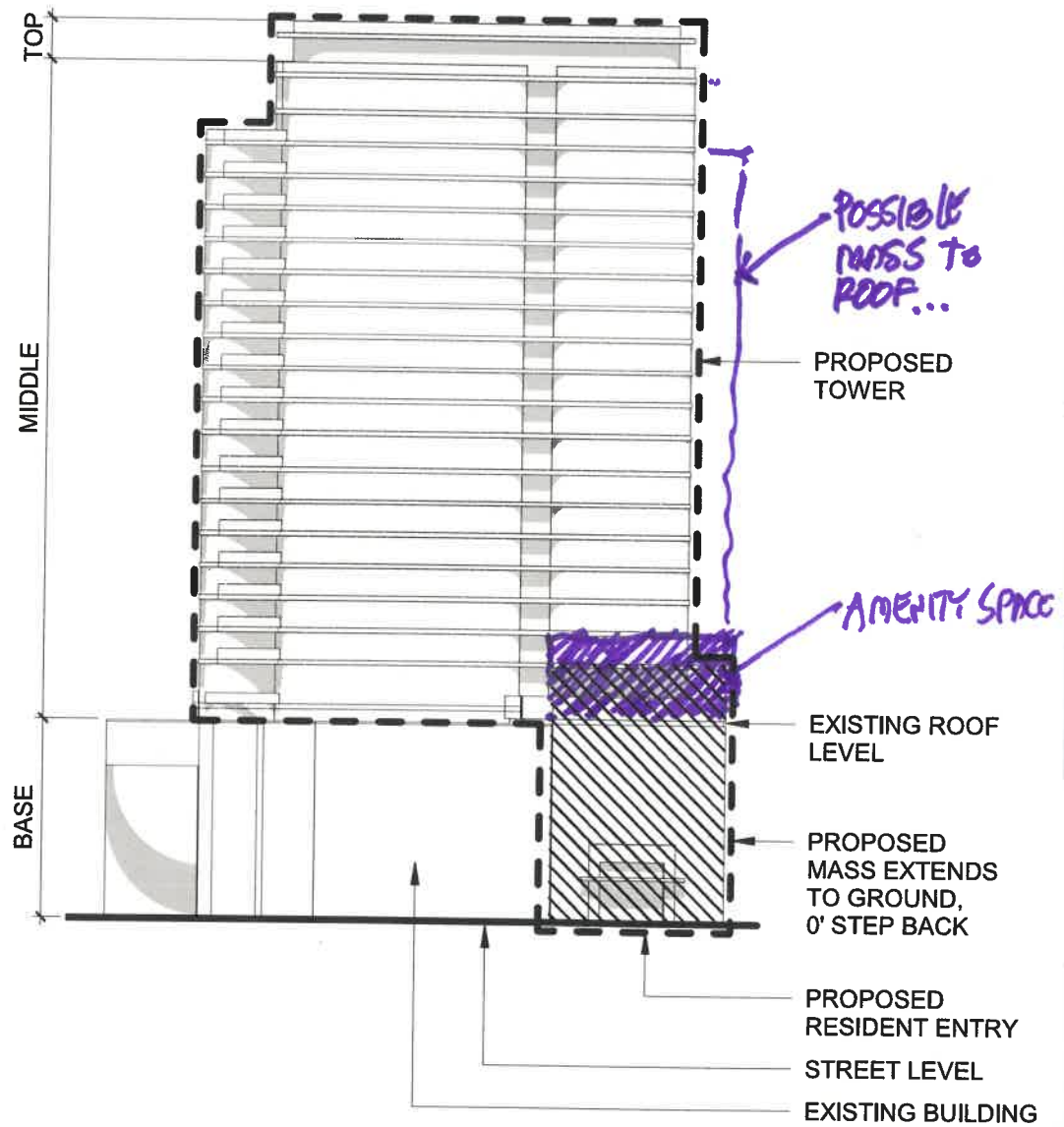


**KEYNOTE LEGEND**

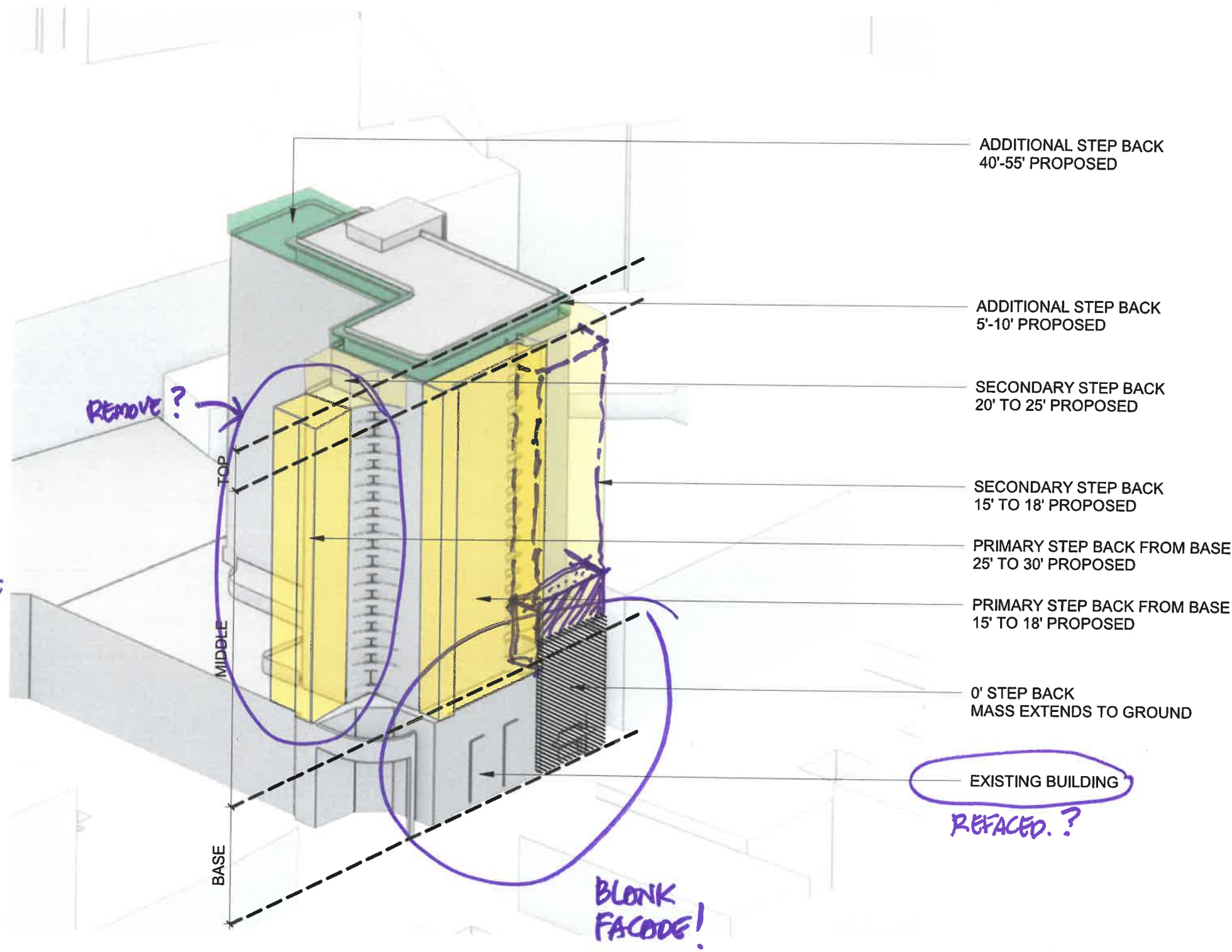
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ELEVATION DIAGRAM (COLESVILLE RD)



STEP BACK AXON DIAGRAM

ADDITIONAL STEP BACK  
40'-55' PROPOSED

ADDITIONAL STEP BACK  
5'-10' PROPOSED

SECONDARY STEP BACK  
20' TO 25' PROPOSED

SECONDARY STEP BACK  
15' TO 18' PROPOSED

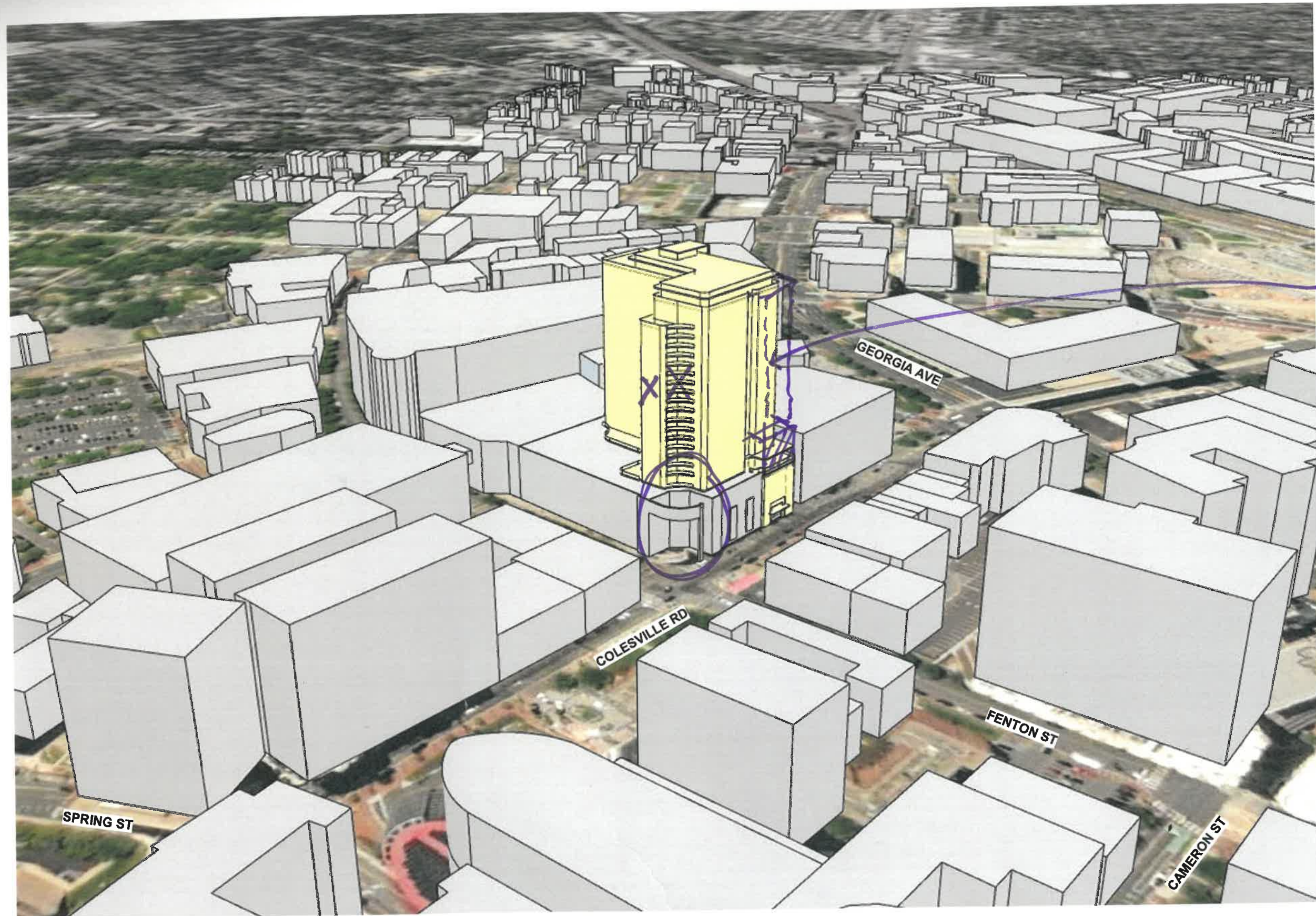
PRIMARY STEP BACK FROM BASE  
25' TO 30' PROPOSED

PRIMARY STEP BACK FROM BASE  
15' TO 18' PROPOSED

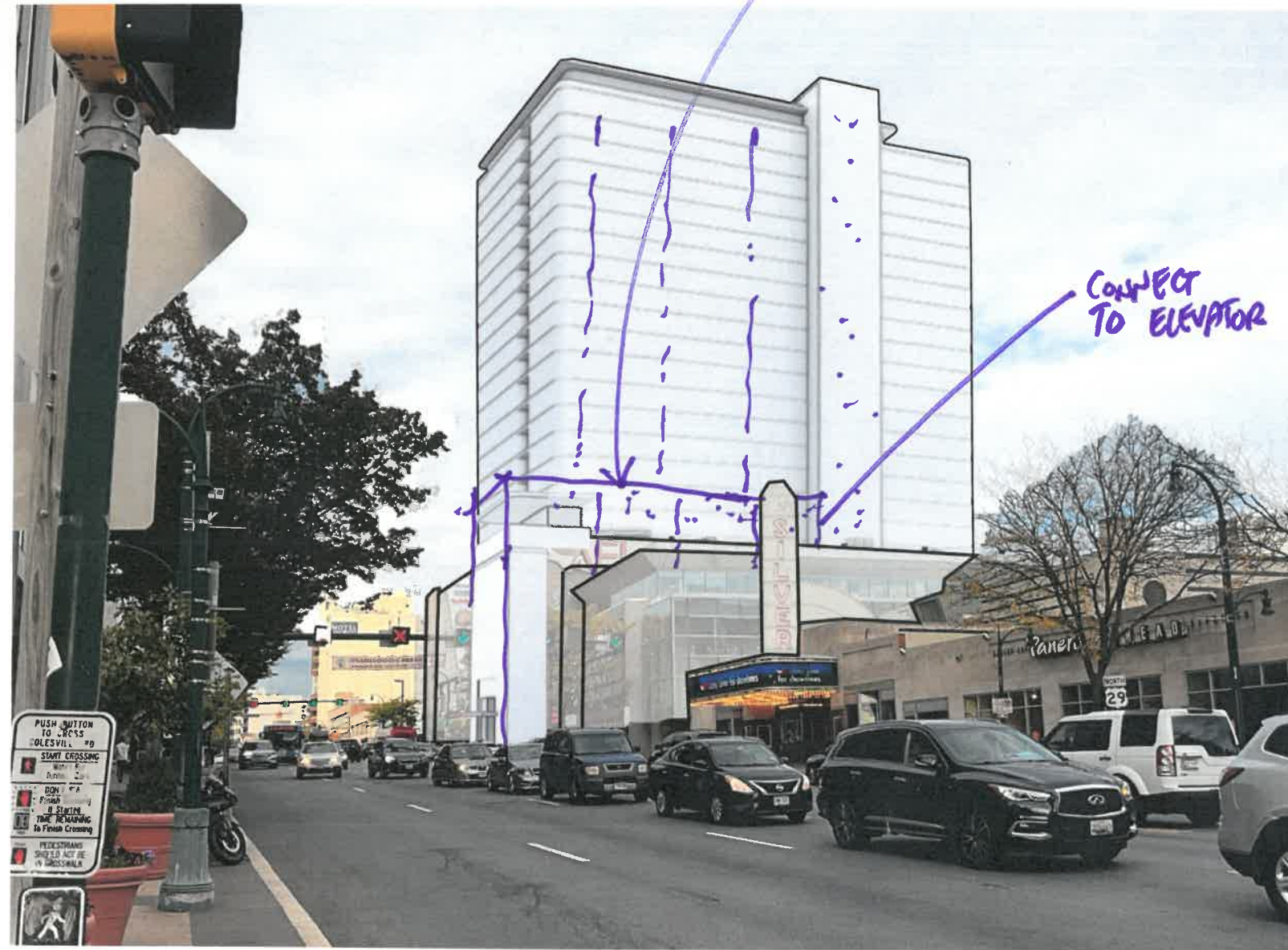
0' STEP BACK  
MASS EXTENDS TO GROUND

EXISTING BUILDING

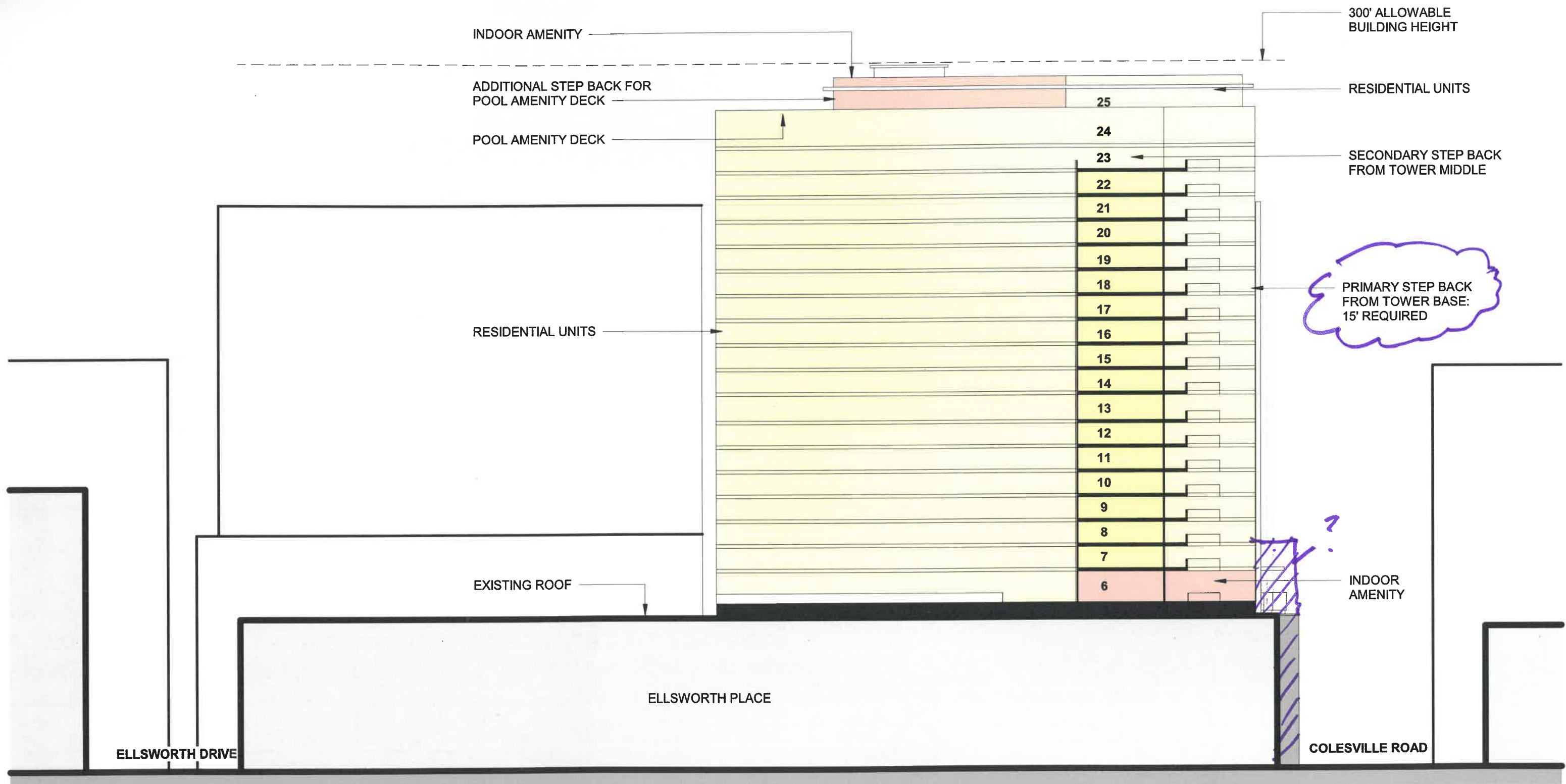
REFACED.?



could  
be existing  
to have  
proj. bar-  
views up  
and down  
Colesville  
Rd



THIS IS JUST LIKE A  
PETROL ARTICULATION ...





- 1 STEPPED MASSING
- 2 INTERSECTION FORMS
- 3 VARIATION IN FACADE PLANE
- 4 ACCENTUATION OF BUILDING TOP
- 5 STEPPED MASSING

