

Silver Spring Downtown Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

Submission Form

Revised February 2023

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	Ellsworth Place Residential
File Number(s)	Sketch Plan #320240060
Project Address	8661 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

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

APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact	VIKA Maryland, LLC	301-619-4100	duke@vika.com
Architect	Gresham Smith	615-770-8626	brandon.bell@greshamsmith.com
Landscape Architect	VIKA Maryland, LLC	301-619-4100	soytutan@vika.com

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

	Zone	Proposed Height	Proposed Density (SF/FAR)	Requested Additional Density (SF/FAR)	MPDU %
Project Data	CR8.0, C8.0, R8.0, H300	300'	825,056 SF / 8.0 FAR	None above maximum allowed per zone.	15%
Proposed Land Uses	High-rise multi-family residential development over existing Ellsworth Place commercial.				



DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL SUBMISSION PROCESS & REQUIREMENTS

1. Schedule a Design Advisory Panel review date with the Design Advisory Panel administrator: Cashielle Nelson: SSDAP@montgomeryplanning.org
2. At least two weeks prior to the scheduled Panel meeting, provide via email to the Design Advisory Panel administrator the completed Submission Form and required drawings in PDF format. Incomplete applications will be returned for revision. **Applications deemed incomplete by the DAP 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 3D model that show the proposal in the built context, as well as with nearby building massings as approved by the Planning Board. (Bring the 3D model to the Panel review.)
 - 3D building massing diagrams illustrating:
 - the maximum mapped density and height on site;
 - Design Guidelines conformance;
 - how the proposed design conforms to the Design Guidelines and where it does not conform, how it still meets the Guidelines' intent;
 - Precedent images showing scale, architectural character, materiality, etc. (Concept & Sketch Plans only).
4. Except as noted, Site Plan applications must include all of the above, as well as, at a minimum:
 - Site landscape plan;
 - 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 Silver Spring. Simple compliance with the numerical standards in the Design Guidelines does not in itself achieve Design Excellence.

STREETS

List the Street Types(s) that are part of this project and fill in the Active Zone Elements chart with the recommended dimensions from the Design Guidelines and the proposed provided dimensions. Streets that do not include separated bike facilities will not have a Pedestrian/Bike Buffer.

STREET TYPE(S): Downtown Boulevard (Colesville Rd) and Downtown Street Type A (Fenton St)

Active Zone Elements	Recommended	Provided	Justification
Frontage Zone	Existing condition varies depending on the portion along frontages (Generous and Typical sidewalk designations).	TBD	Existing condition meets the previous Silver Spring Streetscape Standards and has mature trees. Ground plane (building base) is not changing.
Sidewalk / Sidepath			
Pedestrian/Bike Buffer			
Separated Bike Lane (one-way or two-way)			
Street Buffer			

BUILDING FORM

Fill in the chart below with the number of floors for each Building Massing Component and with the horizontal distance (in feet) of step-backs or tower separations. If a Building Massing Component is not provided, indicate with n/a.

Building Massing Components	# of Floors	Dimension Provided	Comments
Pedestrian Level	See comments	--	Limited replacement of pavers at grade along a portion of the Colesville Rd residential entry.
Base	See comments	--	Existing massing condition. Isolated facade material changes at the proposed residential entrance at the corner of Colesville Rd/Alley.
Middle / Tower	18 stories	--	
Top	2 stories	--	
Cap		--	
Step-back above Base	--	0'-18' at Colesville Rd 20'-30' at Fenton St	
Step-back above Middle	--	15'-20' at Colesville Rd (Level 25) +75' at Fenton St (Level 24)	
Tower Separation	--	n/a	



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

Yes No

- If yes, please provide diagrams demonstrating conformance with Section 2.4.3.B of the Guidelines

IS THE PROJECT ONE OF THE SITES IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 3 OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

Yes No

- If yes, please provide diagrams demonstrating conformance with the Site-Specific Guidelines in Chapter 3.

EXCEPTIONAL DESIGN POINTS REQUIREMENT:

All projects are required to achieve the maximum 10 Public Benefit points for Exceptional Design. Below are the criteria from the [CR Implementation Guidelines](#). Project submissions should address the points below:

1. Provide innovative solutions in response to the immediate context.
2. Create a sense of place and serves as a landmark.
3. Enhance the public realm in a distinct and original manner.
4. Introduce materials, forms or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way.
5. Design compact, infill development so living, working and shopping environments are more pleasurable and desirable on a site.
6. Integrate low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building, beyond green building or site requirements.

Draft projection:

Public Benefits Summary	
59-4.7.3.D: Diversity of Uses & Activities	36
(6) Moderately Priced Dwelling Units	36
59-4.7.3.E: Quality Building & Site Design	20
(2) Exceptional Design	20
59-4.7.3.F: Protection & Enhancement of the Natural Environment	8
(1) Building Lot Termination (BLT)	8
59-4.7.3.G: Building Reuse	94
Building Re-use	94
Number of Categories	4
	PointsRequested
	158





SILVER SPRING DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL

April 3, 2024

ELLSWORTH PLACE RESIDENTIAL

8661 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910

DAP Comment Response Letter

Genuine Ingenuity

222 Second Avenue South
Suite 1400
Nashville, TN 37201
615.770.8100
GreshamSmith.com



The Applicant Team met for a second time with the Silver Spring Design Advisory Panel (DAP) on January 17, 2024 to present updated exhibits for the addition of a residential tower over the existing Ellsworth Place development. The meeting was a hybrid format, with attendees being both in-person and virtual. The DAP provided comments (dated January 22, 2024) to the Applicant Team and requested a third review during the Sketch Plan process. This letter summarizes the Applicant's response to the DAP comments. A revised plan package is being submitted with this letter to demonstrate the design revisions, including diagrams illustrating the existing site entitlements as requested by the DAP.

OVERALL COMMENTS

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.

Applicant Response

In response to the DAP's comments noted above, the following revisions have been incorporated into the design:

1. While the overall mass of the proposed tower remains "L" shaped, all curved elements have been removed from the tower. The height of the "L" mass has been adjusted slightly to give priority to a mass extending from the proposed residential lobby entrance to the roof level. More information regarding this massing gesture is provided in response to comments provided by DAP later in this response.
2. The Applicant team acknowledges the DAP's perspective on the existing subtractive corner condition at Colesville and Fenton. The revised massing now cantilevers over the subtractive corner, creating a physical overlap and visual connection between the street level corner entrance and the proposed tower above.
3. The location and allocation of resident amenity spaces remains similar to the package reviewed in the January 17th DAP meeting. In the current proposal, the exterior façade of the lower amenity level has been recessed from the tower façade above to create a break between the existing building base and proposed tower, as



noted by the DAP in the comments above. The roof level outdoor amenities have been moved to be adjacent to Colesville Road. The location maintains ideal sun exposure for the pool deck area and expansive views to Washington, D.C., while also bringing the activated outdoor space close to the public edges of the building.

TOWER FAÇADE TO GROUND

DAP Comments

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.

Applicant Response

The revised massing emphasizes the gesture towards the entrance on Colesville Road and grounds the tower by extending the proposed façade screening at the residential entry vertically beyond the first level of the new tower, before gradually sloping away from Colesville as the tower height increases. The façade at this first level of the new tower is recessed to create relief in the façade, acknowledge where the old and new connect, and provide activated outdoor space that is visible from street level. At the top of the tower, the grounding mass wraps over the "L" shaped mass and reaches back to connect to the vertical circulation element. A void in the mass at the top level reveals the outdoor amenity and pool deck.

The structural and tenant-related challenges previously mentioned are illustrated on page 6 of the DAP package dated April 3, 2024. There is limited ability to provide additional structure outside of the existing columns that extend through the roof of Ellsworth Place. As mentioned during the last DAP meeting, the retail center's structural system was designed for a future tower, and only specific columns were designed to extend beyond the roof. In an effort to accommodate the DAP's request to bring the building façade down to the meet the street at Colesville Rd, the Applicant team consulted with the retail center's original structural engineer to better understand available options. Knowing that additional structure cannot be added inside the retail center, the engineer



confirmed that a limited amount of cantilevered structure above existing retail center is possible allowing the design team to achieve a building mass similar to what's being shown in this resubmittal.

The existing air rights development was addressed in most of the leases in the Retail Center and included (but was not limited to) stipulations regarding building exteriors, signage locations and signage visibility. Implementation of the proposed massing gesture and façade skin shown grounding the tower at the residential entrance will require future coordination since that signage is part of long-term leases and agreements. Under those agreements, the signage must remain.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

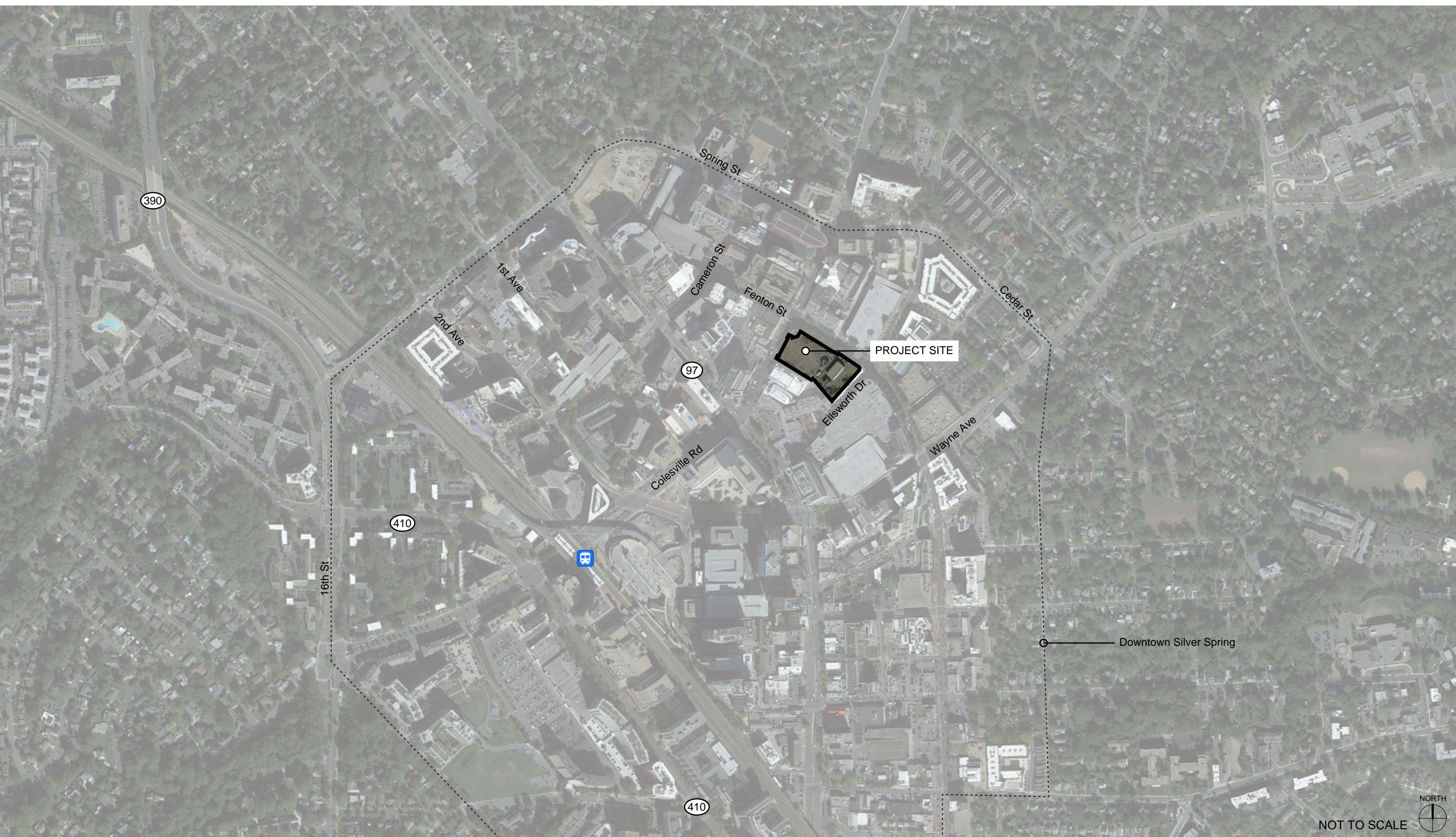
DAP Comments

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.*

Applicant Response

These comments were addressed in the above responses regarding Grounding of the Tower Façade. The structural limitations are also noted in the narrative above and further illustrated on page 6 of the presentation package.



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EXISTING STRUCTURE EXTENDING ABOVE ROOF LEVEL

EXISTING BUILDING BELOW

BOUNDARY OF PREVIOUSLY ENTITLED OFFICE TOWER

ELLSWORTH PLACE
(CITY PLACE 1992)

HECHT'S
(1947/1950)

ELLSWORTH PLACE RESIDENTIAL

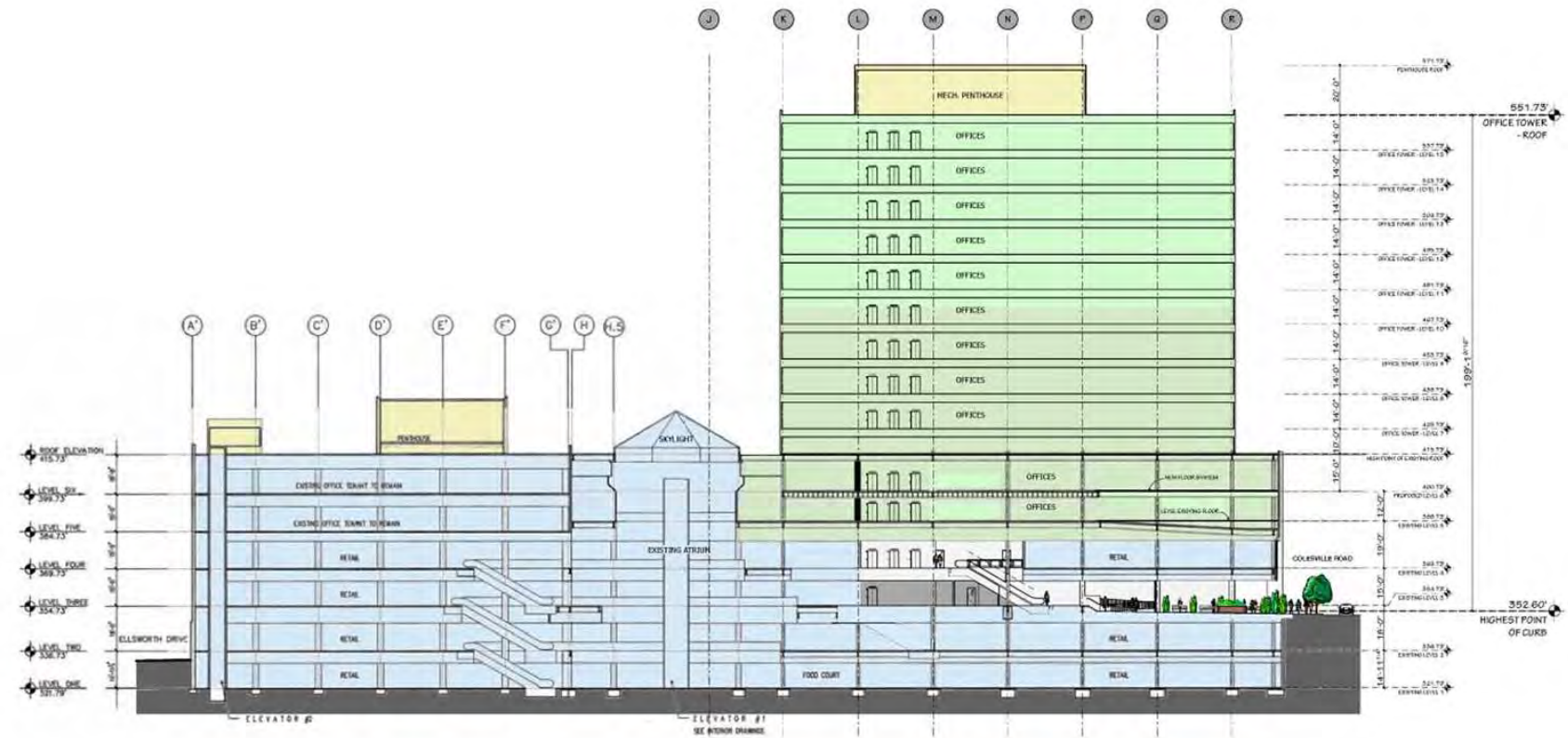
Silver Spring Office Tower Facade Concept Studies

September 18, 2012

Architect:



www.ci-designinc.com



Sketch - Birds-eye



Sketch - Office Entry & Tower



Elevation - Colesville Road

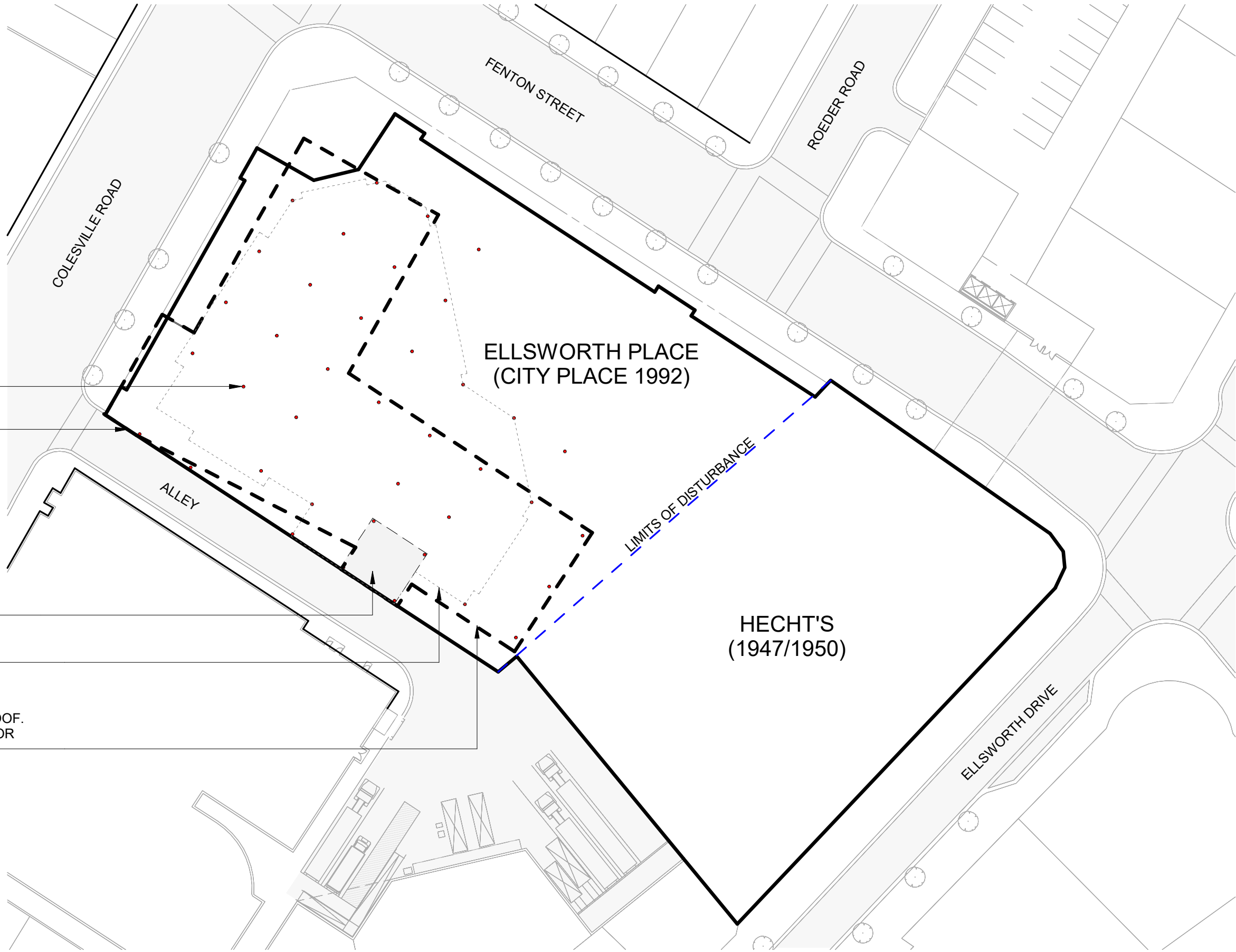
Note: The images on this page illustrate a massing and facade study from 2012 using the existing site entitlements, and are not representative of the Applicant team's proposed massing and facade concepts for this submission.



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EXISTING STRUCTURE EXTENDING ABOVE ROOF LEVEL

EXISTING BUILDING BELOW

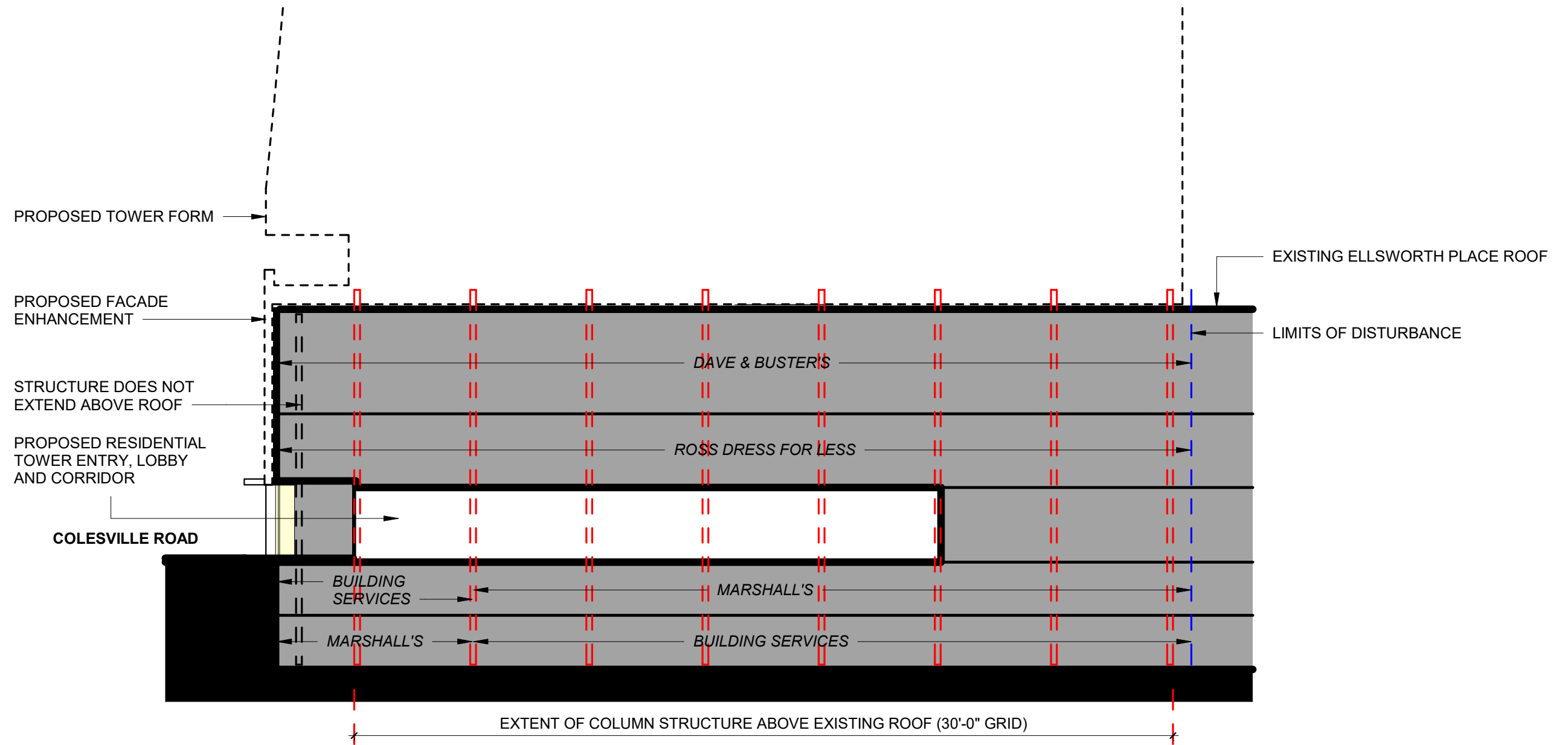
EXISTING VERTICAL CIRCULATION CORE

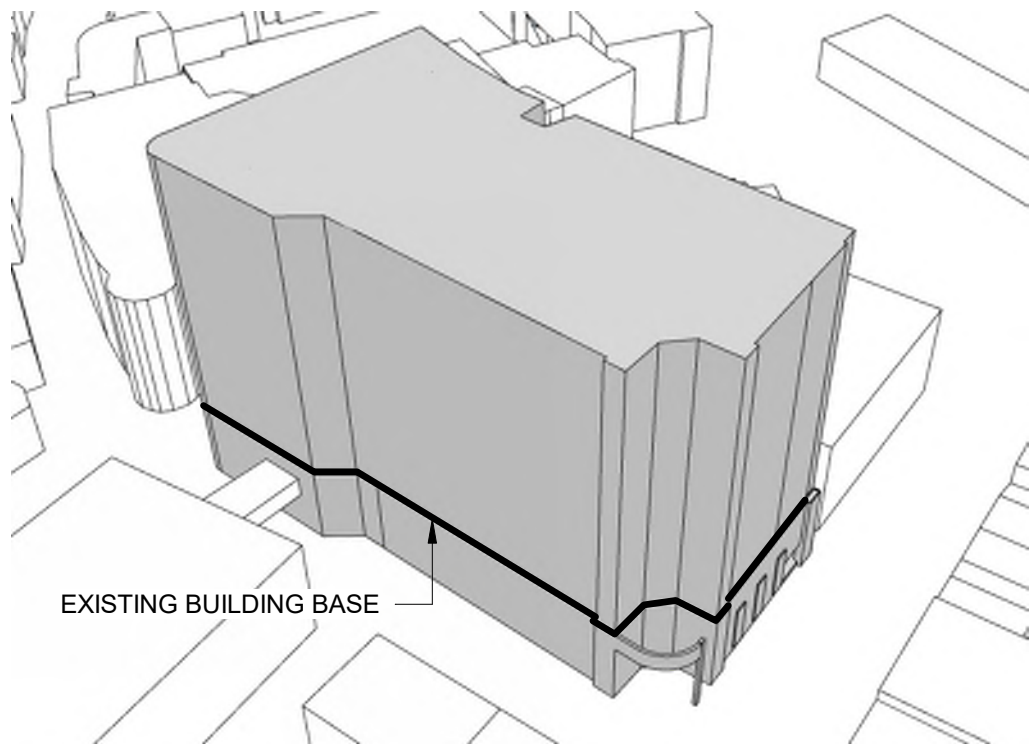
BOUNDARY OF PREVIOUSLY ENTITLED OFFICE TOWER

BOUNDARY OF PROPOSED TOWER:

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

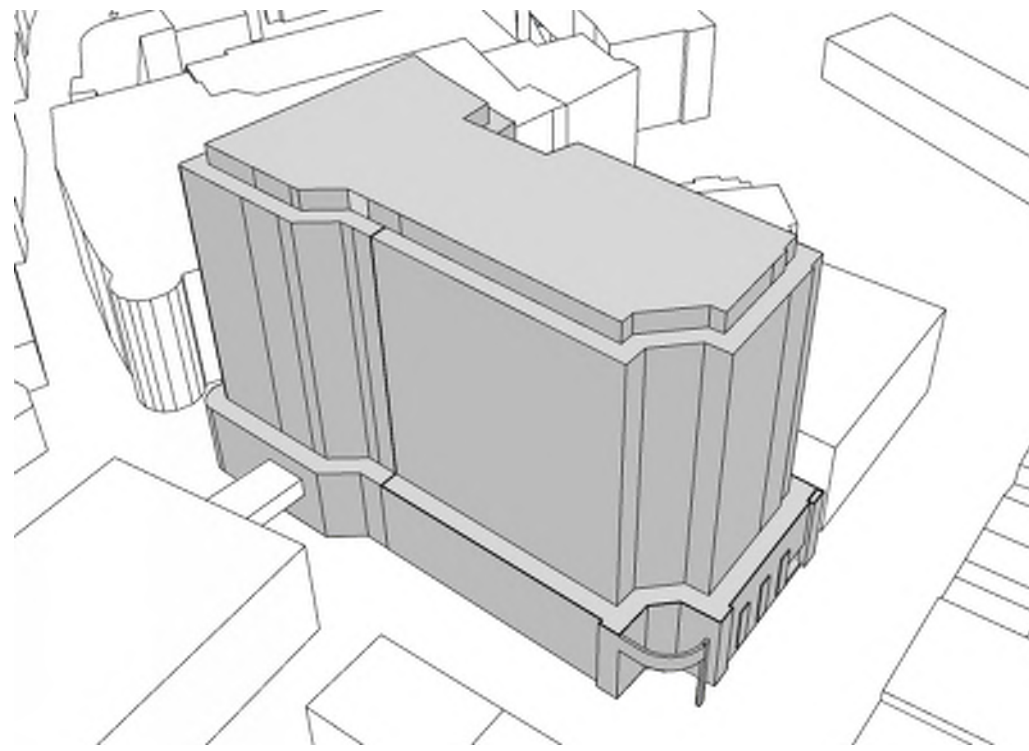
ELLSWORTH PLACE RESIDENTIAL



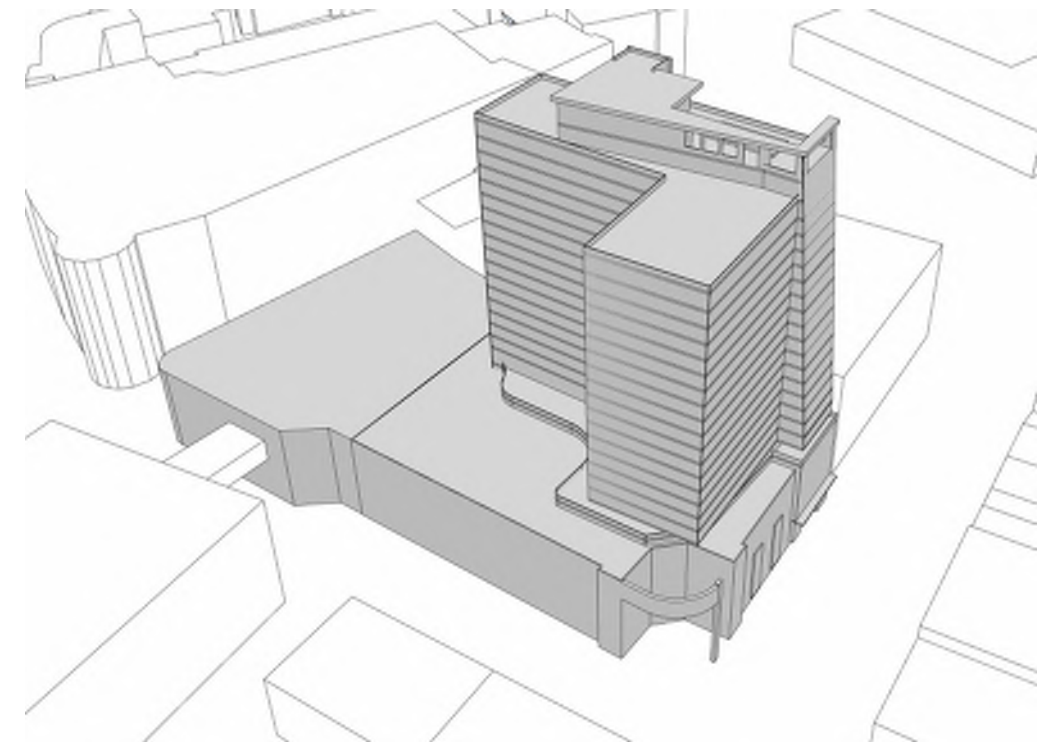


EXISTING BUILDING BASE

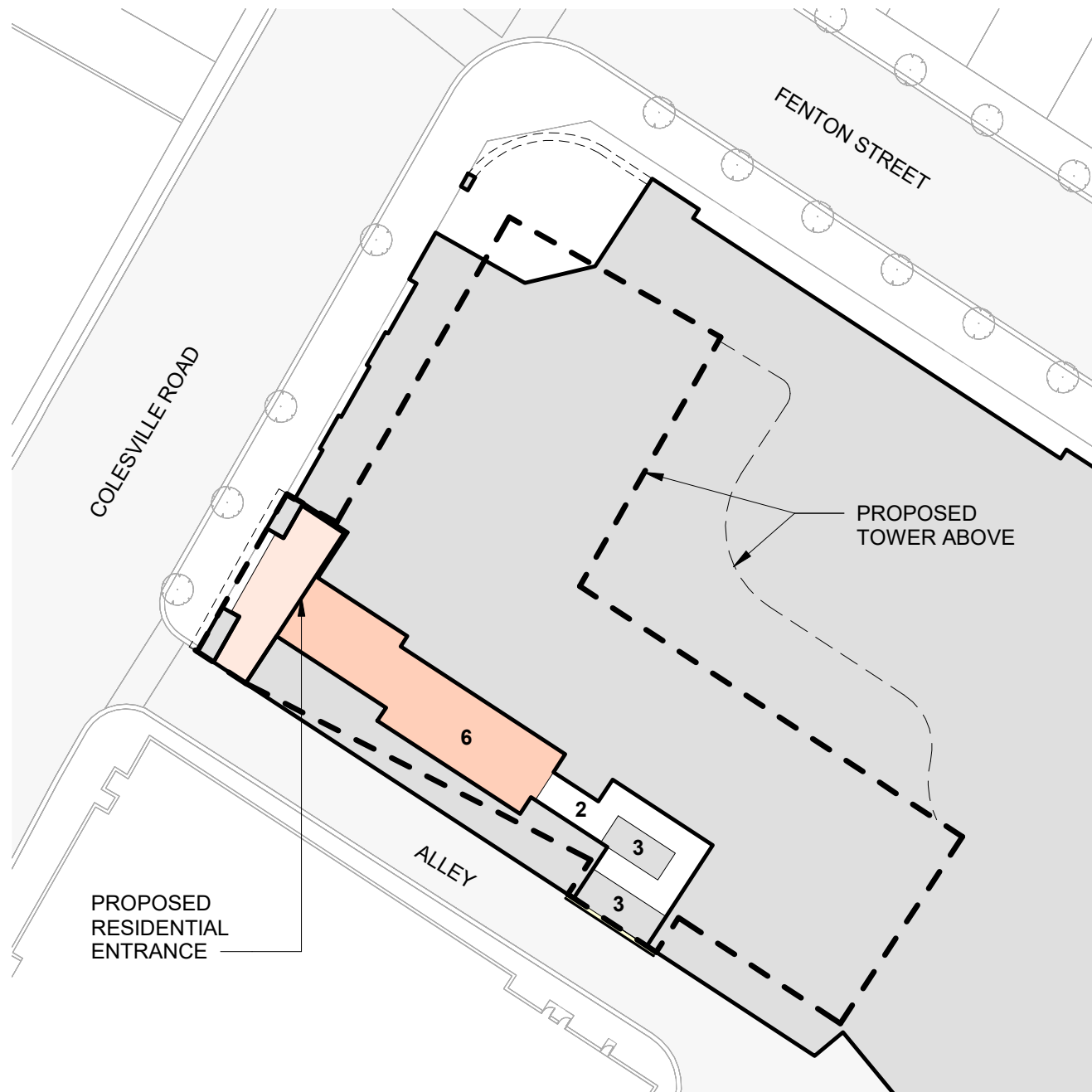
ALLOWABLE HEIGHT, FULL BOUNDARY



RECOMMENDED STEP BACKS



PROPOSED MASSING

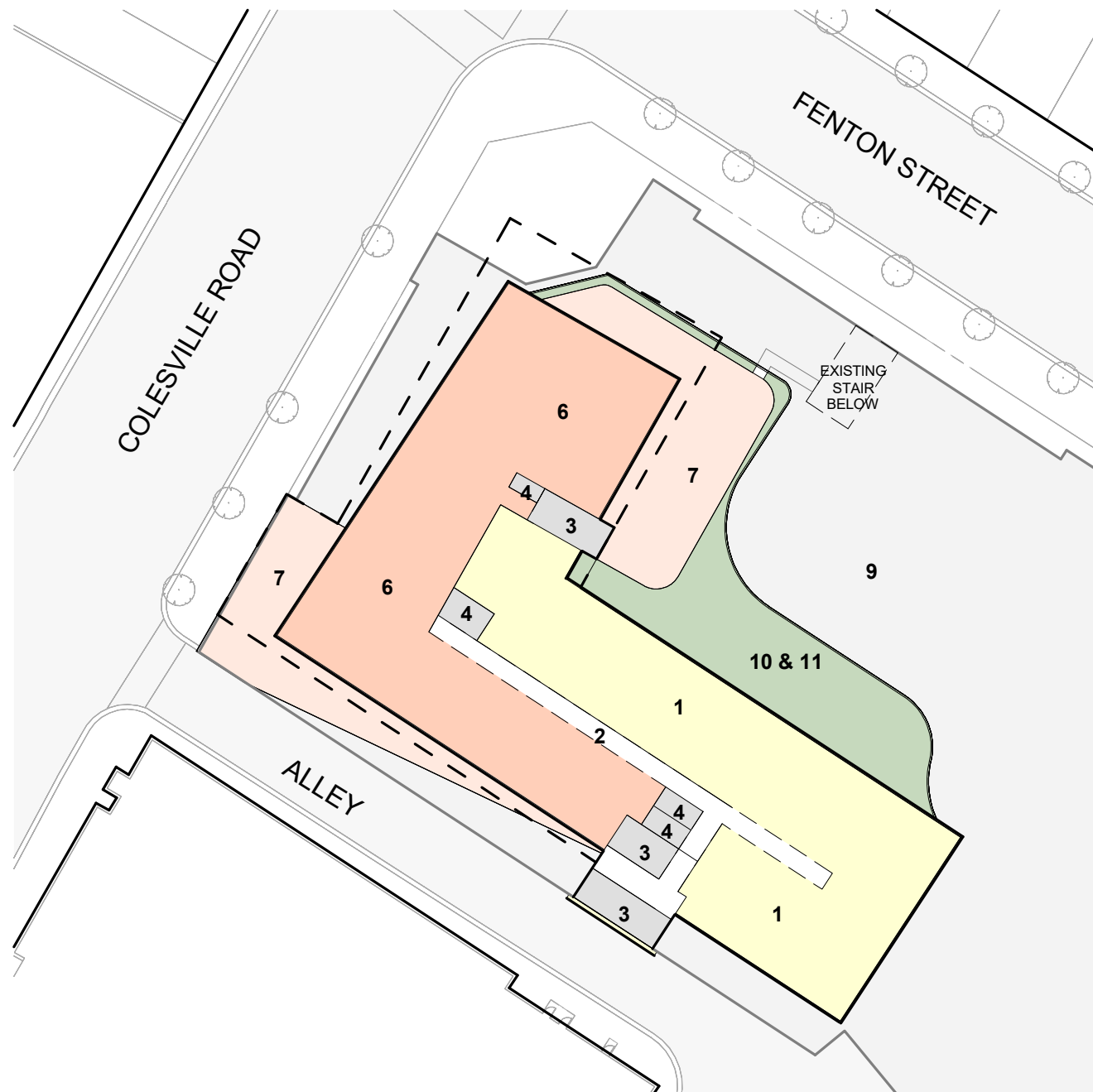


KEYNOTE LEGEND

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

ELLSWORTH PLACE RESIDENTIAL



KEYNOTE LEGEND

Note: Not all program elements occur at every level.

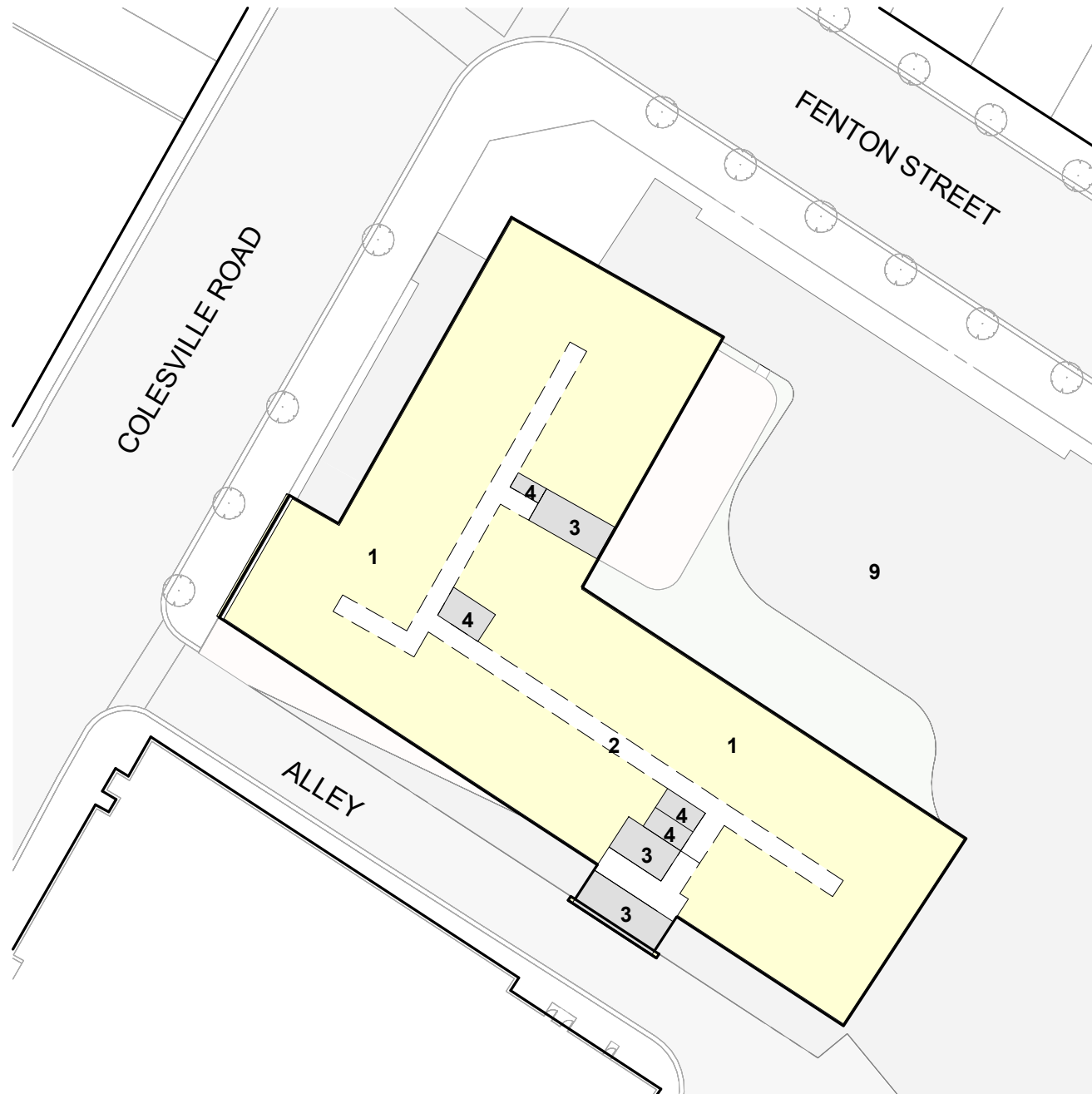
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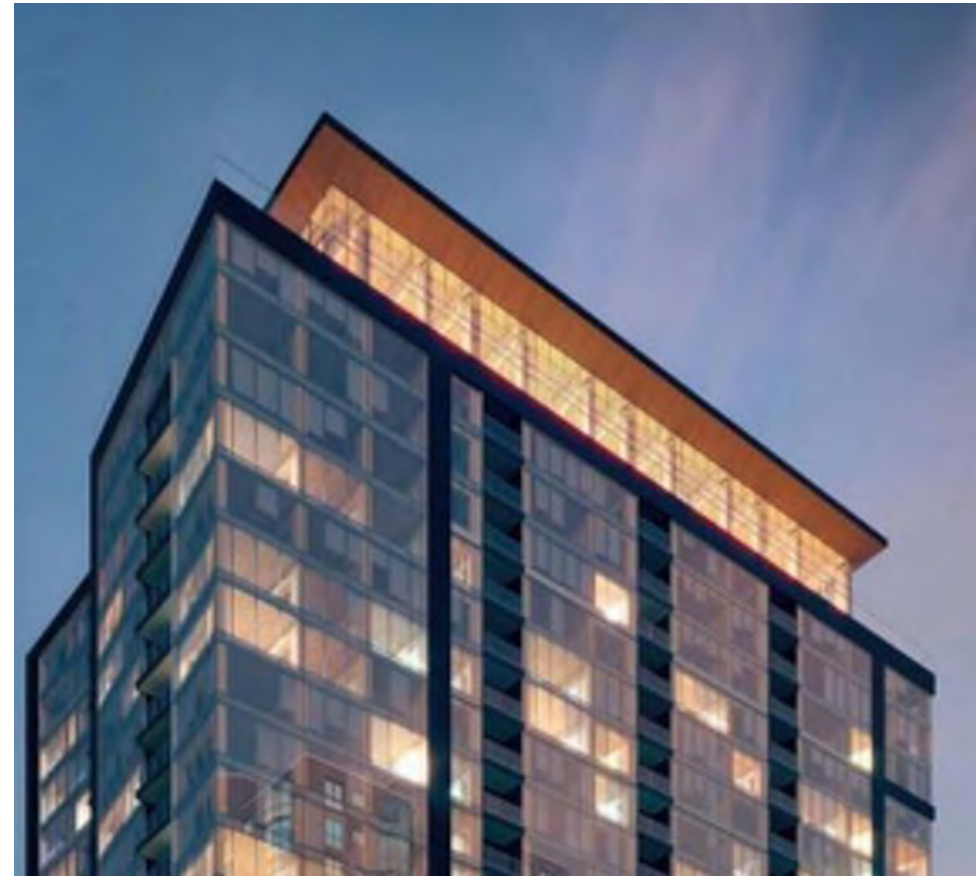
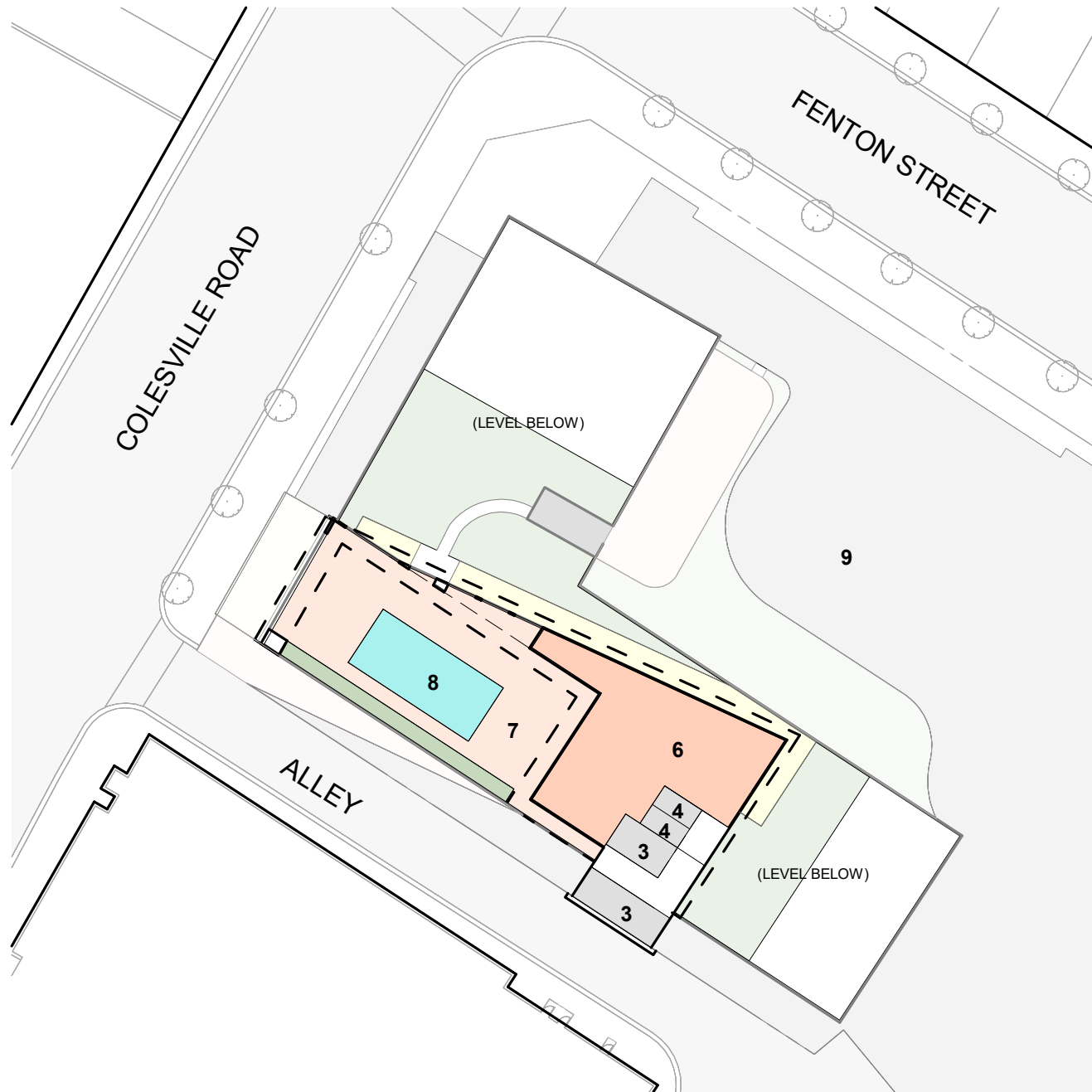
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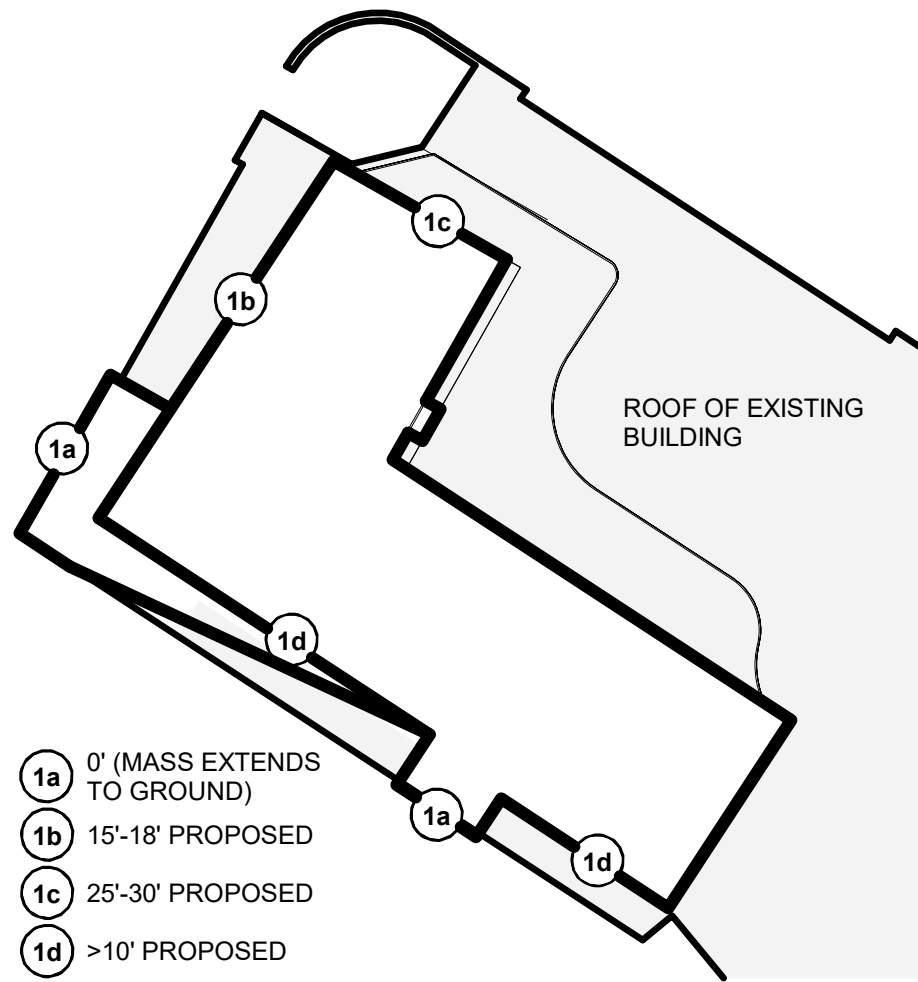
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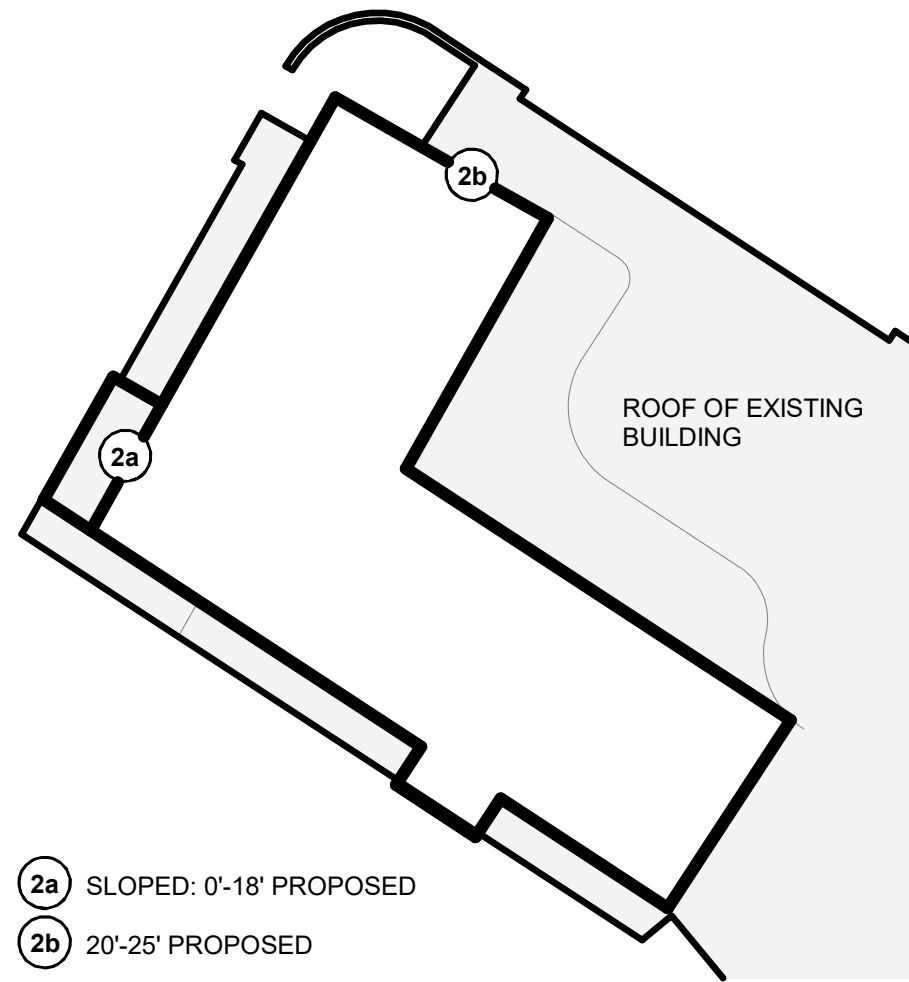
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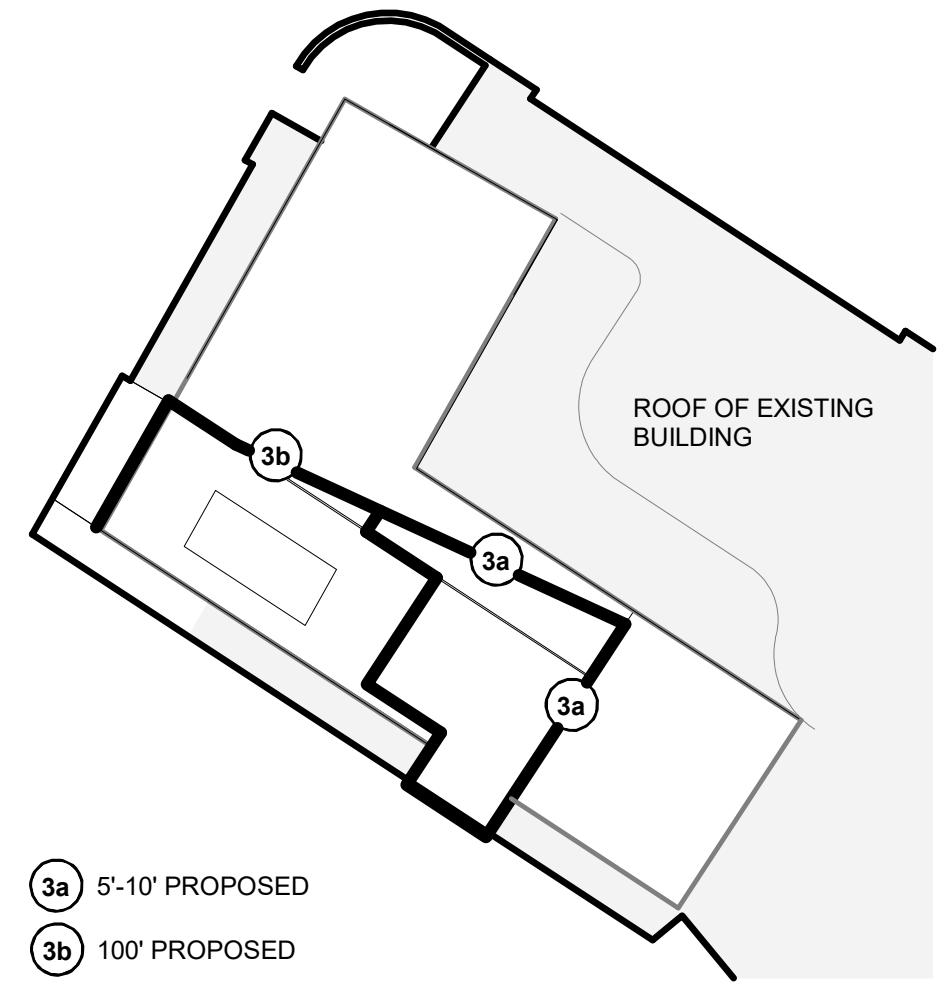
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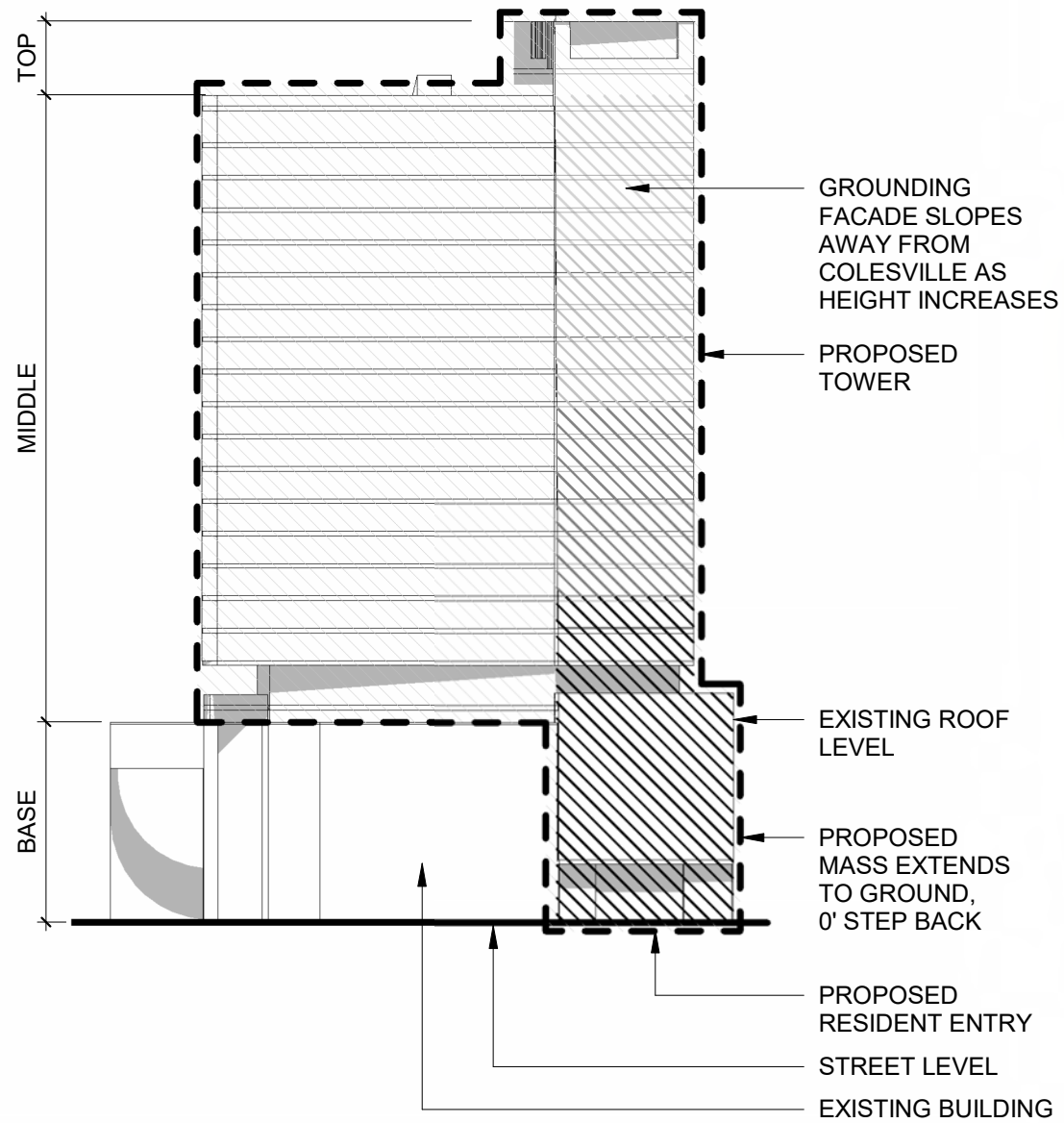
STEP BACK AT BUILDING BASE



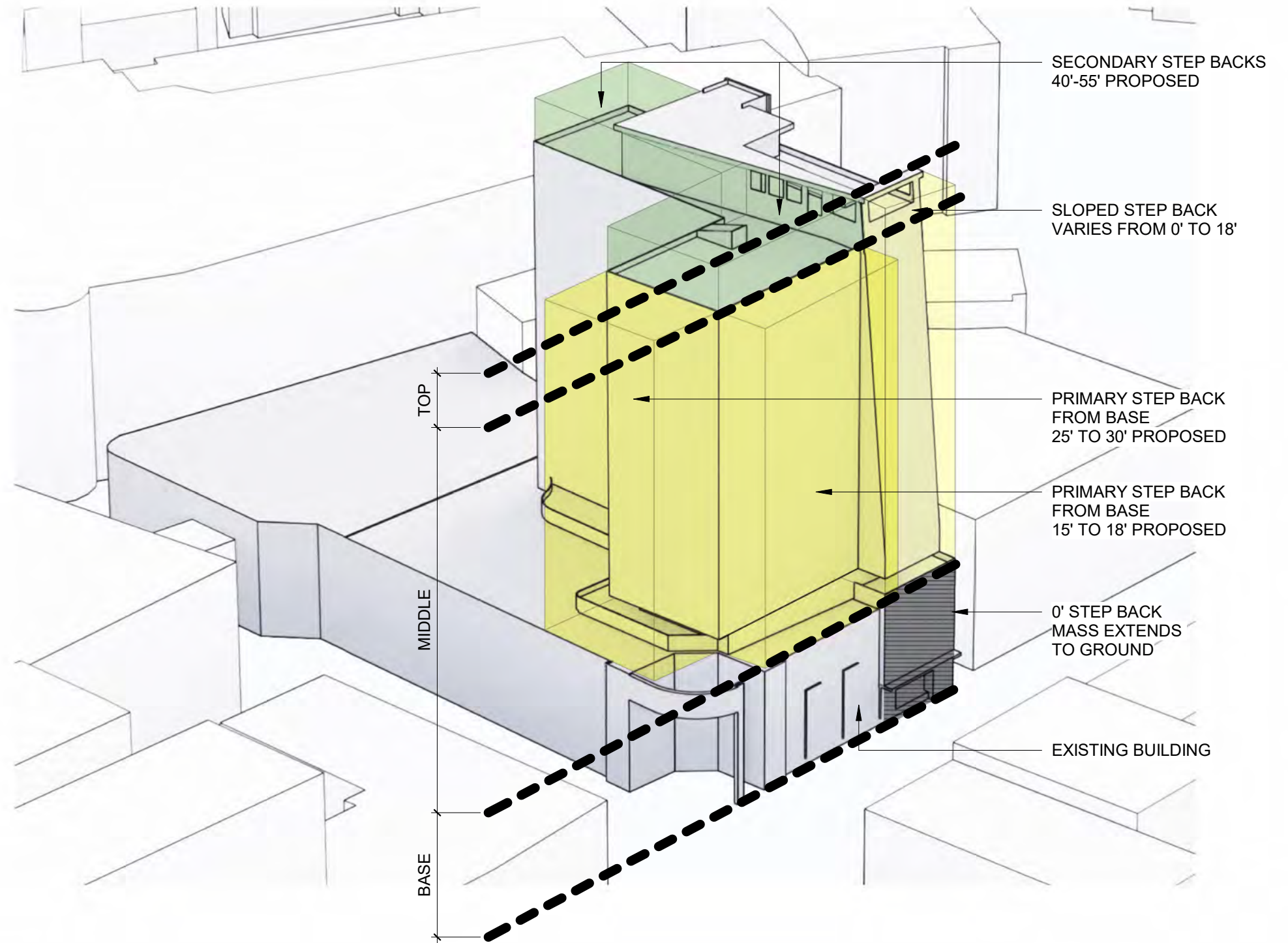
STEP BACK AT TYPICAL TOWER



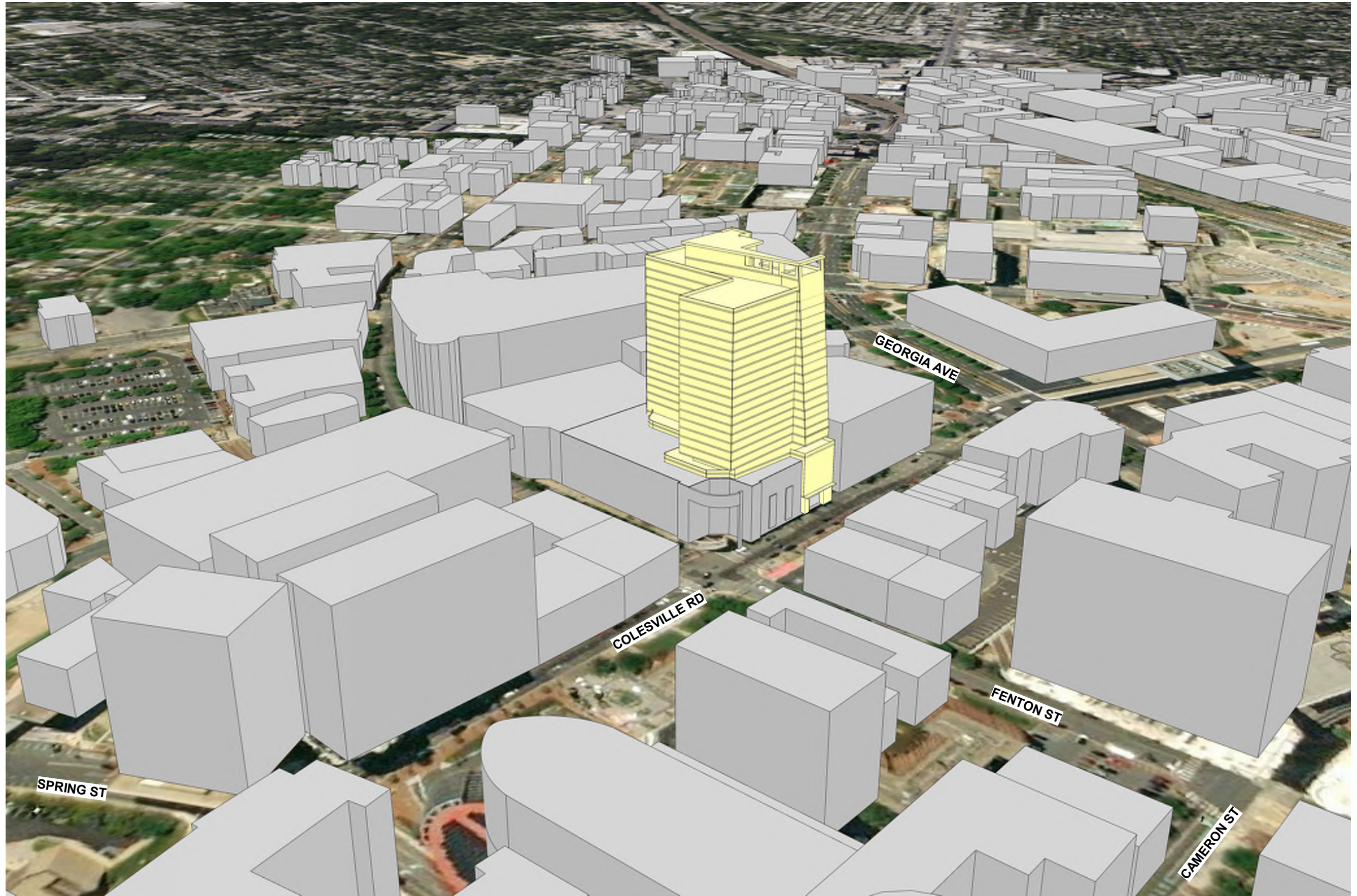
STEP BACK AT BUILDING TOP

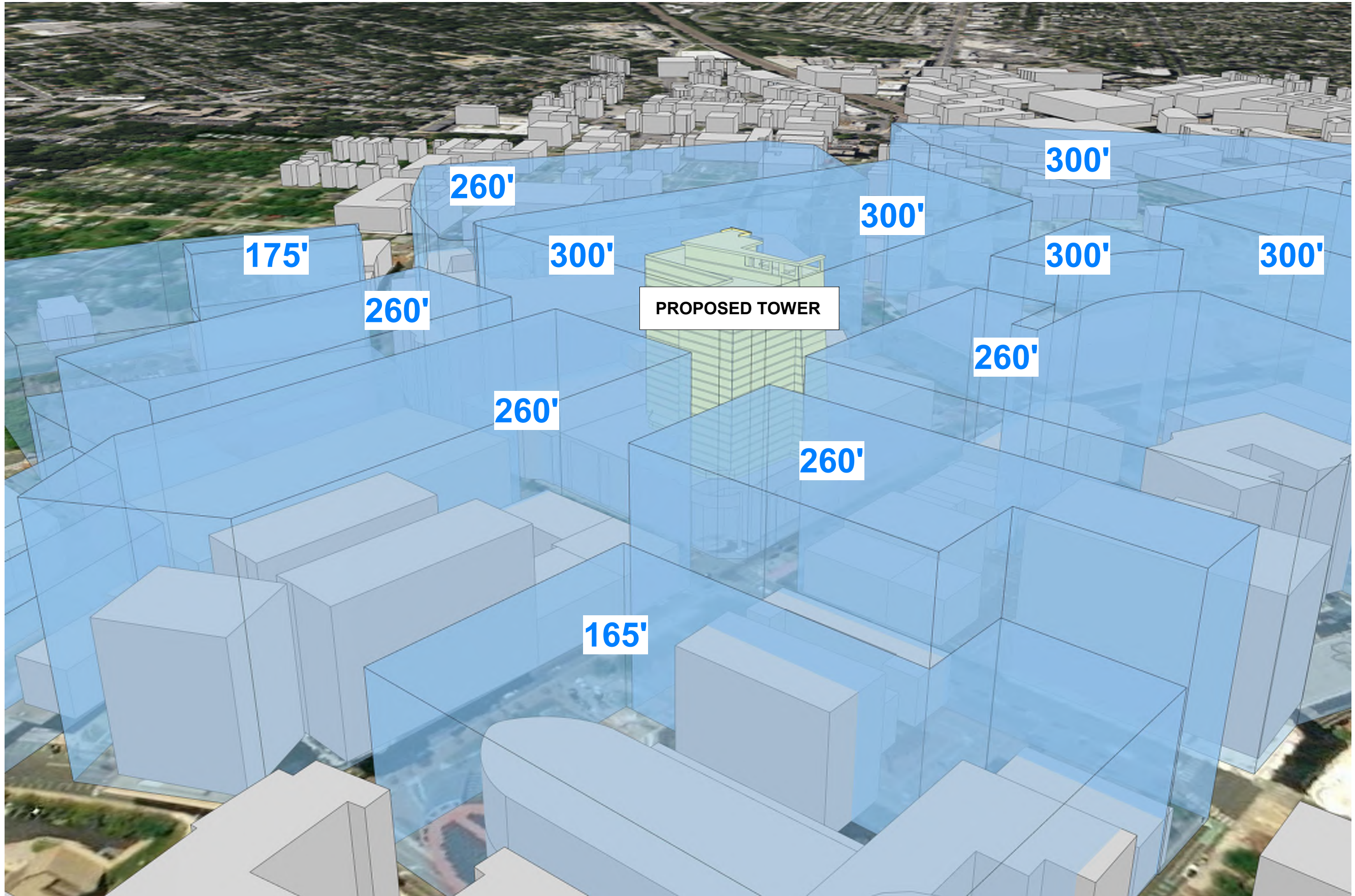


ELEVATION DIAGRAM (COLESVILLE RD)



STEP BACK AXON DIAGRAM







EXISTING VIEW
LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE INTERSECTION OF COLESVILLE ROAD AND FENTON STREET



VIEW OF PROPOSED TOWER
LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE INTERSECTION OF COLESVILLE ROAD AND FENTON STREET



EXISTING VIEW
LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM COLESVILLE ROAD



VIEW OF PROPOSED TOWER
LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM COLESVILLE ROAD



EXISTING VIEW
LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM COLESVILLE ROAD



VIEW OF PROPOSED TOWER
LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM COLESVILLE ROAD



EXISTING VIEW
LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM FENTON STREET



VIEW OF PROPOSED TOWER
LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM FENTON STREET

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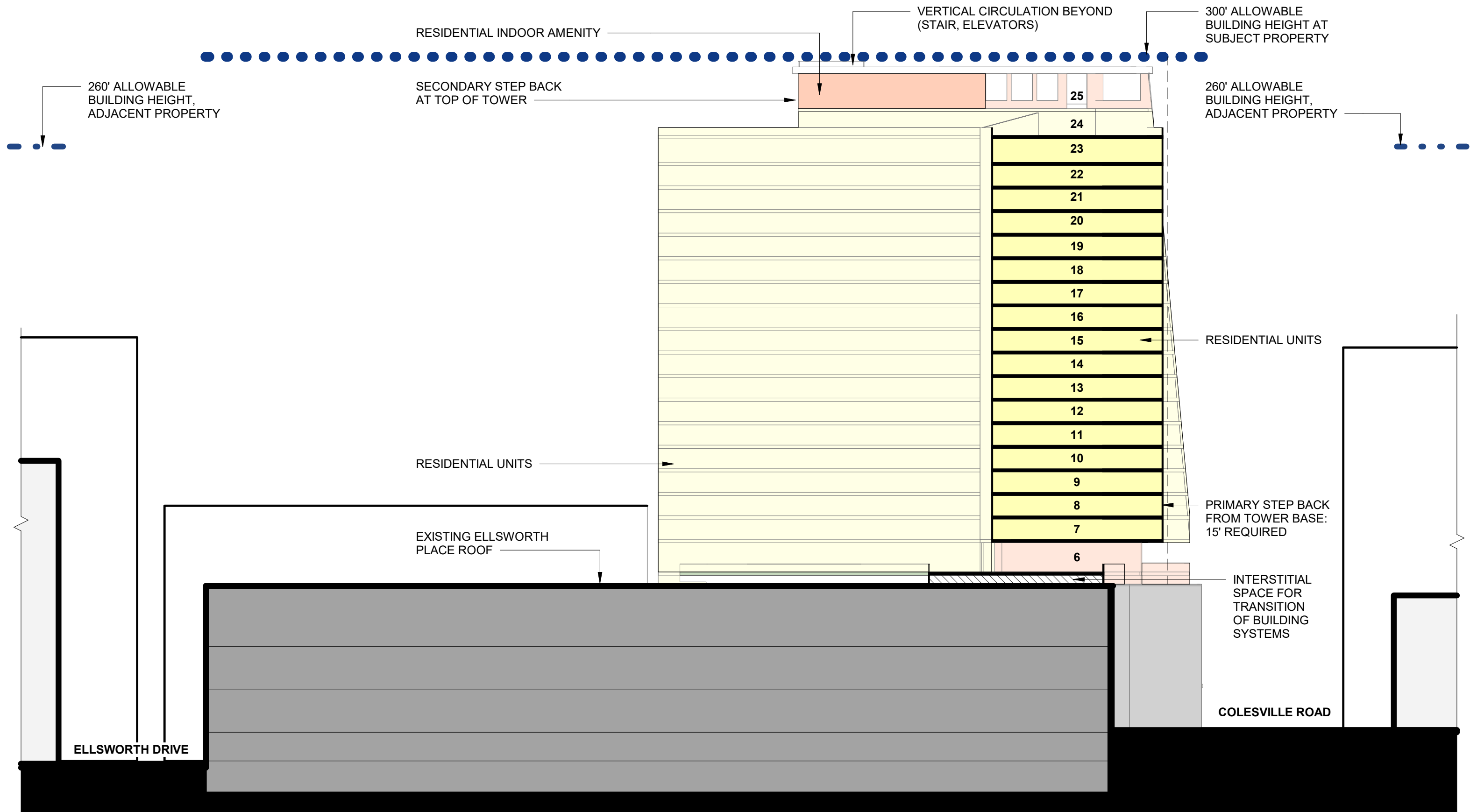
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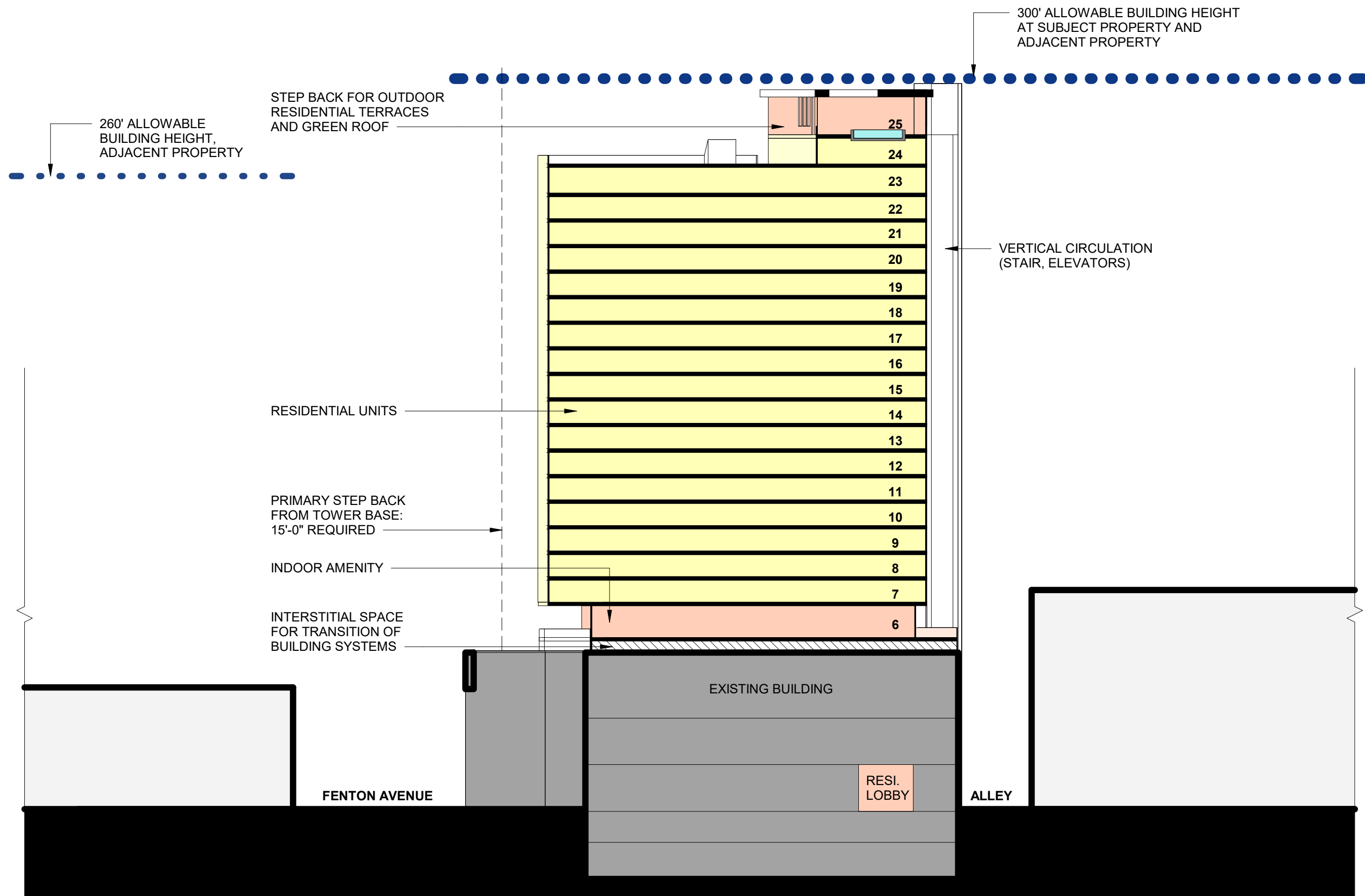
EXISTING VIEW
LOOKING WEST FROM THE INTERSECTION OF FENTON STREET AND ELLSWORTH DRIVE



VIEW OF PROPOSED TOWER
LOOKING WEST FROM THE INTERSECTION OF FENTON STREET AND ELLSWORTH DRIVE



ELLSWORTH PLACE RESIDENTIAL



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



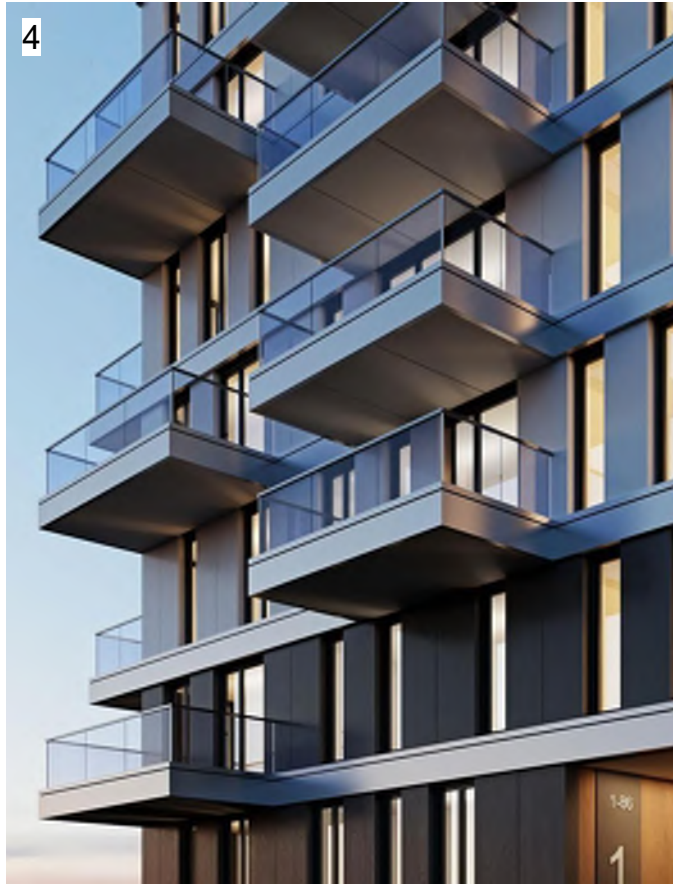
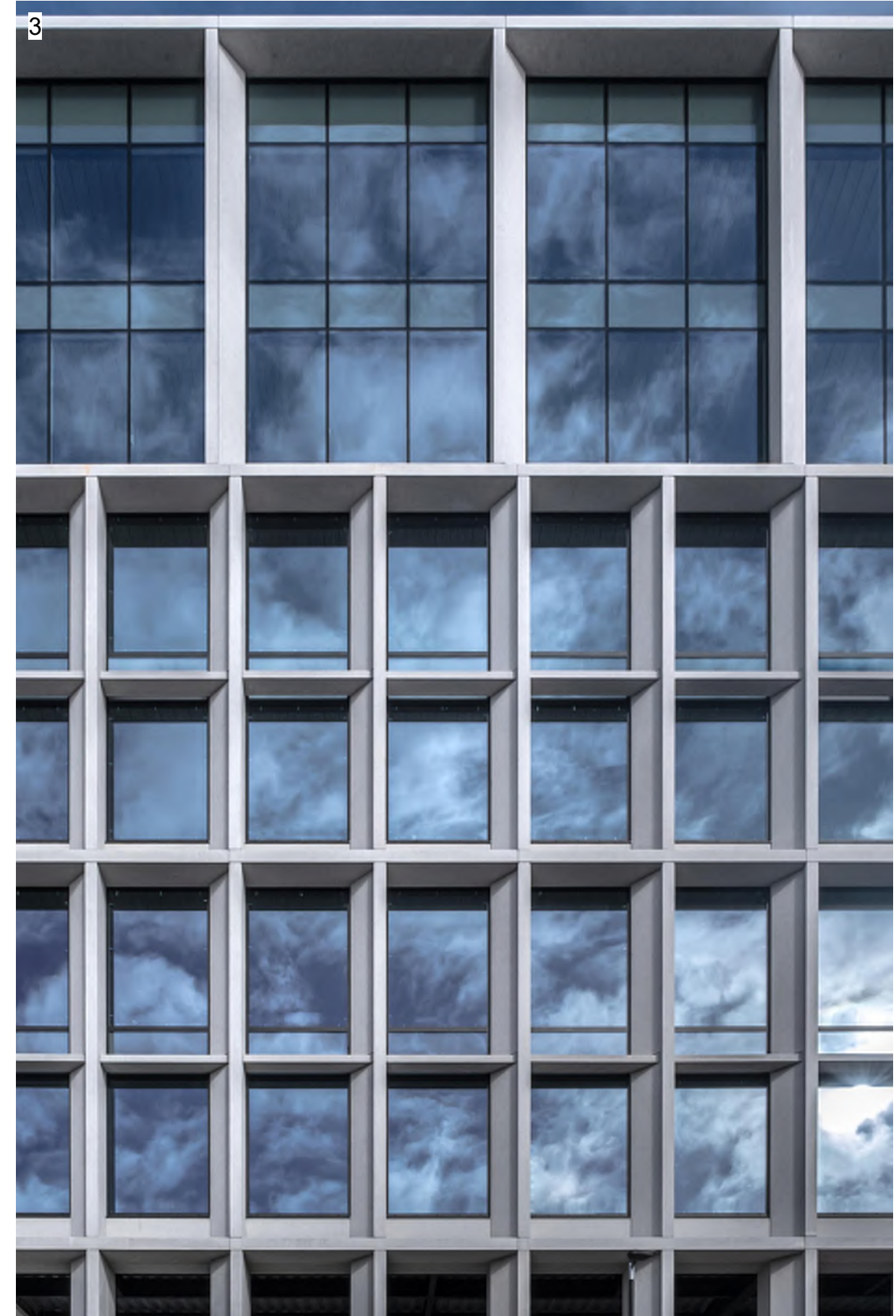
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Gresham Smith
 GBT REALTY CORPORATION
 04/03/24

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Page 24
 ARCHITECTURAL PRECEDENT - FORM

- 1 CREATING TEXTURE WITH COLOR, MATERIAL AND SCALE
- 2 VARIATION IN FACADE ARTICULATION
- 3 VARIATION IN OPENING PROPORTIONS
- 4 BALCONY ARTICULATION
- 5 ADJACENCY OF HISTORIC AND NEW STRUCTURES



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