

## D/DRC Case

1401-1431 Assembly Street & 1011-1019 Washington Street

City Center Design/Development District

TMS: 09013-03-01, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13



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**DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION  
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT**

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**Case # 4**

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**ADDRESS:** 1401 Assembly Street

**APPLICANT:** Russ Caplin, Clayco Realty Group

**TAX MAP REFERENCE:** TMS# 09013-03-06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13

**USE OF PROPERTY:** Existing building houses a beauty salon

**REVIEW DISTRICT:** City Center Design/Development District (-DD)

**NATURE OF REQUEST:** Request for Certificate of Design Approval for new construction of 15-story residential building

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

This proposal, at the northwest corner of Assembly and Washington, is for the development of a 15-story multi-family building with structured parking. The proposal includes moving the existing building one block to the west.

The applicant came before this Commission in May 2016 with an informational presentation to gather feedback. Many of the recommendations are consistent with the comments that were provided at that time.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

**5.2 Architectural Style or Theme**

- *No predetermined architectural style or design theme is required in Columbia's City Center; however, the design of a building should be compatible with its function and with its surroundings (context)... These projects should be sympathetic and compatible with surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, height, façade rhythm, placement of doors and windows, color, and use of materials without giving the feeling that new or renovated structures must duplicate an architectural style from the past to be successful.*

**5.3 Building Mass and Organization**

- *The height and scale of new buildings within City Center should complement existing structures while providing a sense of human scale and proportion...*

The building is surrounded by mostly 2-4 story buildings, of both traditional and modern design. The height of the building is appropriate for this part of City Center, and consistent with the current zoning (C-4) and future land use plan (Central Business District), however the massing does not relate well to the adjacent library next door, or to other surrounding buildings.

While pushing much of the 15-story massing back from the sidewalk does prevent the building from overwhelming the Washington Street section, there is a lack of transition in scale from the tower elements to the one-story volume along this streetscape. The massing could provide a more effective transition in scale if the Washington Street element were 2-4 stories, rather than one. The steel trellis and amenity deck

on the roof above the first floor is unlike anything seen in Columbia's urban architecture. It is visually prominent but does not add physical bulk or height to the Washington Street façade.

- *While these guidelines do not address the regulation of uses within the buildings, the City strongly encourages that- in retail and commercial areas of City Center- the ground level of buildings be developed with retail uses. Such uses will draw activity to the street, thereby enlivening the area.*

This corner is an active corner in a prime location. A portion of the ground level space is dedicated to tenant services; however retail is strongly encouraged. This corner provides an opportunity to connect Main Street and the Vista, and retail spaces would help to close the gap that exists between these districts.

### **5.3.1 Building Height**

- *Except for areas where existing structures are predominantly single story, the most fundamental guidance for building heights in City Center is that the minimum height for any new building in the district should typically be two stories, even if the building contains only one functional story (e.g., a Single-story, high-ceilinged commercial building). Low profile office buildings, commercial buildings, and residences will not yield the density, urban scale, and character desired for City Center, and should, therefore, be discouraged.*

While the overall building is 15-stories, the one-story element along Washington Street is not in scale with the remainder of the building. Having a volume of at least 2-stories would hold the street edge better and be more consistent with this guideline.

### **5.3.2 Façade Proportion and Rhythm**

- *The characteristic proportion (relationship of height to width) of existing façade elements should be respected in relation to new development.*

The large scale and verticality of the building would benefit from breaking up the mass in some way, particularly in how it relates to adjacent buildings. The strong, vertical curtain-wall element draws reference to the library's glass façade, which appears to slide behind the concrete structure. Having this building's curtain wall recede from the brick façade would make the visual layering of materials more effective, as the glass would be on the same plane.

### **5.3.3 Proportion of Openings**

- *Maintain the predominant difference between upper story openings and street level storefront openings (windows and doors). Usually, there is a much greater window area (70 percent) at the storefront level for pedestrians to have a better view of the merchandise displayed behind as opposed to upper stories which have smaller window openings (40 percent).*

The proportion of openings on the Assembly Street façade is 49% storefront/51% upper floors. The Washington Street façade has 37%/47%, respectively. The upper floors have a sufficient proportion of openings, however much more is needed on the ground-level frontage, particularly on Washington Street, where about a third of the storefront area is dedicated to garage/service area.

### **5.3.4 Horizontal Rhythms/Alignment of Architectural Element**

- *Whenever an infill building is proposed, the common horizontal elements (e.g. cornice line and window height, width, and spacing) established by neighboring structures should be identified and the infill design should complement and accentuate what is already in place.*

Brick detailing has been added to the first four floors making a subtle reference to the library. Again, having a stronger relationship to the library in particular would help this building fit into its surrounding context. Again, having more than a single story on Washington Street would be more consistent with the buildings in the immediate context and also with the design guidelines.

### **5.3.5 Wall Articulation**

- *Long, blank, unarticulated street wall facades should not be allowed. Facades should instead be divided into a series of structural bays (e.g., masonry piers which frame window and door elements). This subdivision of the wall plane establishes a rhythm similar to many existing older buildings found in City Center.*

The street wall facades are a combination of glass curtain walls and solid pre-cast panels. These facades are somewhat monotonous and should be further articulated. Of greatest concern is the high-percentage of solid walls and mechanical screens fronting Washington Street.

- *Monolithic street wall facades should be "broken" by vertical and horizontal articulation (e.g., sculpted, carved or penetrated wall surfaces defined by recesses and reveals). These features are characterized by: (a) breaks (reveals, recesses) in the surface of the wall itself; (b) placement of window and door openings; or (c) the placement of balconies, awnings, and/or canopies.*
- *Large unbroken facade surfaces should be avoided, especially at the storefront level. This can be achieved in a number of ways including: (a) dividing the facade into a series of display windows with smaller panes of glass; (b) constructing the facade with small human scale materials such as brick or decorative tile along bulkheads; (c) providing traditional recessed entries; (d) careful sizing, placement and overall design of signage; and (e) providing consistent door and window reveals.*

The recesses and projections of the materials throughout the building should be dimensionally called out and accurately illustrated. The massiveness of the building further compels the depths of recesses and projections to be sufficiently scaled. The perspectives give some idea as to the depths of various features, if they are shown accurately.

There is some brick detailing on the solid walls, however more windows into active spaces as well as canopies and storefront details should be added to enhance the pedestrian experience. The details provided are not sufficient for the amount of street frontage that the building provides. Enlarged elevations of the street-level facades should be provided as well, before final approval.

### **5.3.6 Roofs and Upper Stories**

- *Roof mounted mechanical or utility equipment should be screened. The method of screening should be architecturally integrated with the structure in terms of materials, color, shape and size. Equipment should be screened by solid building elements (e.g., parapet wall) instead of after-the-fact add-on screening (e.g., wood or metal slats).*

The roof mounted utility equipment appears to be screened with materials compatible with the architecture. The height of the building will likely prevent these structures from being highly visible from the adjacent pedestrian realm, however more detailed information should be provided about screening materials.

## **5.4 Site Planning**

- *The manner in which a building and its accessory uses are arranged on a site are critical to how the building contributes to the overall quality of the built environment. This section outlines a series*



*of site planning guidelines that will help establish a human scale, pedestrian-friendly quality in City Center.*

#### **5.4.1 Setbacks**

- *In order to preserve the scale of the pedestrian environment and continue to foster the urban character of the City Center, the Design/Development District will have no minimum required front yard setback. The maximum setback for any new structure should be the average of the existing setback in the block and adjacent blocks where the project is to be constructed. In situations where the average is not established, the setback will be ten feet.*
- *Although the criteria for setbacks will be the same throughout the City Center Design/Development District, some areas of the district have a more urban commercial character and others maintain a residential character. Each project still should be evaluated in context with its surroundings in order to properly decide whether a minimum or maximum setback should be used so that the overall character of the street is preserved.*

The building is appropriately oriented to the build-to line, both on Assembly Street and Washington Street. The pedestrian amenities will be critical to the function and aesthetics of this site, adding over 600 residents to a major street corner. More information should be provided that illustrates detailed and dimensioned right-of-way pedestrian improvements to include wide sidewalks, street trees, district-appropriate street lighting, among others.

#### **5.4.2 Street Orientation**

*The way that a structure is oriented to the street plays a big role in establishing the overall feeling of the street. As a general rule, buildings should be oriented so as to engage and maintain pedestrian interest. Following are specific directions on how this can be accomplished.*

- *Storefronts should be designed to orient to the major street frontage. While side or rear entries may be desirable, the predominant major building entry should be oriented toward the major street.*

The building is oriented toward the major street frontages and provides a primary pedestrian entrance to the corner lobby.

- *The front building facade should be oriented parallel to the street or toward a major plaza or park.*

The building façades are parallel to both streets.

- *Buildings on corners should include storefront design features for at least 50 percent of the wall area on the side street elevation.*

While Washington Street may be considered the side street, it will act as a primary pedestrian corridor for residents and other pedestrians travelling east/west. The amount of non-programmed space along the Washington Street elevation is of significant concern for the success of the pedestrian environment.

### **5.5 Open Spaces in Private Development**

- *City Center's streets with their street trees and pedestrian amenities, are the district's primary open space...To invite public use and ensure user security, plazas and other public spaces should be visible from streets and sidewalks, and should be surrounded by actively programmed building spaces such as shops, restaurants, residential units or offices. The design of plazas and open spaces in private development should conform to the guidelines for public open spaces, and the landscaping guidelines in the following section.*

The space between the library and the residential tower is primarily on library property, but should be designed carefully to ensure a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. The design of the residential tower on this north side will have a significant impact on the pedestrian plaza.

#### **4.4 Service and Loading Areas**

- *Service and loading areas should be located to minimize their visibility from public streets. On blocks with multiple sides facing gateway streets, individual determinations of the more visually significant frontages will be required. Refuse containers and actively-used service and loading areas must be screened from view by the buildings they serve or by solid masonry walls which are designed as an integral part of the building, finished with compatible materials and with a minimum height of six feet. If screening walls are located adjacent to public use areas, they must be buffered from view with a landscaped strip at least eight feet wide. Wherever possible, ground-mounted mechanical equipment should be located within a screened service area. Where this is not feasible, mechanical equipment should be located where it is not visible from streets, sidewalks and adjacent properties. Areas used for occasional service or loading (less than one day per week, or less than one hour per day) may be treated according to the guidelines for surface parking lots.*

The garage entry, electrical room, transformer, etc. located at the west end of the Washington Street ground floor accounts for 80 feet of frontage along this façade. The utility rooms should be located on the west or north side of the building, away from the street frontage.

#### **5.7 The Storefront**

- *This section focuses on establishing “storefronts” that will help revitalize and unify City Center’s commercial street frontages. It should be noted that the term “storefront” does not necessarily imply that a building has a retail commercial use; storefronts are simply the sides of the building that face the street and connect with the sidewalk.*

##### **5.7.1 Storefront Composition, Accessories, and Details**

###### **Entries and Doorways**

- *The main entry to a building, leading to a lobby, stair or central corridor, should be emphasized at the street to announce a point of arrival in one or more of the following ways: flanked columns, decorative fixtures or other details; recessed within a larger arched or cased decorative opening; covered by means of a portico (formal porch) projecting from or set into the building face (refer to zoning guidelines for allowable projections); punctuated by means of a change in roofline, a tower, or a break in the surface of the subject wall... Buildings situated at the corner of a public street should provide a prominent corner entrance to street level shops or lobby space, in a manner consistent with Main Entries, as described above. Commercial storefront entries are typically recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy, or awning...*

The main entry to the building is on the corner of Assembly and Washington. The corner of the building is emphasized with the glass curtain wall, and provides a small canopy at the recessed entrance.

###### **Door and Window Design**

- *Doors to retail shops should contain a high percentage of glass in order to view the retail contents... Use of clear glass (at least 88 percent light transmission) on the first floor is recommended. Storefront windows should be as large as possible, and no closer than 18 inches from the ground (bulkhead height). By limiting the bulkhead height, the visibility to the storefront displays*

*and retail interior is maximized. Maximum bulkhead heights for new construction should be 36 inches.*

The storefront along the street appears to be clear glass. More information should be provided about storefront glass. The bulkhead height varies on Washington as the building steps down with the grade on the storefront configuration.

### **Grillework/Metalwork and Other Details**

- *There are a number of details, often thought of as mundane, that may be incorporated into building design to add a degree of visual richness and interest while meeting functional needs. Such details include the following items:*

*Light fixtures, wall mounted or hung with decorative metal brackets....Metal grillwork, at vent openings or as decorative features at windows, doorways or gates... decorative scuppers, catches and downspouts...balconies, rails, finials, corbels, plaques, etc., flag or banner pole brackets... [among others]*

There are sconces shown on the storefronts, however at the scale shown it is difficult to illustrate much detail. Larger elevations/perspectives should be provided to illustrate the finer details of the storefront.

### **5.7.2 Exterior Walls/Materials**

- *The design element for exterior walls involves two aspects- color and texture. If the building's exterior design is complicated with many design features, the wall texture should be simple and subdued. If the building design is simple (perhaps more monolithic), a finely textured material, such as patterned masonry, can greatly enrich the building's overall character.*

#### **Recommended Materials**

- *Storefront materials should be consistent with the materials used on significant (historically correct) adjacent buildings. The following materials are considered appropriate for buildings within City Center. The number of different wall materials used on anyone building should, however, be kept to a minimum (ideally, two or less).*

*Building Walls: clear glass, glass block (storefront only)...stucco/exterior plaster (smooth trowled), new or used face-brick, cut stone, rusticated block (cast stone)...*

The proposed materials of brick and stucco are on the list of recommended materials. However the simple and monolithic design suggests materials that can add articulation and interest to the design. The brick detailing on the first few floors is a good start; more details such as this throughout the project can help enhance the character of the building.

## **5.8 The Upper Façade**

### **5.8.1. Cornice and Fascia**

- *A cornice or fascia creates a strong roof line and gives a finished appearance to the building façade... The new cornice or fascia should be designed in proportion with the overall mass of the building.*

There is brick detailing on the upper three floors, helping to define the top of the building.

### **5.8.2 Wall Materials (Upper Façade)**

- *Wall materials should be selected to coordinate with neighboring structures and to complement the design of the storefront.*



The upper façade is primarily brick with punched windows openings where it is adjacent to the street, with glass curtain walls at the corners. Where the building is back from the street, the façade material changes to stucco.

### **5.8.3 (Upper Façade) Windows**

- *Upper story window should create a sense of scale and add articulation and visual interest to the upper façade.*

The key to articulating the massive upper façade and the regular pattern of windows is the depth of the window section. The applicant has provided detailed sections of the window configurations. The punched window sections in the brick show a 5” depth with the brick depth and the window frame trim. This is a good depth that should have a distinct shadow line. It is critical that this detail remain part of the design throughout value engineering, and construction documentation.

The stucco window section shows a 1 ½” depth, which is typical for this material. Section/elevations should be provided for the east and west elevations that face into the courtyard.

### **5.10.1 Structured Parking**

- *Where possible, parking structures should be located within the block core, with actively programmed building space fronting on all streets. Where location of parking within the block core is not feasible, parking structures should be located to the rear of the principal use building, with the principal use building oriented to front on the address street. The ground floor of the parking structure should be actively programmed on streets with an active commercial frontage.*

The parking is primarily located interior to the block, with programmed space around it facing the street. Where the grade drops on Washington Street, however, there is a large portion of the elevation dedicated to service, utility rooms, and ventilation. These detract from the pedestrian experience and should be relocated.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

There are a number of significant concerns that have been consistently articulated to the applicant since before the May informational presentation, but have yet to be addressed. If *each specific condition* below can be met, staff recommends Approval with Conditions, to be deferred to staff. If the conditions cannot be met, staff recommends the project come back to the Commission for final approval. The recommended conditions are:

- Reconfiguring the Washington Street elevation to include at least a 2-story massing along the entire street frontage
- Reconfiguring the first/ground level along Washington Street to include additional programmed space, as well as architectural features and details to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Provide detailed information about recesses and projections of materials and massing
- Recess the amenity deck trellis so that it is not visible from the street
- Provide detailed information about the north façade that will be adjacent to the library plaza; roof-mounted utility equipment screening; and storefront glazing
- Provide detailed/dimensioned streetscape design, to include sidewalks, trees, lights, and any other site furnishings.

CLAYCO

THE ART & SCIENCE OF BUILDING

FORUM

THE EDGE

COLUMBIA, SC  
JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2016 DDRC SUBMITTAL









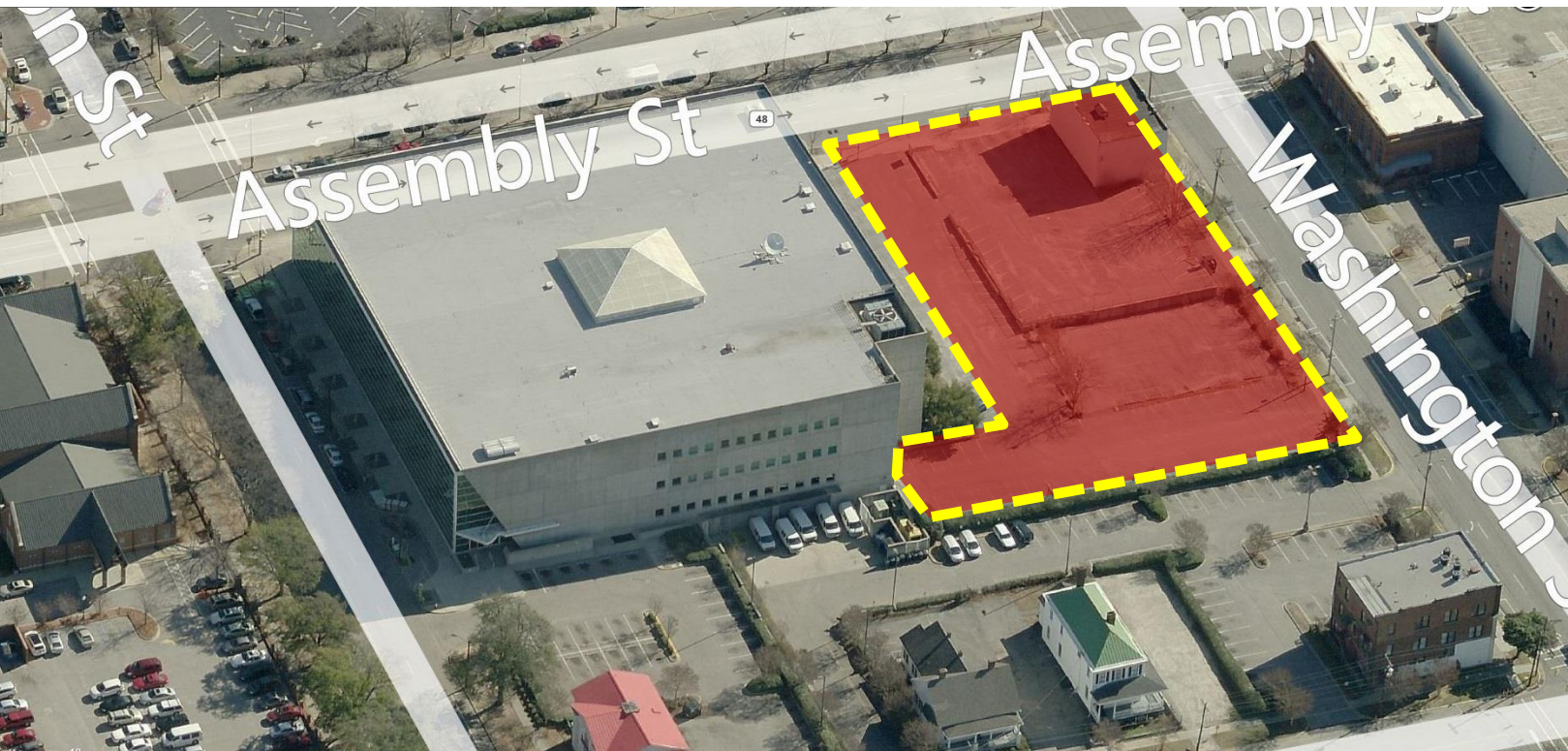




EAST SITE AERIAL



NORTH SITE AERIAL



WEST SITE AERIAL

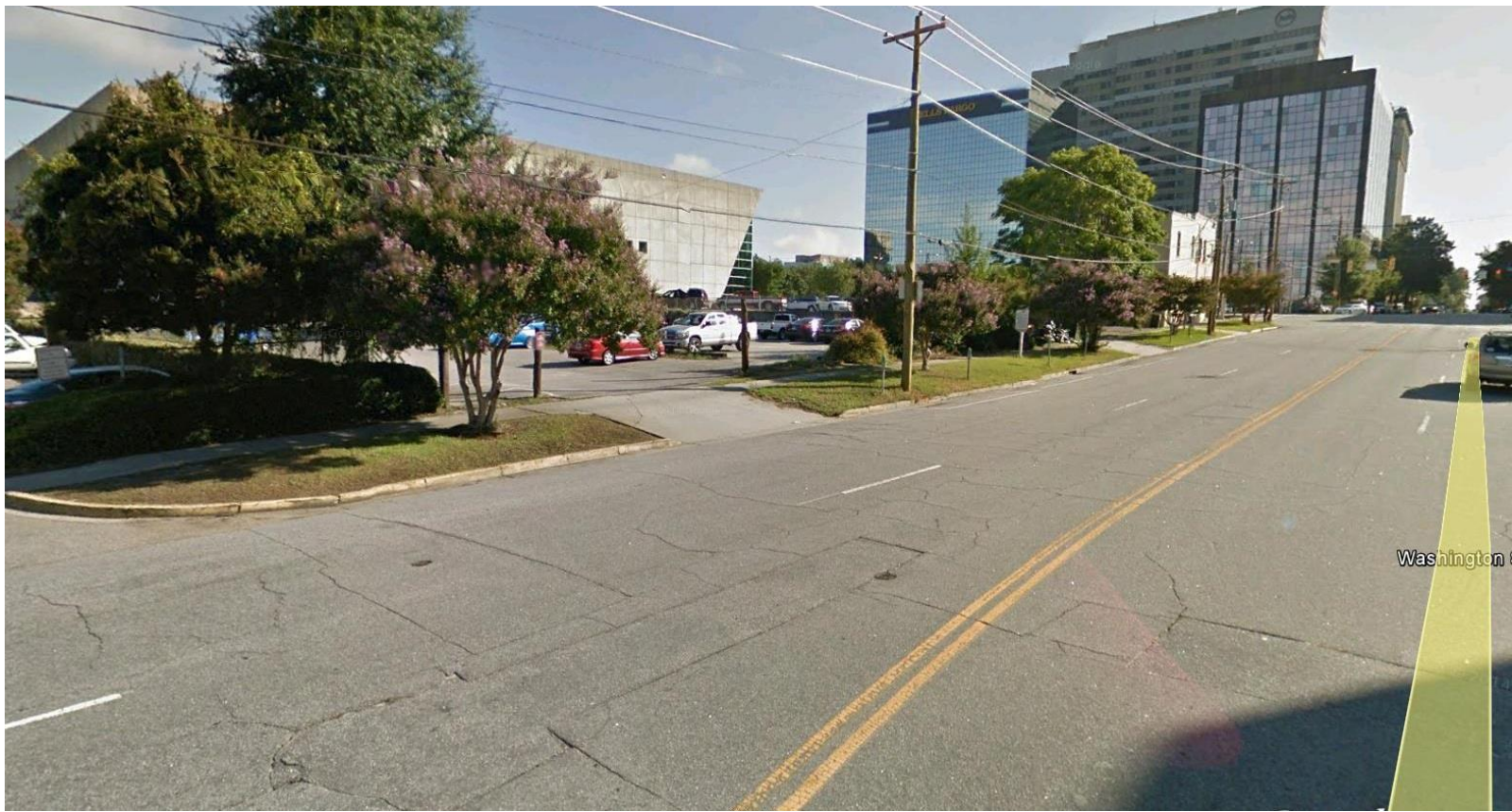


SOUTH SITE AERIAL





VIEW OF SITE FROM WASHINGTON ST. LOOKING NORTH



VIEW FROM WASHINGTON ST. LOOKING NORTHEAST



VIEW AT ASSEMBLY ST. AND WASHINGTON ST. LOOKING NORTHWEST



VIEW OF SITE FROM ASSEMBLY ST. LOOKING WEST



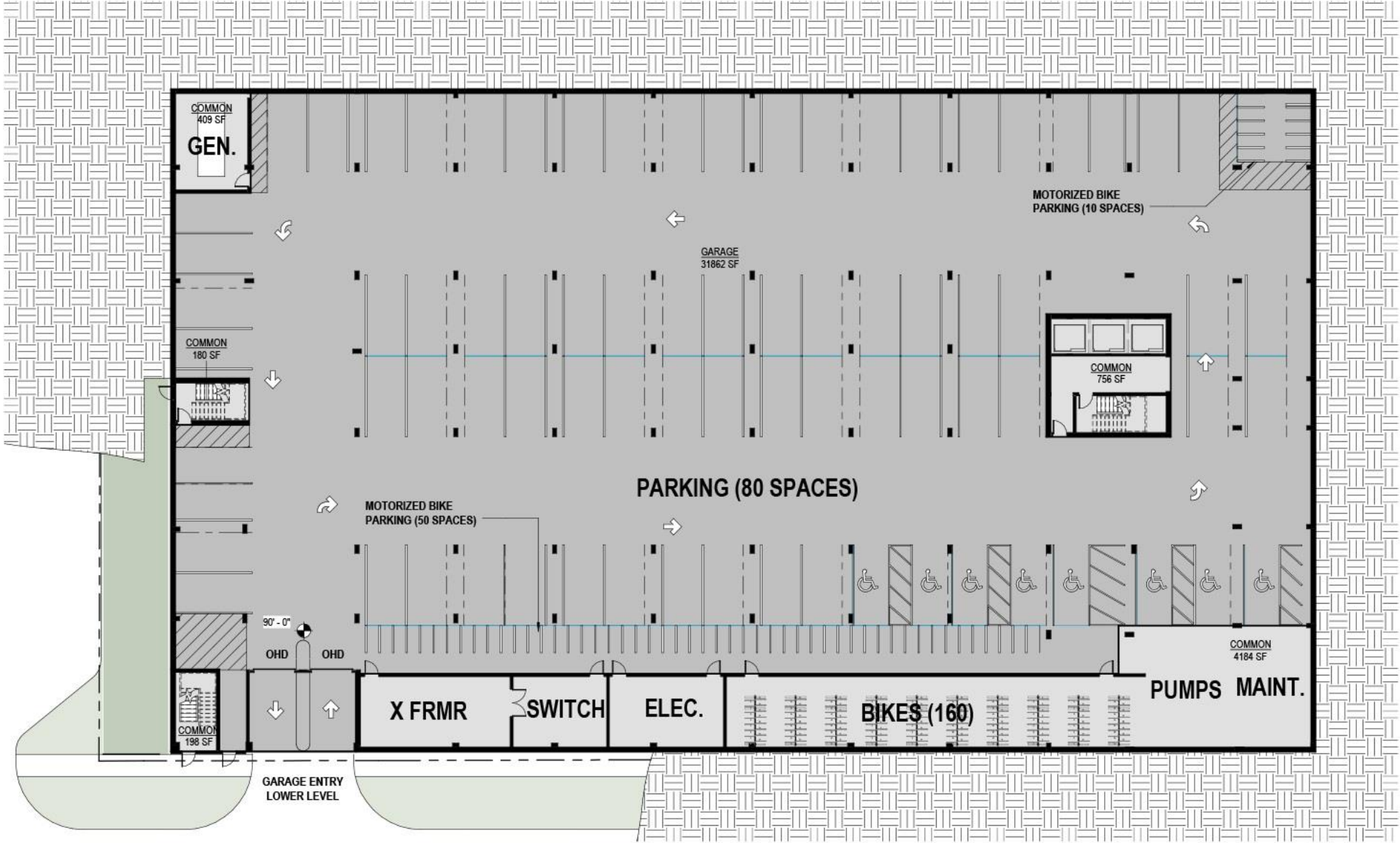






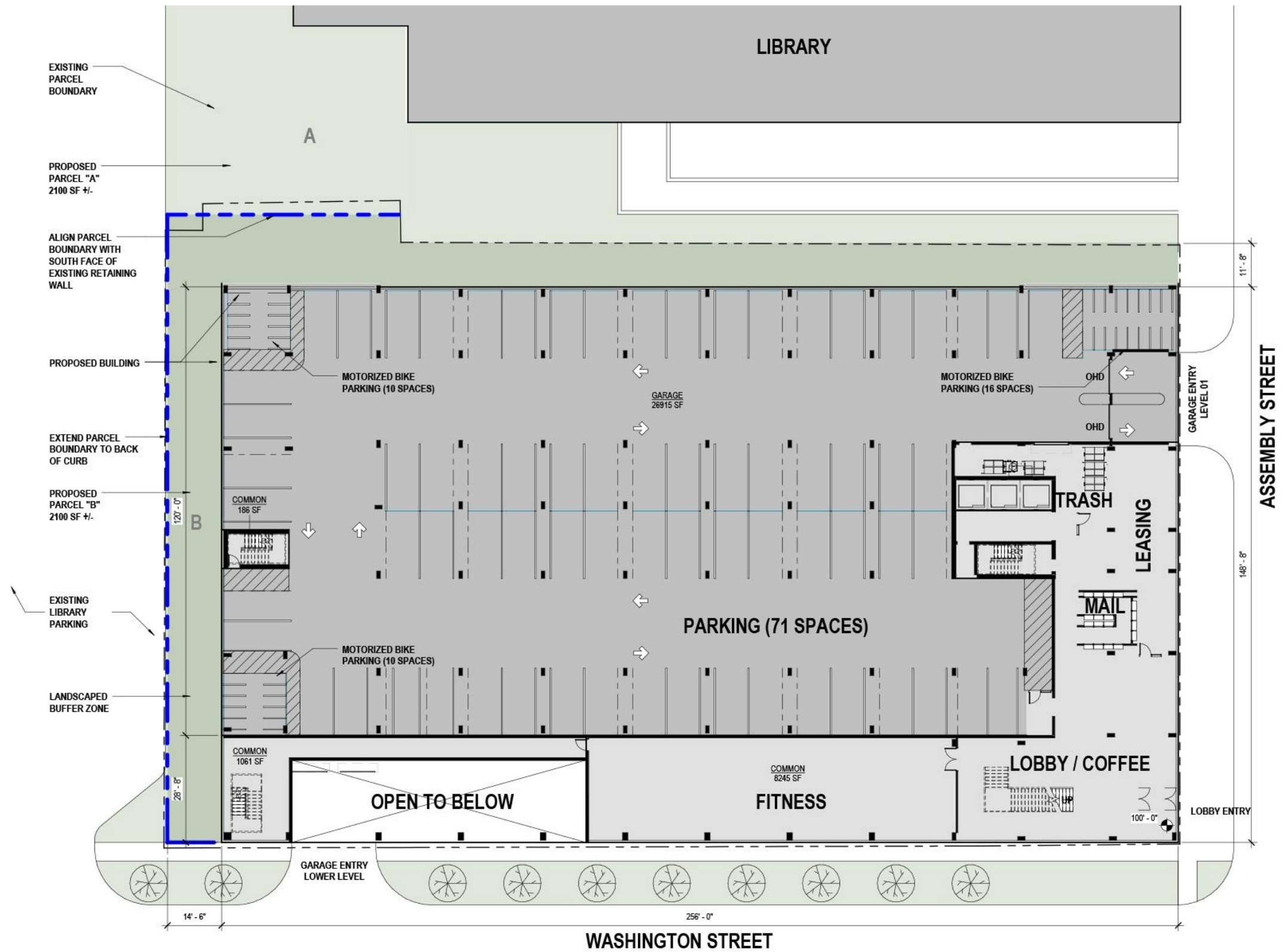
BIRD'S EYE FROM NORTHEAST



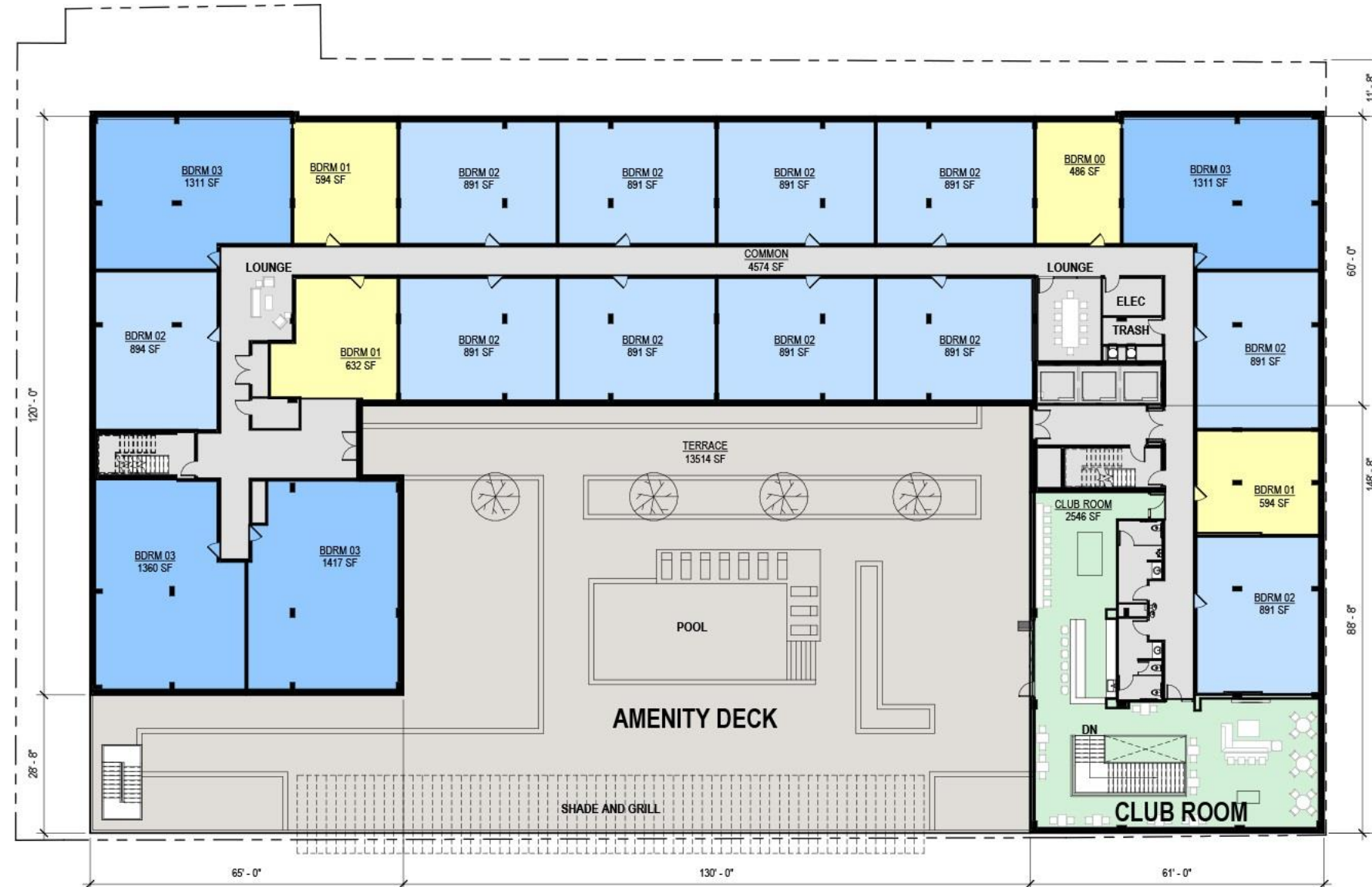


PLAN - LEVEL LL  
1/16" = 1'-0"





PLAN - LEVEL 01  
1/16" = 1'-0"



PLAN - LEVEL 02  
1/16" = 1'-0"



PLAN - LEVEL 03 - 15  
1/16" = 1'-0"





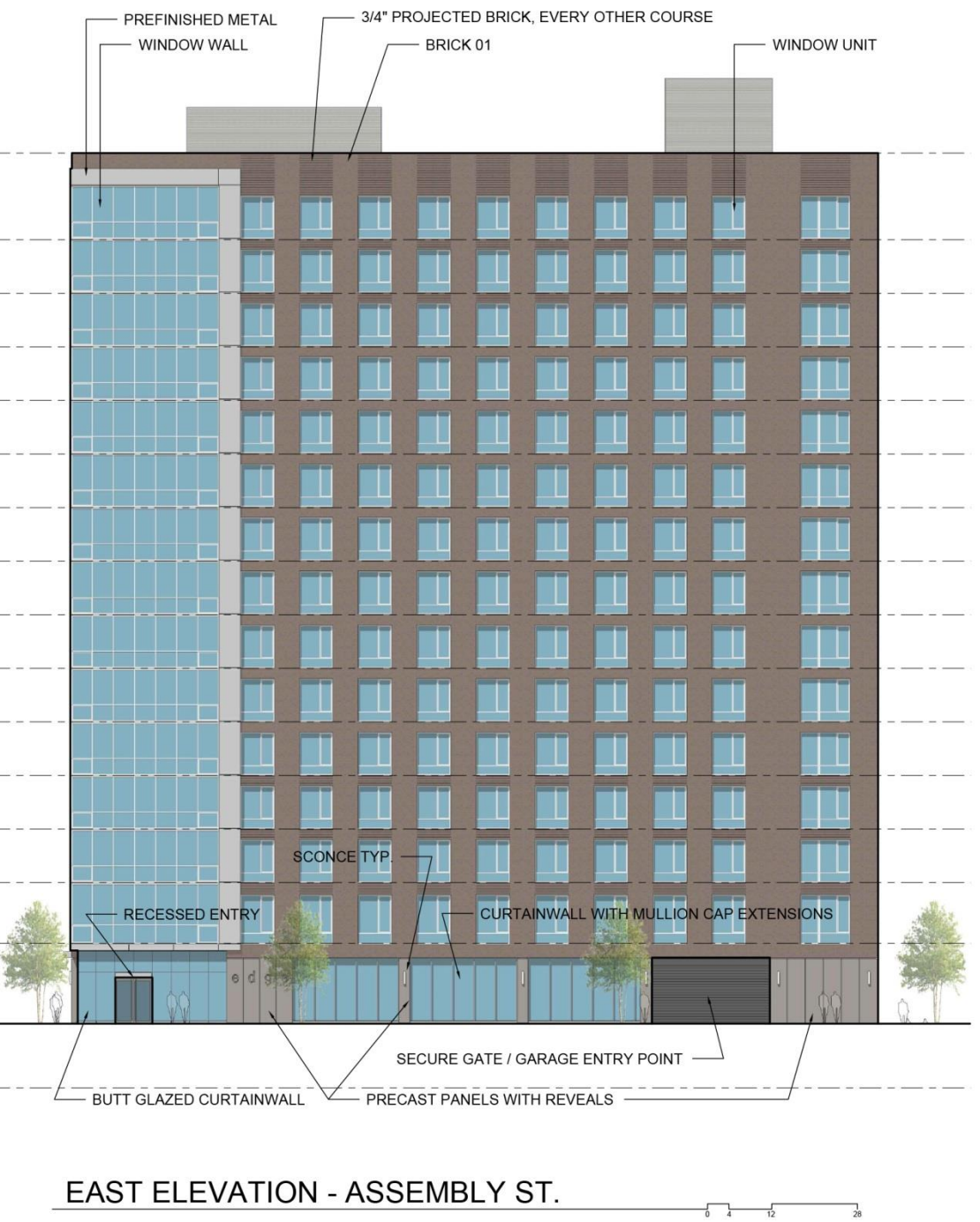
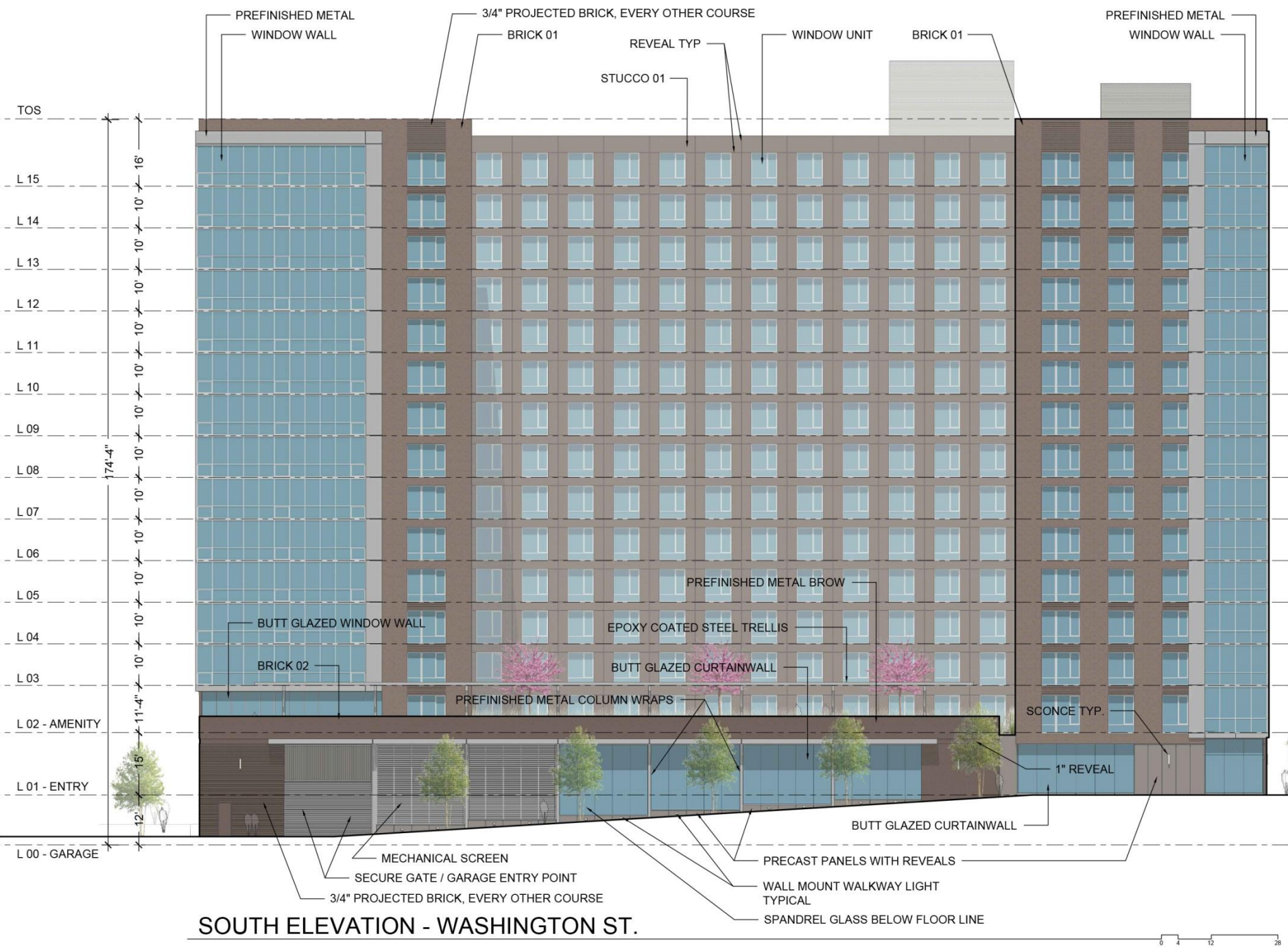




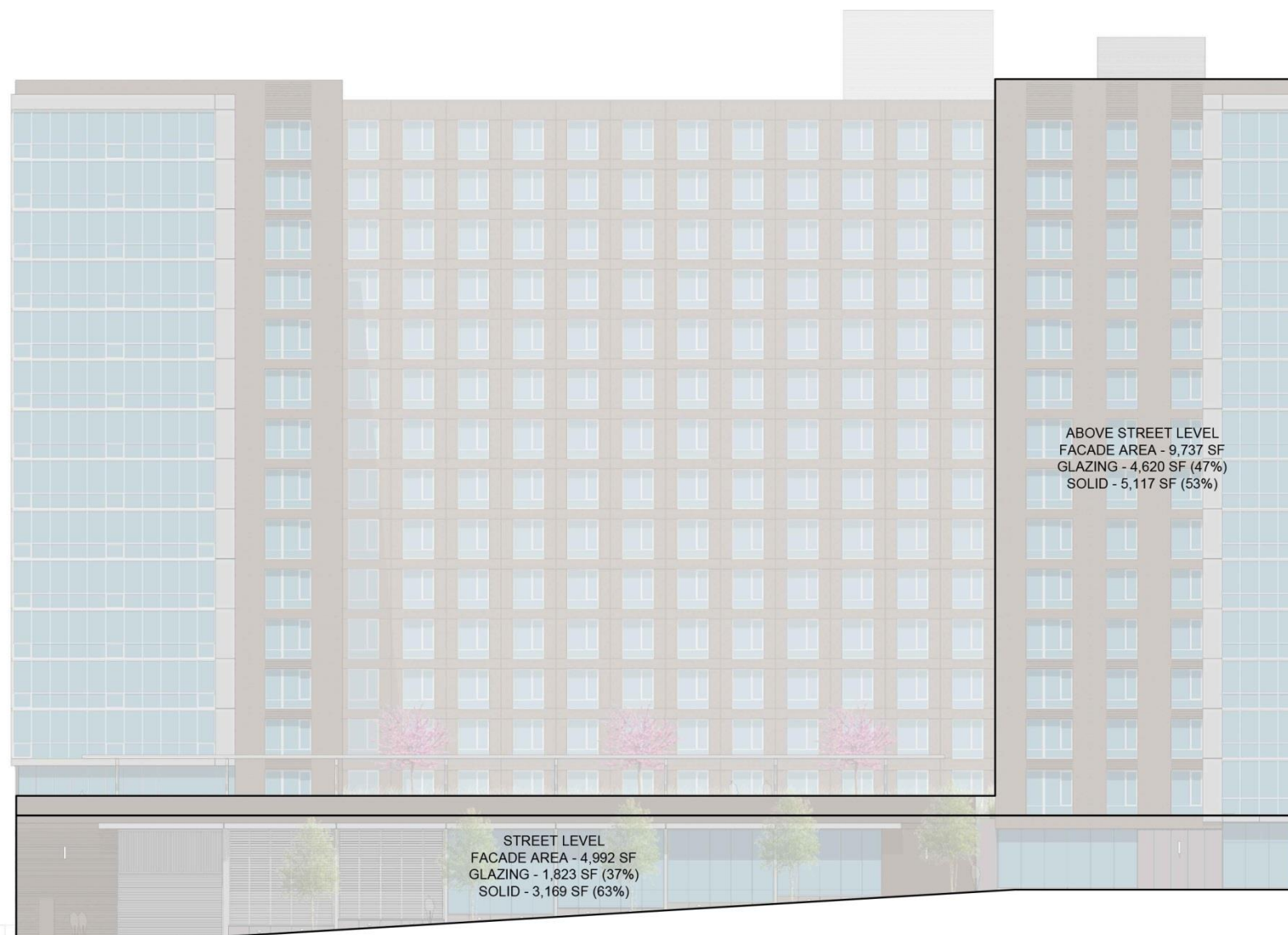






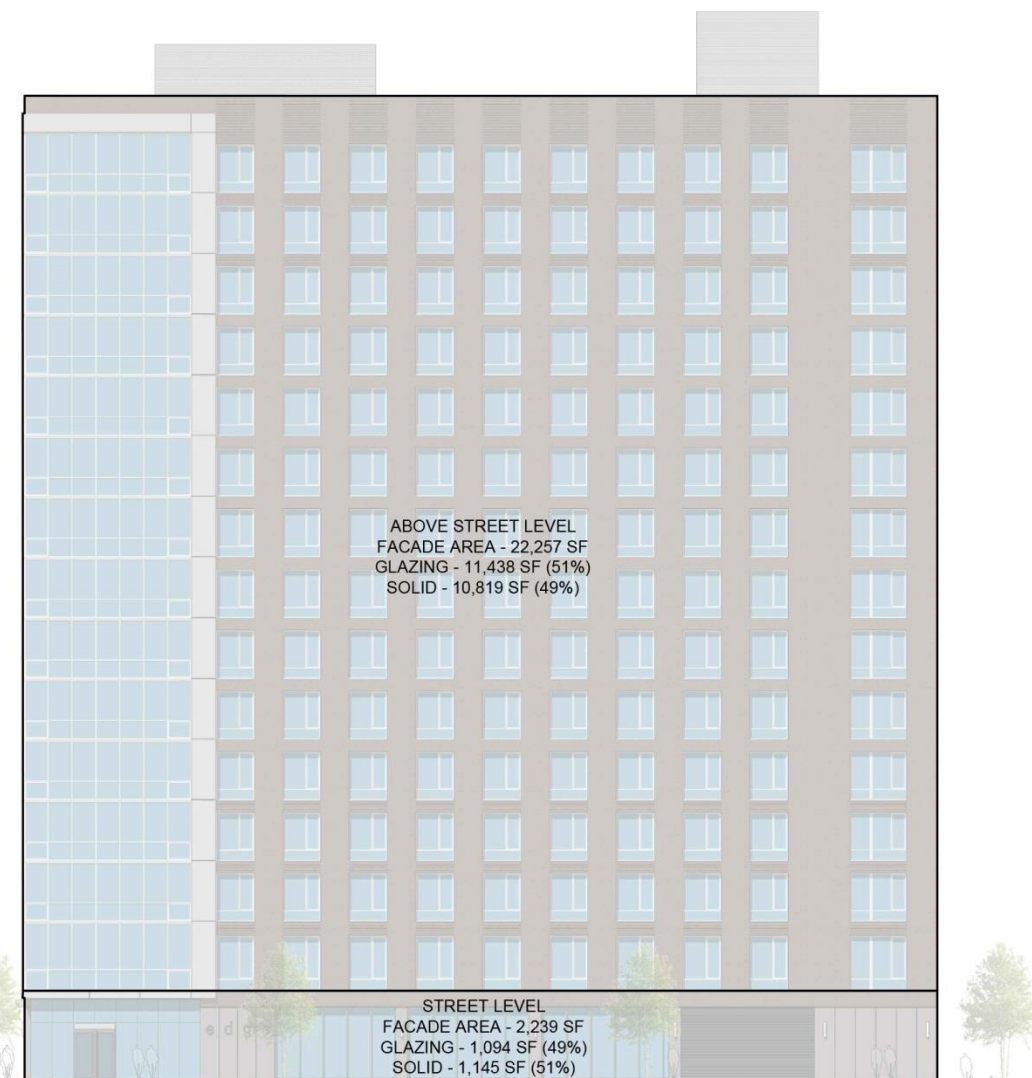






SOUTH ELEVATION - WASHINGTON ST.

0 4 12 28



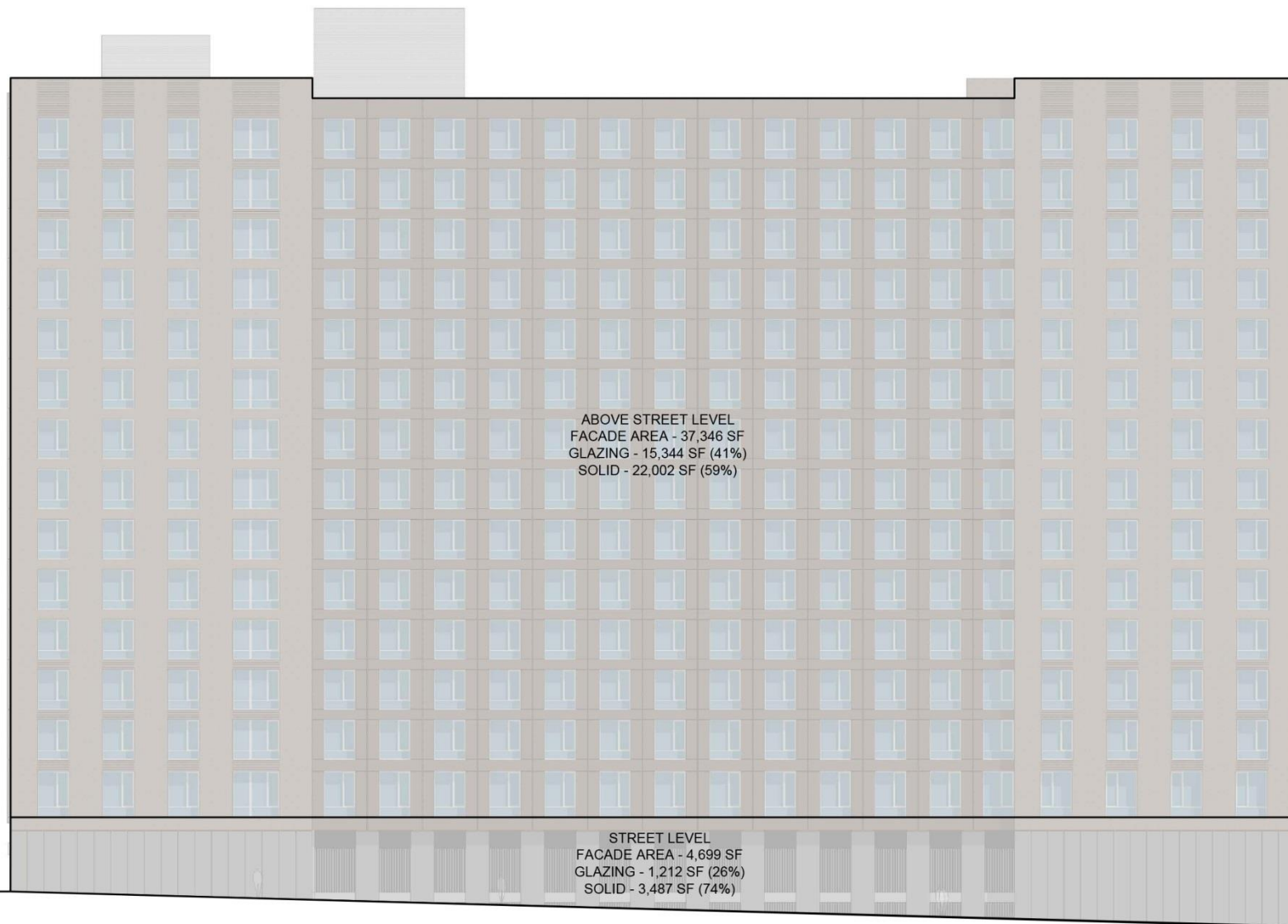
EAST ELEVATION - ASSEMBLY ST.

0 4 12 28

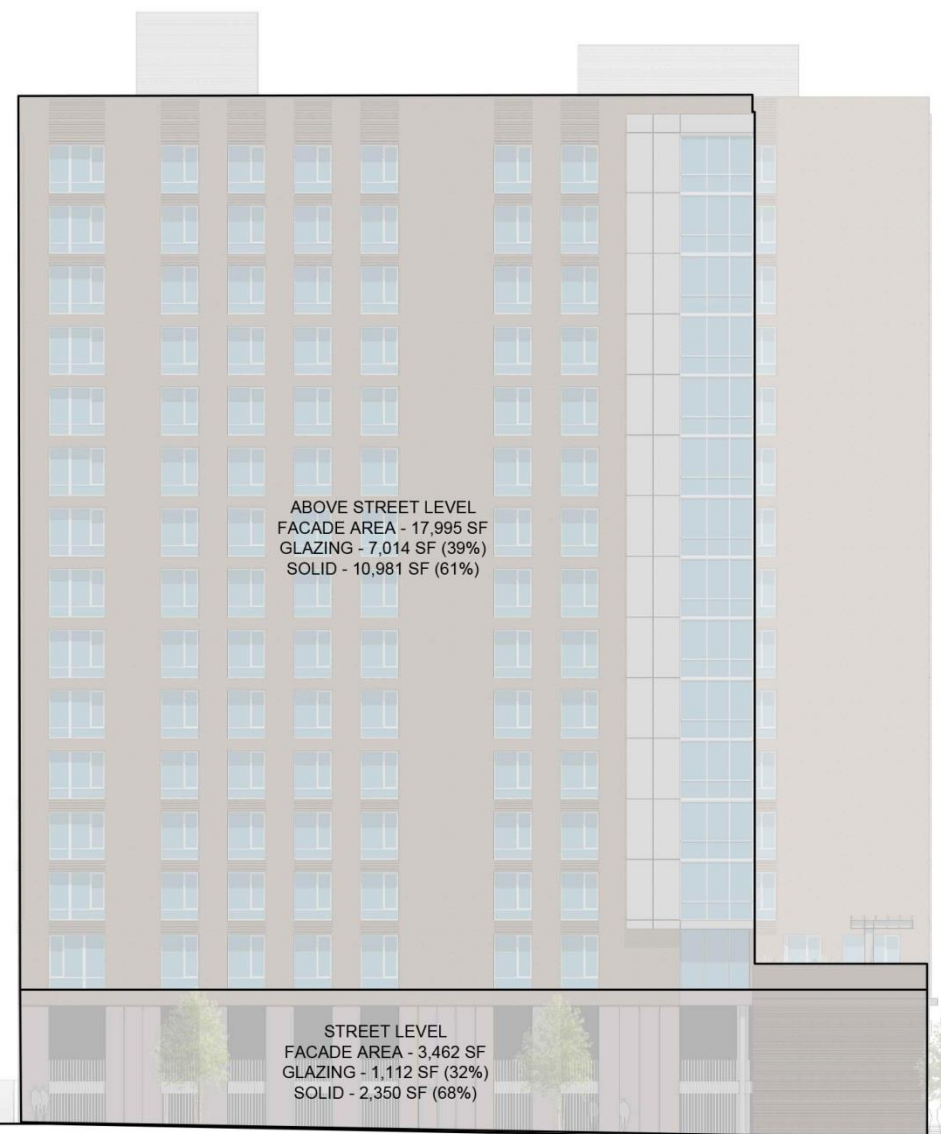
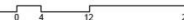




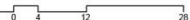




NORTH ELEVATION

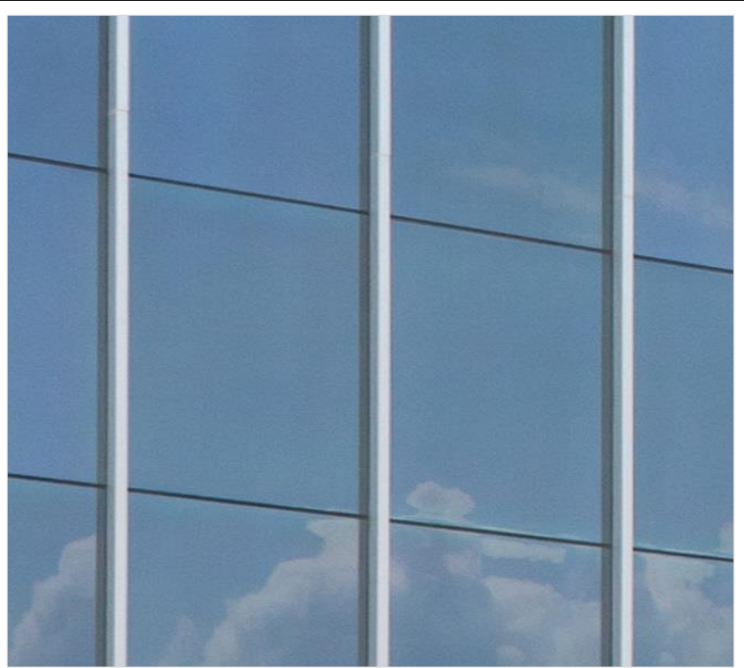


WEST ELEVATION





Storefront



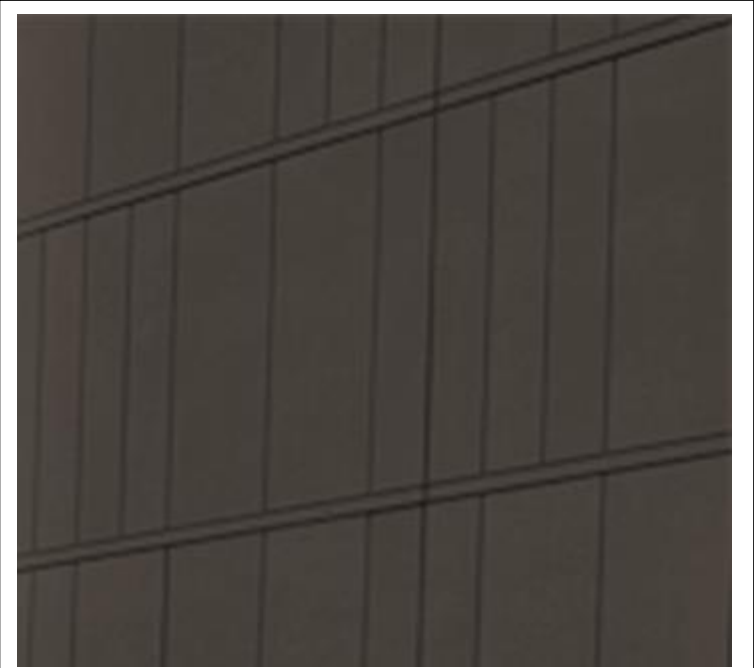
Brick 01



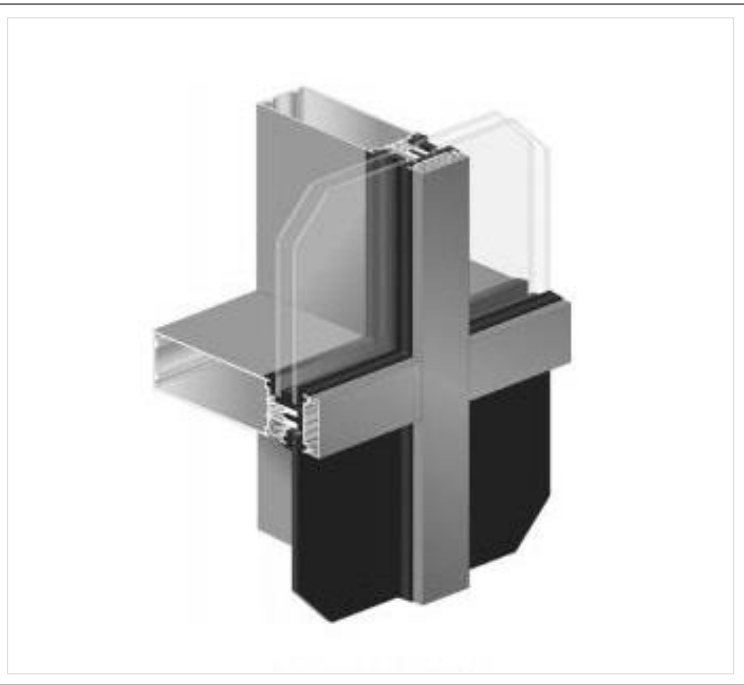
Brick 02



Stucco With Reveals



Storefront Cap Detail



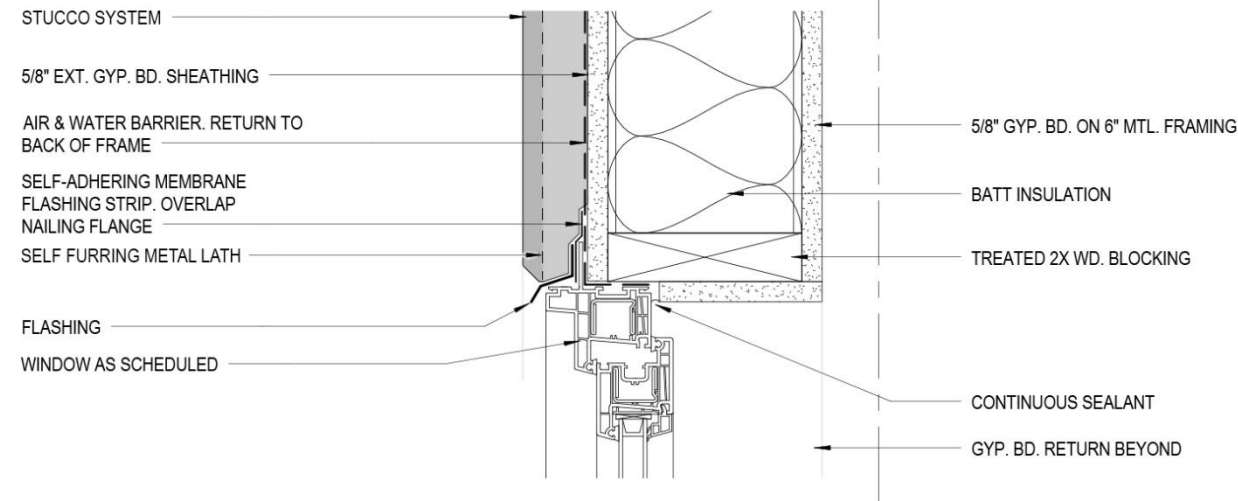
Storefront Wall Butt / Cap Detail



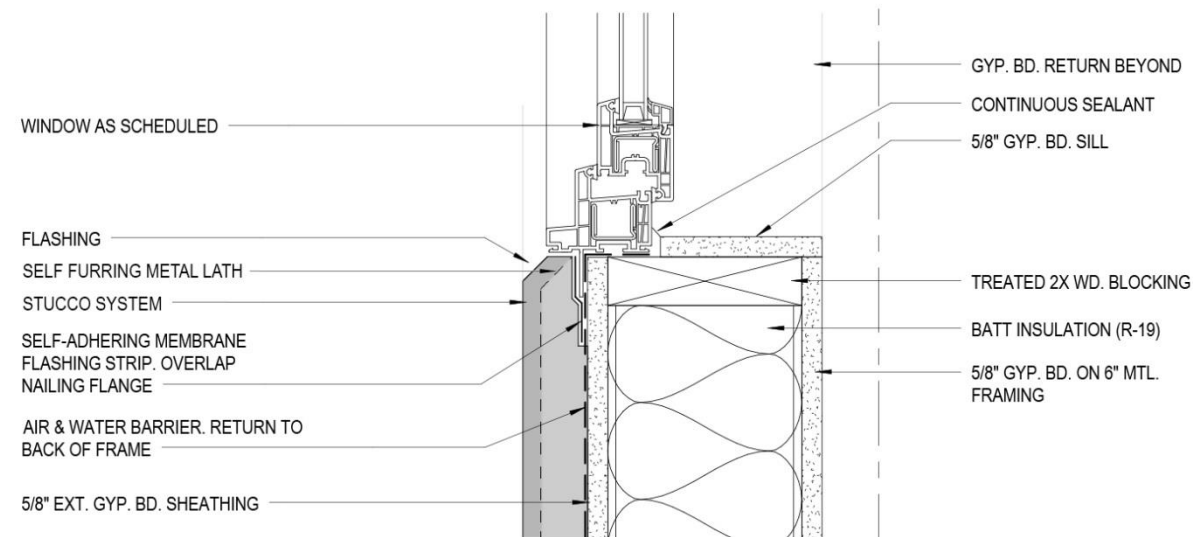
Punched Opening Profile



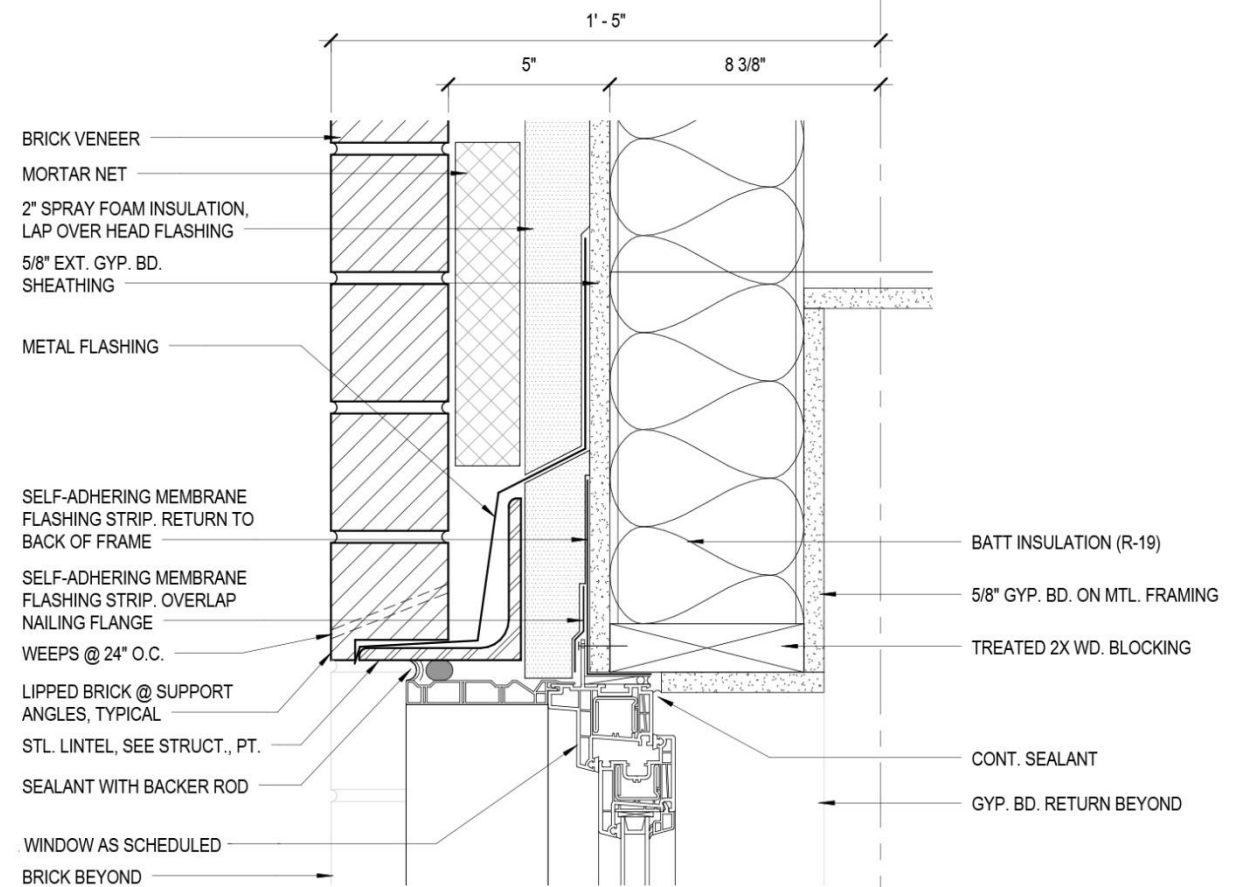




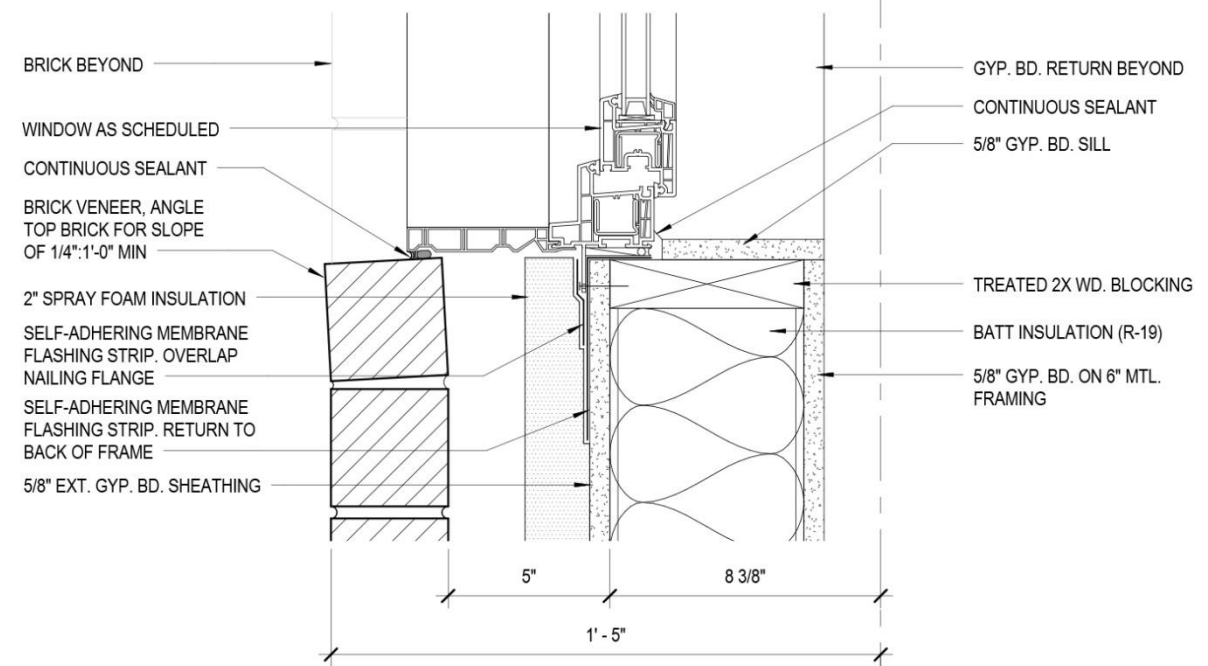
DTL @ WINDOW HEAD @ STUCCO  
3" = 1'-0"



DTL @ WINDOW SILL @ STUCCO  
3" = 1'-0"



DTL @ WINDOW HEAD @ BRICK  
3" = 1'-0"



DTL @ WINDOW SILL @ BRICK  
3" = 1'-0"