D/DRC Case

933 Main Street

City Center/Design Development District

TMS: 08916-06-03

DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
EVALUATION SHEET
Case # 3

ADDRESS: **933 Main Street**

APPLICANT: Ford Elliot, owner

TAX MAP REFERENCE:

USE OF PROPERTY: **surface parking adjacent to restaurant, coffee shop**

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

NATURE OF REQUEST: Request for Certificate of Design Approval for new construction

PROJECT SUMMARY:
This proposal is for a new residential apartment building over parking on the parcel with the former Nickelodeon Theater and Immaculate Consumption. The existing building will remain.

STAFF COMMENTS:

5.2 Architectural Style of Theme & 5.3 Building Mass and Organization

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

The four-story, brick building is compatible in style and scale to the existing building on the site.

- *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.*

The first level of the building is actually open-air parking on a podium, with the apartment building above. The applicant has proposed a number of architectural treatments to disguise the parking as a first floor, which will be described in greater detail later.

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.*

The building does provide some residential density in place of surface parking.

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.*

While larger in scale, the proposed building has a horizontal orientation, with bays to break up the massing.

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 proposal includes storefront-appearance windows across the majority of the façade. The driveway entrances do not contribute to percentage of openings or to the streetscape. Calculations for the upper stories have not been provided, however the proportions appear to be close to what is expected. The architect shall provide percentage calculations prior to final approval.

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 is fairly well articulated, given the use of the first level. The masonry piers help to create a foundation to the building, despite the lack of an enclosed first floor.

- *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.*

The piers, storefront glass, bulkhead, and transom help to break up the street wall façade.

- *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 display windows do help to add interest to the first floor. Critical to their success will be how they are utilized. More detail should be provided as to whether these are glass display cabinets for art (recommended), spandrel glass (not recommended), clear glass (not recommended), or some other treatment that will help to activate the pedestrian realm.

5.3.6 Roofs and Upper Stories

- *Roofs may be flat or sloped. The visible portion of sloped roofs should be sheathed with a roofing material complementary to the architectural style of the building and other surrounding buildings.*

The roof is flat, consistent with the style of the building and with the adjacent building on the parcel.

- *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).*

Information about roof-mounted utility equipment has not yet been provided. This should be reviewed when it becomes available.

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 setback of the building's podium is at the lot line, consistent with the guidelines. The upper floors have been set back about four feet to accommodate the required distance from the overhead distribution line. This creates an awkward building section, however there is not enough space on the property to set the first floor façade back with the upper stories.

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

The building is oriented toward the street, although the first floor is not activated. The door shown on the first level does operate as a pedestrian entrance into the parking level. The building is oriented parallel to the street.

5.6 Landscaping

- *The streetscape, which is installed and maintained by the public sector, is the most important landscape element in City Center, as described in Chapter 4. There will, however, be many opportunities for landscaping in conjunction with private development…These guidelines supplement the guidelines presented in Chapter 4; they do not replace them. In other words, private development projects incorporating the features addressed in Chapter 4 (e.g. parking structures and lots) will have to comply with the Chapter 4 guidelines related to those features.*

There is no space on tis lot for landscaping. While a couple of street trees are present on Pendleton, there may be an opportunity for another tree or two in the right-of-way. This should be coordinated with the land development planner through site plan review process.

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 entrance to the building does address the sidewalk by providing a door with a canopy, which leads through the parking area to a rear star and elevator bay.

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 window design is critical to the success of this storefront. The bulkhead appears to be 18-24", consistent with the guidelines. The applicant should coordinate with staff and possibly One Columbia for Arts and History to come up with a reasonable solution to the storefront display area.

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]

More detail should be provided about any fixtures at the street level that could help add interest to the street-level façade.

5.7.2 Exterior Walls/Materials

- *The design elements for exterior walls involve 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 trawled), new or used face-brick, cut stone, rusticated block (cast stone)…

The primary material, brick, is recommended for City Center and consistent with the adjacent building. Given the proximity, brick color should be reviewed for compatibility. More detailed information about the panels between the balconies and where EFIS is detailed should be provided.

5.8 The Upper Facade

- *The upper façade of a building is distinct from the street-level storefront, and the design qualities differ. The upper façade consists of the following components: the cornice and fascia that cap the building front; the building's upper stories; the windows, which provide articulation and interest to the upper architecture; and the piers, which extend to the ground level to visually support the façade and frame the storefront. The more massive, solid architecture of the upper façade gives the building its feeling of substance and expresses its architectural quality and character. As a result, the design treatment, materials, and conditions of the upper façade play an important role in defining the architectural style of the building and in relating it to neighboring buildings in the block face. The following paragraphs provide general guidance for the development and/or renovations of the upper façades of buildings in City Center.*

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.*

The cornice provides a top to the building. The portions of the parapet that are on the on the brick bays do appear tall and slightly out of proportion to the scale 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 primary material of brick is consistent with the guidelines and with the neighboring structures.

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 upper story windows are adequate in scale and number to provide articulation to the upper façade. The farthest bay to the east, while nicely proportioned, has a separation between the windows that is not consistent with the window pattern on the rest of the building.

5.8.4 Piers

- *The piers that frame the storefront and visually anchor the upper façade play an essential role in creating the unified architectural framework which organizes the street level's visual diversity. Where these piers have been eliminated or reduced in size, the architectural definition of the façade will be weak and the upper architecture inadequately balanced. The piers width and spacing should give support to the façade. Piers which segment the storefront are recommended on wide buildings to improve proportional balance. To emphasize the piers' integral role in defining the architectural character of the upper façade, they should be treated with the same surface material.*

The piers are a critical part of making the first floor a believable base to the building. The applicant has rearranged the floor plans to align the piers with the

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 first level of the building is not actively programmed. While this portion of Pendleton is not currently an active streetscape, it is an important block across from the State House and in the critical section between Main Street and Assembly.

- *Any parking structure which is located adjacent to a street should be set back a minimum of 6 feet and a maximum of ten feet from the sidewalk. This setback should be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and ground cover to soften views of the structure, provide visual interest and establish a sense of human scale.*

The parking, taking up the first level, is adjacent to the property line. The dimensions are so tight that there is no room for landscape screening. The portion of the parking that projects beyond the façade does have a green-screen fence to screen the parking from the sidewalk.

- *Structured parking configured as a base level podium supporting a high-rise tower should not be permitted.*

While this is not a high-rise tower, the base-level podium with apartments above is still contrary to the guidelines. While the façade is somewhat masking the surface parking the lack of building mass at the corner makes it difficult to read as a base to the building. Possible adding some volume to the upper floors at the southwest corner of the building and visually integrating it with the parking screen wall that projects to the west could help visually support the upper floors of the building.

- *The architectural treatment of parking structures should be compatible in quality, form, materials, colors, and textures with the structure(s) being served.*

The first floor has been designed as much as possible to be architecturally compatible with the buildings upper floors.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The applicant has addressed a number of issues and is closer in line with the design guidelines. There are still significant concerns with the podium parking, both in terms of how the building reads visually from the street, as well as from a precedent-setting standpoint. If the following items can be addressed, staff recommends a conditional approval of the request.

- The storefront display windows be further developed to include what will be displayed, etc. possibly with One Columbia for Arts and History
- The upper floor fenestration calculations be provided;
- The pairs of windows at the eastern end of the front façade be placed consistent with the pairs on the western end;
- The parapet be lowered slightly to be in-scale with the façade;
- Brick color and other trim detail material samples be provided;
- More information about storefront details, fixtures, and any roof-mounted utility equipment be provided;
- The western end of the building be modified to provide a more solid appearance at the base.

Pendleton Street Elevation

Scale: ¼" = 1'-0"

0 2' 4' 8' 12' 16'

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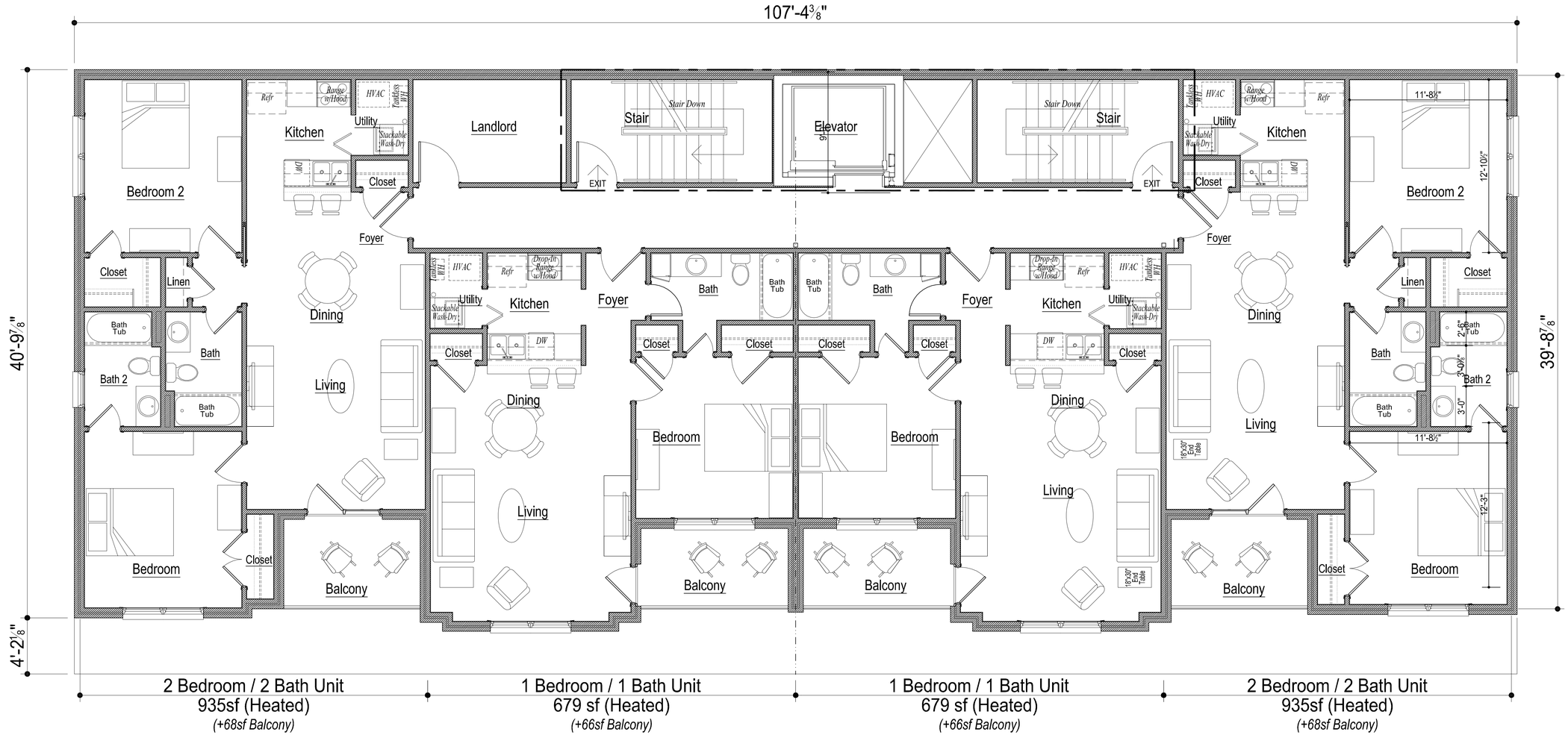
Lofts at the Capitol

Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina

Pendleton Street Elevation

Sheet No.
SD-1
August 9, 2016



Apartment Level Floor Plan (Levels 2-4)

Scale: ¼" = 1'-0"

0 2' 4' 8' 12' 16'

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Floor Plan (Levels 2-4)

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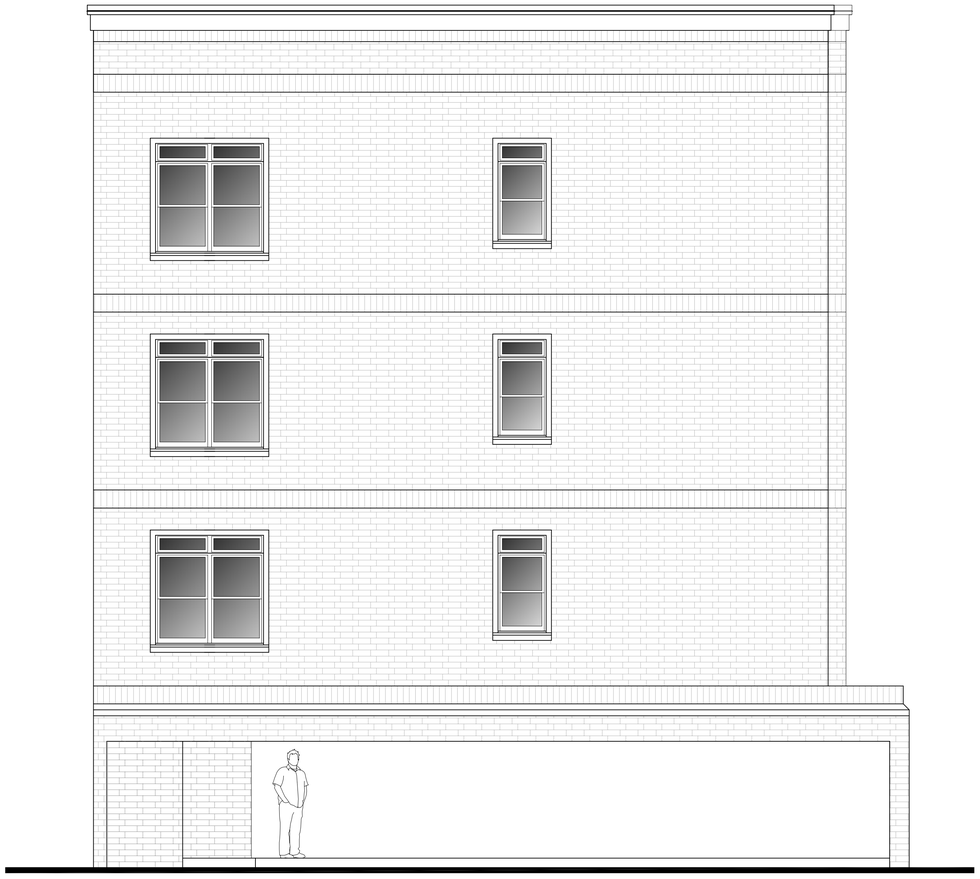
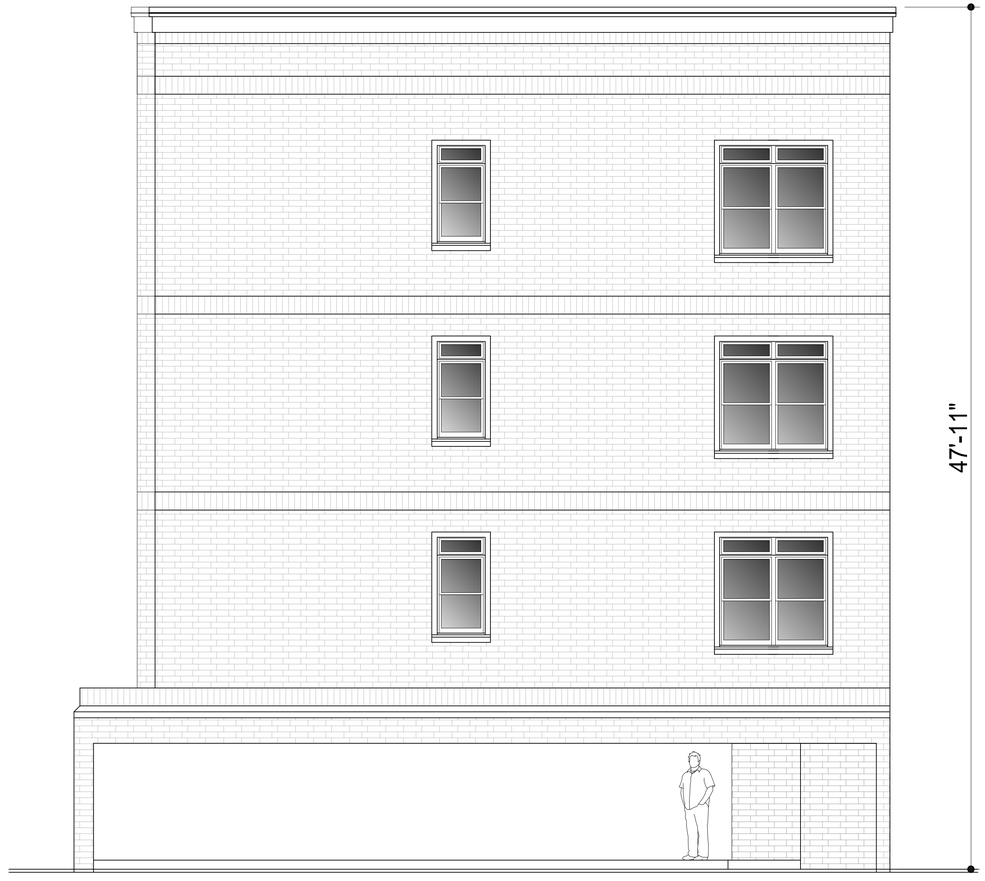


East Elevation *(Facing Main Street)*

Scale: ¼" = 1'-0"

0 2' 4' 8' 12' 16'



West Elevation *(Facing Power RoW)*

Scale: ¼" = 1'-0"

0 2' 4' 8' 12' 16'

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Side Elevations

Sheet No.

SD-3

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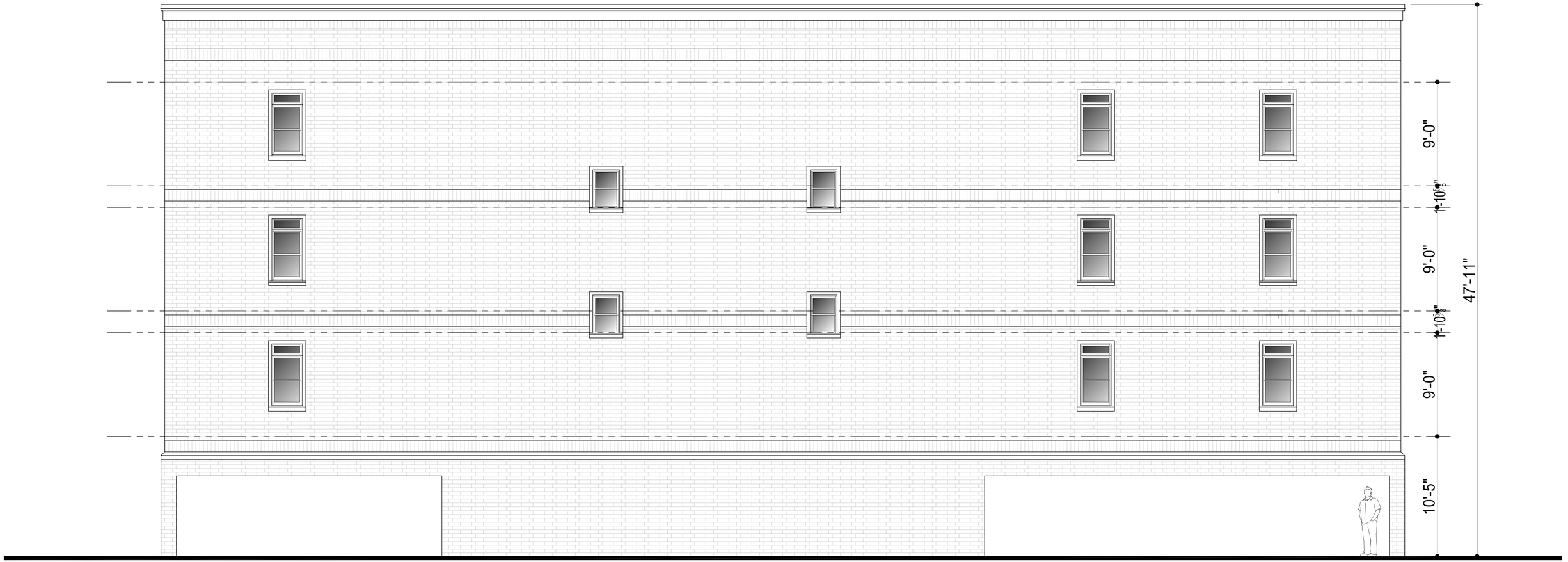

South Building Elevation

Scale: ¼" = 1'-0"

0 2' 4' 8' 12' 16'

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Pendleton Street
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South Building Elevation

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SD-4
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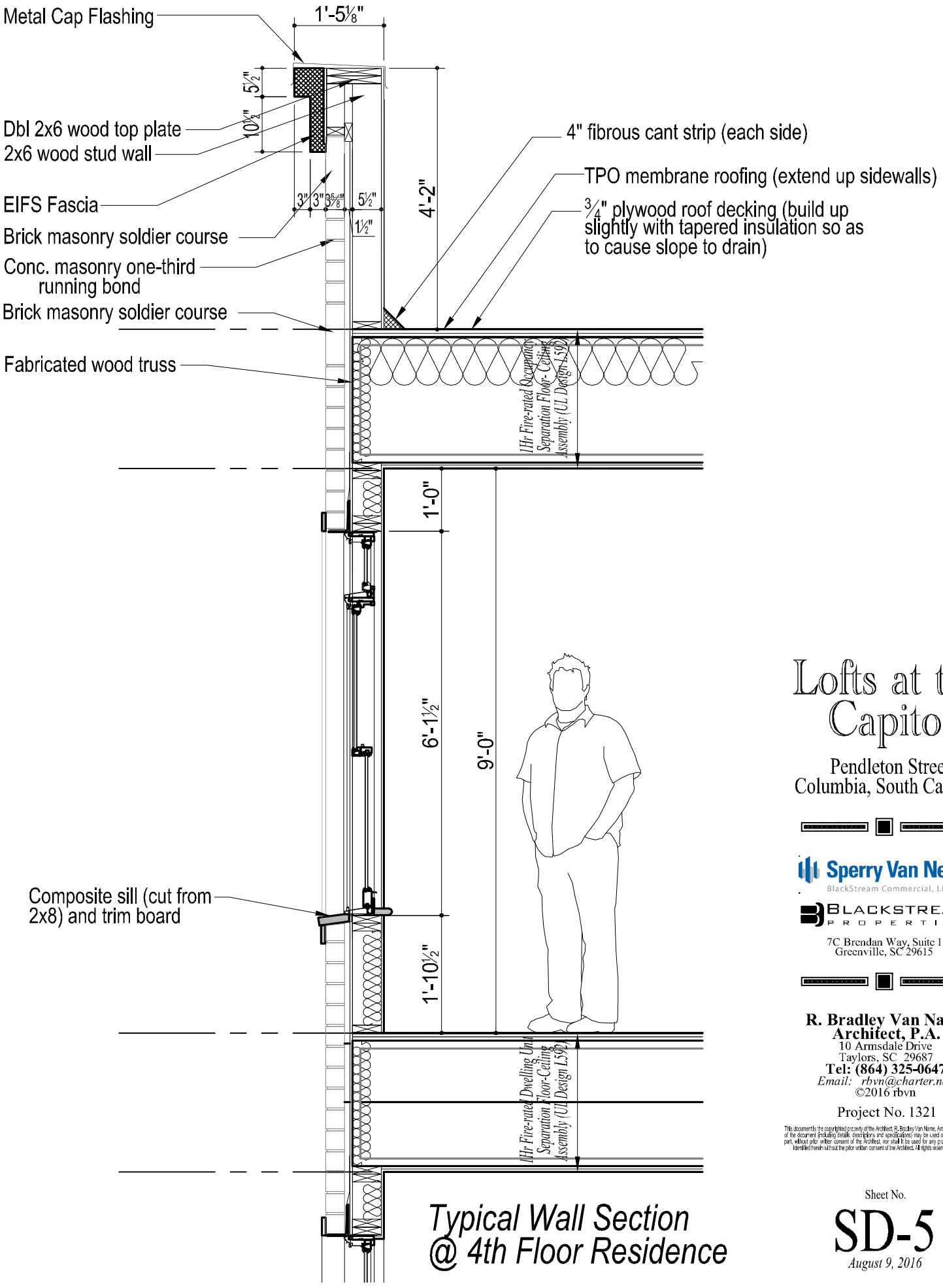

Typical Wall Section @ 4th Floor Residence

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Sheet No.

SD-5

August 9, 2016

Pendleton Street Streetscape

Scale: ⅛" = 1'-0"

0 4' 8' 16' 24' 32'

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Pendleton Street Streetscape

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