

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MARCH 12, 2014

**TO:** CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT  
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

**FROM:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

**SUBJECT:** WORK SESSION COMMENTS ON 220 SOUTH UNION STREET  
BAR CASE #2014-0037 and 2013-0321

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### **I. UPDATE**

At the March 5, 2014 Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review (BAR) hearing, the BAR considered the application for a Permit to Demolish and a Certificate of Appropriateness for 220 South Union Street. The applicant gave a presentation with additional information and schemes prepared in response to comments raised in the staff report. The BAR also heard testimony from the public on the project. Recognizing that the BAR members needed extensive time to discuss and consider the proposal and revisions, the BAR voted to defer the application for further study and requested a work session with the applicant as soon as possible.

What follows is an analysis of the applicant's supplemental materials provided at the March 5 hearing in response to the recommendations in the previous staff report. The sheet numbers on the attached supplemental drawings generally correspond with the Staff Report Recommendation numbers noted below and in the March 5<sup>th</sup> staff report.

### **II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

**Staff Report Recommendation #1:** *That the project read as three distinct but compatible building masses and that the materials, colors and details be standardized for each building. This includes a uniform color scheme, fenestration and architectural details for each "building"; the addition of the gable form on The Strand carried through to the western terminus of that building mass; as well as refinement of the courtyard elevation shown as "2a" in Figure 3.*

The three building scheme is discussed in more detail in Recommendation #2 below.

The applicant has provided perspectives showing that the recommended west gable end would only be minimally visible to pedestrians from the Duke and Lee Street intersection a block away and may not read coherently with the rest of that portion of the building. However, the rooftop mechanical equipment still must be screened with material that is equal in quality to the building

wall. The applicant has, therefore, suggested, and staff supports, extending the brick wall of the elevator penthouse. The applicant has also represented that the rooftop equipment has been gathered in the center of the roof and will not be visible to pedestrians from any other locations. The Board may, therefore, consider waiving the rooftop mechanical equipment screening. The gable on the Strand elevation will be functional screening and the framing behind that roof will be further studied by the applicant.

**Current Recommendation: That the Board evaluate the option of an expanded elevator penthouse as rooftop mechanical screening and the potential for waiving a portion of the rooftop mechanical screening at the work session.**

**Staff Report Recommendation #2:** *That each building form continue to be simplified, standardized and coordinated among all elevations. For example, the windows at the corner of the three-story South Union Street building should match on both the South Union and Duke Street elevations.*

Sheet 2A of the applicant's additional materials shows this improvement for the corner at South Union and Duke streets. Staff strongly supports the change.

Previously, the applicant and staff supported a three building mass overall design but, in an effort to continue to simplify and standardize the overall design, staff now suggests that a two "building" scheme may be more appropriate. Such a scheme retains the three-story South Union Street element in red brick and joins the larger warehouse elements into one cohesive building mass which features a common tan color brick and other common architectural elements. This helps address the question of how the buildings adjoin one another and when design elements and materials should change, minimizing false building elements or relationships.

**Current Recommendation: A simplified two building scheme.**

**Staff Report Recommendation #3:** *That the pitched roof of the main warehouse building be set back from the building face and slope to the maximum extent possible in order to minimize visibility from the Duke Street sidewalk and that the roof windows be low profile with the frame and glass color designed to match the roof color as closely as possible. The applicant must provide a large scale wall section of the Duke Street elevation and provide enlarged details of the cornices and brick corbels for all elevations.*

The roof windows in the most recent renderings appear to be low profile with a frame and glass that match the roof color. The applicant will bring wall sections to the work session for the Board to study the perceived roof pitch, setback, cornice and corbel details.

**Current Recommendation: Evaluate the details provided at the work session to confirm they confirm the design intent previously expressed by City Council and the BAR.**

**Staff Report Recommendation #4:** *That The Strand elevation be refined, as it will be the most prominent elevation—eliminate the spandrel panels and explore the use of French doors and shallow balconies to create an architectural dialogue with the waterfront parks.*

The applicant prepared three studies of this elevation and removed the spandrels. Staff strongly supports removal of the spandrel panels. The inclusion of French doors on this elevation provide for a much stronger connection with the future waterfront park. Staff supports either glass or metal railings but believes the metal railings more successfully reflect a contemporary version of the 18<sup>th</sup> century wheat sheaf porch railings found in Old Town.

**Current Recommendation: French doors with iron railings on The Strand elevation**

**Staff Report Recommendation #5:** *That the applicant provide an enlarged schematic wall section at the “lanterns” on The Strand elevation to indicate the interior ceiling conditions and potential for architectural lighting.*

Staff and many citizens have strongly supported the current modern and minimalist design for the lanterns. The applicant indicated that the intention was to maintain transparency of the lanterns and to minimize the exterior visibility of the interior ceilings and mechanical equipment. These details may be confirmed by the Board at the work session. At the previous hearing, a member of the public asked for details and material clarification of the spandrels and balcony rail. The applicant has confirmed that the spandrels and balcony rail are metal and will provide these details for the Board’s review.

**Current Recommendation: Review the section and details of lantern elements to confirm compliance with the Board’s design intent.**

**Staff Report Recommendation #6:** *That the applicant submit a comprehensive sign plan and a comprehensive architectural lighting plan.*

The applicant has noted that as conversations continue with the hotel brand and restaurant, that a comprehensive sign plan will be proposed separately at a later date. No signage will be permitted or administratively approved until a comprehensive sign plan is reviewed and approved by the BAR.

The applicant has submitted a preliminary site and architectural lighting plan. Full specifications of the various fixtures will be submitted in the future.

**Current Recommendation: Return to BAR at a later date for comprehensive sign plan and light fixture selection.**

**Staff Report Recommendation #7:** *That the applicant resubmit a materials board including an additional brick sample. The applicant must also construct a full size mock-up panel, as*

*required by the DSUP condition, to be approved by BAR staff and Development staff prior to ordering of materials.*

In response to the staff report, the applicant rendered Building 3 in a third brick color. As discussed in Recommendation #2, staff believes that a two “building” scheme using only two principal brick colors can be successful and staff no longer requests a third brick sample. The applicant has agreed to construct a full size mock-up panel prior to ordering of final materials.

**Current Recommendation: That the two building scheme be adopted using only two primary brick colors.**

**Staff Report Recommendation #8:** *That the applicant show the location and size of all exterior vents and similar mechanical appurtenances.*

The applicant has clarified that there will be very few vents on the exterior walls and will provide this information at the work session.

**Current Recommendation: Show vents, where they exist, on building elevations.**

**Staff Report Recommendation #9:** *That the applicant provide a roof plan locating all mechanical equipment, illustrating how any rooftop projections above 50 feet function as chimneys and equipment screening with architectural quality equal to the building walls below. Continue to study and architecturally integrate the proposed HVAC screening.*

As described in Recommendation #1, the applicant has refined the roof plan and the area proposed for penthouses and mechanical equipment has been reduced and located in the center of the roof. Additional details on equipment size must be provided to confirm public visibility. Staff believes there is an opportunity to further study the rooftop screening to minimize the screening. For example, expansion of the elevator penthouse brick wall on the west end and a framed structure behind the east end gable can sufficiently serve as screening.

**Current Recommendation: Continue to study rooftop HVAC placement and provide high quality screening or waive screening where appropriate.**

**Additional Staff Report Miscellaneous Recommendations #10:**

The applicant prepared additional materials based in response to staff comments in the body of the March 5<sup>th</sup> report.

The applicant studied two alternatives for the first story windows, each with larger panes than the previously proposed scheme. Staff finds both restudies to be successful and supports either of the alternative schemes, recommending that the preferable design may be one that works best with the window’s operability and/or to further distinguish the two building types. For example, the more transparent, open window may be more suitable with the three-story building on South

Union Street at the lobby and the other large-paned window may be compatible with the larger warehouse character building on Duke Street and The Strand.

The applicant also studied options for the fourth floor windows in the frieze band on the Duke Street elevation. Staff supports the direction in the alternatives but does not find the restudied fourth floor windows to go far enough to be completely successful. Staff recommends that the windows in this location read as distinct from but compatible with the windows below and that the frieze have a more transparent and clerestory-like form.

**Current Recommendation: Restudy fourth story windows on Duke Street.**

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**PARTIAL DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MARCH 5, 2014 BAR HEARING.**

**1. CASE BAR2014-0037**

Request for complete demolition at **220 South Union Street**

APPLICANT: Carr Hospitality by Rust Orling Architecture

BOARD ACTION: **Deferred for restudy, 5-0-1 (Mr. Neale abstained).**

Discussion of this item was combined with item #2, below.

**2. CASE BAR2013-0321**

Request for new construction at **220 South Union Street**

APPLICANT: Carr Hospitality by Rust Orling Architecture

BOARD ACTION: **Deferred for restudy, 5-0-1 (Mr. Neale abstained).**

**SPEAKERS**

Austin Flajser, Carr Hospitality, spoke in support of the project.

Mark Orling, project architect, spoke in support of the project. He also made a brief presentation addressing the comments raised in the staff report. He presented additional information and study on the following:

1. Study of adding gable at west end (applicant did not support this);
2. Revised drawings to have same windows at corner of Duke and South Union streets (applicant supports);
3. Will provide additional details at a later time (applicant supports);
4. Study of The Strand elevation with French doors with either metal or glass railings and a study with same windows from Duke Street elevation (applicant thought French doors and railings made fenestration too busy and expressed a preference for punched windows matching Duke Street);
5. Agreed that the lanterns will read as a glass element with minimal interior conflicts;
6. Will postpone sign plan and will soon provide a lighting plan;
7. Changed brick color of Building 3 to a terra cotta color (applicant prefers two color bricks instead of three);
8. Will show vent locations at the next submission. A garage vent will be located in the courtyard;
9. Mechanical equipment will be located on roof and area will be centralized and reduced;

10. Additional comments from report:

- a. Study of two additional options with larger panes for ground floor windows (applicant supports all three)
- b. Loading dock door will look like warehouse board and batten door and will provide additional details
- c. Commented that a clerestory with piers at the fourth floor results in too much fenestration and not compatible with geometry of rooms

Bert Ely, 200 South Pitt Street, expressed concern with the proposal and supported deferral. He had major issues with the design finding it too massive for the site.

Michael Jennings, 10 Potomac Court, expressed concern that the size would overwhelm nearby townhouses. He supported a deferral to coordinate with the redevelopment of Robinson Terminal South.

Kathryn Papp, 504 Cameron Street, expressed concern with the size and design, finding it too static and plain. She questioned whether the Planning Commission acted within its purview.

Poul Hertel, 1217 Michigan Court, generally supported the plan but had many concerns including the top floor on Duke Street, the French doors on The Strand, and the details of the glass lanterns.

Beth Gibney, 300 South Lee Street, expressed concern for the project and recommended looking at the Capella Hotel in Washington, D.C. for an example of a simple design with high-quality materials.

Teschia Yonkers, 801 Rivergate Place, expressed concern finding the proposal to be incompatible, cold and lacking continuity among the three elements.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Chairman Hulfish made it clear that the mass and scale of the project were already approved by City Council and that, at this time, the BAR was only reviewing architectural details and finishes. He also noted that BAR member Mr. von Senden had submitted comments that should be included in the minutes/official record. The Chairman then noted that new information had been presented and that there was a lot for the BAR to discuss. He, therefore, recommended that the project be deferred to allow for a work session as soon as possible.

Mr. von Senden was not in attendance but submitted the following comments, which the Chairman asked be included in the minutes:

To: Chairman Hulfish and members of the Board of Architectural Review  
From: John C. von Senden, AIA  
Regarding: BAR Case 2014-0037 – 220 South Union Street  
In my absence please consider the following comments on the above referenced case:

1. The design for the hotel continues to improve; however the application is missing all of the information needed for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The application needs a comprehensive signage plan, as well as a comprehensive lighting plan. In addition, the application should include additional drawings to show the complete exterior design. Wall sections are not shown, neither are all of the exterior elevations. And finally, the details are only conceptually shown.
2. Regarding the site plans, I'm sure there will be some paving replaced; is the intent to replace the asphalt in kind? A different pavement at the car drop-off would make sense.
3. Regarding the building mass:
  - a. The plans nicely show how the organization of the building translates to the exterior elevations. The fifth floor plan shows that the sloped section of the roof could be shallower to better reflect the historic warehouses. Rooms 507 and 512 would need to be garrets or turned into a suite with rooms 508 and 511 respectively.
  - b. Most importantly, the roof massing needs to be better developed.
  - c. The proposed screening in particular does not work aesthetically.
  - d. Sheet A8: This is the elevation one will see driving down Duke Street. The HVAC screening at the roof is a distraction. Would prefer to see the gable form from the east elevation carried throughout and reflected on the west – this would be visible coming down the hill.
  - e. Sheet A9: The roof needs to slope more – to better match the “Historic Waterfront Buildings” shown in the photographic insert. (Ideally the roof should slope at a 7:12 pitch – as that doesn't appear practical, a 12:12 slope would be acceptable; more than that would not match the historic waterfront photographic insert.
4. Regarding the building elevations:
  - a. The elevations nicely show the concept. Would need to see additional detail on the following: Cornice details (insets show concept only), Window heads and sills, Canopy details, Water table details (especially the head)
  - b. The stone water table should be a consistent elevation surrounding the building. Traditionally in Alexandria, this type of water table showed the original grade when the streets were lowered to fill in the marsh at the waterfront. Also, would prefer to see the windowsill and the water table better integrated. Like the transition from dark grey brick to stone at the water table (sheet A9); also like that they are a consistent elevation.
  - c. The window pattern on the ground level should match the doors. Also, if a certain percentage of windows need to be operable, then it would make sense to have the public space windows operable rather than room windows.
  - d. The pattern of the overhead sectional doors doesn't work. Design something that evokes the old swing-type warehouse doors, but still works with a modern overhead sectional door.
  - e. Why the dark window lintels? They read as a distraction.
  - f. The second and third level windows are successful in this elevation Sheet A9).

- g. The fourth level windows should be different. You have, however informally, a Florentine Palazzo type development here and the upper level windows should be smaller scaled – almost even square.
  - h. While the fifth floor roof windows work in concept, I'm not sure how they'll work when detailed. In this case fixed glazing to match the metal roof pans seems like it would be more successful.
  - i. The roof screening is really a distraction in this elevation (Sheet A9) (that's a polite way of saying it is ugly).
  - j. Like the green-screen on the north side (Sheet A10). The assumption is this is temporary until the adjacent building is redeveloped. What thought has been given to the future expansion of this alleyway? Should the green-screen be the same height as the adjoining structure?
  - k. Really like the horizontal pattern of the side windows. Consider using the same design for all the street side ground level windows. Consider repeating the "G1" rail at the fourth level balconies rather than the pipe rail. The pipe rail is somewhat incongruous. You appear to show windows leading to the fourth level balconies, yet show railing (and figures) in the balcony. While the doors may want to read similar to the windows, they will necessarily be different.
  - l. While this may be a minority viewpoint, I believe the double floor windows in the center are successful
  - m. Why the red brick for the inset portion (Sheet A11)? I believe you would be more successful with a consistent color. If you do want to differentiate this portion, I'd suggest a simpler cornice. This would look better and have a stronger traditional precedent.
  - n. While not in BAR purview, the perspective on Sheet A12 shows the desirability for moving overhead electrical service underground. (Not to mention it is also more reliable.)
5. Regarding lighting:
- a. What lighting will be provided for the stair to the garage? How will it keep from generating a point-source glare for pedestrians?
  - b. Like the proposed lights strung across the courtyard. Look forward to a comprehensive lighting plan.

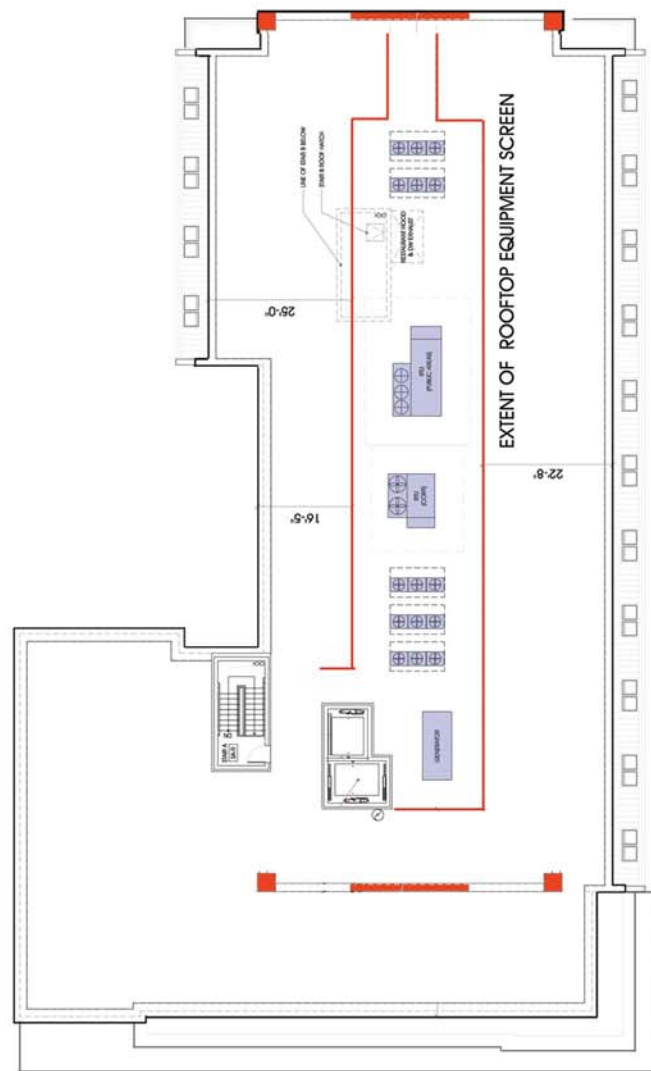
Hope these comments are helpful to the Board. Based upon the above comments, I support deferring the case so Rust Orling Architecture can complete the development of the hotel design.

Mr. Carlin made a motion to defer the application for further study and to schedule a work session as soon as possible. Ms. Roberts seconded the motion. The BAR deferred the project 5-0-1, with Mr. Neale abstaining.

## **REASON**

The Board agreed with the staff recommendation for deferral and found that a work session was necessary.





suggested additional gable location

## Gable and chimney at the Strand

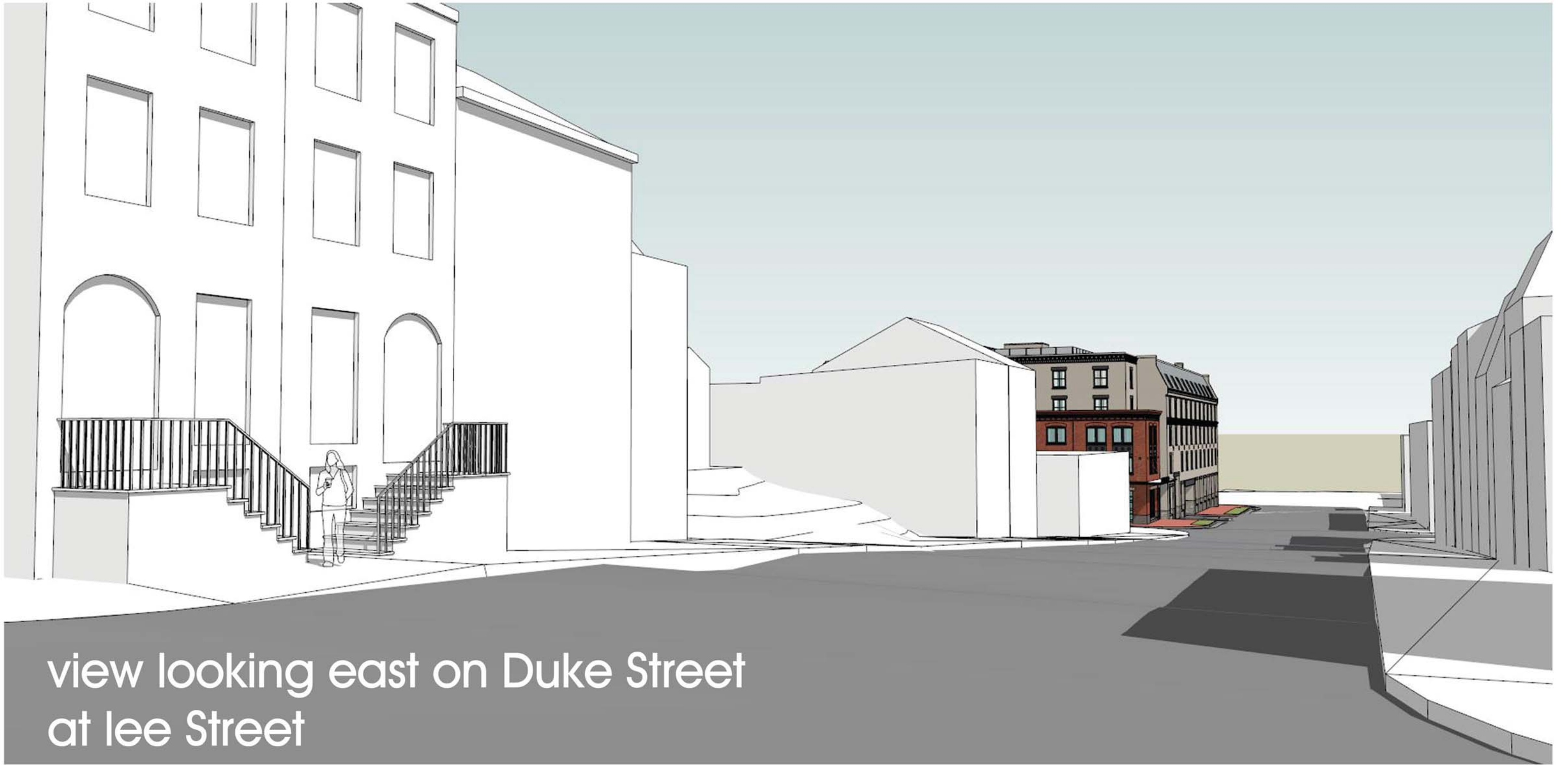
western "gable end"  
not visible from courtyard because of  
elevator penthouse

if provided, gable is 21' - 6" from face of 5 story  
facade.



add matching gable end to west side of building #2

# 220 S. Union Street Hotel



view looking east on Duke Street  
at lee Street

# 220 S. Union Street Hotel



## BUILDING #2

TIE "LINK" BUILDING #2A TO BUILDING #2

## BUILDING #3

STAFF SUGGESTED BRICK COLOR CHANGE



# 220 S. Union Street Hotel





# 220 S. Union Street Hotel





# 220 S. Union Street Hotel





alternate elevation #1

GLASS RAILING OPTION | METAL RAILING OPTION

# 220 S. Union Street Hotel



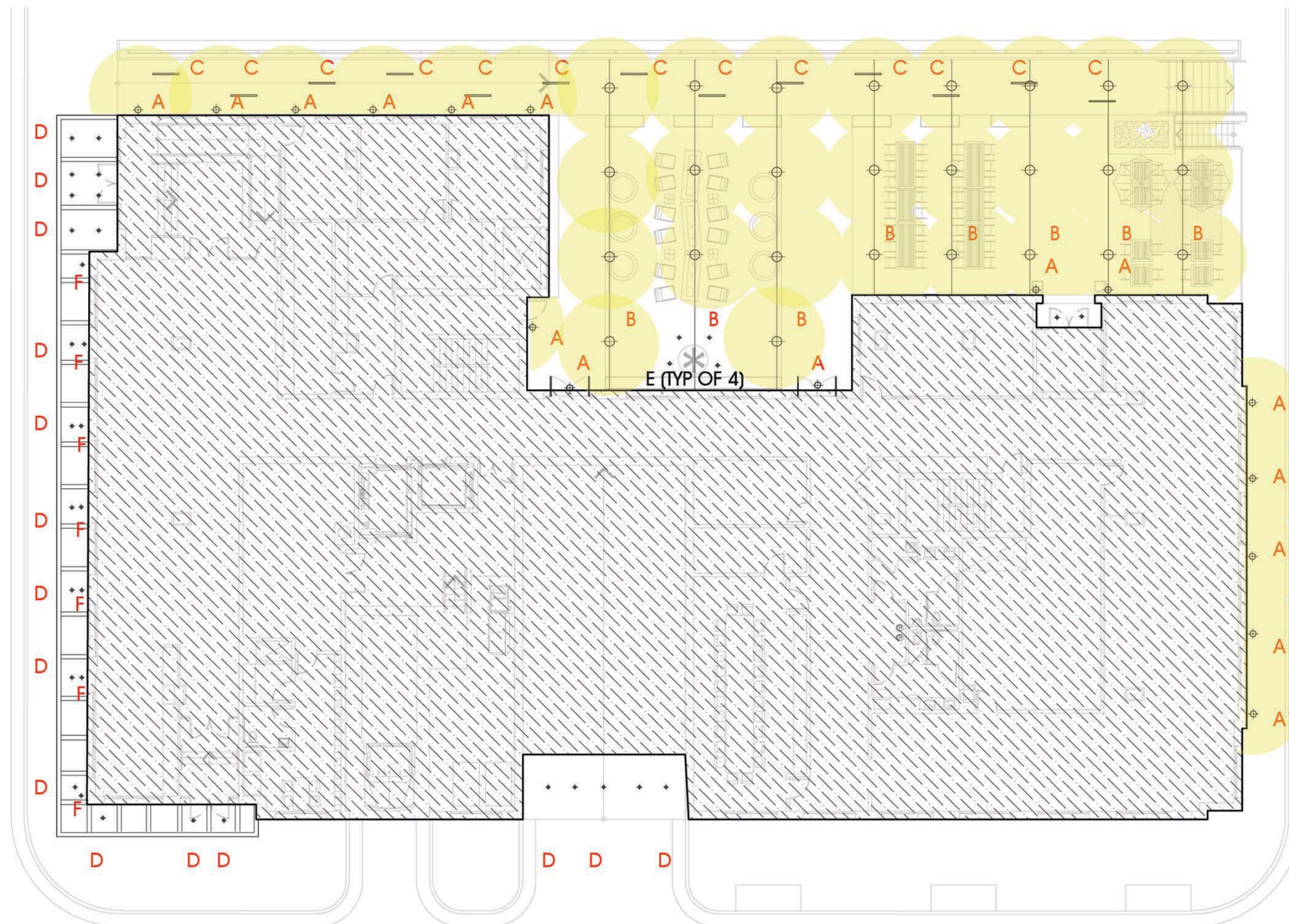


# 220 S. Union Street Hotel

**CARR**  
CITY CENTERS  
March 5, 2014  
**RUST | ORLING**  
ARCHITECTURE

**4B**





MARK	TYPE	MFGR	LAMPING	COMMENTS
A	WALL MTD	BLG	32W PL	
A1	WALL MTD-UP+DN	BLG	32W PL	GLASS TOP FIXTURE
B	CANTENARY	BEGA	42W PL	
C	PAVER LIGHT	FELIX	LED	DECORATIVE
D	DOWN LIGHT	TBD	LED	RECESS MTD IN SOFFITS/CANOPY
E	GROUND ART SPOT	TBD	TBD	
F	UPLIGHT	TBD	LED	AT MASONRY PIERS ABOVE CANOPY

NOTE: STANDARD GATSBY STREET LIGHTS TO BE LOCATED  
PER T+ES REQUIREMENTS



Technical Description: Linear line of light for outdoor and indoor use. Stainless steel housing with flush tempered glass lens for seamless integration into floor surface. Driveover rated.  
Installation: Floor installation requires stainless steel outer casing.  
Wiring: Standard cable length 1m, 24V with remote driver.  
LED Color: 3000K, 4000K, Blue, RGB, other LED colors available on request.

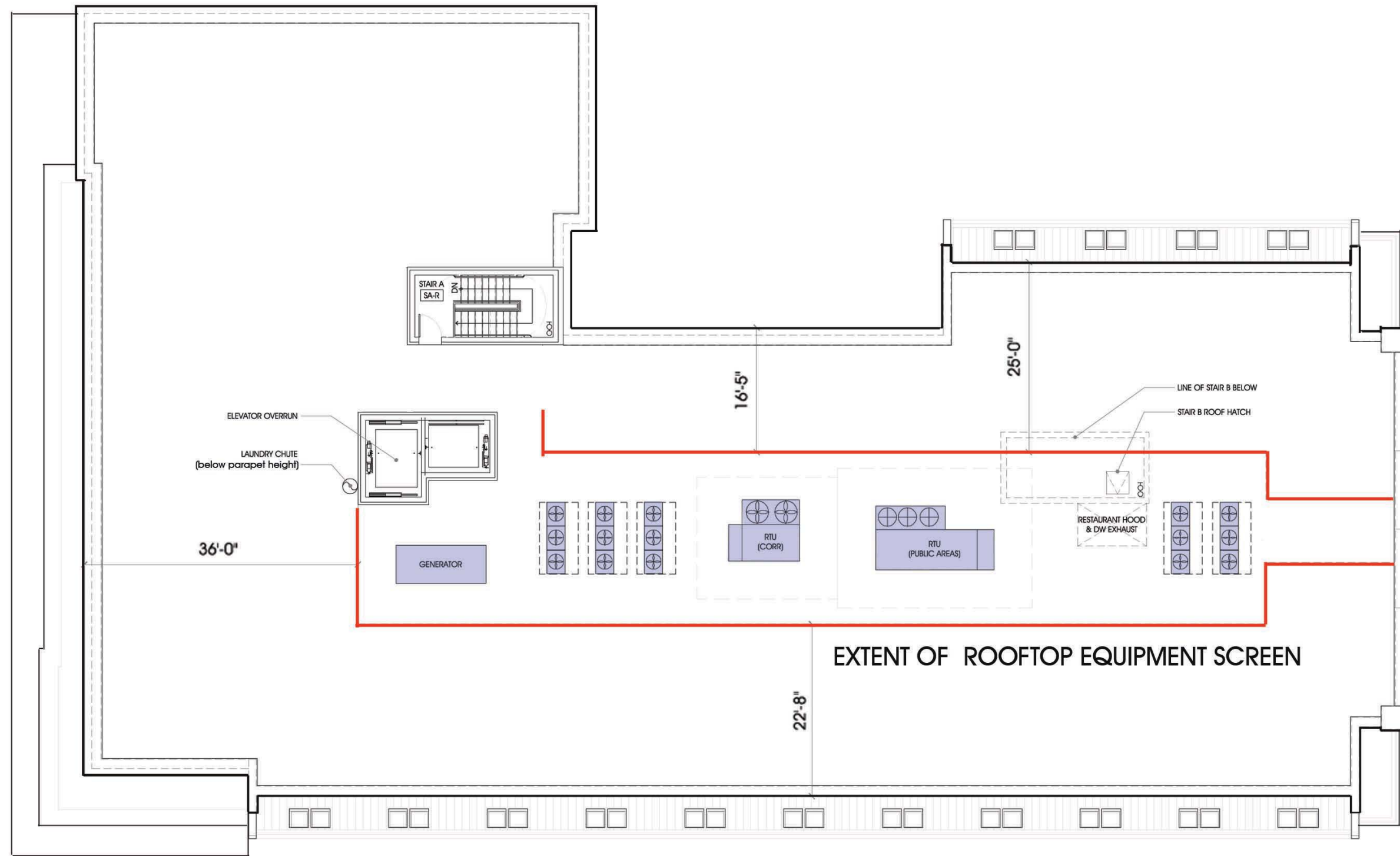
# 220 S. Union Street Hotel





# 220 S. Union Street Hotel





ROOF PLAN

# 220 S. Union Street Hotel



ALTERNATE TWO

ALTERNATE ONE

AS SUBMITTED

GROUND FLOOR - ALUM FRAME LARGE LITES  
GROUND FLOOR - ALUM FRAME LITES EQUAL TO UPPER FLOORS (12)  
UPPER FLOORS - SDL (4)

# 220 S. Union Street Hotel





# 220 S. Union Street Hotel





# 220 S. Union Street Hotel