

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** DECEMBER 17, 2014

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

**FROM:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

**SUBJECT:** 4<sup>th</sup> CONCEPT REVIEW OF 2 DUKE STREET  
(FORMERLY ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH)  
BAR CASE # 2014-0113

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**MINUTES on December 17, 2014:** A work session to discuss the proposed development project at **2 Duke St**

### **SPEAKERS**

Bob Youngentob of EYA, applicant, introduced the project and gave an overview of the changes made since the last work session. The key areas where changes were made included: 1) building 1 as a gateway from the north promenade, 2) increased emphasis on the required transition/set back about 30 feet, 3) increased alley width to the west of 2 Duke Street, 4) increased variety among the townhouses, 5) more color variety for brick, and 6) revisions to building 3 on Wolfe Street. He requested that the Board make a finding of support for the concept plan.

Shalom Baranes, project architect, explained the changes made to the three multifamily buildings since the last work session. He showed how the waterfront elevations were more strongly articulated and how the 30' mark was expressed at the floor slab and with recessed glass above. He explained that the masts were shown at 15' and 18' above the roofline and noted that they would not make sense if they were less than 15'. Building 1 now wrapped the corner to the north and featured additional brick. He explained that for Building 3, the fourth and fifth stories were now set back farther, especially at the corner of Wolfe and South Union streets. He also showed how the 30' mandate was further emphasized on Wolfe Street.

Patrick Burkhart, project architect, explained the changes made to the townhouses to increase variety in architectural character and roof variety and changes at the loft level. He showed the additional brick samples and how the beige and gray brick would work together.

Van Van Fleet, president of the Old Town Civic Association, thought the project was inappropriate and not connected to the historic district.

Bert Ely, member of Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront, supported Mr. Van Fleet's comments. He expressed concern that the architectural renderings did not adequately illustrate the context.

Greg Hudgins, Alexandria resident and involved citizen, spoke in strong support of the project and commended the architectural team.

Jan Rivenburg, 606 South Pitt Street resident, thought the project was too massive and too tall. She said it did not support Old Town's unique character.

Albert Schlachtmeyer, resident at The Oronoco, spoke in support of the entire project and advocated looking forward rather than back for design inspiration.

Bob Wood, Union Street resident, expressed concern about the BAR concept review process.

Tim Morgan, South Union Street resident, expressed concern about the BAR process. He thought that the building 3 was too tall and out of scale.

Scott Anderson, Alexandria resident and member of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Commission, spoke in support of the project and found it evoked the architecture of Old Town and had a human scale.

Peter and Holly Kilcullen, residents at Harborside, noted that their thoughts were expressed in the Harborside Community Letter. They also thought that the design was not appropriate, that the project was not in conformance with the Small Area Plan and that building 3 should be reduced.

Jaime Steve, 325 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke against the character of the river side elevation of the project.

Ted Pulliam, resident, requested that the applicant include information about the proposed interpretation of the site's history.

Windsor Demaine, 6 Wolfe Street, advised taking the time to carefully study the design options and thought the proposal was a reiteration of other developments in the DC area.

Christine Sennett, Cameron Street resident and real estate agent in Alexandria, observed that people are interested in either contemporary or historic buildings but not new buildings meant to look old.

Susan Askew, 34 Wolfe Street, explained that the Harborside Community Letter represented over 100 people and 76 households, 40% of whom lived outside of Harborside but in the nearby area. She noted that she and her neighbors supported development and getting rid of the warehouses but that they were concerned about the mass and scale of building 3. She requested setbacks at the upper floors along the length of Wolfe Street. She also requested that the entire ground floor be set back as well.

Karen Devlin, 20 Wolfe Street, requested further study to have a more fitting design that would have more architectural variety. She thought the mass and scale were overwhelming.

Louise Roseman, Harborside resident, stated that there should be a significant setback from Wolfe Street, as well as a wider sidewalk and the addition of plantings.

Carl Smith, 200 Duke Street, supported the Harborside Community Letter and the previous speakers.

Hal Hardaway, 311 South Union Street, expressed concern about the architectural character, mass and scale.

Kathryn Papp, 504 Cameron Street, expressed concern about the project, finding it too radical for the Old and Historic Alexandria District.

Rob Duggar, 10 Wolfe Street, loved the design but thought the process was flawed. He wanted to see a “boat’s-eye” view of the proposal.

Hank Savage, resident at Waterford Place, said that it was too radical for Old Town and that we needed to safeguard what was here. He recommended meeting with community groups.

Michael Jennings, 10 Potomac Court, suggested dividing building 3 into two or three modules.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Chairman Fitzgerald noted that many comments had been made about mass and scale but that he thought most people were really concerned about the 50 foot height. He asked for staff to provide some background on the 50 foot height limit. Mr. Cox explained how the height limit on the waterfront had previously been 77 feet but was lowered in 1987 to 50 feet. In 1992, it was lowered to 30 feet but there was a provision that allowed for 50 feet with a special use permit and an unspecified setback transition above 30 feet.

Chairman Fitzgerald also explained that the decision to allow 50 foot buildings had already been made as part of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. Regarding compatibility in the historic district, he noted that the majority of townhouses were actually Victorian and 20-century, noting that there were very few colonial period buildings remaining. He stated that details and setbacks can be worked out.

Ms. Roberts asked whether the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) had been issued. Mr. Cox responded that it had not but that the Waterfront Plan indicated 50 foot buildings on this site.

Mr. von Senden observed that people say “look outside the box” and then when that is done, people are chagrined. He thought that there had been a lot of good discussion about the glass. He liked the high masts, as a reflection of the maritime heritage. He thought that the north side of building 1 had been improved as had the overall color palette. He appreciated the increased width of the alley adjacent to 2 Duke Street. He favored the slate shingles on the walls of the townhouse penthouses. He thought that the townhouse schemes captured the formality of Old

Town but with a modern interpretation. Regarding scale and mass, he noted that it was not out of scale with Harborside which had roof heights above 50 feet. He thought that the 30 foot transition may be too subtle and suggested that more effort be made on the transition and set back on Wolfe Street, particularly at the fifth floor. He thought that setting the entire building back would not be successful. He summarized by stating that Alexandria was not a museum and that buildings were continually being modified.

Ms. Finnigan noted that she heard three themes from the comments made by the public: building 3, glass, and roof forms. First, an appropriate compromise should be found for building 3. She wanted to see the staff sketch with a suggested upper floor setback taken even farther. She thought that glass was appropriate for the waterfront buildings and she liked the mast features. She continued to want to see more playful and varied roof forms. While she liked many of the changes proposed for 2 Duke Street she did not think that the canopy was a welcoming entry feature.

Mr. Neale noted that he had lived in Alexandria since 1977 and had absorbed a lot of Old Town's character. He generally agreed with the proposed density, mass and scale but found that its distribution over the site to be problematic. He observed that the condo buildings had small footprints but that they were articulated as larger buildings and so recommended that the elevations be more reflective of the plans. At the Wolfe Street corner of building 3 he expressed concern about the height of the building and the articulation of the façade. He recommended sloping roofs without having to reduce density. He thought that the site plan would feel sterile with the same distance between all the buildings and recommended shifting some of the density from the upper floors to lower floors. He thought that smaller distances between lower buildings could still feel comfortable, similar to alleys between historic buildings in Old Town. He thought that some fundamental elements should be added to the scheme to better integrate with Old Town. He liked the basic organization of the project. He noted that many good comments had been made.

Ms. Miller stated that she was in agreement with Mr. Neale's comments and sympathetic to the concerns expressed by the community. She stated that building 3 was a concern, as it overwhelmed the site. She wanted to see it divided into two buildings or to otherwise rearrange the density on the site. She thought the majority of the site organization was fine. She recommended that the applicant study the view of building 3 from Windmill Hill Park and Ford's Landing looking north. She liked the masts for the waterfront buildings.

Ms. Roberts appreciated some of the refinements that had been made. She thought building 5 on Union Street had been improved but wanted the building to feel more natural by better integrating the loft levels. She believed Duke Street had the best blockface of the project because of its variety. She was interested in seeing a bird's eye view of the project and asked why there was not a model to show the context of the project with respect to the adjacent buildings. She also supported making building 3 into two buildings to reduce the overall mass, finding that it currently appeared too hulking and masculine. She noted that the waterfront buildings can support more glass but building 3 was not on the water and needed to reflect the adjacent residential neighborhood. She also liked taking off the top floor and reallocating the floor area to the interior of the site. She was warming up to buildings 1 and 2 on the waterfront



but recommended a more defined and strengthened delineation at 30 feet. She also requested more information on historic interpretation elements for the next concept review.

Mr. Carlin supported a more playful and angular roof form in some areas, without being 1980s cliché, and noted it seemed that both the BAR and community would like that. He noted that the applicant had made substantial progress along the way. He viewed the project as having big buildings (multifamily) and little buildings (townhouses). He cautioned against the townhouses having a monolithic or institutional feel. He wanted to see more “distinguishment” for the townhouses, such as the addition of bay windows. He thought that the treatment of building 3 had progressed significantly. He recommended studying an angled, all-glass roof for building 3 because it would be contemporary but allude to forms that the community was comfortable with. Overall, he liked the treatment of building 3 from the fourth story down. He also wanted to see more landscaping and plantings on Wolfe Street. He liked the masts on the waterfront buildings and the sense of movement on the site. He also recommended varying the tops of the waterfront buildings, here and there.

Chairman Fitzgerald complimented the architect for being responsive to a range of comments but he cautioned against making too many changes to what was a generally good design. He noted that there were three options for moving forward but that people seemed to really want a final work session. He thought that the northeast and southwest corners of the site, at building 1 and 3, could be refined further. He noted that the biggest concern was the south elevation of building 3. He recommended a substantial setback on the entire top floor. He noted the applicant had some support from the BAR and community. Mr. Carlin made a motion to defer the project for restudy at a fifth work session based on BAR and citizen comments.

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## **I. BACKGROUND**

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On April 30, July 2, and October 15, 2014, the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) Board of Architectural Review held concept review work sessions with public testimony. At the April 30<sup>th</sup> work session, the Board was introduced to the project site, the applicable Waterfront Small Area Plan guidelines and objectives for this block, and the design program of the development team. At that time, the Board generally supported the proposed height, scale, mass and general site layout with some specific comments for further study and direction. At the July 2<sup>nd</sup> work session, the applicant introduced the proposed architectural style and character for the project, showing more traditional waterfront warehouse-inspired designs for the townhouses adjacent to Duke and South Union streets and a very contemporary approach to the waterfront-facing multifamily buildings. The Board expressed serious concerns with the architectural direction and advised the applicant to do a restudy. At the October 15<sup>th</sup> work session, the applicant showed refinements and new directions based on the Board’s previous comments. Based on the revised drawings, the Board provided more feedback to the applicant that included: a desire for greater differentiation between Buildings 1 and 2 on the waterfront, restudy of the architectural character of Building 3 on Wolfe Street and further refinement of the townhouses.

The approved minutes of the most recent work session on October 15<sup>th</sup> follows as Attachment 1.

At the three previous concept review work sessions, the Board affirmed that the architectural design and character of the project should clearly read as being *of Alexandria*. The Board stated

a clear preference for wanting buildings that were locally influenced and rooted and were not generic or trendy magazine-inspired designs that could be seen anywhere in the world. The Board reiterated that a contemporary design, albeit connected to the historic architectural traditions of the Alexandria waterfront, could be appropriate for the waterfront buildings.

The applicant has responded to the Board's previous comments and provided additional information on the site context, including adjacent block faces.

The purpose of this fourth work session is to:

- Confirm that the height, scale, mass, and general architectural character of the project are conceptually appropriate and need no further review until the Certificate of Appropriateness stage\*; and/or
- Identify specific buildings or aspects of those buildings which need additional refinement or revision and clarify whether those elements are so fundamental that they must be restudied during the concept review phase or may be deferred until the Certificate of Appropriateness application is submitted.

*\*The Board is reminded that identifying a building as conceptually appropriate is only the informal first step toward approval of a Development Special Use Permit by City Council. Subsequent to City Council approval, the building will very likely require additional refinement of fenestration, design details and secondary elevations, as well as a complete materials palette during the Board's consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness.*

As noted previously, information regarding uses, parking, grades and the flood plain are provided only for context and will be addressed separately through the development review process. It is anticipated that Planning Commission and City Council will review the Development Special Use Permit and related applications in March 2015.

## **II. STAFF ANALYSIS AND POTOMAC RIVER VICINITY STANDARDS**

Staff strongly supports the revised design, overall, and finds that many of the Board's previous comments have been addressed with this most recent iteration of the design. What follows is a separate analysis of: 1. the multifamily buildings, 2. the townhouse units, and 3. the adaptive reuse of the historic warehouse at 2 Duke Street with respect to changes since the previous submission. Therefore, staff's comments will focus only on the areas that need further refinement and study.

### **Multifamily Buildings #1, #2 & #3**

The BAR has encouraged a contemporary architectural character for the waterfront buildings #1 & #2 throughout the process but noted that the Wolfe Street multifamily building #3 should also relate to the specific context of the adjacent block faces through rhythm, scale, materials and details -- but not necessarily architectural style.

#### *Waterfront Buildings #1 and #2*

The initial designs for Buildings 1 and 2 on the waterfront, presented at the second work session in July, were very contemporary, organic and almost disordered structures that drew their inspiration from contemporary global architecture. The Board reacted strongly against these

designs, finding them to be disconnected from Alexandria building traditions, forms and materials and lacking a sense of place. At the last work session (#3), the architect presented a contemporary interpretation of the Alexandria waterfront shown in 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs: a building bay spacing related to size of the historic warehouses, with slightly curving bay windows referencing the curve of sails and “mast” inspired vertical posts of the ships anchored at the wharfs in front of those historic warehouses. That proposal introduced a rhythmic, repetitive and articulated design that recalled the seafaring past of the Alexandria waterfront and was generally supported by the Board, though some expressed concern that five almost identical bays was too much of a good thing.



**Figure 1. PREVIOUS submission showing conceptual design for waterfront buildings (presented October 15, 2014).**



**Figure 2. CURRENT submission showing conceptual design for waterfront buildings.**

The BAR generally supported a predominantly glass façade facing the river and expressed a clear preference for a reddish hue brick, which the applicant has pursued, but also made two

important points regarding the waterfront buildings. First, that Building #1, the northeast corner of the site, should be a signature building or the “gem” of the project site. The northeast corner of this building should visually attract attention and draw people into the site. The second comment, related to the first, was that Building #1 should be differentiated from Building #2 so as to prevent the monolithic appearance of a single “project” on the waterfront side of this block. Staff does not believe that the current design of Building #1 responds to the BAR’s two primary comments because it is not the *pièce de résistance* the Board was looking for. It is recommended that the applicant expand the curving glass element containing the ground floor restaurant from one story to two-and-one-half or even three stories in height, reinforcing a basic 30’ street wall on this facade. Additionally, the curving feature element should wrap farther around the north elevation so that it is clearly visible from the north on the promenade. Innovative lighting for the proposed restaurant would further enhance this feature. Moreover, a primary entrance adjacent to this prominent corner should be highlighted to further emphasize the welcoming public character of the adjacent parks. Staff thinks that creating such a celebrated corner piece will result in sufficient differentiation between the two waterfront buildings to effectively meet the BAR’s comment regarding variation.

As the first floor of both waterfront buildings will be almost entirely commercial or non-residential amenity space, staff recommends that they be refined to visually express this ground level distinction. As currently shown, the doors and windows at the first story are the same as the residential doors and windows above. The applicant has included tables, umbrellas and signs to convey a pedestrian “friendliness” in this area but the architecture must be enhanced to further express the public and non-residential nature of the first floor so that the public feels welcome to use this open space on the waterfront.

As staff noted above, the waterfront façade of these two buildings must comply with the height district requirement to set back an unspecified distance above 30 feet and this basic street-wall height is not yet apparent in the façade design. This compliance is a subjective determination that must be made separately by both the BAR and City Council. The waterfront buildings very subtly reference the transition with a slight recess of the curved bay glass and pronounced white slab edge at 30 feet but staff thinks the transition on these buildings needs to be better articulated. Staff recommends removing some fourth floor balconies and setting the bay window wall back further to comply with this requirement, without destroying the overall rhythm, balance and proportion the Board supported in the current façade design.

Finally, at the previous meeting, the BAR had mixed responses to the proposed “mast” forms extending above the roof. While some members found them innovative nods to the site’s maritime past, others found them almost kitschy. Regardless, the vertical posts must meet zoning ordinance requirements in order to extend above the height limit. At this time, it is thought that they must be lowered to be in compliance with ordinance requirements for mechanical appurtenances and staff recommends depicting them in a manner so that they are compliant with those requirements. The vertical element rising through the building provides a vertical element that visually supports the balconies, and should remain, but it should be studied with a lower projection above the roof line.

*Wolfe Street Building #3: Architectural Character, Scale and Mass*

As the multifamily building at the southwest corner of the site, Building #3 mediates the transition from the glassier waterfront side of the block to the more traditional architectural character of the adjacent buildings on Wolfe Street and South Union Street through the presence of more masonry with punched windows and a repetitive series of bays. This building must also function as an appropriate transition to the large non-historic townhouses and electrical substation to the south and west, as well as the proposed new townhouses to the north. Therefore, staff recommends that the southwest corner of Building #3 be further stepped back so as to provide a more appropriate transition by removing the top level projecting balcony and stepping back the building plane. Figure 3 shows a massing study which illustrates how such upper level setbacks could be incorporated.



**Figure 3. Schematic massing sketch showing more pronounced upper floor set backs at corner of South Union and Wolfe streets. Dashed lines illustrate submitted building volume.**

The design intent for Building #3 to mediate between the more traditional forms and materials of the townhouses on South Union Street and the more contemporary waterfront multifamily buildings is appreciated and provides architectural variety for the overall project. However, while significantly improved, staff continues to find that this third multifamily building is less successful than either the two multifamily buildings on the waterfront or the townhouses. While the projecting bays and upper floor setbacks on the south elevation define the 30 foot street wall, establish a clear townhouse width rhythm and provide pronounced shadow and articulation, the architectural character is less clear, particularly at the top floor level, and the residential character of the building is vague and lacks human scale detail.

Staff concedes that this rendering is still only a concept review submission. However, it is recommended that a more defined architectural character be established and that the entrance

stoops and doorways be enhanced, particularly to communicate the residential nature of the building. The overall building scale could potentially be visually reduced by adding subtle changes in the material color between bays, introducing variety in the fenestration, reducing the glass pane size, etc. The architects must recall the small scale textural qualities of the windows, lintels, shutters, dormers, chimneys and doorways of historic townhouses in a modern way without creating a Disneyesque pastiche of historicist features.

A group of adjacent property owners has submitted a thoughtful collective letter expressing significant reservations about Building #3 and its potential impact on the adjacent properties, among other issues beyond the BAR's purview. This letter was included in the BAR member's packet. Specifically, the concerns regarded overall building height, roofline and street setback on Wolfe Street. Staff thinks that the recommendations discussed above, regarding increased set back at the upper floors and the detail refinements to convey a more residential architectural character, will largely address some of the neighbors' concerns. Meaningful fourth and fifth story setbacks will reduce the street-level perception of the height and will also result in roofline variation and change, all positive design improvements. Regarding the overall building set back from the street, it should be noted that City ordinances since 1752 required that buildings be constructed at the front property line in order to create an urban street-wall. Additionally, it is quite likely that the setback for the Harborside units on Wolfe Street was due in large part to the adjacent active industrial use in the 1980s and is actually more of an anomaly than a common characteristic in the historic districts. Staff also notes that Wolfe Street has an uncharacteristically wide street section because of the Harborside setback that is not fully conveyed in the submitted drawings. Should the BAR find that the entire front building wall of Building 3 should be set back an additional 10 feet, such a recommendation would conflict with the BAR's general agreement since the second work session that the overall height, scale, mass and site plan layout were conceptually appropriate and would likely have a rippling adverse effect on the remainder of the site plan.

Additionally, as the Wolfe Street façade is revised, the building must be viewed in its entirety, as there is no true rear elevation. The four elevations must coordinate and the north elevation should feature the same level of detail and interest as the street-facing elevations, which may incorporate balconies.

*Multi-family Buildings #1, #2 & #3: Staff Recommendations*

- Emphasize the northeast corner of Building #1 to make it a feature element
- Reduce the height of the waterfront "masts" to comply with zoning
- Distinguish the public nature of the first floor level of Building #1 & #2 on waterfront and park elevations from the upper level residential uses and create a first floor architectural character that is inviting and engaging at the pedestrian level
- Provide a clear setback and transition above the 30 foot height on the waterfront façade of Building #1 & #2
- Restudy Building #3 to improve the transition at the southwest corner and to employ an architectural character that is compatible with the overall site and complementary to adjacent residential buildings through increased setbacks at the fourth and fifth stories that are meaningful

## **Townhouses**

The revised townhouse schemes improve upon what the Board previously saw and staff strongly supports this design direction, which is based on the modern interpretation of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century waterfront warehouse character with large punched windows in a highly detailed brick building. Based on the Board's comments, an additional materials palette of gray brick, in addition to the previous tan brick and red brick, has been introduced along with natural slate, cast stone, and more variety among windows types and arrangements. The colors and details of the townhouses have been carefully composed throughout the site to relate to each other, the historic red brick building at 2 Duke Street and the buildings across the streets. Screening for rooftop mechanical equipment is shown on all of the drawings. While this is far beyond what the BAR has received in the past at the concept review stage, staff is using this opportunity to recommend additional detail refinements when this returns for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### *4<sup>th</sup> Story/Loft Level*

The applicant responded to the BAR's comment to vary the location of the loft-level penthouses by pushing and pulling their location on the roof to increase their setback from the street facades and eliminating the single, linear cornice overhang. The location and scale of the lofts is now much more successful and varies slightly between townhouse groups. The applicant has also introduced a natural slate shingle material for the walls of the rooftop elements, providing a rich texture that recalls the slate roofs on some nearby townhouses. Staff recommends that the applicant study adding more windows to increase the visual lightness of the lofts, as well as to add appropriate trim and architectural detailing so these penthouse elements look deliberate and connected to the main building block to which they are attached. At this time, the overall effect of these elements in their current form is gray, heavy and somewhat brooding. More windows and a more direct connection with the details of building mass below, as well as the exploration of additional interesting, modern materials, such as zinc panels, can offer visual variety and interest.

### *Front Entrances*

The Board has commented that, although an industrial historic architectural reference is the appropriate inspiration on the waterfront for the townhouse rows, the townhouses themselves should still have a clear residential expression. This should, first and foremost, be achieved through a pronounced front entrance and stoop to soften the overall façade and provide a rich experience for pedestrians on the sidewalk. Balconies have been added on the front elevations in some places but the entrance and stoop must be further enhanced with color or materials. Of course, once occupied, the street numbers, porch lights and mail boxes, planters, etc., will also personalize the units and increase the human scale details for pedestrians.

### *Rear and Side Elevations*

As the design evolves, and in consideration that all elevations of the townhouses will be highly visible to the public, it will be essential that all elevations—sides and rears included—be ordered compositions and not visually overwhelming. While at this point in the approval process it is not necessary to fully develop the sides and rears, it should be noted that there will be an expectation to produce well-detailed and ordered elevations. For example, no rear elevations have been shown. As the alleys are intended to be public, pedestrian-friendly carriageways, the rear elevations must have a higher level of quality and design detail than the alley elevations in other projects. In order to avoid a canyon effect in the alley, it will also be necessary to detail and



possibly set back the loft level on the rear elevations. The typical suburban style pressure treated wood deck option will not be acceptable. Finally, while some Board members have strongly encouraged an informal, organic design quality, the fenestration must still be logical and appropriate—for instance, the left elevation of Building #5 (Sheet 32 of the applicant’s package) features six different window types and configurations for seven windows.

*Townhouses: Staff Recommendations*

- Restudy fourth floor loft level to make it visually lighter and well detailed. It should appear to be one intentional and integrated composition with the main block of the townhouses.
- Enhance the front entrances to identify the residential character of the townhouses.
- Use high-quality, naturally-weathering, solid materials befitting a waterfront location. MDF board and fiber cement siding are discouraged.
- Show all elevations—including rear elevations—of each building and ensure that there are no awkward transitions at corners, such as windows or materials that do not relate to the overall building composition. Continue to refine balance, proportions, brick detail and fenestration of some of the townhouse buildings.

**2 Duke Street**

At the three previous work sessions, the Board clearly stated that the warehouse at 2 Duke Street, identified as the only historic building on the site, should be respected. Specifically, one repeated comment was to widen the alley on the west side. The applicant has since widened that alley from 7.8 feet to 9.8 feet at the narrowest width. The applicant has separately requested a Permit to Demolish for partial demolition and capsulation. Staff has no objections to the proposal for 2 Duke Street, finding it an appropriate adaptive reuse of a significantly altered historic building.

Staff has no additional recommendations for the concept review phase on 2 Duke Street.

**III. SUMMARY**

*Additional Standards to Consider for a Certificate of Appropriateness in the Potomac River Vicinity*

As discussed in the previous concept review reports, in addition to the general BAR standards outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, and the Board’s *Design Guidelines*, the Board must also find that the Potomac River Vicinity Standards are met prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness. A project located along the waterfront is subject to a higher level of scrutiny and design due to its prominent location. Staff believes that at this point in the process, the applicant has shown that its project will be able to satisfy this higher level of scrutiny and result in a timeless design rooted in Alexandria’s strong architectural traditions.

*Next Steps*

It is still anticipated that the proposal may be reviewed by Planning Commission and City Council in early 2015. The applicant should return to the BAR for a final work session prior to the Planning Commission and City Council reviews, focusing on each recommendation noted



above. Following City Council approval, the applicant will then return to the BAR with a formal application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for final design details and materials.

Staff notes that this project has undergone a greater level of scrutiny than previous concept reviews and reminds the BAR that its focus at this time is still only height, scale, mass and architectural character.

While several areas for refinement and revision have been noted in the above analysis, staff only believes that two areas must be resolved by the BAR prior to review by Planning Commission and City Council since they are fundamental to the project. These two items are the northeast corner treatment of Building #1 as the centerpiece of the entire project and the upper floors of Building #3, as viewed on Wolfe and South Union streets. It is imperative that the design for the most visually prominent building on the site and at the southern end of the waterfront park planning area be fully developed. Staff finds that the remaining items discussed in the above analysis can be worked through as part of the Certificate of Appropriateness, noting that the architect will continue to refine and improve the design in the interim.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

At this time, staff recommends that the Board find that the height, scale, mass and general architectural character of the overall project are appropriate. Because there are several significant areas that warrant further refinement, staff recommends that the applicant return for a final work session with the BAR only for the east and north elevations of Building #1 and for the south and west elevations of Building #3, advising the applicant to continue working on the other items in preparation for the Certificate of Appropriateness application following approval of the DSUP.

#### **STAFF**

Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 – Approved Minutes from Concept Review Work Session #3 (10/15/14)*
- 2 – Supporting Materials for Concept Review Work Session #4*

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **MINUTES FROM THE WORK SESSION ON OCTOBER 15, 2014**

#### **SPEAKERS**

Bob Youngentob of EYA, the applicant, gave an introduction and explained how the plans were a response to previous comments made by the BAR.

#### **Multi-family Buildings**

Shalom Baranes, project architect, provided an overview of the changes to the architecture explaining the substantially different design approach. He emphasized the grouping of the buildings and the diversity of design elements.

Regarding the waterfront multi-family buildings, Mr. Baranes states that they looked at the history of Alexandria waterfront buildings to determine an appropriate design direction. He explained that there was a strong notion of singularity and a modular expression based on 30-40' building modules. He described the buildings as rectilinear masses with a series of delicate and volumetric layers to be a careful expression of the structure. He explained that these buildings have a depth and sculptural quality. He stated that the applicant would be happy to use a red brick and a reddish-hued slate.

Patrick Burkhart, project architect, explained the design intention for the Wolfe Street multi-family building. He explained that the building had 28' bays with an undulating façade and recessed balconies. He explained that the building would be located on a stone plinth and would have a clear accent/datum line above the third story with the fourth floor glass wall set back from the facade. He also proposed an alternate scheme to enhance the southwest corner at the corner of Wolfe and South Union streets.

#### **BOARD DISCUSSION: Multi-family Buildings**

Ms. Finnigan stated that she appreciated the precedent shapes drawn from historic buildings but continued to be interested in seeing more variety in the roof forms and to better integrate them with the facades. She suggested a mix of gable roofs and parapets, among other options. She stated it was initially unclear what the vertical poles ("masts") were for but now that she understands the design reference she appreciated the varied height and nautical nod. She thought that the two waterfront buildings looked too much like a single complex and wanted to see more variation in the design of these two buildings. She preferred the two-story slate option for the southwest corner of the upper levels of the Wolfe Street multi-family building. She also preferred the use of red brick.

Mr. Carlin responded positively to the new direction and liked the variety. He liked the explorations of the color palette. He was not averse to the use of slate but preferred the red brick as it offered a range of richness and the modularity of brick is what the City is accustomed to. He endorsed an orange-ish red brick with a natural mortar but, as the project evolves, he would like to see them incorporate other materials.

Mr. von Senden complimented the applicant on the preservation and urban fabric pages of the application. He preferred Option B with the red brick for the waterfront buildings. He liked the waterfront elevations and the vertical masts, possibly varying their heights. He requested a perspective view of the project from the foot of King Street. He recommended expanding the restaurant glass curve around the north elevation. He liked the other materials in addition to the use of brick. He was disappointed that he did not get to see the additional images beforehand. He noted that the 30' street-wall band must be amplified on both the street-facing and waterfront-facing buildings. Regarding Building 3, he liked the articulation and also the option for slate at the southwest corner.

Ms. Miller stated that the applicant had made great progress but that she was not sure it was appropriate and it had a long way to go. She noted that the BAR had been delighted by the Old Dominion Boat Club proposal. She thought the masts were a good sense of the past. She thought the overall roof line needed more articulation. She thought the waterfront buildings were closer to a good design but thought that Building 3 was not the flavor of Old Town. She thought that there was not a feeling of community. She noted that Building 3 did not recognize the architectural features of Harborside. She stated the project was too shoebox-like and that more variation was necessary. She also recommended increasing the outdoor areas for the units instead of so much glass.

Ms. Roberts noted she had missed the last work session and was very surprised with the new direction. She thought the overall design was too modular and unlike Old Town. She thought that the two waterfront buildings should be different and not appear like a "project". She thought that the form of Building 1 pushed people away when it should draw people into the site. She stated it was a gift to be able to create the character of this area of Old Town and was concerned that the design did not appear organic and was too "project"-like and was too large and modular, like National Harbor.

Chairman Fitzgerald stated that he understood the concerns expressed by some BAR members but agreed with those in support of the new direction. He stated that the new construction should look new and modern while using materials that related to Alexandria. He preferred red brick to red slate but appreciated the creativity of curved façades. He noted that what was historically on this site is no longer extant so new is relevant. He stated that the west elevations of the waterfront buildings continued to need work but that the east side was nice.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Townhouses**

Patrick Burkhart, project architect, explained the design intention for the townhouses. He outlined the two types: those fronting onto South Union Street and those interior units. He explained that the South Union Street townhouses were two clusters reflecting the historic industrial aesthetic. They maintained a three-story street wall along South Union Street.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION: Townhouses**

Ms. Roberts stated that she also had concerns for the appearance of the townhouses, similar to those she had expressed for the multi-family buildings. She liked the red brick townhouses but not facing Old Town. She thought that they were too modular and repetitive. She questioned whether such an industrial character was the best way to greet visitors. She preferred to see more variety and organic composition.

Ms. Miller observed that the townhouses on Union Street did not complement those directly across the street (Waterford Place) and had no roof variety, no gable roof forms. She thought they appeared too dense and massive.

Mr. von Senden thought that page 22 of the submission packet showed the strongest depiction of an appropriate streetscape. He favored the industrial aesthetic and rhythm between the units in the building. He stated that this was a single complex, as historic waterfront uses often were, and that there should be an underlying structure for its organization. He thought that the hyphens at the elevations needed more design effort. He recommended investigating and organizing the color palette more, particularly with respect to the yellow brick. He advised varying the design and materials of the interior townhouses more—they needn't all be buff brick. He thought Buildings 7 and 8 were too industrial.

Mr. Carlin agreed with Mr. von Senden's comments and felt that too much variety could appear arbitrary. He liked the approach for the South Union Street composition and found that the façades had sufficient modulation. He explained that there was historic precedent for repetition within the composition of a single building. He suggested looking at various color tones and soft grays and metal panels instead of just buff brick. He suggested looking at similar historic townhouse groupings on upper Prince and N. Columbus Streets to see how they treated their facades.

Ms. Finnigan appreciated the varying widths and the end anchors on South Union Street. She also like the addition of buff brick, finding it made for a more interesting design. She was concerned that the plain articulation was too harsh, industrial and uninviting.

Chairman Fitzgerald observed that the BAR members were divided between diversity versus unity approaches to the townhouse scheme. He thought the end elevations of the towns needed substantial work. He stated that only high quality materials like slate or wood should be used and did not support any fiber cement. He thought the South Union Street townhouses were pleasing and recalled historic Alexandria warehouses. He advised not reworking them too much.

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## **2 Duke Street**

Edna Johnston, History Matters, historic preservation consultant for the applicant, gave an overview of the history of the warehouse located at 2 Duke Street. Patrick Burkhart, project architect, provided examples of ways the building could be rehabilitated. He also noted that approximately the bottom four feet of the building would be filled-in due to grade changes mandated by FEMA.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION: 2 Duke Street**

Ms. Finnigan was very pleased with the proposed treatment and thought it had great potential for a market. She supported the changes but requested that the entrance steps on Duke Street be opened up more to be more inviting.

Mr. Carlin agreed with Ms. Finnigan. He found that the building's most important components: the cornice, gable form roof with heavy timber trusses and the punched brick openings would be retained. He agreed with Ms. Finnigan and suggested a broader entry stair.

As he stated at the previous work session, Mr. von Senden strongly recommended that the alley on the west side of 2 Duke be extended to at least ten feet in width, typical of the minimum alley width found in Old Town. He noted that the townhouse strings could be slid westward to accommodate this without losing floor area. He thought the wide openings on the east elevation would read as doors and encouraged them to be active, depending on the tenant. He preferred the aligned windows with metal spandrels in lieu of the brick spandrel form. He reiterated the need to make the Duke St. entrance more inviting.

Ms. Miller agreed with Ms. Finnigan and Mr. Carlin. She thought it was appropriate to open up the interior and possibly convert it to a market. She also wanted to see a more inviting and embellished entrance and supported a 10' wide separation on the west. She advised the architect to pay attention to detail with this building as well as throughout project.

Ms. Roberts agreed with all of the comments made by the other BAR members but preferred the brick spandrel option, as opposed to the metal spandrels. She also wanted the "alley" to the west to be widened as much as possible, citing concern that the townhouses could loom over the smaller historic structure.

Chairman Fitzgerald preferred the window scheme without any spandrel and that just reflected the original punched window openings, though he understood the applicant's desire for a vertical proportion on the shortened building. He advised against making too many changes to the front entrance but agreed that the stairs should be improved to make it more inviting without losing the warehouse character. Overall, he was pleased with the work on this building.

Chairman Fitzgerald summarized his impression of the BAR's comments over the evening. He noted that with seven members you get seven opinions. He stated that some comments were discouraging and he understood the desire for more variety. However, he noted that the overall site already had variety and that too much variety could lead to a mish-mash design. He noted that a modern approach to the project was unifying. He stated there was still work to be done but that, in general, the project was headed in the right direction.

Mr. Neale was not in attendance for the work session but provided written comments to the BAR members prior to the meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bert Ely, co-chair of Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront, expressed concerns, finding that the design fell short and doesn't fit in Old Town very well. He believed it needed more articulation and the roofs should be gabled.

Van Van Fleet, president of the Old Town Civic Association, expressed concern and advised redesigning the project to reflect the approach used at Harborside.

Tony Pinson, 119 Wolfe Street, liked a lot of the design work but stated that the Torpedo Factory is a fundamentally ugly building. He said these are buildings, not ships, expressed concern about the appropriateness of the design at this location.

Kevin Posey, 507 Carlisle Drive, spoke in support of the design. He felt it was tasteful and not phony Colonial and would not cause harm to Alexandria. As an artist, he was concerned that people were fighting redevelopment through aesthetics.

Gayla Reed, nearby business owner and resident/property owner at Harborside, spoke in support of the contemporary design aspects of the project.

Beth Gibney, 300 South Lee Street, stated that the proposal had a lot of good in it. She still had a problem with the scale but noted that this had already been decided by City Council in the Waterfront Small Area Plan. She liked a modern design with no phony Colonial but recommended further work on the color palette. She supported a red hue and no yellow brick.

Robert Atkinson, 1009 Pendleton Street, spoke in support of the project and noted the City needed more contemporary architecture. As an urban designer, he also stated that the scale and design was completely different from National Harbor.

Joan Hutter, 10 Wolfe Street, spoke in support of the project, noting that the waterfront side was “glorious.” She stated that this project had more integrity than National Harbor, especially from the water, and liked the evolution of styles.

Dick Willett, 6044 Woodmont Road, spoke in support of the delightful design from the river and said he would like to live here.

Bob Wood, Potomac Court, expressed concern regarding the character and compatibility of the project. He favored a design that looked like Old Town Village along South Union Street. He likes the waterfront facades but not the masts. He agreed with Ms. Roberts that the northeast corner of building #1 should be concave rather than convex to welcome people from the park. He felt the Wolfe Street building looks like a garden apartment and that it should not be so repetitive, monolithic or blockish.

Kathryn Papp, 504 Cameron Street, expressed some concerns that the multi-family building on Wolfe Street looked like a dormitory. She liked the Union Street townhouses and their reference to the Kahn building at the Ford Plant, especially at the corners. She felt the waterfront buildings were too highly abstracted and minimalist – the glass window curves should be eliminated or strengthened and the flat roof holds the design down.

Jim Devlin, 20 Wolfe Street, expressed support for the project but noted it needed continued refinement. He asked whether the multifamily building could be relocated to the north side along Duke.

Susan and Robert Askew, 34 Wolfe Street, said the project was going in a good direction but expressed concerns regarding the compatibility of the Wolfe Street multi-family building.

Tim Morgan, 319 South Union Street, stated he supported the overall development and the top floor setback on the townhouses but thought that the Wolfe Street multi-family building should also have a similar setback. He questioned the transition of the scale across the site.

Al Hartaway, 300 block of South Union Street, was disappointed by the industrial architectural styles proposed and wanted to see replication of either Ford's Landing or the 100 block of King Street.

Ann Loomis, 132 Waterford Place, encouraged more architectural cohesion and restudy of the industrial character on South Union Street to blend better with the row of garage doors on the townhouses at Waterford Place across the street.

\*\*\*\*\*

**(End of Minutes)**

ATTACHMENT #2

ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH  
Alexandria, VA

BAR Work Session No. 4 Submission

November 17, 2014



# ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH



ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH-ALEXANDRIA, VA | BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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- **Developer:** EYA
- **Equity Partner:** JBG
- **Architect:** Shalom Baranes Associates
- **Landscape Architect:** M. Paul Freidberg Partners
- **Land Use Counsel:** McGuireWoods
- **Civil Engineer:** Bohler
- **Marine Engineer:** Moffat & Nichol
- **Traffic & Parking:** Wells and Associates
- **Acoustical Engineer:** Polysonics
- **Archeological:** Wetlands Studies & Solutions
- **Historian:** History Matters

# Robinson Terminal South Timeline

Waterfront Commission & Community Outreach*	Begin Spring 2014
Board of Architectural Review*	Begin April 2014
File DSUP Application	Fall 2014
Planning Commission Hearing	Winter 2015
City Council Hearing	Winter 2015
Demolition/Archeology/Flood Plain Process	Begin Spring 2015
Construction	Begin Spring 2016
First Occupancy	Summer 2017

\*Ongoing process

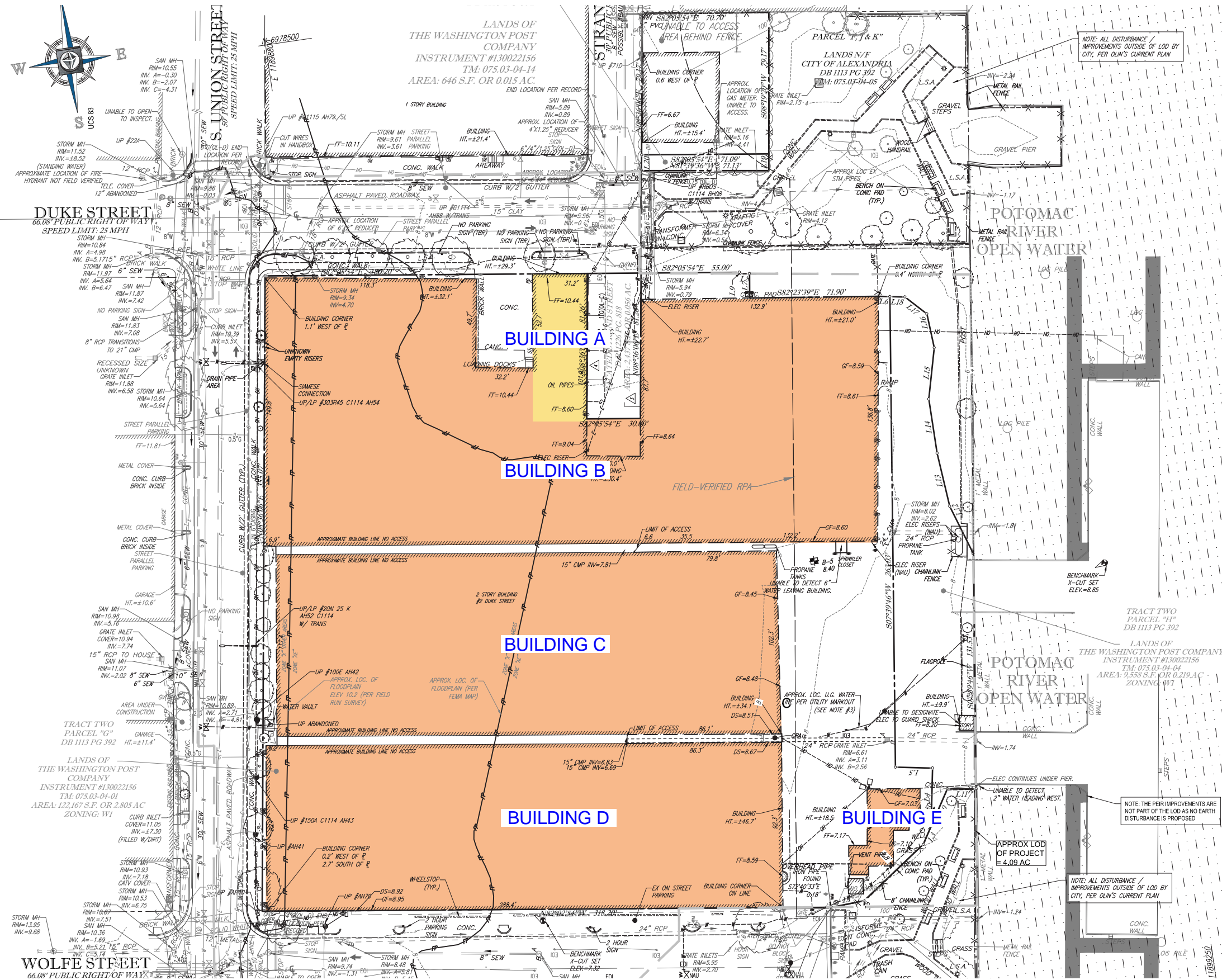
BAR DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Form
- Style
- Bay Width
- Height
- Building Width
- Siting
- Parking
- Fenestration
- Roof Form and Materials
- Building Spacing
- Architectural Detailing
- Materials
- Building Orientation
- Color

BAR PROCESS OUTLINE

Process Step	Purpose	Timing
BAR: Preliminary Submission and Work Session #1	Site history, overall planning concepts and design direction	Apr-14
P&Z: Stage 2 Concept Submission BAR: Work Session #2	Height, scale, mass, architectural language	June/July 2014
BAR: Refinements and Work Session #3	Review refinements to building architecture	Oct-14
BAR: Refinements and Work Session #4; Hearing re Permit to Demolish	Approval to raze existing warehouse buildings; review further refinements on MF / Mixed Use buildings	Dec-14
P&Z: DSUP Submission BAR: Work Session #5; 2 <sup>nd</sup> Hearing re Permit to Demolish (if nec)	Final BAR advisory vote prior to PC and City Council votes	Jan-15
P&Z: DSUP Hearings (Planning Commission & City Council)	Development approval	Mar-15
BAR: Certificate of Appropriateness Process	Final detailed architectural approval	Spring-Summer 2015

# EXISTING BUILDING EXHIBIT



ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH-ALEXANDRIA, VA

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW



## EXISTING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



Union Street is the first north south link inland from the waterfront. From this perspective differences between the east and west sides of Union Street are apparent in terms of size, scale and texture of the urban fabric. From Wolfe Street at the south to Cameron Street at the north, the east side is predominantly commercial uses with larger building footprints and greater heights. The west side is both commercial and residential with residential concentrations to the south and north and more commercial uses near the center at King Street.





















VIEW FROM POINT LAUMLEY PARK

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VIEW FROM BOARDWALK PROMENADE

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VIEW FROM PIER

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VIEW FROM THE STRAND, NORTH OF NO.2 DUKE





VIEW FROM DUKE STREET LOOKING NORTHEAST





VIEW FROM DUKE STREET LOOKING SOUTHEAST





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VIEW FROM THE NORTHWEST (SOUTH UNION STREET)









VIEW FROM WOLFE STREET LOOKING NORTHEAST





VIEW FROM WOLFE STREET LOOKING SOUTHEAST





VIEW FROM STRAND, EAST OF NO.2 DUKE

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VIEW FROM THE NEWS, WEST OF BUILDING #2





1-View from promenade at Point Lumley Park  
Previous Submission



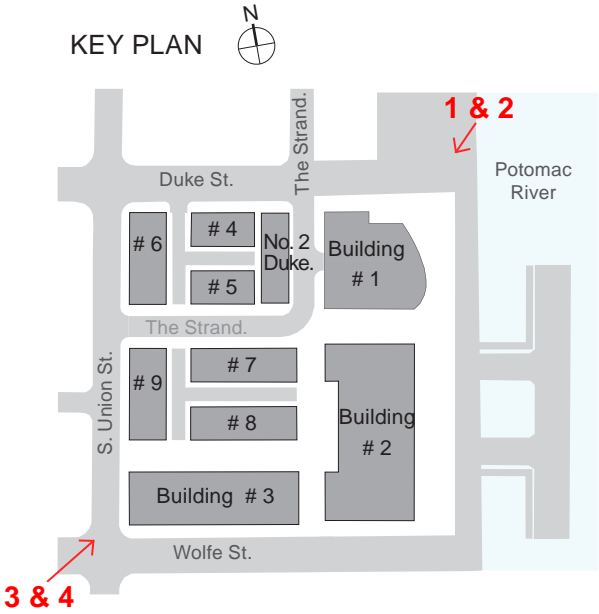
2-View from promenade at Point Lumley Park  
Current Proposal



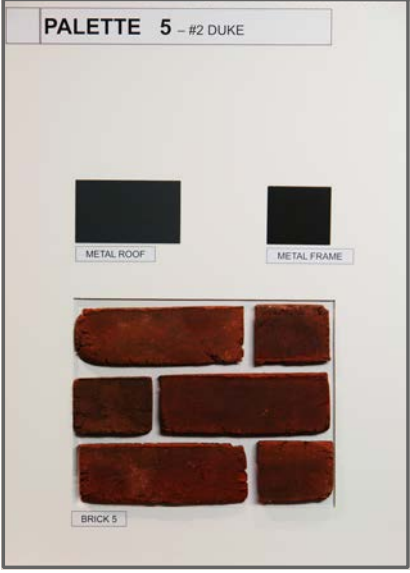
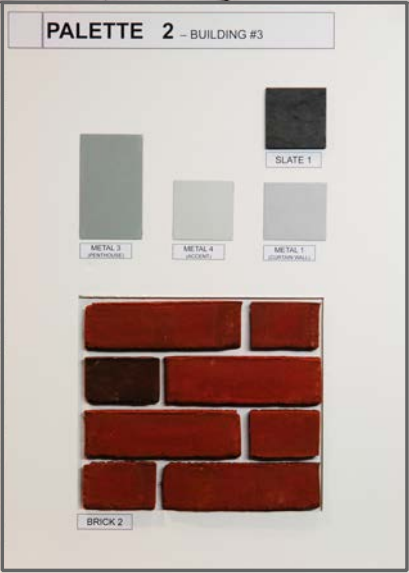
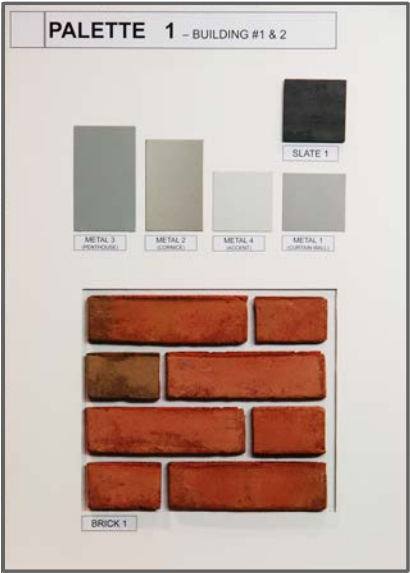
3-View from Wolfe Street looking east  
Previous Submission



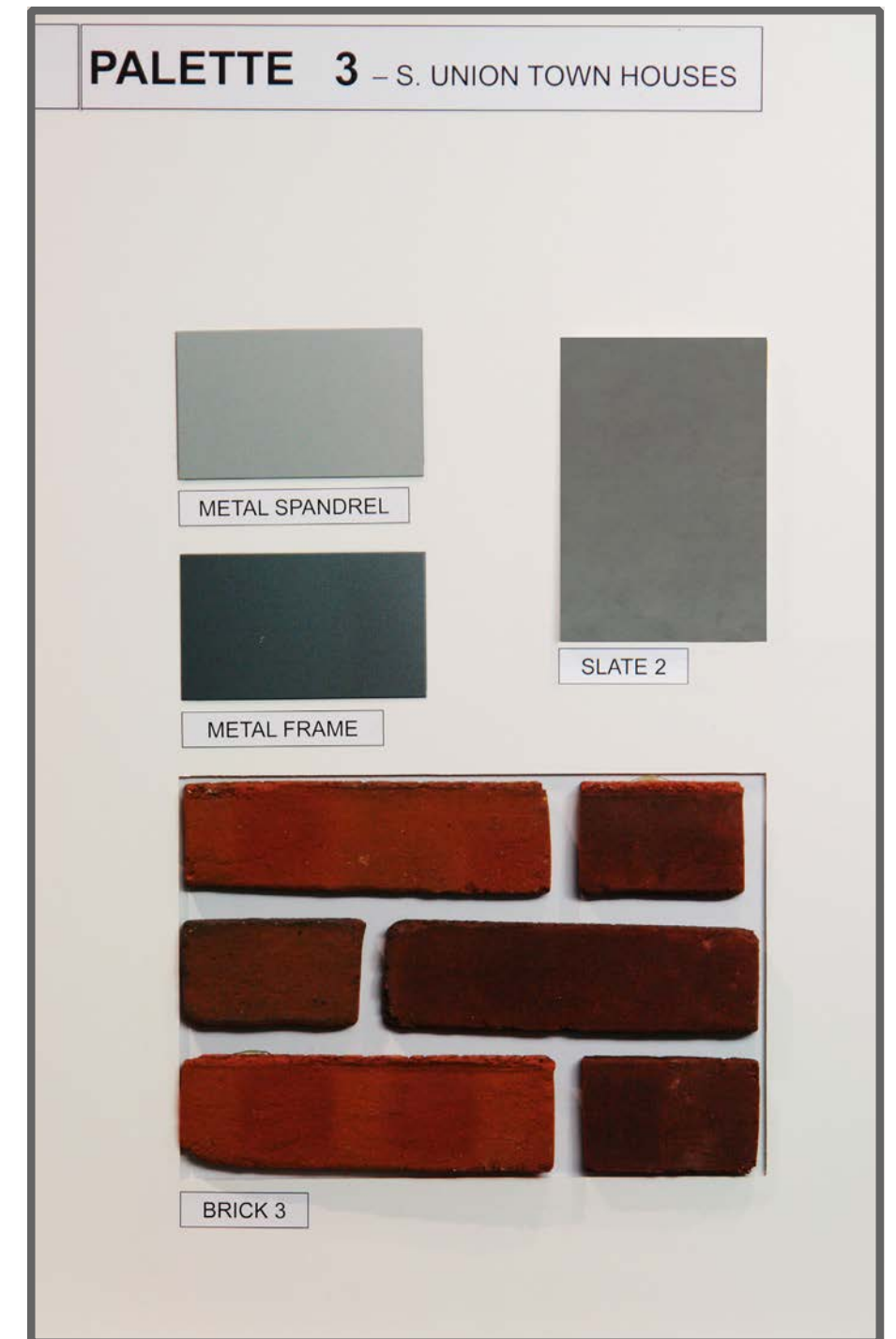
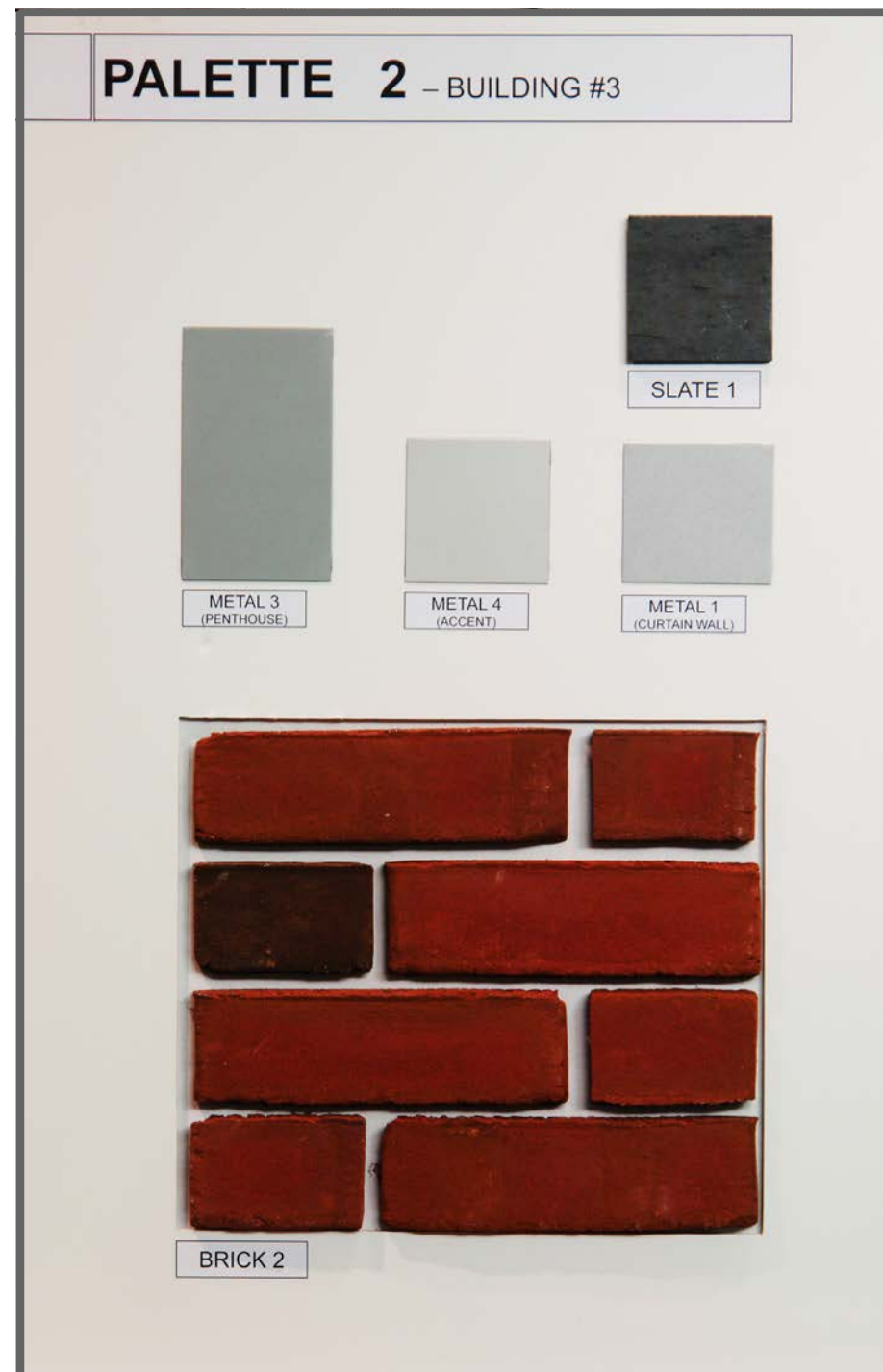
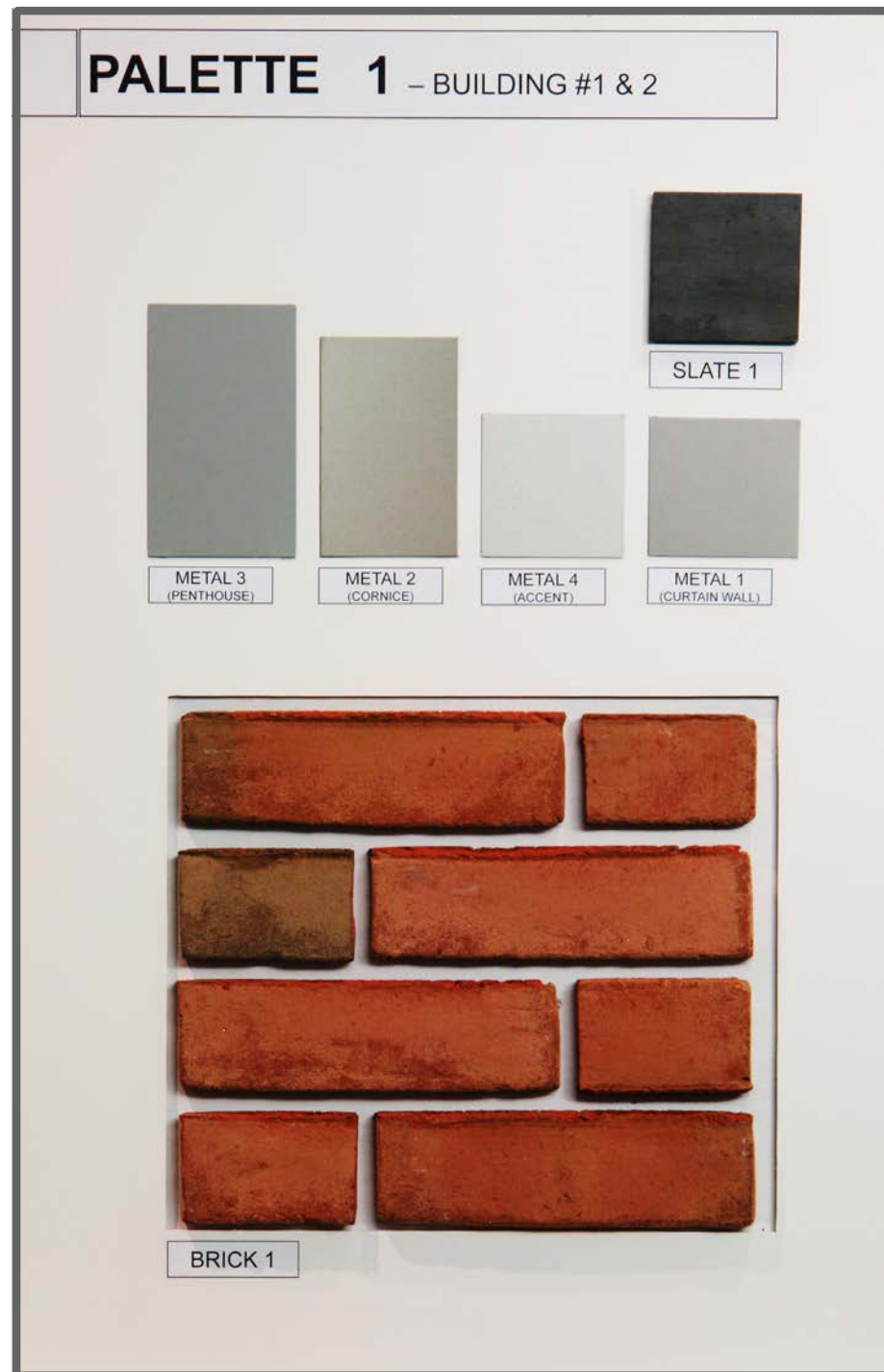
4-View from Wolfe Street looking east  
Current Proposal

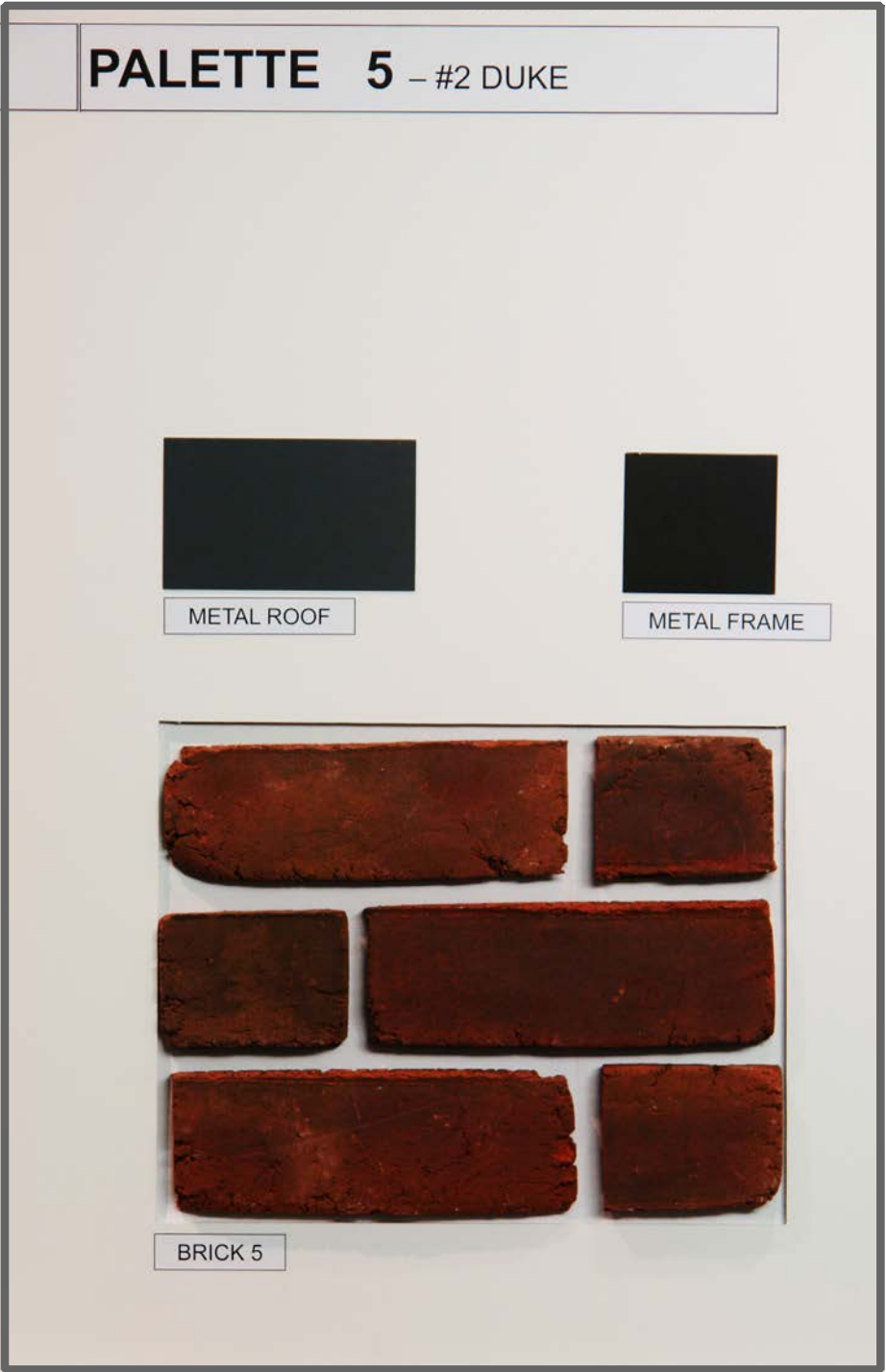






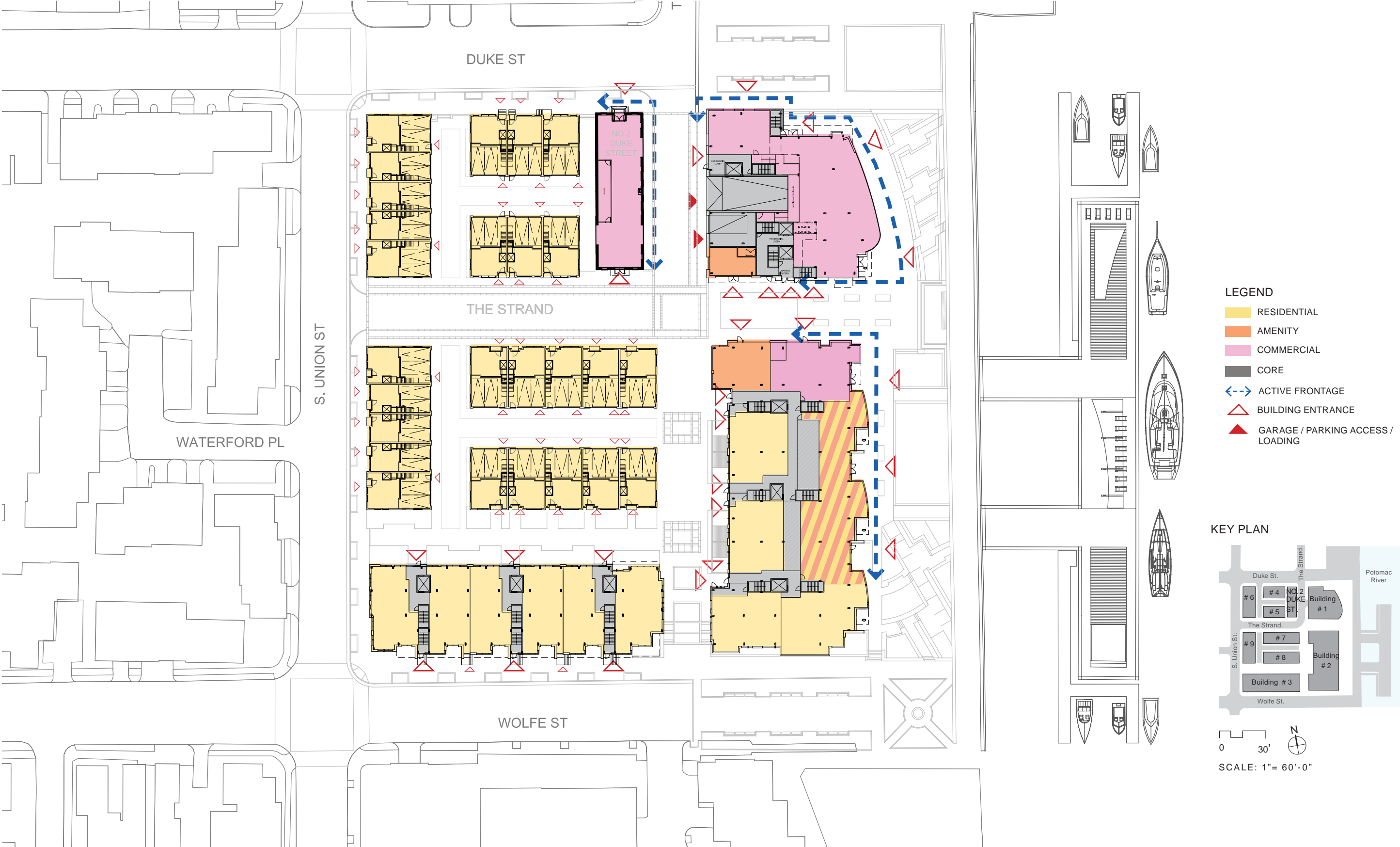


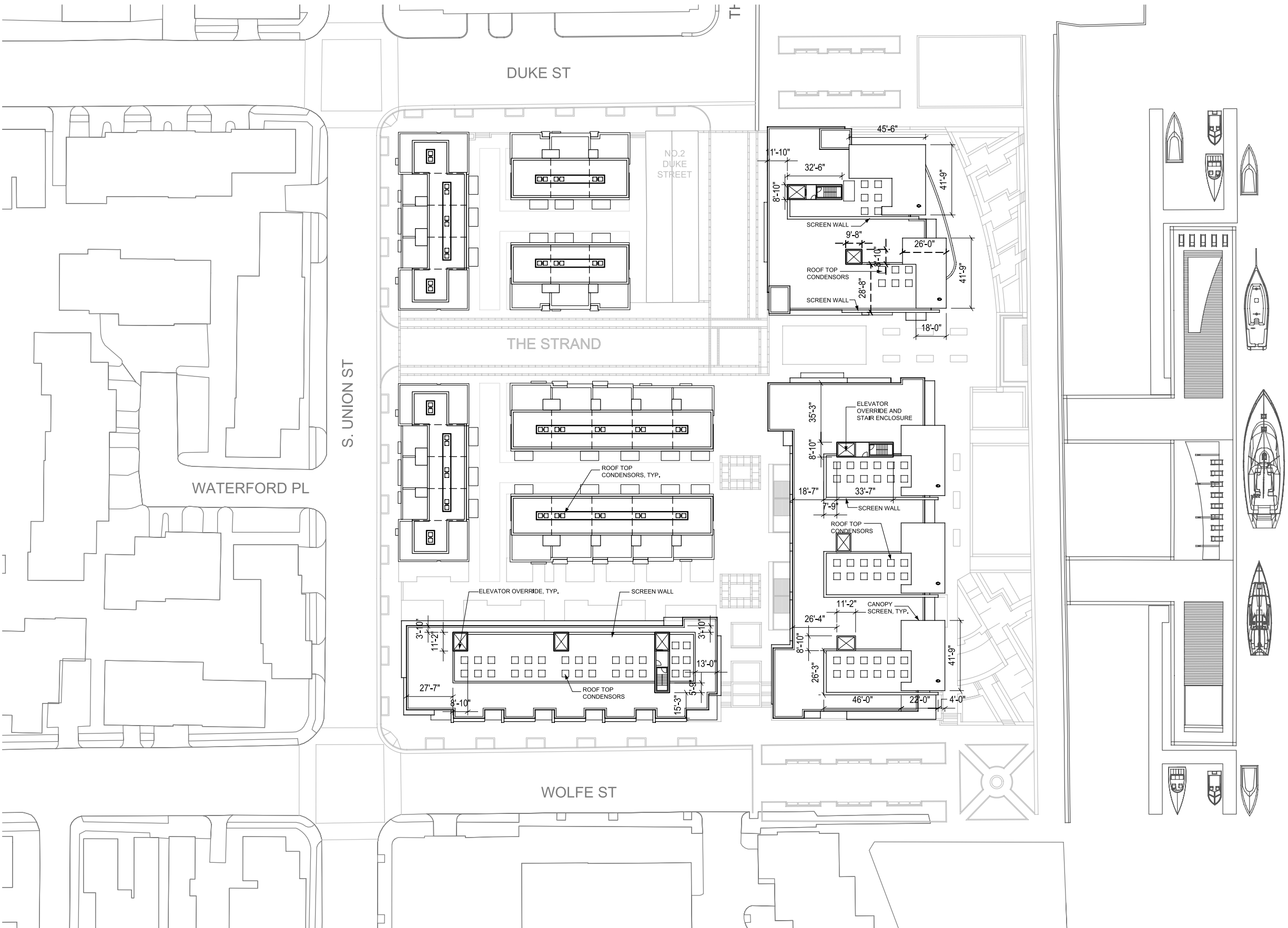






CONCEPT PLAN GROUND USES AND BUILDING ENTRIES

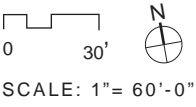
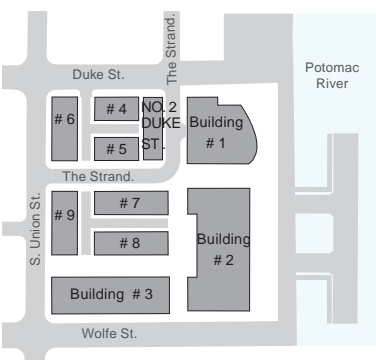




## LEGEND

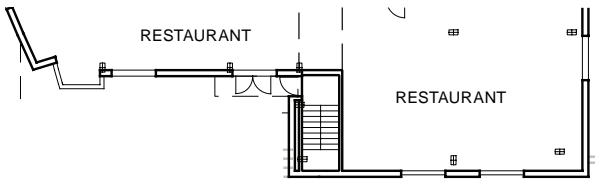
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- AMENITY
- COMMERCIAL
- CORE

## KEY PLAN

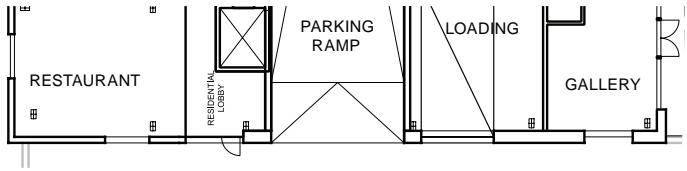




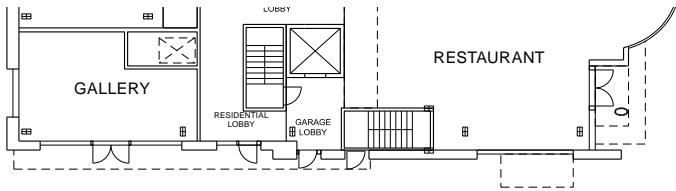
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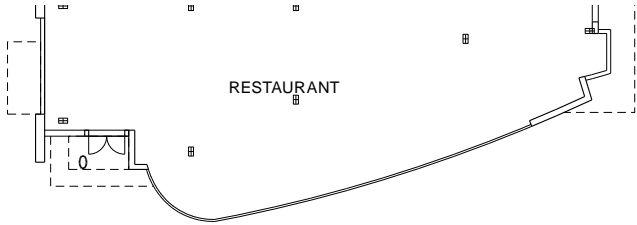
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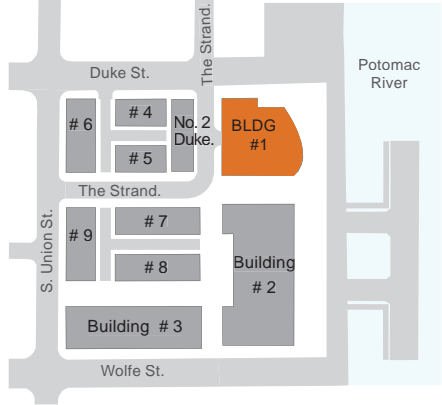
BLDG #1 - SOUTH ELEVATION



BLDG #1 - EAST ELEVATION



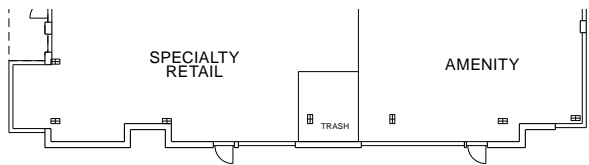
KEY PLAN



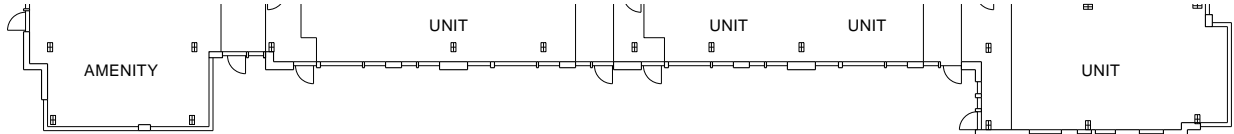




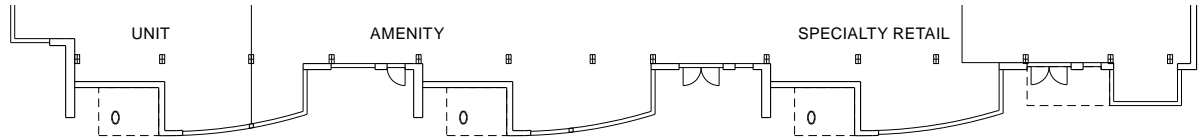
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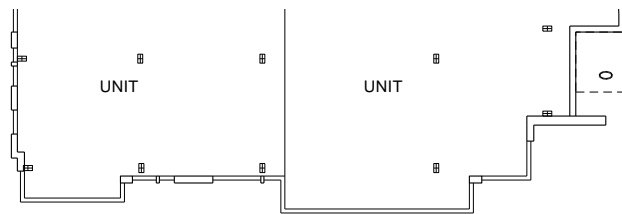
BLDG #2 - WEST ELEVATION



BLDG #2 - EAST ELEVATION



BLDG #2 - SOUTH ELEVATION

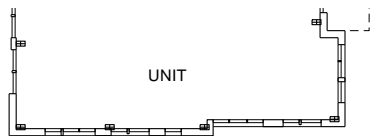


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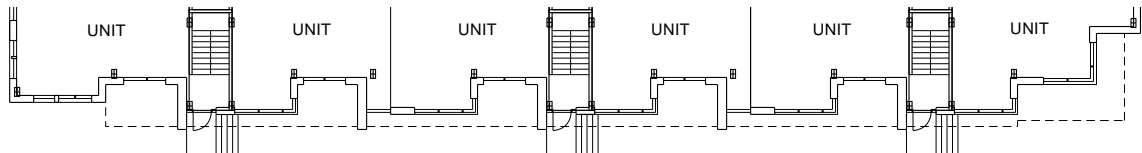




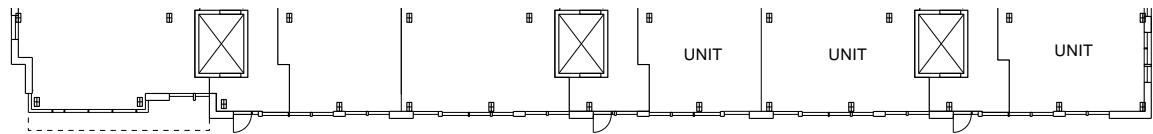
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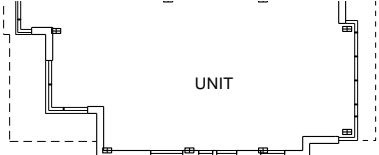
BLDG #3 - SOUTH ELEVATION



BLDG #3 - NORTH ELEVATION



BLDG #3 - EAST ELEVATION

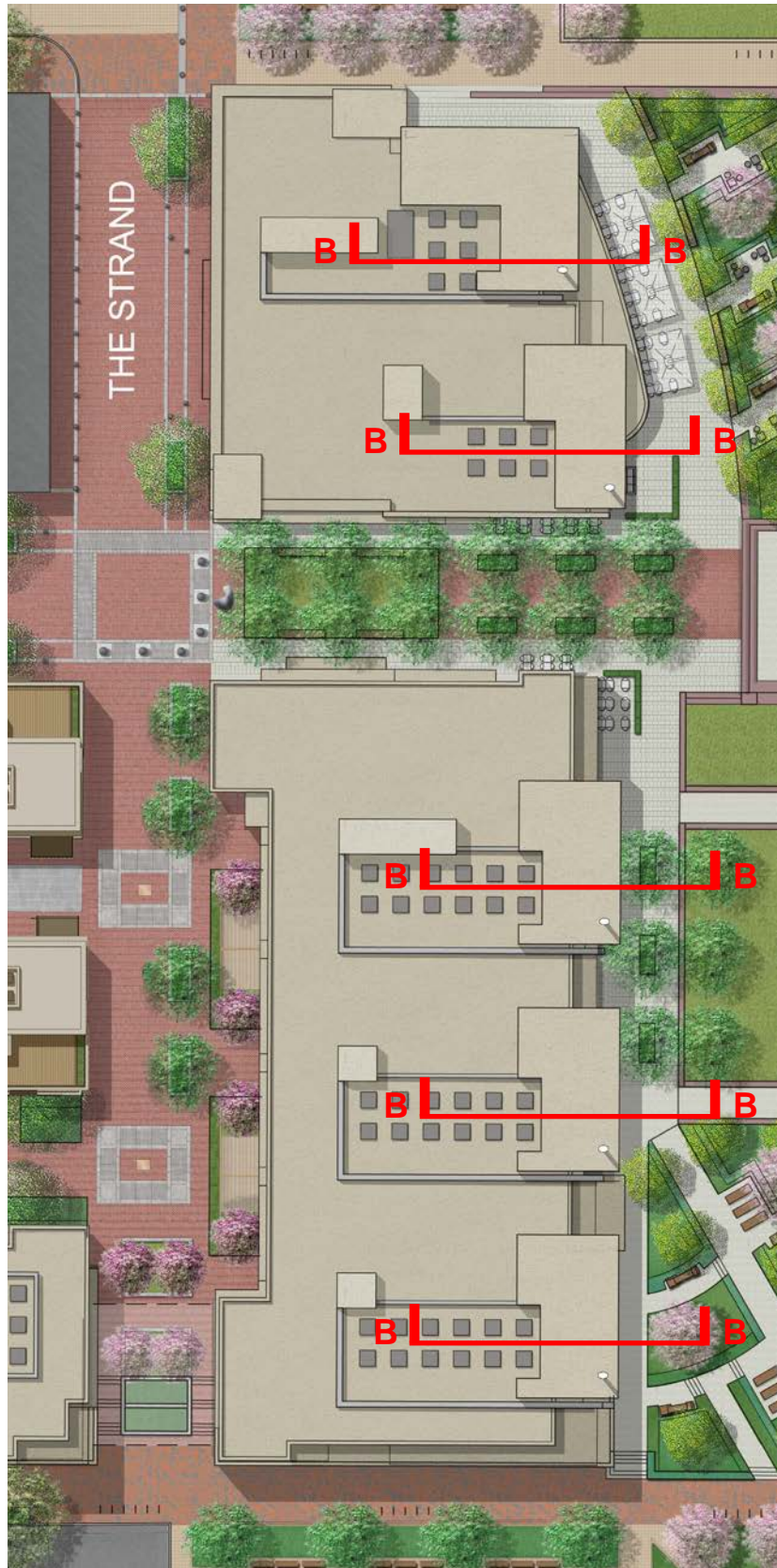




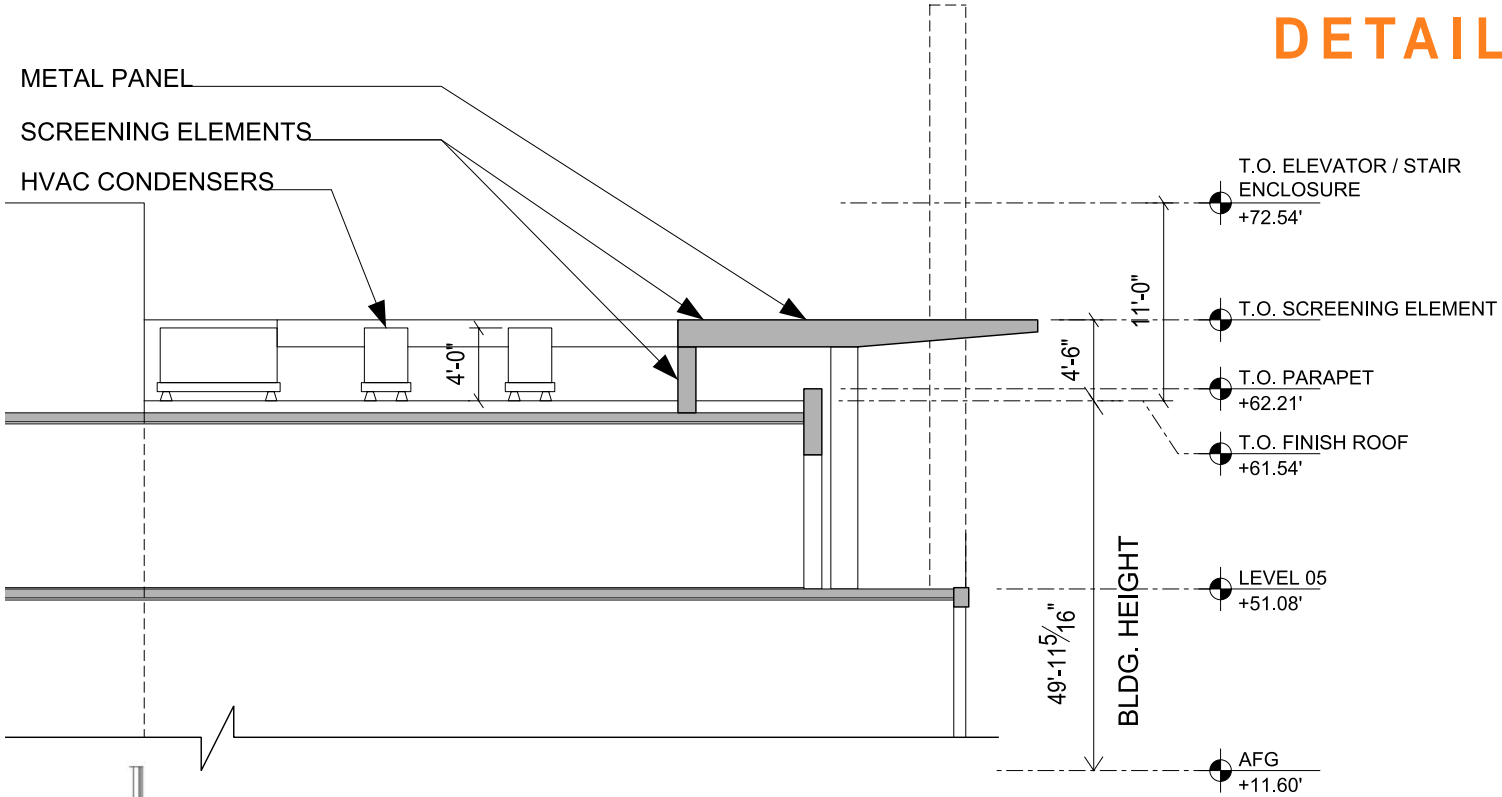
ELEVATIONS



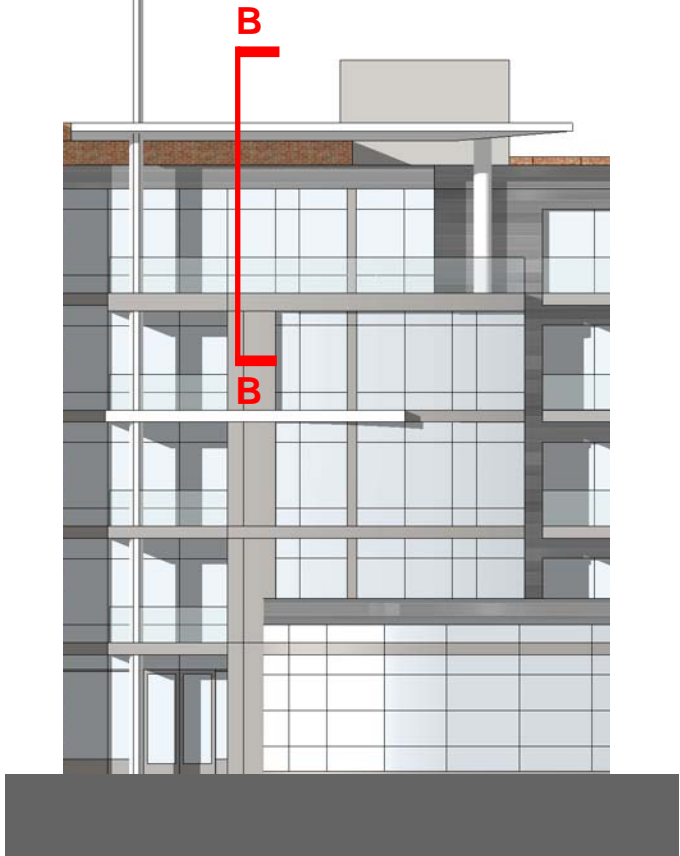




**BLDG 01 & 02: ROOF PLAN**

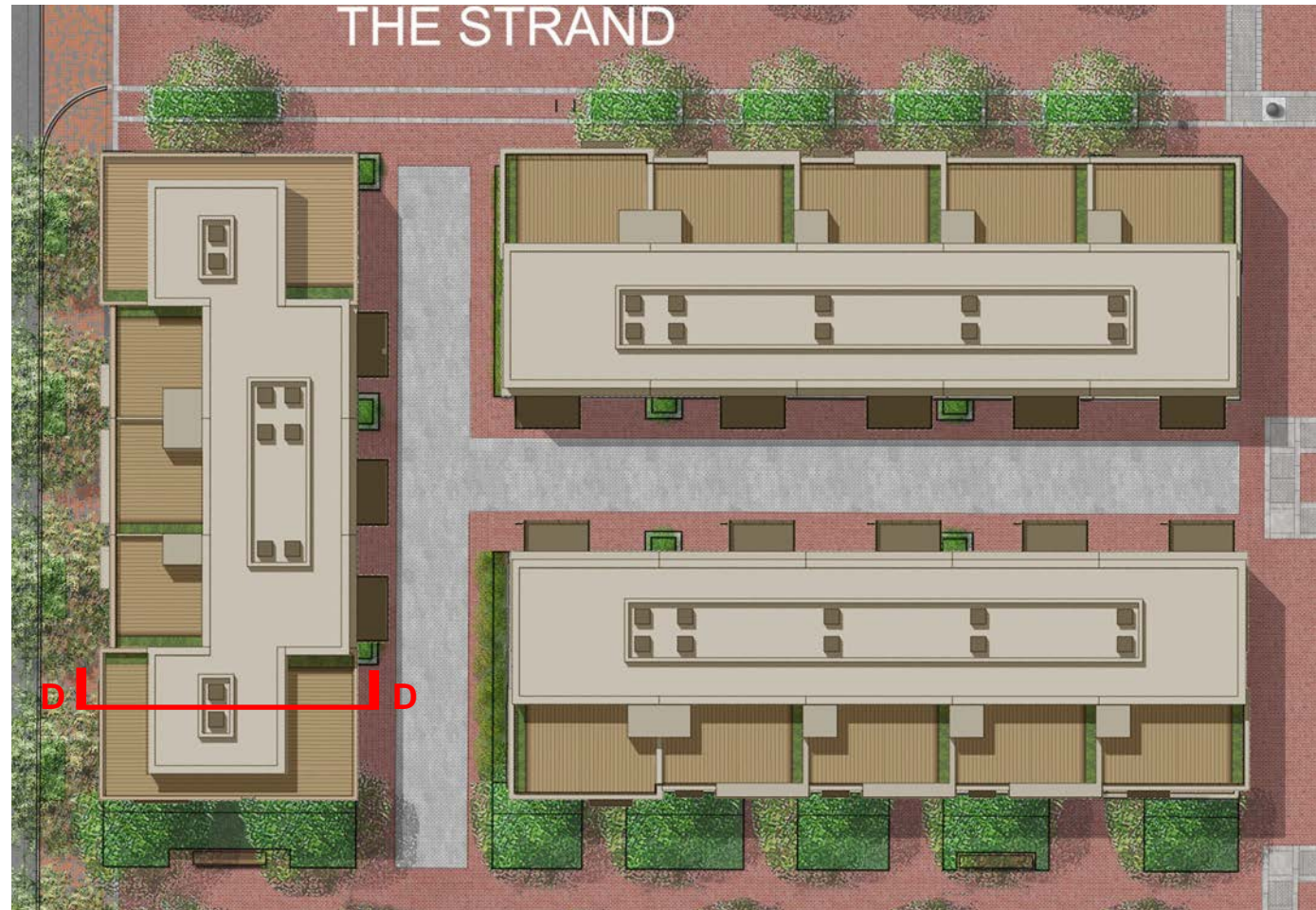


**BLDG 01: ROOF SECTION B**



**PARTIAL ELEVATION**

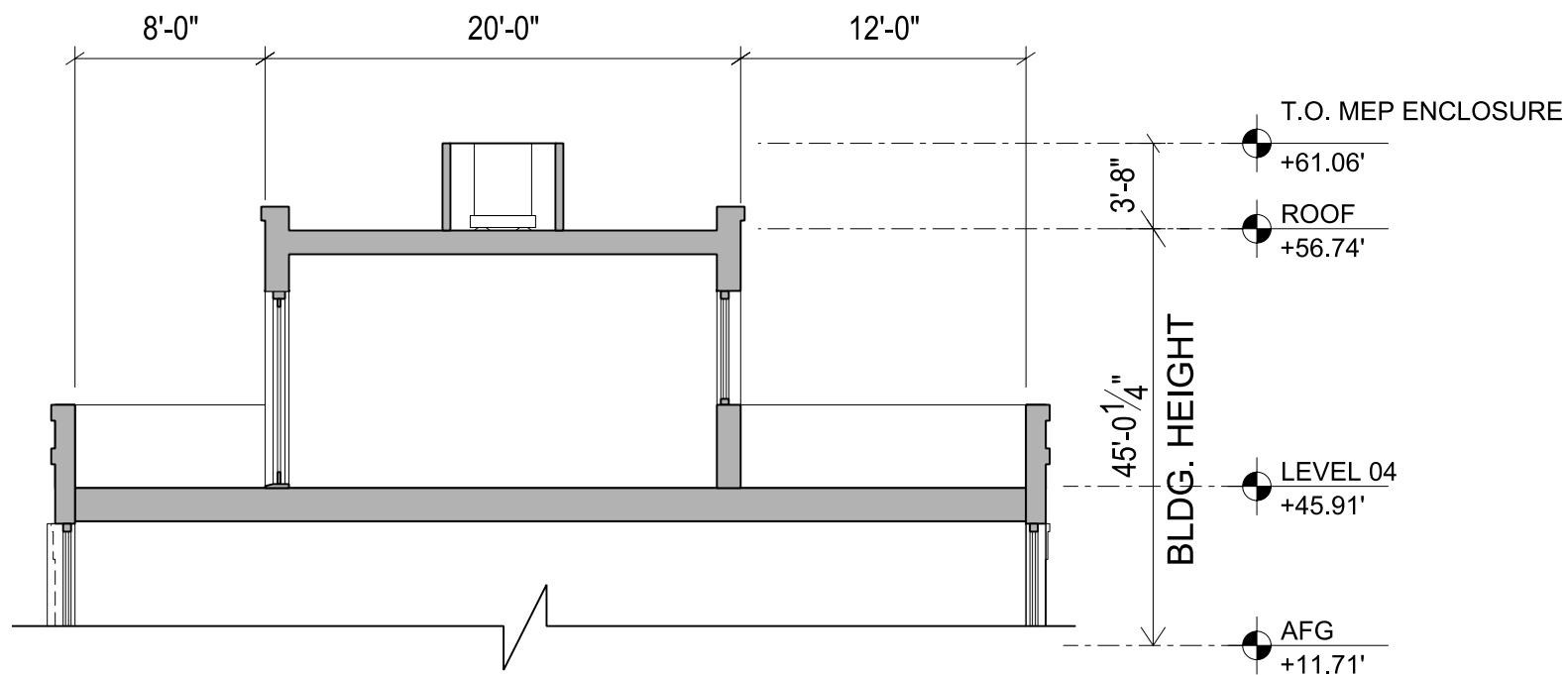
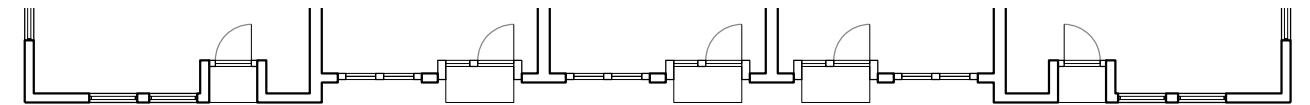




TOWNHOUSE: ROOF PLAN



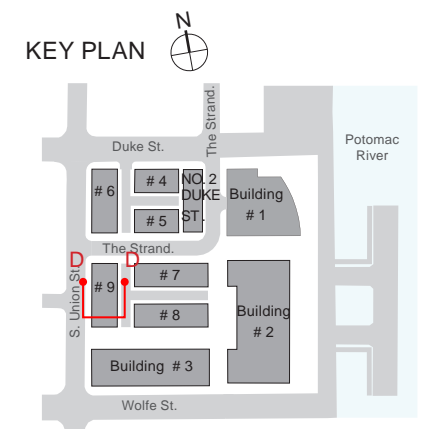
TOWNHOUSE: BLDG 09 ELEVATION



TOWNHOUSE: ROOF SECTION D

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- LEGEND
- DEVELOPMENT
  - RESIDENTIAL
  - AMENITY
  - COMMERCIAL
  - PARKING
  - CORE



SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"



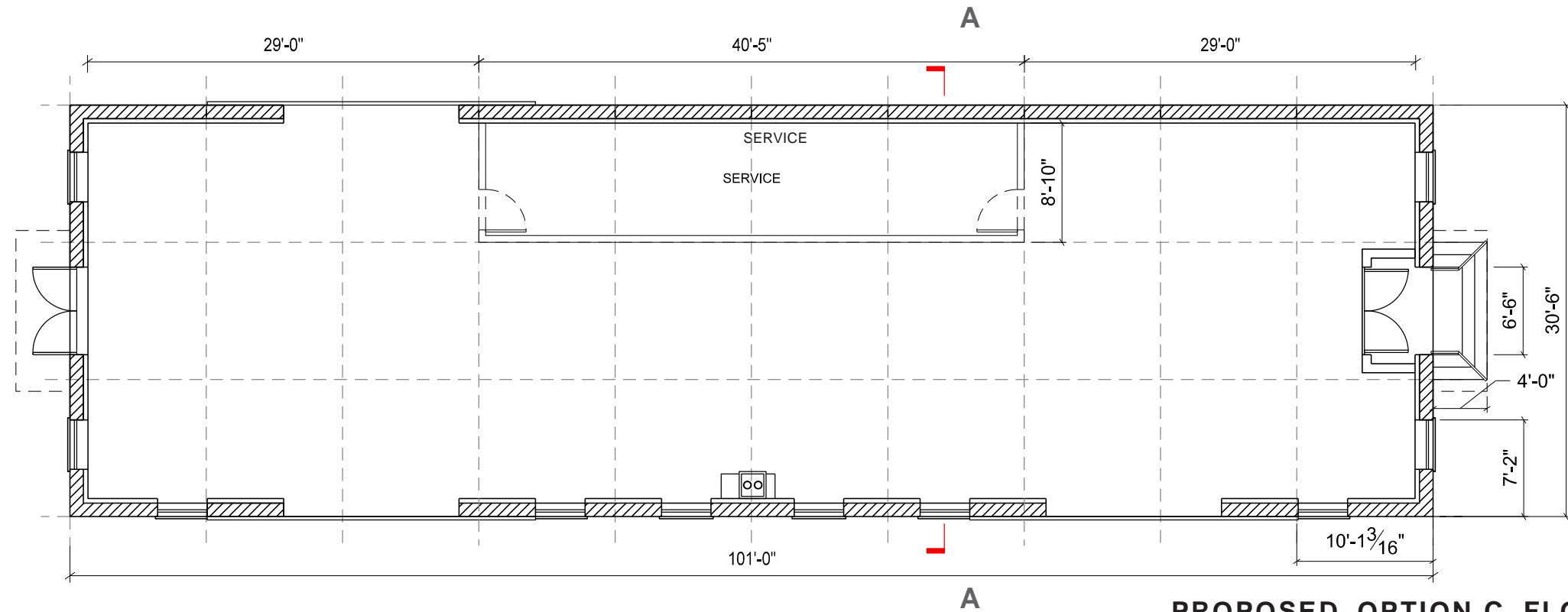


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VIEW FROM THE STRAND, NORTH OF NO.2 DUKE

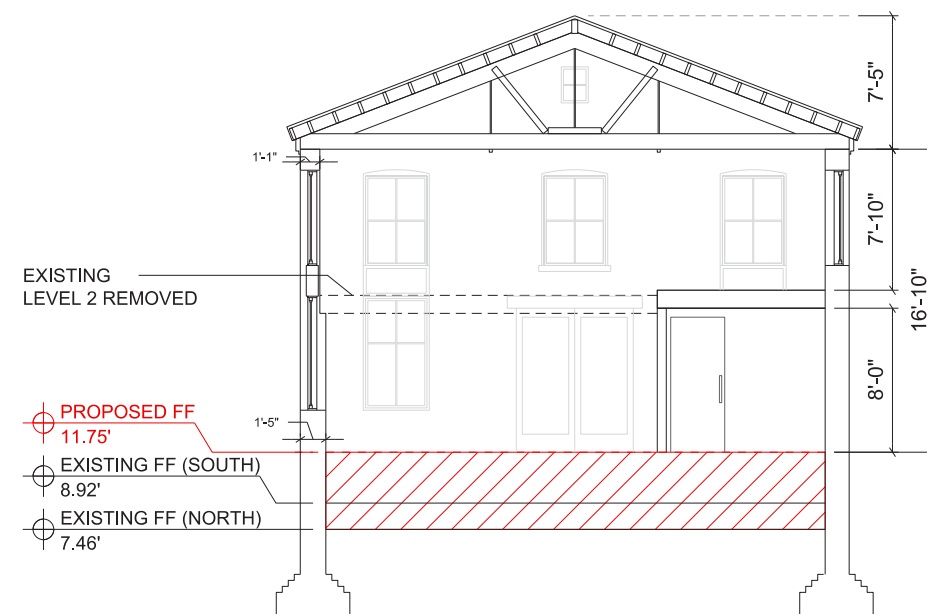


# PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN / SECTION



PROPOSED\_OPTION C\_FLOOR PLAN

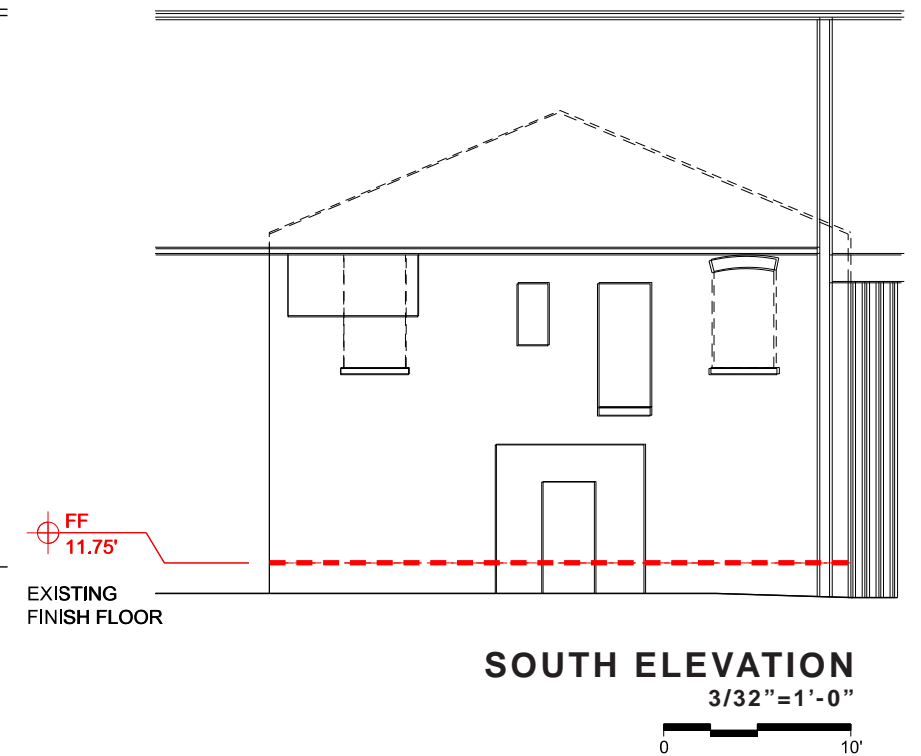
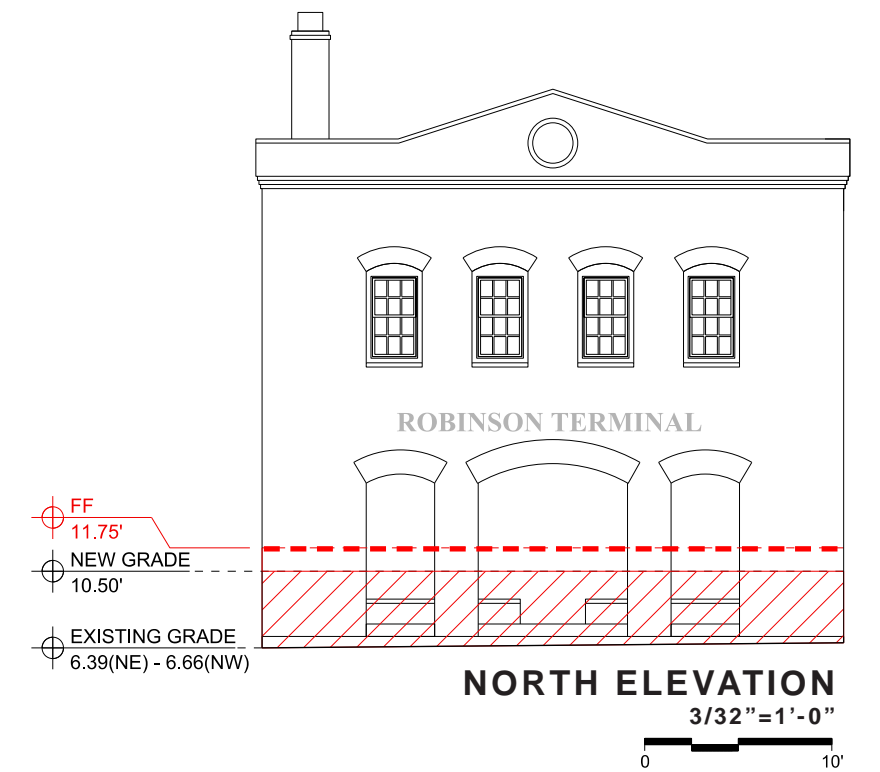
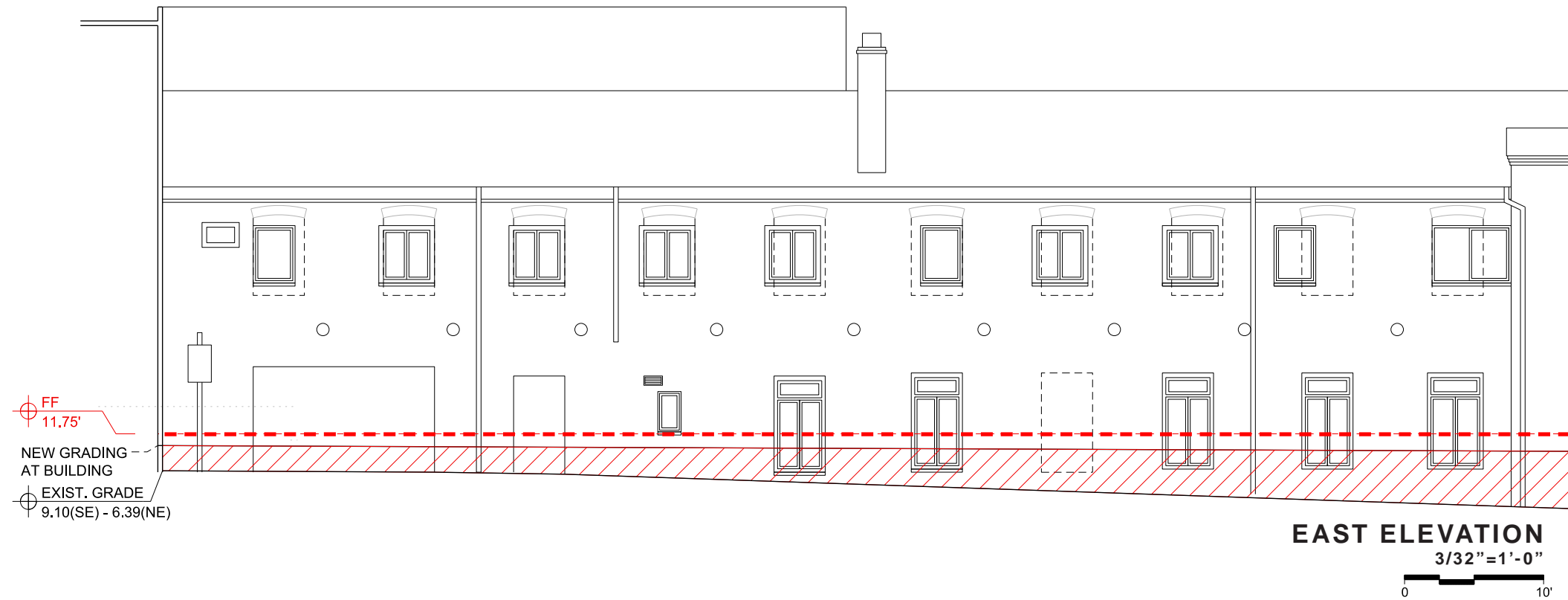
3/32" = 1'-0"  
0 10'



PROPOSED\_OPTION C\_SECTION A-A

3/32" = 1'-0"  
0 10'

# EXISTING ELEVATIONS



## ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH-ALEXANDRIA, VA



# PROPOSED DESIGN

## TWO STORY BAYS IN ORIGINAL LOCATIONS



ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH-ALEXANDRIA, VA

PROPOSED DESIGN - RENDERED ELEVATIONS



EAST ELEVATION

3/32" = 1'-0"



NORTH ELEVATION

3/32" = 1'-0"



WEST ELEVATION

3/32" = 1'-0"



SOUTH ELEVATION

3/32" = 1'-0"



ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH-ALEXANDRIA, VA



Nov 17, 2014

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shalom baranes associates architects