

HPC Submission Cover Letter

July 23, 2019

By Email
Suzanne R. Ludlow
City Manager
City of Takoma Park
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
Email: SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov

Dear Ms. Ludlow:

Below are the next HPC submission documents.

- NDC Presentation: we developed two design options for the building façade. The presentation includes building elevations comparison, precedent imagery, floor plans and perspectives for those two options.
- Project narrative: Includes the changes we had made based on the feedback we received.

The plans are preliminary and we anticipate having ongoing discussions with the HPC and County Planning staff following this submission that may likely result in further revisions.

Very truly yours,

Jingjing Liu

The Neighborhood Development Company, L.L.C.

Historic Features

The Property is located in the area known as Takoma Junction, which is part of the Takoma Park Historic District ("Historic District"). The Project complies with all applicable standards for new buildings located within the Historic District including the following: 1) Takoma Park Ordinance 1985-30 ("Ordinance 1985-30), 2) Chapter 8.40 of the Takoma Park City Code ("Chapter 8.40"), 3) the Design Guidelines for Commercial Buildings in the City of Takoma Park, Md. ("Design Guidelines"), 4) the Approved and Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County, MD Takoma Park Historic District & Carroll Manor/Douglas House ("Historic Preservation Master Plan").

Under the applicable ordinances, new buildings should have facades that are "compatible with and enhance the character of the adjacent areas" and "should respect the traditional quality of the surrounding commercial area and of the residential neighborhood"(Takoma Park Code 8.40.150.).According to the Design Guidelines: "Achieving compatibility does not mean duplicating [...]. A new building [...] should be seen as a product of its own time. However, by effectively relating to the neighborhood, a new building shows a district's evolution just as the existing buildings show its past" (Design Guidelines at 10). The Project's design blends with the historic properties in its vicinity, but also includes modern elements that distinguish it from those historic properties ¹.

Takoma Junction is to be an “extension of Takoma Old Town, providing unique stores and services.” The proposed project is a low-scale building that will contribute to the low-scale, small town quality along Carroll Avenue.

The building will have abroad yet rhythmic façade such that it feels like a series of attached buildings rather than a single long building. This breaks down the building’s scale and blends I in with its neighbors.

Rhythm of building volumes:

Based on feedback from the HPC Board, the elevation has been re-designed to simplify volume expression and balance the notions of separate buildings, the rhythm of the column spacing, and the opportunity to reflect a more human scale that is in keeping with the surrounding context of Carroll Avenue and the Junction. The options proposed demonstrate a 3-volume reading and a 5-volume reading with subtle markers that work to rationalize the façade rhythm with the use of the space within the building, make use of more intuitive “breaks” such as the building setback and the stair locations.

The project is also “sensitive to the scale and historic character of the area.” The proposed building height (measured per M-NCPPC guidelines) is approximately 35 feet, which is compatible with the other one- and two-story commercial buildings in Takoma Junction and in the surrounding R-60 zone. The proposed canopy delineating the first and second stories of the Project will be roughly the same height as the Co-op and serves as a datum for the new building in relation to the context of the neighboring structure.

Building Height:

Feedback from the HPC Staff and Board had recommended lowering the building. The current design reflects a lower building design. The Design Team have worked to deliver a design that is lower, but still responds to market and use requirements of high-quality tenant spaces – for retail and for office uses. Other elements have been adjusted to produce a design that continues to “fit in” to the neighborhood and the Historic corridor of the Junction.

More specifically, the height has been reduced through the following adjustments:

- 1. The first floor has been reduced by 3 feet*
- 2. The parapet wall has been significantly lower – the roof is no longer occupiable (eliminating the high guardrail/parapet requirement)*
- 3. The stair/elevator tower no longer provides roof access and has been significantly reduced*

Other elements of the design have been refined to lower the overall composition. The canopy has been lowered to be reflective of other local canopy expressions.

The current design would result in a building height of 32 feet, using the Montgomery County method.

Other important elements of the building remain unchanged – a green roof element that seeks to achieve green building goals, the lesser degree of embellishment and architectural ornamentation are elements of the contextual syntax and elements that the building will continue to refine.

Height Comparison:

<i>DESIGN</i>	<i>1st Floor Height (FF to FF)</i>	<i>2nd Floor Height (FF to Roof)</i>	<i>Parapet</i>
<i>May 2019</i>	<i>21' (+/- 19 ft. clear)</i>	<i>14' (+/- 12' clear)</i>	<i>42' (at elevator tower 45')</i>
<i>July 2019</i>	<i>18' (+/- 16 ft. clear)</i>	<i>14' (+/- 12' clear)</i>	<i>37'</i>

The proposed building continues the street setback established by the Co-op buildings. This consistent building setback is a character defining feature found in the surviving historic commercial development along Carroll Avenue. The calibration of the specific sidewalk zones has been carefully planned to accommodate the retail activity, clear pedestrian zones and the need for delivery and service to occur within the streetscape. Design Guidelines at 11. At street level, shopfronts are proposed to be pedestrian-oriented with “display windows immediately adjacent to the sidewalk” except for a single step back which will add interest to the façade.

Building setback line:

The principal building front continues to align with the existing co-op storefront, and the tower element has been pulled back, based on direct HPC Board comment. This results in additional space in the public realm. The space will be further detailed by the Project's Landscape Architect moving forward.

The building placement also provides for the opportunity to include several layers of public realm – sidewalk, seating areas, dedicated service area and public space are all included. The design meets the goals of an 8' clear sidewalk (across the entire project width); built-in pockets for casual seating, benches and other social furniture OR café tables – depending on tenants and need; that creates a whole sidewalk varies from 15'-7" to 18'-2"; and a public space that exceeds the 2700 SF requirement of the City of Takoma Park resolution. There is also a 7' loading zone between the lay-by lane and sidewalk.

The building has been carefully designed to be respectful of the sobriety, timelessness, and sturdy materials that typify the neighborhood. Solid construction that includes brick and metal, punched windows, moderate decoration and human scaled fenestration have all been chosen to seamlessly integrate with the architectural heritage of Takoma Park.

Building storefront design:

Based on feedback from Staff and the HPC Board, storefronts have been adjusted to reflect a more compatible design to Takoma Park's catalog of ground floor, street-fronting retail space. Less bulky, the new design is in step with the storefront simplicity found on Laurel Avenue, Carroll Avenue and throughout Takoma Park. This design ethos of utility and simplicity also translates to doors, canopies, mullions, and the transoms over the canopy.

Opportunities to pull the doorway back inside the space have also been explored to introduce more modulation from storefront to storefront and are part of the Takoma Park vocabulary.

The building is intended to fit comfortably on the site and provide a familiar architectural language. Some components are intentionally modern, including the tower element that houses the primary stair and elevator, while the basic language is a simple and sturdy gentle articulation within the context of a strong and lasting building.

Providing interior access to the new commercial space while affording access to parking to both users of the new building and to customers of established businesses in the area was accomplished through the inclusion of two stairs and elevators. This solution was identified during neighborhood outreach in Takoma Park. An agreement has been reached between property owners involved that will enable safe and convenient use by all parties. The two means of vertical circulation will provide users with a clear and “readable” circulation pattern for accessing the garage and for exiting the garage for different uses above ground.

The colors are also compatible with the Takoma Park palette. Clay brick with mixed dark and light tones are common in the neighborhood. Metal windows with divided lights respond to the age of the neighborhood. Articulated but simple window headers and sills provide shadow lines without

being overly ornamental. Occasional brick details and fretwork are used in a reserved capacity to highlight the roof shape, but not be extravagant.

Ornamentation has been significantly reduced, and windows and doors have been re-considered to include fenestration comparable to those elements in Takoma Park.

Elements of the streetscape will separate sidewalk users from the lay-by lane and travel lane. Trees will shade both the travel lane and sidewalk and provide a further barrier between the pedestrian zone and travel lanes. The streetscape along the Carroll Avenue frontage is calibrated to provide safe passage along the pedestrian routes, shade, seating for both dining and simple passive socializing, and the necessary infrastructure for loading and service. The proposed streetscape will be a source of community pride and culture by incorporating opportunities for art in the public realm and public space for the community to gather.

Additional Public Space: approx. 200 SF larger.

No change to the streetscape from the previous design.

The new design of the building, does include an increase in the amount of open/public space required by the project and agreed to between all parties during the process of gaining the City of Takoma Park's approval that is part of the Resolution. This space will add quantity and our Landscape Architect will be working on an updated design – that respects the needs for the project outlined above by the Design Team, and the feedback from the City, Developer and the community members that participated in more than 2 years of active engagement.



TAKOMA JUNCTION

TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

streetsense.

July 24, 2019

SITE AREA & LOCATION



BUILDING HEIGHT COMPARISON

PREVIOUS ELEVATION



CURRENT ELEVATION A



CARROLL AVENUE ELEVATION - OPTION A

BUILDING HEIGHT COMPARISON

PREVIOUS ELEVATION

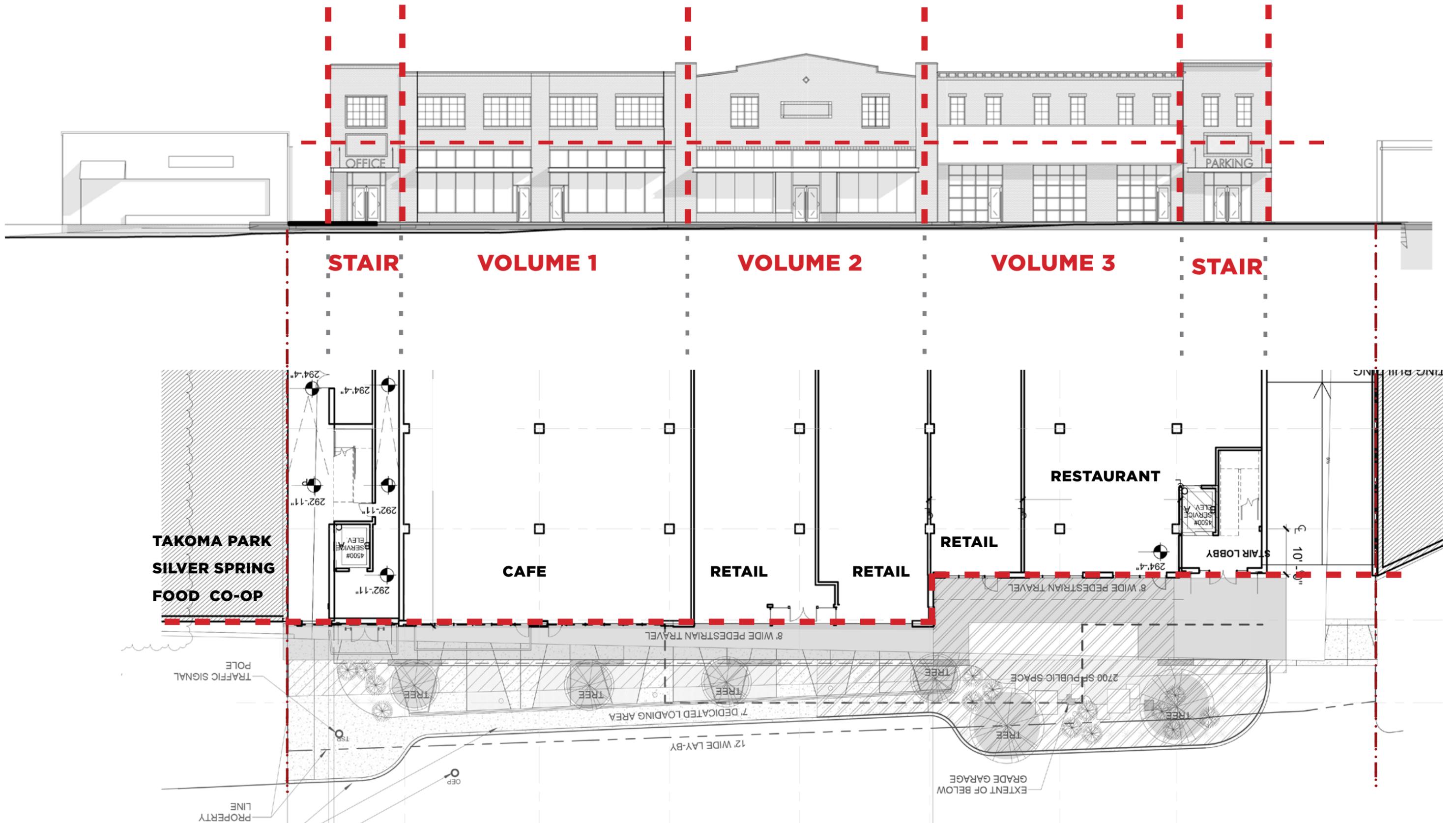


CURRENT ELEVATION B



CARROLL AVENUE ELEVATION - OPTION B

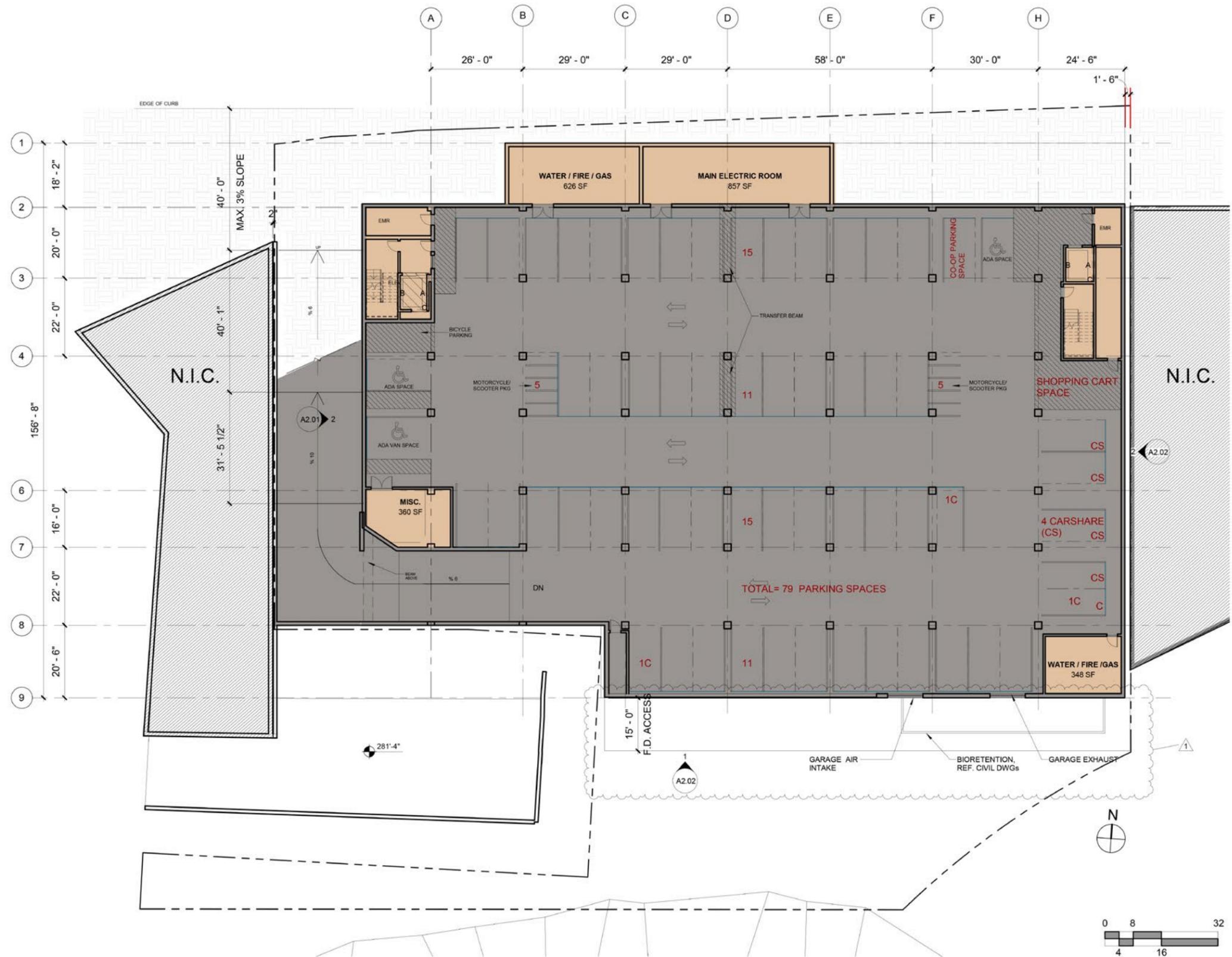
STREET LEVEL - OPTION A



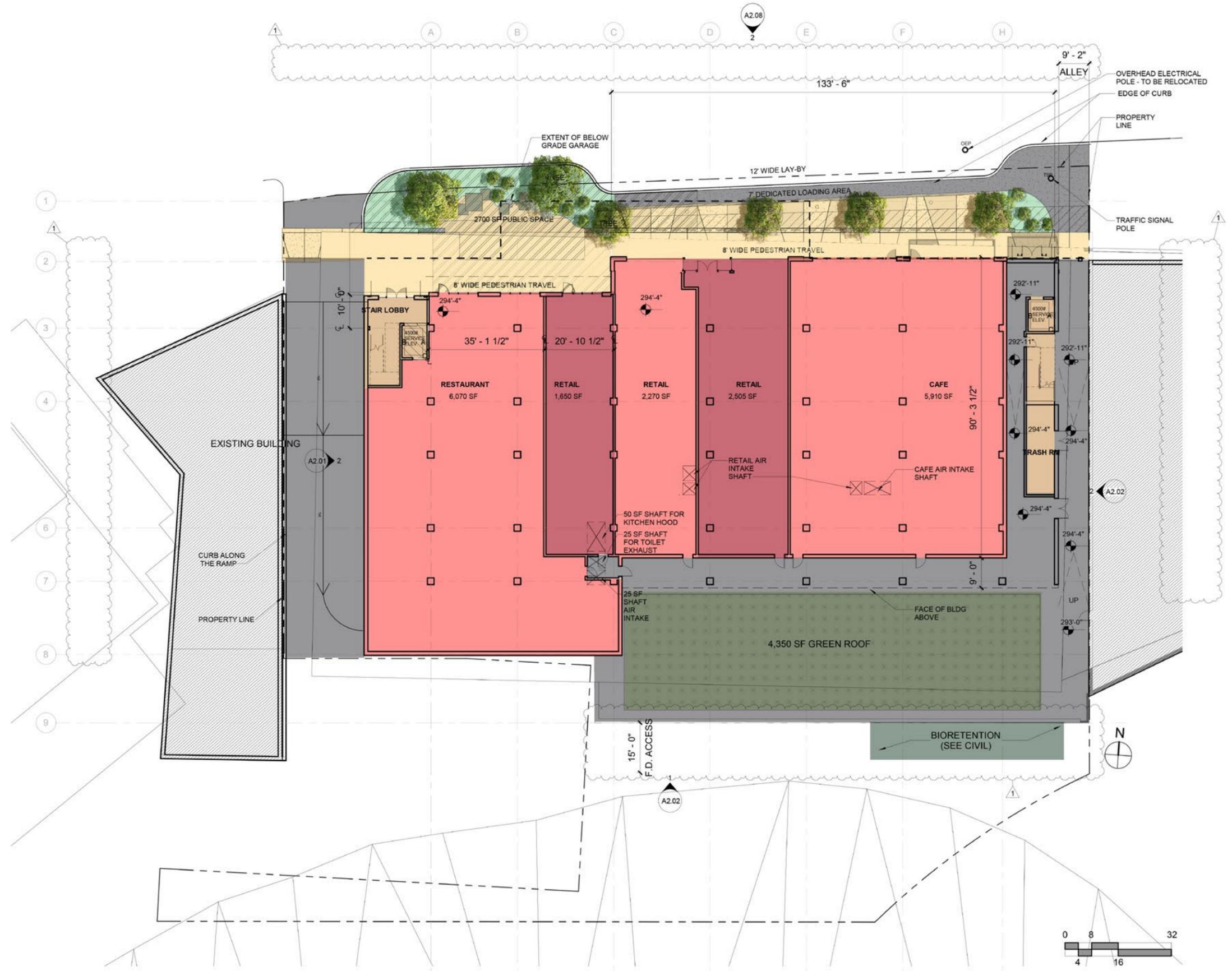
PRECEDENT IMAGERY



GARAGE LEVEL (BELOW GRADE)

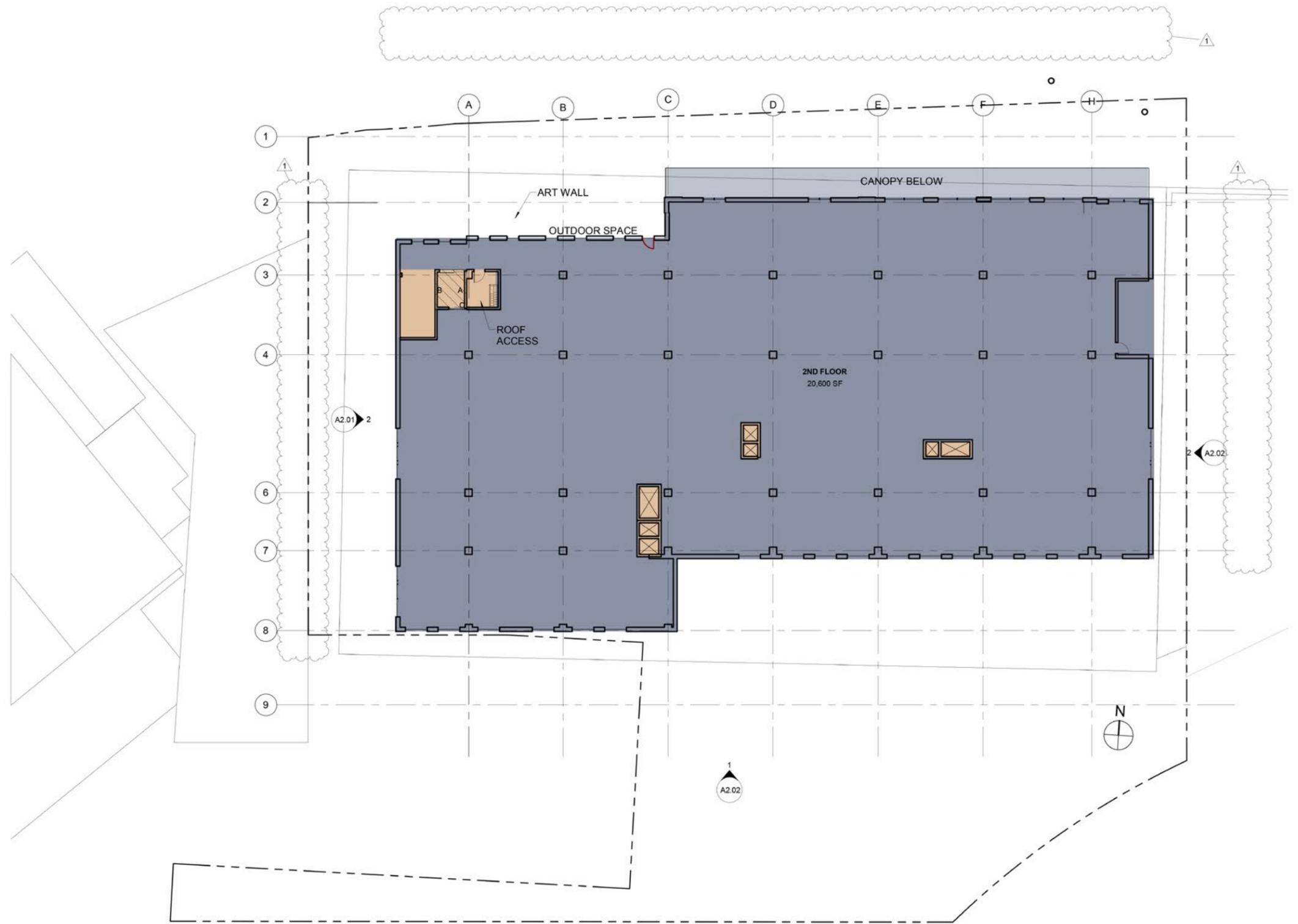


STREET LEVEL

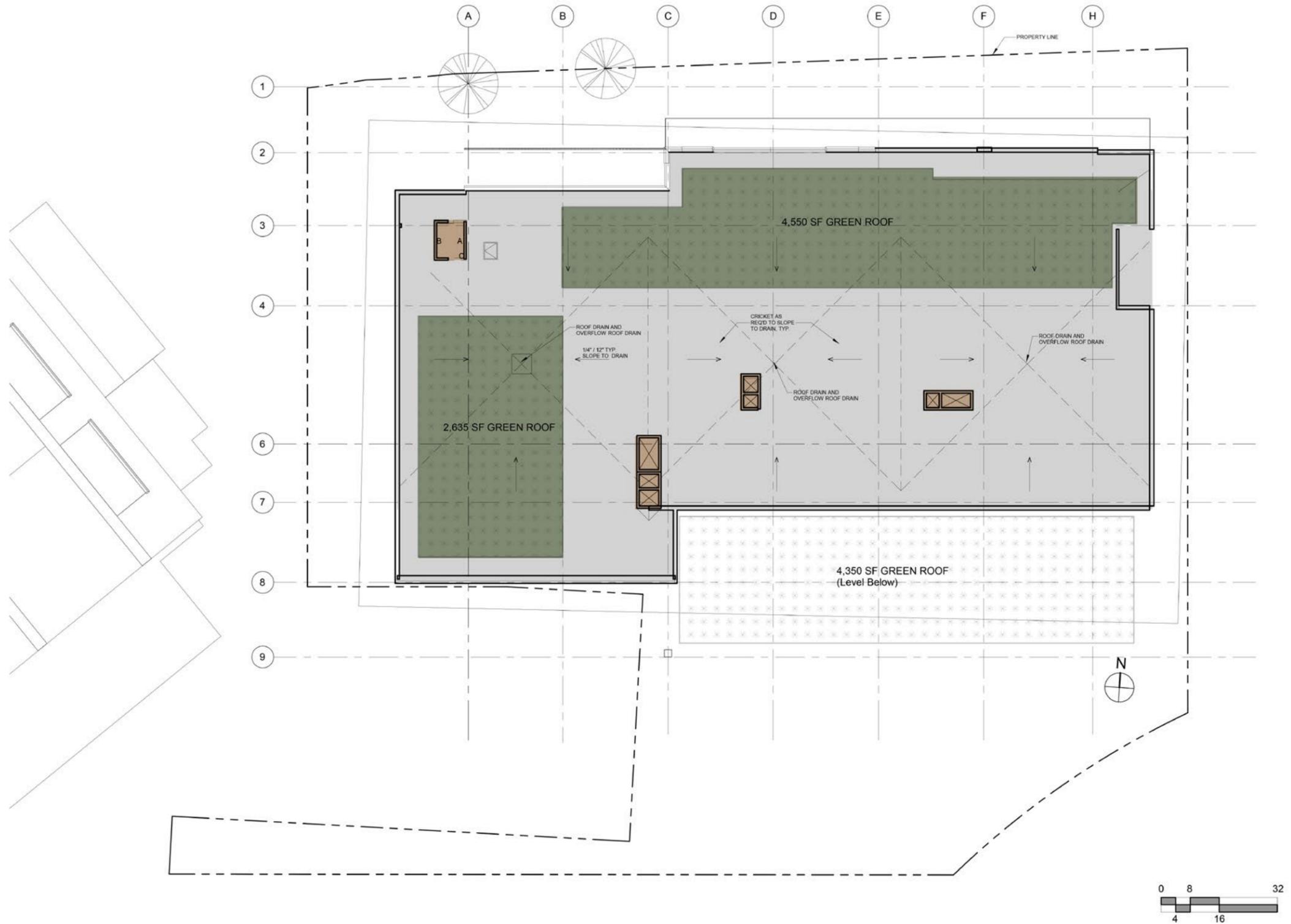


1 FLOOR PLAN - GROUND
A1.02 1/16" = 1'-0"

UPPER LEVEL



ROOF



PERSPECTIVE 1 - OPTION A

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH WEST



PERSPECTIVE 1 - OPTION B

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH WEST



PERSPECTIVE 2 - OPTION A

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH EAST



PERSPECTIVE 2 - OPTION B

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH EAST



PERSPECTIVE 3 - OPTION A

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 3 - OPTION B

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 4 - OPTION A

VIEW LOOKING EAST FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 4 - OPTION B

VIEW LOOKING EAST FROM CARROLL AVE

