

## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** City Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole

**FROM:** Aaron Hanauer, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-2494

**DATE:** August 20, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Construction of a 5-story multiple-family dwelling with 215 dwelling units (477 bedrooms) and 147 parking spaces at 117 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast

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The applicants are proposing a five-story, multiple-family building at 117 27th Avenue Southeast in the Prospect Park neighborhood. CPED staff would like to introduce the project to the City Planning Commission to gain their feedback on the project, the requested applications, and the questions CPED has outlined at the end of the memo. At the time of writing this memo, a land use application has been submitted, but it is incomplete.

The project site is 88,452 square feet (2.03 acres). A portion of the site is owned by the Soo Line Railroad. The railroad has filed a notice to abandon for the railroad corridor that extends from just south of Interstate 94 to the parcel just south of Essex Street Southeast; which includes the project site. The abandonment process starts when the railroad company submits a notice to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) about their intent to abandon a railway line; this notice is served 10 days before the formal abandonment petition is filed by the railroad company. Once filed, various timeframes are allotted in order for other interested parties to proffer their requests regarding the abandonment; any intent by a rail-trail advocacy group to convert the right-of-way into a rail-trail (called rail banking) must be submitted within 30 days, while any financial assistance offers to either purchase the property outright or to subsidize rail traffic on the line must be submitted within 50 days. If ultimately approved by the STB, the railway up for abandonment will be either formally abandoned, converted to trail use if the railroad and trail advocacy group arrive at an agreement on terms/price of the sale of the property, or operated by either the owning railroad (via a subsidy) or by a new owner.

The applicant has a purchase agreement with the Smith Sharpe Company and Soo Line Railroad. More information should be known in the upcoming weeks about the railroad abandonment and if other entities including Hennepin County and the University of Minnesota have expressed an interest in purchasing this portion of the railroad corridor. The railroad land/corridor has been identified by the Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan as part of the proposed Prospect Park Trail.

The project site currently contains one and two-story industrial buildings, unpaved areas for storage and landscaping supplies, and railroad tracks. The applicant is in the process of submitting a historic review letter in order to determine if the demolition of the existing building could be approved administratively or if it will require a public hearing in front of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC).

The immediately surrounding properties are primarily multiple-family dwellings. This includes the University Commons student housing development to the west, the Glendale Townhome development to the east and smaller multiple family development to the north. To the north and northwest, is the site of the new hotel development (501 Huron Boulevard and 2510 Essex Street Southeast).

The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan identifies the future land uses for the project site as urban neighborhood and transitional industrial. Urban neighborhood is predominantly residential area with a range of densities, with highest densities generally to be concentrated around identified nodes and corridors. Transitional industrial includes industrial areas located outside of Industrial Employment Districts that are anticipated to evolve to other uses compatible with surrounding development and do not have the same level of policy protection as areas within Industrial Employment Districts. The project site is not located within or along a future land use feature. However, the project site is located 1.5 blocks from the Stadium Village Activity Center.

The project site is currently split zoned: the parcel at 117 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast is zoned R5/Multiple-Family Residential and the railroad land is zoned I1/Light Industrial. The overlay zoning for the project site is UA/University Area Overlay and IL/Industrial Living Overlay. The project site is located about a half block away from the Stadium Village Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District.

The Stadium Village Small Area Plan (2012) plan provides additional guidance for the project site. Within the small area plan, the subject site is in the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Open Space District. It states that the primary objective for this district is to create a green corridor along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and complete the “missing link” of the Grand Rounds from the proposed Granary Park to the Mississippi River. The corridor will link future redevelopment and infrastructure improvements along the north edge of the study area to residential areas and the Mississippi River in the south. Opportunities for new infill residential should frame the edges of the roadway, strengthening connections to the adjacent neighborhoods, define opportunities for new public plazas/open spaces, and improve character of public realm with streetscape enhancements, stormwater management and architectural guidance.

The proposed five-story building would be approximately 61 feet tall and cover approximately 48 percent of the lot (42,621 square feet). It should be noted that the typical spot elevation along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast is 829 feet above sea level. The proposed first floor elevation is 833 feet above sea level. The applicant states that they are actively monitoring the ground water level to see if the first floor elevation could be reduced a couple feet. The building would include 215 residential units with 477 bedrooms (62 1-bedrooms, 73 2-bedrooms, 51 3-bedrooms, and 29 4-bedrooms). The building is proposed to have three exterior materials: brick, standard fiber cement, and Nichiha (cement panels that are at least 5/8 inches thick). The project would include a 2,500 square foot interior courtyard. Vehicle traffic is accessed from a single curb cut along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue that will lead to one floor of underground parking that would provide 147 compact off-street parking spaces and bike parking/storage.

The proposed project is intended to be built in phases with the first building being built along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast. The applicants state that the goal is to begin construction of the eastern building (along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast) in the spring of 2016 (completed in summer of 2017) and the second phase would commence in the spring of 2017 (completed in the summer of 2018). The applicants also state that even though this is considered phased construction, the intent is to never fully stop construction until the project is complete.

When reviewing the current plans for the project site, the following land use applications have been identified:

- Application to rezone a portion of the project site from the II/Light Industrial District to R5/Multiple-Family District;
- Conditional use permit to allow for a planned unit development;
- Preliminary and final plat to allow for a planned unit development;
- Site plan review.

CPED questions/items for discussion:

- As outlined in the PUD findings, a new development should relate to the surrounding development. Do you have recommendations to improve how the proposed development relates to the surrounding development?
- A PUD may be approved with less parking than is typically required; however, traffic generation, vehicle access, parking and loading areas, pedestrian access, bicycle facilities are evaluated. Since the project is within the UA Overlay District, the project would typically require 238 off-street parking spaces. The applicant is proposing 147 off-street parking spaces. If supportive of this lower off-street parking proposal, do you have recommendations on how to mitigate traffic generation? Would you encourage the applicant to have an enhanced bike parking and bike repair facility on the first floor to further encourage alternative modes of transportation?
- Section 530.120-Building Design states in larger buildings, architectural elements, including recesses or projections, windows and entries, shall be emphasized to divide the building into smaller identifiable sections. Do you have recommendations on further breaking up this larger building? Staff ideas include having more than two buildings, having greater additional height variation within the building or building(s), creating the appearance of multiple buildings that have one or two exterior materials instead of varying the same three materials every 15 to 30 feet, and adding balconies that are at least five feet in depth.
- Section 530.120-Building Design states that multiple entrances shall be encouraged? The current plan has two entrances along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast. Would you like to see additional entrances and walkup apartments along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast?
- Section 530.120-Building Design states that 20 percent of the walls on the first floor that face a public street shall be windows. Minimum window area at the first floor shall be measured between two and ten feet above adjacent grade. Given the current building design and first floor height, the project may not meet this requirement. Are you supportive of requiring that the project meet the 20 percent window requirement along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast?
- Section 530-120-Building Design states that blank, uninterrupted walls that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements, shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in length. The building has multiple areas that have blank walls. Do you have recommendations on breaking up these blank walls?
- Section 530.110-Building Placement states that the area between the building and the lot line shall include amenities such as landscaping, tables and seating. In addition, the Stadium Village Small Area Plan wants to improve the character of the public realm with streetscape enhancement, The project will likely comply with the front yard setback of 15 feet for the R5 zoning district, which will provide additional area for greenspace and public realm improvements. What advice do you have for having the building better relate to the street along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast?
- Section 530.160-Landscaping and Screening will likely require approximately 9,000 square feet of landscape area, 18 canopy trees, and 90 shrubs. Do you have advice on landscaping placement, design, and species?

Date: August 10, 2015

To: City Planning Staff  
Minneapolis Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole

From: Chris Elsey  
Elsey Partners

Re: Essex and 27th Ave SE Redevelopment

We are pleased to submit for your review a multi-family residential project to be located along the west side of 27th Ave SE south of Essex St SE, strategically located between the Minneapolis neighborhood of Prospect Park and the University of Minnesota. This project responds to the 27th Avenue Open Space District as proposed in the the Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan, and aims to provide a more cohesive transition between the residential neighborhood, the university district.

### **Goals for the Site**

The Project will improve the urban quality and pedestrian environment of the 27th Ave transition to the University Avenue District. It will provide quality and affordable housing for students and young professionals. The project's proximity to the METRO green line will support the use of public transportation. It will also help development the "Missing Link" of the 27th Ave portion of the Grand Rounds.

### **Existing Conditions**

The site is located on the west side of 27th Avenue just north of the I-94 overpass and south of Essex St. It is a combination of light industrial uses and an abandoned railroad spur that crosses the length of the site. The existing zoning is both R-5 and I-1. The 88,452 SF triangular site contains several existing connected one and two-story industrial buildings with unpaved area for storage of landscaping supplies. Much of the site is overgrown and existing power utilities run above ground along 27th.

### **Proposed Use**

The proposed project is a 5 story multi-family residential building with one level of underground parking. The first floor of the building contains an entrance lobby, apartment office space, apartment units, and tenant amenity spaces such as workout facilities and outdoor courtyards. The floors above contain apartment units - 215 in total. The below grade parking will provide 147 compact stalls to serve the building's residents.

## **Proposed Design**

The Project has been designed to revitalize the site and support the surrounding neighborhood. The building is composed of two interlocking building elements, responding to the condition of the site, and providing a courtyard for tenants.

The Project will be constructed with quality, attractive materials and finishes. The concrete podium based of the building will be clad in face brick that extends vertically at several locations. Above, recessed and cantilevered elements of two different patterns of fiber cement panels create an urban facade. Vertical strips of glass punctuate the building, breaking up the buildings mass.

The Project enhances the existing streetscape, providing landscape along the public sidewalks. Regularly spaced trees and planters soften the building facade, and provide an attractive pedestrian walkway along the 27th Ave - especially significant to helping to establish the "Missing Link" to the Grand Rounds.

Private vehicle traffic is accessed from a single curb cut along 27th Ave. A private drive provides access to two ramps into the parking garage and to a dedicated trash and recycling room at the end of the site. This drive also provides required fire access for accessing the most distant portions of the site.

The project is being proposed as a PUD and as such intends to meet the point requirements as outlined by the municipal code for corresponding increases. By placing all of our parking below grade, we have the required 10 points for the PUD, and for the additional points required for FAR and height increase we intend to gain points for providing a plaza (5 pts) in the courtyard space, and open space (5 pts). However, we recognize that as the project develops further, achieving the necessary points by other means may be more appropriate.

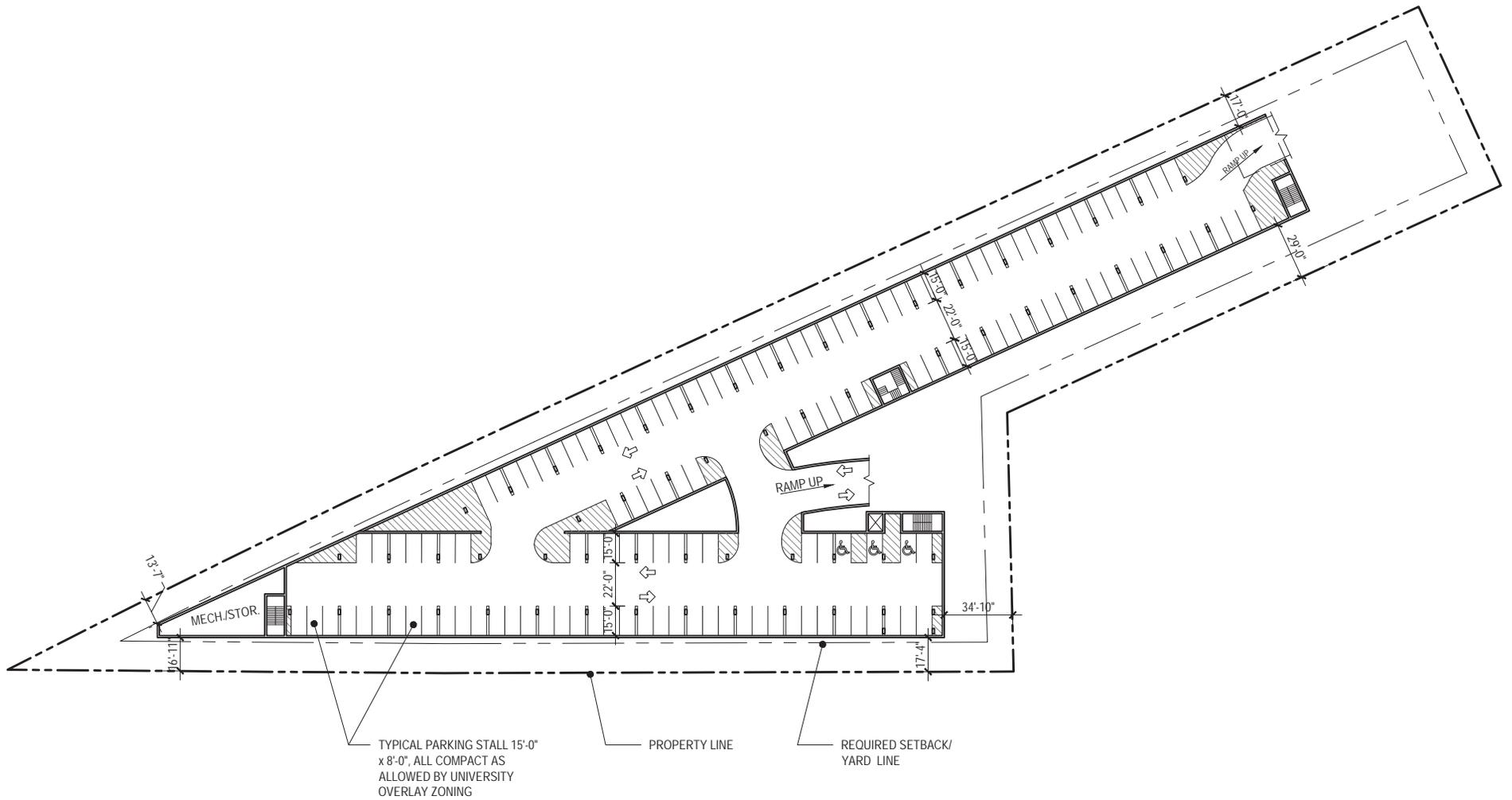
The project is proposed to be a phased development as indicated on the site plan drawing submitted with this letter. Generally, the easternmost building along 27th Ave. will begin construction in spring of 2016 and completed summer of 2017. The second phase of the project would commence in the spring of 2017 and complete the following summer of 2018. While this is considered phased construction, the intent is to never fully stop construction until the project is fully complete.

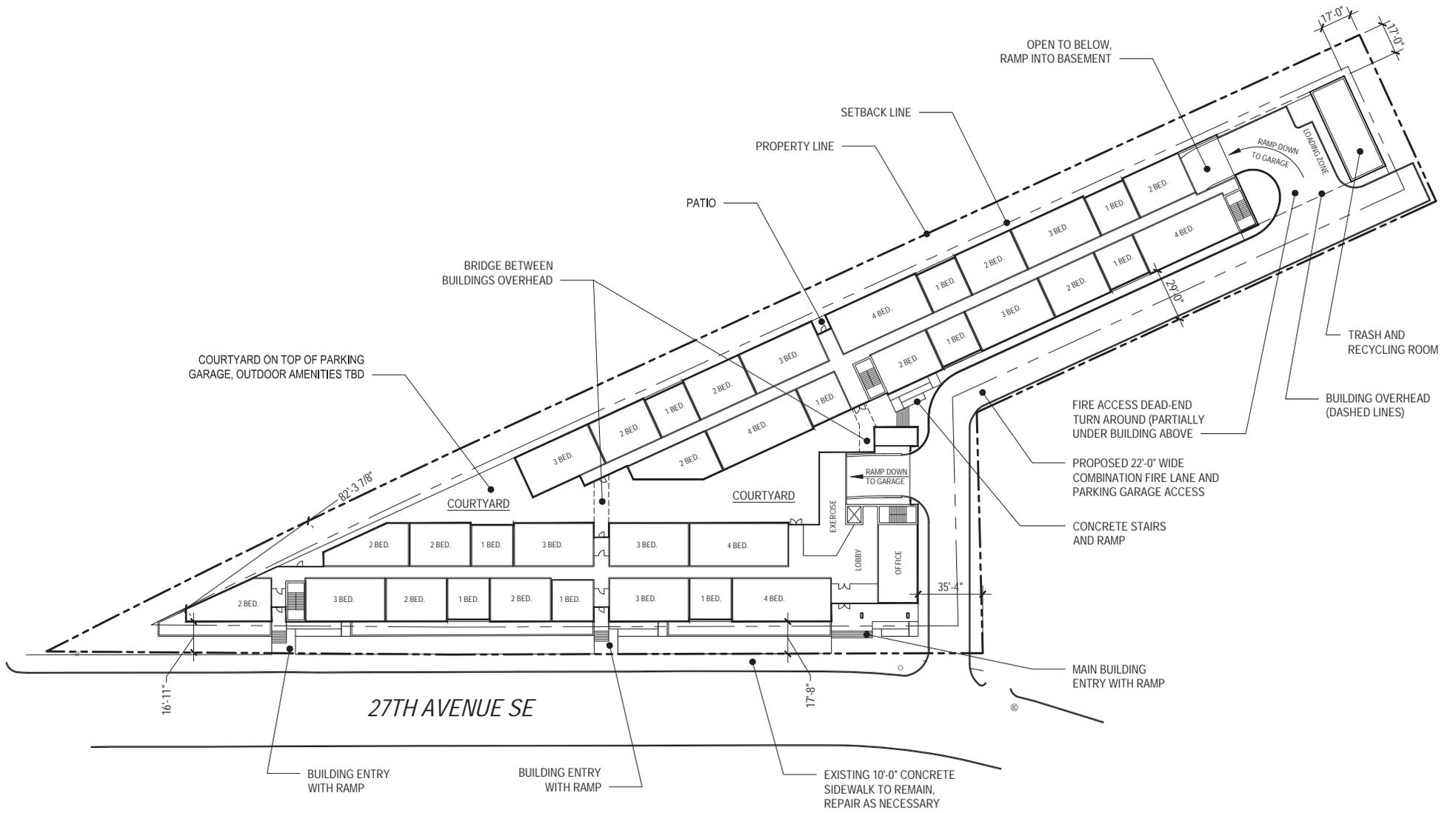
Thank you for this opportunity to present this project. We look forward to your feedback.

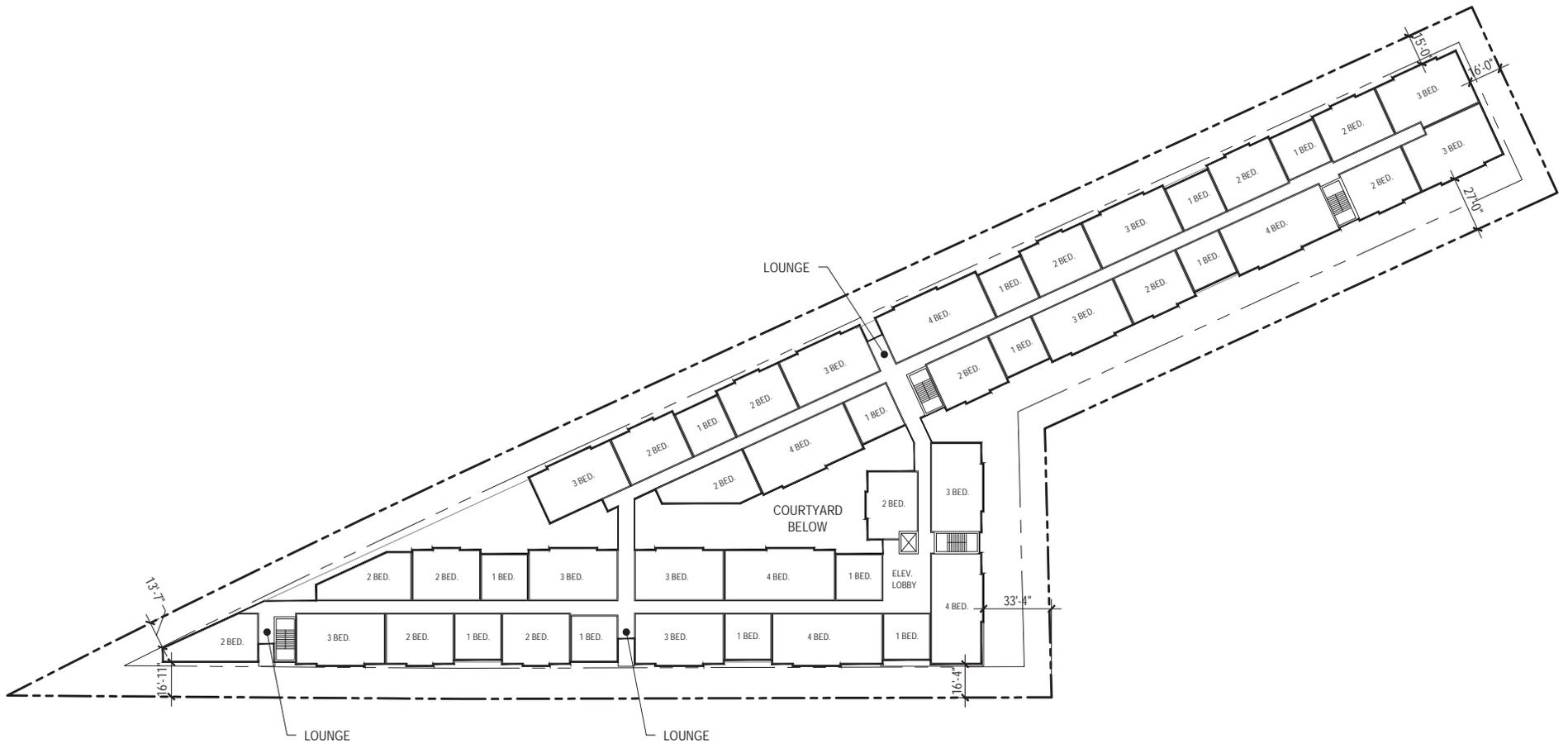
## Project Summary Table

Site and Building Summary	
Building Area (Footprint)	42,621 SF (48.2%)
Impervious Area	65,974 SF (74.5%)
Total Site Development Area	88,452 SF (2.03 Acres)
Building Height	5 Stories, 66 ft
FAR	2.67 as proposed
Dwelling Units	215 units with a total of 477 Bedrooms 62 - 1 bedrooms 73 - 2 bedrooms 51 - 3 bedrooms 29 - 4 bedrooms
Parking	147 Compact Stalls
Bicycle Parking	108 Bicycle Stalls







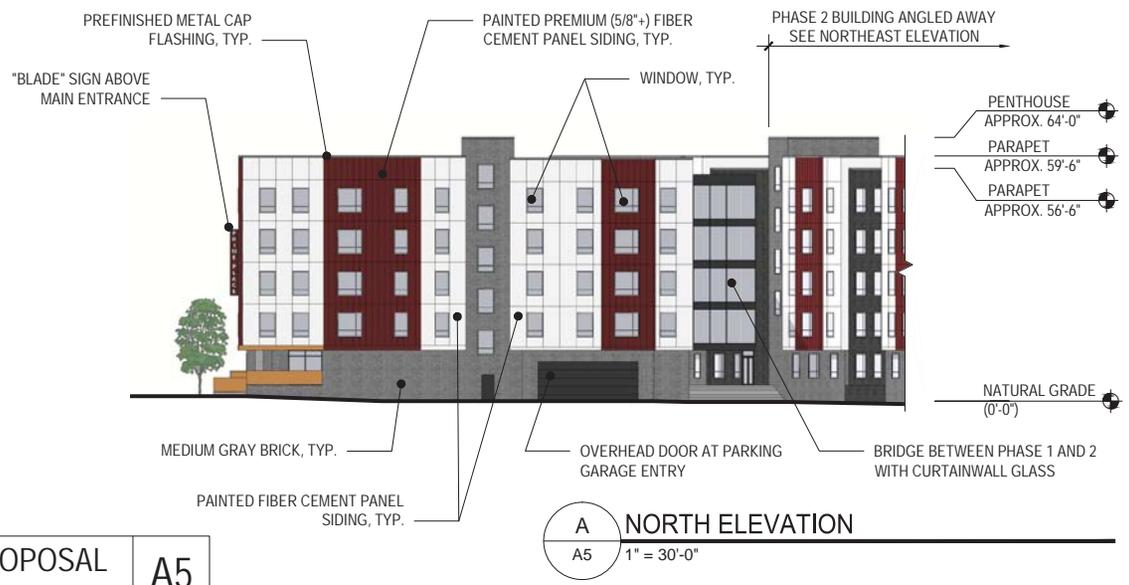




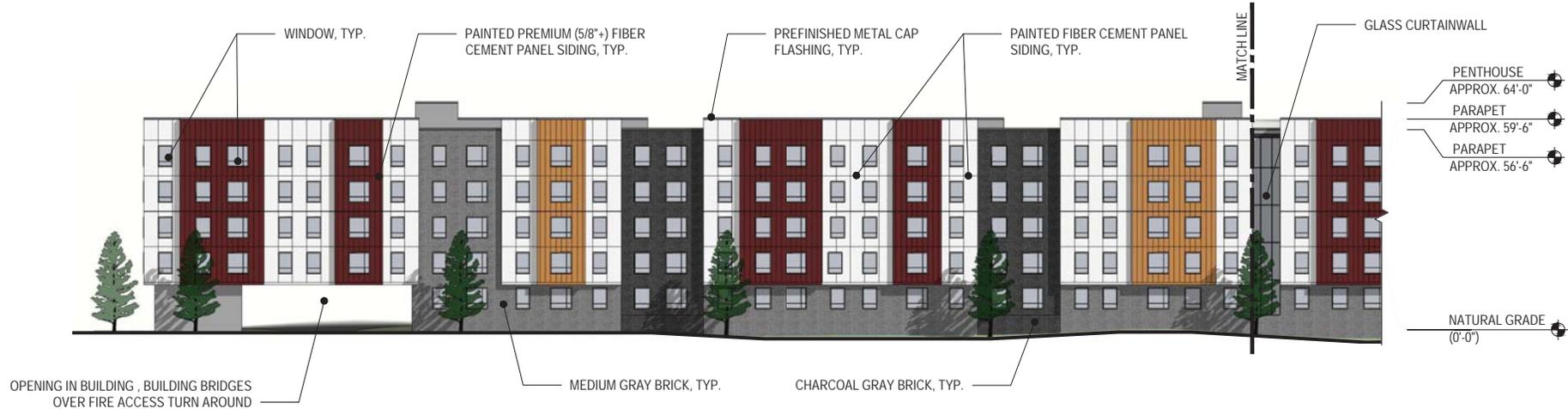
**B EAST ELEVATION (ALONG 27TH AVE SE)**  
A5 1" = 30'-0"

**EAST ELEVATIONS (ALONG 27TH AVE. SE)**  
 MATERIAL 1 - BRICK = 26.6%  
 MATERIAL 2 - STANDARD FIBER CEMENT = 28.1%  
 MATERIAL 3 - PREMIUM FIBER CEMENT (+5/8" THICK) = 19.6%  
 GLASS/WINDOWS = 21.2%  
 FOUNDATION CONCRETE = 4.5%

**NORTH ELEVATION MATERIAL CALCULATIONS**  
 MATERIAL 1 - BRICK = 27.5%  
 MATERIAL 2 - STANDARD FIBER CEMENT = 30.6%  
 MATERIAL 3 PREMIUM FIBER CEMENT (+5/8" THICK) = 17.9%  
 GLASS/WINDOWS - 24.0%

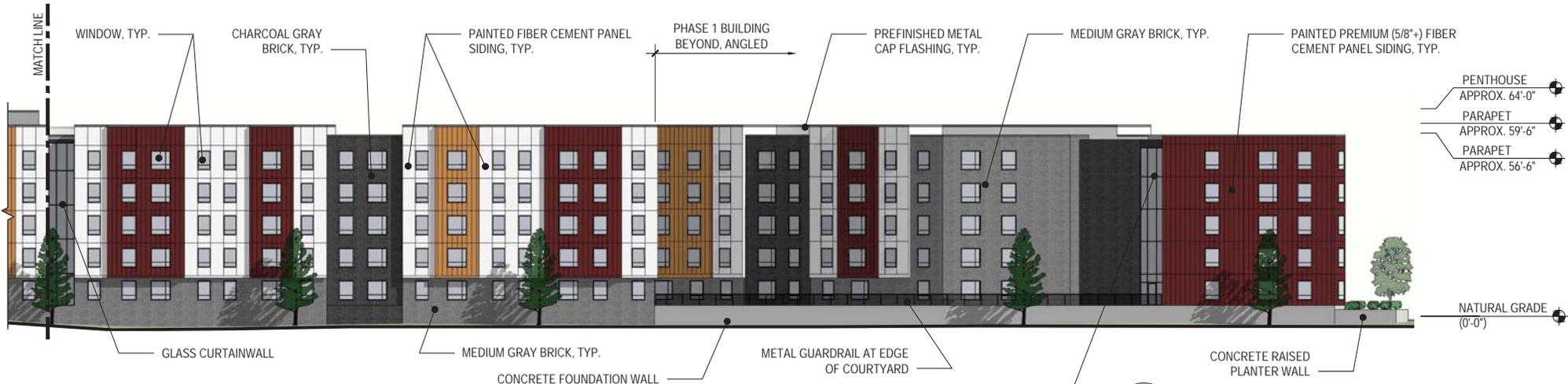


**A NORTH ELEVATION**  
A5 1" = 30'-0"



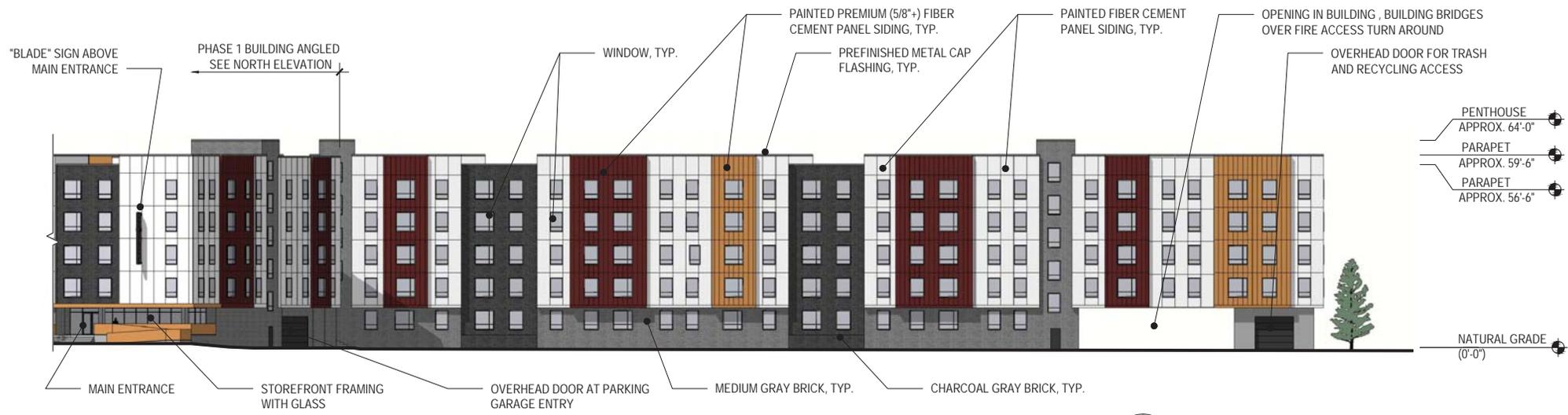
**WEST ELEVATIONS MATERIAL CALCULATIONS**  
 MATERIAL 1 - BRICK = 29.6%  
 MATERIAL 2 - STANDARD FIBER CEMENT = 25.4%  
 MATERIAL 3 - PREMIUM FIBER CEMENT (+ 5/8") = 24.7%  
 GLASS/WINDOWS = 16.0%  
 CONCRETE FOUNDATION = 4.5%

**A WEST ELEVATION (CONT'D)**  
 A6 1" = 30'-0"



**A WEST ELEVATION**  
 A6 1" = 30'-0"

**NORTHEAST ELEVATIONS MATERIAL CALCULATIONS**  
 MATERIAL 1 - BRICK = 21.5%  
 MATERIAL 2 - STANDARD FIBER CEMENT = 23.0%  
 MATERIAL 3 - PREMIUM FIBER CEMENT (+5/8" THICK) = 16.7%  
 GLASS/WINDOWS = 18.6%  
 FOUNDATION CONCRETE = 1.5%





VIEW FROM SOUTH ACROSS 27TH LOOKING NORTH



VIEW FROM NORTH ACROSS 27TH LOOKING SOUTHWEST



VIEW FROM SOUTH OF SITE LOOKING NORTH



ACROSS 27TH LOOKING NORTHWEST AT EXISTING BUILDING



VIEW OF SOUTH PORTION OF SITE FROM CENTER OF SITE



VIEW OF NORTH PORTION OF SITE FROM CENTER OF SITE



VIEW FROM NORTHEAST CORNER OF SITE LOOKING WEST



VIEW ACROSS 27TH LOOKING WEST AT EXISTING BUILDING



VIEW ALONG 27TH LOOKING NORTH



VIEW ALONG 27TH LOOKING SOUTH



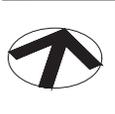
VIEW FROM INTERSECTION OF 27TH AND ESSEX LOOKING SOUTH



VIEW FROM SOUTH ALONG 27TH LOOKING NORTH



AERIAL OBLIQUE OF SITE



AERIAL OBLIQUE VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST LOOKING NORTHWEST



AERIAL OBLIQUE VIEW FROM NORTHEAST LOOKING SOUTHWEST



AERIAL OBLIQUE VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST LOOKING NORTH EAST



RENDERED PERSPECTIVE FROM INTERSECTION OF 27TH AND ESSEX LOOKING SOUTH



RENDERED PERSPECTIVE FROM ACROSS 27TH NEAR NORTHEAST CORNER OF SITE LOOKING SOUTHWEST

PRIME DESIGN

MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL  
127 27TH AVENUE SE MINNEAPOLIS, MN

ELSEY PARTNERS, LLC

A9

A RENDERED PERSPECTIVES  
A9 NOT TO SCALE