



M E M O R A N D U M

Date: November 18, 2014  
To: Hugh Russell, Chairman, Cambridge Planning Board  
From: Tanya Iatridis, Senior Director of University Planning, HPPM  
Copy: John Haigh, Executive Dean, Harvard Kennedy School of Government  
Re: Planning Board Requirements – Special Permit Application #293

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The following information addresses the matters and information requests identified in the November 4, 2014 memorandum to Harvard University from the Cambridge Community Development Department staff (copy attached).

In response to the comments that arose during the public process, Harvard has further revised its proposal and we believe that the project has been improved as a result of this discussion. Throughout the design process HKS has worked diligently to develop a project that advances the School's academic mission while improving the campus in a way that is consistent with the criteria and principles set forth in Article 19. Proposed buildings are below the zoning's maximum height and FAR, new building heights are lower than existing campus buildings and new development is focused within the existing campus footprint. The design touches the public realm in a consistent fashion, improving and expanding access to the campus and its connectivity with the rest of Harvard Square.

We have addressed items in the order in which they were presented in the November 4, 2014 memorandum.

**Site planning and circulation**

1. Belfer Center entry (corner of Eliot and JFK Streets)

In response to comments received from both the public and the Planning Board, the design of this entry area has been modified to incorporate additional landscape elements at either end of the entry stairs and within the central portion of the stairs (See Attachment 1-2). To address safety concerns, hand rails have been placed at the outer edges of the stairway sections. In addition, brick paving is proposed for the sidewalk directly adjoining the entry area. The proposed condition will significantly improve the public realm at this location by increasing the width of a very active sidewalk at this corner.

2. Loading facility operation

The proposed loading facility will be located beneath the raised courtyard and will be accessed via a dedicated entry driveway from Eliot Street (See Attachment 2-1). The minimum distance from the HKS property line to the loading dock door is 43 feet, permitting arriving vehicles to pause briefly on HKS property without interfering with pedestrian, bicycle or vehicle movement along the sidewalk and Eliot Street.

The new facility will have three loading bays as required under zoning, and the capacity to accommodate four deliveries simultaneously. The new facility will be managed by HKS operations staff, employing loading dock best management practices from similar facilities. The following operation practices are proposed:

- The loading facility door and dock area will be managed by a full-time dock manager. The dock manager will be responsible for ensuring that deliveries take place smoothly, and that the facility operation does not impact the public sidewalk or Eliot Street. In the rare instance of an off-hours delivery, HKS security staff will be trained to operate the loading dock doors.
- Vendors providing frequent deliveries or services to the HKS campus will be equipped with a transponder to enable immediate entrance through the loading dock door (opening time 6-10 seconds). HKS estimates this will address a vast majority of the deliveries/service visits. HKS will work closely with its vendors and service providers to equip and train them with transponders and to ensure that delivery protocols are followed.
- Non-transponder deliveries will be handled by the dock manager via a security camera system installed at the facility entrance. This system will be supported by phone communications and, as a back-up, an intercom system located near the loading dock door. Security cameras will be actively monitored to ensure that delivery vehicles are accommodated upon arrival.
- The loading facility has a shared one-way entry and exit. To prevent entry and exit conflicts, arriving vehicles will be alerted by a sensor-triggered signal outside the loading dock entry if another vehicle is exiting, or if all loading bays are full. This signaling system will temporarily divert the arriving vehicle without requiring the vehicle to maneuver in or out of traffic. Based on past experience, HKS expects that it will be extremely rare for all four loading bays to be occupied.
- Loading dock doors will remain closed at all times when not allowing vehicle entry or exit.

### 3. Management of vehicle drop-offs

HKS is committed to implementing measures designed to minimize impacts to traffic and bike lanes on Eliot Street. These following measures are proposed:

- Visiting dignitaries, or other visitors requiring a secure drop-off area, will utilize the below grade loading facility for this purpose.
- Harvard will continue its current practice of instructing University-related buses that stopping is prohibited adjacent to the HKS campus along Eliot Street and JFK Street, and that operators are expected to utilize the existing bus drop-off areas at Mt. Auburn Street.
- All campus loading activities will take place within HKS property at the loading facility.
- HKS will inform its employees, students and other regular visitors that stopped vehicles are not permitted to block traffic or bike lanes on public streets. HKS will advise its affiliates of this restriction on a regular basis, including when new faculty and staff are hired; at the beginning of each semester to incoming students; to all Executive Education program participants; and when new contractors or vendors are engaged by the School.
- HKS will instruct campus security staff and loading facility managers that drivers of vehicles illegally blocking traffic or bike lanes should be requested to move.
- In addition to the above measures recommended by the City's Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department in the September 30<sup>th</sup> memo to the Planning Board, HKS is willing to contract with appropriate safety personnel to enforce vehicle drop-off restrictions at Eliot Street for the first month after it secures occupancy permits.

## **Building massing and design**

### **1. Architectural treatment**

HKS and its design team have studied many possible approaches to the architectural treatment of the proposed connector buildings (See Attachment 3-1). The design of the Gateway Building, as initially presented in the Special Permit application, incorporated key design modifications from the building's earlier conceptual studies including stepping back the building's upper level to reduce its apparent massing, the introduction of a brick cornice to strengthen the visual relationship between the addition and the existing Taubman and Belfer buildings, and a simplification of the proposed façade treatment.

In response to comments at previous the public hearings, the design team has continued to study the façade treatment of the Gateway and West buildings and is proposing further modifications of their articulation. In order to diminish the verticality of these facades the spacing of "fins" on the lower levels of both buildings has been expanded to 3' - 4" (from 2' - 6" in the West Building), in addition this detail is no longer being proposed for the upper level of the Gateway Building. (See Attachment 3-3; 3-5)

The design team examined the feasibility and appropriateness of additional modifications including changes in the Gateway Building's proposed height, massing, and setbacks. Changes to the height and setback of the building would have severe adverse programmatic implications for HKS, resulting in an addition that would be perceived as a bridge connector, and create an addition that aligns less appropriately with adjoining buildings and their interior circulation.

### **2. West Building at JFK Park walkway**

Early in its planning process, HKS and its design team undertook design studies of possible options for the architectural treatment of the proposed West Building (See Attachment 4-1). The design of the West Building as initially presented in the Special Permit application is the result of a careful assessment of several important considerations including the building's relationship to existing campus buildings, its location along the pedestrian pathway, its role as a new entrance to the campus, and the appropriate expression of the program within the building.

To address comments concerning the potential impact of the proposed building to the JFK pedestrian walkway, HKS is proposing design modifications to this addition. First, the School is proposing that the main building façade be set back an additional two feet from the walkway (See Attachment 4-2). While this change will require HKS to sacrifice some office and collaboration space from the building program, it results in a more generous setback of the new building from both the property line and the facades of the existing buildings on either side. (Note: Taubman existing building setback from property line is 9 feet, Rubenstein existing building setback from property line is 0 feet, proposed West Building setback from property line proposed at 23 feet).

Second, the height of the West Building has been reduced by three feet (See Attachment 4-3). This change is in addition to the previous modification that moves the mechanical penthouse back from the façade a total of 24 feet. These changes will further reduce the visual presence of this addition along the pedestrian walkway. Also, as previously noted, the spacing of the "fins" on the lower level has been expanded to 3' - 4" (from 2' - 6") consistent with the detailing of the Gateway Building (See Attachment 4-5).

The proposed development of the West Building will have a relatively small additional shadow impact on the allée; however this impact is primarily limited to winter mornings. This affect will be further mitigated by the aforementioned changes to building height and setback. The shadow is not expected to impact existing trees, as the tree canopy exceeds the height of the West Building situated along the pathway.

As an abutter, HKS shares the community's appreciation of the allée and JFK Park that was represented at the public hearings. The space's character-defining element, the canopy of mature trees lining the pathway to JFK Park, will remain intact and be protected during construction. In response to the concerns regarding the condition of the JFK Park fountain; HKS will commit to working with the DCR to ensure that the appropriate repairs are undertaken.

### 3. Eliot Street section

The drawing submitted at the October 28, 2014 public hearing, titled “Eliot Street Section at the Gateway Building” has been revised to correct the indicated dimensions and scale (See Attachment 5).

## **Landscape Design and Bicycle Parking**

### 1. Security bollards and screen at Eliot Street

The Eliot Street entrance is intended to remain open 24/7 without any physical restrictions to access (See Attachment 6-1). The security bollards and screens proposed at this entrance will be used only when HKS is required to secure the campus at the directive of public safety officials. Based on campus operations history over the past two years, the existing entry gates at Eliot Street were closed an average of four hours on six occasions per year; a total of 24 hours per year.

Given the limited nature of its intended use, a security gate system that is modular and can be readily installed, removed and stored out of site when not in use, remains the preferred alternative. HKS has amended the design to incorporate features such as a black finish and a Harvard insignia that are consistent with the character of other Harvard gates (See Attachment 6-2).

A security gate system more akin to the one proposed at the West entry (a retractable metal fence) was studied and it would require gate sections to remain permanently in place due to the size of the opening and the inability to completely conceal the gate sections within the site when not in use (See Attachment 6 -3). Given the comments on this topic, this would not appear to be a satisfactory design solution from either the perspective of HKS or the public.

### 2. Landscape treatment at Taubman Building Entry

In response to comments received at the public hearing, the entry area at the Taubman Building has been modified to better relate to the existing site geometry and the design details of the adjacent JFK Park walkway. The dimensions of the proposed granite paved entry area have been reduced in both length and width. These changes create a larger landscaped area and pull the granite paved area away from the entrance to the JFK Park pedestrian connector (See Attachment 7-2).

### 3. Bicycle parking

The project’s proposed bicycle parking will meet the requirements contained in the zoning ordinance and the City of Cambridge *Bicycle Parking Guide*. The project team has studied several possible alternatives for the design of the proposed external long-term bicycle parking, including a recent shelter design utilized elsewhere on the Harvard campus (See Attachment 8-1). HKS will continue to work with CDD staff in developing a final design that meets the City’s bicycle parking requirements and is integrated with existing and proposed campus buildings.

### 4. Landscaping plans

A more detailed landscaping plan is being provided that incorporates all of the modifications noted above (See Attachment 9).

Harvard appreciates the thoughtful deliberations of the Planning Board and the participation of many stakeholders on this project. We are pleased that the project proposal has the support of our abutters, community members, and civic leaders and we look forward to furthering this dialogue at the hearing on November 25<sup>th</sup>.



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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BRIAN MURPHY  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

IRAM FAROOQ  
Deputy Director for  
Community Development

To: Harvard  
From: CDD Staff  
Date: November 4, 2014  
Re: **Harvard Kennedy School of Government – Planning Board requirements**

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Following Tuesday's Planning Board hearing, the Planning Board Chairman provided CDD staff with further direction regarding what needs to be addressed by the Harvard Kennedy School of Government prior to the continued hearing on November 25. A list of issues is provided below. All application materials should be revised to reflect changes addressing the identified issues, and those modifications already proposed, so that a complete set of revised documentation is provided.

The Planning Board would also like to encourage a more considered response to the detailed comments and concerns raised by members of the public.

Site planning and circulation

- The sunken Belfer Center entry appears out of scale with the small entry door. There is a need to review the scale and break down the stairs at this entrance, as well as address safety concerns associated with falling down /into the entry. Consider additional landscape treatments such as planters and seating.
- Concerns regarding loading are outstanding. Provide further detail on proposed loading operations, including how deliveries will be scheduled e.g. loading door will be kept open at peak times. Clarify the Eliot Street service entrance dimension – does the 45' include the sidewalk?
- The issue of how vehicle drop-offs will be managed remains a concern. Provide further detail on possible solutions to managing this issue, including ways to prevent vehicles standing in the Eliot Street bicycle lane.

Building massing and design

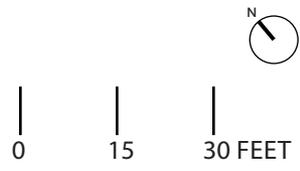
- The architectural treatment of the connecting buildings requires further consideration. The vertical scale of the connectors, as well as their architectural quality, needs review in order to make a more positive contribution to the surrounding streets and public spaces. Some ideas to consider include: further setting back the upper levels, reducing or lowering the cornice, different glazing treatments, etc.

- The Planning Board needs to be convinced that the proposed architectural treatment and massing is the right outcome. As such, show design alternatives or evidence of further study to demonstrate why the selected option was chosen.
- There is some concern that the JFK walkway connector is a mismatch architecturally and does not have the right relationship with the allée. The perspective view of this entry provided in the application materials appears cluttered and lacks interest. This needs further consideration.
- Provide a response to public concerns raised about shadow and sky view impacts on the JFK walkway. Questions to consider include: How does the entrance affect the walkway? Is it intended to be part of a memorable walking experience? How can shadow impacts be minimized?
- There appear to be some errors in the Eliot Street section presented at the last hearing - review dimensions and scale.

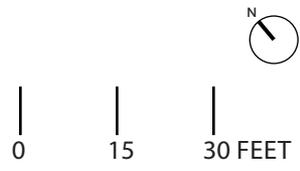
#### Landscape design and bicycle parking

- The proposed security bollards and screen to be used for the Eliot Street entry seem inconvenient and unattractive. The Planning Board would prefer to see use of screens or gates that are of the same design quality as other Harvard gates – consider black finish and use of Harvard logo.
- Clarify proposed landscaping and paving at front of Taubman Building entry, including relationship with the allée's granite markers.
- Bicycle parking has potential to be better designed and integrated. This needs to be addressed prior to the next hearing.
- Provide more detailed landscaping plans that incorporate all the modifications proposed at last Tuesday's hearing and those suggested above - focus on building and courtyard entries.

# BELFER CENTER ENTRY

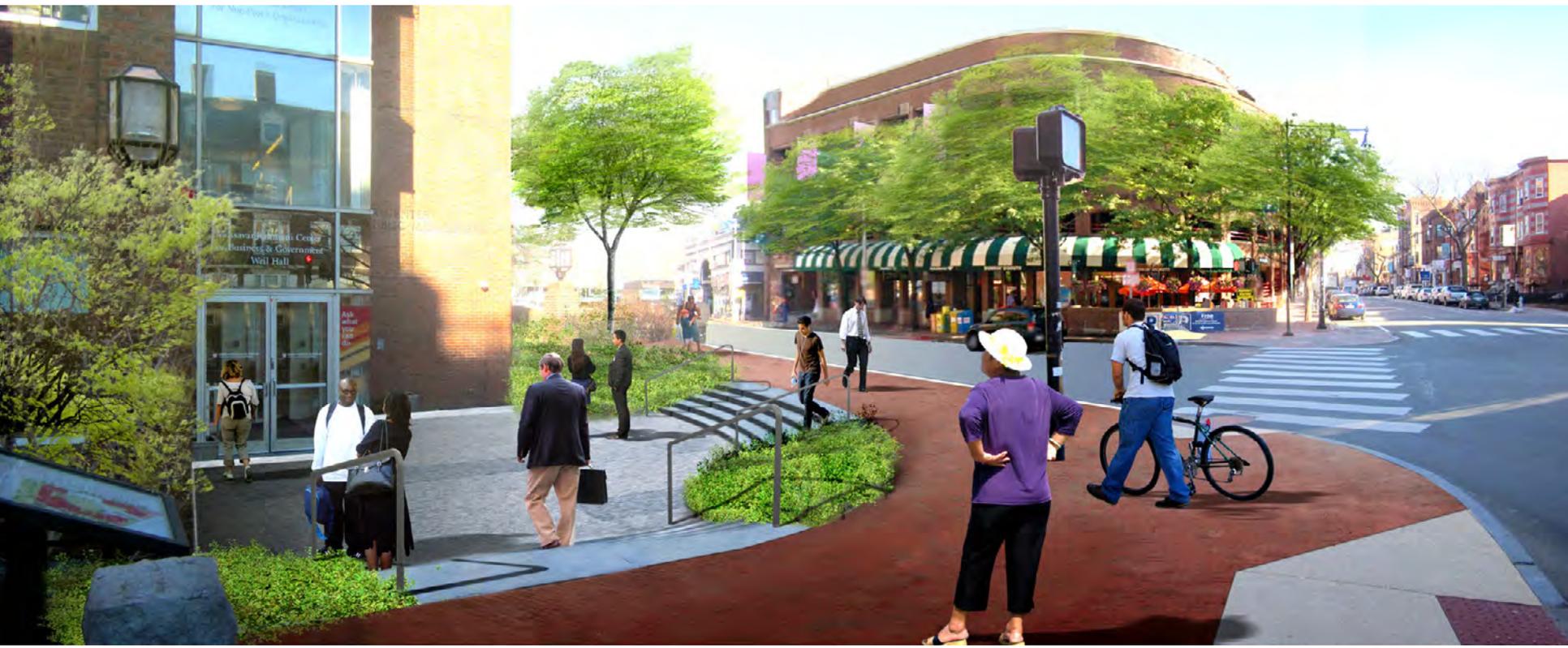


# BELFER CENTER ENTRY - ALTERNATE PROPOSAL









# LOADING FACILITY OPERATION

# DOCK MANAGEMENT – STREET LEVEL

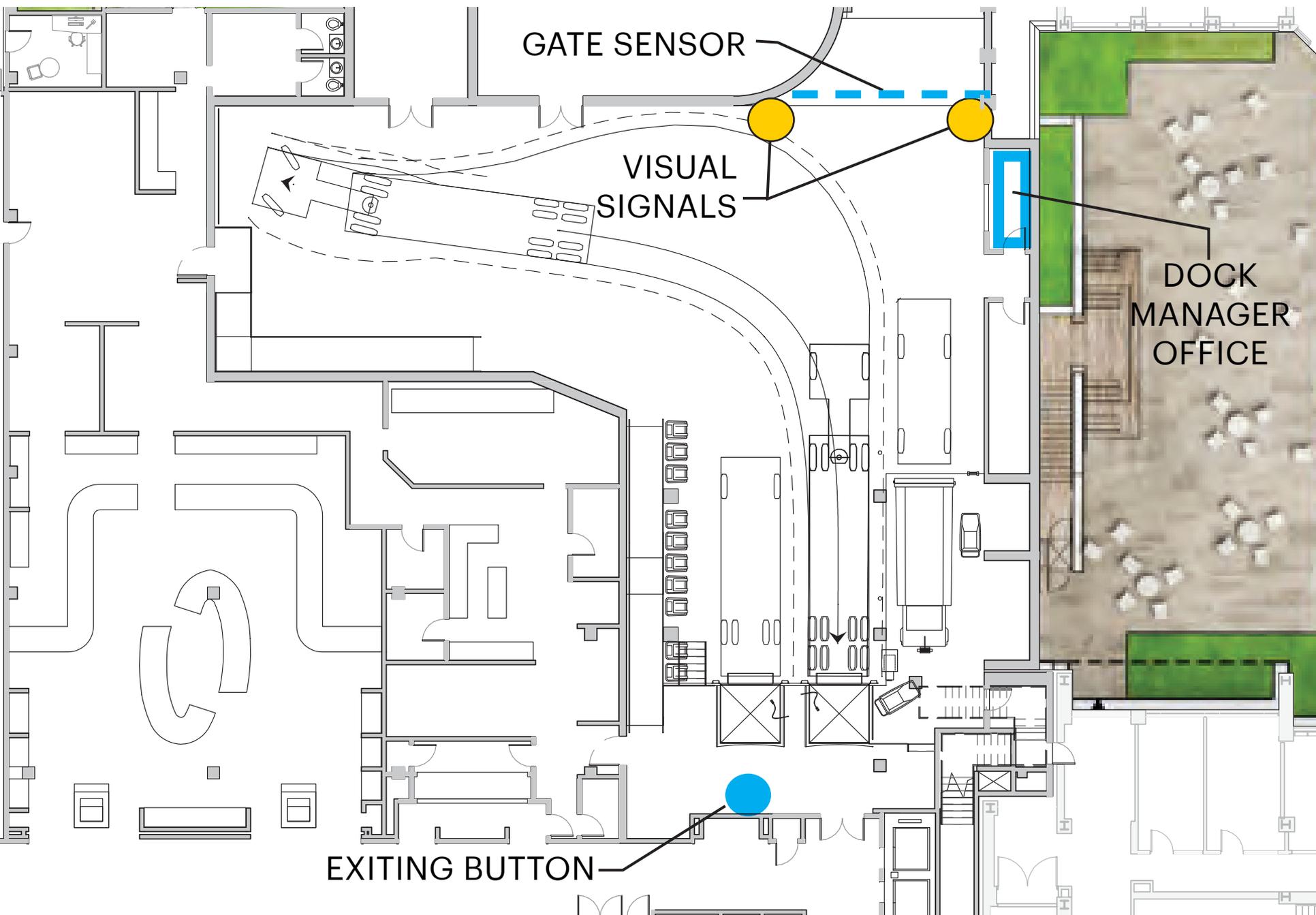
UP

GATE SENSOR

**43'-0"**

VISUAL SIGNALS





# GATEWAY BUILDING



CONCEPT 1 - MASSING ONLY



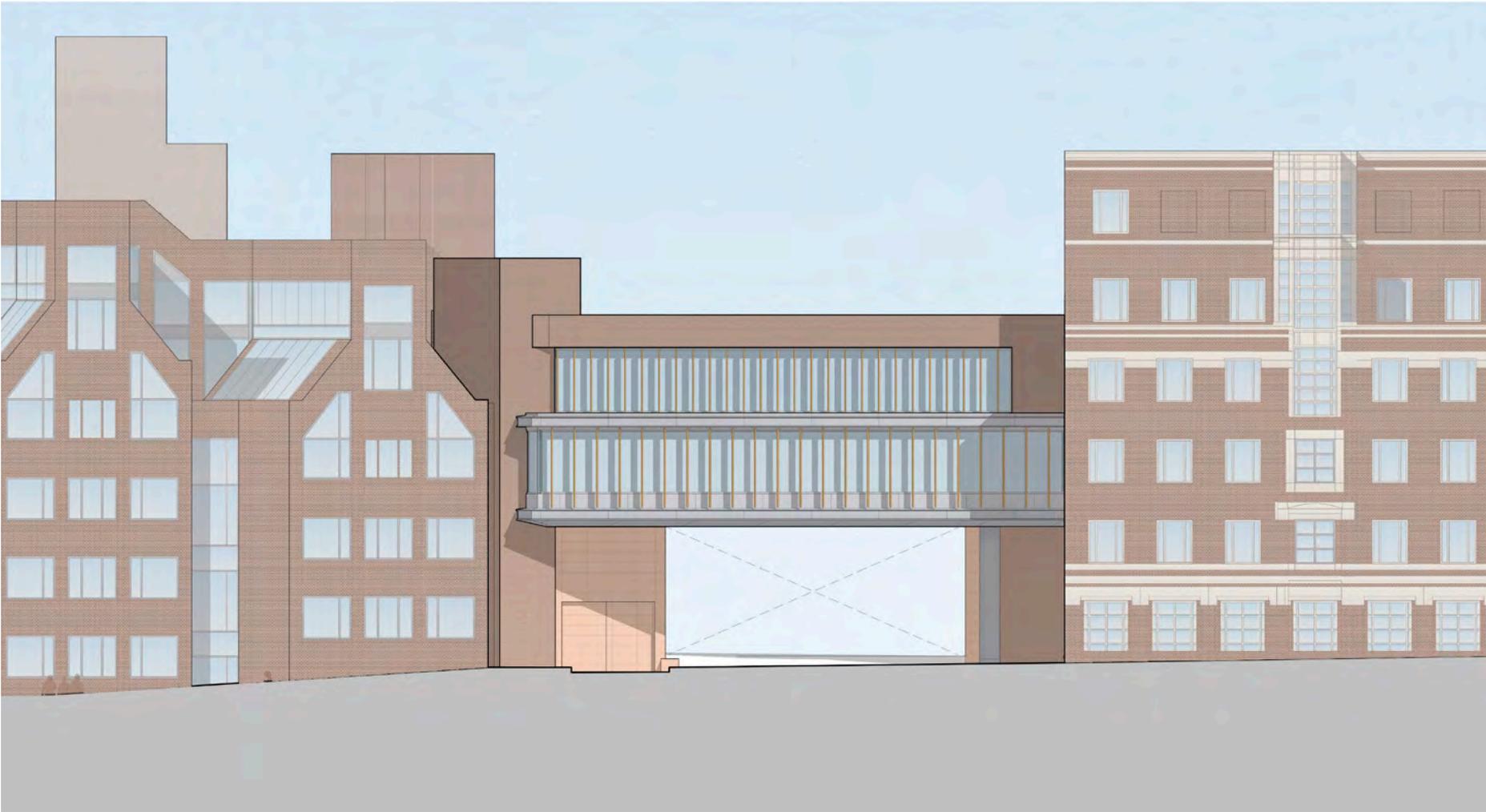
CONCEPT 2



CONCEPT 3



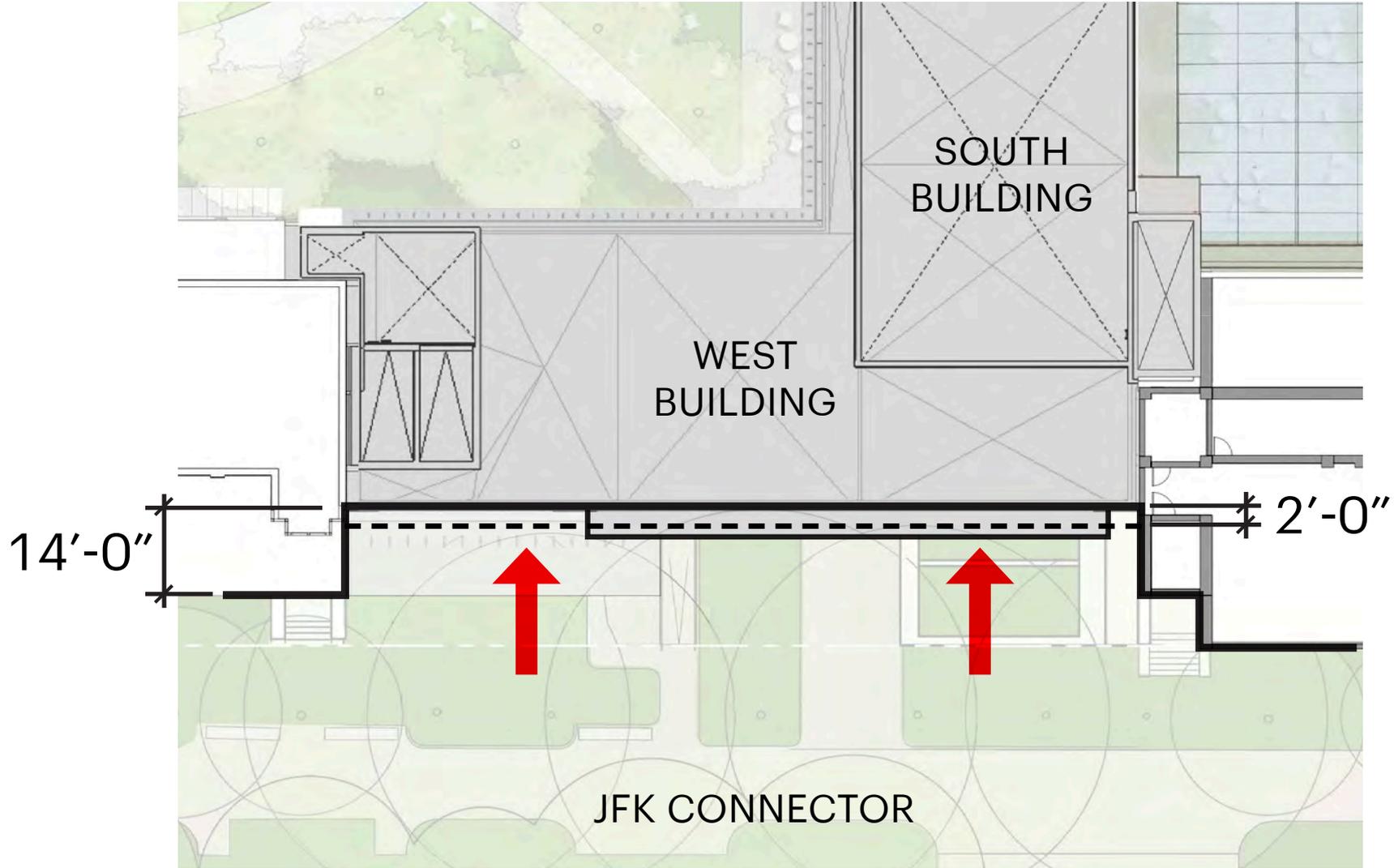




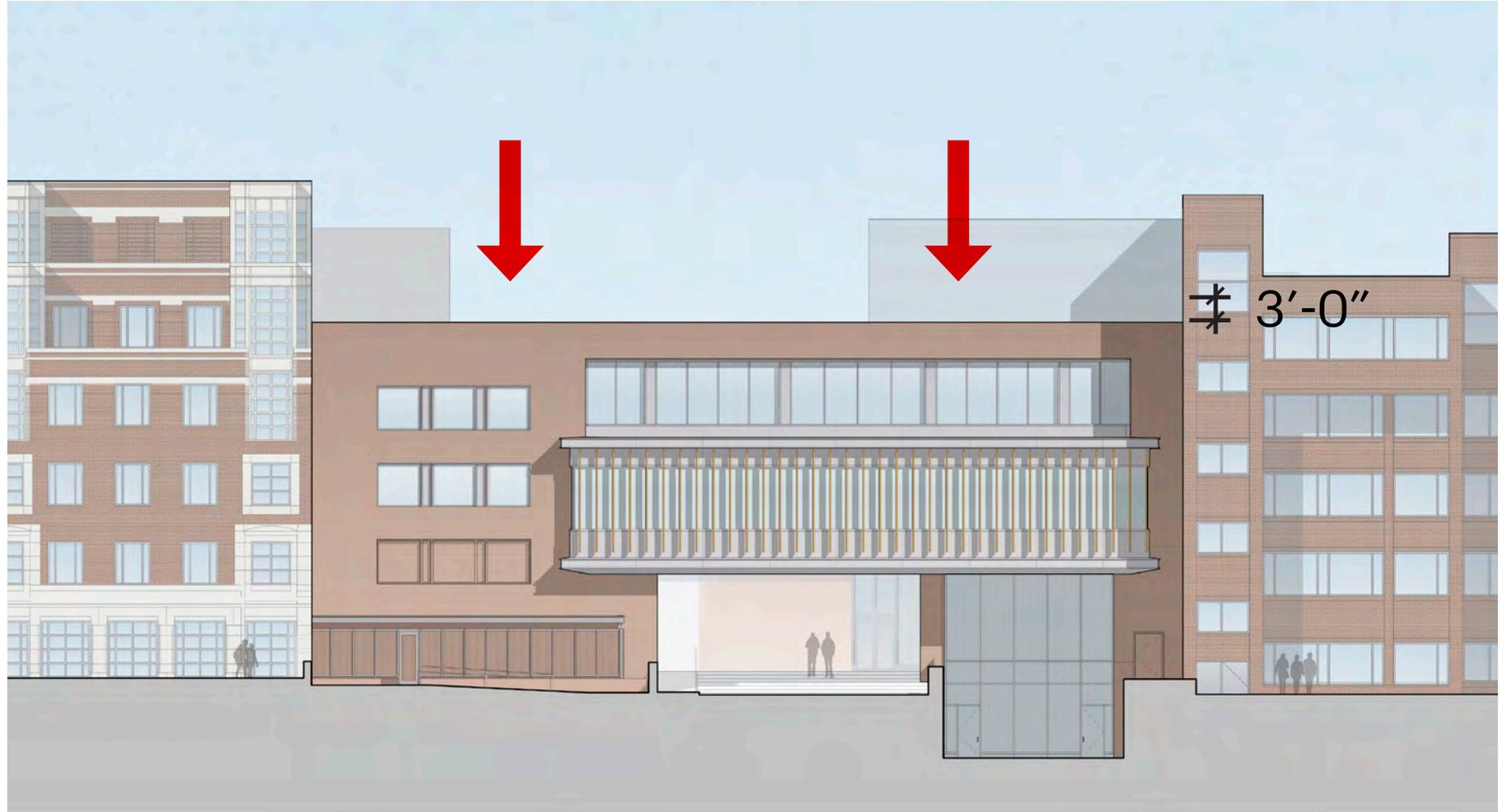


# WEST BUILDING





# WEST BUILDING ELEVATION - 3'-0" HEIGHT REDUCTION





# WEST BUILDING ELEVATION - 3'-4" SPACING (ALTERNATE PROPOSAL) 4-5

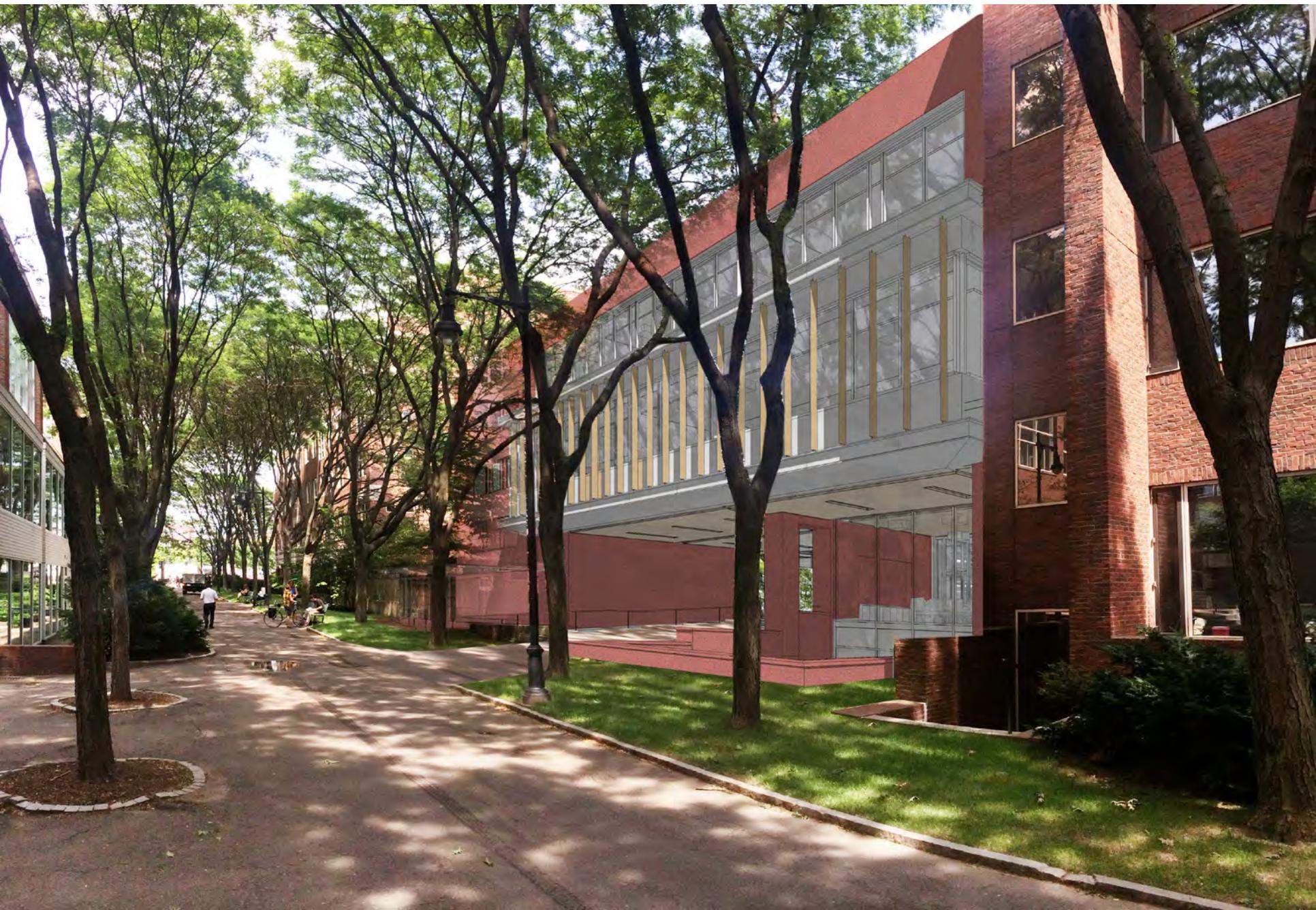




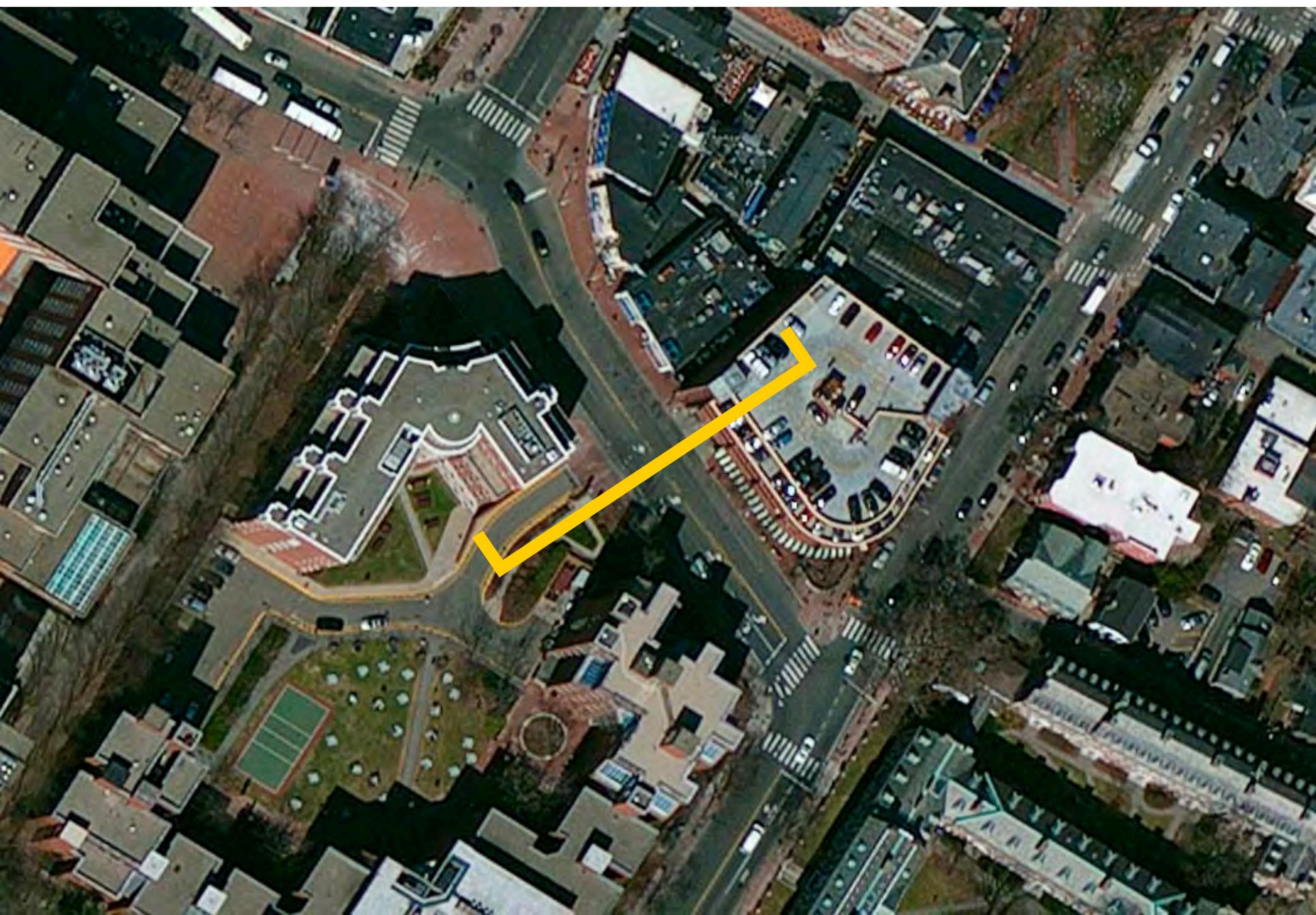


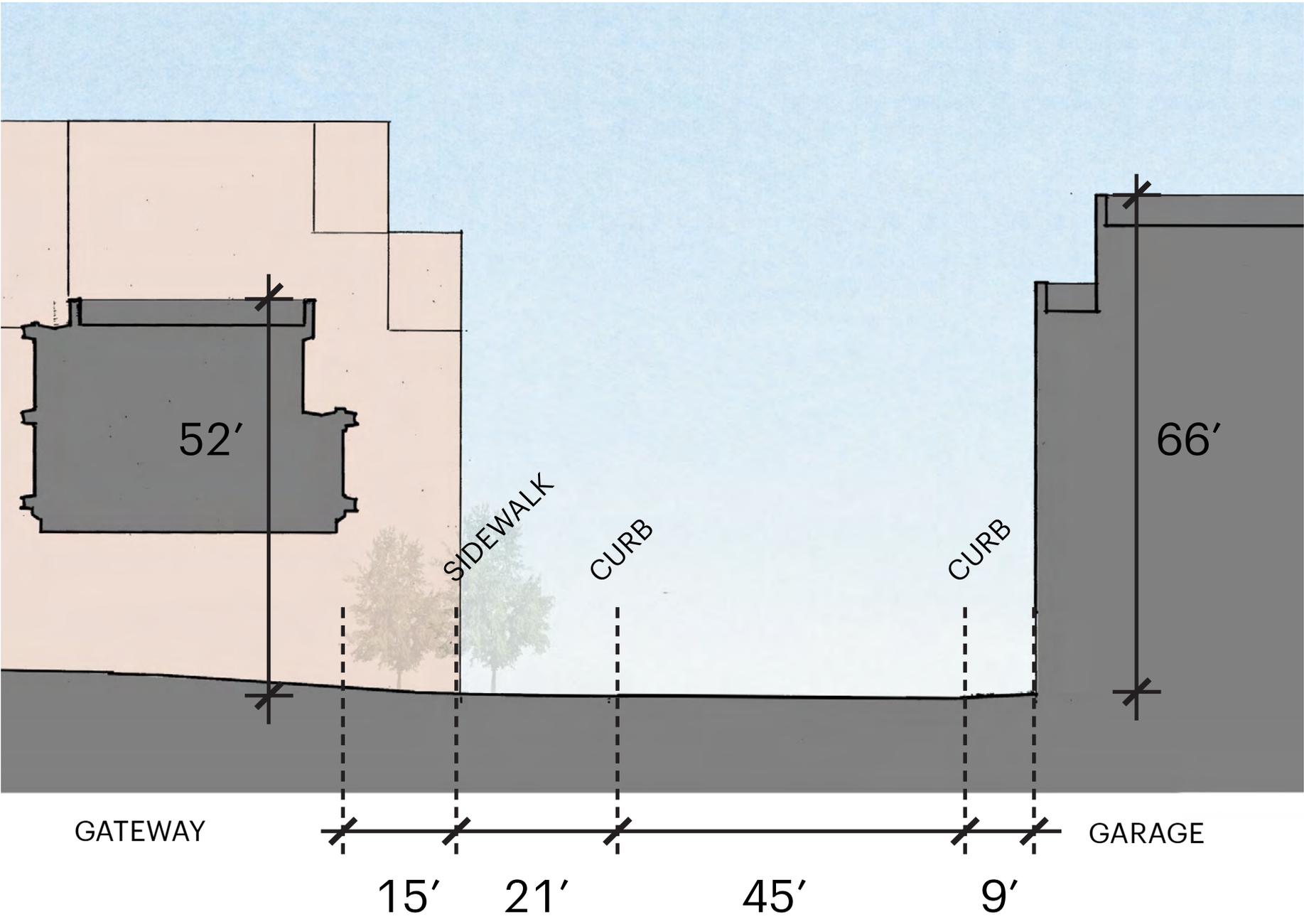






# ELIOT STREET SECTION





# ELIOT STREET ENTRANCE

**24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK, 359 DAYS A YEAR**  
**44'-6" OPENING**



# 4 HOURS A DAY, 6 DAYS A YEAR



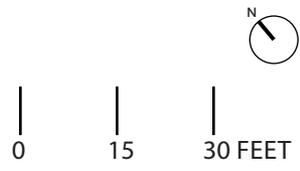
**24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK, 359 DAYS A YEAR**  
**20'-0" OPENING**

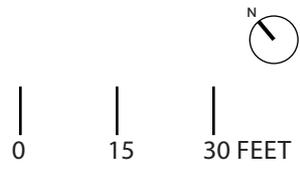


# 4 HOURS A DAY, 6 DAYS A YEAR



# TAUBMAN BUILDING ENTRY





# BICYCLE PARKING



BIKE PARKING ALONG OXFORD STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA