



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Chandra Harrington, Chair; Elizabeth Lyster, Vice Chair; Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
Joseph V. Ferrara, Gavin Kleespies, Paula Paris, Kyle Sheffield, Yuting Zhang, Members
Florrie Darwin, Scott Kyle, Michael Rogove, Alternates

May 28, 2026

To: Members of the Historical Commission

From: Eric Hill, Survey Director

Re: Case D-1826: Robert and William Clark Double House, 178-180 Elm Street North, by John Driscoll on behalf of Mario Bussolati.

A demolition permit application demolish the existing residence and detached former stable at 178-180 Elm Street North was received on May 8, 2026. The owner was notified of an initial determination of significance by the Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, and a public hearing was scheduled for June 18, 2026.



Robert and William Clark Double House, 178-180 Elm Street N

CHC

HISTORY

History

Prior to the coming of the railroad in the mid-1840s, North Cambridge was largely farmland. Large swathes of land on both sides of North (Massachusetts) Avenue were owned by members of the Watson family, thereby giving the area the appellation of Watson’s Plain. These large landholders generally farmed their parcels for their own sustenance. Several colonial-era taverns were scattered along North Avenue until the late nineteenth century. Prior to 1845, Elm Street was known as Milk Row due to the abundance of dairy farms on Tufts family land on the east side of the street. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the dairy industry had gravitated towards outlying towns for their richer topsoil for grazing.

The opening of the Fitchburg Railroad’s Porter Station in 1842 and the introduction of omnibus service along North Avenue provided the impetus for the platting and sale of plots in the district, but development only picked up after the Civil War, when the area experienced a building boom. This change was precipitated in part by the introduction of horse railroads, which were a compromise between the unreliable horse-driven omnibuses and trains that ran on the Fitchburg Railroad and the Lexington & Arlington Branch of the Boston & Lowell (1870).

Cambridge was the first community in the Boston area to adopt a streetcar system. Chartered in 1853, the Cambridge Railroad Company operated services along North (Massachusetts) Avenue by 1856. Meanwhile, the Middlesex Horse Railroad (est. 1856, opened 1858) laid tracks along Elm Street; the Somerville Horse Railroad company was created in 1857 to receive this franchise, which then passed to the Union Railroad in the early 1870s. Conveying 5,000 passengers daily at a fixed five-cent fare, the Cambridge Railroad facilitated the settlement of white-collar bookkeepers, salesmen, and tradesman in North Cambridge who worked in downtown Boston.

In 1887, the West End Street Railway took over the horse railroad lines that converged at Meacham and Elm streets; electric trolleys were introduced on North Avenue two years later. Inexpensive transport enabled working families to relocate to the “suburbs” while continuing to labor in the city. The increased demand spurred the development of two- and three-family homes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including 178-180 Elm Street, the topic of this report.



The Robert and William Clark Double House was built in 1892 for brothers Robert Harry Clark (1862-1916) and William Thomas Clark (1855-1923), both provision dealers with the firm Clark & Hickey. The brothers hired local builder Walter Sewell to design and construct the building, which was completed by 1893. Robert lived alone in one side, while William resided in the other side with his wife, Sarah, and daughter, Maude. The brothers sold the property in 1901 to Carl Robert Weitze and moved to Brookline.

Carl Robert Weitze (1831-1918) was born in Germany and settled in Boston in the 1850s. He moved to East Cambridge and established himself as a sausage maker, maintaining shops in East Cambridge and Eliot Street in Boston. Carl and his wife, Geneva, a music teacher, lived at 156

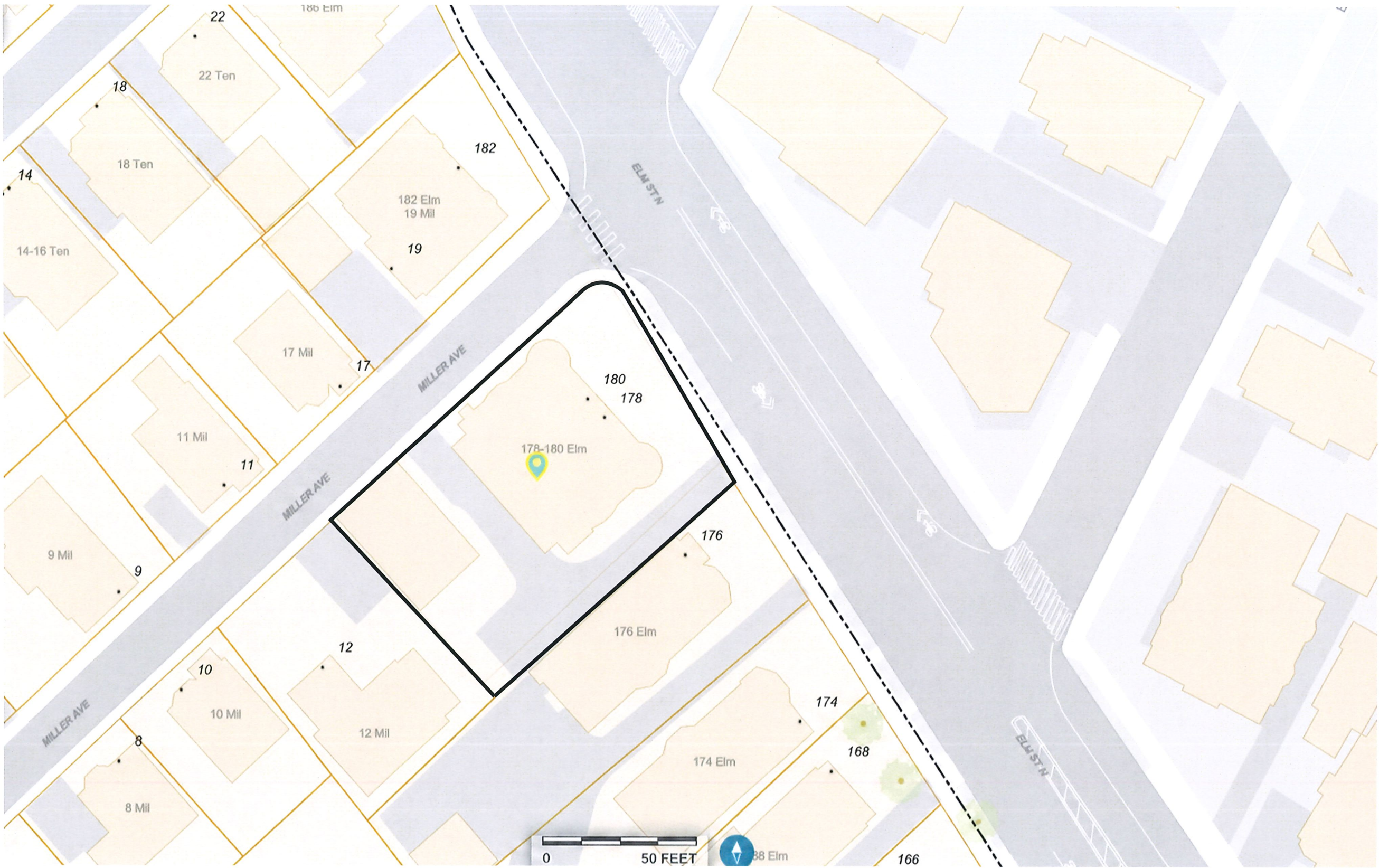
Thorndike Street with their family and maintained this property on Elm Street in North Cambridge as a rental property for supplemental income. The former two-family residence was converted to a six-unit apartment sometime during or soon after Weitze’s ownership. After his death in 1918, the property was acquired by Harry B. Stearns, a salesman with the Cambridge Electric Light Company who resided at 28 Blake Street, renting apartments at 178-180 Elm Street North to tenants. The most recent owner, Mario Bussolati (1932-2024), purchased 178-180 Elm Street North in 1957. Mario was born to Italian parents and attended Cambridge Public Schools, later enlisting in the U.S. Army, where he served in the Korean War. Mr. Bussolati owned and resided in a unit in the building at 178-180 Elm Street North until his death in 2024.

The adjoining three-deckers at 174 and 176 Elm Street share a remarkable stylistic similarity to the Clark house. These were constructed as investment properties by Charles F. Shourds, a feather-duster manufacturer in Boston who resided on Roseland Street. Constructed to the same mirror-image plans, the buildings exhibit elaborate paneling on full-height bay windows that are capped by hexagonal turrets and false gables on their flat roofs. These exceptional buildings are the work of builder Charles F. Weldon (1837-1898), who worked for most of his career in Boston before moving to Cambridge in 1887, where he was credited with only five houses. It is reasonable to assume that some of the exterior details of the Weldon houses were replicated on 178-180 Elm Street next door.

Significance and Recommendation



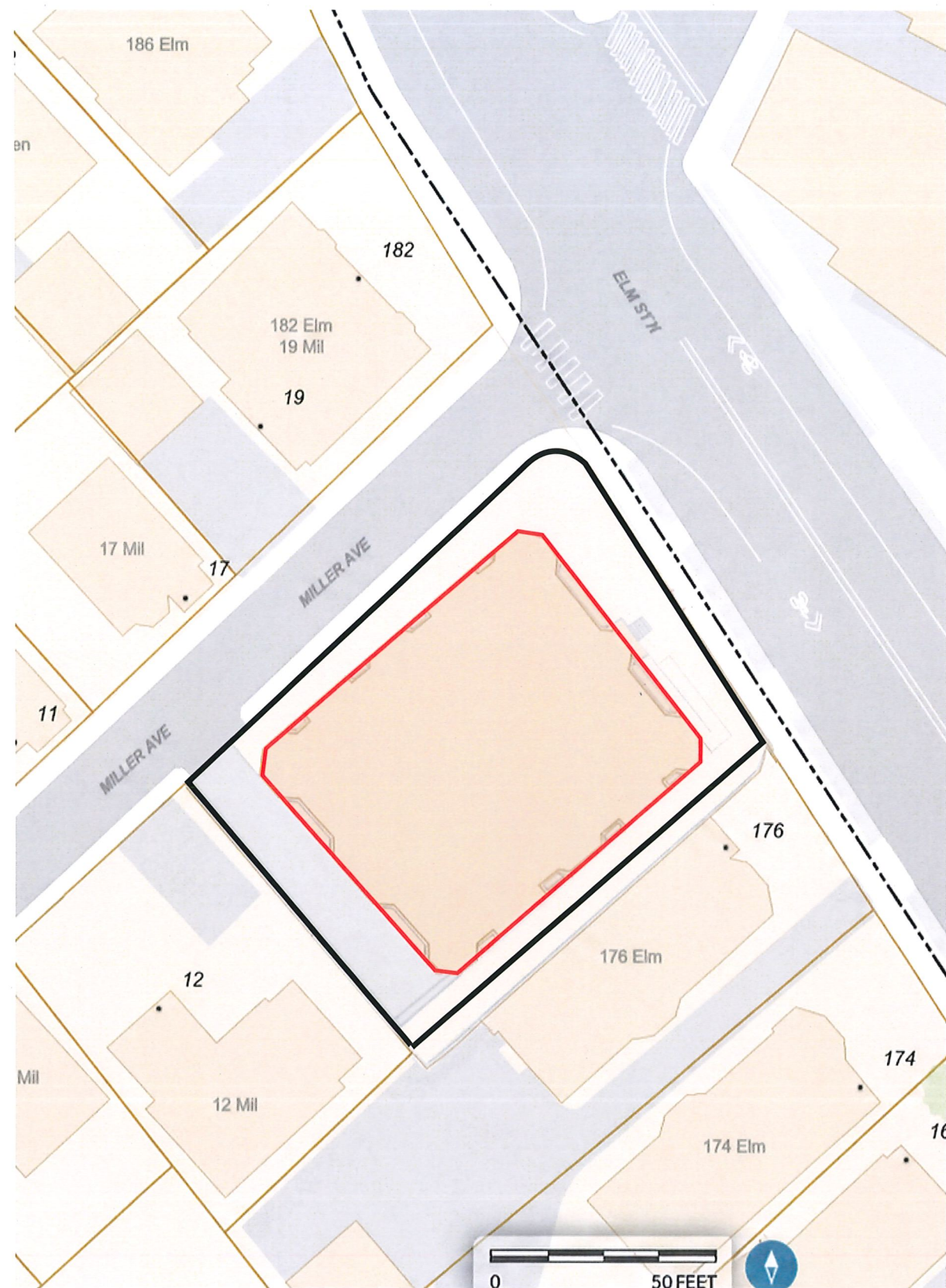
VICINITY PLAN



VICINITY PLAN - ZOOM IN



EXISTING CONDITION



PROPOSED DESIGN

SURVEY PLAN

*NOTE:
LOCATION OF FENCES SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE AND ARE FOR
AESTHETIC PURPOSES ONLY. A DETAILED LOCATION WOULD BE
REQUIRED FOR THE EXACT LOCATION

ZONED: RES B

ZONING REQUIREMENT	EXISTING	PROPOSED
FRONT: 15' (ELM ST NORTH)	13.8'	
FRONT: 15' (MILLER)	4.6'	
SIDE: 7.5'	10.6'	
REAR: 25'	42.4	

CURRENT OWNER: MARIO BUSSOLATI
TITLE REFERENCE: BOOK 8917 PAGE 41
PLAN REFERENCE: PLAN BOOK 337, PLAN No. 28
L.C.C. PLAN No. 7757A
PLAN No. 139 OF 1989
PLAN No. 157 OF 2009

THIS PLAN WAS PREPARED WITHOUT A FULL TITLE EXAMINATION AND IS NOT A
CERTIFICATION TO THE TITLE OF THE LANDS SHOWN. THE OWNERSHIP OF
ABUTTING PROPERTIES IS ACCORDING TO ASSESSORS RECORDS. THIS PLAN MAY
OR MAY NOT SHOW ALL ENCUMBRANCES WHETHER EXPRESSED, IMPLIED OR
PRESCRIPTIVE.

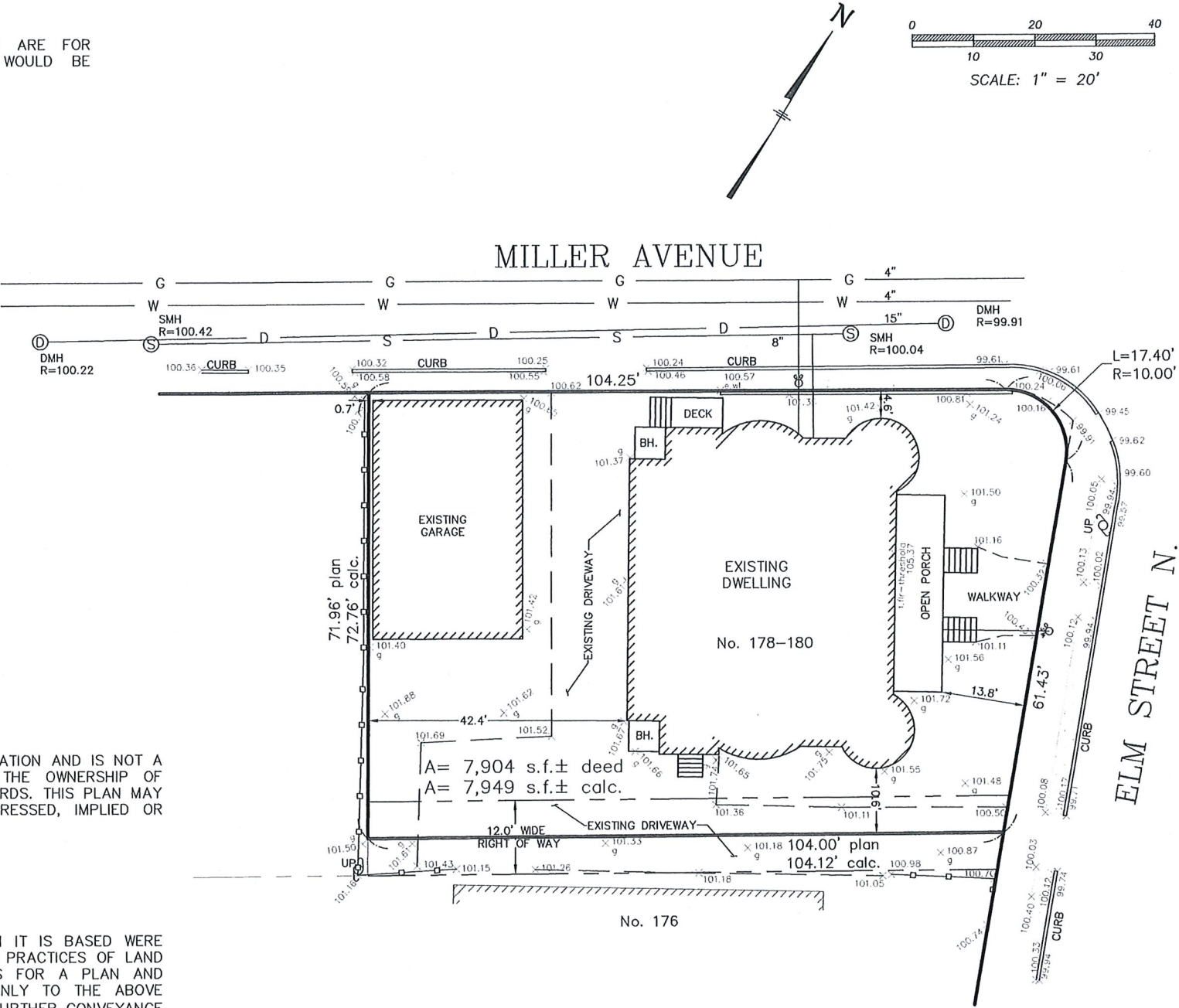
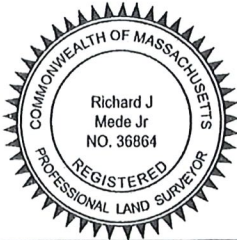
SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION:

TO: JOHN DRISCOLL

I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN AND THE SURVEY ON WHICH IT IS BASED WERE
MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE PRACTICES OF LAND
SURVEYORS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS FOR A PLAN AND
SURVEY OF THIS TYPE. THIS CERTIFICATION IS MADE ONLY TO THE ABOVE
NAMED INDIVIDUAL(S) AND IS NULL AND VOID UPON ANY FURTHER CONVEYANCE
OF THIS PLAN.

THE FIELD WORK WAS COMPLETED ON: APRIL 27, 2026
DATE OF PLAN: APRIL 27, 2026


RICHARD J. MEDE, JR. P.L.S. DATE: 04/27/2026



CERTIFIED PLOT PLAN
178-180 ELM STREET NORTH
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
(MIDDLESEX COUNTY)

PREPARED BY:

ANGELO B. VENEZIANO ASSOCIATES
15 HALL STREET, MEDFORD, MA 02155
781-396-4466 fax: 781-396-8052

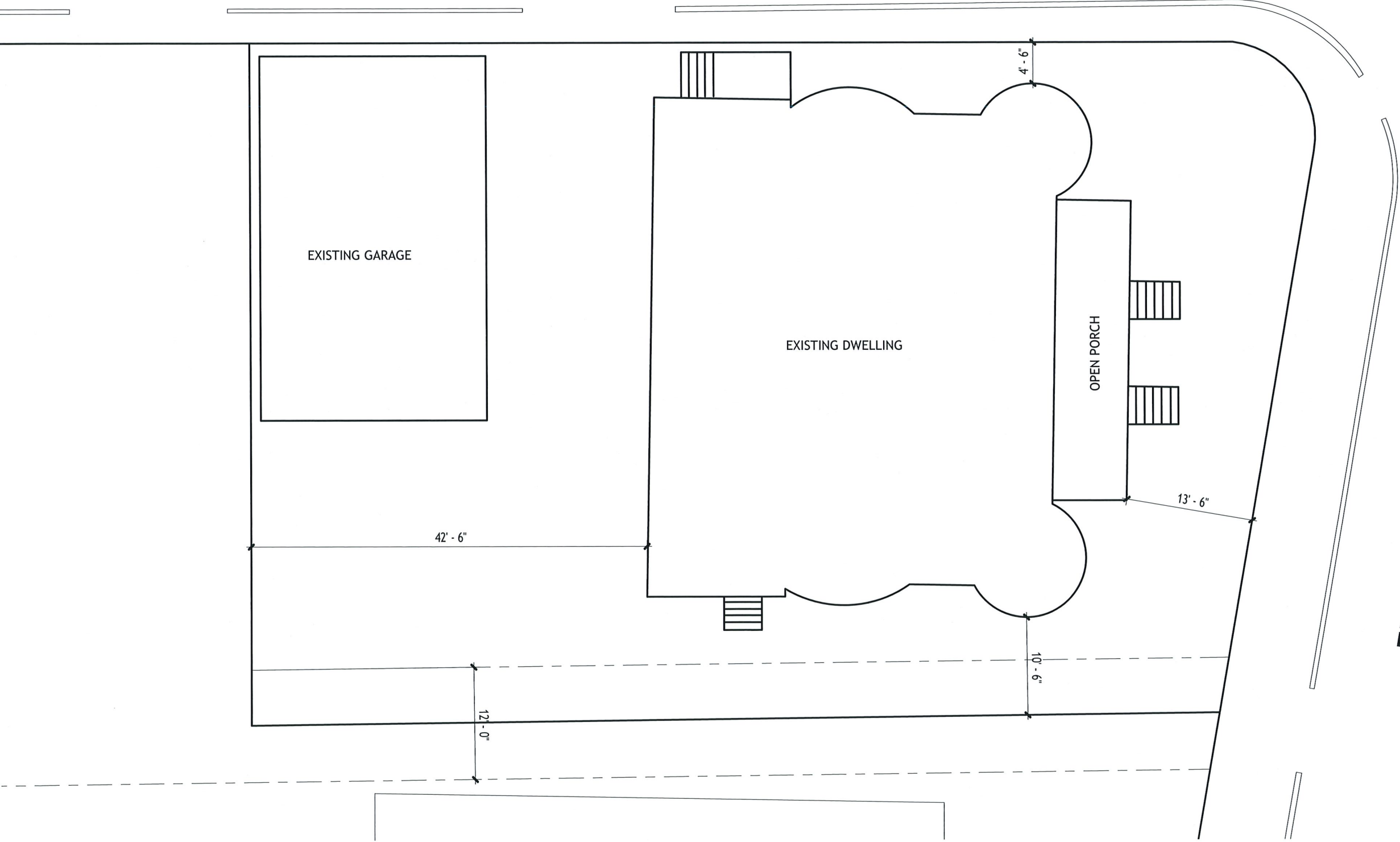
PREPARED FOR:
JOHN DRISCOLL

DRAWN	CHECKED	FILE No.
JTE	RJM	22976

FILENAME: C:\22976\CDwg\22976_revised.dwg PLOTTED: 4/28/2024 10:20:33 AM USER: MEDFORD ENGINEERING1

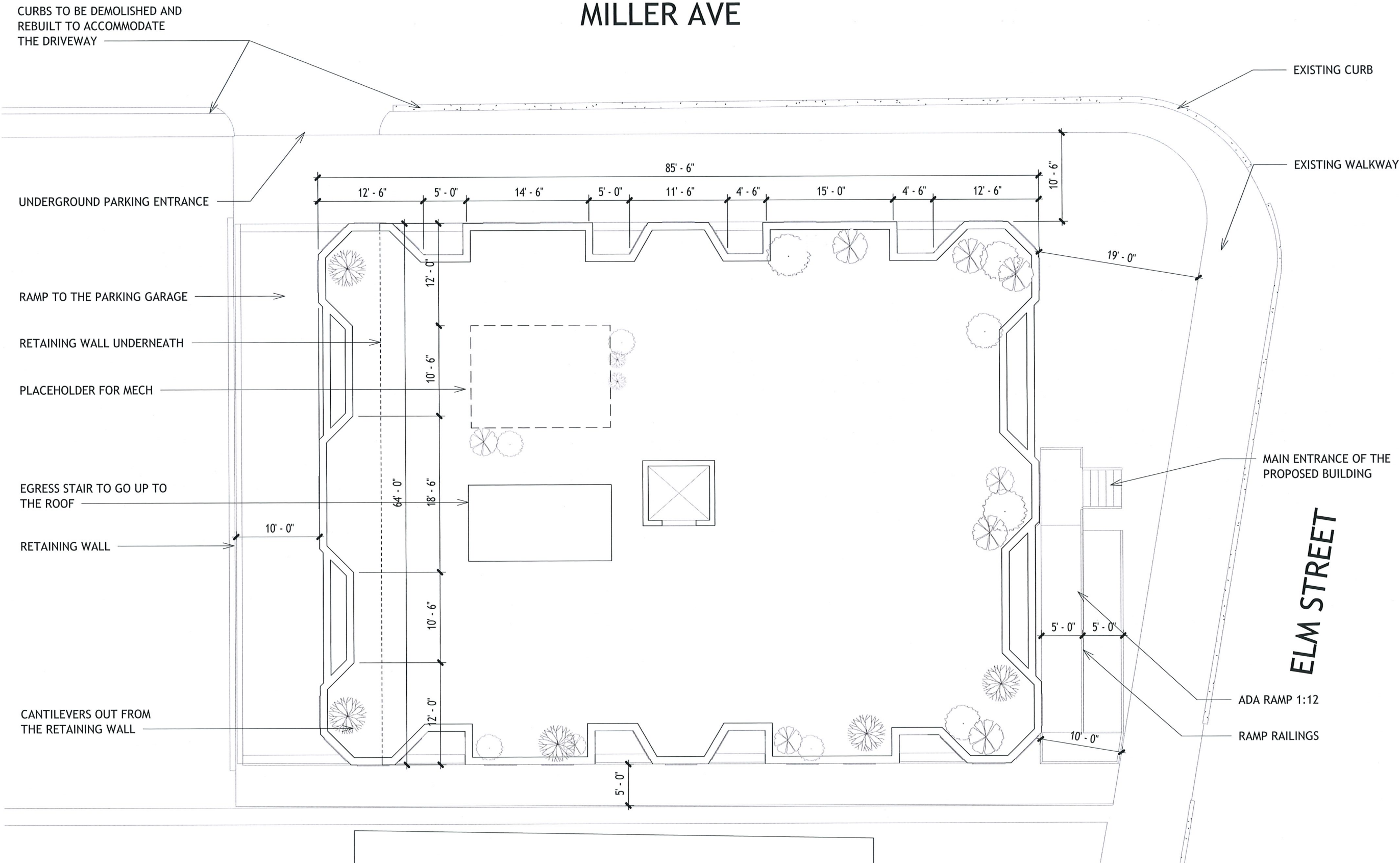
SITE PLAN

MILLER AVE



SITE PLAN

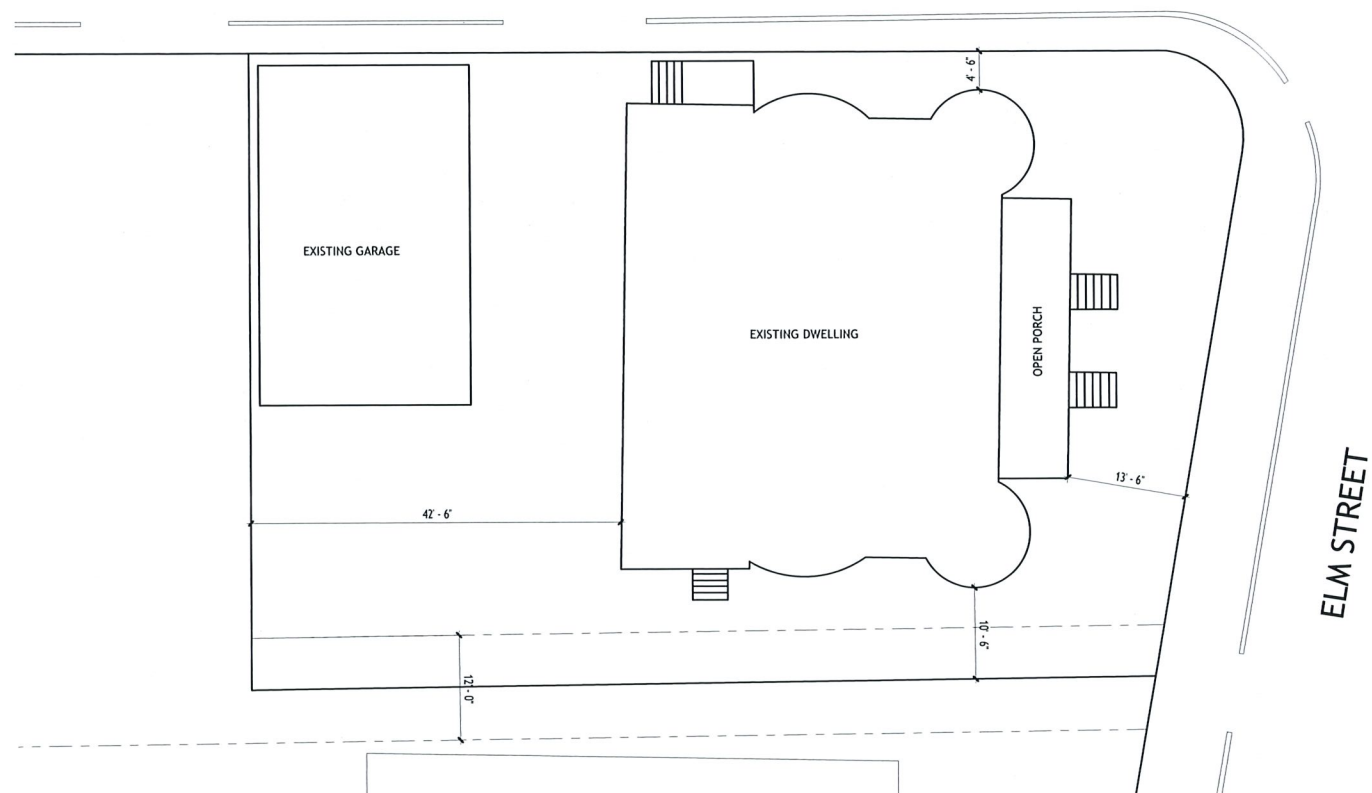
MILLER AVE



SITE PLAN - COMPARISON

BUILDING FOOTPRINT: 3367.11 SF
 GFA: 7904 SF

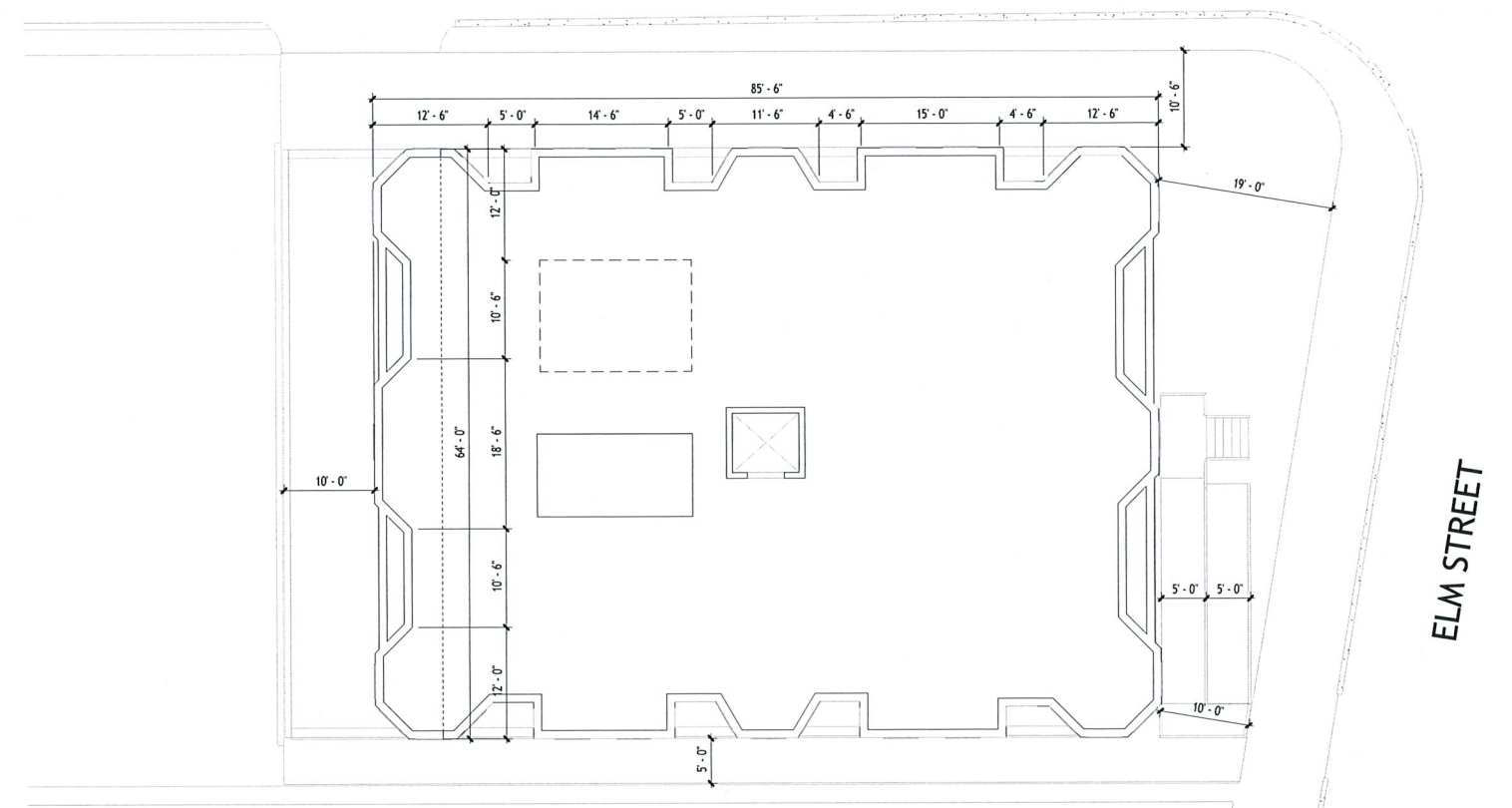
MILLER AVE



EXISTING SITE PLAN

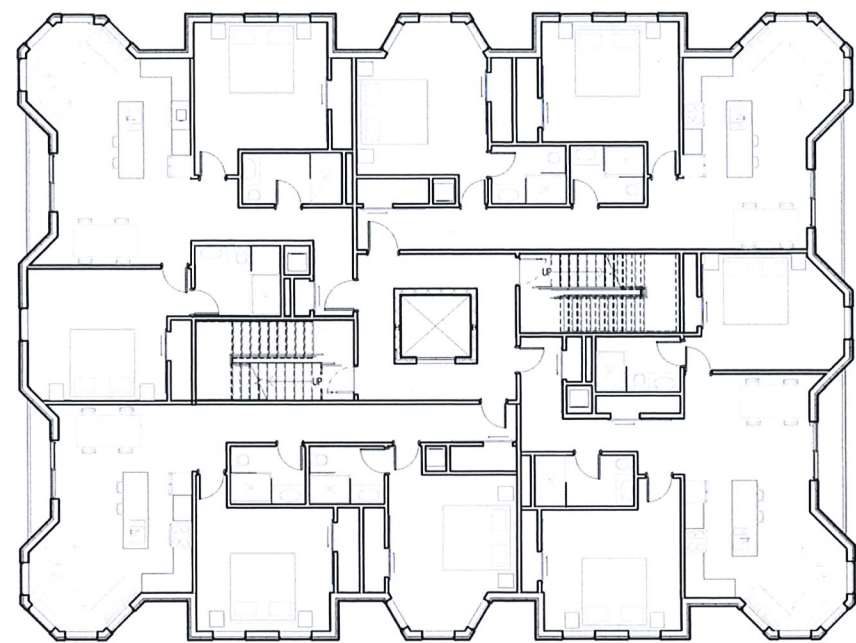
BUILDING FOOTPRINT: 5059.19 SF
 GFA: 19835.13 SF

MILLER AVE

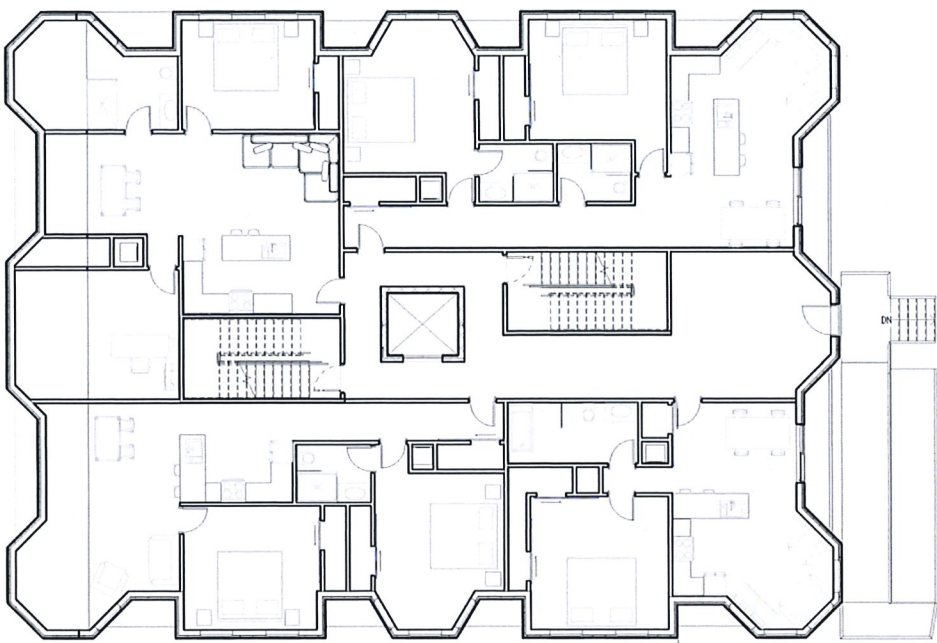


PROPOSED SITE PLAN

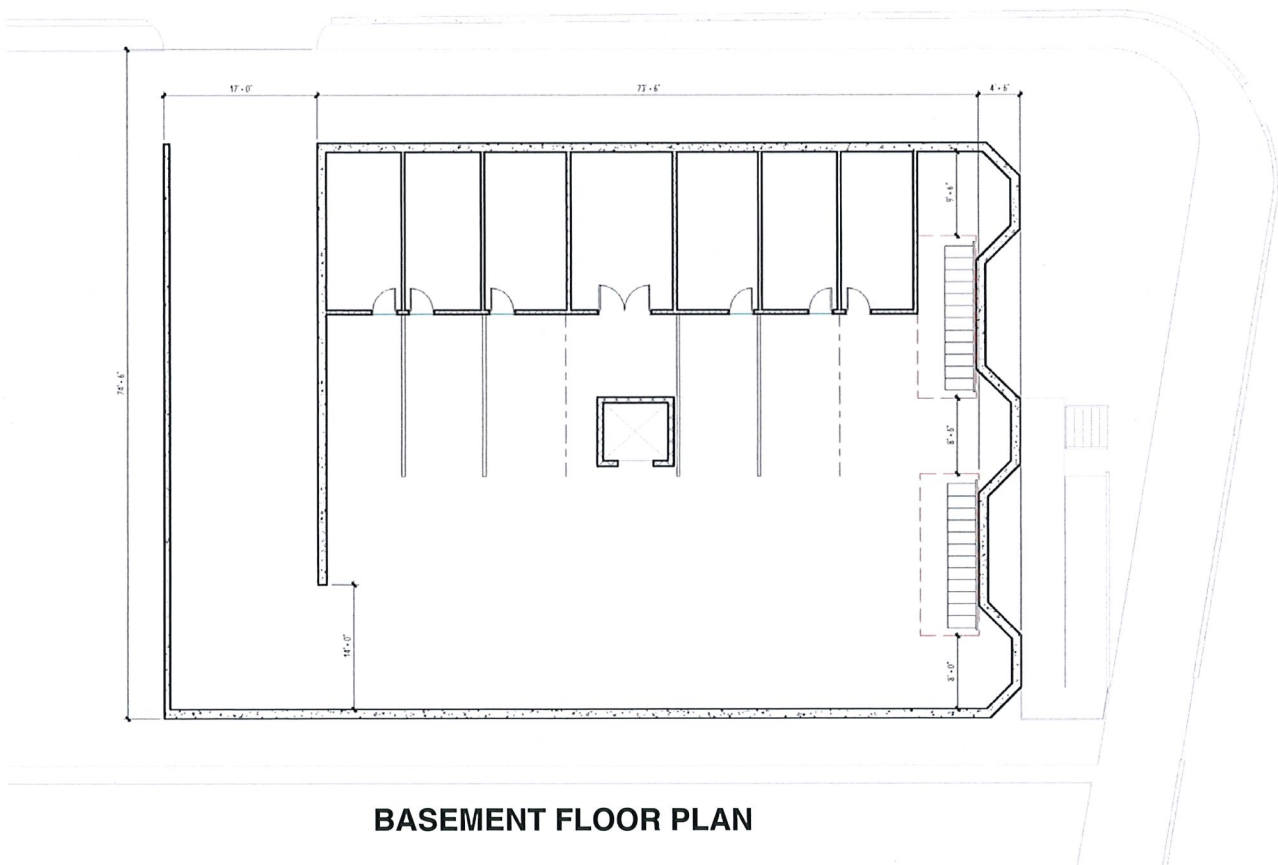
SCHEMATIC FLOOR PLANS



TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

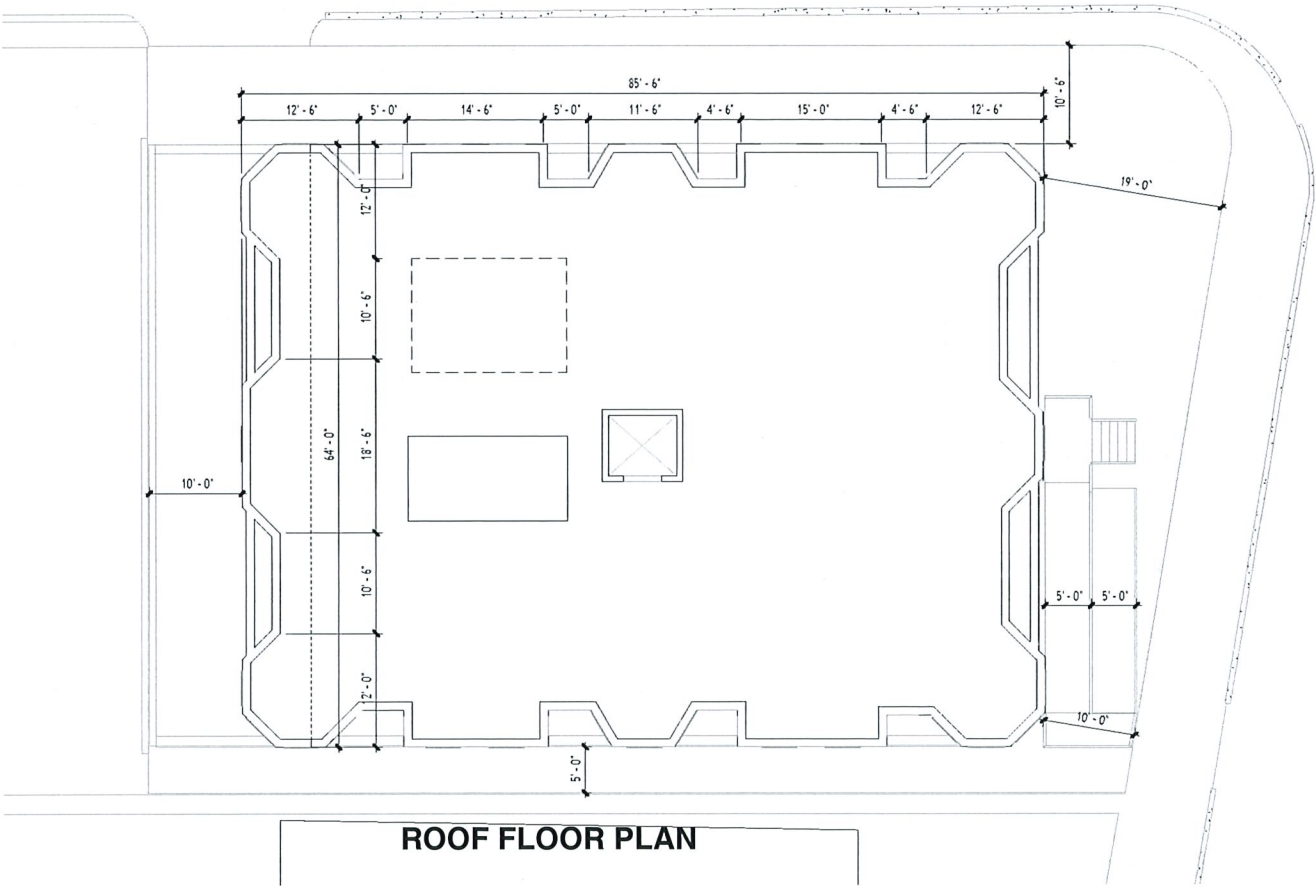


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



ELM STREET

BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



ELM STREET

ROOF FLOOR PLAN

SCHEMATIC ELEVATIONS

EXISTING CONDITION - SITE WITH CONTEXT



PROPOSED DESIGN - SITE WITH CONTEXT



SCHEMATIC ELEVATIONS

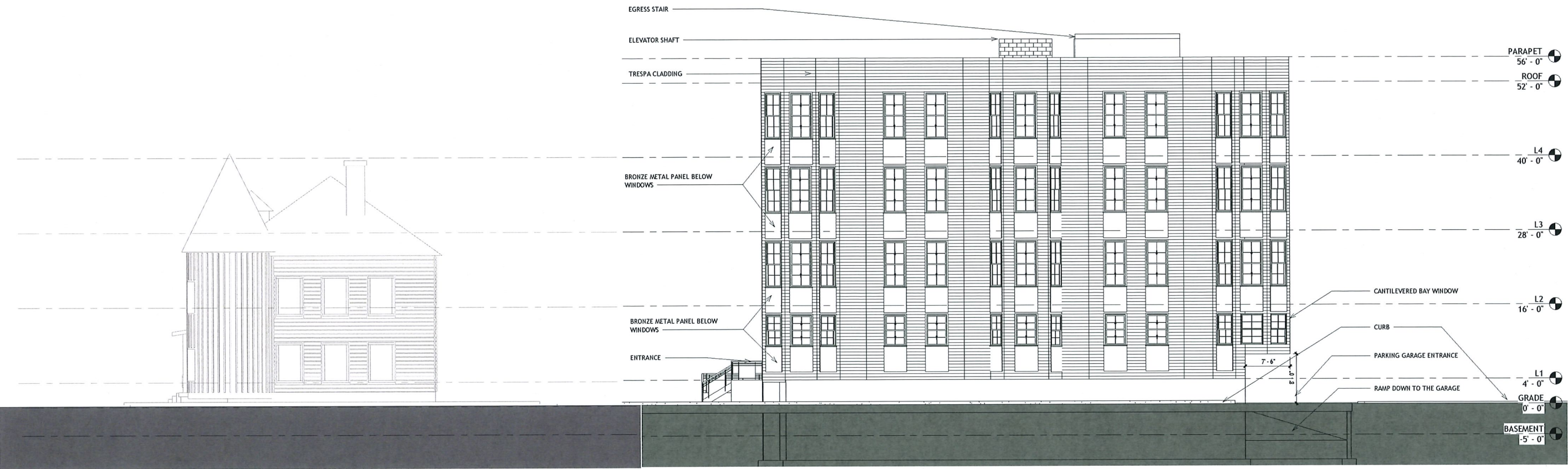


NORTH ELEVATION - EXISTING



NORTH ELEVATION - PROPOSED

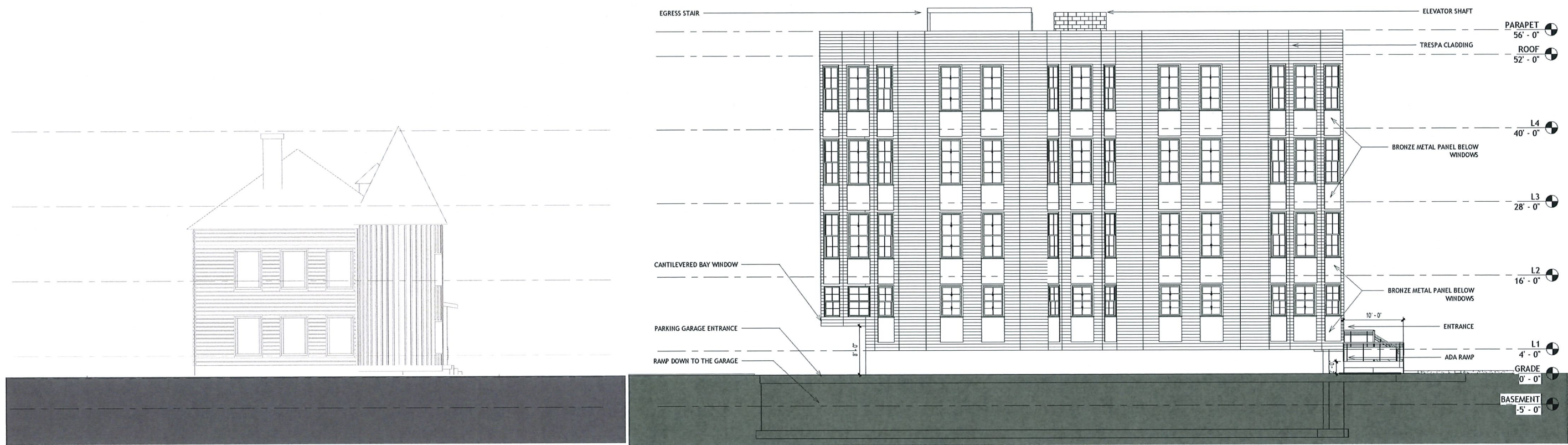
SCHEMATIC ELEVATIONS



WEST ELEVATION - EXISTING

WEST ELEVATION - PROPOSED

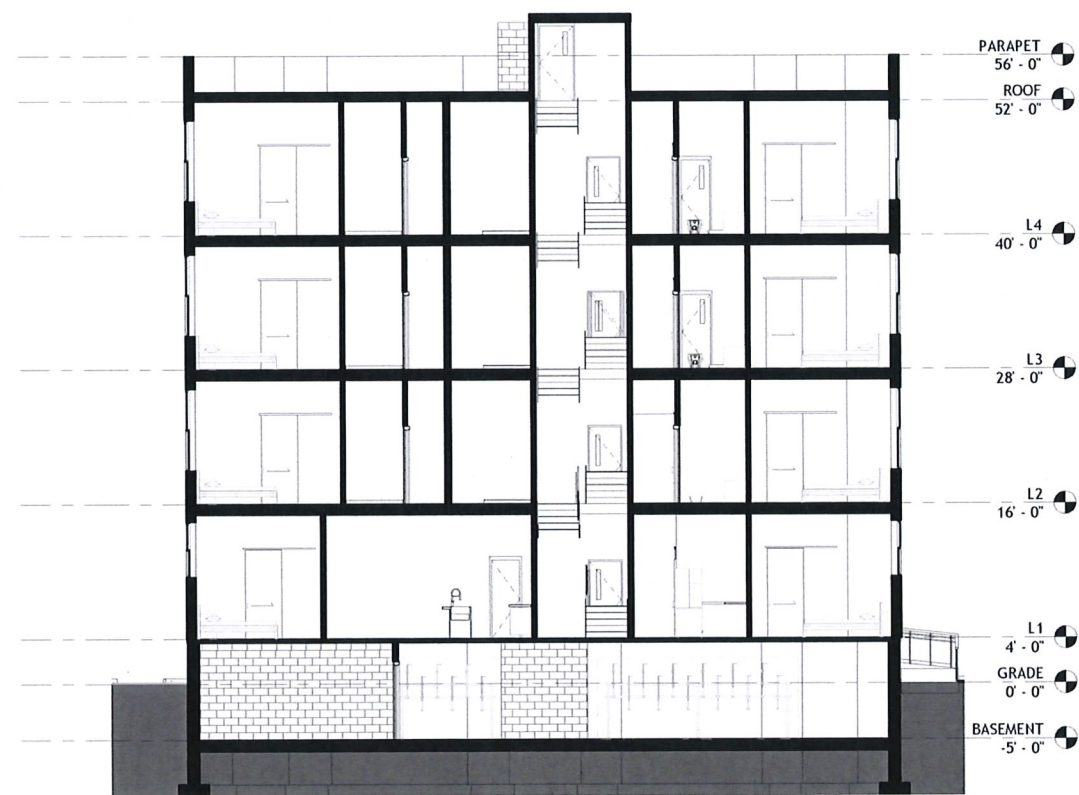
SCHEMATIC ELEVATIONS



EAST ELEVATION - EXISTING

EAST ELEVATION - PROPOSED

SCHEMATIC ELEVATIONS

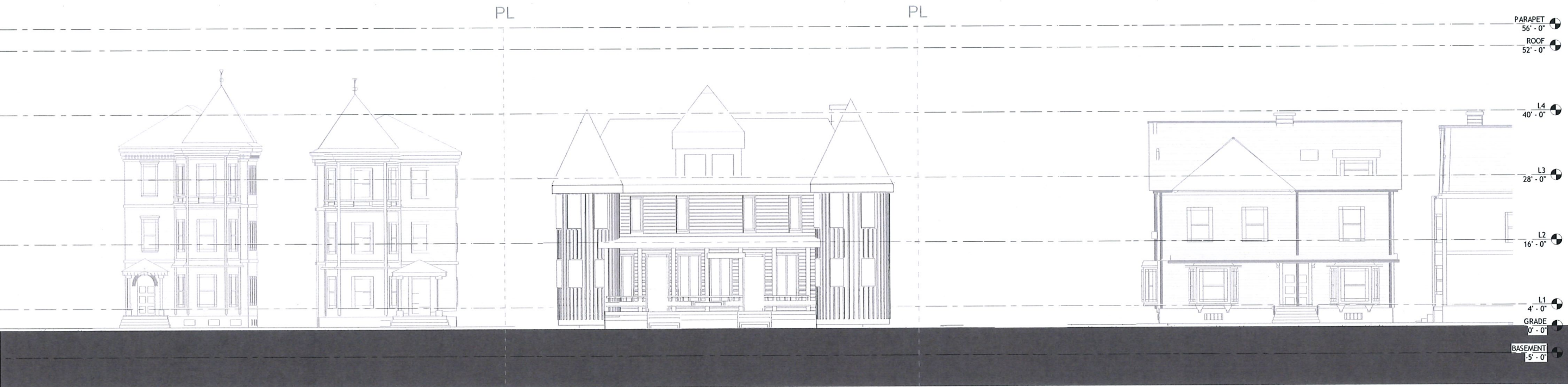


SECTION - PROPOSED



SOUTH ELEVATION - PROPOSED

STREET ELEVATIONS

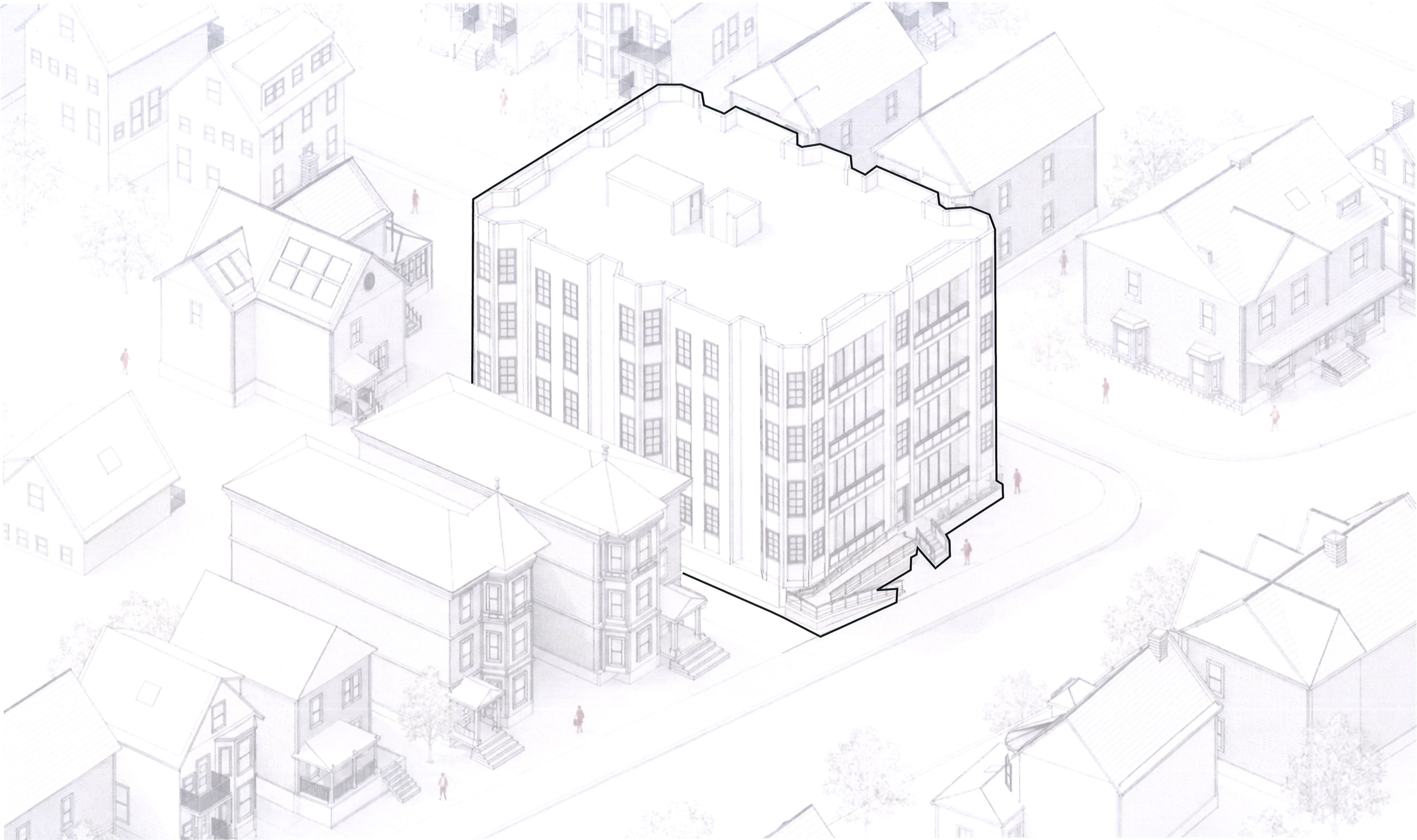


NORTH ELEVATION - EXISTING



NORTH ELEVATION - PROPOSED

STREET AXON VIEW



RENDERING VIEW



RENDERING VIEW



RENDERING VIEW



MATERIAL SELECTION

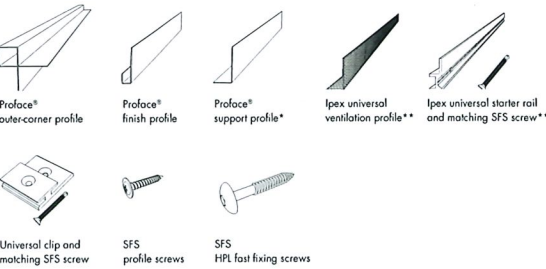
WOOD DECORS	COLOR CODE	COLOR NAME	CORE		FINISH
			Brown	Black	
	PU02	Classic Oak	•		•
	PU14	French Walnut	•		•
	PU31	Western Red Cedar	•		•
	PU08	Romantic Walnut	•		•
	PU30	Tropical Ipe	•		•
	PU28	Siberian Larch	•		•
	PU24	Mystic Cedar	•		•
	PU17	Aged Ash	•		•
	PU22	Slate Ebony		•	•

LUMEN	COLOR CODE	COLOR NAME	CORE		FINISH
			Brown	Black	
	PUL0500	Athens White		•	•
	PUL2581	New York Grey		•	•
	PUL9000	Metropolis Black		•	•

PREFINISHED SIDING

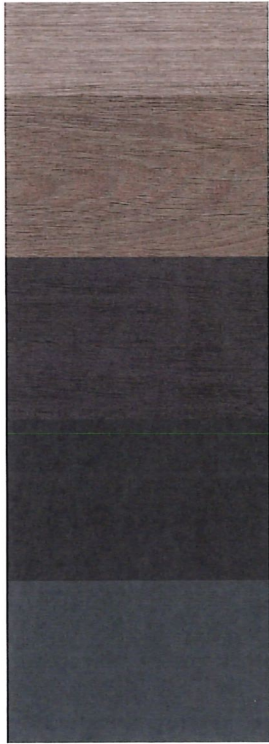
SIDING	Size	Surface (gross)		FULL PALLET
		Surface (gross)	Surface (net)	
	120.08 x 7.32 x 0.315 in 3050 x 186 x 8 mm	6.11 ft² 0.57 m²	5.91 ft² 0.55 m²	144 pcs
	120.08 x 14.41 x 0.315 in 3050 x 366 x 8 mm	12.02 ft² 1.12 m²	11.82 ft² 1.10 m²	48 pcs
	120.08 x 21.5 x 0.315 in 3050 x 546 x 8 mm	17.93 ft² 1.67 m²	17.73 ft² 1.65 m²	48 pcs

FASTENERS AND MATCHING ACCESSORIES



*only available in black core, brown core | **only available in black

PROFILES, HPL SCREWS AND RIVETS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING COLORS:



A large choice of natural colors

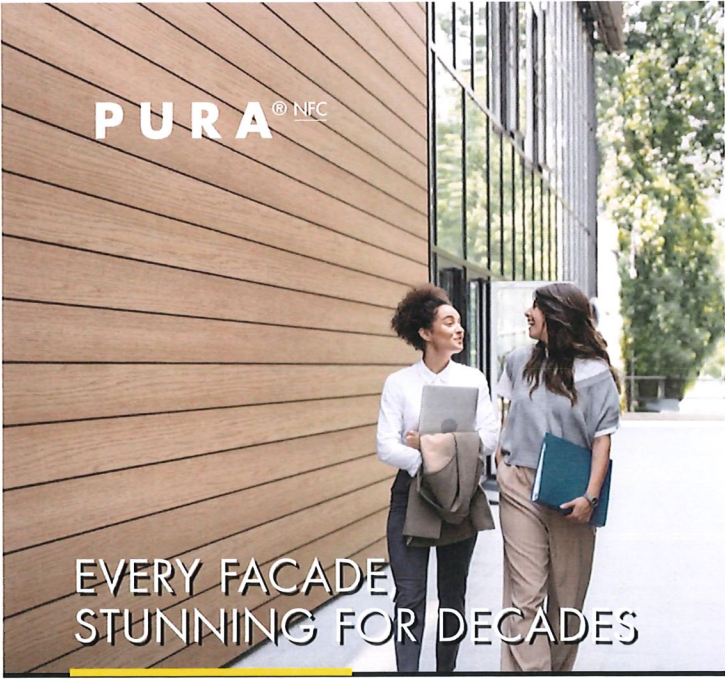
PURA® NFC WOOD DECORS:
HARMONIZING WITH NATURE
Pura® NFC's rich palette of wood decors is inspired by nature to maximize design freedom and a long-lasting, beautiful finish.

PURA® NFC LUMEN:
A MODERN APPEARANCE
Pura® NFC lumen gently diffuses light for a modern or ethereal look. Its low reflection of light gives the façade a smooth matte appearance.

3 sizes to cover all your needs

Pura® NFC siding comes in three sizes to offer architects more flexibility to design each façade exactly as they see fit. The larger size can also reduce installation time.

120 x 7.32 inch (3050 x 186 mm)	5.91 ft² 0.55 m²
120 x 14.41 inch (3050 x 366 mm)	11.82 ft² 1.10 m²
120 x 21.5 inch (3050 x 546 mm)	17.73 ft² 1.65 m²



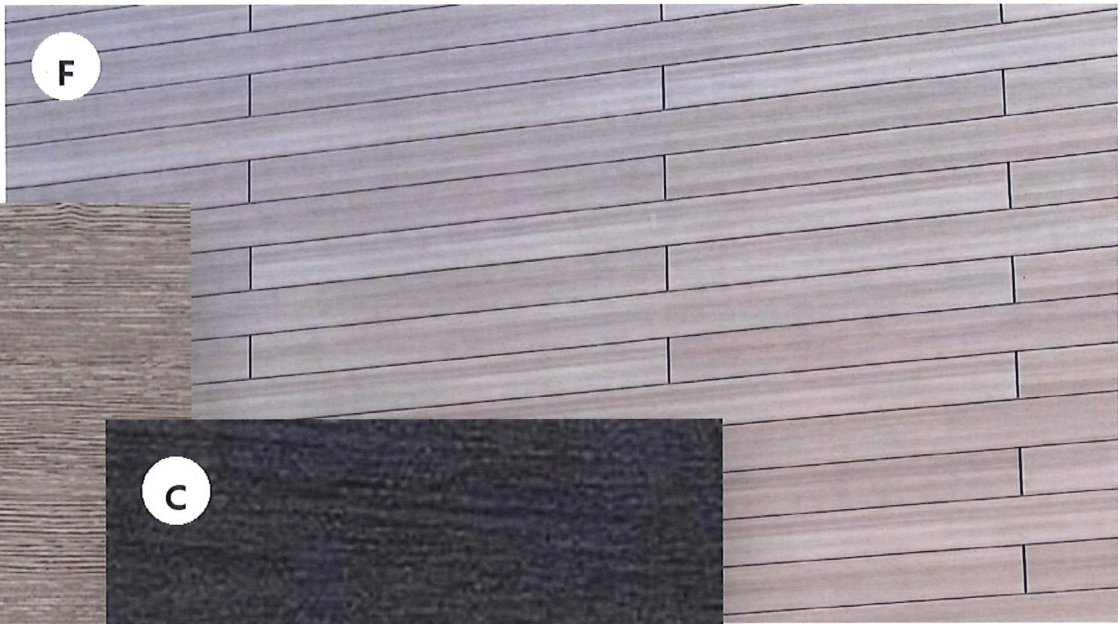
MATERIAL BOARD



A • PU08
Romantic Walnut
WARM FACADE FIELD
Brown core · Matte · PURA pp.10,16



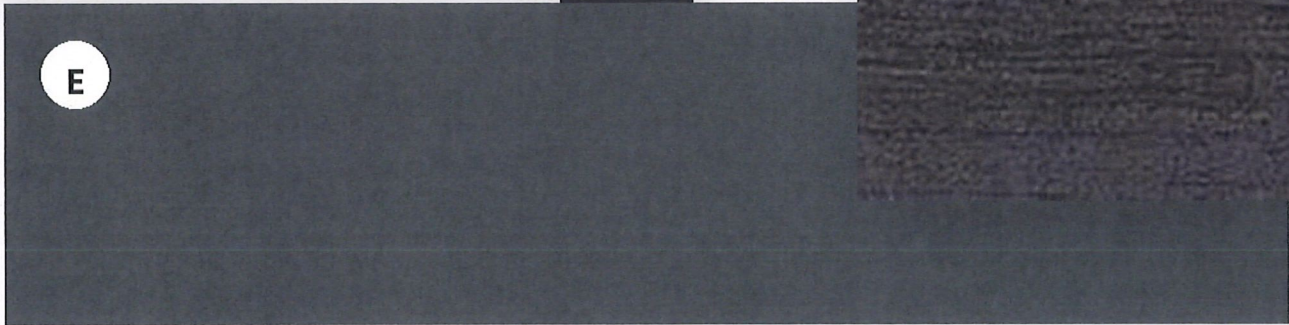
B • PU24
Mystic Cedar
BALCONY RECESSES + SOFFITS
Brown core · Matte · PURA pp.10,16



F • INSTALLED REFERENCE
Warm Taupe Siding
ELM1 · p.1 · PRODUCT CODE NOT SUPPLIED



C • PU22
Slate Ebony
VERTICAL ACCENT
Black core · Matte · PURA pp.10,16



E • PUL2581
New York Grey
LOWER FACADE PLANE
Black core · Diffuse · PURA pp.10,16



D • PUL9000
Metropolis Black
LINEAR DETAIL COLOUR
Black core · Diffuse · PURA pp.10,16,17

MATERIAL - COMPARISON

