



## Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

Cambridge Historical Commission, 831 Massachusetts Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., Cambridge, MA 02139  
Telephone: 617-349-4683 TTY: 617-349-6112 histncds@cambridgema.gov  
www.cambridgema.gov/Historic/DistrictsHistoricProperties/MidCambridgeNCD

### APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE

#### **Section I:**

- The undersigned hereby applies to the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission for a Certificate of (check type of certificate): ☒ Appropriateness, ☐ Nonapplicability, or ☐ Hardship, in accordance with Ch. 2.78 of the Municipal Code and the order establishing the district.
- Address of property: 88 Ellery St, Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Describe the proposed alteration(s), construction, or demolition in the space provided below:  
(An additional page can be attached, if necessary).
  - Partial demolition of existing structure
  - New addition of 6 story structure spanning 47,692 square feet
  - Proposed structure is intended to be zoning compliant (no special permits or variances)

Name of Property Owner of Record: <u>Richard D. Dionne &amp; Elizabeth A. Dionne</u>	
Mailing Address: <u>88 Ellery St, Cambridge, MA 02145</u>	
Telephone/Fax: <u>617-291-4700</u>	E-mail: <u>rddionne@comcast.net</u>
Signature of Property Owner of Record*: <u>Richard Dionne</u>	
(Required field; application will not be considered complete without property owner's signature)	
*I have read the application in full and certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.	
Name of proponent, if not record owner: <u>Royal Temple, LLC - Robin Li</u>	
Mailing Address: <u>15 Winter St, Cambridge, MA</u>	
Telephone/Fax: <u>617-832-5509</u>	E-mail: <u>Robinli@helios-est.com</u>

(for office use only):

Date Application Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Hearing Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Certificate Issued: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section II:**

Is property listed on the National Register of Historic Places? No Publicly owned? No  
Current Zoning District: Res - C1 Current Use: single Family Residence

**Section III:**

Will this project require: variance No special permit No

If yes, nature of zoning relief sought: setbacks \_\_\_\_\_ FAR \_\_\_\_\_ use \_\_\_\_\_  
height \_\_\_\_\_ parking \_\_\_\_\_ other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section IV (Complete any portions that apply to proposed scope of work):**

**New Construction or Additions:**

6,561 floor area of existing structures on the lot  
47,692 amount of floor area (gross square feet) of proposed construction  
626% percentage increase in total floor area after construction  
9,780 total area of lot in square feet  
71.4% percentage of total lot area covered after construction

**Demolition:**

4,428 amount of floor area (gross square feet) of proposed demolition  
6,561 floor area of existing structure  
67.5% percentage decrease in total floor area after demolition

**Alterations:**

Does the proposed work include (check all that apply):

No enclosure or removal of decorative elements (including cornice, fascia, soffit, bay, porch, hood, cornerboard, window sash, or window or door casing);  
No increase or reduction of window or door size;  
No relocation of windows or doors;  
No change in slope, pitch, or configuration of roof;  
No removal of original or historic roofing material.

88 ELLERY ST, CAMBRIDGE, MA, 02138





## 88 Ellery Street Redevelopment

### 1: Introduction & Community Commitment (The Need)

We are here to present a thoughtful approach to a significant opportunity at 88 Ellery Street.

We fully recognize the unique architectural character and historical importance of this neighborhood, and we share your commitment to preserving the beauty of the Ellery Street streetscape. At the same time, we must face the critical challenge that Cambridge is grappling with: the urgent need for diverse housing, especially for the young generation and growing families. Our proposal is a direct response to this need, designed to allow more people to live, work, and raise families here, enriching the diversity and vitality of the community we all value.

### 2: Site Potential & Zoning Reality (The Opportunity)

The property at 88 Ellery Street is exceptional. It features a historic circa 1873 Italianate home situated on an exceptionally large, deep parcel of over 9,600 square feet. Critically, its location—strategically positioned between the transit hubs of Harvard and Central Squares—makes it an ideal site for transit-oriented density.

We are proposing a six-story residential building, which is legally permitted under the recent changes to Cambridge zoning, allowing for a height limit of 74 feet at this location. Our goal is not simply to build to the limit, but to utilize this capacity responsibly to create much-needed homes, primarily offering two-bedroom units specifically tailored to accommodate young and growing families.

### 3: Our Preservation-First Design Strategy (The Integration)

Our commitment is to preservation, not demolition. Unique to recent projects on Ellery Street, our core design philosophy centers on integrating the historic structure into the new design, ensuring its architectural characteristics remain the face of the project.

Specifically, we propose:

- Façade Preservation: The full street-facing (east) façade and the entire north façade of the original Italianate residence will be meticulously preserved and restored, ensuring the historical continuity of the Ellery Street streetscape.
- Interior Activation: The historic interiors will be sensitively rehabilitated to serve as the new building's common residential lounge, complete with the original fireplace, ensuring the historical features are actively enjoyed by the community.

### 4: Architectural Integration & The Glass Reveal (The Interior View)

The new construction is designed to complement and reveal the existing masterpiece, not overpower it.

The remainder of the design involves a sensitive interior reveal. The new building entrance is marked by a distinctive three-story glass curtain wall foyer/lobby box. This deliberate transparency creates a modern, welcoming entrance while serving a critical preservation function: it allows the preserved section of the original 1873 south façade to be fully revealed and appreciated from inside the lobby space. The historical brick and window details become an internal architectural feature, blending the past and present within a light-filled common area. The new density is set back from the original façades to ensure thoughtful transitions, preserving the historical scale at ground level.

### 5: Precedent and Success (The Vision)

This idea of combining the architectural heritage with modern necessity is not new to Cambridge; it is a celebrated hallmark of civic success. We see successful models of this high-quality integration nearby:

- The blending of new and old at the Cambridge Public Library.
- The respectful addition at the Swiss Center.
- The masterful combination seen at the Harvard Art Museum.

Like these successful precedents, our project seeks to protect the architectural heritage while allowing for the vital housing growth Cambridge requires. We are asking for your approval to move forward with a project that is legally compliant, architecturally responsible, and essential for the future vibrancy of the Mid-Cambridge community.





Stading in the park across the street



Looking toward the front of the house and the driveway



Looking at the back of the house



Looking at the backyard





88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Surrounding Streetscape





88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review - Design References





420 Broadway – Swissnex



Museum of Fine Arts Boston Expansion



88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Design References





Harvard Art Museum Expansion



Cambridge Public Library



88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Design References





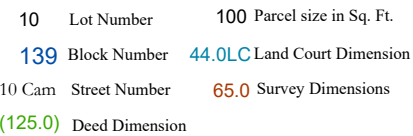
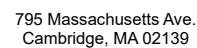
THE LUCAS AT 136 SHAWMUT AVENUE



88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

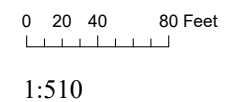
Design Review – Design References





**DISCLAIMER:**  
All Real Property shown on this map was compiled from existing Assessor's Tax Maps dated 1920 to 2025 and maintained by the City Assessor's Office and the Department of Public Works. Subsequent maintenance has been completed using the City of Cambridge Geographic Information System (GIS). Parcels have not been created from survey, and map is suitable for assessing purposes only.

The City of Cambridge assumes no legal responsibility for information shown on this map.



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**SITE PLAN**

Address:  
88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

Assessor's Parcel Number:  
CAMB M:00139 L:00088

Parcel Area:  
0.23 Acres

Land Use:  
Residential  
Single Family Residence

Zoning: C-1

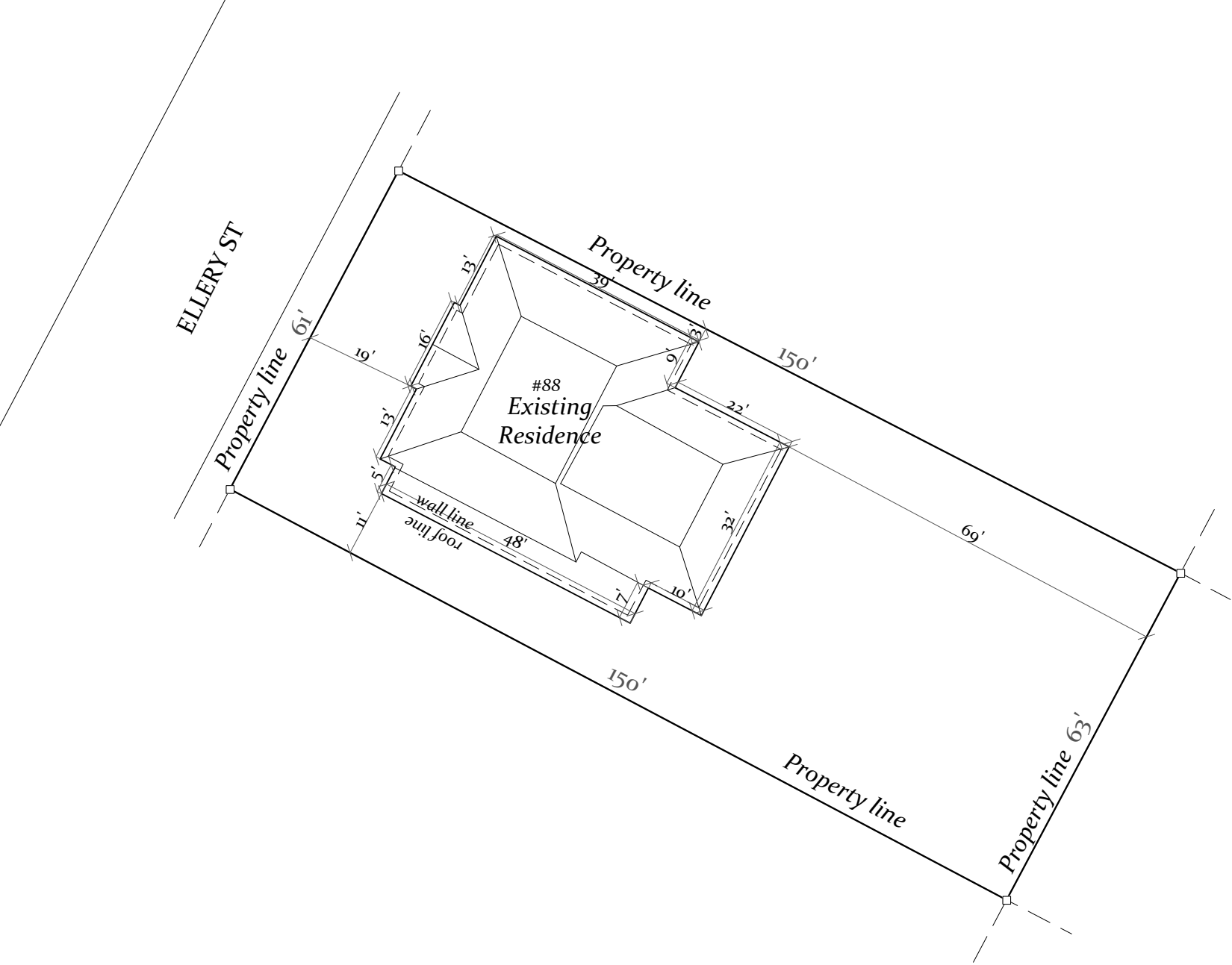
Legal Description:  
/

Subdivision:  
/

Owner: DIONNE, RICHARD  
D

Paper size & scale:  
11"x 17"; 1"=20'

Date: December, 2025

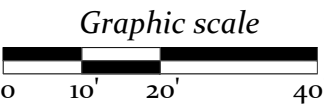


Scale:  
1"=20'  
Paper size:  
11"x 17"

- Legend**
- Property line
  - Topography line
  - Wall line
  - Roof line
  - Retaining wall
  - Fence
  - Proposed addition

**Disclaimer**

This is not a Legal Survey, nor is it intended to be or replace one.  
These measurements are approximate and are for illustrative purposes only.  
This work product represents only generalized location of features, objects or boundaries and should not be relied upon as being legally authoritative for the precise location of any feature, objects or boundary.







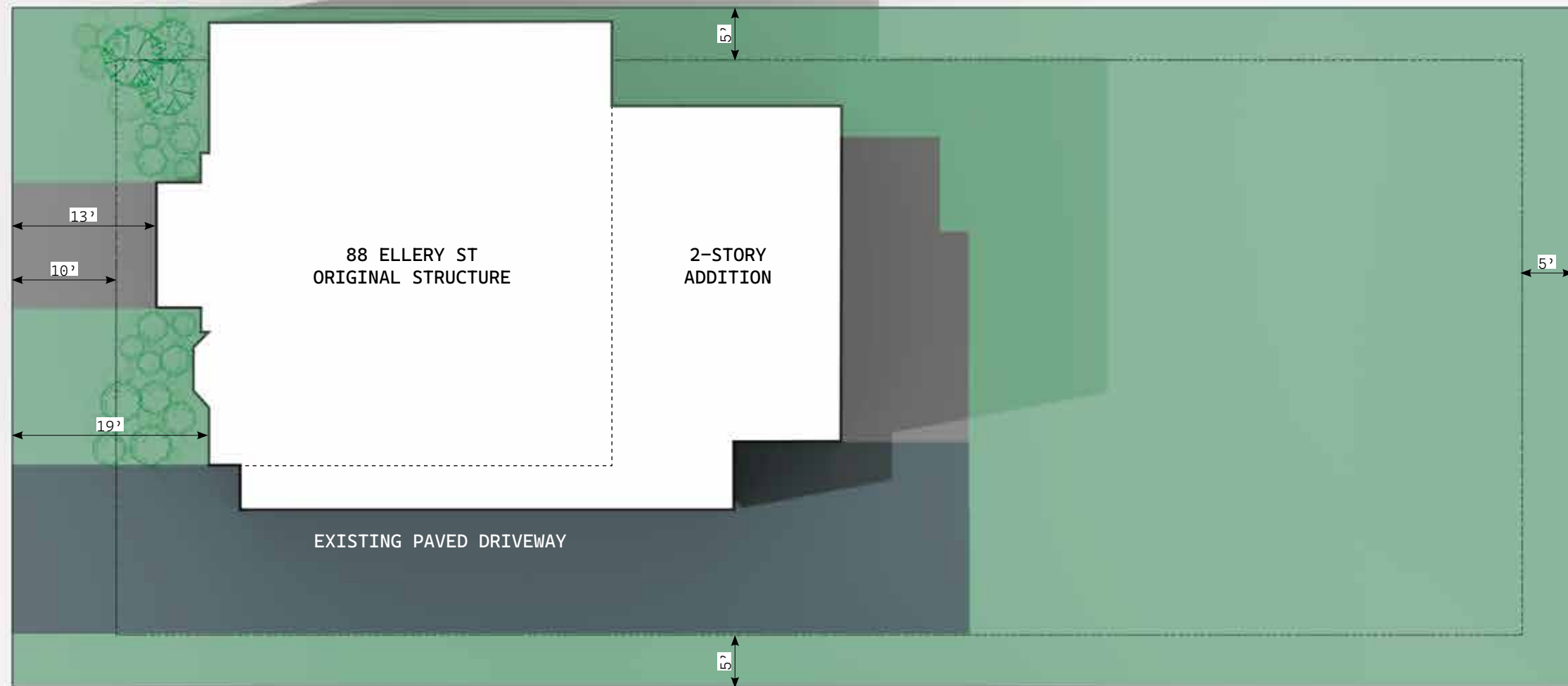
ORIGINAL APPEARANCE WHEN FIRST BUILT (1873-1890).





1891-NOW

ELLERY ST



88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review - Existing Site Plan

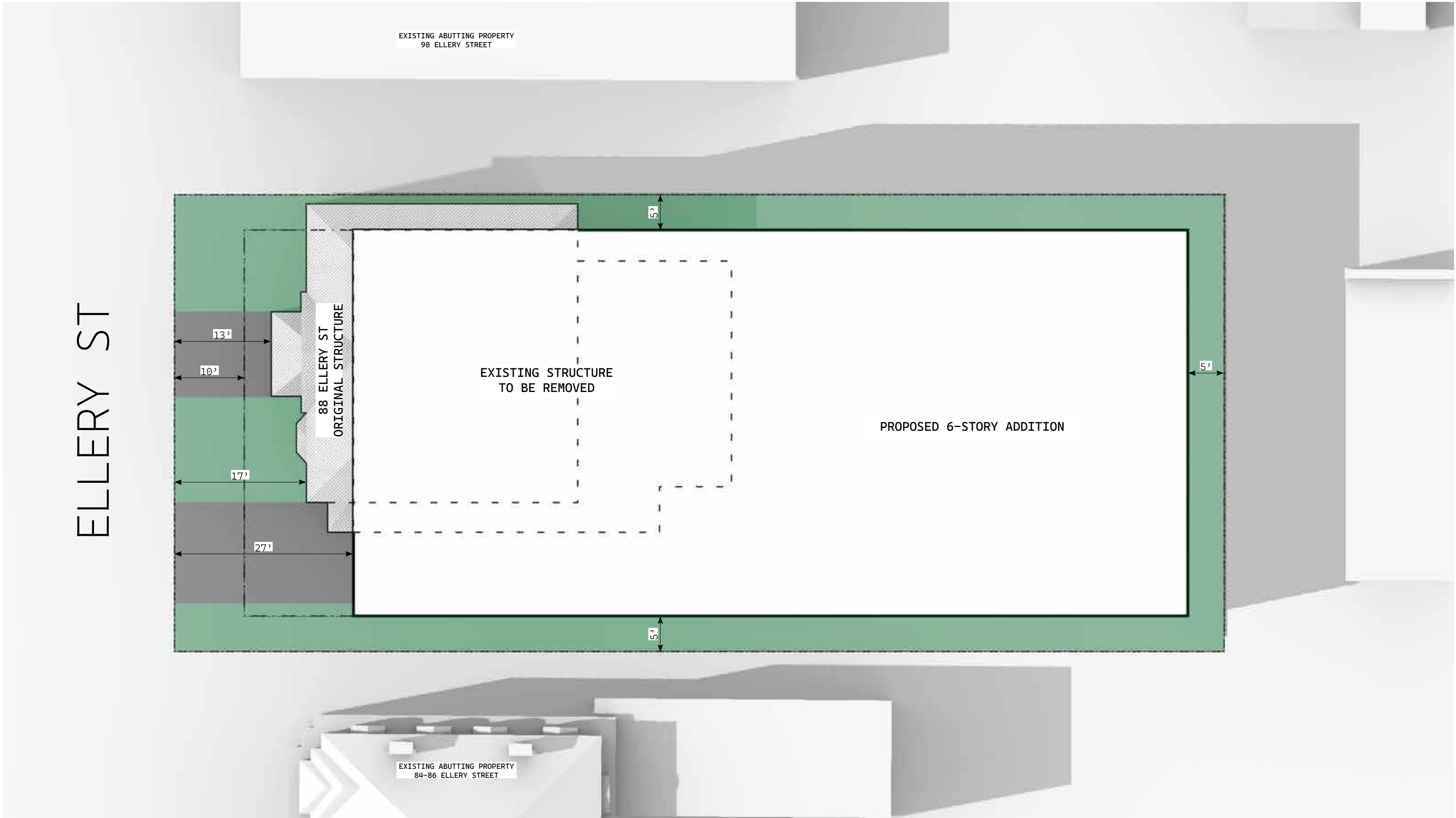




88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

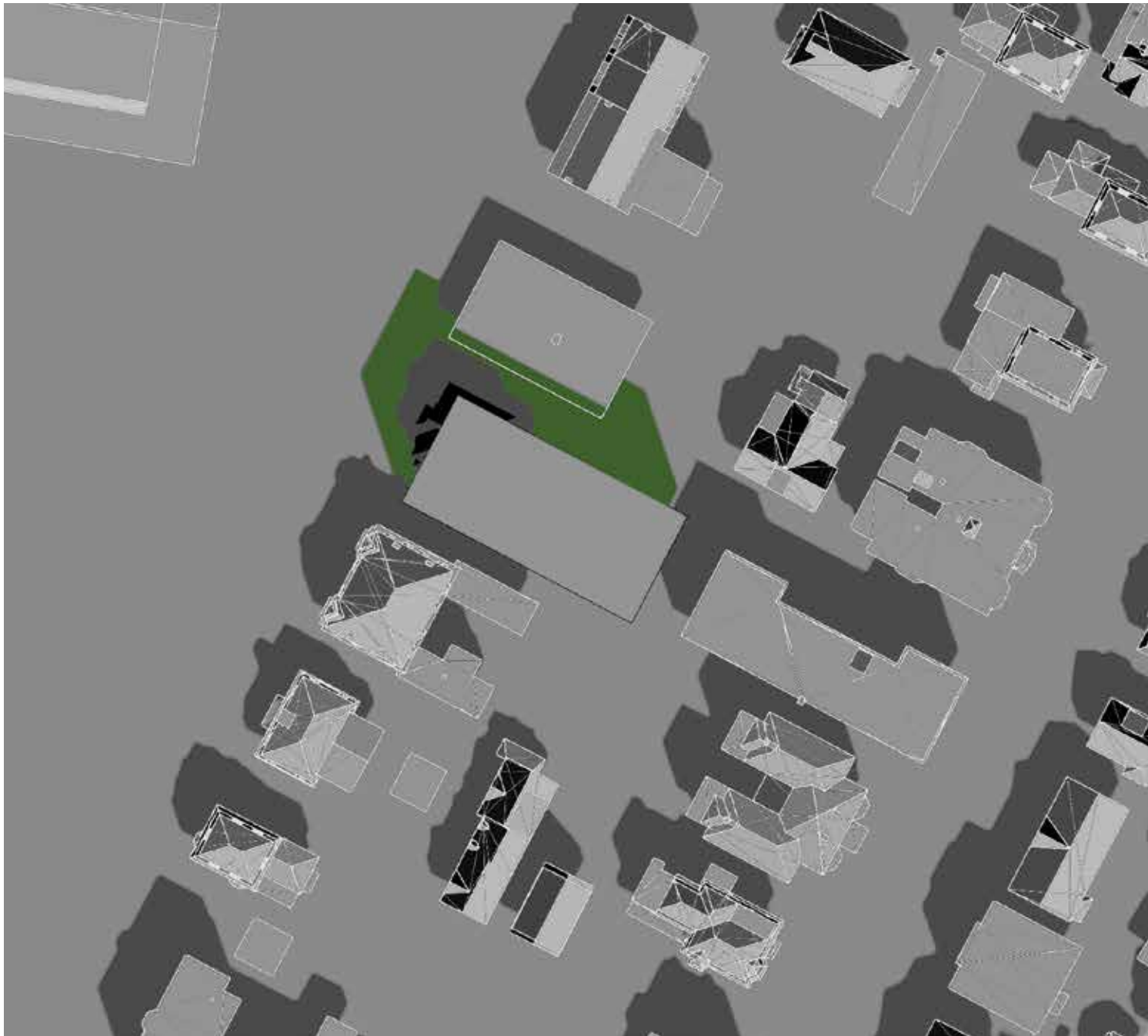
Design Review - Existing Street Elevation



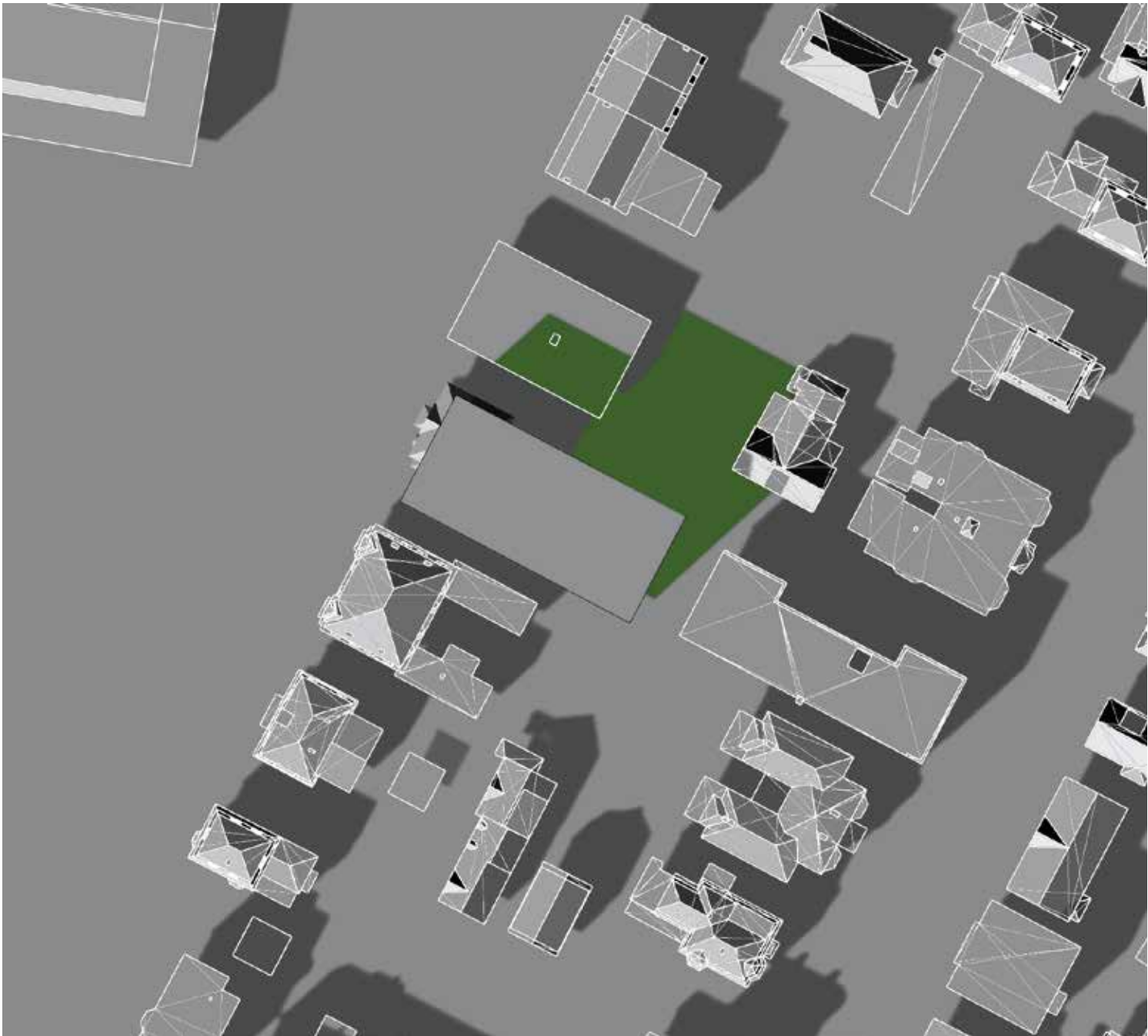


88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Proposed Site Plan



March Equinox 11AM



September Equinox 2PM

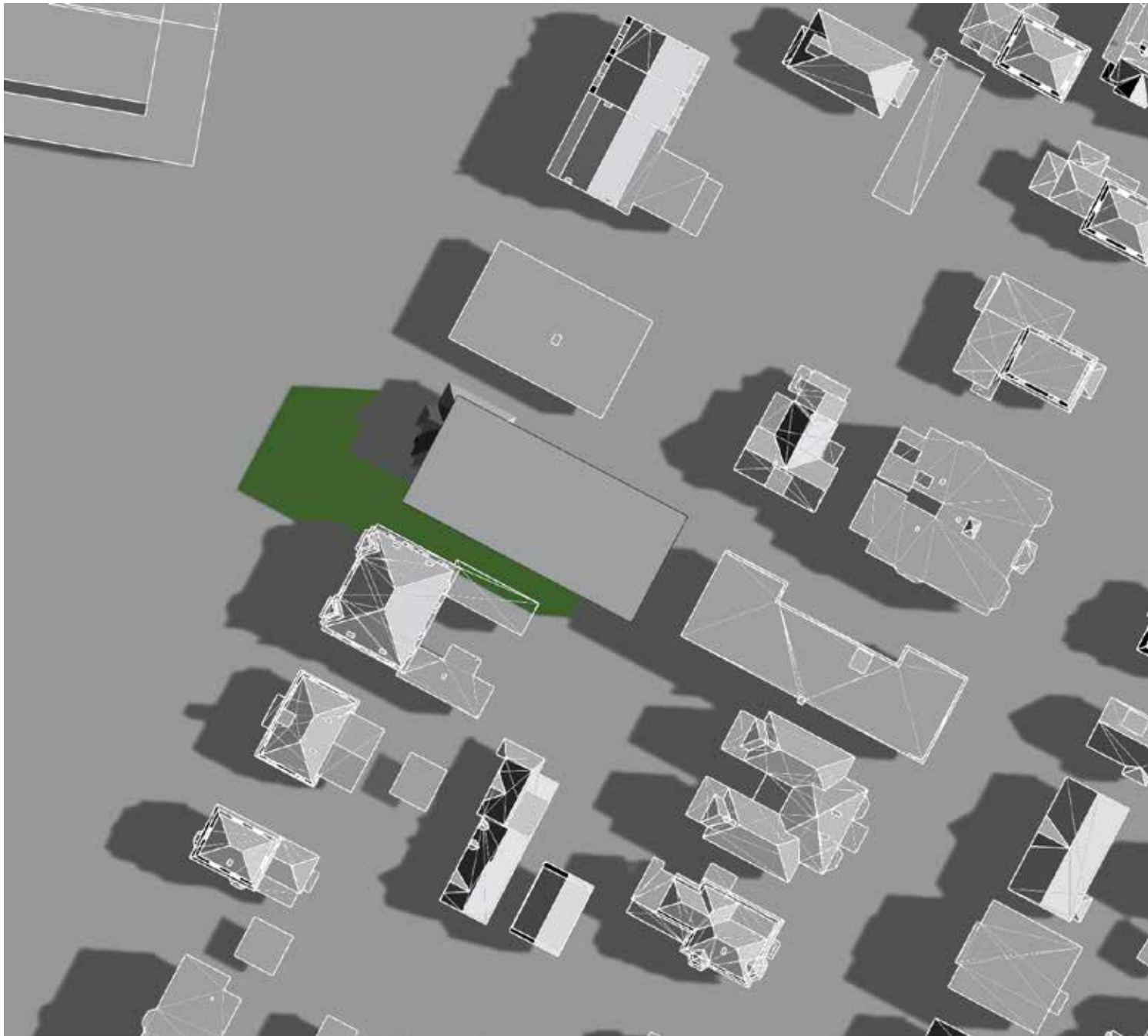


OUTLINE OF ADDITIONAL SHADOW  
CAUSED BY PROPOSED DESIGN

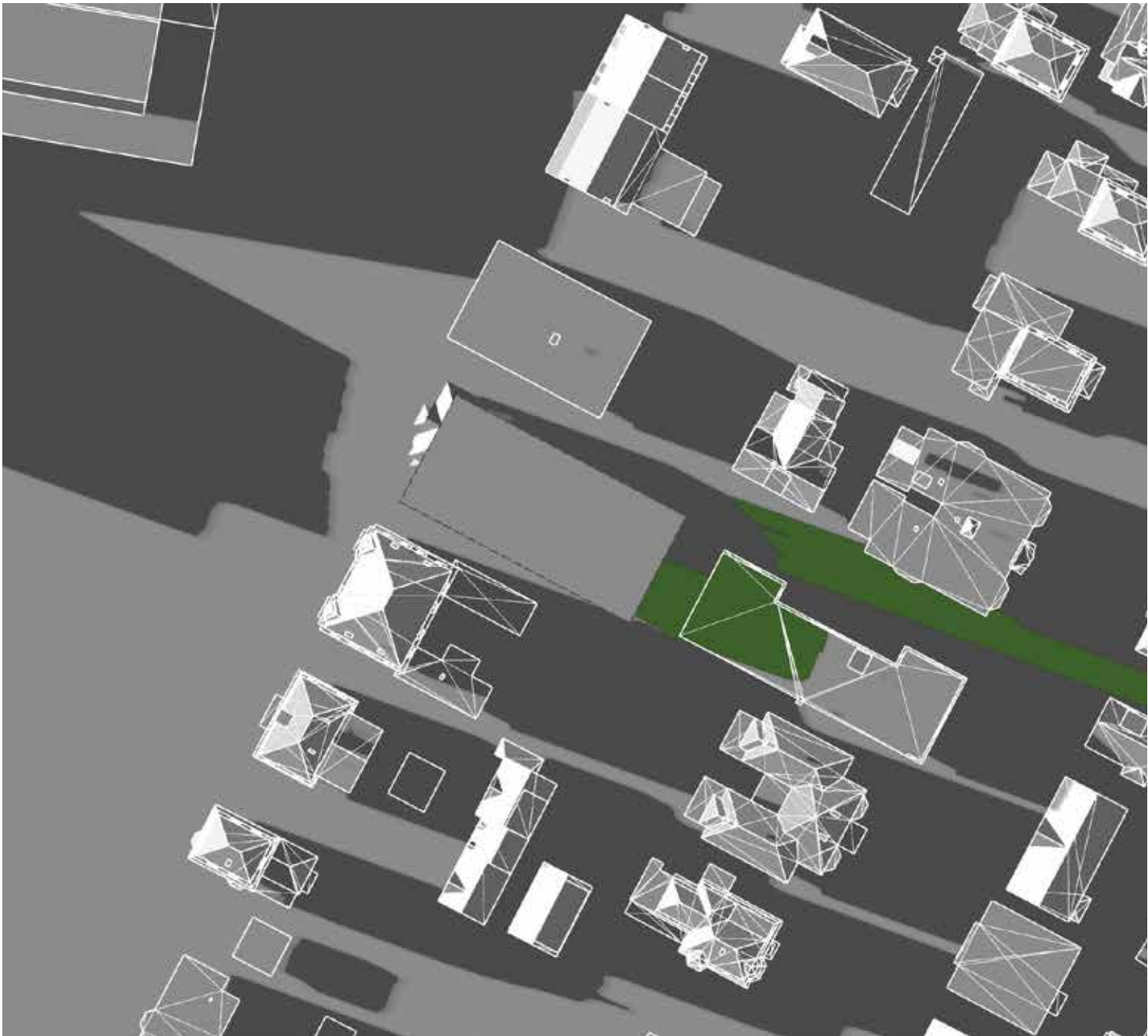
88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Equinox





Summer Solstice 8AM



Summer Solstice 6PM

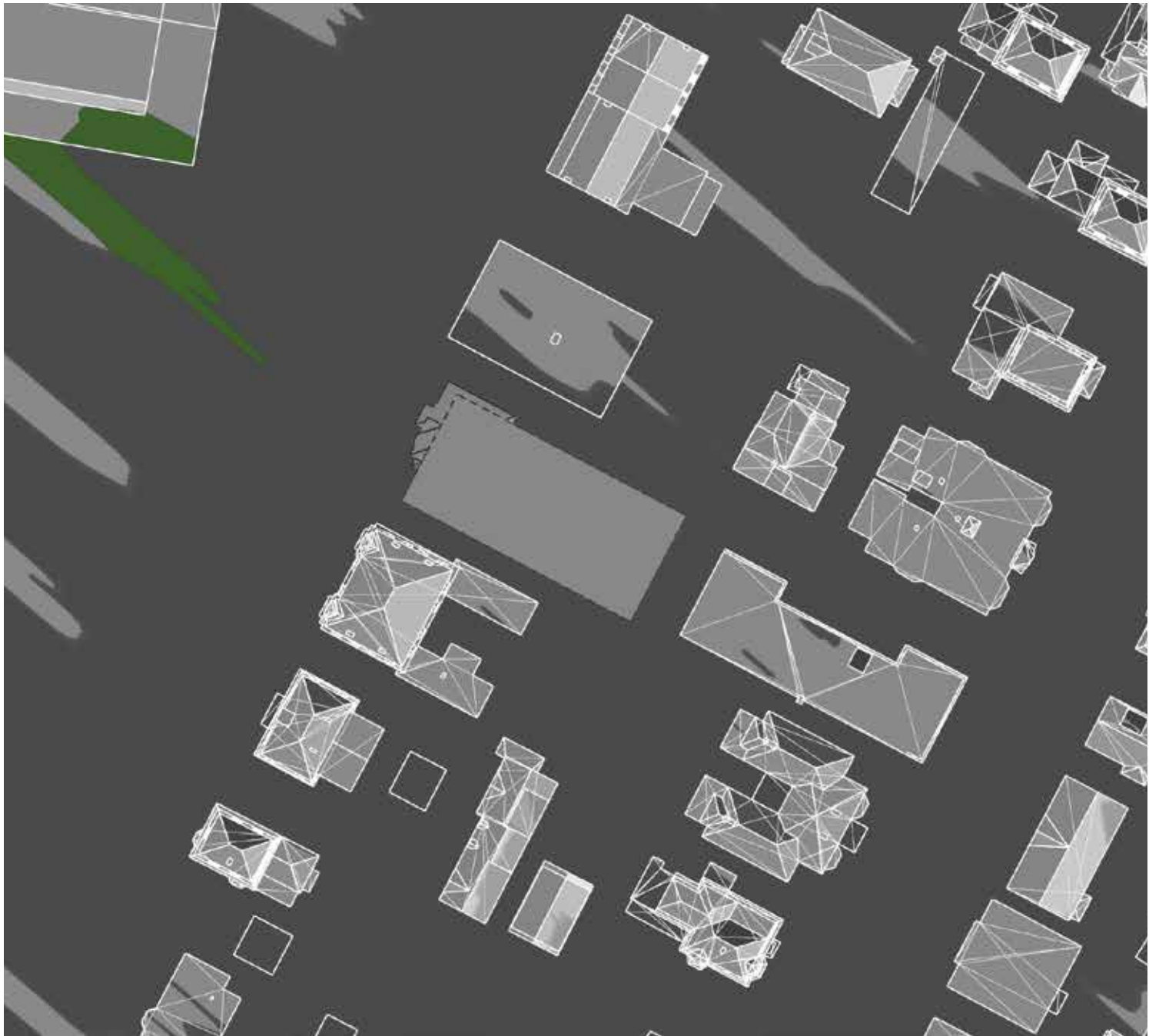


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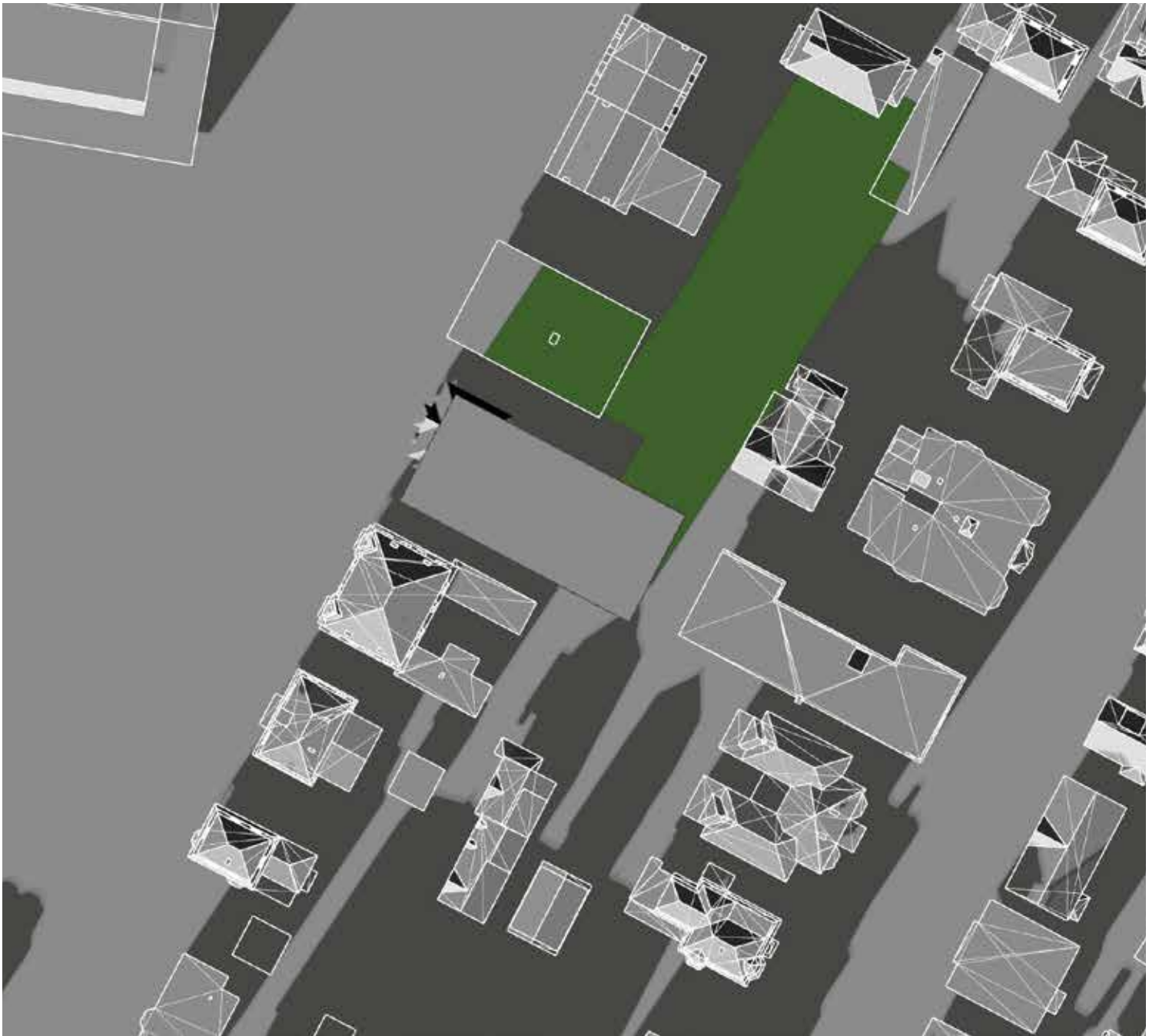
88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Equinox





Winter Solstice 8AM



Winter Solstice 2PM



OUTLINE OF ADDITIONAL SHADOW  
CAUSED BY PROPOSED DESIGN

88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Equinox





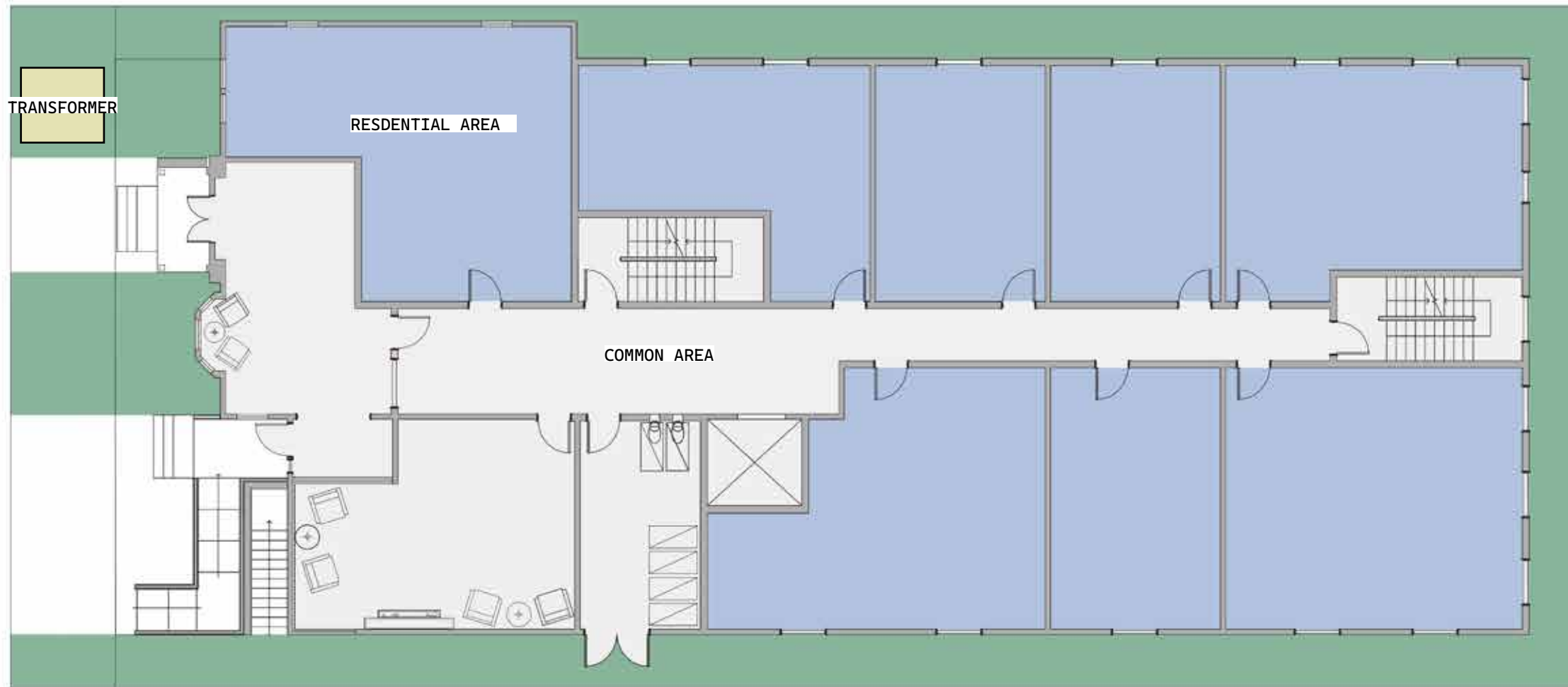
88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review – Proposed Street Elevation





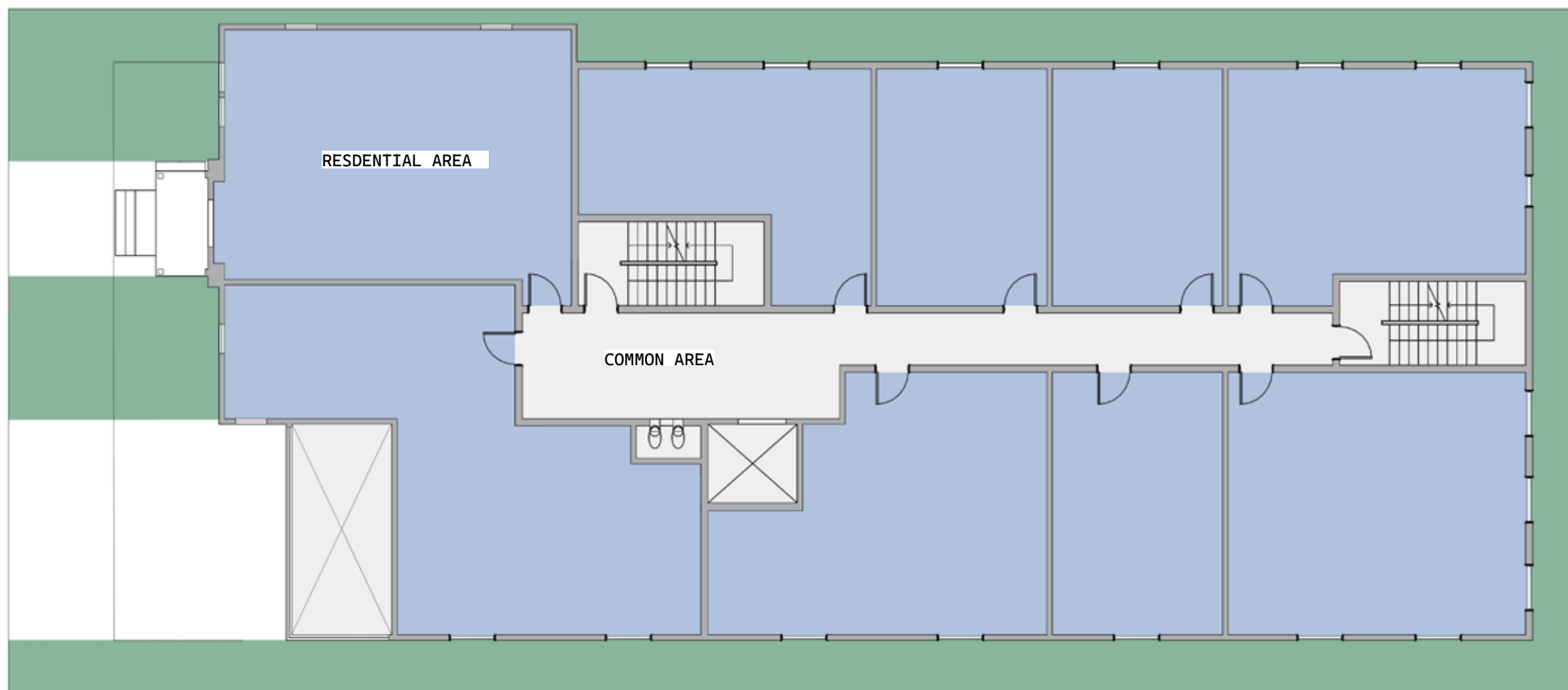




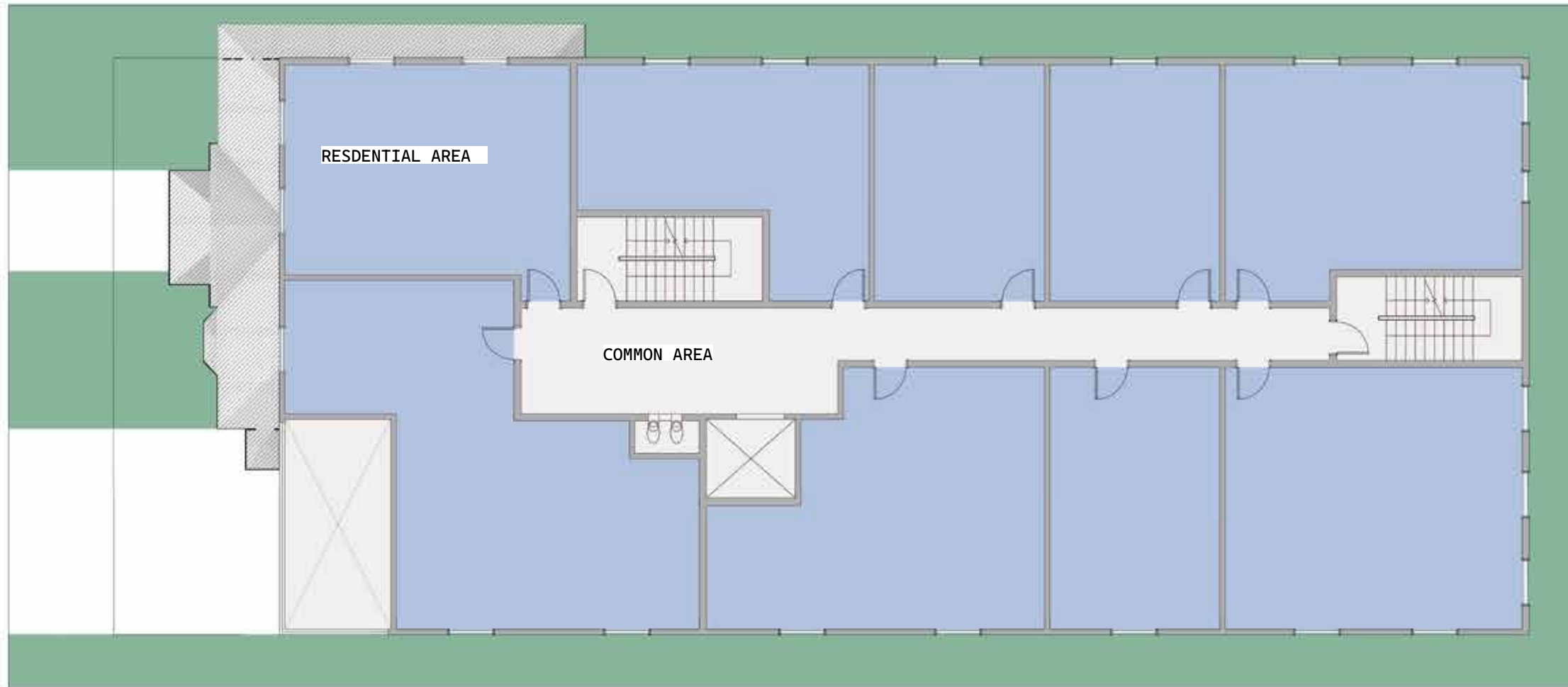
88 ELLERY ST  
CAMBRIDGE, MA

Design Review - Proposed First Floor Plan

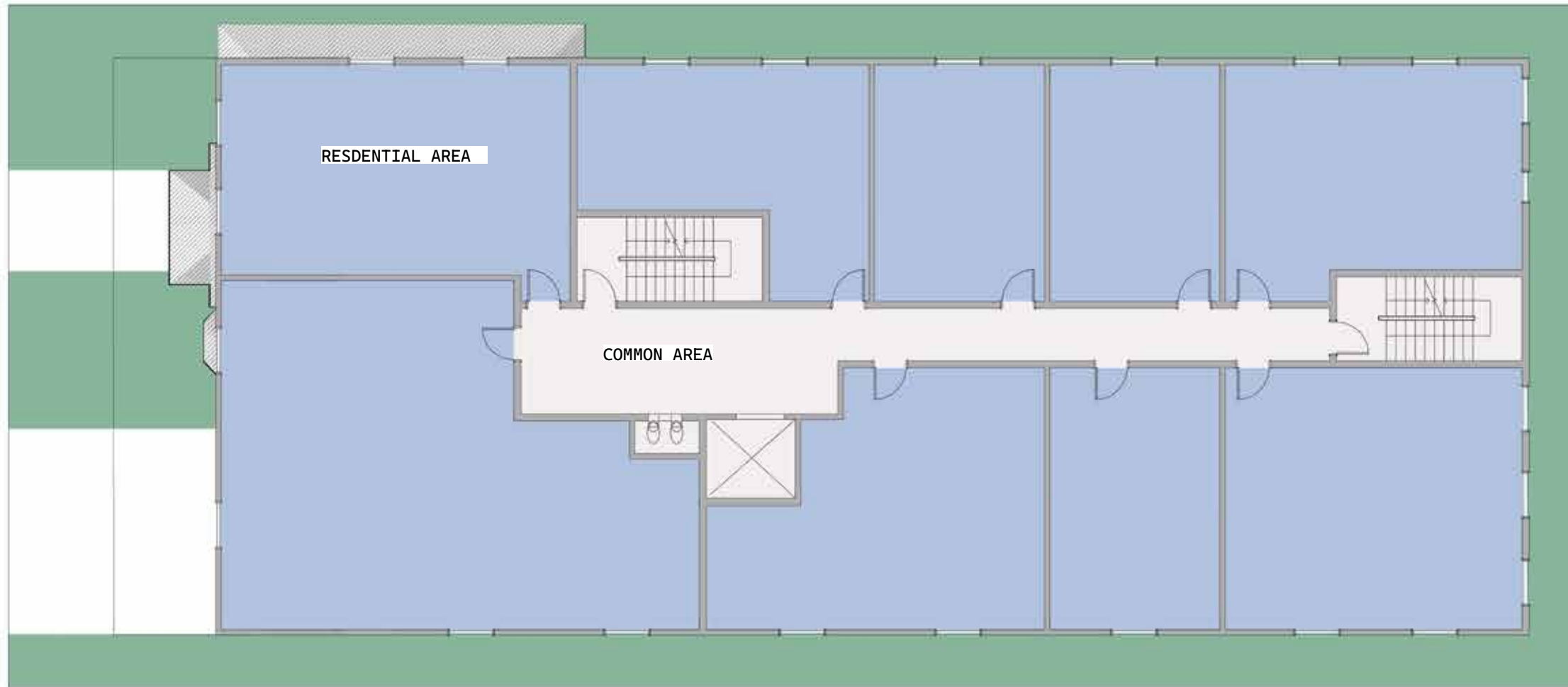




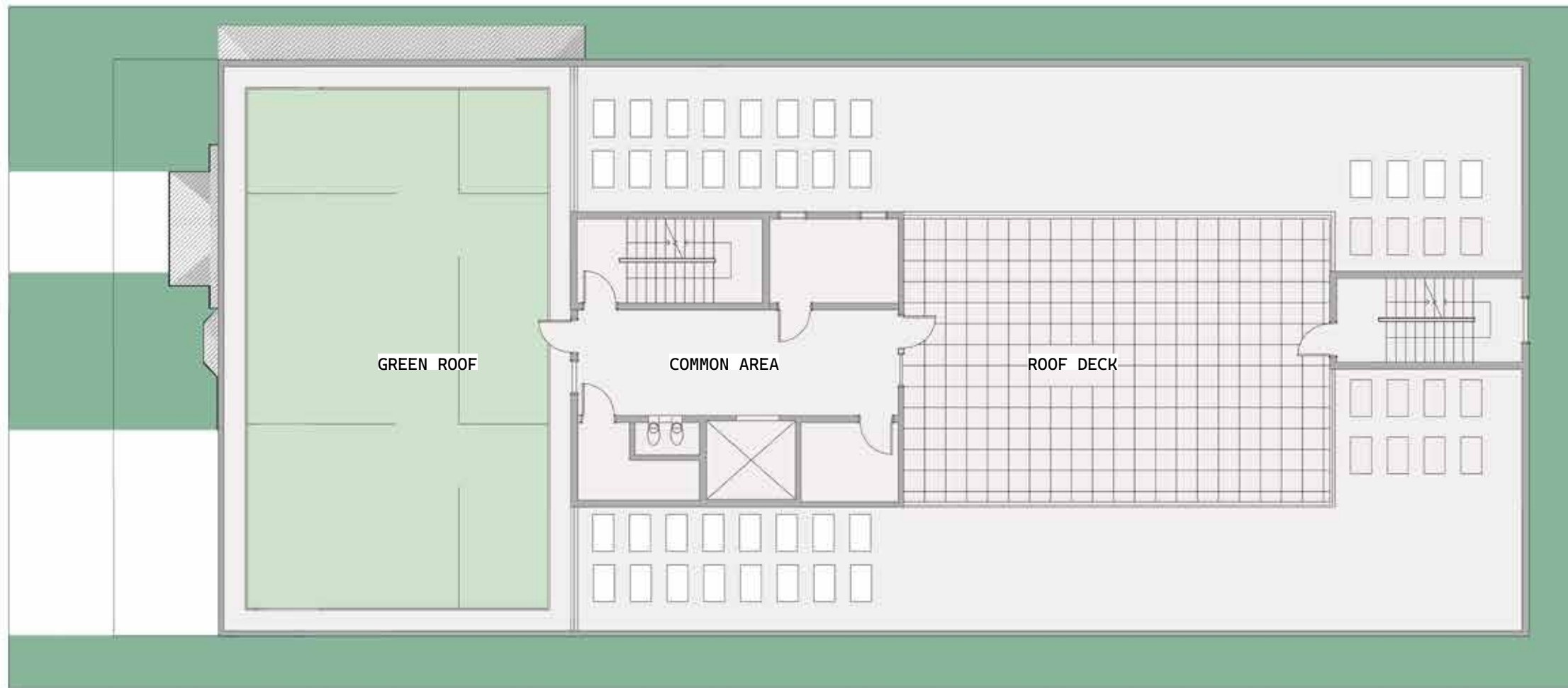




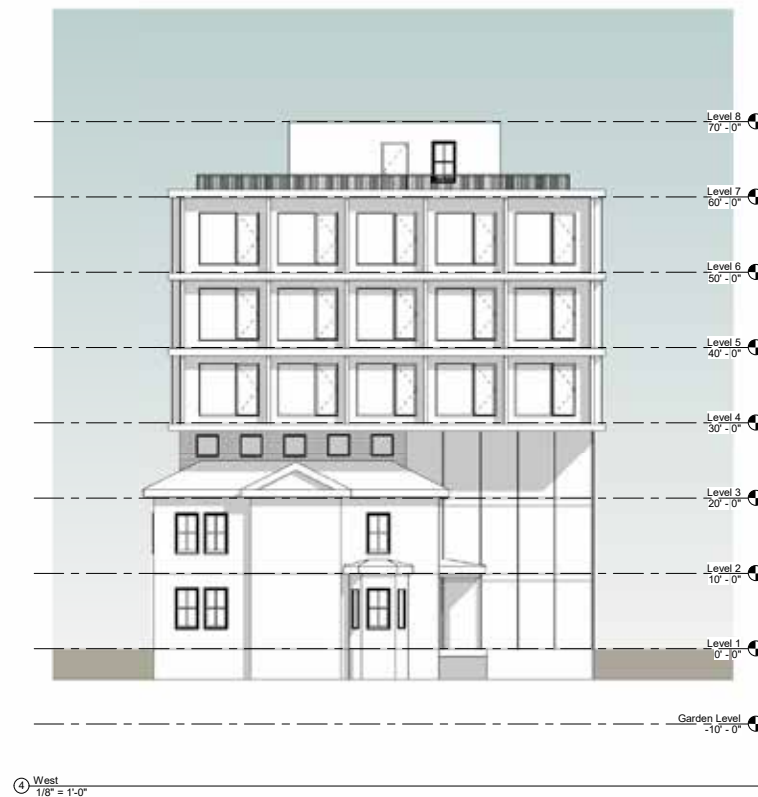
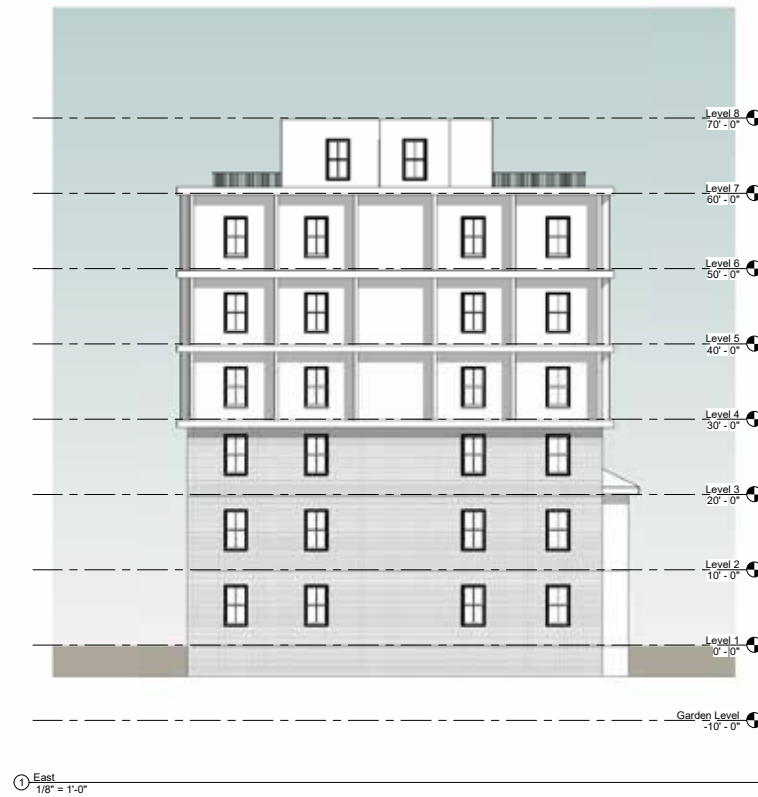














Our facade composition draws inspiration from the material diversity of the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood, especially buildings where old and new intersect. Terracotta and aluminum cladding introduce fine grain and shadow patterns that echo the scale of brick and vinyl, both common in Cambridge’s residential buildings. The glass curtain wall at the lower levels is deliberately placed adjacent to the existing house, reflecting its historic character.

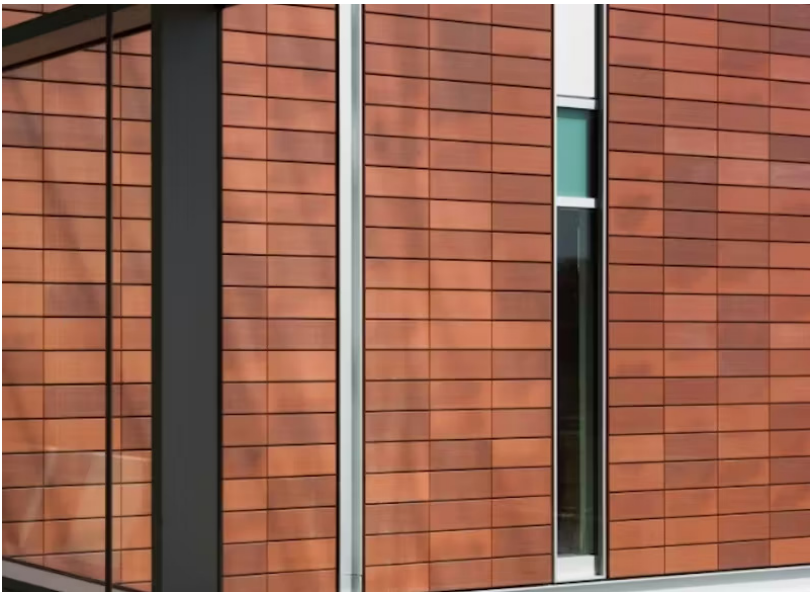
Together, these materials form a layered composition that brings multiple moments of Cambridge’s history into dialogue while breaking down the building’s scale and avoiding a monolithic presence.



Existing Vinyl Siding



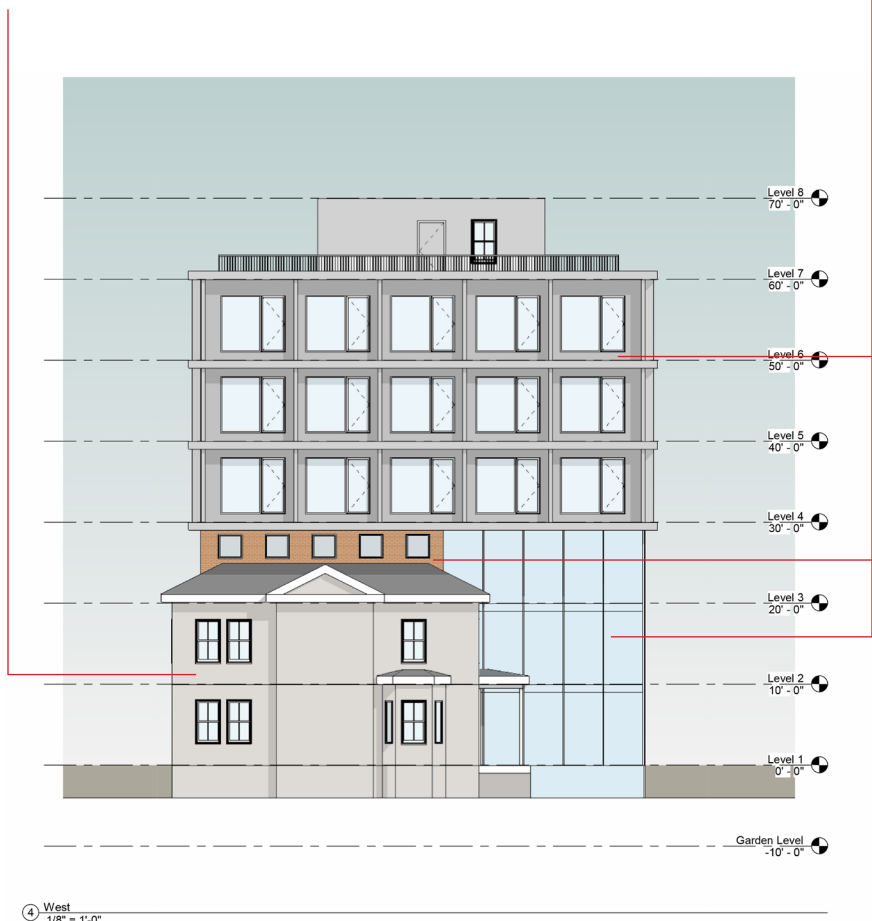
Glass Curtain Wall



Terracotta Cladding



Aluminum Cladding







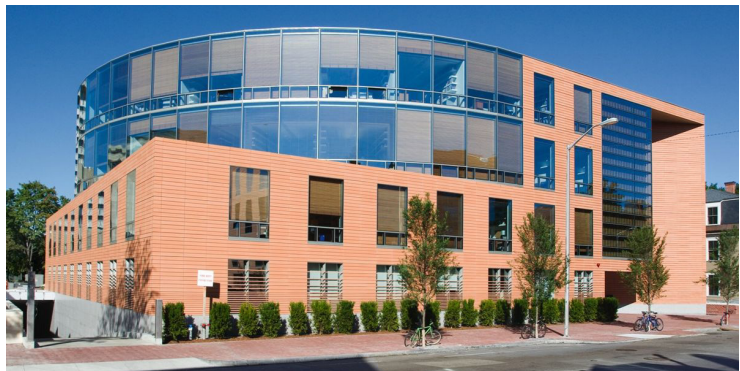
Existing Building on 88 Ellery St, 1891-Now

- vinyl siding commonly used in New England's single family houses and triple deckers.



Renzo Piano's Harvard Art Museums Expansion

- wood facade (Alaskan Yellow Cedar) laid out as horizontal strips.
- a homage to the vinyl facades of the surrounding residential neighborhood.



Center for Government and International Studies, Harvard University

- glass curtain wall and red-brown terracotta cladding.
- the terracotta's color and shadow patterns is synonymous with brick facades, while the glass blends in to the sky.



Cambridge Public Library, Inman Square

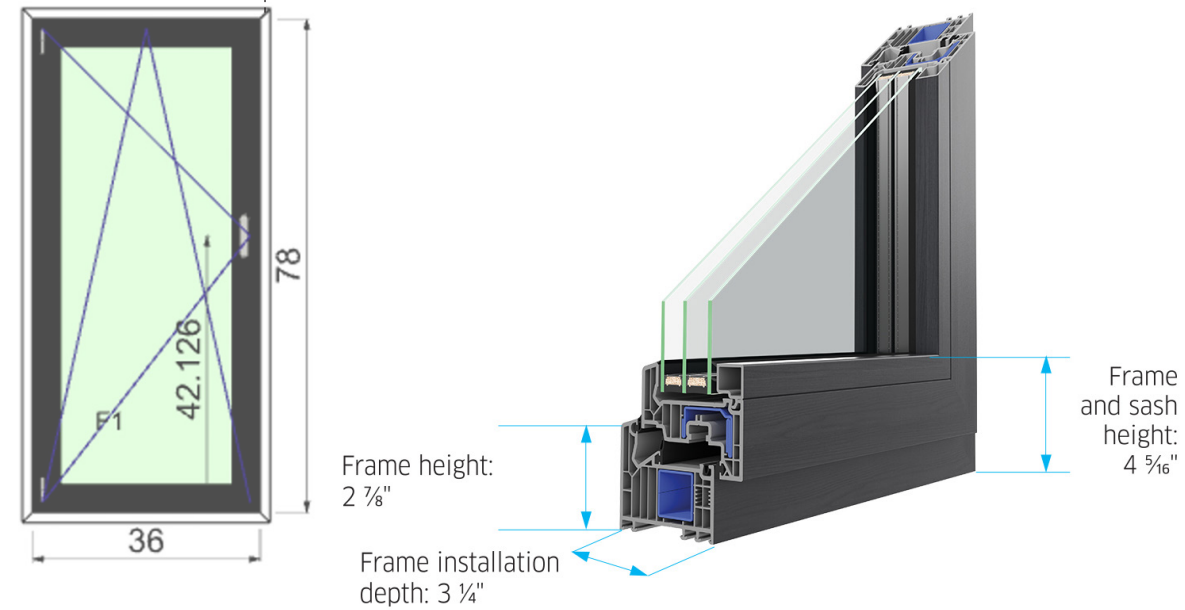
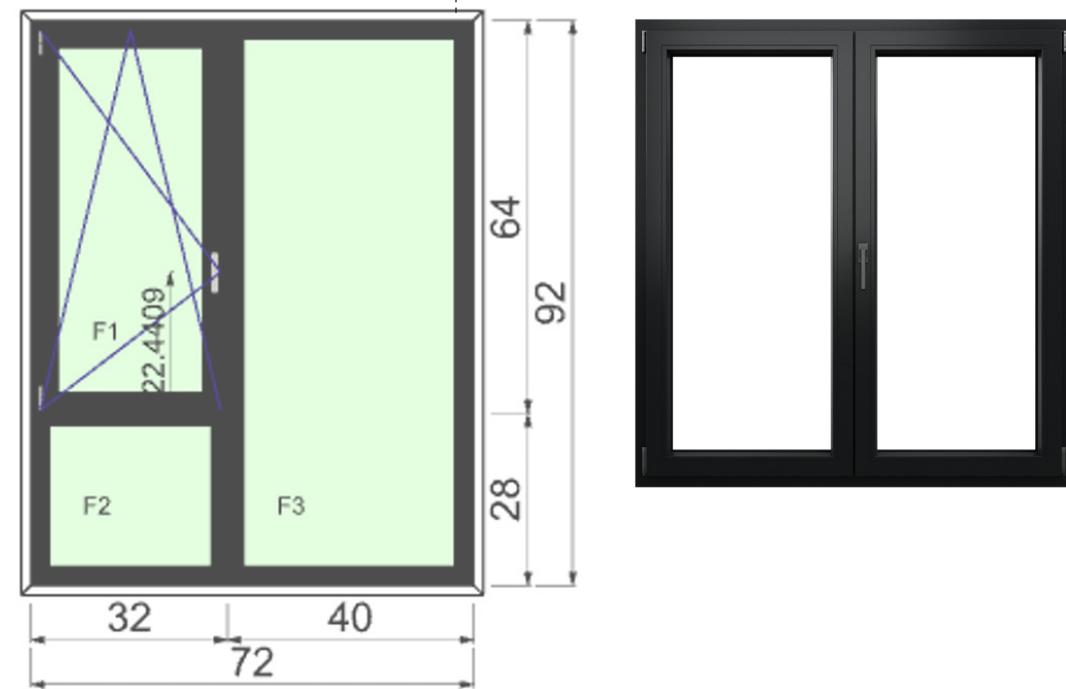
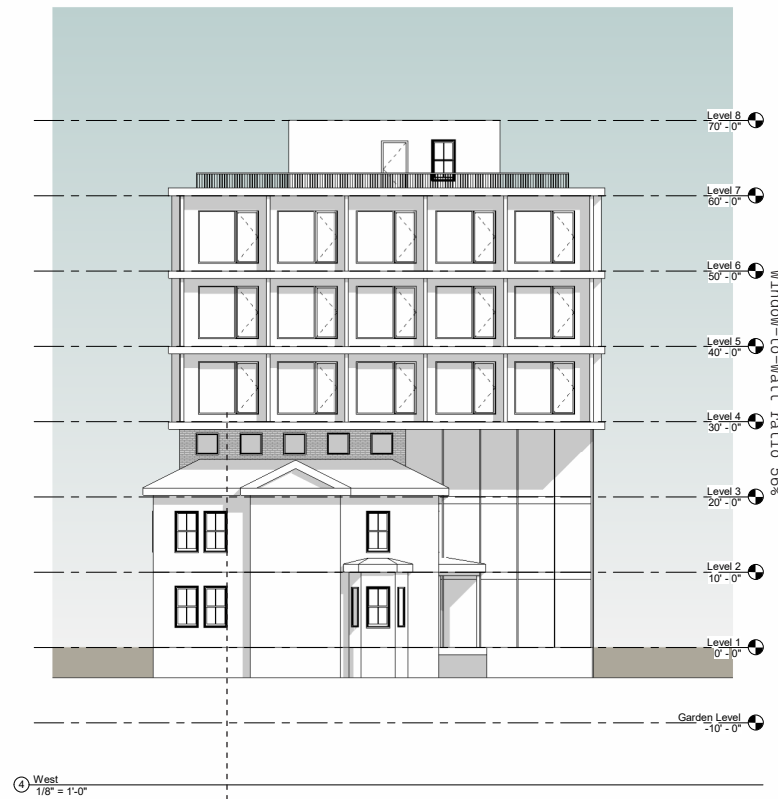
- glass curtain wall that is reflective but transparent

# 88 ELLERY ST

CAMBRIDGE, MA

## Design Review – Facade Material References





In the new proposal, the building's front (west) facade will use larger glass openings than the existing building, while the other three facades will use glazing that is similar in size to the existing windows. We will specify triple-glazed, Passive House-standard windows to support the project's sustainability goals.



