



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Acting Assistant City
Manager for Community
Development

To: Planning Board
From: Suzannah Bigolin, Urban Design Planner
Date: June 12, 2015
Re: **PB #175, 1-25 East Street (Phase II) Continuing Design Review**

Update

At its January 21, 2015 hearing, the Planning Board reviewed and approved the major amendment to Special Permit #175 (Phase II), and delegated continuing design review of the project to the Community Development Department. In taking this action, the Planning Board specifically called out the following elements for staff to review:

- a) Elevations of all sides of each building, with particular emphasis on the public face of each building as it relates to the new Lechmere Station head house and Monsignor O'Brien Highway.
- b) More detailed landscaping plans exploring the open space areas, integration with the Lechmere Station, consideration of materials and details.
- c) Circulation patterns around the site, with a focus on providing ease of travel, comfort and safety for pedestrians and cyclists across the site.
- d) The retaining wall transition between the courtyard building and the public realm, with a view to how this can be softened and activated so that it does not appear as a barrier and is more welcoming to pedestrians.
- e) Residential entrances and "communal stoops," particularly along Glassworks Avenue, with consideration toward access for persons with disabilities and more elegant ways to meet the functional needs of the entries.

Over the last several months, staff has met with the Applicant on multiple occasions to discuss a variety of site planning and design details. In addition, the project team has continued to further refine and expand upon the design ideas and landscape concepts that were presented at the hearing. Given some of the detailed changes that are now proposed, and Board members' interest in being updated on the design, the Applicant has prepared a package of design review materials for the Planning Board's consideration. Staff is very pleased with how the project is progressing and the following points summarize the current status of the project:

- With regard to the overall massing, changes have been introduced to create additional notches along the sixth floor, which creates new balcony space and emphasizes the corners of the two buildings on Glassworks Avenue, as well as the retail end of project. The project has also moved marginally closer to East Street and the future Lechmere station headhouse. Balconies on the south elevations are now concentrated within the courtyard, which is more of a private space and protected from the noise of the railway.

- The residential entrances and communal stoops along Glassworks Avenue are proposed to be consolidated at the building corners and moved closer to grade, which addresses accessibility concerns. Staff feel that these highly transparent corners anchor each end of the buildings, highlight nodes of activity and public presence, and celebrate the physical connection through the site. The asymmetrical configuration of the corner elements also adds interest and is successfully demonstrated in the renderings. In concentrating activity at the corners, there are sections of the street wall where windows are relatively high above the sidewalk. Staff hope to continue to work with the project team to explore opportunities to move the windows down, and creative screening and landscaping approaches to make the ground floor more welcoming.
- Much of the discussion on the landscaping and overall site planning has focused on the interface with the new Lechmere Station headhouse, as well as bicycle access and parking. A significant change that has occurred since the Planning Board Hearing is the introduction of a dog park under the railway viaduct. Previously this location was to be used as a multi-purpose exercise area, which recognized the limitations of the space below the viaduct. While a dog park will serve residents' needs, further details on the type and style of fencing are needed to ensure that an attractive interface with the paths and streetscape is achieved.
- The transition from the interior courtyard to the public realm is proposed to be a planted slope with the courtyard only 3'6" above the pathway. Specific plantings and material details are to be provided.

Staff welcomes feedback from the Planning Board and looks forward to continuing to review the project with the project team as it is further refined and detailed.

NORTHPOINT II

CAMBRIDGE, MA

AvalonBay
COMMUNITIES, INC.

MC
TheMcKimCo.
Landscape Architecture

CUBE3
STUDIO
architecture interiors planning

KYU SUNG WOO ARCHITECTS

CW
DG
Cooley Wolff Design Group
Landscape Architects & Planners

MAY 22, 2015



Northpoint II
Cambridge, Massachusetts

BUILDING/ STREET



GLASSWORKS AVE. ELEVATION

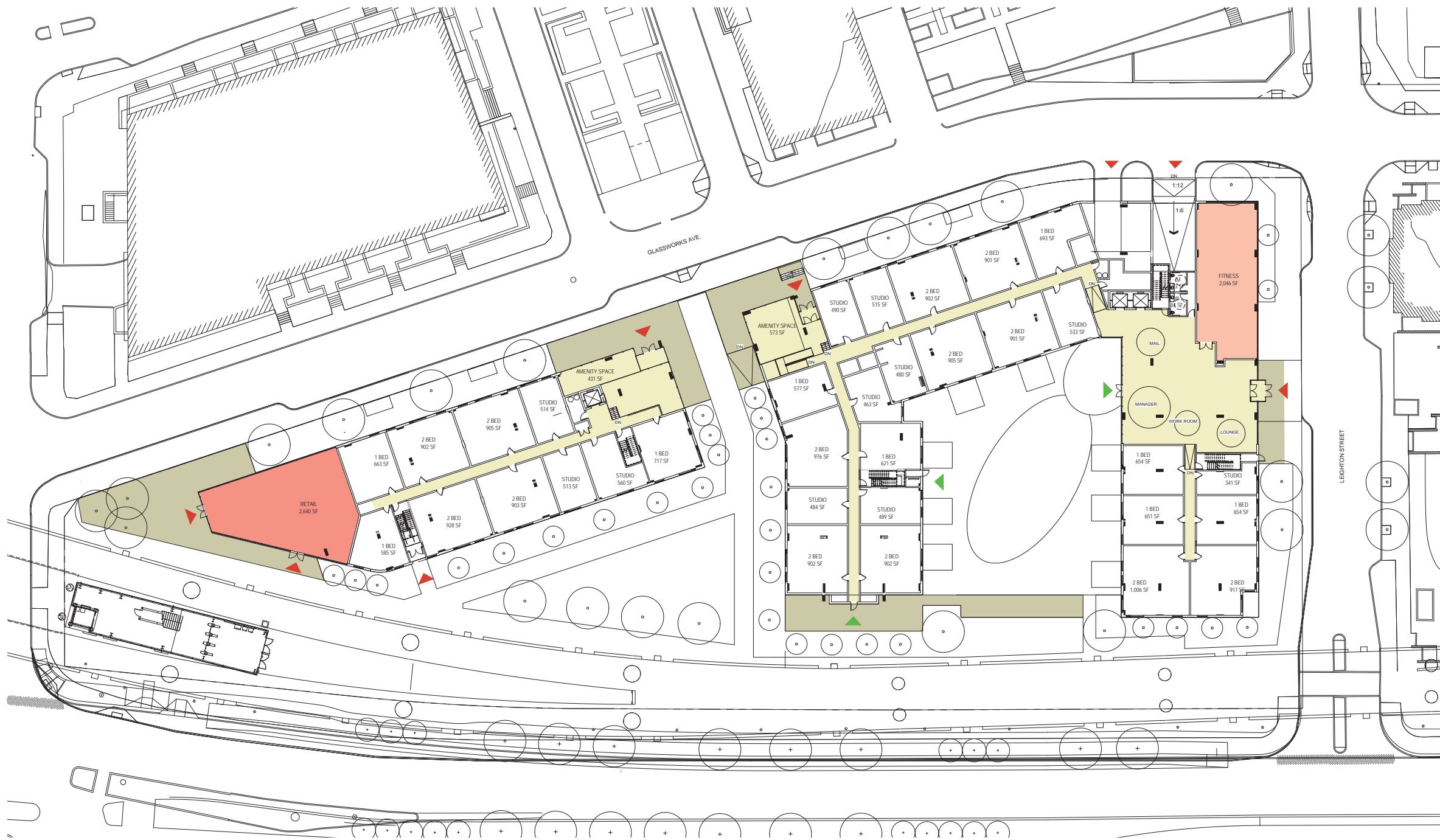


LEIGHTON ST. ELEVATION

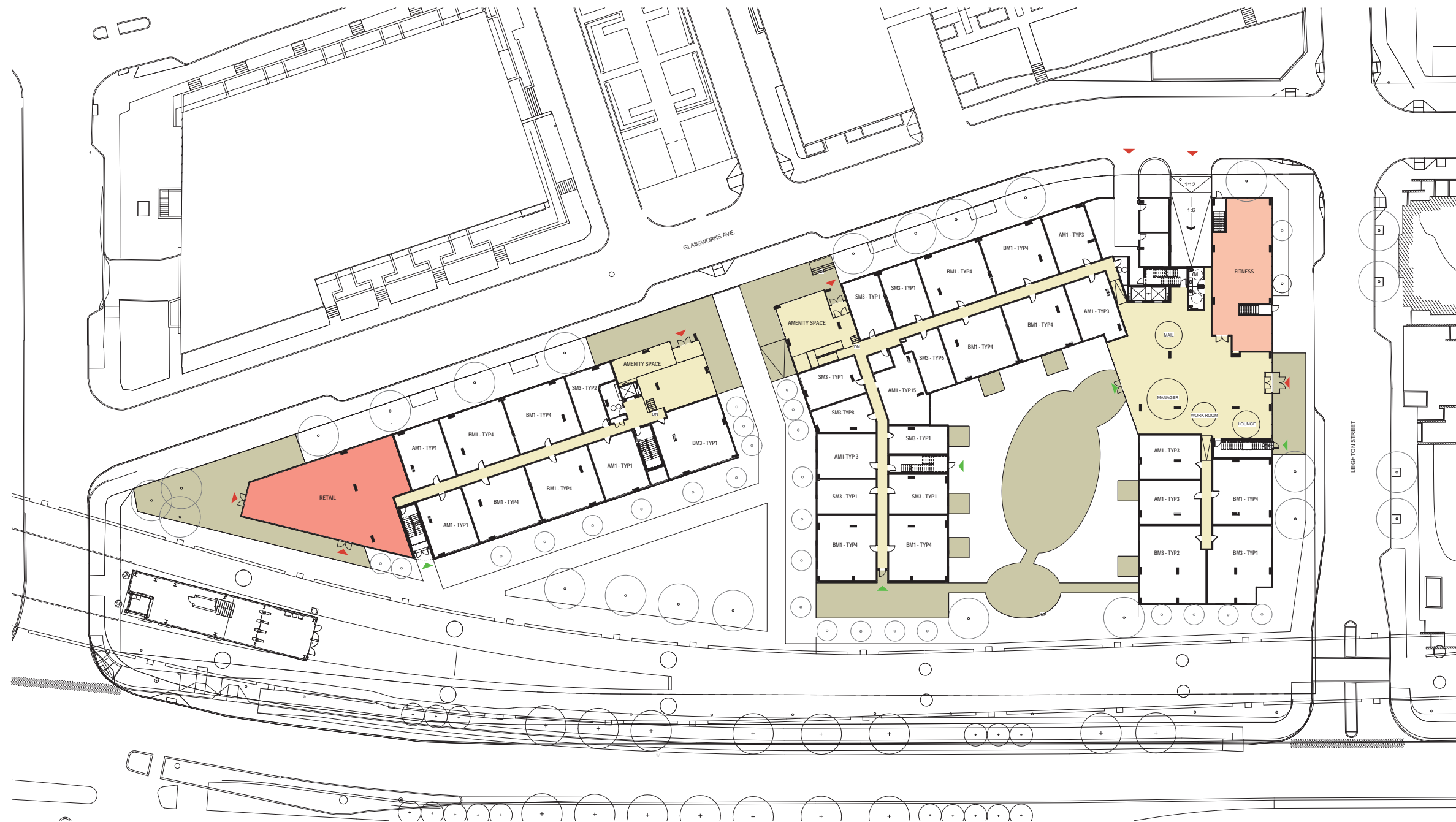


MONSIGNOR O'BRIEN HIGHWAY ELEVATION



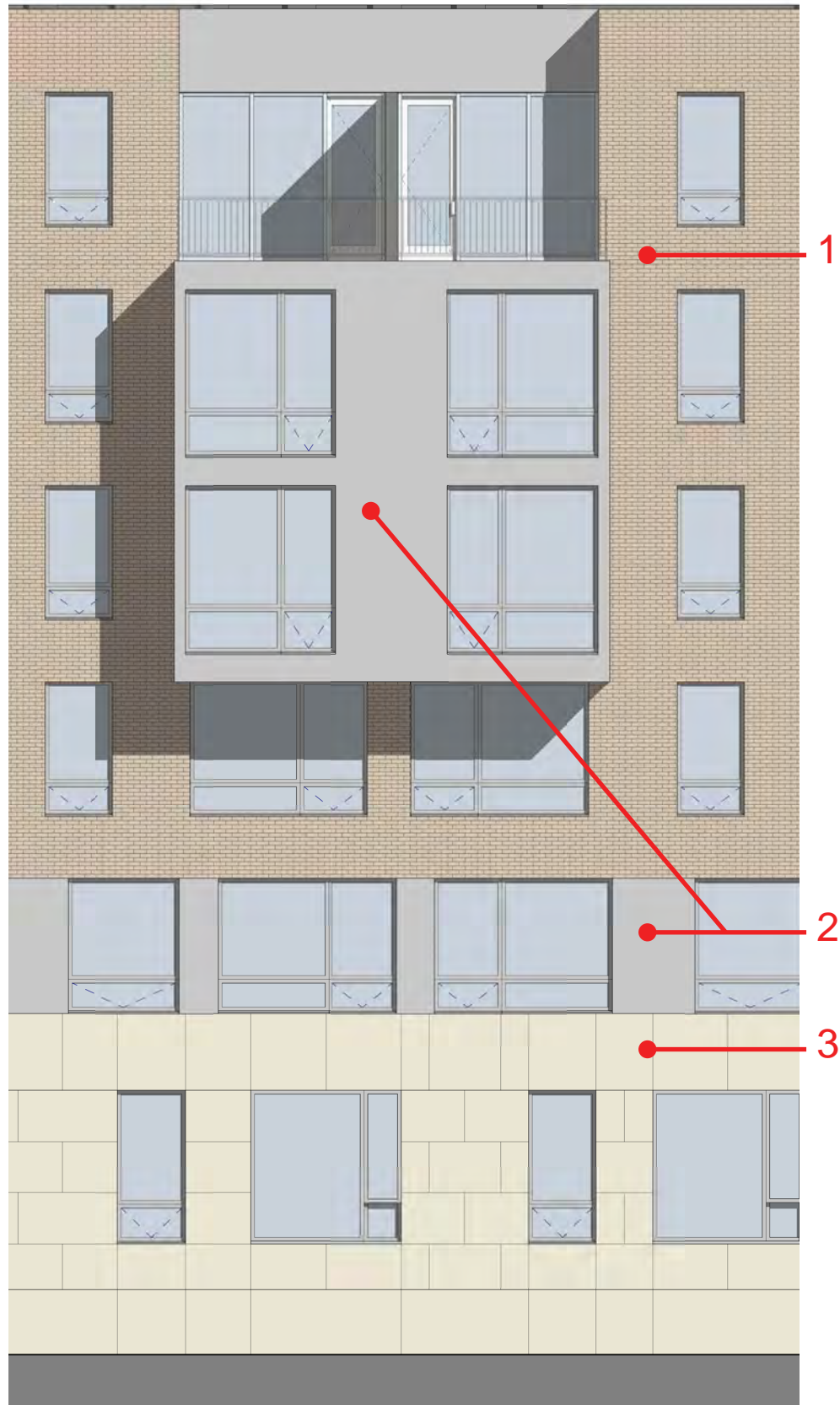


PREVIOUS 1ST FL PLAN



CURRENT 1ST FL PLAN

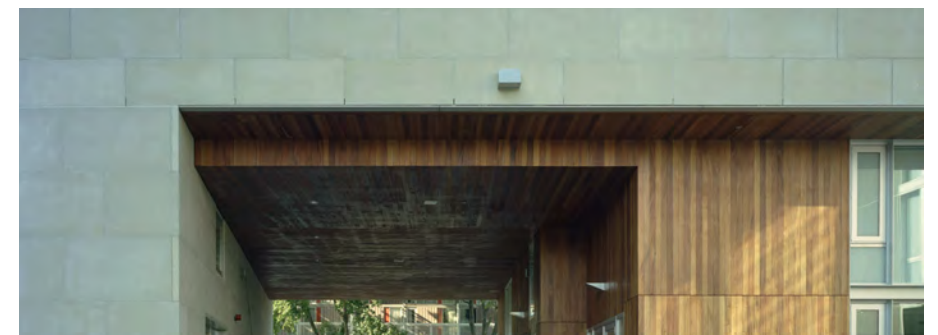
FACADE MATERIALS



1. BRICK SIDING

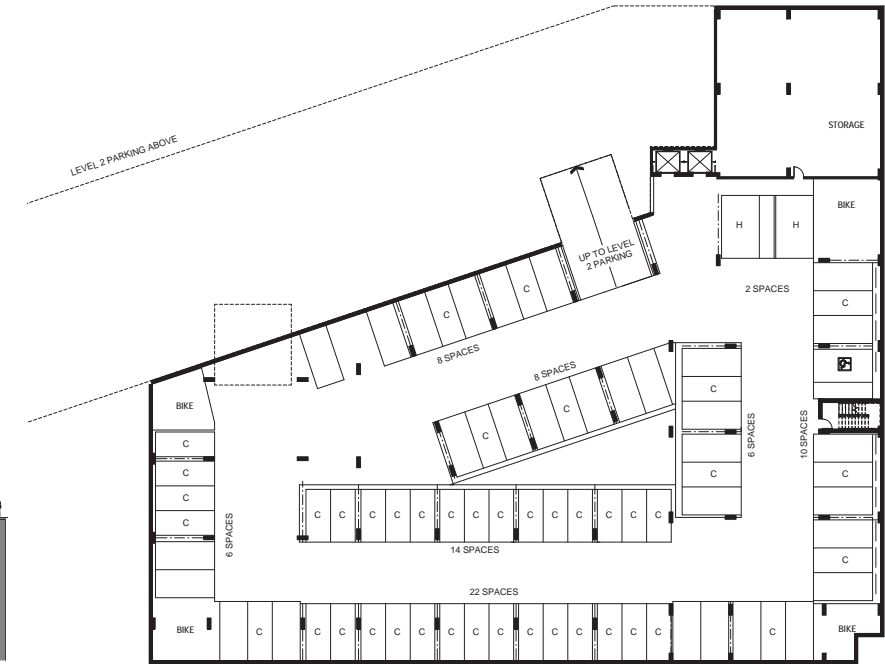


2. ALUMINUM COMPOSITE PANEL AND WINDOW

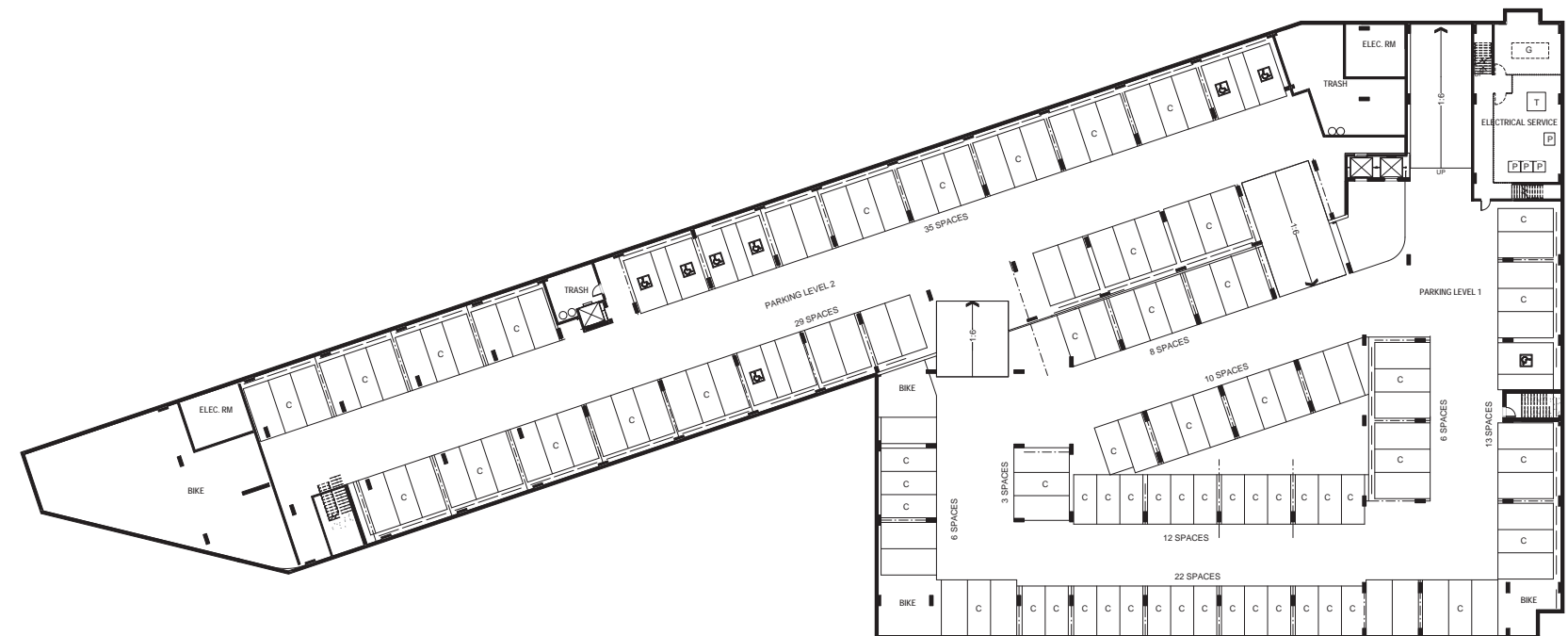


3. PRECAST CONCRETE

SECTION THRU COURTYARD AND PARKING GARAGE



PARKING LEVEL 3



PARKING LEVEL 1 & 2

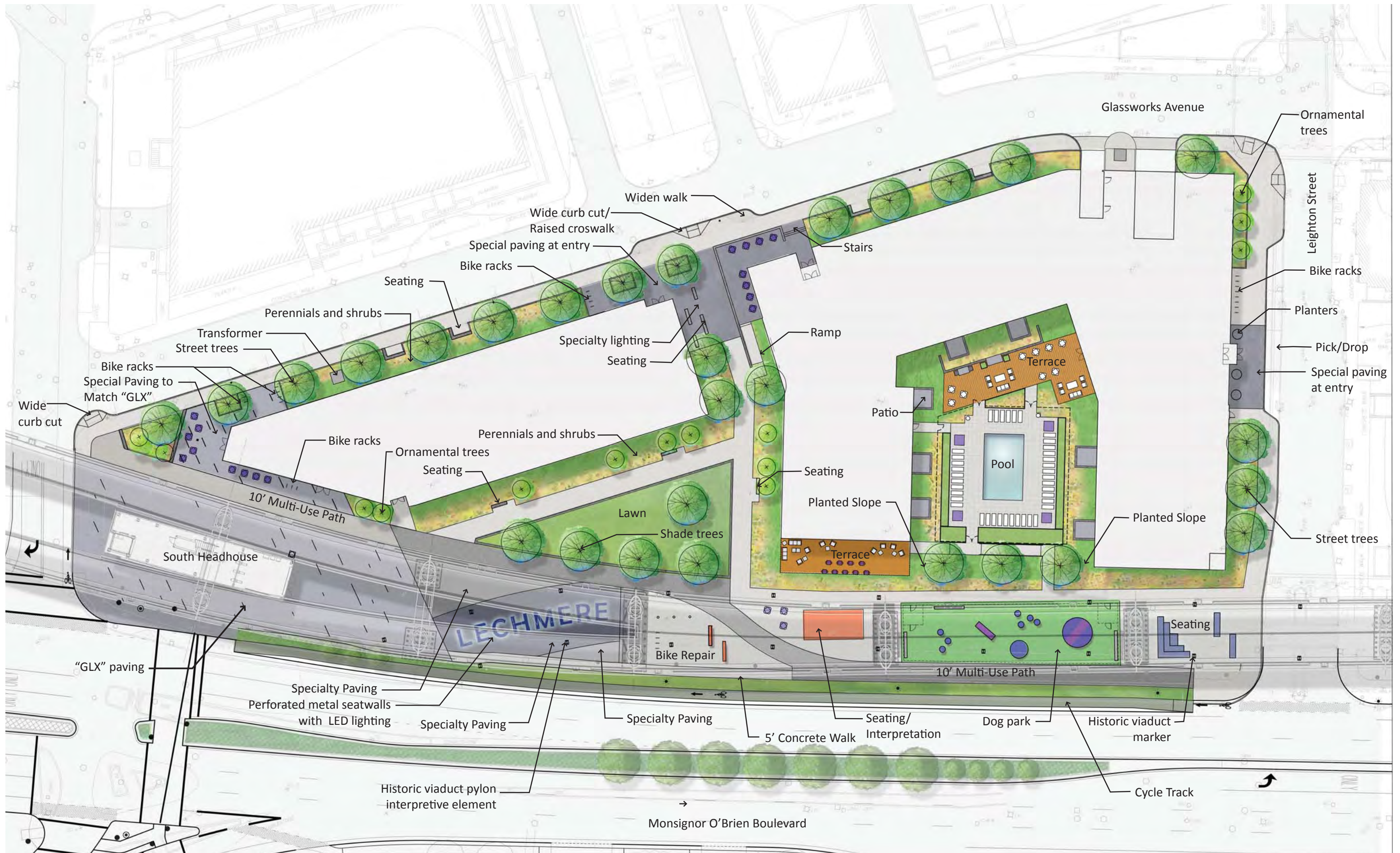


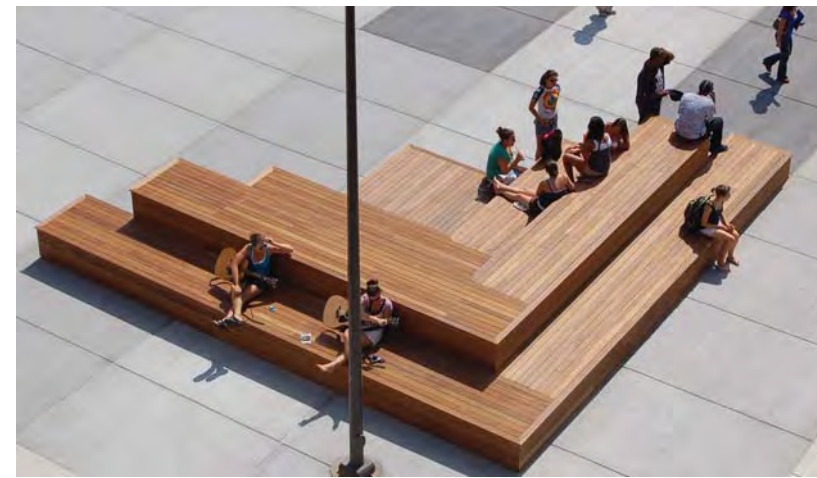
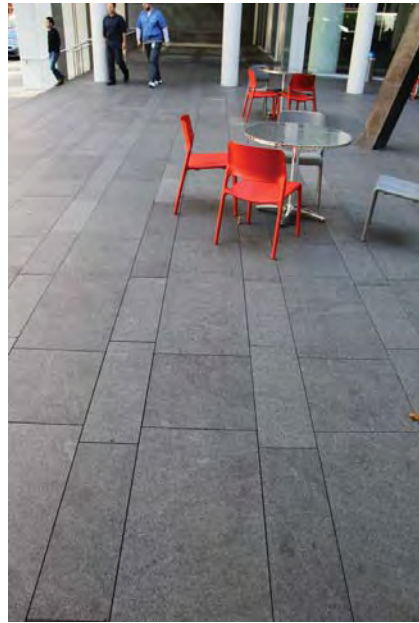


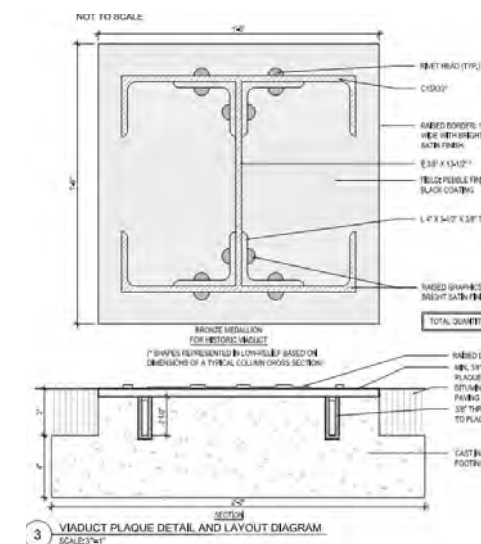
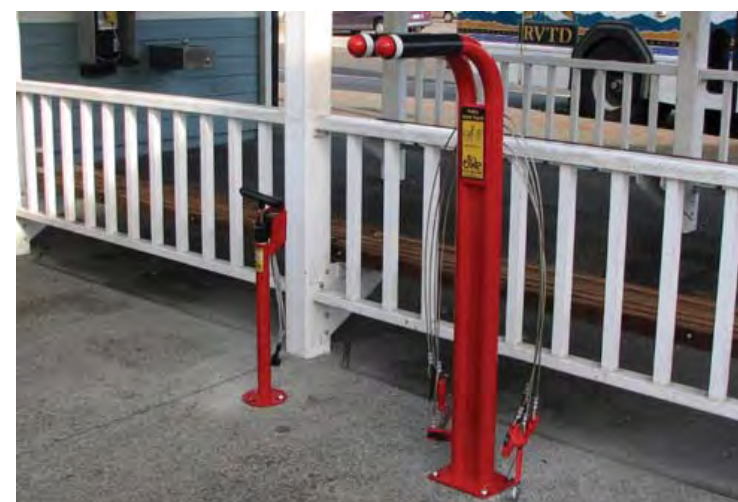
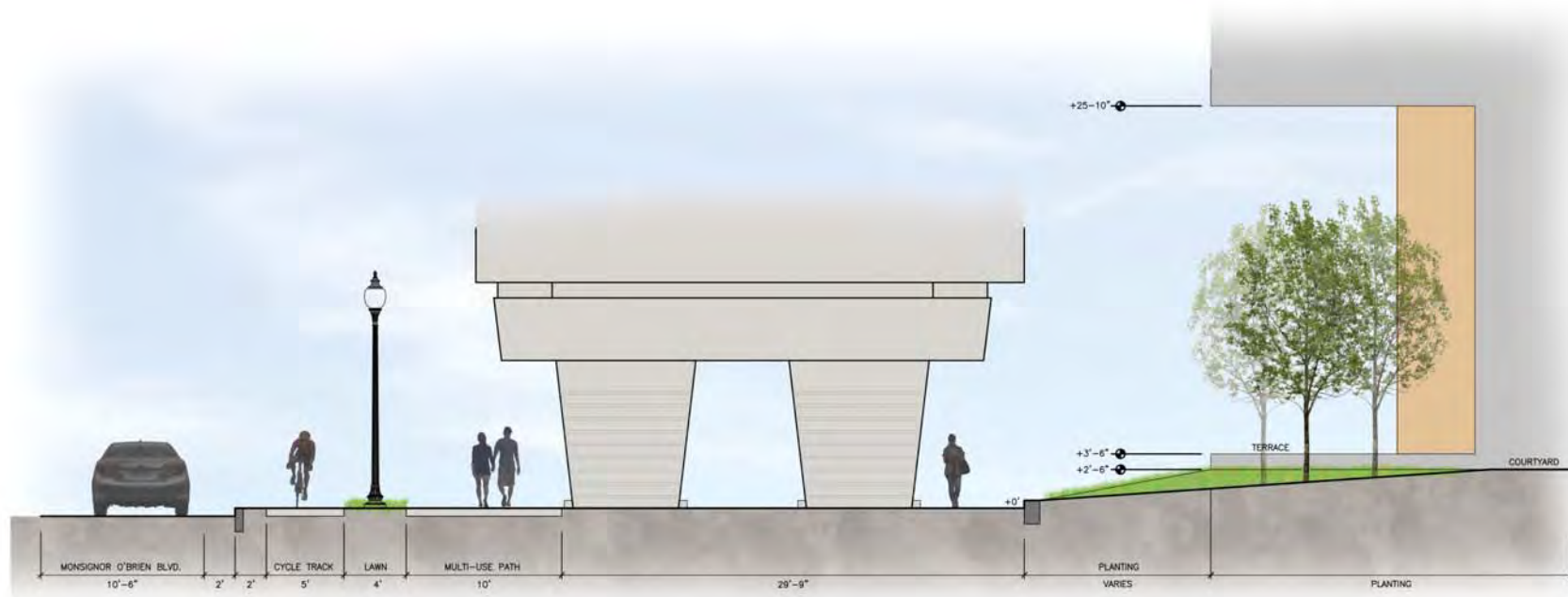




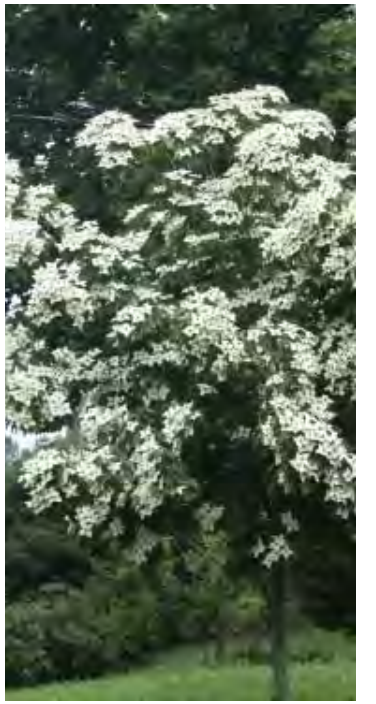
Northpoint II
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Trees



Understory Planting



