

# Project Narrative 0 Greyrock Place (004-1972), 172 Greyrock Place, and 154 Broad Street Text Change, Zone Change, Special Permit, & Final Site and Architectural Plan and Requested uses April 9, 2021 REVISED May 11, 2021

#### 1. Introduction/Background

RMS Companies ("the Applicant") is the contract purchaser of 3 contiguous parcels along Greyrock Place and Broad Street directly adjacent to the City garage. The subject site has been vacant for decades and is often referred to as "the *other* hole-in-the-ground," as it remains one of the key undeveloped parcels in Downtown Stamford since Parcel 38 (the original "hole in the ground") was recently redeveloped. The combined site is approximately 1.3 acres within Master Plan Category 11 (Downtown) and the C-G (General Commercial District) and MX-D (Mixed Use Development) Zoning Districts.

The Applicant is looking to redevelop the site to create an 8-story residential community with 228 apartments,  $8,000\pm$  sf of office, and tenant and public amenities. The proposed redevelopment will help to activate this stretch of Broad Street that has been vacant for approximately 40 years. The proposed office space will be used by the applicant to house their company headquarters.

To facilitate the potential redevelopment, the applicant is submitting the following applications:

- A. Zone Change (to put the entire property into the C-G Zone);
- B. Text Change (to adjust the C-G setbacks in line with other recent Land Use Bureau changes);
- C. Special Permit; and
- D. Final Site and Architectural Plan and Requested uses.

#### 2. Surrounding Area

The properties are wholly within Master Plan Category 11 (Downtown). The surrounding Zoning designations, including MX-D (Mixed Use Development District) to the north and east, P-D (Planned Development District) to the north, C-G (General Commercial District) to the west, and CC (Center City District) to the south.

The surrounding Downtown neighborhood contains a mix of high-density residential, commercial, religious, retail, and restaurant uses.

#### 3. Project Area/Development Site

The overall site is 1.3 acres with frontage on Broad Street and Greyrock Place. It is currently a vacant site directly adjacent to the City of Stamford Broad Street parking garage to the west and Hiberian Hall and The Classic Condominium to the north.

The site has long been fenced off and inaccessible to the public with a curb cut on Broad Street and another on Greyrock Place. Historical images indicate there were 4-5 residential-style buildings on the



site up to the mid 1980s, one of which previously housing the Girls Club and the gas station. Please see attached Historical Aerial Exhibit.

#### 4. Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of 228 apartments, 8,000sf of office, and associated amenities, some of which will be open to the public at the ground floor, with parking at grade and within the building footprint. Vehicular access to the site will be limited to Greyrock Place with no cars entering or exiting on the highly trafficked Broad Street.

#### A. Unit Mix

The proposed unit mix includes 61 studio, 88 one-bedroom, and 79 two-bedroom apartments. However, exact unit size and mix may change slightly depending on market conditions and other factors which may arise.

#### B. Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing

The BMR requirement is proposed to be satisfied entirely onsite consistent with Section 7.4 of the Zoning Regulations. A total of 19 units, representing 10% of the 190 non-exempt residential, will be proportionately distributed throughout the proposed unit mix of the building. (Density and bonus calculations are further described in the accompanying Zoning Data Chart.)

#### C. Building Composition & Features

The building is designed with 6 stories of primarily residential space over 2 levels of parking (and a 3<sup>rd</sup> below grade). The ground level is activated by the new residential lobby and amenity areas, a portion of which will be open to the public. The proposed office use on the second floor facing Broad Street will provide more visual interest to the building and serves to hide the parking level that sits behind it.

For the enjoyment and use of the residents, the building features a range of shared indoor amenities including, but not limited to, fitness/yoga, workspace, bike room, lounges, and club room. In addition to this, there are several outdoor spaces that will be programmed which include a private patio for office use, an enclosed private courtyard with patios and green spaces for residential use as well as a rooftop amenity terrace with a pool. The indoor residential amenities are dispersed throughout building to provide a diverse experience of spaces such as at the ground floor of Broad St. and the corner of Greylock Place to provide active frontage, spaces located on the first residential floor with access to the enclosed outdoor courtyard and lastly amenities at the top floor with access to the outdoor terrace.

The massing of the building features 2 steps, one at the second floor to provide an outdoor terrace for office use and a stepped zone in the top floor to break the mass and accommodate the outdoor roof terrace. In addition, it features a tall parapet that highlights the office entrance location and a recessed area with extended canopy to highlight the residential entry at the corner of Broad St. and Greylock Pl.

The façade design features a variety of high-quality materials to provide interest and highlight the ground floor amenities and office frontage from the residential use. The primary materials of the building are brick, architectural stone and fiber cement panels/siding. In addition, the design proposes the use of large windows in key locations and Juliette balconies to provide additional articulation in the façades.



#### D. Access and Parking

The project will remove the existing curb cut on Broad Street and limit vehicular access to the existing driveway on Greyrock Place at the rear (north) of the site.

Parking is provided within 3 levels accessed from Greyrock Place (including partial basement, atgrade, and 2<sup>nd</sup> story garage structure) totaling 228 spaces. An additional 10 at-grade parking spaces are available for daytime use and are shared with the neighboring Hibernian property. Four of the garage spaces will be equipped for electric vehicle charging. The building will also accommodate up to 30 bike spaces. Office parking will be accommodated through the sharing of available onsite parking spaces. A separate report provided by SLR is included in the application materials and confirms that provided parking is more than sufficient for all proposed uses. The report also confirms that the development will not significantly impact peak hour traffic of the surrounding areas and provides some suggested signal timing improvements for certain intersections.

#### E. Landscaping and Open Space

The interior courtyard, rooftop pool deck, and ground level public access areas make up approximately 10,600sf of usable open space. There will be approximately 17,000sf of usable interior amenity space for the residents. A landscaping buffer is maintained along the much of the western property line with new sidewalks, streetscapes and foundation landscaping along both site frontages.

#### F. Construction Timing

Pending approval of the submitted applications, site is anticipated to begin at the end of 2021 to be completed by the third quarter of 2023.

#### G. Conformity with Stamford Zoning Regulations and Master Plan

The Master Plan for the site is Category 11 which has a stated intent to "to provide for and protect an intensive, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district. Intended is a full array of retail, office, cultural, recreation and residential uses serviced by mass transportation and integrated pedestrian access systems, always at-grade, enhanced by up-to-date lighting, seating, planting, signage, etc., to assure a desirable mixing and interaction of people and activities. A variety of scale and design in new construction is to be encouraged". The proposal accomplishes those goals by infilling an existing vacant site with a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development and improving the quality of housing with new onsite amenities. The density and proposed modifications comply with the standards and requirements of the applicable of the Zoning Regulations. See further details on the submitted Zoning Data Chart and accompanying site and architectural plans.

#### 5. Action Items

To facilitate the development, the Applicant has filed applications for approval by the Zoning Board for the following specific requests:

#### A. Zone Change

The proposed zone change will put the entire site into a single zoning district (C-G) which is



contiguous to surrounding properties and exemplifies the underlying Downtown Master Plan designation.

#### B. Text Change

The application is pursuant to pending Text Change application 221-11 filed by the Land Use Bureau. The application reestablishes residential density and floor area, as well as the ability to convert commercial development rights into residential density.

The applicant is also proposing a Text Change to Appendix B Table IV to establish building setbacks (10-15' measured to the curb line for front yards and 0-15' for side yards depending on the distance from the curb line) which are consistent with recent and future setback regulations introduced by the Land Use Bureau and conducive to Downtown urban development. The proposed change promotes a continuous street wall while allowing for appropriate light, air, landscaping and building spacing.

#### C. Special Permit

- 1. Pursuant to Section 7.5 (Review of Large-Scale Development), Applicant requests approval of a residential structure containing ten (10) or more dwelling units and developing or altering 40,000 square feet of lot area or creating one-hundred or more new parking spaces.
- 2. Pursuant to Appendix B, Footnote 4 and Section 7.S, Applicant requests a residential density of 400sf per family. The site is located on a retail street with a retail amenity provided. However, no associated floor area bonuses or exemptions permitted under Section 7.S.14 are being sought in. Remaining density is derived from a conversion of commercial floor area rights (pursuant to pending Text Change application #221-11) and the existing BMR bonuses permitted per Footnote 4. Proposed density is well below the maximum permitted in the zone.
- 3. Pursuant to Section 12-D.1.c, Applicant requests 1 parking space for each unit of 2 bedrooms or less. The Site is located less than mile of the Stamford Transportation Center and along a main east-west thoroughfare served by public transportation. It is also easy walking distance to several restaurant, retail, and service establishments with a "walk score" of 89 (Very Walkable) including a rating of "Excellent Transit".

The property also maintains direct pedestrian access from the site to the abutting City garage structure, making long-term or short-term use of public parking facilities extremely convenient.

Lastly, more than 65% of the units will be one-bedrooms or smaller. For all of these reasons, the Applicants submit that the proposed parking ratio of 1.0 spaces per unit is appropriate. See also accompanying parking report provided by SLR as it relates to the shared parking sue.

#### D. Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses

The Applicant requests approval for the proposed 228-unit infill building, including approval of the proposed location, height, coverage, relationships with buildings and property lines, parking, open space, and associated uses. Included in the request, and pursuant to Section 12-L, Applicant is seeking administrative approval of the Zoning Board for shared parking to serve the onsite office use.



#### 6. Conclusion

The proposed development embodies many of the goals of both the C-G Zoning District and the underlying Downtown Master Plan Category and creates an attractive new residential community on a long-blighted and underutilized property. The development will continue be an asset to the Downtown neighborhood and overall Stamford community for decades to come.

#### 7. Statement of Findings

- I. The above referenced specific Special Permit requests are integral to the development project as a whole. Thus, for purposes of demonstrating compliance with the standards and conditions below, the entire development proposal is considered. The Applicants submit that all applicable criteria contained in Stamford Zoning Regulations Article V, Section 19.C.2 are met for the following specific reasons:
- a. Special Permits shall be granted by the reviewing board only upon a finding that the proposed use or structure or the proposed extension or alteration of an existing use or structure is in accord with the public convenience and welfare after taking into account, where appropriate:
- 1) the location and nature of the proposed site including its size and configuration, the proposed size, scale and arrangement of structures, drives and parking areas and the proximity of existing dwellings and other structures.
  - The proposed development is appropriately located within a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood and the Downtown Master Plan Category. The proposed building is compatible in scale and style with the surrounding area, particularly the Classic Condominium and Parc Grove Apartments developments. The proposed setbacks and arrangement of buildings are appropriate for the C-G and serve to activate pedestrian street frontages while maintaining ideal sidewalk width. All parking is appropriately accommodated within 2 levels of parking and screened from public view.
- 2) the nature and intensity of the proposed use in relation to its site and the surrounding area. Operations in connection with special permit uses shall not be injurious to the neighborhood, shall be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of these Regulations and shall not be more objectionable to nearby properties by reason of noise, fumes, vibration, artificial lighting or other potential disturbances to the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of property than the public necessity demands.
  - The proposed density, height, and building coverage are well below the maximums permitted within the zone and prescribed by the Master Plan. The proposed building improves the residential community with new indoor and outdoor amenity space and enclosed parking. There are no anticipated objectionable impacts or potential disturbances to nearby properties.
- 3) the resulting traffic patterns, the adequacy of existing streets to accommodate the traffic associated with the proposed use, the adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading, and the extent to which proposed driveways may cause a safety hazard, or traffic nuisance.



Traffic can be safely and adequately accommodated on the surrounding streets. Parking is safely and adequately provided onsite at a ratio of 1.0 spaces per unit with a shared use of parking for onsite office uses. See accompanying report provided by SLR.

4) the nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use or feature might impair its present and future development.

The surrounding area includes a variety of residential, commercial, industrial and retail uses. The proposed residential use is compatible with these uses and will serve as a further catalyst for others to invest in their properties. It will also place people on the streets thereby increasing the patronage of nearby retail and service establishments.

5) the Master Plan of the City of Stamford and all statements of the purpose and intent of these regulations.

Category 11 (Downtown) of the Master Plan contemplates "to provide for and protect an intensive, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district. Intended is a full array of retail, office, cultural, recreation and residential uses serviced by mass transportation and integrated pedestrian access systems, always at-grade, enhanced by up-to-date lighting, seating, planting, signage, etc., to assure a desirable mixing and interaction of people and activities. A variety of scale and design in new construction is to be encouraged." The proposed development fits within this category and fulfills the policy goals of the neighborhood. Other Master Plan policy goals realized through this redevelopment include:

- a) **3B.7** Implement traffic calming and improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the Downtown, along commercial arteries and in neighborhood centers
- b) **3C.3:** Maintain the affordable housing stock to ensure that people who work in Stamford can afford to live in Stamford.
- c) **5A.6** Promote infill development on vacant sites within Downtown.
- d) **5B.1** Improve pedestrian connectivity within Downtown and between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- e) **5B.2** Implement streetscape and traffic calming improvements Downtown.
- f) **5B.3** Encourage quality urban design that relates well to streets and people.
- g) **5E.1**: Promote neighborhood revitalization.
- h) **6A.1**: Balance new development with preservation of existing residential communities.
- i) **6B**: Preserve Existing and Create New Affordable Housing.
- j) **6C.2**: Promote development of a variety of housing types.

II. Pursuant to Section 19.C.2.a of the Zoning Regulations, the Zoning Board must find that the proposed use or structure or the proposed extension or alteration of an existing use or structure is in accord with the public convenience and welfare.

The Applicant is proposing to infill the existing vacant parcels and construct a new mixed-use building with associated parking and streetscape improvements in its place. The proposed development will increase the tax base and significantly improve the appearance of one of the

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most visible corners in Downtown Stamford. The active ground floor frontage, 228 new residential units, both affordable and market rate, will enliven this long-underutilized site and breathe new life into this stretch of Broad Street. For all of these reasons, the Applicants submit that the proposal, and the associated Special Permit requests which are inextricably intertwined, are in accord with the public convenience and welfare.

III. Pursuant to Section 12.D.1.c of the Stamford Zoning Regulations, the site location, proximity to offsite public and/or private parking infrastructure, potential for shared use of spaces, convenience to mass transit, mix of proposed uses, number of bedrooms, or other urban factors that mitigate parking demand provide sufficient rationale for said Parking Management Plan to the satisfaction of the Zoning Board.

The Site is located within a mile of the Stamford Transportation Center and along a main east-west thoroughfare served by public transportation. It is also easy walking distance to several restaurant, retail, and service establishments with a "walk score" of 89 (Very Walkable) including a rating of "Excellent Transit". It includes direct pedestrian access into the abutting City garage. Lastly, more than 65% of the units will be one-bedrooms or smaller. For all of these reasons, the Applicants submit that the proposed parking ratio of 1.0 spaces per unit is appropriate. See also accompanying parking report provided by SLR as it relates to the shared parking sue.

## SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

RESIDENTIAL AREA = +/- 229,794 GSF

TOTAL UNITS = 228 UNITS

TOTAL PARKING = 228 PS

PARKING RATIO = 1 PS/UNIT

RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES = +/- 19,875 GSF

OFFICE AREA = +/- 7,912 GSF

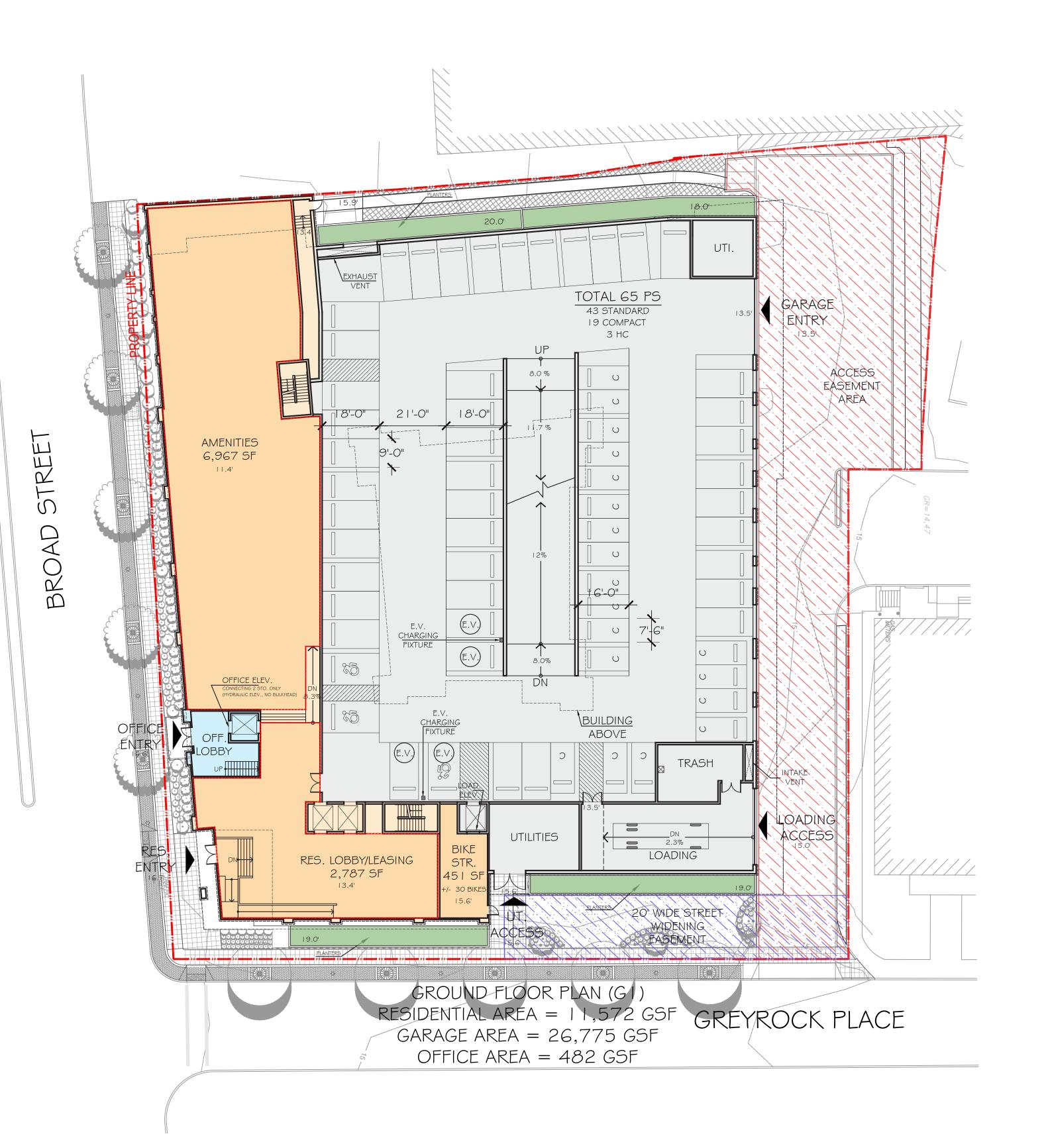


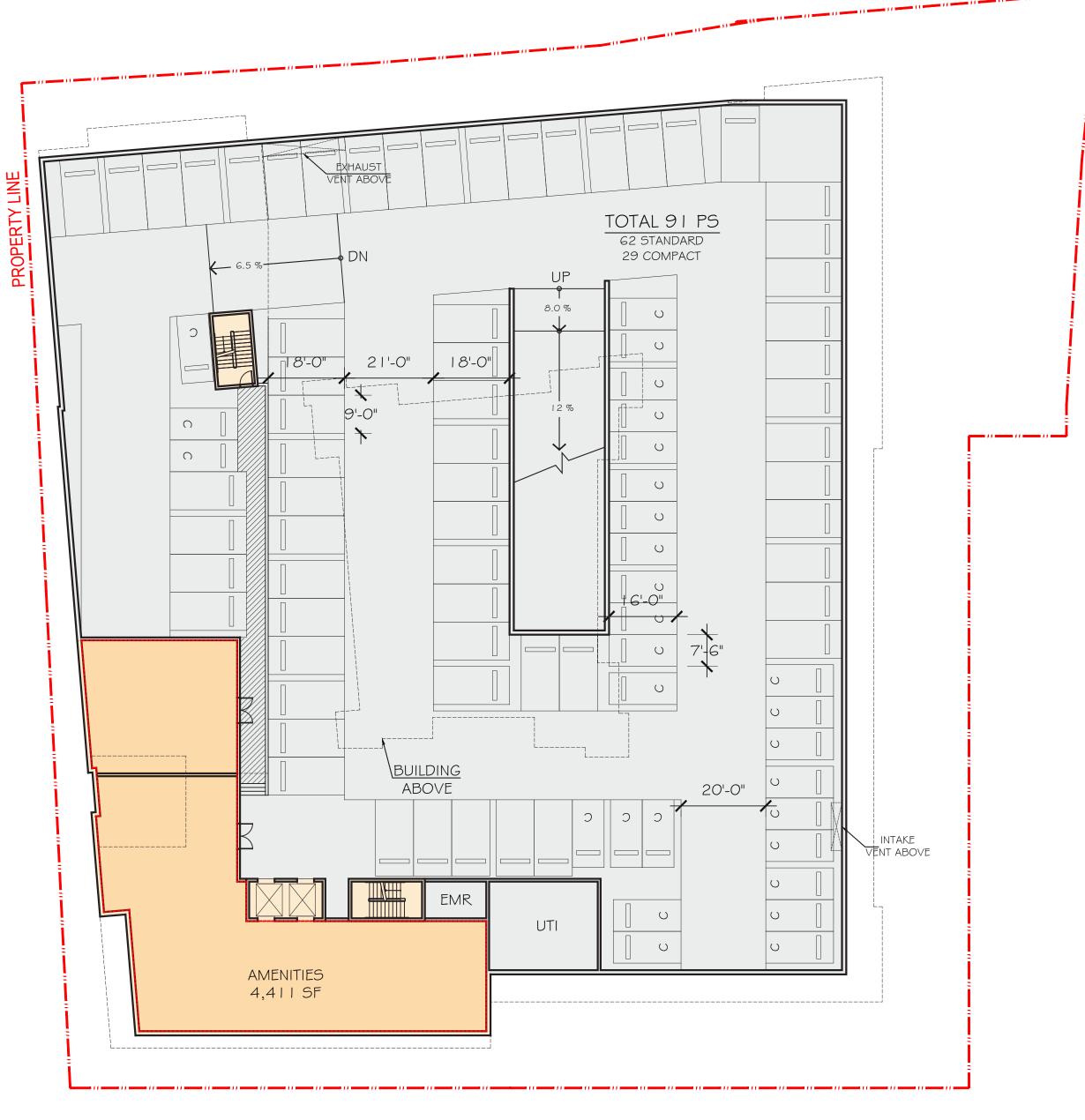
\*NOTE: REFER TO CIVIL FOR SITE PLAN AND CIVIL INFORMATION.

LANDSCAPE SHOWN FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

REFER TO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT DRAWINGS FOR TREES AND LANDSCAPE INFORMATION.







BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN (BI) RESIDENTIAL AREA = 5,194 GSF GARAGE AREA = 32,694 GSF

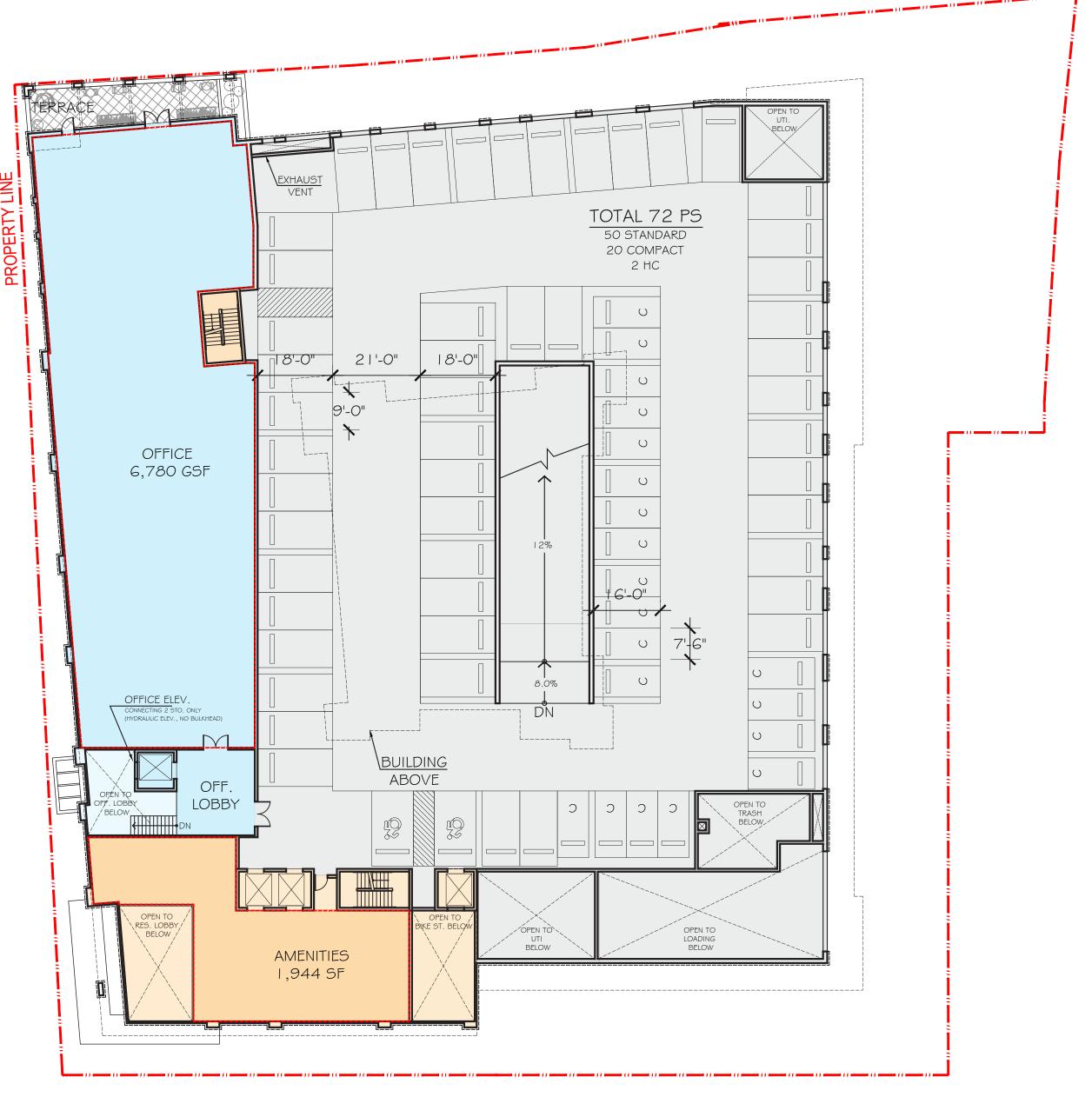


FLOOR PLANS

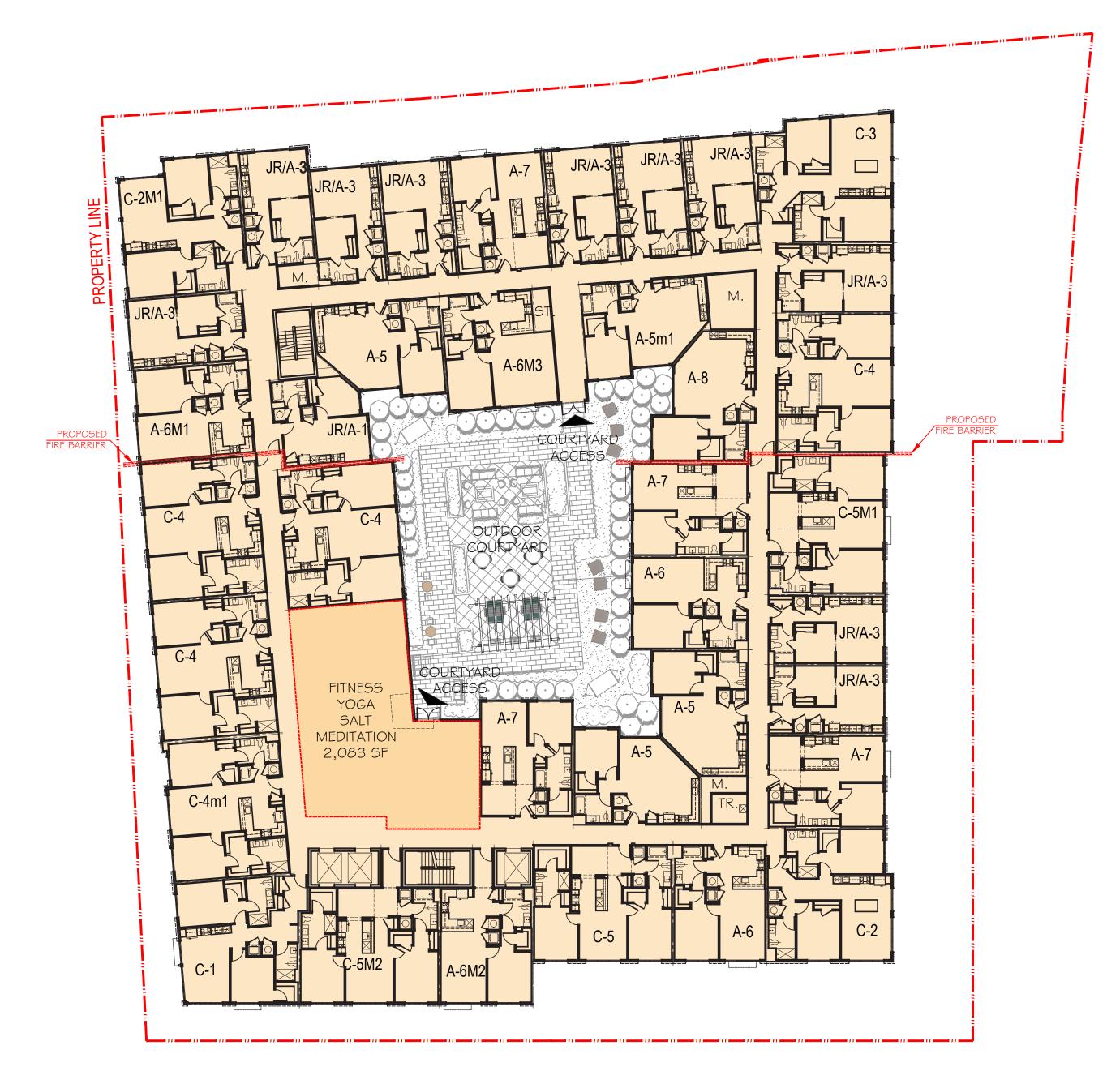
**BROAD ST. & GREYROCK PL.** 

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GARAGE FLOOR PLAN (G2) RESIDENTIAL AREA = 2,747 GSF GARAGE AREA = 22,617 GSFOFFICE AREA = 7,430 GSF



RESIDENTIAL FLOOR PLAN (RI) RESIDENTIAL AREA = 35,609 GSF

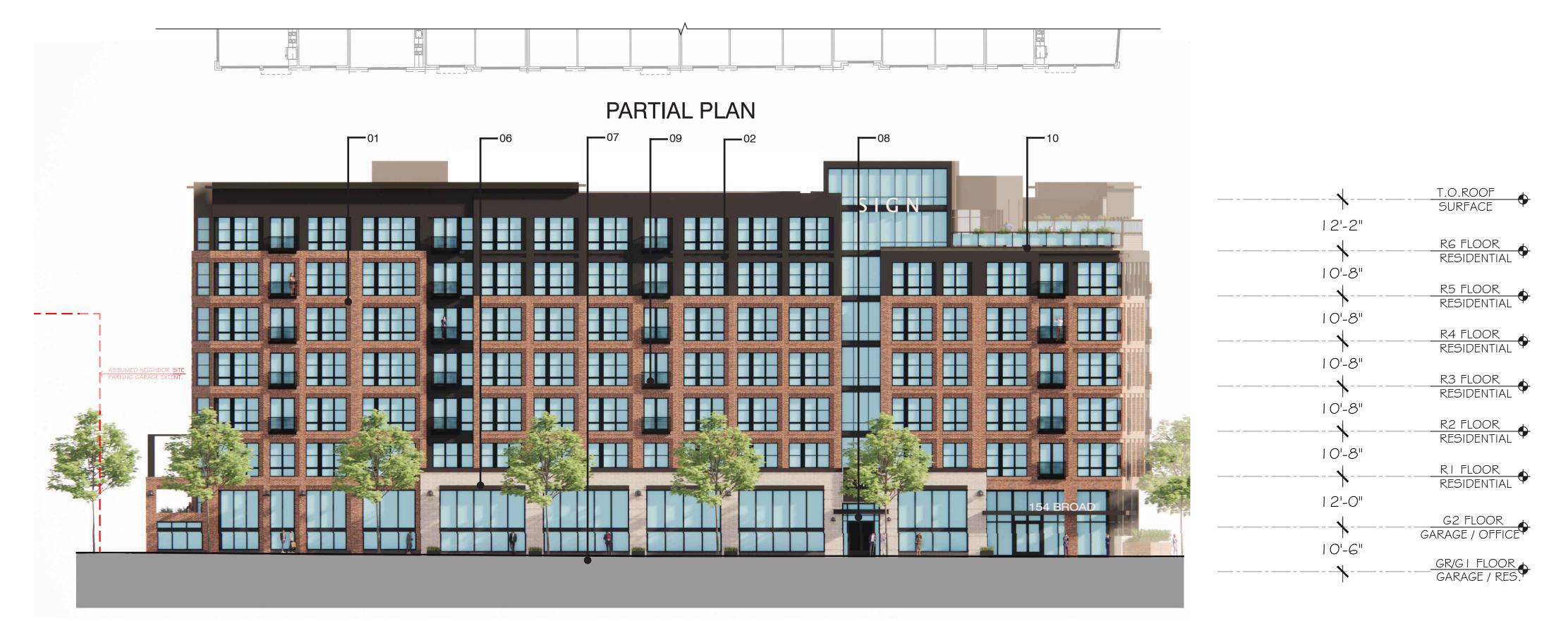


FLOOR PLANS

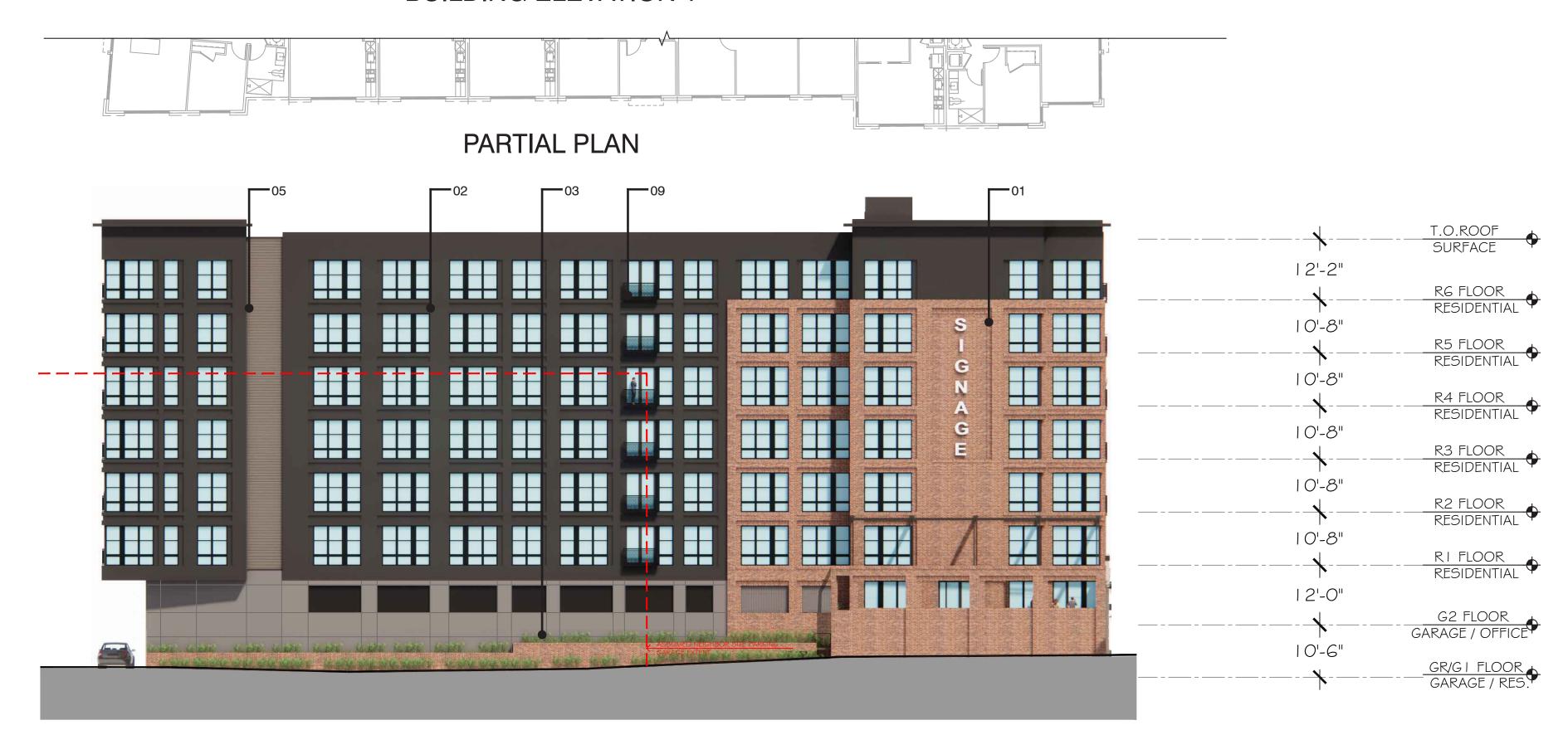
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### **BUILDING ELEVATION 1**

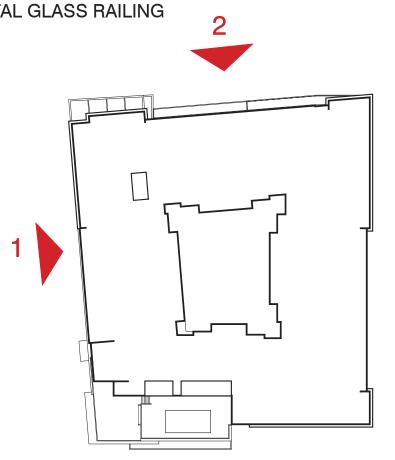


MATERIAL LEGEND

- 02 FIBER CEMENT PANEL DARK GREY

- 05 FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING MEDIUM GREY/SMOOTH
- 07 GRANITE ABSOLUTE BLACK
- 08 METAL ACCENT DARK GREY
- 09 WIRE MESH RAILING

10 METAL GLASS RAILING



## **KEY PLAN**

## **BUILDING ELEVATION 2**

\*NOTE: DECORATIVE LIGHTING, SIGNAGE AND LANDSCAPE TREE'S SHOWN FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. PRODUCTS AND MANUFACTURERS LISTED ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND/OR TO BE SUBSTITUTED WITH EQUIVALENT AND COMPATIBLE OPTIONS.



## **BUILDING ELEVATIONS**

**BROAD ST. & GREYROCK PL.** 

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SITE PLAN SUBMISSION