

BENJAMIN WIER HOUSE ADDITION | AUGUST 22ND 2014

Design Rational & LUB Summary

History and Neighbourhood Context

The subject property is approximately 4500 square feet in area and is located at the civic address of 1459 Hollis Street [PID#00003756] between Bishop and Salter Street. The existing structure was originally built by Henry Peters for Benjamin Wier back in 1863 whom later became a member of the Canadian Senate. Other significant residents include fathers of the confederation William Henry between 1884 and 1885, and Sir Adams Archibald between 1885 and 1892. The building then became home to the Elk's Club fraternity in 1930, and remained under their ownership until it was acquired by the current owner in 1983. Since the Elk's club had left the home in a deteriorated unlivable state, the current owner underwent extensive renovations to restore significant architectural elements including the structure, the roof, balconies, fireplaces, moldings, windows, doors, and stairs. The home was later designated as a provincial heritage property in 1987 through the efforts and resources of the current owner, and is currently used as their office space.

The surrounding neighbourhood block between Bishop and Salter Street includes various prominent historic sites including the Keith Hall, the Brewery, Black-Binney House, St. Mathew's United Church, and Government House. The aim of our design proposal is to bring a fresh new identity and civic presence to Benjamin Wier House and reinforce the surrounding historic context through modest architectural design strategies and mixed-use programming.

Project Description and Programming

Although the surrounding city block predominately houses institutional and commercial office space, Hollis Street transitions into a significant urban residential neighbourhood between Bishop and South Street that is characterized by various Georgian and Victorian style single family dwellings. Our proposal seeks to continue this residential fabric with a six storey mixed-use addition sited at the back of the lot whilst maintaining prominent character defining elements of Benjamin Wier House.

The original 3 storey structure and roof line will be left intact, including all exterior sandstone detailing, windows, and wrought iron balconies. The existing interior has been well maintained over the years, thus major interior alterations will not be considered. Minor interior renovations may include painting and updating to current code standards where applicable. We are proposing to remove the existing 2-storey rear addition to maximize the full potential of effective and efficient living space in the proposed design (refer to site and building plans).

The new 6-storey addition consists of 3,300 square feet of office space on the ground and second floors and approximately 7,600 square feet of modern residential space including two

full-floor penthouses on the 5th and 6th levels. The addition also includes a 2,100 square foot landscaped rooftop accessible to all tenants. Vehicular access and drop off zone is accessed via a designated right-of-way [PID#00480418] via Bishop Street.

Historic Rehabilitation + Architectural Design Strategies

The proposed addition has no intent of neoclassicism or historic mimicry. Instead, the addition takes on a modern form with contemporary interpretations of scale and proportion that can be found in the Benjamin Wier façade. The concept of our proposal hinges on the use of contrast between old and new to provide visual prominence and strong historic identity to the street-front of Benjamin Wier House. This is achieved by simple architectural massing strategies coupled with specific material selection that follow building form and setbacks. A summary of some of these key strategies are outlined below:

- The new addition takes on the shape of two solid forms characterised by a panel cladding system. These two solid forms are separated by a horizontal void with the use of a glass curtain wall system on the third level. This horizontal band of glazing creates the impression of a smaller-scale building of compartments as opposed to a monolithic 6-storey building.
- A secondary continuous band of glass is also utilized vertically as a design strategy to transition and visually separate the heritage building from the new addition. This vertical threshold of glazing runs from ground floor to the 4th floor, increasing natural light to common areas.
- Common areas (corridors) from parking level to the 3rd floor run parallel with the width of the existing house, abutting the former East exterior façade. The intent here is to retain and expose the brick façade internally, creating a tactile and visual backdrop to these common spaces. This is another means of transitioning and initiating an architectural language between old and new.
- The floor to floor heights in the addition align with those of the existing structure. This was a conscious decision on our part to establish an interior dialogue between old and new where common areas of the addition run parallel with the exposed East façade.
- The rear dormers will be removed due to their close proximity to the addition. From a construction and technical perspective, the dormers will pose significant issues with regards to snow-build up and rain-water drainage. From a conceptual point of view, a visual threshold or ‘breathing space’ between the two structures is necessary to reinforce the design intent of defining old and new (see south and north elevations). The zone underneath the addition’s cantilever will be too cluttered if the dormers are retained.
- The existing Romeo and Juliet balcony (installed in 1984) impedes on the circulation requirements and space efficiency within the new addition. Therefore the balcony will be

donated to Renovators Resources for future re-appropriated use, or re-located on the communal roof-top terrace as a tongue-and-cheek installation.

- Glass curtain wall systems are set-back from the building face to create depth, and allow space for potential landscaping
- Due to the nature of the interior lot conditions, the rear (East) façade of the addition is fully glazed to maximise the otherwise minimal daylight penetration into the building. All units will have balconies and or terraces with unobstructed views over Bishop's Landing to the Halifax Harbour.
- The architectural detailing, and panel cladding system will render matte, clean and modern; creating contrast with the decorative Italianate style of the existing house. We have also integrated simple glass volumes at both the front and rear facades to further exemplify old versus new. Strong precedents of these architectural design strategies are evident in several award winning rehabilitation projects across Canada.
- The view and massing from the streetscape is critical to the success of this project. Since the proposed development retains the existing house and roof line, the addition is naturally set-back 11.6 metres from the street lot-line; giving Benjamin Wier House significant dominance and identity. Furthermore, roof setbacks and the introduction of a horizontal band of glazing just above the existing rear roof line gives an effect of a modest 2-storey structure that 'floats' above the historic home.

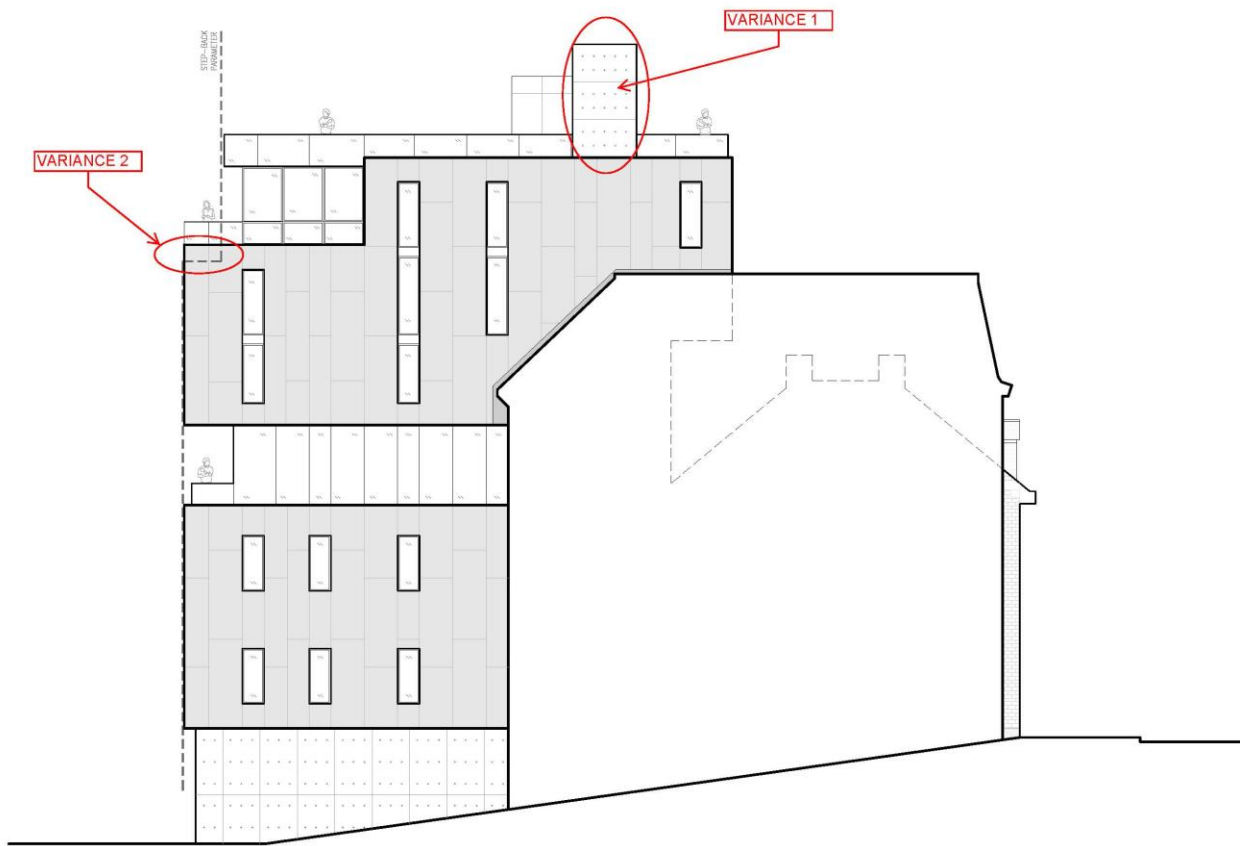
LUB Summary & Requested Variances

Our development conforms to all major LUB requirements including maximum building height and landscape requirements for DH-1 Zoning. Our proposal will require 2 minor variances as set out by the DH LUB pertaining to mid-rise setbacks[Section 10(4)], and rooftop setbacks [Section 8(10)]. It is our desire that HRM Staff and Design Review Committee members consider the significant impact of current regulations on the above architectural design strategies which may restrict our merit to preserve the historic identity of Benjamin Weir House and enhance relationships between old and new. A summary and rationale of these amendments are listed below for your review:

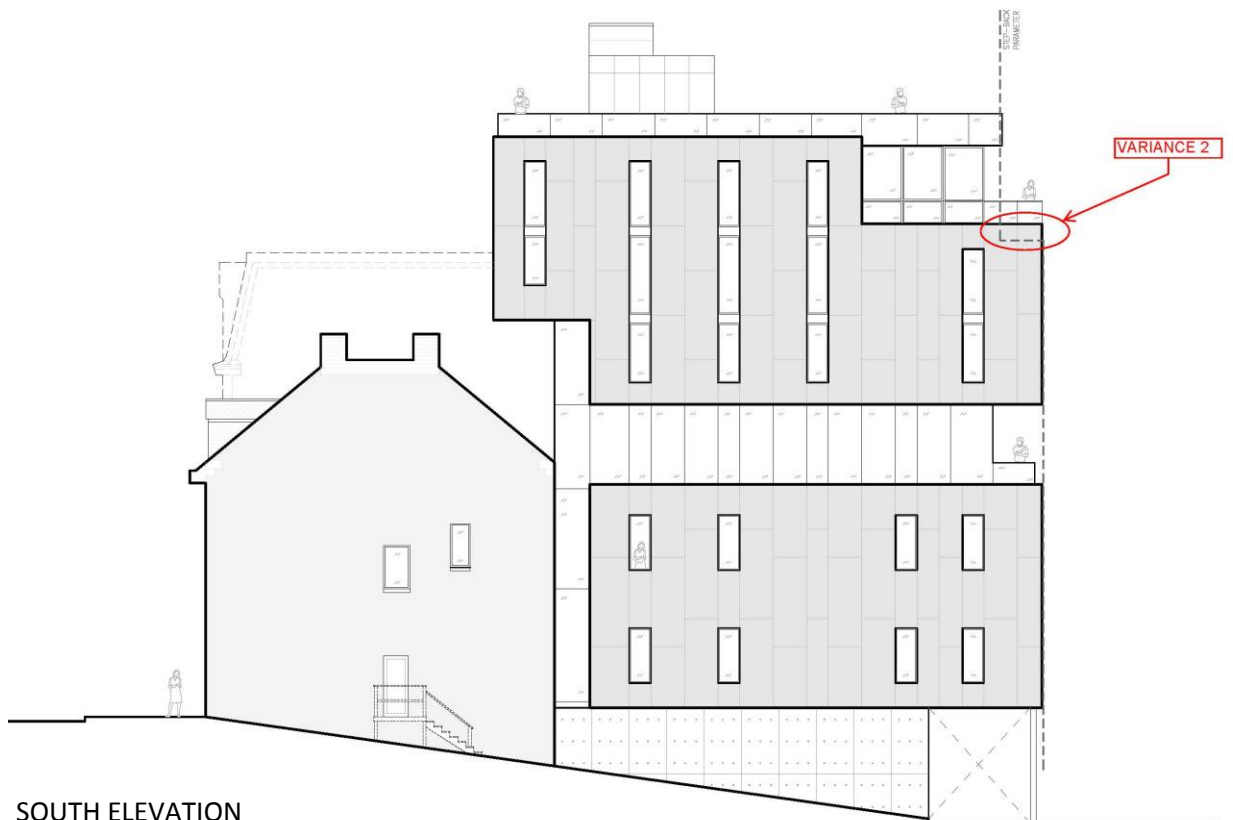
1. Our current proposal conforms to the maximum height requirement of 22 metres. However a minor variance is requested for the minimum 3 metre setback [section (8)(10)] of the roof enclosure which houses vertical access and elevator shafts. The location of the elevator shaft and exit stair are optimized within the tight confines of a 45 foot wide lot and conform to current building code. Furthermore, this configuration plays a significant role in the expression and exposure of the existing East façade in corridors. Rotating or relocating this circulation core will be detrimental to organizing and design principals in place.

2. Based on lot width of 45 feet, a 4-1/2 foot stepback above 18.5 metres is required. We are requesting an amendment to this policy as indicated in the elevations below. This step-back will have a cascade effect on the internal organization of the new addition which will compromise this unique old/new dialogue we are trying to achieve in common areas. Furthermore, an architectural strategy is in place to match the existing floor heights to minimize skewing the human-scale relationship in common areas between new finished floors of the addition and existing window locations within the existing East façade.





NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

Conclusion:

This mixed-use addition supports HRM Regional Plan by promoting residential growth and densification of the downtown core through rear-lot infill and revitalization. More importantly, the proposal reinforces the historic prominence of the Benjamin Wier House through contemporary design strategies and ensures its preservation for future generations to come.

We thank you for considering our application and look forward to working with both municipal and provincial heritage committees in the initiation of this exciting project.

Kind Regards,

Original signed

Jacob JeBailey, Architect
RAIC, NSAA, OAA, M.Arch, BEDS

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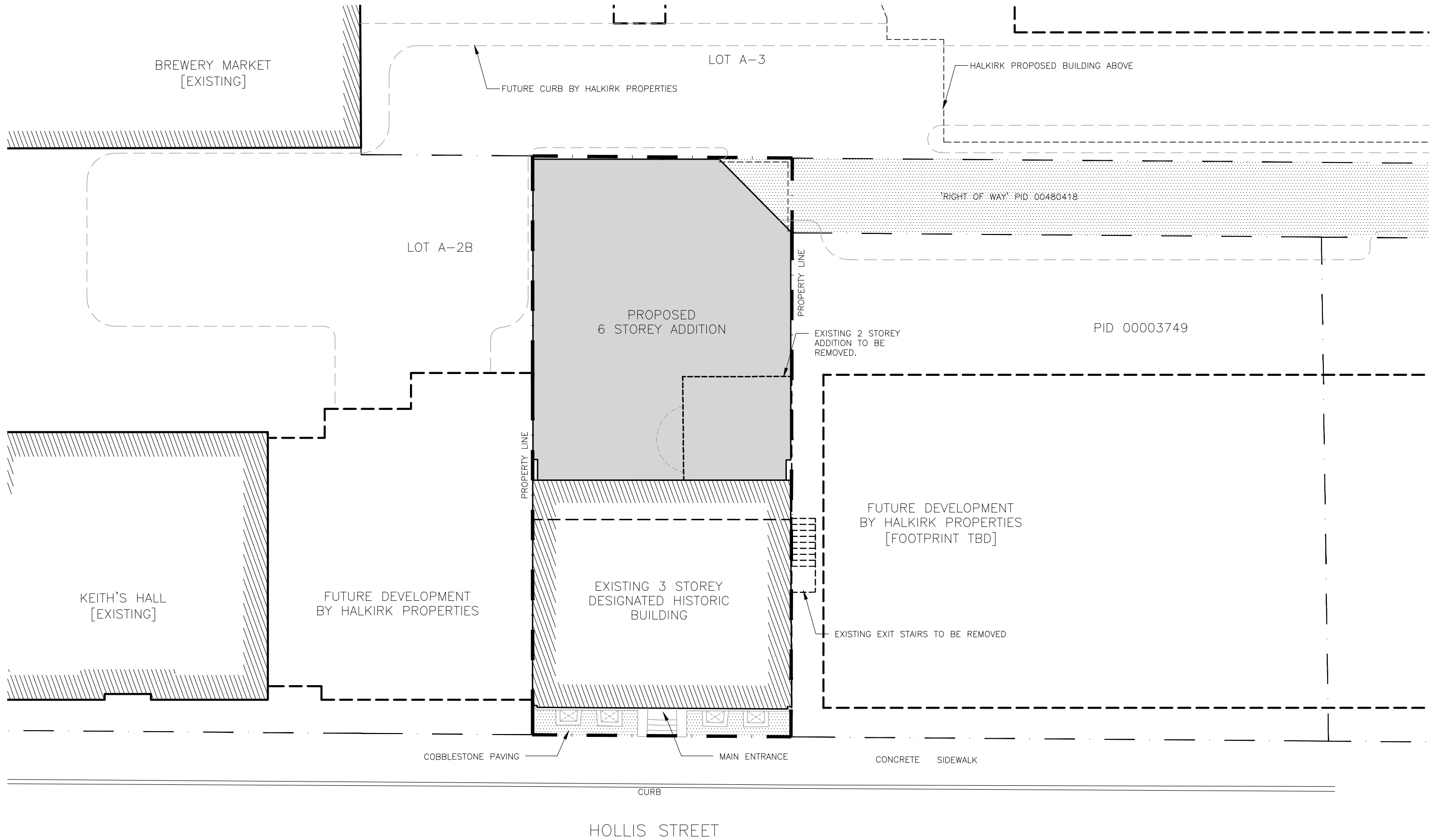


LOT AREA:	4528 SF
EXISTING BUILDING FOOTPRINT:	1778 SF
PROPOSED BUILDING FOOTPRINT:	4279 SF
LOT COVERAGE:	94.5% COV.
TOTAL COMMERCIAL AREA:	9034 SF
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL AREA:	7617 SF
TOTAL UNITS:	6 UNITS
2 BDR:	4 UNITS
3 BDR:	2 UNITS
TOTAL VEHICLE PARKING:	3 SPACES
TOTAL BICYCLE PARKING:	7 SPACES
EXTERIOR LANDSCAPING:	110 SF
ROOFTOP LANDSCAPING:	1553 SF

BENJAMIN WIER ADDITION

DATE: 22 AUGUST 2014



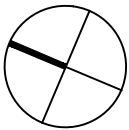


BENJAMIN WIER ADDITION

SITE PLAN

1/16" = 1'-0"

DATE: 05 JUNE 2014



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BENJAMIN WIER ADDITION

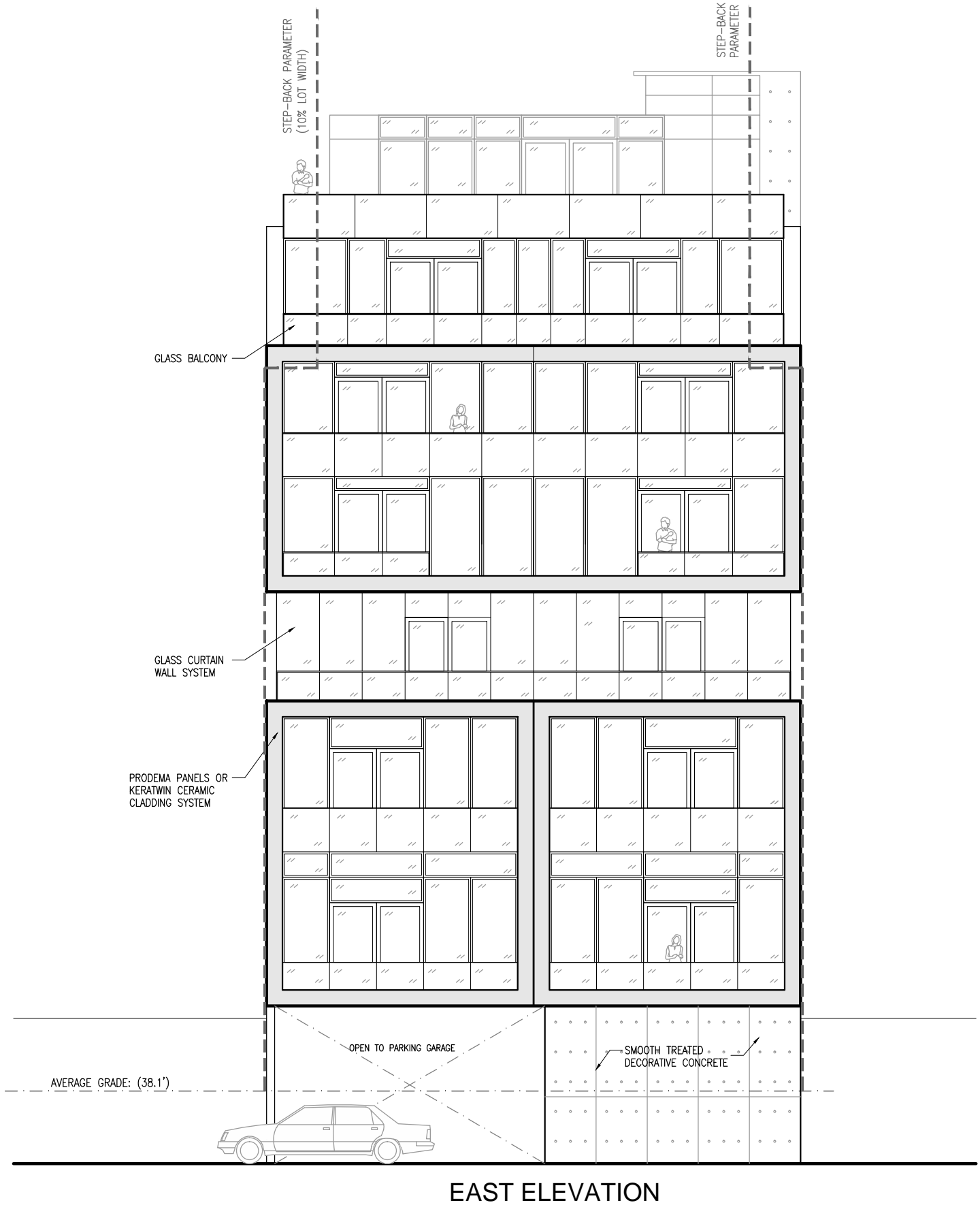
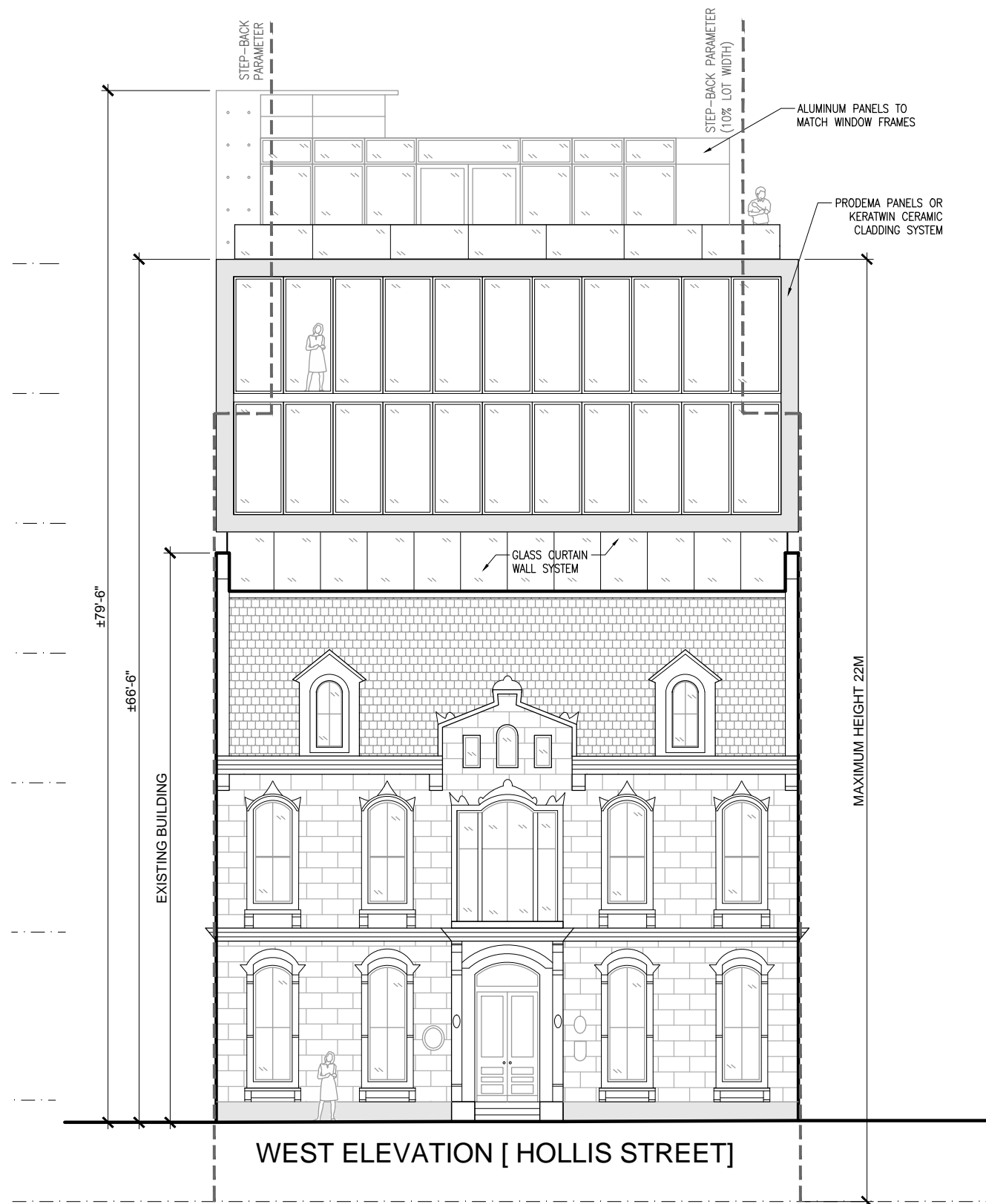
HOLLIS STREET SCAPE

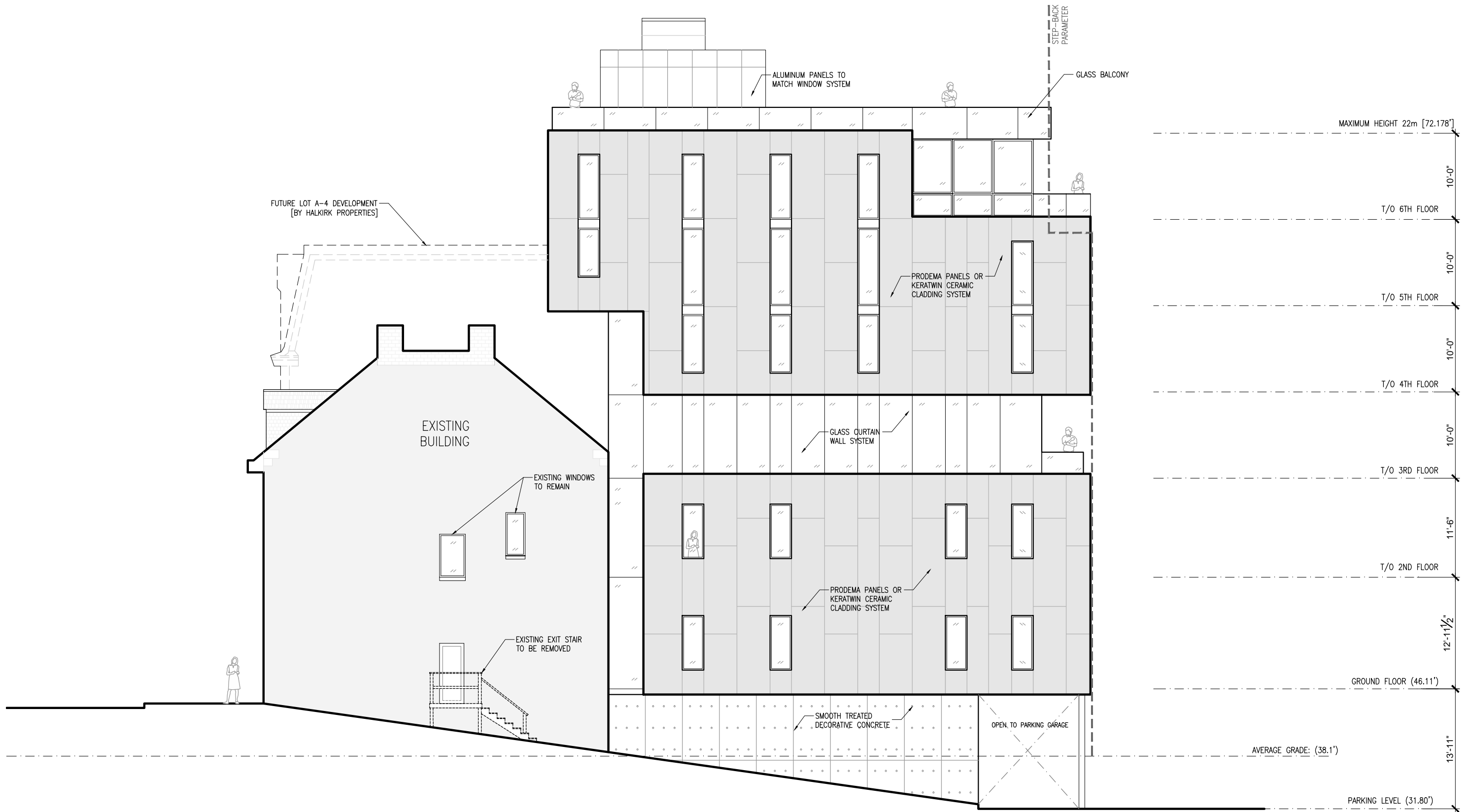
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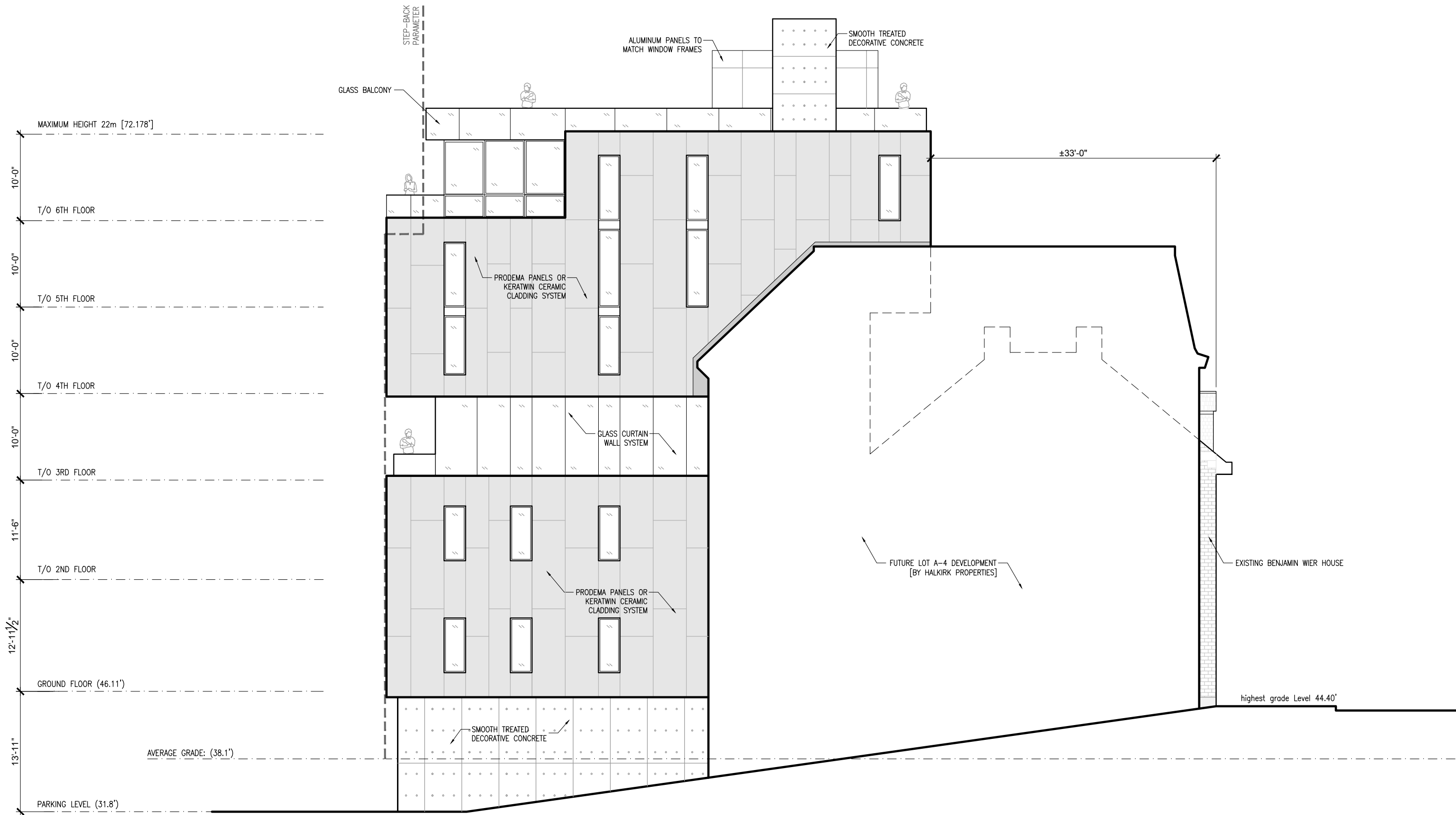
SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

DATE: 22 AUG 2014

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BENJAMIN WIER ADDITION

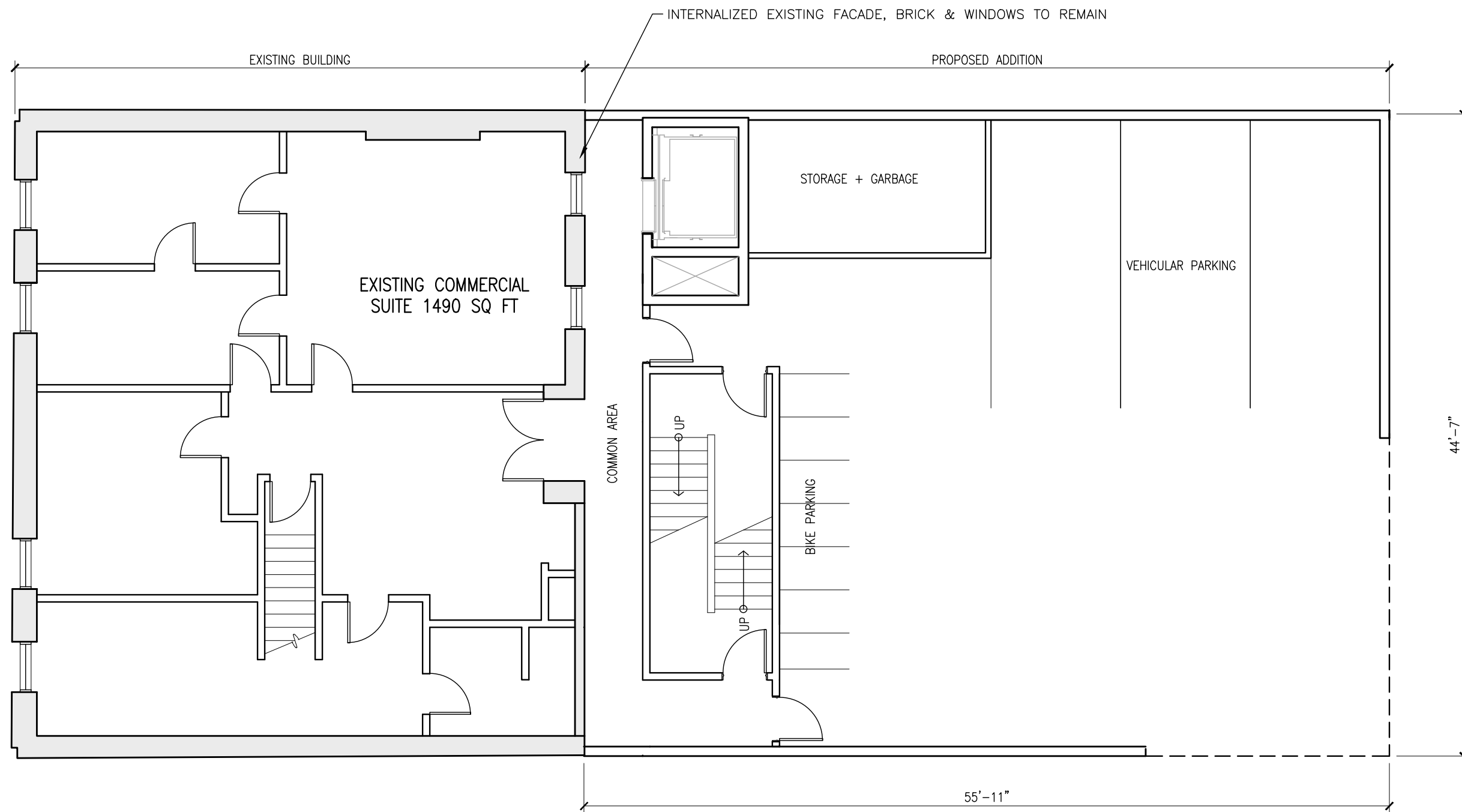
NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

DATE: 22 AUG 2014

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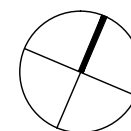


BENJAMIN WIER ADDITION

PARKING LEVEL

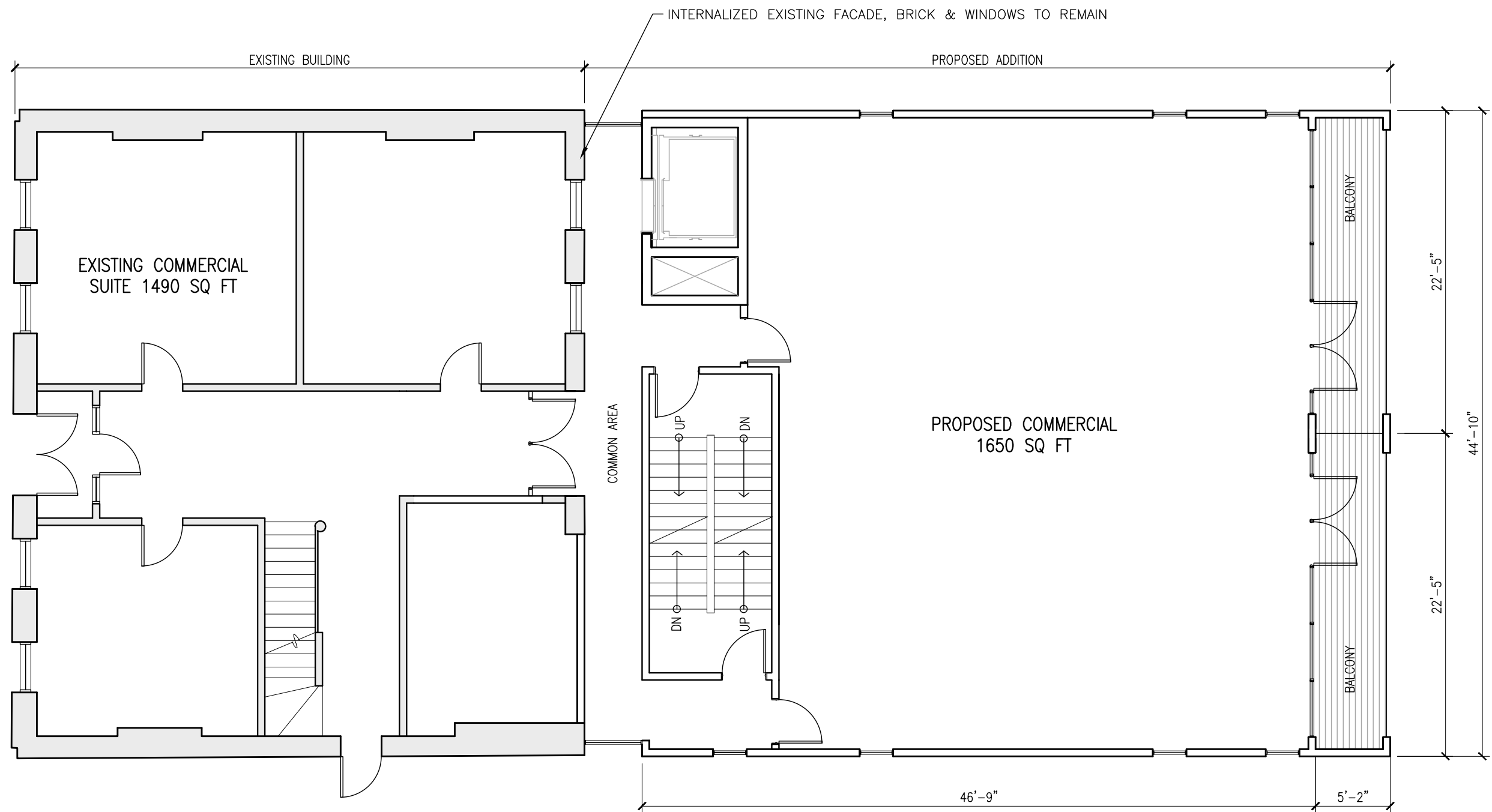
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DATE: 04 JUNE 2014



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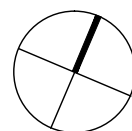


BENJAMIN WIER ADDITION

MAIN LEVEL

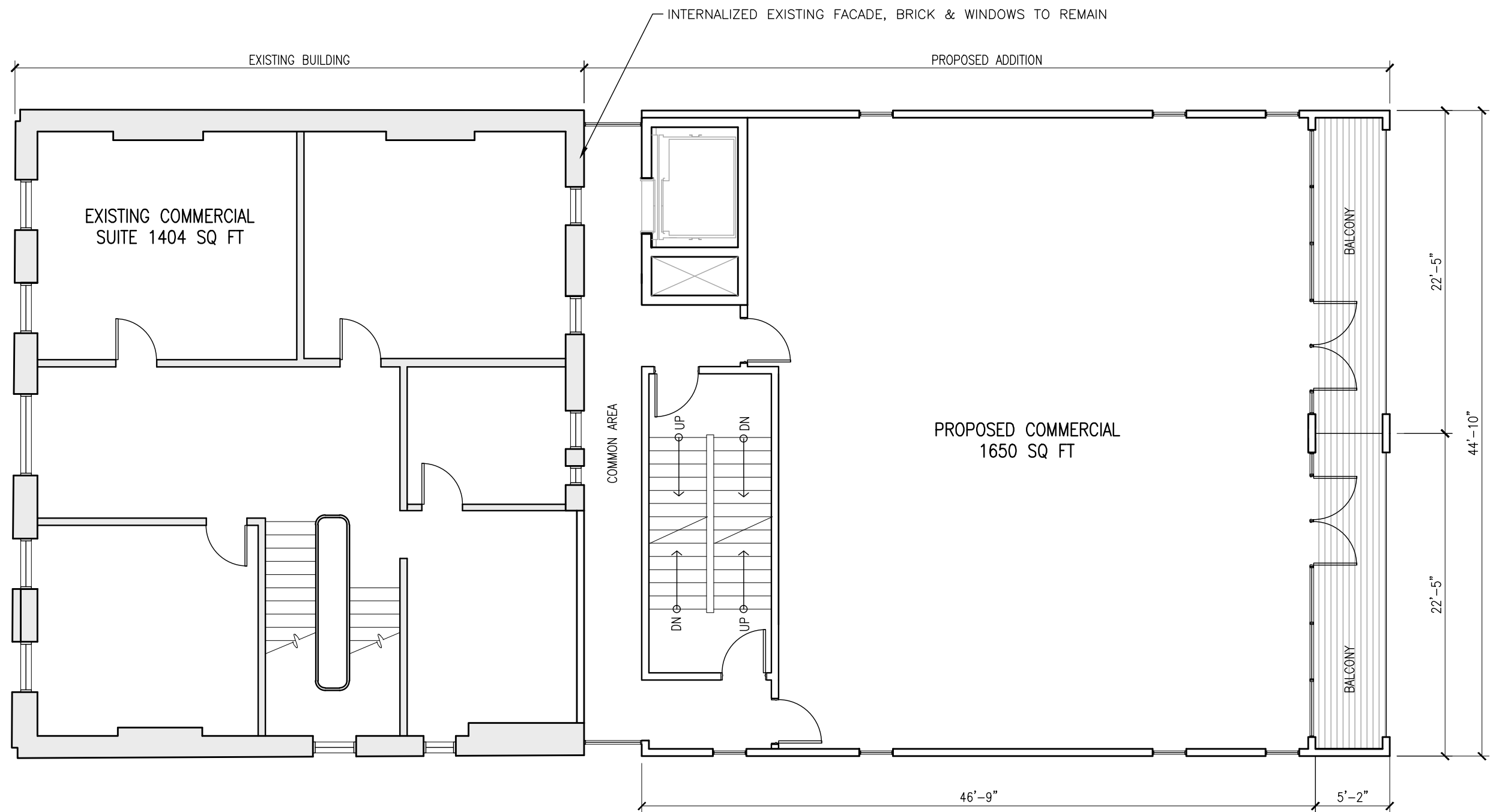
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DATE: 04 JUNE 2014



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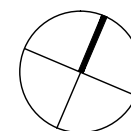


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SECOND LEVEL

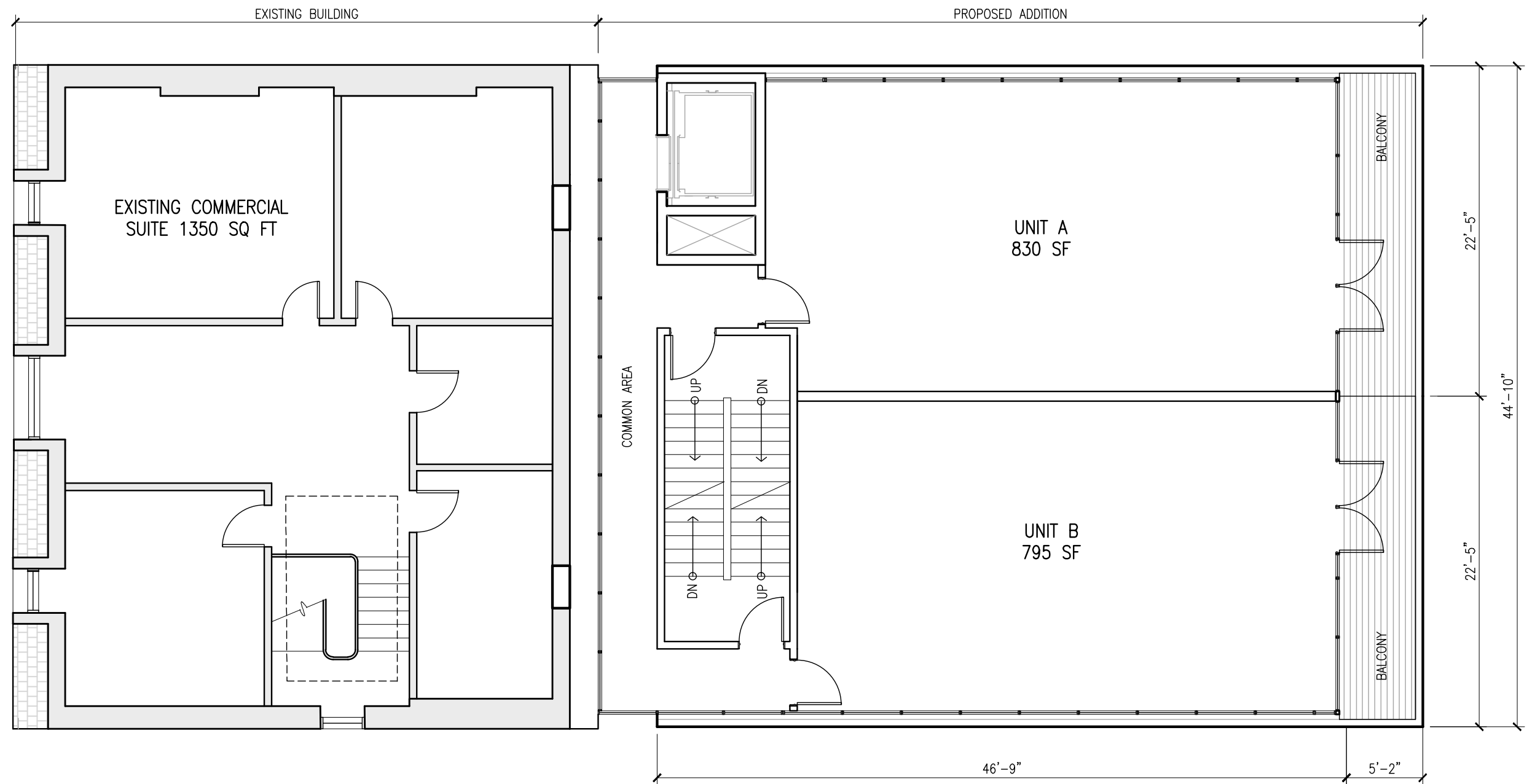
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DATE: 04 JUNE 2014



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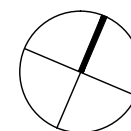


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THIRD LEVEL

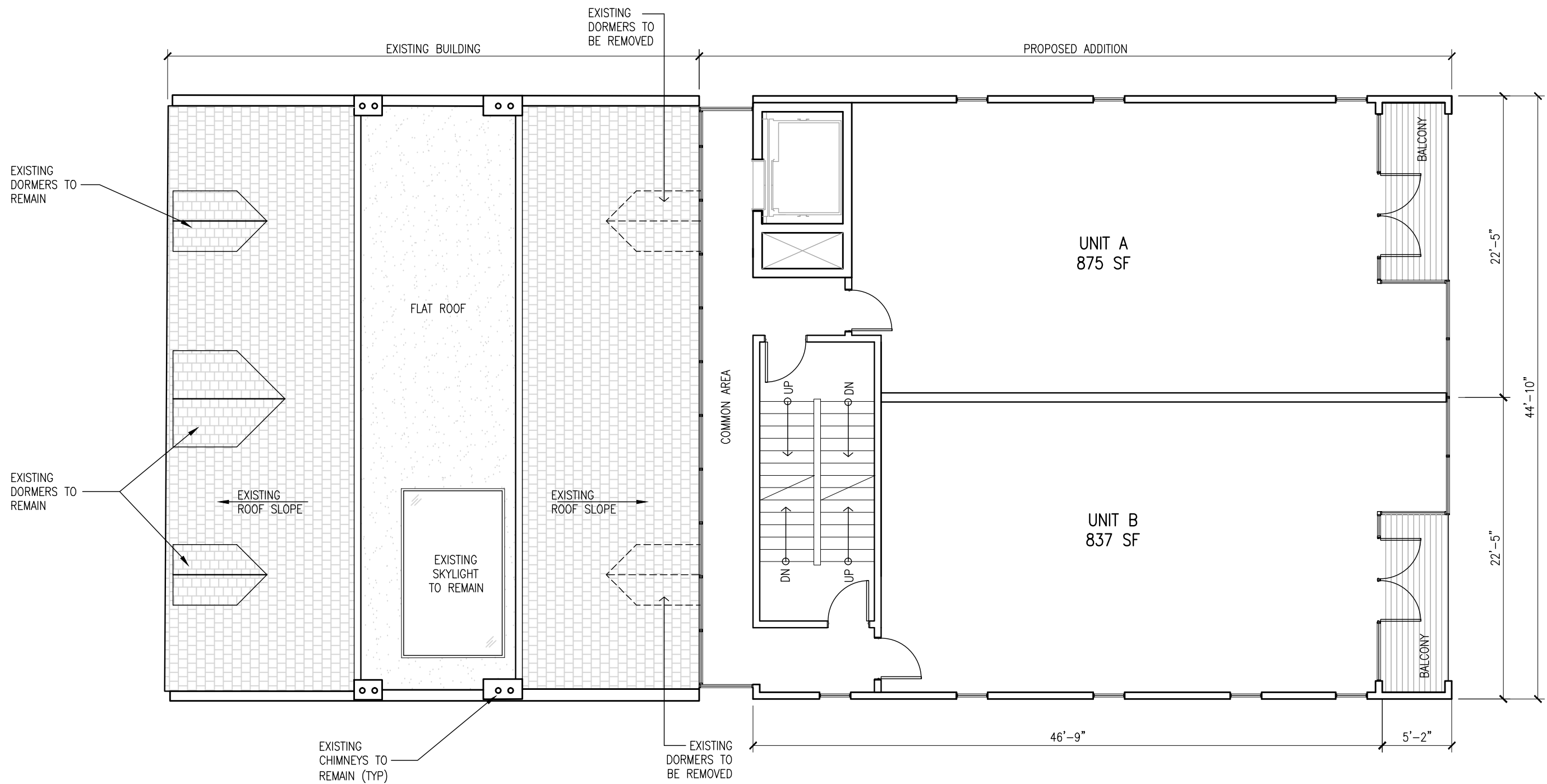
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DATE: 04 JUNE 2014



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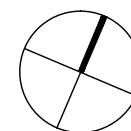


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FOURTH LEVEL

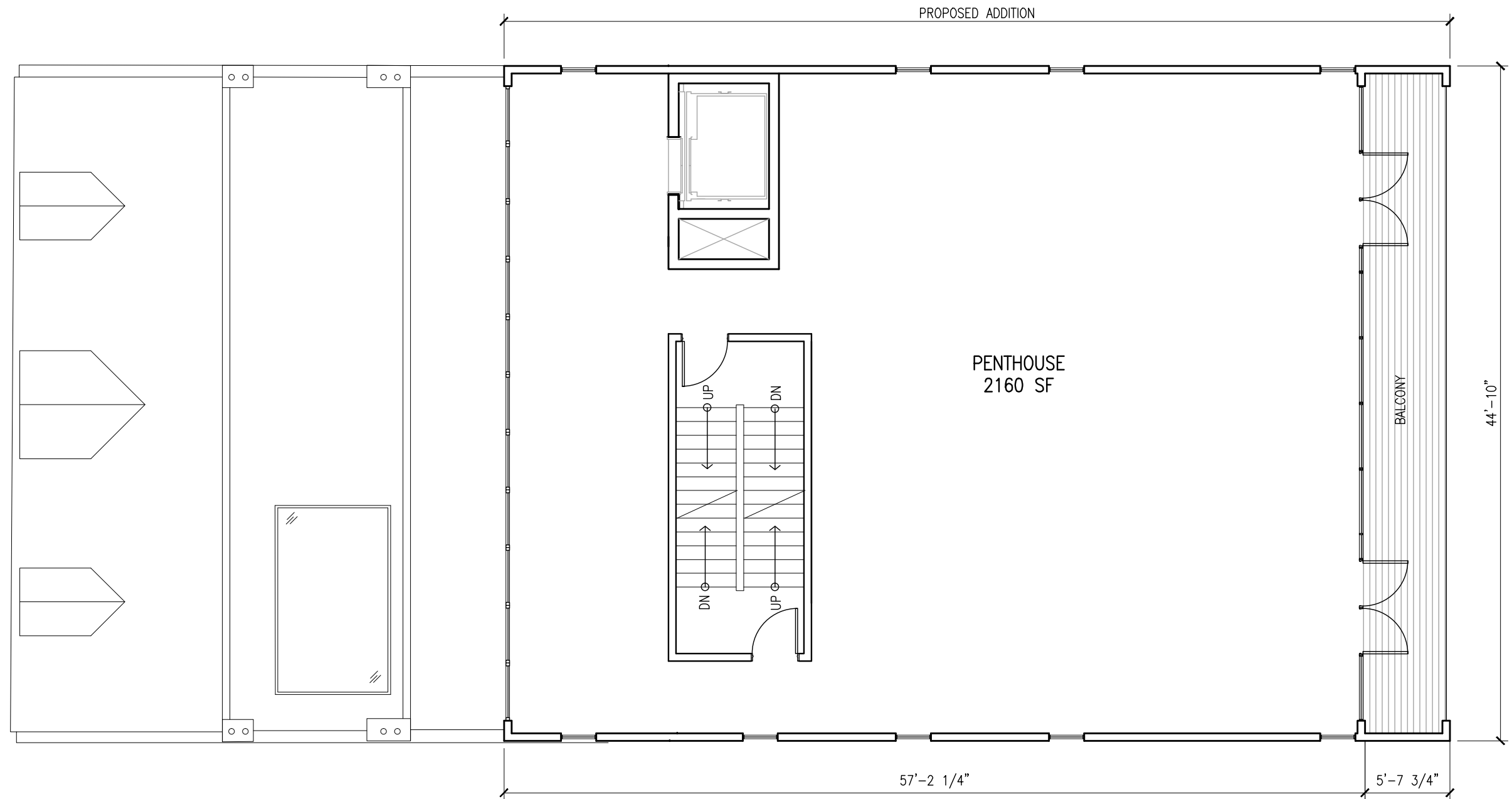
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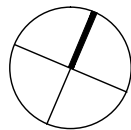


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FIFTH LEVEL

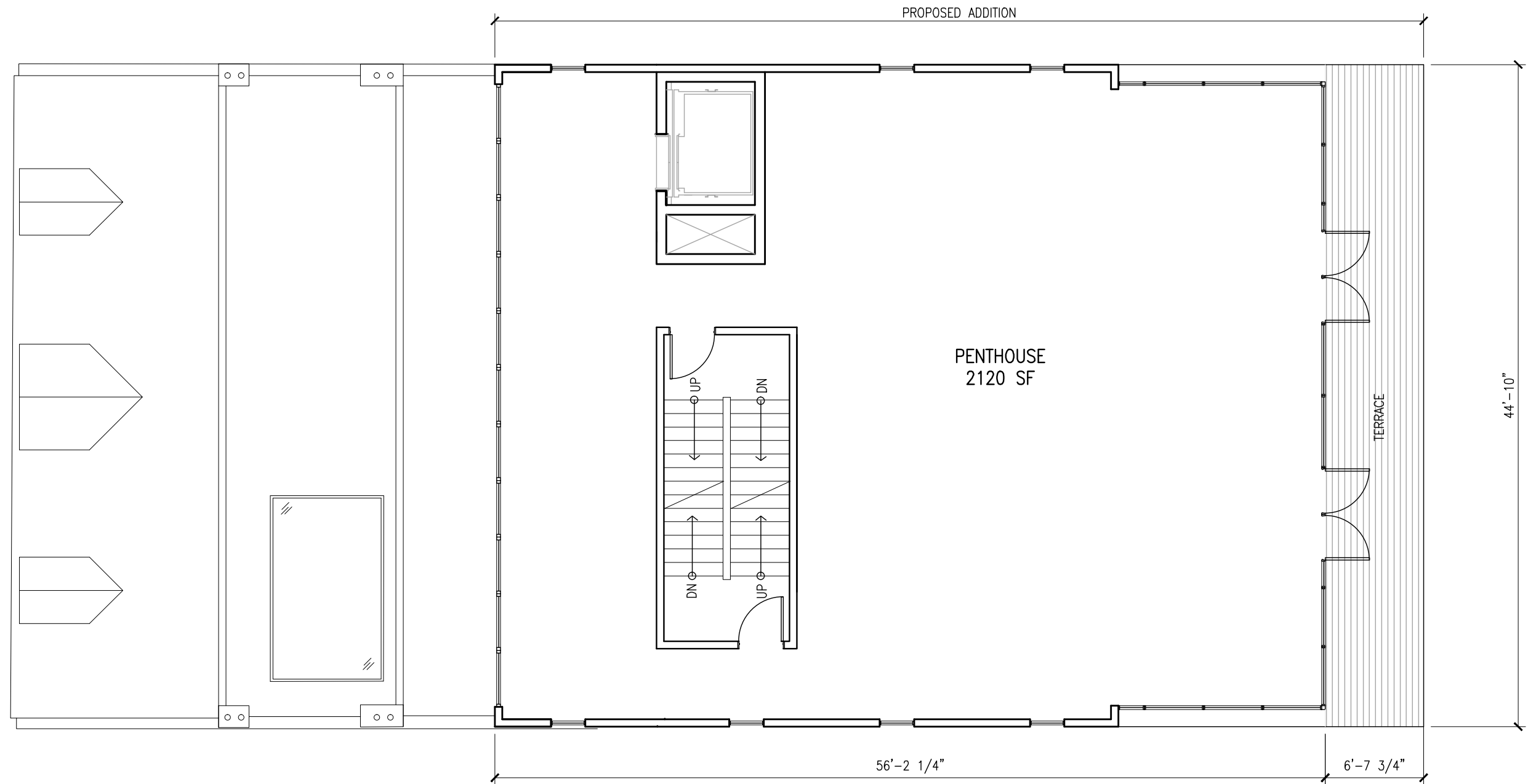
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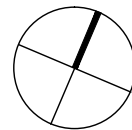


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SIXTH LEVEL

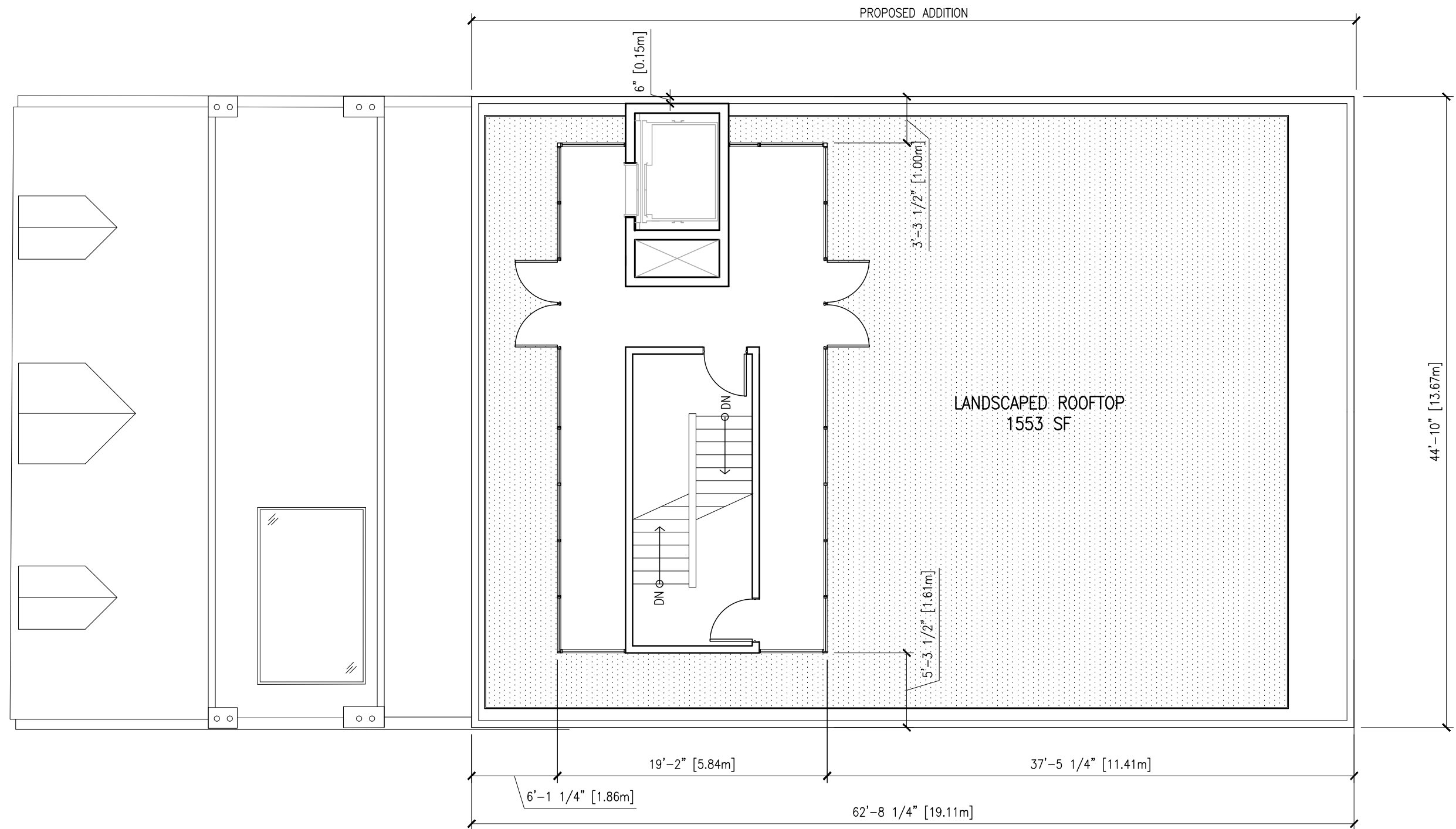
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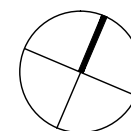


BENJAMIN WIER ADDITION

ROOF

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

DATE: 04 JUNE 2014



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