July 22, 2019

Beth Johnson
Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Avenue, Suite 500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

On behalf of the Willkommen Development Team please see the enclosed materials for updates to the original Willkommen package originally submitted May 25th, 2019.

Enclosed Items:

a) Graphic design packages for 1512-1520 Republic Street, 1617 – 1619 Race Street, and 1600-1602 Pleasant Street.

b) Historic Narrative Letters for 1512-1520 Republic Street, 1617 – 1619 Race Street, and 1600-1602 Pleasant Street.

c) Willkommen Density and Development Requirements

d) Zoning Relief Request Letters for 1512-1520 Republic Street, 1617 – 1619 Race Street, and 1600-1602 Pleasant Street.

Please note that there are two major differences from the May submission.

1. We are no longer seeking a Use Variance for any of the projects as the development team is pursuing a zoning change instead. Please exclude these from your review.

2. We are not submitting the Vine Street project for the August 9th Hearing. Only Republic, Pleasant and Race will be submitted. After receiving your feedback and that of the OTR Foundation, we feel that a little more time is needed. We'll be back in touch with you shortly about design updates for this project, and try to find HCB time at a later date for Vine Street.

We trust that the contents of this package will provide everything you need to inform your decision. We appreciate your time in considering this matter. Please contact me directly if you have any questions. I would be happy to supply you with any additional information that you may need.

Sincerely,

Chad Burke, AIA, LEED AP
GBBN Architects Inc.

Willkommen Density and Development Requirements Responses (7/22/19)

Parking

The Willkommen project is a scatter site project which helps to spread the parking needs of the new residents and commercial spaces across a large area. The new construction buildings are each positioned by a nearby parking asset with the capacity to accept these new parkers.

1. 1602 Pleasant and 1617-19 Race: are located within 1-block of a recently completed surface parking lot at Race & Liberty Streets. The 50-space parking lot is owned and operated by 3CDC.

2. 1512 Republic & 1525 Vine: are located by the planned surface parking lot at the current site of the existing Kroger store. Upon completion of the new grocery store at Court & Walnut Street, 3CDC will demolish the old store and convert this large area into an approximately 116-space surface parking lot.

Trash

The new construction buildings are all equipped with an appropriate trash plan with easy access both the users and service providers.

1. 1617-19 Race Street – the project will be installing a new dumpster pad behind 1623 Race Street (a historic building part of Willkommen) and will accommodate trash/recycling from the new construction building.
2. 1602 Pleasant – the project will be installing a new dumpster pad behind 1601 Race Street (a historic building part of Willkommen) and will accommodate trash/recycling from the new construction building.
3. 1512 Republic – the building has a trash room built within the building footprint, located at the northeast corner of the building.
4. 1525 Vine – the building has room for trash cans along the west and south side of the building.

Economic Feasibility

The Willkommen Project encompasses approximately 190 new residential units in Over-the-Rhine and will cost approximately $50 million. The project is incorporating both the renovation of existing historic buildings (19) and new construction buildings (4). The project is also committed to allocating 40% of the total units as affordable. A key goal of the project is to distribute the affordable units across the properties to ensure the project is truly mixed income, rather than entire buildings being designated affordable vs market rate. All units throughout the project will be finished to the same high-level quality standard seen in market rate development.

The project is designed to be affordable to residents with incomes between 50%AMI-80% AMI, which for individuals is an annual income between $28,500-$45,550. For a family of four, that translates to an income between $40,650-$65,050 per year.

The Willkommen project is a key strategy developed by 3CDC and Model Group to help address the need for more affordable housing units within Over-the-Rhine. Since completion of the 2002 Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan and the 2015 report completed by the Community Building Institute, there has been a loss of approximately 2,300 affordable housing units. The goal of Willkommen is to begin replacing these units and provide quality housing for people of all income levels.

The financing for this project is complex and incorporates New Market Tax Credits, State and Federal Historic Tax Credits (HTCs), and Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs). Each of these resources comes with its own set of requirements and regulations that must be satisfied.

The Ohio Housing and Finance Agency (OHFA) governs the LIHTC in Ohio and dictates these requirements through the annual release of the Qualified Action Plan (QAP). The project is maximizing its request by seeking an allocation of $1 million tax credits (which translates to approximately $9 million in equity), and results in 56 LIHTC residential units based on OHFA's $20,000/unit credit cap per the QAP. The project team is then subject to comply with the following OHFA's requirements:

- OHFA has strict guidelines regarding unit size and unit mix.
    - The unit mix is dictated by the QAP:
        - Efficiency & 1-BR: no more than 25% of units
        - 2-BR: 70% of units
        - 3-BR: at least 5% of units
    - The units are required to be designed to meet the following minimum unit sizes:
        - Efficiencies: 450 SF
        - 1 BR: 650 SF
        - 2 BR: 850 SF
        - 3 BR: 1,000 SF
- OHFA also require the units to meet certain ADA requirements (minimum of 5% of units fully accessible and 100% of the new construction units to be accessible to visitors, which means elevators need to be included in each new construction building). Additionally all units must be designed to contain Universal Design features.
- OHFA requires that each building achieve energy efficiency certification- either LEED or Enterprise Green Communities.

The project was also successfully awarded a large pool of HTCs in June, and in many instances the requirements for the HTCs conflict with the OHFA requirements above. HTCs are used to protect and preserve the historic fabric of the building, thus restricting modifications that can be made to the size and layout of the residential units in the historic buildings. For this reason the new construction buildings are critical to ensuring that the project as a whole satisfies the LIHTC requirements.

Even through the strategic use of these tax credit programs, the project is still experiencing an overall financial gap.

The 4 new construction buildings and density variances are essential in this project not only to meet the OHFA unit size/mix and accessibility requirements, but also to ensure the overall project is financially feasible. Complying with the existing density regulations would significantly increase the development costs per unit, thereby increasing the overall project costs and the funding gap.

Under the current zoning code, the units produced by the 4 new construction buildings would be restricted, as shown in the table below.

	Approved Zoning Code		**Variance Requested**
	Land Area/Unit	Residential Units	Current Count
1602 Pleasant	1,200	4	24
1617-19 Race	1,200	4	15
1512-25 Republic	700	10	27
1521-25Vine	700	8	24
Total		26	90

If the project was required to meet the current zoning code, the overall Willkommen project would not be able to support the requirements of the LIHTC and would increase the project gap by approximately $9 million.

If the project was not granted a variance and had to adhere to the current density requirements, the overall project gap would continue to increase. Below is a breakdown of each new construction building and how the lower density requirements would affect the cost.

As the information on the next page(s) convey, the cost/unit and the gap/unit decrease significantly as the density increases. This is solely contributed to the variance between affordable rental rates vs market rent rates. If the revised density is not approved, the units in the new construction buildings will need to be 100% dedicated as affordable housing in order for the overall project to still qualify for the LIHTCs. However, the drastically decreasing revenue in turn significantly lowers the borrowing capacity of the project and makes the project economically infeasible.

- **1521-25 Vine Street**

	Approved Density	Revised Density	
Building Cost/SF	$ 172	172	
Number of Units	8	24	*Density assumptions below*
Residential SF	7,706	20,403	*SF assumptions below for current density*
Commercial SF	4,130	4,130	
Percentage Affordable	100%	40%	
Affordable Rent/SF	$ 1.00	$ 1.00	
Market Rent/SF	n/a	$ 1.50	
Expenses/SF	$ 8.00	$ 8.00	
Annual Residential Rent	92,471	318,287	
Annual Expenses	61,647	163,224	*All operating expenses, including RE taxes*
Annual NOI	30,824	155,063	
Borrowing Capacity	314,282	1,581,047	*Borrowing assumptions below*
Total Construction Cost	1,321,628	3,509,316	
Total Gap	**(1,007,346)**	**(1,928,269)**	
Cost/Unit	165,204	146,222	
Gap/Unit	***$ 125,918***	***$ 80,345***	

Supporting Assumptions

Approved Density		**Revised Density**
Land Area/Unit	Residential Units	Current Count
700	8	24

OHFA Breakdown				
Unit Type	Unit Count	NSF/Unit	NSF	GSF
1BR	2	650	1,300	1,529
2BR	5	850	4,250	5,000
3BR	1	1,000	1,000	1,176
Total	**8**		**6,550**	**7,706**

Borrowing Assumptions	
DCR	1.35
Interest Rate	6.00%
Amortization	30

- **1512-20 Republic Street**

	Approved Density	Revised Density	
Building Cost/SF	$ 174	$ 174	
Number of Units	10	27	*Density assumptions below*
Residential SF	9,588	22,563	*SF assumptions below for current density*
Commercial SF	0	0	
Percentage Affordable	100%	40%	
Affordable Rent/SF	$ 1.00	$ 1.00	
Market Rent/SF	n/a	$ 1.50	
Expenses/SF	$ 8.00	$ 8.00	
Annual Residential Rent	115,059	351,983	
Annual Expenses	76,706	180,504	*All operating expenses, including RE taxes*
Annual NOI	38,353	171,479	
Borrowing Capacity	391,053	1,748,427	*Borrowing assumptions below*
Total Construction Cost	1,669,378	3,928,373	
Total Gap	**(1,278,324)**	**(2,179,946)**	
Cost/Unit	166,938	145,495	
Gap/Unit	***$ 127,832***	***$ 80,739***	

Supporting Assumptions

Approved Density		**Revised Density**
Land Area/Unit	Residential Units	Current Count
700	10	27

OHFA Breakdown				
Unit Type	Unit Count	NSF/Unit	NSF	GSF
1BR	3	650	1,625	1,912
2BR	7	850	5,525	6,500
3BR	1	1,000	1,000	1,176
Total	**10**		**8,150**	**9,588**

Borrowing Assumptions	
DCR	1.35
Interest Rate	6.00%
Amortization	30

- **1602 Pleasant Street**

	Approved Density	Revised Density	
Building Cost/SF	$ 168	$ 168	
Number of Units	4	24	*Density assumptions below*
Residential SF	3,941	20,108	*SF assumptions below for current density*
Commercial SF	3,962	3962	
Percentage Affordable	100%	40%	
Affordable Rent/SF	$ 1.00	$ 1.00	
Market Rent/SF	n/a	$ 1.50	
Expenses/SF	$ 8.00	$ 8.00	
Annual Residential Rent	47,294	313,685	
Annual Expenses	31,529	160,864	*All operating expenses, including RE taxes*
Annual NOI	15,765	152,821	
Borrowing Capacity	160,740	1,558,187	*Borrowing assumptions below*
Total Construction Cost	662,172	3,378,423	
Total Gap	**(501,433)**	**(1,820,236)**	
Cost/Unit	165,543	140,768	
Gap/Unit	***$ 125,358***	***$ 75,843***	

Supporting Assumptions

Approved Density		**Revised Density**
Land Area/Unit	Residential Units	Current Count
1,200	4	24

OHFA Breakdown				
Unit Type	Unit Count	NSF/Unit	NSF	GSF
1BR	1	650	650	765
2BR	2	850	1,700	2,000
3BR	1	1,000	1,000	1,176
Total	**4**		**3,350**	**3,941**

Borrowing Assumptions	
DCR	1.35
Interest Rate	6.00%
Amortization	30

- **1617-19 Race Street**

	Approved Density	Revised Density	
Building Cost/SF	$ 175	$ 175	
Number of Units	4	15	*Density assumptions below*
Residential SF	3,941	11,867	*SF assumptions below for current density*
Commercial SF	3,644	3,644	
Percentage Affordable	100%	40%	
Affordable Rent/SF	$ 1.00	$ 1.00	
Market Rent/SF	n/a	$ 1.50	
Expenses/SF	$ 8.00	$ 8.00	
Annual Residential Rent	47,294	185,125	
Annual Expenses	31,529	94,936	*All operating expenses, including RE taxes*
Annual NOI	15,765	90,189	
Borrowing Capacity	160,740	919,585	*Borrowing assumptions below*
Total Construction Cost	691,620	2,082,488	
Total Gap	**(530,880)**	**(1,162,904)**	
Cost/Unit	172,905	138,833	
Gap/Unit	***$ 132,720***	***$ 77,527***	

Supporting Assumptions

Approved Density		**Revised Density**
Land Area/Unit	Residential Units	Current Count
1,200	4	15

OHFA Breakdown				
Unit Type	Unit Count	NSF/Unit	NSF	GSF
1BR	1	650	650	765
2BR	2	850	1,700	2,000
3BR	1	1,000	1,000	1,176
Total	**4**		**3,350**	**3,941**

Borrowing Assumptions	
DCR	1.35
Interest Rate	6.00%
Amortization	30

ITEM 11 August 5, 2019

APPLICATION FOR ZONING RELIEF AND CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION #:	ZH20190111/COA2019039
APPLICANT:	GBBN Architects
OWNER:	Northside Revitalization LLC
ADDRESS:	**1617-1619 Race Street**
PARCELS:	094-0008-0055; 0056
ZONING:	RM 1.2
OVERLAYS:	Over the Rhine Historic District
COMMUNITY:	Over the Rhine
REPORT DATE:	July 22, 2019
HEARING DATE:	August 5, 2019
STAFF REVIEW:	Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator

Details of Zoning Relief Required:

A. Sec.1405-07: Density: Numerical Variance: Numeric Variance of 834 sf of lot area/dwelling unit requirement of 1200 sf of lot area/dwelling unit to allow a 15 dwelling multifamily project at a density of 366 sf lot area/dwelling unit.

B. Sec.1405-07: Side Setbacks: Dimensional Variance of 10 feet and 17 feet side to allow for a 5 foot setback on the south and a zero lot line setback on the north.

C. Sec.1405-07: Rear Setbacks: Dimensional Variance of 32’9" to allow for a setback of 7’3” on the rear.

Nature of Request:

The applicant is requesting three variances and a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new mixed use 4 story incorporating and existing building at 1617-1619 Race Street.

Existing Conditions:

The existing property is currently 2 tax parcels with an existing historic contributing building on the north parcel. The south parcel is vacant parcel. The existing building is a three story brick building that has an altered first floor. The existing building is a residential building in use and has a one story rear non-contributing addition.

Figure 1: 1619-1617 Race Street. Pictures provided by Google Street Views.

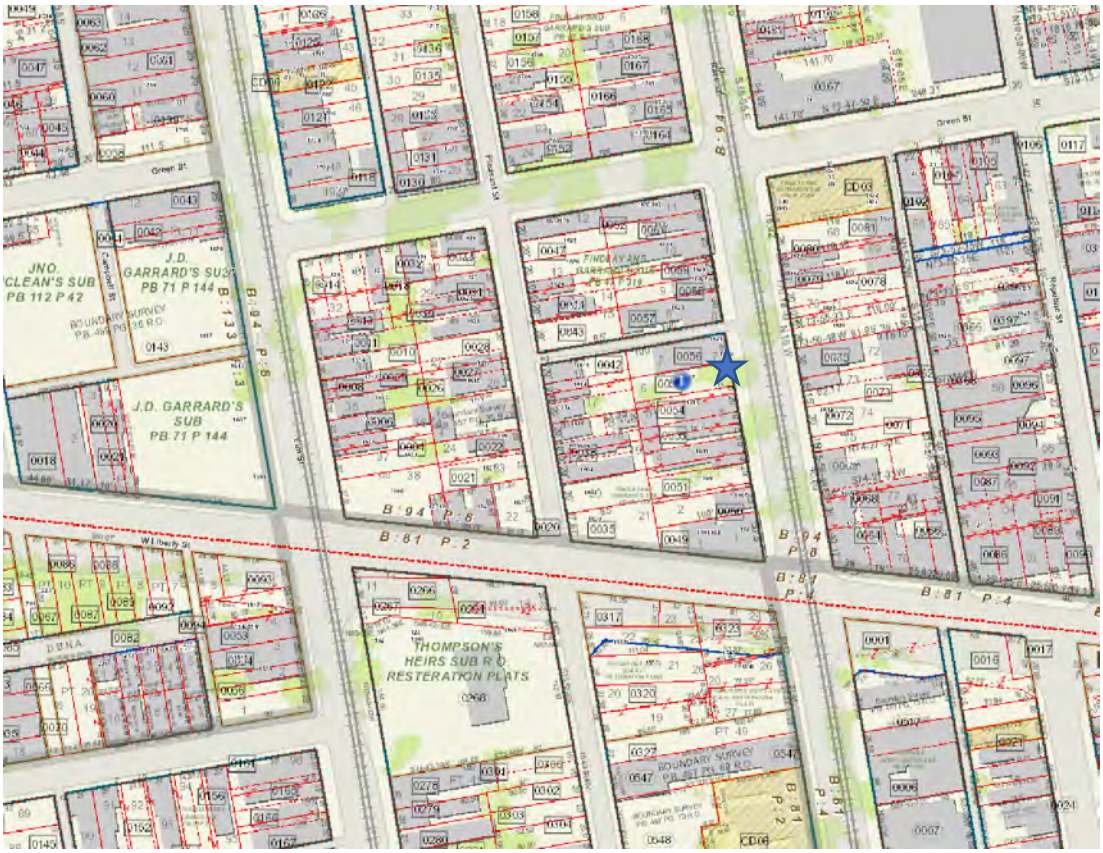


Figure 2: Map of 1617-1619 Race Street. Map provided by Cagis Maps

Proposed Conditions:

1. Construct a new 4-story building, to the south and rear of the 3 story historic building. They will appear to be 2 separate buildings but will function as one on the interior.
2. The existing building will retain the existing opening but will remove a door and add a window.
3. The new building will be clad in brick, will be 3 bays wide with a commercial storefront on the first floor. It will be set back slightly from the property line and will have a fourth floor with distinct window surrounds to act as a larger "top"
4. To the rear of the existing building will be a 4 story addition clad in brick.

Previous Review: NA

Applicable Zoning Code Sections:

Zoning District:	Section 1405	Residential
Variance Requests:	Section 1405	Development Standards
Variance Authority:	Section 1445-07	
HCB authority:	Section 1435-05-4	
Variance Standard:	Section 1445-13	General Standards: Public Interest
	Section 1445-15	Standards for Variances
Overlays:	Section 1435	Historic Preservation
Historic District/Reg:		Over the Rhine Historic District
COA Standard:	Section 1435-09-2	COA; Standard of Review

Zoning Analysis:

The following discussion will be the same text in the following staff reports 1617-1619 Race Street, 1602 Pleasant Street and 1512 Republic Street

As these projects are all part of a larger project called Willkommen, a scattered site low-income housing tax credit projects that includes both rehabilitation of 19 buildings, which will be using Historic Tax Credits, and the construction of 4 new buildings. 3 of the new construction projects are being presented together and one will be coming in a future meeting. This will create approximately 190 total housing units within the neighborhood and will be a mix of market rate and affordable housing units with approximately 40% of the units consider affordable (50 of the units will be at 60% or less of the Area Medium income of the MSA and 26 of the units will be 80% or less of Area Median Income of the MSA).

The applicants have provided a through Economic Feasibility explanation narrative along with proformas showing cost and gaps per unit with the allowable density increase versus the requested density. In order to comply with OHFA regulations, all of the units would have to be affordable in a project which would comply with the allowable density. The project size would decrease, which decreases the construction costs, but it also decreased the income of the project. Even with the decreased construction costs,

the zoning compliant projects still have a gap that is between 1.5-1.7 times the gap for the requested increase density.

A project with a compliant density would also decrease the total number of affordable units the project is able to create. As it has been a stated desire within the Over-the-Rhine Community Plan and Plan Cincinnati for more affordable units, to support this goal a higher density is required. Also allowing for a higher density allows for a mixed income approach in the buildings, both new construction and in the historic rehabilitations. This helps to create affordable housing in otherwise high-opportunity areas that provide greater access to jobs, public transit and amenities.

While typically we cannot consider the proposed rents of a project when considering economic feasibility due to lack of legal accountability for the stated rents, with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits there is a requirement that the units maintain the stated affordability for 30 years to be able to capture the tax credits. That is a factor of consideration here today, as this is a substantial property encumbrance that will be borne by the property owner if the project executed.

When looking at the density variance, two areas of concern that we have consistently considered are Parking and Traffic Patterns and Trash and Utility Management.

1) Parking and Traffic Patterns

On September 19, 2018, City Council passed the Urban Parking Overlay Zone #1, which exempts all projects within the boundary of the overlay from parking requirements. This overlay became law on October 20, 2018. While the property would be exempt from parking requirements, the project is asking for an increase in residential density which does increase the anticipated parking demand based on the zoning code allowances. Overall the major increase in parking demand is created by the New Construction as the rehabilitation portion of the project is only increasing the parking demand generated by 2 additional dwelling units (net 12 trips/day per national standards). Per the zoning code, the new construction would have been permitted to have 26 units over the 4 properties and they are creating 90 units. This creates an increased parking demand for 64 dwelling units. In order to offset this increased demand, the applicants own 2 parking lots within a block of each of the projects that together have 166 parking spaces. These would more than be able to accommodate the needs for the increased parking demand. Additionally, and uniquely within OTR, transit capacity and opportunities within walking distance for jobs, goods and services, should, in actuality, minimize, the parking demand of the more urban context. Applicants and their management team have experience with properties within OTR and should be able to demonstrate previous experience in similar projects in the neighborhood.

2) Trash and Utility Management

When an increase in density is requested for a property, providing adequate trash and utility management within the building or on the property is necessary as to not create a collection of trash receptacles on public right of ways, either on streets or on alleys. In all the new construction projects, the applicants have made trash accommodations off the alley for appropriate trash storage onsite or at adjacent properties owned by the same property owner, for both the residents and the proposed commercial spaces. On any project that has trash collection off-site staff, will require a covenant between the properties for the allowance of trash collection at the time of building permit issuance.

The Following Discussion is specific the project at 1617-1619 Pleasant.

Standards for Variances per Section 1435-05-4

(a) Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the Historic District of Historic Asset; or

The proposed work will fill a significant void in the urban fabric where a vacant lot is currently. It is utilizing new construction to help rehabilitate and utilize an existing building on the site. As detailed below the building is a compatible building to the historic district.

(b) Is necessary where the denial thereof would result in a deprivation of all economically viable uses of the property as viewed in its entirety. In making such a determination, the Historic Conservation Board may consider the factors set forth in Section 1435-09-2 (aa) to (ff).

The applicants have demonstrated that as a piece of larger project, the unit count and associated sizes are necessary to make a low-income housing project work. As this property is currently in a residential district, residential uses are permitted but not at this density. The property is part of a proposed zone change.

Standards for Variances per Section 1445-05-4

(a) Owing to special circumstances or conditions pertaining to a specific piece of property, the strict application of the provisions or requirements of this Code or the Land Development Code, as applicable, are unreasonable and would result in practical difficulties.

A strict application of the code would only allow 4 residential dwelling units on this property. This strict application is contrary to the goals of the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan and Plan Cincinnati of creating more housing opportunities, especially Low-Income Housing opportunities in order to provide more diverse housing options within the neighborhood.

(b) The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant possessed by owners of other properties in the same district or vicinity.

The applicants are asking for the density allowance that is comparable to the density of existing historic buildings in the vicinity but is denser that new construction that has been permitted without parking. However, the applicant is proposing a housing project that typically has not established the parking demand in this neighborhood, compared to market rate housing and the applicant has a means to provide parking in adjacent offsite locations.

Below is analysis of the consideration factors for all the requested zoning actions, utilizing Section 1445-13, General Standards; Public Interest.

1. **Zoning**. The proposed work conforms to the underlying zone district regulations and is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code.

The underlying zoning is RM 1.2. The proposed use of the subject property does not conform to the zoning as it is increasing the density by almost 4 times the allowed density that is permitted and therefore does not meet the standards of the RM 1.2 zoning district. The proposed use of multi-family residential use generally does conform to the zone. The commercial space does not conform. The applicants are not asking for a Use Variance at this time as a proposed zoning change currently being considered, may allow for a commercial space. If this zoning change is not approved, the applicants would be required to ask for a Use Variance.

2. **Guidelines.** The proposed work conforms to any guidelines adopted or approved by Council for the district in which the proposed work is located.

Staff is of the opinion the proposed work does substantially conform to the guidelines for the Over-the-Rhine Conservation District. (Refer to Certificate of Appropriateness review below)

3. **Plans.** The proposed work conforms to a comprehensive plan, any applicable urban design or other plan officially adopted by Council, and any applicable community plan approved by the City Planning Commission.

Plan Cincinnati was adopted in 2012 and there are many maps and discussion about the urban center and the basin area being a dense urban neighborhood. The proposal is supporting the desire for dense development to help build the population and work base for the City of Cincinnati. The proposal is also supporting creating diverse housing options which is desired in the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan.

4. **Traffic.** Streets or other means of access to the proposed development are suitable and adequate to carry anticipated traffic and will not overload the adjacent streets and the internal circulation system is properly designed.

This has been discussed above.

5. **Buffering.** Appropriate buffering is provided to protect adjacent uses or properties from light, noise and visual impacts.
   NA

6. **Landscaping.** Landscaping meets the requirements of Chapter 1423, Landscaping and Buffer Yards.
   NA

7. **Hours of Operation.** Operating hours are compatible with adjacent land uses.
   NA

8. **Neighborhood Compatibility.** The proposed work is compatible with the predominant or prevailing land use, building and structure patterns of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development and will not have a material net cumulative adverse impact on the neighborhood.
   The proposed use as a 4-story mixed use building is in keeping with the mixed use 3-4 story development on this portion of Race. While it is currently zoned as an RM 1.2 Zoning district, the historic fabric of the street is of a mixed use fabric with commercial first floors and residential upper stories.

9. **Proposed Zoning Amendments.** The proposed work is consistent with any proposed amendment to the zoning code then under consideration by the City Planning Commission or Council.
   There is currently a proposed zone change for this parcel to change it to CC-P. This would allow for a commercial first floor use and would also allow a density of 7 residential units which would change the request to asking for only 2x the allowed density.

10. **Adverse Effects.** Any adverse effect on the access to the property by fire, police, or other public services; access to light and air from adjoining properties; traffic conditions; or the development, usefulness or value of neighboring land and buildings.
    There are no anticipated adverse effects to the extent of access to fire, police or other public services.

11. **Blight.** The elimination or avoidance of blight.
    The current property is a combination of a vacant underutilized property and a historic building that has had unsympathetic changes including a first floor and a covered cornice. The project will be rehabilitating the existing historic building and removing a vacant lot.

12. **Economic Benefits.** The promotion of the Cincinnati economy.
    The proposed work will increase the property value of the subject parcels.

13. **Job Creation.** The creation of jobs both permanently and during construction.
    The proposed project will create temporary jobs during construction and will provide permanent jobs at the commercial space and property management.

14. **Tax Valuation.** Any increase in the real property tax duplicate.

Property taxes will increase due to the improved value of the significantly larger structure on the property. While the project does anticipate using Tax Abatement it will still increase taxes to the school district.

15. **Private Benefits.** The economic and other private benefits to the owner or applicant.

The owner has an economic benefit to the proposed establishment.

Certificate of Appropriateness Review

NEW CONSTRUCTION

The Over the Rhine Historic Conservation Design Guidelines gives direction to both staff and an applicant on how to design and review proposed developments. When designing infill developments, context and existing surrounding buildings are the main guiding principles of reference. Typically, the context that we consider the most when looking at appropriate infill design is the block that the parcel is on and especially adjacent properties. The applicants have provided numerous pictures of the block to show the existing historic context of the site in question. The applicant has also provided a detailed written narrative and graphic explanation of their design reasonings and compatibility.

Staff comments on the Specific Guidelines for New Construction:

A. Intent and General Guidelines

1. New construction is allowed on vacant sites in Over-the-Rhine, because gaps due to demolition weaken the streetscape and the overall character of the district. New construction can improve both the physical quality and economic vitality of the neighborhood.

The lot is a vacant unimproved lot.

2. New construction should be well-designed but should not replicate the existing buildings. The exceptional quality of the existing buildings in the district provides an outstanding framework for new construction.

This infill development does not replicate the existing buildings and through the applicant's narrative they explain how they used the existing buildings to inform their design.

3. The Historic Conservation Board's review of new construction will focus on the design compatibility with the surrounding contributing structures. The appropriateness of design

solutions will be based on balancing the programmatic needs of the applicant with how well the design relates to the neighboring buildings and to the intent of these guidelines. New design proposals should pay particular attention to composition, materials, openings, rhythm, scale, proportion and height.

Staff details the compatibility of the project with the guidelines and surrounding buildings below in the specific guidelines.

4. The new construction guidelines for this district will be used to judge the compatibility of new work. The specific site and programmatic needs of each project will be taken into consideration.

Staff details the compatibility of the project with the guidelines and surrounding buildings below in the specific guidelines

B. Specific Guidelines

1. Composition: New buildings should respond to the traditional subdivisions found on historic property: a base, a middle and a top. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are built of brick with the principal facade parallel to the street it faces. The most important features of buildings in Over-the-Rhine are the arrangement of openings on the principal facade and an overall vertical emphasis of the whole design. Each building provides its own variations, but collectively they share many basic features.

Base: New buildings should have a well-defined base. Within the district most buildings have a base that is distinguishable from the rest of the building. This is accomplished through a change of materials, a change of scale, and/or a lintel or other type of horizontal banding. In larger buildings the original base may include more than the first floor.

The property has a strong base defined by a storefront with large transparent glass. The base is topped with a horizontal element as a metal ribbon that is also a similar language to the top story.

Middle: Details on new buildings should relate to the detailing of adjacent or nearby buildings. Buildings in the district often incorporate architectural details such as changes in plane or changes in materials on their upper floors. Decorative, horizontal bands indicating the floor lines, sill heights or lintel heights should not overpower the vertical emphasis of the design.

The middle is defined by 3 floors of punched individual openings on the front and grouped and individual openings on the other sides of the building.

On the front the middle 2 floors have a simple sills.

Top: New construction must employ a strong element that terminates the uppermost part of the building. Distinctive elements in the architecture of Over-the-Rhine are elaborate projecting cornices, decorative parapets and the expressive use of materials.

The top is defined by the 4th floor of the building. The applicant has provided examples of buildings within OTR that have an entire upper floor that is distinguished from the rest providing an extended top. The building across the street at 1616 Race Street provides this detail. The applicant also provides a simple detailed metal cornice with an inset brick and inset metal to provide shadow and profile details.

2. Roofs: Roofs for new construction should be similar to roofs of adjacent and nearby buildings of similar size and use. In the district, buildings of three or more stories generally have low-pitched shed roofs that are not visible above the principal facade. Smaller buildings in the district typically have simple gable roofs on which the gables are perpendicular to the principal facade. Institutional buildings in Over-the-Rhine have a variety of roof shapes, including dormers, multiple gables, hip roofs and towers. Roofs in this district have little or no overhang.

The roof is a slight shed roof and a flat roof on rear. This is an appropriate roof type and provides for a simple horizontal line and top at the street side

3. Window Openings: Window openings are extremely important in this district. The openings of new buildings should be related to the size and placement of openings found on historic structures of similar use in the district. In residential buildings, window openings are typically found individually rather than in pairs or grouped. The openings are taller and wider (typically in a proportion of 2:1), window sash are set back from the wall surface, and openings have some form of definition, such as lintels, sills or decorative surrounds. Window openings, which are typically aligned vertically, usually occupy between 20% and 50% of the principal facade. In commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, windows are often grouped within a single opening. These building types may also use a combination of window sash, including double-hung, awning and hopper. If muntins are used in new window sash, they must provide true divided lights. Within the individual opening, window sashes are usually divided into two or more lights. In all cases the glass must be clear; tinted or reflective glass is not acceptable. Also, roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of the building that cover door and window openings are not appropriate.

1. *The windows are individual punched openings with a one over one details.*
2. *The individual panes are taller than they are wide.*
3. *The glass is clear and only used the tint required for energy code requirements.*
4. *The window openings have a simple sill on the second and third floors and a decorative metal surround on the fourth floor.*
5. *The windows are stacked vertically and lined up horizontally.*
6. *The new windows on the first floor of the historic building are storefront type windows in existing openings.*
7. *The windows on the sides are storefront windows on the first floor and grouped and individual punched openings on upper floors. The windows on the upper floors are still taller than they are wide but are a bit more non-traditional in their grouping forms. As these are not highly visible from the street right of way, staff finds these acceptable.*

4. Storefronts: New storefronts should relate to the characteristics of existing storefronts on historic buildings. Storefronts in the district are typically taller than individual upper floors; framed by piers and/or columns and have a lintel separating them from the upper floors; are divided into bays which increases their verticality and provides a pedestrian scale and proportion; and have large, fixed expanses of clear (not tinted or reflective) glass. As with rehabilitated original storefronts, roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of the building are not appropriate elements for new storefronts. The storefront lintels are 12 to 18 feet above grade; the windowsill height is between 18 inches and 3 feet above grade; and storefront windows are set back from the structural elements approximately 12 inches

The first floor is defined by a commercial storefront. The majority of the base is a storefront form with a large plane of glass. While the design does not include a tall knee wall, it does have approximately a 3 course brick knee wall to provide a solid connection to the ground. The storefront also has strong vertical mullions to break up the glass and help provide vertical emphasis.

There is one entrance at the north edge of the storefront at the point that is setback. The entrance is defined with a metal surround/ribbon.

5. Setback: Setback is an important issue in a dense urban area such as Over-the-Rhine. The setback for new construction should be consistent with the buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites. In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, has shallow setbacks but retain an "edge" at the property line with a fence. Some larger institutional buildings such as schools, churches and public buildings are setback from the street to provide public space and to add to their monumentality. In most cases new construction on corner sites should be built up to the edge of both outside property lines.

The building has a slight angled setback with the south edge being at the street edge and the north corner being setback slightly to allow for both an out swinging door and to allow for the existing historic building to have a bit of prominence.

The applicants are also introducing a setback in the upper windows. The exterior windows surrounds will remain in the same plane as the other windows, but the glass will be setback at a different depth in each window.

While staff does not consider either of these angles/setbacks to be contextual as there are no other angled buildings or setback windows along the block, staff does not think these angles and setbacks will detract from the historic context as the rest of the building is contextual and the angles is shallow. Rather it will provide a unique interest to the building that will only be noticed upon careful observation of the building.

6. Rhythm: New buildings should incorporate design features, such as window groupings, articulation of wall surfaces, and decorative elements such as columns or piers in an effort to maintain the rhythm that already exists in the district. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found on the district. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are relatively narrow, 25 to 50 feet in width. A building facade typically displays vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm. In dense commercial areas such as Vine Street, there are no setbacks, creating a solid wall along the street. This wall is articulated by the individual buildings, which in turn are divided by window groupings, changes in wall planes and decorative elements such as pilasters, columns or piers.

There are many elements of rhythm in the building. As the lot is a wide lot, the building does the following to create an appropriate rhythm:

1. *A regular pattern and spacing on the windows.*
2. *The building is slightly smaller than the 25 feet but as the building is also taller than the neighboring building, the thinner building helps to not overwhelm the historic building.*

7. Emphasis: New residential and mixed-use construction should have a vertical emphasis, because in Over-the-Rhine buildings are taller than they are wide, window openings are tall and narrow, and storefronts have slender columns, which emphasize verticality. Commercial and industrial buildings, which may have an overall horizontal emphasis, often incorporate vertical elements, such as pilasters or vertically oriented openings.

The building is taller than it is wide, and the design incorporated other vertical elements

1. *Windows are taller than they are wide.*
2. *The divisions on the store front create vertical windowpanes*
3. *The vertical alignment of the windows creates columns with both the windows and the brick*

8. Height: The height of new construction should not vary more than one story from adjacent contributing buildings. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are between two- and five-stories.

The building is a 4 story building and is within one story of abutting properties to the north and south and adjacent buildings across the street and on the same block are 4 stories.

9. Materials: New construction should use materials that are found on the historic buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Clearly the dominant material in Over-the-Rhine is brick, but other materials such as limestone, sandstone, cast-iron, slate, wood and sheet metal are important as well. Materials such as stucco, synthetic stucco and plastic are not appropriate and should not be considered as exposed finish materials for new construction in this district.

1. *Overall the materials used on the building are appropriate. The main massing is brick. The brick is an orangish brick that will blend in with unpainted brick on the street.*

2. *Other materials such as metal and glass are appropriate as secondary and accent materials.*

The applicant has kept the materials simple and by using brick and limited metal, the overall materials of the building help make the building contextual.

Other Considerations:

Prehearing Results: June 12, 2019. The meeting was attended by the applicants and a representative from the OTR Foundation.

OTR Foundation submitted a letter to the applicant after a review of the project. The applicant has addressed the comment regarding providing for a base on the storefront. The applicant also studies extending the building to a zero side setback on the south side, however staff and the applicant felt this actually made the building seem much larger and overwhelmed the block.

Recommendation:

I. ZONING VARIANCES

The following recommendations are proposed for the project proposed at 1617-1619 Race Street per the drawings submitted by GBBN Architects dated 07/19/2019.

A. Sec.1409-09 Density: **APPROVE** Numerical Variance of 834 sf of lot area/dwelling unit requirement of 1200 sf of lot area/dwelling unit to allow a 15 dwelling multifamily project at a density of 366 sf lot area/dwelling unit with the following conditions.
   a. A covenant shall be recorded prior to building permit issuance for the trash collection of the property on the adjacent property at 1623 Race Street.
   b. If the project does not move forward with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the density variance is required to come back before the Historic Conservation Board.

B. Sec.1409-09 Side Setback: **APPROVE**: Dimensional Variance of 10 feet and 17 feet side to allow for a 5 foot setback on the south and a zero lot line setback on the north.

C. Sec.1409-09 Rear Setback: **APPROVE** Dimensional Variance of 32’9" to allow for a setback of 7’3” on the rear.

D. FINDING: The Board makes this determination that per Section 1435-05-4:
   1. Such relief from literal implication of the Zoning Code will not materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property within the district or vicinity where property is located.

2. The property is part of a larger project with 23 scattered parcels including both new construction on 4 projects and 19 rehabilitation projects.
3. The project is part of a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Project and the applicants have sufficiently demonstrated that the extra units are needed to make the project economically feasible.

II. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

A. APPROVE the application a Certificate of Appropriateness for 4 story mixed use, multi-family residential building at 1617-1619 Race Street per plans submitted by GBBN Architecture dated 07/19/2019 with the following conditions:

1. The building permit must be issued within 2 years or the Certificate of Appropriateness will expire.
2. The tax parcels shall be merged by Consolidation Plat prior to building permits being issued.

B. FINDING: The Board makes this determination that per Section 1435-05-4:

1. That the property owner and applicant have demonstrated by credible evidence that the proposal substantially conforms to the applicable guidelines for New Construction of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Conservation District.
2. The massing, including height and width, are appropriate and balanced as to not overwhelm the block of historic contributing buildings.
3. The building has contemporary take on historic elements, including and extended/differentiated top floor, simple cornice, and window surrounds.

GBBN

July 19, 2019

Beth Johnson
Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Avenue, Suite 500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Based on the narrative below, we hope that you and the Historic Conservation Board will find that the proposed design for a new 4 story building with a mix of affordable and market rate residential apartments at 1617-1619 Race Streets meets the vast majority of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Guidelines and represents an effort to create a contemporary building that adds to the vitality and texture of Race Street in its relation to the historic fabric of this block of Over-the-Rhine. We have been careful not to replicate the features of adjacent existing buildings, but rather to *relate* to them in their overall organization and effect. We hope that you will support this effort to pair a high level of contemporary design with one of the most significant additions of affordable housing in Over-the-Rhine in recent years as part of Model Group and 3CDC's Willkommen project,.

1.Composition: This building has is organized into a base, middle, and top.

Base: The base is defined by a higher level of transparency than is seen in the middle and top. In the existing building, the non-original brick that infills the area believed to have been storefront will be removed, and infilled with clear glass. These regions of glass will be lined with metal reinforcing their difference from the glazing in the windows above, and suggesting a relationship to the abutting new building that will be built to the south. The new building's base will be outlined by a ribbon of the same metal used at the storefront windows of the historic building, with a deeper profile at the entry door. It will have a brick sill that aligns with the sill height of the store front windows on the abutting historic building. The glass infill will have 2 inch mullions to create a vertical rhythm of glazed panels, each about the same width as the storefront windows of the abutting historic building.

Middle: The middle of both the historic and new building on this site is defined by a field condition of brick with punched windows, organized in vertical columns and rows aligning with each floor. The existing historic building will receive new aluminum clad wood 1 over 1 windows in the existing openings. The abutting new building will have a similar window spacing and floor to floor heights. It will also have aluminum clad wood windows with a 2:1 ratio of height to width, very similar to the abutting historic building and the other adjacent contributing buildings.

The overall design of the middle of the new building seeks to differentiate itself from the abutting historic building with a design that references nearby buildings in which middle is organized into a 2:1 ratio, with a horizontal banding detail that separates the top floor from the middle two floors above the base (Figures 1-4 at the end of this letter). This can be seen most clearly across the street at 1616 Race, but

also on the corner at 1601 Race. It is notable that these examples do not use a shortened attic window, but rather use a full size window, and a full height story, distinguished by its decorative treatment. In both of these examples, you can also see that the window surrounds are more decorative, distinguishing them from those in the levels below. Other examples of façades in OTR featuring the entire top level separated by horizontal banding and different details can be seen at 1426 Race Street, 1719 Vine Street and 1810 Vine Street.

The more decorative top floor in the new building is separated from the more simple 2 middle floors by a thin horizontal metal ledge. The face of the brick at the top floor level slips back the depth of a single brick resulting in a face that will receive light and shadow differently than the plane of brick defining the two levels below. The windows at this top level will feature a heavier metal surround that will project slightly from the face of the brick as a decorative element that distinguishes them from the windows below.

Top: The top the building is defined by a slightly inset row of darker brick topped by a 12 inch profiled metal cornice. The face of the metal cornice steps back to create a reveal, while the top edge creates a thin profile that projects slightly beyond the face of the brick façade.

2.Roof: The new building has roof that reads as a simple gable roof from Race street, similar to the abutting historic building. The roof of the larger volume of the building will be minimally visible from Race Street, as it is well behind the mass of the abutting historic building.

3.Window Openings: The windows are set in punched openings and are of similar size, proportion, and spacing to windows found on the immediately adjacent buildings. The historic building will receive new 1 over 1 double hung windows that will sit at the same depth in the window opening they would have historically. The windows in the top story of the new building on the Race Street elevation will have a decorative metal surround. All windows in the new building will feature a brick sill detail.

4.Storefronts: This design returns transparency to the first floor storefront window openings of the historic building. In the new building, the height of the storefront is aligned with the height of the storefront window openings in the abutting historic building. It will be constructed with black 2 inch x 4.5 inch aluminum mullions and clear glazing. It is inset approximately 12 inches from the facade.

5.Setback: This project's setbacks are in line with the historic guidelines. On the north façade, which faces the alley, the building has zero setback at grade from the property line, except for a small extent of wall at the exit from the residential stair which angles back slightly to create space for the door to swing outward for egress. On the south facade, a 5'-0" setback has been maintained for the length of the building. This 5 foot setback is needed up to the front of the building because the historic building directly to the south has windows along its entire north façade, and the southern units in the new building will also need windows. Along Race Street, no change is being made to the setback of the existing historic building on the site. The wall of the new building angles in very slightly from the property line to create space for the door to open outward as required by code, and to better express the corner of the abutting historic building. This space will be given back to the sidewalk for a more generous entry space.

GBBN

The rear yard setback varies between 7'-3" and 24'-2" the north. The historic properties on this block are generally built close to the rear lot lines with the exception of 1629-1630 Race Street.

6.Rhythm: This building maintains a rhythm of vertical bays by placing most of the new building well behind the existing historic building on the site. The portion of the new building visible on Race Street is slightly under the typical module of 25 ft at 20ft, however, we believe that this dimension results in a more balanced proportion that does not overwhelm the abutting historic building. As noted, the rhythm of window openings and storefront panels is a continuation of the sizes and rhythm found in the abutting historic building, suggesting a strong relationship, even as they differ.

7.Emphasis: This design, which encompasses both the existing historic building on the site and the new building to be built around it, uses many of the elements listed above to reinforce a strong vertical reading of the composition. In particular, the differentiation of "old" and "new" allows their respective massings, each taller than wide, to read clearly in the street elevation. Windows are also taller than wide following the typical ratios found on the block.

8. Height: The proposed new building is 1 story taller than the building directly to the south, and the abutting historic building on the site (1619 Race). On this block of Race Street, between Liberty and Green Street there are other **six** other 4 story buildings (1601 Race, 1616 Race, 1626-1628 Race, , 1630-1640 Race, 1631 Race and 1635 Race,). There are eight buildings at 3 stories (1600 Race, 1606 Race, 1607 Race, 1611 Race, 1613-1615 Race, 1619 Race (on site), 1623 Race, and 1633 Race). There is one building at 2 stories (1627-1629 Race Street). Extreme care has been taken to minimize the visual impact of the height of the new building from Race Street, even though it is within the guidelines in terms of height. As noted, the portion of the new building that fronts to Race Street is a more slender proportion so that it is not competing with the 3 story structures to either side.

9.Materials: This building will have brick on all facades that are visible to the general public from Republic Street. We will use primarily a crimson ironspot brick with smooth red brick. Please refer to the packet for specific make and images. Storefront glazing system will be clear glass with black 2 inch aluminum mullions. Windows will be black aluminum clad wood double hung windows with clear glass. Reveals, cornices and other details will be matching black metal.

We appreciate your consideration and please do not hesitate to reach out if there is any additional information we can provide.

Sincerely,

Chad Burke
Principal

Figure 1a. 1601 Race

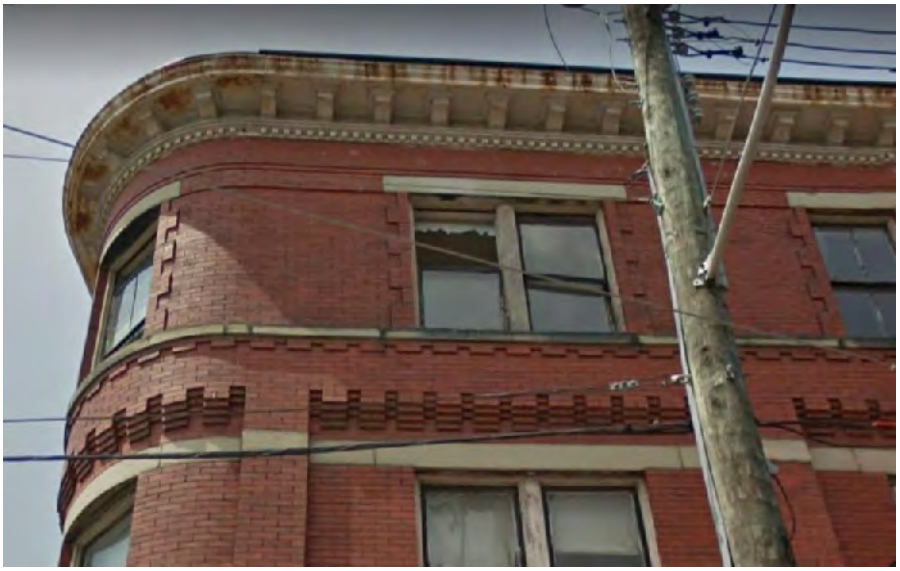


Figure 1b. 1601 Race Enlarged

Figure 2. 1616 Race

Figure 3. 1426 Race

Figure 4. 1810 Vine

July 22, 2019

Beth Johnson
Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Avenue, Suite 500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

On behalf of the Willkommen Development Team we are seeking the following reliefs to the proposed development at 1617-1619 Race Street, Cincinnati, 45202.

Variance:

1. CZC 1409-09 Development Regulations
    a. Density
    b. Side Setback
    c. Rear Setback

General Background:

The new 4 story building that will contain one or two commercial spaces on the first floor and a mix of affordable and market rate residential apartments at the upper floors at 1617-1619 Race Street is part of a larger joint development by Model Group and 3CDC called Willkommen. The residential portion will consist of 15 units (2 two bedroom units,10 one bedroom units , and 3 studio units). Three additional new buildings are proposed and 11 existing historic buildings are being renovated as part of this project that bring one of the largest increases in affordable housing to OTR in years.

Specific Relief Requested:

1. CZC 1409-09 Development Regulations
    a. Density: This location permits a maximum of 4 units under the RM1.2 Multifamily requirement of 1200sf lot area per unit. Due to the size requirements of units in OHFA guidelines, and programmatic requirements the proposed development houses 15 units requiring a variance of 11 units. See Willkommen Density and Development Requirements document provided by 3CDC and Model Group which is part of this submission package for more information.

    b. Side Setback (Side lot lines defined by CZC 1401-01-L13) : (Adjudication states variance required based on final determination based on established height). 5ft + .5 ft for every 1 ft of height above 35ft =minimum side setback. Total height is 50'-0" making required minimum side setback 5ft+ .5(15ft)=12.5ft. Total of side setbacks is 17ft + 1ft for every foot over 35ft. Total height of 50'-0" makes total of required side setbacks 17 + 1(15) = 32 ft.

At the south side lot line the setback of the proposed design is 5'-0", which would require a variance of 7.5ft to satisfy the minimum requirement. At the North side lot line, the setback of the proposed design is at the property line, which would require a variance of 12.5 ft to satisfy the minimum. For overall side setback total, 5 ft has been provided in the current design meaning that a variance of 27ft is required.

c. Rear Setback (Rear lot lines defined by CZC 1401-01-L12) : This location requires a 30 ft rear yard setback plus 1additional ft for every additional 5 ft of height above 35ft. At 50'-0", the required setback would be 33ft. The proposed building is setback between 7ft and 24ft from the rear lot line requiring a variance of 26'-0".

Standards for a Variance:

1. *To meet the standard outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-13, an applicant must show that the proposed project "is in the public interest". A list of factors considered by the Zoning Hearing Examiner to determine whether the project "is in the public interest" is found in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-13.*

Answer: Out of the 16 items listed in CZC Section 1445-13 for use in determining whether a development is in the public interest, the development proposed at 1600-1602 Pleasant Street meets almost all 16 in providing a positive benefit for the public interest.

A few of these are highlighted below.

h) *Neighborhood Compatibility: The proposed work is compatible with the dominant or prevailing land use, building and structure patterns of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development and will not have a material net cumulative adverse impact on the neighborhood.* This project aims to improve this portion of the neighborhood by returning it to uses and building patterns aligned with the historic patterns of the neighborhood. This block of Race Street historically featured primarily buildings that had commercial uses on the first floor below residential or office spaces, as evidenced by the remaining decorative lintels and columns and a few glass storefronts. Although many of these are today infilled with brick or wood paneling, are boarded up or curtained inside and protected with metal bars, it is clear that this was *not* a street for only residential uses until relatively recently. Its worth noting that the most recent apparent use of the first floor and basement of the existing building at 1619 Race appears to been a pool hall. The proposed development at 1617-1619 Race would provide an example on this street, which today feels shuttered, unwatched, and closed off, to encourage opening up and an embrace of city life at street level. This is particularly important since there are many properties along this block which could be renovated in the near future, and this is an opportunity to set a tone that is most desirable for the neighborhood along one of the primary corridors between Finlay Market and the rest of the neighborhood.

k) *Blight:* The proposed project transforms an empty lot along a pedestrian corridor into lively commercial space and multi-family housing constructed of high quality materials. Additionally, it

incorporates a historic building that is currently in poor condition, fully renovating it into new housing and commercial space.

l) *Economic benefits:* The provision units of affordable housing in this mixed income project will allow more lower income residents to remain in the neighborhood, where they can be close to resources, amenities and jobs.

p) *Public Benefits.* The public peace, health, safety or general welfare. A primary goal of the proposed design is to create a buffer that enhances the historic character of Pleasant Street, but also provides an active street presence to increase safety and improve the experience of walking along Race Street.

It may be noted that the project is less aligned with two of the categories below.

a) *Zoning: The proposed work conforms to the underlying zone district regulations and is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code or the Land Development Code as applicable.*

c) *Plans*: *The proposed work conforms to any guidelines adopted or approved by Council for the district in which the proposed work is located.*

This neighborhood is very atypical from other RM 1.2 areas in the city because it is located in a dense urban environment that was historically a commercial corridor. Although many of these storefronts have been boarded up in recent decades, they remain as an indicator of the uses that have historically flourished along this block.

Standards for a Variance (applies to Density and Setback Variance Requests):

To meet the Standard outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-15 an applicant must show:

a. neither the owner nor any of its predecessors caused the condition requiring a variance;

Answer:

Density and Setbacks: The variance request was not caused by the owner nor any of its predecessors. Rather, it is the result of the program (residential mix with the guidelines on unit size and common spaces determined by OHFA) and the application of the historic guidelines in a confined site in an urban setting.

b. how the project meets any of the following conditions:

i. *special circumstances or conditions pertaining to the property cause the strict application of the zoning code to be unreasonable and would result in practical difficulties;*

Answer:

1. *Density:* As noted above, this portion of the neighborhood is very atypical from those typically designated as RM1.2 elsewhere in the city. Discussions with city staff made it clear that even though there were reasons to believe that the site should be rezoned in line with similar surrounding commercial areas (CC-P) it would not be possible for the development team to attempt to get through the process within the timeline required by applications for low income housing tax credits and suggested that requesting a variance was the better route.

   In this case, the density required under the current zoning code would directly impede the creation of new, high quality affordable housing, which has only become a greater priority for the neighborhood over the past few years. In order to produce units that will be affordable, the development team must adhere as closely as possible to the unit sizes outlined in the guidelines produced by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) and to hit unit mix and number targets. These units sizes are slightly larger than is often found in strictly market rate projects. However, to provide only 4 units and create a building on this site that would be within 1 story of the adjacent buildings, and be generally built to the lot lines on all but the rear yard would result in extremely large units that would need to be priced at the very high end of the current housing market.

   2.Setbacks: For sites designated RM1.2, CZC 1405-07 Notes "*Where an overlay district applies, the provisions of that district take precedence if there is a conflict with the standards of this section".*

   In this case the standards for Setbacks under the Over-the-Rhine Historic District should take precedence over the required front, rear, and side setbacks. The guidelines state that *"The setback for new construction should be consistent with the buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites.* In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, have shallow setbacks…"(Item B.5).

   If nearby existing historic buildings are considered we see the following as typical setbacks:

   1611 Race (front setback of 0ft, rear setback of 8.5ft, side setback of 0ft to the north, and 0-5ft on the south)

   1623 Race (front setback of 0ft, rear setback of 0 feet, side set back) 0ft to the north and 0ft -9ft to the south)

1613-1615 is not used as a model here because it appears to be an anomalous case where the building is set back farther off the rear lot line, but an accessory building connecting to 1611 passes behind it, sitting over the top of multiple property lines.

We trust that this memo provides everything you need to inform your decision. We appreciate your time in considering this matter. Please contact me directly if you have any questions. I would be happy to supply you with any additional information that you may need.

Sincerely,

Chad Burke, AIA, LEED AP
GBBN Architects Inc.

LOCATION AND DISTRICTS

- Site Area: 5,500 sf
- Zoning Designation: RM-1.2
  (Residential Multi-Family)
- Historic District: Over the Rhine
- National Registry: Over the Rhine
- Business District: -
- Commercial Use: Permitted after review and approval

MASSING REGULATIONS

- Max Height: -
- Min Height: -
- Front Yard Setback: 20 ft
  - » (+1 ft additional setback for each 5ft of height above 35 ft)
- Side Yard Setback: 5/17 ft
  - » (+1 ft additional setback for each 1ft of height above 35 ft)
- Rear Yard Setback: 30 ft
  - » (+1 ft additional setback for each 5ft of height above 35 ft)

UNIT COUNT

- Current Count: 15 units
- Zoning Code: 1,200 sf land area per unit = 4 units

1617-1619 Race

ZONING ANALYSIS

7.19.2019

LOOKING SOUTH

LOOKING NORTH

LOOKING DIRECTLY WEST

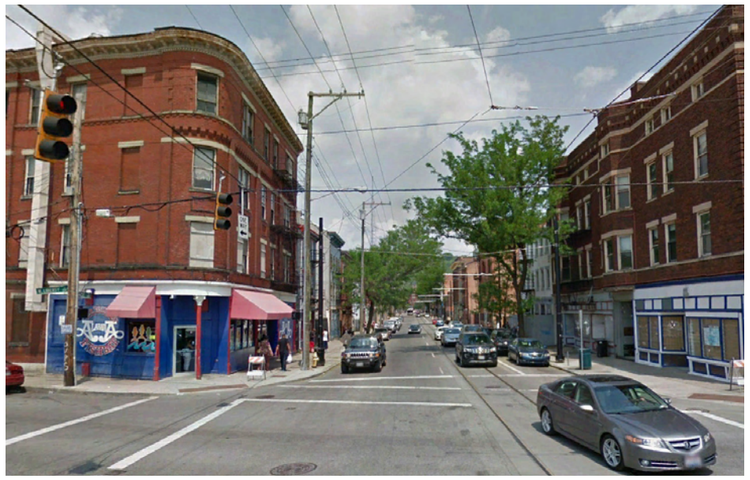
EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDING TO REMAIN AND UNDERGO RENOVATION

1 STORY NON-HISTORIC ADDITION TO BE DEMOLISHED*

*BASED ON BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND HISTORIC AERIALS, WE BELIEVE THIS ADDITION WAS CONSTRUCTED AT SOME POINT IN THE 1970'S. IT APPEARS TO BE BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF A HISTORIC BUILDING, WHICH WAS WOULD HAVE OCCUPIED THE REAR POSTION OF THE SITE BUT WAS DEMOLISHED PRIOR TO THE 1960'S. FOR THIS REASON, IT IS NOT PART OF THE CONTRIBUTING HISTORIC BUILDING.

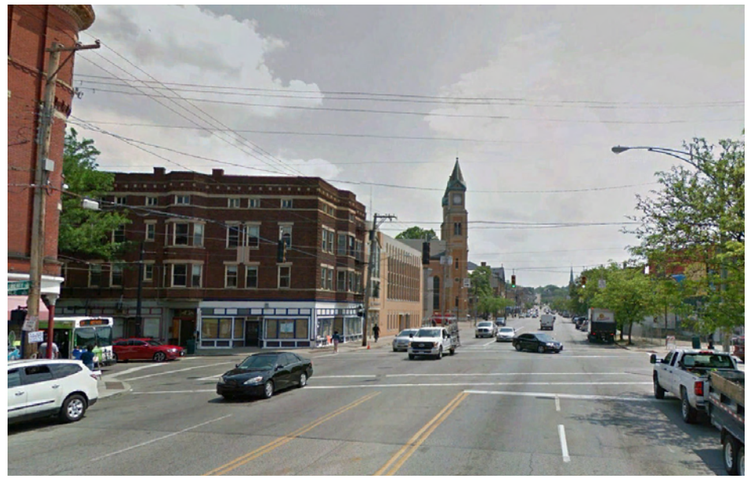
1617-1619 Race

SITE PHOTOS

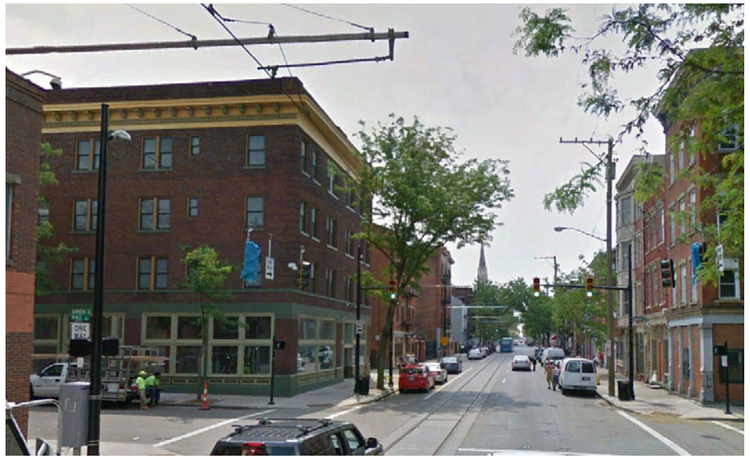


LOOKING NORTH UP RACE STREET FROM LIBERTY STREET

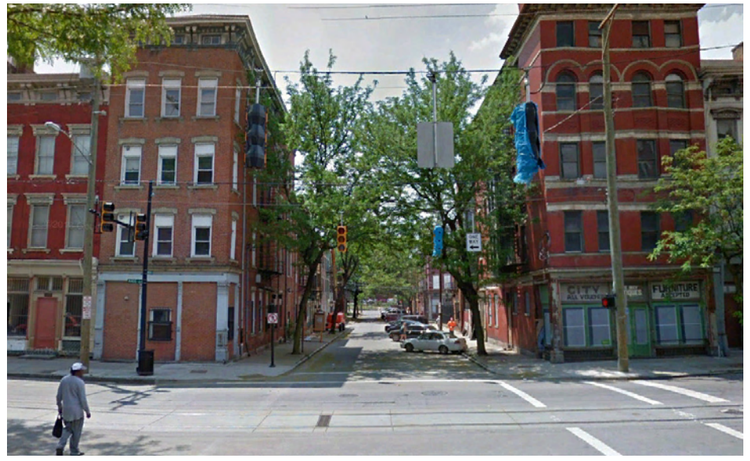
LOOKING EAST ON GREEN STREET @INTERSECTION WITH RACE STREET



LOOKING EAST ON LIBERTY @INTERSECTION WITH RACE STREET



LOOKING SOUTH DOWN RACE STREET FROM GREEN STREET

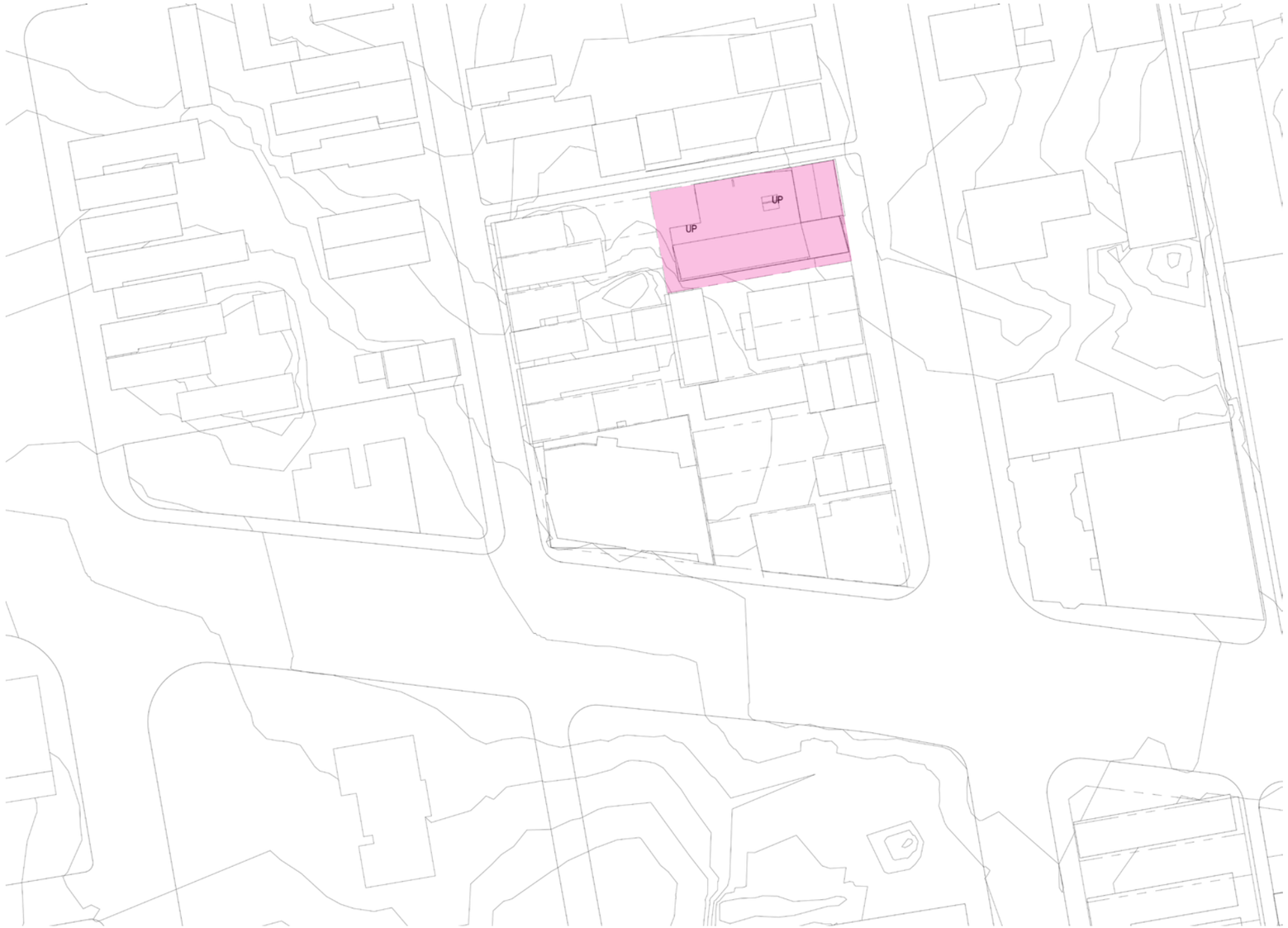


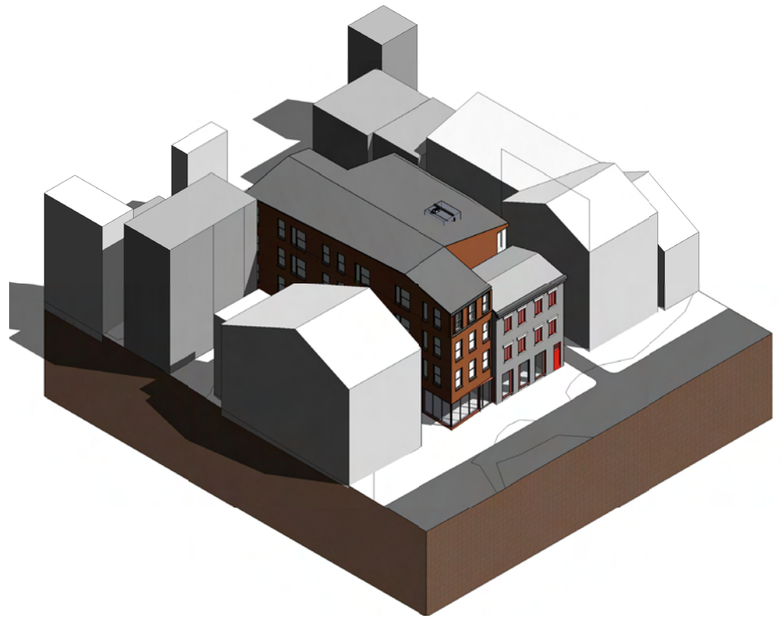
LOOKING WEST ON GREEN STREET @ INTERSECTION WITH RACE STREET

LOOKING WEST ON LIBERTY @ INTERSECTION WITH RACE STREET

1617-1619 Race

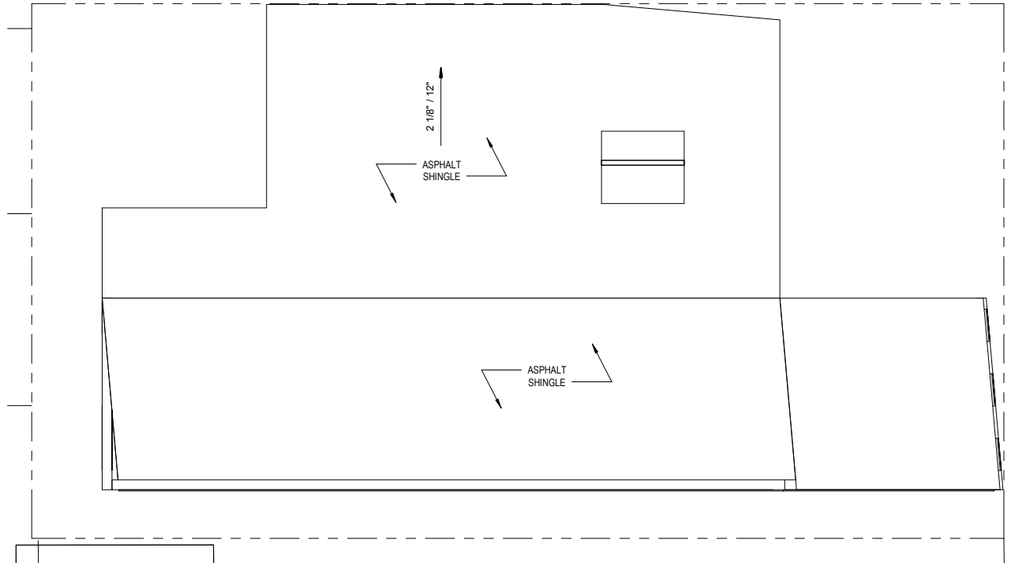
BLOCK CONTEXT PHOTOS



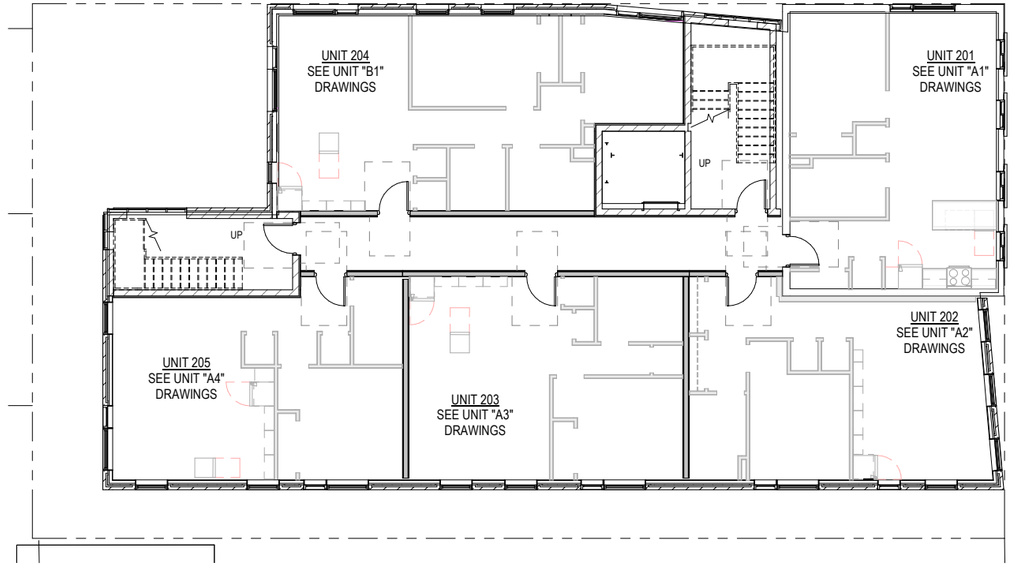


1617–1619 Race

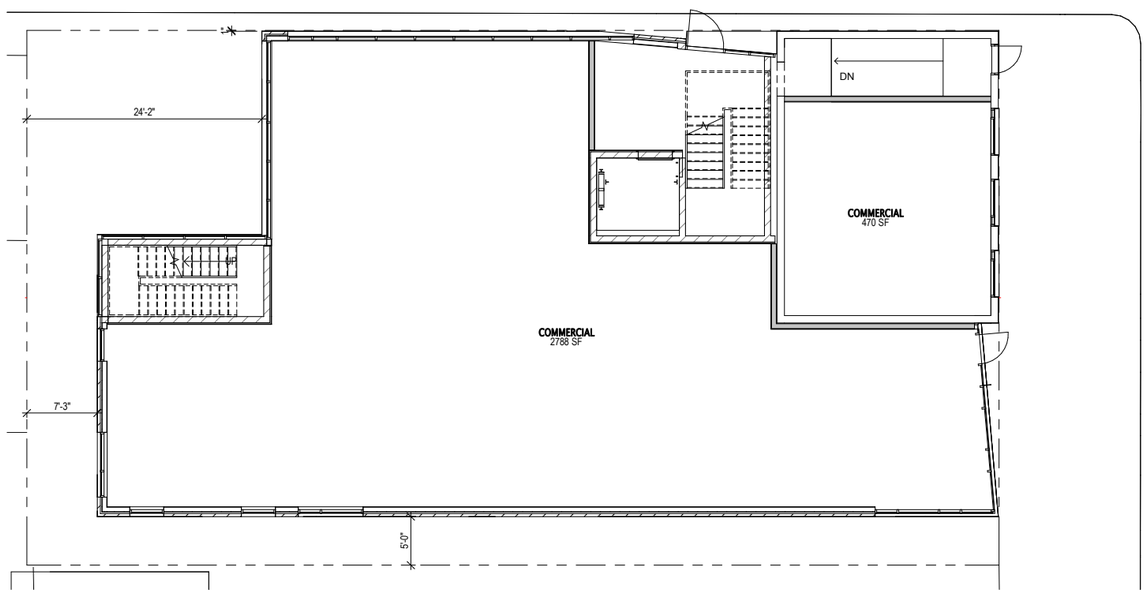
SITE PLAN AND AXONOMETRIC



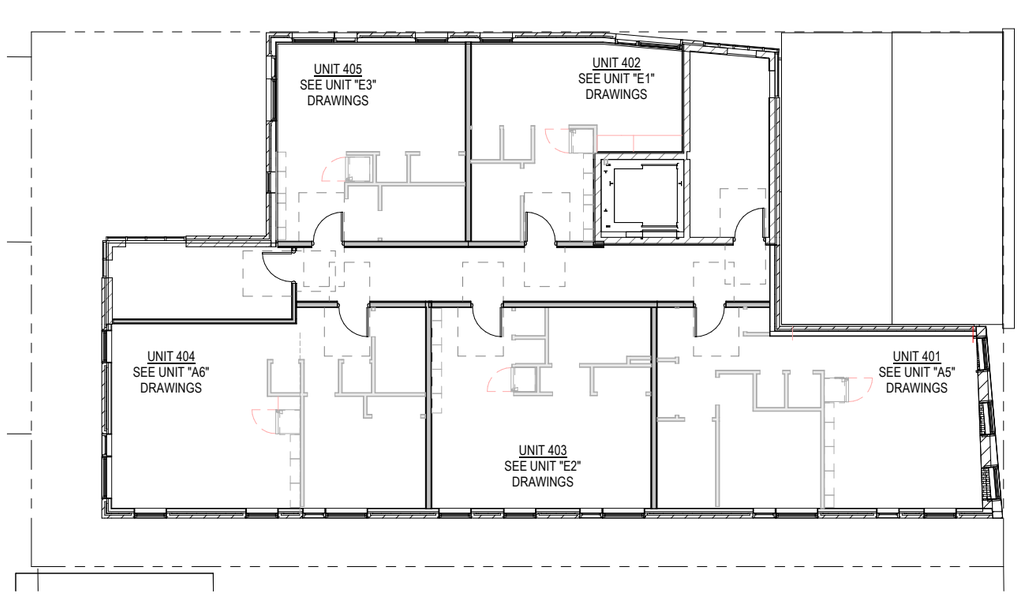
ROOF



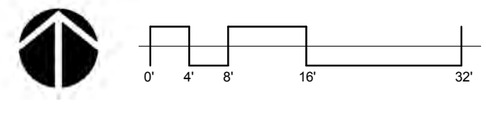
FLOOR 4



GROUND FLOOR



FLOORS 2-3

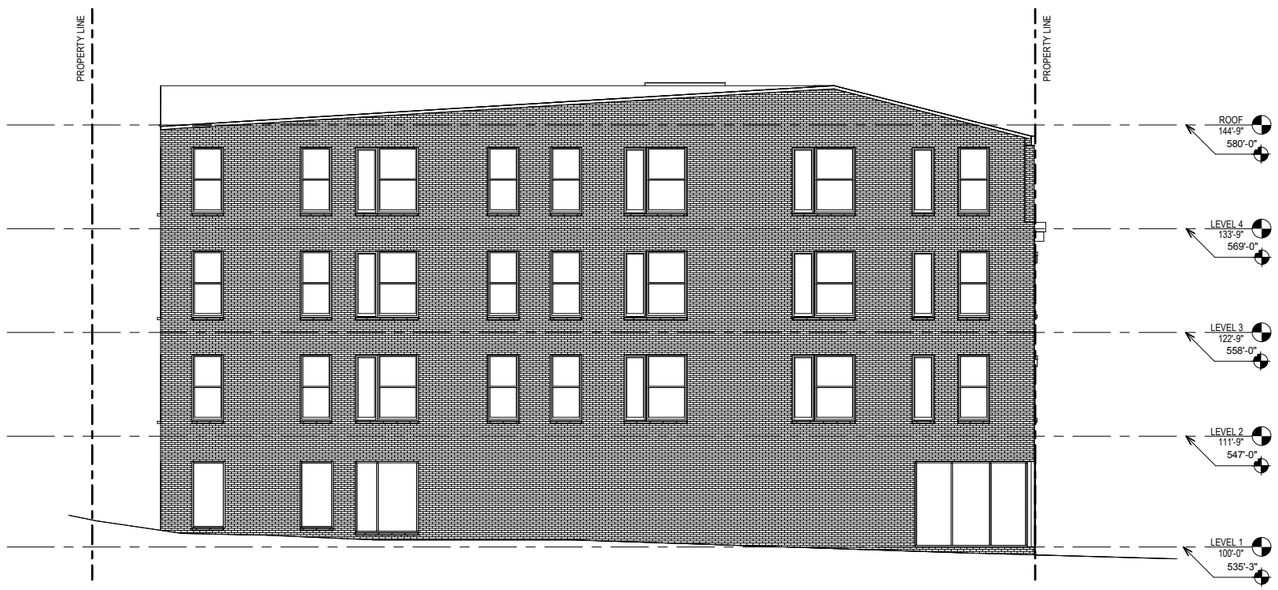


1617-1619 Race

PLANS

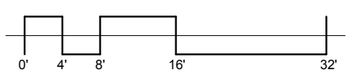
4 A301 **NORTH OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

3 A301 **WEST OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 A301 **SOUTH OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

1 A301 **EAST OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



1617-1619 Race

ELEVATIONS

View Looking Northwest

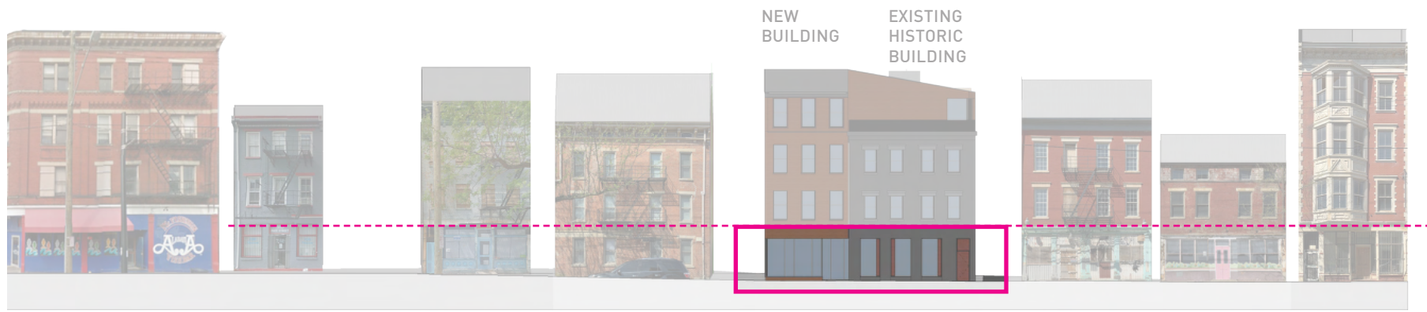
1617–1619 Race

PERSPECTIVE

1619 RACE STREET- COMPOSITION

New buildings should respond to the traditional subdivisions found on historic property: **a base middle and top**. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are built of brick with the principal facade parallel to the street it faces. The most important features of buildings in Over-the-Rhine are the arrangement of openings on the principal facade and an overall **vertical emphasis** of the whole design.

1619 RACE STREET- COMPOSITION, BASE



LINTEL ALIGNS WITH OTHER STOREFRONT LINTELS ON BLOCK

CRIMSON BRICK ABOVE

METAL WRAP AT STOREFRONT PERIMETER AS "HORIZONTAL BAND"

BRICK SILL TO MATCH HEIGHT OF SILLS ON HISTORIC BUILDING

PAINTED BRICK ABOVE

CORTEN METAL

TRANSPARENT GLASS WITH 2 INCH MULLIONS

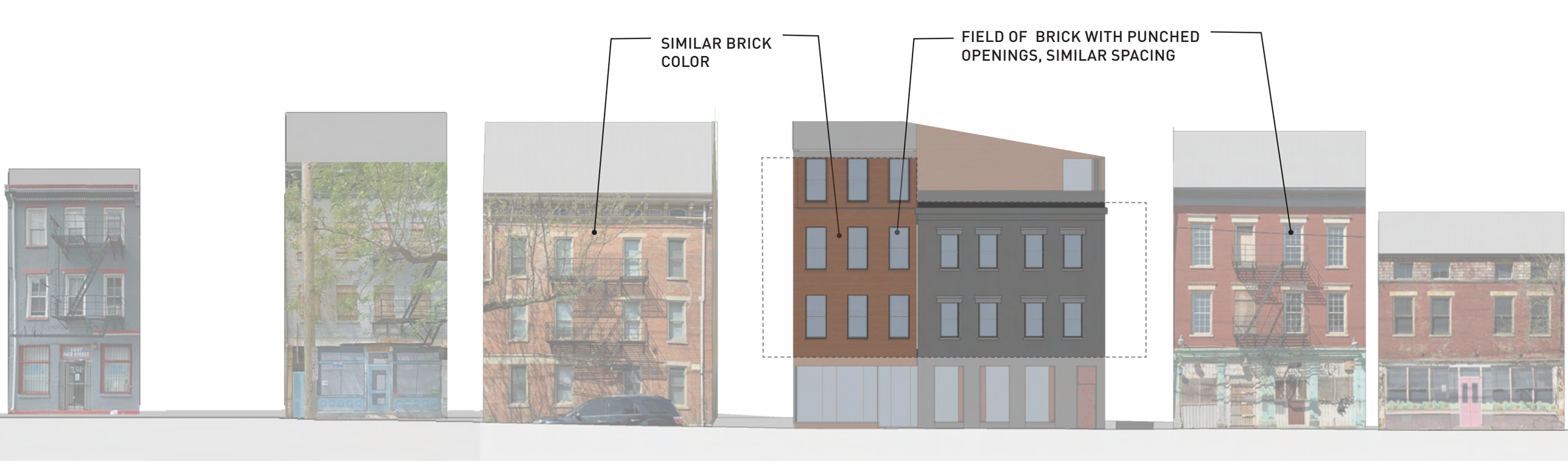
SIMILAR METAL WRAP PROTRUDES SLIGHTLY AT COMMERCIAL ENTRY

MAINTAIN EXISTING SILL.
REMOVE MASONRY INFILL.
LINE OPENINGS WITH METAL TRIM
INFILL WITH TRANSPARENT GLASS

New buildings should have a well defined base. Within the district, most buildings have a base that is distinguishable from the rest of the building. This is accomplished through **a change of materials**, a change of scale, and/or a lintel of **other type of horizontal banding**.

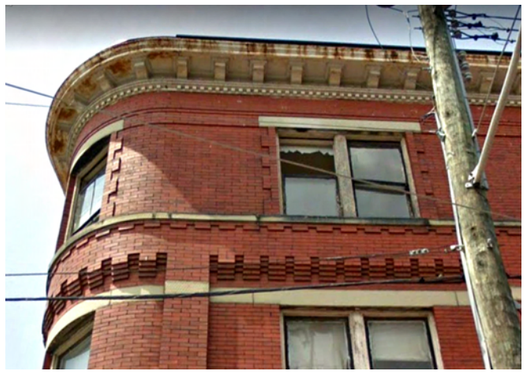
1619 RACE STREET– COMPOSITION, MIDDLE

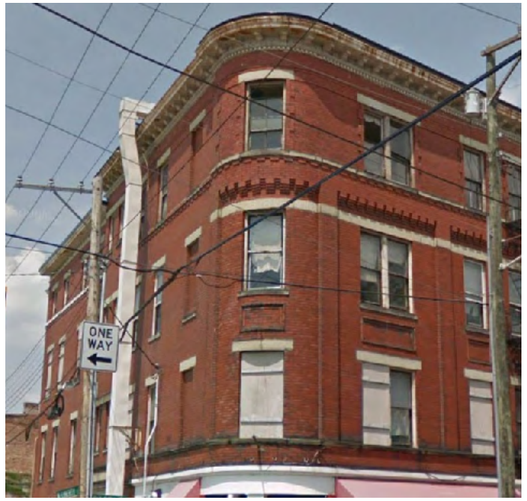
Details on new buildings should **relate to the detailing of adjacent or nearby buildings**.



1619 RACE STREET- COMPOSITION MIDDLE

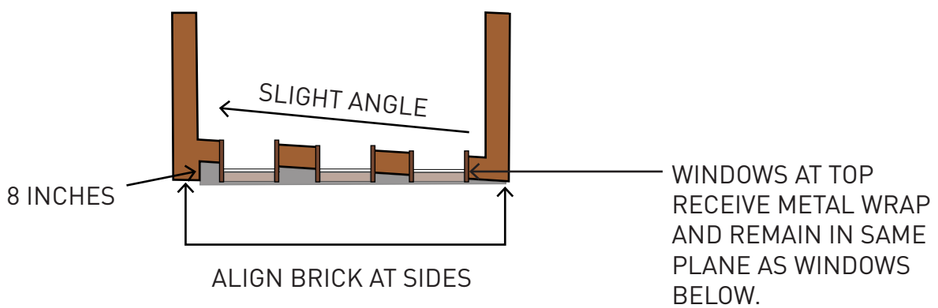
This building borrows a compositional strategy from nearby buildings that separate the top story with a horizontal banding detail and use more decorative surrounds on top story windows.





1601 RACE

1616 RACE

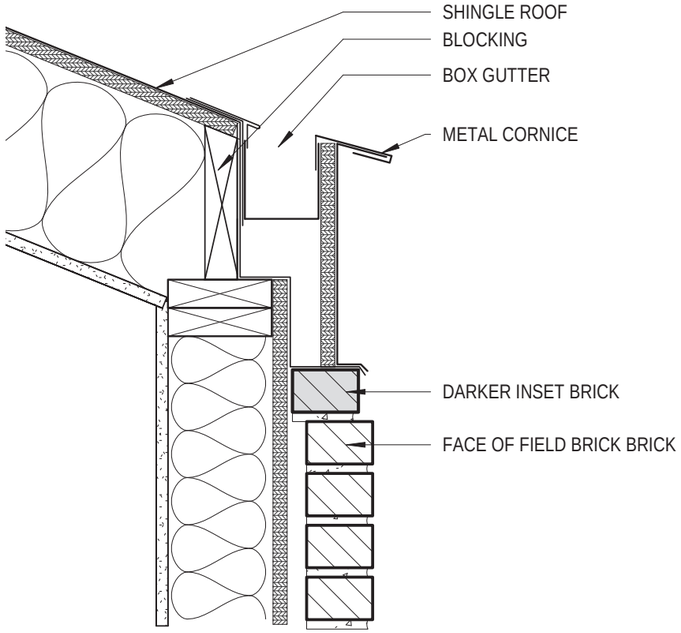


1619 RACE STREET- COMPOSITION, TOP & UPPER MIDDLE

New buildings must employ a **strong element that terminates** the uppermost part of the building. Distinctive elements in the architecture of Over-the-Rhine are elaborate projecting cornices, decorative parapets, and the **expressive use of materials.**

12 INCH FORMED ALUMINUM REVEAL CORNICE DETAIL AND BOX GUTTER, PAINTED BLACK

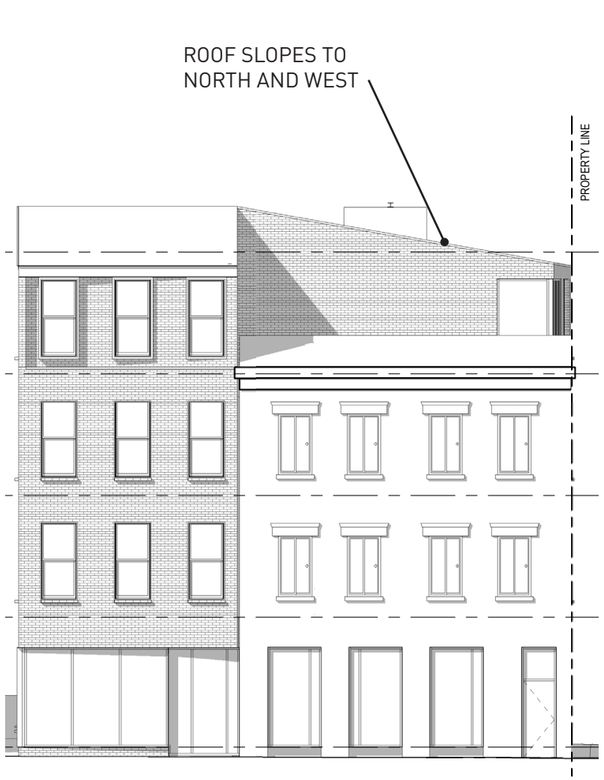
UNCOVER EXISTING CORNICE AT EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDING AND RESTORE



CORNICE DETAIL FOR NEW BUILDING TOP

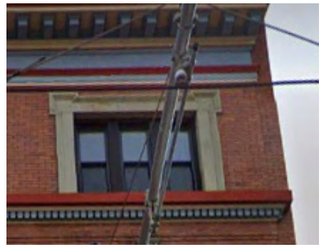
1619 RACE STREET- ROOFS

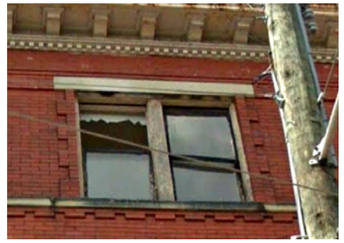
Roofs for new construction should be similar to roofs of adjacent and nearby buildings of similar size and use. In the district buildings of three or more stories generally have **low pitched shed roofs that are not visible above the primary facade...**Smaller buildings in the distric typically have **simple gable roofs on which the gables are perpendicular to the principal facade. Roofs in this district have little or no overhang.**



1619 RACE STREET– WINDOW OPENINGS

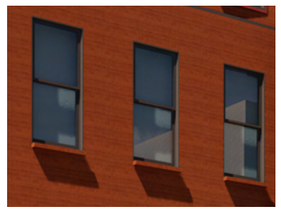
Window openings of new buildings should be related to the size and placement of openings found on historic structures of similar use in the district. In residential buildings, window openings are typically found individually rather than in pairs or grouped. the openings are taller and wide **(proportion of 2:1)**, window sash are **set back from the wall**, and openings have some **form of definition** such as lintels, sills or decorative surrounds. Window openings, which are typically **aligned vertically, occupy between 20% and 50% of the principal facade.**



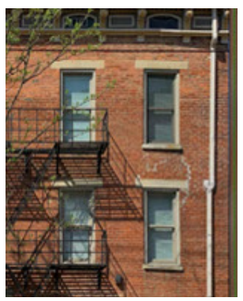


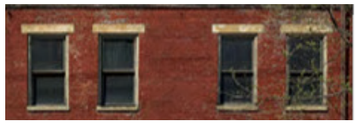
DECORATIVE SURROUNDS AT 1616 RACE AND 1601 RACE TOP FLOORS

DECORATIVE SURROUNDS AT TOP FLOOR



SET BACK FROM WALL





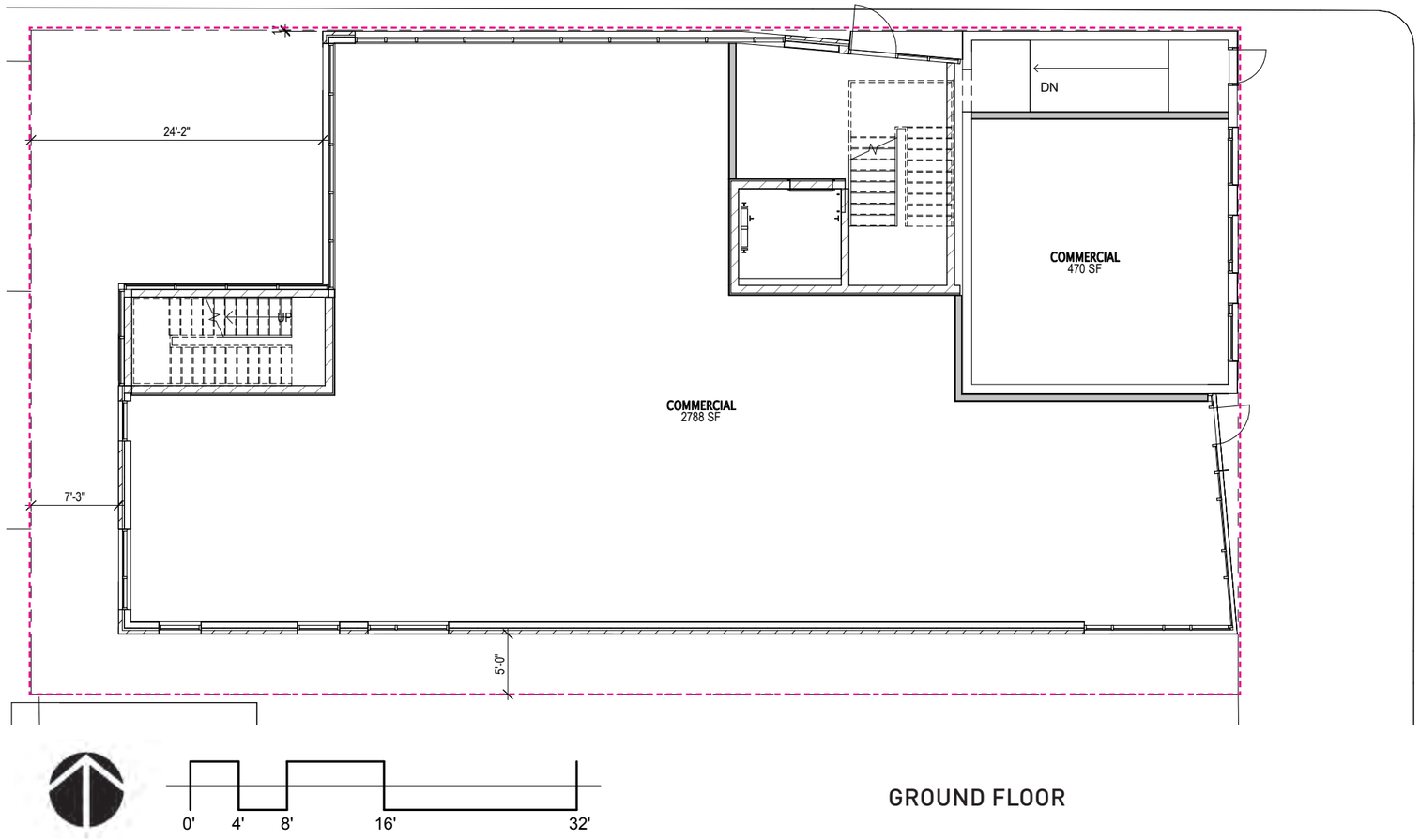
FOLLOWS SIZE, PROPORTION, AND SPACING OF MOST BUILDINGS ON WEST SIDE OF RACE, THIS BLOCK.

1619 RACE STREET- STOREFRONTS

ALMOST EVERY ADJACENT HISTORIC BUILDING HAS AN EXISTING COMMERCIAL STOREFRONT

New storefronts should relate to the characteristics of existing storefronts on historic buildings. **Storefronts in the district are typically taller than individual upper floors**, are **divided into bays** which increases their verticality and provide a pedestrian scale and proportion; and **have large, fixed expanses of clear glass**...The storefront **lintels are 12-18 feet above grade**, window sill height is between 18 inches and 3 feet above grade; and storefront windows are set back from the structural elements approximately 12 inches.

1619 RACE STREET- SETBACKS



GROUND FLOOR

NORTH WALL OF 1613 RACE - THIS BUILDING HAS AN ATYPICAL NORTH SETBACK AND MANY WINDOWS ON THE NORTH ELEVATION OF THE BUILDING. IN ORDER TO NOT COVER THE EXISTING WINDOWS IN THIS BUILDING, AND TO AVOID THE SIGNIFICANT COSTS AND POOR AESTHETICS OF RATED WINDOWS, THE DESIGN MAINTAINS A 5 FT SETBACK FROM THE PROPERTY LINE ALL THE WAY TO THE FRONT LOT LINE.

EXISTING FENCE AT 1613 RACE
NORTH SETBACK

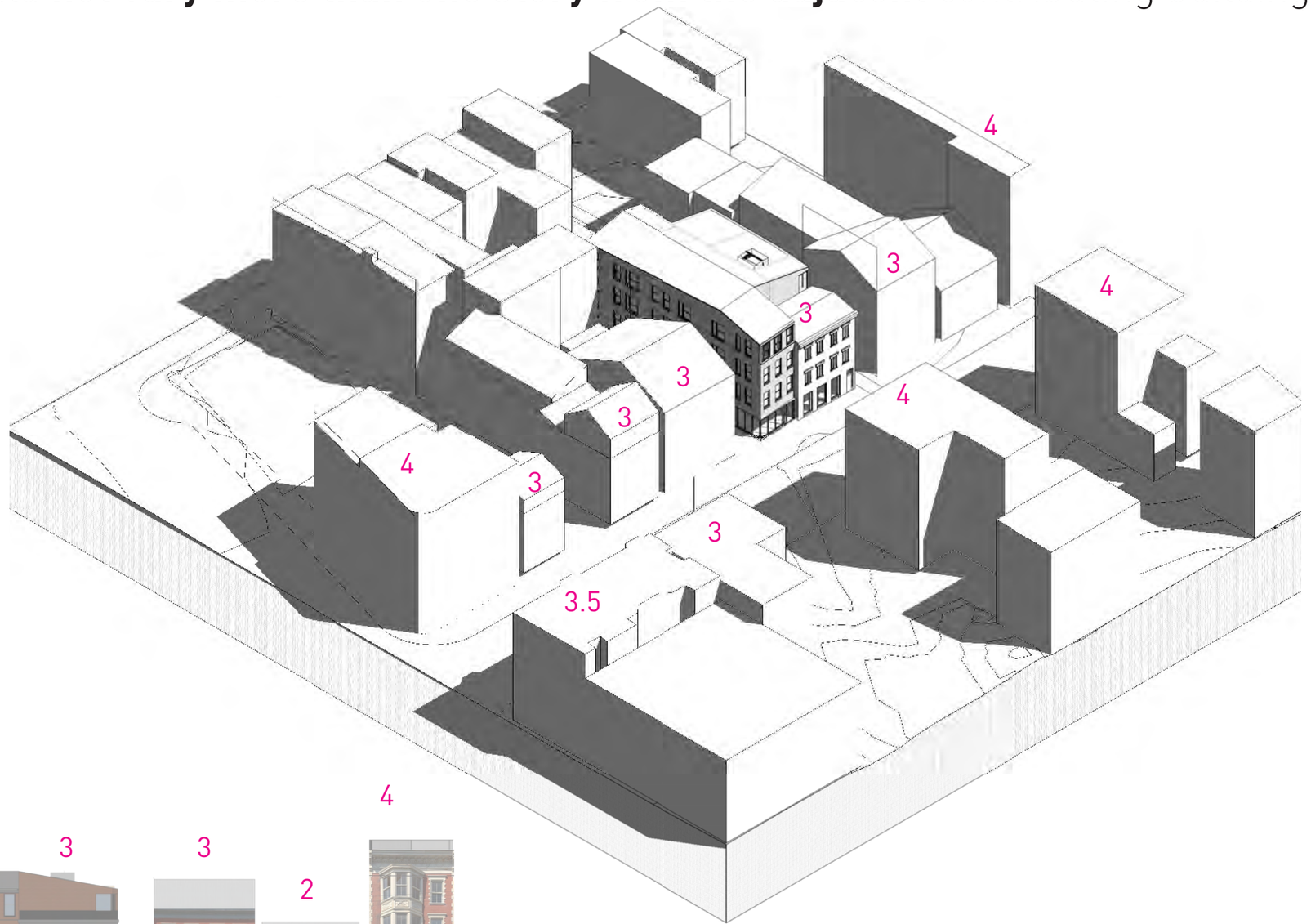
The setback for new construction should be consisten with buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites. In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, have shallow setbacks but retain an “edge” at the property line with a fence...In most cases **new construction on corner sites should be built up to the edge of both outside property lines.**

1619 RACE STREET- RHYTHM AND VERTICAL EMPHASIS

New buildings should incorporate design features, such as **window groupings, articulation of wall surfaces, and decorative elements** such as columns or piers in an effort to maintian the rhythm that already exists in the district. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found in the district. **Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are relatively narrow, 25-50 feet in width. A building facade typically displays vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm.** New residential and Mixed Use construction should have a **vertical emphasis.**

1619 RACE STREET- HEIGHT

The height of new construction should **not vary more than one story from the adjacent** contributing buildings.



BUILDINGS ON THIS STREET VARY BETWEEN 2 AND 4 STORIES. THE NEW BUILDING IS DESIGNED AT 4 STORIES.

THE CORNICE LINE IS DROPPED TO THE TOP OF WINDOW TO HELP BRING DOWN THE PERCEIVED HEIGHT SO THAT IT APPEARS TO BE BETWEEN THE HEIGHTS OF THE 3 AND 4 STORY BUILDINGS. THE BULK OF THIS BUILDING IS WELL BEHIND THE EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDING TO THE NORTH AND SHOULD NOT BE VERY VISIBLE.

RACE STREET- WEST SIDE OF BLOCK

1619 RACE STREET- MATERIALS

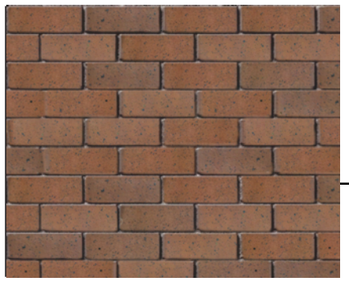
METAL DETAILS

FORMED ALUMINUM,
PAINTED BLACK

FIELD BRICK

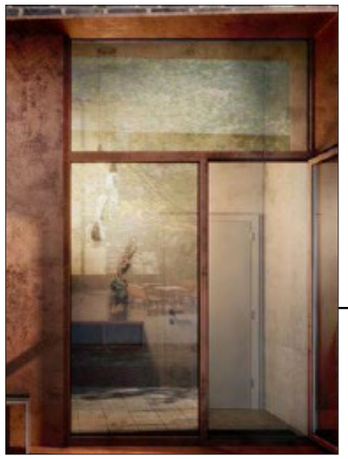
CRIMSON SMOOTH
IRONSPOT BRICK

BY CLOUD CERAMICS



CORTEN STEEL

METAL LINING/WRAP



New construction should use materials that are found on the historic buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Clearly the dominant material in Over-the-Rhine is **brick**, but other materials such as limestone, sandstone, cast-iron, slate, wood and sheet metal are important as well.

1619 RACE STREET- MODIFICATIONS

During the design process, designers and the developers met with the Urban Conservator and the OTR Foundation twice each. The design was able to be modified in the following ways based on feedback.

- 1’-6” height reduction at roof ridgeline of new building
- Addition of brick sill detail
- Storefront sill added at base of new building
- Metal wrap made more continuous at storefront of new building for stronger reading of horizontal at lintel height

ITEM 12 August 5, 2019

APPLICATION FOR ZONING RELIEF AND CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION #:	ZH20190108/COA2019036
APPLICANT:	GBBN Architects
OWNER:	City of Cincinnati
ADDRESS:	**1512-1520 Republic Street**
PARCELS:	081-00040052-0048
ZONING:	CC-P
OVERLAYS:	Over the Rhine Historic District
COMMUNITY:	Over the Rhine
REPORT DATE:	July 22, 2019
HEARING DATE:	August 5, 2019
STAFF REVIEW:	Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator

Details of Zoning Relief Required:

A. Sec.1409-09: Density: Numerical Variance: Numeric Variance of 416 sf of lot area/dwelling unit requirement of 700 sf of lot area/dwelling unit to allow a 27 dwelling multifamily project at a density of 283 sf lot area/dwelling unit.

B. Sec.1405-07: Rear Setbacks: Dimensional Variance of 15’5”’ to allow for a setback of 9’7” setback on the rear.

Nature of Request:

The applicant is requesting 2 variances and a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new mixed use 4 story multi-family residential building.

Existing Conditions:

The existing property is currently 5 tax parcels with an existing paved parking lot. The base zoning is CC-P on this property and on parcels on the east side of Republic Street. The zoning is RM 1.2 across the street. The building makeup of the block is a mix of mostly residential buildings between 2-4 stories tall.

Figure 1: 1512-1520 Republic Street and context. Pictures provided by Google Street Views.

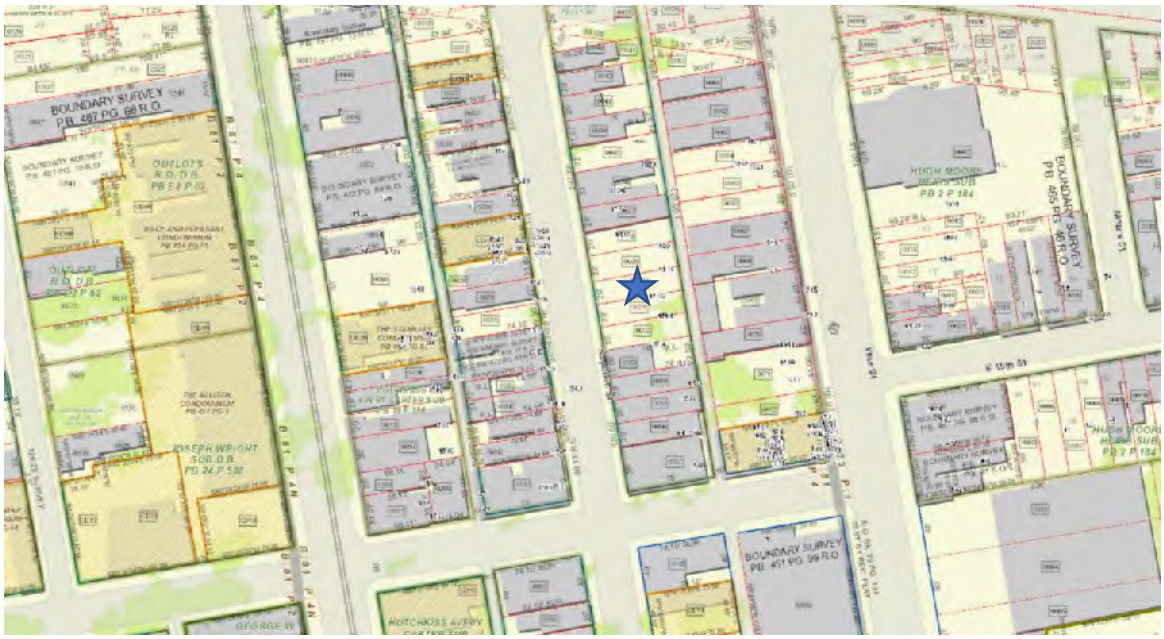


Figure 2: Map of 1512-1520 Republic Street. Map provided by Cagis Maps

Proposed Conditions:

1. Construct a new 4-story brick residential multi-family building.
2. The building will be broken into 5 distinct parts with one portion having a slight recess and commercial storefront feel.
3. The existing building will retain the existing opening but will remove a door and add a window.
4. The new building will be clad in brick and the majority of the building will be set at the property line.

Previous Review: NA

Applicable Zoning Code Sections:

Zoning District:	Section 1409	Residential
Variance Requests:	Section 1409	Development Standards
Variance Authority:	Section 1445-07	
HCB authority:	Section 1435-05-4	
Variance Standard:	Section 1445-13	General Standards: Public Interest
	Section 1445-15	Standards for Variances
Overlays:	Section 1435	Historic Preservation
Historic District/Reg:		Over the Rhine Historic District
COA Standard:	Section 1435-09-2	COA; Standard of Review

Zoning Analysis:

The following discussion will be the same text in the following staff reports 1617-1619 Race Street, 1602 Pleasant Street and 1512 Republic Street

As these projects are all part of a larger project called Willkommen, a scattered site low-income housing tax credit projects that includes both rehabilitation of 19 buildings, which will be using Historic Tax Credits, and the construction of 4 new buildings. 3 of the new construction projects are being presented together and one will be coming in a future meeting. This will create approximately 190 total housing units within the neighborhood and will be a mix of market rate and affordable housing units with approximately 40% of the units consider affordable (50 of the units will be at 60% or less of the Area Medium income of the MSA and 26 of the units will be 80% or less of Area Median Income of the MSA).

The applicants have provided a through Economic Feasibility explanation narrative along with proformas showing cost and gaps per unit with the allowable density increase versus the requested density. In order to comply with OHFA regulations, all of the units would have to be affordable in a project which would comply with the allowable density. The project size would decrease, which decreases the construction costs, but it also decreased the income of the project. Even with the decreased construction costs, the zoning compliant projects still have a gap that is between 1.5-1.7 times the gap for the requested increase density.

A project with a compliant density would also decrease the total number of affordable units the project is able to create. As it has been a stated desire within the Over-the-Rhine Community Plan and Plan Cincinnati for more affordable units, to support this goal a higher density is required. Also allowing for a higher density allows for a mixed income approach in the buildings, both new construction and in the historic rehabilitations. This helps to create affordable housing in otherwise high-opportunity areas that provide greater access to jobs, public transit and amenities.

While typically we cannot consider the proposed rents of a project when considering economic feasibility due to lack of legal accountability for the stated rents, with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits there is a requirement that the units maintain the stated affordability for 30 years to be able to capture the tax credits. That is a factor of consideration here today, as this is a substantial property encumbrance that will be borne by the property owner if the project executed.

When looking at the density variance, two areas of concern that we have consistently considered are Parking and Traffic Patterns and Trash and Utility Management.

1) Parking and Traffic Patterns

On September 19, 2018, City Council passed the Urban Parking Overlay Zone #1, which exempts all projects within the boundary of the overlay from parking requirements. This overlay became law on October 20, 2018. While the property would be exempt from parking requirements, the project is asking for an increase in residential density which does increase the anticipated parking demand based on the zoning code allowances. Overall the major increase in parking demand is created by the New Construction as the rehabilitation portion of the project is only increasing the parking demand generated by 2 additional dwelling units (net 12 trips/day per national standards). Per the zoning code, the new construction would have been permitted to have 26 units over the 4 properties and they are creating 90 units. This creates an increased parking demand for 64 dwelling units. In order to offset this increased demand, the applicants own 2 parking lots within a block of each of the projects that together have 166 parking spaces. These would more than be able to accommodate the needs for the increased parking demand. Additionally, and uniquely within OTR, transit capacity and opportunities within walking distance for jobs, goods and services, should, in actuality, minimize, the parking demand of the more urban context. Applicants and their management team have experience with properties within OTR and should be able to demonstrate previous experience in similar projects in the neighborhood.

2) Trash and Utility Management

When an increase in density is requested for a property, providing adequate trash and utility management within the building or on the property is necessary as to not create a collection of trash receptacles on public right of ways, either on streets or on alleys. In all the new construction projects, the applicants have made trash accommodations off the alley for appropriate trash storage onsite or at adjacent properties owned by the same property owner, for both the residents and the proposed commercial spaces. On any project that has trash collection off-site staff, will require a covenant between the properties for the allowance of trash collection at the time of building permit issuance.

The Following Discussion is specific the project at 1512 Republic Street.

Standards for Variances per Section 1435-05-4

(a) Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the Historic District of Historic Asset; or

The proposed work will fill a significant void in the urban fabric where a parking lot is currently. The overall design is compatible with the design guidelines and helps to create a street continuity that has been missing.

(b) Is necessary where the denial thereof would result in a deprivation of all economically viable uses of the property as viewed in its entirety. In making such a determination, the Historic Conservation Board may consider the factors set forth in Section 1435-09-2 (aa) to (ff).

The applicants have demonstrated that as a piece of larger project, the unit count and associated sizes are necessary to make a low-income housing project work. As this property is within a CC-P district which allows for multi-family however not at this density.

Standards for Variances per Section 1445-05-4

(a) Owing to special circumstances or conditions pertaining to a specific piece of property, the strict application of the provisions or requirements of this Code or the Land Development Code, as applicable, are unreasonable and would result in practical difficulties.

A strict application of the code would only allow 10 residential dwelling units on this property. This strict application is contrary to the goals of the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan and Plan Cincinnati of creating more housing opportunities, especially Low-Income Housing opportunities in order to provide more diverse housing options within the neighborhood.

(b) The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant possessed by owners of other properties in the same district or vicinity.

The applicants are asking for the density allowance that is comparable to the density of existing historic buildings in the vicinity but is denser that new construction that has been permitted without parking. However, the applicant is proposing a housing project that typically has not established the parking demand in this neighborhood, compared to market rate housing.

Below is analysis of the consideration factors for all of the requested zoning actions, utilizing Section 1445-13, General Standards; Public Interest.

1. **Zoning**. The proposed work conforms to the underlying zone district regulations and is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code.

The underlying zoning is CC-P. The proposed use of the subject property does not conform to the zoning as it is increasing the density by 2.7 times the allowed density. The proposed use of multi-family residential use generally does conform to the zone.

2. **Guidelines.** The proposed work conforms to any guidelines adopted or approved by Council for the district in which the proposed work is located.

Staff is of the opinion the proposed work does substantially conform to the guidelines for the Over-the-Rhine Conservation District. (Refer to Certificate of Appropriateness review below)

3. **Plans.** The proposed work conforms to a comprehensive plan, any applicable urban design or other plan officially adopted by Council, and any applicable community plan approved by the City Planning Commission.

Plan Cincinnati was adopted in 2012 and there are many maps and discussion about the urban center and the basin area being a dense urban neighborhood. The proposal is supporting the desire for dense development to help build the population and work base for the City of Cincinnati. The proposal is also supporting creating diverse housing options which is desired in the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan.

4. **Traffic.** Streets or other means of access to the proposed development are suitable and adequate to carry anticipated traffic and will not overload the adjacent streets and the internal circulation system is properly designed.

This has been discussed above.

5. **Buffering.** Appropriate buffering is provided to protect adjacent uses or properties from light, noise and visual impacts.

NA

6. **Landscaping.** Landscaping meets the requirements of Chapter 1423, Landscaping and Buffer Yards.

NA

7. **Hours of Operation.** Operating hours are compatible with adjacent land uses.
   NA

8. **Neighborhood Compatibility.** The proposed work is compatible with the predominant or prevailing land use, building and structure patterns of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development and will not have a material net cumulative adverse impact on the neighborhood.
   The proposed use as a 4-story residential building is in keeping with the 2-4 story residential development on this portion of Republic Street.

   The proposed rear setback is similar to other buildings on the block which have very shallow to zero lot line setbacks.

9. **Proposed Zoning Amendments.** The proposed work is consistent with any proposed amendment to the zoning code then under consideration by the City Planning Commission or Council.
   None.

10. **Adverse Effects.** Any adverse effect on the access to the property by fire, police, or other public services; access to light and air from adjoining properties; traffic conditions; or the development, usefulness or value of neighboring land and buildings.
    There are no anticipated adverse effects to the extent of access to fire, police or other public services.

11. **Blight.** The elimination or avoidance of blight.
    The current property is a vacant parking lot that is not contributing to the street scape.

12. **Economic Benefits.** The promotion of the Cincinnati economy.
    The proposed work will increase the property value of the subject parcels.

13. **Job Creation.** The creation of jobs both permanently and during construction.
    The proposed project will create temporary jobs during construction and will provide permanent jobs for property management.

14. **Tax Valuation.** Any increase in the real property tax duplicate.
    Property taxes will increase due to the improved value of the significantly larger structure on the property. While the project does anticipate using Tax Abatement it will still increase taxes to the school district.

15. **Private Benefits.** The economic and other private benefits to the owner or applicant.
    The owner has an economic benefit to the proposed establishment.

Certificate of Appropriateness Review

NEW CONSTRUCTION

The Over the Rhine Historic Conservation Design Guidelines gives direction to both staff and an applicant on how to design and review proposed developments. When designing infill developments, context and existing surrounding buildings are the main guiding principles of reference. Typically, the context that we consider the most when looking at appropriate infill design is the block that the parcel is on and especially adjacent properties. The applicants have provided numerous pictures of the block to show the existing historic context of the site in question. The applicant has also provided a detailed written narrative and graphic explanation of their design reasonings and compatibility.

Staff comments on the Specific Guidelines for New Construction:

A. Intent and General Guidelines

1. New construction is allowed on vacant sites in Over-the-Rhine, because gaps due to demolition weaken the streetscape and the overall character of the district. New construction can improve both the physical quality and economic vitality of the neighborhood.

The lot is a vacant lot and is used as an unimproved surface parking lot.

2. New construction should be well-designed but should not replicate the existing buildings. The exceptional quality of the existing buildings in the district provides an outstanding framework for new construction.

This infill development does not replicate the existing buildings and through the applicant's narrative they explain how they used the existing buildings to inform their design.

3. The Historic Conservation Board's review of new construction will focus on the design compatibility with the surrounding contributing structures. The appropriateness of design solutions will be based on balancing the programmatic needs of the applicant with how well the design relates to the neighboring buildings and to the intent of these guidelines. New design proposals should pay particular attention to composition, materials, openings, rhythm, scale, proportion and height.

Staff details the compatibility of the project with the guidelines and surrounding buildings below in the specific guidelines.

4. The new construction guidelines for this district will be used to judge the compatibility of new work. The specific site and programmatic needs of each project will be taken into consideration.

Staff details the compatibility of the project with the guidelines and surrounding buildings below in the specific guidelines

B. Specific Guidelines

1. Composition: New buildings should respond to the traditional subdivisions found on historic property: a base, a middle and a top. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are built of brick with the principal facade parallel to the street it faces. The most important features of buildings in Over-the-Rhine are the arrangement of openings on the principal facade and an overall vertical emphasis of the whole design. Each building provides its own variations, but collectively they share many basic features.

Base: New buildings should have a well-defined base. Within the district most buildings have a base that is distinguishable from the rest of the building. This is accomplished through a change of materials, a change of scale, and/or a lintel or other type of horizontal banding. In larger buildings the original base may include more than the first floor.

As a residential building the base is simpler and less defined than a commercial storefront. They have provided a strong base at the point where the building meets the ground by a different color of brick. One portion of the building does have a commercial type treatment as this is the main entrance and lobby for the apartment building. This creates a strong base treatment on this portion of the building.

Middle: Details on new buildings should relate to the detailing of adjacent or nearby buildings. Buildings in the district often incorporate architectural details such as changes in plane or changes in materials on their upper floors. Decorative, horizontal bands indicating the floor lines, sill heights or lintel heights should not overpower the vertical emphasis of the design.

The middle is defined by 4 floors of punched individual and paired window openings on the front and grouped and paired windows on the back.

Top: New construction must employ a strong element that terminates the uppermost part of the building. Distinctive elements in the architecture of Over-the-Rhine are elaborate projecting cornices, decorative parapets and the expressive use of materials.

The top is defined by a simple cornice that is defined by a dark inset brick and metal band with a slight overhang.

2. Roofs: Roofs for new construction should be similar to roofs of adjacent and nearby buildings of similar size and use. In the district, buildings of three or more stories generally have low-pitched shed roofs that are not visible above the principal facade. Smaller buildings in the district typically have simple gable roofs on which the gables are perpendicular to the principal facade. Institutional buildings in Over-the-Rhine have a variety of roof shapes, including dormers, multiple gables, hip roofs and towers. Roofs in this district have little or no overhang.

The roof is a flat roof which is appropriate for a 4 story building.

3. Window Openings: Window openings are extremely important in this district. The openings of new buildings should be related to the size and placement of openings found on historic structures of similar use in the district. In residential buildings, window openings are typically found individually rather than in pairs or grouped. The openings are taller and wider (typically in a proportion of 2:1), window sash are set back from the wall surface, and openings have some form of definition, such as lintels, sills or decorative surrounds. Window openings, which are typically aligned vertically, usually occupy between 20% and 50% of the principal facade. In commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, windows are often grouped within a single opening. These building types may also use a combination of window sash, including double-hung, awning and hopper. If muntins are used in new window sash, they must provide true divided lights. Within the individual opening, window sashes are usually divided into two or more lights. In all cases the glass must be clear; tinted or reflective glass is not acceptable. Also, roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of the building that cover door and window openings are not appropriate.

The window and their arrangements are the major piece that staff still has reservations about. Within the historic district buildings do not have paired windows within the same vertical column as individual windows unless they are placed within an oriel or differenced as a base first floor. The windows within the district also typically have a horizontal division and mixed windows with horizontal divisions with single pane windows creates a lack of continuity across the façade. The use of both of these design elements creates a façade that lacks continuity.

The applicant has also introduced a stepping around the windows with brick to add complexity

Staff does not feel at this point the windows as presented meet the design guidelines. Staff presented to the applicant several options of alternatives that we feel better meet the intent of the guidelines and provided more continuity across the façade to create a better Rhythm. The option listed below as Option 1 is an option that the applicants and staff has mutually agreed upon after their final submission was due.

1) *Option 1: All windows should have a horizontal division to create continuity in window types. This would allow for some differentiation with the windows with the brick work and individual vs paired but would make the façade more regular.*

4. Storefronts: New storefronts should relate to the characteristics of existing storefronts on historic buildings. Storefronts in the district are typically taller than individual upper floors; framed by piers and/or columns and have a lintel separating them from the upper floors; are divided into bays which increases their verticality and provides a pedestrian scale and proportion; and have large, fixed expanses of clear (not tinted or reflective) glass. As with rehabilitated original storefronts, roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of the building are not appropriate elements for new storefronts. The storefront lintels are 12 to 18 feet above grade; the window sill height is between 18 inches and 3 feet above grade; and storefront windows are set back from the structural elements approximately 12 inches

> *Only the northern most portion of the building has a storefront design. While this is a residential portion of the neighborhood, the storefront is a minor portion of the design and is recessed to make it a secondary feature but to also distinguish it as the main entrance.*

5. Setback: Setback is an important issue in a dense urban area such as Over-the-Rhine. The setback for new construction should be consistent with the buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites. In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, has shallow setbacks but retain an "edge" at the property line with a fence. Some larger institutional buildings such as schools, churches and public buildings are setback from the street to provide public space and to add to their monumentality. In most cases new construction on corner sites should be built up to the edge of both outside property lines.

The majority of the building is set at the street with a similar setback as the rest of the block. The design does have a setback on the north to allow for windows as well as a recessed first floor to align with the 2 story history building to the north.

While the recessed first floor without a strong corner column or pillar is not a common component within the district, this design helps to be respectful to the smaller building to the north and helps to not overwhelm this historic building.

6. Rhythm: New buildings should incorporate design features, such as window groupings, articulation of wall surfaces, and decorative elements such as columns or piers in an effort to maintain the rhythm that already exists in the district. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found on the district. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are relatively narrow, 25 to 50 feet in width. A building facade typically displays vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm. In dense commercial areas such as Vine Street, there are no setbacks, creating a solid wall along the street. This wall is articulated by the individual buildings, which in turn are divided by window groupings, changes in wall planes and decorative elements such as pilasters, columns or piers.

There are many elements of rhythm in the building. As the lot is a wide lot, the building does the following to create an appropriate rhythm:

1. *Vertical divides between the three southern portions create sections of building that are 25 feet wide creating a regular rhythm along the façade.*
2. *A regular pattern of windows across the façade also creates a rhythm, however as discussed above the multi differentiations among the windows does create a break in continuity and rhythm. This would be aided with either of the above discussed design solutions.*

7. Emphasis: New residential and mixed-use construction should have a vertical emphasis, because in Over-the-Rhine buildings are taller than they are wide, window openings are tall and narrow, and storefronts have slender columns, which emphasize verticality. Commercial and industrial buildings, which may have an overall horizontal emphasis, often incorporate vertical elements, such as pilasters or vertically oriented openings.

The building is taller than it is wide, and the design incorporated other vertical elements

1. *Windows are taller than they are wide.*
2. *The divisions across the façade break the building into modules that are taller than they are wide.*
3. *The brick and glass hyphen creates a strong vertical element.*
4. *Vertical emphasis would be enhanced with a continuity of window columns as discussed above.*

8. Height: The height of new construction should not vary more than one story from adjacent contributing buildings. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are between two- and five-stories.

The building is a 4 story building and is within one story of abutting properties to the south and adjacent buildings across the street and on the same block are 4 stories.

9. Materials: New construction should use materials that are found on the historic buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Clearly the dominant material in Over-the-Rhine is brick, but other materials such as limestone, sandstone, cast-iron, slate, wood and sheet metal are important as well. Materials such as stucco, synthetic stucco and plastic are not appropriate and should not be considered as exposed finish materials for new construction in this district.

1. *Overall the materials used on the building are appropriate. The main massing is brick. The brick is an orangish brick that will blend in with unpainted brick on the street.*

2. *Other materials such as metal and glass are appropriate as secondary and accent materials.*

The applicant has kept the materials simple and by using brick and limited metal, the overall materials of the building help make the building contextual.

Other Considerations:

Prehearing Results: June 12, 2019. The meeting was attended by the applicants and a representative from the OTR Foundation.

OTR Foundation submitted a letter to the applicant after a review of the project. The applicant has addressed the comment regarding the curtain wall by adding in brick to the hyphen.

2 letters of opposition have been submitted by neighbors regarding the variance for density and setback.

1 letter has been submitted with a critique of the design, specifically in regard to the windows however the letter is in support of density and overall massing.

Recommendation:

I. ZONING VARIANCES

The following recommendations are proposed for the project proposed at 1617-1619 Race Street per the drawings submitted by GBBN Architects dated 07/19/2019.

A. Sec.1409-09 Density: **APPROVE** Numerical Variance of 416 sf of lot area/dwelling unit requirement of 700 sf of lot area/dwelling unit to allow a 27

dwelling multifamily project at a density of 283 sf lot area/dwelling unit subject to the following condition.

a. If the project does not move forward with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the density variance is required to come back before the Historic Conservation Board.

B. Sec.1409-09 Rear Setback: **APPROVE** Dimensional Variance of 15’5”" to allow for a setback of 9’7” on the rear.

C. FINDING: The Board makes this determination that per Section 1435-05-4:

1. Such relief from literal implication of the Zoning Code will not materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property within the district or vicinity where property is located.
2. The property is part of a larger project with 23 scattered parcels including both new construction on 4 projects and 19 rehabilitation projects.
3. The project is part of a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Project and the applicants have sufficiently demonstrated that the extra units are needed to make the project economically feasible.

II. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

A. APPROVE the application a Certificate of Appropriateness for 4 story mixed use, multi-family residential building at 1512-1520 Republic Street per plans submitted by GBBN Architecture dated 07/19/2019 with the following conditions:

1. The architect shall employ Option 1 Design solution as previously agreed upon and shall work with staff to refine the design prior to submittal for building permits.
2. The building permit must be issued within 2 years or the Certificate of Appropriateness will expire.
3. The tax parcels shall be merged by Consolidation Plat prior to building permits being issued.

B. FINDING: The Board makes this determination that per Section 1435-05-4:

1. That the property owner and applicant have demonstrated by credible evidence that the proposal substantially conforms to the applicable guidelines for New Construction of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Conservation District.
2. The massing, including height and width, are appropriate and balanced as to not overwhelm the block of historic contributing buildings.
3. The building has contemporary take on historic elements including cornice, window treatments, and vertical emphasis.

GBBN

July 19, 2019

Beth Johnson
Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Avenue, Suite 500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Based on the narrative below, we hope that you and the Historic Conservation Board will find that the proposed design for a new 4 story building with a mix of affordable and market rate residential apartments at 1512-1520 Republic Streets meets the vast majority of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Guidelines and represents a sufficiently appropriate effort to create a contemporary building that adds to the residential vitality and texture of Republic Street in its relation to the historic fabric. We have been careful not to replicate the features of adjacent existing buildings, but rather to "relate" to them in their overall organization and effect. We hope that you will support this effort to pair a high level of contemporary design with one of the most significant additions of affordable housing in Over-the-Rhine in recent years as part of Model Group and 3CDC's Willkommen project,.

1.Composition: This building has is organized into a base, middle, and top.

Base: The base at the corner is defined by dark brick with large punched openings with fixed windows. The intent is to provide a moderately high level of transparency, to create a connection to the street and highlight the residential lobby, while maintaining a distinct feeling from a typical commercial storefront. To the south, the base is indicated by the presence of a darker brick water table with brick recessed detail and larger recesses in the same darker brick that create residential stoops, adding to the residential feel of the street.

Middle: The middle is defined by a field condition of crimson ironspot smooth brick with punched windows. A few windows in each vertical bay are doubled to create a wider effect and add interest to the composition and are accented with a stepped detail in a darker brick.

Top: The top the building is defined by an inset row of bricks below 12 inch profiled metal cornice. The metal cornice steps back to create a reveal and the very top of the profile protrudes slightly beyond the face of the brick façade.

2.Roof: This building has a low slope roof that is not visible above the principal façade, similar to other buildings of this size on Republic Street.

3.Window Openings: The windows are set in punched openings and are of similar size, proportion, and spacing to windows found on the immediately adjacent buildings. Some of these windows feature a stepped horizontal detail that add a small amount of interest and complexity to the rhythm. Windows are

generally aligned in vertical columns, with some windows receiving a second window. All single windows will be double hung, aluminum clad wood, with a 2:1 ratio of height to width.

4.Storefronts: Although there is no commercial space in the proposed building, are larger areas of fixed glass at the residential lobby and the north stair. This area of glass breaks up the overall mass of the building, provides an appealing entry, and a feeling of increased presence on the street (which currently feels unwatched and shuttered). The field condition of dark brick at the lobby and the stair landings helps to break down the scale of the glass, aligning it with a pedestrian scale. The lintel height of the overhanging volume to the north creates the effect of a taller first floor, helping this base condition to align better with historic neighbors to the north and south.

5.Setback: This project's setbacks are generally in line with the historic guidelines. On the North façade, the building is set back 7'-5" at grade from the property line and between 4'-5" and 7'-5" from the property line at the levels above to allow for window openings at the units above. Additionally, the setback at the ground level of the residential lobby allows the building to align with the face of the historic building to the north. On the south, it is built up to the adjacent building to the south facing Republic Street, and steps back 8'-0" as the stairs open to the back yard facing the alley, again to allow for windows at the units above. Along republic, the majority of the building is built up to the property line except for a recess created by glazing at the stair that improves the vertical rhythm and a 1'-4" setback at the bay containing the residential lobby to allow for a slightly more generous sidewalk. At the rear, the building is set back 9'-7" from the property line along Parvis Alley. This is less than the required 25' setback required by zoning. However, the properties on either side generally built all the way to the alley lot line.

6.Rhythm: This building maintains a rhythm of vertical bays, using modules of approximately 25 feet, that not only meets the general guidelines for OTR (25-50ft) but is scaled to the finer grain found on this block of Republic Street specifically. This project draws directly from the adjacent buildings in the rhythm of its window groupings (1 or 2 windows per bay with equal space between), and wall surfaces (mostly flat with some minor horizontal banding details and indentations for entry stoops). In lieu of historical decorative elements such as pilasters to reinforce the vertical subdivision of the building, we propose a contemporary interpretation – a dark metal reveal that runs from sidewalk to cornice.

7.Emphasis: This is a long horizontal site which relies on the elements listed above to reinforce a vertical reading of the overall design. The tall narrow area of dark brick at the stair and the vertical reveals divide the overall composition into 4 similarly sized vertically oriented bays, and the windows are tall and narrow as seen on its historic neighbors.

8. Height: The proposed building is 1 story taller than the building directly to the south, and 2 stories taller than the building to the North. However, to the north of *that* building, or directly across the street, you will see another 4 story building. Over all, if you look at both sides of this street on this block there are (4) 2 story, (13) 3 story, and (4) 4+ story buildings. The proposed building should not feel out of place.

9.Materials: This building will have brick on all facades that are visible to the general public from Republic Street. We will use primarily a light crimson ironspot brick, with accent areas in a darker

ironspot brick. Please refer to the packet for specific make and images. Windows will be black aluminum clad wood double hung and fixed windows with clear glass. Reveals, cornices and other details will be matching black metal.

We appreciate your consideration and please do not hesitate to reach out if there is any additional information we can provide.

Sincerely,

Chad Burke
Principal

GBBN

July 22, 2019

Beth Johnson
Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Avenue, Suite 500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

On behalf of the Willkommen Development Team we are seeking the following reliefs to the proposed development at 1512-1520 Republic Street, Cincinnati, 45202.

Variance:

1. CZC 1409-09 Development Regulations
    a. Density
    b. Rear Setback

General Background:

The new 4 story building that will contain a mix of affordable and market rate residential apartments at 1512-1520 Republic Streets is part of a larger joint development by Model Group and 3CDC called Willkommen. The building at 1512-1520 Republic Street will consist of 27 units total (six will be two bedroom and twenty one will be one bedroom). Three additional new buildings are proposed and 11 existing historic buildings are being renovated as part of this project that bring one of the largest increases in affordable housing to OTR in years.

Specific Relief Requested:

1. CZC 1409-09 Development Regulations
    a. Density: This location permits a maximum of 10 units. Due to the size requirements of units in OHFA guidelines, and programmatic requirements the proposed development houses 27 units requiring a variance of 17 units.
    b. Rear Setback: This location requires a 25 ft rear yard setback. Based on the efficiencies and layouts needed for affordable units, the latest design of the proposed development maintains a rear setback of 9'-7". The adjudication letter indicates that a 17ft variance is required, but based on these calculations, the actual required variance will be 14 ft.

Standards for a Variance:

1. *To meet the standard outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-13, an applicant must show that the proposed project "is in the public interest". A list of factors considered by the Zoning Hearing Examiner to determine whether the project "is in the public interest" is found in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-13.*

Answer: Out of the 16 items listed in CZC Section 1445-13 for use in determining whether a development is in the public interest, the development proposed at 1512-1520 Republic Street meets all 16 in providing a positive benefit for the public interest. A few of these are highlighted below.

a) *Zoning:* The proposed work conforms to the underlying zone district regulations and is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code or the Land Development Code as applicable. The proposed development conforms to the general and specific purposes for CC-P outlined in section CZC 1409-05. In particular this project would improve the pedestrian character of Republic Street.

c) *Plans*: The proposed work conforms to any guidelines adopted or approved by Council for the district in which the proposed work is located. This development responds directly to Goal 1 from the OTR Land use Plan to "Encourage and welcome new investment at all levels of the housing market and ensure the long-term sustainability of enough affordable housing to house current residents" (47). This includes general support for the investments in housing from LIHTC Projects. (57), that are used to support equity and income diversity in neighborhood residents.

h) *Neighborhood Compatibility:* The proposed work is compatible with the dominant or prevailing land use, building and structure patterns of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development and will not have a material net cumulative adverse impact on the neighborhood. This project follows the historic guidelines, filling a large missing tooth in the residential fabric of this block of Republic Street. The requested density and setback variances will actually allow for a building more similar in character to the historic fabric.

p) *Public Benefits.* The public peace, health, safety or general welfare. A primary goal of the proposed design is to enhance the residential character of the street. The transparency at the residential lobby and main stair will communicate activity inside the building, providing additional eyes on the street, and the presence of a stoop at the ground floor unit of each bay will continue the rhythm of residential scaled entries along the street.

Standards for a Variance:

To meet the Standard outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-15 an applicant must show:

a. neither the owner nor any of its predecessors caused the condition requiring a variance;

Answer: The variance request was not caused by the owner nor any of its predecessors. Rather, it is the result of the program (residential mix with the guidelines on unit size and common spaces determined by OHFA) and the application of the historic guidelines in a confined site in an urban setting.

b. how the project meets any of the following conditions:

i. special circumstances or conditions pertaining to the property cause the strict application of the zoning code to be unreasonable and would result in practical difficulties;

Answer:

1. In this case, the density required under the current zoning code would directly impede the creation of new, high quality affordable housing, which has only become a greater priority for the neighborhood over the past few years. In order to produce units that will be affordable, the development team must adhere as closely as possible to the unit sizes outlined in the guidelines produced by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) and to hit unit mix and number targets. These units sizes are slightly larger than is often found in strictly market rate projects. However, if only 10 units were provided on the site, the resulting building would be very small, and would not be able to comply with the design principals of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Guidelines. To provide only 10 units and create a building on this site that would be within 1 story of the adjacent buildings, and be generally built to the lot lines on all but the rear yard would result in extremely large units that would need to be priced at the very high end of the current housing market.

2. In order to achieve the unit size, mix, and count that make this a viable project, and to create a design that relates to the surrounding built fabric as experienced walking down Republic Street, Ultimately, the building is not able to maintain the required 25 foot rear setback. In this sense, it follows the example of its nearest historic neighbors, which also do not have a 25' setback- many of which have almost no rear setback at all from Parvis Alley. The design team has studied the overall layout of the building and have determined that it is not possible to achieve the required setback without either a **significant** reduction in units, or multiple additional stories, which would violate the historic guidelines and add significant costs.

We trust that this memo provides everything you need to inform your decision. We appreciate your time in considering this matter. Please contact me directly if you have any questions. I would be happy to supply you with any additional information that you may need.

Sincerely,

Chad Burke, AIA, LEED AP
GBBN Architects Inc.

Click to change address

LOCATION AND DISTRICTS

- Site Area: 7,650 sf
- Zoning Designation: CC-P
  (Commercial Community - Pedestrian)
- Historic District: Over the Rhine
- National Registry: Over the Rhine
- Business District: -

MASSING REGULATIONS PER ZONING DESIGNATION

- Max Height: 85 ft
- Min Height: 15 ft
- Front Yard Setback: 0 ft
- Side Yard Setback: 0 ft
- Rear Yard Setback: 25 ft
- Building Placement: Regulated
  - » Building must be located on front lot line of street frontage
  - » Area of street-level recess not to exceed 102 sf
- Ground Floor Transparency
  - » 102 ft frontage = 60% transparency (30"-84" above grade)

UNIT COUNT

- Current Count: 27 units
- Zoning Code: 700 sf land area per unit = 10 units

1512-1520 Republic

ZONING ANALYSIS

7.19.2019

LOOKING SOUTH

LOOKING NORTH

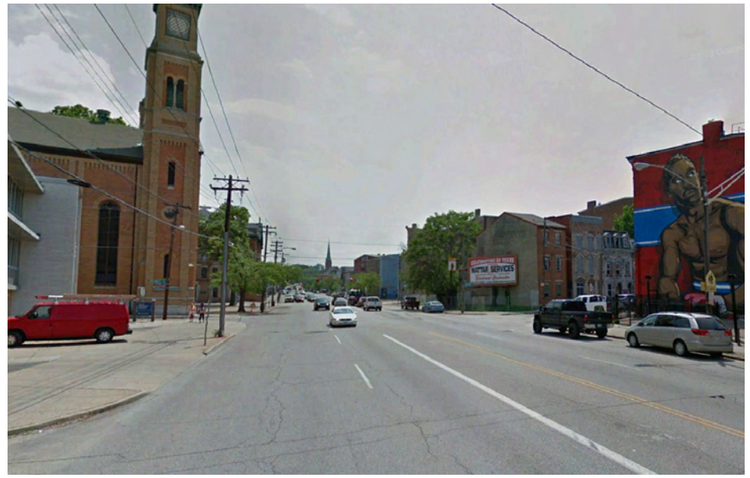
LOOKING DIRECTLY EAST

1512-1525 Republic

SITE PHOTOS

LOOKING SOUTH DOWN REPUBLIC STREET FROM LIBERTY STREET

LOOKING EAST ON 15TH STREET @INTERSECTION WITH REPUBLIC STREET



LOOKING EAST ON LIBERTY @INTERSECTION WITH REPUBLIC STREET

LOOKING NORTH UP REPUBLIC STREET FROM 15TH STREET

LOOKING WEST ON 15TH STREET @ INTERSECTION WITH REPUBLIC STREET

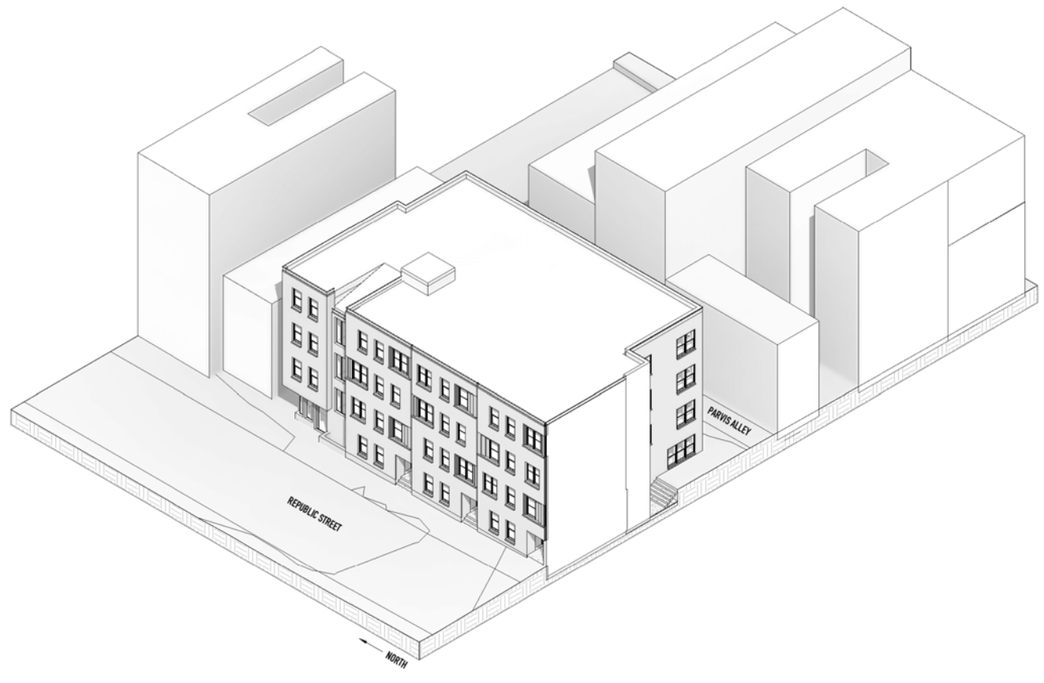
LOOKING WEST ON LIBERTY @ INTERSECTION WITH REPUBLIC STREET

1512-1525 Republic

BLOCK CONTEXT PHOTOS

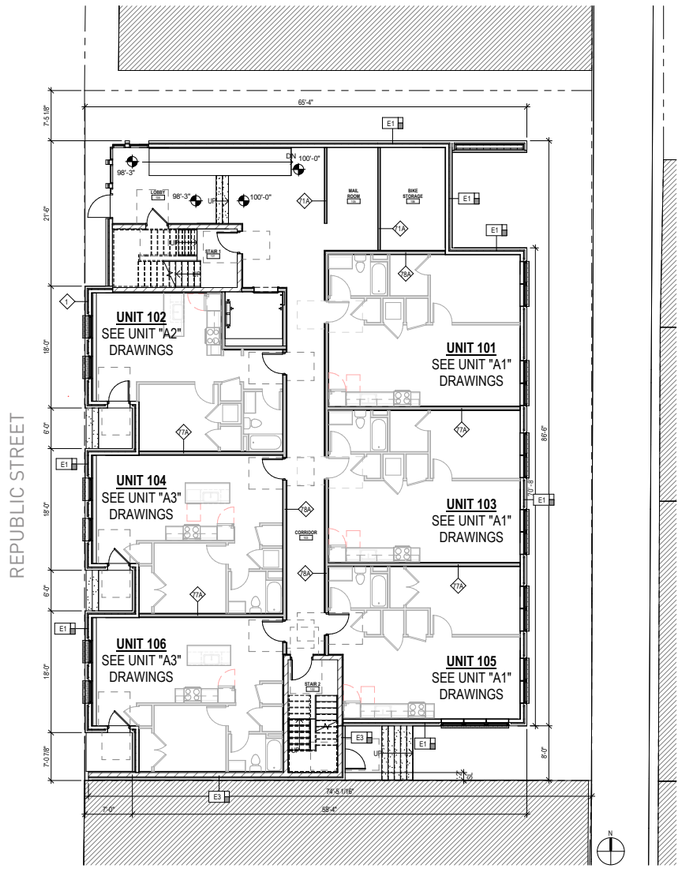
1 A001 **Site Plan**
SCALE: 1/32" = 1'-0"

0' 16' 32' 64' 128'



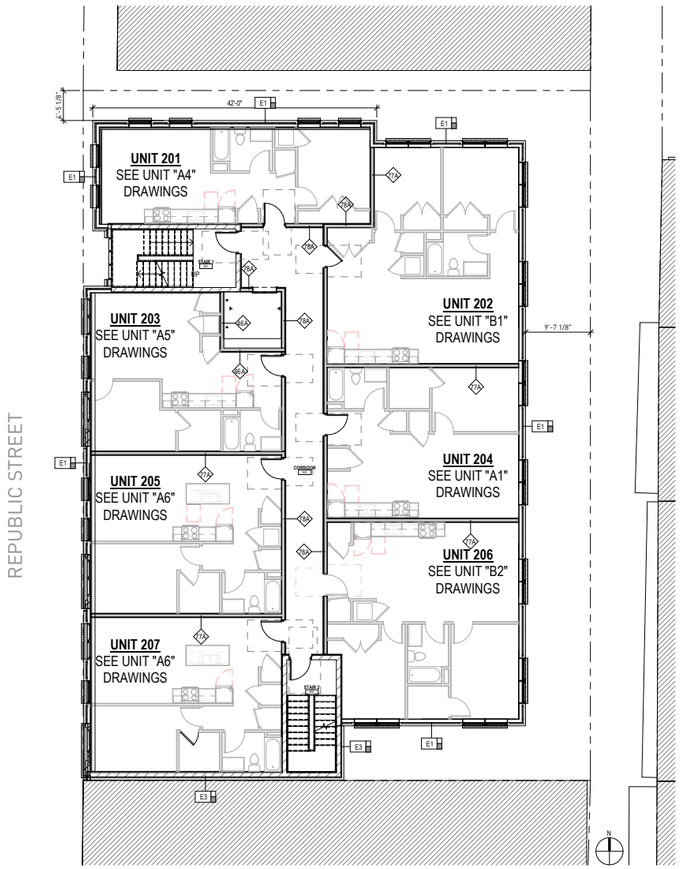
1512-1525 Republic

SITE PLAN AND AXONOMETRIC



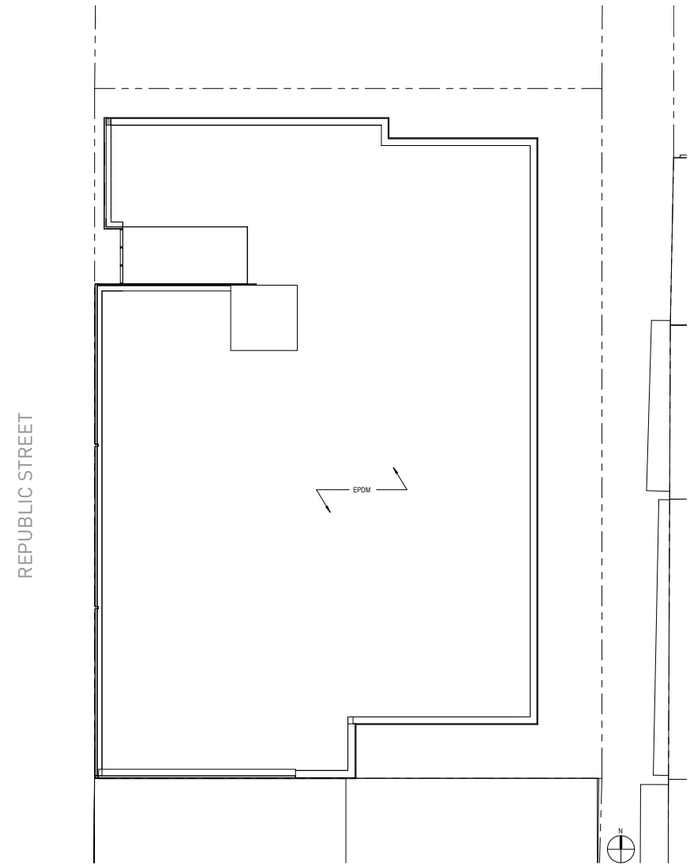
GROUND FLOOR

0' 4' 8' 16' 32'



UPPER FLOORS

0' 4' 8' 16' 32'



ROOF PLAN

0' 4' 8' 16' 32'

1512-1525 Republic

PLANS

2 A301 **NORTH OVERALL ELEVATION**

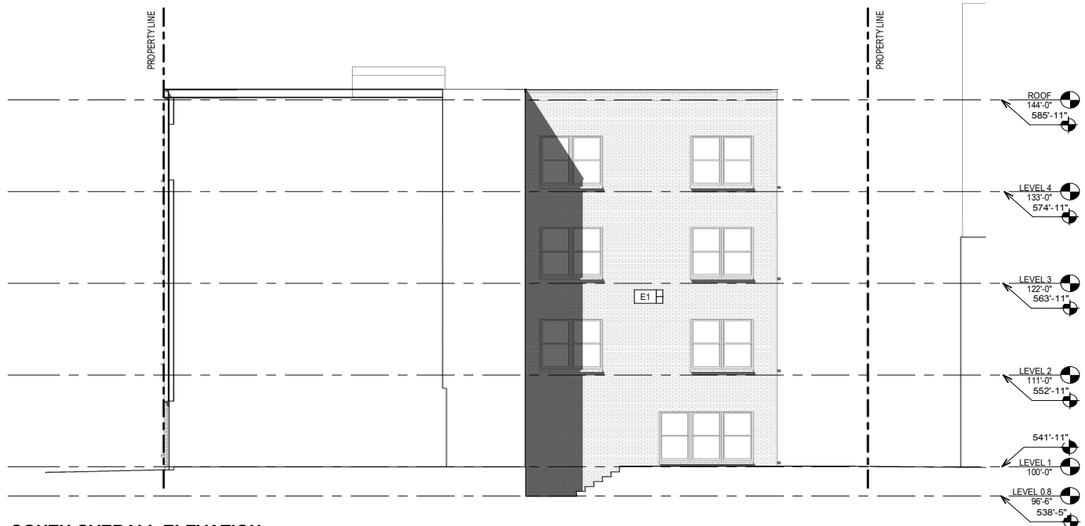
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

0' 4' 8' 16' 32'

1 A301 **WEST OVERALL ELEVATION**

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

0' 4' 8' 16' 32'



4 A301 **SOUTH OVERALL ELEVATION**

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

0' 4' 8' 16' 32'

3 A301 **EAST OVERALL ELEVATION**

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

0' 4' 8' 16' 32'

1512-1525 Republic

ELEVATIONS

View Looking Southeast

1512–1525 Republic

PERSPECTIVE

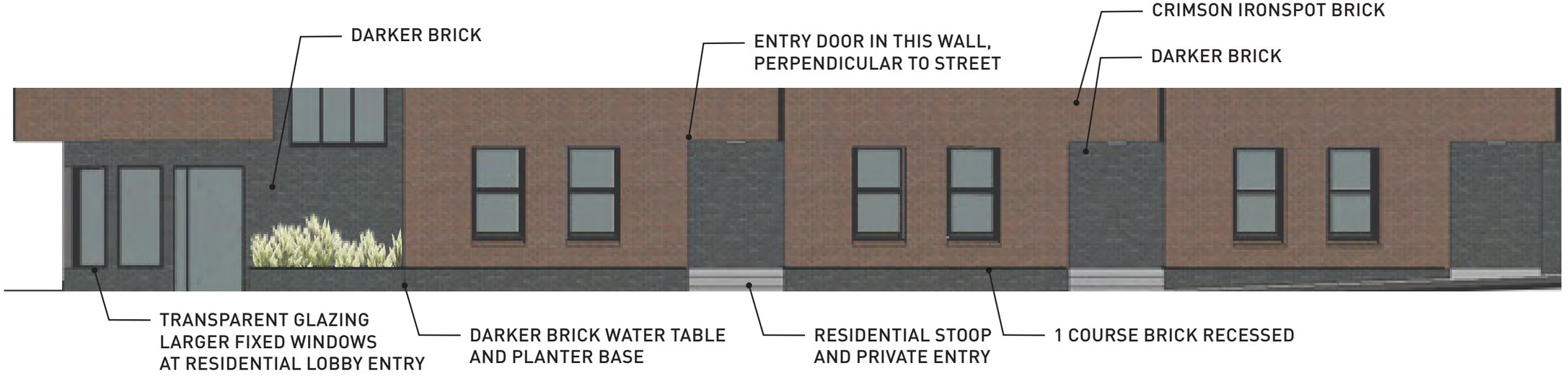
1512-1520 REPUBLIC- COMPOSITION

New buildings should respond to the traditional subdivisions found on historic property: **a base middle and top**. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are built of brick with the principal facade parallel to the street it faces. The most important features of buildings in Over-the-Rhine are the arrangement of openings on the principal facade and an overall **vertical emphasis** of the whole design.

1512-1520 REPUBLIC- COMPOSITION, BASE

New buildings should have a well defined base. Within the district, most buildings have a base that is distinguishable from the rest of the building. This is accomplished through **a change of materials**, a change of scale, and/or a lintel of **other type of horizontal banding**.

THE BASE OF THIS BUILDING IS INTENDED TO REINFORCE THE RESIDNTIAL FEEL OF REPUBLIC STREET PROVIDING A MODERATE AMOUNT OF TRANSPARENCY AND MAINTAINING THE RHYTHM OF ENTRY DOORS.



1512-1520 REPUBLIC- COMPOSITION, MIDDLE

Details on new buildings should **relate to the detailing of adjacent or nearby buildings**.

DECORATIVE USE OF MATERIALS AT WINDOW - NOT ALL WINDOWS THE SAME

FIELD OF BRICK WITH PUNCHED OPENINGS, SIMILAR SPACING

FIELD OF PUNCHED OPENINGS, SIMILAR SPACING

RECESSED RESIDENTIAL ENTRY, SLIGHTLY ELEVATED

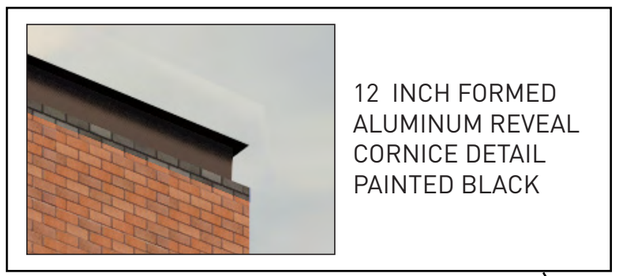
RECESSED RESIDENTIAL ENTRY, SLIGHTLY ELEVATED

DECORATIVE USE OF MATERIALS AT WINDOW - NOT ALL WINDOWS THE SAME

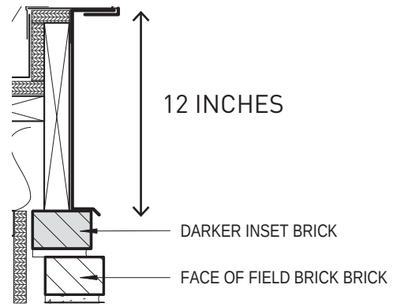
1512-1520 REPUBLIC- COMPOSITION, TOP

New buildings must employ a **strong element that terminates** the uppermost part of the building. Distinctive elements in the architecture of Over-the-Rhine are elaborate projecting cornices, decorative parapets, and the **expressive use of materials.**

THIS BUILDING HAS A METAL CORNICE THAT CREATES A REVEAL WITH A TOP EDGE THAT PROJECTS SLIGHTLY BEYOND THE FACE OF THE BRICK. THE CORNICE WILL CONCEAL



12 INCH FORMED ALUMINUM REVEAL CORNICE DETAIL PAINTED BLACK



1512-1520 REPUBLIC- ROOFS

Roofs for new construction should be similar to roofs of adjacent and nearby buildings of similar size and use. In the district buildings of three or more stories generally have **low pitched shed roofs that are not visible above the primary facade...**Smaller buildings in the distric typically have simple gable roofs on which the gables are perpendicular to the principal facade. **Roofs in this district have little or no overhang.**

1512-1520 REPUBLIC- WINDOW OPENINGS

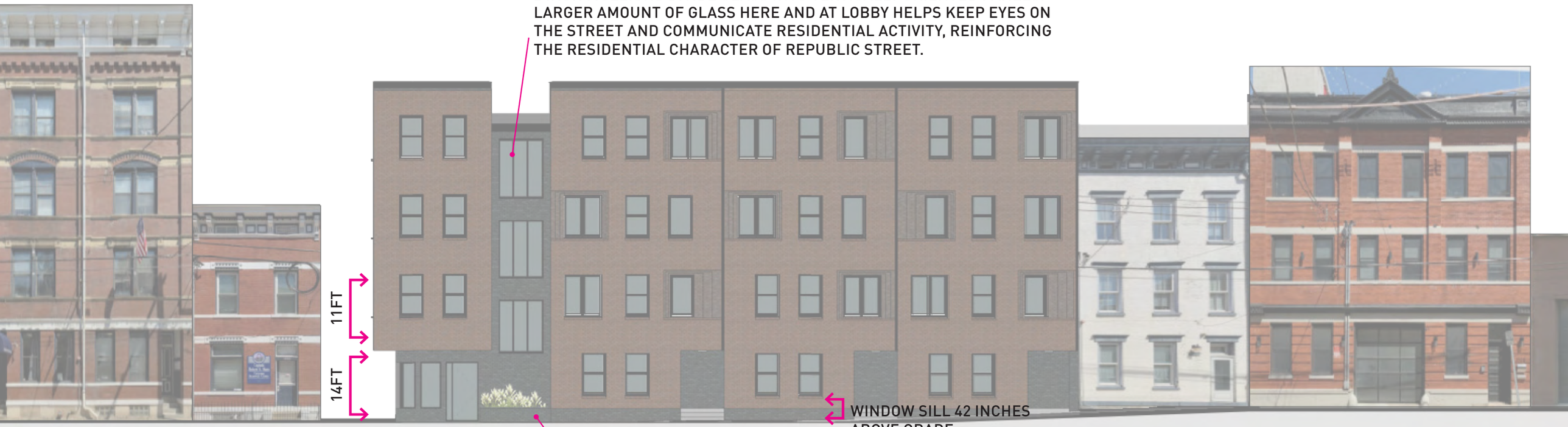
Window openings of new buildings should be related to the size and placement of openings found on historic structures of similar use in the district. In residential buildings, window openings are typically found individually rather than in pairs or grouped. the openings are taller and wide **(proportion of 2:1)**, window sash are **set back from the wall**, and openings have some **form of definition** such as lintels, sills or decorative surrounds. Window openings, which are typically **aligned vertically, occupy between 20% and 50% of the principal facade.**

- WINDOWS WILL BE SET BACK FROM WALL
- DECORATIVE SURROUNDS AT SOME WINDOWS, SILL DETAIL AT ALL WINDOWS
- MOST WINDOWS ARE VERTICALLY ALIGNED
- 2:1 RATIO

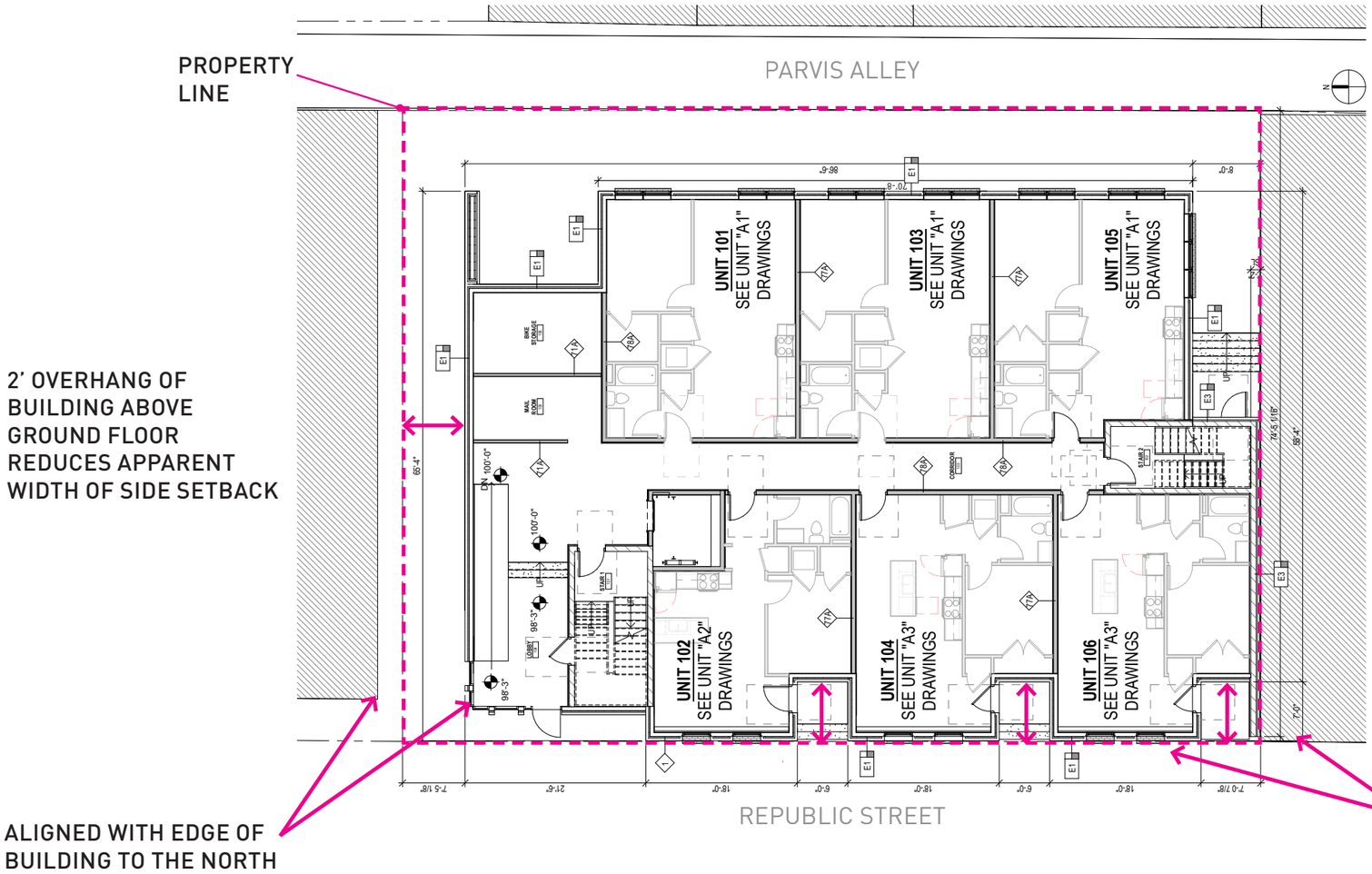
2:1 RATIO

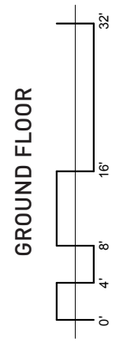
1512-1520 REPUBLIC- STOREFRONTS

New storefronts should relate to the characteristics of existing storefronts on historic buildings. **Storefronts in the district are typically taller than individual upper floors**, are **divided into bays** which increases their verticality and provide a pedestrian scale and proportion; and **have large, fixed expanses of clear glass**...The storefront **lintels are 12-18 feet above grade**, window sill height is between 18 inches and 3 feet above grade; and storefront windows are set back from the structural elements approximately 12 inches.



1512-1520 REPUBLIC- SETBACKS



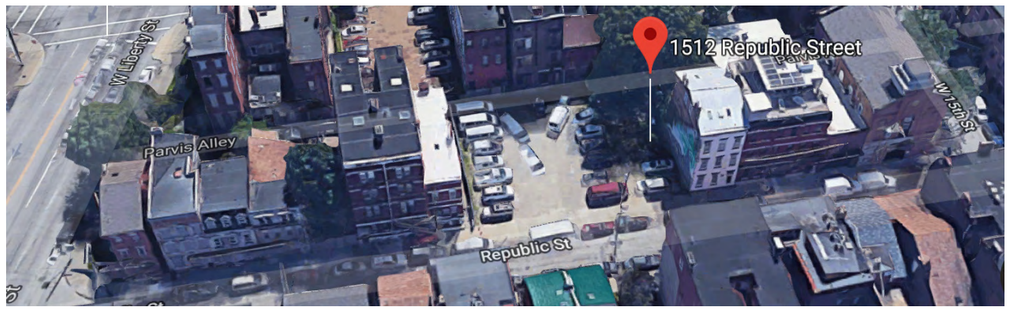


The setback for new construction should be consisten with buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites. In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, have shallow setbacks but retain an “edge” at the property line with a fence...In most cases **new construction on corner sites should be built up to the edge of both outside property lines.**

1512-1520 REPUBLIC- HEIGHT

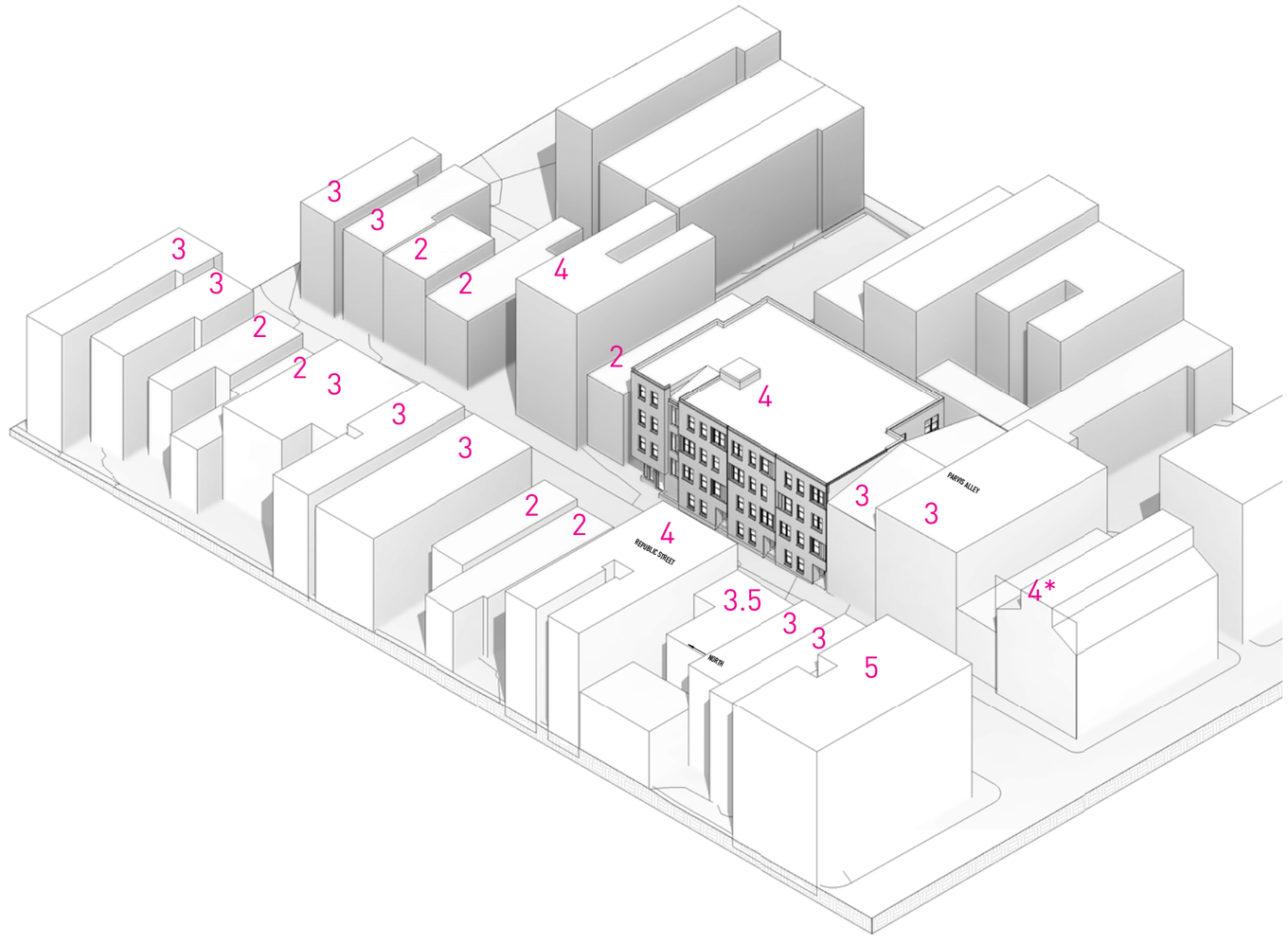
The height of new construction should **not vary more than one story from the adjacent** contributing buildings.

WEST SIDE OF REPUBLIC STREET



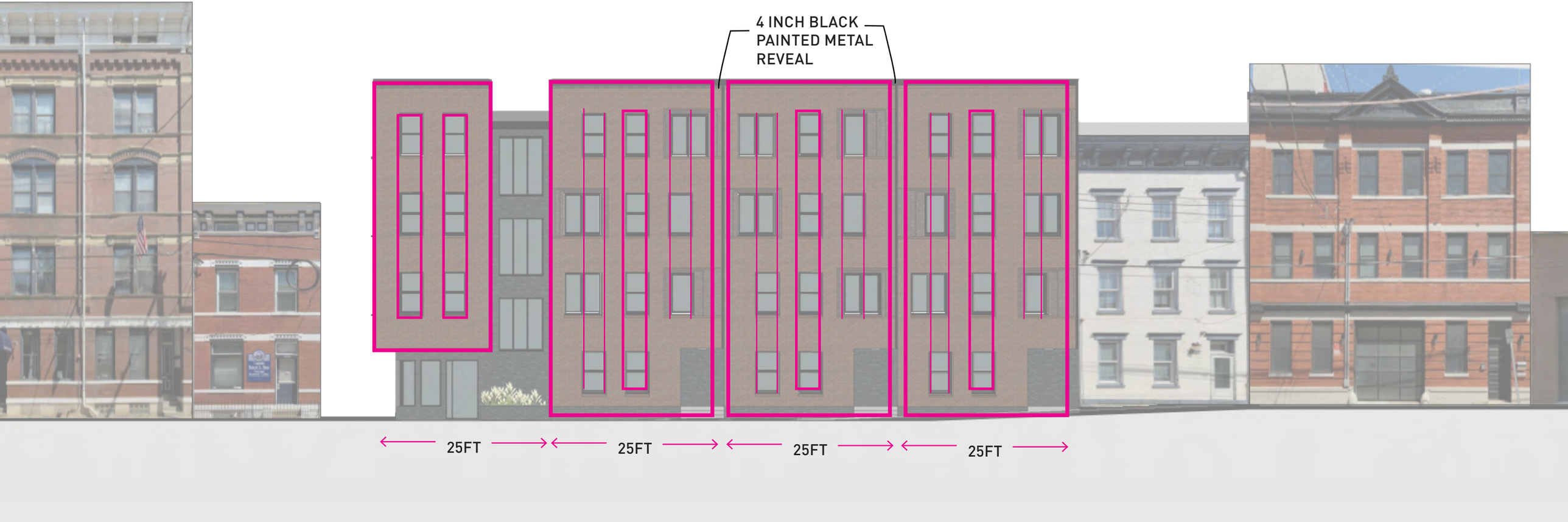
EAST SIDE OF REPUBLIC STREET

STREET ELEVATION



1512-1520 REPUBLIC- RHYTHM AND VERTICAL EMPHASIS

New buildings should incorporate design features, such as **window groupings, articulation of wall surfaces, and decorative elements** such as columns or piers in an effort to maintian the rhythm that already exists in the district. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found in the district. **Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are relatively narrow, 25-50 feet in width. A building facade typically displays vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm.** New residential and Mixed Use construction should have a **vertical emphasis.**



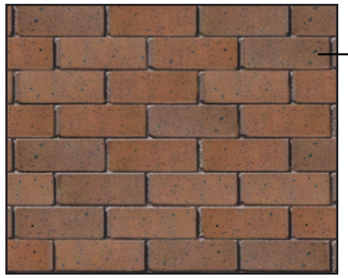
1512-1520 REPUBLIC- MATERIALS

FORMED ALUMINUM
DETAILS, PAINTED BLACK

FIELD BRICK

CRIMSON SMOOTH
IRONSPOT BRICK

BY CLOUD CERAMICS



ACCENT BRICK

EBONY VELOUR

IRONSPOT BRICK

BY CLOUD CERAMICS

New construction should use materials that are found on the historic buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Clearly the dominant material in Over-the-Rhine is **brick**, but other materials such as limestone, sandstone, cast-iron, slate, wood and **sheet metal** are important as well.

1512-1520 REPUBLIC STREET- MODIFICATIONS

During the design process, designers and the developers met with the Urban Conservator and the OTR Foundation twice each. The design was able to be modified in the following ways based on feedback.

- Eliminated larger areas of storefront glass at the stair recess and residential lobby.
- Made window pattern more regular.
- Doubled tall narrow windows in lieu of single square window.
- Changed most windows to double hung from casement style. (remaining non-double hung are fixed)
- Added brick sill detail at all windows.

ITEM 13 August 5, 2019

APPLICATION FOR ZONING RELIEF AND CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION #:	ZH20190110/COA2019038
APPLICANT:	GBBN Architects
OWNER:	Northside Revitalization LLC
ADDRESS:	**1600-1602 Pleasant Street**
PARCELS:	094-0008-0035; 0036
ZONING:	RM 1.2
OVERLAYS:	Over the Rhine Historic District
COMMUNITY:	Over the Rhine
REPORT DATE:	July 23, 2019
HEARING DATE:	August 5, 2019
STAFF REVIEW:	Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator

Details of Zoning Relief Required:

A. Sec.1405-07: Density: Numerical Variance: Numerical Variance of 952 sf of lot area/dwelling unit requirement of 1200 sf of lot area/dwelling unit to allow a 24 dwelling multifamily project at a density of 247 sf lot area/dwelling unit.

B. Sec.1405-07: Front Setback: Dimensional Variance of 10 feet is required for a zero lot line setback.

C. Sec.1405-07: Side Setback: Dimensional Variance of at least 26 feet and 17 feet based on the height being 26 feet over 35 feet maximum height**.**

D. Sec.1405-07: Rear Setback: Dimensional Variance of 56 feet based on the height being 26 feet over 35 feet maximum height**.**

Nature of Request:

The applicant is requesting 4 variances and a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new mixed use 5 story building with a first floor commercial space and upper residential units.

Existing Conditions:

The existing property is currently 2 tax parcels that are both vacant parcels. The building to the east on liberty is a 3 ½-4 story building and the buildings north on Pleasant Street are a 3 story building.

Figure 1: 1602 Pleasant Street. Pictures provided by Google Street Views.

Figure 2: Map of 1602 Pleasant Street. Map provided by Cagis Maps

Proposed Conditions:

1. Construct a new 5-story mixed use building at the NE corner of Pleasant St and Liberty St.
2. A commercial space will be on the first floor and 24 units above.
3. The building will be clad in two different toned bricks to differentiate the two different modules.

Previous Review: NA

Applicable Zoning Code Sections:

Zoning District:	Section 1405	Residential
Variance Requests:	Section 1405	Development Standards
Variance Authority:	Section 1445-07	
HCB authority:	Section 1435-05-4	
Variance Standard:	Section 1445-13	General Standards: Public Interest
	Section 1445-15	Standards for Variances
Overlays:	Section 1435	Historic Preservation
Historic District/Reg:		Over the Rhine Historic District
COA Standard:	Section 1435-09-2	COA; Standard of Review

Zoning Analysis:

The following discussion will be the same text in the following staff reports 1617-1619 Race Street, 1602 Pleasant Street and 1512 Republic Street

As these projects are all part of a larger project called Willkommen, a scattered site low-income housing tax credit projects that includes both rehabilitation of 19 buildings, which will be using Historic Tax Credits, and the construction of 4 new buildings. 3 of the new construction projects are being presented together and one will be coming in a future meeting. This will create approximately 190 total housing units within the neighborhood and will be a mix of market rate and affordable housing units with approximately 40% of the units consider affordable (50 of the units will be at 60% or less of the Area Medium income of the MSA and 26 of the units will be 80% or less of Area Median Income of the MSA).

The applicants have provided a through Economic Feasibility explanation narrative along with proformas showing cost and gaps per unit with the allowable density increase versus the requested density. In order to comply with OHFA regulations, all of the units would have to be affordable in a project which would comply with the allowable density. The project size would decrease, which decreases the construction costs, but it also decreased the income of the project. Even with the decreased construction costs, the zoning compliant projects still have a gap that is between 1.5-1.7 times the gap for the requested increase density.

A project with a compliant density would also decrease the total number of affordable units the project is able to create. As it has been a stated desire within the Over-the-

Rhine Community Plan and Plan Cincinnati for more affordable units, to support this goal a higher density is required. Also allowing for a higher density allows for a mixed income approach in the buildings, both new construction and in the historic rehabilitations. This helps to create affordable housing in otherwise high-opportunity areas that provide greater access to jobs, public transit and amenities.

While typically we cannot consider the proposed rents of a project when considering economic feasibility due to lack of legal accountability for the stated rents, with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits there is a requirement that the units maintain the stated affordability for 30 years to be able to capture the tax credits. That is a factor of consideration here today, as this is a substantial property encumbrance that will be borne by the property owner if the project executed.

When looking at the density variance, two areas of concern that we have consistently considered are Parking and Traffic Patterns and Trash and Utility Management.

1) Parking and Traffic Patterns

On September 19, 2018, City Council passed the Urban Parking Overlay Zone #1, which exempts all projects within the boundary of the overlay from parking requirements. This overlay became law on October 20, 2018. While the property would be exempt from parking requirements, the project is asking for an increase in residential density which does increase the anticipated parking demand based on the zoning code allowances. Overall the major increase in parking demand is created by the New Construction as the rehabilitation portion of the project is only increasing the parking demand generated by 2 additional dwelling units (net 12 trips/day per national standards). Per the zoning code, the new construction would have been permitted to have 26 units over the 4 properties and they are creating 90 units. This creates an increased parking demand for 64 dwelling units. In order to offset this increased demand, the applicants own 2 parking lots within a block of each of the projects that together have 166 parking spaces. These would more than be able to accommodate the needs for the increased parking demand. Additionally, and uniquely within OTR, transit capacity and opportunities within walking distance for jobs, goods and services, should, in actuality, minimize, the parking demand of the more urban context. Applicants and their management team have experience with properties within OTR and should be able to demonstrate previous experience in similar projects in the neighborhood.

2) Trash and Utility Management

When an increase in density is requested for a property, providing adequate trash and utility management within the building or on the property is necessary as to not create a collection of trash receptacles on public right of ways, either on streets or on alleys. In all the new construction projects, the applicants have made trash accommodations off the alley for appropriate trash storage onsite or at adjacent properties owned by the same property owner, for both the residents and the proposed commercial spaces. On any project that has trash collection off-site staff, will require a covenant between the properties for the allowance of trash collection at the time of building permit issuance.

The Following Discussion is specific the project at 1600-1602 Pleasant.

Standards for Variances per Section 1435-05-4

(a) Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the Historic District of Historic Asset; or

The proposed work will fill a significant void and corner on a major road in the urban fabric where a vacant lot is currently. It is utilizing new construction to help rehabilitate and utilize an existing building on the site. As detailed below the building is a compatible building to the historic district.

(b) Is necessary where the denial thereof would result in a deprivation of all economically viable uses of the property as viewed in its entirety. In making such a determination, the Historic Conservation Board may consider the factors set forth in Section 1435-09-2 (aa) to (ff).

The applicants have demonstrated that as a piece of larger project, the unit count and associated sizes are necessary to make a low-income housing project work. As this property is currently a residential district, residential uses are permitted but not at this density. The property is part of a proposed zone change that would allow a greater base density as well as a commercial space on the first floor. If this zone change is not approved the applicants would have to return for a Use Variance.

Standards for Variances per Section 1445-05-4

(a) Owing to special circumstances or conditions pertaining to a specific piece of property, the strict application of the provisions or requirements of this Code or the Land Development Code, as applicable, are unreasonable and would result in practical difficulties.

A strict application of the code would only allow 4 residential dwelling units on this property. This strict application is contrary to the goals of the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan and Plan Cincinnati of creating more housing opportunities, especially Low-Income Housing opportunities in order to provide more diverse housing options within the neighborhood.

(b) The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant possessed by owners of other properties in the same district or vicinity.

The applicants are asking for the density allowance that is comparable to the density of existing historic buildings in the vicinity but is denser that new construction that has been permitted without parking. However, the applicant is proposing a housing project that typically has not established the parking demand in this neighborhood, compared to market rate housing.

Below is analysis of the consideration factors for all of the requested zoning actions, utilizing Section 1445-13, General Standards; Public Interest.

1. **Zoning**. The proposed work conforms to the underlying zone district regulations and is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code.

The underlying zoning is RM 1.2. The proposed use of the subject property does not conform to the zoning as it is increasing the density by 6 times the allowed density that is permitted and therefore does not meet the standards of the RM 1.2 zoning district. The proposed use of multi-family residential use generally does conform to the zone. The commercial space does not conform. The applicants are not asking for a Use Variance at this time as a proposed zoning change will allow for a commercial space. If this zoning change is not approved the applicants would be required to ask for a Use Variance.

2. **Guidelines.** The proposed work conforms to any guidelines adopted or approved by Council for the district in which the proposed work is located.

Staff is of the opinion the proposed work does substantially conform to the guidelines for the Over-the-Rhine Conservation District. (Refer to Certificate of Appropriateness review below)

3. **Plans.** The proposed work conforms to a comprehensive plan, any applicable urban design or other plan officially adopted by Council, and any applicable community plan approved by the City Planning Commission.

Plan Cincinnati was adopted in 2012 and there are many maps and discussion about the urban center and the basin area being a dense urban neighborhood. The proposal is supporting the desire for dense development to help build the population and work base for the City of Cincinnati. The proposal is also supporting creating diverse housing options which is desired in the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan.

4. **Traffic.** Streets or other means of access to the proposed development are suitable and adequate to carry anticipated traffic and will not overload the adjacent streets and the internal circulation system is properly designed.

This has been discussed above.

5. **Buffering.** Appropriate buffering is provided to protect adjacent uses or properties from light, noise and visual impacts.
   NA

6. **Landscaping.** Landscaping meets the requirements of Chapter 1423, Landscaping and Buffer Yards.
   NA

7. **Hours of Operation.** Operating hours are compatible with adjacent land uses.
   NA

8. **Neighborhood Compatibility.** The proposed work is compatible with the predominant or prevailing land use, building and structure patterns of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development and will not have a material net cumulative adverse impact on the neighborhood.
   The proposed use as a 4 ½ -5 story-story mixed use building is in keeping with the mixed use 4 story development on this portion of Liberty Street. While it is currently zoned as an RM 1.2 Zoning district, building is situated on a major corridor on Liberty Street which is a commercial corridor.

9. **Proposed Zoning Amendments.** The proposed work is consistent with any proposed amendment to the zoning code then under consideration by the City Planning Commission or Council.
   There is currently a proposed zone change for this parcel to change it to CC-P. This would allow for a commercial first floor use and would also allow a density of 8 residential units which would change the request to asking for 3x the allowed density rather than 6 times the density.

10. **Adverse Effects.** Any adverse effect on the access to the property by fire, police, or other public services; access to light and air from adjoining properties; traffic conditions; or the development, usefulness or value of neighboring land and buildings.
    There are no anticipated adverse effects to the extent of access to fire, police or other public services.

11. **Blight.** The elimination or avoidance of blight.
    The current property is a vacant underutilized property. It is a vacant property on a major corridor through the neighborhood.

12. **Economic Benefits.** The promotion of the Cincinnati economy.
    The proposed work will increase the property value of the subject parcels.

13. **Job Creation.** The creation of jobs both permanently and during construction.
    The proposed project will create temporary jobs during construction and will provide permanent jobs at the commercial space and property management.

14. **Tax Valuation.** Any increase in the real property tax duplicate.
    Property taxes will increase due to the improved value of the significantly larger structure on the property. While the project does anticipate using Tax Abatement it will still increase taxes to the school district.

15. **Private Benefits.** The economic and other private benefits to the owner or applicant.

The owner has an economic benefit to the proposed establishment.

Certificate of Appropriateness Review

NEW CONSTRUCTION

The Over the Rhine Historic Conservation Design Guidelines gives direction to both staff and an applicant on how to design and review proposed developments. When designing infill developments, context and existing surrounding buildings are the main guiding principles of reference. Typically, the context that we consider the most when looking at appropriate infill design is the block that the parcel is on and especially adjacent properties. The applicants have provided numerous pictures of the block to show the existing historic context of the site in question. The applicant has also provided a detailed written narrative and graphic explanation of their design reasonings and compatibility.

Staff comments on the Specific Guidelines for New Construction:

A. Intent and General Guidelines

1. New construction is allowed on vacant sites in Over-the-Rhine, because gaps due to demolition weaken the streetscape and the overall character of the district. New construction can improve both the physical quality and economic vitality of the neighborhood.

The lot is a vacant lot and is used as an unimproved vacant lot.

2. New construction should be well-designed but should not replicate the existing buildings. The exceptional quality of the existing buildings in the district provides an outstanding framework for new construction.

This infill development does not replicate the existing buildings and through the applicant's narrative they explain how they used the existing buildings to inform their design.

3. The Historic Conservation Board's review of new construction will focus on the design compatibility with the surrounding contributing structures. The appropriateness of design solutions will be based on balancing the programmatic needs of the applicant with how well the design relates to the neighboring buildings and to the intent of these guidelines. New design proposals should pay particular attention to composition, materials, openings, rhythm, scale, proportion and height.

Staff details the compatibility of the project with the guidelines and surrounding buildings below in the specific guidelines.

4. The new construction guidelines for this district will be used to judge the compatibility of new work. The specific site and programmatic needs of each project will be taken into consideration.

Staff details the compatibility of the project with the guidelines and surrounding buildings below in the specific guidelines

B. Specific Guidelines

1. Composition: New buildings should respond to the traditional subdivisions found on historic property: a base, a middle and a top. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are built of brick with the principal facade parallel to the street it faces. The most important features of buildings in Over-the-Rhine are the arrangement of openings on the principal facade and an overall vertical emphasis of the whole design. Each building provides its own variations, but collectively they share many basic features.

Base: New buildings should have a well-defined base. Within the district most buildings have a base that is distinguishable from the rest of the building. This is accomplished through a change of materials, a change of scale, and/or a lintel or other type of horizontal banding. In larger buildings the original base may include more than the first floor.

The property has a strong base defined by a storefront with large transparent glass. The base is topped with a horizontal element as a metal ribbon that is also acts to define the edge of the storefront.

There is no knee wall present and the storefront glass goes directly to the ground.

Middle: Details on new buildings should relate to the detailing of adjacent or nearby buildings. Buildings in the district often incorporate architectural details such as changes in plane or changes in materials on their upper floors. Decorative, horizontal bands indicating the floor lines, sill heights or lintel heights should not overpower the vertical emphasis of the design.

The middle is defined by individual and paired punched openings on both modules of the building. The windows have simple sills to define them and give them both shadow lines and depth.

Top: New construction must employ a strong element that terminates the uppermost part of the building. Distinctive elements in the architecture of Over-the-Rhine are elaborate projecting cornices, decorative parapets and the expressive use of materials.

There are 2 different modules in the building. The Pleasant Street building that is 4 ½ stories tall that incorporates the top story into the "top" and is detailed with horizontal banding to create a unique top. The windows act as through the cornice windows. The top on the 5 story portion of the building is a simple metal channel with an inset darker brick.

2. Roofs: Roofs for new construction should be similar to roofs of adjacent and nearby buildings of similar size and use. In the district, buildings of three or more stories generally have low-pitched shed roofs that are not visible above the principal facade. Smaller buildings in the district typically have simple gable roofs on which the gables are perpendicular to the principal facade. Institutional buildings in Over-the-Rhine have a variety of roof shapes, including dormers, multiple gables, hip roofs and towers. Roofs in this district have little or no overhang.

The roof is a slope roof but appears to be a flat roof from the street.

3. Window Openings: Window openings are extremely important in this district. The openings of new buildings should be related to the size and placement of openings found on historic structures of similar use in the district. In residential buildings, window openings are typically found individually rather than in pairs or grouped. The openings are taller and wider (typically in a proportion of 2:1), window sashes are set back from the wall surface, and openings have some form of definition, such as lintels, sills or decorative surrounds. Window openings, which are typically aligned vertically, usually occupy between 20% and 50% of the principal facade. In commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, windows are often grouped within a single opening. These building types may also use a combination of window sash, including double-hung, awning and hopper. If muntins are used in new window sash, they must provide true divided lights. Within the individual opening, window sashes are usually divided into two or more lights. In all cases the glass must be clear; tinted or reflective glass is not acceptable. Also, roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of the building that cover door and window openings are not appropriate.

1. *The windows are individual and paired punched openings with a one over one detail.*
2. *The individual windows are taller than they are wide.*
3. *The glass is clear and only used the tint required for energy code requirements.*
4. *The window openings have a simple sill on the 2-5 floors to provide definition.*
5. *The windows are stacked vertically and lined up horizontally.*
6. *The windows are individual and paired punched openings with one vertical oriented window on the east and north façade along the stairwell.*

4. Storefronts: New storefronts should relate to the characteristics of existing storefronts on historic buildings. Storefronts in the district are typically taller than individual upper floors; framed by piers and/or columns and have a lintel separating them from the upper floors; are divided into bays which increases their verticality and provides a pedestrian scale and proportion; and have large, fixed expanses of clear (not tinted or reflective) glass. As with rehabilitated original storefronts, roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of the building are not appropriate elements for new storefronts. The storefront lintels are 12 to 18 feet above grade; the window sill height is between 18 inches and 3 feet above grade; and storefront windows are set back from the structural elements approximately 12 inches

The first floor is defined by a commercial storefront on the Liberty and Pleasant Street facades. The majority of the base is a storefront form with a large plane of glass. While the design does not include a knee wall, The storefront also has strong vertical mullions to break up the glass and help provide vertical emphasis.

There are 3 entrances at the storefront level with one being an entrance to the apartment lobby.

5. Setback: Setback is an important issue in a dense urban area such as Over-the-Rhine. The setback for new construction should be consistent with the buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites. In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, has shallow setbacks but retain an "edge" at the property line with a fence. Some larger institutional buildings such as schools, churches and public buildings are setback from the street to provide public space and to add to their monumentality. In most cases new construction on corner sites should be built up to the edge of both outside property lines.

The setback is the only element that staff feels does not meet the guideline as the building does not have a traditional setback, however the explanation of the architects intent behind both the first floor recesses and the gradual recess towards the center of each façade provide a better understanding behind the purpose, both to create building code/DOTE compliant entrances as well as to help break up the building providing a stronger vertical emphasis.

The setbacks are gradual and are not an element that will overwhelm the building or the block, especially along Liberty Street which has multiple buildings that are not parallel to the street.

The recess on the north portion of the building that faces Pleasant Street also has a floating overhang. While overhangs like this typically have a strong corner with a column, staff feels in this instance keeping the area open to encourage views to the mural that will be remaining is an appropriate design response to an iconic mural.

6. Rhythm: New buildings should incorporate design features, such as window groupings, articulation of wall surfaces, and decorative elements such as columns or piers in an effort to maintain the rhythm that already exists in the district. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found on the district. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are relatively narrow, 25 to 50 feet in width. A building facade typically displays vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm. In dense commercial areas such as Vine Street, there are no setbacks, creating a solid wall along the street. This wall is articulated by the individual buildings, which in turn are divided by window groupings, changes in wall planes and decorative elements such as pilasters, columns or piers.

There are many elements of rhythm in the building. As the lot is a wide lot, both along Liberty Street and Pleasant Street the building does the following.

1) *Provide a recess at midway points along the façade. Provide horizontal banding in vertical columns that is reminiscent of quoins.*
2) *Regular pattern of windows across all facades.*
3) *Strong columns that extend from the ground to the top at intervals that break up the building into smaller modular.*

7. Emphasis: New residential and mixed-use construction should have a vertical emphasis, because in Over-the-Rhine buildings are taller than they are wide, window openings are tall and narrow, and storefronts have slender columns, which emphasize verticality. Commercial and industrial buildings, which may have an overall horizontal emphasis, often incorporate vertical elements, such as pilasters or vertically oriented openings.

While the overall building is wider than it is tall it has provided the following elements to provide a strong vertical emphasis

1. *Windows are taller than they are wide.*
2. *The divisions on the store front create vertical window panes*
3. *The vertical alignment of the windows creates columns with both the windows and the brick.*
4. *Strong vertical columns of "quoins"*

8. Height: The height of new construction should not vary more than one story from adjacent contributing buildings. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are between two- and five-stories.

The building is a 5 stories tall on the north building on Pleasant Street and 5 Stories on the corner of Liberty and Pleasant. The 5 story building on Pleasant does step down slightly to provide a transition from the 3 story building that abuts it on Pleasant Street.

The building abutting the property to the east along Liberty Street is 4 stories tall and this building is within 1 story of that building.

While the 5 story portion along Pleasant is 2 stories above the directly abutting building, staff finds that the stepping down from the corner building as well as having a slight setback to make the corner of the historic building remain prominent are efforts to minimize the scale of the building on the streetscape.

9. Materials: New construction should use materials that are found on the historic buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Clearly the dominant material in Over-the-Rhine is brick, but other materials such as limestone, sandstone, cast-iron, slate, wood and sheet metal are important as well. Materials such as stucco, synthetic stucco and plastic are not appropriate and should not be considered as exposed finish materials for new construction in this district.

1. *Overall the materials used on the building are appropriate. The main massing is brick. The brick are 2 tones of an orangish brick that will blend in with unpainted brick on the street.*

2. *Other materials such as metal and glass are appropriate as secondary and accent materials.*

The applicant has kept the materials simple and by using brick and limited metal, the overall materials of the building help make the building contextual.

Other Considerations:

Prehearing Results: June 12, 2019. The meeting was attended by the applicants and a representative from the OTR Foundation.

OTR Foundation submitted a letter to the applicant after a review of the project. The applicant has addressed the comment regarding a large expanse of glass by adding vertical divisions, however, was not able to accommodate their request to reduce the height by a floor.

Recommendation:

I. ZONING VARIANCES

The following recommendations are proposed for the project proposed at 1600-1602 Pleasant Street per the drawings submitted by GBBN Architects dated 07/19/2019.

A. Sec.1409-09 Density: **APPROVE** Numerical Variance of 952 sf of lot area/dwelling unit requirement of 1200 sf of lot area/dwelling unit to allow a 24 dwelling multifamily project at a density of 247 sf lot area/dwelling unit with the following conditions
   a. A covenant shall be recorded prior to building permit issuance for the trash collection of the property on the adjacent property at 1601 Race Street.
   b. If the project does not move forward with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the density variance is required to come back before the Historic Conservation Board.

B. Sec.1409-09 Front Setback: **APPROVE**: Dimensional Variance of 10 feet is required for a zero lot line setback.

C. Sec.1409-09 Side Setback: **APPROVE** Dimensional Variance of 26 feet and 17 feet based on the height being 26 feet over 35 feet maximum height**.**

D. Sec.1405-07: Rear Setback: **APPROVE** Dimensional Variance of 56 feet based on the height being 26 feet over 35 feet maximum height**.**

E. FINDING: The Board makes this determination that per Section 1435-05-4:
   1. Such relief from literal implication of the Zoning Code will not materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property within the district or vicinity where property is located.
   2. The property is part of a larger project with 23 scattered parcels including both new construction on 4 projects and 19 rehabilitation projects.

3. The project is part of a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Project and the applicants have sufficiently demonstrated that the extra units are needed to make the project economically feasible.

II. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

A. APPROVE the application a Certificate of Appropriateness for 5 story mixed use, multi-family residential building at 1600-1602 Pleasant Street per plans submitted by GBBN Architecture dated 07/19/2019 with the following conditions:

1. The building permit must be issued within 2 years or the Certificate of Appropriateness will expire.
2. The tax parcels shall be merged by Consolidation Plat prior to building permits being issued.

B. FINDING: The Board makes this determination that per Section 1435-05-4:

1. That the property owner and applicant have demonstrated by credible evidence that the proposal substantially conforms to the applicable guidelines for New Construction of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Conservation District.
2. The massing, including height and width, are appropriate and balanced as to not overwhelm the block of historic contributing buildings.
3. The building has contemporary take on historic elements, including and extended/differentiated top floor, simple cornice, and quoins as a vertical emphasis element.

GBBN

July 19, 2019

Beth Johnson
Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Avenue, Suite 500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Based on the narrative below, we hope that you and the Historic Conservation Board will find that the proposed design for a new 5 story building with a mix of affordable and market rate residential apartments at 1600-1602 Pleasant Street meets the vast majority of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Guidelines and represents an effort to create a contemporary building that adds to the vitality and texture of Pleasant and Liberty Streets in its relation to the historic fabric of these blocks of Over-the-Rhine. We have been careful not to replicate the features of adjacent existing buildings, but rather to *relate* to them in their overall organization and effect. We hope that you will support this effort to pair a high level of contemporary design with one of the most significant additions of affordable housing in Over-the-Rhine in recent years as part of Model Group and 3CDC's Willkommen project.

1.Composition: This building has is organized into a base, middle, and top. Additionally, a change in the brick color and a small offset causes the composition to read as two distinct narrower "buildings"- one facing onto Liberty and the other that faces onto Pleasant.

Base: The base of both "buildings" is defined by a higher level of transparency than is seen in the middle and top, which relates to the programmatic division between the retail/restaurant/lobby spaces and the residential spaces above. The transparent glass of the storefront will be defined by an outline of metal that wraps the underside of the soffit and jambs to create a contemporary interpretation of an awning structure that is more integrated into the massing of the building as a whole. The "Liberty Building" will feature two entrances for commercial spaces in its base and structural columns supporting the building will be visible just behind the storefront glass. It also has three zones where the brick is brought all the way down to the base in areas featuring a linear reveal detail. The "Pleasant Building" will contain the residential lobby and the storefront will shift back at the corner to create a focal point at the residential entry with direct and borrowed views through the glass to the existing Rosemary Clooney mural on the building directly to the north.

Middle: The middle of the "Liberty Building" and "Pleasant Building" is defined by a field condition of brick with punched windows, organized in vertical columns and rows aligning at each floor. All windows will be 1 over 1 windows double hung windows with roughly a 2:1 ratio of height to width, similar to the nearby historic buildings. The top story windows on the "Pleasant Building" will be shorter than the typical windows, which will allow the height of the structure to be stepped down on Pleasant Street. As noted previously, the "Pleasant Building" primary façade is slightly inset from the Pleasant facing side of the "Liberty Building" to create the effect of two distinct (though related) buildings. The middle of the

"Liberty Building" also features a brick reveal detail that runs from base to top in a vertical "column", reinforcing a sense of verticality in the overall composition.

Top: The top the building is defined by a slightly inset row of darker brick topped by a 12 inch profiled metal cornice. The face of the metal cornice steps back to create a reveal, while the top edge creates a thin profile that projects slightly beyond the face of the brick façade.

2.Roof: Both the "Liberty Building" and the "Pleasant Building" have a very low slope roof (often called "flat roof") that will be black TPO or EPDM, that slopes away from the primary façade so that it is not visible from the street.

3.Window Openings: The windows are set in punched openings and are of similar size, proportion, and spacing to windows found on the immediately adjacent buildings. The windows will sit at a similar depth in the window opening to those in the surrounding historic buildings. All windows will feature a brick sill detail.

4.Storefronts: In addition to the features of the storefront described above, the height of the storefront will be aligned with the height of the storefront window openings in the abutting historic building. It will be constructed with black 2 inch x 4.5 inch aluminum mullions and clear glazing. It is inset approximately 12 inches from the facade.

The glass store will feature 2 in mullions to create a vertical rhythm of glazed panels, each about the same width as the storefront windows of the abutting historic building.

5.Setback: This project's setbacks are generally in line with the historic guidelines, with minor deviations that help to improve the vertical emphasis of the composition and allow the program to better fit in the trapezoidal shaped site.

Above the first floor level: From the north lot line, the building has a setback that varies between 3'-5" at the Pleasant Street frontage and continuing back 34'-8", to 15'-1" at the northeast corner of the lot. This carving away at the rear corner of the site allows for better daylight in the northeast corner unit, and creates opportunity for a small amount of outdoor space. On the east lot line, the building has a zero setback for the first 54 feet off of Liberty Street. It carves back at the northeast corner of the lot, again to provide daylight and views for the northeast corner unit. On the south lot line along Liberty, the building is built to the lot line at both the southeast and southwest corners of the lot. At the middle of the lot line, the building folds back 3'-8", to create a divide in the façade that helps to break up the building mass along Liberty into two distinct faces. At the west lot line, the building is built to the lot line at the northwest and southwest corners of the lot. Midway along the lot line, the building folds in 2'-6" again to divide the face in two, allowing this façade to create the impression of two distinct but related buildings that fall within the recommended widths described in the historic guidelines (see rhythm section below).

First Floor: the storefront angles back below the mass of the building as required to accommodate the outward swinging doors required for egress.

6.Rhythm: This building maintains a rhythm of vertical bays as recommended by the Over-the-Rhine Historic Guidelines within the 25-50 foot range. As described in the setbacks section, the building has two folds, one on Liberty Street and one on Pleasant Street. On Pleasant the north side of the fold is 25'-10" and the south side of the fold is 28'-7". On Liberty Street the west side of the fold is 40'-0" long, and the east side of the fold is 48'-0" long. While the building does not literally have columns or piers, it does have a linear reveal detail in the brick that runs vertically at the edges of the "Liberty Building" that serve a similar decorative and compositional function as a vertical subdivision that breaks up the horizontal expanse of wall.

7.Emphasis: This building uses many of the elements listed above to reinforce a vertical reading of the overall design. As described above, the overall mass has been broken into two "buildings" and a fold in the façade on Liberty Street breaks the wall into two portions, each taller than it is wide. The reveal details that run in vertical "columns" further break down the horizontal wall windows are tall and narrow as seen on historic neighbors.

8. Height: Due to the significant amount of demolished buildings, and new lower rise buildings along Liberty Street it can be difficult to determine a sense for the kind of height appropriate for a new building along this major thoroughfare. If we look a little further east and west on each side of the street, we typically see buildings from 3-4 stories, with some taller churches and steeples, interspersed with several surface parking lots or unbuilt lots. Along the north side of Liberty, the majority of the historic mixed use or residential buildings are 4 stories (1601 Race Street, 1602 Race Street, 1600 Vine Street, 126 W. Liberty, 214 and 212 W. Liberty). Taller institutional buildings include St Francis Seraph Church and School Buildings at the corner of Liberty and Vine Streets. The proposed building is 5 stories, which is within the 1 story above or below adjacent contributing buildings guideline, and within the guideline that most buildings in OTR are between two and five stories. In order to lower the height and scale down towards Pleasant Street, the proposed design uses a smaller top window and lower head height for the "Pleasant Building" top story.

9.Materials: This building will have brick on all facades that are visible to the general public from Liberty and Pleasant Streets. We will use primarily a light crimson smooth ironspot brick and a darker crimson velour brick. Please refer to the packet for specific make and images. Storefront glazing system will be clear glass with black 2 inch aluminum mullions. Windows will be black aluminum clad wood double hung windows with clear glass. Cornices, Storefront wrap and other details will be matching dark metal.

We appreciate your consideration and please do not hesitate to reach out if there is any additional information we can provide.

Sincerely,

Chad Burke
Principal

July 22, 2019

Beth Johnson
Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Avenue, Suite 500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

On behalf of the Willkommen Development Team we are seeking the following reliefs to the proposed development at 1600-1602 Pleasant Street, Cincinnati, 45202.

Variance:

1. CZC 1409-09 Development Regulations
    a. Density
    b. Front Setback
    c. Side Setback
    d. Rear Setback

General Background:

The new 5 story building that will contain two commercial spaces on the first floor and a mix of affordable and market rate residential apartments at the upper floors at 1600-1602 Pleasant Street is part of a larger joint development by Model Group and 3CDC called Willkommen. The residential portion will consist of 24 units (three will be two bedroom and twenty one will be one bedroom). Three additional new buildings are proposed for a total of 4 new buildings and 11 existing historic buildings to be renovated as part of this project that bring one of the largest increases in affordable housing to OTR in years.

Specific Relief Requested:

1. CZC 1409-09 Development Regulations
    a. Density: This location permits a maximum of 4 units under the Rm 1.2 Multifamily requirements of 1200sf lot area per unit. Due to the size requirements of units in OHFA guidelines, and programmatic requirements the proposed development houses 24 units requiring a variance of 20 units. (Adjudication letter states 19). See Development Plan information provided by 3CDC and Model Group for more information.

    b. Front Setback (Front lot line defined by CZC 1401-01L11 as Pleasant Street Frontage) : A Variance of 10 feet will be required per the Adjudication letter.

    c. Side Setback (Side lot lines defined by CZC 1401-01-L13) : (Adjudication states variance required based on final determination based on established height). Minimum side setback is 5ft plus .5 ft for every 1 ft of height above 35ft. Total height is 64'-5" making required minimum side setback 5 ft+14.75ft=19.75ft. The total amount of required side

setbacks is 17ft, plus 1ft for every 1ft of height over 35ft. At 64'-5"total height, the required total of side setbacks is 17ft+ 29ft = 46ft. At the interior side lot line, the setback in the proposed design is 5'-9" at the ground level and 3'-5" from the property line at the upper levels. This would require a variance of 11'-3" to meet the minimum side setback requirement. At the street side lot line the setback ranges from 0'-0" at the corners and 3'-8" at the center of the street side lot line. A variance of 31'-3" is needed is needed on this side.

d. Rear Setback (Rear lot lines defined by CZC 1401-01-L12) : This location requires a 30 ft rear yard setback plus 1additional ft for every additional 5 ft of height above 35ft. At 64'-5", the required setback would be 36ft. The proposed building is setback 7 inches from the rear lot line requiring a variance of 35'-5".

Standards for a Variance:

1. *To meet the standard outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-13, an applicant must show that the proposed project "is in the public interest". A list of factors considered by the Zoning Hearing Examiner to determine whether the project "is in the public interest" is found in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-13.*

Answer: Out of the 16 items listed in CZC Section 1445-13 for use in determining whether a development is in the public interest, the development proposed at 1600-1602 Pleasant Street meets almost all 16 in providing a positive benefit for the public interest.

A few of these are highlighted below.

h) *Neighborhood Compatibility: The proposed work is compatible with the dominant or prevailing land use, building and structure patterns of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development and will not have a material net cumulative adverse impact on the neighborhood.* This project aims to improve this portion of the neighborhood by returning it to uses and scale more aligned with the historic patterns of the neighborhood.

k) *Blight:* The proposed project transforms an empty lot along a major thoroughfare into lively commercial space and multi-family housing constructed of high quality materials.

l) *Economic benefits:* The provision units of affordable housing in this mixed income project will allow more lower income residents to remain in the neighborhood, where they can be close to resources, amenities and jobs.

p) *Public Benefits. The public peace, health, safety or general welfare.* A primary goal of the proposed design is to create a buffer that enhances the quiet residential character of Pleasant Street and to fortify the commercial activity and improve the experience of walking along Liberty Street.

It may be noted that the project is less aligned with two of the categories below.

a) *Zoning: The proposed work conforms to the underlying zone district regulations and is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code or the Land Development Code as applicable.*

c) *Plans*: *The proposed work conforms to any guidelines adopted or approved by Council for the district in which the proposed work is located.*

This neighborhood is very atypical from other RM 1.2 areas in the city because it is located in a dense urban environment that was historically a commercial corridor. Although many of these storefronts have been boarded up, and many building demolished in recent decades, there remain many indicators of the uses that have historically flourished along this block.

Today, greater continuity in the commercial uses would make areas north of Liberty more connected to those south of Liberty improving overall walkability, and would better reflect the more unified nature of the neighborhood historically. Additionally, the neighborhood has seen an influx of high end single family and small multi-family renovations and new construction. It has unfortunately not seen the investment in new affordable housing that was anticipated, and this has emerged as a new and pressing priority for in the neighborhood. The development proposed at 1600-1602 Pleasant and the other buildings that comprise the Willkommen Project provides a rare opportunity to bring responsible investment in high quality mixed income housing to this area.

Standards for a Variance (applies to Density and Setback Variance Requests):

To meet the Standard outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-15 an applicant must show:

a. neither the owner nor any of its predecessors caused the condition requiring a variance;

Answer:

Density and Setbacks: The variance request was not caused by the owner nor any of its predecessors. Rather, it is the result of the program (residential mix with the guidelines on unit size and common spaces determined by OHFA) and the application of the historic guidelines in a confined site in an urban setting.

b. how the project meets any of the following conditions:
i. special circumstances or conditions pertaining to the property cause the strict application of the zoning code to be unreasonable and would result in practical difficulties;

Answer:

1. *Density:* As noted above, this portion of the neighborhood is very atypical from those typically designated as RM1.2 elsewhere in the city. Discussions with city staff made it clear that even though there were reasons to believe that the site should be rezoned in line with similar surrounding commercial areas (CC-P) it would not be possible for the development team to attempt to get through the process within the timeline required by applications for low income housing tax credits and suggested that requesting a variance was the better route.

   In this case, the density required under the current zoning code would directly impede the creation of new, high quality affordable housing, which has only become a greater priority for the neighborhood over the past few years. In order to produce units that will be affordable, the development team must adhere as closely as possible to the unit sizes outlined in the guidelines produced by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) and to hit unit mix and number targets. These units sizes are slightly larger than is often found in strictly market rate projects. However, if only 4 units were provided on the site, the resulting building would be very small, and would not be able to comply with the design principals of the Over-the-Rhine Historic Guidelines. To provide only 4 units and create a building on this site that would be within 1 story of the adjacent buildings, and be generally built to the lot lines on all but the rear yard would result in extremely large units that would need to be priced at the very high end of the current housing market. For further information please see the included letter from 3CDC which outlines the how the density is critical to the overall project feasibility as a means to provide a large percentage of affordable units in the Willkommen development.

   2.Setbacks: For sites designated RM1.2, CZC 1405-07 Notes "*Where an overlay district applies, the provisions of that district take precedence if there is a conflict with the standards of this section".*

   In this case the standards for Setbacks under the Over-the-Rhine Historic District should take precedence over the required front, rear, and side setbacks. The guidelines state that *"The setback for new construction should be consistent with the buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites.* In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, have shallow setbacks…in most cases new construction on corner sites should be built up to the edge of both outside property lines "(Item B.5).

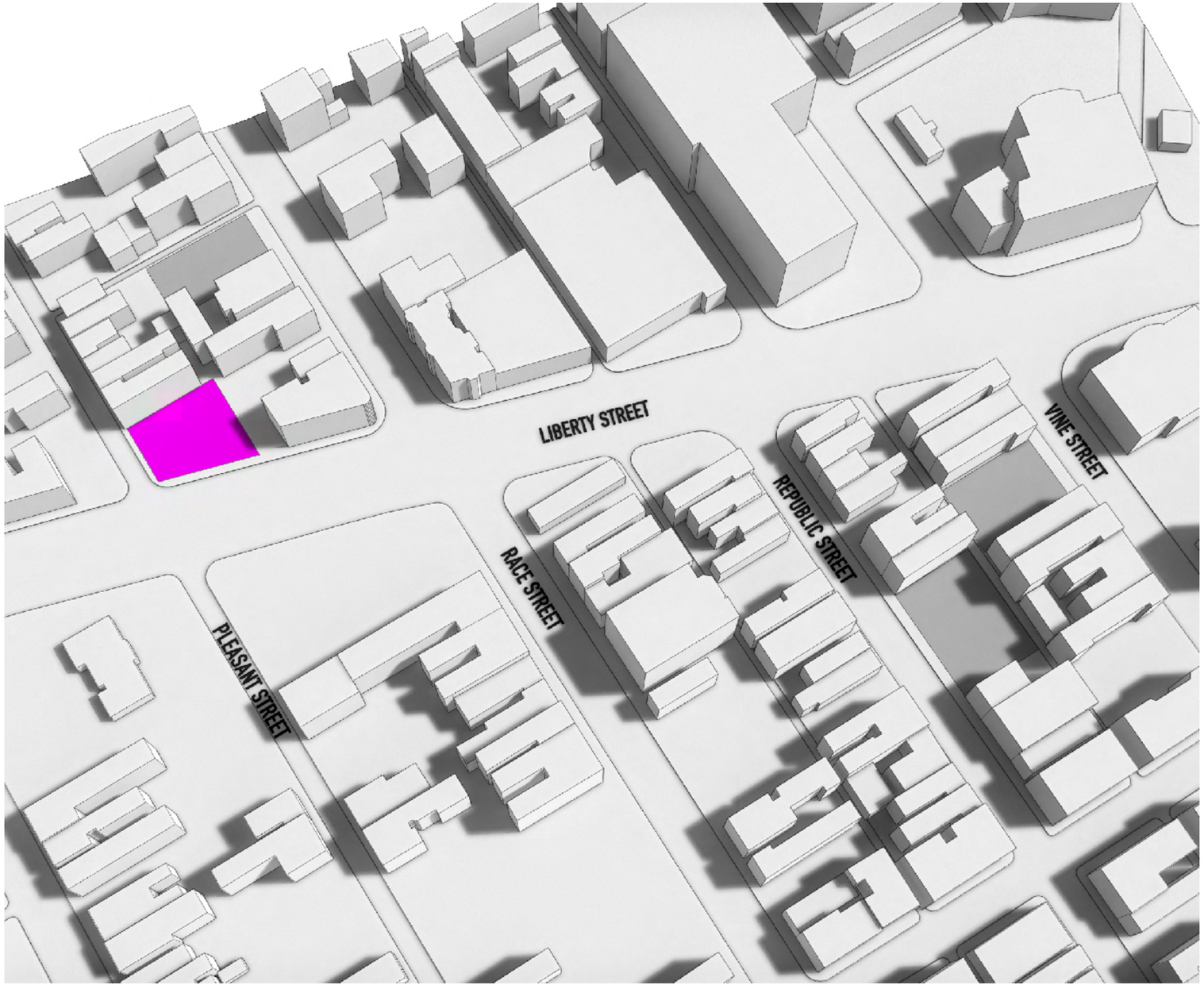
   This would mean on this parallelogram shaped corner site that the building should be generally built out to the front lot line, the street side lot line, which would result in a building that also meets the rear lot line.

   As these guidelines do not specifically address the interior side lot line, setbacks would be determined by CZC 1421-23 regarding the Side Yard of a Corner Lot. *"A corner side yard along the side street of a corner lot in a residential district, which adjoins in the rear, either directly or across an alley, the side lot line of another lot in a residential district must provide a width of no less than one-half the required front yard for the principal building on the corner lot."* The front yard setback is zero per the historic guidelines, which would mean that the setback from the interior side lot line would also be zero.

We trust that this memo provides everything you need to inform your decision. We appreciate your time in considering this matter. Please contact me directly if you have any questions. I would be happy to supply you with any additional information that you may need.

Sincerely,

Chad Burke, AIA, LEED AP
GBBN Architects Inc.



LOCATION AND DISTRICTS

- Site Area: 5,945 sf
- Zoning Designation: RM-1.2
  (Residential Multi-Family)
- Historic District: Over the Rhine
- National Registry: Over the Rhine
- Business District: -
- Commercial Use: Permitted after review and approval

MASSING REGULATIONS

- Max Height: -
- Min Height: -
- Front Yard Setback: 20 ft
  - » (+1 ft additional setback for each 5ft of height above 35 ft)
- Side Yard Setback: 5/17 ft
  - » (+1 ft additional setback for each 1ft of height above 35 ft)
- Rear Yard Setback: 30 ft
  - » (+1 ft additional setback for each 5ft of height above 35 ft)

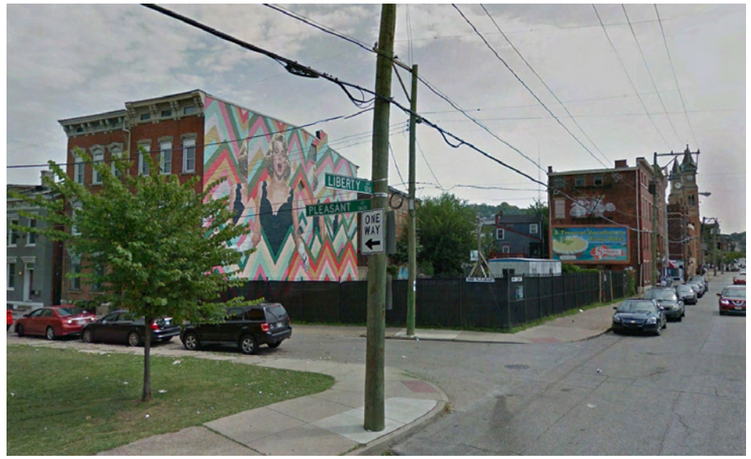
UNIT COUNT

- Current Count: 24 units
- Zoning Code: 1,200 sf land area per unit = 4 units

1600-1602 Pleasant

ZONING ANALYSIS

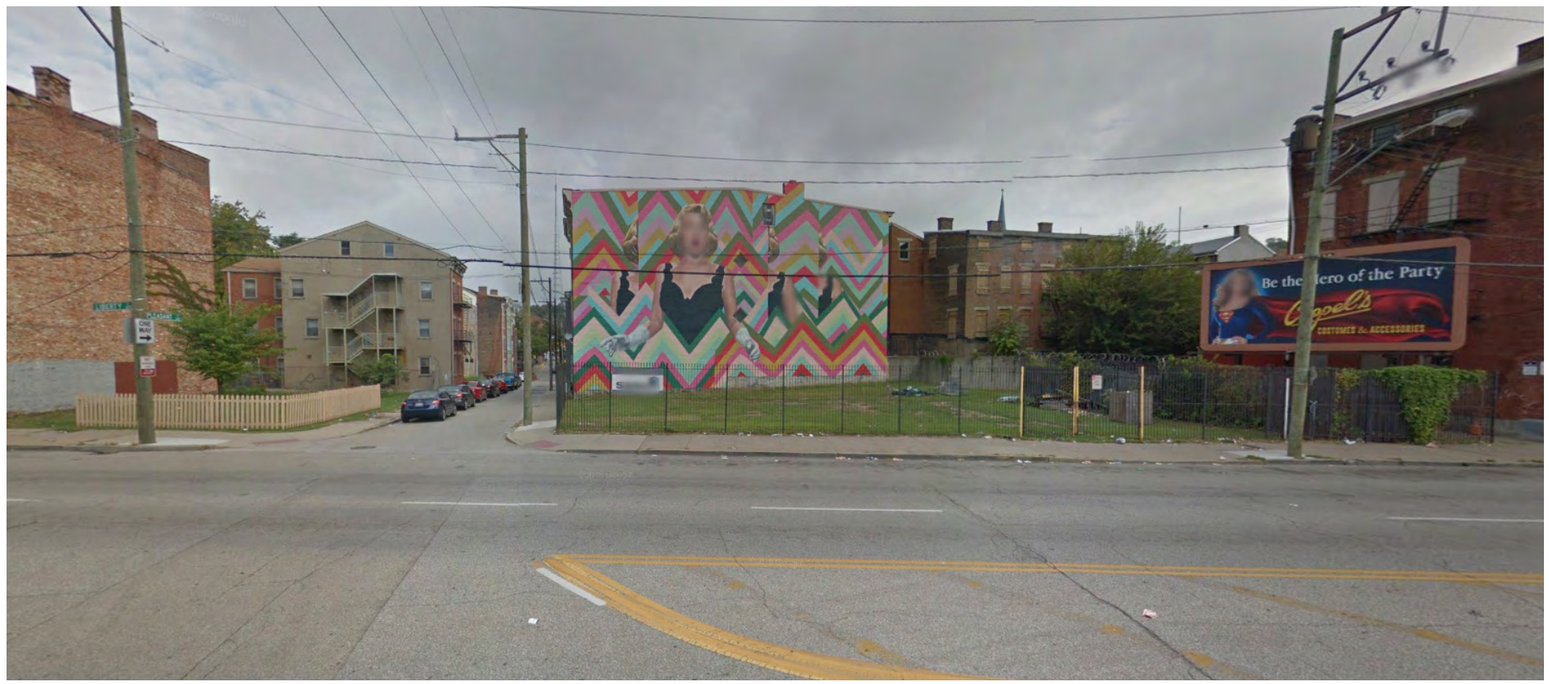
7.19.2019



LOOKING EAST FROM LIBERTY


LOOKING WEST

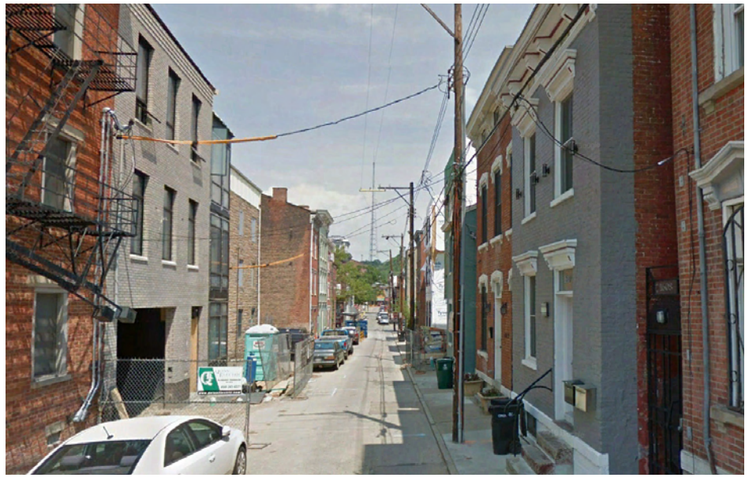

LOOKING EAST FROM PLEASANT



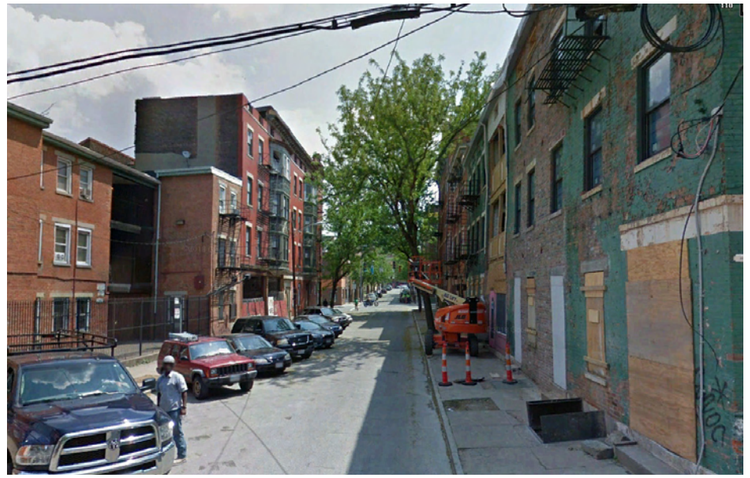
LOOKING DIRECTLY NORTH

1600–1602 Pleasant

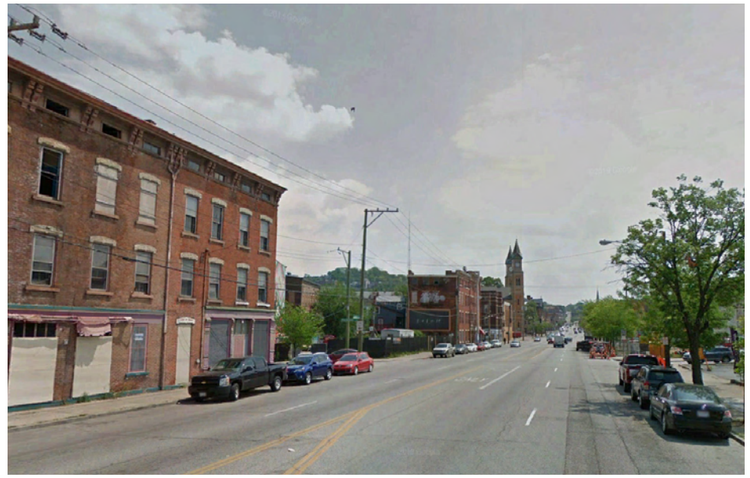
SITE PHOTOS



LOOKING NORTH UP PLEASANT STREET FROM SITE



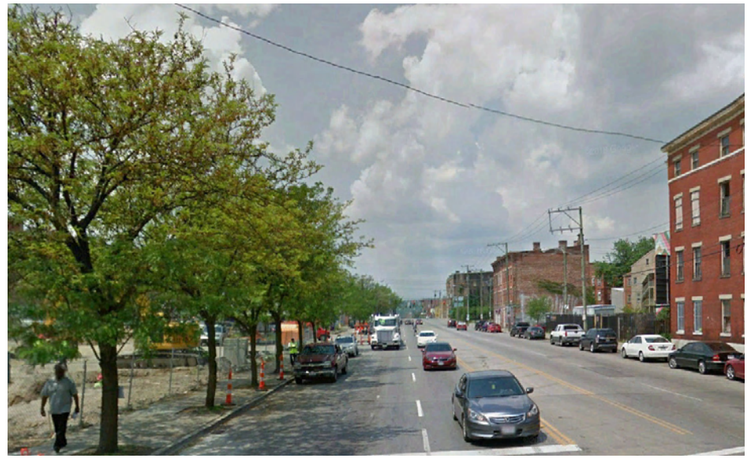
LOOKING EAST ON GREEN STREET @INTERSECTION WITH PLEASANT STREET



LOOKING EAST ON LIBERTY PAST INTERSECTION WITH PLEASANT STREET

LOOKING SOUTH DOWN PLEASANT (OTHER SIDE OF LIBERTY)

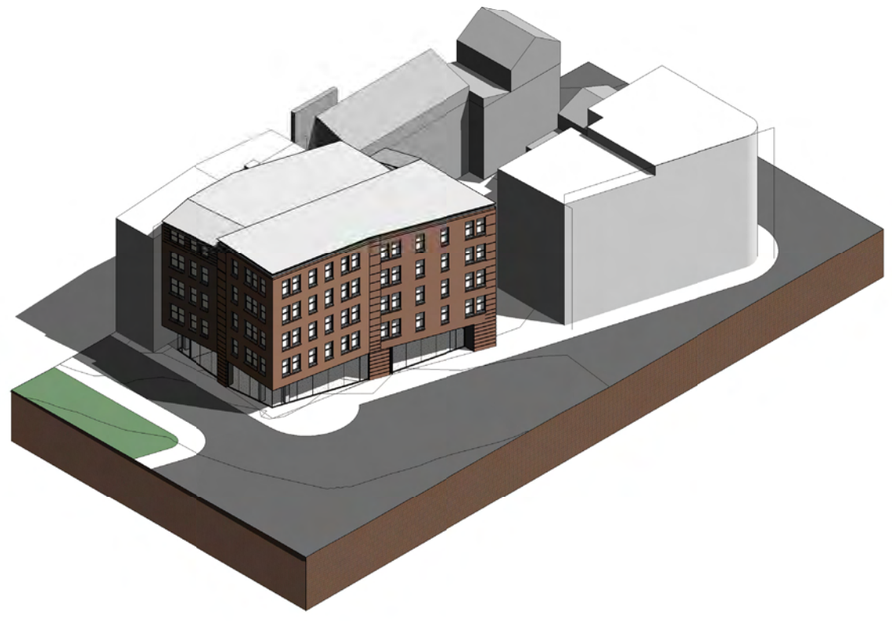
LOOKING WEST ON GREEN STREET @ INTERSECTION WITH PLEASANT STREET



LOOKING WEST ON LIBERTY PAST INTERSECTION WITH PLEASANT STREET

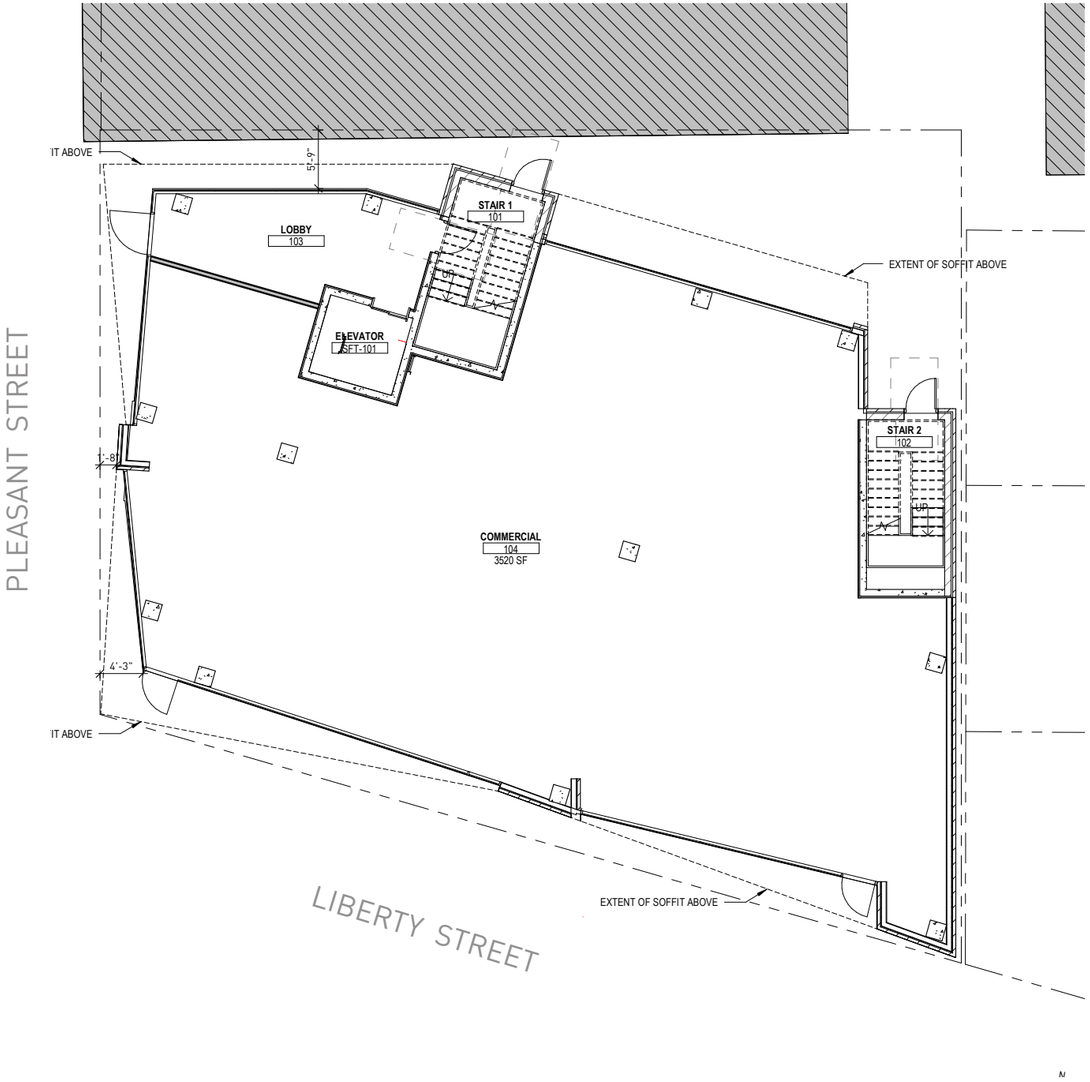
1600–1602 Pleasant

BLOCK CONTEXT PHOTOS



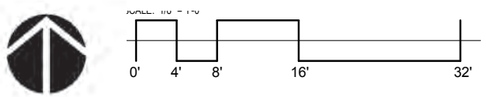
1600–1602 Pleasant

SITE PLAN AND AXONOMETRIC



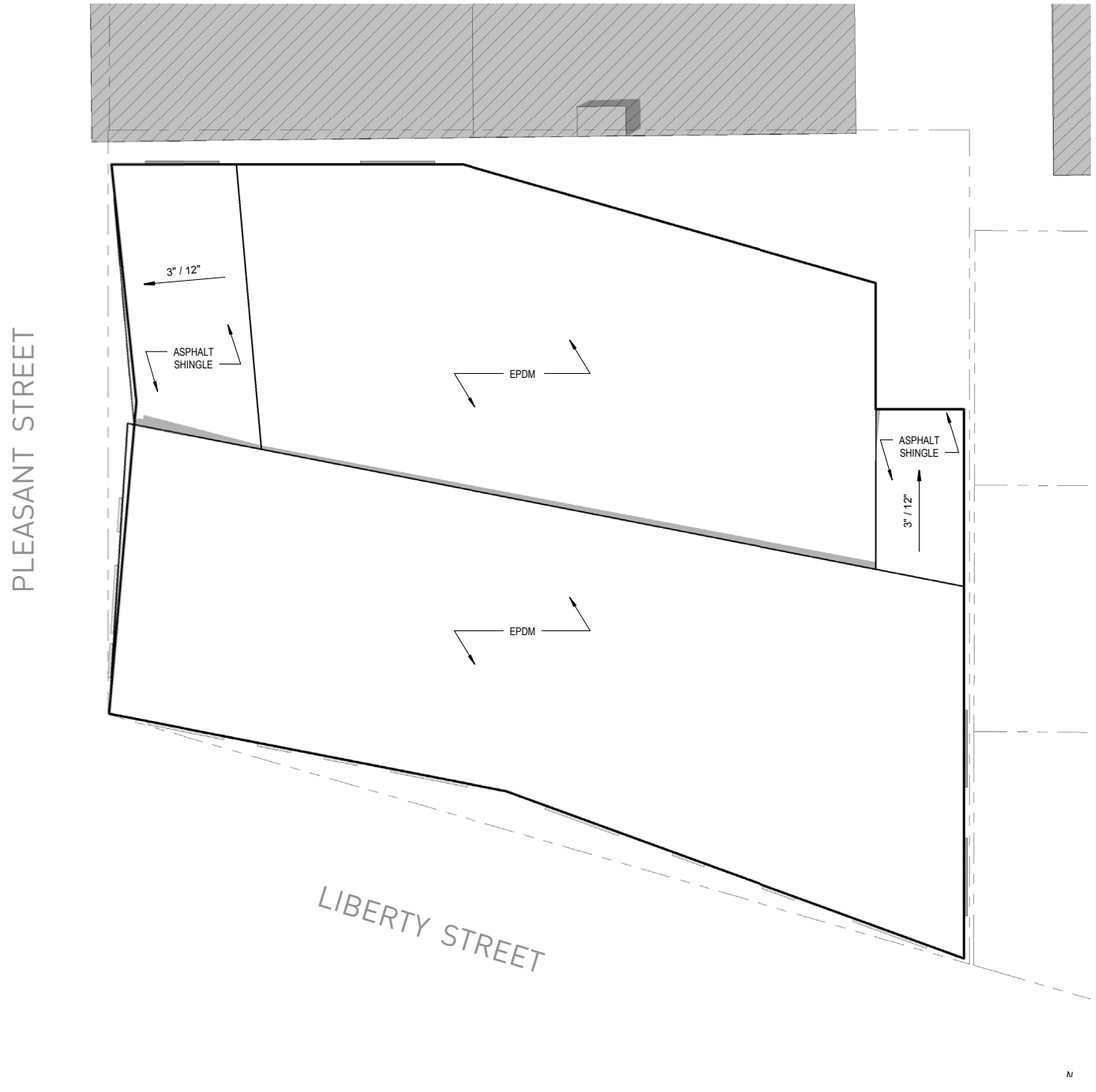
GROUND FLOOR

UPPER FLOORS

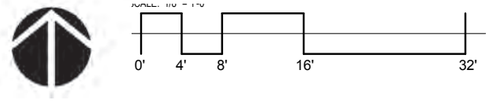


1600-1602 Pleasant

PLANS

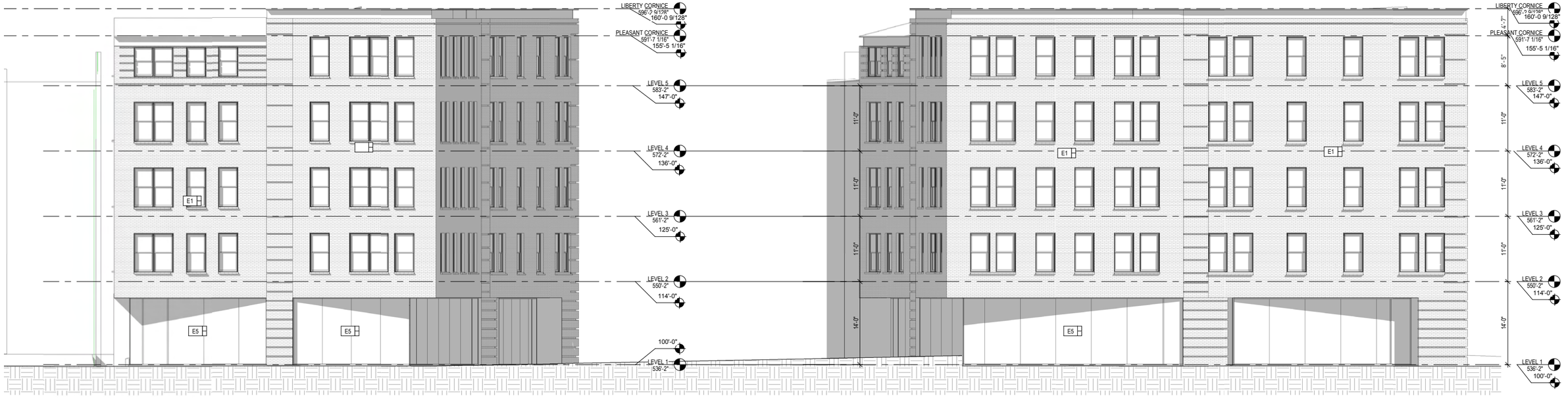


ROOF



1600-1602 Pleasant

PLANS



1 A301 **WEST OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

2 A301 **SOUTH OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

3 A301 **EAST OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

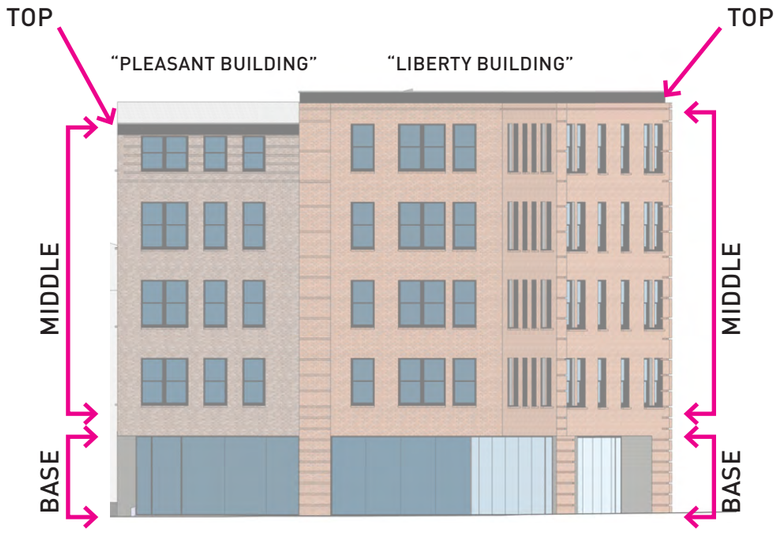
0' 4' 8' 16' 32'

5 A301 **NORTH OVERALL ELEVATION**
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

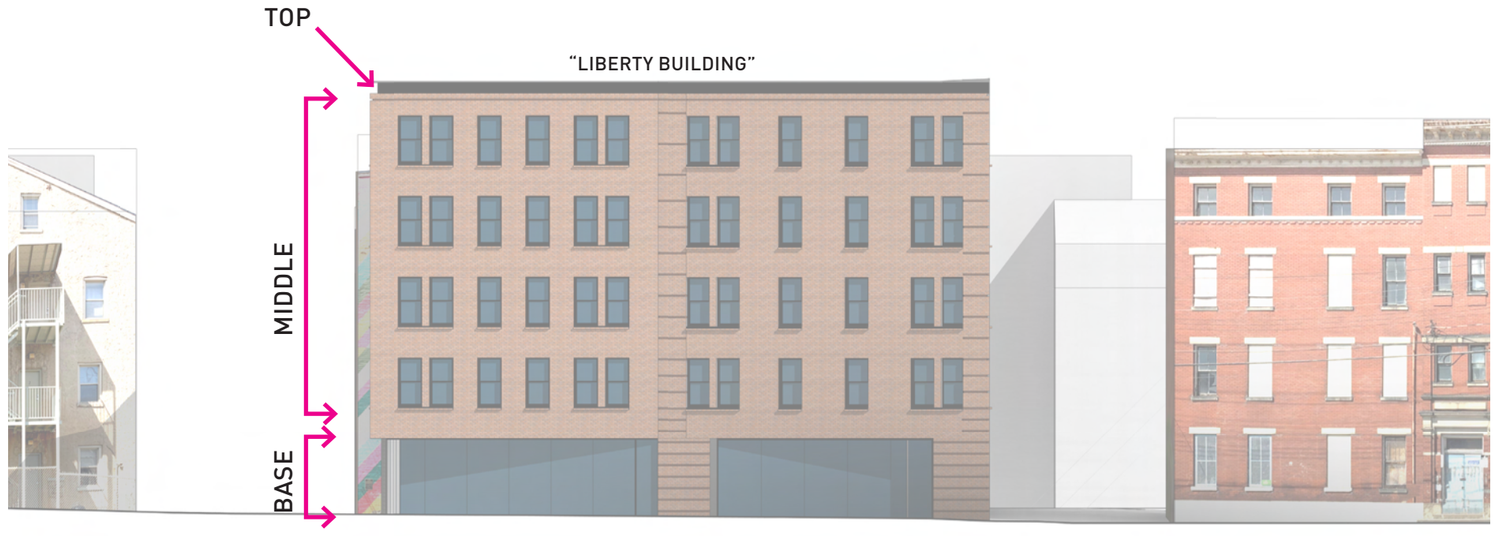
1600-1602 Pleasant

ELEVATIONS

1600 PLEASANT STREET- COMPOSITION



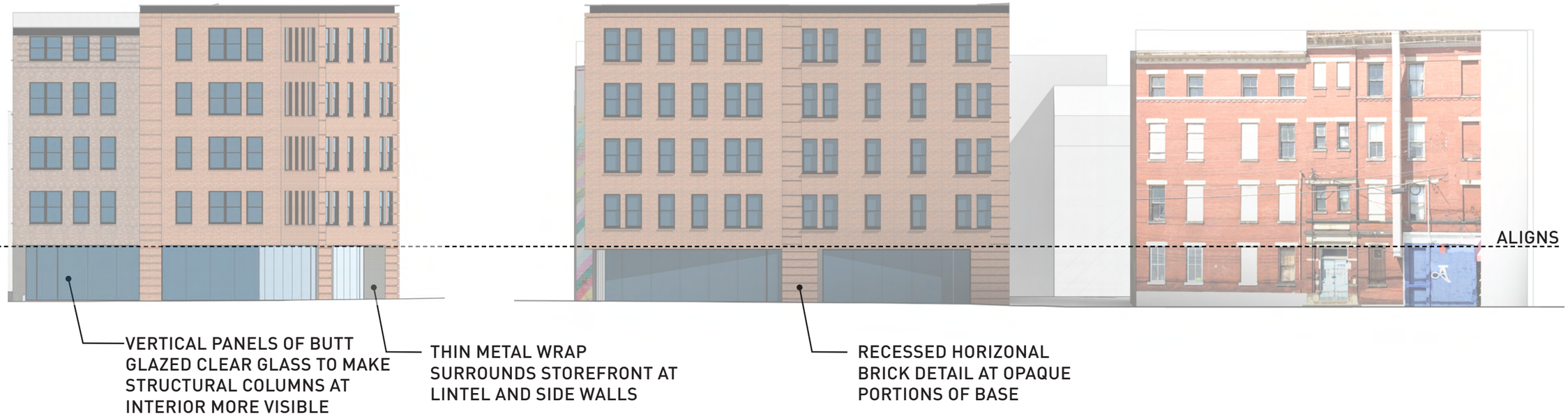
PLEASANT ELEVATION



LIBERTY ELEVATION

New buildings should respond to the traditional subdivisions found on historic property: **a base middle and top**. Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are built of brick with the principal facade parallel to the street it faces. The most important features of buildings in Over-the-Rhine are the arrangement of openings on the principal facade and an overall **vertical emphasis** of the whole design.

1600 PLEASANT STREET- COMPOSITION, BASE



PLEASANT ELEVATION

LIBERTY ELEVATION

New buildings should have a well defined base. Within the district, most buildings have a base that is distinguishable from the rest of the building. This is accomplished through **a change of materials**, a change of scale, and/or a lintel of **other type of horizontal banding**.

1600 PLEASANT STREET- COMPOSITION, MIDDLE

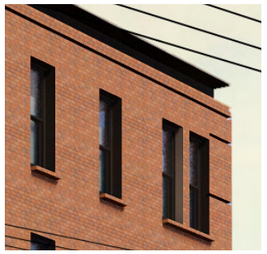
Details on new buildings should **relate to the detailing of adjacent or nearby buildings**.

PLEASANT ELEVATION

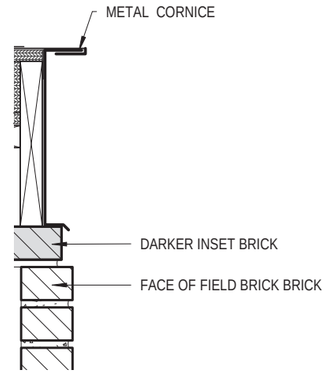
LIBERTY ELEVATION

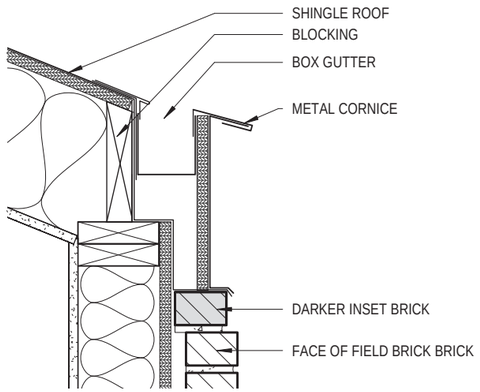
RELATING DETAILS:
- PROJECTING SILL DETAIL
- FIELD OF BRICK WITH PUNCHED OPENINGS, SIMILAR SPACING
- TOP STORY OF "PLEASANT BUILDING" DIFFERENTIATED BY HORIZONTAL BANDING

1600 PLEASANT STREET- COMPOSITION, TOP



12 INCH BLACK
METAL REVEAL WITH
PROTRUDING DRIP EDGE



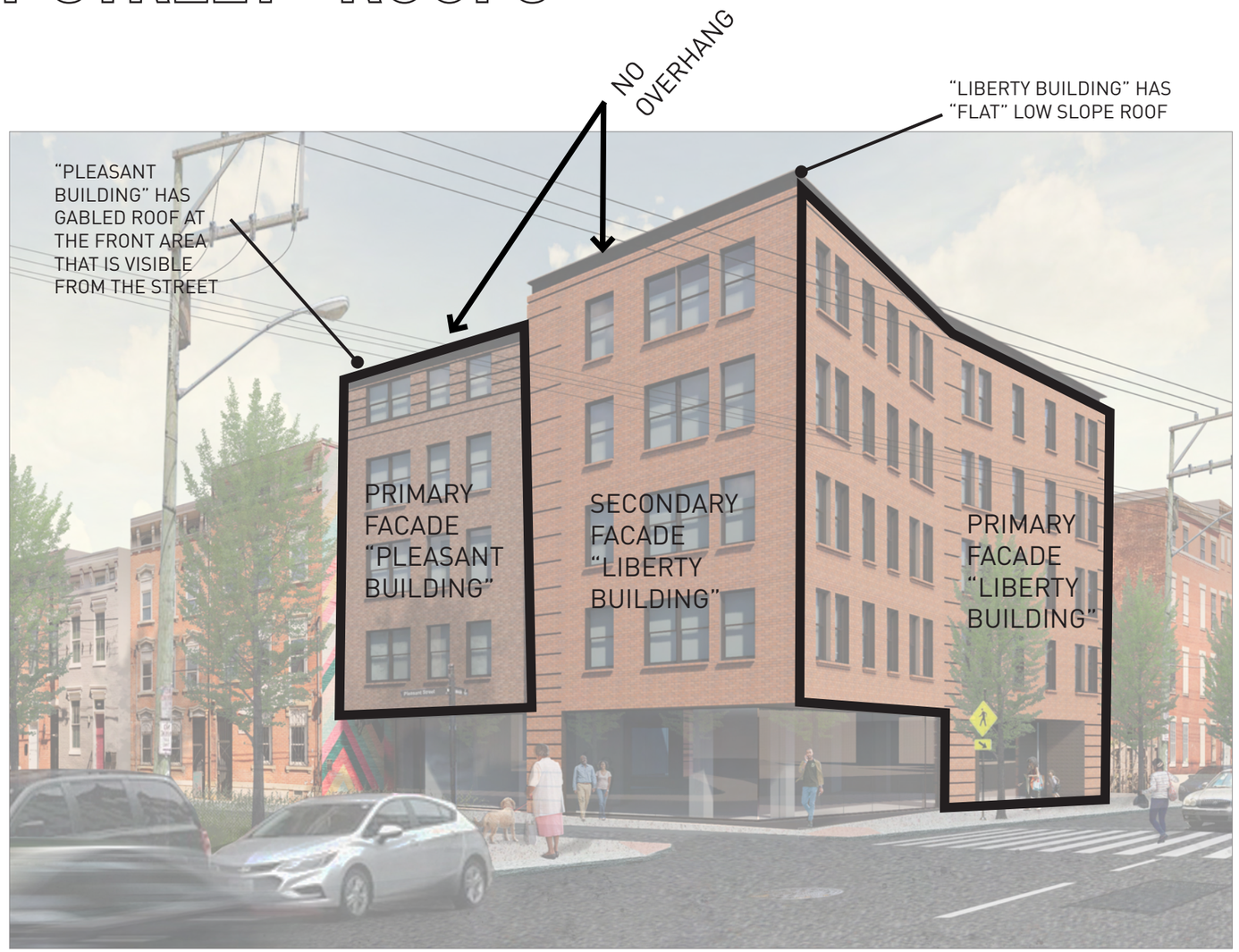


12 INCH BLACK METAL
REVEAL WITH PROTRUDING
DRIP EDGE AND BOX GUTTER

SHORTER ATTIC WINDOWS
THAT ENGAGE BOX GUTTER

New buildings must employ a **strong element that terminates** the uppermost part of the building. Distinctive elements in the architecture of Over-the-Rhine are elaborate projecting cornices, decorative parapets, and the **expressive use of materials.**

1600 PLEASANT STREET- ROOFS



Roofs for new construction should be similar to roofs of adjacent and nearby buildings of similar size and use. In the district buildings of three or more stories generally have **low pitched shed roofs that are not visible above the primary facade...Roofs in this district have little or no overhang.**

1600 PLEASANT STREET- WINDOW OPENINGS

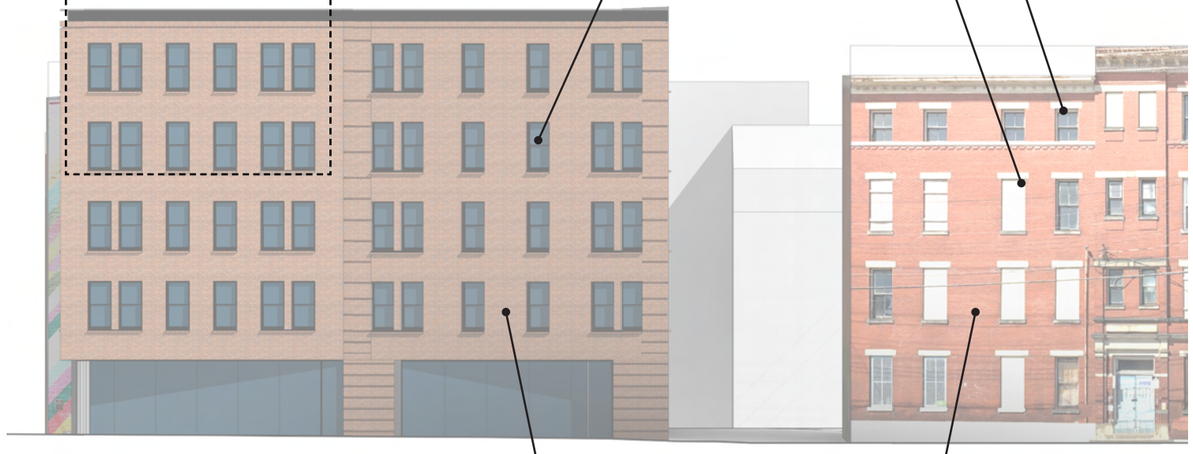
Window openings of new buildings should be related to the size and placement of openings found on historic structures of similar use in the district. In residential buildings, window openings are typically found individually rather than in pairs or grouped. the openings are taller and wide **(proportion of 2:1)**, window sash are **set back from the wall**, and openings have some **form of definition** such as lintels, sills or decorative surrounds. Window openings, which are typically **aligned vertically, occupy between 20% and 50% of the principal facade.**

- SET BACK FROM WALL
- PROTRUDING SILL DETAIL

SHORTER ATTIC WINDOW

SHORTER ATTIC WINDOW

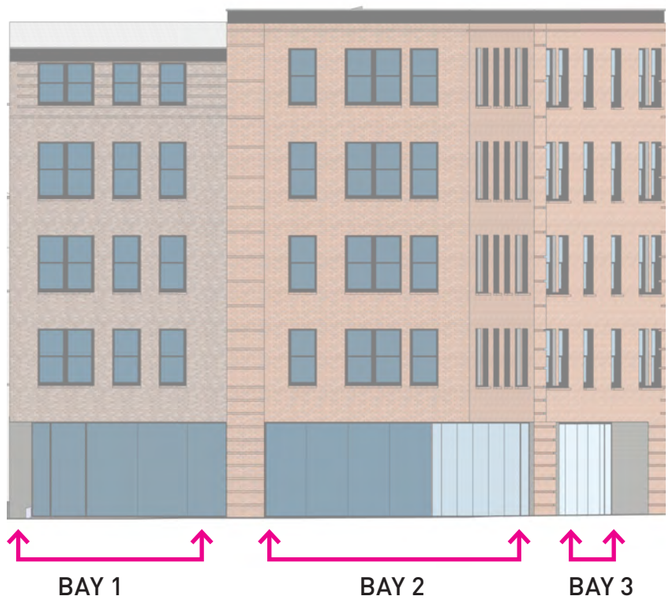
2:1 RATIO



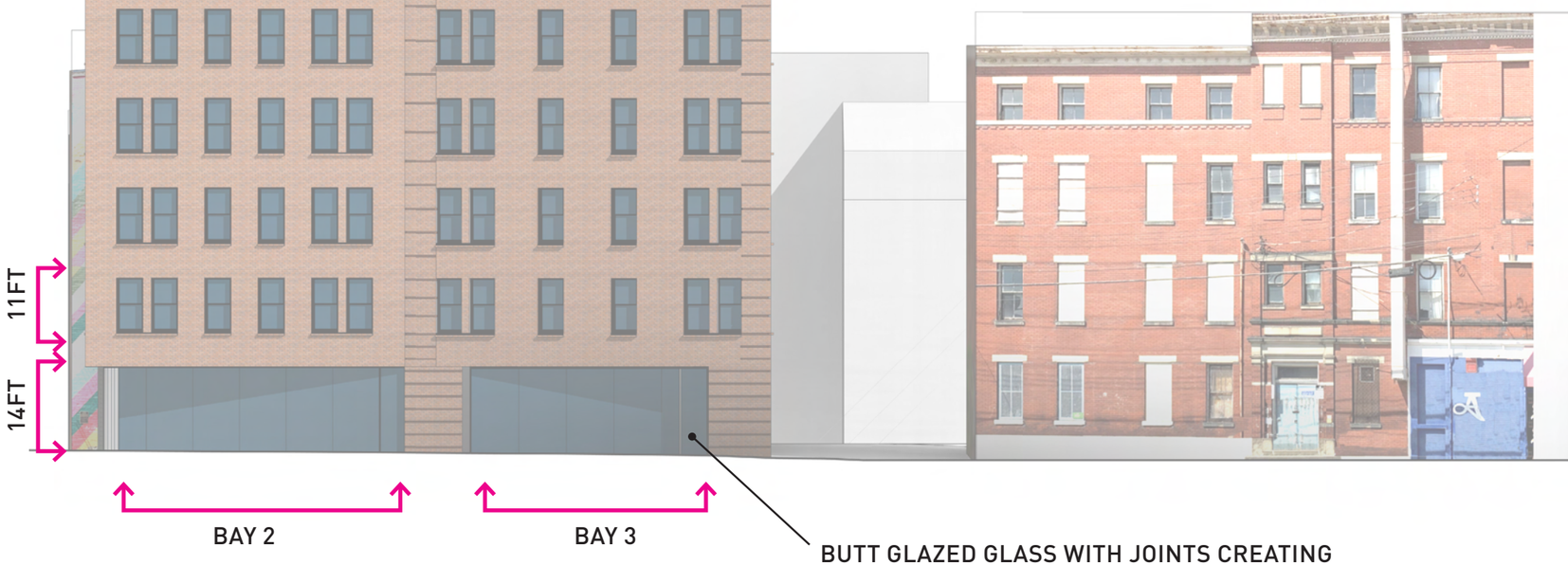
SIMIILAR WINDOW SPACING

1600 PLEASANT STREET- STOREFRONTS

New storefronts should relate to the characteristics of existing storefronts on historic buildings. **Storefronts in the district are typically taller than individual upper floors**, are **divided into bays** which increases their verticality and provide a pedestrian scale and proportion; and **have large, fixed expanses of clear glass**...The storefront **lintels are 12-18 feet above grade**, window sill height is between 18 inches and 3 feet above grade; and storefront windows are set back from the structural elements approximately 12 inches.



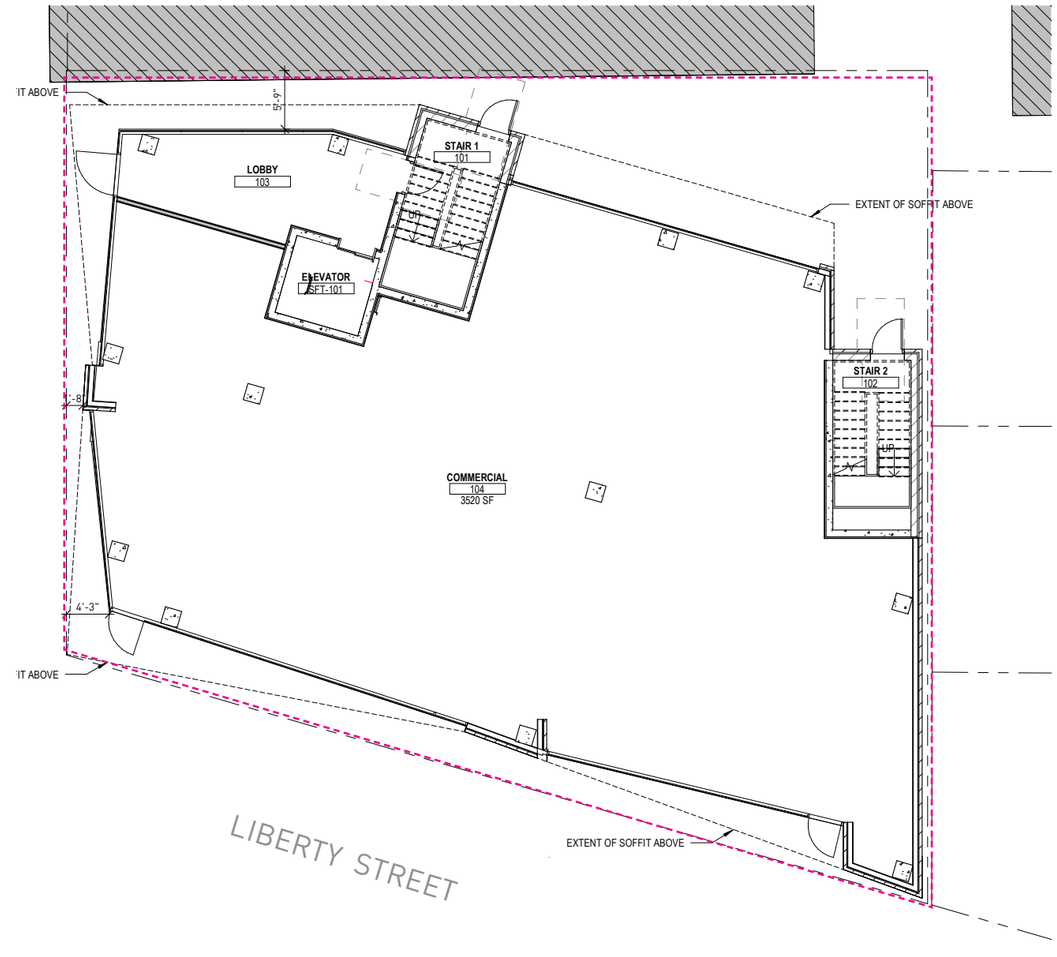
PLEASANT ELEVATION



LIBERTY ELEVATION

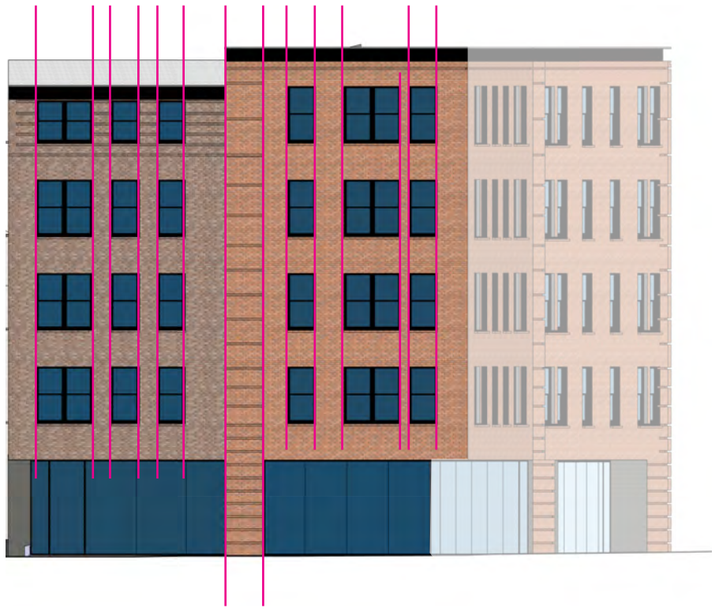
1600 PLEASANT STREET- SETBACKS

The setback for new construction should be consisten with buildings of similar use on adjacent and nearby sites. In Over-the-Rhine, most commercial buildings are built up to the property line. Some residential property, especially detached buildings, have shallow setbacks but retain an "edge" at the property line with a fence...In most cases **new construction on corner sites should be built up to the edge of both outside property lines.**



1600 PLEASANT STREET- RHYTHM AND VERTICAL EMPHASIS

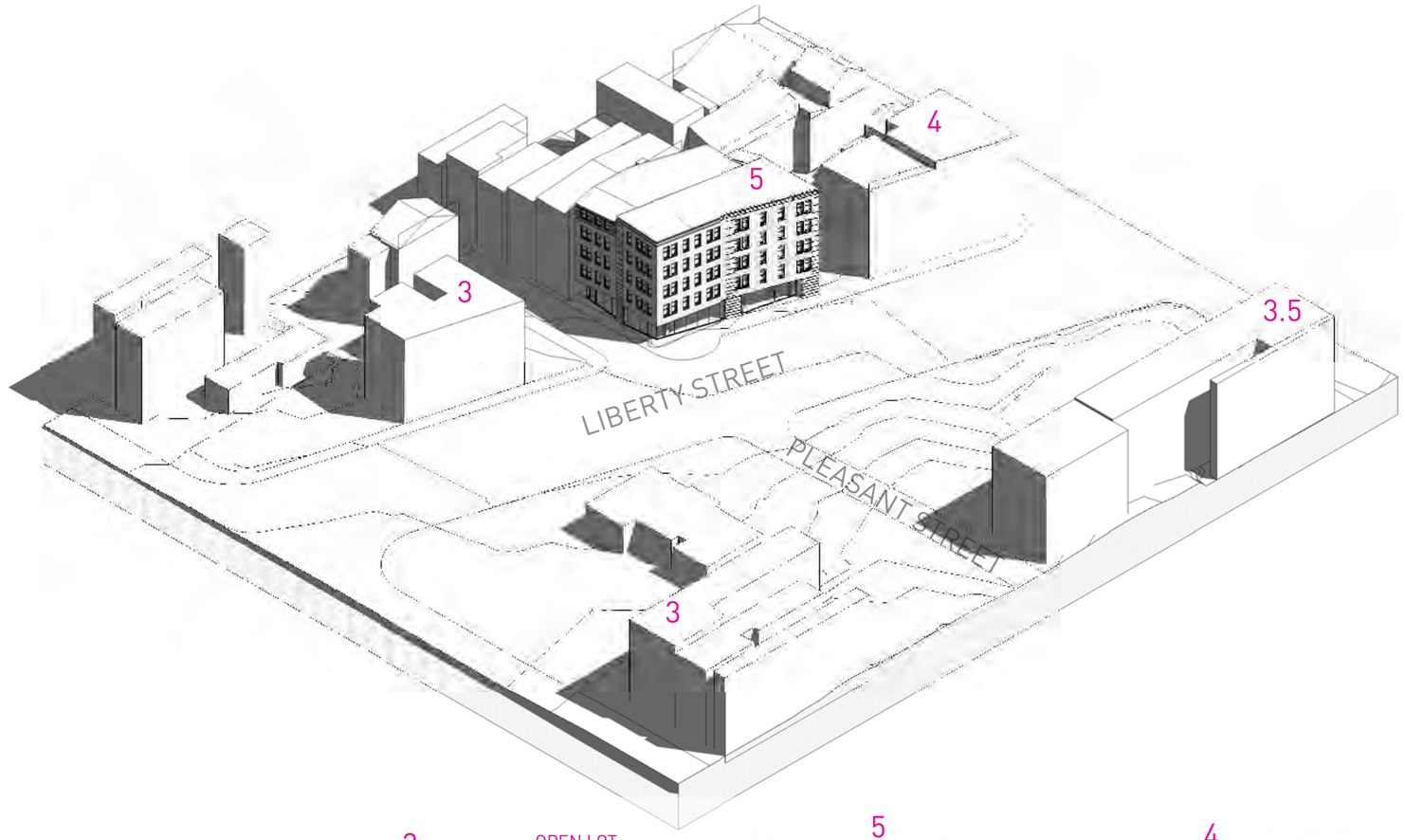
New buildings should incorporate design features, such as **window groupings, articulation of wall surfaces, and decorative elements** such as columns or piers in an effort to maintian the rhythm that already exists in the district. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found in the district. **Most buildings in Over-the-Rhine are relatively narrow, 25-50 feet in width. A building facade typically displays vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm.** New residential and Mixed Use construction should have a **vertical emphasis.**



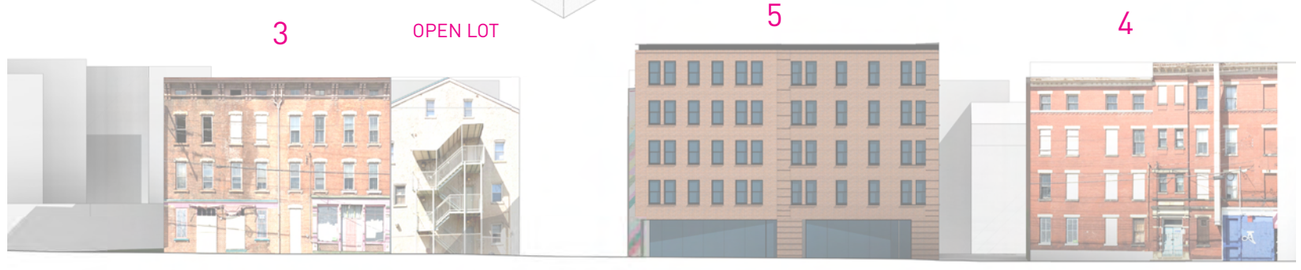
VERTICALLY ORIENTED BAYS

1600 PLEASANT STREET- HEIGHT

The height of new construction should **not vary more than one story from the adjacent** contributing buildings.



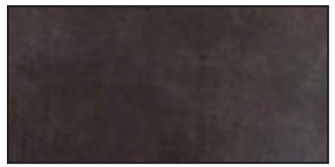
PLEASANT ELEVATION



LIBERTY ELEVATION

1600-1602 PLEASANT STREET- MATERIALS

METAL WRAP AT STOREFRONT RECESS



FIELD BRICK 1

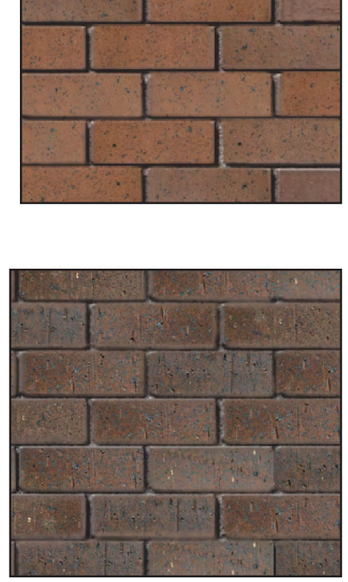
CRIMSON SMOOTH IRONSPOT BRICK

BY CLOUD CERAMICS

FIELD BRICK 2

CRIMSON VELOUR IRONSPOT BRICK

BY CLOUD CERAMICS



New construction should use materials that are found on the historic buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Clearly the dominant material in Over-the-Rhine is **brick**, but other materials such as limestone, sandstone, cast-iron, slate, wood and sheet metal are important as well.

1600-1602 PLEASANT STREET- MODIFICATIONS

During the design process, designers and the developers met with the Urban Conservator and the OTR Foundation twice each. The design was able to be modified in the following ways based on feedback.

- Changed roof shape of “Liberty Building” - flat roof was seen as more compatible on corner building
- Lowered height of “Liberty Building by 2’-6” after flat roof put in place.
- Changed roof shape of “Pleasant Building” from flat to gable.
- “Pleasant Building” cornice height dropped by 2’-6”.
- “Pleasant Building” top story brick reveal detail to break down vertical scale to better align with Pleasant Street.
- Changed window spacing to allow only single and doubled windows.
- Eliminated metal detail connecting windows.
- Added brick sill detail at all windows.
-Storefront changed to frameless glazing system to emphasize structural columns directly behind the glass.

July 5, 2019

Ms. Lann Field
Vice President, Development
3CDC
1203 Walnut Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Ms. Jennifer Walke
Senior Project Manager
The Model Group
1826 Race Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Re: Wilkommen Infill Project
OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Dear Lann and Jenn:

Thank you for meeting with members of the Infill Committee in regards to the design of 4 proposed infill projects in Over-the-Rhine, aka the Wilkommen Project. As you know, the Infill Committee works to ensure that the next generation of buildings in Over-the-Rhine preserves the fundamental character of the Historic District, stitching the fabric back together in a manner that is compatible yet contemporary.

This letter serves as an official response from the Committee and as a clarification of concerns raised during our meeting at the end of June.

We applaud your effort to fill-in vacant sites, create affordable housing, and bring new commercial space to the Historic District. However, we have several real concerns related to the proposed designs, which, if left unaddressed, we believe will be detrimental to the character of the district. We therefore respectfully request that you address each of these important issues.

[Please note that the following is a consolidated list that represents only the most critical concerns; there are many others which, though important, were left out in the interests of prioritization]:

Overarching Concerns

All four infill projects present problems of scale for the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. The district is a predominantly 3-4 story district, with some buildings of 2 and some of 5 stories. The typical Over-the-Rhine building is 20-30 feet in width. This contextual height, massing, and scale of buildings within the district is a uniquely defining feature. It is paramount that new construction be sensitive to this unique feature.

Each of the proposed infill projects is taller than the average height of the surrounding historic buildings – some by a large margin – and three of the four proposed infill projects are multiple times the width of the surrounding historic buildings.

We understand the desire to achieve economies of scale through substantially massed buildings, but it is imperative that the height of the projects be reduced to achieve a more compatible balance with the historic buildings, which should rightfully retain their position as the center of attention within the district.

We subdivide our remaining concerns by property, as follows [properties are listed in order of priority]:

1600 Pleasant

- The project is out of scale with the height of surrounding buildings on both the Liberty Street side and the Pleasant Street side – though the difference is more egregious on Pleasant Street. The appropriate contextual reference point on Liberty Street is the abutting building at the NW corner of Liberty and Race. The proposed is taller than this building. On pleasant street, the contextual reference is the streetscape of 2-3.5 stories in height. At 5 stories, the proposed building overwhelms the scale of this street. The height of the building should be reduced by a full story on both the Liberty and Pleasant street sides in order to fit in with the scale of its neighbors.
- The length of minimally articulated storefront glazing does not meet the guidelines, which state that *"New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found on the district."* While glazing is not technically a wall, in its unarticulated form it may have the same effect of creating "unrelieved expanses" of one material (with only 2" mullions). This also exacerbates the horizontality of an already long building. The guidelines also state that *"A building facade typically displays vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm… by window groupings, changes in wall planes and decorative elements such as pilasters, columns or piers."* Understanding that the façade parti is intended to create a floating mass over 100% transparency, the guidelines call for more robust mullions, pilasters, and structural piers (even if highly visible behind the glass membrane). The storefront glazing is also devoid of bulkheads and transoms, which are typical in the district and add visual interest. [this comment applies to all storefront designs shown in the packet.]

1521-1525 Vine

- The proposed oriels lack a contextual reference point in the district in terms of their particular expression (rhythm, number of bays, geometry, materiality). Therefore, while they originate from an honest premise (that oriels are a part of the neighborhood and an acceptable inspiration for contemporary expression), in practice they create a point of strong contrast rather than compatibility with the rhythm of surrounding buildings on Vine. Modify the number/geometry/material expression of the oriels based on a reference point on the street.
- The building is two stories taller than the abutting historic buildings. While viewed in elevation this is less problematic, viewed in 3D it is clear that the combined height/mass of the building is substantially greater than any other historic building in the vicinity. In other words, the average height of surrounding historic buildings is substantially exceeded by the proposed. Reduce the height by a story to create compatibility with the scale of the block face. Alternatively, subdivide

the mass into two structures, one of 5 stories and the other of 4 stories, in order to break up the mass and preserve the rhythm of height variation on Vine Street.

1512-1525 Republic

- The height exceeds the average height of the block face on Republic Street, though not as egregiously as the other three projects. Reduce the height incrementally such that it no longer exceeds the peak of the main mass of the Zion's Church at the NE corner of 15th & Republic, thereby allowing that important landmark to retain at least some of its precedence on the block face.
- Eliminate the curtain wall. The guidelines state that "*The openings of new buildings should be related to the size and placement of openings found on historic structures of similar use in the district."* Curtain wall construction is not found in the historic context.

1619 Race

- The building exceeds the average height of surrounding historic buildings, a problem that is exacerbated by its relatively large mass. Reduce the height incrementally to a level that is more compatible with the height/mass of surrounding buildings as seen in the 3D massing aerial.
- For its context, the proposed infill is atypically narrow and features an anomalously large side setback on the south side and an anomalously small (zero) side setback on the north side. Widen the front façade slightly on Race street for the first 10-20 feet of building depth, and use a dumbbell shape to pull the building back in, thereby creating additional useable square footage while reducing the side setback. Alternatively, move the façade south ~5' to create a more typical side setback on both sides.
- See storefront comments for 1600 Pleasant. On 1619 Race, the protruding metal wrap flush to the façade is an attractive way of breaking up the length of storefront, but too many may start to diminish guidelines that call for desirable horizontal banding that defines the base. Guidelines call for articulating the base of the façade and this is not present in the 1617 Race façade design.

We thank you again for the opportunity to engage on this important issue of design compatibility within our Over-the-Rhine Historic District, and we look forward to your response.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danny Klingler
Committee Co-Chair

Jennifer Lemasters-Wirtz
Committee Co-Chair

cc: Katie Westbrook

Johnson, Beth

From: Vicky Leavitt <vickyleavitt@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2019 8:26 PM
To: Johnson, Beth
Cc: leavitt ted
Subject: [External Email] Input RE 1512-1520 Republic Street

External Email Communication

Dear Beth,
While we are out of town for both the Pre-Hearing and HCB Board Hearing dates for this proposed COA discussion, I wanted to send our notes on to you and the Board in writing, in advance of your meetings. My husband Ted and I are owners/residents of 1514 Race Street, a 3-unit building with direct sight lines to this proposed development on the 1500 block of Republic.

While we think they are generally on the right track with their proposal, we do have concerns on a couple of fronts:

1. Density Variance Request — Current Zoning calls for a maximum of 10 units on this property, vs the 27 that they are asking for. That seems way out of line, and I would ask that variance for 27 units be DENIED.

2. Rear Setback Variance Request — Their rationale for needing a rear set back variance (otherwise they would need to reduce the number of units), seems at odds with their request for density variance. Additionally, while they (like so many other projects) have mentioned "affordable" units, they do not provide specifics on unit sizes and planned pricing to help dimensionalize this.

3. Trash and Recycling Provision — We do not see provision allocated for the significant trash and recycling that would be generated by 27 units. This needs to be planned/provided for in advance so that they do not end up being stored on the sidewalk or in the alley.

4. Mass/Scale — The overall Mass of the building seems Out Of Scale, where most buildings have fewer units and across a smaller number of lots.

5. NET — If they maintained their design, but reduced the height to only three floors with 20 units, they would end up with a building that seems more of a fit with the neighborhood — and even this would still give them 20 units vs the allowed maximum of 10.

Beth, thank you in advance for passing along this input to the Board.

Many thanks,
Vicky and Ted Leavitt

1514 Race Street, #3
Cincinnati, OH 45202

E vickyleavitt@gmail.com
M +1 614 824 0250

Johnson, Beth

From: DeDe Dennig <dede.dennig@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2019 11:59 AM
To: Johnson, Beth
Subject: [External Email] project at 1512-1520 Republic Street

External Email Communication

Good morning, Ms. Johnson.

We received notice of the pre-hearing for the above properties. We can't be there as we will be out of town. I am a resident of Republic Street and I wanted to let you know I am strongly opposed to the requested variances for density and rear set back. (If you are not the person I should be contacting, please let me know and I will be in touch with the appropriate party.)

We are supportive of efforts to increase affordable and low income housing in Over The Rhine. This project seems overly ambitious about the number of units that the block and the neighborhood can absorb, however. The zoning limitations exist for very good reasons and the requested variance for density exceeds this by more than double. Maintaining the required setback and limiting the structure to three stories would create a structure much more in keeping with the current feel of the neighborhood. While I do agree that filling the "missing tooth" on the street will be an asset, I disagree that the property as proposed will increase the "...public peace, health, safety, and general welfare..." of Republic Street and the neighborhood. Instead, it is likely to cause issues that disrupt the above, namely parking issues, more garbage, noise, and congestion.

We appreciate the efforts of all parties to keep our neighborhoods livable, diverse, safe, and attractive for all who live and work here. I assume that GBBN and Willkommen were well aware of the OHFA guidelines they cited before the purchase of the property. As such, using those guidleines to ask for such extreme variances seems like a stretch.

Thank you for your consideration,
DeDe Dennig

Johnson, Beth

From: Johnson, Beth
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2019 9:23 AM
To: 'Josephj Pflum'
Subject: RE: [External Email] Project 1512-1520 Republic Street

Thank you.

This will be submitted to the board for review.

Beth Johnson, AICP | Urban Conservator

City of Cincinnati | Buildings & Inspections
Permit Center | 805 Central Avenue, Suite 500 | Cincinnati, OH 45202
513-352-4848 (p) | 513-352-2378 (f) | beth.johnson@cincinnati-oh.gov | Website

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From: Josephj Pflum <josephjpflum@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2019 4:49 PM
To: Johnson, Beth <beth.johnson@cincinnati-oh.gov>
Subject: [External Email] Project 1512-1520 Republic Street

External Email Communication

Dear Ms. Johnson,

This letter is my comments on the appropriateness of the project for 1512 to 1520 Republic St.

The verticality of the proposed structure certainly meets with the other buildings of similar nature up and down Republic Street.

With regards to the composition of base, middle, and top third, the choice of brick color seems very appropriate. To use a window glazing on the north corner of the building is a very nice touch. The stoops that are present are nice for opening the building to the street. The 12 inch formed aluminum reveal cornice is no detail at all. There are so many examples of roof cornices that to call this a cornice is an embarrassment. A little imagination could design something that has some detail other than flat piece of aluminum painted black.

The standard window in over the Rhine in all historic buildings is a double hung window of a 2 to 1 ratio. Of the 39 windows on the west for side of the building eight of them are not the 2 to 1 ratio. They appear tome a one to one ratio. Of the 31 remaining windows that are the 2 to 1 ratio six of them are not double hung. None of the windows have any lintel or sill that is evident from the street. An lintel and sill are found on all the buildings up and down Republic Street as well as throughout Over the Rhine on building that have been renovated as well as new construction. The lack of a sill or lintel results in virtually no rhythm or flow that complements the rest of the existing structures on the block.

The grouping of the double hung windows in pairs or singles on the east south and north elevation are completely appropriate with other windows in the neighborhood.

Verticality in the back are perfectly fine for the location. The 9 foot setback from part of a would allow for some outdoor space for the occupants of the apartment. Verticality and sent back are perfectly fine for the location. The 9 foot setback from Parvis Alley would allow for some outdoor space for the occupants of the apartment. This would be a similar use to the spaces on the alley in the 1400 block of Republic St.

In summary I am in support of the project in terms of density, setback, and verticality. I think the façade on the west side of the building needs to be read drawn to have better rhythm and flow with the rest of the neighborhood. It would seem that zero effort went into the cornice on the roof at the roof line as well as the lintel and sill of each window.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Pflum M.D.

July 29, 2019

Ms. Lann Field
Vice President, Development
3CDC
1203 Walnut Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Ms. Jennifer Walke
Senior Project Manager
The Model Group
1826 Race Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Re: Wilkommen Infill Project
OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Update

Dear Lann and Jenn:

Thank you for the recent follow-up meeting with members of the Infill Committee to review the revised designs for 4 proposed infill projects in Over-the-Rhine, aka the Wilkommen Project. As you know, the Infill Committee works to ensure that the next generation of buildings in Over-the-Rhine preserves the fundamental character of the Historic District, stitching the fabric back together in a manner that is compatible yet contemporary.

This letter serves as an official response from the Committee to the final project designs submitted to the Historic Conservation Board.

We applaud your effort to fill-in vacant sites, create affordable housing, and bring new commercial space to the Historic District. However, we have critical remaining concerns related to the proposed designs, which have not been addressed, that we believe will be detrimental to the character of the district. We therefore respectfully request that you address these these important issues.

[Please note that the following is a limited list that represents only the most critical concerns; there are others which, though important, were left out in the interests of prioritization]:

Overarching Concerns

All four infill projects present problems of scale for the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. The district is a predominantly 3-4 story district, with some buildings of 2 and some of 5 stories. The typical Over-the-Rhine building is 20-30 feet in width. This contextual height, massing, and scale of buildings within the district is a uniquely defining feature. It is paramount that new construction be sensitive to this unique feature.

Each of the proposed infill projects is taller than the average height of the surrounding historic buildings – and the 1600 Pleasant building in particular is taller than any surrounding historic building except

churches. We understand the desire to achieve economies of scale through substantially massed buildings, but it is imperative that the height of the projects achieve a more compatible balance with the historic buildings, which should rightfully retain their position as the center of attention within the district.

We subdivide our remaining concerns by property, as follows [properties are listed in order of priority]:

1600 Pleasant

- The project is out of scale with the height of surrounding buildings on both the Liberty Street side and the Pleasant Street side. The appropriate contextual reference point on Liberty Street is the abutting building at the NW corner of Liberty and Race. The proposed is taller than this building and would become the tallest building on Liberty Street outside of St. Francis Seraph church. On pleasant street, the contextual reference is the streetscape of 2-3.5 stories in height. At 5 stories, the proposed building overwhelms the scale of this street, and in fact becomes the tallest building along the entirety of Pleasant Street, from 14th to Elder. The height of the building should be reduced by a full story on the Pleasant street side, and by an amount on Liberty Street that will bring it in line with the height of the adjacent historic building.

1521-1525 Vine

- The proposed oriels lack a contextual reference point in the district in terms of their particular expression (rhythm, number of bays, geometry, materiality). Therefore, while they originate from an honest premise (that oriels are a part of the neighborhood and an acceptable inspiration for contemporary expression), in practice they create a point of strong contrast rather than compatibility with the rhythm of surrounding buildings on Vine. Modify the number/geometry/material expression of the oriels based on a reference point on the street.
- The building is two stories taller than the abutting historic buildings. While viewed in elevation this is less problematic, viewed in 3D it is clear that the combined height/mass of the building is substantially greater than any other historic building in the vicinity. In other words, the average height of surrounding historic buildings is substantially exceeded by the proposed. Reduce the height by a story to create compatibility with the scale of the block face. Alternatively, subdivide

the mass into two structures, one of 5 stories and the other of 4 stories, in order to break up the mass and preserve the rhythm of height variation on Vine Street.

We thank you again for the opportunity to engage on this important issue of design compatibility within our Over-the-Rhine Historic District, and we look forward to your response.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Committee Co-Chair

Jennifer Lemasters-Wirtz
Committee Co-Chair

cc: Katie Westbrook
Beth Johnson