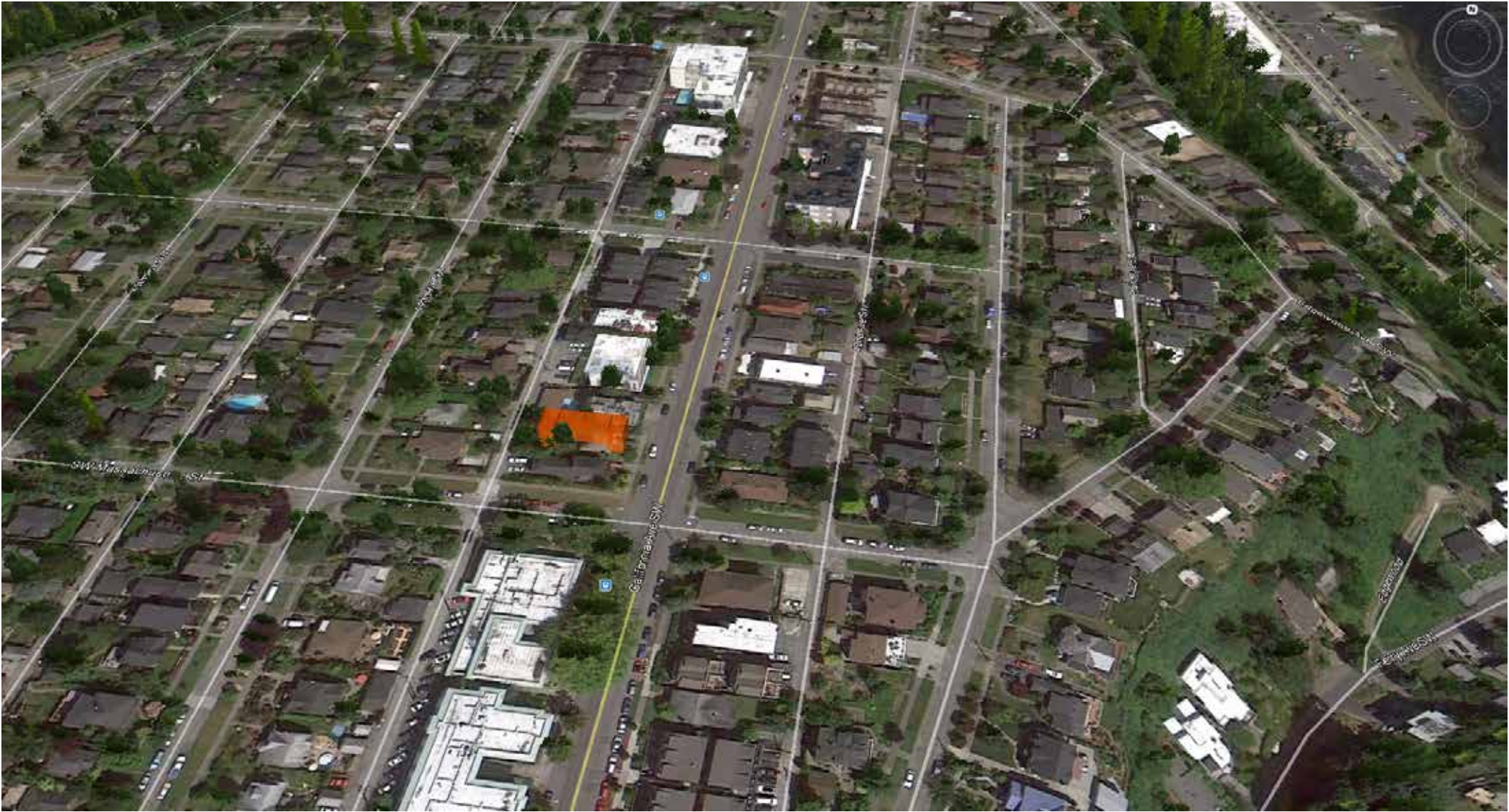


CITY OF SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW  
STREAMLINED DESIGN REVIEW

November 20, 2012

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## Project Information

### Address

1631 California Avenue SW

### Owner

Domus Homes

### Architect

Boxwood

Joe Chauncey

206 343 0236

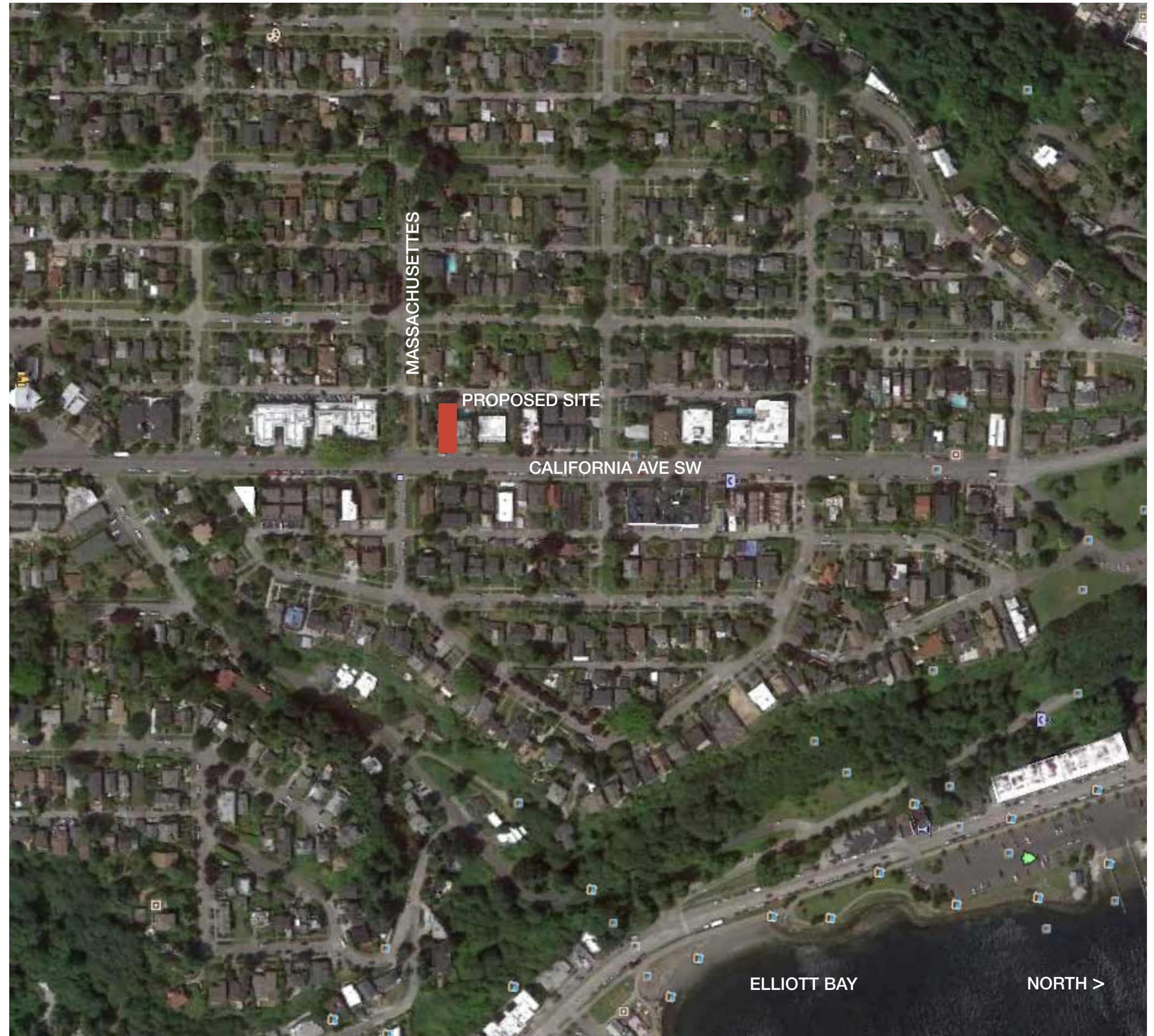
### Project

4- 1250 SF, three story townhouse units. Two bedrooms, two baths, great room with kitchen, dining, living spaces, and roof deck.

## Development Objectives

Design a project that contributes to the character of the residential neighborhood found at the north end of California Avenue.

- Provide high quality living in a small sustainable footprint
- Provide the maximum amenity space as is possible through building modulation at ground level
- Supplement ground level amenity space with roof level decks.
- Maximize daylighting to each unit
- Reduce the visual impact to the single family residential zone on the west side of the common alley with reduced facade size





Urban Design Analysis

Both sides of the north end of California Avenue are lined with Low Rise Zoning (for a half block east and west) except for the blocks between SW Seattle Street and SW Atlantic Street where Low Rise Zoning stretches another full block, to the west. This additional area is serviced by a bus loop (illustrated with a blue line) and two bus stops.

This “island” of Low Rise Zoning is surrounded by Single Family (SF 5000) zoning. A little further out, on the shoulders of the sloping West Seattle terrain is a SF 7200.





# Urban Design Analysis

CONTINUED

In this neighborhood, California Avenue is lined with 1, 2, 3, and 4 story structures of all vernaculars. There are wood clapboard, stucco, shingle-sided buildings with small and large windows, pitched and flat roofs, of small and large mass and varied densities. In essence there is not a well defined character and there is little to key off of and to be sympathetic to. Directly to the north is a large, two-lot, four story stucco building with dark strip windows. Directly to the south is a wood framed, four unit apartment building with a pitched roof. Our building provides an intermediate step between the two buildings in height, bulk and scale.

Buildings along California Avenue move in and out from the street front and are accessed via stairways and flat or sloping sidewalks. Some have garages and carports accessed through the front yard like the existing residence on our site and the apartment building directly to the south. This project removes vehicular access from California Avenue and places parking at the rear of the building accessed from the alley.

Some buildings along California Avenue have four to six foot retaining walls and fences at the property line built of wood, brick, concrete, and stucco, some have none. This project will have a small green landscape wall made of welded wire fabric that provides a railing to the stairway leading to three of the four units and a place for the building's address. The wall creates an eddy from the flow of the sidewalk and an outdoor vestibule at the foot of the stairs. We have purposely graded the slope at the south end of the street frontage to create a soft transition to the adjacent property and provide easy access to the front townhome and the amenity space.

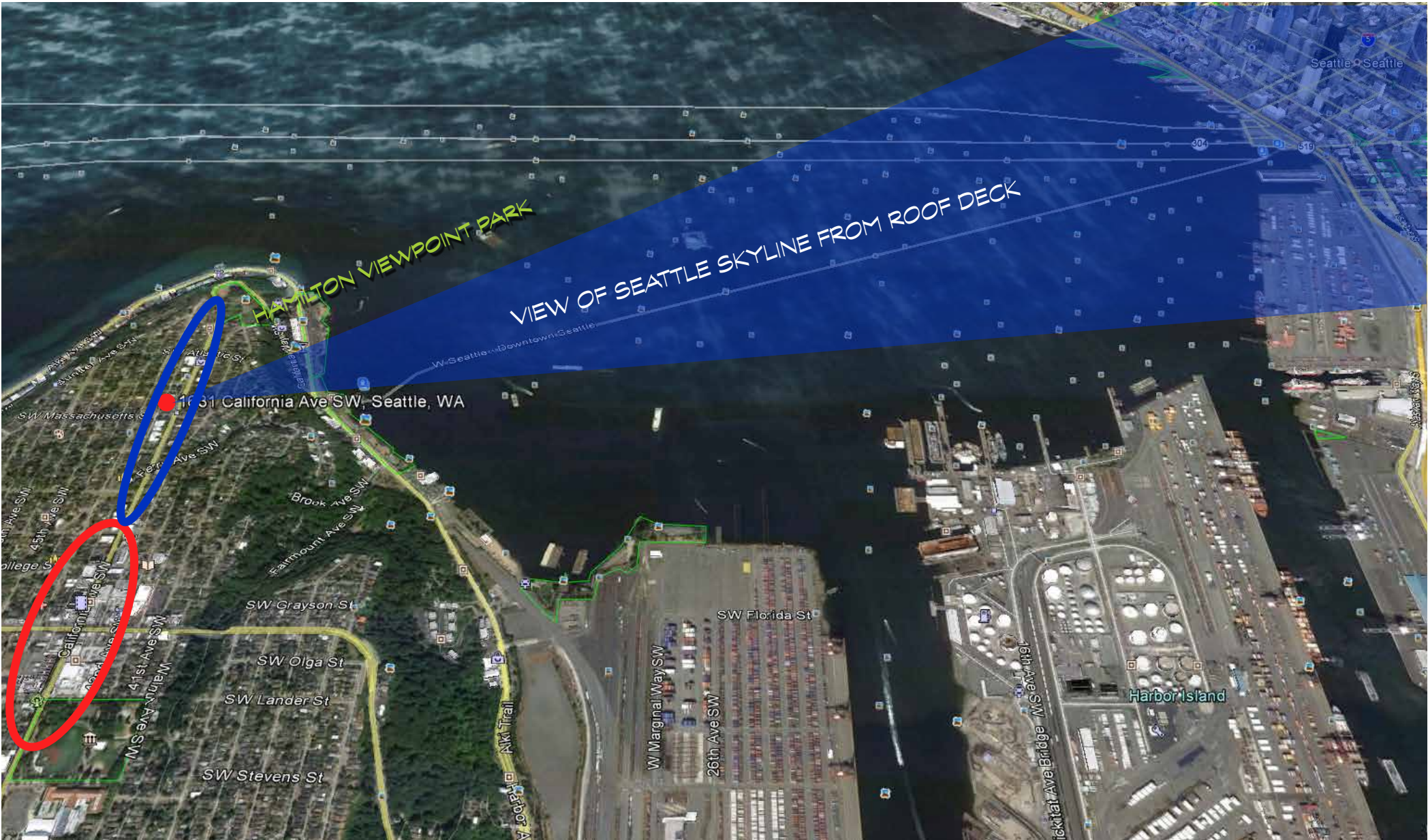




# Urban Design Analysis

CONTINUED

This map illustrates the relationship of the multifamily zone to the surrounding area on the West Seattle peninsula. From the roof decks of the townhouses a view of the Seattle skyline will be visible. Just a three blocks to the north is Hamilton Viewpoint Park that offers stunning views to Seattle and Elliott Bay, day and night.



**KEY**  
Multi-Family

Site

Business District  
Mixed Use

Parks (Outlined in Green)

# Design Guidelines and Intent

## A-1: Responding to Site Characteristics

*The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.*

The proposed grading to the south end of the street frontage will soften the transition to the adjacent property and provide easy access to the front of townhome and the amenity space. The form and entry of the building accommodates 2-3 existing trees in order to maintain significant vegetation.

## A-2: Streetscape Compatibility

*The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.*

The building will continue the rhythm of single and multiunit family houses along California Ave.

## A-3: Entrances Visible from the Street

*Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.*

The entry to unit A and the boardwalk to the other units will be located directly off the pedestrian way on California avenue.

## A-4: Human Activity

*New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.*

Along with entry to the units from the street, Unit A's balcony is street facing to promote neighborly interactions.

## A-5: Respect for Adjacent Sites

*Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings*

The building jogs in and out in rhythm with the building to the south in order to maximize the area between the two buildings in

order to help control privacy. Windows on the north elevation are small to enhance privacy for both properties.

## A-6: Transition between Residence and Street

*For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.*

The entrance to unit A steps down 2 feet to separate it from the street level. There is also a green screen that will mark the transition from street to create a barrier transition space for the other entries.

## A-7: Residential Open Space

*Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.*

The footprint of the building creates ample open space to the south for residential interactions and providing plenty of sunlight adding to the aesthetics of the space and its ability to support lush native landscaping.

## A-8: Parking and Vehicle Access

*Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.*

Parking is located at the rear of the site to minimize the impact.

## B-1: Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

*Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.*

The project responds to the multiple conditions surrounding the site: 1) our building provides an intermediate step in height, bulk and scale between the four story stucco building to the north and four-unit apartment building to the south, 2) The foot print of the building jogs in at the south to reduce bulk of the building, 3) The building is set into the grade to reduce impact on the SF 5000 residential zone across the alley.

## C-1: Architectural Context

*New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.*

The architectural character of the neighborhood varies significantly. To the extent possible, we will respect this character and scale, while designing a project that will provide thoughtful massing, detailing and fenestration.

## C-2: Architectural Concept and Consistency

*Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roof line or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.*

The proposed material dimensions and fenestrations will help reinforce the overall architectural concept while emphasizing the intended function of the spaces. The top of the wall is trimmed.

## C-3: Human Scale

*The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.*

The street façade is broken into several dimensions and incorporates change in materiality and eyebrow roof in order to create



a human scale to the building. Landscaping elements will also be incorporated in order to give a sense of scale and proportionality.

**C-4: Exterior Finish Materials**

*Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.*

The proposed materials are durable and maintainable materials that lend themselves to a high quality of detailing. Use of different sizes and colors of fiber reinforced cement board (FRCB) will create a sense of scale with the addition of corrugated metal panels to provide texture and movement around the building façade.

**D-1: Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrance**

*Convenient and attractive access to the building’s entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.*

A small entry green landscape wall will create an eddy from the flow of the sidewalk and an outdoor vestibule at the foot of the entry stairs. At the parking, there will be a screened area for refuse containers while enhancing the back façade.

**D-2: Blank Walls**

*Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.*

On the east elevation a bump out and eyebrow roof will be employed to break up the walls surface. The eyebrow roof will also be used on the south and north elevations to provide visual interest along with emphasizing entry doors, and patios.

**D-3: Retaining Walls**

*Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.*

We will be not using high retaining walls.

**D-6: Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas**

*Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.*

A screened in area at the parking pad will help screen trash, recycling and compost from the adjacent properties.

**D-8: Treatment of Alleys**

*The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.*

The design of the parking pad will be done in a way to minimize the impact on the adjacent single family zone by using screens and vegetation to screen and enhance the area.

**D-12: Residential Entries and Transitions**

*For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.*

A common walk way set away from the building and only connecting at doors creates individual areas separate from the common path while material variation and eyebrow roofs create visual distinctions to individual unit entries.

**E-1: Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites**

*Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.*

The landscape character of the neighborhood varies significantly. To the extent possible, we will respect this character and scale while designing a landscape using native plants that is thoughtful and inviting.

**E-2: Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site**

*Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.*

The landscaping will be designed to enhance the amenity space and bring landscaped features to the right of way. The rear landscaping will be designed to minimize the visual impact for the adjacent single family zone.

**E-3: Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

*The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.*

The proposed grading to the south end of the street frontage will soften the transition to the adjacent property and provide easy access to the front of townhome and the amenity space. The entry path way is designed to save significant existing trees.

## Existing Site Conditions

The property currently has a single family residence with parking accessed from California Avenue to a garage under the first floor.

The site slopes from the Northwest corner down six feet to the Southeast corner. It is flanked on the south by a four unit apartment building and on the north by a four unit condominium building.

Note the scale of the large trees along the north and south property lines at the west end of the site that will be saved.





## Existing Site Conditions

CONTINUED

The existing site landscaping has been poorly maintained. Shrubs are overgrown, trees have been nearly destroyed to keep them away from power lines at the rear of the site. There is a single significant tree located along the north property line, however, that tree is split and a potential hazard (see arborist report). There are two other non-significant trees that we would like to save, both are located adjacent to property lines. To save the trees on the north property line, we have designed an elevated board walk that will hover over tree roots rather than add fill and construct a sidewalk. Saving these trees will provide an amenity to the linear entry boardwalk and continued visual privacy for the swimming pool and deck owned by the property to the north.

*Diseased and Damaged Trees Cut to Accomodate Overhead Wires (Remove)*

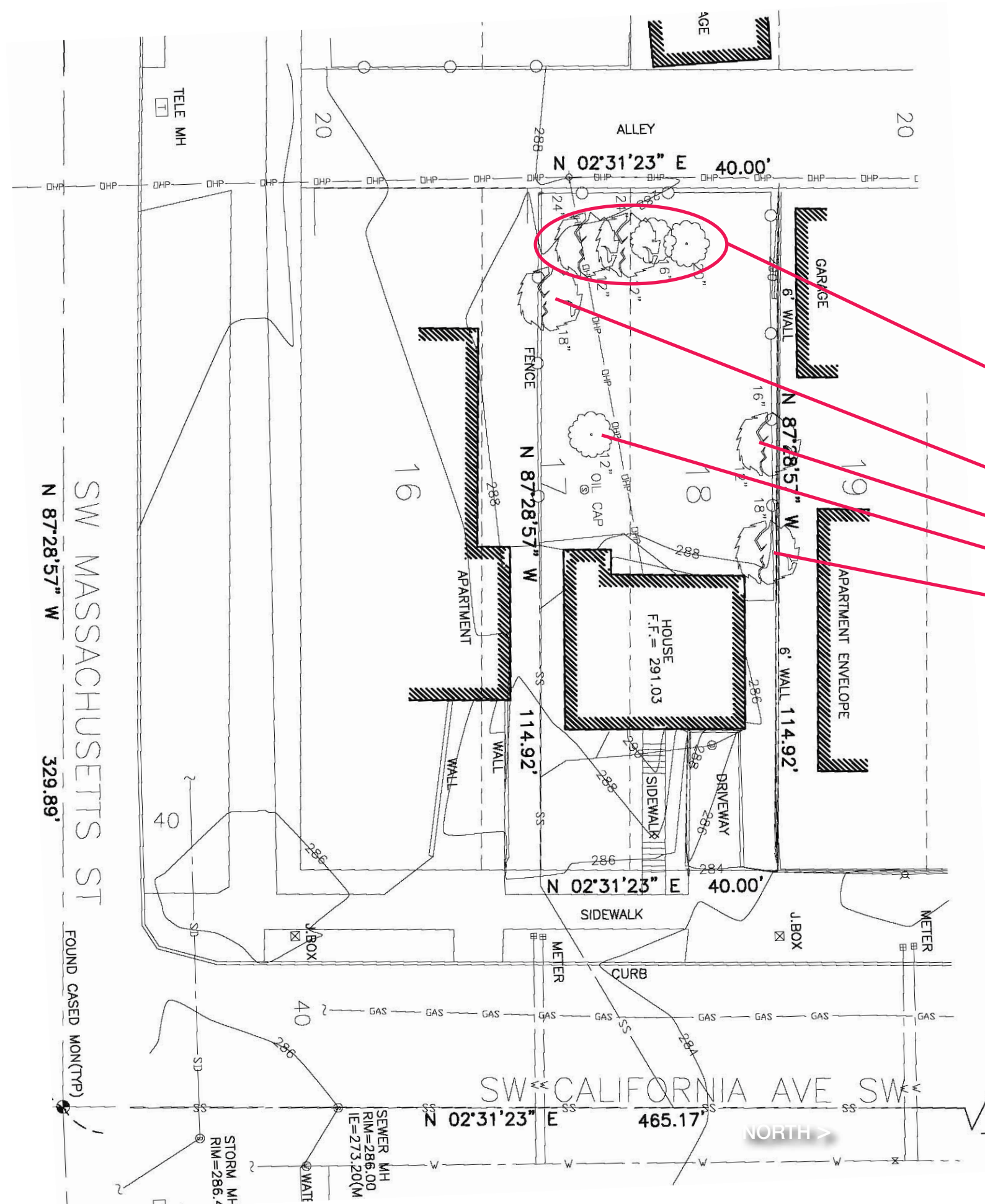
*Non-Significant Tree (Save)*

*Significant Tree (Split and Potentially Dangerous) (Save if Possible)*

*Non Significant Tree (Remove)*

*Non Significant Tree (Save)*

- Zone: LR3. Side and front yards bordered by LR3, SF5000 across the alley
- Lot Size: 4600
- Lot Dimensions: 40'x 115'
- Urban Village – NO, one block away from Admiral Urban Village
- Transit: Served by Metro Transit 55 and 775





# Alternative #1

## Description

This alternative steps units up the hill from California Avenue with the second and third floors cantilevering out over the first floor to create ground level amenity space on the north and south. Entries are on the ground level.

## Advantages

- Entries are accessed through the ground level amenity space.
- There is less excavation than other solutions
- Improved views from roof decks of the western most units

## Disadvantages

- Stepping up the hill creates a larger facade facing the SF 5000 zone across the alley.
- Both north and south facades are relatively close to adjacent properties.
- Both north and south facades would require exceptions to the zoning code because they are longer than the maximum length allowable.





## Alternative #2

### Description

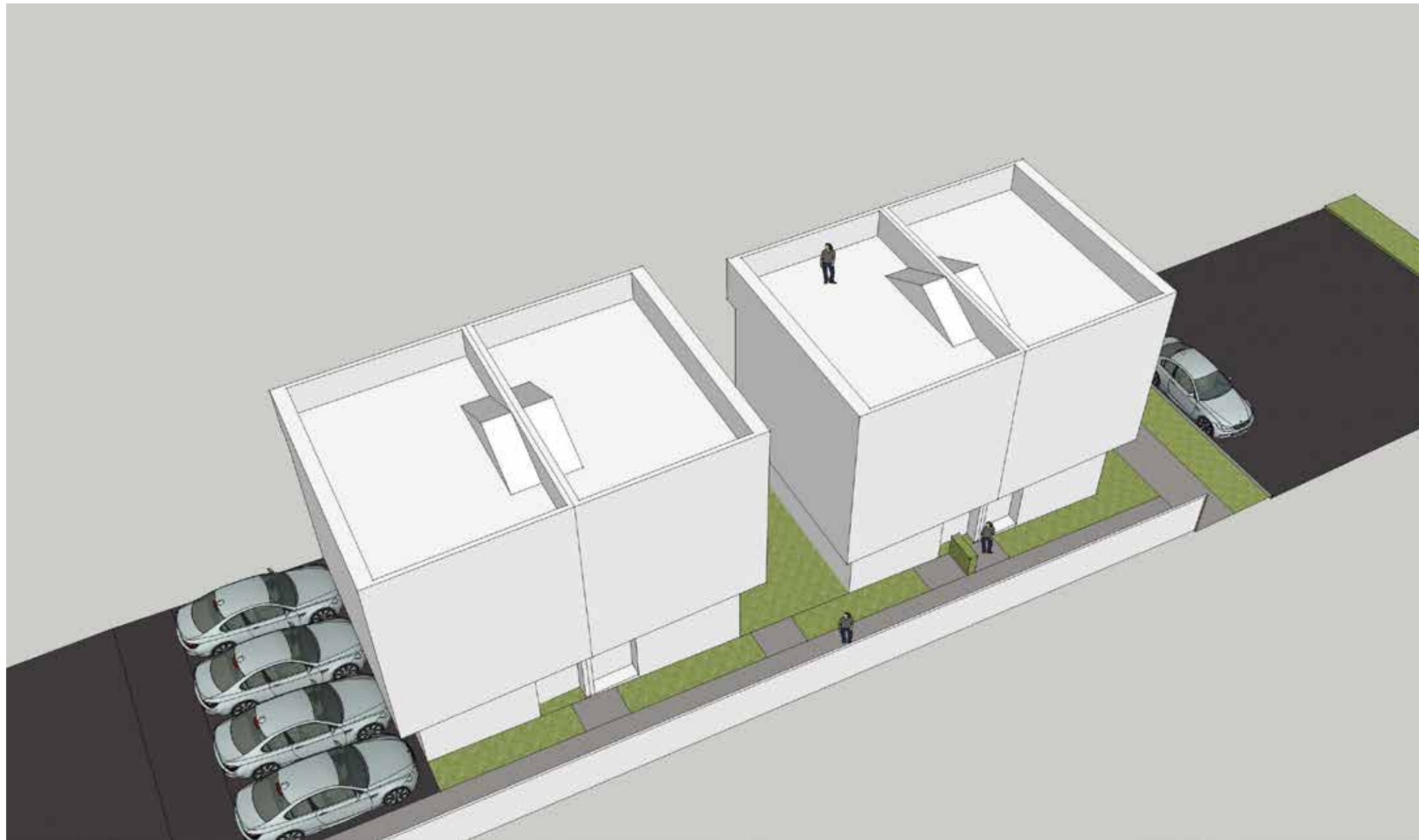
This alternative creates two duplex units that step up the hill from California Avenue with the second and third floors cantilevering out over the first floor to create ground level amenity space on the north and south. Entries are on the ground level.

### Advantages

- Entries are accessed through the ground level amenity space.
- There is less excavation than other solutions
- Improved views from roof decks of the western most units

### Disadvantages

- Stepping up the hill creates a larger facade facing the SF 5000 zone across the alley.
- Both north and south facades are relatively close to adjacent properties.
- The amenity space between units is only 10 feet wide and therefore, not an attractive space to be and view.





## Alternate #3 (Preferred)

### Description

This alternative remains level with the lowest floor positioned 24 inches below the sidewalk on California Avenue with the second and third floors rising straight above the ground floor. Entries are along the north facade from an elevated boardwalk. The center two units are rotated to provide a deep amenity space for territorial views. Entries are on the ground level.

### Advantages

- Ground level amenity space measuring 17' x 52'
- Saving nice non-significant trees
- Modulation on the south facade results in just the north facade needing an adjustment exception
- Leaving floor levels lower on the site reduces the facade size facing the SF 5000 zone across the alley

### Disadvantages

- North facade requires an adjustment to the zoning code because it is longer than the maximum length allowable.





Alternative #3 (Preferred)

CONTINUED

FAR 1.1 = 5,060 Base FAR

- 4 units @ 1,265 SF
- Actual Unit size: 3 units @ 1,250 SF, 1 unit at 1,300

Parking

- 1 space/unit = 4 cars
- Must be accessed from alley
- Must be located at rear of lot or completely contained within the building footprint

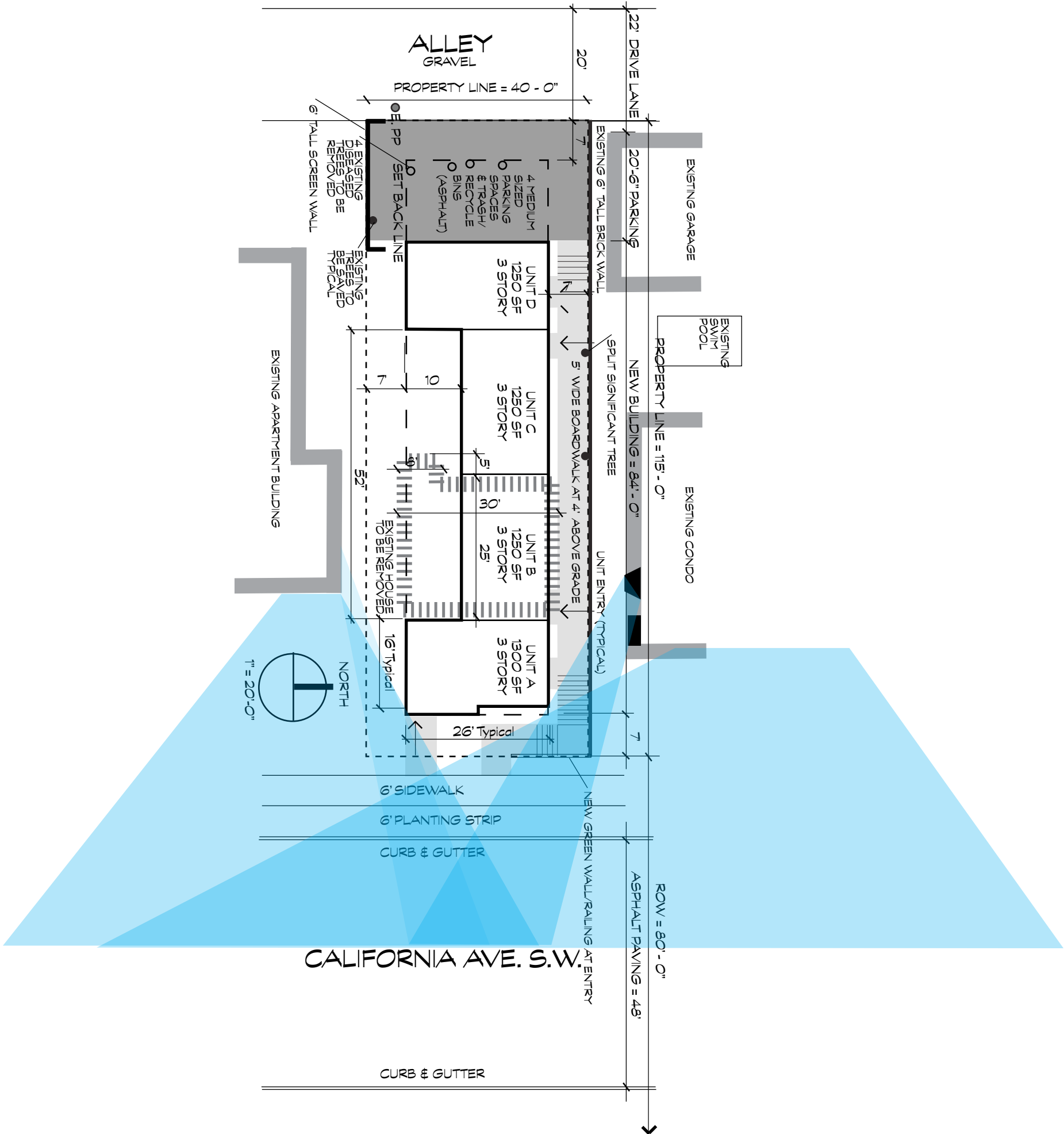
Amenity Area

- 25% of lot area = 1,150 SF
- 50% of required area at ground level = 575 SF
- Actual Amenity Area provided at ground level = 884 SF
- Additional Amenity Area provided on roof decks = 400 SF minimum

We have designed as much amenity area as is possible on a small city lot by creating roof decks equal to the footprint of the building and south facing, ground level landscaped garden that is 17 feet deep x 52 feet wide shared by all four units. From the roof decks views of Elliott Bay and the Seattle skyline will be visible.

You will note that the footprint of our building jogs in and out in rhythm with the building to the south. This movement maximizes the amenity area between the two buildings and helps control privacy for each. It also allows as much sunlight as possible to penetrate the garden amenity area adding to the aesthetics of the space and its ability to support lush native landscaping.

View corridors from existing buidlings are illustrated with at left in blue.





## Alternative #3 (Preferred)

CONTINUED

### Trees

There are two non-significant trees and one damaged (split) significant trees on the site. The trees along the north property create privacy between buildings and privacy for the swimming pool to the north. The tree along the south property line helps screen the parking from the apartment building to the south.

### Roof Deck

Synthetic wood decking covers the entire roof surface. The deck is accessed through a roof door skylight. There are views to the downtown skyline from this level. Owners will be given the option to add a roof hoist to their unit so that they can lift and store larger objects like kayaks on the roof deck.

### Garbage, Composte, and Recycling

There is a place for containers along the south property line at the rear of the site. The area is screened with a six foot tall fence.

### Parking

Four medium sized parking stalls are located off the alley at the rear of the property. There is a boardwalk along the north side of the building that leads from the parking area to each unit.





**Alternative #3 (Preferred)**  
CONTINUED

**Architecture**

Although the street front width of the building is only 26', the design utilizes articulation, three different siding colors and durable materials, eyebrow roofs and decks to break down the scale of the structure. The fiber reinforced cement board (FRCB) base is dark and marked by a 4'x4' module capped with a 12" water table. The FRCB siding on the upper stories are marked by a 4'x8' module with horizontal lines aligned with fenestration and doors. The two end units have fenestration that meets at the corner set in white corrugated metal panels and capped with an eyebrow roof. For pedestrians passing by, this feature draws the eye around the corner of the unit toward the landscaped amenity area in the middle of the site.

Windows on the north elevation are small to enhance privacy for both properties that are relatively close to the property line. Windows to the south are larger with views to the amenity area. Tenants in the building directly to the south do not use its north facing yard.





## Alternative #3 (Preferred)

CONTINUED

Entry to the front unit is just three steps down and across a gracious landscaped patio from the sidewalk on California. It is covered by a cantilevered deck that contains recessed lighting. The entire corner of the front unit is pulled out 18 inches for emphasis.

Walking north on the street sidewalk provides views into the broad landscaped amenity space on the south side of the townhomes.





**Alternative #3 (Preferred)**  
CONTINUED

Entry to the three remaining units is signaled with a 6' x 10' semi-transparent, green landscape wall that serves as the railing to the stairway and is aligned with the brick wall to the north. The address is prominently displayed on its surface. An 8' wide walkway leads from the city sidewalk to the landscaped outdoor entry vestibule/courtyard. This outside room together with the balcony on the main floor and the eyebrow roof create pedestrian scale. These elements are visible from a distance and unmistakable upon approaching the property.

The entry stair and board walk is 5 feet wide and is held away from the building 24" to allow for a linear stand of bamboo between the walkway and the building. The board walk connects the front of the property to the rear where cars are parked.





## Requested Development Departures

This project meets or exceeds all of the development requirements with one exception, therefore, we are requesting a single adjustment.

### SMC 23.45.527 Facade length limits in LR zones

*The maximum facade length within 15 feet of a side property line is 65% of the lot depth.*

This would establish an overall facade length of 74.75 feet for the north elevation.

This project's north elevation length is 84 feet, however:

- We are saving the two large, dense trees along the north property line. These trees significantly break up the facade's impact
- Windows are smaller on this facade and some of them are translucent glass to increase privacy
- This facade uses landscaping between the boardwalk and the building, changes in siding, and eyebrow roofs to soften its impact
- This project does not have a fence along the property line.

