Kassner Goodspeed Architects Ltd.

29 & State Street Developments Ltd.
The Promenade Robie South

Case 20761: Final Application and Response to Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee (HPPAC) Recommendations

The ***Promenade Robie South*** is pleased to present this Final Application for development of our project on College, Carlton and Robie Streets. This application incorporates feedback from the public, the HPPAC and city staff. As a result of this feedback, the ***Promenade Robie South*** now includes enhanced heritage elements, street level townhouses that provide an elegant transition to the heritage properties, lower streetwalls and laybys.

This document is comprised of a Project Overview; a synopsis of the project's Alignment with Centre Plan Parameters; a description of how ***Promenade Robie South*** respects the Centre Plan's five Design Principles; the project's relationship to adjacent developments, and our response to the comments of HPPAC in its approval of the project.

Project Overview

The ***Promenade Robie South*** is an exciting development proposed for a prime location in Peninsular Halifax. The development would transform seven existing lots with 75 rental units into a marquee residential and retail community. All three registered heritage buildings on the properties will be renewed along with a fourth Victorian Home. Our development will respect and enhance the nationally recognized historic streetscape on Carleton Street.

The new construction will feature two slim residential towers, set back on a 3-4 storey streetwall which will accommodate residential suites and commercial retail space. Altogether the new development and historic buildings will have 400 units.

The land assembly is a 1.5- acre parcel located on the northeast corner of Robie and College Streets in Peninsular Halifax, immediately south of Spring Garden Road. The assembly includes 7 contiguous residential properties with frontage on three streets. The properties are currently regulated under the Peninsula Centre Area Plan. The five properties fronting on Robie and College Streets are zoned R-3, and the two properties fronting on Carlton Street are zoned R-2. There is currently a 50-foot height precinct applied over the properties. The front portion of 5969 College Street is a municipally registered heritage property in recognition of its Victorian character.

To the north, the land abuts the west end of the Spring Garden Road district. Immediately south across College Street is the medical sub-campus of Dalhousie University, with the hospital district to the southeast and the main campus to the south west. This location in Central Halifax is favorably positioned for high density development, with a wide range of employment, educational, shopping and recreational

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opportunities within a 15-minute walk of the site. The site has immediate access to the major street and transit networks. It is located in close proximity to a number of existing high-rise structures of up to 23 storeys.

The owners are seeking an SMPS/LUB Amendments and Development Agreement with the municipality to permit re-development of the properties. The proposal includes the removal of some existing residential structures, relocation and conservation of the existing registered heritage building, relocation of an unregistered Victorian era house, renewal of two existing registered Carlton Street houses and construction of a new mixed-use structure fronting on College and Robie Streets.

The proposal includes a low rise stepped streetwall structure incorporating ground floor commercial/retail space with residential suites above. The roof of the streetwall will be used for resident amenities. Above this level, two independently accessed residential towers are set back from the streetwall. As currently envisioned, the Robie Tower rises 22 floors above the 4-storey streetwall for a total of 26 storeys and the College Tower rises 17 floors above the 3-storey streetwall for a total of 20 storeys. The towers are carefully positioned to maintain appropriate separation distance and allow light and air penetration to adjacent properties. Approximately 400 residential suites and up to 32,000 square feet of ground level commercial and retail space are proposed. The structure would be constructed atop a underground parking facility for 384 cars.

Alignment with Centre Plan Parameters

The ***Promenade Robie South*** has been designed to respect the principles and in recognition of the spirit of the Centre Plan:

Urban Structure

This site is included in one of the five Centres identified in the Centre Plan, and has been deemed appropriate for high density multi-unit residential development. The land assembly is large enough to accommodate two residential towers with appropriate siting, step backs and separation distances.

The building form incorporates a streetwall mass with two slim residential towers stepped back from the streetwall line. The mixed-use project incorporates active and pedestrian oriented ground floor uses combined with residential apartments of varying sizes.

Height

The draft Centre Plan identifies a building height of 16 to 20 floors. Economically, the design requires approximately 400 residential suites to finance conservation of the heritage buildings, replace the existing 75 units and accommodate the new construction. In this proposal we have incorporated two towers. In studying various massing options for the two towers, it became obvious that a slim profile for the towers was the most desirable strategy to maintain appropriate separation distances between towers and maximize daylight penetration and sky view from the surrounding areas. Our project thus features a 26-storey tower facing Robie Street and a 20-storey tower on the College Street frontage. Both slim towers are set back from the line of the streetwall.

Floor Area Ratio

Although the Centre Plan draft anticipates the use of Floor Area Ratios (FAR) to control building size, it is silent on specific FAR numbers and the method of calculation. If the calculation is based on the total gross floor area above grade, this proposal has a FAR of 7.4

Response to Design Principles

Transition

This site abuts the west end of the Spring Garden Road district to the north, the Robie Street corridor to the west, Dalhousie University Medical Campus to the south and the registered Carlton Victorian Streetscape to the east.

The streetwall mass is the primary means of establishing an appropriate transition in the neighborhood. The residential towers above are stepped back from the line of the streetwall.

The 4-storey Robie streetwall is an appropriate height to face this wide boulevard. At the northern end of the Robie frontage, the streetwall steps down to 3 floors and is set back.

The principal commercial entrance is expressed as an archway set in a chamfered corner element to mark both the intersection and the transition to the university campus.

Along the College Street frontage, the streetwall height reduces to 3 storeys, reflecting the height of the adjacent heritage structures and the Carlton streetscape. By introducing a small mezzanine level into the first storey facing College Street, townhouse style units accessible from the sidewalk are integrated into the College Street façade. The vertical proportions expressed in the townhouse blocks recall the fine-grained scale and rhythm of the Carlton Victorian Streetscape.

The residential space is accessed from two separate residential lobbies, expressed as columned porticos on the Robie and College frontages.

The vehicle entrance provides an interruption in the College streetscape, effectively highlighting the Victorian homes sited at the Carlton Street corner.

Pedestrian Orientation

The project is located in an area with significant pedestrian traffic to and from the university and hospital districts and the residential and commercial areas to the north and east. The Promenade design seeks to enliven the pedestrian

experience with a variety of forms and setbacks and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure supporting spill out uses, bicycles and transit access.

The plan features an interactive ground floor, with pedestrian oriented commercial space at street level. The commercial storefronts on both Robie and College Streets are set back from the property line, providing space for increased sidewalk width. This creates the potential for spill out uses, especially attractive on the south facing College St frontage.

Human Scale

The human scale of the project is established by its streetwall massing, with the residential towers stepped back from the street line to reduce the sense of presence. The step back varies with the College Street tower set back further. The streetwall is designed using vertically proportioned openings. The masonry construction reinforces the sense of human scale.

The streetwall mass is articulated with varying heights and setbacks, with different exterior treatments to express the residential entrances, commercial entrance and townhouse elements. The widened sidewalks promote spill out uses from the adjacent commercial spaces. This human scaled elements provide for a variety of experiences as one moves along the frontages of the project.

Building Design

The building form follows the principles established in the Downtown Halifax Plan. It features streetwall massing with minimal setbacks, and significant step-backs for the relatively slim towers above.

The ground floor, covering most of the site, provides space for a major commercial use, serviced from the College Street entry. This same location is used for the entry to the underground parking garage.

The streetwall mass is located to address the street frontages, with commercial/retail space on the ground level and residential uses above. The open roof area of the streetwall mass is used to provide outdoor amenity space for both residential towers, accessible from common rooms located on the 5th floor of each tower.

The streetwall mass is enclosed with an articulated stone masonry cladding with vertically proportioned punched window openings. The masonry detail contributes a sense of human scale at the sidewalk level while responding to the adjacent university buildings.

The residential towers are clad in two tones of modular cladding with areas of glass curtain wall. These materials express the tower masses as an aggregation of smaller structures. This is intended to add visual interest, contribute to a sense of scale and to create a level of surface 'roughness' to aid in wind control.

Context Sensitivity

This high-density development is located in an established high-rise residential area, focussed on the west end of Spring Garden Road. The area is one of the 'Centres' identified in the draft Center Plan as locations for the highest density residential use.

The project abuts the Carlton Victorian Streetscape, recognized nationally as a rare example of the type. Two of the Victorian houses at the west end are included in the land assembly for the project. Our proposal to conserve these two structures and to relocate two additional houses, including the municipally registered Gold Cure Institute, aims to rejuvenate and reinforce the Heritage assets of the area.

Our College Street frontage faces the Medical Campus of Dalhousie University across the street. The university buildings are reflected in the reduced streetwall height and the masonry construction.

The main commercial entrance is established in an archway in a chamfered corner at the intersection of College and Robie Streets. This marks the intersection as a prominent node in the neighborhood and reflects the chamfered podium at the entrance to the Dalhousie Medical Campus.

Approval of this project will require amendments to the SPMS to modify or remove the height precinct, to allow for mixed use and to permit the increase in residential density. A Development Agreement will be required to allow the streetwall configuration and to modify the current setback and open space requirements.

Adjacencies to Future Development

Simultaneous with this application, HRM is considering a development proposal for the abutting lands to north, incorporating new construction on all the remaining lands on the block, with the exception of the properties forming the west side of the Carlton Victorian Streetscape.

The proposal currently includes an 8-storey mid-rise structure with two towers above. The main tower, sited midway along the Spring Garden frontage, rises to 30 storeys. The shorter tower is located at the Spring Garden/Robie intersection and rises to 16 storeys.

At 27 metres and 35 metres, the separation distances between the 30-storey tower and the two Promenade towers exceed the 23 metre requirement of the downtown bylaw and the 25m separation proposed for the Centre Plan.

At 20 metres, the separation distance between the 16-storey tower and Promenade A is less than the 25 metres proposed in the draft Centre Plan. This separation is further reduced to 12 metres below the 8-storey level.

HPPAC Recommends Approval

At its 24 September 2018, HPPAC recommended that Halifax & West Community Council approve this project.

In response to their additional comments, we offer the following:

1. **Values increased density development in this area.**

   We have long recognized the suitability of these particular lands for high density development.

2. **Has concerns about the 26-storey tower height and the overall visual mass of the building, and recommends the tower heights conform to current and emerging Centre Plan guidelines:**

   While the Centre Plan guidelines specify a maximum height of 20 floors, they also place value on slim massing, significant step-backs, and separations that would reinforce the streetwall, increase daylight penetration, and open up sky views from the streets. Our vision seeks to exploit slim towers with multiple step-backs, but requires height above the proposed design targets. Importantly, the development has an FAR of 7.4 which is within the draft Centre Plan parameters.

3. **Believes the proposal is an improvement on the existing streetscape.**

   We agree. Appropriate design of the streetscape and the quality of the pedestrian experience were key drivers in our design process.

4. **Appreciates promised effort to improve pedestrian experience and protection of heritage properties along College-Carlton Street corner.**

   The owner urged us to make Heritage conservation a key element in the design. The challenge was to preserve the registered heritage structures in the context of a modern, fully-serviced residential complex. We believe we have developed a viable and appropriate solution.

5. **Encourages at-grade bicycle parking storage be incorporated into the design.**

   Bicycle parking will be provided, including secure indoor storage and outside racks in appropriate locations.

6. **Recommends that additional amenity space for residents be incorporated into the building design and landscaping.**

   We have provided considerable amenity space in this design. Exterior amenities include the extensive landscaped roof at level 5, the large accessible green roof at level 2, private balconies and/or terraces for each suite, and the expanded sidewalk area. Interior amenities include a spacious furnished lobby and a large tenant common room at level 5 in each residential tower. The common rooms open directly onto the landscaped roof area.

7. **Recommends the 4-storey streetwall along Robie and College Streets be reduced to 3 storeys to better suit neighbourhood context.**

To establish the transition from our Heritage corner, the design already features a 3-storey streetwall on College Street, stepping up to four storeys at the corner and along most of the Robie frontage and stepping down to three storeys as it approaches Spring Garden. Robie Street is a wide right of way with a boulevard. We believe four storeys is an appropriate streetwall height for the high-density side of a major corridor street.

8. **Recommend a gazebo design element on the Robie College corner be modified to improve building aesthetic.**

   We are exploring alternative designs for the feature element to better demarcate the corner entry at the Robie/College intersection.

9. **Encourages the construction of two proposals (case 20761 and case 20218) be co-ordinated and happen together it both are approved.**

   We are ready to proceed with construction and are not in a position to comment on the coordination or timing of the adjacent project.

10. **Recommends a quantitative wind study and joint shadow and traffic study be done for impacts of both proposals (case 20761 and case 20218) combined, and additional proposals and buildings in the vicinity, as appropriate.**

    We are in discussion with staff on the parameters for wind, shadow and traffic studies.

11. **Would value a more complete access plan for resident pickup and drop off, and active transportation use.**

    Providing better accommodation for resident pick-up and drop-off would be an improvement. Given that we have incorporated wider sidewalks on both principal frontages, we propose to provide lay-bys, approximately 40-feet long in front of each residential entrance.

12. **Encourages efforts to move utilities and wiring underground during construction.**

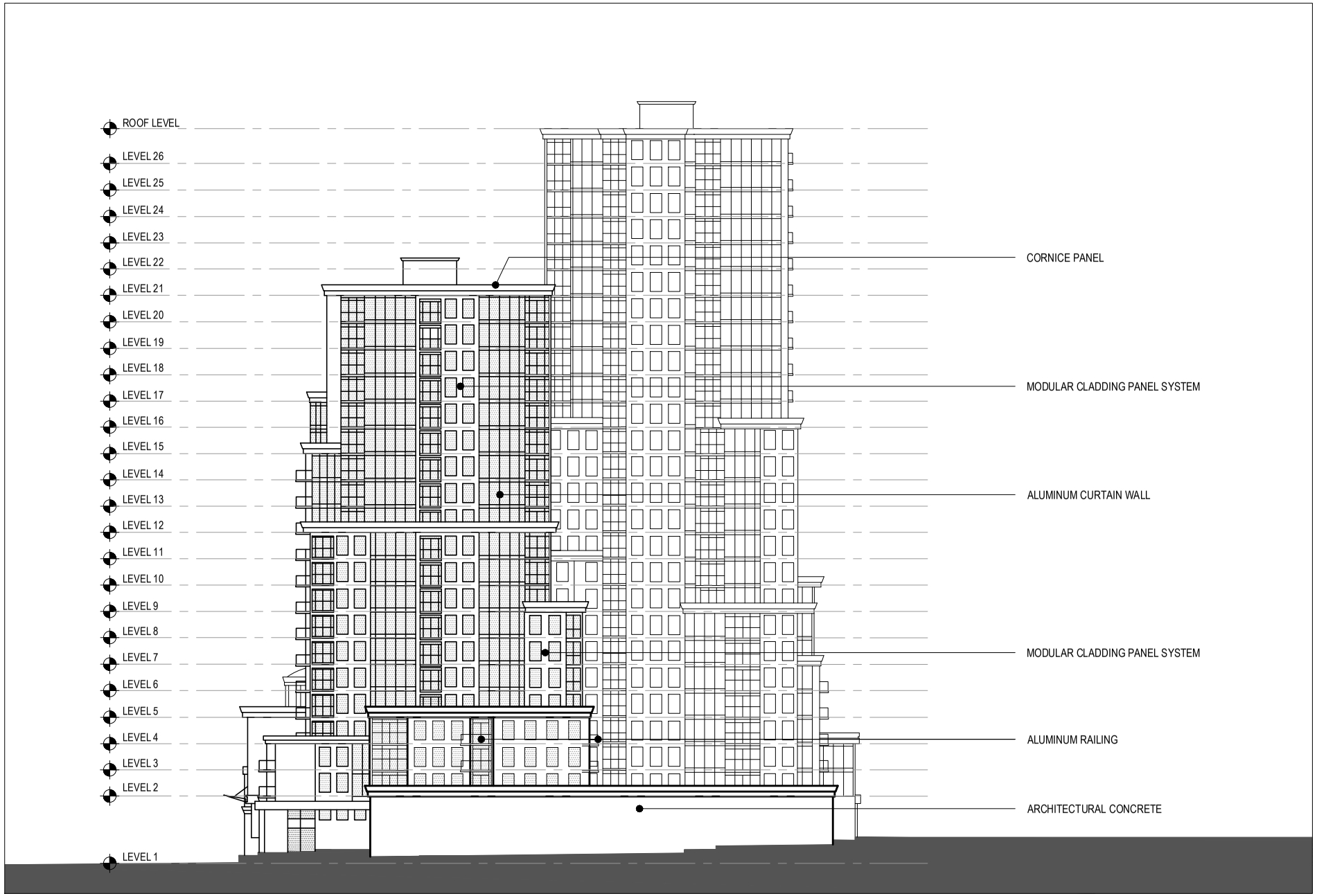
    Our intention is to bury the street wiring underground to the greatest extent possible. Detailed design is required to fully assess the feasibility of this idea.

13. **Recommends that the CH-16 elements be considered by the Heritage Advisory Committee.**

    We have filed an application for substantial alterations before the Heritage Advisory Committee.

14. **Encourages planning staff to use all available tools to maximize affordable housing within the development.**

    We will consult with planning staff on affordable housing policies and approaches.



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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

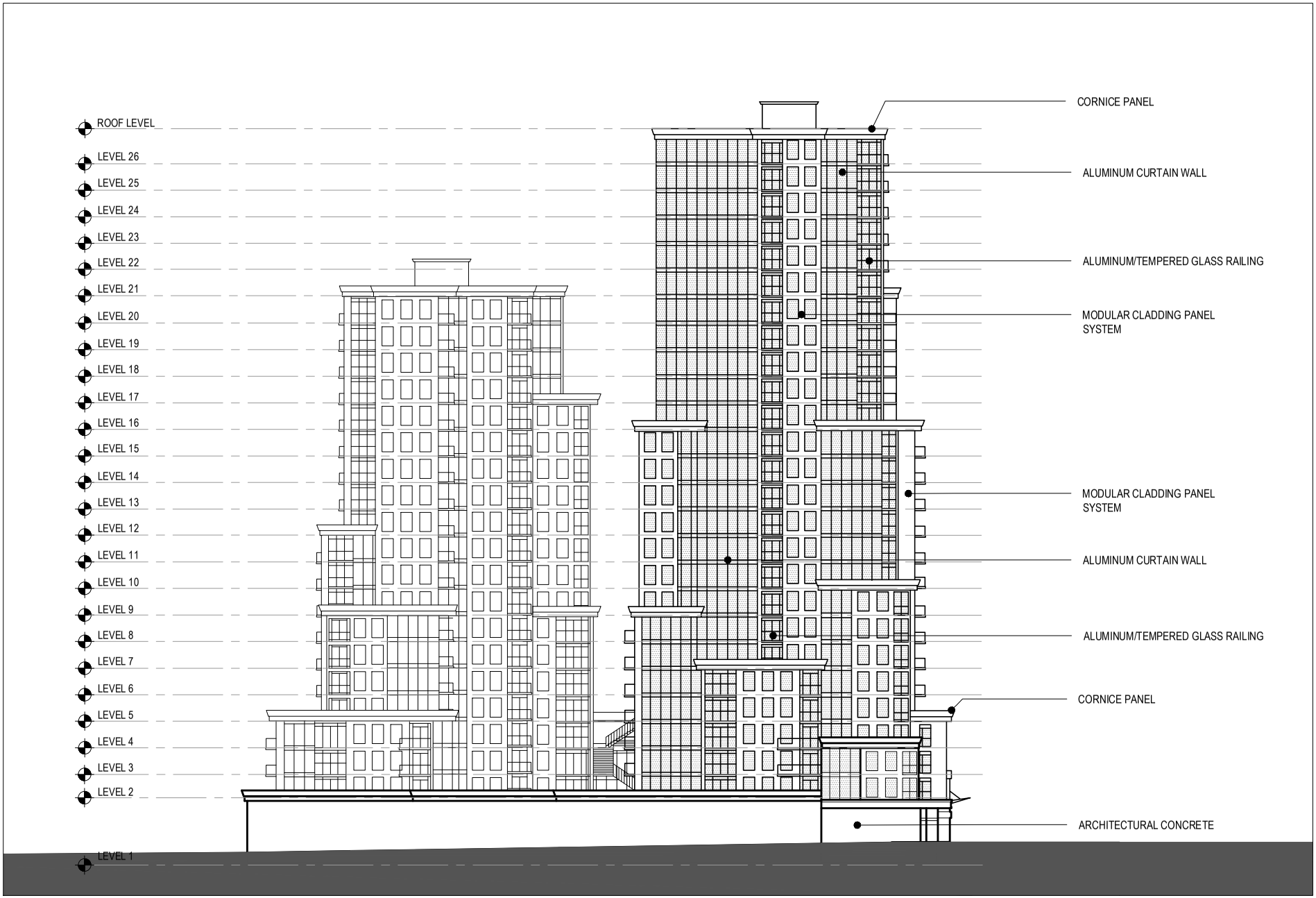
THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

EAST ELEVATION

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 50'-0"

Nov 05, 2018



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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

NORTH ELEVATION

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 50'-0"

Nov 05, 2018

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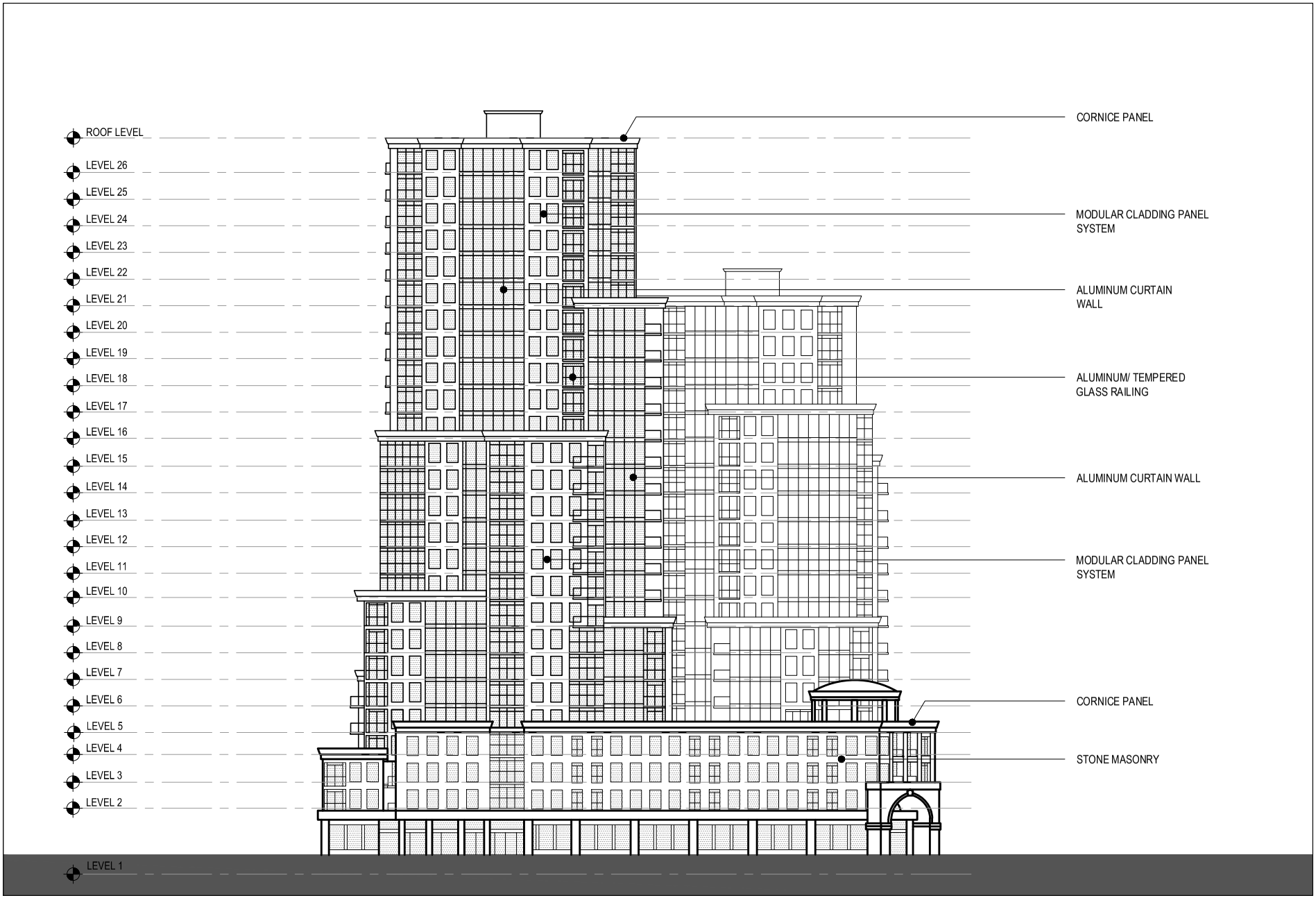

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

WEST ELEVATION-ROBIE

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 50'-0"

Nov 05, 2018

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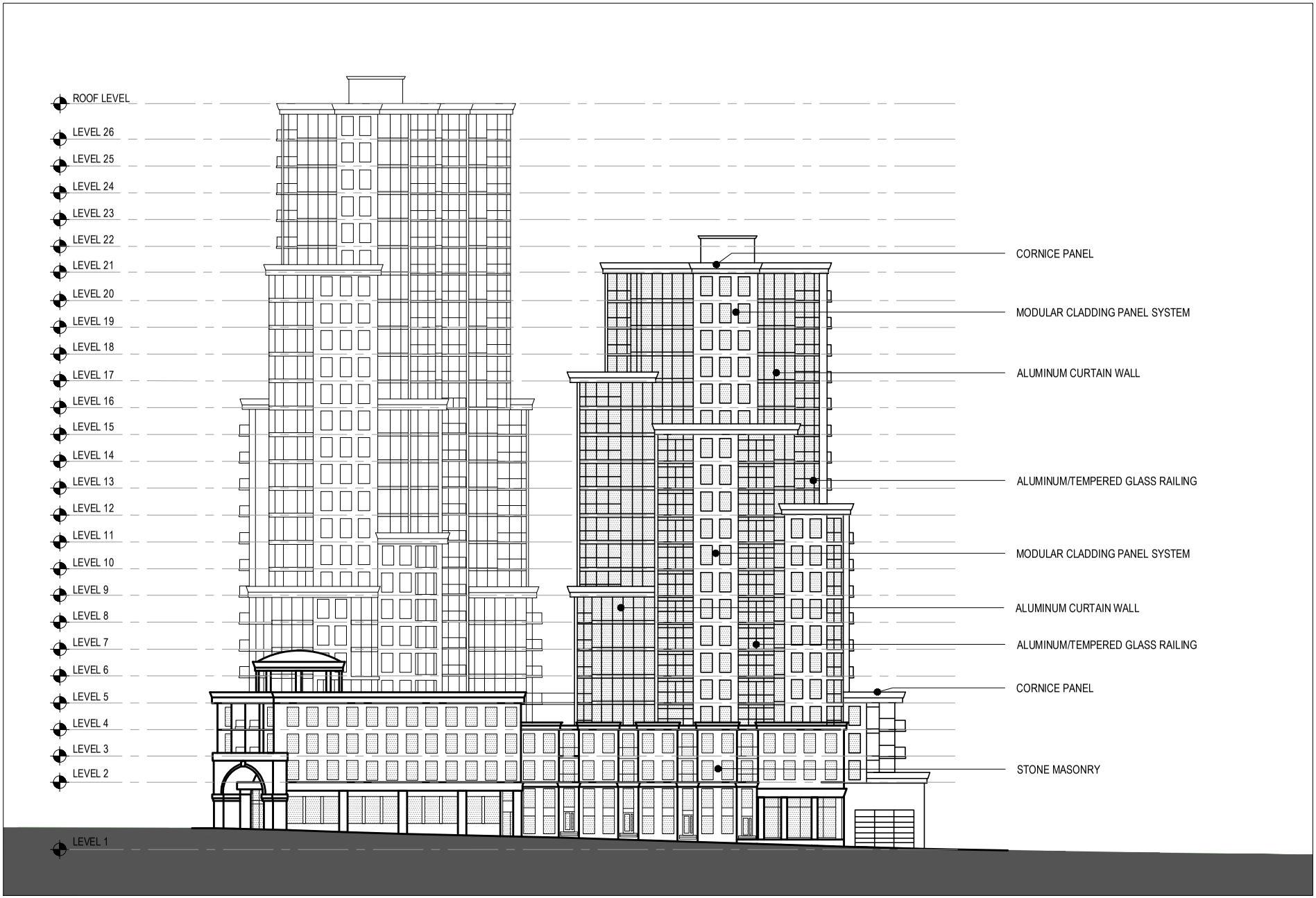

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

SOUTH ELEVATION-COLLEGE

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 50'-0"

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 60'-0" (1:720)

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 60'-0" (1:720)

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

FLOOR PLAN LEVEL 2-4

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 60'-0" (1:720)

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

FLOOR PLAN LEVEL A:10-15 B:9-16

Project # 1411

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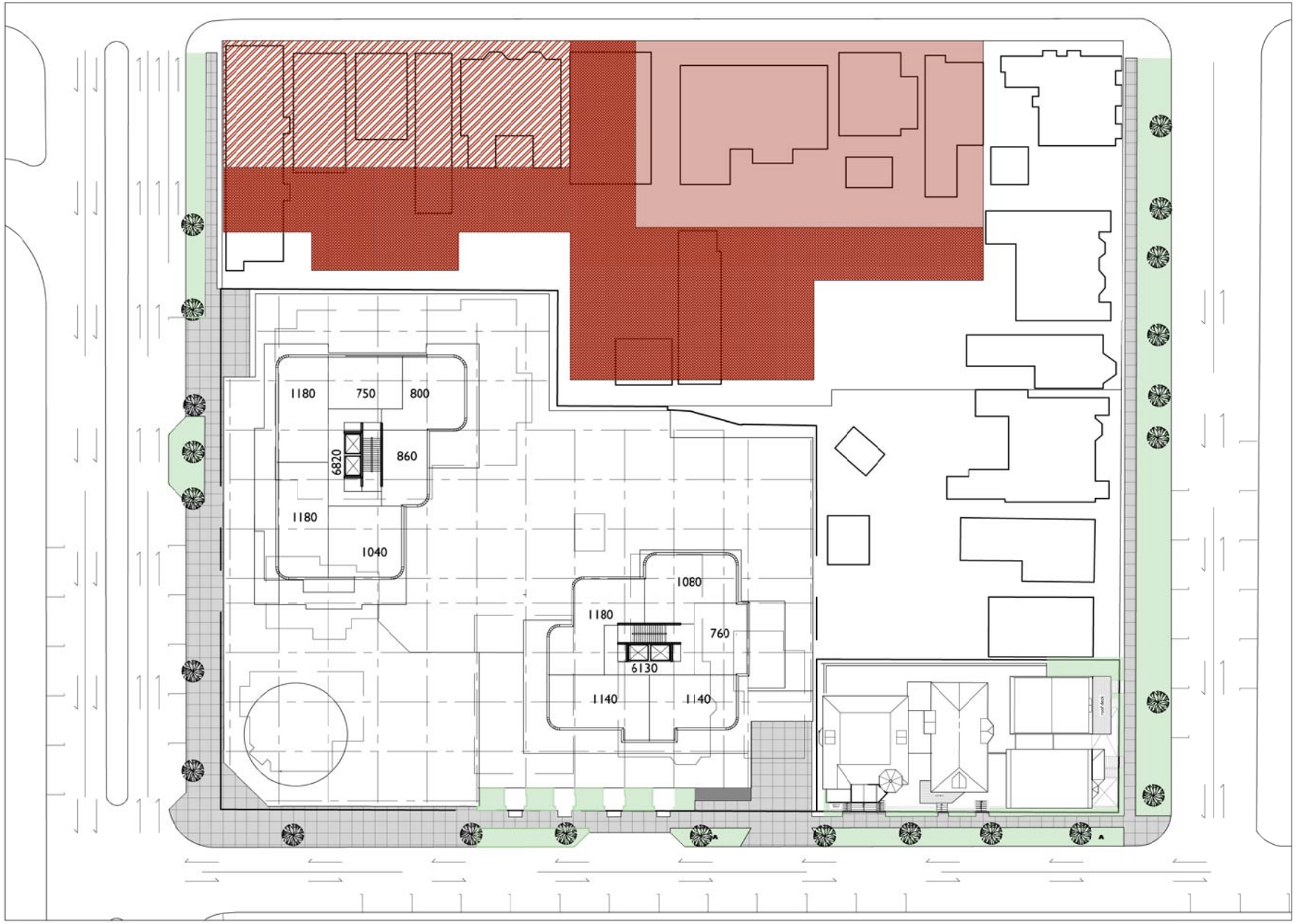

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

FLOOR PLAN LEVEL A:16-26 B:17-20

Project # 1411

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PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PROMENADE AT ROBIE SOUTH, HALIFAX, NS

FLOOR PLAN LEVEL A:5-9 B:4-8

Project # 1411

Scale: 1" = 60'-0" (1:720)

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