



Design Review Board Case #2018-0013
2425 Eisenhower Avenue – Block 6C Retail Pad Site

Application	General Data	
Project Name: 2425 Eisenhower Avenue – Block 6C Retail Pad Site Location: 2425 Eisenhower Avenue Applicant: 2425 Eisenhower Acquisitions, LLC	DRB Date:	July 19, 2018
	Site Area:	.36 acres (15,849 sf)
	Zone:	CDD#2
	Proposed Use:	Residential, Retail, and Associated Parking
	Gross Floor Area:	7,791 sf
<p>Purpose of Application: Initial concept review of a one-story retail building and site improvements proposed for retail and restaurant uses at 2425 Eisenhower Avenue adjacent to the existing Hoffman Town Center. This proposal includes 7,791 sf of retail uses.</p>		
<p>Staff Reviewers: Rob Kerns, AICP robert.kerns@alexandriava.gov Thomas H. Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Nathan Imm, nathan.imm@alexandriava.gov Bill Cook, AICP william.cook@alexandriava.gov</p>		
<p>DRB WORK SESSION, JULY 19, 2018: Overall, the Board concurred with the comments summarized in Section V of the Staff Report and motioned to lend approval to the development and direction of the design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding the Swamp Fox/Eisenhower corner, there was discussion that a corner entry may not be feasible due to utilities and that reducing the notched corner may be more successful. Board members had concerns about the visibility of rooftop utilities from all angles and concurred with Staff comments to consider additional height of the curved parapet form and additional screening methods. The Board encouraged the applicant to consider the western façade and site details pertaining to pedestrian activity and visibility, transformer and service area screening, and context of the adjacent building and entries. The DRB supported the concept suggested by Staff of a pedestrian or transitional treatment for the existing private service/access street. The board thought the corner gesture at the northwest corner deserved additional consideration as a tenant entrance or focal point of activity. Staff will perform research to confirm the setback to be complied with along Eisenhower Avenue. 		

I. OVERVIEW

2425 Eisenhower Acquisitions, LLC is requesting Design Review Board (DRB) review and comment on a new 7,791 sf retail building at 2425 Eisenhower Avenue (Eisenhower East – Block 6C). The applicant proposes a one-story retail building in accordance with existing approvals for Block 6C and the Hoffman Town Center.

II. BACKGROUND

Project Evolution

The subject property, Block 6C (2425 Eisenhower Avenue), is the remaining undeveloped parcel within the original Hoffman Block 6 as identified in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (EESAP) when the plan was adopted by City Council in 2003. A subsequent subdivision (SUB#2014-0001) was approved by the Planning Commission in 2015, dividing Eisenhower East Block 6 into three parcels.

Block 6A at 200 Stovall Street was the former “Hoffman Building 2” constructed in 1969 and leased by the General Services Administration for the majority of its existence. City Council approved Development Special Use Permit (DSUP#2017-0015) in October 2017 to convert the property to residential and retail uses, and also approved an associated amendment to the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan to allow the land use conversion. The project architecture was reviewed by the DRB in July 2017 and March 2018. Block 6B (2461 Eisenhower Avenue) is the site of a currently unoccupied office building which has been recently renovated.

Site Context

This site is located within Eisenhower East, as part of the Hoffman Town Center, which consists of four blocks (Blocks 6, 7, 8 & 14). Upon the completion of the Block 6A conversion, the three parcels which comprise Block 6 are currently planned to consist of approximately 352,000 square feet of office use, 663,000 square feet of residential and 69,000 square feet of retail. The existing AMC movie theater is located on Block 7, and Block 8 is the location of the National Science Foundation’s newly constructed headquarters. Additionally, approximately 3,163 parking spaces are provided within the existing parking garage at Block 14, 250 of which are allocated to Block 6 specifically.

The entirety of Block 6 is located on the north side of Eisenhower Avenue, across from the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station. It is bound by Eisenhower Avenue to the south, Stovall Street to the west, Mandeville Lane to the north, and Swamp Fox Road to the east.

Block 6C is the southern-most parcel within Block 6, located at the northwest corner of Eisenhower Avenue and Swamp Fox Road. Northwest of Block 6C is Block 6B which consists of the existing Hoffman Office Building #1, and to its east a crescent-shaped building with retail, surface parking, and a pocket park. An existing, interior corridor connects the Block 6B retail and office uses to the residential conversion on Block 6A, which is currently beginning renovations.

An existing service and loading area currently separates Block 6A and Hoffman Office Building #1 on Block 6B. This area is accessed from Stovall Street and provides service and loading for the existing retail at Block 6B. The area also includes above-grade utilities, such as electrical transformers, and access to the buildings' service corridors.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Building Design

Footprint and Massing

The footprint of the building largely follows the irregular shape of the site. The longest wall of the building is on the south side and fronts on Eisenhower Avenue. Notches in the corners of the building along Swamp Fox Road help transition site angles. A short segment of glass wall extends along Swamp Fox Road from the intersection with Eisenhower Avenue. Then the building transitions to a curved façade along the north side, gradually rising in height from east to west. This curved façade features the tenant entries and storefronts. It also faces the Town Center plaza and surface parking, thus completing the semi-circle facing inward on the west side of Swamp Fox Road.

Façade and Overall Building Expression

While not identical to the restaurant liner building on Block 6B, the mass and scale is similar and complimentary. The building completes the overall composition fronting the Town Center plaza, but in a style that is contemporary, with generous glass and simple forms and surfaces. From the detail provided, selected materials appear similar to those used in portions of surrounding buildings, thus further making the building “transitional” in many respects. It is clearly different, but adapted to the surrounding context.

The buildings' longest and most visible façade is along the Eisenhower Avenue frontage. About one-half of the length of this wall on the east side is glazed with an aluminum-framed plate glass system, with the remainder of the wall to the west clad in an aluminum panel system. This treatment continues on the east side along Swamp Fox Road, but the façade is punctuated by two setbacks near the corners.

The glass façade expression continues along the curved north façade. On this facade, glass predominates, with only slender aluminum-clad columns vertically separating store fronts. The aluminum panel system shifts to a gray color along the upper portions of the wall to define the roofline which rises approximately four feet in height east to west along the 85-foot length of the façade. A canopy projects over the store front windows facing the plaza, and the west side is finished with an overhang over the sidewalk facing the private drive. This overhang is visually supported by V-shaped columns that echo architectural details found on the adjacent Hoffman Office Building #1.

When viewed in plan, the roofline takes the form of a crescent-shaped accent. This creates a contrasting curved volume atop the otherwise flat structure that is flush and integral to the north façade, but forms a setback parapet wall that arcs across and bisects the flat roof across the length of the building.

Site Design

Parking spaces line the perimeter of the semi-circle, with an ample sidewalk area between the parking and building façade. The sidewalk area accommodates outdoor dining and matches the scale of the existing liner building with restaurants located on Block 6B. The west side of the site is formed by the angle of the existing private drive that allows access between the semi-circular Town Center parking loop, a curb cut to Eisenhower Avenue, and a drive aisle and parking in front of the office building entrance on Block 6B.

The loading area for the building is proposed in the southwest corner of the site, located east of the private drive. In addition to the parking along the semi-circle, additional allocated parking is provided on Block 14 in the parking garage adjacent to the cinemas.

Other existing site elements include tree pits and street trees along Eisenhower Avenue and Swamp Fox Road. The Town Center circle consists of planting beds, stone garden walls, park benches, bollard lights, brick and concrete hardscape treatments, and small trees. A bus shelter is found approximately mid-block on Eisenhower Avenue. Pedestrian scale street lights are found along Swamp Fox Road and along the Town Center circle nearest the structure.

IV. STAFF ANALYSIS

Compliance with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and Design Guidelines

The table below provides a summary of how the proposal for this project complies with the intent of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and Design Guidelines. More detailed comments will be provided with the Analysis Narrative.

Guideline	Plan Requirement	Proposed Plan	Complies with intent?
Land Use	Office & Retail	Retail	Yes
Retail Locations	Ground level on Eisenhower Ave & Swamp Fox Rd	Ground-level retail is proposed on Eisenhower Ave, Swamp Fox Rd, and the inner portion of the Town Center.	Yes
Allowable Gross Floor Area (AGFA)	7,900 sf	7,791 sf	Yes
Building Height	150' 10-15 stories	26.58' 1-story	Yes ¹

Guideline	Plan Requirement	Proposed Plan	Complies with intent?
Architectural Articulation	- "A" Street Facades, Eisenhower Ave, Swamp Fox Rd: The building façade shall articulate a clear base, middle, and top to the building.	Facades conceptually articulate a clear base, middle, and top to the building.	Yes
Architecturally Significant Façade	- Eisenhower Ave: highest level of design excellence and materials. Innovative use of materials, articulation & increased transparency at the façade base.	Staff finds the proposed design promising, recognizing the scale of the building and site, with expectations for a more significant future multi-block development.	TBD
Architectural Expression	HVAC and mechanical equipment shall be integrated in the overall building design.	HVAC and mechanical equipment is not shown but assumed to be primarily beyond the arced roof parapet. Staff will provide additional comment.	TBD
Street Frontage: A Street (Eisenhower Ave, Swamp Fox Rd)	-A minimum of 90% of the building façade shall meet the build-to line.	In order to meet other criteria for the required pedestrian zone, the building would need to be pushed back and additional 5 feet from Eisenhower Avenue. Façade meets 90% of the build-to-line on Swamp Fox Road.	No/Yes
	-The highest quality of architectural façade and streetscape treatment shall be used.	Staff will continue to work with the applicant. Materials will be reviewed at the next DRB meeting.	TBD
	-Main pedestrian building entries must be at sidewalk elevation and shall be spaced no less than 50' apart.	Pedestrian building entries at sidewalk elevation are not spaced further than 50' apart.	Yes
	-Active uses shall be minimum 50' depth.	Floorplans not shown. Uses are appropriate to the site and program.	N/A

Guideline	Plan Requirement	Proposed Plan	Complies with intent?
	-No curb cuts for service or parking entries, service alleys or loading docks shall enter or exit or be visible along “A” street frontages. -Active uses shall be located on all street frontages.	There are curb cuts on Eisenhower Ave and Swamp Fox Rd to accommodate the private street. Active uses, but not entries, are found on all street frontages.	No Yes
Street Sections	Eisenhower Ave: 130’-134’ right-of-way, four 10’ travel lanes, two 10’ parking lanes, variable width median, 22’ pedestrian zone. Swamp Fox Rd: 66’ building face to face, with two 11’ travel lanes, on-street parking and 14’ sidewalks.	Street section is variable width/lanes, no parking lanes, pedestrian zone is approx. 17’. Building face to face and sidewalk width complies, no parking lanes	No No
Public Realm – Hardscape Plazas	Plazas shall be an extension of the sidewalk, be a place for active uses, have ample seating areas, landscaping, setting for fountains monuments and statues.	No change to existing center plaza feature.	Yes
Public Realm – Streetscape elements	Provide streetscape elements per the Plan. Eisenhower Ave: Street trees 25’ oc, 5’ x 10’ tree wells. Swamp Fox Rd: Street trees 25’ oc, 5’ x 8’ tree wells with iron grates and 5’ continuous tree trench beneath the sidewalk.	Eisenhower Ave: 6’ x 4’ tree wells, 30’ oc spacing. Swamp Fox Rd: 5’ x 7’ tree wells, 15’-20’ variable oc spacing.	No No

¹ The Eisenhower East Small Area Plan for Block 6C, as amended, permits a maximum of 7,900 square feet of gross floor area, between 10-15 stories, to a maximum of 150 feet in height.

V. ANALYSIS NARRATIVE

Staff continues to review the proposed project - an initial analysis indicates that this proposal provides a beneficial addition to the town center area of Eisenhower East for the near-term. The proposed restaurant uses compliment the existing tenant mix on Block 6B and expand the critical mass of restaurant and retail that is attractive to existing and prospective office tenants in Eisenhower East. The potential new businesses are anticipated to additionally serve the increase in the residential population brought by the Block 6A conversion and other nearby residential projects in the pipeline, and bring activity to a long undeveloped site.

In terms of design the proposal is visually memorable, appropriate to the use, and utilizes a contemporary style that contextually fits the site. Staff recognizes the unique size and shape offer constraints to the site that would make the application of the full array of design guidelines impractical at this time. When future development demands dictate, it is our estimation that a reconfiguration of the site would allow for a building with greater height and density and a different mix of uses.

Staff offers the following comments as recommendations to the Board to explore with the Applicant:

Building Design

Building Entries

- Study the addition of a glass canopy and provision for direct entry at the prominent corner of Eisenhower & Swamp Fox to address future retail demand and pedestrian convenience. (Figures 1-3)
- The Design Guidelines call for main pedestrian building entries to be located along “A” street frontages. At present all storefront entries are located facing the Town Center circle. Provide an entry on additional sides or corners.

Roof/Roofline

- Study increased height of the curved accent form for a more dramatic slope and stronger presence. (Figures 1-2)
- Study addition of beam or trellis elements to screen views of rooftop equipment from NSF Headquarters building. Consider a green roof treatment to enhance the roof view and contribute to storm water management. (Figure 2)
- Study addition of a vertical cutaway from grade to top of typical glazing to clarify formal relationship.
- Provide a green roof on the section outside of the sloped accent form.

Glazing

- Increase glazed area westward along Eisenhower Avenue to break the impression of a 50/50 solid/glass split. (Figure 1). Further develop this façade to reflect its prominence along an "A" street.

Site Design

Private Drive

- The Eisenhower East Small Area Plan envisions the Hoffman Town Center as a pleasant pedestrian-oriented environment. As part of this proposal, explore utilizing the private street as an active public space which could encompass numerous potential uses. Features could include: additional parking spaces in the semicircle, creation of an expanded and tree-shaded outdoor plaza area for dining and seating between the proposed building and the existing restaurants, reduction in potential vehicular/pedestrian conflicts, improved site integration with Block 6B office building entry and existing Starbucks. (Figure 3).
- Integrate the site and streetscape design to create a cohesive assemblage with the streetscape and entrance to the office building of Block 6B.

Footprint

- Increase the width of the pedestrian zone along Eisenhower Avenue to provide the 22' pedestrian space per the Design Guidelines and to bring the building more in line with the existing streetwall formed by the buildings to the north and south.

Other

- Provide additional renderings of the loading area as seen from Eisenhower, as well as the northwest and southwest corners as seen from across the private drive.
- An enclosure/ screening/ landscaping strategy for the loading area is required. Per the Eisenhower East Design Guidelines, such areas must not be visible from "A" street frontages.
- Provide screening of above grade utilities such as the transformer near the loading area on the west side of the building.

VI. CONCLUSION

Staff recommends the applicant continue to work on the building and site design subject to the comments and analysis narrative provided above. Staff finds the design direction very positive given the unique conditions of the site and program, and welcomes DRB and Applicant comment in order to align the project design with the objectives of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and the Design Guidelines.

Figure 1: Roof, Entry, Glazing

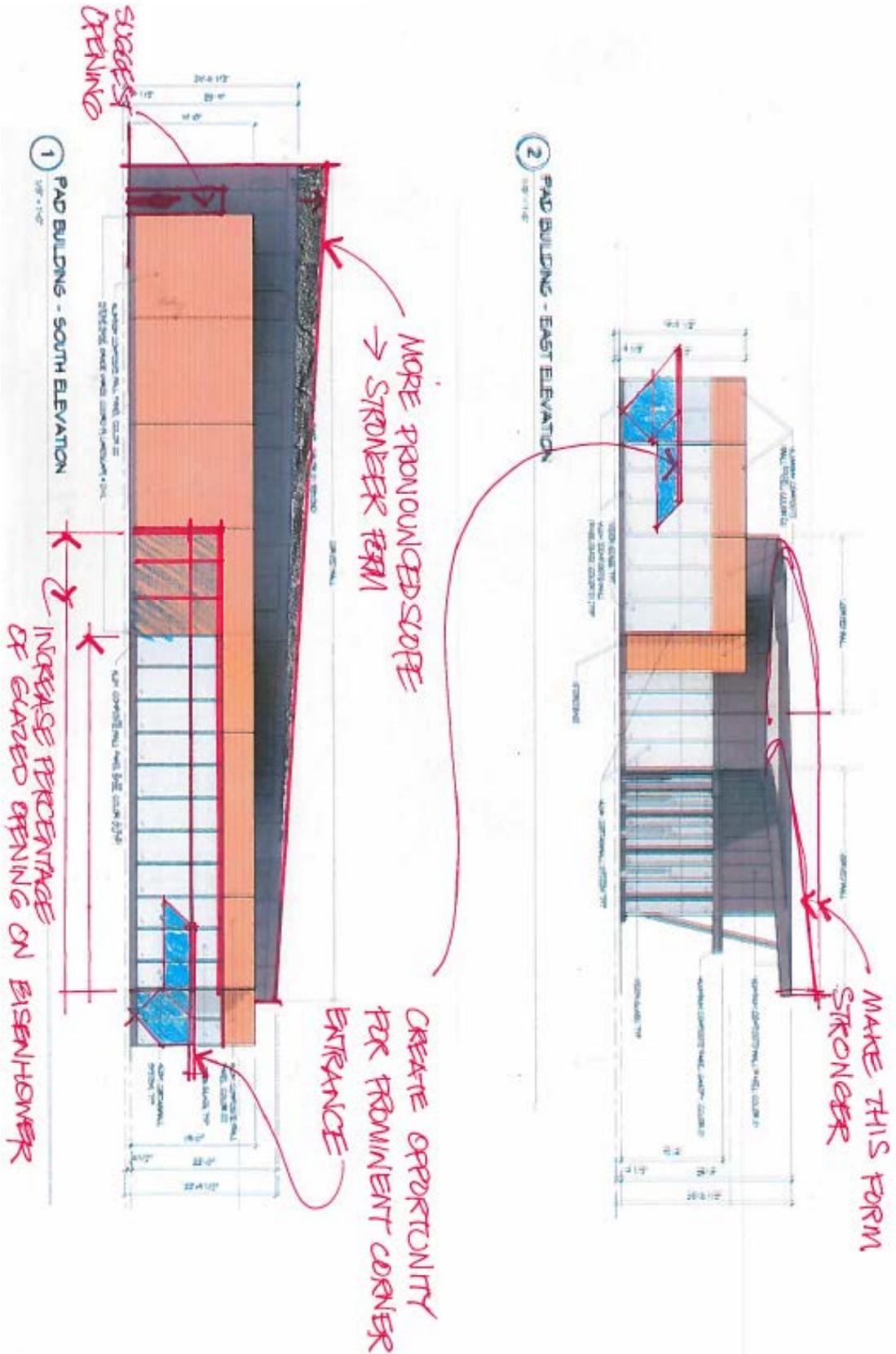


Figure 2: Roof Screening, Corner

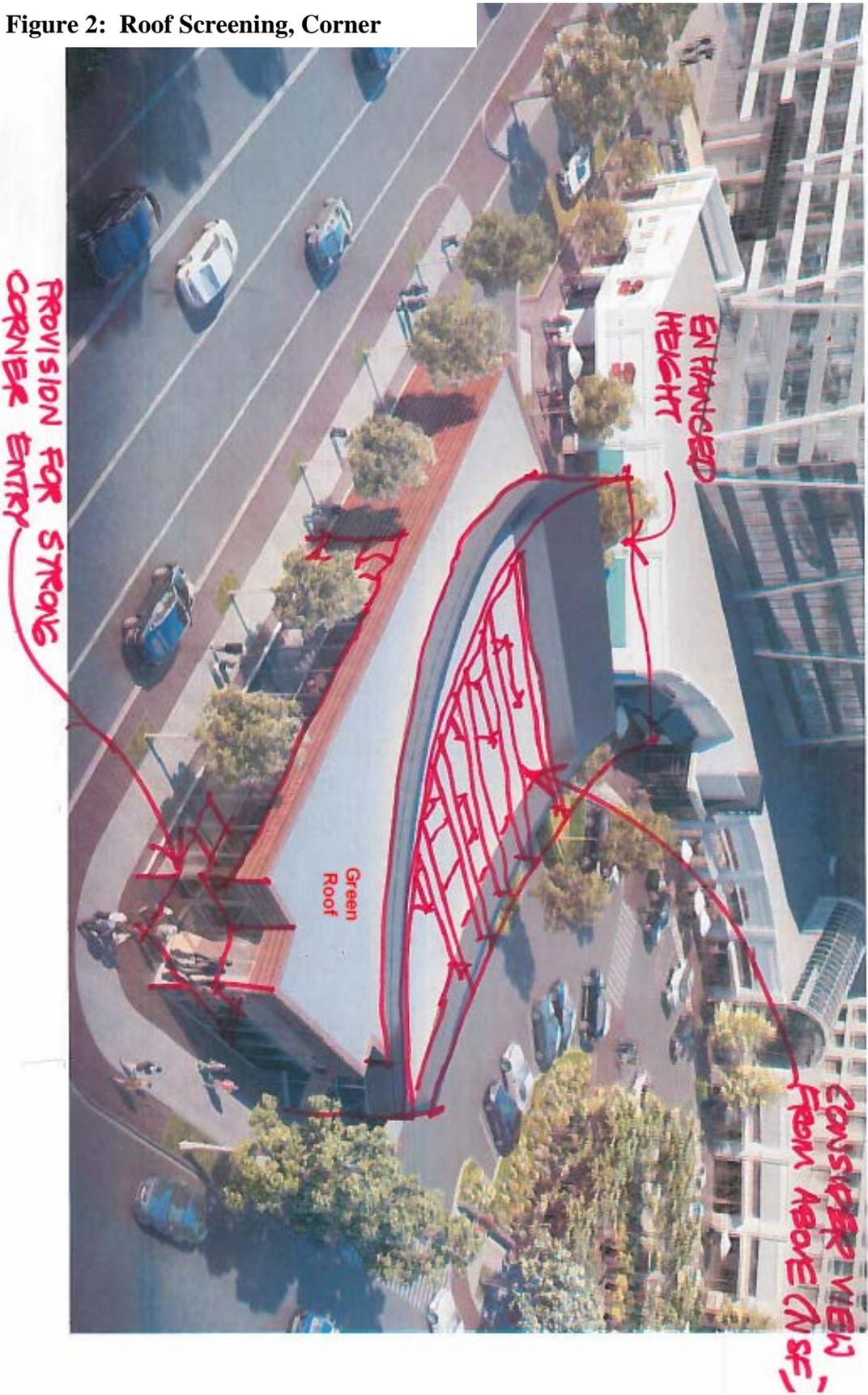
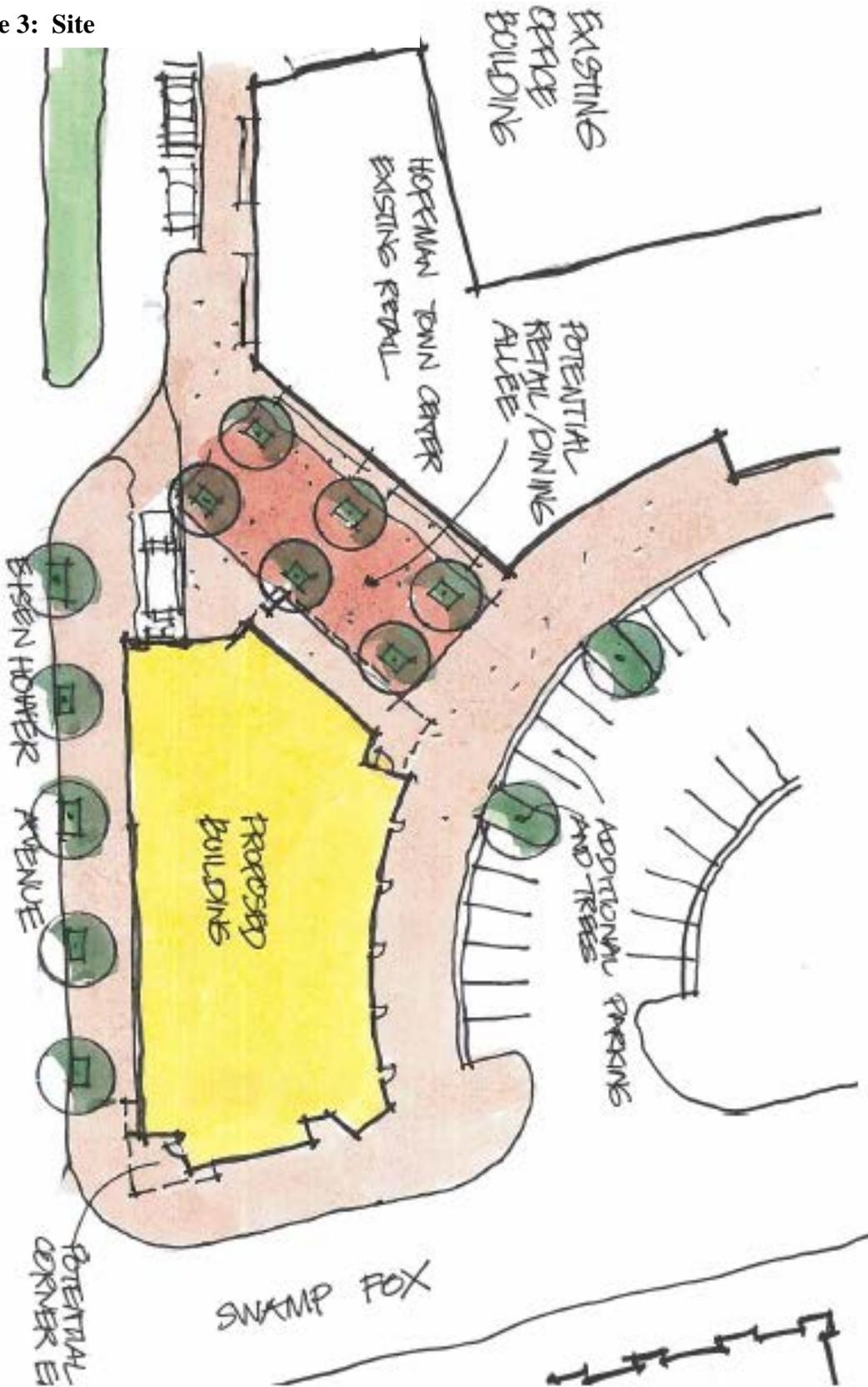


Figure 3: Site



Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks

