

ADDRESS: 708 SANSOM ST

Proposal: Construct 35-story mixed-use tower

Review Requested: Review and Comment

Owner: JR Sansom Partners LLC

Applicant: Meredith Ferleger, Dilworth Paxson LLP

History: vacant lot

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Jewelers' Row Historic District, Non-contributing, pending

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes constructing a 35-story mixed-use retail and residential tower at 708 Sansom Street. The property known as 708 Sansom Street is an assemblage of vacant lots formerly known as 702, 704, 706, and 710 Sansom Street and 128 S. 7th Street. The property is in the proposed Jewelers' Row Historic District. The district nomination is pending before the Historical Commission, which continued the review of the nomination in May 2020 until the Historical Commission resumes in-person meetings.

The proposed building would be 35 stories in height, with a 31-story tower on a four-story podium. The building would have frontages on Sansom Street and S. 7th Street. The entrance to the retail space would be located on Sansom Street. The entrance to the residential lobby, parking, and loading dock would be located on 7th Street. The building would be clad in aluminum and glass. The top of the podium would align with the cornice height of the building to the west. Floors 5 to 20 would cantilever 7'-6" to the west, out over the building at 712-14 Sansom Street. Floors 21 to 35 would cantilever 4'-6" to the west.

The Historical Commission must determine the scope of its jurisdiction over this application, full jurisdiction or review-and-comment jurisdiction. Section 14-1005(4) of the preservation ordinance states that "the Historical Commission's scope of review of applications for building permits for construction, as defined herein, shall be limited to a 45-day period of comment." Section 14-203(76) of the ordinance defines "construction" as "the erection of a new building, structure, or object upon an undeveloped site." Section 2.23 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations defines an "undeveloped site" as:

a property within an historic district which is not individually designated, to which the inventory in the historic district nomination attributes no historical, cultural, or archaeological value, and upon which no building or structure stood at the time of the designation of the historic district.

The site at 708 Sansom Street is not individually designated; the inventory for the proposed Jewelers' Row Historic District does not attribute any value to the vacant lot; and no structure stands on the site currently. The site at 708 Sansom Street is an "undeveloped site." However, some floors of the proposed building would cantilever 7'-6" over the property to the west, perhaps changing that determination. While the Historical Commission has reviewed and approved at least two applications involving towers with cantilevers over adjacent properties, neither involved an "undeveloped site." Therefore, those cases do not shed any light on this question.

In February 2020, the Historical Commission reviewed and commented on an application proposing to construct a 24-story mixed-use retail and residential tower at this site at 708 Sansom Street. At that time, the Historical Commission concluded that its jurisdiction was

limited to review-and-comment because the site was “undeveloped.” The 24-story tower project was eventually abandoned.

If the Historical Commission determines that it enjoys full, not review-and-comment, jurisdiction over this site because it is not “undeveloped,” owing to the cantilever, then the application is subject to the 90-day clock in Section 14-1005(6)(f) of the preservation ordinance. For properties under consideration for designation like this one, the Department of Licenses & Inspections is prohibited from issuing a building permit unless the Historical Commission approves the application, or the Historical Commission does not take a final action on the nomination within 90 days of the submission of the application. In other words, if the Historical Commission does not designate the district within 90 days, the Department of Licenses & Inspections may issue the permit regardless of the Commission’s opinion of the proposal. The application was submitted on 12 March 2024. The 90-day review period will end on 10 June 2024, prior to the Historical Commission’s meeting on 14 June 2024. Given that the Historical Commission has no plans to resume in-person meetings in the next few months and has committed to providing new 60-day notice to property owners in the proposed district before resuming the review of the nomination for the Jewelers’ Row Historic District, it appears unlikely that the Historical Commission will complete the designation of the historic district within the allotted 90 days and the Department may issue the permit without the Commission’s approval.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct 35-story tower.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - Given that the property where the tower will be constructed is a vacant lot, the new construction will not destroy historic materials that characterize the property, satisfying Standard 9. The proposed building, which is very well designed, will be differentiated from the other buildings in the proposed historic district, satisfying Standard 9. Although several tall and very tall buildings are located nearby, most of the buildings in the proposed historic district are between three and six stories in height and are clad in masonry with punched window openings. While the proposed tower does step back above the fourth floor, creating a cornice line that corresponds with the adjacent building and providing an appropriate scale to the base of the building, the tower itself is not compatible with the proposed historic district with regard to massing, size, or scale.
- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a manner such that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*
 - The proposed tower is reversible; it could be removed in the future, leaving the historic district unimpaired; therefore, the project satisfies Standard 10.

STAFF COMMENT: The staff comments that the proposed tower satisfies Standard 10 and some but not all aspects of Standard 9.



Figure 1. A rendering of the proposed tower for 708 Sansom Street reviewed by the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission in January and February 2020.

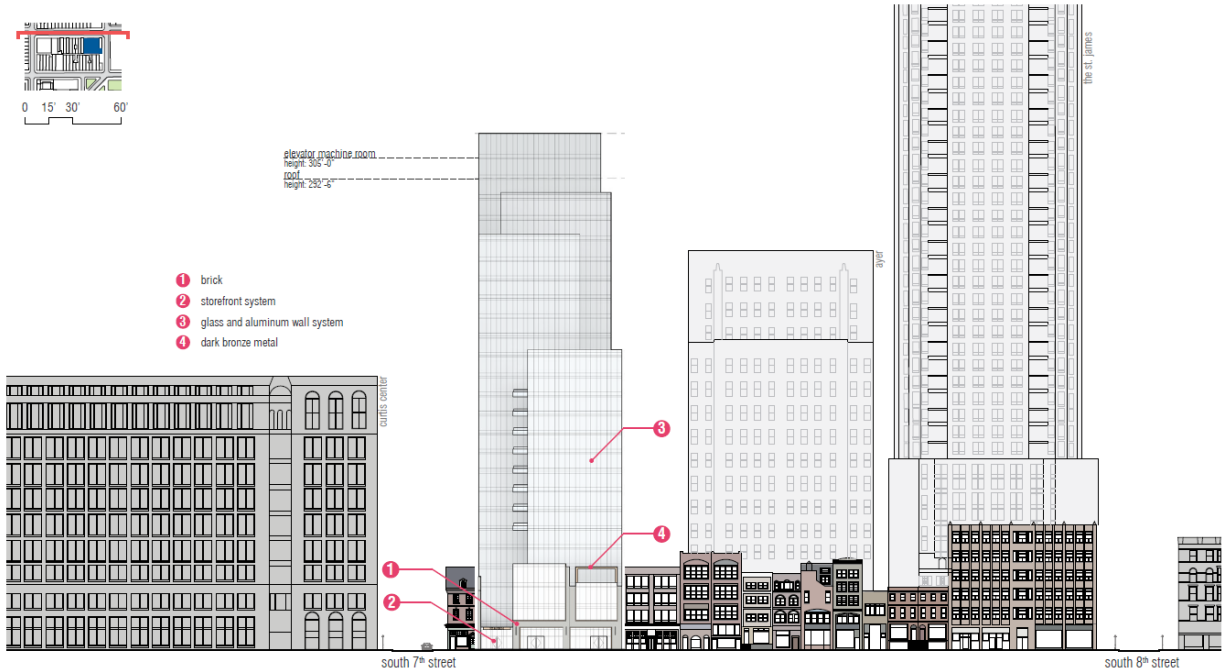


Figure 2. The north or Sansom Street elevation of the proposed tower for 708 Sansom Street with context reviewed by the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission in January and February 2020.



DIRECT DIAL NUMBER:
(215) 575-7052

Meredith Ferleger
mferleger@dilworthlaw.com

March 12, 2024

Via E-mail (preservation@phila.gov)
Architectural Committee of the
Philadelphia Historical Commission
c/o Dr. John Farnham, Executive Director (jon.farnham@phila.gov)
1515 Arch Street – 13th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of Pearl Properties (“Pearl”), we enclose herein a presentation requesting final approval for Pearl’s proposed multi-story residential tower (the “Project”) for the property known as 708 Sansom Street (the “Property”). Committee members may recall the Property was previously the subject of a prior high rise apartment building development proposal (presented to and reviewed by the Committee in early 2020), that was eventually tabled by Toll Brothers as the property owner at that time. The Property was at that time, and remains today, an undeveloped vacant lot which was subsequently sold to Pearl. The newly envisioned Project follows extensive discussions and public meetings with neighborhood stakeholders and reflects Pearl’s commitment to respect and enliven the Jewelers’ Row corridor while blending with the surrounding neighborhood comprised of buildings of mixed character and mass in and around Washington Square.

The Property sits just off the corner of Sansom Street and S. 7th Street with 90.3’ of frontage on Sansom Street and 29.7’ of frontage on S. 7th Street. The Project rises thirty-four (34) stories and stands 403’-06” feet in height. Within the building, the Project includes ninety-nine (99) residential dwelling units, fifty (50) vehicular parking spaces, one (1) loading space, and 1,495sf of retail space fronting Sansom Street. To preserve the crucial retail character of the Sansom Street frontage, all vehicular access enters the site off of S. 7th Street through a valet-managed interior motor court.

Pearl’s Project design seeks to differentiate from the modern glass towers formerly presented to the Committee and instead, more carefully align with the unique design components found along Jewelers’ Row. The Project massing is articulated into several vertical segments. The first segment rises from the base to the 5th floor and is compatible with both the neighboring residential

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towers and street-level commercial properties. The vertical segments continue to change at increasing floor levels to form roof terraces. As a result of this design, the segments create varying silhouettes from different points of view.

Pearl's architect, DAS Architects + Interiors, has designed the building façade in vertical sections of terracotta colored metal panels that complement the traditional beige and red brick buildings in the area. Dark brown horizontal trim divides the terracotta panels adding a distinctive rhythm to the building. The 7th Street vehicle entrance is bright and open above to encourage cascading natural light. Most importantly, the Sansom Street entrance fills a missing void in the Jewelers' Row commercial corridor by encouraging pedestrian activation along Jewelers Row.

We look forward to presenting the Project at your next Committee meeting on March 26, 2024.

Best Regards,

/s/ *Meredith L. Ferleger*

Meredith L. Ferleger, Esq.

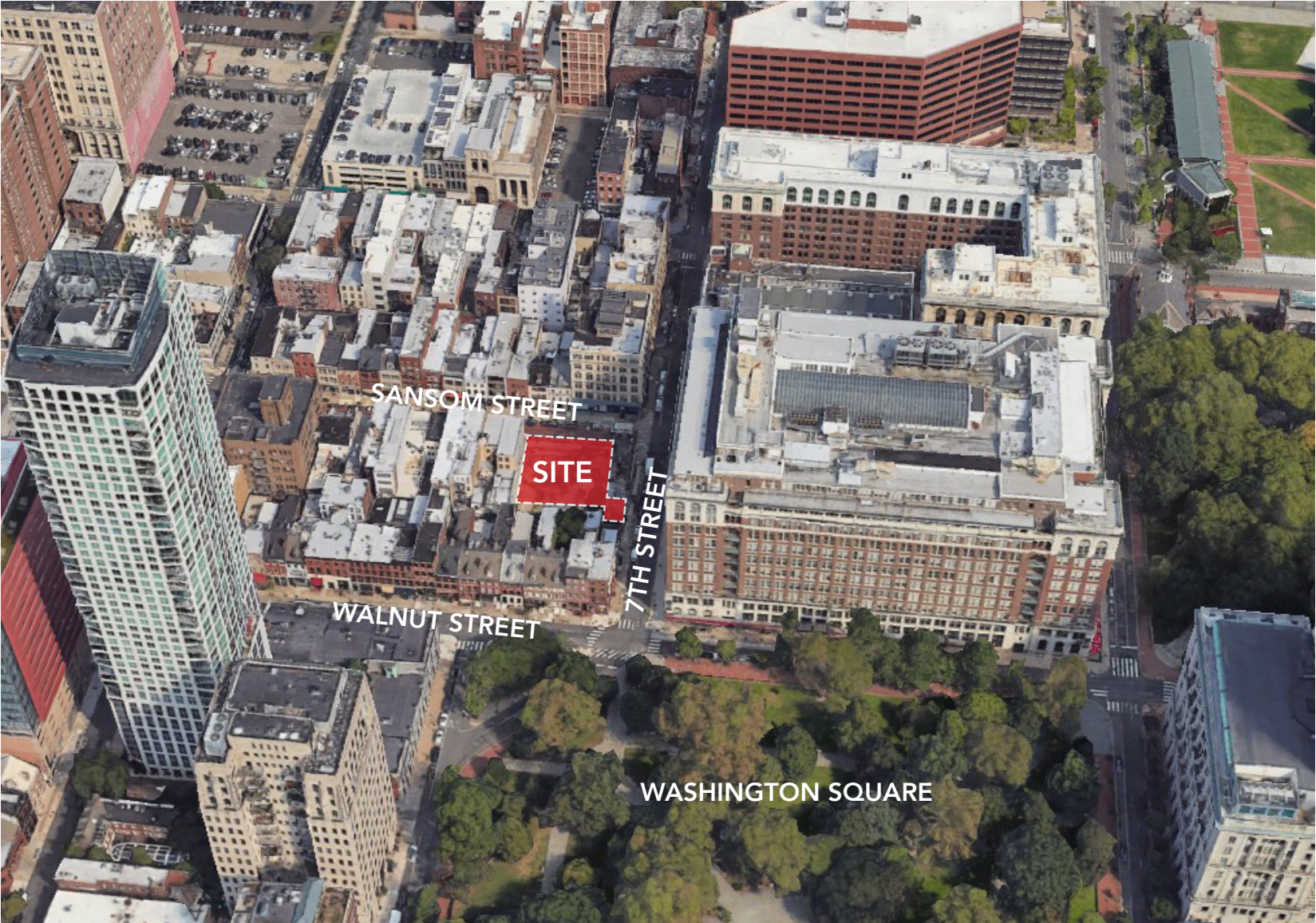
cc: DAS Architects + Interiors
Reed J. Slogoff
James Pearlstein

708 SANSOM STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
March 12, 2024



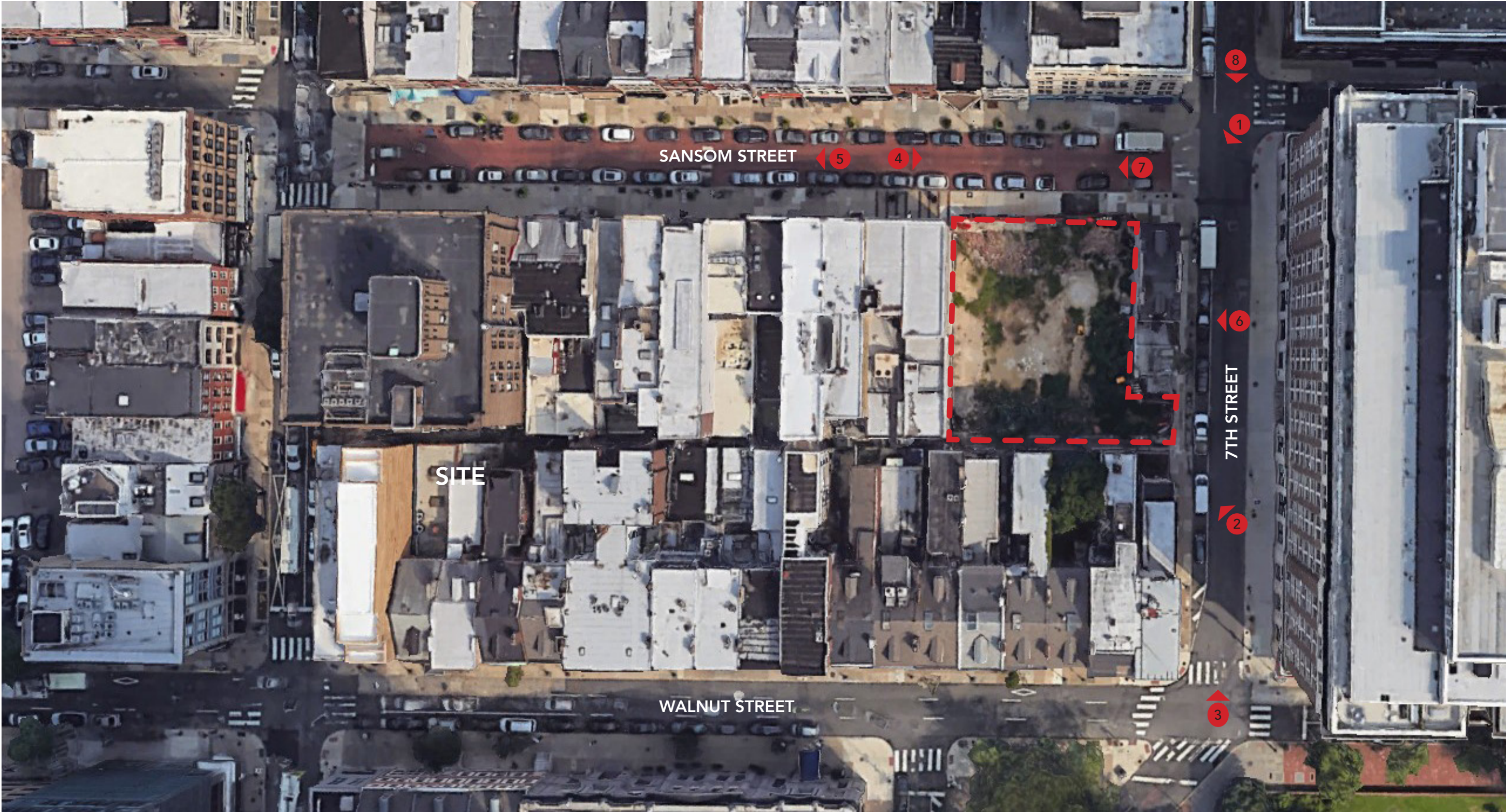




View looking North



View looking Southeast





1 Looking Southwest on Sansom St.



3 Looking North on 7th Street



2 Looking Northwest on S7th Street



4 Looking East on Sansom St.



5 Looking West on Sansom St.



7 Looking West on Sansom St.



6 Looking West on S7th St.



8 Looking South on S7th St.

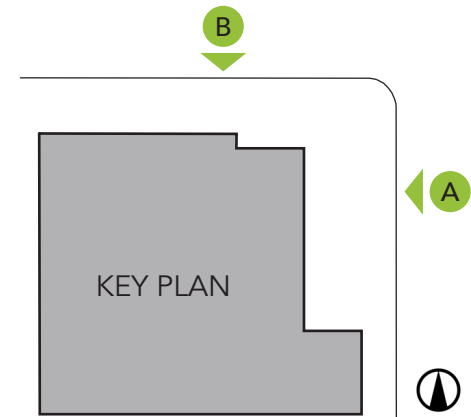






10 | EXTERIOR | EAST & NORTH BUILDING ELEVATIONS

- 1 Vertical Aluminum Clad Piers
- 2 Horizontal Aluminum Clad Slab Covers - Dark
- 3 Horizontal Aluminum Clad Slab Covers - Light
- 4 Aluminum And Clear Glass Windows
- 5 Aluminum And Spandrel Glass At Parking
- 6 Tile Finish
- 7 Sculptural Metal Tree
- 8 Metal Canopy With Planters
- 9 Planters At Roof Edge

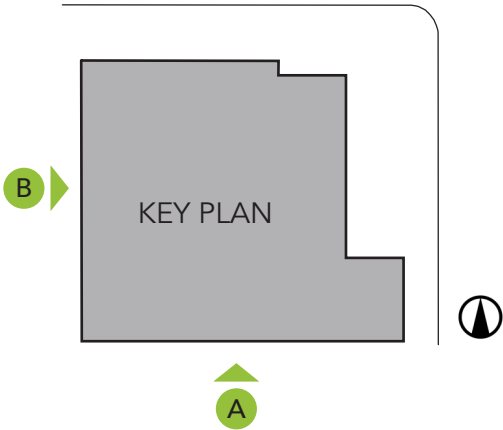


A- EAST BUILDING ELEVATION



B- NORTH BUILDING ELEVATION

- 1 Vertical Aluminum Clad Piers
- 2 Horizontal Aluminum Clad Slab Covers - Dark
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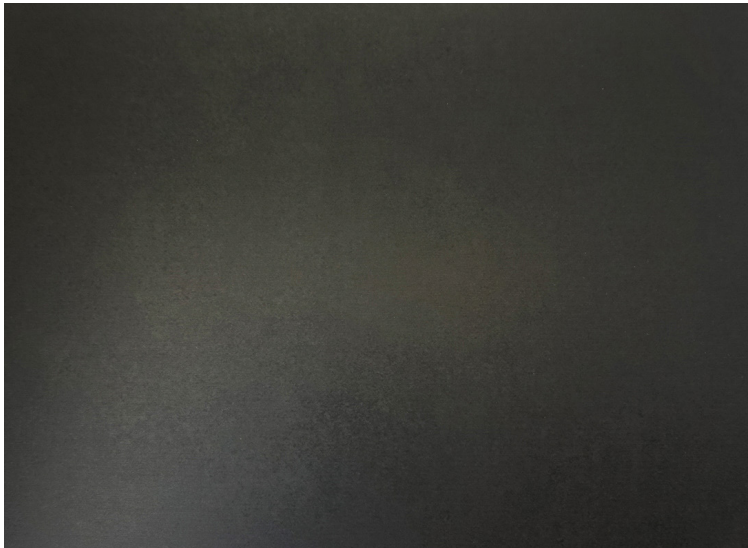
A- SOUTH BUILDING ELEVATION



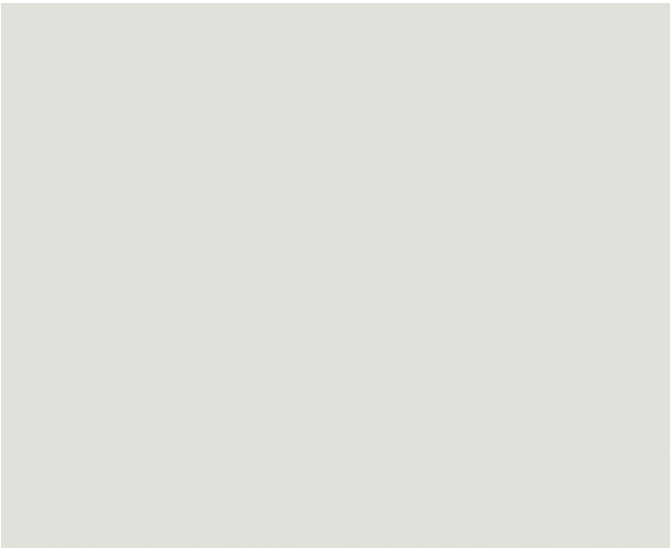
B- WEST BUILDING ELEVATION



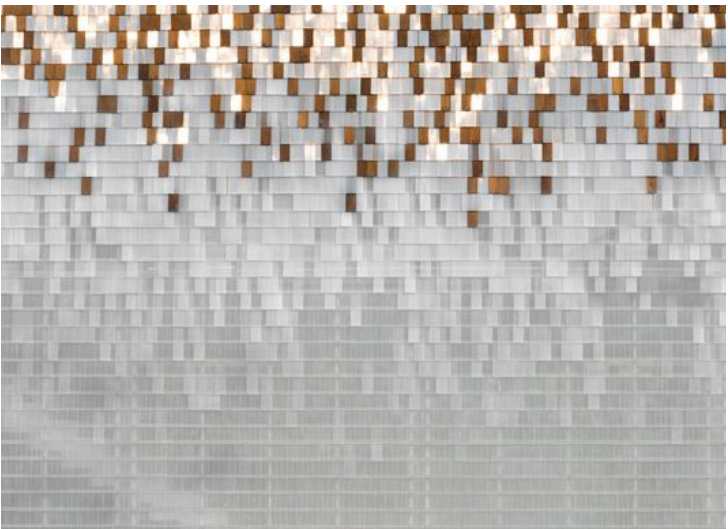
Metal Panels - Terracotta Color
Location: Vertical Ribbed Piers



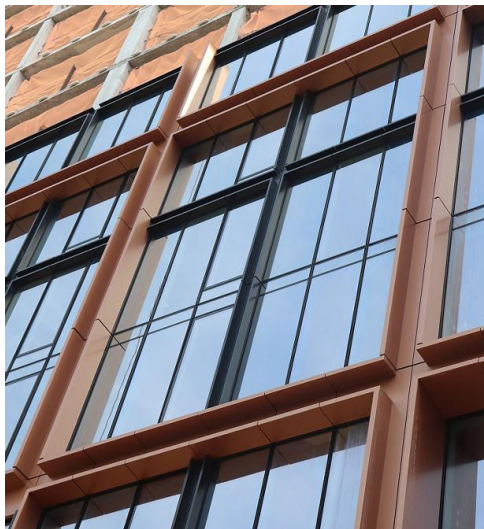
Metal Accents - Dark Bronze Color
Location: Slab Covers, Metal Accents, Window Frames



Metal Soffit Panels - Alabaster Color
Location: Soffits



Acrylic Panels
Location: Motor Court Wall Cladding



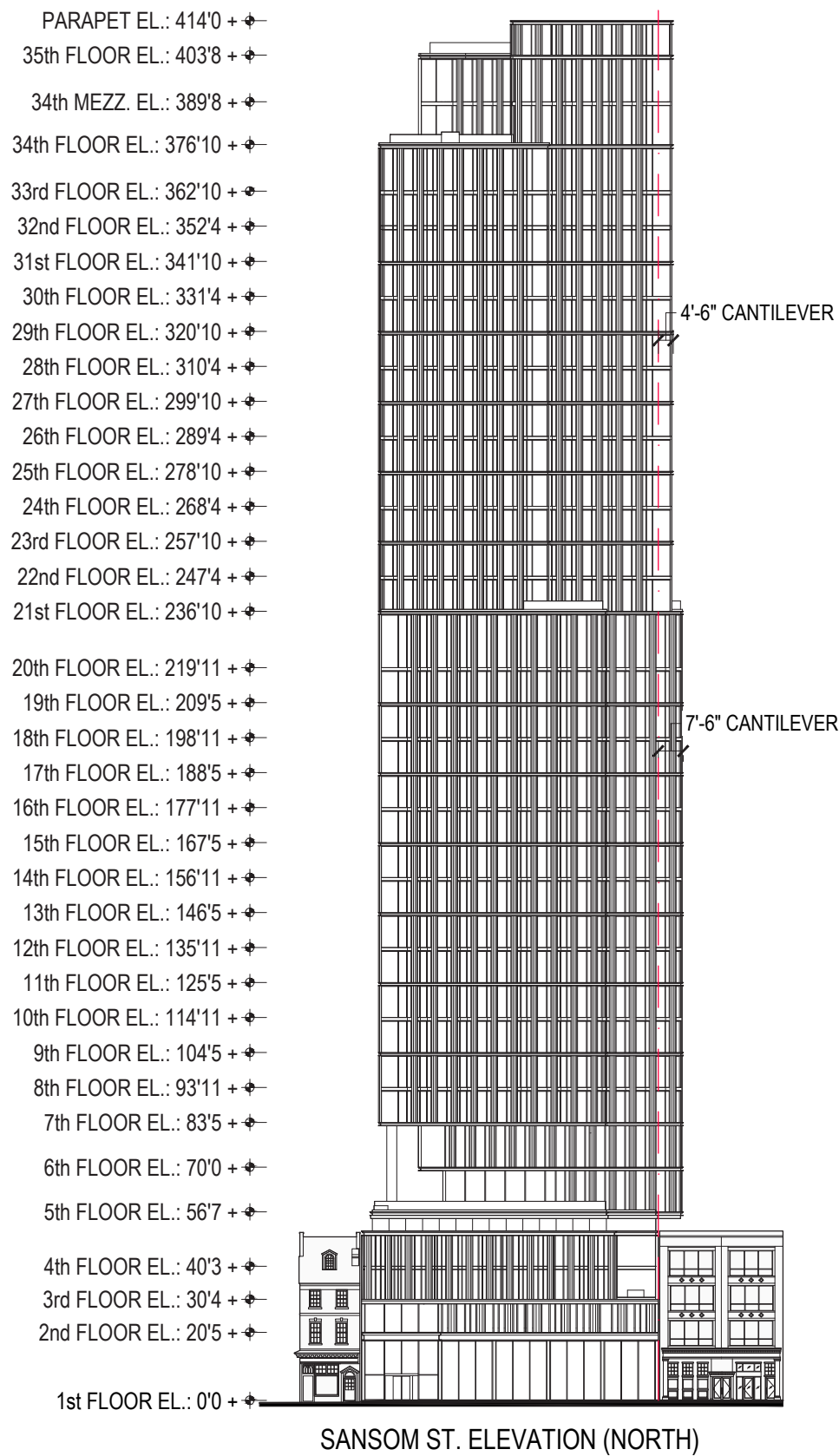
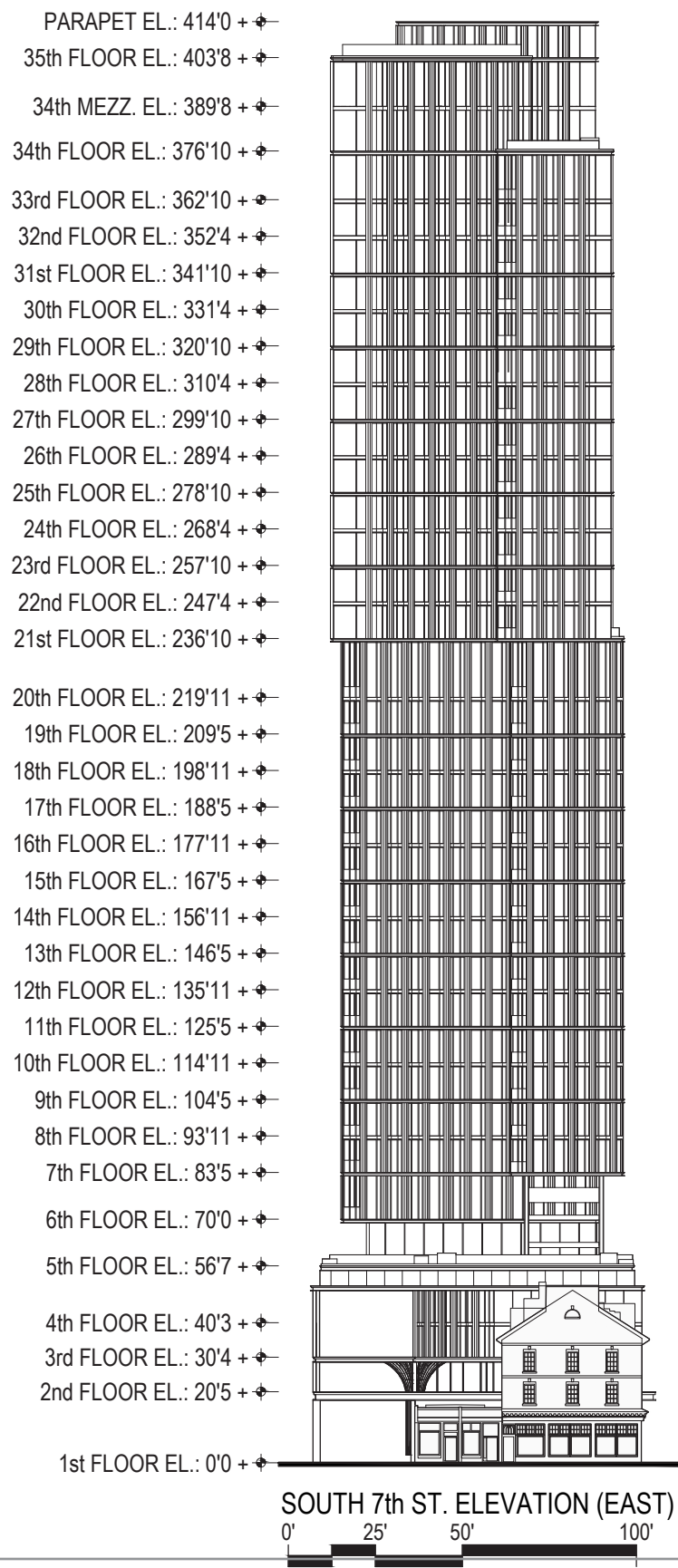
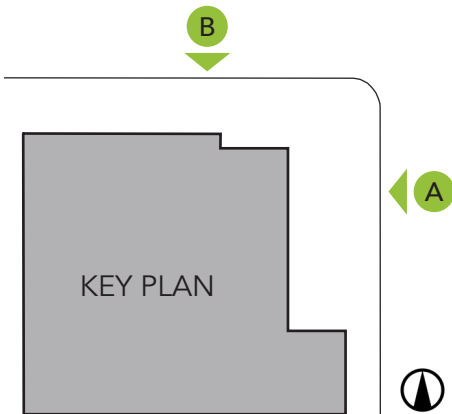
Unitized Window Wall Example
Location: Typical Facade

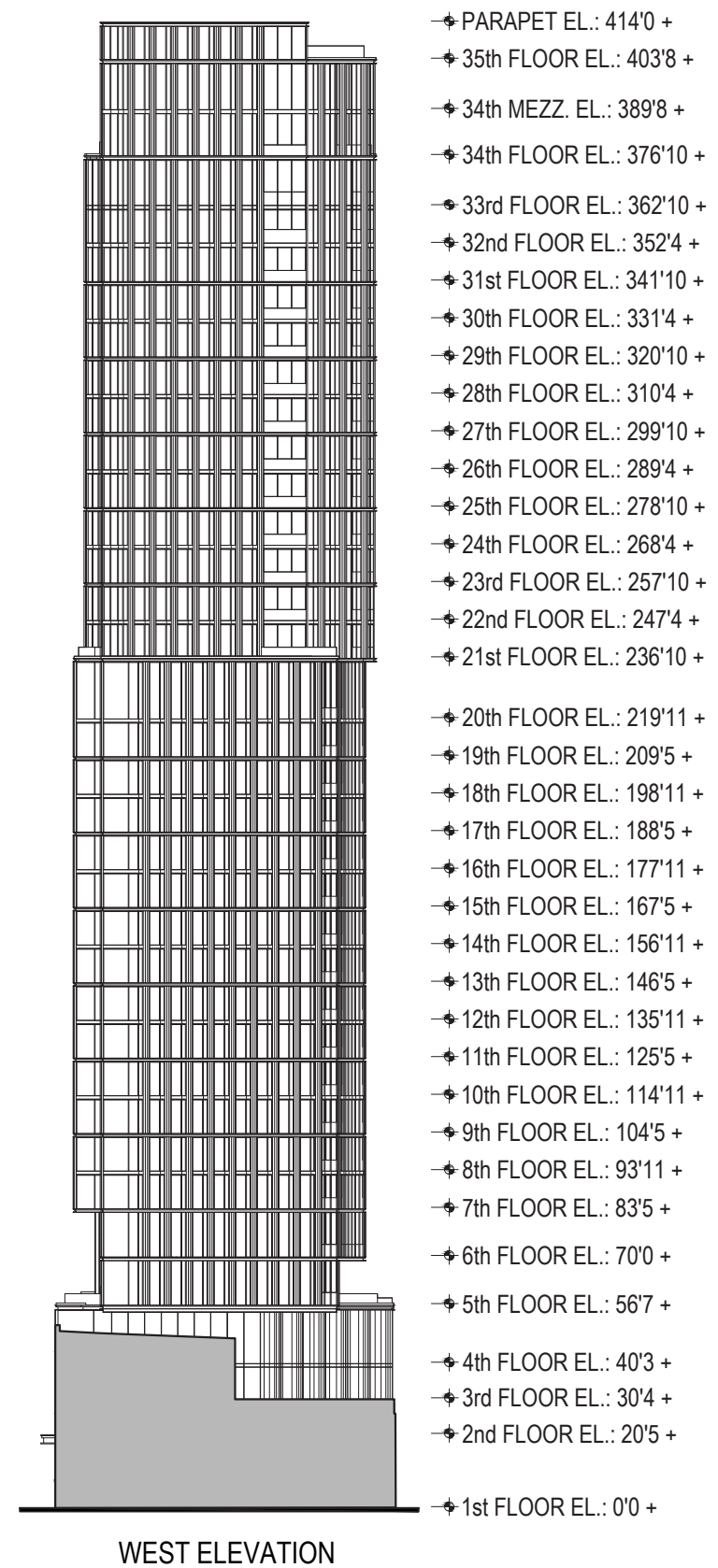
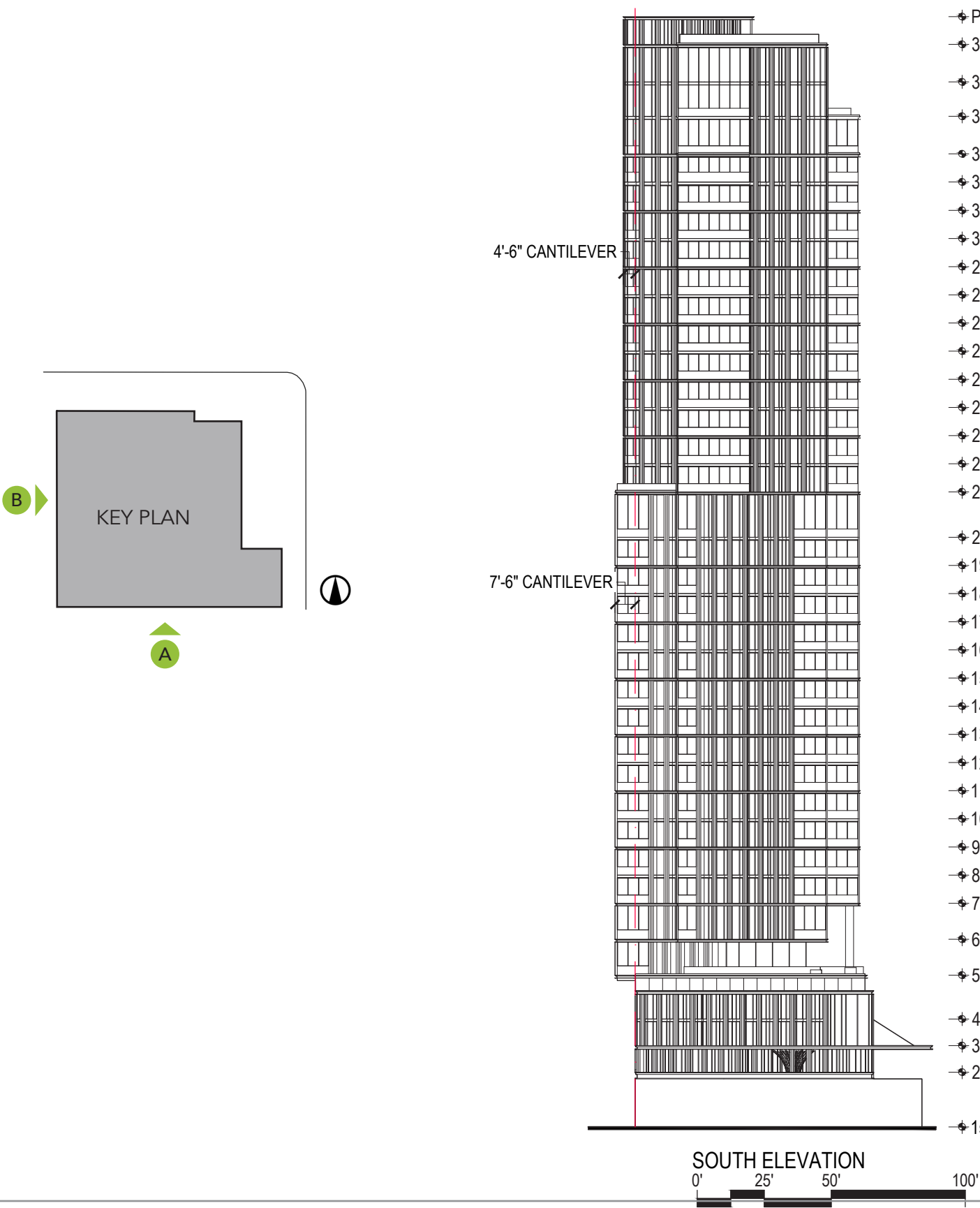


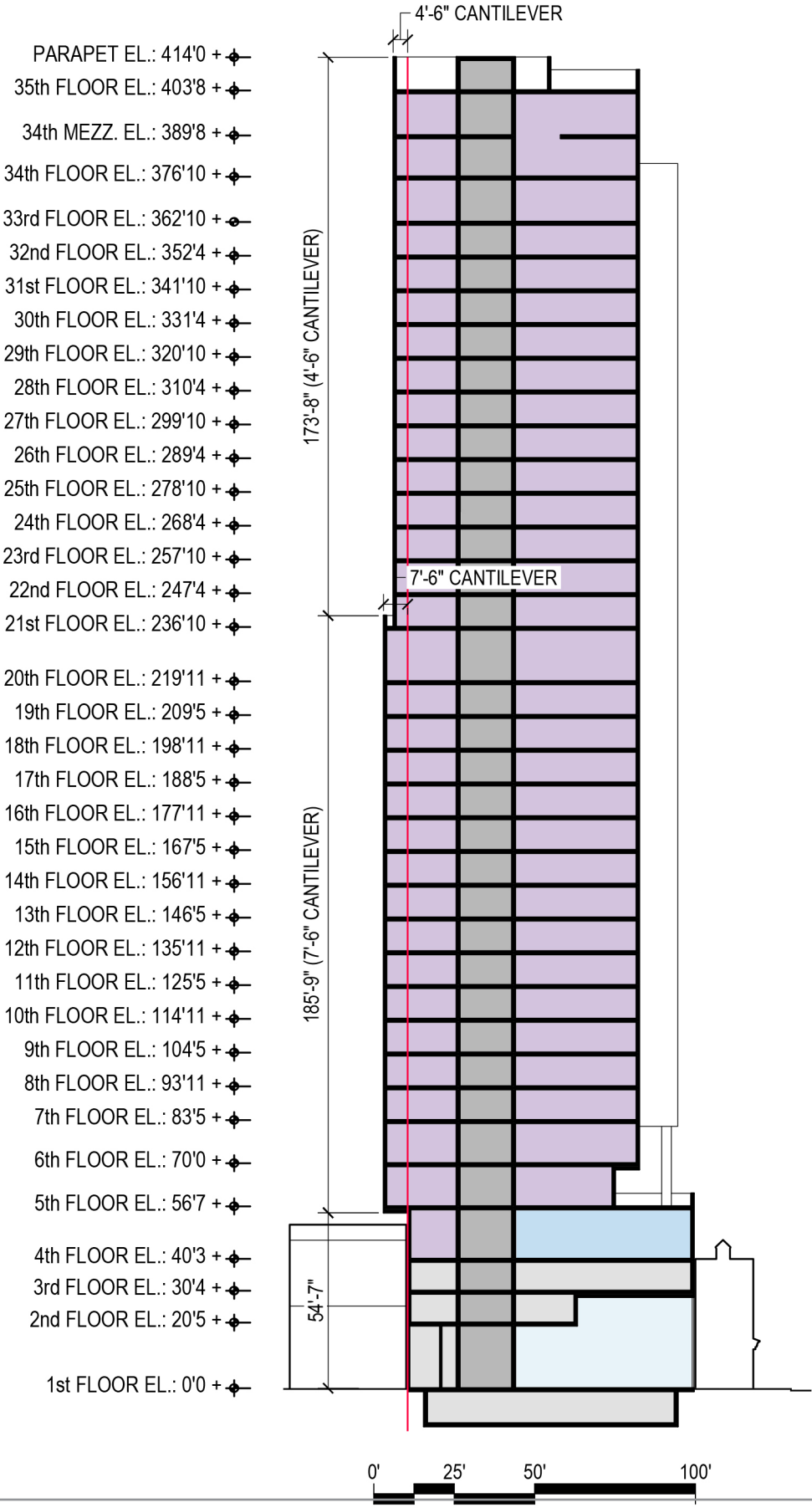
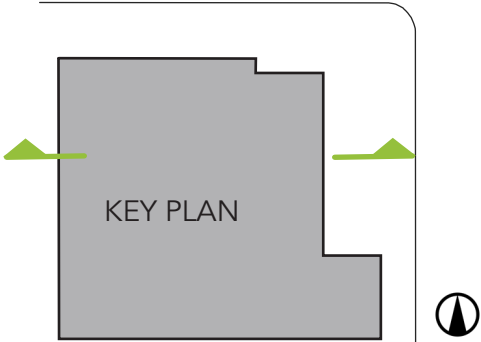
Glass Railing System Example
Location: Typical Balcony Rails

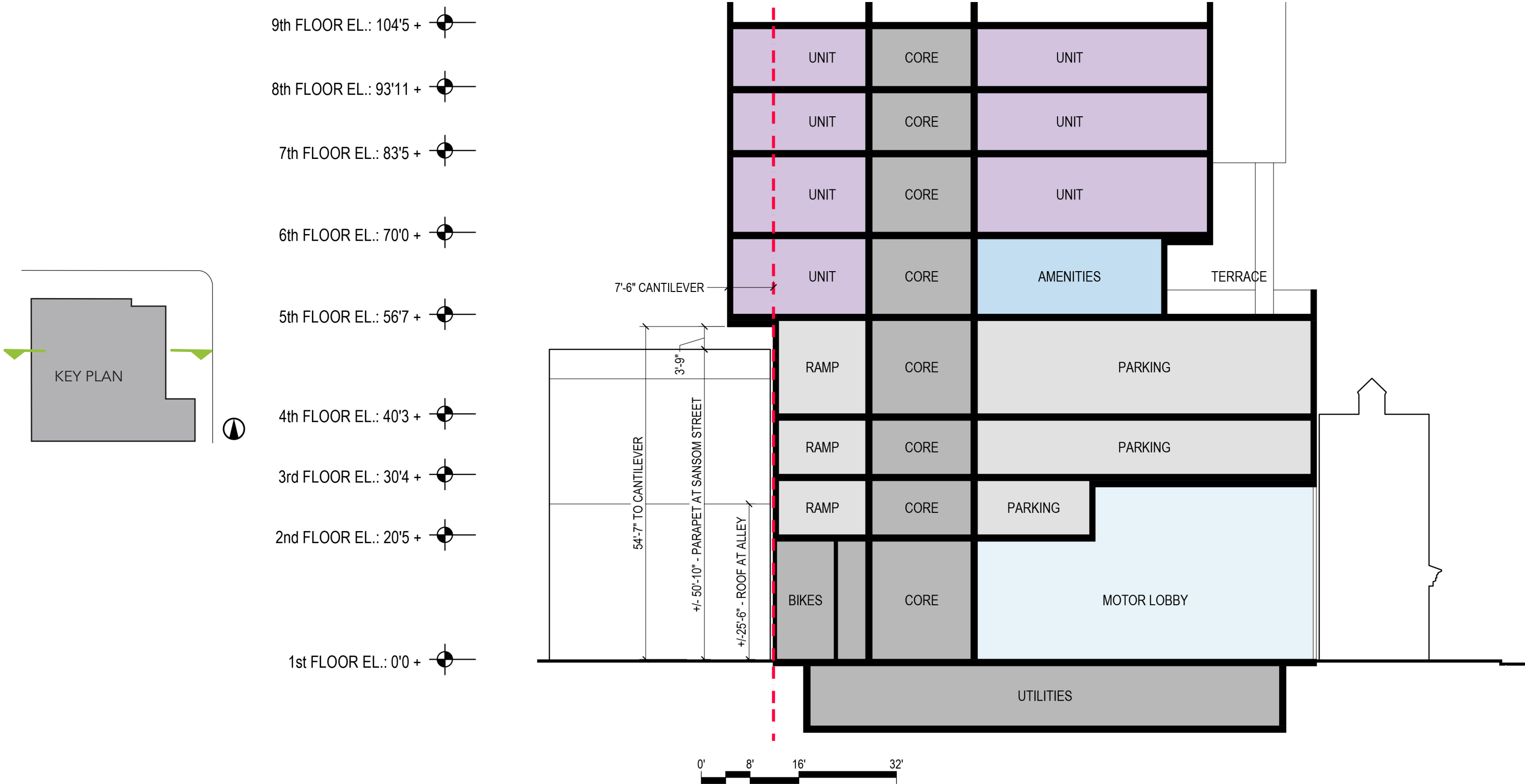


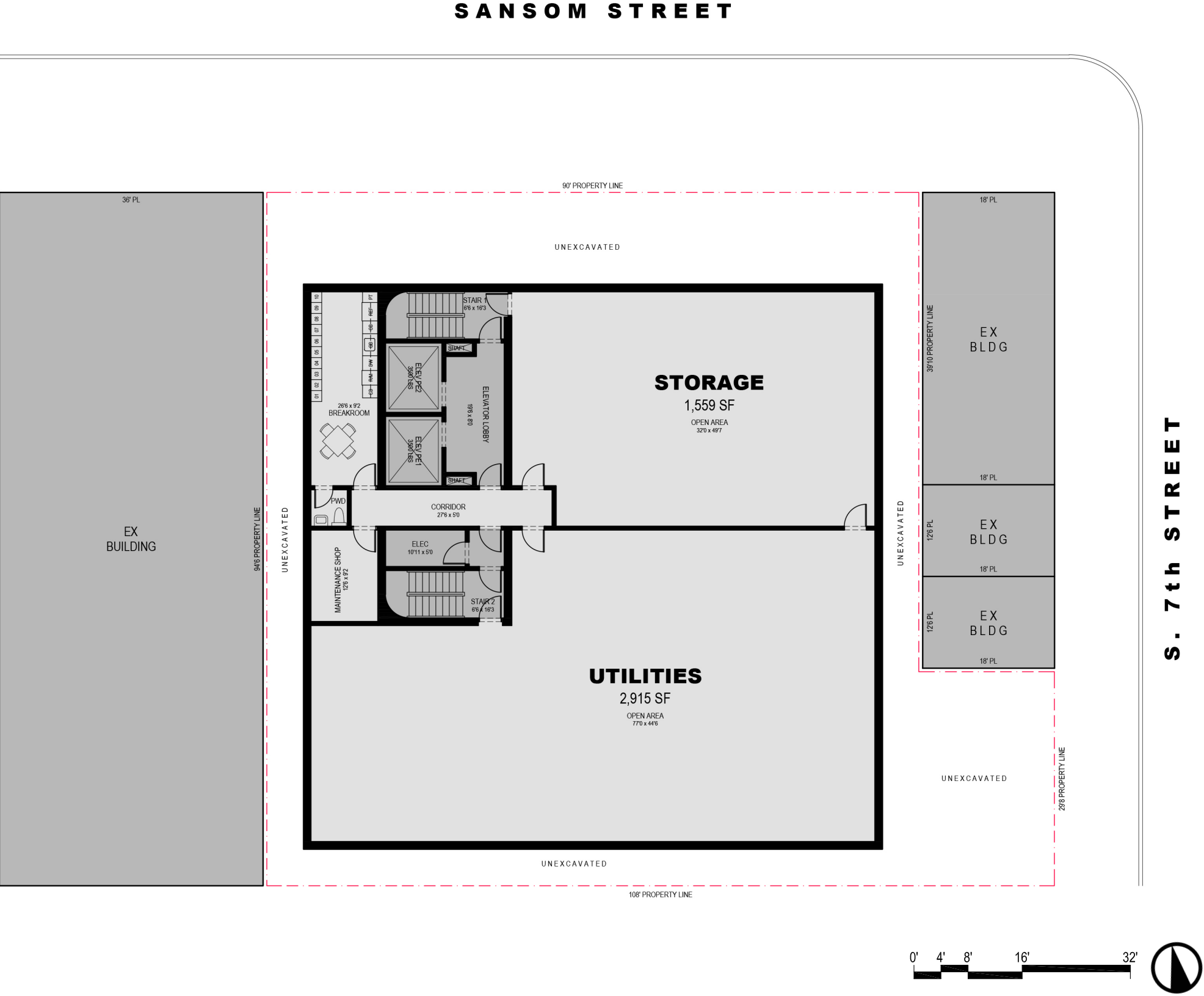
Metal Accents - Brass Color
Location: Accent Color

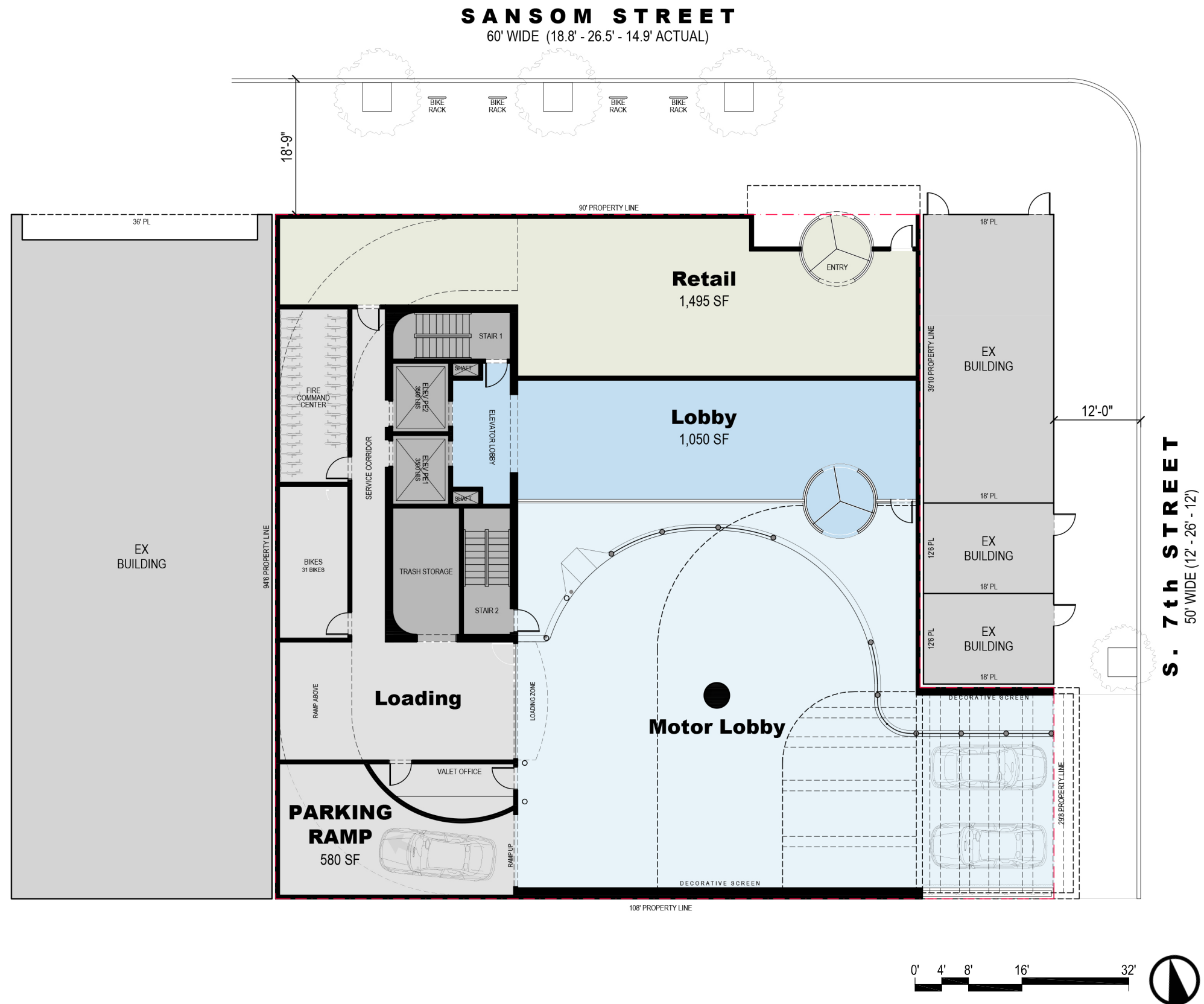


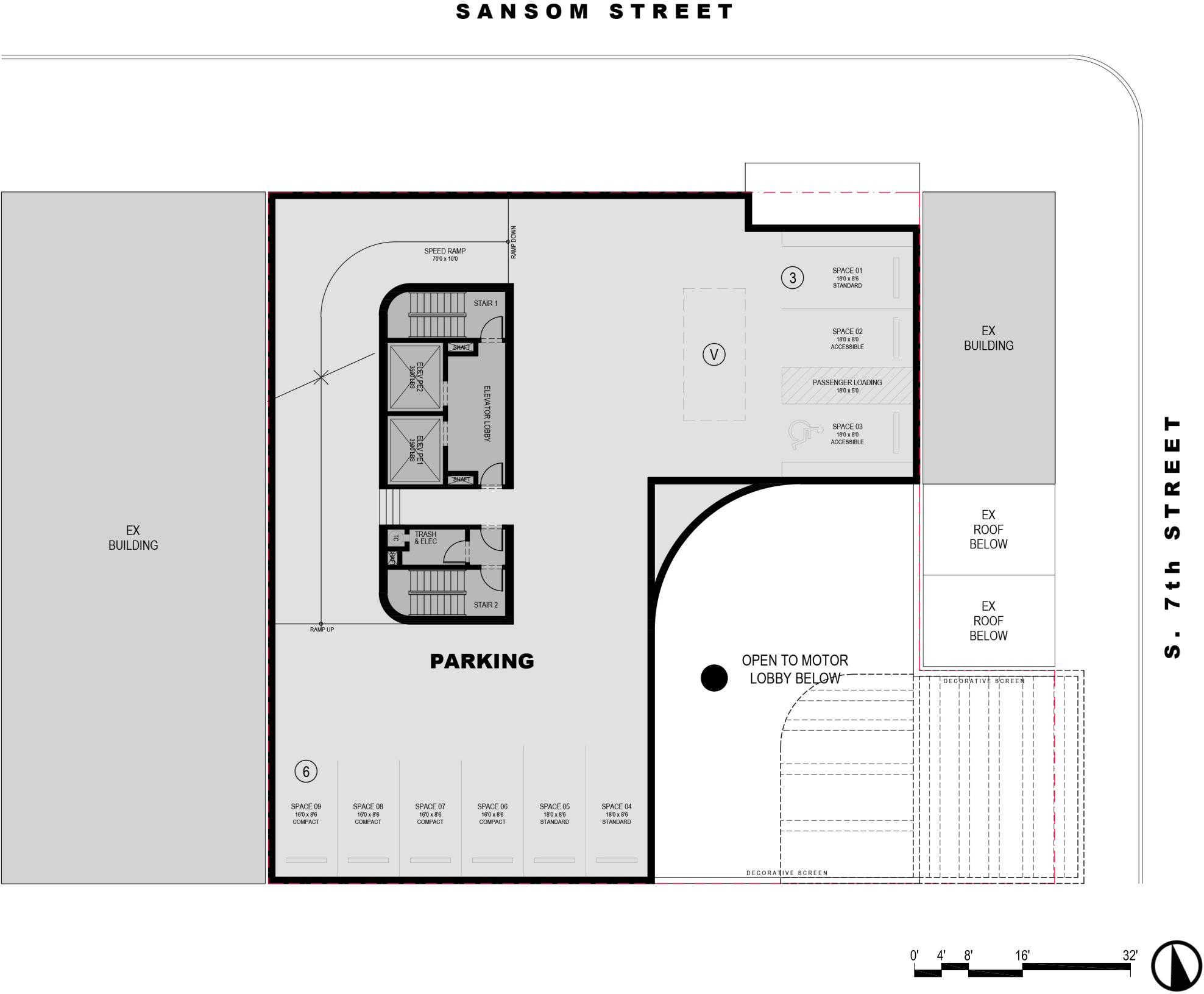


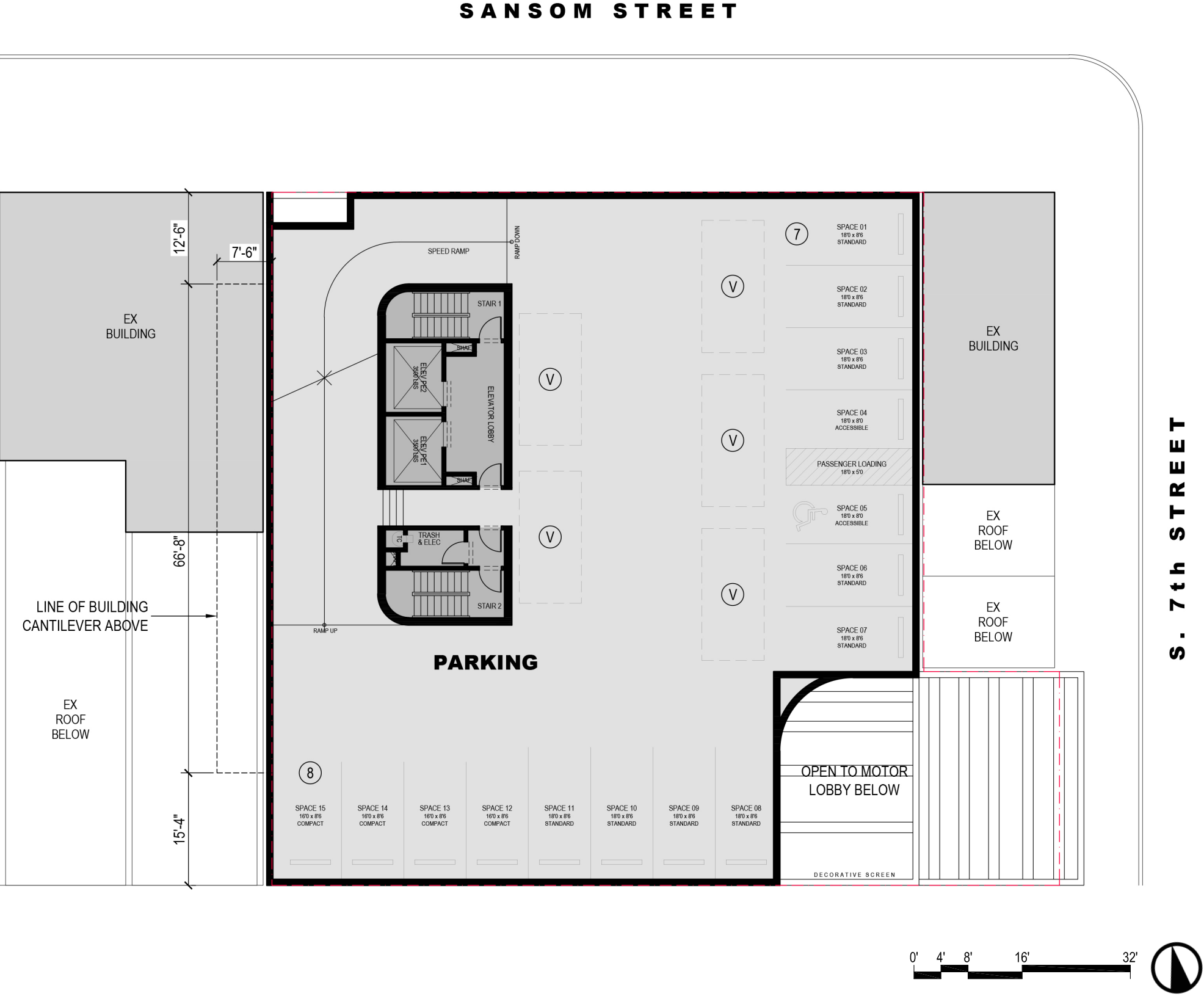


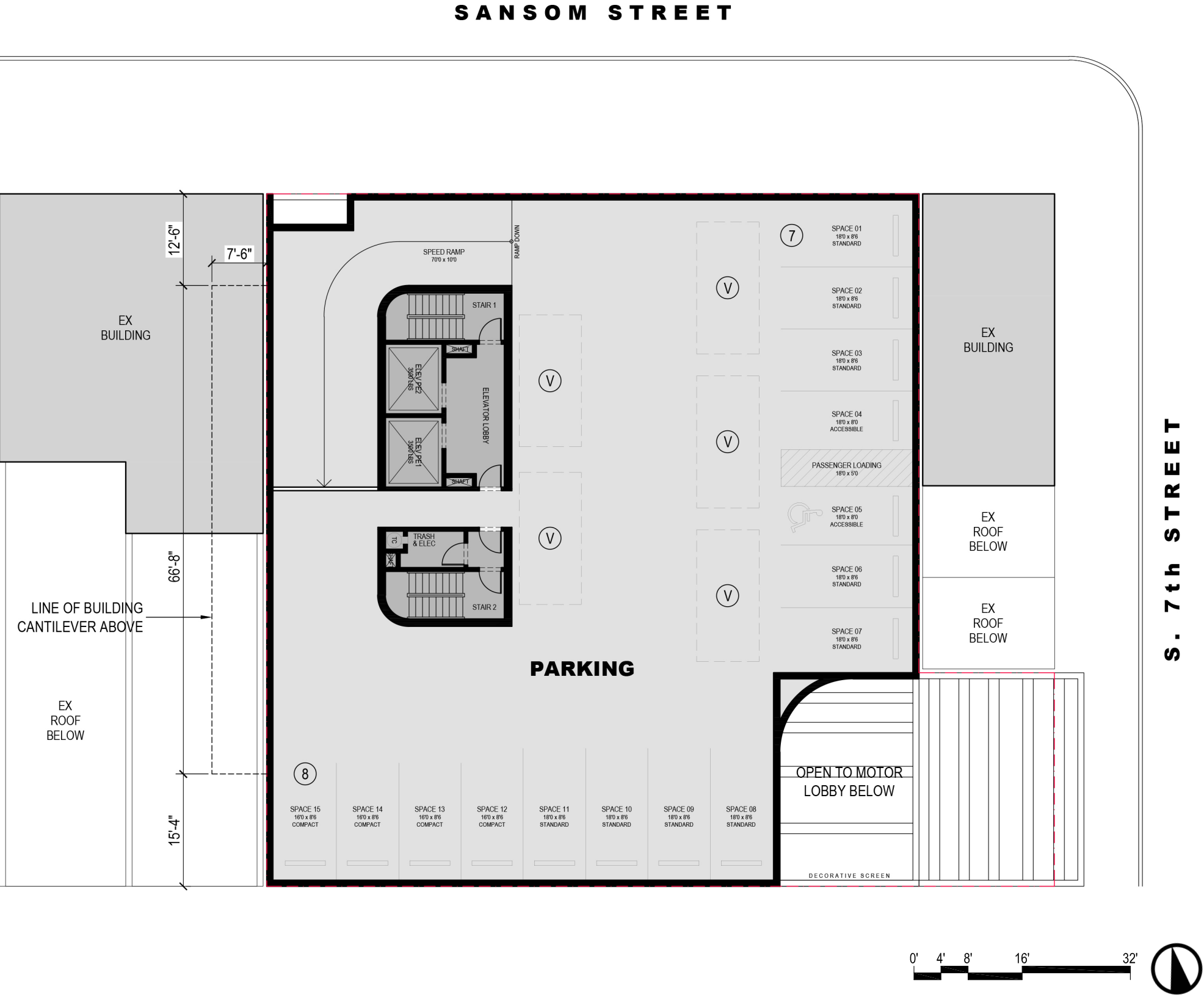


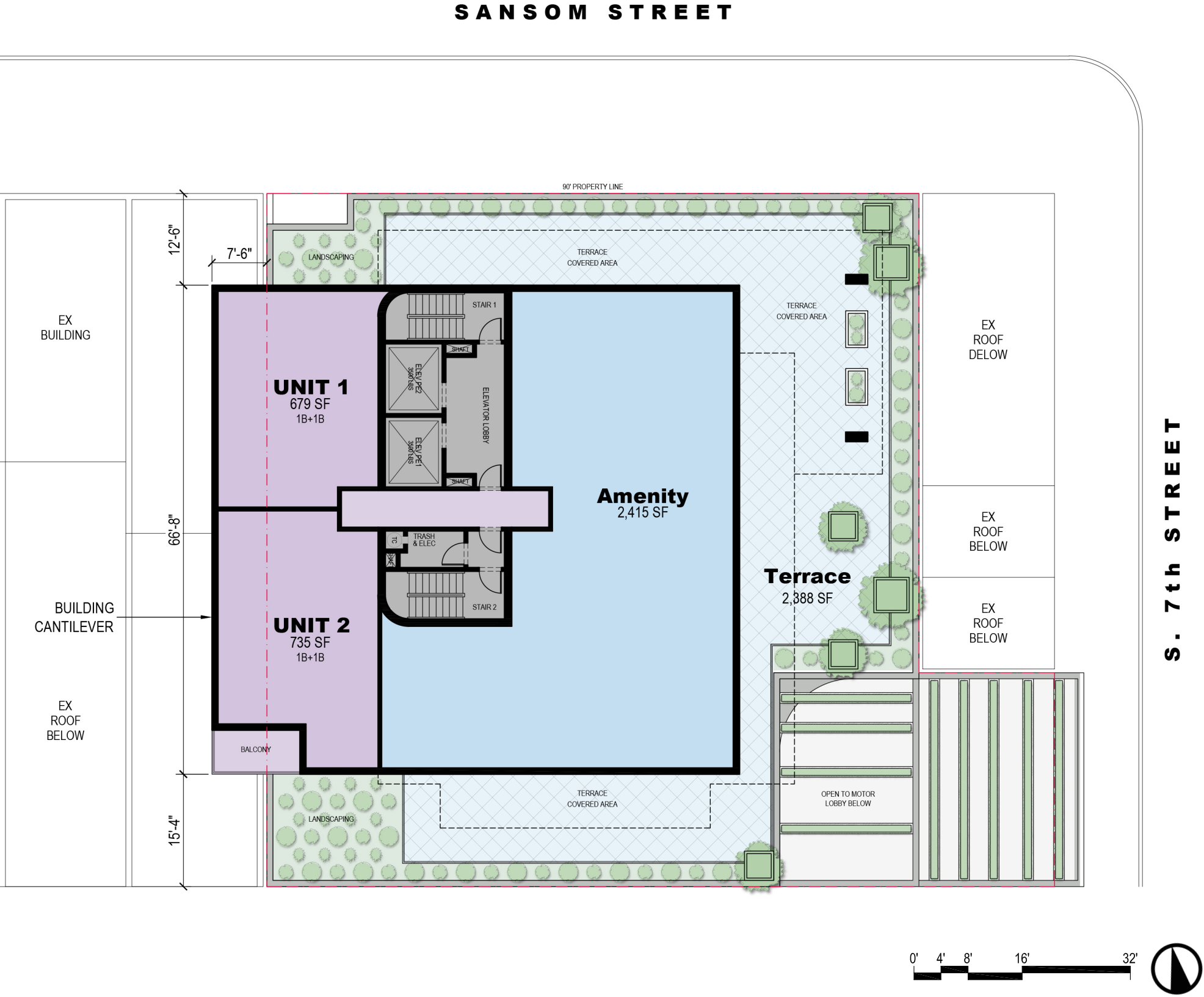


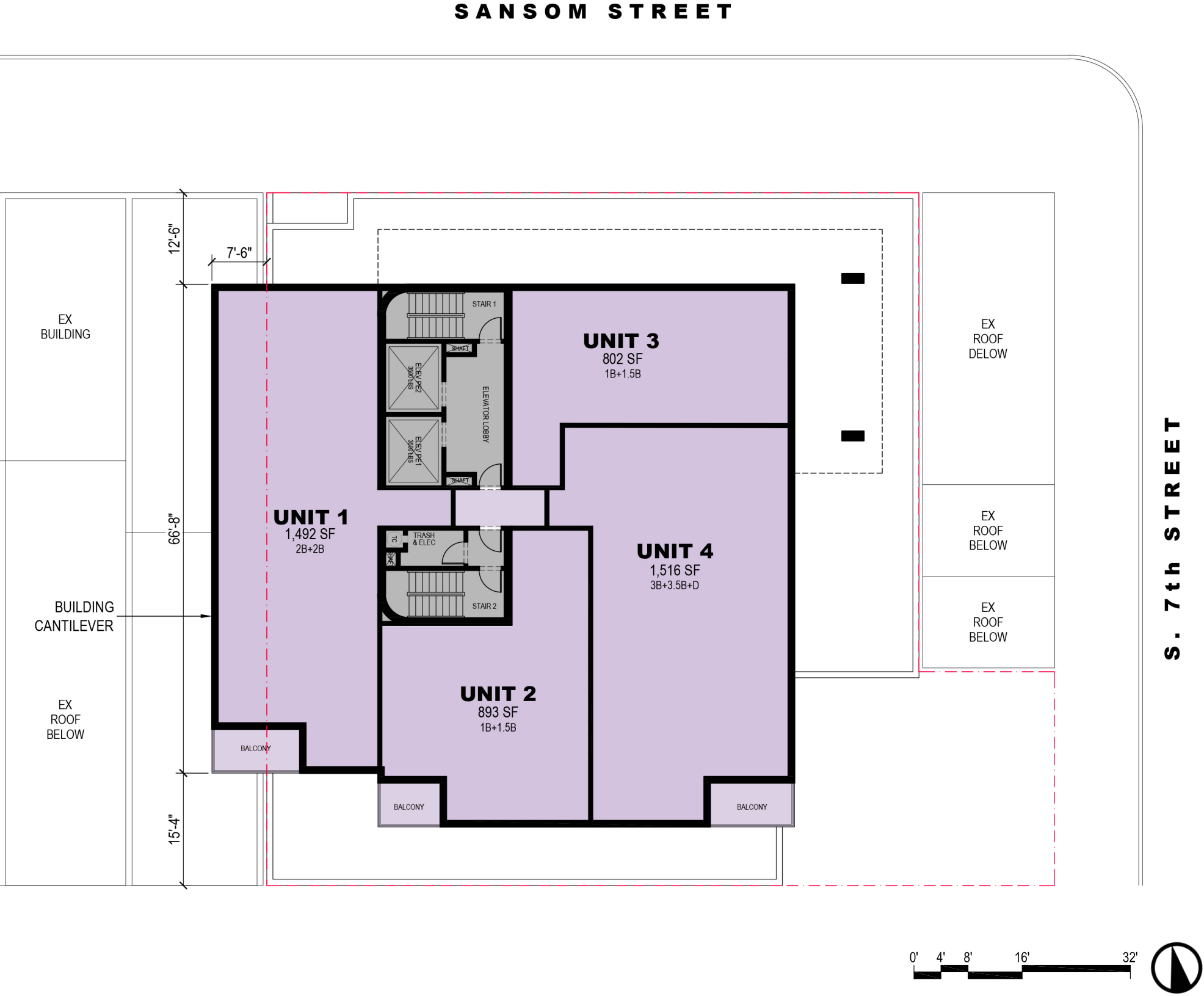




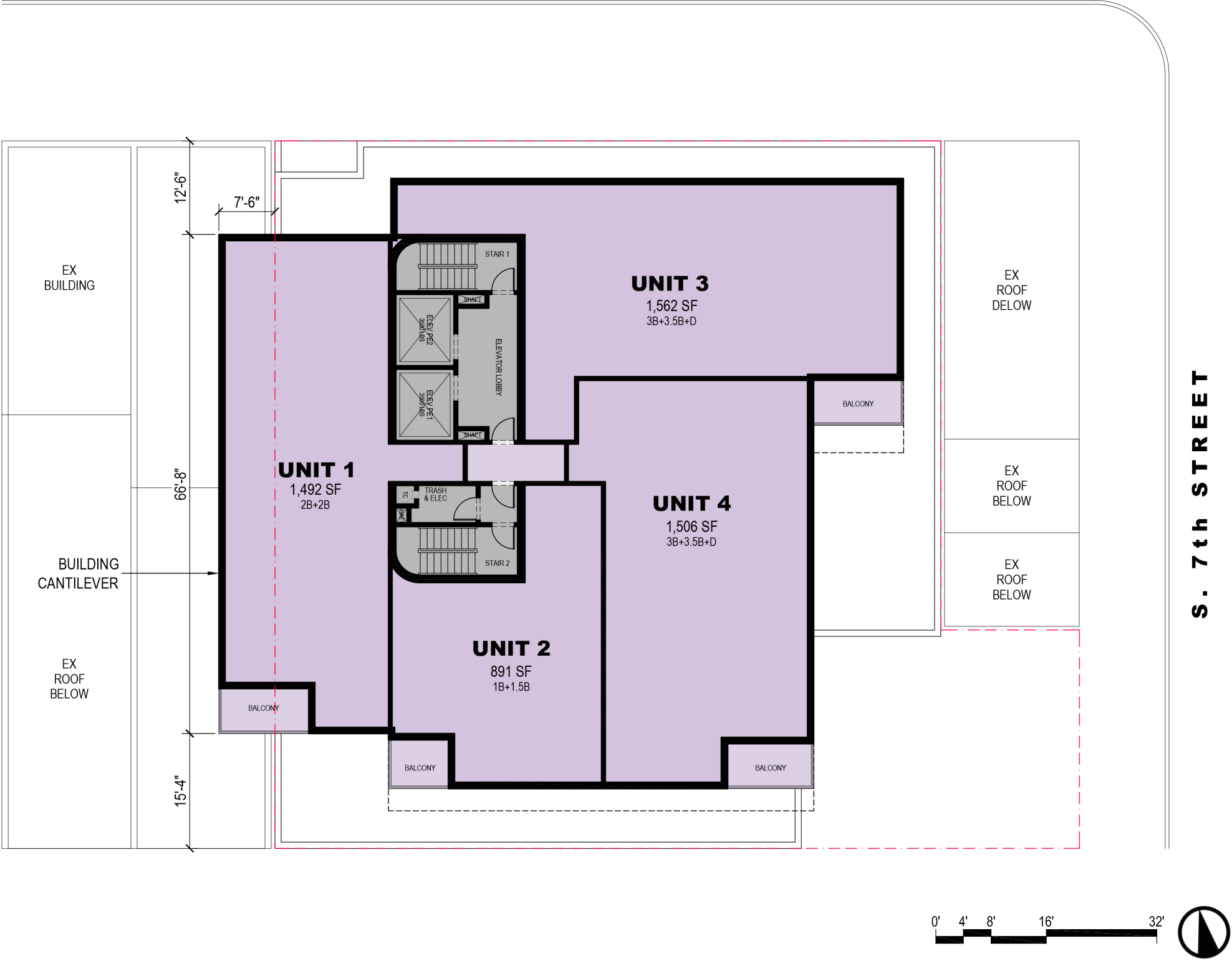


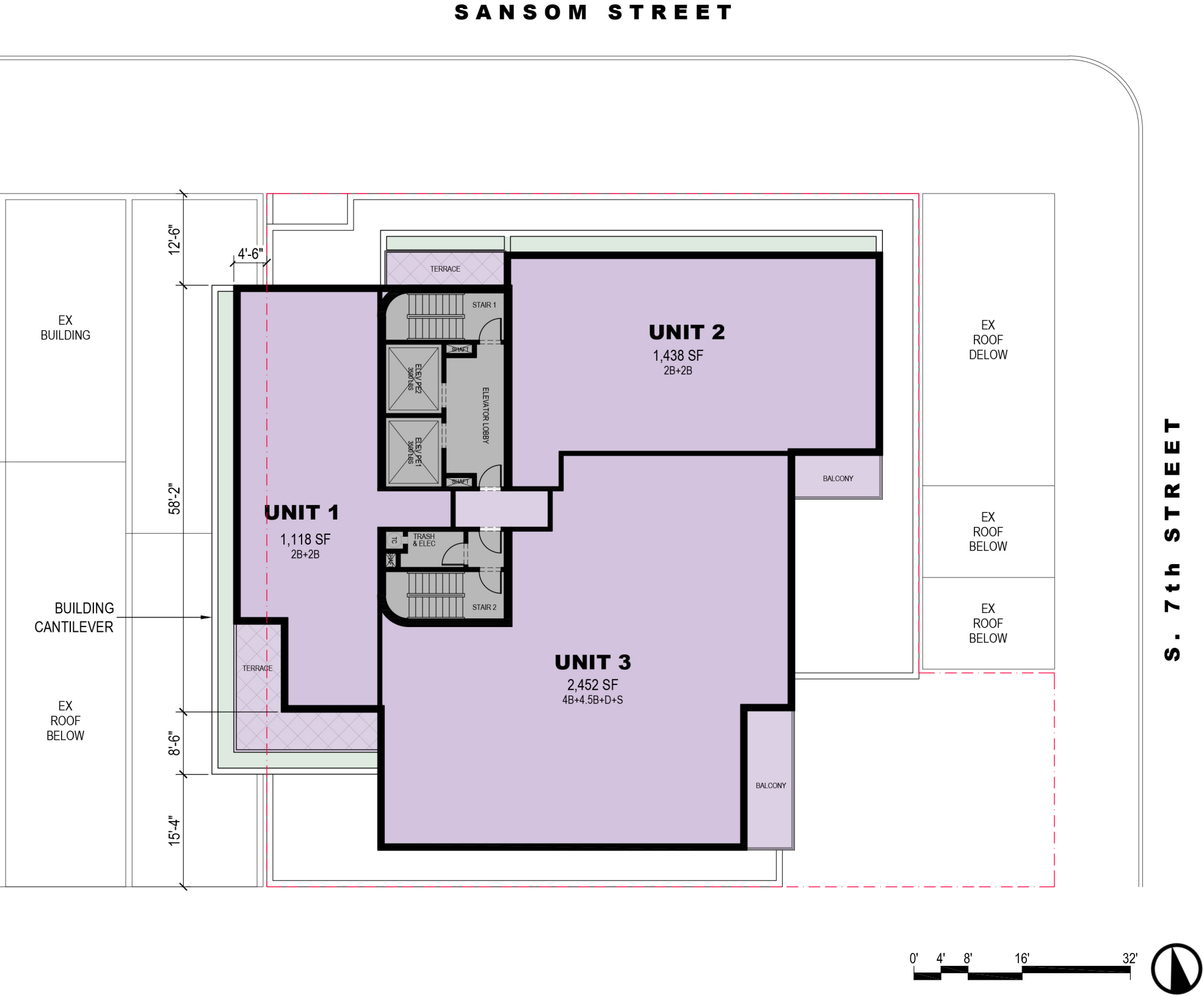




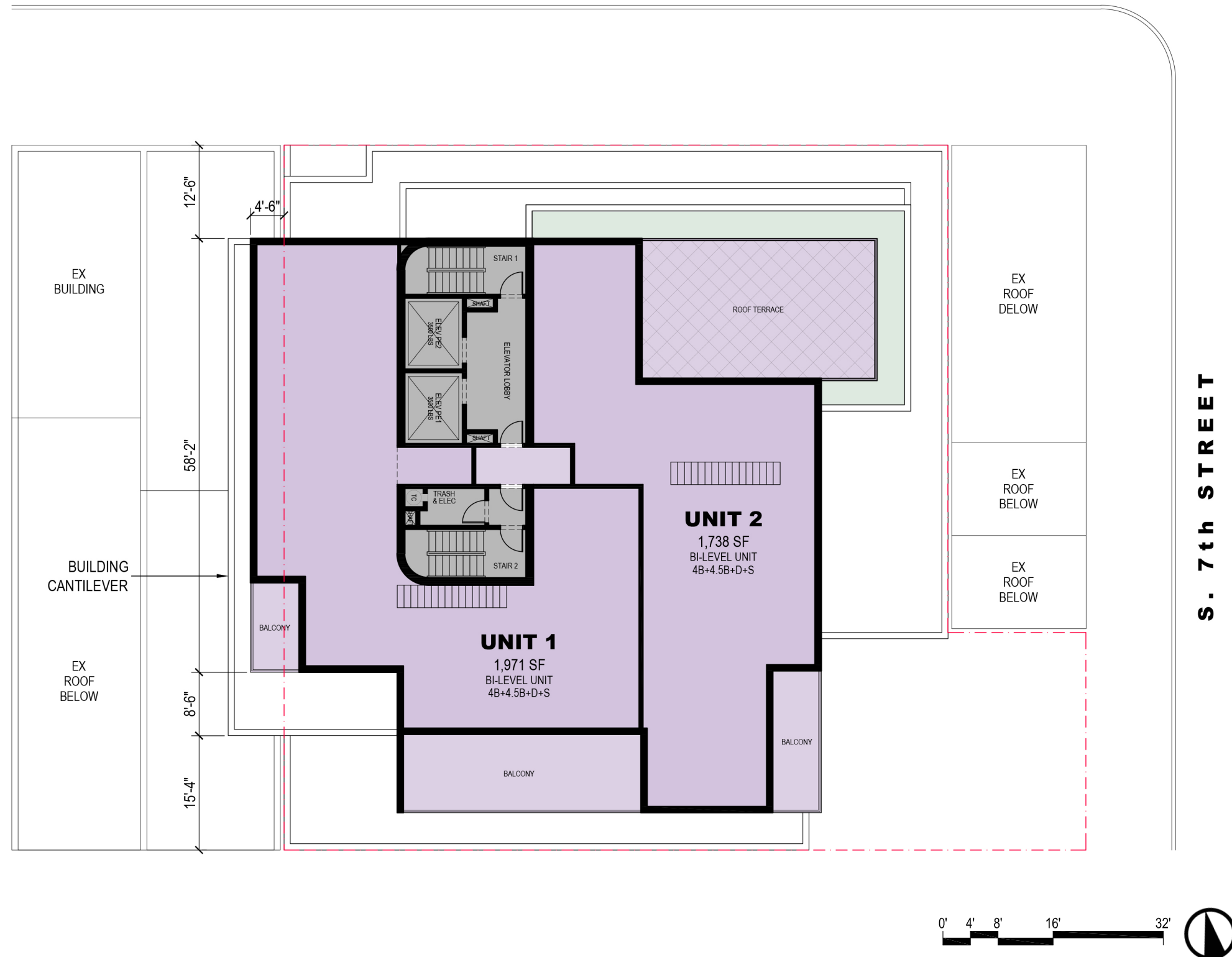


SANSOM STREET



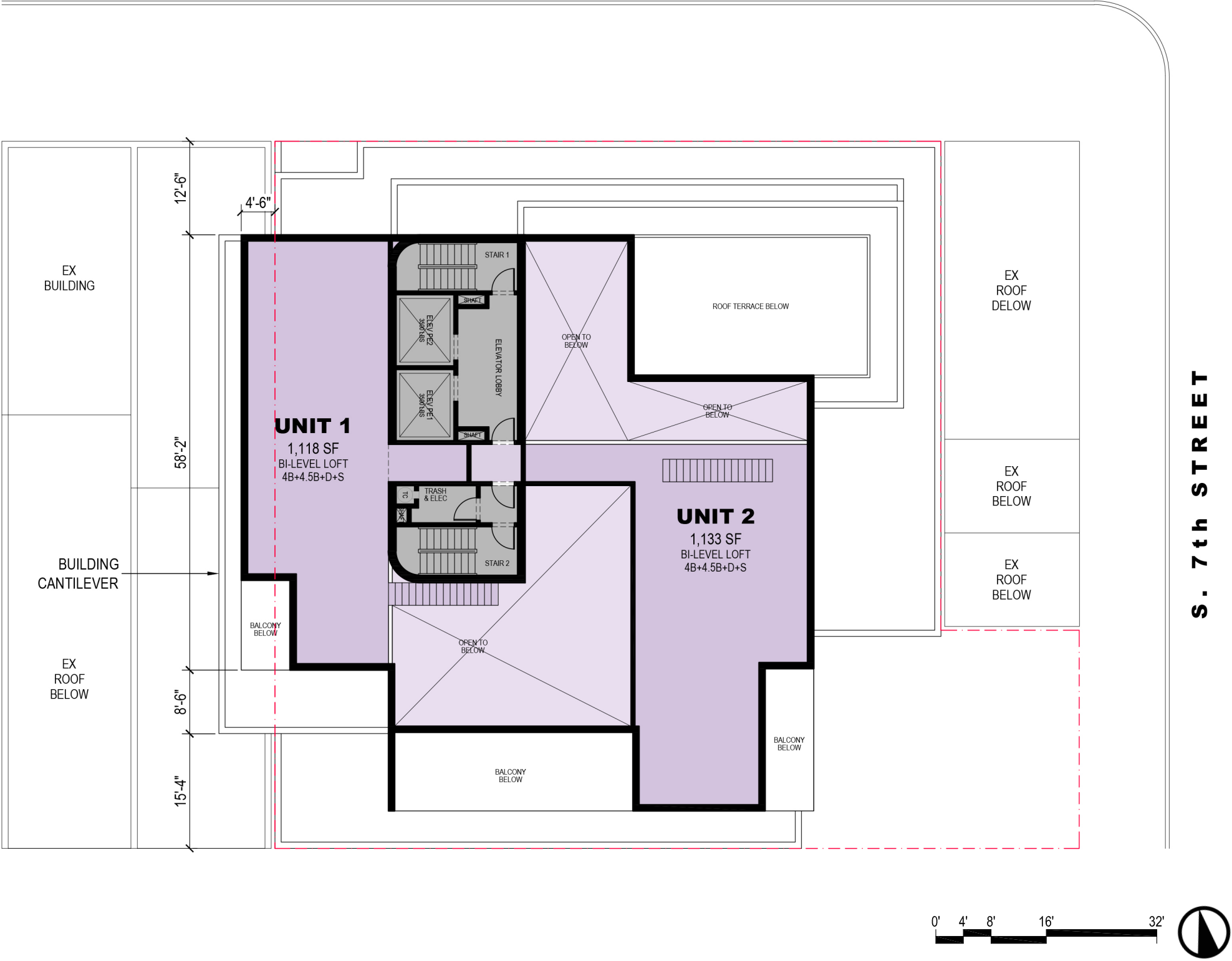


SANSOM STREET



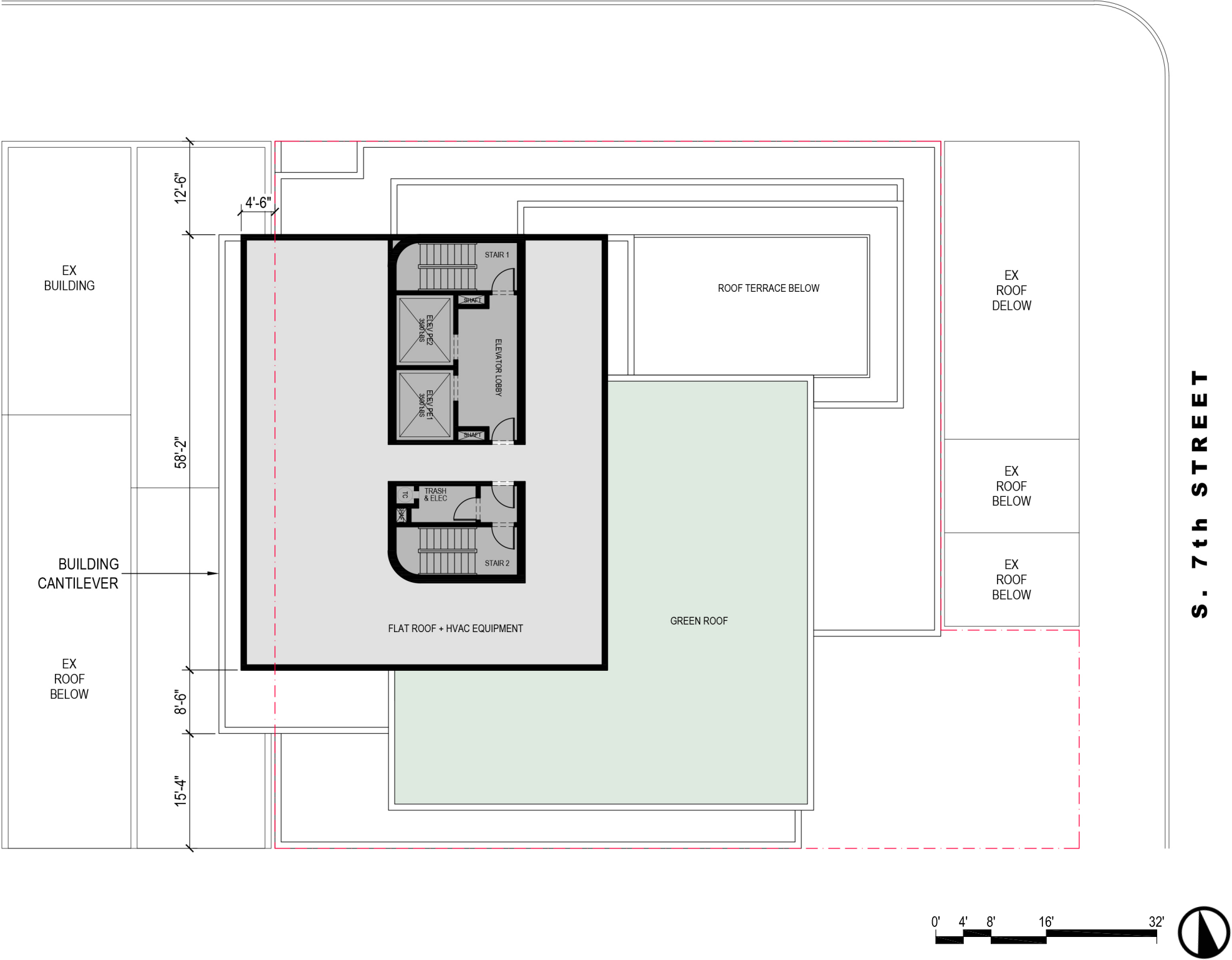
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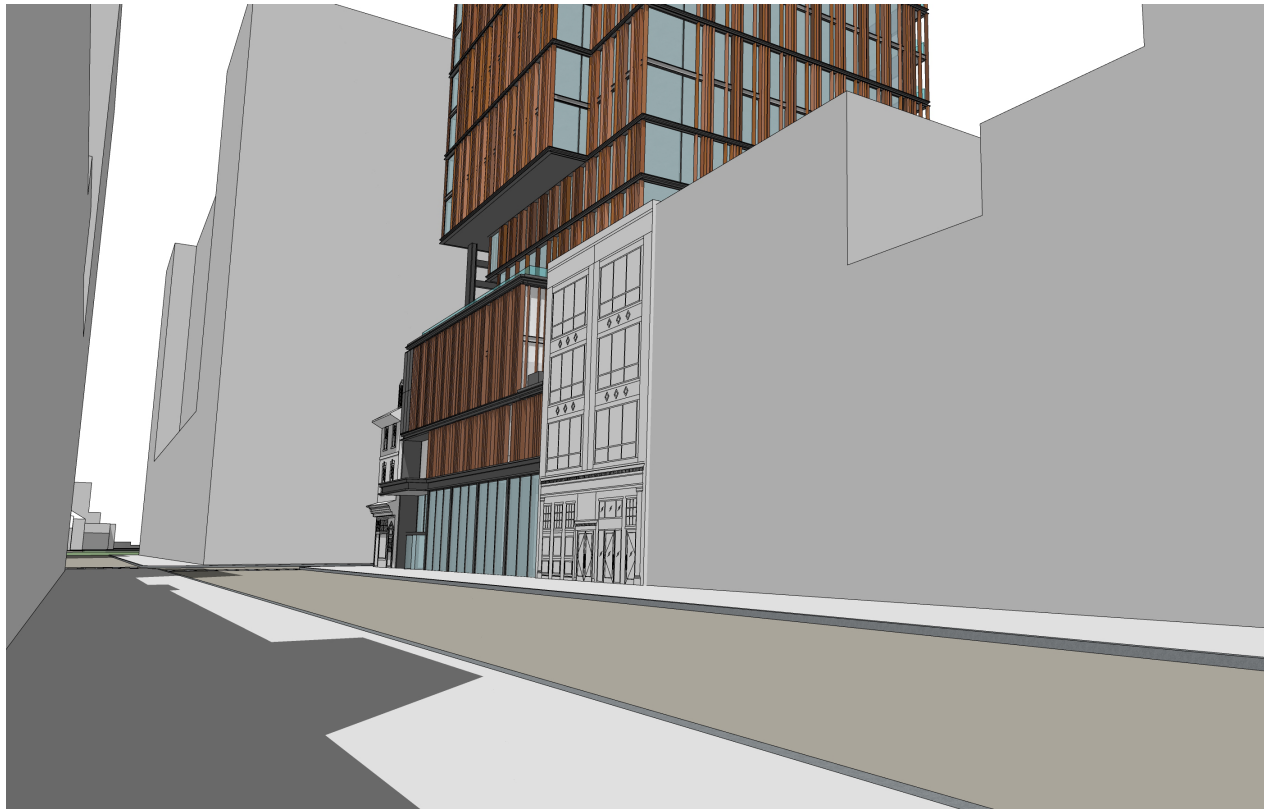
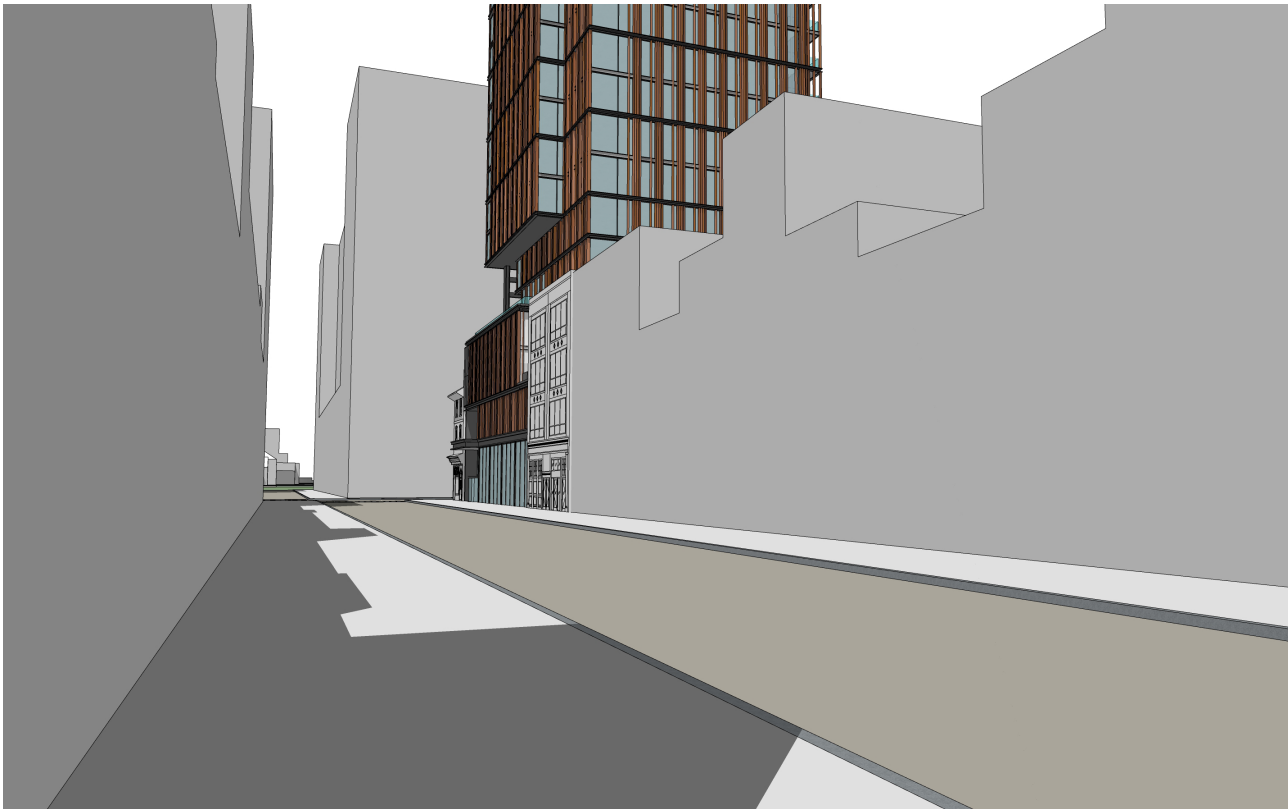
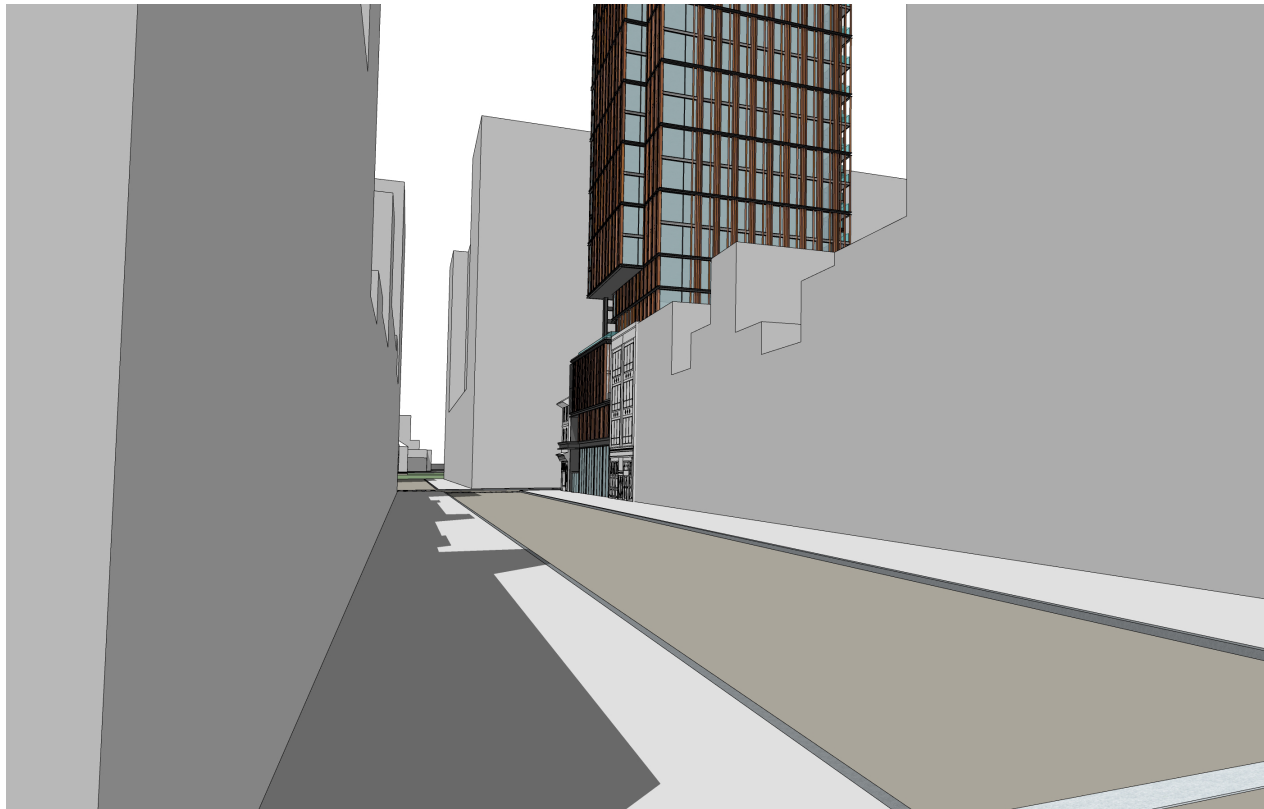
SANSOM STREET



S. 7th STREET

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DAS ARCHITECTS INC.
1628 JOHN F KENNEDY BLVD., SUITE 1300
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103
(T) 215.751.9008 (F) 215.751.9118
www.dasarchitects.com