

ADDRESS: 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, AND 158 N 2ND ST

Proposal: Demolish one building and rear portions of three buildings and construct six-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Balticorp, LLC

Applicant: Derek Spencer, Gnome Architects, LLC

History: c. 1800 (148), c. 1755 (150), c. 1925 (152)

Individual Designation: 12/31/1984 (148), 8/11/1982 (150)

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Contributing (148, 150, 152) and Non-Contributing (154, 156, 158), 12/12/2003

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, theodore.maust@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes constructing a six-story building across six parcels in the Old City Historic District. Two of these parcels were individually designated, a third is Contributing to the district, and the remaining three properties are non-contributing to the district.

As proposed, the development calls for the full demolition of structure at 156 N. 2nd Street (non-contributing) as well as the rear portions of individually-designated buildings at 148 and 150 N. 2nd Street and the Contributing building at 152 N. 2nd Street. The applicant proposes reconstructing the third floor and garret of the historic building at 148 N. 2nd Street, which were demolished sometime between 1915 and 1926.

The Historical Commission reviewed an in-concept version of this proposal in July and August and offered feedback but did not approve or deny the application.

The current proposal responds to comments from the Architectural Committee and the Historical Commission regarding the proposed massing, especially along Quarry Street, where the first two floors are clad in brick and the upper floors are set back and visually differentiated. This application proposes retaining the front 28 feet of the three historic buildings at 148, 150, and 152 N. 2nd Street and demolishing everything behind that line. It appears that the main block of the historic building at 148 N. 2nd Street may be deeper than 28 feet. The main block of the smaller historic building at 150 N. 2nd Street may also be deeper than 28 feet.

To avoid invoking the demolition provision in the ordinance and satisfying preservation standards, the entireties of the main blocks of the historic buildings at 148 and 150 N. 2nd Street should be retained up to and including the rear walls. While the original proposal called for demolishing the entirety of the building at 152 N. 2nd Street, this revised proposal would apparently retain first 28 feet of the building. The overbuild would envelope the building at 152 N. 2nd Street and would be set back six feet from the front facade of the historic building.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish one non-contributing building and the rears of three contributing buildings
- Reconstruct the third floor and garret of the building at 148 N. 2nd Street
- Construct a six-story building

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

- The proposal calls for demolition of a portion of the historic main block of 148 N 2nd Street. While the plans call for the front 28 feet of 152 N 2nd Street to be retained, much of that material will be enveloped by the new building. The extent of demolition should be clarified and details provided which show how this building will be incorporated into the overbuild.
- *Standard 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
 - In the absence of contradictory evidence, it seems likely that the front block of 148 N 2nd Street, including the third floor, extended past the 28-foot depth proposed for retention. To recreate the third floor at this reduced depth would give a false sense of historical development.
- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The use of brick and maximum height are compatible with the immediate context within the historic district.
 - The proposed massing remains close to the rears of the historic buildings, but the design does attempt to break up the elevations to relate to the surrounding context.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends approval of the application, provided that the entire historic main blocks of 148 and 150 N. 2nd Street are retained and the third floor and garret are reconstructed at 148 N. 2nd Street, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 3, and 9.

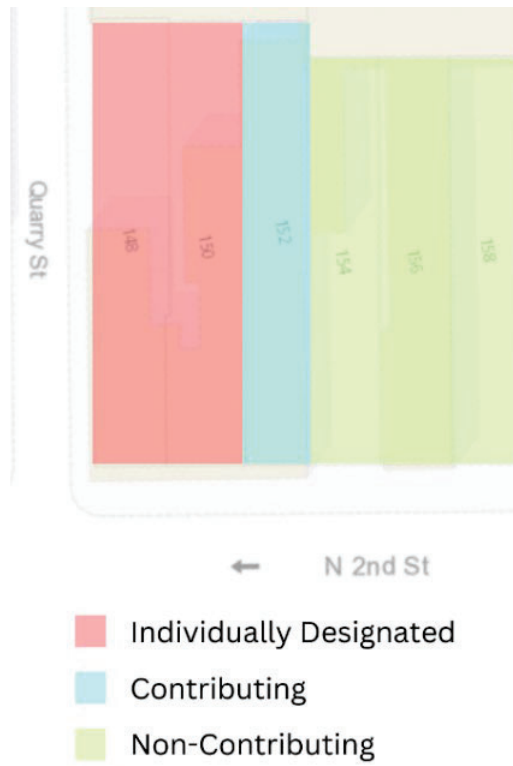


Figure 1: Designation status of subject parcels. Base map from Atlas.phila.gov.



Figure 2: Existing conditions at the corner of 2nd Street and Quarry Street.

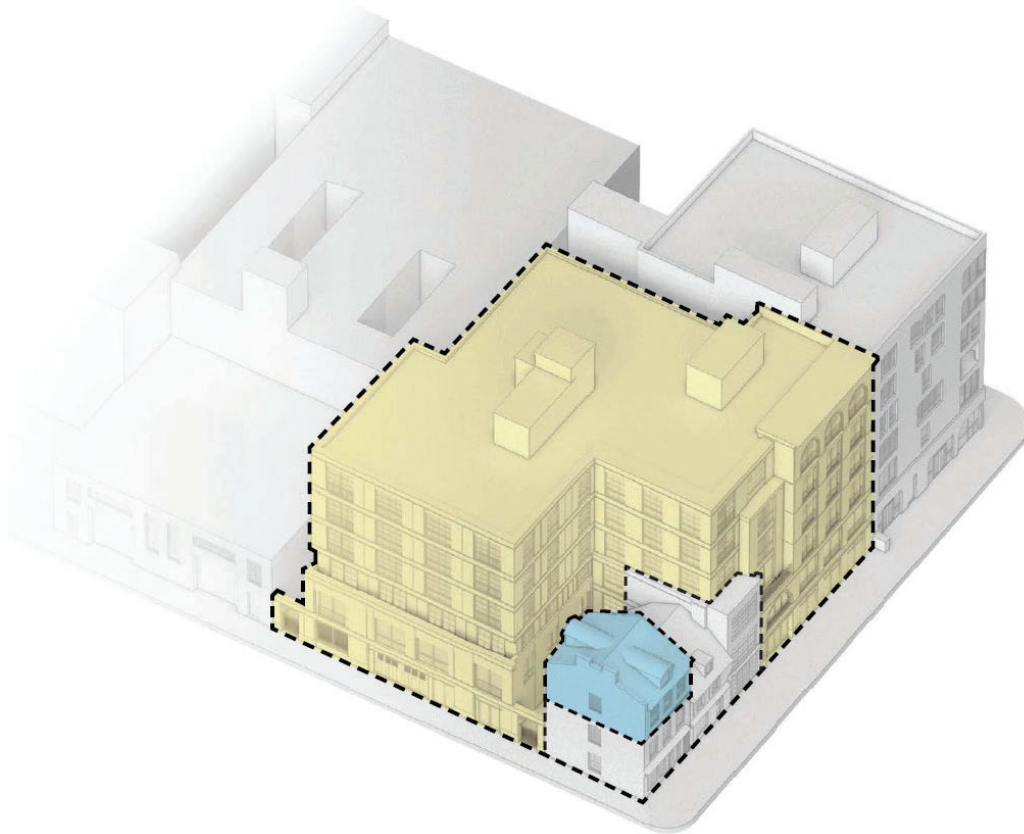


Figure 3: Proposed massing with surrounding context.



Figure 4: Rendering of the proposed building, including the reconstruction of upper floors on 148 N 2nd Street.

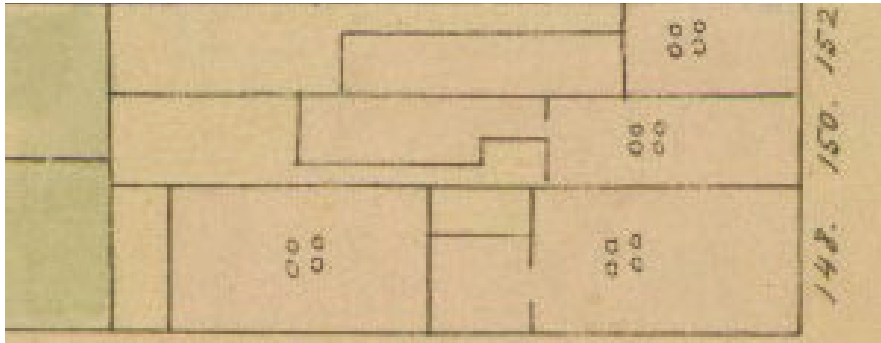


Figure 5: Detail of 1858-60 Hexamer & Locher map showing 148, 150, and 152 N 2nd Street.

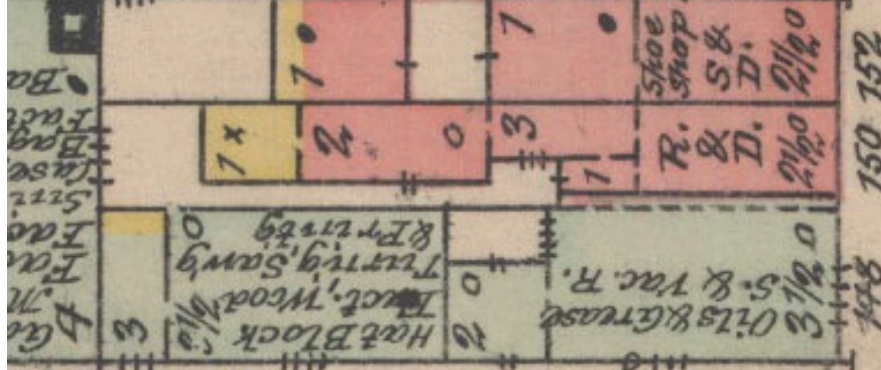


Figure 6: Detail of 1915-16 Ernest Hexamer & Son map.

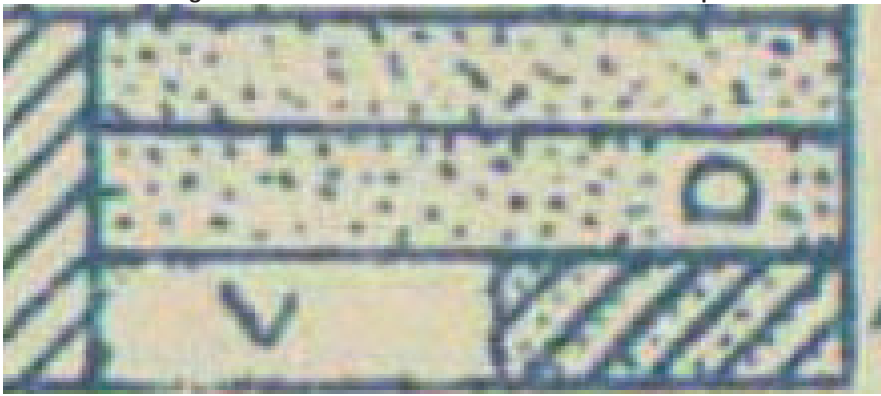


Figure 7: Detail of 1942 Land Use map, showing partial demolition of 148 N 2nd Street.

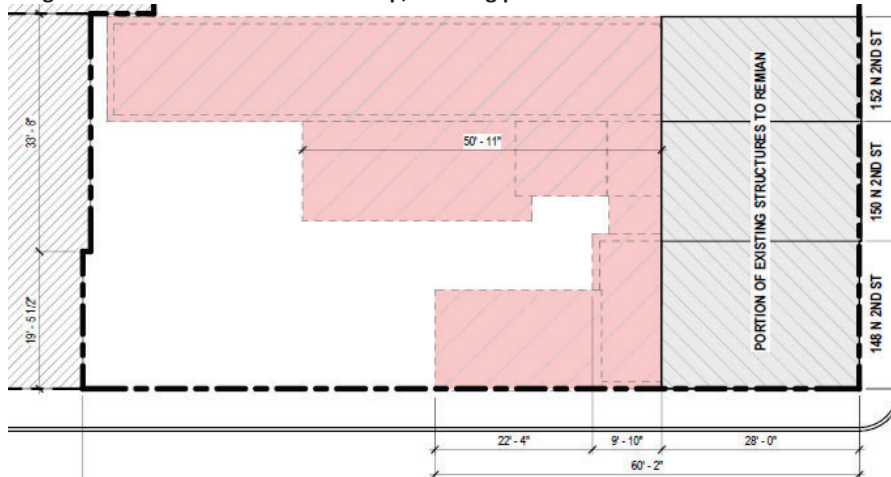


Figure 8: Plan of proposed demolition across 148, 150, and 152 N 2nd Street.



Gnome Architects LLC
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September 16th, 2025

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: 148-158 N 2nd St: In-Concept Application

On behalf of Urban Fund Inc, Gnome Architects is pleased to submit this application for the proposed development of the combined lots at 148–158 N. 2nd Street, located within the Historic District of Old City.

The project proposes the full demolition of the building at 156 N. 2nd Street, the partial rear demolition of 148, 150 and 152 N. 2nd Street, and the preservation and restoration of the remaining portions of 148, 150, and 152 N. 2nd Street. In addition, a new 6-story mixed-use building is proposed as part of the development.

The project will include approximately 35 new residential units, served by 15 parking spaces and supported by dedicated lobby and amenity areas. The development will incorporate the existing façade of 152 N 2nd st into the residential building, and add new commercial space to the first floors of 148-150 N 2nd st.

The massing of the new construction aligns with the context along 2nd st, keeping a continuous façade between the new building to the North (160-164 N 2nd st) and the historic buildings on site. On Quarry st, the new building pulls away from the rear of 148-152 N 2nd st, stepping back on upper floors to give space for the narrow street. This approach is intended to incorporate the corner buildings into the Old City fabric while respecting and preserving their historic character. The parking garage and trash pickup are located on Quarry st and away from the 2nd st commercial corridor.

Please let us know if any additional information is required. We appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing this application, and we look forward to discussing the project with you.

Sincerely,

Derek Spencer, RA

Principal, Gnome Architects

148-58 N 2ND ST.

GNOME ARCHITECTS

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION APPLICATION

09.30.2025





EXISTING SITE: 148-158 N 2ND ST

LOCATION:

The project site is located at the northwest corner of N. 2nd Street and Quarry Street, within Philadelphia's Old City Historic District. This district features a mix of historic commercial and residential buildings, along with several contemporary infill developments.

The site consists of a proposed consolidation of six independent lots and currently contains four existing buildings ranging in height from one to three stories. These include a cluster of three buildings (148-52 N. 2nd St.) at the corner of 2nd and Quarry Streets, as well as a standalone structure at 156 N. 2nd Street. The proposed development includes the full demolition of 156 N. 2nd Street, and the partial rear demolition of 148, 150, and 152 N. 2nd Street.

MASSING:

The proposed development includes a new six-story mixed-use building adjacent to three structures, two historic (148 and 150 N. 2nd St) and one contributing (152 N. 2nd St). The two historic properties will be preserved, with 148 N. 2nd St undergoing an extensive restoration, which will include the reconstruction of the third story and pitched roof, referencing the original form of the building as seen in historic photos and drawings. The contributing building (152 N 2nd St) will be integrated into the design of the new development, with its facade preserved and repaired.

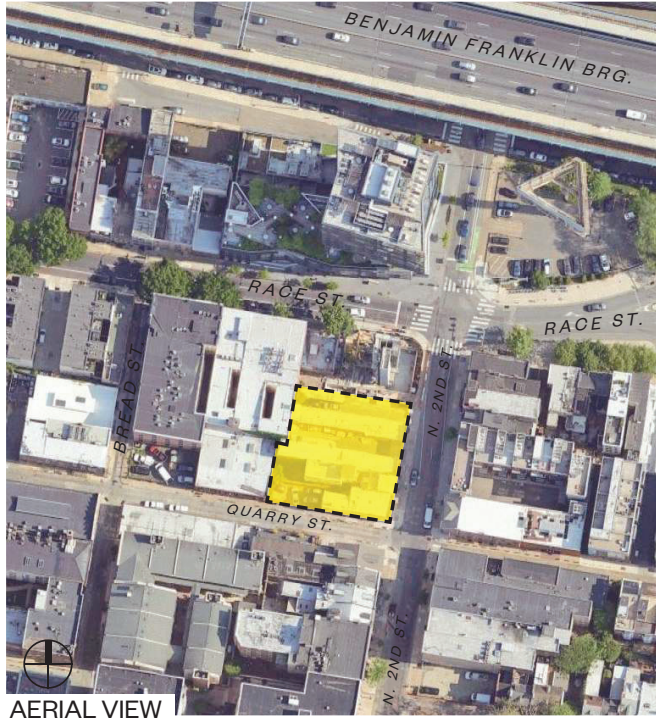
The new six-story building will rise to 65 feet, aligning with the height of the adjacent building to the north (160-164 N 2nd St). Its massing attaches to 160-164 N 2nd and 152 N 2nd, continuing the densely packed, vertically aligned fabric of Old City. Along Quarry st, the building is separate from both the property line and the back of the historic buildings on site (148-152 N 2nd st. It builds off a 2-story horizontal base, similar to the context on Quarry, before stepping back from the narrow street and rising up.

USE:

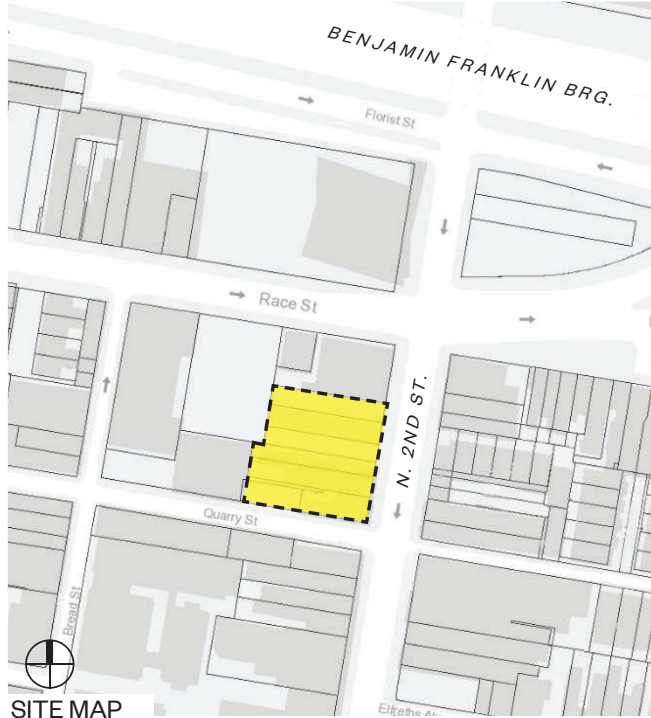
The preserved historic buildings at 148-150 N 2nd st will contain commercial space at the ground level along 2nd Street, with either commercial or residential uses above. The first floor of 152 N 2nd st will be used as the entry to the residential lobby, while the upper floors will be units accessed as part of the larger residential building. The new mixed-use building will feature residential amenity space facing 2nd Street and 35 residential units on the upper floors.

PARKING AND TRASH:

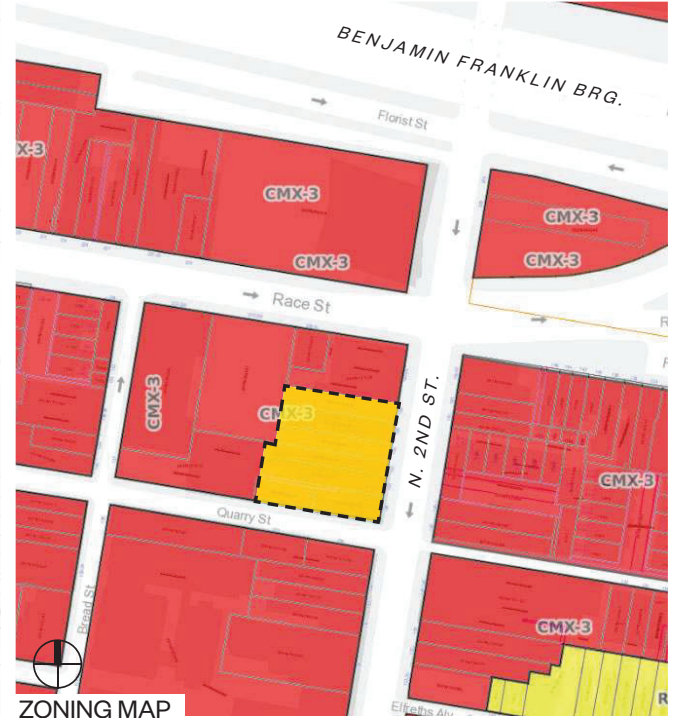
Parking for the new building will be accessed via a two-way drive aisle along Quarry Street. The two existing curb cuts along N. 2nd Street will be removed, and that portion of the sidewalk will be restored for public use. Trash collection will also be handled along Quarry Street, and the existing loading zone along 2nd Street will be utilized for commercial deliveries.



AERIAL VIEW



SITE MAP



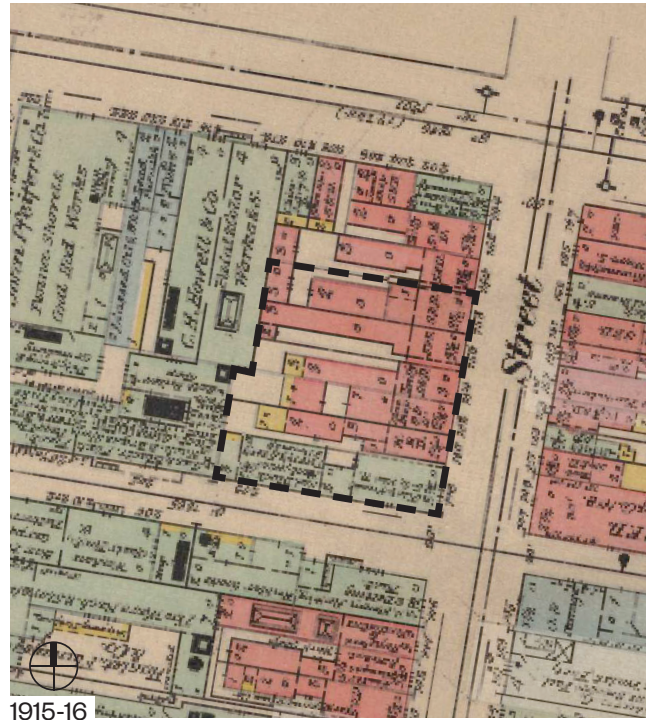
ZONING MAP

EARLY COMMERCIAL USE



1860

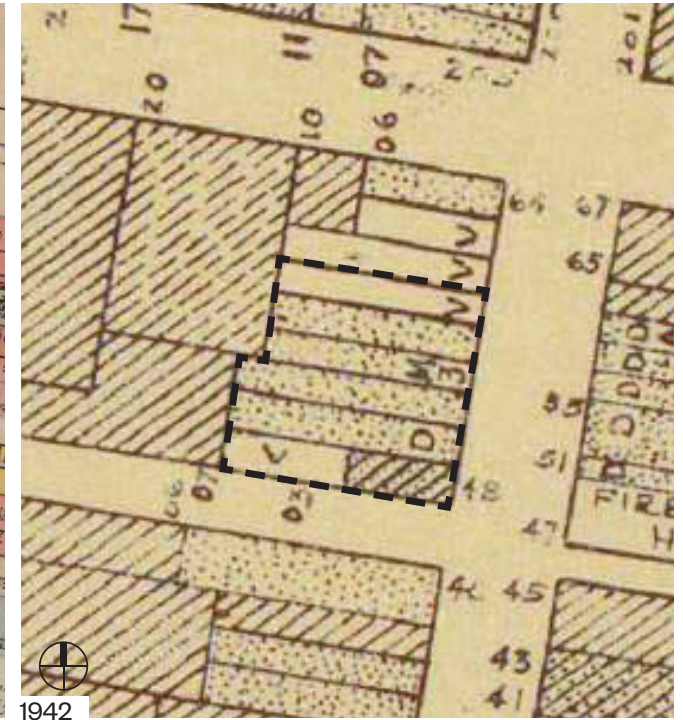
PRINT SHOP AND OIL & GREASE STOREFRONT OCCUPY SITE ~ 1916



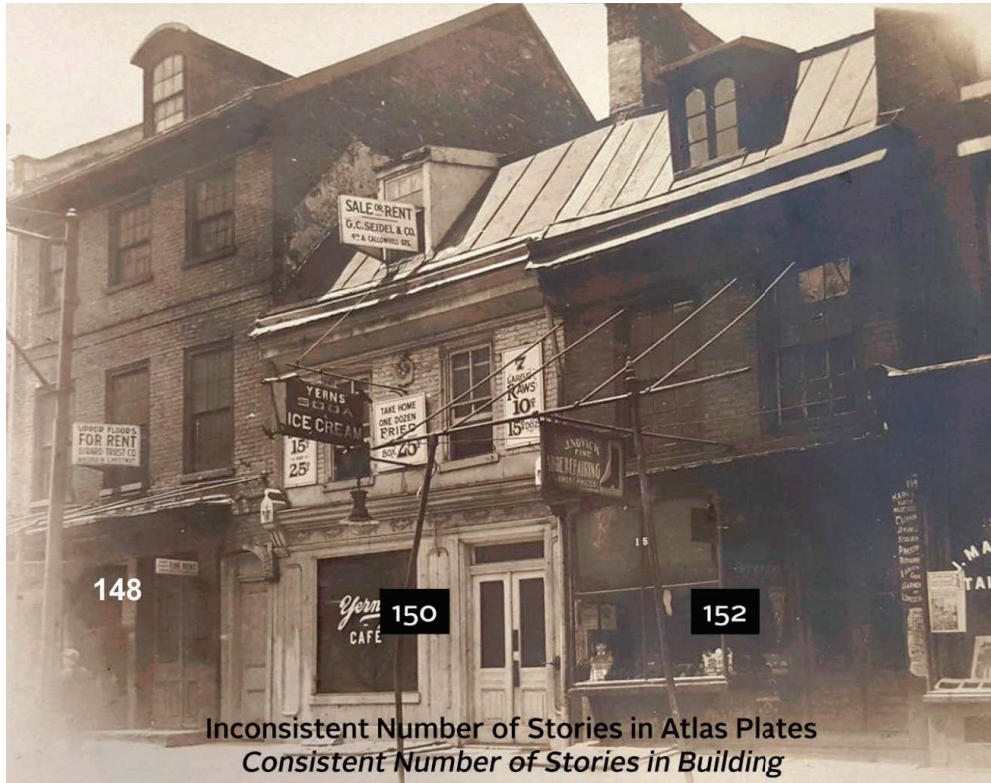
1915-16

BUILDINGS TORN DOWN ~ 1942

PRINT SHOP ON SW CORNER DEMOLISHED AND TURNED INTO PARKING
PARCELS 154 AND 158 CLEARED BY ~1962



1942

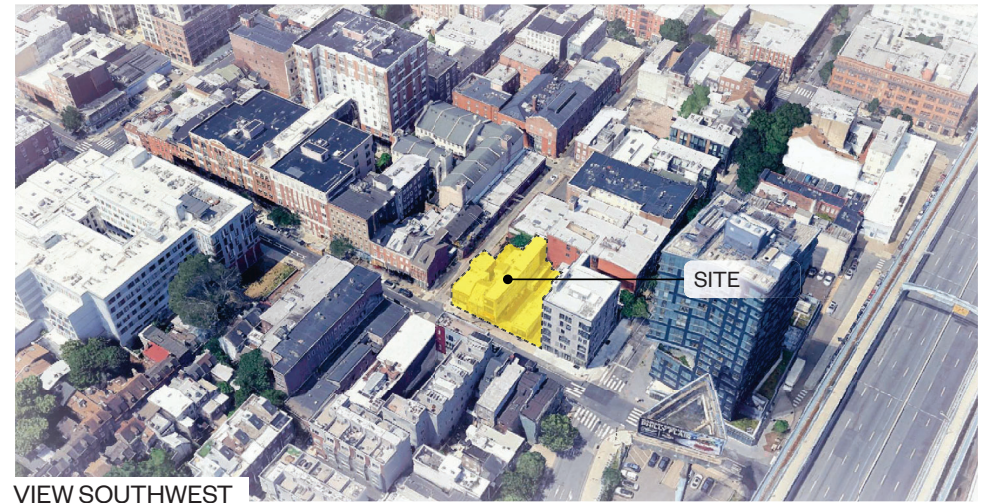
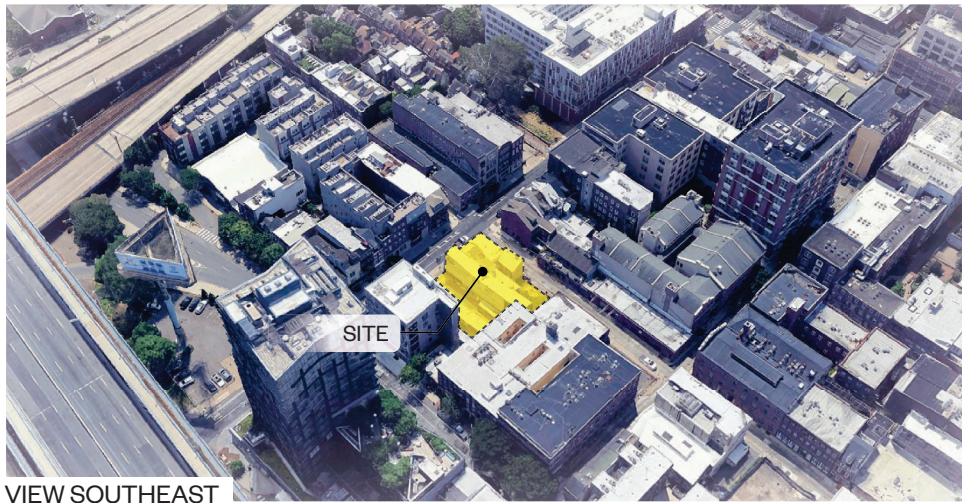
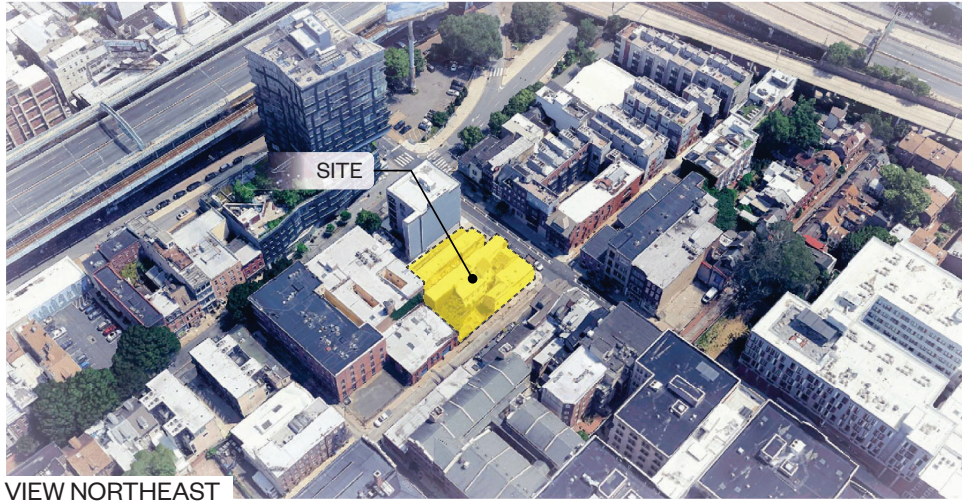


VIEW DOWN N 2ND ST, 1915

Inconsistent Number of Stories in Atlas Plates
Consistent Number of Stories in Building

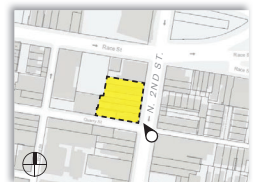


VIEW ON N 2ND ST CORNER TOWARDS QUARRY ST, 1960





VIEW NORTHWEST ON N 2ND ST.

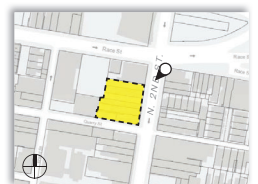


EXISTING SITE CONDITION

PAGE 7



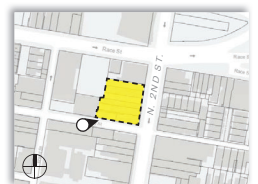
VIEW SOUTHWEST ON N 2ND ST.



EXISTING SITE CONDITION



VIEW NORTHEAST ON QUARRY ST.

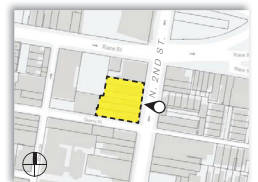


EXISTING SITE CONDITION

PAGE 9



ELEVATION VIEW ON N 2ND ST.



EXISTING SITE CONDITION



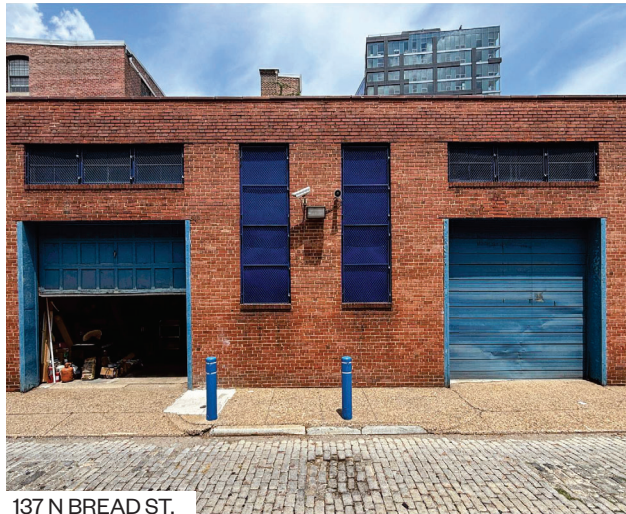
160-164 N 2ND ST.



136-144 N 2ND ST. & 200 QUARRY ST.



210 QUARRY ST.



137 N BREAD ST.



147-159 N 2ND ST.



145 N 2ND ST.



100-104 N 2ND ST.



105 N 2ND ST.



62-72 N. 2ND ST.



221-229 ARCH ST.

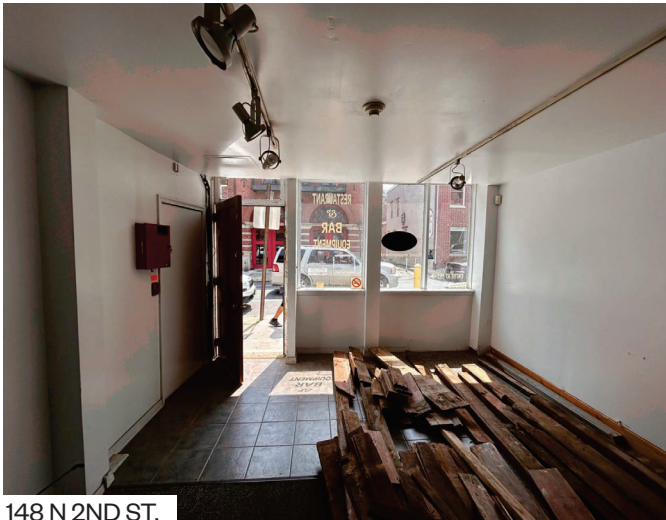


45-51 N 3RD ST.

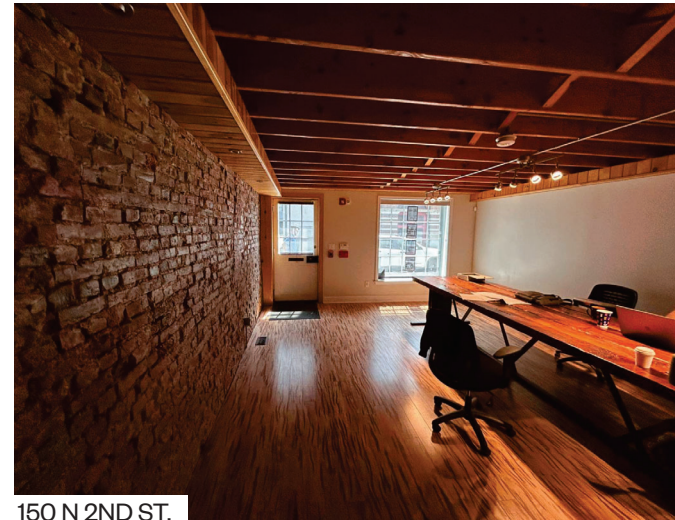
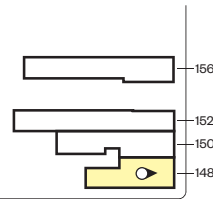


124-126 2ND ST.

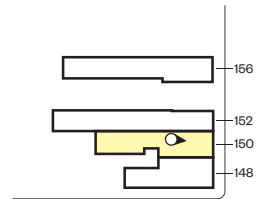




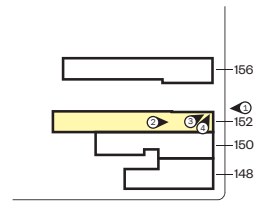
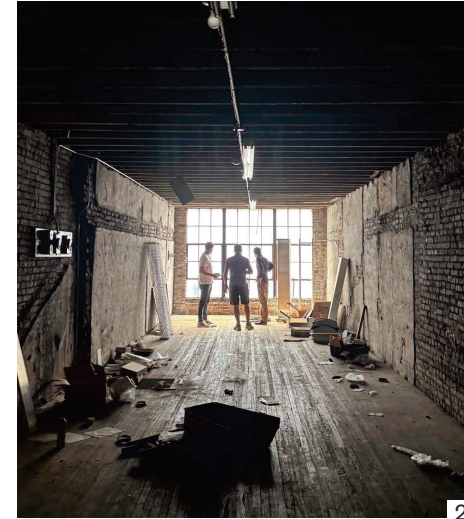
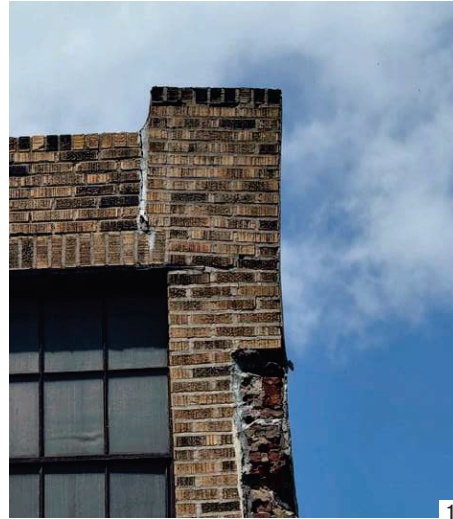
148 N 2ND ST.



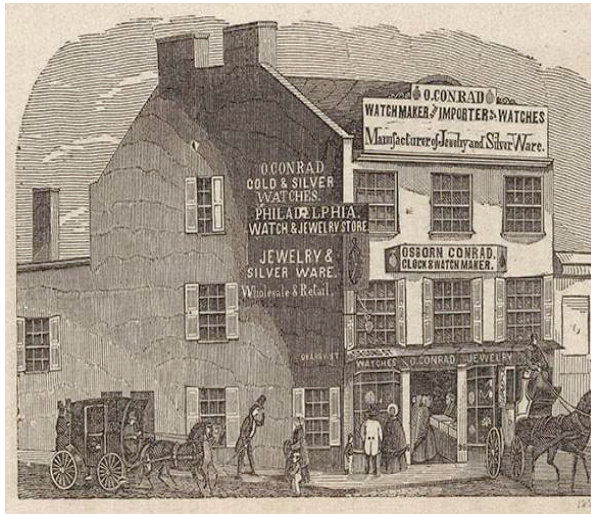
150 N 2ND ST.



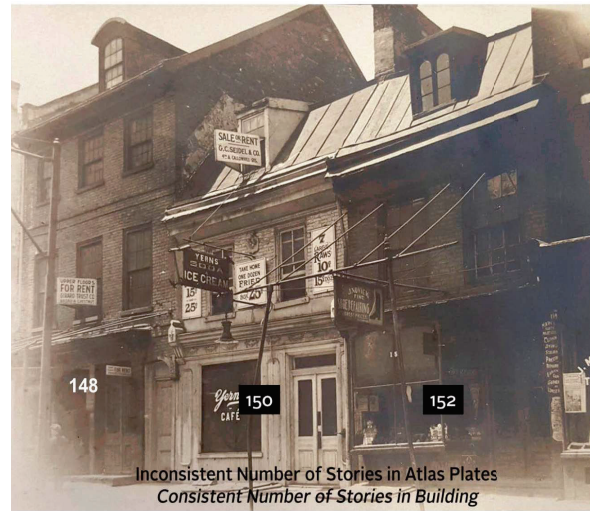
EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS



EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS



148 N 2nd st - Advertisement
1851



148-152 N 2nd st - Historical Photograph
1915



148 N 2nd st - Historical Photograph
1960



148 N 2nd st - Existing Altered Facade

- ① Add new 3rd story and dormer window to match pre-1926 historic facade
- ② Replace windows with insulated divided-lite windows
- ③ Clean brick facade and repoint mortar
- ④ Repair existing door surrounds and replace doors
- ⑤ Remove existing windows and replace with insulated windows to match historic facade
- ⑥ Remove stucco finish and replace with new brick facade to match existing building front
- ⑦ Remove existing window; add new windows per historic facade



148 N 2nd St - Proposed Restoration

RESTORATION - 148 N 2ND ST

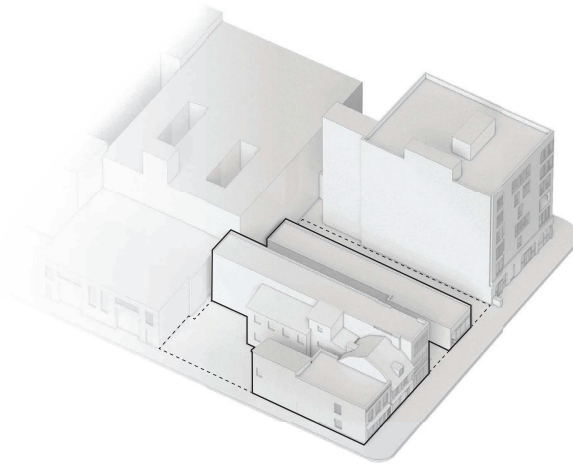


152 N 2nd st - Historical Photograph
1960

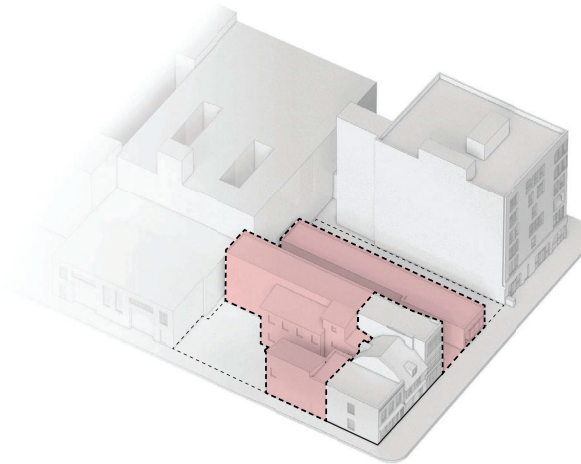


152 N 2nd st - Existing Altered Facade

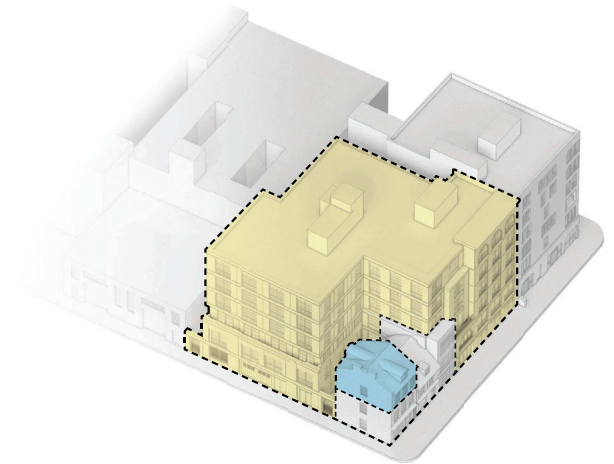
- ① Replace and flatten parapet
- ② Clean/Repair/Replace brick facade and repoint mortar
- ③ Repair/Replace brick piers and cracked facade
- ④ Replace existing windows with new insulated windows to match existing
- ⑤ Remove awning
- ⑥ Replace non-historic storefront with new storefront and building entry



EXISTING

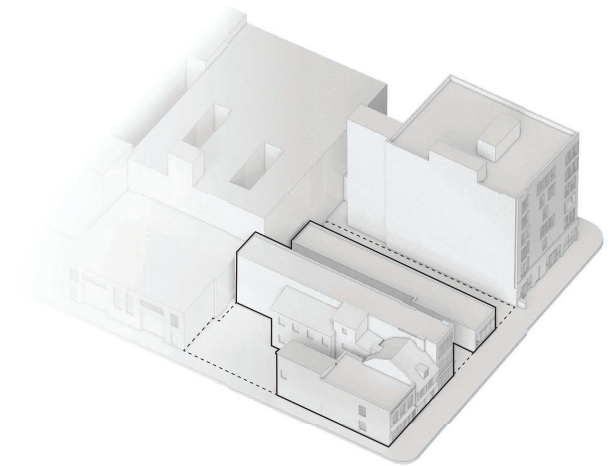
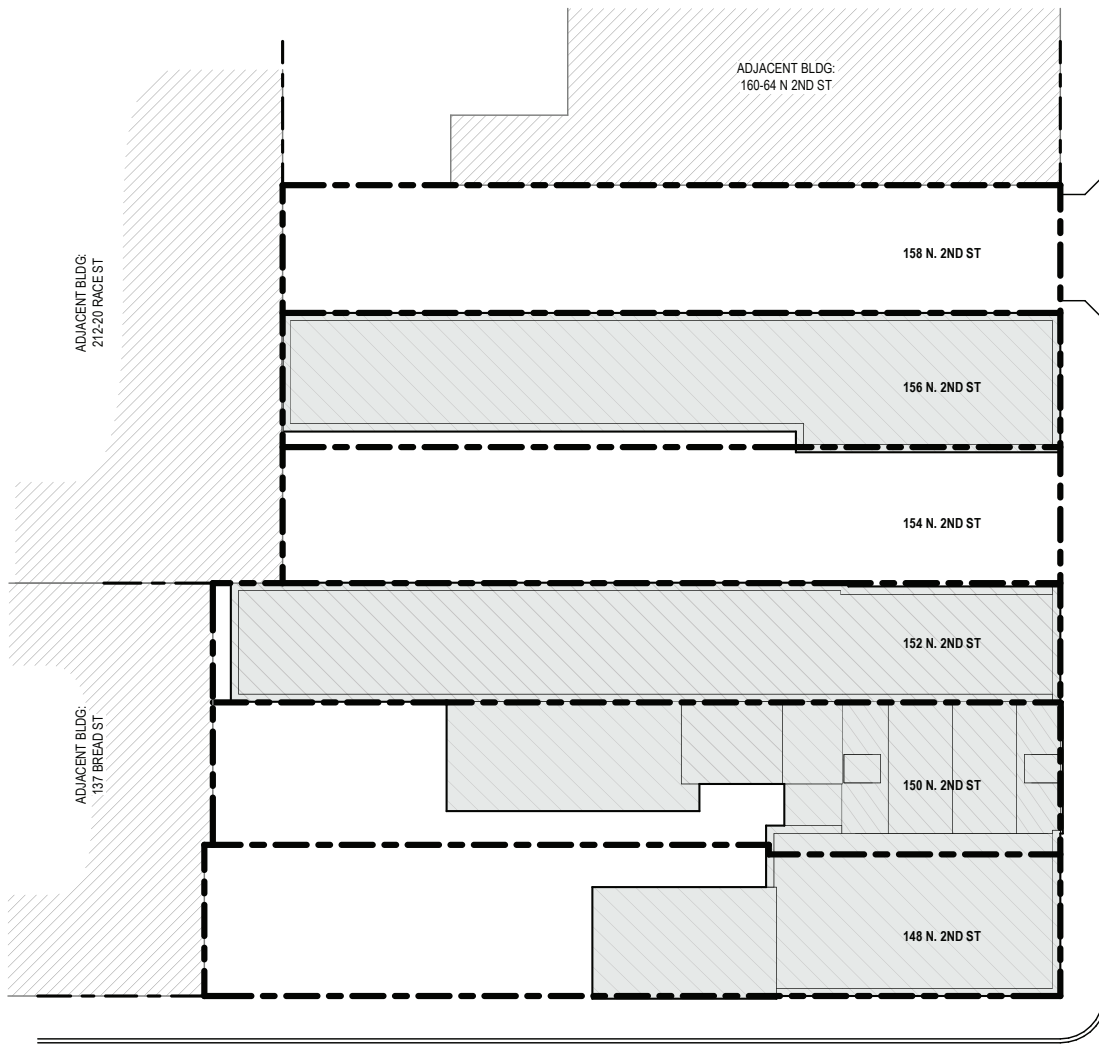


DEMOLISHED



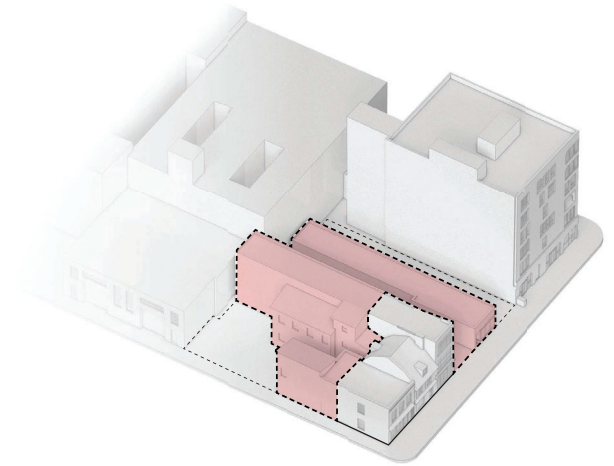
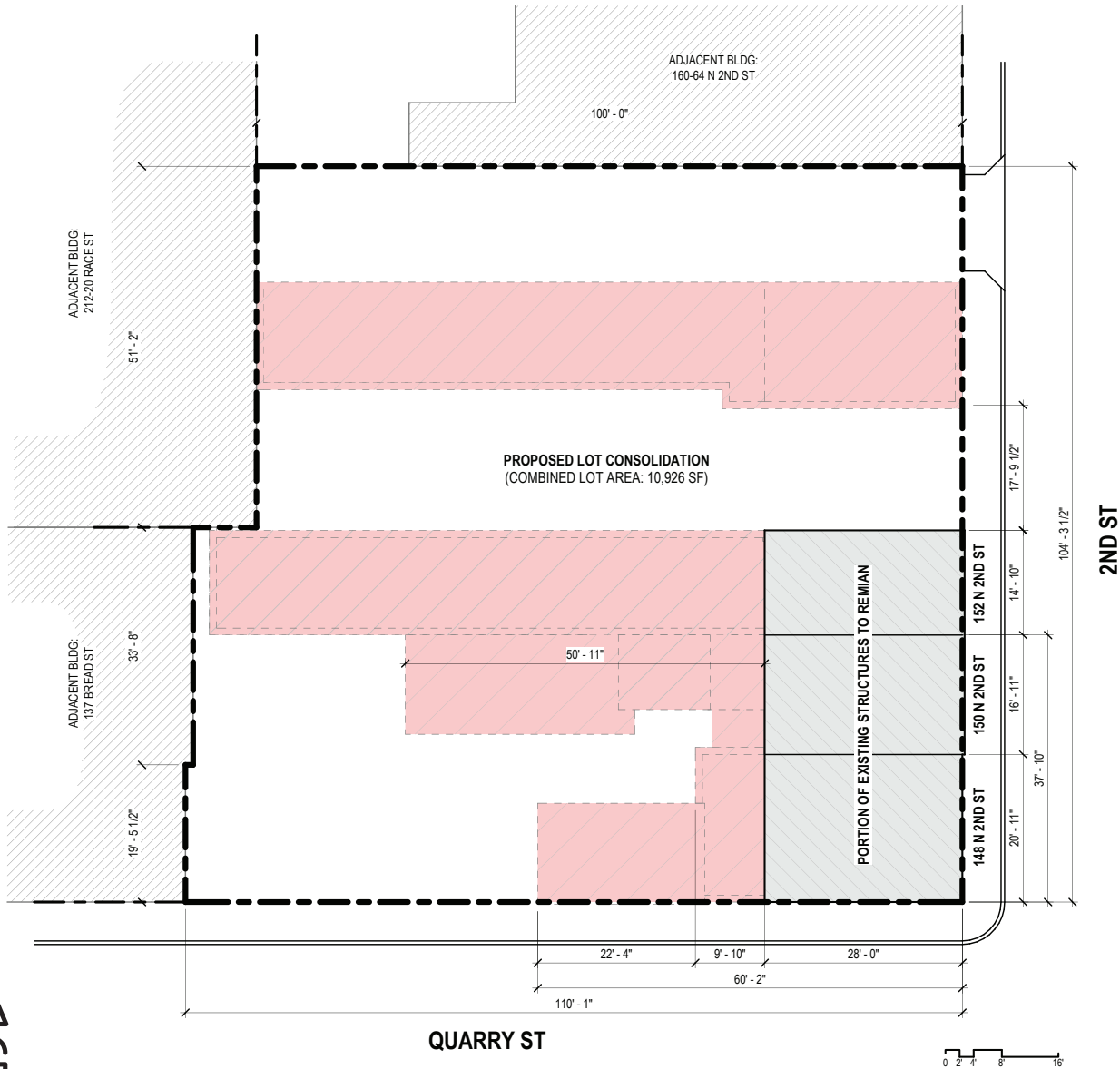
PROPOSED

- EXISTING BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED
- PROPOSED HISTORIC / IN KIND ADDITION
- PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE

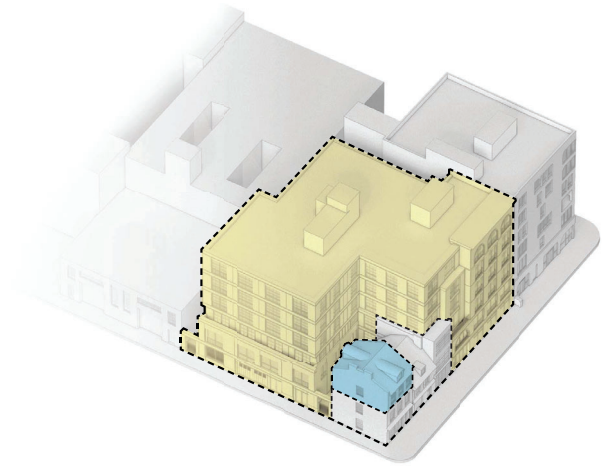
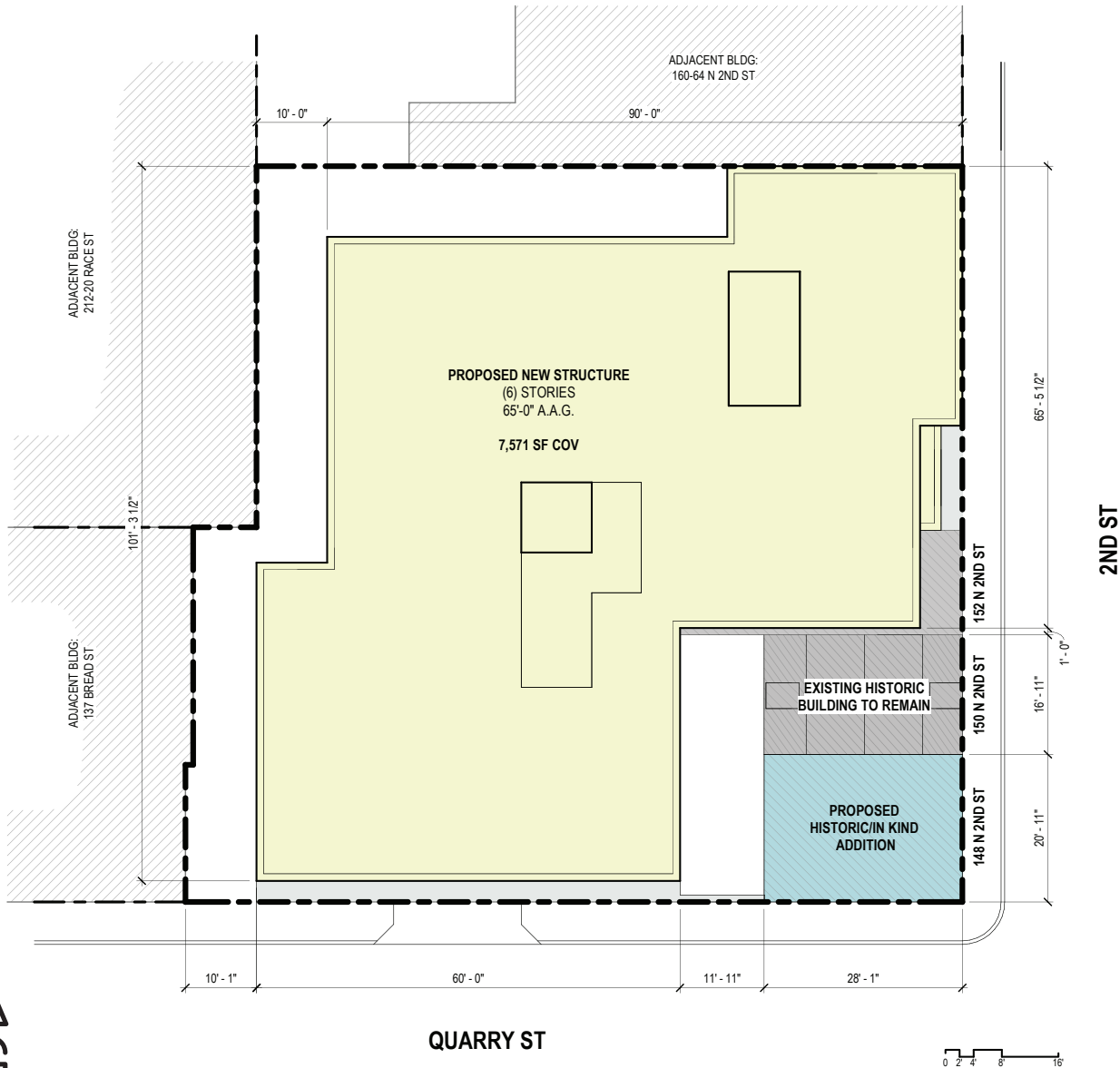


SITE PLAN - EXISTING

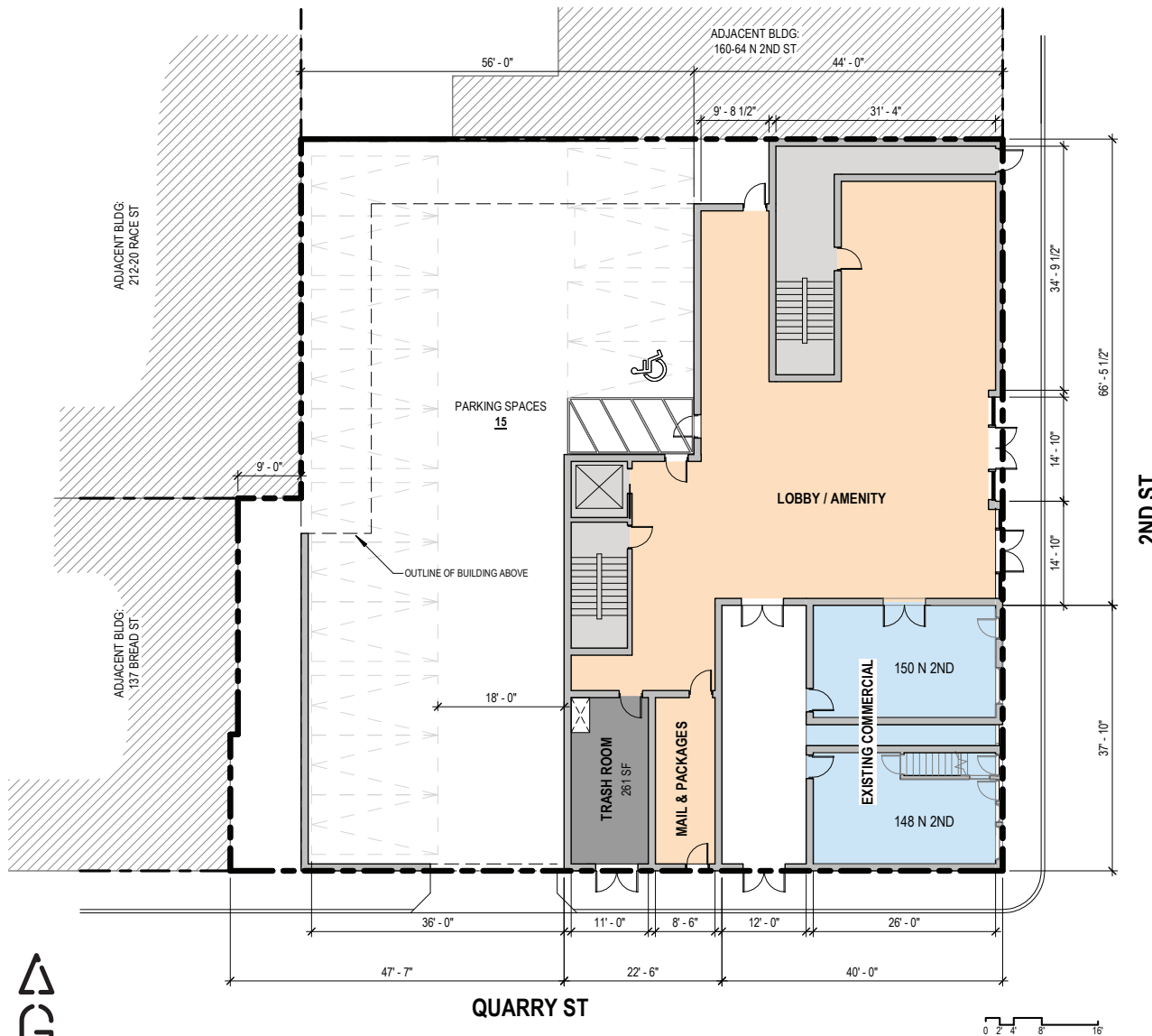
PAGE 19

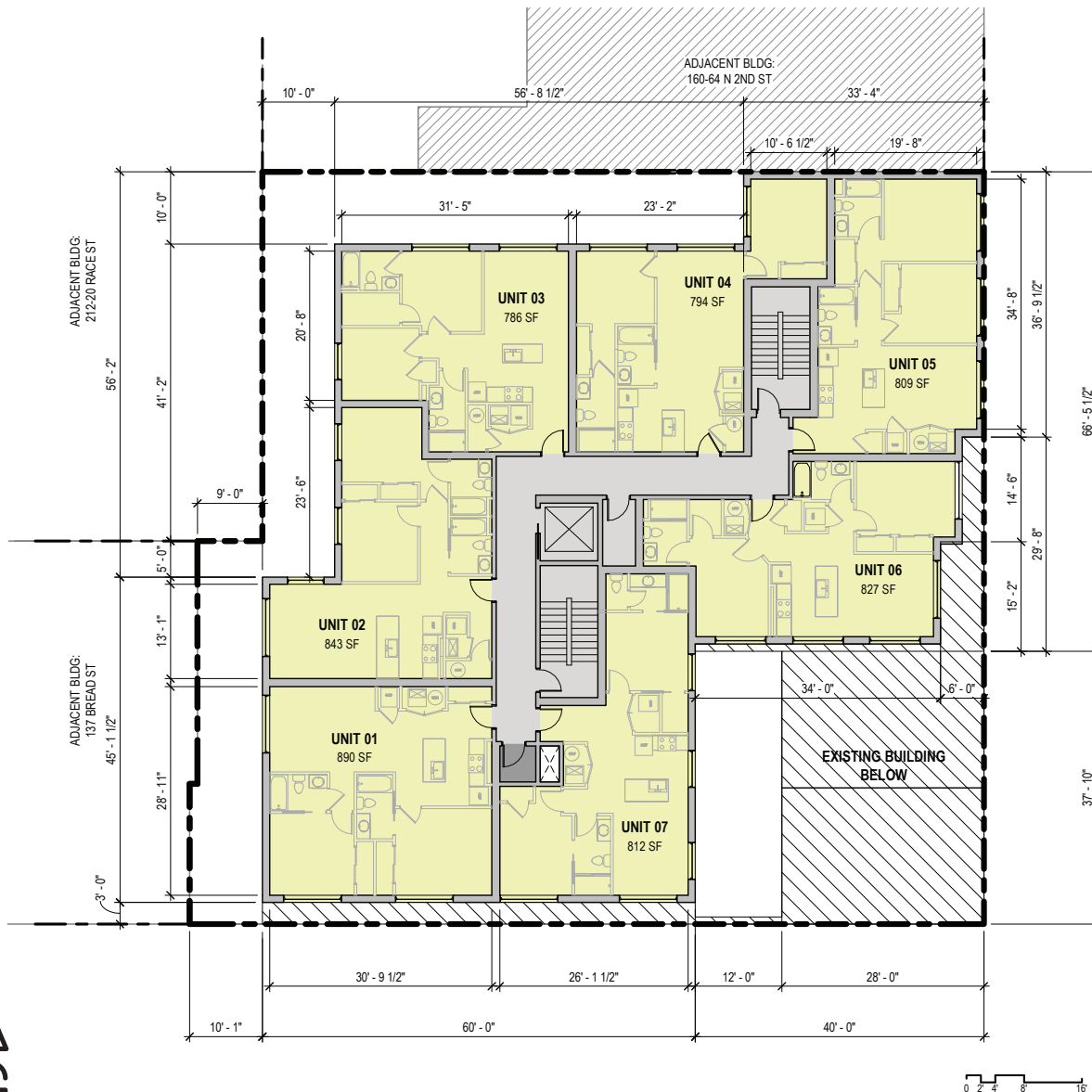


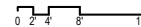
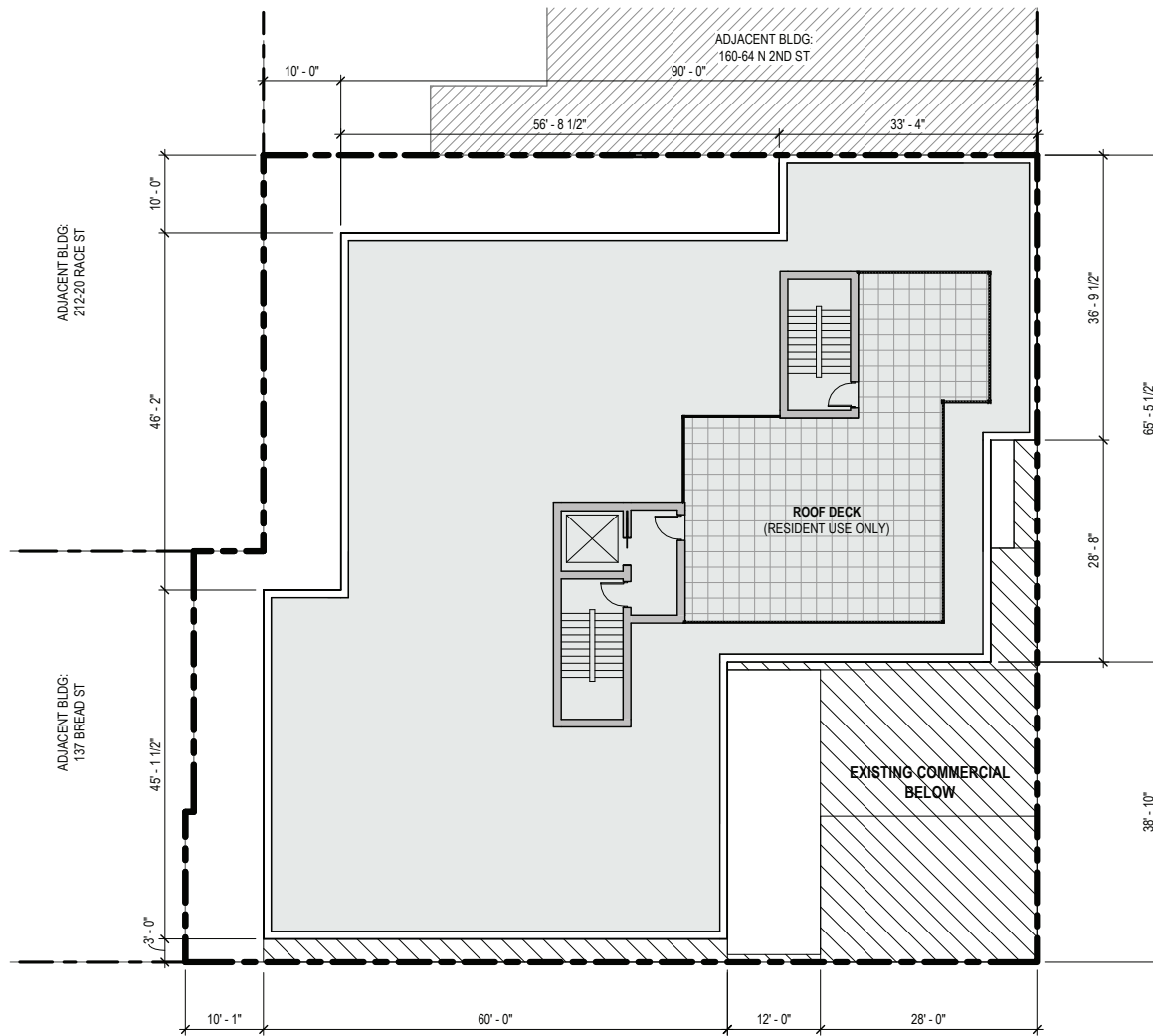
SITE PLAN - DEMOLISHED



SITE PLAN - PROPOSED



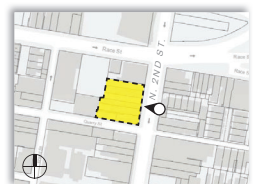




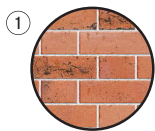
PROPOSED ROOF PLAN



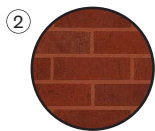
ELEVATION VIEW ON N 2ND ST.



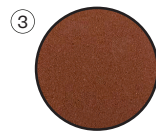
SITE CONDITION - WITH PROPOSED MASSING



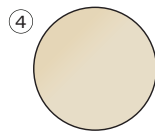
①
NEW BRICK VENEER TO
MATCH EXISTING BRICK



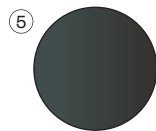
②
COLONIAL BRICK VENEER
RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



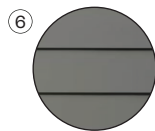
③
CAST STONE SILLS,
FRAMES, & ACCENTS
RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



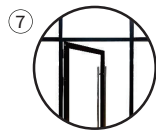
④
COMPOSITE METAL PANEL,
W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES
ALABASTER



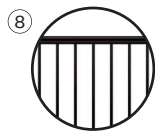
⑤
COMPOSITE METAL PANEL,
W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES
CHARCOAL



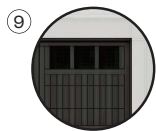
⑥
FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING,
AGED PEWTER



⑦
ANODIZED ALUMINIUM
STOREFRONT. BLACK



⑧
VERTICAL PICKET
GUARDRAIL. BLACK

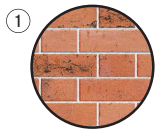


⑨
SOLID PANELED
GARAGE DOOR
CHARCOAL GRAY

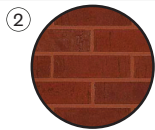


EXTERIOR ELEVATION: N. 2ND ST.

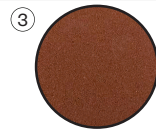
PAGE 26



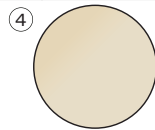
1
NEW BRICK VENEER TO
MATCH EXISTING BRICK



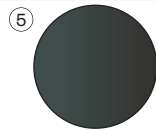
2
COLONIAL BRICK VENEER
RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



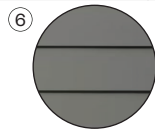
3
CAST STONE SILLS,
FRAMES, & ACCENTS
RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



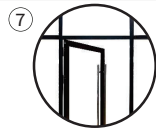
4
COMPOSITE METAL PANEL,
W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES
ALABASTER



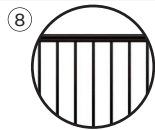
5
COMPOSITE METAL PANEL,
W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES
CHARCOAL



6
FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING,
AGED PEWTER



7
ANODIZED ALUMINIUM
STOREFRONT, BLACK



8
VERTICAL PICKET
GUARDRAIL, BLACK

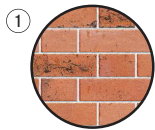


9
SOLID PANELED
GARAGE DOOR
CHARCOAL GRAY

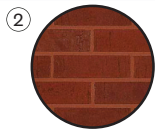


EXTERIOR ELEVATION: QUARRY ST

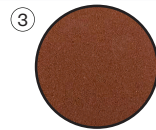
PAGE 27



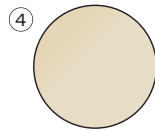
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NEW BRICK VENEER TO
MATCH EXISTING BRICK



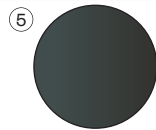
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COLONIAL BRICK VENEER
RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



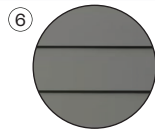
3
CAST STONE SILLS,
FRAMES, & ACCENTS
RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



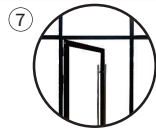
4
COMPOSITE METAL PANEL,
W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES
ALABASTER



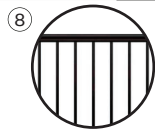
5
COMPOSITE METAL PANEL,
W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES
CHARCOAL



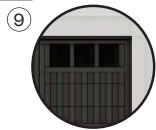
6
FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING,
AGED PEWTER



7
ANODIZED ALUMINIUM
STOREFRONT, BLACK



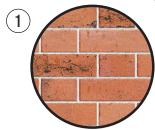
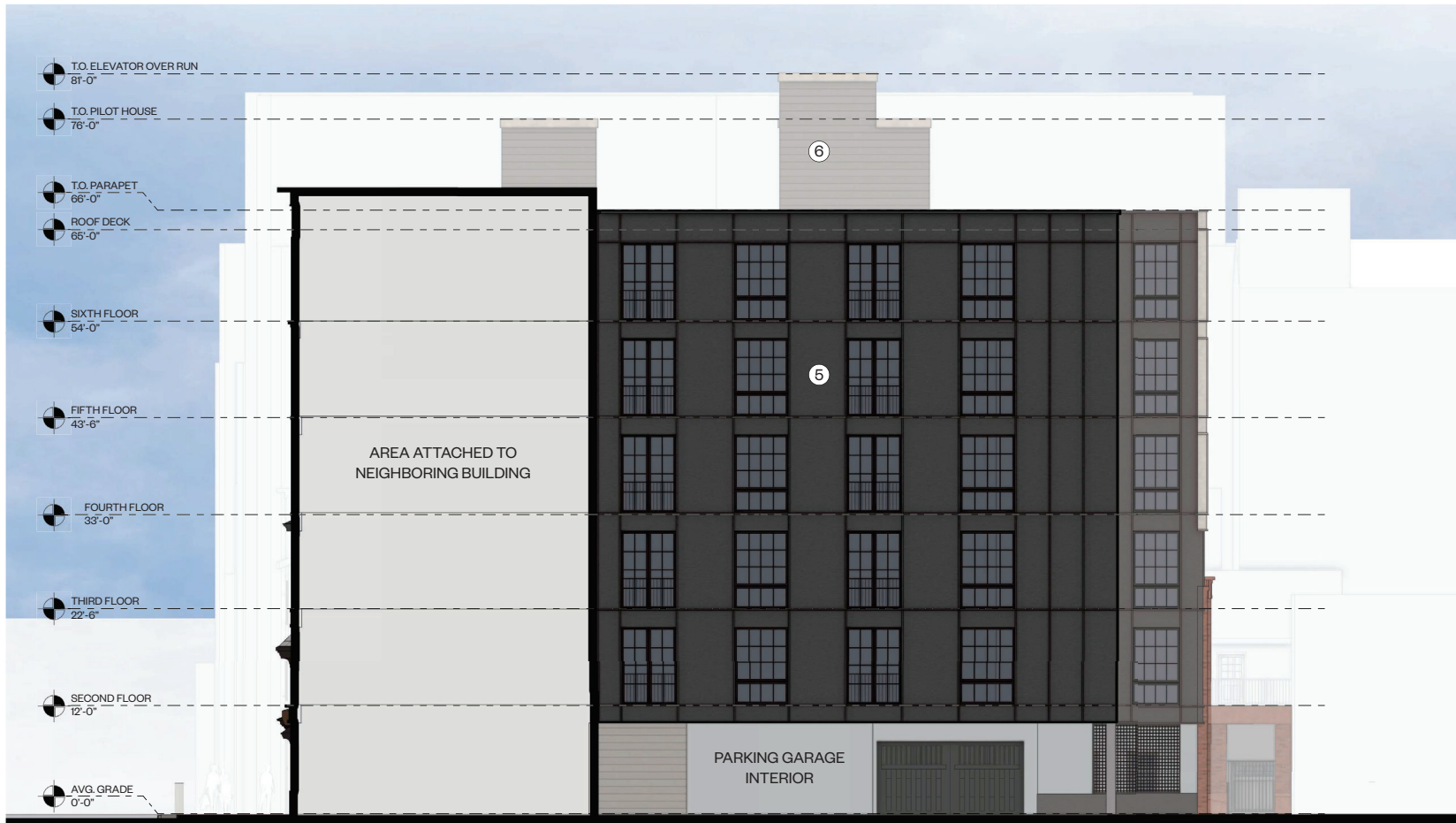
8
VERTICAL PICKET
GUARDRAIL, BLACK



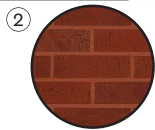
9
SOLID PANELED
GARAGE DOOR
CHARCOAL GRAY



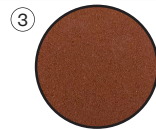
EXTERIOR ELEVATION: WEST FACADE



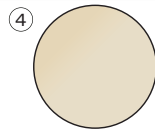
① NEW BRICK VENEER TO MATCH EXISTING BRICK



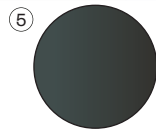
② COLONIAL BRICK VENEER RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



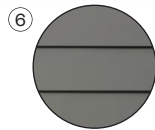
③ CAST STONE SILLS, FRAMES, & ACCENTS RED W/ MATCHING MORTAR



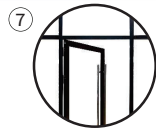
④ COMPOSITE METAL PANEL, W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES ALABASTER



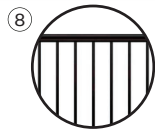
⑤ COMPOSITE METAL PANEL, W/ EXTRUDED TRIM PROFILES CHARCOAL



⑥ FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING, AGED PEWTER



⑦ ANODIZED ALUMINIUM STOREFRONT. BLACK



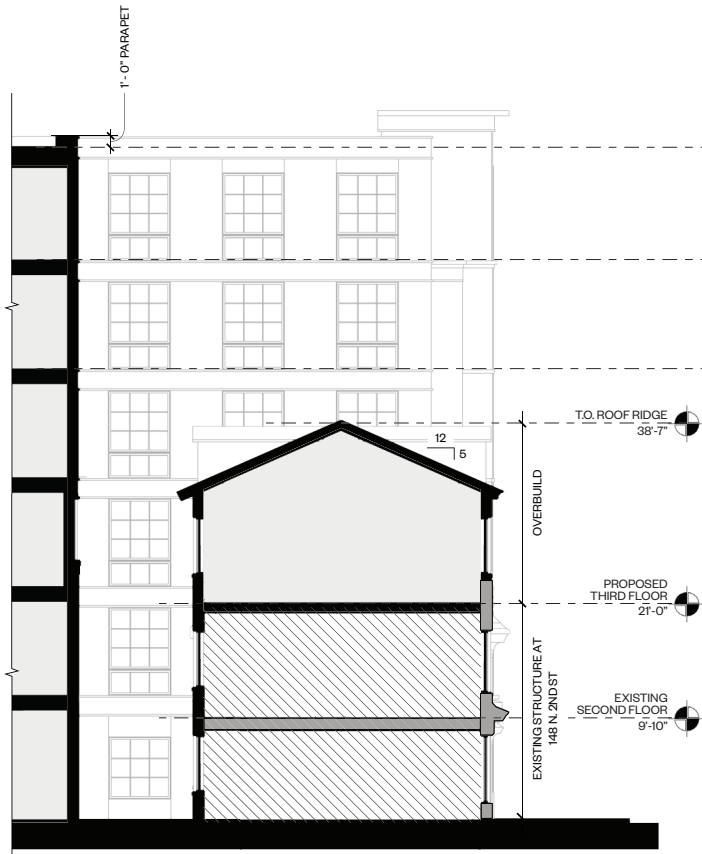
⑧ VERTICAL PICKET GUARDRAIL. BLACK



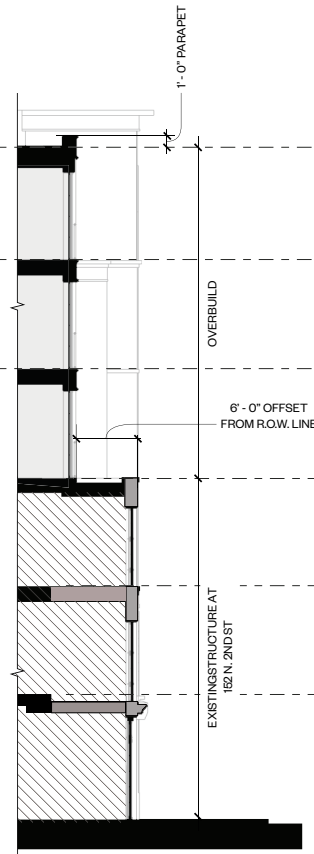
⑨ SOLID PANELED GARAGE DOOR CHARCOAL GRAY



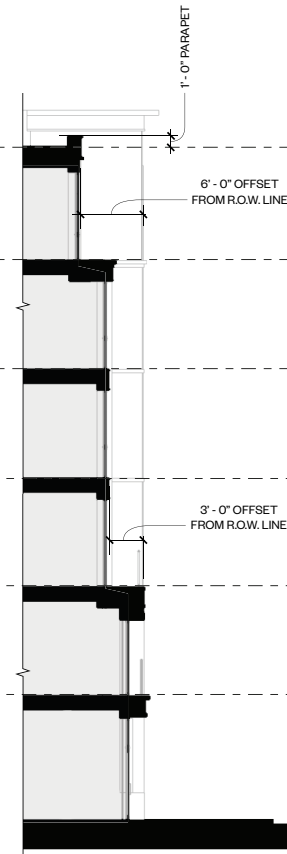
EXTERIOR ELEVATION: NORTH FACADE



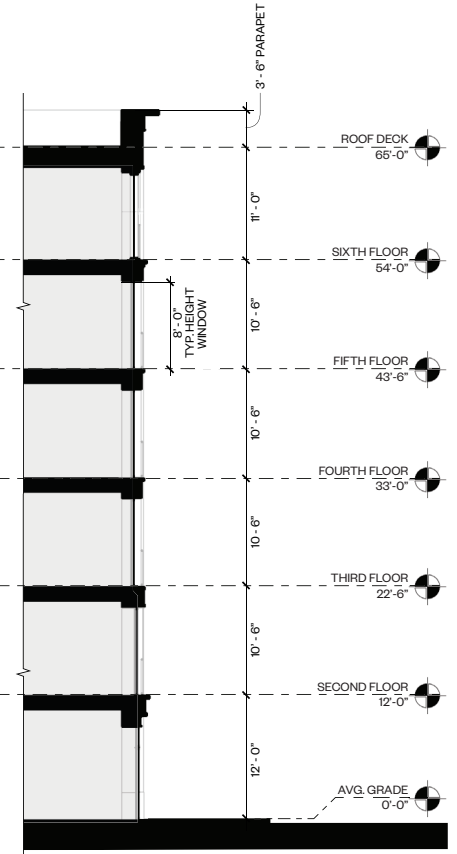
SECTION A



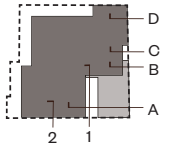
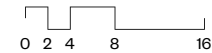
SECTION B



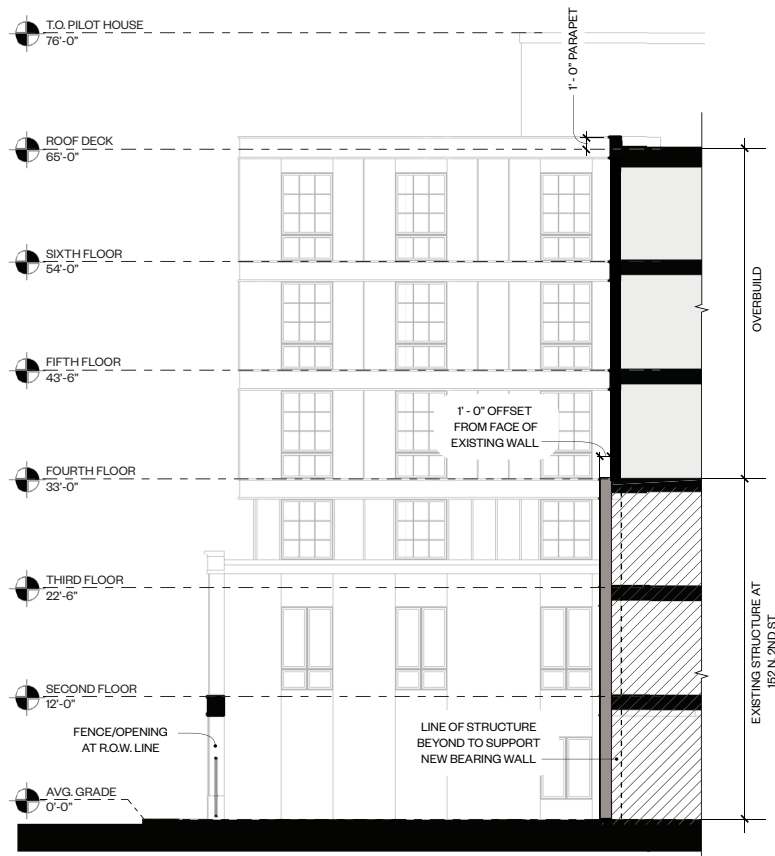
SECTION C



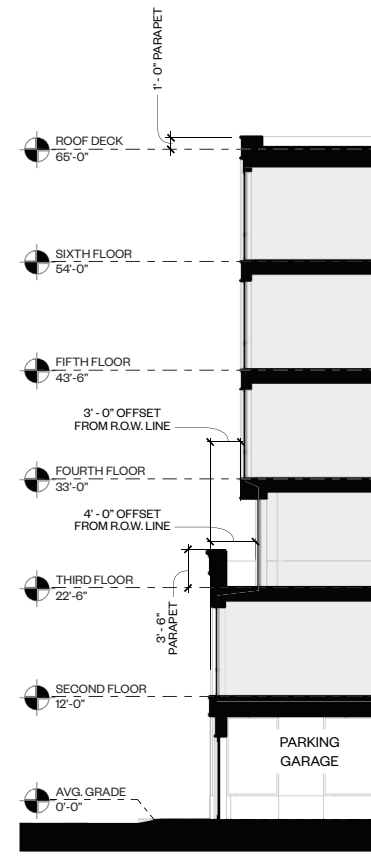
SECTION D



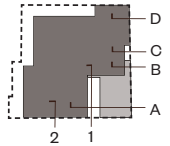
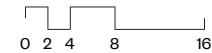
WALL SECTIONS - AT N. 2ND ST.



SECTION 1



SECTION 2



WALL SECTIONS - AT QUARRY ST.



VIEW NORTHWEST ON N 2ND ST.



VIEW FROM N 2ND ST.



SITE CONDITION - WITH PROPOSED MASSING



STREET LEVEL VIEW - SOUTHWEST ON N 2ND ST.





VIEW SOUTH ON N 2ND ST.



IN SITU CONCEPTUAL RENDERING

PAGE 35



VIEW FROM QUARRY ST.



SITE CONDITION - WITH PROPOSED MASSING



STREET LEVEL VIEW - WEST ON QUARRY ST.



SITE CONDITION - WITH PROPOSED MASSING

PAGE 37



VIEW EAST ON QUARRY ST.



IN SITU CONCEPTUAL RENDERING

PAGE 38