

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD WORK SESSION

Design Review Board Case # 2020-00003
Block P – 765 John Carlyle – South Tower

Application	General Data	
Project Name: 765 John Carlyle – South Tower Location: Block P – Carlyle CDD Applicant: Carlyle Plaza, LLC c/o McGuireWoods LLP	DRB Date:	August 27, 2020
	Site Area:	Block P – Carlyle CDD
	Zone:	CDD #1
	Proposed Use:	Senior Living
	Gross Floor Area:	246,223GFA
Purpose of Application: Conceptual review of the height, scale and massing for a proposed senior living tower in Block P, Carlyle CDD.		
Staff Reviewers: Robert M. Kerns, AICP robert.kerns@alexandriava.gov Thomas H. Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Nathan Imm Nathan.imm@alexandriava.gov Carson C. Lucarelli carson.lucarelli@alexandriava.gov		
DRB ACTION FOR AUGUST 27, 2020 WORK SESSION – SUMMARY: Following a vote to approve the final submission package for the north tower and podium, which has been submitted under separate cover, the applicant delivered their first formal presentation of the proposed elderly housing, south tower. The south tower represents a change in use from the previously approved office design and requires approval of an SUP amendment by City Council at a later date. There was extensive discussion regarding Staff’s comments on improving the penthouse level of the building. Staff sought a more individualistic expression of each tower at the roof level. With a motion by Lewis and a second of Pepper, the design was approved as submitted, save and except any further recommendations regarding the expression of the roofline at the penthouse level as may be recommended at the next DRB meeting. A final approval and recommendation to Planning Commission and City Council is required as the next step, to occur subsequent to City Staff review and commentary on the SUP amendment application for the project. The project’s conceptual package was approved by a vote of 5 – 0 with no abstentions.		

Block P – DRB Work Session

Background

This project was previously heard by the DRB during 2006 and 2007, receiving approval for the Design Concept in May 2007 with a number of conditions. Additional approvals were obtained in July and September 2007, for final design of materials with conditions, and for treatment of parking garage and building top accordingly. Further design modifications were proposed and accepted in 2008 and 2015.

The project as proposed consists of the entire Block P development site within the Carlyle CDD and includes two towers conjoined by a common podium. The southern of the two buildings includes a change of use from office to senior living facility, while the northern tower will remain as office – with approximately 12000GFA of ground floor retail – as originally approved.

The Applicant's proposal and City staff report are available on the [DRB website](#). An early pre-concept consideration of the northern building was originally scheduled to be presented at the March 19, 2020 DRB Meeting. Materials from the Applicant were provided; however, this meeting was subsequently cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The presentation and discussion were to have been informal, with no intended action or vote required from the DRB. Shortly thereafter, on April 10th, at the Applicant's request, staff provided a memo to members of the DRB with recommendations for the Applicant based on the materials submitted for the north building. DRB members provided input on these recommendations, and these were subsequently provided to the Applicant as informal input. On June 22nd of this year, the DRB convened for the first time in the 2020 calendar year – where by approval for the northern tower's conceptual massing, architecture and density was made under unanimous consent. The DRB were also shown pre-conceptual images of the southern tower. However, the conversations were informal thus no vote was taken.

Proposal

The applicant, Carlyle Plaza, LLC, proposes to construct two towers of varying height on the Block P development site within the Carlyle CDD – 2600' from the Eisenhower Metro Station. As noted above, the project is divided into two phases – a north tower and podium and a southern tower. The northern office tower and podium are seeking final DRB approval under separate cover while the southern, senior living building – the subject of this application – seeks conceptual design approval for height, scale and massing for a 205' senior living tower – which was originally approved as a 185' office tower.

Regulatory Approval Trajectory

While the architecture of the building may appear to be complete, the sole purpose of this submission review is to reach consensus on the general height, scale and massing of the building. It is worth noting that the south tower – as proposed – requires City Council approval via the Special Use Permit (hereafter "SUP") amendment process. Therefore, the Applicant must also amend their SUP as the senior living facility in order to exceed the permitted allowances for height, use and square footage as per the original SUP approval (e.g. SUP#2018-0039, amending SUP#2253) which govern the development site. Therefore, the DRB – at a later date – must also make a subsequent recommendation to the City Council regarding the applicant's SUP request, which is tentatively docketed for November of this year. A copy of the applicant's SUP

application is attached to the end of this report.

Parking

Due to site constraints, and based on the previous approvals for the block, the Applicant will construct a vertical podium that conjoins the two towers at their base. The podium is approximately five (5) stories in height and will be vehicularly accessible by curb-cuts along Hoofs Run Drive, in the same locations as previously approved. As noted in the April memo, the applicant proposes one (1) fewer level of garage, or approximately 125 fewer spaces – which is in the interest of the City’s goals to “right-size” parking, particularly when the development site is within a transit-rich environment.

Staff Discussion

All comments, critiques and recommendations pertain only to the Conceptual South Tower DRB submission package, which was received through an electronic link, delivered via email on 8.14.2020, and not to any other iteration or design of the building. More specifically:

- The roof level of the building has matured into a handsome and functional element of the tower. The crowing effect achieved by the diminishing massing and expressed structure of the cornice/soffits at the penthouse level engages the skyline unlike most other building presently in the district. This is further enhanced by high-quality materials and finishes to help stitch together a new, unique and modern piece of architecture.
- There are however some concerns about the materiality and its integration with the remainder of the building at the retail and podium levels. As intimated previously, and furthermore herein below, the use of the dark brick to define the podium level (thru P3 level) of the tower is not successfully integrated within the remainder of the architecture. The applicant is encouraged to reach out to Staff regarding a separate, off-line discussion, following the DRB and their input, on ways to integrate more successfully said materiality at the retail, human-scaled levels of the building.

Therefore, beginning with the next DRB submission, the applicant shall provide:

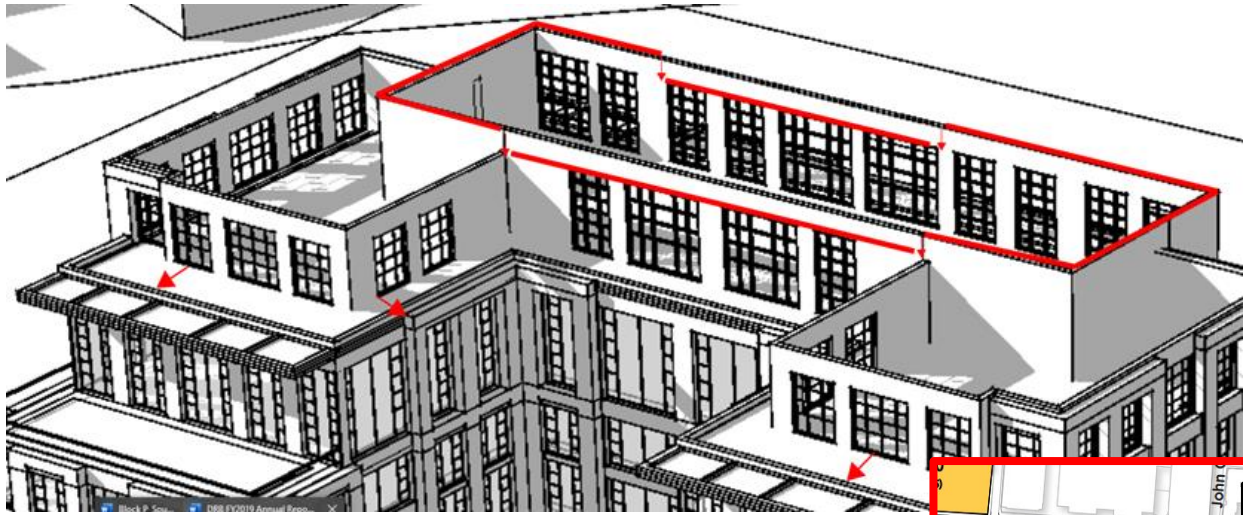
- **REPEAT COMMENT:** Pursuant to the controlling document, SUP#2018-0039, and more specifically Condition #70A.m., the Applicant shall achieve “*LEED Silver or equivalent*”, as per the 2009 City of Alexandria Green Building Policy. This shall include, but not be limited to detailed information or similar on green building systems and approaches for the south tower. Staff understands that many of the specifics related to the such are still in their infancy. Never the less, it is important that these conversations are imperative for Staff
- **REPEAT COMMENT:** Preliminary information on Affordable Housing allocations, with a focus on providing on-site units for the Senior Living is necessary in order for the project to advance.
- **REPEAT COMMENT:** Additional information on considerations of the on-structure landscape plantings/design.

- **REPEAT COMMENT:** Improved floorplans at street and parking level(s) that are fully dimensioned and replete with information call-outs, in order to facilitate Staff's review. Additionally, include information regarding loading and drop-off/pick-up of residents and workers.
- **REPEAT COMMENT:** Building upon the above: Given the proliferation of eCommerce and shared-mobility, the applicant should consider integrating curbside management into the overall site design. Consider ways in which to integrate these services within the site/building itself and/or in coordination with the City of the curbside area for such deliveries and pick-up/drop-off while preserving the integrity of adjacent/future bicycle paths, roadways and sidewalks.

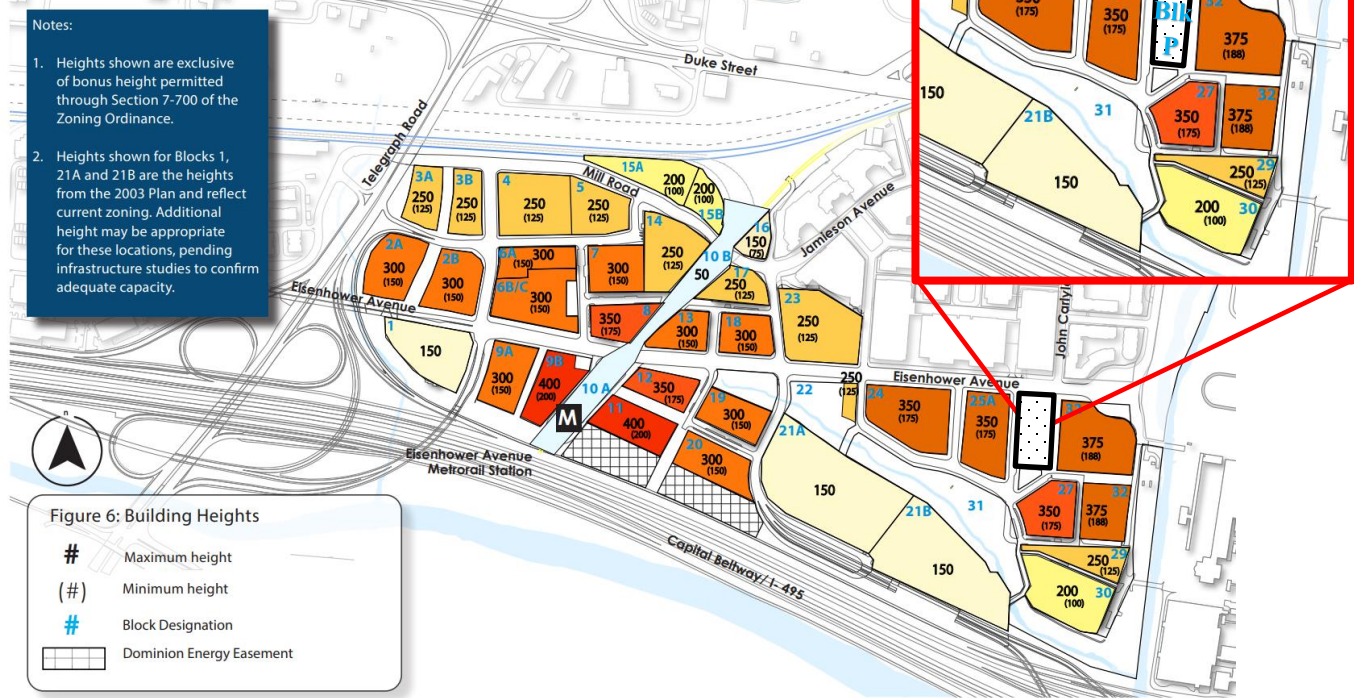
A. Height, Scale and Massing

As noted above, the south tower presents not only a change in floor area program, but also in height, density and massing. And as mentioned, these changes require an amendment to the existing SUP – which necessitates an appearance before City Council. In spite of the additional legislative requirement, the changes to the previously approved office tower's architectural envelope, height and massing are warmly received. The heights proposed are also in keeping with those outlined in the newly adopted Eisenhower East SAP – which envelops the site from the west, south and east. However, some refinements are necessary at the penthouse level. To this end, the applicant should consider the following with the next submission:

1. Consider lowering the height of the connector piece to emphasize the verticality of the towers. (see sketch below)
2. Additionally, consider aligning the face of the penthouse (along *future* John Carlyle Street) with the bulk of general massing of the building for said reasons. (also see sketch below)



Above: Staff's sketch as related to item A-1. above.



Above: Location of the development site, Block P – Carlyle CDD, in relationship to the Min./Max. building heights, as approved in the neighboring Eisenhower East Small Area Plan

B. Parking

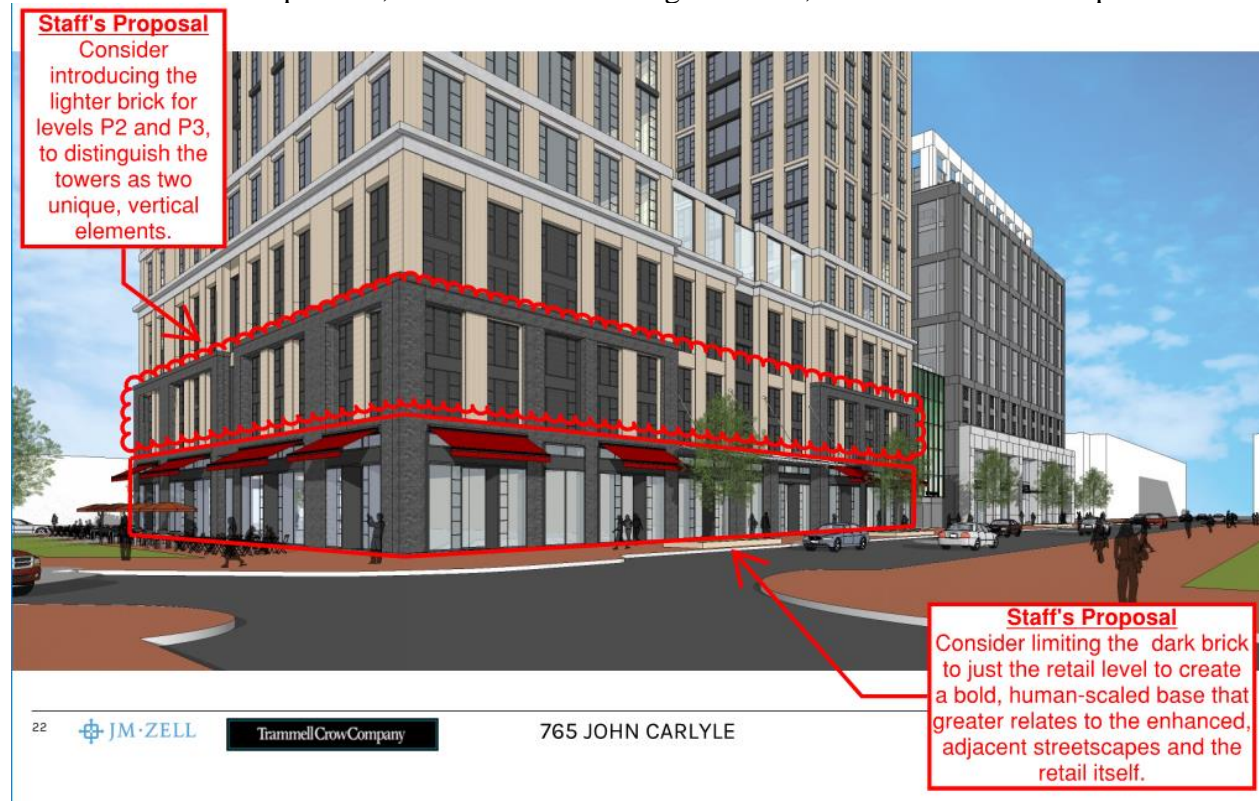
With this iteration, the applicant has reverted to the previously approved garage level screening- in which is a system of spherically-perforated metal panels arranged to mimic typical windows are utilized. However, the graphics themselves, as described more thoroughly in section E – Graphics, contain inconsistencies which shall be reconciled prior to final approval.

C. Glazing

Staff appreciates that the design team has taken an asymmetrical approach with the glazing, mullions, and slab edge cladding in the two-story office façade openings, while utilizing a more traditional symmetrical approach for the senior living tower. This improves individuality between by helping to distinguish the two buildings and uses – which are still connected visually through the use of a two-story window ganging.

D. Podium/Base

As previously noted, the dark brick materiality – apparently superimposed on the south tower base to relate to the lower base datum line on the north tower – detract from the strong base of the southern building. A more successful application would be to use the materiality to express only the retail level of the podium, and to revert to the lighter brick, as noted in the markup below.



Additionally, the change in the awning’s materiality from an industrial expression to an apparent “wind-up” variant is concerning from a design, safety and operational perspective. Therefore, the Applicant shall revert to the original, steel and glass awning, which better relates to the modern, refined architecture of the block.

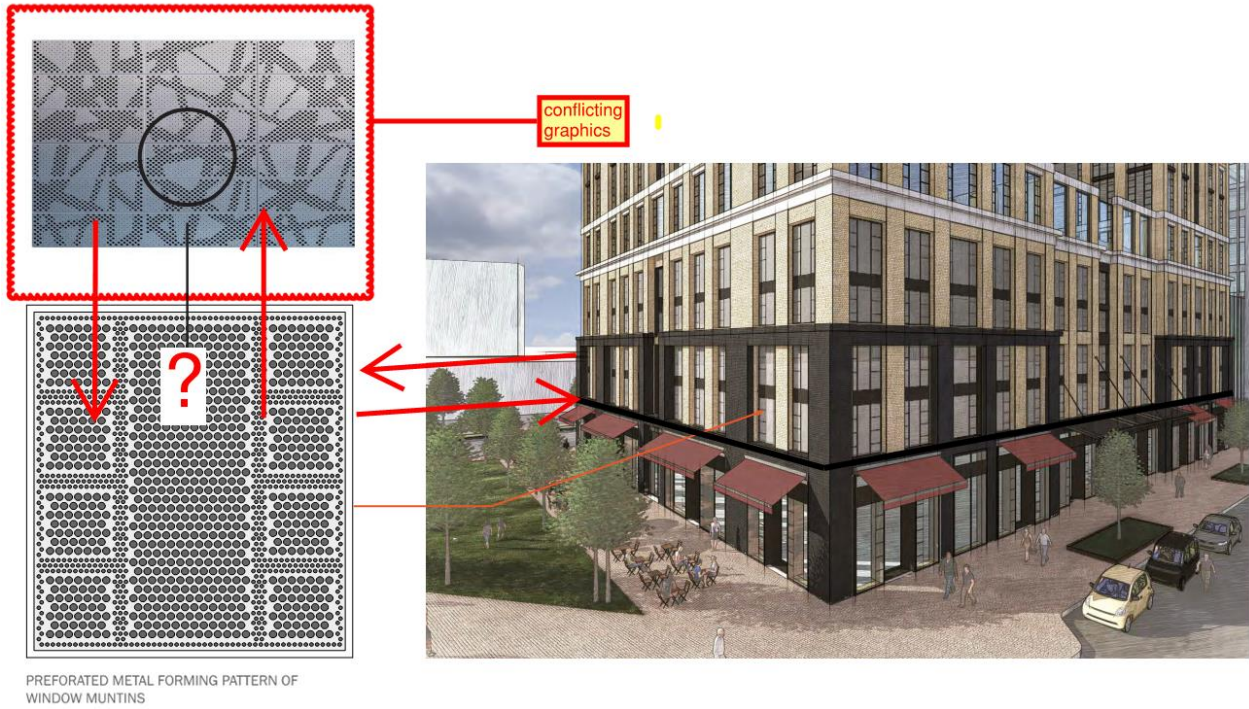


V.



E. Graphics

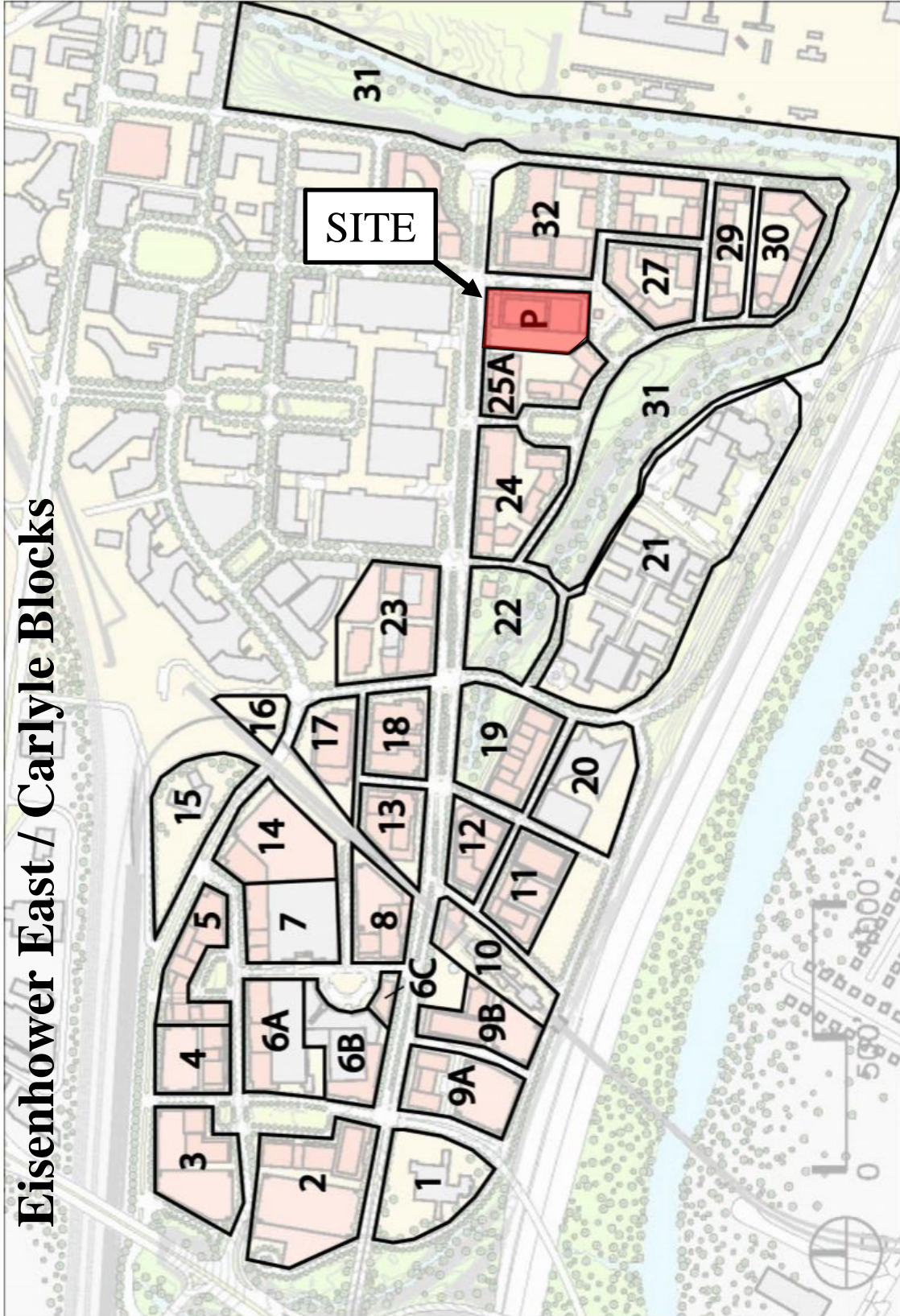
The graphics with this submission are a general improvement. However, those which depict the perforated metal screening used to conceal the above-grade garage levels (P2 – P5, see below) are inconsistent and must be reconciled.



There are also inconsistencies with the labeling of the materiality, as illustrated in a markup below. therefore, all elevations shall be reconciled to include the correct material call out.



Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks



Attachments: