



**CITY OF DOVER, DELAWARE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING  
Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 3:30 PM**

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*City Hall Council Chambers, 15 Loockerman Plaza, Dover, Delaware*

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**AGENDA**

**IN-PERSON and VIRTUAL MEETING NOTICE**

The Historic District Commission, Meeting for Thursday, July 17, 2025 will be held as an In-Person Meeting at the City Council Chambers. The public is welcome to attend in person. The Meeting will also be provided as a Virtual Meeting using Webex, an audio/video conferencing system as an electronic means of communication. See the participation information below to join by phone or computer.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INFORMATION  
City of Dover Historic District Commission Meeting of July 17, 2025**

**Join By Phone:** Dial 1-650-479-3208  
**Access code:** 253 584 98949  
**Password from Phones:** 36837432

**Join Online:** <https://bit.ly/HDCMeeting07172025>  
**Webinar Number:** 2535 849 8949  
**Password:** Dover HDC

If you are new to Webex get the app now at <https://www.webex.com/> to be ready when the meeting starts. For problems accessing the meeting, please call the Planning Office at (302) 736-7196.

**WELCOME**

**ROLL CALL**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Adoption of Minutes of May 15, 2025

**COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS**

**Summary of Activity**

- [2.](#) Summary of Applications for 2024 and 2025
- [3.](#) Summary of Architectural Review Certificates for 2025

**Department of Planning & Inspections Updates**

**NEW APPLICATIONS**

- [4.](#) HI-25-02 Mixed Use Building at 120 S Governors Avenue – Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification for the construction of a four story, 169,080 SF Mixed Use Building including a grocery, retail and restaurant spaces, a child day care, 120 apartment units, and a roof-top courtyard with site improvements of a parking lot, a courtyard, and landscaping. The parcel contains 1.70 +/- acres. The property is zoned C-2 (Central Commercial Zone) and subject to H (Historic District Zone). The property is located on the west side of South Governors Avenue and halfway between Reed Street and West Loockerman Street. The owner of record is Downtown Dover Development Corporation c/o Downtown Dover Partnership. Property Address: 120 S. Governors Avenue, Dover. Tax Parcel: ED-05-077.09-01-44.00-000. Council District 4.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Review of Permits Referred to Commission**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Certified Local Government (CLG) Program**

**Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan**

**ADJOURN**

**Posted:** July 10, 2025

THE AGENDA ITEMS AS LISTED MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED IN SEQUENCE. PURSUANT TO 29 DEL. C. §10004(e)(2), THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OR THE DELETION OF ITEMS, INCLUDING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS, WHICH ARISE AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING

**CITY OF DOVER**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MAY 15, 2025**

The Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 3:54 PM as an In-Person Meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers (anchor location) and virtually using the videoconferencing system Webex. With Chairman Czerwinski presiding, the other members present were Mrs. Richardson and Mrs. Mason (virtual). Ms. Horsey was absent. (There is currently one member not appointed.)

The Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Salzano, and Mrs. Savage-Purnell.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Mrs. Richardson moved for approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Chairman Czerwinski and the vote was unanimously carried 3-0. Ms. Horsey was absent.*

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

*Mrs. Richardson moved for approval of the Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2025, with any necessary corrections, seconded by Chairman Czerwinski, and approved 3-0. Ms. Horsey was absent.*

**COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS**

**Summary of Applications 2024 and 2025**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that you have considered a series of nine (9) Applications over the course of 2024, and today we have another Application. Technically it's numbered the third Application for 2025. One of the other Applications for 2025 is still pending its appearance before the Commission. The Summary Chart gives the status number of those projects from 2024. Those Applications are underway or moving through additional processes to finalize the Application Site Plan approvals.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on the Applications from the last two years? There was none.

**Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2025**

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is where we track all Permit activity in the Historic District area by the Building Permits filed. A number of the permits are eligible for Staff review of that Architectural Review Certification and in other cases, the Historic District Commission was involved in their review process. Through the end of April, at this point, there have been twelve (12) Permit Applications in the Historic District area. The significant tally this time is for Roof Permits. A lot of those are basically reviewed by Staff and in most cases, you can't see the roof that is being worked on because they are flat roofs here in the Downtown. We have also seen two (2) Demolition Permits. Those were ones related to Applications that appeared before

this body. Those being those two properties on South Bradford Street. There have been two Sign Permits, a Window Permit, and a Building Exterior and an Interior Permit.

Staff were able to review a total of nine of those and three involved the Historic District Commission as part of the review process.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on the permit activity. There was none.

#### Department of Planning & Inspections Updates

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that she had good news of a new Planner II, Chris Salzano who has been with us for a month yesterday. We welcome Chris. He actually worked on the review of this project. We will hear from him in a bit. Other information from the Department of Planning and Inspections, we do have a number of vacancies as there are other employment opportunities as well across the City that are open. Please visit the City's website to find out more information about how you can join the team here at Dover. I will say this on behalf of the Code Enforcement Division; it's time to cut your grass. The City has the ability to issue violations if your grass is 8 inches in height or a greater. In other items of interest, the City Council held their Annual Meeting in May and as part of that Chairman Czerwinski was reappointed to continue on another term here with the Historic District Commission. We still await approval for the appointment of the fifth member of the Commission.

#### **NEW APPLICATION**

HI-25-03 Biggs Museum Expansion: Select Removals at 15 and 21 The Green – Public Hearing and Review of the Architectural Review Certification for the selective removal of portions of the buildings located at 15 and 21 The Green as associated with future renovation and expansion of the Biggs Museum of American Art. The proposal includes the selective dismantling of a fire escape at 15 The Green and selective demolition of the rear two-story addition, basement and associated fire escape at 21 The Green. The properties total 0.2 acres+/- and are both zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone) and subject to the SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone) and the H (Historic District Zone). The subject properties are located on the northeastern side of The Green, south of East North Street and east of South State Street. The owner of record is the Sewell C Biggs Trust dba Biggs Museum of American Art. Property Addresses: 15 and 21 The Green. Tax Parcels: ED05-077.09-05-19.00-000 and ED05-077.09-05-18.00-000. Council District 4.

Mr. Chris Salzano stated that this application before you is HI-25-03 Biggs Museum Expansion: Select Removals at 15 and 21 The Green. These structures are located on The Green in the Dover Green National Register Historic District. Both properties are owned by the Sewell C. Biggs Trust, and the lots total 0.2 acres combined. The structures have changed over time with both expansions being added in the past hundred years. The proposal before you today is a request to selectively remove the rear addition at 21 The Green and the fire escape at 15 The Green. The project intends on preserving the original façades of 15 and 21 The Green. All removable work is limited to the rear of the structures. The Historic District Commission is charged with evaluating the proposals against the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*, specifically the standards in Chapter 4 regarding demolition. Staff has provided review

comments for this project starting on page 6 of the DAC Report. With that, I'm going to hand it over to the Applicant to add any additional information.

Mrs. Melson-Williams noted that the Architectural Review Staff Report was included and provided to the applicant and to the Historic District Commission members as was what we call their architectural narrative packet which consisted of text and a series of images.

We do have that entire packet here. Chris just pulled a couple of images to the front to help explain what's going on here. Maybe if you want to back up one slide so we can see where we're talking about, and we'll turn it over to your Director. You can identify yourself for the record and proceed.

**Representative:** Mr. Hassan Najjar, Executive Director of the Biggs Museum of American Art Presentation

Mr. Najjar stated that they are really excited about this project at 15-21 The Green. I think most of you know historic buildings if left empty and unintended are the fast track to demolition and destruction. Thankfully, that will not be the case here with 15-21 The Green. We are working on some very exciting Plans for these buildings so that not only do they contribute to The Green itself but also contribute to the City of Dover. Behind me I've got Staff, Board, and volunteers who have been working tirelessly on this project. I want to thank them for doing that. We will continue to work on this as we move into fruition, but I also want to recognize the folks that have joined us online. It is the award-winning Smith Group who prepared a lot of the materials that you see today. I am not going to sit here and rehash everything that's in the package because you have it in front of you, but certainly we will be here to answer any questions. Our folks online will also be able to answer any questions that you may have. And again, thank you for hearing from us today.

Chairman Czerwinski said thank you. He asked Mr. Najjar if this concludes the presentation as far as the project is concerned. Mr. Najjar replied yes.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if any other members have any questions about their presentation or anything about the project? Mrs. Richardson replied no, I have read the package thoroughly. Mrs. Mason also replied no.

Mrs. Dawn Melson-Williams mentioned she wanted to recognize the members of the project team that joined us online this afternoon for this meeting. There are three individuals from the SmithGroup that joined us online and that includes Jim Shepherd, Grace Lee and Eleanor Choy. Additionally, there is Carl Freedman who I believe acts on behalf of the museum as part of the project and then I think one other member of your Board has also joined us. I would actually suggest that we ask the Smith Group if there's anything in particular you want to highlight regarding this request today. Now would be an opportunity for you to talk a little bit about the project and your efforts to bring this to us today.

Mr. Shepherd stated that he was happy to speak on behalf of the Smith Group. I'm the Director of Historic Preservation and the Vice President at SmithGroup. We have been involved with the project for some time. This package is to recommend the dismantling of the rear part of 21 The Green. It's a by-product of a Master Plan that we had worked on with the Biggs Museum that looked at not only these two historic structures, but also their main museum. With the longer process of integrating these two historic structures into the museum as a part of a future design exercise, there's been a lot of effort and thought and documentation that had gone into that Master Plan. A by-product which was to do some additional historic research to better understand the evolution of 15 and 21 The Green. We did have Robinson and Associates join our team at that time as an enabling study that fed into the recommendations in our submittal. They did some extensive research on the evolution of both buildings. The history started from their 1859 construction and tracked their changes over time to present day. One of the things that was a byproduct of the Master Plan was a planning of a footprint and expansion for the Biggs Museum that could link to these historic buildings. Through our studies, it made us realize the existing conditions and restrictions of the Historic District and that an obvious place for expansion that would minimize visual impact in that area was behind the historic buildings. One of the things that was limiting was the extension of 21 The Green. We did want to make sure we thoroughly documented and understood what the addition was because we very much understood the proximity to The Green and the definition of the Historic District and the fact that these two buildings contributed to it. I think through our findings of the historical resource research, we did find that that backside of the building had been changed over time. It started as a woodshed and then was added onto in the 1920s and expanded further. With the two buildings and their components, the backside of 21 The Green had the least amount of integrity and really lacked the characteristics that contributed to the criteria that was the reason why these two buildings were listed as part of the Historic District. Our document really walks through it clearly. Both are the reasoning for why we are asking for this. A pretty clean and concise definition of what we are removing is the back portion of 21 The Green and its fire escape. At some point, a fire escape was added to 15 The Green because of the need for egress as a result of the upper floors being used as office space. We are asking for the removal of that as well with the intent that with a future designed expansion that would connect these buildings to the Biggs Museum. There would be a total Plan for an accessible elevator and stair that could link all of these. I think you've already showed the Plan. I think the elevations make it clear as to what we are removing. The impact of the Plan shows a very clear and concise removal and the impact of what will remain when that removal happens. I do want to emphasize that obviously we did a lot of review analysis of the removal of this and tried to make it clear that what we are removing doesn't really from The Green impact the visual appearance of the historic buildings at all. We are making sure and thinking through the next steps of the concept design which will come after we have gotten approval for the removal of this. It will take into consideration these historic buildings and how we best integrate them. This concludes what I have to say. Thank you for the opportunity to share our research and recommendations.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if the Board members had any additional questions or comments?

Mrs. Richardson asked about the existing fire escape that is being removed. Is that currently in use? Mr. Shepherd replied yes, just to be clear, we are asking for approval for the removal of these two items with the intent that obviously before these can be removed, we need to go

through a design process to design an addition that would provide proper egress and accessibility that replaces the removal of those fire escapes.

The removal will not happen until the design is complete. We are seeking approval of the removal so that we can move forward for the next phase of the design, at which point we know that we do need to come back to you with our Concept Design for approval.

Mrs. Richardson asked once it's removed, will there be any danger? I mean, there are people on the 3rd floor. If there is a fire what is going to happen if you have to wait. Mr. Shepherd replied, to clarify, we are seeking the removal of this so we can move forward with the next phase of the design. The removal will be the first phase of construction as part of the expansion, at which point we will be integrating a new stair and elevator. Part of the overall construction which will be phased is the removal of this and the installation of an addition that will accommodate the elevator and stairs that will address the accessibility and egress. There will be no time when the fire escape is removed, but the design and construction hasn't happened; if that's clear.

Mr. Carl Freedman asked to go back to the slide that shows the Master Plan addition so that we can clarify the stairs. You're seeing on the slide that there's a new stair tower and elevator component that reaches up behind 15 The Green which is going to provide the egress in the future, but we need to understand that we can have the removals of the addition behind 21 The Green before we can design these additions. None of the demolition of the existing buildings will occur until we're ready to construct the new additions.

Mrs. Richardson said thank you, that answers my question.

Chairman Czerwinski asked Mrs. Mason if she had any questions or concerns or questions to the members.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that just for the record, she wanted to note that the last speaker was Mr. Carl Freedman. He was identifying a little more detail about the timeframe for the project.

Mrs. Mason mentioned that she was following along. She apologizes for being slow to respond. She understands what was said and it is very helpful. Forgive me for being a little slow.

Mrs. Melson-Williams said thank you, Mary. We appreciate you being here so we can keep moving forward.

Mrs. Mason said yeah, and I'm glad I'm here too because when I grew up, I loved that building. It was back in the old days when we used to roller skate around there. I think it's a beautiful building. I hope that they preserve the great qualities of the building, which I'm sure they will.

I guess that's something that we will hear more about because what we're looking at right now, this is basically just for the kind of fire escape, is that correct? Chairman Czerwinski replied it's

the demolition portion of the remodeling and the demolition is the building addition and fire escape. Mrs. Mason said okay.

*The public hearing is open.*

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone who would like to speak.

**Ms. Deborah Hanson-109 Coleman Avenue-Lewes DE**

I am a former resident of the City of Dover about 35 years ago before moving to Lewes, Delaware. I serve on the Historic District Commission in Lewes, Delaware.

I'm very familiar with this process. I did want to speak on behalf of this Application. I'm a board member of the Biggs Museum and I also serve on the Building Committee. We have been very thoughtful in this process and have been working with the SmithGroup. Our other partners have also been thoughtful to the extent that we've tried to engage in the community, not only to ascertain the needs of the Dover area, the Kent County area and the greater Delmarva peninsula; and how we can serve those many people.

When we had an opportunity to explore acquiring these two buildings, we were very excited because as you know, a portion of the Biggs Museum of American Art is a historic building and then it was added onto as the Visitor Center. We have done this in the past; we have been able to integrate successfully the old with the new. We believe that we are up to the task of doing this again. Commissioner Mary Mason, I wanted to just acknowledge your comment about what a beautiful building this is and that it is absolutely intent of the Building Committee to honor the beauty of these buildings. By honoring the history, I think it just preserves them for more time to come so there's a longer time for people to enjoy them, especially in this prominent position on The Green. So again, I'm speaking in favor of this and would ask you to consider this in a positive light. Thank you.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone who would like to speak.

**Mr. Dan Houghtaling -27 Clearview Drive – Dover DE**

I am very much in favor of this project. I love Old Dover. I taught Civil Engineering Architecture for 25 years at Del Tech. I love historic structures, and I really get upset when you do something to them that changes them. If you look at the façade of the two buildings, nothing is being done to change that appearance whatsoever. It ties in with the building on the end. Everything looks good. The building behind it really has no architectural value whatsoever; it has very little history to it. It's wooden and it's not in great shape. The cost of new mechanical systems, sprinkler systems, and just rehabbing the building would be excessive to get it to be used as part of the museum. The layout within those buildings is not conducive to the flow and safety of people going through. So, I am very much in favor of it.

**Mr. Charles Salkin-15 Maple Lane-Dover DE**

I have been nearly a 50-year resident of the City of Dover.

I have been on the Building Committee of the Biggs Museum since maybe before it started. I was asked to offer some advice about this project based on my experience when I was working. And one of the first things I said was that, of course, I knew that these buildings would be saved. One of my major concerns was how this building would tie in as the previous speaker mentioned sensitively and thoughtfully. I explained the process that we would need to go through with the City, starting with the Historic District Commission and here we are. I think that the team, the professional Staff, the consultants from a variety of different fields, and the Building Committee made up of Board members and volunteers have been very sensitive to this issue from the very beginning. In retrospect, I cannot think of any way we could have done more or gathered more information or been more prepared to explain why not only this can be removed, but it should be removed so that the essential buildings that face The Green can be permanently preserved and the Biggs Museum as an institution can thrive and ensure that those buildings will be retained for a long time. I have been the in-house critic through this whole process to make sure that we were ready for this day and I believe we are. I encourage you to act possibly on this recommendation.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone who would like to speak in person or on-line.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned if you have joined us online, certainly take this opportunity to unmute and we can take your statement.

The public hearing was closed seeing no one else wishing to speak in the room or virtually.

Mrs. Mary Mason mentioned that she thinks the project is a great idea. She loves the Biggs Museum, and she would like to see it continue to flourish. She loves those buildings, and she thinks the designs and the people who are orchestrating this seem to really know what they are doing. She is a hundred percent for this project.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned that his thoughts are pretty much the same. I mean, we're looking at an addition that has very low architectural value. It's off the back and you cannot see it from the street. We are not talking about an issue with the façade. We obviously have a complete building that was as-built. It's always great to see we have reuse in our buildings. No argument from me.

*Mrs. Richardson moved for approval of the Architectural Review Certification HI-25-03 Biggs Museum Expansion: Select Removals at the rear of 15 and 21 The Green to include the comments and recommendations presented by the Staff of the Planning Commission. It was seconded by Chairman Czerwinski and approved 3-0. Ms. Horsey was absent.*

**Roll Call Vote**

Mrs. Mason -Yes

Mrs. Richardson - Yes

Chairman Czerwinski -Yes

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that the aspect of designing the connection between the buildings would likewise be subject to a Historic District Commission review application in the future, and also a Planning Commission Site Development Plan review process as well. The Staff will work with the applicant to have them understand what that process involves as they as they move forward. We stand as a reference to how that happens and how you file those applications. Likewise, one of the items I will note that in our recommendations, we recognized the significant amount of research on these two buildings that has already occurred. We would certainly recommend that the information be provided to the Delaware Division of Historic and Cultural Affairs, otherwise known as the State Historic Preservation Office, so that it can be made part of their records in the Delaware Cultural Resource Survey, which is where information about the historic resources throughout Delaware is gathered and held for future research and access. We can certainly assist in making that contact with the State and with the Applicants for this. They took a big step today in your action and review of the first phase. We clearly understand that these demolition and removal dismantling activities would not happen until the actual construction of an expansion is underway basically.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Review of Permits Referred to Commission**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that there were no Permits to specifically bring to the Commission today.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Certified Local Government (CLG) Program**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that the City of Dover is a participant in that program. I have not heard any additional information regarding upcoming Grant opportunities at this point in time but certainly will keep the Historic District Commission in the loop should those opportunities arise.

### **Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that there was no additional information regarding (the implementation of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan) that in particular. There continue to be a number of different studies and efforts citywide that address a number of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there were any questions or comments before we adjourn?

*Mrs. Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting seeing no other items of business, seconded by Chairman Czerwinski, and unanimously carried 3-0 of the members present. Ms. Horsey was absent.*

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM

Sincerely,

Maretta Savage-Purnell  
Secretary

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-25-01	The Old Post at 55 Loockerman Plaza	55 Loockerman Plaza (Old Dover Post Office)	Site Plan for development of mixed-use with apartments	Review for Architectural Review Certification of Site Plan; Public Hearing and Review by HDC on 2/20/2025. Recommended approval of ArchRevCert for project.	Site Plan reviewed by Historic District Commission for Recommendation. Site Plan Application (S-25-07) filed and granted conditional approval and ArchRevCert by Planning Commission on 3/17/2025. Applicant to be working to finalize Site Plan documents.
HI-25-02	Mixed Use Building at 120 S Governors Avenue (The Governor)	120 S Governors Avenue	Site Plan for development of mixed use building	Revised Application filed June 2025. Review for Architectural Review Certification of Site Plan; Public Hearing and Review by HDC scheduled for 7/17/2025.	Application initially filed in March 2025 then placed on hold by the Applicant for continued design work. Revised Application filed and now scheduled for Review.
HI-25-03	Biggs Museum Expansion: Selected Removals at 15 and 21 The Green	15 The Green and 21 The Green	Review for Architectural Certification for Select Removal/Demolition of Rear Additions	Review for Architectural Review Certification. Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HCD on 5/15/2025. Granted Approval subject to conditions.	HDC completed review of Request to remove/demolish portions of the rear additions at the buildings as associated with future project for the Biggs Museum of American Art expansion. Granted Architectural Review Certification; moving into design phase for project that will be subject to future ArchRevCert.

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-24-01	Referral of Fence Permit #23-1868 at 146 S. State Street	146 S. State Street	Fence Permit	Permit #23-1868 referred to HDC by City Planner for consultation on Architectural Review Certification; 1/28/2024 HDC deferred action on ArchRevCert seeking additional information on its materials, location, and another nearby fence. 2/15/2024 HDC granted ArchRevCert subject to conditions.	Permit Application received 12/13/2023 and Referred to the HDC for consultation. The Fence is subject to Code Enforcement Case #23-3983 for installation without a Permit. It is a vinyl fence that is six foot in height. HDC granted ArchRevCert subject to conditions: Fence #2 must be wood and 4 feet in height. Fence #1 due to location can remain at vinyl at 6 feet. Permit issued in April 2024. Part of Fence removed.
HI-24-02	Building Demolition at 148 S. Bradford Street	148 S. Bradford Street	Review for Architectural Certification for Demolition	Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 5/16/2024. Action to deny ArchRevCert.	Request to demolish existing building (currently used as offices). HDC denied ArchRevCert for demolition. Applicant filed an Appeal to the Planning Commission; Appeal considered by Planning Commission on 6/17/2024. Planning Commission granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow Demolition of Building. Demolition Permit #24-1835 issued; demolition complete.
HI-24-03	Building Demolition at 150 S. Bradford Street	150 S. Bradford Street	Review for Architectural Certification for Demolition	Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HCD on 5/16/2024. Action to deny ArchRevCert.	Request to demolish existing building (currently used as offices). HDC denied ArchRevCert for demolition. Applicant filed an Appeal to the Planning Commission, Appeal considered by Planning Commission on 6/17/2024. Planning Commission granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow Demolition of Building. Demolition Permit #25-408 issued; demolition underway.

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-24-04	Legislative Hall Parking Garage at 425 East Avenue	425 East Avenue, corner of East Avenue/ E. Water Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard South	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 5/16/2024. Recommended approval of ArchRevCert for project.	Site Development Plan review for new Parking Garage Structure and associated site improvements. Recommendation on ArchRevCert will be forwarded to Planning Commission for future consideration during Site Plan review process. Application filed with Board of Adjustment for variances related to floodplain requirements; BOA considered on 6/20/2024 and granted approval of two variances (V-24-01). Site Plan Application (S-24-14) filed and granted conditional approval and ArchRevCert by Planning Commission on 9/16/2024. Applicant working to finalize Site Plan documents; Final Plan approval pending.
HI-24-05	Building Demolition at 120 S. Governors Avenue	120 S. Governors Avenue	Review for Architectural Certification for Demolition	Public Hearing and Review for Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 6/20/2024. Granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow Demolition of building.	Request to demolish existing commercial building (was Acme grocery store then recent tenants of auto parts store and a Child Day Care Center). Demolition Permit issued and demolition activities underway in Fall 2024. Demolition of building completed.
HI-24-06	Delaware Supreme Court Building Addition and Renovations	55 The Green	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Action on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 9/19/2024. Granted approval of ArchRevCert to allow building addition.	Review of ArchRevCert for one story Building Addition. Project is subject to an Administrative Site Plan process; Administrative Site Plan filed and currently under review.

FILE#	PLAN NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION	STATUS
HI-24-07	Legislative Hall Building Addition	411 Legislative Avenue	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 10/17/2024. Recommended approval of ArchRevCert for project.	Site Development Plan review for Building Addition and Plaza Area and associated site improvements. Recommendation on ArchRevCert will be forwarded to Planning Commission for future consideration during Site Plan review process. Site Plan Application filed and granted conditional approval with ArchRevCert by Planning Commission on November 18, 2024.
HI-24-08	Referral of Building Permit #24-1399 at 21 N. American Avenue	21 N American Avenue (and previously 19 N American Avenue)	Building Permit	Permit #24-1399 referred to HDC by City Planner for consultation on Architectural Review Certification; Scheduled for HDC Review on 10/17/2024. Recommended Approval of ArchRevCert subject to conditions.	Permit Application received 9/25/2024 and Referred to the HDC for consultation. Project for demolition of rear addition, rebuild of rear addition, renovation to first rear addition, remove asbestos siding and reclad with vinyl siding, and porch renovations. HDC per conditions of ArchRevCert allowed demolition of rear addition and reconstruction, recladding with vinyl siding, and minor change to rear window placements. Permit issued subject to conditions.
HI-24-09	Dover Mobility Center (Parking Garage)	133 S Governors Avenue, 139 S Governors Avenue, 145 S Governors Avenue, 136 S Bradford St, 148 S Bradford St, 150 S Bradford St	Site Plan Review for Architectural Review Certification	Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification by HDC on 12/19/2024 and recommended ArchRevCert subject to conditions.	Site Development Plan review for Dover Mobility Center (multi-purpose Parking Garage) and associated site improvements. Recommendation on ArchRevCert will be forwarded to Planning Commission for future consideration during Site Plan review process. Site Plan Application (S-25-01) filed and Planning Commission granted conditional approval in January 2025.

Summary of Permit Applications with Architectural Review Certification  
 2025- Updated Thru 6-30-2025

Item 3.

DATE	PERMIT #	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION ON ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW CERTIFICATE	NOTES
1/17/2025	24-1399	21 N American Avenue	Building Permit - Interior & Exterior Renovations	Staff Approval as per HDC Action on ArchRevCert HI-24-08.	Demolition of rear addition and its rebuild, exterior finish renovations to allow vinyl siding, renovations to front porch. Permit was referred to the Historic District Commission for review.
1/13/2025	24-1835	148 S Bradford Street	Demolition Permit	Staff Approval as per PC Final Action regarding ArchRevCert (appeal of HDC denial of ArchRevCert) HI-24-02.	Demolition of existing one-and-half story building for future redevelopment of site. HDC denied request on 5/16/2024 and Appeal to Planning Commission granted approval 6/17/2024. Demolition complete.
2/5/2025	25-132	45 The Green, Sykes Building	Building Permit - Interior Renovations	No ArchRevCert Required	Interior Renovations to subfloor in the office buildings.
2/18/2025	25-136	107 S State Street	Sign Permit	Staff Approval	Post Panel sign.
2/20/2025	25-148	151 Kings Hwy SW, Woodburn	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Roof replacement project with synthetic slate material and associated flashing and gutter systems.
3/11/2025	25-209	307 S State St	Sign Permit	Staff Approval	installation of Projecting Sign for office
3/19/2025	25-277	12 Kings Hwy SE, Building at Elizabeth W. Murphy School	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of EPDM roof system (flat roof) with the same following repairs.
3/10/2025	25-284	201 W Loockerman St	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of flat roof on commercial building.
3/10/2025	25-286	30 S American Ave	Roof Permit	No Planning Staff Review.	Removal and replacement of shingle roof.
4/7/2025	24-1152	26 S State Street, Apartment Building	Window Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of windows of various sizes & formats on all elevations, repair and repaint of trimwork areas and shutters.

Summary of Permit Applications with Architectural Review Certification  
 2025- Updated Thru 6-30-2025

Item 3.

DATE	PERMIT #	LOCATION	TYPE	ACTION ON ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW CERTIFICATE	NOTES
4/2/2025	25-395	214 S State Street	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Roof Replacement on main block of building with metal roofing system.
4/15/2025	25-408	150 S. Bradford St	Demolition Permit	Staff Approval as per PC Final Action regarding ArchRevCert (appeal of HDC denial of ArchRev Cert) HI-24-03.	Demolition of existing two story building for future redevelopment of site. HDC denied request on 5/16/2024 and Appeal to Planning Commission granted approval 6/17/2024. Demolition underway.
5/1/2025	24-1510	33 W Loockerman St	Sign Permit	Staff Approval	New Window and Wall Signs for new restaurant tenant
5/29/2025	25-285	500 W Loockerman St	Building Permit - Accessory Structure (Solar Canopy)	Staff Approval	Freestanding canopy over a series of parking spaces with solar panels and equipment for EV charging stations.
5/21/2025	25-515	55 The Green	Building Permit - Exterior Renovations	Staff Approval	Replacement of wood columns on rotunda entry.
5/15/2025	25-599	401 Federal St	Building Permit - Generator Replacement	No Planning Staff Review.	Replacement of generator
5/22/2025	25-693	426 S State St, George & Vyas Attorneys	Sign Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of signs for new law office tenant.
6/4/2025	25-670	500 W Loockerman St	Building Permit - Interior Renovations	Staff Approval	Interior Renovations on third floor for tenant fit-out.
6/5/2025	25-704	32 W Loockerman St, Loockerman Square	Siding Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of existing siding.
6/18/2025	25-738	523 S State St, Christ Church	Temporary Sign Permit	Staff Approval	Temporary Sign Banner installation.
6/13/2025	25-763	145 S State St	Building Permit - Exterior & Interior Renovations	Staff Approval	Extension of previous Permit to convert existing building into 4 apartment units
6/12/2025	25-796	121 S State St, M&T Bank Dover Financial Center	Roof Permit	Staff Approval	Replacement of flat roof area



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW STAFF REPORT  
Before Dover Historic District Commission  
July 17, 2025

- Application: Mixed Use Building at 120 S Governors Avenue, HI-25-02
- Owner: Downtown Dover Development Corporation c/o Downtown Dover Partnership
- Location: Between South Governors Avenue and South New Street, midway between Reed Street and West Loockerman Street in Dover, DE
- Address: 120 South Governors Avenue
- Related Properties: 105, 111, and 115 South New Street
- Tax Parcel: ED-05-077.09-01-44.00-000
- Related Properties: ED-05-077.09-01-37.00-000, ED-05-077.09-01-42.00-000, ED-05-077.09-01-43.00-000
- Size: 1.70 acres +/- (main parcel)  
2.03 acres +/- (total of all parcels)
- Present Uses: Vacant lot – Former auto retail store and daycare center
- Proposed Use: Mixed Use Commercial (Grocery, retail, restaurant, child day care center) and Multi-family Housing (Apartments) and associated parking
- Present Zoning: C-2 (Central Commercial Zone)  
H (Historic District Zone)
- For Consideration: Architectural Review Certification

*Note: This Review Report was initially prepared by Staff of the Rossi Group (under a Planning Services contract with the City of Dover). The Report was completed with additional review and editing by the City’s Planning Office.*

**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The Historic District Commission will act to make a Recommendation for an Architectural Review Certificate for a Site Development Plan Application for the proposed construction of a mixed use commercial and multi-family (apartment) development in Downtown Dover, to be located at 120 South Governors Avenue. The project is construction of a four story, 169,080 SF Mixed Use

Building including a grocery, retail and restaurant spaces, a child day care, 120 apartment units, and a roof-top courtyard with site improvements of a parking lot, a courtyard, and landscaping. The parcel contains 1.70 +/- acres. The property is zoned C-2 (Central Commercial Zone) and subject to H (Historic District Zone). The property is located on the west side of South Governors Avenue and midway between Reed Street and West Lookerman Street. It is bounded by South New Street on the west. The owner of record is Downtown Dover Development Corporation c/o Downtown Dover Partnership. Property Address: 120 South Governors Avenue, Dover. Tax Parcel: ED-05-077.09-01-44.00-000. Council District 4.

The project also proposes improvements on adjacent related properties at 105, 111, and 115 South New Street. One of these parcels is owned by the Downtown Dover Partnership and the other two are owned by the City of Dover. These parcels are not within the H (Historic District Zone).

#### Surrounding Land Uses

The subject property is within the Downtown Development District, located one block north of Lookerman Street. The site is bordered by South Governors Avenue to the east, South New Street to the west, and part of the Minor Street (paper alley) to the south. As previously noted, the parcels are zoned C-2 (Central Commercial Zone) and within the Historic District. Properties immediately adjacent to the subject project location are also zoned C-2. Others in the immediate area are zoned RG-1 (General Residence Zone). The subject property is currently vacant with recent demolition of the one-story Auto Parts/AutoPlus retail store and daycare center; known as the Acme site). The largest of the subject parcels is within the H (Historic District) Zone, as are properties to the south and east, as well as to the north fronting South Governors Avenue. The smaller parcels that are adjacent to the main subject of this application are outside of the H (Historic District Zone). Properties west of the subject site across South New Street are also outside of the H (Historic District Zone). Surrounding uses are a combination of mixed use and residential, with a church located at the southeast corner of South New Street and Reed Street.

#### Previous Applications

The property owners are the Downtown Dover Development Corporation c/o Downtown Dover Partnership and the City of Dover. On June 20, 2024, the Historic District Commission granted approval of the Architectural Review Certification allowing demolition of the previous structure, a one-story Auto Parts/AutoPlus retail store and daycare center, located at 120 South Governors Avenue (HI-24-05). On March 14, 2025, a Narrative Letter, a Site Plan set, and Architectural Graphics set with building elevations and 3-D views were submitted to the Department of Planning and Inspections as the initial filing of the application to the Historic District Commission. Only 120 South Governors was included in that submission, not the additional parcels located at 105, 111, and 115 South New Street. The application was held at the request of the applicant while additional design refinements were made to the submission. The design changes were made to the proposal and the status of the three additional parcels located at 105, 111, and 115 South New Street was clarified and incorporated into the 120 South Governors Avenue Mixed Use Development Narrative Letter, Site Plan set, and Architectural Graphics set with building elevations and 3-D views, which were submitted to the Department of Planning and Inspections on June 13, 2025. This latest submission is the one under consideration.

There was previous proposal in 2011 for demolition of the building and redevelopment of the property with applications HI-11-04 Acme Site Redevelopment Master Plan and S-11-11 Lands at DDP at 120 South Governors Avenue: Master Plan; the plans were never finalized and expired.

## II. HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

### Review of Historic Maps

Historically, this block of Downtown between South Governors Avenue and South New Street north of West Loockerman Street was part of an area known as the Comegy's Lots laid out in the 1850s with development occurring 1859-1885. The *1868 Beers Map* shows the subject site primarily vacant with one building owned by L. Geiser and a school building. By 1885, a series of residential dwellings fronting on both Governors Avenue and New Street were in existence. The subject site is just north of the original building location of the Robbins Hose Fire Company building. The *1887 Map of Dover* published by W.B. Roe continues to show a public school in the southern portion of the site with dwellings to the north. The *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Series* from 1885 – 1944 with updates also documents the history of buildings on the subject site. The 1885 Map shows a two-story school building and a Sunday School & Meeting House building with two-story residential dwellings with accessory buildings (garages, sheds). By 1897, the school building was replaced by a Methodist Protestant Church building with the residential dwellings remaining. These uses for the subject site continue through the early twentieth century. By the mid-twentieth century, the church building was replaced by a one-story cinderblock store building adjacent to Governors Avenue. In the late 1960s, the subject site was redeveloped with the recently demolished masonry commercial building (the Acme grocery store building) setback in the middle of the block; its construction appears to have eliminated approximately nine residential dwellings.

### Property Information

The subject property is located within H (Historic District Zone) as established by the City of Dover. There are four contexts that contribute to the historic character of Dover, including the Green Historic Context; the Victorian Historic Context; the Loockerman Historic Context; and the Capitol Square Historic Context. This property is located within the Loockerman Historic Context. Buildings in the Loockerman Context include a wide variety of nineteenth century commercial buildings. The *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone* describe this context as “a coherent, densely-built commercial area that would have an attractive mix of historic and new buildings and related parking.”

The subject property is located within the boundaries of a National Register of Historic Places Historic District, specifically the Victorian Dover Historic District (K-396) but the mid-twentieth century commercial building was considered a non-contributing building.

## III. PROJECT PROPOSAL

### PROJECT PROPOSAL (Submission of June 2025):

The application proposes the construction of a 169,080 SF Mixed Use Building including grocery, retail and restaurant spaces, a child day care facility, 120 apartment units, and a roof-top courtyard with site improvements of a parking lot, a courtyard, and landscaping. It will be located directly across from the proposed Dover Mobility Center (Parking Garage), which is prioritized in the

*Capital City 2030: Transforming Downtown Dover Master Plan* because the parking and related infrastructure will support the transformation of the Capital City into a vibrant hub for commerce, living, and cultural activities. Additionally, the proposed mixed use redevelopment project will support an additional revitalization strategy within the Master Plan, which is to increase the number of mixed-income residents living in downtown, provide access to food within downtown Dover, and increase retail and service opportunities. It is also identified as a Key Project in the Downtown Development District Plan.

The Applicant's submission includes a Narrative Letter, a Site Plan set, and Architectural Graphics set with building elevations and 3-D views. The elements of the project are as follows:

1. Building Construction: The proposed four-story building will be 60 feet tall. The proposed Mixed Use building will feature two main material palettes. The first includes a blend of masonry colors, feature material such as copper-brown metal panels, matte black metal trim, fiber cement panel in neutral tones, and black or dark bronze decorative metal elements and frames which will be wrapped around the building's northeast and southeast corners. The second includes neutral tones of plank siding and fiber cement panel, matte black metal trim, masonry, and black or dark bronze decorative metal elements and window frames. The building's façade will primarily feature retail frontages that alternate between masonry piers, glazing, fiber cement panel piers, and accent metal panels. Both street-facing elevations follow a brickwork pattern of varying orientations up to cornice lines, where it then transitions to a more muted expression for the upper levels.
2. Parking Lot: A surface parking lot will be developed along the west side of the building with access to South New Street. The proposed Dover Mobility Center (separate project HI-24-09 and S-25-01) will be located directly across South Governors Avenue and will accommodate the anticipated parking needs of the residents, business owners, and shoppers.
3. Sidewalks and Site Amenities: The proposal maintains sidewalks along South New Street and South Governors Avenue. There are also sidewalks and crosswalks adjacent to the parking lot leading to the building. There is a west facing courtyard area in the central u-shaped area of the building. The renderings show additional amenities on the adjacent three parcels on S. New Street, including a public green space with a pollinator garden, nature playscape, and dog park.
4. Tree Planting and Landscaping: The Site Plan proposes seven trees to be planted along South New Street and the either the preservation or replacement of the existing trees along South Governors Avenue. To the northwest of the structure on South New Street (on the adjacent properties), a public green space area is proposed, incorporating trees, shrubs, and various plantings to enhance the aesthetic quality of the site and provide a natural respite within the urban landscape. A mix of trees, shrubs, and various plantings is also proposed in the courtyard of the structure.

See the attached Plan submission and associated graphics and drawings for detailed information on building dimensions, locations, and material choices.

IV. ZONING REVIEW

The large parcel that fronts South Governors Avenue is located in the H (Historic District Zone) and subject to the provisions of the *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 3 §21 and referenced sections. *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 10 §3.2 outlines the review process for Architectural Review Certification and related building height, bulk, and setback standards.

The entire project area is zoned C-2 (Central Commercial Zone). The C-2 zone allows for “retail stores, apartments and multi-family dwellings; uses accessory to the residential units such as lobby and amenity spaces are permitted on the first floor; live-work units; parking lots and parking structures” as principal uses. The subject property has frontage on two streets: South New Street and South Governors Avenue.

<u>Code Compliance for C-2</u>	<u>Required</u>	<u>Provided</u>
Front Setback	0'	> 5'
Rear Setback	20' above ground floor. At ground floor, 5' required	37' ground floor 54' above ground floor
Side Setback	None required, but 5' min. if provided	10' on the North 22' on the South
Building Height	10 stories (125')	4 stories (60')

The C-2 zoning district also includes some design standards provisions. See the code excerpt below:

Article 3 Section 13

13.5 *Design standards*. The following standards shall apply to the site and building development in the central commercial zone (C-2):

13.51 *Façade articulation*. Building facades should incorporate design elements to provide a base, middle, and top of the building to reinforce the pedestrian scale at the street level.

13.52 *Height*. For buildings greater than four stories in height, then the upper floors above the fourth story shall step back six feet for fifty percent of the width of the primary facade. For buildings greater than six stories, then the upper floors above the sixth floor shall step back an additional six feet on the primary façade. These step back areas may begin at a lower height than these minimums as part of the building design in order to be compatible with the character of the area.

13.53 *Step back areas*. The step back areas should be open to the sky and can be open air balcony spaces or other design architectural features that are not enclosed spaces.

13.54 *Off-street parking*. Off-street parking lots shall not be permitted to be situated between the street line and the primary facade of the principal building. Consideration should be given to locating parking to the side or rear of the building.

13.55 *Screening*. Any off-street parking lots provided shall be screened from the street line by buildings, landscaping, or other means. Off-street parking lots shall be screened from adjacent residential zones and residential uses. This screening provision does not apply to adjacent alleys.

#### V. Review of DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The subject property is located in the H (Historic District Zone) within the Loockerman Context. The Loockerman Context is described on pages 2-7 and 2-8 of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. The *Design Standards and Guidelines* describe this context as “a coherent, densely-built commercial area that would have an attractive mix of historic and new buildings and related parking.” Location within the Dover Historic District Zone requires proposals for demolition, new construction, building additions, and certain renovation or rehabilitation activities to existing buildings to receive an Architectural Review Certificate.

As stated in the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*, an Architectural Review Certificate will be granted “if it is found that the architectural style, general design, height, bulk and setbacks, arrangement location and materials affecting the exterior appearance are generally in harmony with neighboring structures and complementary to the traditional architectural standards of the historic district.” In accordance with Article 10 §3.2, the Historic District Commission will provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the project’s compliance with the architectural review standards.

This proposal must be reviewed for conformity with the design criteria guidelines found in Chapter 3: Maintenance, Repair, Preservation and Restoration of Existing Historic Buildings and Chapter 4: New Construction, Additions, Demolition and Relocation. Information on the review considerations is given below.

#### New Construction

The *Design Standards and Guidelines* for New Construction (Chapter 4: pages 4-1 through 4-8) provide the design criteria and development guidelines. The guidelines specify the following individual considerations for new construction to be considered in review by the Historic District Commission (and Planning Commission) of the project for Architectural Review Certification:

- Style
- Scale (*building to reflect dominant cornice and roof height of adjacent buildings*)
- Elevation of the First Floor
- Floor-to-Floor heights
- Bays, windows, and doors (*size, relationship, spacing of*)
- Absolute Size (*compare overall size of new building*)
- Massing (*relationship of solid-to-void*)
- Orientation (*location of primary façade*)
- Proportions (*comparison of height to width of building and elements*)
- Materials
- Forms (*shape of building and roof to be complementary*)
- Siting (*location of building on lot and in relation to street*)
- High density/ large-scale construction

Design criteria and development guidelines specific to the Loockerman Historic Context are detailed on page 4-6 of the *Design Standards and Guidelines* and provide that “the siting of new construction in the Loockerman historic context should conform to the building line of adjacent buildings, to reinforce the sense of the ‘wall’ of buildings, especially along Loockerman Street. New commercial buildings should occupy the full width of their lot at the street line. Freestanding "object" buildings that do not conform to the street and lot lines should not be permitted in the Loockerman historic context. Where a commercial building is built adjacent to a vacant lot, it should be built with a party wall in anticipation of subsequent new construction being built adjacent and up to the property line.” The *Design Standards and Guidelines* Chapter 3 includes information about the use of certain materials within the Historic District.

The proposed project must also be reviewed for compliance with the standards established by the *Zoning Ordinance*. The standards include items such as setbacks from property lines, lot coverage, height, etc. This Proposal for the 120 South Governors Avenue Mixed Use Building appears to conform to the bulk requirements of the C-2 zoning district; however, this should be verified via Site Plan review. The *City of Dover Zoning Ordinance* authorizes the Historic District Commission to waive certain bulk standards when issuing its recommendation to the Planning Commission for an Architectural Review Certificate if necessary.

The *Design Standards and Guidelines* note that “the vacant lots to the north and south of Loockerman Street are not desirable locations for large-scale construction, because they are in the transition area between the commercial and residential zoning districts.”

#### VI. STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are Staff comments and recommendations for this application regarding project activities and Architectural Review Certification.

- 1) Staff recommends conditional approval of the Architectural Review Certificate for the Mixed Use Building at 120 South Governors Avenue project, finding that the building to be of a compatible design with the nearby buildings and with the intent of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. The proposed multi-use site enhances the pedestrian scale of the Downtown area and supports the *Capital City 2030: Transforming Downtown Dover Master Plan*. The brick exterior finishes take cues and architectural style from the buildings downtown and the form breaks up the total façade into smaller building segments and set back (steps-back) in certain areas making it look like multiple connected buildings. Sidewalk expansions and the implementations of pedestrian elements will add to the urban activity expected within the Loockerman Historic Context.
- 2) The following conditions are recommended by Staff to improve the project’s compliance with the recommended guidelines of the *Design Standards and Guidelines*. The following are recommended conditions:
  - a. The selected brick choice should be compatible with the brick of other existing buildings in the area. Clarify the brick size and patterning.

- b. Clarify the window glass area material as mirrored or colored glass is not always appropriate for use in the Historic District zone.
  - c. Clarify the edge treatment (railing material and form) at the west facing Roof Courtyard area.
  - d. Consideration of wall or free-standing signage may require additional review.
  - e. Consider screening of and placement of any roof-mounted equipment.
  - f. Any light fixtures utilized on the property should be consistent with the style of the lighting used in the nearby areas of the Loockerman Context of the Historic District.
  - g. Any revisions or changes in the identified materials may be subject to further review by the Historic District Commission.
- 3) The Mixed Use Building at 120 S. Governors Avenue appears to comply with the design standards of the C-2 zoning district in regard to the building façade articulation (having a base, middle and top). The project has also incorporated the step backs for the lower floors (under the fourth floor). The project design show consideration of the pedestrian at the street level.
- 4) In regard to the placement of off-street parking, South Governors Avenue is considered the primary façade of the building. The placement of a small on-site parking lot along the S. New Street frontage of the property can be considered as it is a secondary front elevation due to the full block depth of the development site. Appropriate screening by landscaping or low fence/wall elements of the parking must be considered.
- 5) Some of the site improvements/amenities were not specifically described or had limited information within the application information. Please provide information for consideration and discussion.
  - a. Consider the format of the area to the south of the building for its surface treatments, ability or limitation for pedestrian access, landscaping of area, and any screening of this loading area at its connection to South Governors Avenue.
  - b. Section 5-5 of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone* details recommendations for signage. Signs at the storefront level should be oriented primarily to pedestrians and sized and designed for pedestrian vision. Large-scale signs are not recommended.
  - c. Off-street parking lots provided shall be screened from the street line by buildings, landscaping, or other means. Page 5 of the proposed submission indicates the off-street parking lot will be screened by shrubs and trees. Screening in compliance with *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 6, Section 5 – Supplementary Regulations for Parking and Loading Facilities and the design standards of the C-2 Zone will be further evaluated with the Site Development Plan submission.
  - d. Provide information on the dumpster enclosure/ utility area construction and screening.
- 6) Clarify whether existing trees on the site or adjacent streetscape area will be preserved. If they are proposed to be removed, replacement of removed trees will be required. The

development area (the property) is also subject to tree planting requirements of the *Zoning Ordinance*.

- 7) Staff recommends the following pertaining to the site design elements of the project:
  - a. The sidewalk system on the street frontage along both South New Street and South Governors Avenue should continue and include barrier free access, crosswalk striping, etc. at the points of intersection with the entrance and exit drive aisles.
  - b. Any proposed landscaping or tree planting locations, and lighting fixture locations should be depicted on the plan and be consistent with the character of these elements as they exist within the Lookerman Context area.
- 8) The review of the development of the three adjacent parcels along S. New Street will occur with the Site Plan review process as some of the planned amenities are likely tied to code requirements for certain uses such as the residential units.
- 9) The central Courtyard/Wellness Area may be an opportunity for public art installations.
- 10) For building construction, the requirements of the building code and fire code must be met. Consult with the Building Inspections Staff and Fire Marshal regarding these requirements. The resolution of these items can impact the site design in some cases.
- 11) In the event that major changes and revisions to the design, materials, or site layout occur in the finalization of the plan and/or construction drawings contact the Department of Planning and Inspections. These changes may require resubmittal for review by the Historic District Commission.
- 12) This site development plan for this project is also subject to the application and review process for Site Development Plan (Article 10 §2 of the *Zoning Ordinance*) before the Planning Commission. Note: Additional technical items for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and other regulations may be identified during the Site Plan Process. Review comments pertaining specifically to the Site Plan set will be issued at that time.
- 13) The applicant shall be aware that Building Permits are required to proceed with any construction activities on the project site. The permit applications must comply with the approvals and conditions granted through the Architectural Review Certification and Site Plan Review process.
- 14) The applicant should be aware that a Sign Permit is required to proceed with the placement of signage on the property.

VII. Historic District Commission Action Required

The Historic District Commission shall consider the proposal and provide a recommendation in regard to the Architectural Review Certification for the 120 South Governors Avenue Mixed Use Building development. The recommendation should reflect consideration of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*.

June 13, 2025

Department of Planning & Inspections  
City of Dover  
PO BOX 475  
Dover, DE 19903

The 120 S. Governors Mixed-Use Development will be a newly constructed 4-story building in the heart of Downtown Dover. The structure will be situated at 120 S. Governors Avenue, Dover, DE 19904, and may include an additional three parcels if the properties are able to be secured by the DDP which will provide additional exterior amenity space and site access. The site is located one block north of Lookerman Street, the site is bordered by S. Governors Avenue to the east, S New Street to the west, and Minor Street paper alley to the south. Currently, the site is vacant with recent demolition of the one-story Auto Parts/AutoPlus retail store and daycare center.

The proposed Mobility Center, for which planning is now fully underway, will be located directly across the street from the proposed Mixed-Use project at 120 S. Governors Ave. (the subject of this narrative) and will accommodate the parking needs for the residents, business owners and shoppers, as well as the public in the business district. This Mobility Center is prioritized in the Capital City 2030: Transforming Downtown Dover master plan because the parking and related infrastructure it will provide is crucial in supporting the transformation of the Capital City into a vibrant hub for commerce, living, and cultural activities projected through 2030 and beyond.

Further, the proposed mixed-use redevelopment project will support an additional revitalization strategy within the master plan, which is to increase the number of mixed-income residents living in downtown by +/- 300 toward an overall goal of 2,000 new residents, as well as provide access to food within downtown Dover, a “food dessert” as well as increase retail and service opportunities.

### **Architectural Design and Adherence to Historic District Guidelines**

The architecture of the Mixed-Use residential community is crafted to creatively reflect and honor the historic district while adhering to its guidelines. The design aligns with the Historic District Zone’s standards, emphasizing that:

*“...the slavish and literal copying of architectural styles and elements will trivialize and confuse the genuine historic architecture of the City of Dover... Contemporary architecture should be representative of the time in which it is created and should thus contribute to Dover’s architectural diversity for the appreciation of future generations.”<sup>1</sup>*

Although “contemporary” in style, the development’s architecture respects the historic context rather than replicating neighboring structures. The building incorporates the guideline’s principles of scale,

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<sup>1</sup> *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*; John Milner Associates, 1992; 4-2

rhythm, proportion, and materiality. This approach enables the structure to harmonize with its surroundings and avoid appearing contextually foreign, while introducing additional contemporary texture and materials into the design to complement the historic landscape.

While not required for a building that is 4-stories or below, our project aims to align with the Design Standards and the new C-2 zoning regulations for larger scale buildings. The building's massing incorporates a tripartite form in key sections of the façade along S. Governors Ave, and provides a six-foot setback in 2 main sections of the façade which allows the building's corners and focal entrance in the center to stand prominent along the street edge. This setback scales the building within the urban fabric of Dover's Historic District by creating alternating vertical 'major' and 'minor' facades to provide relief along the streetscape, while creating identifiable entry points to the different retail and residential entrances along the ground floor along S. Governors Ave. It also creates opportunities to employ a mix of materials and features such as cornices, piers, framed entries, and canopies that are prevalent within the historic district.

With the core approach of respect rather than replication, the building takes cues and architectural style from the buildings downtown, rather than direct forgery. An example of which is the building's brickwork, which takes cues such as the size, shape, color variation, and uniformity of bricks prevalent downtown. The patterning of the brick, mainly running bond with accents of soldier coursing, is a common theme downtown and serves as an acknowledgement and method of folding the building into the fabric of Dover.

## Site

The building is designed to adhere closely to C-2 zoning requirements, which call for a zero-foot setback, positioning the development directly along the sidewalk edge. Between entry points, the sidewalk will be expanded to enhance pedestrian experience and provide opportunities for streetscape implementations. Such implementations could include thoughtfully planned site elements such as sidewalk seating, planting beds, light poles and wall sconces that provide essential lighting while complementing and softening the architectural design.

In addition, a selection of street trees and landscaped plantings along the building's perimeter will create a comfortable, shaded environment for pedestrians, contributing to a pleasant streetscape. To the northwest of the structure on S New Street, a public greenspace area is proposed, incorporating trees, shrubs, and various plantings to enhance the aesthetic quality of the site and provide a natural respite within the urban landscape. This greenspace will serve as a "pocket park", offering a convenient and valuable amenity for residents and visitors with pets.

All site elements, including landscaping and lighting, will be carefully positioned to promote pedestrian safety at all hours of the day in addition to limiting light pollution for neighboring properties. Special

attention will be given to sightlines of building entry points, traffic calming devices, and safe street crossing between the Mobility Center at 133. S Governors Ave. to our Mixed-Use Development at 120 S. Governors Ave, promoting a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment that aligns with the broader vision of Downtown Dover as a vibrant and accessible community space.

### **Ground Floor Programming and Design**

The ground floor of 120 S. Governors Ave. is thoughtfully programmed to serve a variety of activities, which promotes the urban experience. Key occupancies will include a grocer, a day care, a café, and up to three retail bays perfect for small businesses serving the community. The residential community will have their main entrances both from S. Governors Ave. as well as S. New Street to minimize the notion of a ‘rear’ entrance. These entrances, along with the community space and residential lounge, will provide views into a cozy outdoor retreat on the ground level that will serve both residents and visitors as well as create a positive entrance experience from S. New Street for customers of the grocery, and families enrolled in the daycare center.

### **Façade Design and Materiality of the Pedestrian zone**

There are two main material palettes that complement but distinguish the primary façade along S. Governors Ave to the balance of the building’s facades along S. New Street, Minor Street ‘alley’, and the north façade facing Reed Street.

Along S. Governors Ave., the first material palette includes a rich blend of masonry colors, feature material such as copper-brown metal panels, matte black metal trim, fiber cement panel in neutral tones, and black or dark bronze decorative metal elements and frames which will be wrapped around the building’s northeast and southeast corners to maintain visual continuity from the oblique approaching view.

The second palette, while complementary to the first palette, will relate towards the neighboring residential blocks with neutral tones of plank siding and fiber cement panel, matte black metal trim, masonry, and black or dark bronze decorative metal elements and window frames.

The Development’s façade will feature primarily retail frontages that alternate between masonry piers, glazing, fiber cement panel piers, and accent metal panels to create a diverse and rhythmic architectural language to enhance the pedestrian experience that matches the color and scale of surrounding buildings. Similar to our Mobility Center development across S. Governors Ave., the brickwork employs varying orientations, particularly within column bays and at the cornice or perceived cornice levels, to introduce architectural texture and provide a contemporary nod to traditional Victorian brickwork. This technique ensures a harmonious blend with Dover’s historic aesthetic while expressing a modern identity.

Both street-facing elevations follow this brickwork pattern up to the varying cornice lines that step down towards a more residential scale to the north, while giving way to a more muted modern expression above. The thoughtful progression from brick to panel on the upper floors emphasizes the building's contemporary character while maintaining visual cohesion with the district's architectural language at the pedestrian zone.

Along Minor Street paper alley and the north facade, the brickwork and decorative detailing wrap the corner before switching to the second palette.

These design choices reflect a commitment to honoring previous-received public input through our design efforts for the Mobility Center Development, integrating contemporary style with historical context, and aligning with the Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone.

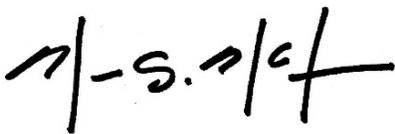
### Windows, Openings, and Canopies

The windows and openings in the Development will be proportional to their function for retail and residential users, but also maintain consistency with those of neighboring buildings, creating a varied, yet unified streetscape.

Extending across the length of the ground floor, canopies with dark painted metal fascia will be installed, designed with detailing that complements the brickwork and adds an additional layer of architectural refinement. These canopies may function simultaneously to manage stormwater runoff while visually lowering the building's scale to create a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

The design choices throughout the structure focus on balancing functionality, historical alignment, and pedestrian comfort, thereby reinforcing the Mixed-Use Development at 120 S. Governors Ave as a well-integrated, accessible element of downtown Dover's urban fabric.

Sincerely,



Michael S. McCloskey, AIA, LEED AP  
Vice President  
215.609.4609 | [mmcloskey@core-states.com](mailto:mmcloskey@core-states.com)

# 120 S GOVERNORS AVENUE **MIXED USE**

DOVER, KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION PRESENTATION**





# SITE SELECTIONS AND CONSIDERATION



SOURCE: ESRI COMMUNITY MAPS, CITY OF DOVER

## DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Additional residential will add vibrancy to downtown corridor, increasing foot traffic and business activity.
- Zoning was changed because of masterplan ideals, this project is realizing the goals embodied by this plan.

## IDEAL LOCATION

- Site aligns with masterplan goals of adding density and residential proximity to commercial corridor of Lookerman Street.

## SITE STATUS

The DDP owns both 120 and 111, and has made capital investments to be a proactive steward of the downtown district. actions taken include improving the 120 site by making it environmentally sound and reduce nuisance activity by adding fencing.

## SITE CONTEXT

- Site located one block north of Lookerman Street.
- Walkable link to downtown businesses.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Project Phase 1 and Phase 2 complete.
- No known concerns

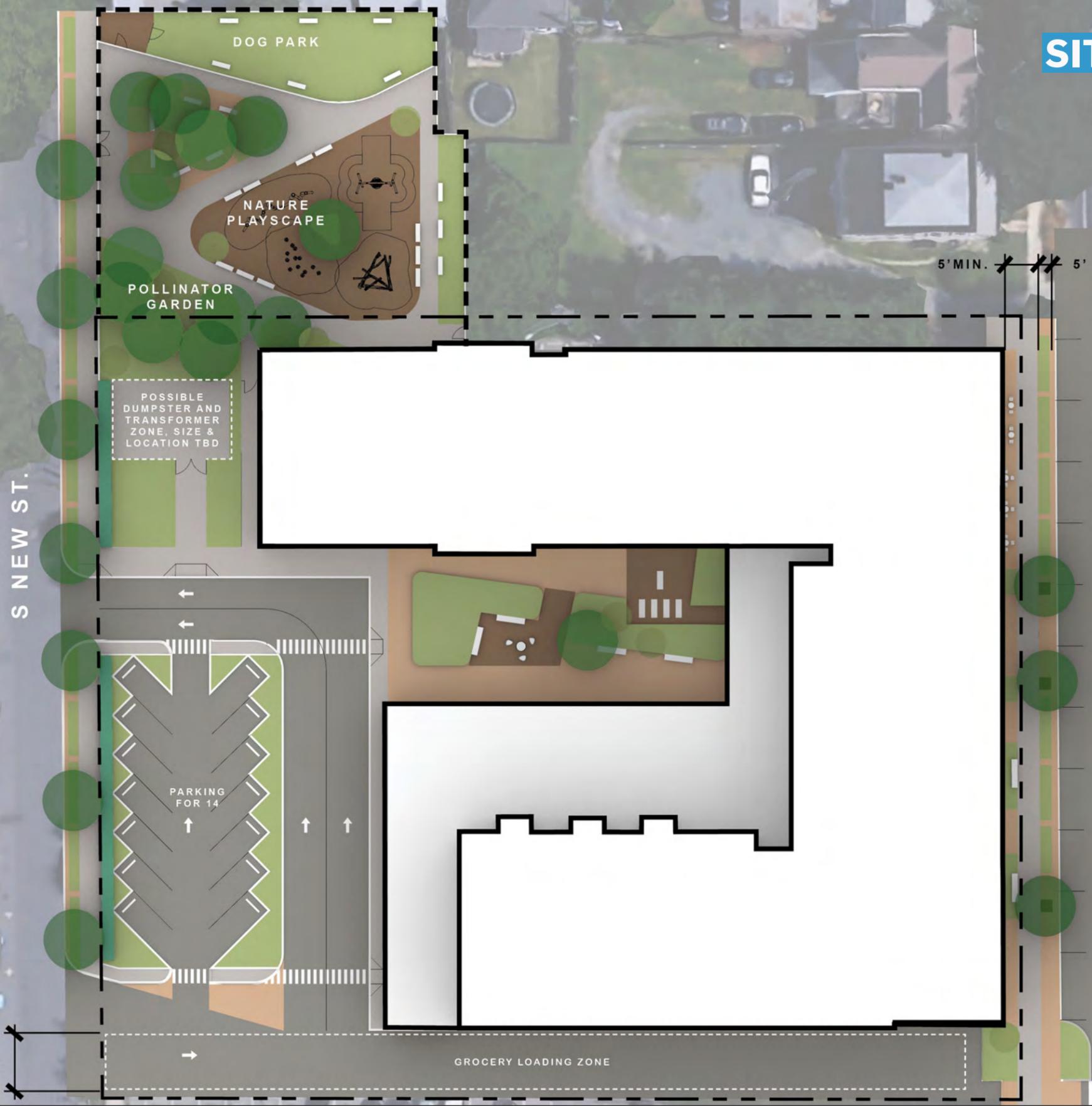
## ADDRESSES AND PARCEL ID

- 120 S. Governors Ave**  
Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-44.00
- 115 S. New Street (City Owned)**  
Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-43.00
- 111 S. New Street (DDP Owned)**  
Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-42.00
- 105 S. New Street (City Owned)**  
Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-37.00

# SITE PLAN

**NOTE:**  
 FURTHER REVIEW WITH THE FM IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE AND ACCESS TO PROTECT LIFE SAFETY.

	REQUIRED	ACHIEVED
Front Setback	0'	5.8'
Side yard	None required but 5' min. if provided	10' on the North 22' on the South
Rear yard	20' Above ground floor. At ground floor 5' required	37' Ground floor 54' above ground floor



# GROUND FLOOR PLAN

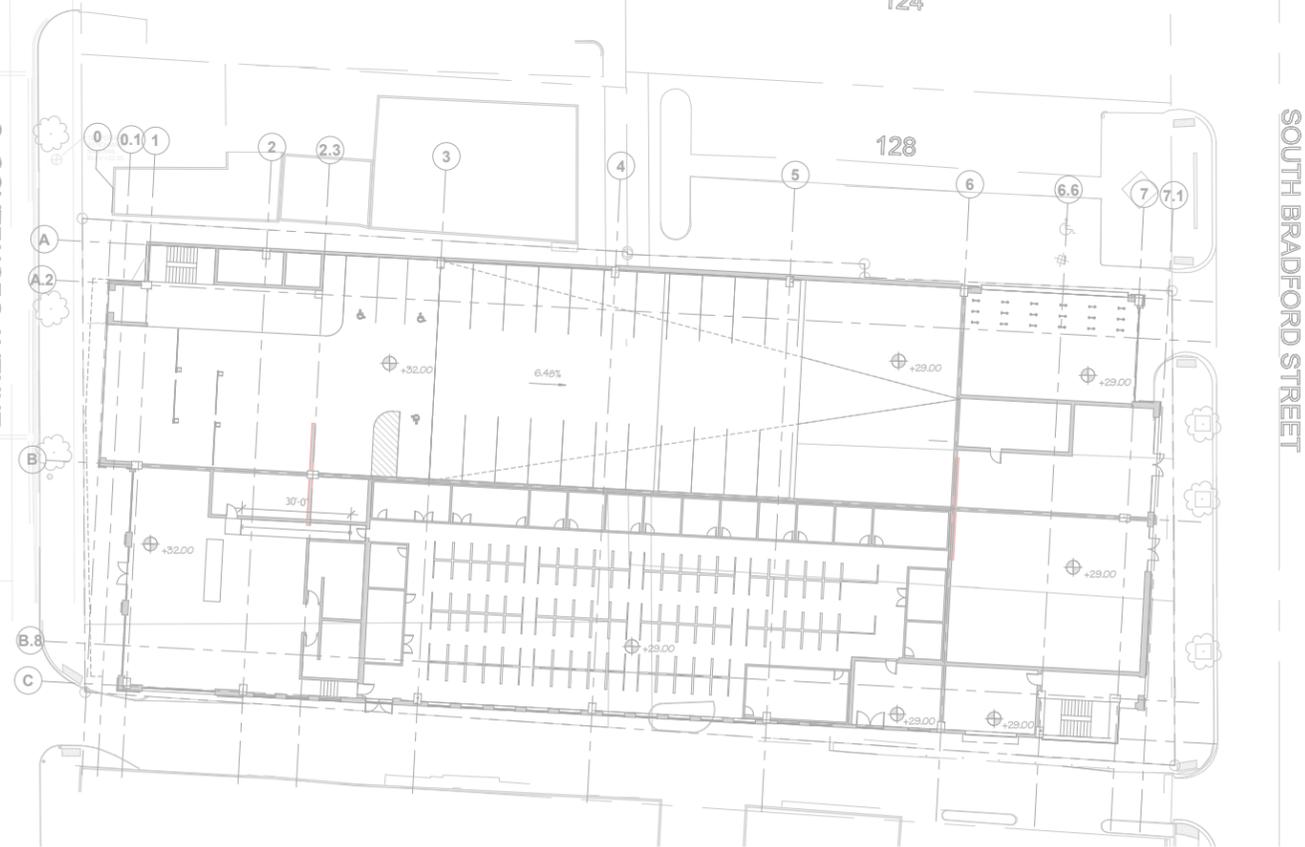
Item 4.

<b>Total Building Area in SF:</b>	<b>169,080</b>
<b>Total Development Site Area from assemblage below:</b>	<b>85,377</b>
120 S. Governors Ave   Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-44.00	74,052
115 S. New Street   Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-43.00	3,484
111 S. New Street   Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-42.00	3,485
105 S. New Street   Parcel ID: ED05-077.09-01-37.00	4,356
<b>C-2 Allowable FAR per DRAFT Proposed Ordinance 2024-01 C-2 Zone Revisions</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Proposed FAR</b>	<b>2.0</b>

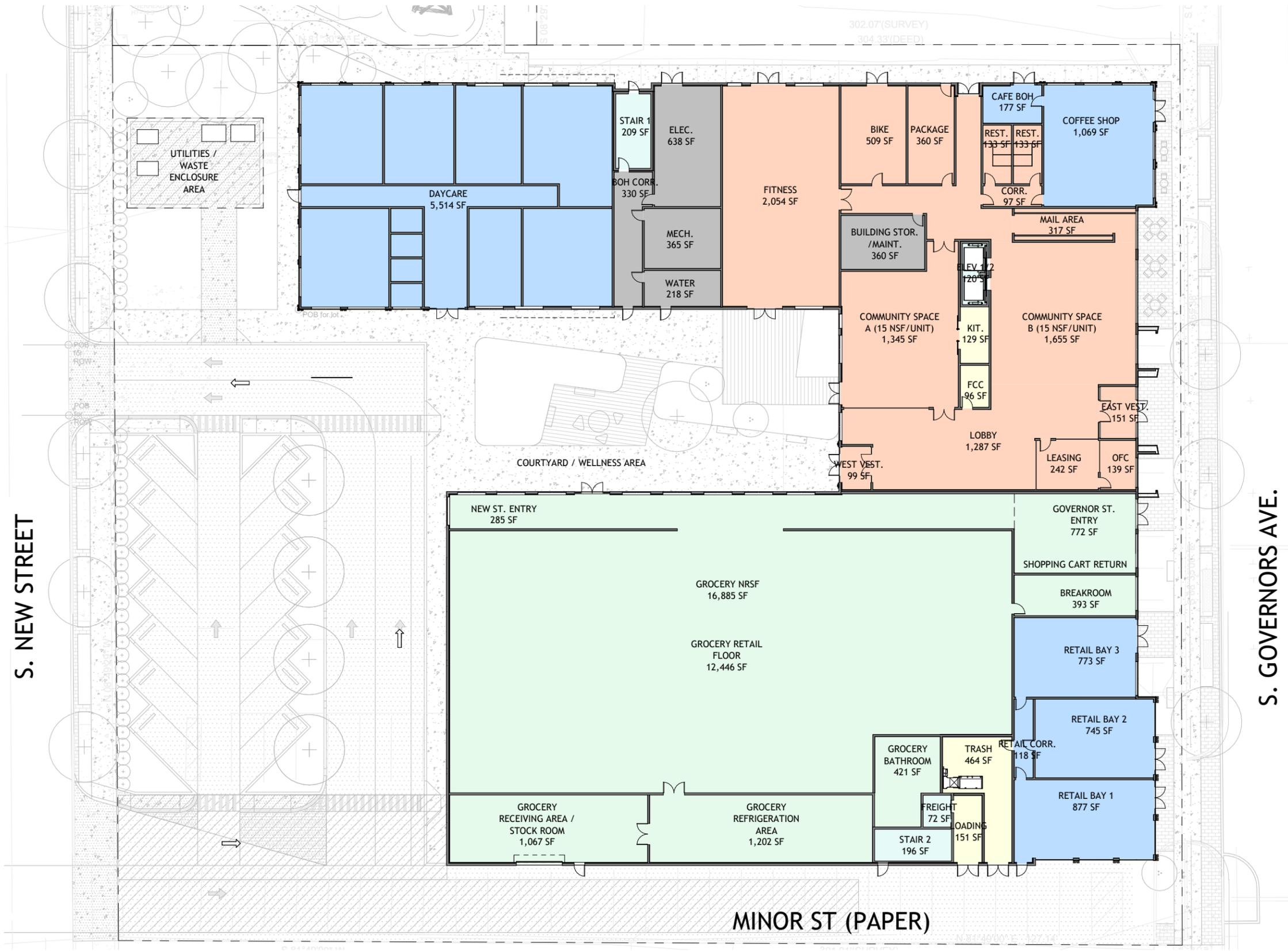


S. GOVERNORS AVE.

S. GOVERNORS AVENUE



SOUTH BRADFORD STREET



# SECOND FLOOR PLAN



LEVELS	L01	L02	L03	L04	TOTAL	MIX
DELTA	0	11	11	11	33	28%
ALPHA	0	21	21	21	63	53%
BETA	0	7	7	7	21	18%
GAMMA	0	1	1	1	3	3%
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	0	40	40	40	120	100%

# THIRD - FOURTH FLOOR

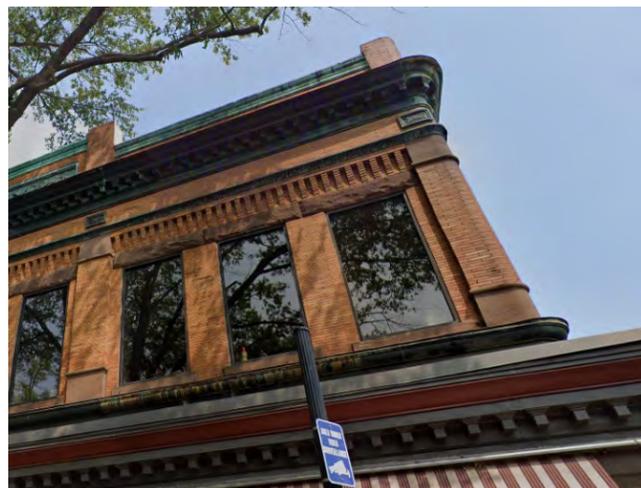


LEVELS	L01	L02	L03	L04	TOTAL	MIX
DELTA	0	11	11	11	33	28%
ALPHA	0	21	21	21	63	53%
BETA	0	7	7	7	21	18%
GAMMA	0	1	1	1	3	3%
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	0	40	40	40	120	100%

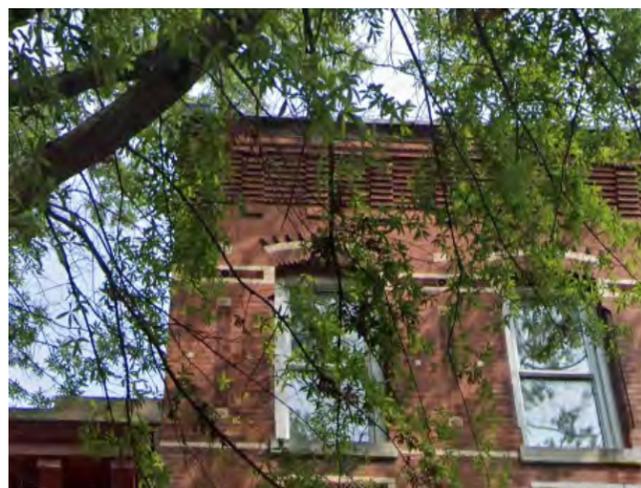
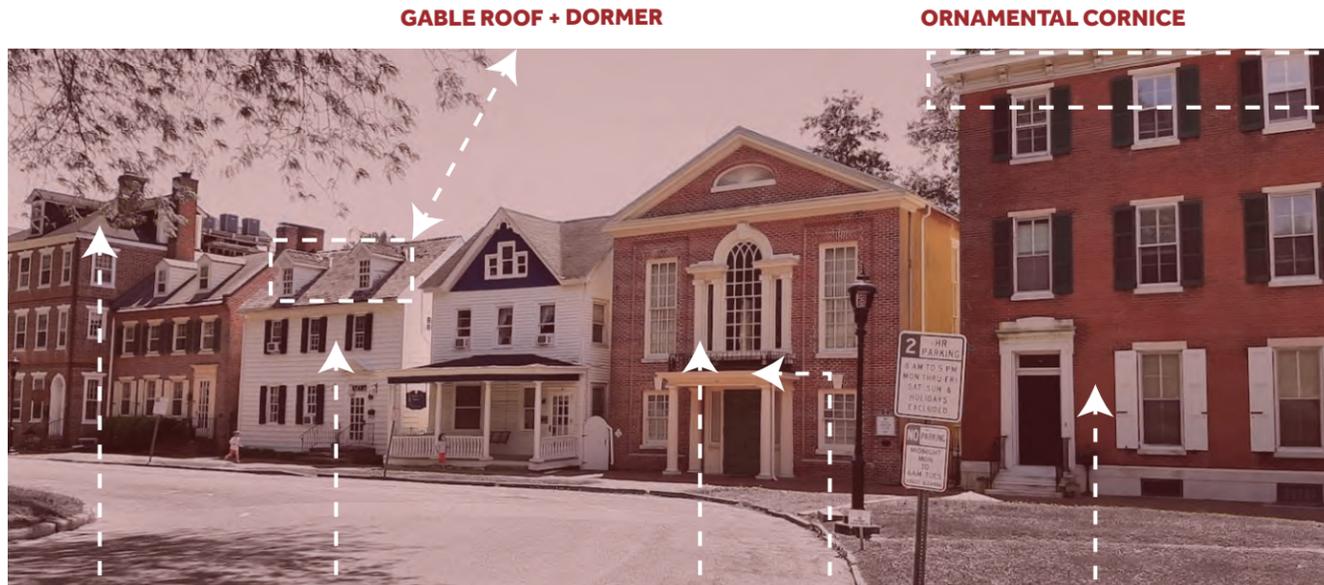
BRICK PATTERNING | COORDINATED DESIGN



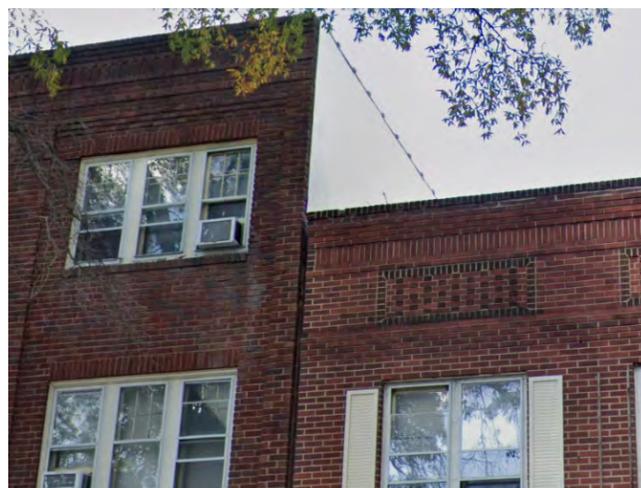
224 W. LOOCKERMAN STREET



1 W. LOOCKERMAN STREET



27 W. LOOCKERMAN STREET



231 W. LOOCKERMAN STREET



HISTORIC PALETTE

MATERIAL PALETTE

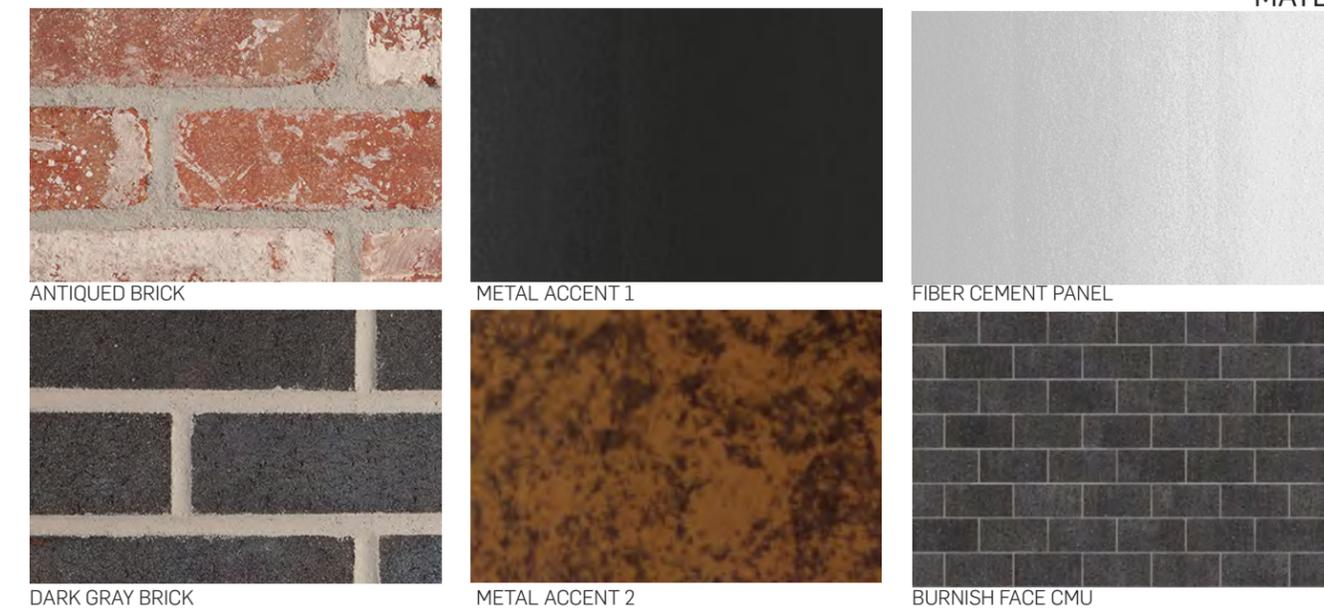
BRICK COLORING



147 S. GOVERNORS AVENUE

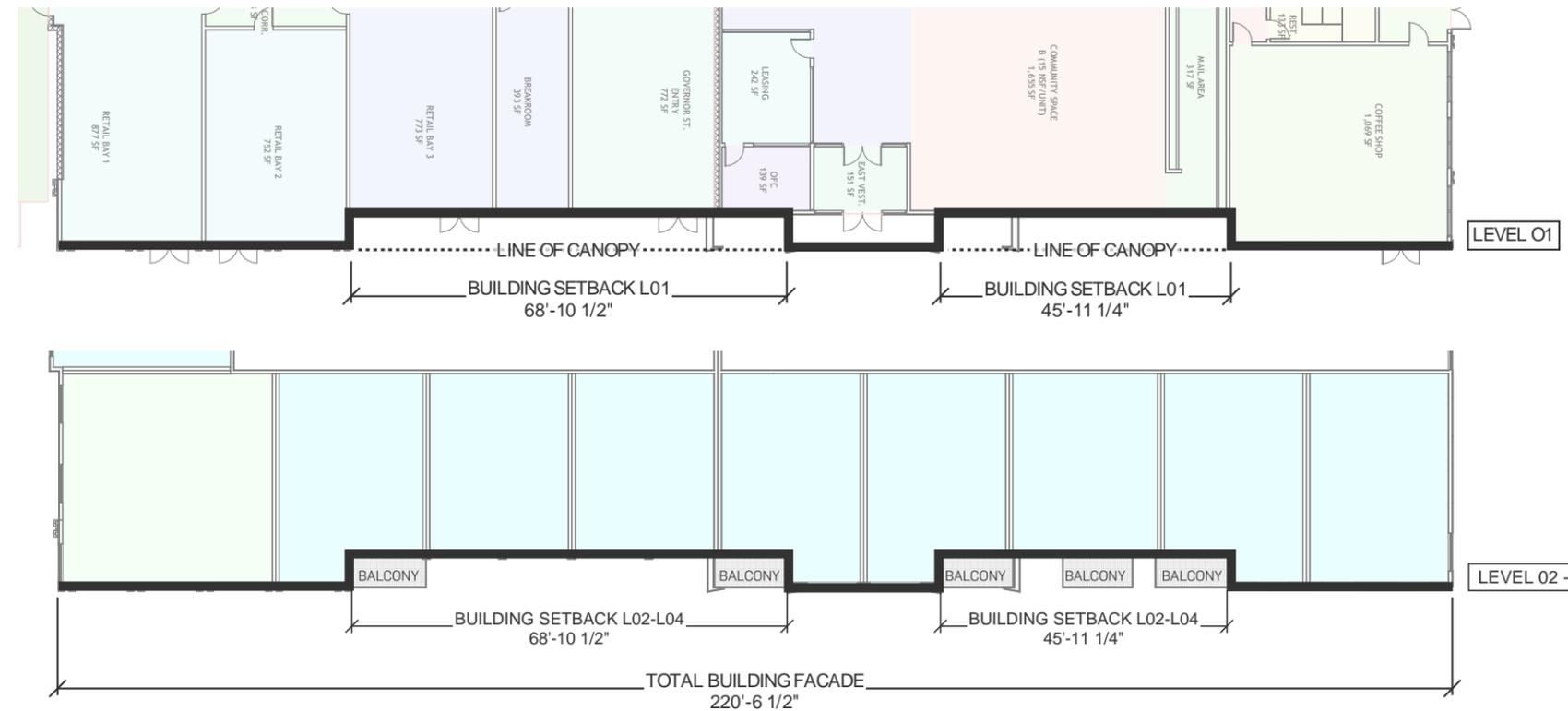


101 W. LOOCKERMAN STREET



ARTICLE 3 SECTION 13 - CENTRAL COMMERCIAL ZONE (C-2) 13.52

\*FOR BUILDING GREATER THAN 4 STORIES, THEN THE UPPER FLOORS SHALL STEP BACK



TOTAL BUILDING FRONTAGE | 220.5'  
 TOTAL BUILDING SETBACK 6' | 114.0'  
**SETBACK ACHIEVED | 51.7%**

S, GOVERNORS AVE





**W:** WEST ELEVATION - S NEW STREET



**E:** EAST ELEVATION - S GOVERNORS AVE





**S:** SOUTH ELEVATION - MINOR STREET ALLEY



**N:** NORTH ELEVATION





**S:** SOUTH ELEVATION - ENTRANCE COURTYARD



**N:** NORTH ELEVATION - ENTRANCE COURTYARD





1: VIEW FACING WEST FROM S GOVERNORS AVENUE



2: VIEW FACING SOUTH WEST FROM S GOVERNORS AVENUE



3: VIEW FACING EAST FROM S NEW STREET



4: VIEW FACING NORTH EAST FROM S NEW STREET