

**Certificate of Appropriateness**

**PROPOSAL:**

Dan Grasso of Sinclair Hille Architects, on behalf of Kappa Foundation, requests a certificate of appropriateness for demolition of 3611 Holdrege, and 1358, 1400, and 1430 Idylwild Dr. and new construction of a fraternity house at the southeast corner of Idylwild Drive and Holdrege Street in the East Campus Neighborhood Landmark District.

The Commission is also asked to comment to the Planning Commission and the City Council on Special Permit 11021 and Change of Zone 11032 associated with this project.

**DISCUSSION:**

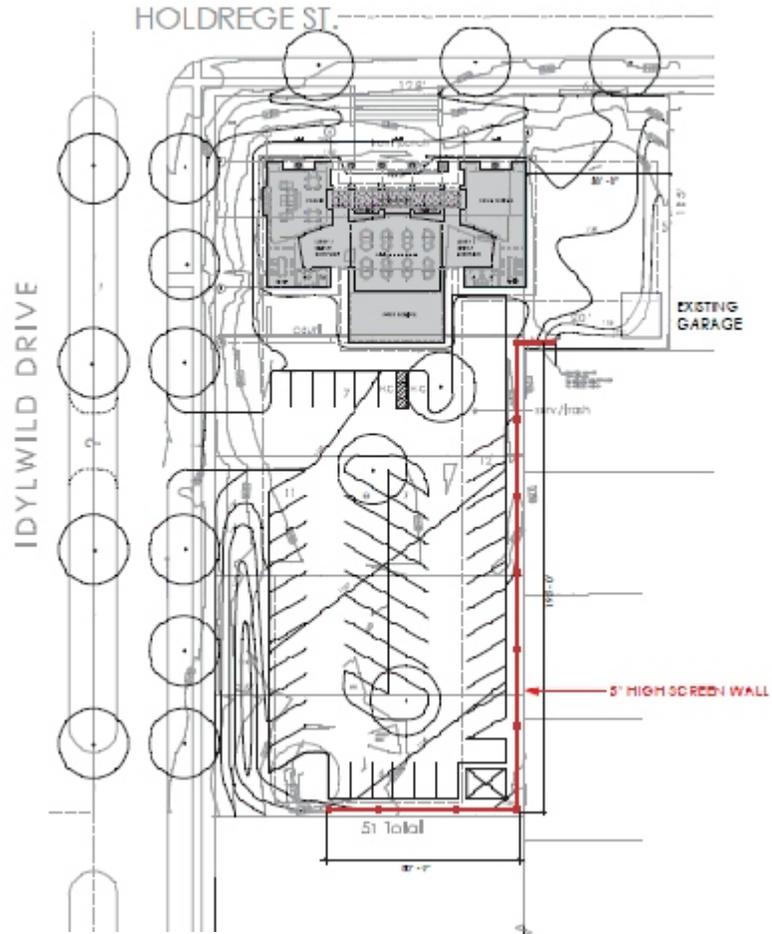
The Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) fraternity house at 1430 Idylwild Drive was built in 1957, with an addition on the south side in the 1970s. The house is within the East Campus Neighborhood Landmark District and was identified as a “non-contributing” property to the historic character of the area at the time of the designation.

THE PROJECT: The Kappa Foundation, the ownership entity of the fraternity, has been striving for several years to upgrade the facility through renovation or replacement and has acquired several residential properties in the vicinity of the fraternity house towards that end. The Foundation has made applications to the Preservation Commission regarding demolition and new construction and to the Planning Commission for a change of zone and special permit for parking. The current proposal to the Preservation Commission requests demolition of the fraternity and three residences and construction of a new fraternity house with associated, required parking. The Commission must consider several complex issues. To bring them into focus, I will begin with a description of the proposal, proceed to consider the requested demolitions, then address the new construction relative to the District preservation guidelines. Finally, I will offer recommendations for the Commission’s consideration on the change of zone and special permit associated with the proposal.

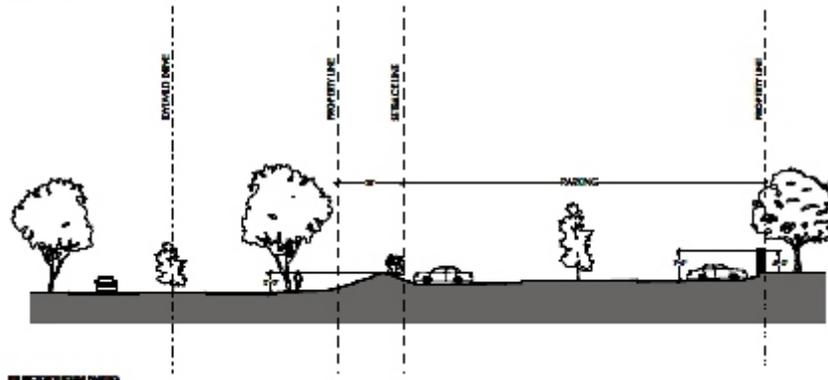
*Proposed perspective from NW*



Detailed visuals provided by Sinclair Hille are attached to the end of this report. The proposed design would orient the front of the 3-story fraternity house north toward Holdrege. A parking lot of 51 spaces would be constructed south of the chapter house, screened by a five-foot masonry wall from properties to the east and south. Screening from Idylwild would be provided by a berm and plant materials, and by depressing the surface of the parking lot approximately two feet from current grade. The parking lot would be accessed from Idylwild and existing curb cuts on Holdrege would be eliminated.

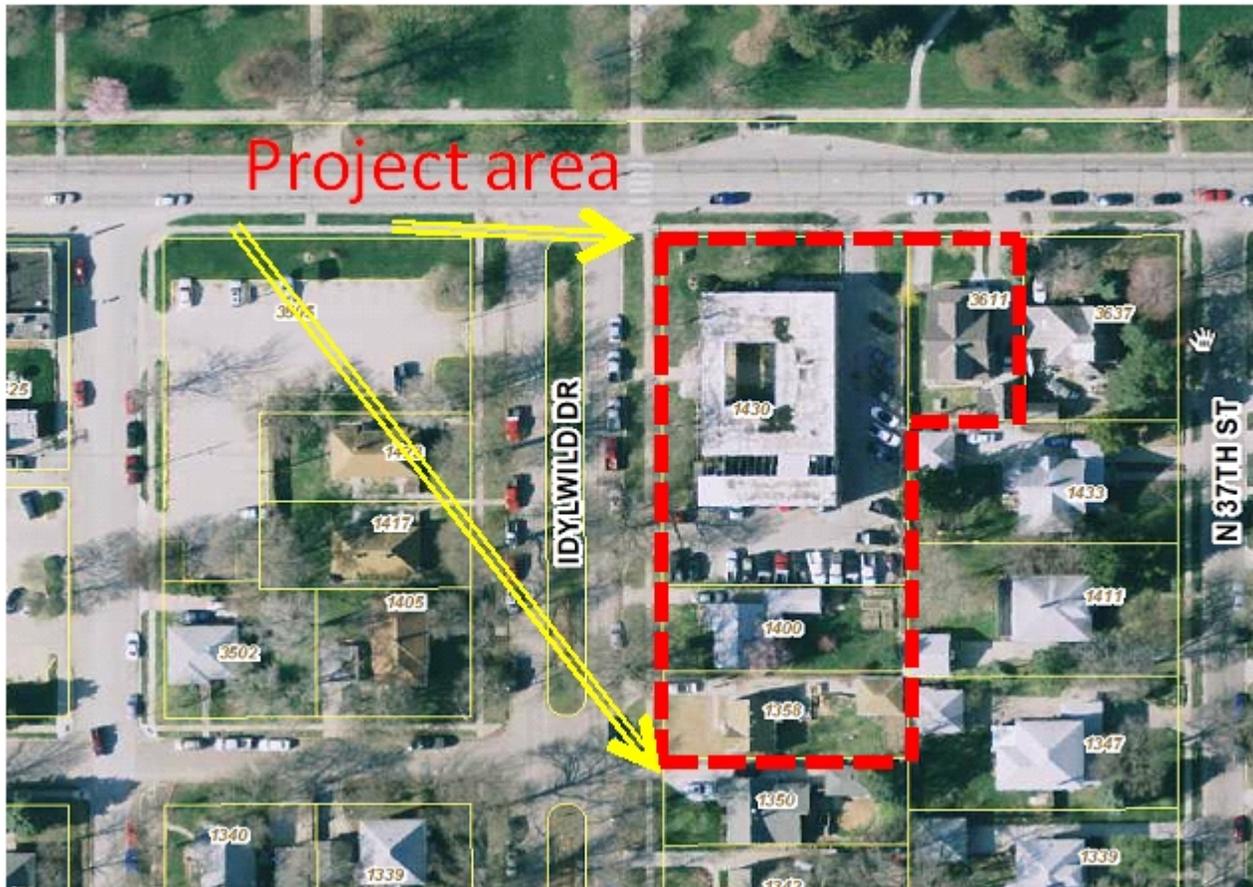


ALPHA GAMMA BLDG  
Landscape Professional



Section (looking north) through parking lot. (See attachment for enlarged images.)

Current Conditions: The AGR project would remove the non-contributing fraternity house at 1430 Idylwild and three contributing residences: 3611 Holdrege, a 1½ story, brick veneered bungalow constructed in 1918 and 1400 and 1358 Idylwild, two single-story masonry cottages built in 1943.



3611 Holdrege was built by Henry Luckey, one of the principal developers of the area. It is in fair-to-poor condition and has suffered some loss of integrity in the uneven painting of its brick veneer, worn false-brick siding of its upper story, and conspicuous repointing/caulking of cracks in the veneer. On the other hand, it clearly expresses its bungalow form in the wide eaves with brackets, low-sweeping gable roof, and porch/sunporch combination across the full length of the Holdrege.





1400 Idylwild (left) and 1358 Idylwild (right) were built by Sweeney Construction Co., in association with Selmer Solheim, in 1943. Idylwild Drive extends about 1400 feet from Holdrege to Apple without any intersecting streets on the east side and has special landscape features including three long, narrow median strips, and Idylwild Park at the southern end. There are 17 residences along the east side of Idylwild. The first three are similar in age, style, and scale to 1358 and 1400; the remainder are more varied, ranging from one to two stories and including period revival styles, ranch houses, and a Colonial Revival duplex at 1200.

Demolition: Viewed separately, the proposed demolitions differ in “appropriateness” to the historic character of the district. The removal of the existing fraternity house at 1430 Idylwild would not diminish the historic fabric of the area. The bungalow at 3611 Holdrege has a prominent location and retains overall historic form and features, but has a blighting effect in its current condition. The brick and limestone cottages on Idylwild are contributors to a small group of similar structures, on a lovely residential street.

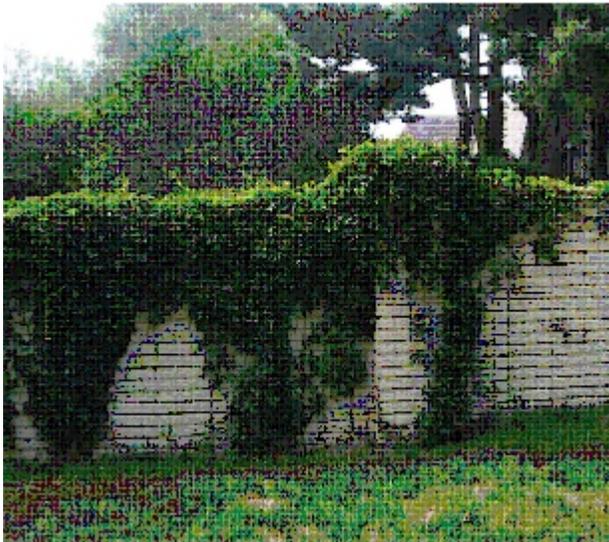
New Construction: These requested demolitions must also be viewed in the broader context of the overall fraternity house proposal. The proposed house is designed in response to the University buildings of East Campus as well as to the single-family residences of the neighborhood. The many linkages between the residential district and the University are a unique historic aspect of the area, and the project’s Holdrege St. orientation seems fitting for its function and design. The proposed masonry materials (brick and limestone) provide connections both to the campus and to the neighborhood’s houses. The proposal fits within the zoned height limits of the area but exceeds the typical heights of the residences. As proposed, the fraternity would have over 50 feet of separation



from the nearest residence to the east and about 200 feet from the nearest Idylwild Dr. house to the south, softening the differences in scale. A comparison of the proposed fraternity to the adjacent house east (3637 Holdrege) has been provided (next page).



Mitigation: The project proponents have met several times with neighbors and the neighborhood association. The attached plans reflect several suggestions from those meetings. The base grade of the fraternity and especially of the parking lot has been lowered. Berms, landscaping, and a 5 foot masonry wall have been proposed to screen the parking area, both in sight and in sound. Two variations on the masonry wall are offered—one stuccoed (similar to the wall the Commission approved several years ago at 37<sup>th</sup> & Holdrege) and the other of “formed” (brick-texture) and painted concrete. My recommendation is that the brick-texture wall, at location at the back and side of the parking lot, may offer more durability, maintainability, and a richer appearance.



FORMED CONCRETE WALL  
FORMED BRICK SCREEN WALL OPTIONS



STUCCO WALL

Associated zoning requests: The project as proposed requires a Change of Zone on the 3611 Holdrege property, from R-2 to R-6, and a special permit on the southern two lots of the parking lot (now occupied by 1358 and 1400 Idylwild). The R-6 zoning district permits fraternities and sororities, while the R-2 district does not. The current house occupies R-6 property but reorienting the longer dimension of the proposed chapter house along Holdrege includes a small portion of the 3611 Holdrege lot. The lot cannot be subdivided legally as the remnant portion falls below the requirements for creating an R-2 parcel.

The Planning Dept.'s report on the Change of Zone request recommends approval, with conditions to mitigate the impacts both of the larger building and the open "yard" adjacent to 3637 Holdrege. Berms and landscaping at the east and south sides of the yard are recommended as conditions for approval, along with planting of street trees on Holdrege and retention of street trees along Idylwild. Furthermore, if the Preservation Commission recommends approval of the overall proposal, the building design and parking lot features would all become recommended conditions for Change of Zone approval.

**Recommended finding:**

Viewed as a whole, the removal of 3611 Holdrege and 1430, 1400, and 1358 Idylwild, and the construction of a new AGR Fraternity House and associated site features as proposed, improve the appearance and maintainability, and reinforces public and private investments, in the area, for a net beneficial effect upon the long-term preservation and historic character of the East Campus Neighborhood District. The materials, design features, and mitigation measures of the proposal are all essential to this finding and any modifications of the approved plan should be reviewed for consistency with this finding.

**Recommended action:**

Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**Recommendations on CZ11032 and SP 11021:**

That the Planning Commission and City Council approve the requests, conditioned upon new construction as proposed, with any modifications requiring review and Certificate of Appropriateness by Historic Preservation Commission.



ALPHA GAMMA RHO - NEW FRATERNITY HOUSE  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

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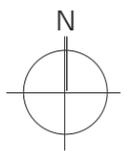
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ALPHA GAMMA RHO  
Lincoln, Nebraska



EXISTING CONDITIONS (AERIAL)  
September 8, 2011

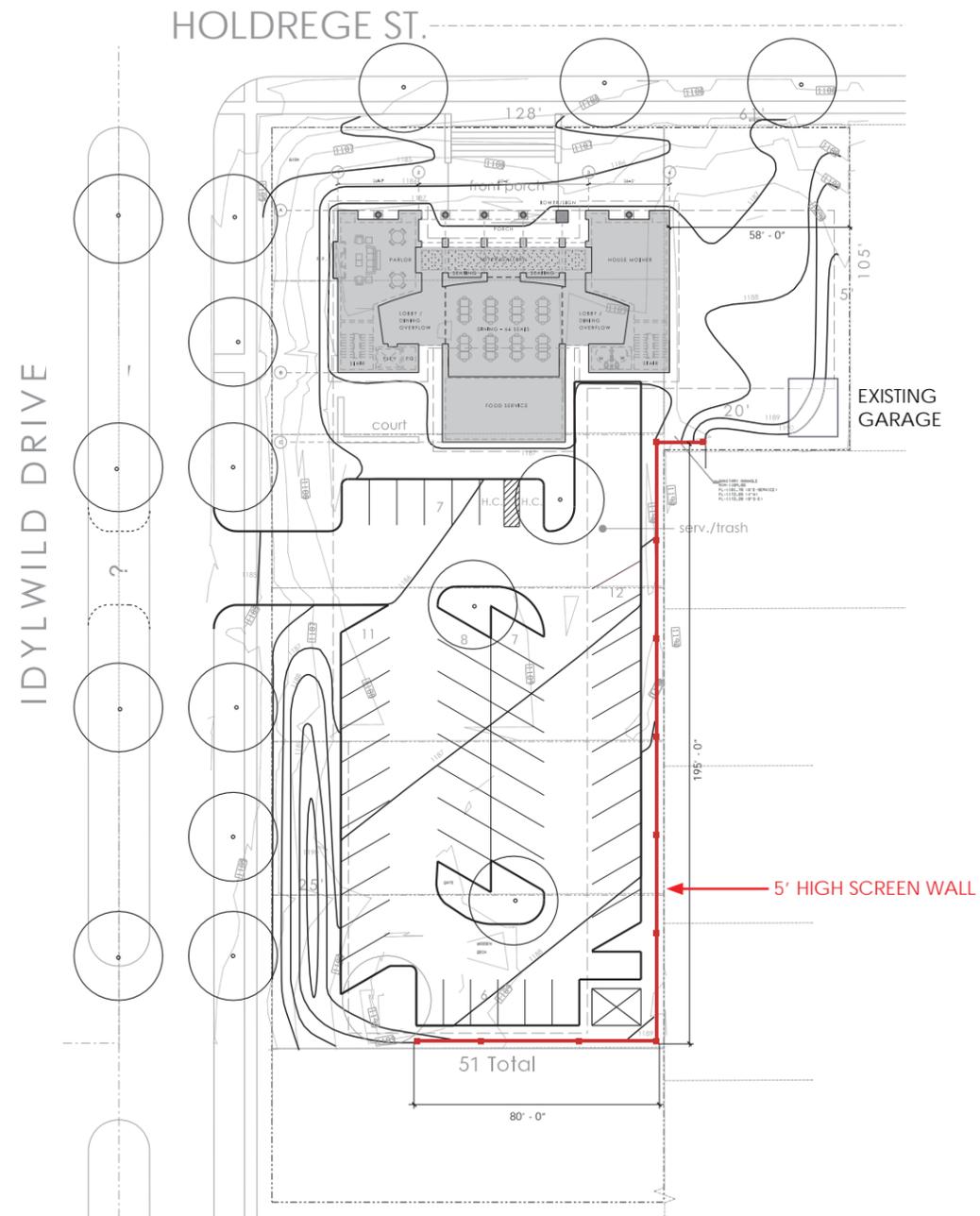
 PROPOSED FOOTPRINT



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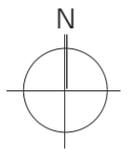
ALPHA GAMMA RHO  
Lincoln, Nebraska



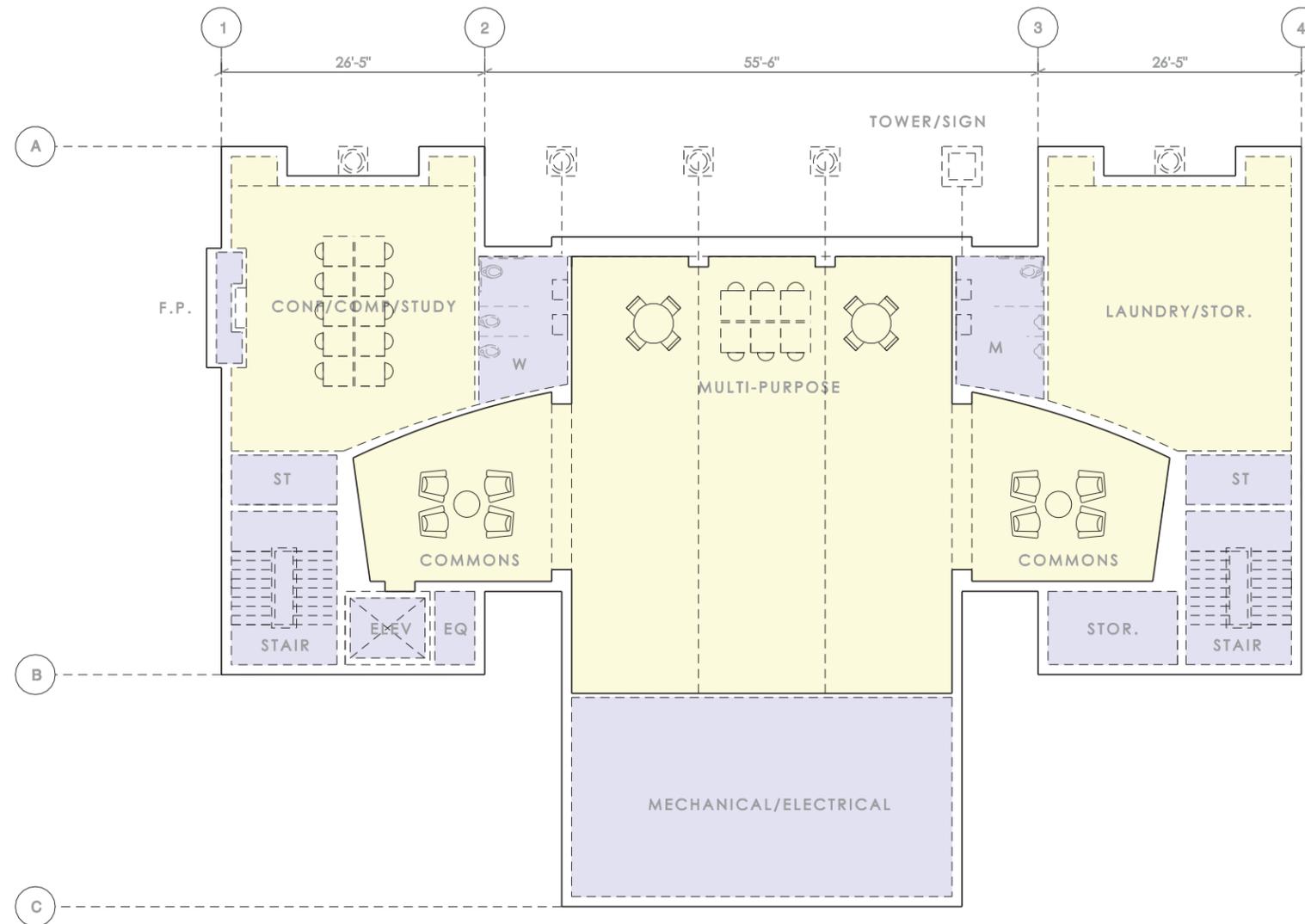
PROPOSED SITE/ GRADING PLAN  
September 8, 2011

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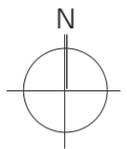
**ALPHA GAMMA RHO**  
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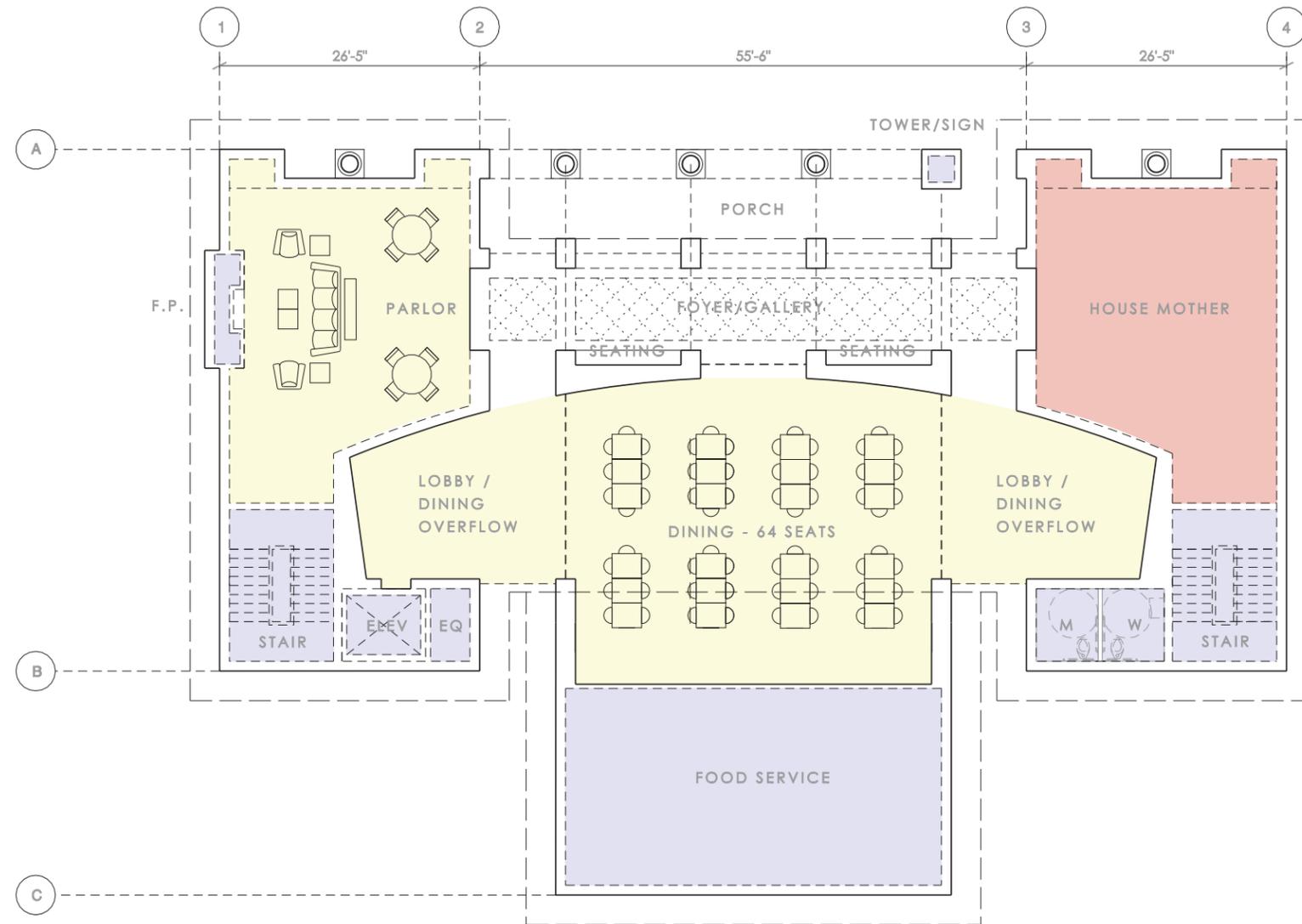
**LOWER LEVEL PLAN**  
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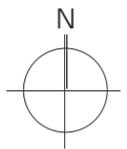
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**MAIN LEVEL PLAN**  
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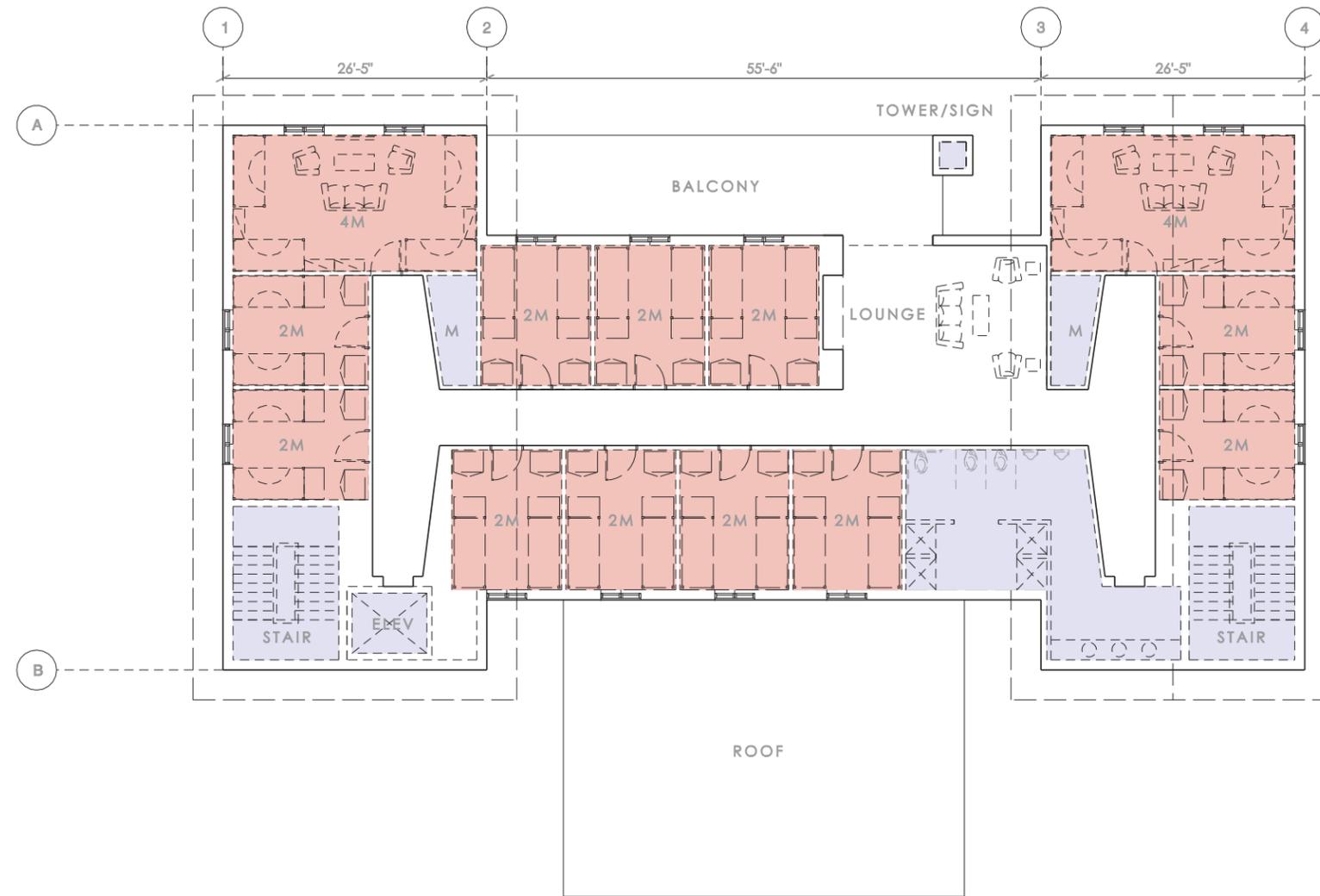


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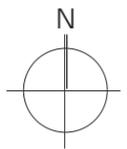


SECOND LEVEL PLAN

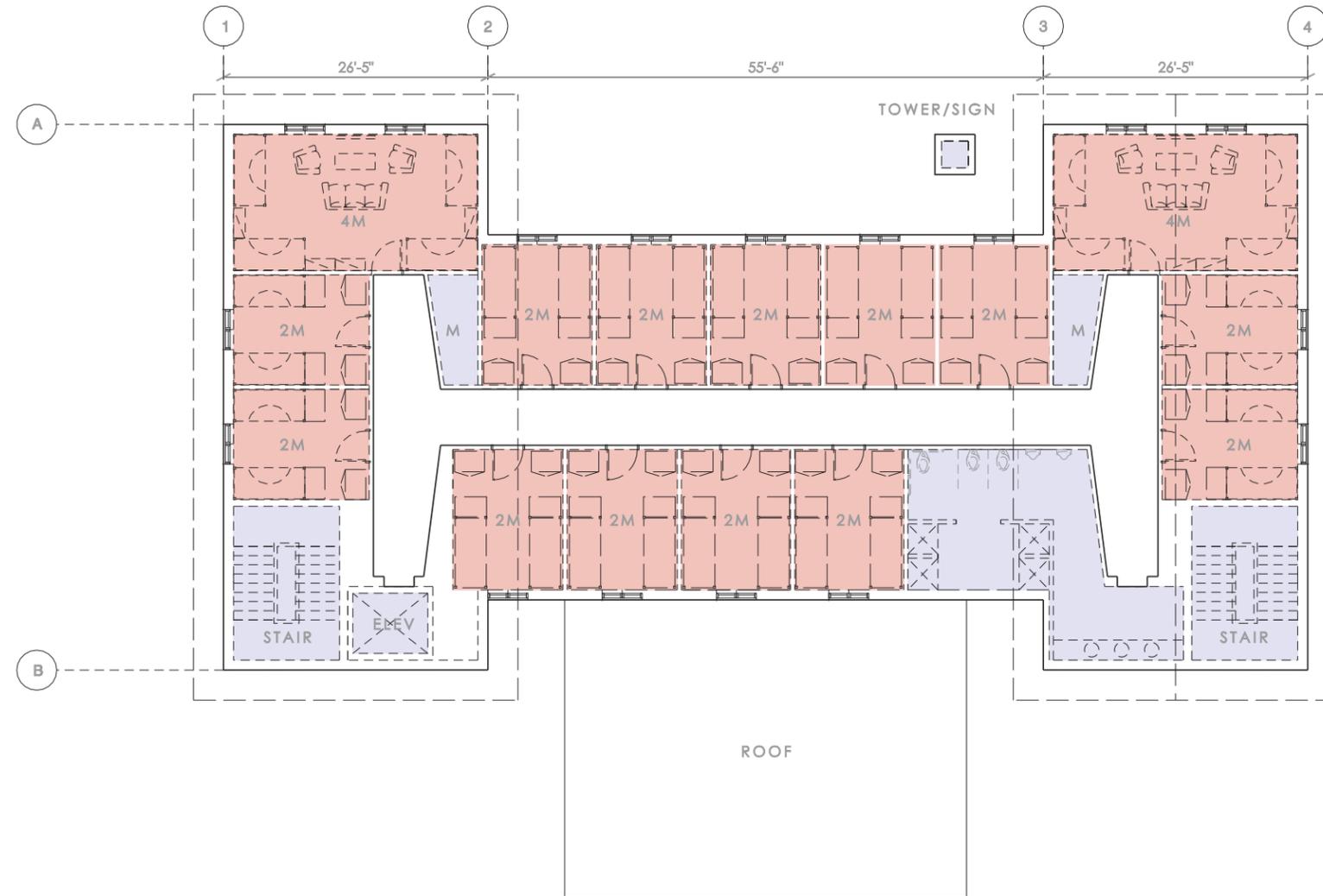
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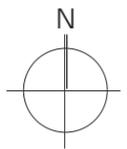
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THIRD LEVEL PLAN  
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UNL EAST CAMPUS CONTEXT



UNL EAST CAMPUS CONTEXT

EAST CAMPUS CONTEXT

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NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



UNL EAST CAMPUS CONTEXT

EAST CAMPUS CONTEXT  
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**VIEW FROM HOLDREDGE STREET**  
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**VIEW OF ENTRY PORCH/BALCONY**

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SITE CONTEXT IMAGE - EXISTING VIEW

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SITE CONTEXT IMAGE WITH PROPOSED DESIGN

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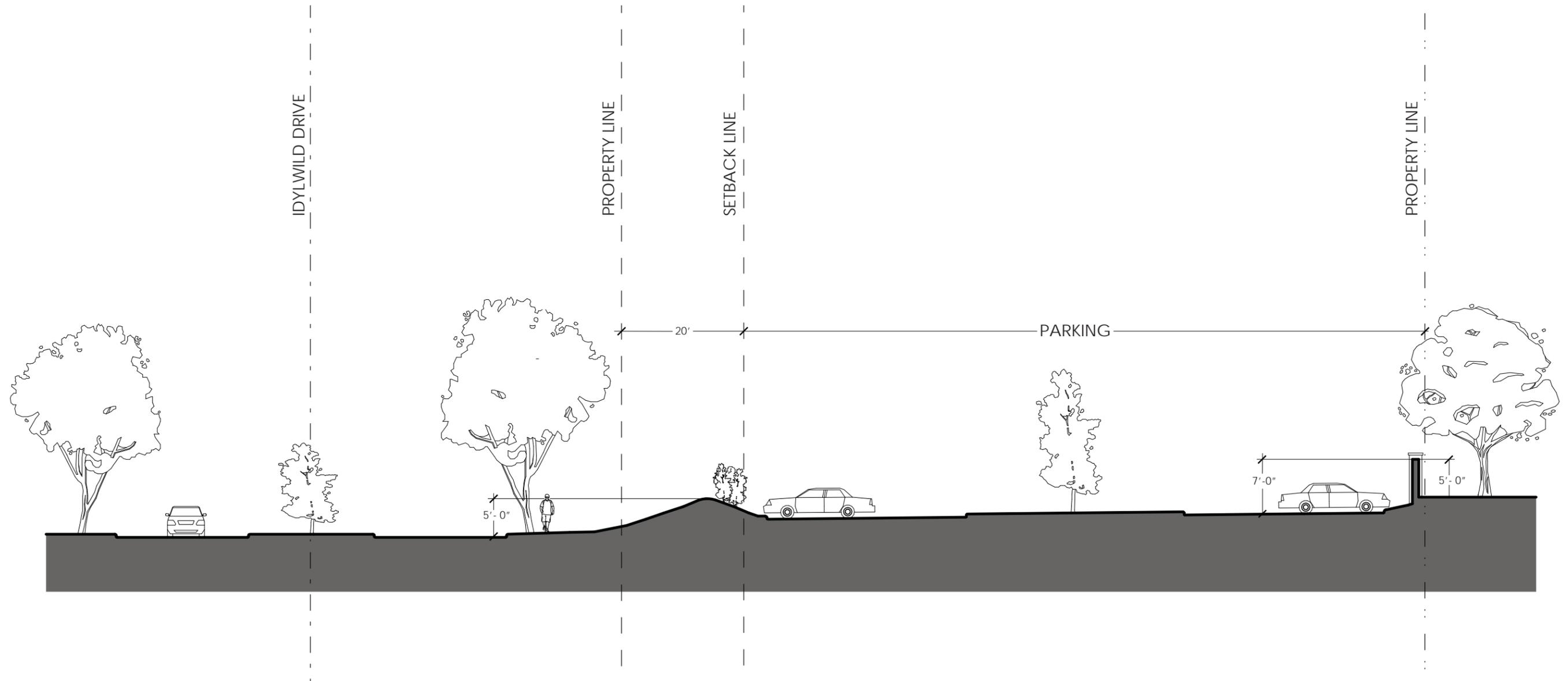
SITE CONTEXT IMAGE WITH PROPOSED DESIGN

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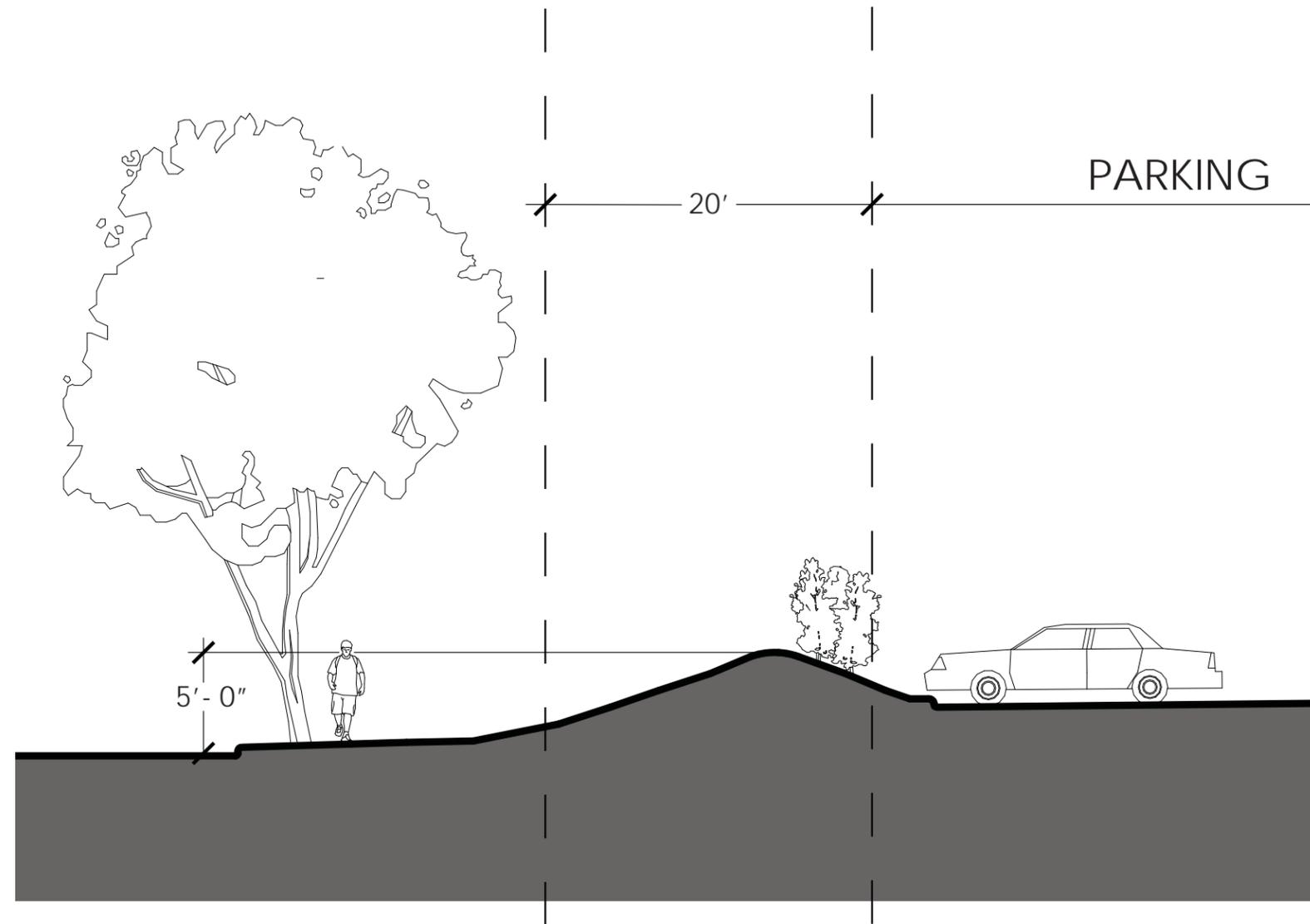
SITE SECTION THROUGH PARKING

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ALPHA GAMMA RHO  
Lincoln, Nebraska

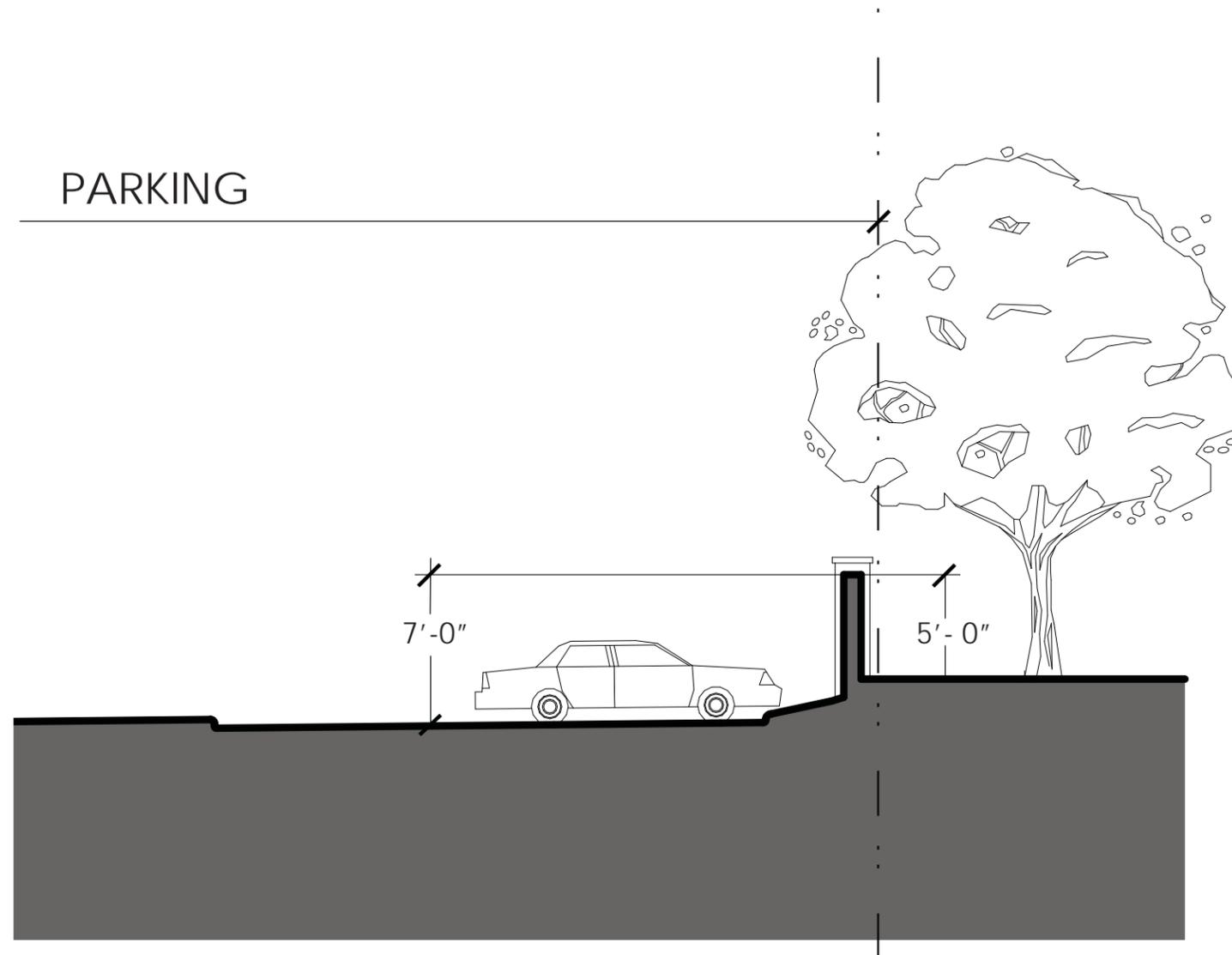


SITE SECTION AT PARKING BERM  
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SITE SECTION AT SCREEN WALL  
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ALPHA GAMMA RHO

Lincoln, Nebraska



FORMED CONCRETE WALL



STUCCO WALL

PROPOSED SITE SCREEN WALL OPTIONS

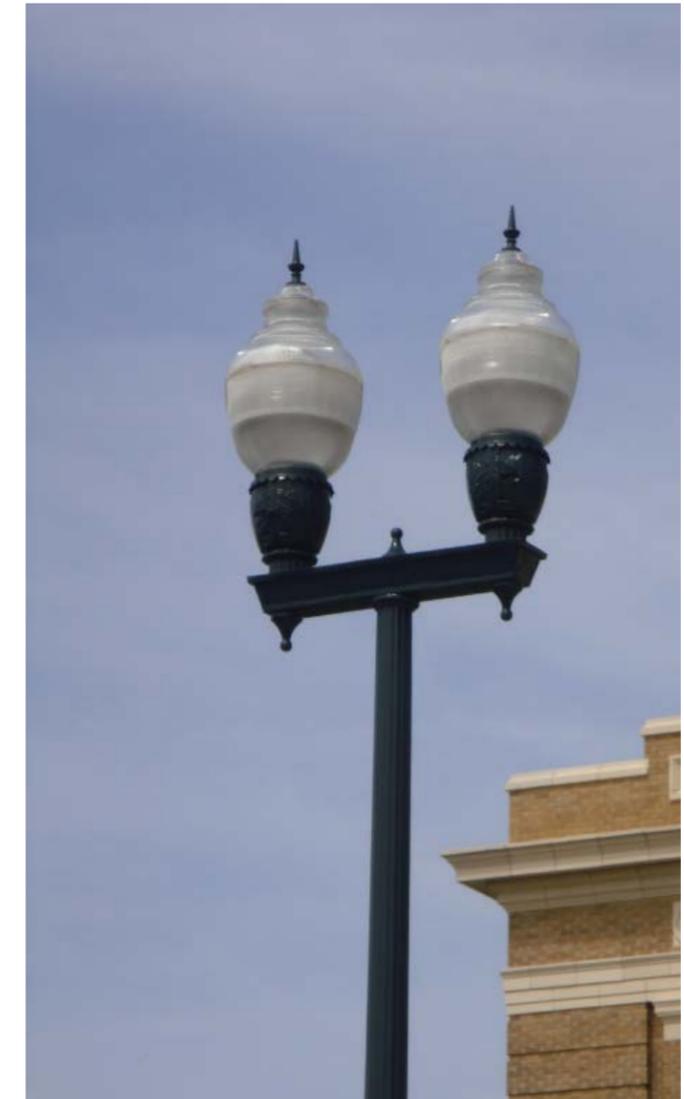
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PROPOSED PARKING LOT LIGHTING

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