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May 15, 2024

**Knoxville-Knox County Planning**  
City-County Building, Suite 403  
400 Main Street  
Knoxville, TN 37902

Re: Agenda Item No. 5  
File No. 8-A-24-OB  
0 W. Hill Ave. / Parcel ID 094MD018, 094MD022, 094MD024, 094MD025, and  
094ME033 ("Property")

Dear Commissioners,

I represent Brock Hudgins Architects related to the Design Review Board's ("DRB") unanimous approval of a certificate of appropriateness for the proposed multi-family development on the Property ("Project"). This matter is before the Planning Commission based on appeal filed by the Overlook Owners Association, Inc. ("Overlook"), which has an interest in the neighboring property. The Overlook challenges the DRB's unanimous approval alleging that the design of the Project violates multiples guidelines of the Downtown Design Guidelines ("Design Guidelines"). The complete set of design plans for the Project approved by the DRB on June 20, 2024 are included within your Agenda Packet.

***The DK (Downtown Knoxville) Zoning District***

The zoning applicable to the Property is DK (Downtown Knoxville). The DK zoning district has five sub-districts thereunder. The portion of the Property that fronts W. Hill Avenue (094MD018) is designated as DK-G (Downtown Knoxville Grid Subdistrict) and the remainder of the Property is zoned DK-B (Downtown Knoxville Boulevards Subdistrict). Article 5.5 of the Zoning Ordinance sets forth dimensional and design standards related to developments in the DK subdistricts. New development projects in the DK zoning district require review and approval by the DRB. Article 16.5 of the Zoning Ordinance provides that the intent of this design review process is to "foster attractive and harmonious development and rehabilitation in Downtown Knoxville that reflects the goals of adopted plans, and the principles of the Design Guidelines." Article 16.5 further provides that the:

Design Guidelines are **not** intended to bring uniformity in design or approach or to require specific materials. The Design Guidelines are to be **applied in a flexible manner to meet the needs of the development** while encouraging the design to respect the context of nearby buildings and the streetscape. The Design Guidelines are thus **not a rigid set of rules**, but rather a set of key principles to guide development.

(emphasis added).

#### ***DRB Workshop Meeting on November 16, 2022***

When a project is subject to the review and approval of the DRB, there is an opportunity to informally introduce a proposed project to the DRB after its regular monthly meeting is concluded in order to receive impressions and comments from the DRB prior to submitting an official Design Review Request Application. This process is an off-the-record meeting that is commonly referred to as a DRB Workshop. On the instant matter, Brock Hudgins Architects and its representatives (collectively “BHA”) introduced the Project and initial design plans for a DRB Workshop review on October 28, 2023. The DRB provided feedback and comments on the initial design plans for the Project. A copy of the initial design plans and the DRB comments/feedback related thereto are attached hereto as **Exhibit A**. Following the DRB Workshop, BHA prepared revised design plans implementing the comments and feedback from the DRB.

#### ***Neighborhood Meeting on April 9, 2024***

BHA held a neighborhood meeting on April 9, 2024, to introduce the proposed Project to the area community members including the residents and representatives of the Overlook.

#### ***DRB Meeting on April 17, 2024***

On March 29, 2024, BHA filed a Design Review Request Application which included design plans for the Project for consideration by the DRB at its meeting on April 17, 2024. At this meeting, BHA described the Project and explained the revisions to the revised plans, some of which included a reduction in the building height along W. Hill Avenue and refinements made to the parking garage. Representatives on behalf of the Overlook spoke in opposition citing various concerns related to the Project. The DRB discussed the Project and the design plans at length. The DRB’s comments and feedback centered on (i) improving the pedestrian experience along Front Avenue; (ii) studying the parking garage façade and design; (iii) introducing building stepbacks along Front Avenue; and (iv) studying the possibility of a building height increase along Locust Street. After considering the design plans, statements by BHA and the Overlook, and discussion by the DRB, a motion to postpone for 30 days was approved by the DRB. A copy of these renderings, which are part of the overall revised design plans, and the DRB comments/feedback thereto at the April 17, 2024 meeting are attached hereto as **Exhibit B**.

#### ***Neighborhood Meeting on May 1, 2024***

BHA held a neighborhood meeting, which was attended by the representatives of the Overlook and other community members to discuss the Project following the comments at the DRB meeting on April 17, 2024. At this meeting, discussed the Project and its design with the attendees. Also, BHA produced renderings of other developments based on comments from the DRB related to the specific design features of the Project. For instance, examples of the different fenestration designs of the parking garages from other developments were included on large boards of the attendees were asked to affix stickers next to their preferred design. A comment and suggestion box were provided for the attendees to provide written feedback on the design of the Project. Attached hereto as **Exhibit C** are photos from this neighborhood meeting.

### ***DRB Meeting on May 15, 2024***

Following the DRB meeting on April 17, 2024 and the neighborhood meeting on May 1, 2024, BHA moved forward on a redesign of the Project based on comments and feedback it received. Revised design plans were submitted for consideration by the DRB at its meeting on May 15, 2024. At this meeting, BHA described the revised plans for the Project, noting the changes in the design that had been made including (a) the introduction of building stepbacks; (b) the new fenestration design incorporated into the parking garage based on the comments from the neighborhood meeting; (c) the reduced height of the building section along Front Avenue closest to Henley (reduction by removing an entire floor); (d) reduced the parking garage height by one floor; and (e) provided activation of the ground floor area along Front Avenue. A copy of these renderings, which are part of the overall revised design plans, and the DRB comments/feedback thereto at the May 15, 2024 meeting are attached hereto as **Exhibit D**.

During DRB's discussion of the revised plans for the Project the members noted the incorporation of certain design changes based on their comments from April. There were still aspects of the design that some members of the DRB wanted BHA to reconsider which included (i) consideration of whether the building height/massing along W. Hill Avenue could be further reduced; (ii) studying the possibility of ways to soften the building at the grade along Front Avenue; and (iii) reviewing the transition at the parking plinth in the parking garage. The DRB applauded the originality of the design of the Project. Following the discussion, the DRB approved a motion to postpone consideration of an approval for 30 days to address their comments through a revision to the design plans.

### ***DRB Meeting on June 20, 2024***

BHA submitted revised design plans for the Project for consideration at the DRB meeting on June 20, 2024. A copy of these renderings, which are part of the overall revised design plans, and the DRB comments/feedback thereto at the June 20, 2024 meeting are attached hereto as **Exhibit E**. The Planning Staff introduced the Project including details of the of the design elements. The Planning Staff Report identifies the Design Guidelines that are applicable to the Project based on the DK-B and DK-G zoning designations for the Property. The Staff Report describes how the Project's design plans satisfy and/or align with the Design Guidelines including the following details (a) the use of the Property in relation to the surrounding uses; (b) the access into the parking facility; (c) the massing and scale of the Project noting how the buildings are

divided into modules that include height variations to break the scale as well as the inclusion of the two story vertical fins to obscure the parking garage; (d) the pedestrian experience associated with the Project including (i) café space on the first story on Hill Avenue, (ii) five storefront entries along Locust Avenue, (iii) a series of storefront areas of enclosed interior amenity space at the ground level along Front Avenue; (iv) landscaping, street trees, sidewalks, and information on a proposed crosswalk along Locust Street, along with a multi-use path to connect to the existing pedestrian bridge; and (e) that the proposed building material for the Project compatible with the overall context of the materials in the area.

Planning Staff recommended that the DRB approve the request for a certificate of appropriateness based on the design plans for the Project satisfying the requirements of the Design Guidelines and the DK zoning ordinance.

After hearing from proponents and opponents of the requested, the DRB discussed the revisions to the design plans for the Project. Several DRB members commented positively on the refinements to the massing of the buildings being a major improvement and the new façade/fenestration treatment to the parking garage. DRB members also expressed great appreciation for the increased pedestrian activation along Front Avenue. The DRB openly expressed that their previous feedback was heard and addressed in the revised. Finding that the design plans satisfied the requirements of the Design Guidelines, the DRB unanimously approved the request per the Planning Staff recommendation, subject to the conditions.

We ask that you uphold the DRB's unanimous approval of the design plans for the Project. The Project satisfied the requirements of the Design Guidelines and complies with the DK-B and DK-G zoning ordinance. This is supported not only by the DRB's unanimous decision, but also by the Planning Staff recommendation of approval to the DRB based their independent review of the design plans for the Project.

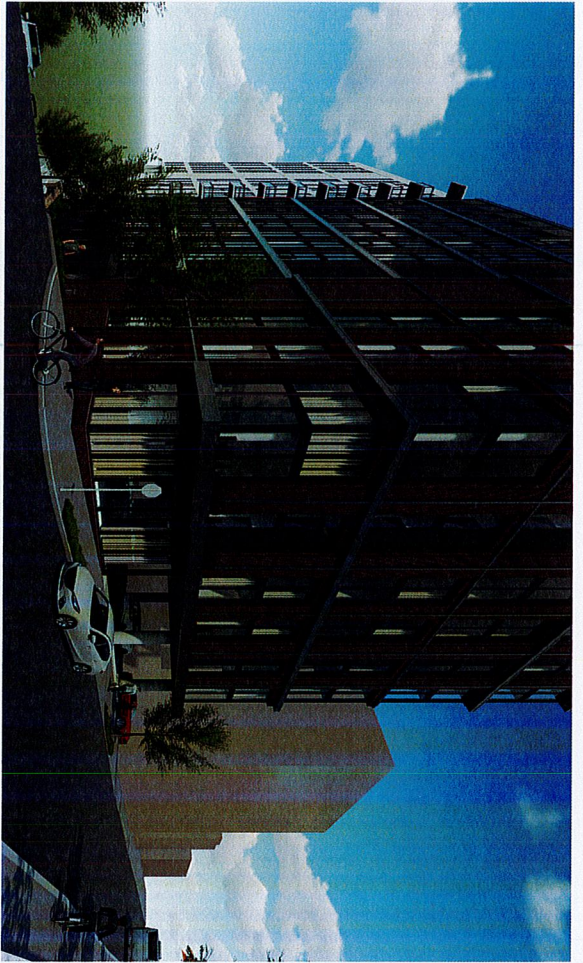
Respectfully yours,

LONG, RAGSDALE & WATERS, P.C.

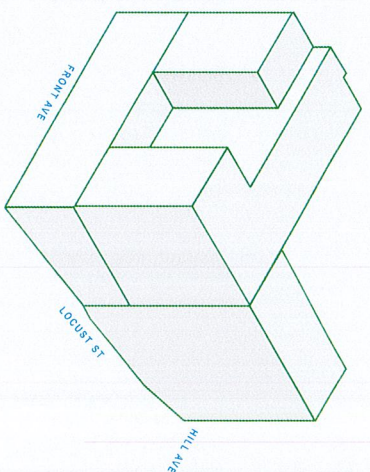
By:

  
Taylor D. Forrester

Enc.

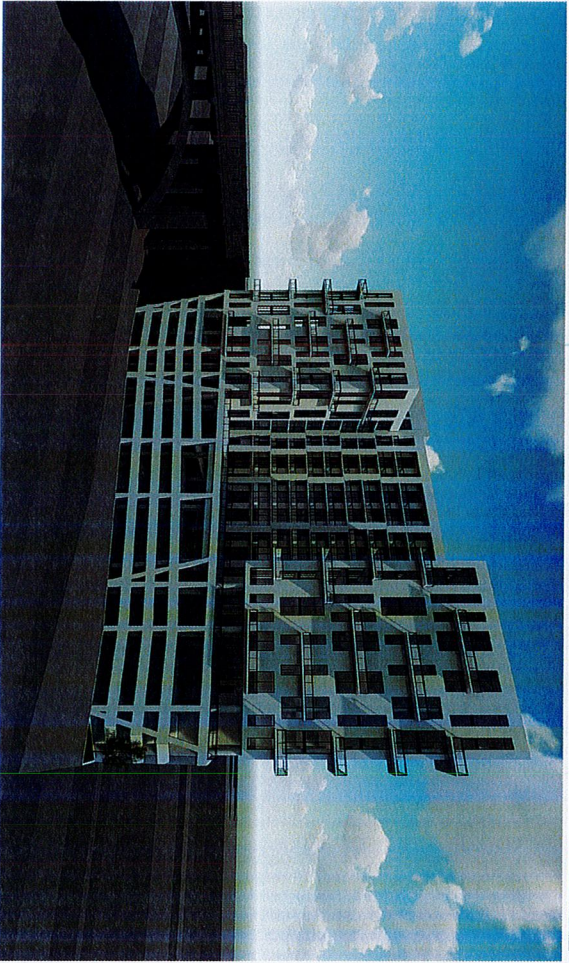


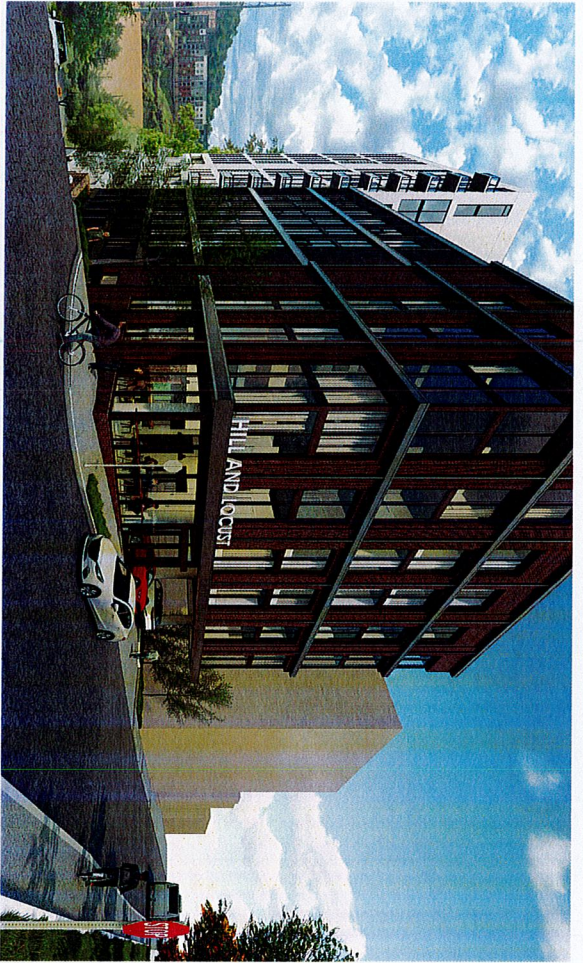
**DRB WORKSHOP**  
**10/28/22**



**DRB FEEDBACK:**

- CONSIDER REDUCING BUILDING HEIGHT/MASSING ON HILL AVE.
- STUDY WAYS TO SOFTEN BUILDING AT GRADE ALONG FRONT AVE.
- DRB APPLAUDS ORIGINALITY OF DESIGN. TOO CHAOTIC?
- MATERIALITY AT HILL AVE BUILDING GOOD, CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSITION AT PARKING PLINTH.

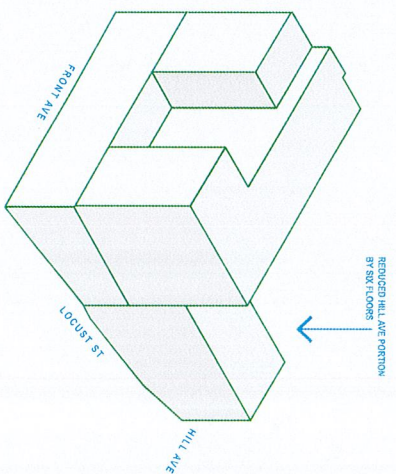




**DRB PRESENTATION #1**  
**04/17/24**

REFINEMENTS MADE SINCE PRIOR MEETING:

- HEIGHT REDUCED ALONG HILL AVE.
- PARKING GARAGE REFINEMENTS.

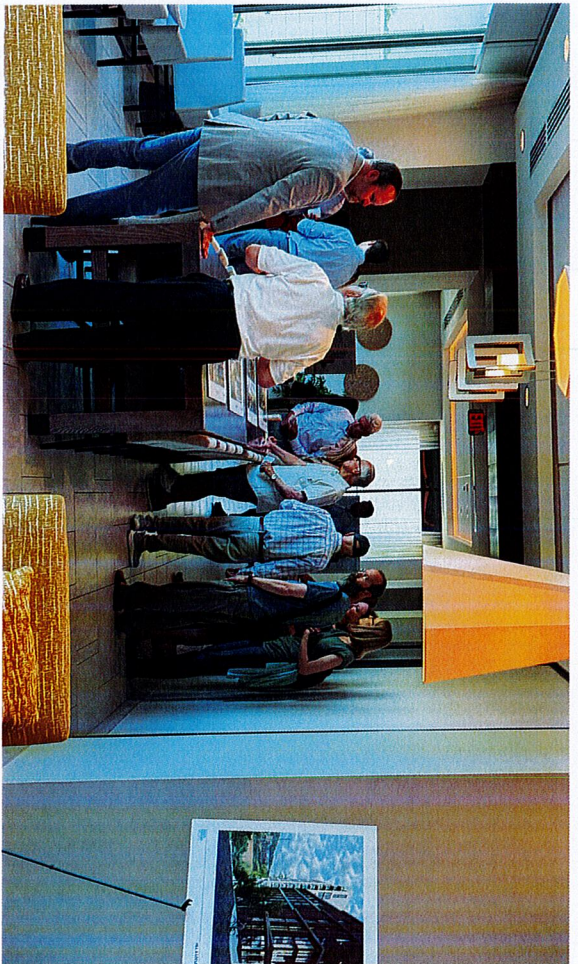


**DRB FEEDBACK:**

- STUDY PARKING GARAGE FACADE DESIGN.
- IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE ALONG FRONT AVE.
- INTRODUCE BUILDING STEPBACKS ALONG STREET FRONTAGE.
- STUDY BUILDING HEIGHT INCREASE ALONG LOCUS ST.



**EXHIBIT B**



**NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOP**  
05/01/24

**NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING SIGN IN SHEET**

HILL AND LOCUST MEETING  
WOODFIELD/ORIGIN DEVELOPMENT  
5/1/2024  
4:30-6:00 pm

Name of Attendee	Address	Phone Number	Email
R. Jill Livan	608 W Hill Ave # 201	865-384-8886	wyvans@otk.edu
Ann Marie Tynard	4225 Gow St # 403	865-604-9005	annmariedubink@paper.com
Gregory Klauzney	FBC Knoxville, 500 W Main		NEAR@concrestry.net
Paul & Wendy Hoag		855-479-9422	
Richardson Goldberg		859-537-0500	
Gay Lyons	608 W Hill & S V		
Shen Srinivasan	608 W Hill # 201		
Y-H HERRERA	608 W Hill # 201		
Ryan Tomlinson	151 E Olivet Ave #314	865-279-4481	RTT@LWID.org
Kyle Guillory	550 Main St, Ste 400	865-546-7711	kguill@kaypac.com
Michelle Fausley	614 W Hill Ave Unit 44	865-549-4392	MKF@wms2@gmail.com
Karin Grainger	614 W Hill Ave	865-332-4444	Karin_Grainger@gmail.com
Sam Richardson	614 W Hill Ave #11	865-828-9986	Sam@otk.com

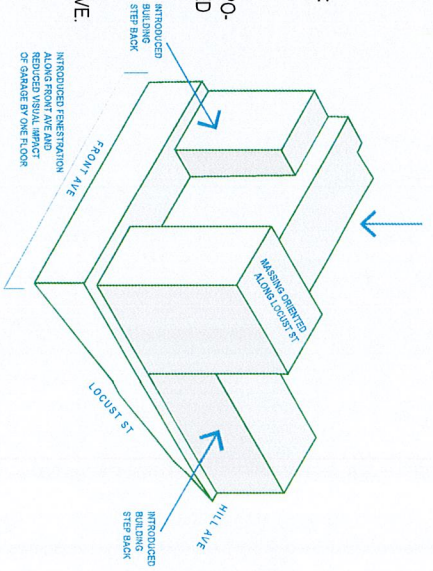




**DRB PRESENTATION #2**  
**05/15/24**

REFINEMENTS MADE SINCE PRIOR MEETING:

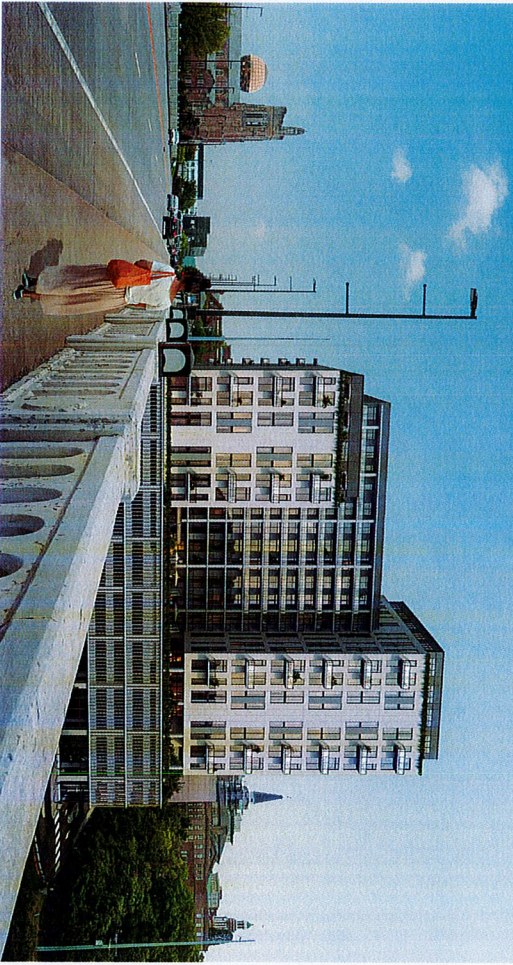
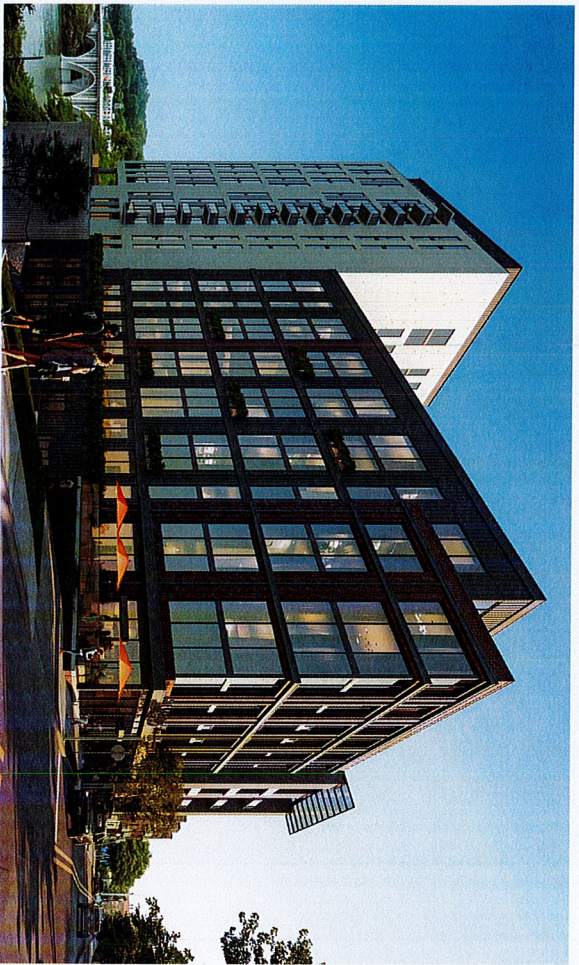
- INTRODUCED BUILDING STEPBACKS.
- PARKING GARAGE REFINED TO INCORPORATE DESIGN PREFERENCES INDICATED IN NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOP
- ENTIRE BUILDING LOWERED BY ONE FLOOR TO REDUCE HEIGHT AND TO PROVIDE ACTIVATION ALONG FRONT AVE.



**DRB FEEDBACK:**

- CONSIDER REDUCING BUILDING HEIGHT/MASSING ON HILL AVE.
- STUDY WAYS TO SOFTEN BUILDING AT GRADE ALONG FRONT AVE.
- DRB APPLAUDS ORIGINALITY OF DESIGN, TOO CHAOTIC?
- MATERIALITY AT HILL AVE BUILDING GOOD, CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSITION AT PARKING PLINTH.

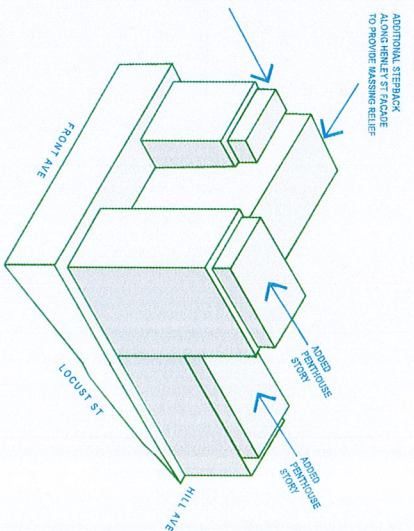




**DRB PRESENTATION #3**  
06/20/24

REFINEMENTS MADE SINCE PRIOR MEETING:

- ADDED STEPBACK ALONG HENLEY ST.
- INTRODUCED PENTHOUSE STEPBACKS FOR MASSING RELIEF.
- DECREASE HEIGHT ALONG HENLEY ST.
- INCREASED HEIGHT ALONG LOCUST ST.
- REDESIGNED GARAGE FACADE AND ADDED SCREENING.



**DRB FEEDBACK:**

- NEW GARAGE TREATMENT WELL RECEIVED.
- MASSING REFINEMENTS ARE MAJOR IMPROVEMENT.
- INCREASED ACTIVATION ALONG FRONT AVE APPRECIATED.
- DRB FEELS PREVIOUS FEEDBACK WAS "HEARD" AND ADDRESSED.
- UNANIMOUS VOTE TO APPROVE: 8-0.

**EXHIBIT E**