

STAFF REPORT: 12/9/2020 MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

ADDRESS: 290 EDMUND PLACE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BRUSH PARK

APPLICANT: JESSIKA HICKS (BEDROCK DETROIT)

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY-COMPLETE APPLICATION: 11/24/2020

DATE OF STAFF VISIT: 12/4/2020

SCOPE: ERECT A NEW BUILDING (REVISION TO PREVIOUSLY-APPROVED PROPOSAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project site consists of an empty parcel that is located within the 200 block of Edmund Place. The general surrounds are dominated by newly constructed, 2-6 story, mixed-use (multiple-family and commercial) buildings. Four, ca.1880, 3-story dwellings are located to the north of the project area/on the north side of Edmund Place. The historic buildings are clad with red brick with stone and/or wood trim/detailing.



Project area, photo taken 12/4/2020

PROPOSAL

The applicant initially appeared in front of this Body at the February 17, 2016 special meeting with a proposal to establish a new mixed-use, multiple-building development (to include commercial and multiple family) within the area bounded by John R, Brush Street, Alfred, and Edmund Place. The development included several building typologies to include apartments, duplexes, townhomes, and carriage homes. The Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposal as presented. The following is the design which the Commission approved for erection at 290 Edmund Place. Specifically, this building type, labeled in the below plan as “D-2,” proposed the erection of a series of 4 duplexes known as “duplettes.”



290 Edmund Place (Building D-2), design approved by the Commission in 2016. See [attached document](#) for the design proposal.

The applicant attended the HDC’s November 11, 2020 regular meeting to seek an approval to revise the design for the D-2 Building which the Commission had approved in 2016. The proposed

revision was based upon the applicant's desire to alter the building's program from market-rate, for-sale, duplexes to a multi-unit apartment building. The Commission reviewed the below revised apartment building design and denied the project. Please see the following image and the [attached document](#) which the Commission reviewed and denied at the November 2020 meeting.

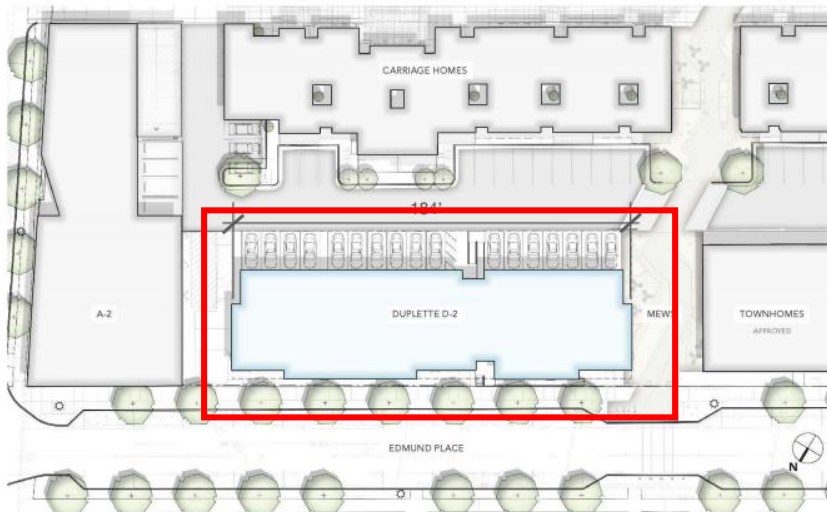


290 Edmund Place (Building D-2), design which the Commission reviewed and denied at the November 2020 regular meeting.

Specifically, the Commission noted that the original D-2 design approved in 2016 presented an aesthetic which was cohesive with the design of the new structures that were proposed for erection directly adjacent to the D-2/within the 200 and 300 block of Edmund Place. In re: to the revised design which was denied at the November 2020, the Commission noted issues with the following:

- **Massing:** The building should read more as multiple buildings with pass-throughs, reflecting the broken streetscape of the historical homes and serving as tradeoffs to the bookend buildings.
- **Materiality:** Material strategies should create more “softness” and “rhythm”.
- **Street Front:** The concrete base should contrast less with building body.
- **Openings:** The building openings should respond more to the openings on the adjacent Townhomes

The applicant has therefore [revised the design of the D-2 building](#) (to be located at 290 Edmund Place) that the Commission denied in November 2020 and is seeking this body's approval of their new proposal. Please see the following image of the new revised design which the property owner has presented with the current application.



290 Edmund Place (Building D-2), revised design which the applicant is presenting with the current application

As per the submitted proposal, the new building/design is proposed as a 4-story building and shall be erected according to the following:

- The new apartment building design measures 46'-6" to the top of the parapet wall whereas the previously-approved duplette building measured 47'-6". In re: to the building footprint, proposed new building measures 184'x 50', which is generally consistent with the dimensions of the previously-approved design (which measured 185'x 47').
- The proposed apartment building design features a materiality and color palette which is in keeping with the design that the Commission approved in 2016. The base/foundation of the building is a grey concrete.

- A concrete accessibility ramp will be located at the building's front elevation and will extend from the sidewalk to the primary entrance
- Windows are aluminum fixed and casement units and doors are aluminum.
- The landscaping and hardscaping (concrete walkways and rear parking lot) will remain as per the proposal which the Commission approved in 2016

Also, as per the applicant, the following revisions were made to the current proposal in order to address the concerns which the Commission expressed with the November 2020 denial:

- *Massing: A staggered setback and varied brick tones break down the massing into more vertically oriented proportions. Addresses Brush Park Elements of Design #2, #16, and #19.*
- *Materiality: A revised material palette, composition, and texture adds variety, softness, and scale. Addresses Brush Park Elements of Design #7, #8, and #9.*
- *Street Front: Ground floor stoops and landscaping engages the pedestrian scale along the street. Addresses Brush Park Elements of Design #6, #17, and #20.*
- *Openings: Windows, varied in size, bridge the two scales of the Townhomes and the LOHA bookend buildings. Addresses Brush Park Elements of Design #3 and #4.*

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The design which the Commission approved in 2016 consisted of three separate, closely-set buildings which were clad with grey brick
- The current design is a single apartment block which shall display a materiality and color palette which closely aligns with the design approved in 2016
- HDC Staff does believe that the revisions outlined in the current application bring the proposed building's appearance closer to the design approved in 2016.
- The proposed new building does appear to push closer towards the sidewalk vs the design approved in 2016. However, the setback is generally consistent with the new buildings proposed for erection within the 200 and 300 block of Edmund Place
- The applicant submitted their proposed new project to Planning and Development (PDD) design staff for their opinion. The following paraphrases general comments of Julio Cedano, staff from PDD's Design and Zoning Innovations division. Please note that Mr. Cedano's review was undertaken within an urban planning/design context. As PDD had an active role reviewing the original design, the following comments have been provided for the Commission's information. Mr. Cedano's review **did not** take the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation* and/or the *Brush Park Elements of Design* into consideration:
 - *Overall, this project is in line with PDD's aesthetic and environmental goals for new residential development. It will add much needed density and activity to the area. This project does not attempt to mimic the historic nature of the surrounding district but it does employ appropriate architectural moves that help maintain the massing, scale, color tones and material textures of the district. The PDD Design Review team thinks this project will be a welcome addition to the Brush Park neighborhood district.*
 - *General Notes:*

- *Adhere to zoning requirements (setbacks, use, parking, etc.).*
- *Follow the design standards for parking lots outlined in the zoning ordinance (including paving surfaces, landscaping and screening).*
- *Investigate opportunities to provide more setback from the front sidewalk.*
- *Investigate providing a walkway between the parking and the rear of the building.*
- *Investigate covering the concrete foundation wall and front stoops with brick.*

ISSUES

- None

RECOMMENDATION

It is staff's opinion that the proposed project is appropriate to the defined Elements of Design for the Brush Park Historic District and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (36 CFR Part 67). Staff therefore recommends that the Commission approve the issuance of a COA for the project as proposed.

Current conditions







Detroit Historic District Commission
2 Woodward, suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

November 16, 2020

Dear Detroit Historic District Commission,

On behalf of Brush Park Development Company Phase I LLC ("BPDC"), we are submitting for your consideration and approval a revised design for 290 Edmund Place at our City Modern development in Brush Park.

The Commission will recall that an original concept design for 290 Edmund Place was approved in 2016 as a part of the development agreement between the City of Detroit and BPDC.

The Commission will also recall that on September 9, 2020, BPDC was before the Historic District Commission seeking approval of a revised design of 290 Edmund Place. These revisions to the 2016 design were deemed necessary by BPDC due to further design development, market conditions, and the general constructability of the project. However, based on the Commission's review, a Notice of Denial was issued.

Since September, BPDC and our consultants have implemented significant changes to the design of 290 Edmund Place in an effort to address the Commission's concerns and ensure the project aligns with the Brush Park Elements of Design and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These changes are outlined in the following pages with reference to the specific strategies that were implemented. We believe these revisions not only address the Commission's concerns, but have also resulted in a superior product that will better complement and enhance the Historic Brush Park Neighborhood.

We hope you find the enclosed design to be aligned with the Commission's expectations, as well as our united goals of increasing local housing supply and building a vibrant and thriving Detroit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jonathan A. Mueller'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Mueller
Director of Residential Development

Bedrock Management Services LLC on behalf of Brush Park Development Company Phase I LLC

290 Edmund Place

Historic District Commission Update

November 2020









Aspects of the design previously presented to the HDC that we understood as reason for denial:

- ❑ **Massing:** The building should read more as multiple buildings with pass-throughs, reflecting the broken streetscape of the historical homes and serving as tradeoffs to the bookend buildings.
- ❑ **Materiality:** Material strategies should create more “softness” and “rhythm”.
- ❑ **Street Front:** The concrete base should contrast less with building body.
- ❑ **Openings:** The building openings should respond more to the openings on the adjacent Townhomes.



WD-01	MAS-01	MAS-02	MAS-03	MTL-01
				
<p>CEDAR CLADDING 4" WIDE, CLEAR COAT, VERTICAL</p>	<p>BRICK VENEER 2 1/4" MODULAR, MONTEREY RED MIX</p>	<p>TEXTURED BRICK 2 1/4" MODULAR, MONTEREY RED MIX</p>		<p>RAILINGS, DOORS, AND WINDOWS POWDER COATED DARK BRONZE</p>

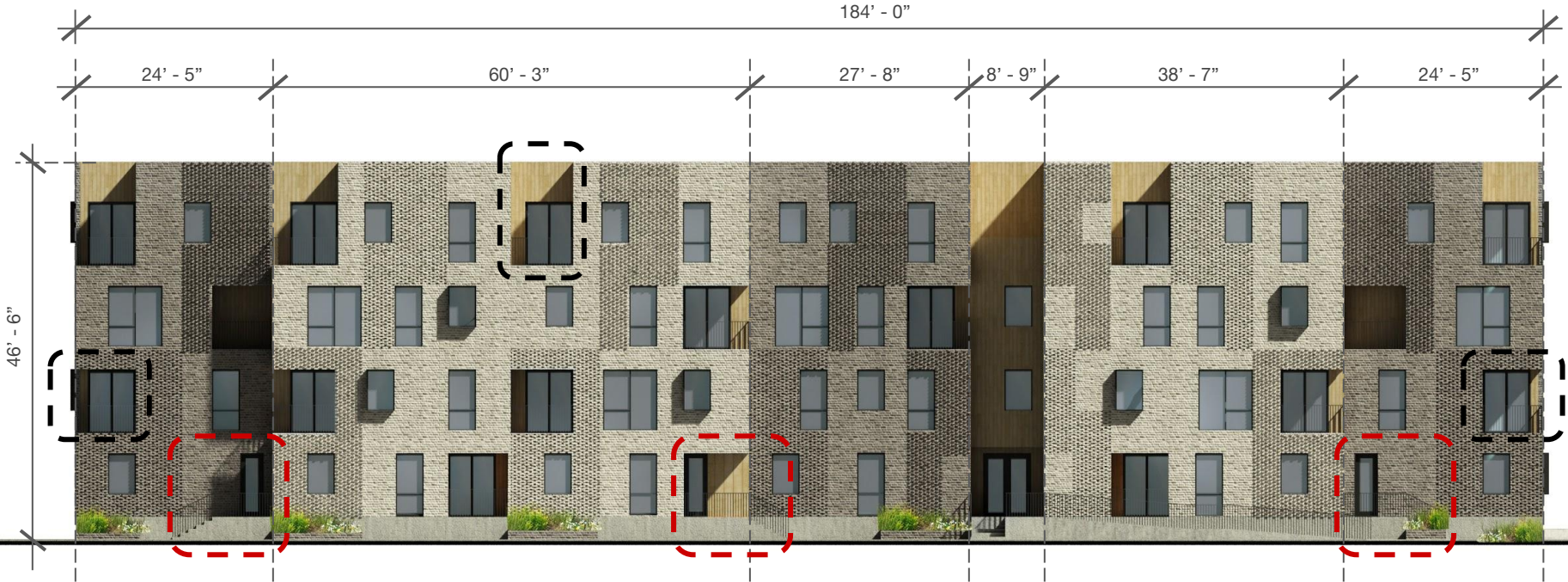
The proposed redesign responds to HDC feedback in the following ways:

- ❑ **Massing:** A staggered setback and varied brick tones break down the massing into more vertically oriented proportions. Addresses *Brush Park Elements of Design* #2, #16, and #19.
- ❑ **Materiality:** A revised material palette, composition, and texture adds variety, softness, and scale. Addresses *Brush Park Elements of Design* #7, #8, and #9.
- ❑ **Street Front:** Ground floor stoops and landscaping engages the pedestrian scale along the street. Addresses *Brush Park Elements of Design* #6, #17, and #20.
- ❑ **Openings:** Windows, varied in size, bridge the two scales of the Townhomes and the LOHA bookend buildings. Addresses *Brush Park Elements of Design* #3 and #4.



WD-01	MAS-01	MAS-02	MAS-03	MAS-04	MTL-01
					
CEDAR CLADDING 4" WIDE, CLEAR COAT, VERTICAL	BRICK VENEER 2 1/4" MODULAR, LIGHT GREY	BRICK VENEER 2 1/4" MODULAR, MEDIUM GREY	TEXTURED BRICK 2 1/4" MODULAR	TEXTURED BRICK 2 1/4" MODULAR	RAILINGS, DOORS, AND WINDOWS POWDER COATED DARK BRONZE

BUILDING ELEVATION (Facing Edmund Place)



- Newly added balconies
- Newly added stoops and stair access

WD-01	MAS-01	MAS-02	MAS-03	MAS-04	MTL-01
 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">CEDAR CLADDING 4" WIDE, CLEAR COAT, VERTICAL</p>	 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">BRICK VENEER 2 1/4" MODULAR, LIGHT GREY</p>	 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">BRICK VENEER 2 1/4" MODULAR, MEDIUM GREY</p>	 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">TEXTURED BRICK 2 1/4" MODULAR</p>		 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">RAILINGS, DOORS, AND WINDOWS POWDER COATED DARK BRONZE</p>

Proportion of building’s front facade

“Buildings in the district are usually taller than wide; horizontal proportions exist only in incompatible later buildings, except for row house buildings.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #2)

- Length of building is broken into portions varied in size, breaking down overall building mass and projecting the image of smaller, individual buildings

Directional expression of front facades.

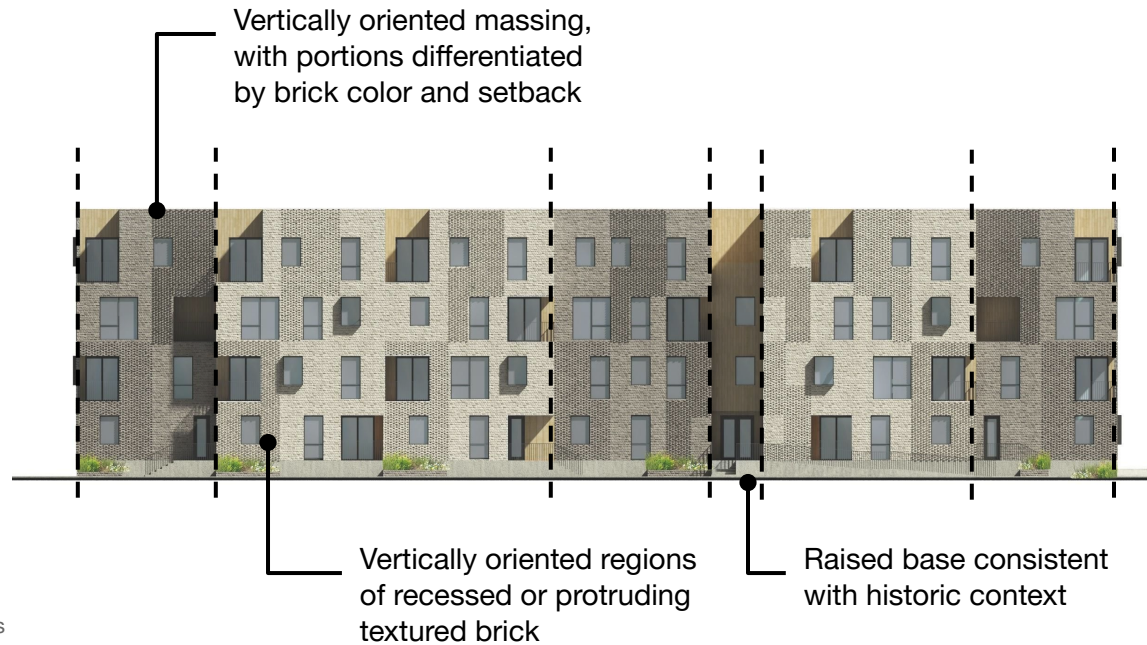
“A substantial majority of the buildings in the district have front facades vertically expressed. Exceptions are some commercial buildings on Woodward, row houses on John R. or Brush, and some duplexes or row houses east of Brush.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, # 16)

- Vertically oriented massing along the front facades
- Vertical proportions of textured brick regions

Degree of complexity with facades.

“The older houses in the district are generally characterized by a high degree of complexity within the facades, with bay windows, towers, porches, window and door hoods, elaborate cornices, and other devices used to decorate the buildings...” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, # 19)

- Subtle but high degree of complexity through:
 - Stepped entries and front stoops
 - Protruding window surrounds
 - Carved voids (balconies)
 - Varied brick color and texture



Staggered front setbacks break up the massing while vertically oriented details respond to the surrounding historic context.

Relationship of materials.

“By far the most prevalent material in the district is common brick; other forms of brick, stone and wood trim are common; wood is used as a structural material only east of Brush...” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #7)

- Primary facade material is brick
- Brickwork is a lighter tone to reduce visual bulk
- Concrete base reinforces the 3-foot plinth datum of the historic form

Relationship of textures.

“The most common relationship of textures in the district is the low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick contrasted to the smoother or rougher surfaces of stone or wood trim...” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #8)

- Vertical patterning of brick provides complexity in texture using a single material
- Brick is contrasted by smooth accent materials like wood (in the carved voids) and metal (at the window surrounds)
- Balconies contribute a dynamic, tactile element at the pedestrian level



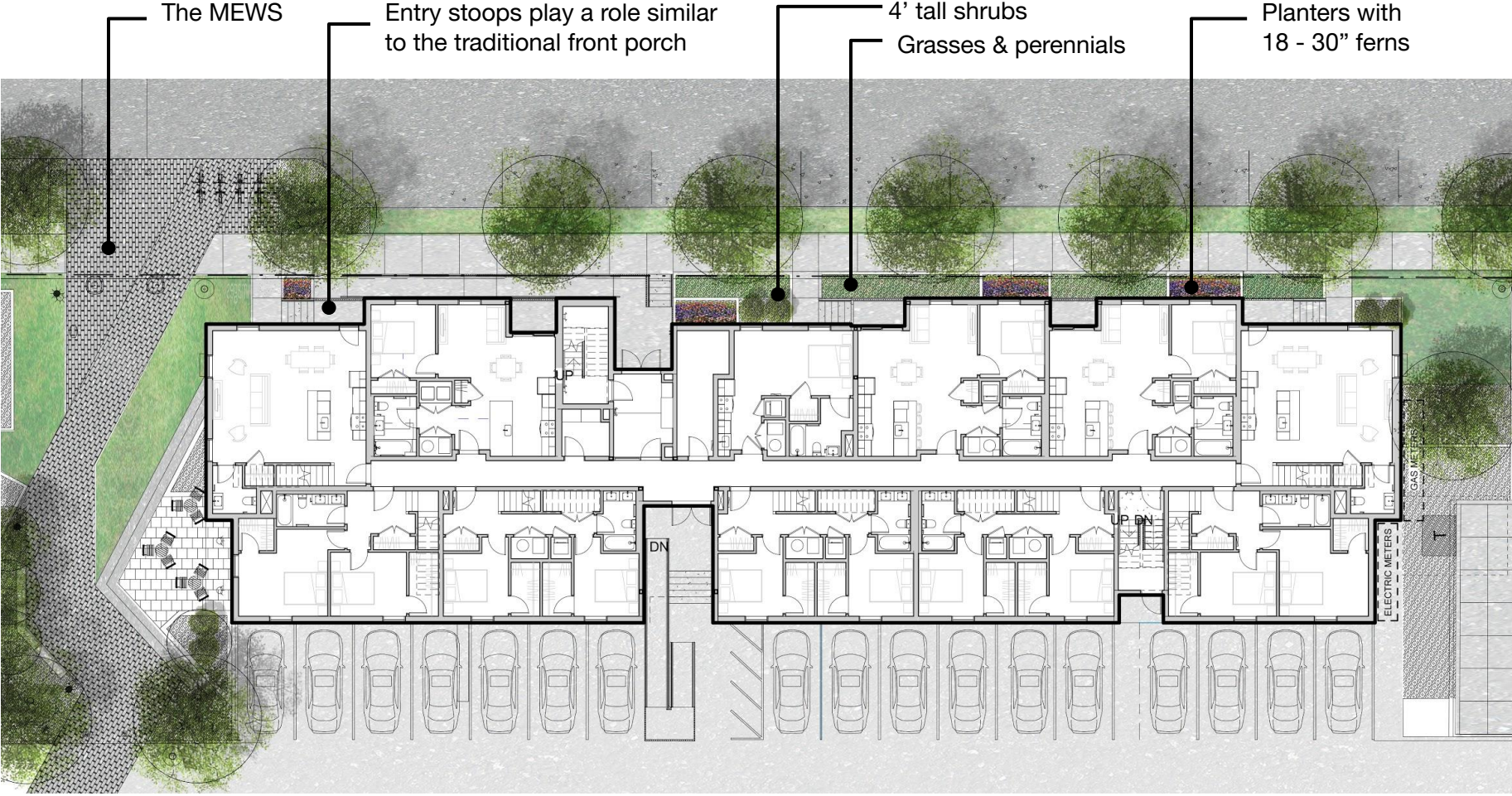
Relationship of colors.

“Brick red predominates, both in the form of natural color brick and in the form of painted brick. Other natural brick and stone colors are also present. These relate to painted woodwork in various colors, and there is an occasional example of stained woodwork. Roofs of other than asphalt are in natural colors; older slate roofs are often laid in patterns with various colors of slate.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #9)

- Grey brick tones are drawn from the variety of grays in neighboring roofs



Brick serves as the primary facade material, with softness and variation achieved through color and texture. Smooth wood and dark metal accents provide additional contrast.



The MEWS

Entry stoops play a role similar to the traditional front porch

4' tall shrubs

Grasses & perennials

Planters with 18 - 30" ferns

DN

ELECTRIC METERS

GAS METERS

Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections.

“Most buildings have or had a porch or entrance projection. The variety inherent in Victorian design precludes the establishment of any absolute rhythm, but such projections were often centered.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #6)

- Entry conditions socially activate the streetscape, similar to the role of the traditional front porch

Rhythm of building setbacks

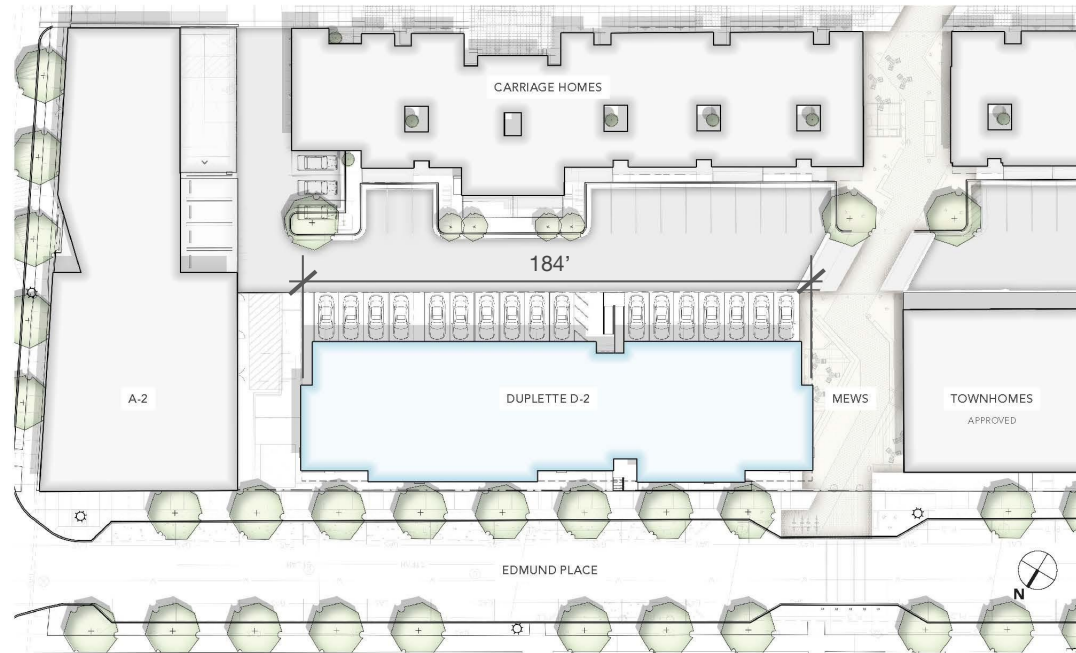
“Buildings on the north-south streets generally have little or no setback, while older houses on the east-west streets between Woodward and Brush have some setback, which varies from street to street, though generally consistent in any one block.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #17)

- Staggered building face setback at the ground floor (+/- 3.5 feet and 7.5 feet) along Edmund Place
- Rhythm of massing is emphasized through landscaping and change in brick color

Orientation, vistas, overviews

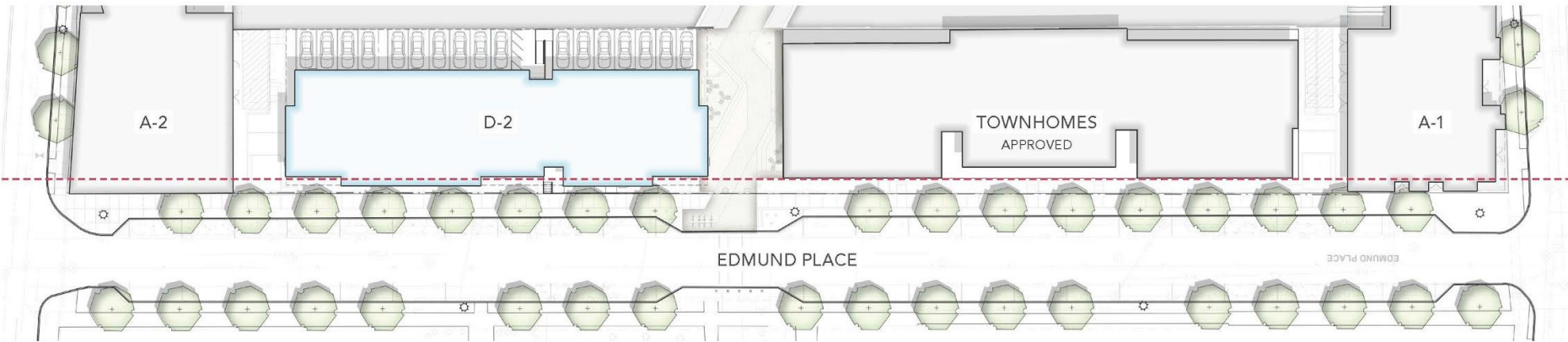
“Houses are generally oriented to the east-west streets, while apartments and commercial structures are more often oriented to the north-south streets.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #20)

- Oriented to Edmund Place with a residential presence
- Private balconies in all units provide views north of the neighborhood and along Edmund

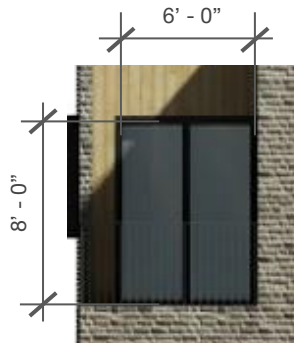


The building has a residential presence along Edmund Place and responds to the neighborhood context.

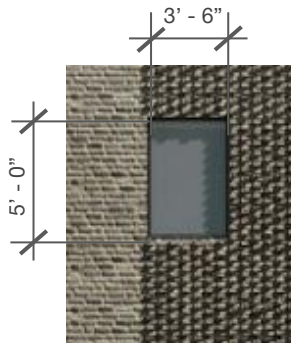
BLOCK ELEVATION



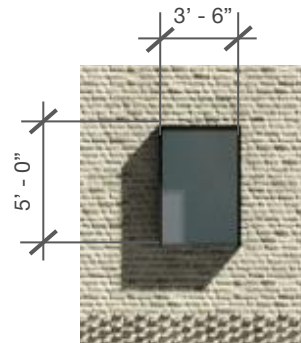
OPENINGS



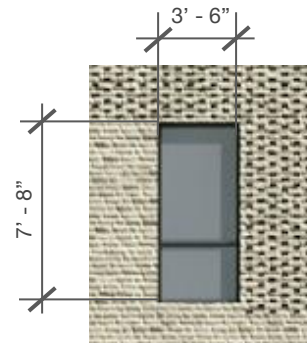
Exterior Doors D0



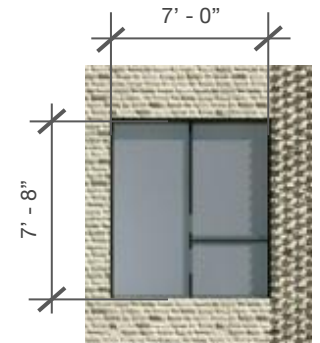
Window Type W1/W3



Window Type W3
With Window Box



Window Type W1+W2



Window Type W1+W2+W4

Proportion of openings within the facade.

“Areas of void generally constitute between fifteen percent and thirty-five percent of the total facade area, excluding roof. Proportions of the openings themselves are generally taller than wide; in some cases, vertically proportioned units are combined to fill an opening wider than tall.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #3)

- Openings (windows, entries) constitute +/-25% of total facade area, consistent with neighborhood precedent
- Openings are vertically proportioned



— — Newly added combined windows

Vertically proportioned window units are combined to create larger openings and variety on the facade

Rhythm of solids to voids in front facade.

“Victorian structures in the district often display great freedom in the placement of openings in the facades, although older examples are generally more regular in such placement than later examples.” (*Brush Park Elements of Design*, #4)

- Contemporary interpretations of the freedom displayed in the placement of openings on Victorian structures through staggered massing and irregular placement of openings in the facade



Historic homes across the street from proposed design
© Eliza-Rolle 2016

The building’s varied window proportions and placement break down the proportions of the front facade.







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