

Agenda Report

September 24, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF AMERICAN GENERAL DESIGN PROJECT LOCATED AT 105 SOUTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is intended to provide information to the City Council, no action is required.

BACKGROUND:

American General Design has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to construct an approximately 50,239 square foot mixed-use development project at 105 South Los Robles Avenue. The PPR process was established to achieve better projects through early consultation between City staff and applicants, identify issues that may arise during application processing such as community concerns, achieve consistency with City regulations and policies, and avoid significant investment in the design of a project without preliminary direction from City staff. Importantly, the PPR process also serves to inform the City Council and the public of development projects that are of community-wide significance.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The subject site measures 18,610 square feet. The project consists of the demolition of two non-residential buildings measuring a combined 9,602 square feet. Proposed is a new five-story mixed-use building containing 50 residential units, and a ground floor commercial space measuring 2,638 square feet above two levels of parking containing 70 parking spaces. The total square footage of the building will be 50,239 square feet. Four on-site very low income housing units are being provided by the project.

DISCREATIONARY ENTITLEMENTS

Affordable Housing Concession Permit

The applicant is requesting an Affordable Housing Concession Permit in an effort to provide affordable housing with this project. The concession is to allow an increase in

MEETING OF _____09/24/2012

AGENDA ITEM NO. **18**

105 South Los Robles Avenue PPR September 24, 2012 Page 2 of 5

floor area from the allowable 2.25 FAR to 2.70 FAR. The applicant has submitted an application which will be reviewed by the Hearing Officer.

Design Review

Because the project consists of new construction in excess of 5,000 square feet, design review is required, with the Design Commission being the reviewing authority. The applicable design guidelines for the project are the Citywide Design Principles in the Land Use Element of the General Plan and the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan. In addition, staff determined that there are no designated historic resources on the property that appear to be eligible for designation.

ANALYSIS

On September 19, 2012 staff conducted a preliminary informational meeting regarding the proposed project with the applicant and other City departments, including Transportation, Fire, Public Works and Housing. Review and comments on the proposal identified the following issues:

Affordable Housing Concession Review

An applicant who utilizes the density bonus provisions of the Zoning Code may request one or more concessions or other incentives. Pursuant to State Density Housing Laws and the City's local ordinances, the Hearing Officer shall approve a concession upon making the following findings:

- 1. The concession or incentive is required in order for the designated units to be affordable; and
- 2. The concession or incentive would not have a specific adverse impact on public health, public safety, or the physical environment, and would not have an adverse impact on a property that is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources, and for which there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigated or avoid the specific adverse impact, or adverse impact, without rendering the development unaffordable to low- and moderate-income households. A specific adverse impact is a significant, quantifiable, direct, and unavoidable impact, based on objective, identified written public health or safety standards, policies, or conditions as they existed on the date the application was deemed complete.

In order to assist in the decision making process the City will hire an independent financial consultant to prepare a financial analysis based on the concession request.

The role of the consultant is to analyze the financial pro-forma to determine if the inclusion of affordable housing is financially feasible and that the increase in FAR is considered necessary to provide the four affordable residential units.

105 South Los Robles Avenue PPR September 24, 2012 Page 3 of 5

Design Review

As stated above, the project is subject to the design review process. The first step is the Preliminary Consultation which is intended to provide the applicant input on their design concept prior to investing in detailed design drawings that would be difficult to modify. The process yields advisory comments which the architect is required to address in subsequent phases of the design review process. A Preliminary Consultation with the Design Commission has been tentatively set for October.

Zoning Code

The subject property is zoned CD-2 (Central District Specific Plan, Subarea 2, Civic Center / Midtown). The Central District encourages a vibrant mix of land uses, including office, retail and residential. In addition, the Zoning Code requires compliance with setbacks, height and density. Below is a breakdown of those requirements as they relate to this project.

Floor Area Ratio. Pursuant to PMC Section 17.30.040, the maximum allowed FAR is 2.25:1. Given the existing lot size of 18,610 square feet, the allowable development would be 41,873 square feet of floor area. As proposed, the applicant is requesting an FAR of 2.70:1 or 50,239 square feet. To exceed the permissible FAR, the applicant is requesting an Affordable Housing Concession Permit to allow the increase in floor area so that affordable units may be provided on site.

Residential Density. The subject site is within an area that allows up to 87 units per acre, before any density bonus. Based on a lot size of 18,610 square feet, a total of 37 units are allowed. Subject to the Density Bonus Provisions of the Zoning Code, an applicant may request a bonus increase of 35 percent (or 13 additional units), when it is demonstrated that the applicant is proposing a mix of residential units intended to be utilized for affordable housing. In this case, the applicant is proposing a total of four very low income units, which allows the maximum increase of 35 percent. As such, the 50 proposed residential units are within the allowable Code requirements.

Setbacks. Setbacks within the Central District are determined by the District Setback Map. A non-residential project may be placed between 0-5 feet from the property line. As proposed the applicant is providing the minimum setback and will comply with the maximum allowable for the proposed mixed use building.

Height. The project complies with the Code's height requirements. The maximum allowable height in this district is 60 feet. The Code provides for height averaging by allowing additional building height on certain portions of a building site that is counterbalanced by lower height elsewhere on a development site. With Height Averaging portions of the new construction may project up to 75 feet in height. In this case, the applicant intends to comply with the height requirement of 60 feet with no additional request for height.

105 South Los Robles Avenue PPR September 24, 2012 Page 4 of 5

Parking. The site will be developed with one level of at grade parking and one level of subterranean parking with a maximum of 70 parking spaces. Vehicle access to the site will be provided by an adjacent mixed use project that is currently under construction. As proposed, the minimum required parking for the use will be provided on site.

Environmental

Due to the nature of the proposal, staff consulted with the Department of Transportation to determine if there are any potential traffic impacts. Early indications show the project will generate minimal traffic-related impacts. As a result, the project may qualify for an In-Fill Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

General Plan

The property's General Plan Land Use designation is Central District Specific Plan (CDSP). The CDSP is further broken down into sub-districts, with the project site located within the CD2 – Civic Center / Midtown. The purpose of the Specific Plan is to include a diverse mix of land uses designed to create the primary business, financial, retailing and government center of the City. The mixed-use project is consistent with the General Plan and within the remaining residential and commercial caps for the Central District. The following Land Use Policy and Objectives of the General Plan may be applicable to the project:

- Objective 1 Targeted Development: Direct higher density development away from Pasadena's residential neighborhoods and into targeted areas, creating an exciting urban core with diverse economic, housing, cultural and entertainment opportunities;
- Policy 1.2 Specific Plans; Policy 1.3 Transit-Oriented and Pedestrian Oriented Development, Policy 1.4 – Mixed Use; and
- Objective 3 Affordable Housing: Policy 3.2 Density: Increase densities in certain areas, including Mixed Use and Urban Village areas, to encourage the production of affordable housing – ownership units affordable to moderate, low and very low income households.

Transportation/Traffic

The thresholds identified in the City's Traffic Impact Review Guidelines required that a full Traffic Impact Study be conducted for the project. This study was recently completed and identified that the project will generate approximately 293 net daily trips with 20 new trips in the AM peak hour and 24 net trips in the PM peak hour.

The Study concluded that none of the studied intersections as well as street segments would result in a significant impact under CEQA.

105 South Los Robles Avenue PPR September 24, 2012 Page 5 of 5

NEXT STEPS

This project will require an administrative, quasi-judicial approval involving public hearings for the Affordable Housing Concession Permit before the Hearing Officer. In addition, the project is subject to review and approval by the Design Commission. The following list identifies next steps in the review process:

- Preliminary Consultation with Design Commission;
- Hearing Officer (Zoning) public meeting; and
- Design Commission reviews.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The project will generate plan check and permit fees. The exact amount of these fees will be determined during the plan check process.

Respectfully-submitted

VINCENT P. BERTON, ALCP Director of Planning & Community Development Department

Prepared by:

Jose D. Jimenez

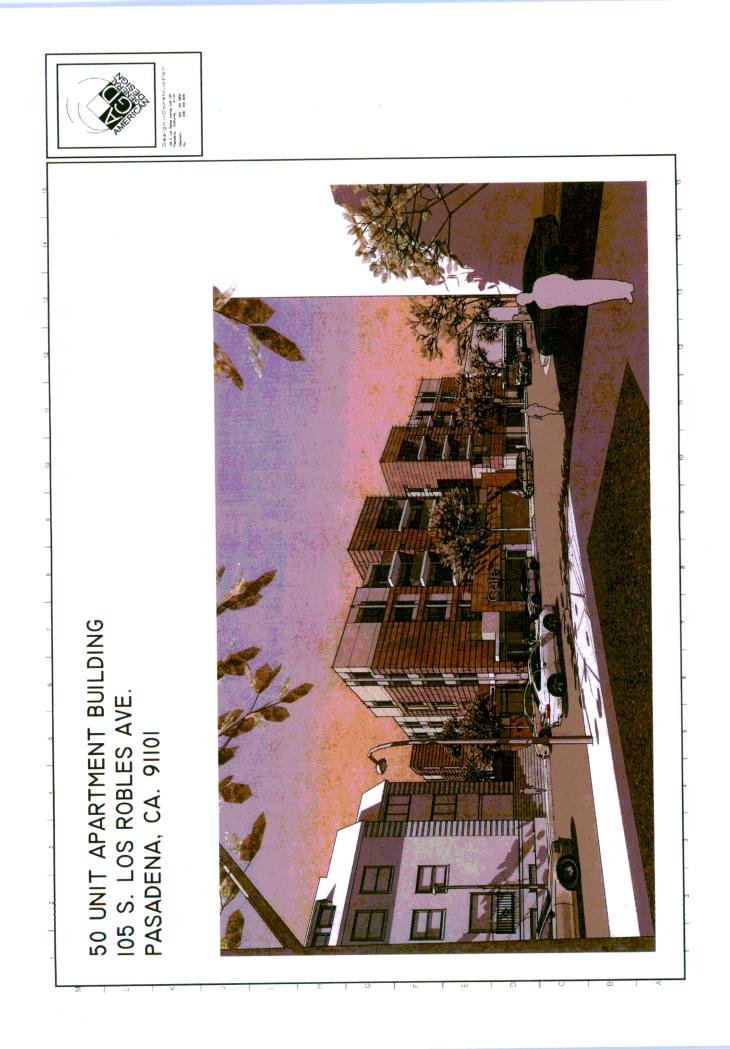
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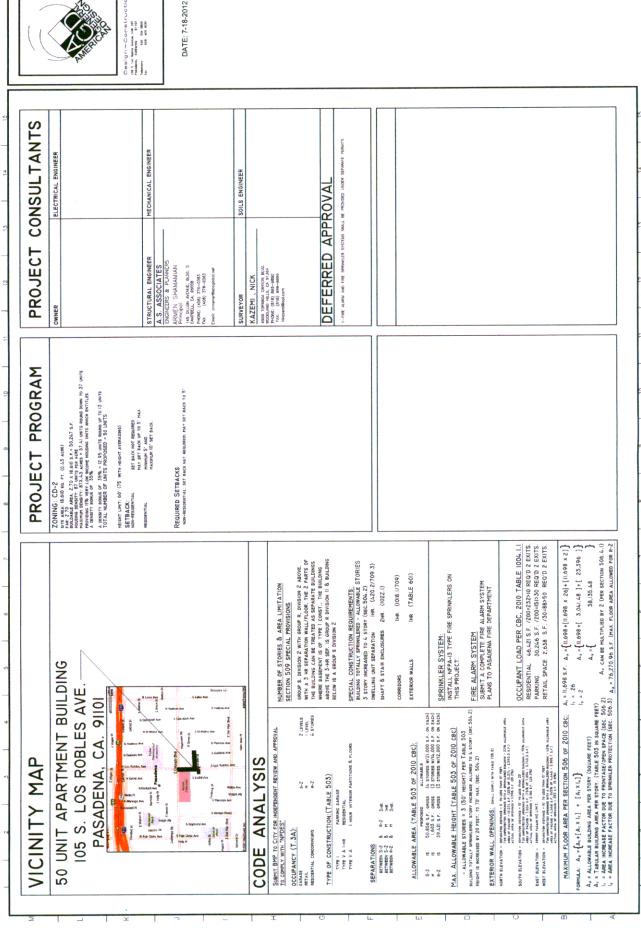
MICHAEL/J. BECK City Manager

Concurred by:

David Reyes Principal Planner/Zoning Administrator

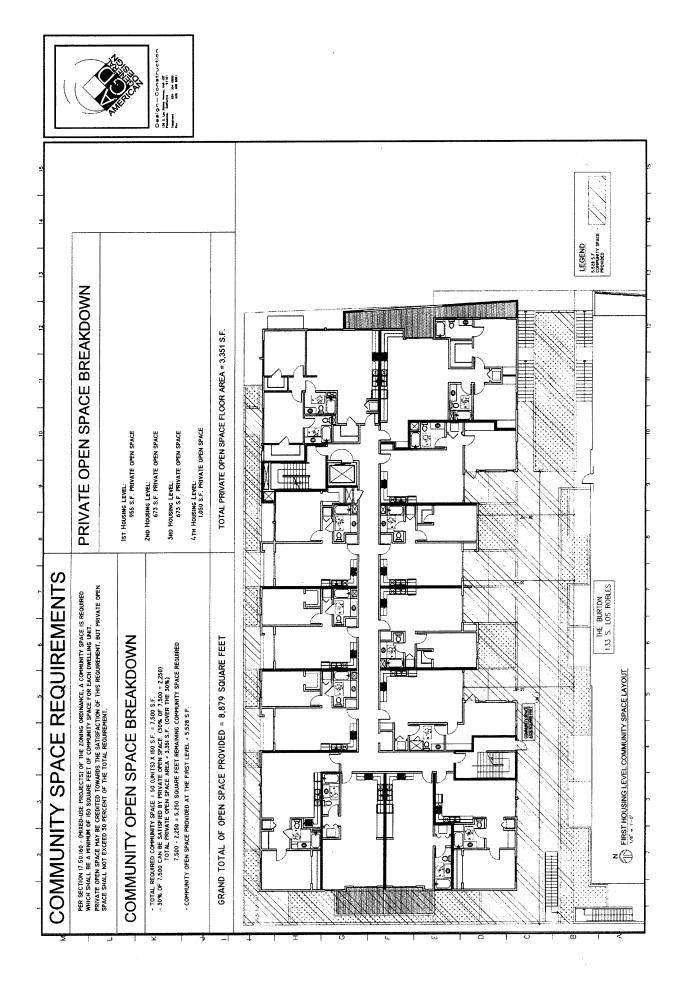
Attachments: PPR Plans.

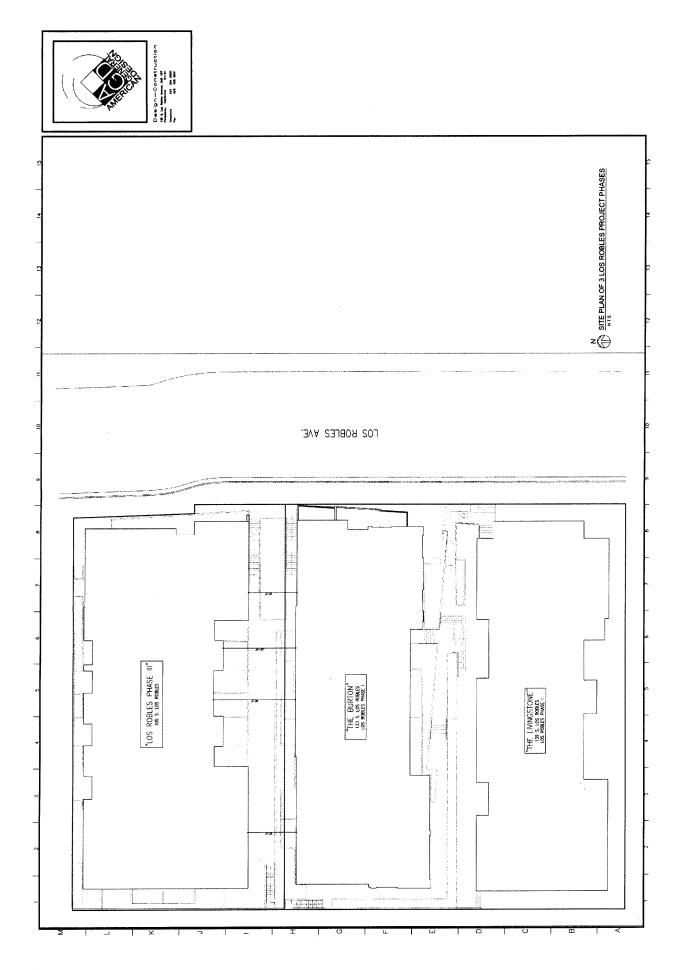


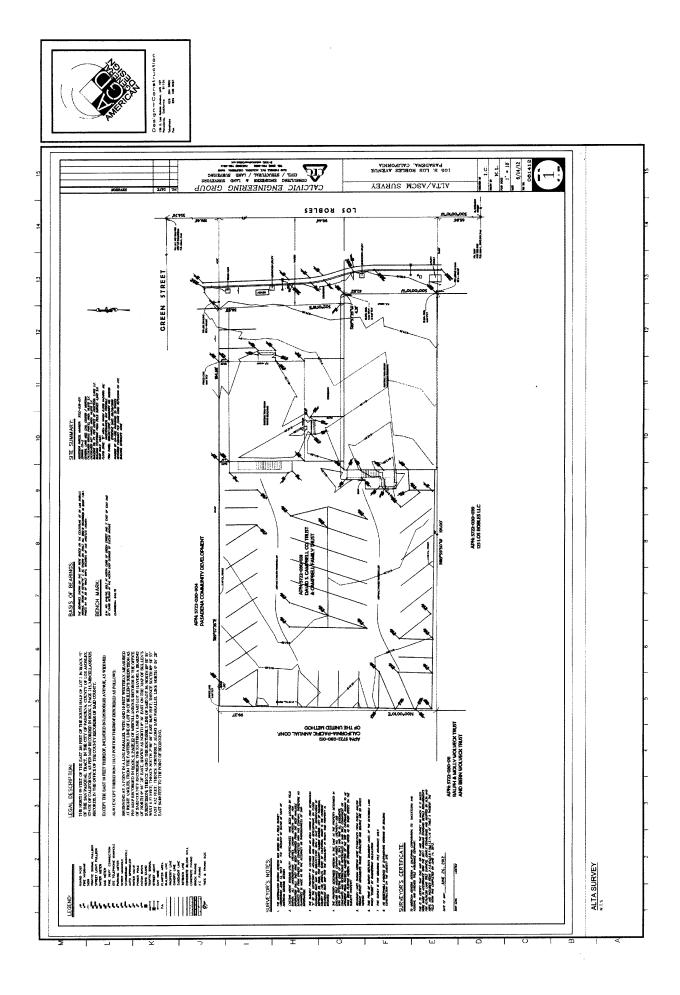


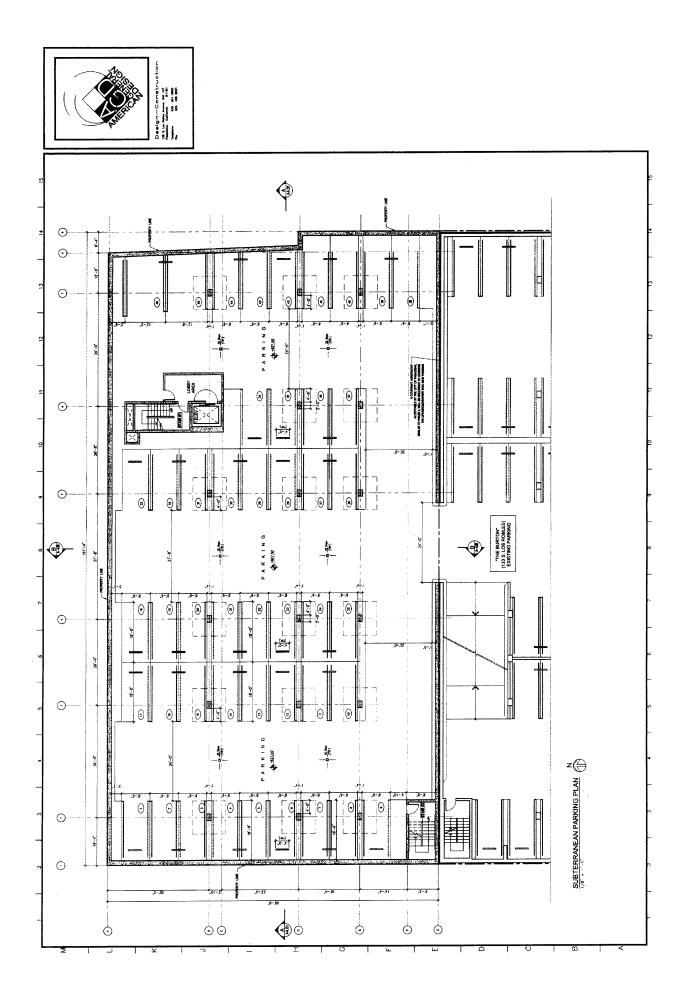


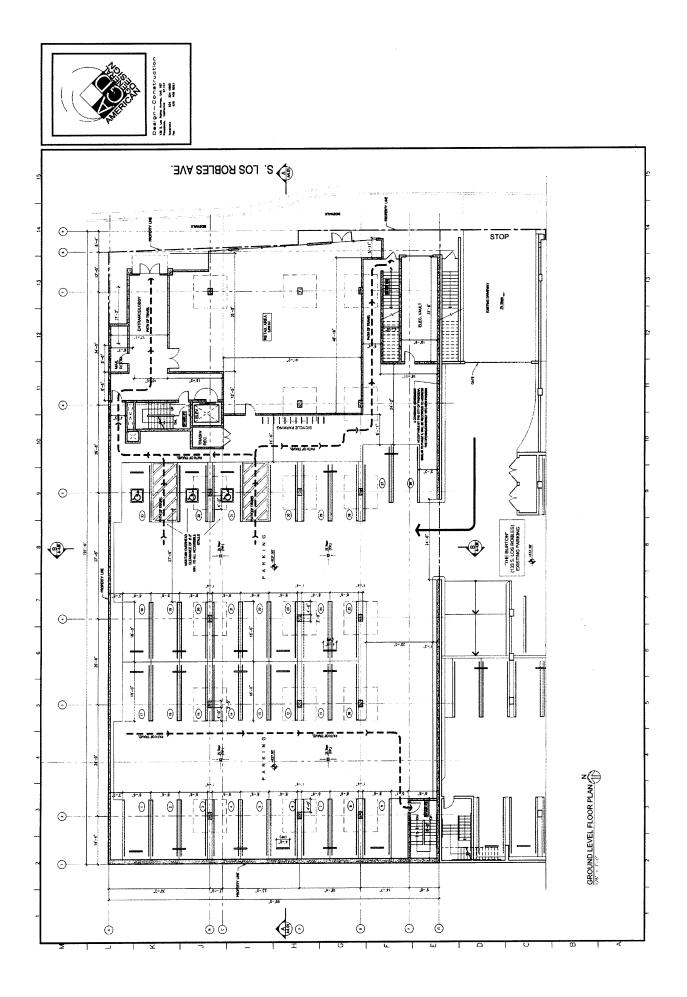
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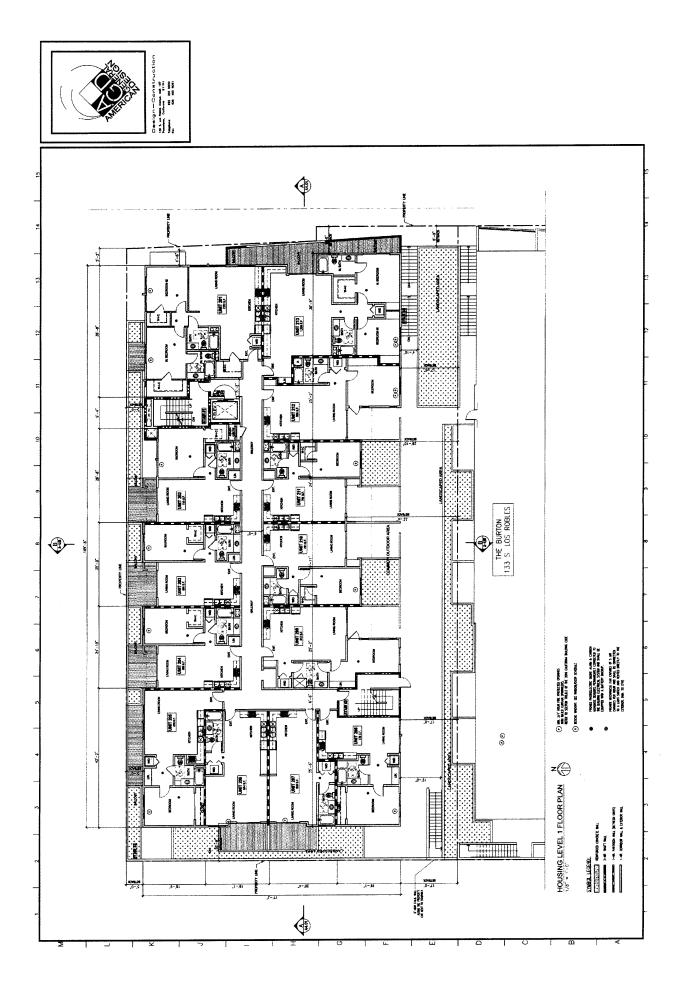


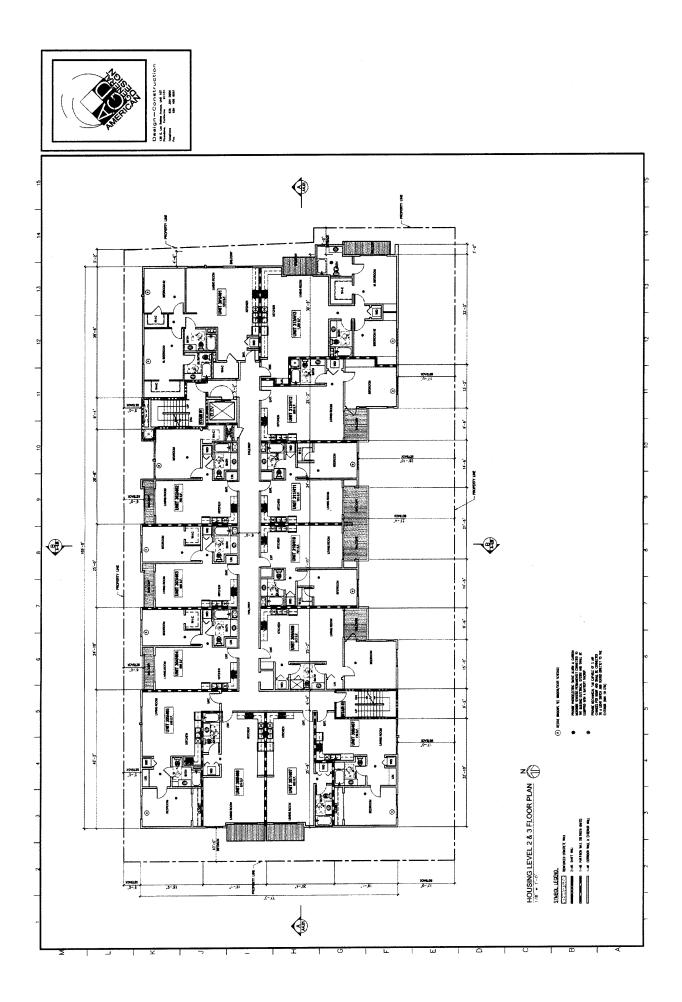


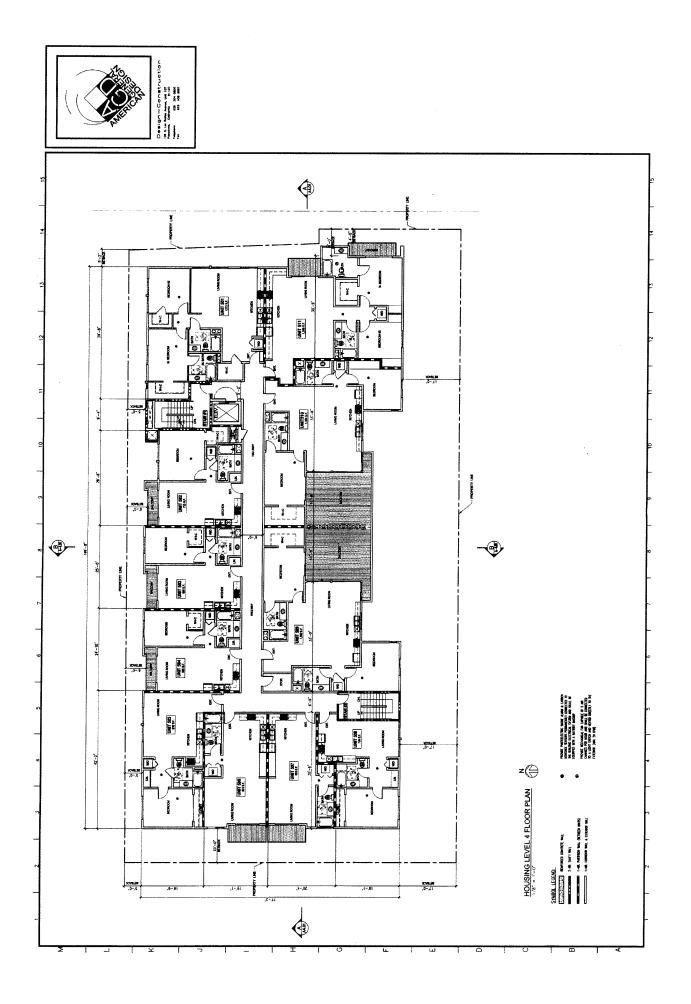


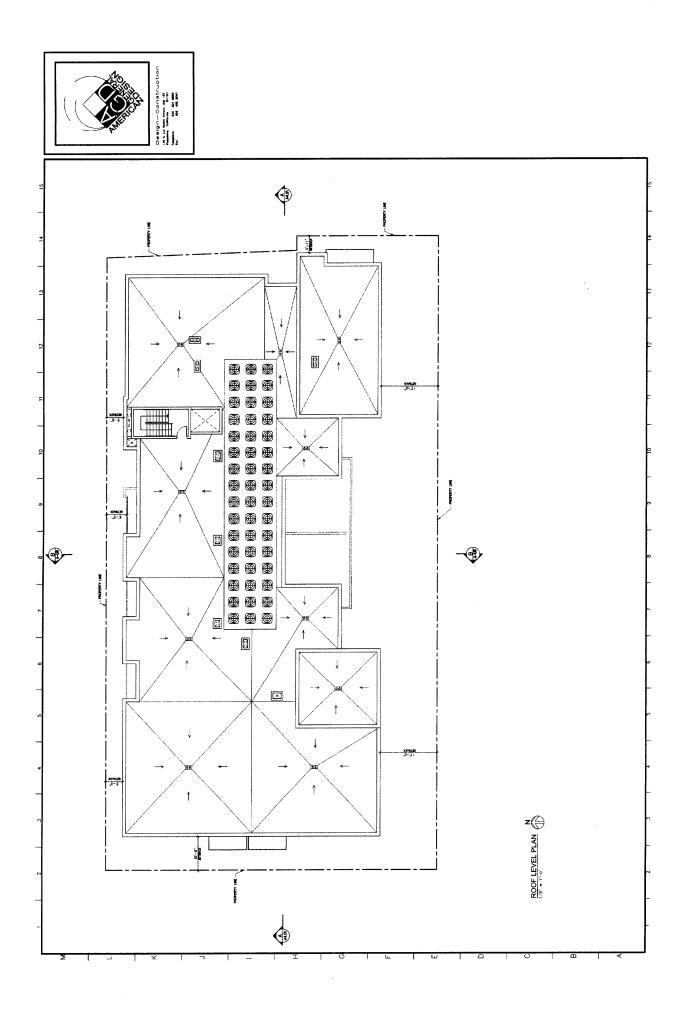




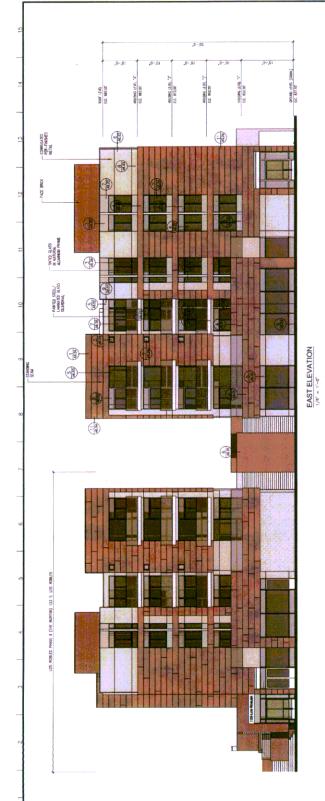


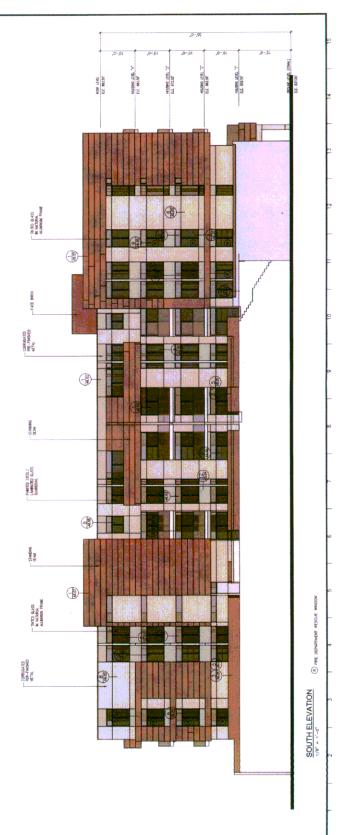






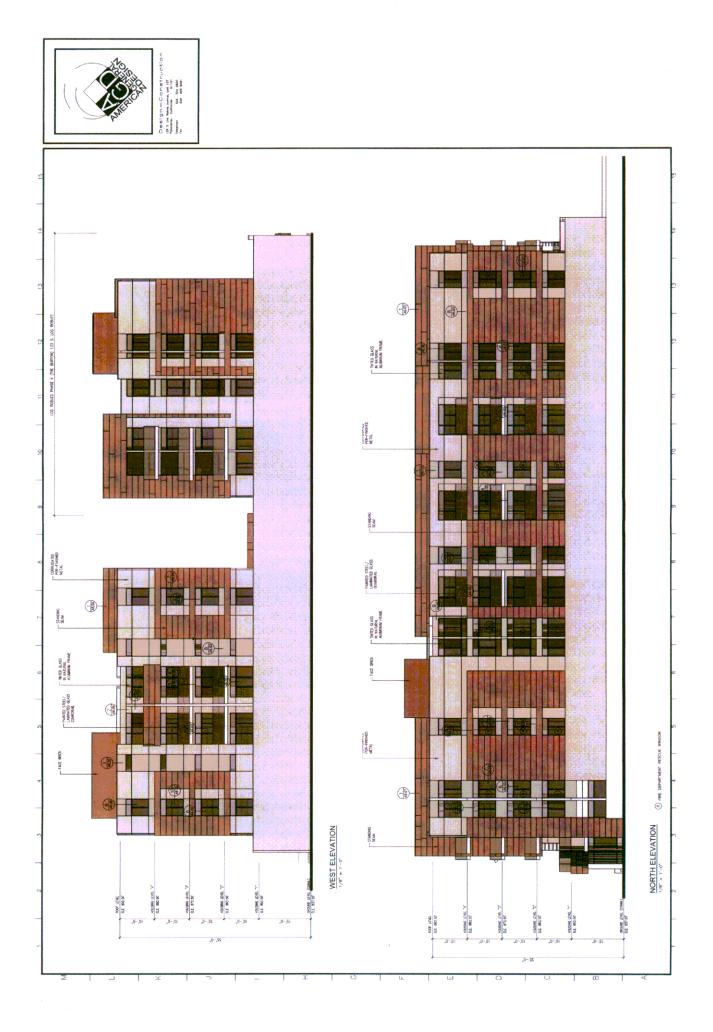


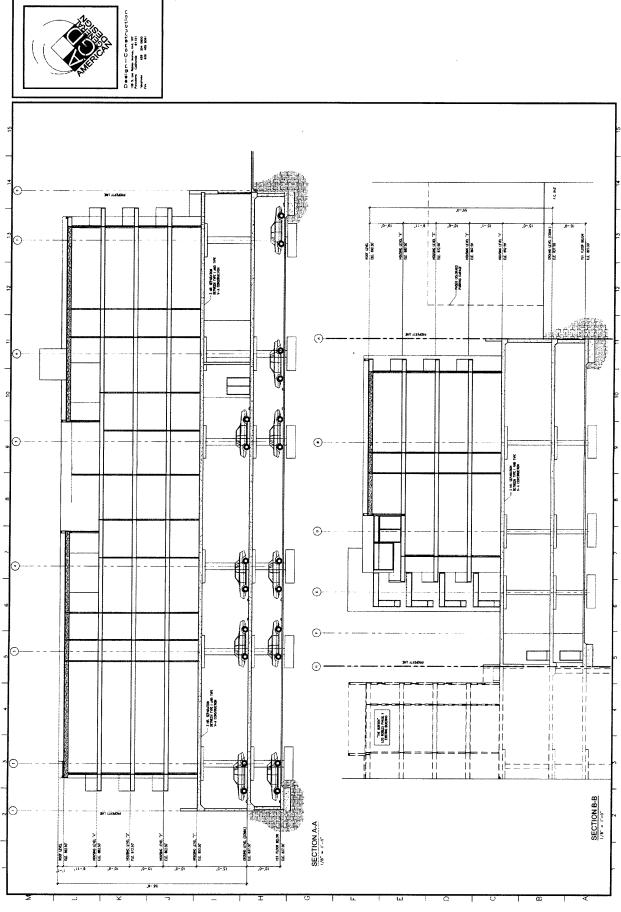




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