Project Notification Form



141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA

April 01, 2019

Submitted to:

Boston Planning & Development Agency Boston City Hall City Hall Square, 9th floor Boston, MA 02201

Submitted by:

Vivian Girard 34 Ditson St #1 Dorchester, MA 02122 Phone 617 290 5822 Email: vivian81260@gmail.com March 30, 2019

Mr. Brian Golden Director, BPDA City of Boston Boston City Hall, 9th Fl. Boston, MA 02201

Re: Boston Compact Living Pilot Project Application 141 Westville Street, Dorchester, MA 02122

Dear Mr. Golden:

In October 2018, the City of Boston implemented a progressive housing pilot program called Boston Compact Living. Under these innovative guidelines, we are proposing a small development, 141westville, consisting of 14 studio apartments with a strong emphasis on affordability, high energy efficiency and optimal land use. The building will be located in Boston's lively Fields Corner community and marketed as transit-oriented development where walking, biking and the use of public transportation are highly encouraged.

You will find enclosed the details of our project. Feel free to reach out with any question that you may have.

Sincerely,

Vivian Girard

Vivian Girard, Fields Corner resident and developer

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1 - Introduction to 141westville

A 2016 study by the Boston Redevelopment Authority reported that nearly half of Boston residents make less than \$35,000 per year, yet none of the market rate apartments and few of the subsidized units built in Boston in recent years are affordable to people in that income range.

Over a third of the housing units in Boston have just one resident, with two-thirds reporting two or less residents. These statistics clearly demonstrate that the City's current housing stock—17 percent of which is a studio or a one-bedroom—is ill-matched to meet demand.

Our project, 141westville, is designed to address that discrepancy by providing 14 unsubsidized, transit-oriented housing units in a lively neighborhood for \$650 to \$850 a month.

To demonstrate the concept and invite community feedback, we built a full-scale temporary model of a 260square-foot studio apartment on a flatbed trailer at the proposed location at 141 Westville Street. More than 200 people have visited the model so far and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Some 25 people have expressed a strong interest in moving into one of the studios upon completion of the project.

Additional details and pictures are available on our website at <u>www.141westville.com</u>. Under the website's FAQ tab, one can find answers to the most frequently asked questions regarding this proposal.

2 – Proposed Project Overview

Project name: 141westville

Location: 141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA 02122

Project Description: The proposed residential building consists of 14 studio apartments with a floor area between 260 and 280-square-feet. The building is four stories high and slightly larger than the surrounding three-deckers. In compliance with the Compact Living Guidelines, amenities include shared common space, two Group 1 accessible units, a common laundry area, adequate bike storage, and a bike repair station.

Lot area: 3000 sqft 40' wide by 75' long

Building footprint: 1456 sqft 28' wide by 52' long

Building height: 4 stories, and 36' 0" tall.

Floor Plan:

<u>1St floor:</u> The first floor is at grade and there is no basement. It includes 2 Group 1 accessible studio apartments of 275 sqft, common lounge, common laundry area, bike storage and utility room. <u>2nd floor:</u> 4 studio apartments of 280 sqft <u>3rd floor:</u> 4 studio apartments of 280 sqft <u>4th floor:</u> 4 studio apartments of 260 sqft

The rear of the building includes an outdoor shared patio. The front and sides are landscaped with reduced impervious surfaces.

Other notable building features:

The building envelope will be super insulated (R-30 walls) and include the most efficient heating system, heat recovery ventilator, water saving plumbing fixtures, drain water heat recovery and highly energy efficient lighting. The objective is a total energy cost of under \$1/day/occupant.

Sound insulation between units will be above building current code requirement (STC 50 and IIC 50) and well above what is typically found in the area's multifamily dwellings.

The building design is minimalist to increase efficiency and reduce construction cost and maintenance, but it involves architectural details such as generous roof overhangs, durable building materials throughout, lush landscaping and little hardscape.

Plans, renderings, and additional details are available on page 18-25 of this document.

3 - Project Narrative

Located in Boston's Fields Corner neighborhood, 141westville aims to provide one of the most affordable and resource-efficient housing options in the City of Boston. The development will consist of 14 single occupancy, transit-oriented units to be rented between \$650 and \$850 per month. It will be entirely privately funded and is expected to generate enough income to cover the building's operating expenses and provide a reasonable profit for the developer/owner.

Affordability:

According to a 2016 Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) study, nearly half of City of Boston residents make less than \$35,000/year. In 2019, unsubsidized apartments for people at that income level are practically nonexistent in the Boston area.

Providing housing that is affordable to residents earning in the range of \$25,000 to \$50,000 a year is the primary goal of this project.

141westville includes 14 studios ranging in size from 260 to 280-square-feet. Each of the three above ground floors contain four studios of identical size, and there are two at grade accessible units on the first floor.

6 units will be rented for \$850 a month with heat and hot water included.

8 units will be rented for \$650 a month with heat and hot water included.

- Two of these eight units will be Group 1 accessible.
- Two of these eight units will meet the BPDA's IDP guidelines as detailed in the paragraph below.

According to the City of Boston's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), 141westville is required to provide 13% of the units as affordable. Although every units in our project will be affordable in perpetuity, in order to satisfy this legal requirement, two rental units will be officially recorded as affordable to residents earning up to 50% of Area Median Income (AMI). Based on the current BPDA guidelines, the rent for a studio apartment at 50% AMI is \$702 a month. Since we are already committing to rent 8 units for \$650 a month, meeting official IDP goals for two units is mostly a matter of administrative compliance.

Rent increases will be no higher than the yearly change in Consumer Price Index (roughly zero to three percent yearly increases between 2007 and 2018). While we intend to remain the owner and manager of the project for years to come, we want these rental units to remain affordable in perpetuity. We will look for the best mechanism to assure that this is the case with all subsequent property owners and caretakers. Additional details regarding rent and utility costs can be found in the FAQ section of our website at <u>www.141westville.com</u>.

Location and resource efficiency:

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh recently called for the City to become carbon neutral by the year 2050. This will require housing and transportation practices that are far more energy efficient than the current practice.

The most resource-efficient type of housing found in an urban area is car-free, multifamily. with close proximity to amenities and quality public transportation. 141westville is located one quarter mile from the Fields Corner Red Line T stop and 50 yards from a bus stop with frequent buses on Geneva Avenue.

All basic amenities (banks, grocery stores, health centers, a library, restaurants and other services, and retail are found within an 8-minute walk of the building location. A Bluebikes bike share station and several Zipcars are

also available within that same radius. Most of the best amenities that the city has to offer are within a 20 to 30 minute bike or T ride. Active transportation will be strongly encouraged. Secure, indoor and dry bike storage will be provided along with a bike repair station. Priority will be given to applicants whose daily activities are within walking/biking distance or a reasonable transit commuting time of 141 Westville Street.

There will be no space for car parking on the premises. Adding off-street car parking would encourage more driving, further contribute to congestion and pollution in the city, greatly reduce the number of units that can be built on the lot, and make them much costlier to build and rent. Only residents who do not own a car will be allowed to reside at this address. It will be an explicit and non-negotiable lease requirement.

In addition, the building will be super-insulated and equipped with the most energy efficient appliances, ventilation, and lighting. The total energy cost per unit (gas and electric) is expected to average \$1/day or \$30 per month per unit. Heat and hot water will be included in the monthly rent. Electricity will be sub-metered and paid by the tenant.

Building finishes involve only durable and healthy materials such as hardwood floor and ceramic tiles.

Additional information and context:

While the Dorchester housing stock consists mostly of two to four bedrooms homes, the average American household size has been shrinking steadily for the past 50 years. According to a 2013 Boston Redevelopment Authority study, only 32.4% of households had more than two people in 2013, down from 49.3% in 1960. Providing new housing better suited to today's reality and needs is a key component of this project.

Each of the 14 units at 141westville are designed for single occupancy and offer 260 to 280-square-feet of living space. This includes a full bathroom, a good-sized walk-in closet and a compact kitchen. With an optimal layout, four generous windows on two sides and a flexible floor plan, the space can feel larger than the square footage implies. Although 260 to 280-square-feet may seem small by U.S. standards, it is not unusual in cities outside North America. It is commonplace for middle class people in prosperous and vibrant cities throughout the world to live healthy, happy, and fulfilling lives with less square footage per person.

Two years ago, along with a business partner, my wife Elisa and I opened home.stead café, a bakery and café in Fields Corner. Even though all of our employees earn well above the hourly minimum wage, housing and housing costs in particular, remains a serious concern for most of them. We strongly believe that everyone who works 40 hours a week should be able to afford quality housing that's within a reasonable walking distance or a short public transit commute.

The overarching goal of the 141westville project is to provide the best possible living option to single folks who can't afford or don't wish to spend more than \$650 to \$850 a month in housing expenses.

In today's Boston, the only option at this rent level is to live with multiple housemates in settings that are typically more confined, in increasingly limited supply, and for most adults past their mid-twenties; less desirable. Yet, with such high housing costs, many people with full time jobs are bound to live with housemates well after they complete their school education. Both my wife and I were in this situation for a good number of years. The 141westville housing model is largely based on our personal experience; we designed it as a space we would have been able to afford and would have enjoyed living in prior to being able to afford a home together.

4 - Project Team

Developer and representative:

Vivian and Elisa Girard 34 Ditson St #1 Dorchester, MA 02122 617 290 5822 Vivian81260@gmail.com

Architect:

Jennifer West Boehm Architecture 561 Windsor St #A402 Somerville, MA 02143 jen@boehmarchitecture.com 617-521-9086

Surveyor:

DGT Associates Surveying and Engineering 803 Summer St, 1st floor Boston, MA 02127 617 275 0541 www.DGTassociates.com

Code consultant:

Kevin S Hastings Hastings Consulting Inc 142 Hanlon Road Holliston, MA 01746 508 397 8417 www.hasting-consulting.com

Financing:

Owner equity

5 - Project Planning and Community Process

The 141westville development is proposed under the City of Boston's new "Compact Living Program". Since it is new and unusual for Boston, and Dorchester in particular, we thought it was important to explain it well to everyone who may be involved or impacted. Comprehensive information about the project and pictures have been publicly available on our dedicated website since July 2018 at <u>www.141westville.com</u>.

The best way to give a proper sense of what we are proposing is to step inside one of the proposed studio apartments. For that purpose, we built a temporary model on a trailer on the property itself and opened it to the public in the summer of 2018. We invited all neighbors, City officials, and everyone who was interested in affordable housing to come and visit, ask questions and give us feedback. Currently, the studio remains available for viewing by appointment. The model has been toured by an estimated 225 to 250 people, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly with regard to the affordability target.

The development team (architect + developer) has met with relevant city agencies and officials between late 2018 and early 2019 and received some useful feedback. These include:

- Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA)
- Boston Housing Innovation Lab
- Department of Neighborhood Development (DND)
- Inspectional Service Department (DND)
- State Representative Liz Miranda
- Bowdoin Geneva area City Liaison Christine Brandao, and Fields Corner City Liaison Khoa Pham
- City Councilor Frank Baker who represents the district that 141westville is in
- The staff of City Councilor Andrea Campbell who represents the adjacent district

Leaders of the local community groups Greater Bowdoin Geneva Neighborhood Association (GBGNA), Fields Corner Civic Association, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and Field Corner Main Streets have also visited the model unit and provided valuable feedback.

The project received some local media coverage in the Bay State Banner and on WGBH.

Bay State Banner: "A micro unit comes to Fields Corner"

www.baystatebanner.com/2018/06/20/a-micro-unit-comes-to-fields-corner

WGBH: "In A Few Years, This Could Be Boston's Smallest, Cheapest Apartment"

https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2018/07/31/in-a-few-years-this-could-be-bostons-smallest-cheapest-apartment

We are confident that our project will maintain a great deal of support throughout the official community process.

6 - Location and Transportation









The vibrant Fields Corner business district offers many amenities within a one to seven-minute walk from 141 Westville Street. *Details on page 10.*

The Fields Corner Red Line MBTA subway stop is a fiveminute walk from 141 Westville Street. Details on page 11

A bus stop for three frequent MBTA bus lines is located within 100' of the property. The bus stop is visible on the left side of the picture, 141westville is out of the frame on the right side of the mural. Details on page 12.

A Bluebikes station is located within walking distance, next to the Fields Corner train station. *Details on page 13.*

6-1 Amenities Within Walking Distance:



The Bowdoin-Geneva, Four Corners, and Fields Corner areas encompass well over 100 businesses and institutions within a short walking distance from 141 Westville Street.

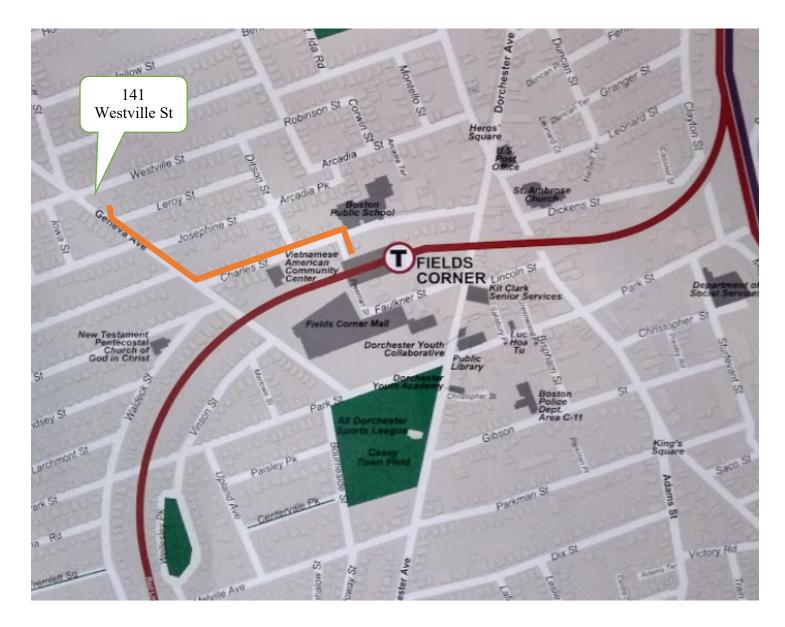
These include many employment opportunities, restaurants, a public library, public parks, supermarkets, health centers, a post office, banks, places of worship, cultural institutions, schools, community centers, and a large variety of independent businesses.



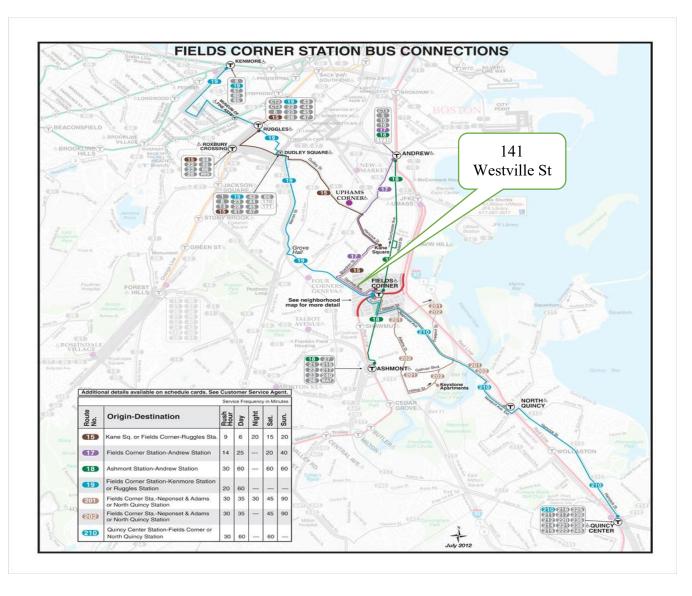
The green line represents a 5 to 7-minute walk, or 2 to 3-minute bike ride from 141 Westville St.

The picture above is a map from the Fields Corner Main Streets website. It gives a sense of the large number of businesses and amenities located within a short walking distance. There are additional businesses located on nearby Geneva Avenue, Washington Street, and Bowdoin Street that are not shown on this map.

6-2 Subway Access:



141 Westville Street is located 0.3 mile or a 5-minute walk from the Fields Corner Red Line subway station. Downtown Boston and Cambridge are a direct 15 to 25-minute train ride away from Fields Corner. Much of what the city has to offer is reachable by subway.



In addition to the nearby Red Line MBTA station, 141 Westville Street is less than 70 yards away (less than a minute walk) from the bus stop for buses #15, #17 and #19. These three frequent bus lines provide good transit access to other parts of Dorchester and Roxbury.

Bus #19 provides a direct line to some of the largest centers of education and employment in the City of Boston, including Roxbury Community College, Northeastern University, the Longwood Medical Area, Fenway area, and Boston University.

Bus #210 leaves from the Fields Corner station and provides a direct route all the way to Quincy Center.

6-4 Biking:



Dorchester's expanding bike network provides a valuable and inexpensive transportation option. The developer uses his bicycles as his year-round primary form of transportation and is a committed bike advocate. Adequate indoor bike storage and maintenance amenities will be provided at 141 Westville Street for all residents.



A new station from the Bluebikes bike share program was established in Fields Corner in the fall of 2018. It will return in the spring of 2019 at a permanent location. 141westville will offer the following community benefits:

Unsubsidized housing that's affordable in perpetuity

Of the 14 units offered, eight of them will be rented for \$650 a month including heat and hot water. They will be affordable to an individual earning the yearly minimum wage (\$26,520 in 2020 and rising to \$31,200 in 2023). The six other units will be rented for \$850 a month including heat and hot water, and they will be affordable to an individual earning 50% of the 2018 area median income (\$37,750). The developer's mission is to keep all of the units at that level of affordability in perpetuity; rents will not increase faster than inflation as measured by the CPI (Consumer Price Index).

Transit-Oriented Development will bring no additional car owners to the neighborhood

Since there is an acute shortage of affordable housing near dependable public transit in particular, it is both fair and logical to give priority to people who need public transit the most and are going to use it most efficiently. Only people who don't own a car will be able to live at 141westville. It will be clearly spelled out in the lease and strictly enforced. The new car-free residents will bring the benefits of enlivening the neighborhood by increasing pedestrian traffic and patronizing local businesses without significantly adding to the issues brought by automobiles: traffic congestion, injuries, pollution, noise, parking shortage etc.

Highly resource efficient housing

A recent EPA report titled "Location Efficiency and Housing Type" starts with the following: "How and where we construct our communities has an enormous effect on our energy consumption. Buildings and transportation together account for about 70 percent of energy use in the United States and about 62 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Creating more energy-efficient communities and buildings would reduce our impact on climate change, reduce our reliance on foreign fuel and non-renewable energy, and save people money on household energy costs."

In addition to being all affordable, 141westville is designed to use valuable land and natural resources as efficiently as possible. The goal is an energy cost of less than \$1/day/resident. This also corresponds with a low carbon footprint for housing and transportation. This development is well aligned with the priorities of the "Climate Ready Boston" initiative.

Supporting the adjacent community garden and maintaining the pedestrian shortcut to Westville Street

424-428 Geneva Avenue is a small city-owned vacant lot at the rear of 141 Westville Street. Last fall, a group of nonprofits and volunteers greatly improved that long neglected parcel by planting fruit trees and bushes, installing planters, and revamping the foot path. The foot path goes through both 424 Geneva Avenue and 141 Westville Street. It is used as a short cut for people who live on Westville Street. We are committed to keeping this path open to the public on our property on one side of the building. As we have in the past, we will keep supporting the improvements of 424 Geneva Avenue and the surrounding areas for the benefit of all local residents.

8 – Compact Living Guidelines Compliance

Shared spaces

Nearly half of the first-floor area, about 500 sqft, is designated as shared space. This includes a shared lounge area, bicycle storage and repair station, and washers and dryers for common use.

An outdoor patio of about 250 sqft at the rear of the building provides additional gathering space.

424 Geneva Ave is a nicely landscaped plot of land abutting the rear of 141 Westville St. Along with the planners and designers of the 424 Geneva Ave, we have agreed to keep that area open and unfenced. We want it to be an attractive amenity benefiting all nearby residents.

Transportation Demand Management

The Boston Compact Living lot guidelines requires projects containing Compact Living units to implement transportation strategies that minimize the number of people driving alone in cars.

The project includes 14 indoor bike storage space; one for each unit. There are four additional bike parking spaces outside the building for visitors and daytime use.

The "Location and Transportation" section of this document (pages 10-14) details the range of transportation options that will be available to the residents of 141westville.

Under the Compact Living Guideline, our project (10-14 units) must fulfill 4 TDM points.

We are proposing the following measures:

B3 Bicycle Maintenance: 2 points

The developer will fully subsidize a yearly bike tune-up for any resident who wishes it at either of Dorchester's bike shops: Sip and Spoke Bike Kitchen or Ashmont Cycles.

B4 Bicycle Repair Station: 1 point

An adequate indoor bike repair station will be provided near the indoor bike storage area. In addition, there will be a bike washing station located outside the building, since keeping a drivetrain clean is an essential part of keeping a bike in good working order.

B5 Bike Share Membership: 2 Points

A city bike share station is expected to be permanently located near the Fields Corner subway station in the spring of 2019. It is about ¹/₄ mile away from 141 Westville Street. Any resident who signs up for a bike share membership will be offered a 50% subsidy in perpetuity to help defray membership cost.

The above measures account for a total of 5 points.

Providing no car parking will discourage the number of trips made by private vehicles. For the occasion when one needs to use an automobile, several Zipcars are conveniently available at 42 Charles Street (within a four-minute walk).

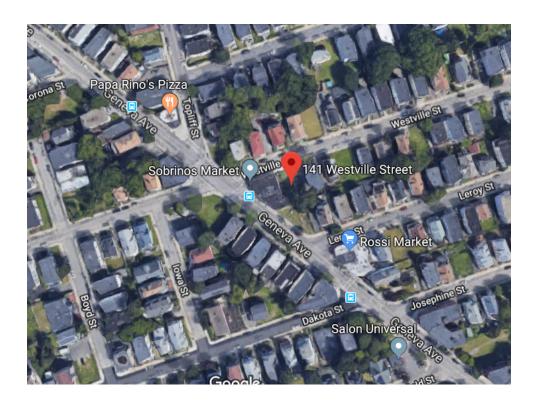
Zoning district:

Dorchester Neighborhood District Zoning 2F-5000 Subdistrict, Any Other Dwelling or Use Lot Area: 3,000 sf

Proposed project:

Dorchester New Construction: 14 rental apartment units

	Description	Required	Existing	Proposed	Variance needed
1	Lot area minimum	5000 sqft	3000 sqft	3000 sqft	Yes
2	Minimum lot width	50 ft	40 ft	40 ft	Yes
3	Lot frontage minimum	50 ft	40 ft	40 ft	Yes
4	Floor Area Ratio maximum	0.5	-	5,820 GSF/ 3,000 = 1.94 (requires relief) [1455 GSF X 4 = 5820 GSF]	Yes
5	Building height - maximum stories	2.5 stories/ 35 ft	-	4 stories/ 36' 0"	Yes
6	Usable open space minimum sq. ft. per dwelling unit	N/A	-	Providing 270 sqft patio area	Yes
7	Front yard – minimum depth	15 ft	-	8' 0"	Yes
8	Side yard – minimum depth	10 ft	-	West side: 6' East side: 6'	Yes
9	Rear yard – minimum depth	30 ft	-	15 ft	Yes
10	Number of units	2 allowed		14 units	Yes
11	Parking spaces per dwelling unit, 10+ units	1.5 x 12 units = 18	-	0 (Compact Living Guidelines)	Yes



The 3000 sqft lot 141 Westville St. property used to have a three decker on it. It is surrounded by mostly three deckers built on properties of a comparable size.

The scale of the proposed development is meant to fit within that context.

B-Model Unit Pictures

The images below are captures from the actual model unit currently located at 141 Westville Street.



General view from the front of the apartment. The open floor plan allows the residents to furnish the space according to their needs and liking.



General view from the apartment entrance.



View of the kitchen with doors open.

The kitchen design may change slightly, but the location and footprint will remain the same



Bathroom view

The walk-in closet and other built-in shelving provide adequate storage.

C – Putting Housing Size Into Context

While a 280-square-foot studio apartment is small by U.S. standards, it is not unusual in cities outside of North America. It is commonplace for middle class people in prosperous and vibrant cities throughout the world to live healthy, happy, fulfilling and less wasteful lives with less square footage per person.

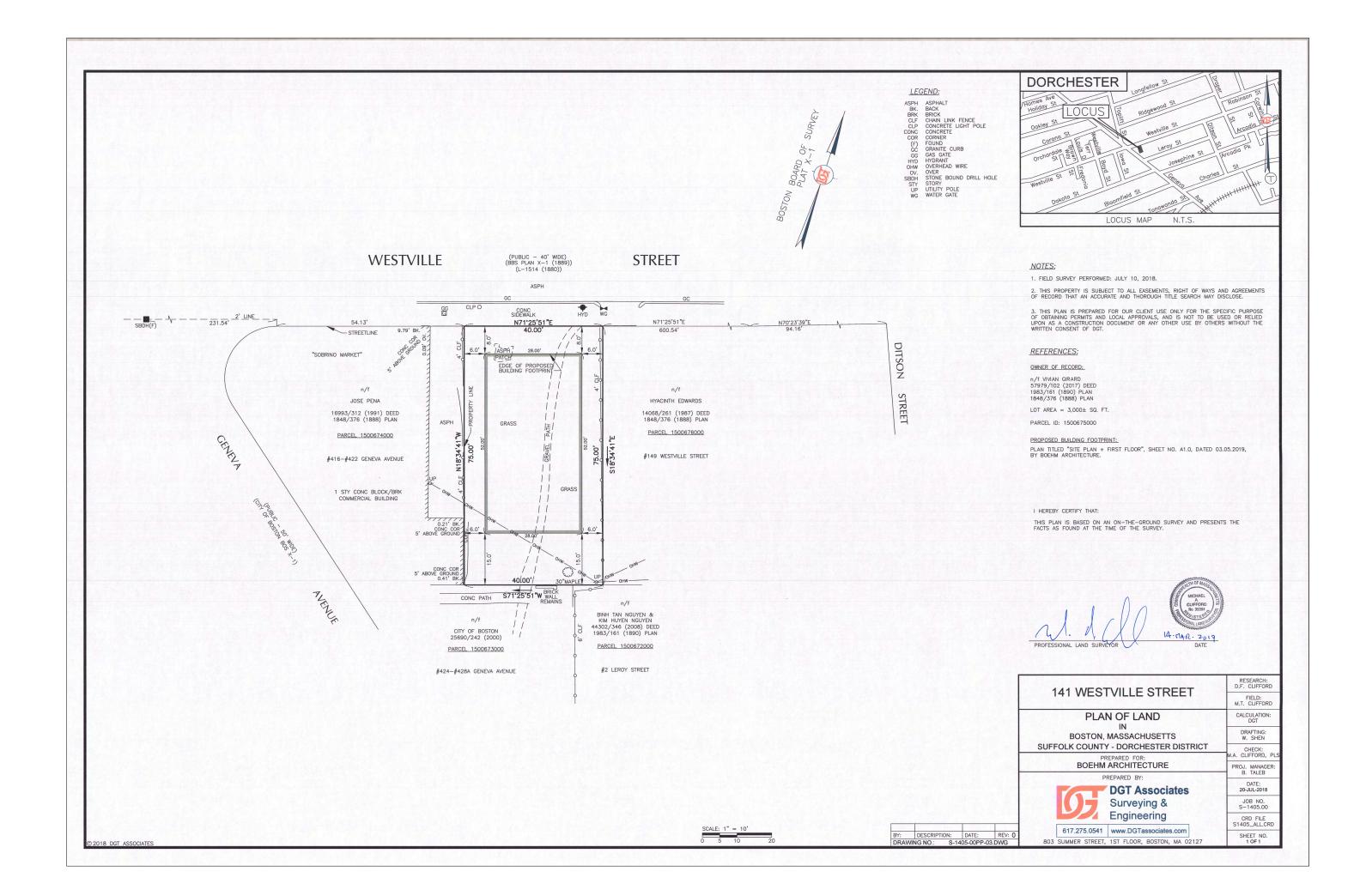
Another useful reference is found in student housing. The plan to the left shows a typical apartment layout for the second floor of 141westville. The picture to the right is a rendering of a recently built UMass Boston double occupancy dorm room at a comparable scale.

Reducing dwelling size is the most efficient way to provide affordable and environmentally friendly housing.



Typical UMass Boston doubleunit dorm room layout

Typical 141westville unit





141WESTVILLE

141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA 02122

Developer/ Owner

Vivian and Elisa Girard 34 Ditson Street #1 Dorchester, MA 02122

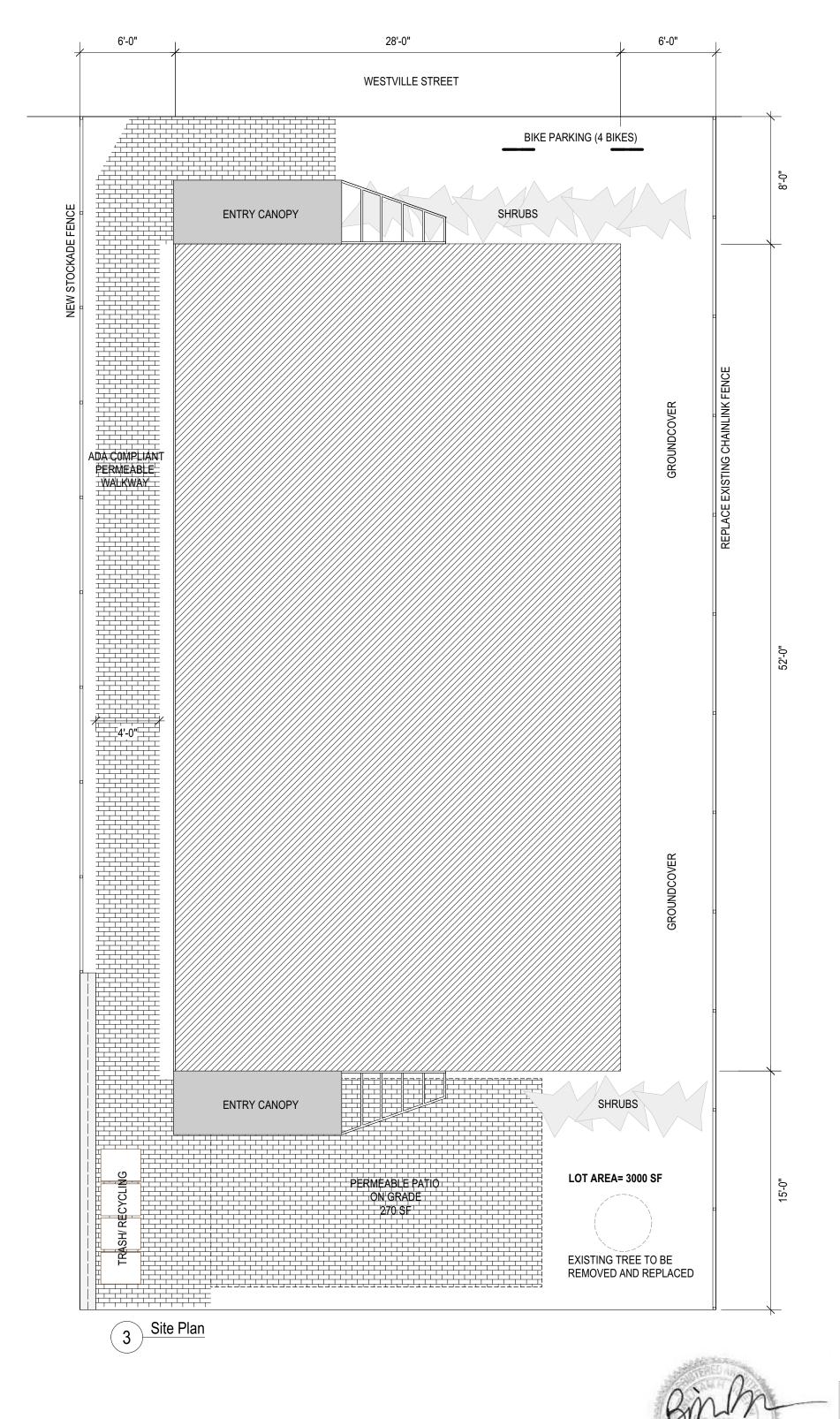
Architect

Boehm Architecture 561 Windsor Street #a402 Somerville, MA 02143

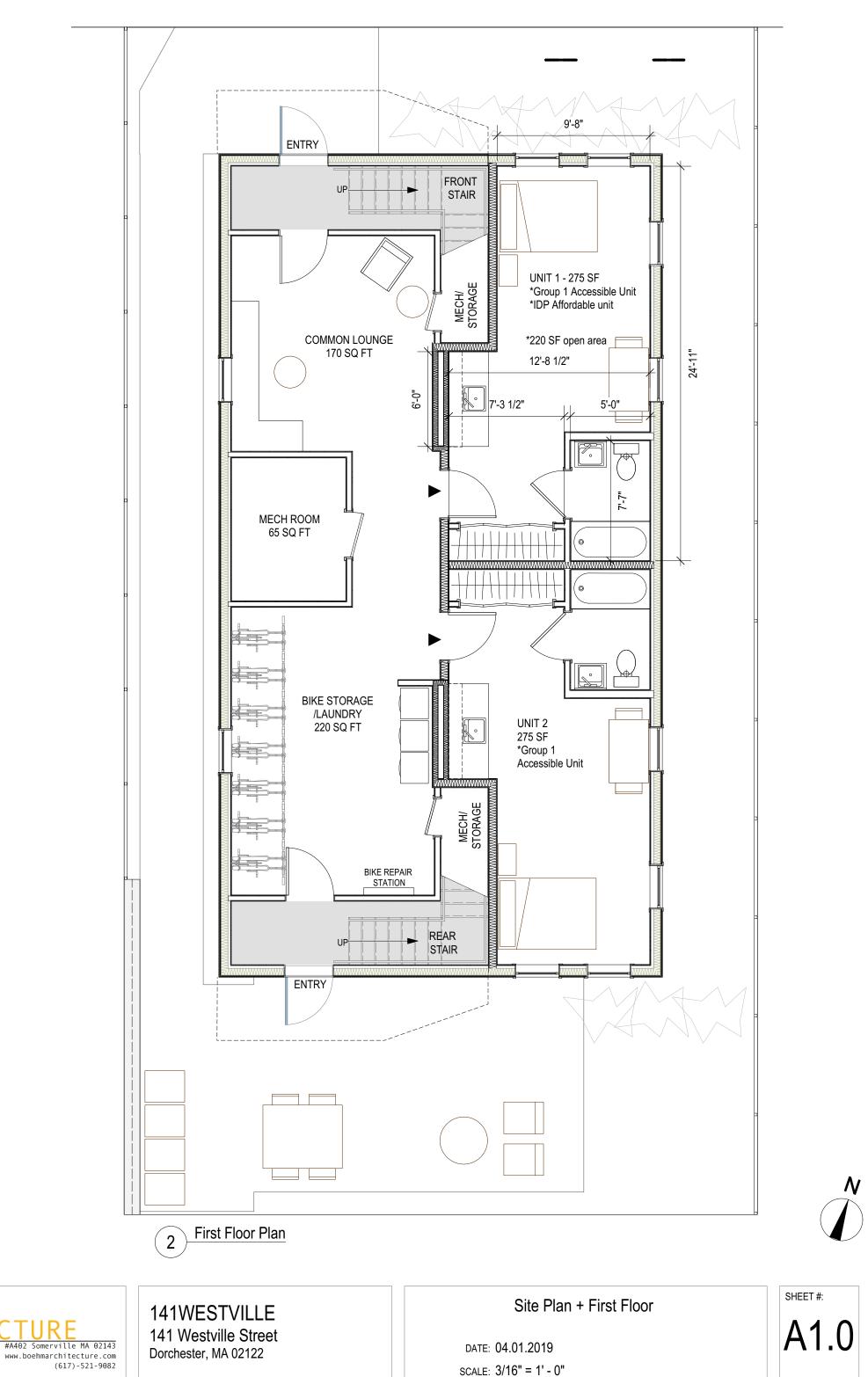
Drawing Index

- A1.0 Site Plan + First Floor
- A1.1 Second + Third Floor Plans
- A1.2 Fourth Floor + Roof Plans
- A2.0 North + East Elevations
- A2.1 South + West Elevations
- A2.2 Front Rendering View
- A2.3 Rear Rendering View

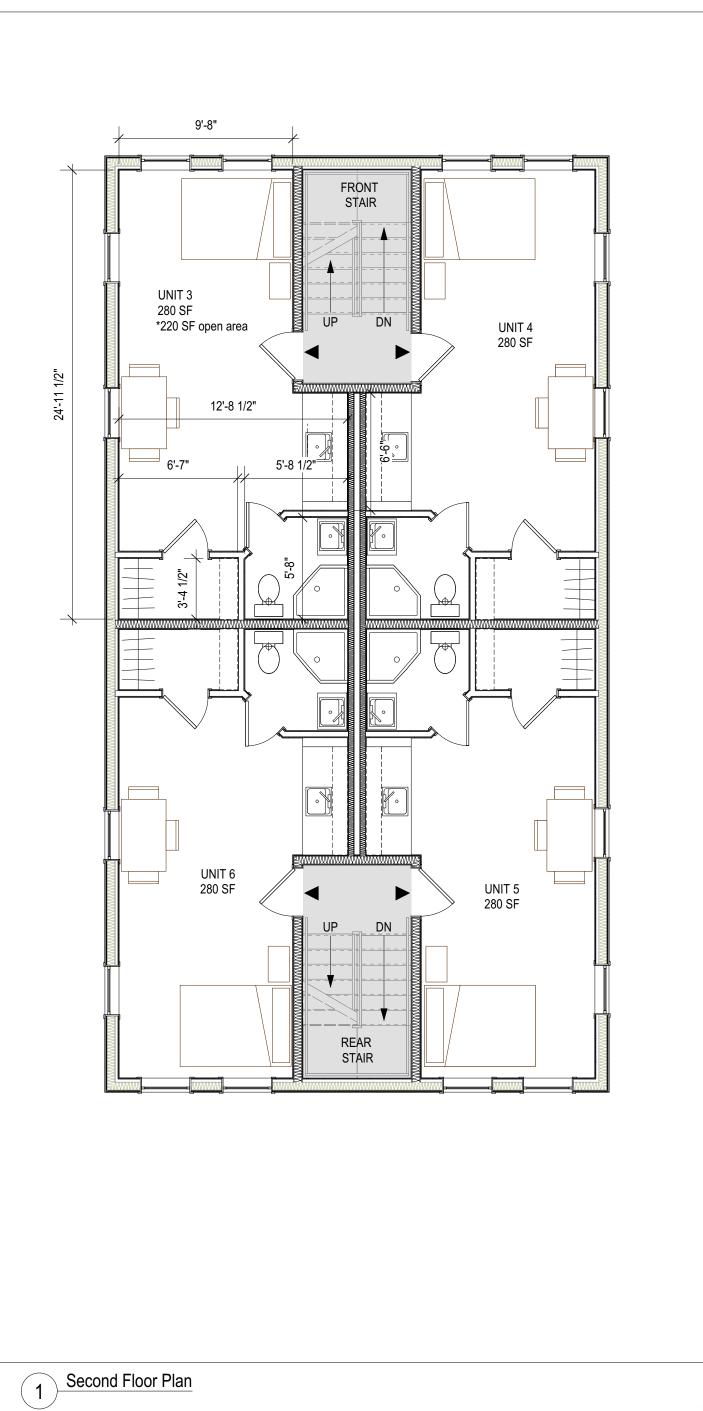
ZONING REVIEW 04-01-2019







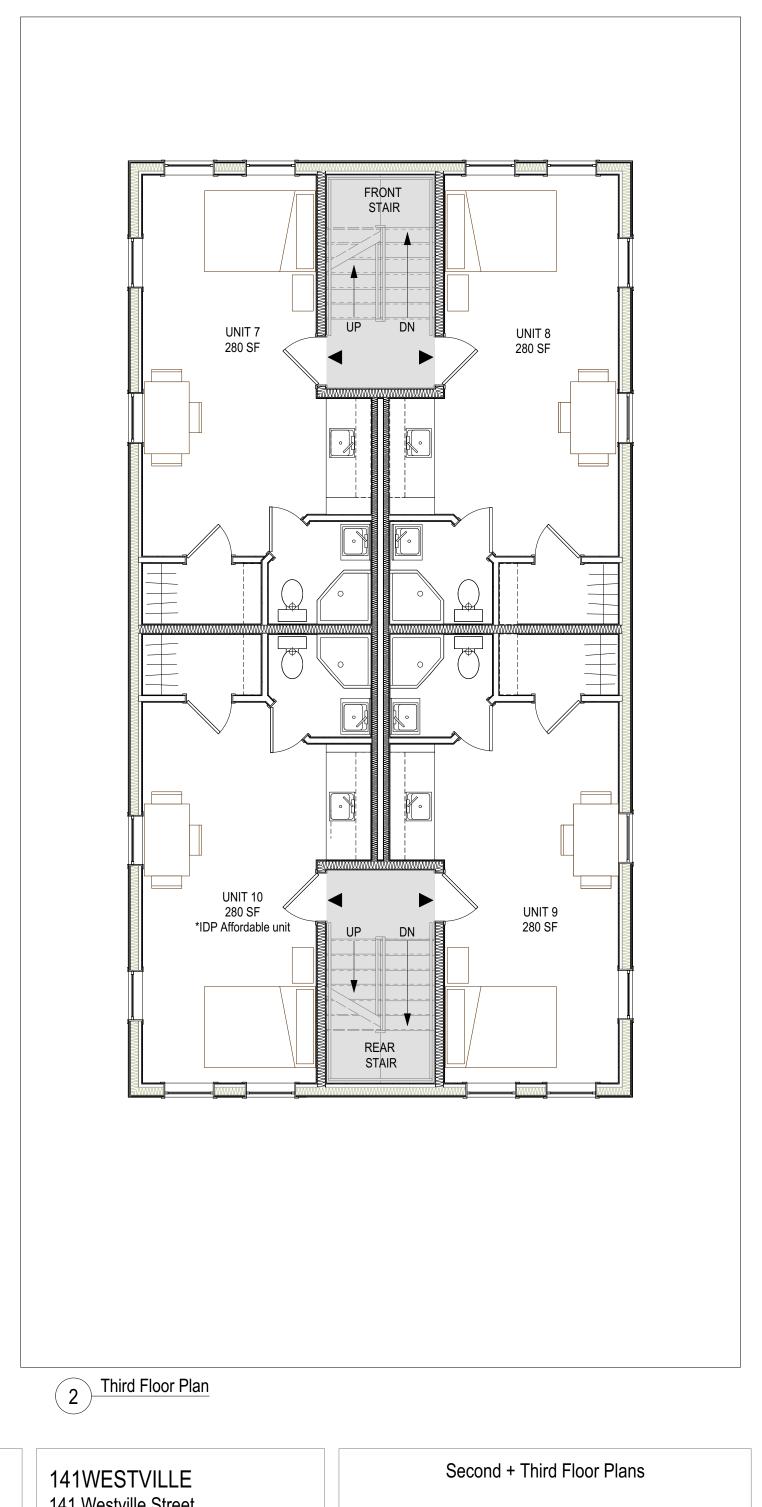
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WESTVILLE STREET



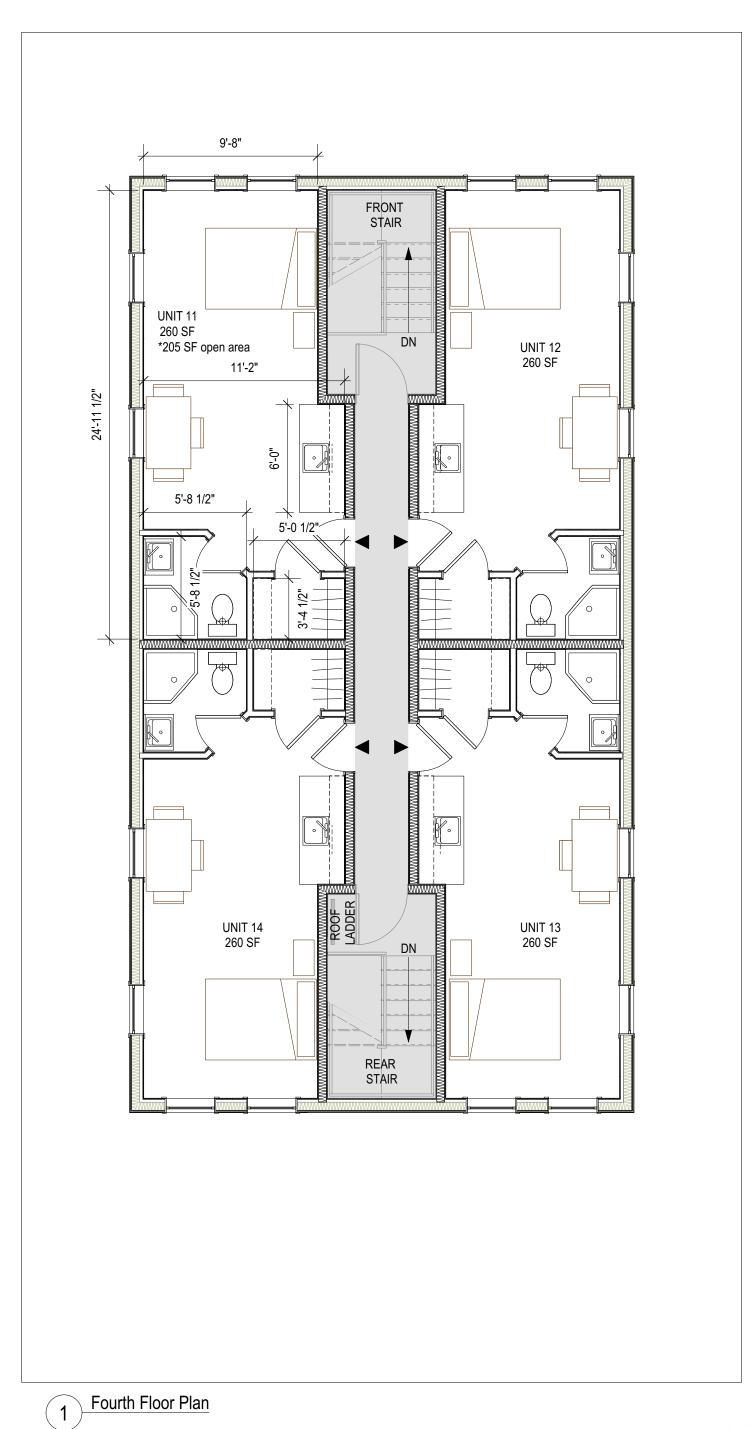


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URE #A402 Somerville MA 02143 www.boehmarchitecture.com (617)-521-9082 141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA 02122

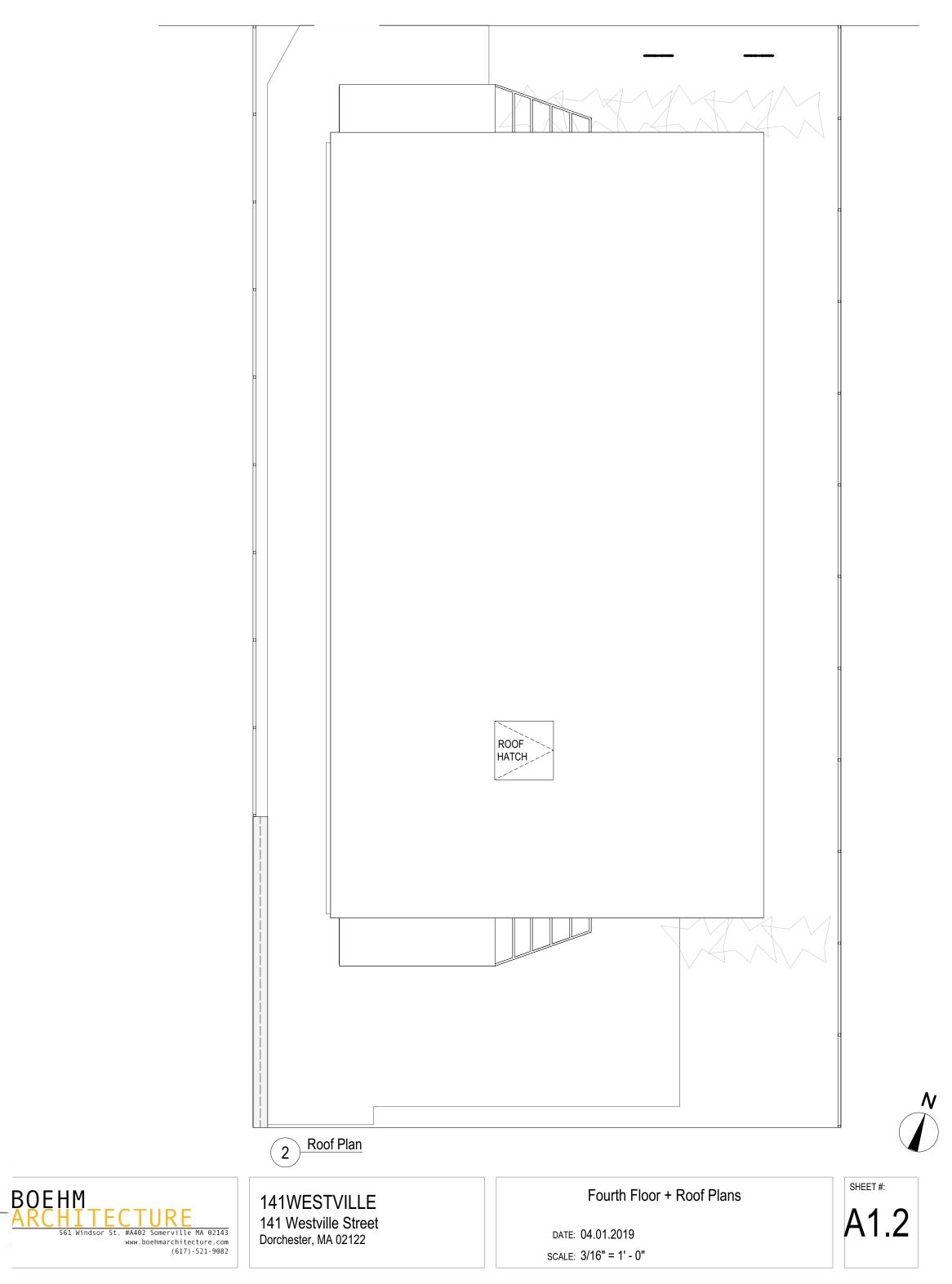
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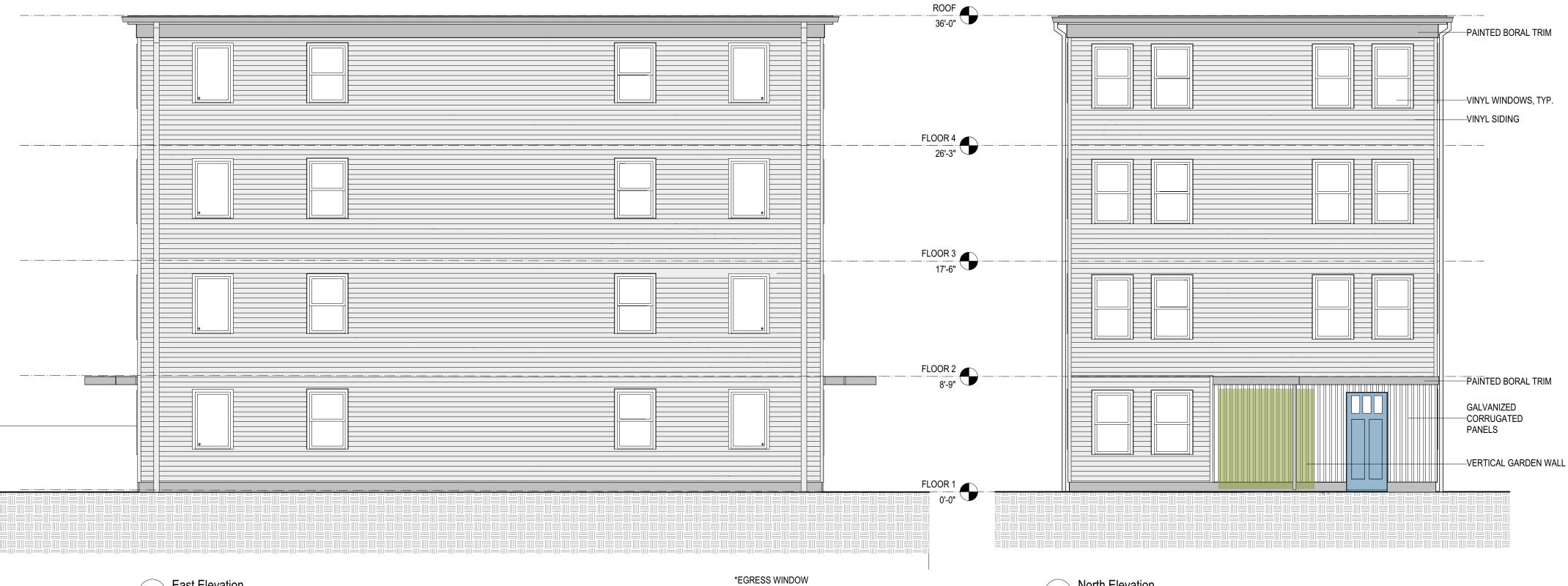
WESTVILLE STREET





WESTVILLE STREET



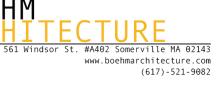








North Elevation (2)

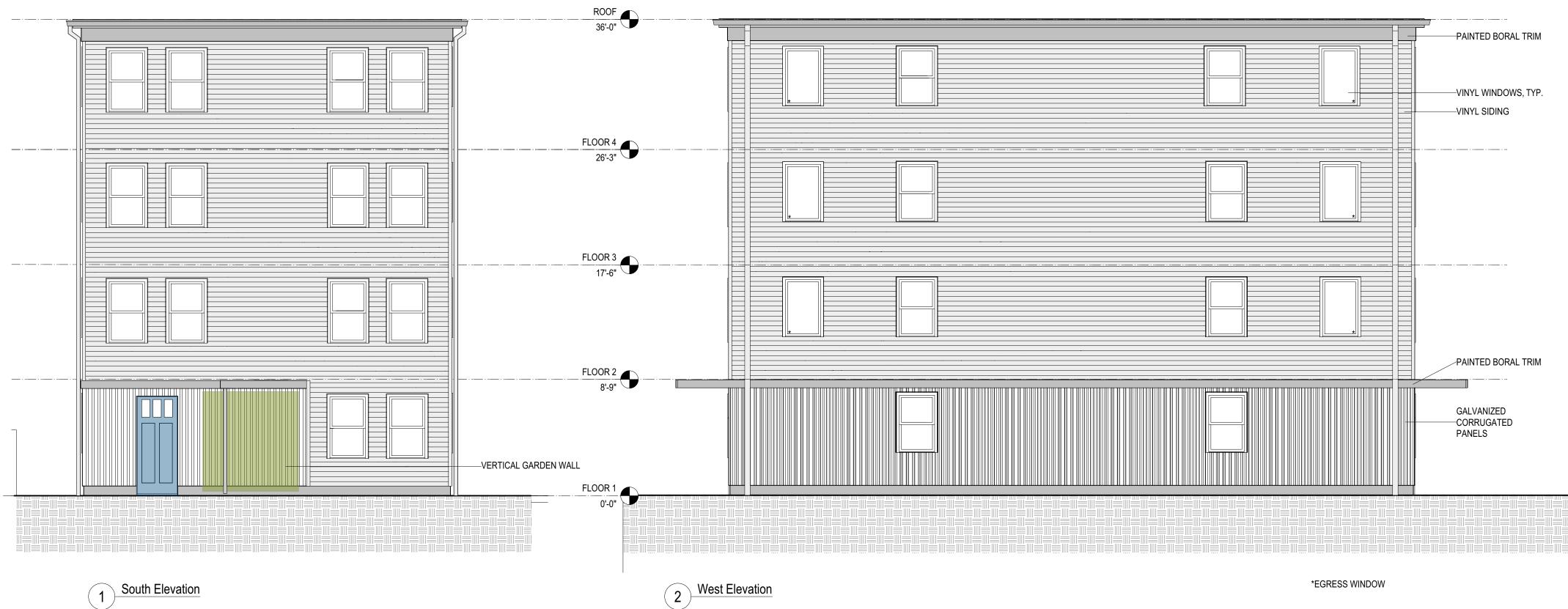


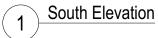
141WESTVILLE 141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA 02122 North + East Elevations

SHEET #:

DATE: 04.01.2019 SCALE: 3/16" = 1' - 0"









*EGRESS WINDOW

141WESTVILLE 141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA 02122 South + West Elevations

SHEET #: A2.1

DATE: 04.01.2019 SCALE: 3/16" = 1' - 0"





141WESTVILLE 141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA 02122 FRONT RENDERING VIEW



date: 04.01.2019 scale: NTS







141WESTVILLE 141 Westville Street Dorchester, MA 02122

REAR RENDERING VIEW

SHEET #: A2.3

DATE: 04.01.2019 SCALE: NTS