

Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee Meeting (PYDAC)

April 22, 2015

7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

The Station at Potomac Yard Community Room

650 Maskell Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22301

Meeting Agenda

- I. Introductions and Election of a Chair
- II. Review of Landbay G, Block A – National Industries for the Blind



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

DATE: April 16, 2015
TO: Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee
FROM: Planning Staff
SUBJECT: Landbay G, Block A – National Industries for the Blind

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

With this application, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) requests approval to subdivide Block A into two parcels and construct a mixed-use building on the southern parcel, Parcel A2. The applicant proposes to construct 100,000 square feet of office; 10,500 square feet of retail; and four levels of below-grade parking. The applicant is requesting approval to construct a phased development with 70,000 square feet in the first phase and a 30,000 square foot addition in the second phase. The applicant proposes to complete the retail square footage within the first phase of development.

BACKGROUND

Block A is approximately 0.89 acres and is located at the northern portion of Landbay G. It is bordered by North Potomac Yard to the north, Potomac Avenue to the east, East Glebe Road to the south and Dogue Street to the west. The Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) has preliminary plan approval to construct approximately 400,000 square feet of office within two multi-story buildings just west of the site on Block D.

The development special use permit (DSUP) for Landbay G, considered the “town center” of Potomac Yard, was approved by City Council in January 2009. The initial approval included nine buildings on eight blocks with a variety of uses, including office, retail, hotel and residential. Block A was originally approved for a mixed-use building with 220,000 square feet of office, approximately 11,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and five levels of below grade parking. The approved building was a contemporary precast concrete and glass-clad structure, with a highly-articulated façade, which contrasted vertical and horizontal expression to reduce the perceived building mass.

The applicant proposes to amend the approved development special use permit to construct a mixed-use building, including approximately 100,000 square feet of office and 10,500 square feet of retail on approximately half of the block. The applicant also proposes four levels of below grade parking. The proposal is currently being reviewed

by staff to determine its consistency with the Potomac Yard / Potomac Greens Small Area Plan, CDD #10 and the Potomac Yard Urban Design Guidelines.

SITE DESIGN

The overall site design remains consistent with the CDD Concept Plan, as it maintains the block size and street grid previously approved. The primary difference with the proposed application is the proposal to construct a building on half of the block. While more subtle, it is important to note that the previously approved building appeared to relate more closely to the curvature of Potomac Avenue on the eastern façade, with a slightly curved building façade which terminated in a recess at the corner of Potomac Avenue and East Glebe Road, designed to achieve a significant sidewalk dimension at this important intersection. The approved building also featured a through-lobby to connect the open space within Potomac Yard Park to the hotel and other commercial uses within the Town Center. Some of the primary site design issues that staff is currently reviewing include:

- Staff is considering the impacts of the construction of only half of the block, and has requested additional information from both the applicant and the property owner of Parcel A1 to demonstrate how a second building could be accommodated on the remaining parcel in the future. Staff has also requested that the applicant explore providing a connection within the garage to achieve a single loading and parking entrance for both buildings in the future.
- Staff also has concerns with the proposal to construct the development in two phases, as staff is uncertain that the 30,000 square foot addition will be feasible or desirable in the future. As this site is located in close proximity to the locations currently being explored in the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Environmental Impact Statement, staff anticipates a high demand for office square footage in the future, and seeks to maximize the commercial square footage permitted at this location.
- Staff is also concerned that Dogue Street will ultimately have multiple garage doors and loading docks to serve the separate buildings, rather than a combined service area.
- The applicant proposes a subdivision of Block A, which divides the block into two nearly equal parcels. As proposed, the NIB building program does not appear to require half of the block. Staff may recommend that the applicant study opportunities to shift the proposed property line south to accommodate the NIB building while maximizing the development potential of the northern parcel.

It is important to note that the site design evolved during conceptual reviews. Specifically, the applicant originally proposed the 30,000 square foot additional along the western portion of the property, adjacent to Dogue Street. Staff expressed concern with this design, as the proposal failed to provide a meaningful street wall or establish a relationship with the surrounding buildings and open spaces. Staff worked with the applicant to relocate the proposed addition to the northern portion of the site in order to achieve a street wall on the three street frontages.

BUILDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

In the initial Landbay G approval, Block A was designed using a more contemporary vocabulary. With this proposal, the applicant proposes a more traditional design, with the wall materials consisting predominantly of brick, with some precast and metal elements. As design on this project moves forward, staff asks the applicant to consider the following design principles, and work to achieve them in the final design for this project:

- The proposed 30,000 square foot addition should be expressed as a hyphen, rather than flush with the primary façade proposed along Potomac Avenue. (Staff notes that the graphics attached to this memorandum, including the plans and renderings, are inconsistent with regard to the placement of the addition.)
- The treatment of the northern elevation, for both the 70,000 square foot proposal and the 30,000 square foot addition must be carefully evaluated, including whether the northern elevation should provide windows or a blank façade to promote a corresponding development on the northern portion of Block A.
- Staff previously recommended that the applicant consider applying elements from the approved building design, including the use of precast concrete, rather than a red brick masonry, as the primary façade material, to further the transition between the traditional character in South Potomac Yard and the more contemporary character planned for North Potomac Yard. A contemporary use of brick elements within the composition is not discouraged.
- Staff also recommends that the applicant study the use of contrasting vertical and horizontal skin expressions similar to the approved DSUP elevations, both to enhance the transition mentioned above, and to better connect visually with the other approved designs on Blocks B, E1 and E2, which were intended to appear as a coordinated ensemble. While Staff is not suggesting that the applicant merely build a portion of the previous design, they are encouraging the applicant to design their building to harmonize and appear consistent with the approved design vocabulary, which is more contemporary than the current proposal.
- Since Blocks A and B were envisioned as the prime office anchors for one of the Potomac Yard Metro access points, work to keep the appearance of the final build out of Blocks A1 and A2 as that of a single building.
- The building should present a full street wall at the property line to the greatest extent possible.
- The building should be built to the maximum allowable height under current final FAA permission.
- Minimize the number of curb cuts and service openings of all kinds.
- The building mass should be articulated, and employ predominantly vertical expression, while creating an active skyline through varied heights, with a distinctive or articulated vertical element.
- The mechanical penthouse should be fully integrated into the building design through both massing and materiality; this is a principle that needs to be carefully considered in conjunction with future development on Block A1.

- The building should address grade to sky relationships through the thoughtful, contemporary interpretation of base-middle-top vocabulary and strategies. The corner element at East Glebe Road and Potomac Avenue requires additional refinement to better read as a signature corner, while simultaneously eliminating the false appearance of the primary office entrance. The base of corner element should, however, celebrate the proposed retail.
- As currently proposed the primary office entrance appears understated and should be reevaluated to provide a prominent entry along Potomac Avenue.
- The retail height should be a minimum of 18 feet floor to floor.

PREFERRED RETAIL LOCATION

The East Glebe Road frontage of Block A was identified as a preferred retail location in the Coordinated Development District Amendments approved in November, 2010 due to the site's proximity to the Town Center Green. As previously noted, the applicant proposes to construct retail consistent with the Coordinated Development District.

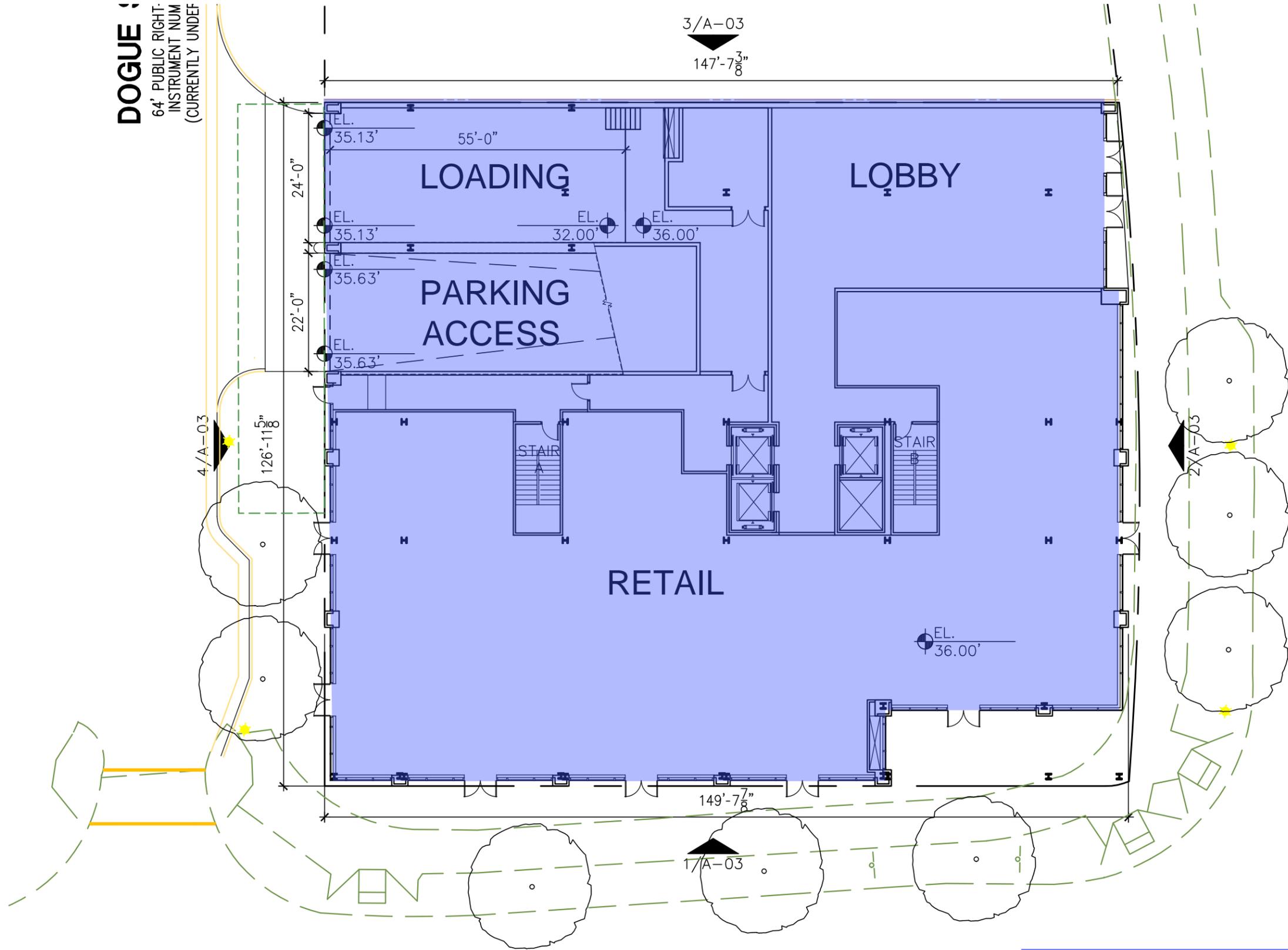
DESIGN GUIDELINES

The site layout, building design and uses proposed are generally consistent with the Design Guidelines and staff will continue to work with the applicant to refine site and building features. Staff anticipates that a formal application, which includes a greater level of detail, will be submitted later this spring, and staff will continue to encourage the applicant to work with the owners of Block A1 to produce a compatible design.

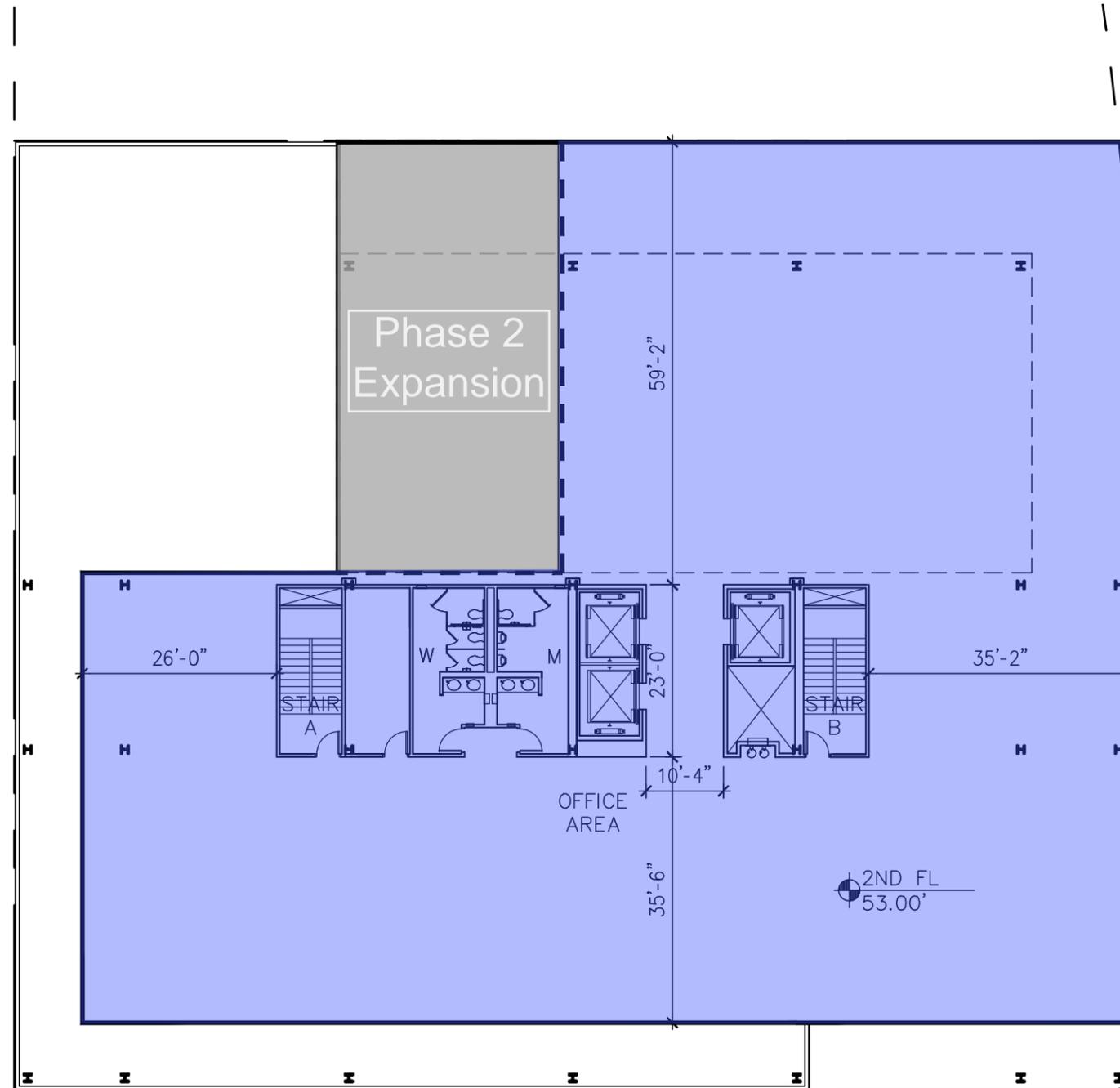
CONCLUSION

Staff anticipates that the applicant will submit a preliminary plan later this spring. Based on the submission of the preliminary plan, staff anticipates that the application will be heard by the Planning Commission and City Council early in the autumn. Staff will request that the applicant schedule a subsequent meeting(s) with PYDAC to review the proposal, in conjunction with massing studies of the future A1 development, prior to submission of the preliminary plan, and will ultimately request that PYDAC provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council on the proposal.

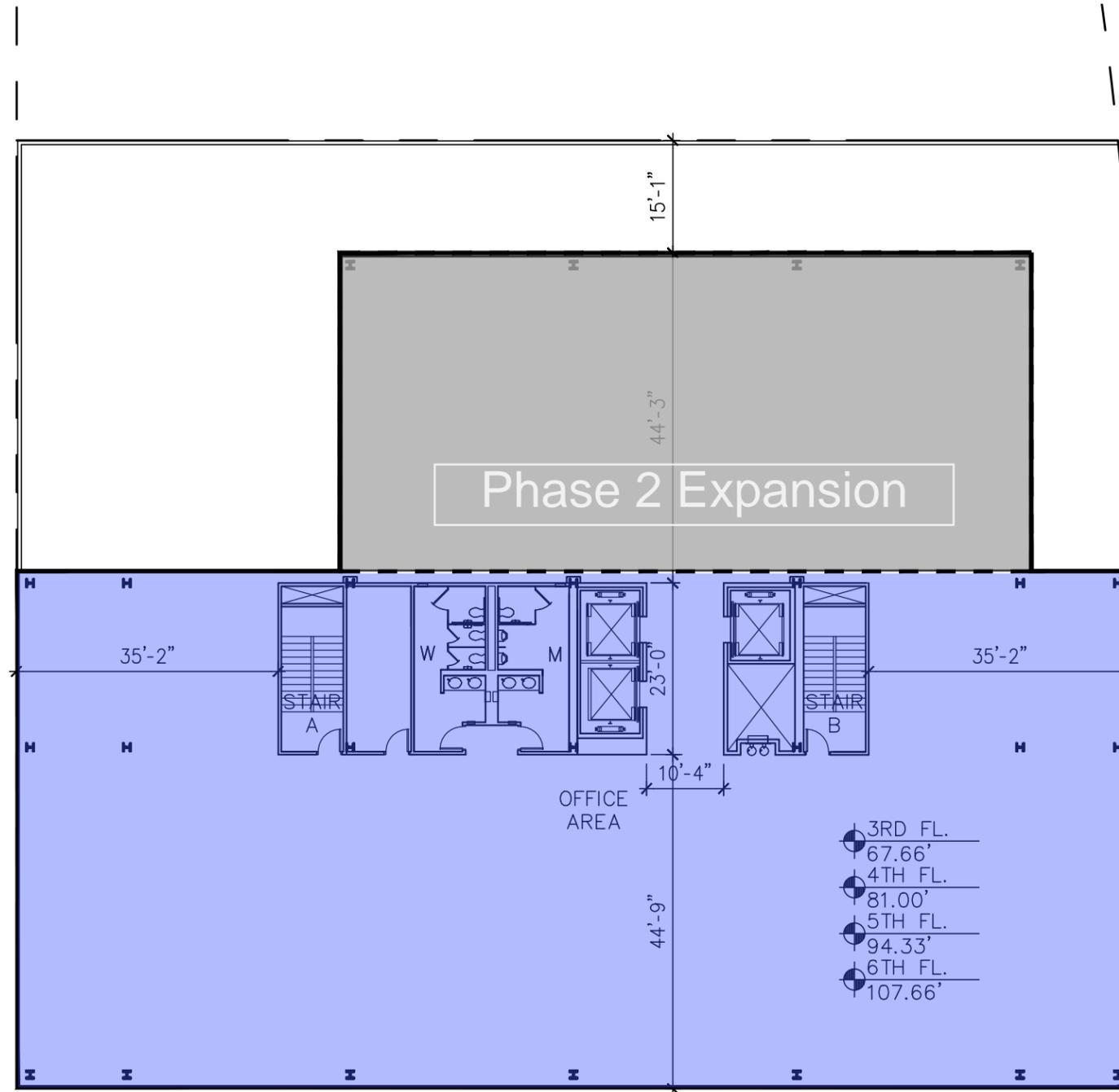
DOGUE :
64' PUBLIC RIGHT-
INSTRUMENT NUM
(CURRENTLY UNDEF



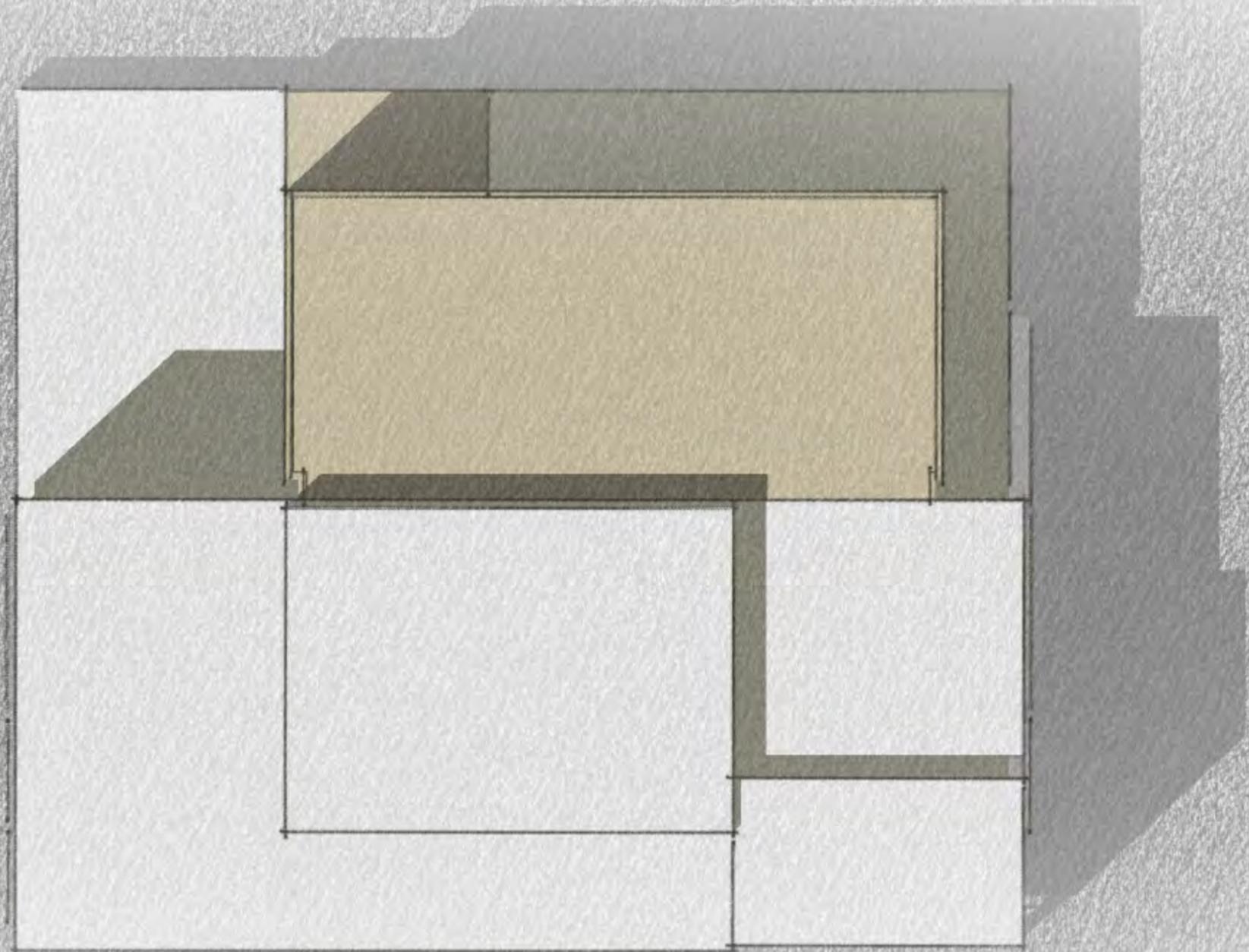
Preliminary Ground Floor Plan

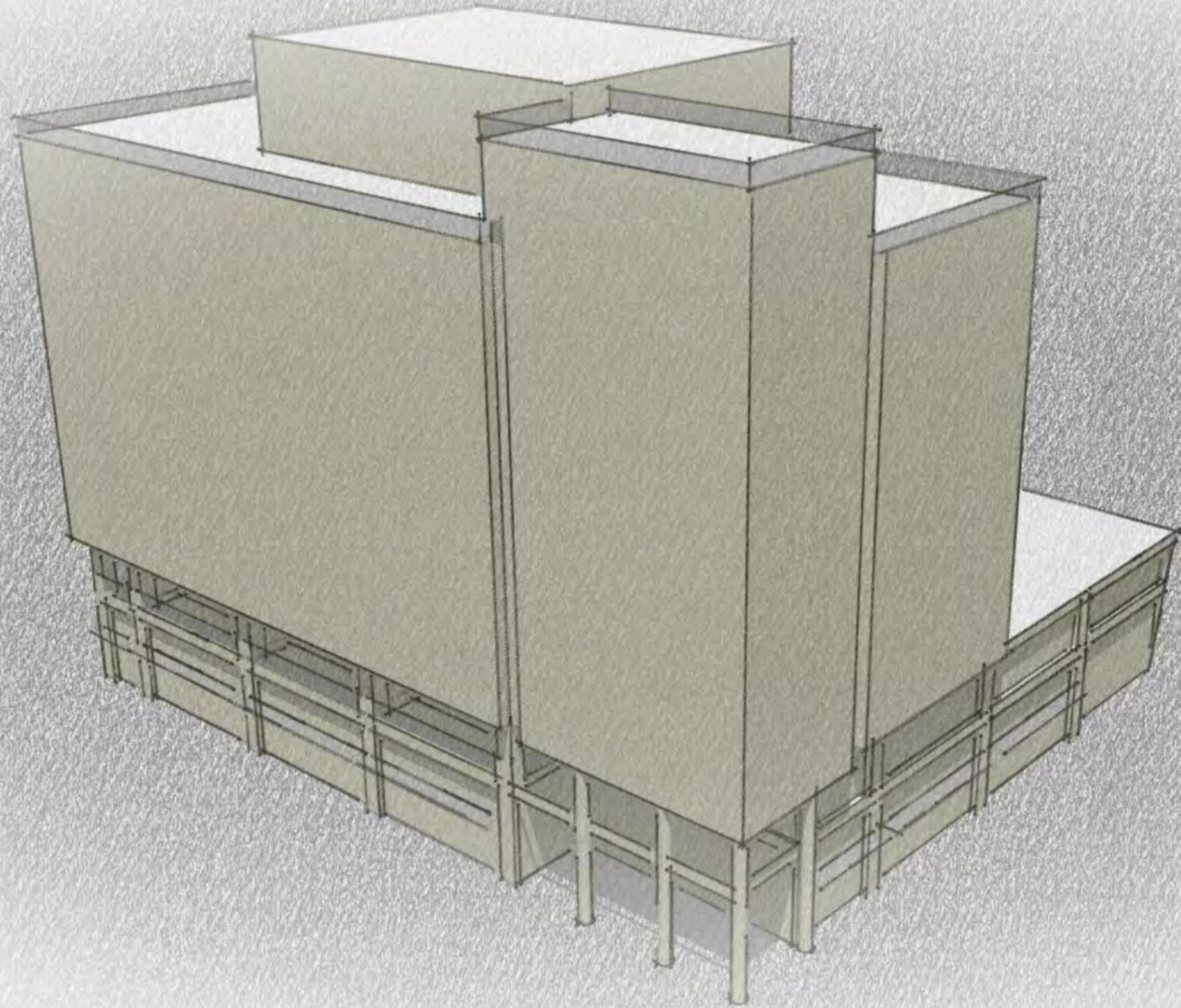


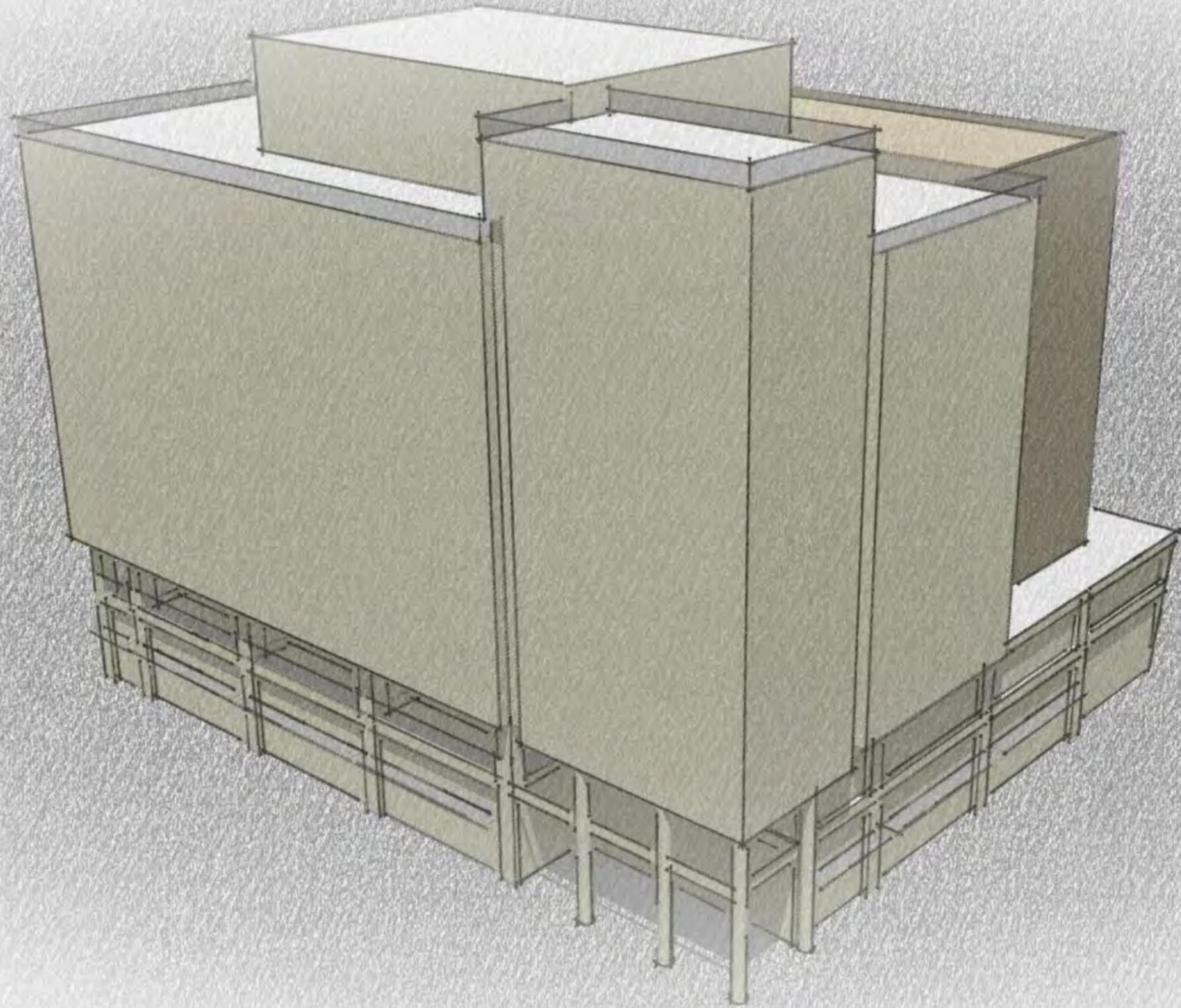
Preliminary Second Floor Plan

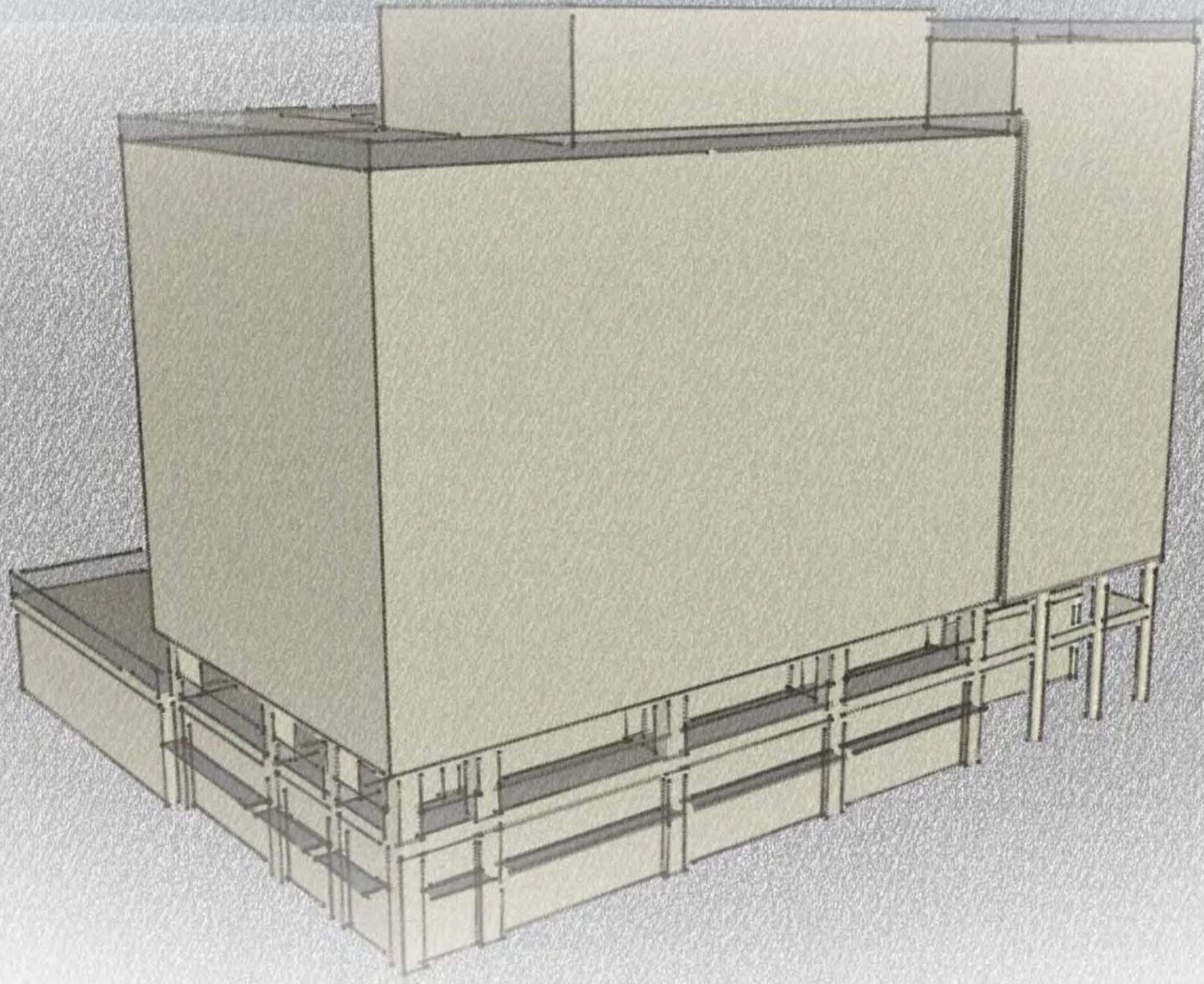


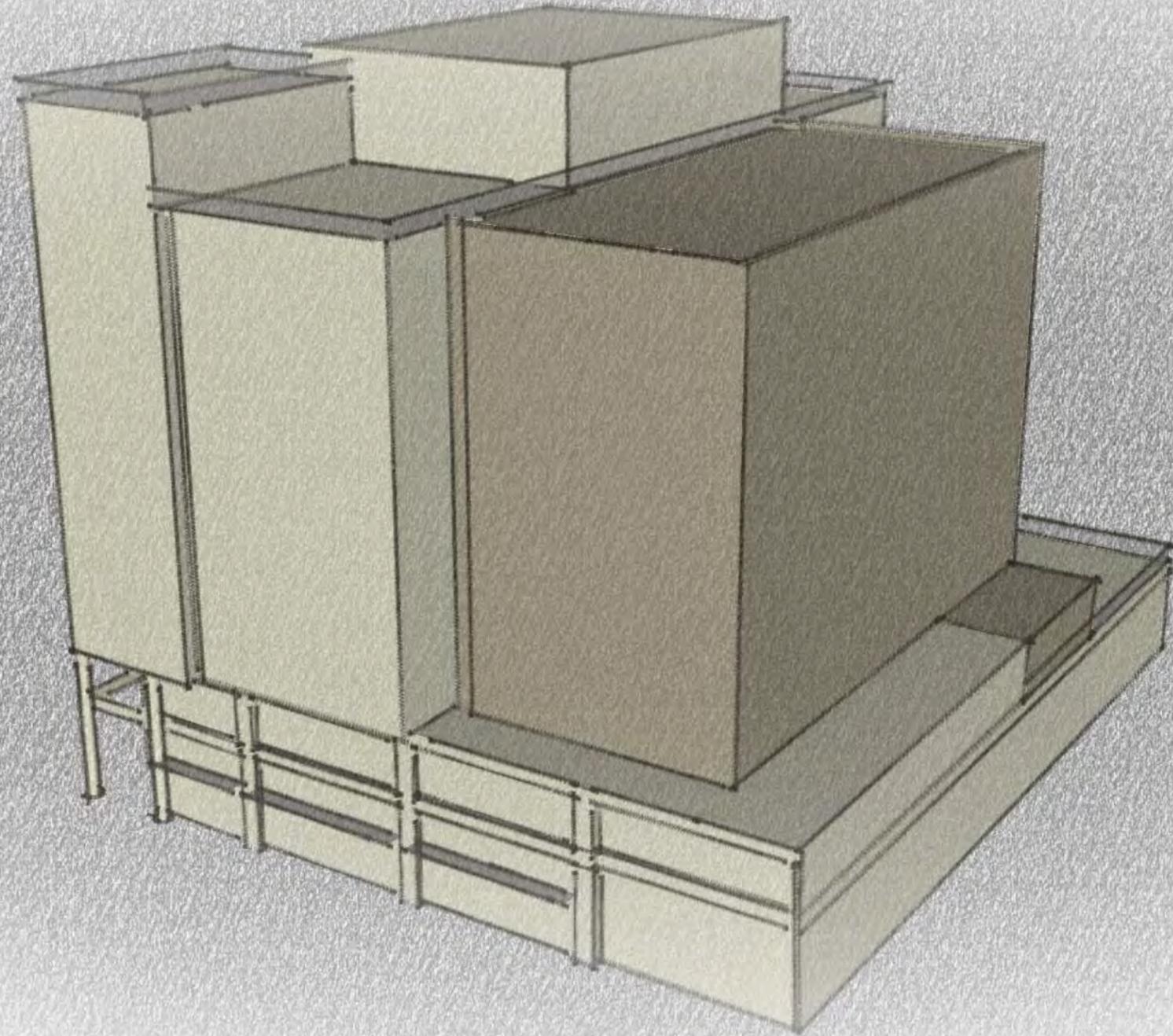
Preliminary Typical Floor Plan

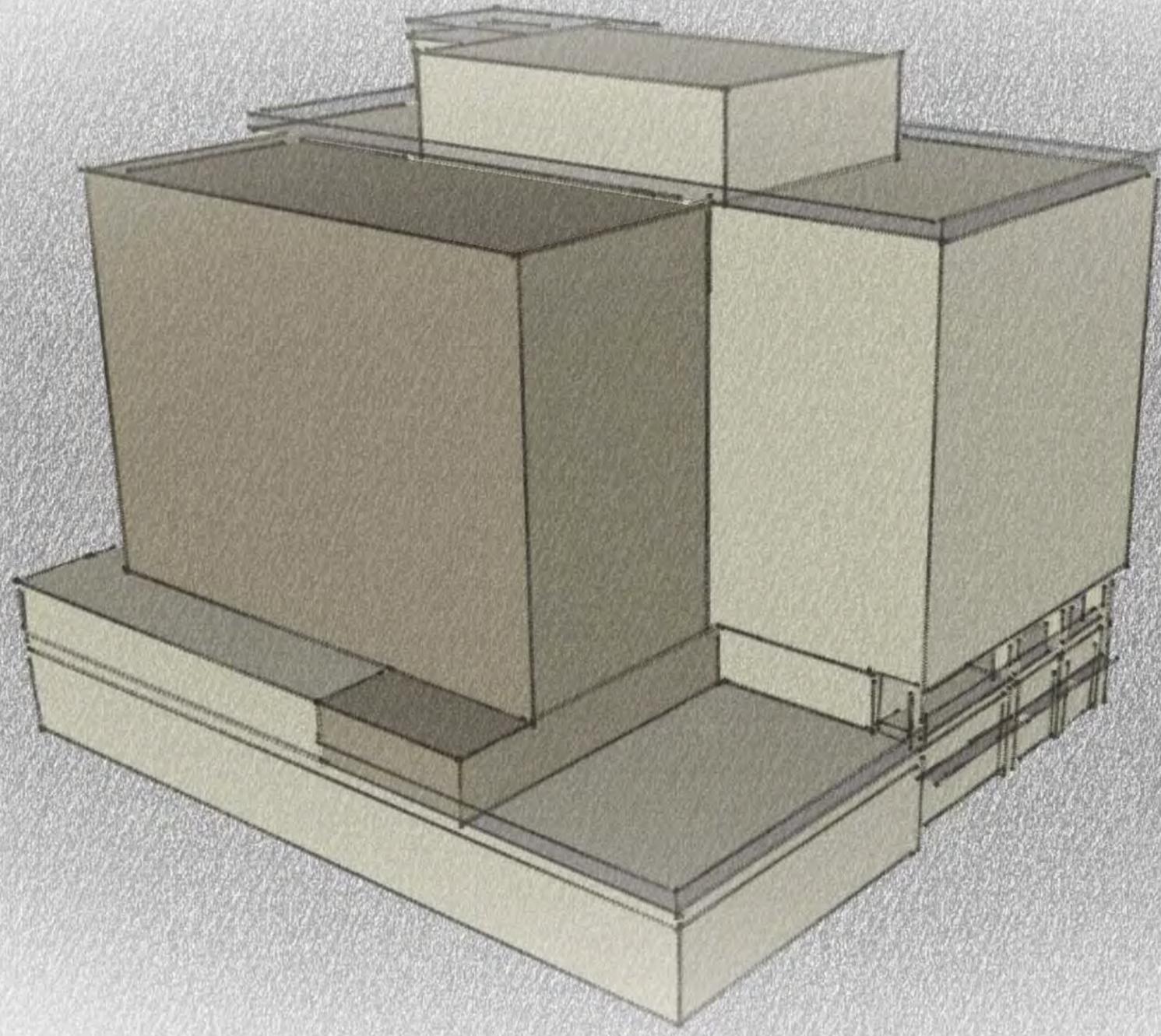


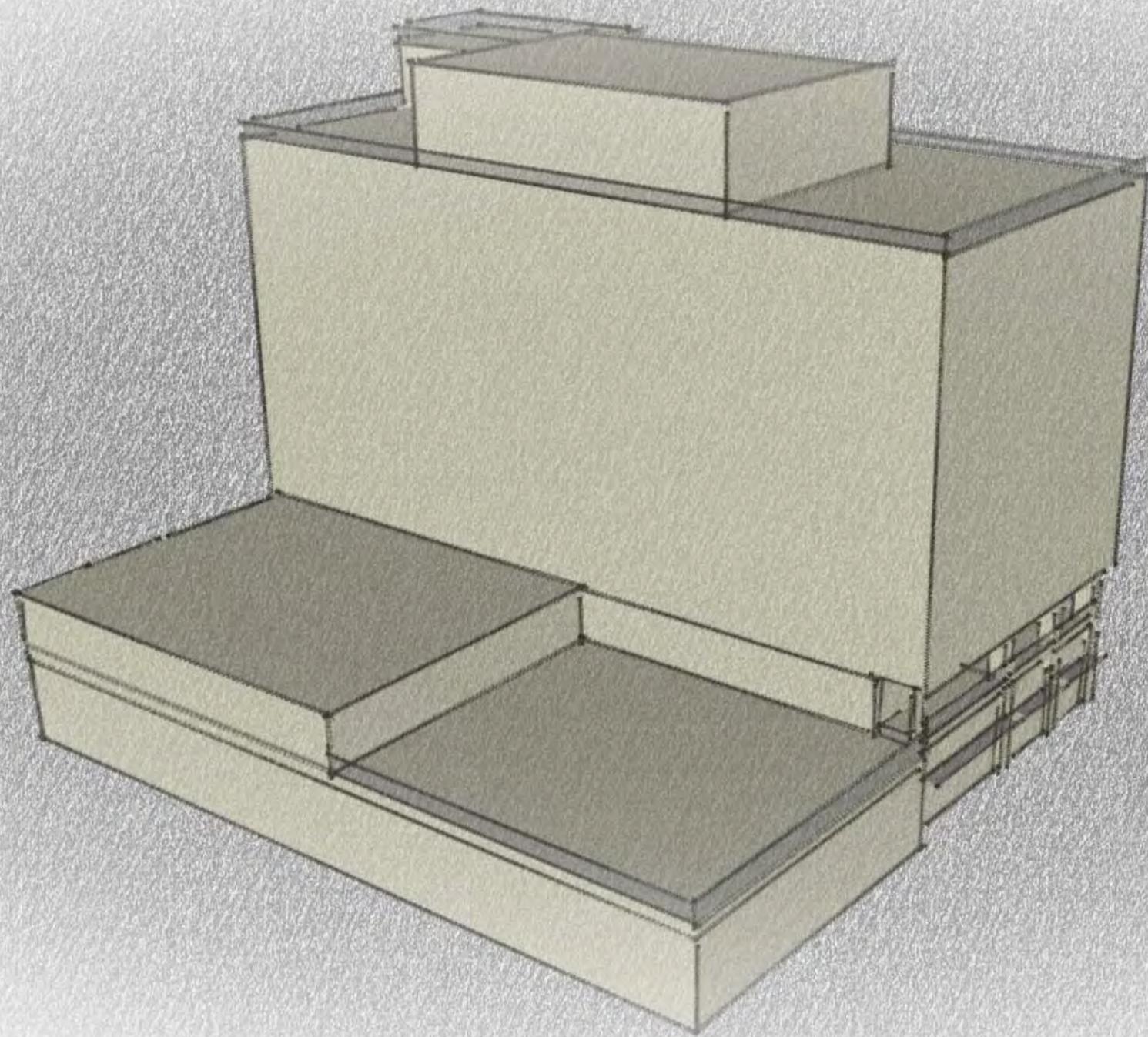


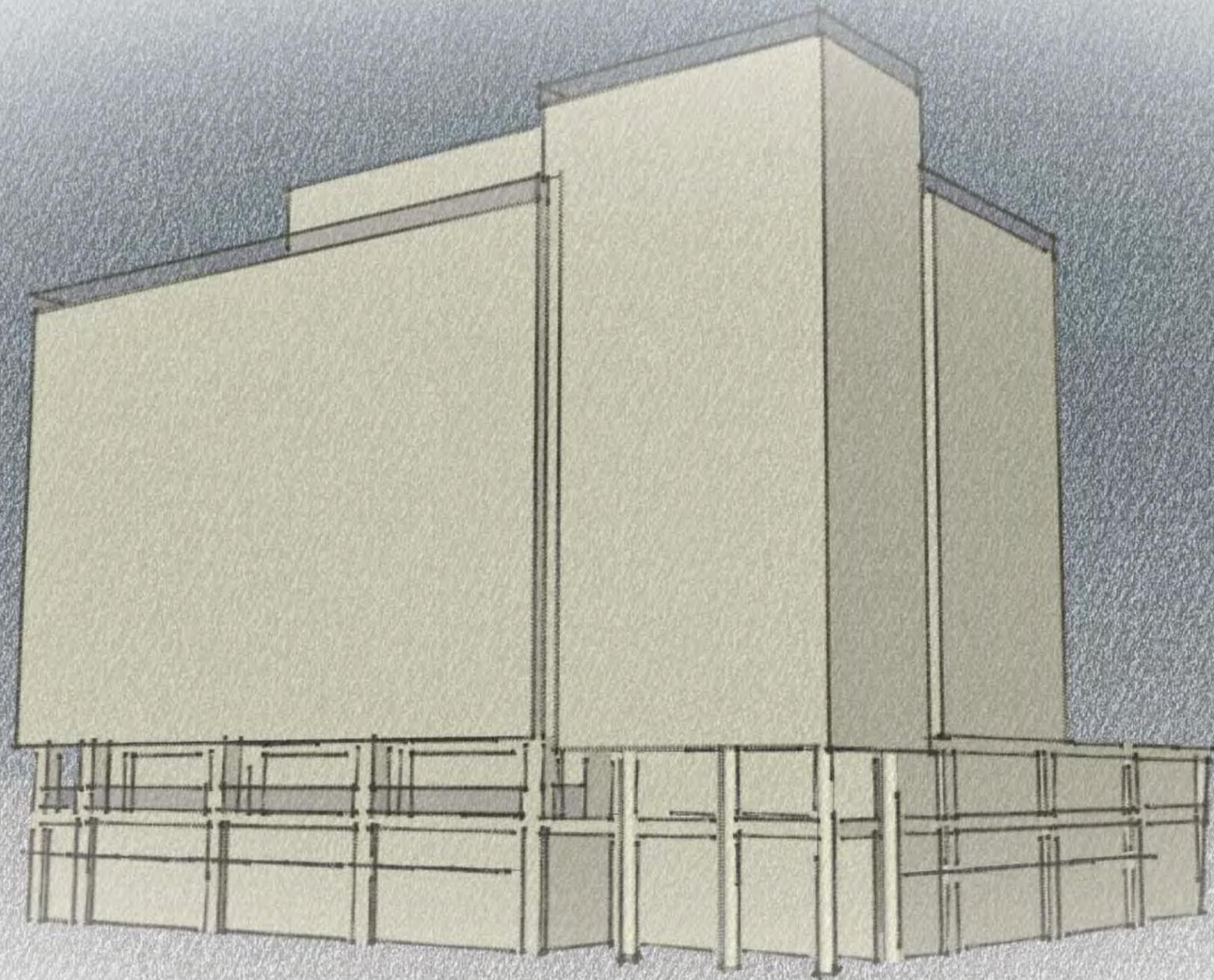


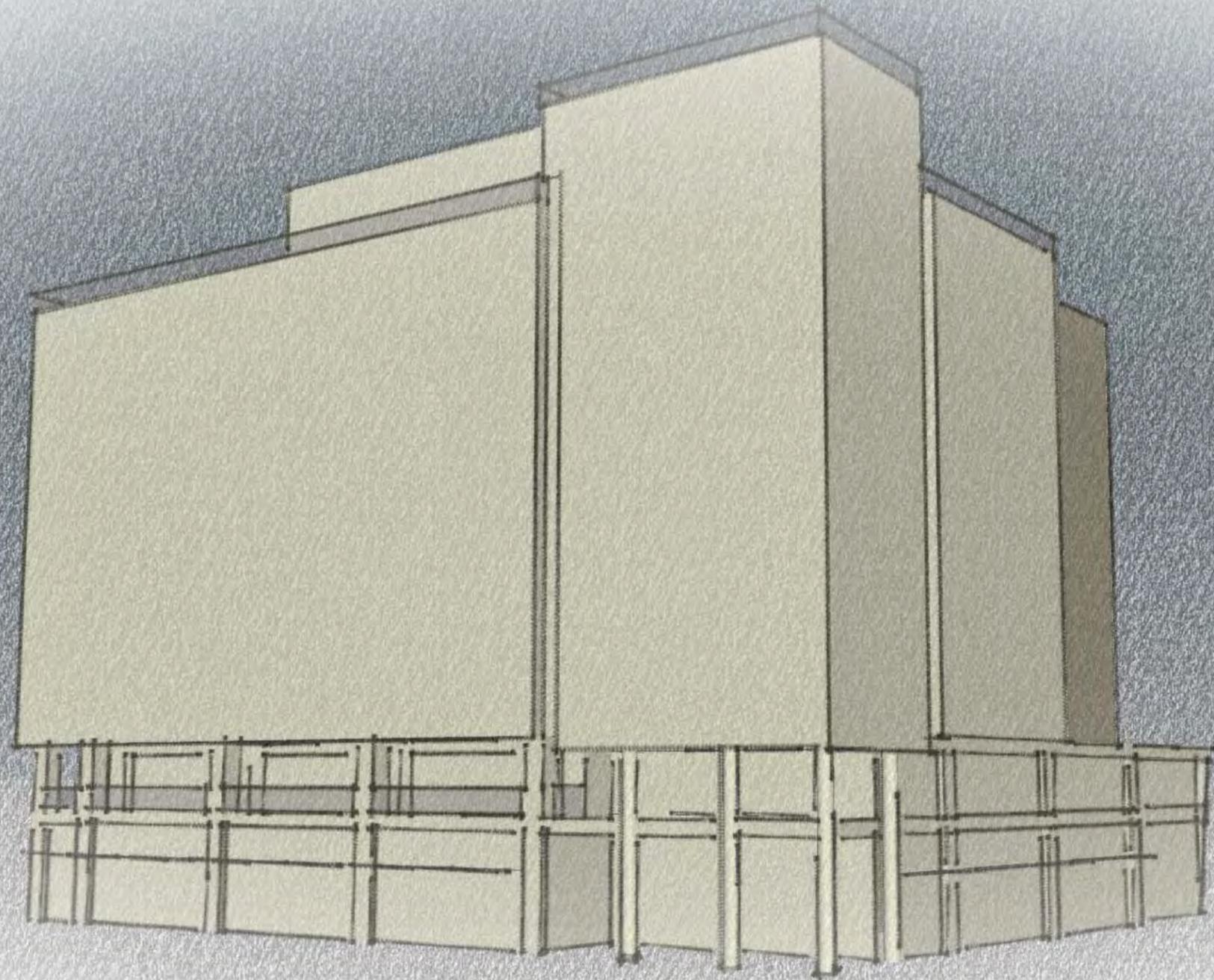




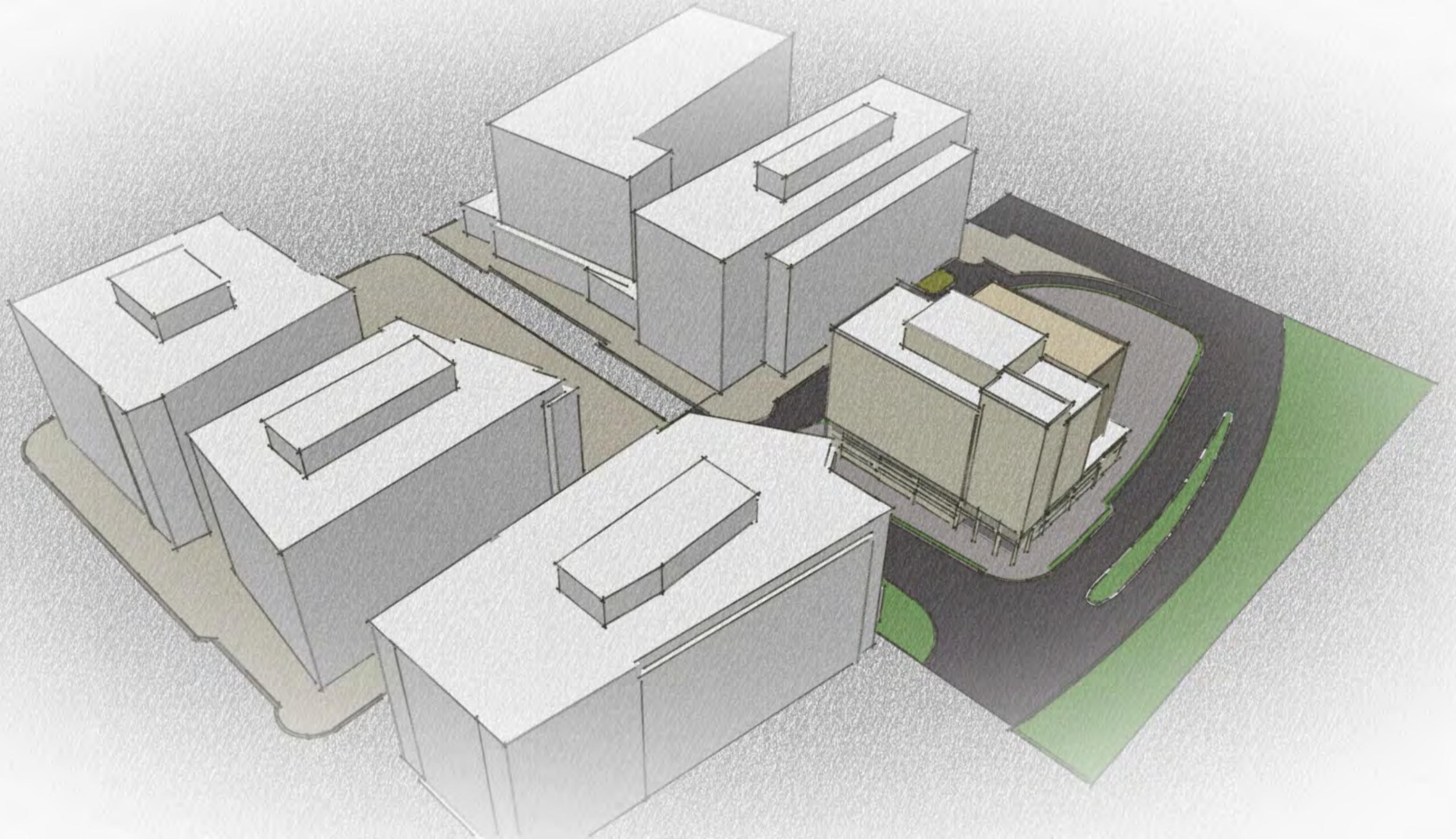


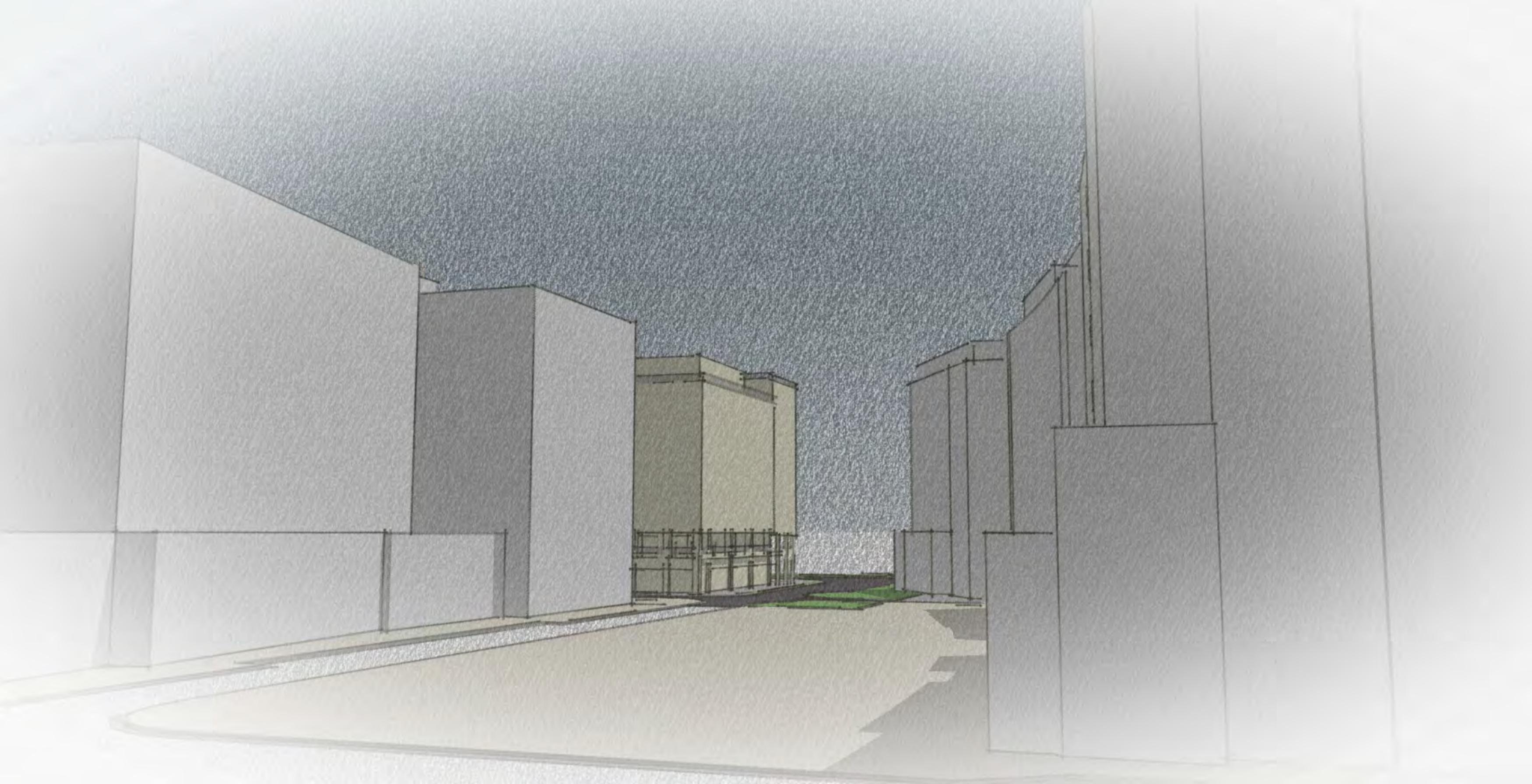


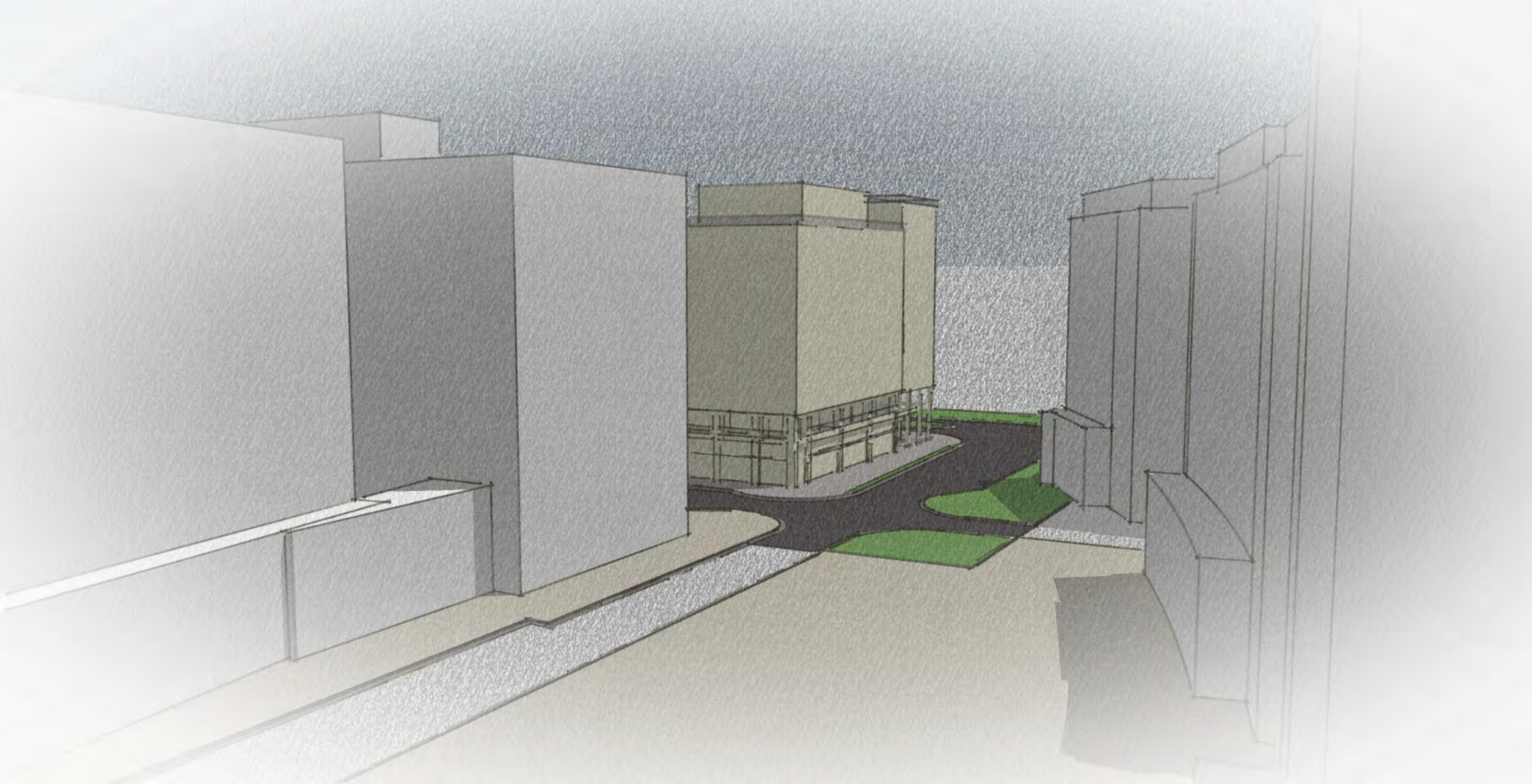


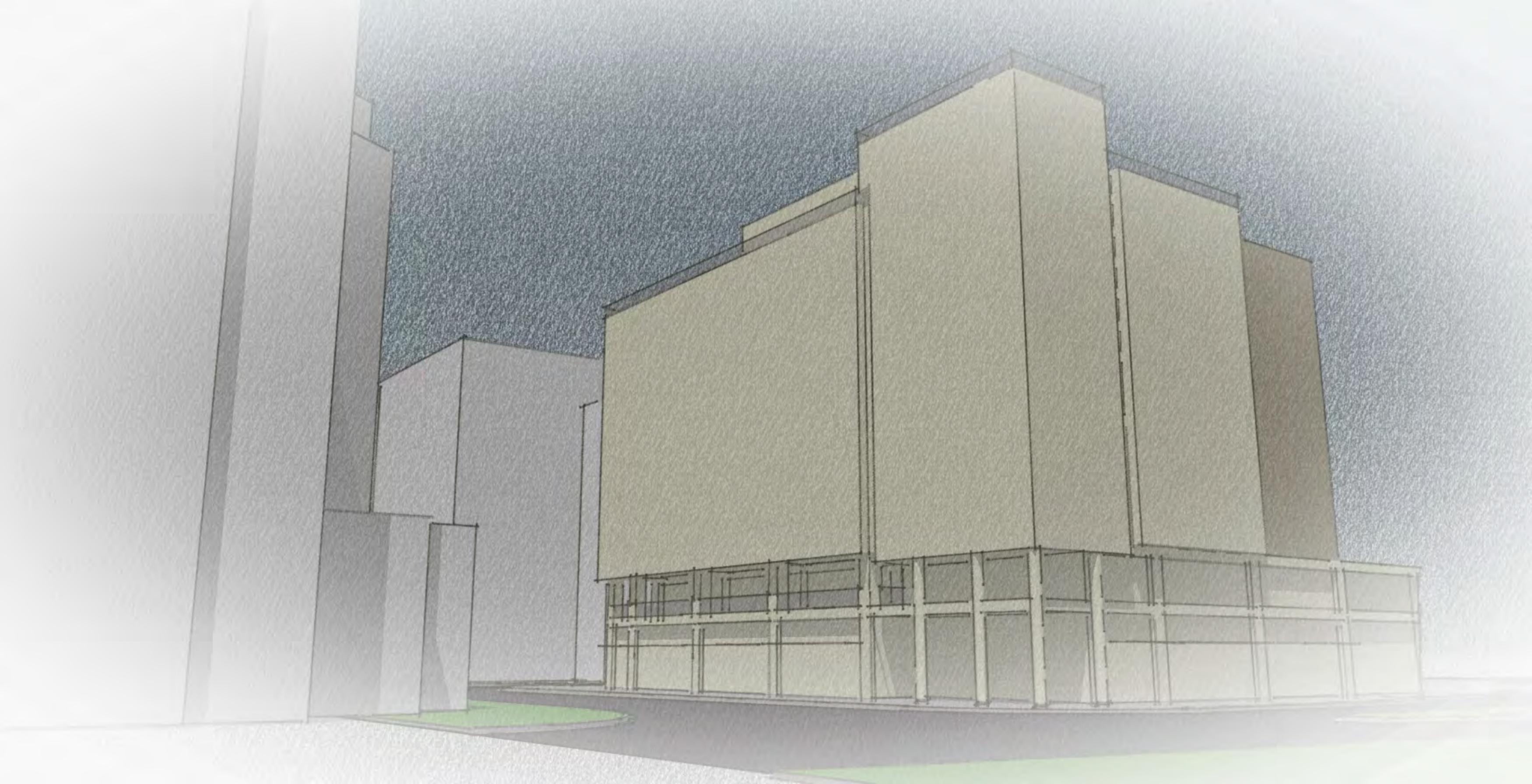


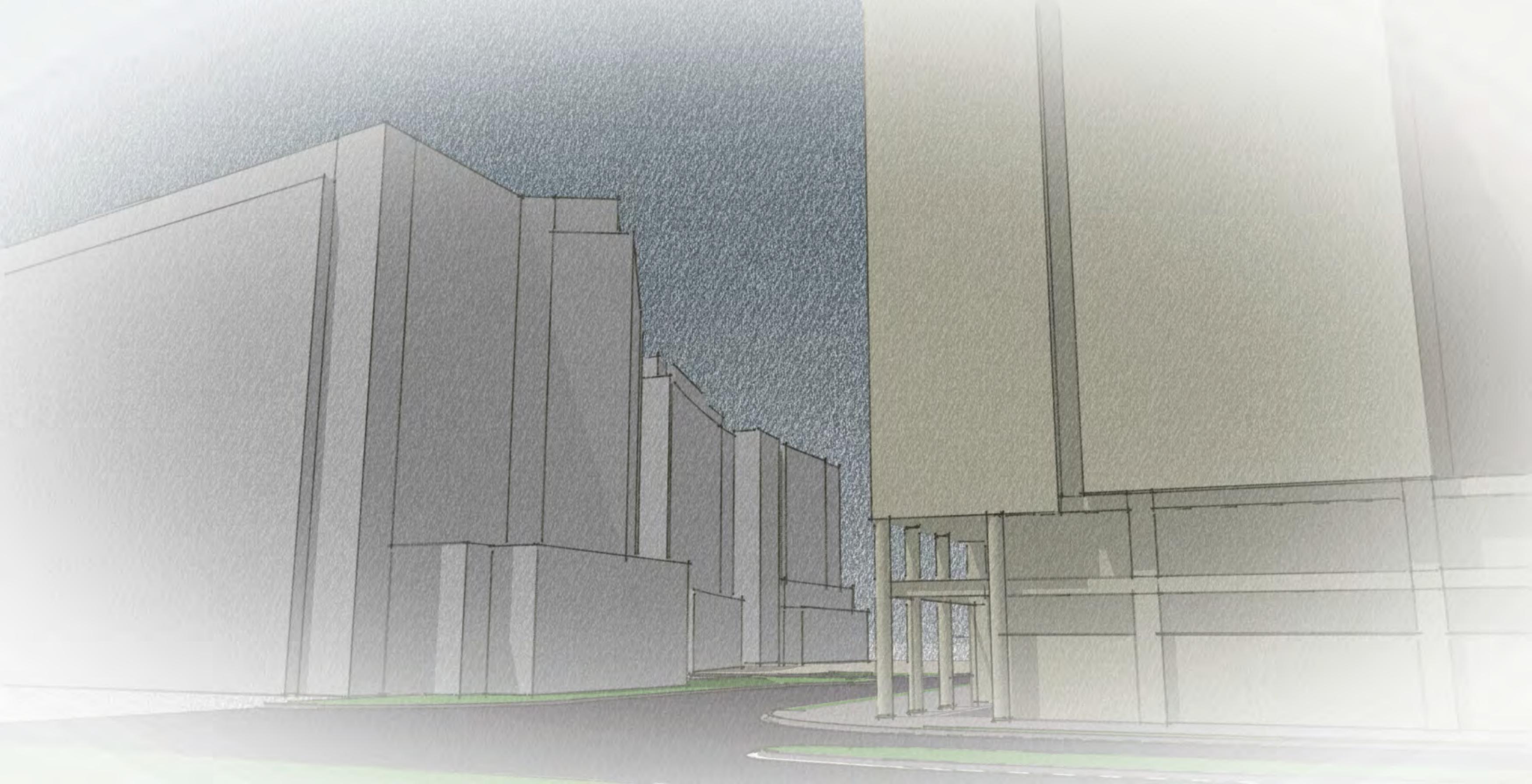


















SWEET VERDE

COFFEE SHOP

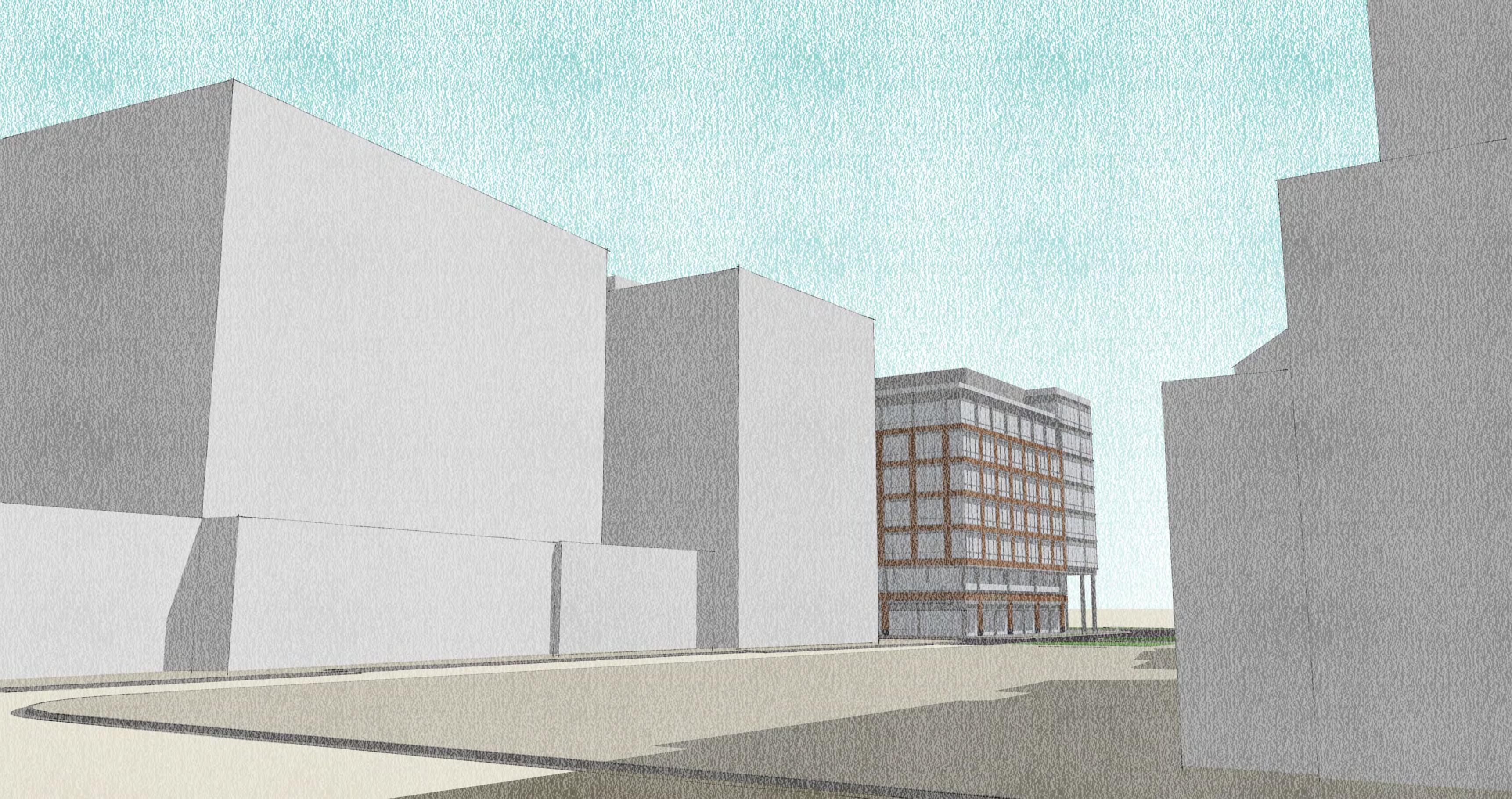
CYCLE SHOP

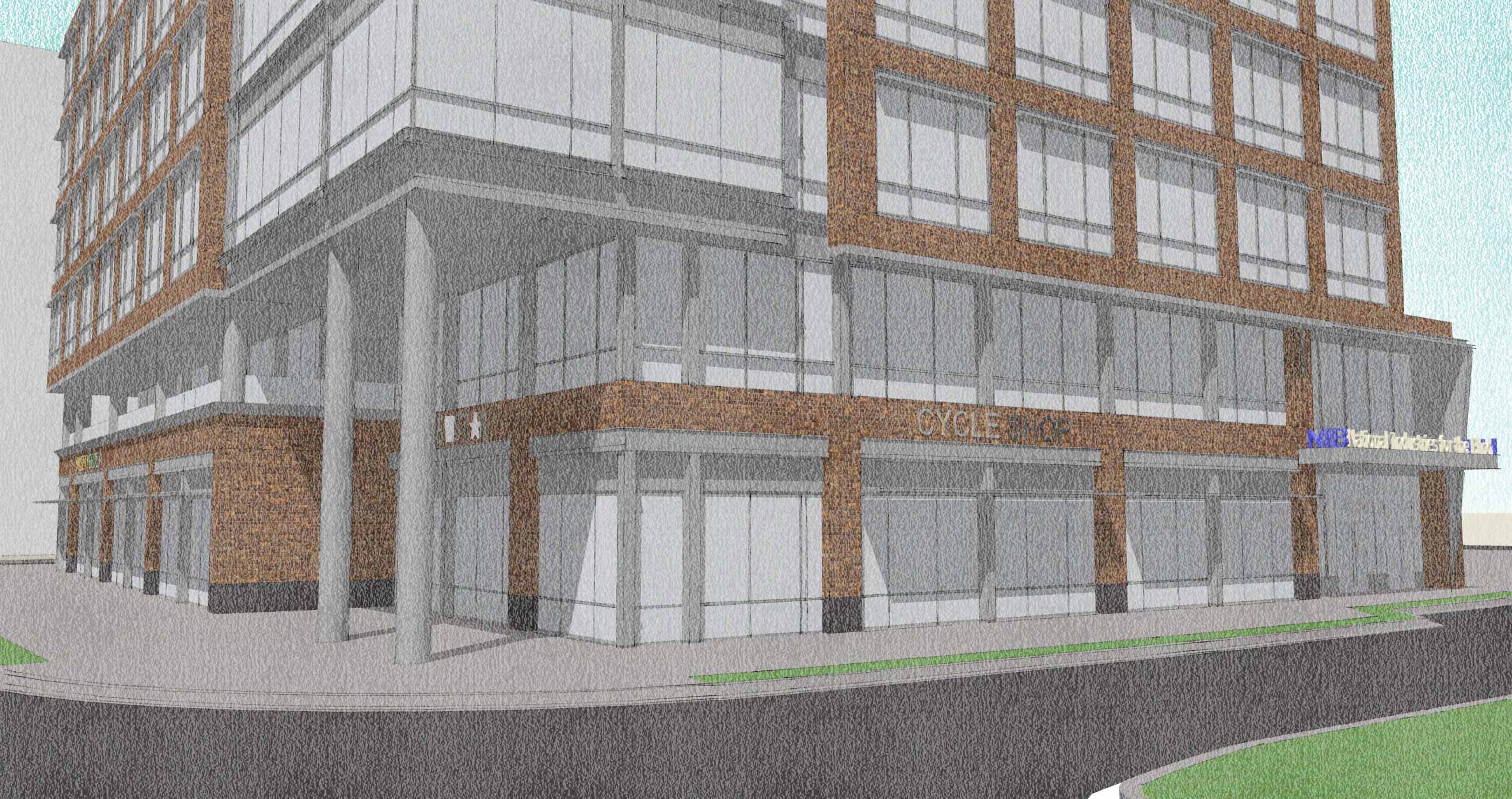
NWS





SWEET VERDE





11

CYCLE SHOP

NIB National Industries for the Blind

