

Please fill out the below information. If information has not changed since a previous submission phase (e.g. from Preliminary to Final Review), please insert previously submitted information.

Please visit our "How to Submit" webpage for instructions on what materials to send and where to send them:

<https://www.ncpc.gov/review/submit/>

As a reminder, all digital materials must be Section 508 compliant.

**Section A: Applicant Information**

1. Point of Contact Name RICK SCHNEIDER, FAIA, PRINCIPAL	2. Agency or Organization ISTUDIO ARCHITECTS	3. Mailing Address 1400 16TH ST NW SUITE 130 WASHINGTON, DC 20036
4. Phone Number 202.758.2037	5. Email Address DESIGN@ISTUDIOARCHITECTS.COM	
6. Authorization Officer's Name SEAN GARGANIO, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER	7. Authorization Officer's Organization DC DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES	8. Mailing Address 3924 MINNESOTA AVE NE 5TH FLOOR WASHINGTON, DC 20019
9. Phone Number 202.746.7040	10. Email Address SEAN.GARGANIO@DC.GOV	
I authorize and approve the submission of this project to the National Capital Planning Commission for review.		11. Signature

**Section B: General Project Information**

12. Does this submission contain any confidential or For Official Use Only (FOUO) information? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
13. Project Name WILLIAM H RUMSEY AQUATIC CENTER	
14. Project Address or Location 635 NORTH CAROLINA AVE SE, WASHINGTON, DC 20003	15. Is the Project on federal land? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
16. Type of Project Building, Site, or Park Project	17a. Is this project part of an approved Master Plan? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
18. Scheduling Issues (explain):	17b. Master Plan Name:
19. Project Description (3 or 4 sentences) The redevelopment of the Rumsey Aquatic Center will replace the existing facility with a new, state-of-the-art building. The project will include two pools, upgraded locker rooms, and expanded community amenities such as a senior center and community room to better serve diverse users. The surrounding plaza will be redesigned to support Eastern Market vendors and create a more welcoming, functional public space. Enhancements will include bioretention systems, expanded tree canopy, and additional landscaping to improve stormwater management.	20. NCPC Review Phase Concept Review

**Section C: Environmental Review**

As the applicant, are you required to comply with NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA for this project?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES – Please complete Section C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO – Please skip to Section D
21. Was the NEPA Review Initiated? <input type="checkbox"/> YES – Please Explain: <input type="checkbox"/> NO – Expected Schedule: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A – Please Explain: The proposed redevelopment does not fall within any category that triggers NCPC's NEPA approval authority, as it is located on District-owned land outside the Central Area and does not involve federal property, Capper-Cramton land, commemorative works on NPS or GSA property, or any interagency jurisdictional transfer. As a result, the project does not constitute a federal undertaking requiring review under NEPA. The project will therefore proceed solely through applicable District of Columbia regulatory and permitting processes.	
22. What is the level of NEPA Analysis? N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment (EA) <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	
23. Is the Appropriate NEPA Documentation Attached? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	24. Who is the Lead Agency?
25. Is Consultation with SHPO Under Section 106 of the NHPA Required? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Please Explain:	26. Was Consultation Initiated? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO – Expected Schedule:

**Section D: Status and Description of Other Agency Approvals and Consultation**

*Please List Other Agency Approvals and Consultations Required (or planned) for the Project.*

Agency	Type	Expected Date	Contact Name
27a. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA)	Concept Review - <b>Approved</b> Permit Review - Pending	<b>Concept Approved,</b> March 2026 Hearing Permit Review - Fall 2026	Thomas Luebke, US CFA Secretary
27b. Other Federal Agency			
27c. State Government			
27d. Local Government DC Historic Preservation Office / Historic Preservation Review Board	Concept Review - <b>Approved</b> Permit Review - Pending	<b>Concept Approved,</b> March 2026 Hearing Permit Review - Fall 2026	Jack Jones, DC HPO Specialist
27e. Other			

Submissions to NCPC also require a Project Report. The details of the Project Report requirements are available in the Submission Guidelines. In general, the Project Report includes a more details project description and an explanation of how the project complies with NCPC's plans and policies that guide the development of the National Capital Region.

28. Is the Project Report Included?     YES     NO – *Please Explain:*

William Scharf, Chairman  
National Capital Planning Commission  
401 9<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Suite 500N  
Washington, DC 20004

4/30/2026

Dear Chairman Scharf,

The Department of General Services respectfully presents to the National Capital Planning Commission their submission for Concept Design review at the meeting scheduled for **June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026**. The Rumsey Aquatic Center project involves demolishing the existing facility and replacing it with a new two-story aquatics and community center.

This concept review submission includes:

- Digital submission for distribution to the staff and members of the Commission
- Scope and Scale, Property lines, North orientation arrow and adjacency to Eastern Market
- Existing conditions site plan
- Existing building plan
- Existing elevations
- Existing building section
- Existing rendered views
- Proposed site plan
- Proposed building plans
- Proposed elevations
- Proposed building sections
- Concept Rendering of New Improvements

We appreciate your review of this Aquatic Facility for Concept submission and look forward to receiving your recommendations. For any questions, please contact Margaret Thacker (202) 941-4480 or Sean Garganio (202)746-7040.

Sincerely,



Sean Garganio  
Senior Project Manager



**RUMSEY AQUATIC CENTER**  
NCPC CONCEPT RESUBMISSION - 1 MAY 2026

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# TRANSFORMING AN OUTDATED, UNDERSIZED FACILITY INTO A STATE-OF-THE-ART AQUATIC CENTER

### History

The William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center, located near Eastern Market, honors Dr. William H. Rumsey, a community leader who started his career maintaining the Dunbar pool and later served as an education adviser to Mayor Walter E. Washington. In 1974, he became Deputy Director of the District's Recreation Department and co-founded the Black History Invitational Swim Meet in 1987, a landmark event in D.C.'s recreational history.

Designed by Eugene Delmar and constructed in 1972, the facility includes an eight-lane pool, a kiddie wading pool, and a community room. Over the years, it has faced repairs for structural and HVAC issues. Despite being a vital part of the Capitol Hill community, the center's outdated design—marked by inadequate locker space, limited spectator accommodations, and underutilized grounds—has spurred calls for modernization and redevelopment.

### Proposed Development

The proposed redevelopment of the Rumsey Aquatic Center will begin with the demolition of the current facility to make way for a state-of-the-art building. The new design will include two pools, expanded and improved locker rooms, and additional community amenities, such as a senior center and community room, to better serve the area's diverse needs.

The surrounding plaza will also be revitalized to accommodate Eastern Market vendors, create a more welcoming environment for facility users, and enhance the neighborhood's green spaces. This reimagined area will feature bio-retention systems for stormwater management, increased tree coverage, and additional greenery to promote environmental sustainability and community engagement.

### Owner, DC Department of General Services

The DC Department of General Services (DGS) is responsible for managing the District's real estate, facilities, and construction projects to support efficient government operations. Its mission centers on delivering high-quality, sustainable, and cost-effective services that enhance public infrastructure and community spaces. DGS also prioritizes safety, environmental stewardship, and equitable access in maintaining and developing District-owned properties.

### Client Agency, DC Department of Parks and Recreation

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) works to enhance the quality of life for residents by providing safe, accessible parks, recreational facilities, and diverse programming. Its mission focuses on promoting health, wellness, and community engagement through inclusive and affordable activities for all ages. DPR also emphasizes stewardship of public green spaces and equitable access to recreational opportunities across the District.



EXISTING AQUATIC CENTER ( TO BE DEMO'ED)

## OUTREACH AND COORDINATION

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The DC DPR, in coordination with the DC DGS, has led a robust and ongoing public engagement process for the Rumsey Aquatic Center redevelopment, including three community meetings and multiple briefings with Councilmember Charles Allen to ensure constituent priorities are continuously heard and incorporated into the project. Engagement has been further supported through a comprehensive community survey with 1,171 responses—primarily from Ward 6 residents within walking distance of the site—which confirmed strong support for the facility and highlighted key priorities including expanded aquatic programming (especially learn-to-swim, fitness, and competitive swimming), improved cleanliness and maintenance, enhanced safety and accessibility, and upgraded amenities such as seating, family spaces, and outdoor gathering areas with sustainable landscaping features.

DPR will continue to lead additional stakeholder and public meetings throughout the design-build process to maintain transparency and ensure ongoing community input as the project advances. In parallel, the design team has conducted targeted coordination with key stakeholders including the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, DC Preservation League, Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee, the DC Historic Preservation Office, and staff from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. These coordinated efforts culminated in concept approval during the March 2026 review hearings by both the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and the DC Historic Preservation Review Board, reflecting a consensus-driven design approach grounded in community priorities and regulatory alignment.



### FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL AHJ COORDINATION

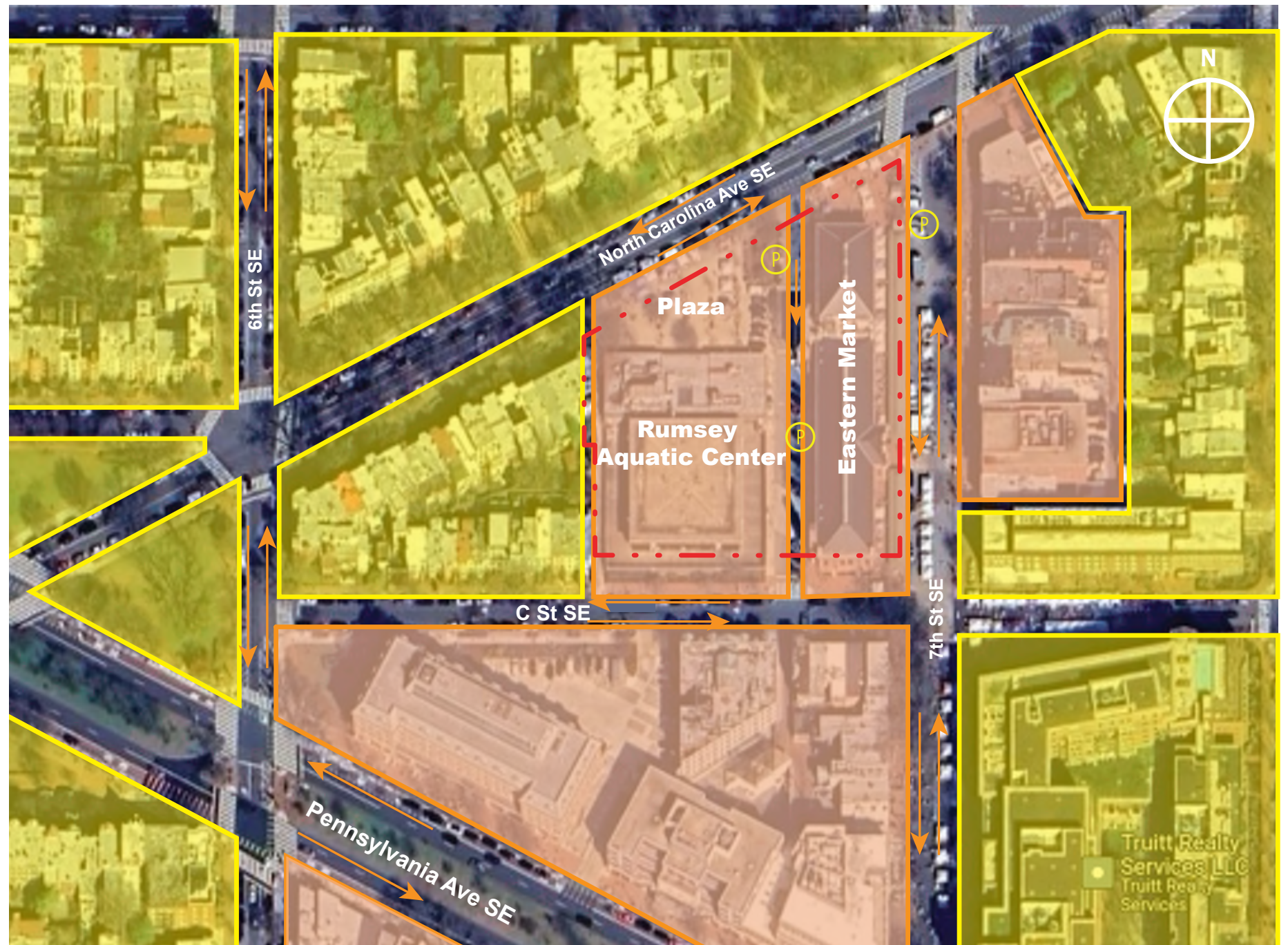
The redevelopment of the William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center will require coordinated review and approvals across multiple Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) at the District and federal levels to address zoning, historic context, public space, utilities, and sustainability requirements. Given the site's location adjacent to the landmarked Eastern Market and its status as a tax lot requiring subdivision, early and continuous engagement with regulatory agencies will be critical to maintain schedule and align design decisions with permitting expectations. The project will also need to meet District mandates for stormwater management, Green Area Ratio (GAR), and LEED/Net Zero performance, all of which require integrated review across agencies. Key AHJs and their roles include:

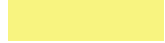







- **DC Department of Buildings** – Building permit review and approvals, including structural, architectural, and life safety systems, as well as trade permits (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection).
- **DC Office of Zoning** – Zoning compliance, including review of use, density, and subdivision conditions.
- **DC Historic Preservation Office / DC Historic Preservation Review Board** – Review of subdivision, design compatibility with the adjacent Eastern Market landmark, and oversight of visibility, massing, and historic context considerations. **Concept review approved during March 2026 Hearing.**
- **DC Department of Transportation** – Public space permitting, streetscape improvements, curb cuts, and transportation-related infrastructure.
- **DC Department of Energy and Environment** – Stormwater management approvals, erosion and sediment control, Green Area Ratio compliance, and environmental performance requirements.
- **DC Water** – Water and sewer connections, capacity review, and coordination within the Combined Sewer System (CSS).
- **Pepco** – Electrical service coordination, upgrades, and interconnection for on-site renewable energy systems.
- **Washington Gas** – Natural gas service coordination for building systems.
- **National Capital Planning Commission** – Federal planning review, if applicable based on project scope or federal interest.
- **U.S. Commission of Fine Arts** – Design review for projects with visibility or impact on federal interests and the monumental core, if triggered. **Concept review approved during March 2026 Hearing.**

Typical permits and approvals will include subdivision approval (following HPO concurrence), zoning review and potential relief, building permits, public space permits, DOEE stormwater and GAR approvals, utility connection permits, and trade permits. Coordination across these entities will be essential to deliver a compliant, high-performance aquatic and community facility that integrates sustainability goals while respecting the historic Capitol Hill context.

## ZONING ANALYSIS

<b>ADDRESS:</b>	635 North Carolina Avenue SE Washington, DC 20003
<b>SQUARE:</b>	0872
<b>LOT:</b>	0800 The lot is a tax lot which requires sub-dividing to convert to a record lot. The lot is also shared with Eastern Market.
<b>WARD:</b>	6
<b>ANC:</b>	6B (SMD - 6B02)
<b>ZONE:</b>	MU-4, Mixed Use Zone Provides for mixed use developments that permit broad range of commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential development at varying densities.
<b>OWNER:</b>	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 200 14th Street NW, 8th Floor Washington, DC 20009
<b>CURRENT USE:</b>	Special Purpose - Misc
<b>LAND AREA:</b>	74,496 SF (full lot) 48,657 SF (Rumsey Aquatic Center)
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA:</b>	20,584 SF Existing
<b>ZONING STANDARDS</b>	
<b>LOT OCCUPANCY:</b>	60% Maximum
<b>FLOOR AREA RATIO:</b>	1.5 Maximum
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	50 FT Maximum
<b>PENTHOUSE HEIGHT:</b>	12 FT Typ; 15 FT Mechanical
<b>REAR YARD SETBACK:</b>	15 FT Minimum
<b>SIDE YARD SETBACK:</b>	8 FT Minimum, if applicable
<b>GREEN AREA RATIO:</b>	0.3



Residential Flat Zone, RF-1	
Residential Apartment Zone, RA-1	
Mixed-Use Zone, MU-4/CHC	
Production, Distribution, and Repair, PDR-1	
Pedestrian Pathway	
Road Direction	
Site Outline	
Building Entry	
Site Entry	

## EXISTING SITE

The William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center, located at 635 North Carolina Ave SE in southeast DC's Capital Hill neighborhood, has been a staple for the community, serving as a hub for recreation and connection. With its 25-yard pool and a range of amenities including a community room and an outdoor plaza, the center caters to the diverse needs of its visitors.

Surrounded by the historic brick Eastern Market to the east, 2-story brick residential buildings to the north and west, and commercial buildings to the south, the center is seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood.

Its strategic location ensures easy access for residents and visitors alike, whether by car, bike, or public transportation. Nearby bus stops, situated within a one-block radius, link the center to key thoroughfares such as 8th St SE and Pennsylvania Ave SE. Additionally, the Eastern Market Metro Station, just a four-minute walk away, provides convenient rail access, emphasizing the center's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility for all.

The existing facility is a brutalist style one story brick and concrete building. The tall pool building is set back from the lot line and separated from the sides + rear public space by a forbidding brick wall.



Rumsey Aquatic Center Entrance



Private Alley between Rumsey & Eastern Market



South-East Corner of Rumsey



Parking lot



Interior Pool



Heritage tree & Front Plaza

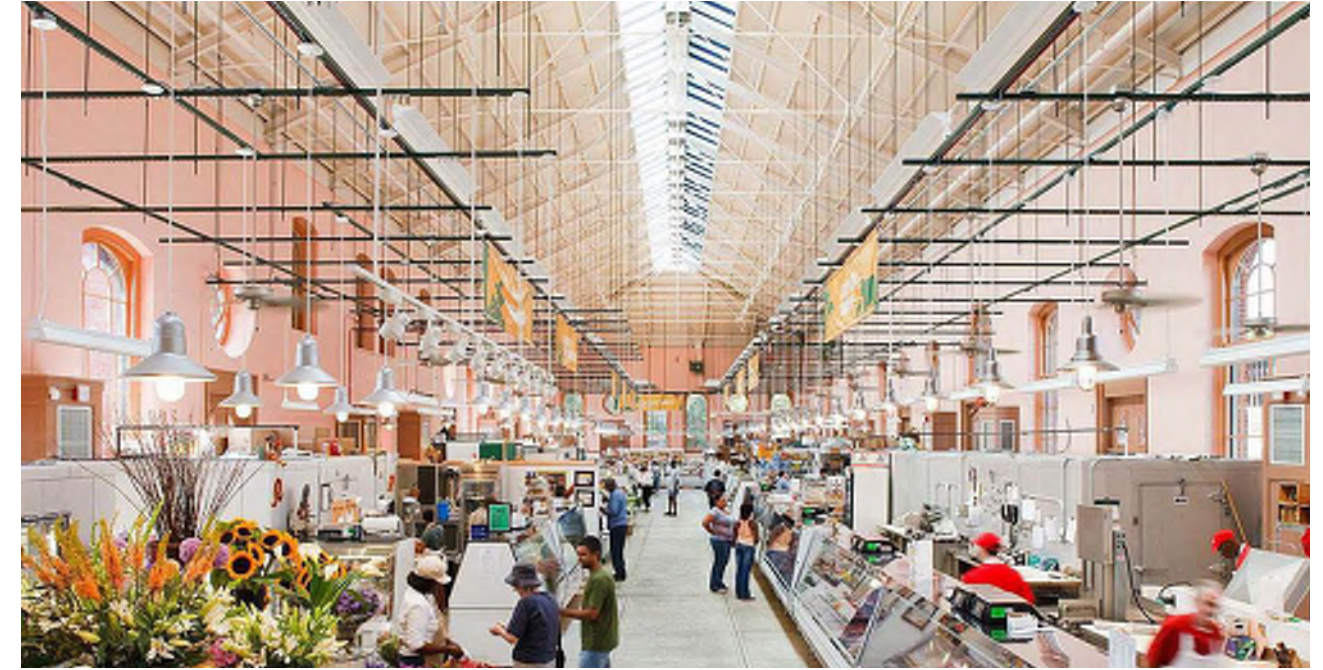


Art Wall

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



Eastern Market



Eastern Market - Interior Vendors



Private Alley - West



Pin Oak Heritage Tree + Brick Houses West of Rumsey



Single-Family Brick Rowhomes along North Carolina Ave.



Businesses along C Street

## SITE CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Site Constraints:

Because the Aquatic Center sits on a tightly constrained urban site, its layout must be carefully planned to maximize efficiency while staying within the existing building envelope. This is essential to comply with zoning requirements and to protect the critical structural root zone of the heritage Pin Oak tree.

### 2. Uses:

The Capitol Hill neighborhood—home to the iconic Eastern Market—continues to attract new residents, and its population is steadily growing. However, the programs offered at the existing Aquatic Center no longer meet the community's needs. The current facility features a full-size pool, a wading pool, standard pool amenities, and a single community room. The upcoming Rumsey Aquatic Center will expand its offerings, introducing a wider variety of programs designed for people of all ages.

The site also includes a spacious plaza and a walkway encircling the pool. On weekends, the plaza becomes an extension of Eastern Market, bustling with activity. This space holds untapped potential for outdoor amenities and public art that reflects the neighborhood's unique character. Similarly, the pathway around the pool presents an opportunity to enhance the site's programmatic space, creating a more vibrant and engaging community destination.

### 3. ADA accessibility:

The one story brick building is ADA accessible. However, due to the elevation difference between the north and south side of the existing building, an ADA ramp will be needed at any of the southern exits.

### 4. Views:

The site is situated within a vibrant residential and commercial neighborhood, with Eastern Market located directly east of the Aquatic Center. The plaza serves as a central gathering space, offering views of both the historic market and the diverse artwork displayed on the surrounding facades.

### 5. Solar Access:

The site benefits from good east-to-west solar exposure and prevailing southwest winds in warmer months. These offer opportunities for daylighting to enhance interior wellness and benefit from energy savings.



## BUILDING FOOTPRINT ANALYSIS

### 1. Zoning Setbacks + Lot Occupancy

- Rear Yard: Minimum 15'-0" required
- Side Yard: Minimum 8'-0,"if applicable
- Lot Occupancy: Maximum 60%  
Eastern Market = 17,800 sf  
Rumsey ≤ 26,897 sf Maximum Footprint

### 2. Historic Preservation

- NE corner must remain one story to preserve the existing viewshed of Eastern Market.
- Front Façade Consideration: Aim to maintain the existing setback, with some flexibility to move it slightly forward if needed in areas outside of critical root zone
- All mechanical equipment to be shielded from view

### 3. Heritage Tree Protection

- NW corner must be preserved, ensuring no disturbance within the critical root zone.
- Structural Limitation: The existing footprint and footer location must remain unchanged.
- Building Restriction: Adding a story in this area is not possible, as the existing footing cannot support additional load.

### 4. LEED Regulations & Appendix Z Compliance

- Shared Heat Exchange: Potential for collaboration with Eastern Market

### 5. Plaza Space Usage & Requirements

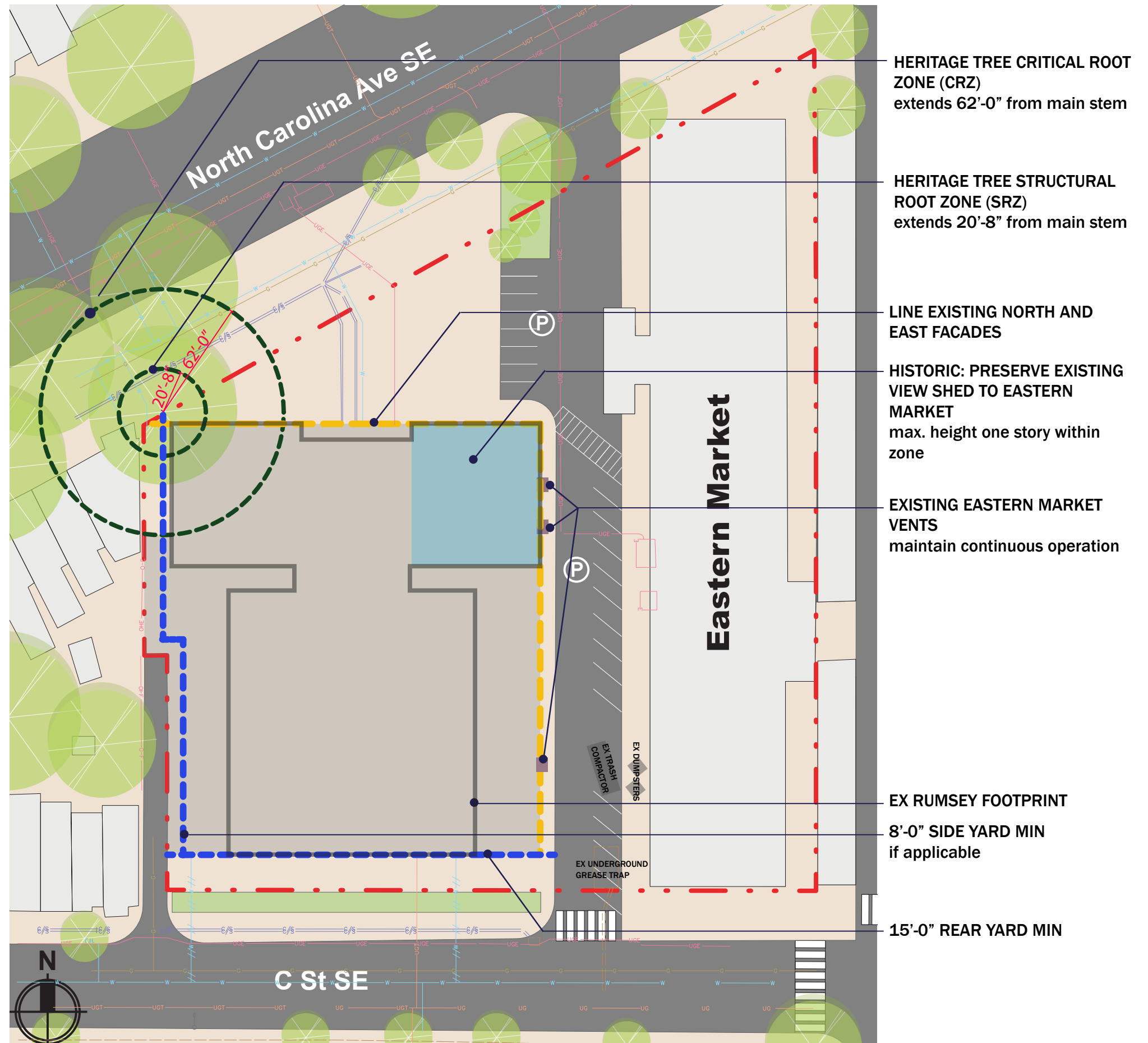
- Plaza Space: Currently used by Eastern Market vendors; space cannot be reduced

### 6. Client Programming

- Existing aquatic center: 20,854 sf (as per the 2009 Faithful & Gould Survey)
- Owner to provide approved programming

### 7. Existing Vents

- The three existing vents along Rumsey's eastern facade serve Eastern Market and must remain operational throughout construction. The new design should fully accommodate these vents.



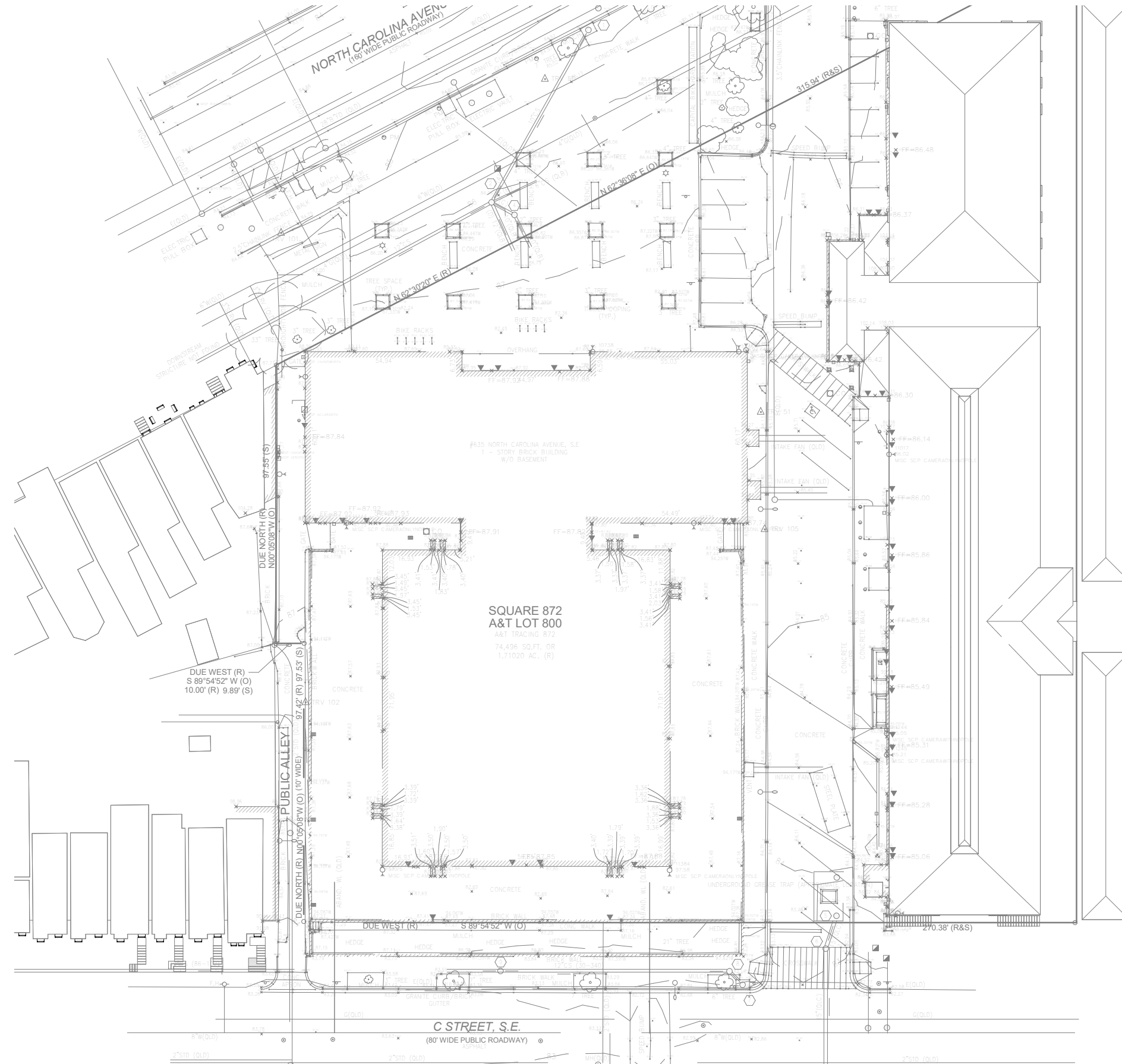


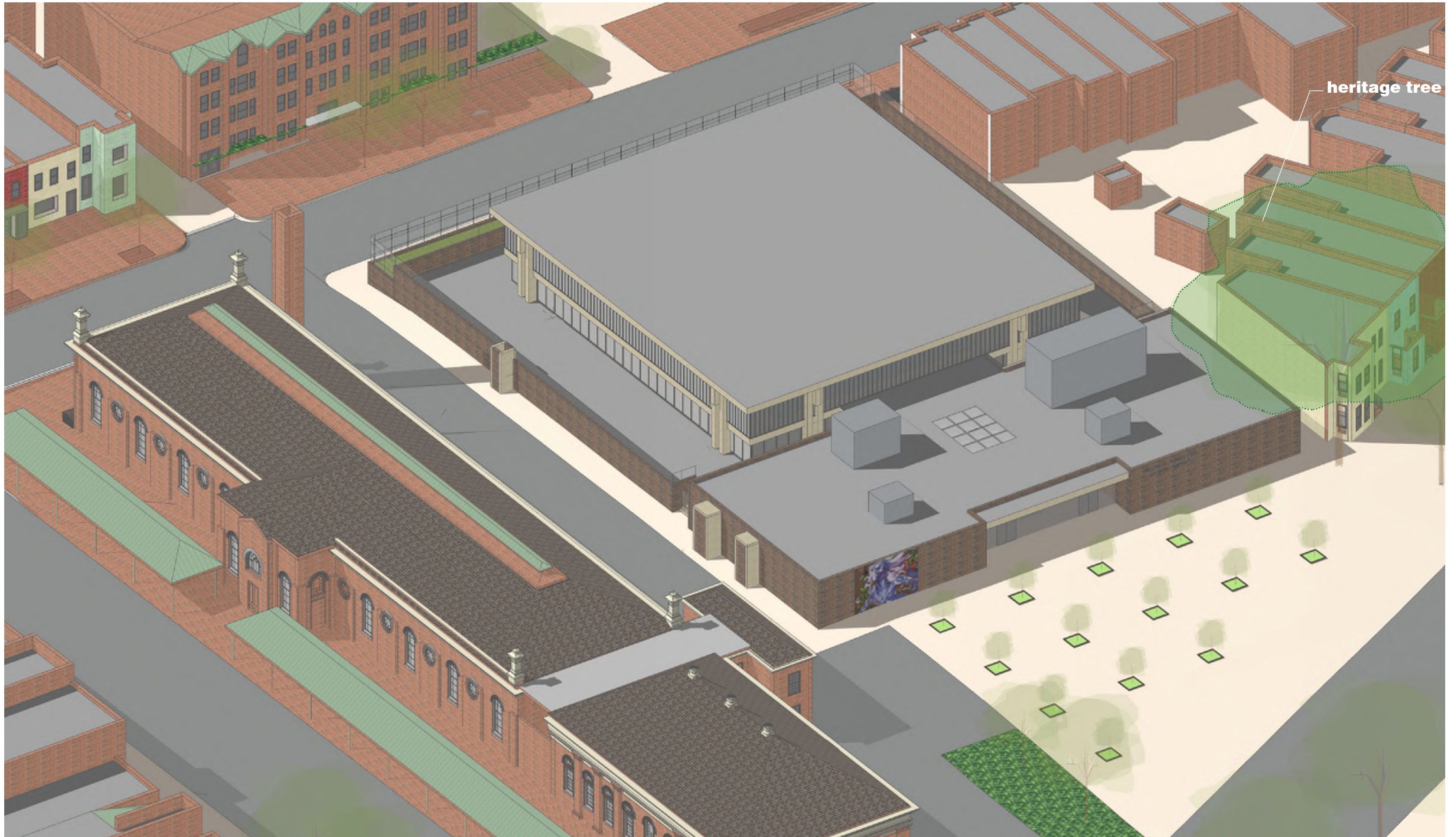
# EXISTING BUILDING

heritage tree

# EXISTING CIVIL SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"





heritage tree

EXISTING | BIRDS EYE VIEW

## EXISTING PLAN ANALYSIS + PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

### PLAN

#### (6 LANE SWIMMING POOL) + (SMALLER WADING POOL)

- DPR STAFF OFFICES
- LOCKER + SHOWER ROOMS
- UTILILITES
- POOL EQUIPMENT + CHEMICALS
- LOBBY + CIRCULATION
- 6-LANE SWIMMING POOL
- WADING POOL
- LARGE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
- STORAGE

The current design features a one-story brick building set at the back of a large plaza, lacking a clear transition from the vibrant urban neighborhood and market to the aquatic center. It includes a small multipurpose room, wading pool, offices, restrooms, showers, lockers, and a mechanical room. Pool equipment and mechanical rooms are positioned to the west for easy access via the alley and interior.

The double-height entrance leads to a central six-lane pool, enclosed by three lattice brick corridors that provide privacy but limit visual connection to the exterior.

To enhance the design, the following improvements are proposed:

- Plaza Redesign – Enhance exterior amenities with landscaping, rain gardens, seating, and art to create a welcoming entry.
- Massing & Facade – Use either a minimal modern aesthetic with glass and steel or a contextual approach matching existing materials, forms, and scale.
- Connectivity – Increase transparency with more glass to improve natural light and strengthen visual ties to the exterior.
- Functionality – Optimize layout for efficient circulation, accessibility, and logical grouping of spaces.





EXISTING NE CORNER AND ALLEY VIEW



EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS EASTERN MARKET



EXISTING ALLEY VIEW FROM C STREET



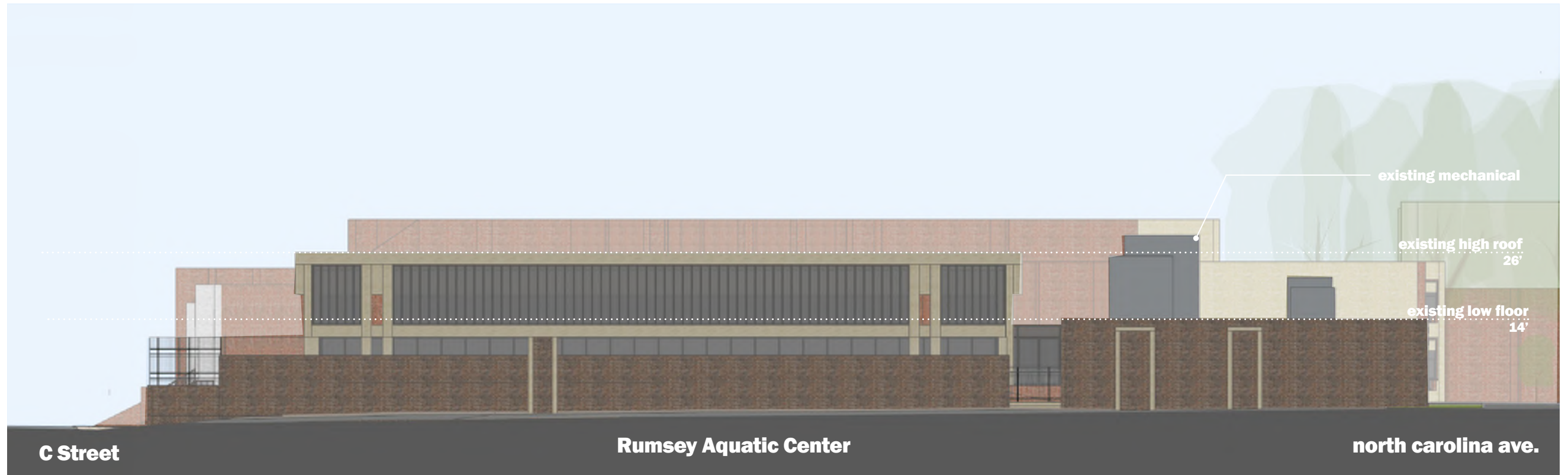
EXISTING C STREET VIEW



EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION [ON NORTH CAROLINA AVENUE]



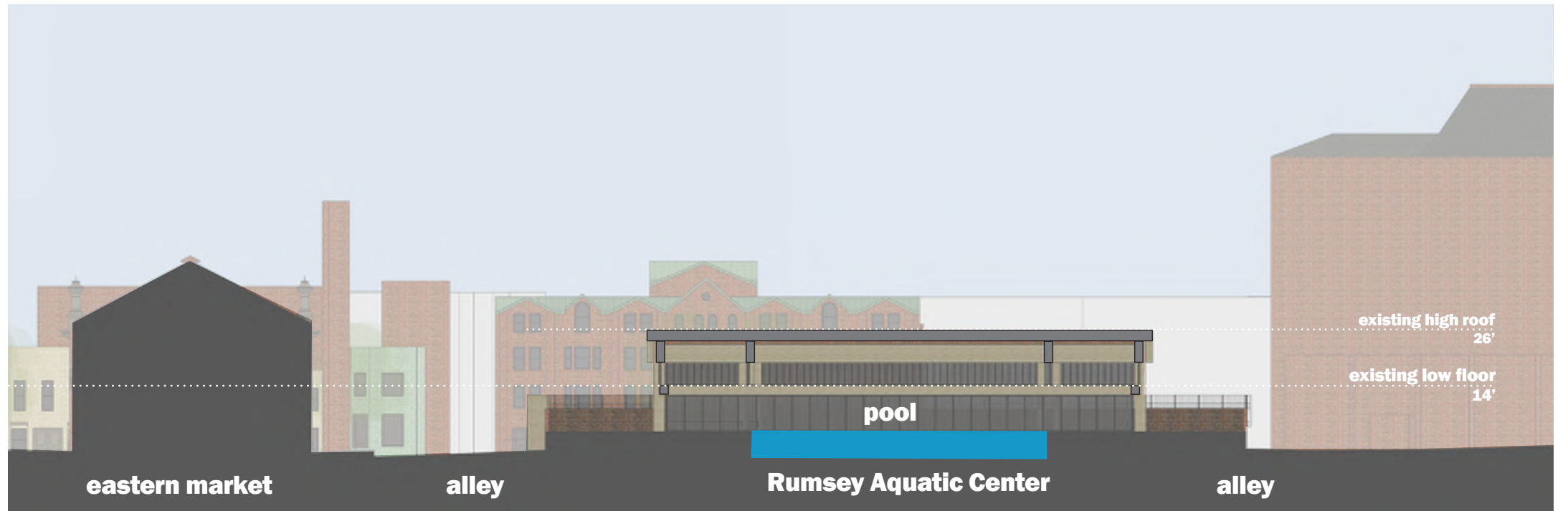
EXISTING REAR ELEVATION [C STREET SE]



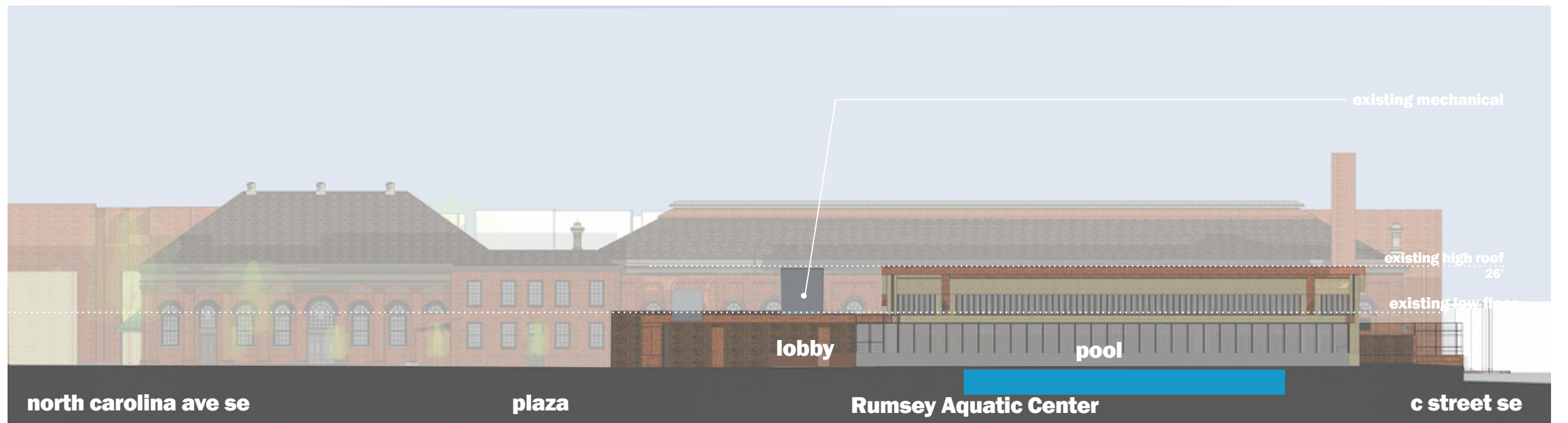
EXISTING EAST ELEVATION [ALLEY WITH EASTERN MARKET]



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION [ALLEY]



EXISTING | E-W SITE SECTION



EXISTING | N-S SITE SECTION



7th Street Southeast DC



660 Pennsylvania Ave SE



770 Pennsylvania Ave SE



660 Pennsylvania Ave SE



770 Pennsylvania Ave SE



8th Street SE, Above Penn Ave



360 7th Street Southeast DC



# PRECEDENTS



Tall Window Bays in metal and glass



Ganged windows and decorative bricks



Brick Pattern btwn windows and contrasting brick bands



7th Street Southeast DC



660 Pennsylvania Ave SE



770 Pe



660 Pennsylvania Ave SE



770 Pennsylvania Ave SE



8th Street SE, Above Penn Ave



360 7th Street Southeast DC



660 Pennsylvania Ave SE



Tall Window Bays in metal and glass



Ganged windows and decorative blanks



Brick Pattern btwn windows and contrasting brick bands

PRECEDENTS | AMY WEINSTEIN





Clerestory, Eastern Market



Brick Rustication, 15+P NW DC



Phillips Coll, Dupont, NW DC



Ribbed Brick



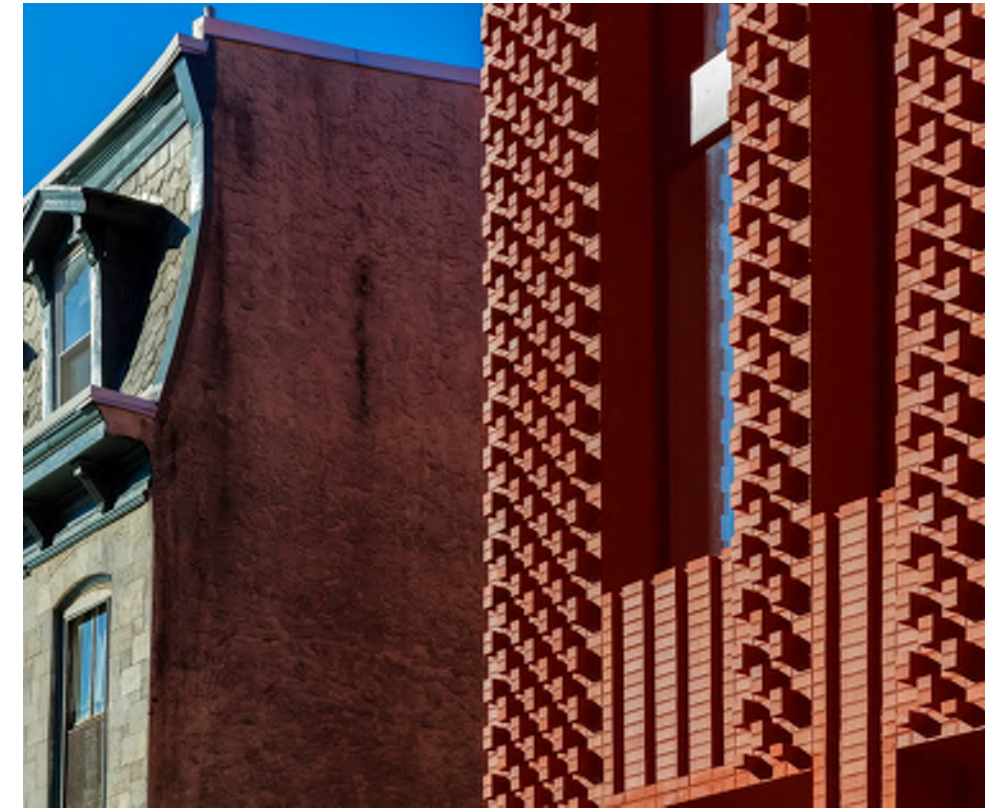
Ribbed Brick, Glover Park DC



Canopy and grand entry volume, Penn Theater, Capitol Hill



Grand entry vol, dbl-height windows, Restoration Church, Capitol Hill

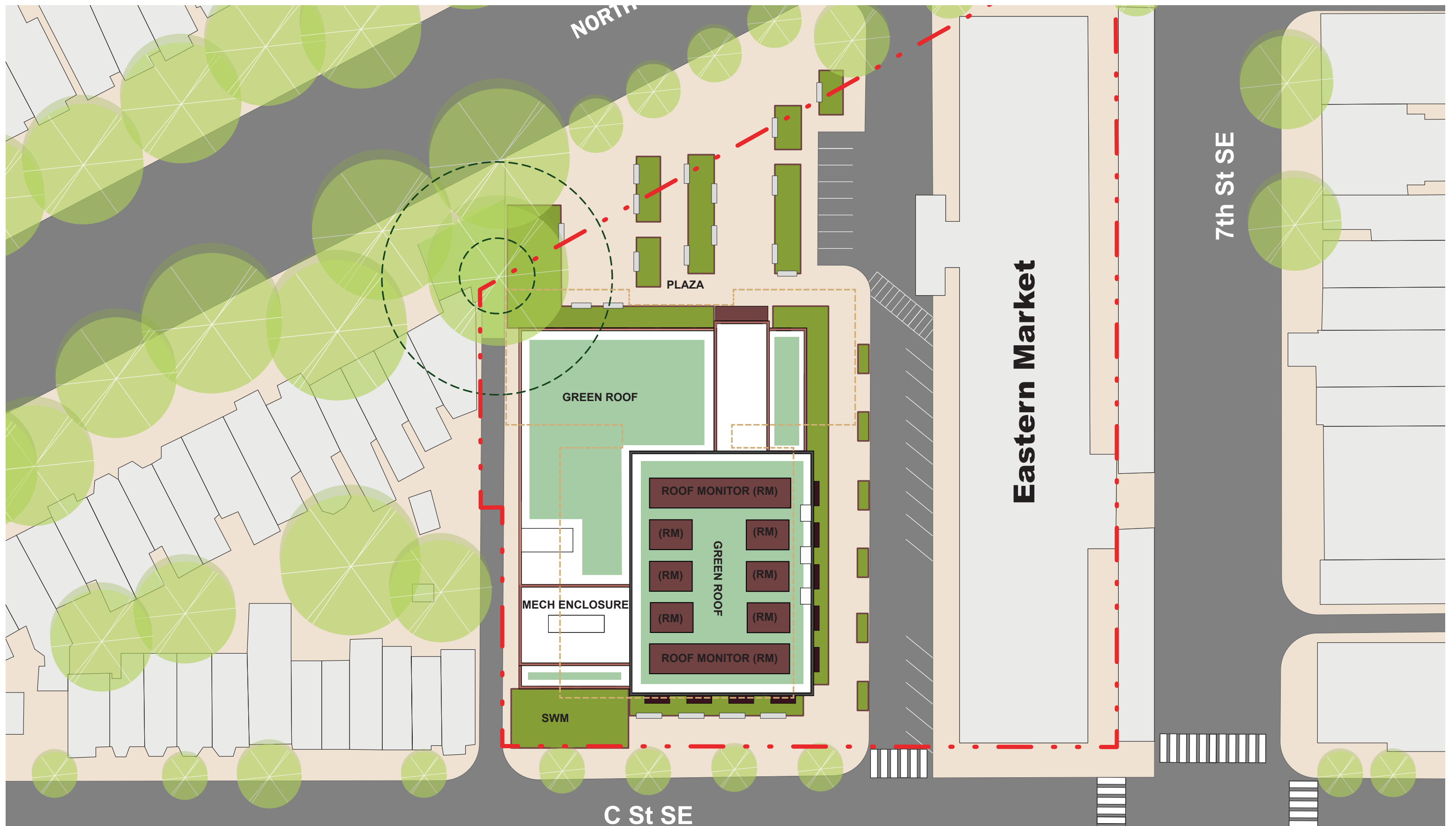


Large scale decorative brick, double bricks

PRECEDENTS | CAPITOL HILL

# PROPOSED CONCEPT

RUMSEY AQUATIC CENTER



**PROPOSED SITE PLAN**  
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"



heritage tree

BIRDS EYE VIEW

## FIRST FLOOR PLAN

### PROGRAM:

Base Program:

- Full size 8 lane swimming pool.
- A smaller leisure / therapy pool.
- Locker rooms, a family changing room, and bathrooms adjacent to the pools and splash pad
- Large Multipurpose/Recreation Room.
- Small to Medium Multipurpose/Recreation Rooms.
- Tech Lounge.
- Staff Office.
- Lobby with Reception Desk
- Senior center with kitchenette and other amenities.
- Utility Spaces and Pool Support Rooms.
- Storage
- Fitness Room

Additional Owner & Community Requests:

- Two Stories, 10,000 sf Second Floor for Community Programming

### SCOPE OF WORK:

**Area = 29,000 sf | First Floor = 19,000 sf | Second Floor = 10,000 sf**

### ARCHITECTURAL:

Two-story building with brick, storefront and glazing. Metal roof with roof monitors and green roof.

### CIVIL & STORM WATER:

The project is in a Combined Sewer System (CSS) area where retention may be met with Stormwater Retention Credits, but on-site detention is still required; as a Major Land Disturbing Activity, it must retain the 90th percentile storm (1.2 inches) and control peak flows to pre-project and pre-development conditions. Public space disturbance will also be treated as MLDA and managed to the maximum extent practicable using BMPs such as bioretention and tree plantings, with no vehicular runoff treatment required. The design is expected to provide about 2,500 cubic feet of retention and 7,500 cubic feet of detention via an intensive green roof, bioretention, and limited permeable pavement.

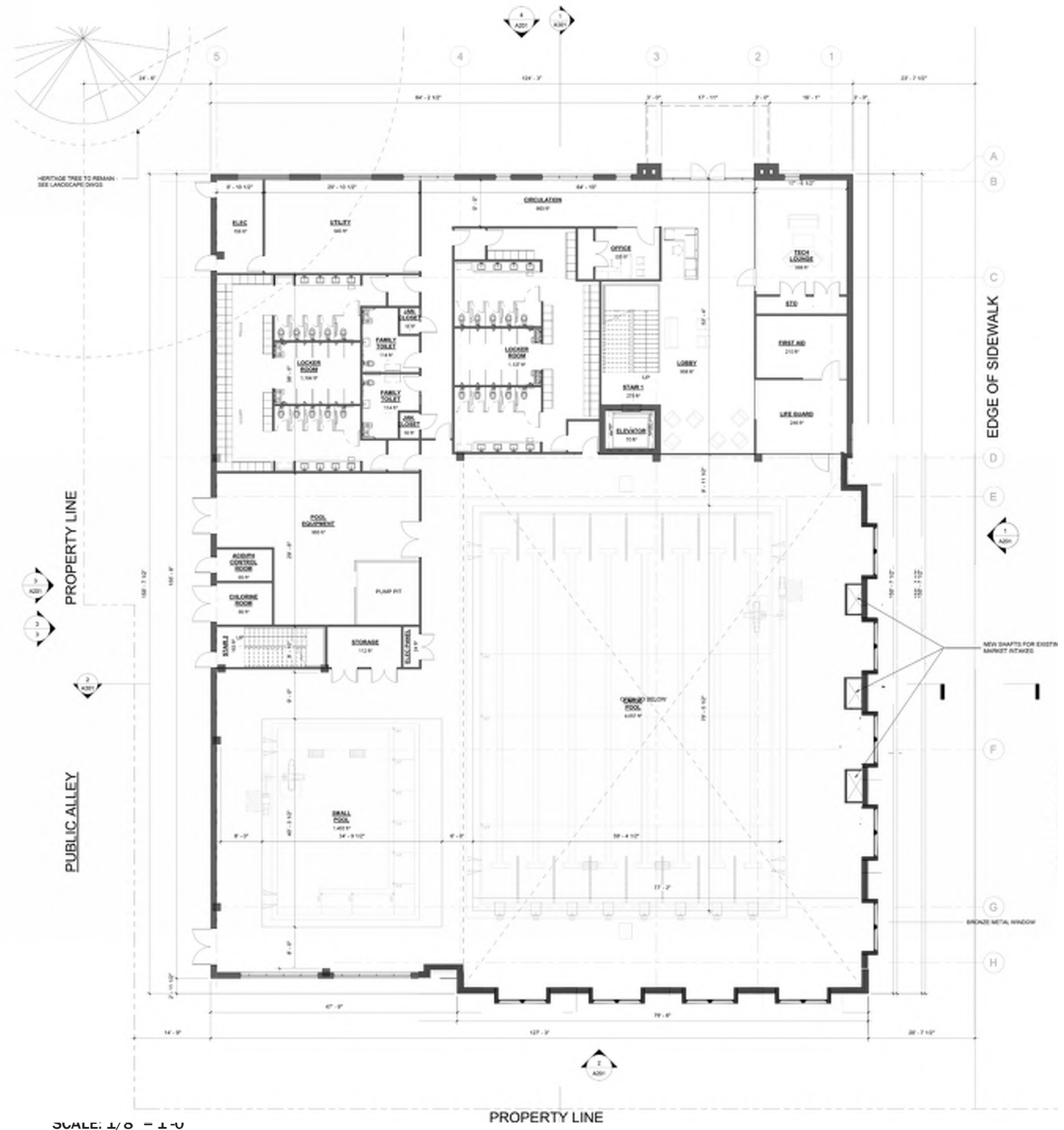
### STRUCTURAL:

Steel framework on a concrete foundation. The roofs are supported by steel beams and joists, while the natatorium roof uses steel long-span trusses.

### ELECTRICAL:

Reuse existing 208Y/120V 3-phase 1600A service with necessary equipment rework and relocation. Provide exterior utility vault, power based on room functions, and emergency power for egress lighting. Include fire alarm system with battery backup and emergency phone system. For elevator, provide battery lowering. High-efficiency LED fixtures throughout.

SOW narratives continued on the next sheet...



## SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SOW narratives continued from the previous sheet...

### MECHANICAL:

Heating and cooling will be provided by a central heat recovery heat pump plant, supplemented by air-source heat pumps and an electric backup boiler. Chilled and heating hot water will be distributed via a four-pipe hydronic system serving fan coil units in each zone. Ventilation will be provided by hydronic air handling units with energy recovery. The pool will be served by a dedicated air handling unit, with pool heating provided via a heat exchanger on the heating hot water loop and supplemental air-source heat pumps as required.

### PLUMBING:

New 4" domestic water service, makeup water lines for pools (1.5"–3"), low-flow fixtures, and floor drains. Emergency eyewash and shower stations in chemical storage areas. Floor sinks in utility spaces. Roof drainage connected to stormwater infrastructure. Overflow drains discharge to daylight, with a foundation drainage system and sump pump if needed. No natural gas connections.

### FIRE:

NFPA 13 sprinkler system with full coverage, using a dedicated 4" water system, backflow preventer, and wet-pipe system for each room.





NORTH CAROLINA AVE VIEW TOWARDS ALLEY



heritage tree

line of existing mechanical units

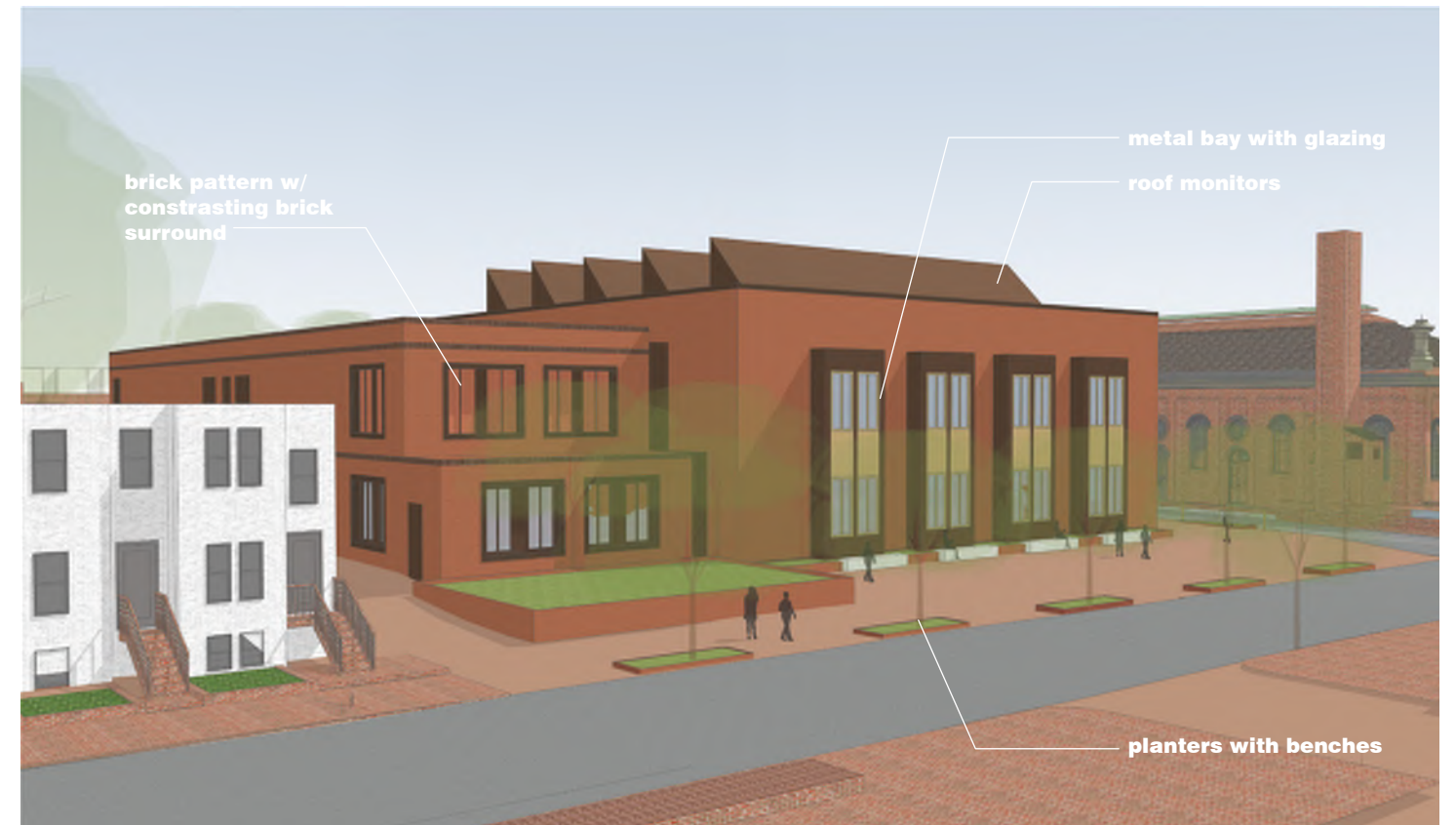
RUMSEY AQUATIC CENTER

existing rumsey facade

VIEW TOWARDS EASTERN MARKET FROM NORTH CAROLINA AVE SE



NE CORNER AND ALLEY VIEW



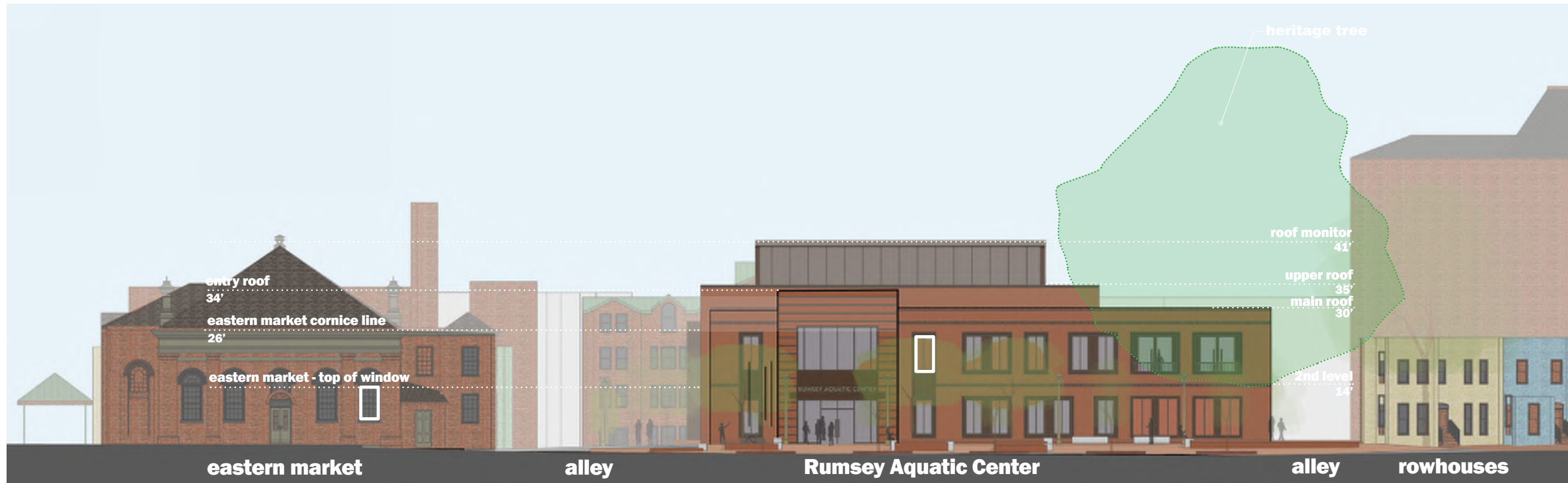
C STREET VIEW



ALLEY VIEW FROM C STREET



EASTERN MARKET PROMENADE



FRONT ELEVATION [NORTH CAROLINA AVE SE]



Red Solid Brick



Dark Courses



Ribbed Brick



Bronze Storefront



REAR ELEVATION [C STREET SE]



EAST ELEVATION [ALLEY WITH EASTERN MARKET]



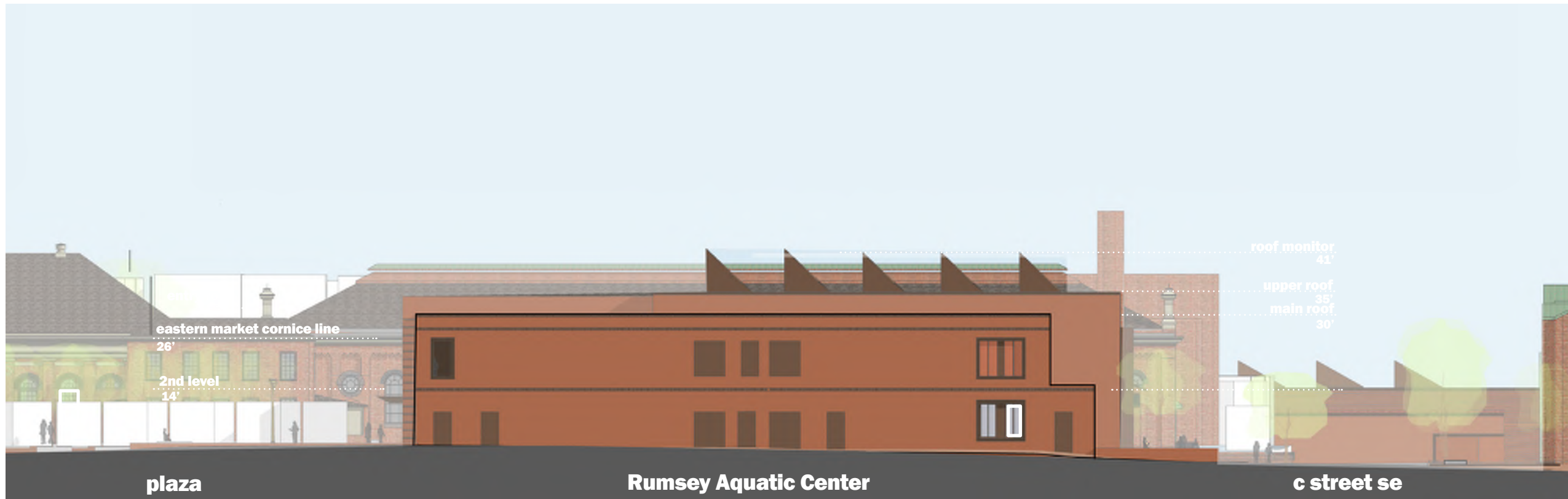
Outdoor Bench



Green Roof



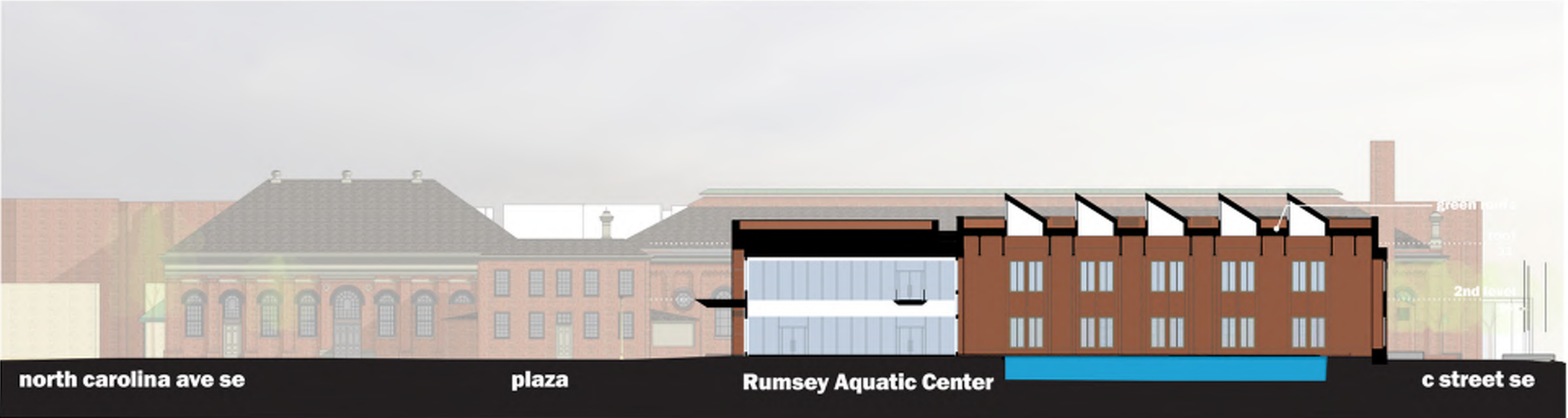
Stormwater management BMP



WEST ELEVATION [ALLEY]



CONCEPT C | E-W SITE SECTION



N-S SITE SECTION



PLAZA PRECEDENTS

## WILLIAM H RUMSEY AQUATIC CENTER HISTORIC FACTS



440 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
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Rumsey Aquatic Center Fact Sheet  
EHT Traceries, Inc.

January 2025

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### Property Overview

We are awaiting additional materials detailing the history and development of the Capitol East Natatorium (Rumsey Aquatic Center) from the DC Archives and will update this fact sheet accordingly.

The Capitol East Natatorium (present-day Rumsey Aquatic Center) is located at 635 North Carolina Avenue, SE, in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, DC. Construction of the building began in June 1969, and it officially opened to the public in August 1970 as the first year-round, racially integrated public swimming pool in the District.<sup>1</sup>

### Plans for a New Pool

Beginning in 1964, Molly Kux, a Capitol Hill resident and mother helped spearhead the campaign for the construction of a recreational facility in the neighborhood, motivated by concerns that local children had limited places to play in the populated city. Kux, who served as chairman of the community development program for local advocacy group Circle on the Hill, highlighted that for the 43,000



Figure 1: Rumsey Aquatic Center property, outlined in red (Google Earth)

residents of Capitol Hill, there should be forty-three acres of recreational space, compared to the twelve that were made available at the time. Along with the nearly 100 local women that comprised Circle on the Hill, Kux appealed to the National Park Service and the DC Recreation Department to advocate for the addition of more recreation facilities in the neighborhood, including a pool which the group felt was suited to appeal to a wide age range.<sup>2</sup>

The battle for a recreation center was intertwined with the city's dilemma regarding the future of the Eastern Market. In 1964, the DC Health Commissioner declared the market "a menace to public health" and advocated for its replacement with a large supermarket and on-site parking. The lease for the market was set to expire the following year and discussions regarding its demolition prompted a strong adverse response from the Capitol Hill community. Plans to retain Eastern Market, and construct a recreation facility, including a swimming pool intensified in the

summer of 1964. A new group called the Emergency Recreation Council for Capitol East (ERC) formed from forty-five organizations in the area, united in the common cause of alleviating what they called a "recreation gap" in the Capitol Hill community. The group's advocacy efforts helped encourage the Recreation Department to develop a plan for the area including a list of desirable land, cost estimates, and coordination with the National Capital Planning Commission.<sup>3</sup>

The ERC, which comprised of White and Black residents of the Capitol Hill neighborhood faced resistance to the construction of the pool from the exclusively White Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS). CHRS opposed the project in favor of preserving what they anticipated to be a developing commercial strip centered around Eastern Market. Some CHRS members indicated that the opposition may have been in part racially based, as they raised concerns over Black children frequenting the market after swimming in the adjacent integrated pool.<sup>4</sup> Instead, the CHRS proposed a renovation of Firehouse No. 8 building as a community center and the conversion of the East Capitol Street Car Barn at Fifteenth and East Capitol Streets for swimming and other recreational purposes. ERC feared that the District would not have funding for both projects, and the protests of the CHRS would doom the natatorium project.<sup>5</sup>

### Design and Construction

Despite CHRS's objections, the Recreation Department authorized \$54,000 for planning and \$769,500 for construction of the Capitol East Natatorium. Although completion of the facility was anticipated for the summer of 1969, delays with the design prolonged construction, with the Natatorium opening to the public in August 1970.<sup>6,7</sup>

Following the authorization of funds for the natatorium, the Department had selected local architect Eugene A. Delmar (1928-2018) for the design of the building. Delmar studied at Columbia University before moving to the DC area and establishing his own firm, Delmar Architects, in 1959. He was a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and was prominent in local circles, serving as president of the Maryland Society of Architects, as well as the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Delmar was primarily known for his designs of office buildings, multi-family residences, and schools.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 3: Rendering of Capitol East Natatorium (Delmar Architects)



Figure 2: Demolition of Firehouse No. 8 in preparation for construction of Capitol East Natatorium (The Washington Post)

<sup>1</sup> "Pool Opens," *Washington Post-Times Herald*, August 2, 1970, D3.

<sup>2</sup> "A Ring Leader on Capitol Hill," *The Washington Post-Times Herald*, March 8, 1946, F1.

<sup>3</sup> "Eastern Market Will Remain if District Can Afford the Cost," *The Washington Post-Times Herald*, March 29, 1965.

<sup>4</sup> Sam Smith, *Captive Capital; a colonial life in modern Washinton*, (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1974), 83

<sup>5</sup> "Storm Brews Over Recreation Center," *The Washington Post-Times Herald*, January 12, 1968, B1.

<sup>6</sup> "3 Swimming Pools Delayed," *The Washington Post*, April 8, 1969, C1.

<sup>7</sup> "Pool Opens," *Washington Post-Times Herald*, August 2, 1970, D3.

<sup>8</sup> "About the Firm – Founded in 1959," *Delmar Architects*, accessed January 28, 2025,

<https://www.delmararchitects.com/copy-of-the-firm>.



Figure 4: Capitol East Natatorium following completion (Delmar Architects)

Delmar submitted designs to the Department of Buildings and Grounds (DBG), as well as the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) in February of 1968.<sup>9</sup> His initial design of the building consisted of four linked windowless blocks, housing two interior pools and community rooms. Delmar felt that by breaking up the masses, the building blended with the neighborhood which was comprised of small brick row houses. CFA members disagreed, stating that the design was overly complicated and oppressive. They requested that the architect develop a singular design that was reflective of the function of the building. At a CFA meeting on February 20, 1968, member Aline Saarinen expressed criticism of Delmar's initial design which, he felt, did not reflect the idea of a swimming pool. He stated that the building should be redesigned "in terms of a bright and beautiful structure" that conforms to and enhances the surrounding neighborhood.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 5: Interior of Capitol East Natatorium following completion (Delmar Architects)

Delmar revised the plans for the Natatorium, incorporating these recommendations, and resubmitted his new drawings to the CFA, which approved them at the Commission meeting on June 4, 1968.<sup>11</sup> Dick Wolf, a member of the CHRS later stated that famed architect Gordon Bunshaft of the CFA was ultimately responsible for the final design of the natatorium, as he drastically altered Delmar's plans for the building.<sup>12</sup> Bunshaft, a Pritzker Prize winning architect, served as a member of the CFA from 1963 to 1972. He was a longtime partner of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, and is credited with ushering in a new era of Modernist skyscraper design and corporate architecture.<sup>13</sup>

Upon completion of the Capitol East Natatorium of 1970, the building quickly encountered numerous issues including, but not limited to, several smashed windows, and overcrowding. Delmar stated that he was aware

<sup>9</sup> "What Goes on Here," *The Washington Daily News*, February 21, 1968, 5.

<sup>10</sup> United States Commission of Fine Arts Meeting Minutes, November 1, 1967, to April 30, 1968, accessed January 28, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/uscommissionoffineartsminutes>.

<sup>11</sup> United States Commission of Fine Arts Meeting Minutes, May 1, 1968, to February 28, 1969, accessed January 28, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/uscommissionoffineartsminutes>.

<sup>12</sup> Hilary Russell, "Part II. A Deep Dive into Rumsey Pool's Turbulent Beginning," *Capitol Hill Corner*.

<sup>13</sup> "Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA (1909-1990)," *US Modernist*, accessed January 28, 2025, <https://usmodernist.org/bunshaft.htm>

that the natatorium would be the subject of vandalism and informed the *Evening Star* the CFA demanded that he abandon his original plan of a windowless building with a skylight, aimed at avoiding the issue.<sup>14</sup>

#### Continued Use

In spite of the many maintenance and crowding issues posed by the Capitol East Natatorium, the facility quickly became an important feature of the Capitol Hill community. As the first year-round, integrated pool in the District, the natatorium was selected as the location for the annual Black History Invitational Swim Meet. The meet was co-founded in 1987 by the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, along with the United Black Fund, Inc. with the goal of providing youth with an opportunity to meet positive role models, and to create a positive outlet of expression.<sup>15</sup> The building was renamed the Rumsey Aquatic Center in honor of the former director of the DC Department of Recreation and Parks, Dr. William Rumsey.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Natatorium a Beautiful White Elephant; New Capitol Hill Pool Flooded with Complaints," *Evening Star*, August 15, 1970, A-3.

<sup>15</sup> "Black History Invitational Swim Meet," *Department of Parks and Recreation*, accessed January 28, 2025, <https://dpr.dc.gov/service/black-history-invitational-swim-meet#:~:text=This%20unique%20event%20was%20co,honor%20of%20Black%20History%20Month>.

<sup>16</sup> Hilary Russell, "Part II. A Deep Dive into Rumsey Pool's Turbulent Beginning," *Capitol Hill Corner*.



## Honoring the Legacy of the William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center Through Integrated Art and Graphics in the New Lobby



LOBBY PERSPECTIVE | PRESERVING EXISTING RUMSEY AQUATIC CENTER HISTORY

# U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

401 F STREET NW SUITE 312 WASHINGTON DC 20001-2728 202-504-2200 FAX 202-504-2195 WWW.CFA.GOV

26 March 2026

Dear Mr. Hunter:

In its meeting of 19 March, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a second concept design submission for the construction of a new aquatic and community center, to be located in the Capitol Hill neighborhood at 635 North Carolina Avenue, SE. Expressing appreciation for the responsiveness of the design revisions, the Commission approved the submission and provided the following comments.

The Commission members commented favorably on the more sensitive design approach for this large civic project within the historic context of Eastern Market and Capitol Hill. They expressed a preference for Option A, which they said employs a more balanced composition of horizontal and vertical elements; they also suggested replacing the proposed rectangular roof monitors with a traditional sawtooth design but without hipped ends as depicted in Option B, with the possibility of increasing the number of monitors from three to five.

The Commission looks forward to further review of this project. Please continue to consult with the staff which, as always, is available to assist you.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA  
Secretary

Delano Hunter, Director  
D.C. Department of General Services  
3924 Minnesota Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20019

cc: Rick Harlan Schneider, ISTUDIO Architects  
Peter Nohrden, D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



## Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting

March 26, 2026

The Historic Preservation Review Board met via WebEx at 9:00AM on March 26, 2026 to consider the following. Present at the meeting were Marnique Heath (Chair), Andrew Aurbach, Matthew Bell, Bill Marzella, Lauren McHale, Chris Morrison and Timothy Thomas. Absent: Gabrielle Miller.

### DENIAL CALENDAR

#### **CAPITOL HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

418 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE, HPA 25-324, revised concept/demolition

*The Board voted to recommend denial of the revised proposal as inconsistent with its regulations. Vote: 7-0.*

### AGENDA

#### **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION**

Overview of Recently Completed Projects - 2026

#### **LANDMARK DESIGNATION HEARING**

Capitol Power Plant Pump House, 1520 1<sup>st</sup> Street SE, Case 21-05

*The Board voted 7-0 to approve the designation and supported the staff's recommendation to work with the applicants to add context about the building typology and history of the Earth Conservation Corps before the nomination is forwarded to the National Register.*

#### **CAPITOL HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

635 North Carolina Avenue SE, HPA 26-81, revised concept/construct new aquatic center

*The Board voted to approve the general concept expressing its preference for Option A with the skylights shown in Option B. However, the Board asked the applicant and staff to continue working on resolving the tension between the horizontal and vertical window expressions and investigating whether the landscape plan could aggregate the many small planters into fewer larger planters. Vote: 7-0.*

#### **DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

503-517 H Street NW, HPA 26-149, revised concept for hotel tower addition

*The Board voted to approve the revised concept to add an additional floor with the proviso that approval of the concept did not constitute endorsement or support for any needed zoning relief. Vote: 6-0 (Heath recused)*

## DC HPRB & US CFA APPROVAL ACTIONS

