#### City of Sugar Hill Planning Staff Report CBD Design Review 24-001

**DATE:** September 5, 2024

**TO:** Mayor and Council, Design Review Board

**FROM:** Planning Department

**SUBJECT:** Central Business District (CBD) Design Review

5021 Nelson Brogdon Blvd, Commercial Project

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION

### Approval of the site plan and buildings in material and architectural detail with the following conditions:

- 1. Final building design for Buildings 1 & 2 shall substantially resemble the attached exhibits labeled Exhibit 1 through 5. Final material and color selections shall be subject to on-site mock-up approval, with identified materials.
- 2. The proposed drive-thru restaurant is not considered at this time. A special use permit with this design review board application. A stand-alone restaurant or additional multi-tenant spaces shall be allowed in this vicinity, subject to review and approval by the Planning Department.
- 3. Connectivity and activation for the rear of the proposed retail buildings (East Elevations), which presently is shown as the side along Stanley Street shall be provided in the form of public gathering, pedestrian access, and interactive spaces. The architecture along all street frontages shall be designed with front-facade architectural finishes and improvements exhibiting the same level of design quality and materials as the primary facade, avoiding any back-of-house appearances, including visible service areas, blank wall area, loading docks, or utility installations. This may take the form of entry systems, architectural elements, sidewalks, landscaping, etc. or any combination thereof, as reviewed and approved by the Planning Department.
- 4. The approximate 2-acre area to the north of the retail development bounded by Oak Street and Stanley Street to the north of the retail area shall be dedicated to the city.
- 5. A substantial gateway art feature shall be incorporated into the site design. The final design and location shall be approved by the City Manager prior to releasing permits and installed prior to certificate of occupancy. Developer may elect to make a monetary contribution of \$25,000 to the City of Sugar Hill in lieu of installing the improvements.
- 6. Sidewalks along the project perimeter shall be constructed in accordance with the paver details currently approved for use in the Central Business District by the city and GA Department of Transportation.
- 7. Ornamental streetlights approved by GA Dept. of Transportation for Highway 20 shall be installed along the Hwy 20 frontage.
- 8. No new overhead utility installations, above-ground grease traps, or other back-of-house equipment (or storage) shall be located between the building and any adjacent street. Such items must be placed in areas that are screened from public view and do not detract from the building's street-facing facades. Dumpster enclosure shall be designed to match the existing buildings, architecture and finishes.

#### **UPDATES**

The applicant submitted revised renderings on September  $6^{th}$  to address staff's feedback regarding the design of street-facing facades and activation of the frontages. At the time of developing this report, staff hadn't received the remaining renderings to confirm additional activation details along Stanley Street. Staff recommended conditions to ensure the building addresses the street with front-facing architecture and to mitigate the placement of back-of-house installations.

#### **REQUEST**

The City of Sugar Hill has received an application from Novare Group - Sugar Hill Parcel Owner, LLC, requesting design review board approval for 16,075 square feet of restaurant and retail space for a commercial development located within the Central Business District (CBD) Overlay at the corner of Stanley Street and Nelson Brogdon Boulevard.

#### **DISCUSSION**

- The subject site acts as a gateway location for the greenway and downtown.
- The proposed site plan preserves interparcel access with the Sugar Hill Church, lending future opportunities for shared parking and coordination with community events.
- The applicant proposes to dedicate approximately 2 acres of the subject site to the City of Sugar Hill for public use.
- The proposal includes approximately 0.20 miles of construction of the Sugar Hill greenway and connection to the proposed pedestrian bridge connecting the parcels to the Bowl and other downtown amenities.
- The proposed project is within walking distance of 5 multi-family developments, with Conclave Sugar Hill being directly adjacent to the site.
- The site plan includes pedestrian circulation and gathering spaces to better activate cohesion amongst the retail site, the greenway, and nearby residences.
- The proposed site plan includes two multi-tenant retail buildings and one drive-thru restaurant. Each building includes patio areas and pedestrian connectivity.
- The two multi-tenant spaces total 13,275 square feet and are approximately 24.75' in height. Facades are finished in a variety of materials to create defined tenant frontages, utilizing materials such as faux wood, synthetic stucco, and brick. Colors are neutral in nature, with reddish-brown wood tones. The buildings include glass store fronts facing the parking area as well as access from the greenway.
- The 2,800 square foot drive-thru restaurant has separate drive-thru access in addition to a patio and pedestrian connection. The applicant has not included renderings or façade details for this building which will require a separate special use permit and design review.
- A brick monument sign with tenant information is located at the corner of Stanley Street and Nelson Brogdon Blvd guiding residents off of a major thoroughfare to local amenities.

APPLICANT: Sugar Hill Parcel Owner, LLC

PROPERTY OWNER: City of Sugar Hill

EXISTING ZONING: General Business (BG) within the

Town Center Overlay District (TCO), and

Central Business Overlay District (CBD).

REQUEST: Design review approval, Commercial Project.

PROPERTY SIZE: ± 4.08 Acres, Tax Parcel #: R7-292-078

LOCATION: 5021 Nelson Brogdon Boulevard Sugar Hill, GA, 30518

#### DESIGN REVIEW CRITERIA

# 1. Is the proposed project consistent with the adopted design guidelines for the type of development, and/or the proposed use?

The CBD requirements are designed to foster development of the city center using traditional block patterns characterized by common side walls, building fronts abutting the sidewalk and on-street parking; breaking up large blocks; optimizing multi-modal connectivity and incorporating small public gathering spaces.

The proposed design is somewhat consistent with the CBD guidelines. Retail and restaurant uses are allowed and encouraged within the CBD. Having direct access to amenities off of the Sugar Hill greenway and connection to the downtown core aligns with the goals of the Central Business District. The proposed outdoor seating areas and pedestrian infrastructure support the purpose of the CBD.

However, the proposed restaurant with drive-thru service conflicts with Section 1002.D.7 of the zoning ordinance. Drive-thru restaurants may be permitted by special use as determined by the City Council, so long as the project meets certain criteria.

The drive-thru restaurant meets most general requirements as outlined in Section 1002.D.7, except for the subject site's proximity to Hillcrest Drive. From the centerline of Hillcrest Drive to the centerline of Stanley Street, which is beyond the location of the drive-thru, is approximately 1150 feet as measured on Gwinnett County's GIS System. The approximate location of the drive-thru is less than 800 feet away. Typically, land use is not considered for a design review application. However, Section 1002 contains guidelines that the council shall consider in deliberating a special use permit specifically for the drive-thru use:

#### A. Appropriateness of the use based on the development of surrounding properties;

No drive-thru restaurants are located within the vicinity of the CBD. The nearest restaurants with drive thru service are a Dunkin Donuts located approximately 1.4 miles eastbound on Highway 20, and a Dunkin Donuts located approximately 2.64 miles westbound on Highway 20. Auto-centric uses are intentionally limited within the CBD and TCO in general. Nearby uses that would be considered special uses under these provisions include two convenience stores with fuel pumps, structured parking areas within the downtown area, and a city-hosted farmer's market.

B. Any benefit or harm to the surrounding properties and the CBD as a result of the use: The proposed drive-thru restaurant would provide an additional dining experience to the CBD, something which has been consistently requested by citizens and noted in the ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan. The drive-thru restaurant does include a large outdoor seating area adjacent to the restaurant and pedestrian facilities. The restaurant is connected through the intraparcel pedestrian network.

Drive-thru restaurants typically generate higher and more consistent traffic volumes. The recent installation of a traffic light at the Stanley Street intersection will help manage traffic flow. However, the increase in vehicular traffic may impact pedestrian movement, especially given the restaurant's proximity to the greenway and nearby residential areas. The design should prioritize pedestrian safety to ensure a balanced coexistence between foot traffic and vehicles.

#### C. Whether the use is consistent with the intent of the CBD and this section.

While provisions are in place to allow for uses of a similar nature within the CBD, these have been restricted to explicit guidelines outlined in Section 1002. The proposed drive-thru does incorporate outdoor dining into its design, however, auto-centric use within a pedestrian oriented district pose safety and aesthetic conflicts with the spirit and intent of the downtown area.

# 2. Is the proposed project consistent and compatible with the nature and character of the surrounding areas?

The proposed designs are somewhat consistent with the adopted vision and emerging character of Downtown Sugar Hill. With the modifications to building architecture and enhanced public realm activation in the recommended conditions, the project has the potential to become a vibrant and compatible retail and restaurant development within the CBD.

3. Are the site design, landscaping, general design, character, arrangement and scale of buildings, texture, materials and colors of the project similar to or compatible with features or structures in the area.

The proposed elevations and conceptual site plans are somewhat compatible in scale, material selection, and general design character with the nearby proposed development. Modifications facilitated by the recommended conditions would achieve full compatibility.

4. Will the interior arrangement or use have any effect on exterior architectural features and otherwise complies with the standards of this ordinance?

The design team will need to ensure that any interior changes to the configuration do not adversely affect the layout of the facade.

# 5. Does the project contribute or resemble the following criteria for considering a design inappropriate?

Character foreign to the area / Arresting and spectacular effects / Violent contrasts of material or color, or intense or lurid colors / A multiplicity or incongruity of details resulting in a restless and disturbing appearance / The absence of unity and coherence in composition not in consonance with the density and character of the present structure or surrounding area.

The drive-thru restaurant use would constitute a character foreign to the CBD area. The remainder of the proposed project has the potential to be an attractive shopping and dining experience for all of Sugar Hill's residents. However, modifications will be necessary to the site layout related to the drive-thru in order to create the best possible experience for our residents.

#### **LETTER OF INTENT FOR DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION**

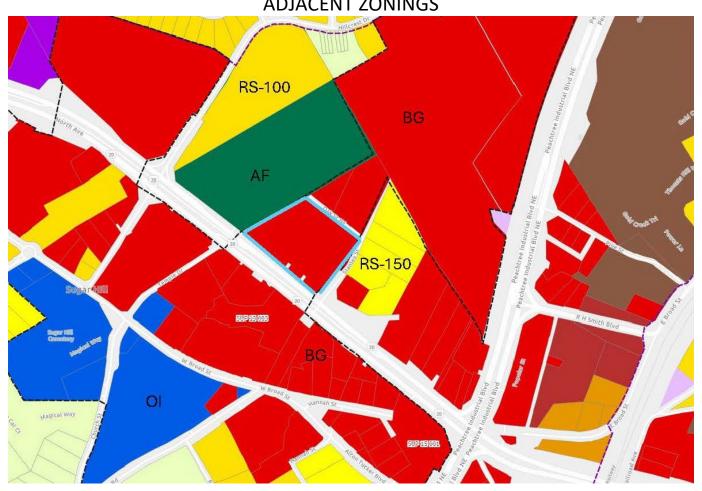
This Letter of Intent and attached Design Review Application (the "Application") relates to an approximately 4.07-acre tract (the "Property") located at the intersection of Stanley Street and Nelson Brogdon Boulevard (State Route 20) currently owned by Sugar Hill Parcel, LLC (the "Applicant"). The Applicant also owns an approximately 2.01-acre tract behind the Property, which has frontage on Stanley Street, and desires to dedicate this area to the City of Sugar Hill for public use.

Commercial buildings in the Proposed Development (the "Development") will be constructed with facades primarily of brick, fiber cement siding, aluminum storefront, and additional attractive architectural elements as depicted on the building elevations submitted with the Application. The Development will also include construction of Sugar Hill Greenway trail segments on the State Route 20 and Stanley Street frontages.

The Applicant and its representatives welcome the opportunity to meet with staff of the City of Sugar Hill Planning and Development Department to answer any questions or to address any concerns relating to the matters set forth in this letter or in the Application filed herewith. The Applicant respectfully requests your approval of this Application.

Respectfully submitted this 19th day of July 2024.

# DRB-CBD 24-001 Sugar Hill Parcel Owner, LLC Design Review Approval BG/CBD Commercial Development ADJACENT ZONINGS



# DRB-CBD 24-001 Sugar Hill Parcel Owner, LLC Design Review Approval BG/CBD Commercial Development AERIAL



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120'

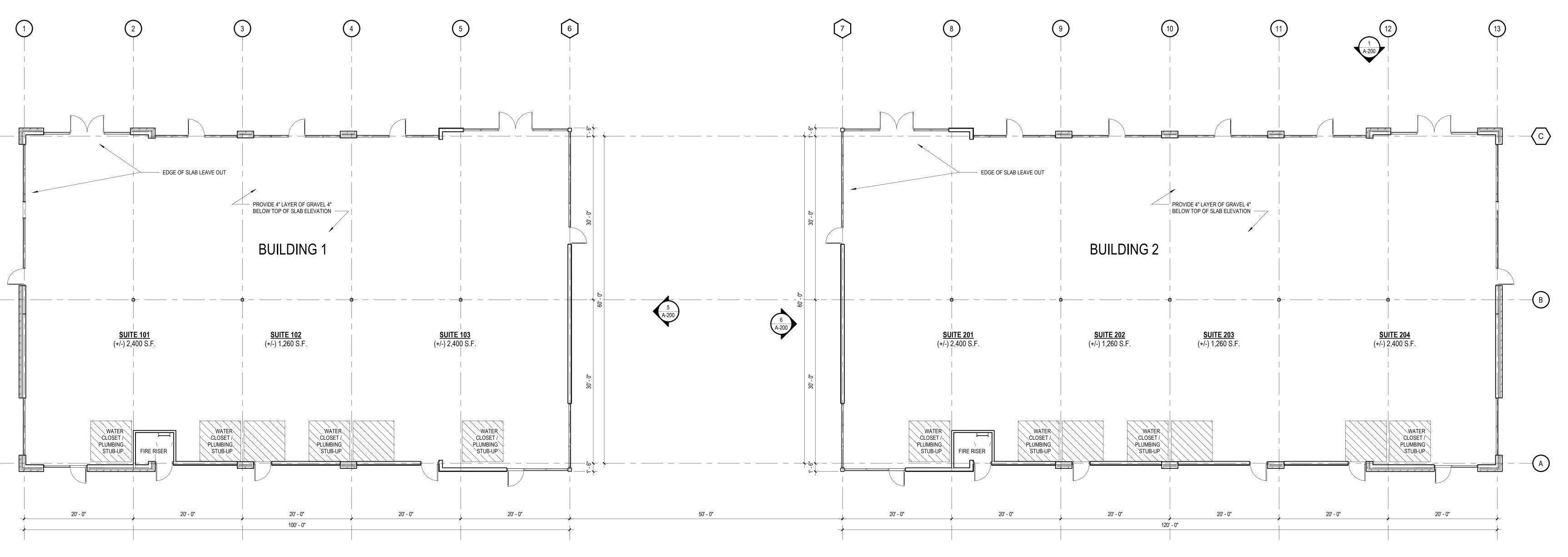
30'

60'





# Exhibit 4



OVERALL FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"



Roswell Mill 85-A Mill Street, Suite 200 Roswell, Georgia 30075 770.650.7558 www.randallpaulson.com

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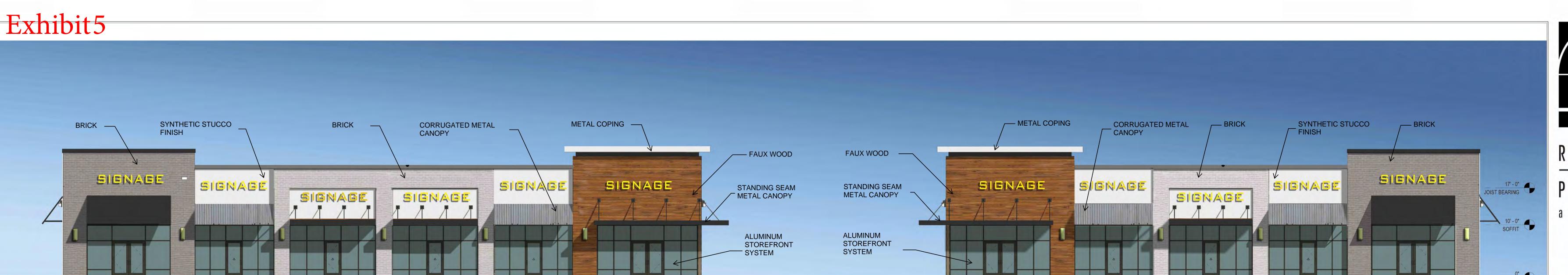
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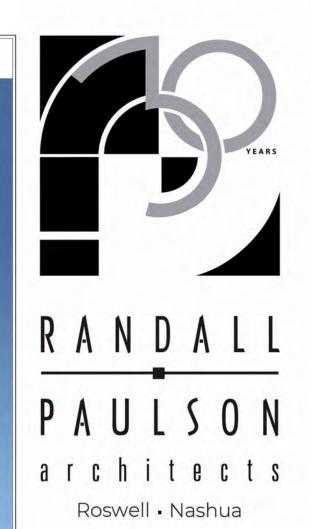
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Released for Construction

Not Released for Construction





NORTH - ELEVATION (parking view)

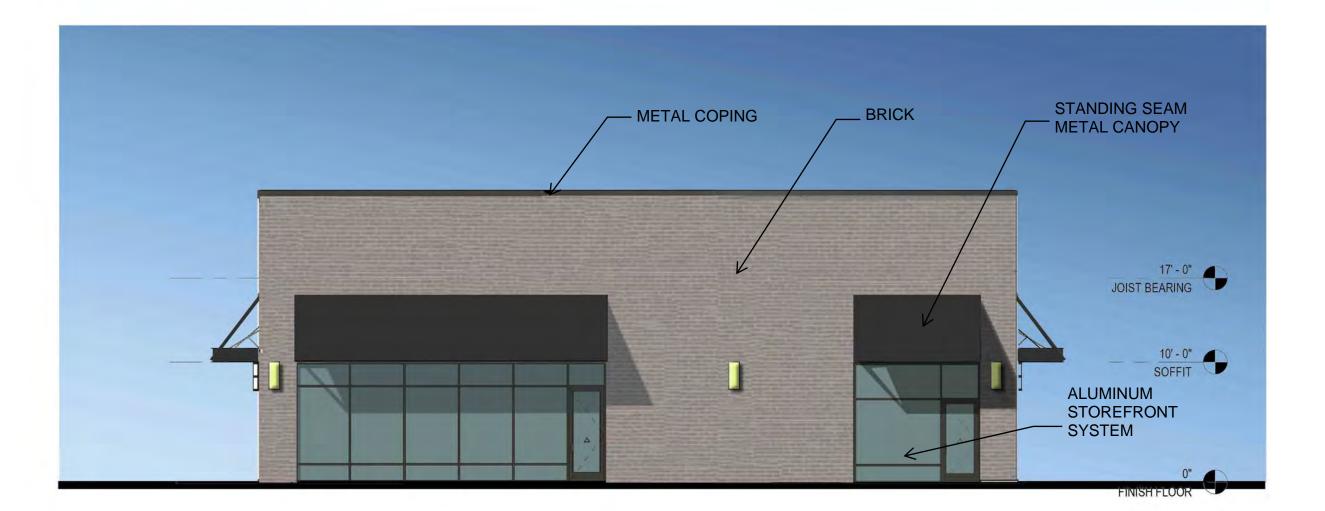
BUILDING 2

**BUILDING 1** 

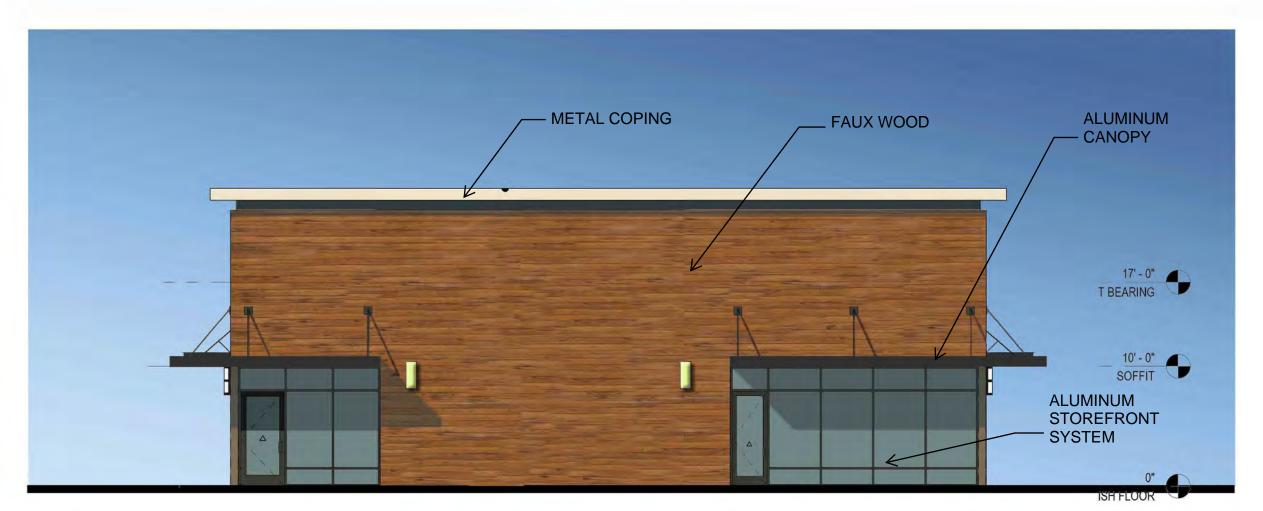
**BUILDING 1** 

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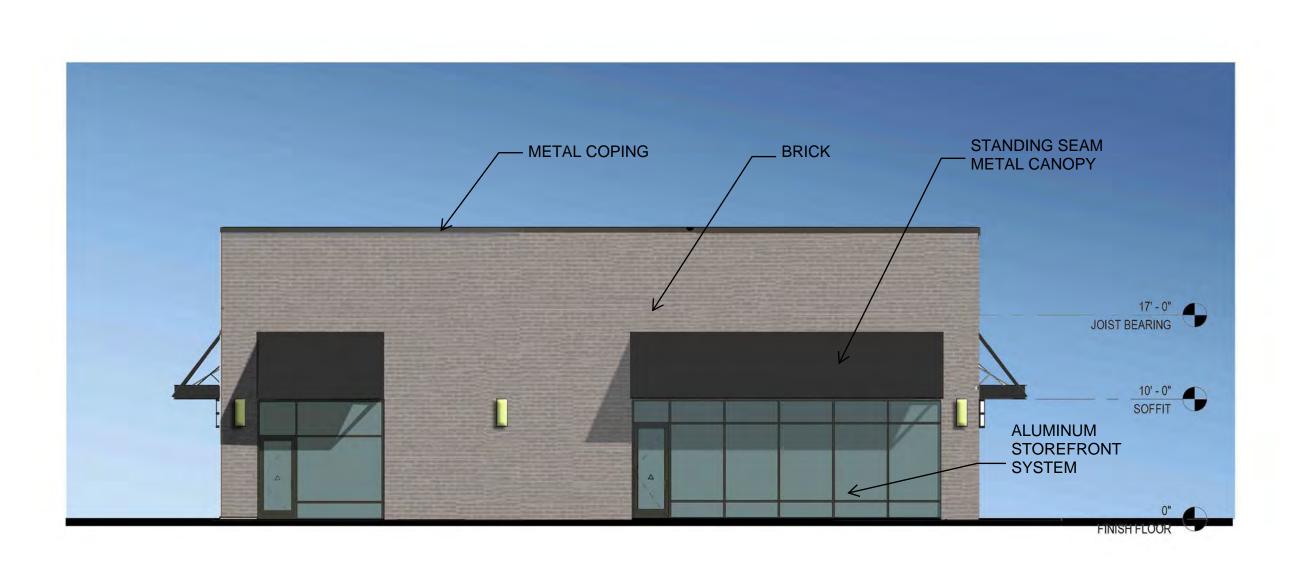
SOUTH - ELEVATION (street view)



WEST - ELEVATION B1



5 EAST - ELEVATION B1



**BUILDING 2** 

WEST - ELEVATION B2



6 EAST - ELEVATION B2

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# architecture/interiors

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SUGAR HILL-GA

for

ACKERMAN & CO

SUGAR HILL, GA

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Date Project No.
30 AUG 2024 2024225.00

Sheet Title
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

Released for Construction

Not Released for Construction