



OFFICE OF CAMPUS PLANNING & OPERATIONS

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING NOTIFICATION

September 27th 2023

Dear Chautauquan,

The owner of 1 Pratt Avenue, The St Elmo Condominium Board of Managers, Inc., is coming before the Architectural Review Board with designs to replace the existing deteriorating vinyl siding and trim at the St. Elmo with new vinyl siding and trim. Therefore, this requires an Architectural Review Board review for the request made as part of this proposal.

Variances/Requests being considered:

- 1) Variance to replace vinyl siding and trim with vinyl siding and trim (ALU Section 4.2.2).

You are receiving this notification because your property is approximately within 150' of the proposed project site. Plans for this project may be reviewed online using the following link: [Architecture Review Board \(ARB\) News and Notes - Chautauqua Institution \(chq.org\)](https://www.chq.org/architecture-review-board-arb-news-and-notes)

The Architectural Review Board will meet on **November 2nd 2023 in the Turner Conference Room at 12:00pm Noon**. Please submit any comments that you may have in writing for the Architectural Review Board's consideration. E-mails are preferred and may be submitted to the Administrator of Architectural and Land Use Regulations at arb@chq.org until 12:00pm noon on November 1st 2023.

Thank you for your time,

Ryan B. Boughton, Assoc. AIA

Administrator of Architectural and Land Use Regulations

rboughton@chq.org | o: 716.357.6245

PO Box 28 • Chautauqua, NY 14722
716.357.6245 • 716.357.9014 (fax)
ARB@chq.org • [chq.org](https://www.chq.org)

September 18, 2023

Architectural Review Board
Chautauqua Institution
1 Ames Plaza
Chautauqua, New York 14722

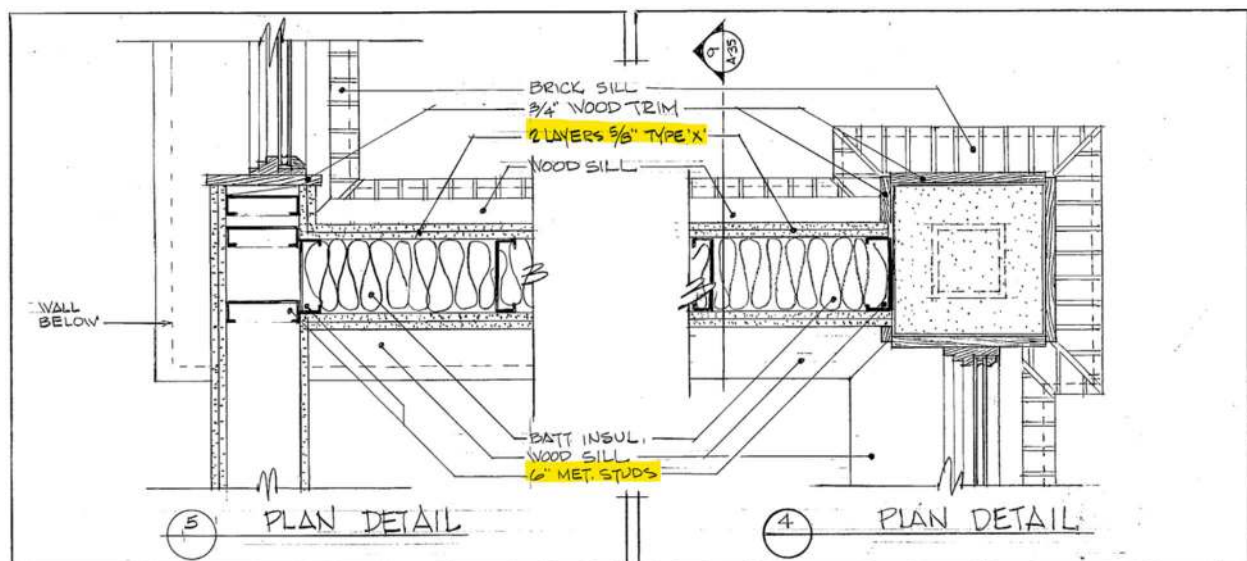
RE: Variance Request for Vinyl Siding
St. Elmo Condominium Board of Managers, Inc.

Dear ARB Members:

The St. Elmo Condominium Board of Managers is requesting a Variance for a comprehensive re-siding project and is aware that Chautauqua Institution's *Architectural and Land Use Regulations* prohibit vinyl and aluminum siding in building projects and new construction, with some exceptions. The St. Elmo Building Committee has been diligently researching alternative products and materials for the past 1 ½ years.

Construction of The St. Elmo commenced in 1987 and included vinyl siding and trim, the original design concept of the architect, as the accompanying elevation drawings illustrate.

The St. Elmo is unique in its construction compared to most, if not all other buildings at the Institution. With a height of five stories, it is comprised of a steel frame structure with metal stud exterior walls, and two layers of 5/8" Type X fire-resistant gypsum sheathing on each side of the metal studs. The composition of the exterior wall has posed significant challenges to re-siding with materials other than the lightweight vinyl siding it was originally designed to carry. This plan detail from the original construction drawings illustrates the existing condition:





Charles Lacki, B & L Wholesale Supply, Inc., arranged site visits with manufacturer technical representatives from the James Hardy Company (fiber cement siding and trim products) and Boral/Westlake Royal Building Products TruExterior (poly-ash siding and trim) within the past several months to see the building firsthand, understand its existing conditions and determine the suitability of their products. Additionally, I spoke to technical representatives of both companies to understand the issues. The building's substrate, a double layer of gypsum sheathing totaling 1 ¼" thick, and metal stud walls, prevent either product from being endorsed by the manufacturer, and preclude or limit the extent of product warranties.

- James Hardy Company fiber cement siding: The substrate must be nailable or no more than 1" thick if it is non-nailable. James Hardy Company considers gypsum sheathing a non-nailable substrate for their product. This condition at the St. Elmo would require the installation of wood or steel furring strips over the gypsum sheathing, fastened to the metal studs. This would require every window and door opening to be retrofitted with extension head, jamb and sill trim pieces to avoid an awkward recessed construction detail resulting from the increased depth of the exterior wall. Because this application veers from its standard recommended installation, James Hardy's disclaimer states, per Technical Bulletin #19 issued January 2018, that it will not be responsible in connection with any such information or assistance given, on how to build a nailable base over non-nailable substrates.

There are other limitations to fiber cement products that preclude it from being an appropriate option for the St. Elmo. It is considerably heavier than the lightweight vinyl siding the building was designed to support. Fiber cement siding requires painting, and generally requires annual maintenance. Ground contact must be avoided. A 6-inch minimum clearance from siding to ground is required.

- Boral/Westlake Royal Building Products TruExterior poly-ash siding: Requires wood studs for installation, with 1 ½" minimum penetration of the stud. The product's technical requirements also state that fasteners should penetrate solid wood, and that sheathing alone will not provide adequate support or holding power. The technical rep noted specific concerns that the double layer of gypsum sheathing would reduce the amount of pin nail passing through studs and would likely reduce the wind load for the siding. Two layers of gypsum sheathing create an unknown reaction condition; specifically, that the additional offset could create challenges of seating the head of the pins flush.

TruExterior poly-ash siding is a heavier product than the vinyl siding the building was designed to carry. It requires painting.

We understand that the ARB shall consider Relevant Factors in deciding whether to grant a Variance, and to that extent we offer the following summary:

- *Whether the requested Variance will impose any material detriment to the health, safety or welfare of any member of the Chautauqua community; it will not.*
- *Whether the requested Variance will impose any material that is detriment to the character of the district, neighborhood, or grounds of the Chautauqua Institution; it will not. It will maintain the same material original to its design and construction.*



- *Whether the requested Variance will adversely affect the physical or environmental conditions in the district, neighborhood, or grounds of the Chautauqua Institution; it will maintain the same conditions that have existing for 35 years.*
- *Whether the requested Variance will produce an undesirable change in the character of the district, neighborhood, or grounds of the Chautauqua Institution; there will be no change.*
- *Whether the requested Variance will adversely impact nearby properties; it will not.*
- *Whether the Variance will produce a benefit to the Applicant or others that exceeds any detriment to the character of the district, neighborhood, or grounds of the Chautauqua Institution, any adverse impact to nearby properties, or any detriment to the health, safety or welfare of the members of the Chautauqua community; the Variance will simply maintain the present character, without adverse impact or any detriment.*
- *Whether the requested Variance will produce a benefit to the Applicant or others that can be achieved by some method that is feasible for the Applicant to pursue and that does not require a Variance; alternative siding materials have been researched and explored, but the building's existing wall composition is not suitable for materials other than the lightweight vinyl siding of the original design.*
- *Whether the need for the requested Variance was self-created; no, vinyl siding was permissible by the Institution's Regulations when the St. Elmo began construction in 1987.*
- *Whether the requested Variance is substantial; vinyl siding is now prohibited in substantial rehabilitations that result in more than 50% of the total area of vinyl siding being replaced.*
- *Whether the requested Variance is the minimum necessary to achieve the desired results; yes.*
- *Whether the requested Variance will allow the retention of the existing Structure to be in keeping with the scale, character and design of the existing Structure and the character of the existing district and neighborhood; it will maintain the existing Structure as originally designed and constructed.*
- *Whether the requested Variance will eliminate or mitigate a hardship to the property in question that is unique and does not apply to a substantial portion of the Buildings or Structures in the district; the construction and composition of the St. Elmo is unique, and unlike other buildings or structures in the district.*
- *Whether, as demonstrated by competent evidence, without the requested Variance the Applicant cannot make an appropriate use of the Building, Structure, or Lot (including a possible alternative use to that proposed in the application) at a reasonable cost; alternative siding products were researched and determined to be incompatible with the existing structure's composition, as evident by the documentation presented. In addition, research regarding an alternative composite type siding included cost estimates for labor and materials for vinyl siding and composite siding comparisons. The cost for composite siding was more than 2 ½ times the cost of vinyl siding, not considering the substantial costs for painting that would be repeated every 10 years.*



- *Whether the same or similar Variances have been granted or denied in the past under circumstances similar to that presented by the application;* the circumstances regarding the St. Elmo are unique. Currently, the St. Elmo is a legally existing nonconformity, but at the time of construction vinyl siding was permitted by the Institution's Regulations.

The replacement of the existing vinyl siding of the St. Elmo with new vinyl siding is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation cited in the Institution's Regulations, which state that, *"Each property be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use"*, and furthermore, that changes that create a false sense of historical development should not be undertaken.

In conclusion, for over 35 years the St. Elmo's stately presence has enhanced the character of its district while contributing to the preservation of the unique development pattern of the Mixed Core. Granting the Variance requested would permit the St. Elmo to proceed with its needed re-siding capital improvement, sympathetic to the original architectural design intent, and mindful of the unique challenges the structure's wall composition poses to alternatives.

Thank you for your review and consideration of this Variance request.

Respectfully submitted,

LaBella Associates

Edmund M. Schober
Project Manager

REVISIONS
 1. 5/20/21 MECHANICAL LOUVER

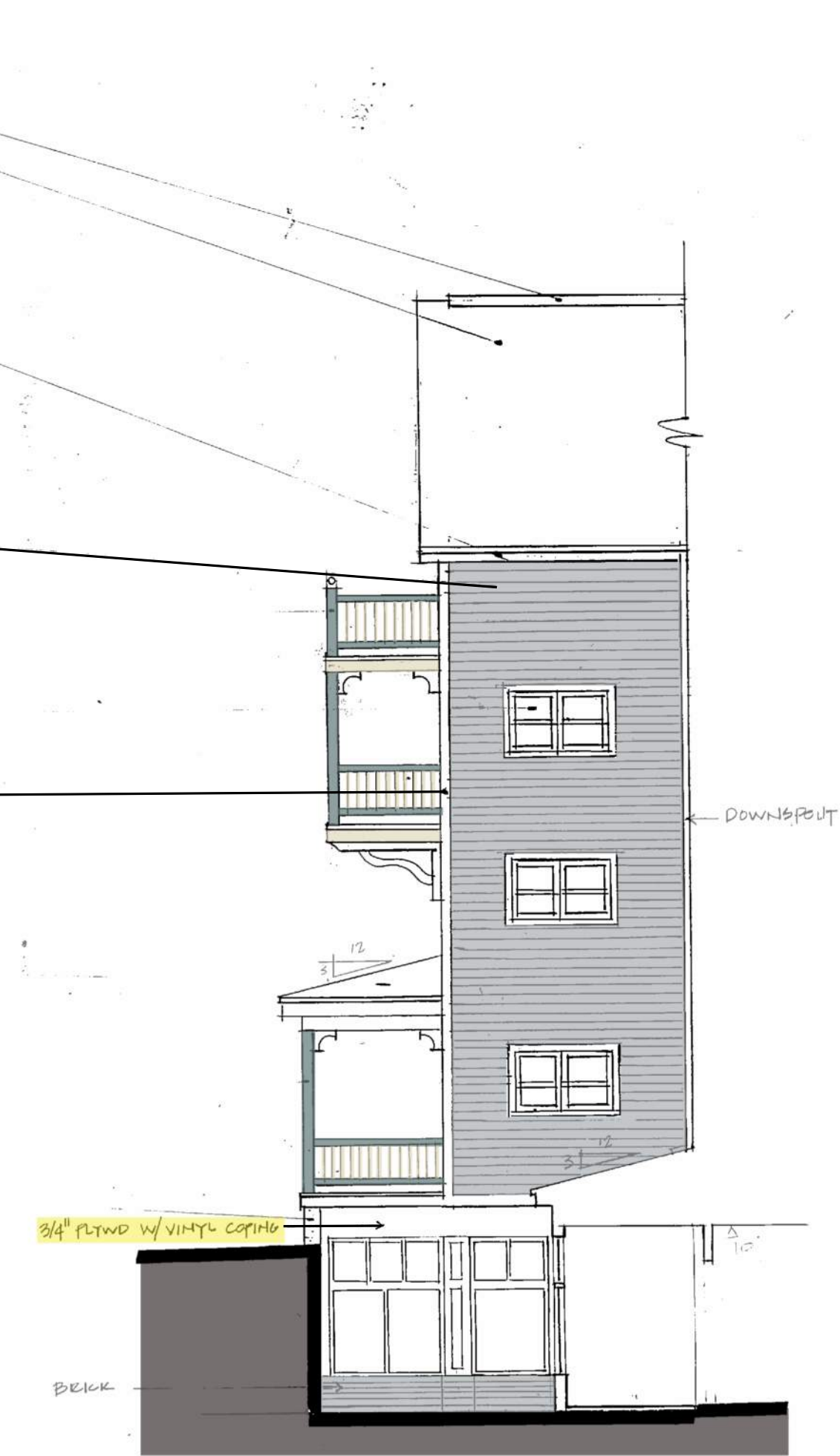


CONCOURSE ENTRY ELEVATION

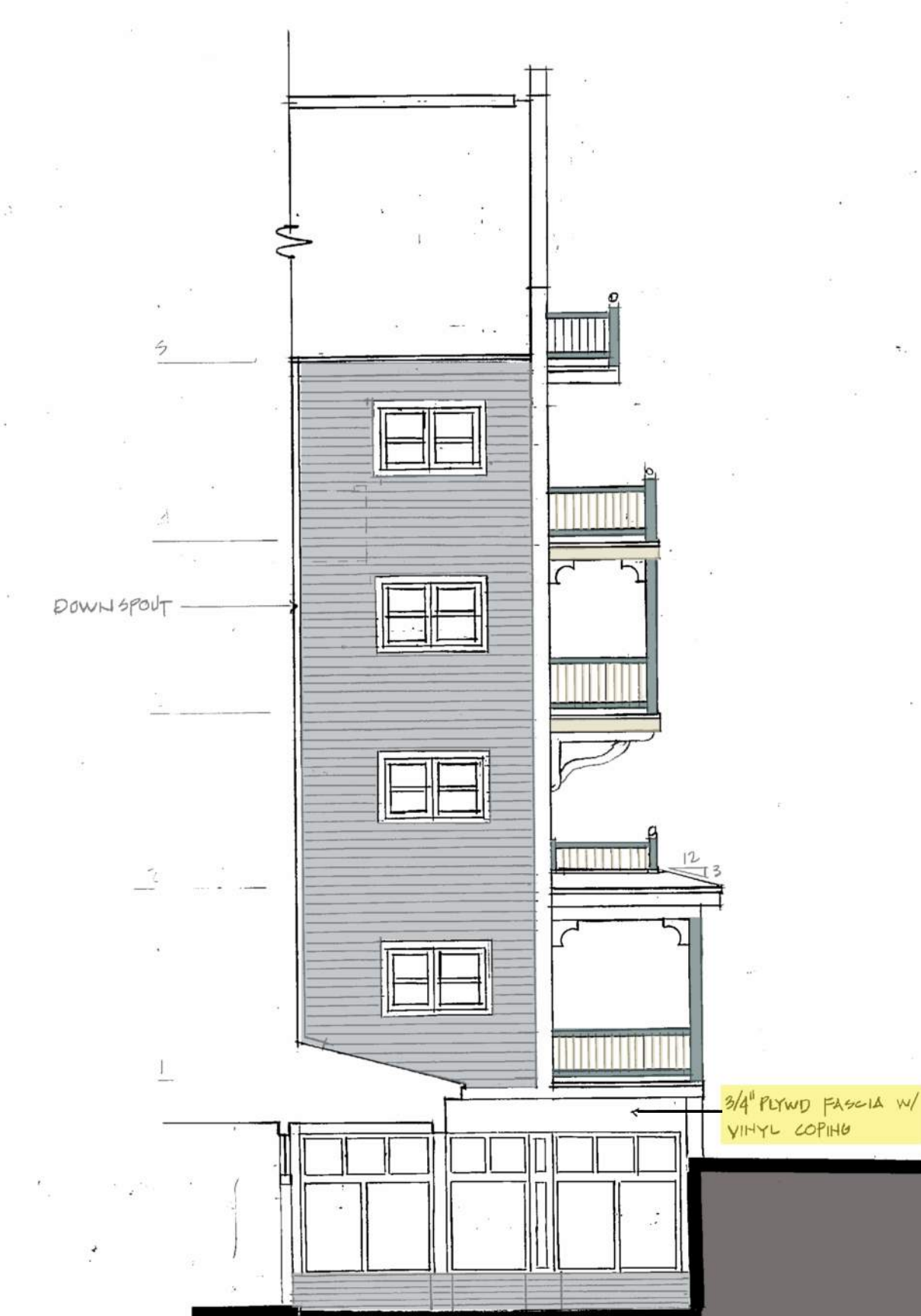
PRATT AVENUE ELEVATION



WYTHE AVENUE ELEVATION



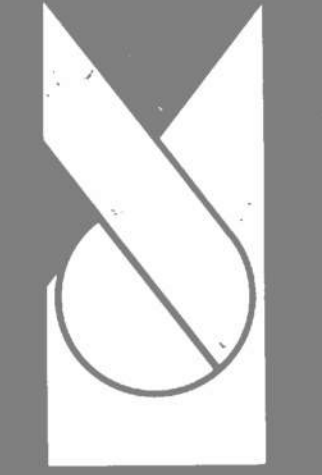
NORTHEAST COURTYARD ELEVATION



SOUTHEAST COURTYARD ELEVATION

NOTE:
 SIMILAR NOTES APPLY TO ALL ELEVATIONS

ARCHITECTS
 LANSON KNAPP & PULVER
 ROCHESTER NEW YORK 76-442-0896



The New
St. Elmo

Hotel and
 Condominiums
 at
 Chautauque Institution
 Chautauque, New York

JOB NO. 406
 DRAWN W.T.P.
 CHECKED
 DATE 21 MAR. 1987
 ISSUED

EXTERIOR
 ELEVATIONS

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

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ELEVATIONS
ST. ELMO CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION
 CHAUTAUQUA, NY

REVISIONS
 1. 5/20/21 MECHANICAL LOUVER

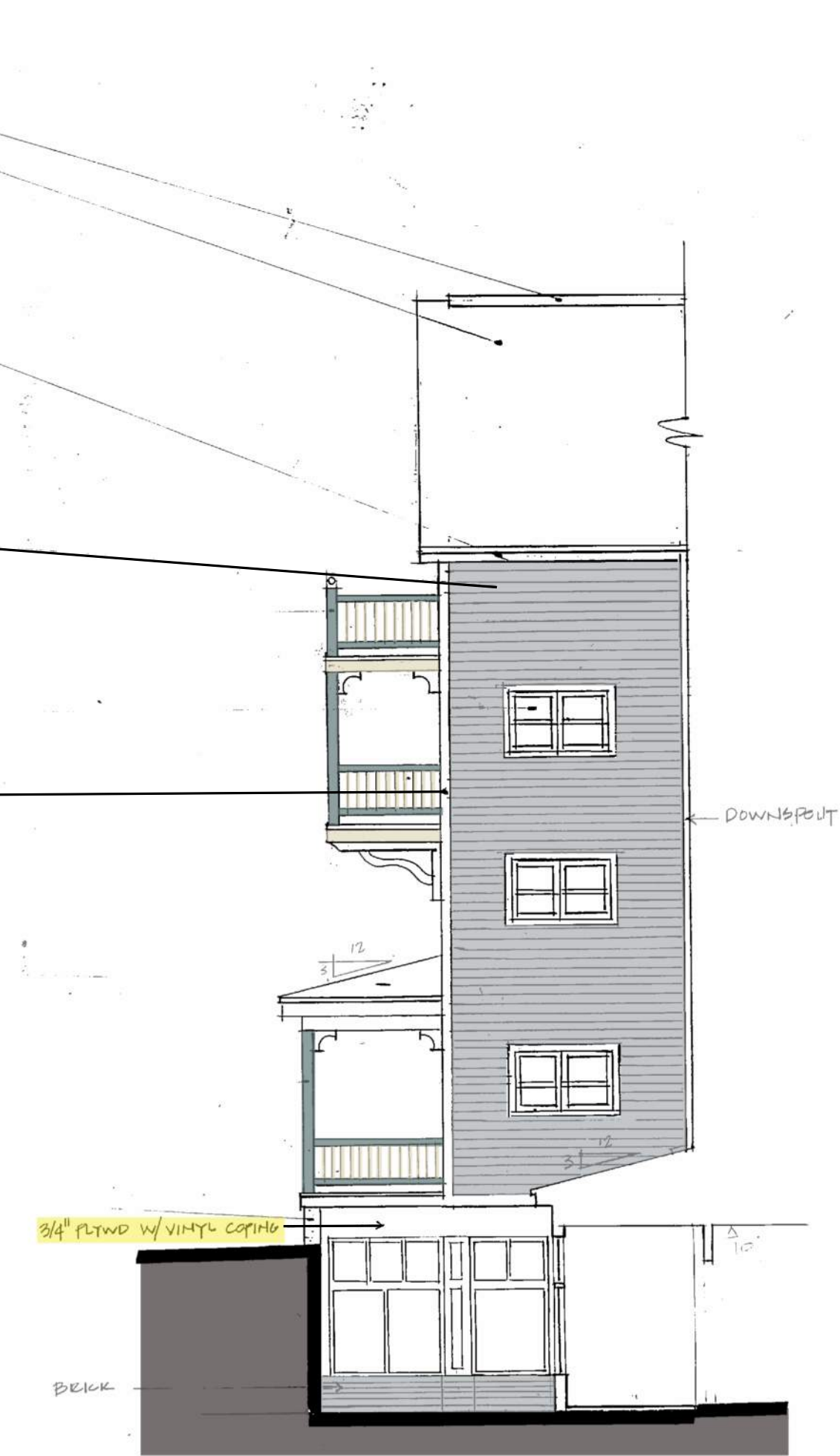


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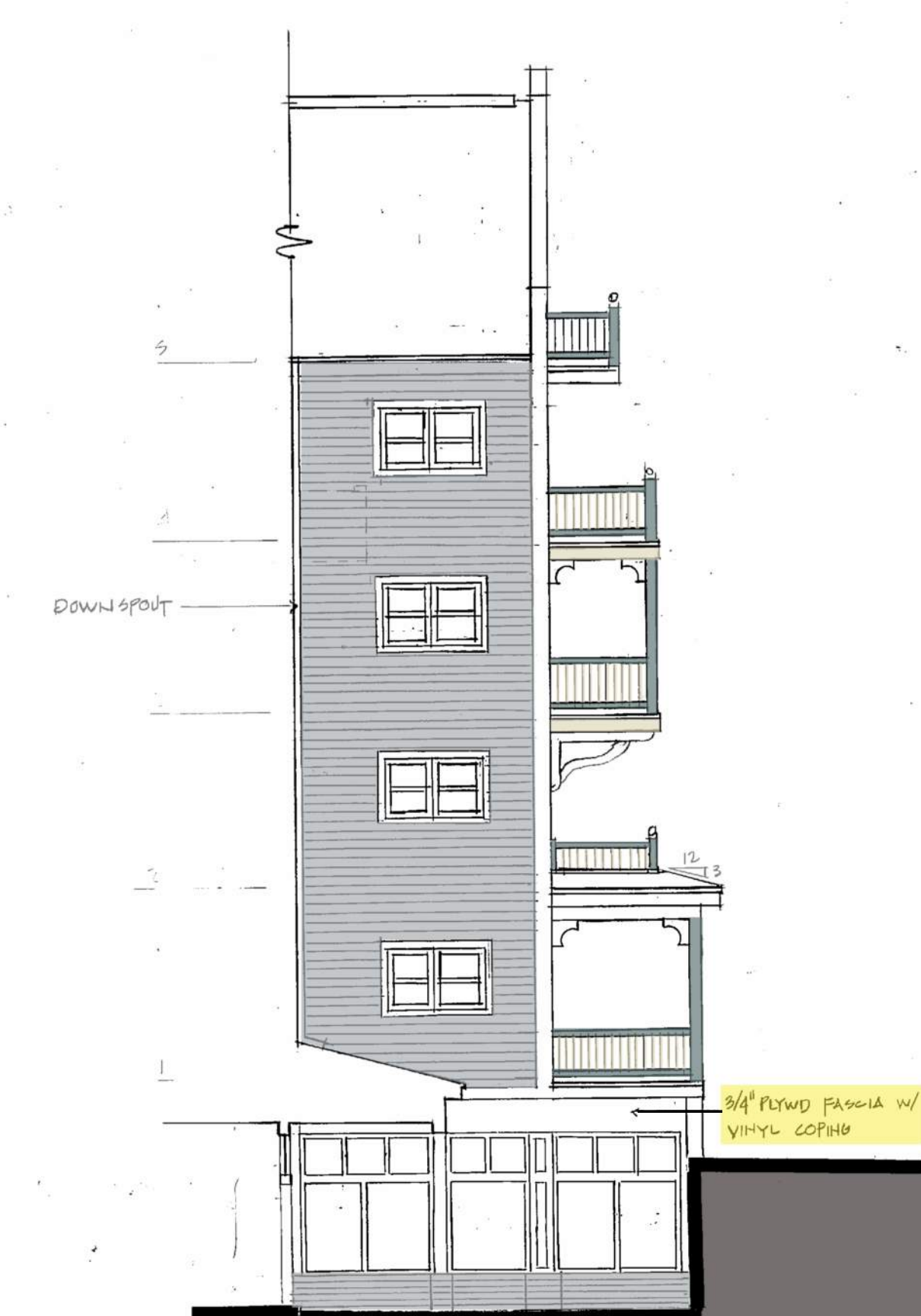
PRATT AVENUE ELEVATION



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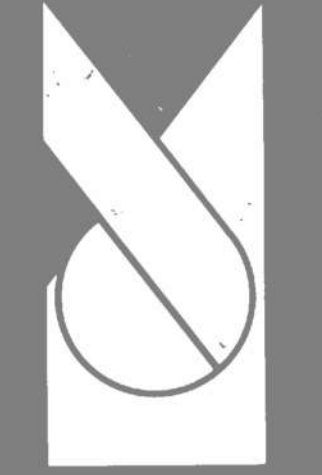
NORTHEAST COURTYARD ELEVATION



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