

166 Lincolnway Valparaiso, IN 46383 (219) 462-1161 **Valpo.us**

Valparaiso Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, May 17, 2023, 5:30 p.m. City Hall, 166 Lincolnway, Valparaiso, IN 46383 Council Chambers

- 1. Pledge of Allegiance
- 2. Roll Call
- 3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes April 19, 2023
- 4. Old Business
- 5. New Business

UV23-003

A petition filed by The Elizabeth Building LLC and 107 Brown Street LLC c/o Chester, Inc. The properties are located at 255 Franklin Street and 107 Brown Street. The petitioner requests the following variance(s) related to proposed new construction of a mixed-use building and a parking lot on the properties referenced (both in Central Place (CP) Zoning District):

- Development Standards Variances pertaining to Parcel 1 (mixed use building):
 - (1) Table 3.301(B) to reduce LSR from 0.15 to 0.00;
 - (2) Table 3.301(B) to increase Gross FAR to 169.47% of allowance;
 - (3) Table 3.301(B) to increase Net FAR to 169.32% of allowance;
 - (4) Table 10.301 to reduce On-Lot Landscaping from 1 large tree, 2 small trees, and 15 shrubs to 0 large tree, 0 small trees, and 0 shrubs;
 - (5) Section 11.502(B) to not require building offsets of building dimensions requirement;
 - (6) Section 11.503(C) to allow a blank wall (south side) described in architectural features requirement; and
 - (7) Section 11.506(B) to not meet window design standards.
- Development Standards Variances pertaining to Parcel 3 (remote parking lot):
 - (1) Table 10.301 to reduce On-Lot Landscaping from 1 large tree, 2 small trees, and 12 shrubs to 0 large tree, 5 small trees, and 31 shrubs;
 - (2) Table 10.304 to reduce Parking Lot Landscaping from 2 large trees and 3 shrubs to 0 large trees and 3 shrubs;
 - (3) Article 18 definition of "accessory structure" to allow for accessory structures (solar roofed parking structures) on a property other than the same property as the principal building served; and
 - (4) Section 2.403(F) to allow accessory structures (solar roofed parking structures) to cover more area than 25% of the footprint of the principal building.

(agenda continued on next page)

- 6. Other Business
- 7. Staff Items
- 8. Adjournment

Kyle Yelton, President – Board of Zoning Appeals Beth Shrader, Planning Director

Next Meeting: June 21, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Interested persons may attend in person, view the meeting live on the city's website (www.valpo.us), participate via web conference (bit.ly/ValpoBZA2023), or submit written comments (with name, address and telephone number) to the Planning Director prior to the hearing date (planningdepartment@valpo.us or City Hall address provided above).

PETITION TO VALPARAISO BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS:	For Office Use Only:	
This application is being submitted for (Check all that app	ly): Petition #:	
Use Variance Development Standards Variance Special Exception/Special Use Relief to Administrative Decision Conditional Use Wireless Communications Facility	Application Type:	
SUBJECT PROPERTY INFORMATION	TYPE OR PRINT IN INK	
the ages of the obligation of	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Property Address:	Subject property from of the	
255 FRANKLIN STREET	side between (streets) MONROE STREET	
VALPARAISO, IN 46383	& BROWN STREET	
	Zoning District: CP, CENTRAL PLACE	
PETITIONER INFORMATION		
Applicant Name:	Address:	
Steve DEBOLD - CHESTER, INC.	555 EASTPORT CENTRE DRIVE	
Phone: 219-476-4424	VALPARAISO, IN 46383	
Email: SDEBOLD & CHESTERING. COM		
PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION		
Applicant Name:	Address:	
Elizabeth Building, ALC. AND	255 FRANKUN STREET	
Phone: 107 BROWN St LLC.	Valparaiso, In 40383	
Email:		
. 45 - 5 7 -		
SECTIONS OF UDO FROM WHICH A VARIANCE, SPECIAL E	EXCEPTION OR ADMIN RELIEF IS SOUGHT: EXH. 1	
Article:Section:Paragraph:Item:	Article: Section: Paragraph: Item:	
Article:Section:Paragraph:Item:	Article:Section:Paragraph:Item:	
Article:Section:Paragraph:Item:	Article:Section:Paragraph:Item:	
Article:Section:Paragraph:ltem:	Article:Section:Paragraph:Item:	

The Elizabeth Development Standards Variance List Exhibit No. 1

Development Standards Variances pertaining to Parcel 1 (mixed use building):

- (1) Table 3.301(B) to reduce LSR from 0.15 to 0.00
- (2) Table 3.301(B) to increase Gross FAR to 169.47% of allowance
- (3) Table 3.301(B) to increase Net FAR to 169.32% of allowance
- (4) Table 10.301 to reduce On-Lot Landscaping from 1 large tree, 2 small trees, and 15 shrubs to 0 large tree, 0 small trees, and 0 shrubs
- (5) Section 11.502(B) to not require building offsets of building dimensions requirement.
- (6) Section 11.503(C) to allow a blank wall (south side) described in architectural features requirement.
- (7) Section 11.506(B) to not meet window design standards.

Development Standards Variances pertaining to Parcel 3 (remote parking lot):

- (8) Table 10.301 to reduce On-Lot Landscaping from 1 large tree, 2 small trees, and 12 shrubs to 0 large tree, 5 small trees, and 31 shrubs.
- (9) Table 10.304 to reduce Parking Lot Landscaping from 2 large trees and 3 shrubs to 0 large trees and 3 shrubs.
- (10) Article 18 definition of "accessory structure" to allow for accessory structures (solar roofed parking structures) on a property other than the same property as the principal building served.
- (11) Section 2.403(F) to allow accessory structures (solar roofed parking structures) to cover more area than 25% of the footprint of the principal building.

Vicinity Map Exhibit No. 2



LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PROPERTY: (OR EXHIBIT NO. 4)		
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT: (OR EXHIBIT NO. 3		

Written Description Exhibit No. 3

The construction of a 12,993 sq. ft. Mixed Use building on Parcel 1 with two retail spaces, management office, passageway to a common exterior courtyard area on the first floor, four high end one-bedroom apartments with terraces on the second floor, bedroom loft areas for the apartments on the third floor, and a tenant amenity area along with solar panel area on the roof deck. There are two parking spaces on the east side of the building.

The Construction of an eleven-space parking lot located on Parcel 3 with two solar panel carports structures and an entrance drive off Michigan Avenue.

Legal Description Exhibit No. 4

Parcel 1 255 Franklin Street, Valparaiso, Indiana

The north ½ of Lot 5 and north ¼ of Lot 6 in the original town, now city, of Valparaiso, as per plat thereof, recorded in Deed Record "A", Page 13, in the office of the Recorder of Porter County, Indiana.

Parcel 3 107 Brown Street, Valparaiso, Indiana

Lot 8 except the 56 feet, in Block 32 in the original survey of the town (now city) of Valparaiso as per plat thereof, recorded in Deed Record "A", Page 13, in the Office of the Recorder of Porter County, Indiana.

Variance from Development Standards Petitioner's Proposed Findings of Fact

(Please use fillable pdf, print neatly, or attach printed document.)

Petitioner submits that:

Α.	The proposed variance from the Development Standards will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community because:
9	EXH. 7
B.	The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the proposed variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner because:
()	EXH.7
C.	The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property included in the proposed variance because:
	EXH.7
- 1	

The petitioner carries the burden of proving to the Board of Zoning Appeals the existence of each and every one of the elements listed above.

The Elizabeth BZA Variance Requests - Findings of Fact **EXH.7** 5/5/23

Variance Requests 1-3

Table 3.301(B) – Nonresidential and Mixed Use Standards: "Central Place (CP), Mixed Use (at least 50% residential floor area) – LSR=0.15; Gross FAR=1.175; Net FAR=1.382"

This project consists of two non-contiguous parcels — one which will have the new building, semi-public passageway, and courtyard, as well as two parking spaces - and one which will have new a parking area for eleven cars, surrounded by landscaping. Because the building and the majority of parking are located on non-contiguous lots, the project site has essentially been 'split' into two parts, each of which is subject to the UDO individually. However, when these parts of the project are viewed together, the overall project's noncompliance with these limits decreases significantly.

For instance, 15% of the project site is required to be landscaped area **(LSR)**. When both parts of the project are considered together, the proposed landscaped area is 12.8%. Given the small size of the overall project area, it should be noted that this shortfall amounts to just 252 square feet, well below the area of proposed ROW landscape enhancements proposed (see Variance Request 4).

The allowable **Gross FAR** is 1.175 (very low for a zoning district where four story zero lot line buildings are permitted). When both parts of the project are considered together, the proposed Gross FAR is actually 1.13 - below the allowable maximum. However, because the two parts of the project are on separate lots, a variance is required for the 'building' lot, while the 'parking' lot has a proposed Gross FAR of 0.

Likewise, the allowable **Net FAR** is 1.382. When both parts of the project are considered together, the proposed Net FAR is actually 1.33% - also below the allowable. However, again because the two parts of the project are on separate lots, a variance is required for the 'building' lot, while the 'parking' lot has a proposed Net FAR of 0.

Here, due to the very small size of the individual parcels (.15 acres and .115 acres), and the fact that both are to be developed as part of the same project, consideration of the overall project's compliance with the LSR, Gross FAR, and Net FAR requirements would provide substantial justice to the property owner, who is attempting to produce a good project, albeit on two tiny, non-contiguous lots – one for the building and one for the parking/open space. In addition, application of the standards to the parcels individually would be necessarily burdensome to the owner, since individual compliance would render the project non-viable, as the 'building' portion of the project could not be spread across the two non-contiguous lots. Finally, the public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, because if the two lots were a single parcel, the project would be in compliance except for the LSR, as discussed above.

Variance Request 4

Table 10.301 – On-Lot Landscaping Standards, CP, Non-Residential (Parcel 1): "8 Large Trees/Acre; 16 Small Trees/Acre; 46 Shrubs/Acre."

According to the above standards, required landscaping for the 'Building Lot' (Parcel 1) consists of 1 Large Tree, 2 Small Trees, and 15 Shrubs.

Because this project proposes to take advantage of the zoning district's zero setback requirements for the front and side yards and to create a hardscaped semi-public courtyard and provide as much on-lot parking as feasible (2 spaces), and because of the small size of the lot (6525sf), the only option remaining to provide landscaping involves the use of above-ground 'container' evergreen shrubs (of which four are proposed), and to provide landscaping improvements in the form of an assortment of shrubs and perennials within the right of way (approximately 359sf of this is proposed).

Application of the standards to this parcel would be necessarily burdensome to the owner, since the area needed to support the required trees and shrubs would necessitate eliminating either the on-site parking (required for the project to comply with the parking ordinance) or eliminating the semi-public courtyard feature, which is of the essence of this project. Here, this semi-public hardscape area is intended as an urban enhancement in much the same way landscaping requirements are intended. In this case, however, since no front or side yard setbacks are required in the district, this landscaping (if installed) would occur only within the rear yard setback which, if private, would provide no direct benefit to the public, as the owner intends the hardscape courtyard with container trees to do. In addition, the public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, but instead will benefit from the addition of a semi-public pedestrian courtyard providing a unique visual and urban experience.

Variance Request 5

Section 11.502(B) – 'Required Offsets': "Building walls with a horizontal dimension of more than 80 feet shall have projections or recesses of at least six feet, and at least two feet for buildings with horizontal dimension of less than 80 feet, measured perpendicular to the vertical plane of the wall. These projections or recesses shall be spaced not more than 80 feet apart. Projections or recesses shall have a horizontal dimension parallel to the building wall from which the offset is measured of at least the lesser of:

- 1. 20 feet; or
- 2. 20 percent of the building facade. See Figure 11.502, Required Offsets."

This section of the UDO requires a variance request for almost every project due to the fact that it is unreasonably misapplied to every single 'Nonresidential' project, regardless of context or scale.

In this case, where the zoning permits structures to have zero setbacks from the ROW and side lot lines, the UDO's intent is clearly to promote urban, zero-lot-line type development.

Observation of the local, historical, urban, zero-lot-line streetscape in Valparaiso, or almost any other similar downtown, does not demonstrate urban street facades that jog in and out two to six feet along the street. This provision seems to have been intended to prevent large, undifferentiated 'big-box' building facades in more sub-urban or exurban settings, but has been unreasonably applied to all nonresidential buildings, including those in urban contexts where a consistent street edge is more traditional.

Here, the proposed overall building façade along the street is 65'-4" long, divided into two parts by a pedestrian passageway into the interior of the site, resulting in two separate ground floor street facades of 24'-8" and 30'-8" in length. This voluntary breaking-up of the massing, along with the inclusion of a pedestrian passageway ten feet in width, plus the use of transparent glazing and entrances constituting the majority of the length of those facades, serves to better 'interrupt' the horizontal dimension of the building then would merely jogging the façade in and out arbitrarily.

While this section of the UDO may be appropriate when applied to larger buildings in less urban contexts, in such a small building, the loss of square footage and the resultant structural problems created, to say nothing of the expense incurred, by jogging the exterior street facades in and out two feet for five to six feet of length would be necessarily burdensome to the property owner and could undermine the project's feasibility. The public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, and such a variance would provide substantial justice to the landowner by not imposing such an arbitrary requirement on a project that already aims for good design that will enhance the streetscape and neighborhood.

Variance Request 6

Section 11.503(C) — 'Blank Walls': "All exterior building elevations that face public streets, customer parking areas, or areas of residential use shall be designed so that there are no areas of blank wall that are more than 16 feet in horizontal or vertical direction. This requirement can be met by employing the use of any architectural feature required by subsection A or B, above, <u>or by material and color variations</u>, decorative cornices, murals, score lines, and graphics." (Emphasis added).

Since this project complies with the highlighted language above, it is not clear why a variance from this section is being required.

Here, the zoning code permits zero-lot-line buildings in this district, and since the Indiana Building Code does not permit window openings in walls on lot lines, nor elements that project across lot lines, decoration of facades is the only option to avoid 'blank walls' in this situation. This project proposes to carry the material variation and banding of the primary street façade across the entire length of the zero-lot-line walls. This project also proposes openings and variations in the building massing to help break up the zero-lot-line walls in an attempt to be a good neighbor. Since the project complies with this section of the ordinance, it is unclear what finding of fact should be required to grant this variance.

Variance Request 7

Section 11.506(B) – 'Window Design': "On nonresidential buildings that are not industrial buildings:

- 1. Windows shall be recessed at least two inches, and shall include obvious sills, heads, and other forms of framing.
- 2. Windows shall be transparent, and shall allow views into the building at a depth of not less than four feet.
- 3. The ratio of width to height of upper-story windows shall be not more than 1:2."

This project complies with all portions of this section, except for the mandated proportional ratio of 1:2 maximum width to height for upper story windows, and the requirement for 'obvious sills, heads, and other forms of framing.'

With respect to the upper story window proportions, this rule is arbitrary and no guarantee of good design, which is presumably the intent. A walk up Lincolnway will reveal that the Chamber of Commerce building (next door to City Hall at 162 Lincolnway), as well as the buildings at 151 Lincolnway, 68 Lincolnway, 64-66 Lincolnway, 7 Lincolnway, 23 Lincolnway, and the Porter County Museum all have upper story windows in excess of the mandated proportions. These structures are all a century old or more, and part of the historic downtown Valparaiso streetscape. This rule is arbitrary, and only a few of the project's upper story windows do not comply, and those that do not are recessed more than eight feet from the outer plane of the building façade.

With respect to the requirement that all windows have obvious sills, heads, and other forms of framing, the proposed windows in the masonry exterior wall all have cast stone sills, and either have a cast stone course passing across the top of the opening to form a head, or have a brick accent course aligned with the top of the opening to lend emphasis.

Due to the property owner's desire for well-proportioned and composed building façades, strict adherence to this rule would be necessarily burdensome to the property owner. The public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, and such a variance would provide substantial justice to the landowner by not imposing such an arbitrary requirement on a project that already aims for good design that will enhance the streetscape and neighborhood.

The Elizabeth BZA Findings of Fact 5/5/23

PARCEL 3

Variance Request 8

Section 2.403(F)(1)(a) – 'Other Detached Accessory Buildings or Structures; Footprint': "In the ER, SR, GR, UR, NC, RU, CN, CG, CP, and RT districts, no detached accessory building or buildings on a nonresidential lot shall cover an area that is larger than 25 percent of the footprint of the principal building."

Here, the Parcel 1 building footprint is 4,427sf (if 'footprint' means the actual area of ground occupied by the structure), or 4,896sf (if 'footprint' means the total area of roof at whatever height above the ground), while the extent of proposed solar panel shade structures above the parking on Parcel 3 is 2,394sf (if 'footprint' means the total area of roof at whatever height above the ground). On the other hand if 'footprint' means only the actual area of ground occupied by the structure, the proposed solar shade structures' 'footprint' amounts to less than 20sf.

Strict adherence to this rule would be necessarily burdensome to the property owner since what is being considered an 'accessory structure' by the UDO is here merely a roof on columns, rather than an enclosed structure with walls. While the roof 'footprint' exceeds the allowable maximum for 'accessory structures', the actual ground area 'footprint' does not. The 'accessory structure' in question is intended as both an amenity for tenants and guests in the form of covered parking, as well as utility infrastructure in the form of a power-generating solar array. The extent proposed corresponds to the extent of required parking for the overall project that is proposed for Parcel 3, and any reduction made in order to comply with the 25% rule would result in a reduced amenity for the residents and visiting public, as well as a reduced green energy generating capacity. The public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, and such a variance would provide substantial justice to the landowner by not imposing this limit on an open-sided roof 'structure' that lacks the solidity and mass of an actual 'building'.

Variance Request 9

Table 10.301 – On-Lot Landscaping Standards, CP, Non-Residential (Parcel 3): "8 Large Trees/Acre; 16 Small Trees/Acre; 46 Shrubs/Acre."

According to the above standards, required landscaping for the 'Parking Lot' (Parcel 3) consists of 1 Large Tree, 2 Small Trees, and 12 Shrubs.

Because this project proposes to provide solar panel shade structures above the parking spaces on Parcel 3 (which is only .15 acres in size), it is undesirable to plant large trees which will interfere with the power generation potential of such structures. Instead, 5 Small Trees are proposed in lieu of the required 3, and 31 Shrubs are proposed in lieu of the required 12, in addition to some of the required Parking Landscaping (discussed below), around the perimeter of the site.

Granting a variance to the standards under this section of the UDO would provide substantial justice to the property owner, who is trying to be both a good neighbor by screening the parking with more than the required On-Lot shrubs and small trees, and to be a good steward of the earth by installing solar power generation infrastructure. In addition, application of the standards to this parcel would be necessarily burdensome to the owner, since the required trees would undermine the goal of green energy production, requiring that portion of the project to be dropped. Finally, the public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, as the total number of plantings proposed as On-Lot and Parking Lot (34 Shrubs and 5 Small Trees) exceeds the required number (3 Large Trees, 2 Small Trees, and 15 Shrubs) for a total of 39 proposed versus 20 required.

Variance Request 10

Table 10.304 - Parking Lot Landscaping Standards (CP): "1 Large Tree/8 spaces; 1 Shrub/4 spaces."

According to the above standards, required landscaping for the 'Parking Lot' (parcel 3) consists of 2 Large Trees and 3 Shrubs.

Because this project proposes to provide solar panel shade structures above the parking spaces on Parcel 3 (which is only .15acres in size), it is undesirable to plant large trees which will interfere with the power generation potential of such structures. On the other hand, the 3 required Shrubs will be provided, in addition to the required On-Lot Landscaping, around the perimeter of the site.

Granting a variance to the standards under this section of the UDO would provide substantial justice to the property owner, who is trying to be both a good neighbor by screening the parking with required shrubs, and to be a good steward of the earth by installing solar power generation infrastructure. In addition, application of the standards to this parcel would be necessarily burdensome to the owner, since the required trees would undermine the goal of green energy production, requiring that portion of the project to be dropped. Finally, the public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, as the total number of plantings proposed as On-Lot and Parking Lot (34 Shrubs and 5 Small Trees) exceeds the required number (3 Large Trees, 2 Small Trees, and 15 Shrubs) for a total of 39 proposed versus 20 required.

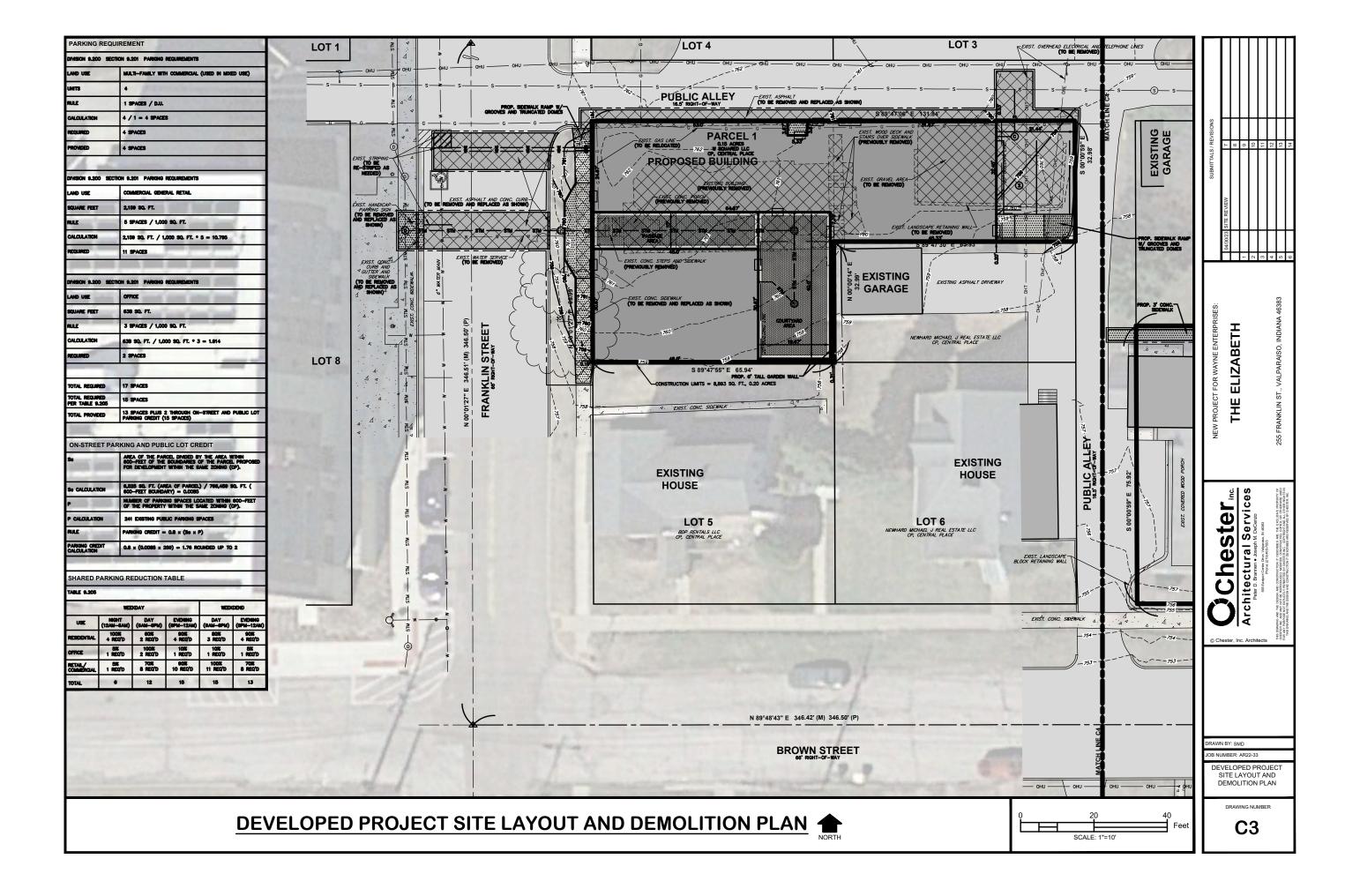
Variance Request 11

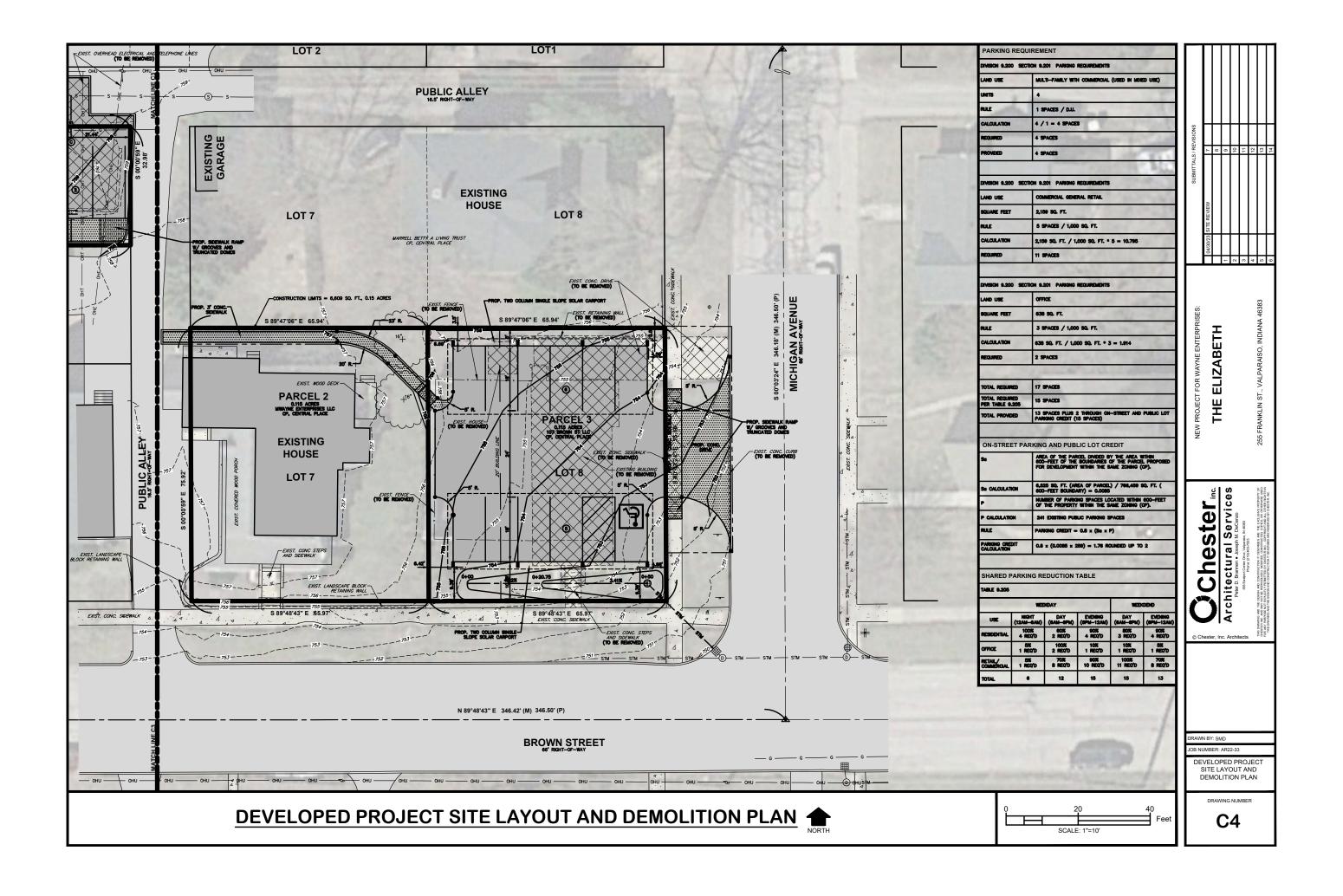
Division 18.4 – General Definitions: "Accessory Building or Accessory Structure means a building or structure that: . . . (4.) Is located on the same lot as the principal building or structure served."

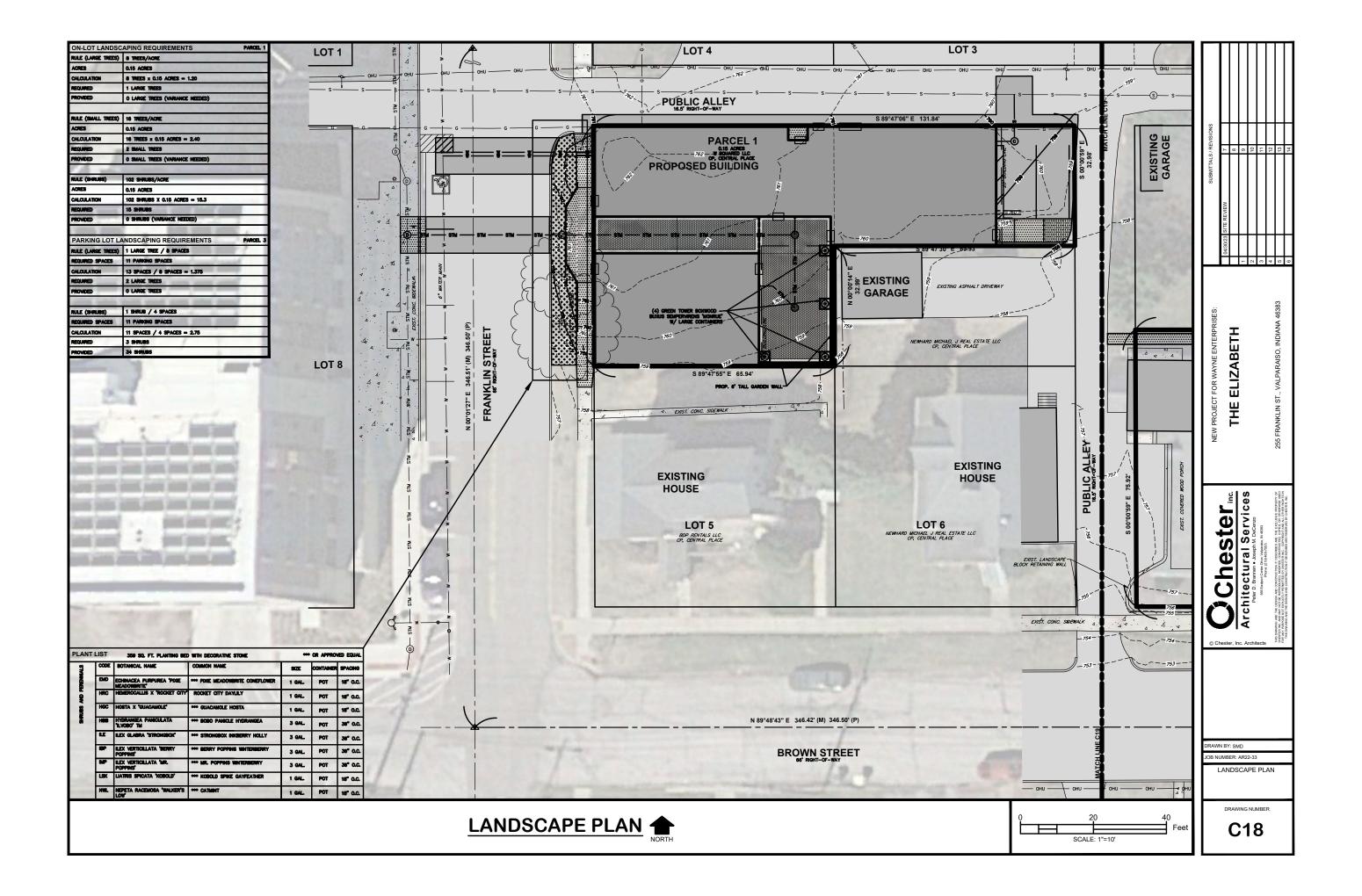
Here, this project consists of two non-contiguous parcels, as discussed above. Due to the size of the lots, it is not feasible to locate all of the required parking on the 'building' lot (Parcel 1). Because the building and the majority of parking are located on non-contiguous lots, the project site has essentially been 'split' into two parts, each of which is subject to the UDO individually. However, if viewed as a single project spread across two small, non-contiguous lots, the noncompliance with this definition becomes one of semantics.

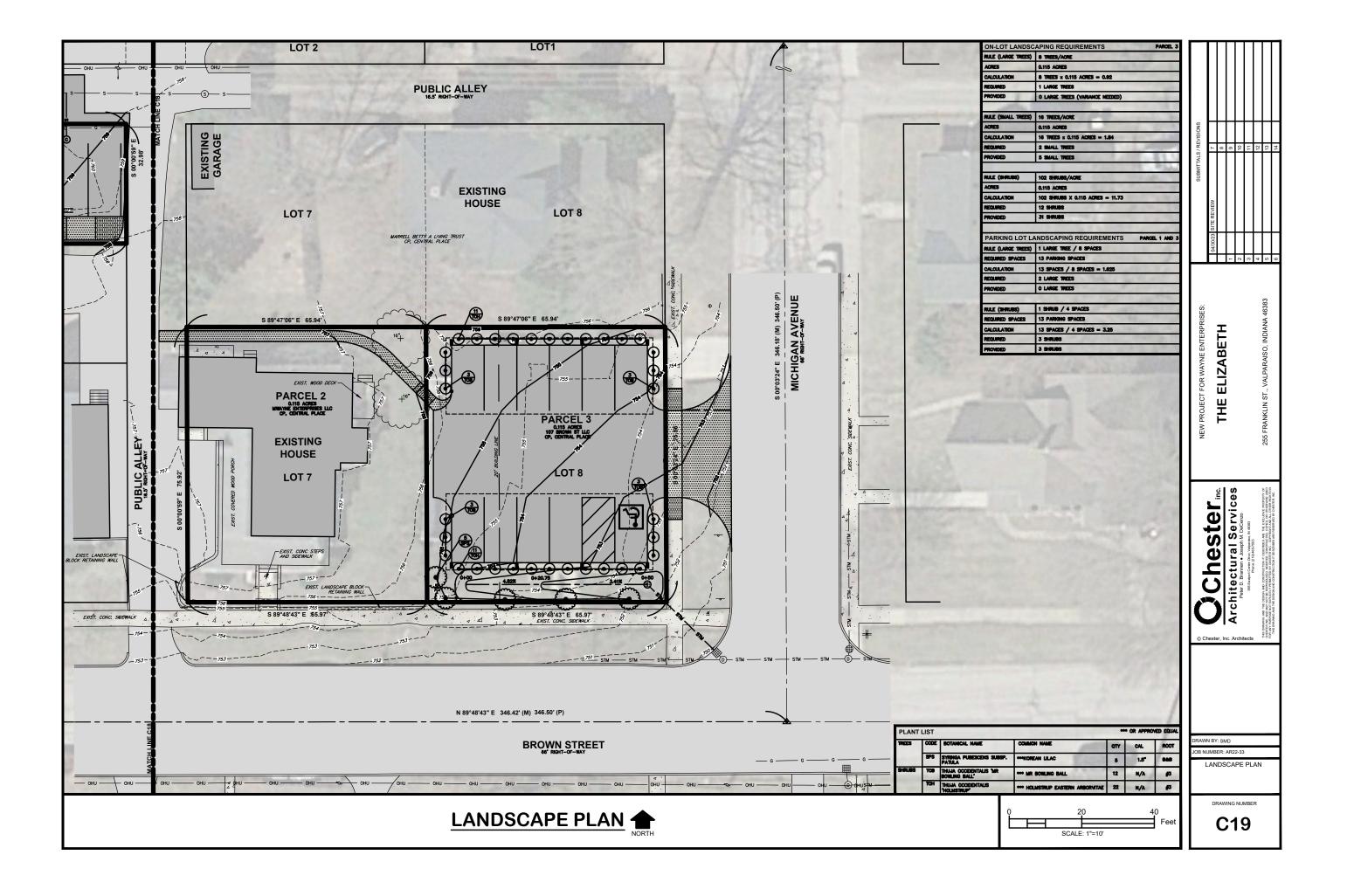
Granting a variance to the standards under this section of the UDO would provide substantial justice to the property owner, who proposes to provide an amenity in the form of covered parking to both residents and visitors using the lot. Application of the standards to this parcel would be necessarily burdensome to the owner, since it would result in the elimination of the covered parking amenity, as well as the power-generating solar arrays intended as an investment in green energy. Finally, the public will not be harmed or endangered by a granting of this variance, since they will be enabled to utilize the covered parking when visiting the principal building on Parcel 1.

Site Plan, Landscape Plan, and Building Elevations Exhibit No. 8











SOUTH ELEVATION SCALE: 1/8"=1"-0"



NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8"=1"-0"



EAST ELEVATION



FRANKLIN ST. (WEST) ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

THE ELIZABETH

Architectural Services
Peter D. Barmen • Joseph M. DeCarzo
555 EmperChark Deck Vapeans in 84333
504 Peter D. Bernen • Joseph M. DeCarzo
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Chester, Inc. Architects

DRAWN BY: JMD JOB NUMBER: AR-22-33

> COLOR ELEVATIONS

DRAWING NUMBER

A1.1

