



architecture + planning
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May 17, 2023

Leah Perrin
Regional Plan Review
Planning and Development
Halifax Regional Municipality
Via email: perrinl@halifax.ca

RE: Proposal for Mixed-Use Development - Bedford Highway Lands

Dear Leah,

zzap Consulting Inc. on behalf of our client, Pat Croskerry, is pleased to submit this request to the municipality to review and consider a multi-unit residential with ground floor commercial building proposal on Bedford Highway near Glenmont Avenue (PIDs: 41377920, 41377938, 41377946, 41377953, 41377920, 00429407, and 00429340). The subject site is within the urban service boundary, has a combined area of 6,505 square meters, and approximately 90 meters of frontage on Bedford Highway and 45 meters on Crosby Street (see Appendix A)

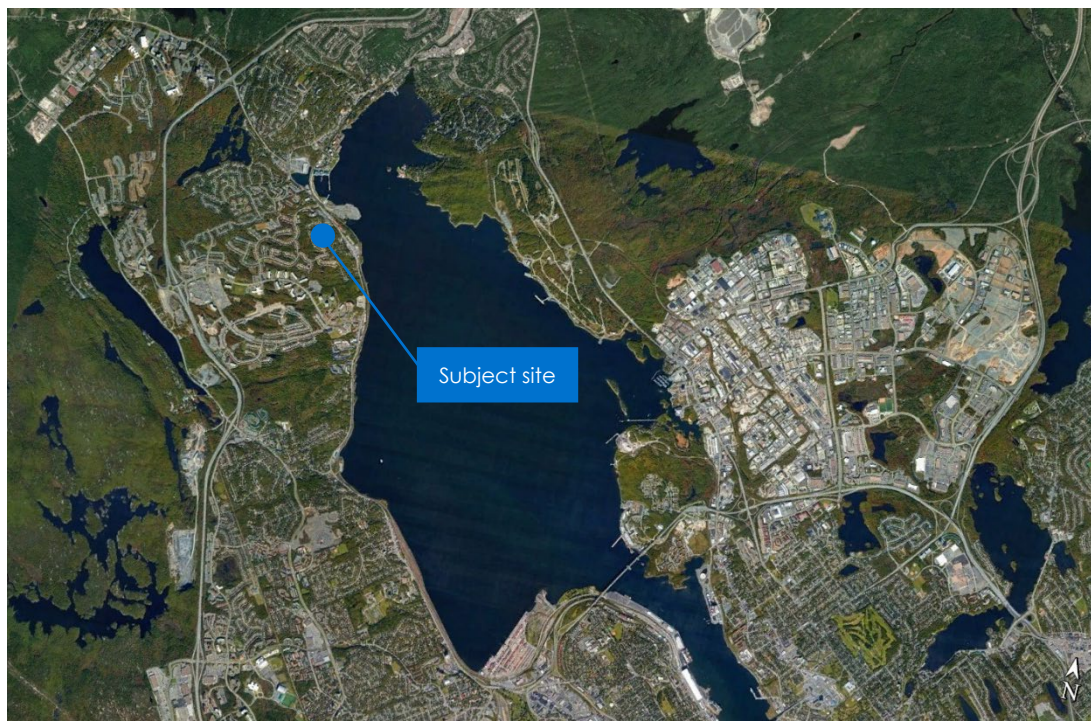


Figure 1: Proposed Development Location

1.0 Site Context

The site fronts onto both Bedford Highway and Crosby Street. This section of Bedford Highway and surrounding areas includes a range of land uses – retail, personal service, restaurant, residential and recreational. Residential land uses provide a variety of typologies and densities including six-storey apartment buildings, single-family homes, and townhouse-style units. The images below depict the diverse land uses surrounding the site.

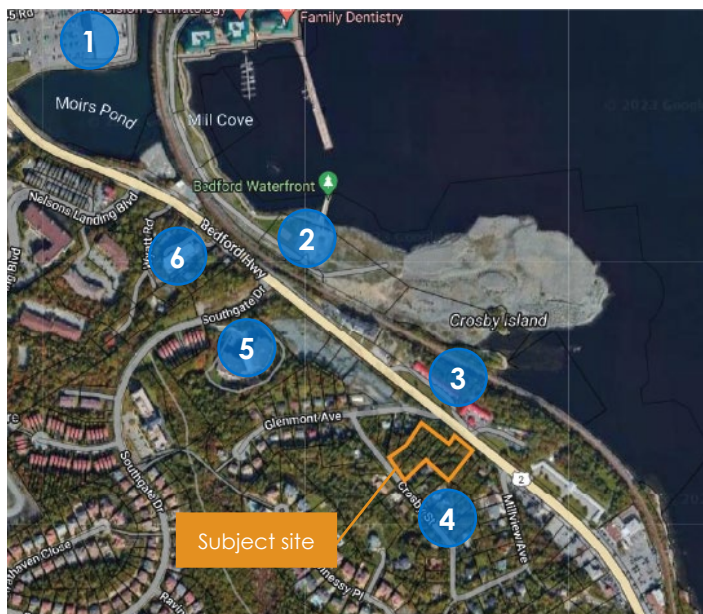


Figure 2: Land Use Context



Strip mall containing retail and services, 12 Esquire Lane



Single family home, 18 Crosby Street



Shopping centre, 949 Bedford Highway



Six-storey multi-unit residential, 36 Southgate Drive



Bedford Waterfront Park



Six-storey multi-unit residential, 864 Bedford Highway



The site is directly adjacent to two bus stops serviced by routes 8 & 93 and connect the site to downtown Halifax and the Sackville and Cobequid Transit Terminals. Route #8 runs every 20 minutes during peak ridership hours. Route #93 is a commuter line, offering peak period, peak direction connection along the Bedford Highway to downtown Halifax.

1.1 Planning Context

The site is located within the Bedford Plan area and is regulated by the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB). It is designated Residential on the Bedford Generalized Future Land Use Map and zoned Residential Single Dwelling Unit (RSU). This zone restricts residential uses to single-unit dwellings.

The Bedford Highway is an important corridor within HRM's transportation network and is identified in HRM's 2017 Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) as a Transit Priority Corridor. A Functional Plan for the Bedford Highway was completed in 2019 and identified opportunities for a multi-modal corridor. The functional plan outlines potential transit enhancements to this corridor, including new active transportation infrastructure, improved transit services, and changes to address pedestrian safety and comfort.

2.0 Development Request

This proposal includes a multi-unit, mixed-use building fronting onto Bedford Highway, with five ground-based units fronting onto Crosby Street (see Appendix B). Three levels of concealed parking would be utilized on the lower storeys to assist in site grading, while the upper storeys would be stepped back to minimize the building's scale in relation to the street. Approximately 98 units (assuming an average unit size of 750 ft²) could be accommodated on the building's upper five storeys. The proposed main access is from Crosby Street, however we are open to exploring other access options (i.e., from the Bedford Highway) with HRM staff that may improve the functionality of the Bedford Highway intersection.

We are requesting that through the Regional Plan review and Suburban Plan process, HRM modify the existing zoning to permit:

1. higher density residential and commercial uses along the Bedford Highway, an arterial corridor where higher density land uses align with modern planning principles.
2. Ground-based, townhouse-style units on Crosby Street to provide gentle density within this lower-density neighbourhood.

3.0 Planning Rationale

This development proposal is supported by several Regional Plan policies as well as policy in the IMP and Rapid Transit Strategy (RTS).

3.1 Regional Plan Policy

The site is in the Urban Settlement designation under HRM's Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS). The RMPS establishes several policies and goals related to housing including:

- Focusing new growth where supporting services and infrastructure are already available (Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing, Objective #3).
- Encouraging density and mixed-use development near current and planned transit (Policy G-9A(e), Policy S-30(a), Policy T-9)
- Supporting housing affordability (Policy S-30)

This proposal addresses these goals – densifying an area close to existing services and amenities and providing significant new housing supply in a very limited housing market. The site has access to frequent transit and active transportation corridors and is near a future rapid transit terminal.

The site is also in one of the Urban Local Growth Centres identified in the Regional Plan (the Mill Cove Growth Centre). The intended future land use and design characteristics of these centres are outlined in the Regional Plan as:

- Mix of low, medium and high density residential, small office, small institutional and convenience commercial uses
- In established residential neighbourhoods, low to medium density residential uses
- Encourage infill or redevelopment of large parking lots into traditional blocks with streetwalls and stepbacks
- Pedestrian oriented facades

This proposal aligns with that intent, filling in currently vacant lots to provide a mix of medium and high-density residential uses. The design also creates a more comfortable pedestrian environment with ground floor commercial. Building stepbacks and the site's natural topography are utilized in the building design to minimize its scale, creating a pedestrian-scale environment.

3.2 Population Growth and Housing Demand

The population growth experienced within HRM has exceeded the projections contained in the 2014 Regional Plan update (source: Regional Plan Report, Supplemental Report, Population and Housing, December 2021). The unanticipated population growth has resulted in a corresponding and unforeseen housing demand evidenced by historically low vacancy rates in HRM (1.0% in 2022).

The need for housing in HRM is well established. The 2014 Regional Plan targets 75% of new population growth in the Regional Centre (25%) and Suburban (50%) geographies of HRM. However, more recent planning documents suggest that these targets are insufficient to meet HRM's policy goals. HRM's Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP), introduced in 2017, contained even more aggressive density targets, with the goal of having 90% of

future growth contained in the Regional Centre (40%) and Suburban areas (50%). This target is more aligned with the goal of creating transit-supportive densities in suburban communities.

While the Regional Centre Secondary Plan has enabled considerable density in the regional centre, outdated policies in Suburban areas limit growth in well-served suburban communities. The single unit zoning applied to this site works against the regional housing targets, and limits density in a suburban site with access to amenities and services.

3.3 The Integrated Mobility Plan and Rapid Transit Strategy

Both the IMP and the RTS underscore the critically important synergy between land use and transit. Sufficient ridership bases are key to supporting frequent, reliable transit, and locating development close to transit maximizes the public benefit of transit services. The project site is located within the 800m walkshed for the proposed Mill Cove Ferry Terminal identified in the Rapid Transit Strategy. The area surrounding the terminal is identified as a potential Transit-Oriented Community. Ferry service is a key part of providing rapid transit service to the Bedford area, where Bus Rapid Transit is not feasible, and essential to reducing the high car dependence in the Bedford region.



Figure 3: Excerpt from Rapid Transit Strategy, p. 42, Rapid Transit Walksheds (notation added)

Located on the Bedford Highway, the site also offers access to current and planned active transportation infrastructure connecting cyclists and other AT users to the Halifax Peninsula. Planned bikeways (see Figure 4) will address existing gaps in the AT network and support non-car-oriented density along the Bedford Highway.



Figure 4: Excerpt from Rapid Transit Strategy, p. 15, existing and proposed transportation near subject site (notation added)

4.0 Closing

Our proposal includes a mid-rise multi-storey building containing approximately 98 residential units, three levels of underground parking and commercial units fronting onto the Bedford Highway. Additionally, we are proposing five ground-based units fronting onto Crosby Street. We believe the increased density at this location is supported by policies contained in the Regional Plan as well as the BRT and IMP functional plans. These plans encourage infill development in serviced areas where increased transit service can be supported through higher density, transit-oriented development. Finally, this proposal responds to the acute housing shortage by enabling new units as-of-right.

We ask that this proposal be considered under the current Regional Plan review process. Should you have any questions, clarifications, or comments regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Greg Zwicker, MCIP, LPP
Principal
Zzap Consulting Inc.
greg@zzap.ca
902-266-2941

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LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Adjacent Property Boundary
- Internal Property Boundary

SITE SUMMARY:

- Total Land Area: 6,505 sm
- Existing Zone: RSU

NOTES:

- Subject to survey. Property lines and topographic features are approximate only.
- Site subject to by-law review and regulations.

SOURCES:

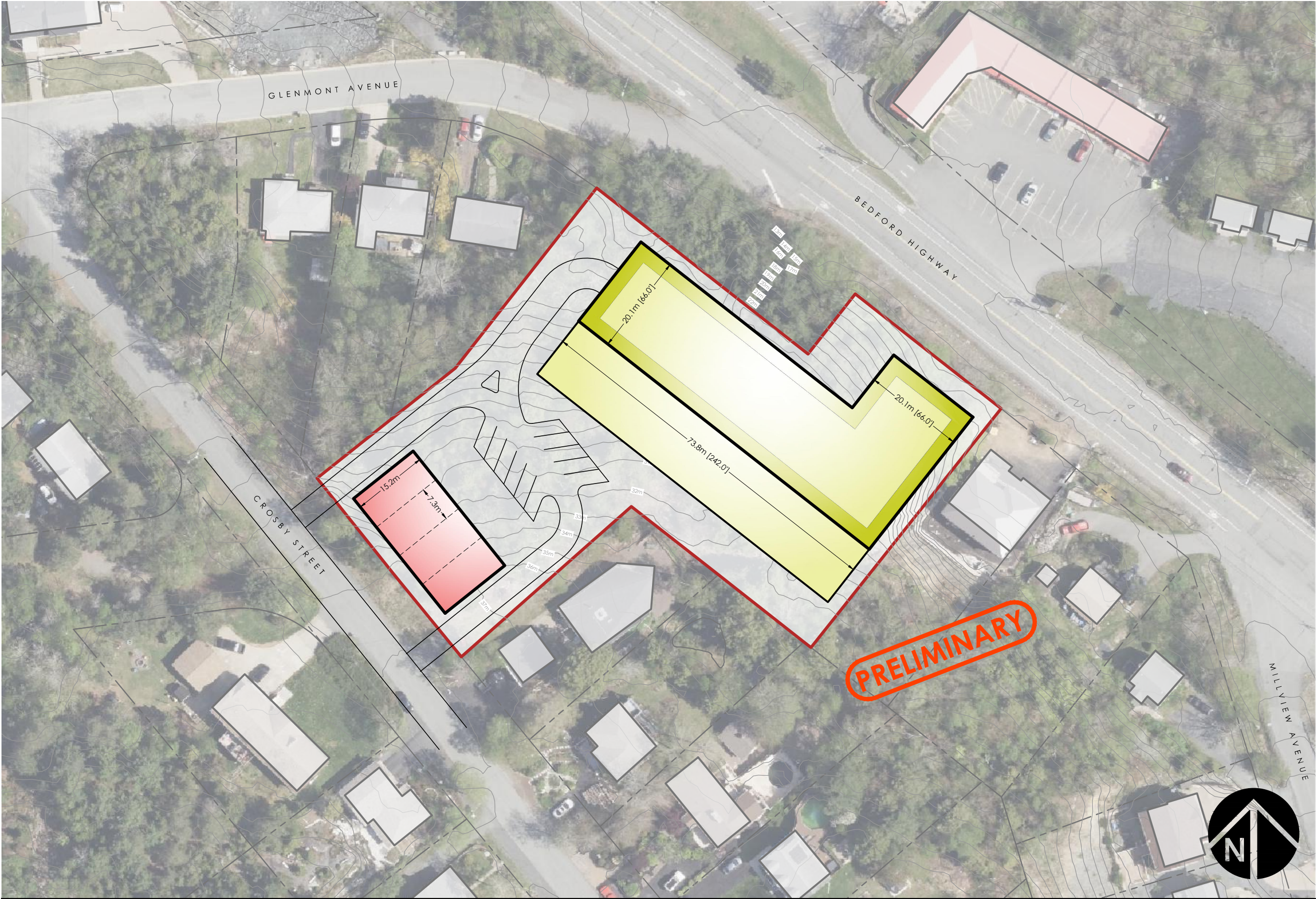
- Property lines and topographic features are from Provincial Mapping

SCALE:

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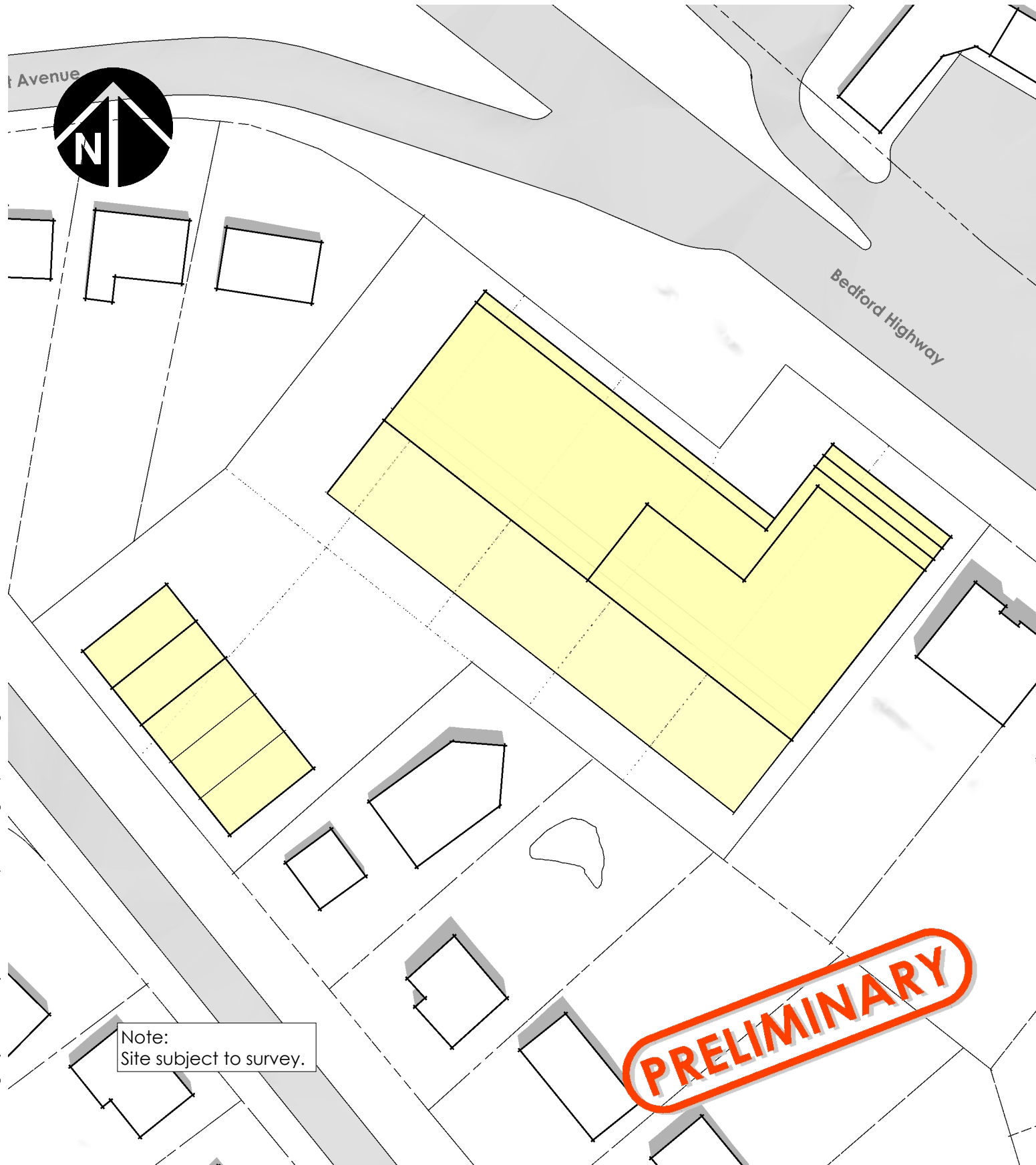
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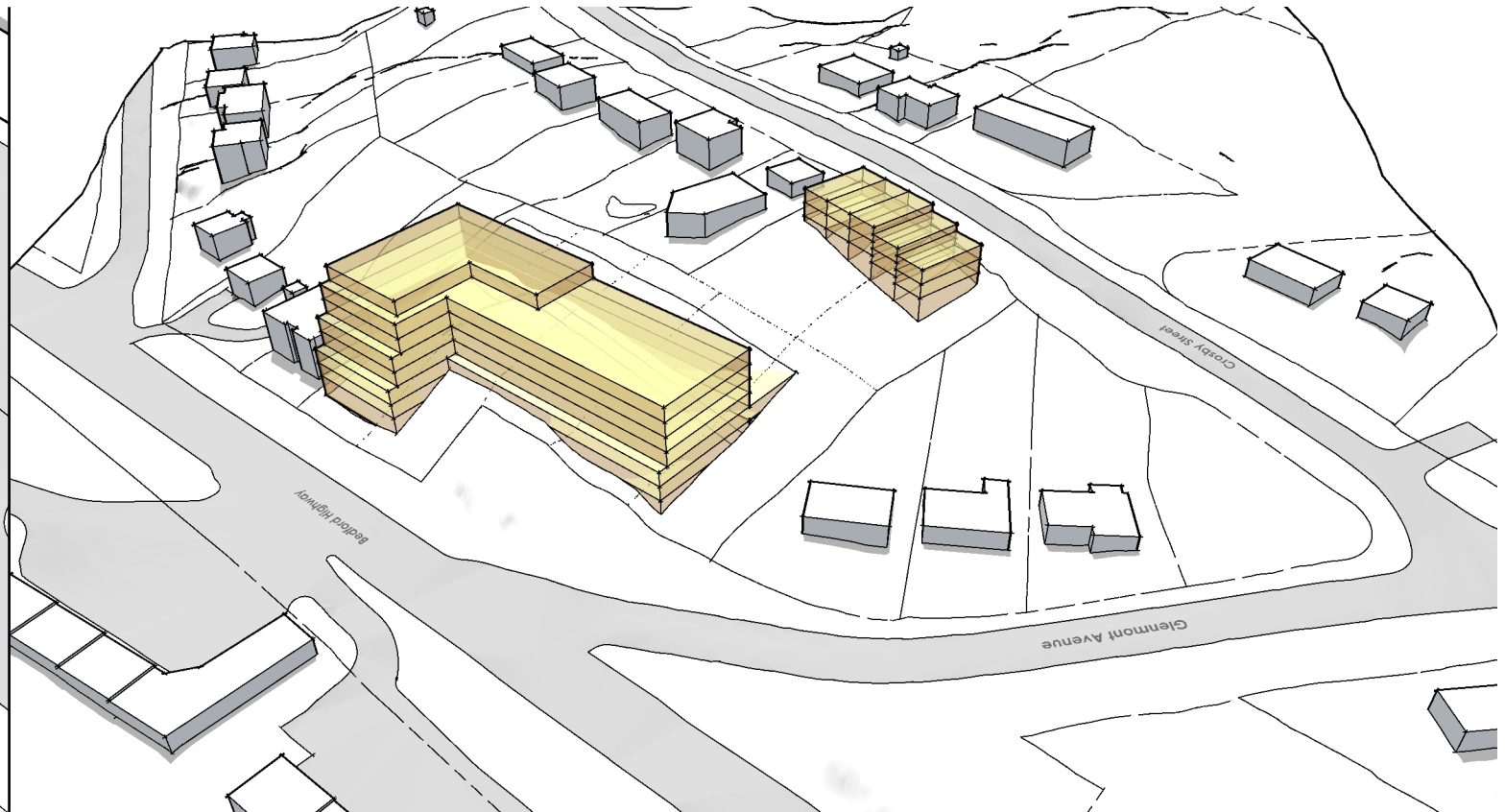
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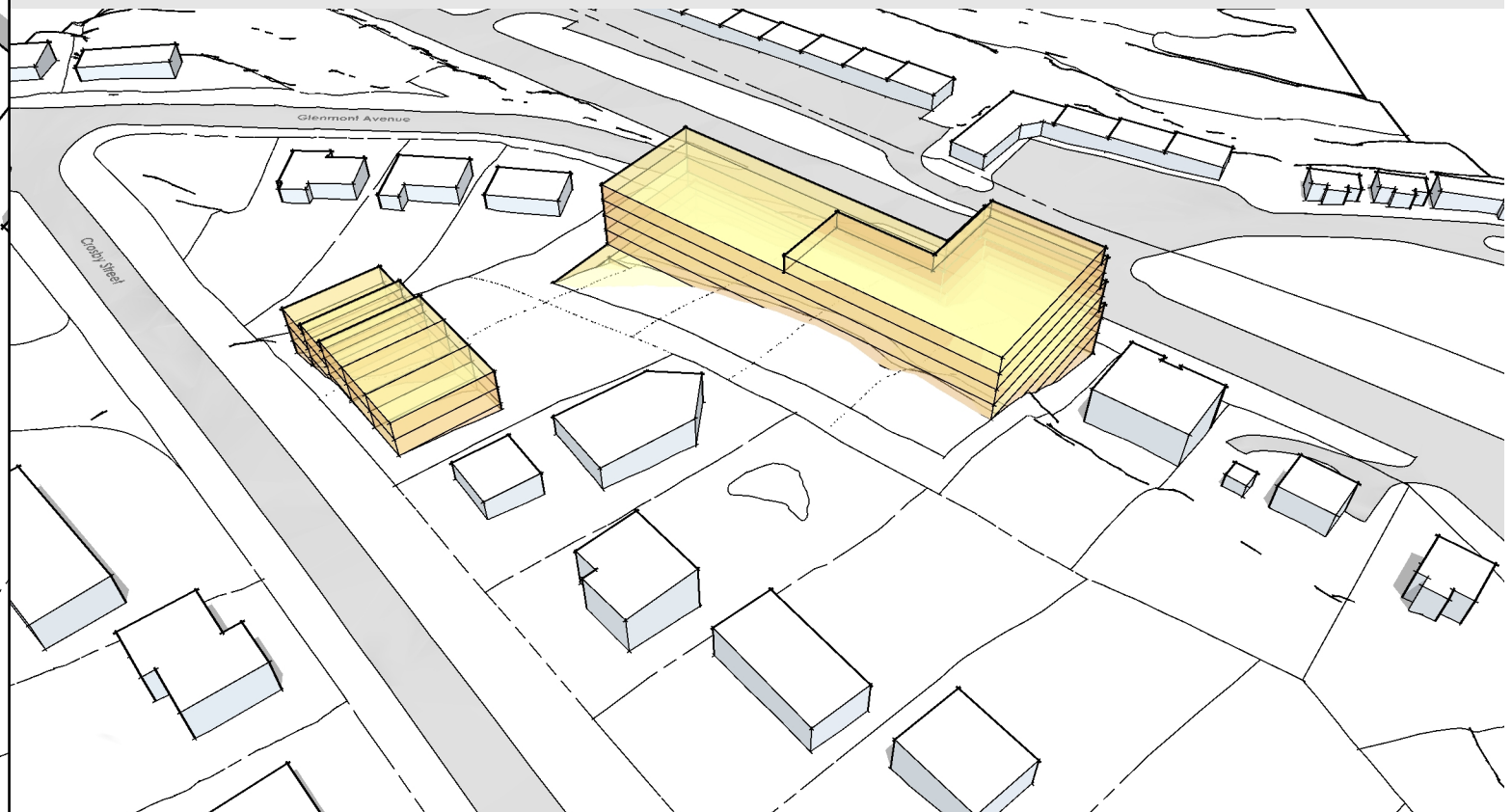
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Plan View scale 1"=60'



Perspective View (southern)



Perspective View (northern)