

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

FILE # 14-189-866

HEARING DATE: 7/31/14

1. **APPLICANT:** RD Parent Investors LLC (Walgreens)
2. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Site Plan Review
3. **LOCATION:** 1578 University Avenue West
4. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** 342923320001 Section 34 Town 29 Range 23 Subj To Aves And Esmts The W 27o Ft Of N 26o Ft Of Sw 1/4 Of Sec 34 Tn 29 Rn 23
5. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 13
6. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** 61.402.c
7. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** 7/24/14
8. **DATE RECEIVED:** 3/25/14
9. **DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** 9/30/14 (The applicant submitted a letter on 5/23/14 approving an extension of the deadline for action by the City on the site plan.)

PRESENT ZONING: T4

BY: Tom Beach

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- A. **PURPOSE:** Site plan review for a building addition, relocation of a drive-through window and changes to the existing parking lot.
 - B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 44,000 sq. ft.
 - C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** The building, drive-through window and parking lot were previously used by a bank. The building is currently vacant.
 - D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North: Commercial (T4)
 - East: Commercial (T4)
 - South: Commercial, Midway Shopping Center (T4)
 - West: Commercial, Midway Shopping Center (T4)
 - E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** Section 61.402.c lists 11 findings that the Planning Commission must make to approve a site plan. These findings are reviewed in Section I of this staff report.
 - F. **PROJECT OVERVIEW:**
 - The site is located in the northwest corner of the 36-acre "superblock" made up of Midway Shopping Center and the bus barn site.
 - The existing two-story bank building would be renovated and an addition would be built. Walgreens would be the tenant on the first floor and the basement (approximately 23,000 square feet) of the existing building. Another tenant (to be determined) would occupy the second floor (approximately 11,500 square feet). Another tenant (to be determined) would occupy the addition (2,800 square feet).
 - There are currently six drive-through windows that were used by the bank. These would be removed and one new drive-through window would be relocated in a slightly different location on the site.
 - The parking lot would be reconfigured and improved. Two driveways would be eliminated. A new delivery dock would be constructed. Landscaping and sidewalks would be added around the parking lot.
 - G. **HISTORY:** The property was previously used as a bank since at least 1958. The previous use included six drive-through lanes. In 1982, the property was approved for a height variance for a four-story addition related to the bank use by the Board of Zoning Appeals. The decision was appealed, but the City Council upheld the variance. The building was not ultimately expanded. The property was approved for a sign variance in 2004 for a two-foot tall electronic message sign around the perimeter of the building. The sign was not installed and the permission expired in 2005. The bank closed in 2013 and the building has been vacant since then.

H. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** The District 13 Council has recommended approval of the site plan and nonconforming use permit for relocation of one drive-through lane.

I. **FINDINGS:** Section 62.108(c) of the Zoning Code says that in "order to approve the site plan, the planning commission shall consider and find that the site plan is consistent with" the findings listed below.

a. *The city's adopted comprehensive plan and development or project plans for sub-areas of the city.*

This finding can be/is met. The Snelling Station Area Plan recommends that redevelopment contribute to pedestrian and street connectivity. The use meets the following relevant policies from the Snelling Station Area Plan:

4.2.1.d) *New development or expansion of existing buildings along the south side of the Avenue should line streets and open spaces and encourage a base podium height of between 3-6 residential stories or 3-4 commercial stories. Two stories of residential above 1 story of commercial or retail would also be acceptable.*

4.2.1.g) *Ensure first floor units and storefronts have at least one entrance that is oriented towards the Avenue, access points to the station platforms, and/or key gathering places.*

5.2 *The Mobility Enhancement Area*

Special strategies for the Snelling Station Mobility Enhancement Area include:

Extending the existing block pattern and incorporating urban streetscape standards within the Midway Shopping District with reduced curb radii, bump-outs, narrower streets and special paving patterns.

b. *Applicable ordinances of the City of Saint Paul.*

The site plan meets all applicable zoning standards, including setbacks, building height, and off-street parking. (The existing building and addition will not meet the minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0 for a new building in the T4 zoning district. However, under Section 62.105.b, the existing building can expand even if the resulting FAR is less than 1.0.)

The new addition will conform to Traditional Neighborhood design standards.

Drive-through windows are not a permitted use in the T4. The site plan calls for removing the six existing drive through windows that the bank had and replacing it with one drive-through window in a different location on the site. This is permitted if the Planning Commission approves a Relocation of Nonconforming Use.

c. *Preservation of unique geologic, geographic or historically significant characteristics of the city and environmentally sensitive areas.*

The site plan will preserve the existing bank building. This building has large glass windows on two sides. The Snelling side does not have windows but is constructed with marble.

The addition is will be located up close to the sidewalk with large windows facing the street, enhancing the character of the existing building and the public sidewalk.

d. *Protection of adjacent and neighboring properties through reasonable provision for such matters as surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers, preservation of views, light and air, and those aspects of design which may have substantial effects on neighboring land uses.*

The site plan will protect the adjacent commercial properties:

- Storm water will be directed to City sewers at a controlled rate.
- The drive thru and dumpsters will be located behind the building to screen them from the adjacent streets.
- Existing driveways will be removed or relocated to improve traffic flow.
- The entrances to the building are located on Snelling (to support pedestrian traffic) as well as on the back (for access to the parking lot).
- Landscaping and sidewalks will be added to the parking lot.

e. *The arrangement of buildings, uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to assure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected.*

The site plan will not unreasonably affect abutting properties:

- The proposed addition will screen the parking lot and drive-through from the street.
- Driveways will be removed or relocated to improve traffic flow.
- The drive-through will not interfere with the circulation of the adjacent properties.

f. *Creation of energy-conserving design through landscaping and location, orientation and elevation of structures.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding.

- New trees will be planted around the parking lot to provide shade and reduce heat buildup in the lot.
- The location and design of the building supports the use of mass transit.

g. *Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets, including traffic circulation features, the locations and design of entrances and exits and parking areas within the site.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding:

- The existing driveways will be removed or relocated to improve car circulation into and out of the site. The location of these driveways take into account plans to create new public streets on the south and east side of the site.
- New sidewalks are shown on the south and east sides of the site. There are currently no sidewalks there.
- Walgreens typically gets one semi-truck per week with deliveries. Staff is currently working with the architect for the project on the details of this, including the hours of deliveries, the size of the trucks and the route the truck uses to get to the delivery dock. A condition of site plan approval should be final approval by Public Works Traffic of the details for deliveries.

h. *The satisfactory availability and capacity of storm and sanitary sewers, including solutions to any drainage problems in the area of the development.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding. Sewer is available for the site. When the parking lot is rebuilt, it will be graded so stormwater will drain to catch basins that will carry it to an underground storage system that will control the rate of stormwater run-off.

Public Works has approved the concept for stormwater drainage but is currently reviewing the details. A condition of site plan approval should be final approval by Public Works of the stormwater sewer plan.

i. *Sufficient landscaping, fences, walls and parking necessary to meet the above objectives.*
Landscaping

The site plan will provide landscaping for the parking lot, which currently does not have any landscaping. Planters will be added on the University Avenue side of the building.

Parking

The site plan will provide 39 off-street parking spaces (compared to 45 spaces in the existing parking lot). These spaces will be shared by Walgreens, and the other tenants. No off-street parking is required for this site under the parking standards for the Central Corridor.

j. *Site accessibility in accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including parking spaces, passenger loading zones and accessible routes.*

The site plan is consistent with the standards of the ADA and provides more ADA parking spaces than is required.

k. *Provision for erosion and sediment control as specified in the "Ramsey Erosion Sediment and Control Handbook."*

The site plan includes an erosion and sediment control plan that meets this standard.

J. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Based on the findings above, the staff recommends approval of the site plan for a building addition, drive-through window and changes to an existing parking lot at 1578 University Avenue West, subject to the following condition:

1. Final approval by Public Works Traffic Division of plans and terms for delivery trucks.
2. Final approval by Public Works Sewer Division of the stormwater sewer system.



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Certification
I hereby certify that this plan, specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Architect under laws of the State of Minnesota.
Print Name:
Signature:
Date

Reg. No.
Date

**SITE PLAN
REVIEW SET
RESUBMISSION
DRAFT**

Project:
**RD PARENT
INVESTORS LLC**

**YVALGREENS
RELOCATION
W/ PHARMACY
DRIVE-THRU
& RETAIL ADDITION**

1578 UNIVERSITY AVE W
ST. PAUL, MN 55104

Commission Number
14-102.01

Drawn: SHK
Checked: SHK
Date: JULY 18 2014

MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION

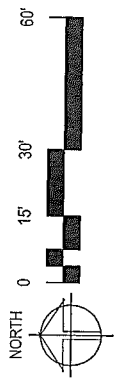
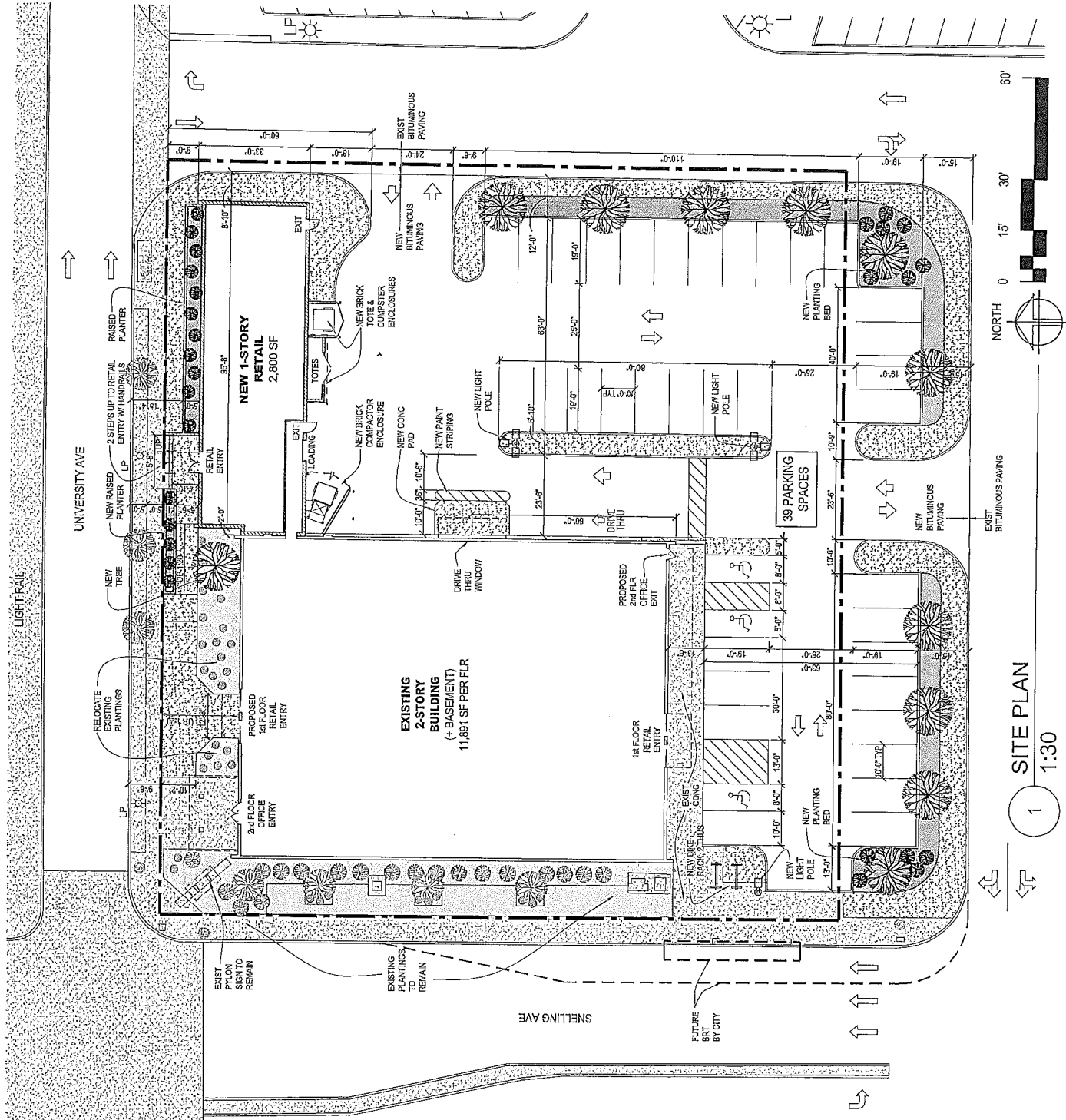
Sheet Title:

SITE PLAN

Sheet
A3

SYMBOL KEY:

- NEW CONCRETE PAVING
- EXIST CONCRETE PAVING TO REMAIN
- NEW PLANTING BED/ LANDSCAPING
- EXIST PLANTING BED/ LANDSCAPING TO REMAIN
- NEW TREESHURUB
- EXISTING TREESHURUB TO REMAIN



1 SITE PLAN
1:30



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Certification
 I hereby certify that this specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Architect under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Print Name: _____
 Signature: _____
 Date: _____
 Reg. No. _____

**SITE PLAN
 REVIEW SUBMISSIONS**

Project: **RD PARENT INVESTORS I**

WALGREENS RELOCATION W/ PHARMACY DRIVE-THRU & RETAIL ADDITION

1578 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
 ST. PAUL, MN 55104

Commission Number: 14-102.01

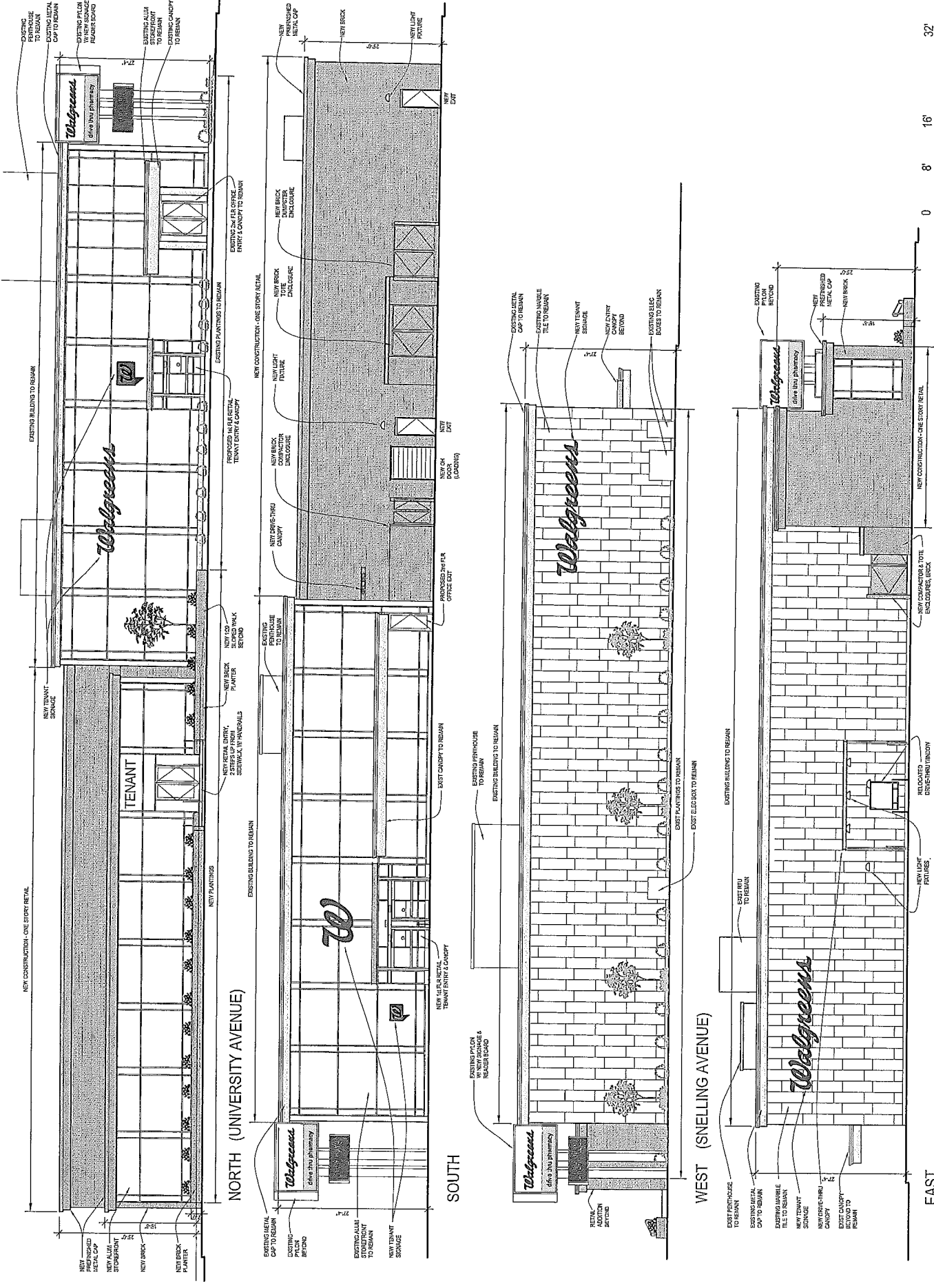
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 Checked: SHK
 Date: JULY 18, 2014

MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION

Sheet Title: **ELEVATIONS**

Sheet: **A4**

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Certification
I hereby certify that this plan, specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am duly Licensed Architect under laws of the State of Minnesota.

Print Name:
Signature:
Date
Reg. No.

**SITE PLAN
REVIEW SET
RESUBMISSION**

Project:
**RD PARENT
INVESTORS LLC**

WALGREENS
RELOCATION
W/PHARMACY
DRIVE-THRU
& RETAIL ADDITION

1578 UNIVERSITY AVE W
ST. PAUL, MN 55104

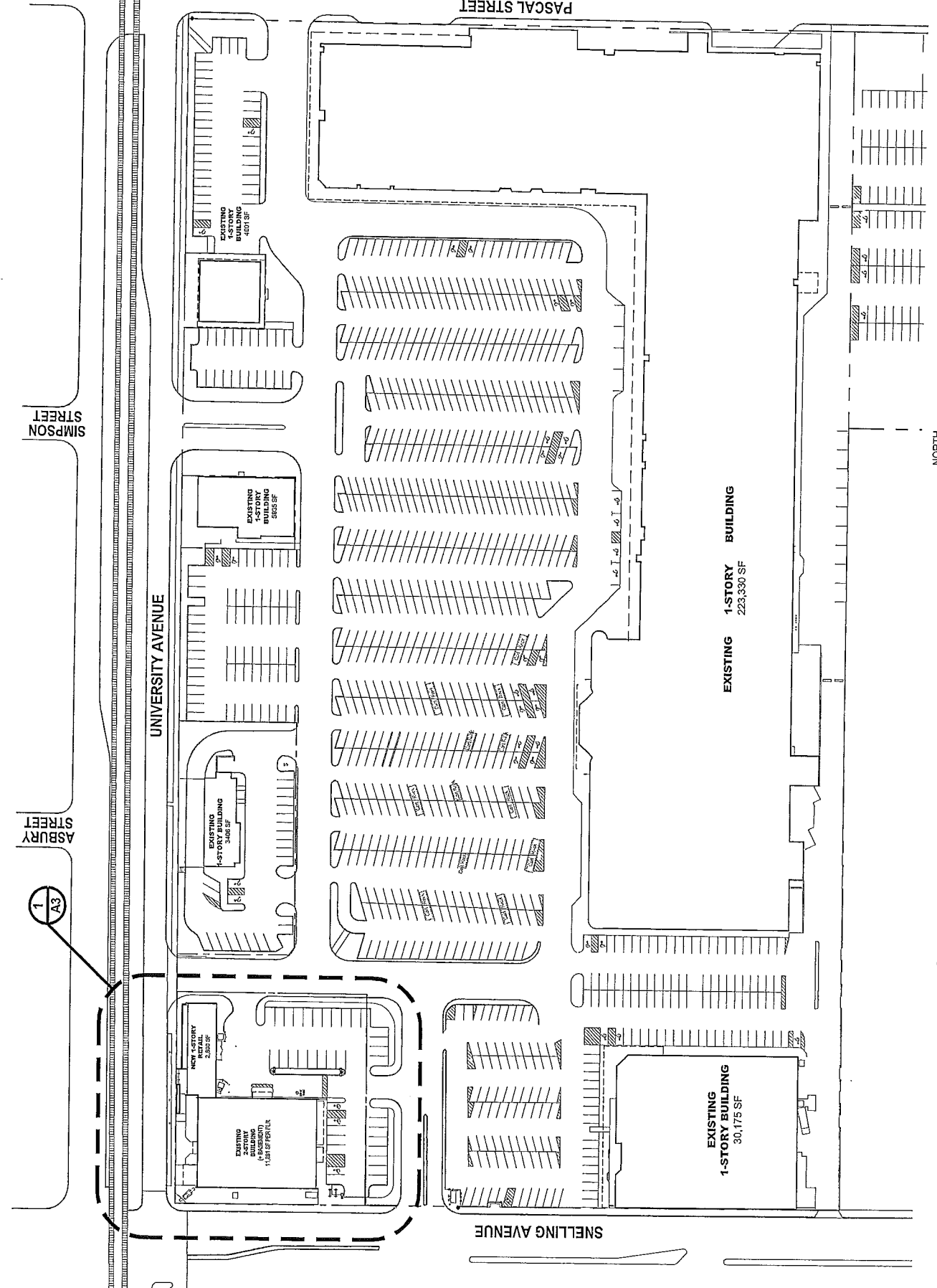
Commission Number:
14-102.01

Drawn: SHK
Checked: SHK
Date: JULY 18, 2014

MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION

Sheet Title:
**OVERALL
SHOPPING CENTER
SITE PLAN**

Sheet:
A2



1 OVERALL SHOPPING CENTER SITE PLAN
1:100



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Certification
I hereby certify that this plan, specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Architect under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Print Name:
Signature:
Date
Reg. No.

**SITE PLAN
REVIEW SET
RESUBMISSION**

Project:
RD PARENT
INVESTORS LLC
WALGREENS
RELOCATION
W/PHARMACY
DRIVE-THRU
& RETAIL ADDITION

1578 UNIVERSITY AVE W
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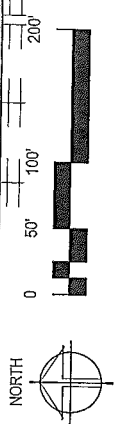
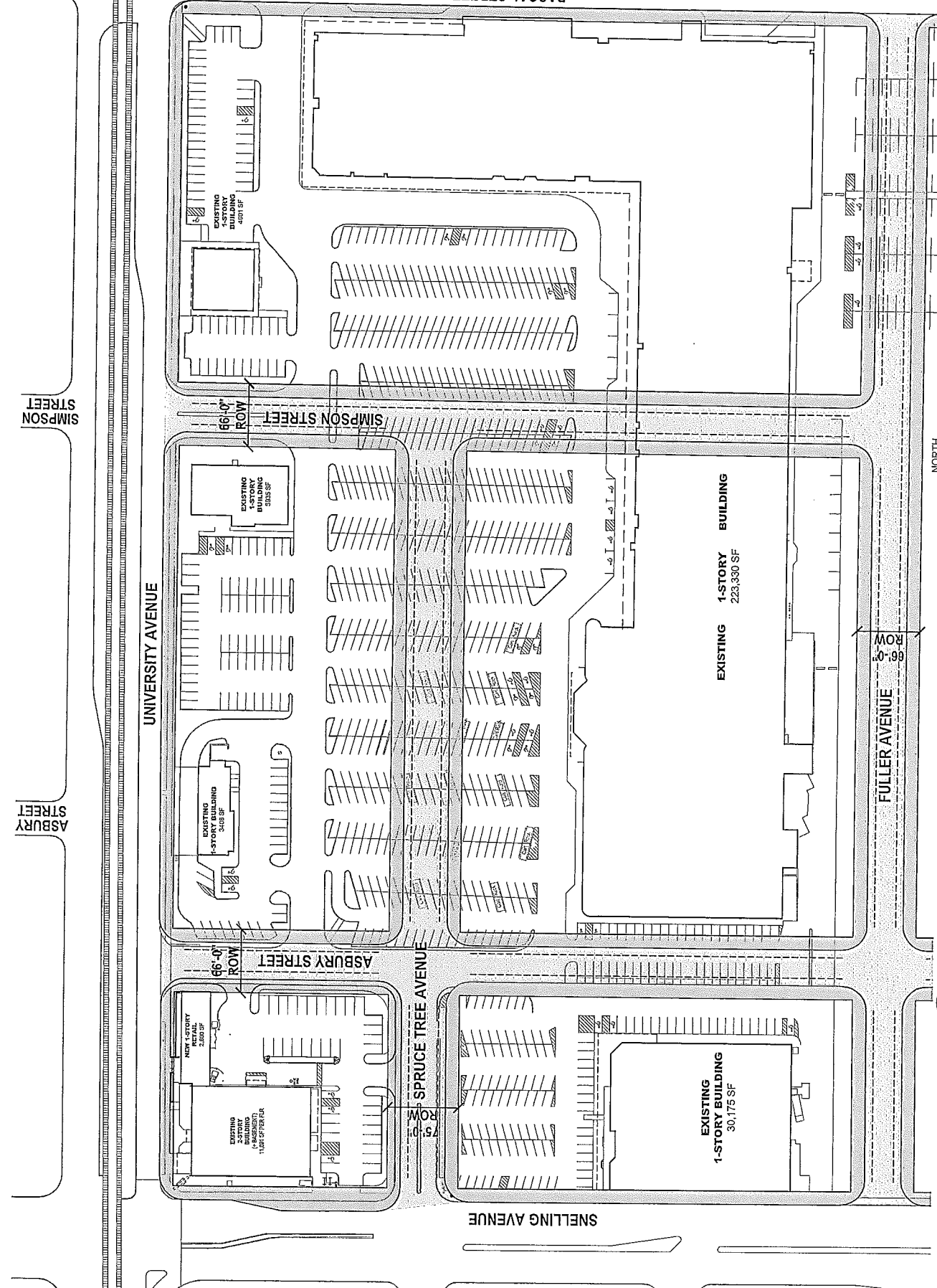
Commission Number:
14-102.01

Drawn: SHK Checked: SHK
Date: JULY 18, 2014

MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION

Sheet Title:
**OVERALL
SHOPPING CENTER
MASTER PLAN**

Sheet:
A2.1



**OVERALL SHOPPING CENTER MASTER PLAN
(SMART SITE REDEVELOPMENT OVERLAY)**

1

1:100