

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project applicant seeks to develop/redevelop a commercial strip mall and vacant church site in the Wilshire Community Plan Area of Los Angeles. More specifically, the objectives of the Wilshire and La Brea Project are

- to provide multifamily residential housing in an urban area of the City of Los Angeles where there is substantial demand for such housing;
- to promote the use of public transportation by providing housing, retail shopping and dining opportunities adjacent to a major public transit corridor;
- to provide retail shopping and dining opportunities for the local community;
- to promote walkability by providing housing, retail shopping and dining opportunities in close proximity to adjacent commercial and residential uses;
- to meet the City's green building ordinance which will enhance the City's sustainability goals;
- to develop the site with land uses consistent with the intent of the Wilshire Community Plan and the Miracle Mile Community Design Overlay District Design Guidelines and Standards;
- to improve and integrate the streetscape along Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue;
- to provide jobs within the Wilshire Community Area of Los Angeles;
- to provide a development in the Miracle Mile District that respects the height of adjacent historic buildings; and
- to develop the site with structures that are compatible with existing residences to the east in terms of scale, mass, and bulk.

B. PROJECT LOCATION

As shown in **Figure II-1, Project Location Map**, the proposed project site is located on the southeastern corner of Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. Specifically, the site is bound by Wilshire Boulevard to the north, Sycamore Avenue to the east, 8th Street on the south and La Brea Avenue to the west. The proposed project is located approximately 2 miles north of the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10).

C. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The property owner and applicant, BRE Properties Inc., an Orange County-based developer specializing in urban mixed-use projects, proposed the project to provide multifamily residential housing in the

Wilshire Community Plan Area of Los Angeles and the City at large where there is substantial demand for such housing. In addition, the project was proposed to take advantage of transit opportunities along the Wilshire Boulevard Corridor. Finally, the project was proposed to provide land uses that would be in accordance with the Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's Global Warming Reduction Strategy and Smart Growth vision.

D. SURROUNDING USES

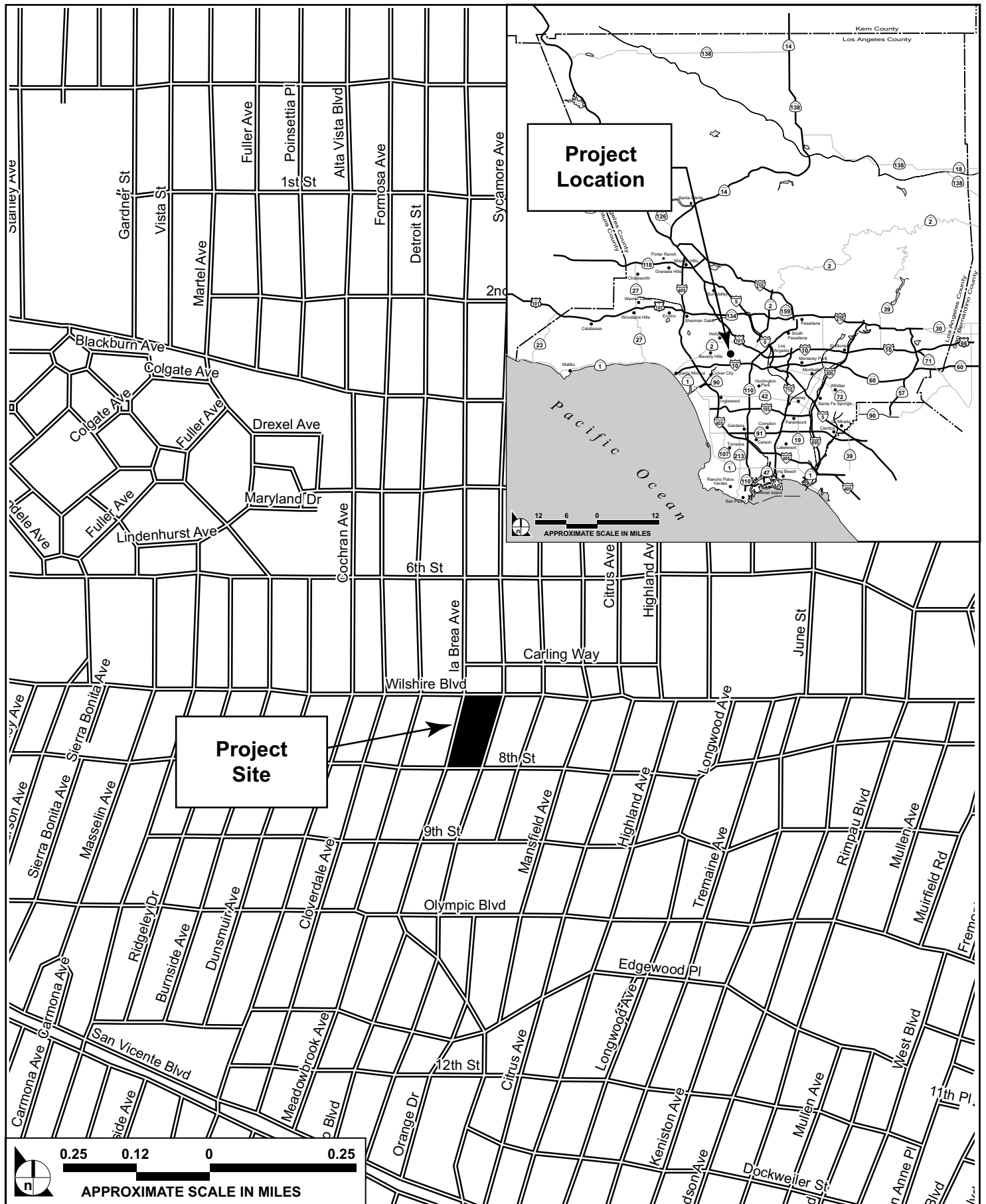
The project site is located within the Wilshire Community Plan Area. The plan was established in 2001 under the direction of the City of Los Angeles Planning Department. The Wilshire Community Plan further refines the Los Angeles City General Plan and is intended to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social, and physical health, and for the welfare of the people that work and reside in the community.

The northern portion of the project site is located within the Miracle Mile Community Design Overlay (CDO) District. The district was established in 2005 under the direction of the City of Los Angeles Planning Department. The intent of the CDO is to provide guidance and direction in the design of new buildings and rehabilitation of existing buildings and storefronts in order to improve the appearance, enhance the identity, and promote the pedestrian environment of the district.

Other prominent land uses in the immediate vicinity of the project site include high-rise office buildings, La Brea Tar Pits, Hancock Park, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Cantor Sculpture Garden, and Japanese Art Pavilion. Other land uses in the immediate vicinity of the project site include, commercial-retail, office and residential uses.

E. EXISTING CONDITIONS

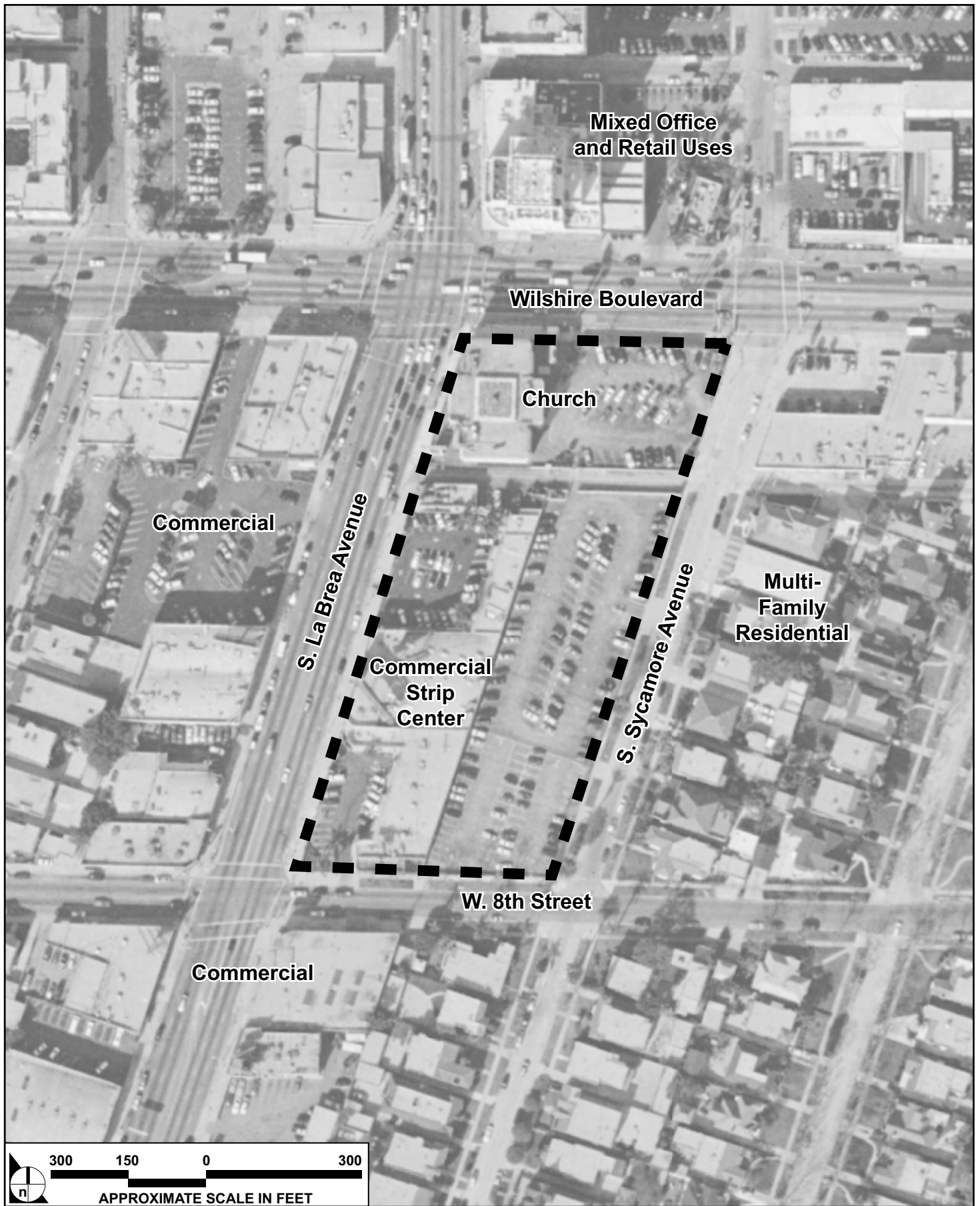
As indicated in **Figure II-2, Aerial View of Project Site**, the project site is presently occupied by a church, a commercial strip center, and a paved parking lot. The paved parking lot is utilized by both the church and commercial strip center patrons. The church is located at 5220 Wilshire Boulevard, on the southeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. The three-story (plus basement), reinforced concrete building was constructed in 1965 and was formally occupied by a bank. The commercial strip center is located at 716–750 La Brea Avenue, along the western half of the project site. The center is a combination of older structures retrofitted for adaptive use and new, replacement structures. The main structure was constructed in 1945, with major renovations occurring in the 1980s.



SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. – April 2007

FIGURE II-1

Project Location Map



SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. – April 2007

FIGURE II-2

Aerial View of Project Site



F. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

1. Overview

The Wilshire and La Brea project proposes a mixed-use development consisting of 562 residential units and approximately 45,000 square feet of ground-floor retail-commercial and restaurant uses. The ground-floor retail/commercial and restaurant uses would be located on Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. Parking would be provided in a partial above-ground “mezzanine” level, in a ground level and in a 2.5 level subterranean structure.

The residential units would be designed in a variety of layouts and sizes and would including studio, one- and two-bedroom apartment units, and two-bedroom townhome units, some of which would have a mezzanine. The major project components are summarized in **Table II-1, Summary of Proposed Development. Figure II-3, 1st/Ground Level Retail Plan**, illustrates the proposed 1st and ground level site plan for the proposed project while **Figures II-4 through II-6** illustrate typical residential level site plans.

2. Residential

Of the proposed 562 residential units, 138 would be studio units, 315 would be one-bedroom apartment units, 99 would be two-bedroom apartment units, and 10 would be two-bedroom townhome units. The studio units would range from 400 to 575 square feet, and the one-bedroom apartment units would range from 600 to 835 square feet. The two-bedroom apartment units would range from 1,000 to 1,275 square feet, and the two-bedroom townhome units would be 1,300 square feet each. Based on an average of 2.17 persons per residential unit, approximately 1,220 residents (562 units × 2.17 persons per household) would be generated by the proposed project.¹

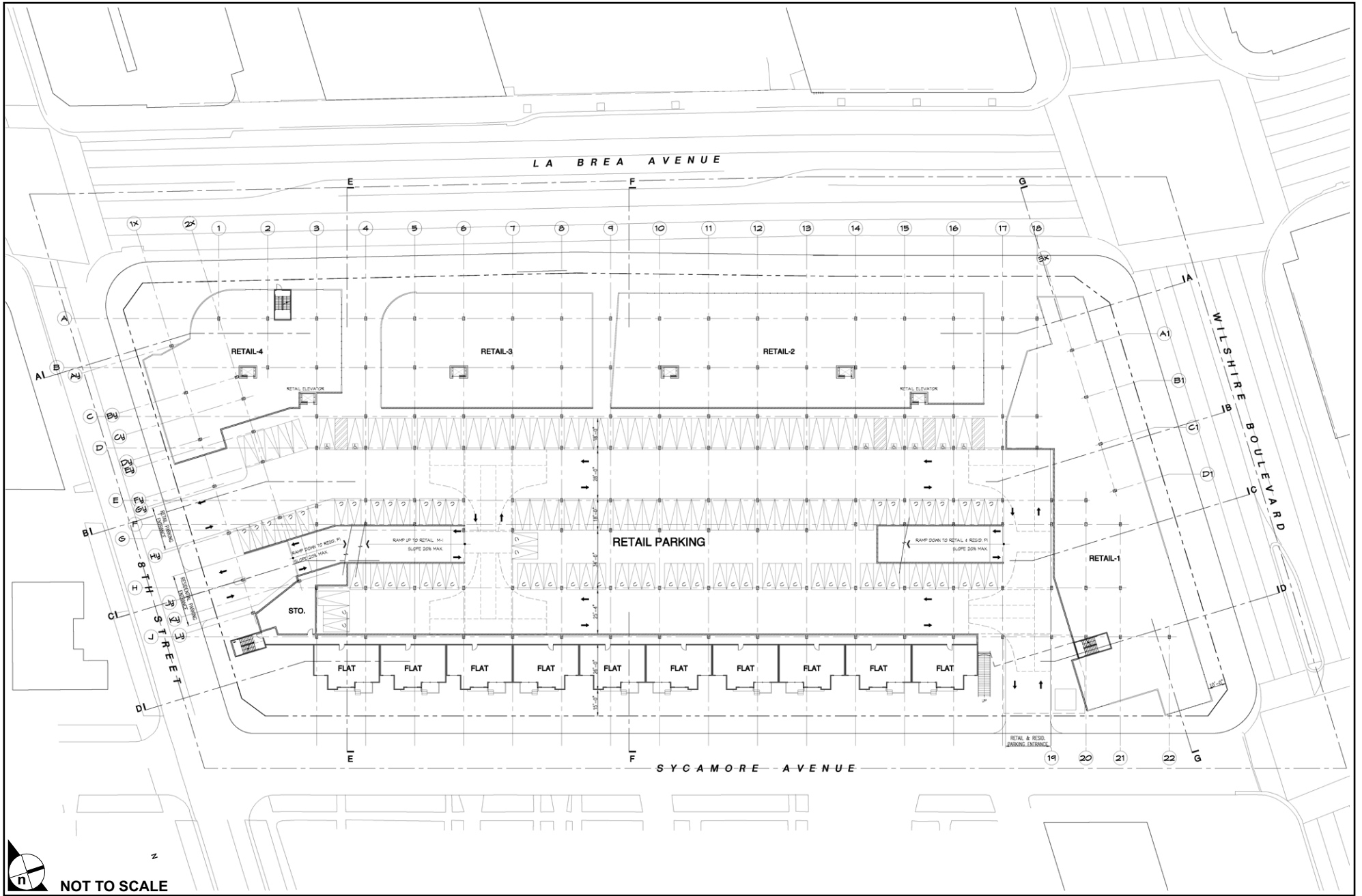
¹ Based on the 2000 Census, an average of 2.17 persons occupied multiple family units within Census Tract 2110, where the proposed project would be constructed. U.S. Census Bureau. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000. Census Tract 2110, Los Angeles County, California. Available on-line at: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>. Date accessed: March 30, 2007.

**Table II-1
Summary of Proposed Development**

	Total Project
Residential Units	
Studio Units	138
One-Bedroom Apartments	315
Two-Bedroom Apartments	99
Two-Bedroom Townhomes	10
Total Residential Units:	562
Retail/Commercial and Restaurant Space	
Retail (sq. ft.)	37,000
Restaurant (sq. ft.)	8,000
Total Retail/Commercial and Restaurant Space (sq. ft.):	45,000
Open Space	
Common Recreational Open Space (sq. ft.)	3,000
Common Non-Recreational Open Space (sq. ft.)	39,600
Private Open Space (sq. ft.)	22,400
Total Open Space (sq. ft.):	65,000
Parking Stalls	
Residential	855
Retail/Commercial and Restaurant	228
Total Parking Stalls:	1,083
Number of Stories	7/3
Total Gross Building Size (sq. ft.)¹	920,000
Lot Size (sq. ft.)	147,057

Source: Thomas P. Cox, Architects, Inc., April 2008

¹ The gross building size does not include residential unit decks.



SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-3

1st / Ground Level Retail Plan

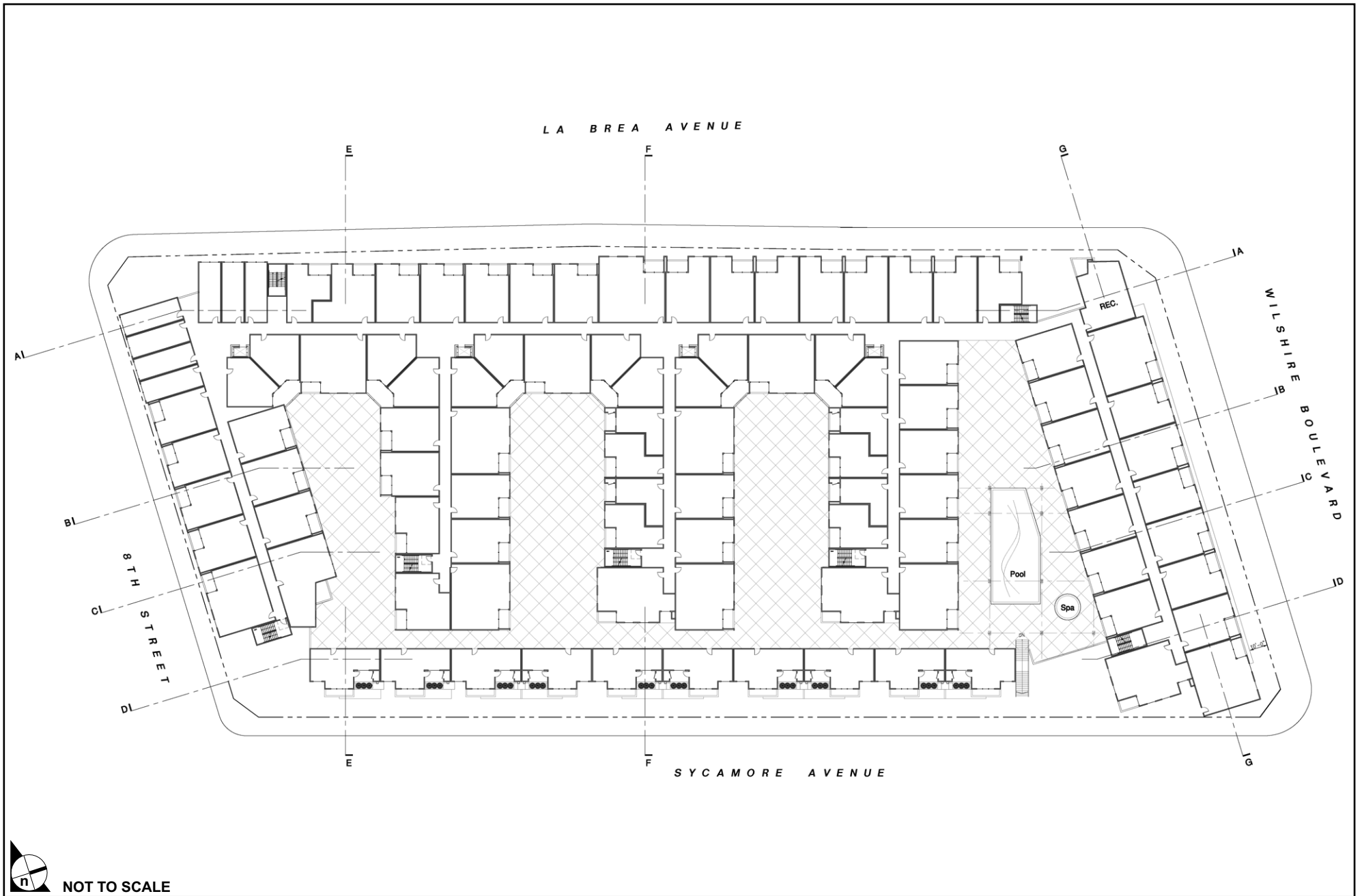
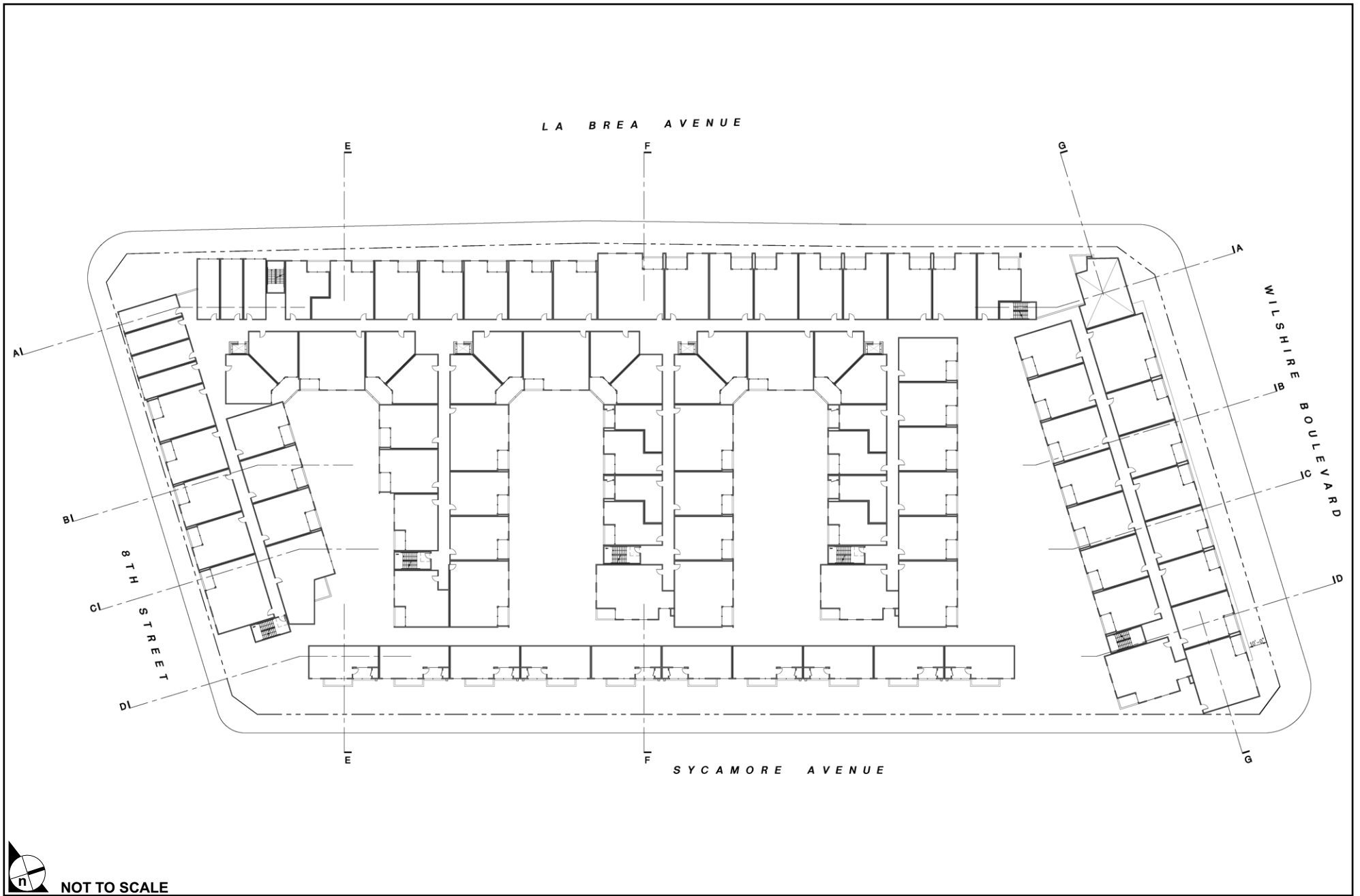


FIGURE II-4

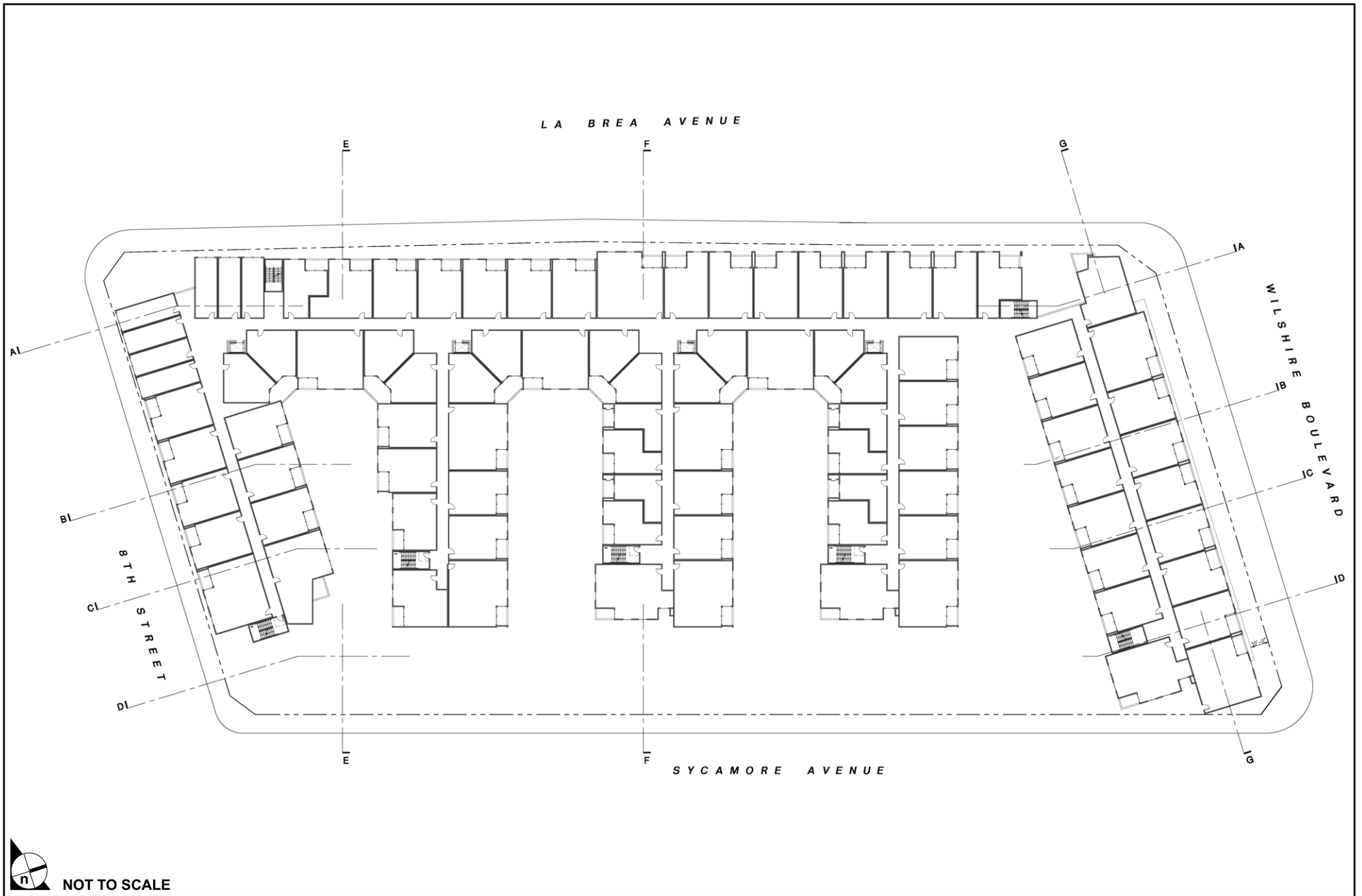
2nd / Base Level Plan



SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-5

3rd Level Plan



NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-6

4th thru 7th Level Plan

3. Retail/Commercial Restaurant

The retail/commercial and restaurant uses would be located along Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. The approximately 45,000 square-foot ground floor commercial component of the proposed project would consist of 37,000 square feet of retail space and 8,000 square feet of restaurant space. Of the 8,000 square feet of restaurant space, 5,000 square feet would be designated for high quality, low-turnover restaurant uses and 3,000 square feet would be designated for high-turnover restaurant uses. Based on an average of three employees per 1,000 square feet, the retail and restaurant components combined would employ approximately 135 workers/employees.² **Figure II-3** identifies the location of the retail component of the proposed project.

4. Open Space/Common Space

The proposed project would include both common and private open space and amenities totaling 65,000 square feet. Shared open space recreational amenities totaling 3,000 square feet would be provided on the 2nd/base level and would include a 1,200 square foot club room and a 1,800 square foot fitness room. Shared open space non-recreational amenities would total 39,600 square feet and would include a 31,500 square foot pool deck on the 2nd/base level. The pool deck would also include a spa. The amenities and pool deck would be available to residents only. Other non-recreational amenities include an 5,400 square foot linear park located on Sycamore Avenue, a 1,600 square foot garden located at the corner of 8th Street and Sycamore Avenue, and the 1,100 square foot La Brea Court, located along La Brea Avenue. Private decks totaling 22,400 square feet would also be provided. **Figure II-3** identifies the location of the pool and spa deck. In addition, a business center for residents would be located adjacent to the club room.

5. Architectural Design

The proposed project is illustrated in **Figures II-7** through **II-10**.

The proposed structure would consist of six levels of apartment dwellings atop an elevated base which would be approximately 20 feet above street level at the Wilshire Boulevard end of the property and approximately 28 feet above street level at 8th Street.

The residential floors would consist of two elements: a primary structure arranged in a “wing” configuration, which would create building “fingers” that would surround open-ended courtyards, and a smaller “bar” structure along the base edge at Sycamore Avenue. The “finger” building would be six stories plus mezzanines above the base, while the “bar” building would be two stories above the base.

² This estimate is based on statistics from the Southern California Association of Governments GMA-4 Forecast and Central Business District Land Use Database.

Overall, the “finger” building would be a maximum of 100 feet above grade, and the “bar” building would be up to 44 feet above grade. An accent tower at the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue would be up to 130 feet above grade; the highest parts would contain equipment and provide a decorative element for the building.

The courtyards would open to the east to take advantage of city skyline views and to provide a more articulated building face to the adjacent residential neighborhood on Sycamore Avenue. The secondary “bar” building would be used, together with the flats at grade, to diminish the height of the structure as it fronts Sycamore Avenue, and would provide mass, bulk, and scale that is more consistent with the residential structures located at the east side of the street.

The skin of the building would be composed primarily of exterior plaster. The exterior would also feature accent materials of composite aluminum siding, decorative block or stone cladding, cement fiber board, and perforated metal. Balcony railings would include plaster, metal shapes, and glass railing systems.

While modern in its forms and materials, the building would be referential to its context, which includes the Art Deco Clem Wilson Tower (Samsung) located to the north of the project site across Wilshire Boulevard, and the Firestone Tire store at La Brea Avenue and 8th Street. The project’s 130-foot accent tower at Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue would reference the stepped massing, pronounced plinth, and expressive rooftop of the Wilson tower. Elsewhere on the Wilshire façade, the black glass of the bank building across the street would be acknowledged in the dark cladding at the structure’s lower levels. At La Brea Avenue and 8th Street, the curving form of the project’s corner, as well as the retail walls, would reflect the sweeping influence of the Firestone building.

The project would encourage pedestrian activity at the ground level by providing planters, building recesses, awnings and other scale elements. On Sycamore Avenue, a 15 foot wide linear park and a 1,600 sq. ft. garden at the corner of Sycamore Avenue and 8th Street would be available for use by both residents of the building and the neighborhood.



NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-7

Wilshire Boulevard Elevation



NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-8

La Brea Avenue Elevation



NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-9

8th Street Elevation



NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-10

Sycamore Avenue Elevation

6. Landscaping

Figure II-11, Landscape Plans, illustrates the landscaping plans for the 1st/Ground and 2nd/Podium Levels for the proposed project. As shown, on Sycamore Avenue, a 15 foot wide setback would allow for development of a 5,400 square foot linear park along Sycamore Avenue and a 1,600 square foot garden at the corner of Sycamore Avenue and 8th Street for use by both residents of the building and the neighborhood. On Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, the building setbacks would allow for some planting areas to be established adjacent to the building. In addition, along those two streets, landscaped planters would be located curbside in a row which would allow a double layer of landscaping along many areas of the sidewalk.

7. Sustainable Design

The proposed project has a targeted goal of meeting the City's green building standards. This process is intended to promote a whole-building approach to sustainability by incorporating a checklist of green practices into their building plans. The checklist includes a choice of items such as low-flow toilets, use of recycled materials, and use of natural light. The average green building saves 36 percent in energy, 40 percent in water, and cuts greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent and solid waste by 70 percent.

8. Parking

The proposed project would provide a total of 1,083 parking spaces, as shown in **Table II-2, Proposed Project Parking Summary**. Parking would be provided in a partial above-ground "mezzanine" level, in a ground level and in a 2.5 level subterranean structure. The retail and commercial parking spaces would be provided within a partial above-ground mezzanine level located at the southern end of the project site, in the at-grade parking level, and in the top subterranean parking level. Residential parking spaces would be provided in the 2.5 subterranean parking levels. **Figures II-12 through II-15** illustrate the above-grade, at-grade and below-grade parking levels. The building sections provided in **Figures II-16 through II-18** also show the parking levels.

**Table II-2
Proposed Project Parking Summary**

Level	Residential	Retail	Total
Level 1.5 (Mezzanine)	0	41	41
Level 1 (Ground)	0	113	113
Level P1	284	74	358
Level P2	388	0	388
Level P3	183	0	183
Total	855	228	1,083

Source: Thomas P. Cox, Architects, Inc., April 2008

Based on code requirements, the residential component of the proposed project would require 855 parking spaces while the commercial component would require 228 parking spaces, for a total of 1,083 spaces. As shown in **Table II-2**, above, the project would provide the code-required parking. During off-peak retail hours, guests of residents would be allowed to use the retail and commercial parking spaces.

9. Access and Circulation

Access points to the parking structure would be located on Sycamore Avenue (residential and retail), and West 8th Street (residential and retail.) Loading zones are proposed to be located completely within the interior of the structure. Trucks would enter on the north from the driveway on Sycamore Avenue and exit via the south driveway onto 8th Street. Pedestrian access to the apartments would be located along Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, while pedestrian access to the townhome units and flats would be located along Sycamore Avenue.

G. PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

Development of the proposed project would require the demolition and removal of existing uses. Construction of the proposed project is expected to begin in December 2009 and last approximately 36 months (although some units may be occupied prior to full project completion). The construction period for the project is anticipated to consist of four phases. Phase I (Demolition) would involve the demolition and removal of existing on-site structures. Approximately 14,000 cubic yards of demolition materials would be generated. Demolition and removal would involve the use of standard construction equipment such as excavators and other related equipment such as haul trucks. This phase is anticipated to take two months to complete.

- LEGEND**
- ① PODIUM LEVEL, TYPICAL
 - ② POOL
 - ③ FIREPLACE
 - ④ FIREPIT
 - ⑤ WATER FEATURE
 - ⑥ ENHANCED PAVING
 - ⑦ PUBLIC SEATING/DINING
 - ⑧ PUBLIC COURTYARD
 - ⑨ BUS SHELTER
 - ⑩ STREET TREE PER CITY OF LOS ANGELES GUIDELINES
 - ⑪ POOL ENCLOSURE
 - ⑫ SIDEWALK PER CITY OF LOS ANGELES STANDARDS
 - ⑬ BARBEQUE AREA
 - ⑭ ENHANCED LANDSCAPING
 - ⑮ PRIVATE PATIO

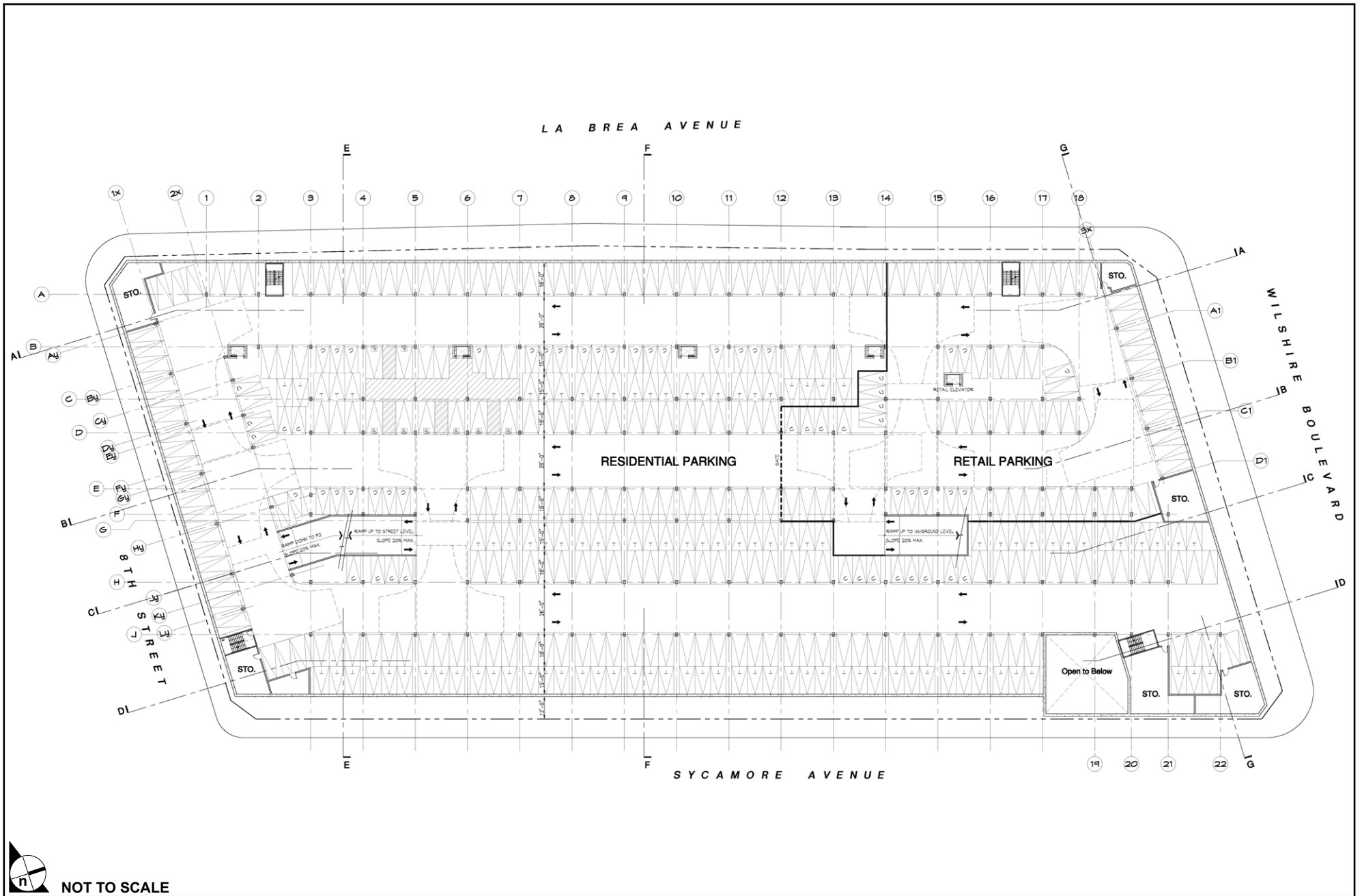


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SOURCE: LRM Landscape Architecture and Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - May 2008

FIGURE II-11

Landscape Plans

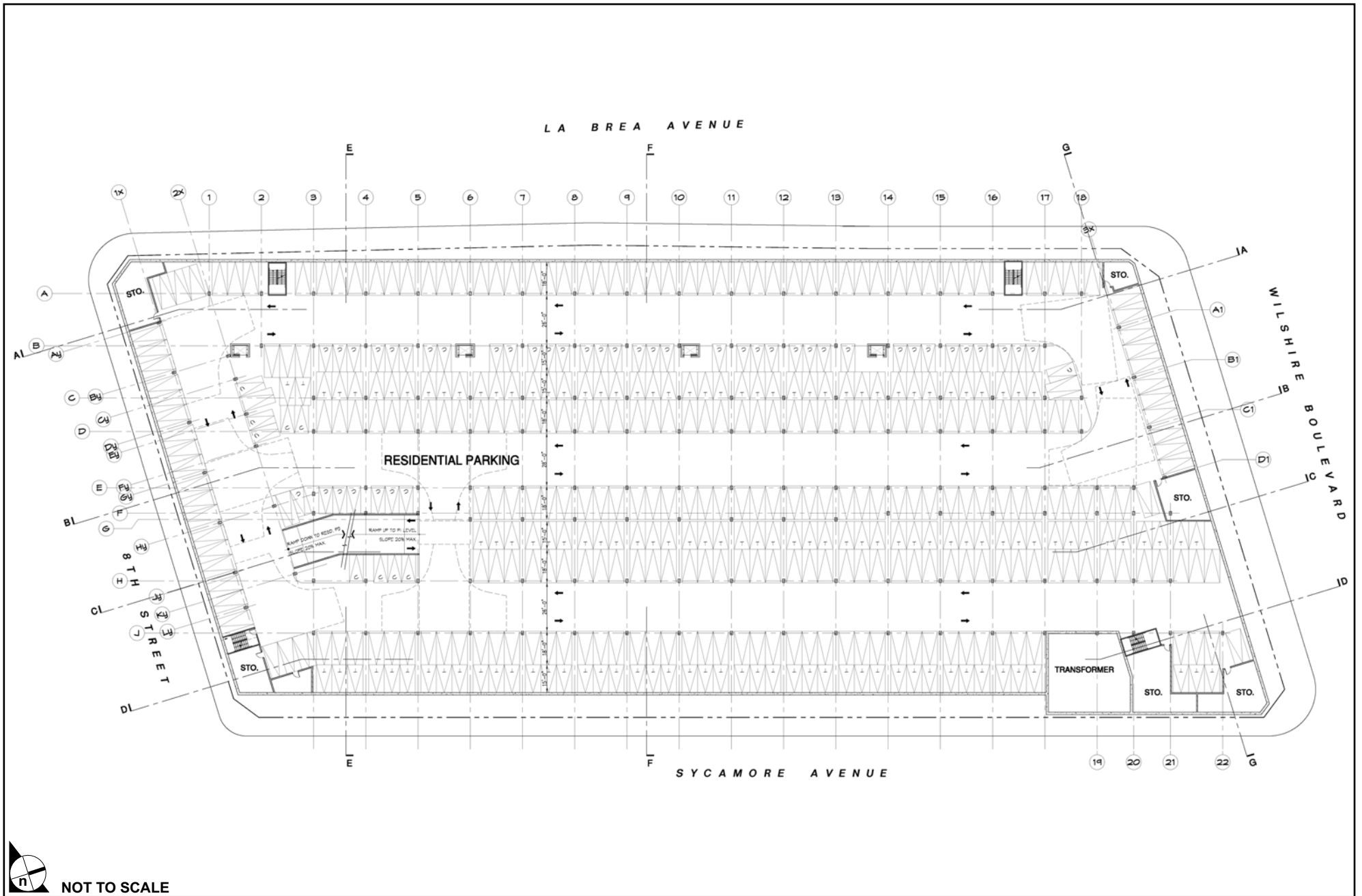


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SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-12

Parking Level P1 Plan

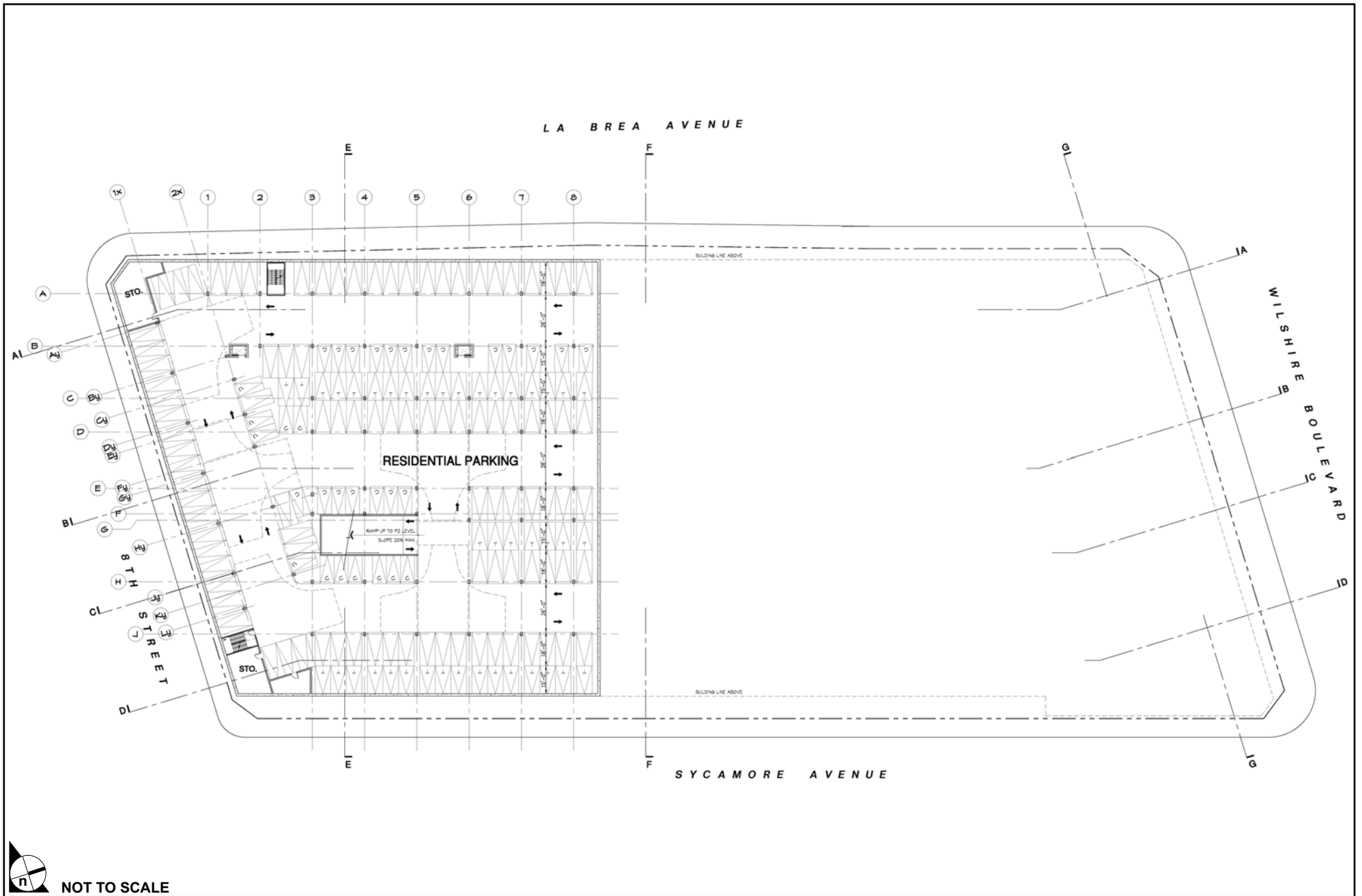


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SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-13

Parking Level P2 Plan

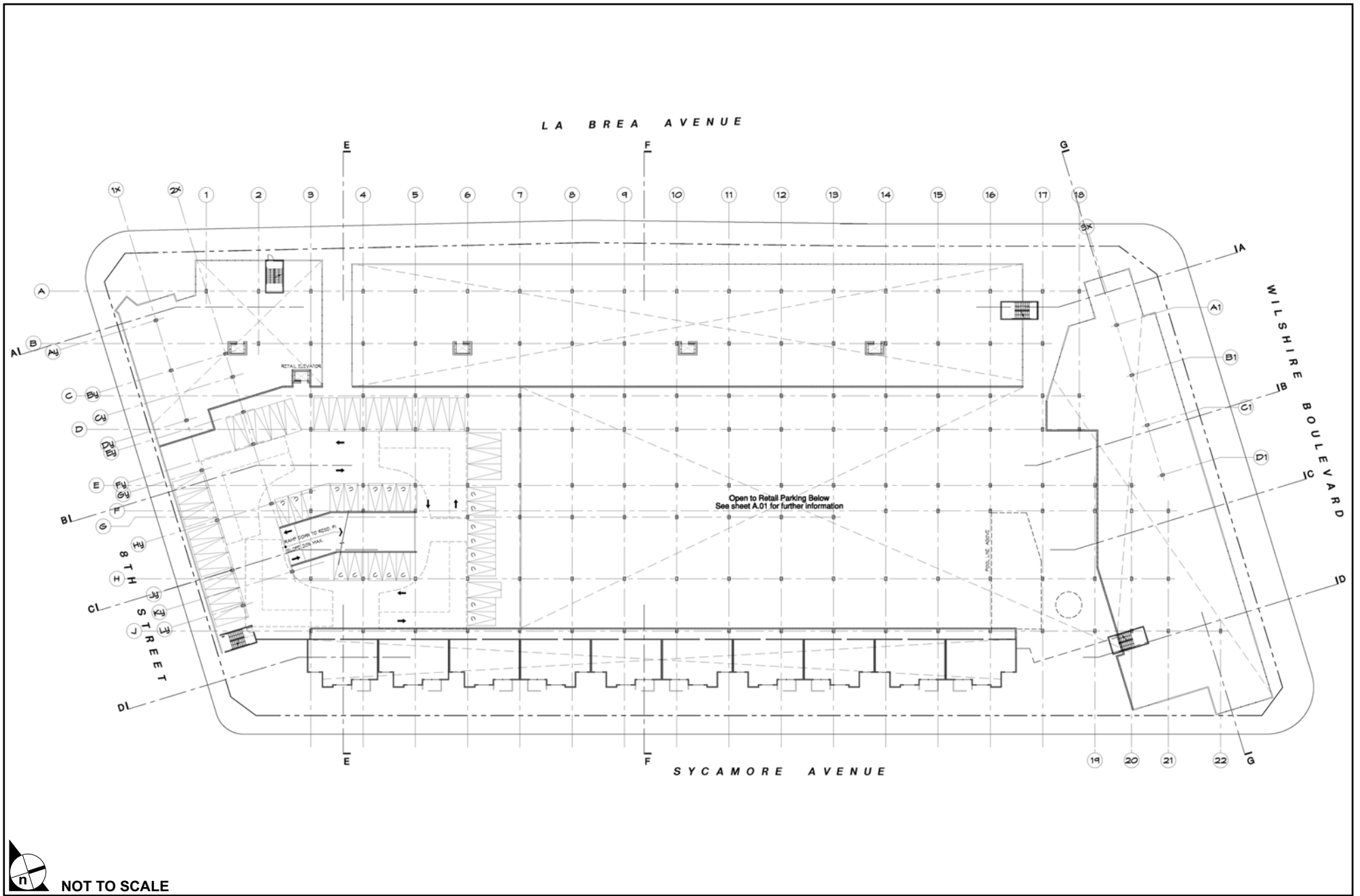


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SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-14

Parking Level P3 Plan



SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-15

Retail Parking at Mezzanine Level Plan

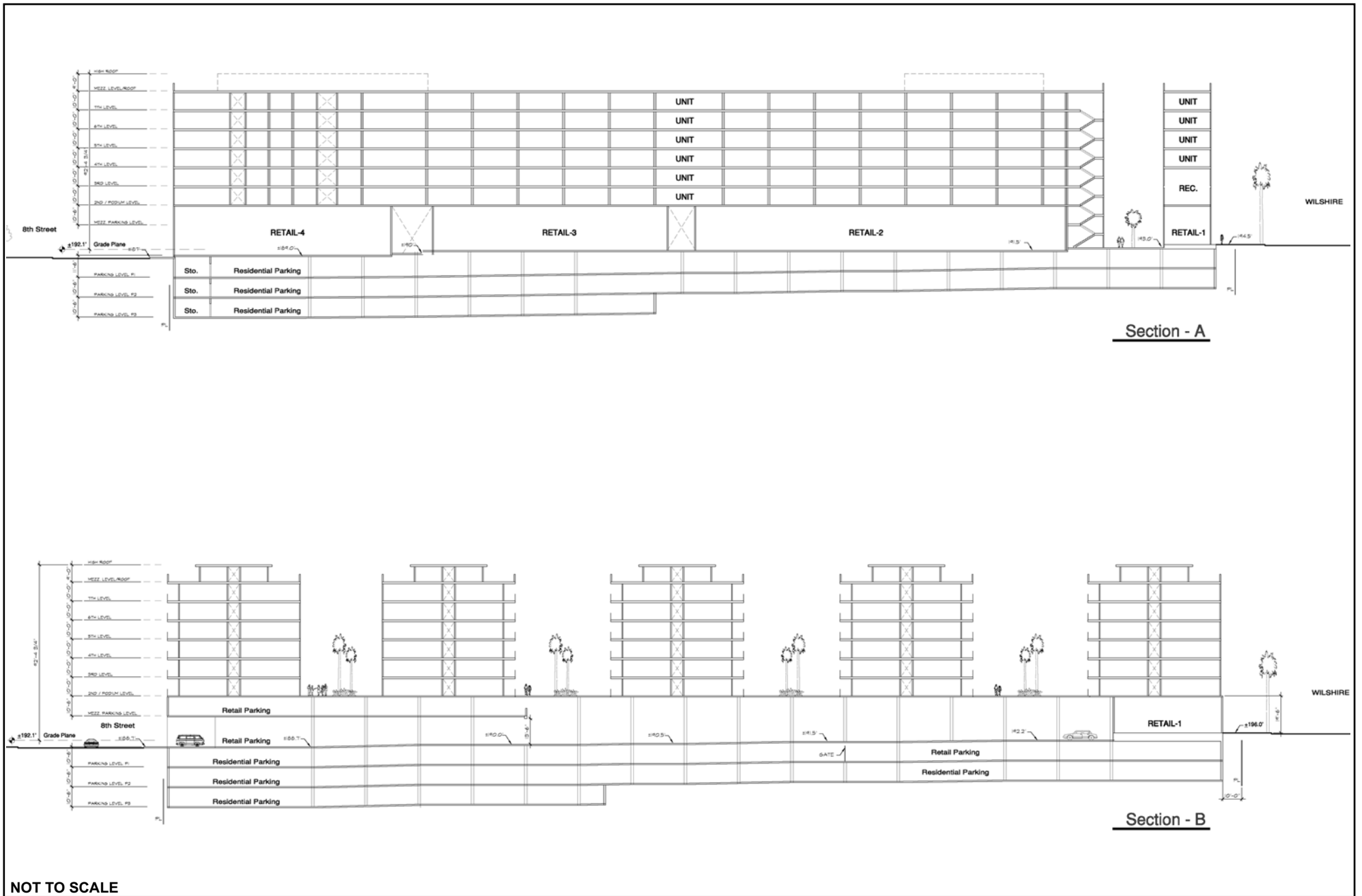
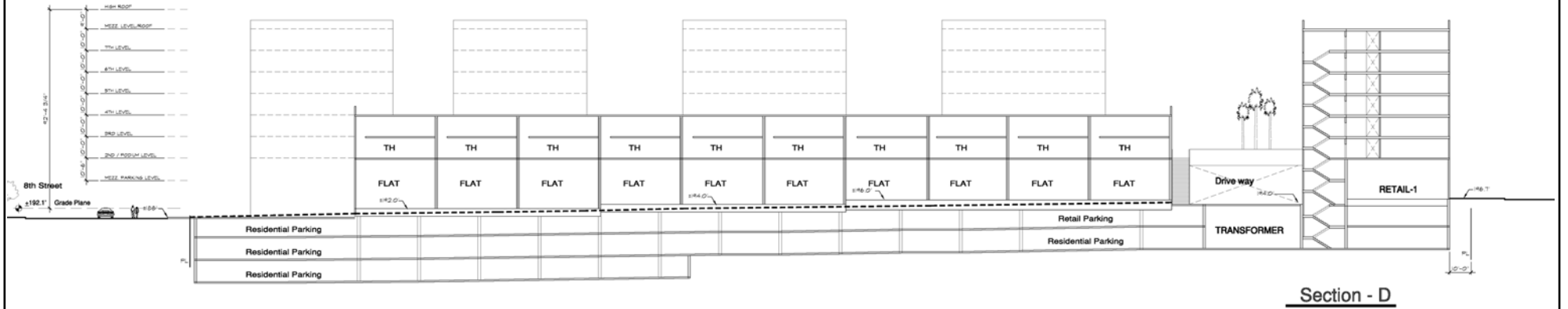
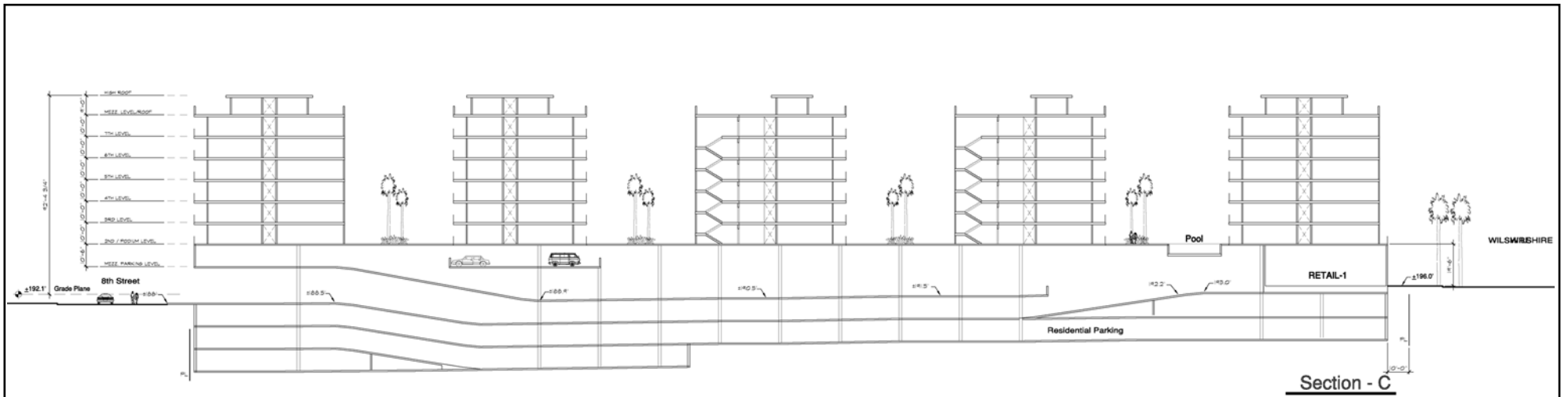


FIGURE II-16

Building Sections

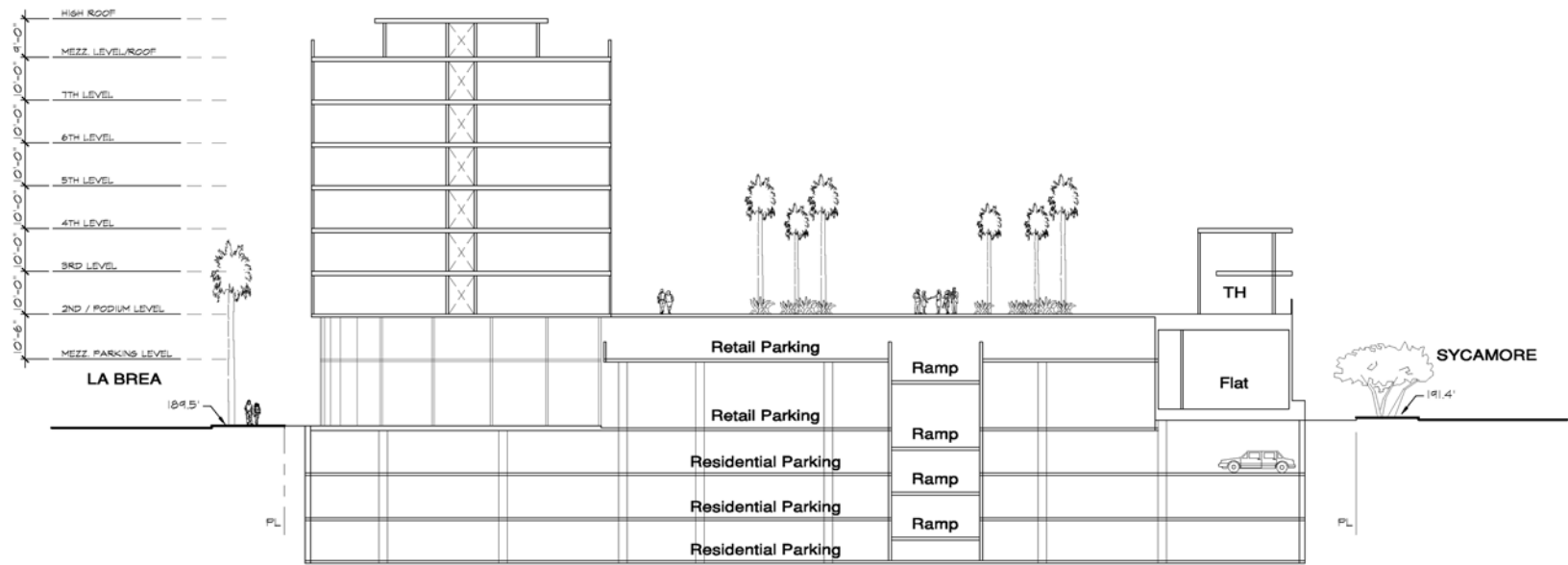


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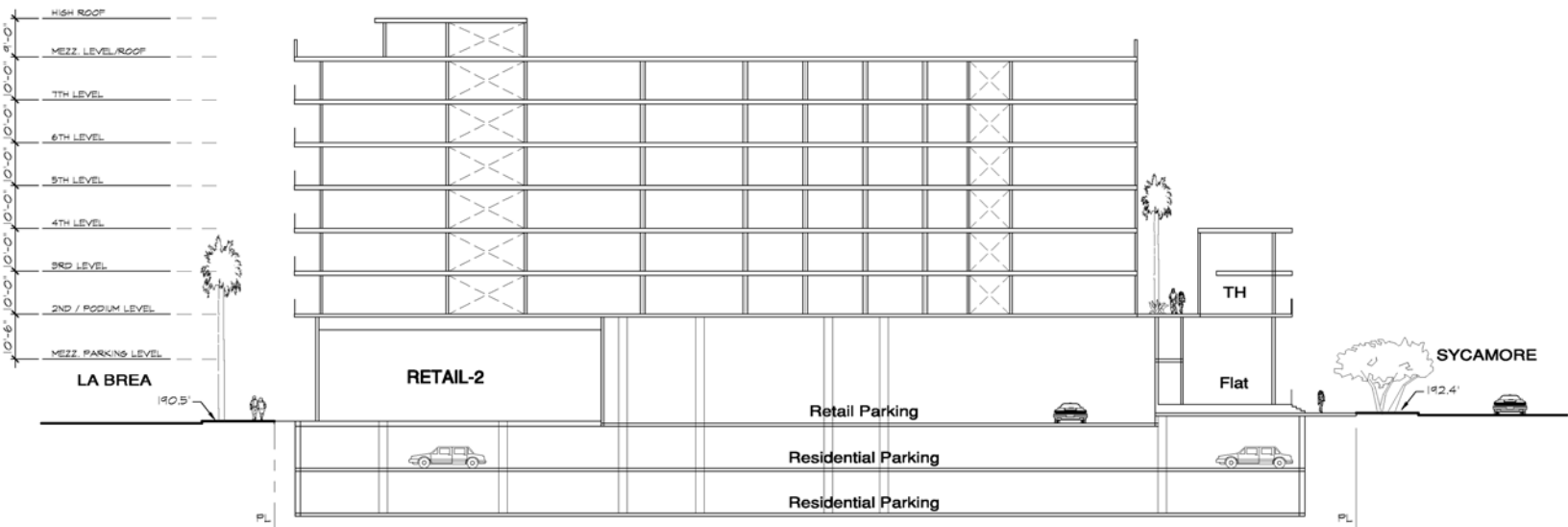
SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE II-17

Building Sections



Section - E



Section - F

NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc. - April 2008

FIGURE **II-18**

Phase II (Excavation/Earthwork) would involve the grading and excavation of existing on-site soils. Grading would require excavation up to depths of approximately 36 feet below ground surface at 8th Street and approximately 27 feet below ground surface at Wilshire Boulevard. It is anticipated that approximately 163,000 cubic yards of earth material would be removed from the project site. Excavation/Earthwork activities would involve the use of standard earth moving equipment, such as excavators, backhoes, and dump trucks, and other related heavy-duty equipment, which would be stored on site during construction to minimize disruption of the surrounding land uses. This phase is anticipated to take four months to complete.

Phase III (Sub-Grade Construction) would involve construction of the foundations and sub-grade portions of the parking structure while Phase IV (Building Construction) would involve above grade construction of the base building. Building activities during these two phases on a worst-case day would involve the use of standard construction equipment, including one crane, two mobile cranes, one electric lift, and two back hoes. Phase III is expected to take nine months to complete while Phase IV is expected to take 14 months to complete. There would be three months of overlap of Phase III and Phase IV.

H. INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This draft EIR will serve as the primary source of environmental information for the actions and approvals associated with the development of the Wilshire and La Brea Project. In accordance with Section 21002.1 of the CEQA Statute, this draft EIR is intended to provide the City of Los Angeles with information as to the environmental effects of the project, alternatives to the project, and mitigation measures which may reduce or avoid any significant effects. This draft EIR will also be used as an information document by other public agencies in connection with any approvals or permits necessary for construction and operation of the Wilshire and La Brea project.

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning is acting as lead agency as defined by CEQA for environmental review of this project. Upon certification of the EIR by the City of Los Angeles, a variety of discretionary and ministerial actions will be required, including, but not limited to:

- General Plan Amendment for the southernmost portion of the La Brea Avenue parcel from General Commercial to Regional Center Commercial;
- Zone/Height District (HD) change from [Q] C4-2-CDO (Wilshire), C2-1 (La Brea) and [Q]C2-1 (Sycamore) to [T][Q]C4-2 on the entire site;
- Vesting tract map, including the vacation of an alley;
- Zoning administrator adjustment;

II. Project Description

- Site plan review;
- Master conditional use permit (CUP) for sale of alcohol;
- Building line removal along Wilshire Boulevard;
- Project permit compliance under Community Design Overlay (CDO) District; and
- Other approvals as necessary.