

July 24, 2018

Anthony Hood, Chairperson
D.C. Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: Z.C. Case No. 17-18
Hickok Cole Comments Regarding Areaway Measurement and Dimensions**

Hickok Cole Architects offers the following recommendations regarding the text amendments proposed in Z.C. Case No. 17-18 and, more specifically, the provisions concerning the treatment of finished and natural grade for projects that have areaways.

Under the proposed language, when determining the finished or natural grade — and, correspondingly, how a building’s gross floor area is measured — exceptions are provided for both window wells and areaways. An areaway is defined under the proposed amendments as “[a] subsurface space adjacent to a building open at the top or protected at the top by a grating or guard and passageways accessing basement/cellar doors.” (Window wells are similar to areaways, except that they provide air, light, or emergency egress to windows rather than doors.) In order for an areaway to be excluded from the determination of finished or natural grade, the areaway must provide direct access to an entrance and must project no more than five (5) feet from the building face, not including associated stairs or ramps. On this point, we offer two comments.

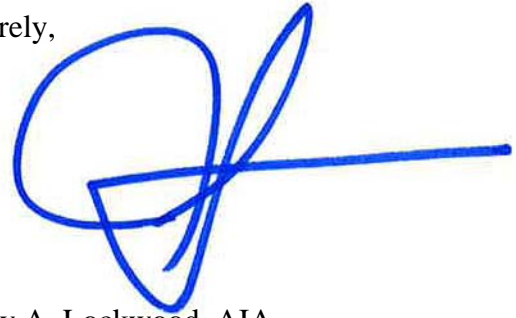
First, we strongly support the proposed language that specifically excludes steps and ramps leading into an areaway from the dimension of the maximum projection. Excluding ramps and stairs from this measurement is important because stairs and ramps leading into an areaway could otherwise easily absorb, and even exceed, the entirety of the permitted projection distance.

Second, whereas the proposed amendments would exclude an areaway from finished/natural grade up to a maximum projection of five (5) feet from the building face, we recommend that the Commission increase this maximum permitted projection to seven (7) feet. As illustrated in the areaway study attached as Exhibit A, limiting areaways to the five (5) foot dimension substantially restricts the degree of sunlight and outdoor views offered to below-grade units, as well as constraining the space provided by the area way for ingress and egress. As shown in the study, increasing the maximum permitted areaway projection by only two (2) additional feet to seven (7) feet accommodates significantly more — 26% more — sunlight to units located partially below grade. Additionally, as the study sections demonstrate, while the five (5) foot cap provides only barely enough room for two people to access the areaway together, increasing the maximum to seven (7) accommodates two occupants comfortably, with a much less claustrophobic experience than would be imposed by the five (5) foot dimension currently proposed.

Accordingly, we ask that the Commission adopt the proposed language excluding stairs and ramps from areaway measurements, and to increase the maximum permitted areaway projection to seven (7) feet in order to afford more light to below-grade units and better serve the District residents who occupy these units.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments and look forward to the Commission's consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

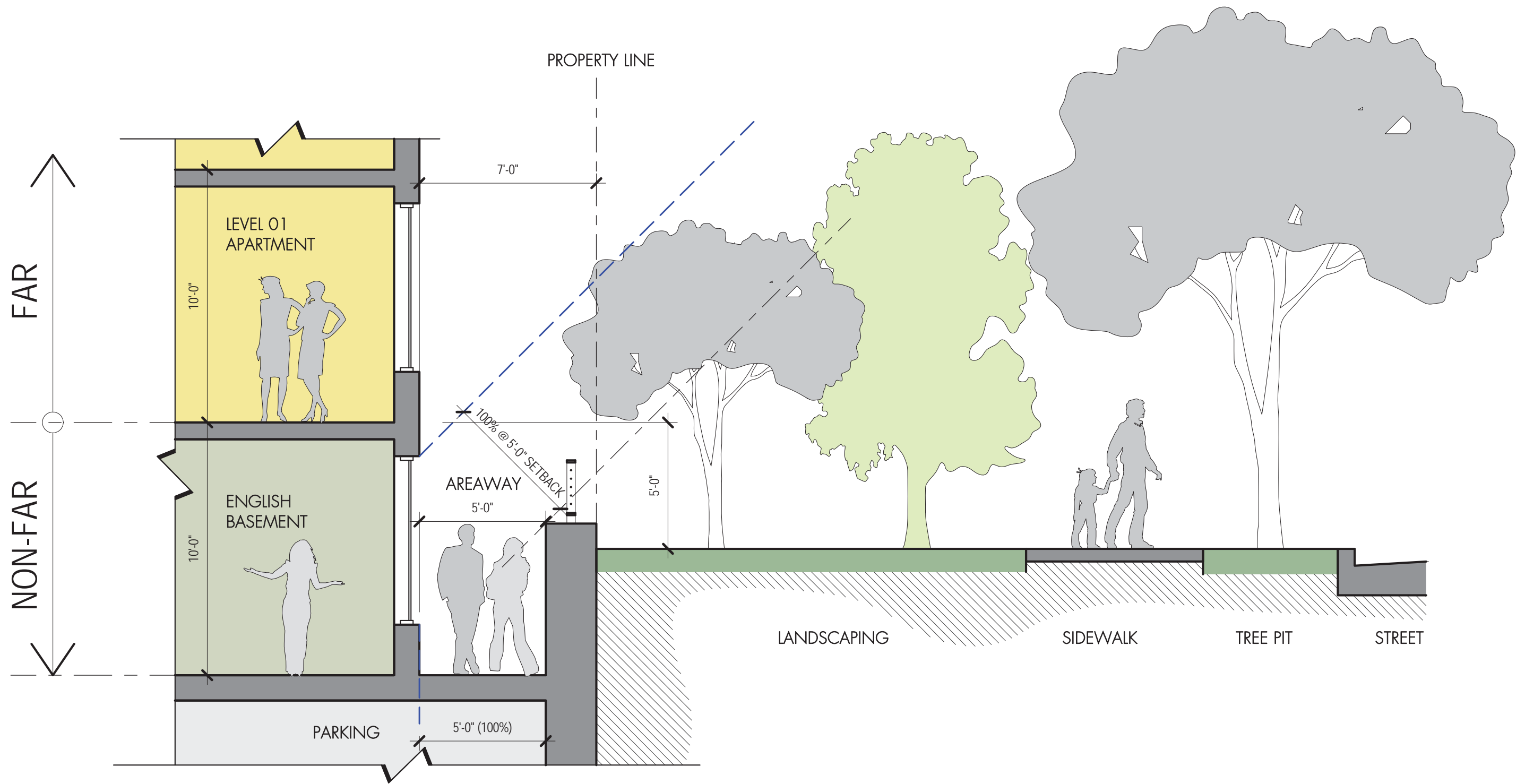
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Jeffrey A. Lockwood, AIA
Hickok Cole Architects



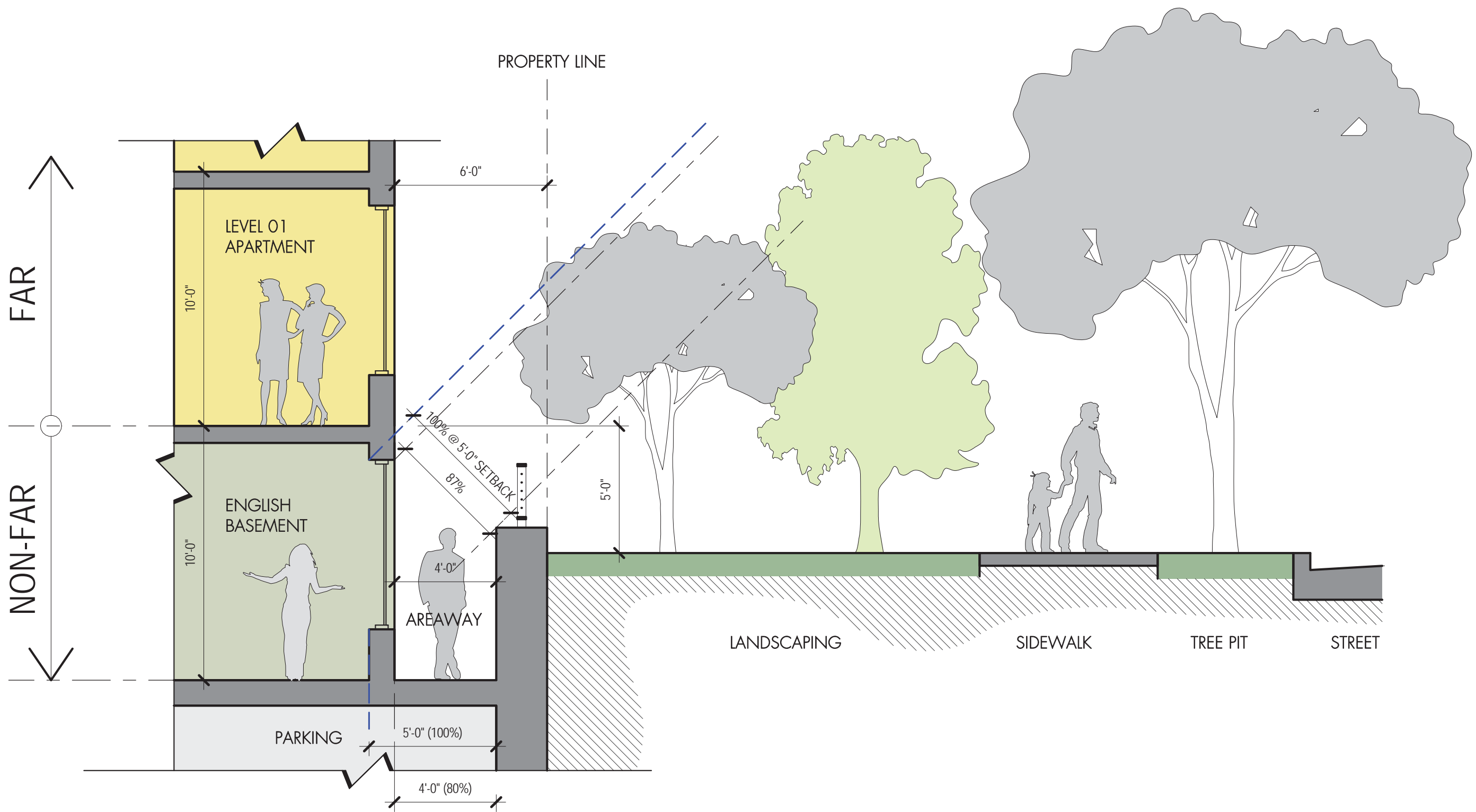
AREAWAY STUDY

07.10.2018

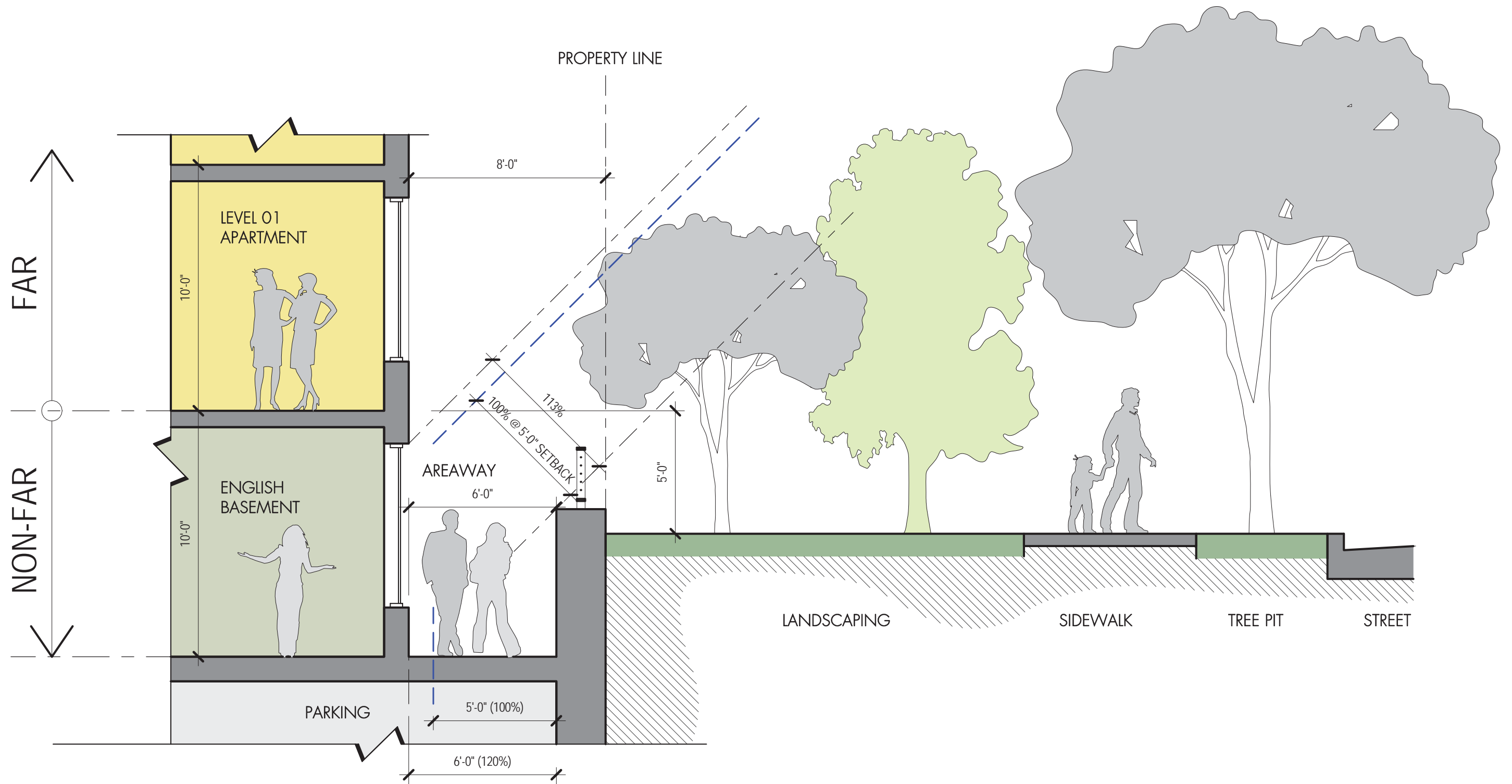


ENGLISH BASEMENT / AREAWAY SECTION
@ 5'-0" WIDE AREAWAY

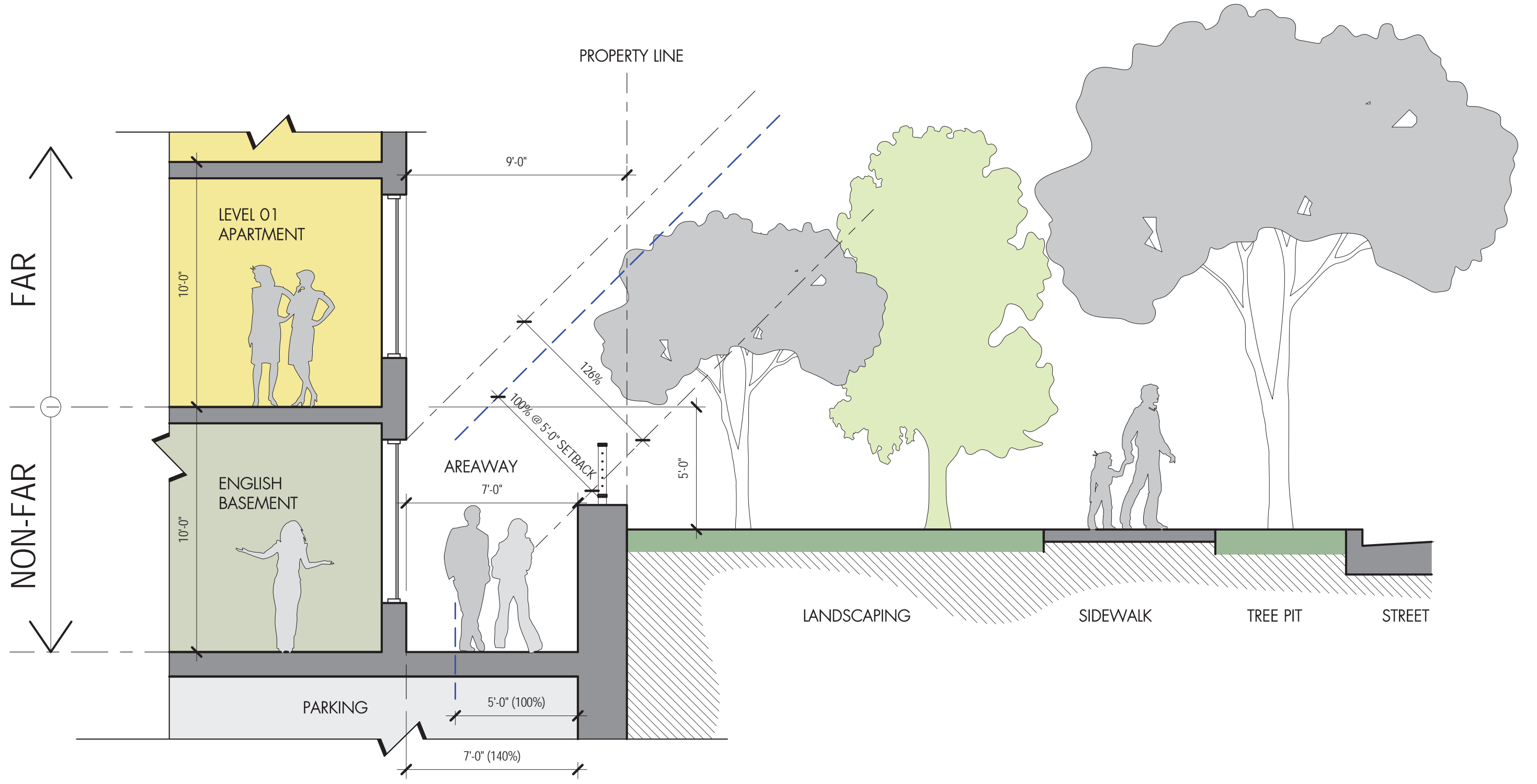
BASELINE DIAGRAM



ENGLISH BASEMENT / AREAWAY SECTION
@ 4'-0" WIDE AREAWAY



ENGLISH BASEMENT / AREAWAY SECTION
@ 6'-0" WIDE AREAWAY



ENGLISH BASEMENT / AREAWAY SECTION
@ 7'-0" WIDE AREAWAY