

Singer Steel Building Residential Development

Preferred Alternative 1 - Community Design Recommendations

2100 Random Road | Little Italy, Cleveland, Ohio | October 2026

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Presented to: TurnDev and Vocon



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Executive Summary

Little Italy residents support responsible development that enhances neighborhood safety, walkability, and architectural character; strengthens long-term residential stability; and improves quality of life for both existing and future residents.

The Preferred Alternative 1 builds upon the proposed four-story, L-shaped development and approximately 368'–6" Random Road frontage, recommending five principal improvements to strengthen residential livability, architectural compatibility, long-term neighborhood stability, and street-level activity:

1. Elevated, **private ground-floor patios and functional upper-floor balconies** that encourage residents to spend time outdoors, improving quality of life and providing natural surveillance—eyes on the street.
2. A **cohesive brick-and-steel** architectural identity that reflects Little Italy's historic masonry traditions and industrial heritage.
3. A **recessed fourth story** with private terraces, reducing the building's perceived height while preserving four residential levels.
4. Incorporate **owner-occupied townhomes** to expand homeownership opportunities, encourage long-term residency, and strengthen neighborhood continuity as Little Italy becomes increasingly transient.
5. Integrate **neighborhood-serving retail** at a prominent ground-floor corner to provide everyday amenities, encourage social connections, and reinforce Little Italy's historic mixed-use character.

1. Prioritize Elevated Patios and Balconies



Ground-floor patios are the community's highest priority because they improve residents' daily lives and create a more active, naturally observed streetscape.

The preferred design is a system of vertically stacked, recessed outdoor spaces integrated into the building façade. Ground-floor patios would align with recessed balconies above, creating a consistent architectural rhythm without relying on extensive projecting structures.

Recommended requirements:

- Patio elevations, wall heights, and screening should balance residential privacy with street visibility. Vocon should evaluate representative cross-sections showing sidewalk grade, patio elevation, privacy-wall height, accessible routes, and sightlines before finalizing the configuration.
- Target 6–8 feet of usable patio depth where the building layout permits.
- Recess patios into the building footprint where necessary to accommodate the existing approximately 8'–4" front setback.
- Provide modest landscaping between patio enclosures and the sidewalk.
- Ensure direct access from individual residences.

1. Prioritize Elevated Patios and Balconies

Privacy is essential to successful street activation. Residents are more likely to use patios that provide separation from passing pedestrians. Comfortable, occupied outdoor spaces create more opportunities for casual observation and neighborhood interaction than exposed patios that remain unused.

Recessed patios may reduce ground-floor interior area, but can also help establish a repeatable construction system. The patio design must be coordinated with accessible routes, drainage, waterproofing, and applicable guard requirements.

1a. Precedent for street-facing patios



Stack Architecture, 52 Plympton Street. Boston MA



Gerald J. Caliando, Roma Condominiums Queens NY

The community recommends providing directly accessible private outdoor space for as many Random Road-facing apartments as practicable.

Balconies should accommodate practical seating and be constructed using standardized details, dark steel railings, and durable materials.

Private outdoor space is an important contributor to the neighborhood's pedestrian and safety environment —not merely an aesthetic feature.

2. Require Cohesive Brick-and-Steel Architecture



The Singer Steel Building should use predominantly red brick, sandstone, and dark steel across its entire Random Road frontage and other prominent public-facing elevations.

The design should incorporate industrial-style windows, masonry piers, restrained sandstone detailing, and consistent brick coloration. It should not rely on alternating vinyl or panelized siding to break up the street façade.

The brick-and-steel expression, as well as early industrial and art-deco inspired vertical elements would also honor the site's industrial history and its documented association with the Ohio Cut Stone Company and the artisans who carved Cleveland's Guardians of Traffic.

Cost-saving compromise: Economical, code-compliant vinyl or alternative siding may be considered on less visible rear elevations facing parking and service areas. Prominent corners and publicly visible portions of the perpendicular wing should retain compatible masonry treatment.

2. Require Cohesive Brick-and-Steel Architecture

2a. Local Precedents: Cohesive Masonry and Vertical Façade Articulation



Murray Hill School — Historic masonry precedent



Holy Rosary Church — Cohesive institutional masonry



Alta House — Neighborhood architectural character



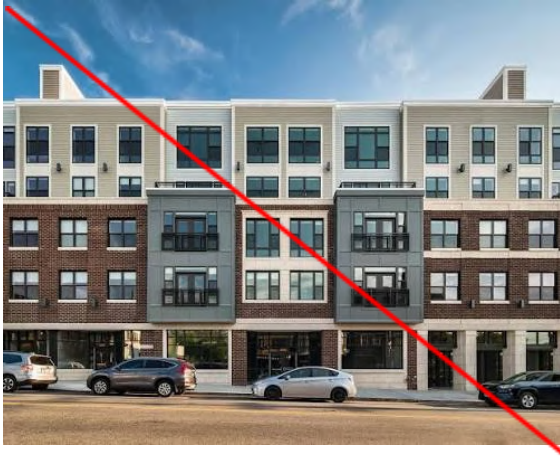
Noyes House — Contemporary masonry reference

Little Italy’s historic institutional buildings—including Murray Hill School, Holy Rosary Church, and Alta House—demonstrate the neighborhood’s established tradition of cohesive masonry construction. Contemporary examples such as Noyes House provide a related design reference. These large buildings emphasize vertical masonry motifs to reduce their perceived scale.

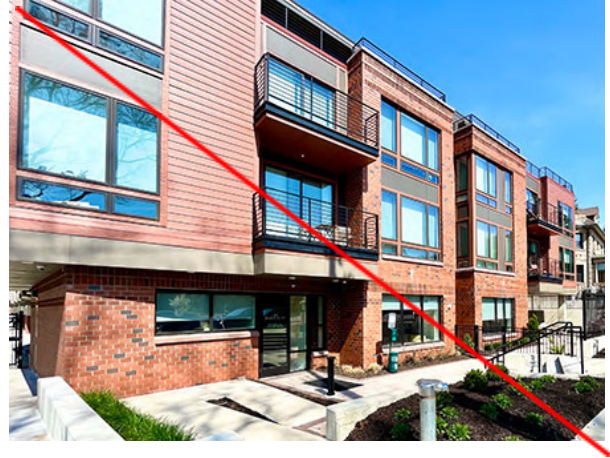
2. Require Cohesive Brick-and-Steel Architecture

2a. Local Precedents: Cohesive Masonry and Vertical Façade Articulation

By contrast, developments such as La Collina and Baricelli have employed contrasting cladding to visually subdivide their massing. **Historical preservationists and Little Italy residents have criticized this ‘broken-massing’ approach as inconsistent with Little Italy’s architectural identity.**



La Collina - 12314 Mayfield Rd



Baricelli - 2189 Cornell Rd

2. Require Cohesive Brick-and-Steel Architecture

2a. Local Precedents: Cohesive Masonry and Vertical Façade Articulation

Neighborhood examples of appropriate brick detailing:



*Murray Hill Condos - 2043 Random Road -
Decorative brick patterns — Soldier courses,
recessed panels, and geometric masonry.*



*Murray Hill Condos - 2043 Random Road -
Ground-to-roof vertical motifs — Continuous brick
piers and subtle stepped parapets*

To reduce the perceived scale of the approximately 368-foot frontage, the community recommends selective ground-to-roof vertical brick motifs reminiscent of early twentieth-century industrial and Art Deco architecture.

These should include full-height brick piers, geometric brick insets, soldier courses, and modest stepped parapets.

The detailing should visually organize the building into warehouse-like sections without requiring costly structural setbacks or introducing contrasting façade materials.

Use standardized brick units and repetitive details to maintain construction efficiency.

3. Recess the Top Floor



Retain four occupied residential stories, but recess the fourth floor approximately 10 feet from Random Road as an initial design target.

This would reduce the building's perceived height while providing usable private terraces.

A continuous 8-foot setback along 368' would displace approximately 2,948 square feet of enclosed fourth-floor area. Vocon should evaluate selective setbacks where necessary to preserve unit count and financial feasibility.

The recessed fourth floor should use restrained dark cladding compatible with the predominantly brick architecture below.

3. Recess the Top Floor

Examples of recessed top story setbacks.



*Provided/Quest Realty Group, 2501 N.
Clark Street, Chicago IL*



*Hepburn Architects, Apartment Scheme
Birmingham*



Morris Adjmi Architects, The Grand Mulberry, Little Italy New York NY

3. Recess the Top Floor

3a. Precedent: Little Italy's Top Floor Setbacks



Murray Hill Condos - 2043 Random Road- Historical Example: Fourth Story is set back approximately 16 feet, reducing its perceived height and creating a comfortable rooftop terrace for residents.



Woodhill Townhomes - E120th & E123rd Streets -Contemporary Example: Fourth Story is setback, providing a generous balcony.

4. Incorporate Owner-Occupied Townhomes



The Preferred Alternative 1 should include a meaningful component of for-sale townhomes, designed to support owner occupancy and long-term residency.

As Little Italy becomes increasingly transient, providing opportunities for residents to establish permanent roots should be a central development objective. Rental housing serves an important role, but additional rental units alone do not address the need for a balanced mix of housing tenures. Owner-occupied homes can support continuity in neighborhood relationships, sustained participation in community organizations, and long-term stewardship of buildings and public spaces.

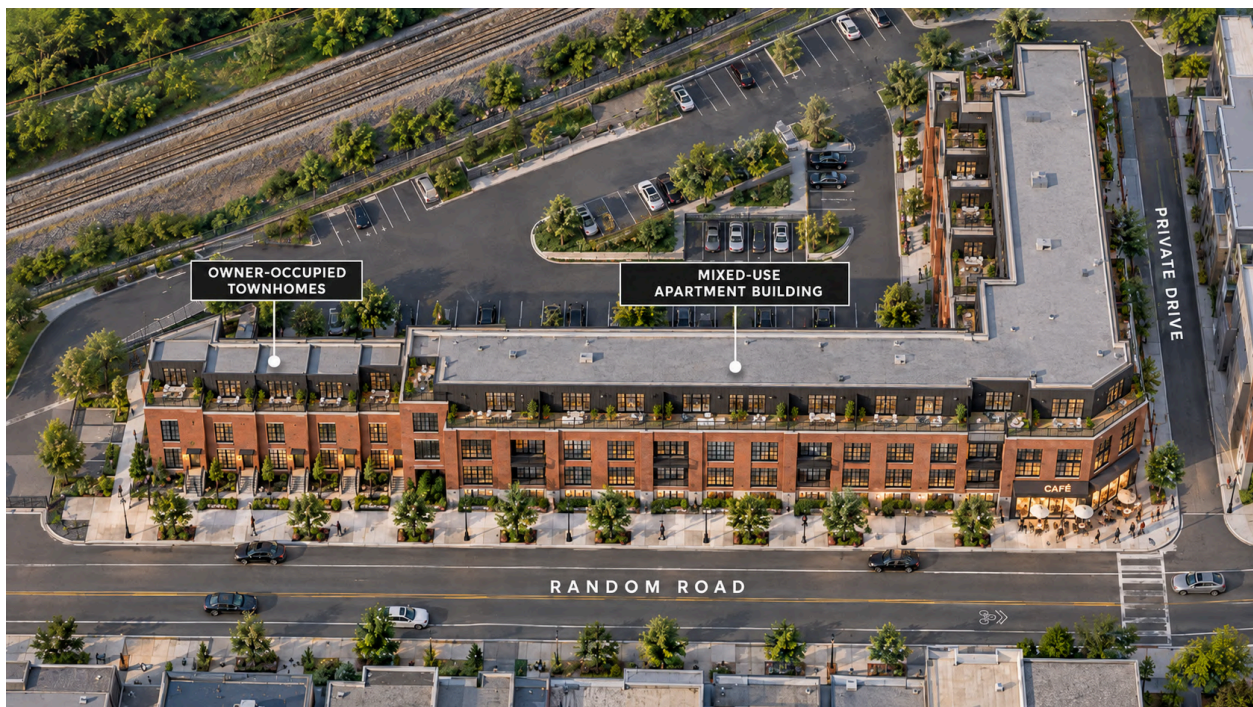
Townhomes would also introduce a familiar residential scale through individual entrances, stoops, private outdoor spaces, and clearly defined street addresses. These features would complement the larger apartment building while creating a more direct relationship between homes and the sidewalk.

4. Incorporate Owner-Occupied Townhomes

Recommended requirements:

- Evaluate a dedicated townhome component along an appropriate street-facing portion of the site.
- Offer these homes for individual purchase, with owner occupancy as an explicit project objective.
- Provide direct street entrances and private outdoor space.
- Use brick, sandstone, and dark steel details consistent with the overall architectural approach.

The objective is to create a development where residents can remain through different stages of life and contribute to Little Italy's long-term residential stability.



4. Incorporate Owner-Occupied Townhomes

4a. Precedent: Little Italy Townhomes



Villa Carabelli - Mayfield Rd - 20 townhomes built in 2001-03



Woodhill Townhomes - E120th & E123rd Streets - 17 homes to be completed in 2026

5. Integrate Neighborhood-Serving Retail



Reserve a prominent ground-floor corner for neighborhood-serving retail or a small café, with a visible entrance and transparent storefront facing the sidewalk.

A corner commercial space would provide amenities within walking distance of both new and existing residents. It would also create opportunities for informal interaction and, with an appropriate tenant and seating, function as a “third space”—a place outside home and work where neighbors can meet and build relationships.

Active storefronts would extend street activity beyond residential arrivals and departures, bringing more people onto the sidewalk throughout the day. This approach would reinforce the close relationship between homes, shops, and gathering places that defines Little Italy’s historic mixed-use character.

Additional parking should not be treated as a prerequisite for modest, neighborhood-serving retail. The intended customer base is the surrounding walkable neighborhood, including residents of the development itself. Commercial space should be scaled to this pedestrian context, with practical provisions for deliveries, refuse collection, and bicycle parking.

5. Integrate Neighborhood-Serving Retail

Recommended requirements:

- Locate retail at the most visible and pedestrian-accessible corner.
- Provide a direct, accessible sidewalk entrance and generous storefront glazing.
- Favor uses that serve daily neighborhood needs and encourage repeat visits.
- Accommodate seating where feasible without obstructing pedestrian circulation.



La Dolce Vita - 12112 Mayfield Rd - Ground-floor restaurant below two stories of apartments



Mount Granita - 2024 Murray Hill - Ground-floor retail reestablished in 2023, demonstrating the compatibility of small-scale commercial uses within Little Italy's predominantly residential streets.

5. Integrate Neighborhood-Serving Retail

5a. Precedent: New Development Mixed-Use Buildings



The Lincoln - 2410 Scranton Rd - Mixed-use apartment building incorporating ground-floor retail and neighborhood-serving businesses within Tremont's historic residential setting.



The Tappan - 1633 Auburn Ave - Ground-floor bakery integrated into a multifamily residential building on a predominantly residential street in Tremont.

Summary of Requested Revisions from TurnDev and Vocon

The community requests that TurnDev and Vocon evaluate Preferred Alternative 1 and provide a revised concept package addressing the following:

1. **Private outdoor space:** Representative plans and sections showing elevated ground-floor patios, recessed balconies, privacy screening, accessibility, and drainage.
2. **Architectural materials:** Updated Random Road and public-facing elevations illustrating cohesive brick masonry, sandstone accents, dark steel detailing, and restrained vertical ornamentation.
3. **Fourth-floor setback:** A massing comparison evaluating an approximately 10-foot setback, resulting terrace areas, and implications for residential floor area and unit count.
4. **Owner-occupied townhomes:** A site and ownership concept showing approximately four to six individually owned townhomes, their relationship to the apartment building, and potential subdivision or condominium ownership structures.
5. **Neighborhood-serving retail:** A ground-floor plan identifying one corner commercial space, pedestrian access, storefront design, seating opportunities, and servicing requirements.

Closing community position

The community supports a financially viable development that contributes to Little Italy's long-term safety, architectural character, residential stability, and neighborhood vitality.

Preferred Alternative 1 prioritizes five outcomes:

1. **Residential Livability:** Private, elevated ground-floor patios and functional balconies that encourage outdoor activity and natural surveillance.
2. **Architectural Compatibility:** Cohesive brick-and-steel architecture with restrained industrial and Art Deco-inspired masonry detailing that acknowledges the site's history.
3. **Contextual Massing:** A recessed fourth story that reduces perceived building height while providing usable residential terraces.
4. **Residential Stability:** Owner-occupied townhomes that expand homeownership opportunities and encourage long-term neighborhood stewardship.
5. **Neighborhood Vitality:** One appropriately scaled corner retail space that provides walkable amenities and strengthens social connections.

The objective is a development that provides lasting value to its residents and respects the neighborhood in which it is built.