



RB14-003

## DISTINGUISHING “LOCALIZED DEPRESSIONS” FOR DETERMINATION OF GRADE

### Reference: Definitions of *Building Height*, *First Storey* and *Grade*

***Building Height*** (in storeys) means the number of storeys contained between the roof and the floor of the first storey.

***First Storey*** means the uppermost storey having its floor level not more than 2 m above grade.

***Grade*** (as applying to the determination of *building height*) means the lowest of the average levels of finished ground adjoining each exterior wall of a building, except that localized depressions such as for vehicle or pedestrian entrances need not be considered in the determination of average levels of finished ground. (See First storey.)

### Question:

To what extent can the term “localized depression” be applied to discount areas for the purpose of establishing the ***First Storey*** and thereby permit a building to remain in Part 9 rather than Part 3?

### Commentary | Relevant Facts:

*Building height* is determined by considering *grade* and *first storey* as defined in the ABC 2014. The relationship between the definitions is often interpreted inconsistently as the definition of *grade* makes exceptions for localized depressions (not a defined term in the ABC 2014). It is therefore necessary to clarify the extent and use of localized depressions for the purpose of determining building height and the application of Part 9 or Part 3

Identifying the *first storey* is necessary to determine which part(s) of the Building Code are applicable to a given building. Since the definition of ***Grade*** makes exceptions for localized depressions for things such as vehicle and pedestrian entrances it is necessary to make an interpretation of what this exception means for the purposes of consistency and reliability.

#### Regulation Bulletin General Policy Statement

Unless stated otherwise, the Code references in this Regulations Bulletin are to Division B of the Alberta Building Code 2006 (ABC 2006). Regulation Bulletins do not overrule the ABC 2006 nor constitute a relaxation of the Code. They serve to clarify the Code in areas where the latter is ambiguous or does not cover a specific topic. Regulation Bulletins are City of Calgary clarifications for staff use to enable consistency in the application of the Code. Regulation Bulletins should always be read in the context of the appropriate requirements of the Code

## Conclusion:

The City of Calgary makes the following interpretation regarding the definition of grade and localized depressions in the determination of building height. This interpretation does not apply to things such as partial depth window wells as they do not need to be considered in determining **building height, first storey or grade**

### **The interpreted meaning of Localized Depression for buildings with dwelling units above or below other dwelling units (i.e. condo's, apartments) is that they,**

- a) are for the purpose of vehicle or pedestrian traffic only and not for private outdoor amenity spaces such as patios,
- b) shall extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not partial depth window wells),
- c) except as permitted in d), can extend to a maximum width of 0.6m to the side of the pedestrian or vehicle opening,
- d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings,
- e) shall have a width that does not make up more than 25% of an individual facades length and,
- f) overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standata 06-BCI-013.

### **where there are dwelling units with no dwelling units above or below it (i.e. row or townhouses) is that, for each individual dwelling unit they,**

- a) are for the purpose of vehicle or pedestrian traffic only and not for private outdoor amenity spaces such as patios,
- b) shall extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not partial depth window wells),
- c) except as permitted in d) can extend to a maximum width of 0.6m to the side of the pedestrian or vehicle opening,
- d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings,
- e) are limited to one (1) vehicular entrance per dwelling unit and/or one (1) pedestrian entrance per dwelling unit where,
  - i) the vehicle entrance is limited to 5m in width,
  - ii) the pedestrian entrance is limited to 2m in width,
- f) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standata 06-BCI-013.

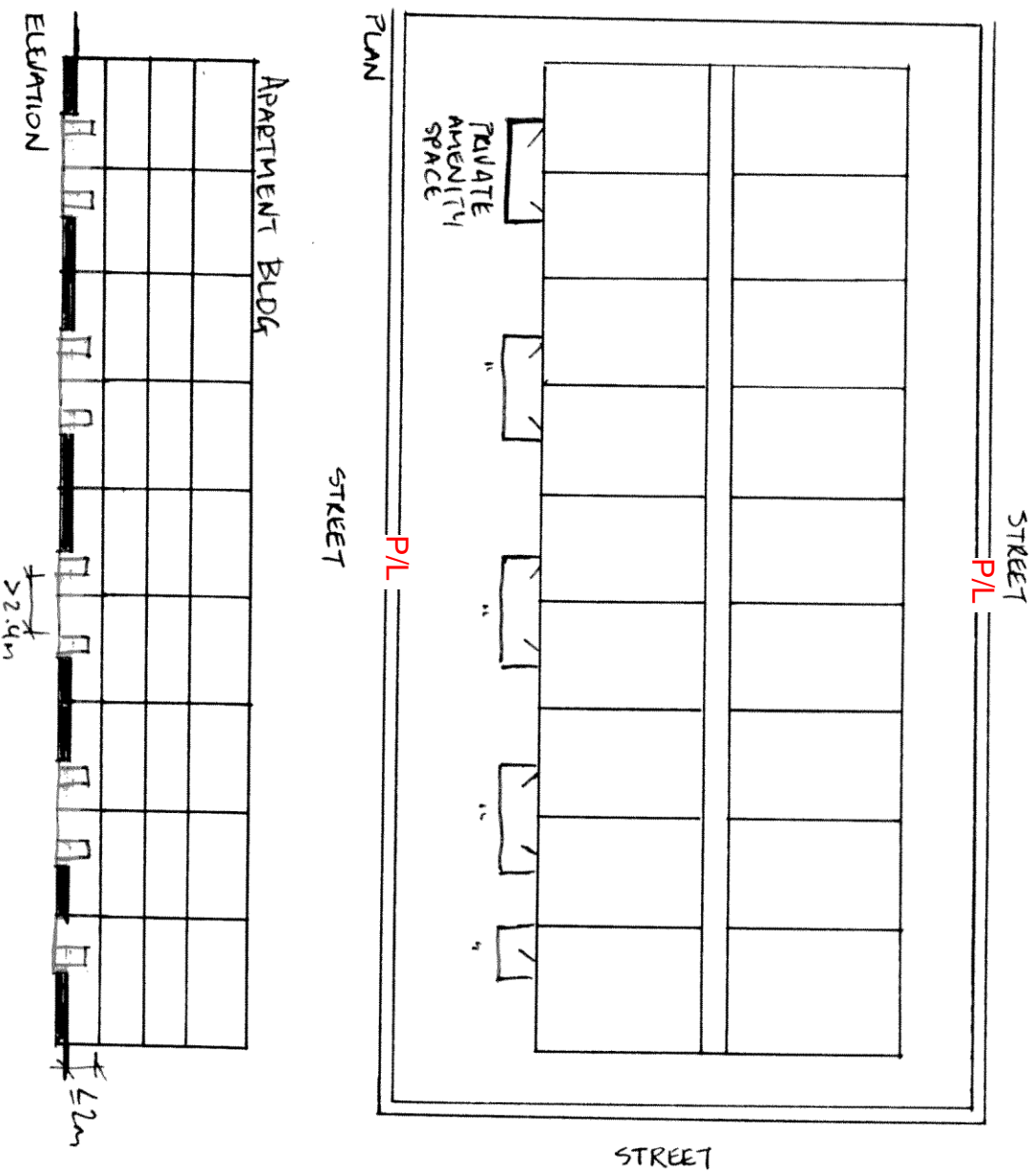
### **that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units is that they**

- a) are for vehicular entrances, pedestrian entrances and windows,
- b) do not make up more than 25% of the perimeter of the building area,
- c) extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not partial depth window wells),
- d) the facade they serve has a limiting distance of 7.5m or more (including to detached garage or accessory building) and,
- e) overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standata 06-BCI-013.

### **See appendix for Illustrations of Interpretation**

Chief Building Inspector

Appendix  
RB14-003 - Illustrations of Interpretation



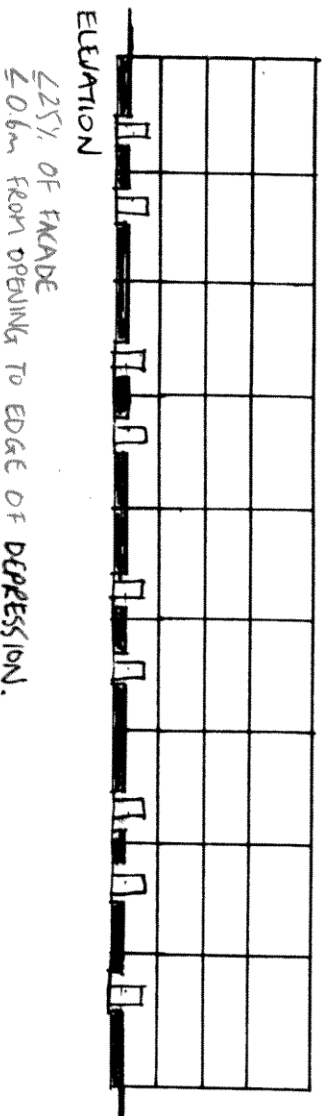
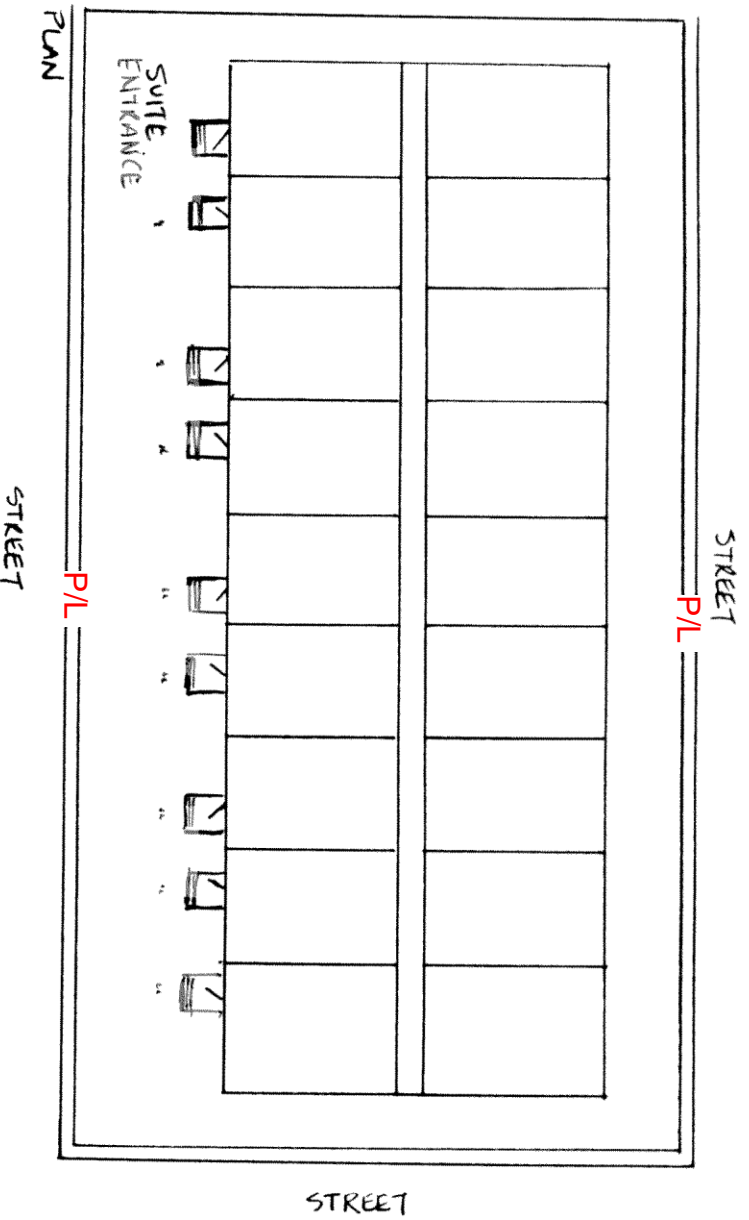
This is a 4 storey building as it does not meet all conditions of localized depressions for buildings with dwelling units above or below other dwelling units (i.e. condo's, apartments)

a) are for the purpose of vehicle or pedestrian traffic only (i.e. not for private outdoor amenity spaces such as patios)

d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings

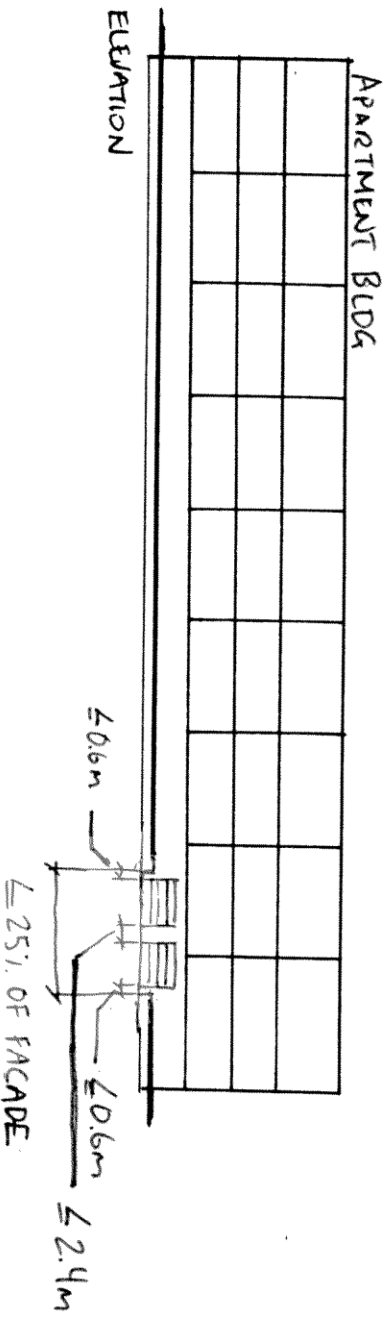
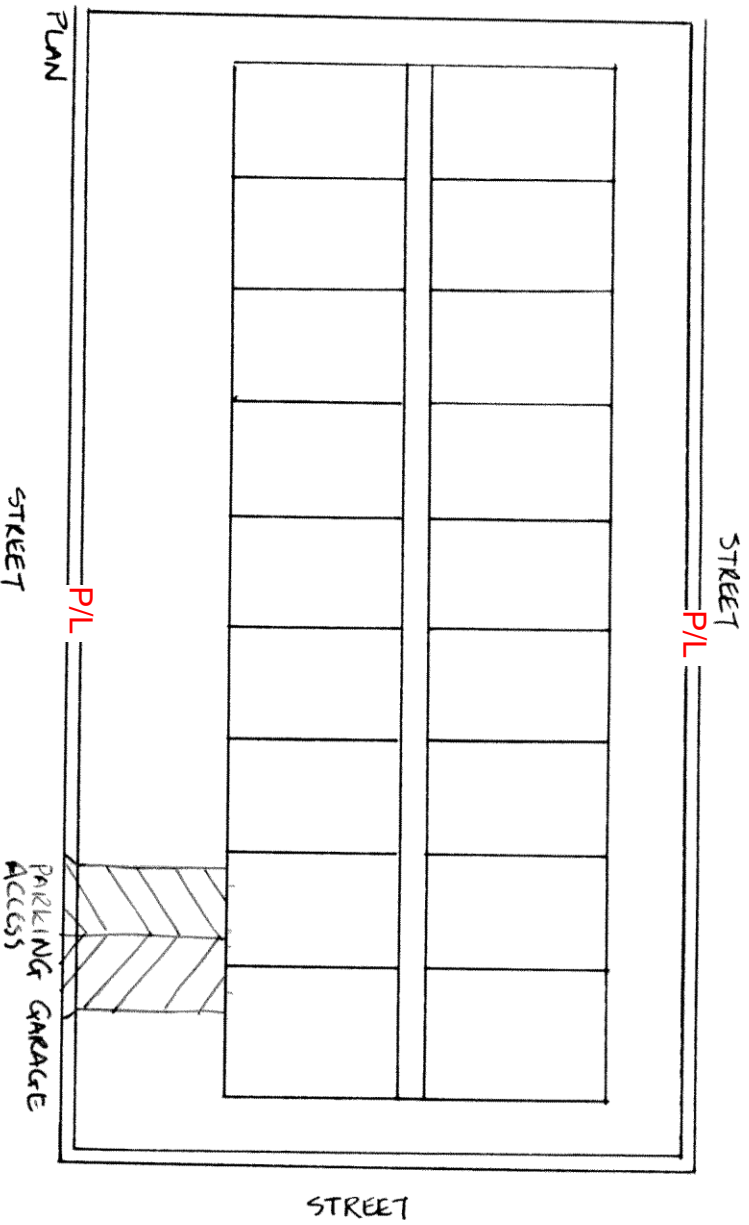
e) shall have a width that does not make up more than 25% of an individual facades length

Illustration 1



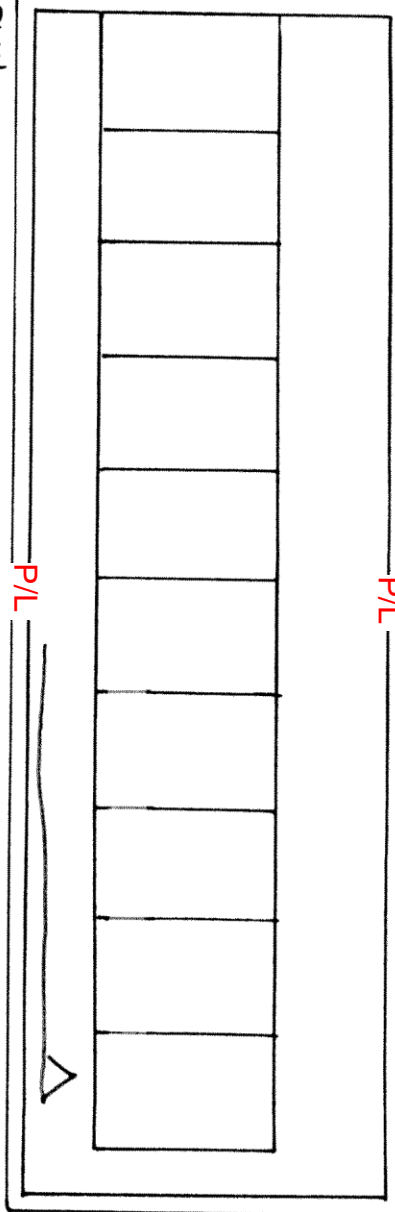
25% OF FACADE  
 ± 0.6m FROM OPENING TO EDGE OF DEPRESSION.

- This is a 3 storey building as it meets all conditions of localized depressions for buildings with dwelling units above or below other dwelling units (i.e. condo's, apartments)
- a) are for the purpose of vehicle or pedestrian traffic only (i.e. not for private outdoor amenity spaces such as patios)
  - b) shall extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not window wells)
  - c) except as permitted in d), can extend to a maximum width of 0.6m to the side of the pedestrian or vehicle opening
  - d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings
  - e) shall have a width that does not make up more than 25% of an individual facades length
  - f) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standata 06-RGI-013



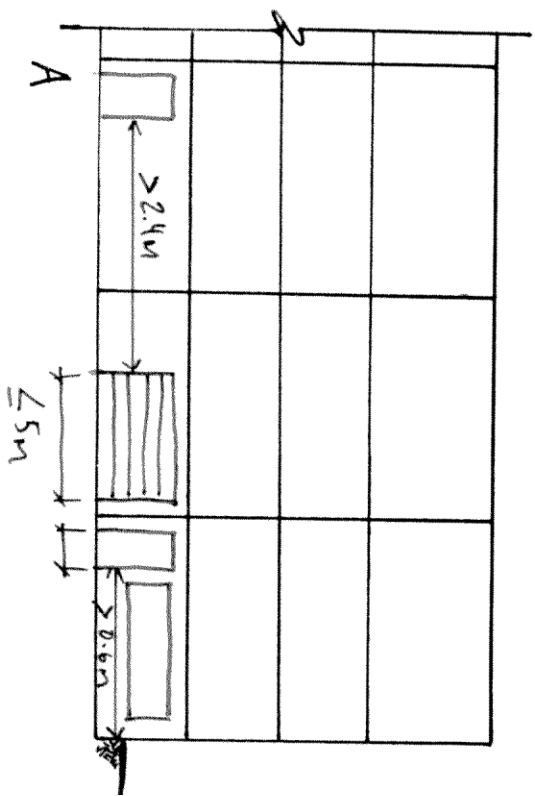
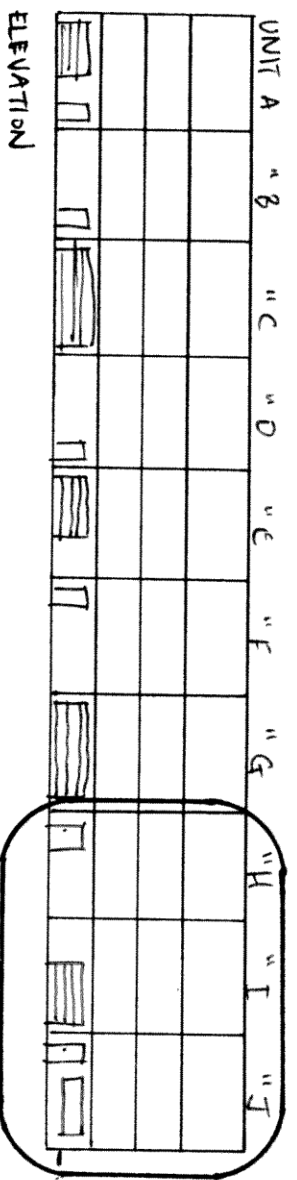
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  - d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings
  - e) shall have a width that does not make up more than 25% of an individual facades length
  - f) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standata 06-RCI-013

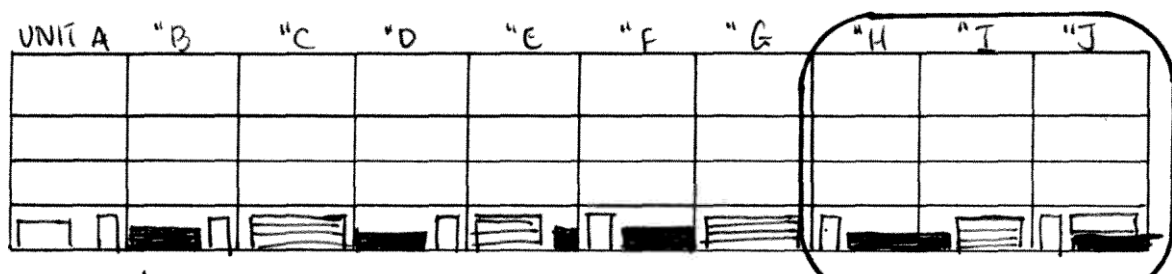
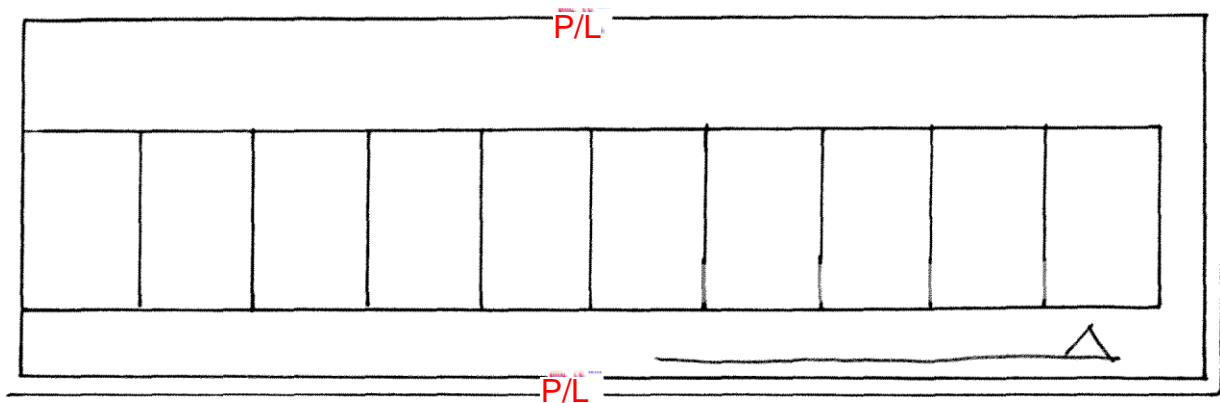
LINE OF ADJACENT PROPERTY  
P/L



STREET

PLAN  
STREET





ELEVATION

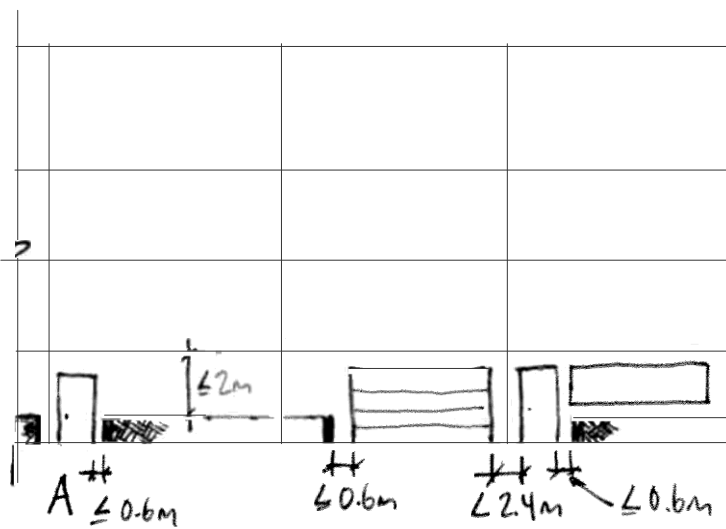


Illustration 5

This is a 3 storey building as it meets all conditions of localized depressions for buildings with dwelling units with no dwelling units above or below another

a) are for the purpose of vehicle or pedestrian traffic only and not for private outdoor amenity spaces such as patios

b) shall extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not window wells)

c) except as permitted in d) can extend to a maximum width of 0.6m to the side of the pedestrian or vehicle opening

d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings

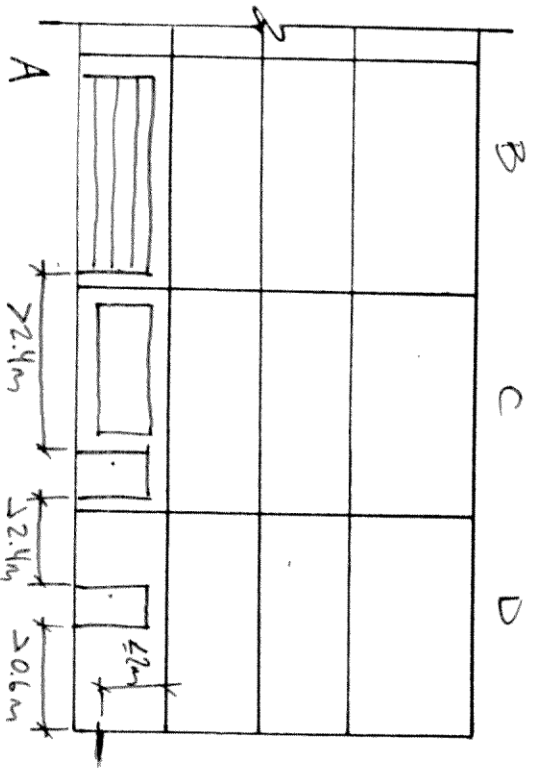
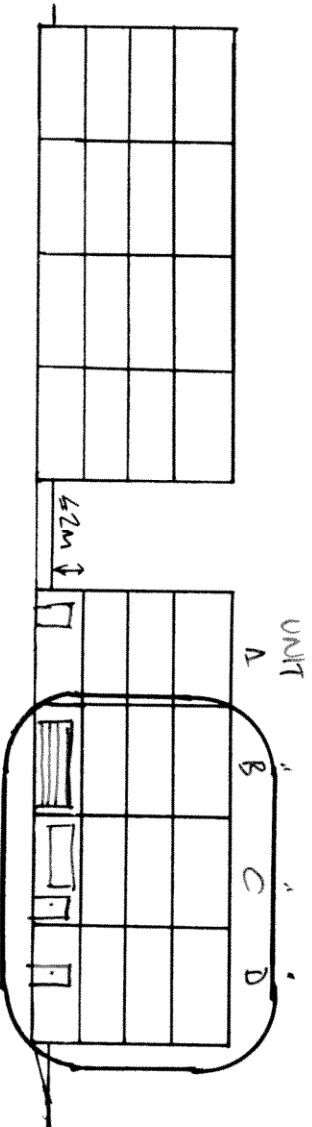
e) are limited to one (1) vehicular entrance per dwelling unit and/or one (1) pedestrian entrance per dwelling unit where,

i) the vehicle entrance is limited to 5m in width

ii) the pedestrian entrance is limited to 2m in width

f) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standard 06-BCI-013





This is a 4 storey building as it does not meet all conditions of localized depressions for buildings containing dwelling units with no dwelling units above or below another (i.e. row or townhouses) **c) except as permitted in d) can extend to a maximum width of 0.6m to the side of the pedestrian or vehicle opening** **d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings**

Illustration 6



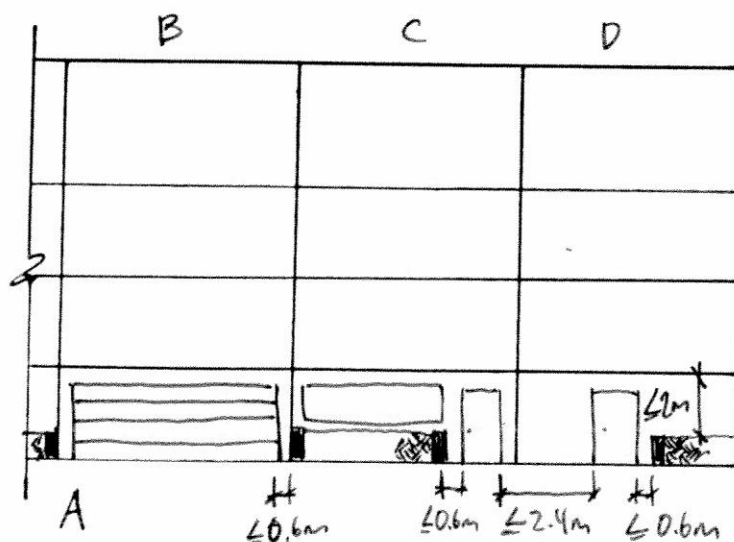
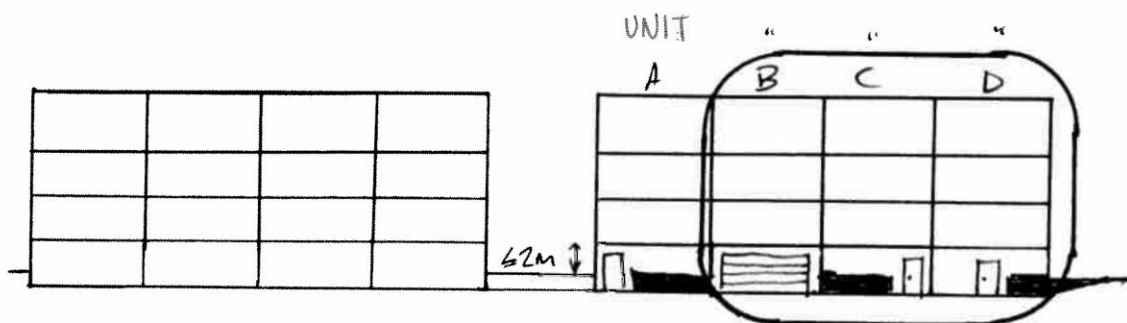
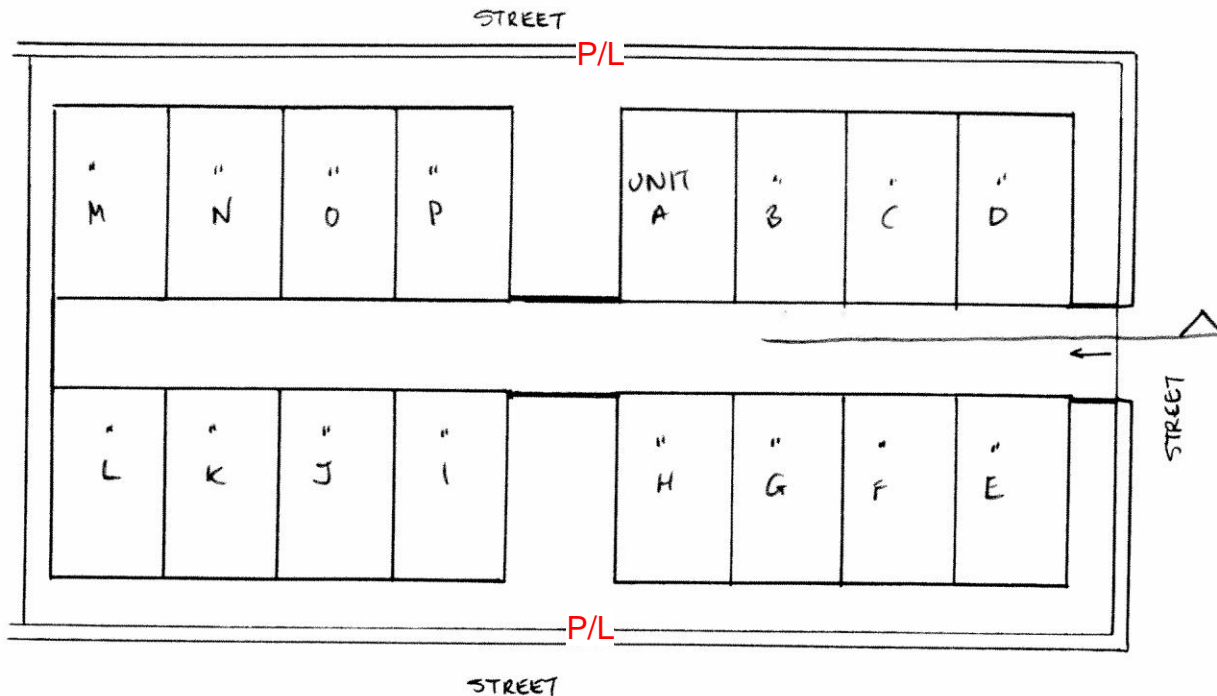


Illustration 7

This is a 3 storey building as it meets all conditions of localized depressions for buildings with dwelling units with no dwelling units above or below another

a) are for the purpose of vehicle or pedestrian traffic only and not for private outdoor amenity spaces such as patios

b) shall extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not window wells)

c) except as permitted in d) can extend to a maximum width of 0.6m to the side of the pedestrian or vehicle opening

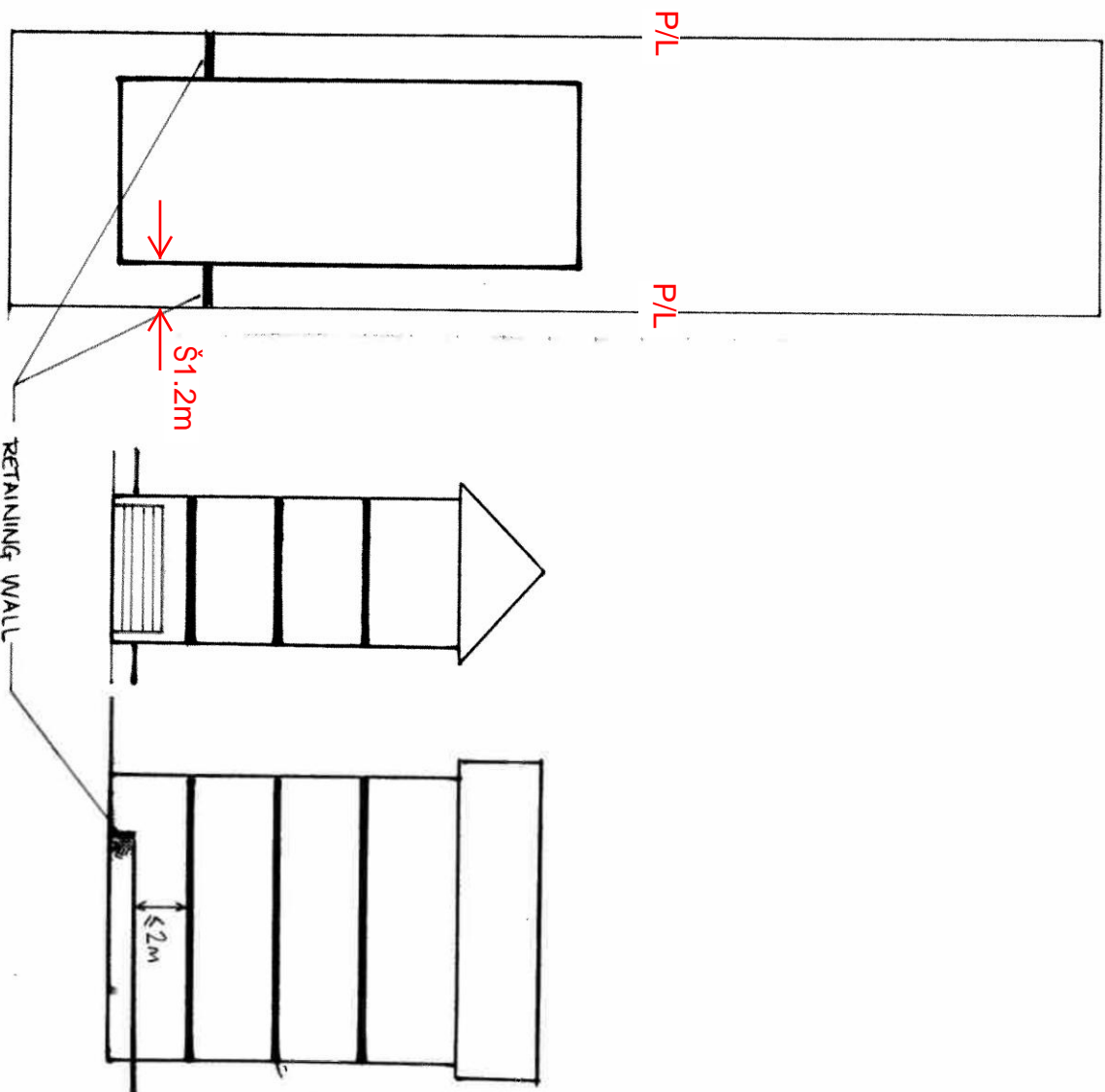
d) shall have not more than 2.4m between individual pedestrian or vehicle openings

e) are limited to one (1) vehicular entrance per dwelling unit and/or one (1) pedestrian entrance per dwelling unit where,

i) the vehicle entrance is limited to 5m in width

ii) the pedestrian entrance is limited to 2m in width

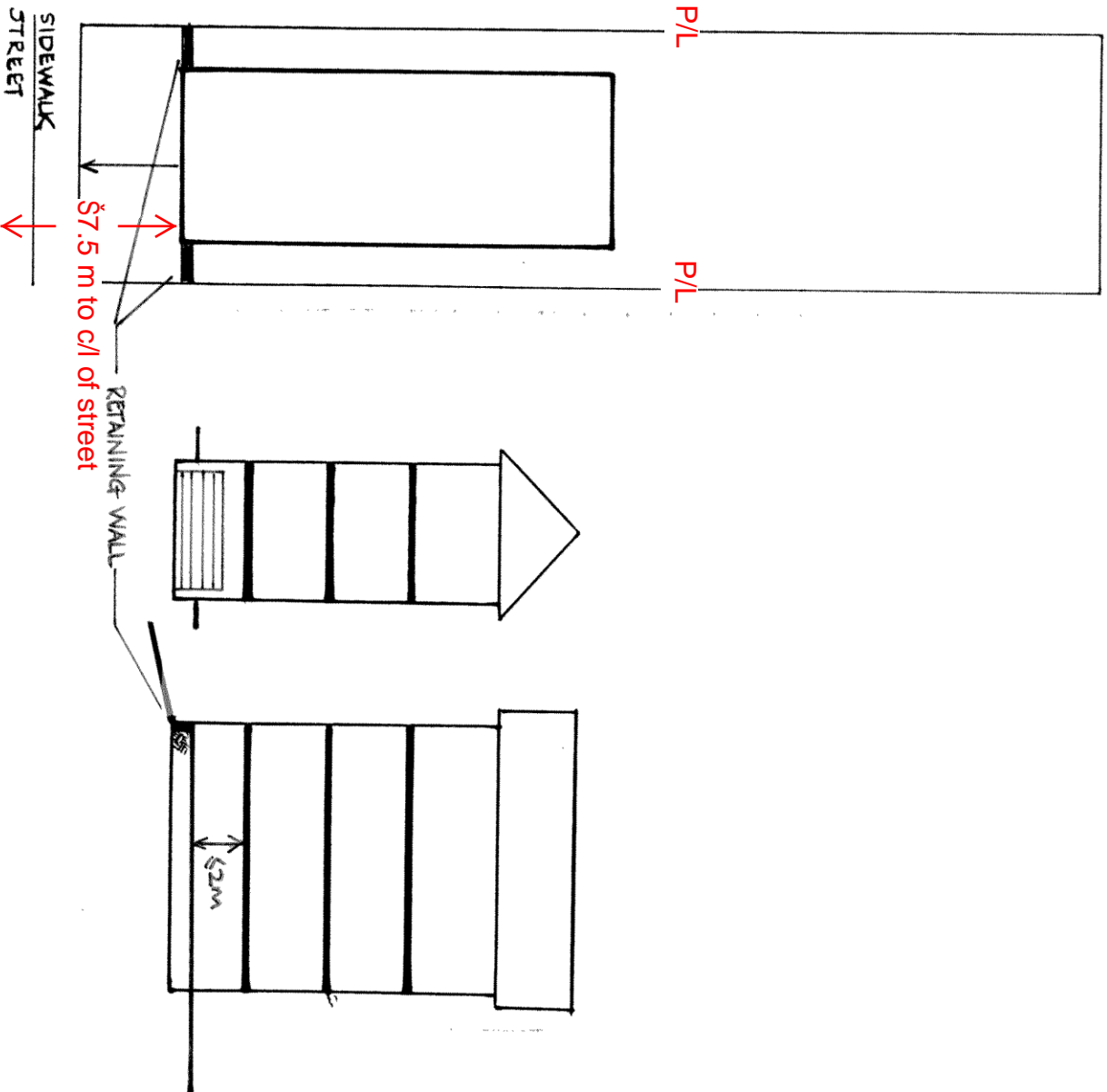
f) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standata 06-BCI-013



This is a 4 storey building as it does not meet all conditions of localized depressions for buildings that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units.

**d) the facade they serve has a limiting distance of 7.5m or more**

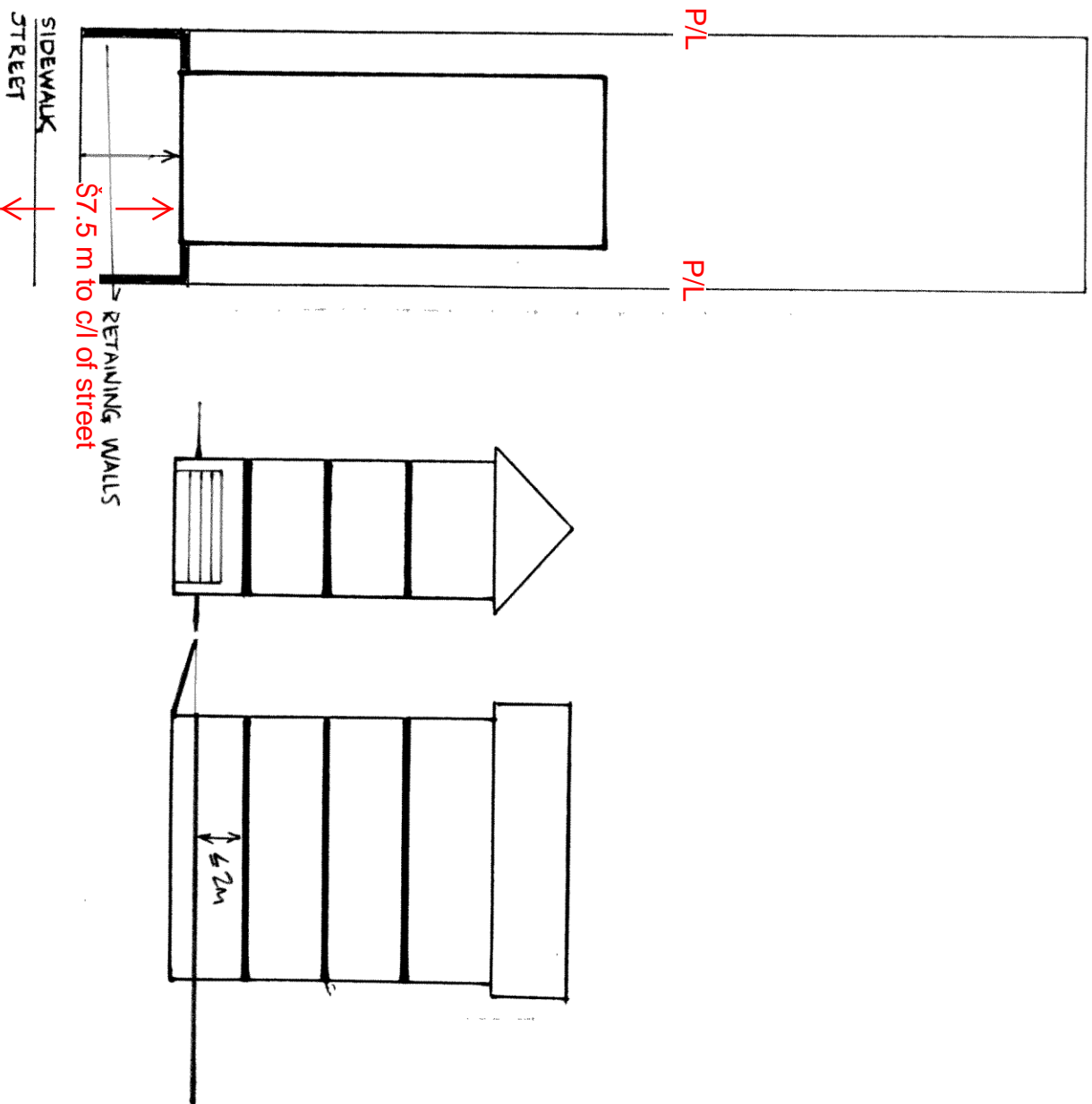
Illustration 8



This is a 3 storey building as it meets all conditions of localized depressions for buildings that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units.

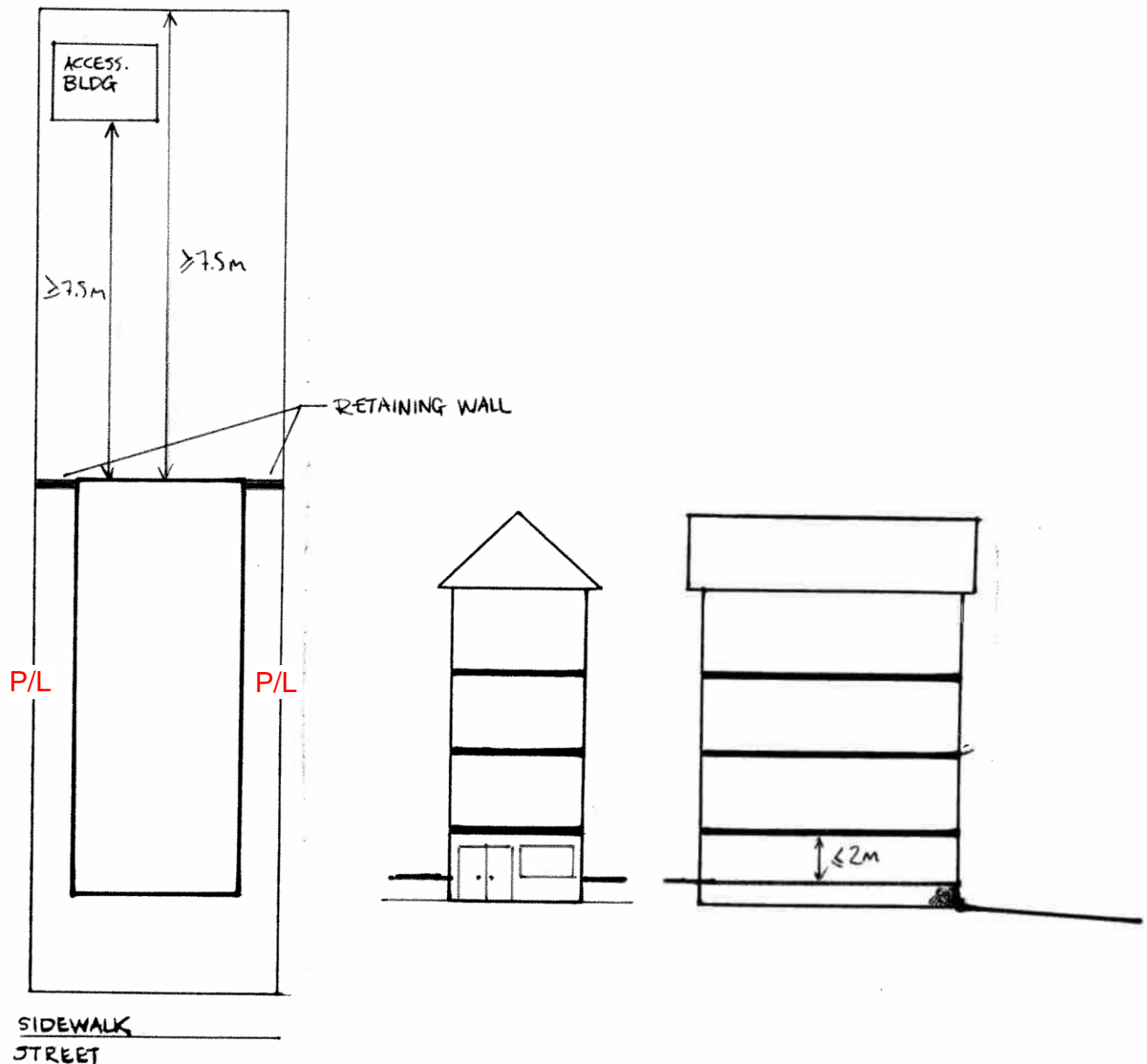
- a) are for vehicular entrances, pedestrian entrances and windows
- b) do not make up more than 25% of the buildings perimeter
- c) extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not window wells) and
- d) the facade they serve has a limiting distance of 7.5m or more
- e) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standard 06-BCI-013

Illustration 9



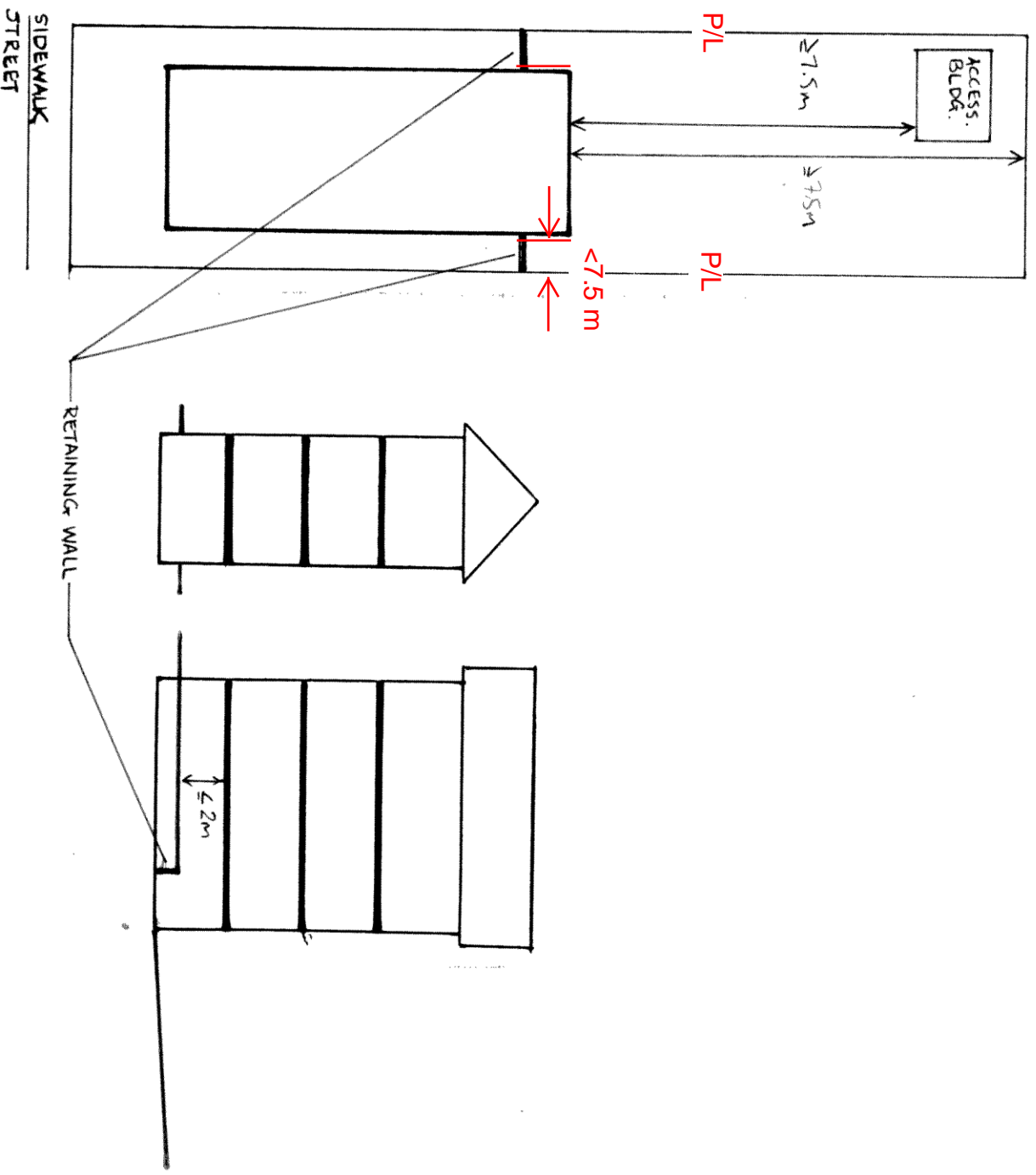
This is a 3 storey building as it meets all conditions of localized depressions for buildings that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units.

- a) are for vehicular entrances, pedestrian entrances and windows
- b) do not make up more than 25% of the buildings perimeter
- c) extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not window wells) and
- d) the facade they serve has a limiting distance of 7.5m or more
- e) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standard 06-BCI-013



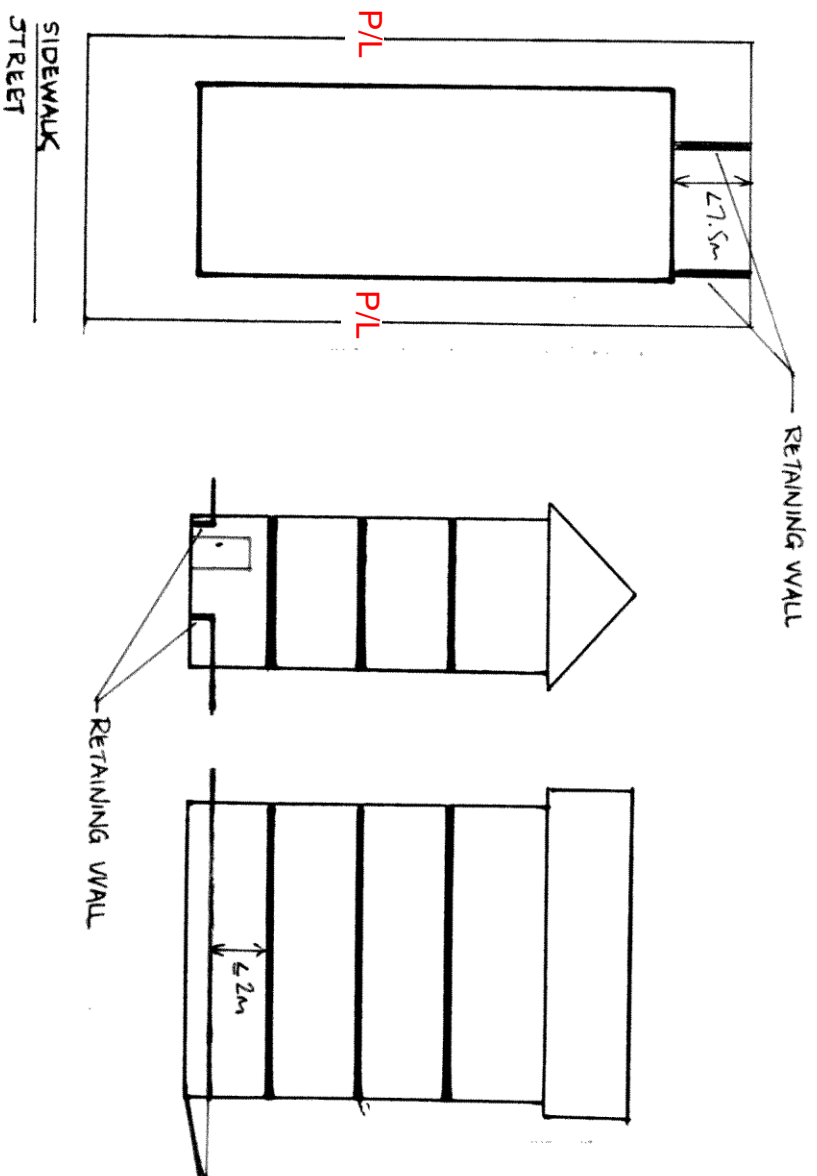
This is a 3 storey building as it meets all conditions of localized depressions for buildings that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units.

- a) are for vehicular entrances, pedestrian entrances and windows
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- c) extend from floor to ceiling (i.e. they are not window wells) and
- d) the facade they serve has a limiting distance of 7.5m or more
- e) and, overall grade shall be established according to Alberta Standard 06-BCI-013



This is a 4 storey building as it does not meet all conditions of localized depressions for buildings that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units.

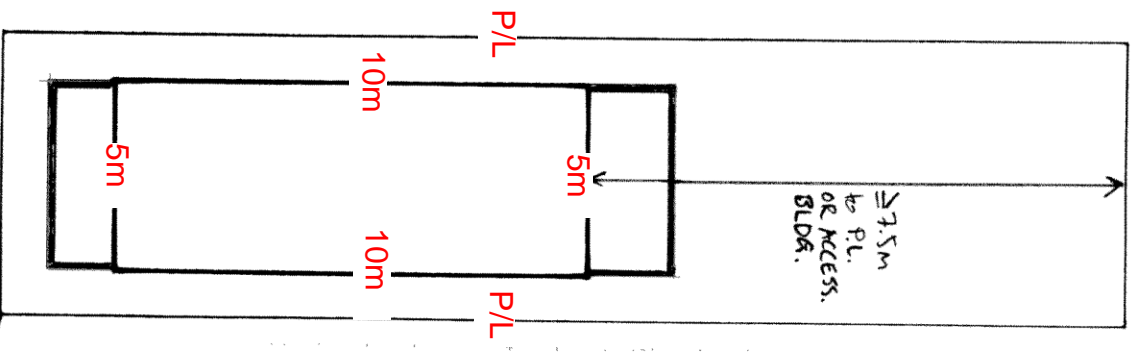
**d) the facade they serve has a limiting distance of 7.5m or more**



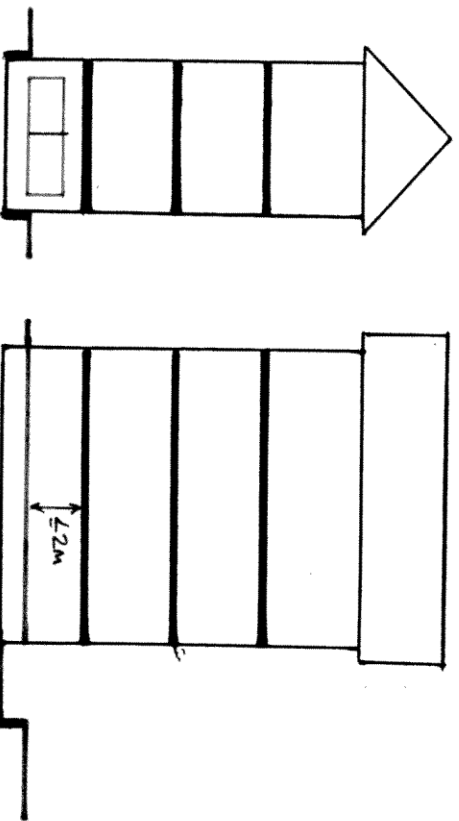
This is a 4 storey building as it does not meet all conditions of localized depressions for buildings that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units.

**d) the facade they serve has a limiting distance of 7.5m or more**





SIDEWALK  
STREET



This is a 4 storey building as it does not meet all conditions of localized depressions for buildings that are single family dwelling units and semi-detached dwelling units.

**b) do not make up more than 25% of the buildings perimeter**