



L A N D M A R K S
P R E S E R V A T I O N
C O M M I S S I O N

S T A F F R E P O R T

FOR COMMISSION ACTION
MARCH 2, 2023

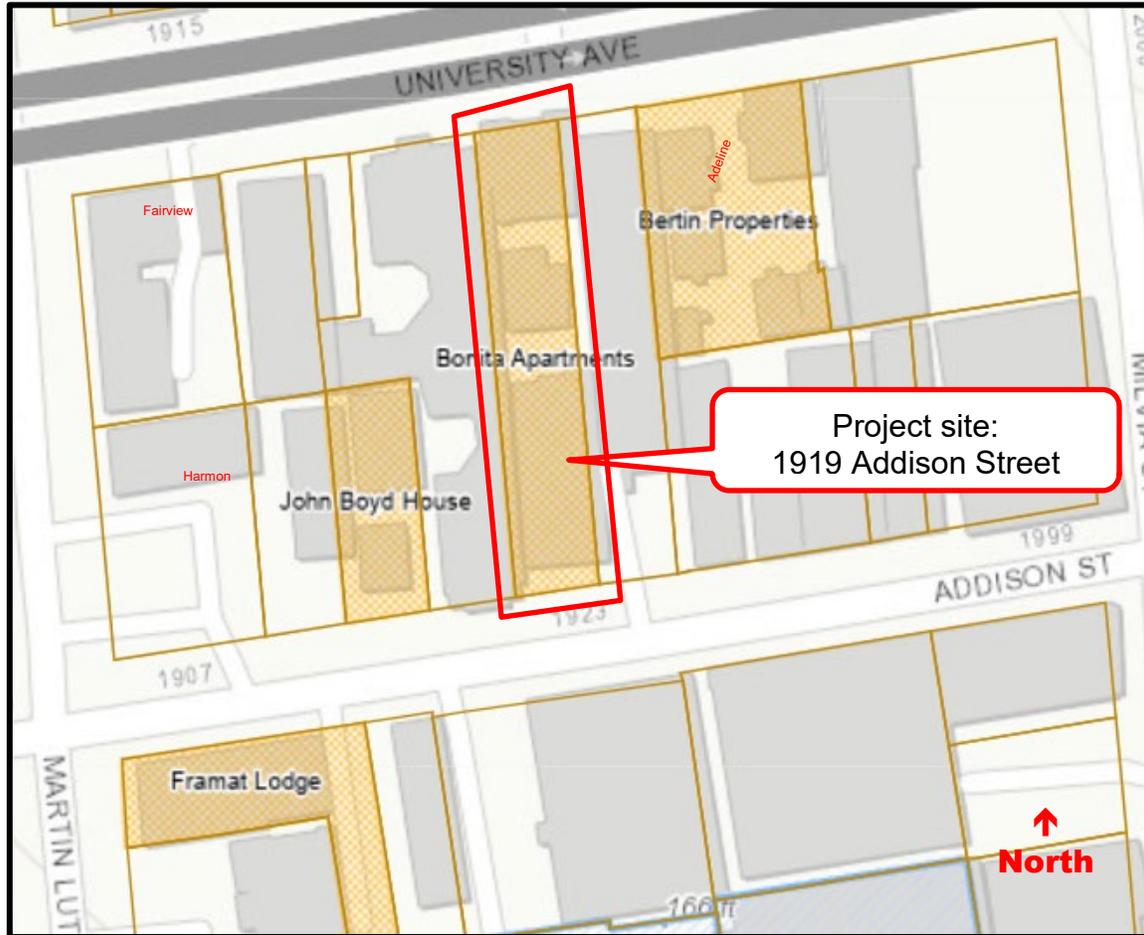
1919 Addison Street – Bonita Apartments

Structural Alteration Permit #LMSAP2022-0012 to provide accessibility upgrades and a renovated lobby and landscaped entry for a non-historic building located on a City Landmark site.

I. Application Basics

- A. Zoning District:** Downtown Commercial/Mixed-Use District (C-DMU)
- B. CEQA Determination:** Categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Section 15331 of the CEQA Guidelines for Historical Resource Rehabilitation.
- C. Parties Involved**
- **Applicant & Architect:** Jim Novosel, Architect
The Bay Architects
1840 Alcatraz Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94703
 - **Property Owner:** Prasad Lakireddy
2319 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704
- D. Recommendation:** Resume & conclude hearing; take favorable action.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map – highlighting nearby City Landmarks and Structures of Merit



	Landmarks / Structure of Merit; LM,		Parcels
	Features		Demolished
	Districts		Partially Demolished

Figure 2 : Aerial Map – Showing historic building facing North (University) and non-historic building facing South (Addison)

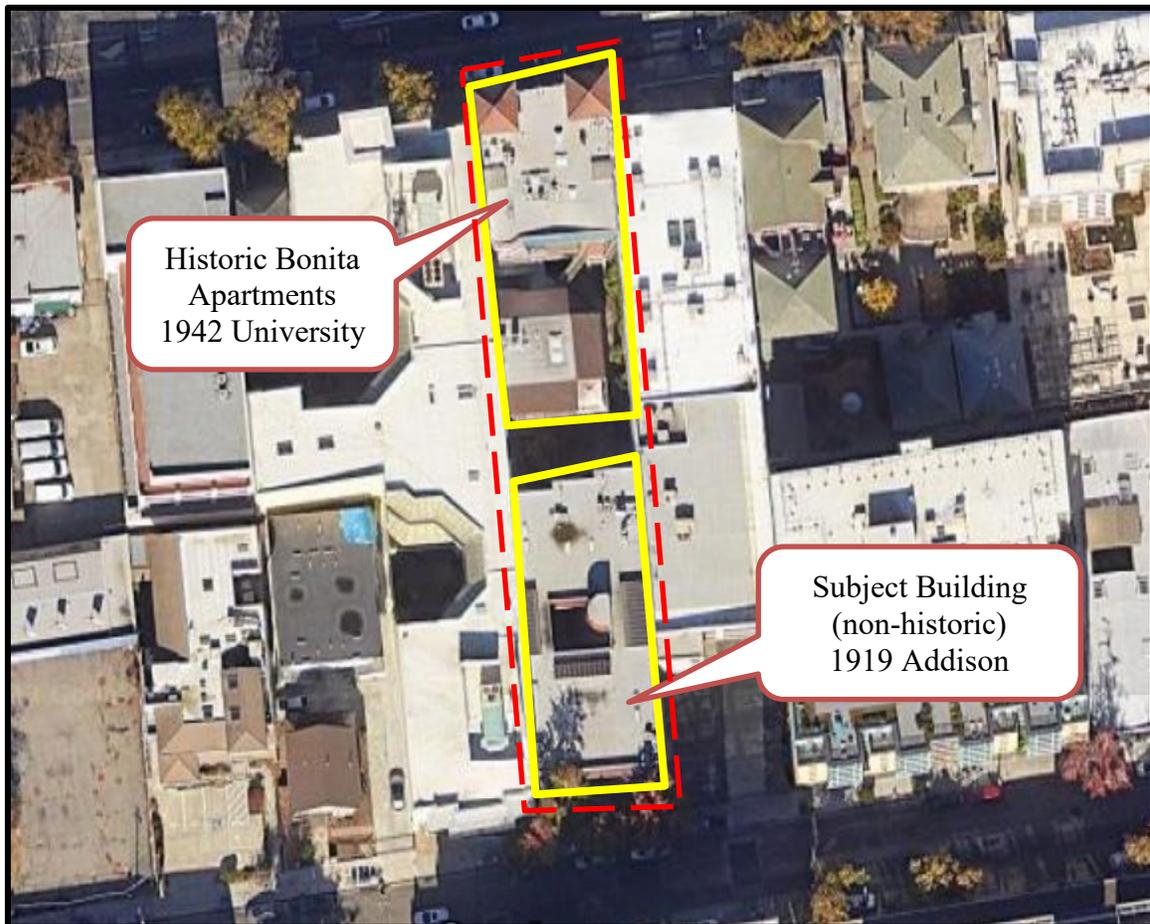


Figure 3 : Bonita Apartments at 1942 University – Existing Conditions



Figure 4: Subject Building at 1919 Addison – Existing Conditions



II. Background

On November 02, 2022, the applicant submitted the subject Structural Alterations Permit (SAP) application requesting permission to upgrade the lobby and entrance at Addison because it is located on a City Landmark property. The project came the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 2, 2023, where the Commission provided comments for further refinement of the façade design as it relates to the street. In response, the applicant submitted revised drawings on the February 13. Please refer to the Project Plans, Attachment 2.

III. Project Description

The SAP applicant requests permission to remodel the entry lobby and north façade of the Addison Street building. They would like to enclose the double height lobby entrance with angled plaster clad sidewalls and a glass roof, and install a new ADA-compliant accessible ramp, stairs, interior seating, and raised planting area. At the February 2 meeting, the Commission provided the following comments:

- Improve the proposed boundary wall at the landscaped area;
- Consider adding plantings in front of the boundary;
- Consider alternative material for the proposed address sign band;
- Present alternative retaining wall cladding options that are more complimentary to the neighborhood context.

Table 1 further below outlines of the proposed revisions, which are also detailed in the Applicant's Response to Commissioner Comments, Attachment 3.

For project details and architectural drawings, refer to the Project Plans, Attachment 2, a

IV. Issues and Analysis

A. Regulatory Requirements

Staff identified relevant criteria pertinent to this project from the City's Downtown Design Guidelines (2012), the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1977) and the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (BMC Section 3.24). Please refer to the February 2, 2023 staff report and the attached draft Findings & Conditions for Approval (Attachment 1), which contain the analysis for the relevant guidelines and standards applicable to this consideration.

B. LPC Hearing – February 2, 2022

The Commission received a presentation from Staff and the applicant describing the proposed upgrades at the previous hearing. Each Commissioner provided comments about the project design, made suggestions for refinements and further development, and then continued the hearing to allow the applicant sufficient time to make improvements and return with a revised proposal that addresses the Commissioners' comments and concerns.

On February 13, 2023, the applicant submitted a revised project design for staff's initial review. The more significant changes include replacing the glass wall at the open space

area with wrought iron fencing, reducing the size of the address sign band from 30 inches to 12 inches and using powder coated aluminum rather than Corten steel, refinement of the color palette per Commissioner comments, and reduction of the glass overhang at the lobby entrance. Table 2, below, summarized the themes that emerged throughout the LPC comments, and refers to the revised project plan set for more information.

Table 1. LPC February 2023 Hearing – Proposed Alterations, LPC Comments & Results

Proposed Alteration	LPC Comments February 2023	Applicant Response		Refer to Project Plans
<p><u>LOBBY ENCLOSURE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolish wrought iron security gate, planter box, and planting street at sidewalk • Construct sloped plaster clad side walls, storefront system, 2'-0" tile covered bulkhead and glass roof extending over sidewalk; • Install accessible ramp and stair to first level office spaces; • Construct raise planters with wood benches. 	1. Consider an alternative material to Corten steel for address sign.	✓	Sign band is now proposed as powder coated aluminum.	A2.1 A2.3 & A2.4
	2. Commission expressed concerns about overhang dripping rain onto the public right of way.	✓	Proposed glass overhang reduced and rain gutter added.	A1.2
<p><u>LANDSCAPE ENCLOSURE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolish concrete curb and wrought iron fence enclosure; • Construct new 2'-7" tile covered retaining wall with 4'-0" clear glass rail wall, including glass side door. 	3. Reconsider the glass rail wall at the landscaped area.	✓	Proposed glass wall replaced with wrought iron fence	A2.1 A2.3 & A2.4
	4. Consider alternate color palette for tile at the retaining wall and bulkhead.	✓	Proposed color palette refined per Commissioner comments.	A5.1
	5. Consider adding plantings in front of the fence.		Not Addressed	

V. Possible Discussion Topic: proposed barrier treatment along right-of-way

Staff recommends that the Commission discuss the modifications made to the design

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 2, 2023

1919 ADDISON STREET
#LMSAP2022-0012

since the February hearing and whether the proposed design achieves the best possible design for the sidewalk.

- Are the proposed changes successful?
- Would plantings in front of the retaining wall further improve the revised design?

IV. Recommendation

After conclusion of this consideration and any possible improvements to the proposed design, staff recommends that the Commission take favorable action on this Structural Alteration Permit application pursuant to BMC Section 3.24.260 and subject to the attached Findings and Conditions because the proposed project would:

- 1) Provide safety and ADA compliant upgrades to the lobby of the non-historic building; and
- 2) Adhere to the standards of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance and best practices for exterior alterations to historic properties.

Attachments:

1. Draft Structural Alteration Permit Findings and Conditions of Approval
2. Project plans, received February 13, 2023
3. Applicant response to LPC comments, received February 13, 2023
4. Landmarks Preservation Commission Notice of Decision for 1942 University (1979)

Prepared by: Desiree Dougherty, Assistant Planner, ddougherty@cityofberkeley.info; 510-981-7431

Reviewed by: Fatema Crane, Principal Planner; fcrane@cityofberkeley.info ; 510-981-7410

ATTACHMENT 1

FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS

1919 Addison Street – Bonita Apartments

Structural Alteration Permit #LMSAP2022-0012 to provide accessibility upgrades and a renovated lobby and landscaped entry for a non-historic building located on a City Landmark site.

CEQA FINDINGS

1. The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code §21000, et seq. and California Code of Regulations, §15000, et seq.) pursuant to Section 15331 of the CEQA Guidelines (“Historic Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation”). Furthermore, none of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply, as follows: (a) the site is not located in an environmentally sensitive area, (b) there are no cumulative impacts, (c) there are no significant effects, (d) the project is not located near a scenic highway, and (e) the project site is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR’S STANDARDS FINDINGS

Regarding the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of Berkeley makes the following findings:

1. The proposed project does not require a change of use. The City Landmarked property will retain the historic uses as an apartment building and the 1978 office building will also retain its current use.
2. This historic character of the Bonita Apartments building will be retained and preserved with this project, which would not alter the historic building. The project avoids removal of distinctive materials and any alteration of features that characterize the property. The project scope is limited to work on the entry lobby and façade of the non-historic building on this City Landmark property and will not result in changes to its form or any changes to the historic Bonita Apartments.
3. The project reflects the contemporary design of the detached, non-historic building at the Bonita Apartments. These proposed new features are also contemporary and will not result in a false sense of historical development.
4. The subject property does not feature changes that have acquired significance in their own right.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques, or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the Mission Revival style of the Bonita Apartments will be preserved as the scope will not touch the historic structure.

6. As conditioned herein, if deteriorated historic features will be affected by this request, then they would be repaired or replaced to match the materials, design, and finishes of the original items.
7. The applicant does not propose chemical or physical treatments. However, standard conditions of Structural Alteration Permit approval would require any chemical or physical treatments to be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. The project does not have the potential to affect any archaeological resources because the applicant proposes no excavation.
9. The proposed new work is designed with complimentary, high-quality materials in simplified, contemporary style employing colors and finishes that harmonize with the design elements of the existing non-historic building. Owing to these aspects, new work will be sufficiently differentiated from the historic design.
10. If the proposed improvements were removed in the future, they would not permanently impair the integrity or essential form of the Bonita Apartments building.

FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL

1. As required by Section 3.24.260 of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, the Commission finds that proposed work is appropriate for and consistent with the purposes of the Ordinance, and will preserve and enhance the characteristics and features specified in the designation for this property. Specifically:
 - a. The proposed area of scope is contained to the non-historic building located on the City Landmark parcel, but not a part of the Landmarked structure. No changes are proposed on the Landmarked building.
 - b. The proposed project would provide safety and accessibility upgrades to the entry lobby of the non-historic Addison Street building. There are no aspects of this proposal that would be detrimental to the character of the Landmarked apartment building.

STANDARD CONDITIONS

The following conditions, as well as all other applicable provisions of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, apply to this Permit:

1. Conditions Shall be Printed on Plans

The conditions of this Permit shall be printed on the *second* sheet of each plan set submitted for a building permit pursuant to this Permit, under the title 'Structural Alteration Permit Conditions'. *Additional sheets* may also be used if the *second* sheet is not of sufficient size to list all of the conditions. The sheet(s) containing the conditions shall be of the same size as those sheets containing the construction drawings; 8-1/2" by 11" sheets are not acceptable.

2. Plans and Representations Become Conditions

Except as specified herein, the site plan, floor plans, building elevations and/or any additional information or representations, whether oral or written, indicating the proposed structure or manner of operation submitted with an application or during the approval process are deemed conditions of approval.

3. Subject to All Applicable Laws and Regulations

The approved use and/or construction is subject to, and shall comply with, all applicable City Ordinances and laws and regulations of other governmental agencies. Prior to construction, the applicant shall identify and secure all applicable permits from the Building and Safety Division, Public Works Department and other affected City divisions and departments.

4. Exercise and Lapse of Permits (Section 23B.56.100)

- A. A permit for the construction of a building or structure is deemed exercised when a valid City building permit, if required, is issued, and construction has lawfully commenced.
- B. A permit may be declared lapsed and of no further force and effect if it is not exercised within one year of its issuance, except that permits for construction or alteration of structures or buildings may not be declared lapsed if the permittee has: (1) applied for a building permit; or (2) made substantial good faith efforts to obtain a building permit and begin construction, even if a building permit has not been issued and/or construction has not begun.

5. Indemnification Agreement

The applicant shall hold the City of Berkeley and its officers harmless in the event of any legal action related to the granting of this Permit, shall cooperate with the City in defense of such action, and shall indemnify the City for any award of damages or attorneys fees that may result.

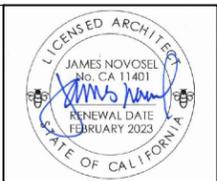
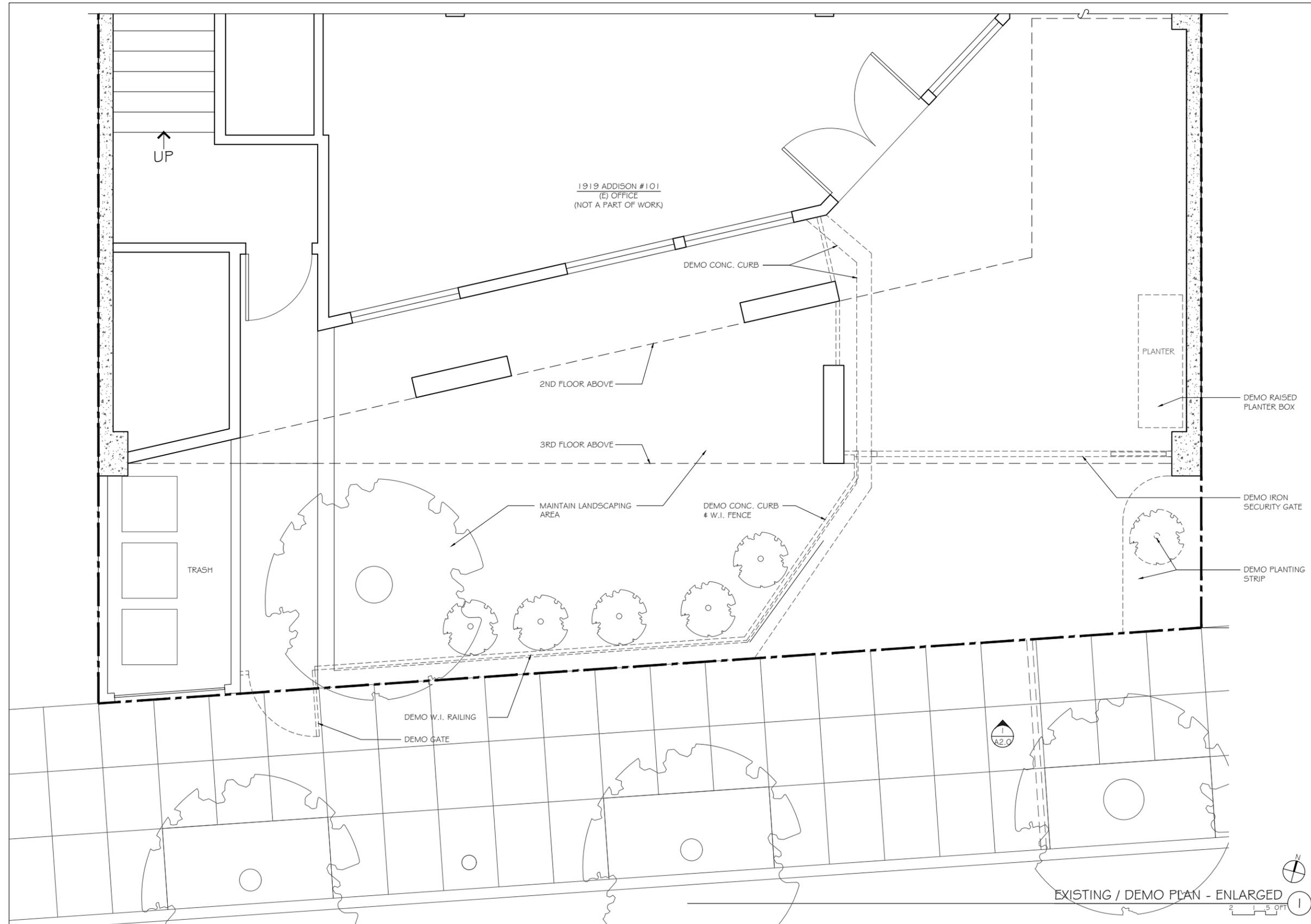
ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

The following additional conditions are attached to this Permit:

- 6. The proposed façade upgrades are approved as shown on the drawings dated “received February 13, 2023” subject to the following conditions.
- 7. No changes can be made to these approved plans without prior approval.
- 8. **CITY PERMITS.** This Structural Alteration Permit (SAP) approval is contingent upon approval of the requisite Use Permit and Public Work Permit for the project scope.
- 9. **PLANS COMPLIANCE.** Construction and building permit plans shall substantially conform to the Structural Alteration Permit (SAP) project plans dated/received **February 13, 2023.**

- 10. REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES.**
Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old or historic feature in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- 11.** Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.
- 12. COLORS.** Prior to Landmarks plan checker sign-off of the Building Permit set of drawings, the applicant shall submit color and materials information for review and approval by Landmarks staff, in coordination with the LPC Chair as needed.
- 13. CLEAR GLASS.** All glass is assumed to be clear glass. Any proposed glass that is not clear glass, or includes signage, shall be indicated on all drawings, and shall be reviewed for approval by Landmarks staff.
- 14. DETAILS.** Prior to Landmarks plan checker sign-off of the Building Permit set of drawings, the applicant shall submit storefront, ramp, stairs, interior seating and planting area, glass awning, tile retaining wall, handrail wall details for review and approval by the Landmarks plan checker.
- 15. LIGHTING.** Prior to Landmarks plan checker sign-off of the building permit set of drawings, the applicant shall submit lighting details showing all existing and proposed site and building lighting. Exterior lighting, including for signage, shall be downcast and not cause glare on the public right-of-way and adjacent parcels.
- 16. LANDSCAPE PLANS.** Prior to Landmarks plan checker sign-off of the Building Permit set of drawings, the applicant shall submit a Landscape plan including the number, location, and species of all proposed plantings, and which existing plantings shall be removed. The applicant shall provide irrigation for all landscaped areas or provide drought tolerant plant palette. This shall be called out on Landscape building permit drawings.
- 17. CURB CUTS.** All curbs and curb cuts shall be constructed per the standards and specifications of the Public Works Department. Curb cuts no longer utilized shall be restored per the Public Works Department specifications.
- 18.** The applicant shall be responsible for identifying and securing all applicable permits from the Building and Safety Division and all other affected City divisions/departments prior to the start of work.
- 19.** The applicant is responsible for complying with all the above conditions. Failure to comply with any condition could result in construction work being stopped, issuance of citations, as well as further review by the Landmarks staff, which may modify or impose additional conditions, or revoke approval.

- 20.** All building permit drawings and subsequent construction shall substantially conform to the approved plans as outlined in Condition #1. Any modifications must be reviewed by the Landmarks plan checker to determine whether the modification requires approval.
- 21.** The applicant shall hold harmless, defend, and indemnify the City of Berkeley and its officers, agents, and employees against any and all liability, damages, claims, demands, judgments or other losses (including without limitation, attorney's fees, expert witness and consultant fees and other litigation expenses), referendum or initiative relating to, resulting from or caused by, or alleged to have resulted from, or caused by, any action or approval associated with the project. The indemnity includes without limitation, any legal or administrative challenge, referendum or initiative filed or prosecuted to overturn, set aside, stay or otherwise rescind any or all approvals granted in connection with the Project, any environmental determination made for the project and granting any permit issued in accordance with the project. This indemnity includes, without limitation, payment of all direct and indirect costs associated with any action specified herein. Direct and indirect costs shall include, without limitation, any attorney's fees, expert witness and consultant fees, court costs, and other litigation fees. City shall have the right to select counsel to represent the City at Applicant's expense in the defense of any action specified in this condition of approval. City shall take reasonable steps to promptly notify the Applicant of any claim, demand, or legal actions that may create a claim for indemnification under these conditions of approval.



PROJECT:
NEW ENTRY LOBBY
 1919 ADDISON STREET
 BERKELEY, CA 94704

ARCHITECT OF RECORD:
 JAMES NOVOSEL

the bay architects

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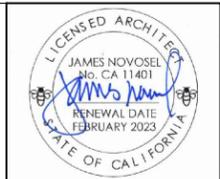
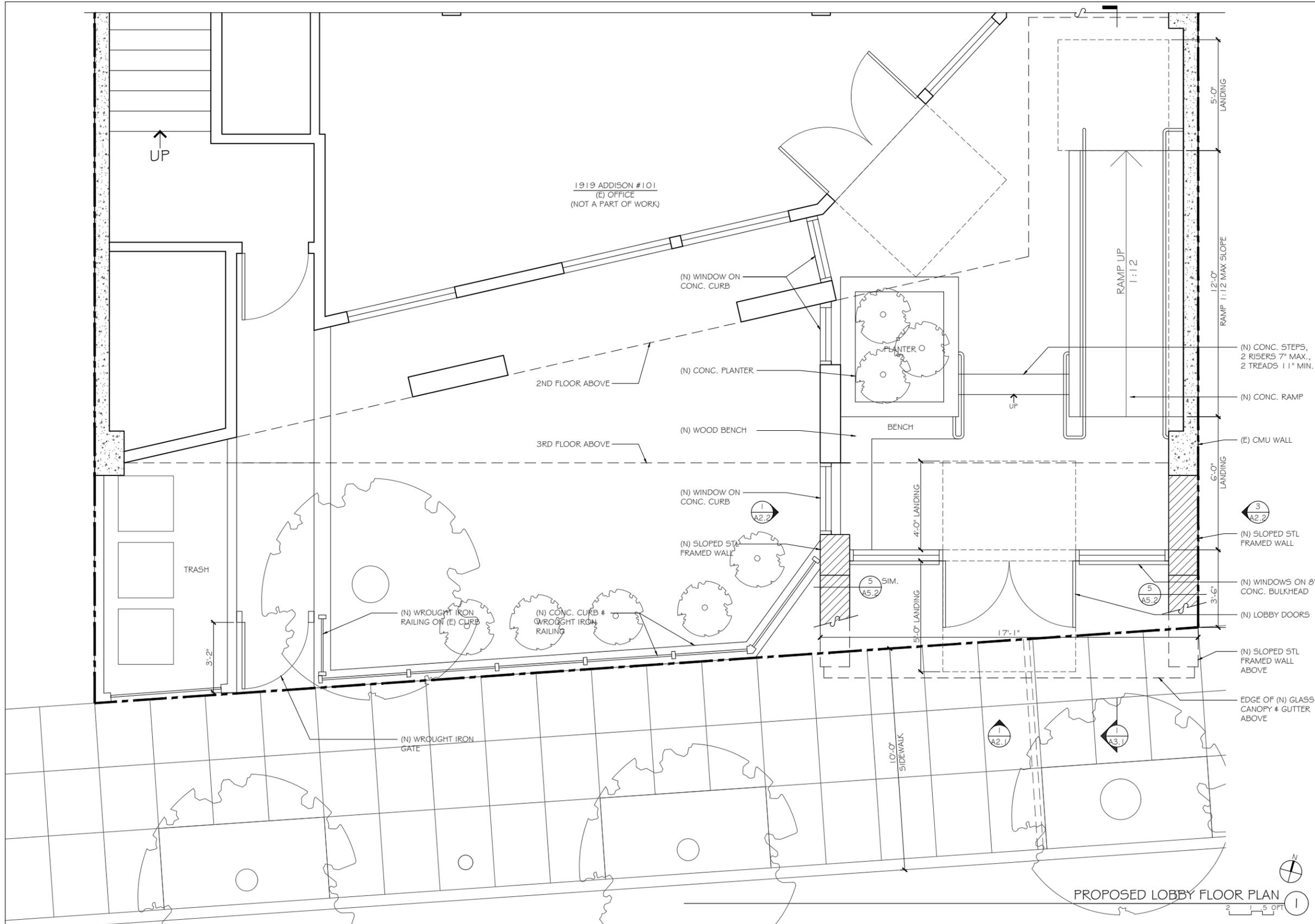
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02/13/23 LPC HEARING REVISIONS

EXISTING / DEMO PLAN

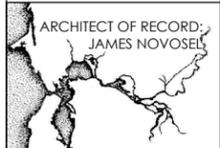
A1.0

DRAWING SHEET

EXISTING / DEMO PLAN - ENLARGED
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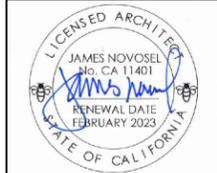
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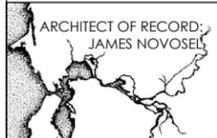
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PROPOSED LOBBY FLOOR PLAN
A1.1
 DRAWING SHEET

PROPOSED LOBBY FLOOR PLAN
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ARCHITECT OF RECORD:
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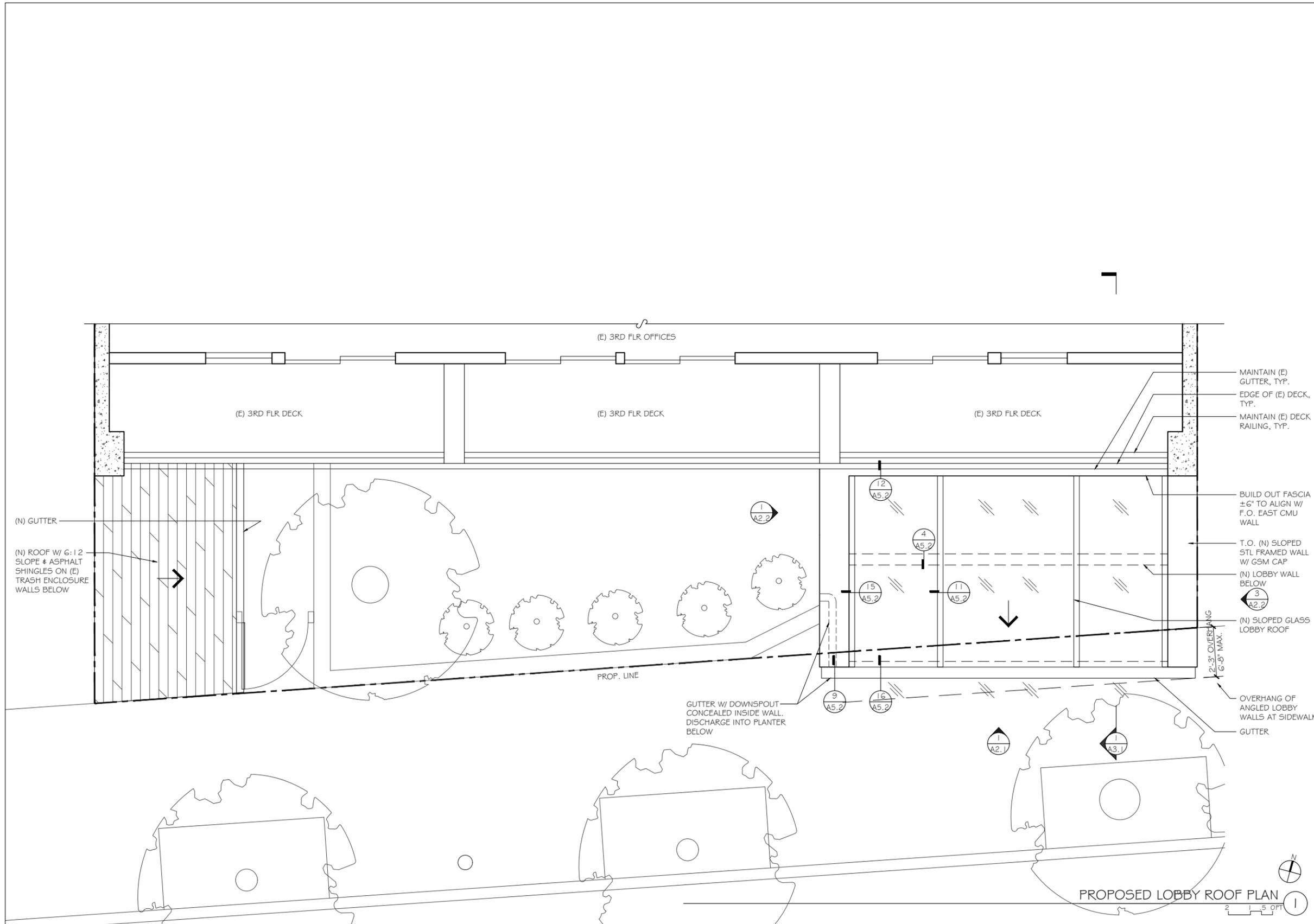
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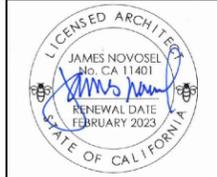
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PROPOSED LOBBY
 ROOF PLAN
A1.2
 DRAWING SHEET





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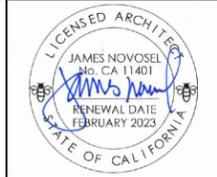
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EXISTING / DEMO
 ELEVATION
A2.0
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EXISTING / DEMO SOUTH (STREET) ELEVATION ①
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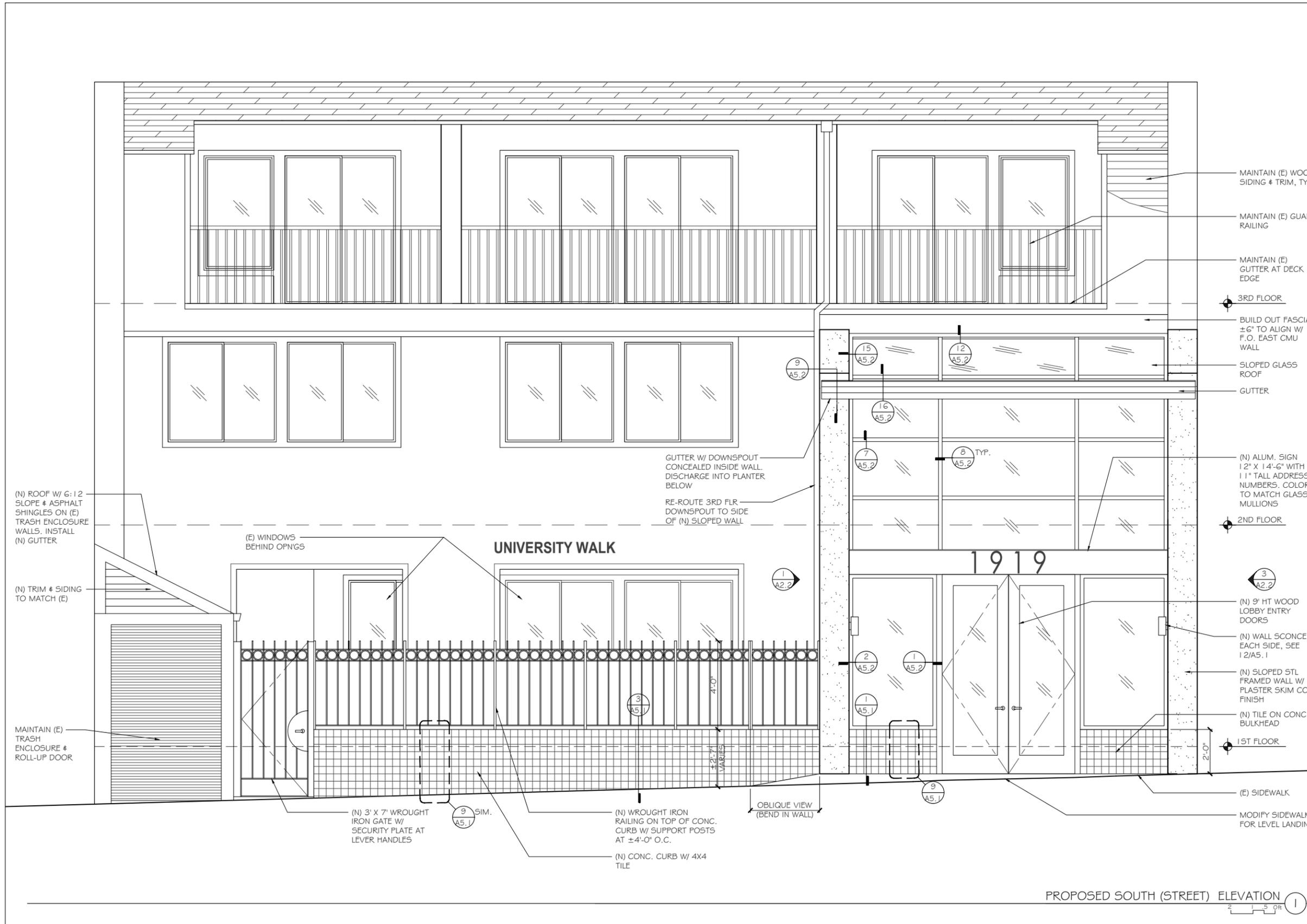
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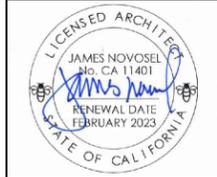
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PROPOSED ELEVATION

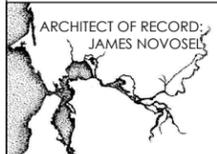
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PROPOSED SOUTH (STREET) ELEVATION 1
 2" = 1'-0"



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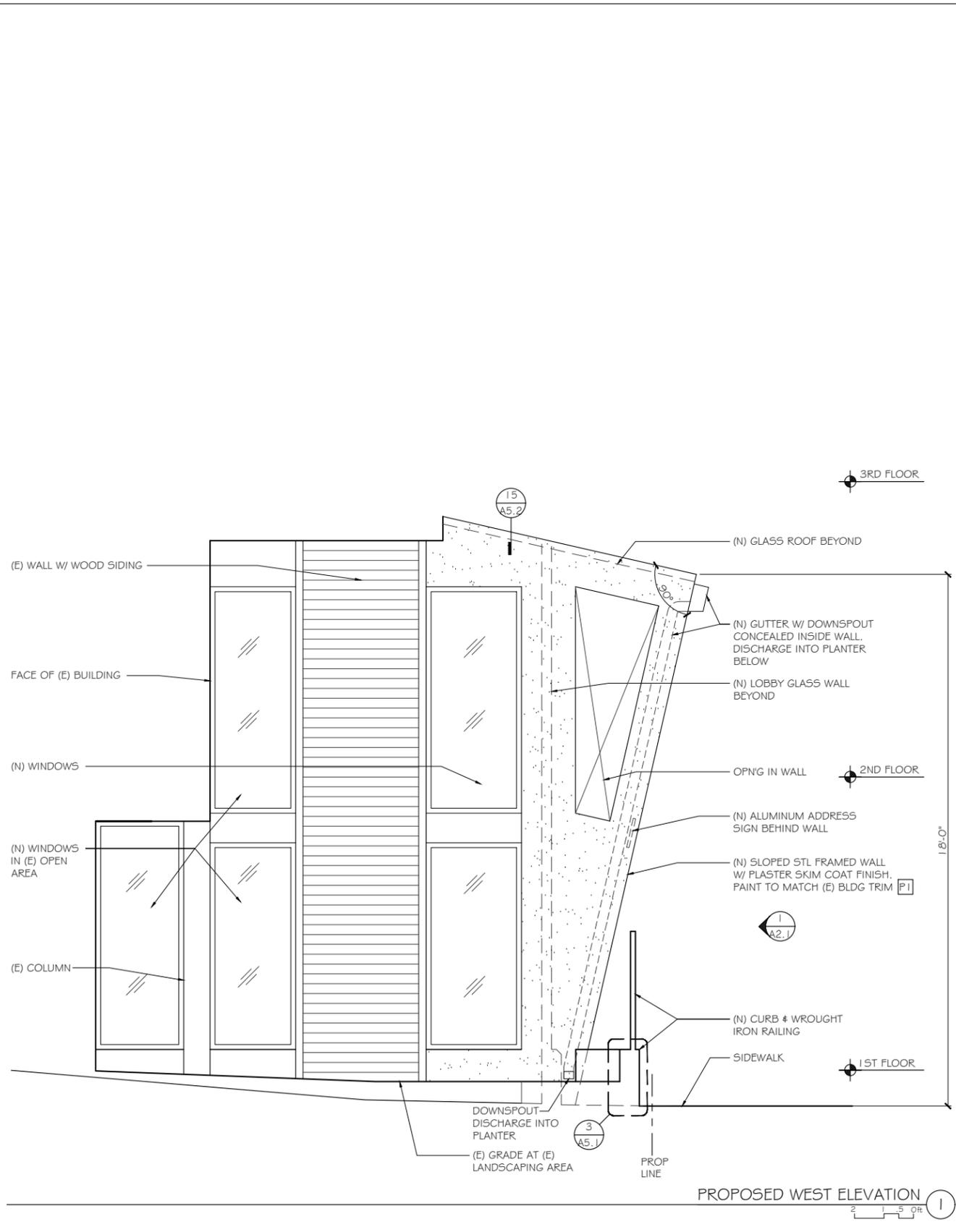
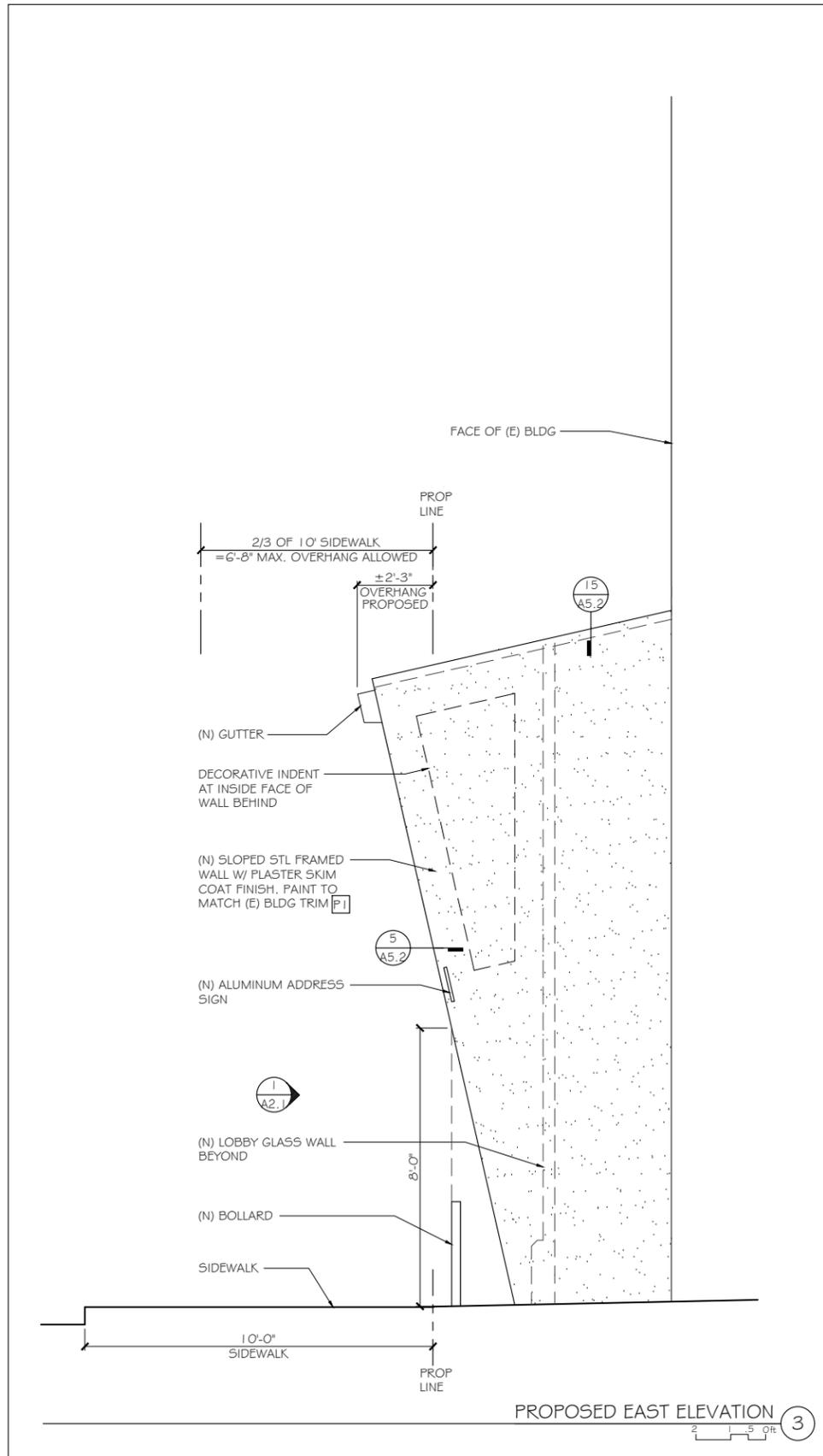
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PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
A2.2
 DRAWING SHEET





VIEW FROM EAST
NTS ④



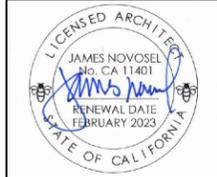
VIEW FROM EAST
NTS ②



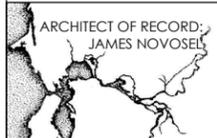
VIEW FROM WEST
NTS ③



VIEW FROM WEST
NTS ①



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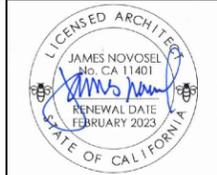
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RENDERINGS

A2.3
 DRAWING SHEET



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COLORS & MATERIALS
 ELEVATION

A2.4

DRAWING SHEET



(N) SLOPED ROOF AT TRASH ENCLOSURE, MATCH (E) BLDG COLORS & ROOF MATERIALS

(E) BUILDING COLORS, TYP.

(E) CMU WALL

(N) GUTTER [P1]

(N) ALUMINUM LOBBY WINDOW WALL SYSTEM & SLOPED GLASS CANOPY

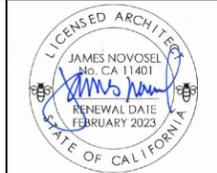
(N) ALUMINUM ADDRESS SIGN

(N) WOOD LOBBY DOORS

[P1] AT (N) LOBBY WALLS, SEE A5.1

(N) TILE PATTERN, SEE 9/A5.1

COLOR & MATERIALS FRONT ELEVATION **1**



PROJECT:
NEW ENTRY LOBBY
 1919 ADDISON STREET
 BERKELEY, CA 94704

ARCHITECT OF RECORD:
 JAMES NOVOSEL

the bay architects

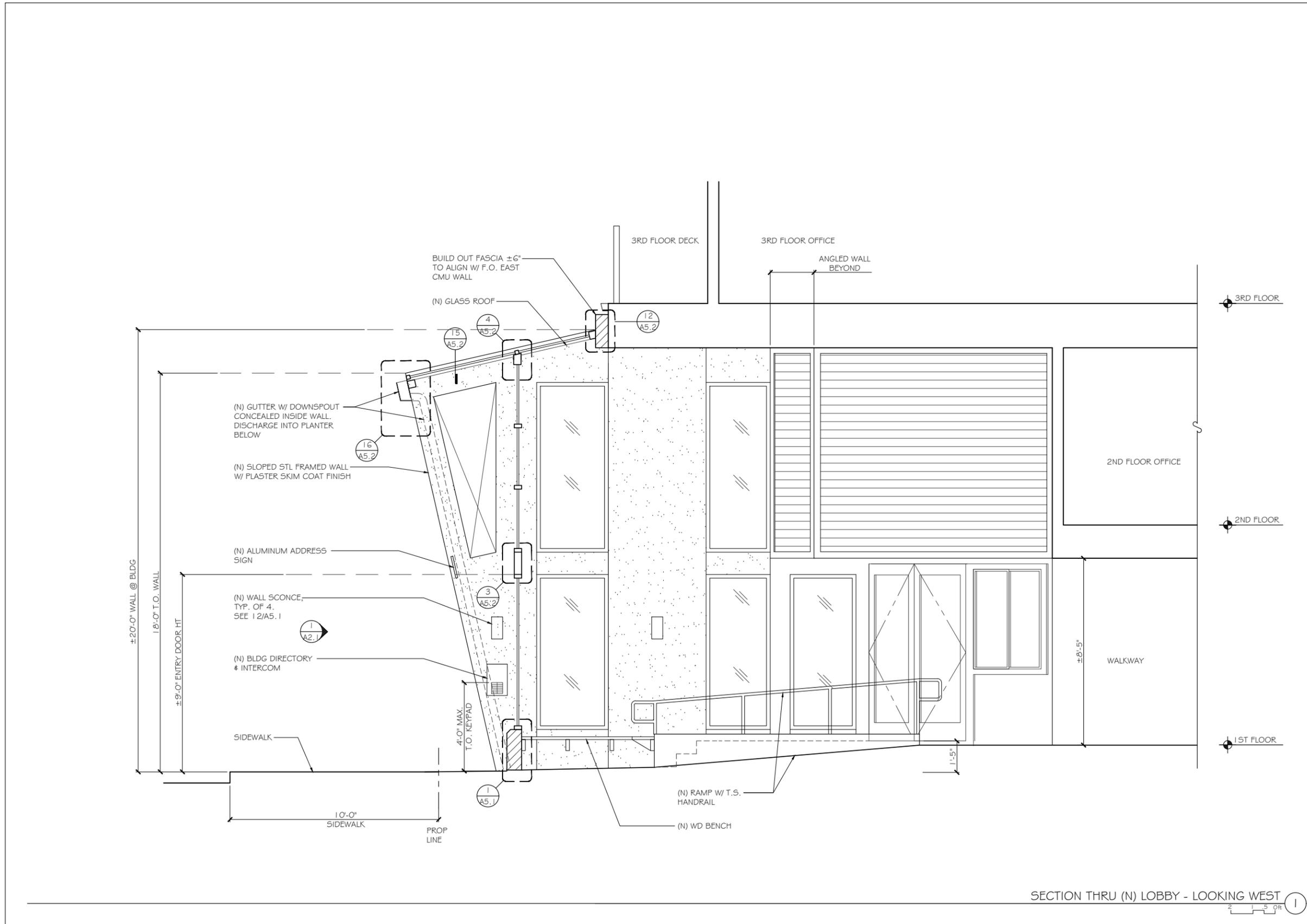
1840b alcatraz ave
 berkeley, ca 94703
 510.420.1484
 fax 510.420.1165
 www.bayarch.com
 bayarch@pacbell.net

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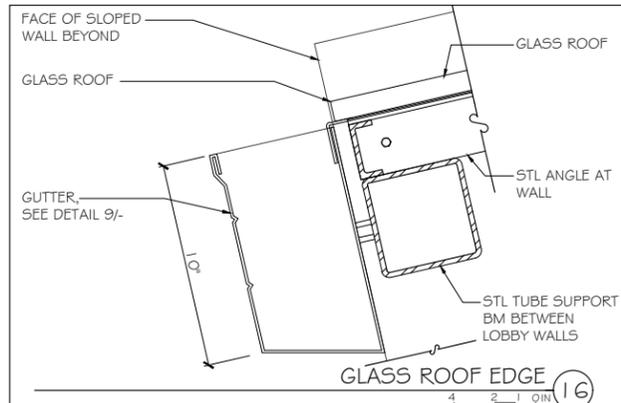
CLIENT:
 PRASAD LAKIREDDY
 2278 SHATTUCK AVENUE
 BERKELEY, CA 94704
 (510) 715-1901

PRINT DATE / PURPOSE
09/22/22 DESIGN REVIEW SUBMITTAL
01/23/23 FOR LPC HEARING
02/13/23 LPC HEARING REVISIONS

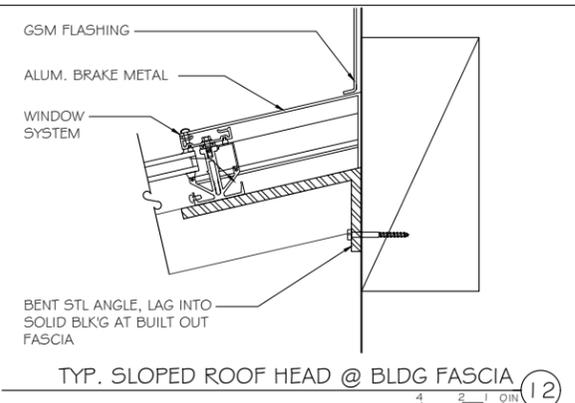
SECTION
A3.1
 DRAWING SHEET



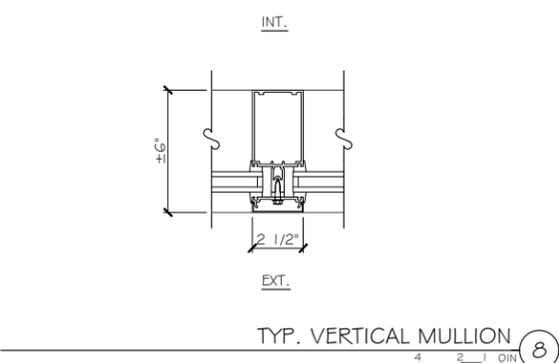
SECTION THRU (N) LOBBY - LOOKING WEST
 1/5/23



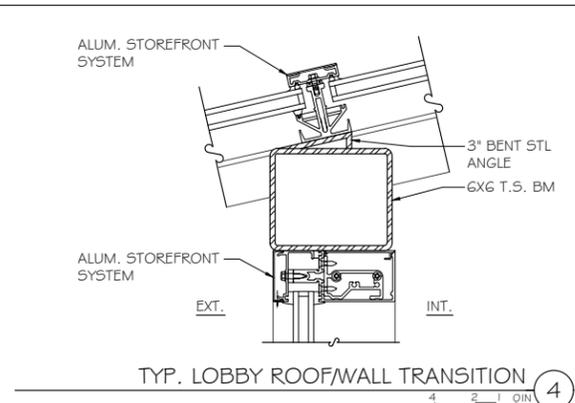
GLASS ROOF EDGE 16



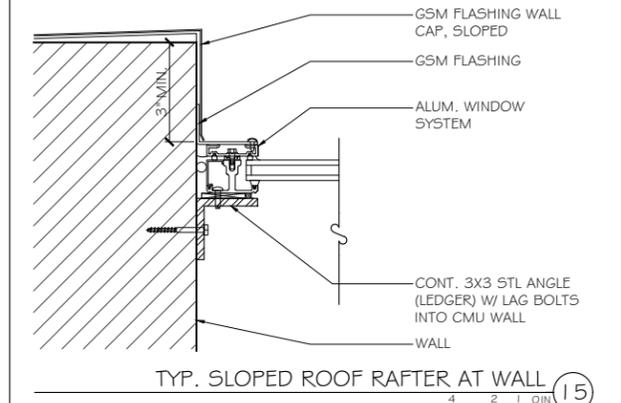
TYP. SLOPED ROOF HEAD @ BLDG FASCIA 12



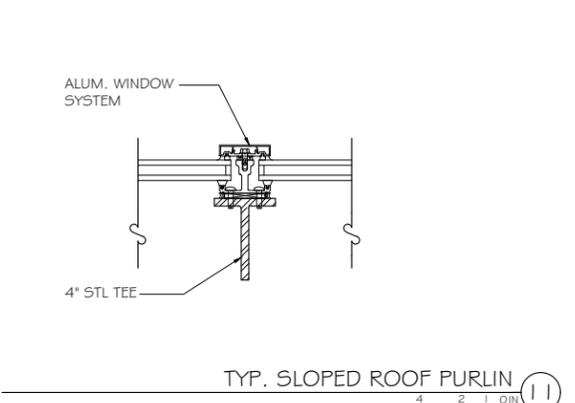
TYP. VERTICAL MULLION 8



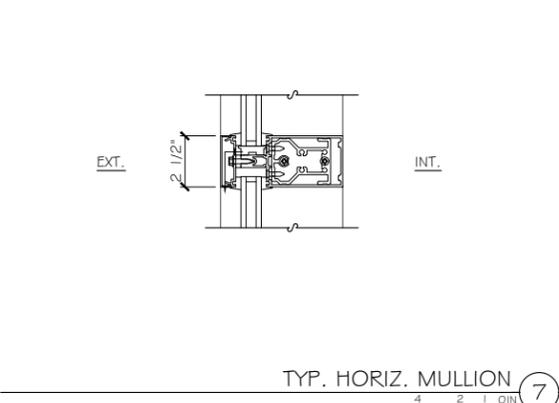
TYP. LOBBY ROOF/WALL TRANSITION 4



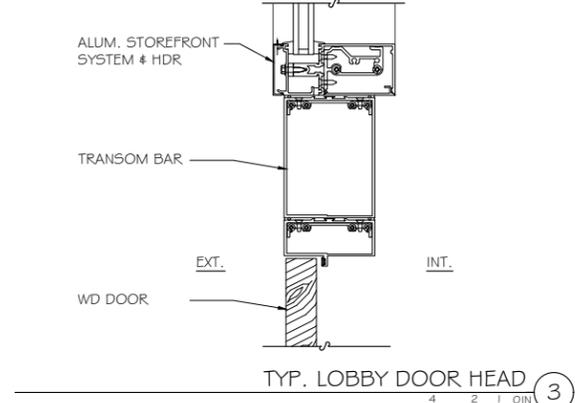
TYP. SLOPED ROOF RAFTER AT WALL 15



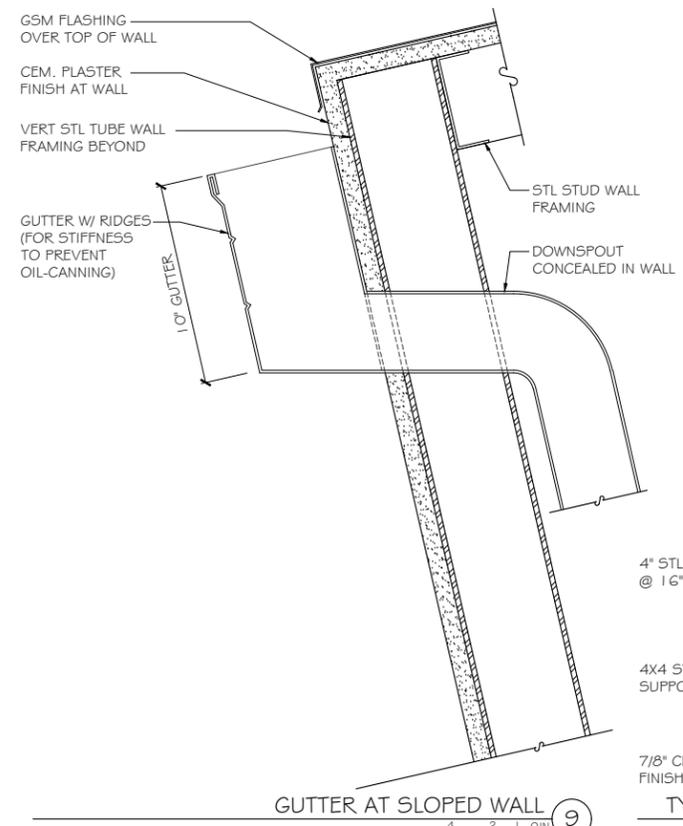
TYP. SLOPED ROOF PURLIN 11



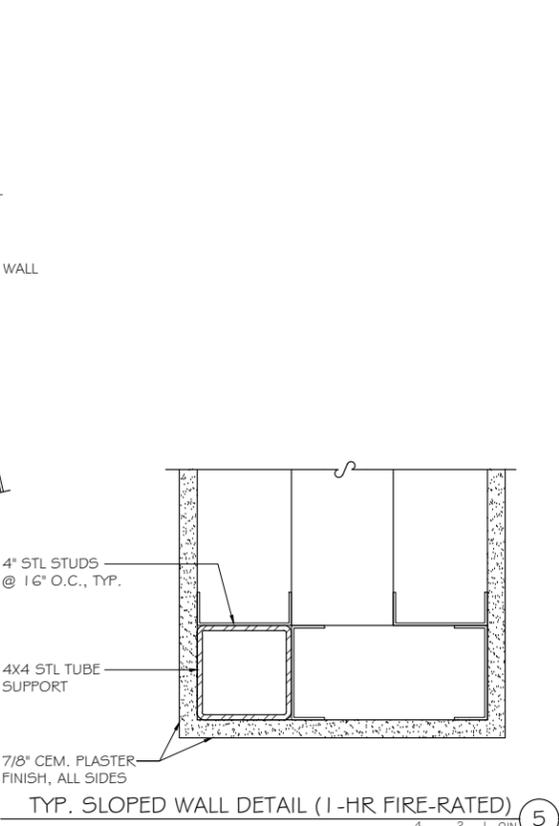
TYP. HORIZ. MULLION 7



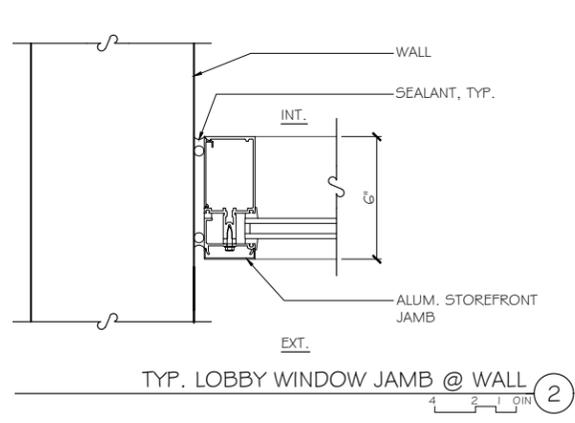
TYP. LOBBY DOOR HEAD 3



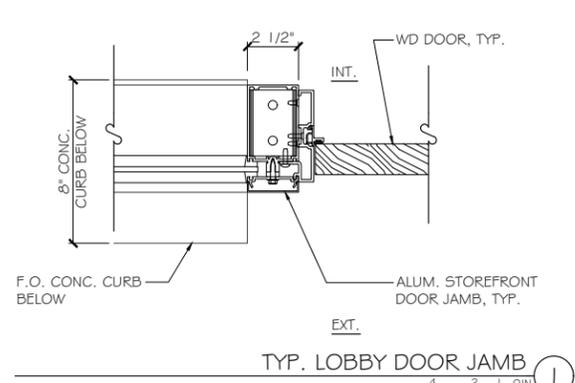
GUTTER AT SLOPED WALL 9



TYP. SLOPED WALL DETAIL (1-HR FIRE-RATED) 5



TYP. LOBBY WINDOW JAMB @ WALL 2



TYP. LOBBY DOOR JAMB 1

- GENERAL NOTES 13
1. ALUMINUM WINDOW SYSTEM TO BE KAWNEER 1600 WALL SYSTEM.
 2. GLAZING TO BE 1" CLEAR TEMPERED SAFETY GLAZING OR AS REQUIRED BY CODE.
 3. ALL STEEL MEMBERS TO BE PRIMED & PAINTED.
 4. ALL WELDS TO BE GROUND SMOOTH & PAINTED.

GENERAL NOTES 13

LICENSED ARCHITECT
JAMES NOVOSSEL
No. CA 11401
RENEWAL DATE
FEBRUARY 2023
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PROJECT:
NEW ENTRY LOBBY
1919 ADDISON STREET
BERKELEY, CA 94704

ARCHITECT OF RECORD:
JAMES NOVOSSEL

the bay architects
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(510) 715-1901

PRINT DATE / PURPOSE
09/22/22 DESIGN REVIEW SUBMITTAL
01/23/23 FOR LPC HEARING
02/13/23 LPC HEARING REVISIONS

DETAILS
A5.2
DRAWING SHEET

February 13, 2023

the bay architects

1840b alcatraz avenue
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JAMES NOVOSEL
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Response to February 2nd LPC Commissioners Comments on Proposed Entry Lobby at 1919 Addison Street

Commissioners provided several comments on our design for a lobby addition to the office building at 1919 Addition Street. We have positively responded to their comments and have made the following proposed adjustments to the design:

- 1. The proposed glass wall in front of the present landscaped area will be replaced with a simple wrought iron railing. This will provide security along the face of the public sidewalk as well as to allow public viewing of the planting area.**
- 2. The previously proposed cor-ten steel sign carrying the building's address numbers will be changed to an aluminum sign band. It will be powder coated with a color that matches the lobby window mullions. It will be reduced in height from 30" to 12". The address numbers will be stenciled in black onto the sign band.**
- 3. The "bathroom" colors and pattern of the tile bulkhead along the planting area has been changed to more substantive colors. The contrasting bright white tiles have been changed to more earthy, darker colors with an alternate colored tile banding.**
- 4. It was noted that much water might waterfall onto the sidewalk from the lobby glass roof. We eliminated the glass overhang and placed an ornamental gutter along the face of the pilaster columns to control water. The gutter is designed with horizontal ridges in order to avoid "oil canning" and to give its face some character.**
- 5. There was a comment about whether the cross block walkway through the property will be open during daylight hours. The owners have a gate along the University Avenue facade that is open during the day. It is possible that the new Addison Street doors can remain open so that people can use the cross block walkway. However, this will depend on whether security concerns arise during the day.**

CITY OF BERKELEY
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

(APPLICATION REQUESTING DESIGNATION FOR LANDMARK STATUS)

ES: Ordinance 4694-N.S. Individual Landmark \$50.00 Historical Dist. \$100.00

1. Name of Property Bonita Apartments Survey Code No. _____

2. Building XXX Site _____ Open Space _____

3. County Alameda 4. City Berkeley

5. Street 1942 University Avenue

6. Vicinity (if rural) --

7. Present Occupant None

8. Present Owner Robert & Anna Harelson

9. Original Owner (if known) George Lewis Mohr

10. Date of Construction 1905 11. Style Mission Revival

12. Architect/Builder George Lewis Mohr 13. Original Use Apartment dwelling

Historic Value: national ___ state ___ county ___ city X neighborhood ___
none ___

15. Architectural Value: national ___ state X county ___ city ___ neighbor-
hood ___ none ___

16. Notable Garden or Landscaping: yes ___ no X

17. Photographs: contemporary X historical _____
dates 1978 dates _____
photographer Craig Buchanan photographer _____
repository _____ repository _____

18. Bibliography: Published Sources Berkeley Gazette & Oakland Tribune of 03/14/56
Public Records Block Books, Sanborn Atlas, Ormsby Donogh Files
Interviews Brian Horrigan, Carol Martel, Lucille Mohr, L. Stein
Other Photo collection of Bancroft Library, U.C.; Historical
records of Merritt Hospital, Oakland

19. Block Number 2024 20. Lot No. 0180021. Lot Size: Frontage 80'
Depth 50'

22. Current Zoning Status _____ 23. Adjacent Property Zoning Status _____

24. Present Use: residential (single family ___ multiple ___) office ___
store ___ public ___ other X specify Building is vacant
at present; possible renovation to offices

25. Adjacent Property Use (check all that apply): residential (single
family ___ multiple X) office X store X public ___
other ___ specify _____

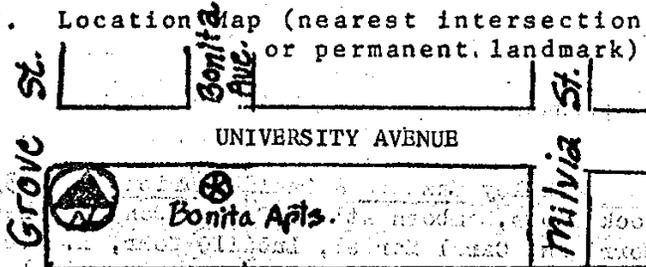
26. Assessed Property Value: current 5 yrs. ago 10 yrs. ago
27. Present Condition of Property: exterior: excellent good X fair poor
interior: excellent good X fair poor
grounds: excellent good fair X poor
28. Property Endangered: yes no source, if yes Possibly
29. Potential New Property Uses: Commercial offices
30. History: Briefly describe the historical significance of this property

Please see accompanying pages.

31. Architecture: Briefly describe the appearance of this structure. Indicate notable features as well as later alterations and changes. Include notable landscaping or natural features.

Please see accompanying pages.

32. Location Map (nearest intersection or permanent landmark)



33. Photograph (Contact print from 35mm black and white photo)

34. Additional Comments or Continuation of Previous Answers

35. Recorder: Name Kenneth Martin Title
Address 2138 Center Street Date November 15, 1978
Berkeley 94704

I T E M 3 0

When George Lewis Mohr (1872-1956), the architect and builder of the Bonita Apartments, came to northern California as an infant in the early seventies of the last century, San Francisco and its Bay had already become the cultural and commercial focus of the American west coast. While Mohr was still a boy, however, a city called Berkeley was born beside the Bay, and the new town was certain to grow up quickly, if only because of its spectacular site across from the Golden Gate, and because in any case of its recent choice as seat of the state's public university. Here it was amid the excitement of a city's beginning that George Mohr began his own life's work--at the age of fifteen, in apprenticeship to the distinguished local contractor A. H. Broad. Both these men, but particularly Mohr, were to shape significantly the young community's future.

Mohr's coming of age coincided with that of Berkeley: but he did not get involved in those acropolisian splendors of Phoebe Hearst's campus which are still partial justification for his town's being known throughout the world as the Athens of the West. Rather, Mohr's less exalted aspirations kept him busy in the marketplace with the commercial and residential development of a characteristically American, and once beautifully proportioned, small urban center. He built in his early maturity no less than six major buildings for downtown Berkeley¹-- buildings that can indeed be called "major" in that they are large, but "major" also in the sense that they set the tone over many years for the town's center by the high quality of their several designs and by the perfect awareness on Mohr's part of how their scale and function should fit in with such a city's master plan.

Item 30 (Continued)

Page 2

Although Mohr was several years too late to become part of this famous plan of Mrs. Hearst and her friends which would have placed their grand academy in a yet larger setting of beautiful access from the Bay, the buildings Mohr erected on his own along the upper reaches of University Avenue made all the same an excellent approach to the west entrance of the campus. The first of these, begun in 1905, was the Bonita Apartments, 1942 University Avenue, which happens to be the first apartment house ever built in Berkeley.² Soon after came the Such Building (1906) at 2140 Oxford Street, the Campanile and University Hotels (1905 and 1909, respectively), both in the 2000 block of University Avenue, and the Acheson Physicians' Building (1908), 2130 University Avenue, one of Berkeley's early professional buildings and a fine example of Sullivanesque commercial design. All these structures still stand and are in reasonably good condition. Though Mohr is not known to have contracted for any other buildings on University Avenue, he had very much to do with its further development in the way of advice and investment³: ~~the avenue even as we know it today~~ can quite justly be called the effect of his vision.

How could it come about that a young man of most likely unassuming nature,⁴ one in any case whose intelligence was completely untutored in artistic theory, should have produced such splendid buildings--in the example of the Bonita Apartments, such an important contribution to the so-called Mission Revival style of architecture in Berkeley (important because of its size and prominence and wonderful balance)? Doubtless part of the answer--the only part it seems one can reflect on now for want of much biographical data--lies with the good fortune

Item 30 (Continued)

Page 3

Mohr enjoyed in working while there still endured a tradition of craftsmanship from which a mind lively enough but requiring no instruction save genuine experience might draw stimulation and support for a life's career.

Mohr lived during a time that deemed good an eclectic appreciation of the best in architecture which had developed since the Renaissance, no better embodiment of which in California was the Mission Revival. It was an age, moreover, that considered love of ornamentation natural and admirable in itself but that knew also what ornamentation could do both for an individual structure and for the greater environment in which it was placed. It was an age, in short, that could distinguish--in architectural matters, anyhow--part from whole (which involves knowing what's important and what's not) and that could recognize that a good building's totality was best imagined in an attitude of historical modesty when combining and fitting well-worn elements to form an intelligently derived present--and this despite the era's celebrated exuberance and occasional grotesquerie.

Such aesthetic notions had become an epoch's principles long before Mohr, and Mohr himself could not have helped but deduce his own endeavors from them. The Bonita Apartments, for instance, must stand as near paradigm for a great deal of workmanship produced in the America of seventy years ago. It represents everywhere that rich pattern of enthusiastic choices which the nation was producing then, just as the building also exhibits the instinctive good taste of an ordinary citizen's sound mind at work. The freely inventive (some might say with reason, amateurish) combining of, from top to bottom--Spanish tiles and picket fence--with mock-Moorish machicolation--with Italian^ate curlicues--

with Greek columns--with early Christian mosaics--would probably have come from a nightmare in any other era, and would certainly result in one in ours (the commercial architecture of modern-day Nevada may be cited as illustration of an eclectic here and now), but in Mohr's time such elements could be brought together with pleasing effect to form an arresting, and completely unpretentious, piece of architecture. The result is that though connoisseurs may know that the towers alone of the Bonita Apartments qualify it for the designation of "Mission Revival," and that other elements place it within certain norms and expectations of early twentieth-century building, all of Berkeley can recognize that, no matter how or whence the structure came about, it makes a beautiful contribution to the city's central livelihood.

The immediate inspiration for the Bonita Apartments came probably from around several corners. Berkeley's first Post Office, built by A. H. Broad in 1897, bears an astonishing resemblance to the Bonita Apartments as to shape, plan of entrance and windows, and corner towers.⁵ (The Post Office and its contiguous building burned in 1906, and soon the site was extended to make room for the much larger Wright Building, which is still there at the southeast corner of Shattuck Avenue and Center Street.) It is not at all unlikely that this structure, which was designed by Mohr's own master, suggested to him a model for another sorely needed building in central Berkeley--an apartment house--provided only the architect apply a little imagination to it and properly fit out his modification with the latest domestic accouterments.⁶ And surely, imagination was not a capacity lacking in George Mohr, though there was--again--in the very atmosphere of the day, so to

Item 30 (Continued)

Page 5

○ speak, general conditions which would have demanded interesting work of high quality from him as from any artisan, whether he was particularly inspired or not. In any case, there were already at the turn of the century many good buildings in the East Bay besides those of Broad, and if the old Post Office was not the specific incentive for Mohr to build another, he would not have had to look very far to find one, should he have needed it.

○ It seems important, finally, to point out just what league of architecture Mohr did not even try to play in: it is the far-famed one whose field begins at the campus and extends up the hill. For though there were near great masters of architectural design working in California while Mohr was active, his knowledge of where he belonged did not tempt him to emulate their grander efforts and so become a mere shadow of their brilliance. The likes of John Galen Howard and Julia Morgan were already making their presence felt in the higher regions of Berkeley through contemporary design; Mohr's place, on the other hand, was unashamedly "downtown," and he used there motifs and materials that were best suited by tradition for this locale. For instance, both the aforementioned architects built apartment houses in Berkeley before the First World War--in the case of Julia Morgan, the Beautiful Price Apartments on Panoramic Hill, and in Howard's, elegant Cloyne Court in the Northgate neighborhood--and they most artfully combined advanced notions of housing with the then fashionable medium of brown shingle, thereby creating the new and open effect which was soon to make "California living" so attractive to so many.

○ Just plain wood--wood however cut into nicely beveled and well-joined boards--was good enough for Mohr and the Bonita Apartments, and

Item 30 (Continued)

Page 6

the building's provenience did not need to be so smartly "original" as those creations on the hill. The architectural roots of the Bonita Apartments, it must be admitted, are there for all to see. What saves the structure from mediocrity is a bold note of style that turns what could be commonplace into something very beautiful: the only regret one may have about this now is that the product of such stylistic ingenuousness comes often to be considered as desirable for its quaintness, rather than simply for the real solidity of thought and craftsmanship which keeps it still standing. Perhaps it is fortune enough, though, that the Bonita Apartments does still stand anyway, and if the building is rivaled elsewhere by a few of its kind, in Berkeley at least it remains matchless.

NOTES

¹Actually Mohr's first building--contracted for when he was twenty-five--was in Oakland: the Maternity Cottage (dedicated 1899) of Fabiola Hospital, now subsumed by the Kaiser Medical Center; early on, too (1900), he was awarded the contract for a twenty-thousand dollar cannery in Stockton. It is evident from this that the ability of the man was recognized soon even outside Berkeley.

²The permit of construction for the Bonita Apartments was taken by Mohr on September 18, 1905; the price is entered as \$3,000. Though there were in downtown Berkeley previous to this building other rentable rooms and apartments, the Bonita Apartments, according to the Berkeley Gazette in its obituary of Mohr, was the city's "first apartment house," that is to say, the building was the first whose primary function was to serve as a multiple dwelling of contracting residents.

³In partnership with L. M. Williamson, another early Berkeley contractor.

⁴The witness of Miss Carol Martel--for whose parents Mohr built sixty years ago a house in the 3100 block of College Avenue--bears out the inference that Mohr was an eager, modest and conscientious landlord, one who cared for his buildings so much that, in Miss Martel's case at least, he did all the repairs and improvements on them himself.

⁵See item 19xx40.26-PIC in the Bancroft Library, U.C.

⁶Although a building's interior lies outside this survey's jurisdiction, it should be noted in passing that the individual apartments of the Bonita Apartments, especially the front ones, are beautifully, even elegantly, appointed, with marble fireplaces and free-standing mantels on columns, high and rounded ceilings, and lovely hanging lamps.

George Lewis Mohr lived all his life in a house of his own making at 1810 Shattuck Avenue, just a few blocks from his most important buildings.

I T E M 3 1

The building known in Berkeley as the Bonita Apartments is a three-story wooden structure painted at present in a warm cream color. The building, placed exactly mid-block between two cross-streets of the city's major thoroughfare to and from the Bay, faces north but from its upper stories commands long and splendid views in all directions. It is the largest structure within a good distance, and while it dominates the other buildings nearby, it in no way seems out of place or disproportionate to the site: indeed, the Bonita Apartments gives a hen-amidst-her-chicks appearance and can rightly be said to form the focal point for this section of University Avenue.

Two shops which extend the depth of the building flank the front entrance on the ground floor. These are lighted by plate-glass windows encased in heavy frames; the entrance itself is a shallow portico with double doors on the right, which lead immediately to a staircase going to the upper floors, and a single door on the left, which opens into a long narrow corridor running to the back yard. This entrance is richly ornamented with a keystone motif and neo-classical decoration directly above the aperture on the outer facade and with a lovely mosaic on its ground whose pattern consists of the Bonita Apartments' old numerical address (1920A) and a single colorful frame.

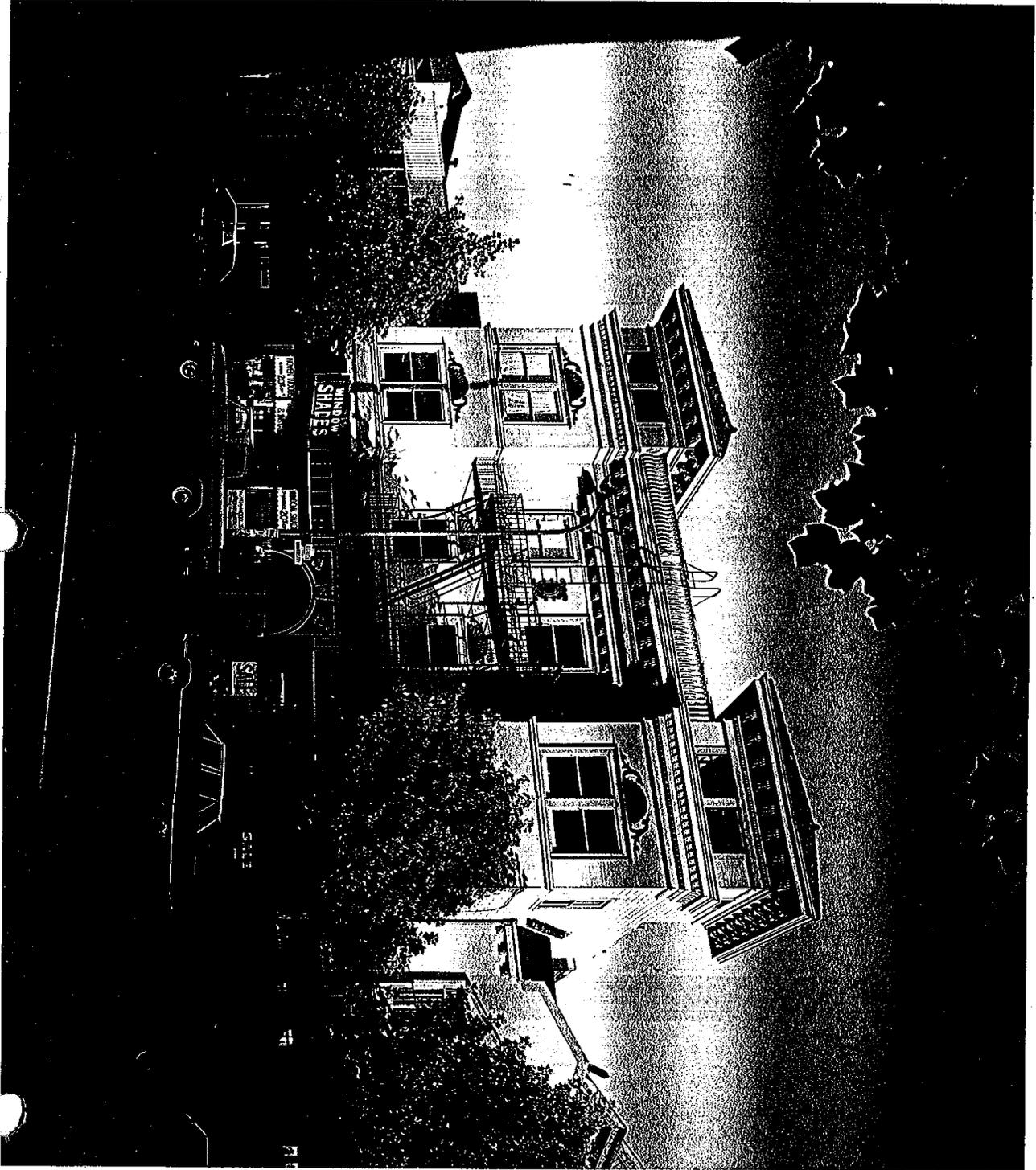
The care for detail and sense of slight whimsy obvious in the entrance are evident in the physical appearance of the structure as a whole. Four pilasters topped by Corinthian-style (plaster?) capitals seem as if they really intend to support the bulk of the whole building. Up above, the windows of the individual apartments are large and elegant, and their

Item 31 (Continued)

Page 2

frames have been painted crimson--the color in fact of the pilasters and most of the building's trim, which includes large scallops above each window, curling ribbons around these scallops, and a rather fantastic outdoor girandole of sorts (now somewhat obscured by a fire escape) set jewel-like in the very center of the facade. A band of machicolations just above the top scallops runs the entire length of the facade and around its corners, and this helps to bring together the disparate elements below. A few feet beyond the band of machicolations, and occurring only in the middle third of the facade, there hangs a slanted false eave with its outer portion painted red. (This remarkable feature prepares the eye for the dramatically placed towers which stand above the top floor's ceiling.) Finally, at the building's full height another band, this time of an egg-and-dart motif, wraps round the facade.

But the most wonderful mark of the structure--the one that affords it its unique aspect on the avenue--is at the very top: two short square towers at the northeast and northwest corners. These towers are actually small lofts with windows. Their roofs are hipped and sheathed in tin brightly painted to resemble Spanish tiles, and their eaves are as if undergirded by handsome brackets and another band of egg-and-dart. A Victorian balustrade, picket-fence-like, connects the two towers and thereby keeps them from straying apart visually; the balustrade also gives relief to what would otherwise be a quite ordinary straight roof-line. The towers are a perfect culmination for the building, balanced as they are so lightly on the structure's mass, and completing in height and, by their judicious separation, in length the noble proportions of the total design.



CITY OF BERKELEY
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

NOTICE OF DECISION

DATE: January 18, 1979

Dear MR. CARL GROCH & Mr. & Mrs. Robert Harelson

The City of Berkeley adopted the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance 4694-N.S. which went into effect June 6, 1974. This Ordinance established the Landmarks Preservation Commission whose duty is to preserve and protect structures, sites or areas in the City having special historical, architectural or aesthetic value.

In accordance with this Ordinance, a public hearing was held on January 15, 1979. At their regular meeting of January 15, 1979 the Commission designated your property, commonly known as Bonita Apartments and located at 1940-42-44 University Ave. as a Berkeley landmark.

Such status means that (Section 5 of the Ordinance);

"NO PERSON SHALL CARRY OUT OR CAUSE TO BE CARRIED OUT ON A DESIGNATED LANDMARK ... ANY CONSTRUCTION, ALTERATION OR DEMOLITION FOR WHICH A CITY PERMIT IS REQUIRED, WITHOUT APPROVAL BY THE COMMISSION ... IN ADDITION, NO SUCH WORK SHALL TAKE PLACE UNLESS ALL APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATION HAVE BEEN COMPLIED WITH, AND A PERMIT HAS BEEN ISSUED FOR SAID WORK."

Section 9 of the Ordinance establishes the right to appeal the Commission's decision to City Council by;

"...THE VERIFIED APPLICATION OF THE OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY OR THEIR AUTHORIZED AGENTS, OR BY THE VERIFIED APPLICATION OF AT LEAST FIFTY (50) RESIDENTS OF THE CITY AGGRIEVED OR AFFECTED BY ANY DETERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION...SUCH APPEAL SHALL BE TAKEN BY FILING A WRITTEN NOTICE OF APPEAL WITH THE CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF BERKELEY WITHIN FIFTEEN (15) DAYS AFTER THE MAILING OF THE NOTICE OF DECISION OF THE COMMISSION."

Very truly yours,



ARLENE SILK, Chairperson
Landmarks Preservation Commission

HDD-010
Rev. June 1976
January 1978

Date Mailed 1/18/79