

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**Application Date:** June 29, 2016

**Applicant:** Rusty Bienvenue, AIA Houston, for Steve A. Radom, Bayou Retail Partners, LP, owner

**Property:** 900 Commerce Street, Unit CU #4, .0404 INT COMMON LAND & ELE, Bayou Lofts Condo 8<sup>th</sup> Amend. The property includes a historic 3-story brick commercial structure situated at the corner of Commerce and Travis Streets. The subject of this application is the 5,618 square foot ground level space, as well as the three-story facades facing Commerce and Travis Streets.

**Significance:** Contributing brick commercial structure, constructed 1906, located in the Main Street Market Square Historic District. The historic 1906 B.A. Riesner Building is located in downtown Houston at the corner of Commerce and Travis and is located within both the national and locally designated Main Street Market Square Historic Districts.

**Proposal:** Alteration – The applicant, AIA Houston, proposes to restore and alter the exterior facades to accommodate the conversion of the space to the new Architecture Center Houston (ArCH). No existing original materials are proposed for removal. At both the Commerce Street and Travis Street elevations:

- New clay tiles will be installed at the original shallow cantilevered roof
- At the upper windows, the brick in-fill will be removed and the arch will be restored
- At the second and third level window openings, new window frames matching the original 6-over-6 and 3-panel transom lite configurations, with screen panels instead of glass, will be installed
- Paint will be removed from the existing brick and limestone

At the Commerce Street elevation:

- All non-original storefront and brick will be removed at the three ground floor bays
- Each bay will receive a new steel frame storefront system that references the three-part rhythm of the upper level windows; and the original door, window, canopy and transom conditions

At the Travis Street elevation:

- Remove three non-original windows at the ground level
- At the northern edge (street corner), install a new storefront system to fit the original opening
- Infill system to match Commerce Street storefront system
- Remove the brick infill at the four original square clerestory window openings and install a new steel frame, single pane window at each opening
- Restore the brick window ledge at the first clerestory opening from Commerce Street
- Install a new steel exit door with sidelight and floodgate below the fifth clerestory window from Commerce Street
- Remove the metal door located flush to the façade, between the upper 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> windows from Commerce Street, and patch the opening with matching façade brick

The first phase of the project includes work to the Riesner Building. The second phase includes work to the boiler room of the adjacent Bayou Lofts Building (1911 Southern Pacific Railroad Building). The second phase scope of work is not included in this COA application.

See enclosed application materials and detailed project description on p. 5-20 for further details.

**Public Comment:** No public comment received at this time.

**Civic Association:** No comment received.

**Recommendation:** Approval

**HAHC Action:** -

APPROVAL CRITERIA

ALTERATIONS, REHABILITATIONS, RESTORATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Sec. 33-241: HAHC shall issue a certificate of appropriateness for the alteration, rehabilitation, restoration or addition of an exterior feature of (i) any landmark, (ii) protected landmark, (iii) any building, structure or object that is part of an archaeological site, or (iv) contributing building in a historic district upon finding that the application satisfies the following criteria, as applicable:

S D NA

S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable

- (1) The proposed activity must retain and preserve the historical character of the property;
(2) The proposed activity must contribute to the continued availability of the property for a contemporary use;
(3) The proposed activity must recognize the building, structure, object or site as a product of its own time and avoid alterations that seek to create an earlier or later appearance;
(4) The proposed activity must preserve the distinguishing qualities or character of the building, structure, object or site and its environment;
(5) The proposed activity must maintain or replicate distinctive stylistic exterior features or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize the building, structure, object or site;
(6) New materials to be used for any exterior feature excluding what is visible from public alleys must be visually compatible with, but not necessarily the same as, the materials being replaced in form, design, texture, dimension and scale;
(7) The proposed replacement of missing exterior features, if any, should be based on an accurate duplication of features, substantiated by available historical, physical or pictorial evidence, where that evidence is available, rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other structures;
(8) Proposed additions or alterations must be done in a manner that, if removed in the future, would leave unimpaired the essential form and integrity of the building, structure, object or site;
(9) The proposed design for any exterior alterations or addition must not destroy significant historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural material, including but not limited to siding, windows, doors and porch elements;
(10) The proposed alteration or addition must be compatible with the massing, size, scale material and character of the property and the context area; and
(11) The distance from the property line to the front and side walls, porches, and exterior features of any proposed addition or alteration must be compatible with the distance to the property line of similar elements of existing contributing structures in the context area.



PROPERTY LOCATION

MAIN STREET MARKET SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT



Building Classification

- Contributing
- Non-Contributing
- Park

**CURRENT PHOTOS**



Commerce and Travis Elevations; 2016



Commerce St Elevation (north) and connected parking structure; 2016

**EXISTING ELEVATIONS**



Commerce St Elevation (north); 2016



Travis Street Elevation (west); 2016

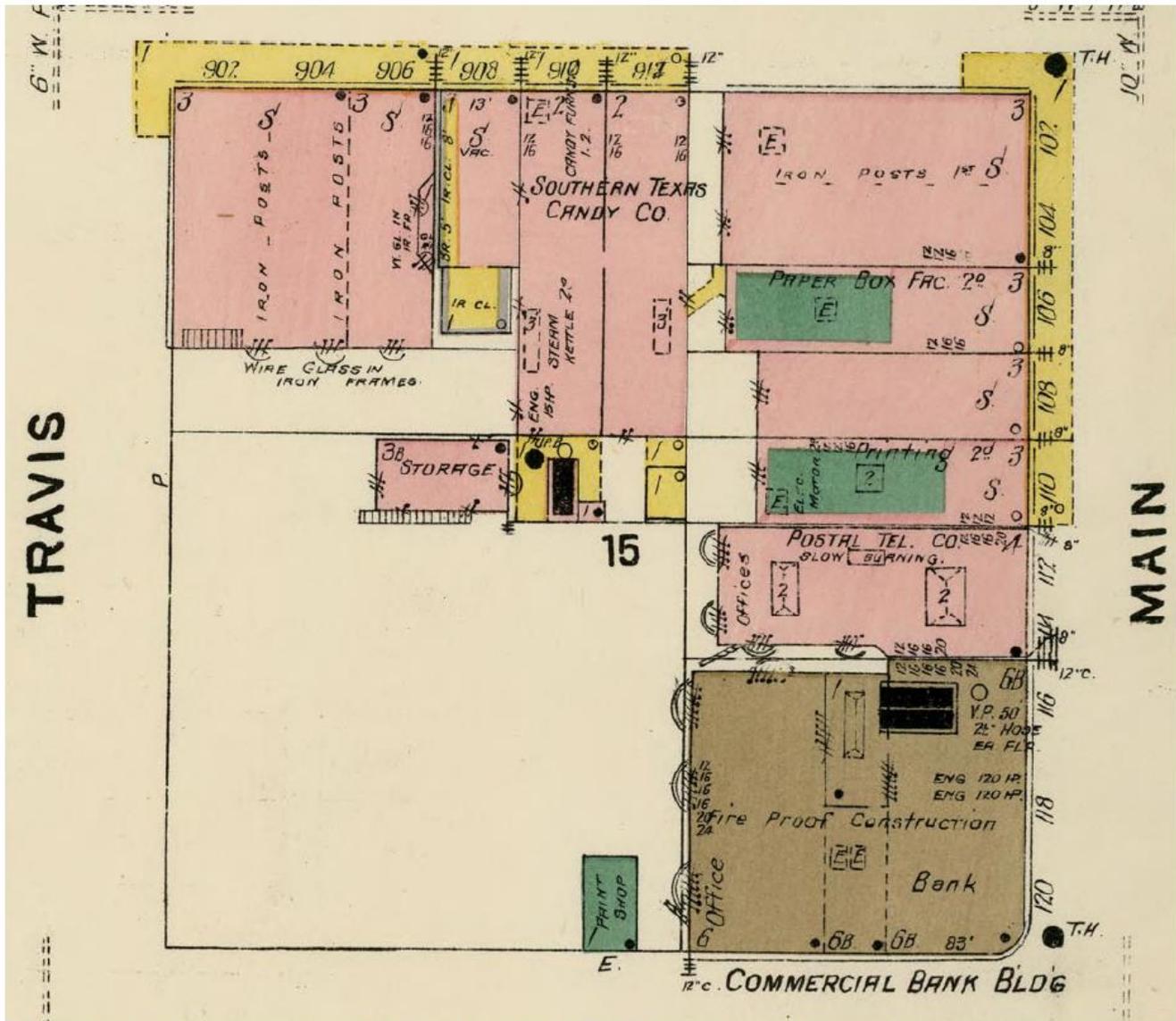
Aerial Photo of Site



Google Earth Aerial Photo, 2015; Dashed indicates Riesner Building and Bayou Loft boiler room

**SANBORN MAP**

(SHOWING ORIGINAL AWNING CONFIGURATION)

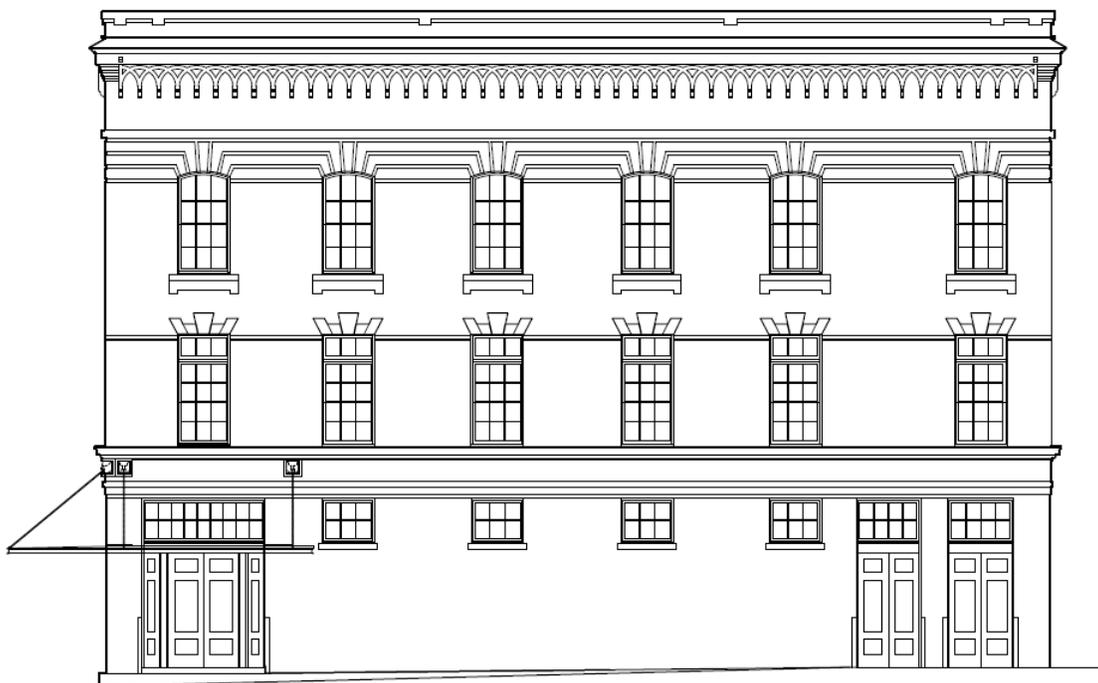


Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1907, Volume 1; illustrating original canopy line.

**HISTORIC 1906 ELEVATIONS**  
**FRONT (FACING COMMERCE STREET)**



**WEST (FACING TRAVIS STREET)**



HISTORIC PHOTOS



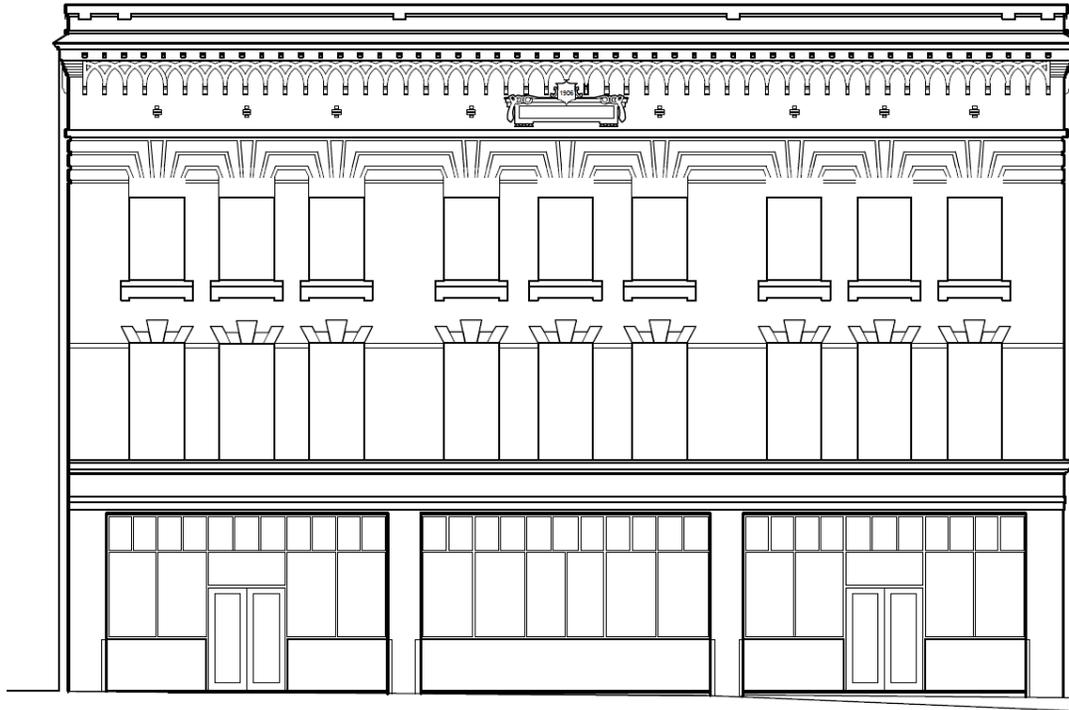
Commerce and Travis Elevations, circa 1915



900 block of Commerce, 1906 – Riesner building light colored structure middle left

**NORTH ELEVATION – FRONT FACING COMMERCE STREET**

EXISTING

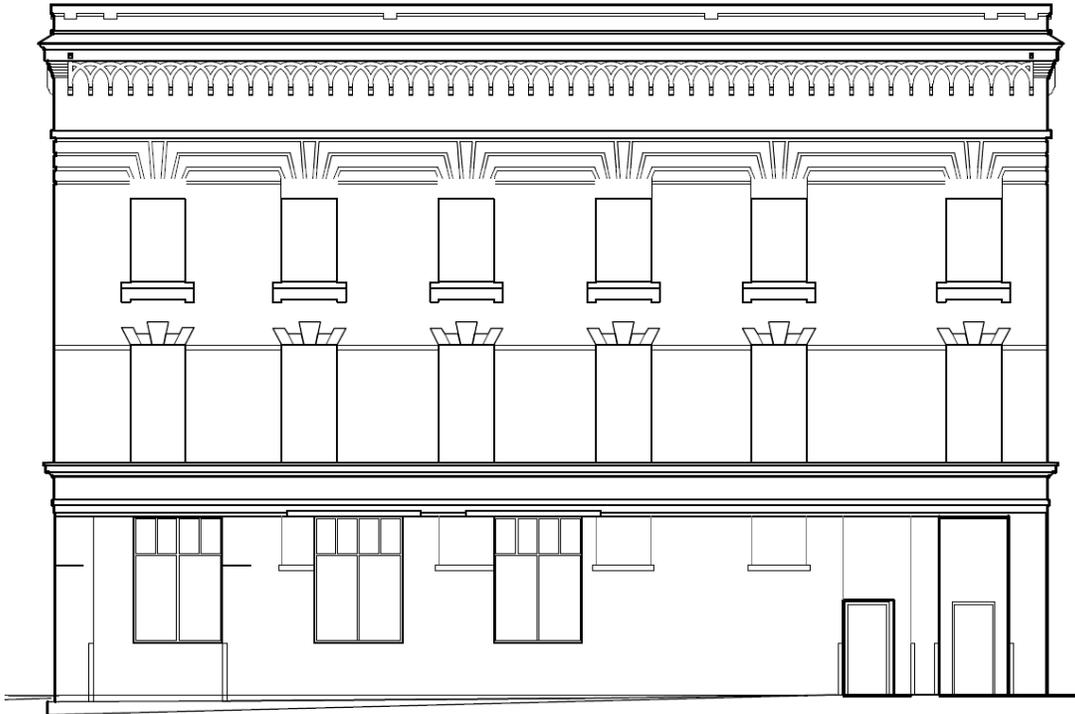


PROPOSED



WEST SIDE ELEVATION – FACING TRAVIS STREET

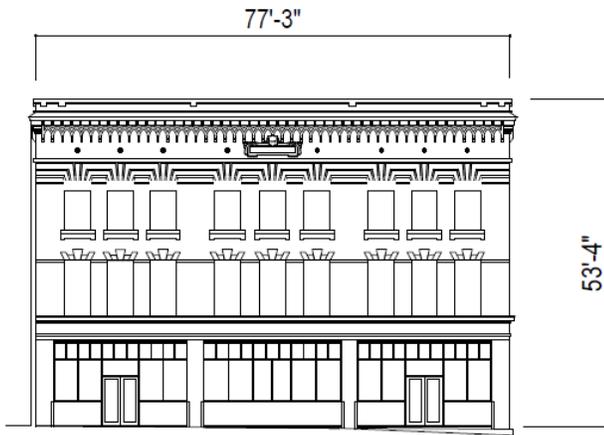
EXISTING



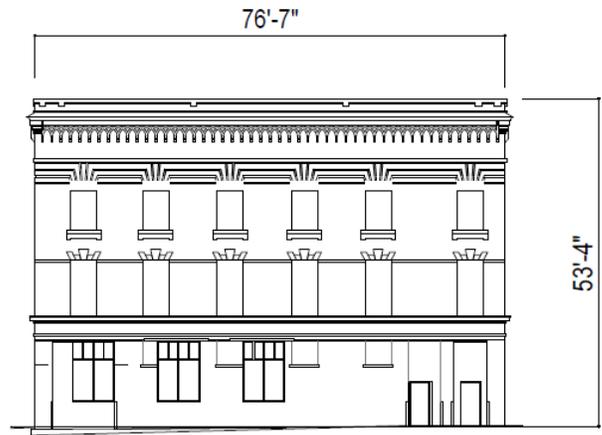
PROPOSED



**DIMENSIONED ELEVATIONS**  
(EXISTING BUILDING SHELL TO REMAIN)

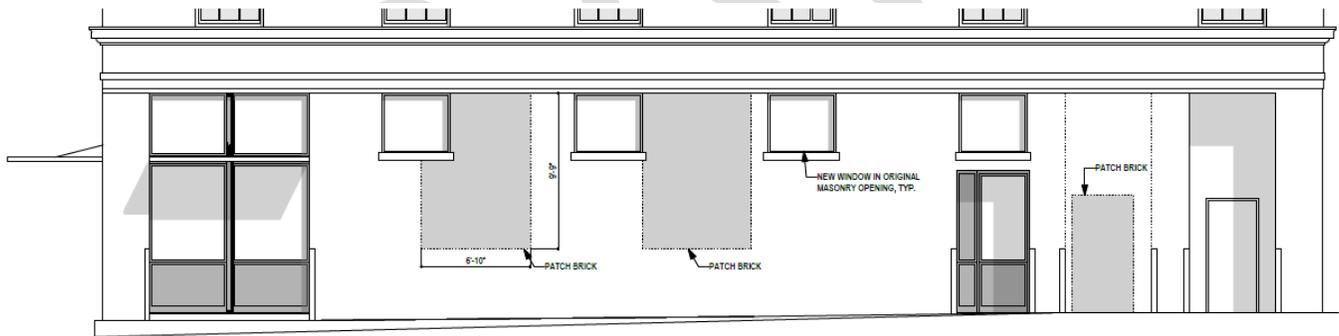


Commerce Elevation Existing  
1/16" = 1'-0"

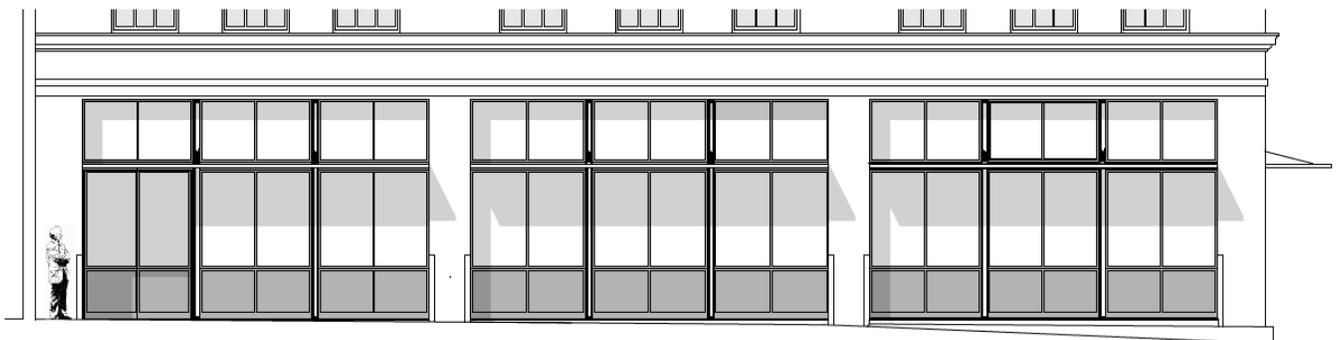


Travis Elevation Existing  
1/16" = 1'-0"

**GROUND LEVEL (STOREFRONT) DETAIL**

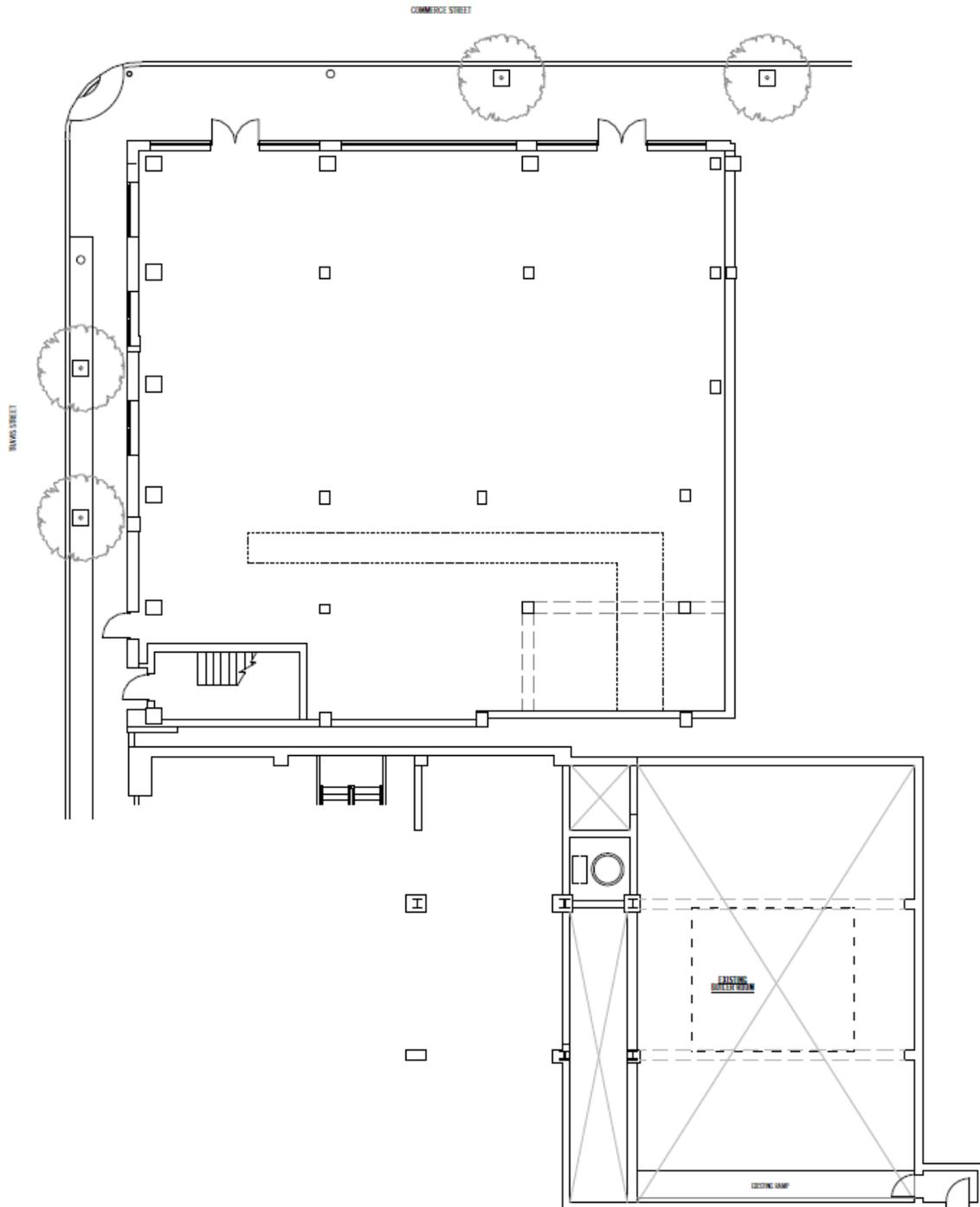


Partial Travis St. Elevation  
3/16" = 1'-0"

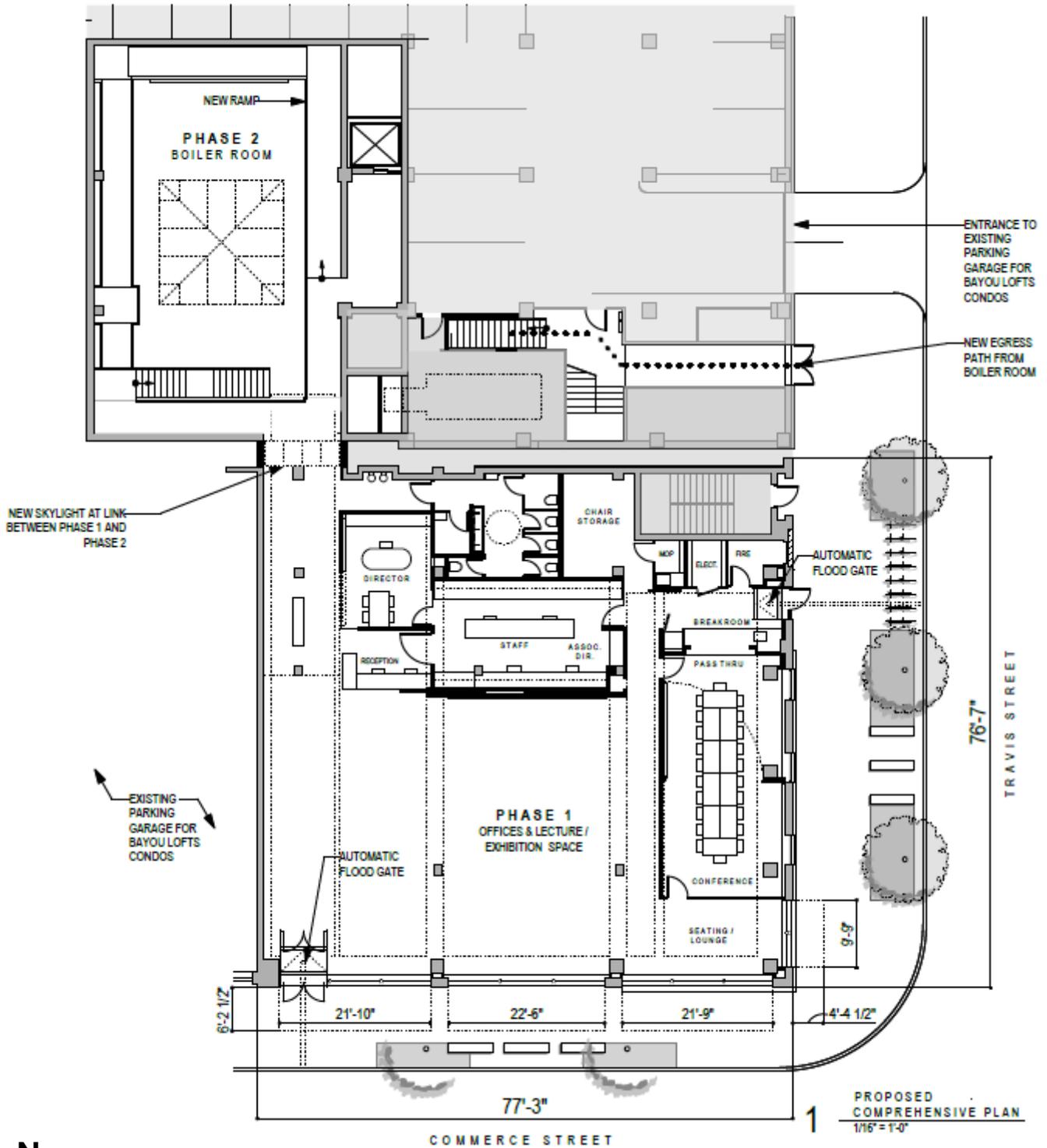


Partial Commerce St. Elevation  
3/16" = 1'-0"

SITE PLAN



FLOOR PLAN

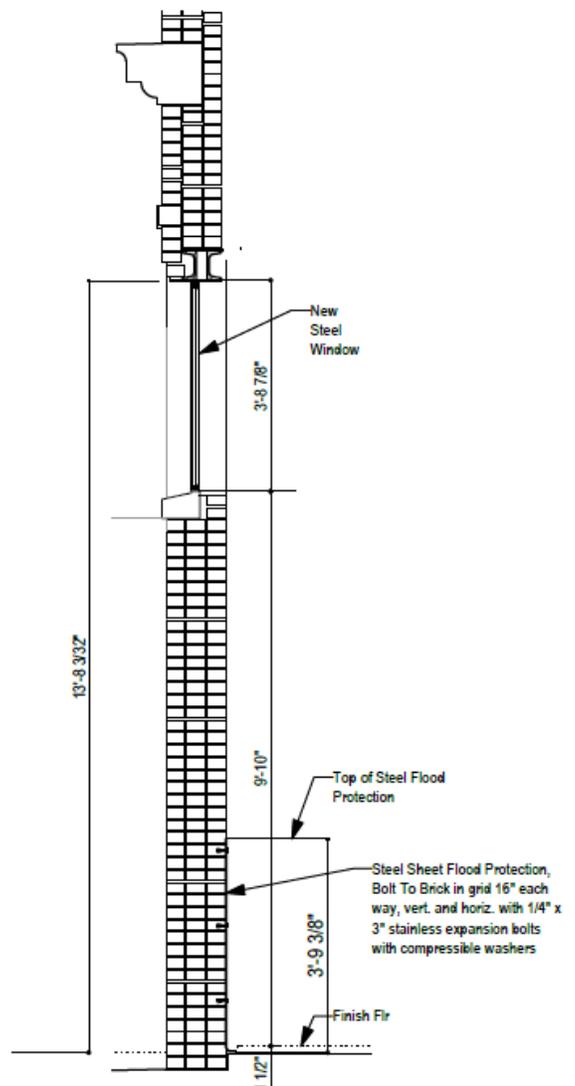
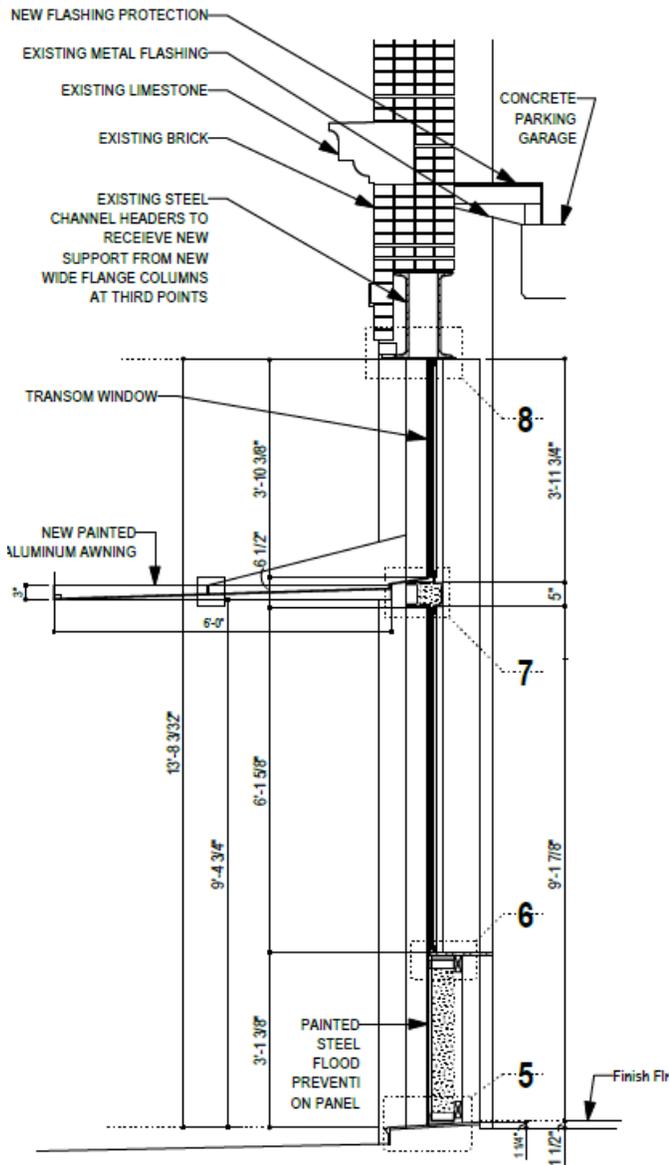


**AWNING / WINDOW / WALL SECTION DETAIL**

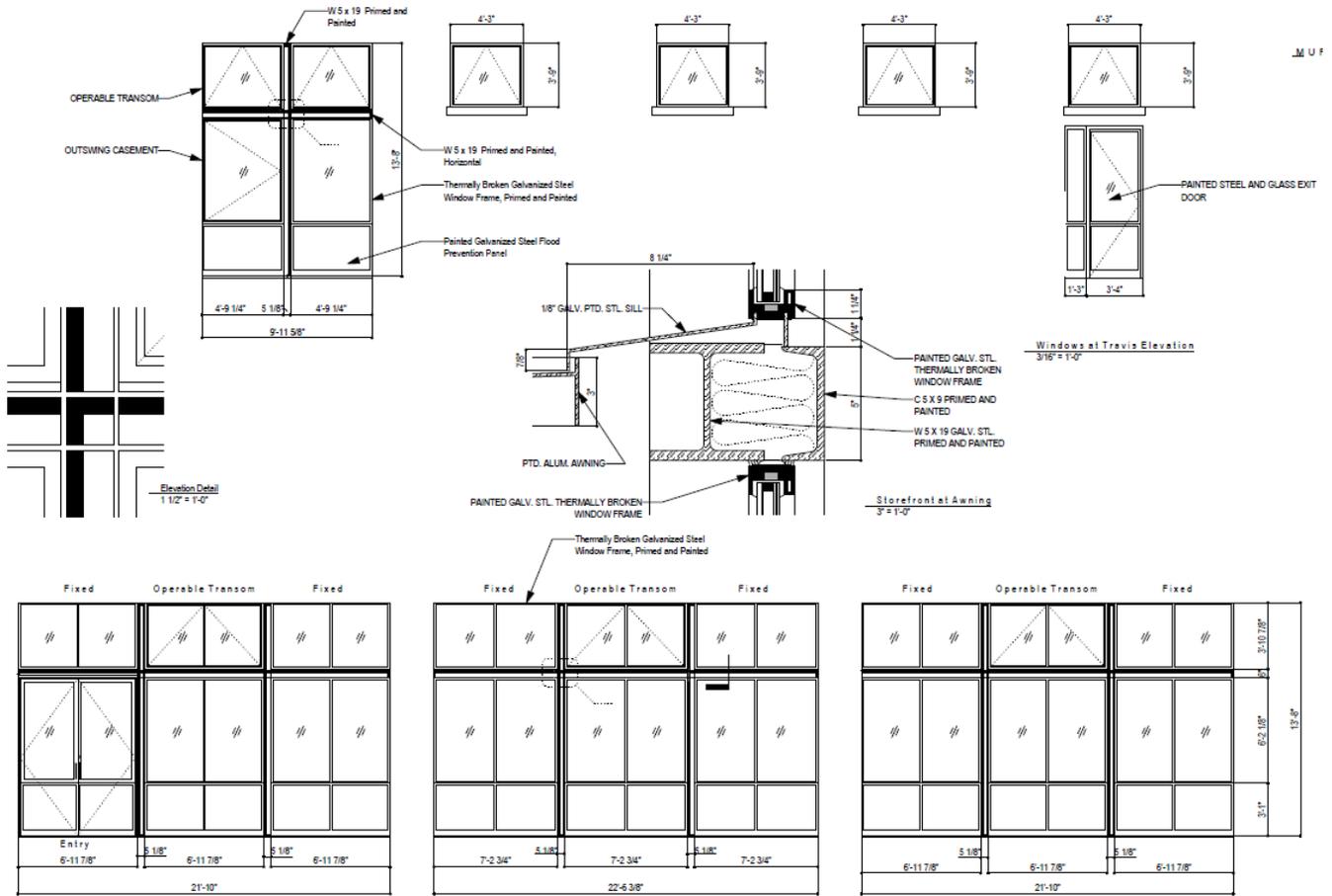
PROPOSED

FRONT (FACING COMMERCE STREET)

WEST (FACING TRAVIS STREET)



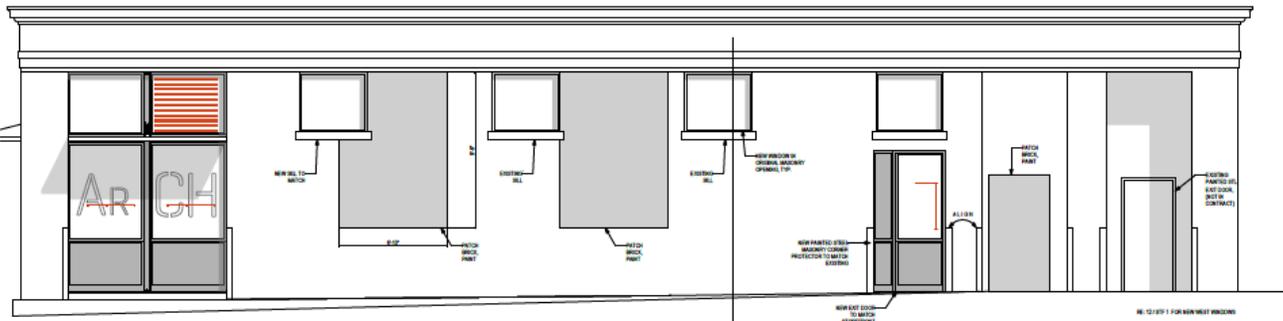
WINDOW / DOOR SCHEDULE



PROPOSED STOREFRONT DETAIL  
FRONT (FACING COMMERCE STREET)



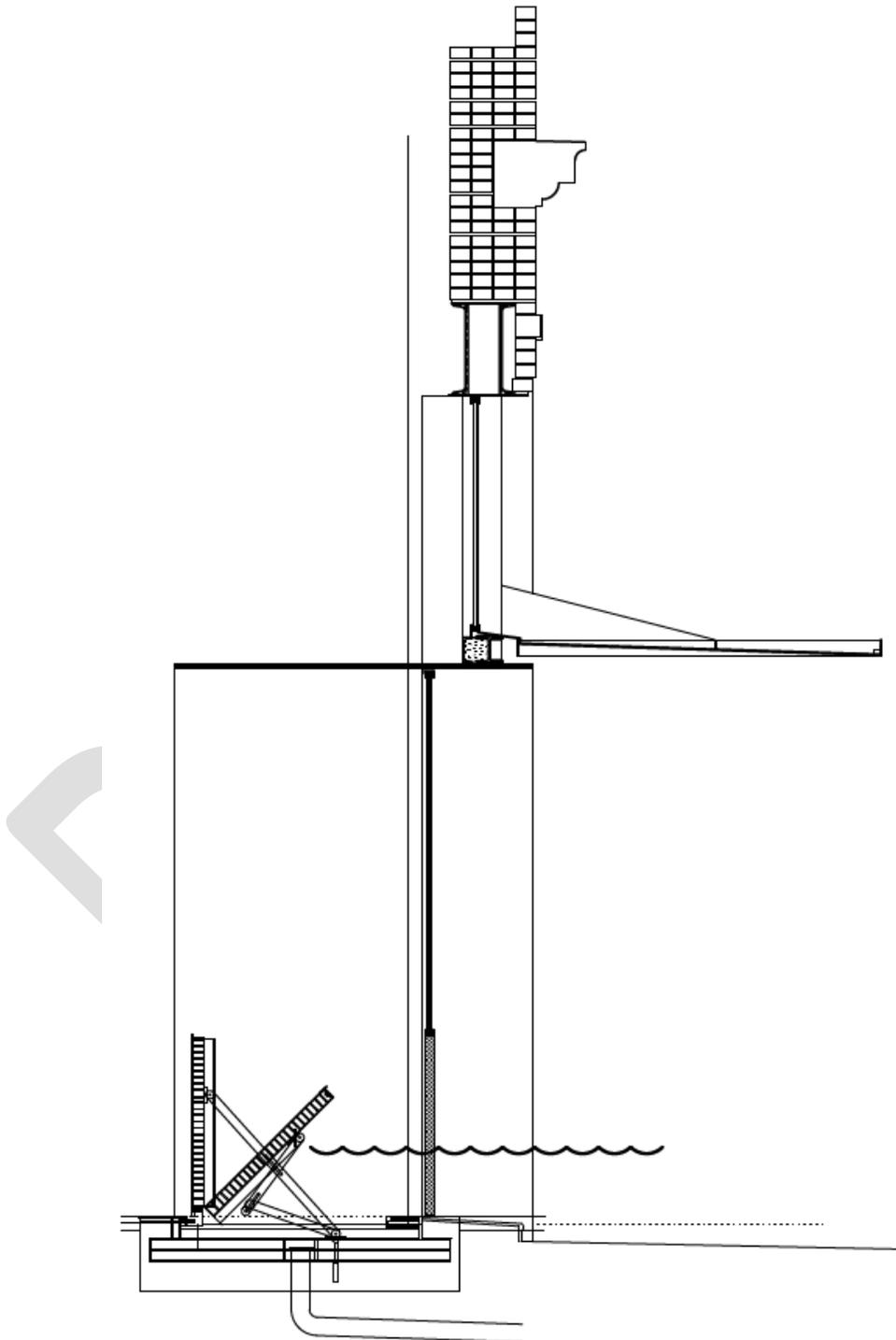
WEST (FACING TRAVIS STREET)



**PROPOSED FLOOD GATE DETAIL  
COMMERCE STREET ENTRANCE**

*INSIDE*

*OUTSIDE*



## PROJECT DETAILS

**Shape/Mass:** The Riesner building is a three-story structure with a brick veneer façade. The upper levels of the structure consist only of the historic facades facing Commerce and Travis. The structure behind has been removed and a parking garage that spans the block has been tucked behind the façade. The existing building has a front width (along Commerce Street) of 77'-3" and a depth (along Travis Street) of 76'-7". The structure is 53'-4" in height.

The existing building shape and mass will not be altered. The building shell is to remain. See drawings for more detail.

**Setbacks:** The existing building is zero lot line construction.

The existing setbacks are to remain as the building footprint will be retained and not be altered. See drawings for more detail.

**Foundation:** The existing structure has a concrete foundation.

The existing foundation will not be altered. See drawings for more detail.

**Windows/Doors:** Commerce Street Existing: At the ground level, all original doors, windows, clerestory windows and canopies have been removed. The original transom windows had a 7-over-7 lite configuration. The original canopy was hung from the building with chain tiebacks and a cast metal lion's head anchor. The ground level bays have been in-filled with an approximately 3' tall brick lower ledge and with a dark aluminum storefront system above. The two side bays have centered double entrance doors.

Travis Street Existing: Both upper levels have a series of 6 window openings blocked with brick from behind. The arches at the upper window openings have been in-filled with brick flush with the exterior wall. Originally, the ground floor had doors and windows covered by a canopy at the corner, followed by 4 square clerestory windows; and two recessed openings with doors with transoms at the far south side. The original openings at the ground level aligned with the openings above. Currently, three large square storefront windows have been installed at the north side of the façade. At the south side of the façade, one of the recessed openings remains recessed while another has been in-filled flush with the exterior wall; both have a single metal door. The original opening locations can be seen by the remaining brick ledge at the clerestory windows and variation at the infill brick texture and mortar joints pattern.

Overall Proposed: The brick in-fill will be removed and the arch will be restored on all the second and third story windows. New screen panels, instead of glass, will be installed in the window openings. The new window frames will match the original 6-over-6 and 3-panel transom lite configurations.

Commerce Street Proposed: All non-original storefront and brick will be removed at the three ground floor bays. Each bay will receive a new steel frame storefront system that references the three-part rhythm of the upper level windows; and the original door, window, canopy and transom conditions. From floor to existing steel header, each section of the ground level infill is comprised of a 3' painted steel flood prevention panels, 6' tall windows, a 3" aluminum awning, and a 4' transom window. The center transom at each bay will be an operable awning window. The eastern bay will have a double entry door, recessed from the storefront system and equipped with an automatic floodgate.

Travis Street Proposed: Remove three non-original windows at the ground level. At the northern edge (street corner), install a new storefront system to fit the original opening. Infill system to match Commerce Street steel, window, canopy, and transom system described above. The northern central window will be an operable out-swing casement; both transoms will be operable awning windows. Remove the brick infill at the four original square clerestory window openings and install a new steel frame, single pane window at each opening. Restore the brick window ledge at the first clerestory opening from Commerce Street. Install a new steel exit door with

sidelight and floodgate below the fifth clerestory window from Commerce Street. Remove the metal door located flush to the façade, between the upper 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> windows from Commerce Street, and patch the opening with matching façade brick. See drawings for more detail.

**Exterior Materials:** The three-story structure has a brick veneer façade and original cornice with an intricate brick detail. The brick façade and cornice details are in good condition. The tiles at the original shallow cantilevered roof have been removed. The building's stone nameplate frame remains at the top of the center bay, however the "Riesner" lettering has been removed.

New clay tiles will be installed at the original shallow cantilevered roof. The paint will be removed from the existing brick and limestone. New 'RIESNER' painted metal letters will be installed to match the original condition in the nameplate on the cornice.

Three new suspended aluminum awnings will be installed on the Commerce elevation. The 3" thick awnings will extend 6'-2½" out from the building and be suspended 9'-4¾" above the sidewalk. The central awning will be 22'-6" wide while the two flanking awnings will be 21'-10" wide. A single 9'-9" wide 4'-4½" awning will be located on the Travis elevation. See drawings for more detail.

**Front Elevation:** The existing north elevation features a three bay storefront on the ground floor. The original (North) storefronts have been removed and replaced with a CMU knee wall with 6 glass panels topped by a 12 pane transom. Double doors are located on the two end bays. The second-story features three sets of bricked in windows. The third-story also includes three sets of bricked in windows. The tops of the third-story windows were originally arched. A decorative name plate is located in the central bay below the heavily decorative brick cornice. The letters on the name plate have been removed but the bolt holes are still visible.

In the proposed north elevation, the non-original infill will be removed and replaced with a new storefront system. The new storefront system will include steel knee walls, glass windows and a transom. Between the windows and the transom, a new awning will be installed. On the second- and third-story, new window frames with screens instead of glass will be installed over the bricked in windows. See drawings for more detail.

**Side Elevation:** The existing west elevation features three non-original window openings on the ground floor. The (West) original windows have been bricked-in and their locations can be identified by the remaining sills. Two non-original doors are also located at the rear of the ground level. The second-story features six bricked in windows. The third-story also includes six bricked in windows. The tops of the third-story windows were originally arched. The building is topped by a heavily decorative brick cornice.

In the proposed west elevation, the non-original infill and windows will be removed and replaced with a new storefront system and windows. The new storefront system will include steel knee walls, glass windows and a transom. Between the windows and the transom, a new awning will be installed. New windows will be installed in the original bricked-in openings. On the second- and third-story, new window frames with screens instead of glass will be installed over the bricked in windows. See drawings for more detail.