

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

December 06, 2023

HDRC CASE NO: 2023-460
ADDRESS: 3903 N ST MARYS ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB A49 PART OF A-2, A-4, A-52 (208 AC)
ZONING: R-5, H, RIO-1
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 2
APPLICANT: Jonathan Smith/Smithdish architecture
OWNER: Matthew Meyer/CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
TYPE OF WORK: Construction of a savanna and giraffe exhibit
APPLICATION RECEIVED: November 13, 2023
60-DAY REVIEW: January 12, 2024
CASE MANAGER: Edward Hall

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to construct a savanna and giraffe exhibit at the San Antonio Zoo. The proposed exhibit will feature a giraffe barn, a single hotel room, and a pedestrian board walk.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Unified Development Code Section. 35-642. New Construction of Buildings and Facilities.

In considering whether to recommend approval or disapproval of a certificate, the historic and design review commission shall be guided by the following design considerations. These are not intended to restrict imagination, innovation or variety, but rather to assist in focusing on design principles, which can result in creative solutions that will enhance the city and its neighborhoods. Good and original design solutions that meet the individual requirements of a specific site or neighborhood are encouraged and welcomed.

(a) Site and Setting.

- (1) Building sites should be planned to take into consideration existing natural climatic and topographical features. The intrusive leveling of the site should be avoided. Climatic factors such as sun, wind, and temperature should become an integral part of the design to encourage design of site-specific facilities which reinforces the individual identity of a neighborhood and promotes energy efficient facilities.
- (2) Special consideration should be given to maintain existing urban design characteristics, such as setbacks, building heights, streetscapes, pedestrian movement, and traffic flow. Building placement should enhance or create focal points and views. Continuity of scale and orientation shall be emphasized.
- (3) Accessibility from streets should be designed to accommodate safe pedestrian movement as well as vehicular traffic. Where possible, parking areas should be screened from view from the public right-of-way by attractive fences, beams, plantings or other means.
- (4) Historically significant aspects of the site shall be identified and if possible incorporated into the site design. Historic relationships between buildings, such as plazas or open spaces, boulevards or axial relationships should be maintained.

(b) Building Design.

- (1) Buildings for the public should maintain the highest quality standards of design integrity. They should elicit a pride of ownership for all citizens. Public buildings should reflect the unique and diverse character of San Antonio and should be responsive to the time and place in which they were constructed.
- (2) Buildings shall be in scale with their adjoining surroundings and shall be in conformance to the identifying quality and characteristics of the neighborhood. They shall be compatible in design, style and materials. Reproductions of styles and designs from a different time period are not encouraged, consistent with the secretary of the interior's standards. Major horizontal and vertical elements in adjoining sites should be respected.

- (3) Materials shall be suitable to the type of building and design in which they are used. They shall be durable and easily maintained. Materials and designs at pedestrian level shall be at human scale, that is they shall be designed to be understood and appreciated by someone on foot. Materials should be selected that respect the historic character of the surrounding area in texture, size and color.
- (4) Building components such as doors, windows, overhangs, awnings, roof shapes and decorative elements shall all be designed to contribute to the proportions and scale of their surrounding context. Established mass/void relationships shall be maintained. Patterns and rhythms in the streetscape shall be continued.
- (5) Colors shall be harmonious with the surrounding environment, but should not be dull. Choice of color should reflect the local and regional character. Nearby historic colors shall be respected.
- (6) Mechanical equipment or other utility hardware should be screened from public view with materials compatible with the building design. Where possible, rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened, even from above. Where feasible, overhead utilities should also be underground or attractively screened. Exterior lighting shall be an integral part of the design. Interior lighting shall be controlled so that the spillover lighting onto public walkways is not annoying to pedestrians.
- (7) Signs which are out of keeping with the character of the environment in question should not be used. Excessive size and inappropriate placement on buildings results in visual clutter. Signs should be designed to relate harmoniously to exterior building materials and colors. Signs should express a simple clear message with wording kept to a minimum.
- (8) Auxiliary design. The site should take into account the compatibility of landscaping, parking facilities, utility and service areas, walkways and appurtenances. These should be designed with the overall environment in mind and should be in visual keeping with related buildings, structures and places.

FINDINGS:

- a. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to construct a savanna and giraffe exhibit at the San Antonio Zoo. The proposed exhibit will feature a giraffe barn, a single hotel room, and a pedestrian board walk.
- b. EXISTING SITE/ELEPHANT BARN – The site of the proposed savanna and giraffe exhibit previously housed the elephant barn. This structure was determined to be non-contributing by Office of Historic Preservation staff in October 2023, and a Certificate of Appropriateness has been issued for its demolition. Materials from this structure, including reclaimed masonry will be incorporated into the construction of the new giraffe barn.
- c. GIRAFFE BARN – The applicant has proposed to construct a giraffe barn within the proposed savanna and giraffe exhibit. The proposed barn will feature a footprint of approximately 2,640 square feet. The proposed barn will feature a Douglas fir structure and cladding, a standing seam metal roof, accent wood panels and reclaimed masonry from the elephant barn. The applicant has noted dark brown colored fiberglass windows and has provided a wall section noting a recessed installation. Staff finds the proposed materials and windows to be appropriate.
- d. HOTEL – The applicant has proposed to construct a single hotel room within the proposed savanna and giraffe exhibit. The proposed hotel room will feature a footprint of approximately 600 square feet. The proposed barn will feature a Douglas fir structure and cladding, a standing seam metal roof, accent wood panels and reclaimed masonry from the elephant barn. The applicant has noted dark brown colored aluminum windows. Staff finds the proposed materials to be appropriate.
- e. BOARD WALK – The applicant has proposed to construct a pedestrian board walk to facilitate pedestrian traffic around the savanna and proposed exhibit. The proposed board walk will be constructed of wood and will be complementary of those found within the zoo campus. Staff finds the proposed board walk's location, design and materials to be appropriate.
- f. ARCHAEOLOGY – The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

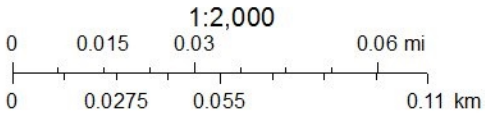
Staff recommends approval based on findings a through e with the following stipulations:

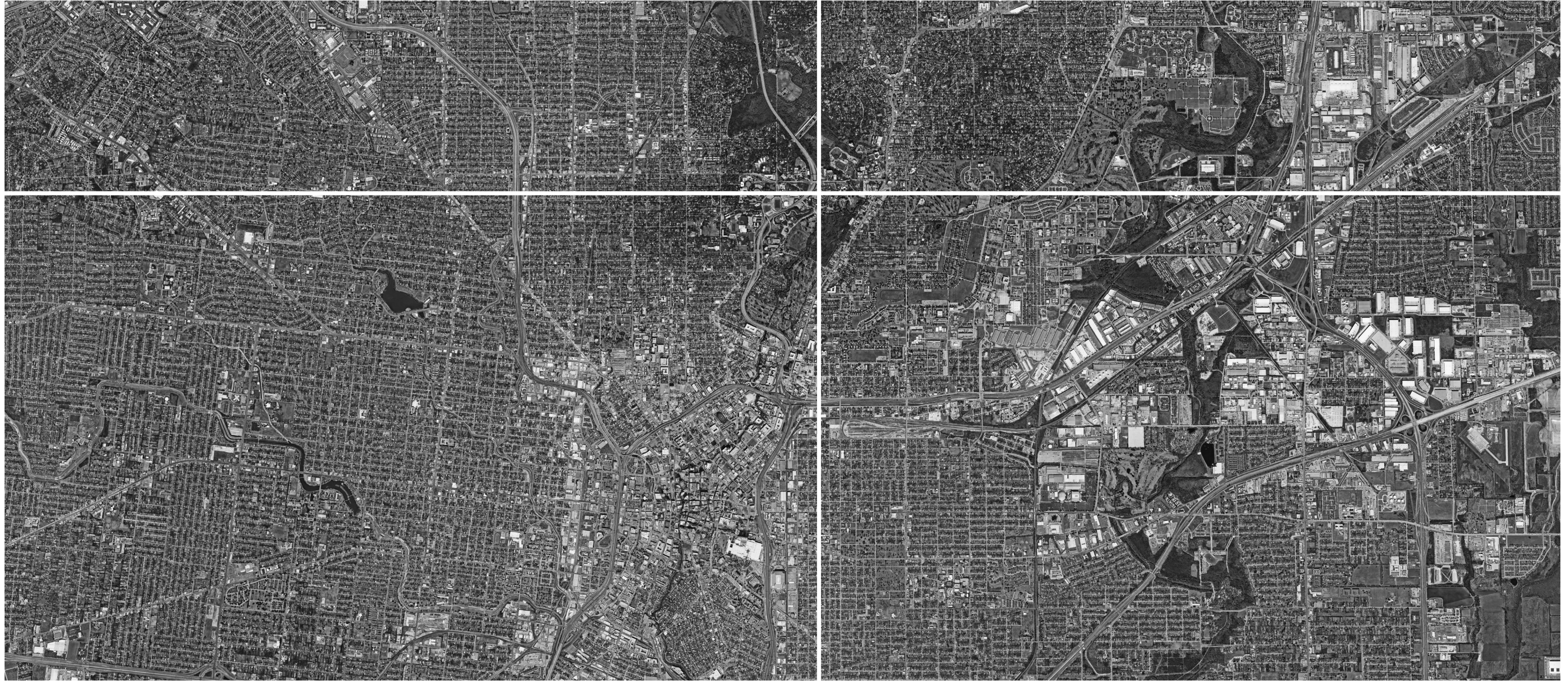
- i. Archaeology – The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

City of San Antonio One Stop



November 29, 2023





San Antonio Zoo Savanna Expansion

HDRC PRESENTATION

smithdish
ARCHITECTURE

Project Scope:

The project address is San Antonio Zoo 3903 N. St Mary’s St. San Antonio, TX 78212

The project scope is the new construction of:

- 1. A Giraffe Barn of approximately 40’ x 66’
- 2. A Hotel Room of approximately 600 sf
- 3. A Savanna Boardwalk extension of approx. 1,100 linear feet.

Project Narrative:

The San Antonio Zoo Savanna Expansion will create an immersive environment for guests to experience savanna animals up close. The giraffes will get a handsome new large barn with a public savanna boardwalk snaking through it. A giraffe-height casita will house guests for a unique hotel experience where they will overlook the savanna. The barn, casita and connecting boardwalks are predominantly wood to be friendly to curious licking giraffes and to tie into the existing zoo campus material palette. Reclaimed masonry from the elephant barn will anchor the base of the new giraffe barn, while wood accent panels reference both the native architecture of the reticulated giraffe’s home-range in Africa while also echoing the South Texas jacal. Both buildings are topped by a rust colored metal roof that will blend into the existing zoo campus fabric.





1. Existing Giraffe Barn 2. Existing Savanna Overlook 3. Existing Feeding Deck



4. Existing Longnecks Barn and Grill



1. Existing Giraffe Barn



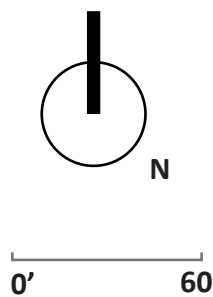
5. Existing Railing



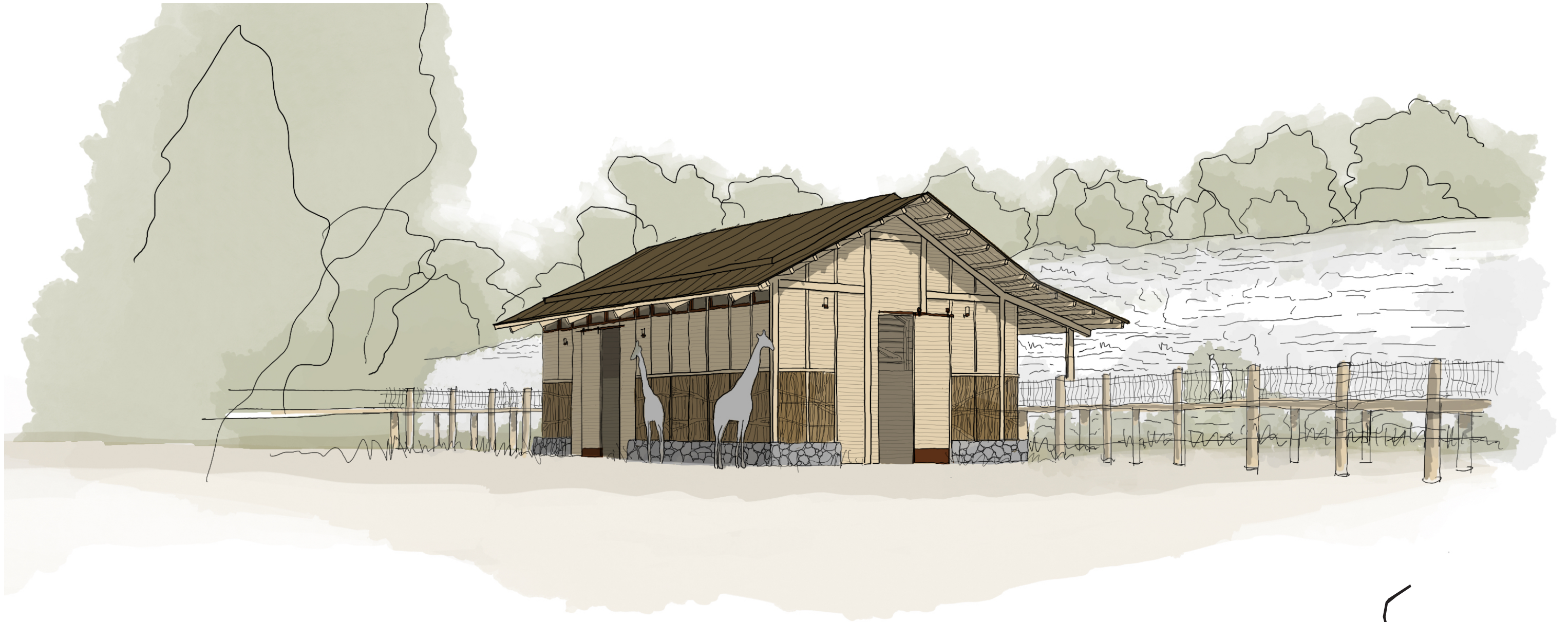
6. Existing Former Quarry Walls



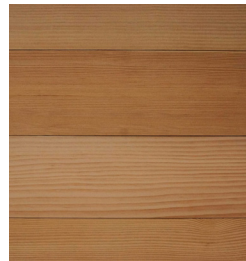
7. Elephant Barn Stone



- 1 Giraffe Barn
- 2 Giraffe Large Pen
- 3 Giraffe Casita Hotel Room
- 4 Savanna Boardwalk
- 5 Lower Savanna (zebras, ostriches, sitatunga, cranes, giraffes)
- 6 Upper Savanna (rhinos)
- 7 Elephant Barn (to be deconstructed and demolished)



douglas fir structure



douglas fir cladding



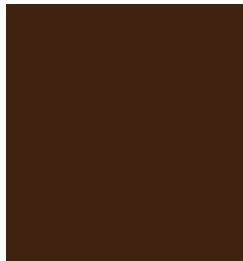
*standing seam rust
colored roof*



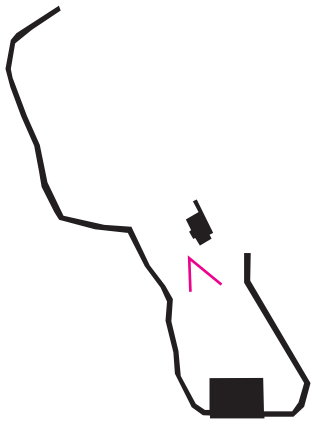
accent wood panels



*re-used wpa elephant
barn stone - dry
stacked appearance*

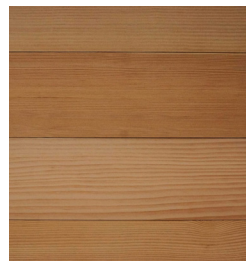


window mullion color





douglas fir structure



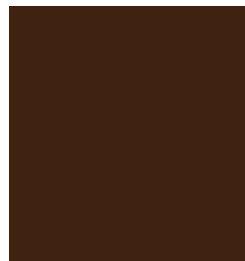
douglas fir cladding



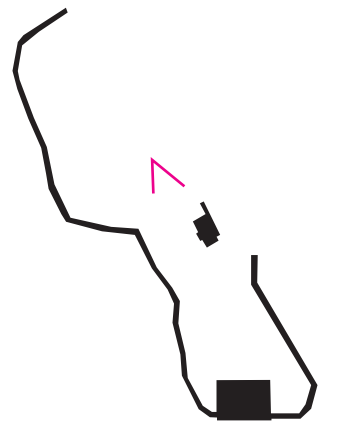
*standing seam rust
colored roof*



accent wood panels



window mullion color





1. www.africavernaculararchitecture.com
2. www.africavernaculararchitecture.com



1. Jacal de Lena- El Rancho in South Texas, Joe S Graham
 2. Jacal in Falfurrias - Jacals in South Texas, Joe S Graham
 3. Kitchen Jacal at Union Ranch - Jacals in South Texas, Joe S Graham