

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

February 05, 2025

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-421
ADDRESS: 235 E COMMERCE ST
234 RIVERWALK
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 116 BLK LOT E 26.9 FT OF 9 OR 12 & W TRI 2FT OF 20 & NW
1FT TRI OF 21
ZONING: D, H, RIO-3
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Alamo Plaza Historic District
LANDMARK: Individual Landmark
APPLICANT: Christina Berlanga/Don B. McDonald Architects
OWNER: Christopher Hill/235 E COMMERCE LTD
TYPE OF WORK: Construction of a seating deck, improvements to an existing elevator tower,
installation of a sidewalk lift on Commerce, impacts to the public right of
way at street and river level
APPLICATION RECEIVED: December 20, 2024
60-DAY REVIEW: February 18, 2025
CASE MANAGER: Edward Hall

REQUEST:

1. Install a canvas awning at the main entry on the E Commerce Street façade.
2. Install two canvas awnings at two, 3rd story windows.
3. Install a sidewalk lift and valet station within the sidewalk at the public owned right of way on the E Commerce Street sidewalk.
4. Construct a rear, outdoor dining deck structure to extend from the rear of the historic structure. The proposed deck will feature an overall width of approximately twenty-eight (28) feet and an overall length of approximately sixty (60) feet. The proposed deck will extend over the public right of way at the river level below.
5. Perform modifications to the existing, publicly owned elevator tower to include the installation new façade materials and the construction of a stair.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations

10. Commercial Facades

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. Character-defining features*—Preserve character defining features such as cornice molding, upper-story windows, transoms, display windows, kickplates, entryways, tiled paving at entryways, parapet walls, bulkheads, and other features that contribute to the character of the building.
- ii. Windows and doors*—Use clear glass in display windows. See Guidelines for Architectural Features: Doors, Windows, and Screens for additional guidance.
- iii. Missing features*—Replace missing features in-kind based on evidence such as photographs, or match the style of the building and the period in which it was designed.
- iv. Materials*—Use in-kind materials or materials appropriate to the time period of the original commercial facade when making repairs.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

- i. New features*—Do not introduce new facade elements that alter or destroy the historic building character, such as adding inappropriate materials; altering the size or shape of windows, doors, bulkheads, and transom openings; or altering the façade from commercial to residential. Alterations should not disrupt the rhythm of the commercial block.
- ii. Historical commercial facades*—Return non-historic facades to the original design based on photographic evidence. Keep in mind

that some non-original facades may have gained historic importance and should be retained. When evidence is not available, ensure the scale, design, materials, color, and texture is compatible with the historic building. Consider the features of the design holistically so as to not include elements from multiple buildings and styles.

11. Canopies and Awnings

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

i. Existing canopies and awnings—Preserve existing historic awnings and canopies through regular cleaning and periodic inspections of the support system to ensure they are secure.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

i. Replacement canopies and awnings—Replace canopies and awnings in-kind whenever possible.

ii. New canopies and awnings—Add canopies and awnings based on accurate evidence of the original, such as photographs. If no such evidence exists, the design of new canopies and awnings should be based on the architectural style of the building and be proportionate in shape and size to the scale of the building façade to which they will be attached. See UDC Section 35-609(j).

iii. Lighting—Do not internally illuminate awnings; however, lighting may be concealed in an awning to provide illumination to sidewalks or storefronts.

iv. Awning materials—Use fire-resistant canvas awnings that are striped or solid in a color that is appropriate to the period of the building.

v. Building features—Avoid obscuring building features such as arched transom windows with new canopies or awnings.

vi. Support structure—Support awnings with metal or wood frames, matching the historic support system whenever possible. Minimize damage to historic materials when anchoring the support system. For example, anchors should be inserted into mortar rather than brick. Ensure that the support structure is integrated into the structure of the building as to avoid stress on the structural stability of the façade.

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 3, Guidelines for Additions

2. Massing and Form of Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Additions

A. GENERAL

i. Historic context—Design new additions to be in keeping with the existing, historic context of the block. For example, additions should not fundamentally alter the scale and character of the block when viewed from the public right-of-way.

ii. Preferred location—Place additions at the side or rear of the building whenever possible to minimize the visual impact on the original structure from the public right of way. An addition to the front of a building is inappropriate.

iii. Similar roof form—Utilize a similar roof pitch, form, and orientation as the principal structure for additions, particularly for those that are visible from the public right-of-way.

iv. Subordinate to principal facade—Design additions to historic buildings to be subordinate to the principal façade of the original structure in terms of their scale and mass.

v. Transitions between old and new—Distinguish additions as new without distracting from the original structure. For example, rooftop additions should be appropriately set back to minimize visibility from the public right-of-way. For side or rear additions utilize setbacks, a small change in detailing, or a recessed area at the seam of the historic structure and new addition to provide a clear visual distinction between old and new building forms.

B. SCALE, MASSING, AND FORM

i. Height—Limit the height of side or rear additions to the height of the original structure. Limit the height of rooftop additions to no more than 40 percent of the height of original structure.

ii. Total addition footprint—New additions should never result in the doubling of the historic building footprint. Full-floor rooftop additions that obscure the form of the original structure are not appropriate.

3. Materials and Textures

A. COMPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

i. Complementary materials—Use materials that match in type, color, and texture and include an offset or reveal to distinguish the addition from the historic structure whenever possible. Any new materials introduced to the site as a result

of an addition must be compatible with the architectural style and materials of the original structure.

ii. Metal roofs—Construct new metal roofs in a similar fashion as historic metal roofs. Refer to the Guidelines for Alternations and Maintenance section for additional specifications regarding metal roofs.

iii. Other roofing materials—Match original roofs in terms of form and materials. For example, when adding on to a building with a clay tile roof, the addition should have a roof that is clay tile, synthetic clay tile, or a material that appears similar in color and dimension to the existing clay tile.

B. INAPPROPRIATE MATERIALS

i. Imitation or synthetic materials—Do not use imitation or synthetic materials, such as vinyl siding, brick or simulated stone veneer, plastic, or other materials not compatible with the architectural style and materials of the original structure.

C. REUSE OF HISTORIC MATERIALS

i. Salvage—Salvage and reuse historic materials, where possible, that will be covered or removed as a result of an addition.

4. Architectural Details

A. GENERAL

i. Historic context—Design additions to reflect their time while respecting the historic context. Consider character-defining features and details of the original structure in the design of additions. These architectural details include roof form, porches, porticos, cornices, lintels, arches, quoins, chimneys, projecting bays, and the shapes of window and door openings.

ii. Architectural details—Incorporate architectural details that are in keeping with the architectural style of the original structure. Details should be simple in design and compliment the character of the original structure. Architectural details that are more ornate or elaborate than those found on the original structure should not be used to avoid drawing undue attention to the addition.

iii. Contemporary interpretations—Consider integrating contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details for additions. Use of contemporary window moldings and door surroundings, for example, can provide visual interest while helping to convey the fact that the addition is new.

FINDINGS:

- a. The historic structure located at 235 E Commerce Street was constructed in 1901. The historic structure features a total of six levels, including one basement level, a stone and brick façade, and is first found on the 1904 Sanborn Maps. The structure is an individually designated landmark.
- b. SUB-COMMITTEE / DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE – This request was reviewed by the Design Review Committee on January 31, 2024, February 14, 2024, April 9, 2024, and most recently on January 7, 2025. At the most recent meeting, committee members comments on the proposed materials, asked questions regarding access and voiced concerns regarding the length of the proposed deck’s extension over the street and right of way.
- c. AWNING INSTALLATION (Primary Entrance) – The applicant has proposed to install a canvas awning at the main entry on the E Commerce Street façade. The proposed canvas awning will feature an overall depth of ten (10) feet and will span the width of the opening. The applicant has proposed for the awning to be secured to the structure with a steel rod set within the opening. The Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 11.B.ii. notes that canopies and awnings should be based on accurate evidence of the original. If no such evidence exists, the design of new canopies and awnings should be based on the architectural style of the building and be proportionate in shape and size to the scale of the building façade. While there is no historical evidence of an awning at this location, staff finds the proposed fabric awning’s profile to be appropriate as staff finds that it will not detract or modify the historic entrance profile. Staff finds that detailed construction documents should be developed and submitted for review and approval prior to retuning to the Commission for final approval.
- d. AWNING INSTALLATION (Third Level Windows) – The applicant has proposed to install two canvas awnings at two, 3rd story windows. The proposed canvas awnings will feature an overall depth of four (4) feet and an overall width that match the width of the window openings. The Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 11.B.ii. notes that canopies and awnings should be based on accurate evidence of the original. If no such evidence exists, the design of new canopies and awnings should be based on the architectural style of the building and be proportionate in shape and size to the scale of the building façade. While there is no historical evidence of an awning at this location, staff finds the proposed fabric awning’s profile to be appropriate as staff

finds that it will not detract or modify the historic window opening profile. Staff finds that detailed construction documents should be developed and submitted for review and approval prior to retuning to the Commission for final approval.

- e. E COMMERCE RIGHT OF WAY (Sidewalk Lift) – Immediately in front of the historic structure and within the right of way on E Commerce, the applicant has proposed a sidewalk lift. Staff finds both of these elements to be appropriate.
- f. REAR DECK – The applicant has proposed to construct a rear, outdoor dining deck structure to extend from the rear of the historic structure. The proposed deck will feature an overall width of approximately twenty-eight (28) feet and an overall length of approximately sixty (60) feet. The proposed deck will extend over the public right of way at the river level below.
- g. REAR DECK (Location & Massing) – The Guidelines for Additions 2.A. and B. note that additions to historic structures should be in keeping with the existing, historic context of the block, should be located at the side or rear of a building, should be subordinate to the structure’s primary façade, should feature a transition between old and new and should feature a height that are subordinate to the original. Generally, staff find the location and massing of the proposed rear deck to be appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines.
- h. REAR DECK (Footprint) – The applicant has proposed for the rear deck to extend from the rear of the historic structure, across E Crockett Street, and over the publicly owned right of way above the San Antonio River Walk. The applicant has proposed for the deck to end at the current extent of the property owner’s leased area, within the public right of way. Generally, staff finds the proposed deck and its extension above the publicly owned right of way to be appropriate as the deck is positioned above E Crockett Street, where the property owner has air rights, and above space which the property owner has leased from the City of San Antonio. Location of deck elements over landscaped elements, the river channel, and the established pedestrian path at the river level would not be appropriate.
- i. REAR DECK (Materials) – The applicant has proposed for the rear deck to feature materials that include synthetic decking, steel columns, wire cable railings and a hardwood pergola structure with a glass ceiling. Generally, staff finds the proposed materials to be appropriate; however, staff finds that all composite or synthetic materials should feature profiles that relate to traditional materials, while not including faux textures.
- j. ELEVATOR TOWER (Modifications) – The applicant has proposed to perform modifications to the existing, publicly owned elevator tower to include the installation of new façade materials, and the construction of a stair. The applicant has noted that the overall height of the elevator tower may increase slightly, by approximately one to two feet, pending final elevator cab design. The applicant has noted that the proposed new materials will include wood banding. Generally, staff finds the proposed modifications to the existing elevator tower to be appropriate. Staff finds an increase in massing and footprint at the elevator to be appropriate as it promotes pedestrian and ADA access to and from the public right of way at the River Walk level.

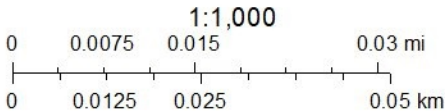
RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. Staff recommends approval of item #1, the installation of a fabric awning at the primary entrance based on finding c with the following stipulation:
 - i. That that detailed construction documents should be developed and submitted for review and approval prior to retuning to the Commission for final approval.
- 2. Staff recommends approval of item #2, the installation of fabric awnings within third story window openings based on finding d with the following stipulation:
 - i. That that detailed construction documents should be developed and submitted for review and approval prior to retuning to the Commission for final approval.
- 3. Staff recommends approval of item #3, the installation of a valet station and sidewalk lift within the right of way on E Commerce based on finding e with the following stipulations:
 - i. That the sidewalk lift should feature a door element that lies flush with the sidewalk grade.
- 4. Staff recommends approval of item #4, the construction of a rear deck based on findings f through i with the following stipulations:
 - i. That all composite or synthetic materials should feature profiles that relate to traditional materials, while not including faux textures.
- 5. Staff recommends approval of item #5, modifications to the existing elevator tower based on finding j, with the following stipulation:
 - i. That all materials relate to those used in the proposed deck and be complementary of the River Walk.

City of San Antonio One Stop

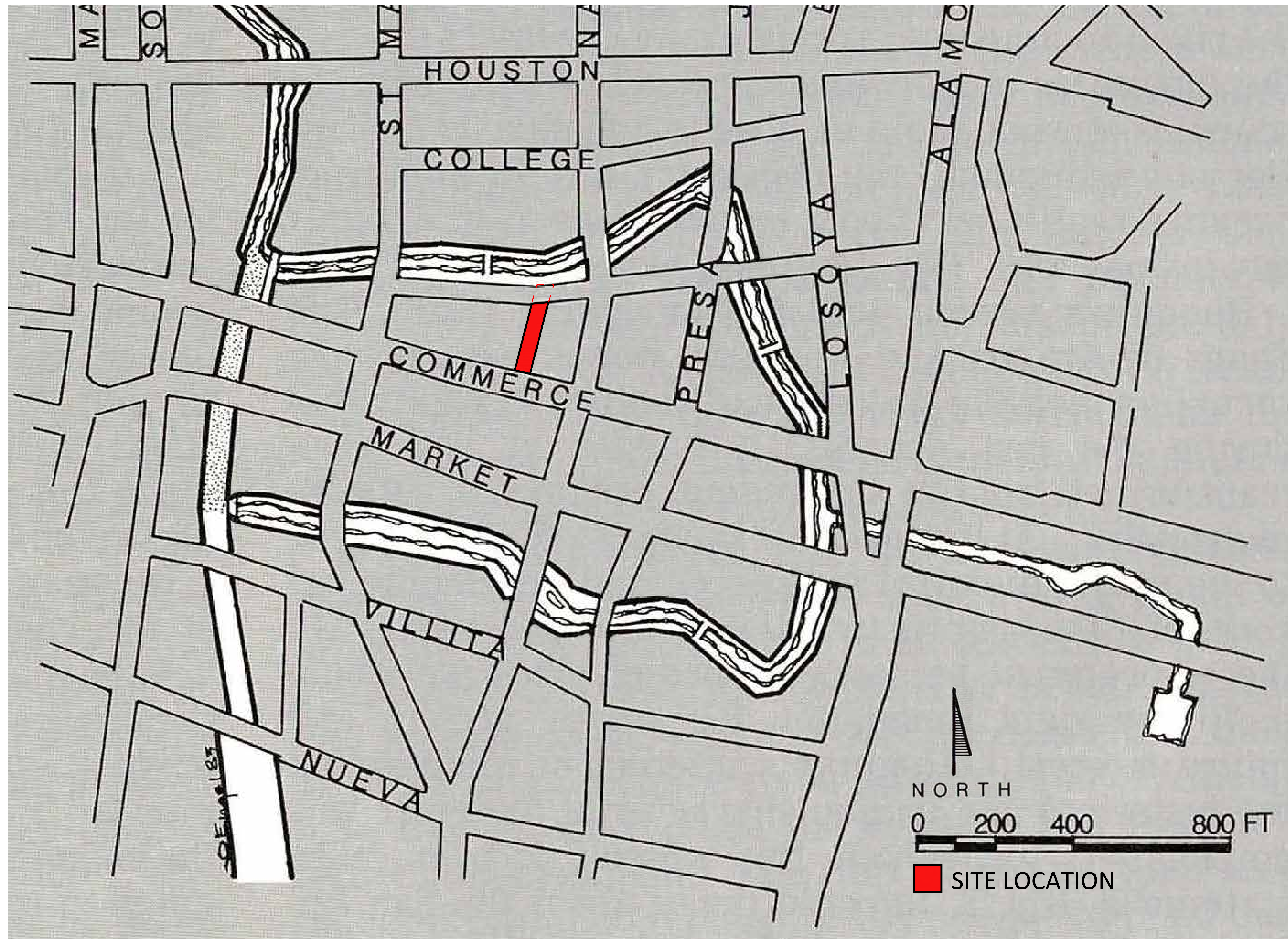


January 31, 2025



235 E. Commerce
Exterior Restoration and Proposed Deck





235 E. COMMERCE - HISTORIC VIEW KEY

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E Commerce St.

The San Antonio Loan and Trust building was constructed by George Brackenridge next to his downtown office in 1901. The rear of the five-story building abuts a Crockett Street easement, but the basement continues beneath the street to the Riverwalk.

235 E. COMMERCE - 1940 HISTORIC IMAGE

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCER - RIVER AT CROCKETT ST. 1947 & 1949

DON^{B.} MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE - EXISTING CONDITION
SOUTH AND WEST FACADES
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE - EXISTING CONDITION
SOUTH AND WEST FACADES

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



VIEW FROM THE RIVER LOOKING WEST



VIEW FROM CROCKETT STREET LOOKING WEST

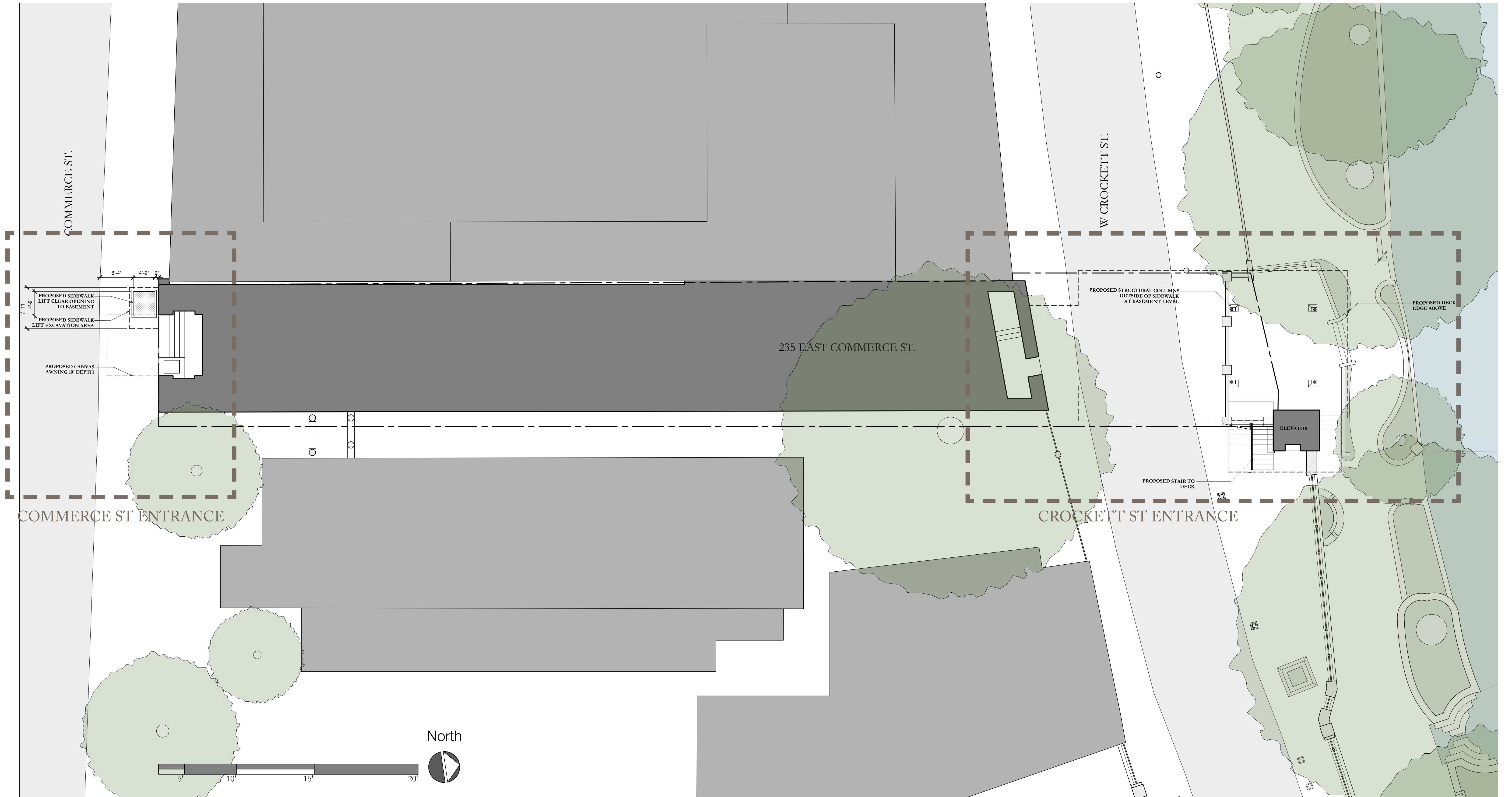
235 E. COMMERCE - EXISTING CONDITION
ELEVATOR AT CROCKETT ST.

DON^{B.} MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE - BUILDING SECTION

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS

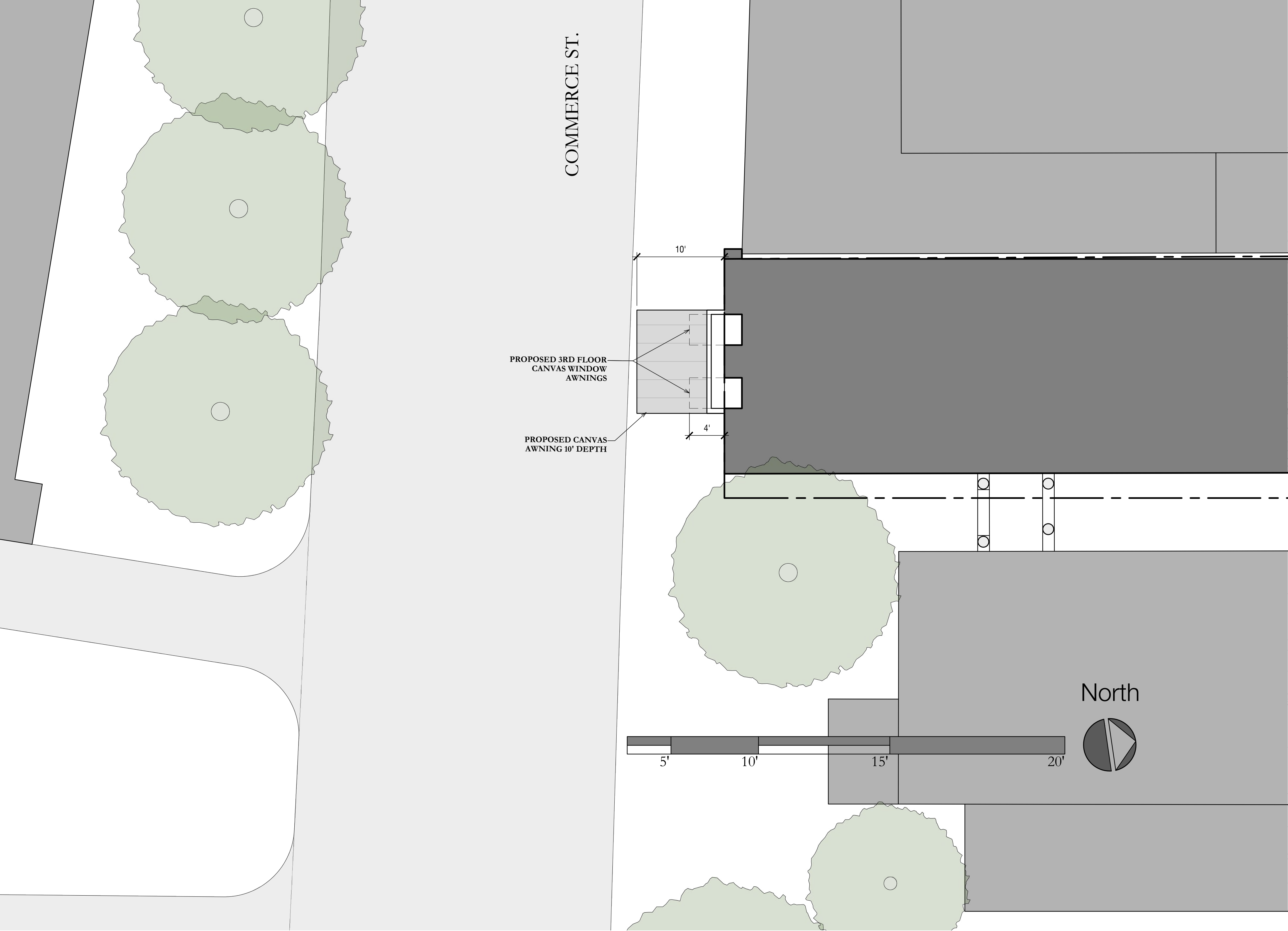


235 E. COMMERCE - SITE PLAN STREET LEVEL

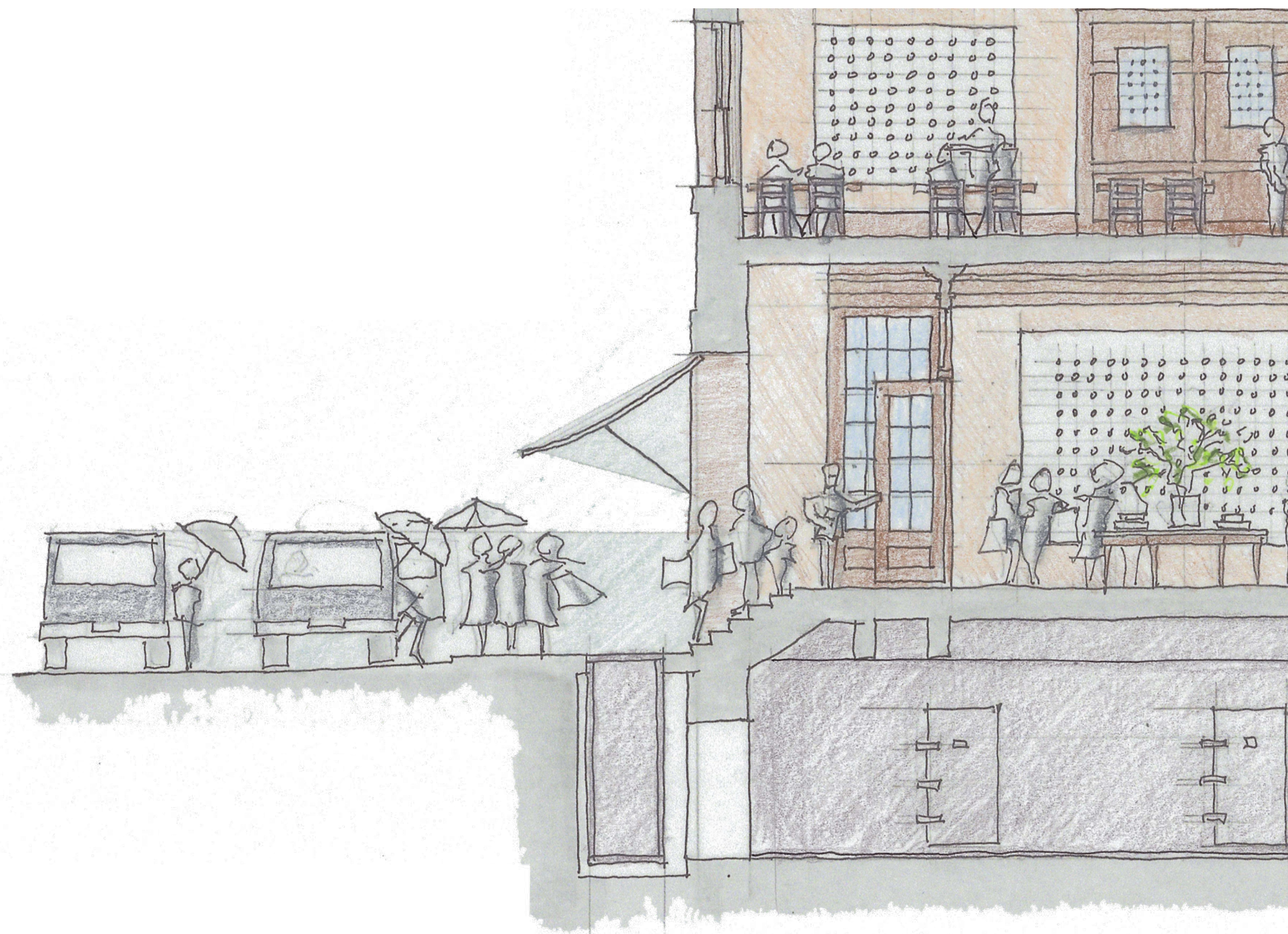
DON^{B.} MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS

E Commerce St.
Canvas Awnings





235 E. COMMERCE - PROPOSED THIRD
FLOOR AWNINGS
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



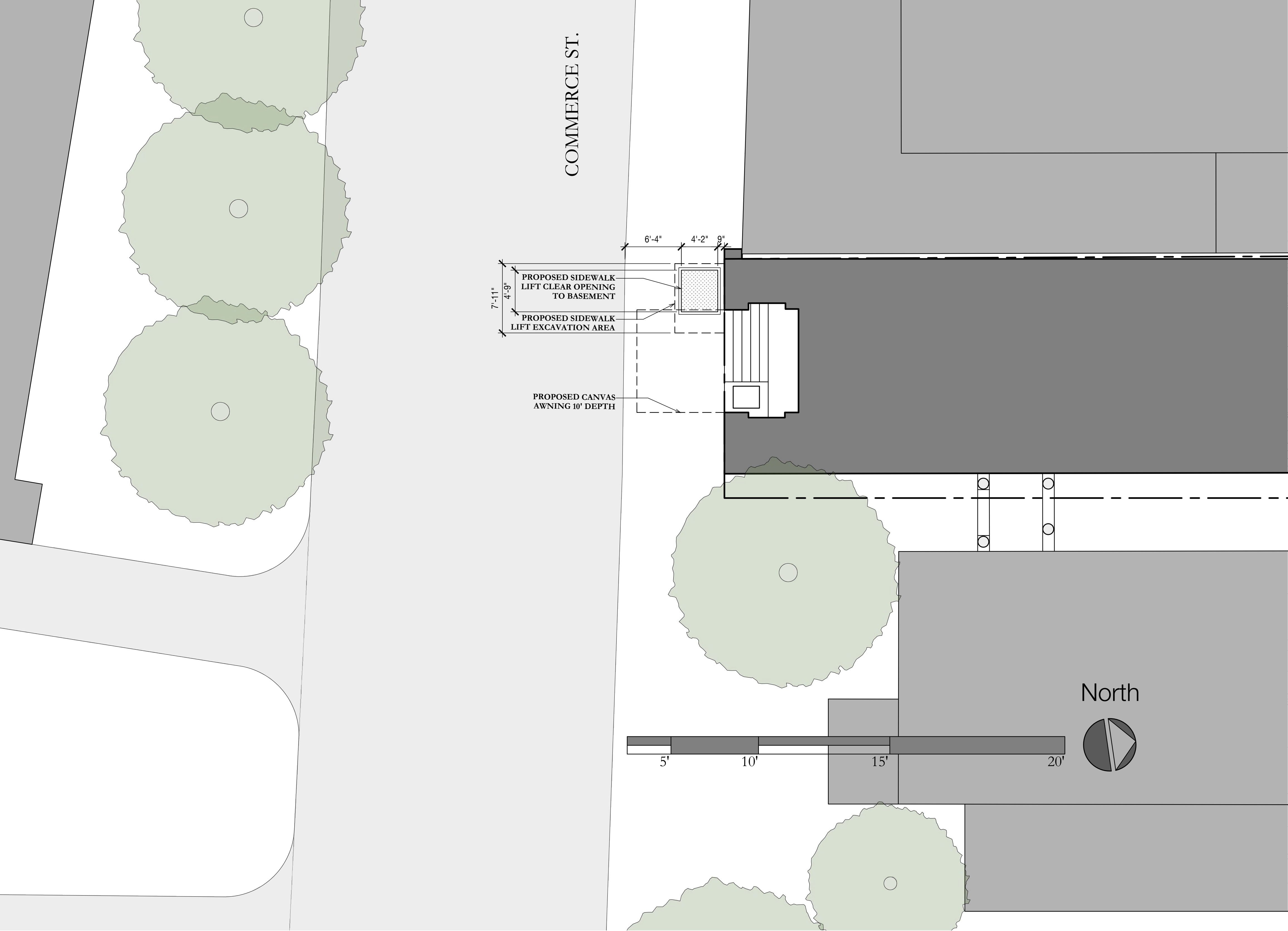
235 E. COMMERCE - ENTRY AWNING
AND SIDEWALK LIFT

DON B. MCDONALD

ARCHITECTS

E Commerce St.
Sidewalk Lift



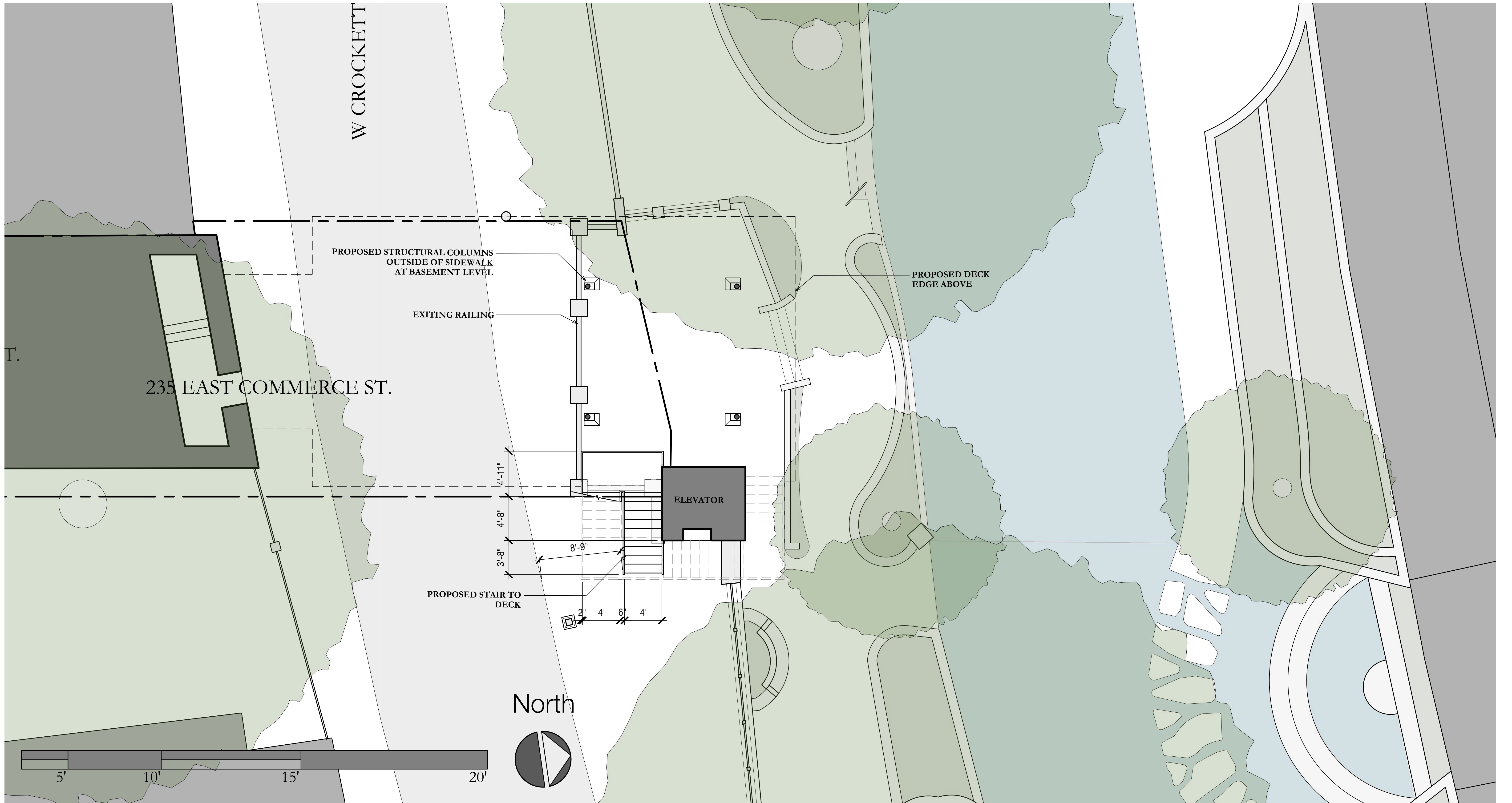


235 E. COMMERCE - PROPOSED LIFT
AT COMMERCE ST.

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS

Crockett St. Staircase

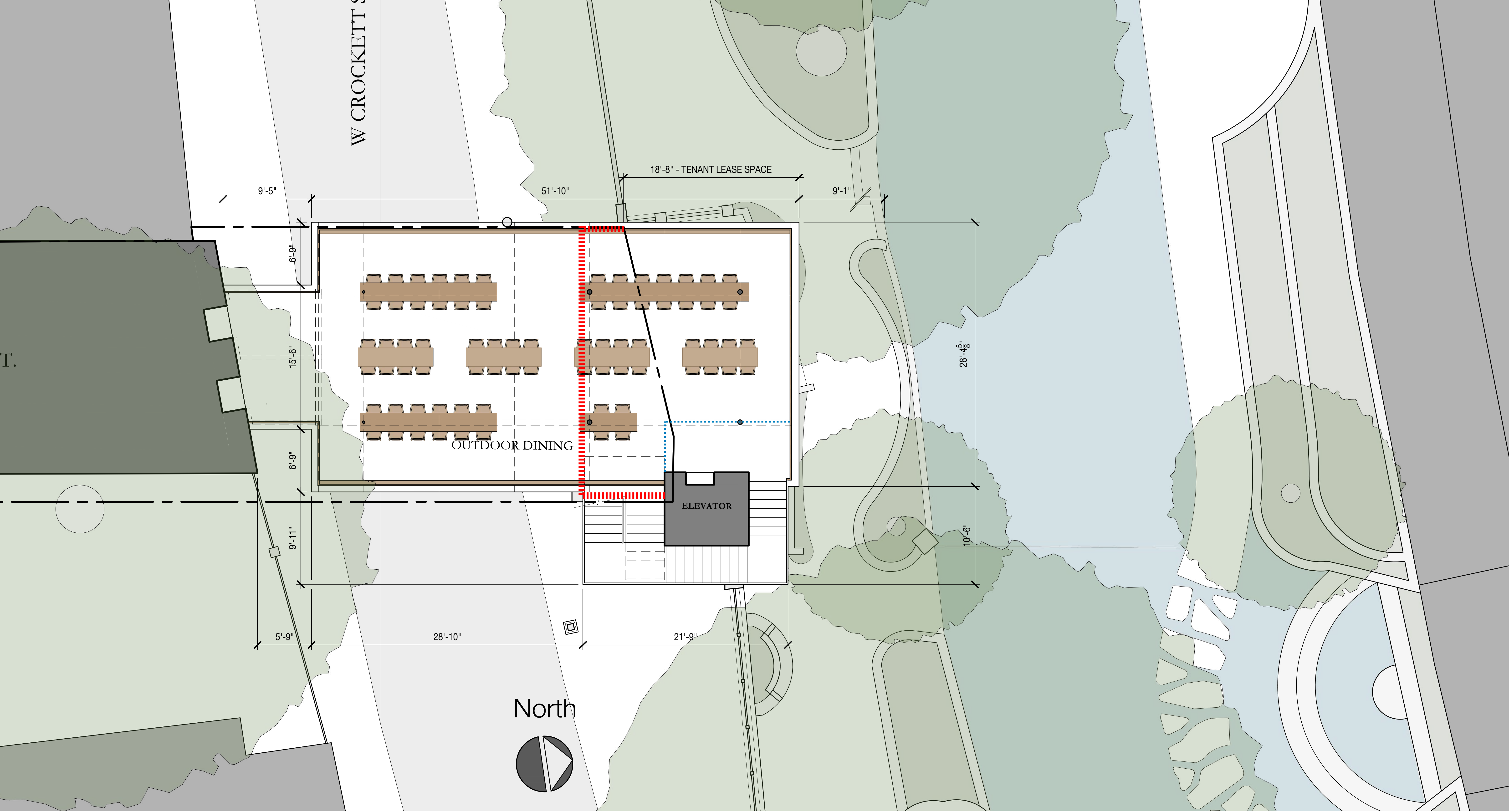




235 E. COMMERCE - ENLARGED SITE PLAN
STREET LEVEL
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS

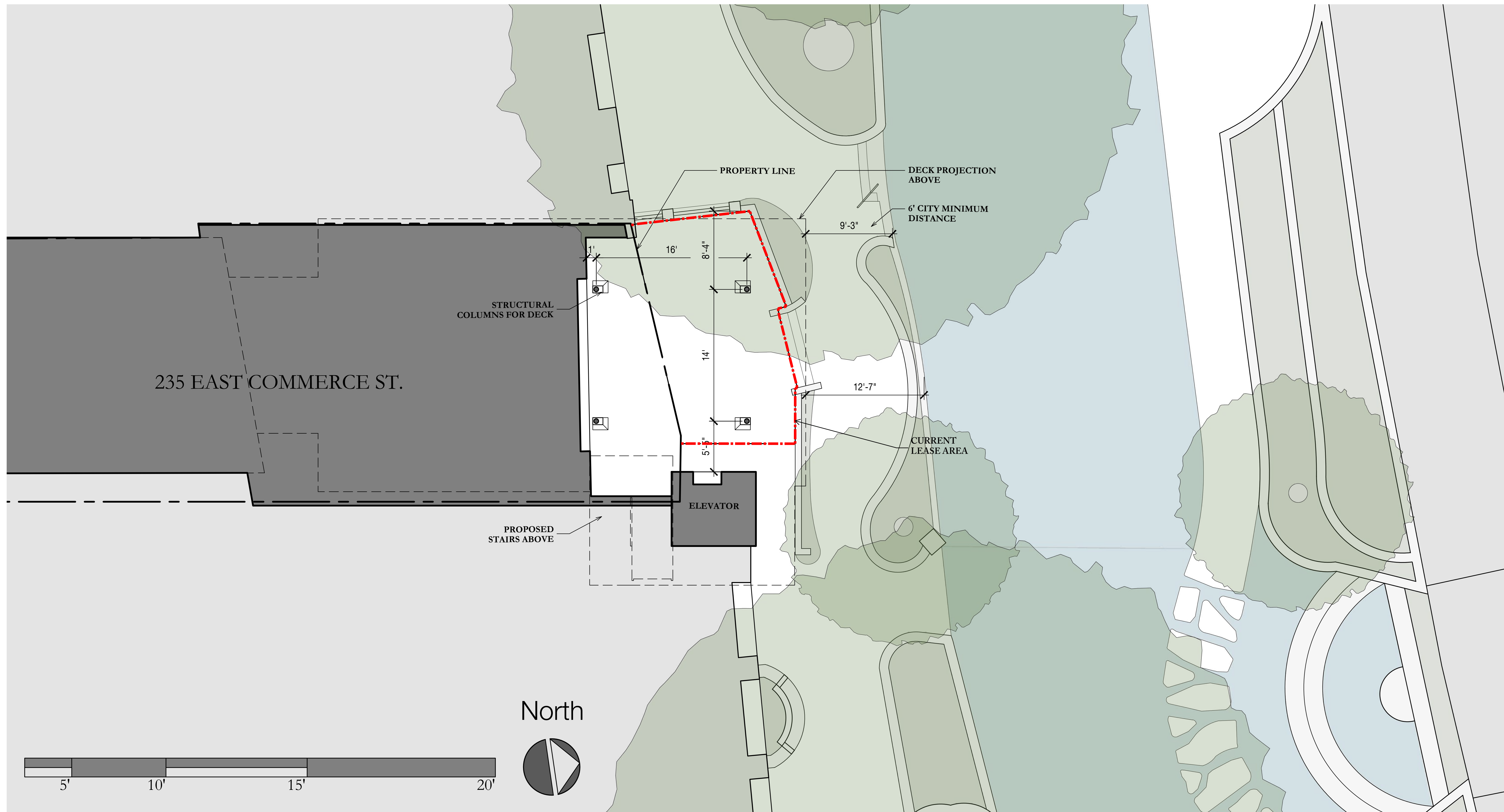
Proposed Terrace



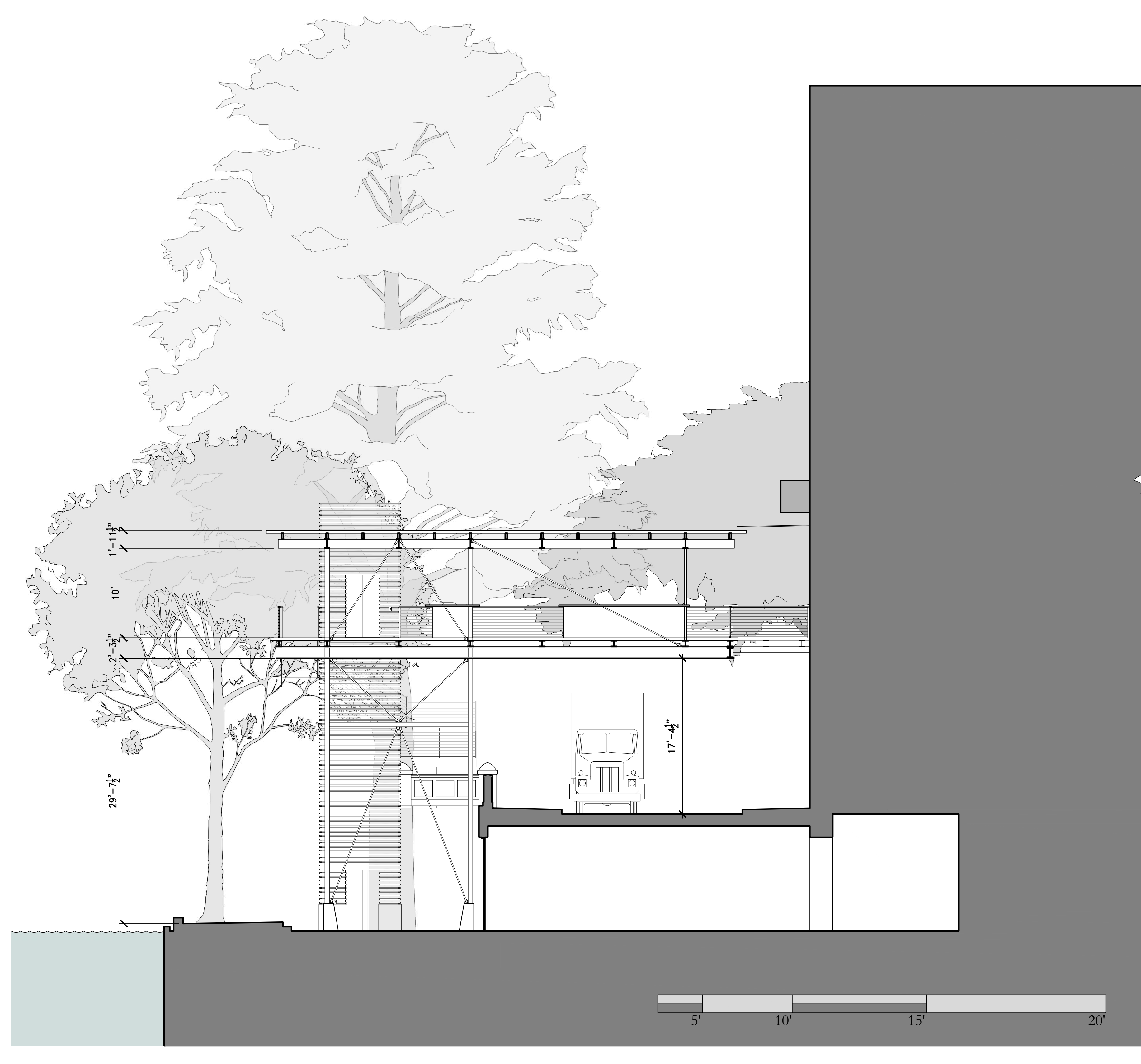


235 E. COMMERCE - SITE PLAN TERRACE LEVEL

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE - ENLARGED SITE PLAN
RIVER LEVEL
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE - ENLARGED SITE PLAN
STREET LEVEL
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE - ENLARGED SITE PLAN
STREET LEVEL
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE
RIVER WALK LOOKING EAST
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE
CROCKETT ST. LOOKING EAST
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE
CROCKETT ST. LOOKING WEST
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



235 E. COMMERCE
VIEW FROM ACROSS THE RIVER
DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS

Requests:

1. Commerce St. Sidewalk Lift to Basement
2. Crockett St. Elevator Renovation and Stair to Deck
3. Crockett St. Building Deck Structure

Materials Palette:

- Steel Structure With Recessive Warm Grey Color
- Wood Deck, Baluster and Pergola Ideally Utilizing Native Materials

Deck Structure Dimensions:

- Deck Area 1,610 SF
- Height Clearance from Crockett St. to Bottom of Structure: 17'-3.5"
- Height Clearance from River Level to Bottom of Structure: 29'-4.5"
- Structure Height from Crockett St. to Deck Finish Floor: 19'-7"





SUMMER SOLSTICE - 8:00 AM
SUNRISE - 6:34 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE - 10:00 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE - 12:00 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE - 3:00 PM
SUNRISE - 7:24 AM



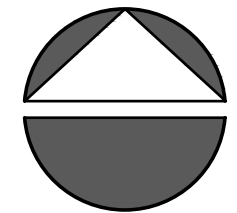
SUMMER SOLSTICE - 5:00 PM
SUNRISE - 8:36 AM

LEGEND

- 235 E COMMERCE ST.
- PROPERTY LINE
- EXTENTS OF STUDY AREA
- RIVER

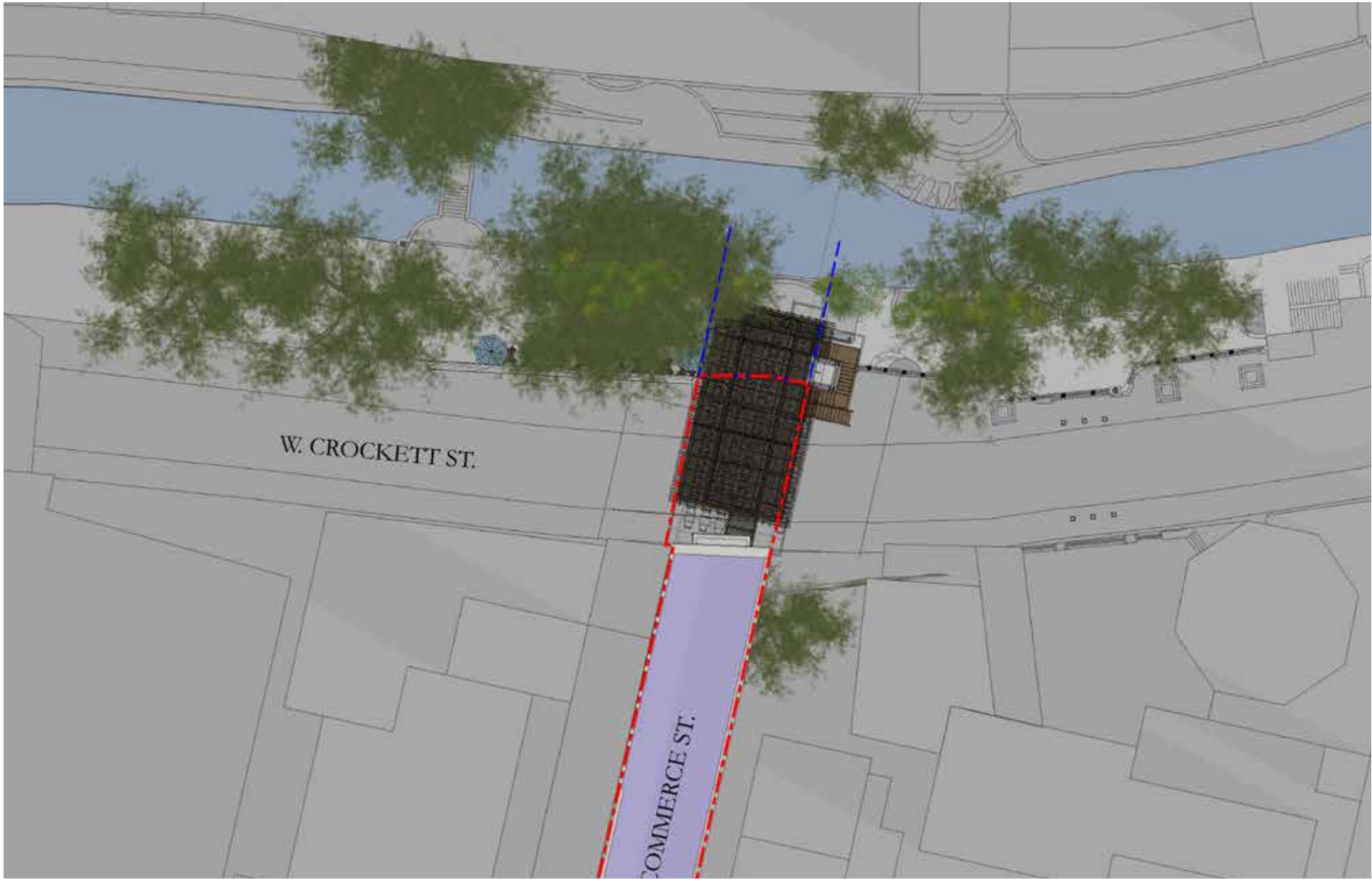
*Extents of Study Align with Extents of Proposed addition to building and offset 30' from the River's Edge.

North



235 E. COMMERCE - SOLAR STUDIES

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS



WINTER SOLSTICE - 8:00 AM
SUNRISE - 7:24 AM



WINTER SOLSTICE - 10:00 AM



WINTER SOLSTICE - 12:00 PM



WINTER SOLSTICE - 3:00 PM
SUNRISE - 7:24 AM



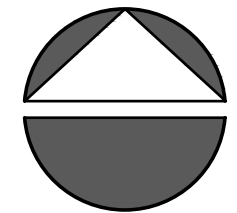
WINTER SOLSTICE - 5:00 PM
SUNRISE - 5:39 AM

LEGEND

- 235 E COMMERCE ST.
- PROPERTY LINE
- EXTENTS OF STUDY AREA
- RIVER

*Extents of Study Align with Extents of Proposed addition to building and offset 30' from the River's Edge.

North



235 E. COMMERCE - SOLAR STUDIES

DON B. MCDONALD
ARCHITECTS