

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

February 16, 2022

HDRC CASE NO: 2022-103
ADDRESS: 112 COLLEGE ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 405 BLK 22 LOT 3 THRU 8
ZONING: D, HS
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
LANDMARK: Individual Landmark
APPLICANT: OMNI LA MANSION CORPORATION
OWNER: OMNI LA MANSION CORPORATION
TYPE OF WORK: Tree removal
APPLICATION RECEIVED: February 09, 2022
60-DAY REVIEW: Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders
CASE MANAGER: Rachel Rettaliata

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove four (4) palm trees.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Sec. 35-680. - Demolition of Historic Features in the River Improvement Overlay Districts.

Demolition of architectural features, artwork, furniture, and other items shown on the Robert Hugman plans as well as other historic Riverwalk construction dating back to Spanish Colonial times and including works by the WPA, the CCC and the National Youth Administration constitutes an irreplaceable loss to the quality, character, ambiance and atmosphere of the San Antonio Riverwalk in the river improvement overlay districts. Accordingly, these procedures provide criteria to prevent unnecessary damage to the unique character of the city's Riverwalk areas and character.

(a)Applicability. The provisions of this section apply to any application for demolition of important architectural features on or immediately adjacent to the river and or the Riverwalk in the river improvement overlay districts. Items shown on the Robert Hugman Plans for the Riverwalk in "RIO-3."

Heritage Trees. Removal or damage to heritage trees such as large Cypress trees and other, old significant trees at top of bank or along the Riverwalk is prohibited in all river improvement overlay districts. Except where the tree is damaged due to disease, age or physical condition and must be removed for the safety reasons. Then with a recommendation from the city arborist, or the official urban forester, the historic and design review commission may grant approval for demolition.

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

1. Topography

A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- i. *Historic topography*—Avoid significantly altering the topography of a property (i.e., extensive grading). Do not alter character-defining features such as berms or sloped front lawns that help define the character of the public right-of-way. Maintain the established lawn to help prevent erosion. If turf is replaced over time, new plant materials in these areas should be low-growing and suitable for the prevention of erosion.
- ii. *New construction*—Match the historic topography of adjacent lots prevalent along the block face for new construction. Do not excavate raised lots to accommodate additional building height or an additional story for new construction.
- iii. *New elements*—Minimize changes in topography resulting from new elements, like driveways and walkways, through appropriate siting and design. New site elements should work with, rather than change, character-defining topography when possible.

3. Landscape Design

A. PLANTINGS

- i. *Historic Gardens*—Maintain front yard gardens when appropriate within a specific historic district.

- ii. *Historic Lawns*—Do not fully remove and replace traditional lawn areas with impervious hardscape. Limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Low-growing plantings should be used in historic lawn areas; invasive or large-scale species should be avoided. Historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%.
- iii. *Native xeric plant materials*—Select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. See UDC Appendix E: San Antonio Recommended Plant List—All Suited to Xeriscape Planting Methods, for a list of appropriate materials and planting methods. Select plant materials with a similar character, growth habit, and light requirements as those being replaced.
- iv. *Plant palettes*—If a varied plant palette is used, incorporate species of taller heights, such informal elements should be restrained to small areas of the front yard or to the rear or side yard so as not to obstruct views of or otherwise distract from the historic structure.
- v. *Maintenance*—Maintain existing landscape features. Do not introduce landscape elements that will obscure the historic structure or are located as to retain moisture on walls or foundations (e.g., dense foundation plantings or vines) or as to cause damage.

B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

- i. *Impervious surfaces* —Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.
- ii. *Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces*—New pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small plantings should be incorporated into the design.
- iii. *Rock mulch and gravel* - Do not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. If used, plantings should be incorporated into the design.

C. MULCH

- Organic mulch* – Organic mulch should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Organic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as beneath a tree canopy.
- i. *Inorganic mulch* – Inorganic mulch should not be used in highly-visible areas and should never be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Inorganic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as along a foundation wall where moisture retention is discouraged.

D. TREES

- i. *Preservation*—Preserve and protect from damage existing mature trees and heritage trees. See UDC Section 35-523 (Tree Preservation) for specific requirements.
- ii. *New Trees* – Select new trees based on site conditions. Avoid planting new trees in locations that could potentially cause damage to a historic structure or other historic elements. Species selection and planting procedure should be done in accordance with guidance from the City Arborist.
- iii. *Maintenance* – Proper pruning encourages healthy growth and can extend the lifespan of trees. Avoid unnecessary or harmful pruning. A certified, licensed arborist is recommended for the pruning of mature trees and heritage trees.

FINDINGS:

- a. The primary structure at 112 College is commonly known as the Omni La Mansion del Rio. The property is currently owned by the Omni La Mansion Corporation. The property is designated as an individual landmark and is within the River Improvement Overlay.
- b. TREE REMOVAL – The applicant has proposed to remove four (4) palms along the Riverwalk at 112 College.
- c. TREES IN THE RIO – Generally, compliance with the City’s tree preservation requirements is reviewed by the City Arborist and does not require additional review by the HDRC in most instances. Heritage trees and significant trees located at the top of the bank or along the River Walk are not allowed to be removed without HDRC approval per UDC 35-680. On a case-by-case basis, tree removal may be approved by the HDRC with a recommendation from the City Arborist (Development Services) and Forester (Parks Department).
- d. According to the City Arborist, the palms proposed to be removed meet the significant/heritage definition. If the permit is approved for removal of the palms, mitigation will be required. There is also a Live oak tree within the area that will likely be heavily impacted. Based on the extent of impact to the root system of the tree there may be mitigation requirements for the oak tree as well. Tree review and inspection has not been completed by the City Arborist.
- e. ARCHAEOLOGY – The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:


Staff recommends approval of the proposed plan as recommended by the City Arborist with the following stipulation:

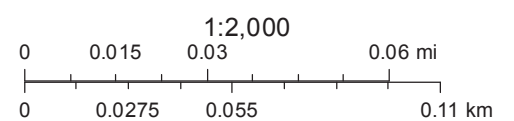
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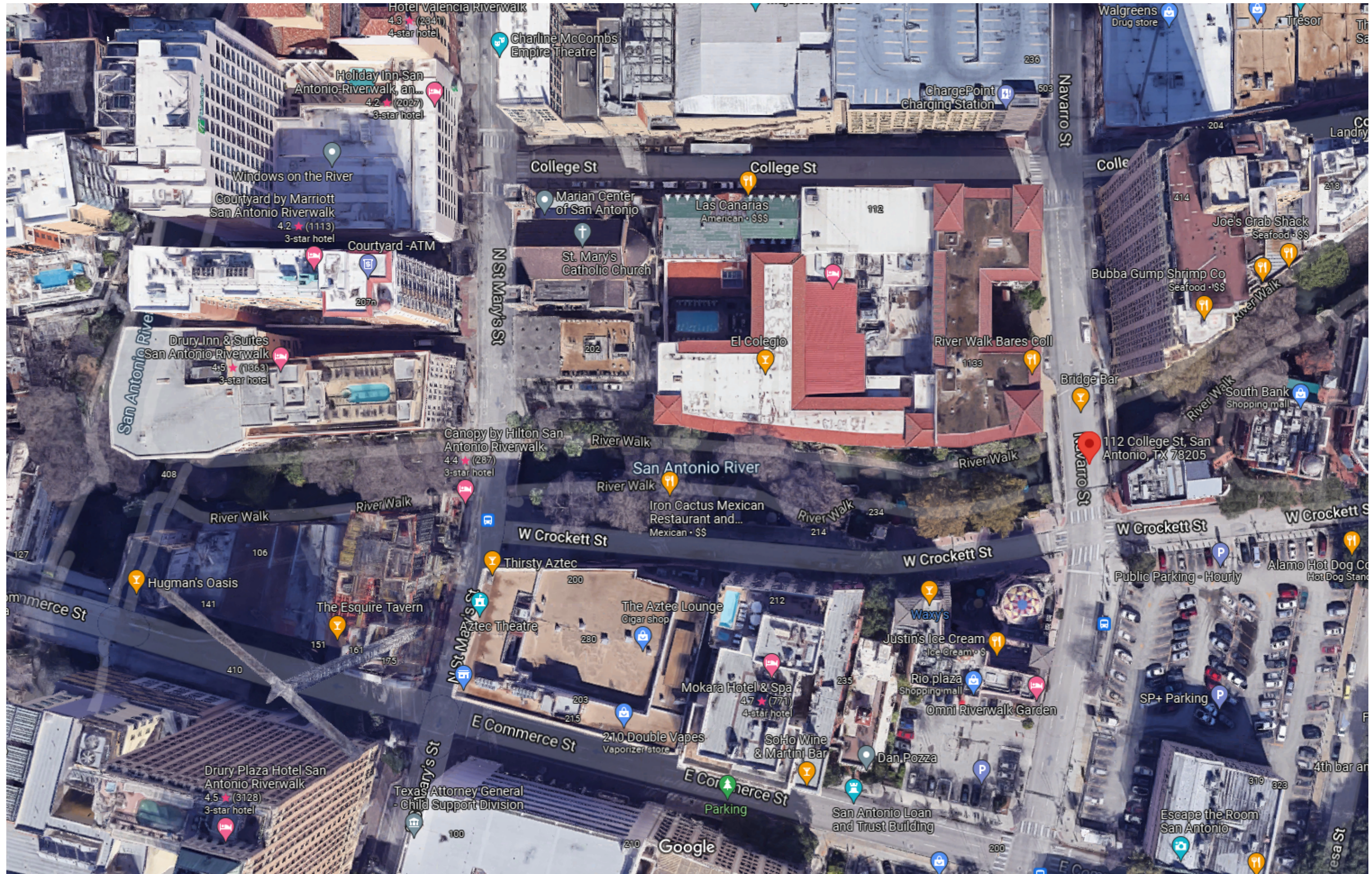
City of San Antonio One Stop



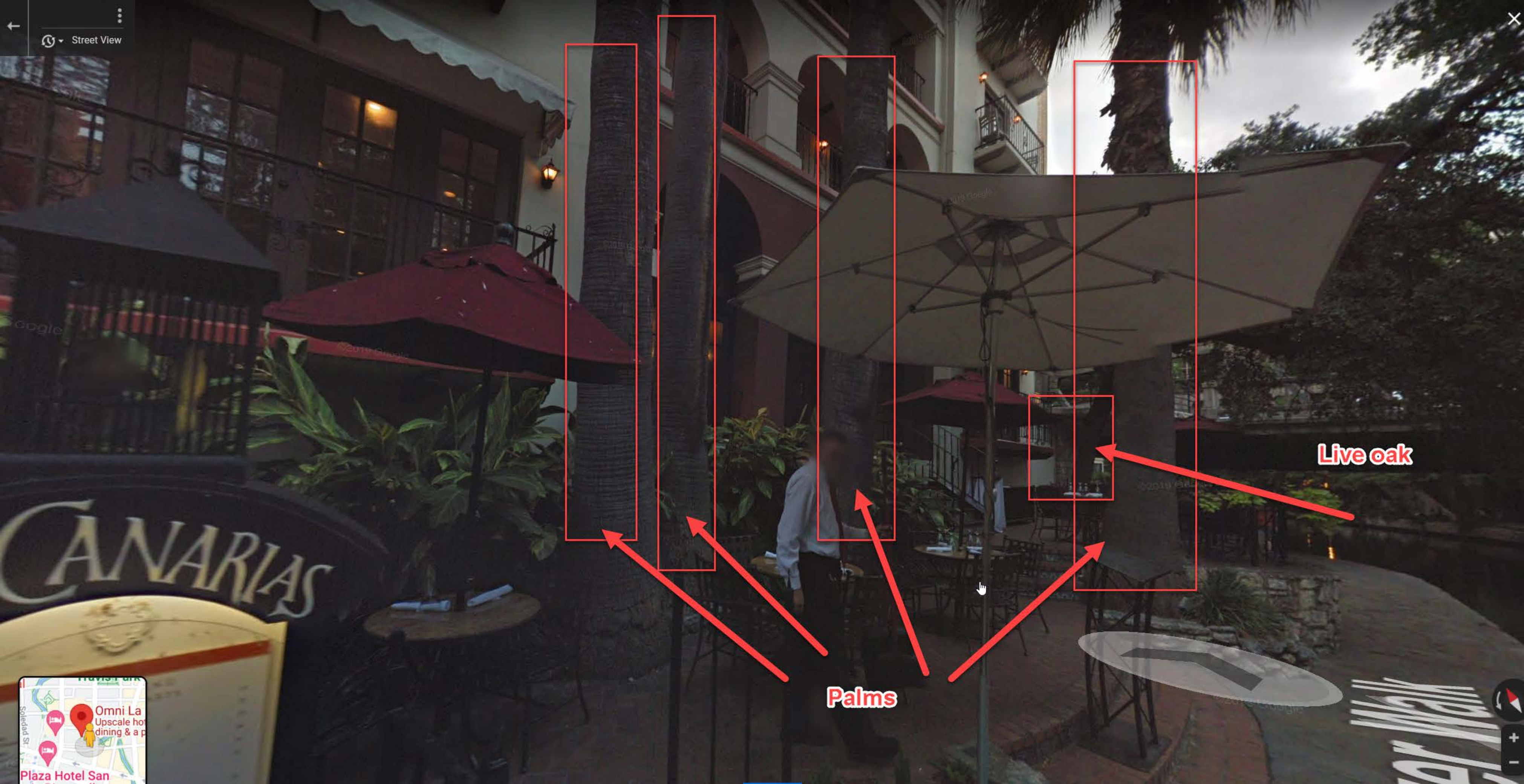
February 11, 2022

 User drawn lines









Live oak

Palms

