



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Major Permit to Alter Case Report

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2011

*Hearing Date:* February 2, 2011  
*Filing Date:* December 8, 2010  
*Case No.:* **2010.1084H**  
*Project Address:* **237 Post Street**  
*Conservation District:* Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District  
*Category:* Category V – Unrated  
*Zoning:* C-3-R (Downtown Retail)  
80-130-F Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 0309/025  
*Applicant:* Graff Holdings, Inc.  
c/o Andrew Junius of  
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### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The subject building is located at 237 Post Street (Assessor's Block 0309, Lot 025), south side between Stockton Street and Grant Avenue. It is a Category V (Unrated) Building within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District. The building is located within the C-3-R (Downtown Retail) Use District with an 80-130-F Height and Bulk limit.

The subject building is a two-story commercial building that was constructed in 1908 and significantly altered in 1996. The historic front façade of the building has been removed and the subject building retains no historic integrity.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to remove and replace the existing front façade of the subject building, and also proposes interior tenant improvements for a proposed retail tenant (d.b.a. Graff). The proposed façade would consist of four limestone vertical columns that would be connected by a matching limestone fascia and a honed, flush river stone finish spanning the bottom of the columns. Window bays would infill between the column areas, and decorative bronze screens are proposed on the interior of the glazed areas located in the second-story window bays and in the middle ground-level window bay and entry. The easterly and westerly ground-floor window bays would remain clear and unobstructed with the

exception of two displays for merchandise. Bronze spandrel panels would be located above the first and second-story window and above the entry.

Tenant signage would be located on the bronze spandrel panels located above the entry and the ground-story windows and on the parapet for a total of five signs. The sign located on the parapet would consist of individual metal-leafed letters incised flush into the limestone. The signage located on the bronze spandrel panels would consist of individually cut-out, pin-mounted letters. The signs located above the ground-floor windows are proposed to have halo illumination, while the sign located above the entry would not be illuminated.

### **OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

A Building Permit is required.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANNING CODE PROVISIONS**

The proposed project is in compliance with all other provisions of the Planning Code.

### **APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS**

#### **ARTICLE 11**

City Charter Section 4.135 gives the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) authority to approve, disapprove, or modify Permit to Alter applications for designated Significant or Contributory buildings. In appraising a proposal for a Permit to Alter, the Historic Preservation Commission should consider the factors of architectural style, design, arrangement, texture, materials, color, and other pertinent issues. Section 1111.6 of the Planning Code outlines standards and requirements for the HPC to consider when reviewing a Permit to Alter.

#### **ARTICLE 11 – Appendix E– The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District**

In reviewing an application for a Permit to Alter, the Historic Preservation Commission must consider whether the proposed work would be compatible with the character of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District as described in Appendix E of Article 11 of the Planning Code (attached) and the standards and requirements for review as outlined in Section 1111.6 of the Planning Code.

#### **SECTION 1111.6 OF THE PLANNING CODE**

Section 1111.6 of the Planning Code outlines the specific standards and requirements the Historic Preservation Commission shall use when evaluating Permits to Alter. These standards, in relevant part(s), are listed below:

- (a) The proposed alteration shall be consistent with and appropriate for the effectuation of the purposes of this Article 11.
  
- (c) Within Conservation Districts, all major exterior alterations, of Category V Buildings, shall be compatible in scale and design with the District as set forth in Sections 6 and 7 of the Appendix which describes the District.

*The discussion of the compatibility of the project with the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District is contained within the below Staff Analysis section of the case report.*

## PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

The Department has received no public input on the project at the date of this report.

## ISSUES & OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

Based on the requirements of Article 11, Department has determined the following:

**Scale and Massing:** In general, the scale and massing of the proposed façade have been found to be consistent with the District and the subject block. The façade would be built-out to the front property line, which is a feature of the vast majority of the buildings in the KMMS District and of all the buildings on the subject block of Post Street.

The articulation of the façade has been broken-up into three bay widths that not only mimic typical bay widths found on buildings with a similar street frontage width within the subject block, but also within the KMMS District. By picking-up on the rhythm of the bay widths typically found in the District, the project is anticipated to provide an intimate scale at the street for pedestrians. The ground-floor height has been found to relate well with the surrounding ground-floor levels.

**Materials and Color:** The majority of the solid portions of the façade would be clad in limestone. Stone cladding with a light, creamy color is commonly found throughout the District, and has been determined to be consistent with the District. The Department has found that the proposed bronze spandrel installations could be considered compliant with the District if the finish of the bronze surfaces have a weathered patina, and further, have a non-reflective surface. A condition of approval has been crafted to memorialize the finish of the bronze surfaces.

**Detailing and Ornamentation:** The proposed window reveals appear shallower than the typical window reveal found in the KMMS District. Buildings in the District typically feature a deep window reveal to express texture and depth on the façade of the building. Although the window reveal depth appears to be somewhat limited by a moment frame, staff would be interested in Commission input that would create a deeper window reveal on the proposed façade of the building and potentially creating a condition of approval as such.

The decorative bronze screens that are proposed in four of the six glazing areas appear to darken the proposed façade and affect the symmetry and verticality of the window bays. A condition of approval has been crafted that would limit the bronze screening to the entry door and the middle glazing panels of the middle bay on both the ground-floor and second floors. The condition of approval would require the

screening to be removed from the easterly and westerly bays along with the finer-grained screening proposed on the side panels of the middle bay.

**Signs:** The proposed sign materials and finishes have been found to be of high quality and are consistent with the proposed sign guidelines for the KMMS District in terms of materials and finishes. To make sign proposal more consistent with the District and to sign standards adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission, staff believes that the number of wall signs should be reduced to four and illumination of the signs should be reserved for the wall sign located immediately above the entry as well as at the parapet. The illumination method should utilize an indirect method of illumination (such as back-lit halo lighting). The reduction in the number of signs, sign location and method of illumination has been included in the conditions of approval.

***The Secretary of Interior's Standards:*** As conditioned, the project has been found to be consistent with Standard 9 as the project would be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the KMMS District.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that the proposed project is exempt/excluded from environmental review; pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15301 (Class One-Maintenance and Repair of Existing facility) because the project is a minor alteration of an existing structure and meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*.

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Planning Department staff recommends APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS of the proposed project as it appears to meet the *Secretary of the Interior Standards* for Rehabilitation.

## ATTACHMENTS

Draft Motion  
Block Book Map  
Sanborn Map  
Project Sponsor Submittal

*AJH: G:\DOCUMENTS\Projects\Permit to Alter - Major\237 Post Street\237 Post Street Case Report.doc*



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Motion

*Hearing Date:* February 2, 2011  
*Filing Date:* December 8, 2010  
*Case No.:* **2010.1084H**  
*Project Address:* **237 Post Street**  
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**ADOPTING FINDINGS FOR A MAJOR PERMIT TO ALTER FOR ALTERATIONS TO A CATEGORY V (UNRATED) BUILDING, INCLUDING THE REPLACEMENT OF THE FRONT FAÇADE AND TENANT SIGNAGE FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON LOT 025 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 0309. THE SUBJECT BUILDING IS WITHIN A C-3-R (DOWNTOWN RETAIL) ZONING DISTRICT, THE KEARNY-MARKET-MASON-SUTTER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, AND AN 80-130-F HEIGHT AND BULK DISTRICT.**

### PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2010, Graff Holdings, Inc. (Project Sponsor) filed with the City and County of San Francisco Planning Department (Department) Major Permit to Alter Application No. 2010.1084H to replace the front façade of the subject building and to install tenant signage at 237 Post Street, a Category V Building within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District.

WHEREAS, the Project was determined by the Department to be categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15301 (Class One-Maintenance and Repair of Existing Facility)

WHEREAS, on February 2, 2011, the Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the project, Case No. 2010.1084H (Project) for a Major Permit to Alter.

WHEREAS, in reviewing the Application, the Commission has had available for its review and consideration case reports, plans, and other materials pertaining to the Project contained in the Department's case files, has reviewed and heard testimony and received materials from interested parties during the public hearing on the Project.

**MOVED**, that the Commission hereby grants the Major Permit to Alter, WITH CONDITIONS, and in conformance with the architectural plans dated January 10, 2011, and labeled Exhibit A on file in the docket for Case No. 2010.1084H based on the following conditions:

**Conditions:**

1. Before approval of the building permit application by the Planning Department, Planning Department Preservation Staff shall review physical samples of all finish materials and glazing.
2. Any decorative metal screens located in glazed areas of the front façade shall be limited to the entry door and the middle panels of the middle window bays.
3. Bronze spandrel materials shall have a weathered patina and shall have a non-reflective surface.
4. Wall signs shall be limited to four in number and shall be limited to the follow areas: the spandrel area located above the entry, the spandrel areas located above the easterly and westerly ground-floor windows and the parapet.
5. Only proposed wall signage located above the entry and at the parapet shall be allowed to be illuminated and shall be illuminated by indirect means of illumination.

**FINDINGS**

Having reviewed all the materials identified in the recitals above and having heard oral testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. The above recitals are accurate and also constitute findings of the Commission.
2. Findings pursuant to Article 11:

The Historical Preservation Commission has determined that the proposed work is compatible with the character of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District as described in Appendix E of Article 11 of the Planning Code in respect to the following considerations:

- Scale and Massing;
- Materials and Color;
- Detailing and Ormentation; and
- Signage

For these reasons, the proposal overall, is appropriate for and consistent with the purposes of Article 11, meets the standards of Article 1111.6 of the Planning Code and complies with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*.

3. **General Plan Compliance.** The proposed Permit to Alter is, on balance, consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

I. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

THE URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT CONCERNS THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER AND ORDER OF THE CITY, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

GOALS

*The Urban Design Element is concerned both with development and with preservation. It is a concerted effort to recognize the positive attributes of the city, to enhance and conserve those attributes, and to improve the living environment where it is less than satisfactory. The Plan is a definition of quality, a definition based upon human needs.*

OBJECTIVE 1

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

POLICY 1.3

*Recognize that buildings, when seen together, produce a total effect that characterizes the city and its districts.*

OBJECTIVE 2

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES WHICH PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.

POLICY 2.4

*Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.*

POLICY 2.5

*Use care in remodeling of older buildings, in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.*

POLICY 2.7

*Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.*

*The goal of a Permit to Alter is to provide additional oversight for buildings and districts that are architecturally or culturally significant to the City in order to protect the qualities that are associated with that significance.*

*The proposed project qualifies for a Permit to Alter and therefore furthers these policies and objectives by maintaining and preserving the character-defining features of the KMMS Conservation District for the future enjoyment and education of San Francisco residents and visitors.*

1. The proposed project is generally consistent with the eight General Plan priority policies set forth in Section 101.1 in that:

- A) The existing neighborhood-serving retail uses will be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses will be enhanced:

*The proposed project is not neighborhood-serving; however, its continued use maintains and strengthens the surrounding retail uses, many of them are locally-owned, by bringing visitors to the area.*

- B) The existing housing and neighborhood character will be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods:

*The proposed project will strengthen neighborhood character by respecting the character-defining features of the KMMS Conservation District in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.*

- C) The City's supply of affordable housing will be preserved and enhanced:

*The proposed project will have no adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.*

- D) The commuter traffic will not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking:

*The proposed project will not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening the streets or neighborhood parking.*

- E) A diverse economic base will be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development. And future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors will be enhanced:

*The Project proposes no office use. The project would establish a retail use, which is expected to provide resident employment.*

- F) The City will achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

*Preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake is unaffected by the proposed project. Any construction or alteration associated would be executed in compliance with all applicable*



*construction and safety measures.*

- G) That landmark and historic buildings will be preserved:

*The proposed project in conformance with Appendix E of Article 11 of the Planning Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.*

- H) Parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas will be protected from development:

*The proposed Permit to Alter will not impact the City's parks and open space.*

4. For these reasons, the proposal overall, meets the provisions of Article 11 of the Planning Code regarding Major Alterations in the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District.

**DECISION**

That based upon the Record, the submissions by the Applicant, the staff of the Department and other interested parties, the oral testimony presented to this Commission at the public hearings, and all other written materials submitted by all parties, the Commission hereby **GRANTS WITH CONDITIONS Major Permit to Alter Application 2010.1084H** attached hereto as "EXHIBIT A" which is incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth.

**APPEAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF MOTION:** Any aggrieved person may appeal this Motion to the Board of Appeals within fifteen (15) days after the effective date of this Motion No. XXXXX. The effective date of this Motion shall be the date of this Motion. For further information, please contact the Board of Appeals in person at 1650 Mission Street, Room 304 or call 575-6880.

**THIS IS NOT A PERMIT TO COMMENCE ANY WORK OR CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY UNLESS NO BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED. PERMITS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION (and any other appropriate agencies) MUST BE SECURED BEFORE WORK IS STARTED OR OCCUPANCY IS CHANGED.**

I hereby certify that the Historical Preservation Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Motion on February 2, 2011.

Linda D. Avery  
Commission Secretary

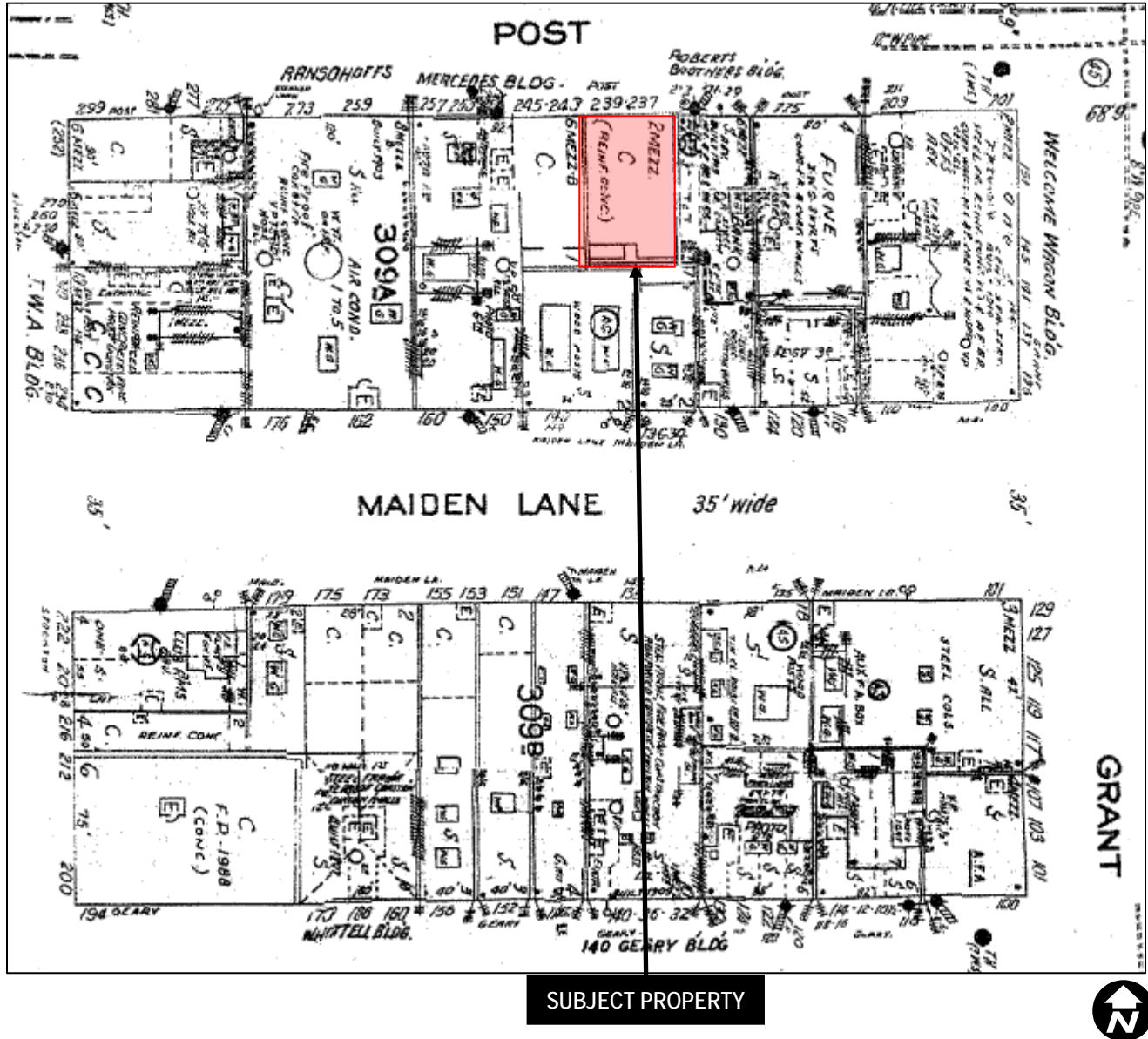
AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: February 2, 2011

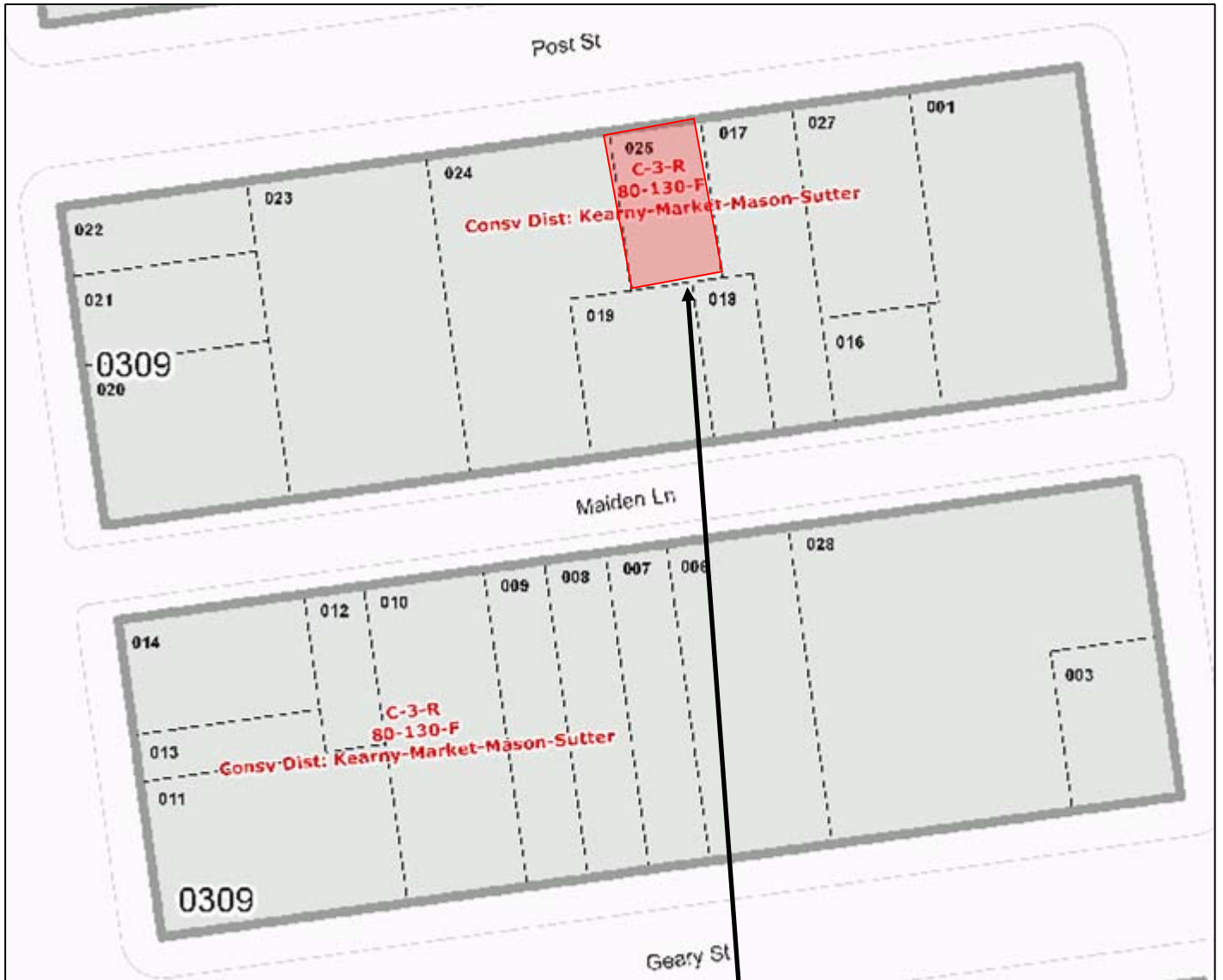
# Sanborn Map\*



\*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.

Major Permit to Alter  
 Case Number 2010.1084H  
 KMMS Conservation District  
 237 Post Street

# Block Book Map



**SUBJECT PROPERTY**



Major Permit to Alter  
Case Number 2010.1084H  
KMMS Conservation District  
237 Post Street

# REUBEN & JUNIUS<sup>LLP</sup>

January 26, 2011

## VIA MESSENGER

Mr. Charles Chase, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**Re: Graff Jewelry – 237 Post Street  
Planning Department Case No. 2010.1084  
Hearing Date: February 2, 2011  
Our File No.: 6724.01**

Dear President Chase and Commissioners:

This office represents Graff Holdings, Inc., the project sponsor of a proposed remodel of the façade of the existing, two-story retail building (“Project”) located at 237 Post Street in San Francisco (“Property”).

The Property was most recently occupied by Bvlgari, an Italian jewelry and luxury goods store. The Property now sits vacant and the Project Sponsor proposes to open a Graff jewelry store there. Graff is one of the most exclusive diamond and fine gem dealers in the world. They currently have 15 stores throughout Europe, North America, the Middle East and Asia.

The Project proposes to remove the existing façade of the Property and replace it with a new façade that is consistent with existing Graff jewelry stores throughout the world. The new façade will consist of four limestone vertical columns connecting with a horizontal spandrel at the roofline of the building. Glass windows will fill the space between the columns. The upper areas of the windows will feature interior bronze decorative screens behind the glass. Fascia panels run horizontally where the first and second floors intersect and along the top of the windows, framing the bronze screening. Halogen-lit signage with the “Graff” logo will be displayed on each of the lower fascia panels. The entrance will be located between the two middle columns, and the interior bronze screen from above will continue down all the way to the top of the entrance. The windows below the fascia panels to the right and left of the entrance will be clear and provide a view directly into the store from the street. Display boxes will be located in these windows as well.

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Daniel A. Frattin | Stephen R. Miller | Lindsay M. Petrone | John Kevlin | Alison L. Krumbein | John McInerney III<sup>2</sup>

1. Also admitted in New York 2. Of Counsel

Included in your packet are (1) reduced plans for the Project (2) photographs of a Graff Jewelry store in New York with similar architectural features and materials as the Project, and (3) photos of the Property and adjacent buildings, and the buildings across the street.

The Property is a Category V building located in the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District (“Conservation District”). Article 11 of the Planning Code requires a Major Permit to Alter to be obtained for any “major alteration” to a Category V building in a conservation district. By remodeling the entire existing façade at the Property, the Project falls within the definition of a “major alteration,” and requires a Permit to Alter to be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

**A. Benefits of the Project**

Benefits of the Project will include:

- Increasing the consistency of the Property with the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District;
- Filling a vacant storefront in Union Square, a high-end, high-volume shopping district.

**B. Project Compatibility with the Conservation District**

The Project is compatible and consistent with the aesthetic and architectural themes of the Conservation District, specifically in its composition and massing, scale, materials and color, and detailing and ornamentation.

1. Composition and Massing

The Project will not alter the existing scale of the building at the Property. The Project consists of a remodeling of the façade, and no increase in height or bulk is proposed. The Project’s composition and massing will enhance the compatibility of the building with the Conservation District and with this block of Post Street.

The Project strengthens the horizontal line that separates the Property’s tall ground floor with its second floor, and in so doing connects and strengthens similar elements on the buildings adjacent to the Property. The existing façade does include a distinctive line separating the floors, but only on its right half. The left half has a flat block that extends from the ground up to the middle of the second floor. The Project would unify the horizontal floor separation line of the adjacent buildings with strong fascia panels across the entire façade. Further, by removing the flat block and the extruding deck above and restoring a

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symmetrical façade, the Property will become more consistent with the other retail storefronts along this block of Post Street.

A number of buildings on this block of Post Street are broken up into three bays, with the entrance through the middle bay. The retail spaces across the street from the Property occupied by Saks Fifth Avenue, Boucheron, Ann Taylor, Cartier and Zara all have such elements. The Project will also create three bays in the façade of the Property, thereby breaking the facade into discrete segments. The center bay is emphasized by locating the entrance there, and also extending the interior bronze screen below the horizontal dividing line created by the fascia panels. These elements that break the façade up into smaller parts create a building that better relates to the human scale.

2. Scale

While the building at the Property is shorter than most buildings in the Conservation District, it is generally compatible with the small-scale nature of buildings in the area. The Project will maintain the building's scale as it relates to the rest of the Conservation District. The Project's large windows are broken up by stone columns, acting as mullions, which divide the windows to create a façade that relates to human scale.

3. Materials and Color

The Project includes four columns and a horizontal spandrel along the top of the façade, all consisting of limestone. The light, creamy color of the stone is consistent with the Conservation District, including the color of the ground floor of the buildings adjacent to the Property. The vertical columns simulate the qualities necessary to support the weight of a load bearing wall. Rustication is also present on the stone columns, consisting of vertical and horizontal lines highlighting details of the design and other materials of the façade.

4. Detailing and Ornamentation

The Project creates a new façade that is consistent with the Conservation District by picking up decorative elements from nearby buildings. Columns are featured in several buildings on the block, including the building adjacent to the Property's east, and the Boucheron, Ann Taylor and the Cartier/Zara buildings across Post Street. The fascia panels along the first and second floor dividing line and above the bronze screens also mimic lintels, another common ornamental feature of the Conservation District.

The Project's stone columns honor the classical architecture of the Conservation District, while its perpendicular straight lines give it a modern touch. The Project's masonry columns, rustication, and deep window reveals give the impression of load bearing walls, typical of the buildings built during the reconstruction of the area after the 1906 fire.

**C. The Project Fills a Vacant Storefront With a Compatible Use**

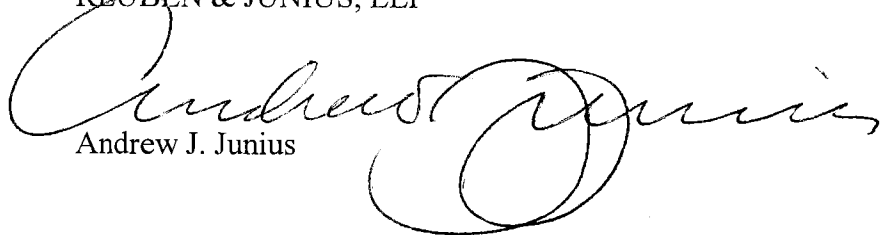
The Union Square shopping district is a regional, national and international shopping destination for high-end products, including fine diamonds and gems, and is one of San Francisco's most important tourist areas. There is a large amount of pedestrian foot traffic and a vacant storefront sticks out. The Project would fill this vacant storefront with an internationally-renowned jeweler – a use that will fit in and enhance the existing luxury retailers in the district. The previous tenant at the Property was also a high-end jewelry store and the Project will continue that existing use. In addition, the Project will create high-end retail jobs for area residents and pay local taxes. The proposed use is uniquely appropriate for this unique retail space.

**D. Conclusion**

The Project requires a Permit to Alter from the Historic Preservation Commission. The Project provides dual benefits to the city: it will enhance the Property's aesthetic character and make it more compatible with the Conservation District while also supporting and enhancing San Francisco's premiere shopping and tourist area. The Project Sponsor is proposing the Project at a time when retail storefront vacancies are on the rise throughout the city and the economic health of the country is anemic. For these reasons and those listed in the application, we respectfully request this Commission grant the Permit to Alter for the Project.

Very truly yours,

REUBEN & JUNIUS, LLP

  
Andrew J. Junius

Encls.

cc: Commissioner Courtney Damkroger  
Commissioner Karl Hasz  
Commissioner Richard Johns  
Commissioner Alan Martinez  
Commissioner Diane Matsuda  
Commissioner Andrew Wolfram  
Aaron Hollister - Planner  
Linda Avery - Commission Secretary  
George Papadopoulos – Graff Holdings, Inc.

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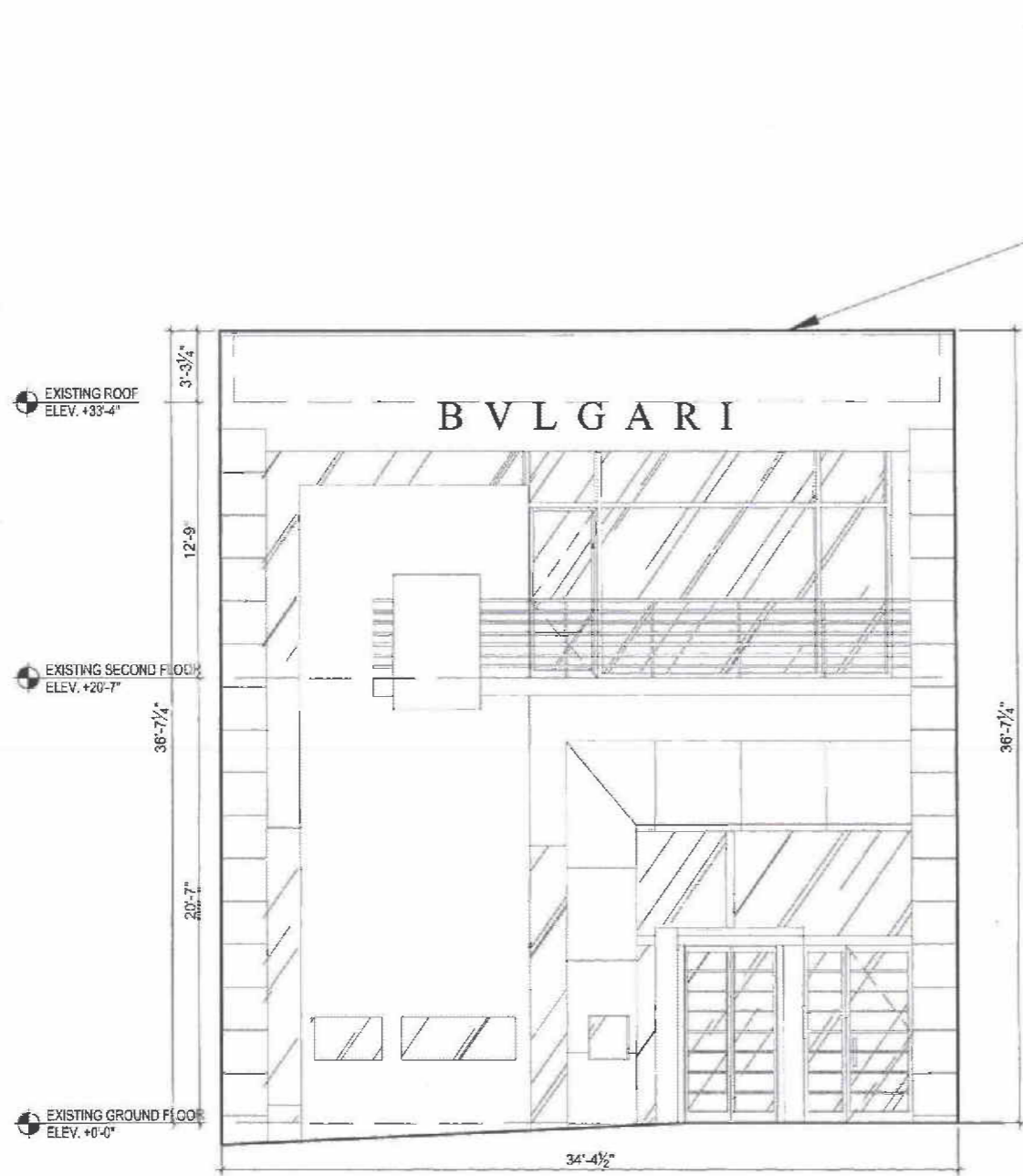
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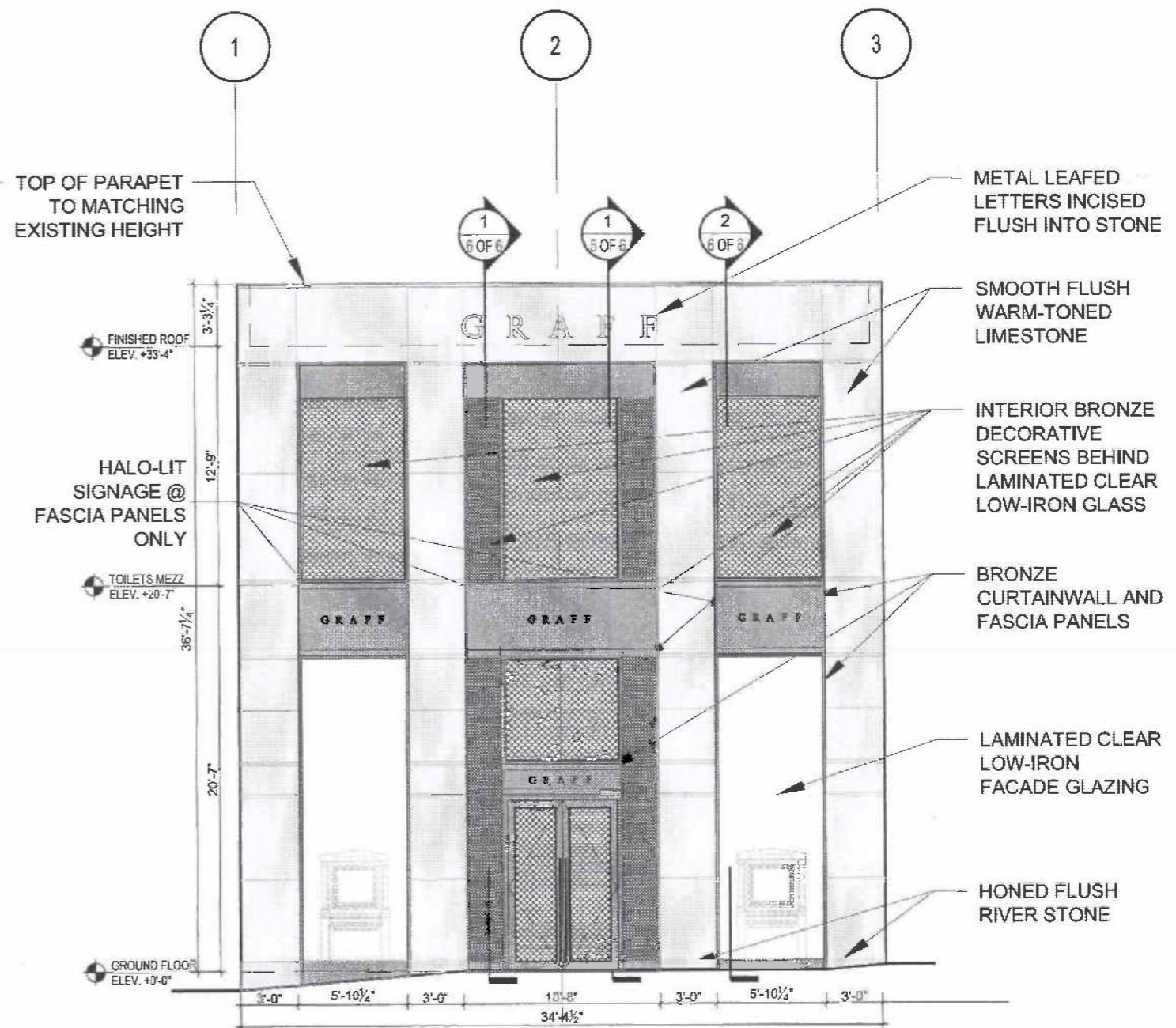




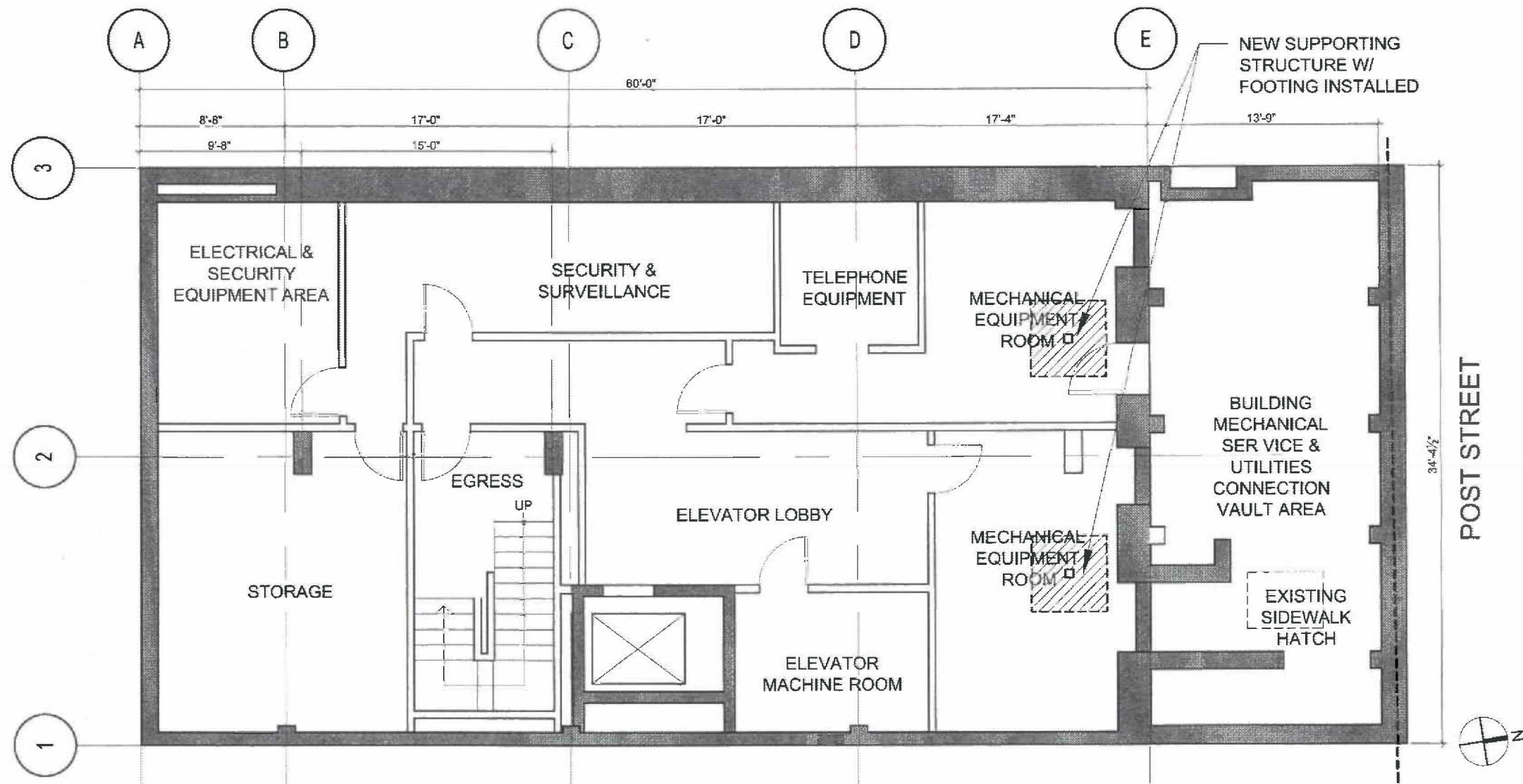




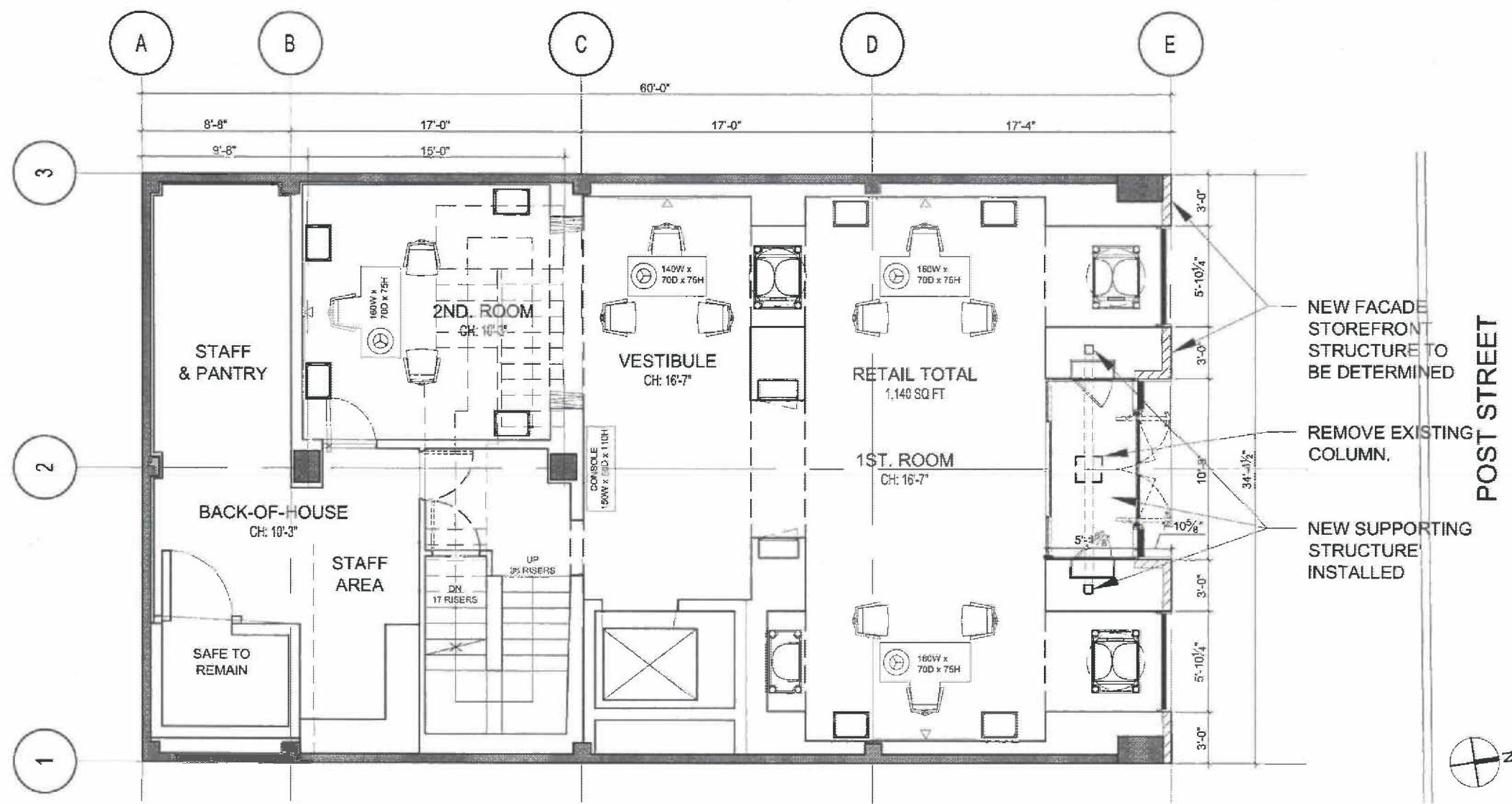
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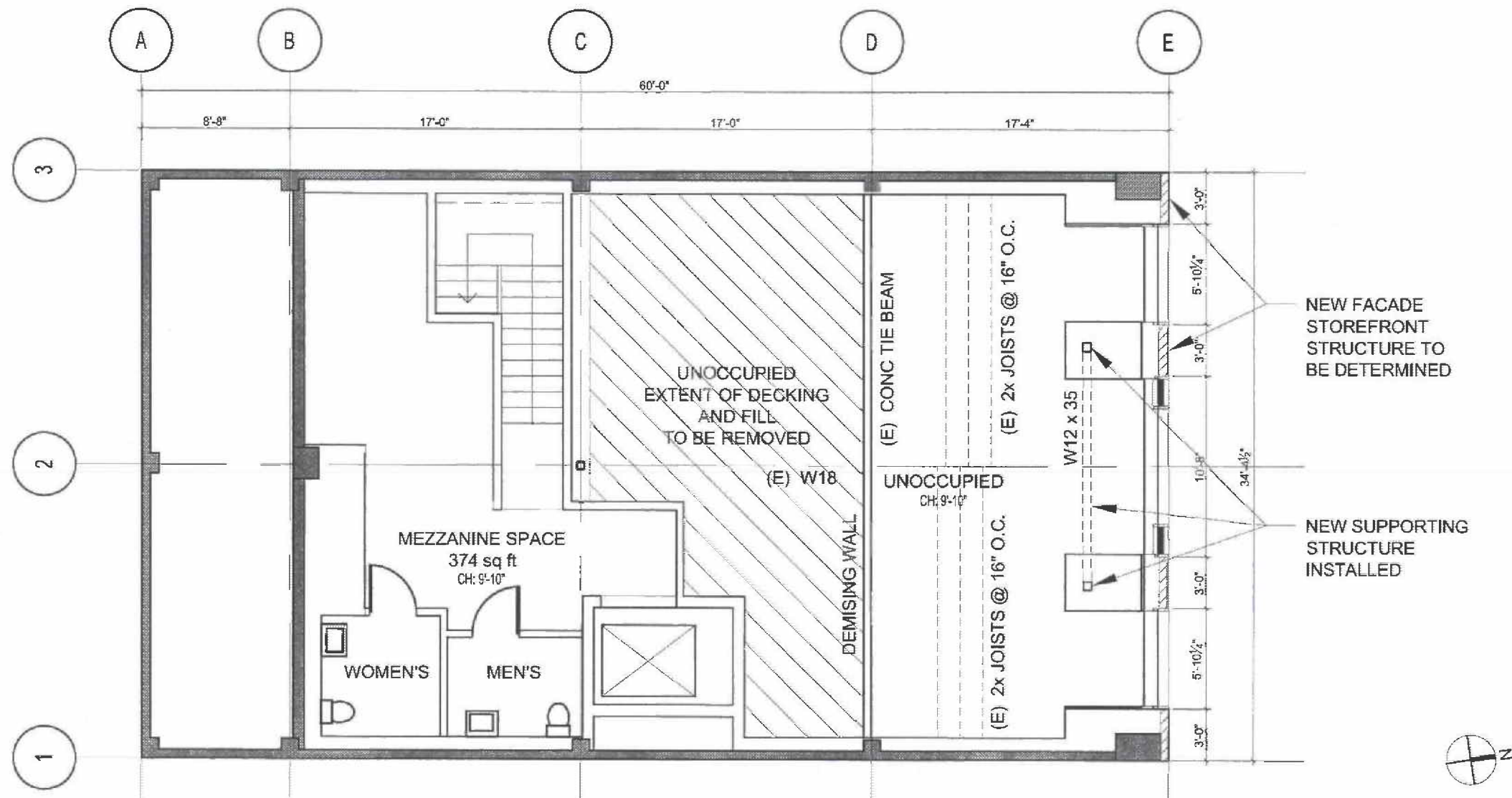


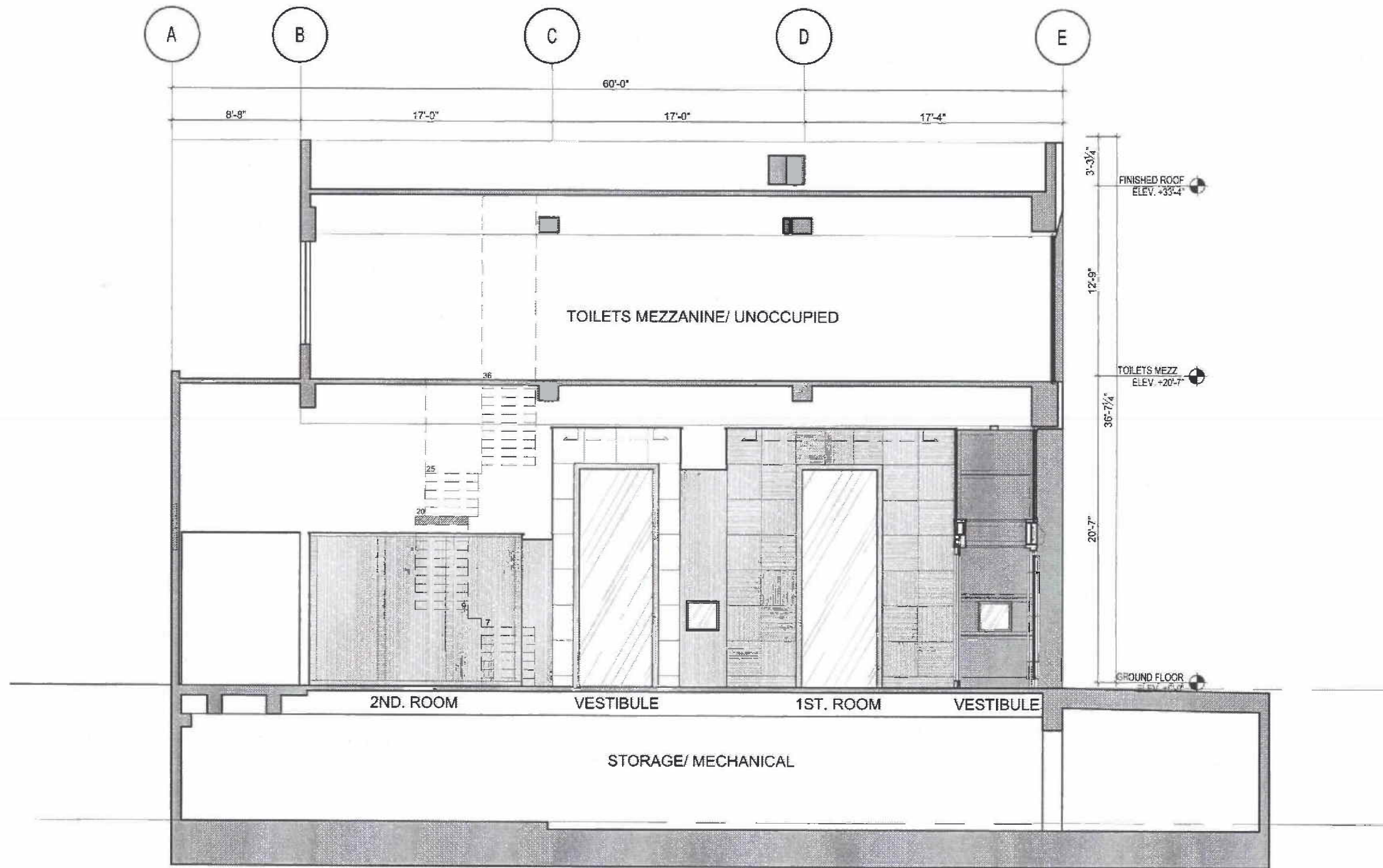
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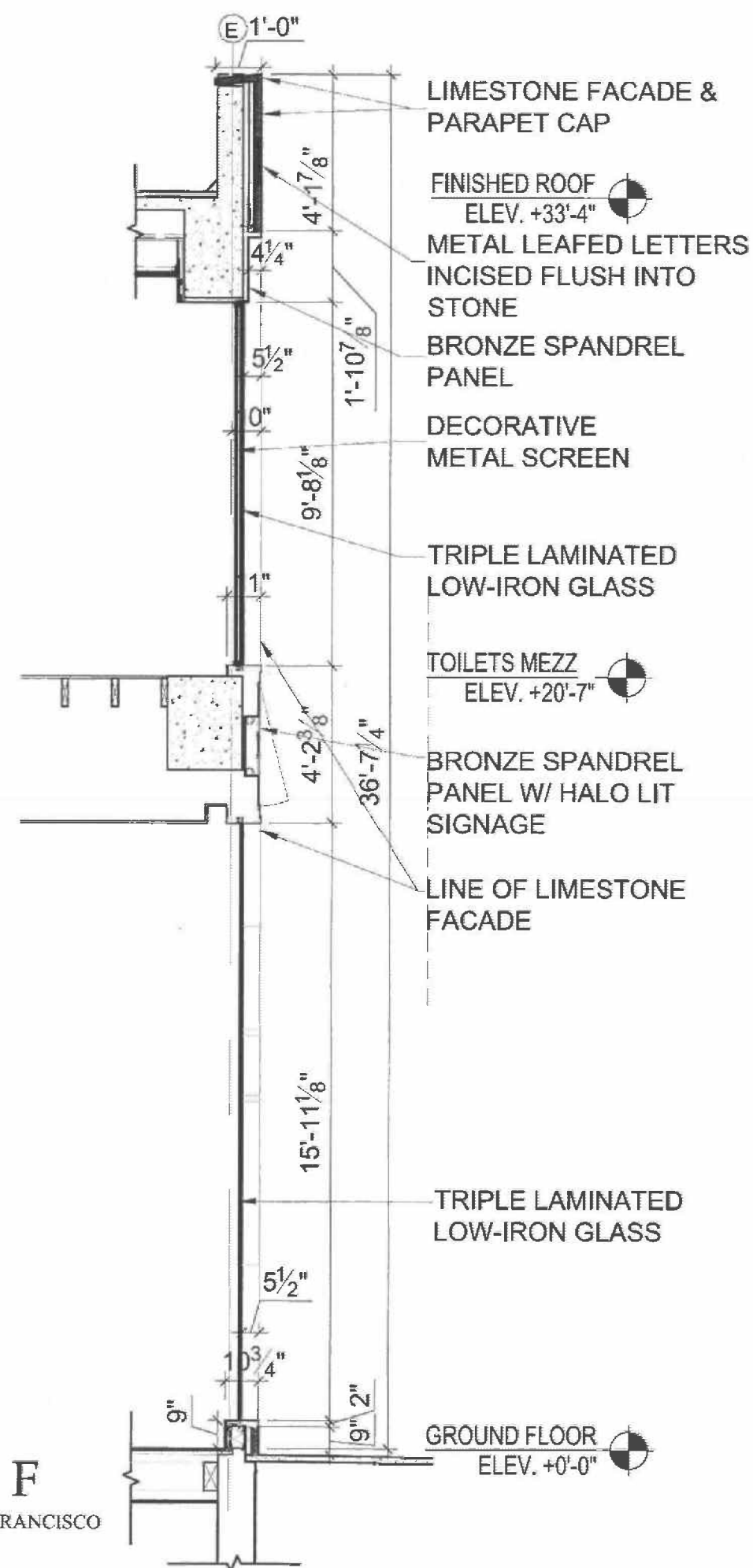
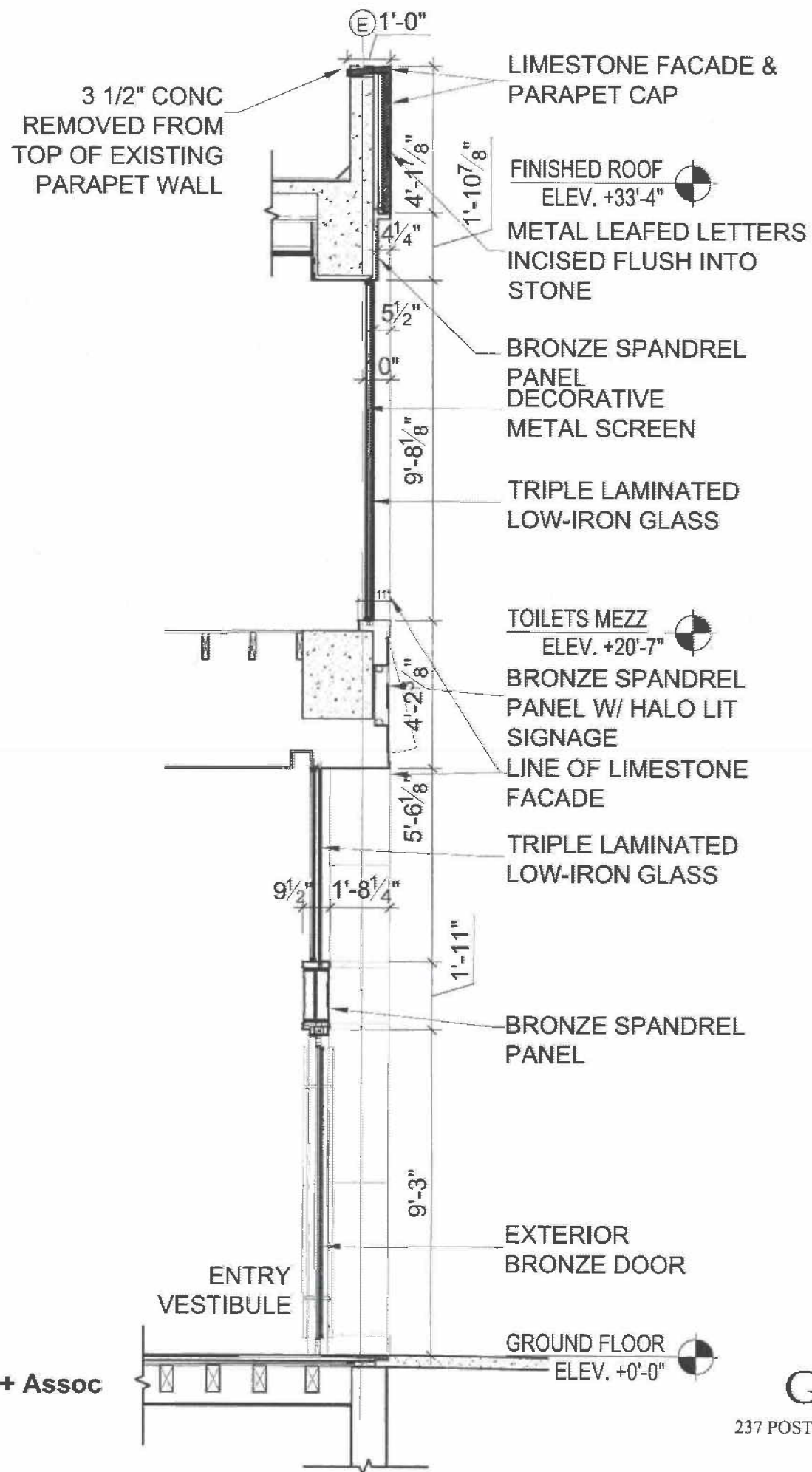












Peter Marino + Assoc  
Architects

**GRAFF**  
237 POST STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

FACADE SECTIONS  
1/4"=1'-0"  
JANUARY 14, 2010  
6 OF 6





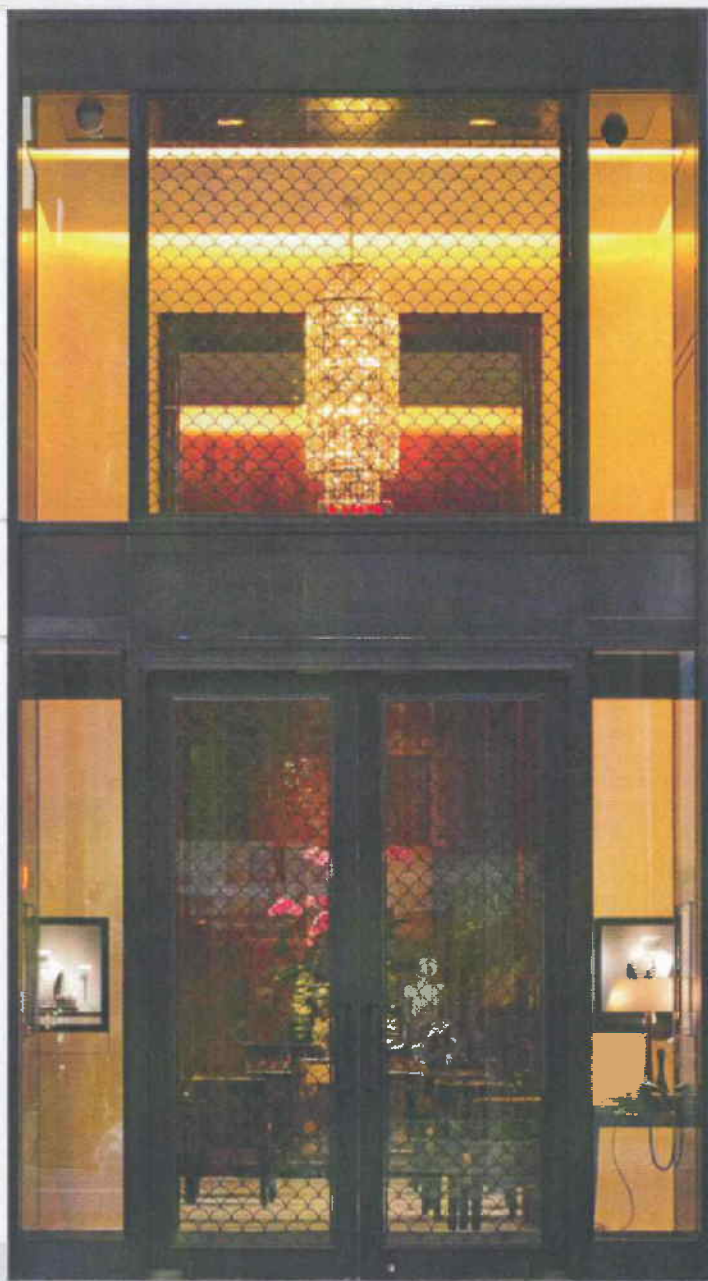


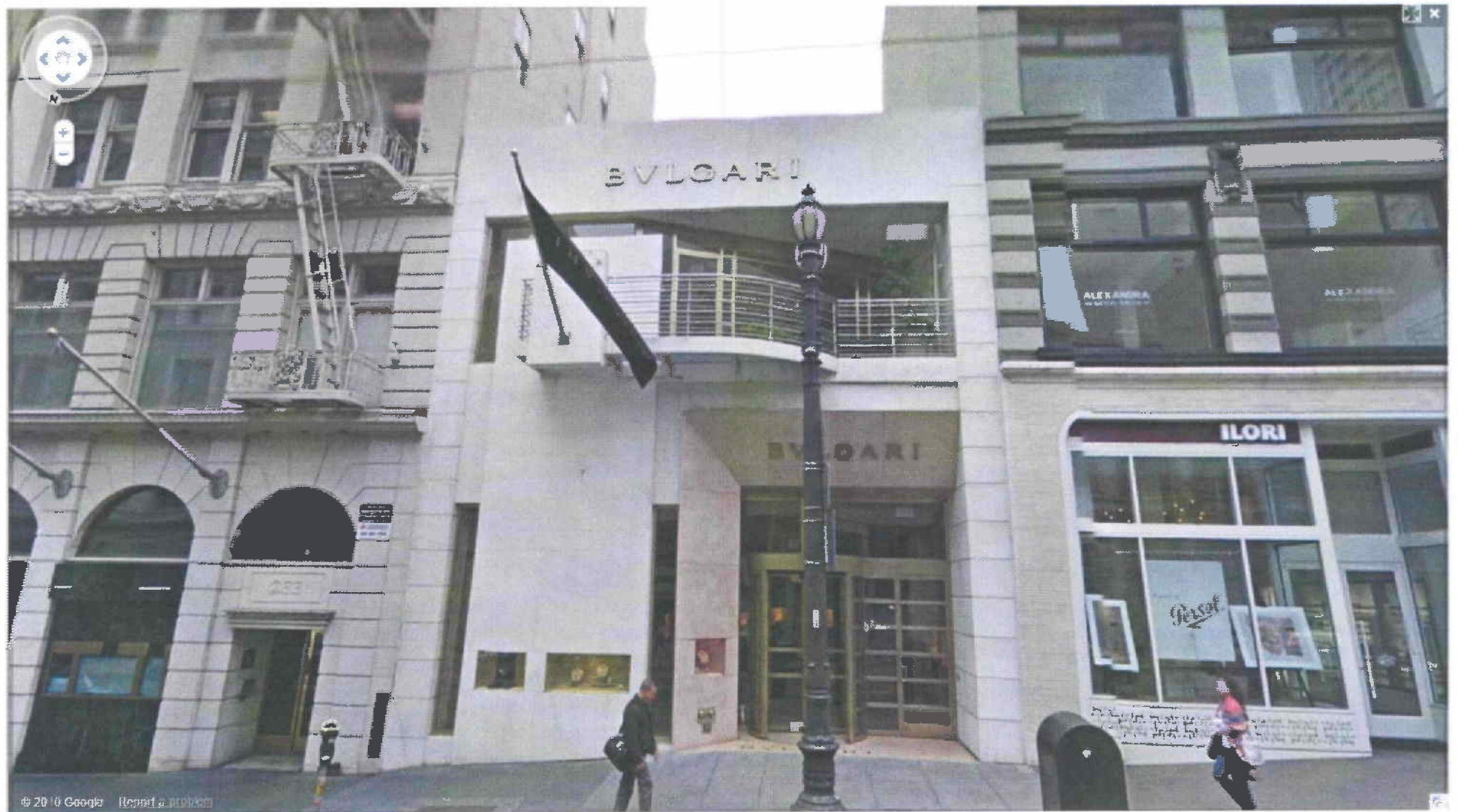
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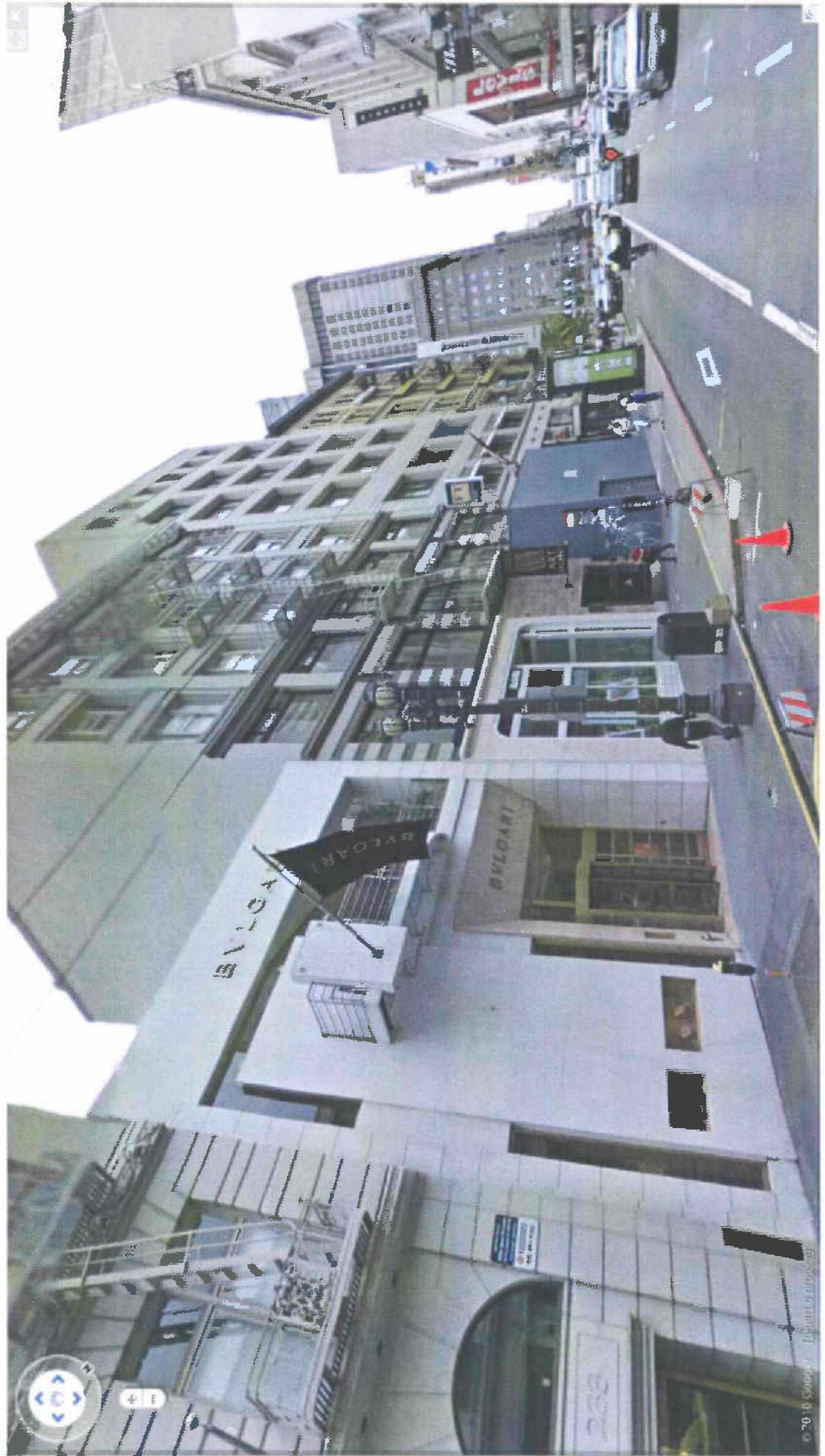
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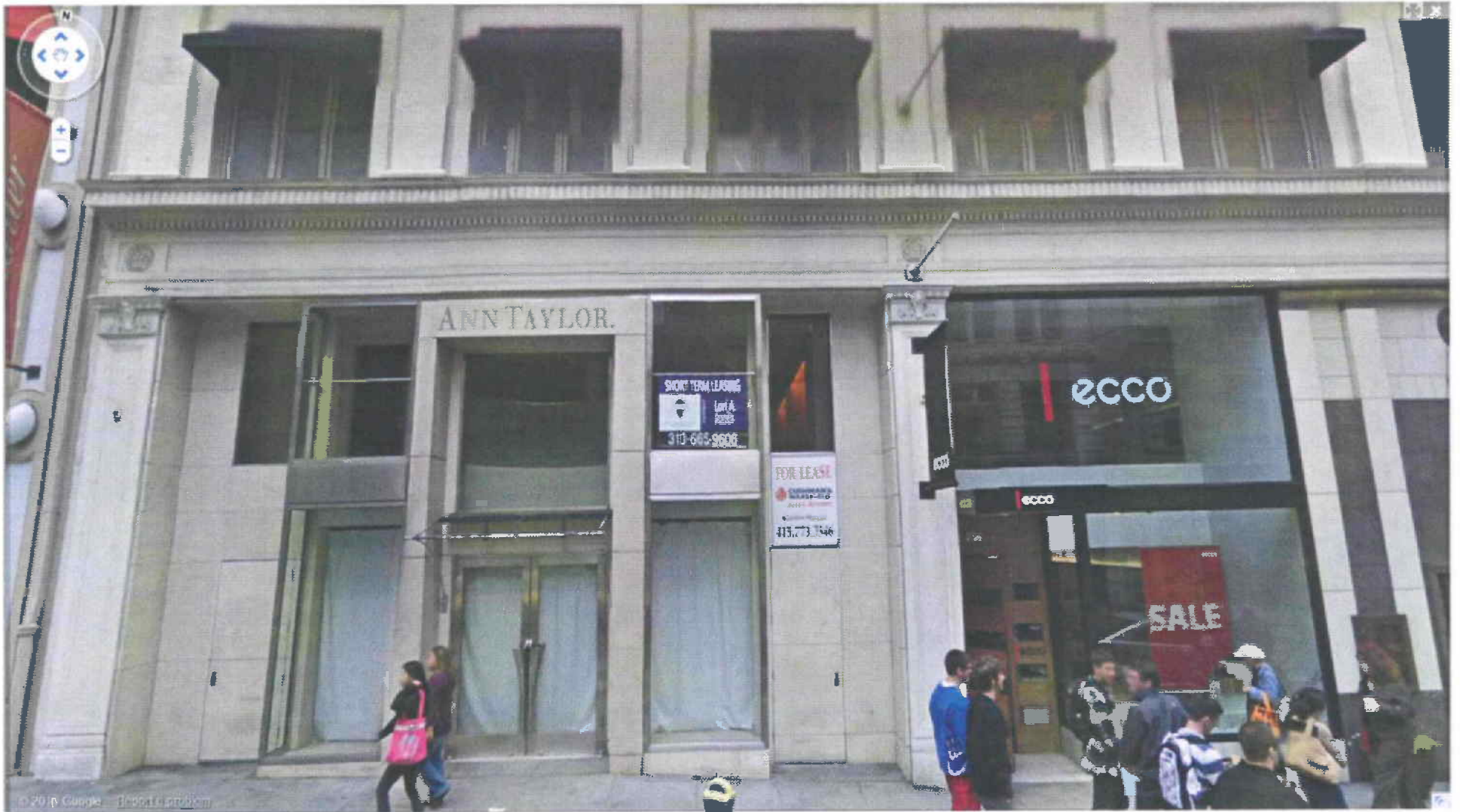
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