

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

April 15, 2015

### Agenda Item No: 31

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2015-131  
**ADDRESS:** 720 N ST MARYS  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 180 BLK LOT W IRRG 113.2 FT OF 18 ARB 20B  
**ZONING:** D RIO-3  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**APPLICANT:** Luna Architecture + Design  
**OWNER:** Dr. Felipe & Gloria Morales  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Exterior modifications  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to:

1. Apply a new layer of stucco as well as incorporate new trim and moldings throughout the façade.
2. Construct a partial third floor and a covered roof deck area.
3. Modify the existing entrance portal.
4. Install a canopy on the N St Mary's Street façade.
5. Install new exterior wall lights.
6. Install new three foot deep balconies to the river facing façade.
7. Install open-air covered terraces to the river facing façade.
8. Install new stucco arches throughout the project.
9. Add a two car garage with two separate garage doors with access to N St Mary's.

### APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Sec. 35-674. Building Design Principles*

(a) Architectural Character. A basic objective for architectural design in the river improvement overlay districts is to encourage the reuse of existing buildings and construction of new, innovative designs that enhance the area, and help to establish distinct identities for each of the zone districts. At the same time, these new buildings should reinforce established building traditions and respect the contexts of neighborhoods.

When a new building is constructed, it shall be designed in a manner that reinforces the basic character-defining features of the area. Such features include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it faces the street and its orientation to the river. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally, visual compatibility results.

(b) Mass and Scale. A building shall appear to have a "human scale." In general, this scale can be accomplished by using familiar forms and elements interpreted in human dimensions. Exterior wall designs shall help pedestrians establish a sense of scale with relation to each building. Articulating the number of floors in a building can help to establish a building's scale, for example, and prevent larger buildings from dwarfing the pedestrian.

- (1) Express facade components in ways that will help to establish building scale.

A. Treatment of architectural facades shall contain a discernible pattern of mass to void, or windows and doors to solid mass. Openings shall appear in a regular pattern, or be clustered to form a cohesive design. Architectural elements such as columns, lintels, sills, canopies, windows and doors should align with other architectural features on the adjacent facades.

- (2) Align horizontal building elements with others in the blockface to establish building scale.

A. Align at least one (1) horizontal building element with another horizontal building element on the same block face. It will be considered to be within alignment if it is within three (3) feet, measured vertically, of the existing architectural element.

- (3) Express the distinction between upper and lower floors.

A. Develop the first floor as primarily transparent. The building facade facing a major street shall have at least

fifty (50) percent of the street level facade area devoted to display windows and/or windows affording some view into the interior areas. Multi-family residential buildings with no retail or office space are exempt from this requirement.

(4) Where a building facade faces the street or river and exceeds the maximum facade length allowed in Table 674-1 divide the facade of building into modules that express traditional dimensions.

A. The maximum length of an individual wall plane that faces a street or the river shall be as shown in Table 674-1.

Table 674-1

Description	RIO-1	RIO-2	RIO-3	RIO-4	RIO-5	RIO-6
Maximum Facade Length	50 ft.	50 ft.	30 ft.	75 ft.	75 ft.	50 ft.

B. If a building wall plane facing the street or river and exceeds the length allowed in Table 674-1, employ at least two (2) of the following techniques to reduce the perceived mass:

- Change materials with each building module to reduce its perceived mass; or
- Change the height with each building module of a wall plane. The change in height shall be at least ten (10) percent of the vertical height; or
- Change the roof form of each building module to help express the different modules of the building mass; or
- Change the arrangement of windows and other facade articulation features, such as, columns, pilasters or strap work, which divides large planes into smaller components.

(5) Organize the Mass of a Building to Provide Solar Access to the River.

A. One (1) method of doing so is to step the building down toward the river to meet the solar access requirements of subsection 35-673(a).

B. Another method is to set the building back from the river a distance sufficient to meet the solar access requirements of subsection 35-673(a).

(c) Height. Building heights vary along the river corridor, from one-story houses to high-rise hotels and apartments. This diversity of building heights is expected to continue. However, within each zone, a general similarity in building heights should be encouraged in order to help establish a sense of visual continuity. In addition, building heights shall be configured such that a comfortable human scale is established along the edges of properties and views to the river and other significant landmarks are provided while allowing the appropriate density for an area.

(1) The maximum building height shall be as defined in Table 674-2.

A. Solar access standards subsection 35-673(a), and massing standards subsection 35-674(b) also will affect building heights.

Table 674-2

Description	RIO-1	RIO-2	RIO-3	RIO-4	RIO-5	RIO-6
Maximum # of Stories	5	10	None	7	5	4
Maximum Height in Feet	60 ft.	120 ft.	None	84 ft.	60 ft.	50 ft.

(3) On the street-side, the building facade shall appear similar in height to those of other buildings found traditionally in the area.

If fifty (50) percent of the building facades within a block face are predominantly lower than the maximum height allowed, the new building facade on the street-side shall align with the average height of those lower buildings within the block face, or with a particular building that falls within the fifty (50) percent range. However, the remainder of the building may obtain its maximum height by stepping back fifteen (15) feet from the building face.

(4) Designation of a development node provides for the ability to increase the building height by fifty (50) percent from the requirements set out in article VI.

(d) Materials and Finishes. Masonry materials are well established as primary features along the river corridor and their use should be continued. Stucco that is detailed to provide a texture and pattern, which conveys a human scale, is also part of the tradition. In general, materials and finishes that provide a sense of human scale, reduce the perceived mass of a building and appear to blend with the natural setting of the river shall be used, especially on major structures.

(1) Use indigenous materials and traditional building materials for primary wall surfaces. A minimum of seventy-five

(75) percent of walls (excluding window fenestrations) shall be composed of the following:

- A. Modular masonry materials including brick, stone, and rusticated masonry block, tile, terra-cotta, structural clay tile and cast stone. Concrete masonry units (CMU) are not allowed.
- B. Other new materials that convey the texture, scale, and finish similar to traditional building materials.
- C. Stucco and painted concrete when detailed to express visual interest and convey a sense of scale.
- D. Painted or stained wood in a lap or shingle pattern.

(2) The following materials are not permitted as primary building materials and may be used as a secondary material only:

- A. Large expanses of high gloss or shiny metal panels.
- B. Mirror glass panels. Glass curtain wall buildings are allowed in RIO-3 as long as the river and street levels comply with 35-674(d)(1) above.

(3) Paint or Finish Colors.

- A. Use natural colors of indigenous building materials for properties that abut the Riverwalk area.
- B. Use matte finishes instead of high glossy finishes on wall surfaces. Wood trim and metal trim may be painted with gloss enamel.
- C. Bright colors may highlight entrances or architectural features.

(e) Facade Composition. Traditionally, many commercial and multi-family buildings in the core of San Antonio have had facade designs that are organized into three (3) distinct segments: First, a "base" exists, which establishes a scale at the street level; second a "mid-section," or shaft is used, which may include several floors. Finally a "cap" finishes the composition. The cap may take the form of an ornamental roof form or decorative molding and may also include the top floors of the building. This organization helps to give a sense of scale to a building and its use should be encouraged. In order to maintain the sense of scale, buildings should have the same setback as surrounding buildings so as to maintain the street-wall pattern, if clearly established.

In contrast, the traditional treatment of facades along the riverside has been more modest. This treatment is largely a result of the fact that the riverside was a utilitarian edge and was not oriented to the public. Today, even though orienting buildings to the river is a high priority objective, it is appropriate that these river-oriented facades be simpler in character than those facing the street.

(1) Street Facade. Buildings that are taller than the street-wall (sixty (60) feet) shall be articulated at the stop of the street wall or stepped back in order to maintain the rhythm of the street wall. Buildings should be composed to include a base, a middle and a cap.

A. High rise buildings, more than one hundred (100) feet tall, shall terminate with a distinctive top or cap. This can be accomplished by:

- i. Reducing the bulk of the top twenty (20) percent of the building by ten (10) percent.
- ii. By stepping back the top twenty (20) percent of the building.
- iii. Changing the material of the cap.

B. Roof forms shall be used to conceal all mechanical equipment and to add architectural interest to the structure.

C. Roof surfaces should include strategies to reduce heat island effects such as use of green roofs, photo voltaic panels, and/or the use of roof materials with high solar reflectivity.

(2) Fenestration. Windows help provide a human scale and so shall be proportioned accordingly.

D. Curtain wall systems shall be designed with modulating features such as projecting horizontal and/or vertical mullions.

(3) Entrances. Entrances shall be easy to find, be a special feature of the building, and be appropriately scaled.

A. Entrances shall be the most prominent on the street side and less prominent on the river side.

B. Entrances shall be placed so as to be highly visible.

C. The scale of the entrance is determined by the prominence of the function and or the amount of use.

D. Entrances shall have a change in material and/or wall plane.

E. Entrances should not use excessive storefront systems.

(4) Riverside facade. The riverside facade of a building shall have simpler detailing and composition than the street facade.

A. Architectural details such as cornices, sills, lintels, door surrounds, water tables and other similar details should use simple curves and handcrafted detailing.

B. Stone detailing shall be rough hewn, and chiseled faced. Smooth faced stone is not permitted as the primary building material, but can be used as accent pieces.

C. Facades on the riverside shall be asymmetrical, pedestrian scale, and give the appearance of the back of a

building. That is, in traditional building along the river, the backs of building were designed with simpler details, and appear less formal than the street facades.

(g) Awnings, Canopies and Arcades. (See Figure 674-2) The tradition of sheltering sidewalks with awnings, canopies and arcades on commercial and multi-family buildings is well established in San Antonio and is a practice that should be continued. They offer shade from the hot summer sun and shelter from rainstorms, thereby facilitating pedestrian activity. They also establish a sense of scale for a building, especially at the ground level. Awnings and canopies are appropriate locations for signage. Awnings with signage shall comply with any master signage plan on file with the historic preservation officer for the property. Awnings and canopies installed at street level within the public right-of-way require licensing with the city's capital improvements management services (CIMS) department. Canopies, balconies and awnings installed at river level within the public right-of-way require licensing with the city's downtown operations department.

(1) If awnings, arcades and canopies are to be used they should accentuate the character-defining features of a building.

A. The awning, arcade or canopy shall be located in relationship to the openings of a building. That is, if there are a series of awnings or canopies, they shall be located at the window or door openings. However awnings, canopies and arcades may extend the length of building to provide shade at the first floor for the pedestrian.

B. Awnings, arcades and canopies shall be mounted to highlight architectural features such as moldings that may be found above the storefront.

C. They should match the shape of the opening.

D. Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.

E. Odd shapes and bubble awnings are prohibited except where the shape of an opening requires a bubble awning, or historic precedent shows they have been previously used on the building.

F. Canopies, awnings and arcades shall not conflict with the building's proportions or with the shape of the openings that the awning or canopy covers.

G. Historic canopies shall be repaired or replaced with in-kind materials.

(2) Materials and Color.

A. Awnings and canopies may be constructed of metal, wood or fabric. Certain vinyl is allowed if it has the appearance of natural fiber as approved by the HDRC.

B. Awning color shall coordinate with the building. Natural and earth tone colors are encouraged. Fluorescent colors are not allowed. When used for signage it is appropriate to choose a dark color for the canopy and use light lettering for signage.

(3) Incorporating lighting into the design of a canopy is appropriate.

A. Lights that illuminate the pedestrian way beneath the awning are appropriate.

B. Lights that illuminate the storefront are appropriate.

C. Internally illuminated awnings that glow are prohibited.

#### *UDC Section. 35-675. Archaeology.*

When an HDRC application is submitted for commercial development projects within a river improvement overlay district the city archeologist shall review the project application to determine if there is potential of containing intact archaeological deposits utilizing the following documents/methods:

(1)The Texas Sites Atlas for known/recorded sites, site data in the files of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and the Texas Historical Commission;

(2)USGS maps;

(3)Soil Survey maps;

(4)Distance to water;

(5)Topographical data;

(6)Predictive settlement patterns;

(7)Archival research and historic maps;

(8)Data on file at the office of historic preservation.

If after review the city archeologist determines there is potential of containing intact archaeological deposits, an archaeological survey report shall be prepared and submitted. If, after review by the city archeologist, a determination is

made that the site has little to no potential of containing intact archaeological deposits, the requirement for an archaeological survey report may be waived.

Upon completion of a survey, owners of property containing inventoried archaeological sites are encouraged to educate the public regarding archaeological components of the site and shall coordinate any efforts with the office of historic preservation.

## **FINDINGS:**

- a. The structure at 720 N St Mary's is a non-contributing structure built circa 1940. Currently, the property is zoned Downtown and RIO-3.
- b. The applicant has proposed to modify the existing façade arrangement of the structure by applying new, earth toned stucco with new window trim and window trim detailing. The UDC Section 35-674(d) states that indigenous materials such as stucco and other materials that convey the texture, scale and finish of traditional building materials should be used. The applicant's proposal to resurface the structure with stucco is consistent with the UDC. In addition to this, the emphasis on newly placed trim and molding helps to convey a human scale to the second and proposed third floor.
- c. The existing structure features two floors. The applicant has proposed to construct a partial third floor which would include the formation of a tower as well as a covered roof deck. The creation of the tower as well as the partial third floor form a capital and focal point at the roof line to terminate the structure. Staff finds that the creation of the third floor is appropriate, however, there are concerns with the proposed detailing. Staff finds that the third floor additions would be more appropriate with simply detailed railing, simple square punched openings, the elimination of stucco arches and simplistic metal ornamentation.
- d. Currently, the structure features an existing store front façade system. The applicant has proposed to remove the existing store front façade and to create a recessed, open-air court yard that will serve as the structure's primary entrance. Regarding entrances, the UDC states that entrances should be easy to find, be appropriately scaled and should feature a change in materials or wall plane. The applicant's proposal is consistent with the UDC Section 35-674(e)(3).
- e. The applicant has proposed exterior lighting on both the river facade and N St Mary's façade. The proposed lighting as well as its location is consistent with the UDC Section 35-673(j) in regards to lighting
- f. The river side façade currently features balconies that are located at the existing doors and windows. The applicant has proposed to install three foot deep balconies that run the length of both the street level and second level rear facades that face the river. Staff finds the redesign and extension of the existing balconies appropriate and consistent with the UDC in regards to façade composition.
- g. The applicant has proposed to install two open-air terraces on the river façade, one on the first level and one above it on the third level. The footprint of the structure will not change. The proposal to install the open-air terraces creates depth and continues to provide a visual reference for human scale. This is consistent with the UDC Section 35-674(b).
- h. The applicant has proposed to create new stucco arches throughout the project including locations on both the N St Mary's facades, the river façade and the open air court façade that forms where the river and N St Mary's meet. Given original massing of the structure staff finds that the arched entrances and window openings present a false sense of scale and do not coincide with the square window openings and other architectural features that complement them. Staff recommends that the applicant redesign the arched openings to become more consistent with the other openings throughout the project.
- i. The applicant has proposed to install two garage doors that will provide garage access to N St Mary's. Garage doors placed along urban corridors provide a false sense of scale, disrupt human scaled façade patterns and provide an entrance into the structure that distracts from the designed primary entrance. The proposal to install two garage doors on the N St Mary's façade is not consistent with the UDC Section 35-674(e) in regards to façade composition.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

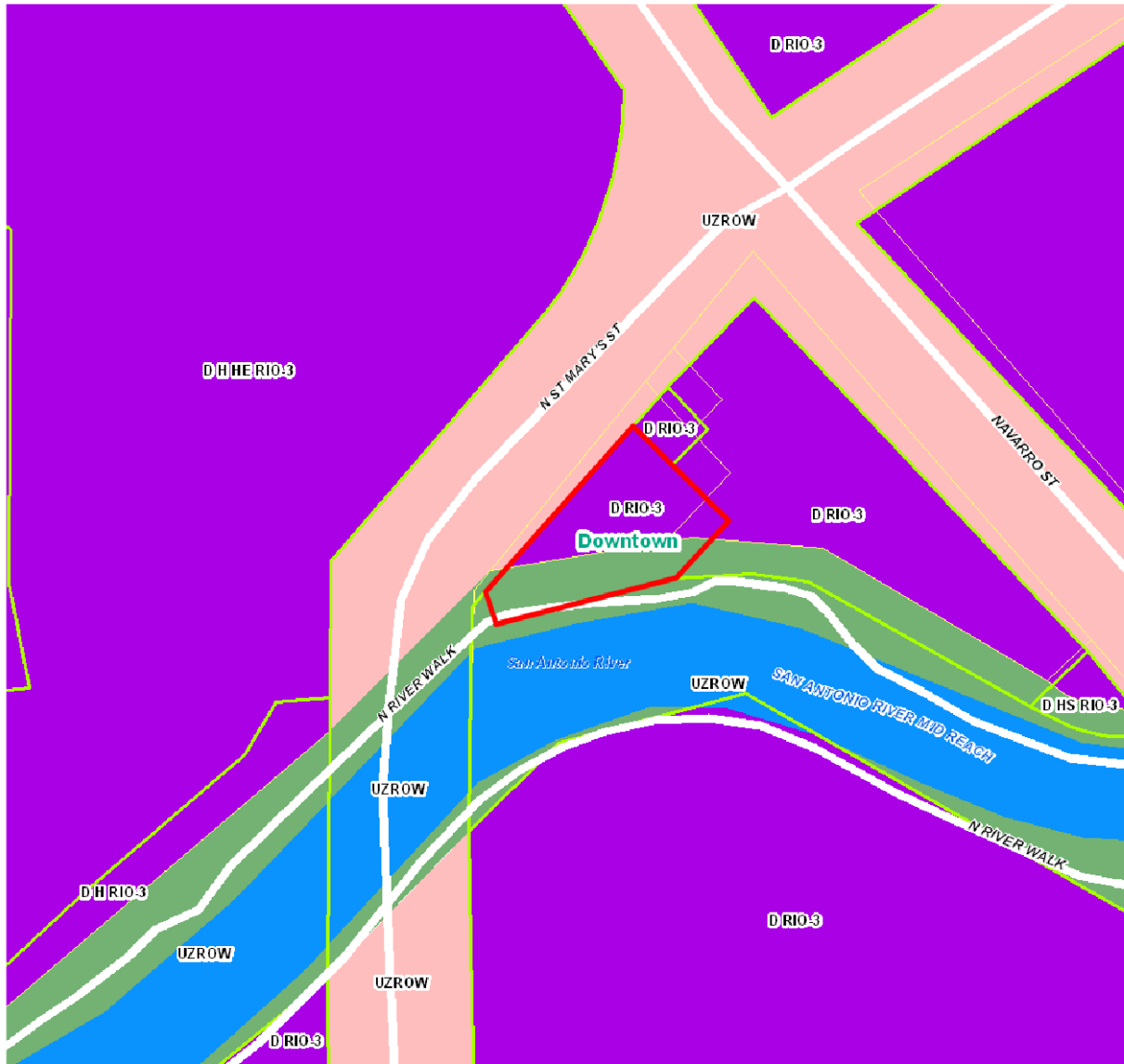
Staff recommends approval of items #1 through #7 based on findings a through g with the following stipulations:

- i. That the applicant simplify the proposed railing to exclude the curved ornate design, utilize simple, square punched openings, eliminate the proposed arched openings and provide information regarding a final lighting scheme prior to receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Staff does not recommend approval of items #8 and #9 based on findings h and i.

**CASE MANAGER:**

Edward Hall





## Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

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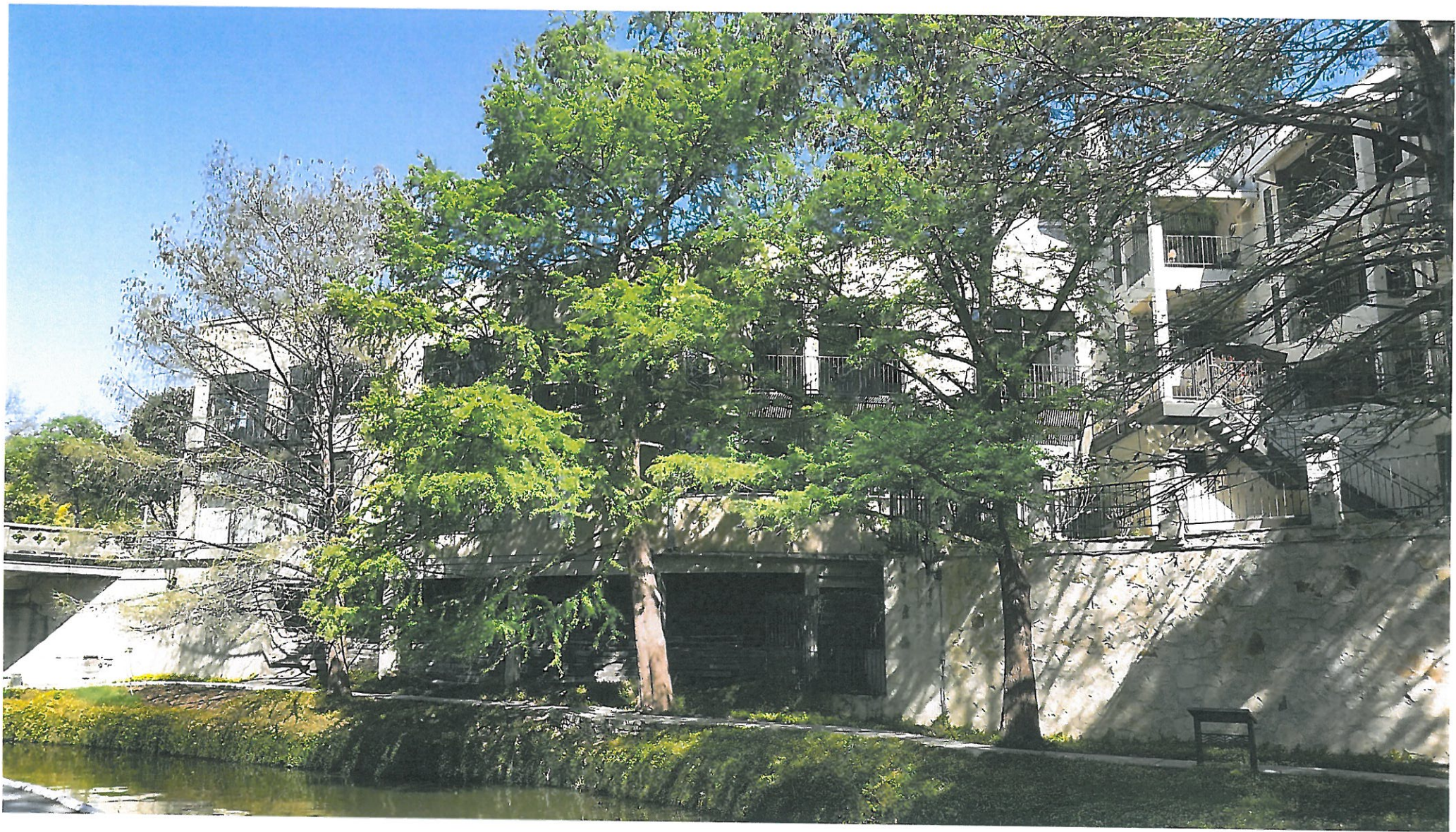














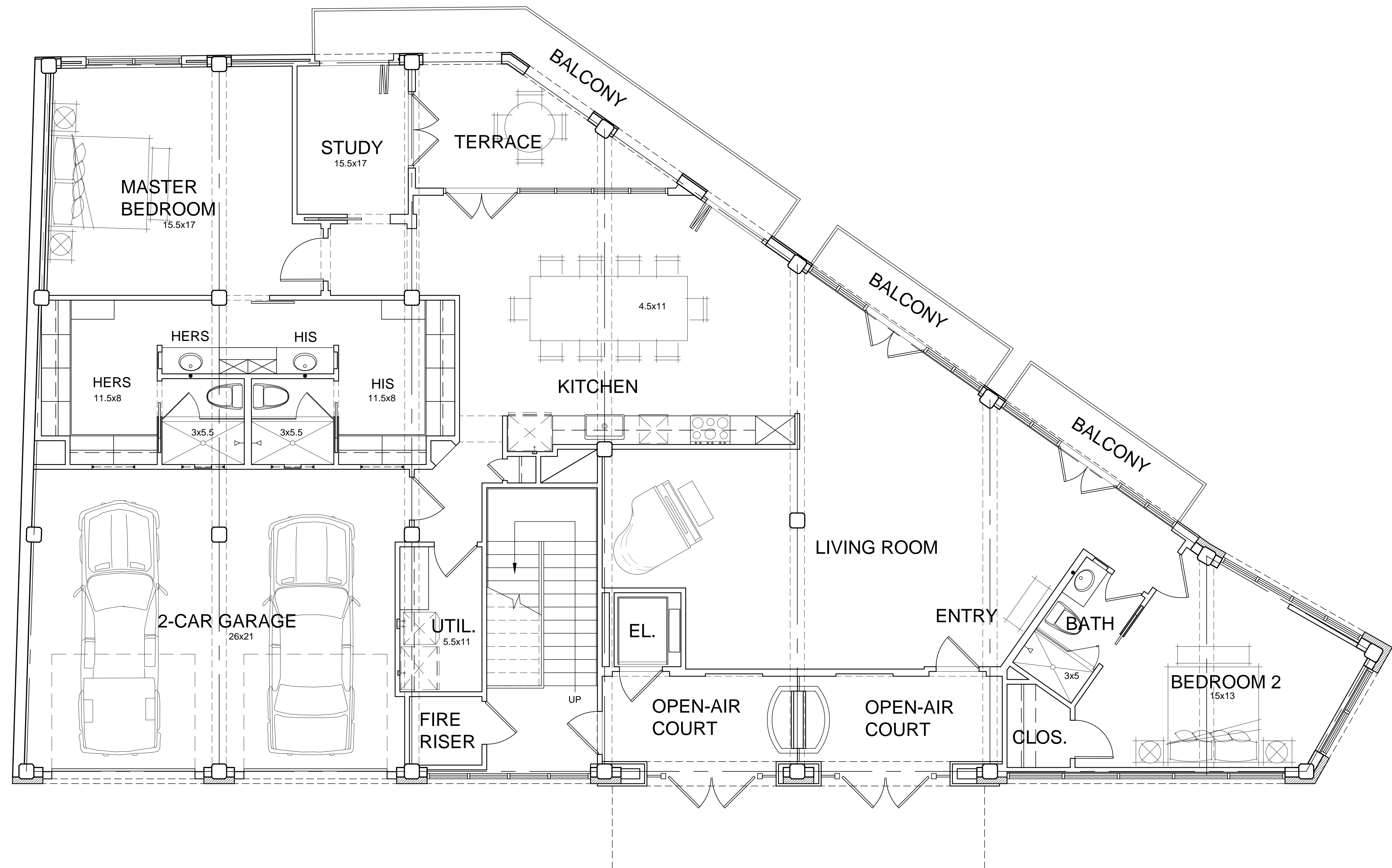




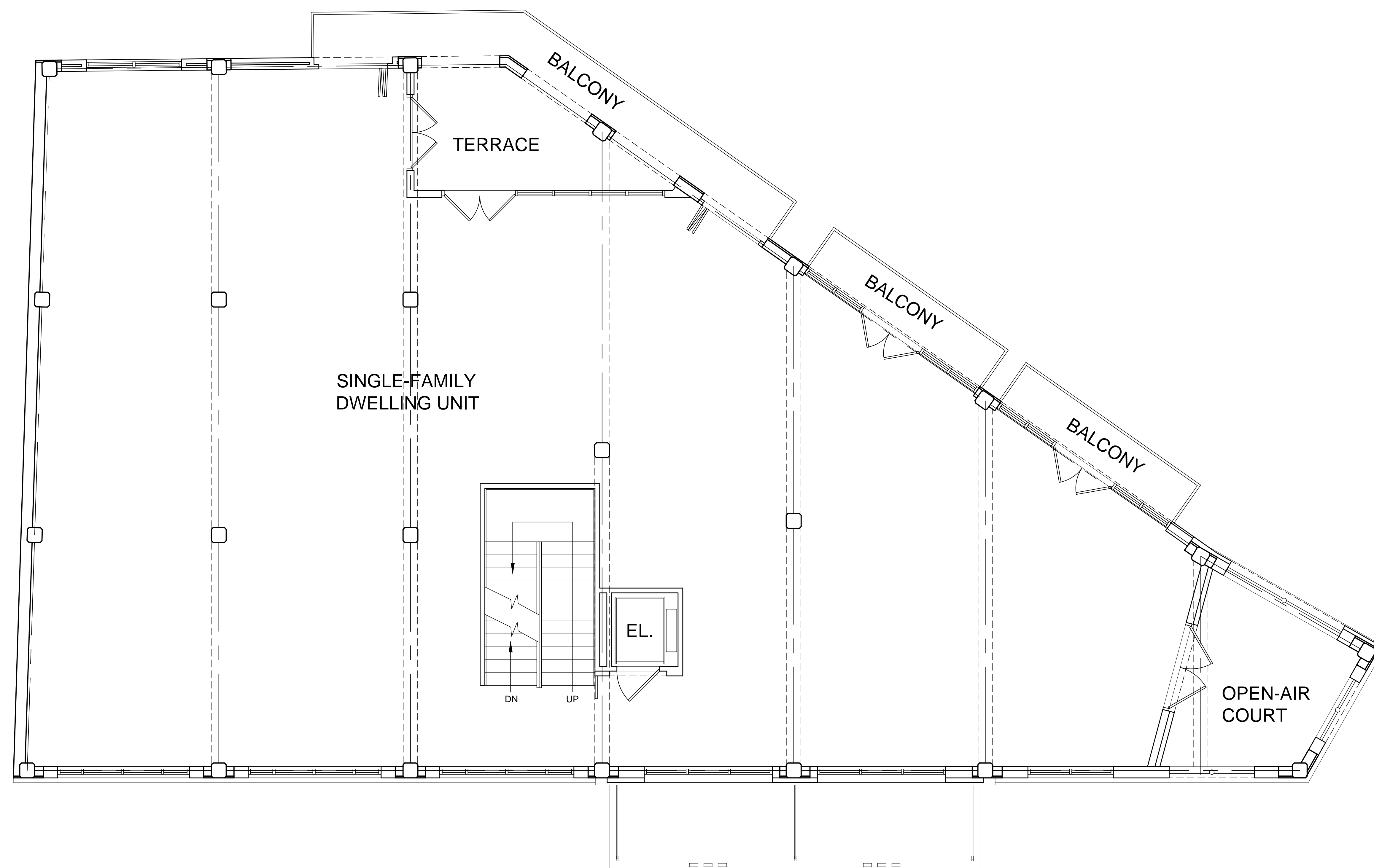




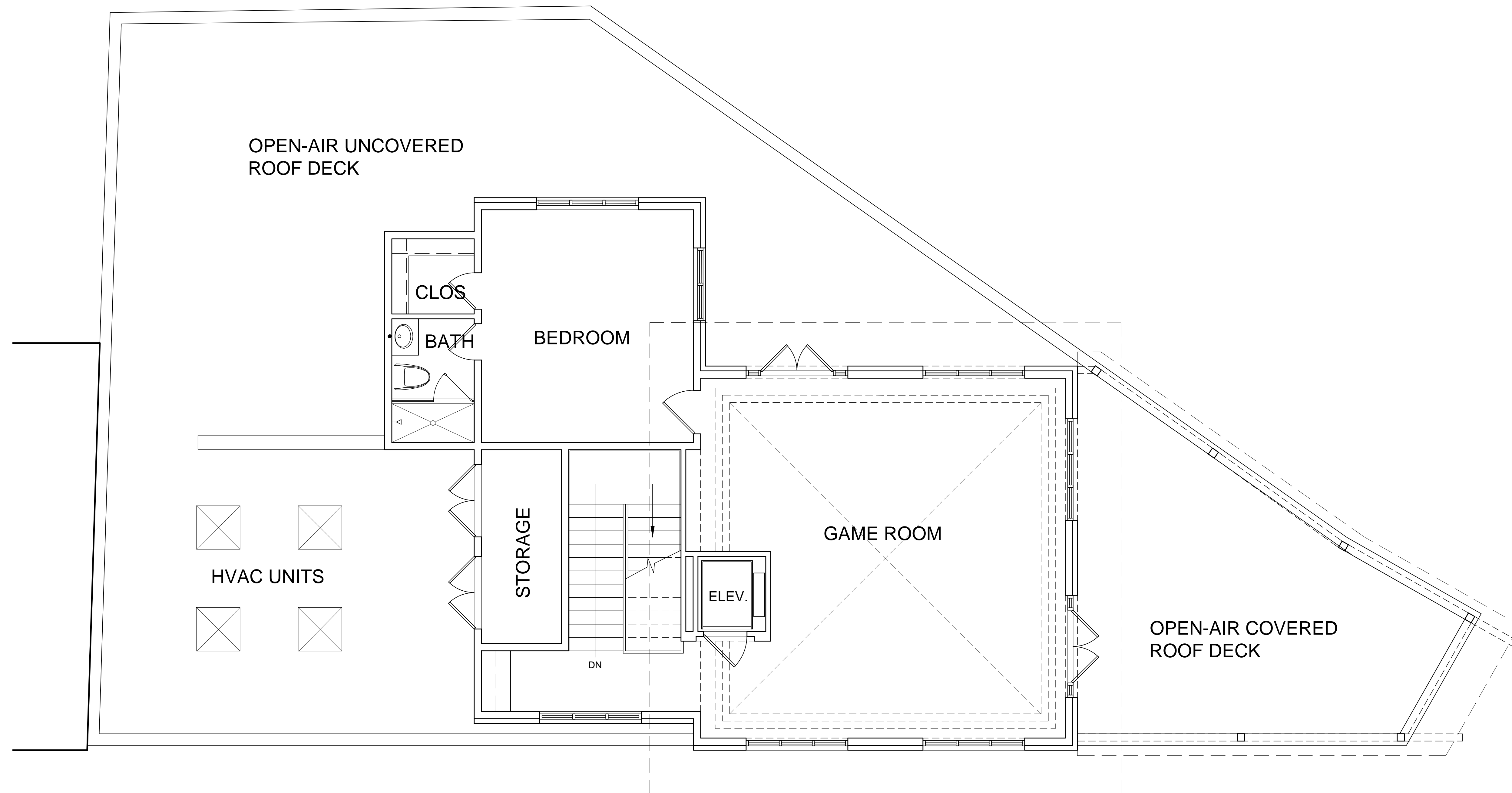




FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

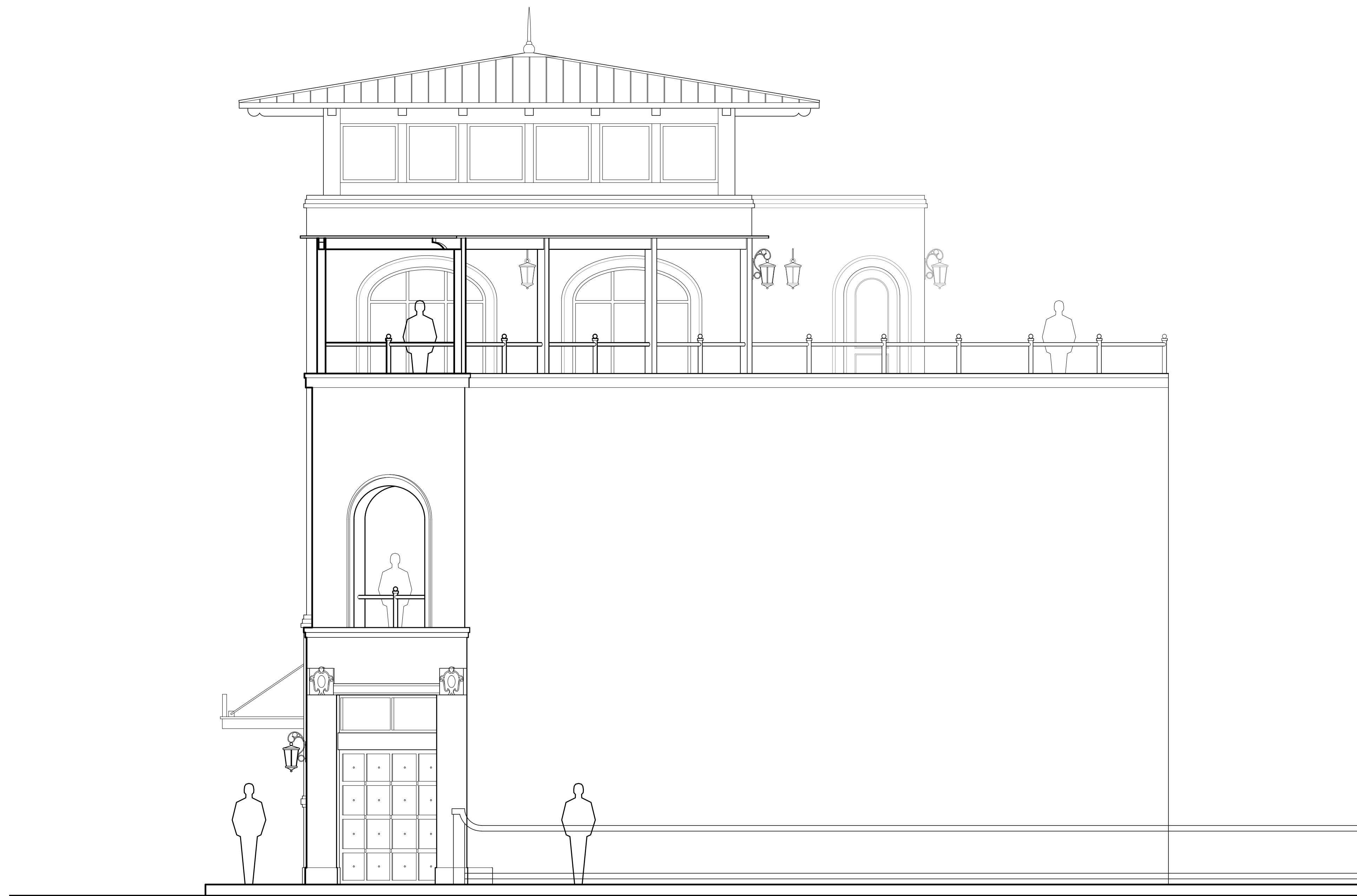


STREET VIEW



RIVER VIEW





STREET VIEW NEAR BRIDGE





STREET VIEW