

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

April 18, 2018

HDRC CASE NO: 2018-151
ADDRESS: 122 E HOUSTON ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 106 BLK LOT A-2
ZONING: D, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Main/Military Plaza Historic District
APPLICANT: Mikel Bennett
OWNER: Cabbage, Ltd
TYPE OF WORK: Installation of an awning structure, signage
APPLICATION RECEIVED: March 30, 2018
60-DAY REVIEW: May 29, 2018
REQUEST:

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

1. Install a flat metal awning below the existing front façade transoms to measure 1'-0" in height and 18'-7 1/8" in length.
2. Install extruded metal signage above the proposed awning with exposed white neon to total 10.1 square feet.
3. Install painted signage on the east and west facing elevations of the awning to total approximately 8 square feet.
4. Install painted window signage to total approximately 5.5 square feet.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, 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 6, Guidelines for Signage

1. General

A. GENERAL

i. *Number and size*—Each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet.

ii. *New signs*—Select the type of sign to be used based on evidence of historic signs or sign attachment parts along the building storefront where possible. Design signs to respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic districts.

iii. *Scale*—Design signage to be in proportion to the facade, respecting the building's size, scale and mass, height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. Scale signage (in terms of its height and width) to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

B. HISTORIC SIGNS

i. *Preservation*—Preserve historic signs, such as ghost signs or other signs characteristic of the building's or district's period of significance, whenever possible.

ii. *Maintenance*—Repair historic signs and replace historic parts in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair.

C. PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION

i. *Location*—Place signs where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Do not erect signs above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details.

ii. *Obstruction of historic features*—Avoid obscuring historic building features such as cornices, gables, porches, balconies, or other decorative elements with new signs.

iii. *Damage*—Avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry.

iv. *Pedestrian orientation*—Orient signs toward the sidewalk to maintain the pedestrian oriented nature of the historic districts.

D. DESIGN

i. *Inappropriate materials*—Do not use plastic, fiberglass, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read, or other synthetic materials not historically used in the district.

ii. *Appropriate materials*—Construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work.

iii. *Color*—Limit the number of colors used on a sign to three. Select a dark background with light lettering to make signs more legible.

iv. *Typefaces*—Select letter styles and sizes that complement the overall character of the building façade. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate styles.

E. LIGHTING

i. *Lighting sources*—Use only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Internal illumination should not be used.

ii. *Neon lighting*—Incorporate neon lighting as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site, if used.

F. PROHIBITED SIGNS

i. An abbreviated list of the types of signs prohibited within San Antonio's historic districts and on historic landmarks is provided below. Refer to UDC Section 35-612(j) and Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code for more detailed information on

prohibited signs.

Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, and advertising benches.

Pole signs.

Revolving signs or signs with a kinetic component.

Roof mounted signs, except in the case of a contributing sign.

Digital and/or LED lighted signs, not to include LED light sources that do not meet the definition of a sign.

Moored balloons or other floating signs that are tethered to the ground or to a structure.

Any sign which does not identify a business or service within the historic district or historic landmark.

Any non-contributing sign which is abandoned or damaged beyond 50 percent of its replacement value, including parts of old or unused signs.

Notwithstanding the above, signs designated as a contributing sign or structure by the historic preservation officer shall not be prohibited unless or until such designation is revoked.

G. MULTI-TENANT PROPERTIES

i. *Signage Plan*—Develop a master signage plan or signage guidelines for the total building or property.

ii. *Directory signs*—Group required signage in a single directory sign to minimize visual color and promote a unified appearance

2. Awning and Canopy Signs

A. GENERAL

i. *Appropriate usage*—Limit the use of awning and canopy signs to building forms that historically used awnings, most typically commercial storefronts and apartment buildings.

ii. *Placement*—Place signs on the awning or canopy valance, the portion that is parallel with the window.

iii. *Mounting*—Install awning hardware in a manner that does not damage historic building elements or materials.

B. DESIGN

i. *Materials*—Fabricate awnings using fire-resistant canvas in a color that is appropriate to the period of the building.

ii. *Shape*—Select awning shapes that reflect the door or window openings they cover. Limit valances to approximately eight to twelve inches in length.

iii. *Lettering and symbols*—Lettering should generally be placed on the valance portion of the awning.

C. LIGHTING

i. *Internal illumination*—Do not use internal illumination or other techniques that cause awnings to glow; however, illumination may be concealed in the awning to provide directional light to illuminate sidewalks or storefronts.

D. METAL CANOPIES

i. *Placement*—Do not mount new signs or letters on historic metal canopies in a manner that destroys or conceals historic materials.

5. Window Signs

A. GENERAL

i. *Location*—Limit the use of window signs to first floor windows where they may be readily viewed by pedestrians.

ii. *Appropriate building types*—Use window signs in high traffic pedestrian areas, such as on commercial storefronts or other buildings that have been adapted for non-residential use.

iii. *Historic signage*—Retain historic window signage if it reflects a historic building name, owner, or early business.

B. DESIGN

i. *Window coverage*—Do not cover more than 30 percent of the window area with signage.

ii. *Opacity*—Do not use window signs constructed of opaque materials that obscure views into and out of windows, either partially or completely.

iii. *Prohibited window signs*—Do not use paper signs, banners, or graphic films that adhere to the exterior of window glazing.

iv. *Symbols and lettering*—Incorporate lettering, symbols, and other design elements that reflect the type of business or institution at the location to increase a sign's impact.

v. *Temporary signs and banners*—Place temporary signs in a manner that is appropriate for the building scale and style, as allowed by UDC sec. 35-612(i).

FINDINGS:

- a. The primary structure located at 122 E Houston is a 3-story commercial block constructed circa 1920 in the

Romanesque Revival style with Richardsonian Revival elements. The structure is known as the University Building and features a metal storefront system on the first floor with rough face limestone blocks on the second and third stories. Each level is delineated by a dentil course and stone blocks containing intricately carved leaves and similar organic motifs at the window headers. The structure is contributing to the Main/Military Plaza Historic District.

- b. AWNING – The applicant has proposed to install a metal awning above the first floor doors and transoms at Suite 101, which abuts the adjacent Book Building. The awning will project approximately 4’-2” from the façade, measure 9’-0” from street level, measure 1’-0” tall, and measure 18’-7 1/8” in length. The flat, projecting design of the awning is derived from a historic photograph of the structure included in the exhibits. The awning will be a navy blue color and feature hexagonal detailing on the underside with bulb lights. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, new canopies and awnings should be based on evidence of the original, such as photographs. Staff finds the proposal consistent with the Guidelines.
- c. AWNING SIGNAGE: METAL – The applicant has proposed to install aluminum channel metal lettering above the proposed awning to read “Royal Blue Grocery.” The letters will total approximately 10.1 square feet. The letters will be the same navy color as the awning and contain exposed white neon for nighttime illumination. The applicant has not yet provided the total square footage of these letters. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, signage should be limited to three colors, be placed in locations that do not obscure historic building elements, and use appropriate materials for the period of construction. Staff finds the signage size, proportions, designs, illumination, and installation methods appropriate for the specific site.
- d. AWNING SIGNAGE: PAINTED – The applicant has proposed to paint the word “Grocery” on the east and west facing elevations of the proposed canopy to total approximately 8 square feet. The words will feature white letters in the same font as the proposed metal awning signage. Staff finds the proposal appropriate.
- e. WINDOW SIGNAGE – The applicant has proposed to install window decal signage to total 5.5 square feet. The signage will be hand painted in white and will indicate several items featured at the grocery. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, window signage should be limited to the first floor and should not obscure views in and out of the windows. Additionally, the signage should reflect the type of business at a location to increase its impact. Staff finds the proposed window signage appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed comprehensive signage plan based on findings a through e.

CASE MANAGER:

Stephanie Phillips



Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

Printed: Apr 11, 2018

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Royal Blue Grocery



Photo #7: Existing conditions of storefront, 2/20/18



Royal Blue Grocery

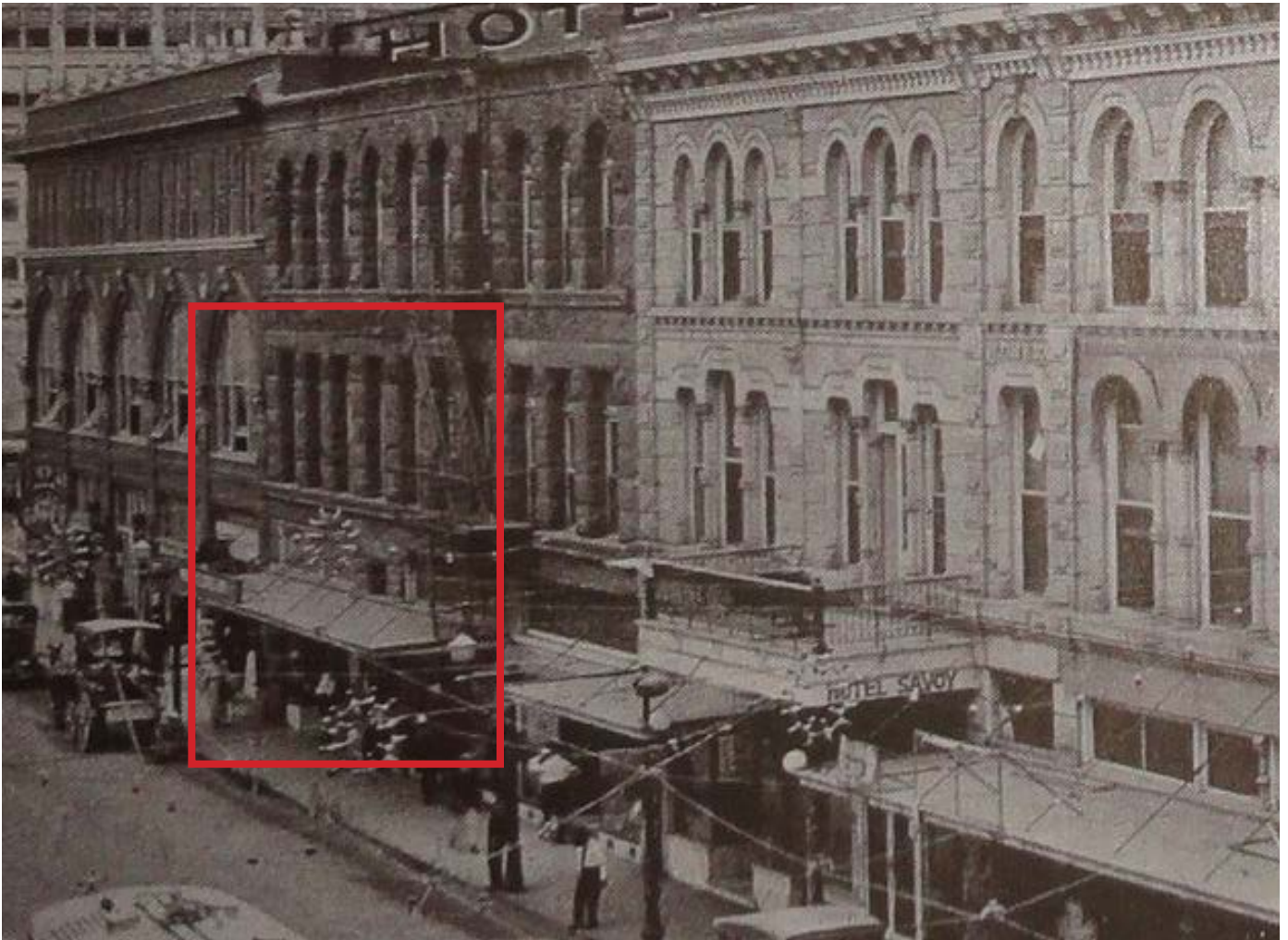


Photo #6: Historic photo, showing flat canopy. Photo from City of Destiny 1923.

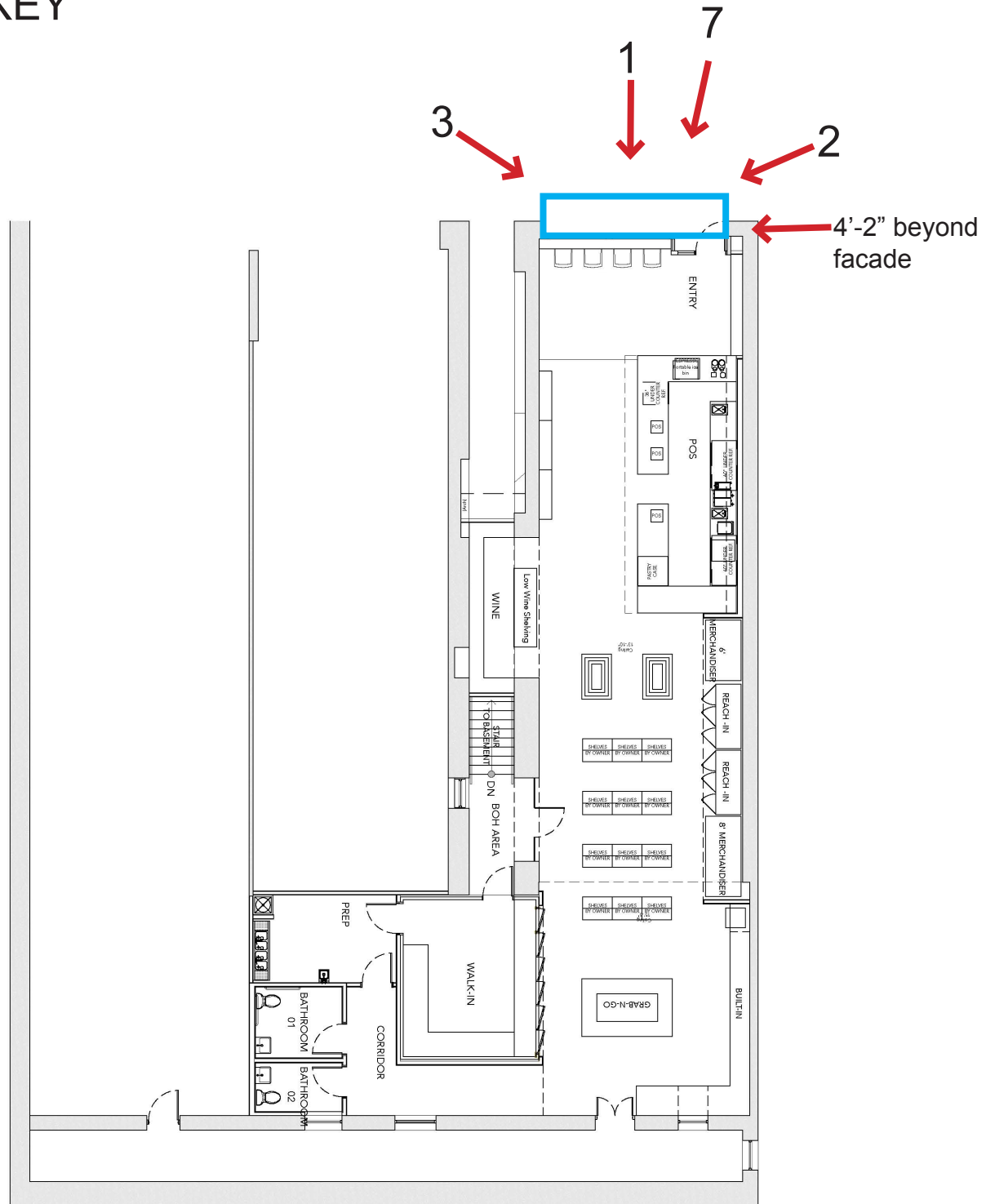
SITE PLAN

Royal Blue Grocery
122 East Houston Street Suite 101
San Antonio, TX, 78205



Royal Blue Grocery

PHOTO KEY



Royal Blue Grocery



Photo #1: Rendering of proposed Royal Blue Grocery

Royal Blue Grocery

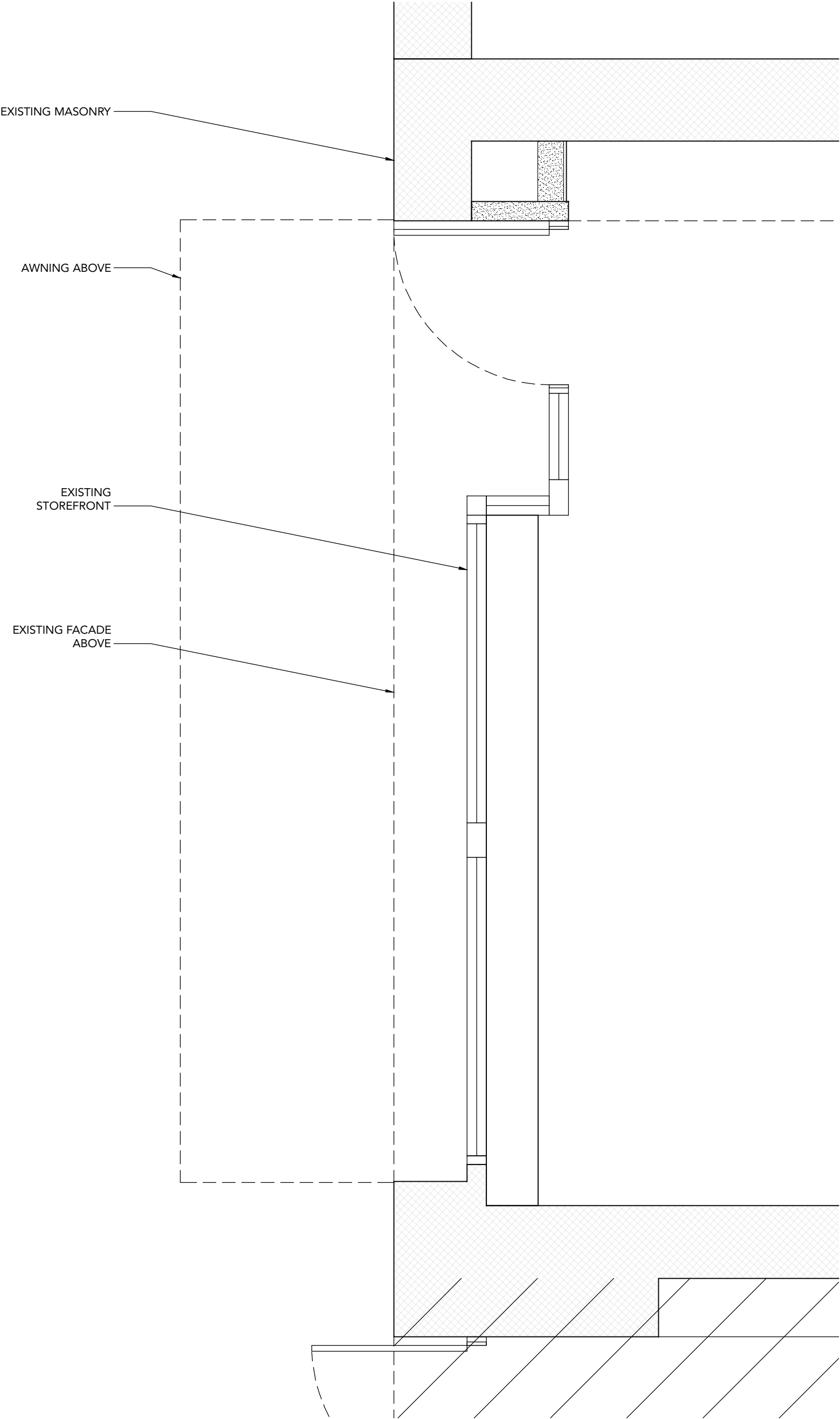


Photo #2: Rendering of proposed Royal Blue Grocery canopy and signage

Royal Blue Grocery



Photo #3: Example of a similar canopy (the signage will be on top of the canopy)



Plan at Entry

04/12/18

Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"

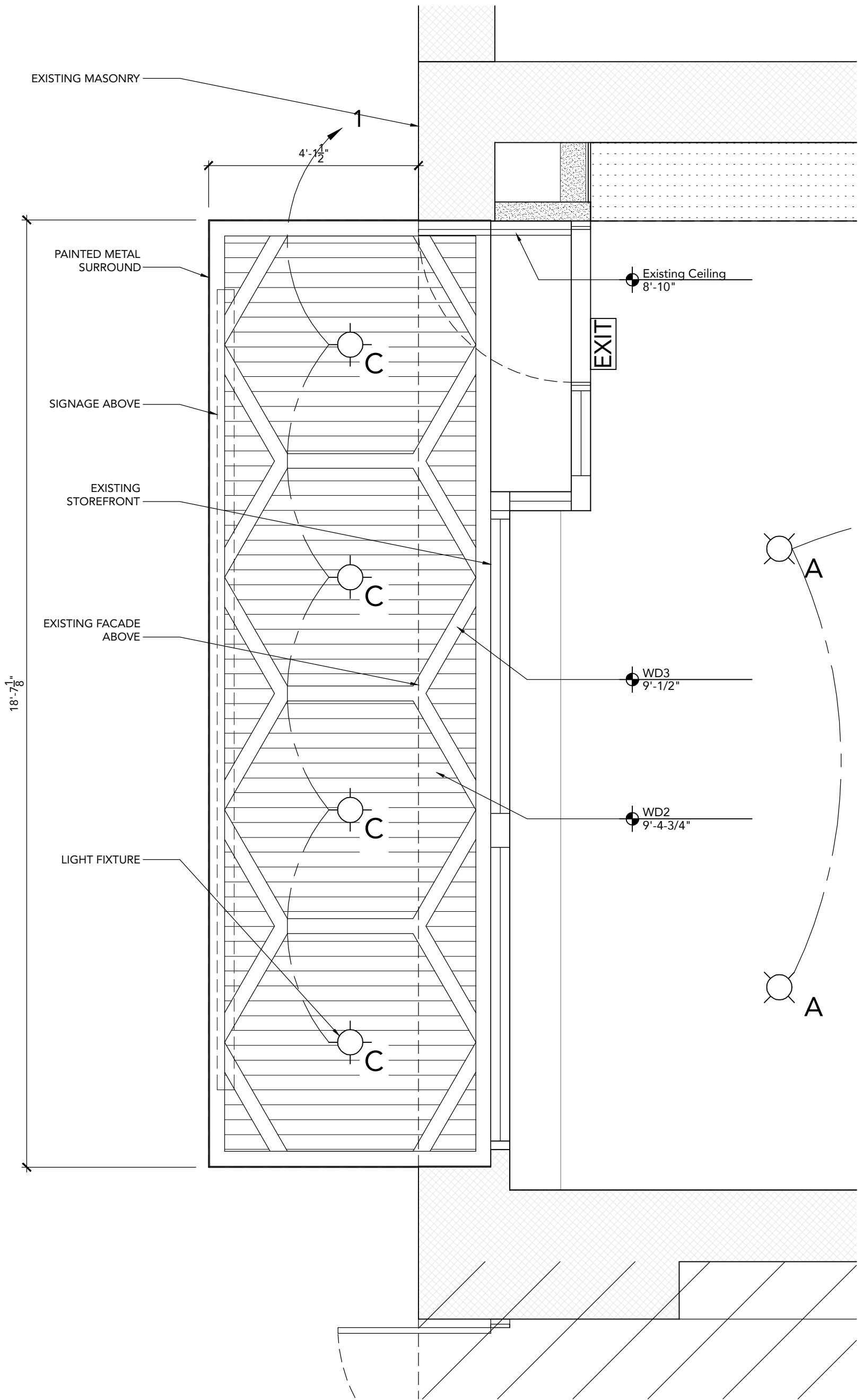
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CHIOCO

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1306 rosewood avenue
512.374.0288

austin, tx 78702
contact@chiocodesign.com



RCP at Entry

04/12/18

Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"

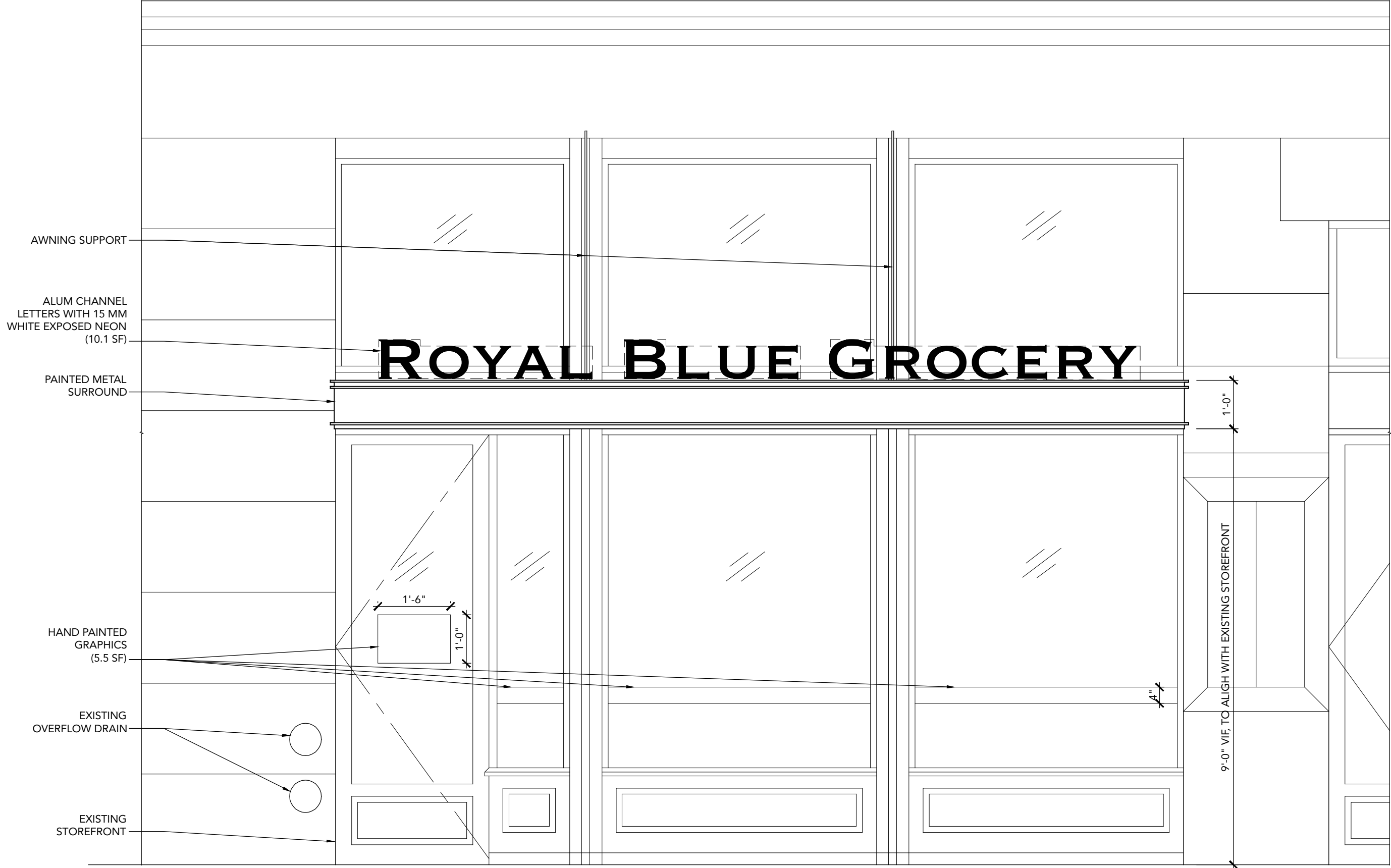
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Elevation at Entry

04/12/18

Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

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Royal Blue Grocery



Photo #4: Example of similar hand painted sign at Royal Blue Grocery

Royal Blue Grocery



Photo #5: Example of similar hand painted sign at Royal Blue Grocery