

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

December 05, 2018

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2018-605  
**COMMON NAME:** City Hall / 100 MILITARY PLAZA  
**ADDRESS:** 100 MILITARY PLAZA  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 865 BLK LOT P-100 ARB CITY HALL  
**ZONING:** D, HE  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**DISTRICT:** Main/Military Plaza Historic District  
**LANDMARK:** Plaza de Armas / Military Plaza  
**APPLICANT:** Allison Chambers, AIA/Ford, Powell & Carson  
**OWNER:** City of San Antonio  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Removal of fire escapes, construction of an ADA ramp and entrance modifications  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** November 16, 2018  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** January 15, 2018  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting conceptual approval for approval to:

1. Remove the fire escapes on the north and south elevations.
2. Construct an accessible ramp and entrance to City Hall on the east elevation.

## 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 facade 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.

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 8, Guidelines for Site Elements

### 8. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

## A. HISTORIC FEATURES

- i. Avoid damage*—Minimize the damage to the historic character and materials of the building and sidewalk while complying with all aspects of accessibility requirements.
- ii. Doors and door openings*—Avoid modifying historic doors or door openings that do not conform to the building and/or accessibility codes, particularly on the front façade. Consider using a discretely located addition as a means of providing accessibility.

## B. ENTRANCES

- i. Grade changes*—Incorporate minor changes in grade to modify sidewalk or walkway elevation to provide an accessible entry when possible.
- ii. Residential entrances*—The preferred location of new ramps is at the side or rear of the building when convenient for the user.
- iii. Non-residential and mixed use entrances*—Provide an accessible entrance located as close to the primary entrance as possible when access to the front door is not feasible.

## C. DESIGN

- i. Materials*—Design ramps and lifts to compliment the historic character of the building and be visually unobtrusive as to minimize the visual impact, especially when visible from the public right-of-way.
- ii. Screening*—Screen ramps, lifts, or other elements related to ADA compliance using appropriate landscape materials. Refer to Guidelines for Site Elements for additional guidance.
- iii. Curb cuts*—Install new ADA curb cuts on historic sidewalks to be consistent with the existing sidewalk color and texture while minimizing damage to the historical sidewalk.

## FINDINGS:

- a. The historic structure located at 100 Military Plaza, commonly known as City Hall was constructed in 1889. The structure features a fourth story addition which was constructed in 1927. At this time, the applicant has proposed to remove existing fire escapes and construct an ADA ramp and accessible entrance on the east façade.
- b. DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE – This request was reviewed by the Design Review Committee on November 13, 2018. At that meeting, committee members asked general questions regarding the design and rehabilitation as well as offered suggestions to the design team.
- c. FIRE ESCAPE REMOVAL – The Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 10. notes that character defining features should be preserved. Additionally, the guidelines note that new features should not obscure original architectural elements. The applicant has proposed to remove the existing fire escapes, which were added in 1927, noting that they are no longer needed for egress, are not a code compliant means of egress and are a security risk. Staff finds the removal of the non-original fire escapes to be appropriate given that they are not original to the structure and their removal will better display original architectural elements.
- d. ADA RAMP – The applicant has proposed to construct an ADA ramp to the east façade of the historic structure. The construction of this ramp will include a new formal entry stair that is to mirror the profile and geometry of the existing stairs, will feature two broad ramps that will ascend from the northeast and southeast corners of the site that feature flared bases. In addition to the two ramp masses, the applicant has also proposed to shift the east curb forward proportionally to the stair, raise the ground plane to rise with the ramps to eliminate the need for guardrails to present the ramps as a cohesive part of the landscaping and add a circular plaza between both ramps.
- e. SITE TREES – The applicant has noted that steps have been taken to preserve the existing trees on site including the establishment of root protection zones and the use of permeable paving in the circular plaza.
- f. EXISTING MONUMENTS – Three historic monuments that currently exist on site will be re-installed at the ramp and plaza entries near where their historic locations.
- g. ARCHAEOLOGY- The project area is within the River Improvement Overlay District, Main and Military Plazas Local Historic District, Main and Military Plazas Historic District National Register of Historic Places District, and is a designated Local Historic Landmark. In addition, the project area is within the 1722 footprint of the San Antonio de Béxar Presidio. Furthermore, the property is within, or in close proximity to, previously recorded archaeological sites 41BX179, 41BX795, 41BX1598, and 41BX2088. Therefore, archaeological investigations are required. The development project shall comply with the Antiquities Code of Texas, Health and Safety Code of Texas, and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology.

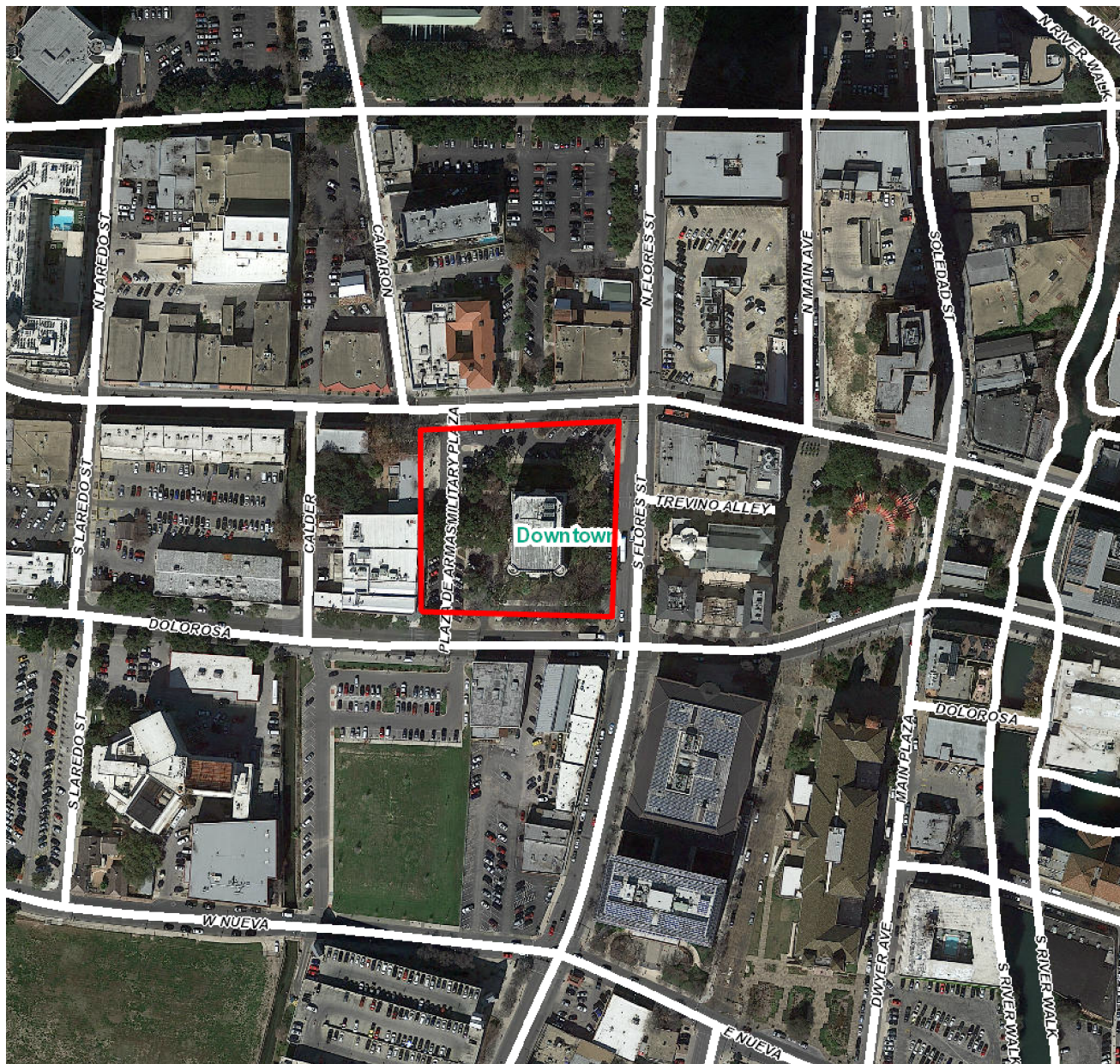
**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends conceptual of items #1 and #2 based on findings a through g with the following stipulation:

- i. ARCHAEOLOGY- Archaeological investigations are required. The archaeological scope of work should be submitted to the OHP archaeologists for review and approval prior to beginning the archaeological investigation. The development project shall comply with the Antiquities Code of Texas, Health and Safety Code of Texas, and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology.
- ii. That the proposed new stair be a close match to the original regarding appearance and materials.
- iii. That every attempt be made to use carved stone. If this is not possible due to project constraints, staff finds that any cast stone that is used should match the existing detailing as closely as possible.

**CASE MANAGER:**

Edward Hall



## Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

Printed: Nov 29, 2018

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION**

**Historic and Design Review Commission  
Design Review Committee  
Report & Recommendation**

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2018 HDRC Case#                     

ADDRESS: CITY HALL Meeting Location: 1901 S ALAMO

APPLICANT: LOSA / FORA POWELL CARSON / BEATTY PALMER

DRC Members present: JEFF PETZER, JOHN LAFFOON

Staff present: EDWARD HALL

Others present: ALLISON CHAMBERS, MIKE BEATTY

REQUEST: RENOVATIONS, CONSTRUCTION OF AN AAA ENTRANCE RAMP

COMMENTS/CONCERNS: MB: OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK  
REGARDING AAA RAMP ON EAST FACADE. JE: DESIGN ALLOWS FOR THE  
HISTORIC STRUCTURE REMAIN THE PROMINENT FEATURE RATHER THAN  
THE RAMP. JL: WOULD CURVED RAMPS BE CONSIDERED? CURVED  
RAMP MAY BE MORE GRACEFUL. JE: EXPLORE WAYS TO BREAK OR  
SOFTEN SHARP EDGES OF PLANTERS. JE: QUESTIONS REGARDING  
MATERIALS; STONE (LAST STONE) OR CARVED STONE. AL: PROPOSING TO  
REMOVE FIVE ESCAPES (ADDED IN 1917); INTERNAL STAIRS WILL BE  
RECONFIGURED TO MEET CODE. JL: NO CONCERN. JE: AMBIVALENT  
**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** ☐ APPROVE ☐ DISAPPROVE ☐  
**APPROVE WITH COMMENTS/STIPULATIONS:**

Committee Chair Signature (or representative)

11.13.18  
Date



EAST ELEVATION





SOUTH ELEVATION





SOUTHWEST PERSPECTIVE





WEST ELEVATION





NORTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION  
FIRE ESCAPE





SOUTH ELEVATION  
FIRE ESCAPE





# Renovation of Historic City Hall

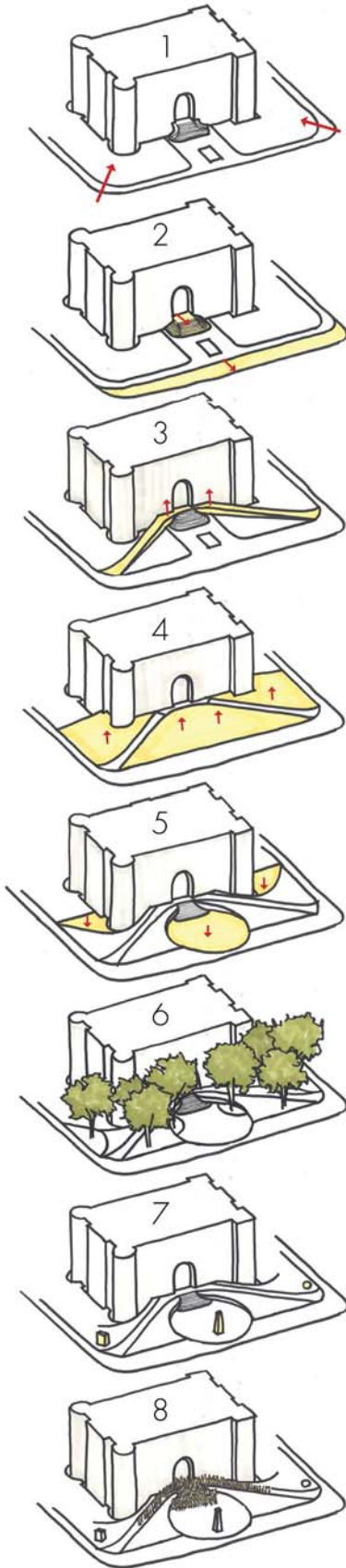
## Removal of Fire Escapes – Conceptual Approval Narrative

The design team is proposing to remove the fire escapes on the north and south elevations of City Hall. They are not original to the building and were added as part of the 1927 renovation. They are no longer needed for egress because the existing interior stairs are being reconfigured as part of the current renovation. To access the fire escapes from the interior, a person would have to climb out of a window, which is not to code. They are also a security risk to this high profile building.



## BEATY PALMER ARCHITECTS

### Schematic Design Concept Narrative East Entry of City Hall



The objective of the design is to provide equal access for all while preserving the historic integrity of this important municipal landmark. The new design elements are subtle and allow the building to “speak for itself”. New construction and landscaping are positioned to provide a frame for the formal stairs and entryway. The existing symbolic functions of City Hall, its material palette, its architectural style, its symmetrical configuration, and its existing landscape were all carefully considered and woven into the new design.

1: After analysis of the site traffic patterns, both pedestrian traffic from off-site and pedestrian traffic from parked vehicles are directed to the corners of the site before they reach the east entry. This makes the corners the most convenient approach for the majority of people entering at the east entry.

2: A new formal stair, mirroring the geometry of the deteriorated existing stair, is placed forward to provide proper clearances and more room for people to gather. The east curb is shifted forward proportional to the stair.

3: Two broad ramps are inlaid from the northeast and southeast corners of the site. The ramps extend diagonally into the sides of the top landing of the stair. The new ramps will likely become the primary access route for the disabled and able-bodied alike. The ramps flare out at their bases to provide legible, inviting, and convenient pathways to the building.

4: The ground plane grade is raised along with the walks so that the new ramps are perceived as walks. This will integrate the new ramps into the existing fabric of the site landscaping and will eliminate the need for obtrusive guardrails.

5: A generous, circular plaza is cut from the raised grade to frame the existing entry and stairs. The symmetry of the circular plaza will complement the near symmetry of the building and recalls the circular geometry of previous historic plaza layouts. The raised grade is also cut back on the west side of the ramps in a circular form to allow the new construction to ‘float’ over the historic moat and maintain the stepped views out the basement windows.

6: Since the site’s mature trees contribute to much of the character of City Hall, special care has been taken to preserve them. Alterations in the root protection zones of the trees will be minimized by suspending the structure of new construction, the use of permeable paving in the plaza, and a subterranean gravel system to provide oxygen and rain water to the tree roots.

7: Three historic monuments will be re-installed at the ramp and plaza entries near where they historically existed.

8: The new plaza is designed to be utilized in the same symbolic way as it is used today. The ramps and circular plaza provide more space for community gatherings and public speeches.



CITY HALL, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.



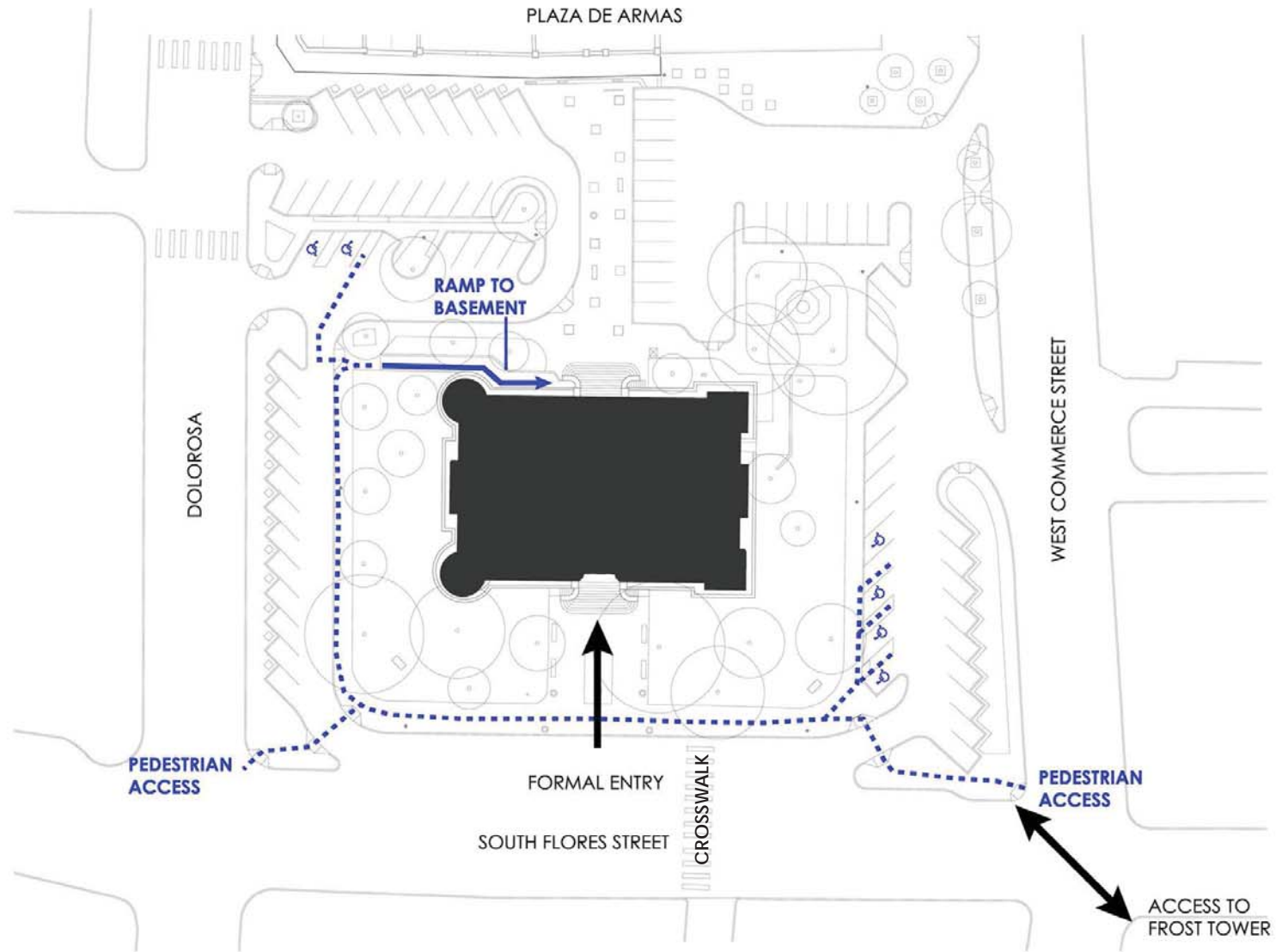
WWW.THEALAMOCITY.COM

HISTORIC IMAGE

## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

100 MILITARY PLAZA  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205



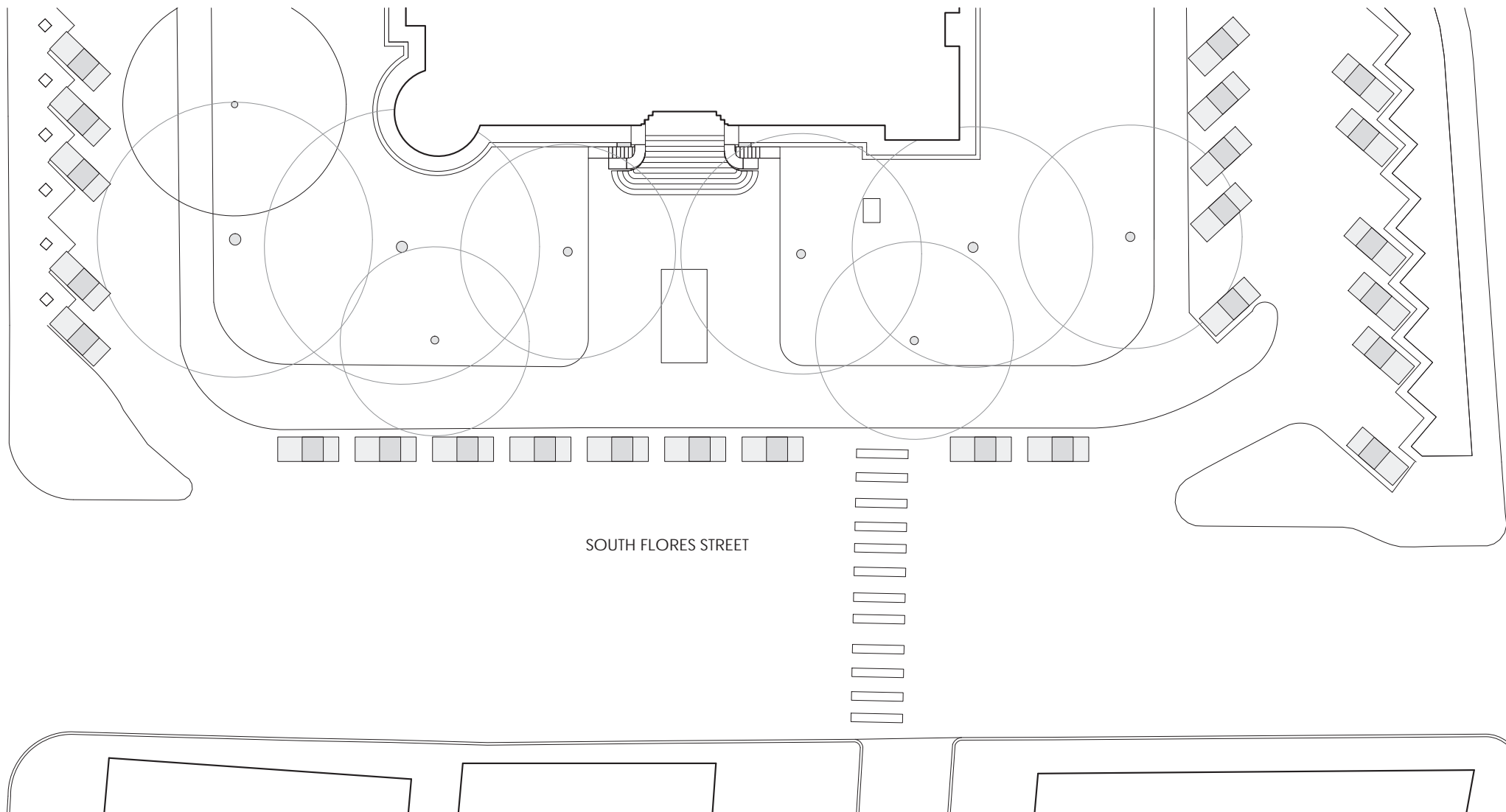


EXISTING SITE PLAN

## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

100 MILITARY PLAZA  
 SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205





SOUTH FLORES STREET

EXISTING SITE PLAN

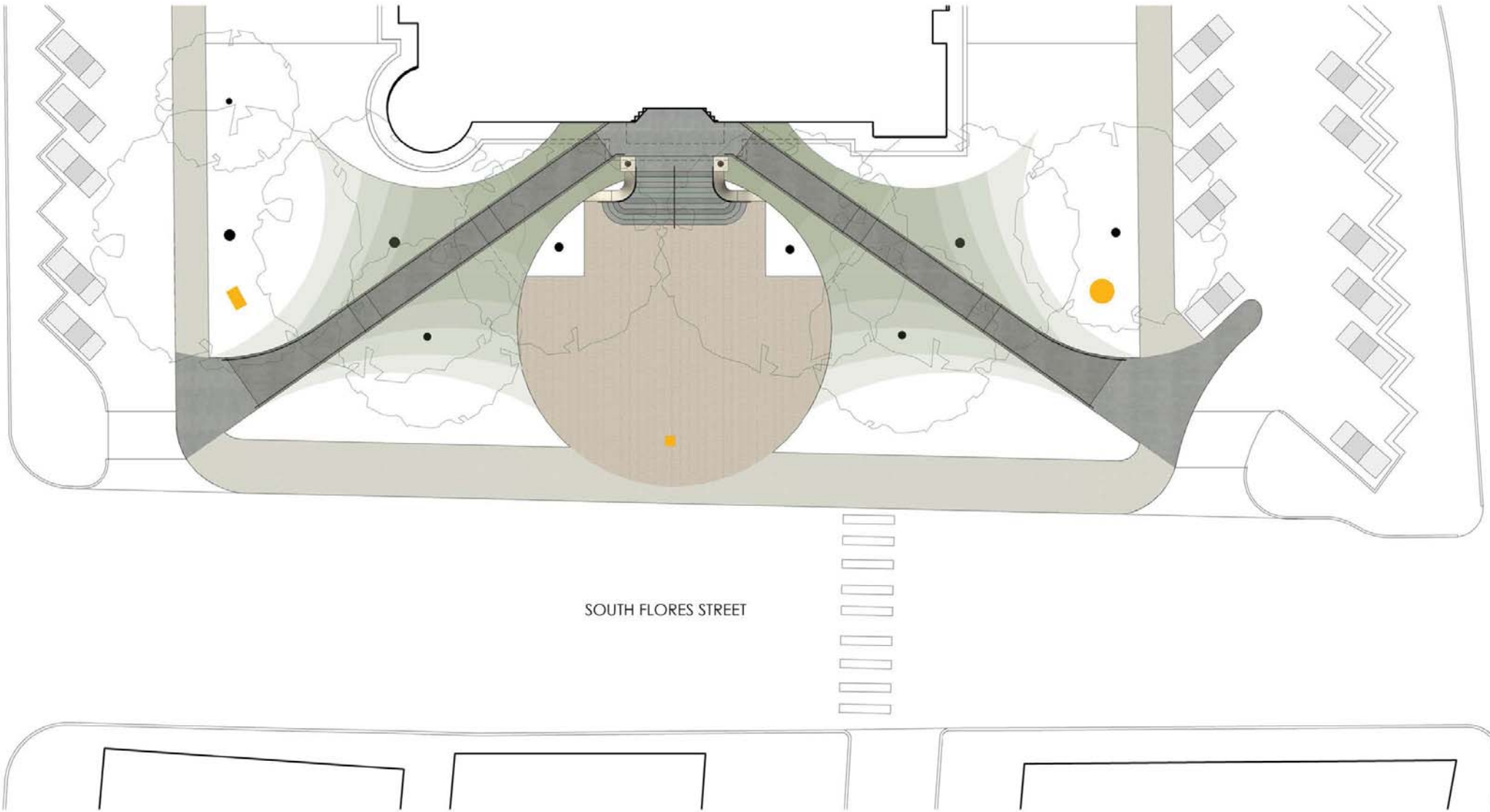


**BEATY PALMER ARCHITECTS**

## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

100 MILITARY PLAZA  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205





SOUTH FLORES STREET

PROPOSED SITE PLAN



## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

100 MILITARY PLAZA  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205

**BEATY PALMER ARCHITECTS**





EAST ELEVATION





EAST ELEVATION

## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

100 MILITARY PLAZA  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205





**BEATY PALMER ARCHITECTS**

## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

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## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

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SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205





NORTHEAST APPROACH

## RENOVATION OF HISTORIC CITY HALL

100 MILITARY PLAZA  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205





NORTHEAST APPROACH





EAST ENTRY





EAST ENTRY