

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

July 01, 2020

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2020-256  
**ADDRESS:** 515 N PALMETTO  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 1371 BLK 3 LOT 33 34 & 35  
**ZONING:** RM-4, H  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 2  
**DISTRICT:** Dignowity Hill Historic District  
**APPLICANT:** ricardo mccullough/mccullough design assoc  
**OWNER:** luisa naves  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Construction of three, 1-story residential structures  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** June 08, 2020  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders  
**CASE MANAGER:** Edward Hall

## REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting conceptual approval of a site plan and massing for the construction of three, 1-story residential structures on the vacant lot at 515 N Palmetto, located within the Dignowity Hill Historic District.

## APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 4, Guidelines for New Construction*

### 1. Building and Entrance Orientation

#### A. FAÇADE ORIENTATION

*i. Setbacks*—Align front facades of new buildings with front facades of adjacent buildings where a consistent setback has been established along the street frontage. Use the median setback of buildings along the street frontage where a variety of

setbacks exist. Refer to UDC Article 3, Division 2. Base Zoning Districts for applicable setback requirements.

*ii. Orientation*—Orient the front façade of new buildings to be consistent with the predominant orientation of historic buildings along the street frontage.

#### B. ENTRANCES

*i. Orientation*—Orient primary building entrances, porches, and landings to be consistent with those historically found along the street frontage. Typically, historic building entrances are oriented towards the primary street.

### 2. Building Massing and Form

#### A. SCALE AND MASS

*i. Similar height and scale*—Design new construction so that its height and overall scale are consistent with nearby historic buildings. In residential districts, the height and scale of new construction should not exceed that of the majority of historic buildings by more than one-story. In commercial districts, building height shall conform to the established pattern. If there is no more than a 50% variation in the scale of buildings on the adjacent block faces, then the height of the new building shall not exceed the tallest building on the adjacent block face by more than 10%.

*ii. Transitions*—Utilize step-downs in building height, wall-plane offsets, and other variations in building massing to provide a visual transition when the height of new construction exceeds that of adjacent historic buildings by more than one-half story.

*iii. Foundation and floor heights*—Align foundation and floor-to-floor heights (including porches and balconies) within one foot of floor-to-floor heights on adjacent historic structures.

#### B. ROOF FORM

*i. Similar roof forms*—Incorporate roof forms—pitch, overhangs, and orientation—that are consistent with those

predominantly found on the block. Roof forms on residential building types are typically sloped, while roof forms on nonresidential

building types are more typically flat and screened by an ornamental parapet wall.

*ii. Façade configuration*—The primary façade of new commercial buildings should be in keeping with established patterns. Maintaining horizontal elements within adjacent cap, middle, and base precedents will establish a consistent street wall through the alignment of horizontal parts. Avoid blank walls, particularly on elevations visible from the street.

No new façade should exceed 40 linear feet without being penetrated by windows, entryways, or other defined bays.

#### D. LOT COVERAGE

*i. Building to lot ratio*—New construction should be consistent with adjacent historic buildings in terms of the building to

lot ratio. Limit the building footprint for new construction to no more than 50 percent of the total lot area, unless adjacent

historic buildings establish a precedent with a greater building to lot ratio.

### 3. Materials and Textures

#### A. NEW MATERIALS

*i. Complementary materials*—Use materials that complement the type, color, and texture of materials traditionally found in the district. Materials should not be so dissimilar as to distract from the historic interpretation of the district. For example, corrugated metal siding would not be appropriate for a new structure in a district comprised of homes with wood siding.

*ii. Alternative use of traditional materials*—Consider using traditional materials, such as wood siding, in a new way to provide visual interest in new construction while still ensuring compatibility.

*iii. Roof materials*—Select roof materials that are similar in terms of form, color, and texture to traditionally used in the district.

*iv. Metal roofs*—Construct new metal roofs in a similar fashion as historic metal roofs. Refer to the Guidelines for Alterations and Maintenance section for additional specifications regarding metal roofs.

*v. Imitation or synthetic materials*—Do not use vinyl siding, plastic, or corrugated metal sheeting. Contemporary materials not traditionally used in the district, such as brick or simulated stone veneer and Hardie Board or other fiberboard siding, may be appropriate for new construction in some locations as long as new materials are visually similar

to the traditional material in dimension, finish, and texture. EIFS is not recommended as a substitute for actual stucco.

### 4. Architectural Details

#### A. GENERAL

*i. Historic context*—Design new buildings to reflect their time while respecting the historic context. While new construction should not attempt to mirror or replicate historic features, new structures should not be so dissimilar as to distract from or diminish the historic interpretation of the district.

*ii. Architectural details*—Incorporate architectural details that are in keeping with the predominant architectural style along the block face or within the district when one exists. Details should be simple in design and should complement, but

not visually compete with, the character of the adjacent historic structures or other historic structures within the district. Architectural details that are more ornate or elaborate than those found within the district are inappropriate.

*iii. Contemporary interpretations*—Consider integrating contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details for

new construction. Use of contemporary window moldings and door surroundings, for example, can provide visual interest

while helping to convey the fact that the structure is new. Modern materials should be implemented in a way that does not

distract from the historic structure.

### 5. Garages and Outbuildings

## A. DESIGN AND CHARACTER

v. *Garage doors*—Incorporate garage doors with similar proportions and materials as those traditionally found in the district.

## 6. Mechanical Equipment and Roof Appurtenances

### A. LOCATION AND SITING

i. *Visibility*—Do not locate utility boxes, air conditioners, rooftop mechanical equipment, skylights, satellite dishes, and other roof appurtenances on primary facades, front-facing roof slopes, in front yards, or in other locations that are clearly

visible from the public right-of-way.

ii. *Service Areas*—Locate service areas towards the rear of the site to minimize visibility from the public right-of-way.

### B. SCREENING

i. *Building-mounted equipment*—Paint devices mounted on secondary facades and other exposed hardware, frames, and piping to match the color scheme of the primary structure or screen them with landscaping.

ii. *Freestanding equipment*—Screen service areas, air conditioning units, and other mechanical equipment from public view using a fence, hedge, or other enclosure.

iii. *Roof-mounted equipment*—Screen and set back devices mounted on the roof to avoid view from public right-of-way. Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

### B. NEW FENCES AND WALLS

i. *Design*—New fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale,

transparency, and character. Design of fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure.

ii. *Location*—Avoid installing a fence or wall in a location where one did not historically exist, particularly within the front yard. The appropriateness of a front yard fence or wall is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district.

New front yard fences or wall should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them.

iii. *Height*—Limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet. The appropriateness of a front yard fence is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them. If a taller fence or wall existed historically, additional height may be considered. The height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains.

iv. *Prohibited materials*—Do not use exposed concrete masonry units (CMU), Keystone or similar interlocking retaining

wall systems, concrete block, vinyl fencing, or chain link fencing.

v. *Appropriate materials*—Construct new fences or walls of materials similar to fence materials historically used in the district. Select materials that are similar in scale, texture, color, and form as those historically used in the district, and that

are compatible with the main structure. Screening incompatible uses—Review alternative fence heights and materials for

appropriateness where residential properties are adjacent to commercial or other potentially incompatible uses.

## 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.

## 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.

## 5. Sidewalks, Walkways, Driveways, and Curbing

### A. SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

*i. Maintenance*—Repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces. Retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials—often brick or concrete—in place.

*ii. Replacement materials*—Replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair. Every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material.

*iii. Width and alignment*—Follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways. Alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree.

*iv. Stamped concrete*—Preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary.

*v. ADA compliance*—Limit removal of historic sidewalk materials to the immediate intersection when ramps are added to address ADA requirements.

### B. DRIVEWAYS

*i. Driveway configuration*—Retain and repair in place historic driveway configurations, such as ribbon drives. Incorporate

a similar driveway configuration—materials, width, and design—to that historically found on the site. Historic driveways

are typically no wider than 10 feet. Pervious paving surfaces may be considered where replacement is necessary to



increase stormwater infiltration.

*ii. Curb cuts and ramps*—Maintain the width and configuration of original curb cuts when replacing historic driveways. Avoid introducing new curb cuts where not historically found.

## 7. Off-Street Parking

### A. LOCATION

*i. Preferred location*—Place parking areas for non-residential and mixed-use structures at the rear of the site, behind primary structures to hide them from the public right-of-way. On corner lots, place parking areas behind the primary structure and set them back as far as possible from the side streets. Parking areas to the side of the primary structure are acceptable when location behind the structure is not feasible. See UDC Section 35-310 for district-specific standards.

*ii. Front*—Do not add off-street parking areas within the front yard setback as to not disrupt the continuity of the streetscape.

*iii. Access*—Design off-street parking areas to be accessed from alleys or secondary streets rather than from principal streets whenever possible.

### B. DESIGN

*i. Screening*—Screen off-street parking areas with a landscape buffer, wall, or ornamental fence two to four feet high—or a combination of these methods. Landscape buffers are preferred due to their ability to absorb carbon dioxide. See UDC Section 35-510 for buffer requirements.

*ii. Materials*—Use permeable parking surfaces when possible to reduce run-off and flooding. See UDC Section 35-526(j) for specific standards.

*iii. Parking structures*—Design new parking structures to be similar in scale, materials, and rhythm of the surrounding historic district when new parking structures are necessary.

### *Standard Specifications for Windows in Additions and New Construction*

Consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines, the following recommendations are made for windows to be used in new construction:

- **GENERAL:** Windows used in new construction should be similar in appearance to those commonly found within the district in terms of size, profile, and configuration. While no material is expressly prohibited by the Historic Design Guidelines, a high quality wood or aluminum-clad wood window product often meets the Guidelines with the stipulations listed below.
- **SIZE:** Windows should feature traditional dimensions and proportions as found within the district.
- **SASH:** Meeting rails must be no taller than 1.25". Stiles must be no wider than 2.25". Top and bottom sashes must be equal in size unless otherwise approved.
- **DEPTH:** There should be a minimum of 2" in depth between the front face of the window trim and the front face of the top window sash. This must be accomplished by recessing the window sufficiently within the opening or with the installation of additional window trim to add thickness. All windows should be supplied in a block frame and exclude nailing fins which limit the ability to sufficiently recess the windows.
- **TRIM:** Window trim must feature traditional dimensions and architecturally appropriate casing and sloped sill detail.
- **GLAZING:** Windows should feature clear glass. Low-e or reflective coatings are not recommended for replacements. The glazing should not feature faux divided lights with an interior grille. If approved to match a historic window configuration, the window should feature true, exterior muntins.
- **COLOR:** Wood windows should feature a painted finish. If a clad or non-wood product is approved, white or metallic manufacturer's color is not allowed and color selection must be presented to staff.

## **FINDINGS:**

- a. The applicant is requesting conceptual approval of a site plan and massing for the construction of three, 1-story residential structures on the vacant lot at 515 N Palmetto, located within the Dignowity Hill Historic District.
- b. **CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL** – Conceptual approval is the review of general design ideas and principles (such as scale and setback). Specific design details reviewed at this stage are not binding and may only be approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness for final approval.
- c. **CONTEXT & DEVELOPMENT PATTERN** – As noted in finding a, the existing site is currently void of any structures and is bounded by N Palmetto to the east and Florence/Dawson Alley to the west (rear). The lot is approximately 120 feet wide and 130 feet deep for a total size of 15,600 square feet. The applicant intends to sub divide the property into three lots.
- d. **DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE** – This request was reviewed by the Design Review Committee on April 22, 2020. At that meeting, the committee noted that front yard parking pads should be removed, commented on driveway configuration and noted that three new structures rather than six would be most appropriate for the district.
- e. **SETBACKS & ORIENTATION** – Regarding setbacks, the applicant has proposed setbacks for all three structures that are greater than those found historically on the block. This is consistent with the Guidelines for New Construction. Regarding orientation, the applicant has proposed an orientation that is appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines.
- f. **SCALE & MASS** – Per the Guidelines for New Construction 2.A.i., a height and massing similar to historic structures in the vicinity of the proposed new construction should be used. In residential districts, the height and scale of new construction should not exceed that of the majority of historic buildings by more than one-story. This block of N Palmetto features five historic structures, only one of which features more than one story in height. Staff finds the proposed height and massing of one story for each structure to be appropriate.
- g. **ENTRANCES** – According to the Guidelines for New Construction 1.B.i., primary building entrances should be oriented towards the primary street. The applicant’s proposed entrance orientation is consistent with the Guidelines.
- h. **FOUNDATION & FLOOR HEIGHTS** – Per the Guidelines for New Construction 2.A.iii., applicants should align foundation and floor-to-floor heights within one foot of floor-to-floor heights on adjacent historic structures. At this time the applicant has not provided information regarding foundation heights. Staff finds that the applicant should utilize foundation heights that are consistent with the Guidelines, at least one (1) foot in height.
- i. **ROOF FORMS** – The applicant has proposed for each of the three structures to feature gabled and hipped roofs. Staff finds each of these roof forms to be appropriate; however, staff finds that gable returns should be eliminated from gabled roofs.
- j. **WINDOW & DOOR OPENINGS** – Per the Guidelines for New Construction 2.C.i., window and door openings with similar proportions of wall to window space as typical with nearby historic facades should be incorporated into new construction. Per the submitted elevations, the applicant has proposed window and door openings that are generally consistent with the Guidelines. The applicant should incorporate window and door openings that are consistent with the Guidelines when developing construction documents.
- k. **PORCH MASSING** – The applicant has proposed for each porch to feature a massing that is incorporated within the massing of each structure. Staff finds this to be appropriate; however, staff finds that each porch should feature a depth of at least five (5) feet. Additionally, staff finds that a side window should be incorporated into the each porch wall (facing the side wall), consistent with historic examples found throughout the district.
- l. **LOT COVERAGE** – Per the Guidelines for New Construction 2.D.i., applicants should limit the building footprint for new construction to no more than 50 percent of the total lot area, unless adjacent historic buildings establish a precedent with a greater building to lot ratio. Per the submitted site plan, staff finds that the proposed lot coverage is consistent with the Guidelines.

- m. **MATERIALS** – At this time the applicant has not submitted information regarding materials. Staff finds that all siding should feature a four (4) inch exposure, a thickness of  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", mitered corners and a smooth finish. Columns should be six inches square, and window materials should meet staff's standards for windows in new construction.
- n. **WINDOW MATERIALS** – At this time, the applicant has not provided information regarding window materials. Staff finds that a wood, or aluminum clad wood window should be installed that is consistent with staff's specifications for windows, which are noted in the applicable citations.
- o. **ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS** – As noted in the previous findings, staff finds that through the development of construction documents, foundation heights, window and door openings and materials should be incorporated into the design. Additionally, each porch should feature a side facing window and a depth of at least five (5) inches.
- p. **ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS (Unique Design)** – The applicant has taken steps to incorporate a unique design for each structure, including roof forms. Staff finds that additional steps should be taken to incorporate a unique design for each structure.
- q. **SITE ELEMENTS (DRIVEWAYS)** – The applicant has incorporated driveways for each structure that terminate into the front façade of each structure, and result in a front yard parking condition. The Guidelines for Site Elements 7.A. notes that front yard parking should not be added into the front yard setbacks. Staff finds the proposed driveway location to be inconsistent with the Guidelines. Driveways should be positioned to the side of each structure. A driveway entrance from the rear alley would also be appropriate.
- r. **WALKWAY** – Historic structures within the Dignowity Hill Historic District feature walkways leading from the front porch to the sidewalk at the public right of way. Staff finds that this should be incorporated into the applicant's front yard design.
- s. **LANDSCAPING** – At this time the applicant has not provided information regarding landscaping. A detailed landscaping plan should be submitted to OHP staff for review and approval. Landscaping should be consistent with the Guidelines for Site Elements.
- t. **MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT** – The applicant has not noted the location of mechanical equipment at this time. Staff finds that all mechanical equipment should be screened from view from the public right of way.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends conceptual approval of the proposed site plan, building footprints and massing based on findings a through t with the following stipulations:

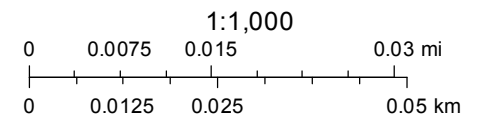
- i. That the applicant utilize foundation heights that are consistent with the Guidelines, at least one (1) foot in height, as noted in finding h.
- ii. That the applicant incorporate window and door openings that are consistent with the Guidelines when developing construction documents, as noted in finding j.
- iii. That each porch feature a depth of at least five (5) feet in depth, and feature a side facing window as noted in finding k.
- iv. That all siding feature a four (4) inch exposure, a thickness of  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", mitered corners and a smooth finish. Columns should be six inches square, and window materials should meet staff's standards for windows in new construction, as noted in finding m. Additionally, gable returns should be eliminated from the gabled roofs.
- v. That the applicant install windows that are consistent with staff's specifications for windows in new construction, as noted in finding n.
- vi. That additional steps be taken to incorporate a unique design for each structure, as noted in finding p.
- vii. That the applicant eliminate the proposed driveways that terminate into the front façade of each structure and consider a rear driveway from the alley, as noted in finding q.
- viii. That the applicant install a front walkway to connect to the sidewalk at the right of way, develop a landscaping plan, and screen all mechanical equipment as noted in findings r, s, and t.



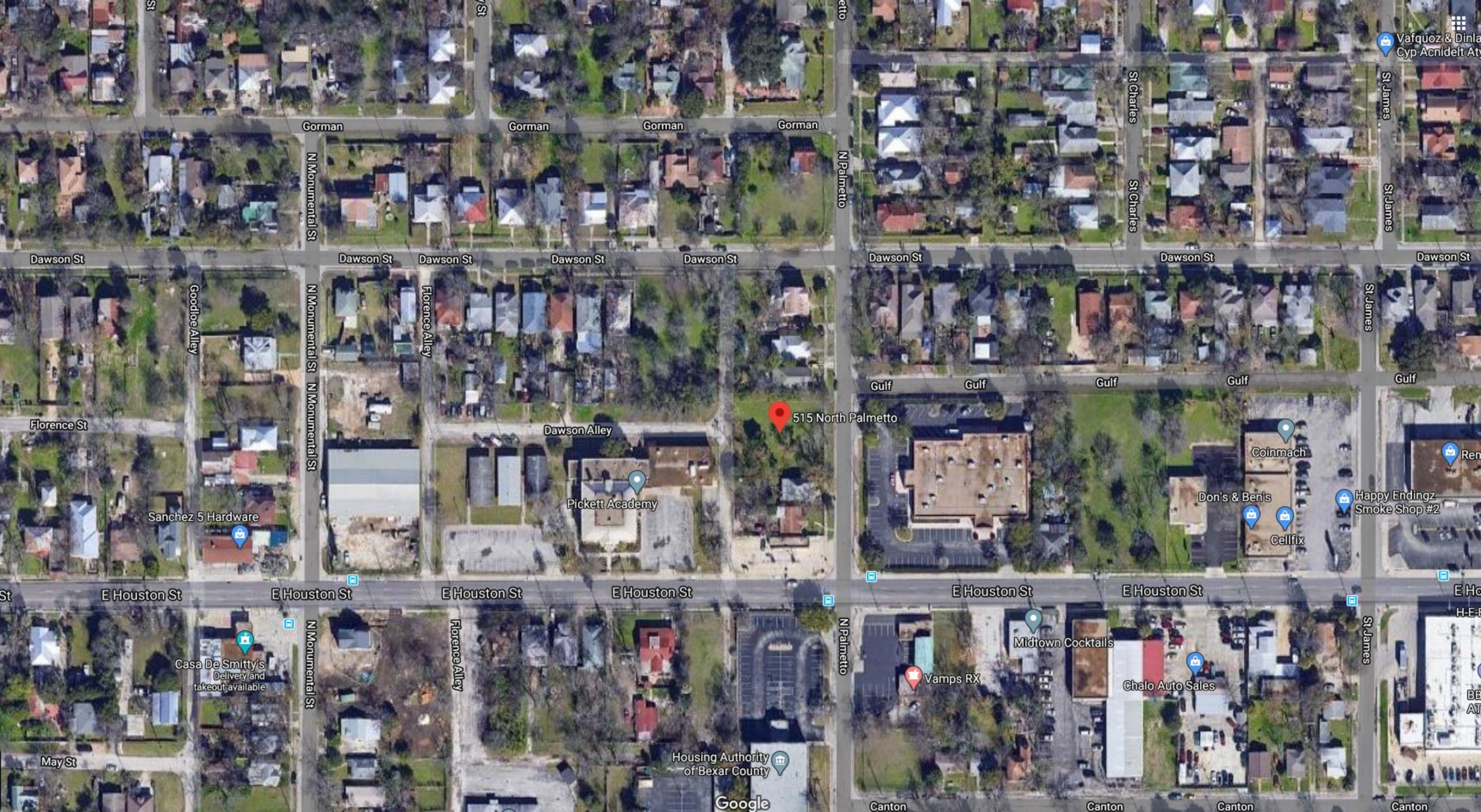
# 515 N Palmetto



April 7, 2020







Gorman

Gorman

Gorman

Gorman

Dawson St

Dawson St

Dawson St

Dawson St

Dawson St

Dawson St

Dawson St

Dawson St

Goodloe Alley

N Monumental St

Florence Alley

N Palmetto

St Charles

St Charles

St James

St James

Florence St

Dawson Alley

515 North Palmetto

Sanchez 5 Hardware

Pickett Academy

Coinmach

Don's & Ben's

Cellfix

Happy Endingz  
Smoke Shop #2

Ren

E Houston St

E Houston St

E Houston St

E Houston St

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E Houston St

E Houston St

Casa De Smitty's  
Delivery and  
takeout available

Housing Authority  
of Bexar County

Midtown Cocktails

Vamps RX

Chalo Auto Sales

May St

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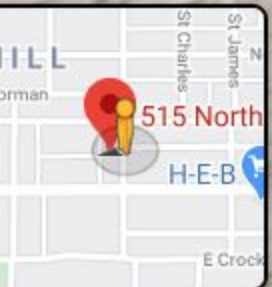


Pickett Academy

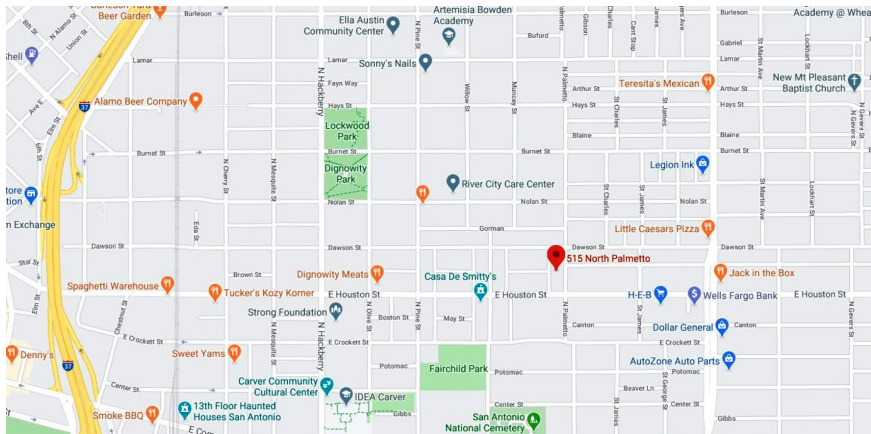
515 North Palmetto

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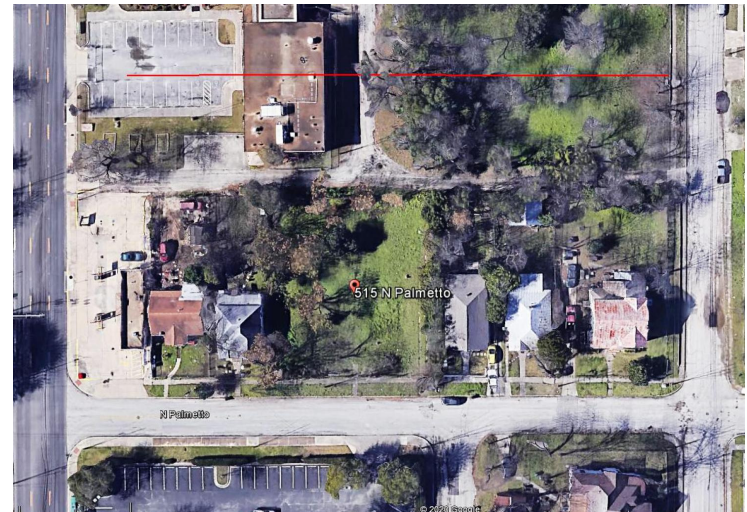




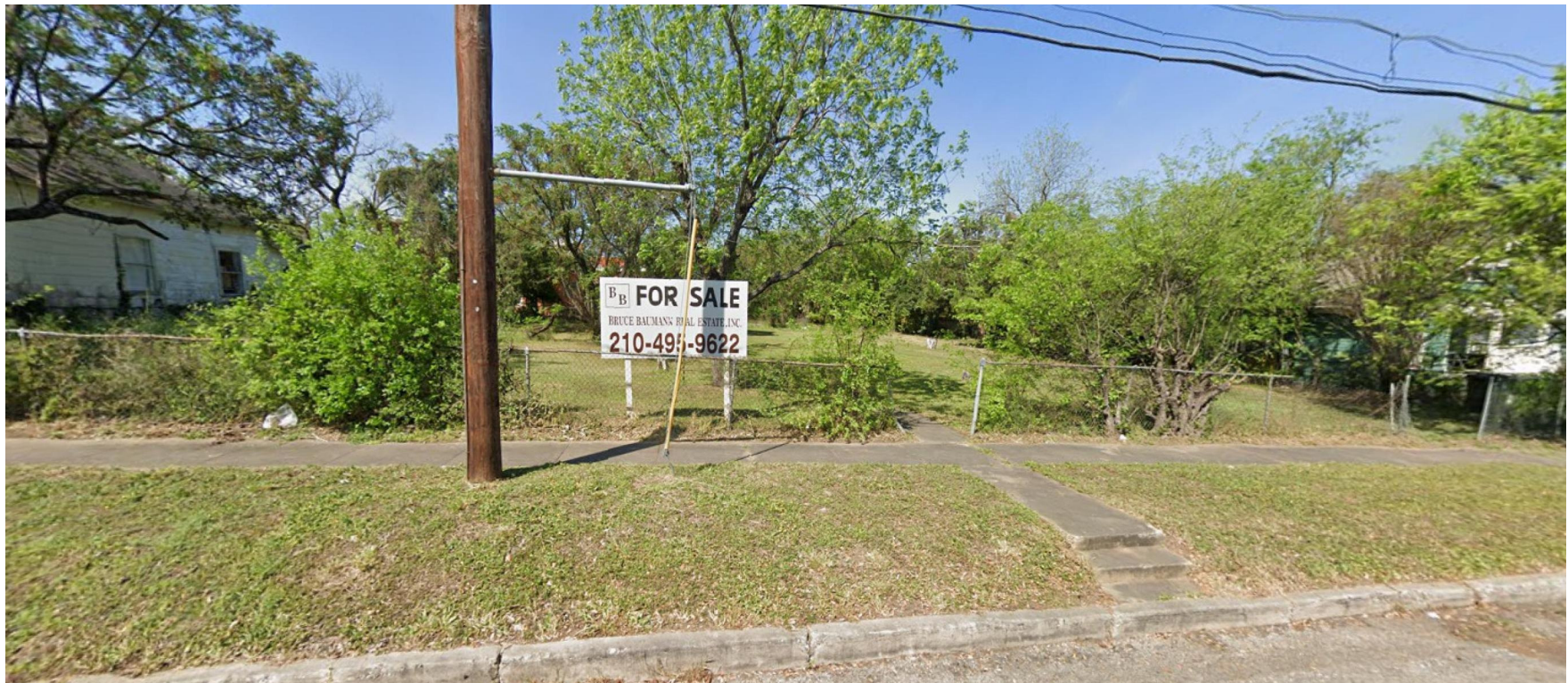




SITE MAP



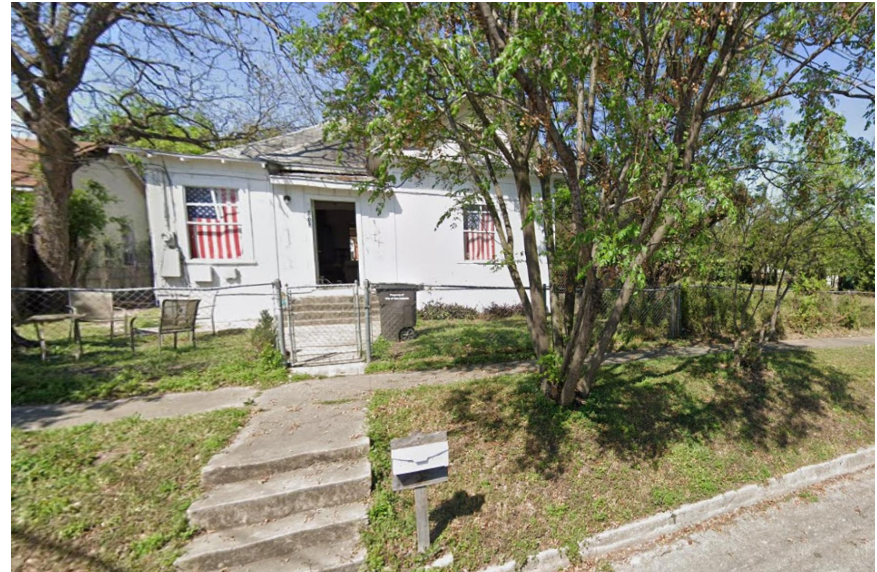
AERIAL VIEW



EXISTING PROJECT SITE

515, 517, 519 NORTH PALMETTO, DIGNOWITY HILL, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS





EXISTING ADJACENT STRUCTURES

515, 517, 519 NORTH PALMETTO, DIGNOWITY HILL, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

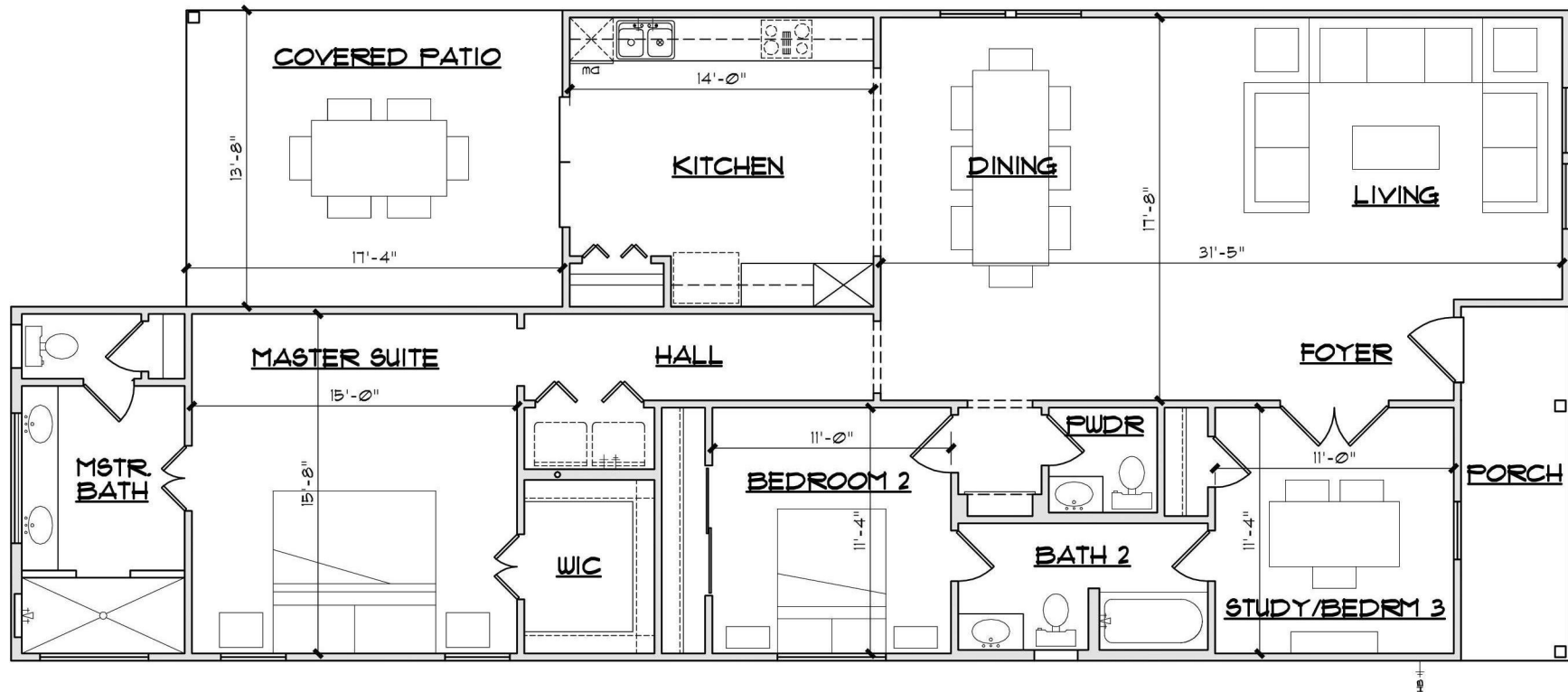




CONCEPTUAL FRONT ELEVATIONS

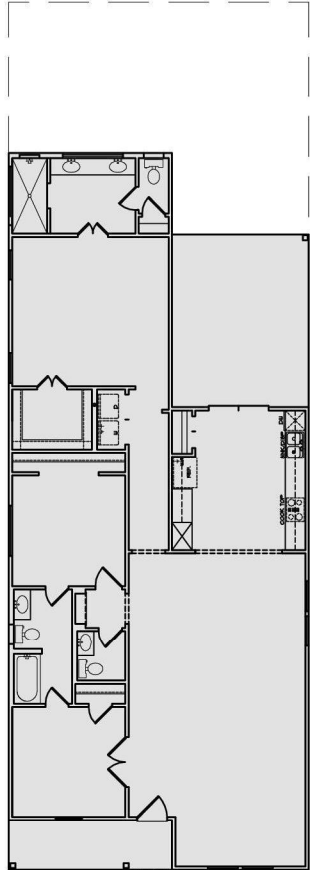


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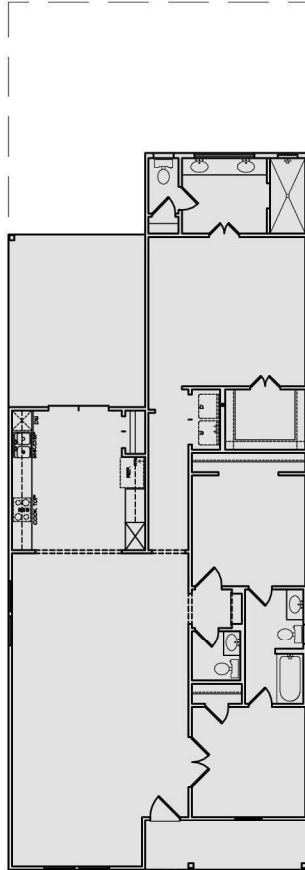


CONCEPTUAL FLOOR PLAN

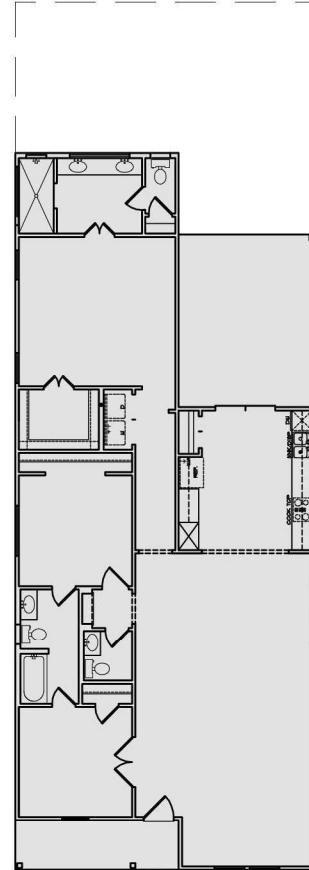
LOT 33, BLK 3, NCB 1371  
515 PALMETTO  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



LOT 34, BLK 3, NCB 1371  
517 PALMETTO  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



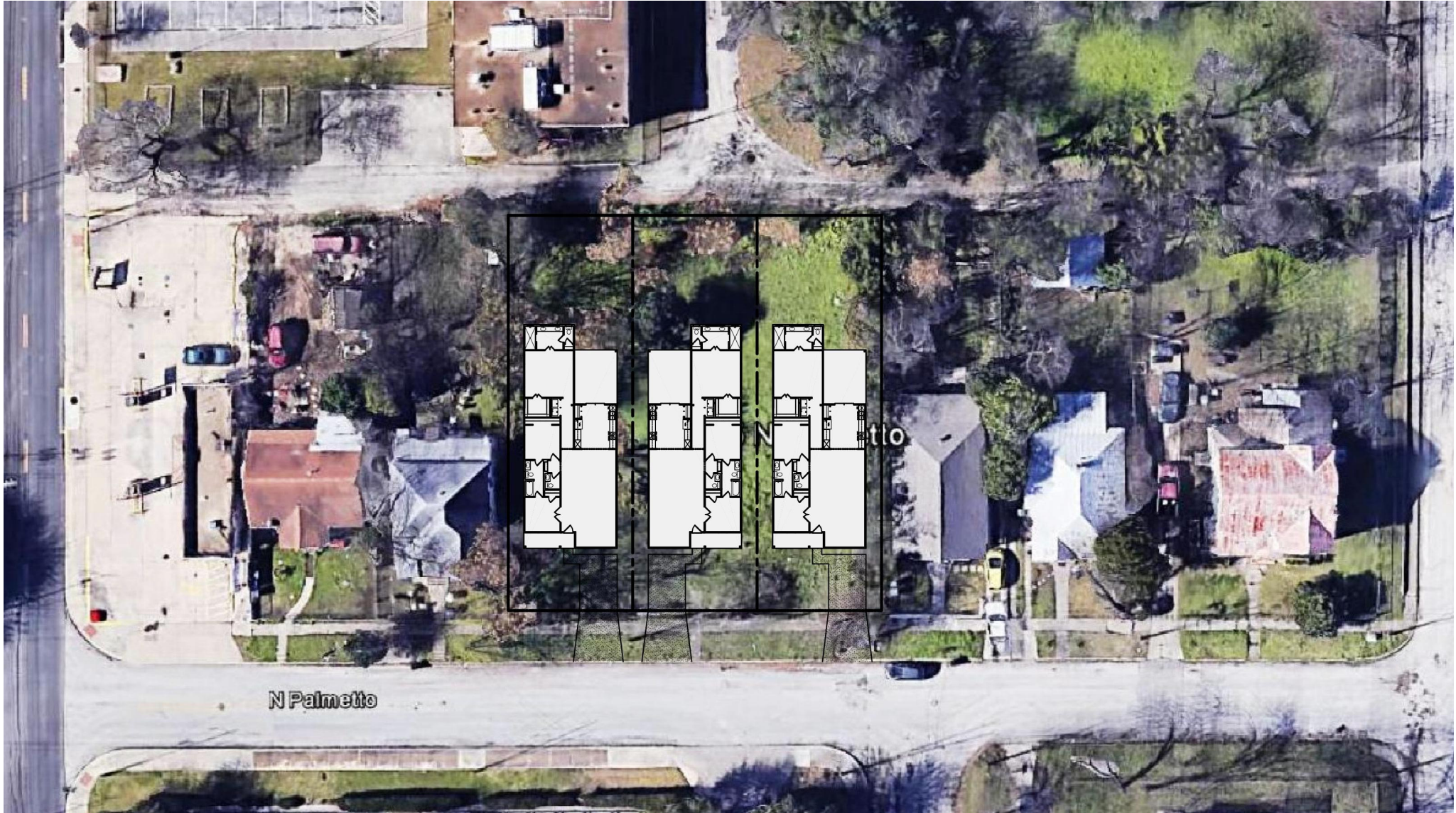
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519 PALMETTO  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

515, 517, 519 NORTH PALMETTO, DIGNOWITY HILL, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS





CONCEPTUAL AERIAL VIEW

515, 517, 519 NORTH PALMETTO, DIGNOWITY HILL, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS