



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

**DATE:** August 10, 2016

**TO:** **Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of the Historic Preservation Commission**

**FROM:** Marcelle Boudreaux, Preservation Planner, (415) 575-9140

**REVIEWED BY:** Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer

**RE:** Review and Comment for 300 Grant Avenue  
Case No. 2015-000878PTA

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The Planning Department (Department) and the Project Sponsor (Sponsor) are requesting review and comment before the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) regarding the proposal for new construction within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District (KMMS). The proposal includes demolition of two subject buildings, both Category V – Unrated buildings within the KMMS Conservation District.

## BACKGROUND

The proposed 10,500-square-foot subject site area would encompass two parcels at the northeast corner of Grant Avenue and Sutter Street: 300 Grant Avenue (290 Sutter Street) and 272 Sutter Street, in Lots 013 and 014 of Assessor's Block 0287. The 300 Grant Avenue building, currently occupied by a variety of retail tenants, is three stories. The 272 Sutter Street building is a one-story building, with mezzanine level, occupied by retail use.

The two properties are both Category V (Unrated) Buildings located within the KMMS Conservation District, the C-3-R (Downtown Retail) Zoning District, and 80-130-F Height and Bulk District. The project will require a Major Permit to Alter. The project will also require Planning Commission approval under Section 309 of the Planning Code, Conditional Use Authorization for office use within the C-3-R Zoning District under Section 303, Office Allocation for greater than 25,000 square feet under Sections 320-325 of the Planning Code, and a Variance to be granted by the Zoning Administrator for overhead projections of purely architectural character under Section 136 of the Planning Code.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves demolition of the two subject buildings, merger of the two parcels and construction one new approximately 83 foot tall, six-story commercial building, with basement, to be comprised of retail use on floors 1-3 and office use on floors 4-6.

The building will occupy the entire project site, and the façades facing Sutter Street, Grant Avenue, and Harlan Place will be constructed to the property line (except for the approximate 2-foot setback at the ground story). The building includes three visible frontages on Sutter Street, Grant Avenue and Harlan Place. No off-street automobile parking is proposed, and on-street loading is proposed from Harlan Place.

## OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

The proposed project is being brought to the ARC for review and comment prior to review by the HPC of a request for a Major Permit to Alter for demolition and new construction within the KMMS Conservation District, pursuant to Article 11 of the Planning Code.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The Department seeks the advice of the ARC regarding compatibility of the proposed design with the KMMS Conservation District as well as its compatibility with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (Secretary's Standards). The Department would like the ARC to consider the following information:

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is currently undergoing environmental review.

## ARTICLE 11 – APPENDIX E – 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 Conservation District as described in Appendix E of Article 11 of the Planning Code and the character-defining features specifically outlined in the designating ordinance.

**Massing and Composition.** The compositions of the building facades reflect the different architectural functions of the building. For the most part, building facades in the district are two- or three-part vertical compositions consisting either of a base and a shaft, or a base, a shaft and a capital.

In addition, the facade of a building is often divided into bays expressing the structure (commonly steel and reinforced concrete) beneath the façade. This was accomplished through fenestration, structural articulation or other detailing that serves to break the facade into discrete segments. A common compositional device in the District is an emphasis placed upon either the end bays or the central bay.

**Scale.** The buildings are of small to medium scale. The bay width is generally from 20 feet to 30 feet. Heights generally range from four to eight stories, although a number of taller buildings exist. The wider frontages are often broken up by articulation of the facade, making the buildings appear narrower. The base is generally delineated from the rest of the building giving the District an intimate scale at the street.

*The proposed building, five stories at the street and six stories overall, is generally compatible with the District's varied height. The proposed building will replicate the existing building's squared corner and entrance accessed by Sutter Street, and will align with the existing buildings along those streets, thereby forming a continuous street wall. The façades of the proposed building will be divided into bays, characteristic of the District, demarcated by stone-clad columns which extend into vertical piers. Specifically, the west façade (Grant Avenue) is divided into four bays, approximately 28 feet wide, and the north and south facades are divided into three bays, approximately 23 feet wide, which is consistent with the large bay width of other buildings in the District.*

*The expression of the vertical composition is strong in this District and on this blockface, which is defined through a tripartite system of a base, shaft and capital. The proposed fenestration and cladding will introduce a three-part composition with a stone and concrete column base and ornamental metal panel breaking up the storefront base from the upper level shaft.*

*The proposed ground floor base, a double-height commercial space approximately 19 feet in height, is executed through a defined storefront bay system and reinforces the pedestrian scale characteristic in the District. Each bay module is defined by marble bulkhead, coated aluminum storefront glazed system, and plasma-cut bronze metal panel and demarcated by ovoid concrete columns. The primary retail storefront entrance of glazed, double doors will be located in the western bay of the south façade accessed from Sutter Street. The office entrance will be located in the eastern bay, adjacent to the loading bay, activating the north façade at Harlan Place.*

*The continuous vertical piers are expressed through the concrete columns at the base and the steel piers to articulate the façade and provide a sense of scale. Further, the continuous vertical piers anchor the base of the building and strongly define the storefront bay modules. The shaft is a composed of a glazed curtain wall system clad in a ceramic scrim (screen) system and its frame on the south (Sutter Street) and west (Grant Avenue) elevations. Proposed spacing of the scrim reflects the proposed interior uses, office use at the fourth and fifth floor and retail use at the second and third floors. The scrim is a unique exterior element in the District, and the spacing between the individual scrim is a prominent design feature. The spacing of the ceramic scrim at the third floor and overall should be re-evaluated to reflect a more integrated system at those floors proposed with scrim and to consider how the scrim density could reference the building termination. The secondary elevation on Harlan Place (north) is primarily a glazed curtain wall system, with the most eastern bay dedicated to loading and mechanicals clad in metal and ceramic rain screen.*

*The top of the building at the streetwall (five stories) terminates with a boxed frieze composed of a decorative metal panel. The sixth floor is proposed as a glazed penthouse level with minimal setbacks (approximately 5 feet from the floor below), and projecting awning. Combined visually, the frieze and the sixth floor awning compositionally read as the capital. In addition, the prominence of the sixth floor due to its minimal setback and its height are disproportionate with the District's vertical tripartite composition and defined streetwall.*

**Recommendation #1:** The Department recommends two options for the sixth floor in order for the overall vertical composition of the building to meet the *Standards* and the *Guidelines* in Appendix E of Article 11. Two options that could make the proposal compatible with the District's overall massing and scale are as follows:

- a. In the first option, Staff recommends six stories in the same plane with no setbacks at the sixth floor from the street. Integrating the sixth floor into the same plane as the main façade could assist with strengthening the building's prominence at the corner. The additional floor at the streetwall could be the starting point for defining the building's strong termination, a characteristic of the District's vertical composition.
- b. For the second option, Staff recommends increasing the sixth floor setback from the streetwall for a minimally visible penthouse floor. As currently proposed, the penthouse's five foot setback is too minimal as this mass reads as an additional story from the street. This additional story (with integrated mechanical screen) projects above the assumed fifth floor termination at the streetwall and the three-part vertical composition is out of proportion. Further, the District exhibits

buildings with strong terminations in the same plane at the streetwall. If a greater setback is proposed, Staff recommends that the awning not be visible from a public right of way or be removed, as this element is a visual interruption beyond the characteristic termination point.

**Recommendation #2:** The building terminates with a frieze at the fifth level, and projecting awnings at a setback sixth floor; this disjointed termination is uncharacteristic of the District, defined by full-width cornices and strong, projecting cornices. A well-articulated termination in the form of a projecting cornice or a strongly defined cap, which could be supported by a frieze element, would allow the top story to read as a capital of the building. The Department recommends the sponsor propose a definitive termination to cap the building to meet the *Standards* and the Guidelines in Appendix E of Article 11.

**Recommendation #3:** Generally, the Department believes that the use of the ceramic scrim could be found appropriate meet the *Standards* and the Guidelines in Appendix E of Article 11. The continuous primary vertical piers and secondary vertical posts balance the horizontal scrim system and provide a strong verticality to define the shaft. The spacing of the ceramic scrim at the third floor and overall should be re-evaluated to reflect a more integrated system at those floors proposed with scrim and to consider how the scrim density could reference the building termination. Staff recommends refinement of the ceramic scrim spacing as this is a strong exterior element, in relationship to options proposed in Recommendation #1.

**Materials and Colors.** Buildings are usually clad in masonry materials over a supporting structure. The cladding materials include terra cotta, brick, stone and stucco. Wood, metal and metal panels are not facade materials, although painted wood and metal are sometimes used for window sash and ornament.

The materials are generally colored light or medium earth tones, including white, cream, buff, yellow, and brown. Individual buildings generally use a few different tones of one color.

To express the mass and weight of the structure, masonry materials are used on multidimensional wall surfaces with texture and depth, which simulates the qualities necessary to support the weight of a load-bearing wall.

**Detailing and Ornamentation.** Buildings use the expression of texture and depth on masonry material (e.g., rustication, deep window reveals) to simulate the appearance of load-bearing walls. The buildings are not constructed in a single style, but with ornament drawn from a variety of historical sources, primarily Classical and Renaissance. Gothic detailing is also well represented. Popular details include arches, columns, pilasters, projecting bracketed cornices, multiple belt-courses, elaborate lintels and pediments, and decorated spandrels. Details were used to relate buildings to their neighbors by repeating and varying the ornament used in the surrounding structures.

*The Project Sponsor proposes a glazed curtain wall above the base, with an exterior ceramic scrim skin in earth tones set approximately one foot from the glazing, for the primary elevations at the south (Sutter Street) and west (Grant Avenue). At the second floor, the bronze-color coated steel vertical posts are a defining architectural element at the exterior on the south and west elevations, and are incorporated into the scrim at the third floor and higher. At the north elevation, Harlan Place, the three western bays are glazed curtain wall and the eastern bay dedicated to*



loading is clad with corrugated zinc with a service garage entrance and pedestrian door at the first floor and a ceramic rain screen above the third floor.

Structures in the District display cladding materials that are often rusticated at the ground and second story to express the mass and weight of structures, and have textural variation and a sense of depth.

The proposed design responds to this materiality with the use of ovoid columns composed of architectural concrete at the base, storefront display windows that are recessed around these exterior-facing columns, storefront bays framed by a plasma-cut bronze metal screen and further strengthened by a stone bulkhead.

A ceramic material is proposed as a modern interpretation of material traditionally found as exterior cladding in the District (*terra cotta*). The ceramic scrims are proposed as long, square tubes, less than half an inch, and are proposed in light to medium earth tones. The vertical piers and vertical posts supporting the ceramic scrim will be dark-colored, coated steel. The interplay between the glazed curtain wall, scrim frame, and ceramic scrim tubes creates layers of depth consistent with the District's prevailing architectural styles.

The commercial storefront system is proposed as a bronze-colored coated aluminum system with transparent glazing. A plasma-cut bronze metal panel is proposed as an ornamental frame at the storefront bays at the base, and again as a frieze element capping the fifth floor. Use of metal ornamentation is a detail of some contributory buildings in the District. Further refinement of the design detailing of the metal panel should reflect its relationship to the District.

A primary retail entry is featured at the western bay of the south elevation (Sutter Street), proposed to be framed in Carrera marble. The marble is a material referenced again at the storefront bulkhead. Although marble is a stone found in the District, a *terra cotta* tile may be more consistent with the proposed materials palette, in contrast with the more formal nature of the marble. In addition, the *terra cotta* could reference the proposed ceramic scrim.

The project proposes a continuous sign armature across the three bays on the Sutter Street elevation, wrapping the corner, and continues across the three southern bays of the Grant Avenue elevation, of dark colored painted metal. The metal sign arm will range in height 9 feet above the sidewalk depending on the slope and will project approximately 7 feet from the façade over the public right of way. Consistent with the Guidelines in Appendix E of Article 11, sign bands, awnings or armature should be placed within the piers and be integrated into the overall design. The sign armature should not be expressed as a continuous element that interrupts vertical expression. Although shown on drawings, signage for the project will be reviewed and approved at a later date through a Minor Permit to Alter.

**Recommendation #4:** Some of the proposed color palette and materials selections appear to meet the Standards and the Guidelines in Appendix E of Article 11; however, more information is required to assess the overall proposal. A finished stone such as a *terra cotta* for the entry portal and bulkhead, in an earth tone, would be compatible with the District. Architectural concrete columns finished in stucco, or some other way refined, expressed in an earth tone would be compatible with the District. Powder-coated steel, as expressed in renderings in dark-colored vertical piers, could be compatible with the District. Submittal of all required information is required for comprehensive review for compatibility with the Standards and Guidelines in Appendix E or Article 11.

**Recommendation #5:** The use of metal filigree may be appropriate and meet the *Standards* and the Guidelines in Appendix E of Article 11, as a finished metal in an earth tone would be compatible with ornamental metals in the District. Further, the filigree design should have some point of reference from within the District without replicating historic motifs. At the storefront level, the design of the metal panel should meet all Code requirements, maximize transparency in a retail district, and emphasize the ornamental nature of metal in the District. In addition, a detail of attachment details shall be provided.

**Recommendation #6:** The ceramic scrim is proposed as an exterior element, installed approximately one foot from the glazed curtain wall. Beyond the scrim, the glazing and aluminum system will be completely visible at floor two and varying levels of visibility as the floors increase, dependent on viewer perspective. The details of the glazing color and coatings, and the details of painted aluminum curtain wall system require refinement, a design detail heretofore not discussed. There is precedent for the approval of painted or powder-coated systems provided the profiles are consistent with character of the District.

**Recommendation #7:** Although the general material and color may be compatible, the Department finds that the sinuous design of the sign armature does not meet the *Standards* and the Guidelines in Appendix E of Article 11. Staff recommends that the width of the sign armature relate to the proposed storefront bays and the width of a sign armature be placed within the piers and relate or be integrated into the overall design. The sign armature should not be expressed as a continuous element that interrupts vertical expression. Further recommendations include emphasizing the entry points to the retail area(s). The signage will be reviewed and approved at a later date though a Minor Permit to Alter.

**Recommendation #8:** A primary retail entry is featured at the southwestern corner on the Sutter Street elevation, framed to define its prominence. Staff recommends the inclusion of a recessed entry area, characteristic with the District, and a minimized entry frame. In this specific bay, there are multiple layers that compete (ornamental metal frame, potential sign armature, entry frame and scrim frame) and are not successfully layered, a characteristic of the District. The primary retail entry does not meet the meet the *Standards* and the Guidelines in Appendix E of Article 11.

Staff recommends developing, at minimum, a secondary retail entry point for access to secondary ground floor retail tenants or for access to a lobby for upper level retail tenant(s). Staff recognizes there are various permutations within the real estate leasing market, but would like the project sponsor to propose the expression of at least one additional secondary entry.

The Project Sponsor shall provide a physical sample of the inclusive proposed material palette, including color, coatings, thickness, and design, if applicable, prior to review by the HPC.

## REQUESTED ACTION

Specifically, the Department seeks comments on:

- Compatibility of the New Construction with the KMMS Conservation District;
- Recommendations for Massing and Composition, and for Scale;
- Recommendations for Materials and Colors, and for Details and Ornamentation;
- The compatibility of the project with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (*Standards*) and Article 11.

## ATTACHMENTS

Project sponsor plans, elevations, renderings and photographs





## Floor Area Matrix

All quantities are approximate and subject to verification.

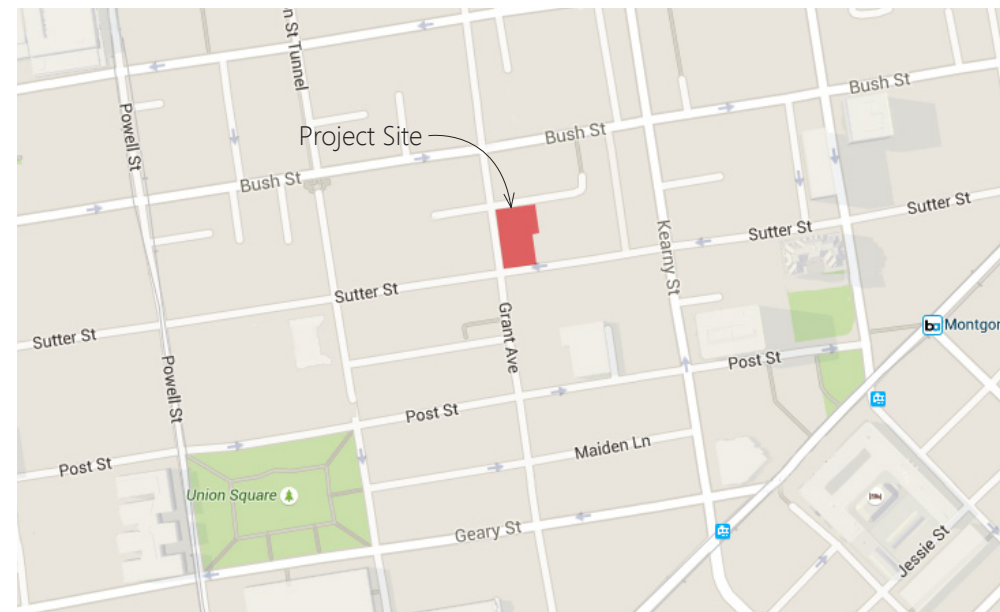
Floor	Existing Interior Gross Area 300 Grant	Existing Interior Gross Area 272 Sutter	Existing Interior Gross Area Total	Proposed Interior Gross Area	Major Vertical Penetrations Gross Area	Occupant	Occupant Area Gross Area
Basement*						Bike Storage	920
						Showers and Lockers	635
1						MEP/Fire Pump/Switch Gear	2,035
						Retail	6,590
Mezzanine						Retail*	3,335
						<b>Total</b>	<b>13,515</b>
2						Retail	8,065
						Lobby	100
3						Janitor's Closet	45
						Loading	285
4						Exit Passageway	350
						<b>Total</b>	<b>8,845</b>
5						Retail	8,925
						Telcom	90
6						Janitor's Closet	50
						<b>Total</b>	<b>9,065</b>
Total						Retail	9,305
						Telcom	105
Total						Office	8,745
						Telcom	85
Total						Restrooms	435
						<b>Total</b>	<b>9,410</b>
Total						Office	8,745
						Telcom	85
Total						Restrooms	435
						<b>Total</b>	<b>9,265</b>
Total						Office	6,845
						Telcom	85
Total						Restrooms	435
						<b>Total</b>	<b>7,365</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,055</b>	<b>7,195</b>	<b>46,250</b>	<b>72,280</b>	<b>5,550</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>66,730</b>

\*Area includes PG&E Vault  
 \*\* Area not excluded from Retail

Existing



Vicinity Map



Sheet Index

1	Cover Sheet	15	South Elevation
2	Existing Buildings Near 300 Grant	16	West Elevation
3	Existing Buildings Near 300 Grant	17	North Elevation
4	Existing Buildings Near 300 Grant	18	View from Grant and Sutter
5	Existing Site Plan	19	View from Grant and Harlan
6	Proposed Site Plan	20	Detail Sketches
7	Basement Plan	21	Colors and Materials
8	1st Floor Plan	22	South Elevation
9	2nd Floor Plan	23	Elevation in Context
10	3rd Floor Plan	24	Grant Avenue Wall Section
11	4th Floor Plan	25	Grant Avenue Section Axonometric
12	5th Floor Plan		
13	6th Floor Plan		
14	Roof Plan		





321 GRANT AVE.



327 GRANT AVE.



338-342 GRANT AVE.



445 BUSH ST.



301 GRANT AVE.



222 SUTTER ST.



400 BUSH ST.









240 STOCKTON ST.



201 POST ST.



177 POST ST.



180 GEARY ST.

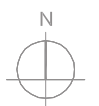
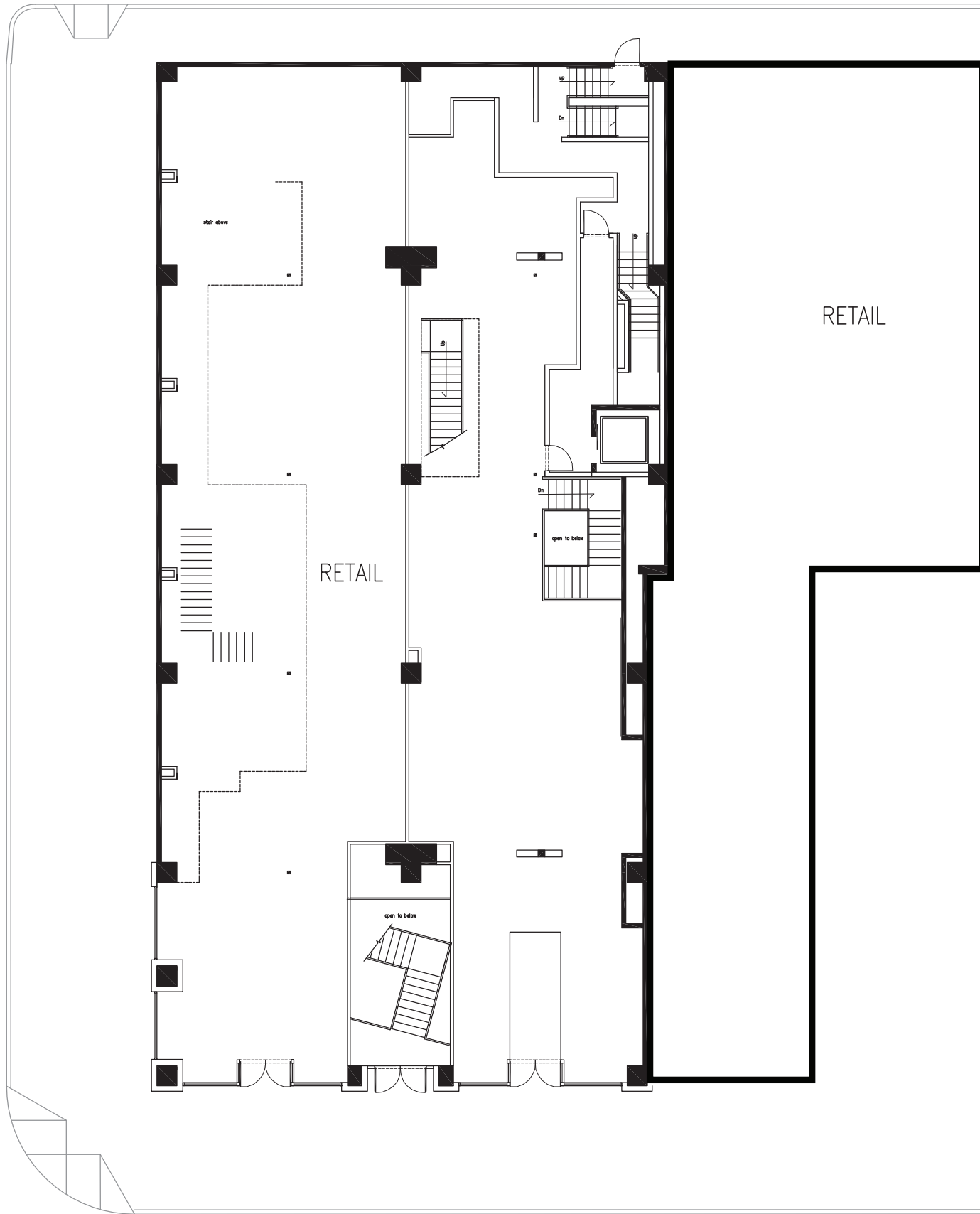


166 GEARY ST.



45 KEARNY ST.





Existing Site Plan

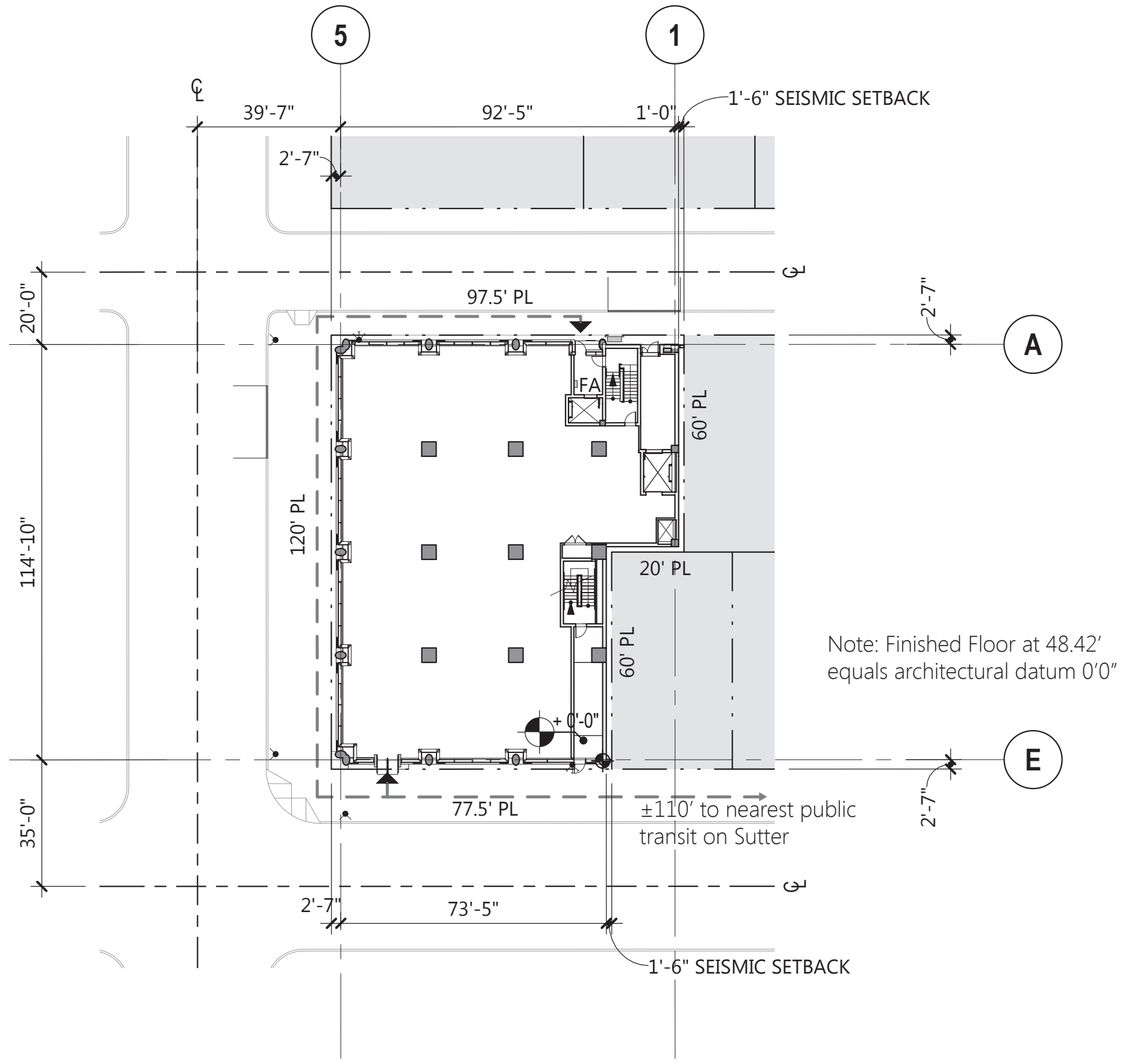
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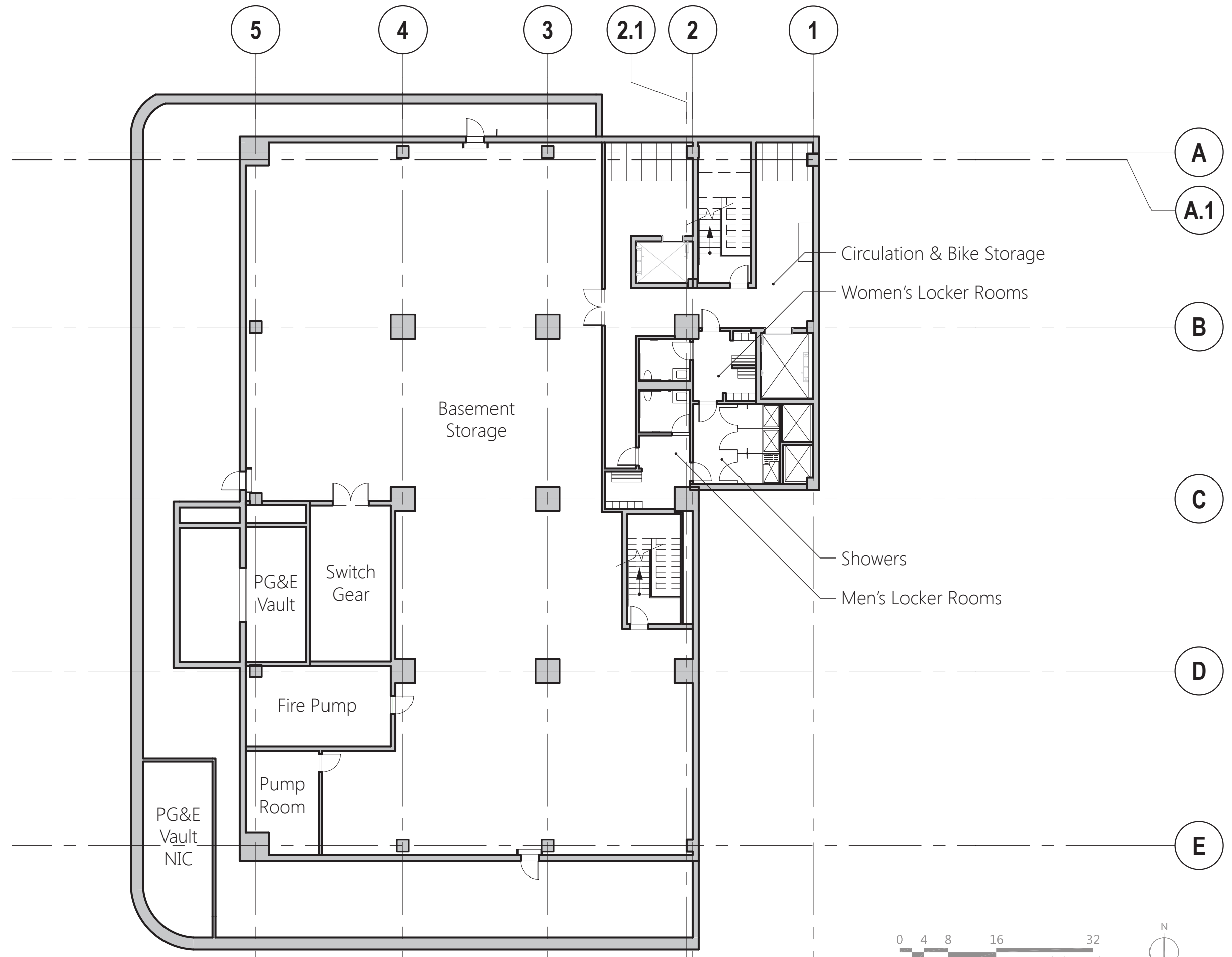
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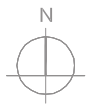
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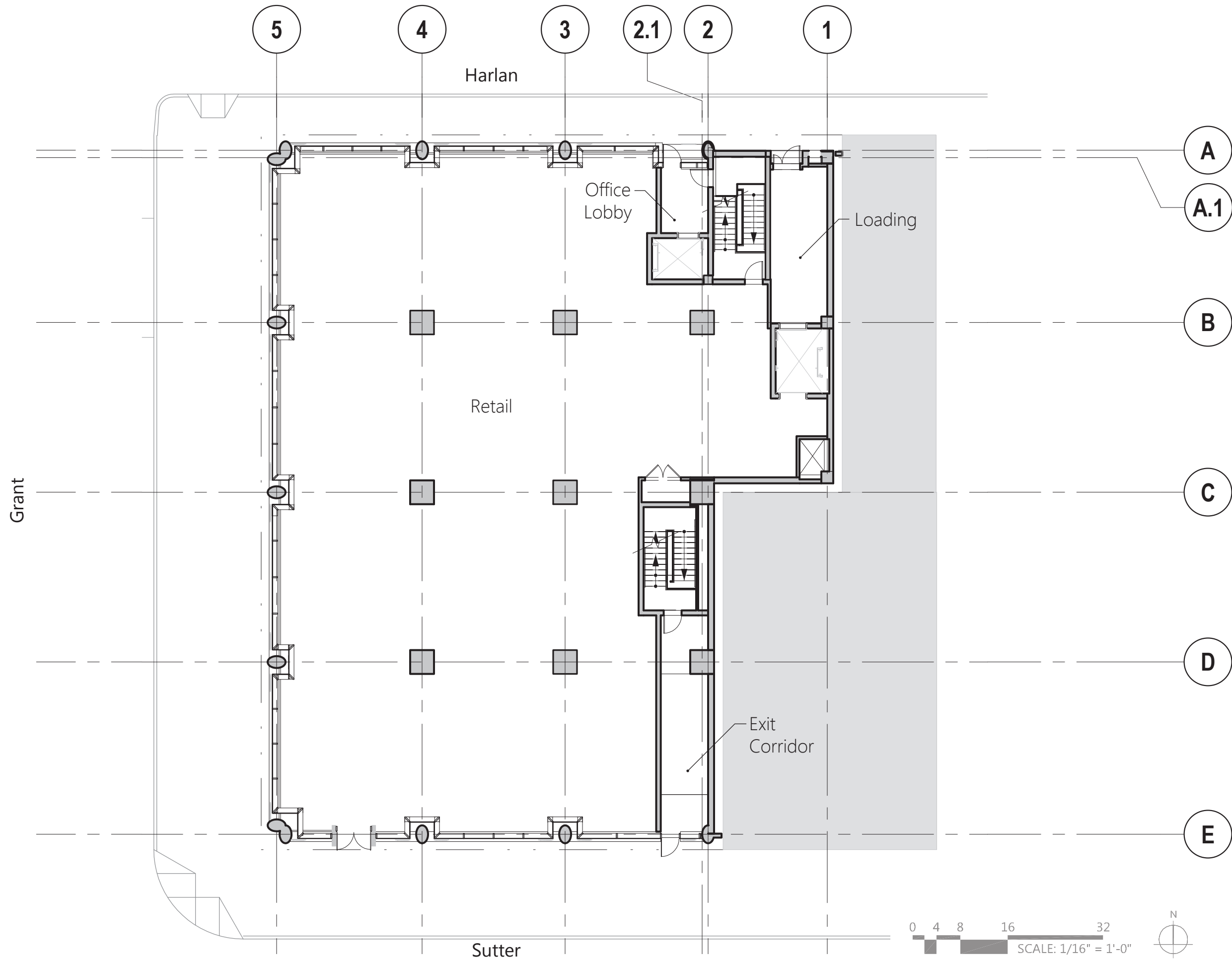
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Basement Plan



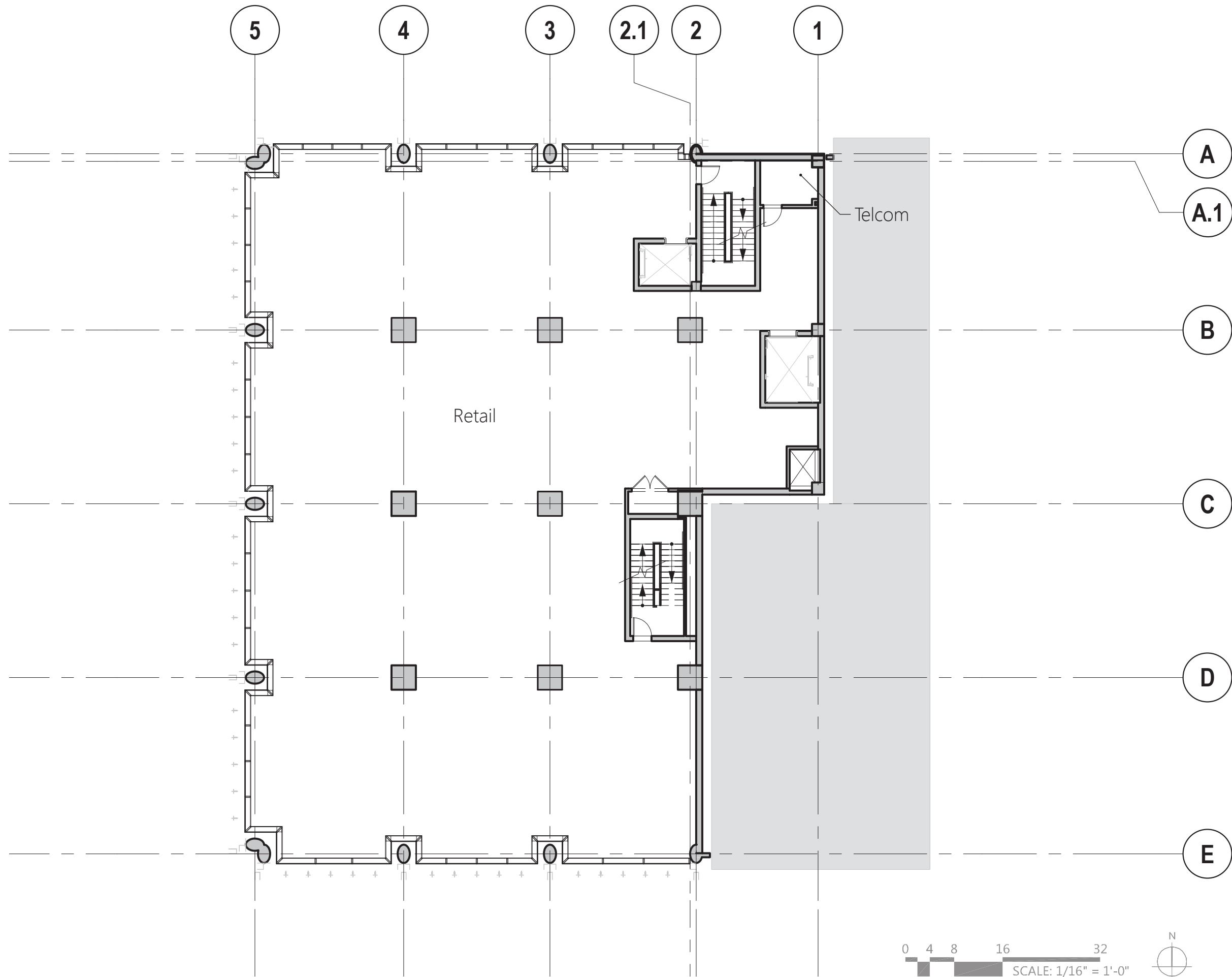


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1st Floor Plan



0 4 8 16 32  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

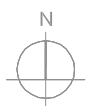
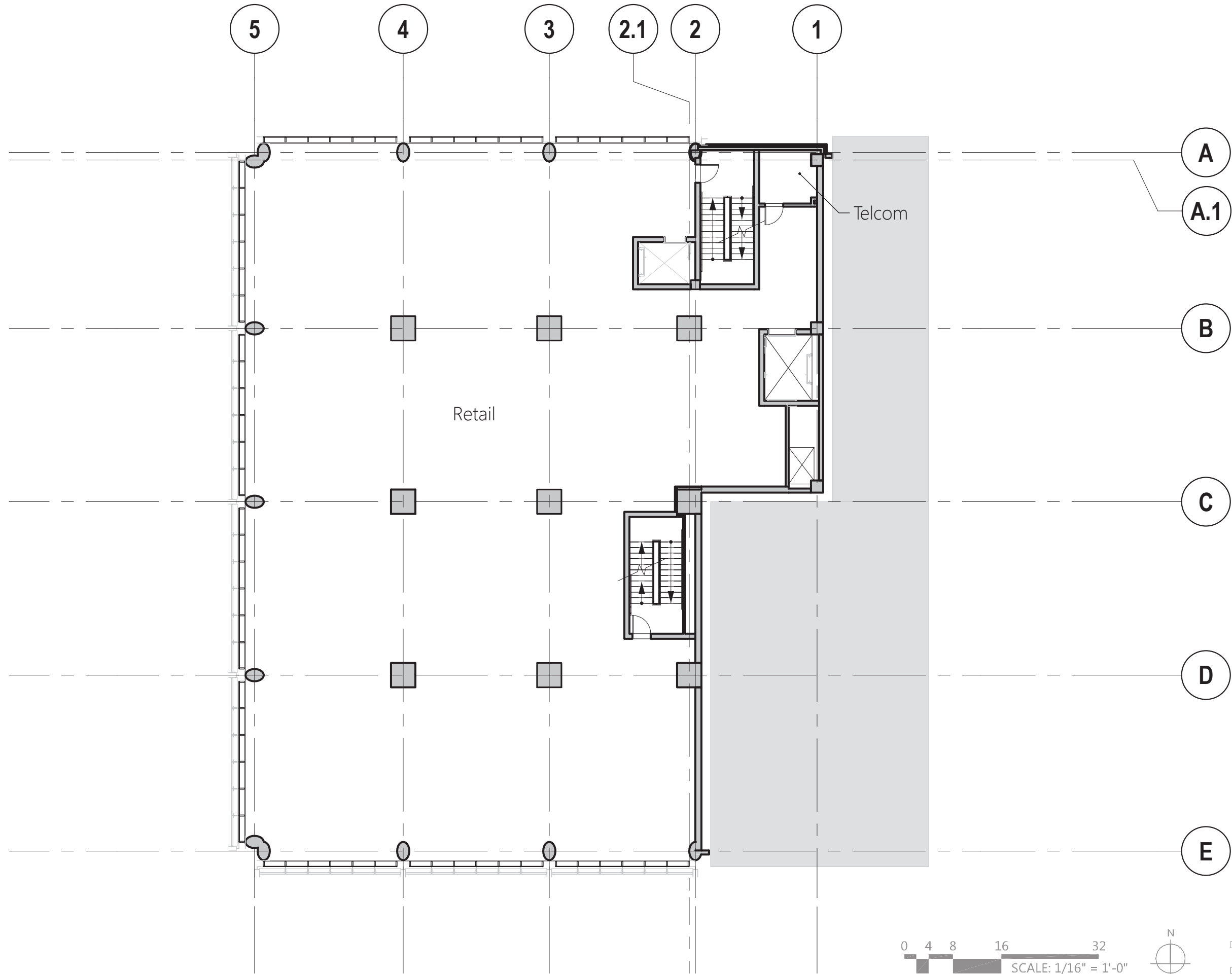


2nd Floor Plan



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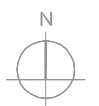
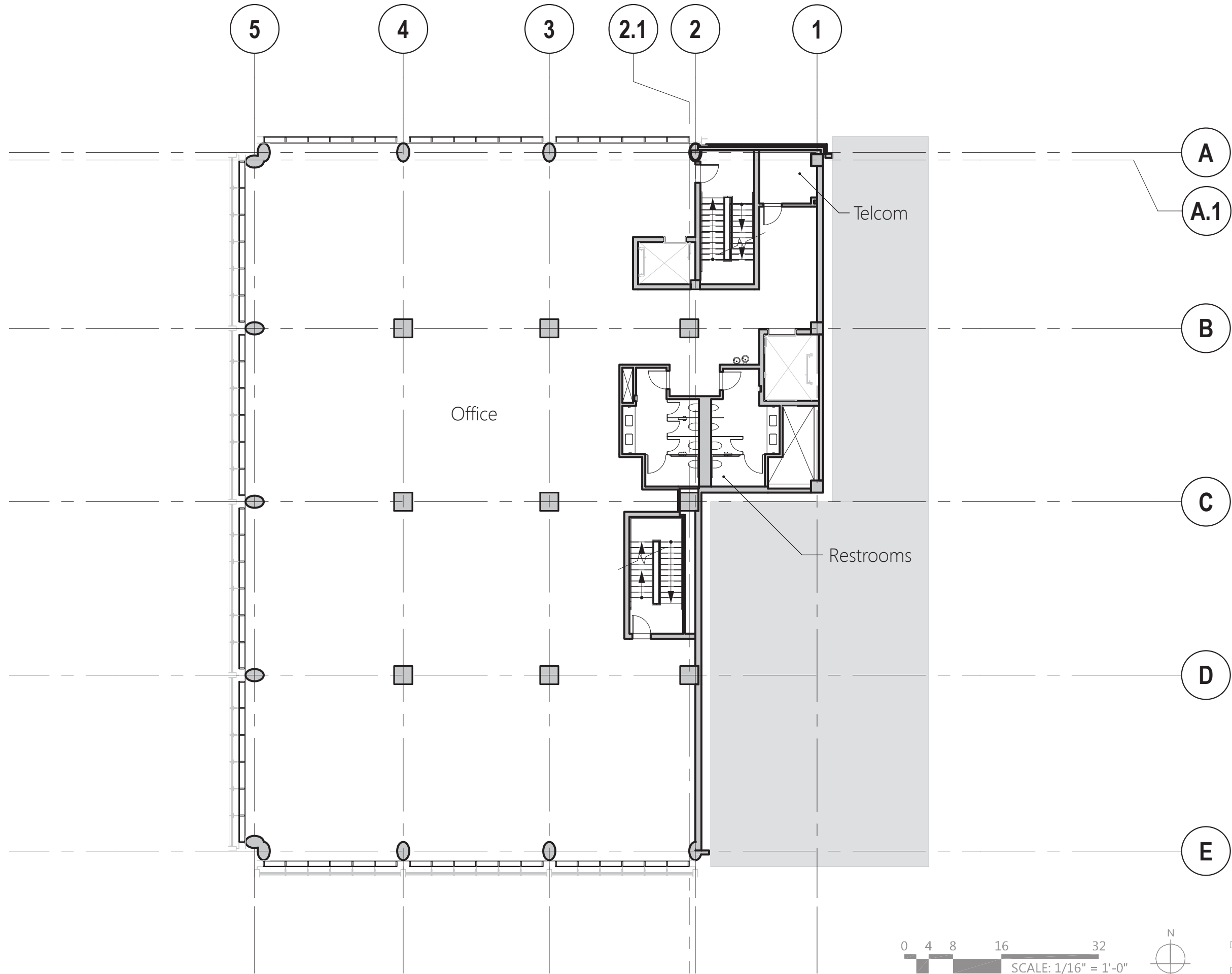
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3rd Floor Plan



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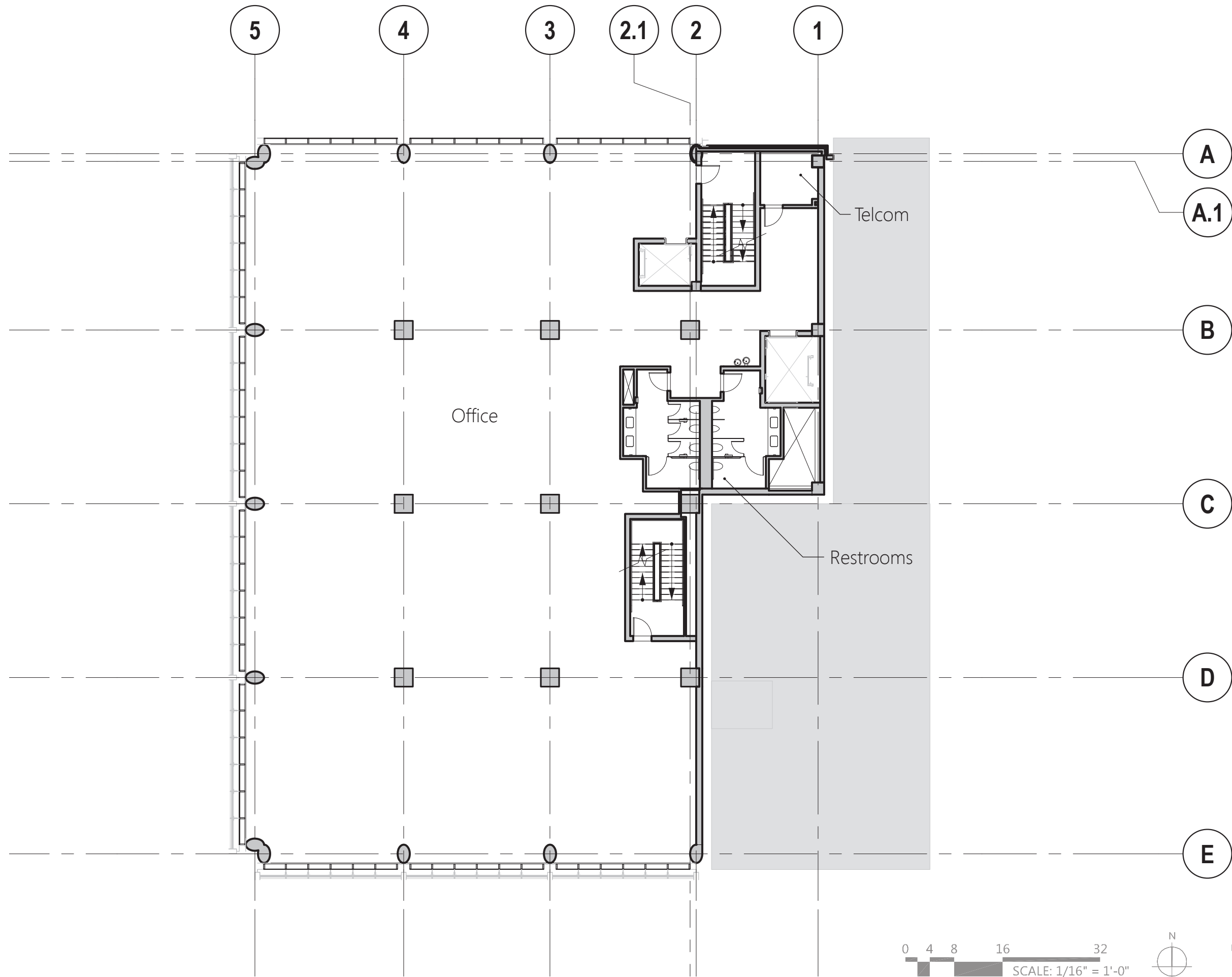
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11

4th Floor Plan





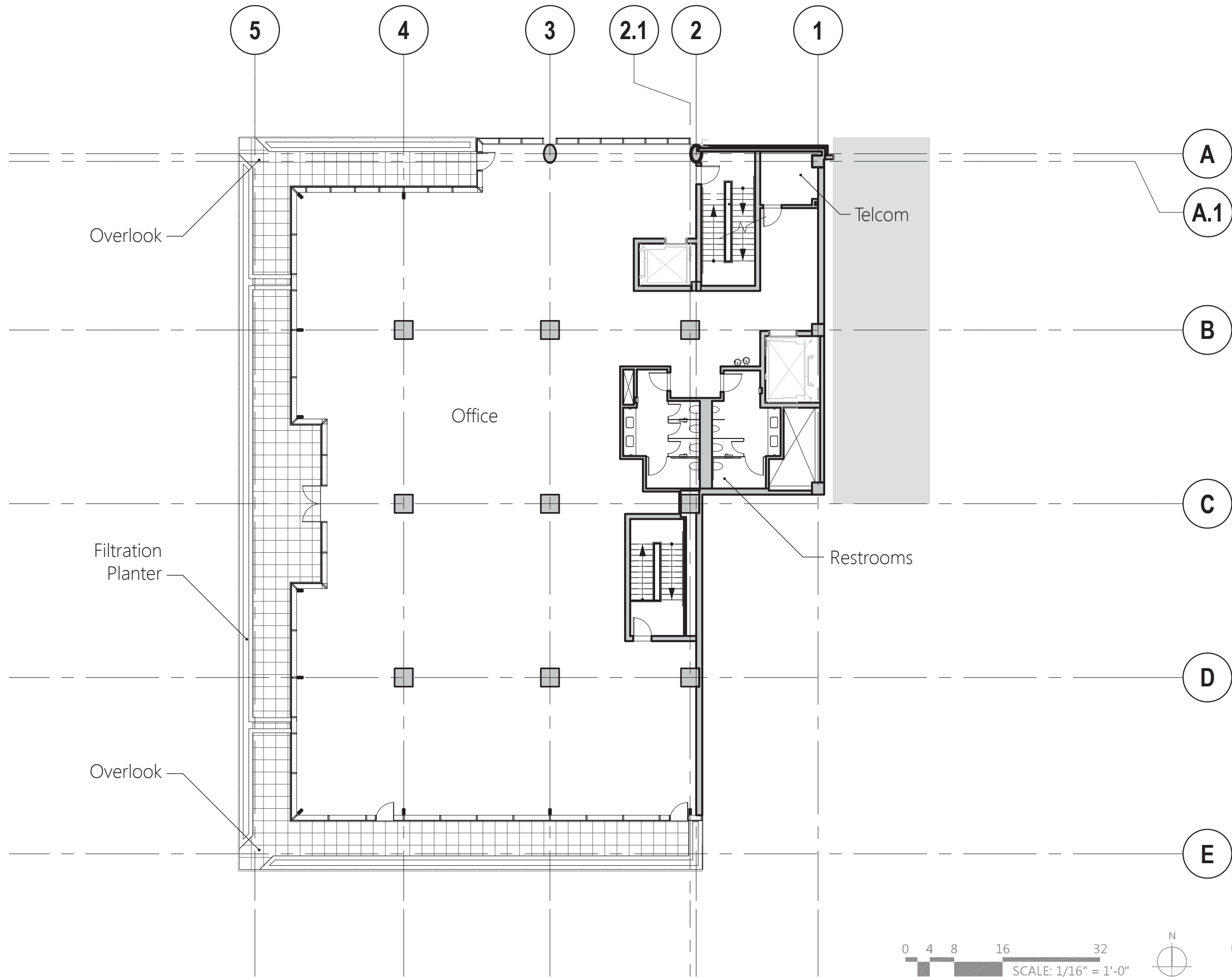
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5th Floor Plan



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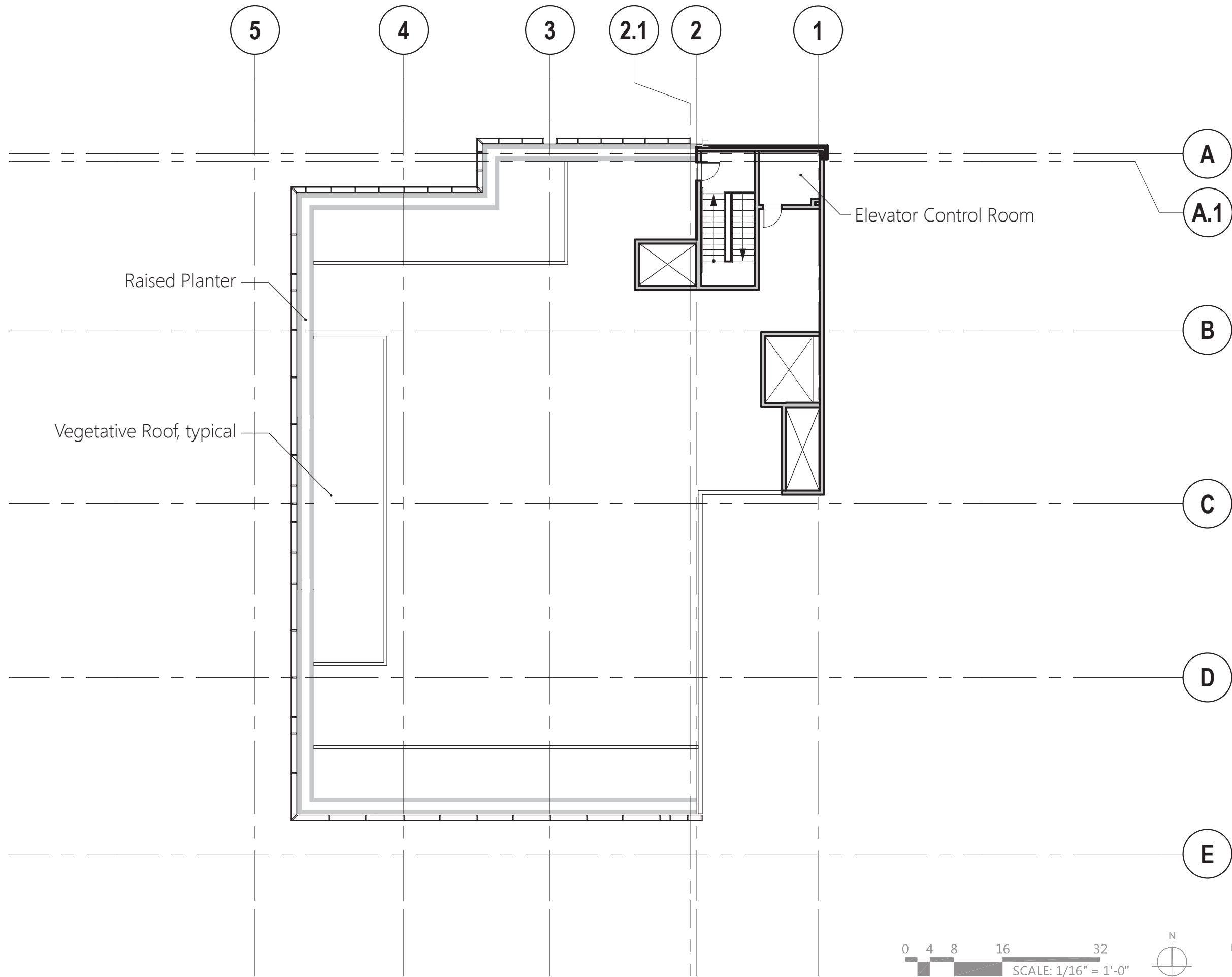
6th Floor Plan

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Raised Planter

Vegetative Roof, typical

Elevator Control Room

0 4 8 16 32  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

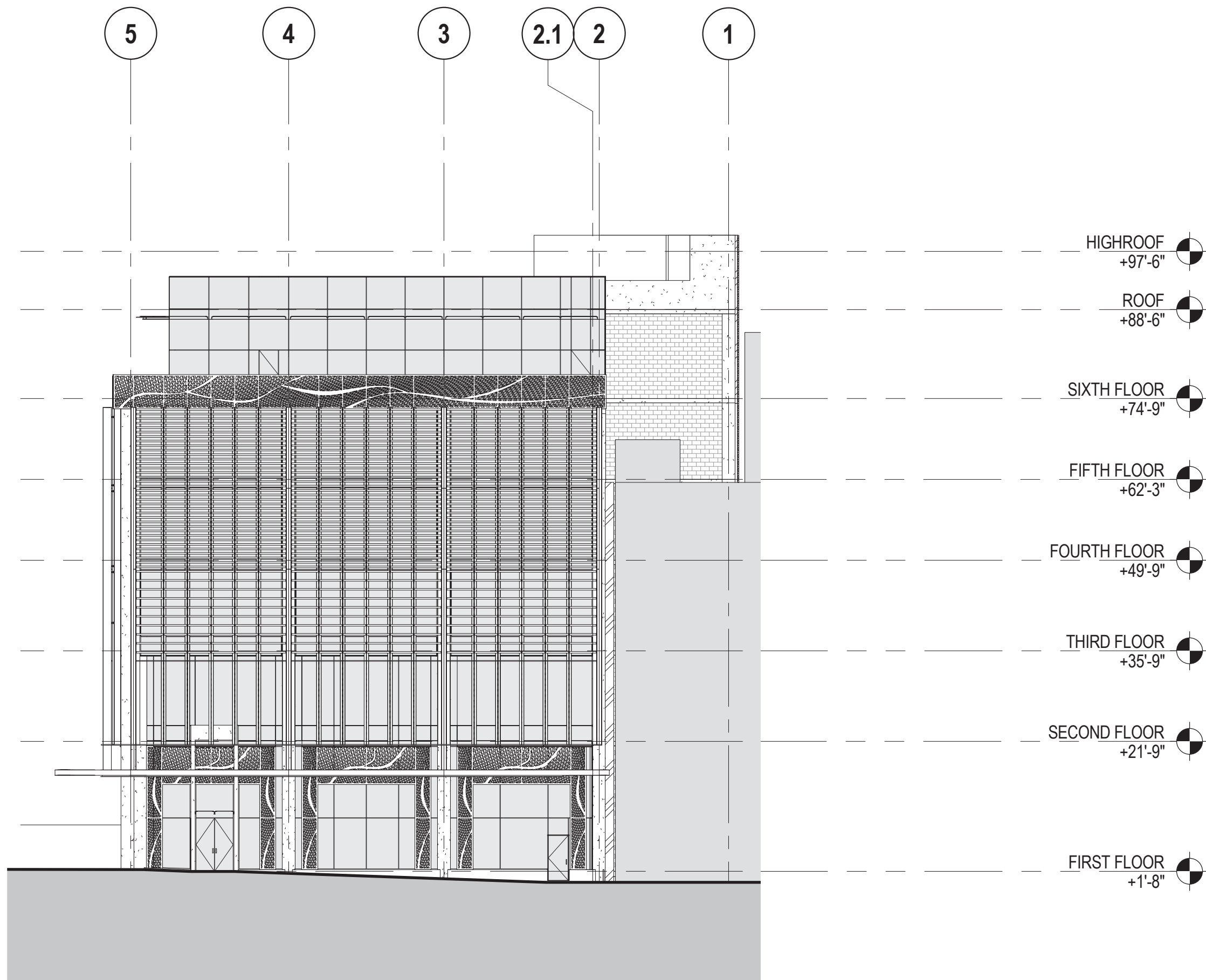


14  
Roof Plan

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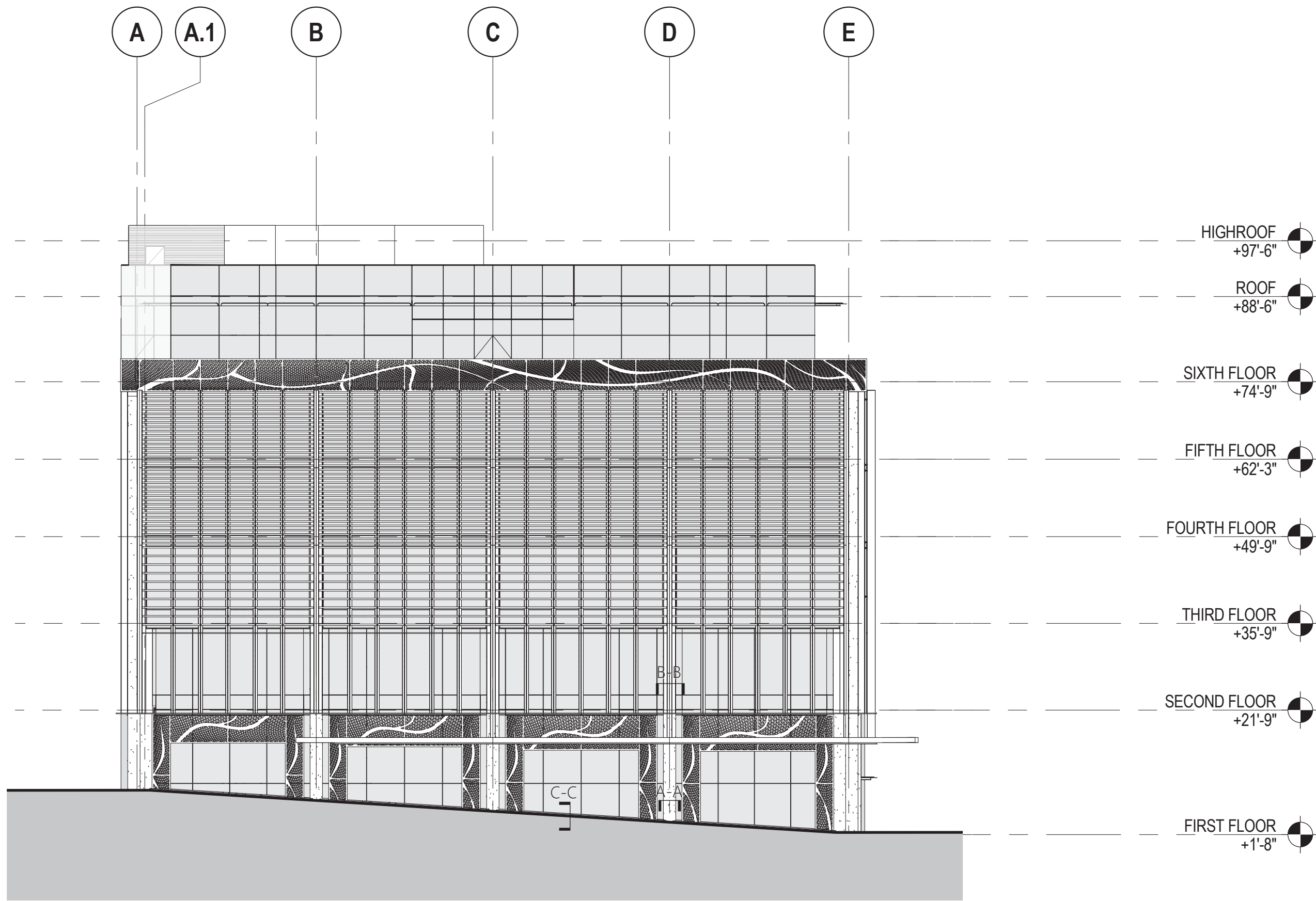
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15  
 South Elevation





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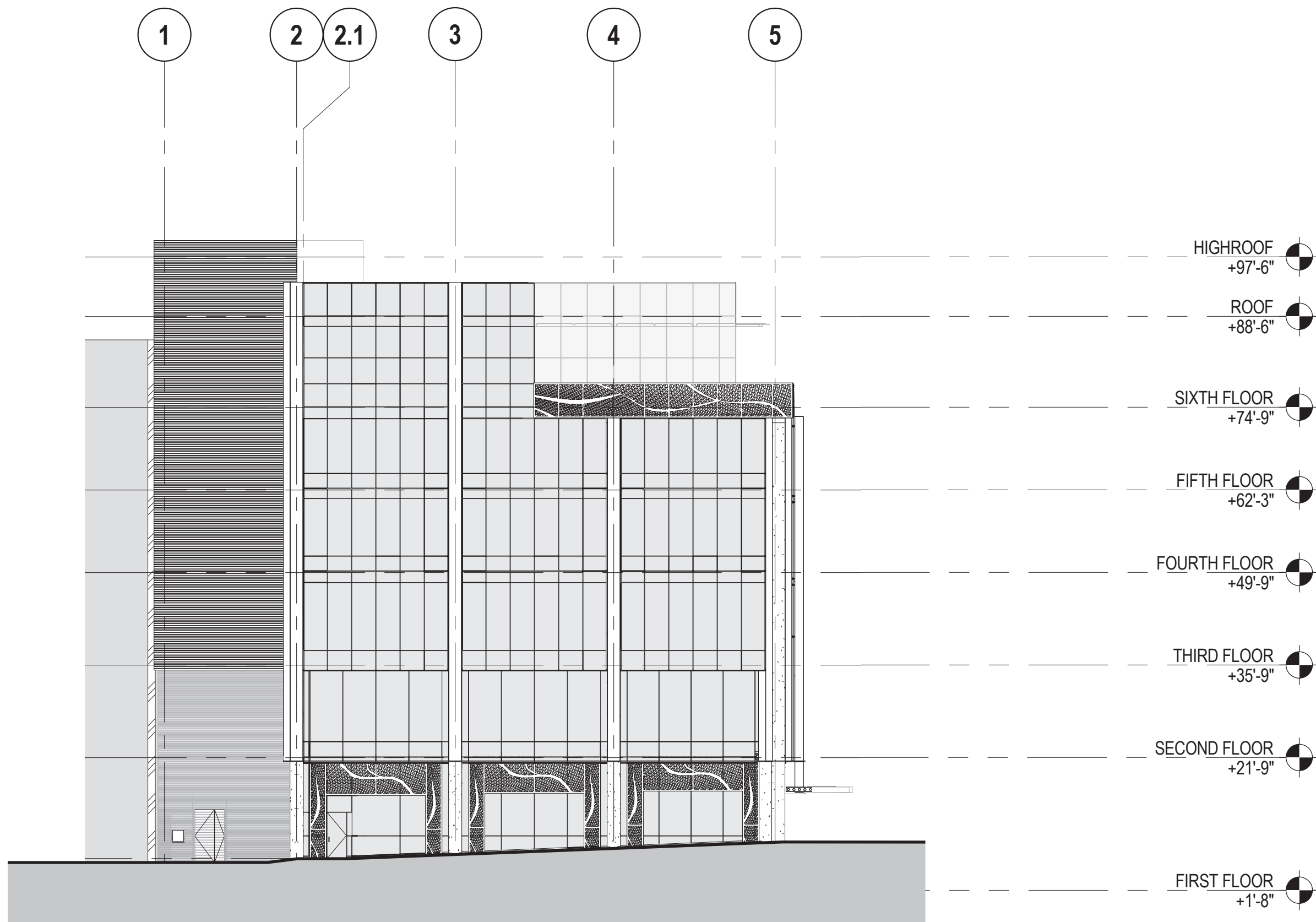
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16

West Elevation





17  
North Elevation





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18

Corner of Grant and Sutter







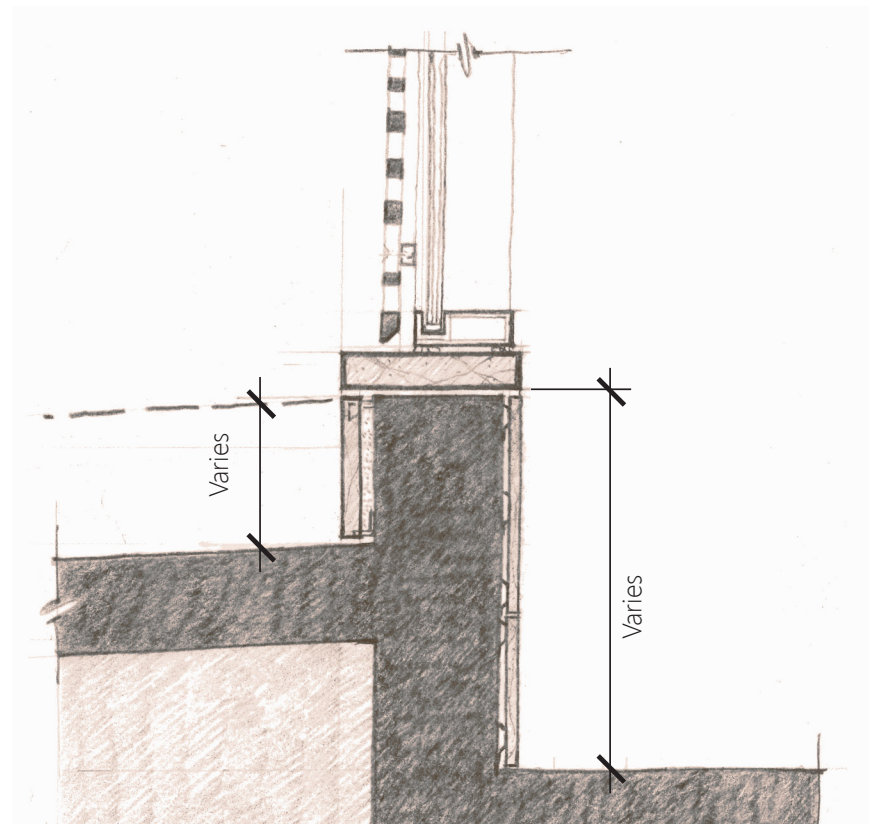
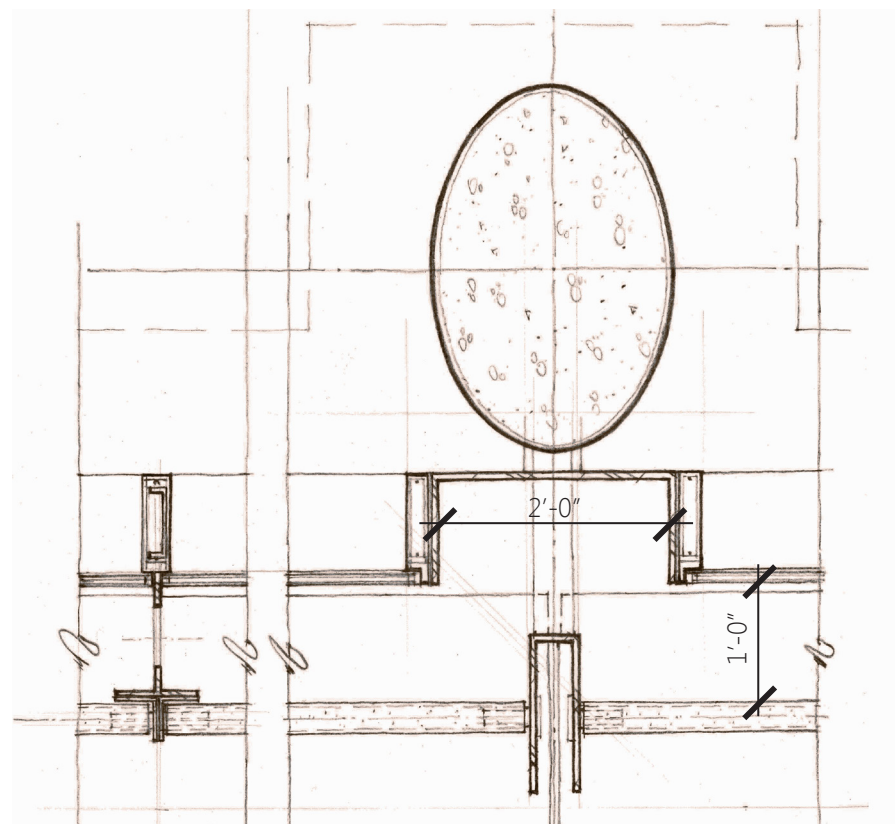
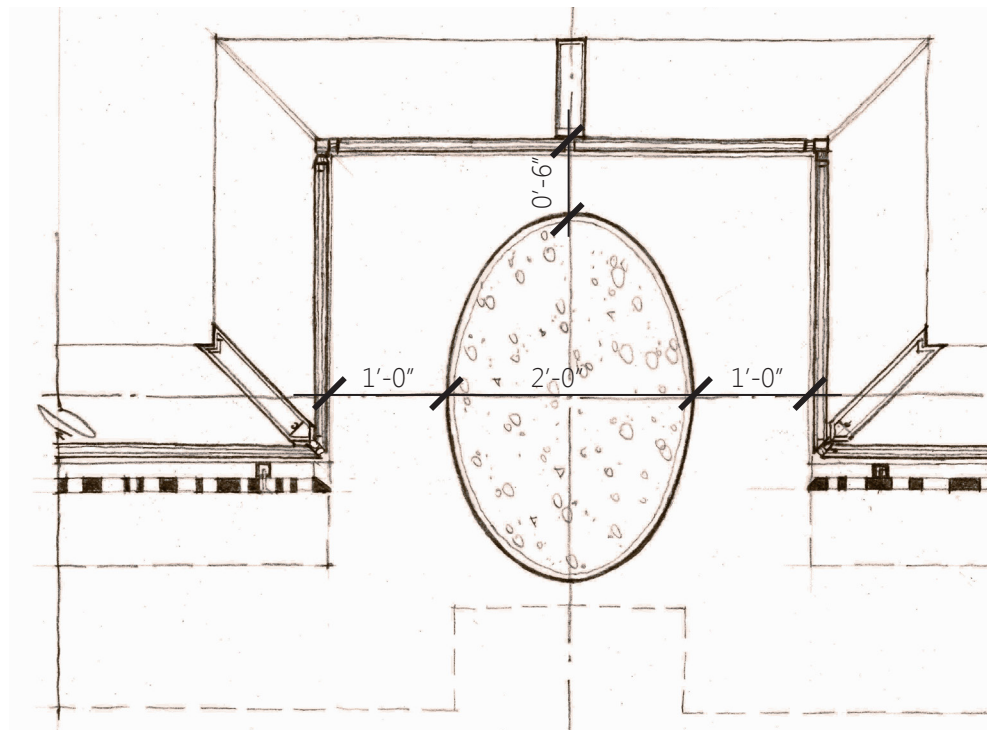
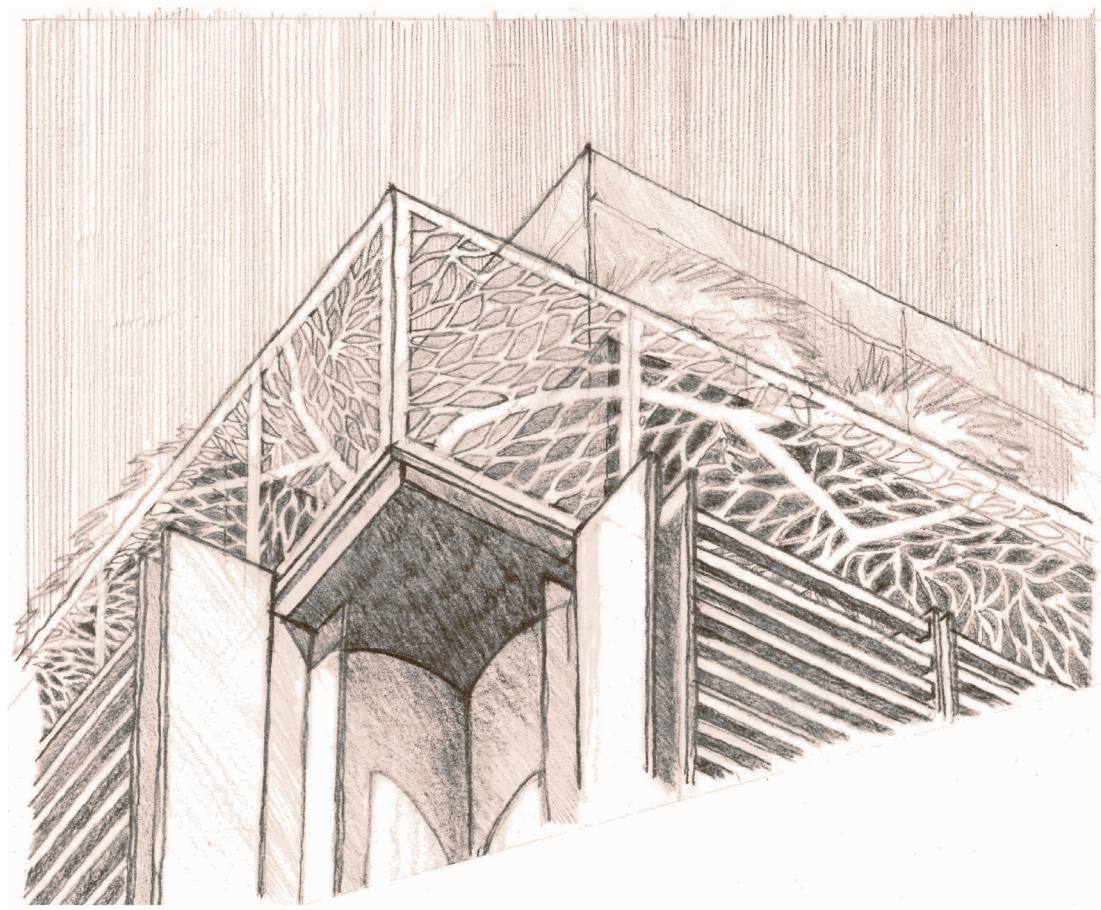
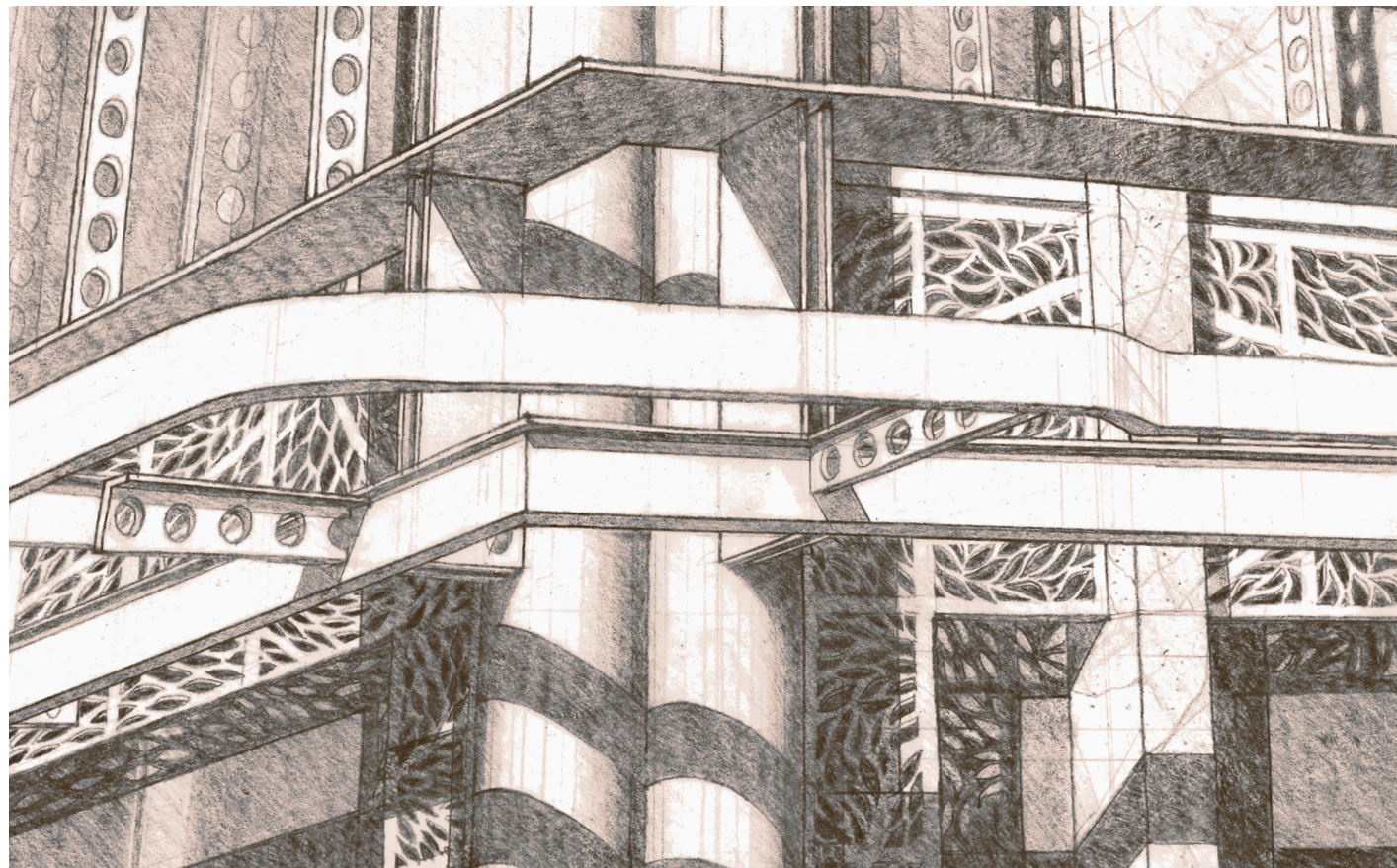
Ceramic rain screen cladding

Corrugated metal panel

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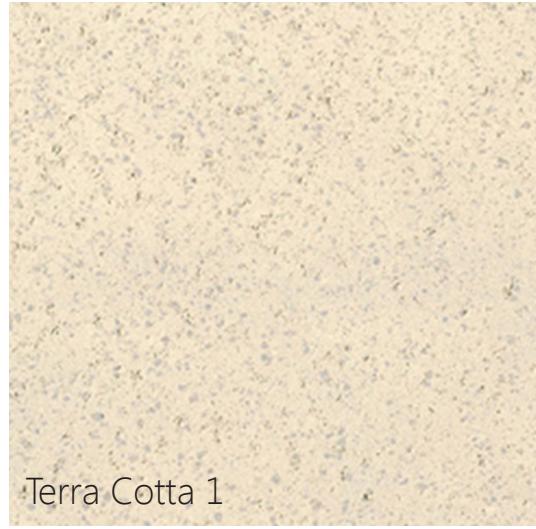


A-A

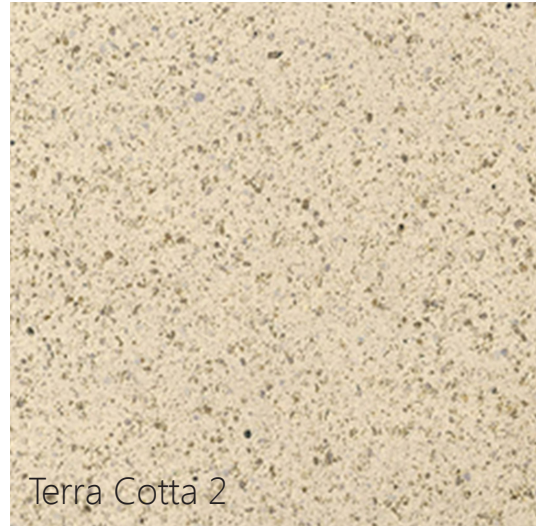
B-B

C-C





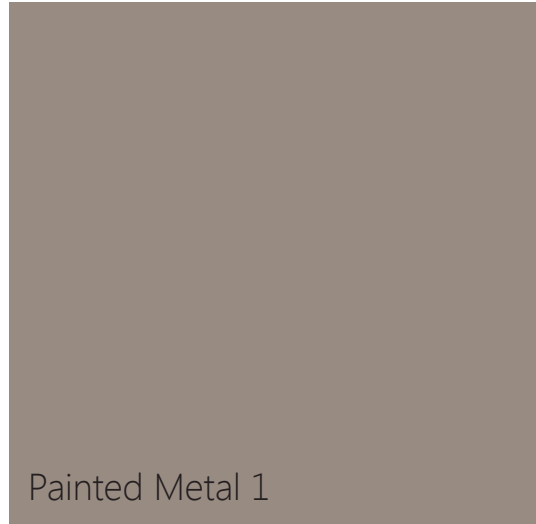
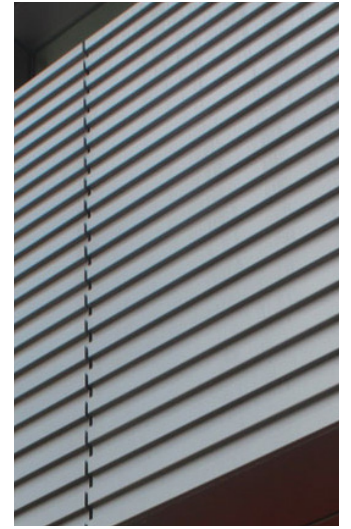
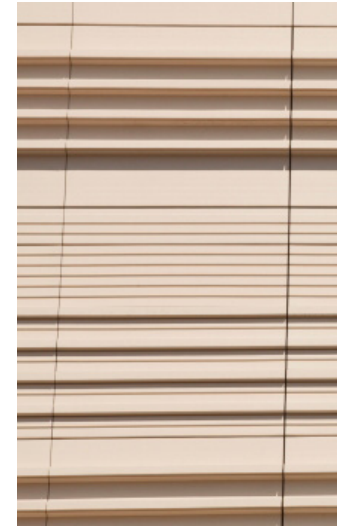
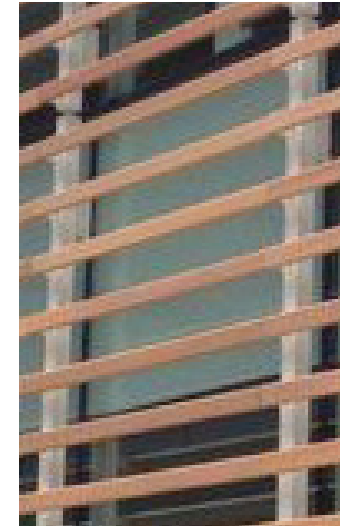
Terra Cotta 1



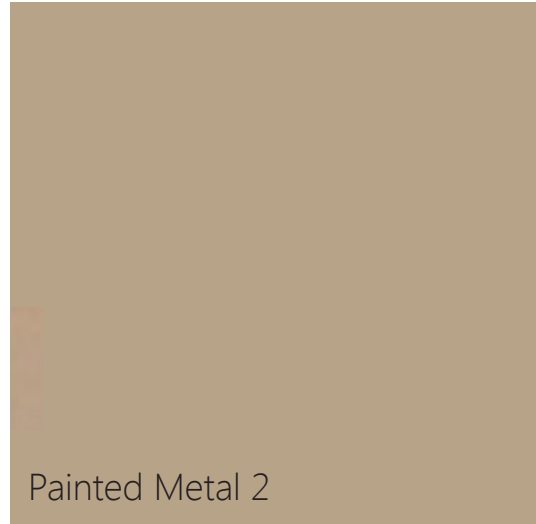
Terra Cotta 2



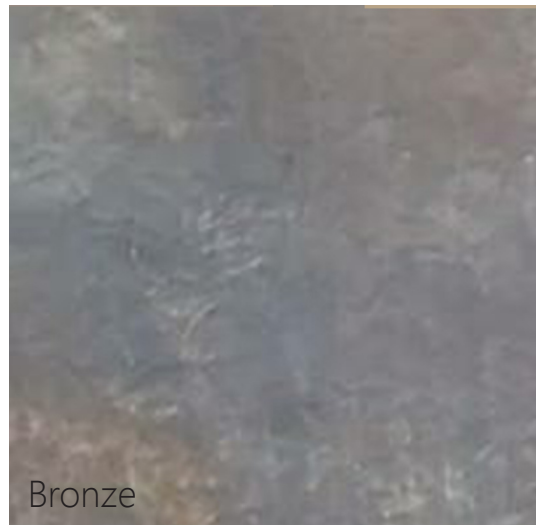
Terra Cotta 3



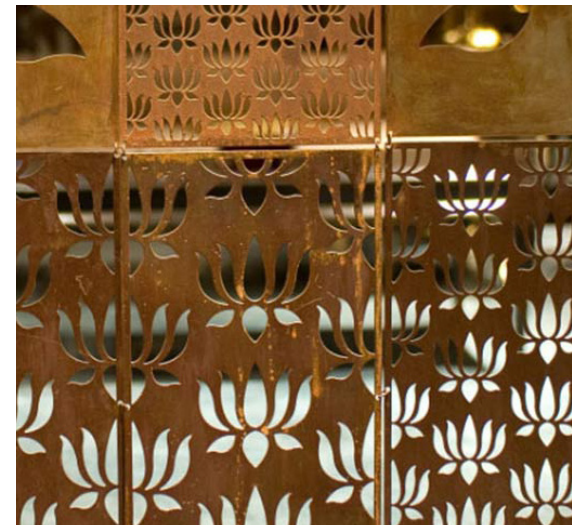
Painted Metal 1



Painted Metal 2



Bronze





Capital  
Shaft  
Base



- Glass penthouse stepped back from street with integrated equipment screen
- Plasma cut bronze frieze mounted over face of planters to provide further detailing and ornamentation
- ROOF +88'-6"
- Steel plate scrim frame & armature to receive bronze paint coating
- SIXTH FLOOR +74'-9"
- Ceramic scrim over glass curtain wall; ceramic baguettes occur in 3 colors, 50% density at 3rd floor
- FIFTH FLOOR +62'-3"
- Structural bays expressed via primary vertical grid at column lines and secondary horizontal grid at floor lines
- 4 sided structurally glazed curtain wall; aluminum mullions to receive bronze paint coating
- FOURTH FLOOR +49'-9"
- Steel tube & plate armature to receive bronze paint coating
- THIRD FLOOR +35'-9"
- Plasma cut bronze belt course mounted over storefront glazing, framed by bottom of scrim frame and signage armature
- SECOND FLOOR +21'-9"
- Ovoid white portland cement architectural concrete columns
- Aluminum storefront to receive bronze paint coating
- Carrara marble curb at storefront sill
- LOBBY +6'-6"
- Base delineation expressed via recessed entrance, display window pop-outs and material articulation to provide a pedestrian scale
- FIRST FLOOR +1'-8"

Carrara marble portal at entry

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Elevation in Context



