



THE CITY OF
NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

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DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING

DATE: October 18, 2017

STAFF: Vivek Damodaran, Planner I

SUBJECT: **GRANT AVENUE FAÇADE REVISION
P2017-082; DESIGN REVIEW
CEQA CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT – SECTION 15301
APN 141-281-11; 1305 GRANT AVENUE**

REQUESTED ACTION

Consider approval of a Design Review application for exterior architectural modifications to the building façade fronting onto Grant Avenue at 1305 Grant, within the Downtown Core Retail zoning district.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is 7,031 square feet and located south of the Grant Plaza, in downtown Novato. The project site fronts onto the south side of Grant Avenue on a 55-foot wide sidewalk segment which is separated from the east bound travel lane by five (5) public parking stalls and one street tree. The site/building is positioned between two (2) existing businesses “Bank of the West” and “Marinscope”.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This proposal is to revise the building façade fronting Grant Avenue. The building itself has undergone extensive internal improvements, including a reconfiguration of the two story floor plan. A part of these interior changes warrants the need to relocate the eastern entryway from Grant Avenue. Below is a list of the proposed façade modification:

- Removal of existing awnings
- Removal of existing metal gate and fencing, relocation of existing mailboxes
- Balcony replacement with Juliet balcony
- New building cornice
- New canvas awnings
- Relocation of the eastern entryway
- New siding material along the building’s skirting
- New building finishes

BACKGROUND

Property Owner: Grant Building Investment, LLC.

Applicant: Daniel Macdonald, AIA Architects Inc.

Assessor’s Parcel No.: 141-281-11

Property Size: 7,031 square feet

General Plan Designation: Downtown Core (CD)

Existing Zoning: Downtown Core Retail (CDR); Downtown Overlay (D)

Existing Use: Personal Service/Office

Adjacent Zoning & Uses: North } Downtown Core Retail (CDR); Downtown
 East } Overlay (D); Retail/Personal Service & Office
 West }
 South – Low Density Residential (R1-7.5); Residential

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed building modifications have been determined to be categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City of Novato Environmental Review Guidelines pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities). Pursuant to the requirements of CEQA “Class 1 consists of the... minor alteration of an existing private structure...involving negligible expansion of existing use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency’s determination”.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Design review approval is a mandatory process for all new commercial development and exterior remodels deemed significant by the Community Development Director. The Design Review Commission’s action to approve the proposed façade remodel must be based on the findings of approval required for design review actions specified in Novato Municipal Code Section 19.42.030.F. To assist the DRC in making its decision, the analysis below lists each finding and discusses whether the proposed plans for the façade remodel conforms thereto.

Design Review Finding No. 1: The design, layout, size, architectural features and general appearance of the proposed project is consistent with the general plan, and any applicable specific plan and with the development standards, design guidelines and all applicable provisions of this code, including this title and any approved master plan and precise development plan.

1996 General Plan Consistency

This proposal to remodel the commercial building’s façade is on a site that has the Downtown Commercial (CD) land use designation of the Novato General Plan. The CD land use designation

permits a variety of commercial uses, including retail and office which currently occupy the building. Therefore, the existing uses in the building are considered to be an acceptable and compliant land use at this location.

The CD land use designation permits a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.2 and up to 2.0 if housing, exemplary architecture or a combination of both is provided. Floor area ratio is the maximum amount of floor area represented as a percentage of a given parcel's land area. The existing commercial building has an FAR of approximately 0.9. This FAR level is within the maximum FAR limit.

In addition to specifying acceptable types of land uses and maximum development intensities, the Novato General Plan provides a framework of policies addressing such matters as land use, transportation and circulation, and community character. These policies are intended to coordinate Novato's physical development over a 20-year period. In this instance, the Design Review Commission should consider applicable design policies of the Community Identity Chapter of the General Plan when reviewing this proposal. Relevant Community Identity policies are:

Community Identity Policy 1 Compatibility of Development with Surroundings. Ensure that new development is sensitive to the surrounding architecture, topography, landscaping, and to the character, scale, and ambiance of the surrounding neighborhood. Recognize that neighborhoods include community facilities needed by Novato residents as well as homes, and integrate facilities into neighborhoods.

Staff believes the combined, coordinated, balanced and quality façade modifications are sensitive to the surrounding architecture, character, scale and ambiance of the surrounding commercial neighborhood. Therefore, staff finds the proposed renovations to the commercial building are consistent with and further LU-Policy 1 of the Novato General Plan.

Community Identity Chapter Policy 15 Pedestrian Paths. Provide for maximum feasible pedestrian circulation.

The site plan and building modifications both preserves and enhance the building's pedestrian circulation experience, particularly along Grant Ave. with the addition of new storefront entries leading to and from the public sidewalk.

Downtown Novato Specific Plan

The property and building are within the Downtown Novato Specific Plan (DTSP), which sets forth several applicable design guidelines, including:

UD 11.1 (1) New or renovated buildings designated for first floor retail, particularly on Grant Avenue and Redwood Boulevard, shall front with windows and entryways to the street. Street frontage is not allowed for parking lots or building walls with no windows or entryways. Additionally, street frontage of retail shall not be interrupted by mid-block driveways.

UD 11.2 (10) Storefront windows and displays are encouraged where compatible with surroundings.

The building's primary frontage is on Grant Avenue. The façade renovations provide an enhanced set of storefronts with large picture windows for improved display that are not interrupted by a driveway(s). Parking is provided at the rear of the building. For these reasons the proposed renovations comply with UD 11.1 (1) and (10) above.

UD 11.7 (4) The size, shape and location of all signs shall be compatible with the building proportions and features.

The proposed façade enhancements include coordinated locations for signs centered under ground floor canopies that are of a size and dimensions that is compatible with the proportions and features of the canopies and the overall façade. Thus, the proposed signs are compliant with UD 11.7 (4).

The Downtown Novato Design Guidelines (DNDG) provide a direction for building renovations in the downtown area, listed below are the design guidelines and the proposal's discussion of each:

- ❖ *Preserve Original Features and Decoration: The value of preserving existing design elements including, building proportions, finish materials, trim, doors, windows, and fixtures should be considered when undertaking building renovations and/or additions.*

The existing façade is sun-bleached, unmaintained and significantly deteriorating, retaining the building's outdated finish and materials is infeasible and aesthetically displeasing. These proposed façade modifications are minor changes that lend to a new look, without negatively impacting the building's character.

- ❖ *Removal of Elements Inconsistent with the Original Façade: If a building's original design elements are determined to be of historic and/or architectural significance, subsequently applied features that are incompatible should be removed.*

Storefront Renovation: When it is determined that a building façade is historically significant due to its contribution to the Downtown's architectural heritage any alteration shall retain or incorporate the essential elements and details of the original façade. Contemporary interpretations and replications of original building elements (windows, plaster trim work, wood, details, etc.) may be considered provided they offer an equivalent visual quality and improved durability.

This structure has not been identified to have historic or architectural significance, changes and modifications proposed are consistent with the original façade and will not negatively affect the character of the building or the downtown area.

- ❖ *Additions to Existing Structures: Addition(s) should be consistent with the scale, proportions, and massing of the original structure. Additionally, exterior finish materials and details should be consistent with the existing building.*

There are no additions proposed as part of this façade revision's project scope.

- ❖ *Awnings, Doors, Windows: For buildings determined to be of historical significance, the design of replacement awnings, doors and windows should be compatible with the historical character and design of the building.*

As aforementioned, this structure has not been identified to be historical or architecturally significant, the proposed wall finishes, building trim, and building skirting all remain compatible with the existing downtown area.

Zoning Consistency –

The Downtown Core Retail (CDR) zoning district is applied to part of the downtown area, and is intended to allow for a mix of commercial, office and residential land uses with predominantly retail, entertainment and personal services on the ground floor street frontage to encourage pedestrian activities. The CDR zoning district is consistent with the Downtown Core land use designation of the General Plan.

These façade modifications will continue to encourage pedestrian activities through a revised ground floor street frontage. The proposal will not create additional building square footage, it will not remove existing parking nor increase the height of the building or change a building setback; the focus of the application is primarily to provide a cosmetic revision for the existing building façade.

As demonstrated by the table below, the project proposal conforms to the codified general development standards for the Downtown Core Retail (CDR) zoning district.

Project Parcel Size = 7,031 square feet	Setback			Building Coverage	Height Limit	Floor Area Ratio
	Front	Side	Rear			
Codified Standard	None	None	None	100%	35'	1.2
Project Proposal	None	None	75'	49%	27.6'	0.9

Public Notice

Section 19.58.050 of the Novato Municipal Code requires an action of the Community Development Director to be publicly noticed. Accordingly, notices have been mailed to property owners within 600-feet of the project site.

Design Review Finding No. 2: The proposed project would maintain and enhance the community's character, provide for harmonious and orderly development, and create a desirable environment for the occupants, neighbors, and visiting public.

The proposed façade revision is intended to revise and uplift the existing façade through minimal exterior structural modifications.

The project proposal retains several features of the existing design. The faux balcony will be replaced by a new decorative Juliet balcony. The orientation, size and shape of the windows, behind the Juliet balcony, will not be changing. The existing oval shaped awnings over the building's two entrances, are proposed to be replaced by a singular rectangular shaped stationary

awning. The entryway to the building has become more uniform and centralized, with the relocation of the eastern entryway closer to the existing western entrance. Both of the entrances benefit from the proposed stationary awning. The existing building skirting will be replaced by a new shale stone style siding material, providing a subtle articulation along the skirting. Two panel windows along the eastern portion of the building will be replaced by the proposed mailbox and access door. These design modifications will complement the community's character, and will create a desirable environment for occupants, neighbors and the visiting public.

Design Review Finding No. 3: The proposed development would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; is not materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity; does not interfere with the use or enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments and does not create potential traffic, pedestrian or bicycle hazards.

Prior to any demolition or construction, the project plans will be reviewed by the responsible public agencies to ensure that public safety and welfare are maintained and enhanced. Additionally, the proposed façade and building upgrade do not cause material injury to surrounding properties and their use and potential redevelopment. Lastly, the enhanced storefronts with new access doors will improve pedestrian ingress and egress to the building and along the public sidewalk at the building's frontage on Grant Avenue.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the façade revision for the commercial building as proposed.
2. Approve the façade revision for the commercial building, with recommended revisions.
3. Do not approve the façade revision for the commercial building.
4. Continue the public hearing, with direction to staff and the applicant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Design Review Commission approve the design of the proposed façade revision at 1305 Grant Avenue, APN 141-281-11, pursuant to the plans prepared by Daniel Macdonald dated September 20, 2017, based on the following, required findings, the staff analysis above, and subject to the conditions of approval below.

FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL

CEQA Finding: The proposed building modifications have been determined to be categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City of Novato Environmental Review Guidelines pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities).

Design Review Findings: In accordance with Section 19.42.030.F. of the Novato Municipal Code and on the basis of the discussion above in support of the findings in the

staff analysis section of this report, the Design Review Commission finds that:

1. *The design, layout, size architectural features and general appearance of the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, and any applicable Specific Plan and with the development standards, design guidelines and all applicable provisions of the Municipal Code, including the Zoning Ordinance and any approve Master Plan and Precise Development Plan.*
2. *The proposed project would maintain and enhance the community's character, provide for harmonious and orderly development, and create a desirable environment for the occupants, neighbors, and visiting public.*
3. *The proposed development would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; is not materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity; does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments and does not create potential traffic, pedestrian or bicycle hazards.*

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

The following conditions shall be met to the satisfaction of the *Planning Division of the Novato Community Development Department*:

1. Design Review shall expire two (2) years from the date of approval unless within that time a building permit has been issued and remains valid.
2. The approval granted herein shall not become effective until all appropriate fees billed by the City of Novato to the application account are paid in full in accordance with the City's cost Base Fee System. Failure to pay said fees may results in the City withholding issuance of related building permit, certificate of occupancy, recordation of final maps or other entitlements.
3. Significant design alterations shall be brought to the Planning Division for consideration. No deviation from approved plans, including color changes or substitution of materials shall be made without staff approval.
4. Indemnity and Time Limitations
 - a. The applicant shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City, its agents, officers, attorneys and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding brought against the City or its agents, officers, attorneys, or employees, to attack set aside, void or annul the City's decision to approve the application and associated environmental determination at issue herein. This indemnification shall include damages or fees awarded against the City, if any, cost of suit, attorney's fees, and other costs and expenses incurred in connection with such action whether incurred by the applicant, the City, and/or parties initiating or bringing such action.
 - b. The applicant shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City, its agents, officers, employees, and attorneys for all costs incurred in additional investigation (such as the

environmental determination at issue herein or any subsequently required Environmental Document), if made necessary by said legal action and if the applicant desires to pursue securing such approvals, after initiation of such litigation, which are conditioned on the approval of such documents, in a form and under conditions approved by the City Attorney.

- c. The applicant indemnifies the City for all the City's costs, fees, and damages which the City incurs in enforcing the above indemnification provisions.
- d. Unless a shorter period applies, the time within which judicial review of this decision must be sought is governed by California Code of Civil Procedure, Section 1094.6.
- e. The Conditions of Project Approval set forth herein include certain fees, dedication requirements, reservation requirements, and other exactions. Pursuant to Government Code Section 66020(d)(1), these Conditions constitute written notice of a statement of the amount of such fees, and a description of the dedications, reservations, and other exactions. The applicant is hereby further notified that the 90-day approval period in which you may protest these fees, dedications, reservations, and other exactions, pursuant to Government Code Section 66020(a), has begun. If the applicant fails to file a protest within this 90-day period complying with all of the requirements of Section 66020, the applicant will be legally barred from later challenging such exactions.

The following conditions shall be met to the satisfaction of the *Novato Fire District*:

4. Pursuant to Novato Fire District Standard 205 the façade changes need to incorporate approved building premise identification for building and suite numbers at the rear and front of the building.

FURTHER ACTION

No further action on the Design Review application will be taken unless an appeal is filed in writing within ten (10) calendar days along with the required filing fee.

Design and construction of this project shall be in accordance with all City ordinances, including the Development Standards Chapter of the Municipal Code. Unless exceptions have been granted heretofore in writing, then none will be allowed by reason of this approval.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Plans prepared by Daniel Macdonald, AIA Architects Inc.

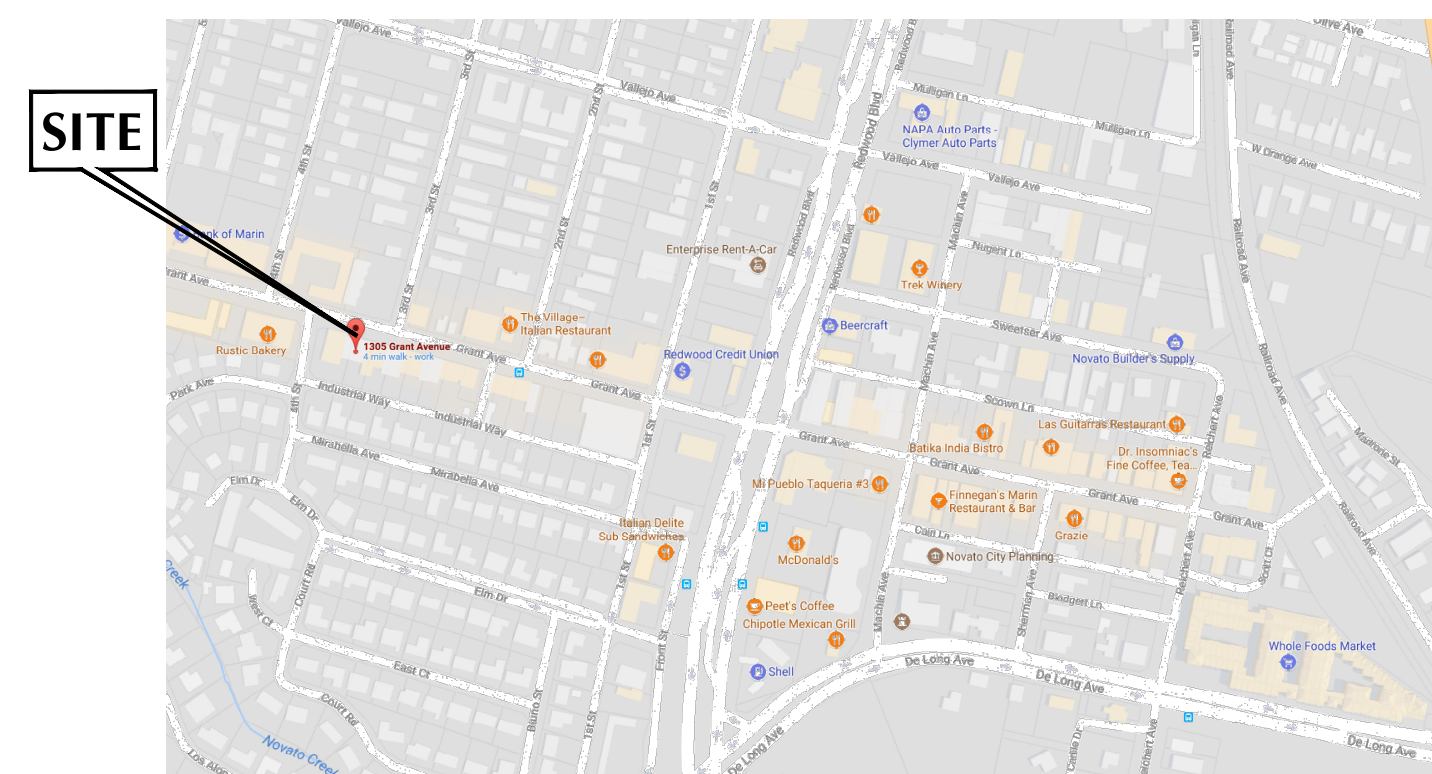


Facade Improvement

1305 Grant Ave

Novato, California 94945

Location Map



MAP OF DOWNTOWN NOVATO, CALIFORNIA

Project Information

PROJECT SCOPE:

- 1) Install new storefront door and entry to new staircase per building permit #

OFFICE BUILDING

USE: Retail Sales, Professional Offices
 TYPE: VN
 OCCUPANCY: B
 FULLY SPRINKLERED: Yes

PARKING:

(E) on-site parking spaces provided, including (1) van accessible space with loading area.

Project Team

OWNER

MILES JONES
 1305 Grant Ave
 Novato, CA 94947

ARCHITECT

DANIEL MACDONALD AIA ARCHITECTS, INC.
 1595 Grant Avenue, Suite 200
 Novato, CA 94945
 PH: (415) 899-0050
 FX: (415) 899-0055
 CONTACT: Daniel Macdonald AIA

List of Drawings

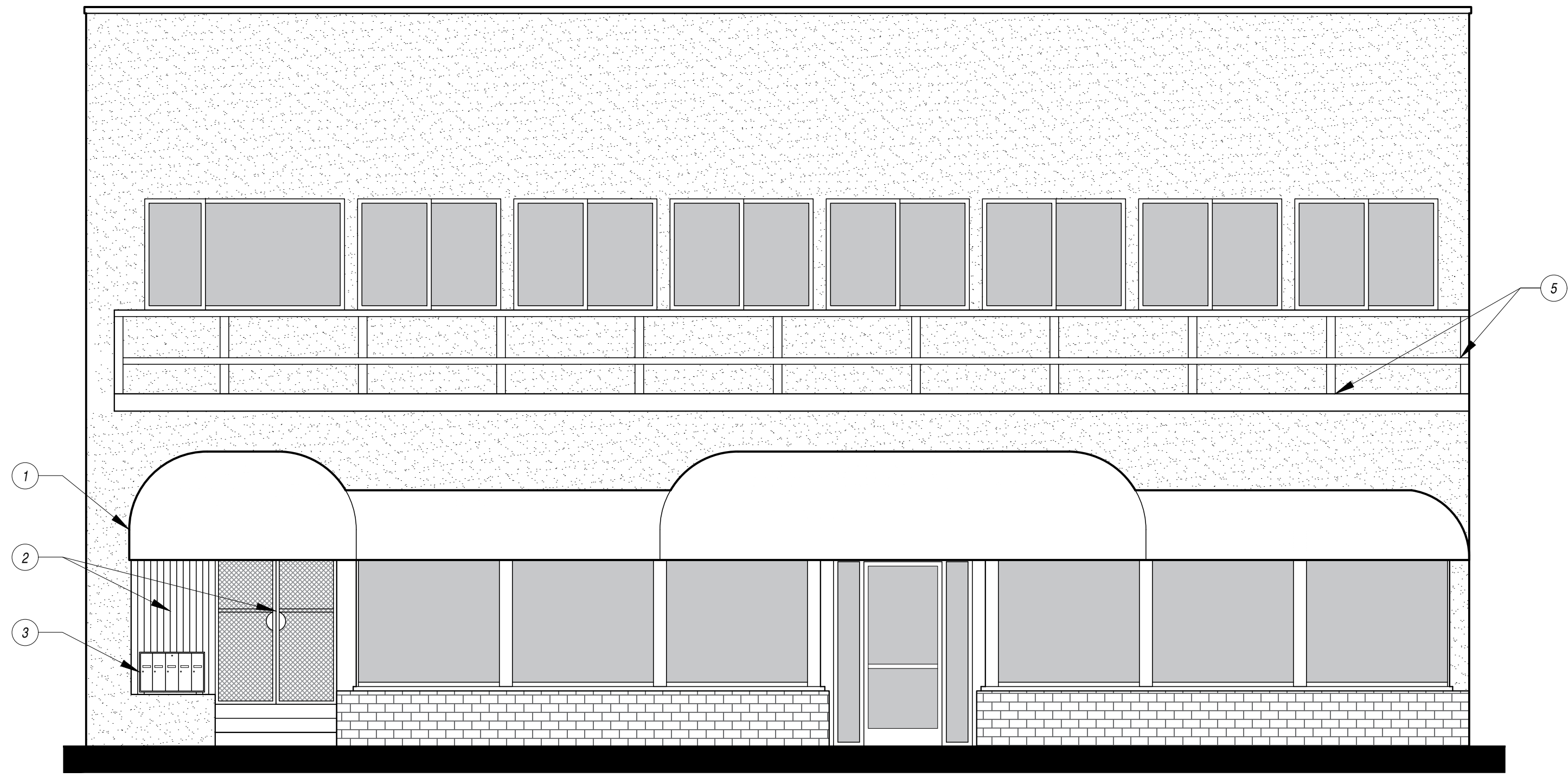
ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

- A0 COVER SHEET
- A1 EXISTING ELEVATIONS & PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

Facade Improvement

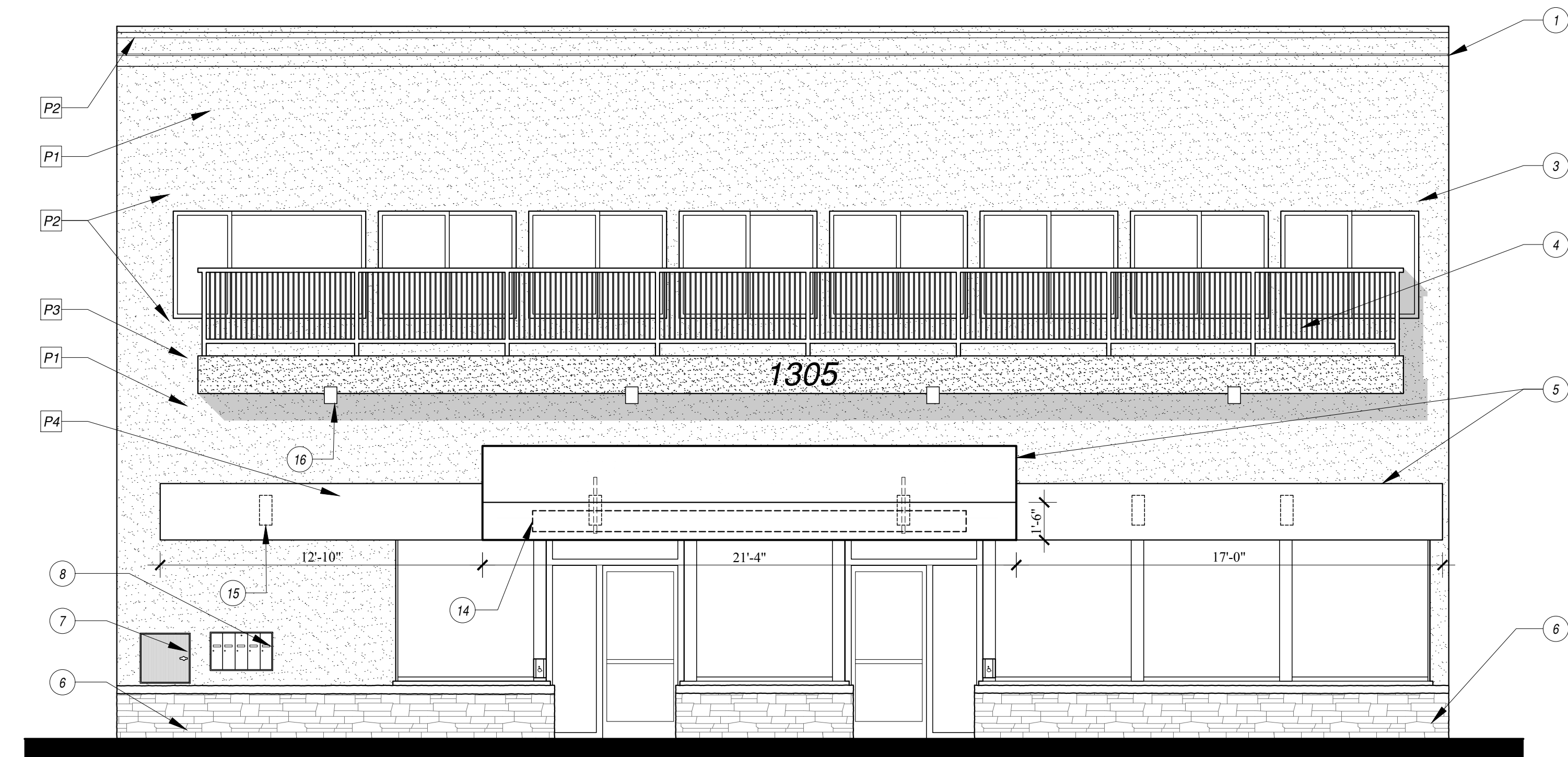
1305 Grant Ave

Novato, California



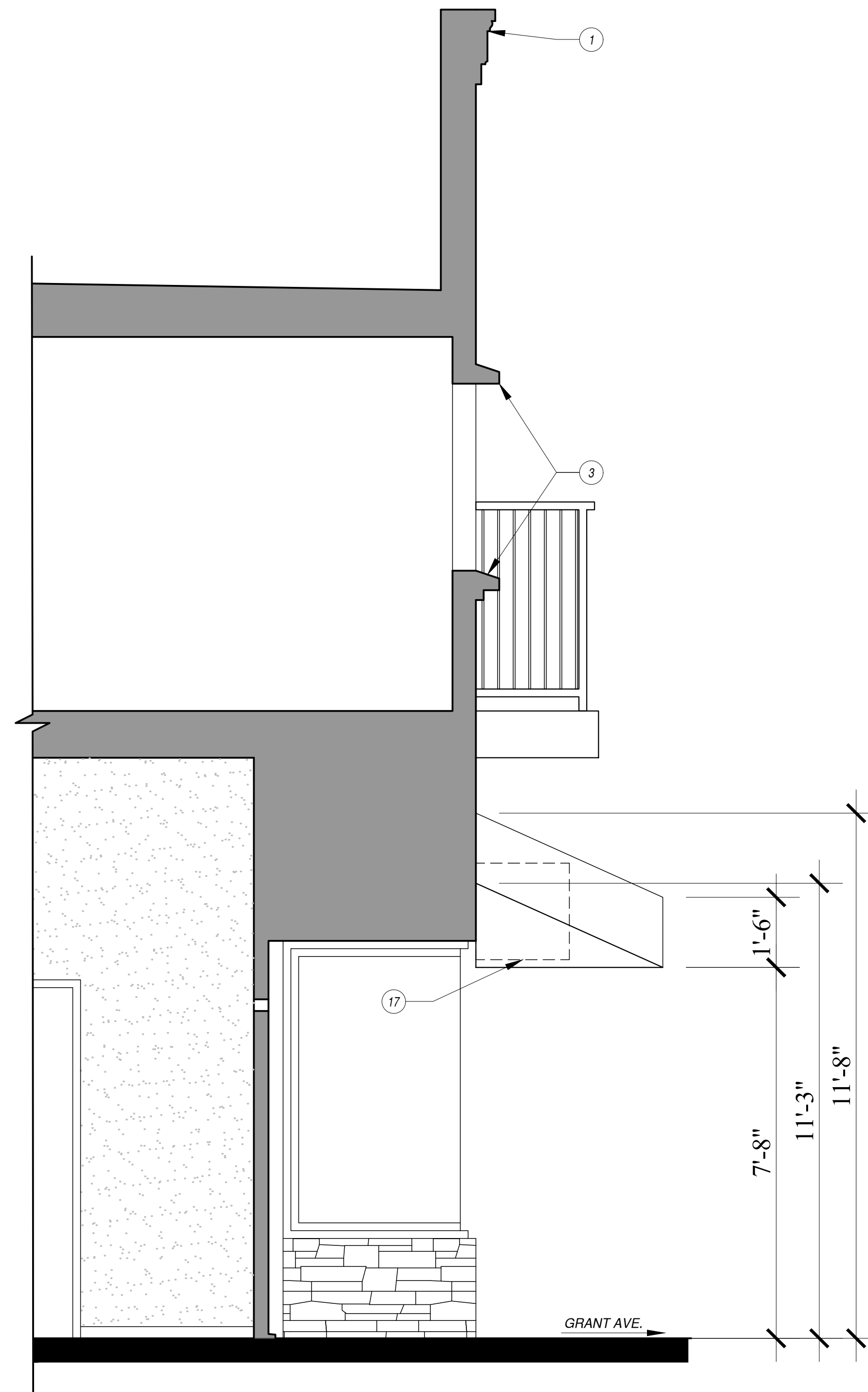
1 EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"



2 PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

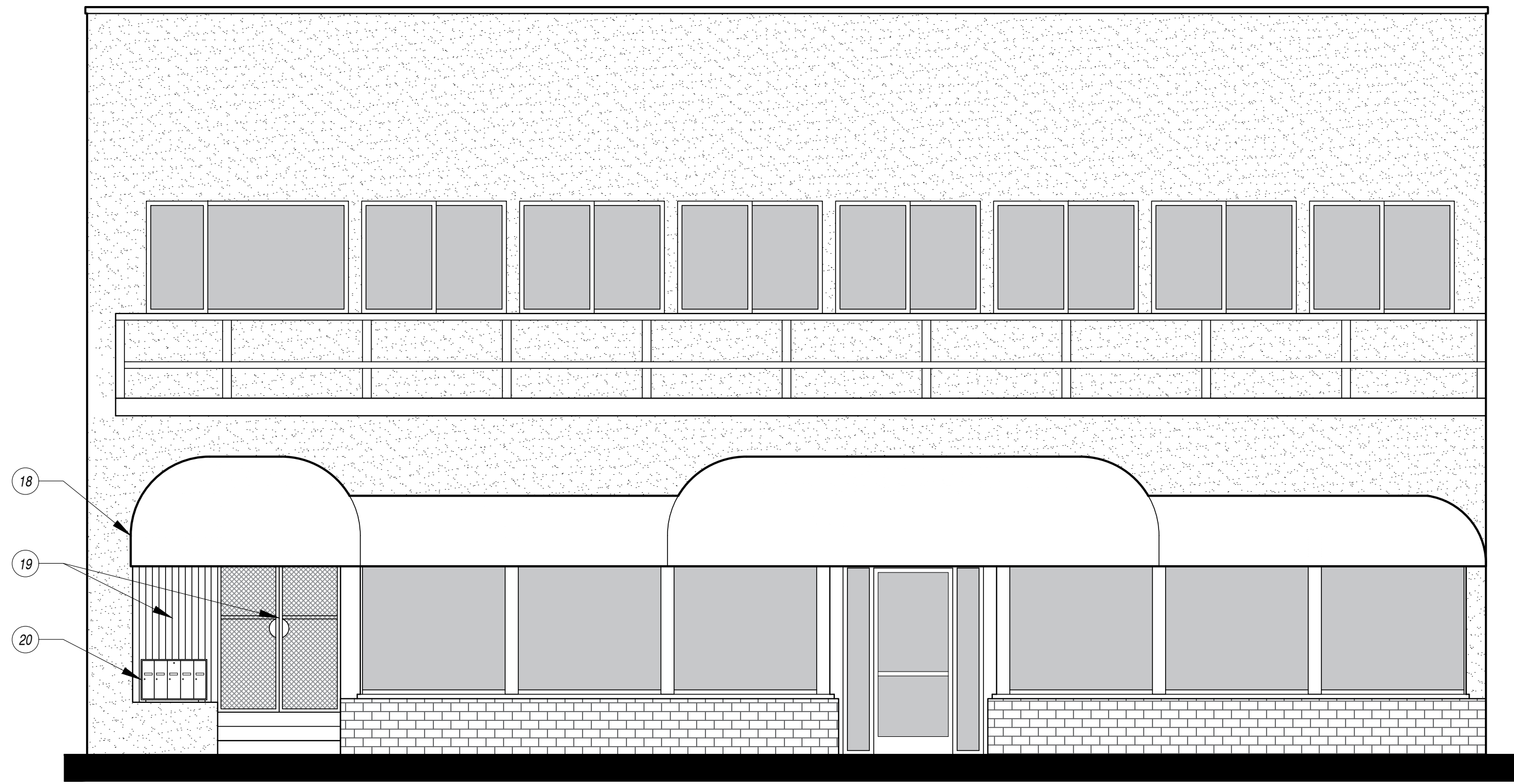


3 BUILDING SECTION

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

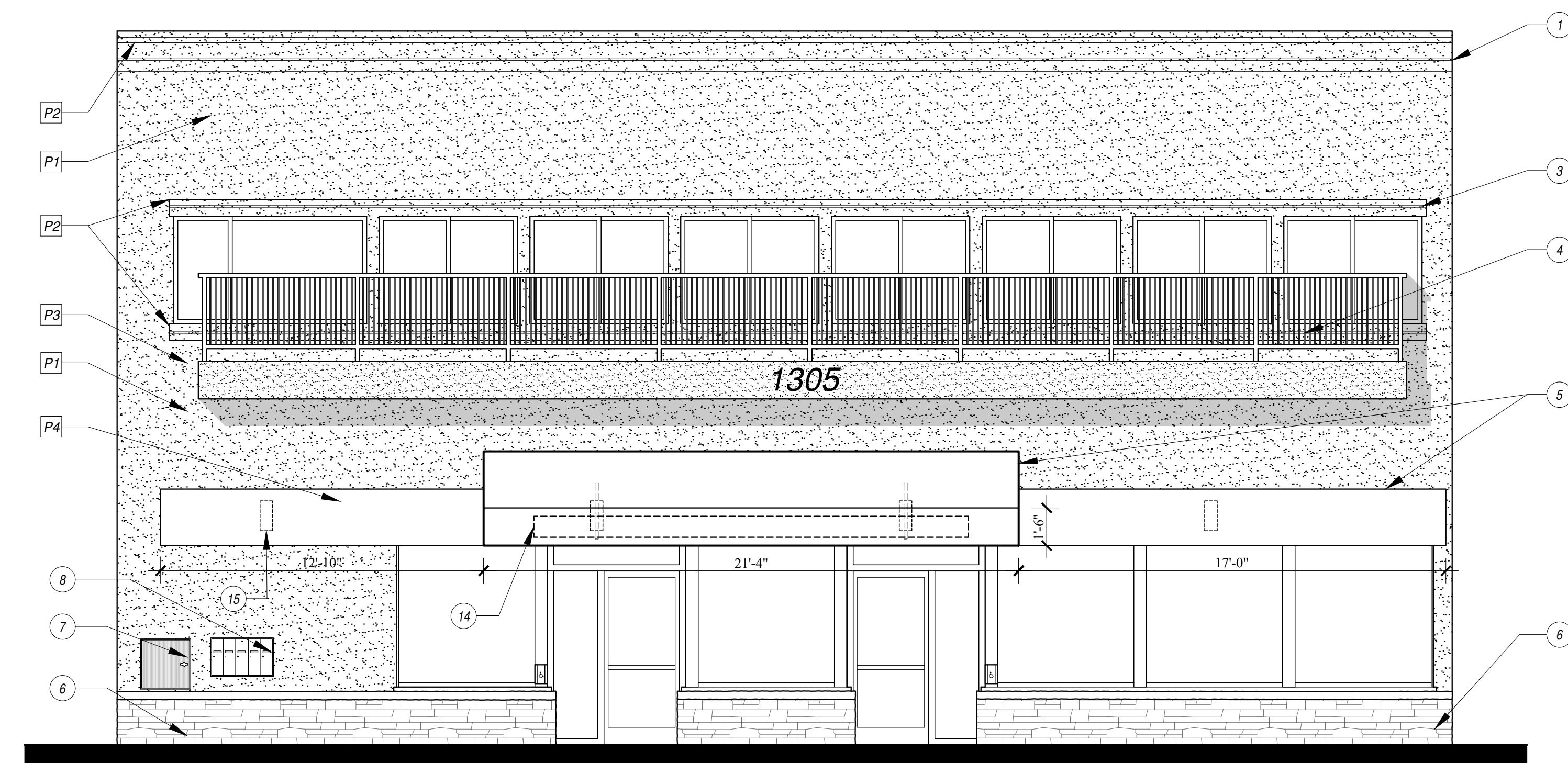
PROPOSED ELEVATION - Keynotes	
1 NEW DECORATIVE CORNICE	12 NEW DOOR TO MECH/ROOM
2	13 NEW AWNING
3 NEW DECORATIVE WINDOW TRIM	14 FUTURE TENANT SIGN
4 NEW DECORATIVE JULIET BALCONY	15 NEW LIGHTING FIXTURE - (UP AND DOWN)
5 NEW CANVAS AWNINGS	16 NEW LIGHTING FIXTURE - (DOWN ONLY)
6 EL DORADO STONE - NANTUCKET	17 FUTURE BLADE SIGN
7 EXISTING ACCESS DOOR	18 REMOVE EXISTING AWNINGS
8 EXISTING MAILBOXES TO REMAIN	19 REMOVE EXISTING METAL GATE AND FENCE
9 EXISTING PLUMBING TO REMAIN	20 REUSE AND RELOCATE EXISTING MAILBOXES
10 EXISTING AWNING TO REMAIN	21 REMOVE EXISTING CONCRETE STEPS
11 EXISTING BALCONY AND RAILING TO REMAIN	

Finishes	
WALLS - EXTERIOR	
P1	BENJAMIN MOORE - ROCKPORT GRAY - HC105
P2	BENJAMIN MOORE - WHITE 2121-70
P3	BENJAMIN MOORE - FLAT BLACK 2132-10
P4	FABRIC - AWNING



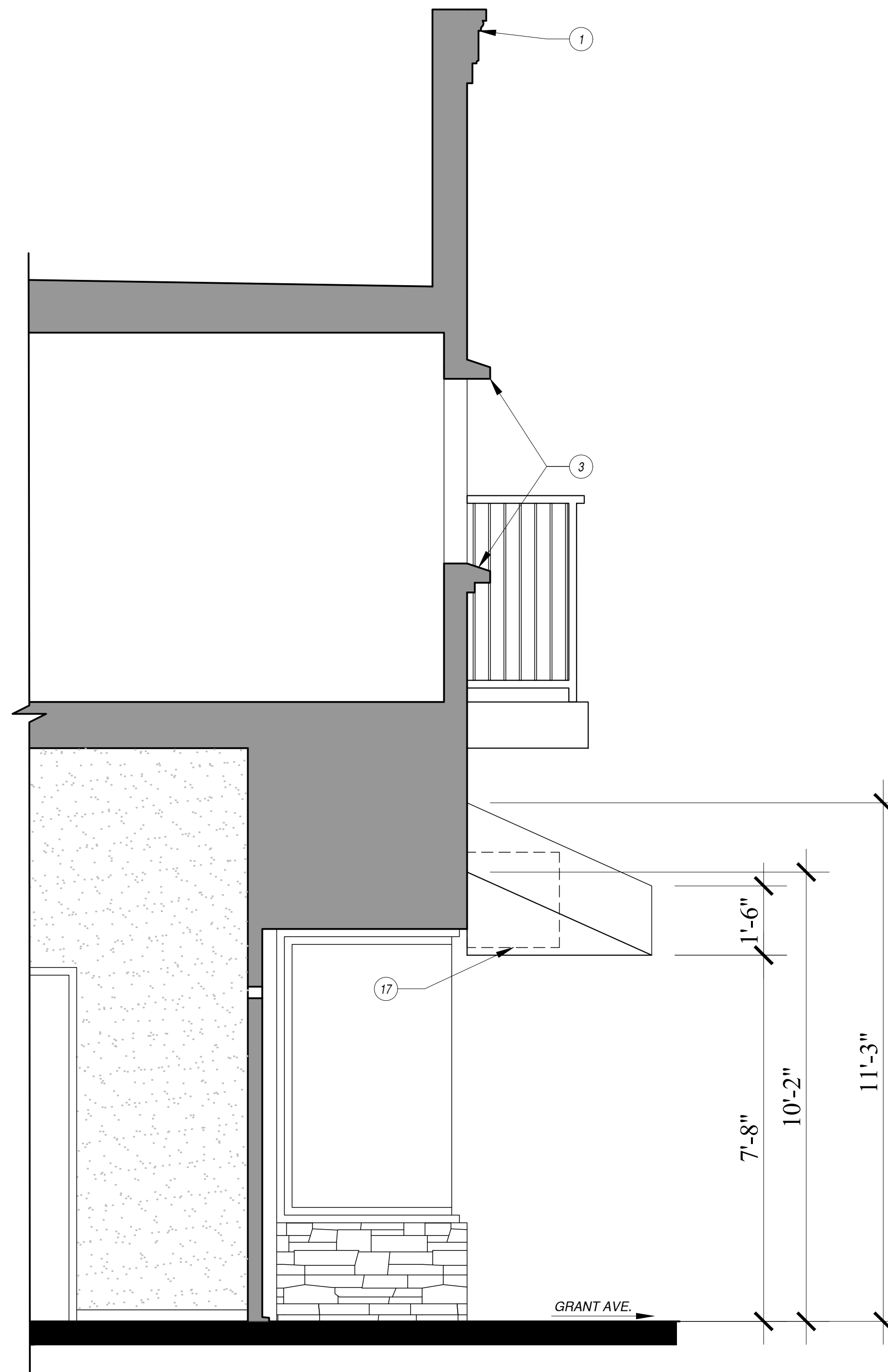
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SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"



2 PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"



3 BUILDING SECTION

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

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P4	FABRIC - AWNING



Facade Improvement 1305 Grant Ave

Novato, California

DESIGN REVIEW RESUBMITTAL

September 20, 2017

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