

To: Mr. Tim Askin, City of Milwaukee HPC  
From: Ken Gowland RA, NCARB  
*MetroStudio, LLC*  
Re: Stained Glass Window Relocation; Scottish Rite Temple 790 N. Van Buren St. Milwaukee  
Wi  
Date: 03.14.17

Mr. Askin:

This letter and its attachments is a follow-up to the original COA application filed for planned modifications to the Scottish Rite Temple Building located at 790 N. Van Buren Street.

As you may remember the original COA application material called for the removal of existing stained glass panels from existing windows located along the E. Wells and N. Van Buren St. elevations (see attached elevations). These stained glass panels would be replaced with clear glazing matching the material characteristics of adjacent similar windows. The removed stained glass panels would be relocated to the building interior and be installed in such a manner as to be a visible feature of the building interior.

The COA language put forth by the HPC appears to require the retention of this the majority of this material in the current locations. While we understand the basic concern of the HPC to protect this material our continued design development has clearly illustrated that the retention of the stained glass is both problematic and deleterious to the success of the planned hotel and restaurant operations.

As mentioned in the well-researched staff report the signature feature of the existing building is its unique Art Deco façade. This façade with its fluted stone paneling and highly stylized statuary is an outstanding example of the architectural language of this unique period. The statuary and carvings at the exterior are fine examples of the abstracted tectonics of this artistic period. While these features are no doubt truly historic and character defining features of the architecture it is important to note that the stained glass panels were never conceived as an integral part of the architect's original vision for the façade. The original design for the building as understood in the original façade drawings does not indicate the presence of stained glass panels and indicates windows consistent with the typical pattern of openings along the façade (see attached original building elevation drawings).

Additionally it is important to note that the design of these decorative panels lack the abstracted/stylized language one would expect to see in a truly art deco design. The panels themselves are figural, bearing little to no coherence with the visual language of the building itself and in many cases do not correspond with the period of significance for the building.

In our discussions with the Masons it has been made clear to the design team that these panels were installed after the Art-Deco façade renovation. The panels were gifts from the various graduating classes and installed over the years. While these panels may be considered representative of the Masons history they are not in our opinion a character defining feature of the façade. In fact given the locations and installation the stained glass panels are not even visible at the exterior of the building. During normal daylight conditions these panels appear to be black/dark recesses with no visible detail when viewed from the exterior.

A key challenge to working with this existing façade is utilizing all available opportunities to introduce natural light into the interior of the building. As you no doubt are aware given

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the building's depth of plan and limited frontage (N. Van Buren and E. Wells) very little opportunities for the introduction of natural light into the deep plan interior exist. The existing Art Deco façade while elegant and powerful in its conceptions is largely opaque. Given this hermetic design it would be difficult if not impossible to conceive of the creation of additional openings into the façade without violating the integrity of the facade. As such we currently see our only opportunity to lighten the building interior thru the relocation of these panels. This daylighting will improve the quality of space at the interior and allow the ornate interior spaces to be viewed in daylight conditions as was no doubt the intention of the original architect.

We have attached a letter from the hotel operator that clearly outlines the challenges presented by these windows and the subsequent lack of natural lighting and visibility/awareness. The comments in our opinion are appropriate and consistent with the programmatic requirements of similar hotel/restaurant and meeting space requirements on other hospitality projects. We would ask that that you give consideration to the points listed in the letter as they do impact the long-term viability of the proposed project.

As always we respect the work and time of the HPC staff and look forward to developing a solution which addresses the needs of the building moving forward while preserving the important architectural aspects of its historic past.

Best Regards;

Kenneth Gowland RA  
For MetroStudio



February 28, 2017

Carlen Hatala and Tim Askin  
Historic Preservation Commission - City of Milwaukee  
City Hall, 200 E Wells St, Room B-4  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Carlen and Tim,

On behalf of Provenance Hotels, in our role as operators redeveloping the Scottish Rite building into a hotel with food and beverage and event space offerings, I am reaching out with you today regarding the feasibility of retaining the stained-glass windows that were installed by Masonic classes over the years.

While the windows are beautiful, we foresee operational challenges retaining them in their current placement following our adaptive reuse of the building to hotel, event and restaurant usage. In their current setting, the windows will result in limited daylight and compromised sight lines both into and out of the building that will negatively impact our ability to market the spaces to meeting customers, food and beverage partners/lessees and restaurant and bar patrons.

Our experience has proven that meeting planners prefer spaces with natural daylight and restaurateurs invariably gravitate toward spaces that have unobstructed ground floor windows. Clear line-of-sight and daylight are important elements in the design and marketing of a successful restaurant. Being able to see clearly into a restaurant space from the street will allow us to showcase the 'theater' of our food and beverage operations and draw customers into the space. It will also help us to create a dynamic, inviting streetscape along the length of the building and a varied and changing pedestrian experience along the length of the block. This is accretive not only to our business, both from a restaurant and hotel perspective, but also to the businesses that surround us and to the greater neighborhood.

With this project, we are aiming to create a modern design that complements the original historic building and are excited to embrace the building's history and unique architecture. For the long-term success of the project, it is important that the hotel appeal to a wide range of customers, including millennial travelers. These travelers crave connection to a sense of place and, in the overall scheme of the project, we believe windows that connect our patrons with the excitement in the hotel and outside on the street will serve the project better than retention of the stained-glass windows.

If the Masons are willing to sell the windows, we propose their careful removal, consideration of integrating some into the interior design of the building, archival preservation of those we cannot display either on- or off-site or loaning or donating some or all to a local historical organization. I am confident we can find a way to preserve the windows in another setting and honor the building's history without compromising our ability to create a successful hotel and food and beverage operation.

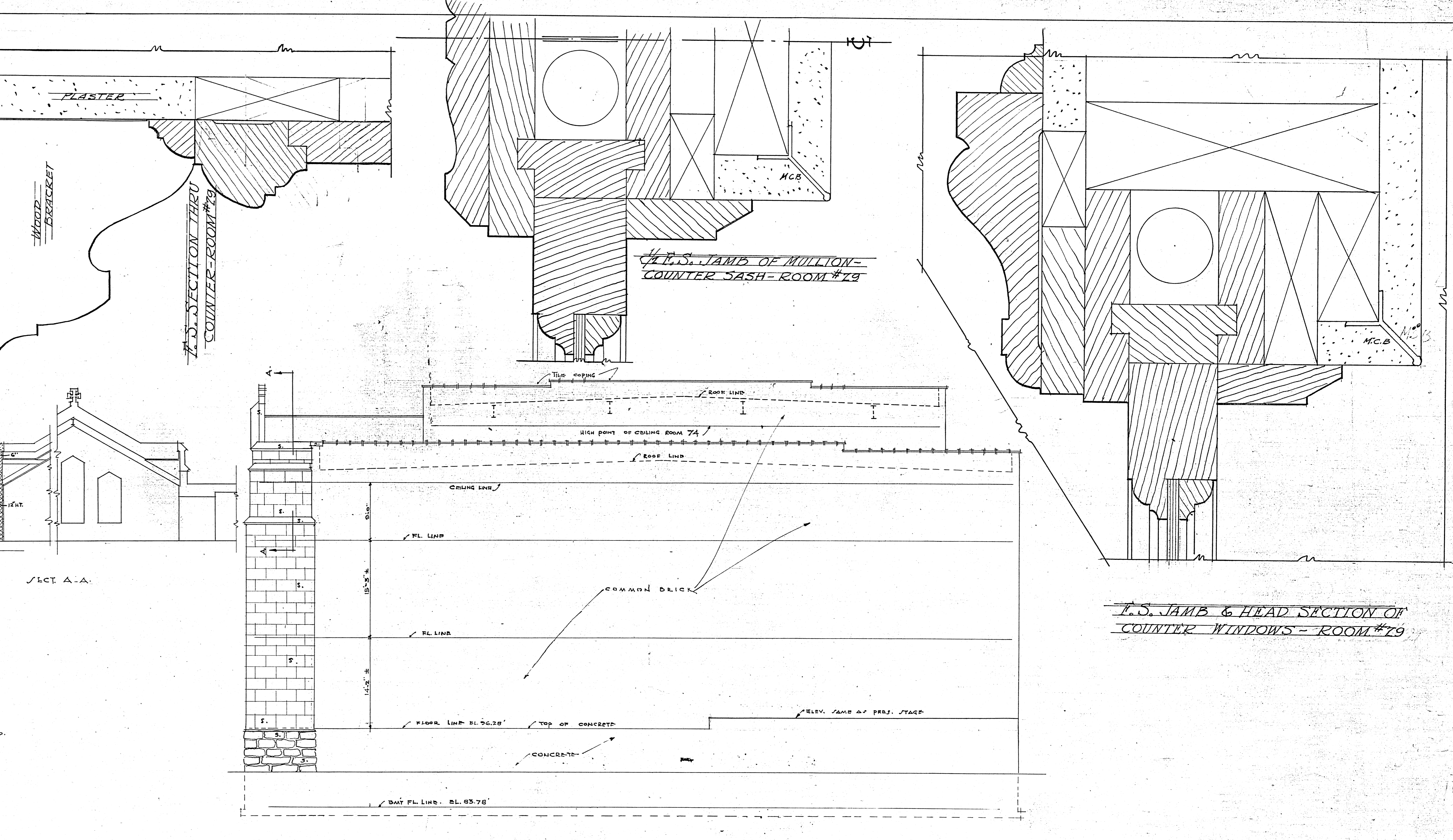
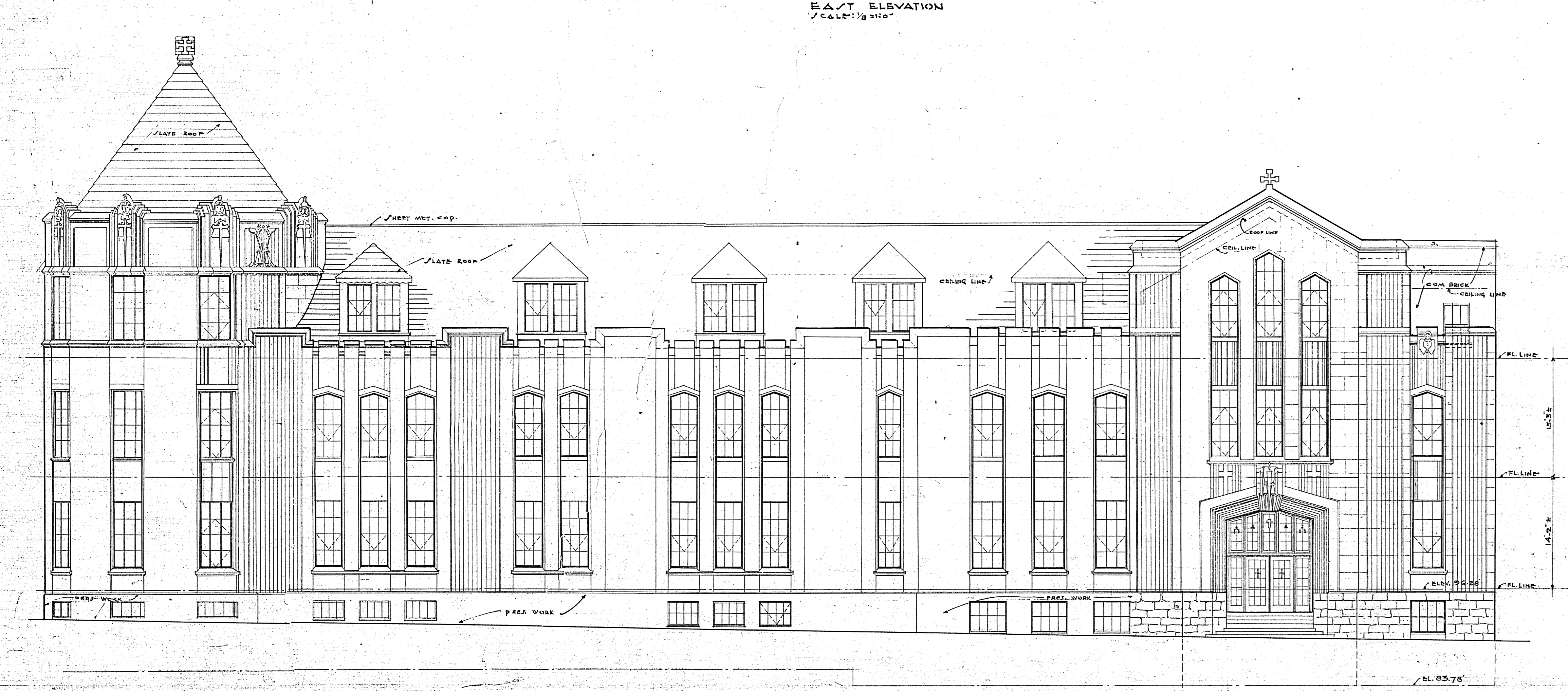
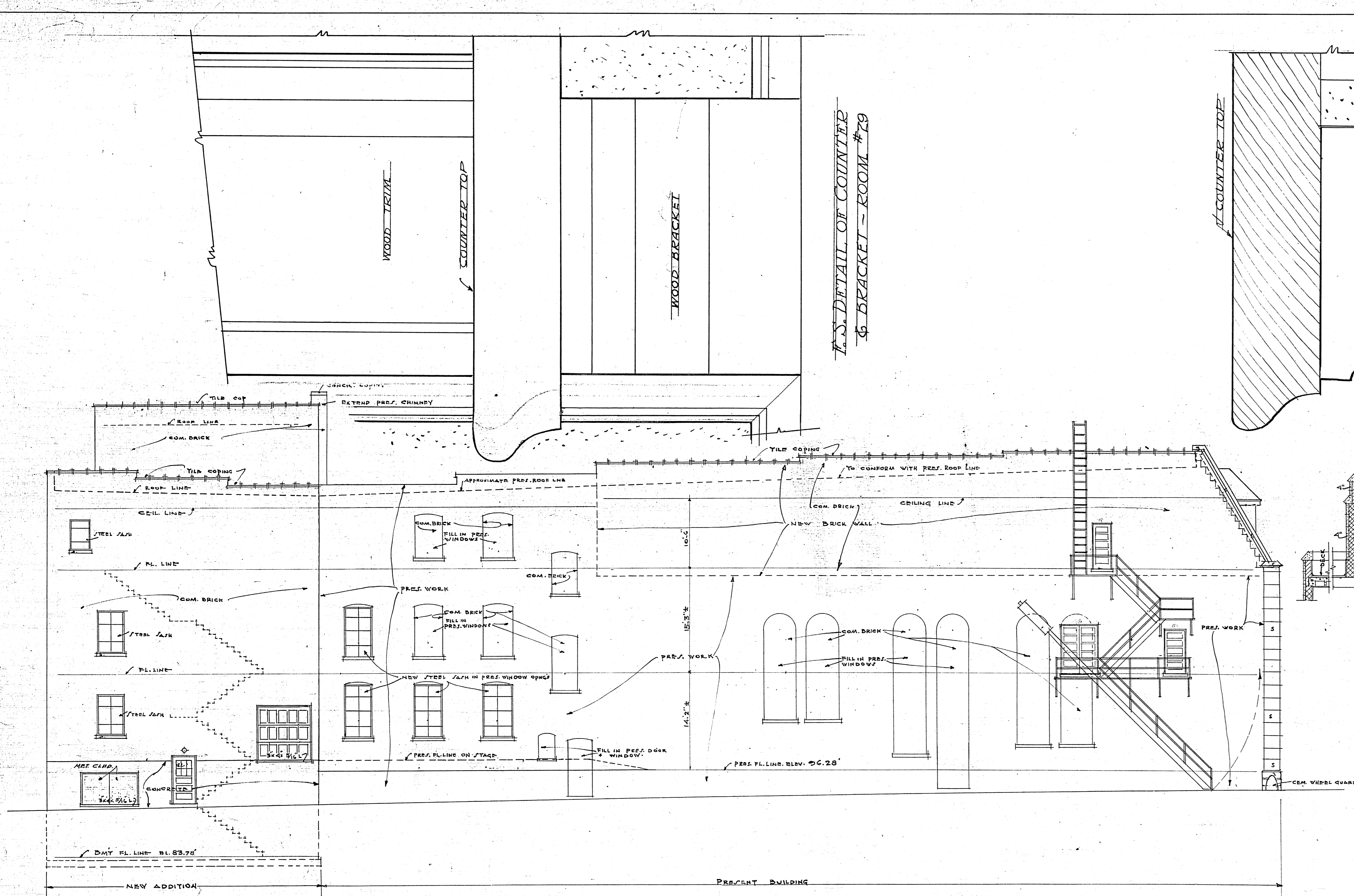
Thank you for the consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bashar Wali', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bashar Wali

President, Provenance Hotels

cc: Eric Nordeen and Matt Prescott, Principals, Ascendant Holdings

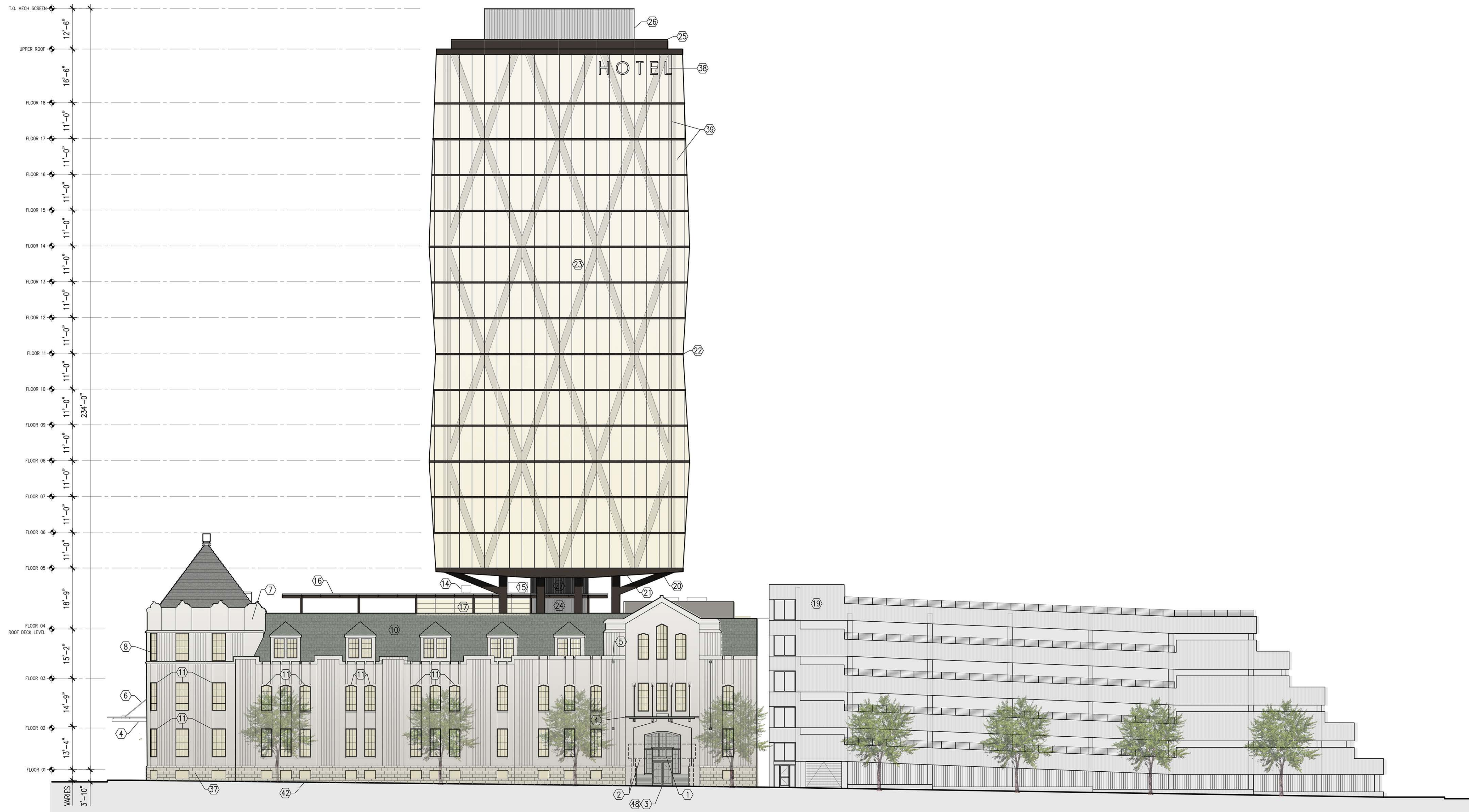


SCOTTISH RITE TEMPLE  
PROPOSED HOTEL DEVELOPMENT  
790 N. VAN BUREN MILWAUKEE, WI 53202  
01.17.17



SCOTTISH RITE  
TEMPLE  
NEW HOTEL - REDEVELOPMENT

790 N VAN BUREN ST.  
MILWAUKEE, WI. 53202



SHEET KEYNOTES

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MASONRY/STONE RESTORATION GENERAL NOTES

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01 N. VAN BUREN ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

2	HPC SUBMITTAL/CONCEPTUAL	02.01.17
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**ELEVATIONS**

**A-201**

SCOTTISH RITE  
TEMPLE  
NEW HOTEL - REDEVELOPMENT

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MILWAUKEE, WI. 53202



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- 1. ELEVATOR
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