

# **Finney Market Description of the Project**

## **Summary:**

The goal of our proposal is to improve accessibility from all sides, utilize portions of the building that no longer function as intended, and beautify parts of the structure that were not considered necessary when constructed. Our zoning of LB2 and our approved uses of “Mercantile” and “Assembly” require accessibility and convenience. Our proposal creates 1 new entrance, and replaces an overhead door with accessible storefront doors and windows. The south elevation addition built in 1979, is visually enhanced with a design that shares the same size, shape and proportions but utilizes modern cladding for a fresh look that will not be confused with the original 1953 architectural elements.

## **Historic perspective:**

The Finney Library was constructed in 1953 and is the only Mid-century Modern Structure in the Sherman Boulevard Historic District. The Eastern most wall had Zero-lot line and portions of the south elevation were very near to the Lot-line as well. The South-East 2000sqft corner was occupied by an outdoor “Reading Terrace”. In 1979 an addition was designed and constructed as part of a major remodeling project. The addition was constructed at the location of the Reading Terrace. To the south of the Lot line two adjacent residences were purchased and relocated a few hundred yards north on Sherman Blvd. The two vacated lots were redeveloped as the Finney Library Parking lot, a project the Historic Preservation Commission would probably discourage today. The South and East Elevations of the addition were constructed of functional materials, concrete masonry units in the 1979 addition and Chicago Pinks (commons) in 1953. Little concern for “finished” appearance was shown. Surprisingly no effort was made to make entering the Library any more convenient by creating a “parking lot entrance”. The original entrance at the North-West corner is more than 150 yards from some parking spaces. A 4 foot tall retaining wall and berm topped with a chain-link fence, shrubs and trees further isolated the parking lot from the Main entrance.

## **2004 To Present:**

In 2004 it was determined that the repairs and upgrading of the Finney Library did not make economic sense. The new Washington Park Library was constructed 2 blocks away. A number of projects were proposed and never executed. The property remained vacant for 11 years. In 2015 the property was acquired by Finney Arts Incubator LLC. The owner had previously re-developed a 54,000 sqft industrial property as a business incubator that catered to more than 20 small businesses and home to more than 50 jobs. In 2015 a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued by the HPC for removal of the Parking lot retaining wall, berm, chain-link fence and shrubs. This work truly connected the parking lot to the structure, increasing accessibility, the perception of safety and

security, and has allowed us to consider creating new public entrances to the interior spaces. As seen in the attached photos it also makes it obvious that the south elevation also needs a 2019 “Make-over”. The proposed work will create two new public entrances and bring the appearance up to the standards of the Sherman Blvd and North Ave. elevations.

- 1) The south facing concrete block (CMU) wall will be re-placed with a concrete knee wall topped with aluminum sash storefront windows and double door entrance similar to the original main entrance. The knee wall detail was utilized in the 1953 design and clad with 36” square Slate tiles. In order to differentiate the 1979 addition and 2020 update we propose keeping the size/shape/scale and proportion consistent with the 1953 design but utilizing modern materials for cladding. 36” square Luster board panels replicating porcelain enamel steel panels commonly used in Mid-Century Modern Architecture. A Mid-Century color palate will be used. The Aluminum sash windows and doors will be nearly identical to the originals in proportion and appearance.
- 2) The west facing loading Dock will serve as a new Sherman Blvd. entrance. The overhead door has an overhang that makes it impossible to load a modern delivery truck, rendering it useless as a loading dock. Its location makes it ideal for a side entrance. We propose to replace the overhead door with aluminum sash storefront doors and sidelight windows as seen in the rendering. To make the entrance accessible we propose a hardwood deck to raise the below grade concrete loading dock surface. A hardwood deck is more attractive to our proposed use as a patio and more attractive than an on grade concrete surface.