

DETAILS

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NW Corner of N. Claiborne and Congress Streets

Summary of Request:

Construct a four-story mixed-use building and related site improvements

Applicant (as applicable):

GAI Consultants, Inc.

Property Owner:

City of Mobile/Figures Construction & Development

Historic District:

DeTonti Square

Classification:

Vacant lot

Summary of Analysis:

- The proposed design is intended for the southernmost lot on parcel R022906400003036.
- The proposed materials are appropriate for the district and approvable for new construction under the Guidelines.
- The submitted plans incorporate the traditional design elements seen in the surrounding district.
- The massing and scale of the proposed structure is not compatible with surrounding historic structures.
- The application has undergone review by the Consolidated Review Committee (CRC).

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PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

DeTonti Square Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1972 under Criterion A for social and urban planning significance and Criterion C for significant architecture. The district was one of two historic districts created by a municipal ordinance in 1962 in an effort to halt the rapid demolition of historic buildings near the city's central business district. The district, named for the French explorer Henri DeTonti, contains a few structures surviving from the 1830s, but the majority were built in the 1850s as residences of the wealthy and influential cotton factors, merchants, and planters.

According to Historic Development survey records and the City's Geographical Information System, the projected parcel proposed for the subject project, on the northwest corner of Congress and N. Claiborne Street streets, straddles what was once 350 and 352 Congress Street. Both lots were occupied by c. 1897 one-and-a-half-stories raised cottages fitted out in the Queen Anne Style. Both facades consisted of a bay window projecting from the eastern end, and a front porch extending westward across the remainder of the elevation.

Detailed plans to fully rehabilitate the historic house at 352 Congress under the supervision of the Mobile Housing Board and the Architectural Review Board were drawn up in the early 1980s. Records show that 352 Congress was demolished in 1997. It is likely that 350 Congress was destroyed around the same time, along with all remaining historic structures along the west side of the block of N. Claiborne Street north of Congress Street.

This subject parcel has appeared before the Architectural Review Board twice. In February 2025, an application to construct a new dwelling came before the ARB and was withdrawn. In May 2025, an application for three new residential construction projects were granted conceptual approval and were shortly afterwards issued COAs.

SCOPE OF WORK

- 1. Construct a four-story mixed-use building.
 - a. The new structure would be oriented to the east with a 2'-2" setback from the ROW. The south (secondary façade) elevation would be setback approximately 6'-0".
 - b. The proposed four-story structure would measure 79'-11 5/8" wide by 140'-0" deep.
 - c. The foundation would be slab on grade with a horizontal element running across the east and south elevations at 2'-0" from grade to create the appearance of a raised slab. First floor finished floor to second floor finished floor (ff) would measure 16'-0". Finished floor to finished floor measurements for second through fourth floor would be 12"-0" high.
 - d. The building height from grade to roof peak would measure 77'-2".
 - e. The structure would sit under a cross-gabled roof with the main gable running parallel to N. Claiborne Street and the cross gable running parallel to Congress Street. The main gable would measure approximately 20'-0" high and the second gable would measure approximately 9'-0" high. The roof would be clad in galvalume standing-seam metal.
 - f. The exterior walls of the structure would be clad in STO products. The veneers would be applied as follows:
 - East façade and south elevation: A sand finished stucco would rise above the second story finished floor level, and a brick veneer would cover the upper-floor levels.
 - The sand finished stucco would cover the north and west elevations.
 - g. All windows would consist of the following across the elevations:
 - Aluminum-clad wood double casement window with side lights and arched transom measuring approximately 10'-0" wide by 9'- 8" high.
 - Vinyl-clad wood fixed four-over-four sash window measuring 2'-7 ½ "wide by 7'-0" high.
 - Vinyl-clad wood one-over-one window measuring 1'-6" wide by 3' 7 ¼ "high.
 - h. Doors will be a mix of aluminum-clad and vinyl-clad wood and would consist of the following arrangements along the first floor across the elevations:

- Multi-light glass doors with stucco bulkhead, fixed sidelights and transoms measuring approximately 10'-0" wide by 12'-1" high.
- Double multi-light glass doors with sidelights and transoms measuring approximately 8'-0" wide by 12'-1" high.
- Single multi-light glass doors and transom measuring 3'-2 ¾ "wide by 12'-0" high.
- Double multi-light doors measuring 6'-4" wide by 8'-0" high.
- Single multi-light door measuring 3-2" wide by 8'-0" high.
- i. Steel decorative balconies will project from all double windows along the east and south elevations on floors 2-4. Matching steel handrail will be installed on single open recesses located on the south elevation at floors 2-4.
- j. The east façade and south elevation will consist of multiple entry door arrangements along the first floor that access commercial spaces. The second through fourth floors will consist of double and single windows arranged in a symmetrical pattern. The double windows would be accentuated by decorative steel balconies.
- k. The west half of the north elevation would consist of a blank stucco wall (with a louvered vent located in the main gable). The east half of the elevation would include three recessed galleries on floors 2-4. The galleries would be enclosed by balustrades set between posts.
- I. The west elevation would consist of a blank stucco wall.
- m. A parking lot would be located to the north of the parcel at the rear of the proposed building. The lot would sit 70'-0" west of the ROW on N. Claiborne Street. The lot would be enclosed by a 6'-0" high wood privacy fence and door, painted white. Parking islands consisting of lights would be located along the east and west sides of the parking lot at regular intervals.
- n. Landscaping would include jasmine ground cover along N. Claiborne and Congress Streets and red maple trees planted at the rear of the parcel to screen parking area.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS (Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts)

- 1. **7.30** Orient a new commercial building to be similar to that of nearby historic structures.
 - Place buildings in line with adjacent historic buildings in terms of relationship to the street. If a project is flanked by non-historic structures, refer to nearby historic structures.
 - Design side setbacks to be similar to those in adjacent historic buildings. If a project is flanked by non-historic structures refer to nearby historic structures.
 - Orient façades of new commercial buildings similarly to adjacent historic structures. In most cases, new commercial structures should be oriented to directly face the street.
 - Face primary building entries toward the public street.
 - Screen ancillary buildings or place them behind the primary building.
- 2. **7.33** Place and orient new commercial construction at interior neighborhood locations to be compatible with that of nearby historic residential structures.
 - Establish front setbacks similar to those in adjacent historic residential development or historic residential development on the same block.
 - Locate any ancillary buildings to the rear of the primary commercial building.
 - If off-street parking is required, provide it behind the building where possible.
 - Provide landscaping around a driveway to off-street parking to mimic a driveway for a historic residential building.
 - Orient façades to be parallel with the street.
- 3. 7.34 Design a building to be compatible with massing and scale with historic structures in the district.
 - Design building massing to reflect massing of nearby historic structures.
 - Where the volume of new construction is larger than historic structures in the district, break down the massing into smaller components to increase compatibility.
 - Limit the height or the perceived height of buildings to be similar to heights of nearby historic structures.

- Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass.
- Incorporate changes in color, texture and materials.
- Use architectural details to create visual interest.
- Use materials that help to convey scale in their proportion, detail and form.
- 4. **7.35** Design building massing and scale to maintain the visual continuity of the district.
 - Incorporate floor-to-floor heights that appear similar to those of traditional commercial buildings in Mobile.
 - Design a new structure to incorporate a traditional base, middle and cap.
- 5. 7.36 Maintain traditional spacing patterns created by the repetition of building widths along the street.
 - Proportion a new façade to reflect the established range of traditional building widths seen in Mobile.
 - Where a structure must exceed a traditional building width, use changes in building configuration, articulation or design features such as materials, window design, façade height or decorative details to break the façade into modules that suggest traditional building widths.
- 6. 7.39 Design the massing and scale of a new commercial building to be compatible with the district. »
 - Use massing that is similar to that of nearby historic residential structures. »
 - Where larger building volumes are desired, break down the massing near the street to present components with similar massing to that of adjacent and nearby historic residential structures.
 - Limit the height of a building to be equal or less to that of historic residential structures in the district.
- 7. **7.40** Maintain the distinction between the street level and upper floor on multi-story structures.
 - Incorporate a high percentage of transparent glass into the first floor of the primary façade.
 - Design upper floors to appear more opaque than the street level.
 - Express the distinction in floor heights between street levels and upper levels through detailing, materials and fenestration. The presence of a belt course is an important feature in this relationship.
 - Do not use highly reflective or darkly tinted glass.
- 8. **7.41** Maintain the traditional spacing pattern created by upper story windows.
 - Use traditional proportions of windows, individually or in groups.
 - Maintain the traditional placement of window headers and sills relative to cornices and belt courses.
- 9. **7.48** Use building materials that are compatible with the surrounding historic residential context.
 - Use a material that is compatible with the surrounding historic residential structures. Use wood siding for a commercial structure where the majority of the surrounding historic residential structures use wood siding.
- 10. 10.6 Install a new sidewalk to be compatible with historic ones in the area.
 - Maintain the existing width of neighboring sidewalks.
 - Use a traditional sidewalk material as seen in the district if permitted by the City Code. Consult Staff if necessary.
- 11. **10.7** Minimize the visual impact of parking.
 - Locate a parking area at the rear or to the side of a site whenever possible.
 - Use landscaping to screen a parking area.
 - Minimize the widths of a paved area or a curb cut.
 - If a curb cut is no longer in use, repair the curb. In some areas, granite curbs may be required.
 - Do not use paving in the front yard for a parking area. Paving stones might be acceptable in certain instances. Do not create a new driveway or garage that opens onto a primary street.
 - Do not create a new driveway or garage that opens onto a primary street.
- 12. 10.10 Provide a landscaped front yard for a residential property in a historic district.
 - Maintain a predominant appearance of a planted front yard/lawn.
 - Minimize paved areas in a front yard.

- Consider using decorative modular pavers, grass and cellular paving systems in order to minimize the impact of hard surface paving where grass or other plant materials are not used.
- In commercial areas, consider using landscaping to screen and soften the appearance of surface parking areas. Use an internal and perimeter landscaping treatment to screen a fenced or walled parking area.
- Do not use landscaping to hide a design feature that is inconsistent with these Design Review Guidelines.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The property under review is part of a vacant parcel located in the DeTonti Square Historic District. The application proposes the construction of a four-story mixed-use building which would be located on the northwest corner of N. Claiborne and Congress streets. The location of the proposed construction is associated with the Interior Neighborhood Context which is described in the *Guidelines* as follows (the applicable guidelines used to review the project are associated with this context):

This context is more rare in Mobile's historic districts than the two contexts discussed above. This refers to new commercial construction that develops in the interior of a predominantly residential historic district. This context refers specifically to new, small scale commercial construction for corner stores or other neighborhood-serving retail uses that are completely surrounded by residential structures. In most cases, commercial infill in this context is likely to develop on corner lots; however, interior commercial infill is also possible, and particularly in DeTonti Square the northern edge of Church Street East. For this context, new commercial construction should strongly consider massing, scale, and orientation to ensure compatibility with nearby historic residential buildings. This context is potentially relevant to DeTonti Square, Oakleigh Garden, Leinkauf, and portions of Old Dauphin Way and Church Street East.

The *Guidelines* direct that the placement of a new structure should be similar to adjacent historic structures. Currently, there are no extant structures along the west side of N. Claiborne Street to the north. Across N. Claiborne Street, front setbacks of historic structures range from approximately 3'-6" to 7'-3". The only nearby historic structures across from Congress Street include 308 and 357 Congress Street, which sit back from the ROW approximately 10'-0" and 15'-0" respectively. Submitted plans demonstrate setbacks of approximately 6'-0" along Congress Street and 2'-0" along N. Claiborne Street, which do not veer far from the established range. These nearby historic structures are single-family cottage dwellings, which could be considered less-than-ideal references for more commercial type building placement and orientation. A look further afield within the district reveals that the placement and orientation of the proposed structure would be respectful of traditional placement patterns within the DeTonti Square Historic District, which historically lends itself to a more urban style of development. The off-street parking provided for the structure is orientated to the rear of the structure and sits 70'-0" back from the ROW along N. Claiborne Street. This placement does not conflict with the guidelines for commercial construction within the Interior Neighborhood Context. (7.30, 7.34, 10.7)

The *Guidelines* state that massing and scale of new commercial construction should be compatible with nearby historic structures. The volume of the proposed structure surpasses that of the closest historic dwellings, and of most structures in the district. In this case, the *Guidelines* instruct that massing be broken down into smaller components to create a more compatible appearance. Regarding scale, the *Guidelines* state that larger buildings should be designed such that the height or perceived height is like nearby historic structures. The design of the proposed structure attempts to break up the massing and scale (both height and width) with elements such as the arched open breezeway, the projecting balconies on the south and east elevations, the multi-floor galleries on the north elevation, and variations in the design of first-floor entry doors and windows on the upper floors. The change in roof form creates the appearance of two distinct sections of the building. Along the north elevation, the recessed galleries create depth and serve to further break up the volume of the structure. The design also calls for the use of stucco at the base (rising partially past the second-story floor height) of the building to differentiate it

from the three upper floors, which are clad in a cast brick veneer. The blank walls along the north and west elevations, however, communicate a massive appearance which is not compatible with the district.

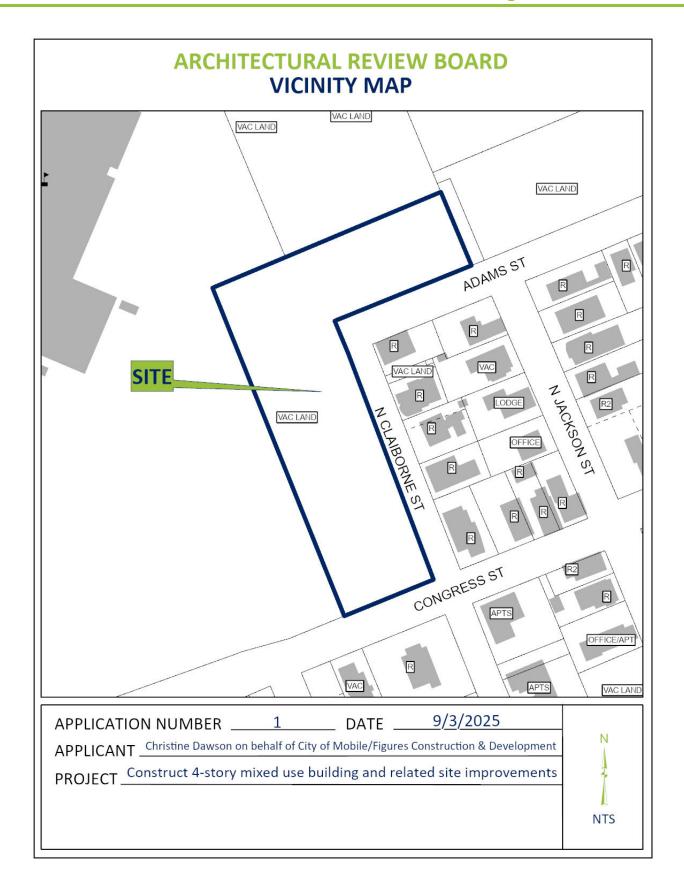
Although the above-mentioned elements contribute to visually lessening the mass and scale of the structure, they do not fully satisfy the Guideline's directive. The application of additional elements such as a vertical component between each of the "columns" of window types along the south elevation; or the incorporation of projections and recesses along the same demarcations may serve to further define distinct 'modules' and increase the compatibility of the proposed structure with the surrounding district. There is a lack of definition along the top of exterior walls on the east and south elevations. The *Guidelines* clarify that taller buildings should have a distinctive base, middle, and cap. The proposed design lacks a defined cap. Elements such as cornices, eaves, parapets, and coping are commonly seen on historic homes throughout the district. The integration of such features, interpreted in a manner that integrates with the more contemporary design, would create a more compatible appearance. The proposed structure maintains the distinction between the street level and upper floors and incorporates a high percentage of transparent glass into the first floor of the main south and east elevations, as directed by the *Guidelines*. (7.34-7.36, 7.40)

The height of the building does not fall into the established range of historic structure heights within the DeTonti Square district. There is no historic precedent for a four-story structure. In addition, the visual massing of the gable roof (parallel to N. Claiborne Street) in proportion to the structure is not compatible with historic structures in the district. (7.39)

The design generally incorporates traditional window placement and spacing patterns that reflect those seen in the district. However, as mentioned above, details such as the space between window head and top of exterior walls denote a departure from traditional proportions and design. (7.41)

All proposed materials are approvable for new commercial construction in Mobile's historic district and are compatible with the surrounding historic district. (7.48)

As discussed, a parking lot would be located to the rear of the structure, stretching north to south. A 6'-0" high privacy fence is proposed to enclose the parking lot. Landscaping will further shield and soften the parking area.



Site Photos – Northwest corner of N. Claiborne and Congress Streets



1. View of lot looking NW



2. View of lot looking E



3. View of historic house on NE corner of N. Claiborne and Congress Streets



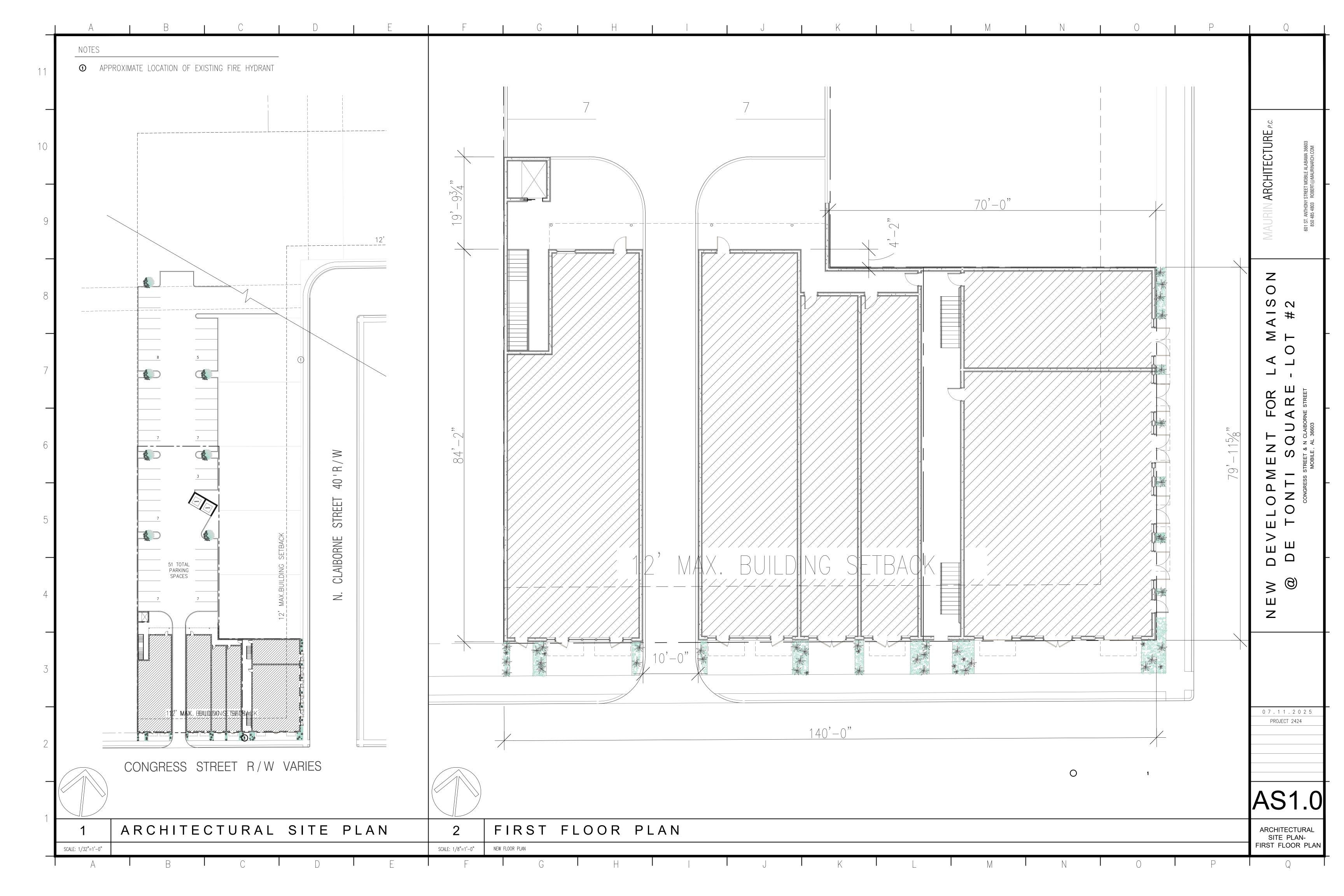
4. View of non-historic structure on SE corne of N. Claiborne and Congress Streets

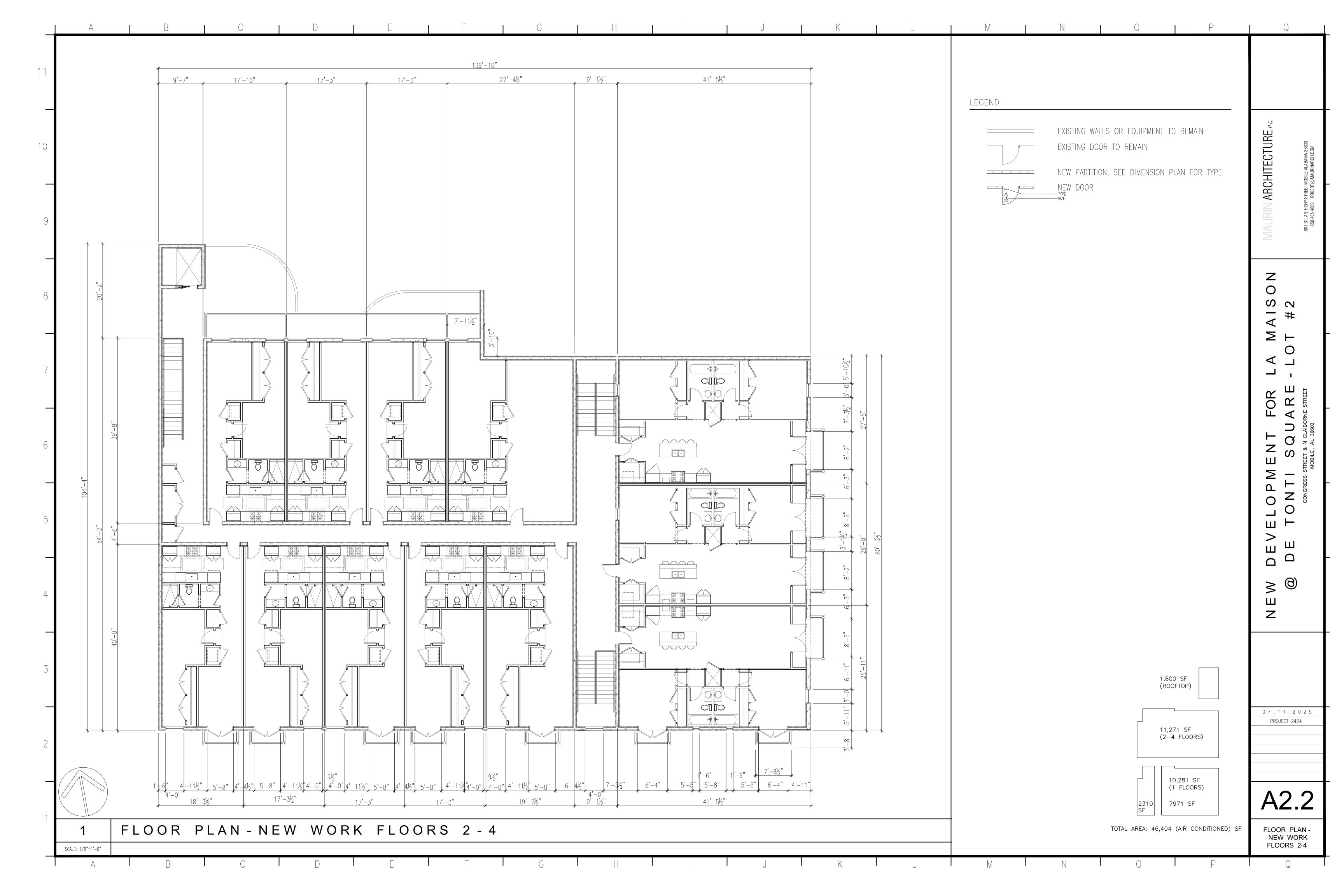


View of historic structure at 357 Congress St. (out of district)

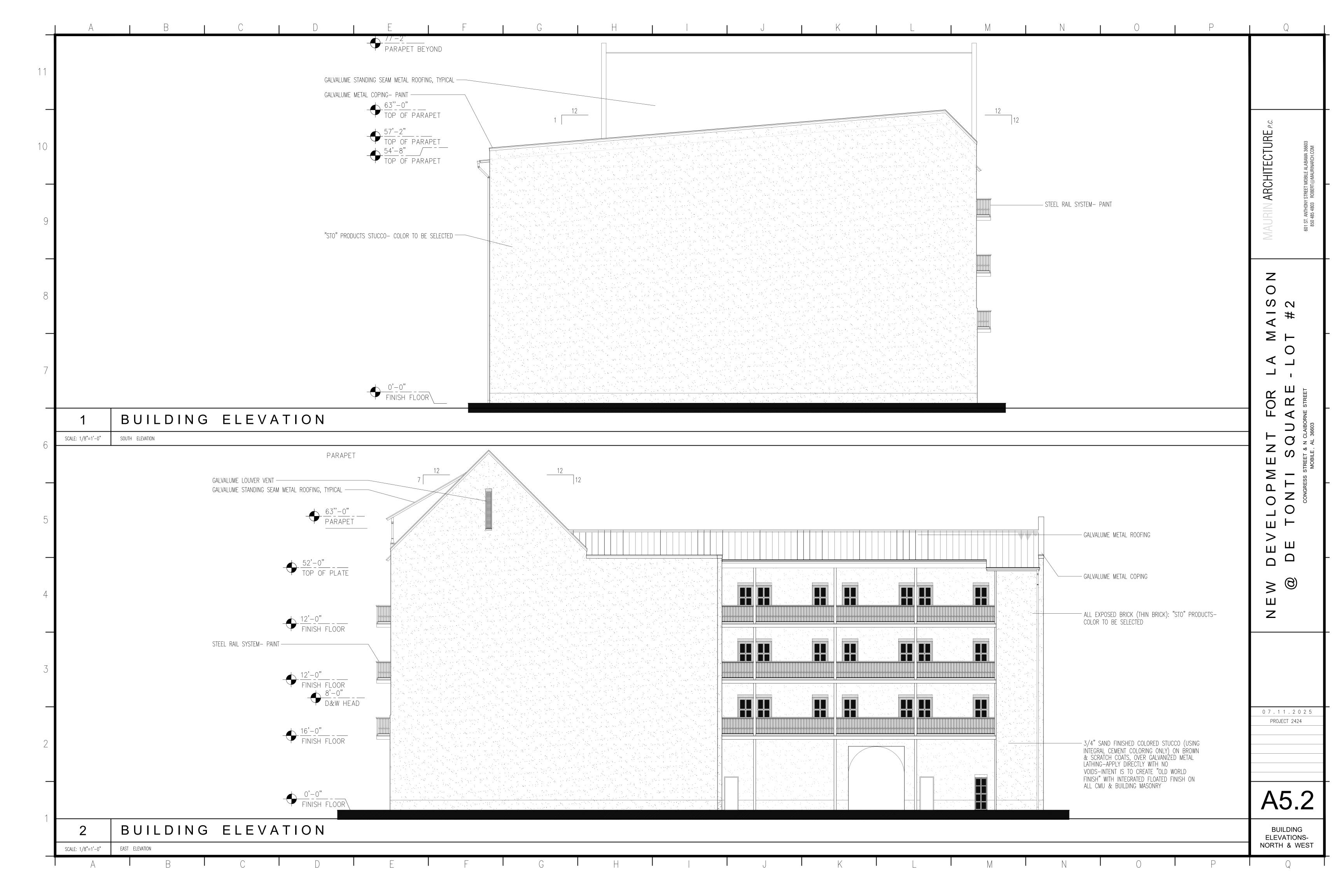


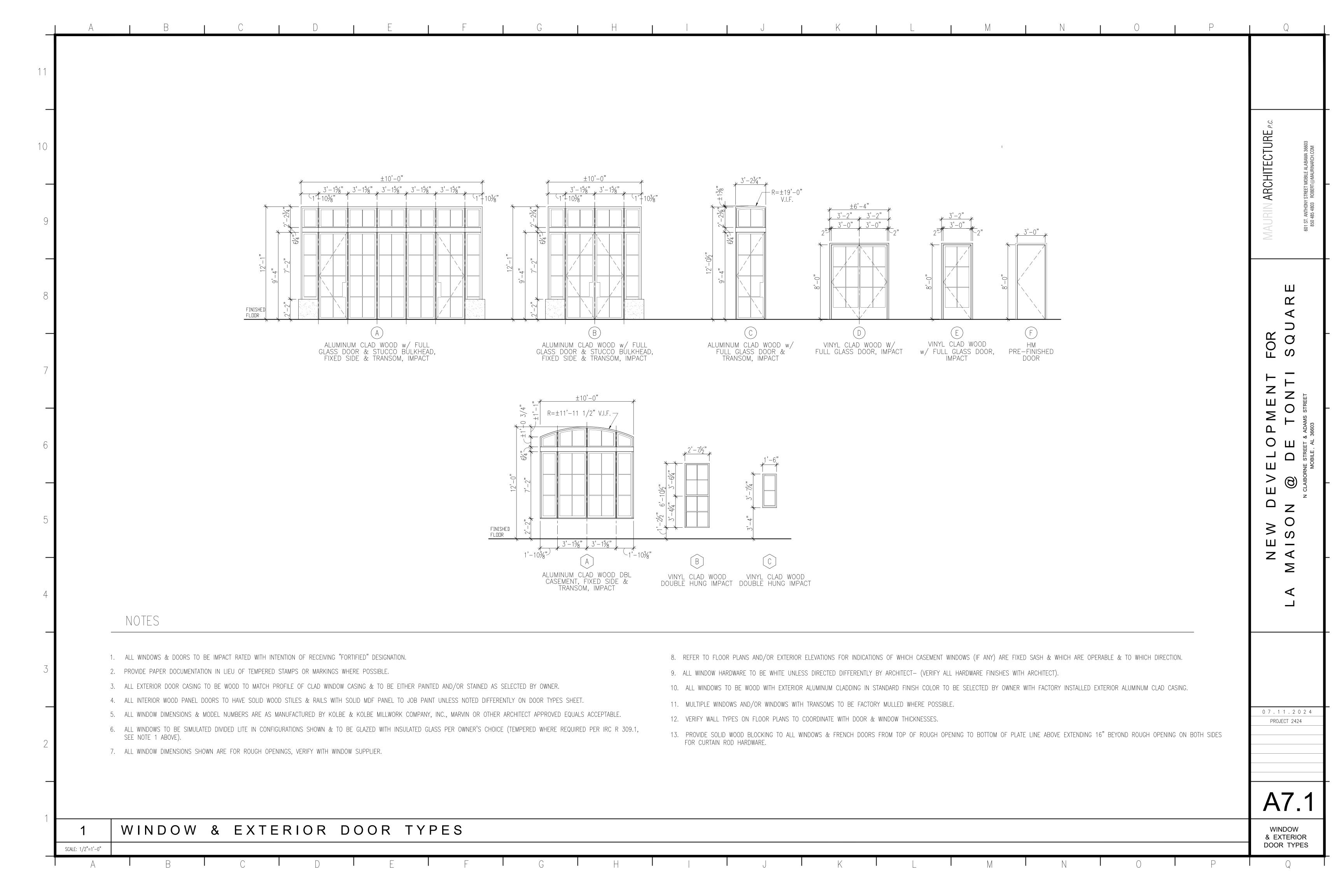
6. View of non-historic structure at 351 Congress St.



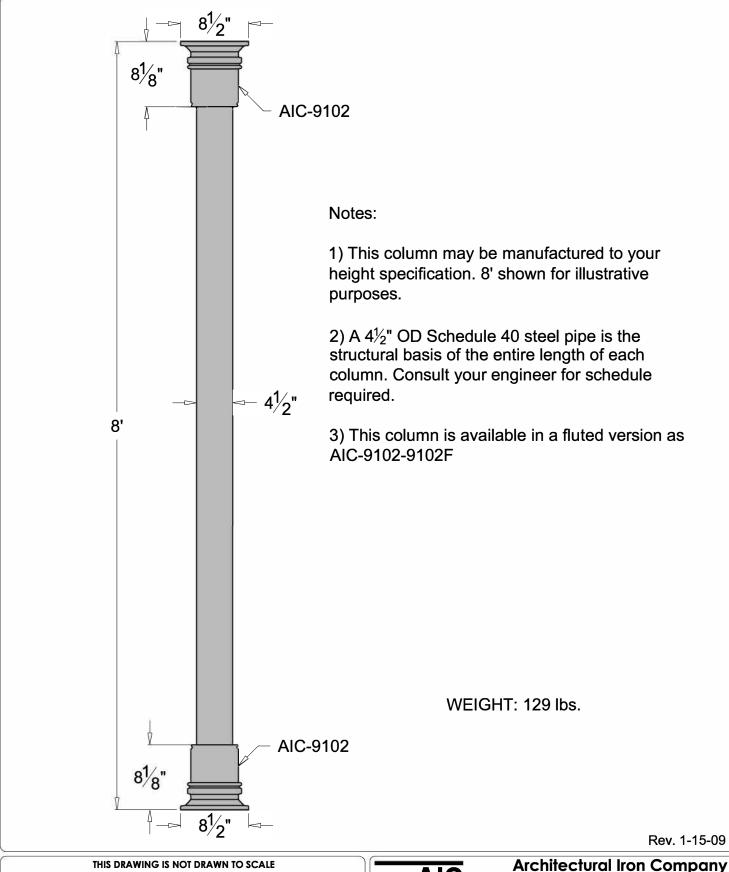








Rooftop Porch Columns Design



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This drawing is available in AutoCad format.

Material used is cast iron unless otherwise specified.

Due to the casting process actual measurements may vary slightly.

AIC

800-442-IRON/4766

104 Ironwood Court Milford, PA 18337

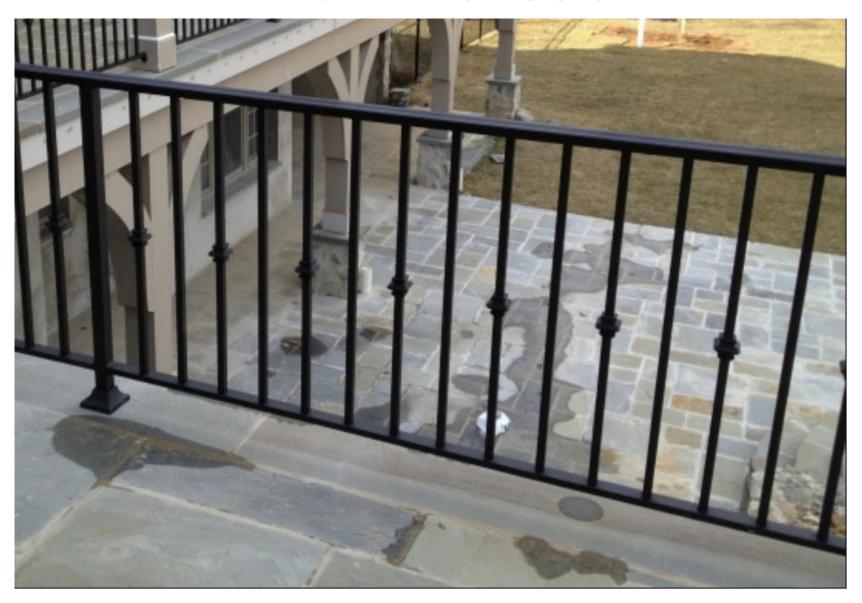
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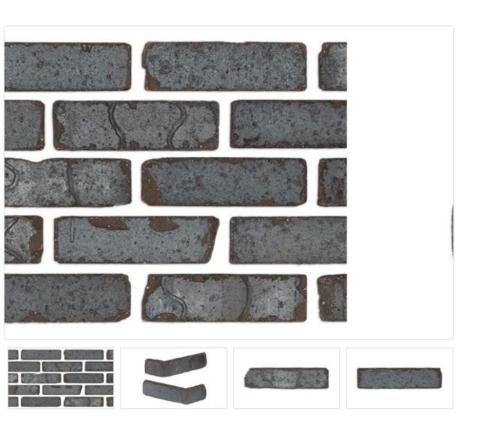
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 Drawing No.
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 Checked By:
 Date:
 Part Number

 AIC-9102-9102
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Balcony/Porch Railing Design (42")





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Order our thin brick sample to experience the texture, color, and size. We highly recommend acquiring a sample board before purchasing this product.



Catalog #:	Project:	Type:
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Slice Medium (SLM)

Outdoor LED Area Light













OVERVIEW				
Lumen Package	9,000 - 55,000			
Wattage Range	62 - 436			
Efficacy Range (LPW)	114 - 162			
Weight lbs(kg)	27 (12.2)			
Control Options	IMSBT, ALB, ALS, 7-Pin, PCI			



QUICK LINKS

Ordering Guide

Performance

Photometrics

Dimensions

FEATURES & SPECIFICATIONS

Construction

- Rugged die-cast aluminum housing contains factory prewired driver and optical unit. Cast aluminum wiring access door located underneath.
- Fixtures are finished with LSI's DuraGrip® polyester powder coat finishing process.
 The DuraGrip finish withstands extreme weather changes without cracking or peeling. Other standard LSI finishes available. Consult factory.
- Shipping weight: 33 lbs in carton.

Optical System

- State-of-the-Art one piece silicone optic sheet delivers industry leading optical control with an integrated gasket to provide IP66 rated seal.
- Proprietary silicone refractor optics provide exceptional coverage and uniformity in distribution types 2, 3,4, 5W, FT, FTA, AM, and LC/RC.
- Silicone optical material does not yellow or crack with age and provides a typical light transmittance of 93-95%.
- Zero uplight.
- Available in 5000K, 4000K, 3500K, 3000K and 2700K color temperatures per ANS C78.377. Also Available in Phospho Converted Amber with Peak intensity at 610nm.
- 70 or 80CRI Minimum.
- Integral louver (IL) and integral half louver (IH) options available for enhanced backlight control.

Electrical

- High-performance driver features overvoltage, under-voltage, short-circuit and over temperature protection.
- 0-10V dimming (10% 100%) standard.
- Standard Universal Voltage (120-277 VAC) Input 50/60 Hz or optional High Voltage (347-480 VAC).
- L80 Calculated Life: >100k Hours (See Lumen Maintenance chart)
- Total harmonic distortion: <20%
- Operating temperature: -40°C to +50°C (-40°F to +122°F). 42L and 48L lumen packages rated to +40°C. 55L lumen package rate to +35°C.
- Power factor: >.90
- Input power stays constant over life.
- Field replaceable 10kV surge protection device meets a minimum Category C Low operation (per ANSI/IEEE C62.41.2).
- High-efficacy LEDs mounted to metal-core circuit board to maximize heat dissipation.
- Driver is fully encased in potting material for moisture resistance and complies with FCC standards. Driver and key electronic components can easily be accessed.

Controls

- Optional integral passive infrared Bluetooth™ motion sensor. Fixtures operate independently and can be commissioned via iOS or Android configuration app.
- AirLink™ Blue wireless control system with technology partner Silvair incorporates Luminaire Level Lighting Controls (LLLC) and high-end trim.

Installation

- A single fastener secures the hinged door, underneath the housing and provides quick & easy access to the electrical compartment.
- Included terminal block accepts up to 12 ga. wire.
- Utilizes LSI's traditional B3 drill pattern. (See drawing in poles section)

Warranty

 LSI luminaires carry a 5-year limited warranty. Refer to https://www.lsicorp.com/resources/terms-conditions-warranty/ for more information.

Listings

- Listed to UL 1598 and UL 8750.
- · Meets Buy American Act requirements.
- DarkSky approved with 3000K color temperature selection and fixed mounting.
- Title 24 Compliant; see local ordinance for qualification information.
- · Suitable for wet locations.
- IP66 rated Luminaire per IEC 60598-1.
- 3G rated for ANSI C136.31 high vibration applicationsapplicationsare qualified.
- IK08 rated luminiare per IEC 66262 mechanical impact code.
- DesignLights Consortium® (DLC) qualified product. Not all versions of this product may be DLC qualified. Please check the DLC Qualified Products List at www. designlights.org/QPL to confirm which versions are qualified.
- Patented Silicone Optics (US Patent NO. 10,816,165 B2)







Photo 1: View north to the subject property from Congress Street; N. Claiborne Street at right



Photo 2: View west along south side of the subject property; Congress Street at left





Photo 3: View west inside the subject property from N. Claiborne Street; Congress Street at left



Photo 4: View northwest across the subject property from northwest corner of Congress and N. Claiborne streets





Photo 5: View north across the subject property to Calloway-Smith Middle School (outside the historic district)



Photo 6: View southwest across the subject property from approximately 80 feet north of the site on N. Claiborne Street





Photo 7: View south-southwest to subject property from approximately 90 feet north; N. Claiborne Street at left



Photo 8: View east from the subject property to west wall of 308 Congress Street



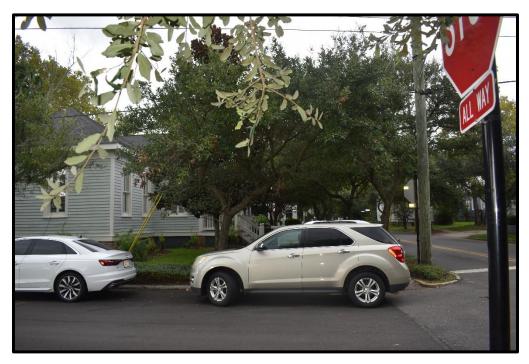


Photo 9: View east from the subject property across N. Claiborne Street to west side of 308 Congress Street



Photo 10: View southeast from the subject property to 309 Congress Street (non-historic)





Photo 11: View south from the subject property across Congress Street to northeast corner of Congress and N. Claiborne streets



Photo 12: View south from the subject property to 351 Congress Street (non-historic)





Photo 13: View southwest from the subject property across Congress Street to 357 Congress Street (outside the historic district)



Photo 14: View north from approximate northern edge of subject property along N. Claiborne Street