



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 27, 2014

NEW BUSINESS

SUBJECT: THE PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM REQUESTING APPROVAL OF A SIGN VARIANCE FOR THE MUSEUM'S ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN CENTER (A.K.A. THE SANTA FE FEDERAL SAVINGS & LOAN BUILDING), A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE LOCATED AT 300 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE (HSPB 54 / CASE 8.259 VAR (ZONE CBD) (KL).

FROM: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

The sign ordinance allows one main sign on each street frontage. Monument signs are not a permitted sign type in the CBD. The site has two street frontages but museum seeks approval of a variance to have three main signs, two of which are monument signs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the sign variance subject to the following:

- The proposed sign at the corner of Baristo Road and South Palm Canyon Drive extends into the roadway right of way. An encroachment agreement must be executed between the City and the PSAM prior to installation or permits.

ISSUES:

The Santa Fe Federal Savings & Loan Building (now the Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture + Design Center) is a Class 1 historic site. The requested signs must be approved by the Historic Site Preservation Board as a certificate of approval for alteration of a historic site and the Planning Commission must approve a sign variance.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

Most Recent Change of Ownership	
June 2011	Purchase by the present owner.

Neighborhood Meeting	
None	Not required, the property is not in or near a recognized neighborhood organization.

Field Check	
July 2014	Site inspection by Planning Staff.

Site Area	
Net Area	31,363 square feet

Sign Posting of Pending Project	
None	Not required for a Variance, pursuant to Section 94.09.00(F)(3) of the Zoning Code.

Related Relevant City Actions by Planning, Fire, Building, etc.	
May 6, 2009	City Council designated 300 South Palm Canyon Drive as a Class 1 historic site (HSPB 54)
September 13, 2011	HSPB approved Certificate of Approval for re-facing an existing monument sign (since removed).
November 8, 2011	HSPB approved Certificate of Approval for the Rehabilitation of the SFF for the Palm Springs Art Museum's Architecture and Design Center.
January 10, 2012	HSPB approved Certificate of Approval for the design of the trash enclosure and color for the repaint of the exterior columns. .
August 20, 2012	Staff level approval of minor landscape revisions.
June 10, 2014	HSPB approved Certificate of Approval for outdoor event space south of building.
August 11, 2014	AAC reviewed the proposed sign variance and recommended approval as submitted.
August 12, 2014	HSPB issued Certificate of Approval for the proposed signs and recommended approval of the sign variance by the Planning Commission.

The Palm Springs Art Museum's (PSAM) Architecture and Design Center is seeking approval for new exterior main signage that varies from the code-allowed signage for the CBD.

1. a wall sign mounted on the east wall facing the building's parking lot,
2. a monument sign at the northwest corner of Baristo Road and South Palm Canyon Drive, and
3. another monument sign located on a free-standing wall at the south side of the building.

When the building was built and occupied by the Santa Fe Federal Savings & Loan Association there were three main signs. There are no permits on file for these original

signs and they were removed many years ago by other tenants / owners of the building. The PSAM is proposing signage in roughly the same location and approximately the same general size.

Signs in the CBD are regulated by Section 93.20.09 of the Zoning Code. This section allows for one main sign per tenant. If the same tenant space fronts two streets, the tenant may have two main signs. Free-standing monument signs are permitted for commercial and industrial uses pursuant Section 93.20.05 but are not permitted in the CBD without approval of a sign variance.¹

ANALYSIS:

PSZC Section 94.04.00.("Architectural Review") Part D. Planning Commission Architectural Advisory Committee Review Guidelines.

The planning commission architectural advisory committee shall examine the material submitted with the architectural approval application and specific aspects of design shall be examined to determine whether the proposed development will provide desirable environment for its occupants as well as being compatible with the character of adjacent and surrounding developments, and whether aesthetically it is of good composition, materials, textures and colors. Conformance will be evaluated, based on consideration of the following:

Item	Guideline:	Conforms?	Staff Evaluation:
1	Does the proposed development provide a desirable environment for its occupants?	Yes	The proposed signage would be easily visibility from all directions.
2	Is the proposed development compatible with the character of adjacent and surrounding developments?	Yes	The proposed signage is compatible with the character of the site, however there are few monument signs on other sites in the vicinity.
3	Is the proposed development of good composition, materials, textures, and colors?	Yes	The signage is proposed to be constructed of high quality durable materials.
4	Site layout, orientation, location of structures and relationship to one another and to open spaces and topography. Definition of pedestrian and vehicular areas; i.e., sidewalks as distinct from parking lot areas	Yes	The proposed signage provides ample visibility from both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

¹ Those monument signs which do exist at older buildings in the CBD were likely installed prior to enactment of the current sign ordinance or were approved as sign variances.

5	Harmonious relationship with existing and proposed adjoining developments and in the context of the immediate neighborhood/community, avoiding both excessive variety and monotonous repetition, but allowing similarity of style, if warranted	Yes	The signage is proposed in materials that are harmonious with those found on the existing building. Each sign is slightly different, yet complementary.
6	Maximum height, area, setbacks and overall mass, as well as parts of any structure (buildings, walls, screens, towers or signs) and effective concealment of all mechanical equipment	No	Monument signs are not a permitted sign type in the CBD. The sign proposed at the northwest corner of the site encroaches into the street right of way and would require execution of an encroachment agreement with the City.
7	Building design, materials and colors to be sympathetic with desert surroundings	Yes	The signs are proposed in neutral tones and subtle materials.
8	Harmony of materials, colors and composition of those elements of a structure, including overhangs, roofs, and substructures which are visible simultaneously	Yes	The proposed signs are harmonious with the existing historic building.
9	Consistency of composition and treatment	Yes	There is consistency in the composition and treatment of the three proposed signs.
10	Location and type of planting, with regard for desert climate conditions. Preservation of specimen and landmark trees upon a site, with proper irrigation to insure maintenance of all plant materials	N/A	
11	Signs and graphics, as understood in architectural design including materials and colors;	Yes	The signs are architecturally complementary to the existing historic building.

FINDINGS:

In order to consider and approve a sign variance application, the Planning Commission, must make affirmative findings pursuant to PSZC Section 93.20.10.A.4 ("*Signage General Provisions; Variances*") and Section 94.06.00 ("*Variances*") as follows:

PSZC Section 94.06.00.B. Conditions Necessary to Granting a Variance.

The commission, before it may grant a variance, shall make a finding that in the evidence presented, all four (4) of the following conditions as set forth in state law exist in reference to the property being considered.

1. *Because of special circumstances applicable to subject property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the Zoning Code would deprive subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classification.*

The PSAM Architecture + Design Center is a "special circumstance" building with Class 1 historic status and . Its all-glass exterior façade creates a challenge in applying signage without adversely impacting the building's historic integrity.

2. *Any variance granted shall be subject to such conditions as will assure that the adjustment thereby authorized shall not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which subject property is situated.*

Pursuant to the sign ordinance, sign variances may be requested and approved if the applicable findings can be made.

3. *The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, convenience or welfare or injurious to property and improvements in the same vicinity and zone in which subject property is situated.*

The proposed sign variance would not be detrimental to public safety or injurious to other properties in the vicinity and in the CBD. One of the proposed signs is proposed to be located partially in the roadway right-of-way, however an Encroachment Agreement executed between the City and the Owner is recommended as a condition of approval.

4. *The granting of such variance will not adversely affect the general plan of the city.*

No impact on the General Plan will be caused as a result of granting the requested variance.

PSZC Section 93.20.10.A.4. Sign Variances.

The provisions of Section 94.06.00 shall apply in considering an application for a sign variance. In addition to the findings required therein, the planning commission may grant a sign variance based on the findings that

1. *due to the physical characteristics of the property and the orientation and design of the structures on the property, strict application of the regulations of the sign ordinance will not give adequate visibility to the signage;*

The PSAM A + D Center is a unique structure in that it is clad almost entirely of glass. It is also a Class 1 historic site. The characteristics of the site limit the locations where signage could be installed without adversely impacting the historic resource thereon.

2. *that the approved signage will be compatible with the design of the property and will represent the least departure from the standards of the sign ordinance necessary for the effectiveness of the signage; and*


The proposed signs are compatible with the design of the property and are similar in location, size and type, to that which was originally in place when the building was constructed.

3. *that the approved signage is compatible with the surrounding property and not contrary to the purpose of the sign ordinance.*

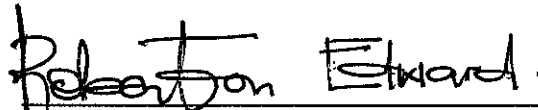
The southern end of the CBD was where many financial institutions located in the fifties and sixties. Many of these older buildings still have monument signs. The monument signs in the vicinity are compatible with the buildings and are appropriately scaled so as not to detract from the overall attractiveness of this part of the downtown.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.

The proposed sign variance is a project as defined by the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has evaluated the project against the requirements of CEQA and propose that it be deemed "Categorically Exempt" from further analysis under CEQA as a Class 31 exemption (historic resource). The site is a Class 1 historic site and the proposed signage does not cause adverse impacts to the historic defining characteristics of the site nor do they materially impair the elements that contribute to the historic integrity of the site.



Ken Lyon, RA
Associate Planner



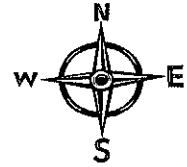
For Douglas R. Evans
Interim Director of Planning Services

Attachments:

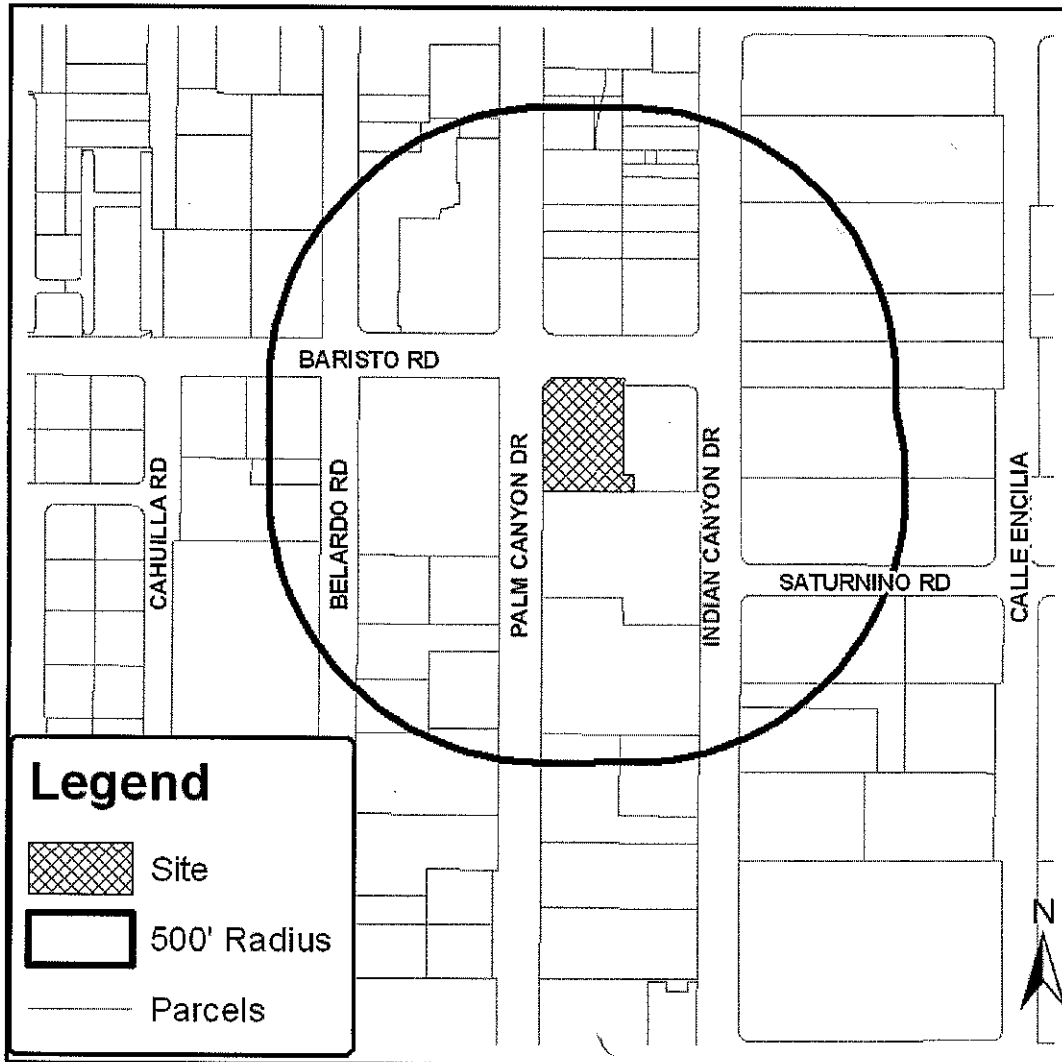
1. Vicinity Map
2. Applicant Justification Letter
3. Existing Site Photographs
4. Graphics



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



8.259 SV / HSPB 54



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: 8.259 Sign Variance

APPLICANT:
Palm Springs Art Museum (PSAM)

DESCRIPTION: Sign Variance and Certificate of Approval request proposing three main signs, two of which are monument signs at the PSAM's Architecture + Design Center (a.k.a. The Santa Fe Savings Building), a Class 1 Historic Site, Zone CBD, Section 15 (HSPB 54).



THE KINER GROUP

RECEIVED

July 20, 2014

JUL 21 2014

**PLANNING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

Mr. Ken Lyon
Assistant Planner
Dept. of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs
3200 Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92263

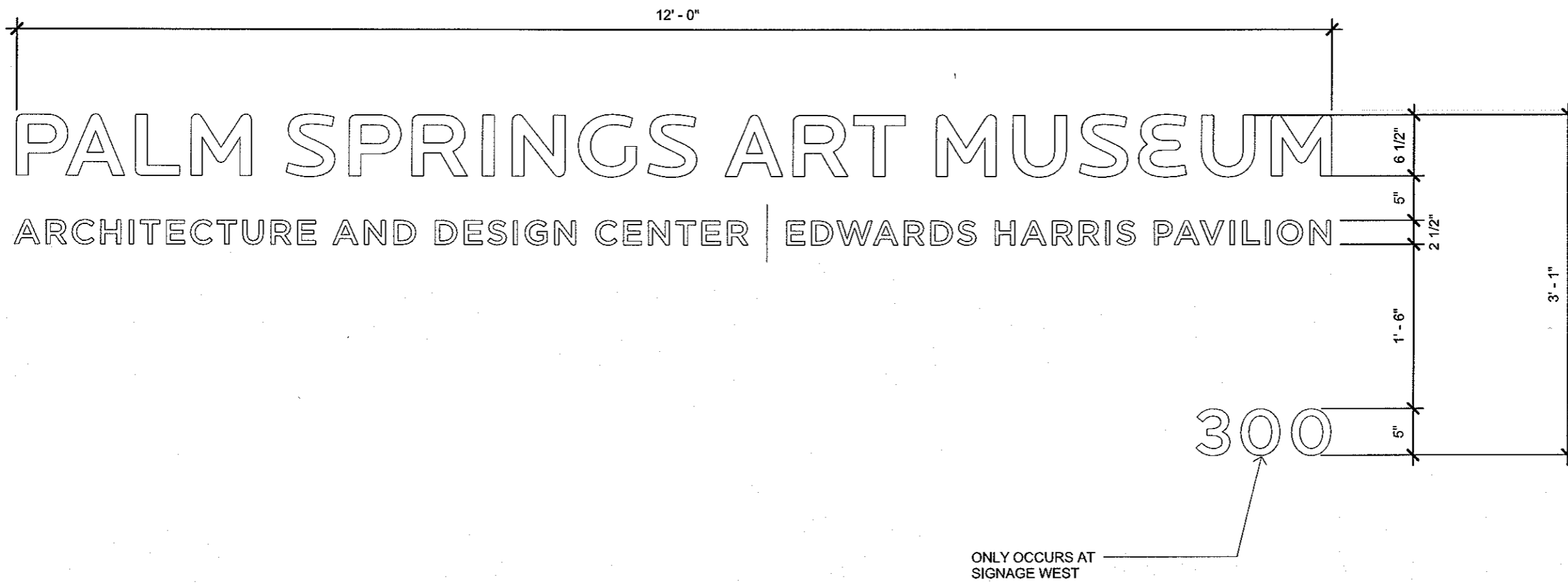
RE: 300 No. Palm Canyon Drive

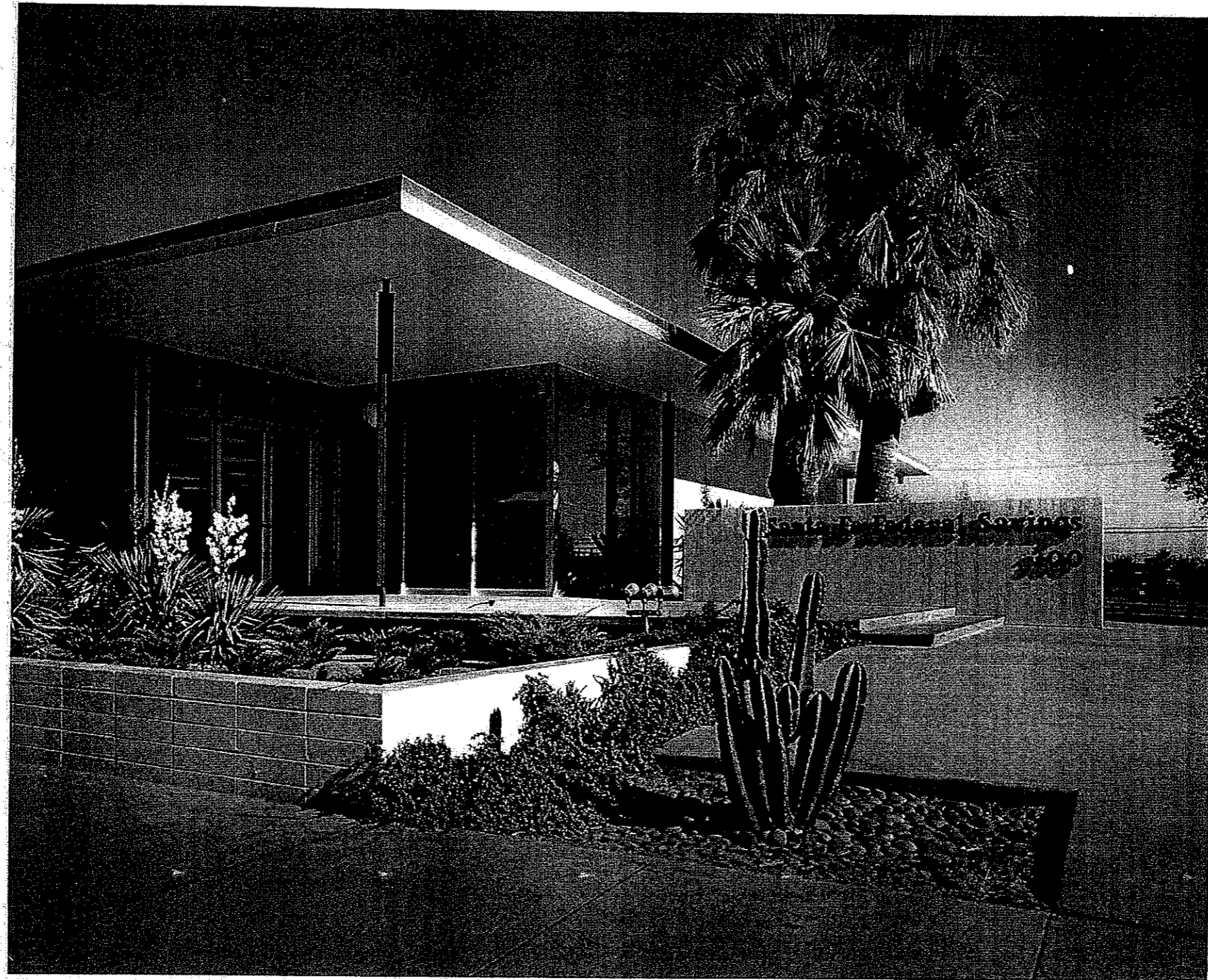
Dear Mr. Lyon,

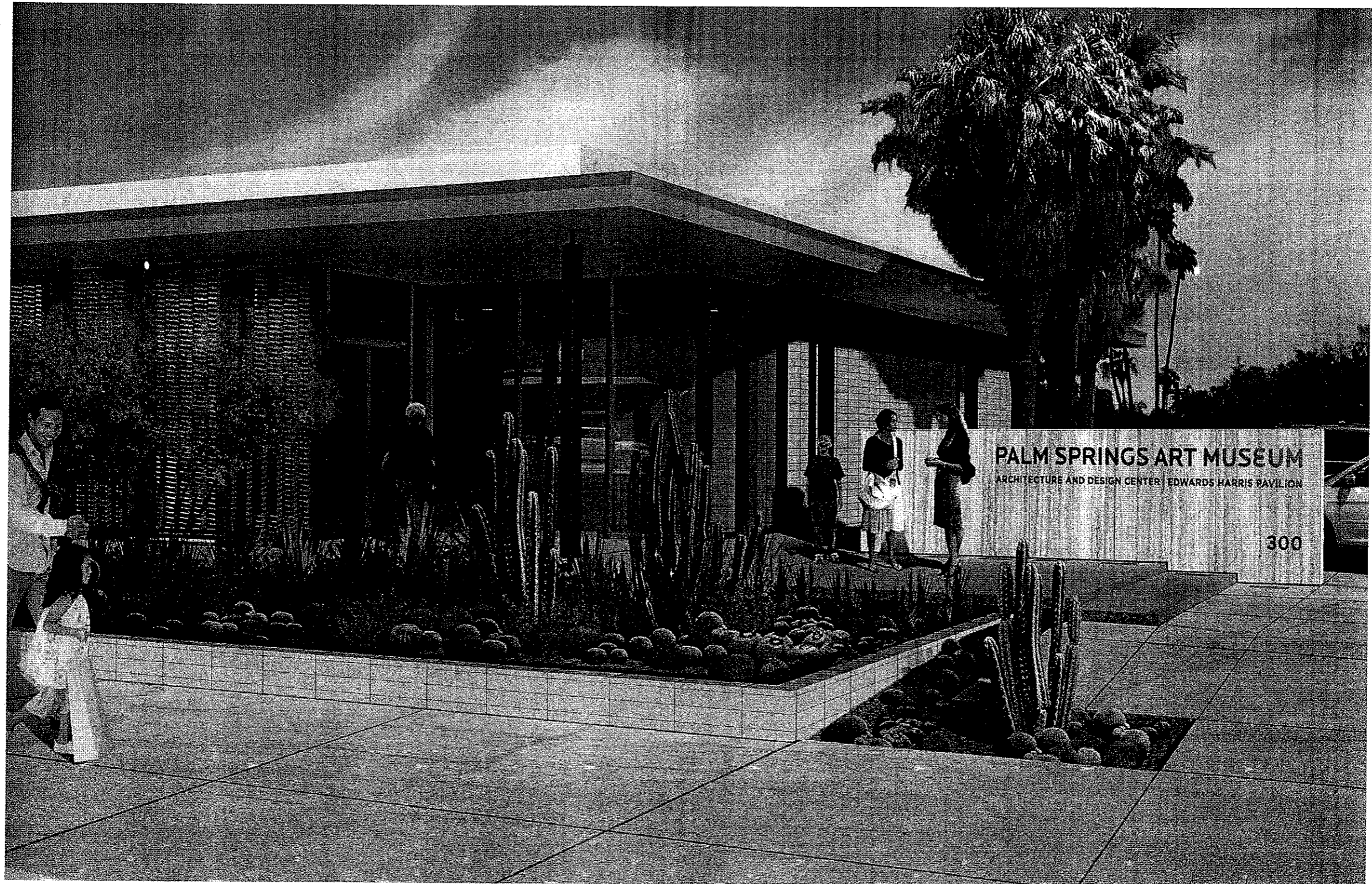
The Palm Springs Art Museum's Architecture and Design Center is requesting a variance to allow for the placement of a free-standing monument sign near the southeast corner of Palm Canyon Drive and Baristo Rd. We believe that the variance should be approved for the following reasons:

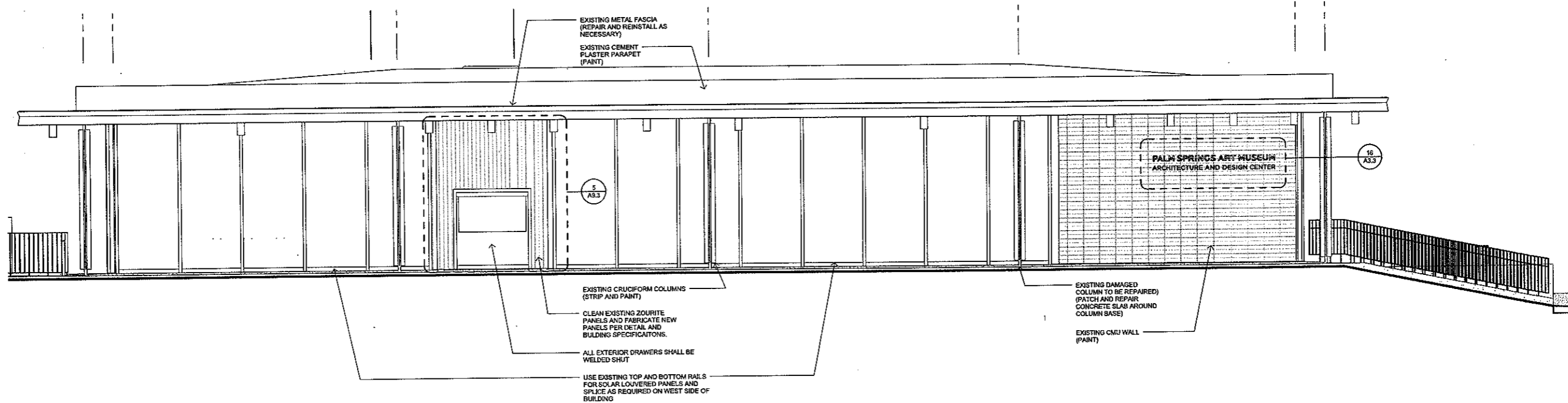
- 1) The building has been designated a Class 1 Historical site. It was designed by Stewart Williams originally for Santa Fe Savings & Loan. The building sits well off of the intersection of Palm Canyon Dr. and Baristo Rd. with a large raised planting area between the sidewalks and the building. In our opinion, a monument sign, placed in the landscaped planter perpendicular to Palm Canyon Drive is the only way to adequately identify the building at the intersection of the two streets. Placing a sign along the roof facade is not an option as this would compromise the original architectural design, as well as not being as effective as the proposed monument sign.
- 2) The proposed monument sign is the most compatible application with Mr. Williams' original design. We have included a photograph of the original building which shows a very large monument sign in basically the same location we are proposing for the new, smaller sign. In fact, all of the proposed signage for the A+D Center is consistent with Mr. Williams' original design.
- 3) The proposed monument sign is compatible with the surrounding property. The A+D Center is unique in that the building will function as a museum in the center of the Downtown/Uptown District. This is a 12,500 S.F. single use building positioned at one of the key intersections in downtown Palm Springs. The wall signage will not adequately identify the building in time to either access the parking lot, or the parking structure on





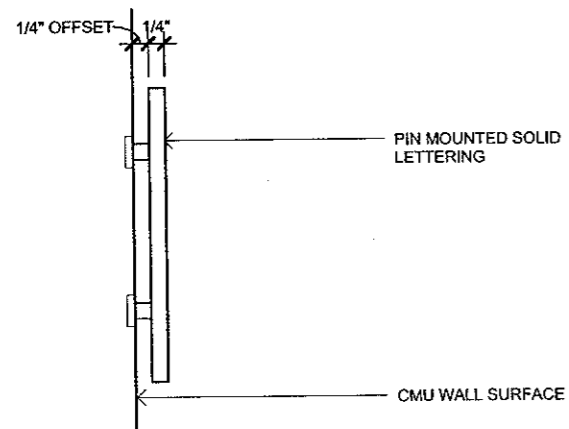






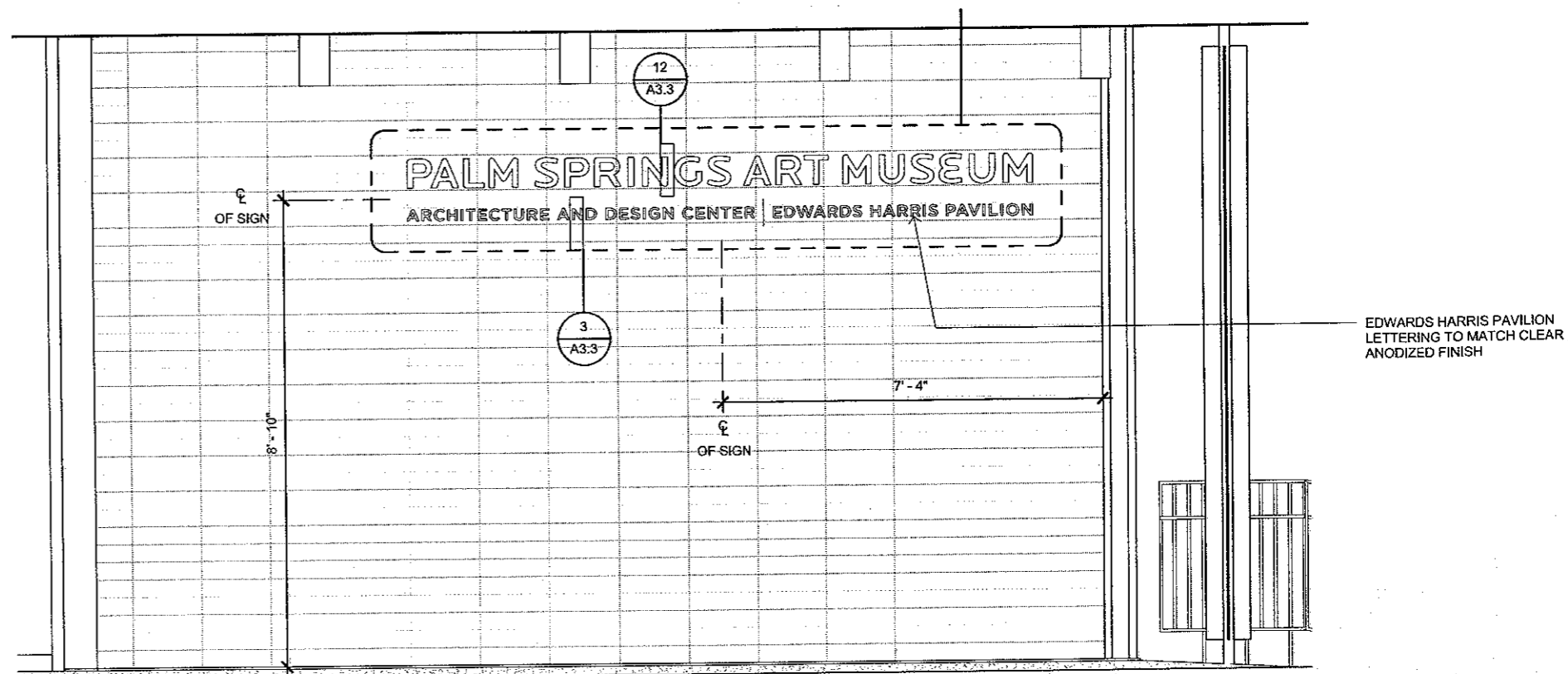
EXTERIOR ELEVATION EAST - REAR SIGNAGE

1/8" = 1'-0"



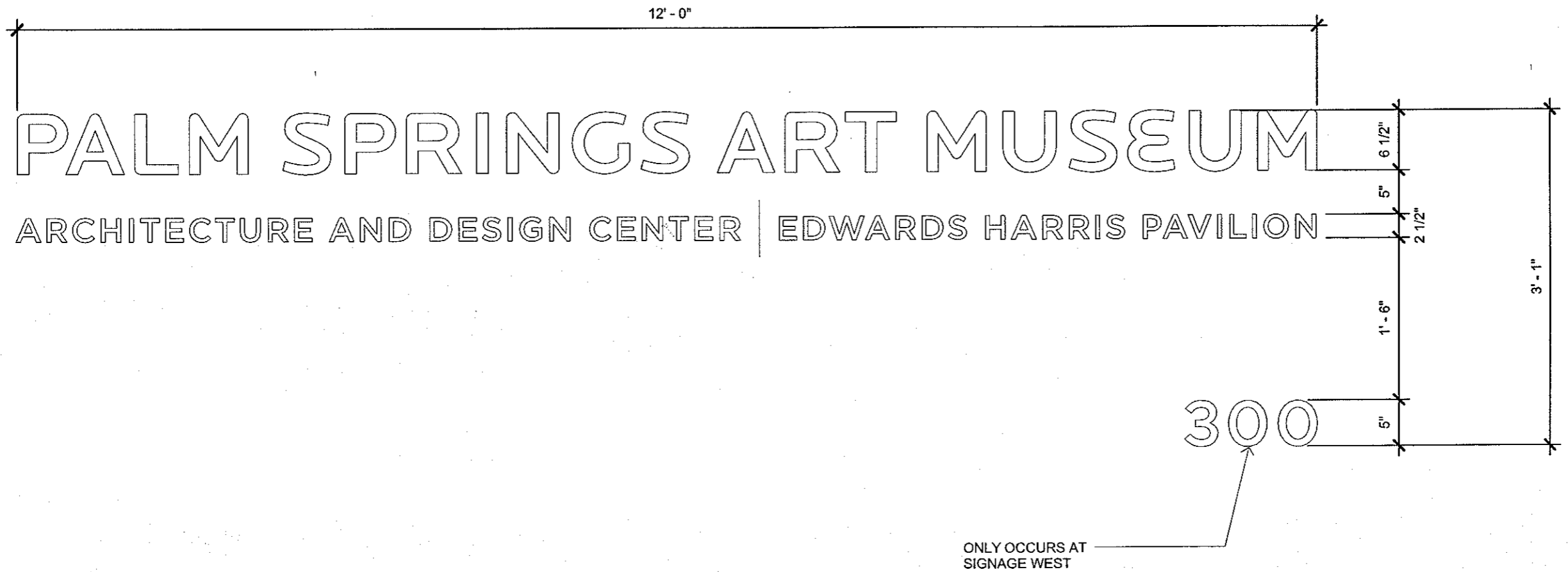
MOUNTING DETAIL - REAR SIGNAGE

3" = 1'-0"

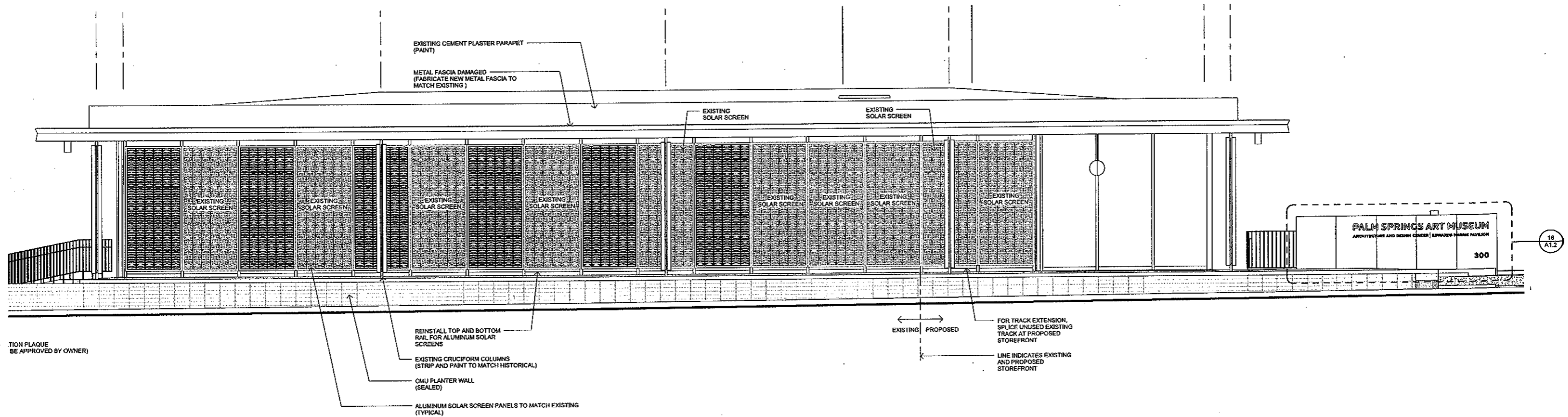


ENLARGED ELEVATION - REAR SIGNAGE

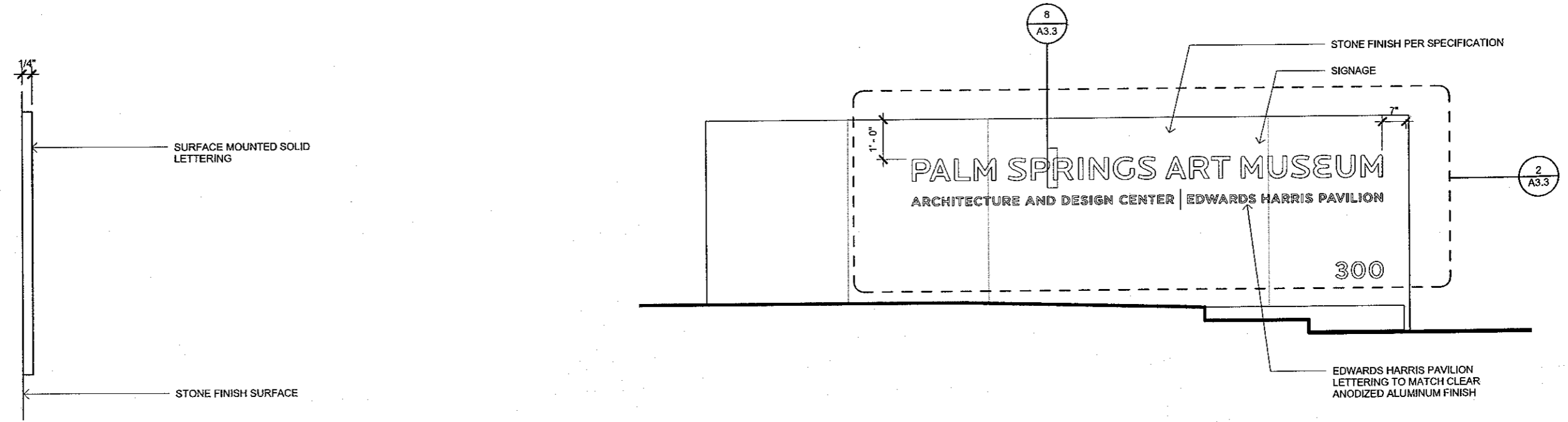
1/4" = 1'-0"



1" = 1'-0"

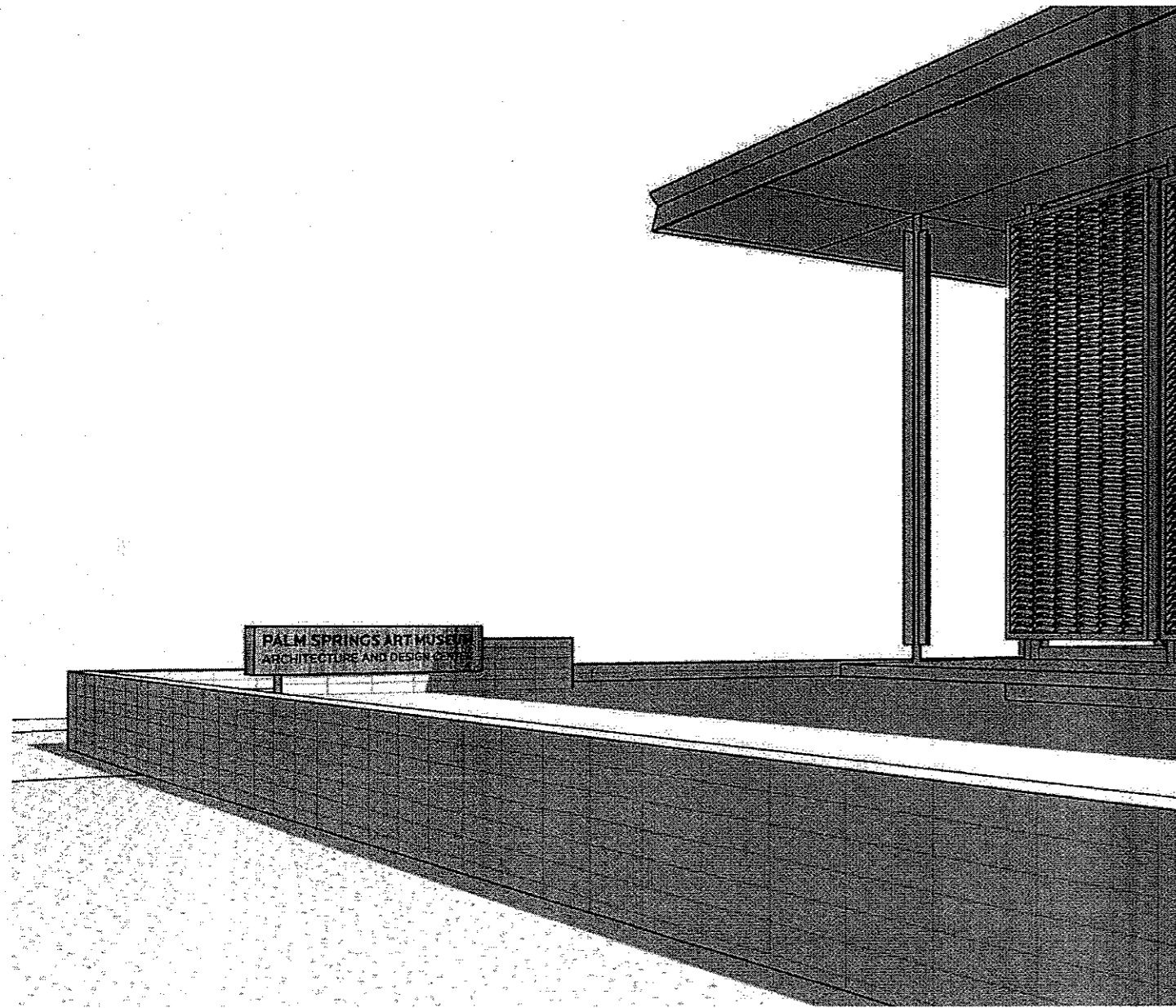


EXTERIOR ELEVATION - WEST - MAIN ENTRY SIGNAGE
 1/8" = 1'-0"

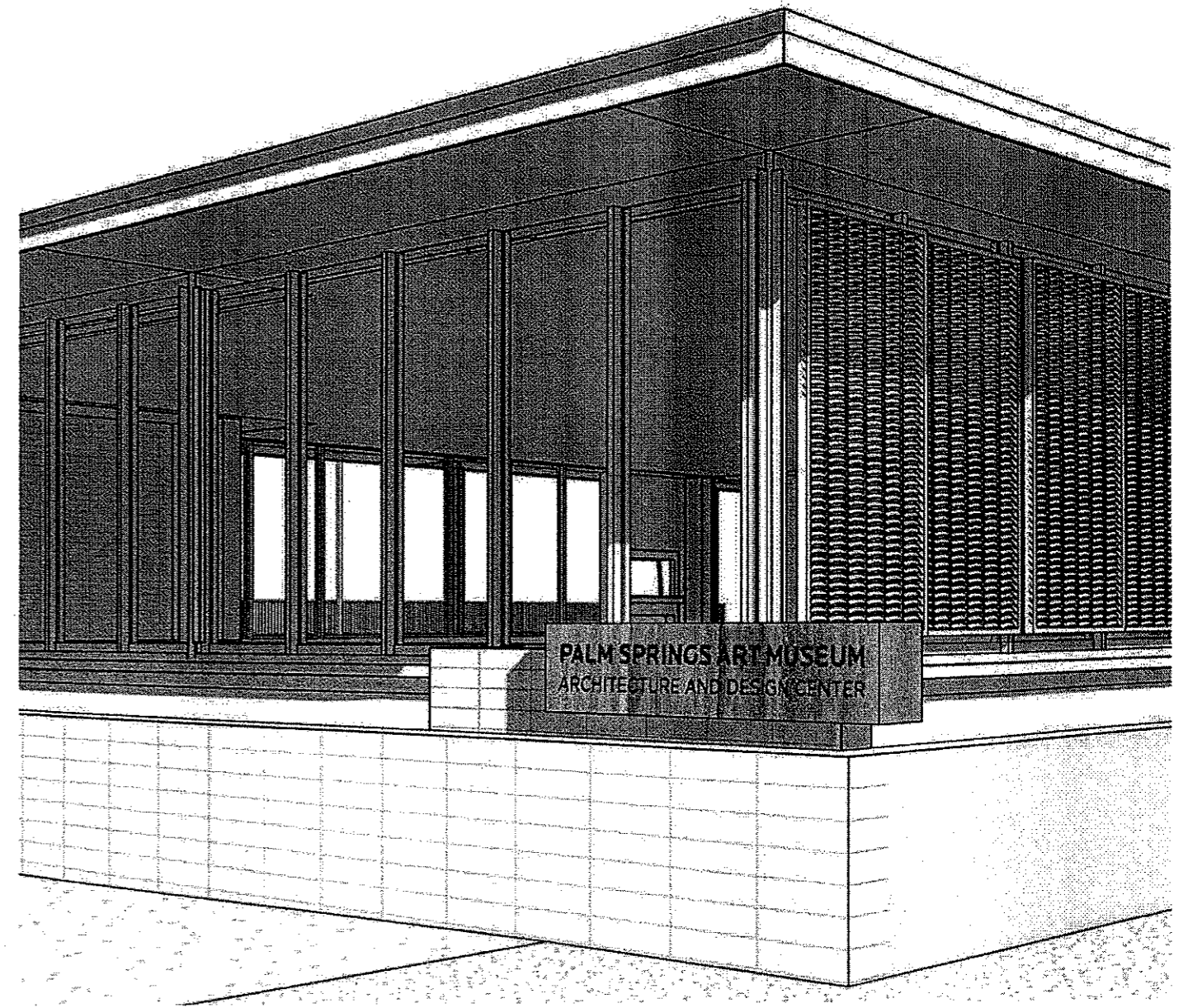


MOUNTING DETAIL - MAIN ENTRY SIGNAGE
 3" = 1'-0"

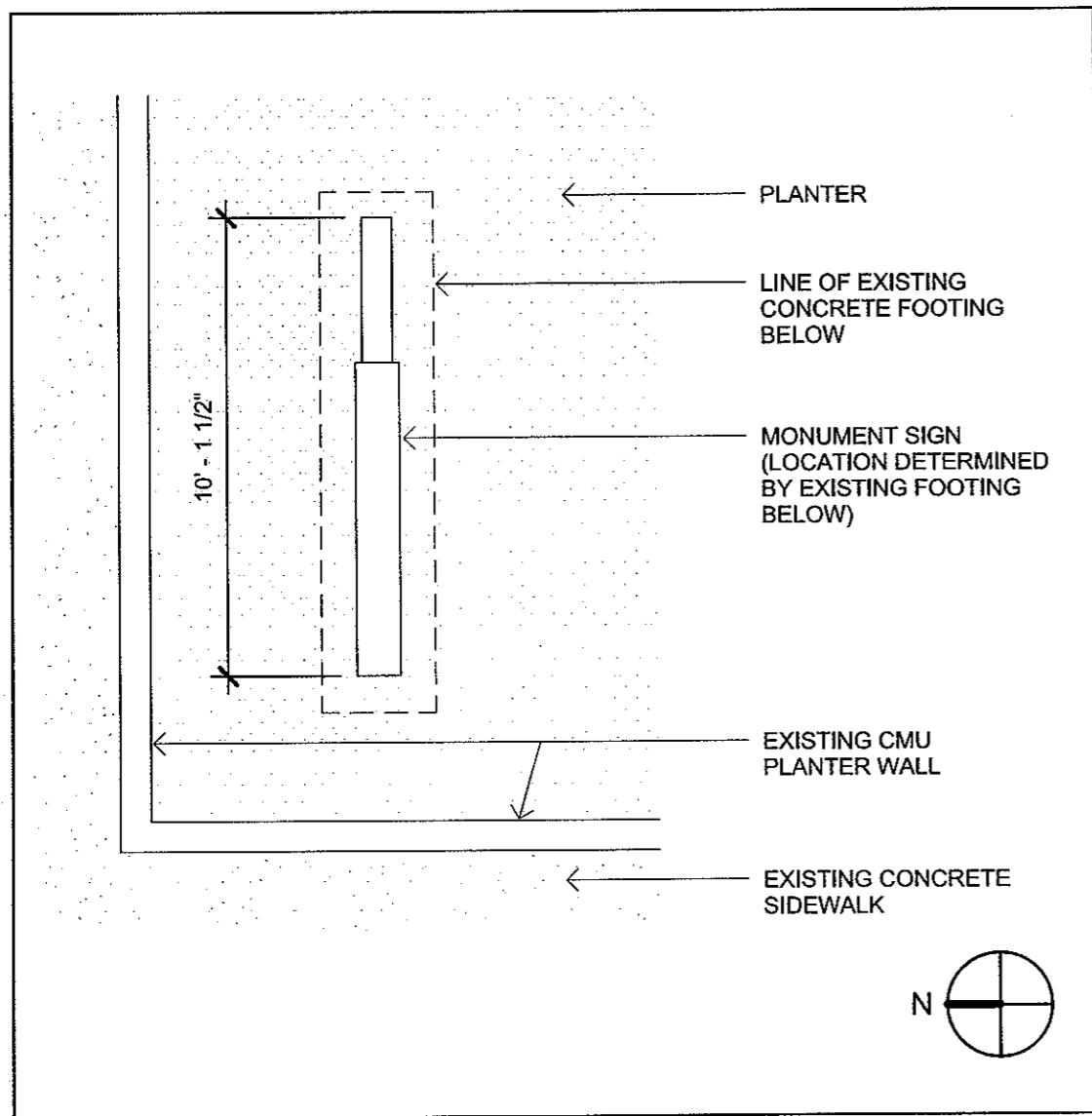
ENLARGED ELEVATION - MAIN ENTRY SIGNAGE
 1/4" = 1'-0"



VIEW LOOKING NORTH

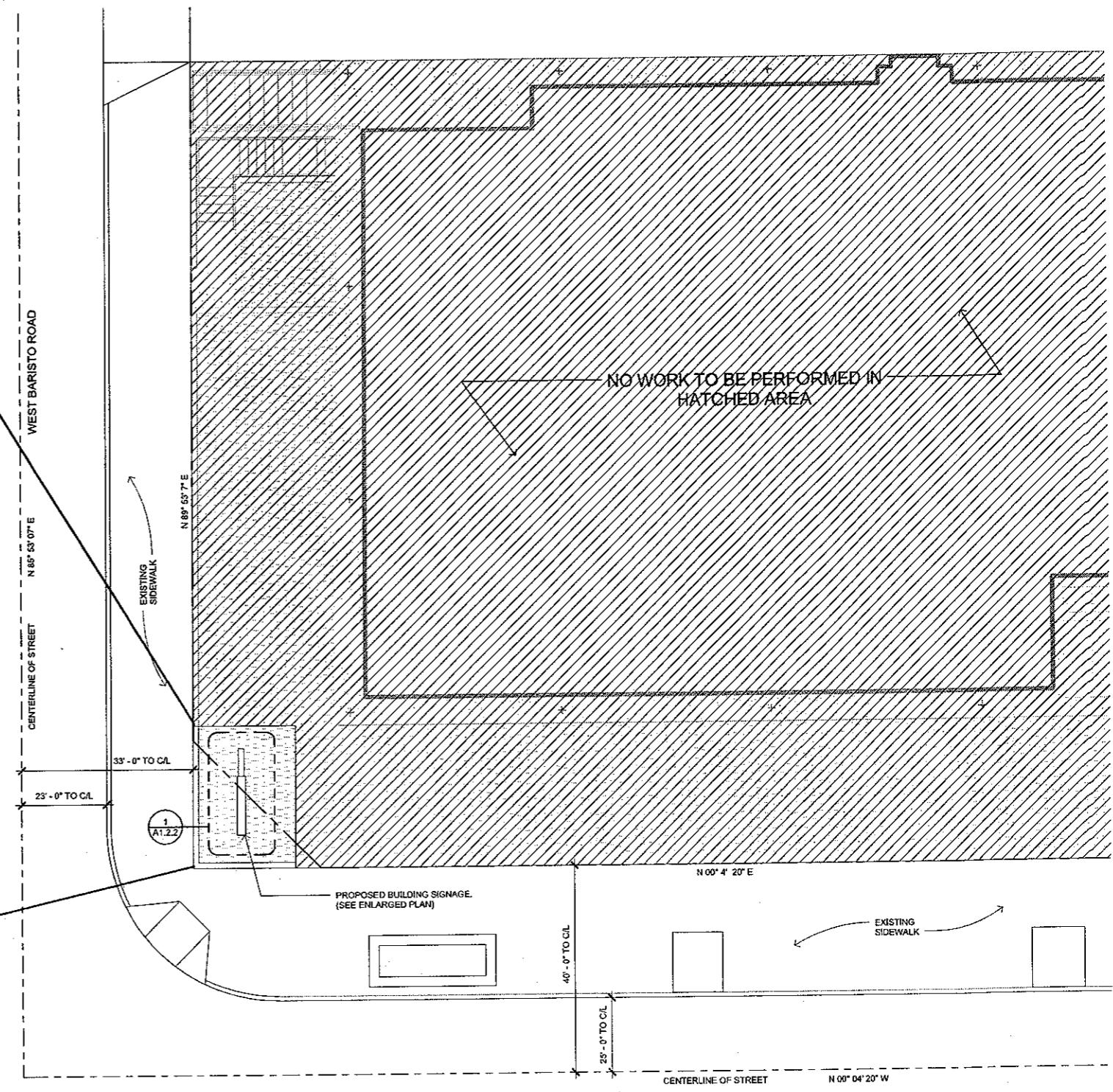


VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST



ENLARGED PLAN - MONUMENT SIGN

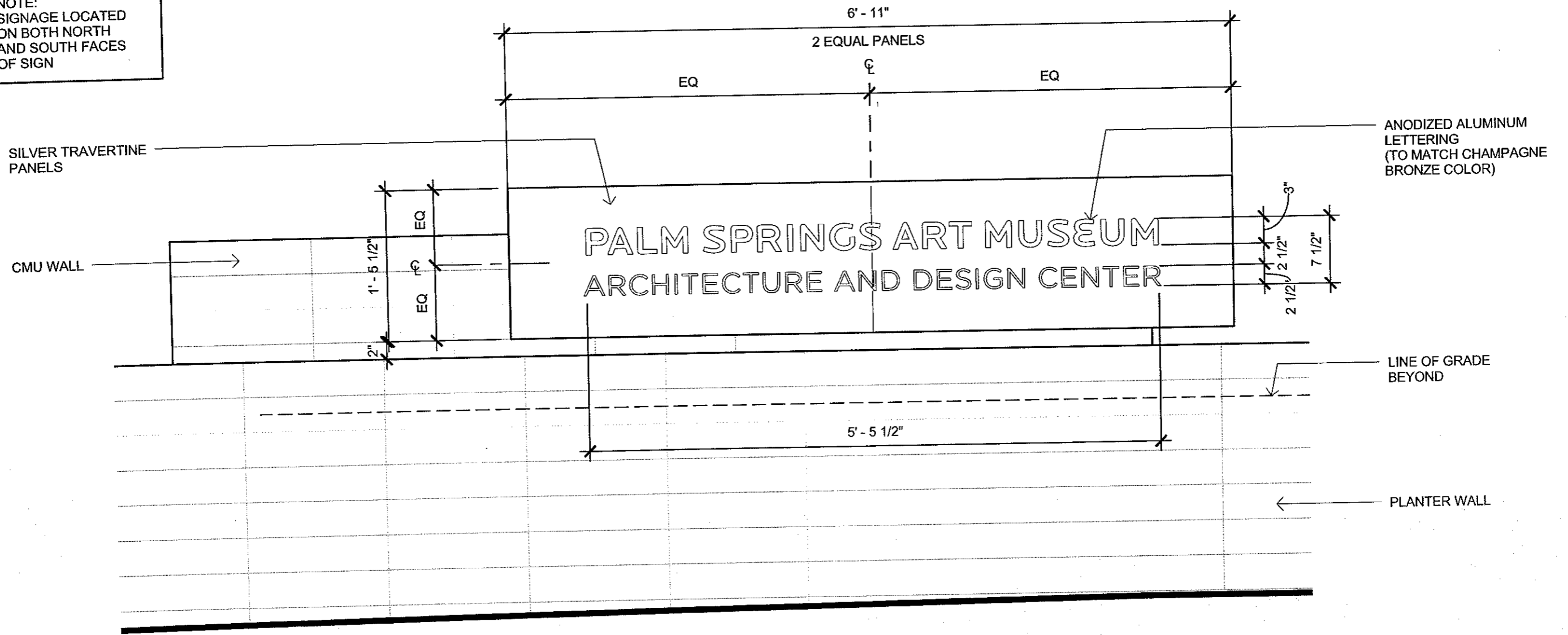
1/4" = 1'-0"



PARTIAL SITE PLAN - NORTHWEST CORNER

1/16" = 1'-0"

NOTE:
SIGNAGE LOCATED
ON BOTH NORTH
AND SOUTH FACES
OF SIGN



1/2" = 1'-0"

