



# ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 5, 2021

SUBJECT: GRIT DEVELOPMENT, FOR A MINOR ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SEVEN (7') FOOT TALL WALL TO ENCLOSE AN EXISTING COURTYARD FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POOL AREA AS PART OF AN ADAPTIVE REUSE OF AN OFFICE/RETAIL BUILDING TO A SUITE HOTEL LOCATED AT 125 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, ZONE CBD, SECTION 15 (CASE 3.2148 MAA) (GM)

FROM: Development Services Department

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## SUMMARY

This is a request of the Architectural Advisory Committee to review a Minor Architectural Application for the construction of a new seven (7') foot tall wall to enclose the courtyard at the corner of South Indian Canyon Drive and East Tahquitz Canyon Way. The wall will enclose the area for the construction of a new pool and deck associated with the adaptive reuse of the office/retail building to a fourteen (14) unit extended stay suite hotel. The project will require the demolition of an existing Palapa. The applicant has provided two options for the wall design and new courtyard landscape plan.

## RECOMMENDATION:

The Architectural Advisory Committee's recommendation will be forward to the Director of Development Services. Staff recommends the following:

1. Wall to meet the intent of the Downtown Urban Design Plan.
2. Lower wall to six (6') feet.
3. Add planter areas at base of wall to soften the hard sidewalk edge as it meets the vertical wall.

## PRIOR ACTIONS:

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
1990	Construction of Plaza Las Flores

**BACKGROUND AND SETTING:**

<b><i>Most Recent Ownership</i></b>	
1988	Grit Development

<b><i>Notification</i></b>	
4/1/2021	Email sent to the following Neighborhood Organizations to notify that this project will be reviewed by the AAC on 4/5/21: Vista Las Palmas, Old Las Palmas, Movie Colony, Movie Colony East, Midtown, Baristo, Historic Tennis Club, Warm Sands, Tahquitz River Estates Neighborhood Organizations.

<b><i>Field Check</i></b>	
March 2021	Staff visited site to observe existing conditions.

<b><i>Details of Application Request</i></b>	
<b><i>Site Area</i></b>	
Overall Site	0.48 acres

<b><i>General Plan, Zoning and Land Uses of Site &amp; Surrounding Areas</i></b>			
	<b><i>Existing General Plan Designations</i></b>	<b><i>Existing Zoning Designation</i></b>	<b><i>Existing Land Use</i></b>
Site	Central Business District (CBD)	Central Business District (CBD)	Office/Retail Building
North	Central Business District (CBD)	Central Business District (CBD)	Retail
South	Central Business District (CBD)	Central Business District (CBD)	Retail
East	RA (Resort Attraction)	Central Business District (CBD)	Restaurant/Retail
West	Central Business District (CBD)	Central Business District (CBD)	Retail & City Library

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:**

Development Standards for the CBD Zone pursuant to Section 92.09.03 of the PSZC is silent relative to walls and does not call-out setbacks from the property line if the wall cannot be considered a building structure.

The City adopted the “Downtown Urban Design Plan” in 2005 as a document to guide development in the Central Business District. These guidelines include a series of ideas and strategies to promote good design in the downtown area. Key features relative to the project in question include:

- Corner “sidewalk bulbs” are recommended at intersections.
- Clear sight lines should be maintained at intersections.

- Towers, architectural detailing, and large display windows on first floor help create pedestrian interest.
- Detailing on corner buildings or structures create a sense of arrival and importance.
- Distinctive architectural treatments should be incorporated into design when appropriate to the style of the building.
- Structures placed on street corners define the street edge and create visual and pedestrian interest which should include special design features and detailing.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The project site is located at the southwest corner of South Indian Canyon Drive and East Tahquitz Canyon Drive and is known as Plaza Las Flores. The building is a two-story structure that spans the block between South Palm Canyon Drive and South Indian Canyon Drive and wraps around the Wellwood Murray Library at the corner of East Tahquitz Canyon Way. Currently the building is a combination of retail/restaurant on the first floor and office space on the second floor. The property owner, Grit Development intends to convert the building into a fourteen (14) room extended stay suite hotel with three (3) rooms on the first floor with retail and supportive services such as a coffee shop, housekeeping; and eleven (11) rooms on the second floor.

There currently exists an outdoor courtyard with a Palapa at the east corner of the site which has been occupied by a restaurants over the years. To accommodate the extended stay suites hotel, the outdoor courtyard would be converted into a pool and lounge for guests. This will require the removal of the 745-square foot Palapa and the construction of a new privacy wall enclosing the pool area.



**Subject Site**

The applicant has provided two versions of the wall to review which can be described as the “Tile Wall”, and the other as the “Clay Roof”. Staff will discuss both below.

### Tile Wall

The proposed wall will be approximately seventy (70') feet long facing East Tahquitz Canyon Way and fifty (50') feet along South Indian Canyon Drive. The height as proposed is seven (7') feet and constructed of concrete block with a masonry cap.

5.0 POOL WALL - TILES TO MATCH DOME



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KAP STUDIOS - PLAZA LAS FLORES - MINOR ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

Image of proposed tile wall

This version of the wall provides depth, areas of light and air circulation, and a more appealing façade for the pedestrian by using wooden slats which off-set the block walls by 2'-6". The street side wall will be clad in triangular tiles in colors found on the building dome tying the two together. The graphic pattern of the tiles is a design feature that can be incorporated into the street facing wall. The wall is stepped in plan to create alcoves on the street side. These alcoves will be landscaped to bring a pedestrian scale to the wall. Breaks in the wall are located at the steps with wood slats creating discrete views in and out of the pool area. The corner is set back so that landscaping can be introduced as well as planter areas along both street frontages.



Simulation of proposed wall

## Clay Roof

The second option is to use clay roof tiles as the primary material in the wall design and structure. Plaza Las Flores roof is distinctive and adds a rich texture to the building's appearance. The wall constructed of the clay tiles references the buildings Spanish Colonial style but also the numerous breeze block walls that are used in the City. This proposal is to use a concrete base and infill areas with the clay tiles open at the top. The wall height will be seven (7') feet and undulate along the street frontages allowing for alcoves and landscaping.

### 5.8 POOL WALL - ROOF TILES



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Image of proposed clay roof wall

## Landscape Plan

The enclosed courtyard will have a swimming pool and deck for lounge chairs and several cabanas. The plantings proposed include five (5) Kumquat trees, Pigmy Date Palms, California Fan Palms, multiple Natal Plum and Flax Lily plus various vines. The alcoves on the street side of the wall are not defined on the applicant's submission. Staff believes that additional setback is needed to provide for landscaping on the street side.

5.0 POOL WALL - ROOF TILES



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**Simulation of proposed wall**

Architectural Review:

PSZC Section 94.04.00(D) requires an evaluation of the proposed development to determine if it will provide a desirable environment for its occupants, be compatible with the character of adjacent and surrounding developments, and whether it is of good composition, materials, textures and colors. Conformance shall be evaluated based on the following criteria.

	Guidelines [PSZC 94.04.00(D)]	Compliance
1.	<i>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.</i>	No
	The project site is located at the Plaza Las Flores building with the subject courtyard enclosure at the corner of East Tahquitz Canyon Way and South Indian Canyon Drive. The proposed wall placed on the property line provides a defined area between the private and public sidewalk space. However, the street frontage lengths of the walls at 70' and 50' do not meet the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines for structures placed on street corners which are to define the street edge and create visual and pedestrian interest to include special design features and detailing.	

	Guidelines [PSZC 94.04.00(D)]	Compliance
2.	<p><i>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;</i></p> <p>The Plaza Las Flores building is Spanish Colonial style with unique features such as arches, heavy stucco, wood, masonry, large glass windows, and ironwork. The proposed options use one element currently on the building (tiles from the dome, and clay roof tiles) however the hard edge of the walls at the sidewalk is not pedestrian friendly or engages with the street. The wall alcoves and wooden slats provide some relief to the length of the wall, however additional detailing is needed.</p>	No
3.	<p><i>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;</i></p> <p>The proposed wall height is seven (7') feet located at the property line. The PSZC allows a wall of this height in the CBD zone, however Staff believes that an alternative design that engages the street and is inviting to the pedestrian would be more consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines.</p>	No
4.	<p><i>Building design, materials and colors to be sympathetic with desert surroundings;</i></p> <p>The proposed wall materials include masonry block, concrete, ceramic tiles, and clay roof tiles in colors that are found on the existing Spanish Colonel style building. The use of these materials in colors existing on the building would be consistent.</p>	Yes
5.	<p><i>Harmony of materials, colors and composition of those elements of a structure, including overhangs, roofs, and substructures which are visible simultaneously;</i></p> <p>The proposed wall will utilize a combination of masonry block, stucco, ceramic and roof tiles which address the street frontage and will be harmonious in their composition.</p>	Yes
6.	<p><i>Consistency of composition and treatment;</i></p> <p>Overall, there is a consistency of project composition and treatment. The new wall will create an enclosed swimming pool area for the use of the extended stay suites hotel.</p>	Yes
7.	<p><i>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;</i></p> <p>The conceptual landscape scheme provides a good selection of desert appropriate plantings on the interior of the pool courtyard. The street side of the wall which is highly visible is lacking in detail.</p>	No

	Guidelines [PSZC 94.04.00(D)]	Compliance
8.	<i>Signs and graphics, as understood in architectural design including materials and colors.</i>	N/A
	Signage is not part of this proposal.	

CONCLUSION:

The corner of East Tahquitz Canton Way and South Indian Canyon Drive is the junction of two major streets within the Downtown and has been anchored by an existing Palapa that provides a focal point that is pedestrian scaled and inviting. The design of Plaza Las Flores in a Spanish Colonel style has a warm texture that appears to be missing in the proposed wall designs. Staff worked with the applicant asking for a design that would meet the Downtown Design Guidelines and the two options are presented. The wall with alcoves and landscaping is moving in the right direction, however Staff believes that the wall should be setback off the property line to provide for additional planter beds, lower in height, and the corner could have a defining focal point feature that is consistent with the overall design of the building.

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Glenn Mlaker, AICP  
Associate Planner

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David Newell, AICP  
Assistant Planning Director

Attachments:


1. Vicinity Map
2. Exhibit Package



	Guidelines [PSZC 94.04.00(D)]	Compliance
8.	<i>Signs and graphics, as understood in architectural design including materials and colors.</i>	N/A
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Associate Planner

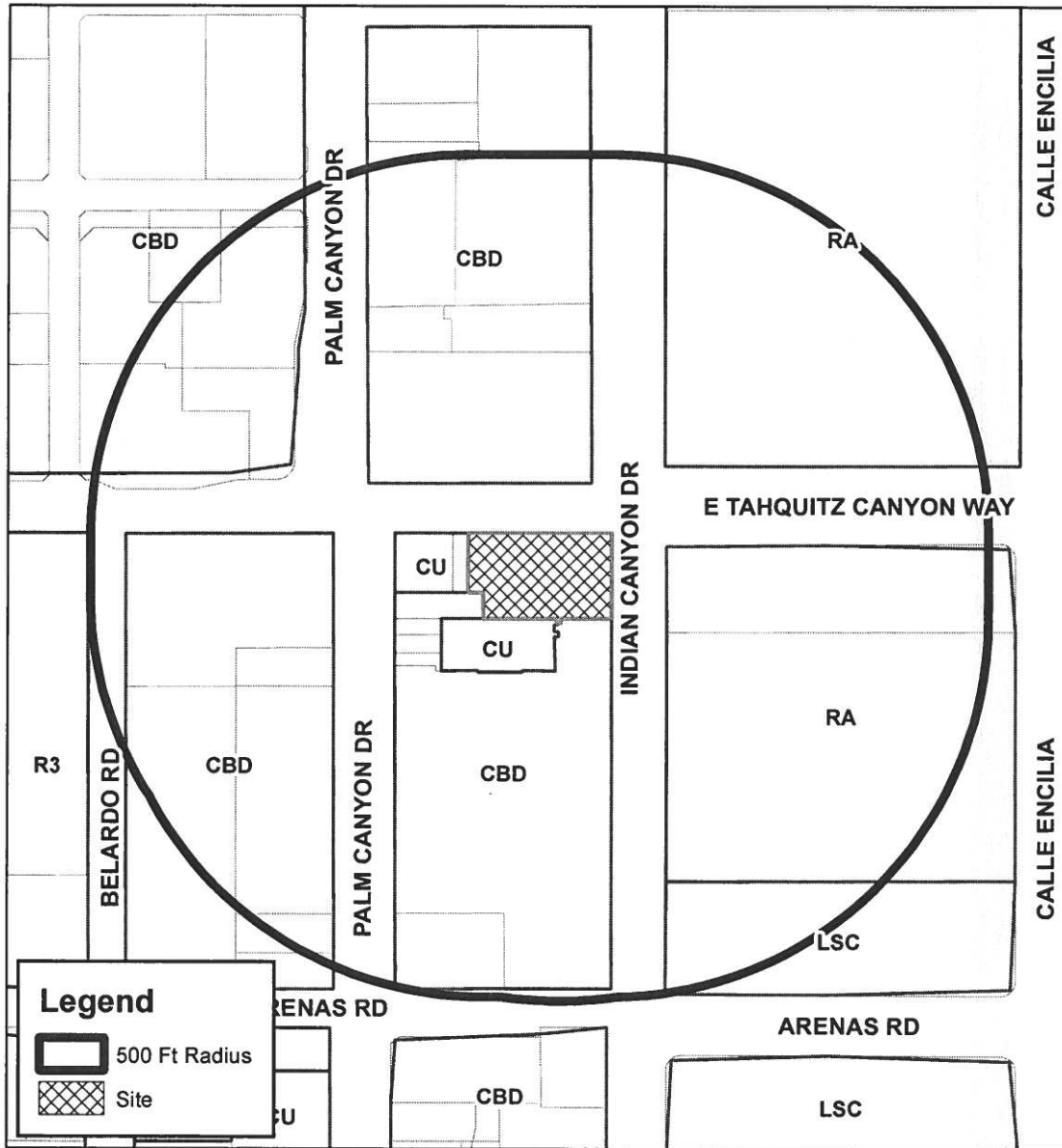
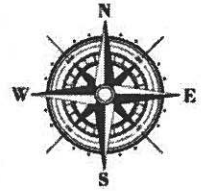
  
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David Newell, AICP  
Assistant Planning Director

Attachments:

- 1. Vicinity Map
- 2. Exhibit Package



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



**Legend**

- 500 Ft Radius
- Site

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS**  
**Case # 3.2148 MAA**  
**125 E Tahquitz Canyon Way**

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# PLAZA LAS FLORES

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**MINOR ARCHITECTURAL  
APPLICATION SUBMITTAL**

**KAP.**

25 MARCH 2021  
REVISION A

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION



The revitalization proposals of Plaza las Flores, located at 125 Tahquitz Canyon Way, are covered in this report.

The building has been 65 % vacant for the past ten years and the sensitive design interventions discussed in the following pages have the aim of bringing this building back to life.

Reactivating Plaza las Flores will in turn support the growth, prosperity and the activity associated with downtown Palm Springs.

The design interventions proposed are: the introduction of a swimming pool, a visually stimulating art wall on the corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Indian Canyon Drive, and measures to make the building ADA accessible like the introduction of ramps.

The design options presented not only engage with the street to create a pedestrian friendly environment but also relate to the existing building through material and color choices.

## 2.0 EXISTING BUILDING

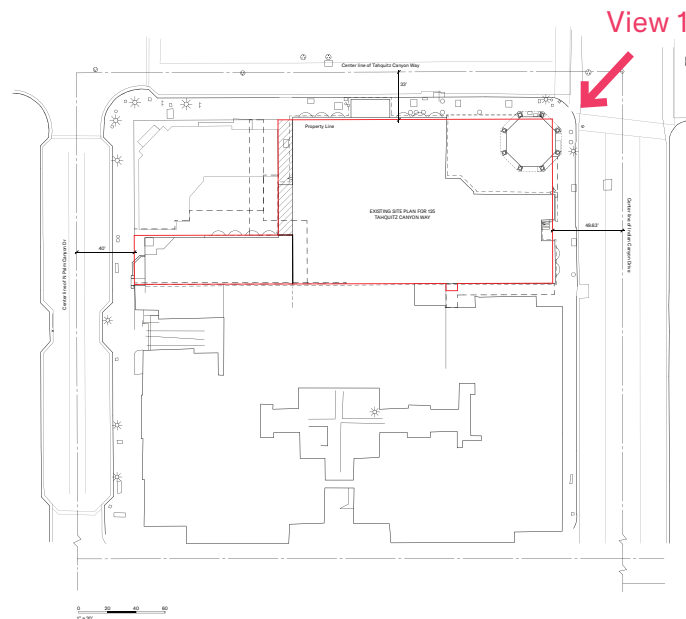
Plaza las Flores is designed in a Spanish Colonial style, with clay roof tiles, arched windows, arcades, and a colorful dome completing its roofline.

The building is set back from the street, with a courtyard at the corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Indian Canyon Drive.

A palette of clay based colors, like deep yellows, dark tans and oranges, make up the majority of the building's facade. Wood framed windows are inset from the facade giving depth and casting shadows on the building's frontage.

The main entrance off of Tahquitz Canyon Way is defined by an arcade and a portion of the building that steps out from the rest of the facade.

The building being set back from the street provides unique challenges for its occupancy and visibility.



View 1: Corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Indian Canyon Drive

## 2.0 EXISTING BUILDING



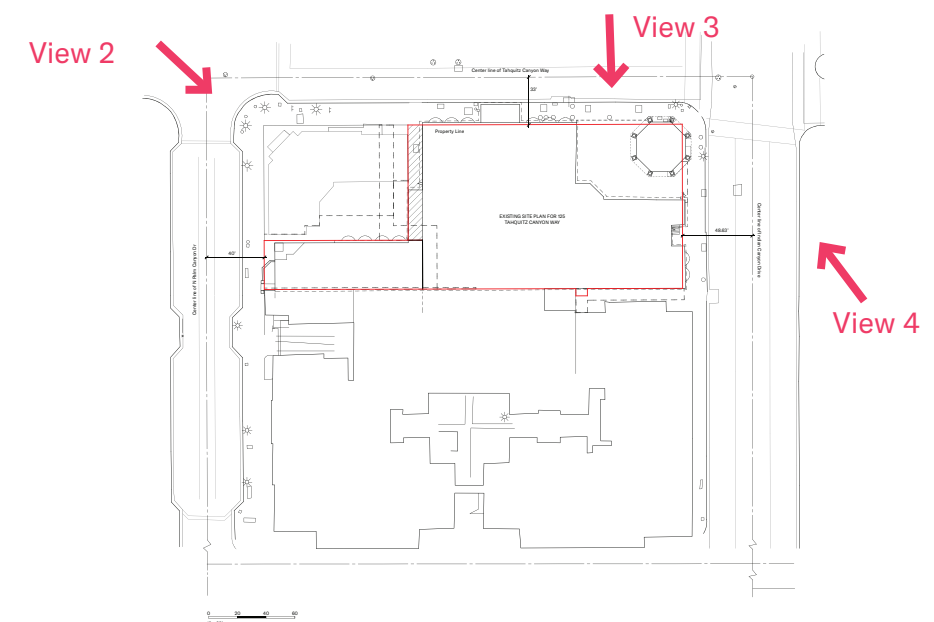
View 2: Corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and N Palm Canyon Dr



View 3: Tahquitz Canyon Elevation



View 4: Indian Canyon Dr Elevation



### 3.0 USE - EXTENDED STAY SUITES



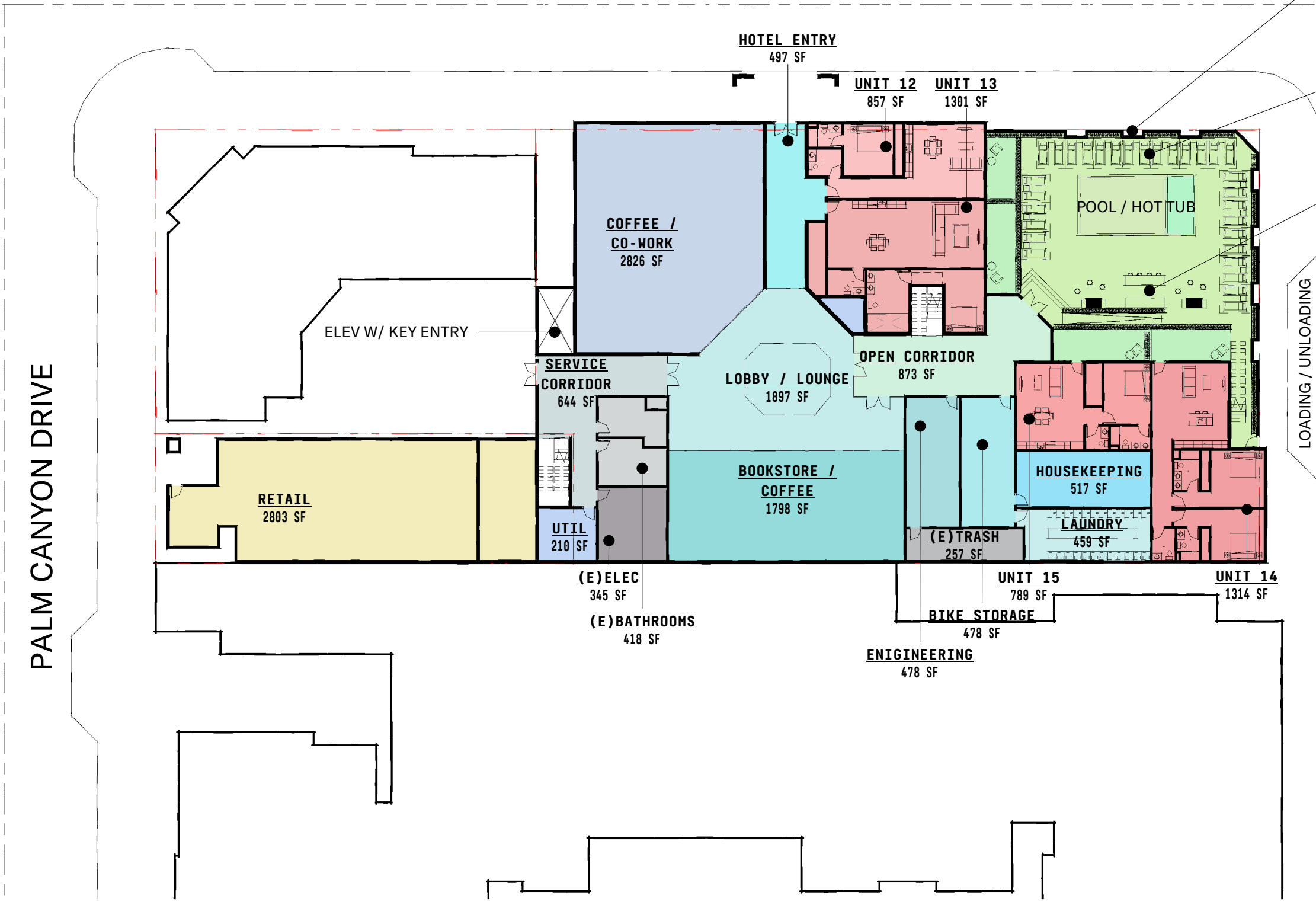
In order to bring new life back to Plaza Las Flores and have it contribute to the activity and excitement of downtown Palm Springs, it is proposed to transform the building into a new extended stay and family option under the Rowan Hotel. 15 one and two bedroom suites will be located on the ground and second floors of the building, with the retail unit off of Palm Canyon Dr remaining.

Discussions are being had with the Rowan Hotel to manage Plaza Las Flores, with guest arrivals, valets, and concierge services occurring out of the Rowan Hotel.

An extensive refurbishment of Plaza Las Flores will be undertaken to turn the building into a modern and desirable extended stay offering that will be unique to downtown Palm Springs. The exterior of the building will be repainted, roof tiles replaced, services updated, and new amenity spaces, such as pool on the corner, will be completed.

The plans on the following pages illustrate the proposed layout of the extended stay suites, illustrating a mixture of one and two bedroom units.

TAQUITZ DRIVE



PRIVACY SITE WALL WITH ARTICULATION FOR SEATING AND PLANT SCREENING. POTENTIAL FOR CITY ARTWORK

(15) PRIVATE CABANAS

COCKTAIL BAR & (2) GRILL AREAS

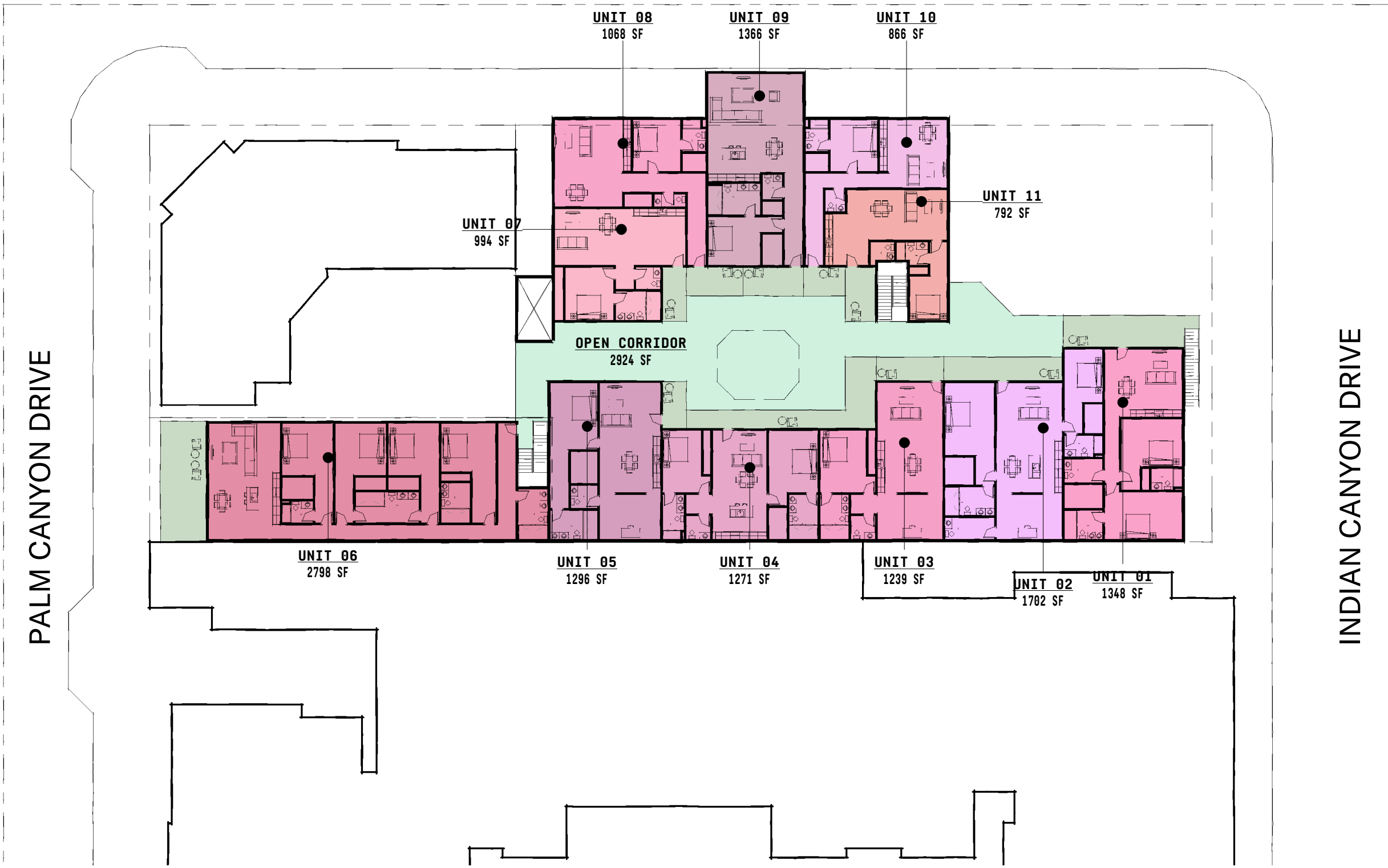
LOADING / UNLOADING

PALM CANYON DRIVE

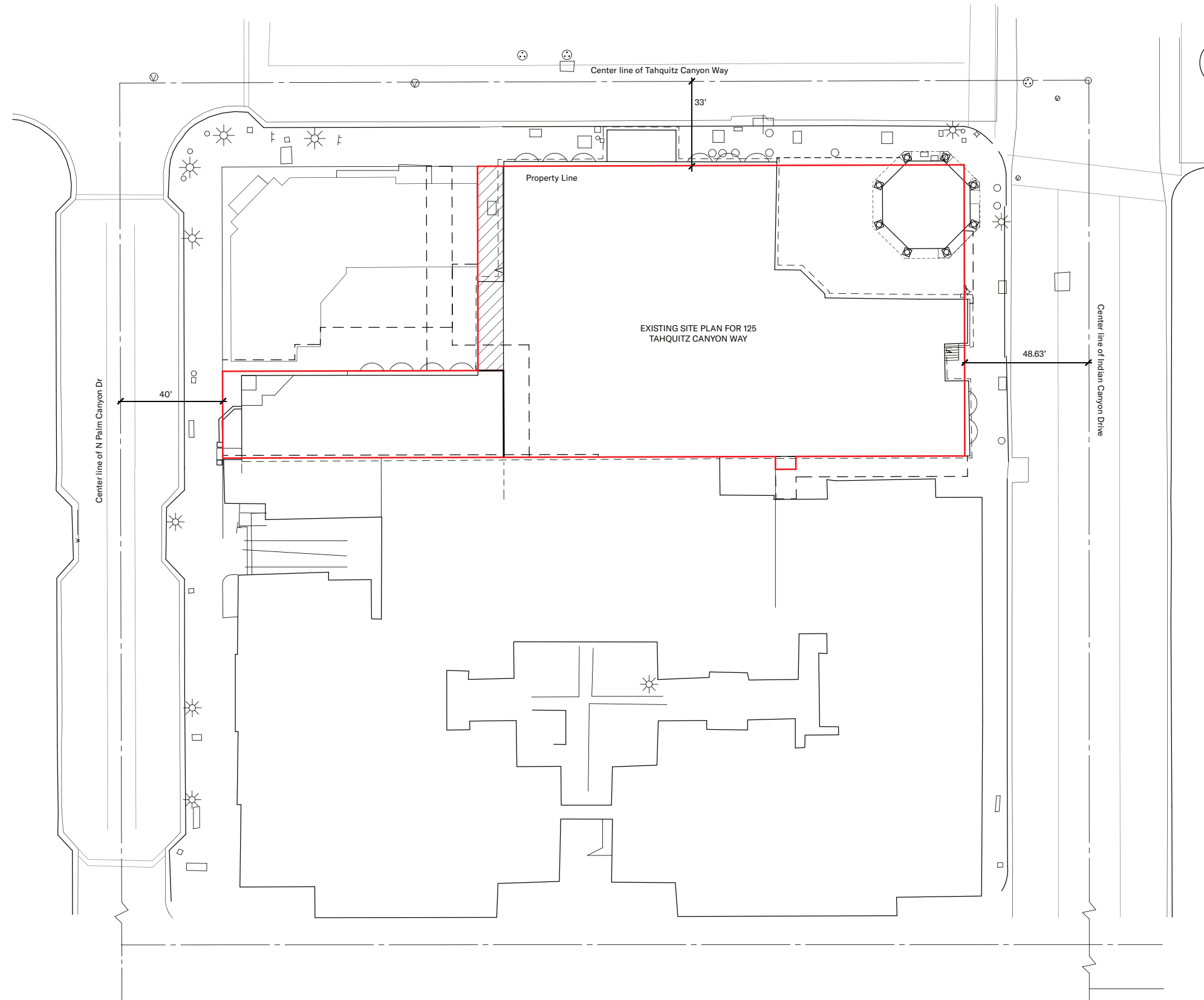
INDIAN CANYON DRIVE



TAQUITZ DRIVE



## 4.0 SITE PLAN - EXISTING

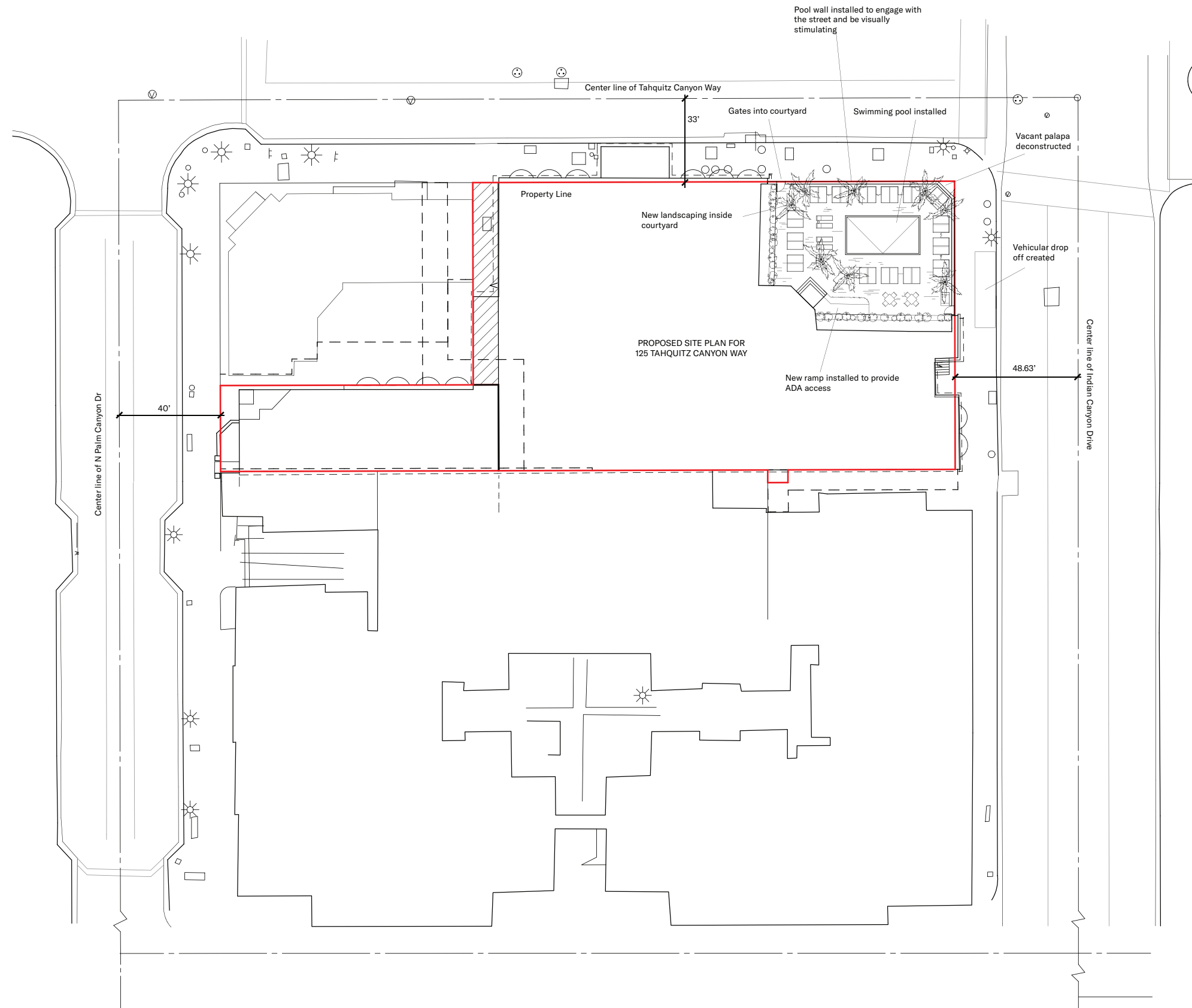


Plaza las Flores' main frontage is on Tahquitz Canyon Way, with a small elevation on S Palm Canyon Dr and another on Indian Canyon Dr.

The majority of the building's elevations do not front the street. This proposes challenges for the building's occupancy. Retail is not conducive to this arrangement due to the building's lack of visibility.

The proposed design interventions to the building address this situation and aim to reactivate the building and bring it back to life.

## 4.0 SITE PLAN - PROPOSED



Certain building interventions are proposed in order to accommodate the extended stay use.

The first is the introduction of a swimming pool in the building's under used, dark and awkwardly laid out existing courtyard.

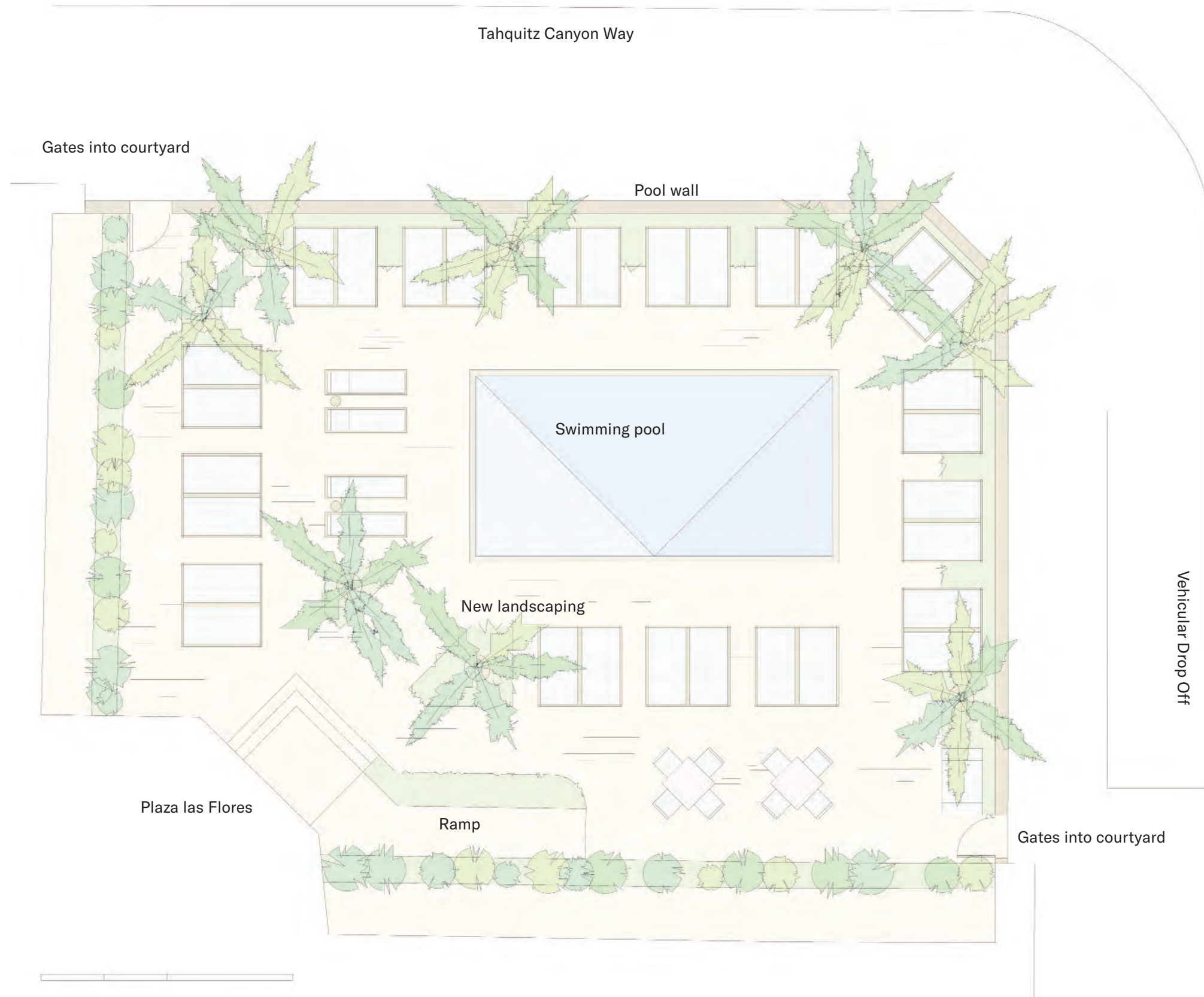
Opening this space up washes this area with sunlight, making it much more appealing and inviting than it's current configuration. The pool has been designed with landscaping in mind, bringing in new vegetation throughout.

In order to open this space up the deconstruction of the vacant palapa is proposed.

A visually stimulating pool wall is the second proposed design intervention. Two options for the wall have been looked at, with both picking up elements of the existing building as part of their design. How the pool wall engages with the street has been key to each of their designs.

The third intervention is the introduction of a ramp in the courtyard to make the building ADA accessible. This ramp has been seamlessly designed with the courtyard's layout, incorporating landscaping around it.

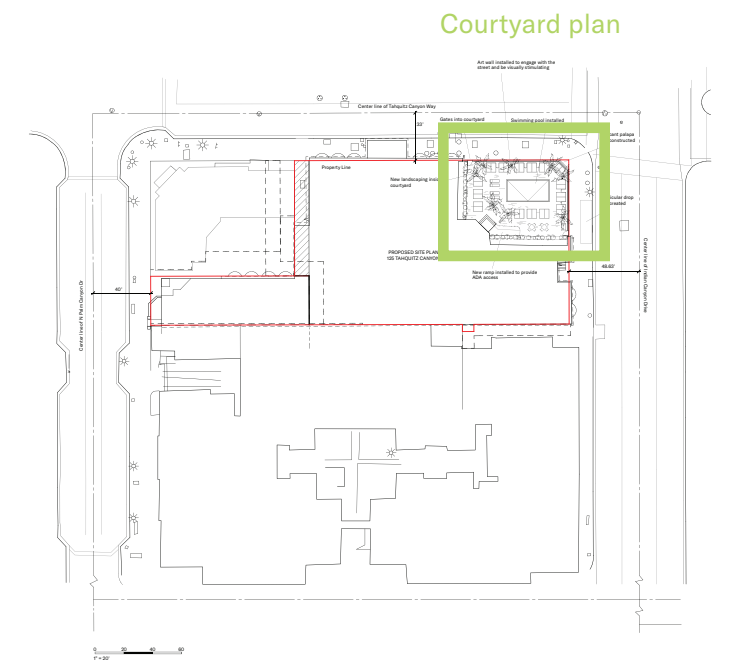
## 4.0 SITE PLAN - PROPOSED



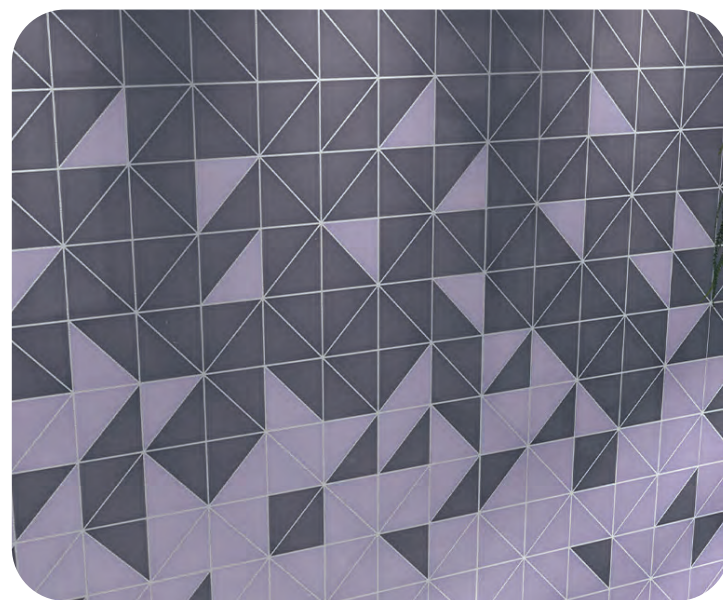
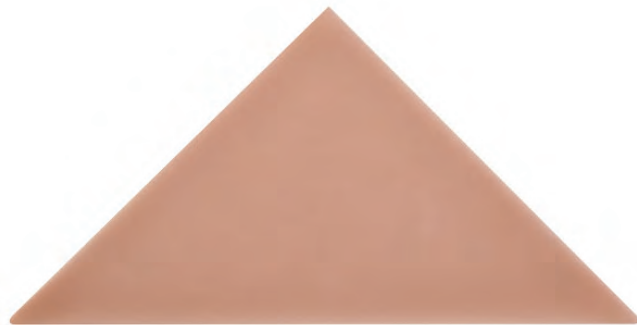
The courtyard plan opposite illustrates the proposed layout of the swimming pool, landscaping, pool wall, and new ramp.

Gates leading from the courtyard to the streets are proposed.

A vehicular drop off on Indian Canyon Dr is also proposed.



## 5.0 POOL WALL - TILES TO MATCH DOME



The tiled dome atop Plaza las Flores is one of its most distinctive and attractive architectural elements. The tiled pattern sits well with the rest of the building and provides a visually stimulating feature.

One of the ideas for the pool wall is to pick up on both the materiality and color of these tiles. The graphic pattern of the tiles is another design feature that can be incorporated into the pool wall.

The proposed tiles opposite closely match the tiles of the dome.

A playful pattern references the dome's graphic qualities without exactly replicating it.

The pool wall is stepped in plan to create alcoves on the street side. These alcoves will be landscaped to bring a pedestrian scale to the wall. Breaks in the wall are located at the steps, with wood slats creating discrete views in and out of the pool.

The corner is also set back so that landscaping can be introduced here, softening the corner. The tiles are laid out in a pattern that emphasizes the corner and makes it a feature.

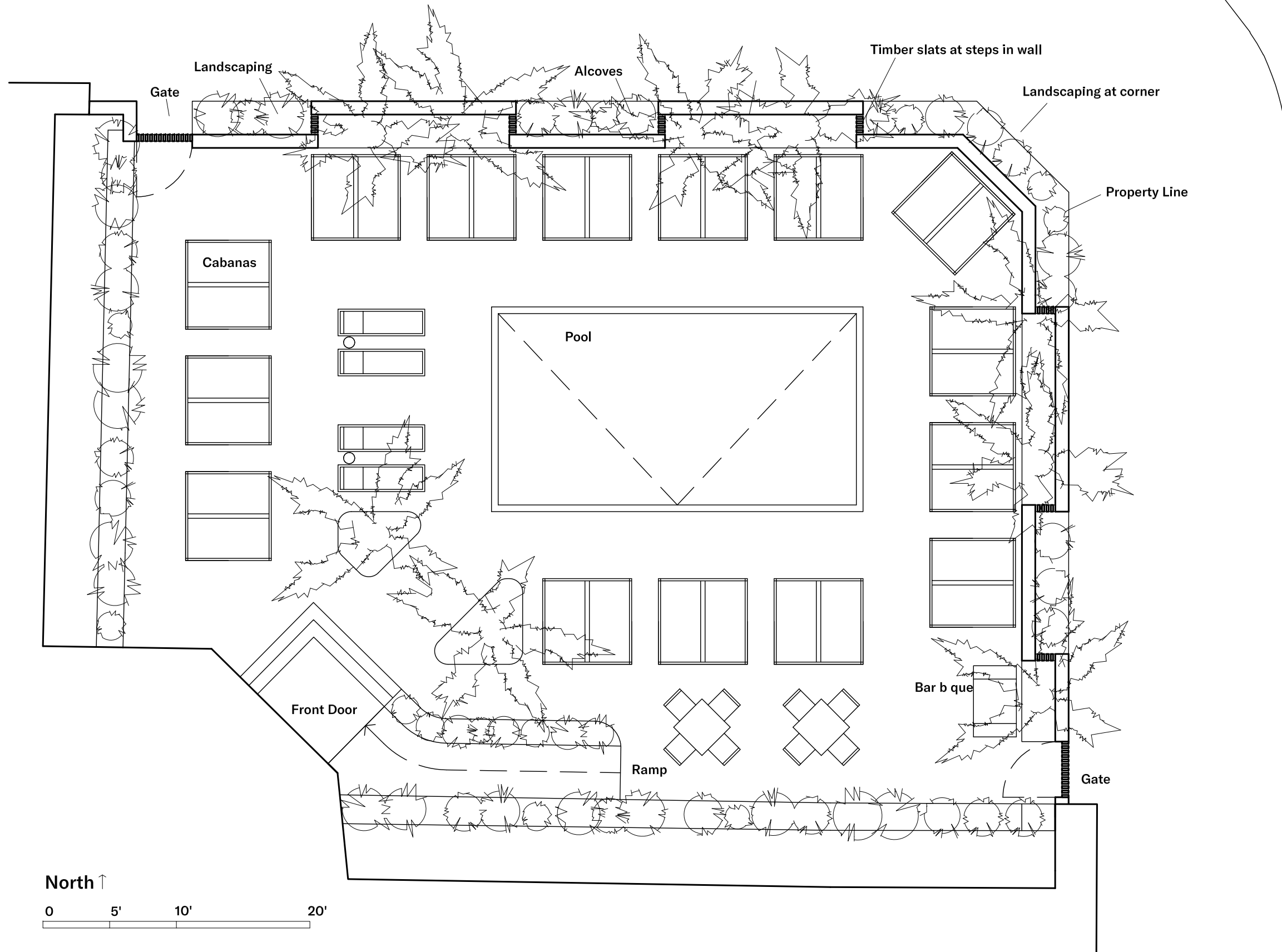
It is proposed to repaint the building as part of the refurbishment works and a possible white solution is shown on the image on the following page.

The images, a site plan, and wall section on the following pages is an illustrative idea of how this design idea could look.

5.0 POOL WALL - TILES TO MATCH DOME



Stepped Wall with Colored Tiles Design



- Notes:
1. All dimensions are in imperial.
  2. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with relevant contract documents.
  3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with engineer's drawings.
  4. Do not scale from this drawing.
  5. Report any errors, contradictions and omissions.

Rev.	Description



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 E info@kapstudios.com  
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Job No.: 20/024

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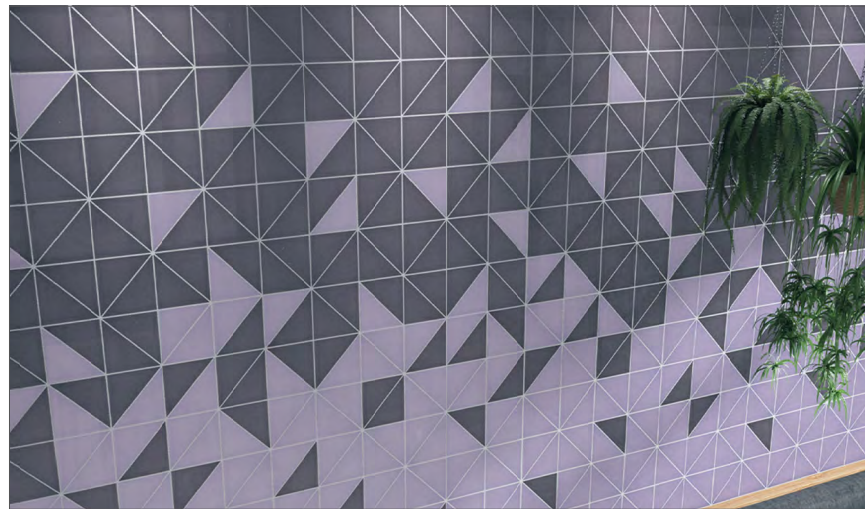
Status: Planning

Date: Mar 23 2021

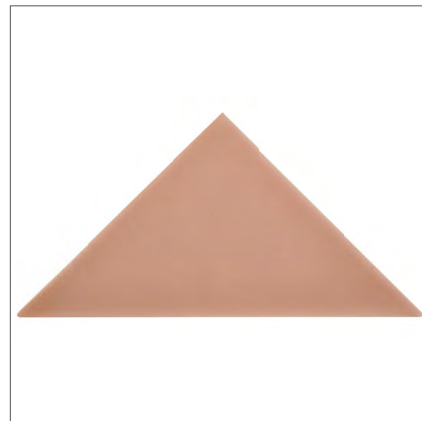
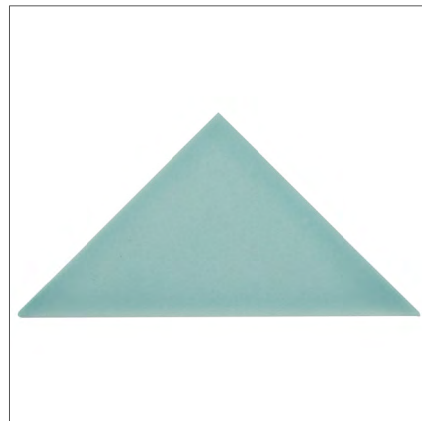
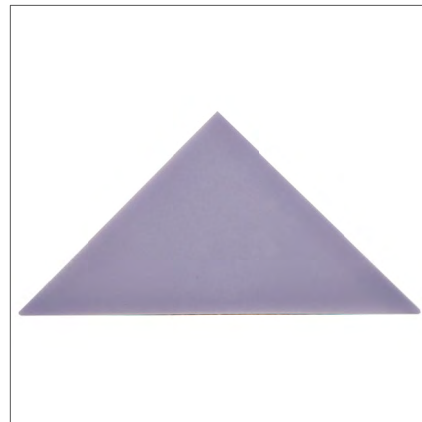
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Project Name: Plaza Las Flores

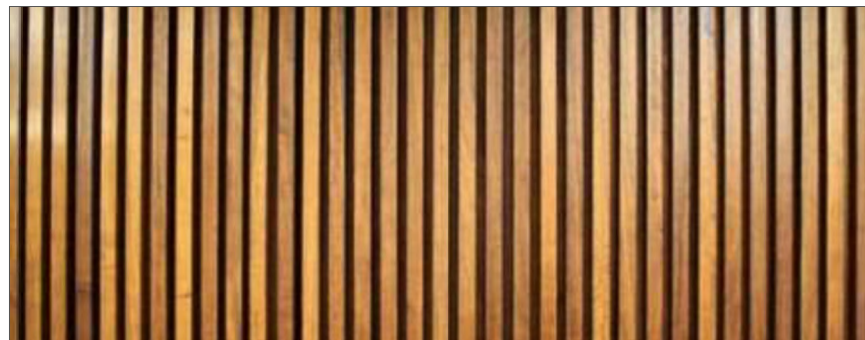
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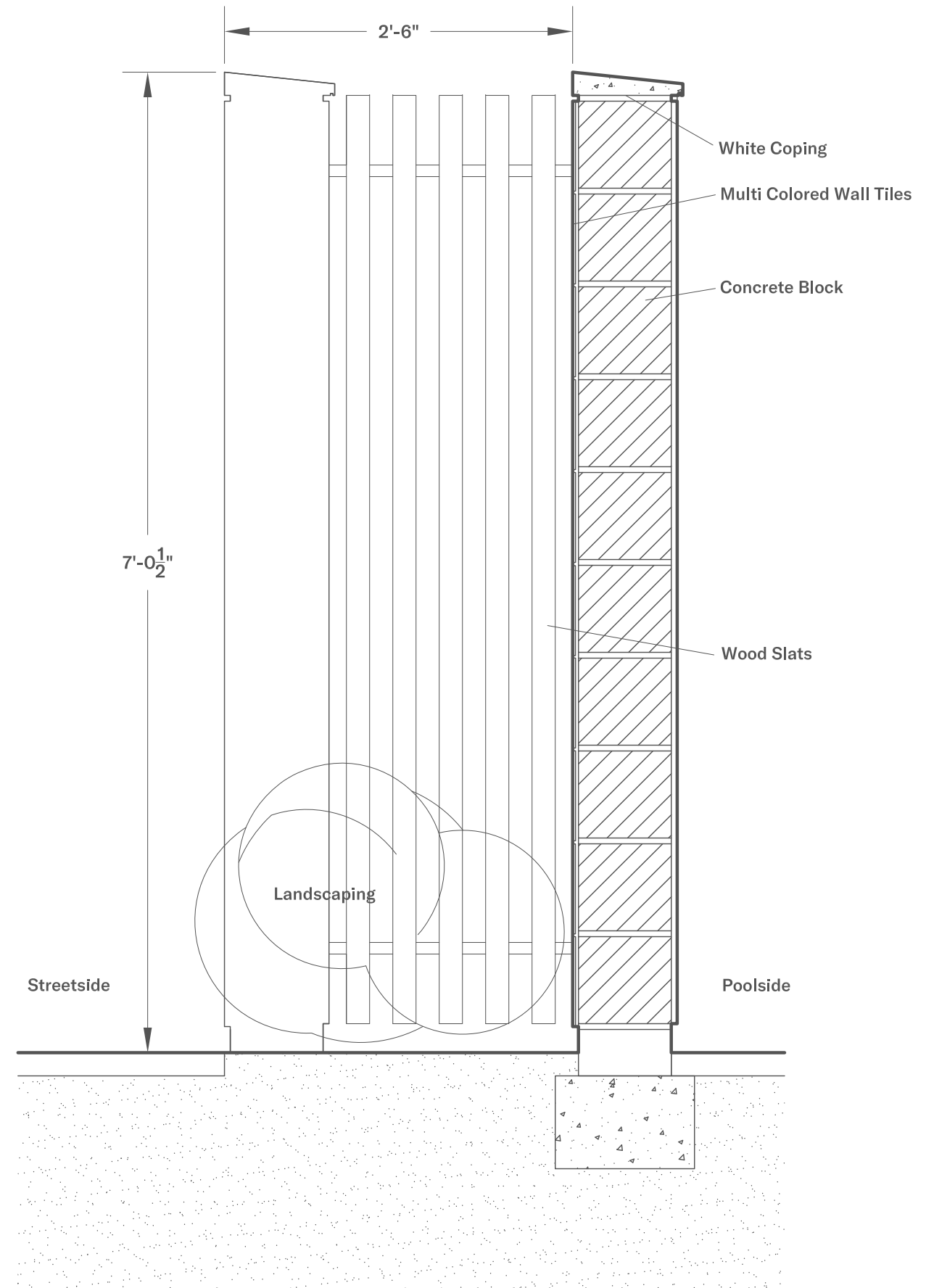
Colored Wall Tiles



Colored Wall Tiles



Wood Slat Screen



Stepped, Multi Colored Tiled Wall

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Job No.: 20/024

Scale: 1" = 1' @ 11 x 17

Status: Planning

Date: Mar 23 2021

Drawing Name: Planning / 105

Project Name: Plaza Las Flores

Rev:



5.0 POOL WALL - TILES TO MATCH DOME



## 5.0 POOL WALL - ROOF TILES



Using clay roof tiles as the materiality of the artwall is another design idea.

Plaza las Flores' clay roof tiles are distinctive and add a rich texture to the building's appearance.

A pattern of clay tiles not only references the building's Spanish Colonial style but also the numerous breeze block walls that are distinctive to Palm Springs architecture.

A varied texture of filled in tiles and open tiles brings a richness and lightness to the design of the artwall.

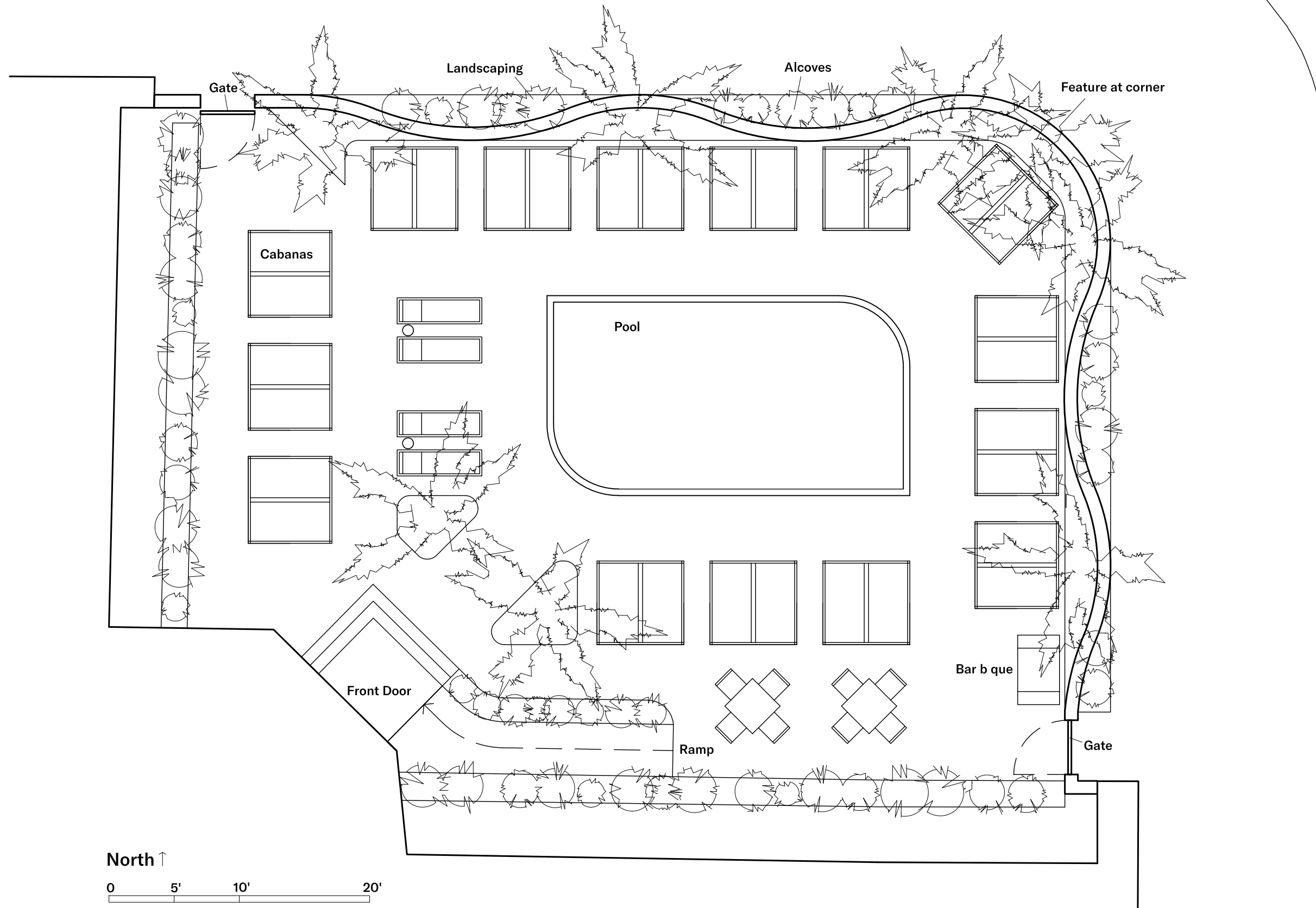
In plan the wall undulates, curving back to introduce landscaped areas on the street side of the wall. This curve also references the curved roof tiles.

Indicative images, a site plan, and wall sections follow after this page.

5.0 POOL WALL - ROOF TILES



Curved Wall with Roof Tiles Design



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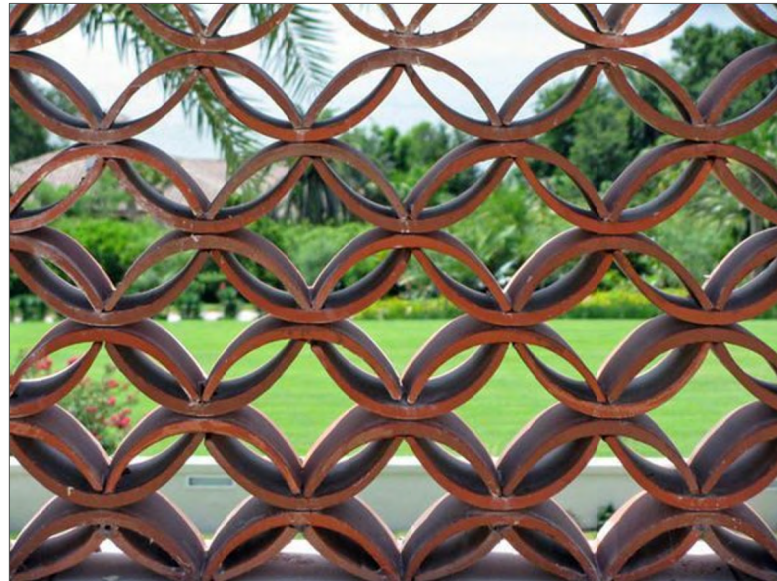
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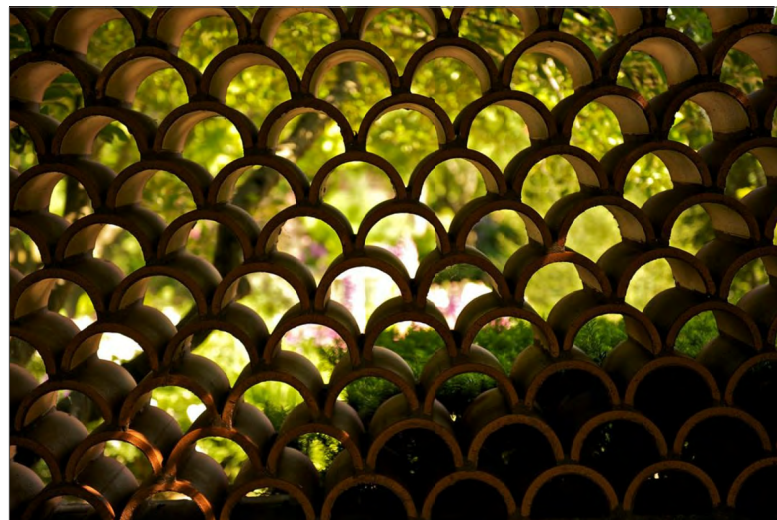
Project Name: Plaza Las Flores

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Indian Canyon Dr



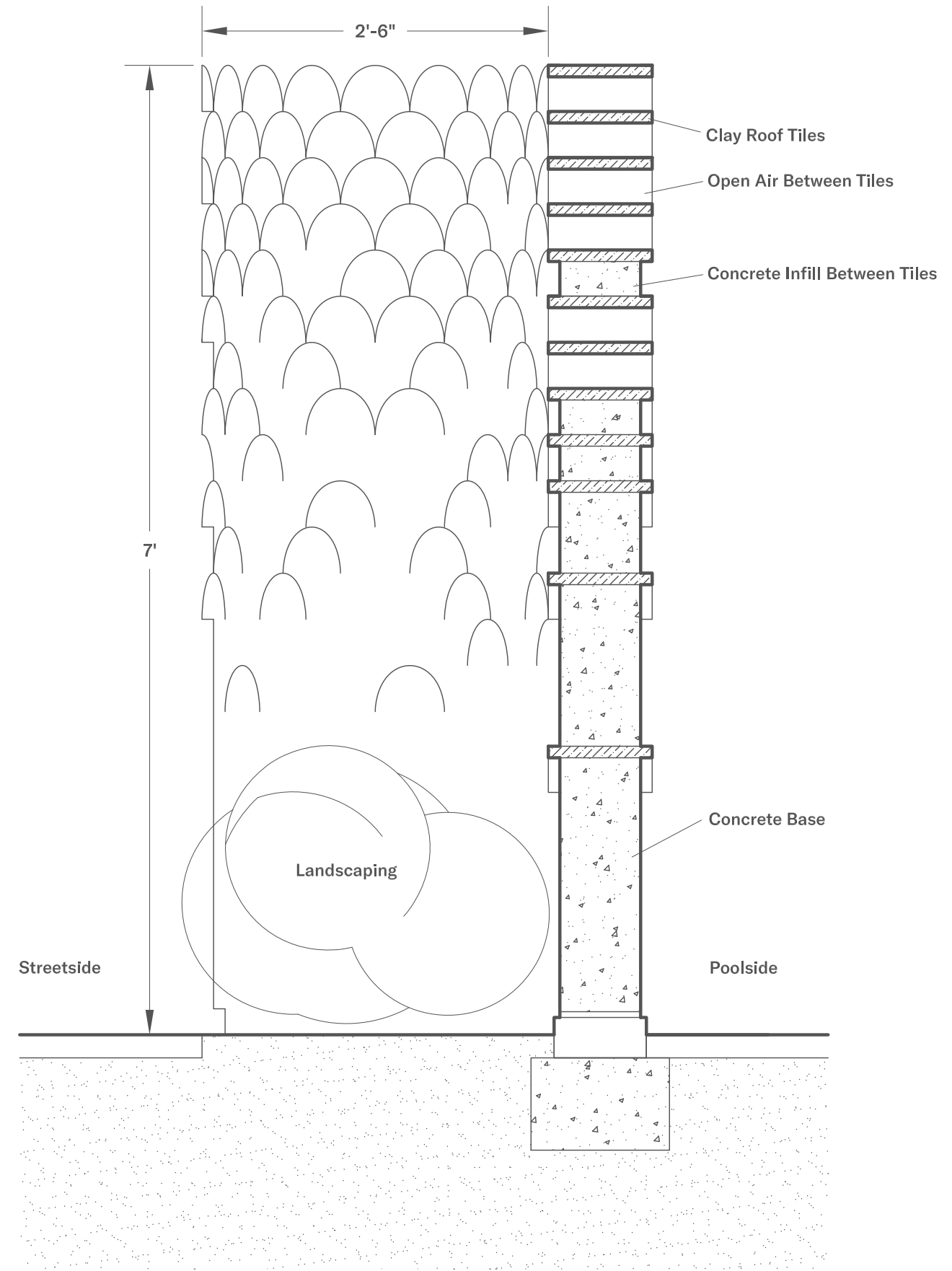
Clay Roof Tiles



Clay Roof Tiles



Concrete Base



Curved, Clay Roof Tile Section

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Date: Mar 23 2021

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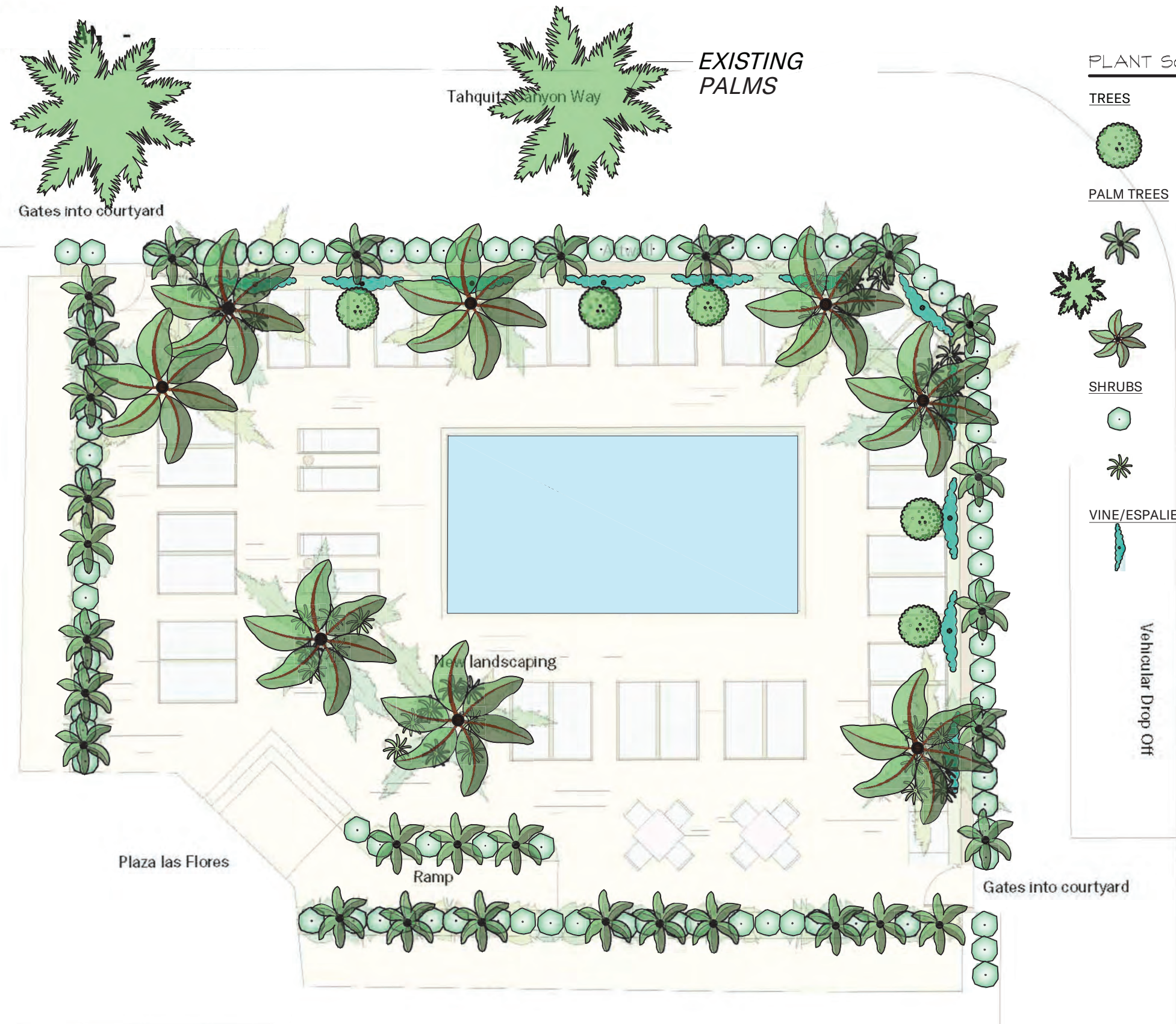
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



5.0 POOL WALL - ROOF TILES



# 5.0 LANDSCAPING



## PLANT SCHEDULE

TREES	QTY	BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME	SIZE
	5	Citrus japonica `Nagami` / Nagami Kumquat	15 gal.
PALM TREES	QTY	BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME	SIZE
	30	Phoenix roebelenii / Pigmy Date Palm Multi-Trunk	15 gal.
	4	Washingtonia filifera / California Fan Palm	Existing to remain
	8	Washingtonia hybrid / Hybrid Fan Palm	16" B.T. Skinned
SHRUBS	QTY	BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME	SIZE
	98	Carissa macrocarpa `Boxwood Beauty` / Beauty Natal	5 gal.
	37	Plum	5 gal.
		Dianella tasmanica `Silver Streak` / Flax Lily	SIZE
VINE/ESPALIER	QTY	BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME	SIZE
	11	Calliandra inaequilatera / Pink Powder Puff	15 gal. esp.

