

**PHILADELPHIA ART COMMISSION**

**AKA HOTEL AND RESIDENCES | stanev potts architects**

135 South 18th St  
Philadelphia, PA | June 19, 2024

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Philadelphia Art Commission  
1515 Arch St., 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

May 22, 2024

To the Philadelphia Art Commission:

The following pages detail signage improvements for the AKA Rittenhouse Square Hotel located at 135 S 18th Street. The proposal expands on a prior Art Commission-approved approach to new hotel signage to the building at street level on Walnut Street and 18th Street. The overall objective of this new building identification signage (the street level and parapet level signage) is to bring a stronger presence of identity to the building and to help with way-finding. We are looking at two areas with different purposes and goals - building identification signage at the parapet level, which is the primary focus of this application, and street level building identification signage, which this commission approved at its April session. However, we are gathering in this presentation both prior and new proposed building signage, as well as other tenant signage (TUMI etc) to be able to assist in clarifying what's being proposed and how it fits with existing signage.

#### EXISTING SIGNAGE

At the street level, besides the entry canopy on 18th Street half way up the block from Walnut, most signage currently pertains to tenant spaces. TUMI and Lagos are obvious examples, but its important to note that a.bar and a.kitchen are tenants as well, and their signage pertains to the specific destinations they represent. As an example, where there is a bar currently, many will recall the prior Kiel's Soap Co, which is an example of how spaces at the street level turn over from time to time or are re-branded. Thus we consider a.bar and a.kitchen in that category. There is a small plaque at the corner of Walnut Street, which could be considered redundant if the rest of the signage is approved. The same is true of an existing banner sign - this would be removed in favor of approved street level and parapet level signage. Small 'aka' lettering on the sides of the canopy at the entrance to the lobby, off of 18th street, help pedestrians find their way to the entrance once they have arrived at the building, but the signage this commission agreed was appropriate in its April session will greatly improve visibility and way-finding at the street level.

This commission approved our prior request for signage at the indicated locations below the 3rd floor windows, near the corner of 18th and Walnut, for which we are very grateful. This location requires a variance for height, because to install it any lower would interfere with architectural detailing & materials of the crenelated stone and ornate bronze window surrounds that exist at the entire surface zone of the 'by-right' zoning height for this type of sign. The proposed spot is better for historic preservation, and also feels right aesthetically, given that its located in an existing 'clean' plane of the architectural design.

Its feasible we will not succeed in getting a ZBA variance for the street level location this commission approved last month, in which case we would rely on the alternative by-right location presented in this package, at the parapet level facing West. Below we explain the logic we are asking you to consider, in order to keep our options open, yet comply with the concern that to have signs in both locations would be too much, a position with which we in fact agree. This set of approval parameters mirrors what the full Historic Commission has approved.

#### NEW SIGNAGE

The parapet level signage we present today has been approved by the PHC full commission, with the important proviso (proposed by the applicant, based on feedback from this commission and the PHC), that in order to achieve a good balance of visibility without going too far, only one substantial building identification sign would be allowed per primary elevation. This means that facing East and North, a parapet level sign would provide much needed building identification for people approaching from the east along Walnut, or from Chestnut St and beyond on 18th St, and there would be no other building ID signs on those facades. No parapet level sign has ever been proposed to face south, out of respect for the residential building immediately opposite.

We hope that you find the proposed two signs facing north and east to be non-controversial. Regarding the West-facing parapet level sign in this application, we request you approve it with the same proviso that the Philadelphia Historic Commission did - that if we do receive a variance for the West facing sign you approved last month at street level, we would only have permission to install one or the other of those signs, and not both. If we are denied both street level signs, we would put one by-right parapet sign at the E, W and N facades, 3 in total.

We look forward to discussing the project with you, and hope for your support and collaboration on moving this forward!

Thank you,



Stephan Potts, AIA  
Stanev Potts Architects



18th street and Walnut street, looking north, February 2020



18th street, looking north, February 2020



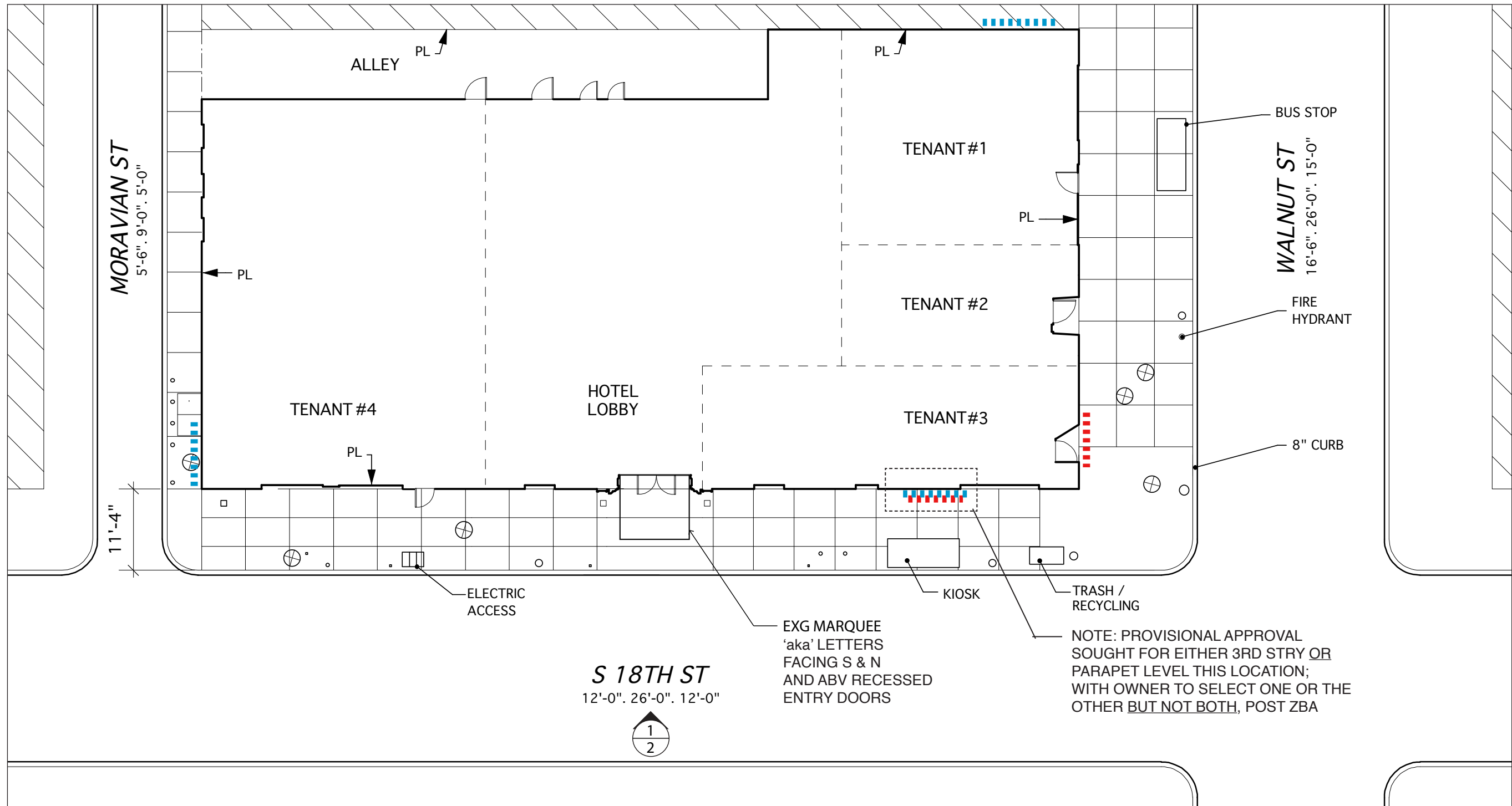
Existing 18th st entry, looking south, February 2020



Looking northeast, February 2020



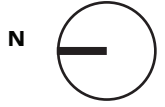
Looking northeast, February 2020



KEY

- ⊗ EXISTING MANHOLE
- EXISTING PARKING SIGN
- EXISTING LAMP POST
- EXISTING FLUSH LIGHT
- EXISTING TRAFFIC LIGHT POI F

- PROPOSED AKA SIGNAGE BELOW 3RD STORY SILL (PAC and PHC APPROVED, PENDING ZBA VARIANCE)
- PROPOSED AKA SIGNAGE AT PARAPET LEVEL (PHC APPROVED - SEEKING PAC APPROVAL WITH THIS APP)





**AKA HOTEL BUILDING SIGNAGE**  
 EXISTING AND PRIOR APPROVED PROPOSED STREET LEVEL SIGNAGE (FOR REFERENCE)

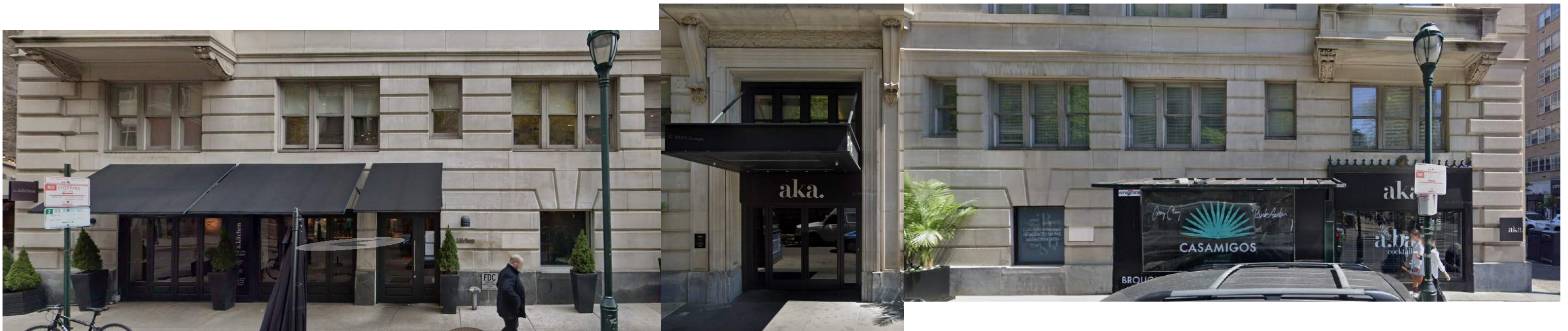
**AKA HOTEL RESIDENCES** | **stanev potts architects**  
 135 South 18th St | Not to Scale  
 Philadelphia, PA | 06 19 2024



Corner of 18th and Walnut with rendering of PAC and PHC Approved Street Signs



Composite Street View along Walnut Street



Composit Street View along 18th

### AKA HOTEL BUILDING SIGNAGE

Street Level Building Signage - Existing and Renderings of Proposed

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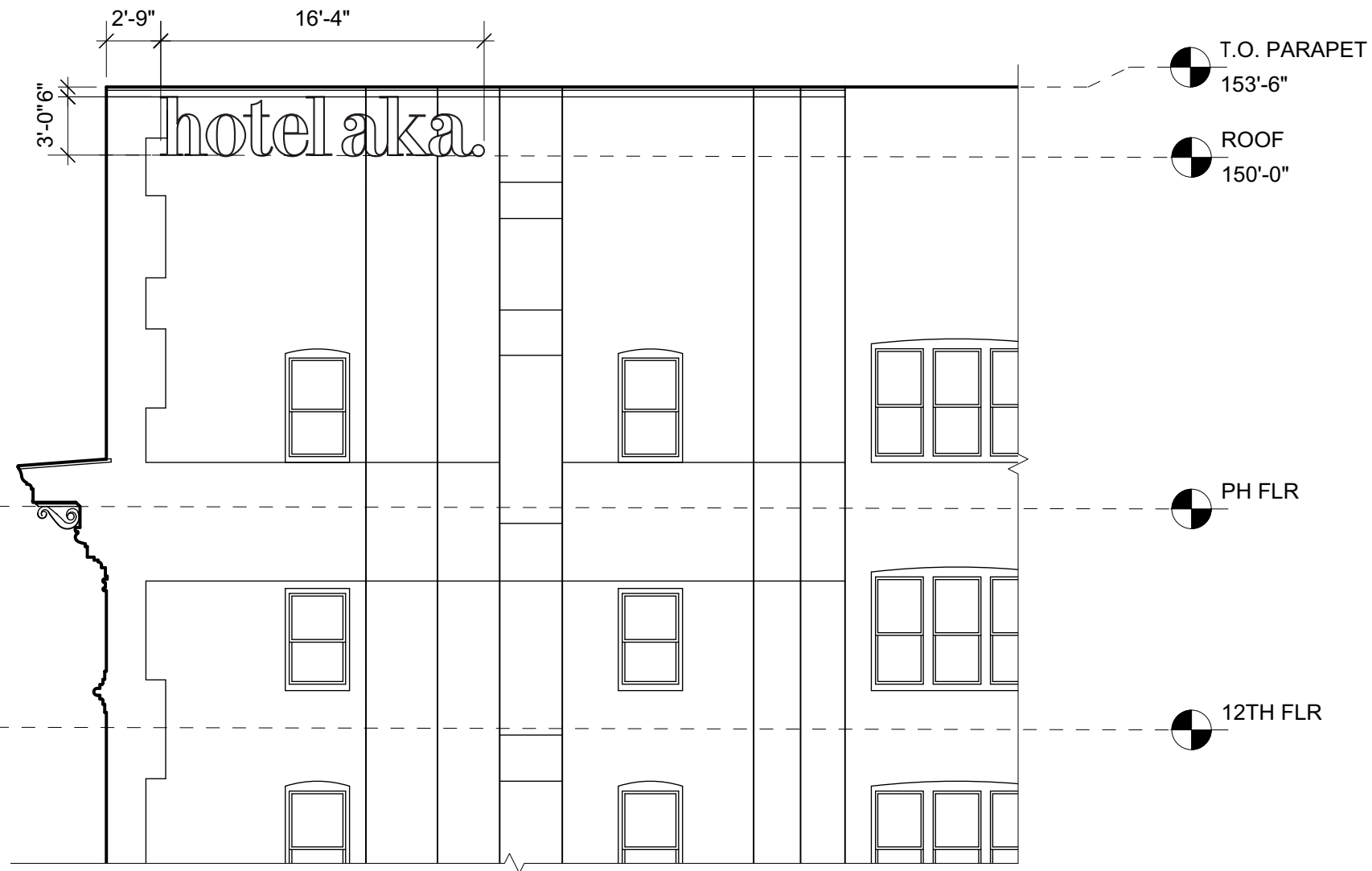
ROOFLINE SIGNAGE SHALL START AT OR ABOVE 150'  
AND NOT EXTEND ABOVE TOP OF PARAPET

LIGHTING TO COMPLY WITH APPLICABLE CODES:  
SHALL NOT EXCEED MAX ALLOWABLE BRIGHTNESS  
NO ANIMATION, NO FLASHING

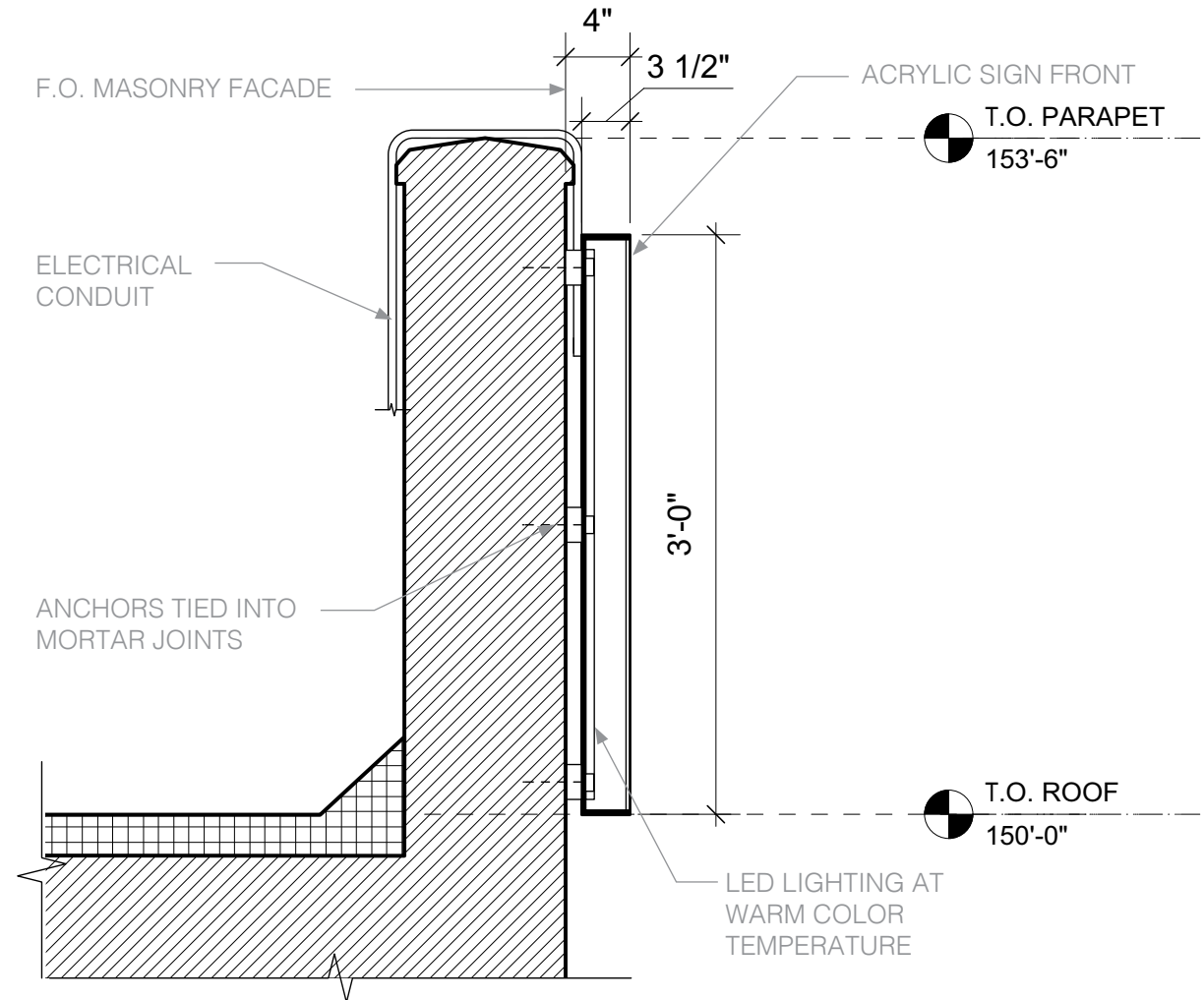
ROOFLINE SIGNAGE FABRICATION SPECS:

FACE LIT ACRYLIC LETTERS MATCH COLOR TEMP OF  
CORNICE LIGHTING (SOFT WHITE +/-3000K)

BLACK METAL HOUSING 4" DEEP MAX W/  
MOUNTING POINTS AT GROUT LINES ONLY

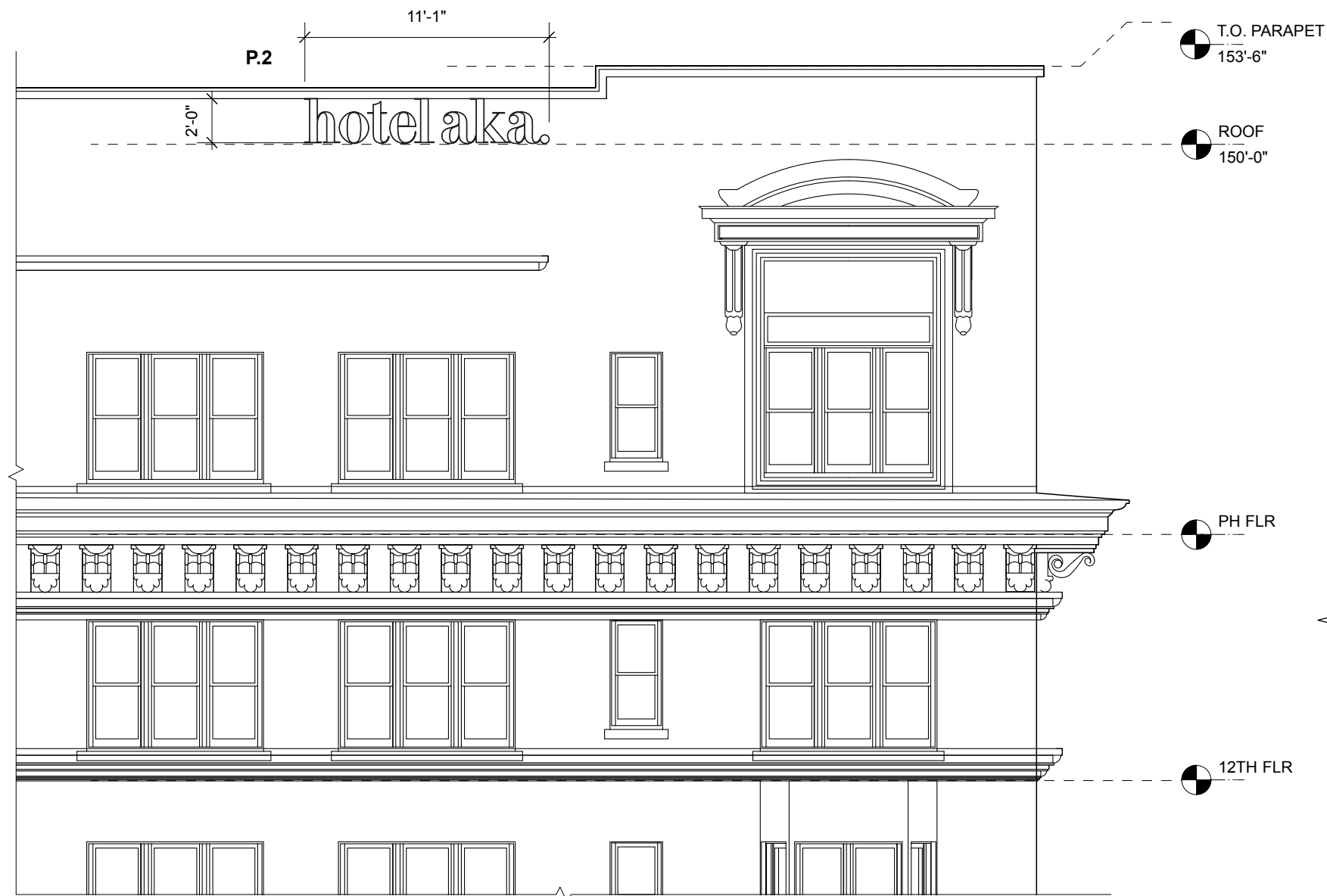


1. PARTIAL EAST ELEVATION

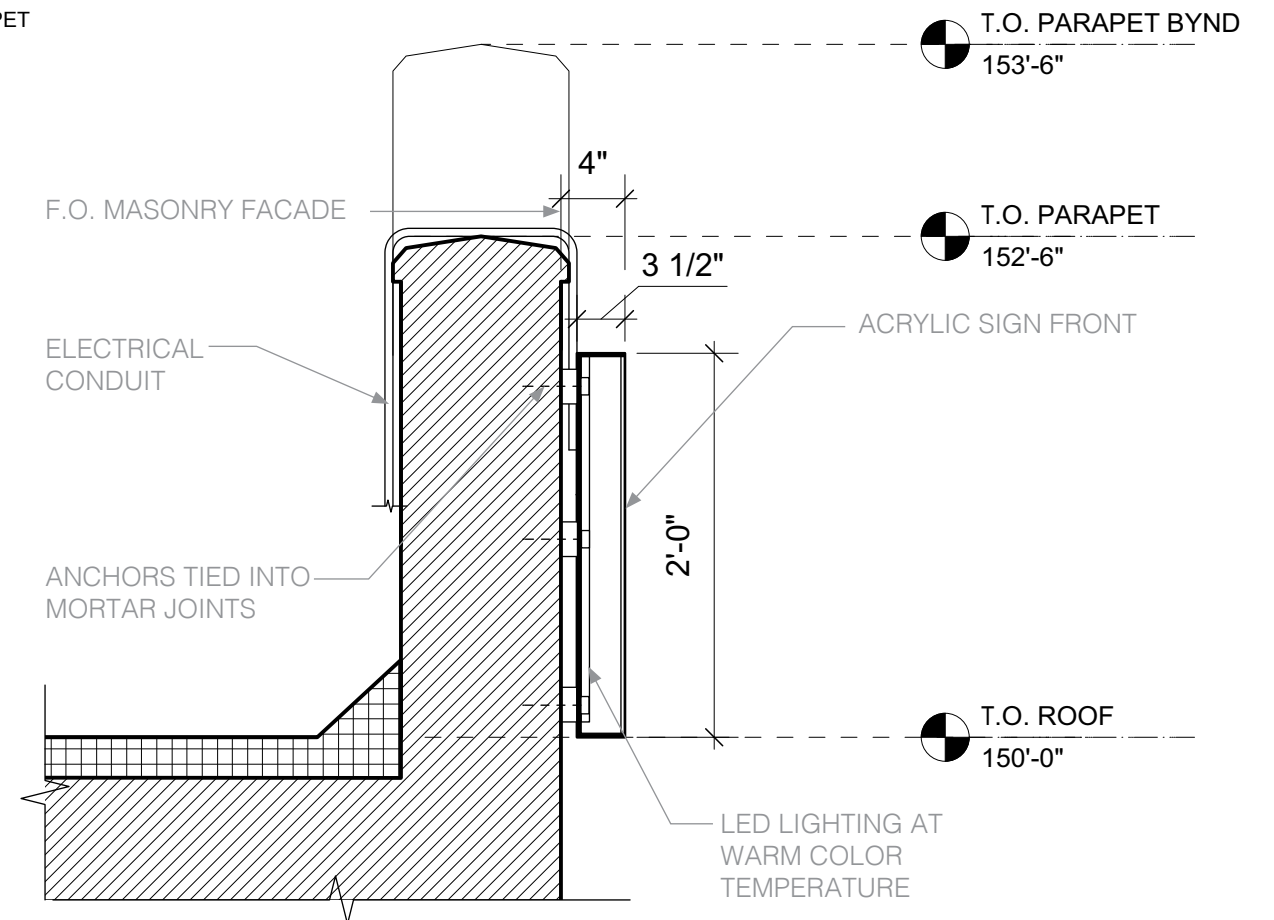


2. DETAIL @ EAST ELEVATION

SEE PAGE 5 FOR SIGNAGE FABRICATION SPECS



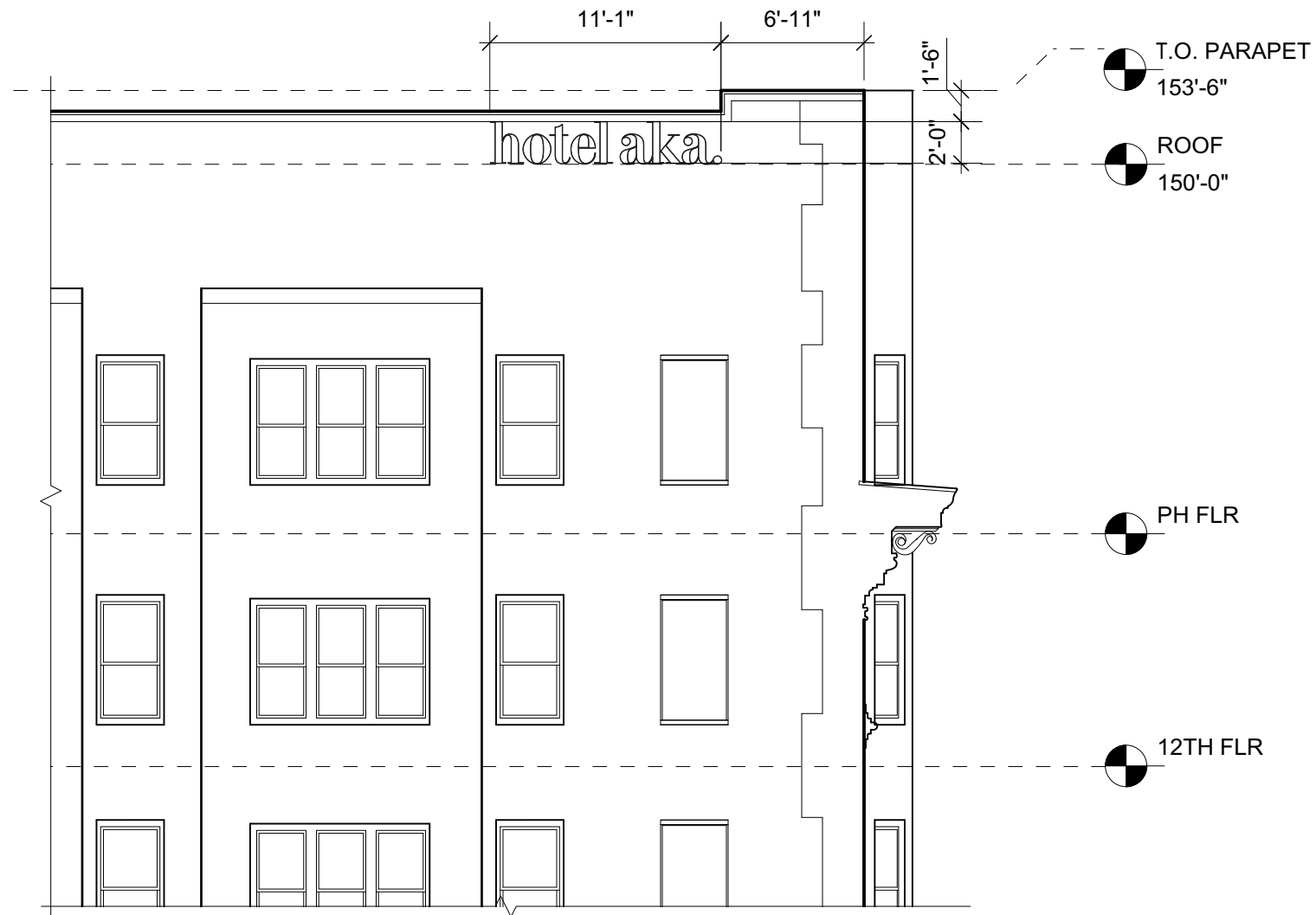
1. PARTIAL WEST ELEVATION



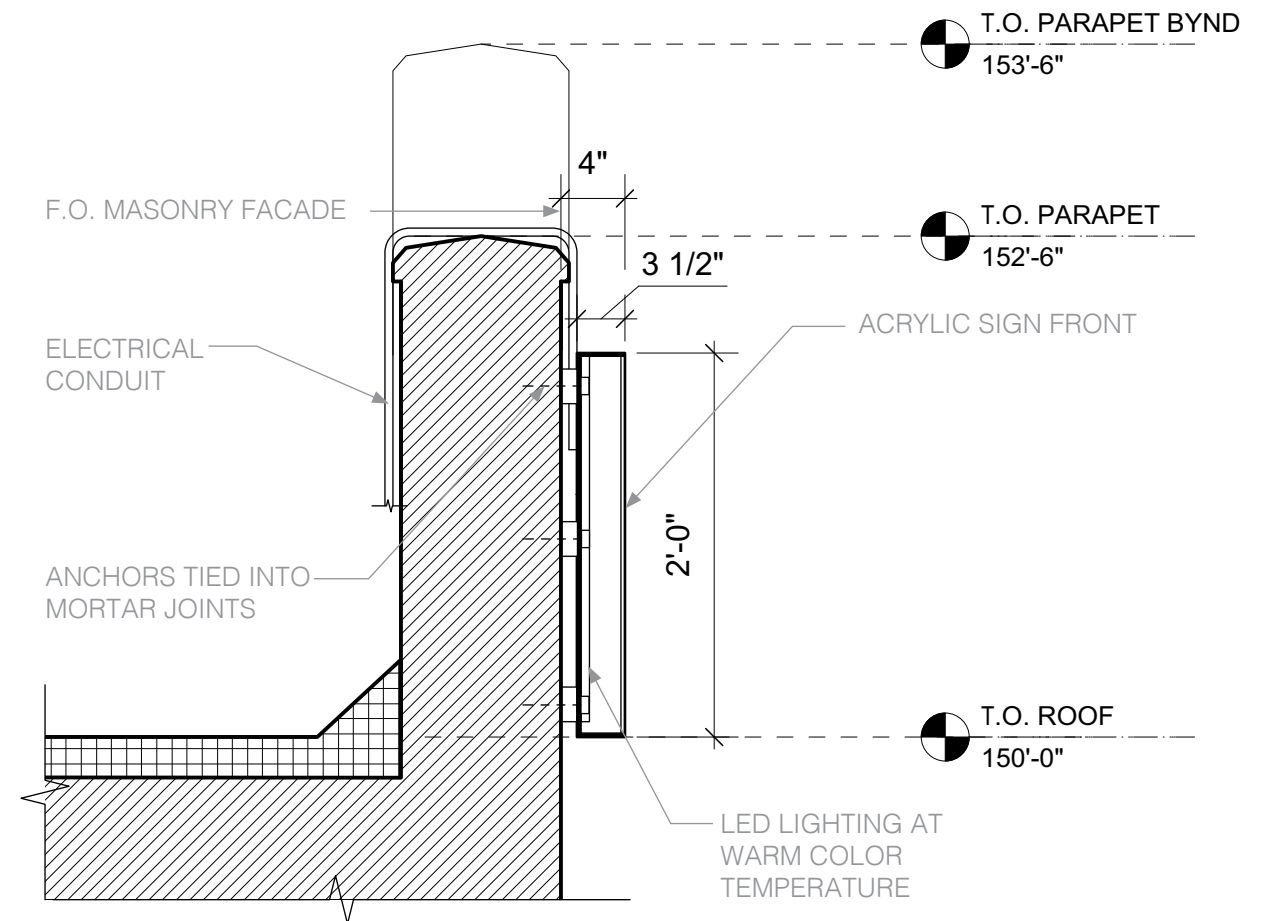
2. DETAIL @ WEST & NORTH ELEVATION



SEE PAGE 5 FOR SIGNAGE FABRICATION SPECS



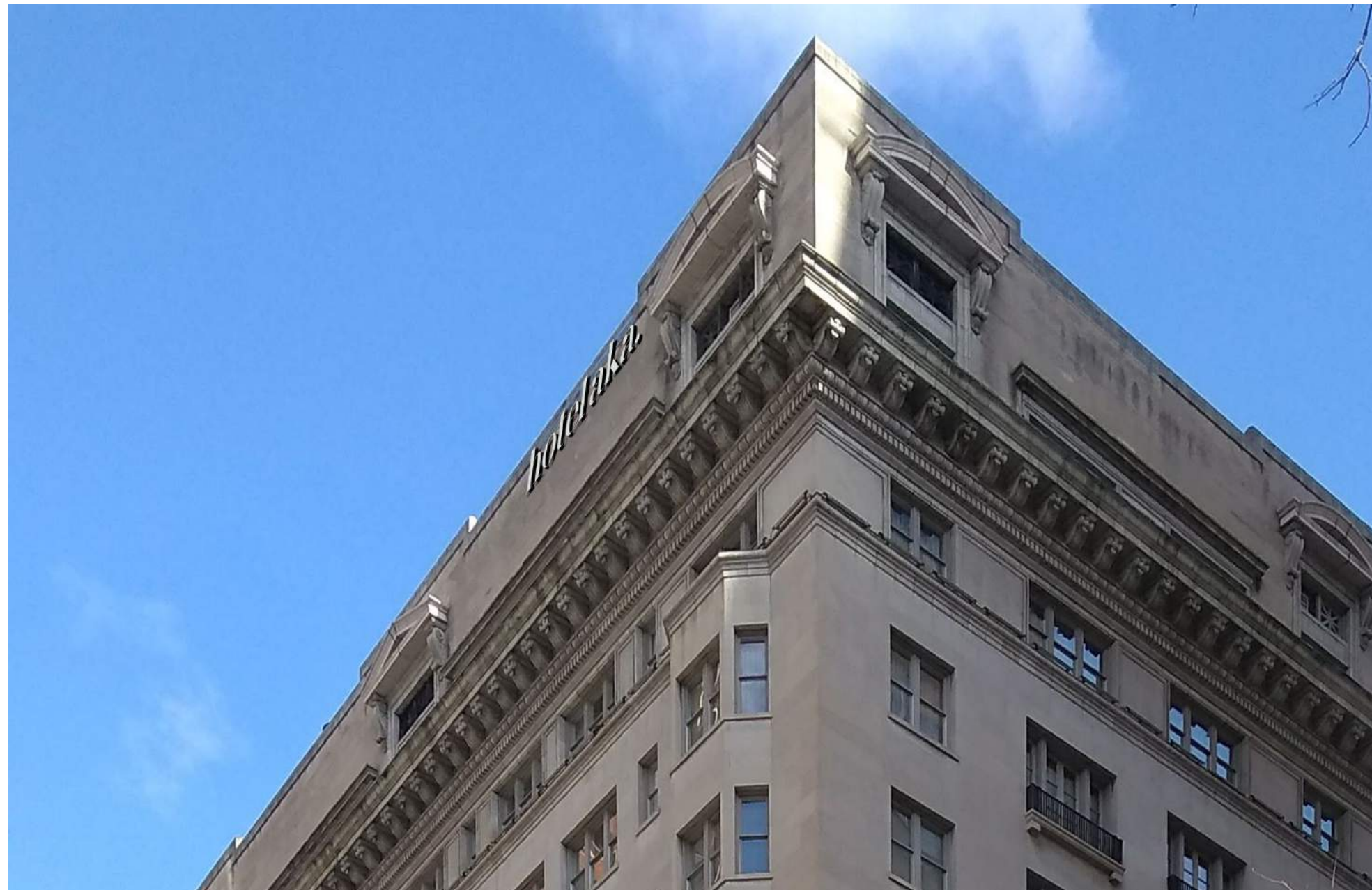
1. PARTIAL NORTH ELEVATION



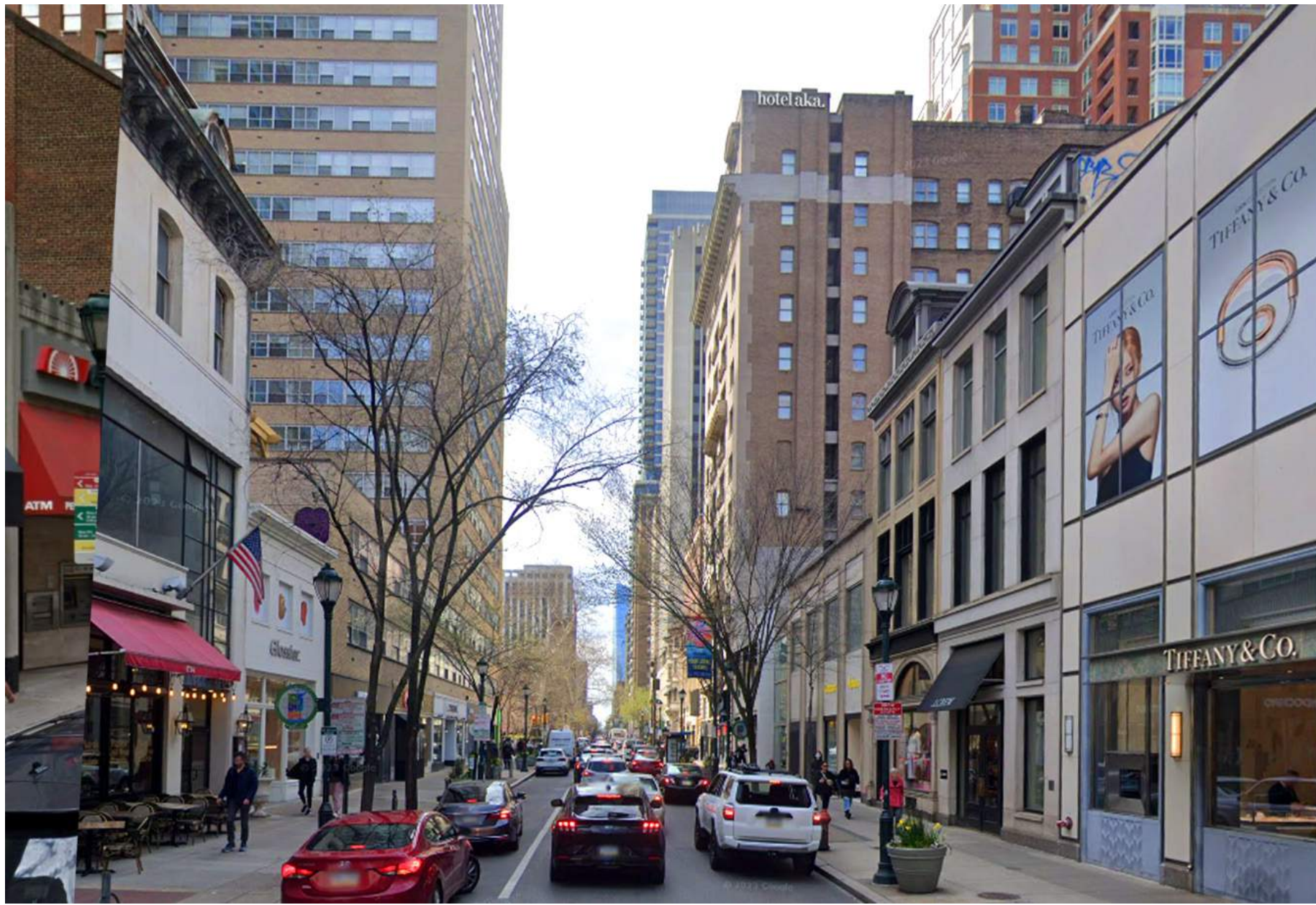
2. DETAIL @ WEST & NORTH ELEVATION



Rittenhouse Square View



Close Up View



Westbound Walnut Street View



Close Up View



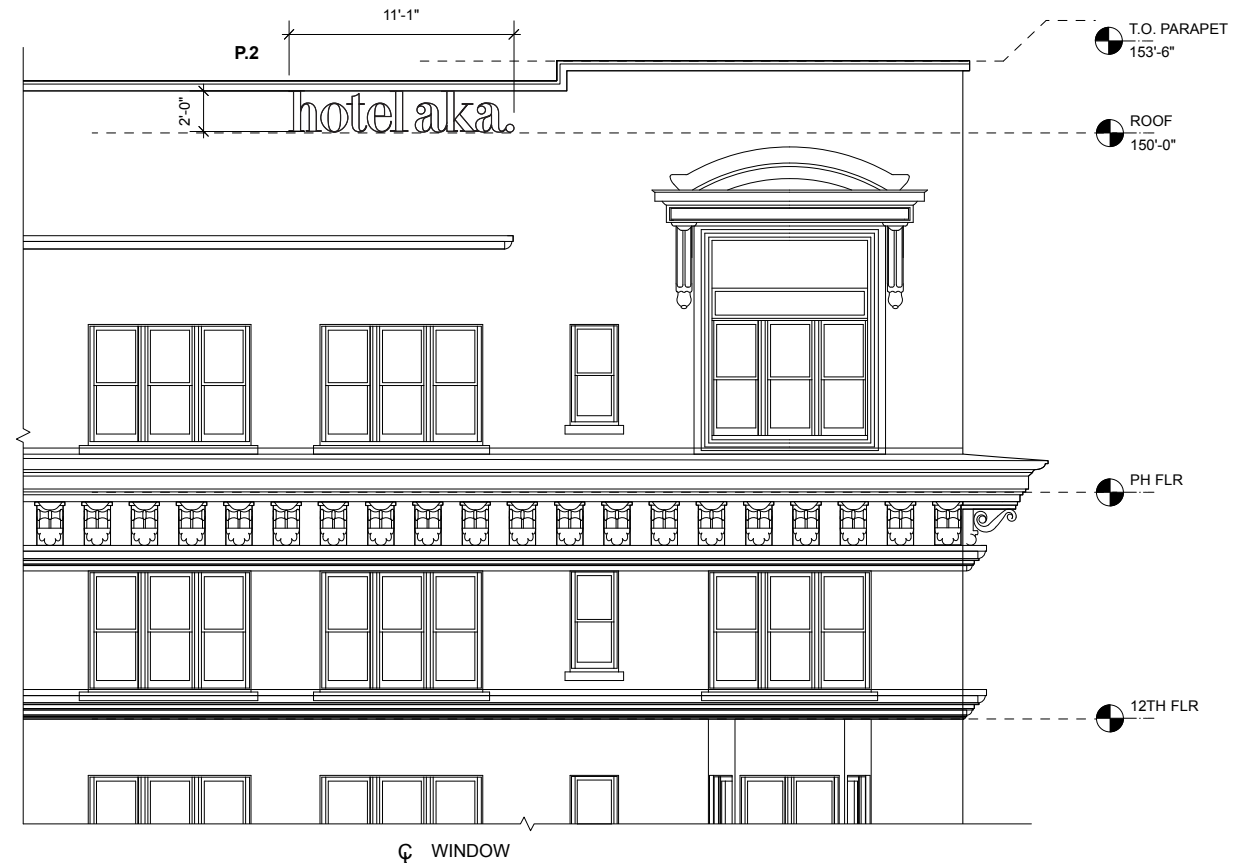
18th Street View Looking South



Close Up View

S 18TH STREET		EXISTING SIGNS								PROPOSED SIGNS				
		RETAIL			BUILDING ID					BUILDING ID				
TAG	LABEL	WIDTH	HT	AREA (SF)	TAG	LABEL	WIDTH	HEIGHT	AREA (SF)	TAG	LABEL	WIDTH	HT	AREA (SF)
R.1	"a.kitchen"	1'6"	1'6"	2.25	B.1	"aka"	10 3/4"	1'2"	1	P.2	"hotel aka"	11'1"	2'0"	22 [EXEMPT]
R.2	"a.kitchen"	10 1/4"	4'7"	4	B.2	"aka" (can)	2'10 1/2"	1'3"	3.6	or				
R.3	"a.kitchen"	1'9"	1'3"	2.2	B.3	"aka" (can)	2'10 1/2"	1'3"	3.6	P.1	"hotel aka"	8'10"	1'8"	15
R.4	"a.bar"	4'3 1/2"	3'7"	17.5	B.4	"aka"	3'6 1/2"	1'5 1/2"	5.1					
					B.5	"aka"	2'0"	2'9 3/4"	5.6					
					B.6	"luxury..."	3'11"	4'5 1/2"	17.5					
					B.7	"aka"	3'6"	1'5 1/2"	5.1					
					B.8	"aka"	2'0"	2'0"	4					
<b>TOTAL 18TH ST SF</b>				<b>25.95</b>					<b>45.5</b>	<b>0 OR 15</b>				

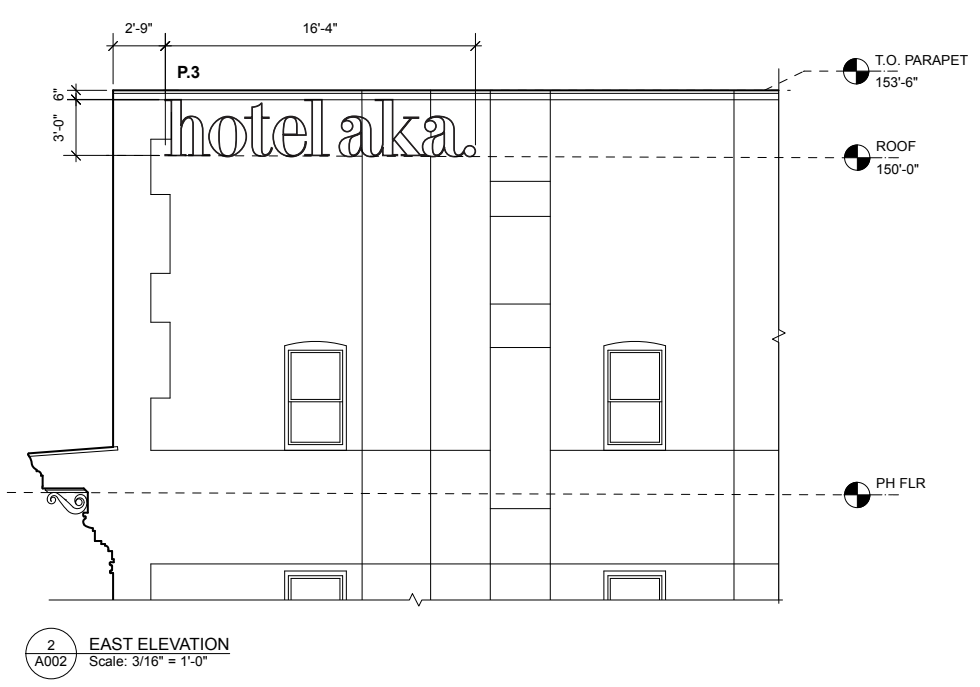
WALNUT STREET (S)		EXISTING SIGNS								PROPOSED SIGNS				
		RETAIL			BUILDING ID					BUILDING ID				
TAG	LABEL	WIDTH	HEIGHT	AREA (SF)	TAG	LABEL	WIDTH	HEIGHT	AREA (SF)	TAG	LABEL	WIDTH	HT	AREA (SF)
R.5	"a.bar"	1'5"	6"	0.7	B.9	"aka"	2'0"	2'0"	4	P.1	"hotel aka"	8'10"	1'8"	15
R.6	"a.bar"	1'4"	3'10"	5.1	B.10	"aka"	3'6 1/2"	1'5 1/2"	5					
R.7	"a.bar"	2'1 1/2"	1'0"	2					9					
R.8	LAGOS FOR MEN	1'0"	3 3/4"	0.3	<b>BANNER (TO BE REMOVED)</b>									
R.9	LAGOS	4'5"	8 1/2"	3	BN.1	"aka"	3'0"	9'0"	27					
R.10	LAGOS FOR MEN	1'0"	3 3/4"	0.3										
R.11	TUMI	3'2"	10 1/2"	2.7										
R.12	TUMI	3'2"	10 1/2"	2.7										
<b>SUBTOT WALNUT</b>				<b>16.8</b>					<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>				
<b>MORAVIAN ST (N)</b>														
R.13	"a.kitchen"	10'10"	7'5"	38						P.2	"hotel aka"	11'1"	2'0"	22 [EXEMPT]
<b>SUBTOT MORAVIAN</b>				<b>38</b>						<b>22 [EXEMPT]</b>				
<b>EAST ELEVATION</b>														
										P.3	"hotel aka"	16'4"	3'0"	49
<b>SUBTOT EAST</b>										<b>49 [EXEMPT]</b>				



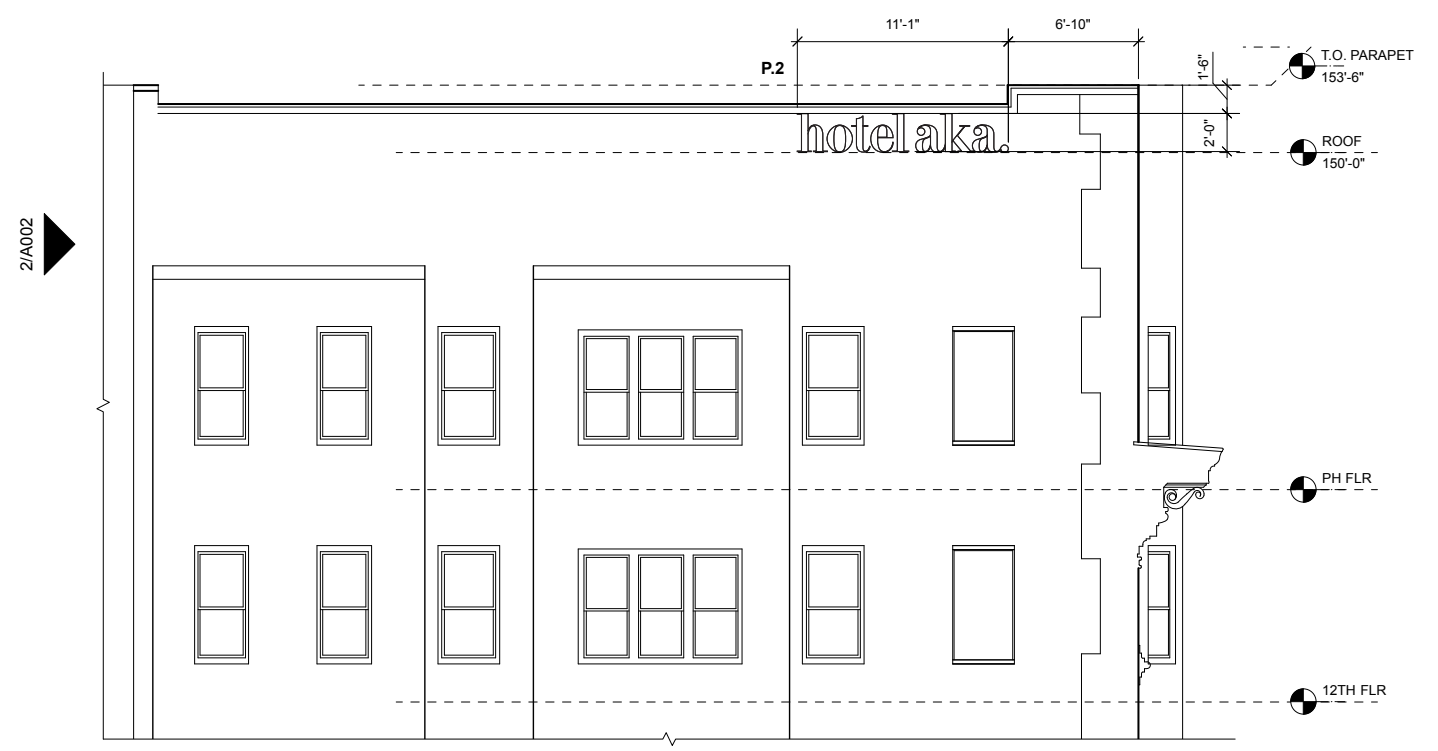
1 18TH STREET ELEVATION  
A001 Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

B.2 & B.3 EXSTG 'AKA' SIGN @ N & S  
FACES OF CANOPY  
5 SF EACH

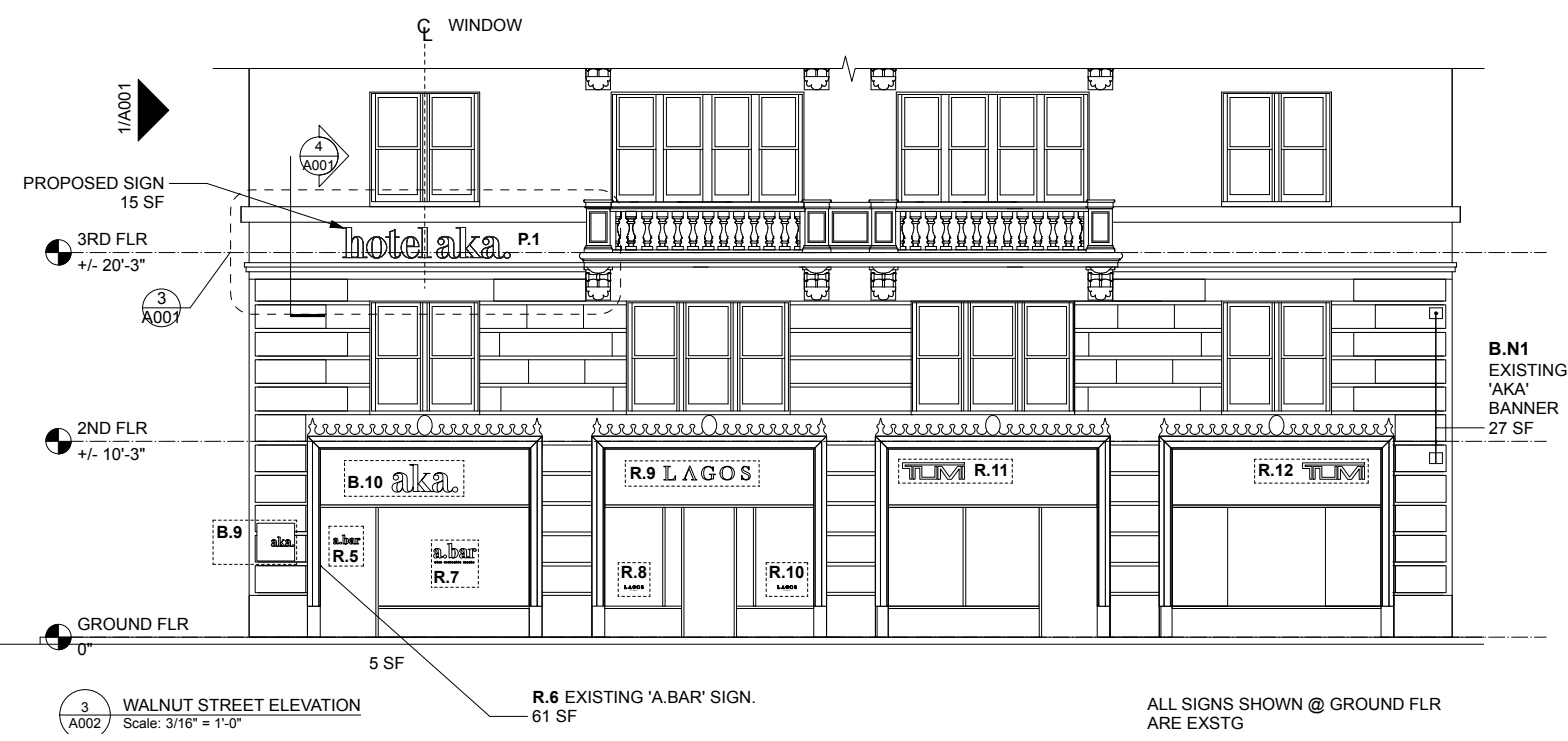
ALL SIGNS SHOWN @ GROUND FLR  
ARE EXSTG



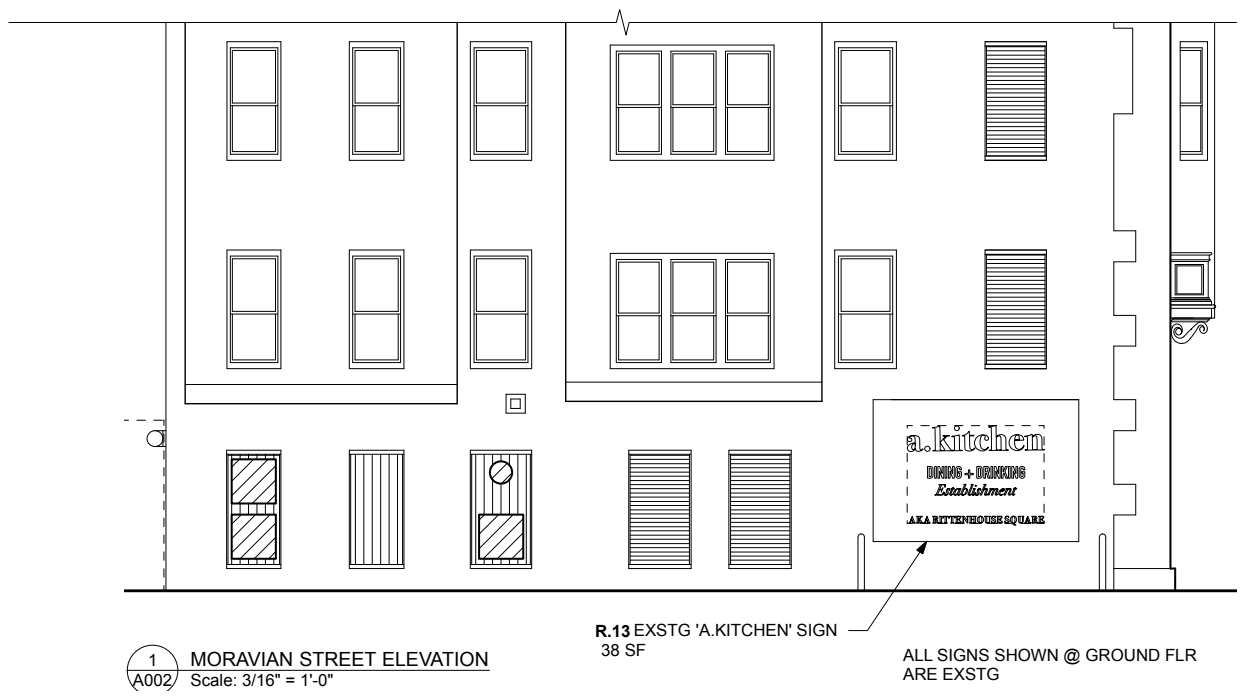
2 EAST ELEVATION  
A002 Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"



1 MORAVIAN STREET ELEVATION  
A002 Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"



3 WALNUT STREET ELEVATION  
A002 Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"



R.13 EXSTG 'A.KITCHEN' SIGN 38 SF  
ALL SIGNS SHOWN @ GROUND FLR ARE EXSTG



R.1  
2.25 SF



R.2  
4 SF



R.3  
2.2 SF



R.4  
15.3 SF



R.5  
0.7 SF



R.6  
5.1 SF



R.7  
2 SF



R.8  
0.3 SF



R.9  
3 SF



R.10  
0.3 SF



R.11  
2.7 SF



R.12  
2.7 SF

**BUILDING**



R.13  
69.5 SF



B.1  
1 SF



B.2  
3.6 SF



B.3  
3.6 SF



B.4  
5.1 SF



B.5  
5.6 SF



B.6  
17.5 SF



B.7  
5.1 SF



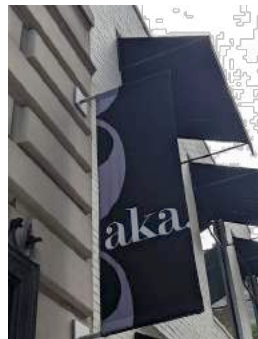
B.8  
4 SF



B.9  
4 SF



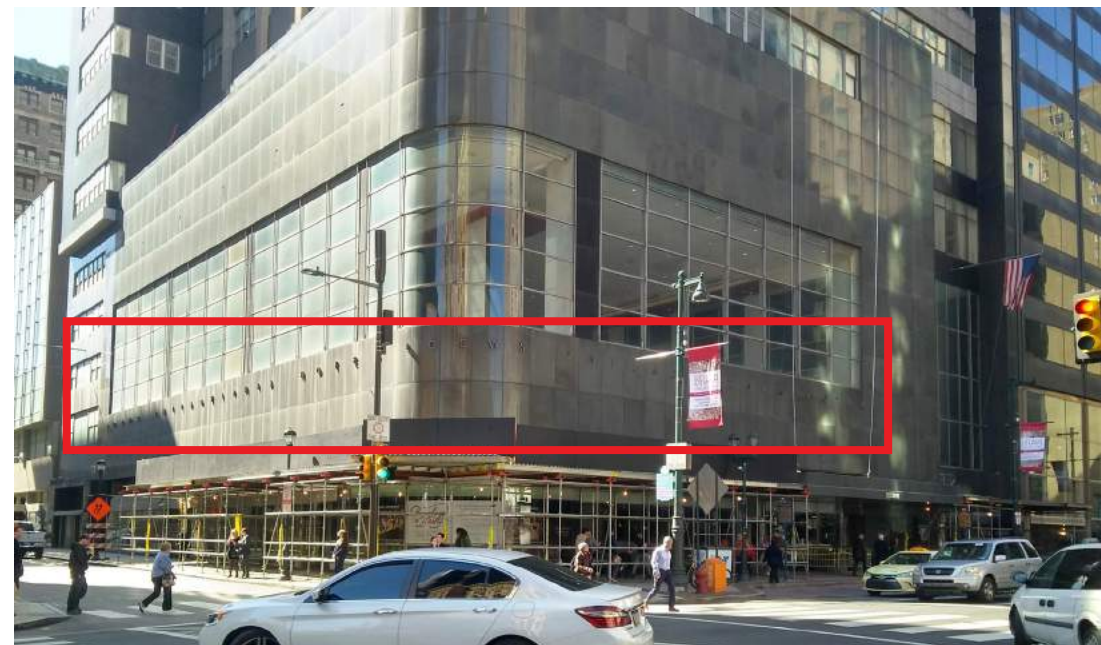
B.10  
5 SF



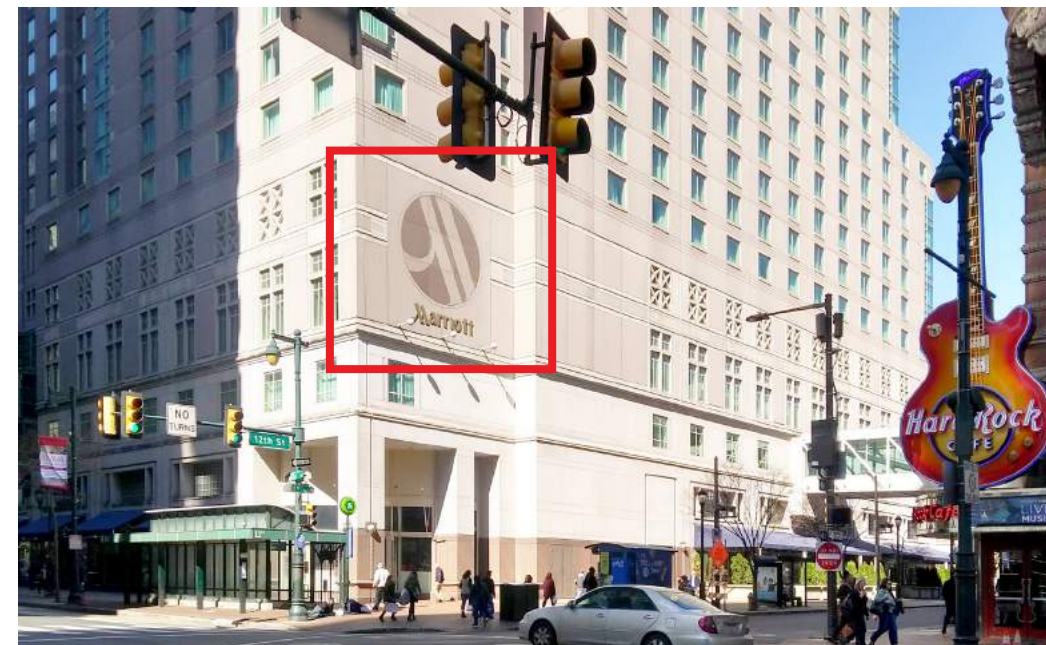
BN.1  
27 SF



Sofitel Hotel - 17th and Sansom Street (Foreground)  
W Hotel - 15th and Chestnut Street (Background)



Lowes Hotel - 12th and Market Street



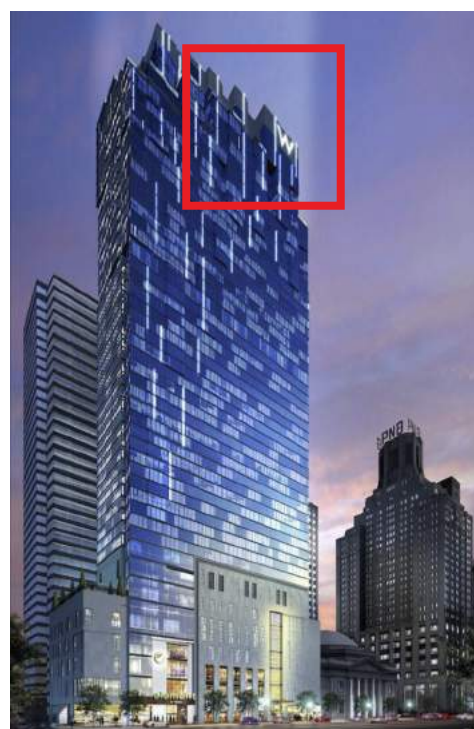
Marriott Hotel - 12th and Market Street



Marriott Hotel - 12th and Filbert Street



The Notary Hotel - 13th and Filbert Street



W Hotel - 15th and Chestnut Street



Embassy Suites - 18th and Benjamin Franklin Parkway





Aldine Hotel - 19th and Chestnut Street -1890s -1920s



Hotel - 17th and Walnut Street - Photo Date:1928



Hotel - 1200 Block of Locust Street - Photo Date: 1960



Hotel - 1200 Block of Sansom Street - Photo Date: 1959



Aldine Hotel - Photo Date: 1920s



Hotel - Between 1200 Block of Walnut Street - Photo Date: 1931



Hotel York - 1215 Walnut Street -Photo Date: 1921