

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

DENNY'S RESTAURANT (503 W. Mission Ave.)

- Location:** 503 W. Mission Ave., Escondido, San Diego County, California
- Present Owner/
Occupant:** 503 West Mission, LLC
- Present Use:** Vacant
- Significance:** The 503 W. Mission Ave. building was previously evaluated as eligible for local designation under California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) Criterion 3 and City of Escondido Local Register of Historic Places (City of Escondido Register) Criteria 2 and 5.¹ The building is significant under CRHR Criterion 1 and City of Escondido Register Criterion 2 for its 1962 Googie-style architecture, examples of which are not common in Escondido. The building is significant under City of Escondido Register Criterion 5 since it is over 50 years of age. The period of significance for the building is 1962, its date of construction.
- Historians:** Irem Oz, Ph.D., Architectural Historian, Jennifer R.K. Stropes, M.S., Senior Historian, and Elena C. Goralogia, B.A of BFS A Environmental Services, a Perennial Company. Photography by Bob Hill of Photo Dark Room. This report was completed on February 22, 2023.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

- 1. Date of erection:** According to the Notice of Completion, construction of the building was completed in 1962 by R.E Mauer Construction, a construction company operating in Chula Vista, San Diego, Clairemont, and National City.²
- 2. Architects:** The identity of the original architect could not be ascertained.
- 3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:** The 503 W. Mission Ave. property was originally owned by George Perkins and Anna Myrtle Timmons, Ralph and Mona E. Petreny, and James and Fotine Twedell, who were doing business as Mt.

¹ Irem Oz and Brian F. Smith, Historic Structure Assessment for 503 West Mission Avenue, Escondido, California, prepared for the City of Escondido, 2022.

² *Chula Vista Star-News*, Renovation and Extension of the Turf Club, Chula Vista, California (December 9, 1954); *San Diego Union*, Contract OKd for Center in Clairemont, San Diego, California (October 13, 1960); *National City Star-News*, Renovation and Extension of the Turf Club, National City, California (December 9, 1954).

Vernon Motels. Historic aerial photographs and archival research indicate that Mt. Vernon Inn was constructed south of 503 W. Mission Ave. between 1960-61 and was listed in city directories for the first time in 1962.³ The motel and 503 W. Mission Ave building were located within the same building block.

On April 17, 1962, ownership of the 503 West Mission Ave. property passed to Mt. Vernon Motels, Inc. before construction of the building was completed on May 31, 1962, as a Denny's Restaurant. Ownership of the property was once again transferred to Ralph and Mona Petreny and James and Fotine Tweddell as equal shareholder, on June 4, 1962, and to Aircraft Mobilehomes, Inc. on the same day.

George and Anne Timmons were born in 1907 and 1906, respectively, in Kansas.⁴ They married and moved to California between 1915-30 and resided in Long Beach.⁵ The Long Beach City Directory indicates that George Timmons worked as a driver in 1940, a shipyard worker in 1942, and a painting contractor in 1951 before starting his own business, Timmons Painting and Engineering Company, in 1952.⁶ Records indicate that George Timmons passed away in 1978.⁷

Canadians Ralph (Rudolph) and Mona Ellen Petreny moved to Blaine, Washington, in 1952 when Ralph Petreny was 31 and Mona Petreny was 28. Ralph Petreny's naturalization record indicates that they lived in Long Beach in 1952.⁸

Canadians James and Fotine Tweddell also moved to Blaine, Washington, in 1952, when both were 32. That same year, they resided in Garden Grove, California.⁹ James Tweddell's border crossing document indicates that he worked as a glass cutter before he moved to the United States¹⁰ and the 1954 directory shows that he continued to work at the Grove Glass Company.¹¹ James Tweddell passed away in 1985 and Fotine Malinos (after her divorce from Tweddell) passed away in 1993.¹²

Aircraft Mobilehomes, Inc. was established in 1946 in Hartford, Connecticut, by Vernon Titcomb, Sr. and his sons, Vernon Titcomb, Jr. and Ellwood Titcomb.¹³ "The family operated an FBO [fixed-base operators] the Brainard Field [Airport] in East Hartford, Connecticut. At the same time the family was operating a war-time trailer

³ Ancestry.com, *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* (database online), Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁴ Ancestry.com, *1930 United States Federal Census* (database online), Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2002.

⁵ Ancestry.com, *1940 United States Federal Census* (database online), Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

⁶ Ancestry.com, *1930*, 2002.

⁷ Ancestry.com, *California, U.S., Death Index, 1940-1997* (database online), Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2000.

⁸ Ancestry.com, *U.S., Naturalization Records, 1840-1957* (database online), Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

⁹ Ancestry.com, *Naturalization*, 2010.

¹⁰ Ancestry.com, *U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895-1960* (database online), Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

¹¹ Ancestry.com, *Directories*, 2011.

¹² Ancestry.com, *U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014* (database online), Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

¹³ *Times-Advocate*, Mount Vernon Motel Built by Father and Sons, Escondido, California (October 7, 1963).

camp for factory workers at Pratt & Whitney.”¹⁴ The trailer park was initially named Aircraft Trailer Park, Inc. and changed to Aircraft Mobilehomes, Inc. in the 1960s, Amicorp, Inc. in the 1980s, and finally Amicorp Enterprises, Inc. in 2003.¹⁵ In 1962, they expanded operations by purchasing the land where Mt. Vernon Inn and the Denny's Restaurant (at 503 W. Mission Ave.) were located and they built Mount Vernon Apartments, a luxury living apartment complex, on the lot south of the motel and restaurant.¹⁶ The apartment complex is still extant and operates under the name “Quince Park Apartment.”

Ellwood, Vernon Jr., and Vernon Sr. Titcomb were all licensed pilots.¹⁷ Vernon, Jr. and his wife Jean died in a plane crash when their twin-engine plane crashed in New Hampshire. Titcomb, Jr. served in the United States Air Corps during World War II as a flight instructor and worked for Eastern Air Lines in Florida before moving to California. Before his death, he served as director of the Escondido Chamber of Commerce for three years and he was a member of the Ambassadors Club for five years. He was also the director of the North County Bank of Escondido. He and his wife were active members of the First Baptist Church in Encinitas.¹⁸ Vernon Titcomb, Sr. passed away in 1977.¹⁹ In 1967, when he was 81 years old, he solo-piloted a small plane across the United States from coast to coast.²⁰ After his father and brother passed away, Ellwood Titcomb continued with the development business until he retired and moved to Florida in 1979. After he retired, the 503 W. Mission Ave. property remained in the possession of Amicorp Enterprises, Inc. until 2004, when it was sold to Trinity Capital Investments. He passed away in 2011.²¹

While the 503 W. Mission Ave. property was owned by Americorp Enterprises, Inc., it was operated as a Denny's until 1982. In 1963, the *Times-Advocate* referred to the 503 W. Mission Ave. Denny's as one of the best coffee shops in Escondido.²² That year, the 503 W. Mission Ave. Denny's served as a meeting place for a group of Mexican lawmakers, who stopped in Escondido as a part of a three-day tour through San Diego to observe private enterprise operations, and Bob Hale, who served on the San Diego Chamber of Commerce and as president of the Balboa Mortgage Company.²³ In 1964, the 503 W. Mission Ave. Denny's was given the “Golden Cup” award by the Coffee Brewing Institute for the quality and brewing excellence of the coffee it serves.”²⁴ In 1970, another Denny's was opened at 2680 S. Escondido Blvd. in Escondido.²⁵ The 1983 city directory shows that Denny's stopped operating

¹⁴ Kent Titcomb, “Why I Choose to Fly a Twin Commander,” <https://flightlevelsonline.com/2017/winter-2017/why-i-choose-to-fly-a-twin-commander/> (May 5, 2018).

¹⁵ Kent Titcomb, Commander, 2018.

¹⁶ *Times-Advocate*, Motel, 26.

¹⁷ *Times-Advocate*, Business Reports, Escondido, California (December 16, 1965).

¹⁸ *Times-Advocate*, Escondido Businessman, Wife Dead in Plane Crash, Escondido, California (August 26, 1974).

¹⁹ *Times-Advocate*, North County Deaths, Escondido, California (May 11, 1977).

²⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, The News of the Day: Southland, Los Angeles, California (April 23, 1967).

²¹ Dignity Memorial “Obituary: Ellwood A. Titcomb,” <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/orange-city-fl/ellwood-titcomb-4924147> (December 29, 2011).

²² *Times-Advocate*, The President of Denny's chain of coffee shops ..., Escondido, California (June 1, 1963).

²³ *Times-Advocate*, Mexican Legislators Due Here, Escondido, California (August 20, 1963).

²⁴ *Times-Advocate*, Coffee Award Is Given To Denny's, Escondido, California (August 11, 1964).

²⁵ *Times-Advocate*, Restaurant chain opens new outlet, Escondido, California (July 12, 1970).

at 503 W. Mission Ave. and moved to 510 W. Mission Ave. that year. The 510 W. Mission Ave. address appears for the first time in 1982.²⁶

An article from 1982 mentions that three Greek Covina restauranteurs, Pete Tsokas, Alex Lazinos, and Pete Polytarhos, leased the 503 W. Mission Ave. Denny's building, which was remodeled between 1982 and 1983.²⁷ In 1983, the 503 W. Mission Ave. building had become a restaurant called Burger Stop Family Restaurant²⁸ and appeared on the *Times-Advocate's* best hamburger list as the second runner-up.²⁹ The name of the restaurant changed in 1983 to the Family Stop Restaurant, still run by Tsokas, Lazinos, and Polytarhos.³⁰ In 1986, it became the Escondido Café,³¹ in 1988, it became Johnny R's #2 Family Restaurant run by Johnny Raizian,³² in 1991, it became Cheers Family Restaurant,³³ and in 2001, it became El Galeón Mexican Restaurant.

4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** The construction of the building was completed in 1962 by R.E. Mauer Construction, a construction company operating in Chula Vista, San Diego, Clairemont, and National City.³⁴
5. **Original plans and construction:** Although no original plans for the building could be located, the 503 W. Mission Ave. building was designed as a Googie-style Denny's restaurant. The design is dominated by a boomerang roofline that shelters the building's northeast, southeast, and southwest façades, which are visible from the road. The building record indicates that the original roof cover was built-up; however, this was replaced by insulated metal sheets at an unknown date.
6. **Alterations and additions:** A service area enclosure was added to the southwest part of the building in 1962 after the original construction. The building record indicates that the building was remodeled in 1983, which primarily included replacing existing insulated metal panels. The building was painted blue and white and the signage on the northwest and southeast boomerang ends of the roof was added between 2008 and 2009. The building was painted white and green and the northwest and southeast signage and free-standing sign were changed between 2012 and 2014. The built-up roof cover was replaced with metal sheets at an unknown date.

B. Historical Context

The subject property is located inside the Rincón del Diablo Land Grant issued to Juan Bautista Alvarado by Mexican Governor Manuel Micheltorena in 1843. Alvarado was a prominent figure in Los Angeles and San Diego, holding office as a councilman in both cities

²⁶ *Times-Advocate*, Denny's Contest Advertisement, Escondido, California (November 18, 1982).

²⁷ *Times-Advocate*, Family restaurant due in old Denny's building, Escondido, California (November 22, 1982).

²⁸ *Times-Advocate*, Fictitious Business Name Statement, File No. 83-11233, Escondido, California (June 26, 1983).

²⁹ *Times-Advocate*, Second runner-up, Escondido, California (May 29, 1983).

³⁰ *Times-Advocate*, Fictitious, 22.0

³¹ *Times-Advocate*, Escondido Café Advertisement, Escondido, California (December 21, 1986).

³² Karen Mock, Table Talk, *Times-Advocate*, Escondido, California (September 1, 1988).

³³ Ancestry.com, *Directories*, 2011; *Times-Advocate*, Cheers Contest, Escondido, California (May 21, 1993).

³⁴ *Chula Vista Star-News*, Renovation, 4; *San Diego Union*, Contract, a34; *National City Star-News*, Extension, 16.

in the 1830s. When he died in 1850, the rancho was sold to Oliver S. Witherby, a judge and member of California's first state legislature. Witherby farmed and raised cattle, and in the early 1860s, began to mine for gold.³⁵ In 1868, Witherby sold the rancho to Edward McGear and the three Wolfskill brothers.

In 1886, 13 businessmen formed the Escondido Land and Town Company (ELTC) and bought the former Rincón del Diablo, subdividing the land to plant more vineyards and citrus groves.³⁶ During the 1886 survey for a new rail line that was to extend from the coastal city of Oceanside to Escondido, a former cow path was turned into a 100-foot street and named Grand Avenue.³⁷ The railroad line was constructed to Escondido in 1887 because the ELTC needed to move their agricultural products. In 1888, the ELTC was influential in getting the town incorporated and drilled several wells to provide water for the surrounding farms and new city. The incorporation of the city also led to the widening of Grand Avenue and the addition of board sidewalks and hitching posts. Escondido continued to grow and Grand Avenue quickly became home to the Escondido Bank, the *Escondido Times*, a post office, general stores, a meat market, a drug store, a bakery, a barber, a smithy, a cobbler-harness maker, and a laundry.³⁸

“About 1891, the Escondido Irrigation District was organized and bonds in the amount of \$350,000 were issued ... to Henry W. Putnam of San Diego, for the construction of the Escondido Reservoir, late[r] named Lake Wohlford.”³⁹ The Escondido Irrigation District was reorganized and named the Escondido Mutual Water Company,⁴⁰ after which:

A period of depression followed, and many people were not able to pay their irrigation taxes; finally, a compromise was worked out, whereby the land would be released from the bonded indebtedness upon payment of 43% of the amount due. The burning of the bonds was the occasion for a joyful celebration on Admission Day, September 9, 1905, and a crowd of three thousand people gathered at the Lime Street school grounds in what is now Grape Day Park. When the papers went up in flames, men tossed their hats into the air and women waved their handkerchiefs; judge J. N. Turrentine gave the speech of the day, which was loudly applauded.

On September 9, 1908, the people of Escondido started holding an annual celebration in remembrance of the burning of the bonds. It was called “Grape Day” because grapes were then one of the most important agricultural products of the valley, and each yearly celebration, tons of free grapes were distributed to the crowds. W. L. Ramey of the Escondido Lumber Hay and Grain Company, and Sig Steiner, early store owner and civic leader, were the

³⁵ Bill Fark, “A Brief History of Escondido,” <http://escondidohistory.com/#!/history> (October 27, 2016).

³⁶ Bill Fark, History, 2016.

³⁷ City of Escondido, “Escondido Context Statement,” <https://www.escondido.org/data/Sites/1/media/pdfs/Planning/EscondidoContextStatement.pdf> (May 7, 2020).

³⁸ City of Escondido, Context, 15.

³⁹ Margie L. Whetstone, The Escondido Story, *The Journal of San Diego History* 9(3), San Diego Historical Society Quarterly, San Diego, California, 1963.

⁴⁰ Cecil C. Moyer, *Historic Ranchos of San Diego*, edited by Richard F. Pourade, University of California Press, 1969.

originators of Grape Day, the community's largest event for many years.⁴¹

Visitors came from all over and stayed in the Escondido Hotel, centrally located on Grand Avenue, which was the main shopping street.⁴² "Later, as horse drawn wagons were replaced by automobiles, surfaced streets began to crisscross the County and by the 1940s, motor courts and motels became economical 'homes away from home' for families seeing the country."⁴³

As Escondido flourished, houses were constructed that would represent the time period. "Many were Victorian cottages which had Queen Anne and Colonial Revival phases. These smaller Victorians were often decorated almost as elaborately as their larger sisters, but some were plain hip-roof boxes."⁴⁴ Through the early 1900s, Classical Revival, Mission (Moorish) Revival, Craftsman, American Foursquare, and Prairie homes were also constructed in Escondido.⁴⁵ In the early 1900s, Craftsman-style homes were prominent. Craftsman architecture, which was part of the Arts and Crafts movement of 1876 to 1916, rejected the ornamental architecture of the Victorian home:

The [Arts and Crafts] movement was a response to a call for the return to simple, natural, and honest lifestyles and products. It addressed social, industrial, and political issues and included the fine arts, literature, bookbinding, printing, furniture and textile design, as well as architecture.⁴⁶

Grapes continued to be an important agricultural product for Escondido throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1909, W.E. Alexander purchased 2,000 acres of the remaining McCoy ranch, south of downtown. He first subdivided the western portion of the land into 10-acre parcels, which became known as the first Homeland Acres Addition to Escondido.⁴⁷ In 1911:

Between 600 and 700 acres of muscatel grapes were set out in Escondido ... by the Escondido Valley Land and Planting Company [EVLPC], of which ... W.E. Alexander [was] the president.

The planting was done on the Homeland Acres, and with the acreage planted in 1910 makes a total of between 1,000 and 1,100 acres.⁴⁸

"Between 300 and 400 acres" were to be planted in 1912.⁴⁹ The EVLPC planted and cared for the vineyards for three years then turned them over to the owners. Although the grapes

⁴¹ Margie L. Whetstone, Escondido, 1963.

⁴² Bill Fark, History, 2016.

⁴³ Escondido History Center, "Commerce," <https://www.escondidohistory.org/commerce> (August 6, 2019).

⁴⁴ City of Escondido, Context, 17.

⁴⁵ City of Escondido, Context, 18.

⁴⁶ City of Escondido, Context, 19.

⁴⁷ Lucy Jones Berk and Stephen A. Covey, *Postcards of America: Escondido Grape Day Festivals*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2010.

⁴⁸ J.B. Jeffery and C.E. Ferguson, "San Diego County Back Country," *The Overland Monthly* January-June:280-281, the Overland Monthly Co., San Francisco, California, 1912.

⁴⁹ J.B. Jeffery and C.E. Ferguson, Back Country, 280-281.

were “planted on rolling ground no irrigation” was used, nor was any necessary. Instead, “the Campbell system of dry farming [was used], of which Mr. Alexander [was] an ardent advocate.”⁵⁰ Utilizing these grapes, several wineries opened in Escondido. “Before the prohibition era there were at least a dozen wineries in Escondido, but only the Ferrara Winery survived beyond that time and it continued to operate until 2011.”⁵¹

By 1914, “an electric railroad from the county seat at San Diego, thirty-five miles southerly [of Escondido], via El Cajon” was “assured ... to eventually be extended to Los Angeles, 100 miles to the north,” but the railroad was never completed.⁵² In 1916, Homeland Acres Addition to Escondido No. 2 was platted to the east of the original Homeland Acres Addition. Both Homeland Acres additions were part of the 2,000-acre McCoy Tract located in the northern portion of the original San Bernardo Land Grant, south of the city of Escondido. “The town of Bernardo flourished for a time, then declined and disappeared by the early 1920s. Its demise was hastened by the growth of the city of Escondido ... and the completion of the Lake Hodges Dam and Reservoir in 1919.”⁵³

Prior to the 1950s, the main thoroughfare between Escondido and San Diego was San Diego Boulevard, which was later renamed Escondido Boulevard. The boulevard was home to sparse development including gas stations, small stores, motor courts, and rural single-family residences.⁵⁴ With the construction of Highway 395 in the late 1940s, however, the city of Escondido experienced a building boom. Highway 395 was realigned in 1947 from further east to its current location, which follows the route of Centre City Parkway (previously called Pine Street or the Escondido Expressway), passing through downtown Escondido. Changing a major travel route to provide a north to south connection in San Diego County allowed travel-related businesses, especially motel accommodations and restaurants, to be established along the route.⁵⁵

Highway 395 linked Escondido to San Diego, making the city a good choice for commuters. Around this time, many agricultural fields that were previously dedicated to citrus and grapes were developed into subdivisions to house workers in the defense industry. In 1960, the lemon packing house, previously famed to be the largest facility of its kind in the world, closed its doors. Citrus fields gave way to more subdivisions, and some were converted into avocado crops.⁵⁶ Escondido can still be described as a commuter city. It has some fame because of the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, breweries, wineries, the auto mall, and the California Center for the Arts, Escondido, which was constructed in 1994.

⁵⁰ J.B. Jeffery and C.E. Ferguson, *Back Country*, 280–281.

⁵¹ Robin Fox and Carol Rea, *Escondido: A Pictorial History of the Hidden Valley*, HPNbooks/Ledge Media, Jackson, Wyoming, 2020.

⁵² J.B. Jeffery and C.E. Ferguson, *Back Country*, 280–281.

⁵³ Rancho Bernardo Historical Society, “The History of Rancho Bernardo,” <https://rbhistory.org/about-us/history>, 2020.

⁵⁴ J.R.K. Stropes and Brian F. Smith, *Historic Structure Assessment for 1405 South Escondido Boulevard*, Escondido, California, prepared for the City of Escondido, 2020.

⁵⁵ Harry J. Price, “Historic Building Evaluation of the Palm Tree Motor Lodge and the Wagon Wheel Restaurant at 425 West Mission Avenue in Escondido,” <https://www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/PDFs/Planning/CityCentre/AppendixB-HistoricBuildingEvaluation.pdf>, 2017.

⁵⁶ Bill Fark, *History*, 2016.

The 503 W. Mission Ave. building was constructed as a Denny's right before the property was purchased by Aircraft Mobilehomes, Inc. Denny's was established by Harold Butler and Richard Jezak, who opened a donut stand in Lakewood, California in 1953 and called it "Danny's Donuts." By 1956, Danny's Donuts had become a six-store chain. When Jezak left the partnership, Butler changed the concept from a donut shop to a coffee shop and rebranded the small franchise as 24-hour "Danny's Coffee Shops."⁵⁷ The name of the franchise was changed to "Denny's Coffee Shops" in 1959 to avoid confusion with Coffee Dan's in Los Angeles and eventually became just "Denny's" in 1961.⁵⁸ The business quickly grew and by 1981, there were over 1,000 restaurants in the United States. The business purchased many of the old Sambo's restaurants and used their similar designs to their advantage.⁵⁹

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

- 1. Architectural character:** The 503 W. Mission Ave. building was originally constructed in the Googie style by R.E Mauer Construction while the property was owned by George P. and Anna M. Timmons, Ralph and Mona E. Petreny, and James and Fotine Tweddell.

While historical research could not identify the architect, it is possible that the building was constructed following the theme and boomerang-roofed prototype created by architects Louis Armét and Eldon Davis in the 1950s, who are credited with construction of over 4,000 Googie-style restaurants.⁶⁰ Armét and Davis created a prototype building for Danny's Coffee Shops, which would later become a model for stores built all over the United States. Their designs included two Googie-style prototypes: the boomerang-roofed design that became a model for Denny's restaurants built all over the United States and the zigzag-roofed restaurant structure. Their designs enabled the Googie style to spread across the country.⁶¹ The 503 W. Mission Ave. building was constructed as an example of the boomerang-shaped roof prototype and included large signage, since most of the later stores were built around freeways.⁶²

The emergence of the Googie style is explained as follows by San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement and the Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement:

The Futurist style of Modern architecture began after World War II as Americans became entranced with technology and the Space Age. At

⁵⁷ Denny's, "Since 1953: Our History," <https://www.dennys.com/company> (July 5, 2022).

⁵⁸ Denny's, 1953, 2022.

⁵⁹ *New York Times*, Diner Chain Has to Buy Locks for First Holiday Closing, New York, New York (December 20, 1988).

⁶⁰ Edward Cella Art & Architecture, "Louis Armét, Eldon Davis (American, B. 1914 / 1917)," <https://www.edwardcella.com/artists/49-louis-armet%2C-eldon-davis> (July 5, 2022).

⁶¹ Alan Hess, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture*, Chronicle Books, 2004.

⁶² Alan Hess, *Googie*, 126.

that time, America was also being transformed by a car culture. As automobile use increased, roadside architecture evolved. It was intended to attract the consumer with bright colors, oversized lighted signage, and exaggerated forms. In short, the building was the billboard. The Futurist style was used overwhelmingly on coffee shops, gas stations, motels, restaurants, and retail buildings. The name "Googie" comes from the well-known coffee shop in Los Angeles called Googies, which was designed by renowned Modernist architect John Lautner in 1949 ...

Futurist architectural design often incorporates sharp angles, boomerang or flying saucer shapes, large expanses of glass, exposed steel structural elements, and dramatic roof overhangs. The basic form and size of Futurist buildings varies significantly from building to building. An abstract arrangement of shapes and textures is typical.⁶³

However:

... the Googie style had fallen out of favor by the late 1960s. By this time, the nation's architectural culture had changed. The American public was no longer as captivated by ideas like space travel and nuclear energy, and aspects of the future that had once engendered excitement among the public were now seen as mundane and effete.⁶⁴

The style was not used after the 1970s. The 503 W. Mission Ave. building was constructed in 1962, during the period in which the Googie style was most popular.⁶⁵

Identifying features associated with the Googie style, as described by the City of San Diego, include:

Abstract, angular, or curved shapes; expressive roof forms (flat, gabled, upswept, butterfly, parabolic, boomerang, or folded); large windows (aluminum-framed); prominent signage (neon or lighted); variety of exterior finishes (including stucco, concrete block, brick, stone, plastic, and wood siding); bright colors; screen block and shadow block accents; building as billboard and asymmetrical façade.⁶⁶

Identifying features associated with the Googie style present in the 503 W. Mission Ave. building include an abstract and angular roof, an expressive boomerang-shaped roof form, aluminum-framed large windows, a variety of exterior finishes, and an asymmetrical façade. However, although the building features both a pole sign and

⁶³ City of San Diego, San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement, submitted to the State of California Office of Historic Preservation, 2007.

⁶⁴ City of Los Angeles, SurveyLA Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey: Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/4f67bd39-631a-4f26-9a52-cd5809a66655/LA_Modernism_1919-1980.pdf, 2021.

⁶⁵ City of San Diego, Modernism, 61.

⁶⁶ City of San Diego, Modernism, 62.

prominent signs on its northwest and southeast façades, they are not original and have been altered multiple times. While the building features bright colors, the color scheme was changed at least twice in the past. The building does not possess screen block or shadow block accents and cannot be considered a “billboard building.”

2. **Condition of fabric:** The condition of the original materials used to construct the building is generally average to poor. Some windowpanes are missing and have been replaced with compressed wood boards. The paint is peeling off the walls at some places. Much of the exterior wood trim used at the fascia of the roof has been damaged by weather. The condition of the dining areas within the restaurant is average; however, some of the roof boards are missing. The back area of the building, where service areas and the kitchen are located, is in poor condition, mostly due to the damage caused by heat released from cooking and frying.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall dimensions:** The 503 W. Mission Ave. building features a rectangular-planned northwest portion and a smaller rectangular-planned southwest portion that are attached to each other on their long ends. The northwest portion measures 61'-7" x 27'-4" and the southwest building measures 15'-0" x 49'-6". The building features an enclosed back patio that measures 15'-0" x 47'-6". The building measures approximately 2,400 square feet without the enclosed patio and 3,100 square feet with the patio.
2. **Foundations:** The building features a reinforced concrete foundation.
3. **Walls:** The building features standard frame walls clad in stucco. All façades exhibit partial fieldstone veneer walls.
4. **Structural system, framing:** The northwest portion of the building was constructed using steel frame construction. The steel columns are visible on the northeast, northwest, and southeast façades of the southwest portion, which feature windows. The southwest portion of the building was constructed using standard frame construction.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** The aluminum-framed, glass front entry door is located on the southeast side of the northeast façade of the northeast portion of the building. This door is not original and was installed at an unknown date. Additional doors are located on the northwest façade of the northeast portion of the building and the southwest façade of the southwest portion of the building. The original door on the northwest façade is metal. There are three doors on the southwest façade: the northwest side provides access to the southwest portion of the restaurant and is a simple wood door with a metal screen; the other doors are simple wood doors. While the southeast door

provides access to the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) room, the middle door provides access to the small storage room. The outdoor service/storage area located southwest of the building also features wood gates on its southwest façade.

- b. Windows and shutters:** The northeast portion of the building features large horizontal bands of aluminum-framed windows on top of short walls.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering:** The northeast portion of the building features a boomerang-shaped roof that shelters the building's northeast, southeast, and southwest façades, which are visible from the road. The building record indicates that the original roof cover was built-up; however, this was replaced by insulated metal sheets at an unknown date. The roof exhibits wide eave overhangs with enclosed rafters. The southwest portion of the building features a flat roof with rolled roofing.

C. Description of Interior

- 1. Floor plans:** The main entrance to the building is located on the northeast façade and leads into the main dining area. The northeast portion of the building consists of three nested areas. The outermost area is the main dining area, which is a large, rectangular space with an open plan that measures 60'-9". The southeast portion of the dining area is larger and measures 26'-2" and the northwest portion measures 20'-9". The middle section of the northeast portion of the building is separated from the dining area by counters that measure 2'-1" x 12'-11" and 17'-1" x 3'-5" on the southeast side and a short wall that measures 23'-2" x 3'-10" on the northwest side. This middle section was used as a serving/preparation area and features a counter on its east corner that measures 2'-1" x 6'-2" x 6'-3". The area southeast of this counter measures 6'-2" x 14'-11" and the area northwest of the counter measures 5'-9" x 29'-5". The innermost space, located on the southwest part of the northeast portion of the building, is used as the main kitchen. The kitchen space measures 5'-9" x 29'-5" and features a large counter space on its southwest side that measures 16'-11" x 4'-7".

The southwest portion of the building is attached to the northeast portion on its southwest side. Two door openings on the southwest façade of the northeast portion provide access to the southwest portion. The southeast doorway opens to a short, southeast-northwest, 3'-0" x 11'-11" corridor. Two lavatories that measure 8'-2" x 4'-8" and 10'-6" x 4'-7" and a small storage room that measures 8'-2" x 5'-0" are located southwest of this short corridor, opening to a larger service/cleaning area. This cleaning service area consists of a smaller 5'-5" x 11'-10" rectangular area on the east and a larger 8'-8" x 17'-8" rectangular area on the west. A large, 13'-5" x 8'-7" refrigeration room is located northeast of this service/cleaning area. A small, southwest-northeast, 3'-4" x 17'-10" corridor connects the service/cleaning area to the northwest opening between the two portions of the building. Two storage rooms that

measure 6'-2" x 12'-9" and 7'-10" x 6'-1" are located northwest of this corridor.

An outdoor service/storage area is located southwest of the southwest portion of the building. This area features a 7'-4" x 13'-8" outdoor refrigeration area on its northwest side. Access to this area is provided through a door located on the northwest side of the service/storage area. A 7'-6" x 14'-2" platform is located southeast of this entrance door.

2. **Stairways:** The building does not feature any interior stairways.
3. **Flooring:** Ceramic tiles were used for the entirety of the flooring. While the dining area features white, 12" x 12" ceramic tiles with grey grout, reddish-brown, 6" x 6" ceramic tiles with grey grout are present in the rest of the building.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Interior walls in the northeast portion of the building consist of drywall that has been painted white, orange, and green. The northwest side of the southwest façade of the northeast portion of the building features a wall painting. The northwest portion of the building features a drop ceiling covered with smooth-finished panels. The interior walls in the southwest portion of the building consist of drywall that has been painted white, orange, and green. The walls of the refrigeration room feature wood wainscoting. The ceilings in this area are finished drywall that has been painted white.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** Interior doorways are trimmed with rough wood beams. Most of the interior doors have been removed except for the lavatory doors, the refrigeration room door, and the door located northwest of the narrow corridor between the lavatories and the service area. The lavatory doors are simple, four-panel wood doors that are painted white and green. The other doors are metal.
 - b. **Windows:** There are no interior windows in the building. A window opening is located on the wall that separates the kitchen from the serving/preparation area.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** The northeast portion of the building, which includes the dining area, features decorative features. The dining area-facing walls of the counters feature a grey stone veneer finish. The northwest side of the southwest façade of the northeast portion of the building features a wall painting.
7. **Hardware:** Interior door hardware consists of brass doorknobs.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The building features a HVAC

system. Wall and ceiling vents are present throughout the building for delivery. The kitchen space includes additional pipes for gas and ventilation. Additional ventilation hoods are located over the counters.

- b. **Lighting:** Non-original, oil-rubbed, bronze chandeliers are present in the dining areas. The rest of the areas feature fluorescent lamp panels. The fluorescent panels consist of 4'-0"-long, surface-mounted fluorescent lamps.
- c. **Plumbing:** The men's and women's restrooms each contain two toilets and a sink. Additional sinks are located in the serving area within the northeast portion of the building. A large sink is located in the service area in the southwest portion of the building.

9. **Original furnishings:** The building does not contain any original furnishings.

D. Site

- 1. **Historic landscape design:** Historic photographs do not depict any associated landscaping.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings:

- 1. **First Floor Plan, Denny's Restaurant (503 W. Mission Ave.) – 1962 (Sheet No. 1, February 21, 2023)**
- 2. **First Floor Plan, Denny's Restaurant (503 W. Mission Ave.) – 1962 (Sheet No. 2, February 21, 2023)**
- 3. **Northeast Plan View, Denny's Restaurant (503 W. Mission Ave.) – 1962 (Sheet No. 3, February 21, 2023)**
- 4. **Northwest Plan View, Denny's Restaurant (503 W. Mission Ave.) – 1962 (Sheet No. 4, February 21, 2023)**
- 5. **Southeast Plan View, Denny's Restaurant (503 W. Mission Ave.) – 1962 (Sheet No. 5, February 21, 2023)**

B. Early views:

- 1. **Denny's:** View of a Danny's Donut, the original donut stand opened by Butler and Kezak, available at <https://www.dennys.com/company>.
- 2. **Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California:** Louis Armét and Eldon Davis's Design/Prototype for Danny's Coffee Shop, available at <https://www.getty.edu/research/library/>.
- 3. **Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California:** Louis Armét and Eldon Davis's Design/Prototype for Denny's Coffee Shop, available at

<https://www.getty.edu/research/library/>.

4. ***Times-Advocate, Escondido, California:*** “Table Talk,” article by Karen Mock showing Johnny R’s #2 Family Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in 1988, available at <http://www.newspapers.com/image/570267708>, 1 September:90.
5. ***Times-Advocate, Escondido, California:*** “Cheers Contest,” photograph by Dan Rios showing Cheers Family Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in 1993, available at <http://www.newspapers.com/image/571839487>, 21 May:B3.
6. **Google Street View:** Street view image of the El Galeón Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in 2007, available at <https://www.google.com/maps>.
7. **University of California at Santa Barbara Library Geospatial Collection:** Aerial photograph of 503 W. Mission Ave. in 1963, available at <https://www.library.ucsb.edu/geospatial/aerial-photography>.
8. **University of California at Santa Barbara Library Geospatial Collection:** Aerial photograph of 503 W. Mission Ave. in 1978, available at <https://www.library.ucsb.edu/geospatial/aerial-photography>.
9. **University of California at Santa Barbara Library Geospatial Collection:** Aerial photograph of 503 W. Mission Ave. in 1987, available at <https://www.library.ucsb.edu/geospatial/aerial-photography>.
10. **Google Earth:** Aerial photograph of 503 W. Mission Ave. in 2022, available at <https://earth.google.com/web/>.
11. **Google Street View:** Street view image of the El Galeón Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in May 2008, available at <https://www.google.com/maps>.
12. **Google Street View:** Street view image of the El Galeón Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in March 2009, available at <https://www.google.com/maps>.
13. **Google Street View:** Street view image of the restaurant building at 503 W. Mission Ave. in January 2012, available at <https://www.google.com/maps>.
14. **Google Street View:** Street view image of the restaurant building at 503 W. Mission Ave. in April 2014, available at <https://www.google.com/maps>.
15. **Google Street View:** Street view image of the Pho Truc Anh Vietnamese Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in November 2016, available at <https://www.google.com/maps>.
16. **RoadsideArchitecture.com:** Denny’s Restaurants in Pasadena (1963), Los Angeles, and Palm Springs (1965), available at <https://www.roadarch.com/eateries/>

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C. Interviews: No interviews were conducted.

D. Selected sources:

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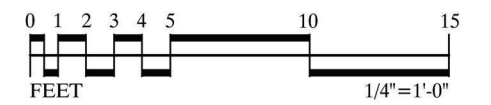
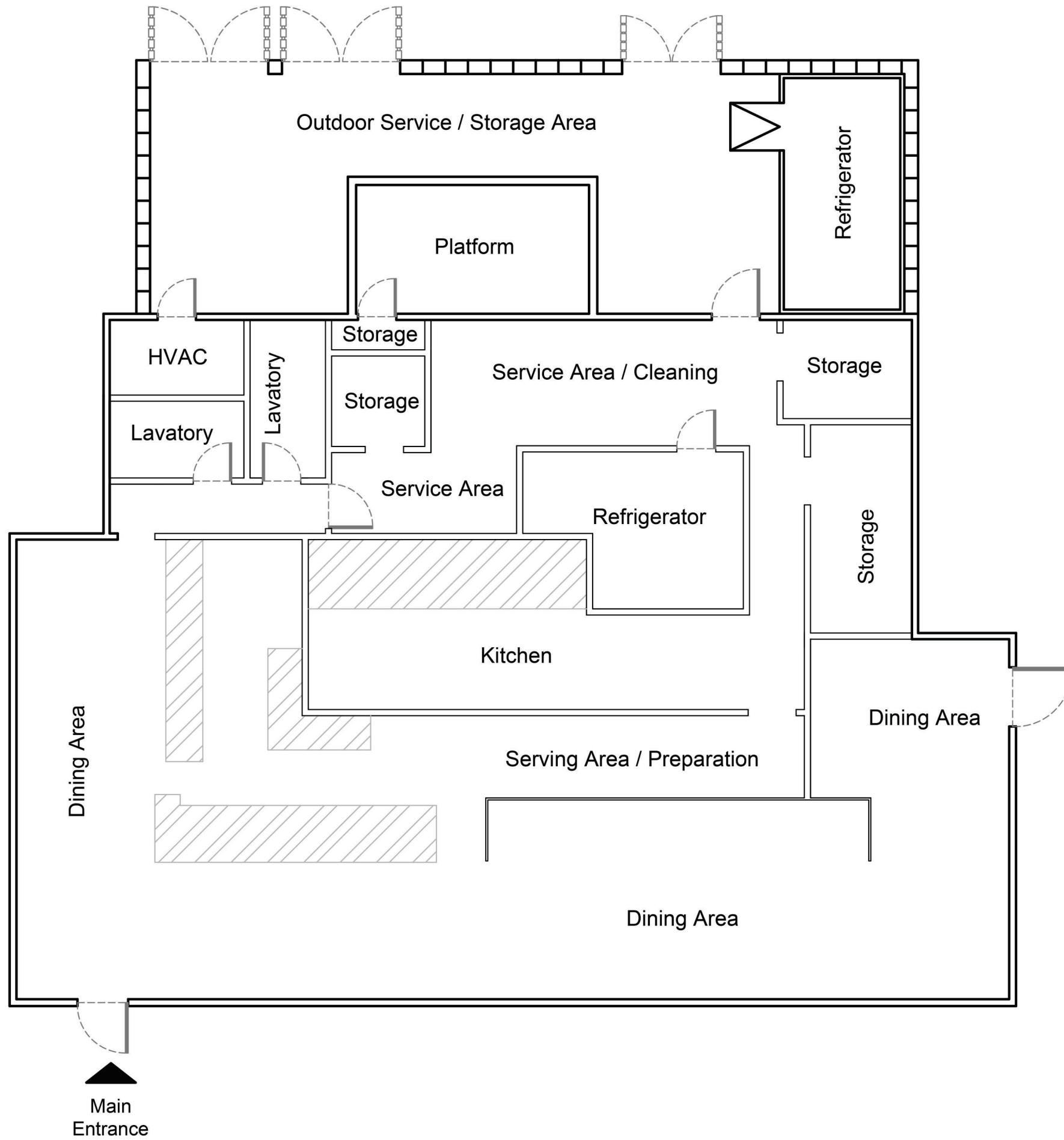
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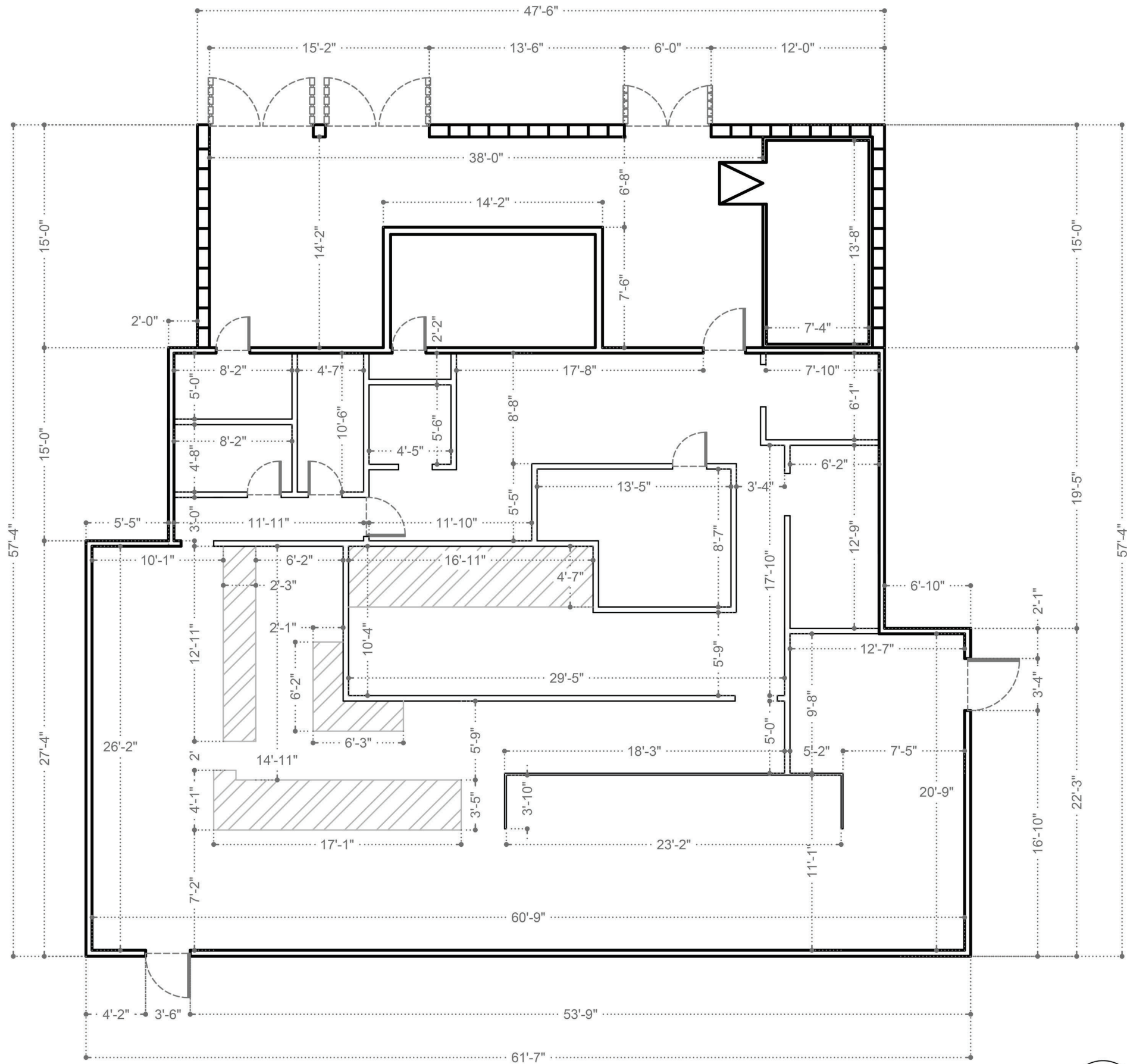
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2. Secondary Sources: None.

E. Likely sources not yet investigated: There are no known sources to be investigated.

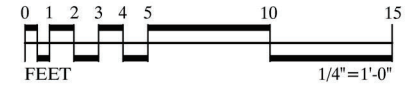
F. Supplemental material: None.

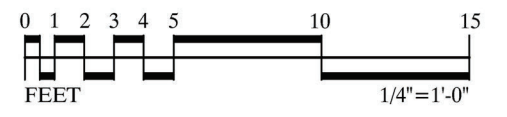
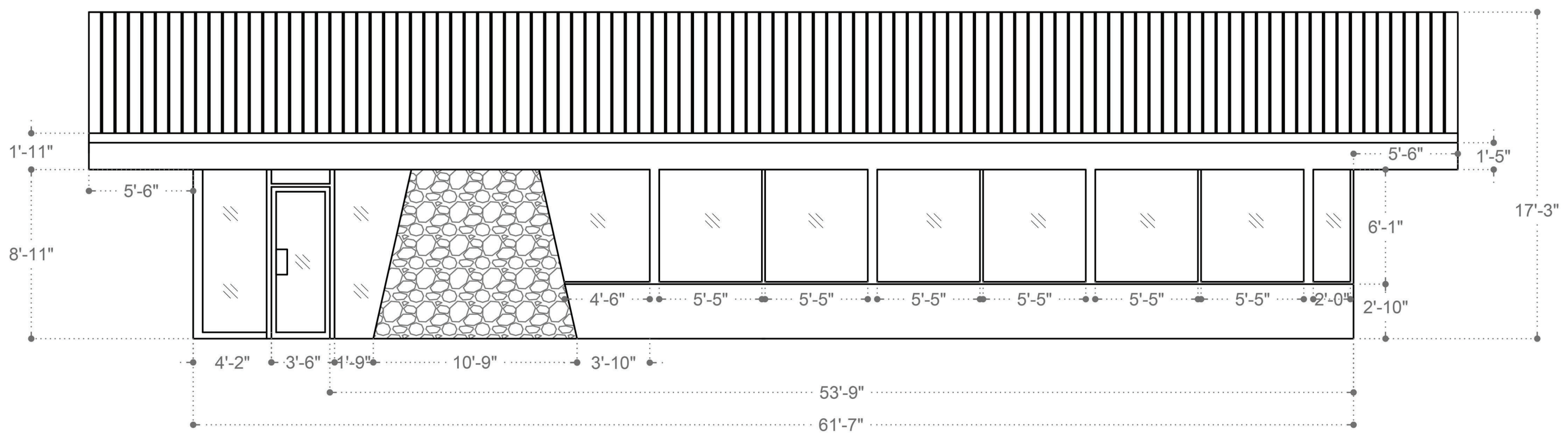


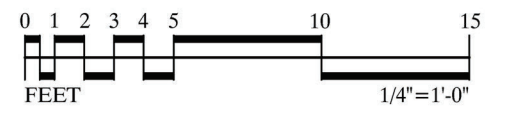
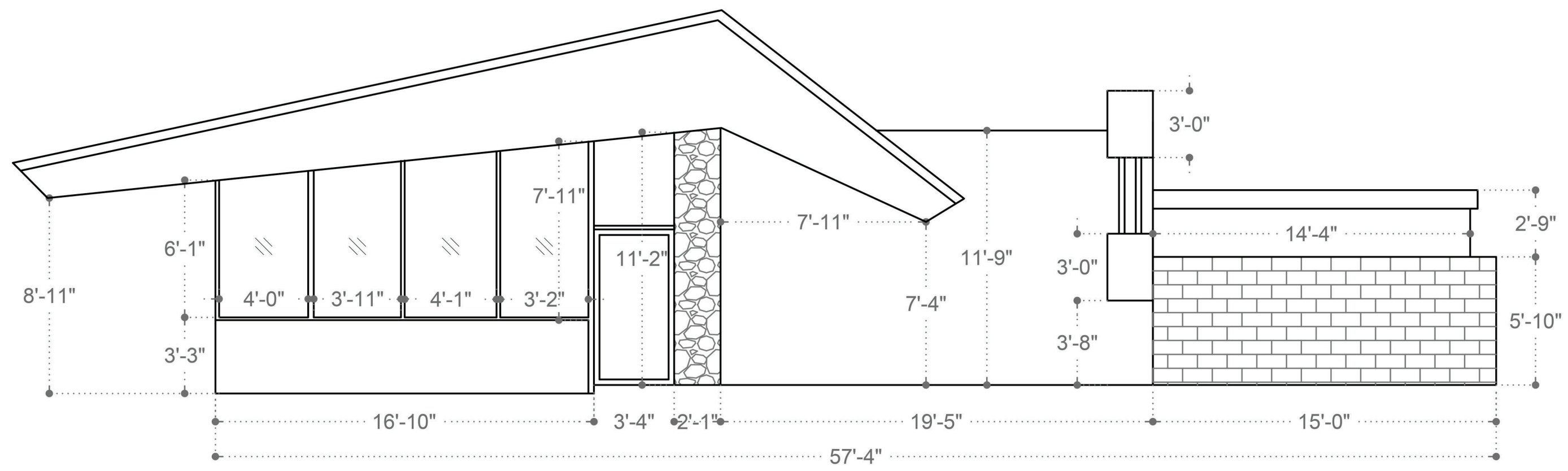


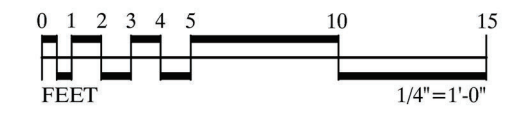
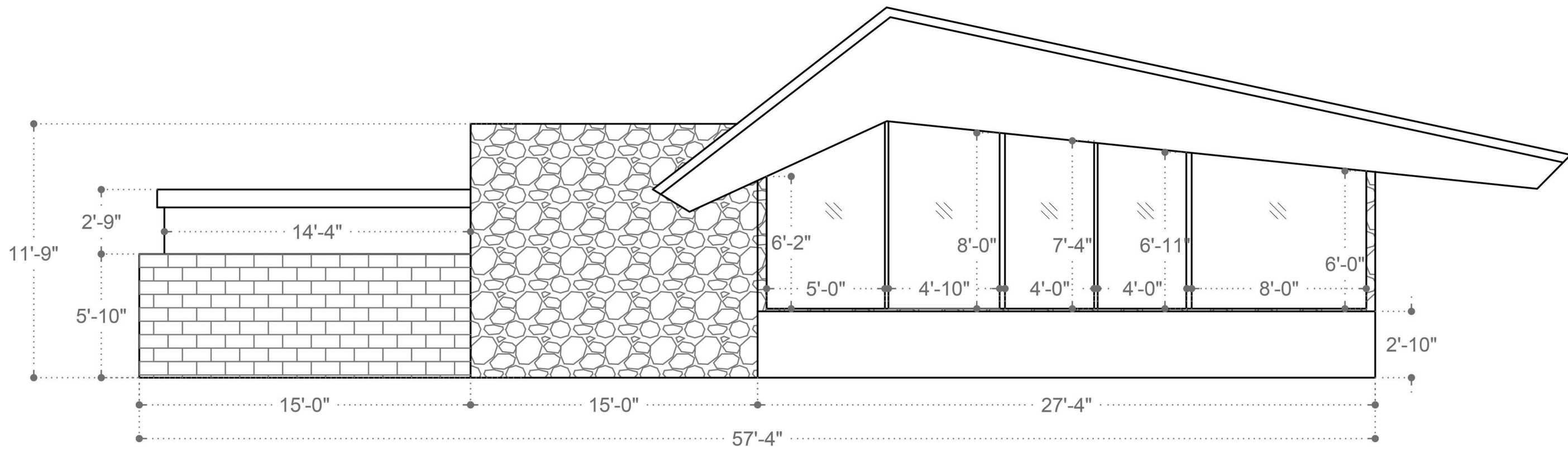


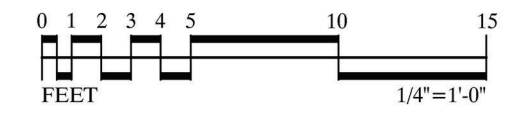
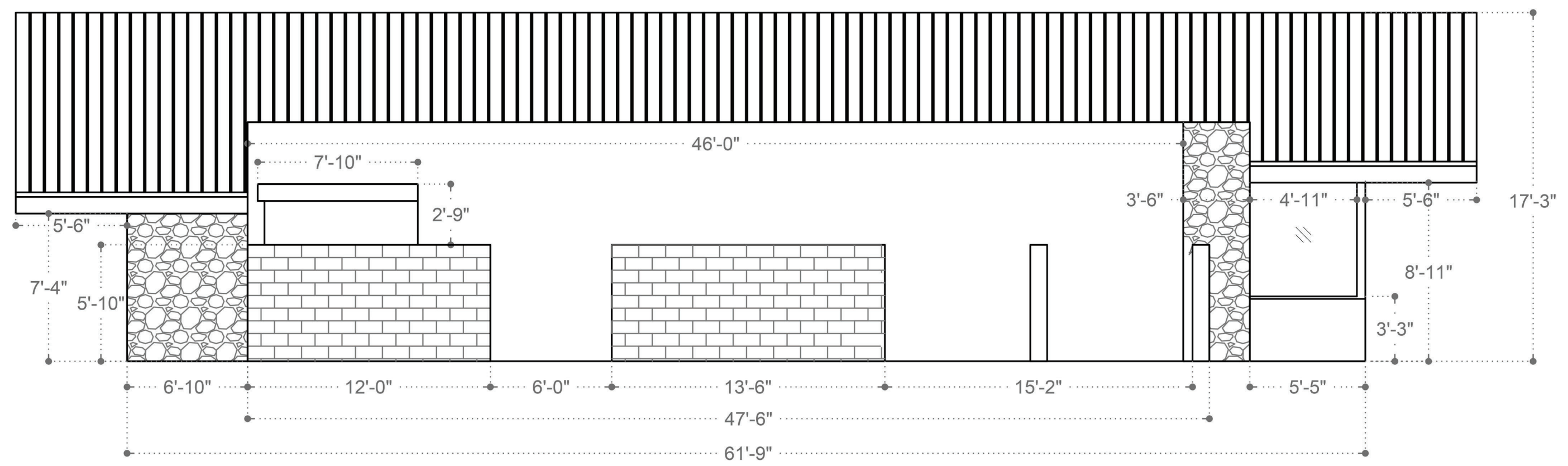
Main Entrance













BFSA Environmental Services
A Perennial Company

Danny's Donuts, the Original Donut Stand Opened by Butler and Jezak

503 W. Mission Ave.

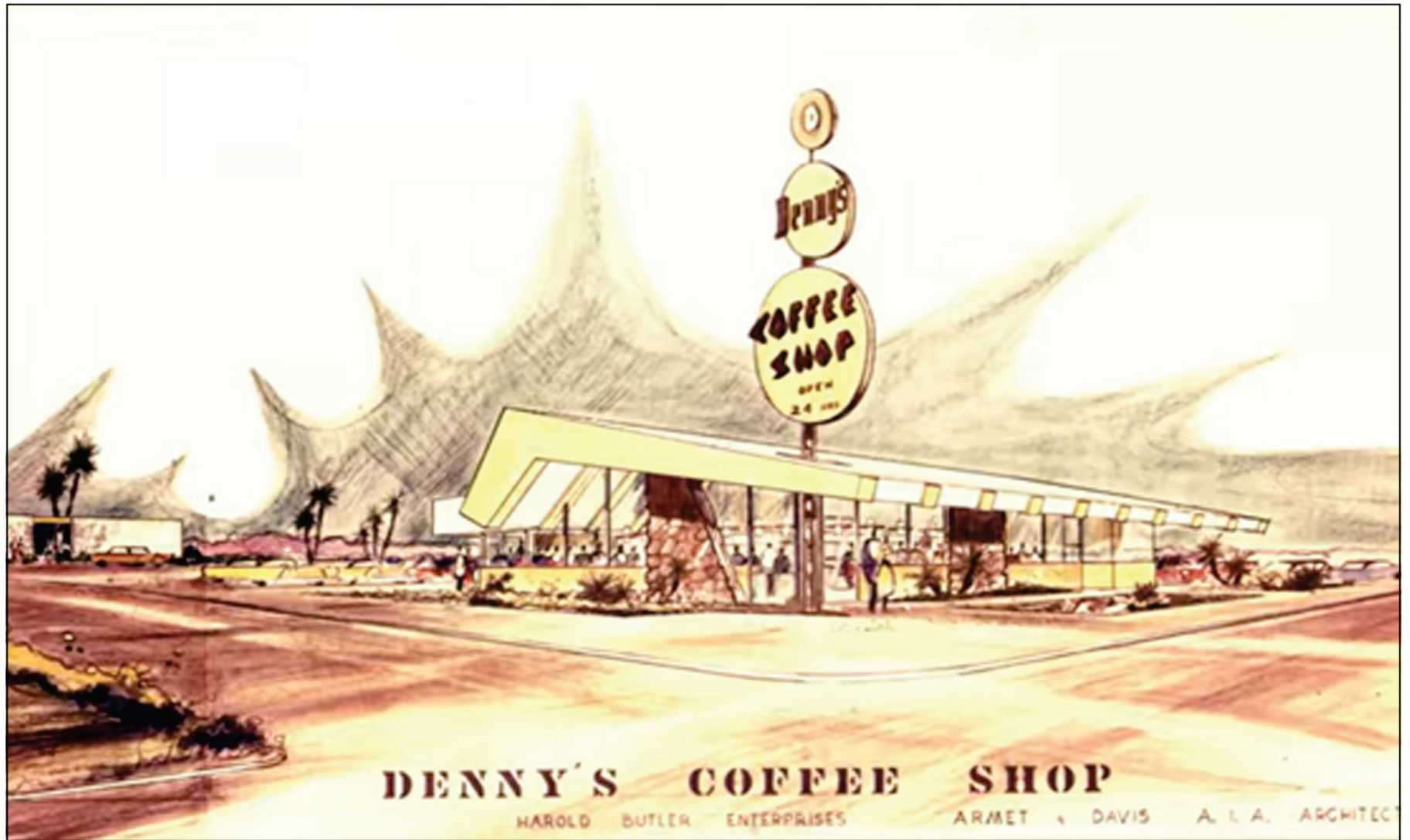
(Photograph courtesy of Denny's 2022)



BFSA Environmental Services
A Perennial Company

Louis Armét and Eldon Davis's Design/Prototype for Danny's Coffee Shop
503 W. Mission Ave.

(Photograph courtesy of Getty Research Institute 2013)



BFS Environmental Services
A Perennial Company

Louis Armét and Eldon Davis's Design/Prototype for Denny's Coffee Shop

503 W. Mission Ave.

(Photograph courtesy of Getty Research Institute 2013)



BFSA Environmental Services
A Perennial Company

Johnny R's #2 Family Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in 1988

503 W. Mission Ave.

(Photograph courtesy of Mock 1988)



BFSA Environmental Services
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Cheers Family Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in 1993

503 W. Mission Ave.

(Photograph courtesy of Times-Advocate 1993)



BFS Environmental Services
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El Galeón Mexican Restaurant at 503 W. Mission Ave. in 2007

503 W. Mission Ave.

(Photograph courtesy of Google Street View)