

City Planning Commission Meeting
Tuesday, May 26, 2015

CPC Deadline: May 28, 2015
CC Deadline: 45 days from
the receipt of the CPC report
Council District: B - Cantrell

PRELIMINARY STAFF REPORT

To: City Planning Commission
Design Review: 50/15

Prepared by: Kelly G. Butler
Date: May 13, 2015

Applicant: LAMAR ADVERTISING OF NEW ORLEANS

Request: An appeal of the General Sign Regulations, **Article 12, Section 12.5** *Outdoor General Advertising Sign Regulations* of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO), to permit the installation of a new billboard adjacent to the Pontchartrain Expressway (Interstate Highway 10).

Zoning: HI - Heavy Industrial District

Location: The petitioned property is located on Square 747, Lot A, in the First Municipal District, bounded by Gravier, South Scott, South Pierce, and Julia Streets. The municipal address is 3918 Gravier Street. (PD 4)

Proposal: The proposal calls for installation of a new, sixty (60') feet high, "V" shaped double faced billboard with each sign face measuring fourteen by forty-eight (14' x 48') feet, the maximum allowed. The billboard will be mounted on a single pole located adjacent to the Pontchartrain Expressway (Interstate Highway 10) between South Pierce Street and South Scott Street on property owned by Bootleg Distillation, LLC. The applicant proposes to remove an existing double faced billboard that is located approximately two-hundred forty (240) feet to the north east from the proposed site.

Why is City Planning Commission action required?

In accordance with **Article 12, Section 12.5.11-Variance or Waiver of Requirements**, of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, any application for a variance of the Outdoor General Advertising Sign Regulations shall be submitted to the City Planning Commission for a recommendation before a final determination by the City Council.

I. EVALUATION

The applicant is requesting three (3) waivers of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to permit the construction of a new billboard. If approved, the applicant intends to remove an existing double faced non-conforming billboard located approximately two-hundred forty (240) linear feet north of the proposed location.

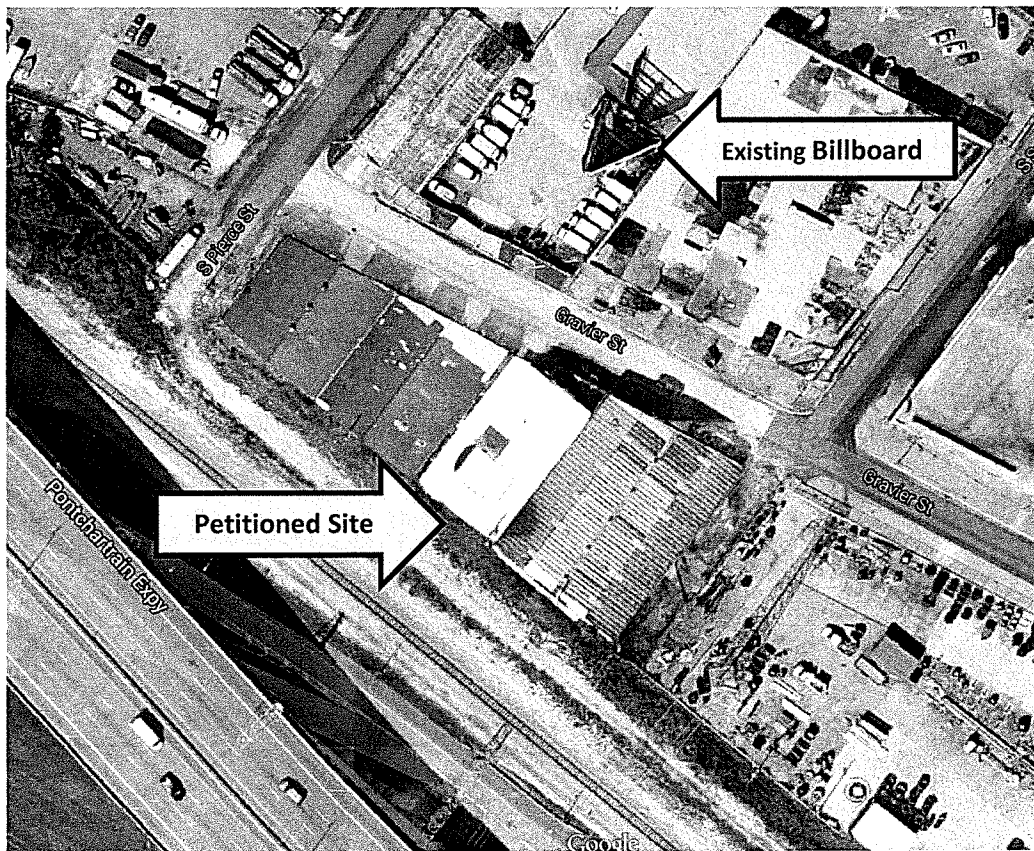


Figure 1: Google Maps, accessed 5/6/2015

The first requested waiver is of **Article 12, Section 12.3.1(1)**, which requires that all outdoor general advertising signs be located at a minimum of two hundred (200) feet away from the right-of-way lines of any major highway, as adopted by the Major Street Plan of the City of New Orleans. The proposed location of the billboard is approximately ninety-eight (98) feet away from Interstate Highway 10 right-of-way; therefore, a waiver of one hundred and two (102) feet is requested.

The second requested waiver is of **Article 12, Section 12.3.1.2**, which requires all billboards be at a minimum of two hundred (200) feet away from any grade separation. The applicant proposes to locate the billboard approximately one hundred and sixty-four (164) feet away from the elevated portion of the Pontchartrain Expressway, necessitating a waiver of thirty-six (36) feet.

Lastly, the applicant is requesting a waiver of **Article 12, Section 12.5.9(1)**, which prohibits permits for new billboard structures in a Design Vista and Aesthetically Sensitive Areas, which includes the Central Business District Skyline and Louisiana Superdome as seen from all grade separation roadways. The applicant is requesting a waiver to install a new billboard within this aesthetically sensitive area.

Sign Face and Spacing Comparison: Existing and Proposed Billboard

The existing billboard, located at 730 South Pierce Street is a two-faced “V” shaped structure constructed on a single pole. Each of the two (2) sign faces measure fourteen (14) feet by forty-eight (48) feet with each sign face measuring six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet for a total sign face area of one thousand three hundred forty-four (1,344) square feet which is in accordance with **Article 12, Section 12.5.4.3a – Design Criteria** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. The proposed new billboard will also meet the maximum permitted sign face area as each of the two (2) faces will also measure fourteen (14’) feet by forty-eight (48’) feet for a total sign face area of one thousand three hundred forty-four square feet ($14 \times 48 \times 2 = 1,344$ sq. ft). Both the existing and proposed billboards have heights of sixty (60) feet.

Article 12, Section 12.3.1.1. – Subdistrict Regulations of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, prohibits placement of billboards within two hundred (200) feet of the right-of-way lines of any limited access highway. The existing billboard is located approximately two hundred forty (240) feet north east of the location of the proposed billboard and is situated approximately three hundred twenty-one (321) feet from the public right-of-way along the Pontchartrain Expressway. The proposed billboard will be located approximately ninety-eight (98) feet from the public right-of-way along the Pontchartrain Expressway.

Article 12, Section 12.3.1.2. – Subdistrict Regulations of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, prohibits placement of billboards along highways within two hundred (200) feet of any grade separation. The existing billboard is located approximately two hundred forty (240) feet north east of the location of the proposed billboard and is situated approximately three hundred seventy (370) feet from the grade separation of the Pontchartrain Expressway, while the proposed billboard will be located one hundred sixty-four (164) feet from the grade separation of the Pontchartrain Expressway.

Analysis

The proposed site is located within an HI Heavy Industrial District. The applicant is proposing to install a new billboard and remove an existing billboard. The proposed new billboard’s sign faces would be equal to the existing square footage as the existing billboard, measuring six hundred seventy-two square (672) square feet on each of the two (2) sign faces, which is the maximum allowed per **Article 12, Section 12.5.4(3.a) – Design Criteria** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. Both the existing and proposed billboards are compliant with the square footage requirements.

In evaluating the location and considering the waivers, the staff analyzed the existing location and proposed location of the new billboard. The existing billboard, located in a commercial business’s parking lot, is within a C-1 General Commercial District that is generally bounded by Gravier, S. Solomon, Ulloa and S. Gayoso Streets. Tulane Avenue is a major corridor within this district. The rear of the billboard is visible from Tulane Avenue and the Midtown Hotel as well as other businesses on Tulane Avenue and also the minor streets within the area. The proposed location is within an HI Heavy Industrial District that is generally bounded by the

Pontchartrain Expressway (I-10), S. Carrollton Avenue, and Gravier Street extending along both sides of the interstate to Claiborne Avenue. The uses in the immediate area surrounding the proposed site includes the interstate, a rail line several industrial uses, including a sheathing distributor, a distillery, a construction equipment yard, and a drywall supply center. Based on the area surrounding the existing location, staff believes the removal of the existing billboard would benefit the area in that the billboard would be removed from a commercially designated district containing a variety of uses that include residential, office, service-oriented and industrial uses. The removal would enhance the aesthetic view of the surrounding commercial area, including an adjacent hotel, the Tulane Avenue corridor, and minor streets within the district. However, the staff does not reason that the removal of the existing billboard off-sets creating a new non-conformity at the proposed location in that the new billboard will be located only ninety-eight (98) feet from the public right-of-way of the interstate, one hundred sixty-four (164) feet from the grade separation and within a Design Vista of the downtown skyline. Staff supports adherence to the outdoor general advertising sign regulations and believes granting the waivers will encourage additional signage and therefore recommends that the requirements be maintained.

It should also be noted that the current regulations have been agreed upon with the billboard industry as a result of a several year effort to draft regulations. As the conversation continues, there may be new regulations implemented; however, at this time the staff continues to recommend adherence to these established standards to curb the proliferation of excessive signage through-out the City.



Figure 2: Zoning Districts of existing and proposed locations

Although the applicant is not requesting a waiver of **Article 12, Section 12.5.5 – Spacing Along Freeways and Interstate Highways** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, which allows one (1) billboard structure every one thousand (1,000') feet on either side of the roadway or the other, but not on both sides, the staff felt that it was important to review the location(s) of other billboards to evaluate whether the relocation would be considered an improvement or if the billboard would add additional visual clutter along the interstate. Staff found that there were no other billboards existing within one thousand (1,000) feet on either side of the roadway of the proposed billboard.¹

Compliance with the Plan for the 21st Century, New Orleans 2030

Though the *Plan for the 21st Century, New Orleans 2030* commonly known as the Master Plan does not specifically address general advertising signage, “Chapter 14: Land Use Plan” of the Master Plan designates the future land use of the petitioned site as “Mixed Use High Density.” The goal, range of uses, and development character for that designation are copied below:

MIXED USE HIGH DENSITY

Goal: Encourage compact, walkable, transit-oriented (or transit-ready) neighborhood centers with medium to-high density multifamily residential, office, and commercial services at key, underutilized, centrally located parcels within neighborhoods and along edges.

Range of Uses: Medium- to high-density multifamily residential, office, hotel and commercial retail.

Development Character: These areas will provide proper transitions to surrounding areas with lower densities/heights. Many structures will require ground-floor retail with residences or offices or both on upper floors.

The Master Plan does not address the issue of general advertising signage in the Mixed Use High Density designation. As long as the proposal is not in conflict with the Master Plan, the decision whether or not to grant signage waivers may be made on a case-by-case basis.

II. SUMMARY

Design Review 050-15 is an appeal of the General Sign Regulations to permit the construction of a new billboard, by replacing an existing billboard, inconsistent with the **Article 12, Section 12.3 Subdistrict Regulations**. The applicant is requesting three (3) waivers, which pertain to setback requirements from the interstate and the placement of the billboard within a Design Vista. Though the staff believes removing the existing billboard would benefit the area, the staff does

¹ See attached diagram
DR 050-15

not concur that its removal off-sets locating the new billboard in closer proximity to the public right-of-way of the interstate, closer to the grade separation and continuing to be located within a Design Vista, since doing so would create a new non-conforming billboard. Therefore, the staff recommends **denial** of Design Review 050-15.

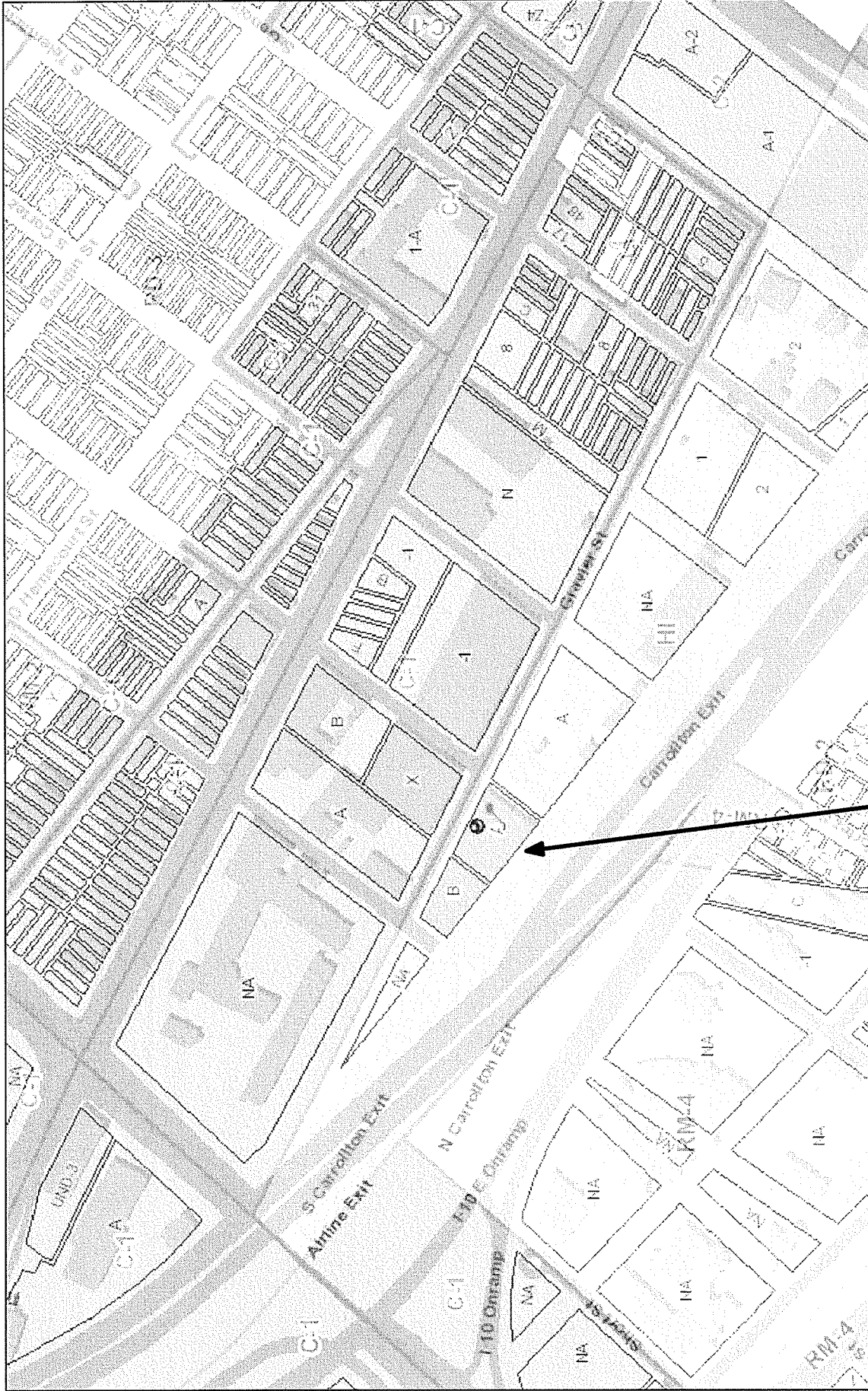
III. RECOMMENDATION²

The design review staff recommends **denial** of the request.

IV. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. The proposed billboard location will create a new non-conforming billboard.
2. The billboard installation to replace an existing billboard does not negate the non-conformity of the proposed billboard.
3. Moving the billboard closer to the interstate will add additional visual clutter to the interstate.

² Subject to modification by the City Planning Commission.

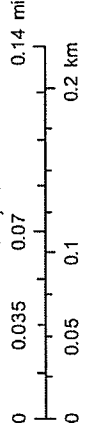


May 6, 2015

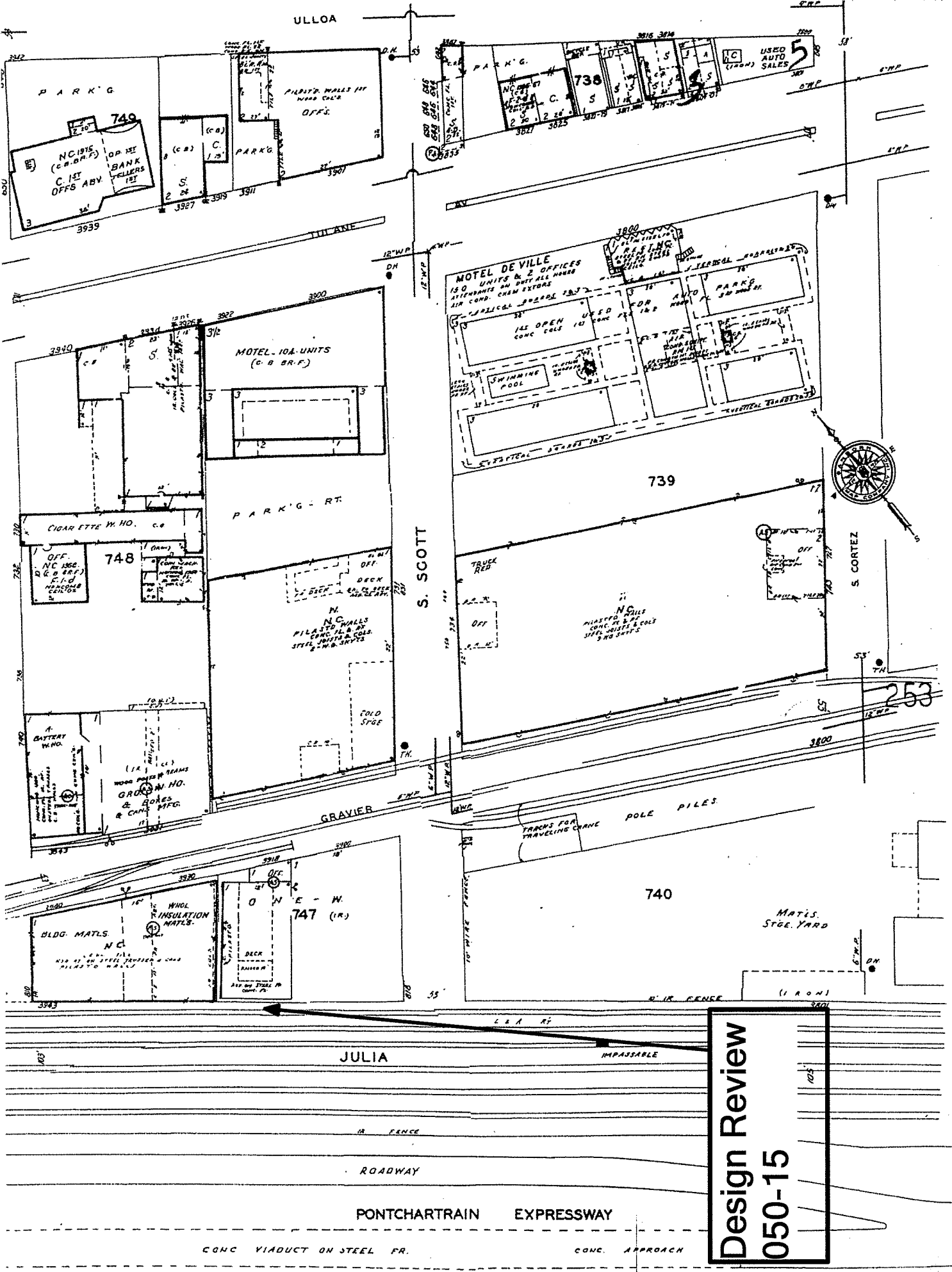


Override 1

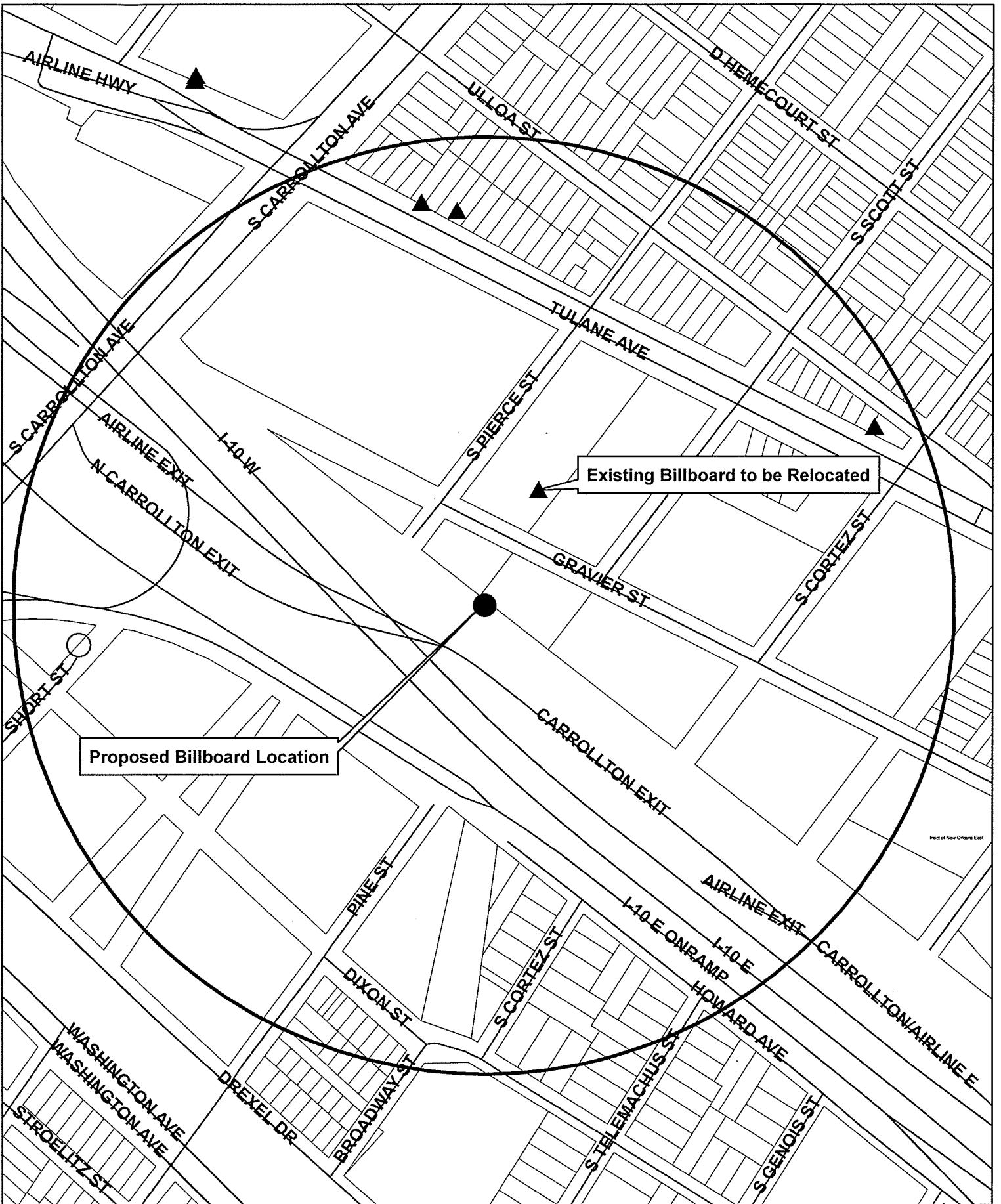
1:4,361



DESIGN REVIEW 050-15



Design Review
050-15



Legend

- ▲ Current Billboard Locations
- Streets-General

Design Review Docket 50-15



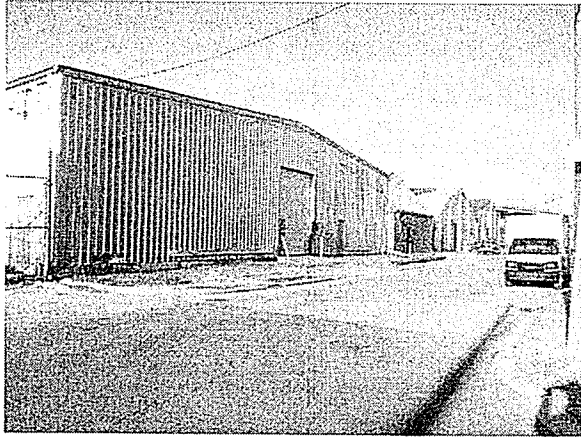
BUILDING PHOTOGRAPHS

See Instructions for Item A6.

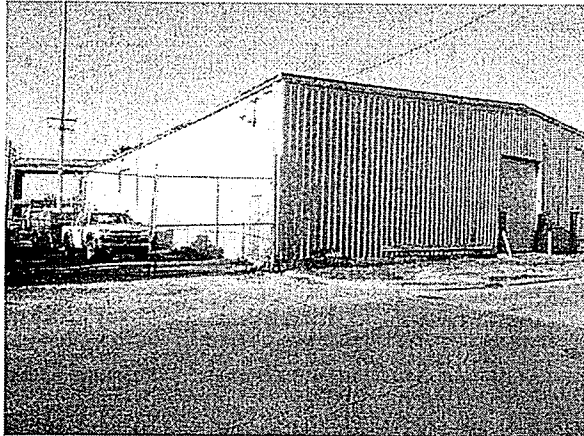
IMPORTANT: In these spaces, copy the corresponding information from Section A.		For Insurance Company Use:
Building Street Address (including Apt., Unit, Suite, and/or Bldg. No.) or P.O. Route and Box No. 3918 Gravier St.		Policy Number
City New Orleans	State LA	ZIP Code 70119
		Company NAIC Number

If using the Elevation Certificate to obtain NFIP flood insurance, affix at least two building photographs below according to the instructions for Item A6. Identify all photographs with: date taken; "Front View" and "Rear View"; and, if required, "Right Side View" and "Left Side View." When applicable, photographs must show the foundation with representative examples of the flood openings or vents, as indicated in Section A8. If submitting more photographs than will fit on this page, use the Continuation Page.

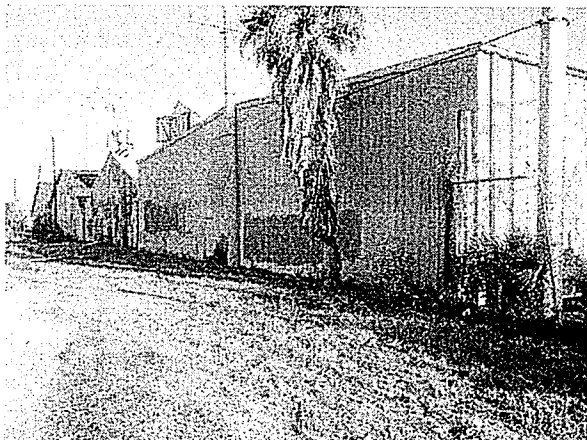
Date of Photographs: 2-12-2015



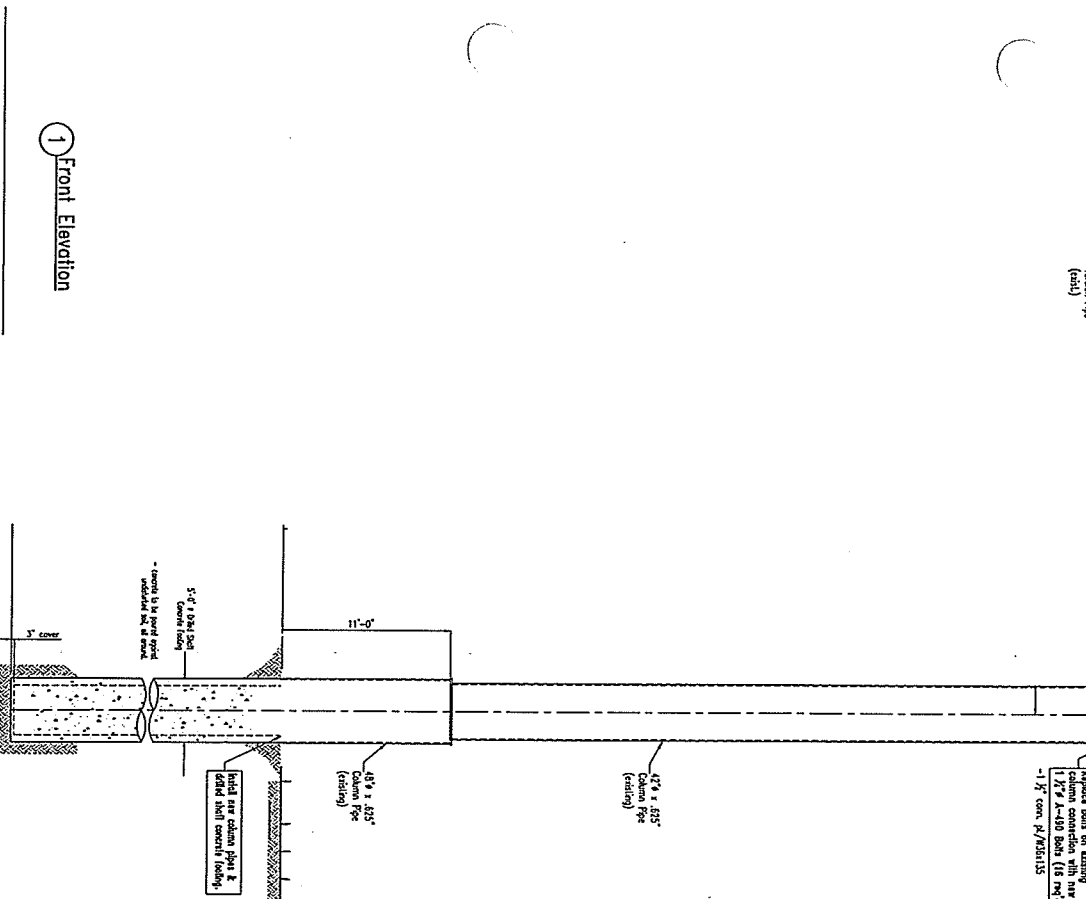
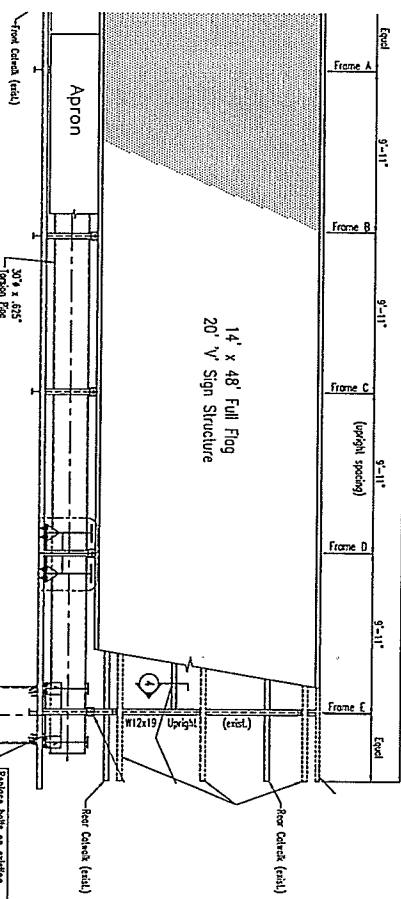
Front View



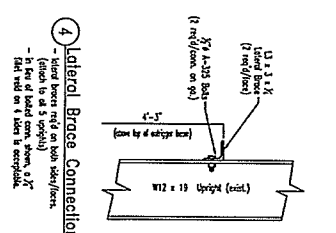
Left View



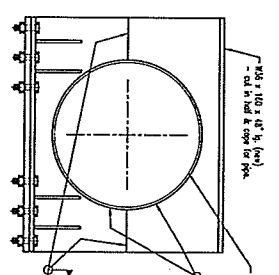
Rear View



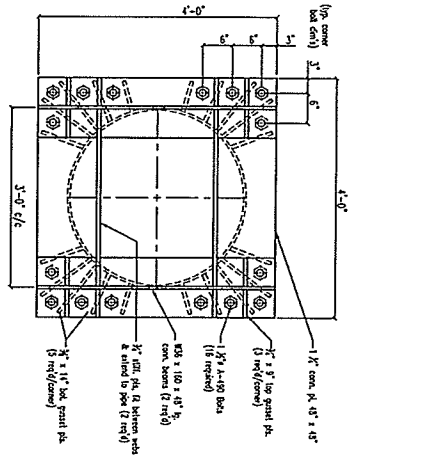
1 Front Elevation



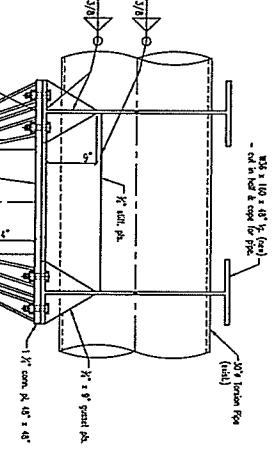
4 Lateral Brace Connection



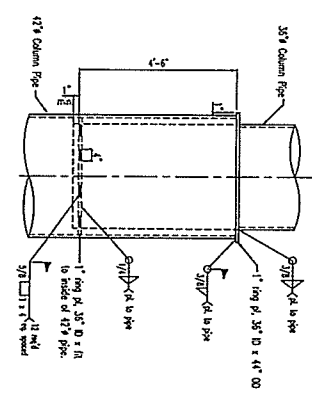
Side View



Plan View



2 Column Connection



3 Column Splice Detail

GENERAL

- All bolts and nuts are to be 304 or 316 stainless steel unless otherwise specified.
- Steel shall be A36 unless otherwise specified.
- Welding shall be E70XX.
- Structural steel shall be A588 or A572 unless otherwise specified.
- Concrete shall be 3000 psi normal weight unless otherwise specified.
- Reinforcing steel shall be #4 unless otherwise specified.
- Dimensions to centerlines unless otherwise indicated.
- Dimensions to finished surfaces unless otherwise indicated.
- Dimensions to structural steel shall be to the outside of flanges or web.
- Dimensions to concrete shall be to the finished surface.
- Dimensions to masonry shall be to the finished face.
- Dimensions to glass shall be to the glazing panel.
- Dimensions to fabric shall be to the finished surface.
- Dimensions to sign shall be to the finished surface.

PROJECT: 20' V- Sign Face

CLIENT: LAMAR - New

DATE: 11/11/11

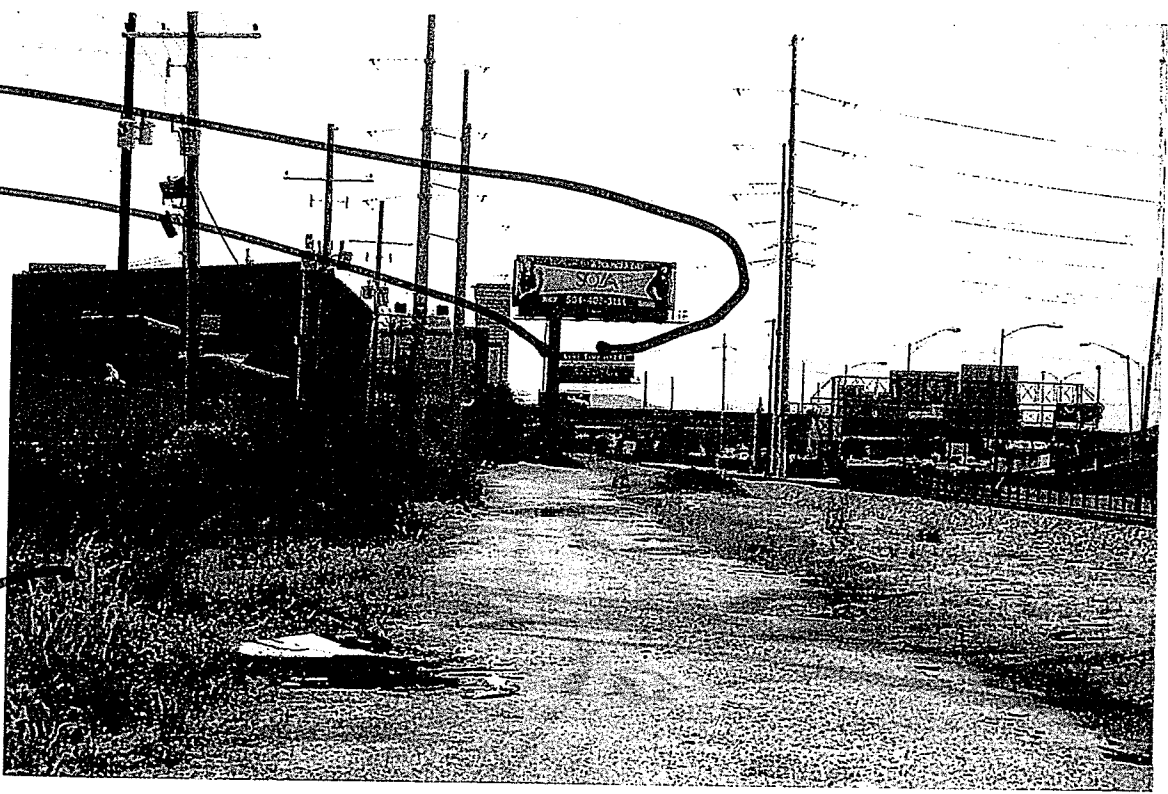
PROJECT: 20' V- Sign Face

CLIENT: LAMAR - New

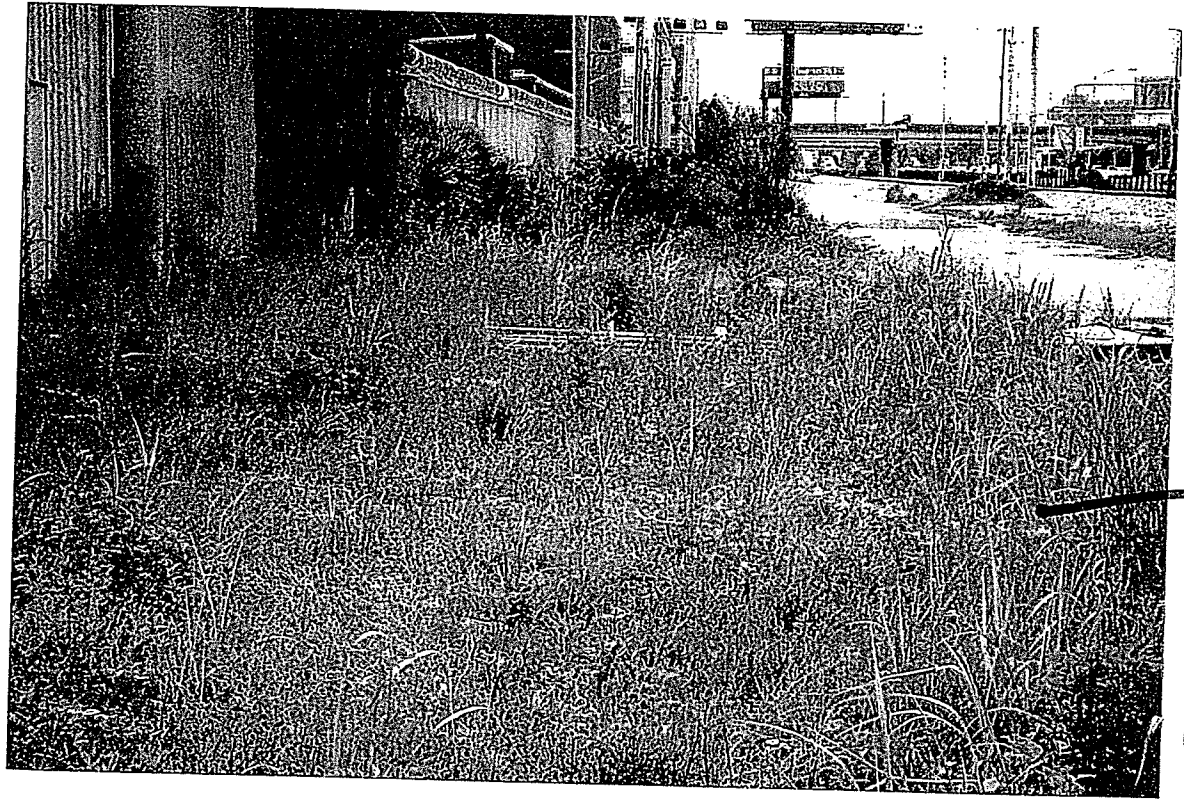
DATE: 11/11/11

1) Contractor is responsible to verify all dimensions and materials. Contractor shall be responsible to the City of Houston for all permits and inspections of this structure.

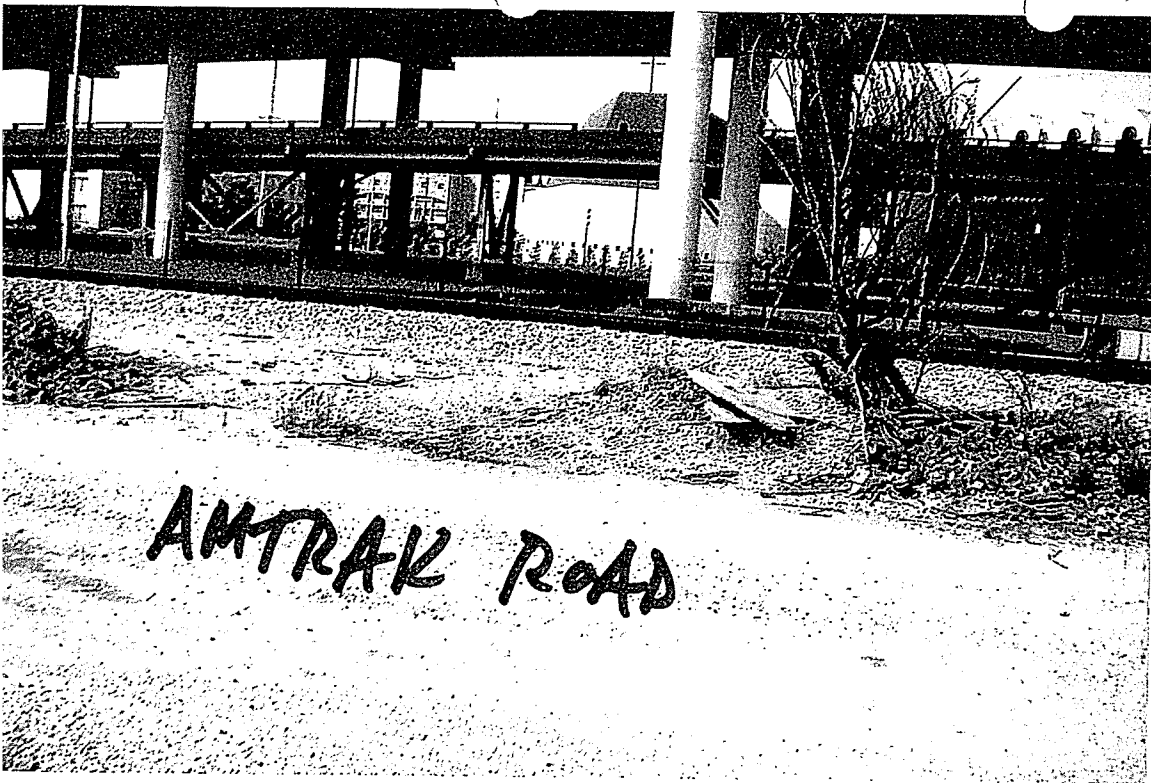
OTHER
BILLBOARDS
WHICH ARE
ON CITY-OWNED
PROPERTY



REAR OF
PROPERTY
@ 3918 GRAVIER



REAR
OF PROPERTY
@ 3918 GRAVIER



Low
Fence

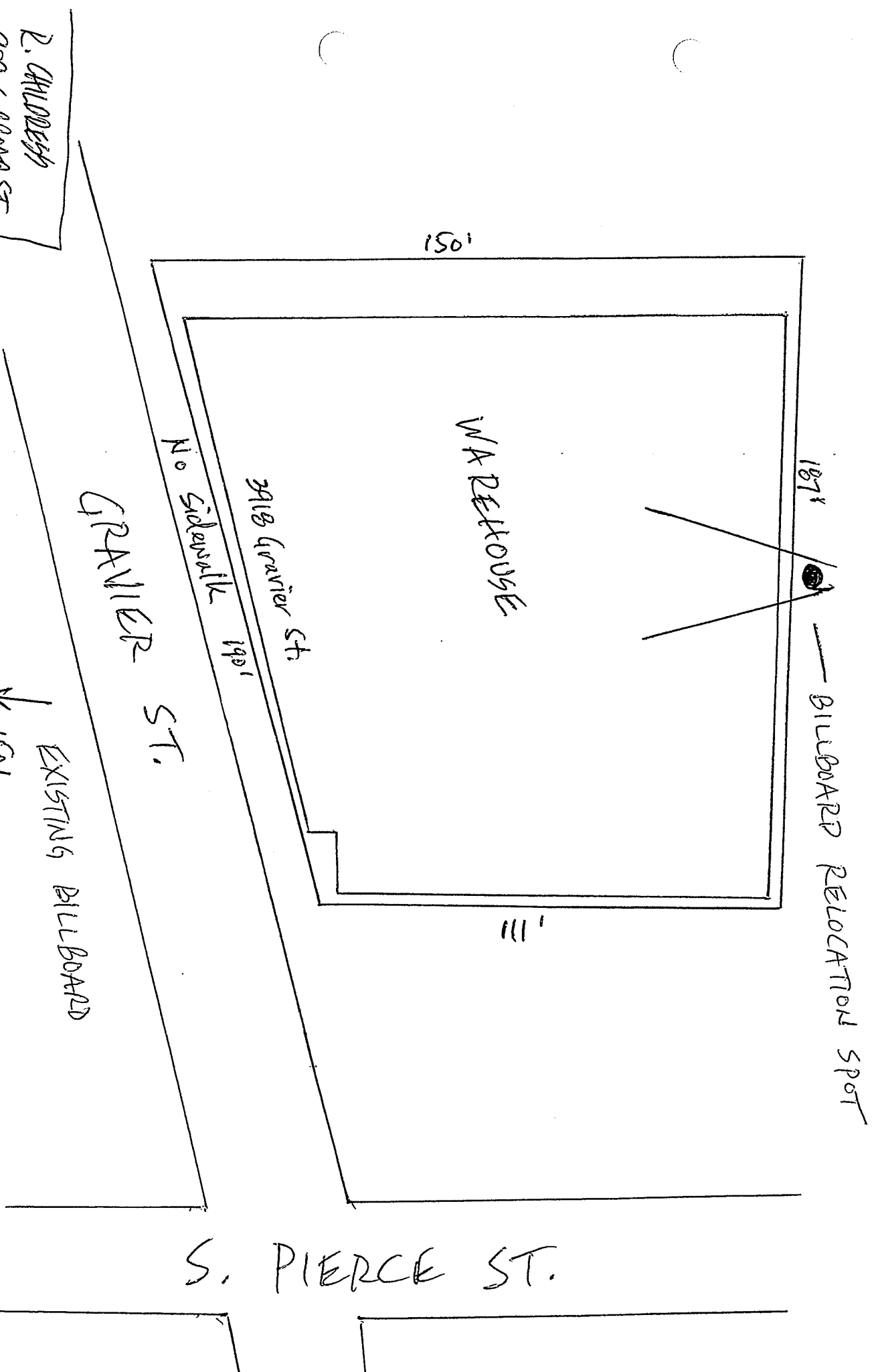
AMTRAK ROAD

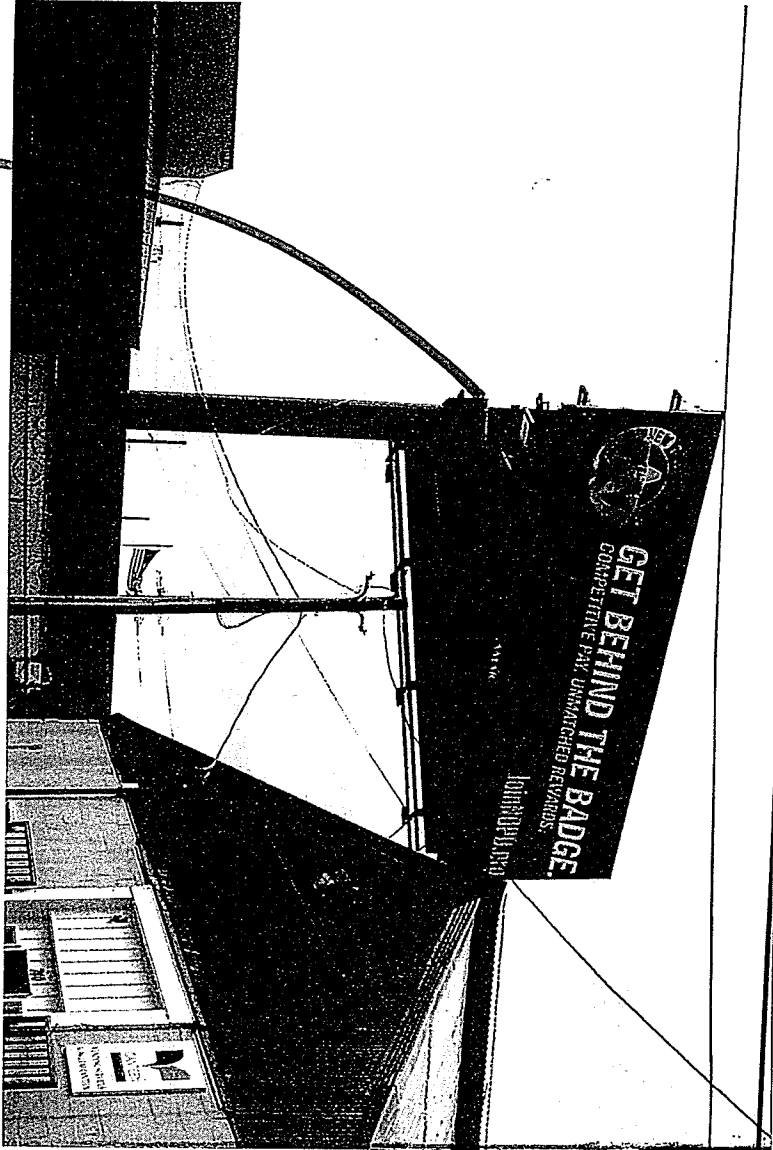


Close-up
of
Low Fence

PUBLIC BELT RR TRACK

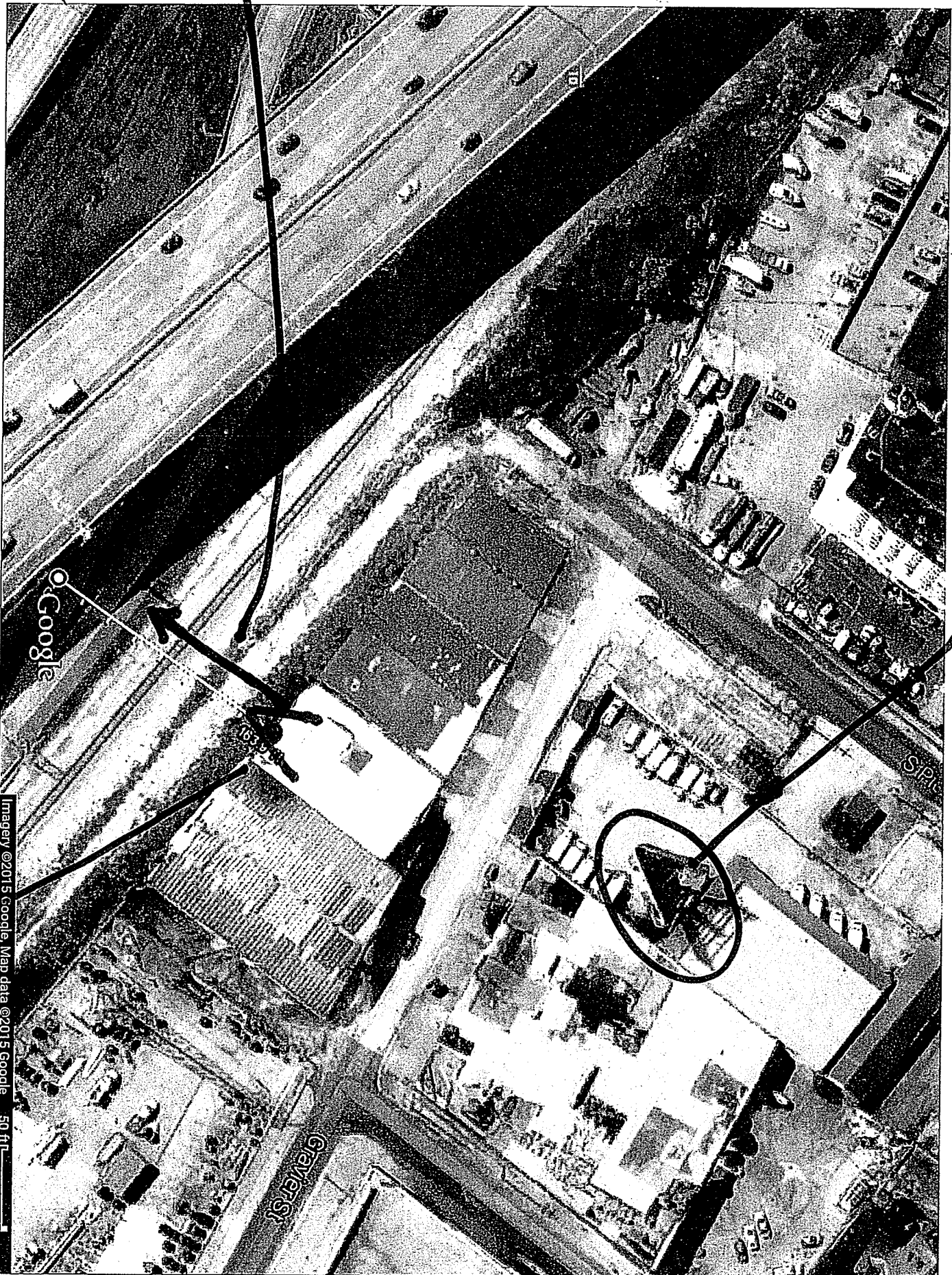
I-10





SIGN TO BE REMOVED FROM 730 S. PIERCE
AND RELOCATED TO 3918 GRAVIER

EXISTING BILLBOARD
TO BE RELOCATED.



164' TO MAIN ROAD - LAST TO EXIT ROAD

RELOCATED BILLBOARD 50'