

ART AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (AARB)

Project Data Sheet

Revised February 6, 2025

(Due by 3:00 p.m. on the Friday two weeks before the meeting to AARB@dgs.virginia.gov)

Date Submitted: February 20, 2026

Agency Name: Virginia Commonwealth University

Project Name, Number, and Location

Project Name: RecWell Enabling Project
Project Code: 236-18676-002
Project Location: 601 N 10th St, Richmond, VA 23298

Representatives for the Agency and the Architect/Engineer

Agency: Virginia Commonwealth University
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Sarah Rosenblatt
Associate Principal, Senior Architect and Richmond Office Leader
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Current Project Status/Phase and Schedule

- Preliminary Design Submission:
- Final Design Submission:

Phase: Preliminary Design

Request for Consent Agenda: Yes: No:

Project Description

The VCU RecWell Enabling Project is located on the first floor of the VCU Parking Deck on 10th Street. It will transform the existing VCU MCV Barnes & Noble bookstore space into a vibrant new recreation and wellness facility. This first floor, 7,718 SF renovation will provide a welcoming and flexible fitness spaces designed to serve students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The program includes generous open fitness areas complemented by a service desk, lockers, office space, restrooms, and back-of-house support areas. Enhanced by abundant natural light, the main fitness space is envisioned as an urban harbor — a place of energy, restoration, and community — while offering the campus population a place to exercise, recharge, and connect within the dynamic setting of the VCU Medical Campus.

Architectural Aesthetic:

The RecWell project will preserve the overall architectural character of the existing building while introducing targeted enhancements to elevate its presence and performance. Exterior improvements will focus on updated storefront systems, enhanced lighting, and a cohesive wayfinding strategy. The existing

outdated storefronts will be replaced with new full-height glazing systems to improve energy efficiency, and strengthen visual connectivity between the interior fitness spaces and the campus beyond. The relocation of the primary entrance to the southwest corner of the building will establish a clearer point of arrival, enhancing accessibility and creating a welcoming sense of place at this prominent corner. A new, limited solid façade area will be clad in preformed metal to complement and visually align with the building's existing precast concrete panels, metal roofing, ensuring material continuity while subtly refreshing the exterior expression.

Relationship to Approved Master Plan

The VCU RecWell project aligns with the ONE VCU Master Plan, emphasizing campus unification, enhanced mobility and safety, and strategic growth of the Medical College of Virginia campus. The new VCU RecWell facility is positioned to support the students, staff, and alumni at the VCU MCV Campus.

Existing Architectural Context

The surrounding context reflects a diverse and evolving architectural landscape, characterized by a mix of building types, styles, and scales. To the southwest, the six-story Virginia Biotechnology Research Park presents a composition of brick, concrete masonry, and glass curtain wall systems. Directly south, the eight-story VCU College of Health Professions Building expresses a contemporary architectural language through expansive glazing, stone accents, and architectural precast detailing. To the southeast, Cabaniss Hall introduces a lower-rise residential scale, offering a more traditional and intimate campus presence. This portion of the campus is undergoing a significant architectural transformation. Recent developments emphasize modern materials and forms, including glass-forward façades, metal panel accents, textured precast concrete, and locally sourced Virginia stone. These newer interventions reflect a shift toward a contemporary design vocabulary while maintaining references to the region's architectural heritage. In contrast, many of the earlier campus buildings retain more traditional expressions, defined by brick façades and darker glazing systems. Together, these layers of architectural evolution create a dynamic and visually rich urban fabric that reflects both the history and forward momentum of the VCU Medical Campus.



RICHMOND

VIRGINIA



VCU

RECWELL ENABLING PROJECT

DEB Project #: 236-18676-002

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN
ART AND ARCHITECTURAL
REVIEW BOARD
6 MARCH 2026**

Client

Virginia Commonwealth University

Architect

Hanbury

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

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PROJECT VISION AND DRIVERS

The RecWell project will preserve the overall architectural character of the existing building while introducing targeted enhancements to elevate its presence and performance. Exterior improvements will focus on updated storefront systems, enhanced lighting, and a cohesive wayfinding strategy. The existing outdated storefronts will be replaced with new full-height glazing systems to improve energy efficiency, and strengthen visual connectivity between the interior fitness spaces and the campus beyond. The relocation of the primary entrance to the southwest corner of the building will establish a clearer point of arrival, enhancing accessibility and creating a welcoming sense of place at this prominent corner. A new, limited solid façade area will be clad in preformed metal to complement and visually align with the building's existing precast concrete panels, metal roofing, ensuring material continuity while subtly refreshing the exterior expression.



Existing Condition: Entry



Precedent Image: Entry

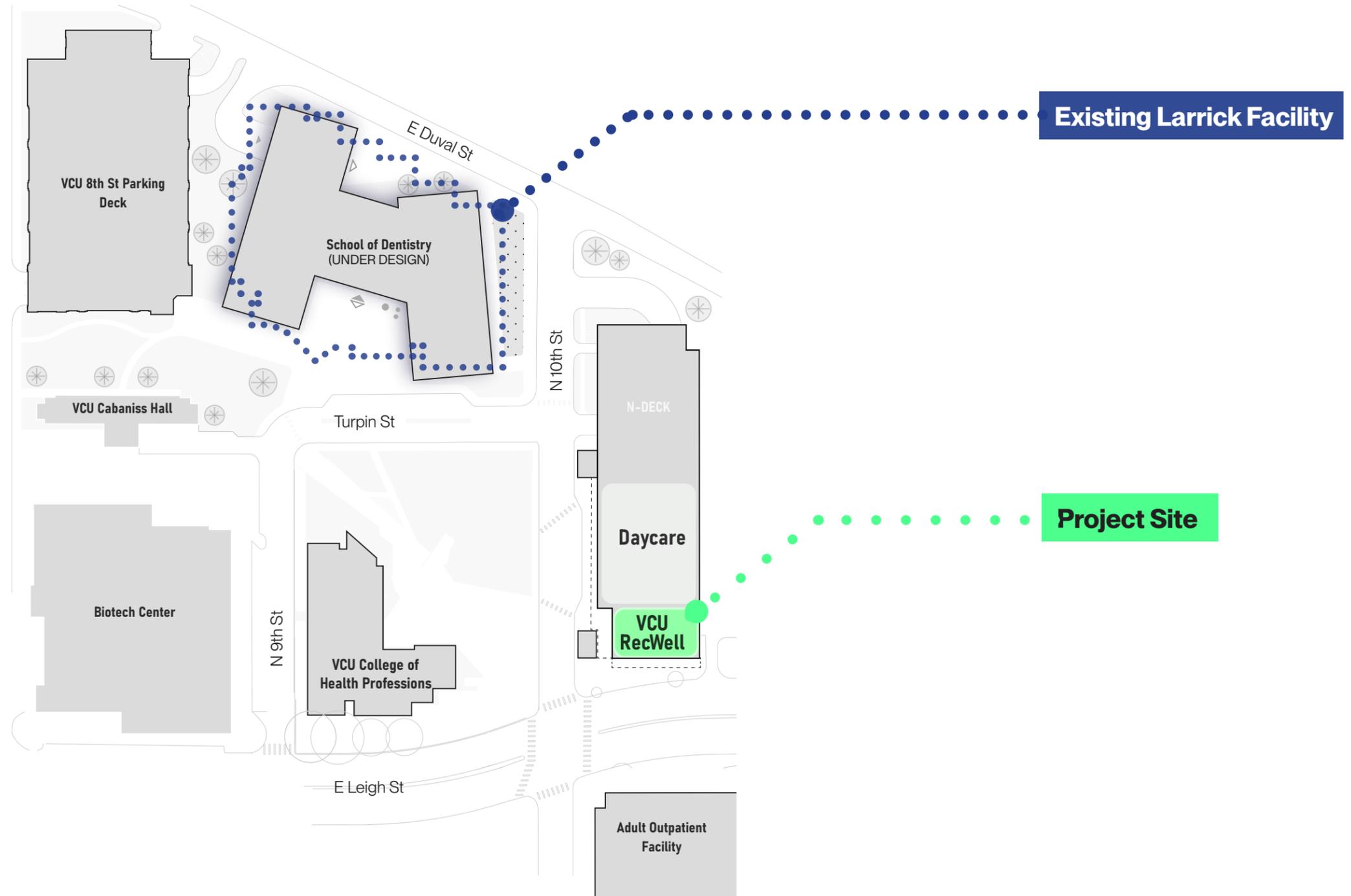


Precedent Image: Fitness Space

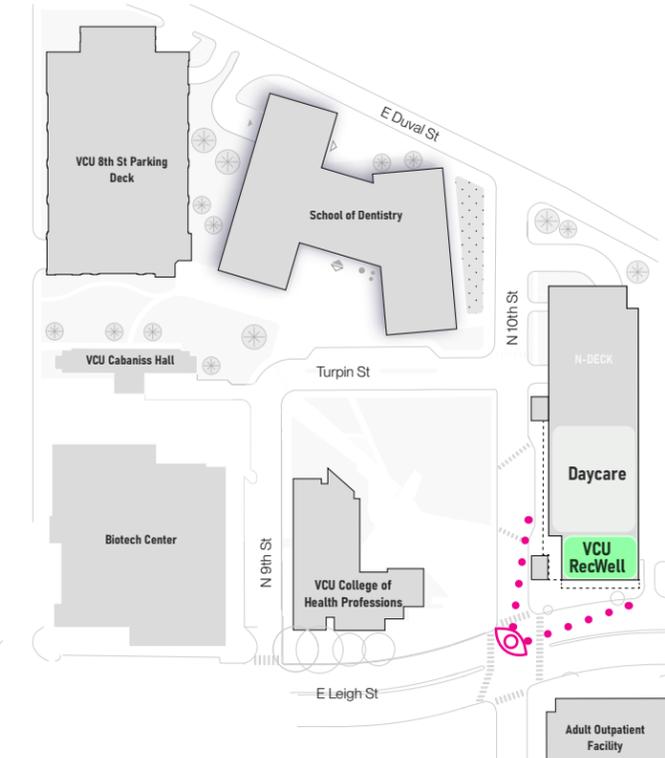


Precedent Image: Preformed Metal Panel

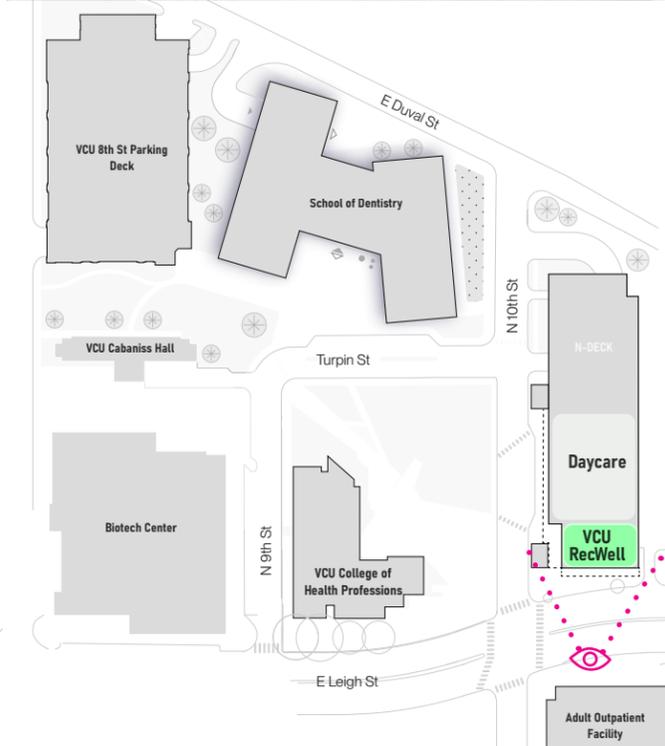
SITE LOCATION



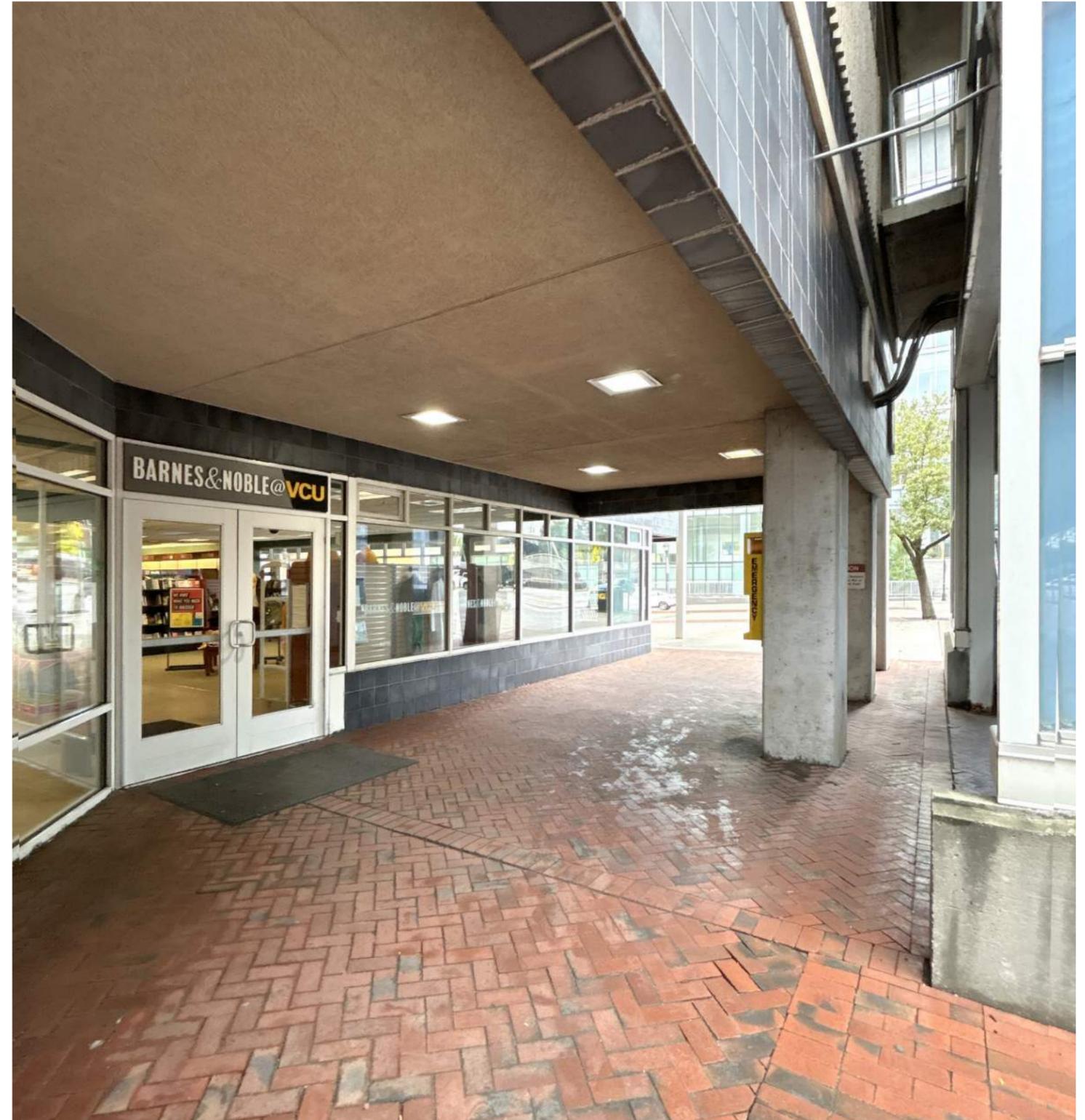
EXISTING CONDITION - N 10TH STREET



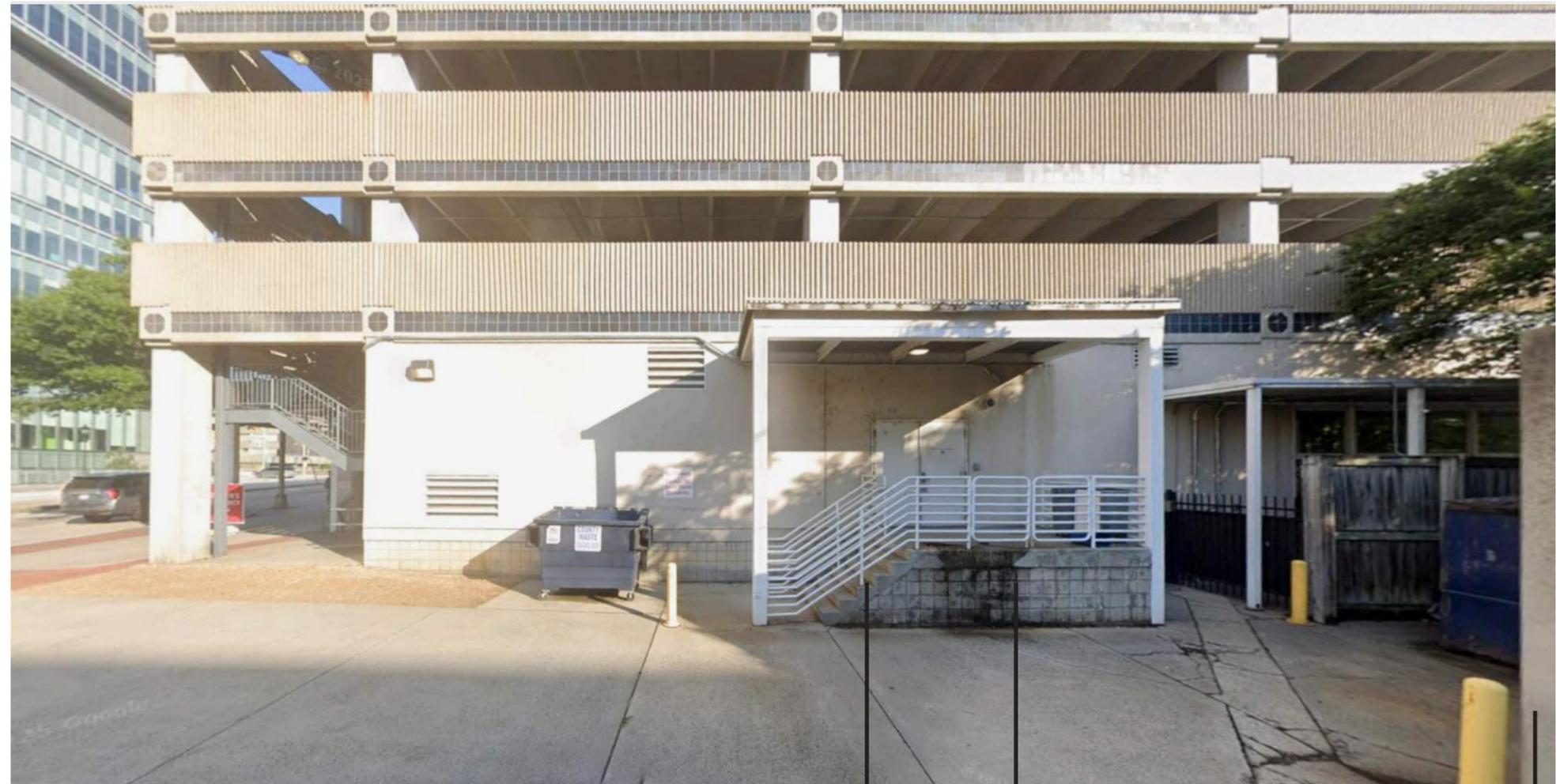
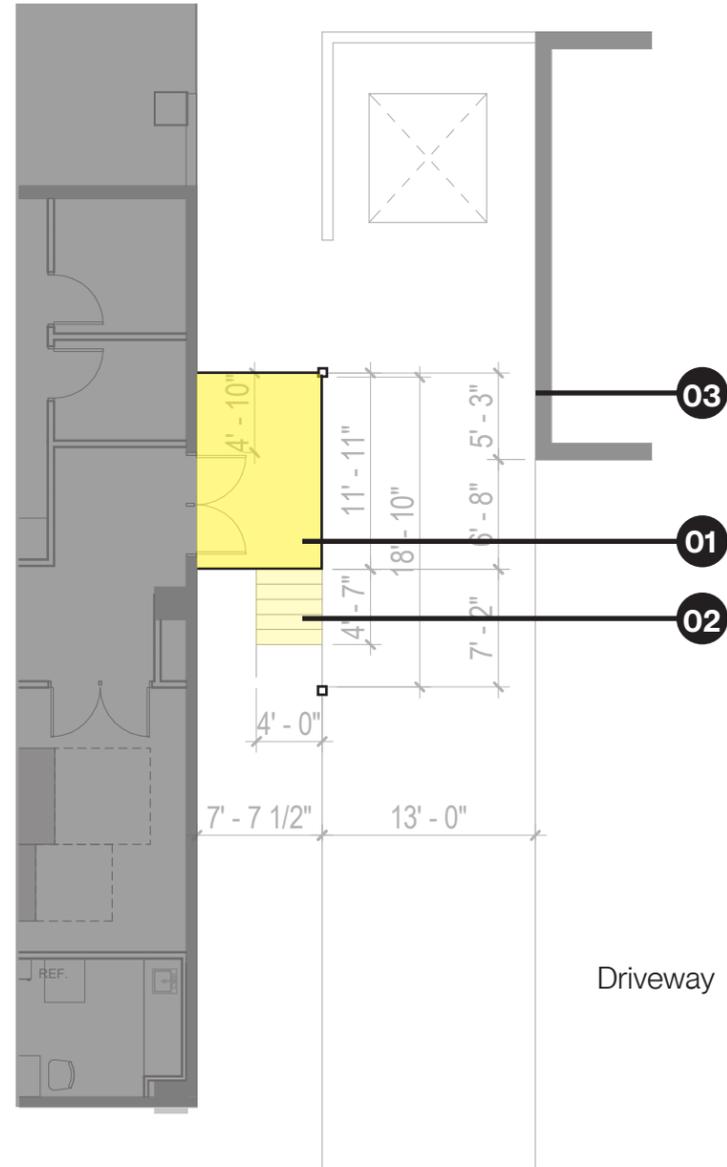
EXISTING CONDITION - E LEIGH STREET



SITE CONTEXT

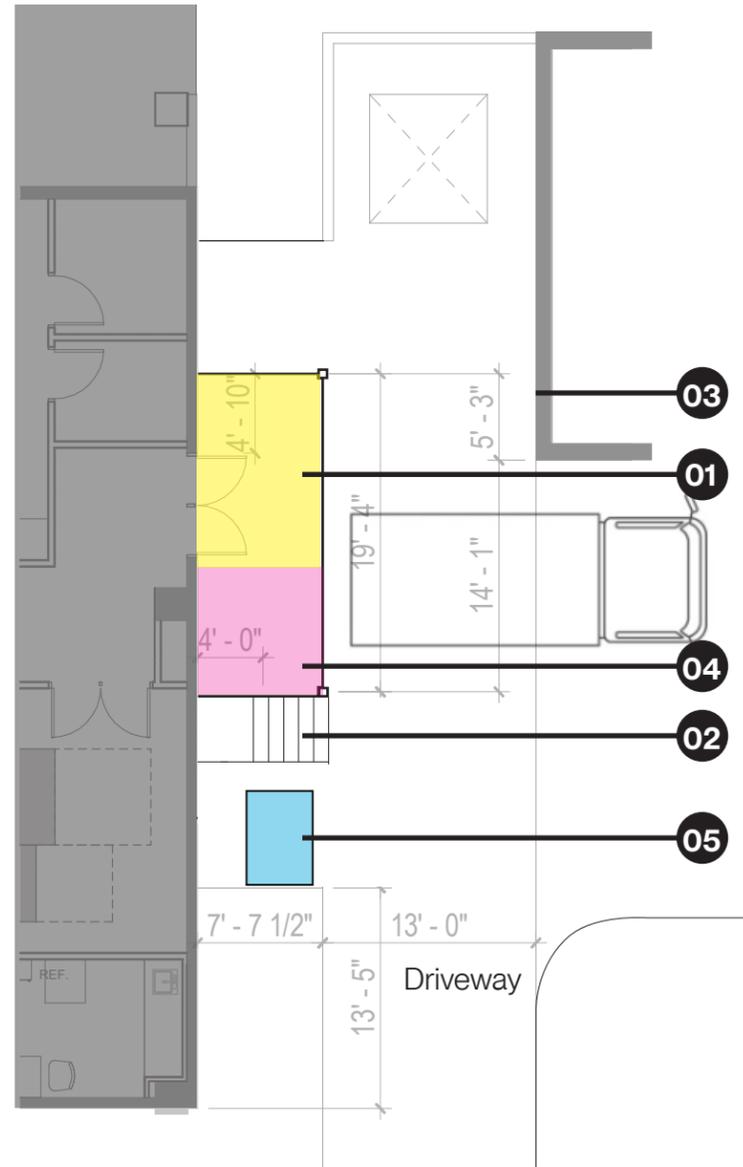


EXISTING LOADING DOCK



- 01. Existing Loading Dock
- 02. Existing Stair
- 03. Existing Concrete Wall

PROPOSED LOADING DOCK + CHILLER



- 01. Existing Loading Dock
- 02. New Stair
- 03. Existing Concrete Wall
- 04. Extended Loading Dock Platform
- 05. New Chiller



LEIGH STREET - ENTRY FACADE



Back-lit column enclosure



Vertical channel cladding



Exterior Storefront

FACADE MODIFICATIONS

- Remove soffit at Leigh Street canopy to elevate street presence for RecWell
- Increase storefront height to 12'-0"H
- Strategic re-skinning of vertical surfaces at Leigh Street
- Opportunity to re-clad double height column with feature finish and/or illumination

LEIGH STREET - ENTRY FACADE



CURRENT CONDITION



PROPOSED DESIGN