

# Seattle Center Armory Facade Lighting Project

City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board, ARC Briefing

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# PROJECT SUMMARY

## Purpose and context:

With the renovation of the New Arena at Seattle Center, the Seattle Center Campus looks to address the exterior of the Armory building, by acknowledging its history and current use as a food and event hall for the area. This phased package of work has removed many non-original elements from the Armory and looks to highlight its impressive form and scale as a center and anchor for Seattle Center. The current and final phase consists of a new lighting concept that emphasizes the architectural character of the building and is also programmable to change color for special events.

## Completed Phases of Work:

- **Phase 1** (completed 2021)
  1. Removal of non-original items from the building facade (canopies, light fixtures, stucco, etc.)
  2. Facade restoration (brick cleaning, concrete painting)
  3. New building signs
- **Phase 2** (nearly complete)
  1. New entry canopies at northwest and southwest entrances
  2. Upgrades to public entries/doors

## Proposed Scope of Work Under This Certificate of Approval:

- **Phase 3 - New Exterior Building Lighting**
  1. Full building facade washes on the east, west and south elevations
  2. Architectural uplighting of window reliefs at the building corners and north entry
  3. Lighting of unique architectural features, namely the north entry eagles
  4. Illumination of new building signage

## Proposed Project Schedule:





# ARMORY SITE AND CONTEXT

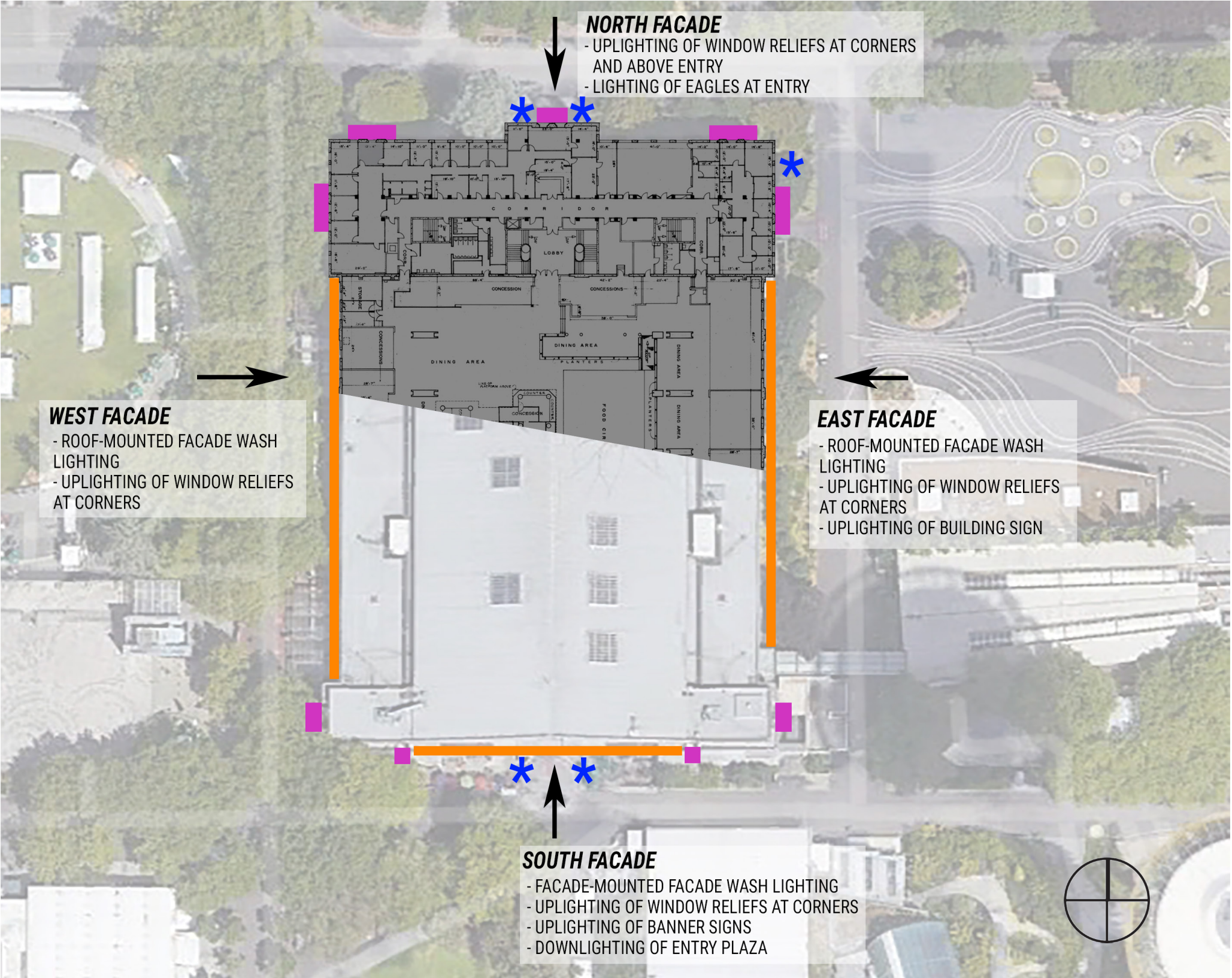
- **Seattle Center Campus**
  - 1 - Climate Pledge Arena
  - 2 - International Fountain
  - 3 - Memorial Stadium
  - 4 - McCaw Hall
  - 5 - MoPOP
  - 6 - Space Needle
  - 7 - Armory
  - 8 - Pacific Science Center





# ARMORY SCOPE OF WORK

- Facade Wash Downlighting
- Uplighting of Window Reliefs at Corners
- Feature Lighting





# BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

**Name:** Seattle Center - Armory  
**Address:** 305 Harrison St, Seattle WA 98109  
**Date Constructed:** 1939

The Seattle Armory building was built in 1939 as the Seattle Field Artillery Armory for the National Guard under the New Deal Program – Public Works Administration, at the end of the Great Depression.

The Seattle Armory building is a poured in place concrete structure with brick accents. Designed in a streamlined modern style, the mass of the building is articulated by concrete relief, ribbon windows with divided lites, and bands of brick. The strong horizontal and vertical lines of the building are contrasted by the slope of the site; the south elevation of the building sits three stories above grade, the north elevation is four stories.

Originally built within a residential neighborhood on the block south of the Civic Center Complex, the full-block building was bounded by Harrison St, Thomas St, 3rd Ave N, and Nob Hill Ave N. At the time of construction, the Seattle Armory was the largest armory building in America.

The Armory building had two main program areas, the office or head house, at the north end of the building, and the expansive volume of the Great Hall to the south. Currently, the head house is used for the offices of Seattle Center and other organizations, while the Great Hall forms a food and event hall at the heart of the Seattle Center Campus.

In 1957, the city acquired the property through condemnation. The residential areas surrounding the site were cleared when in 1962, it became part of the Century 21 – Seattle World’s Fair campus. Serving the fair as the “Food Circus,” the building included multiple food concessionaires in the interior, as well as attached structures on all facades, as part of a “dress-up” strategy. During the fair, little mention was given on media and pamphlets to the Armory building, considered “an eyesore” at the time.

Multiple attempts have been made throughout the building’s history to apply new identifying features onto the Armory’s massive facades. In 2012, an effort was made on the interior of the Armory to strip back the layers of finishes to bring the Armory back to its original roots. This effort continues with the proposed modifications intended to celebrate the architecture of the Armory as originally designed.



1



2

1 1939 Northeast corner - then Harrison St

2 1962 South elevation - Food Circus entrance during Seattle Worlds Fair



**COMPLETED PHASE 1: REMOVAL OF NON-ORIGINAL ELEMENTS, FACADE RESTORATION, BUILDING SIGNAGE** FOR REFERENCE ONLY

This phase of work involved the removal of many non-original elements from the Armory to better reflect its original architectural character.

The goal of the facade restoration was to restore the original high-contrast visual impact of the facade using bright concrete contrasted by the dark horizontal brick elements.

- Restoration work included:
- Cleaning the brick and concrete surfaces with medium pressure spray
  - Removing abandoned elements and re-tuckpointing the brick as needed
  - Re-painting the concrete in three subtle tones selected to enhance the relief of the streamlined modern architecture and restore the original contrast between concrete and brick
  - Re-painting of the eagles at the north entrance to match the standard building palette in order to simplify and accentuate the concrete relief

New signage included vertical banners on the south facade, pin-mounted signs above multiple building entries, and a pin-mounted sign on the upper northwest corner of the building.





**COMPLETED PHASE 2: NEW ENTRY CANOPIES AND UPGRADES TO ENTRY DOORS** FOR REFERENCE ONLY

In Phase 2, new canopies were constructed to provide minimal weather protection where previous canopies were removed. Canopies are minimal steel with frosted glass inserts and integrated lighting. Existing brackets were re-used for support.

Additionally, existing non-original public entry doors to the Food and Event Hall, previously frameless and leaky, have been replaced by new fully framed storefront doors.





# PROPOSED PHASE 3: NEW EXTERIOR BUILDING LIGHTING

In Phase 3, new LED lighting will be installed to highlight the architecture of the Armory and announce its presence on the Seattle Center Campus. Lighting will be provided in several layers:

- Full building facade washes on the east, west, and south elevations
- Architectural uplighting of window reliefs at the building corners and north entry
- Lighting of unique architectural features, namely the north entry eagles
- Illumination of new building signage

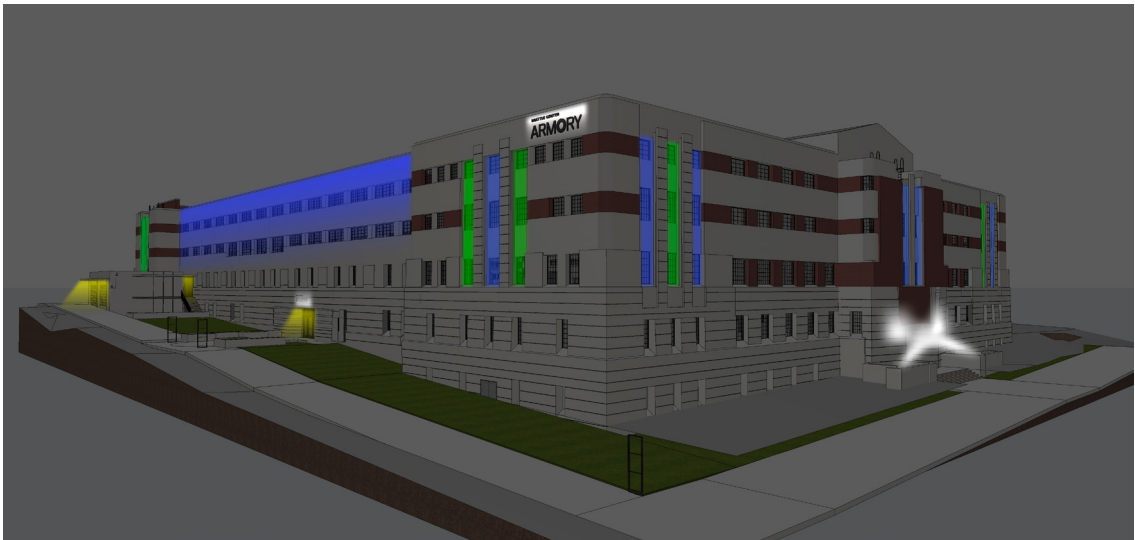
View from southwest corner  
Typical lighting condition



View from northeast corner  
Typical lighting condition



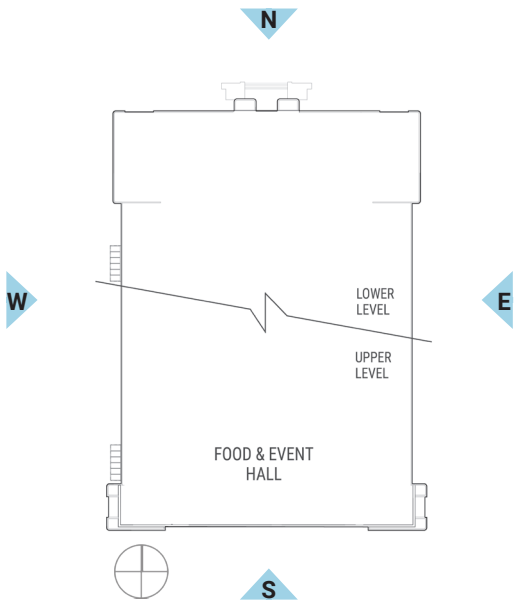
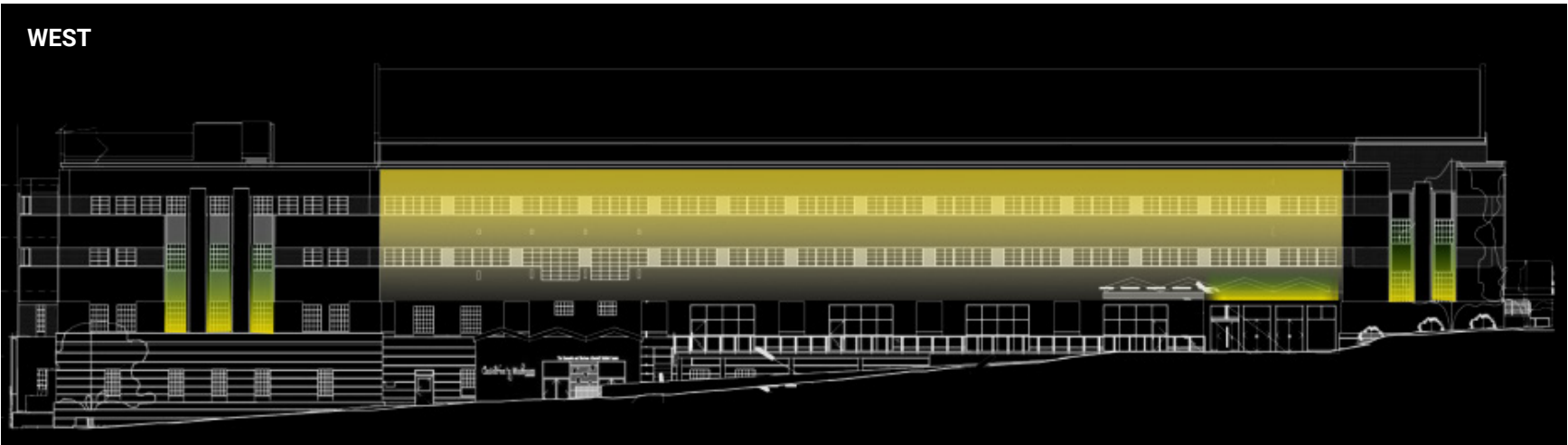
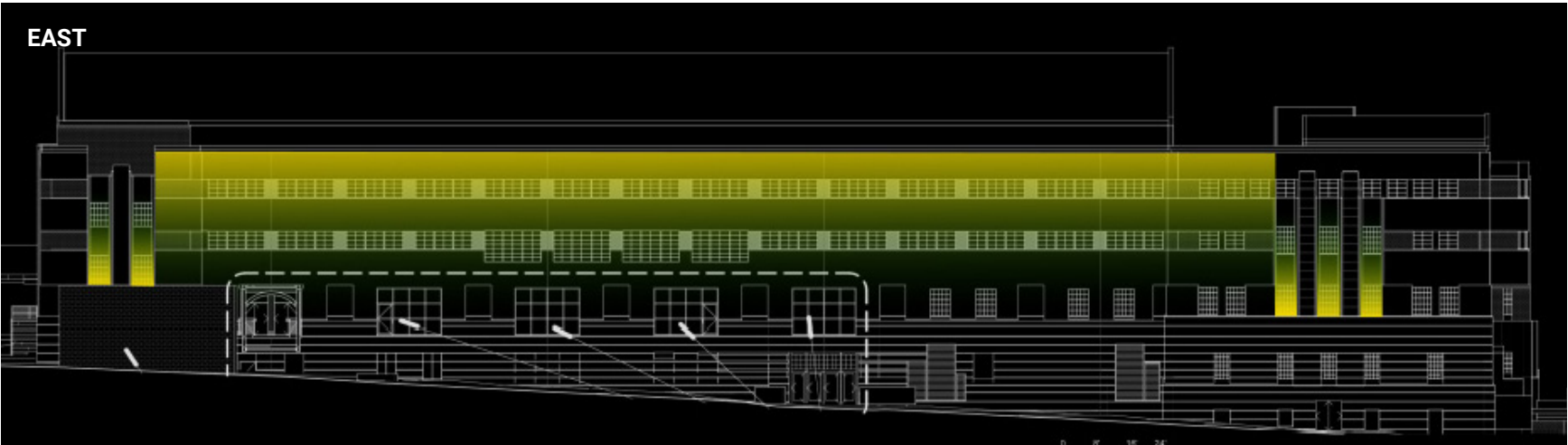
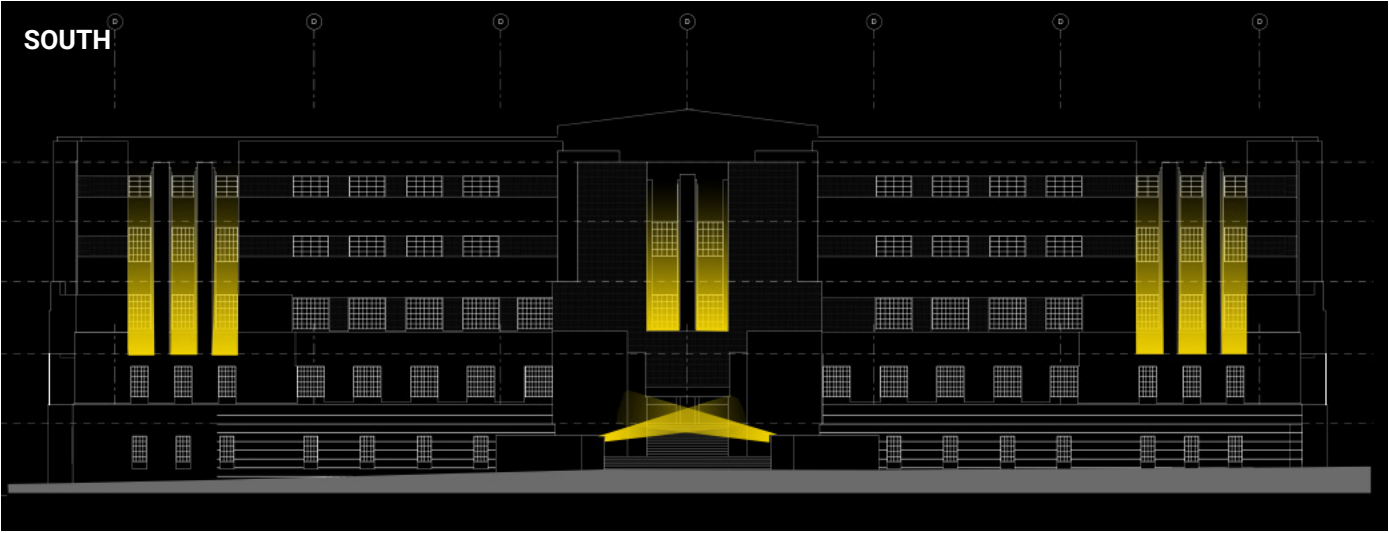
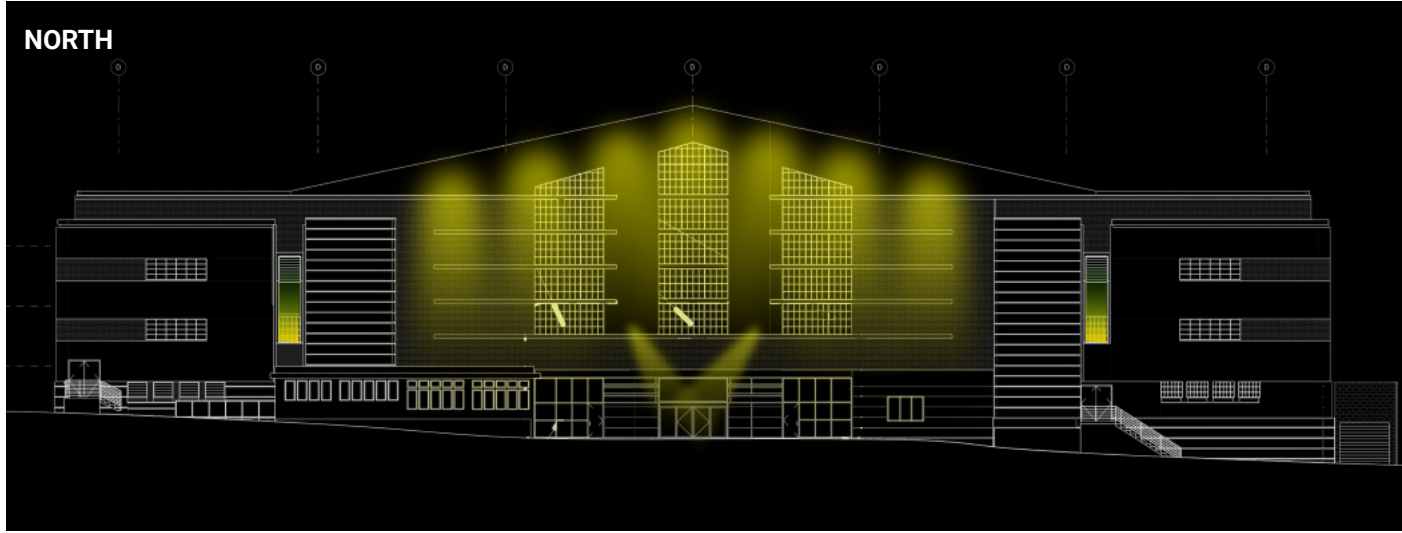
View from northeast corner  
Special event/themed lighting



- ☐ Proposed architectural lighting
- ☒ Existing lighting at entries



PROPOSED PHASE 3: NEW EXTERIOR BUILDING LIGHTING

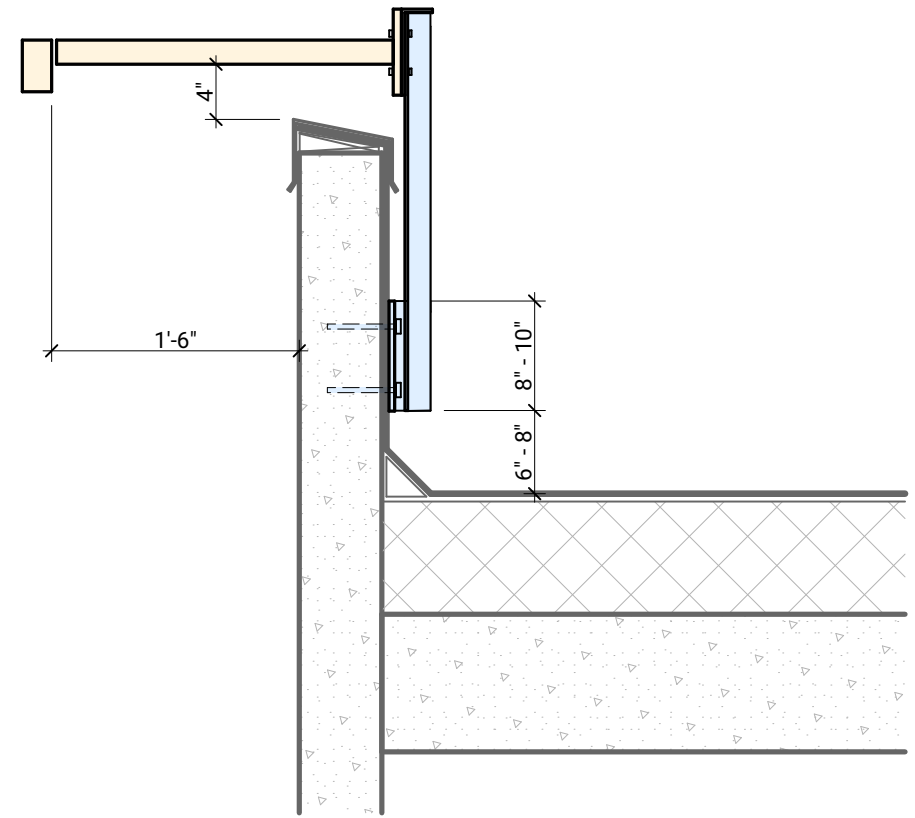
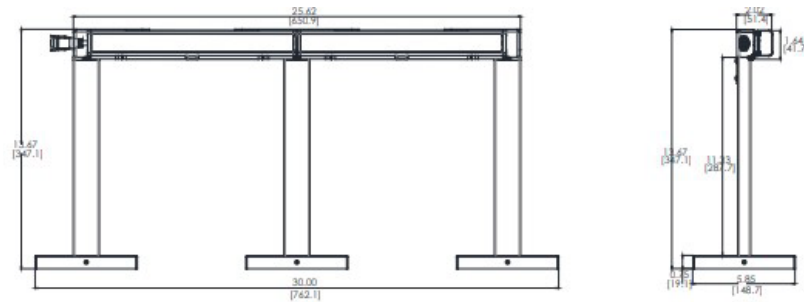




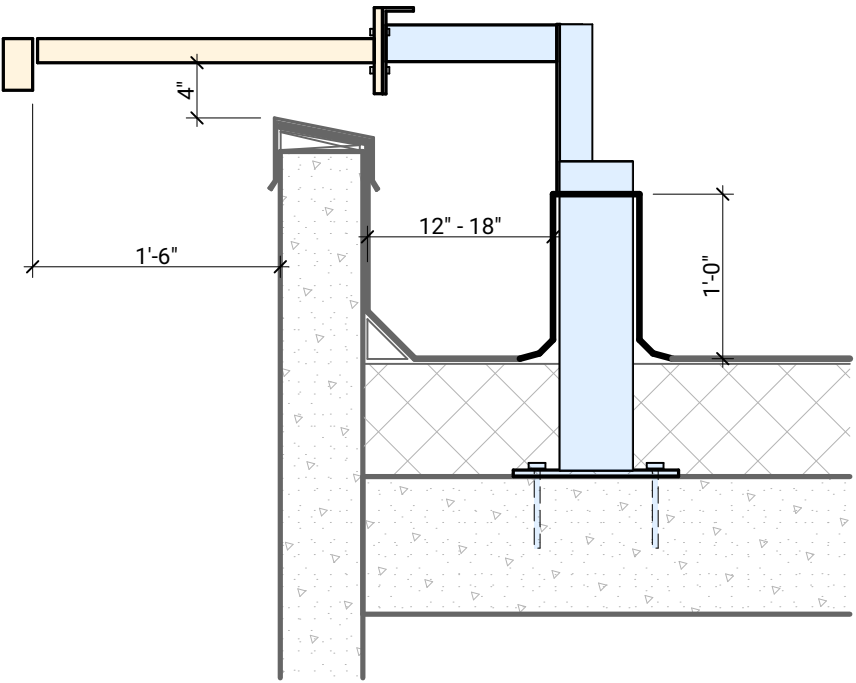
PROPOSED PHASE 3: NEW EXTERIOR BUILDING LIGHTING

Facade Wash Lighting Strategy  
East and West Facades

- Continuous linear fixture will overhang roof line by roughly 18"
- Support arms will be mounted to roof parapet wherever possible, roof deck when necessary



At Tall Parapet



At Short Parapet

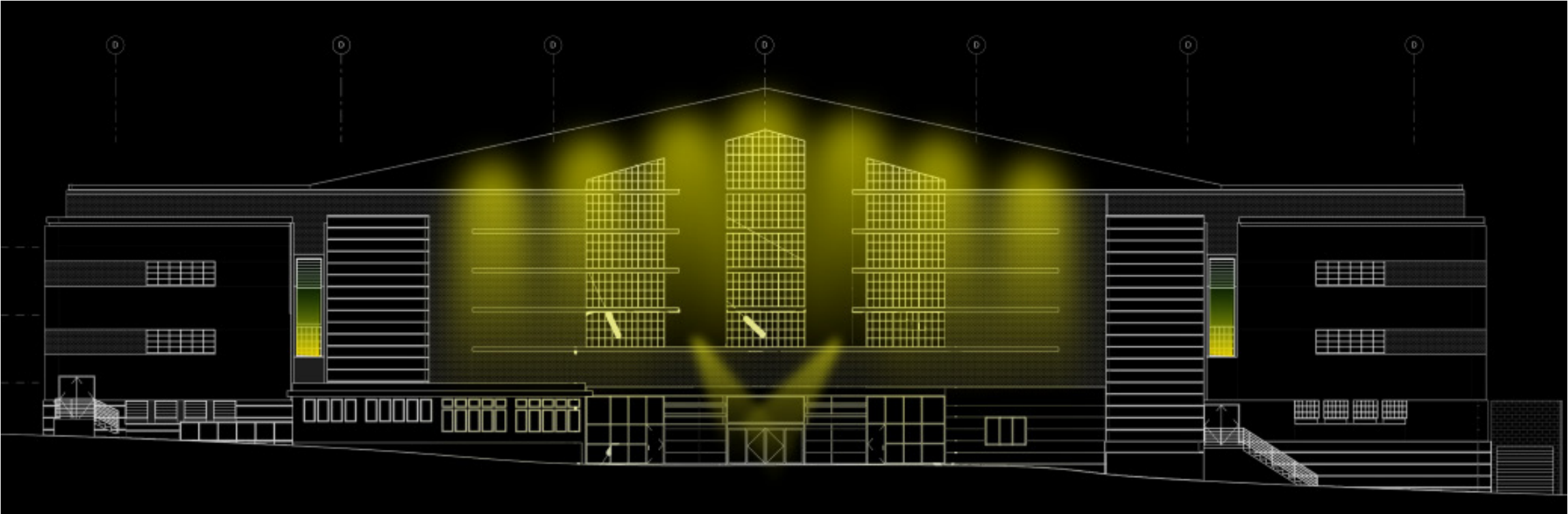




PROPOSED PHASE 3: NEW EXTERIOR BUILDING LIGHTING

Facade Wash Lighting Strategy  
South Facade

- Peaked roof parapet not suitable for mounting fixtures, therefore using facade-mounted fixtures
- Each fixture can be programmed individually





**PROPOSED PHASE 3: NEW EXTERIOR BUILDING LIGHTING**



**South Facade  
Banner/Area Lighting**



**All Facades  
Up-lighting of Window Reliefs**



**East Facade  
Northeast Sign Illumination**



**North Facade  
Feature Lighting on Eagles**

