

UPPER REALMS

BY YALE WOLF

CONCEPT

Neon Art Installation // Public Art Proposal for RailSpur Alley // Yale Wolf

Working Title: *Upper Realms, 2026*

This proposal presents a six-story neon ladder installation for the existing fire escape in RailSpur Alley, the South-end of the Pioneer Square pedestrian friendly alley connecting to Occidental Park through Nord Alley. The artwork will illuminate the south entrance from the stadiums, creating an iconic landmark visible from Occidental Square looking south down the alley. The scale and impact of this work can stand alone while complementing the block's existing art collection, such as Derek Bruno's installation in the stairway on the north side of the building. Interestingly, both pieces engage with themes of light and movement from floor to floor.

The neon ladder is alive. Its simple presence is powerful, light in multiple dimensions creating dynamic lines with interesting viewpoints from the alley and the surrounding area. This installation is an invitation for the viewer's interpretation and can symbolize aspiration, peak achievement, and the journey toward a higher self, serving as a universal invitation to climb toward new possibilities.

This work continues my ongoing visual climbing landscape series, which includes the 8 foot Ruby Red Ladder from 2022, 3 foot Yellow Ladder from 2024, and the 20 foot White Ladder titled *Zenith Accent* from 2025. All three of these pieces are currently in private collections and demonstrate the development of this conceptual framework.

The scope of the project includes neon ladders mindfully attached to the existing framework of the historic building and fire escape. An additional neon ladder for rooftop access, plus one out of reach street level ladder paying homage to the building's original architecture. The neon ladders consist of lightweight custom fabricated metal frames with neon attached, securely mounted to the existing fire escape structure.

The installation utilizes UL rated electrical components and wiring designed for outdoor conditions, running off standard 120v wall power in collaboration with on site electricians and engineers. The installation is fully serviceable, allowing for repairs or fabrication of replacement parts if needed. The longest running neon is 77 years and counting. The same components used in electric commercial signage would be used in the making of this, the same way neon signage has been done for over a 100 years.

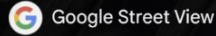
This neon art installation would add to the transformation in the RailSpur alleyway. The light from this installation would be a beacon of artistic ambition, creating a memorable visual experience that draws visitors deeper into the arts district while honoring the building's character and architecture.



RailSpur



Seattle, Washington



Jun 2019 See more dates

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F.X.McCrory's steak chop & Oyster house

Building



Directions



Save



Nearby



Send to phone



Share



Occidental Ave S, Seattle, WA 98104



Suggest an edit on F.X.McCrory's steak chop & Oyster house



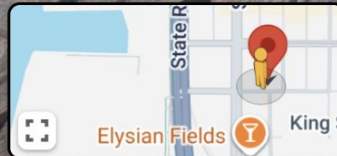
Add a missing place



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Elysian Fields



King S

Google Maps



Permanent installation

Fire escape is non functioning, there is no ladder or access to any of the platforms

15mm neon tubes, white light

Aluminum ladder frame provides structure for neon

Lowest point of ladder is 20ft above ground level

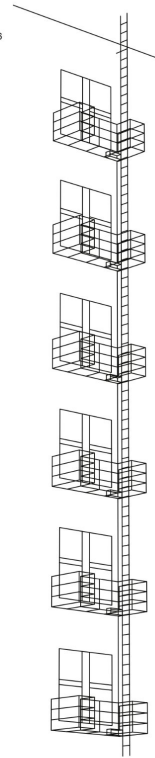
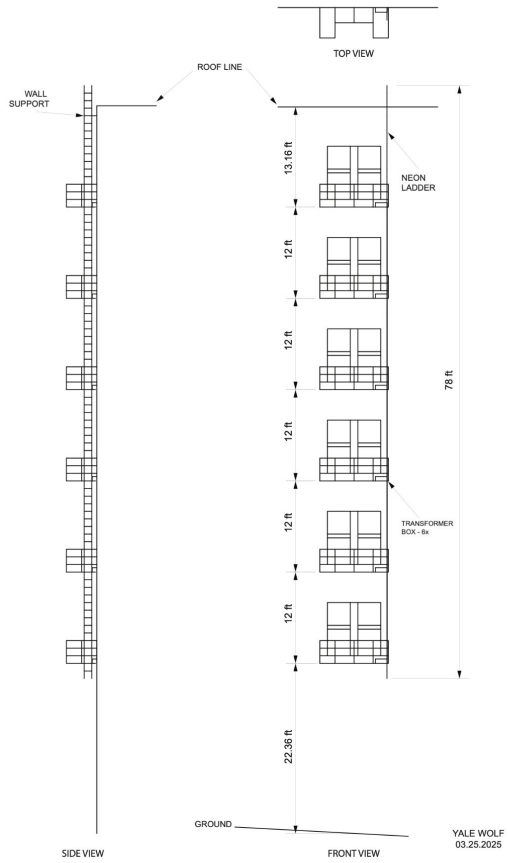
Ladder and transformer attachments to platforms are a bolted vice binding approach (does not require holes in wall or historic platforms)

Conduit runs from ground floor to rooftop, powering each transformer without drilling through the wall

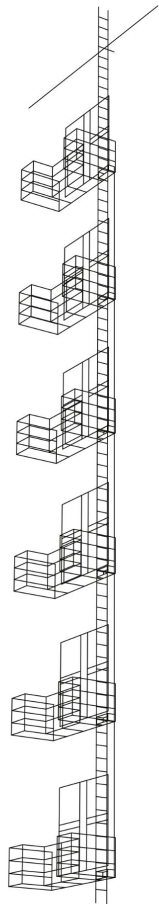
Dimmer allows light to be dimmed from 12am - 6am

Neon faces up North alley, blocked by aluminum ladder structure from South viewpoint

Approved by Urban Villages (owners of RailSpur & Populus Hotel)

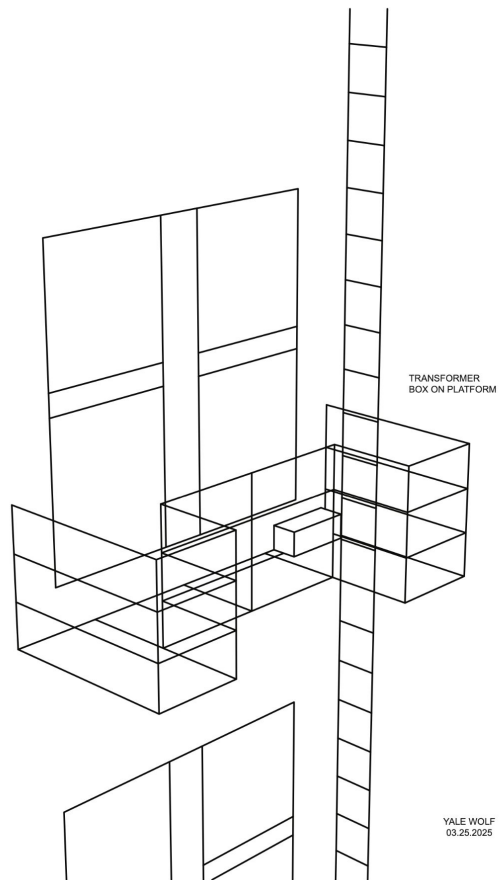


UPPER REALMS, CONCEPT 2026
DRAFT // Version 02



YALE WOLF
03.25.2025

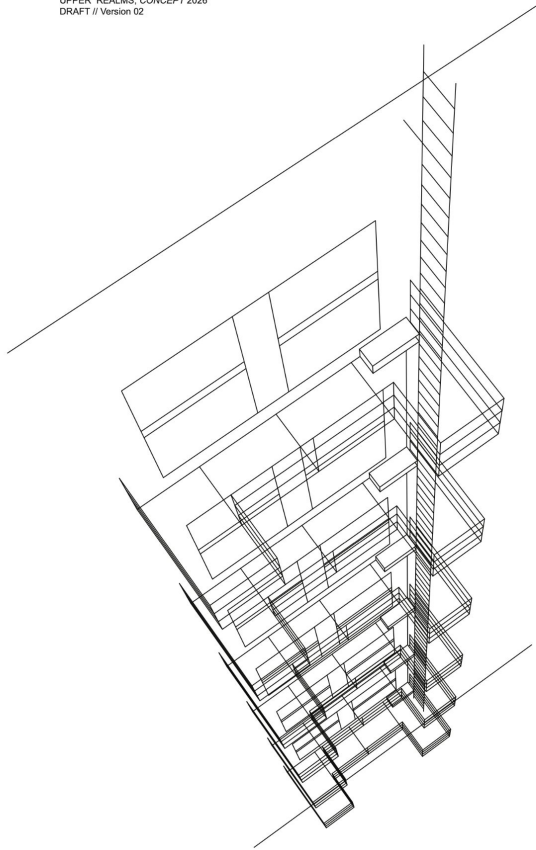
UPPER REALMS, CONCEPT 2026
DRAFT // Version 02



TRANSFORMER
BOX ON PLATFORM

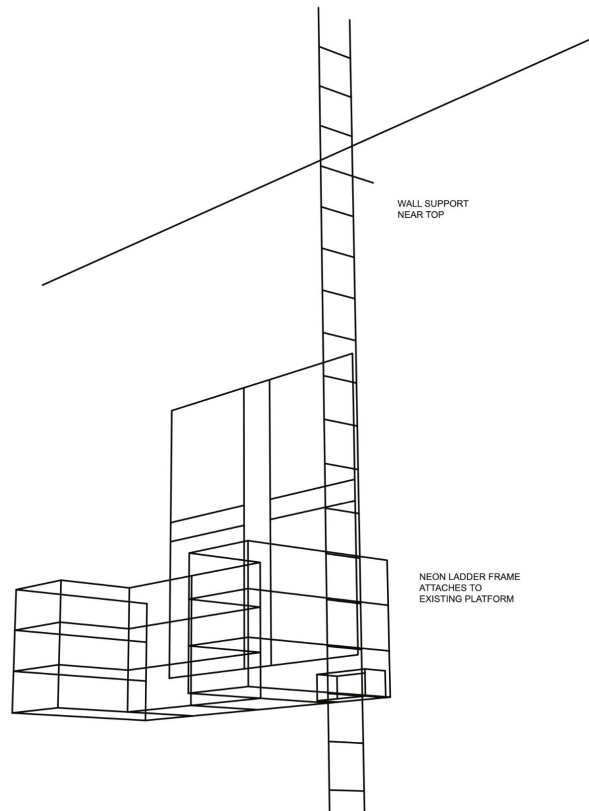
YALE WOLF
03.25.2025

UPPER REALMS, CONCEPT 2026
DRAFT // Version 02



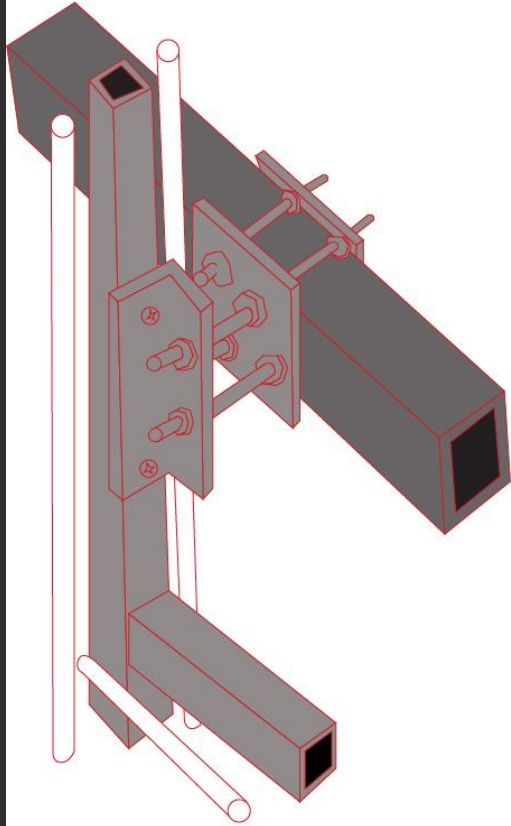
YALE WOLF
03.26.2026

UPPER REALMS, CONCEPT 2026
DRAFT // Version 02

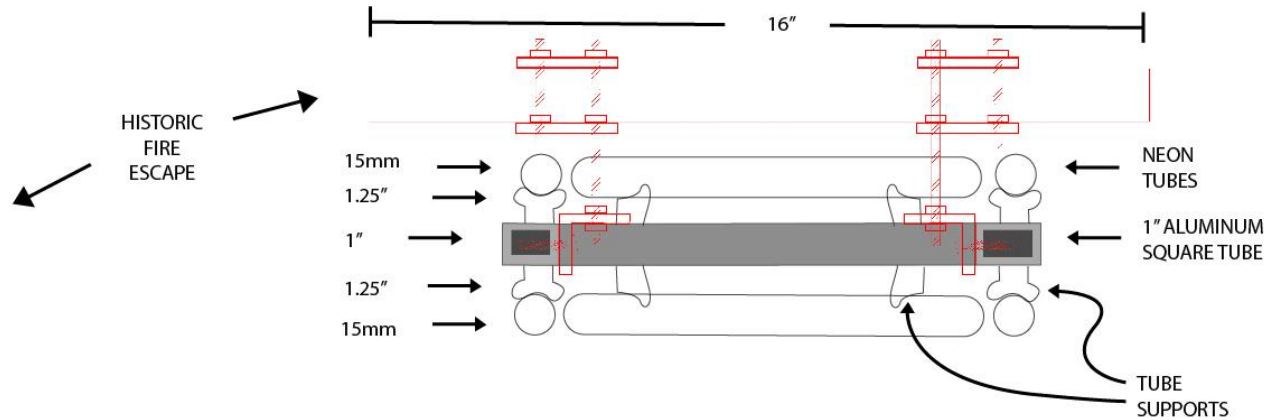


YALE WOLF
03.26.2026

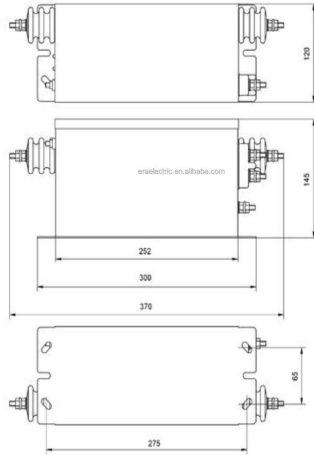
SIDE VIEW



TOP VIEW







Neon Transformer

Model: T30-150

Model	Input Voltage (V)	Frequency (Hz)	Output Voltage (KV)	Output Current (mA)	Capacity (VA)	N/G.Weight (KG)	Packing Size (cm)	Package (PCS/CTN)
T30-150	120	60	15	30	450	7.0/8.0	37x25x25	2





April 10, 2026

Gage Hamilton
Director
Forest for the Trees

Project: Fire Escape Artwork Installation – Structural Feasibility Review
Re: Neon Ladder Artwork Installation on Existing Fire Escape – 419 Occidental Ave S
Gage,

At your request, we have evaluated the structural feasibility of installing the proposed neon ladder artwork on the existing exterior fire escape structure. Our review is based on the artwork information provided by the artist (Upper Realms, Concept 2026 – Draft Version 02 dated 03/25/2025), along with our understanding of the existing fire escape configuration and prior alterations.

Based on available information, the existing fire escape has undergone modifications since its original construction, including removal of the bar grating floor system and the access ladder that previously served the structure. The remaining framing is assumed to be unchanged from its original configuration aside from these removals.

We have evaluated the relative change in loading associated with installation of the proposed artwork. The neon ladder assembly, including associated components such as transformer boxes and supports, represents a lightweight addition to the structure. When compared against the weight of the previously removed grating and ladder elements, the net increase in gravity load on the existing framing is approximately 4.6%.

This increase is below the 5% threshold defined in the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) for triggering classification as a substantial structural alteration. Based on this criterion, the addition of the artwork does not constitute a substantial increase in structural demand on the existing fire escape framing.

Based on our review, it is our opinion that the existing fire escape structure can support the proposed neon ladder artwork from a gravity load standpoint, assuming:

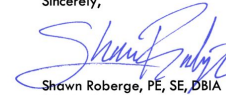
- The existing structural members are in sound condition and free of significant corrosion or damage.
- Attachment of the artwork is detailed to distribute loads in a manner consistent with the existing framing capacity.

- No additional loads beyond those represented in the provided artwork information are introduced.

This evaluation is limited to overall gravity load effects associated with the proposed installation. Assessment of local connection detailing, anchorage, lateral loading (including wind), electrical components, and code compliance for means of egress are outside the scope of this review unless noted otherwise.

If you have any questions or would like us to review connection details or field conditions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Shawn Roberge, PE, SE, DBIA
Principal





February 12, 2026

On behalf of Urban Villages, owner's representative for FOUR NINETEEN OCCIDENTAL LLC and the property located at 419 Occidental Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98104, this letter serves as formal approval for the installation of the exterior neon art installation titled *Upper Realms* by Yale Wolf.

The installation will be facilitated by Forest for the Trees and will be located on the west-facing wall of 419 Occidental Avenue South, running vertically through the historic fire escape.

Please let us know if any additional documentation is required.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henry Watson".

Henry Watson
Director of Development

THANK YOU :)