

Docket Item #s 8 & 9
BAR CASE # 2009-0016 &
BAR CASE # 2009-0017

BAR Meeting
April 1, 2009

ISSUE: Addition and alterations and Waiver of HVAC Screening Requirement

APPLICANT: Patrick Camus for Ken and Esther Carpi

LOCATION: 117 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

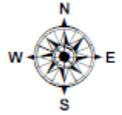
1. That the addition be stepped in on the north elevation so it is either flush with or slightly inset from the plane of the existing north elevation, and that the addition be reduced proportionately to this width reduction to retain the proportions and design of the proposed classical revival addition.
2. That the applicant should reuse all historic brick on the altered garden wall located at the west (rear) property line.
3. *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
4. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
5. The statements in archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk "*" shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

**EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

**BUILDING PERMIT NOTE: Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



BAR CASE #2009-0015, 0016, 0017 4/1/2009



UPDATE:

At the March 4, 2009 hearing, the Board voted to defer the application for further study. The Board commended the design, yet encouraged further study of the proposed addition. The Board recommended the restudy of the height of the addition, the shutter and window configuration, and the height of the proposed garden wall on the north property line (reduce the height to 6 feet by the building). The Board agreed with Staff and believed that the historic garden wall adjacent to the alley should be retained and not altered.

The applicant has since submitted a revised design with a reduction in the amount of proposed demolition/encapsulation and changes to the proposed addition and alterations. The following revisions have been made:

Addition

- Reduction of height of parapet by 6 inches
- Revision of design to make shutters operable and simplification of the panels

Garden Walls and Garden Structure

- No demolition or alteration to the historic wall on the alley elevation
- Installation of two new brick piers adjacent to historic garden wall to access parking area
- Reduction in height of proposed north garden wall by 2 feet with a stepped grade change so that total wall height will be 6-6.5 feet
- Relocation of proposed shed with lattice-work

BAR Case #2009-0008, the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate, must be approved prior to consideration of these cases.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations and a waiver of the HVAC screening requirement at 117 South Lee Street.

Addition

The applicant proposes to construct a two-story rear addition measuring approximately 21 feet by 14.5 feet on the rear (west) elevation of the existing house which currently measures approximately 56.3 feet in length by 20 feet in width at the main block and 14.7 feet in width at the rear ell. Originally, the height of the proposed addition was 23.5 feet in contrast to the height of the existing rear ell which is approximately 21 feet. The applicant has reduced the height of the addition by 6 inches, to +/- 23 feet. On the south side, the proposed addition will wrap a 2 foot wide portion of the south elevation of the brick rear ell. On the north elevation, the proposed addition will extend 2 feet beyond the wall plane of the existing house. On the side (south) elevation an open pergola will be constructed adjacent to the existing rear ell connecting the main block of the house with the addition. There will also be a simple iron railing under the pergola at the basement stairs. The proposed addition will have the general architectural expression of an enclosed two-story porch and have a classical revival vocabulary with Tuscan half columns and a pronounced entablature. The proposed addition will be clad with wood trim and columns, as well as have MDO panels below the windows. The portion extending beyond the north building plane and the north elevation is proposed to have two vertical panels. The

proposed windows will be two-over-two, true divided light, double-hung wood windows. The doors will also be true divided light, four light wood doors. Adjacent to the windows will be single operable louvered wood shutters.

Alterations

The applicant is proposing a number of alterations to the property.

The applicant is proposing to remove the existing side-oriented front stoop. The proposed stoop and stairs will encroach 4 feet into the public right-of-way. The stoop will be limestone with an iron railing, curving outward at the bottom tread. New light fixtures are proposed on either side of the door and will be simple metal framed lanterns measuring 10.5 by 11.5 by 18.75 inches. The applicant proposes new ironwork at the basement windows.

The applicant proposes several alterations to the historic brick garden wall. On the front (east) elevation, the applicant proposes to construct a new 6 foot brick pier at the corner and install a new painted wood gate. The applicant no longer proposes any demolition, encapsulation or alterations to the historic garden wall. Adjacent to the historic garden wall and parking area, the applicant proposes to construct two brick piers and a wood gate, providing access from the garden to the parking area. A new brick wall, 6 feet in height, is proposed to be constructed where a non-historic brick wall currently separates the garden from the parking area. A new brick wall, 6 feet in height, is proposed to be constructed at the rear (west) property line. A wood pergola at least 80% open and measuring 8.5 feet in height will be constructed over the parking area.

On the north property line the applicant is proposing to remove a dilapidated wood fence and construct a new brick wall measuring 6-6.5 feet in height in a stepped scheme.

As part of the alterations, but beyond the purview of the Board, the applicant will be reducing the grade of the yard. As a result, the height of the proposed wall adjacent to the parking area and yard will be 6 feet from grade at the parking area and 8.5 feet from grade in the yard. In the yard, adjacent to this wall and at the northwest corner, the applicant proposes a shed measuring 7.5 feet in height by 3.5 feet in width by 6.5 feet in depth, approximately 23 square feet in area. The shed will be clad in a wood, rectangular-angled, lattice form. In the southwest corner, the applicant proposes a short set of stairs with wood gate leading to the parking area.

Waiver of HVAC Screening Requirement

The applicant has requested a waiver of the HVAC screening requirement for a new rooftop unit. The new unit will be located adjacent to an existing rooftop HVAC unit for which the Board approved an after-the-fact application for waiver of the HVAC screening requirement.

II. HISTORY:

The dwelling at 117 South Lee Street is a two-story, three-bay frame townhouse which City real estate records dates to 1902, though Staff and historical maps date it to the late 19th century. The G.M. Hopkins *City Atlas of Alexandria* depicts a building, similar in configuration to the existing dwelling but without a rear ell, at this location in 1877. The building appears on the *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* from 1891 (the first year which covers this area). Only the main block is depicted on the 1891 map. The two-story brick rear ell first appears on the *Sanborn Fire*

Insurance Maps from 1896. A one-story frame addition attached to the rear ell first appears on the *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* from 1896 but does not appear in 1902. A two-story rear porch addition (attached to the rear ell) was constructed by 1941 and continued to appear in 1958, according to *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* from those years.

In 2001, the Board approved an after-the-fact application for a waiver of the rooftop HVAC screening requirement (BAR Case # 2001-0084). In 1958, the Board approved a “spraycrete” application to the exterior.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed rear addition, walls, gates, pergola and stoop comply with Zoning Ordinance regulations.

Addition

The proposed addition will be highly visible from both South Lee and South Fairfax streets due to the property’s location adjacent to an alley.

In terms of general architectural expression, the proposed addition is appropriate and compatible with the two-story townhouse at 117 South Lee Street in respect to its general architectural vocabulary and selection of materials. The proposed addition evokes the traditional architectural form of an enclosed porch, common for rear and side additions. The *Design Guidelines* state that “the design of an addition should respect the heritage of the historic building to which it is attached as well as adjacent buildings....or which echo the design elements of the existing structure.” Staff finds that the proposed addition complements the architectural style of the dwelling.

Upon receipt of the original submission, Staff expressed concerns to the applicant regarding the height and massing of the proposed addition. While the applicant has since lowered the height of the parapet by approximately 6 inches, Staff continues to find that the addition should be further reduced. Specifically, Staff finds that an addition should be no wider than the existing historic house (14.7 feet at the rear ell and 20 feet at the main block). While appropriate, and even encouraged, to differentiate new construction from historic fabric, Staff finds that the extension of the addition beyond the historic building’s wall plane is generally not an appropriate treatment. A more common form of differentiation would be offsetting the addition to have it step in from the historic house. However, the addition is appropriately differentiated from the historic house through the change of materials and shift in architectural vocabulary. Generally, additions should be subordinate to a historic building, specifically in regard to height. As proposed, the addition is still approximately 2 feet higher than the rear of the house. Staff recommends that the applicant continue to reduce the height and massing of the proposed addition in a way that maintains the proportions of the classical revival architectural design. Staff recommends that the north elevation of the proposed addition be stepped in so that it is either flush with or slightly inset from the plane of the existing north elevation, and that the addition be reduced proportionately to this reduction to retain the proposed classical proportions. Although the roof will still be slightly higher than the rear ell with this reduction, Staff finds that

the reduction must be done proportionately to not impact the design. Further, Staff estimates that the difference in roof height will be negligible once this change is made.

Staff has no objection to the proposed pergola adjacent to the rear ell and connecting the addition and main block and finds that it will not overwhelm the historic building and successfully serves as a transitional element between the new construction and historic fabric.

The use of true divided light wood windows and doors are preferred for the addition and consistent with the *Design Guidelines*; however, Staff initially recommended that a different light pattern be studied for the windows. The two-over-two windows, intended to relate to the two-over-two historic windows on the dwelling, have a slightly different proportion than what would typically be found on a classically detailed enclosed porch such as this. Previously, Staff recommended that other windows be considered before making a decision to continue with the two-over-two light pattern. Staff is not aware that other window configurations have been studied but finds as the design of the project has evolved, the proposed windows are acceptable.

Regarding shutters, the *Design Guidelines* state that “decorative window and door shutters that are not operable are strongly discouraged” and that “shutters should be appropriate to the period of the structure.” The applicant has revised the design to make the shutters operable; however they will only be operable in appearance, not in function. The use of single shutters in this manner is a unique design solution for the treatment of the solid wall space. Shutters are appropriate for an enclosed porch and represent traditional building patterns, though the single fixed shutter is uncommon.

Alterations

The existing side-loading front stoop, made of brick and concrete, does not appear to be historic. The proposed limestone stoop is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* which state that “stoops, steps and railings should be made of materials which are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic districts” and “should be appropriate and compatible with the historic architecture of the building.” Staff continues to find that the proposed limestone stoop is compatible.

The *Design Guidelines* pronounce that “an important visual feature of the historic districts are the fences, garden walls and gates that define property lines...[and] serve as a distinctive feature of the streetscape and individual yards.” Originally, the applicant proposed demolition and alterations to the historic garden wall on the alley (south) property line, which was of great concern to Staff. The applicant has since revised the application to leave the historic garden wall untouched. Staff finds that the construction of new brick piers, adjacent to the historic garden wall are appropriate and will ensure that the historic garden wall will be retained as both a useful and historic element. Staff finds that the new brick garden wall on the north and west property lines is acceptable as it has been revised to be no higher than 6-6.5 feet in height above grade at the property line and is stepped to accommodate grade changes without added height. This contrasts with the original submission which proposed a height of 8.5 feet on the north property line.

Staff finds the proposed pergola over the parking area to be appropriate in design, scale and materials. The proposed alterations to the garden area, including the shed, are appropriate. Due to the reduction in grade in the rear yard, the shed will be minimally visible. The proposed painted wood gates are appropriate.

Waiver of HVAC Screening Requirement

Staff has no objection to the request for waiver of the HVAC screening requirement since the Board has already approved an after-the-fact application for waiver of the HVAC screening requirement for the existing unit. In addition, Staff notes that the units will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way.

Staff notes the comments and recommendations from Alexandria Archaeology and Transportation and Environmental Services.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the addition be stepped in on the north elevation so it is either flush or slightly inset with the plane of the existing north elevation, and that the addition be reduced proportionately to this reduction to retain the classical proportions and design of the proposed addition.
2. That the applicant should reuse all historic brick on the altered garden wall located at the west (rear) property line.
3. *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
4. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
5. The statements in archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk "*" shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides of the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance. Openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet shall not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface (This shall include bay windows). Openings shall not be permitted in exterior walls within 3 feet of an interior lot line.
- C-2 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-8 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-9 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-10 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

- C-11 Structural calculations are required to verify the ability of the existing roof to support the additional weight of the A/C unit.
- C-12 Guardrail structural design and construction must comply with USBC.
- C-13 Where appliances are located $\leq 10'$ from a roof edge or open side with a drop $\geq 24"$, guards shall be provided (USBC 2801.1)

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology Finding

1. Tax records indicate that houses were present on this street face by 1810. The 1877 Hopkins insurance map shows a structure on the lot at 117 S. Lee. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into activities in 19th-century Alexandria.

Archaeology Recommendations

*1. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

*2. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

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Transportation and Environmental Services:

FINDINGS

F1. An approved grading plan may be required at the time of building permit application. Insufficient information has been provided to make that determination at this time.

In summary, City Code Section 8-1-22(d) requires that a grading plan be submitted to and approved by T&ES prior to the issuance of building permits for improvements involving:

- the construction of a new home;
- construction of an addition to an existing home where either

- the addition exceeds the area of the existing building footprint by 100% or more;
or
- the construction of the addition results in less than 50% of the existing first floor exterior walls, in their entirety, remaining;
- changes to existing grade elevation of 1-foot or greater;
- changes to existing drainage patterns;
- land disturbance of 2,500 square feet or greater.

Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 838-4318. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link.

<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R2. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R4. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- R5. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)
- R5. Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)



Figure 2. Front (east) and side (south) elevations, 117 South Lee Street.



Figure 3. Rear (west) and side (south) elevations, including existing porch to be demolished.



Figure 4. View showing non-historic brick wall adjacent to parking area and historic brick wall on alley.



Figure 5. Parking area with brick walls and wood fence proposed to be demolished.



Figure 6. Existing wood fence to be demolished.



Figure 7. Proposed demolition in elevation (west and south).

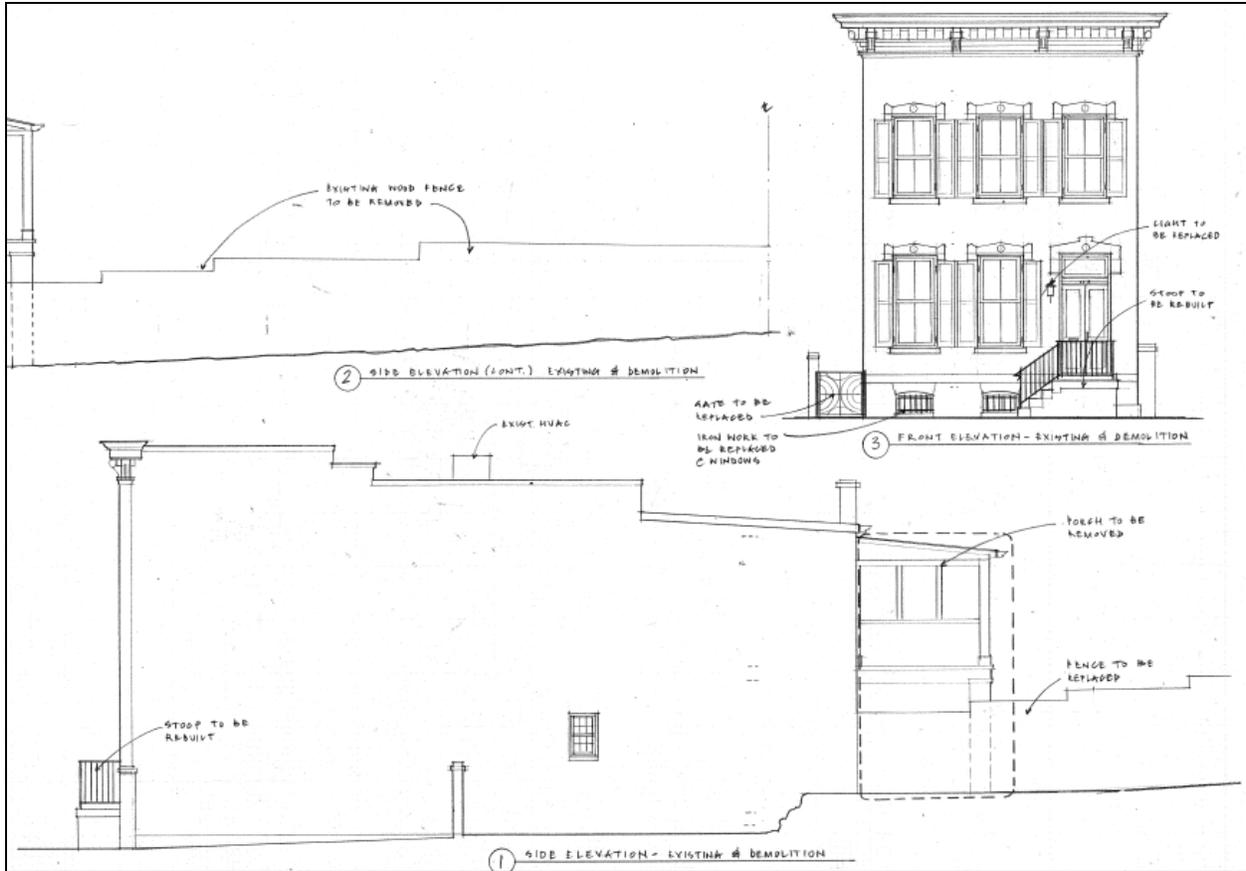


Figure 8. Proposed demolition in elevation (east and north).

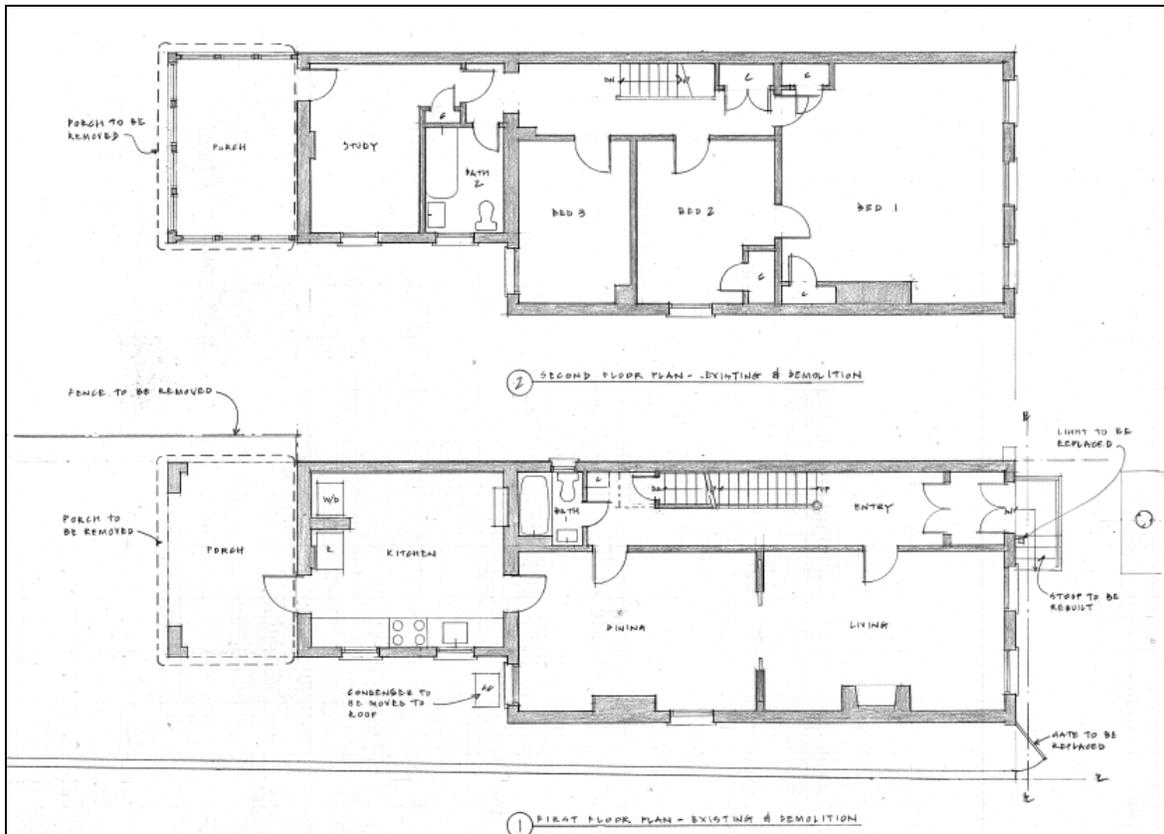


Figure 9. Proposed demolition in plan.



Figure 10. Proposed addition elevations: side (south), rear (west), and extended portion (east).

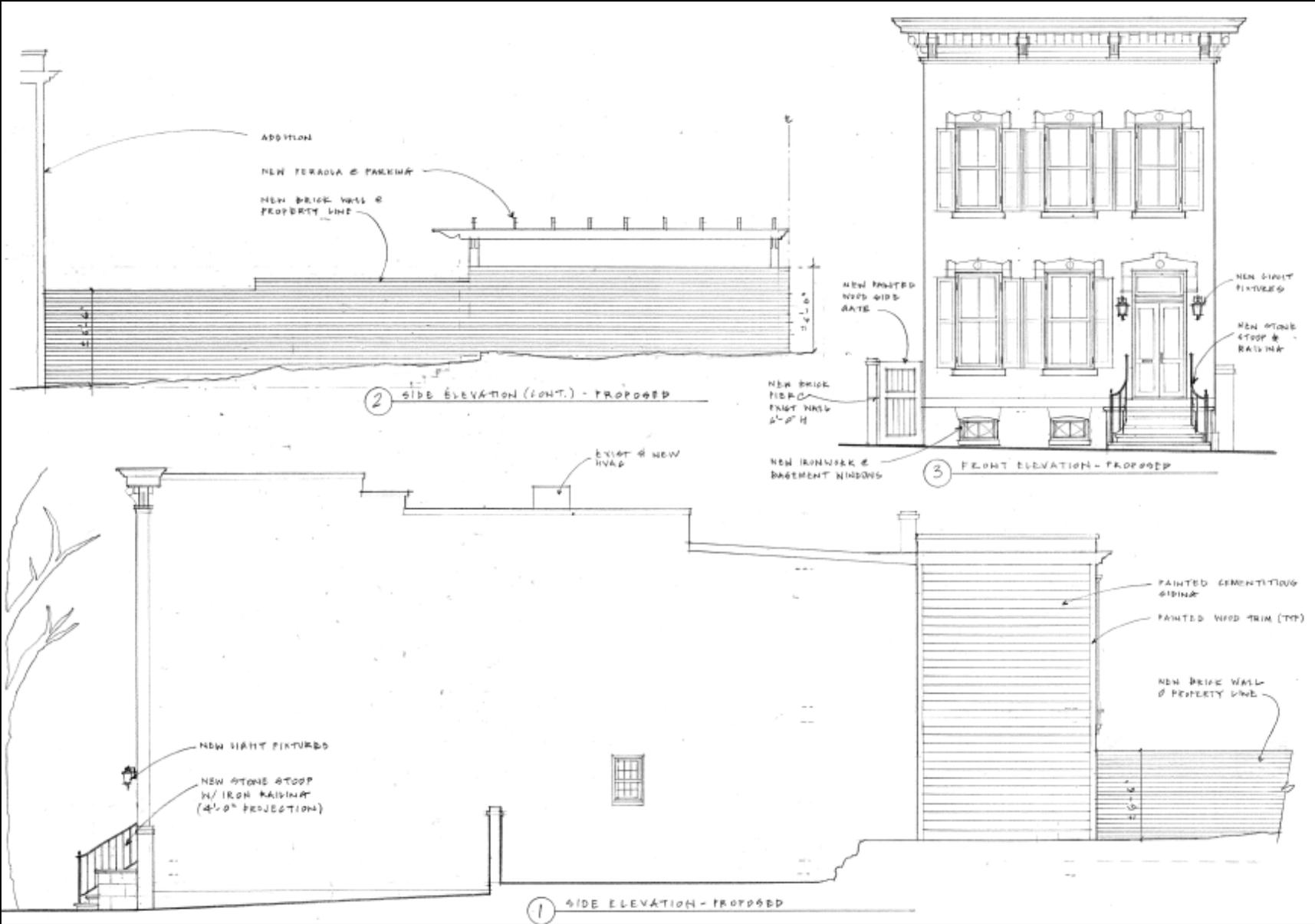


Figure 11. Proposed elevations: front (east) and side (north).

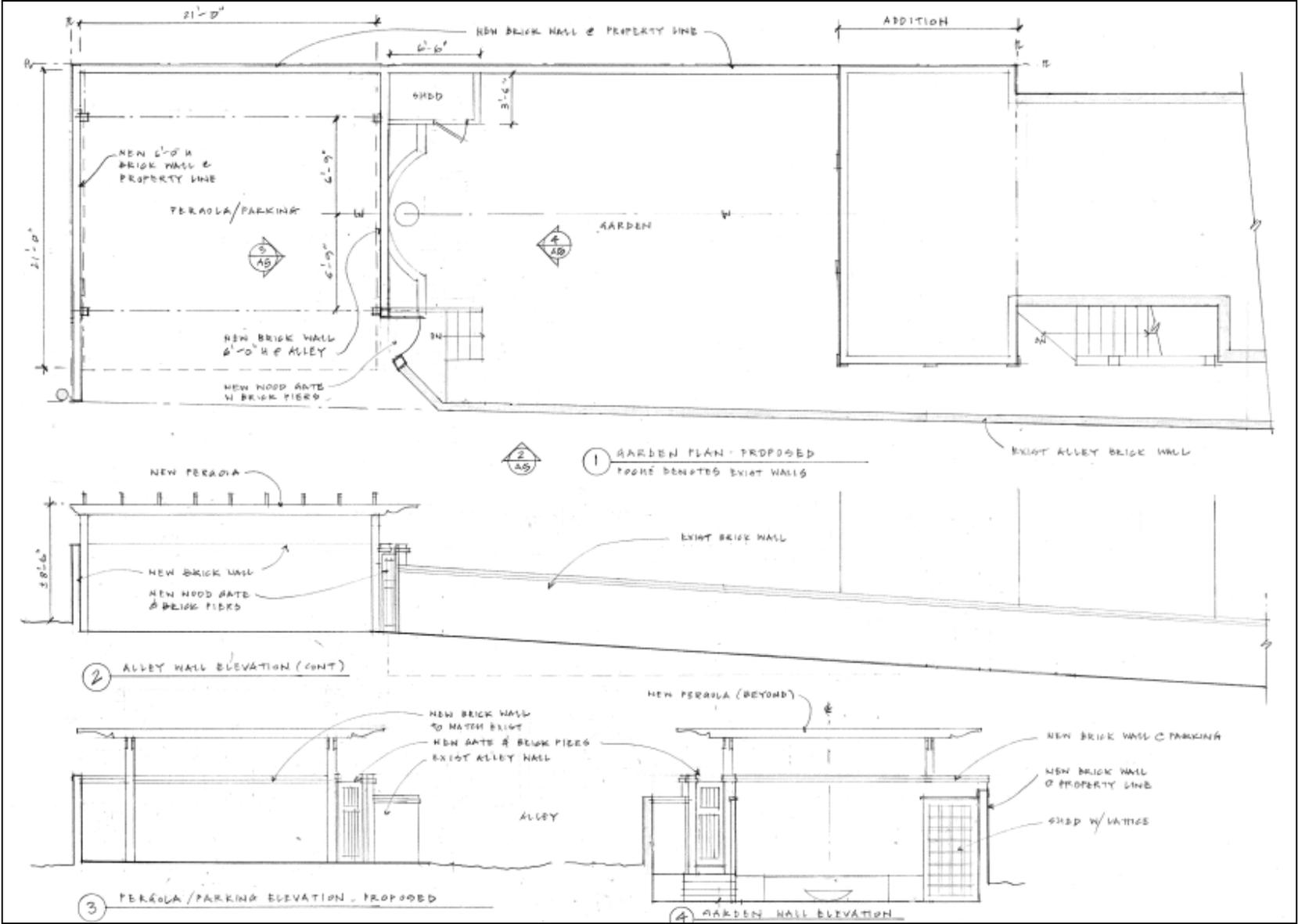


Figure 13. Proposed alterations to rear yard area including garden walls, pergola and shed.

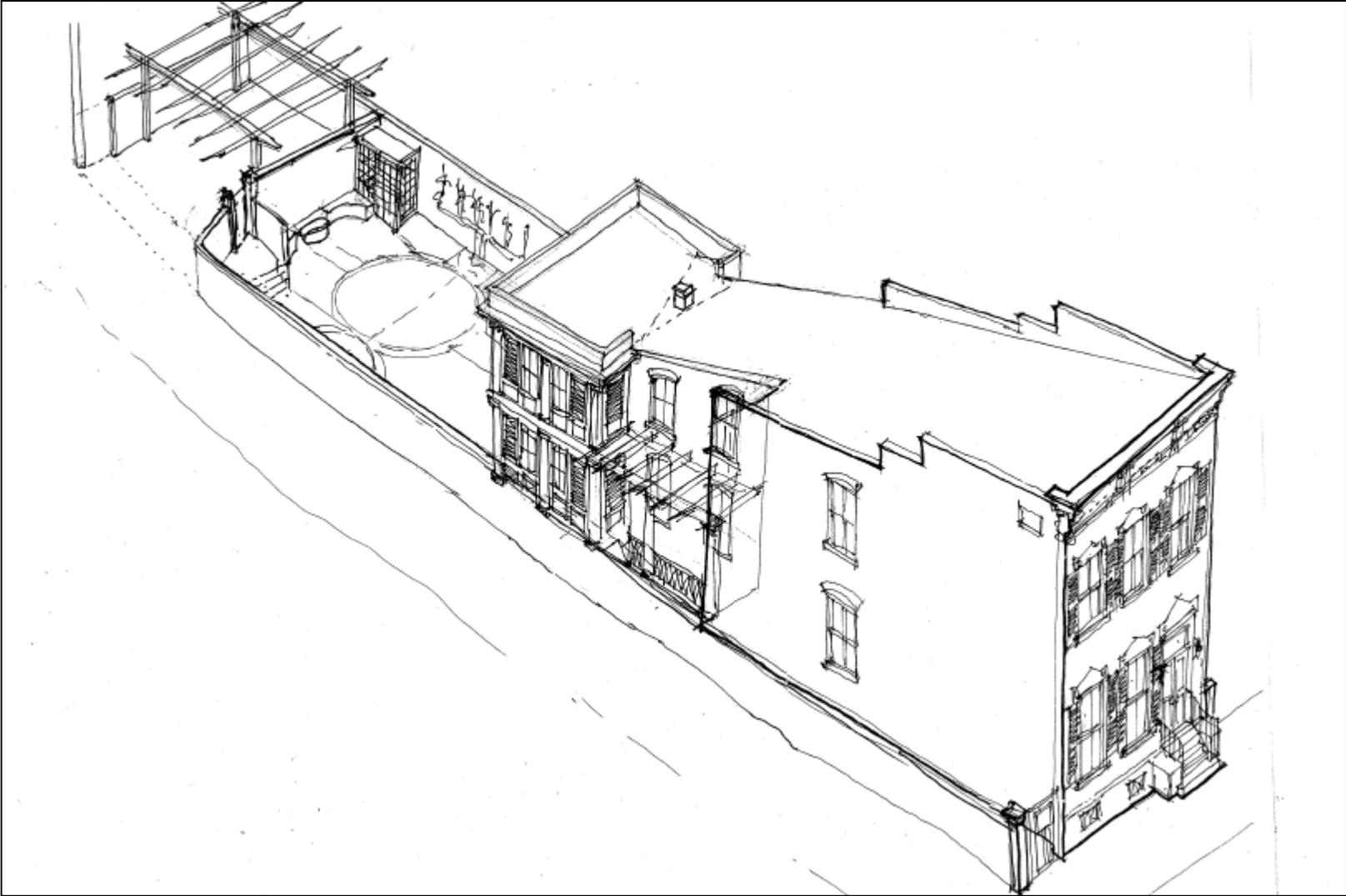


Figure 14. Axonometric view of proposed addition and alterations.