

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE # 2008-0148

BAR Meeting
September 24, 2008

ISSUE: Demolition/Encapsulation
APPLICANT: James and DeShuna Spencer
LOCATION: 229 North West Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate with the following conditions:

1. The statements in archaeology conditions below 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:
 - a. 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.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

Note: This item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate in order to construct a rear addition at 229 North West Street. The existing 21.5' by 10' one story rear addition and the rear wall of the second story elevation is proposed to be demolished and encapsulated in order to construct a new two story addition. The existing brick chimney along the shared property line with 227 North West Street is also proposed to be demolished. The southernmost window opening on the second floor of the front façade is proposed to also be enlarged in order to accommodate a pair of double-hung windows.

II. HISTORY:

According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the two-bay, two story frame house at 229 North West Street was constructed between 1891 and 1896 as one of five modest townhouses (227-235 North West Street). When constructed, the houses each had a one story rear ell.

Staff could find no previous Board approvals for 229 North West Street. However, in 1999 and 2000 BAR staff approved replacement wood siding and wood windows on the rear addition (BLD#1999-0788 and BLD#2000-02163 respectively).

In the past few years the Board has approved a number of alterations and additions to this row of five townhouses, including:

227 North West Street

In 2005, the Board approved a two story rear addition and a front porch (BAR Case #2005-0077 & 0078, July 27, 2005). This project was never undertaken and the Board approved a subsequent two story rear addition and alterations to the front façade (BAR Case #2007-0040 & 0041, June 27, 2007). The Certificate of Appropriateness expired on this project and the Board reapprived the addition and alterations on May 28th, 2008 (BAR Case #2008-0081).

231 North West Street

The Board approved a second story addition on November 10, 2004 (BAR Case #2004-0239 & 0240) and a new front door on September 26, 2007 (BAR Case #2007-0186).

233 North West Street

The Board approved a rear porch on June 22, 2005 (BAR Case #2005-0127). The house has an existing two story rear addition.

235 North West Street

Staff could find no recent BAR approvals for this property, although the house has an existing one story addition.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish or Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec 10-205(B):

1. Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest?
2. Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into an historic shrine?
3. Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture, and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
4. Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
5. Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists, and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place to live?
6. Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed demolition/encapsulation does not meet any of the above criteria. The proposal is almost entirely confined to the rear of the house and it is obvious that the existing addition does not date to the original construction of the house – the original one-story ell was smaller and located along the north property line, not the south side as it exists today. Both the one story addition and the chimney are in poor structural condition. The addition has damaged studs and significant water damage and the unused chimney has been poorly patched on many occasions and is leaning. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that existing chimneys “be maintained *in situ* and not removed without compelling reason and substantial justification.” Staff believes that the condition of the chimney, paired with its minimally visible location at the rear of the house, is sufficient justification for demolition. The applicant has also submitted a letter from the adjacent property owner at 227 North West Street supporting the demolition of the shared chimney.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate as submitted.

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.

Historic Alexandria:

R-1 Approve.

S-1 Double-hung paired windows at first and second floor front façade be replaced by single, double-hung, two-over-two wood windows to reflect original fenestration scheme.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 This block was part of the African American neighborhood known as Uptown in the late 19th century. Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household near the property in 1850. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in 19th-century Alexandria.

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VI. IMAGES

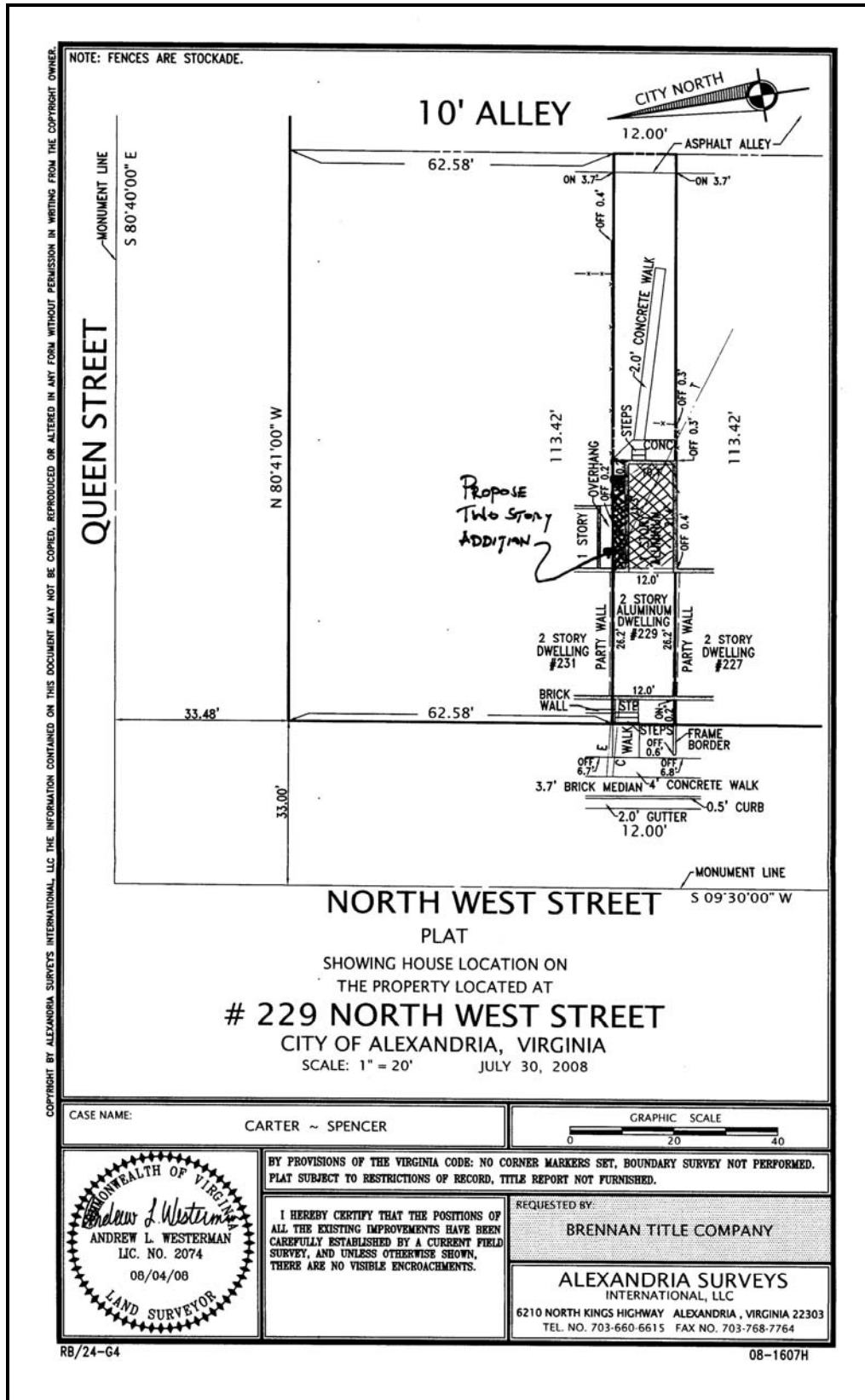


Figure 1 Plat

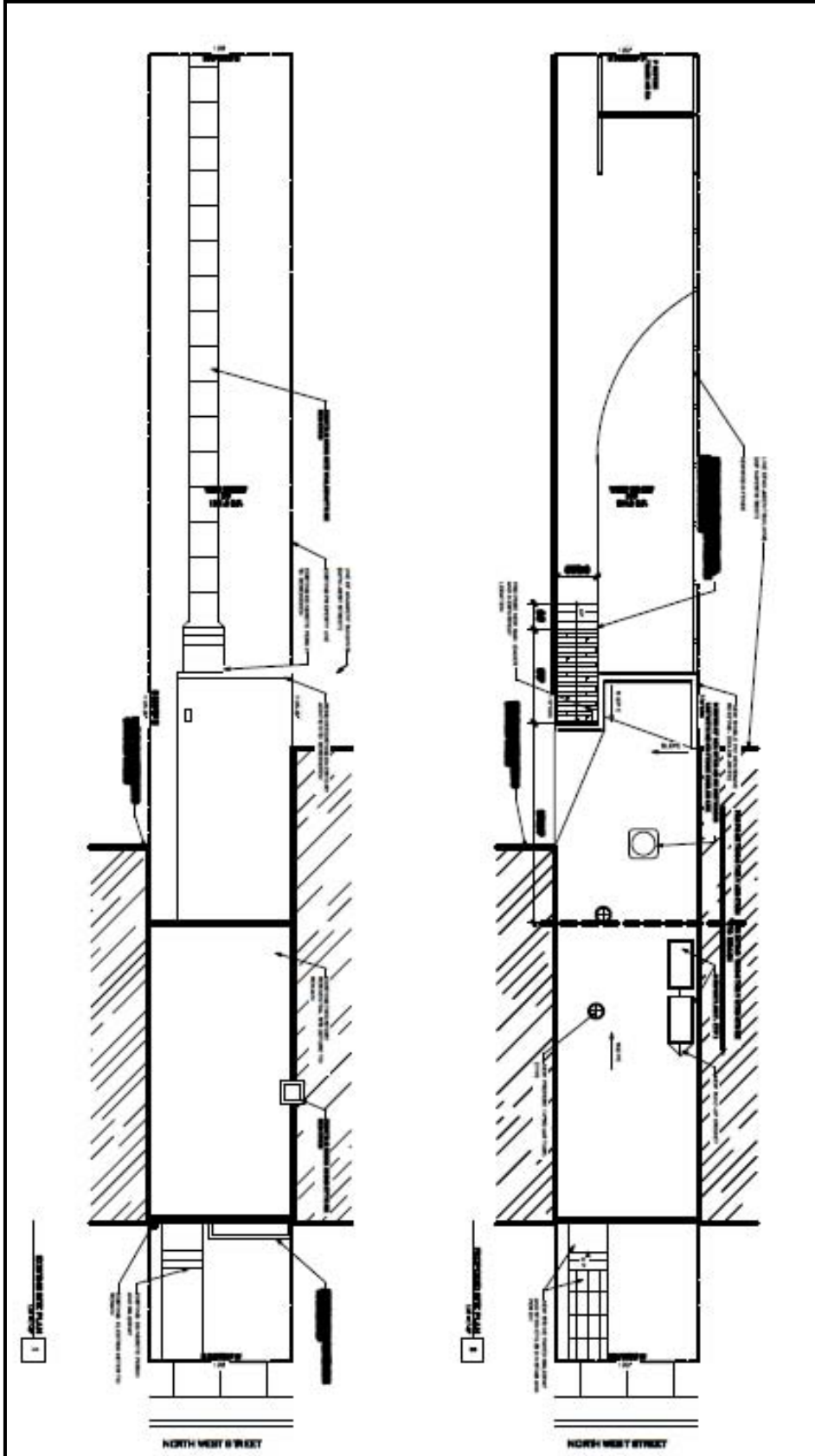


Figure 2 Existing & Proposed Site Plan

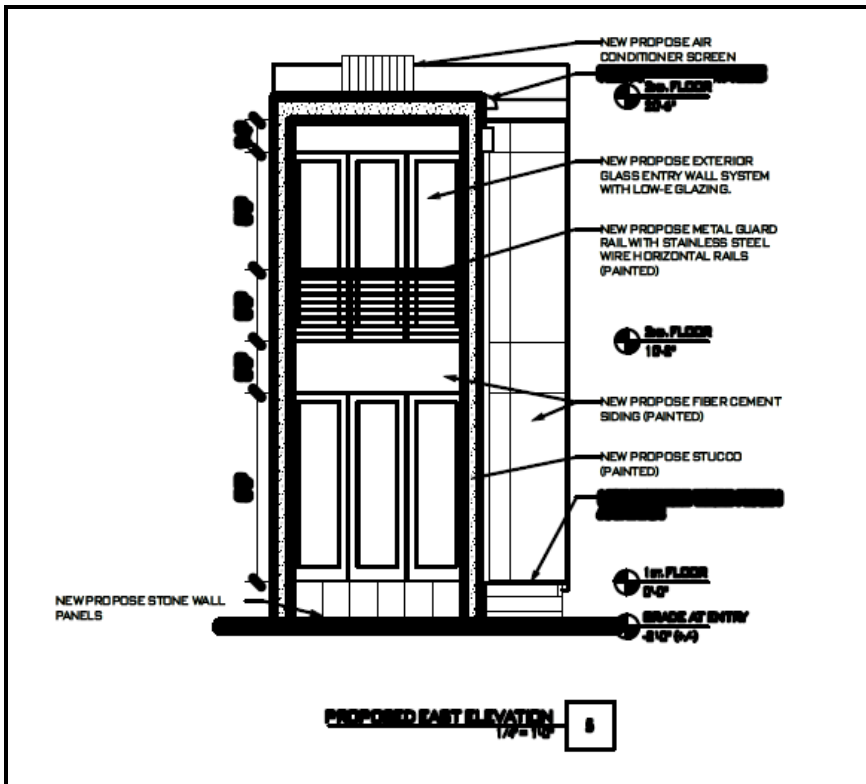


Figure 3 Proposed East Elevation

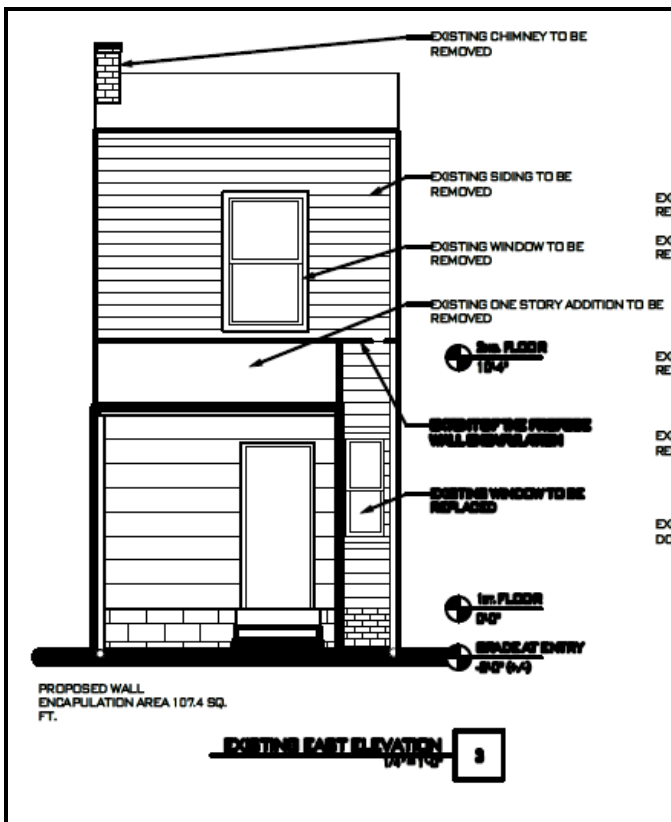


Figure 4 Existing East Elevation

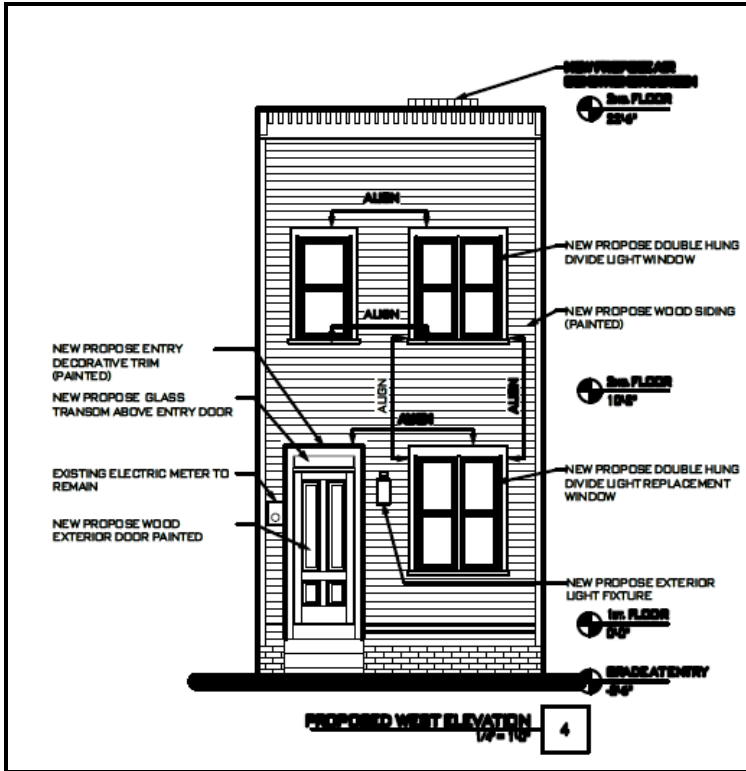


Figure 2 Proposed West Elevation

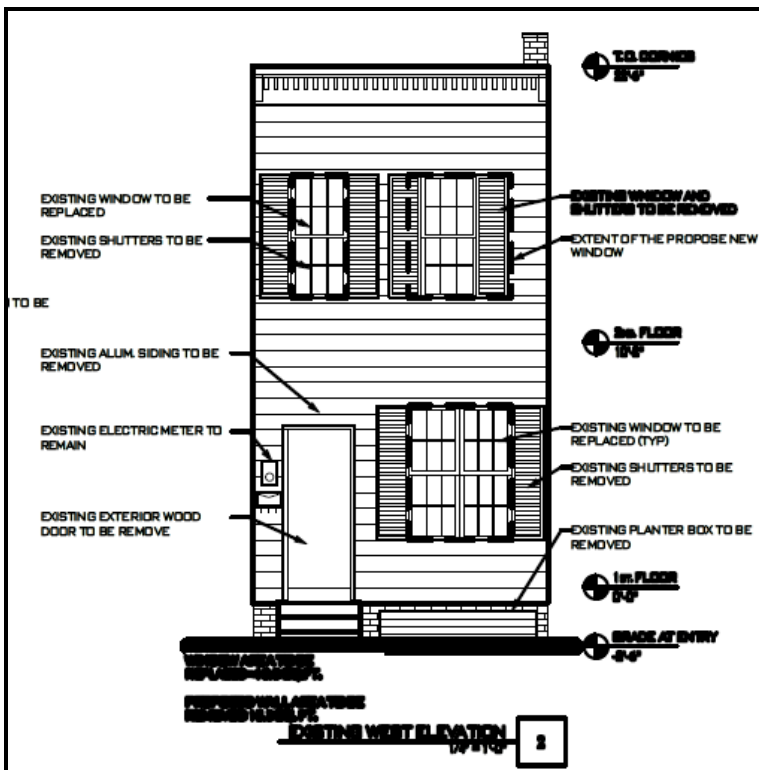


Figure 3 Existing West Elevation



Figure 4 Existing Rear Elevation



Figure 5 Chimney Detail