

BAR Meeting
September 24, 2008

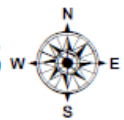
ISSUE: Addition and Alterations
APPLICANT: James and DeShuna Spencer
LOCATION: 229 North West Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

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

1. That there be no parking on the property;
2. That the new windows on the front façade be double-hung, single-glazed wood windows;
3. That the southernmost window opening on the second floor be retained and not enlarged;
4. That the applicant work with Staff to evaluate any historic wood siding underneath the aluminum siding on the front elevation and whether it can be retained and repaired;
5. That, if the condition of the siding is poor, the applicant should install the same type of wood siding that was originally on the house; and,
6. That the fiber cement panels be used only on the addition;
7. That smooth fiber cement panels be used;
8. That the nails not show in the installation of the panels;
9. That the wood screen fence around the rooftop HVAC be stained or painted; and,
10. That the following statement 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.



BAR CASE #2008-0148, 0149 2/27/2008



****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 the Code Enforcement Bureau (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Enforcement, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.

Note: Docket Item # must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations 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.

Addition

The applicant proposes to construct a rear addition measuring approximately 21.5' by 12'. The addition will span the full width of the lot (12') on the second floor. On the first floor the addition is proposed to be set back approximately 2.5' from the north property line, although this area will be screened by a solid wall, creating a well which will be visible only through oblique views.

On the first floor of the rear (east) elevation, there will be three 8' fixed windows over stone wall panels. On the second floor, three full-light French doors are proposed and a metal guard rail with stainless steel wire horizontal rails. This entire two story projection is proposed to be framed by stucco. To the north of this projection is a 4' setback two stories in height which contains an entrance to the new addition. The setback will be clad with fiber cement panels. There will be a small wood deck with a stainless steel wire railing leading to the rear entrance. All windows and doors on the addition, as well as the replacement windows on the front façade, are proposed to be double-insulated and manufactured by Jeld-Wen.

On the south elevation, approximately 6' of the addition will be visible beyond the neighbor's future addition at 227 North West Street which was previously approved by the Board and has just begun construction. This elevation will have no openings and will be clad with stucco.

On the north side, the applicant's addition will project roughly 11' beyond the rear of the neighbor's two story addition at 231 North West Street. The first floor of the adjacent addition is also set back on the first floor. The north elevation will be clad with fiber cement panels.

The addition will have a flat roof with a solar light tube and a roof mounted HVAC condenser. The condenser will be screened by a low wood fence. The applicant also proposes to enclose the property with a horizontal board fence. The house will be painted a medium blue color with black trim.

Alterations

The applicant proposes a number of alterations to the historic portion of the townhouse, including:

- a new four panel wood door;
- a new wood door surround, with a transom;
- a new light fixture;
- removal of the existing shutters;
- removal of the aluminum siding;
- installation of new wood siding;
- removal of the planter box;
- installation of two rooftop skylights and a solar light tube;
- replacement one-over-one, double hung wood windows – two on the first floor and the northernmost window on the second floor;
- enlargement of the southernmost window opening on the second floor to enable installation of a pair of one-over-one wood windows that match the ganged windows on the first floor.

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 reapproved 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:

The proposed property is currently deficient in open space but because the addition does not exceed the existing footprint it does not further reduce the open space and no variance is required. However, the applicant cannot use the rear yard for off-street parking because it would further reduce the existing open space.

In general, Staff supports the proposed addition and the alterations to this historic townhouse. It provides interest to see a contemporary approach to a new addition while still maintaining the historical integrity of the original portion of the house. The *Design Guidelines* specifically state that: “New and untried approaches to common design problems are encouraged and should not be rejected out of hand simply because they appear to be outside the common practices outlined in the guidelines.” The addition is of a reasonable size and it does not overwhelm the existing house or adjacent properties.

While Staff would not typically support the installation of a fence with horizontal boards (the *Design Guidelines* recommend that fences generally have vertical pickets), the applicant makes a compelling argument for installing a horizontally oriented fence to contrast with the vertical nature of the contemporary addition.

While the majority of the alterations to the front of the house are compatible with the simple vernacular design of the 1890s townhouse, Staff does have a few comments and concerns which are discussed below. Staff is also including a discussion of the Board’s policy on fiber cement siding, as a portion of the addition will be clad with this material.

Windows

Staff would prefer to see the applicant maintain the two single window openings on the second floor rather than enlarging the southernmost opening on the second floor for a pair of windows. Staff believes that historically each of the five townhouses on this row would have had two single windows on the second floor. All of the original townhouses have been modified over the years and Staff agrees with the applicant that the windows on 229 North West Street appear to be offset and may well not be original openings. Nevertheless, Staff believes that the existing double-hung windows on the second floor should be retained.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that all windows on historic properties be single glazed (one pane of glass) with true divided lights. Although the Board sometimes permits the use of double-insulated (two panes of glass) windows on less visible elevations, and on new construction, Staff typically recommends that at the very least the front windows be single glazed. The Board recently approved double-insulated two-over-two wood windows on the front façade of the adjacent townhouse at 227 North West Street. Should the Board approve double-insulated windows in this particular case, the impact of the double glazing will be mitigated by the lack of muntins and spacer bars dividing the glass.

Siding

Staff does not typically recommend approval of replacement wood siding without evaluating the condition of the original siding, if it exists. If the original siding is in good condition, Staff would recommend that it be repaired and retained, and patched where necessary. If the condition of the siding is poor, Staff recommends that the applicant install the appropriate type of wood siding, most likely German lap wood siding. The applicant should work closely with Staff to determine the most appropriate course of action once the aluminum siding is removed and the original siding is revealed.

The applicant is proposing to use fiber cement panels on the addition. The Board has adopted the following policy with respect to the fiber cement siding, and Staff believes the same standards should apply to the proposed panels:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Thus, Staff finds the use of fiber cement on the new addition is in conformance with the Board's policy.

In addition, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology that 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. Staff recommends that the comments of Alexandria Archaeology be included as a condition of the approval.

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

1. That there be no parking on the property;
2. That the new windows on the front façade be double-hung, single-glazed wood windows;
3. That the southernmost window opening on the second floor be retained and not enlarged;
4. That the applicant work with Staff to evaluate any historic wood siding underneath the aluminum siding on the front elevation and whether it can be retained and repaired;
5. That, if the condition of the siding is poor, the applicant should install the same type of wood siding that was originally on the house; and,
6. That the fiber cement panels be used only on the addition;
7. That smooth fiber cement panels be used;

8. That the nails not show in the installation of the panels;
9. That the wood screen fence around the rooftop HVAC be stained or painted; and,
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 - 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.

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.

R-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:

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VI. IMAGES

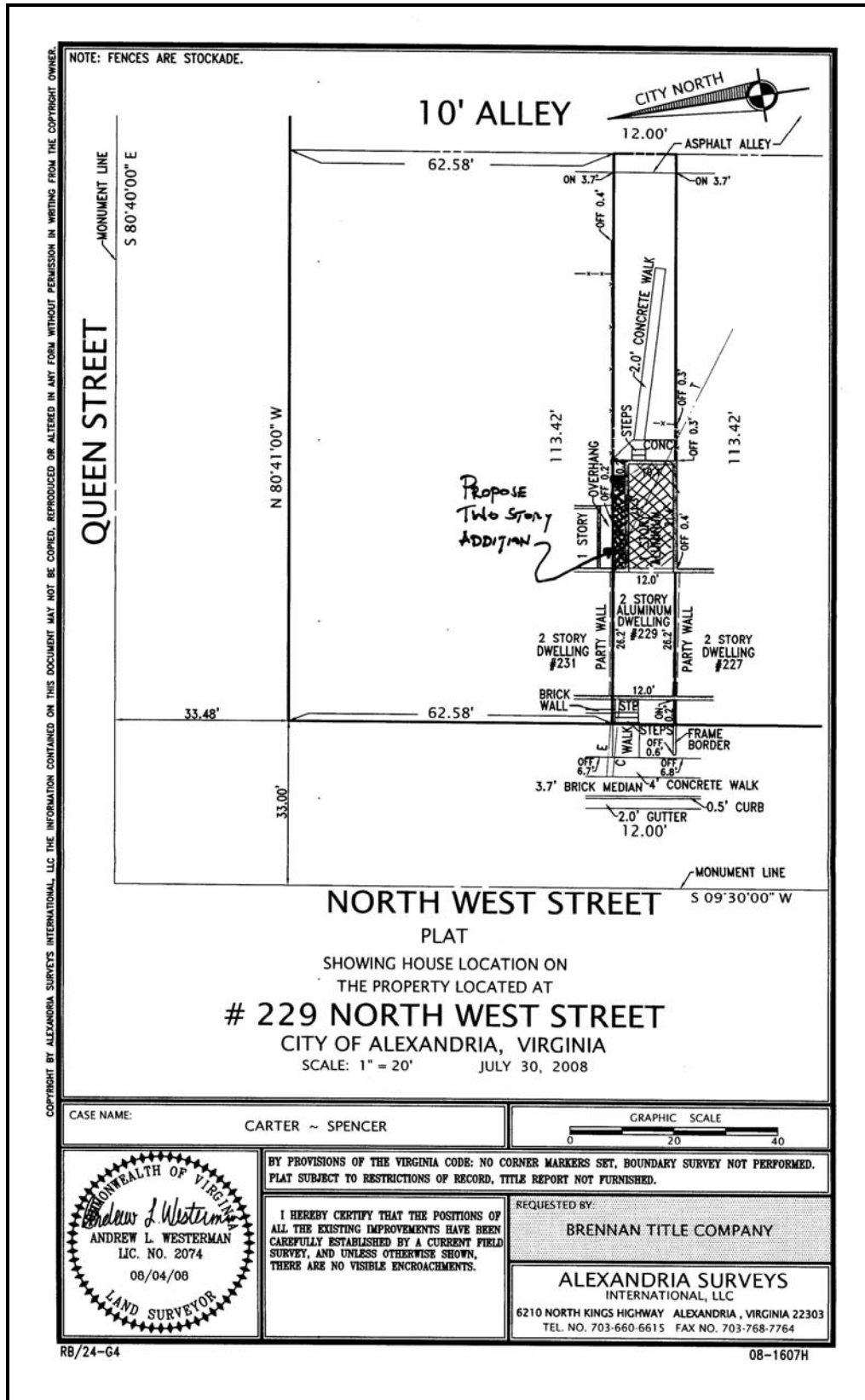


Figure 1 Plat

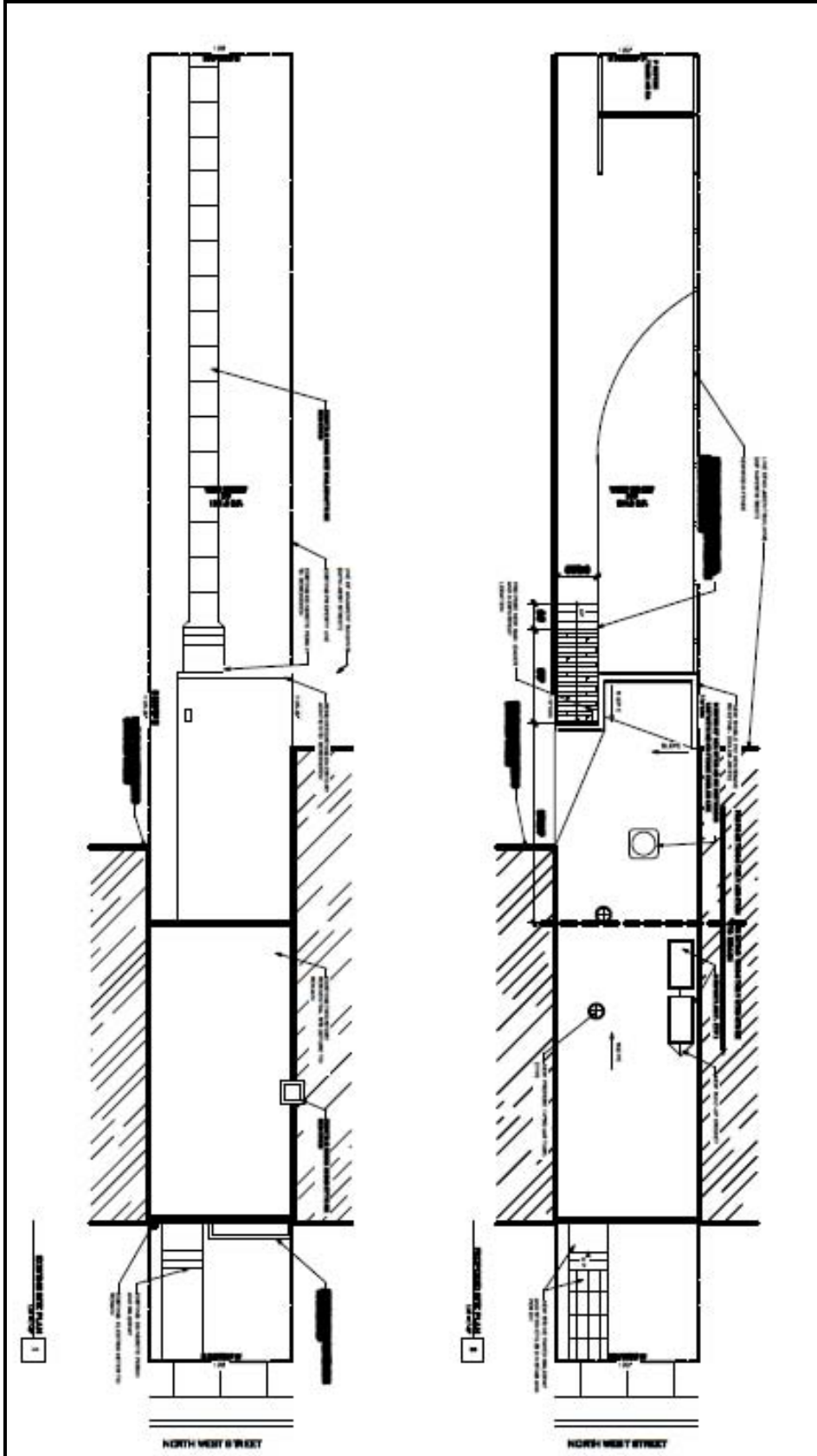


Figure 2 Existing & Proposed Site Plan

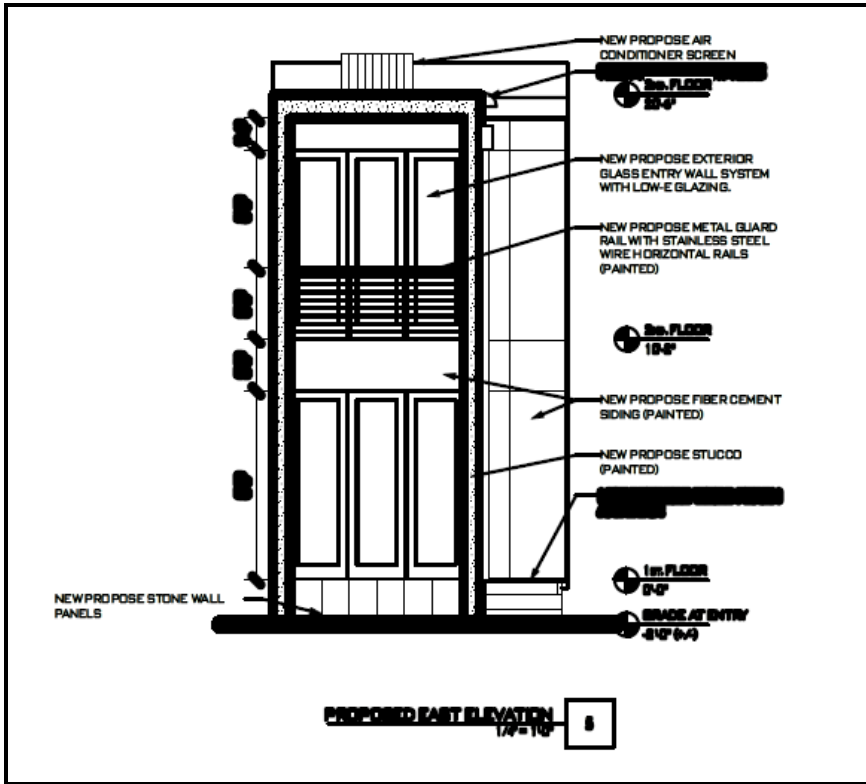


Figure 3 Proposed East Elevation

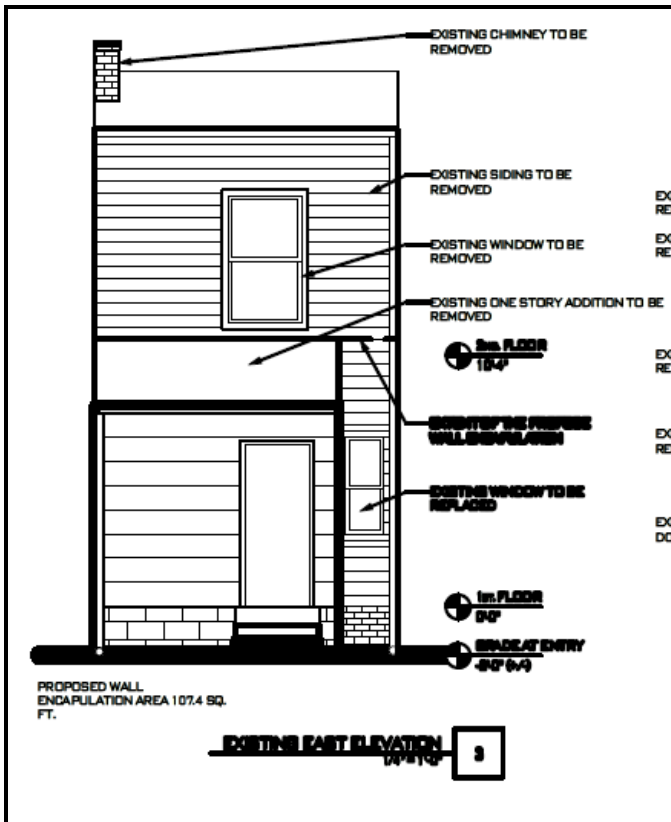


Figure 4 Existing East Elevation

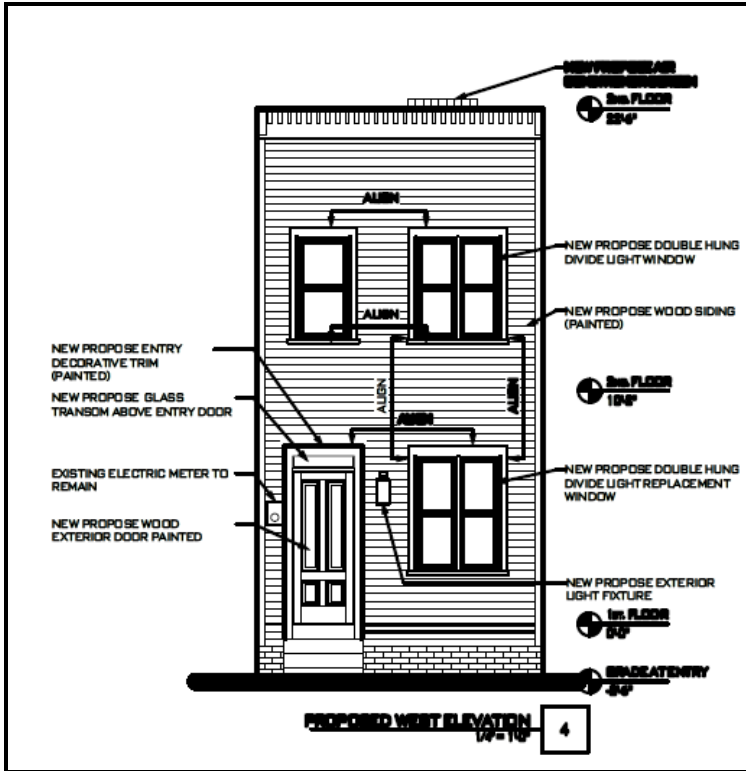


Figure 5 Proposed West Elevation

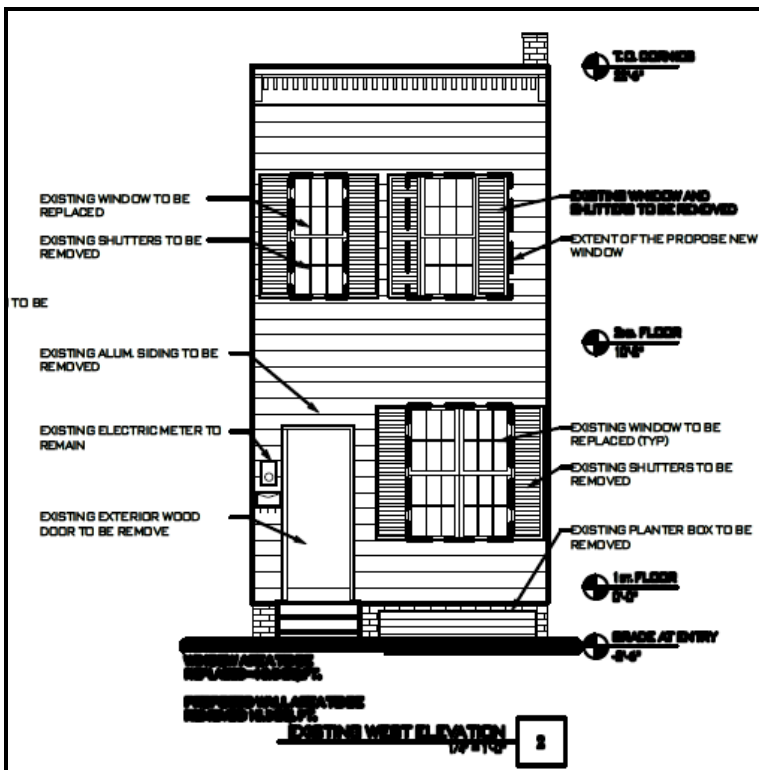


Figure 6 Existing West Elevation

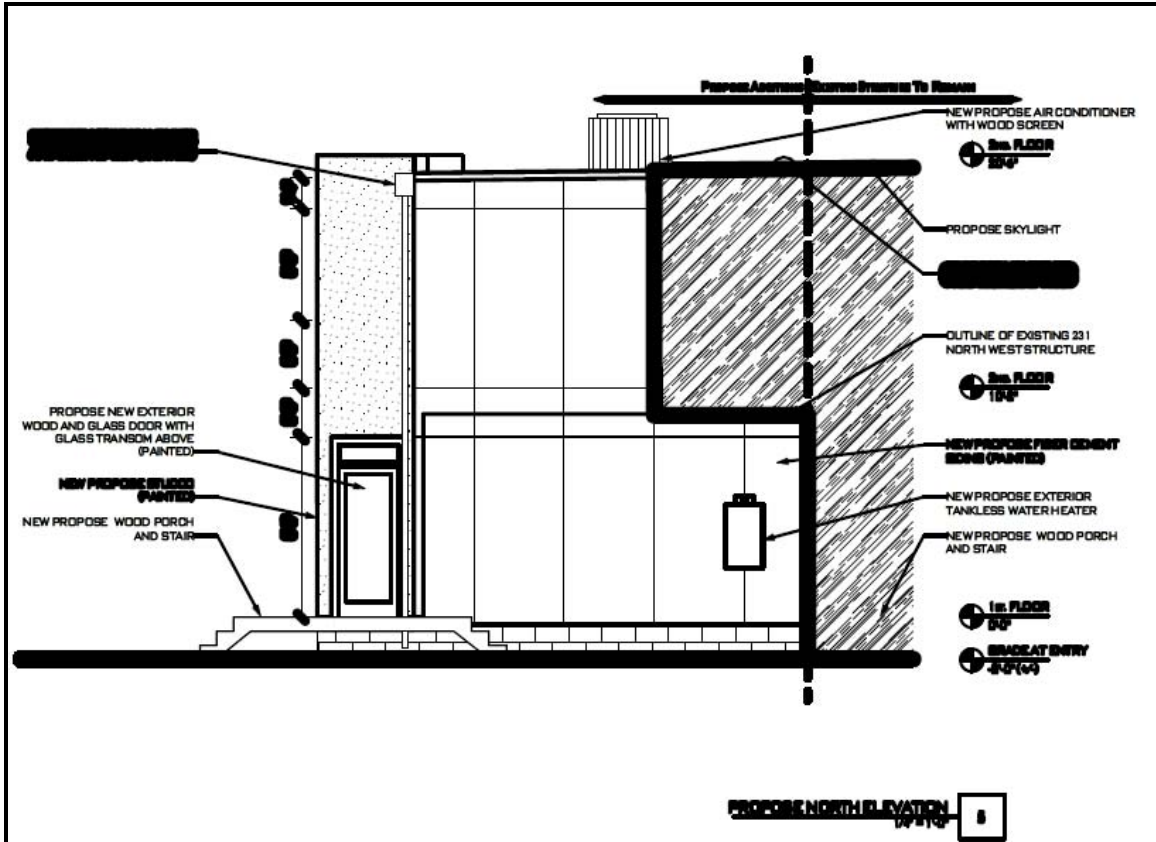


Figure 7 Proposed North Elevation

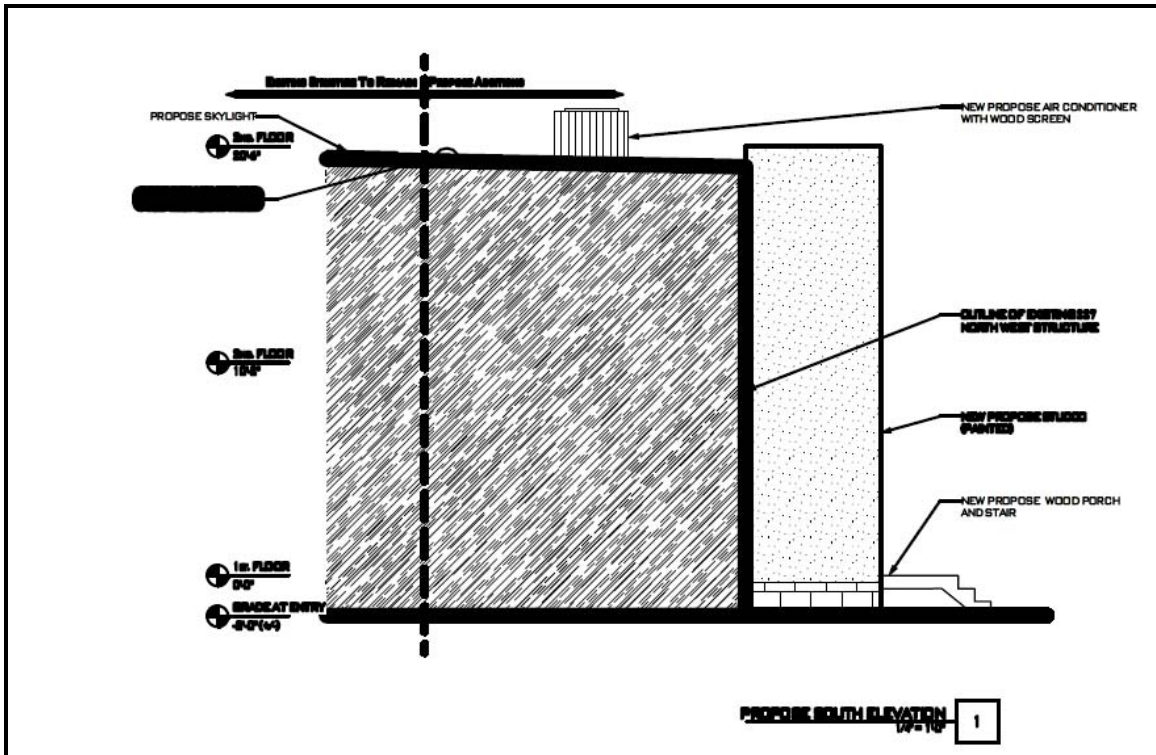


Figure 8 Proposed South Elevation

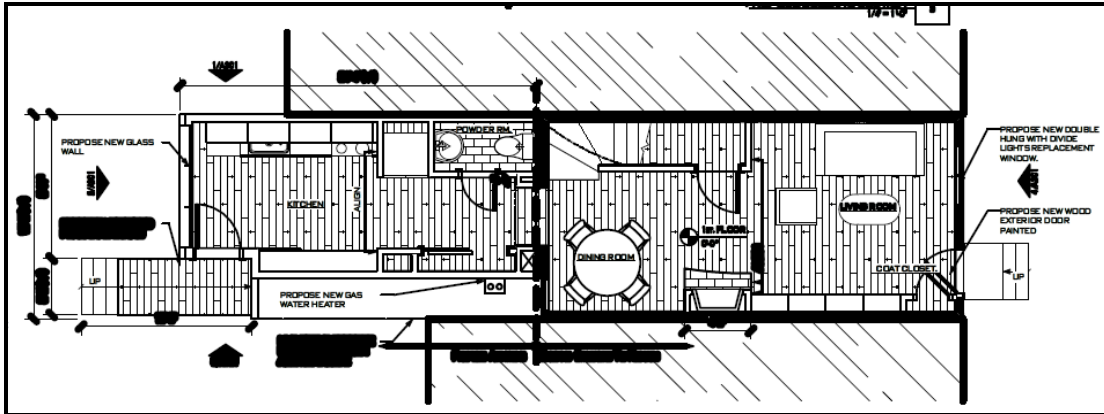


Figure 9 Proposed First Floor Plan

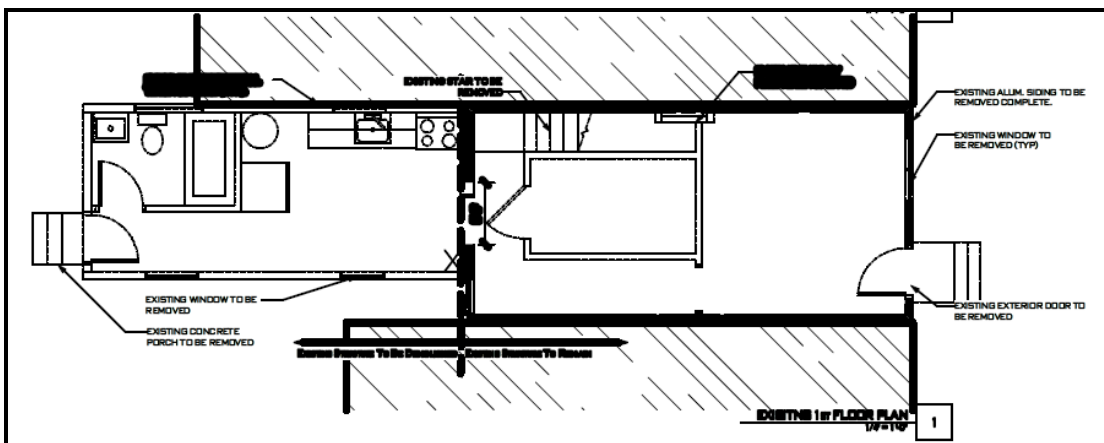


Figure 10 Existing First Floor Plan

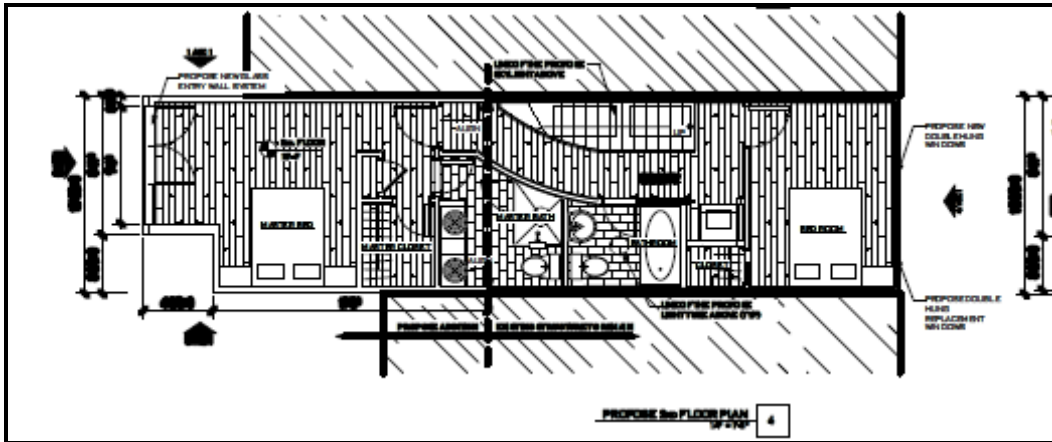


Figure 11 Proposed Second Floor Plan

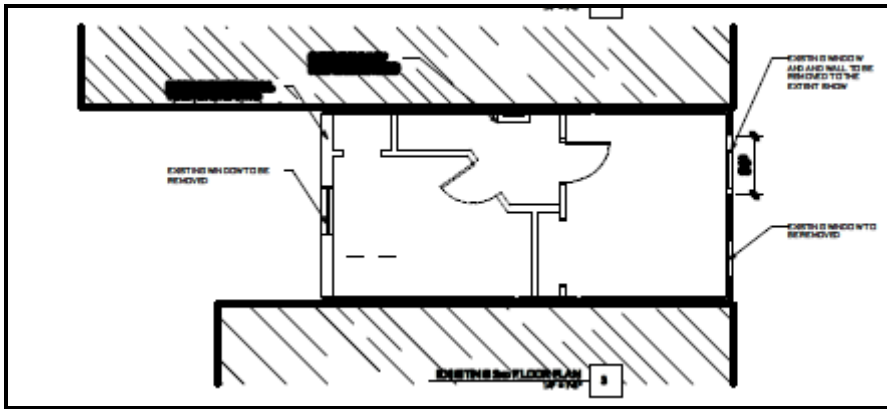


Figure 12 Existing Second Floor Plan



Figure 13 Existing West Elevation



Figure 14 Existing West Elevation



Figure 15 Existing East Elevation



Figure 16 Chimney Detail