

7

2-20-10

Statement for City Council re SUP Application
Hearing Date: 20FEB10 Docket #7
by Douglas Drabkowski, Owner/Applicant

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council on this matter. I ask the Council to approve the SUP as originally submitted and approved by the P&Z Staff, with the side yard setback of 4'1" on the east side of the house and 3'1" on the west side of the house with the house width of 17'8".

Background

I purchased the property over a year ago with the expectation and intention of building an attached or semi-attached dwelling, per the explicit expectations and anticipations documented in the 2002 SUP for 518 E. Howell (the property to the right of 516A). Due to factors and issues beyond my knowledge or control, I was not able to build my home as expected and intended by the City and by the local community.

The two major factors that prevented me from following through as the City intended were: 1) The lack of explicit wording in the 2002 SUP *requiring* the owner of 518 E. Howell to allow the construction of an attached or semi-attached dwelling on 516A E. Howell; and 2) the refusal of the current owners of 518 E. Howell to allow me to attach or touch their home. After discussions with various City departments, including P&Z, Plan Review, and the General Counsel's Office, I was informed that it was solely at the discretion of the owners of 518 E. Howell to allow an attached or semi-attached dwelling to be constructed.

I met several times with P&Z Staff, to obtain guidance as to options for building my home on the property, which is my right as documented in the City Zoning Ordinance. As noted in the Staff report and recommendation for approval, I have been through a Zoning Variance process, several major design changes, and now the SUP process, to meet all requirements in pursuit of my right to build my home on this property.

I believe the submitted design and location of my home is optimal, given the constraints imposed and my right to obtain maximum value and functionality from my home. I further believe that my home will add character and value to the community, as well as a comfortable place for me and future owners to live.

My neighbor at 516 has expressed concern over the impact on his view and quality of life if I am allowed to proceed as planned and approved by the P&Z Staff. The Planning Commission vote on 2FEB10 would require shifting my home one foot to the right (towards 518 E. Howell), and shrink the width of my home by at least one foot. These two actions would increase the distance between 516 E. Howell and 516A E. Howell by two feet (to 61"), but it would *decrease* the distance between 516A E. Howell and 518 E. Howell by one foot (to only 37"). The neighbor request puts an unreasonable restraint on me for what I should be allowed to build on my property. The total distance between 516 and 516a as planned is 11 feet, with the neighbor requesting me to make it 13 feet, it will remove 200 sq ft of living space in my house, and requires a redesign of the floor plan and impacts the floor plan functionality. As such I request that the 3'1 inch set back from the property of 516 be retained. .

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Council. My project designer, Ralph Crafts, and I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Specific Items/Issues

The owner of 516 E. Howell has expressed concern over the impact on his view and quality of life if the Applicant is allowed to proceed as planned and approved by the P&Z Staff. The Planning Commission vote on 2FEB10 would require the Applicant to shift his home one foot to the right (towards 518 E. Howell), and shrink the width of his home by at least one foot. These two actions would increase the distance between 516 E. Howell and 516A E. Howell by two feet (to 61”), but it would *decrease* the distance between 516A E. Howell and 518 E. Howell by one foot (to only 37”).

As you will see in the first 3 photos, 516 E. Howell is a large brick structure, with a fence on the side property line, and a view of the side of the house at 518 E. Howell. There are 7 windows on the side of the house that are higher than the fence, and three of them are small (e.g., for bathrooms). The only view is of the vinyl siding on the side of the house at 518 E. Howell, with its simulated windows. The 4th photo is a satellite view of the properties, clearly showing the gap between the house on 516 E. Howell and the fence on the property line between 516 and 516A. That 8’ gap will remain once the Applicant’s home is completed.

Slide #5 is a 3D rendering showing the relative sizes of the houses on 516, 516A, and 518 E. Howell. There is significant space between 516 and 516A, and 516 is clearly much more massive than the other two properties. The next slide is a 3D rendering showing the view from 516 E. Howell towards the Applicant’s home on 516A—the top view is what can be seen if the Applicant builds his home as requested and approved by Staff, and the bottom view is how that view will change if the Applicant builds his home 2’ further away. There is no appreciable difference in the field of view.

Several references have been made to the house at 518 E. Howell, as if it is or should be a benchmark for the Applicant’s home. As shown in the next two slides, the house at 518 E. Howell is a modular home, built with 2x4 walls and vinyl siding, and minimal insulation. The floor plan is inefficient and does not accommodate current design and functionality—for example, there is no bathroom or powder room on the first floor. By comparison, the Applicant’s design incorporates many energy-efficient methods and technologies, including 6” steel stud walls, a ferrous-concrete “skin” that eliminates air infiltration, and a floor plan that accommodates current lifestyles and functionalities. Further, the Applicant’s home is what is sometimes called an “8-Proof Home,” in that it is hurricane-proof, waterproof, termite-proof, rot-proof, earthquake-proof, tornado-proof, flood-proof, and fireproof. It is inappropriate for the Applicant’s home to be constrained by the design, size, and construction of the house at 518 E. Howell.

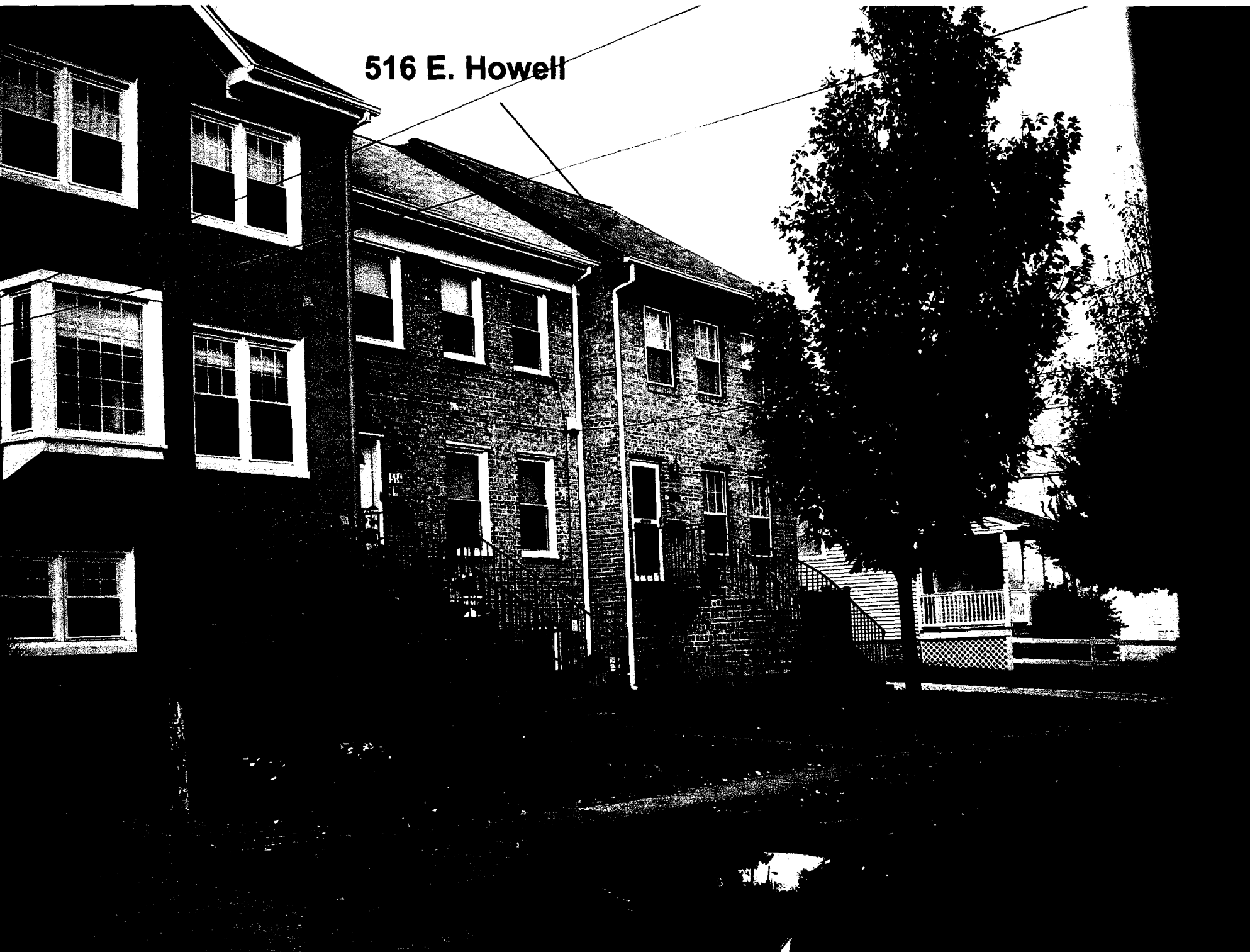
Regarding the width of the Applicant’s home, he is being denied the opportunity for a standard side yard and the corresponding open space, due to the two factors noted previously. He has the right to maximize the value of his home, and the only way for him to do so is by increasing its footprint. The walls of the Applicant’s home are 6” steel studs, which reduces the finished living space by 2” around the entire perimeter of the house, when compared to the 2x4 walls at 518 E. Howell. As demonstrated in the slides, a two-foot difference in the distance between 516 E. Howell and 516A E. Howell provides no noticeable increase in view.

More importantly, reducing the space between 516A E. Howell and 518 E. Howell to just 37” introduces significant access and safety problems. Per OSHA guidelines, the bottom of a ladder should be placed $\frac{1}{4}$ of its working length away from the structure—a 3’ space would limit the ladder length to just 12’, making it almost impossible to perform routine maintenance and repairs

on either house (both structures are more than 30' high). Standard scaffolding comes in 3', 4', or 5' widths, and specialty scaffolding will be very difficult to erect and maneuver in such a confined space. A distance of only 37" literally prevents the use of a hammer, spray painting equipment or pressure washers. Finally, while the Applicant's home will have a 2-hour fire-rated wall, the house at 518 E. Howell is 2x4 wood construction with vinyl siding—in the event of a fire, emergency response personnel will have a very difficult time in gaining access to 518 E. Howell with firefighting equipment.

It should be noted that one of Applicant's major justifications for the 49" space is in consideration of the residents at 518 E. Howell, and enabling reasonable access to their house for maintenance and repairs.

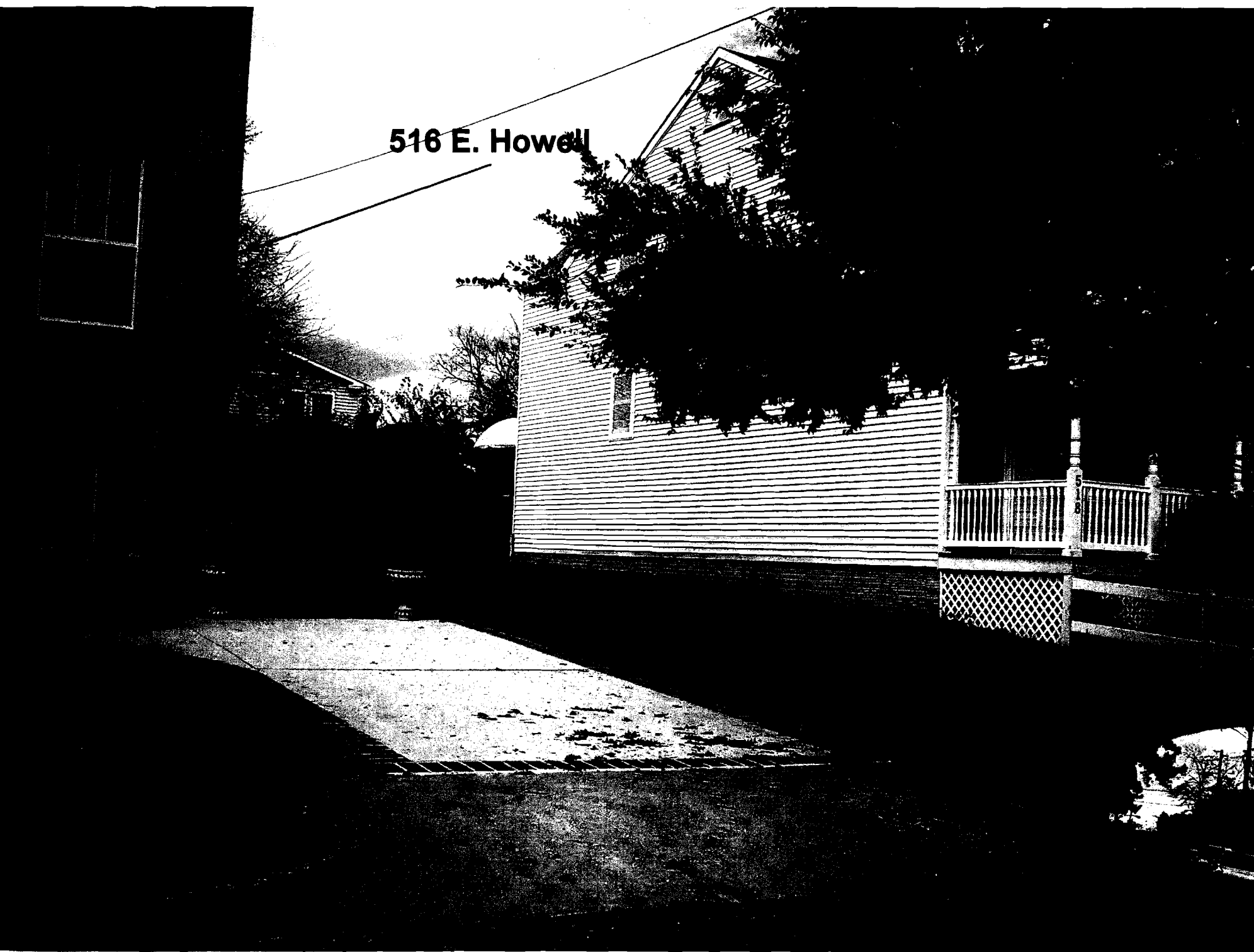
516 E. Howell



516 E. Howell



516 E. Howell



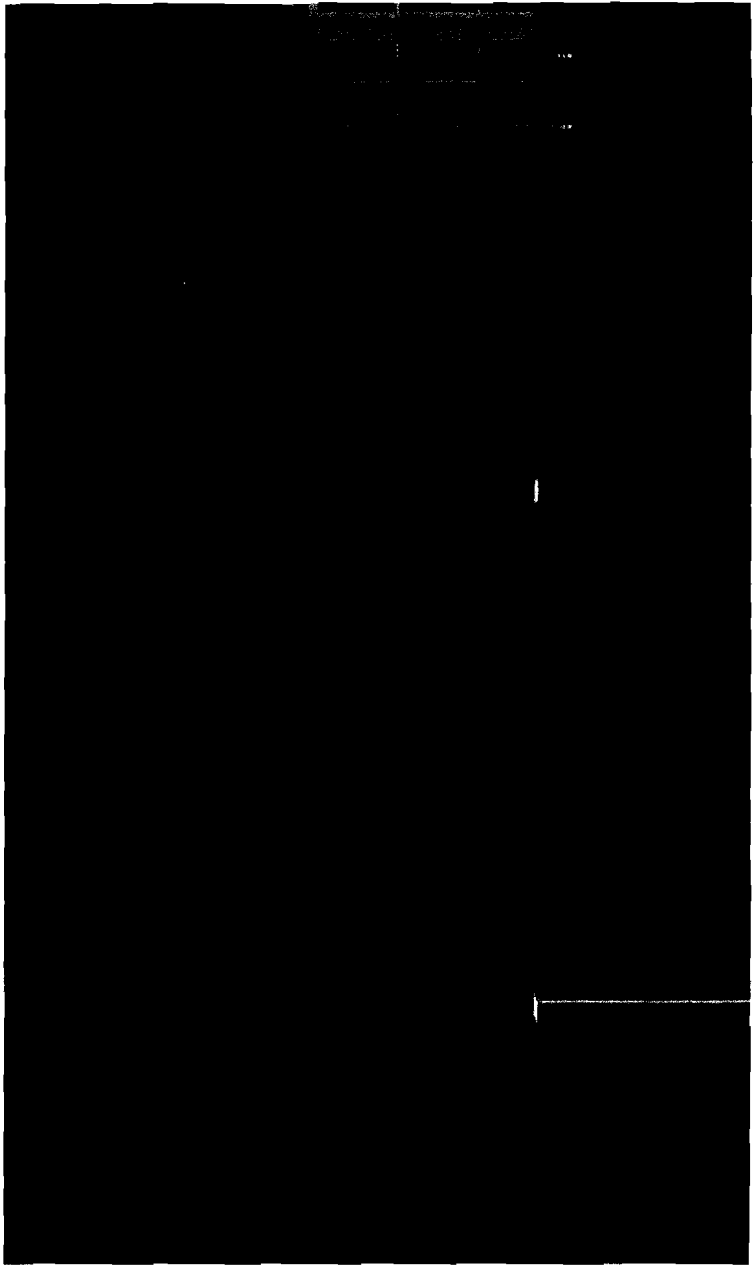


Overhead photo showing 516 E. Howell ("A") w/ fence & separation

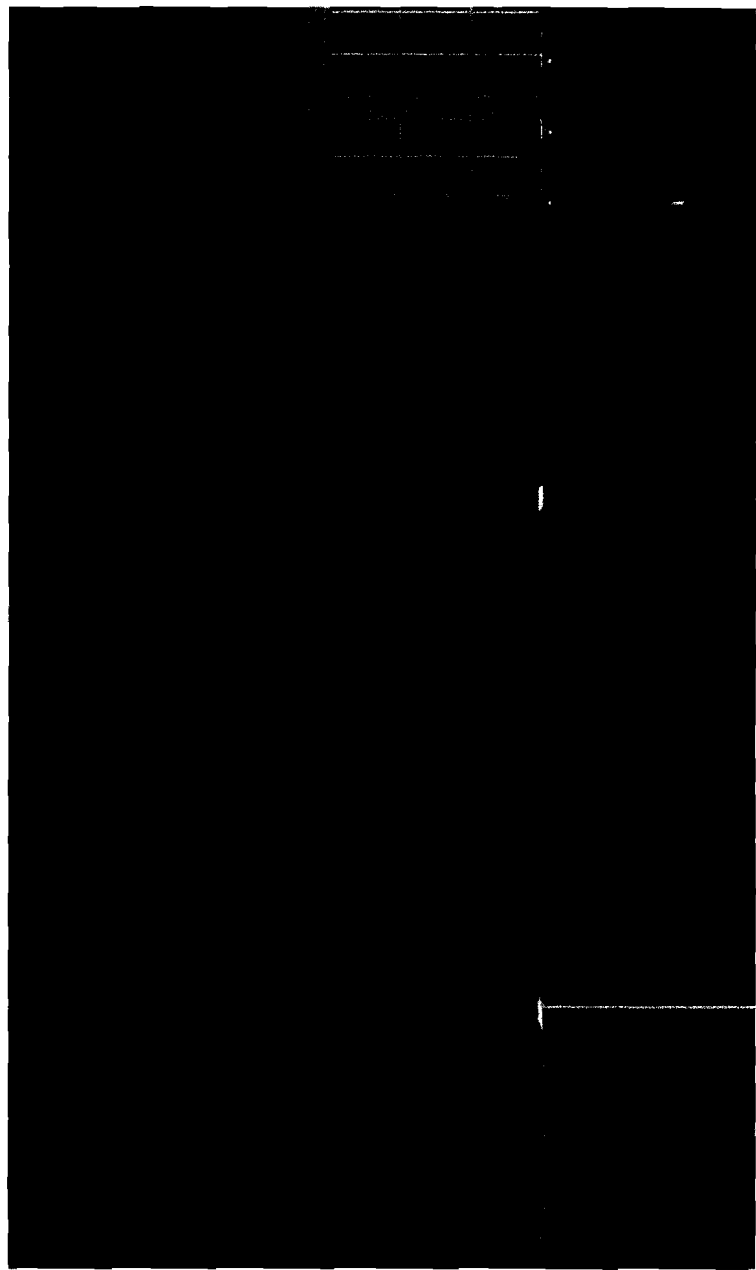


3D Rendering showing actual separation between the houses @ 516, 516A, & 518 E. Howell

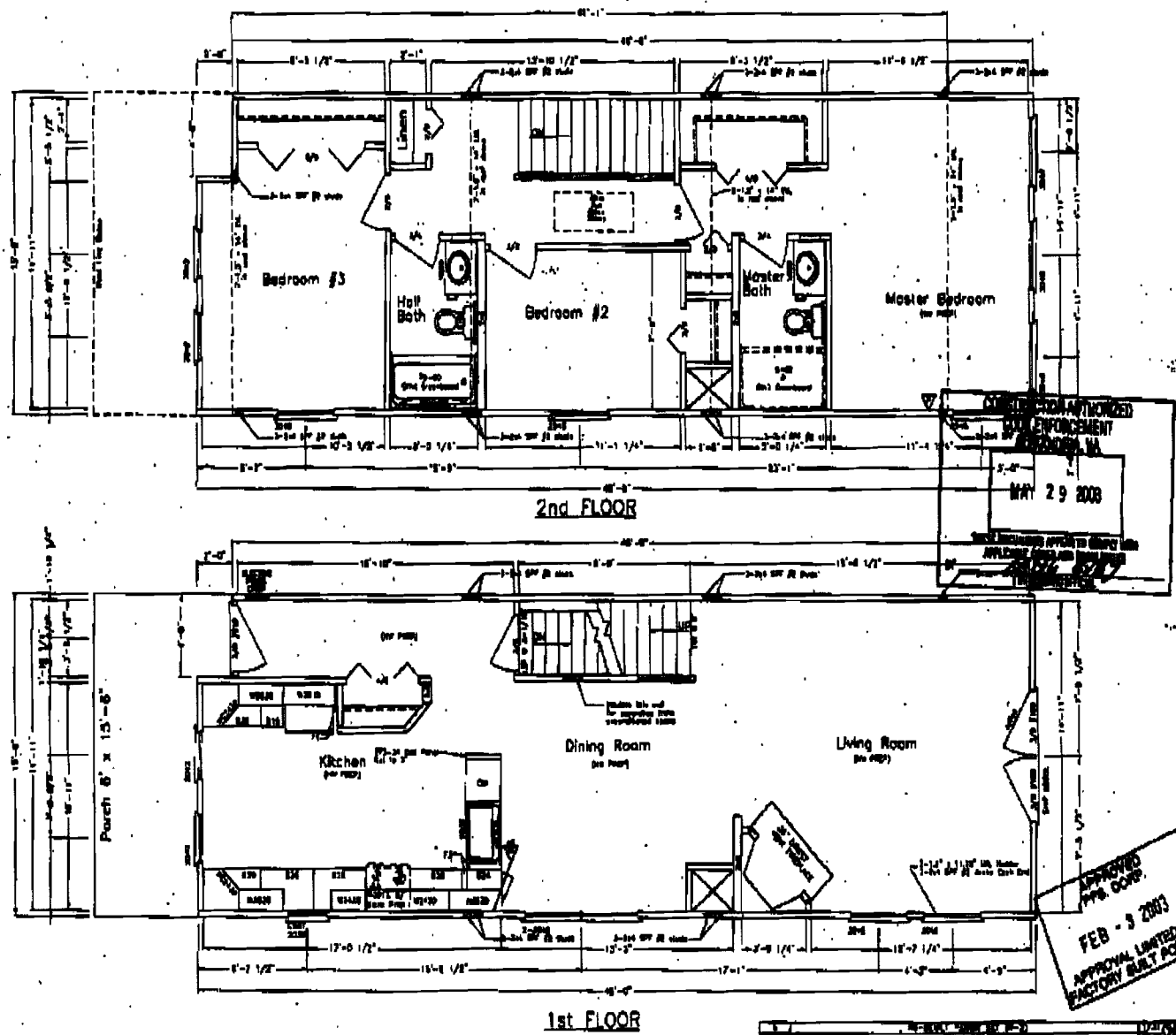
**View from 516 E. Howell
w/ 3' 1" side yard setback**



**View from 516 E. Howell
w/ 5' 1" side yard setback**



RELEASED FOR PRODUCTION
 This plan was prepared for a specific lot of building lots. It shall not be used for any other building.



Room	Area (sq. ft.)	Perimeter (ft.)	Volume (cu. ft.)	Notes
Living Room	176.78	133.88	728.00	
Dining Room	114.00	104.00	518.40	
Kitchen	114.00	104.00	518.40	
Bedroom #1	114.00	104.00	518.40	
Bedroom #2	114.00	104.00	518.40	
Bedroom #3	114.00	104.00	518.40	
Bath	57.00	68.00	277.20	
Hall	12.00	12.00	57.60	
Staircase	12.00	12.00	57.60	
Porch	127.68	103.35	272.80	
Total	687.86	617.23	2812.00	

SHEET 1
 2 of 13

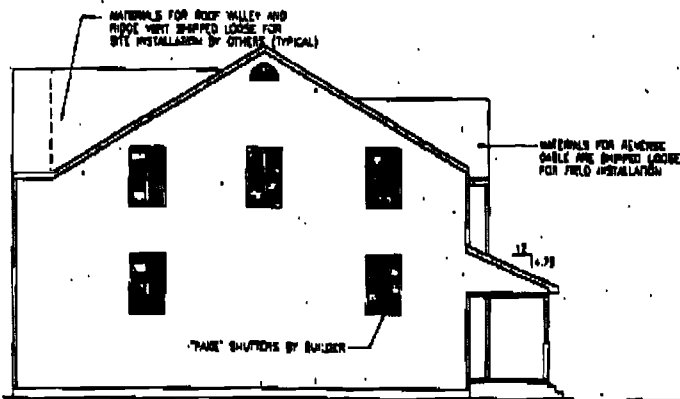
MODEL: CUSTOM
 23-15547
 FILE NAME:

DESIGNER: Floor Plans
 COMPANY: CARBIDE

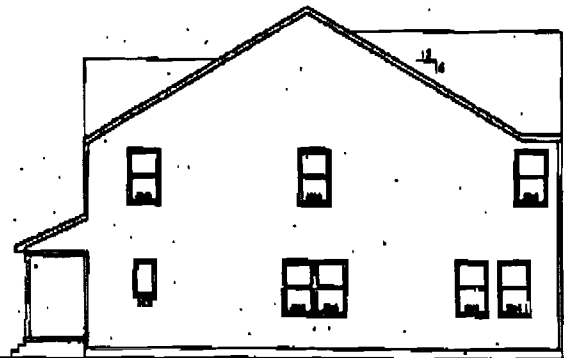
North American Housing Corp.
 CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
 5754 BRADLEY LANE FREDERICK, MD 21777
 301-454-9100

APPROVED FOR PRODUCTION
 P. MONROE
 DATE: 7/29/02

APPROVAL LIMITED TO FACTORY BUILT PORTION
 FEB - 3 2003
 APPROVED FOR PRODUCTION



LEFT ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/32"

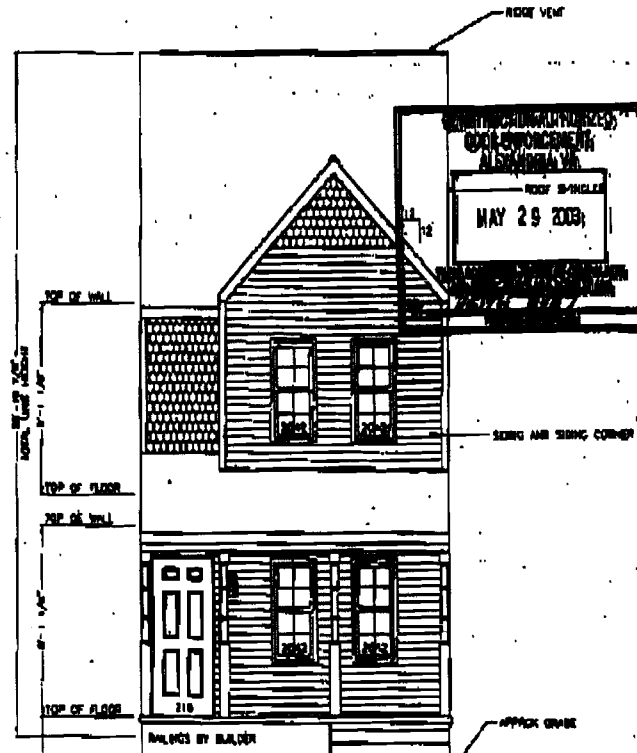


RIGHT ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/32"

RELEASED FOR PRODUCTION
DATE: 02-09-03
This model and drawings have been approved for production from a complete set of drawings and are shown as complete in their drawings.



REAR ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/32"



FRONT ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/16"

APPROVED FOR CONSTRUCTION
FEB - 9 2003
APPROVAL LIMITED TO FACTORY BUILT PORTIONS

SHEET 1 OF 12

MODEL: CUSTOM 23-15547 1.56 UNIT

DATE: Elevations COMPANY 2003

North American Housing Corp.
5745 WILSON DRIVE SUITE 100 FARMERSVILLE, MD 21777
301-694-9100

DATE: 7/29/02

SCALE: 3/16"



APPLICATION SPECIAL USE PERMIT

SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2009-0059

PROPERTY LOCATION: 516A E. Howell Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 035.03 Block 03 Lot 13 **ZONE:** RB

APPLICANT:

Name: Douglas Drabkowski

Address: 6828 Stoneybrooke Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306

PROPOSED USE: Single family detached home

THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 4-11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria staff and Commission Members to visit, inspect, and photograph the building premises, land etc., connected with the application.

THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4-1404(D)(7) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Director of Planning and Zoning on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Douglas Drabkowski

Print Name of Applicant or Agent

Signature

9/16/09

Date

6828 Stoneybrooke Lane

Mailing/Street Address

703-861-0533

Telephone #

Fax #

Alexandria, VA 22306

City and State Zip Code

heelgeorge@aol.com

Email address

original signature

Recommended Approval w/ Amendments 7-0
ACTION-PLANNING COMMISSION: _____ DATE: 2/2/10
ACTION-CITY COUNCIL: _____ DATE: _____

2/20/2010 - CC approved the original recommendation from staff - 7-0 (see attachment)

City Council adopted the consent calendar, as follows:

- 3. City Council approved the Planning Commission recommendation.
- 4. City Council approved the Planning Commission recommendation.
- 5. City Council approved the Planning Commission recommendation.

Council Action: _____

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY MANAGER

None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES (continued)

Planning Commission (continued)

- 6. SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2009-0064
3401 MOUNT VERNON AVENUE
RESTAURANT
Public Hearing and Consideration of a request to operate a restaurant and a request for a parking reduction; zone CSL/Commercial Service Low. Applicant: Jose Mario Cabero, Jose Guillermo Cabero and Marisol Gonzalez

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommend Approval 7-0

City Council approved the Planning Commission recommendation.

Council Action: _____

- 7. SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2009-0059
516-A EAST HOWELL AVENUE
SINGLE FAMILY HOME
Public Hearing and Consideration of a request for a parking reduction and site plan modifications for construction of a single family home; zone RB/Residential. Applicant: Douglas Drabkowski

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommend Approval w/amendments 7-0

City Council approved the original staff recommendation and to replace condition #1 as amended by the Planning Commission with the original condition #1 as proposed by staff.

Council Action: _____

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS