

Docket Item #3
BZA CASE #2010-0004

Board of Zoning Appeals
June 10, 2010

ADDRESS: 219 N. WEST STREET
ZONE: R-B, RESIDENTIAL
APPLICANT: WANDA CARTER, OWNER

ISSUE: Variance to construct a single-family home reducing the required open space from 800 square feet to 457 square feet.

CODE SECTION	SUBJECT	CODE REQMT	APPLICANT PROPOSES	REQUESTED VARIANCE
3-706(B)	Open Space	800 SF	457 SF	343 SF

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION OF JUNE 10, 2010: On a motion to approve by Mr. Goodale, seconded by Mr. Lantzy the variance was approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

Reason: The applicant demonstrated a hardship due to the substandard nature of the lot as outlined in the staff report.

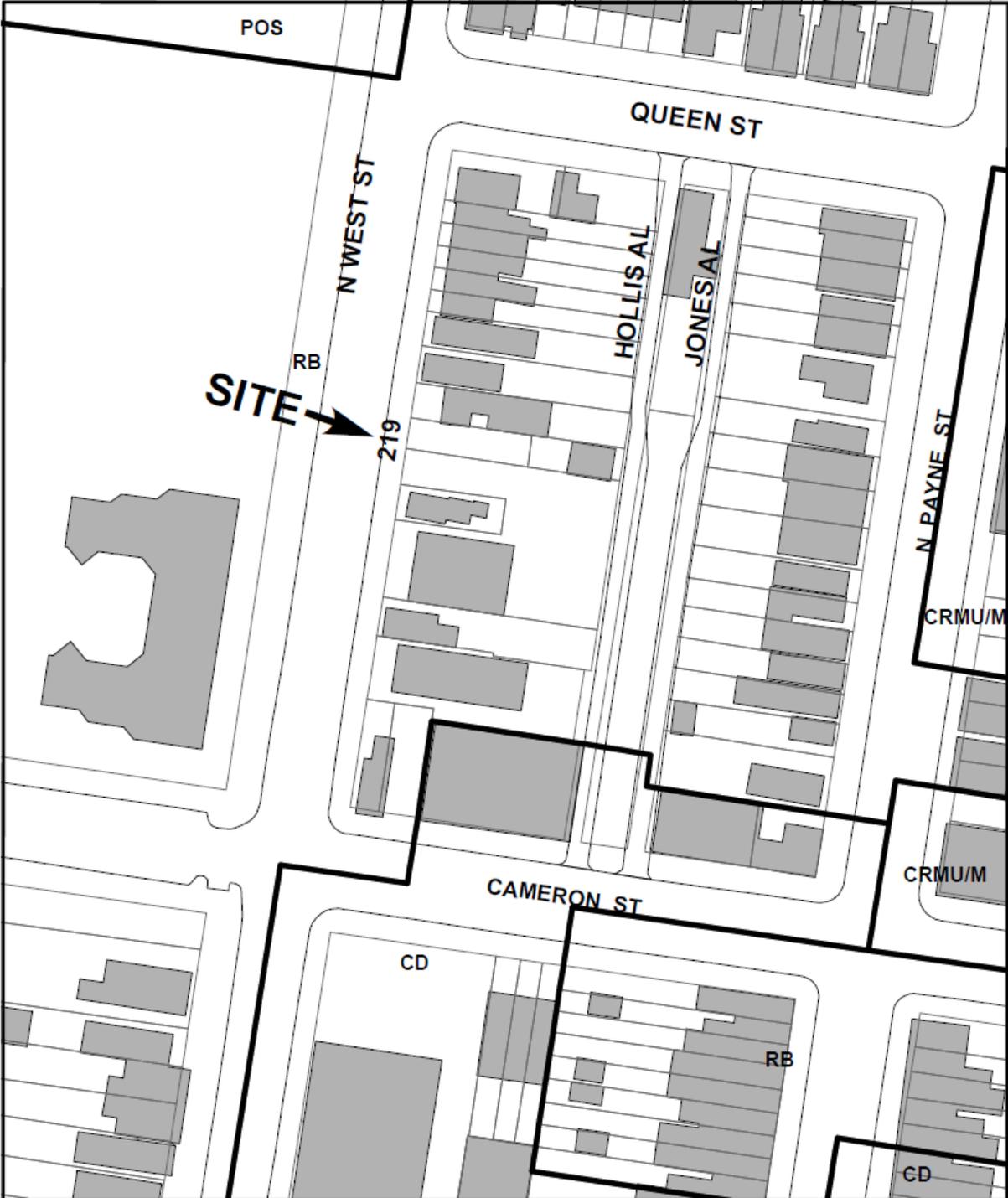
Speakers:

Wanda Carter, owner, made the presentation.

Staff **recommends approval** of the request because the applicant has demonstrated a hardship.

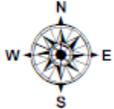
If the Board decides to grant the requested variance it must comply with the code requirements under the department comments and the applicant must submit the following prior to the release of a Certificate of Occupancy: (1) a survey plat prepared by a licensed surveyor confirming building footprint, setbacks, and building height compliance from average preconstruction grade and (2) certification of floor area from a licensed architect or engineer. The variance must also be recorded with the deed of the property in the City's Land Records Office prior to the release of the building permit.

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6/10/2010



I. Issue

The applicant proposes to construct a new single family dwelling reducing the required open space to less than the 800 square feet required at 219 North West Street.

II. Background

The subject property, a vacant lot, is one lot of record with 18.21 feet of frontage on North West Street, a depth of 63.42 feet and a lot area of 1,154.88 square feet. The lot is substandard for an RB zoned property where the minimum lot area is 1,980 square feet. Section 3-707(B) of the zoning ordinance states in the RB zone, a lot of record as of December 28, 1951 may be developed with a single family dwelling at the lot size and lot width shown.

The proposed building at 219 N. West Street is within the Parker-Gray historic district and will require approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review. The BAR staff states the proposed two story, wood frame Italianate style structure is generally compatible with nearby structures of historic merit in this neighborhood.

III. Description

The applicant proposes to construct a two-story single family dwelling on the front property line facing North West Street, on the north and south side property lines and 25.42 feet from the rear property line. The house will measure 28.15 feet in height to the midpoint of the gable roof.

At the rear of the new house a ground level deck, basement steps (covered with doors) and a window well (covered with a grate) will be constructed. A total of 457 square feet of open space will be maintained in the backyard. The RB zone requires 800 square feet of open space.

The subject property is located within the Parker-Gray Historic District and parking cannot be accessed off of an ally or interior court, therefore per section 8-200(C)(5)(b) no off street parking is required for this dwelling.

There have been no variances previously granted for the subject property.

IV. Master Plan/Zoning

The subject property is zoned RB and has been so zoned since adoption of the Third Revised Zoning Map in 1951 and identified in the Braddock Road Metro Small Area Plan for residential land use.

V. Requested variances

Section 3-706(B) Open Space

The applicant requests an open space variance of 343 square feet to reduce the required open space from 800 to 457 square feet.

VI. Staff analysis under criteria of section 11-1103

To grant a variance, the Board of Zoning Appeals must determine that a unique characteristic exists for the property. Section 11-1103 of the zoning ordinance lists standards that an applicant must address and that the Board believes exists and thus warrants varying the zoning regulations.

- (1) The particular physical surroundings, shape, topographical condition or extraordinary situation or condition of the property that prohibits or unreasonably restricts the use of the property.
- (2) The property's condition is not applicable to other property within the same zoning classification.
- (3) Hardship produced by the zoning ordinance was not created by the property owner.
- (4) The granting of a variance will not be detrimental to the public or other property or the neighborhood in which the subject property is located. Nor will the granting of a variance diminish or impair the value of adjoining properties or the neighborhood.
- (5) The granting of the variance will not impair light and air to the adjacent property.
- (6) The granting of a variance will not alter the character of the area nor be detrimental to the adjacent property.
- (7) Strict application of the zoning ordinance will produce a hardship.
- (8) Such hardship is generally not shared by other properties in the same zone and vicinity.
- (9) No other remedy or relief exists to allow for the proposed improvement.
- (10) The property owner has explored all options to build without the need of a variance.

VII. Applicant's Justification for Hardship

The applicant indicates that the subject property is a grandfathered lot and extremely substandard in lot area. The required 800 square feet of open space on such a small lot places an unreasonable restriction on the property.

VIII. Staff Analysis

Staff finds that the strict application of the zoning ordinance does result in a hardship for the applicant. A substandard lot totaling 1,154 square feet cannot meet the open space requirement of 800 square feet and allow for the construction of a modest single family dwelling. As requested, the applicant will be providing 39.50 percent open space, a proportionate amount of open space to that required of a complying lot with 1,980 square feet of lot area, which must provide 800 square feet of open space or 40 percent.

Based upon the above findings, staff **recommends approval** of the variance.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS

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

* The applicant is advised that if the variance is approved the following additional comments apply.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R-1 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)
- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-3 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R-4 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)
- R-5 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)
- R-6 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)
- R-7 The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)
- R-8 Construction of a new driveway entrance, or widening of an existing driveway entrance, requires separate application to; and approval from, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services.
- F-1 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

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- 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) 746-4064. 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>

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99).
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.
- C-3 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.8-1-22)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3)
- C-5 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to release of Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-6-25)
- C-6 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)

Code Administration:

- C-1 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-2 New Construction must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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-4 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

- C-5 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-6 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-7 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-8 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-9 A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 116.1.

Recreation (Arborist):

- F-1 No trees are affected by this plan.

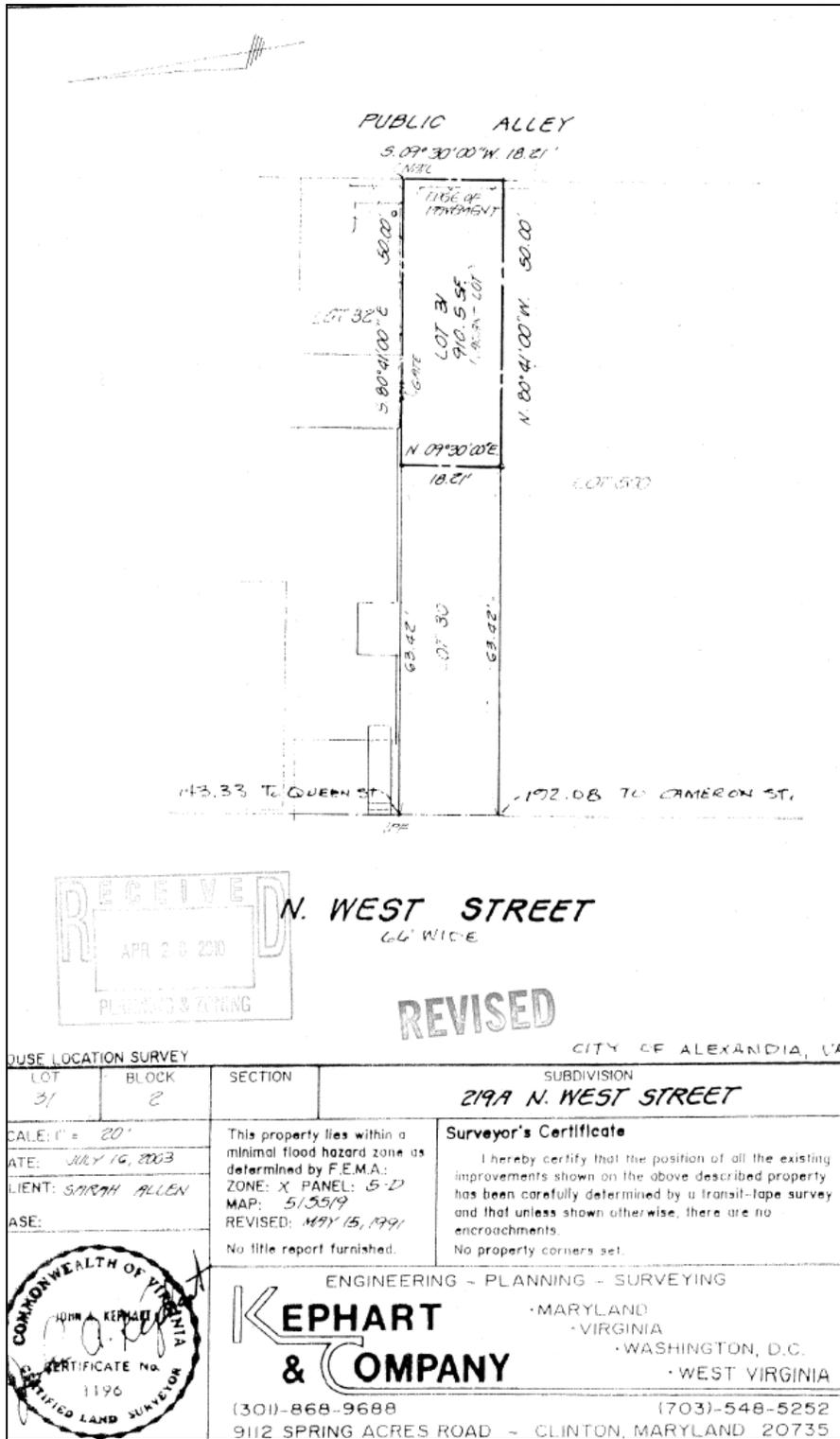
Historic Alexandria (Archaeology):

- F-1 The G.M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas indicates that a house was present on this lot in 1877. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in 19th-century Alexandria.
- *R-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.
- *R-2 The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-3 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.

Other Requirements Brought to the Applicant's Attention:

- C-1 A wall check survey plat shall be submitted to Planning and Zoning when the building footprint is in place, pursuant to Alexandria City Code section 8-1-12.

IX. Images



File copy
4th Submission



**APPLICATION
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
VARIANCE**

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Section of zoning ordinance from which request for variance is made:

Section 3 (B) Open and Usable Space

PART A

1. Applicant: Owner Contract Purchaser Agent

Name: Wanda Carter

Address: 810 Hampton St.
Walterboro, SC 29488

Daytime Phone: 843-909-0689

Email Address: wcartersc@comcast.net

2. Property Location: 219 N. West St.

3. Assessment Map: 064.03 Block 2 Lot 30 **Zone:** RB

4. Legal Property Owner:

Name: Wanda Carter

Address: 810 Hampton St. Walterboro, SC. 29488

REVISED

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OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Use additional sheets if necessary

1. Applicant. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1.Wanda Carter	810 Hampton St Walterboro, SC 29488	100%

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 219 N. West, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

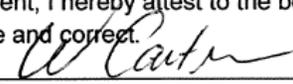
Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1.Wanda Carter	810 Hampton St Walterboro, SC 29488	100%

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity listed above (1 and 2), with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property is required to disclose **any** business or financial relationship, as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance, existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review.

Name of person or entity	Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance	Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.)
1.N/A		
2.		
3.		

NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.

As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

<u>4/11/201</u> Date	Wanda Carter Printed Name	<u></u> Signature
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5. Describe request briefly:

This request is for a variance to reduce the open space requirement from 800 sq. ft. to 461.95 sq. ft. for the construction of a single family home.

6. If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent, such as an attorney, realtor or other person for which there is a form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which they are employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

Yes — Provide proof of current City business license.

No — Said agent shall be required to obtain a business prior to filing application.

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY ATTESTS that all of the information herein provided including the site plan, building elevations, prospective drawings of the projects, etc., are true, correct and accurate. The undersigned further understands that, should such information be found incorrect, any action taken by the Board based on such information may be invalidated. The undersigned also hereby grants the City of Alexandria permission to post placard notice as required by Article XI, Division A, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Alexandria City Zoning Ordinance, on the property which is the subject of this application. The applicant, if other than the property owner, also attests that he/she has obtained permission from the property owner to make this application.

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Wanda Carter

Print Name



Signature

843-909-0689

Telephone

4/29/2010

Date

Pursuant to Section 13-3-2 of the City Code, the use of a document containing false information may constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor and may result in a punishment of a year in jail or \$2,500 or both. It may also constitute grounds to revoke the permit applied for with such information.

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PART B (SECTION 11-1102)

NOTE: The Board of Zoning Appeals may grant a variance only if the applicant can demonstrate a legal hardship. A legal hardship refers to the shape and topographical conditions, or to some other unique characteristic of the property; for example, if a rear yard has sharp drop-off or hilly terrain where an addition could otherwise be located legally, or if the property has three front yards.

A legal hardship is NOT, for example, having a large family in a two-bedroom house, or that you need a first-floor bedroom and bath. (These are good personal reasons for a variance, but do not constitute a legal hardship having to do with specific conditions of the land.)

APPLICANT MUST EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING:

(Please **print clearly** and use additional pages where necessary.)

1. Does strict application of the zoning ordinance to the subject property result in a hardship to the owner? (Answer A or B).

A. Explain how enforcement of the zoning ordinance will amount to confiscation of the property.

Yes

Property is a grandfathered in "out lot." Tax records show a detached house occupied and owned by Fielding Gaines existed on the property until 1943 or 1944 when it was demolished. I brought the property from M. Kavianpour in 2003 as a single family lot. He brought the property from the City.

Enforcement of the zoning ordinance Section 3-706(B) open and usable space, which states "Each lot occupied by a dwelling unit shall provide a minimum of 800 square feet of open and usable space for each dwelling unit" will result in undue **hardship** and amount to **confiscation** of the property because the disproportionate requirement of 800 sq ft on this property would deem the 1154.8 sq ft lot unbuildable.

This is a lot which was divided in 1915 when open space was not required resulting in 2 small lots-- Lots 30 and 31. With the house on the Lot 31 and the proposed structure on Lot 30, the open space for the two lots combined totals 823.95 sq. ft., which is more than the required 800 sq. ft. open space for each lot. The proposed house on Lot 30 will provide a proportionate amount of the currently required 800 sq. ft. **as does the house on Lot 31.**

B. Explain how enforcement of the zoning ordinance will prevent reasonable use of the property.

Yes, there would not be enough space to build a house. Building footprint would be reduced to 18' x 19', which is smaller than a single car garage.

Enforcement of this 800 sq ft open space ordinance will prevent reasonable use of the property.

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2. Is this hardship unique to the property? No
A. Explain if the hardship shared by other properties in the neighborhood.

Any new construction would face a similar problem because of the disproportionate requirement of open space.

The Historic Area has a few lots left that would require a variance before they could be built upon. If other neighbors were trying to build on their lots today, they would face the same hardship since the 800 sq ft open space ordinance and 2 parking spaces requirement would be hard for them to meet since most of the lots are small. I polled the neighborhood – 200 West St. to N. 1300 Queen St. to 200 Payne St. N. and to 1300 Cameron St Block- and found that

- a. out of 54 single family lots, 47 (87% of 54) were less than 1600 sq ft,
- b. and 19 (35% of 54) were less than 1200 sq ft.

The data came from the Real Estate Assessment Data Base.

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B. Explain how this situation or condition of the property (on which this application is based) applies generally to other properties in the same zone.

The same conditions apply to other properties in this zone, but the neighborhood is basically built out so only owners who are putting up new construction are affected by the 800 sq ft open space ordinance. Most of the old houses would have needed a variance to build if the 800 ft open space ordinance had been in effect 100 years ago. Now all construction will need a variance to build.

3. Was the hardship caused by the applicant? No

A. Did the condition exist when the property was purchased? I was not aware of the 800 sq ft open space requirement but bought the property with knowledge of the ordinance that allows for a dwelling to be built on a lot that was recorded prior to 1951.

Section 3-707(B) states that if a the lot was recorded prior to December 28, 1951 the lot may be developed with a single family dwelling and accessory structures at the lot size shown on the recorded plat.

B. Did the applicant purchase the property without knowing of this hardship? No

C. How and when was the condition, which creates the hardship, first created?

The hardship was created by the 800 sq ft open space requirement. The lot is 1154 sq ft and the open space requirement would only leave 354 sq ft or a footprint of 18' x 19', which is not big enough for a single car garage.

D. Did the applicant create the hardship and, if so, how was it created?
No

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4. Will the variance, if granted, be harmful to others? No

A. Explain if the proposed variance will be detrimental to the adjacent properties or the neighborhood in general.

B. Explain how the proposed variance will affect the value of the adjacent and nearby properties.

It will increase the value of the properties of the neighborhood because it will be a structure that one would expect to find in Parker Gray. When I bought the property at 221 N West I also cleared the lot at 219 N West St and kept it clean for almost ten years. Before I cleared the lot, it was full of animal pens, trash, and drug paraphernalia, and overgrown. The neighborhood is considerably different than it was ten years ago, and it is for the better – safer.

C. Has the applicant shown the proposed plans to the most affected property owners? Has that neighbor objected to the proposed variance, or has the neighbor written a letter of support of the proposed variance? If so, please attach the letter.

Yes, the plans have been shown to the neighbors, and there are no objections.

D. Explain how the proposed variance will change the character of the neighborhood.

The proposed house will be in character with the others in the neighborhood. The City architect has been consulted and I will need to get approval of the BAR.

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5. Is there any other administrative or procedural remedy to relieve the hardship?

Because of the small size of the lot it is not possible to have 800 sq ft of open space. Neither is it possible for 40 out of 54 polled lots to provide 800 sq ft of open space. The City ordinance that required Parker Gray to have 800 sq ft of open space is almost impossible to meet. A request for a variance is common in the historic areas.

The ordinance should exempt the historical area because of the small size lots, The average size of the homes and the open space should be taken into account and a revised ordinance approved. The open space requirement should be proportionate to the lot size and allow for a reasonable size home, give the high cost of small lots in the historical areas. This would reduce the number of proposed single family residence owners that have to request a variance. The ordinance requiring 800 sq ft of open space on these small lots is unreasonable.

PART C

1. Have alternative plans or solutions been considered so that a variance would not be needed? Please explain each alternative and why it is unsatisfactory.

A variance cannot be avoided because of the small lot size. It is not possible to have 800 sq ft of open space and have a livable house on this 1154 sq ft lot. Providing the required 800 sq ft open space would leave only 354 sq ft for the dwelling.

4th Submission

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File Copy



ALEXANDRIA DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

FLOOR AREA AND OPEN SPACE COMPUTATIONS

A. Property Information

A1. Street 219 N West St
 A2. Zone _____ Total Lot 1154.87

B. FAR Information

B1. Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.) allowed by the Zone _____
 B2. $\frac{1154.87}{\text{Lot Area}} \times .75 = 866$
 F.A.R. Maximum Allowable Net Floor

C. Existing Gross Area Computations

EXISTING GROSS AREA		DEDUCTIONS	
Basement		Basement	
First Floor		Stairways	
Second Floor		Mechanical/Elevator	
Third Floor		Total Deductions	
Porches/ Other			
Total Gross			

C1. Existing Gross Floor Area * _____ Square Feet
 C2. Allowable Floor Deductions ** _____ Square Feet
 C3. Existing Net Floor Area (subtract C2 from C1) _____ Square Feet

D. New Gross Area Computations

NEW GROSS AREA		DEDUCTIONS	
Basement	684	Basement	684
First Floor	684	Stairways	167.5
Second Floor	684	Mechanical/Elevator	less 76 = 386.8
Third Floor		Total Deductions	1237.3
Porches/ Other			
Total Gross	2052		

D1. New Gross Floor Area * 2052 Square Feet
 D2. Allowable Deductions ** 1237.3 Square Feet
 D3. New Net Floor Area (subtract D2 from D1) 814.7 Square Feet

E. Existing + New Area

E1. Total Net Floor Area (add C3 and D3) 814.7 Square Feet
 E2. Total Net Floor Area Allowed (B2) 866 Square Feet

F. Open Space

F1. Existing Open Space 458.89 Square Feet
 F2. Required Open Space 800 Square Feet
 F3. Proposed Open Space 458.89 Square Feet

*Gross floor area is measured from the face of exterior walls and includes basements, outside garages, sheds, gazebos, guest buildings and other accessory buildings.

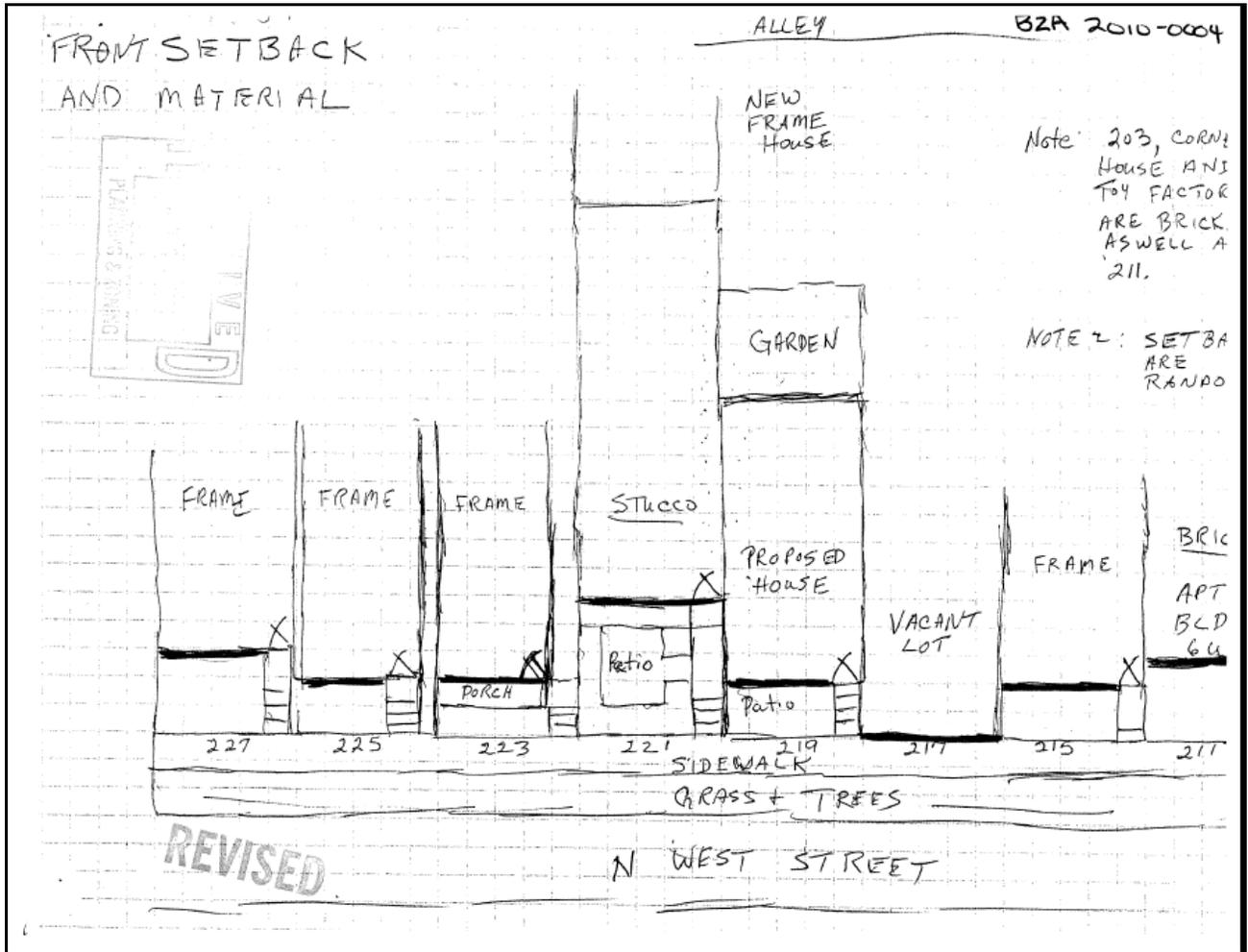
** Allowable deductions from gross floor area: Stairways, elevators, mechanical and electrical rooms; basements (if the basement is less than four feet out of the ground as measured from the average finished grade at the perimeter of the bottom of the first floor).

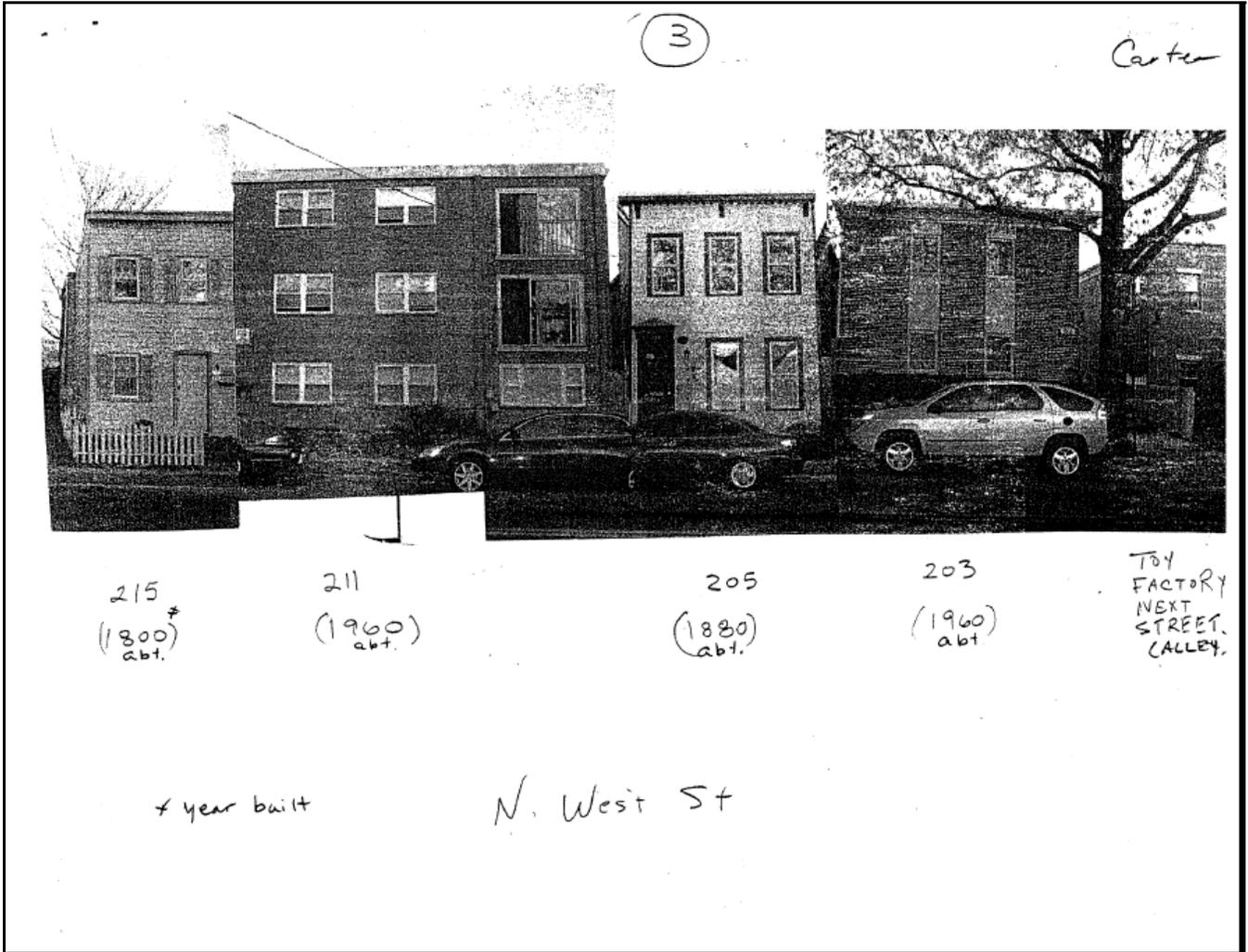
NOTE: Open space calculations are required for all residential zones (except in the R-20, R-12, R-8, R-5, R-2-5 and RT zones) and in commercial, office and mixed-use zones where residential uses are proposed. Refer to specific provisions in the zoning ordinance.

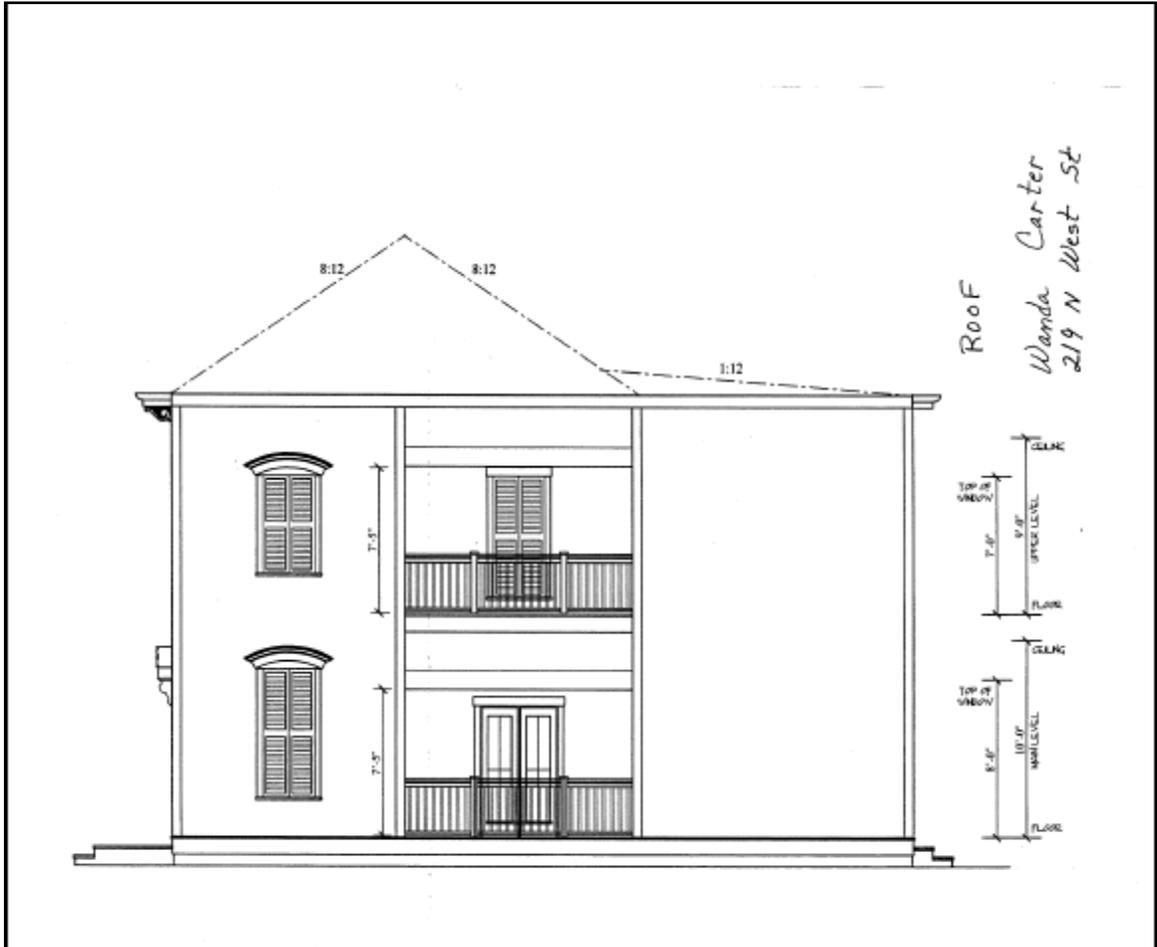
The undersigned hereby certifies and attests that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the above computations are true and correct.

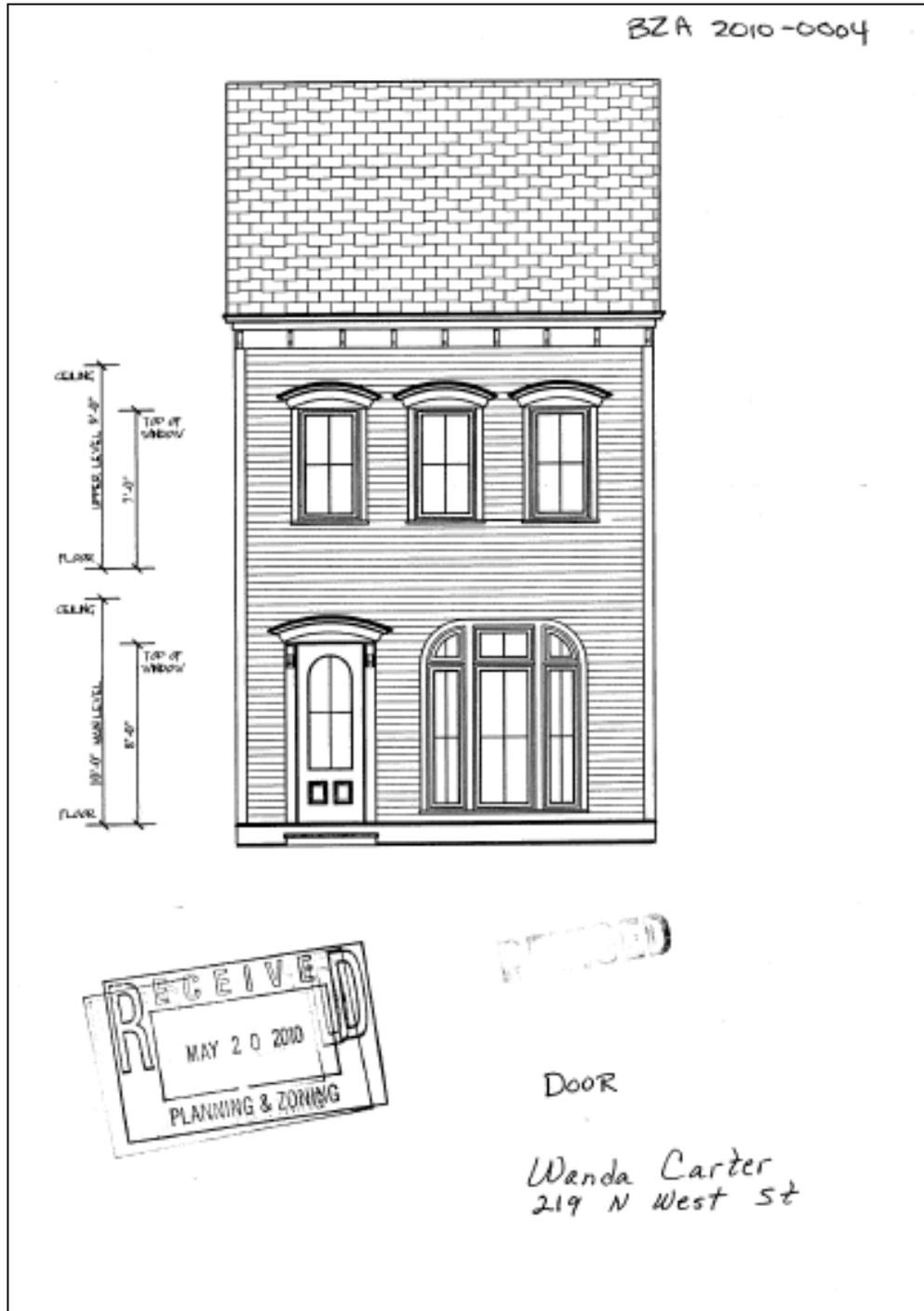
Signature: Wanda Carter Date: 4/29/2010

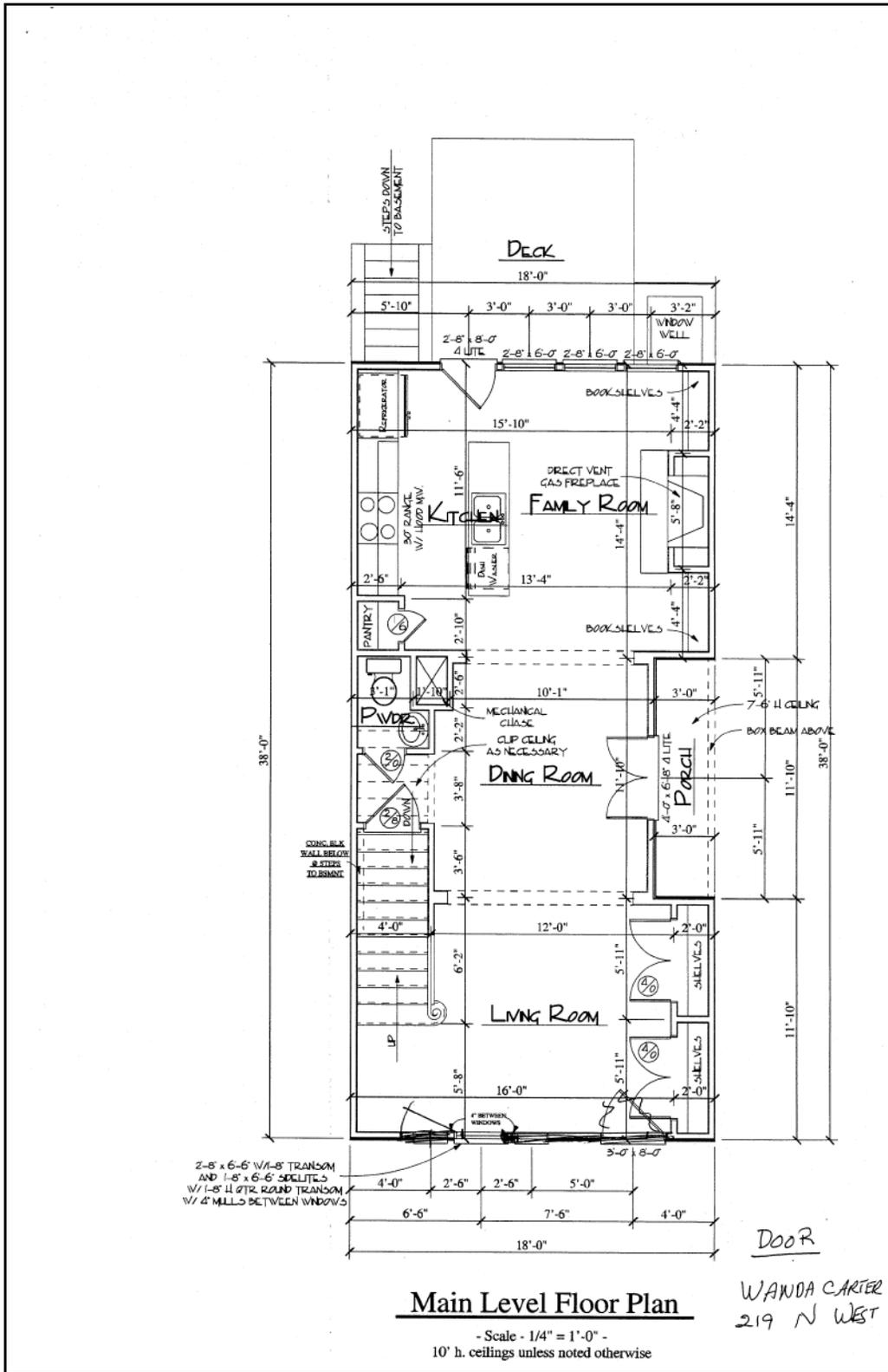
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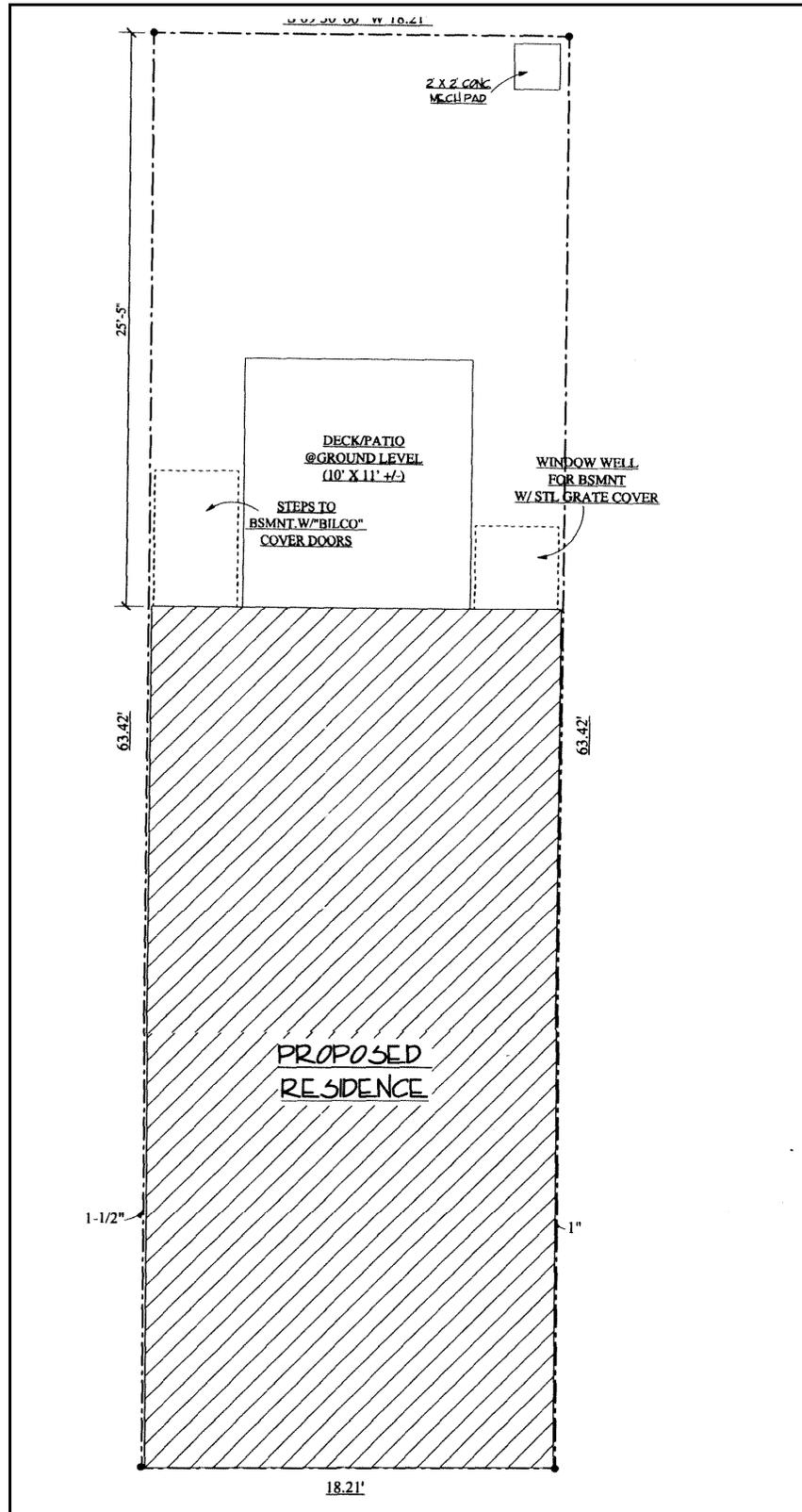


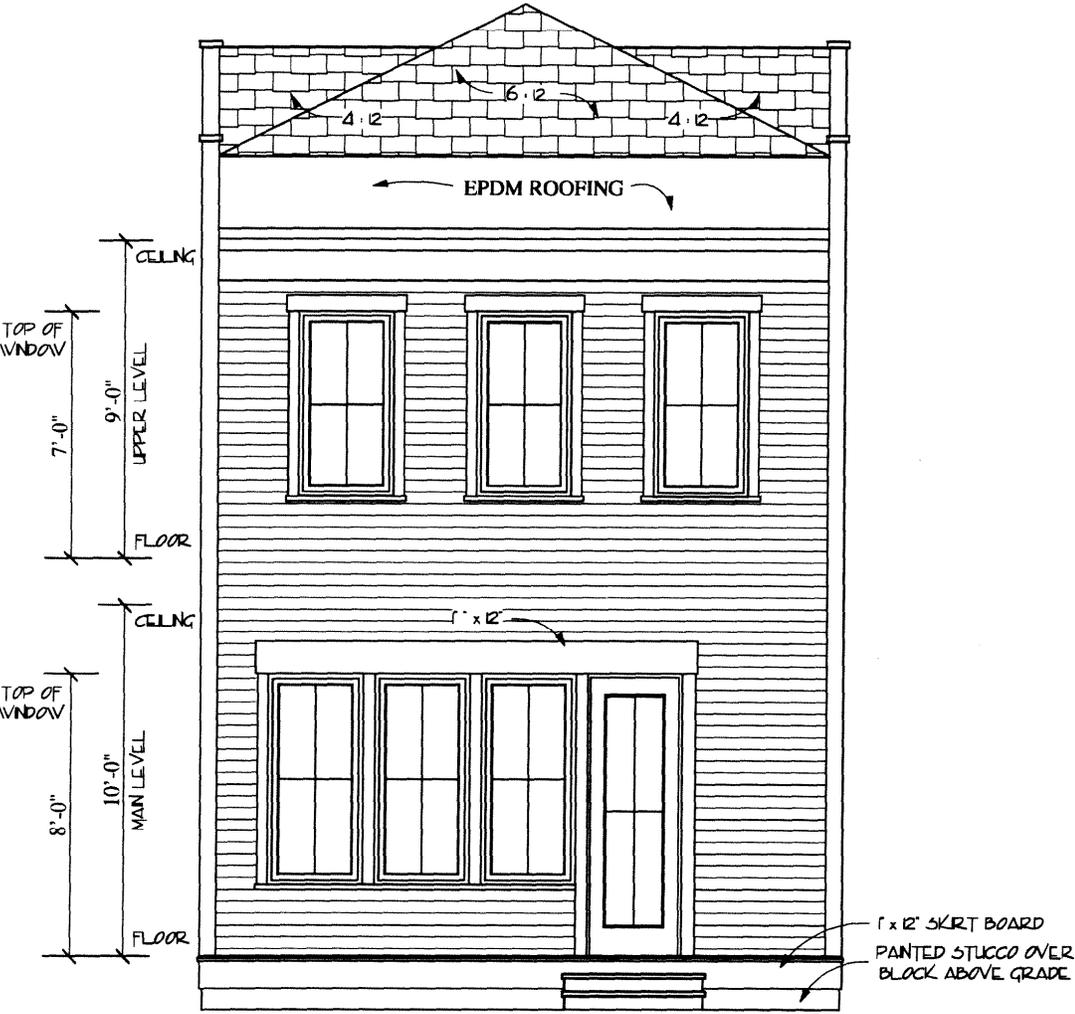




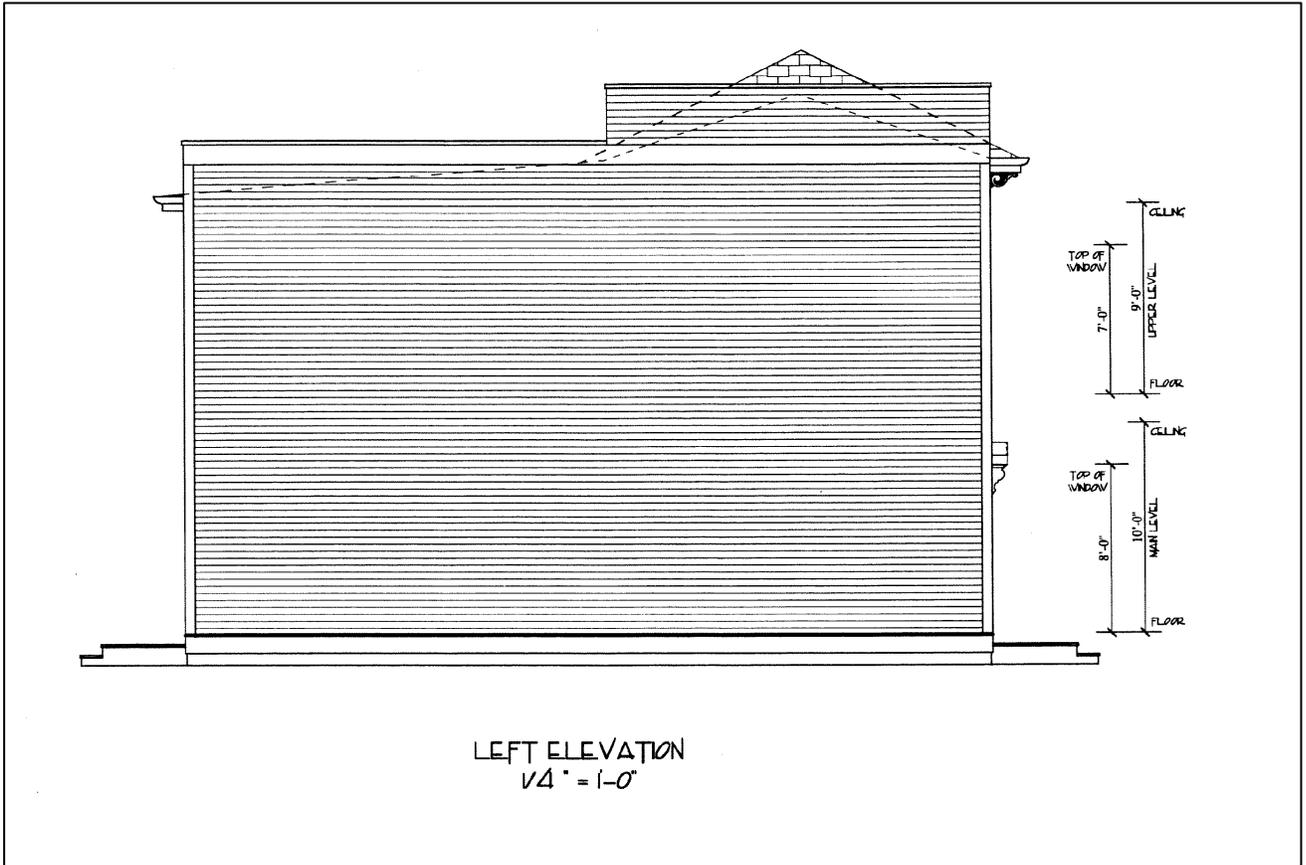


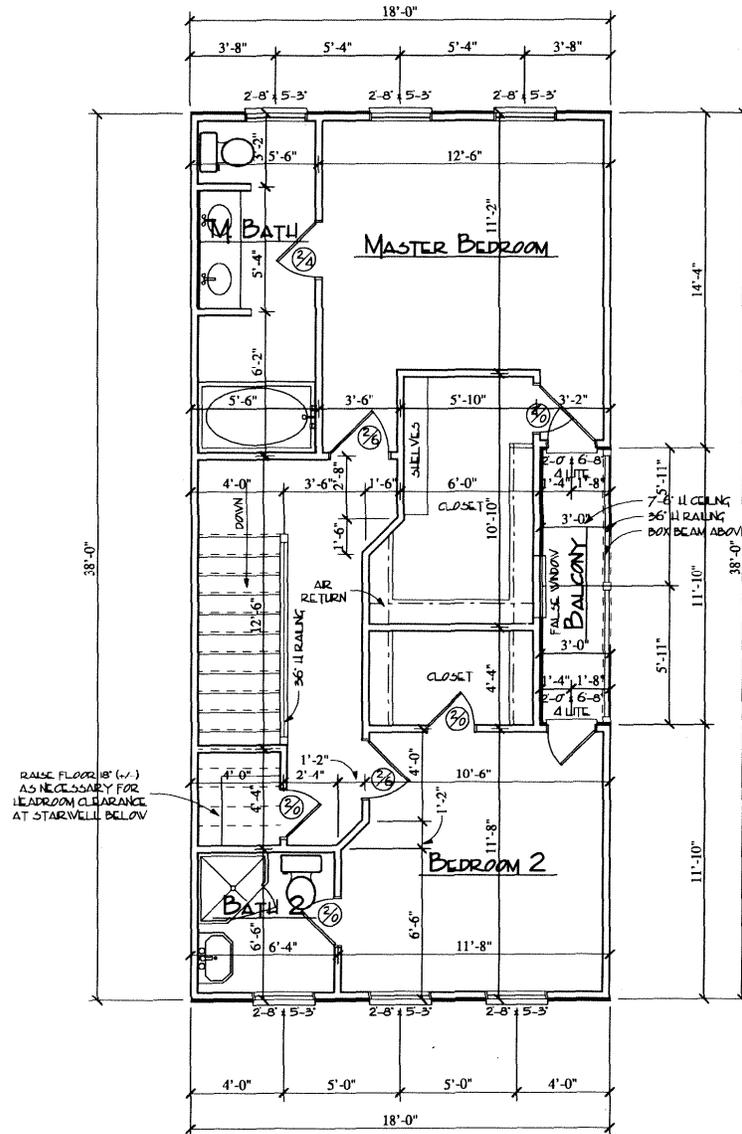






REAR ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"



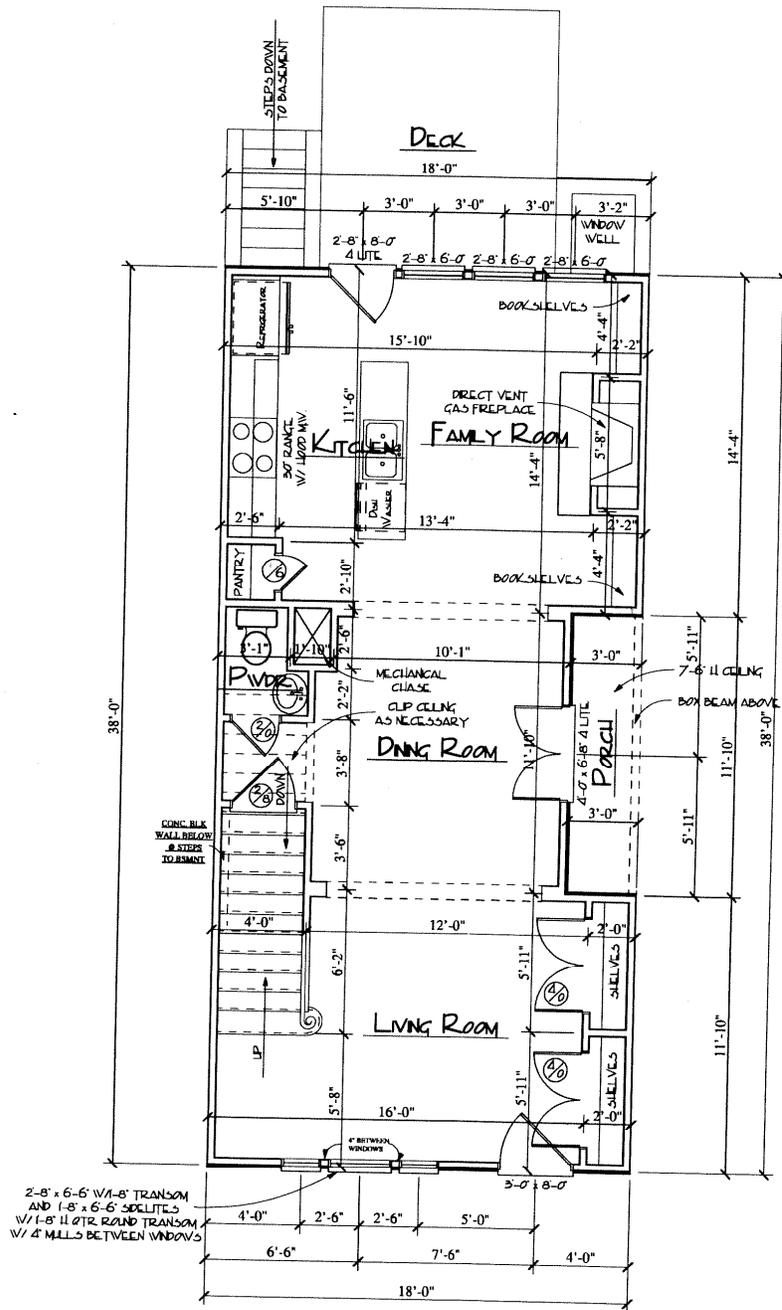


Upper Level Floor Plan

- Scale - 1/4" = 1'-0" -
 9' h. ceilings unless noted otherwise

Note:

- 1.) Interior doors and openings to be 6'-8" h. unless noted otherwise
- 2.) Top of windows to be @ 6'-8" unless noted otherwise



Main Level Floor Plan

- Scale - 1/4" = 1'-0" -
 10' h. ceilings unless noted otherwise

Note:

- 1.) Interior doors and openings to be 6'-8" h. unless noted otherwise
- 2.) Top of windows to be @ 6'-8" unless noted otherwise

