

Docket Item # 6  
BAR CASE # 2008-0095

BAR Meeting  
September 17, 2008

**ISSUE:** Addition and Alterations  
**APPLICANT:** Stephanie Dimond  
**LOCATION:** 725 South Columbus Street  
**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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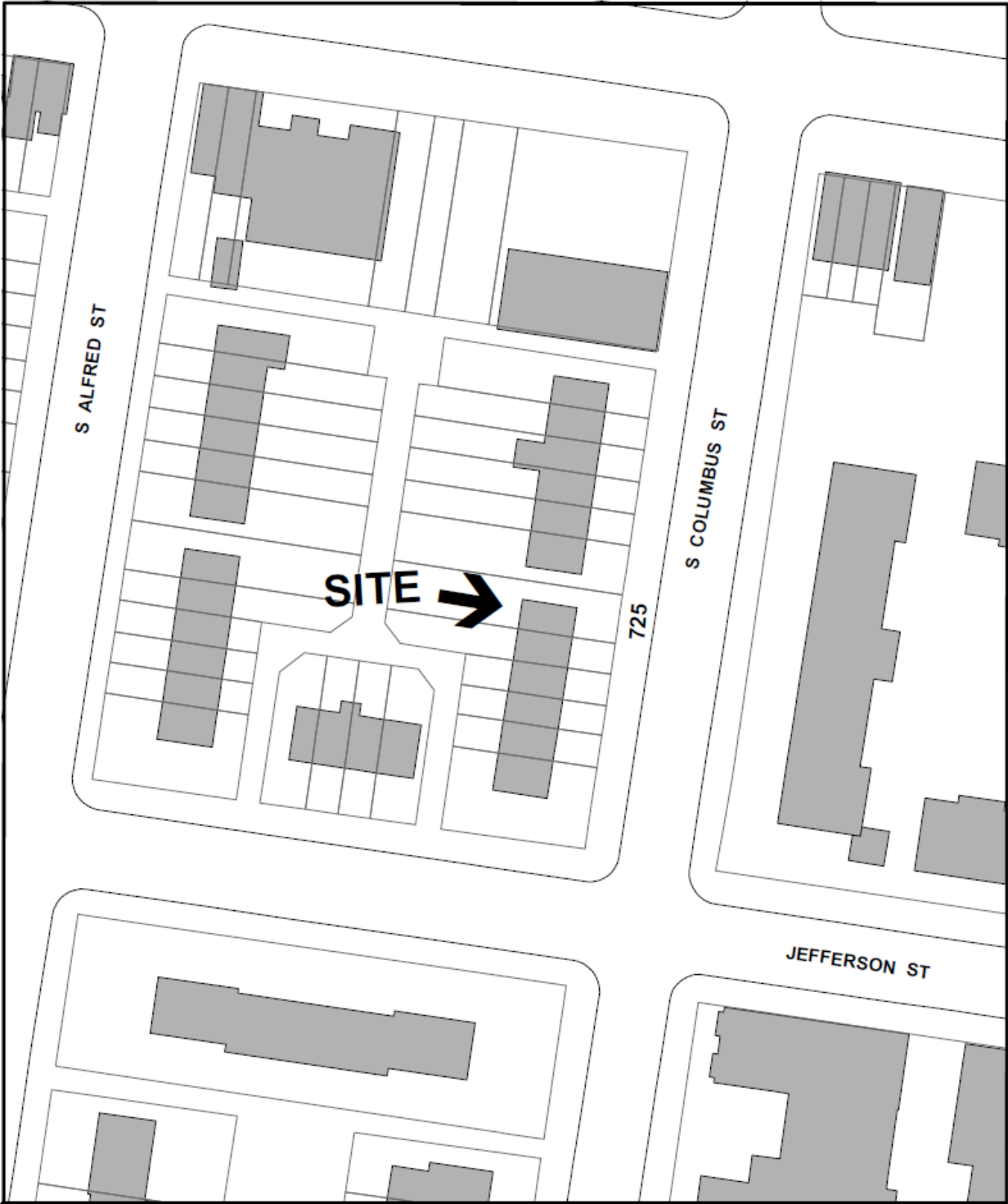
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. 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 above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.
3. Should the existing stockade fence in the side yard be damaged during construction of the addition, or if the applicant chooses to install a new fence, the design and style of the fence should be approved by Staff prior to its installation.

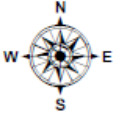
**BOARD ACTION, JULY 9, 2008:** On a motion by Ms. Neihardt, seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 4-0.

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**BAR CASE #2008-0094, 0095 9/17/2008**



Note: Docket Item # 5 must be approved before this item may be considered.

Update: At the July 9, 2008 BAR hearing, the Board expressed concerns with the mass of the proposed addition and the lack of articulation on the addition's south elevation, and asked the applicant to explore ways to address these concerns. The applicant has submitted additional information which shows the articulation of the south elevation of the addition with recessed faux windows. In addition, the submitted materials include a further justification of the size and mass of the addition as it relates to the surrounding neighborhood.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations at 725 South Columbus Street.

Addition

The applicant proposes to construct a rear addition measuring approximately 19.6' by 20.75'. The addition will project approximately 3.5' beyond the north elevation of the original house.

On the north side elevation of the new addition there will be a raised entrance with a single door centered on the first floor flanked by single casement windows. The stoop will have a decorative metal railing and a corrugated metal awning which is hung from metal ties. The second floor of the north elevation will contain three wood awning windows. As a result of the addition a new below grade cellar entrance will be created with a new decorative metal railing at ground level, surrounding the basement door well.

On the first floor of the rear, west elevation there will be a pair of French doors, and a pair of casement windows with operable awning windows above the windows. The second floor will have the same window and door configuration with the paired doors to the left and the windows to the right, with a decorative metal railing in front of the French doors on the second floor.

The south elevation of the addition has been revised to include two recessed faux windows on both the first and second floors. The recessed panels are intended to give the appearance of former window openings.

The addition will be constructed of brick to match the original townhouse and the windows and doors are proposed to be manufactured by Kolbe and Kolbe, with double-insulated, simulated divided lights with an interior spacer bar and 7/8" fixed muntins. Based on a recommendation by the Board, the applicant will now paint the window and door trim on the addition the same color as the window and door trim on the original portion of the house. The decorative metal railings will be painted black.

Alterations

The existing double-hung vinyl windows on the front and side elevations of the townhouse will be replaced with wood casement windows to match the windows on the addition. The existing

vinyl awning windows on the north elevation will also be replaced with new wood awning windows. The existing vinyl shutters on the front of the house will be removed.

## **II. HISTORY:**

The two-story, end unit brick townhouse at 725 South Columbus Street was constructed in c. 1941 as part of the Patrick Henry Homes subdivision, according to the City's real estate records.

Staff could find no previous Board approvals for this house.

## **III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Since the last Board meeting in July, the applicant has provided additional information intended to demonstrate that, with the addition, the property will still have an excess of open space and FAR (floor area ratio) as required in the RM zone. The applicant's material outlines that the resulting open space will be 85% more than what is required by the zoning ordinance (993 square feet required vs. 1,834 square feet provided) and the new FAR is just 38% of what is allowed under the zoning ordinance (4,285 square feet allowed vs. 1,639 square feet provided). Staff does point out that the zoning ordinance establishes only the absolute limitations and *minimum/maximum* standards and it is the Board's role to evaluate the addition in terms of scale, mass and compatibility.

Staff understands that there has been some concern about the size of the addition within the neighborhood and Staff encouraged the applicant to reach out to the community. To that end, the applicant held an open house to describe the project to interested neighbors and has submitted a number of letters of support.

Staff is aware that the proposed addition almost doubles the size of the existing house and that the Board has previously expressed a preference for additions that represent no more than 50% increase in the size of the house. Having said that, Staff is cognizant that the Board has approved large additions to townhouses within the Old and Historic Alexandria District, including Yates Gardens, another development of historic townhouses where there are a large number of additions.

Staff does acknowledge the impact the proposed addition will have on the applicant's immediate neighbors. The proposed addition will be visible through an approximately 17 ft gap between 721 and 725 South Columbus Street. The addition will be most noticeable from the rear yards of the houses on South Alfred Street and from the rear alley behind the property, which is very narrow and utilitarian in nature with vegetation and 6' fences throughout, some located on raised brick walls.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition is appropriate and compatible with the two story townhouse at 725 South Columbus Street and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. The design of the addition is compatible in style, material and fenestration with the existing brick townhouse. The simplistic geometric form of the addition expresses the "prevailing shape" of the original building, as discussed in the *Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* also

recommend that new additions be differentiated from the existing buildings, and Staff believes the applicant has achieved this by, in the words of the applicant, "...offsetting the footprint of the addition to break the wall plane..." While the addition introduces a new mass into the rear yard, it retains the integrity of the historic portion of the house by maintaining the uniform massing of the blockface as recommend in the *Design Guidelines*.

While none of the other townhouses in the Patrick Henry Homes subdivision have two story additions to the rear, there are a number of houses in the subdivision that have been expanded through the addition of a third floor, primarily those in the block to the west, facing South Patrick Street and Jefferson Street. Staff does not believe that this approach would be a viable alternative for 725 South Columbus Street because it would have adverse impacts on the historic structure and be incompatible and incongruous with the near-identical row of pre-war townhouses in the 700 block of South Columbus Street.

Staff commends the applicant for making appropriate alterations to the original part of the townhouse, namely the removal of the vinyl shutters and the replacement of the double hung vinyl windows with historically appropriate casement style windows.

The *Design Guidelines* do not recommend the installation of stockade fencing, a portion of which the applicant is proposing to relocate in the side yard closer to the front of the house after the construction of the addition. Should the stockade fence be damaged, or if the applicant chooses to install a new fence, the design and style of the fence should be approved by Staff prior to its installation.

Staff also notes the conditions from Alexandria Archaeology.

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

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2. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.
3. Should the existing stockade fence in the side yard be damaged during construction of the addition, or if the applicant chooses to install a new fence, the design and style of the fence should be approved by Staff prior to its installation.

## **V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 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-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-7 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-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 wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

### Historic Alexandria:

- F-1 No comment.

### Alexandria Archaeology:

- R-1 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 above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

VI. IMAGES

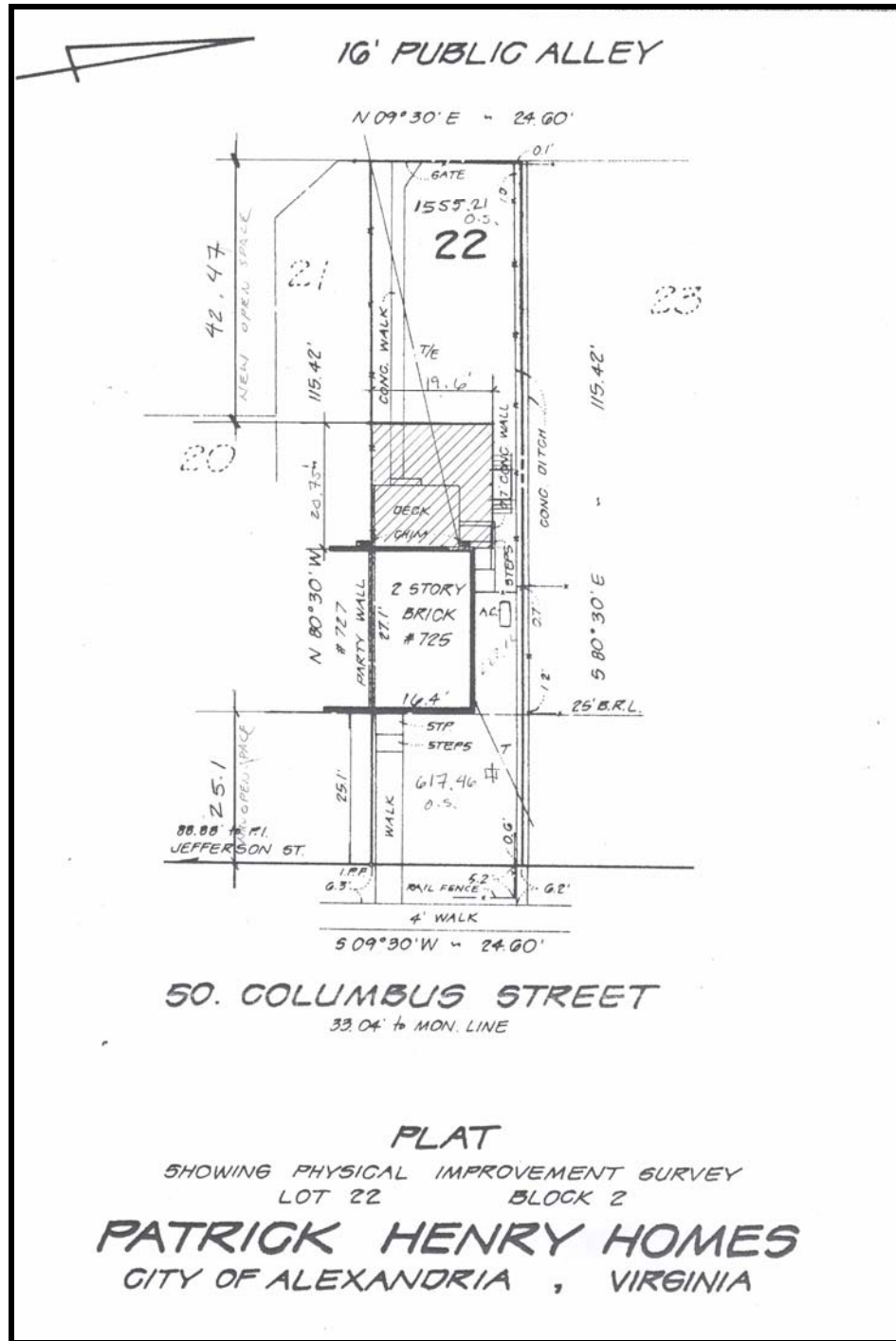


Figure 1: Plat showing area of demolition/addition





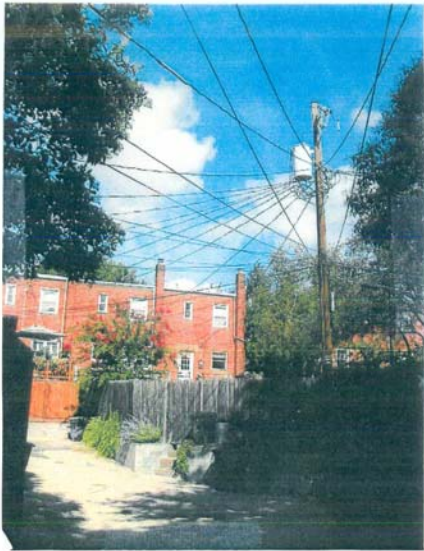
Front Elevation



Side Elevation



Rear Elevation



Rear and Side Alley behind  
725 S. Columbus Street



Janine Rubitski standing at end  
of proposed addition



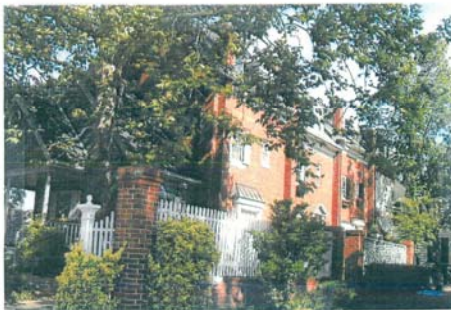
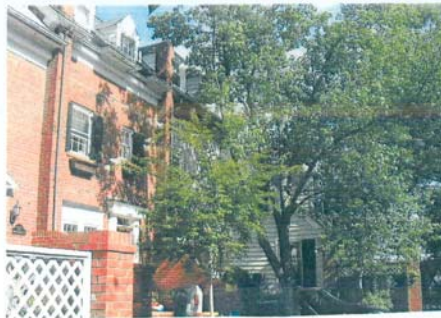
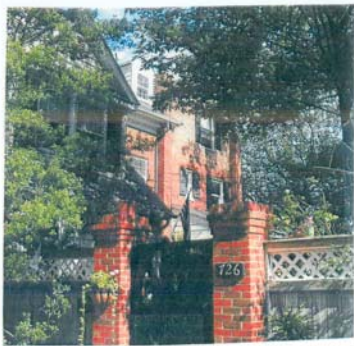
Addition to house at 700 block of S. Alfred Street  
(alley behind 725 S. Columbus Street)



Addition at house at 800 block of Jefferson Street  
(alley behind 725 S. Columbus Street)



Additions to houses in 700 block of  
S. Columbus and 800 block of Jefferson Street  
(same block as subject property)



Alterations, Pop-up, Rear and Side Additions to houses in  
Patrick Henry Subdivision  
700 Block South Patrick Street



Front Elevation



Side Elevation

Alterations and Additions to house  
in Patrick Henry Subdivision in  
700 block of South Alfred Street  
(This is the only house in the row  
with alterations or additions)



Rear Elevation



Front Elevation

Pop-up and Portico Additions  
to houses in Patrick Henry Subdivision  
900 block of Jefferson Street  
(Patrick Henry Subdivision)



Rear Elevation



Two story addition at 900 block of S. Columbus (only addition in row)



Addition at 900 block of S. Alfred (only addition in row)



Two story addition at row houses of 800 block of S. Columbus Street



Development at 800 block of S. Columbus Street

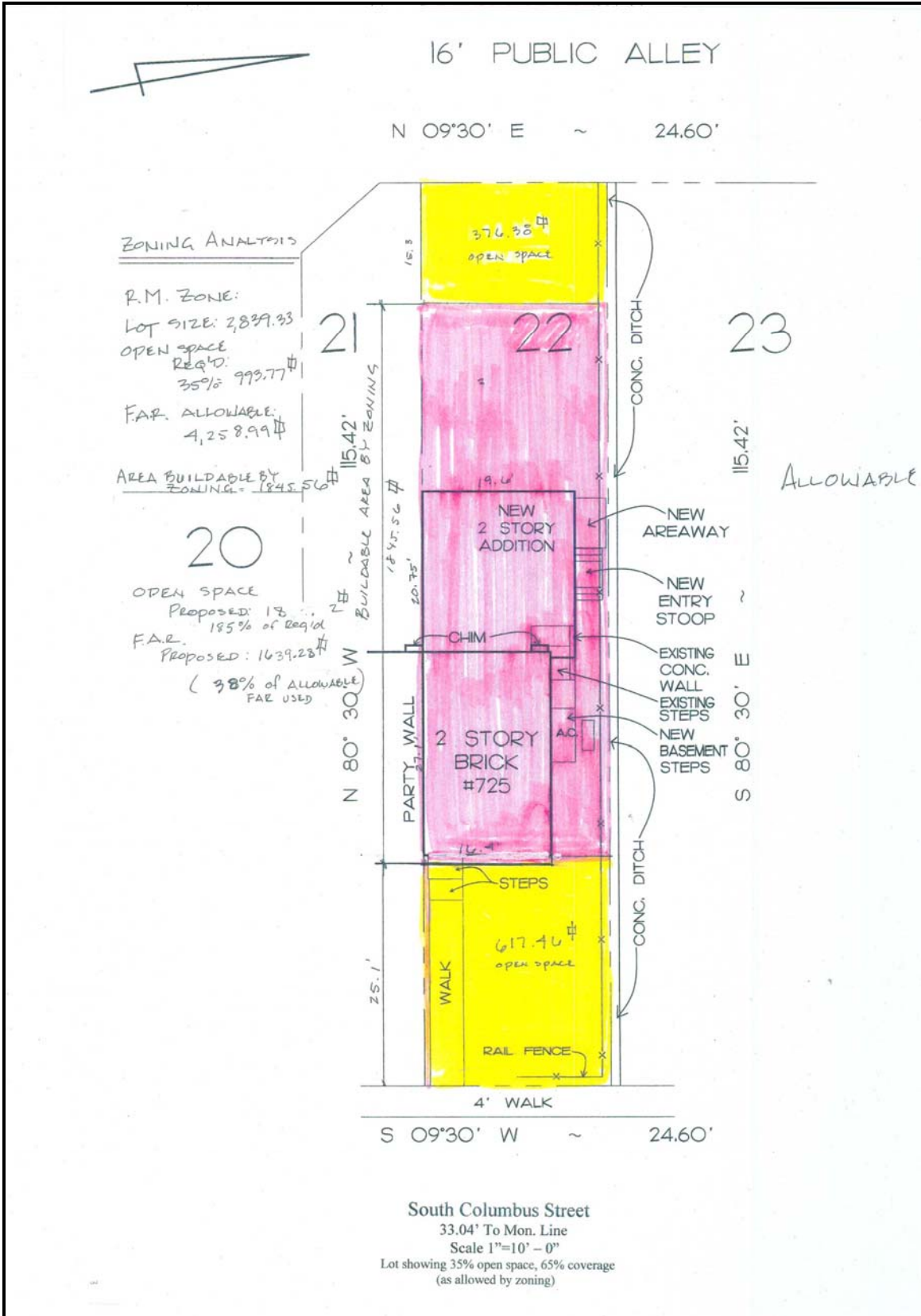


Figure 2. Allowable footprint permitted by zoning district.

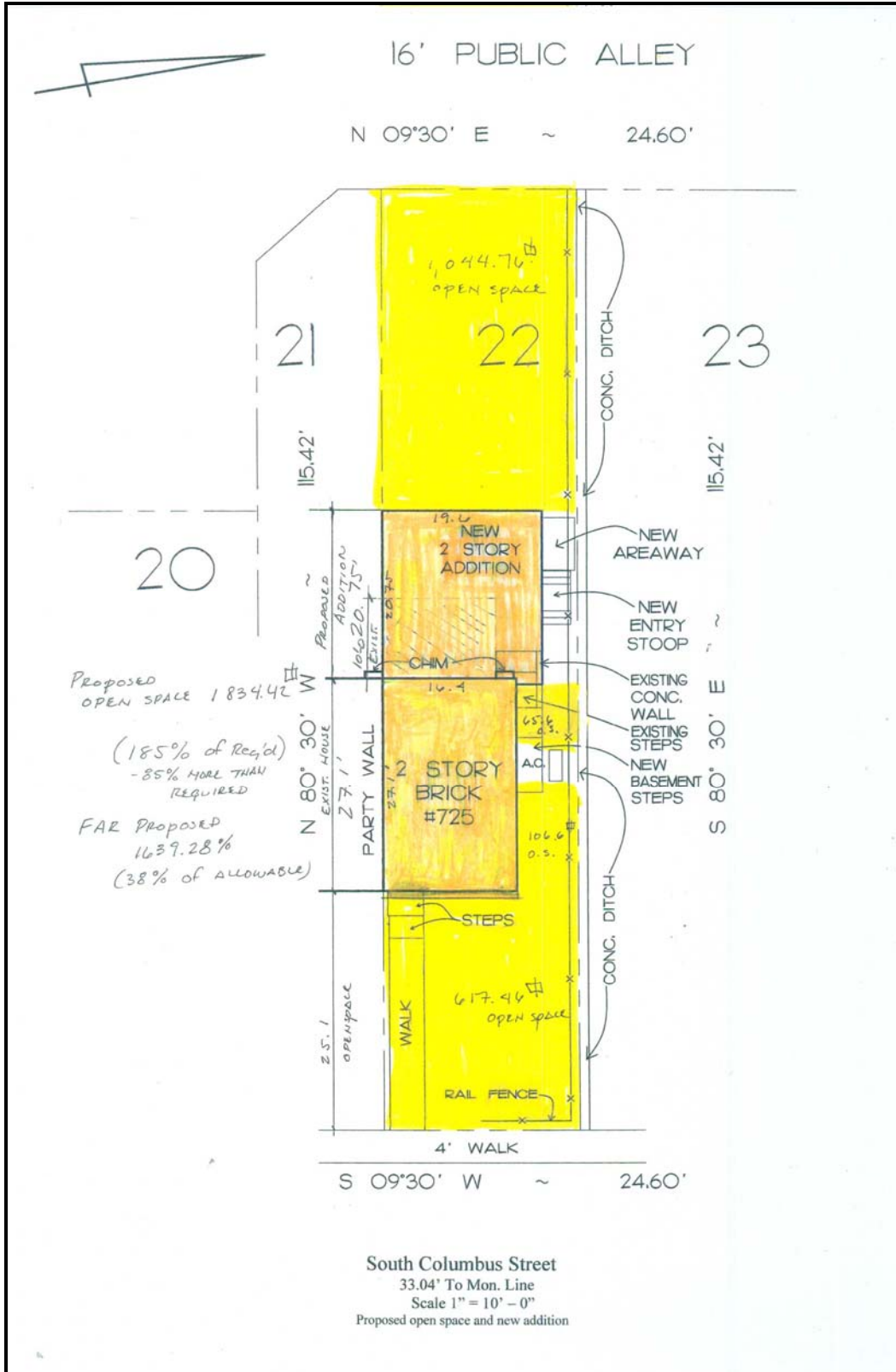


Figure 3. Open space with proposed addition.

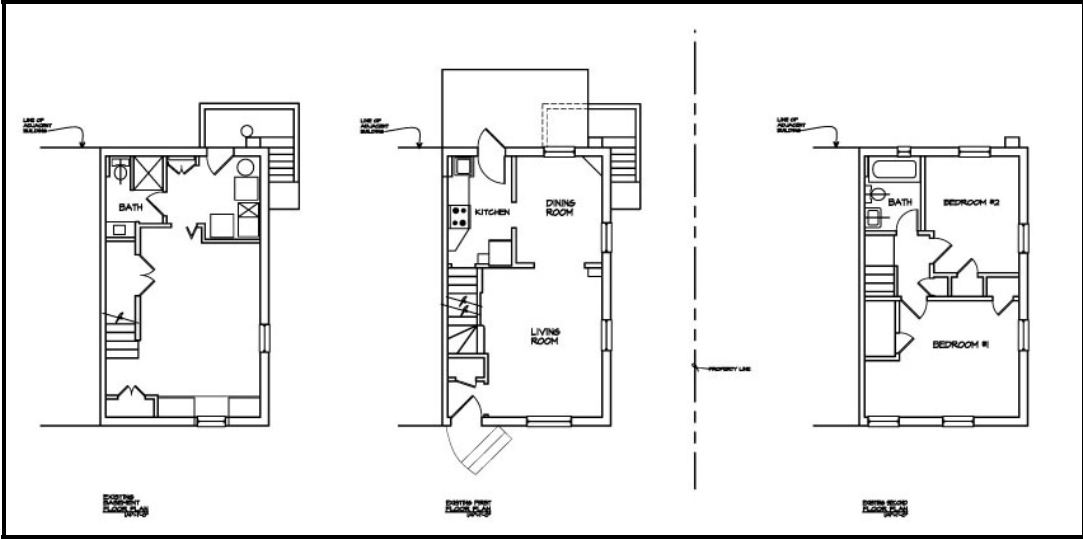


Figure 4. Existing floorplan.

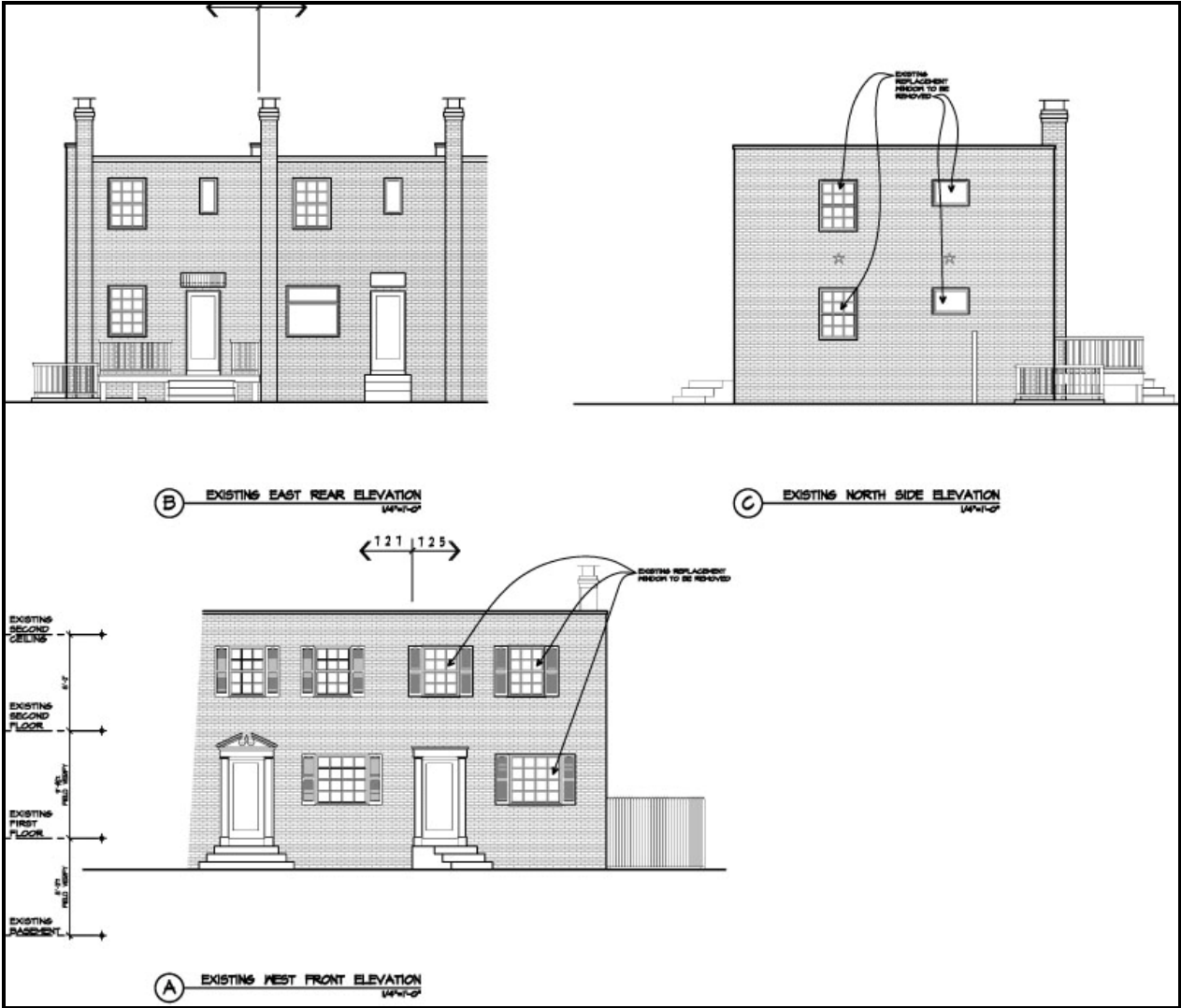


Figure 5. Existing elevations.

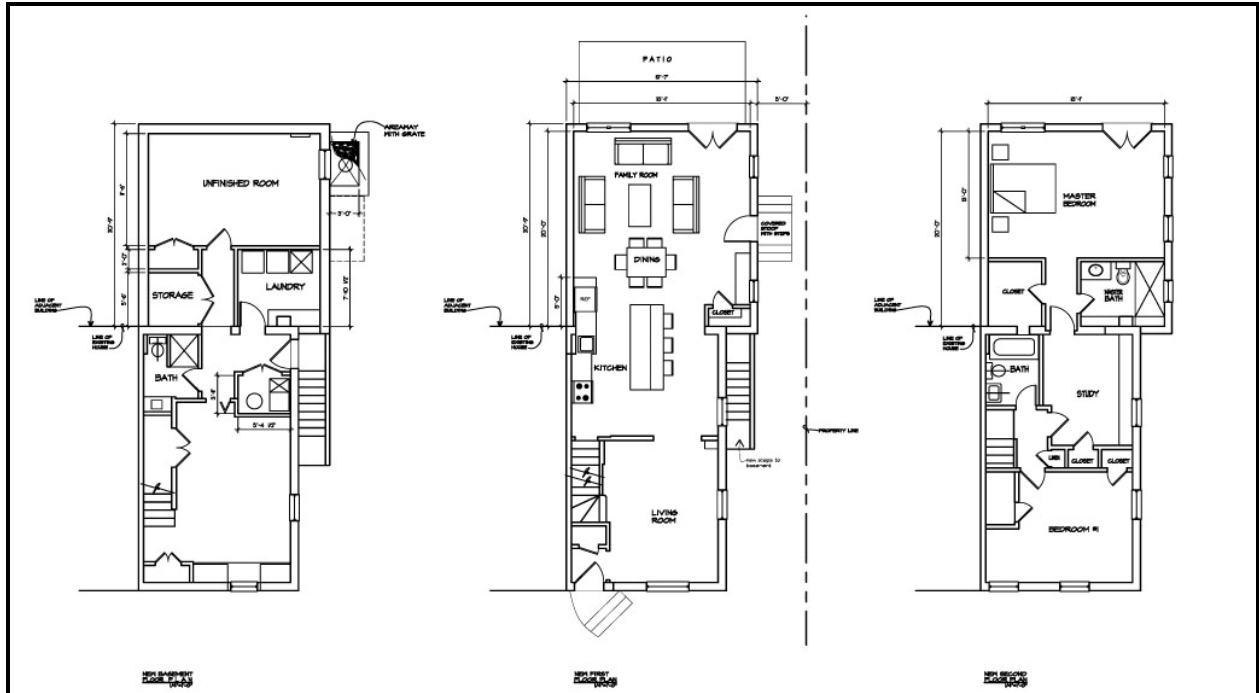


Figure 6. Proposed floorplan.

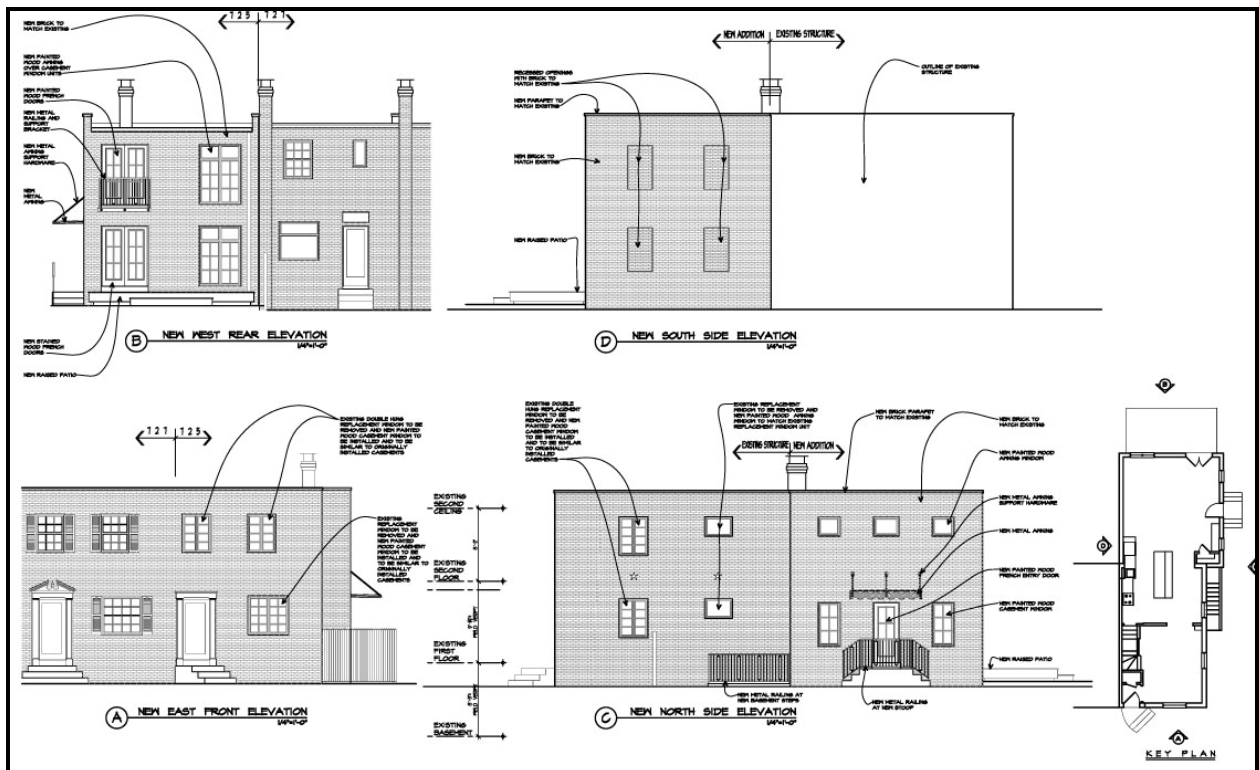


Figure 7. Proposed elevations.