

Docket Item # 19
BAR CASE # 2008-0199

BAR Meeting
November 5, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Benjamin and Kira Brooks
LOCATION: 523 South Lee Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

1. That the rear chimney be relocated to the east approximately 6', as shown in the attached sketch dated September 24, 2008;
2. 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.

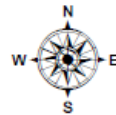
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 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.



BAR CASE #2008-0199

11/5/2008



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 523 South Lee Street. The applicant proposes to remove the rear chimney in order to construct a second story addition approved by the Board on September 3, 2008, as well as construct a new perimeter fence and arbor. The request to remove the chimney would modify the Board's September action, which required the applicant to retain the chimney. The existing fence and rear gate will be replaced with a new 6' flush board fence with a horizontal cap. A new arbor will also be constructed in the rear yard connecting the future rear entrance to the existing shed. The arbor will be 8' in height and will have 4" by 4" columns with a square base and round capitol. Both the fence and the arbor will be constructed of cedar and either stained or painted.

II. HISTORY:

The two story, gable roof frame townhouse at 523 South Lee Street was constructed between 1831 and 1852 as one of a row of four houses (523 through 529 South Lee Street) on land owned by William H. McKnight (Ethelyn Cox, Historic Alexandria, Virginia: Street by Street, p. 92). The 1877 Hopkins atlas shows the four houses each having a rear ell. This area of the City is not included on the Sanborn Fire Insurance map until 1902, when all four houses are shown with identical two story rear ells and one story rear additions. Thus, the existing two story ell may date to the original construction and most certainly was extant by 1877. The one story addition probably dates to the late 19th century.

In 1989, the Board approved the demolition of portions of the two story rear ell at 523 South Lee Street and the construction of a new two story addition (BAR Case #1989-0086, May 17, 1989). That project was never undertaken. More recently, on September 3, 2008, the BAR approved a partial demolition/encapsulation, a second story rear addition and alterations at 523 South Lee Street with the following conditions (BAR Case #2008-0133 & 0134):

1. That the applicant retain the chimney;
2. That all windows be retained and restored; and
3. That the applicant submit a completed HVAC waiver form or gain an approval of a variance from BZA prior to the issuance of a building permit.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed arbor, relocation of the HVAC unit and replacement fence comply with the zoning ordinance.

Staff supports the applicant's request for a new arbor and replacement fence. The fence will be an improvement over the existing, ivy covered fence and will be an attractive addition to the rather utilitarian alley next to and behind 523 South Lee Street. In addition, Staff believes that the arbor complements the main building, as recommended in the *Design Guidelines*. Both projects meet the *Guidelines* recommendations pertaining to either painting or staining accessory structures and fencing.

When the proposed addition for 523 South Lee Street was brought before the Board in September of this year, the BAR specifically conditioned their approval on the retention of the rear chimney. After the hearing, the applicant's architect completed detailed construction drawings for the proposed addition and determined that the retention of the brick chimney would

be costly because the flue would need to be removed and the chimney would need to be stabilized. The applicant was particularly concerned about safety issues because the chimney would be over a bedroom and would have to be stabilized to withstand a 90mph windload resistance, which they state would not be sufficient in a hurricane or tornado). When the applicant's architect first approached Staff about the potential removal of the chimney they showed an alternative location to rebuild the chimney approximately 6' to the east (see attached drawing dated September 24, 2008). Although Staff would prefer to see the chimney retained in situ, Staff can support the relocation of the chimney because the visibility of the rear chimney will be limited to the side and rear alley and not South Lee Street and it will be located over an interior closet and not the new second story bedroom addition.

Another condition made by the Board in September pertained to the relocation of the HVAC condenser in the required rear yard. The applicant now proposes to relocate the condenser closer to the house, which does not require a HVAC waiver or variance.

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

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

1. That the rear chimney be relocated to the east approximately 6', as shown in the attached sketch dated September 24, 2008;
2. 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.

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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street*, by Ethelyn Cox, the house currently on this lot was probably constructed after 1831 by William H. McKnight. Prior to that time, tax records indicate that there were numerous houses on the street face and on the alley that runs just north of 521 S. Lee Street. In 1810, Captain Dennis Johnston, a mariner, lived in a large house near the corner of Gibbon and Lee Streets. He and others (George Wise, Sam'l Keitch) leased houses on the alley to various workers, including Adam Hicks, a laborer, and Josias Hill, a paver, plus several free African Americans, Pompy Primus and Hannah Jackson, a washerwoman. While the ground disturbance associated with this project is minimal, there is a slight possibility for the discovery of archaeological resources that could provide insight into 19th-century domestic activities associated with these and other inhabitants. To insure that information about the past is not lost as a result of this project, the following requirements are recommended.
- 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 to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-3 The statements in archaeology conditions above marked with and 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.

VI. IMAGES

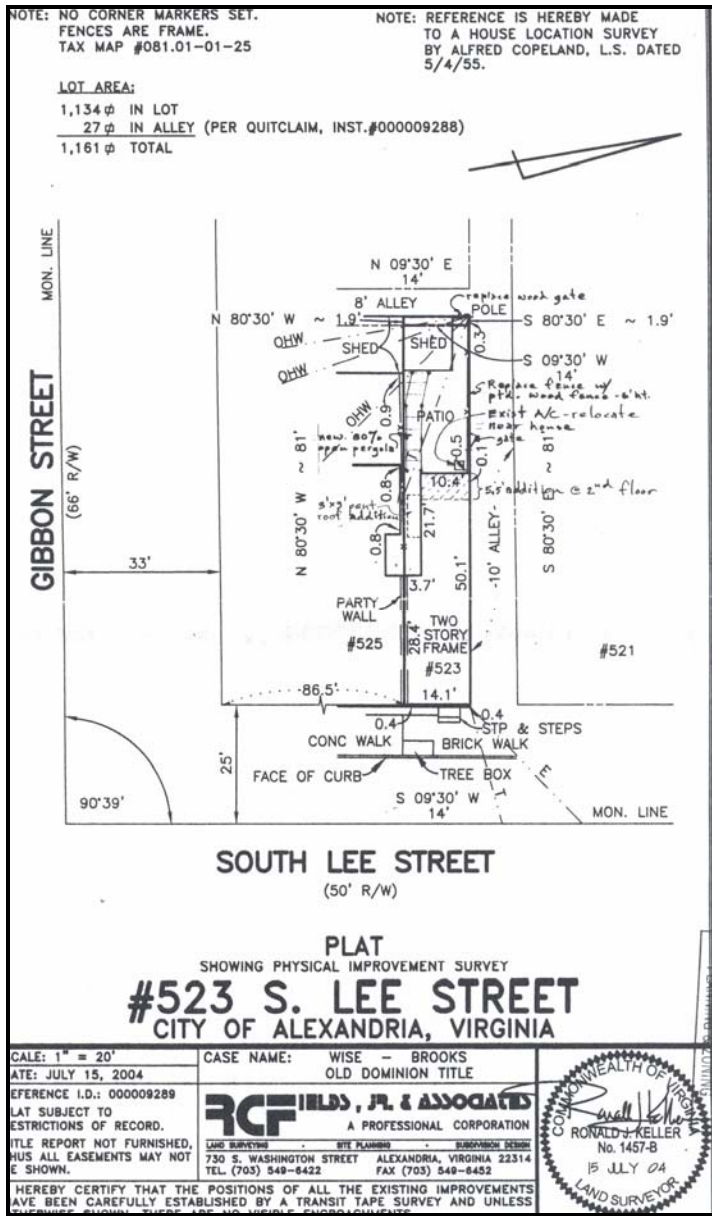


Figure 1: Site plan

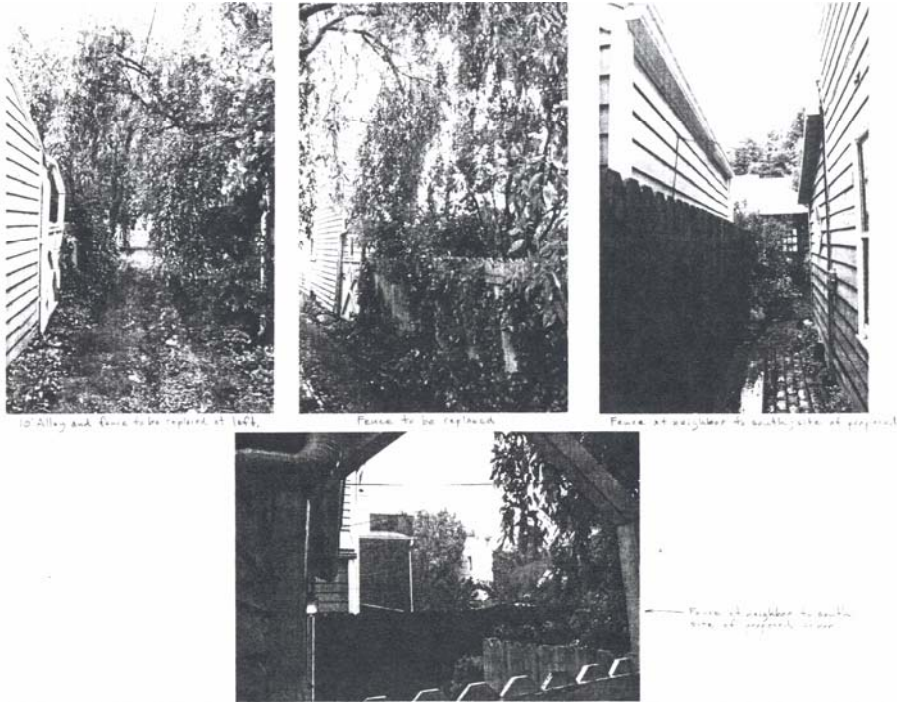


Figure 2: Existing photos

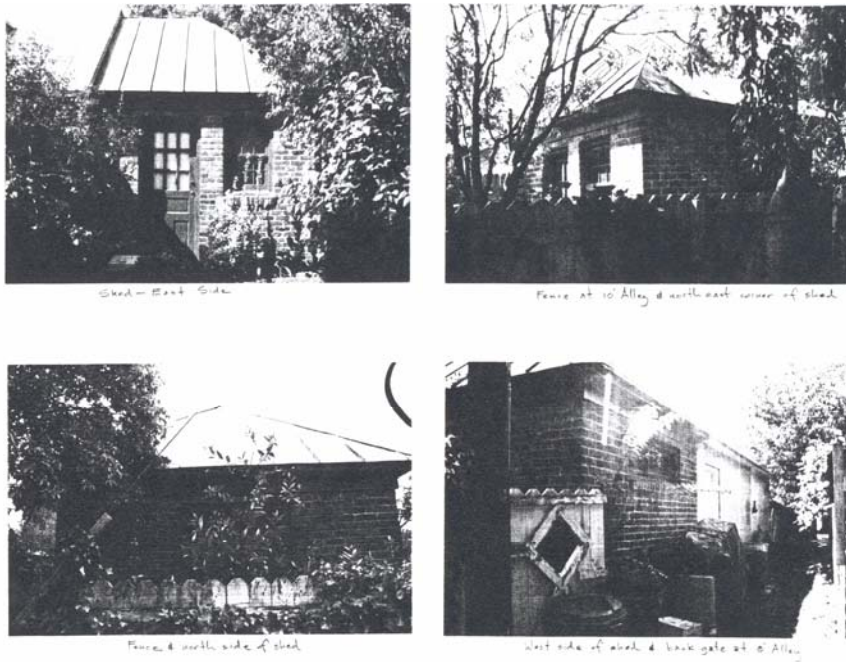


Figure 3: Existing photos



Figure 4: Rear chimney proposed to be demolished

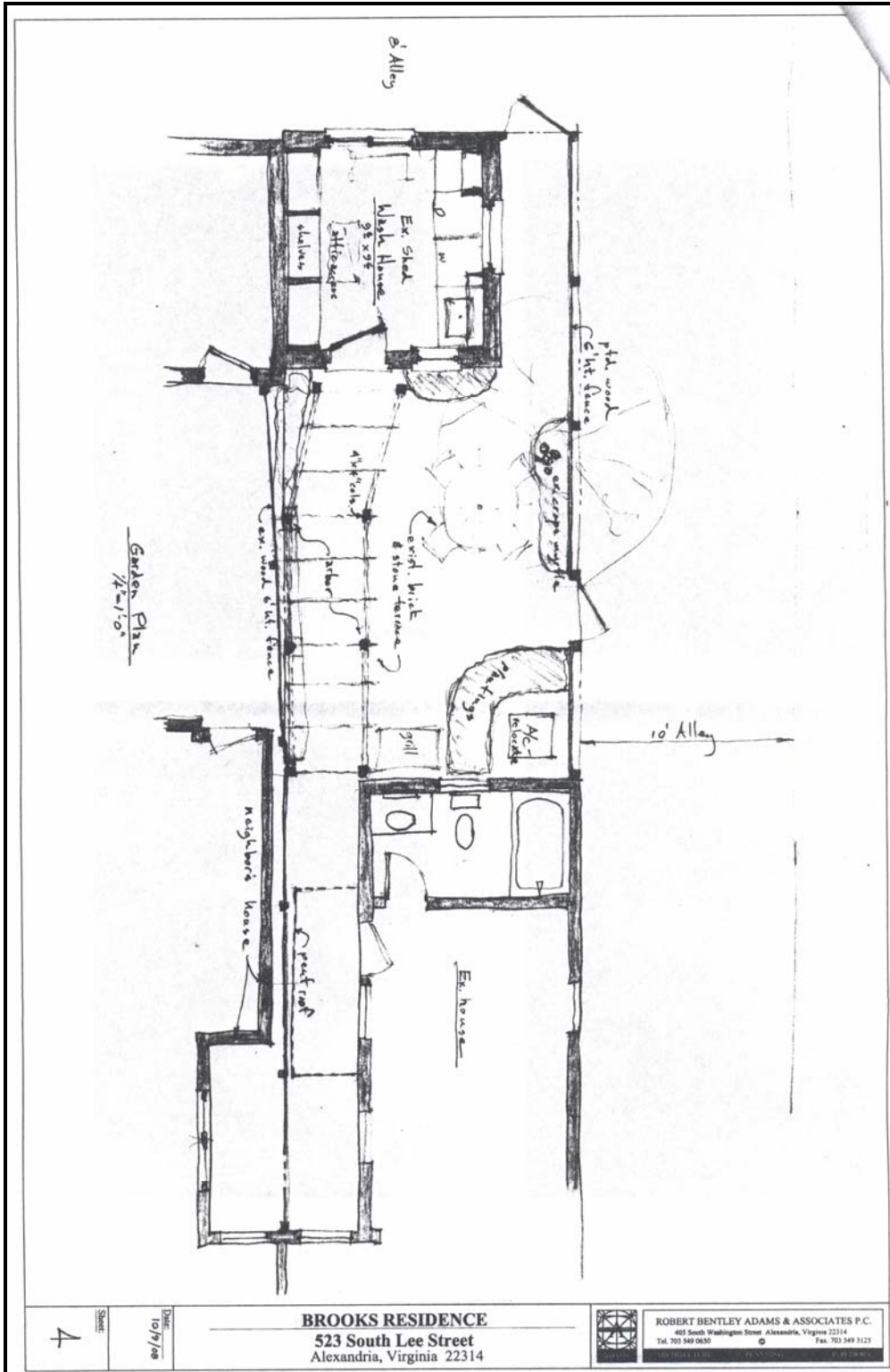


Figure 5: Plan showing arbor and fence location

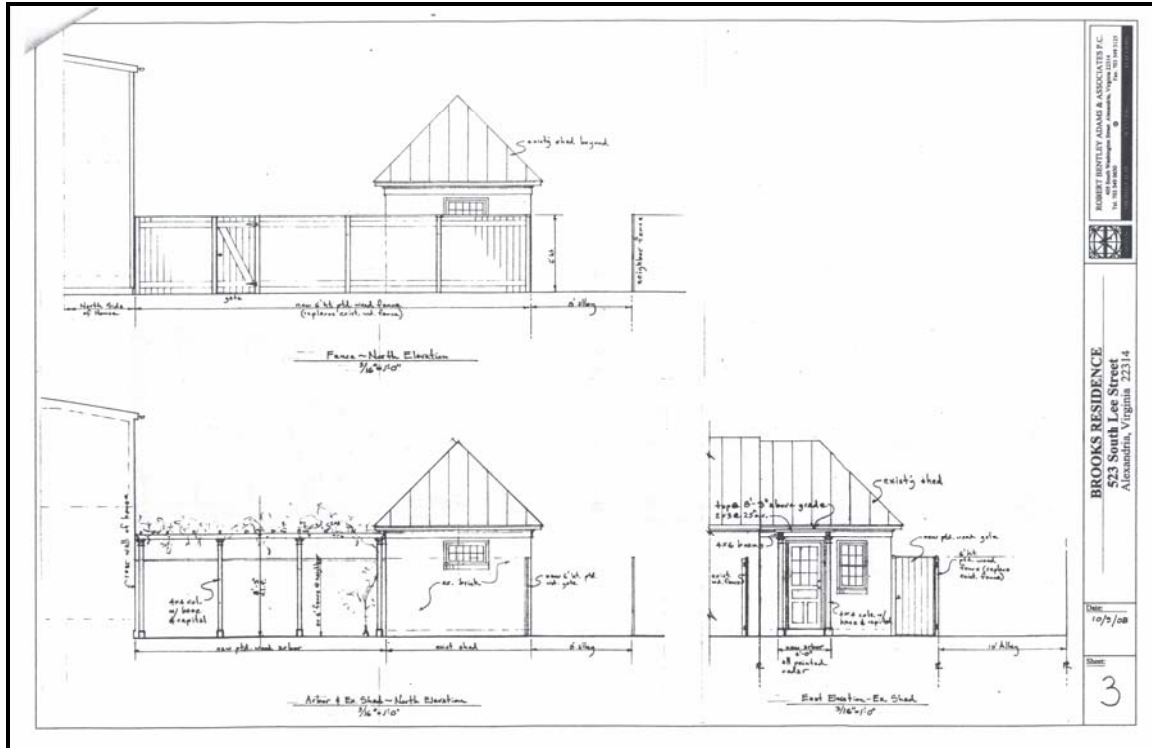


Figure 6: Fence and Arbor details

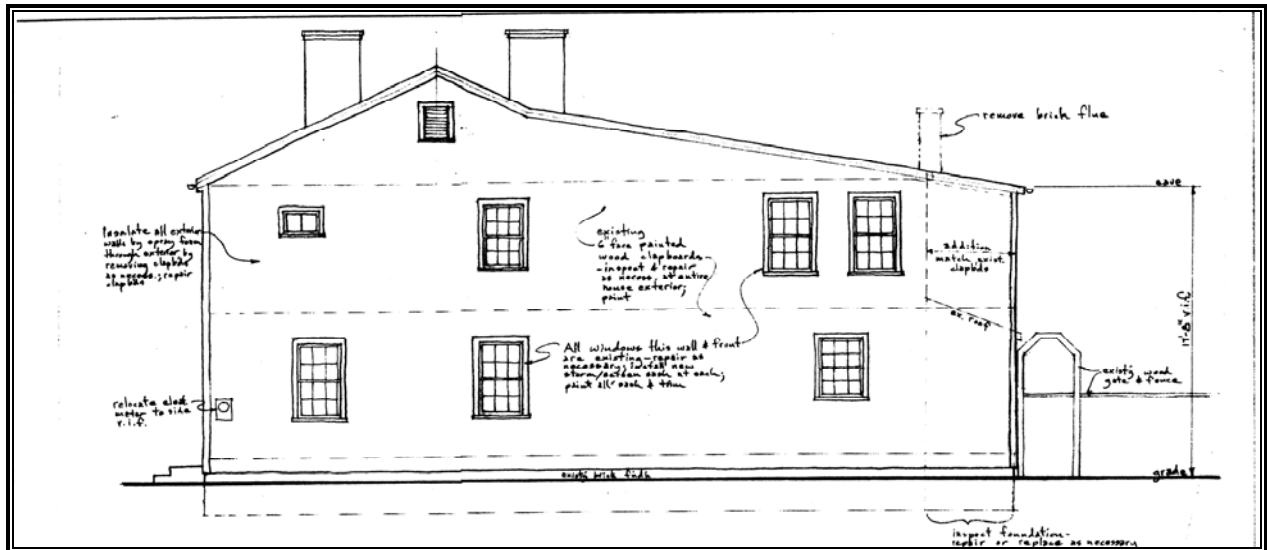


Figure 7: Elevation from September 3, 2008 BAR submission showing rear chimney

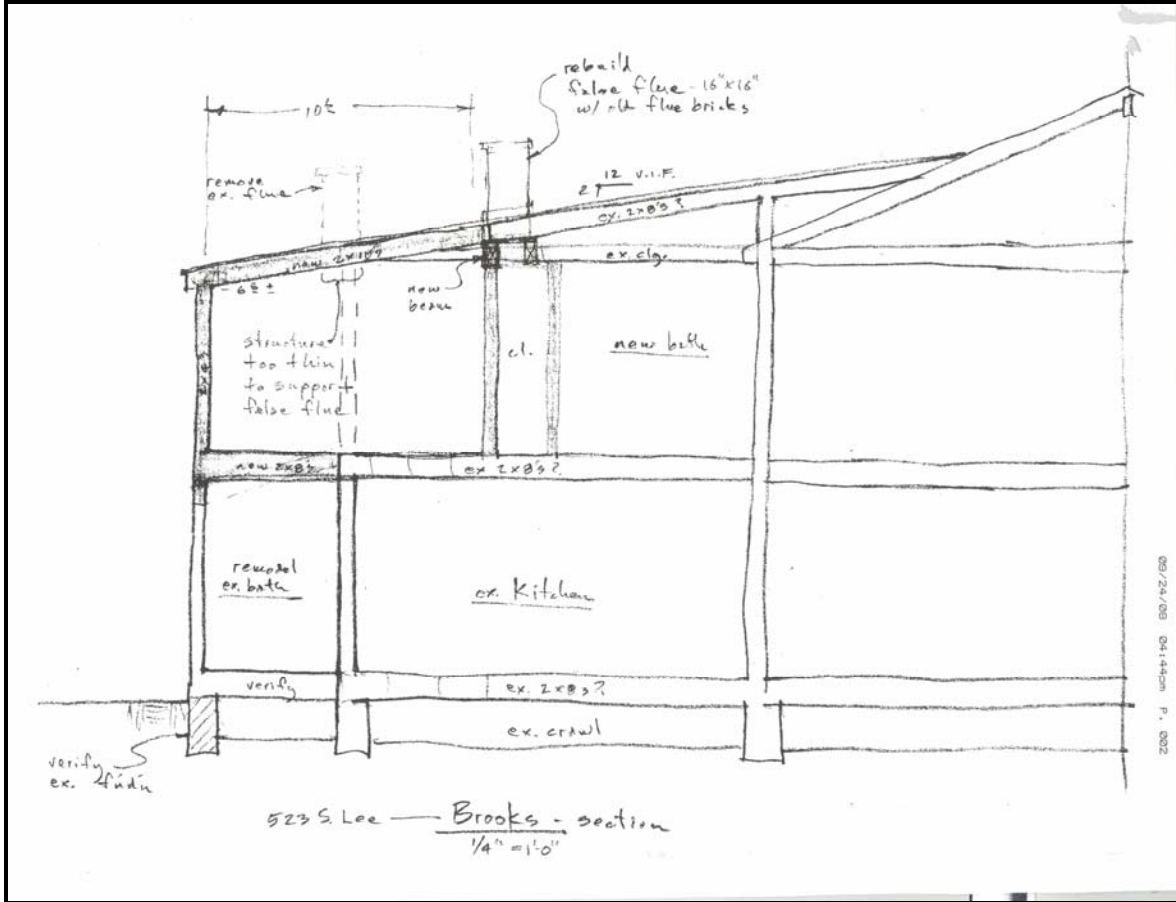


Figure 8: Section showing relocated chimney dated September 24, 2008.