

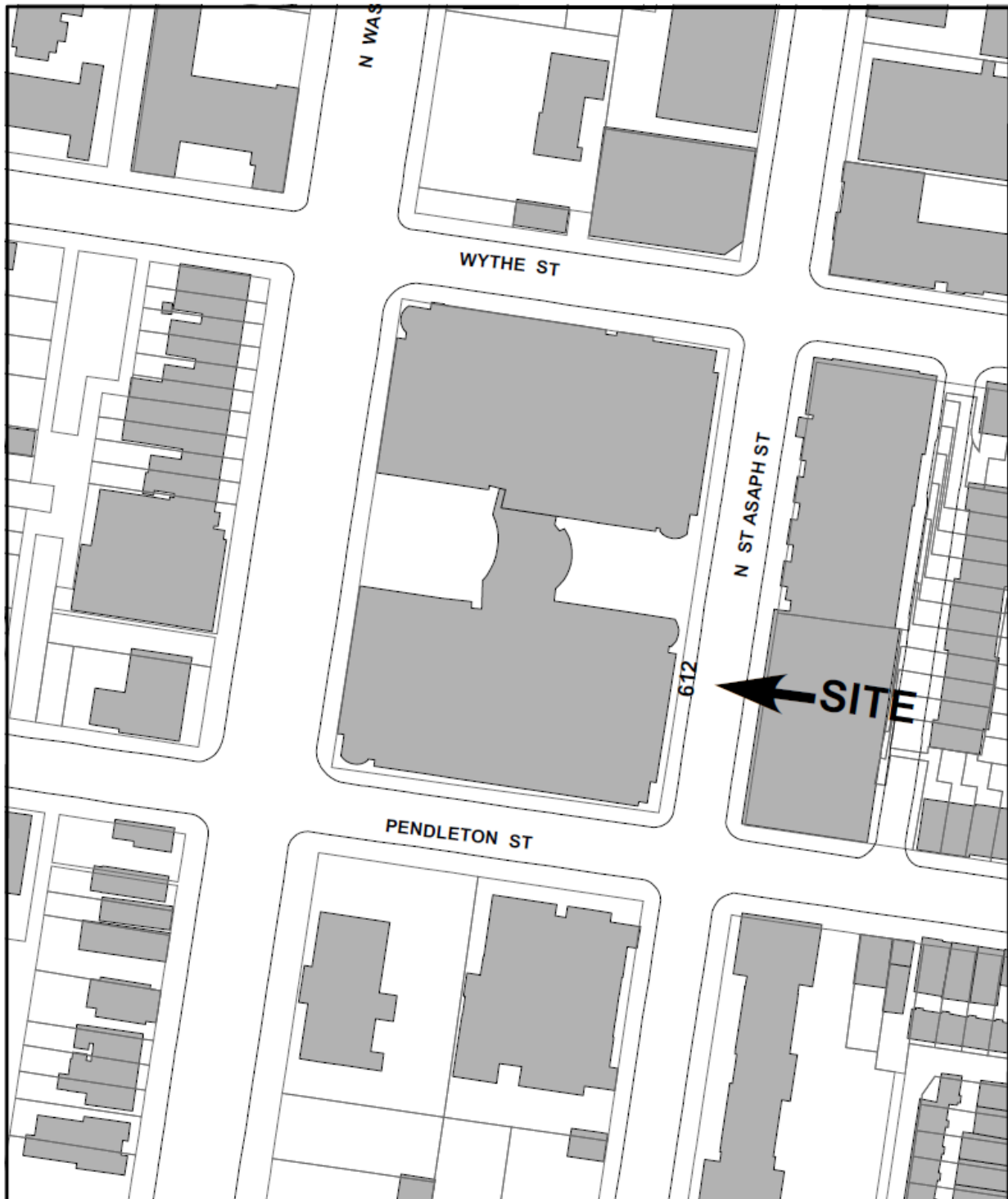
Docket Item # 7
BAR CASE #2008-0137

BAR Meeting
December 17, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations and Signage
APPLICANT: Jeffrey Taylor for Trader Joe's
LOCATION: 612 North St. Asaph Street
ZONE: CRMU-X/Mixed Use Commercial

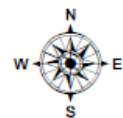
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant work with Staff and the building owner to achieve an additional sign for Staff approval at the store corner of Pendleton Street and St. Asaph Street; and,
2. That the murals and blinds currently obstructing the windows at the corner of St. Asaph Street and the drive aisle into the parking garage be removed so that the interior of the store is visible from the right-of-way.



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12/17/2008



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and signage at the Trader Joe's grocery store, located at 612 North St. Asaph Street.

Trader Joe's is expanding its business into the adjacent vacant tenant spaces previously occupied by Quiznos Subs and Blockbuster Video. The grocery store will have frontage on both North St. Asaph Street and Pendleton Street. The applicant proposes to replace the three existing entrance doors along St. Asaph Street with a new storefront aluminum/glass fixed window.

The applicant also proposes to install additional signage along both the North St. Asaph Street and Pendleton Street elevations where the previous tenants had signage. The new signs – two along St. Asaph Street and one along Pendleton Street – will measure 11 ¾" high by 9' 5 ½" long and will be located within the existing decorative grills. The gold letters spelling TRADER JOES will not be illuminated.

II. HISTORY:

The building in which Trader Joe's is located, 625-675 North Washington Street, is a mixed use commercial and office building approved as a Development Special Use Permit on December 2, 1998 (DSUP 1998-0003). The Board also approved the construction of the building in 1998 (BAR Case #1998-0112), as well as a coordinated sign program for the retail tenants of the building which consisted of a metal (aluminum) frame in the recessed retail entry across the width of each bay with 2" thick centered letters. The two existing Trader Joe's signs were administratively approved by Staff in 2000 because they complied with the coordinated sign program (SGN #2000-00163).

III: ANALYSIS:

Proposed alterations and signage comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Trader Joe's originally submitted an application for the door alterations and signage in July 2008. In addition to the original application being incomplete, Staff had a number of concerns related to the proposal, in part, because Trader Joe's is located within a building approved under a Development Special Use permit. When it was originally approved in 1998, both BAR and Development Staff were particularly interested in making the commercial/retail building be accessible and pedestrian friendly. When the current application was submitted in July, Staff's major concern related to the fact that the grocery store was internally focused, with all of the windows along Pendleton Street and St. Asaph Street – over 139' of frontage along St. Asaph Street and 59' along Pendleton Street – proposed to be obscured. Since July, Staff has had a number of productive meetings with the applicant, and Trader Joe's has completely revised the interior layout to address Staff's concerns and desire to have an open and transparent street frontage. At the recommendation of Staff, the applicant now proposes to install open shelving at the perimeter of the store with products that will be visible from the sidewalk (not unlike the attached photo of a Harris Teeter grocery store). In the opinion of Staff, the expanded grocery store will be an asset to the neighborhood, both aesthetically and functionally.

December 17, 2008

Because the applicant worked so closely with Staff over the past few months, there is only one outstanding issue that pertains to Staff's desire to have an additional sign installed at the corner of St. Asaph Street and Pendleton Street. Because the existing door at the corner will become a second entrance (the existing entrance door along the drive aisle will be permanently locked), Staff believes that it would be beneficial to see a sign in this location to help animate this corner of the building. While Staff would prefer to have the sign visible from Washington Street – it could be a blade sign or a larger awning at the corner with signage on the valance – a less visible option may be the addition of a Trader Joe's sign in the same gold lettering over the Pendleton Street/North St. Asaph Street door. The applicant has expressed a willingness to install an additional sign in this location; however, the building owner must approve any additional signage beyond what is currently proposed by Trader Joe's. Staff will continue to work with the building owner and the applicant to achieve an additional sign in this location that is consistent and compatible with the existing signage.

One mutually agreed upon change which was inadvertently left off of the drawings is the removal of the murals and blinds on the windows at the corner of St. Asaph Street and the drive aisle. These windows will also have the open shelving visible from the right-of-way.

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

1. That the applicant work with Staff and the building owner to achieve an additional sign for Staff approval at the store corner of Pendleton Street and St. Asaph Street; and,
2. That the murals and blinds currently obstructing the windows at the corner of St. Asaph Street and the drive aisle into the parking garage be removed so that the interior of the store is visible from the right-of-way.

V: CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The plans do not show a project description on the cover sheet and there is no application providing what the applicant is requesting.
- F-2 The applicant shall obtain a sign permit for the proposed sign and/ or wall lettering.
- C- 1 The current use is classified as B- Business; the proposed use is M- Mercantile. Change of use, in whole or in part, will require a certificate of use and occupancy (USBC 116.2) and compliance with USBC 116.1 including but not limited to: limitations of exit travel distance, emergency and exit lighting, a manual fire alarm system, and accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- C- 2 Prior to the application for new Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant shall submit a building permit for a change of use. Drawings prepared by a licensed architect or professional engineer shall accompany the permit application. These plans shall show provide existing conditions, construction type data, and a plot plan. In addition, these plans shall show proposed conditions and provide data by the design professional which details how the proposed use will comply with the current edition of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code for the new use in the area of structural strength, means of egress, passive and active fire protection, heating and ventilating systems, handicapped accessibility and plumbing facilities.
- C-3 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 Additions and alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit (USBC 108.1). Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application (USBC 109.1).
- C-5 This structure contains mixed use groups [M, Mercantile; B, Business; S-2, Low-Hazard Storage (public garage, group 2) and is subject to the mixed use and occupancy requirements of USBC 508.
- C-6 The new handrails must comply with USBC for a minimum/maximum height of 30 to 34 inches. The ends must extend 12" beyond the top and bottom risers. The handgrip position must not be more that 2-1/4" in cross-sectional dimension, or the shape must provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handgrip portion must have a smooth surface with no sharp corners. The space between the wall and handrail must not be less that 1-1/2".

- C-7 The most restrictive type of construction shall apply to the structure for height and area limitations for non-separated uses (USBC 508).
- C-8 Awnings must comply with all applicable requirements of USBC 3105.3 and 3202.3.1 Retractable and fixed awnings must have a minimum 7 foot clearance form a sidewalk to the lowest part of the framework or any fixed portion of any retractable awning is required. Retractable awnings must be securely fastened to the building and can not extend closer than 24 inches in from the curb line (USBC 3202.3.1).
- C-9 Fixed awnings must be designed and constructed to withstand wind or other lateral loads and live loads required by the USBC. Structural members must be protected to prevent deterioration (USBC 3105.3).
- C-10 The handicapped ramp must comply with the requirements of USBC 1010.1. The front approach to the exterior door (which is on the pull side) must comply with the landing requirements of USBC 1010.6. Handrails must comply with USBC 1010.8
- C-11 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11. Handicapped accessible bathrooms shall also be provided.
- C-12 Building Code Analysis: The following minimum building code data is required on the drawings: a) use group, b) number of stories, c) construction type and d) tenant area.
- C-13 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

R-1 Approve.

National Park Service:

F-1 The George Washington Memorial Parkway does not have any comments on the project proper as it will not directly affect North Washington Street. However, if the Trader Joe's display window along North Washington Street should change to a more modern design we would have no problem with that change.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1: Existing Window and Entrance Only Door at St. Asaph Street



Figure 2: View Along St. Asaph Street Looking Toward Pendleton Street



Figure 3: Pendleton Street Windows



Figure 4: Door at the Corner of Pendleton Street and St. Asaph Street



Figure 5: Corner of St. Asaph Street and Pendleton Street

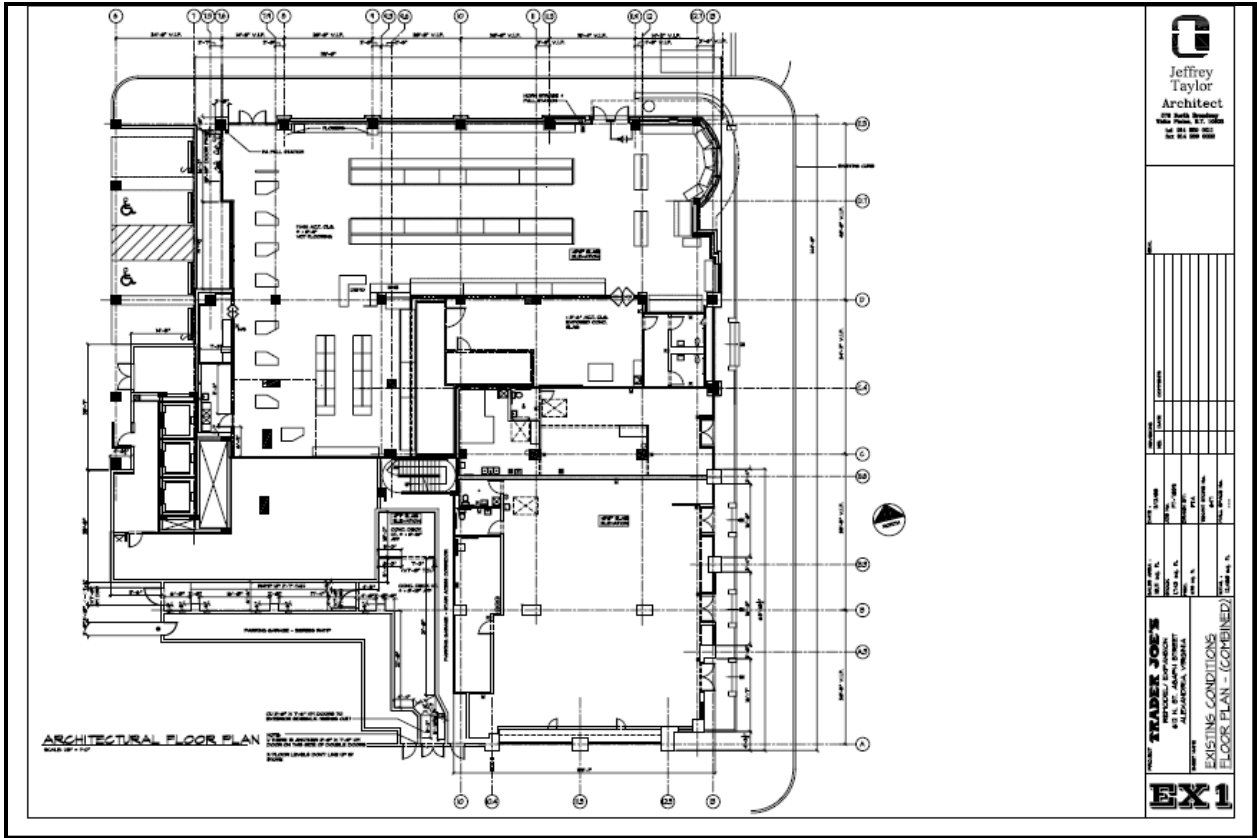


Figure 6: Existing Floor Plan

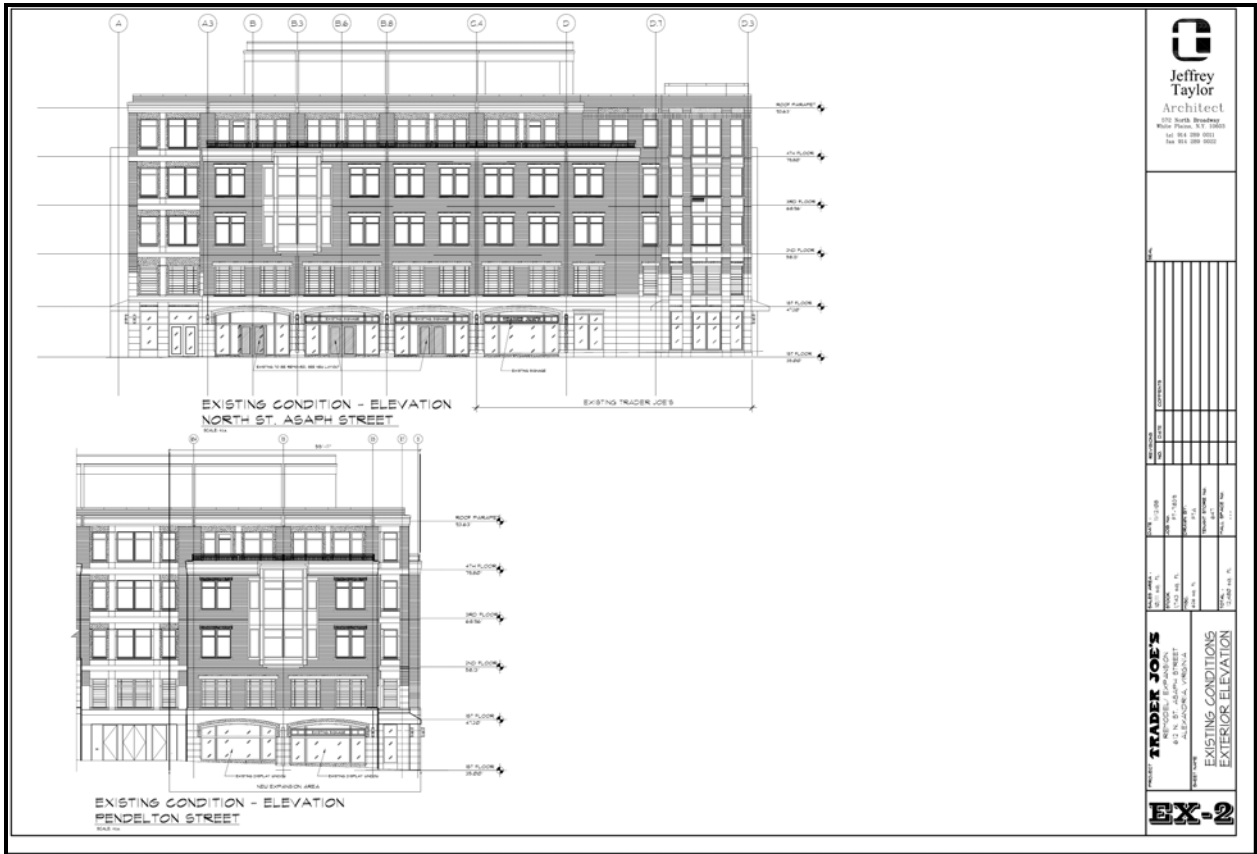


Figure 7: Existing Elevations Showing Proposed Demolition

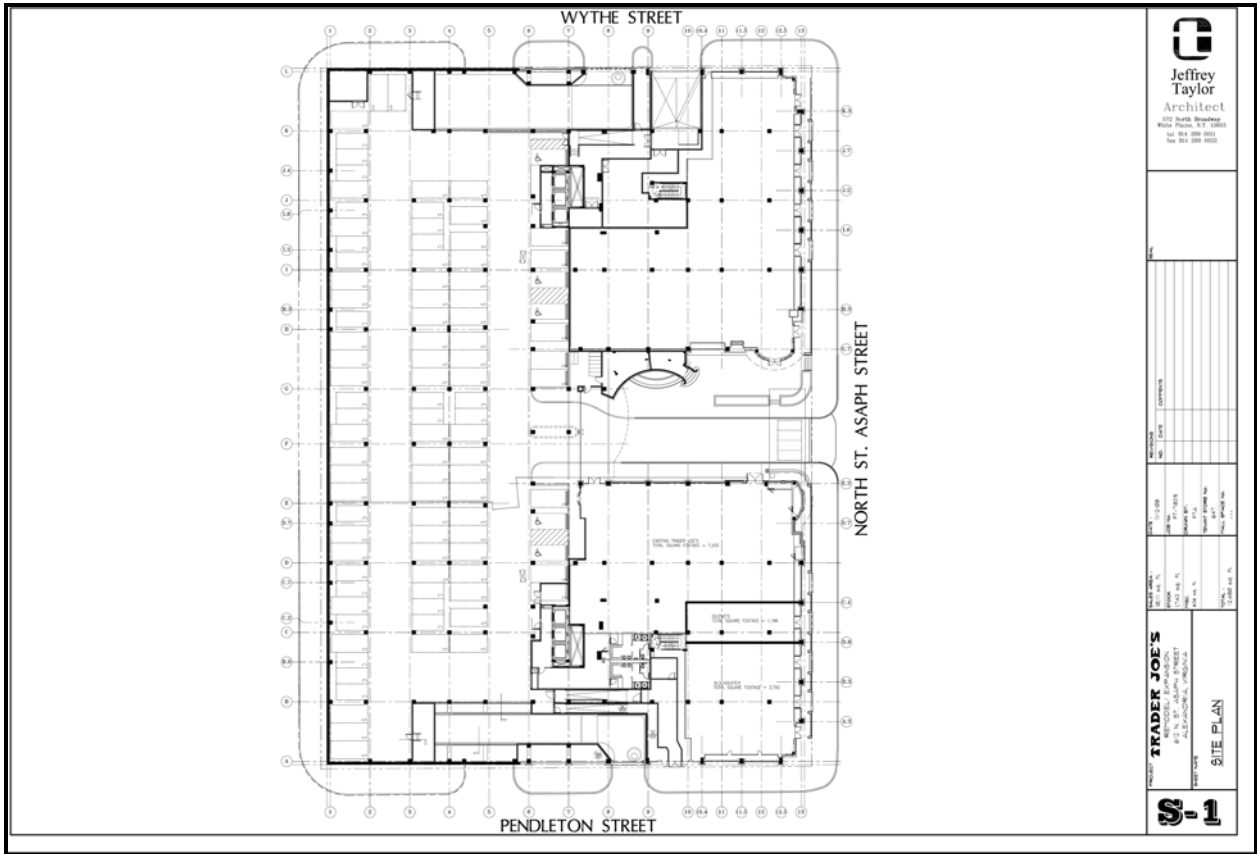


Figure 8: Existing Floor Plan

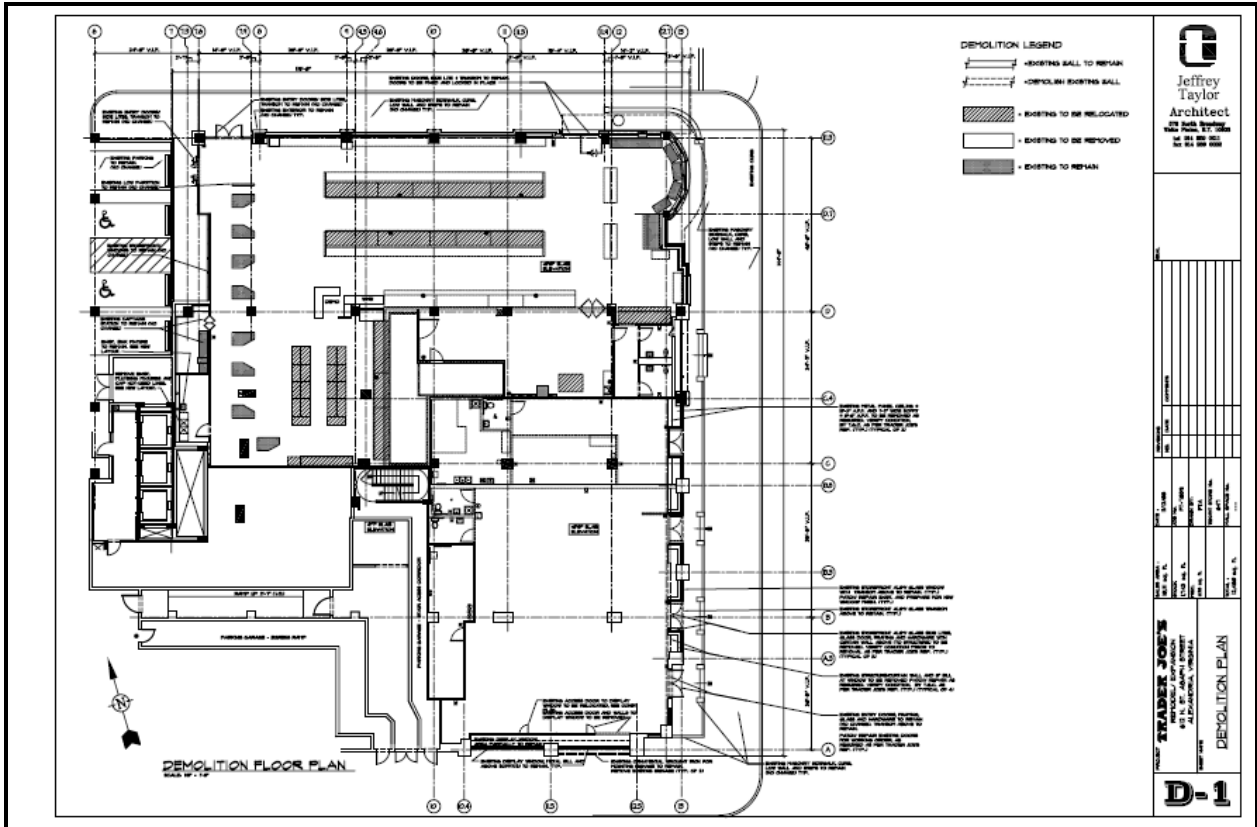


Figure 9: Proposed Demolition

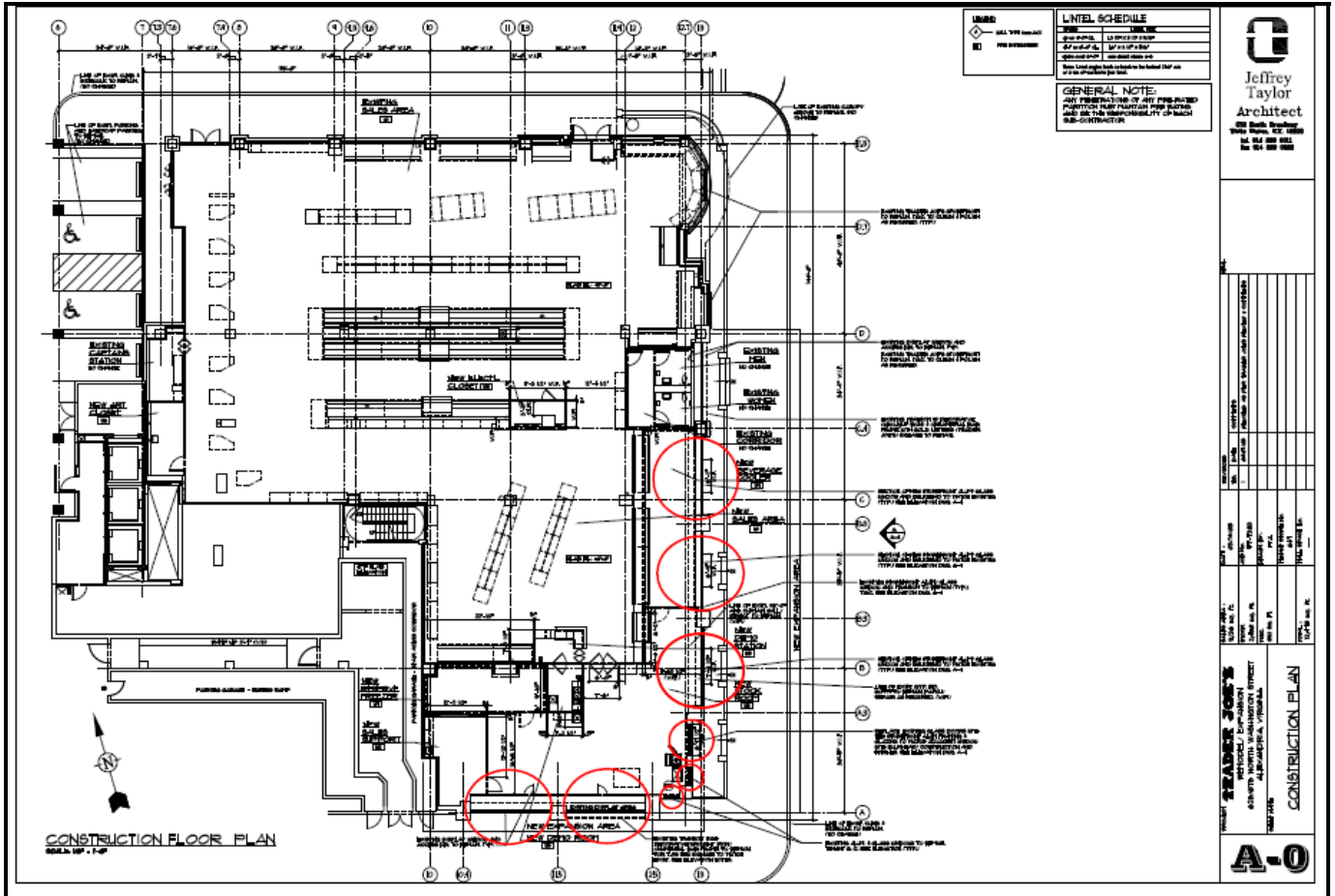


Figure 10: Original proposed floor plan from July 2008 showing windows (circled) proposed to be blocked for storage space

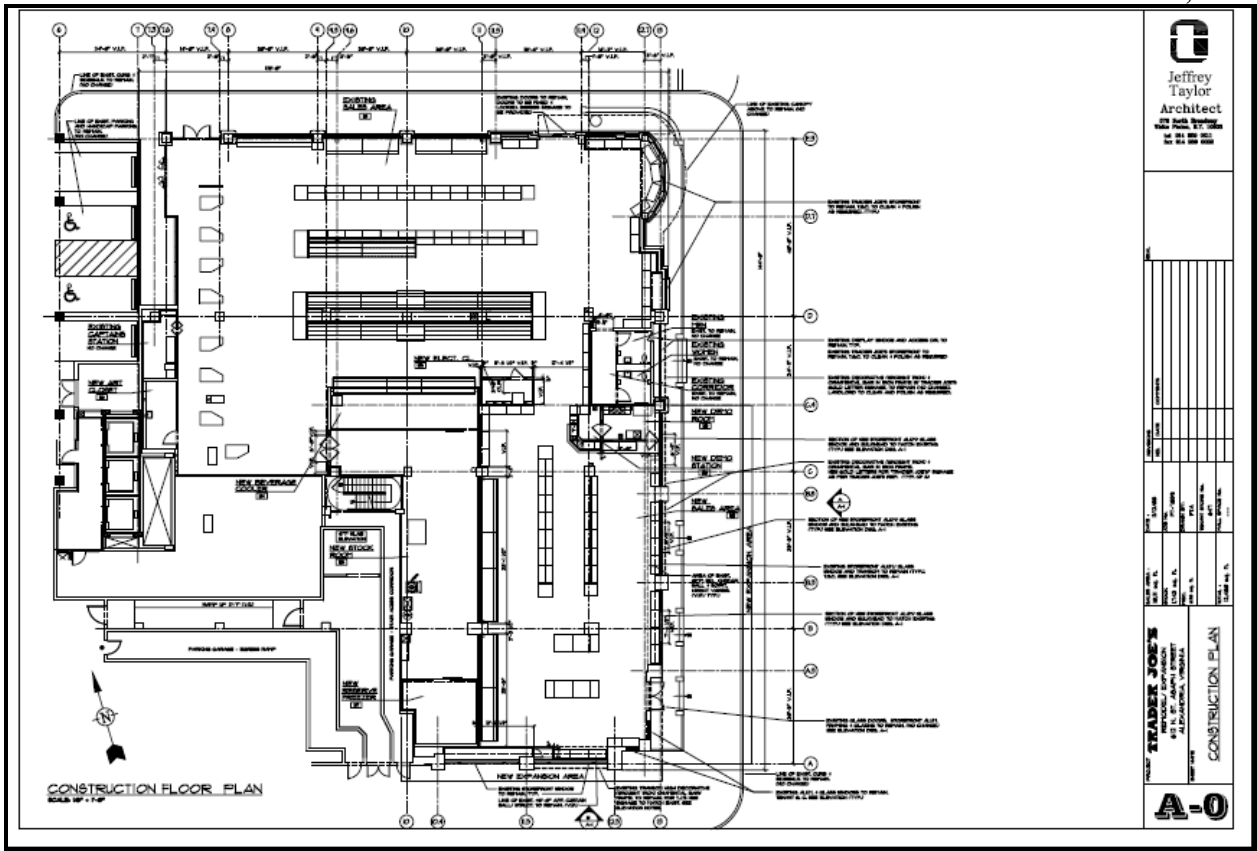


Figure 11: Proposed Floor Plan

