Docket Item #8
BAR CASE # 2009-0006

BAR Meeting
February 18, 2009

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: William Cromley, Owner

LOCATION: 426 North Columbus Street

ZONE: CL / Commercial Low Zone

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following condition:

That the Applicant will contact staff after removing the artificial siding on the north elevation, to verify there is physical evidence of windows in this location. If there is no physical evidence, the Applicant will not install new windows.


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BAR CASE #2009-0005, 0006 2/18/2009
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Note: Docket item #7 must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:
The Applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness at 426 North Columbus Street. The Certificate of Appropriateness proposes alterations to the house and outbuilding on the subject property. The proposed alterations include:

Outbuilding
(The proposed alterations will not require changes to the building's footprint (30.30' x 24.30').

1. Install shed roof dormers on the re-oriented gable roof structure. The new side gable roof proposes to be articulated with two shed dormers protruding from each roof slope. The shed roof dormers will be detailed with wood, windows with insulated glass, and exposed rafter tails.

2. Construct a 9' x 13'+/- flat roof, glass "hyphen" between the rear ell of the dwelling and the renovated outbuilding. The applicant is not proposing to penetrate the exterior wall on the rear ell. The glass hyphen will only be attached to the exterior cladding of the dwelling's rear façade (144 sq. ft. of encapsulation). A 10' x 13' +/- painted wood pergola supported by paintable, prefabricated fiberglass columns extends from the flat roof of the glass hyphen into the grass courtyard.

3. Remove the existing fiberboard siding and clad the cement block building with a traditional, three-layer, stucco surface.

4. Install Greek revival trim details on the outbuilding. These details include an oversized denticulated cornice and Doric pilasters.

5. Install door and window fenestrations within the existing, overhead door openings. The proposed configuration is designed to replicate a residential/carriage house form. The proposed door and windows will be wood with insulated glass and simulated-divided lights.

6. Install a painted, lattice panel along the south elevation of the outbuilding. A lattice panel installed on the south elevation of the building will provide a structure for climbing vegetation and assist in climate control for the structure.

7. Install a solid color vegetation living roof (see Figure 11) on the gable roof slopes, to reduce impermeable surface area.

House

8. Enclose 18' of the existing, one-story shed roof open porch along the south elevation of the ell. The enclosure will be fabricated of painted, wood insulated glass panels with simulated divided-lights (130 sq. ft. of encapsulation).

9. Install two, new, 4/4 true-divided light wood windows on the first floor of the north elevation of the principal massing (32.5 sq. ft of wall surface). Based on the architectural style of the house and this elevation's current configuration, it is believed that historically the first floor of this house had 4/4 wood double hung windows which matched the existing windows on the elevation's second story.

II. <u>HISTORY</u>:

This three-part frame dwelling is an excellent representation of the evolution of a mid-19th century Alexandria city house. Based on deed and title research it is believed that the main structure of this house was built by "Master Carpenter" Benjamin Jenkins about 1858 after purchasing the subdivided land from Cassius F. Lee (Period 1). Facing North Columbus Street, this structure is a simple side, cross-gable dwelling, four-bays wide and detailed in the Greek Revival style. Soon after the construction of the main house, a two-bay outbuilding with an exterior-end chimney was constructed behind the house. It is believed that this building was originally 1-1/2 stories in height (Period 2). The outbuilding was altered to a two-story building and connected to the main massing, turning these massings into a two-story ell extension with a central chimney (Period 3).

This house is duplicated on another property on Braddock Road. The home's form and detailing are almost identical, including the evolution of the ell extension. The evolution of the Braddock Road home's ell extension was confirmed after discussions with the home's owner. The visible evidence within the ell confirming the three periods of construction includes plaster walls in the attic, and exterior wall material on interior wall surfaces. It is possible that both of these dwellings were either "kit homes" or a pair of homes built by the same family.

The environmental setting of the property is the 6,896 sq. ft. lot. The setting includes the main house with its ell extension, and the gable roof outbuilding which faces the rear alley. This property has historically several different outbuildings on this location throughout the years. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map research has dated the current concrete block outbuilding between 1977 and 1988. BAR Case History documents identifies a new garage was approved for the site in 1982.

Regulatory Processes:

The Board of Zoning Appeals approved the Applicant's variance request to modify the roof form of

the existing detached outbuilding at their February 12, 2009 hearing.

Staff located the following previous approvals for the property*:*

7/17/52	Imitation brick siding
9/9/59	Brick addition to rear
4/10/68	Addition to residence - North elevation
11/17/82	New Garage - approved with 8" wood lap siding

III. <u>ANALYSIS</u>:
The proposed alterations to this non-historic outbuilding comply with zoning ordinance requirements. The Board of Zoning Appeals approved the Applicant's variance request to modify the roof form of the existing detached outbuilding at their February 12, 2009 hearing.

Re-orientating the gable roof provides an opportunity to have a contemporary resource reconfigured into a structure which is stylistically more compatible with the adjacent neighbor's garage and other outbuildings within the historic district. The proposed alterations to the outbuilding are modest in massing, scale and design and are complementary to, without competing with, the architectural style of the existing historic house at 426 North Columbus Street, as recommended in the *Design Guidelines* for Accessory Structures and Outbuildings.

The new building's detailing is reminiscent of a carriage house. The door and window fenestrations which face the alley allude to the presence of carriage doors. The real stucco walls, the oversized, denticulated cornice and the Doric pilasters give this modest outbuilding an elegant level of materials to complement the strong features and architectural details on the main dwelling. A very subordinate detailed outbuilding would be incompatible for this urban dwelling.

The *Design Guidelines* also note that "the style of the dormer should be appropriate to the architectural style of the existing structure." The proposed shed dormers are a common detail on outbuildings. These dormer forms are typically utilized when it is desired to reduce the perceived massing and scale of a structure. The site lines from North Columbus Street will be significantly improved when the orientation of this building's gable is altered. Currently, the building is viewed as a 1-1/2 story structure from North Columbus, as the entire bulk of the gable end is visible from North Columbus. Reversing the gable roof's structure, significantly improves the perceived height and sight lines from North Columbus, as the visual massing seen is a one-story wall surface.

As this non-historic structure was built after 1980, there is an opportunity to make significant contemporary alterations and changes while being compatible to the adjacent historic resource and the district. The new design for the structure proposes to include green building features. Some of these features include a solid color living roof, a "green wall" on the south elevation, insulated glass

windows and doors and concrete block walls clad in stucco for its insulation qualities. The proposed living roof will be monochromatic and will not grow beyond the roof's fascia board. The look will remain tailored and thus blend into the existing green landscape. This design provides an excellent opportunity to implement the City of Alexandria's Green Building Policy on a residential use within the Old and Historic District, while maintaining the historic character of the existing streetscape. The proposed green features will not negatively impact the historic development pattern of the district, as the features are being added to a non-contributing building sited at the rear of the property and only accessible from a public alley.

This building is being joined to the main house though the use of a glass hyphen and pergola combination. The hyphen segment is necessary, as the Zoning Code requires all units in a multi-family dwelling to be connected. The Applicant has worked closely with Zoning and BAR staff to develop the design of this hyphen and pergola. It was necessary that the hyphen's massing contain a solid roof form for Zoning Code requirements, however BAR staff wanted to make certain that the body of the structure was as transparent as possible. This transparent design was considered essential in order to maintain a visual disconnection between the main historic house and the contemporary outbuilding and not to completely obstruct sightlines into the side courtyard.

The glass panels being utilized to enclose a segment of the side porch will be mounted between the porch's existing square columns. BAR staff has developed a design detail with the Applicant to ensure that the original porch columns will not be damaged during the installation of these panels and to provide an opportunity for a future owner to return the porch to its open configuration without any damage to the historic architectural details.

The proposed window "re-installation" on the first floor of the main massing's north elevation (see proposal in Figures 18 & 19) is being proposed by the Applicant based on an educated evaluation of the property. An approval with the above-recommended condition will enable the Applicant to remove the artificial siding and make a determination based on visible evidence of the window closure. If there is no visible evidence, the BAR staff recommendation advises against the installation of a conjectural feature on a prominent façade of this very architecturally unique house.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following condition:

That the Applicant will contact staff after removing the artificial siding on the north elevation, to verify there is physical evidence of windows in this location. If there is no physical evidence, the Applicant will not install new windows.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:

Legend: C – Code Requirement R – Recommendation S – Suggestion F- Finding

Code Enforcement:

C-1 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-2 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-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.

C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.

C-5 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-6 Additions and 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.

Code Enforcement Cont:

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:

R- Approve.

Figure 1: Front Elevation of Dwelling

Figure 2: View of Ell Extension

Figure 3: Alley View of Outbuilding

Figure 4: Alley View of Outbuilding with View of Adjacent Neighbor's Garage

Figure 5: Interior Courtyard View of Outbuilding

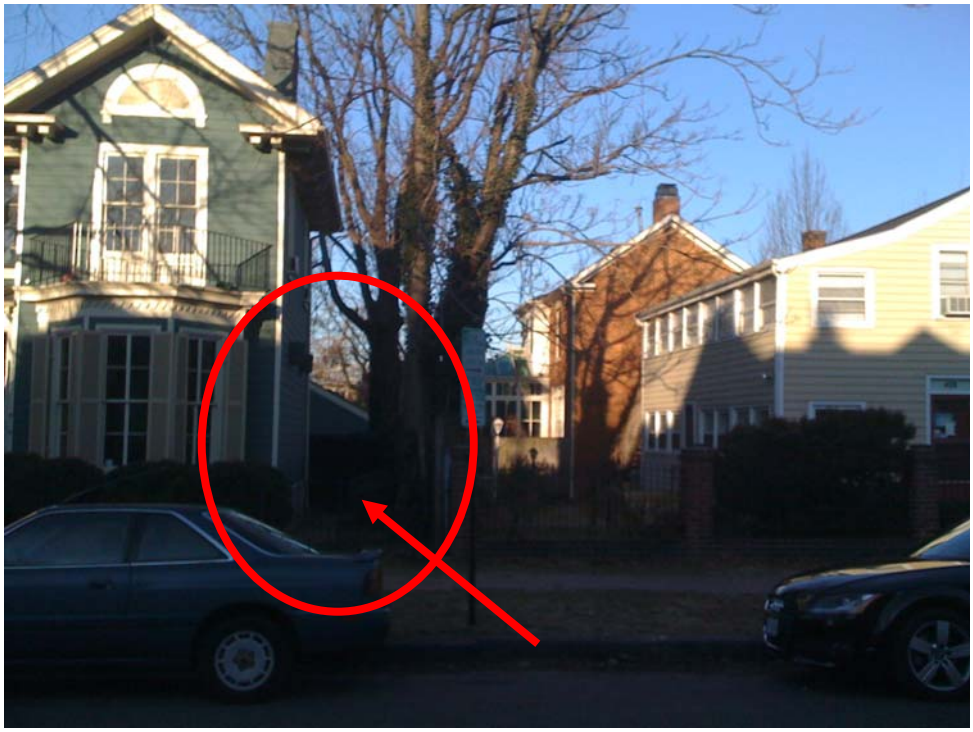

Figure 6: Existing Site lines to Outbuilding from North Columbus

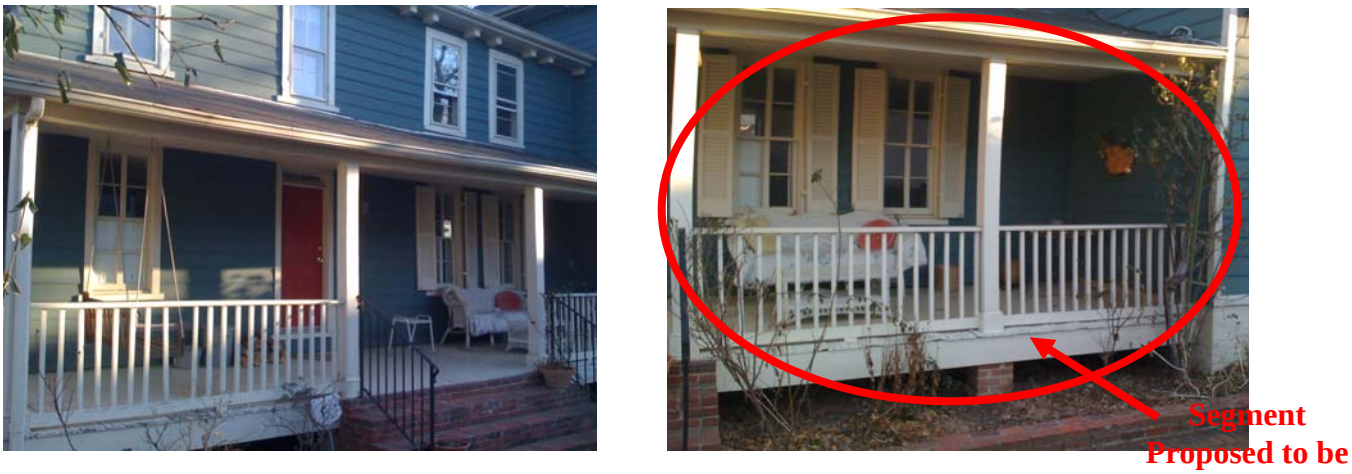

Figure 7: Views of Existing Porch on Ell Extension

Figure 8: Detail View of Porch Post

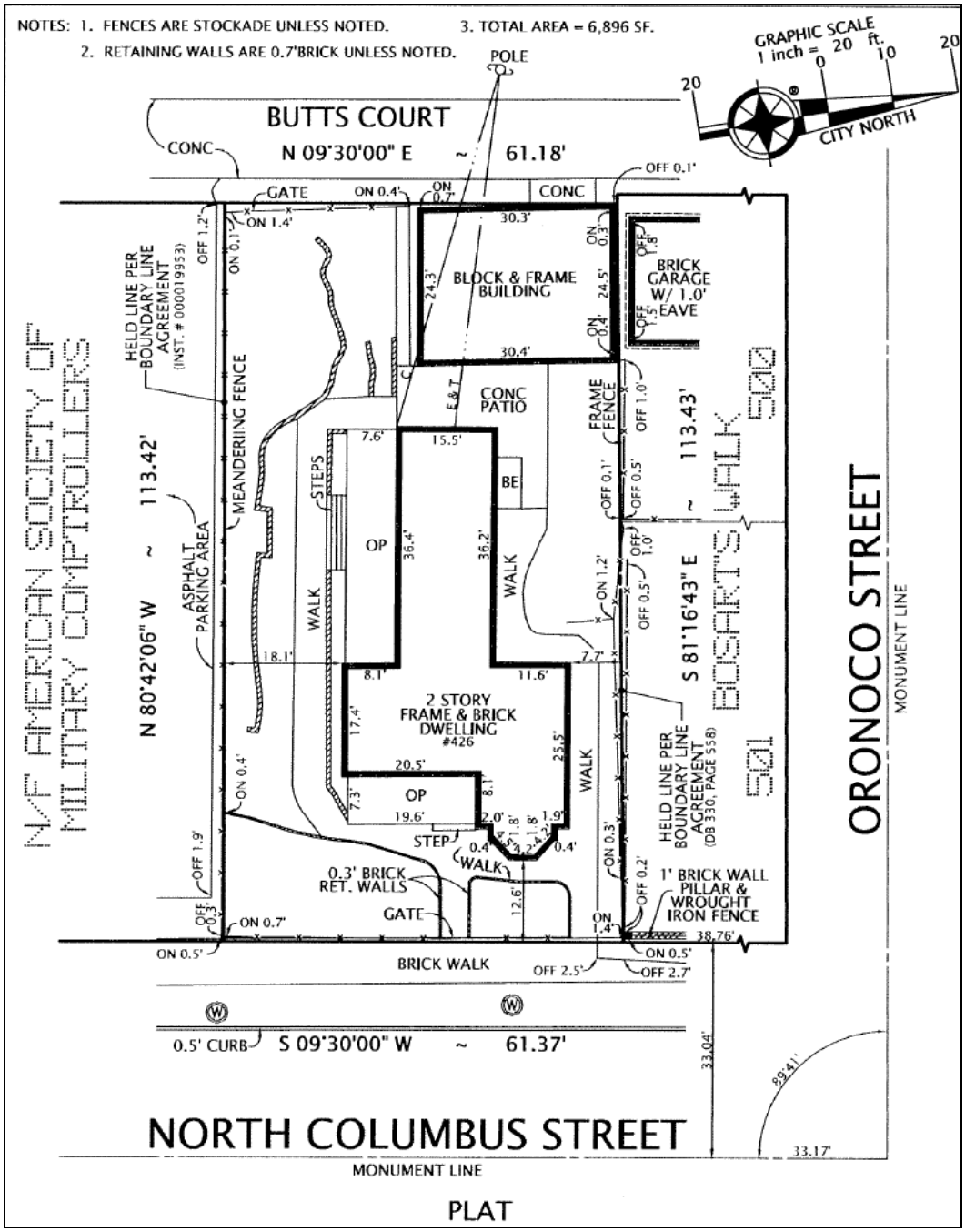

Figure 9: Existing Site Plan

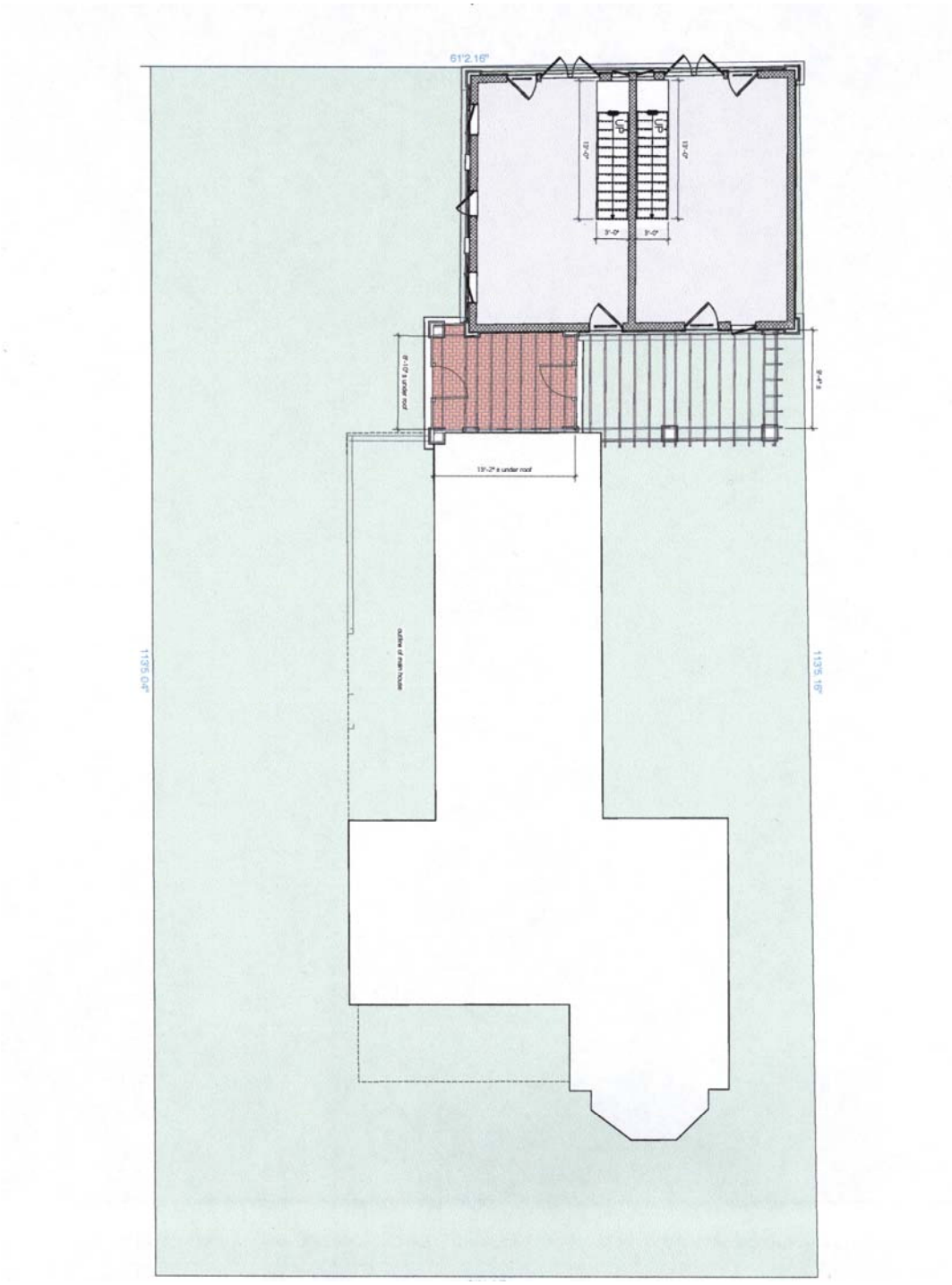

Figure 10: Proposed Site Plan

Figure 11: Proposed South Elevation

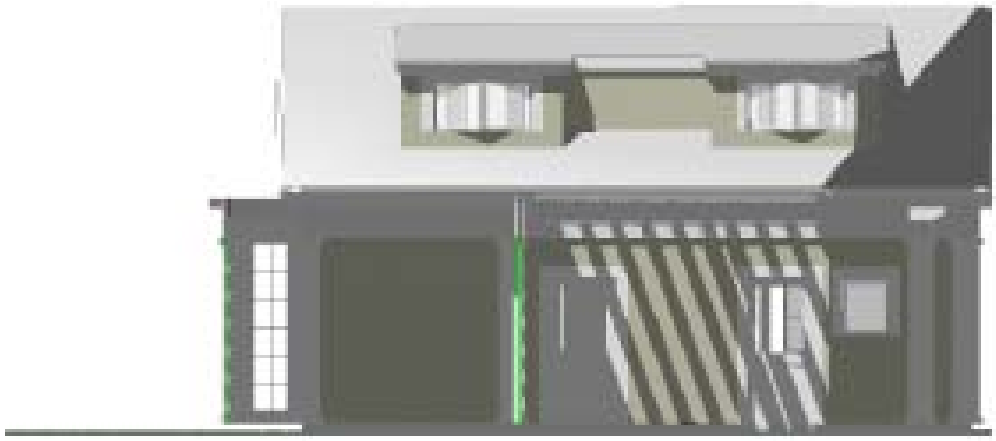

Figure 12: Proposed West Elevation of Outbuilding

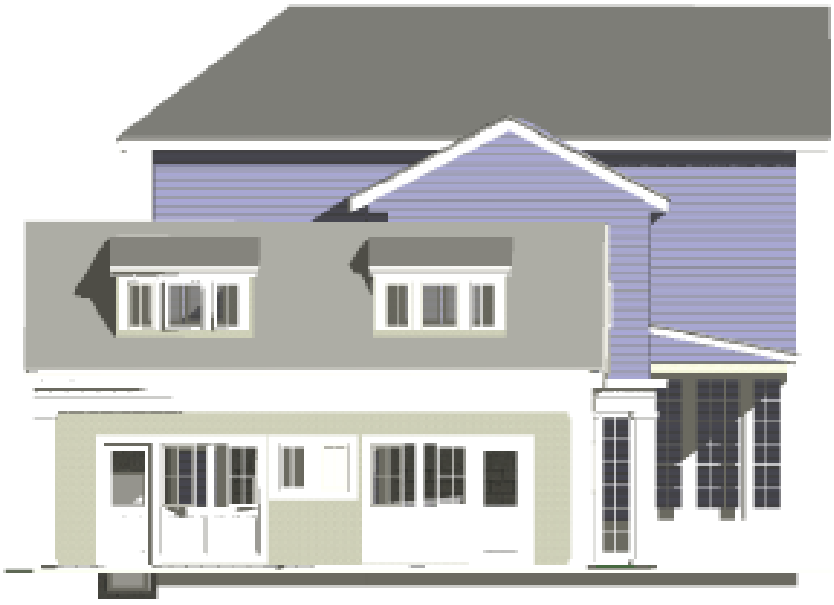

Figure 13: Proposed West Elevation of Outbuilding and Dwelling

Figure 14: Oblique View of Project - Looking Northeast

Figure 15: Oblique View of Outbuilding – Looking East

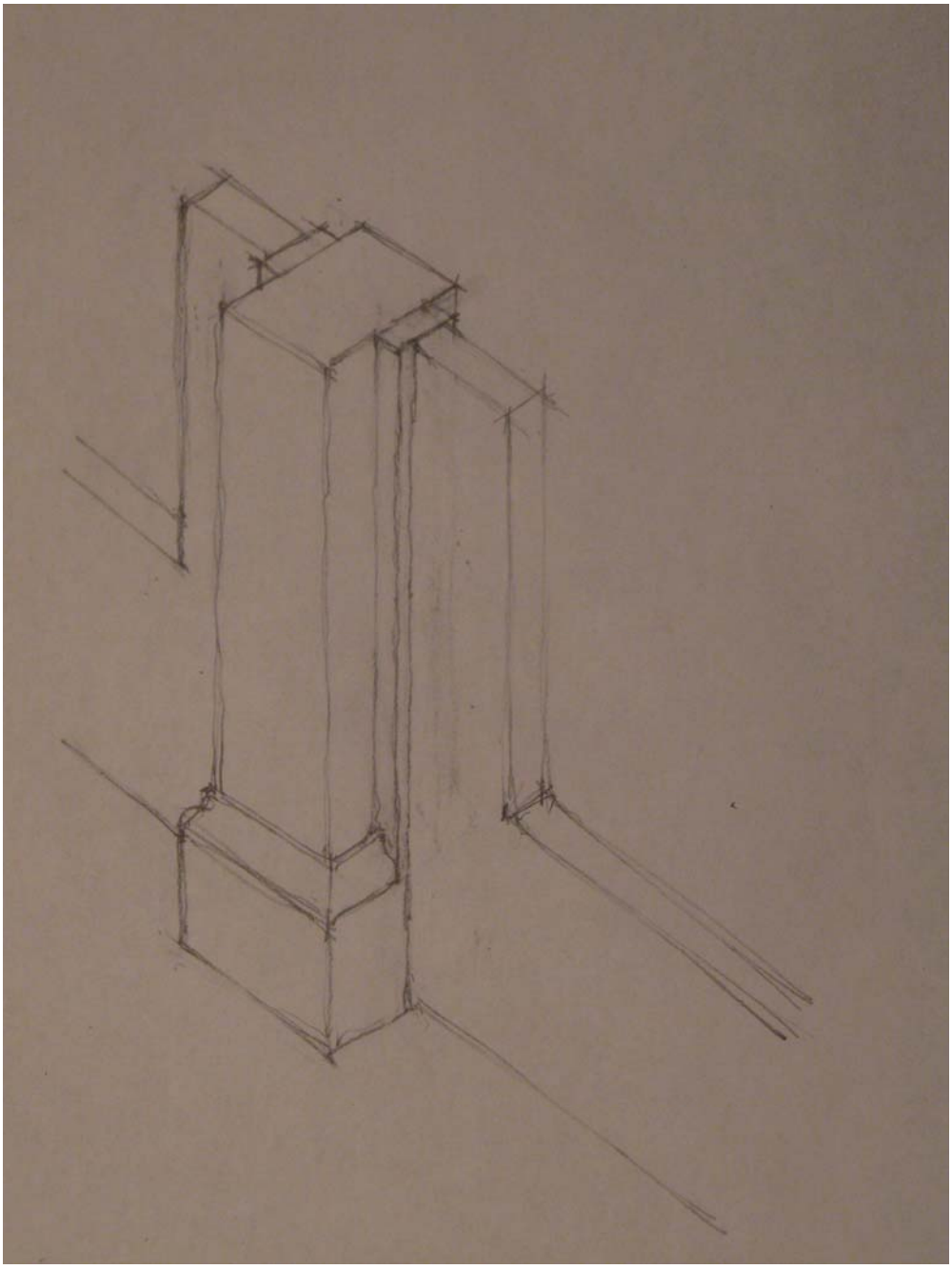

Figure 16: Mounting Detail of Shed Roof Porch Enclosure
to Existing Wood Porch Posts

Figure 17: Example of a Glass “Hyphen” Form Attaching an Outbuilding to the Main House
Note: The two massings still continue to read as two separate units.

Figure 18: Existing North Side Elevation View

Figure 19: Proposed North Side Elevation View with Windows

Figure 20: Example of a Solid Color "Living Roof" Mounted to a Gable Roof Form

Benefits of Green Roofs from the US Green Building Council

- Stormwater Management : Living roofs reduce impermeable surface area. They can retain 65-100% of rainwater thus providing local flood prevention and offset peak flow events by releasing water at a slower rate.
- Urban Climate Mitigation (reductions in urban heat island effect): Living roofs counter the urban heat island effect by cooling roof surfaces through plant evapotranspiration, shading, and insulation.
- Reductions in Energy Costs: Living roofs decrease energy costs by reducing thermal loading in summer (roof structure is cooler in summer).
- Provides Wildlife Habitat: Living roofs contributes to local biodiversity by providing wildlife habitat for insects and birds.
- Urban Greenspace: Living roofs increases living and green space in congested urban environments. This may be enjoyed visually through a view or physically through a roof garden.
- Increased Membrane Life: Living roofs increase longevity of roof membranes by blocking UV rays and preventing extreme surface temperature fluctuations which cause membrane degradation. This leads to lower roof costs over time.
- Improves Air Quality: Living roofs purify the air by absorbing pollutants such as particulate matter from automobiles and factories, pollen, and dust.
- Provides Numerous LEED Credits: Stormwater Management Rate Quantity, and Treatment; Design to Reduce Heat Islands; Water-Efficient Landscaping; Optimizing Energy Performance; Recycled Content (green roof system components); Local/Regional Materials (green roof components and plants)