

Docket Item # 14
BAR CASE # 2009-0022

BAR Meeting
March 4, 2009

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: Dunstan Williams, Owner

LOCATION: 731 South Pitt Street

ZONE: RM / Residential Townhouse Zone

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

1. That the Applicant will address stormwater management concerns at the garden wall abutting the addition by filling in and/or flashing the gap between the two additions. This infill is to be no greater than the length and height of the neighbor's addition. The top of the gap will be flashed to ensure that water will not penetrate into the buildings. The Applicant will gain the neighbor's written permission to complete this condition.
2. That the false windows will contain brick sills and slightly recessed "windows".
3. That the brick cornice detail on the front façade of the house will be continued onto the side elevations of the new addition and that the permit drawings reflect this detail.
4. That all windows and doors will be simulated-divided light painted wood with 7/8" muntins.
5. That the Applicant will provide staff specification sheets for the exterior lighting at time of permitting for review and approval before purchase and installation.
6. That all exterior trim surrounding doors and windows will be fabricated of painted wood or paintable wood composite and designed to match the trim on the existing rear façade in width and profile.
7. That the second floor balcony balustrade will be fabricated of a black metal and that details for the balustrade will be shown on the permit drawings.
8. That the new addition's brickwork pattern will be a simple stretcher bond to complement the original massing's common bond brickwork.
9. * 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.
10. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
11. 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.



BAR CASE #2009-0021, 0022 3/4/2009



Note: Docket item #13, BAR Case #2009-0021, must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a two-story rear addition (16' wide x 18' long) at 731 South Pitt Street.

The two-story addition will encapsulate the existing rear façade of the 1941 townhouse and will utilize materials and finishes that complement the existing style of the house including solid brick construction, wood, simulated-divided light painted doors, false "windows", and a painted, standing-seam metal roof to match the existing. All the trim and details will be wood. The new addition was designed to meet the existing roofline as a cross-gable roof-form, and recessed 8" from the side elevations of the townhouse to differentiate this massing as a separate addition.

II. HISTORY:

The two-story brick single-family attached dwelling unit at 731 South Pitt Street was constructed around 1941 as part of the Yates Gardens development. The subject property is an interior unit of a six-unit townhouse stick. This townhouse stick is accessed in the front by public, one-way, separated curb lane and in the rear by a public alley. The separated curb lane assists in mitigating the impacts of the urban street on this residential development. A 4' wide sidewalk is constructed across the property frontage.

Along the rear, the flanking townhouse to the south is recessed approximately 6' from the rear plane of the subject townhouse. This townhouse is detailed with a hipped roof form sheathed in shingles. The flanking townhouse to the north is flush with the subject townhouse and shares a side gable roof, sheathed in standing seam metal.

The current rear yard of the subject property measures approximately 16' wide x 46' long (length measured from rear elevation to fence line and width measured from garden wall to garden wall.)

III. ANALYSIS:

The subject proposal complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The proposed addition does not exceed the height of the existing massing; installs false windows on the side elevations to provide visual relief where the building code does not permit penetrations into the wall face; specifies doors and windows to complement the existing architectural style of the building, and programs a roof form and material that is traditional to the existing historic house at 731 South Pitt Street, as recommended in the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions.

When this project was originally submitted, Staff was concerned about the addition's scale and massing as it relates to the adjacent neighbors. Staff met with the Applicant, builder, and neighbor on site to review the project. The neighbor most affected by the proposed addition, the owner of 729 S. Pitt Street, has written a letter of support for the proposed project. Photos have also been provided by the Applicant taken from the second floor windows of this adjacent neighbor's house (see Figure 20). After a study of the site from the neighbor's windows, from the interior of the fence, and discussing the case with the neighbors, it is the opinion of Staff that this project's massing would have little impact to the flanking neighbor.

Staff has been working with the Applicant on the new addition's detailing. The current drawings do not reflect the evolution of this design, as time did not allow for revised drawings to be included in the staff report. The recommended conditions reflect the changes and modifications discussed with the Applicant. The major changes include: a full gable return, a rectangular louvered vent in the gable end to replace the ocular window, false "windows" to be located on the north and south elevations with detailing that replicate the windows on the existing rear elevation, installing the brick cornice detail (see photo on Figure 8) from the front elevation on the addition's side elevation, and filling in the one-story gap between the neighbor's one-story addition and the proposed addition to prevent that there would be no future water damage to either properties.

If constructed, the property will retain approximately 450 sq. ft. of rear open space (28' +/- by 16'). The proposed addition will extend approximately 3'4" beyond the neighbor's existing one-story extension.

This design will maintain the historic character of the existing streetscape. The proposed addition will not negatively impact the historic development pattern of the district, as the ridgeline of the addition will not exceed the height of the existing building and it is being sited at the rear of the townhouse only visible from a public alley.

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

1. That the Applicant will address stormwater management concerns at the garden wall abutting the addition by filling in and/or flashing the gap between the two additions. This infill is to be no greater than the length and height of the neighbor's addition. The top of the gap will be flashed to ensure that water will not penetrate into the buildings. The Applicant will gain the neighbor's written permission to complete this condition.
2. That the false windows will contain brick sills and slightly recessed "windows".
3. That the brick cornice detail on the front façade of the house will be continued onto the side elevations of the new addition and that the permit drawings reflect this detail.
4. That all windows and doors will be simulated-divided light painted wood with 7/8" muntins.

5. That the Applicant will provide staff specification sheets for the exterior lighting at time of permitting for review and approval before purchase and installation.
6. That all exterior trim surrounding doors and windows will be fabricated of painted wood or paintable wood composite and designed to match the trim on the existing rear façade in width and profile.
7. That the second floor balcony balustrade will be fabricated of a black metal and that details for the balustrade will be shown on the permit drawings.
8. That the new addition's brickwork pattern will be a simple stretcher bond to complement the original massing's common bond brickwork.
9. * 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.
10. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
11. 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.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:

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

Code Administration:

- 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 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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-8 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-9 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-10 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)

FINDINGS

- F1. 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
 - 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) 838-4318. 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>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. 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)
- R2. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons,

etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)

- R4. 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)
- R5. 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)
- R5. 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)

Historic Alexandria:

R- Approve with conditions:

FINDINGS

Tax records indicate that a house was present on the block bounded by Franklin, Pitt, Jefferson, and St. Asaph Streets by 1830. The 1877 Hopkins insurance map shows a structure, part of the estate of Samuel Miller, in the north central part of the block. While the known structure was probably not situated on the property of 731 S. Pitt, it is possible that archaeological evidence of structures and activities associated with this early to mid-19th-century homestead at the edge of town could remain buried in the yard areas of the property.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *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.
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Figure 1: View of Townhouse Stick



Figure 2: View of Streetscape Development Pattern
(Divided Street: Public Street with Separate Curb Lane)



Figure 3: View of Rear Public Alley



Figure 4: View of Rear of Property from Public Alley



Figure 5: Front Elevation of Subject Property



Figure 6: View of Front Elevations of Subject Property and Flanking Townhouses



Figure 7: View of Existing Trim Detail on Front Façade



Cornice:
Three rows of
stretcher bricks,
topped with a
row of header
bricks

Figure 8: View of Cornice Detail on Front Façade



Figure 9: View of Existing Elevation's "Common Bond" Brickwork

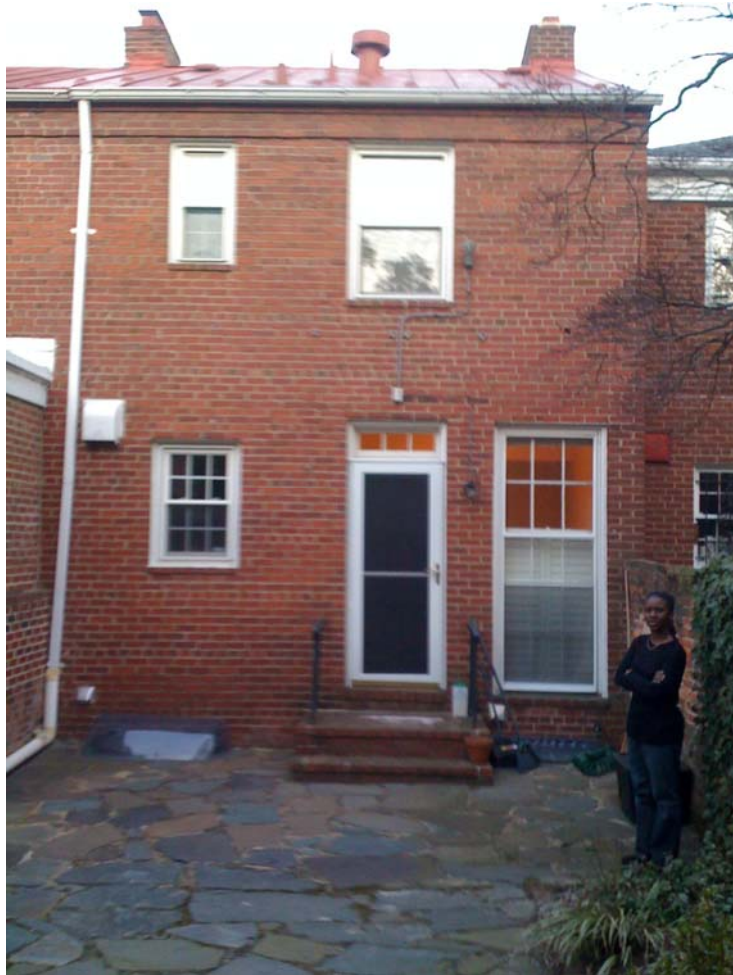


Figure 10: Existing Rear Elevation



Figure 11: View of Adjacent Neighbor to the North



Figure 12: View of Adjacent Neighbor to the South

Side Elevation of
Neighbor's
One-Story
Addition



Rear Elevation of
Subject House

Garden Wall

Figure 13: Detail of North Garden Wall

Rear Elevation of
Subject House



Garden Wall

Figure 14: Detail of South Garden Wall

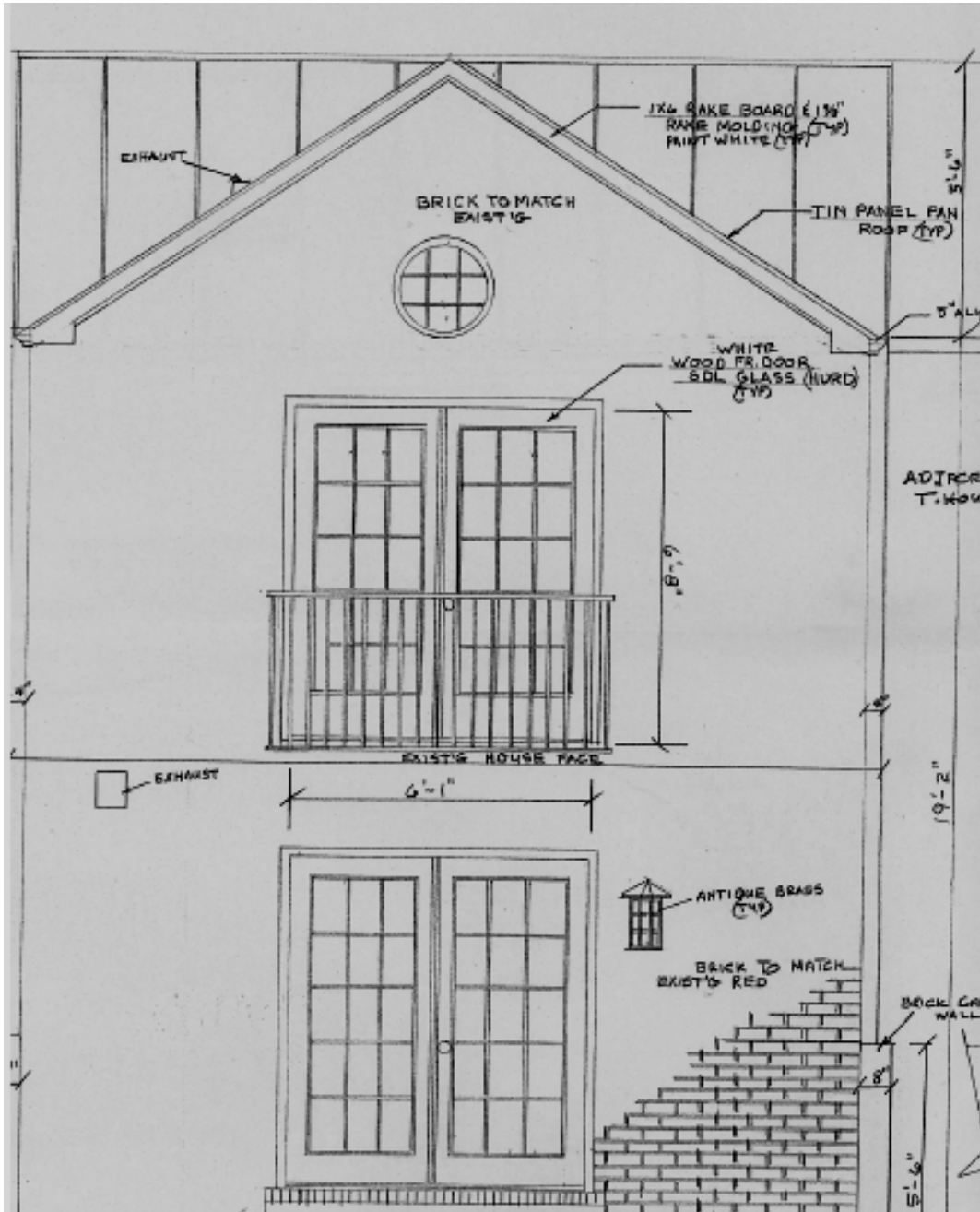


Figure 16: Proposed Rear Elevation without Staff recommended changes

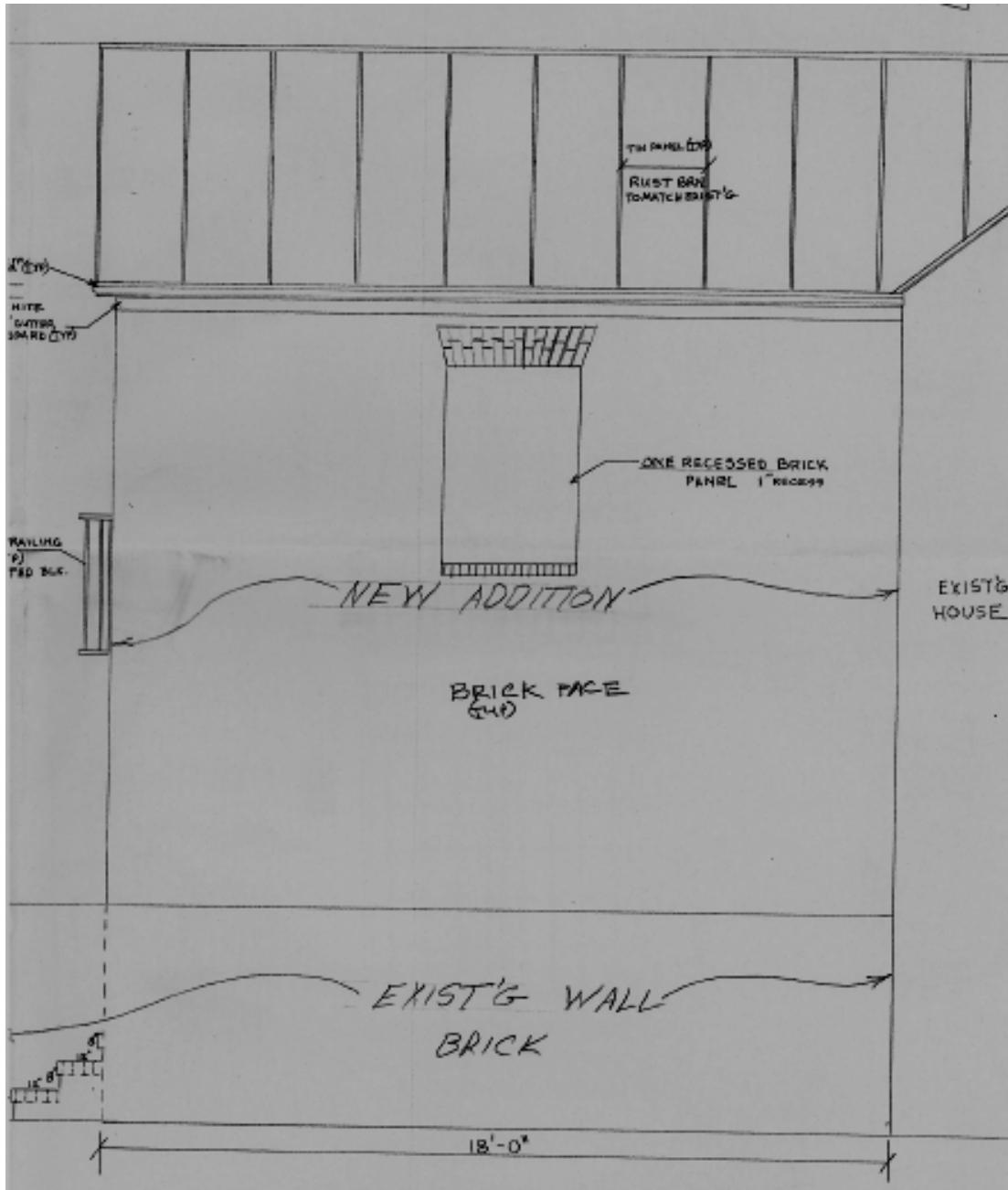


Figure 17: Proposed Side Elevations without Staff recommended changes

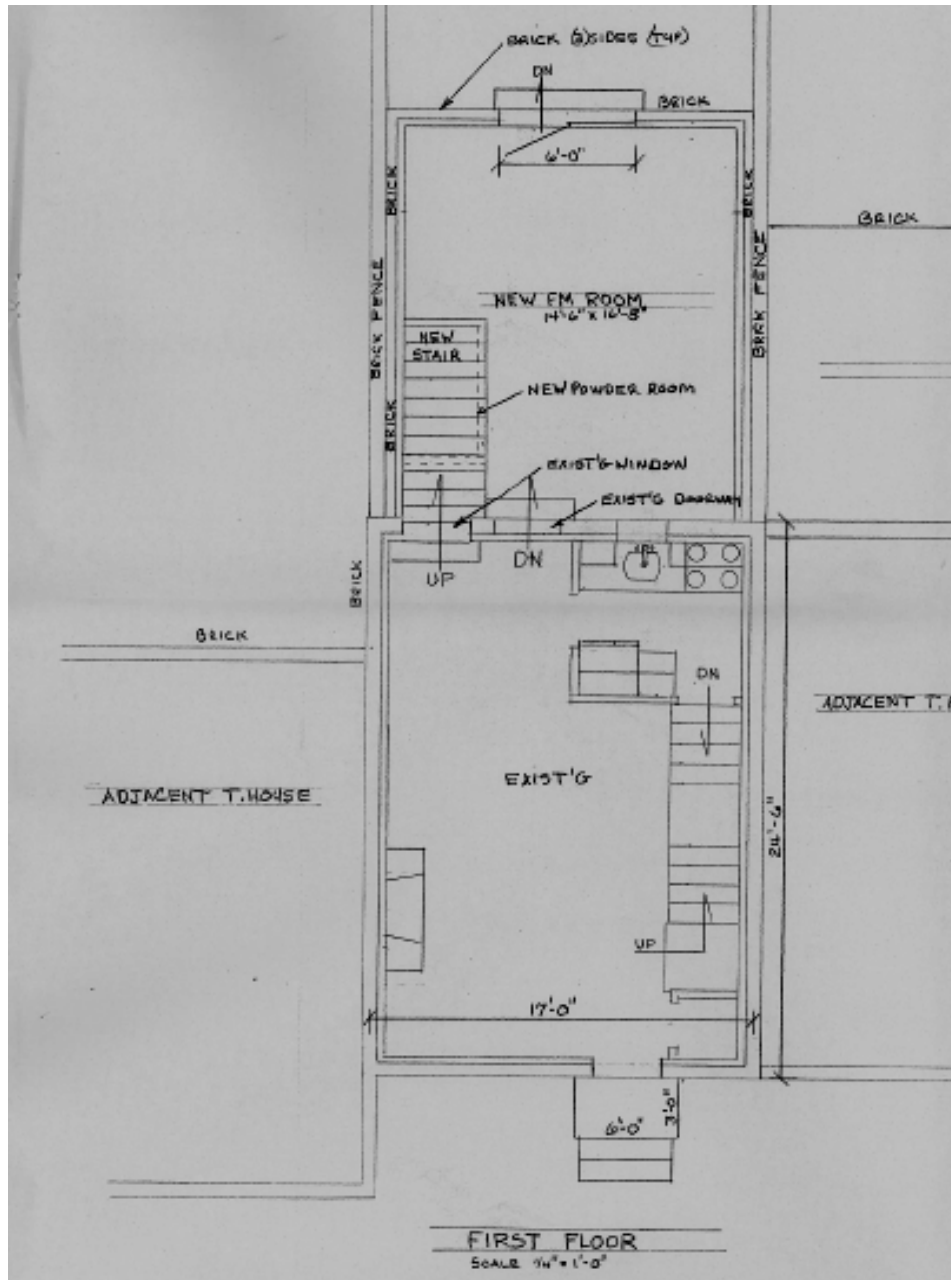


Figure 18: First Floor plan

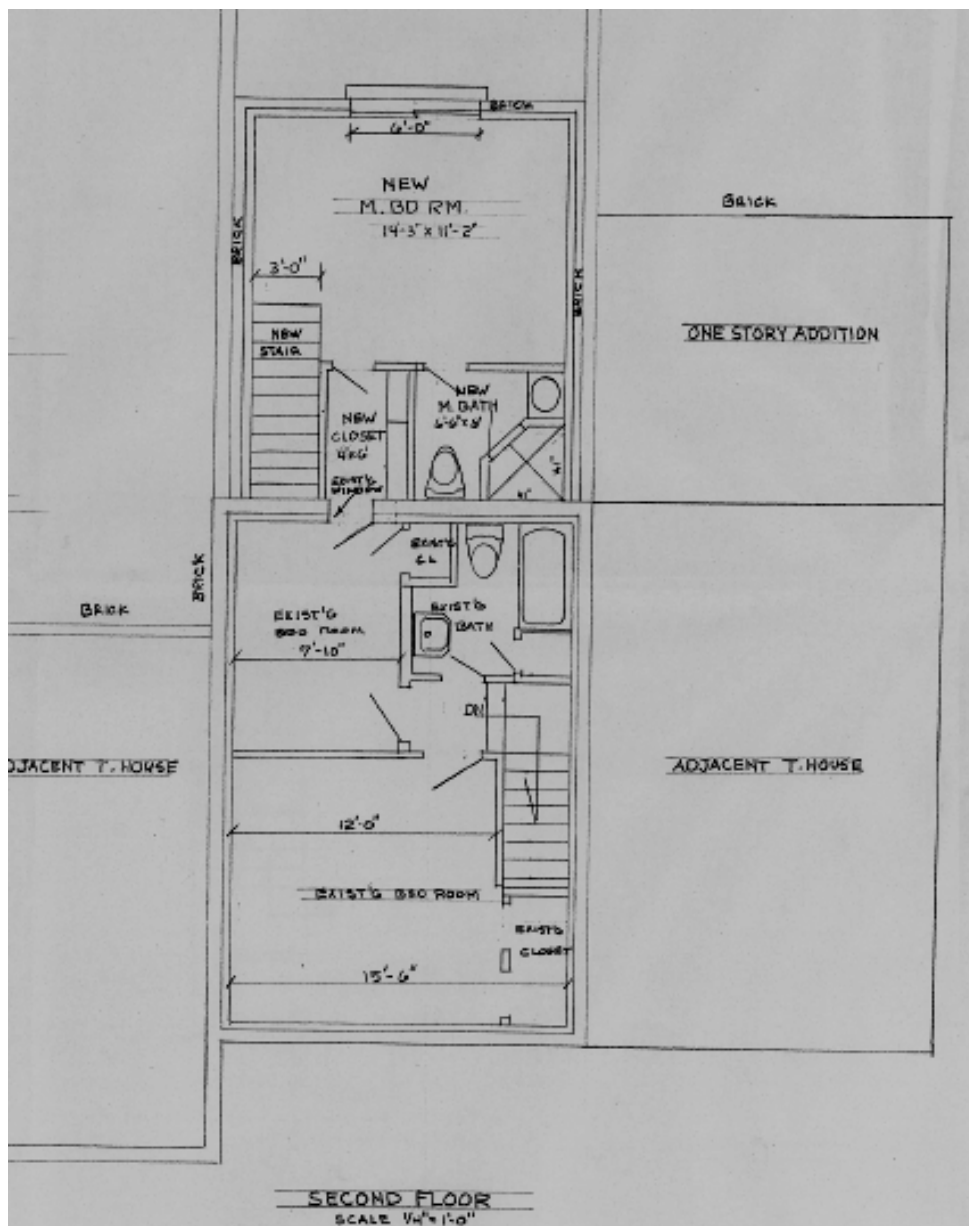
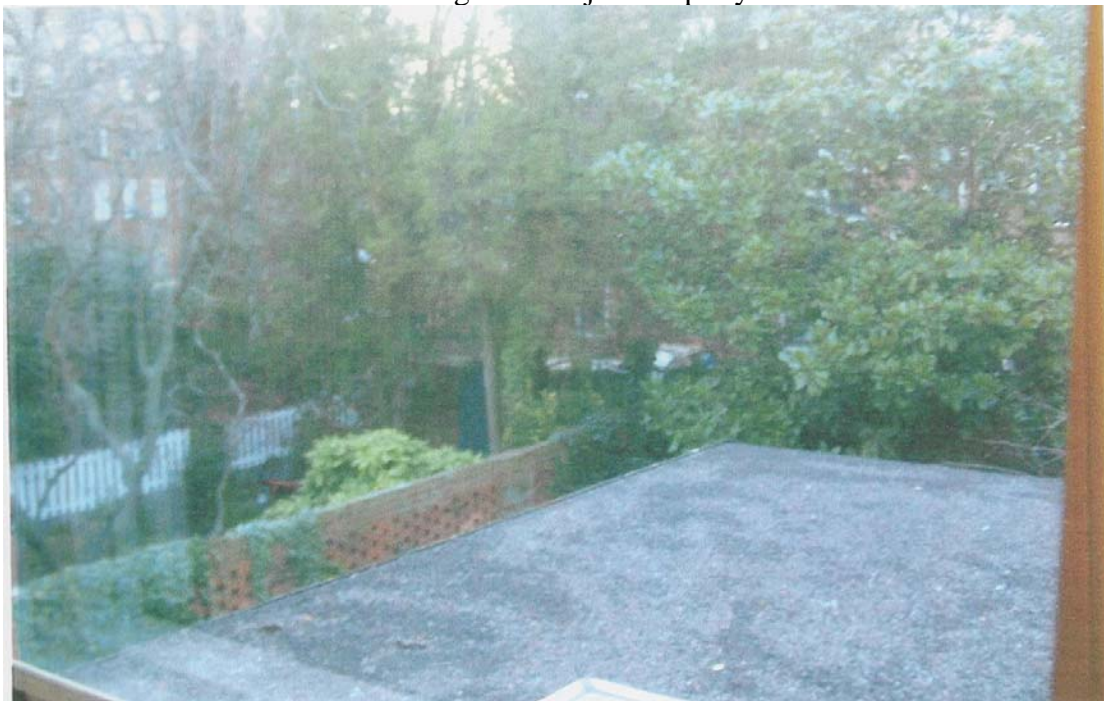


Figure 19: Second Floor plan



Figure 20: Photos from 729 South Pitt Street Second Floor Neighbor's Window
Looking into Subject Property



24 February 2009

729 S Pitt St
Alexandria, VA 22314

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing regarding the proposed addition to the property at 731 S Pitt Street (Tax Assessment Number: 080-040-107). As the owner and occupant of the adjacent property at 729 S Pitt St, I would like to express my support for this project. I believe it will be a valuable addition not just to the property itself, but also to the entire neighborhood. Also, this construction will in no way deter from the cherished historical character of the area.

Please feel free to contact me at 571-451-2142 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Ashley Bone

Letter of Support from Flanking Neighbor at 729 S. Pitt Street