

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE # 2009-0007

BAR Meeting
April 1, 2009

ISSUE: Demolition/Encapsulation
APPLICANT: Stephanie Dimond for Peter Erickson
LOCATION: 208 North Fairfax Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

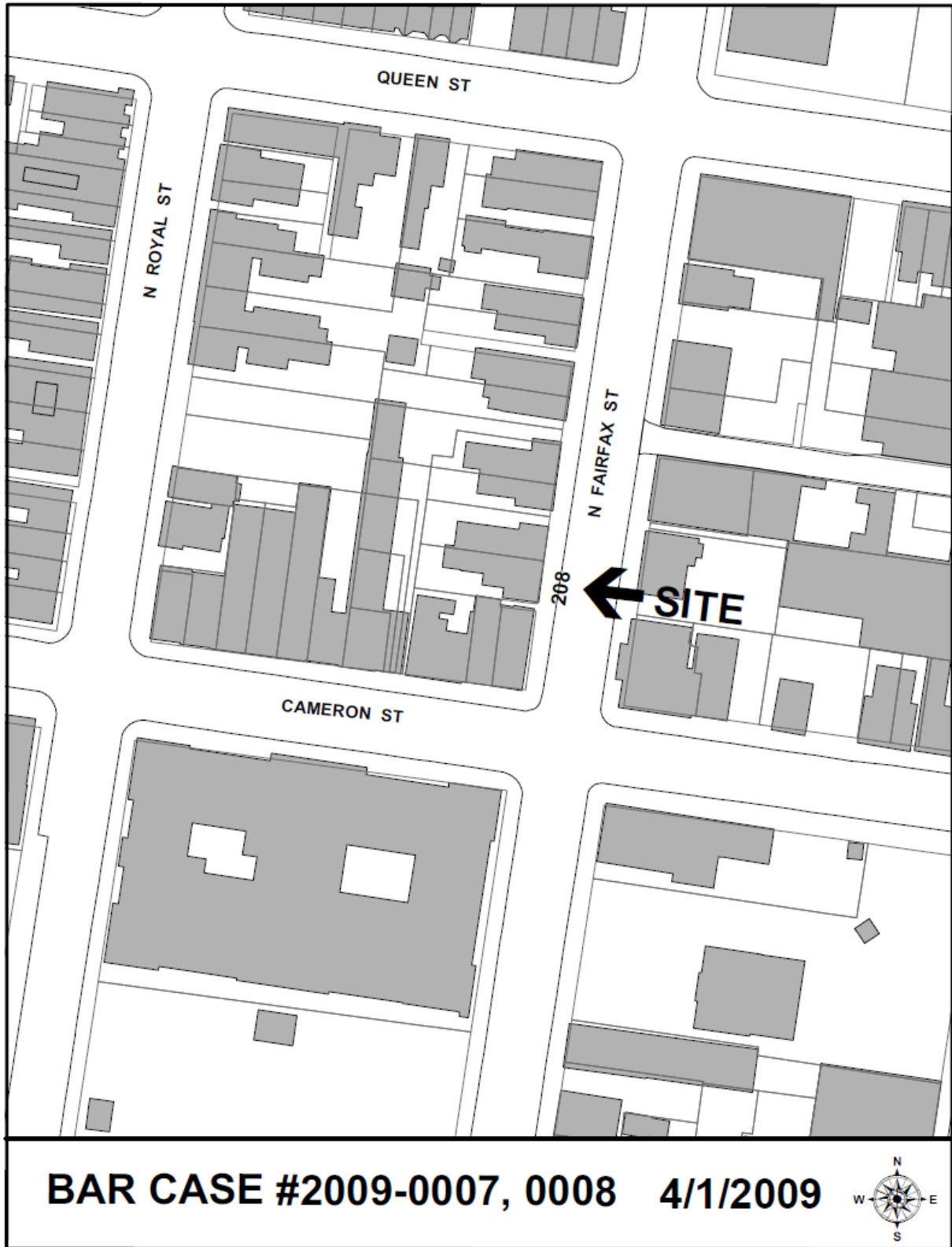
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate with the following conditions:

1. That the following statements 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. Ground disturbing activities shall be monitored by City archaeologists. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection/monitoring schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
 - B. 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.
 - C. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
 - D. At least one 18th-century burial could be located on this property. It is illegal to disturb human remains without obtaining appropriate legal authorization. If burials are found during development and need to be moved, the burials will be removed archaeologically, and appropriate legal authorization will be obtained, including a permit from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for the archaeological removal of burials.

****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 Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of

Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Encapsulate in order to construct a two story rear addition at 208 North Fairfax Street. The existing one story addition will be demolished and the rear wall of the two story ell above the existing addition will be encapsulated in order to construct the new addition.

The total area of proposed demolition, the existing one story 1960s addition, is approximately 175.2 square feet. The area of encapsulation – the area of the exposed rear wall on the second story of the ell - is roughly 90 feet. The existing brick wall will be incorporated into the addition, with the window opening to be used as the entrance into the new addition. The existing chimney will also be retained.

II. HISTORY:

208 North Fairfax Street, together with 210 North Fairfax Street, is a two-and-a-half-story brick townhouse constructed by William Duvall sometime between 1784 when he purchased the land from William Ramsay, and 1793, when he sold the houses to William Downman of Prince William County for 400 pounds. The townhouses are notable examples of 18th century brick townhouses in Alexandria. Both are flounder houses turned at a ninety degree angle to the usual street orientation of other flounder buildings found in Alexandria, and were constructed with their roofs shedding toward the street. To the knowledge of Staff, there are only five 18th century flounder houses with this street orientation existing in the historic district - one example is in the 200 block of North Pitt Street and the other two are paired houses in the 200 block of South Royal Street.

Further, Staff notes that this pair of brick houses shares remarkably similar detailing of the belt course and water table with a number of other 18th century brick houses in the historic district. So distinctive is the similarity that Staff is of the opinion that the same hand designed these houses, which Staff has dubbed "Designer X". Extant examples include 521 and 601 Duke Street, the Dr. Craik house on Prince Street, and another at 219 South Lee Street. Colross, relocated early in the 20th century from the 500 block of North Henry Street to Princeton, NJ, is also an example of this distinctive house design.

In mid-February, Staff visited the site with the project architect and inspected both the exterior and interior of the subject property and determined that the house as it exists today was likely constructed in five phases (see Figure 2 showing phases of construction). With the exception of the existing one story rear addition, the house was completed by 1877, when it is shown with its existing layout on the 1877 Hopkins City Atlas of Alexandria. Staff believes that the house was constructed in the following phases:

- Phase I:* The original flounder house was constructed between 1784 and 1793 on the front property line at a ninety degree angle, with the roof shedding toward the street.
- Phase II:* The two story section behind the flounder was added with a shed roof – together the front and rear form a gable type roof.

Phase III/IV: The rear ell was added along with an entrance bay on the south side of the front flounder.

Phase V: A frame kitchen at the rear of the house was removed and the existing one story brick addition was constructed. At the same time, the dormer on the east slope of the main roof was constructed (Building Permit #19234, 3/5/1963).

On April 5, 2006, the Board approved alterations to the existing rear one story addition but denied a request to reconfigure the front stairs and add a proposed new door surround (BAR Case # 2006-0058 and 2006-0059). A building permit was approved for the project, although the exterior portions of that project were never undertaken. The interior alterations - the kitchen relocation from the rear addition to the 1st floor of the rear ell and the addition of a 2nd floor bathroom - are still underway.

In 1997, the Board approved a rear addition at the adjacent townhouse, 210 North Fairfax. That project, involved the demolition of the roof of the ell and portions of the ell's north façade, along with the encapsulation of the rear wall of the ell (BAR Case #1997-0015 & 0016, April 2, 1997).

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the criteria are met for either the demolition of the non-historic 1960s one story addition or the encapsulation of the rear wall of the ell. Although the great majority of the townhouse at 208 North Fairfax Street retains a high degree of architectural integrity, the area of encapsulation is rather small in size (approximately 90 feet) and, in the opinion of Staff, has lost its historic integrity. Given the variety of brick types, the inconsistent bond pattern and mortar patches, as well as the apparent reconstruction of the rear chimney, Staff determined during the site visit that the rear wall of the ell may have either collapsed or been damaged by fire. Staff notes, however, that the applicant has proposed to encapsulate, rather than demolish, this rear wall.

Views of the rear of the house where the demolition and encapsulation are proposed are limited to the 15 foot utility and pedestrian easement which provides access to the businesses at Norford Court, which is accessed off of Cameron Street. The area being impacted is not visible from North Fairfax Street or the pedestrian (and public) service alley immediately south of the townhouse.

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted, but notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be incorporated as conditions of approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate with the following conditions:

1. That the following statements 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:
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 - C. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
 - D. At least one 18th-century burial could be located on this property. It is illegal to disturb human remains without obtaining appropriate legal authorization. If burials are found during development and need to be moved, the burials will be removed archaeologically, and appropriate legal authorization will be obtained, including a permit from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for the archaeological removal of burials.

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 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.
- 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.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R-1 The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any demolition permit.

Historic Alexandria:

- R-1 Table pending documentation of age and condition of wall abutting 20th century addition (February 5, 2009).
- R-2 If the BAR requires that an easement be placed on the encapsulated rear wall, the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission should be the holder of the easement (March 24, 2009).

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 This property is situated in the early historic core of the town and has potential to yield significant archaeological resources that could provide insight into life in 18th-century Alexandria. According to Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street*, the house on the lot was built by William Duvall between 1784 and 1793. However, it is possible that there were structures present even earlier. Henry Salkeld, a mariner, purchased the southern half of the block bounded by Cameron, Fairfax, Royal and Queen Streets in 1749 and may have lived there until his death in 1755. The lot at 208 N. Fairfax is situated within Salkeld's 1749 parcel, but it is not known if Salkeld built any structures on the development property. In addition, at the time of Salkeld's death, a diary entry of a Mrs. Brown, who came to Alexandria with Braddock's troops, suggests that he may have been buried on his property, but the exact location is not known. Thus, although the locations of structures and graves on Salkeld's land are unknown, the lot at 208 N. Fairfax has the potential to yield significant archaeological resources that could provide insight into daily life in the early town, and it is also possible for at least one burial to be present.
- R-1 Ground disturbing activities shall be monitored by City archaeologists. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection/monitoring schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
- R-2 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-3 The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-4 At least one 18th-century burial could be located on this property. It is illegal to disturb human remains without obtaining appropriate legal authorization. If burials are found during development and need to be moved, the burials will be removed archaeologically, and appropriate legal authorization will be obtained, including a permit from the Virginia

Department of Historic Resources for the archaeological removal of burials.

- R-5 The statements in archaeology conditions R-1 through R-4 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.

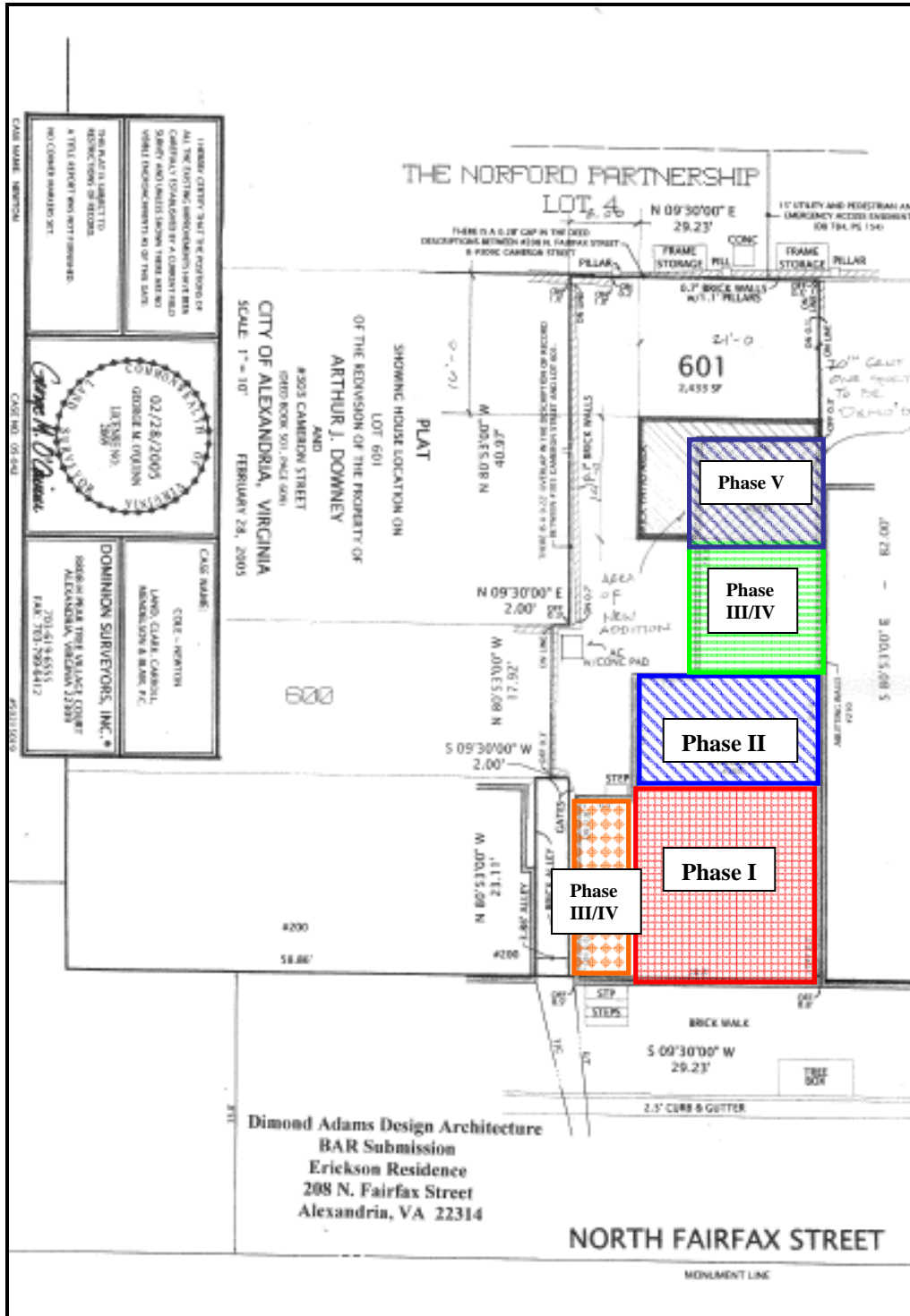


Figure 2: Plat showing phases of construction

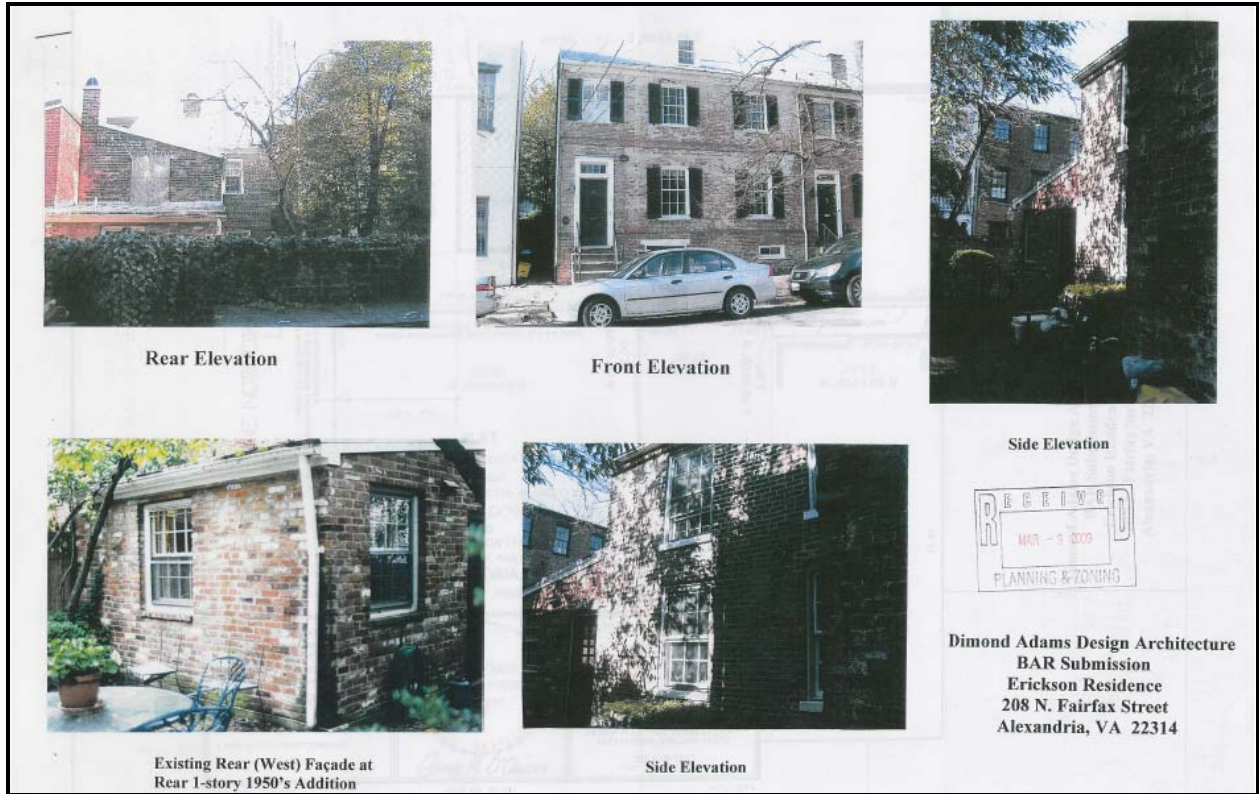


Figure 3: Existing site photos



Figure 4: Photo showing side of 208 North Fairfax Street



Figure 5: Photo showing front flouder at 210 North Fairfax Street



Figure 6: Close up of rear wall to be encapsulated

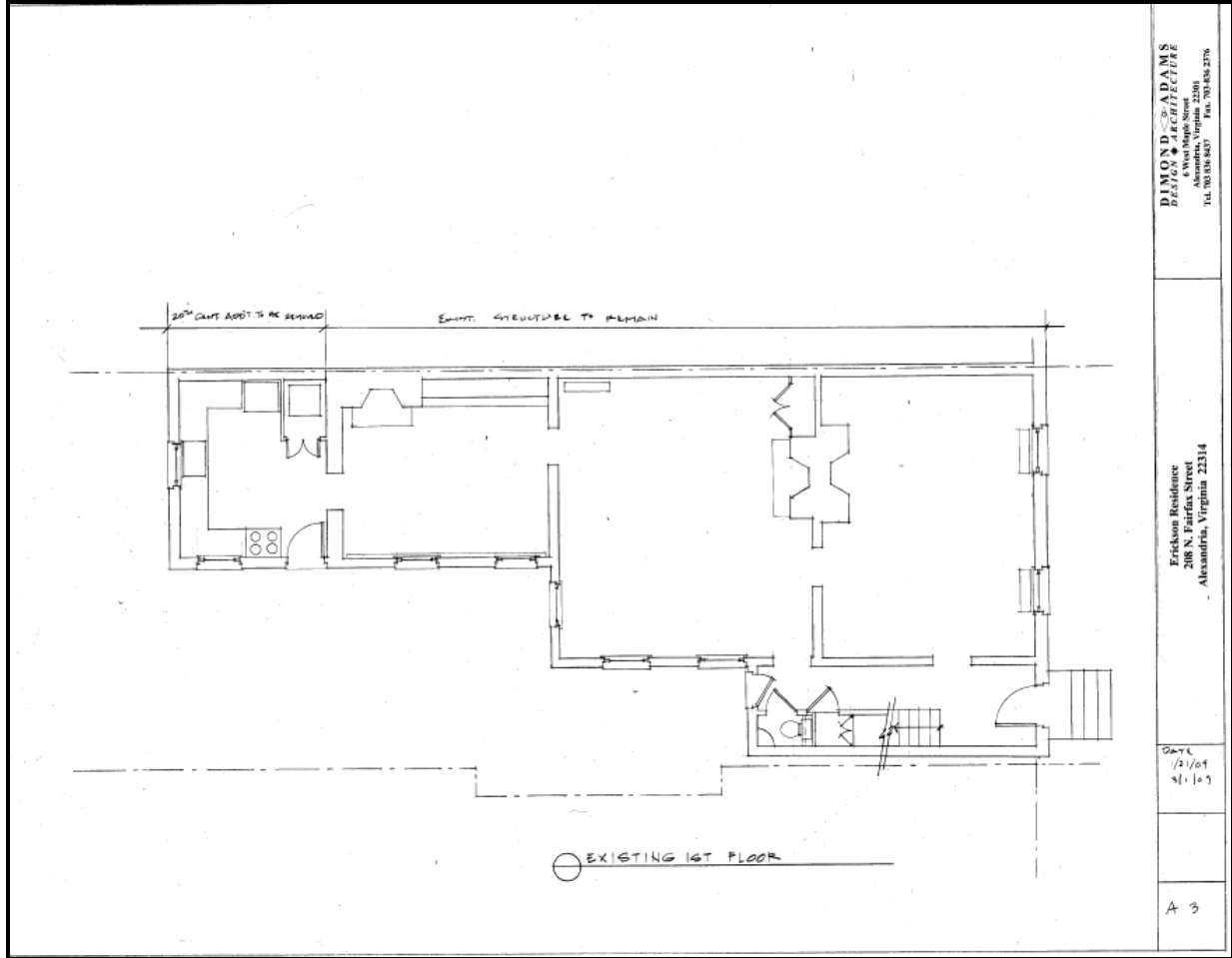


Figure 7: Existing first floor

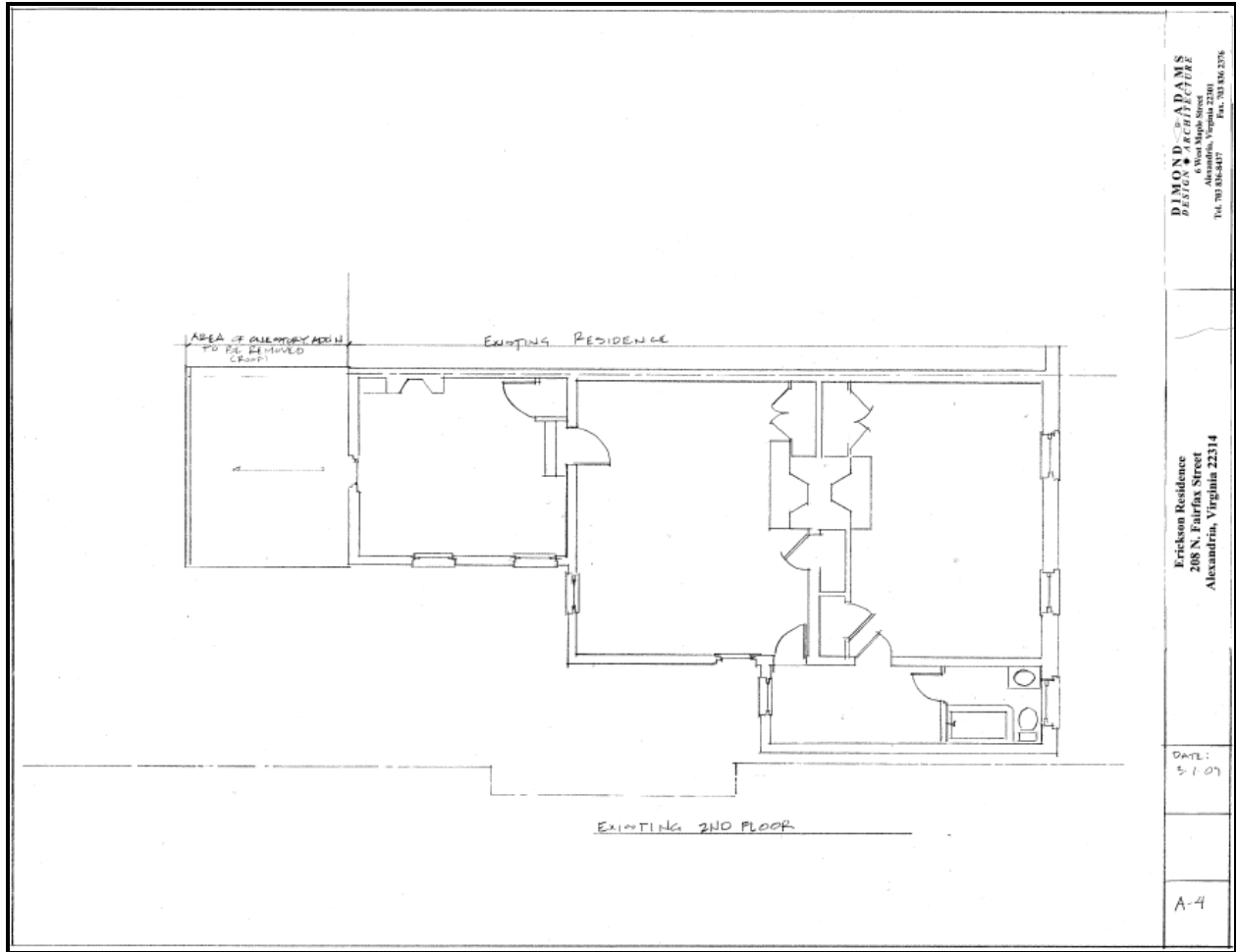


Figure 8: Existing second floor

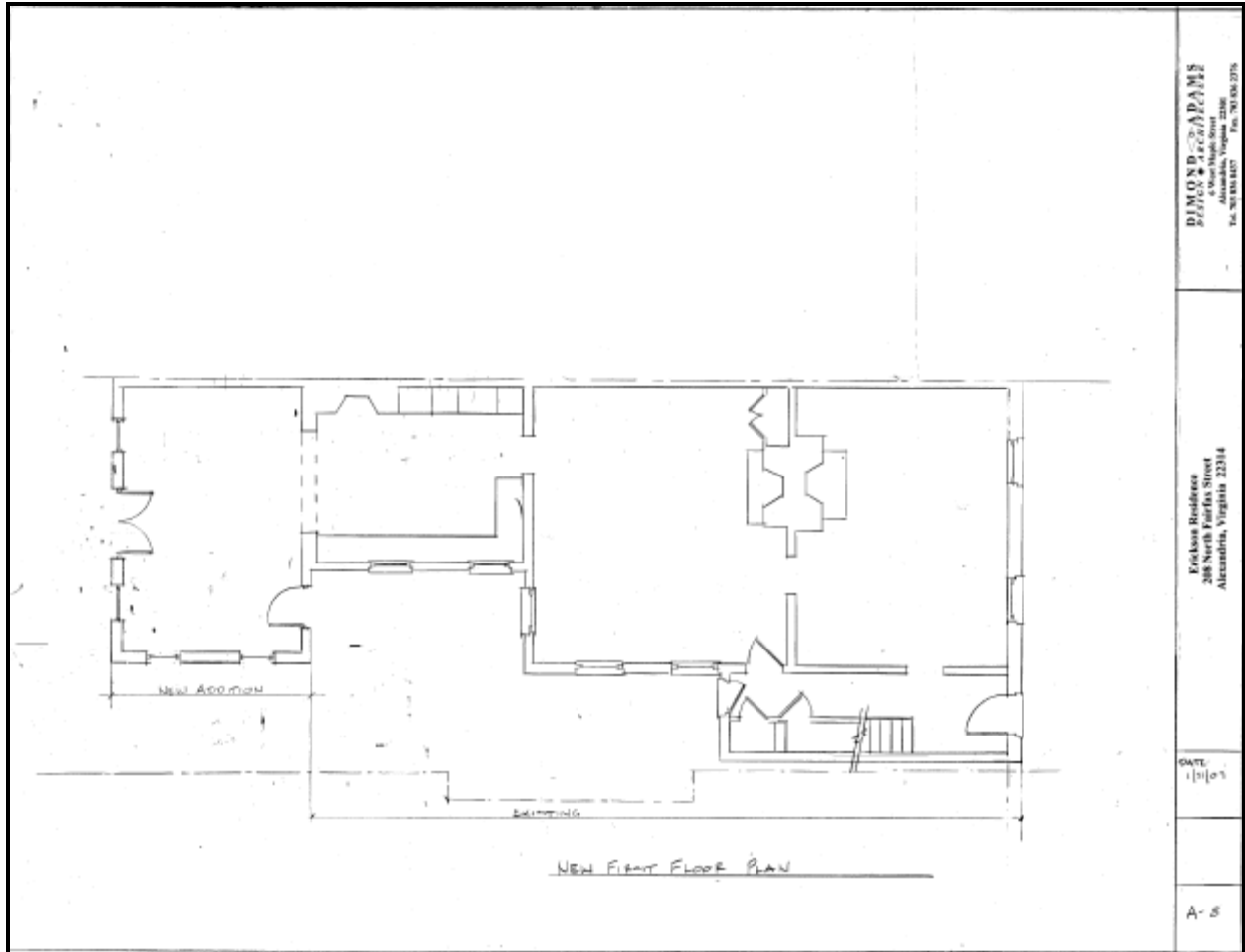


Figure 9: Proposed first floor

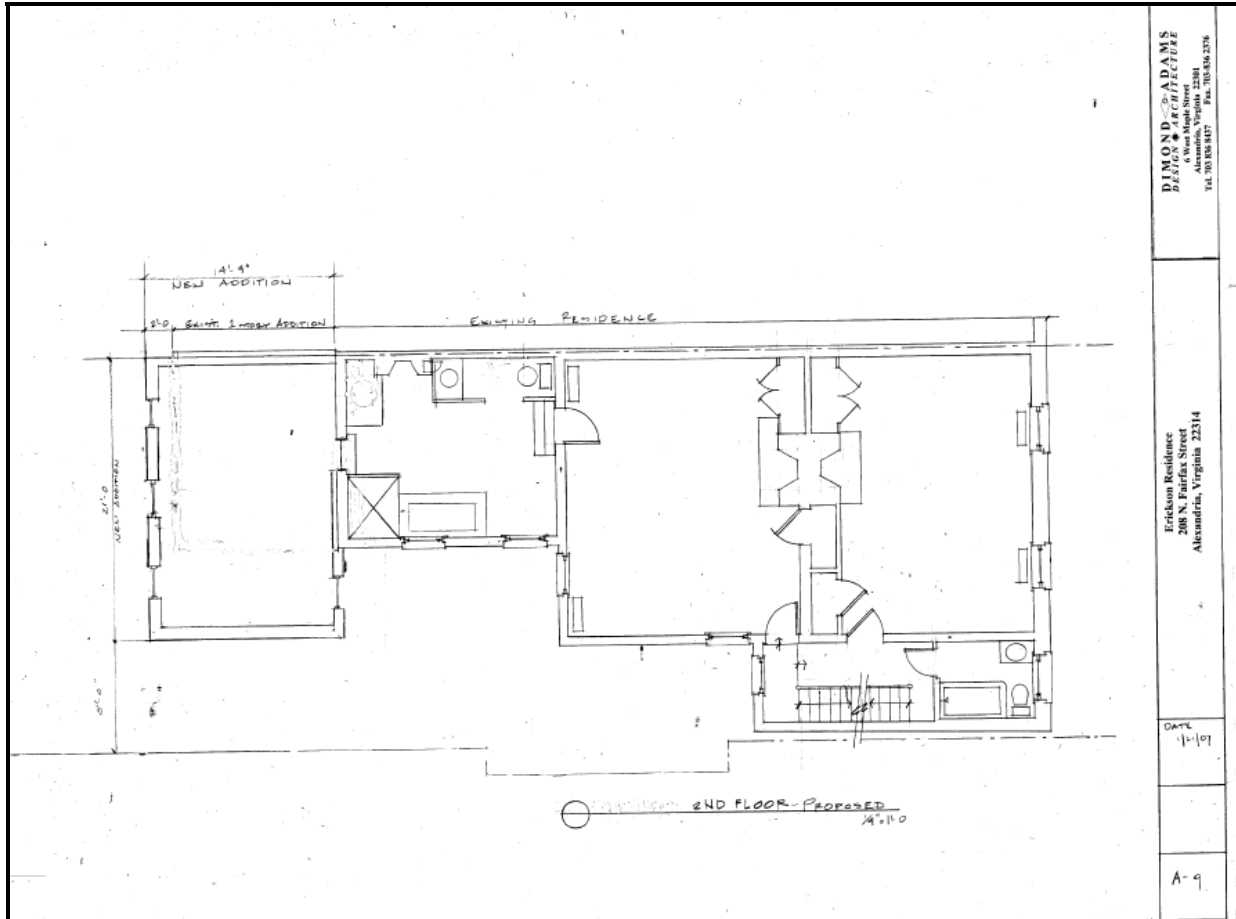


Figure 10: Proposed second floor