

Docket Item # 9
BAR CASE # 2009-0099

BAR Meeting
June 3, 2009

ISSUE: Addition
APPLICANT: Lewis and Associates LTD by Ray Lewis
LOCATION: 413 South Fairfax Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral of the application.

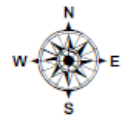
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that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



BAR CASE #2009-0098, 0099

6/3/2009



Note: The Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate, BAR Case #2009-0098, must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a two story addition at 413 South Fairfax Street. The applicant is constructing the addition, in part, in order to add an elevator which will provide access to the second floor of the house.

The proposed gable roof brick addition will measure approximately 17 feet by 17 feet and will be two stories in height. The addition will contain roughly 578 gross square feet of space and will be built on the north property line, with a 3 foot side yard to the south.

The east elevation of the addition will contain a double door with multi-light glazing on the upper half, under a multi-light transom. The second floor will contain a single six-over-six, double hung wood window. On the south elevation, the addition will have a bank of four double hung, six-over-six wood windows centered on both the first and second floors. The area of glazing will be 11 feet wide by 7 feet high on each level. Two skylights are proposed on the down slope of the roof. The west elevation of the addition will have two pair of wood multi-light French doors under multi-light transoms. The second floor will have a full height arched window surrounded by a sunburst window filling the gable end of the addition. The north elevation is being constructed on the property line and will have no openings. A built-in gutter will be constructed along this elevation to capture rainwater.

The brick addition will have an north-south sloping gable roof clad with standing seam metal. All of the doors and windows on the addition will have brick lintels, and the trim will be wood and the gutters and downspouts will be metal. The windows on the addition will be manufactured by Marvin and have insulated glass with fixed wood muntins.

The applicant has made a model of the proposed addition which will be available at the public hearing.

The alley behind the house is private. Portions of the addition will be slightly visible from the public right-of-way through breaks in the buildings.

II. HISTORY:

The three bay, two story Georgian style frame house at 413 South Fairfax Street has a two story rear ell and was built c. 1812 by Laughlin Masterson, according to Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street*. The house appears in its current configuration as early as 1877, when it is shown on the G.M. Hopkins City Atlas of Alexandria. The property owner believes that the front portion of the house was constructed in the 1820s. Staff conducted a site visit which confirms that the ell, which contains the kitchen, was added at a later date but before 1877. Staff's research of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicates that between 1896 and 1902 a one story outbuilding was constructed on the rear property line; however, that structure no longer exists. The alley behind the house is private.

Staff could locate only one BAR approval for the subject property and that was in 1972 when the BAR approved the “removal of ornamentation”.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition complies with the RM requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. In order to comply with the required open space for the RM zone the existing (and any future) HVAC equipment may not be located in required open space.

Staff met with the applicant and expressed concern about the form and fenestration of the proposed addition. The addition, while designed with a traditional gable roof, does not easily relate to the rear ell to which it is being added. The slope of the gable roof creates an awkward area on the north where a triangle of the ell will be exposed. While it is appropriate, and even encouraged, to differentiate new construction from historic fabric, Staff believes that the proposed gable roof addition may not be the most appropriate form. The Board recently approved a rear addition to a house with a similar rear ell (208 North Fairfax Street) where the first proposal was for a gable roofed addition which created too much mass at the rear of the house. At the suggestion of Staff, the applicant revised the addition to have a shed roof perpendicular to the ell; this may be a viable solution in this particular case.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that “the fenestration pattern, i.e. the relationship of solid to void, such as windows, doors, and walls, should be compatible with the fenestration pattern on the existing structure.” Staff believes that the addition’s fenestration, in particular the second story glazing on the rear elevation, is inappropriate and should be changed to more closely reflect the historic building’s fenestration pattern. In addition, the windows on the south elevation do not comply with Code Administration’s recommendation per the building code that openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface. The applicant has stated that a waiver will be obtained from Code Administration to allow fire rated windows on the south elevation.

While single-glazed, true-divided-light wood windows are preferable, the *Design Guidelines* and the Board generally allow for double-insulated, simulated-divided-light wood windows and doors on new construction or in areas with limited visibility, both of which apply in this case. The applicant has indicated that the proposed wood windows will be manufactured by Marvin and that they will have fixed and exposed muntins. The applicant has stated that the windows will be true-divided-lights, yet the plans describe the windows as having insulated glass. The muntin width is also not specified.

One of the issues raised by the applicant is the lack of visibility of the rear addition. Staff concurs that the public visibility will be limited to what can be seen from South Fairfax Street on either side of the house, which will be glimpses of the north and south elevations. The applicant has also raised the issue of compatibility with the existing rear additions visible from the private alley. Some of these additions, if they were visible, would likely not be approved by the BAR today. Staff did find evidence that the two most incompatible additions visible in the rear alley were actually approved by the BAR in 1970 and 1982.

While Staff recognizes that the new addition will be limited in its visibility from any public views, Staff believes that revisions to the design are possible in order to improve its compatibility and appropriateness to the original historic house, namely addressing the issues of the roof form and the fenestration pattern. Therefore, Staff recommends that the application be deferred to address the issues raised in the staff report.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application.

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 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-8 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-9 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-10 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-11 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 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)
- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-3 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R-4 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)
- R-5 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)
- R-6 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)
- F-1 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>

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records from the 19th century indicate that free African Americans were living on this property as early as 1825. The lot was part of the African American neighborhood known as Hayti. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in 19th-century Alexandria.
- 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 or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-3 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.

VI. IMAGES

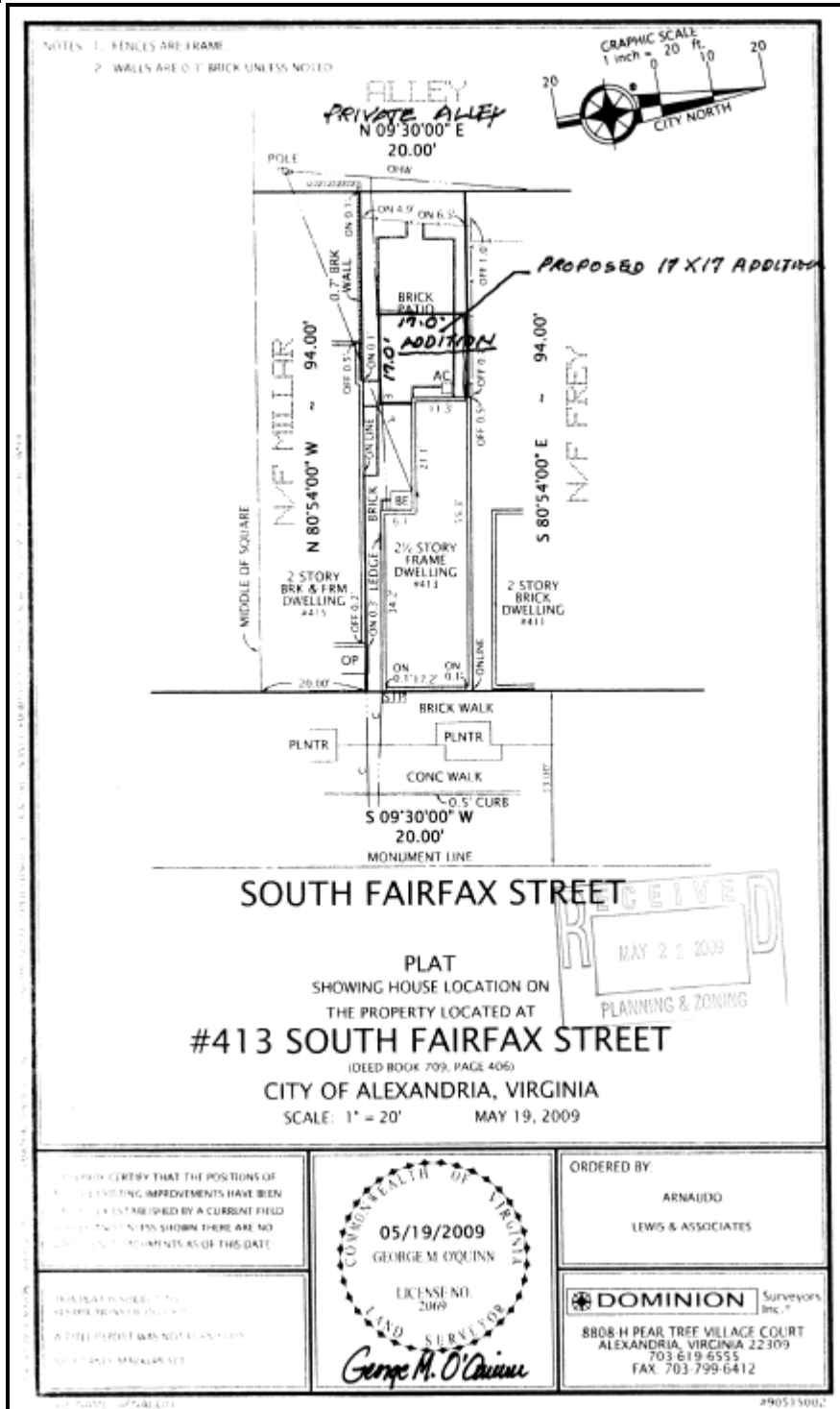


Figure 1: Plat showing addition footprint.



Figure 2: Site photos.

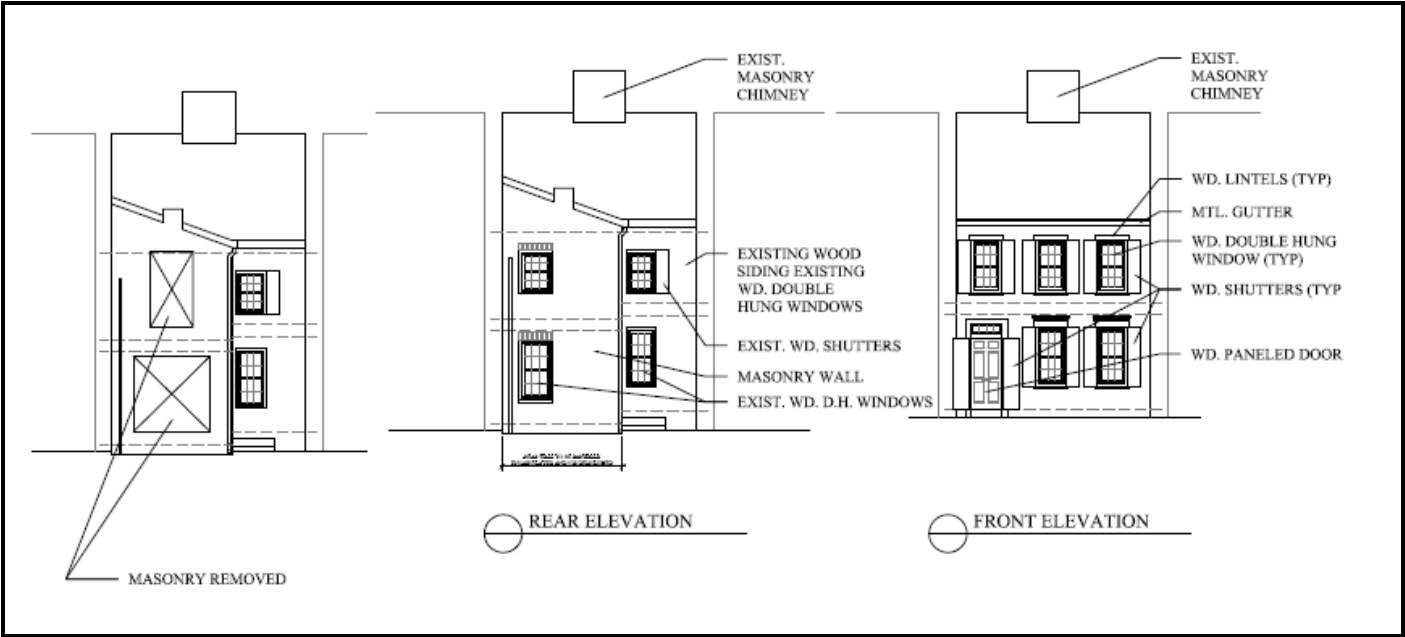


Figure 3: Existing elevations.

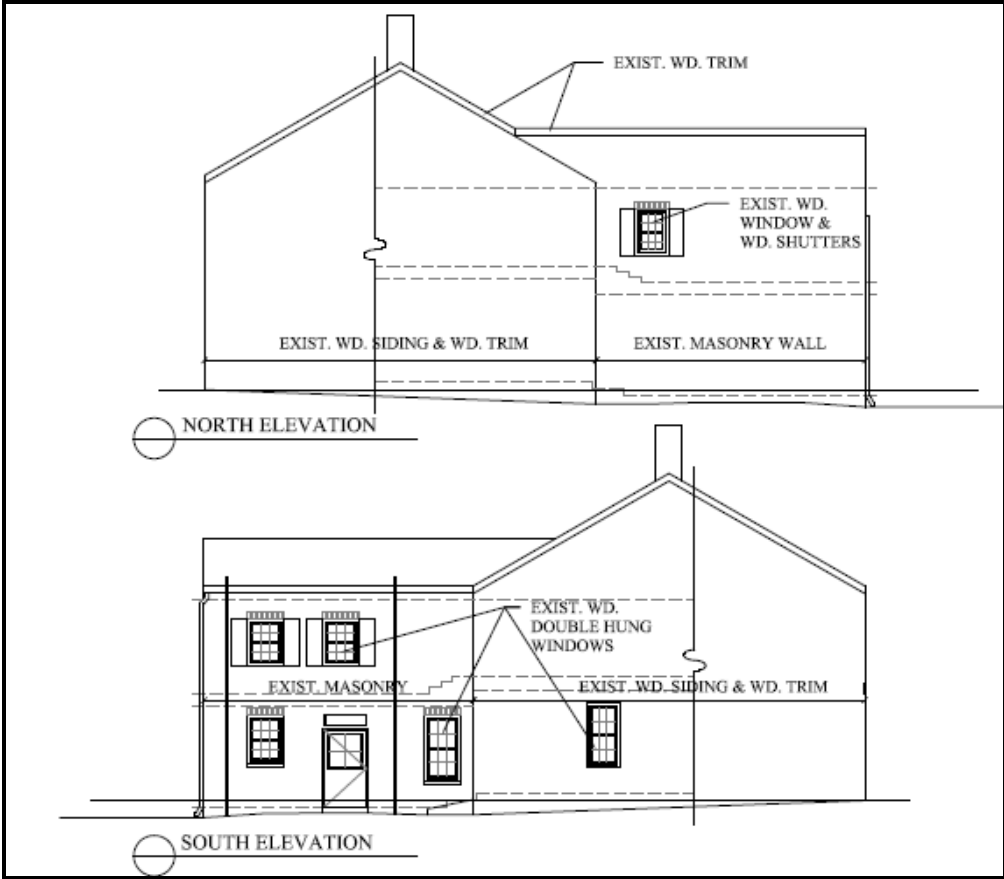


Figure 4: Existing elevations.

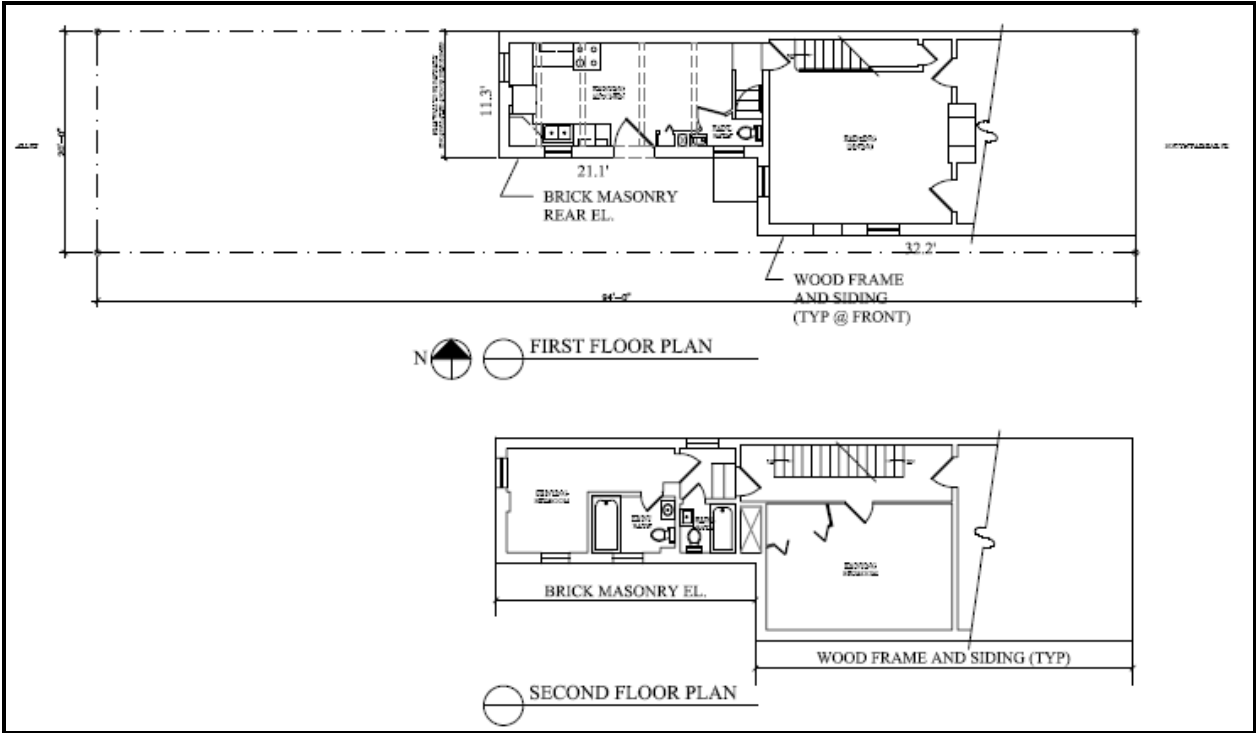


Figure 5: Existing floor plans.

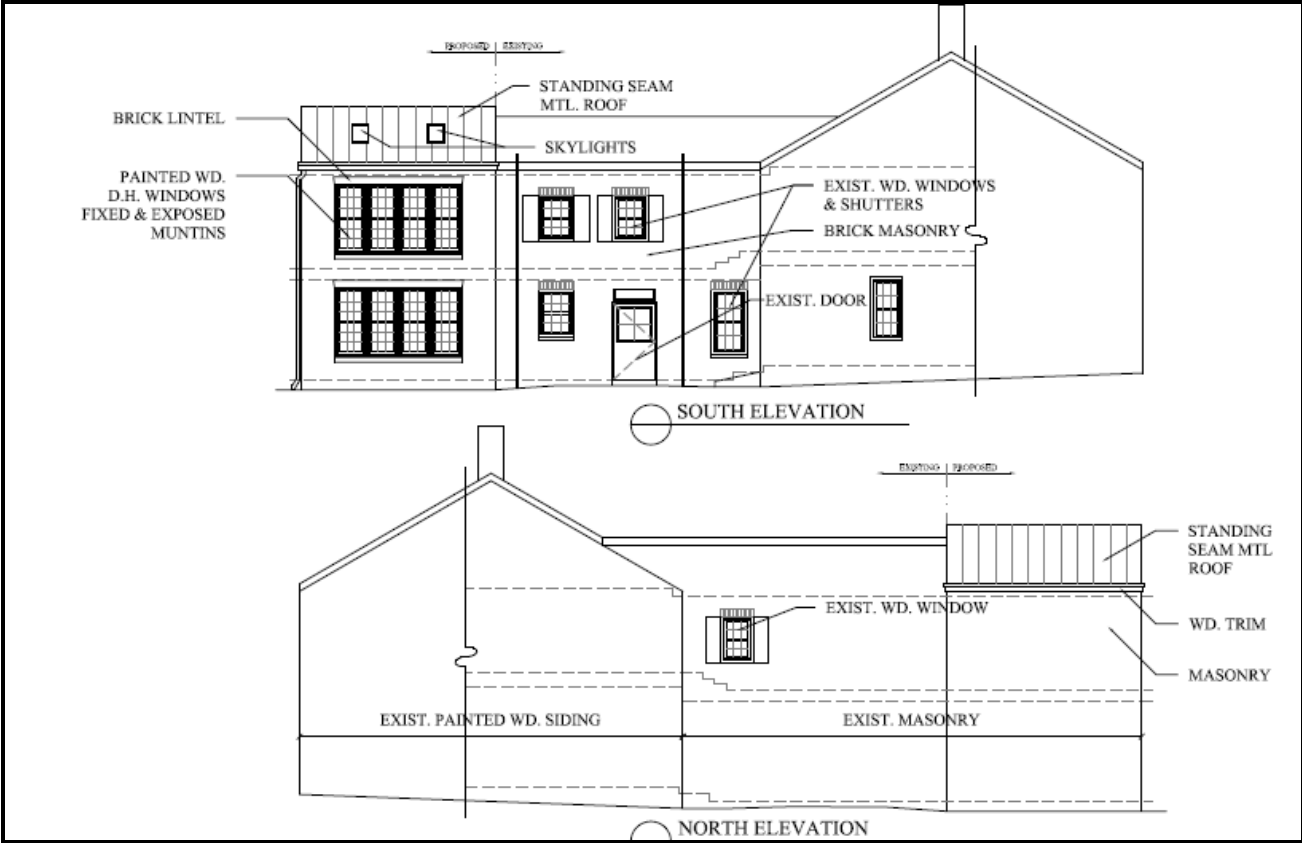


Figure 6: Proposed north and south elevations.

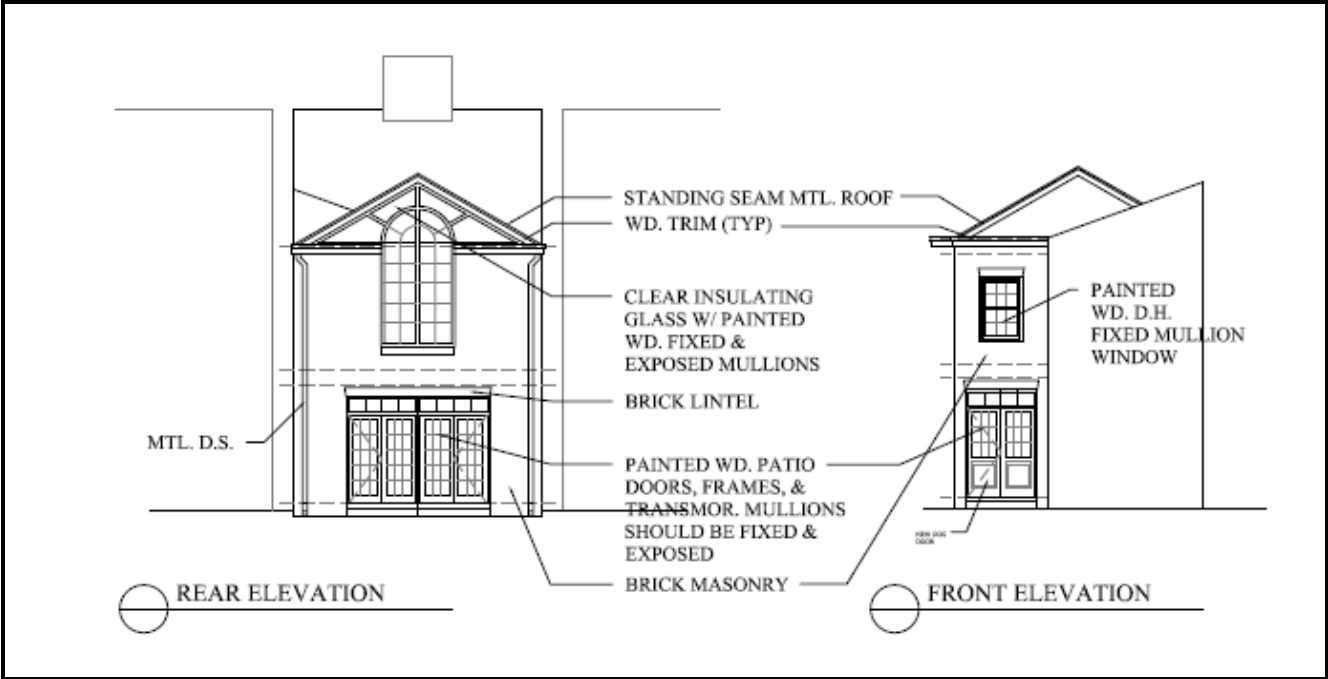


Figure 7: Proposed west (rear) elevation.

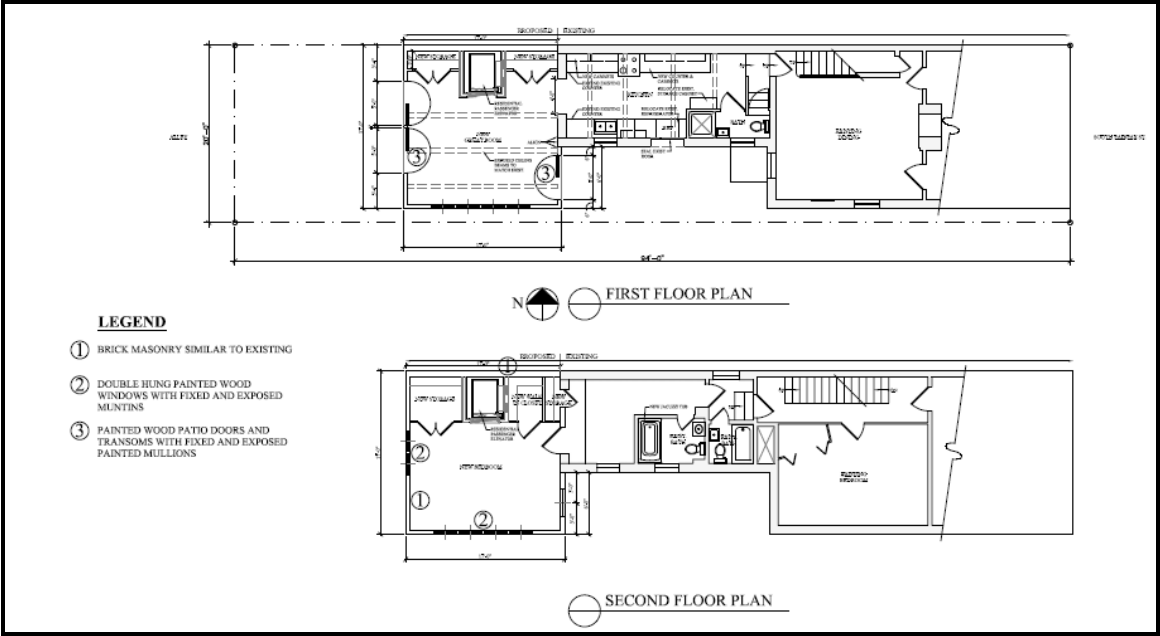


Figure 8: Proposed floor plans.