

Docket Item # 17
BAR CASE # 2009-0127

BAR Meeting
July 8, 2009

ISSUE: Addition and Alterations
APPLICANT: Cathleen Cotell by Stephanie Dimond
LOCATION: 607 South Fairfax Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

1. That nightshades are installed on the skylights to prevent external light seepage.
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.
3. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
4. 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.

****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 #2009-0126 & 0127 7/8/2009



Note: The Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate, BAR Case #2009-0126, 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 rear addition and alterations at 607 South Fairfax Street. The proposed addition will measure approximately 14.75 feet in width (slightly less than the width of the existing house) by 18.25 feet in depth.

West (rear) Elevation

The west (rear) elevation of the addition will have a pair of French doors (wood with simulated divided lights) flanked by two simple light fixtures with wood steps and a wood railing leading to the rear yard. The AC unit will be relocated under these stairs. Also on the first floor will be a pair of wood casement windows with simulated divided lights with wood paneling below. A Bilco hatch (metal) will also be installed to provide access to the basement. The Bilco hatch will be less than two feet above grade and will slope to grade. At the second story will be three simulated divided light, double-hung, wood windows. Above the center window, will be a through-the-cornice dormer. The dormer will have wood trim and a six-light, simulated divided light, wood window. The siding will be wood and will match the existing wood siding on the main block. The roof will be standing seam metal and will match the existing roof. The foundation on the addition will be brick to match the existing brick foundation. A new metal gutter and downspout will be installed to match the existing.

South (side) elevation

The south (side) elevation will have two, six-over-six, simulated divided light, double-hung wood windows, one on each story. The first story will also have a six-light, simulated divided light wood awning window. The wood trim and operable wood shutters will match the existing house. The existing wood garden gate in the brick wall on the south property line will be relocated approximately 25 feet west, toward the rear of the property.

North (side) elevation

The north (side) elevation will have no openings. The siding and trim will be wood and will match that on the existing house.

Roof

A new gable roof, perpendicular to the gable roof on the main block and to the gable roof on the proposed addition, will connect the two portions over the existing rear element. The proposed new roof will be standing seam metal, to match the existing, and will have two small skylights.

Materials

The siding on the addition will be wood and will match the existing siding. The proposed windows and doors on the new south elevation will be manufactured by Loewen. The double-hung wood windows will be double glazed, with simulated divided lights and an interior spacer bar. The muntin bars will measure $\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide. Wood screens are standard on Loewen wood windows. The French doors will also be simulated divided lights with $\frac{3}{4}$ " muntin bars. The exterior light fixtures are the Woodside Hills Outdoor Wall Sconce and will have a black metal

finish and seeded glass. Each scone measures approximately 8 by 19.75 by 11.25 inches. The standing seam metal roof will be a hand-crimped painted metal as opposed to pre-finished. The roof will match the existing standing seam metal roof.

The pedestrian alley beside the house is private. Portions of the addition will be minimally visible from South Fairfax and Gibbon streets.

II. HISTORY:

The two-bay, two-story frame house with a gable roof at 607 South Fairfax Street has a two-story rear portion with a one-story enclosed porch. Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street* dates the clapboard building to the early nineteenth century. The house appears as early as 1877 on historic maps, where it is shown on the G.M. Hopkins *City Atlas of Alexandria*. The current configuration, with a two-story rear portion with a one-story porch, first appears on the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

Staff located only one BAR application for the subject property and that was in 1985. Records indicate the application was withdrawn.

The alley beside the house is private.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition complies with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The AC unit is proposed to be relocated under the stairs on the addition. Should the applicant propose to relocate the AC to a different location, all zoning and open space requirements must be met.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition is appropriate and compatible with the two-story townhouse at 607 South Fairfax Street and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. The design of the addition is compatible in style, material and fenestration with the existing townhouse. The form and massing of the addition expresses the “prevailing shape” of the original building, a gable roof form, as discussed in the *Guidelines*. While the addition introduces a new mass into the rear yard of the property, it retains the integrity of the historic portion of the house and reads as secondary to the existing townhouse due to its location. Further, the proposed addition will be differentiated from the existing house by a slight offset, by the application of a vertical trimboard separation between the addition and existing house, and by the gable roof form. The fenestration on the south (side) elevation is compatible with the fenestration on the existing house, and will likely be the only portion of the addition visible from the public right-of-way. The fenestration on the rear is less traditional, but is still considered appropriate and consistent with the *Design Guidelines* for an addition. Due to the limited visibility of the rear (west) elevation, Staff anticipates that only the dormer will be visible. While the new roof over the existing rear portion is higher and more substantial than the existing shed roof, Staff finds it acceptable in this circumstance as it remains lower than the ridge of the gable on the main block as well as provides for a cohesive connection between the old and new.

Windows, Doors and Shutters

While single-glazed, true divided light, wood windows are preferable, the *Design Guidelines* and the Board generally allow for double-glazed, simulated divided light, wood windows and doors

on new construction or in areas with limited visibility. Staff also does not object to the use of casement windows on the south elevation. The Loewen window specifications submitted by the applicant state that the double-hung windows come with an exterior fiberglass sill. The applicant contacted the Loewen window representative and confirmed that *all* exterior features of the wood windows, including the sill, are constructed of wood and that the fiberglass sill is provided on the aluminum clad windows only.

The installation of operable wood shutters is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* and will contribute to compatibility between the addition and the existing townhouse.

The proposed basement Bilco hatch will be constructed of metal. Staff finds that metal doors are acceptable for this feature due its utilitarian nature and complete lack of visibility.

Skylights

The *Guidelines* note that “skylights should be located on the least visually prominent section of the roof” and that “low or flat profile glass skylights are preferred.” The proposed skylights are relatively modest in size and will be minimally, if at all, visible from the public right-of-way. In addition, the proposed skylights will be flat. The *Guidelines* also note that “skylights must have integral shades that should be used at nighttime to reduce seepage of light visible from the exterior.” Staff recommends that nightshades be installed.

Dormer

The *Design Guidelines* note that “the style of the dormer should be appropriate to the architectural style of the existing structure” and that “dormer sashes should be operable and should be the same type as the other window sashes on the structure.” Staff finds that the proposed single attic dormer is appropriate.

Materials

The selection of materials on the proposed addition contributes to compatibility with the existing historic townhouse. The use of matching brick at the foundation and matching wood siding on the addition is appropriate. Regarding roofing materials, the *Guidelines* recommend that “new and replacement roofs should be made of material appropriate to the period of significance of the structure.” The proposed standing seam metal roof is appropriate.

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that nightshades be installed on the skylights. Staff also recommends the inclusion of Alexandria Archaeology’s comments.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted with the following conditions:

1. That nightshades are installed on the skylights to prevent external light seepage.
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.

3. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
4. 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 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:

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)
- R6. 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)

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>

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology Finding

1. Historic Maps indicate that there was a structure on this property at least by the late 19th century and Ethelyn Cox in Historic Alexandria, Virginia Street by Street, states that the standing structure dates to “probably early 19th C..” (1976:51). The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities in 19th-century Alexandria.

Archaeology 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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VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Front (east) elevation of 607 South Fairfax Street (left).



Figure 2. Rear (west) elevation showing existing one-story enclosed porch to be demolished.



Figure 3. Rear (west) elevation.



Figure 4. Side (south) elevation.

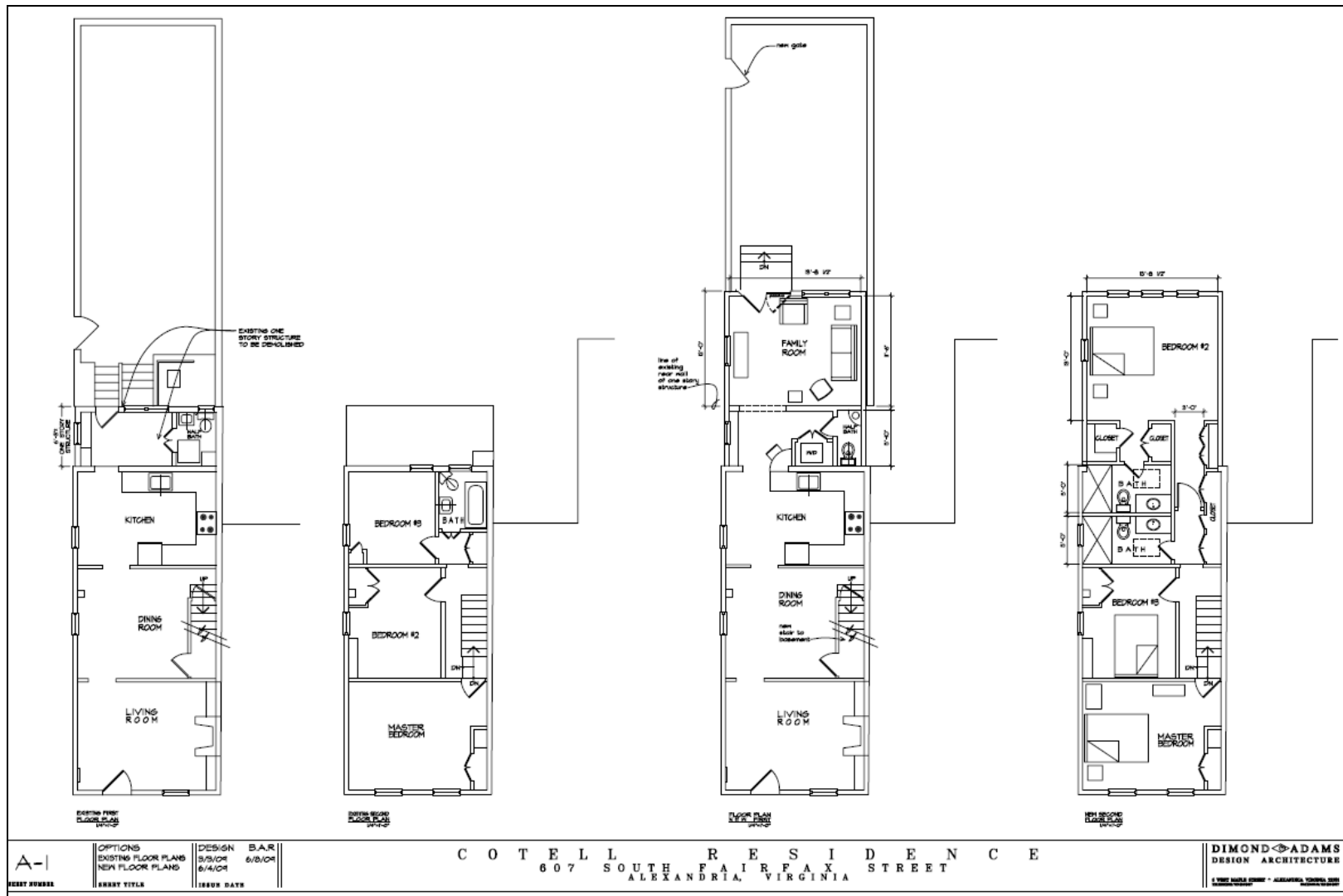


Figure 5. Existing and proposed plans.

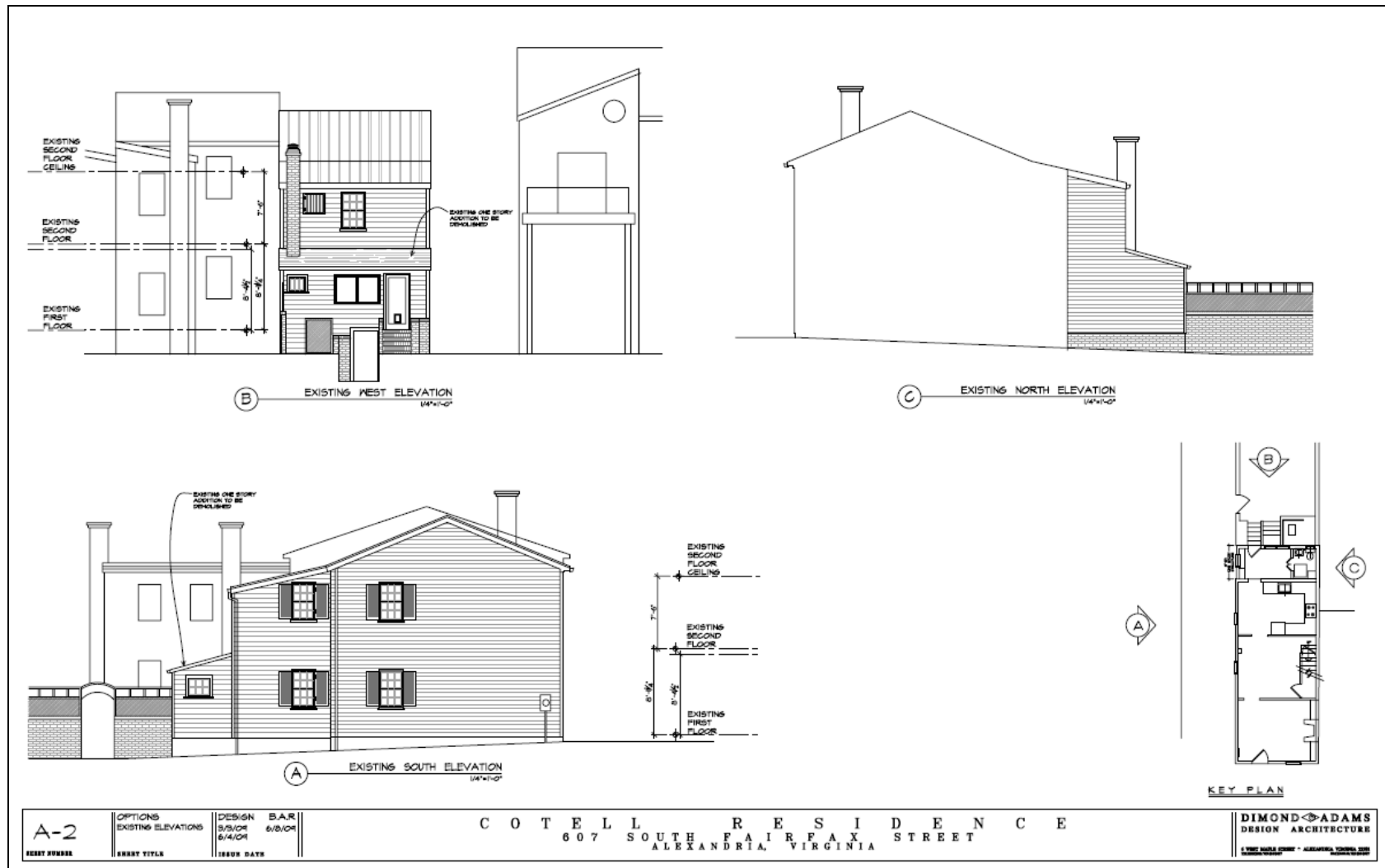


Figure 6. Existing elevations.

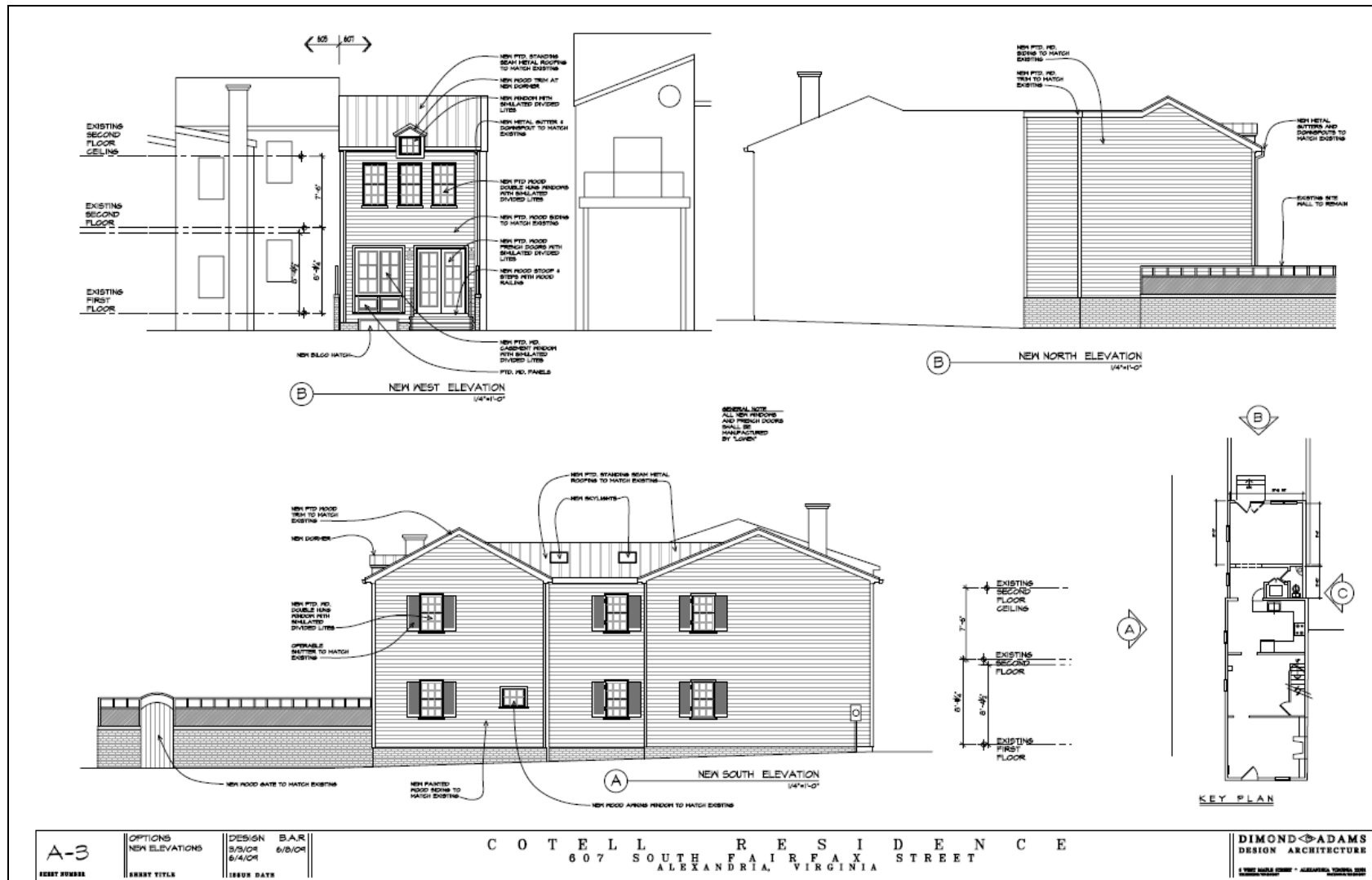


Figure 7. Proposed elevations.