

Docket Items # 9 & 10
BAR CASE # 2009-0243 & 0245

BAR Meeting
November 4, 2009

ISSUE: Additions/Alterations and Waiver of HVAC Screening Requirement
APPLICANT: William Cromley, Applicant
LOCATION: 227 South Fairfax Street
ZONE: RM/ Residential Townhouse Zone

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

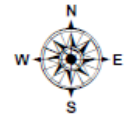
1. That the window being converted to a door on the south ell will retain its jack arch and the original width of the opening.
2. That the bricks being removed for the installation of the door on the south ell will be used, where possible, for the masonry infill required for the door to window conversion on the south ell.
3. That the statements in archaeology conditions below 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.
 - 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.
 - The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

****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, 703-746-4200 for further information



BAR CASE #2009-0242, 0243, 0245 11/4/2009



Note: The Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate (BAR Case #2009-0242) must be approved before this case can be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness and a Waiver of the Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement at 227 South Fairfax Street. The Certificate of Appropriateness proposes alterations to the house and landscape. The proposed alterations include:

House-General:

- Rehabilitate all existing historic windows on the building by removing excess paint, repainting, re-installing sash cords and weights, and remove and replace glazing putty, as necessary.
- Construct a new, one-story conservatory addition with monitor on the existing foundation of the c1974 addition (proposed to be demolished). The conservatory is to be constructed with wood Doric pilasters and a prominent wood, built-up cornice detailed with a flat seam copper gutter, simulated divided light casement windows and French doors with 7/8" wood muntins, and a rustic horizontal, gray stone base.

Greek Revival Main Block:

- Reconstruct the front (east) entry surround to a c1850 Greek revival style. Reconstruction's design is per photographic evidence. Reconstruction to include returning the front entry to a recessed entry, installing a painted wood, seven (7) light transom, a pair of painted wood, three (3) light sidelights, a pair of painted wood brackets, and a set of raised panel wood doors.
- New lighting in soffit behind entry cornice in vestibule will not be visible as it will be recessed within the tall ceiling.

South Ell:

- Conversion of an existing window opening by installing a painted raised-panel, solid wood door and true divided light, three-light transom.
- Installation of a new lantern-type fixture flanking the left side of the new door opening (see detail on drawing A03).
- Construct a new brick stoop and install a new, painted metal handrail to access to the new entry door.
- Conversion of an existing door opening to a window (new wood true divided light, window and sill fabricated to match the existing windows). Remove existing brick stoop. Install infill brick to match existing.
- Construct a five foot (5') by three foot (3') brick storage shed with wood batten doors and a standing seam copper roof.

Landscape

- South courtyard: Construct a 3.5' high, wood pyramidal picket fence

HVAC -Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement

- Installation of two HVAC unit on the roof of the main block - will be partially screened from Public right-of-way due to existing parapet wall.

II. HISTORY:

Note: This historic context was developed based on deed and title research and a site survey. As research and rehabilitation continues on the building, this context might be revised based on additional physical evidence.

This brick dwelling is an example of the evolution of a prominent Alexandria city house. It is believed that the house began as an early 1800s, 1-1/2 story outbuilding. The form of this original structure was absorbed into the two-story extension, as the two central bays of its first floor. The original structural timbers and whitewash on the interior are the only visible surviving features (Period 1).

After the four foot (4') alley along the northern property line was abandoned, it appears that this outbuilding was extended an additional five feet to the north (Period 2). Documentation of this footprint increase is visible in the interior kitchen where an exterior brick wall is recessed into the kitchen approximately five feet (5') from the current exterior wall. It is most likely during this time period when this building was raised to its full second-story height.

An addition onto the outbuilding's southern elevation is believed to be the third period of construction. Original surviving features in this massing include a box stair and wide plank floors which are indicative of early 1800s construction (Period 3).

The main massing of this house which faces South Fairfax Street was built in the Greek Revival style by George Plain, a prosperous house and sign painter about 1851-53 (Period 4). Surviving exterior and interior details remain, some of which include elongated windows, operable window panels, the entry entablature with its simple, yet stately Doric columns, and the wide denticulated cornice.

After the sale of the home to Mr. John McLean, a wealthy fish and oyster merchant in 1870, it is believed that a two-bay hyphen was added to join the two buildings together and the "outbuilding" was converted into living quarters, as it is documented that Mr. Mclean was listed as having his mother move in with him during this period (the house's footprint is completed by the 1877 Hopkins Map-Period 5).

In the mid-1970s, a major transformation to the house occurred. The Greek Revival details were stripped from the interior and exterior of the building to make the house more "Federal" in style. This included demolishing the recessed entry and its transom window on the front elevation and replacing it with a six-panel door and fanlight, adding elaborate trimwork in the interior, erecting a

brick wall to enclose the southern courtyard and constructing a new, one-story, family room addition in the interior northern courtyard (Period 6).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition, alterations and rooftop A/C unit installation comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

It is the opinion of Staff, that the design of the addition is compatible in style and massing to the historic house, and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. In keeping with the recommendations contained in the *Guidelines*, the addition is designed as a background building "...which allow historic structures to maintain the primary visual importance" and "echo the design elements of the existing structure." Demolishing the current contemporary c1970s addition's walls and roof to construct a conservatory building provides an opportunity to have an existing, contemporary non-compatible addition reconfigured into a structure which is stylistically more compatible with the dominant architectural style of the building and with the historic district's streetscape. Conservatories are typical building forms that can be seen on high-style architecture throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The proposed design, scale, and details being proposed for this new structure are complementary to the house's dominant Greek Revival style. These details include Doric pilasters, monitors/cupolas, prominent cornice profiles and divided-light wood windows and doors - materials to complement the high-style features and architectural details on the main dwelling. Additionally, since the structure will be utilizing the existing foundation and the height of the previous c1970s addition as the benchmark for the new addition, the conservatory's form will not negatively impact any original exterior building fabric. The proposed monitor to be installed in the center of the conservatory's roof will project an additional two feet six inches (2'6") above the ridgeline. Finally, the addition will be sited within the formal garden/courtyard a typical location for this building form.

The *Design Guidelines* dictate that "a large number of architectural styles are represented in the buildings in the historic districts and each style incorporates distinctive doorways and surrounding architectural elements. Care should be taken that the character-defining features of these doorways are maintained." The applicant's specifications for the reconstruction of the Greek Revival door surround are expertly detailed and in accordance with standard preservation practices for reconstruction. Based on historic photo documentation of the original door surround and physical evidence on the property (the delineation in the floor boards which documents the original location of the recessed entry), the proposed reconstruction design for the door, sidelight, and transom will replace these documented character defining-features and restore the integrity that was lost when these non-sympathetic alterations were implemented. Staff commends the applicant's willingness to undertake the very labor intensive reconstruction of this significant architectural feature.

The applicant's request to convert an existing door opening to a window opening and a window opening to a door on the south ell was initially a concern for staff. However after site visits, the current physical evidence suggests that there have been alterations to this elevation. Staff finds that the proposal will not negatively impact the integrity of the resource as a whole, and considers the

interchangeability of a door to a window while retaining the opening widths, the jack arches, and re-using existing brick for the masonry repair, where possible, a typical evolution for a building and a minor change to this secondary elevation. Staff supports this requested change.

Finally, the applicant is proposing to construct a new, wood 3-1/2 foot high, pyramidal picket fence to enclose the southern courtyard. This fence design has been modeled after photo documentation of the house during the late 1960s. Staff feels that this design is consistent with the current Greek Revival architectural style of the main massing and also promotes the visibility of the previously obstructed view of this c1850s side (south) elevation.

The proposed addition, and the rehabilitation/reconstruction projects are modest in massing, scale and design, while maintaining original historic fabric and are complementary to, without competing with, the architectural style of the existing historic house as recommended in the *Design Guidelines*.

Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement

Staff finds the proposed placement of the HVAC equipment will be minimally, if at all, visible from South Fairfax Street or Duke Street. Additionally, it was recommended by staff to analyze the roof's structural system to ensure it can support the additional weight of the condenser units without requiring an alteration to its structural system. Based on the attached structural analysis (page 21), the condensers being sited on the roof will not negatively impact to the structural integrity of the historic resource. Staff recommends approval of the waiver.

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

1. That the window being converted to a door on the south ell will retain its jack arch and the original width of the opening.
2. That the bricks being removed for the installation of the door on the south ell will be used, where possible, for the masonry infill required for the door to window conversion on the south ell.
3. That the statements in archaeology conditions below 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.
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in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

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

STAFF:

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Stephen Milone, Division Chief, Zoning and Land Use Services

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:

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

Code Administration:

- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 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-3 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-4 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.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology Finding:

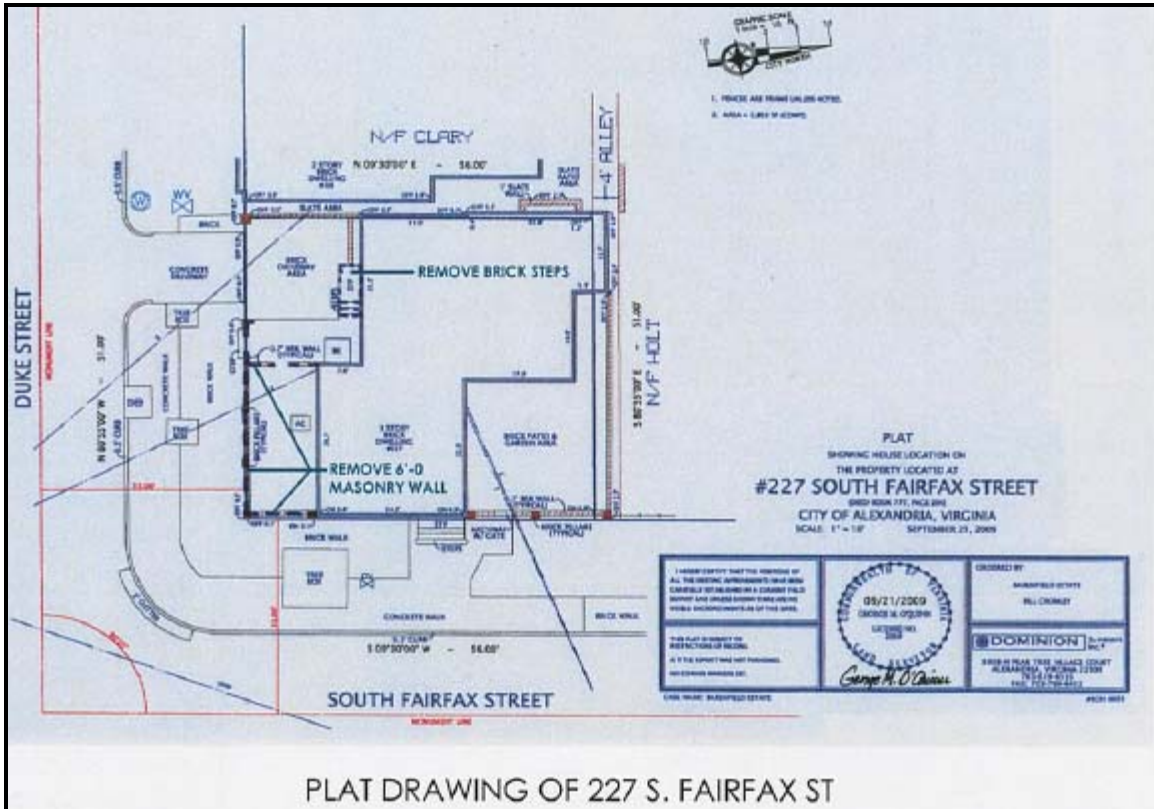
Historical research indicates a possibility that there was a free African American household on this corner in 1790. There were structures present on the street face in the 18th century, and by 1830, tax records note the presence of a house at the corner of Duke and Fairfax streets. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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

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:



PLAT DRAWING OF 227 S. FAIRFAX ST
Figure 1: Plat showing Proposed Changes

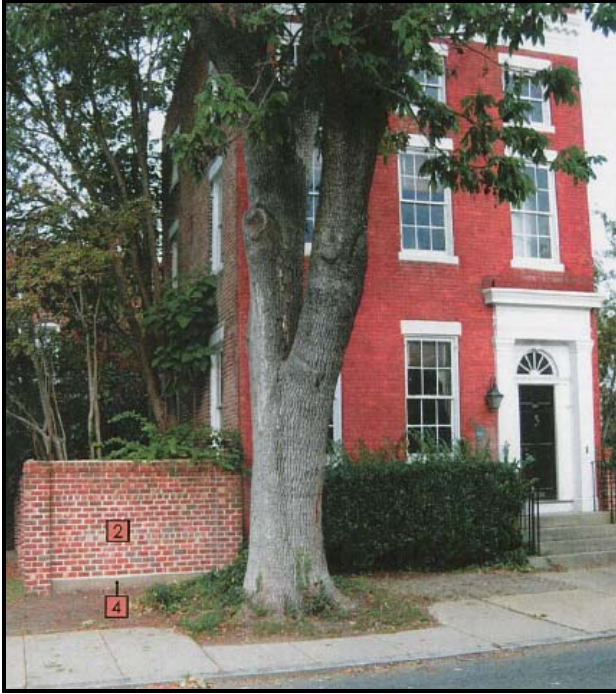


Figure 2: Existing Conditions – Front Facade

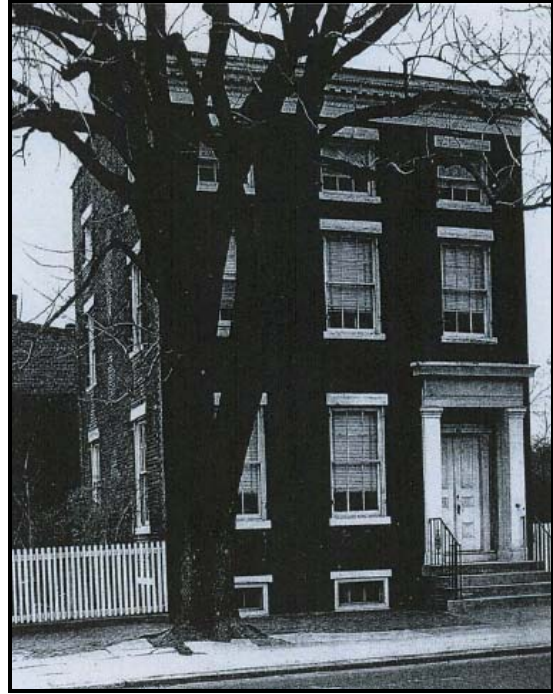


Figure 3: c1967 Photo of Front Facade



Figure 4: Proposed Changes to Fairfax Street Elevation (Front Façade)

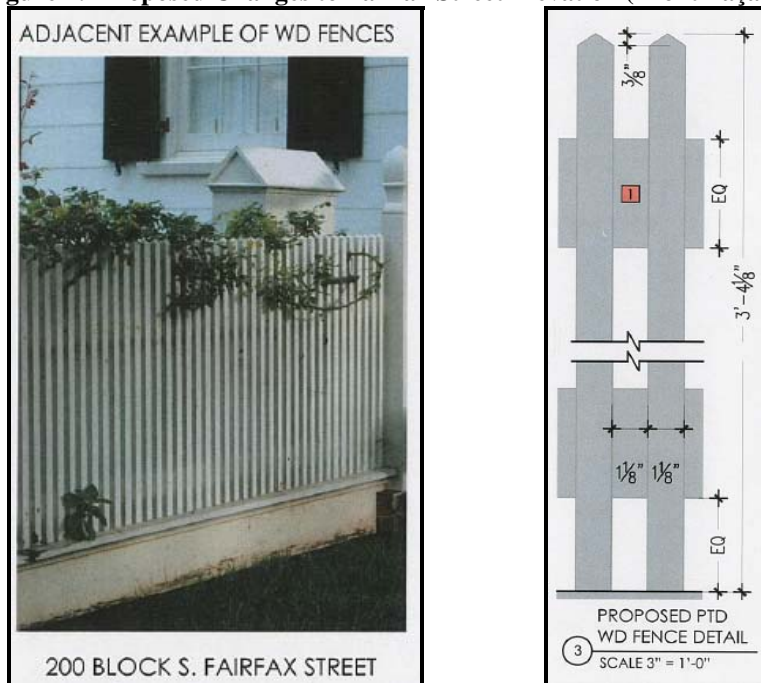


Figure 5: Proposed Pyramidal Fence to enclose south courtyard



Figure 6: Existing Front Entry and Surround

Figure 7: c1967 Front Entry and Surround



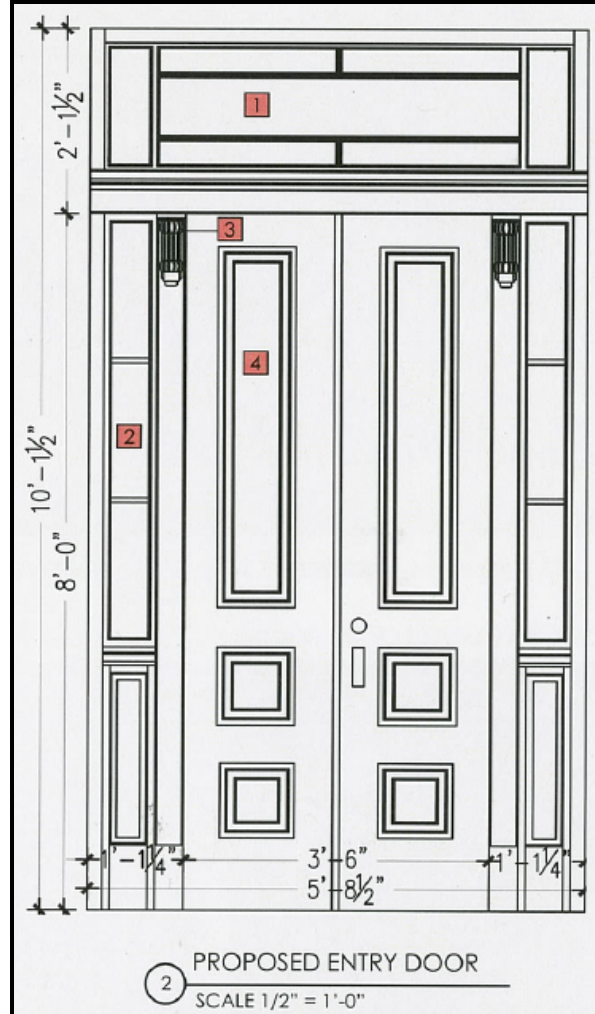
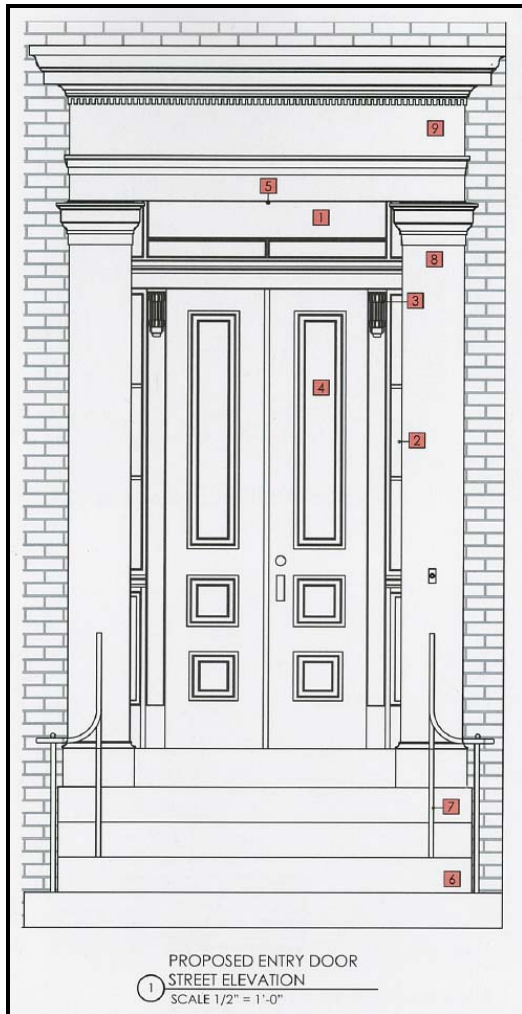


Figure 8: Proposed Changes to Front Entry

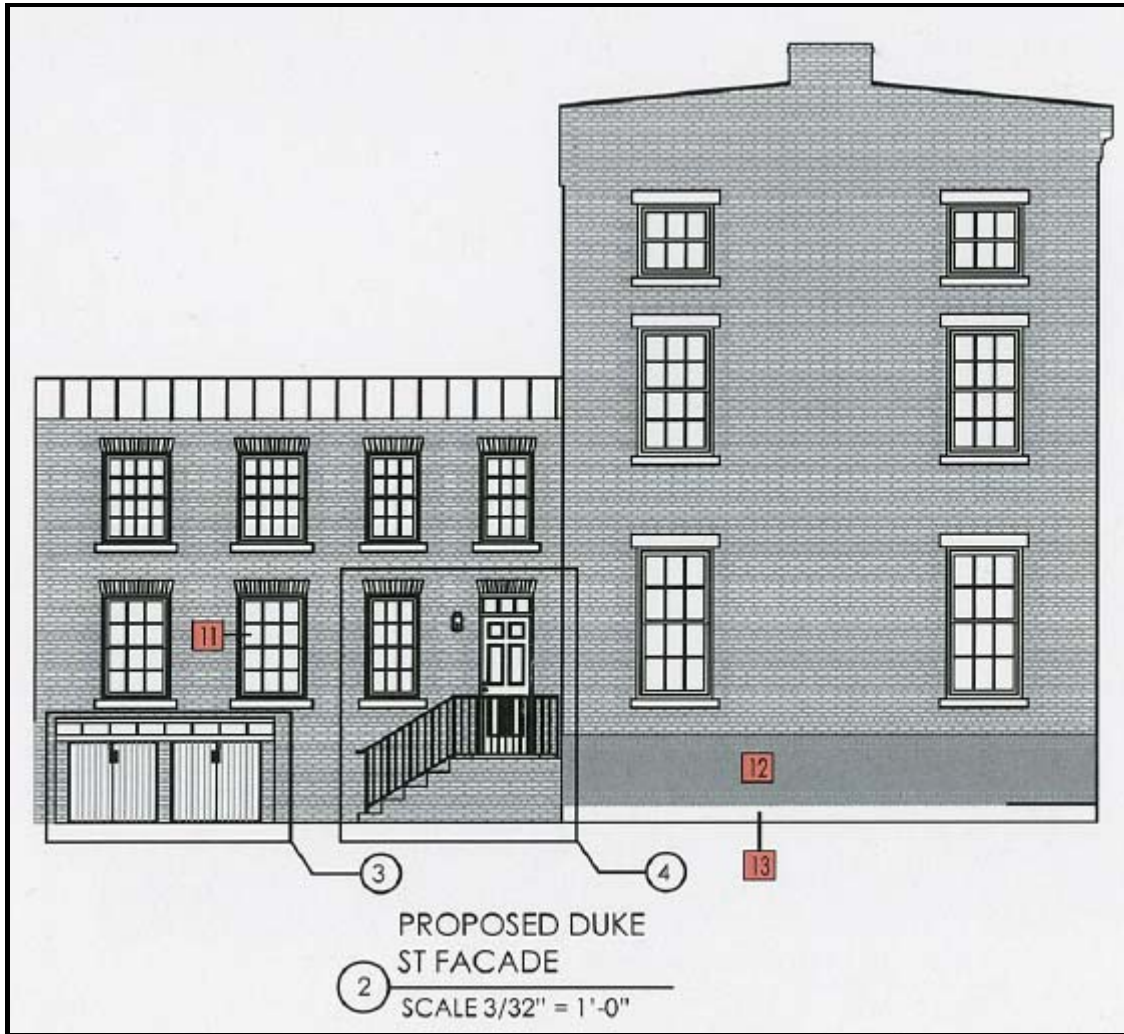


Figure 9: Proposed Changes – Duke Street Elevation

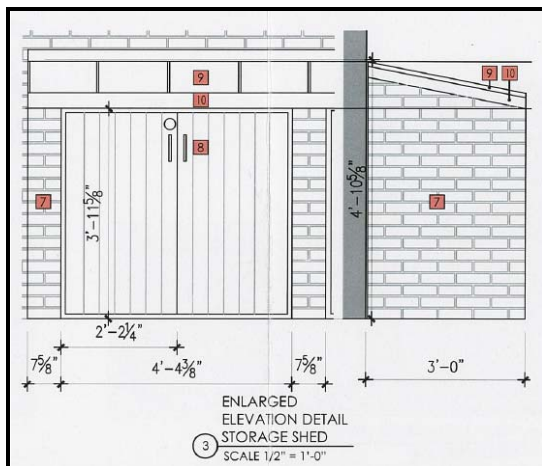


Figure 10: Storage Shed Detail

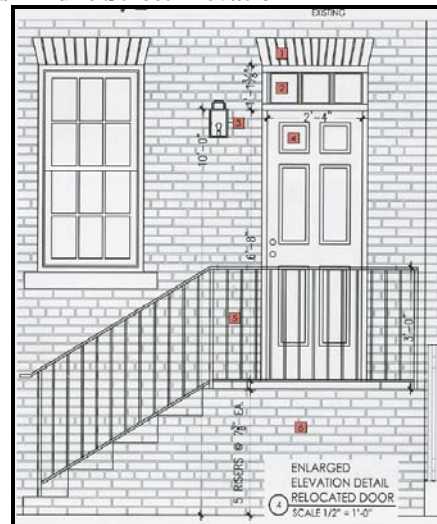


Figure 11: Relocated Door Detail

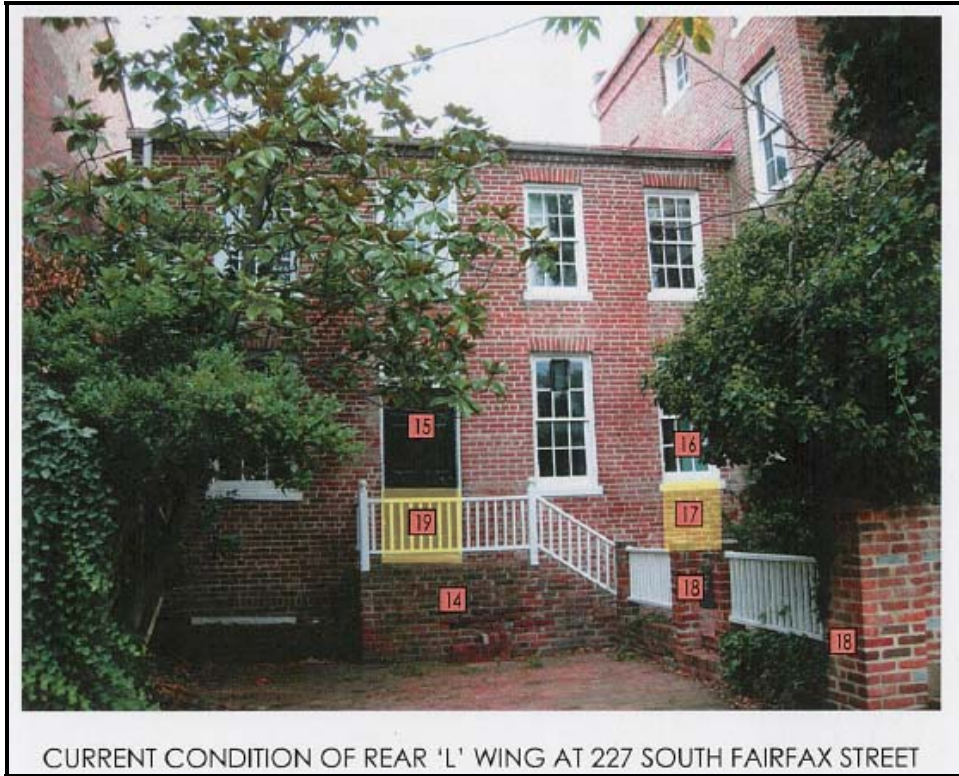


Figure 12: Existing Conditions - Duke Street Elevation

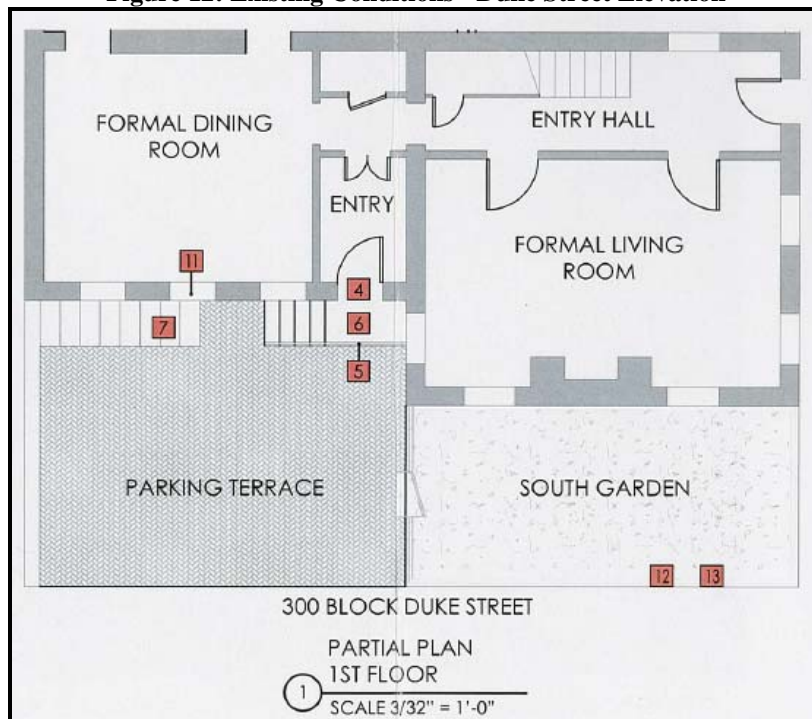


Figure 13: Proposed Floor Plan



Figure 14: Proposed Changes to Fairfax Street Elevation (Front Façade)

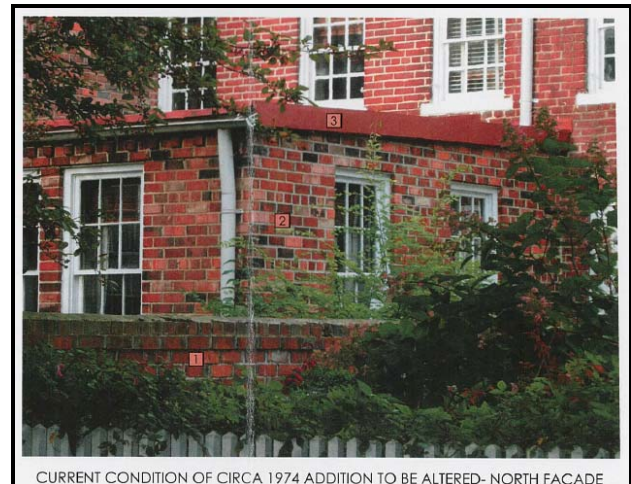
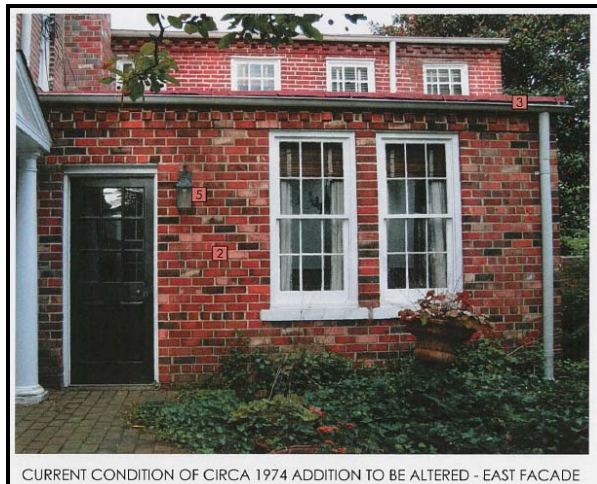


Figure 15: Existing conditions c1970s addition

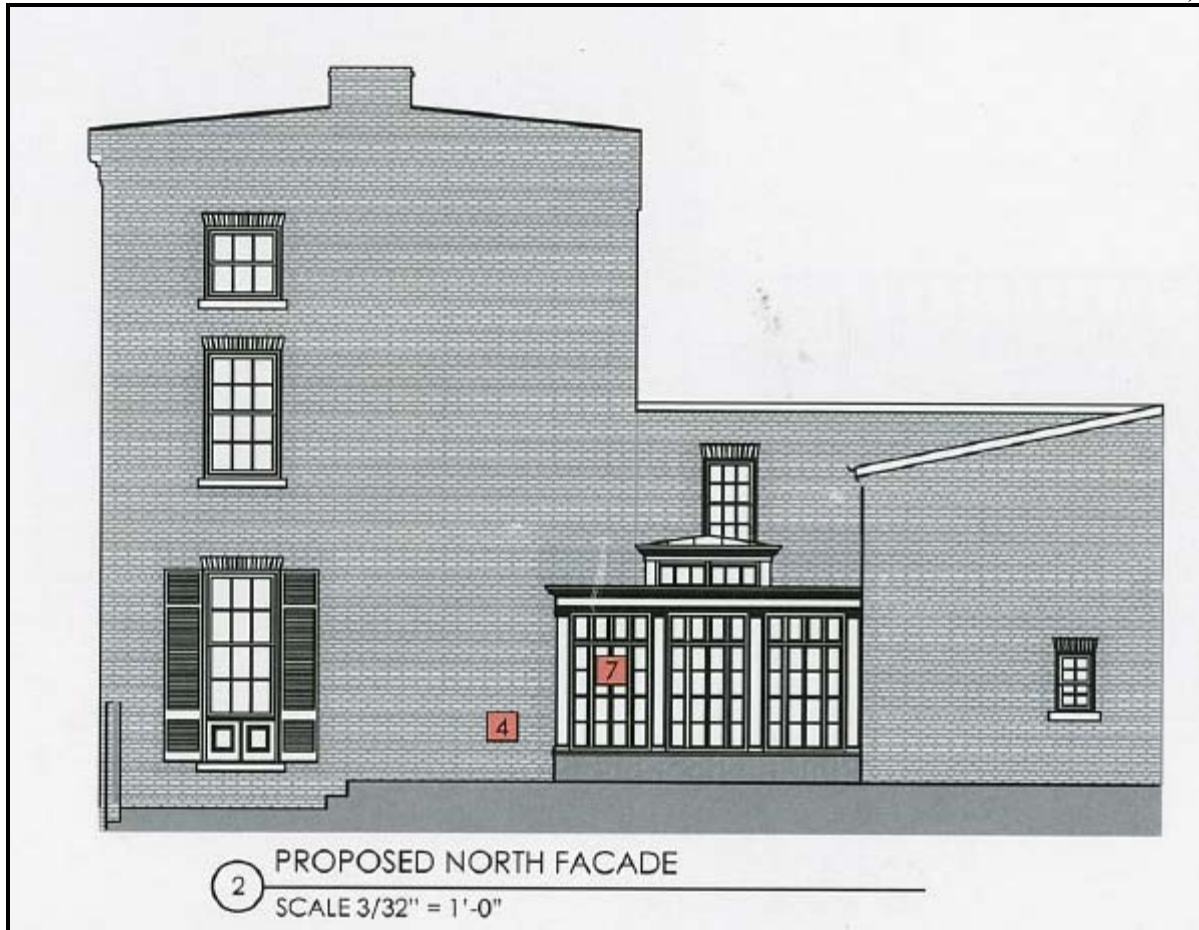


Figure 16: Proposed Changes – North Elevation



Figure 17: Proposed c1970s Folly to be demolished

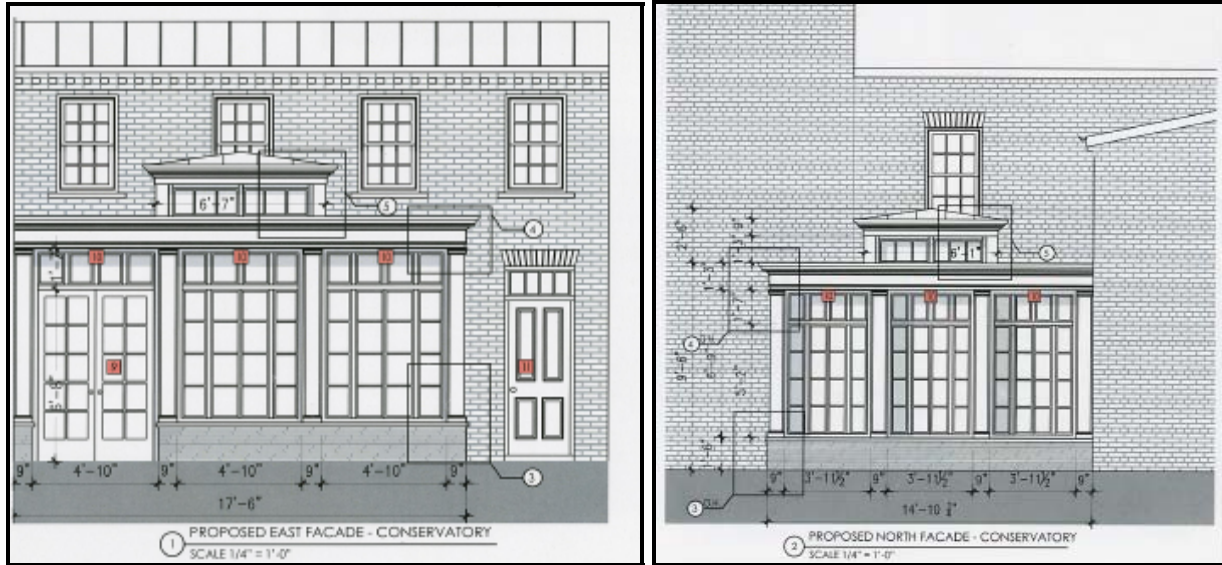


Figure 18: Proposed Conservatory Addition

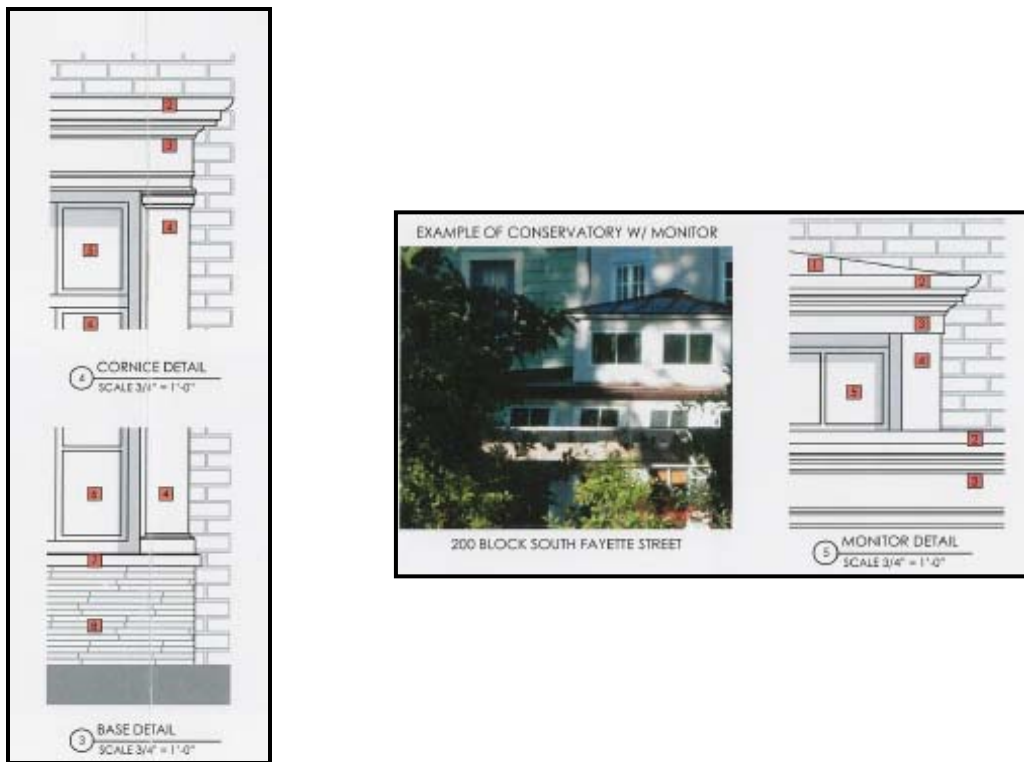


Figure 19: Detail Drawings for Conservatory Addition

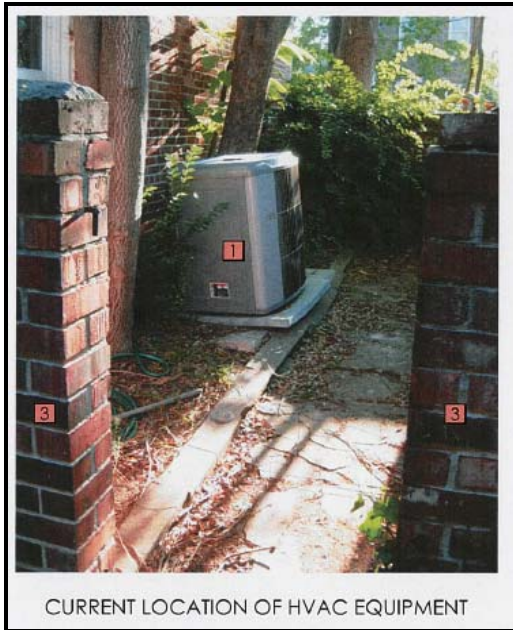


Figure 20: HVAC - Existing conditions

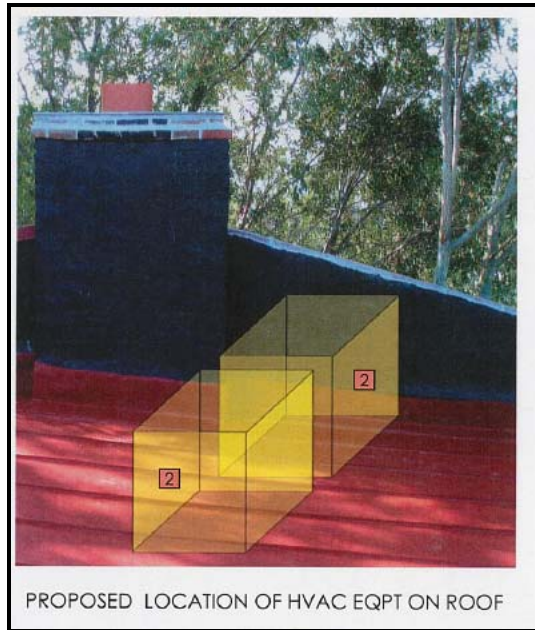


Figure 21: HVAC – Proposed Location

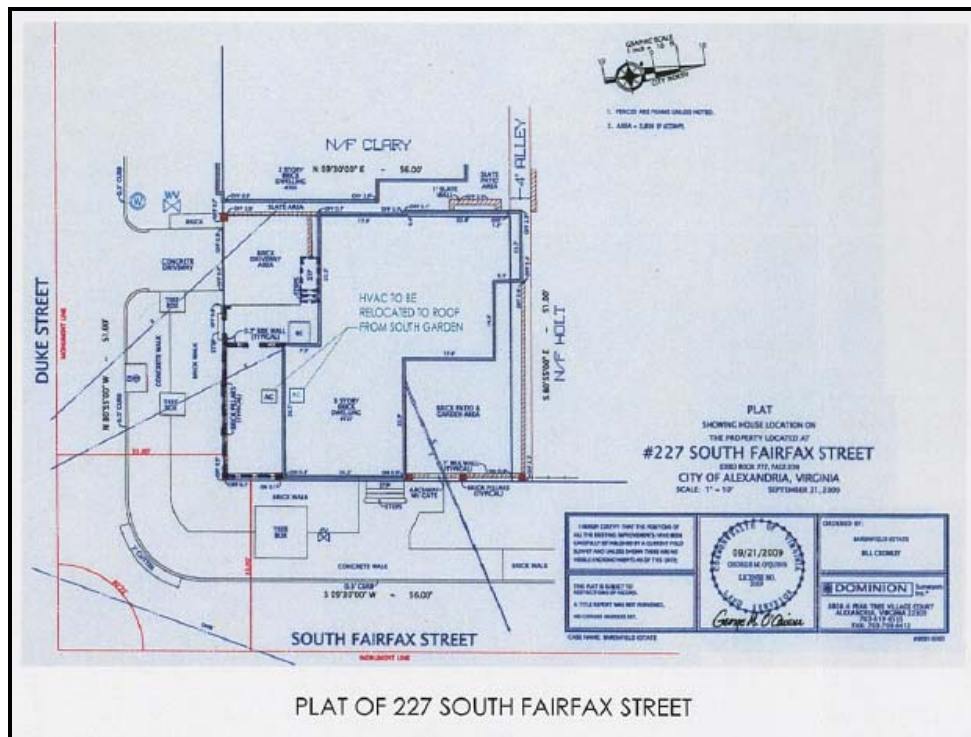


Figure 22: Plat of HVAC – Proposed Relocation

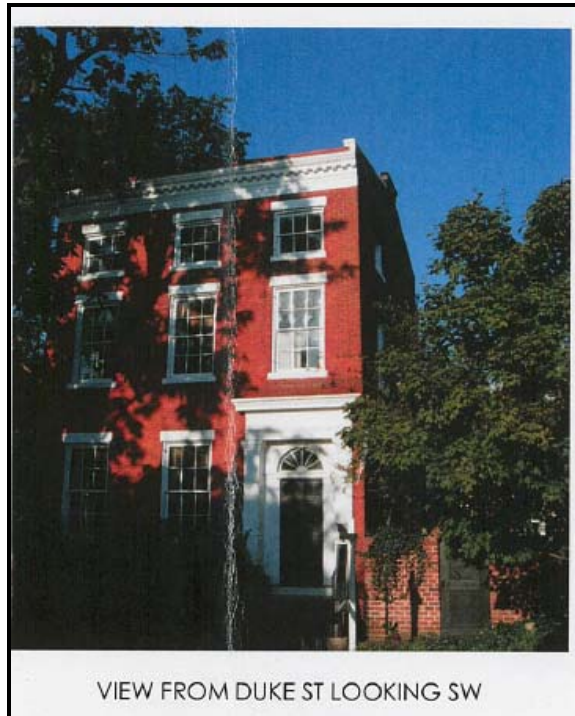
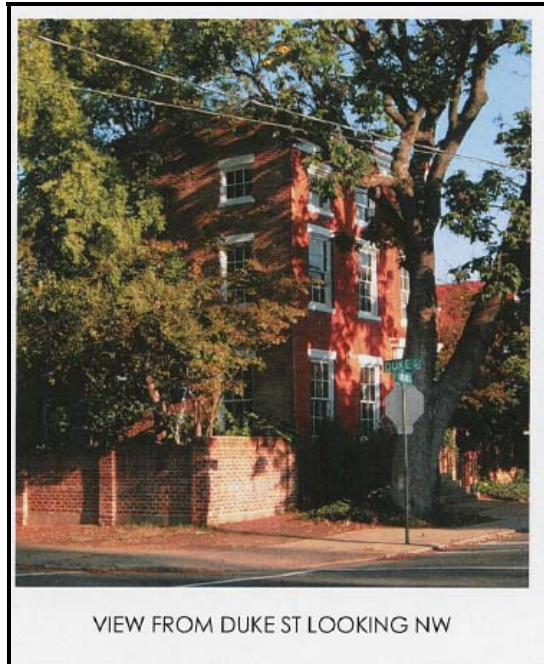


Figure 23: Existing Photos showing Parapet and proposed relocation site for HVAC units

GOUGHNOUR
ENGINEERING, PC

October 29, 2009

Mr. Bill Cromley
Cromley Builders
421 North Alfred Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: 227 South Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA
09165

Dear Mr. Cromley;

Goughnour Engineering, PC has reviewed your proposal to place two mechanical units on the roof of the referenced residence. As we understand the units will weigh approximately two hundred pounds each and will be supported by the existing roof framing. We were able to determine that the roof is supported by 3"x6" deep joists spaced at sixteen inches on center. In our opinion, based on our understanding of the project and calculations, the roof framing is more than adequate to support the additional load of the units.

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service. If you have any further questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

Steven D. Goughnour, P.E.
President

CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
NORTHERN VIRGINIA-HAMPTON ROADS
800 THIRD STREET, SUITE R-100-HERNOON, VA-20170-703.904.4115-703.689.8938 FAX