

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE # 2010-0025

BAR Meeting
March 17, 2010

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish
APPLICANT: Sean & Helen Vermillion
LOCATION: 1126 & 1128 Prince Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

1. That the interior and exterior of the building is documented prior to the release of the Permit to Demolish. Documentation shall consist of 35 mm black x white, 4 x 6 photographs and negatives deposited at the Barrett Library;
2. That the brick outbuilding which is integrated into the brick wall at the southeast corner of the property is preserved;
3. That, prior to the release of the Permit to Demolish, the applicant shall work with Staff to identify and preserve the cornice and any early 20th century architectural artifacts (doors, etc.) for potential reuse in future construction; and,
4. That the following archaeology conditions 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:
 - A. 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.
 - B. 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 BAR approval 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 #2010-0025 **3/17/2010** 

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish for the two-unit, one-story frame building at 1126 and 1128 Prince Street. The building is located on the same lot as the two-story brick building on the corner of Prince and South Fayette Streets (1132 Prince Street). The applicant also proposes to demolish two of the three sheds in the rear yard. The brick shed integrated into the brick wall will be retained, while the two plywood sheds will be demolished.

The total area of demolition is approximately 950 square feet, including the sheds. The building measures 22 feet wide by 40 feet deep.

The applicant recently submitted an application to subdivide the 46 foot by 88 foot lot which contains the following properties: 1126, 1128 and 1132 Prince Street (SUB#2009-0008). The proposed lot line would separate the two story brick building from the remainder of the lot where 1126 and 1128 Prince Street are located. The subdivision will not be docketed on the Planning Commission agenda until the BAR acts on the Permit to Demolish.

II. HISTORY:

Small portions of the one-story frame building at 1126 and 1128 Prince Street may date to the early 20th century. Although the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show two buildings on this lot in 1885 and 1891, by 1896 the lot was vacant. The 1902 Sanborn map shows the existing brick building (a grocery store) on the corner of Prince and South Fayette Streets with a narrow one-story hyphen set back from the front property line on the east elevation, and a larger one-story addition used as grocery storage on the east side of the lot. The use of the grocery storage building and the hyphen (which was enlarged by 1907 to the front property line) changed over the years to a variety of commercial uses, such as a lunch room, cobbler, plumber, general store and barber shop. (See the relevant portions of the attached Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps).

It appears that from the beginning, the one-story portions were connected internally to the two story commercial building on the corner. However, in 1941 the Sanborn maps show that the easternmost side of the one-story building was no longer connected internally to the other properties and between 1941 and 1958 the internal connection between the corner building and 1128 Prince Street was also deleted. By 1958, the Sanborn map shows the one-story portion divided into two equal sized dwelling units and the removal of the one-story ell at 1126 Prince Street. The map also indicates that the material of the rear wall of the one-story building was tile, a popular mid-20th century inexpensive building material which is likely the same hollow clay tile which exists today.

The two plywood sheds in the rear of the property clearly date from the late 20th century or the early 21st century. However, the brick outbuilding integrated into the brick wall at the rear of the property is potentially historic, dating most likely to the early 20th century. The Sanborn Maps do not consistently document the outbuilding; Staff inspected the outbuilding during a site visit and believes that this historic structure may have been used as a smokehouse.

The only BAR approval Staff was able to locate for this property was for signage at 1132 Prince Street (BAR Case #2004-0116, July 21, 2004). Over the years, the BAR also approved window alterations at 1132 Prince Street (1980). Also in 1980, the BAR approved a significant addition/renovation to 1124 Prince Street, the two-story clapboard house to the east.

The alley behind the house is public.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate, 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, encapsulating 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?

Although portions of the one-story, two-unit building at 1126 and 1128 Prince Street are over 50 years old, Staff does not believe that any of the criteria for demolition are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted. The vernacular building's widely varied history – beginning in the early 20th century to when it likely took its present form in the mid-20th century – can be seen on the attached Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Staff surmises that the only element of the façade dating from the buildings first period of construction may be the late Victorian style cornice, which could have been installed in the early 1900s. Given the building's change from a commercial use to a residential use in the mid-20th century (between 1941 and 1958), Staff believes that the front façade was altered to have a more residential appearance and that the windows, siding and one of the two doors were likely installed at that time. The building has also had some later alterations –synthetic, inoperable shutters and a hollow core aluminum door.

Therefore, the form and fabric from the structure's earliest use as grocery storage has been almost entirely erased and the mid-20th century conversion to a duplex and has no historical or architectural merit. While Staff normally supports the retention of Alexandria's vernacular commercial buildings, in this case Staff believes that what remains is not of unusual or uncommon design and its preservation would not preserve historic interest in the City. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish.

The two plywood sheds in the rear yard also do not meet the criteria for demolition and are not historically significant, although Staff recommends – an the applicant has agreed - that the historic brick outbuilding should be preserved.

In addition, Staff recommends that prior to the release of the Permit to Demolish the building be photo documented on the interior and exterior. The black & white photos, along with the negatives, should be deposited in the Barrett Library. In addition, the applicant should coordinate with Staff to identify and preserve any of the early 20th century architectural artifacts for potential reuse in future construction.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and recommends that they be included as conditions of approval.

If the Permit to Demolish is approved and the proposed subdivision granted, the Board will likely see an application for new construction on the subject property. The applicant is reminded that any changes to the historic corner building as a result of new construction on the 1126 and 1128 portion of the lot may necessitate changes to the openings on the east wall of the historic building for fire separation reasons which will also need to be separately reviewed and approved by the BAR.

STAFF:

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner
Al Cox, City Architect, Historic Preservation Section

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Administration:

- C-1 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-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 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-6 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-7 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-8 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.
- C-9 A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 116.1.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

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

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 The G.M. Hopkins fire insurance atlas indicates that structures were present on these lots by 1877. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight in domestic activities in the 19th century.
- *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.

V. IMAGES



Figure 1: Site photos.

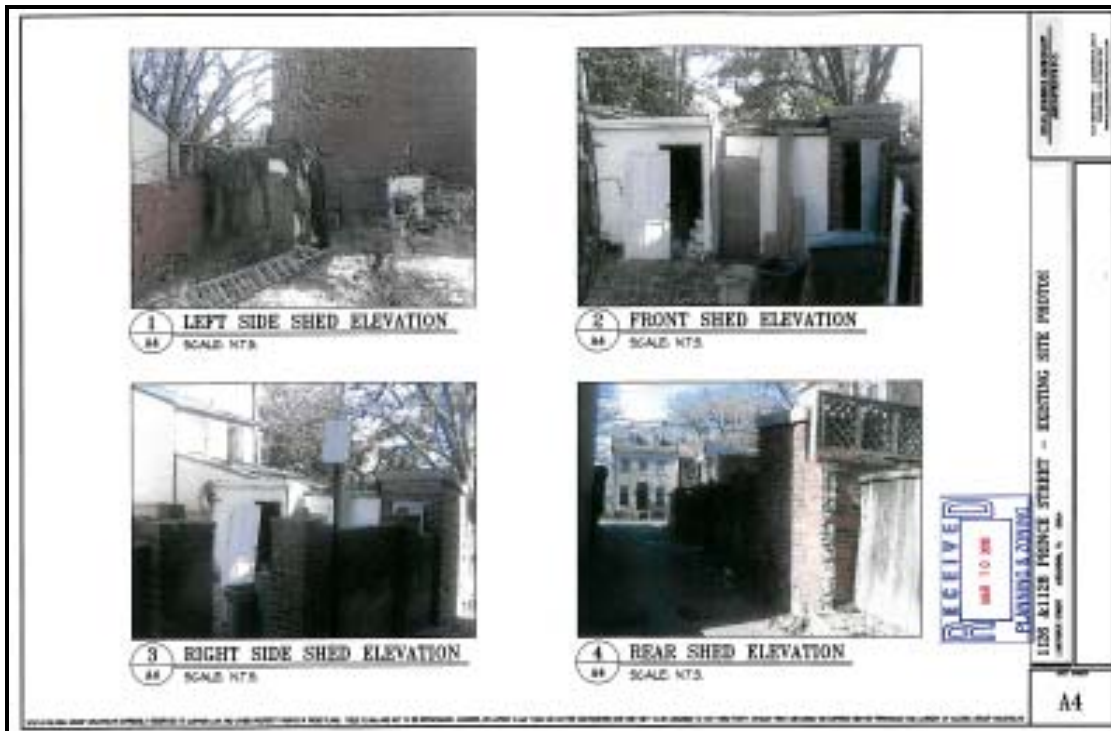


Figure 2: Site photos.

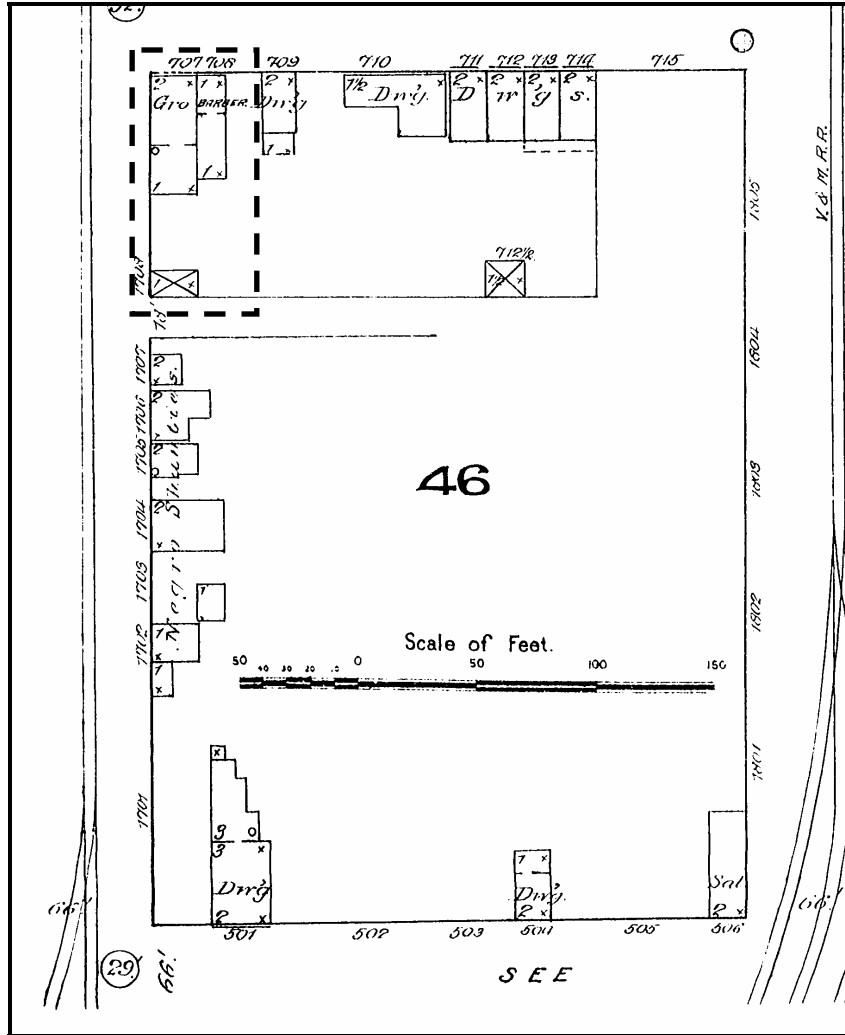


Figure 3: 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

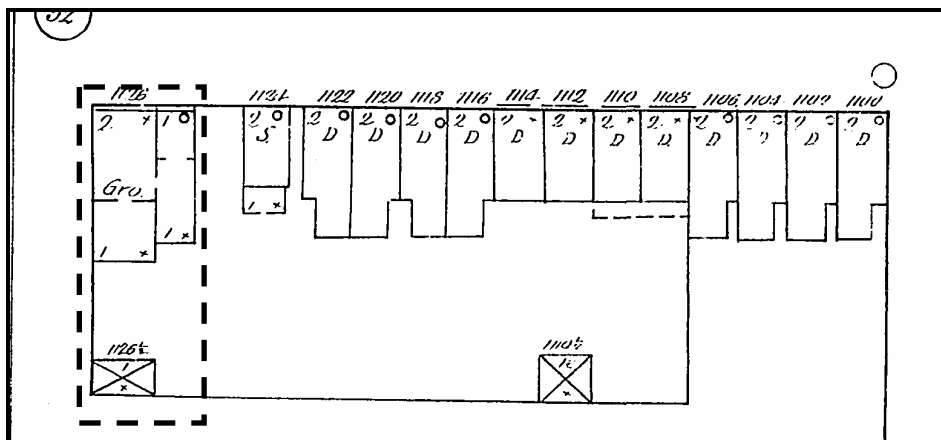


Figure 4: 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

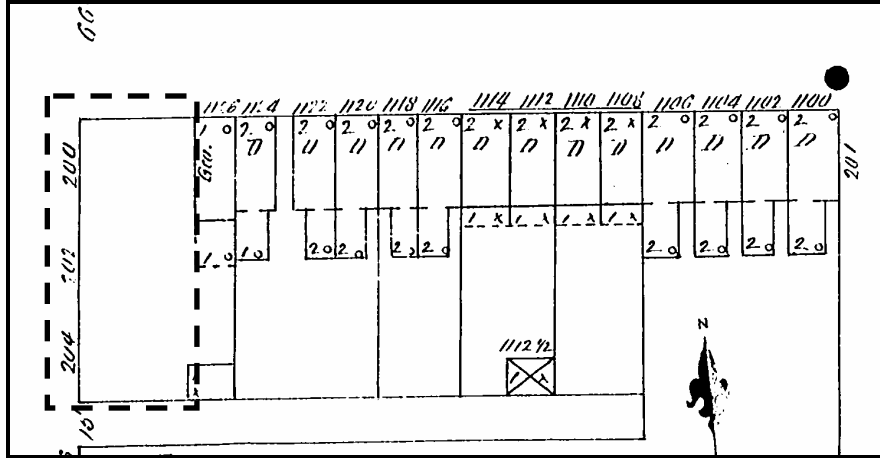


Figure 5: 1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

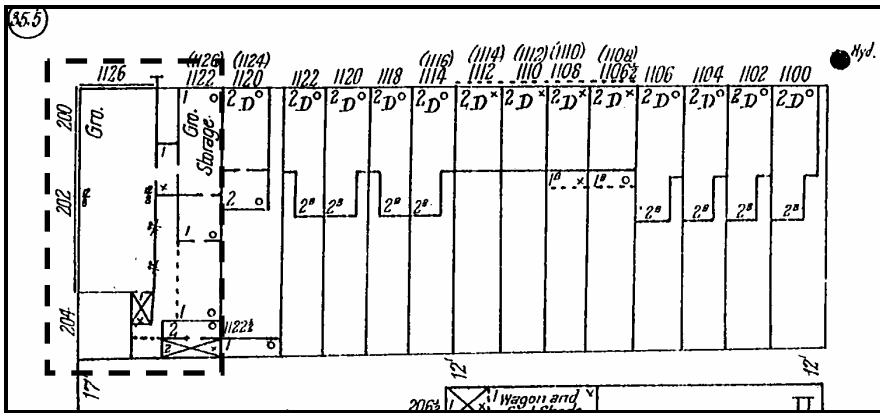


Figure 6: 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

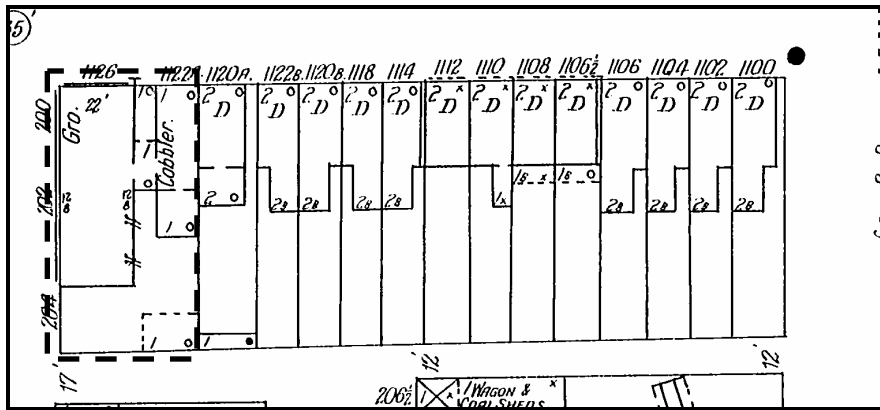


Figure 7: 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

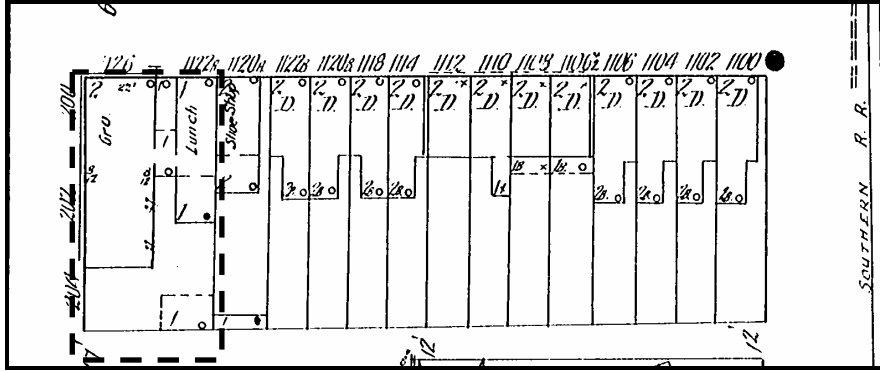


Figure 8: 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

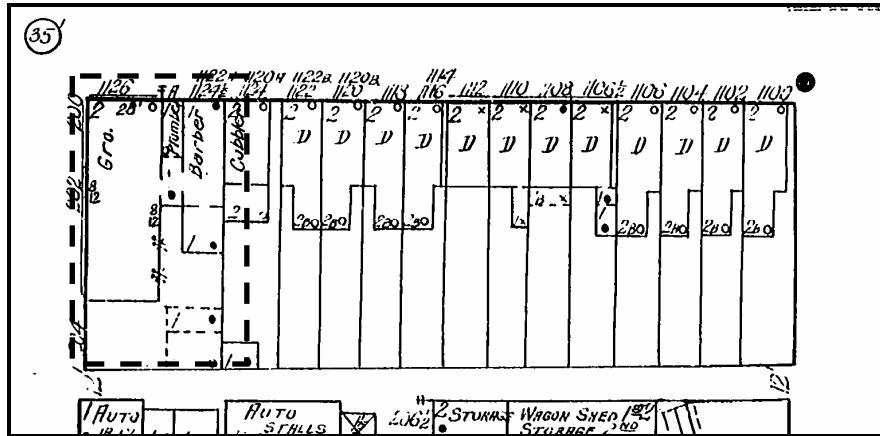


Figure 9: 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

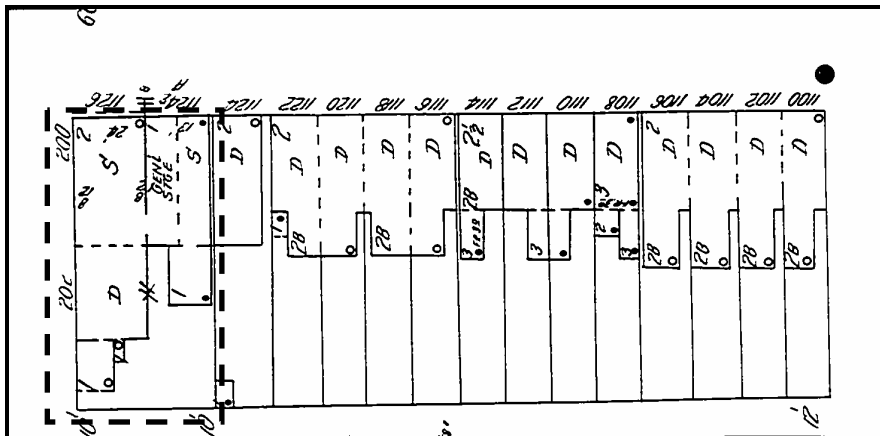


Figure 10: 1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

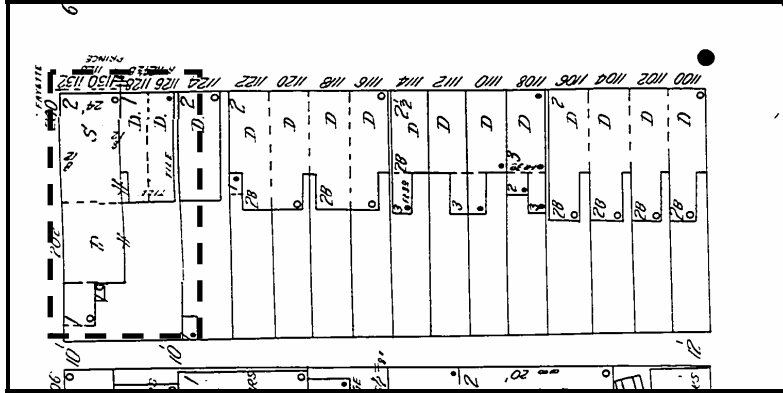


Figure 11: 1958 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

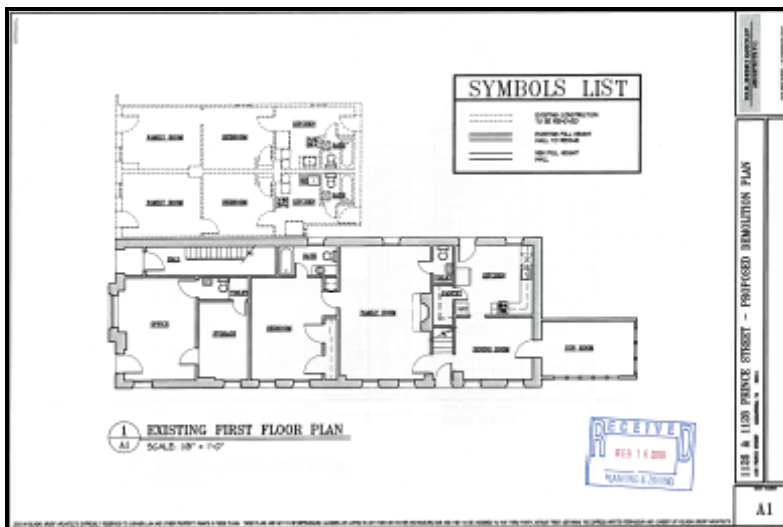


Figure 12: Existing first floor plan.



Figure 13: Existing Prince Street elevation.

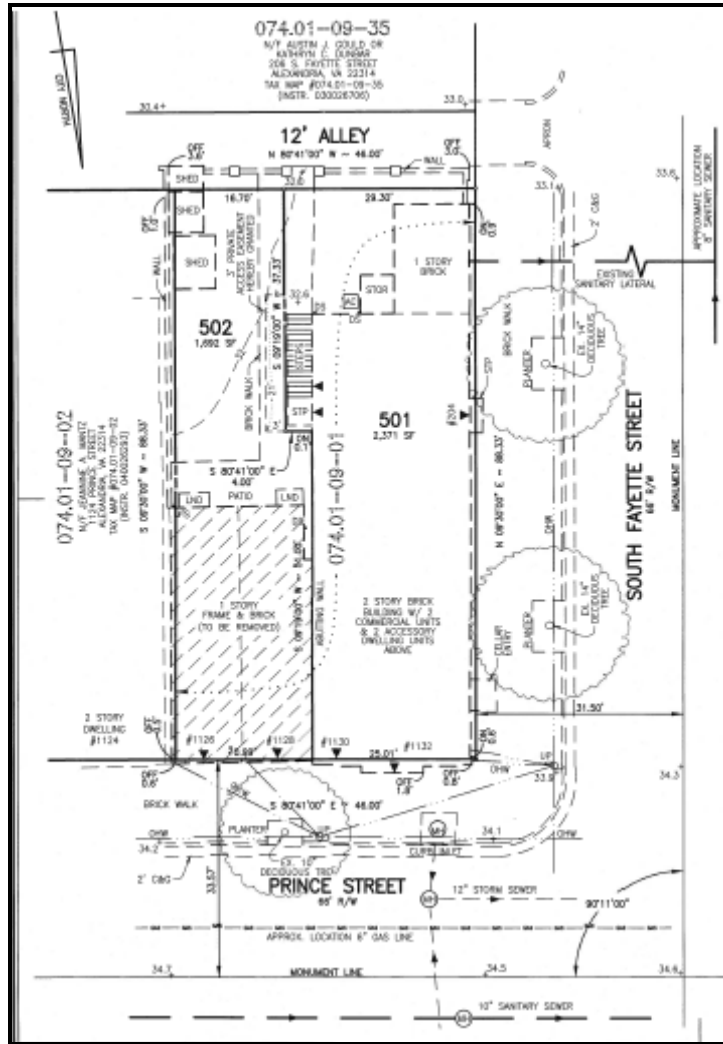


Figure 14: Proposed subdivision plat