

Docket Item # 11 & 12
BAR CASE # 2010-0049/0050

BAR Meeting
April 21, 2010

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate & Addition

APPLICANT: Suzanne Duda

LOCATION: 812 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish (BAR CASE #2010-0049) and deferral of the addition for restudy of the building massing (BAR CASE #2010-0050).

****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 #2010-0049/0050 4/21/2010



Note: Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2010-0049 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2010-0050 (Certificate of Appropriateness) for clarity and brevity. This item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a third floor addition at 812 South Lee Street.

The area of demolition consists of the entire roof structure, including the existing gable roof with single dormer and the flat roof at the rear of the house, an area of approximately 871 square feet.

The applicant proposes to install a new roof with a ridge height approximately 4 feet 8 inches higher than the existing front gable, thereby changing the front roof pitch from an 8/12 slope to a steeper 11/12 slope. The new roof will appear to have a gable roof form from the front, but the rear will have a more gradual slope, with a 2.5/12 pitch. The front façade will be increased in height by approximately 2 feet 9 inches, which will be accomplished using a matching brick veneer. A brick soldier course will be added above both of the exiting windows on the second floor, as well as just below the new HardieTrim cornice. The gutters and downspouts will be constructed of copper. As a result of the proposed height increase, the chimney must also be raised. The addition will have HardiePlank siding and a prefinished aluminum standing seam metal roof in black. Two skylights will be installed on the rear slope of the roof. The HardiTrim and HardiPlank will be painted white.

On the front elevation of the addition there will be two pedimented dormers, each with a multi-light casement window. Three multi-light casements will also be centered on the rear elevation. The simulated-divided-light wood windows will be manufactured by Pella with double-insulated glass and 7/8 inch muntins.

II. HISTORY:

The interior unit townhouse at 812 South Lee Street was constructed as part of the Yates Garden subdivision in ca. 1953. It is a three bay, two-and-one-half story brick townhouse in a row of eight townhouses with alternately projecting and set back facades. The west elevation is distinguished from its neighbors primarily by its slightly projecting frame bay window at the first level. The construction of these rowhouses was approved by the Board on March 12, 1953.

Staff could find no previous BAR approvals for 812 South Lee Street. However, there have been a number of significant third floor additions on the 800 block of South Lee Street since their construction in the mid-20th century, including:

- 809 South Lee Street (BAR Case #2006-0002)
- 811 South Lee Street
- 821 South Lee Street
- 831 South Lee Street
- 821 South Lee Street (BAR Case #2001-0080)
- 833 South Lee Street (BAR Case #2007-0002)

Staff was unable to locate the specific BAR approvals for three of the properties (811, 821 or 831 South Lee Street). The third story additions at 809 and 833 South Lee Street were both designed by the applicant's architect.

IV. ANALYSIS:

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition of the roof structure, but believes that the proposed third floor addition is out of scale and incompatible with the adjacent townhouses.

Permit to Demolish

In considering a Permit to Demolish, 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, while this mid-20th century townhouse is a successful background building and compatible with nearby historic structures, it is without individual historical interest or uncommon architectural merit and none of the criteria for demolition and encapsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted.

Addition

Staff had a preliminary meeting with the applicant and the applicant's architect prior to the submission of the proposal. At that meeting, Staff suggested that the height of the addition, in particular the front slope of the roof, be reduced. While this may result in less usable space on the third floor, Staff believes that the proposed roof height, along with the addition of two dormers and the increased façade height, creates a significant and incompatible building mass as compared to the adjacent townhouses in this row. Not only will the peak of the new roof be 4 feet 8 inches higher than the existing gable roof, but it will be equally higher than the adjacent gable roof at 814 South Lee Street which has the same roof height and pitch as 812 South Lee Street (although the entire townhouse projects approximately 2 feet in front of the subject property).

While Staff has no objection to a modest increased height of the front façade and conversion of the attic into a habitable third floor, the height and pitch of the new roof, along with the two

dormers, accentuates its mass relative to its neighbors. Staff proposes that the applicant lower the proposed roof to match the slope of the existing (and adjacent) gable roof. Installing only one dormer on the front slope of the roof, instead of the two proposed dormers, will also help to reduce the visual mass of the addition against the sky and is consistent with all but one of the gable roof townhouses in this row. Staff estimates that the revised roof would result in a height increase of between 2 and 3 feet, not the 4 feet 8 inches proposed by the applicant. The rear roof slope could then be nearly flat to maximize the square footage on this part of the house.

While there is Board precedent for approving third story additions on the 800 block of South Lee Street, Staff believes that some of them were more successful than others and bases its comments for this particular addition on that assessment. The third story additions at 809 and 811 South Lee Street are a good comparison (see attached Staff photos). The addition at 809 South Lee Street, also designed by the applicant's architect, is a gable roof addition with a pitch of 10/12 and a heightened front facade. The third story addition at 811 South Lee Street is an even better comparison because the roof form is similar to proposed roof at 812 South Lee Street. In the opinion of Staff, this is not an appropriate solution as it calls attention to these buildings because they are larger than others on a block of handsome but generally modest, background buildings.

In summary, Staff does not object to the demolition or construction of a third floor addition at 812 South Lee Street. However, Staff believes that the current proposal adds unnecessary height to the townhouse, making it incompatible with its immediate neighbors. Staff recommends that the application be deferred so that the applicant can restudy the height of the addition.

STAFF:

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

IV. 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 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

There is low potential for significant archaeological resources to be disturbed by this project. No archaeological action is required.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

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. (T&ES)
<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>

F2. A portion of the subject property is in the 1% annual chance floodplain, as per the Flood Insurance Rate Map, dated March 15, 1991. However, the existing structure is not located in the 1% annual chance floodplain. Therefore, any improvements within the existing footprint would not be subject to the provisions of the Floodplain Ordinance. Any change in the footprint of the building would need to be evaluated in relation to the mapped floodplain. (T&ES)

F3. Parcel is tagged as being in a Resource Protection Area. However, it has been deemed that the parcel is not within an RPA. Erosion and Sediment Control Measures must be observed at all times. (T&ES)

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)
- R7. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)

V. IMAGES



Figure 1: Photo of 812 South Lee Street.

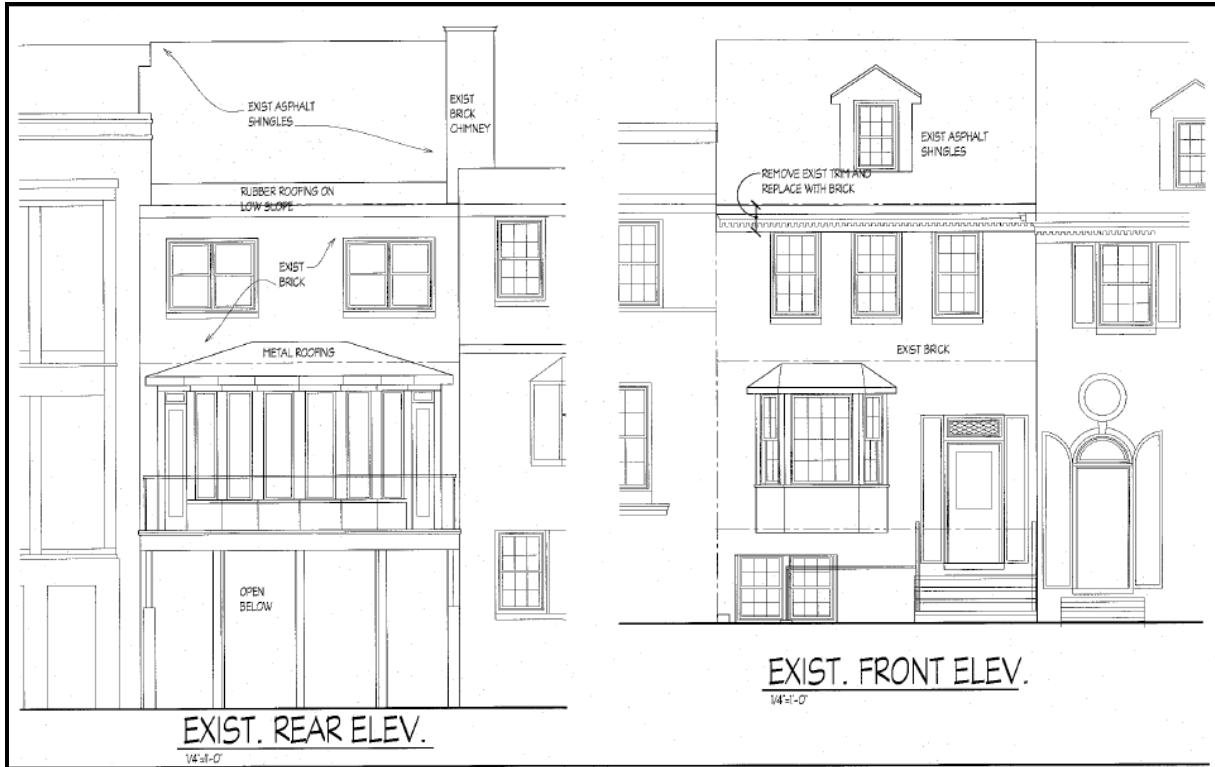


Figure 2: Existing elevations.

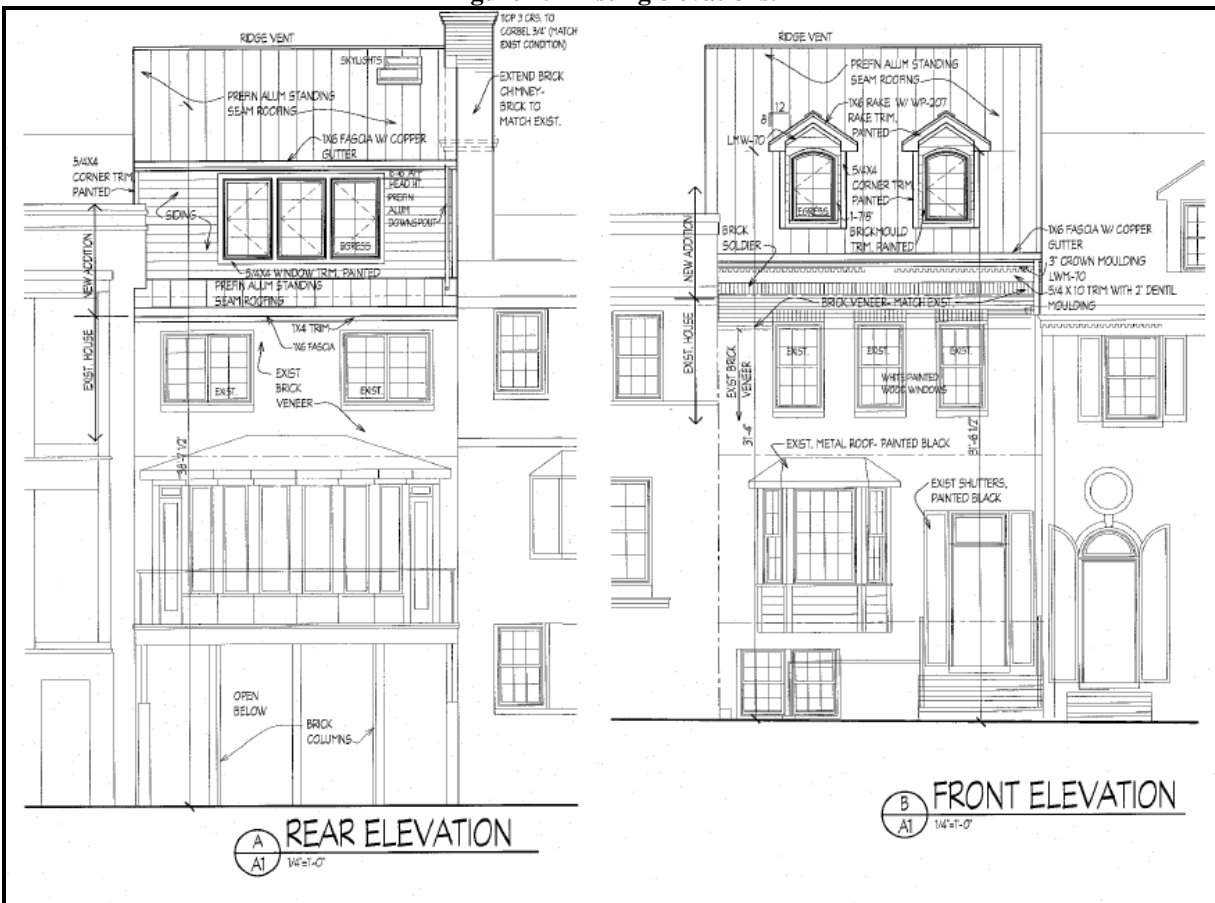


Figure 3: Proposed elevations.

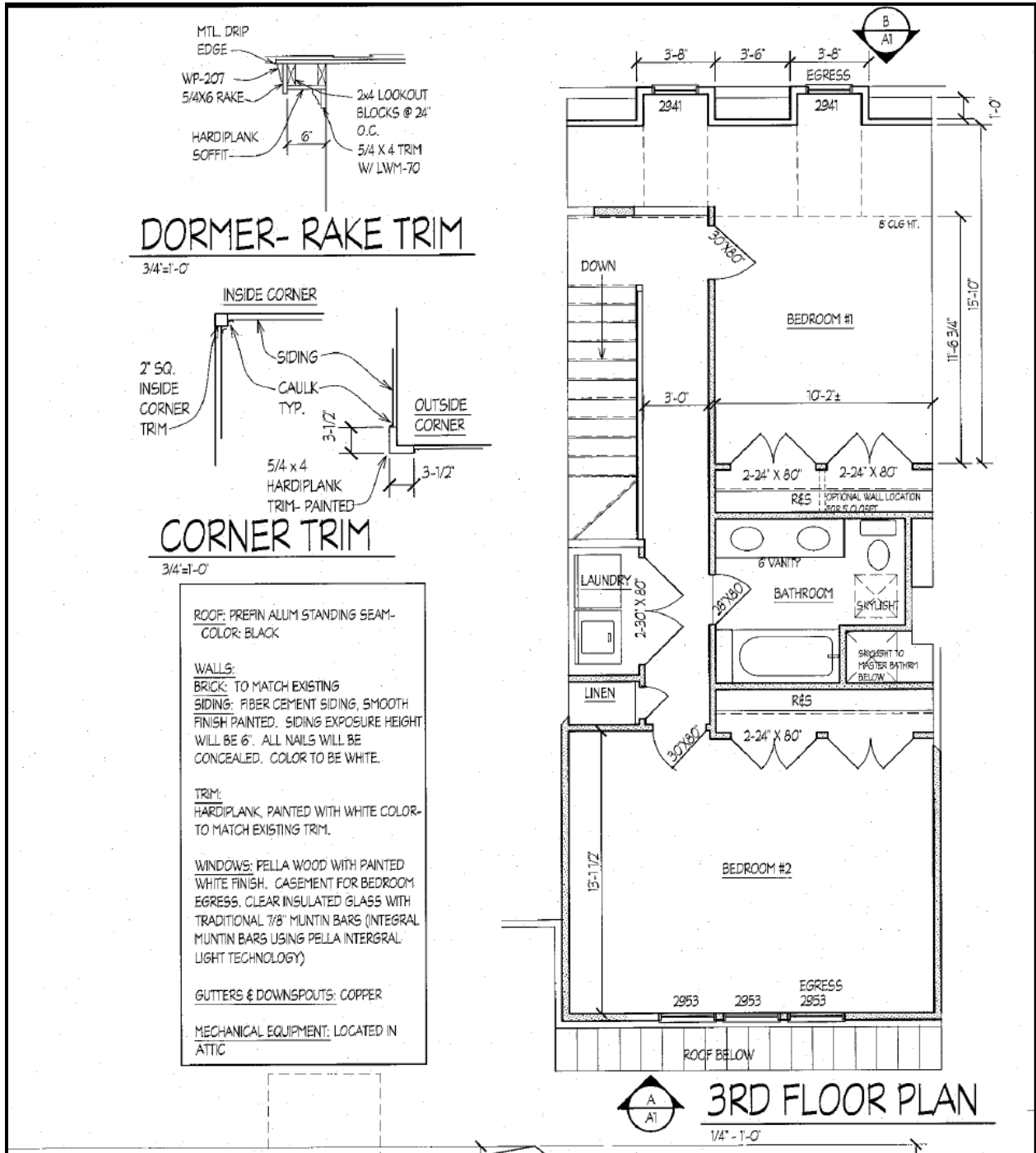


Figure 4: Trim details, materials, floor plan.

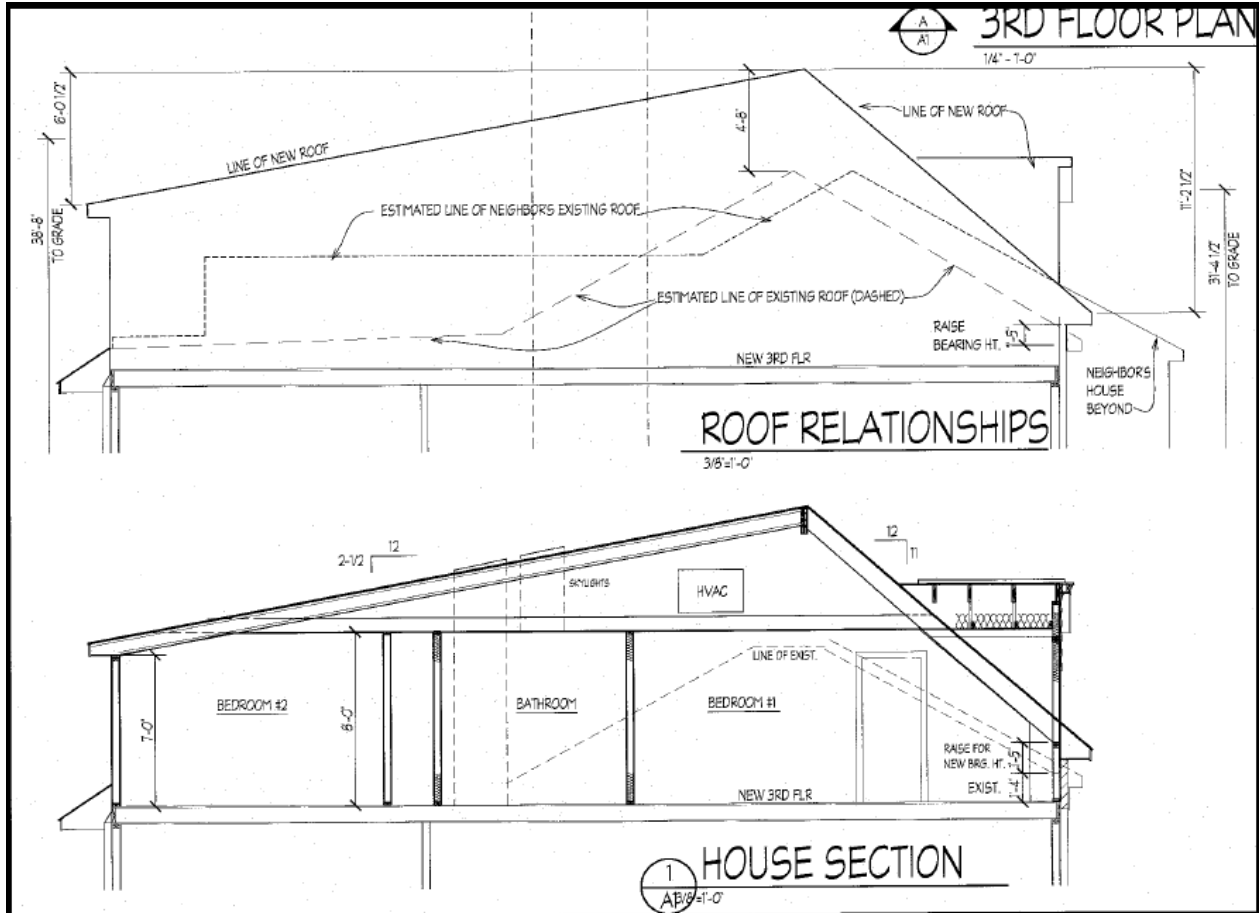


Figure 5: Roof sections.



Figure 6: Photo showing 809 (right) and 811 (left) South Lee Street.



Figure 7: Photo showing 809 (right) and 811 (left) South Lee Street.