

BAR Meeting
September 15, 2010

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Addition/Alterations
APPLICANT: Neil and Ruth McCray by Adams Architects (Scot McBroom)
LOCATION: 620 South Saint Asaph Street
ZONE: RM / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and the Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations with the following conditions:

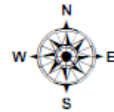
1. That the applicant work with Staff to determine the condition of the historic wood siding underneath the aluminum siding, and if the siding is in good condition that it be retained and repaired rather than replaced. If the siding is not salvageable, then replacement wood siding must match the historic siding.
2. That the applicant either relocate the HVAC units so that they are no closer than five feet to the side property line, or obtain a waiver from the adjoining neighbor to place units within the required side yard.
3. That the following archaeology conditions 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 (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that a monitoring and inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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, 703-838-4360 for further information.



BAR CASE #2010-0235/0236 09/15/2010



Note: Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2010-0235 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2010-0236 (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/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an addition and alterations at 620 South Saint Asaph Street.

Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate

North Elevation:

- 508 square feet to be encapsulated
- 183 square feet to be demolished (160.6 square feet is within encapsulated area), including demolition of a rear flue

East Elevation:

- 15 square feet to be encapsulated
- 38.5 square feet to be demolished

South Elevation:

- 4.2 square feet to be demolished for enlarged window opening

Total Encapsulation: 523 square feet

Total Demolition: 225.7 square feet (160 square feet is within the area of encapsulation)

Addition

The proposed addition will be located on the north elevation of the existing house and will measure approximately 31.5 feet by 6 feet, and will be set back approximately 16 feet from the front property line and ten feet from the front building plane. The addition will wrap around the existing rear block and add an additional half story with gable roof onto the rear block. The proposed addition has Queen Anne forms and details.

The west (front) elevation will read as a single-bay recessed addition. At the first story will be a one-story garden shed with a shed roof and single window. The three-story portion of the addition will be recessed approximately eight feet from the shed and twenty-five feet from the front property line. The proposed addition will be three stories and will have a tower feature. The west (front) elevation of the addition will have a two-over-two simulated divided light wood window with operable wood shutters at both the second and third stories. The tower element will have a pyramidal standing seam metal roof and a wood cornice with brackets that complement those on the historic portion of the house. On the north elevation, the three-story tower steps down to the two-and-a-half story rear portion. The east (rear) elevation features two porches: one at the first story and one projecting from the gable roof at the third story. Both porches will feature standing seam metal roofs and wood columns and brackets. On the south elevation, the existing gable roof form will connect with the new gable roof form with a cross gable, that will be minimally visible.

The proposed materials on the addition include: painted wood German lap siding, Marvin simulated divided light double-glazed wood windows, painted louvered and operable wood shutters, a wood vent, and painted wood brackets, cornices and other details. The proposed windows will have 1 1/8" muntins (exterior applied wood muntins with interior spacer bar), appropriate for the two-over-two light configuration. The casement windows and doors on the first story of the rear elevation will have 7/8" muntins.

Alterations

The applicant proposes to reconfigure the existing front dormer into a more stylistically appropriate dormer by changing the windows and trim details. The gable dormer will have a tripartite window with arched two-over-two windows.

Also on the front elevation, the applicant proposes to remove the existing wood railing on the front porch.

On the south elevation the applicant proposes to enlarge an existing window in the rear block.

On the entire house, the applicant proposes to restore the existing painted wood windows and to remove the aluminum siding and repair the existing historic siding.

II. HISTORY

The two-story, wood-frame, vernacular, Queen Anne style detached house at 620 South Saint Asaph Street was constructed prior to 1891, the first year this block was included on the Sanborn Insurance maps. A two-story addition was added to the rear between 1902 and 1907 and the one-story front porch was added between 1907 and 1912.

On February 19, 1997, the Board approved a three-story rear addition at 620 South Saint Asaph Street (BAR Case #97-4). This addition was never constructed. On June 16, 1993, the Board approved a rear yard fence separating the parking pad from the rear yard of the house (BAR Case #93-98). In 2001, the Board denied an application for an addition (BAR Case #2001-0252 and BAR Case #2001-0253, 6/5/02).

The property is located mid-block with a public alley at the rear.

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed project complies with Zoning Ordinance requirements conditional upon relocating the HVAC units to be no closer than five feet to the side property line or obtaining a waiver from the adjoining neighbor to locate the units within the required side yard.

Staff has no objection to the proposed encapsulation and demolition of portions of the north (side) and east (rear) elevations and the roof of the existing rear block (including demolition of the flue), and finds the proposed addition to be compatible with the existing building and surrounding area.

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, none of the criteria for demolition and encapsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate should be granted. The area proposed for demolition/encapsulation on the historic portion of the building is modest in scope, located on secondary elevations, does not remove any portion of the building containing character defining features of uncommon design or historic merit, and does not compromise the integrity of the building as a whole.

Although the *Design Guidelines* state that “Existing chimneys should be maintained *in situ* and not removed without a compelling reason and substantial justification,” Staff does not object to the demolition of the rear flue. Staff notes that this flue is secondary and not original to the main historic block. The flue on the main historic block will be retained. In addition, the proposed design would make retention of the flue nearly impossible.

Addition and Alterations

The construction of an addition to any building within a historic district must be evaluated not only for its impact on the building to which it is being attached, but also for its impact on the district as a whole. The *Design Guidelines* encourage “designs that are respectful of the existing structure and which seek to be background statements or which echo the design elements of the existing structure.” In this case, the proposed design successfully functions as a background to the existing freestanding house as well as incorporates Queen Anne architectural references.

Staff met with the applicant several times prior to the filing of this submission to review and refine the design. An initial scheme included a rear gable form with a higher roof ridge than the historic block. The massing of the rear addition in this early scheme (below) overwhelmed the historic main block and was strongly discouraged by staff.

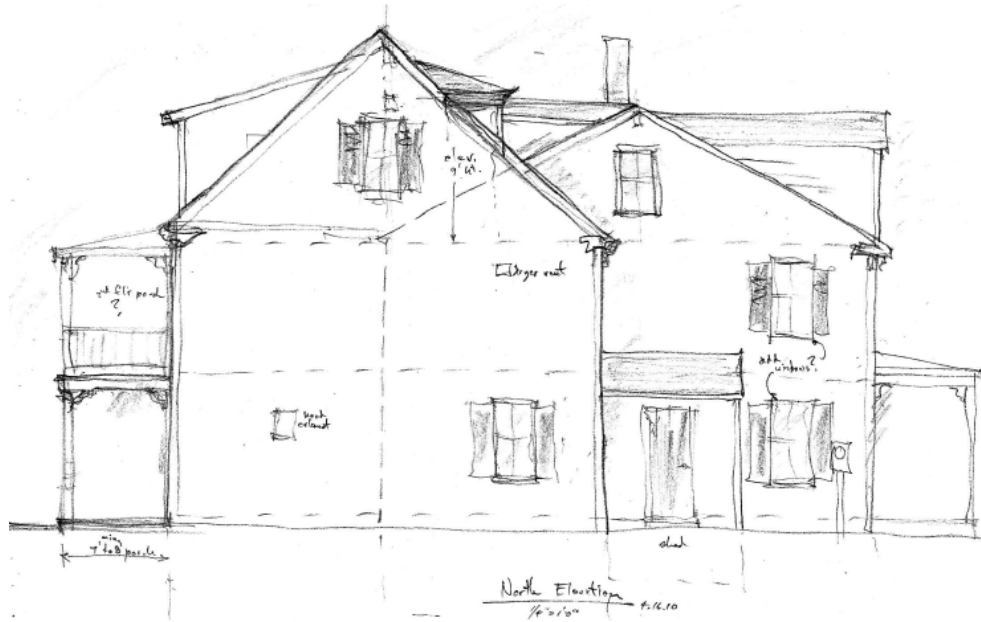


Figure 1. Early scheme of proposed addition.

Another early scheme featured a tower element as a way to accommodate an elevator shaft. This early version of the tower appeared heavy and somewhat out of scale with the historic house.

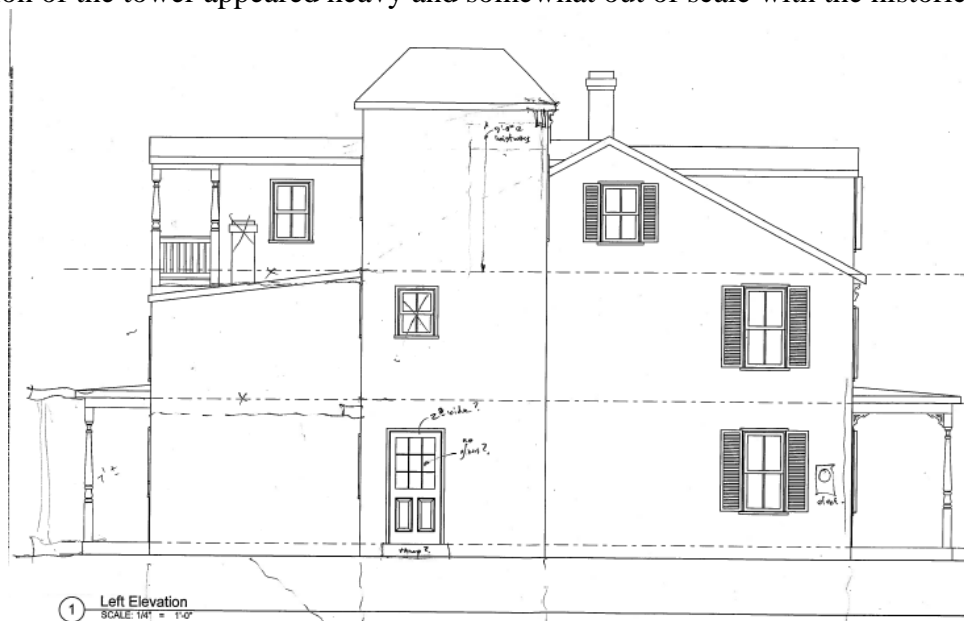


Figure 2. Early scheme showing initial tower proposal.

However, the use of a tower, a design element often associated with Queen Anne architecture, was found to be a historically appropriate way to accommodate the modern needs of an elevator. Although a tower would not be appropriate on many houses in the district, this proposal is an exception as this building is one of very few freestanding Queen Anne style houses. However, the location of the tower at the rear of the historic main block will ensure that it does not overwhelm the streetscape or the existing house. The refinement of the tower and the incorporation of design details found on the historic house, such as the brackets and cornice, have resulted in a uniquely appropriate and compatible design.

In addition, revising the rear portion so that the rear gable ridge was no higher than the gable ridge on the main block allows the addition to be secondary to the historic block. While the proposed addition is substantial, the massing and scale are both appropriate. Contextually, the addition will be adjacent to a three-story house and the height of the tower, *not the addition*, will be just above the roof of the neighboring house at 618 South St Asaph Street. In addition, as the streetview photographs show, the addition will be minimally visible from South St Asaph Street due to the location at the rear of the main block. The architectural side elevations that were submitted are views that will never be visible in this form because of adjacent buildings. As a practical matter, substantial screening vegetation is also present through much of the year. Staff suggests that the location of the proposed tower is much like the tower bay on the south side of the residence at 505 S. Lee Street and should have a similar visual relationship to the streetscape.

The proposed materials—German lap wood siding, wood trim and details, standing seam metal roof, and simulated divided light wood windows—are all considered historically appropriate and contribute to the compatibility of the addition with the existing house and the overall district. Although the *Design Guidelines* state that “single glazed true divided light wood windows” are the preferred window type, Staff notes that the Board has regularly approved simulated divided light, double-glazed windows on new construction and Staff recommends their approval on the new windows for the additions on this project. The applicant has proposed, and Staff strongly supports, preservation of the original windows on the early portions of the house.

Staff notes that the applicant’s proposal to remove the aluminum siding and shutters on the existing house will be a great improvement. The applicant believes that historic German lap siding exists underneath and that it can be repaired and retained from a preliminary investigation. Therefore, a condition that the applicant work with Staff to determine the condition of the siding and that, if it can be retained and repaired it should be, has been recommended.

The proposed alterations which include redesigning the existing, but non original, front dormer and removing the railing on the front porch are both appropriate alterations and are much more in keeping with the Queen Anne style than what currently exists.

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and the Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations with the conditions noted above.

STAFF

Catherine Miliaras, 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 Administration 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 current 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.

Historic Alexandria

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology (comments from previous BAR case for this property)
Alexandria Archeology:

- F-1 Historical maps indicate that houses were present on this street face by 1877 and a residence was definitely situated on this lot by 1885. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into nineteenth-century domestic activities in Alexandria.
- R-1 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 above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement

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) 746-4064. 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>

City Code Requirements

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99).
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.
- C-3 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.8-1-22)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3)
- C-5 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to release of Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-6-25)
- C-6 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)

V. IMAGES

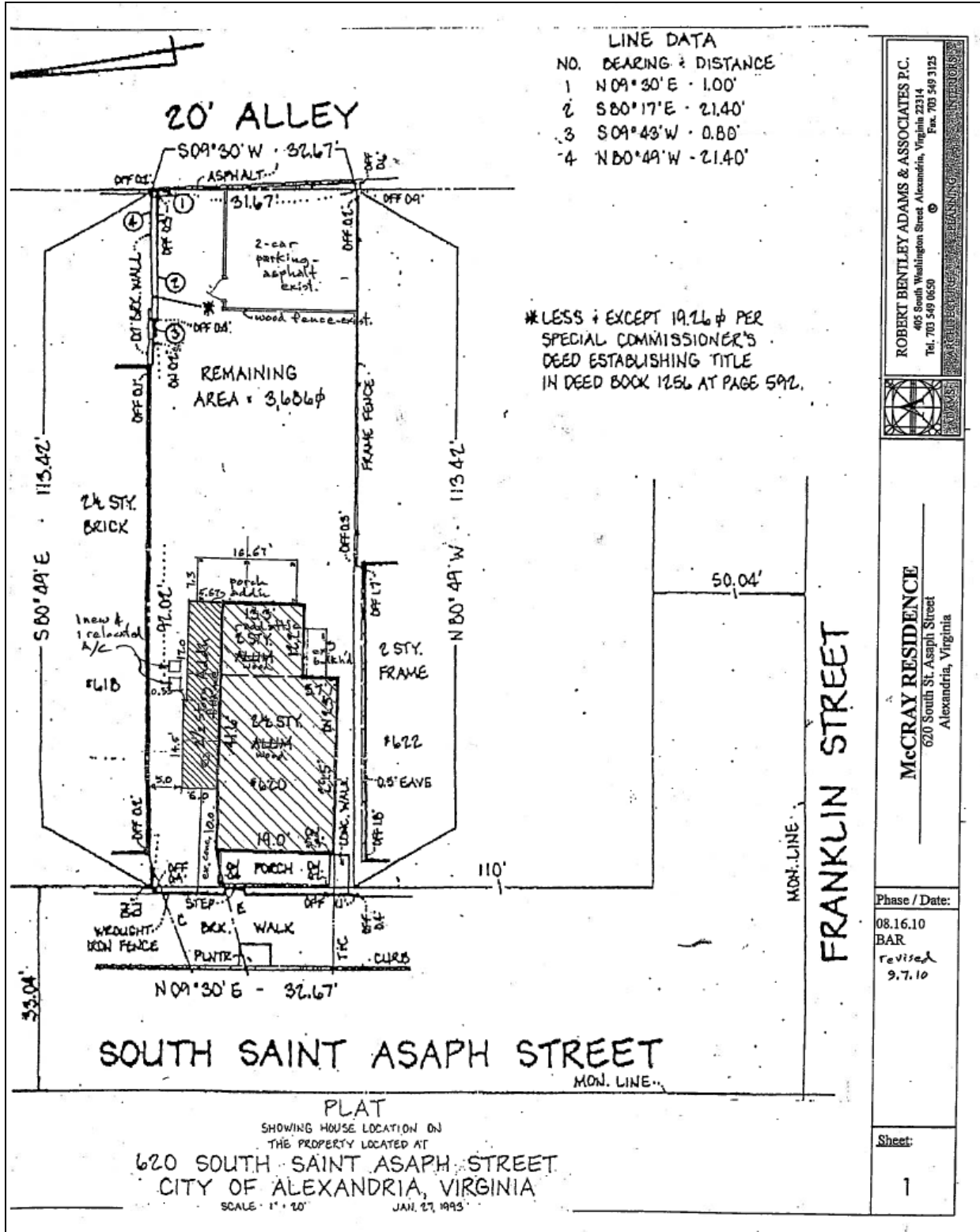


Figure 3. Plat showing proposed addition.



Figure 4. Front (west) elevation of 620 South Saint Asaph with adjacent properties (Source: Google Streetview).



Figure 5. Streetscape on South Saint Asaph looking north, subject property has front porch (Source: Google Streetview).



① EX Front Elevation
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Figure 6. Existing front (west) elevation.

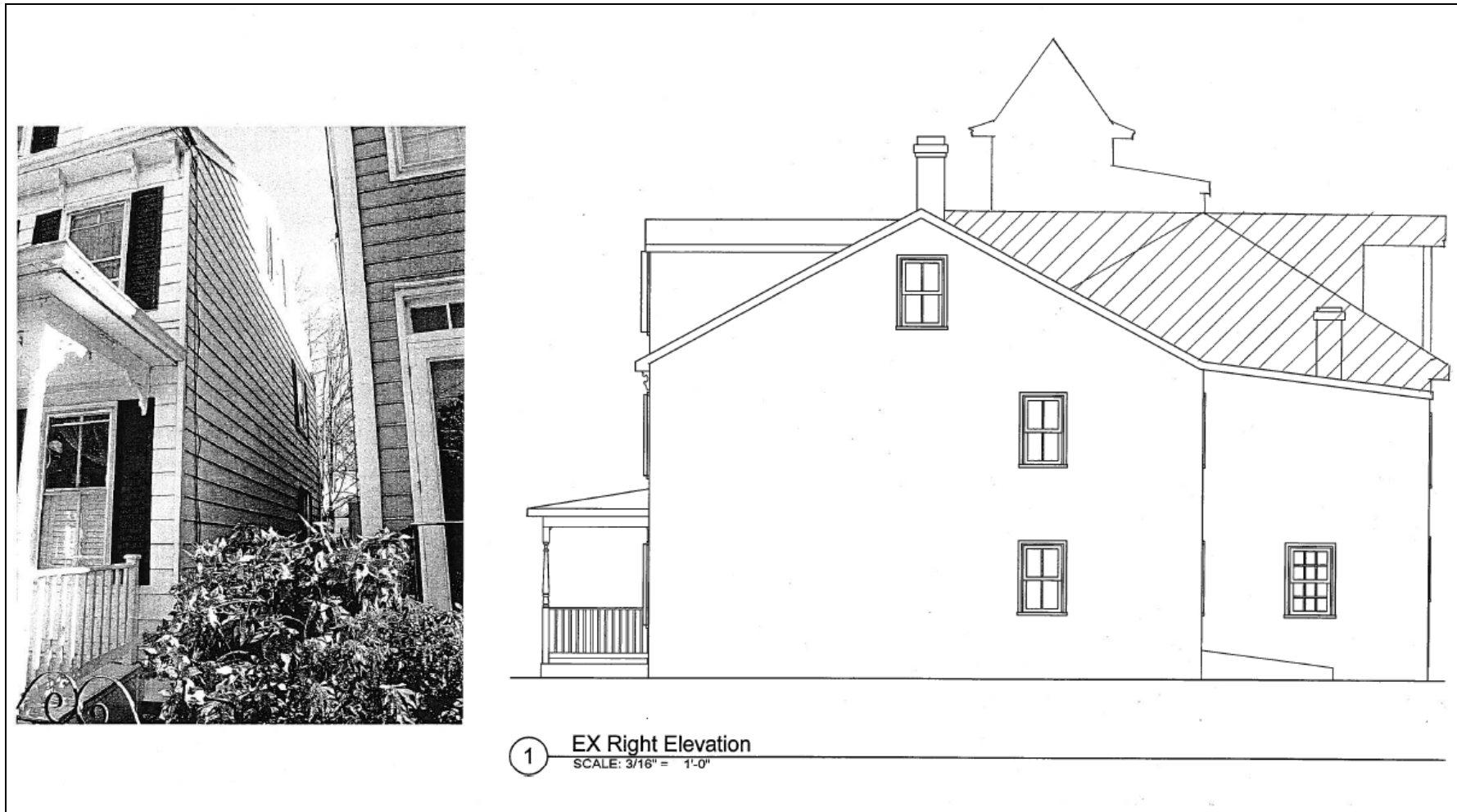


Figure 7. Existing side (south) elevation also indicating massing of proposed addition and areas of demolition/encapsulation.

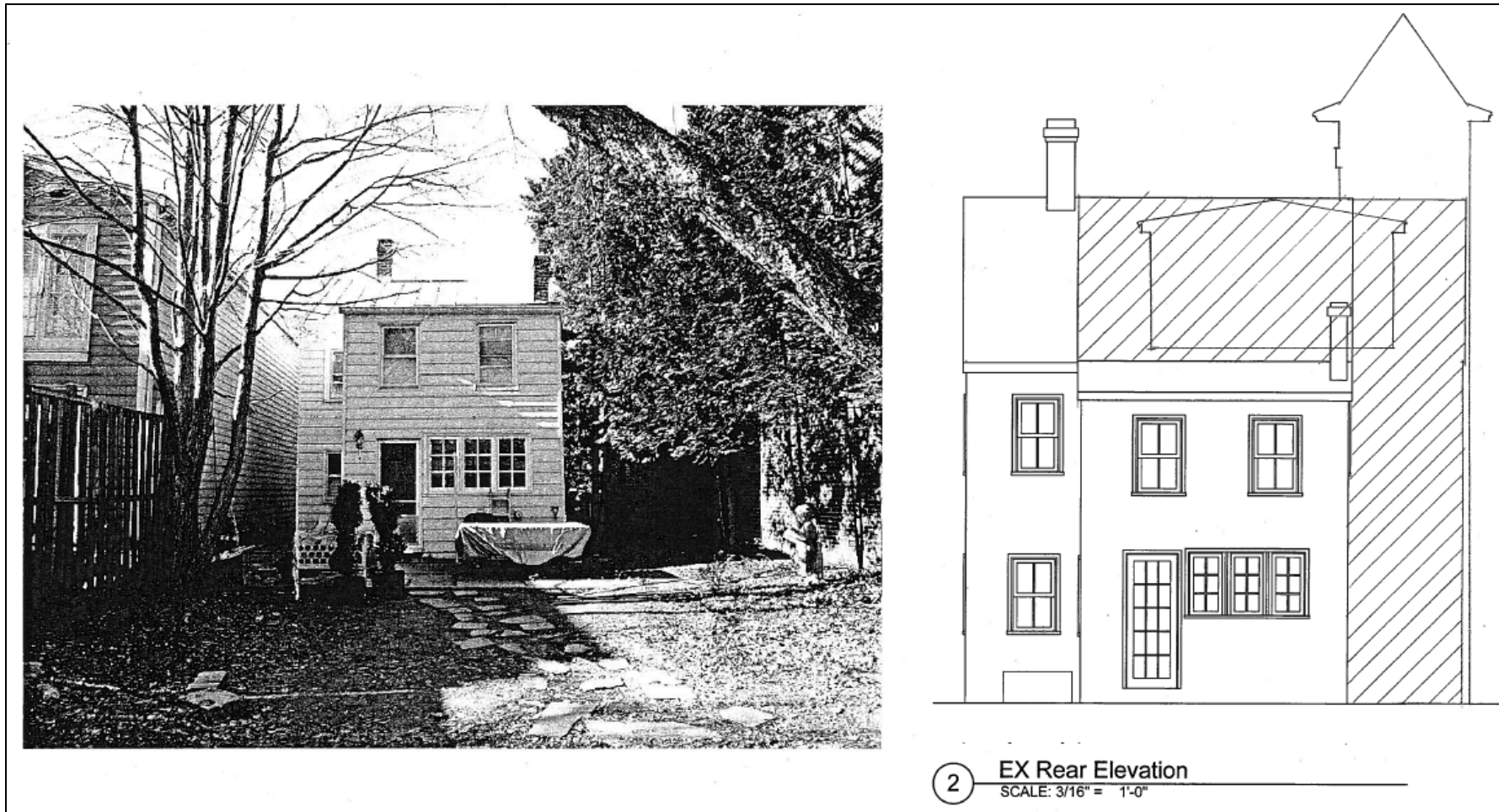


Figure 8. Existing rear (east) elevation, showing massing of proposed addition and areas of demolition/encapsulation.



Figure 9. Existing side (north) elevation, showing massing of proposed addition and areas of demolition/encapsulation.



Figure 10. Proposed front (west) elevation.



Figure 11. Proposed side (south) elevation.



Figure 12. Proposed rear (east) elevation.

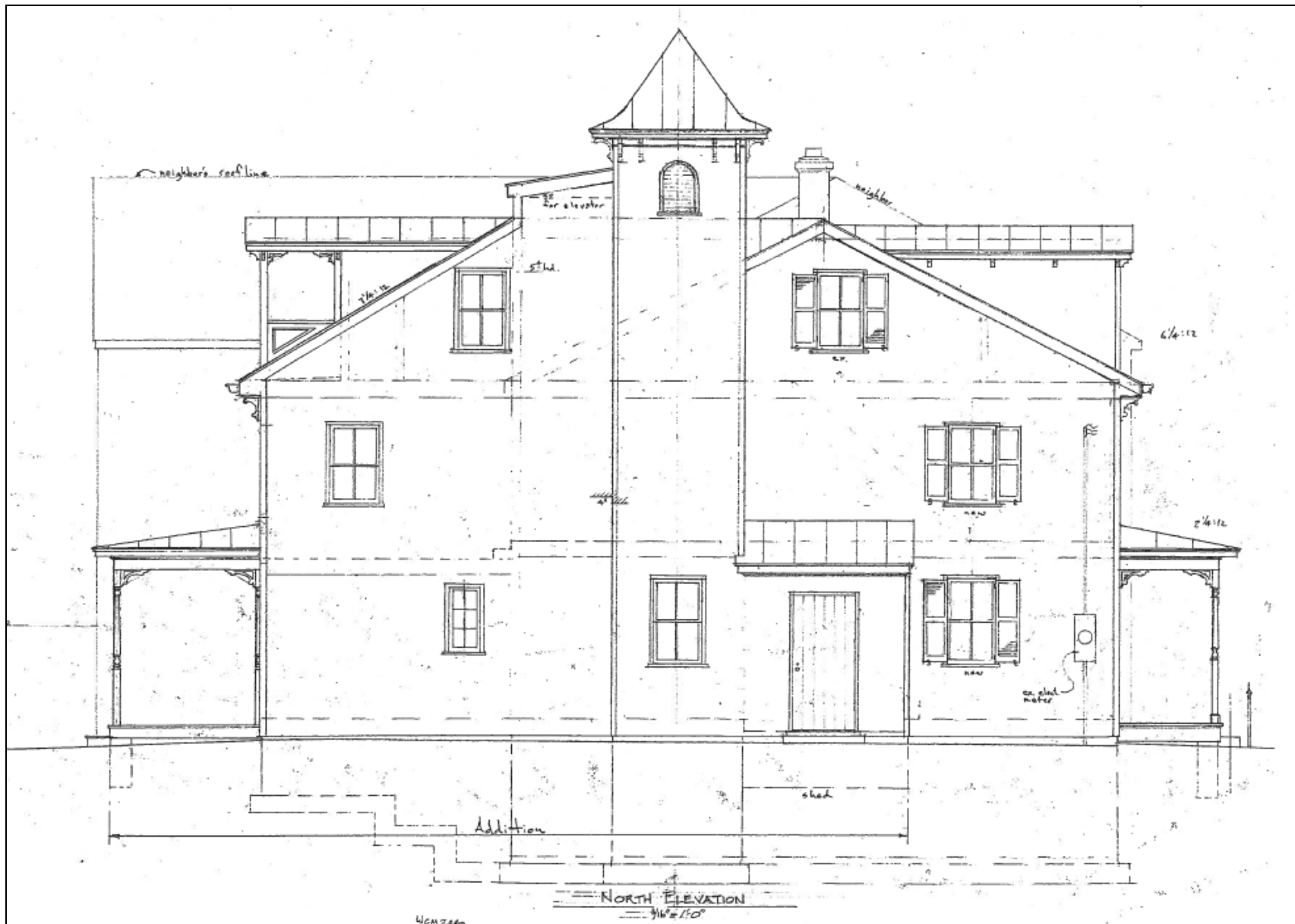


Figure 13. Proposed side (north) elevation.

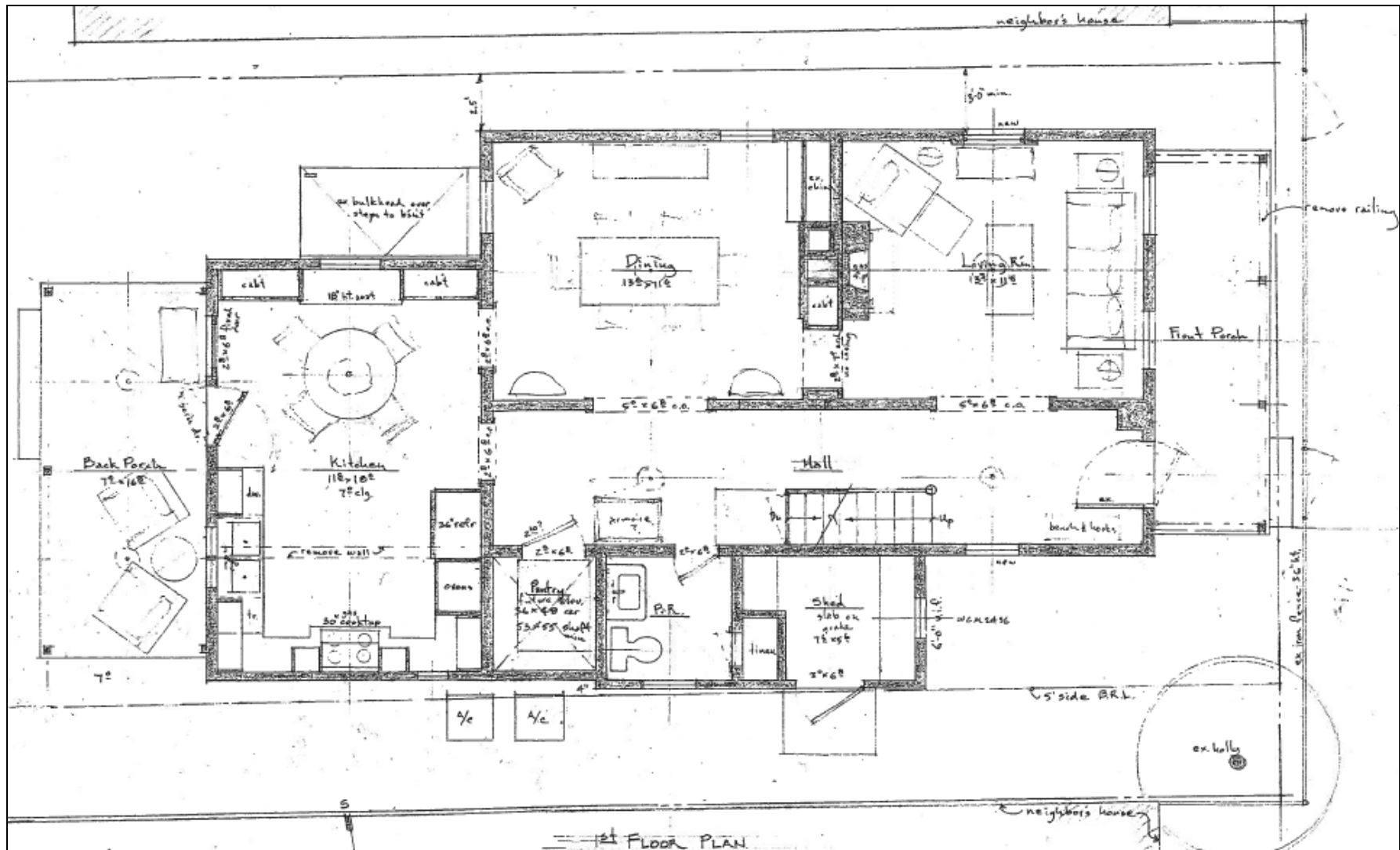


Figure 14. Proposed first floor plan.

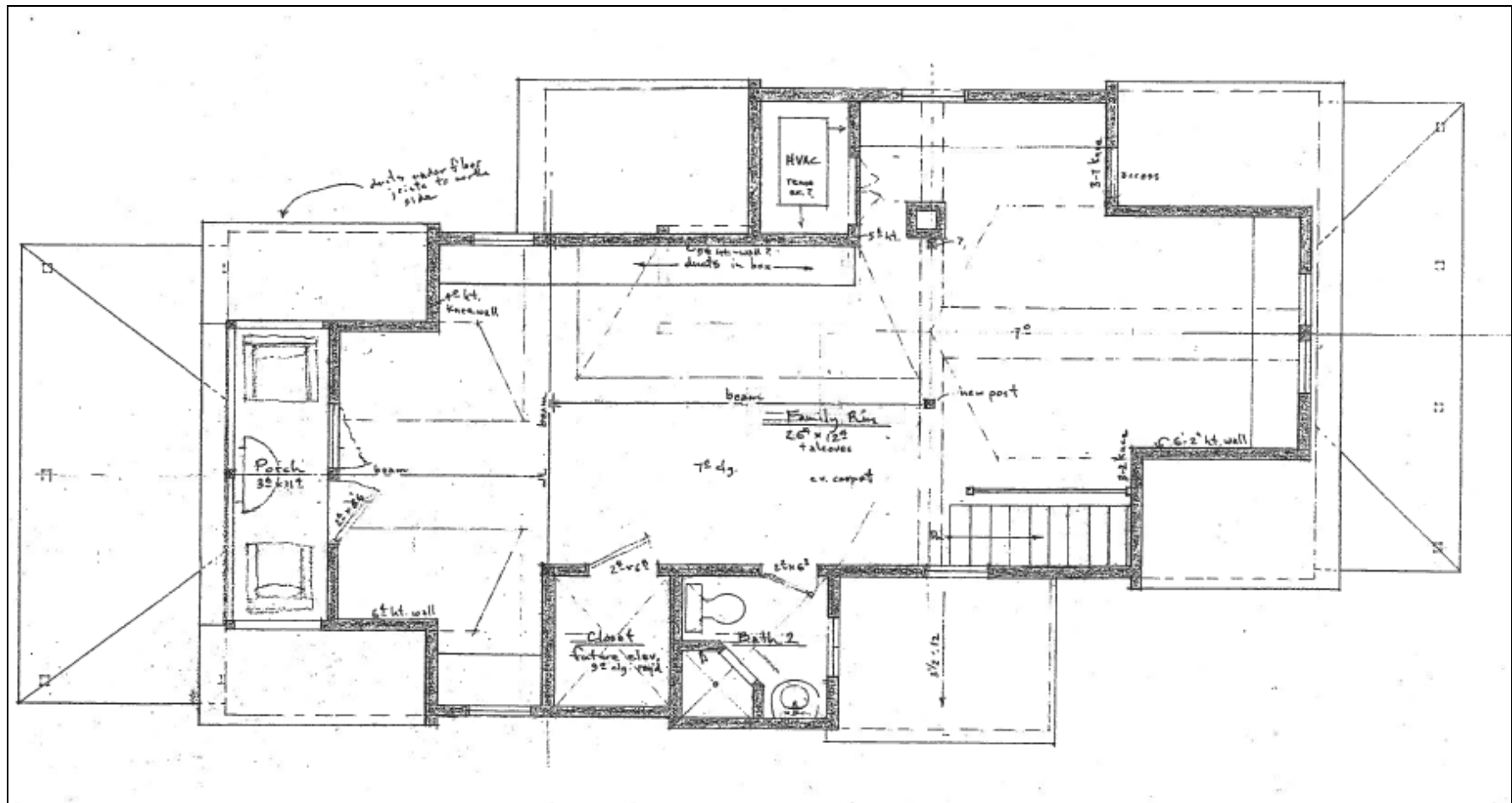


Figure 15. Proposed third floor plan.